

Decoding Mystery of Markandesvara Temple through Inscriptions

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Abstract

The Markanda temple remains as one of the controversial site for historians while dating temple art. Historically it is a significant but comparatively neglected group of monuments from Vidarbha which is situated at Chamorshi taluka, Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra.

The Archaeological Survey of India protects the site accommodating eighteen temples out of twenty-four. The total area of the Markanda temple complex is 196×168 sq feet. Local people call the place as Markandi or Markanda Deva, and assign the major temple in the group to Markanda Rishi or Markandesvara, which was damaged by striking of lightening 300 years back. Therefore, it is difficult to trace the original form of Markandesvara temple. The architecture and sculptures of these firmly resemble the Khajuraho temples. It is famous for its “Hemandpanthi” style of construction.

This research paper attempts readings of all the available inscriptions and a newly found inscription at Markanda that has never been discussed by scholars. Here we are trying find out some possibilities and additions that will give a particular perspective to the present study by concluding the date of Markandesvara temple.

Keywords: Markandeshvara Temple Gadchiroli, Dashavtara Temple, Markanda Temples, Inscriptions from Markanda, Khajuraho of Vidarbha, Hemadpanthi Temple, Yadava Temple, Art and Architecture of Markanda

Introduction

According to Alexander Cunningham, S.B. Deo, A. Jamkhedkar and G.B. Deglurkar, dating of the Markandi temples can be attempted based on stylistic consideration (Cunningham 1879: 143, Deo 1973: 20, Jamkhedkar and Deglurkar 1975: 98), whereas, V.V. Mirashi (1975: 244) states that, “stylistic evidence is not always unimpeachable. It should be substantiated, where possible, by inscriptional evidence. There are some early inscriptions at Markandi, but they are not connected with the temples there. Hence, their evidence has not been taken into account by both Cunningham and Deo”. While dating the structure or the temple one must take notice of some important points:

- (i) Proper placement of inscriptions
- (ii) Stylistic evolution and influences
- (iii) Socio-political and economic situation

To draw certain instances to illustrate those points, let us look at two case studies. Based on stylisation, Alexander Cunningham and S.B Deo draw similarities between the Markandi and Khajuraho temples (Cunningham 1879: 145, Deo 1973: 20). On the other hand, V.V. Mirashi tries to analyse the temples based on inscriptions. According to him, “the available *Brahmi* inscriptions show the Markandi temple has been built by Rashtrakuta” (Mirashi 1975: 252), and to prove his opinion, he referred those inscriptions to the Rashtrakuta period.

Material and Methods

Scholars like A. Cunningham, S.B. Deo, and V.V. Mirashi have discussed some inscriptions from Markandi. Among them Cunningham, in his report, “The Tour in the Central provinces in 1873-74 and 1874-75”, has given eye copies of inscriptions, of which three are associated with the Markandesvara temple, one with Mrityunjaya temple and three are unconnected with any temples. In 2012, P. Meshram and D. Choudhari have discussed some more inscriptions from Markandi in *Studies in Indian Epigraphy*, vol. XXXVII and have given appropriate interpretation of the inscriptions. Still all the scholars have unlike opinion about the date of Markandesvara temple. Here we have tried to reanalyse their interpretations and found inscription at Markandi to come up with the date of Markandesvara temple.

There are some inscriptions in *Brahmi* script, or *Kutila-lipi* and the rest are in Devanagari. However, the *Brahmi* (acute-angled) records have nothing to do with the principle temple called Markandesvara under study. It opens the possibilities of two phases of Markandesvara temple in addition to two different guilds which were working over there. Because of it, Markandesvara temple has two different style of sculptural lineage, i.e. one is from Khajuraho guild and another is local, possibly the Yadava.

There are few inscriptions at Markandi temples but they are not appropriate enough to come to a conclusive date but recent renovation of the temple by Archaeological

Survey of India started since November 2017 found an inscription on pillar in Devanagari, which can be an important evidence for dating the Markandesvara temple.

The inscriptions at Markandi can be classified into two categories based on script such as Brahmi Inscriptions and Nagari (Devanagari) Inscriptions.

Brahmi Inscriptions

Inscription No. 1 (Fig. 1, No. 1)

It is one of the most important and earliest inscriptions at Markandi which is inscribed on isolated three sides of a square monolith with a moulded capital placed at southern courtyard of the main temple, i.e. Markandesvara temple. Stylistically the Dasavatara temple belongs to 7th to 9th century, so it is quite possible that these inscriptions are also from the same period.

Left Face

It is on the left side of a pillar. Alexander Cunningham and S.B. Deo have given the eye copy of the inscription without reading but they believe that this two-line record is distinct from another side of a pillar. According to Cunningham, “its characters are somewhat older than of the other pillar, say of the sixth or seventh century. The two lines on left face of the pillar apparently form a distinct record of which the latter half of the second line is in much smaller characters” (Cunningham 1879: 149).

Reading: V.V. Mirashi, Pradeep Meshram and Dhiraj Choudhari have given the readings of this inscription as follows:

No. (Mirashi 1975: 248)	(Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 78)
1. <i>nistirma(m) sapadi</i>	<i>Jonehujasadapa</i>
2. <i>mala-yaso-bhuja-srir-yo—sya</i>	<i>Cho –sri-</i>

Meaning : Both authors do not give the meaning of this inscription and reading is varied.

Middle Face: It is on middle side of the same pillar.

Reading: A. Cunningham, V.V. Mirashi, Meshram and Choudhari have given the following reading.

No. (Cunningham 1879: 150)	(Mirashi 1975: 248)	(Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 72)
1. <i>Swasti Sri Samyidha</i>	<i>Svasti sri-saumya</i>	<i>Svasti Sri Sashiyara</i>
2. <i>Jna Chila badra chigi</i>	<i>nkula_ _</i>	<i>Jna li _ du chi gi</i>
3. <i>Posa dhi ha _ lu ma</i>	<i>_ _ _ _</i>	<i>Po _ Ra ha_ Lu</i>
4. <i>_ budhi suchandra sishya</i>	<i>_ _a-chandra suryya</i>	<i>Pa _Ra achanadaya Sishya</i>
5. <i>Nta Chatriyama sute</i>	<i>_ _ sriya_ _</i>	<i>Na Chei _ yama a_ mayiba</i>

Meaning: The inscription starts with Svasti followed by a name Sashiyar. According to Alexander Cunningham, these inscriptions must belong to sixth or seventh century (Cunningham 1879: 149), while V.V. Mirashi says, based on the evidence of paleography, they may refer to the eighth or ninth century. Further Mirashi added, “The middle one seems to express the hope that would endure so long as the moon and the sun continue to shine” (Mirashi 1975: 248). Here, all the authors have different opinion on reading and meaning of this inscription.

Right Face: It is on the Right side of the same pillar.

Reading: A. Cunningham, V.V. Mirashi, Meshram and Choudhari have given the following reading.

No.	(Cunningham 1879: 150)	(Mirashi 1975: 248)	(Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 73)
1.	_ _ bra _ _	Nabu_ _ _	Nubu
2.	_ thu la _ _	Vyapara _ _ _	Thu _
3.	Nya dha di yaga	Nnaradiya ga _ _ _	Nyaradigaya
4.	Ma yi badi nga bra	_ _ _	bu
5.	Sata di _ _ ba	_	bu bra

Meaning: According to Cunningham, the record on the right face “has larger letter and has no connection with that on the middle face” (Cunningham 1879: 150), while reading this inscription, all the authors have different views and could not decipher the meaning.

Inscription No. 2 (Fig. 1, No. 2)

It is inscribed on top of the square monolith consisting with *Somaskanda murti* on one side, which is placed under the ruined *mandapa* opposite to southern side of Markandesvara temple.

Reading:

PrayaSri

Meaning: Alexander Cunningham and S.B. Deo have attributed this inscription to fifth or sixth century. According to Alexander Cunningham, “the letters are near the top of the stone, and below there is a male figure with four arms, carrying a battle axe, and attended by two females. A snake encircles the waist, which may perhaps serve to identify the figure with Siva, but there is no other trace of god” (Cunningham 1879: 149). According to V.V. Mirashi, “the correct reading of it is *Praya-sri* and it appears to be the Sanskritisation of a Prakrit record. Though the battle-axe is one of the weapons of Siva, he is generally shown with his trident. So the figure may be the god of the Nagas” (Mirashi 1975: 249). Meshram and Choudhari say the script is Kutila or Siddhamatrika so it must belong to sixth – eighth century (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 73). The four-armed figure is *Somaskanda murti* and the inscription *Prayasri* must belong to sixth-ninth century.

Inscription No. 3 (Fig. 1, No. 3)

It is inscribed on fragmentary stone now placed at the backside of Markandesvara temple.

Reading: S.B. Deo attributed this inscription to late fifth and early sixth century based on nail-headed variety of Brahmi (Deo 1973: 55). He has given the following reading.

- 1) *Anuraga_yaprabhu (?)*
- 2) *Baghanagasri*

Another scholar V.V. Mirashi has given the following reading.

- 1) *Anuragastha Praya Purnah*
- 2) *BappanagaSri*

Meaning: According to Mirashi, the name Bappanaga Sri could be the name of a sculptor or architect and it could belong to eighth – ninth century. In addition, he believes that it might have been affixed on the *Sikhara* of the Markandesvara temple in respect of the maker (Mirashi 1975: 250).

However, Mirashi has given different propositions but it does not take a conclusion. That he tries to place this temple in the ninth century under the Rashtrakuta. Because in ninth century Vidharba was ruled under the Rashtrakutas and according to him, only the Rashtrakuta could build such huge structures (Mirashi 1975: 251).

All the available *Brahmi* inscriptions may belong to the period of Rashtrakutas but it does not mean that the principal temple Markandeshvara may also have been built by the Rashtrakutas. Because stylistically and iconographically Markandeshvara temple can be placed in the twelfth century. Moreover, all the *Brahmi* inscriptions are not connected with any temples, they are yet in isolation. So it may possible that, the Rashtrakutas were ruling at Markanda region in ninth century or earlier.

Inscription No. 4 (Fig.1, No. 4)

It is only two letters' short inscription, which has been inscribed on a small fragmentary stone, deposited near above inscription.

Reading: S.B. Deo has given the following reading (Deo 1973: 55).

napa

Scholars like Meshram and Choudhari have given the following reading (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 74).

na (na)

Meaning: It is not clear; but it is a north Indian script belonging to seventh-eighth century.

Nagari (Devanagari) Inscriptions

Inscription No. 1 (Fig. 2, No. 1)

It is an important inscription, which is presently with the Archaeological Survey of India. It is inscribed on a shaft of the pillar found near the ruined Shiva temple in north Indian Nagari script with 6 to 7 lines.

Reading:

Sake 1095

Vijaya Samvasar Stapata

- - - ga - -si

Meaning: It is dated with Sake 1095 (1173 AD) Vijaya Samvasar. It includes the word “Stapata”. The remaining words are not readable. On stylistic and iconographical grounds, Markandesvara temple must be placed in the twelfth century of Yadava period, so it could be possible that this inscription also belongs to Yadava, which is the date of Markandesvara temple.

Inscription No. 2 (Fig. 2, No. 2)

It is inscribed on the same pillar at the upper portion of the above inscription.

Reading:

Yasavape

Inscription No. 3 (Fig. 2, No. 3)

It is an important inscription, which inscribed on a pillar situated at eastern corner of the Markandesvara temple besides the Nandi Mandapa. Many scholars like Alexander Cunningham, S.B. Deo and Y.K. Deshpande have put their views on this inscription. S.G. Tulpule (1963) gives a detailed description about this inscription.

Reading:

O || KanhoPurushottamachahSimghanarayachapanato

UpangaraotheachanamaskaruSriMarkandesvara

O || JanamajasiSamgitagunanidhi

Meaning: “The son (Kanho) of Purushottama and the grandson of Singhanaraya, (who) Upangaraya is bowing down to Markandesvara. May he be the benefactor of music for this life and many lives” (Tulpule 1963). The inscription does not mention any date

but by accepting Tulpule's views, it must belong to Krushnadeva (1245 – 1261 AD) of Yadava period.

Inscription No. 4 (Fig. 2, No. 4)

It is located on the left side of a doorjamb of Mrityunjaya temple. It consists of a human figure holding a book or a mirror.

Reading:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) <i>Vadilithaka</i> 714 | 1. <i>Ganga</i> 12 |
| 2) <i>RuRu</i> 314 | 2. <i>Ganga</i> 60 |
| 3) ————286 | 3. <i>Ganga</i> 124 |
| 4) <i>Ethaga(ka) tatu</i> 1314 | 4. <i>Gangasampalana</i> 196 |

Meaning: Meaning of the inscription is certainly unclear but it found that the sum of total numbers i.e. $714 + 314 + 286 = 1314$ and $12 + 60 + 124 = 196$.

By taking consideration of Samvasar 1314, the text may belong to 1257 century AD. Cunningham states, "these may refer to two different classes of offering which the owner of the rudely sketched head may have made to the temple" (Cunningham 1879: 148). On other hand, P. Meshram and D. Choudhari gave different opinion, "here are personal names of individuals along with their respective figures and the word Ganga" (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 77).

Inscription No. 5 (Fig. 2, No. 5)

This inscription is carved inside the Markandesvara temple.

Reading: S.B. Deo read it as follows (Deo 1973: 54).

Gadhayana 11 Samgi(te)

Meaning: It may denote the meaning of donation of 11 gold coins to musician for presenting music in front of God. The inscription may belong to thirteenth century.

Inscription No. 6 (Fig. 2, No. 6)

Alexander Cunningham refers this inscription at Markandesvara temple (Cunningham 1879).

Reading:

Thasarasi Tapodhana

Meaning: S.B. Deo denotes the meaning that it may mention the name of a person Thasarasi whose wealth was his penance (Deo 1973: 54). P. Meshram and D. Choudhari have interpreted it differently as "the Saivasampradaya in the middle ages had many yatis whose names were postfixes with the title Rasi, Pandit or Sakti. Such yati with the name Thasa and title Rasi must have visited the Markandesvara temple in those days. Such yatis used to look after the aspect of management of the temple" (Meshram and Choudhari

2012: 75). If the interpretation given by P. Meshram and D. Choudhari is accepted, then the inscription may belong to the thirteenth century.

Inscription No. 7 (Fig. 2, No. 7)

It is located on the western side below the Apsara of the Markandesvara temple. This inscription may belong to the thirteenth century.

Reading:

No.	(Meshram and Choudhari 2012, 76)	(Deo 1973, 56)	My Reading
1.	<i>Lasha (Pa)sadu</i>	<i>Lashapumsadu</i>	<i>Lashanusatu</i>

Meaning: According to Meshram and Choudhari, Lasha is Lakshmana in impure Marathi similarly Pasadu is Prasada, means Lakshmana gave some donation to the temple (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 76).

Inscription No. 8 (Fig. 2, No. 8)

It is carved on the left side of the door of Mrityunjaya temple.

Reading: Meshram and Choudhari read it as follows (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 80).

Lashanu

Meaning: It appears to be of Thirteenth Century Nagari script but meaning is not clear.

Inscription No. 9 (Fig. 3, No. 9)

It is located at the northern side *Jangha* of the Markandesvara temple.

Reading: Meshram and Choudhari read it as follows (Meshram and Choudhari 2012, 80).

Vara 4 – 9

Meaning: Not Clear. I think it can be as Vira and it may belong to Thirteenth Century.

Inscription No. 10 (Fig. 3, No. 10)

S.B. Deo has published the inscription earlier but cannot be traced now.

Reading:

Vira

Meaning: “The initial two are numerals, one and seven, and the last two letters are possibly *Vira*. It is not possible to decipher the entire record, but paleographically it can

be assigned to Twelfth Century or later” (Deo 1973, 55). The inscription may belong to the thirteenth century.

Inscription No. 11 (Fig. 3, No. 11)

It is located on the western side (Front Side) of the Yamadharmaraja temple.

Reading:

Narasigha Rathala Unavanre //:

Meaning: A name of a person called Narasigha (Narasimvha) (Amandeva 1270-1271 AD) is inscribed in this inscription. Who may be the son of Mahadeva (1261-1270 AD). Amandeva escaped from Devgiri when Ramchandra (1271-1311 AD) attack him. As it is mentioned in Leela-Charitra of Hiraisa text, “*Amandeyache Dole Kadhile: he navheghayaleteasati:mhanonikhataredakhvile*” (Translation).

Also Vaideshkar text describes: “*HathiSehaniMarila: PatasehaniBhedila, Narasimhdevopalala*” (Translation). Therefore, it is possible that the above inscription of Narasimvha is none other than Amandeva (1270-1271 AD). P. Meshram and D. Choudhari read this inscription as (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 80).

nana Sighasa – Laupavana //

Inscription No. 12 (Fig. 3, No. 12)

It is located on the Jangha of south side of the Markandesvara temple.

Reading: P. Meshram and D. Choudhari read this inscription as follows (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 79).

1) *Dasa Mahuru Bija Adeki*

2) *Su 1343*

Meaning: According to them, “the inscription belongs to Samvat 1343 in the thirteenth Century.” (Meshram and Choudhari 2012, 79), but I think the inscription mentions Sake 1343, which must belong to 1421-22 century AD (early fifteenth century). The word Bija consistently used in Leela-Charitra and its meaning is “to go”. The distance between Markanda and Mahur is about 260 kms and both are religious places. Therefore, it is possible that a person, who was resident of Mahur, visited the Markandesvara temple in fifteenth century.

Inscription No. 13 (Fig. 3, No. 13)

This three-line inscription is located at the footsteps of the Antarala of Markandesvara temple.

Reading: Meshram and Choudhari read it as (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 79):

1) *Dasa Mahurache Jayaramji__Jachu*

2) *Aa – Bija Shivarama__Mo_tasasa*

3) *Dasa Narayanarayaji*

Meaning: Jayaram, Shivram, Narayanrayaji who belonged to Mahur visited Markandesvara temple. The script of this inscription is very similar to the inscription no. 12, so I think it may belong to the fifteenth century.

Inscription No. 14 (Fig. 3, No. 14)

It is carved at the first footstep of *Garbhagriha* of the Markandesvara temple. It is a three-line inscription, among them first two lines are in Modi script and the last line is in north Indian Devanagari script, possibly fifteenth century.

Reading: Meshram and Choudhari read it as (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 79)

- 1) *-kshatra- lajnacha-vinatyachamamichala—radala-*
- 2) *Larara*
- 3) *Dasa naga – yaraja yaja namamiya a—vararvanikarara*

Meaning: It is not clear.

Inscription No. 15 (Fig. 3, No. 15)

It is three line inscription, which is located at the first footstep of *Garbhagriha* of the Markandesvara temple.

Reading: Meshram and Choudhari read it as (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 80)

- 1) *Ragho – rava—*
- 2) *Gai shadarava – sva(mi) – so*
- 3) *Ga ga – dhara svami*

Meaning: Gangadharasvami and Raghobarao names are mentioned in this inscription but meaning is not clear.

Inscription No. 16 (Fig. 3, No. 16)

This inscription is inscribed on the southern door of the Markandesvara temple.

Readings:

- 1) *Magaradhvaja*
- 2) *Jogi 700*

Meaning: Alexander Cunningham was the first to interpret this inscription and tried to give a date to the Markandesvara temple. According to him, “the number 700 is most probably intended for the date of Magaradhvaja’s visit but it does not belong either to Vikramaditya or Saka era. On the basis of paleographical evidence, the record may be assigned to AD 1000; and if referred to the Chedi Samvat, the date will be about AD 950” (Cunningham 1879: 146), whereas V.V. Mirashi disagrees with Cunningham’s theory and he believes that 700 must be disciples of Magaradhvaja and not a date (Mirashi 1975: 246).

According to Meshram and Choudhari, the number 700 indicates the followers of the Magaradhvaja. This group must have visited Markandesvara temple in fifteenth century (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 75). Such inscriptions are found at Eshwarmau (Damoh), Devargao (Durg), Bahrata (Narasimhapur), Bhairamgadh (Bastar), Amarkantak and Bilhari. I think the interpretation given by Meshram and Choudhari can be accepted and the inscription may belong to fifteenth century.

Inscription No. 17 (Fig. 3, No. 17)

It is inscribed at the *Jangha* of western side of Markandesvara temple.

Reading:

SaA 1519 jetha vadi pamcha Jogi Ratnadhvaja //

Meaning: Ratnadhvaja Jogi visited this place on (Panchami) 5th day of Jeshtha in Samvat 1519. Meanwhile he visited on Wednesday 2nd June 1462 century AD who belongs to Siva clan.

Inscription No. 18 (Fig. 3, No. 18)

It is located at the western side of a *Jangha* of the Markandesvara temple. It is a two-line inscription.

Reading: Reading of S.B. Deo, Meshram and Choudhari:

No. (Deo 1973)	(Meshram and Choudhari 2012)	My reading
1. <i>Jitanamdapaisa...na...</i>	<i>Gitanandara u sa – gakam</i>	<i>Gitanandarausasrag ach andra</i>
2. <i>akuthite (?)// panam //</i>	<i>akuthive 11 pano</i>	<i>ajadive // pano</i>

Meaning: It is not clear but possibly belongs to fifteenth century.

Inscription No. 19 (Fig. 4, No. 19)

This inscription is inscribed on a pillar situated near the river.

Reading: P. Meshram and D. Choudhari read it as (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 81)

(di) setisu – ra

Meaning: it is not clear.

Inscription No. 20 (Fig. 4, No. 20)

It is carved on the left side of the main entrance door of the temple complex.

Reading: P. Meshram and D. Choudhari read it as (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 81).

Ekalavadudodumima

Meaning: not clear.

Inscription No. 21 (Fig. 4, No. 21)

This inscription is inscribed below the door on the southern side of the Markandesvara temple. It is a two-line inscription in worn out condition.

Reading: P. Meshram and D. Choudhari read it as (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 78).

- 1) *Ganapata Govinda —Jayanatha Govinda*
- 2) *Lakshmana*

Meaning: It is sixteenth - seventeenth Century text including with names like Ganapata, Govinda, Jayanatha, Govinda and Lakshmana. Scholars like Meshram and Choudhari believe that names mentioned in inscription may belong to the same family (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 78).

Inscription No. 22 (Fig. 4, No. 22)

It is located on the south side of the Markandesvara temple in Modi Script.

Reading: Meshram and Choudhari read this inscription as follows (Meshram and Choudhari 2012)

Jageram Siparam Tipache Samvat 1989

Meaning: A person Jageram Siparam who is resident of Tipa village visited this place in SaAvat 1989 (1932 AD).

Inscription No. 23 (Fig. 4, No. 23)

This inscription is carved at the southern side of the door of Markandesvara temple and it is three-lined Devanagari inscription.

Reading: Meshram and Choudhari read this inscription as follows (Meshram and Choudhari 2012).

- 1) *Jayram Sivram*
- 2) *Tiwade vi. Chora*
- 3) *E. 1934*

Meaning: Jayram Sivram Tiwade who is resident of Chora visited this temple on 1934 AD.

Inscription No. 24 (Fig. 4, No. 24)

It is located on the Jangha of Markandesvara temple on the southeast side.

Reading:

Jayram ta. 1934

Meaning: It is a single line Devanagari inscription, which inscribed the name of a person Jayram and the date 1934 AD.

Inscription No. 25 (Fig. 4, No. 25)

This inscription is located on the western side of Jangha of the Markandesvara temple.

Reading:

Siganesayenamah

Meaning: Meshram and Choudhari have deciphered it as “Greetings by King Simghana. This person Simghana may or may not be the Yadava king Simghanadeva”. (Meshram and Choudhari 2012: 78). I have deciphered it as “Shri Ganesay Namah”

Inscription No. 26 (Fig. 4, No. 26)

It is inscribed on same pillar of Nagari inscription No.3 at bottom side. The inscription is written in two different scripts and may be of different time periods.

Reading:

Markandesvara

Ganesayanma

Meaning: First line denotes the name of Sage Markandeya and second line inscribed with the name of the Lord Ganesa.

Discussion

By looking at the earliest inscriptions from Markandi, i.e. Inscription No. 1, 2 and 3, in Brahmi script, which may belong to sixth to ninth century, cannot be considered as a date of Markandesvara temple. Stylistically, Markandesvara temple is much evolved and might have been built in twelfth century, rather in ninth century or earlier. Here the question may arise that how these inscriptions are available at Markandi. Interestingly it opens up more possibilities of existence of another ruler (may be Rashtrakuta) at Markandi. Brahmi inscription No. 1 inscribed on a pillar, which is stylistically different from the other available pillars at Markandi. According to Cunningham, the Dasavatara temple is earlier temple at Markandi complex. He assigns it to two to three century earlier than the date of other Shiva temples at Markandi (Cunningham 1879: 149). So it is quite possible that, there was another ruler (may be Rashtrakuta) at Markandi before constructing the Markandesvara temple to whom may be assigned these inscriptions and may be Dasavatara temple.

As we can see that, most of the Devanagari inscriptions, which are found at Markandesvara temple, are not so much conventional. They could not give an exact or proper date of the temple, because none of the inscriptions is placed at considerable place, which can be authenticated.



Figure 1

No. 1

Brahmi Inscription No. 11.1

Left Face1.2

Middle Face1.3

Right Face

No. 2

Brahmi Inscription No. 2

No. 3

Brahmi Inscription No. 3

No. 4

Brahmi Inscription No. 4

Figure 2



1



2

आकाशमूर्त्तयेऽर्पयामि नमः
उपांगनाजे ते हा वासुदेवाय
महात्म्यं प्रकृतं श्रीगणेशाय नमः

3

वसिष्ठ १२४ मंगल
कृष्ण . ३१४ मंगल
२५ ६ मंगल
१२४
७३२४
मंगल सं पत्र १२६

4

गद्याल्ल संगीत

5

वासनासितपोधन

6



7



8

Figure 2

- No. 5
- No. 6
- No. 7
- No. 8

- Devanagari Inscription No. 5
- Devanagari Inscription No. 6
- Devanagari Inscription No. 7
- Devanagari Inscription No. 8



Figure 3

- No. 9
- No. 10
- No. 11
- No. 12
- No. 13
- No. 14
- No. 15
- No. 16
- No. 17
- No. 18

- Devanagari Inscription No. 9
- Devanagari Inscription No. 10
- Devanagari Inscription No. 11
- Devanagari Inscription No. 12
- Devanagari Inscription No. 13
- Devanagari Inscription No. 14
- Devanagari Inscription No. 15
- Devanagari Inscription No. 16
- Devanagari Inscription No. 17
- Devanagari Inscription No. 18

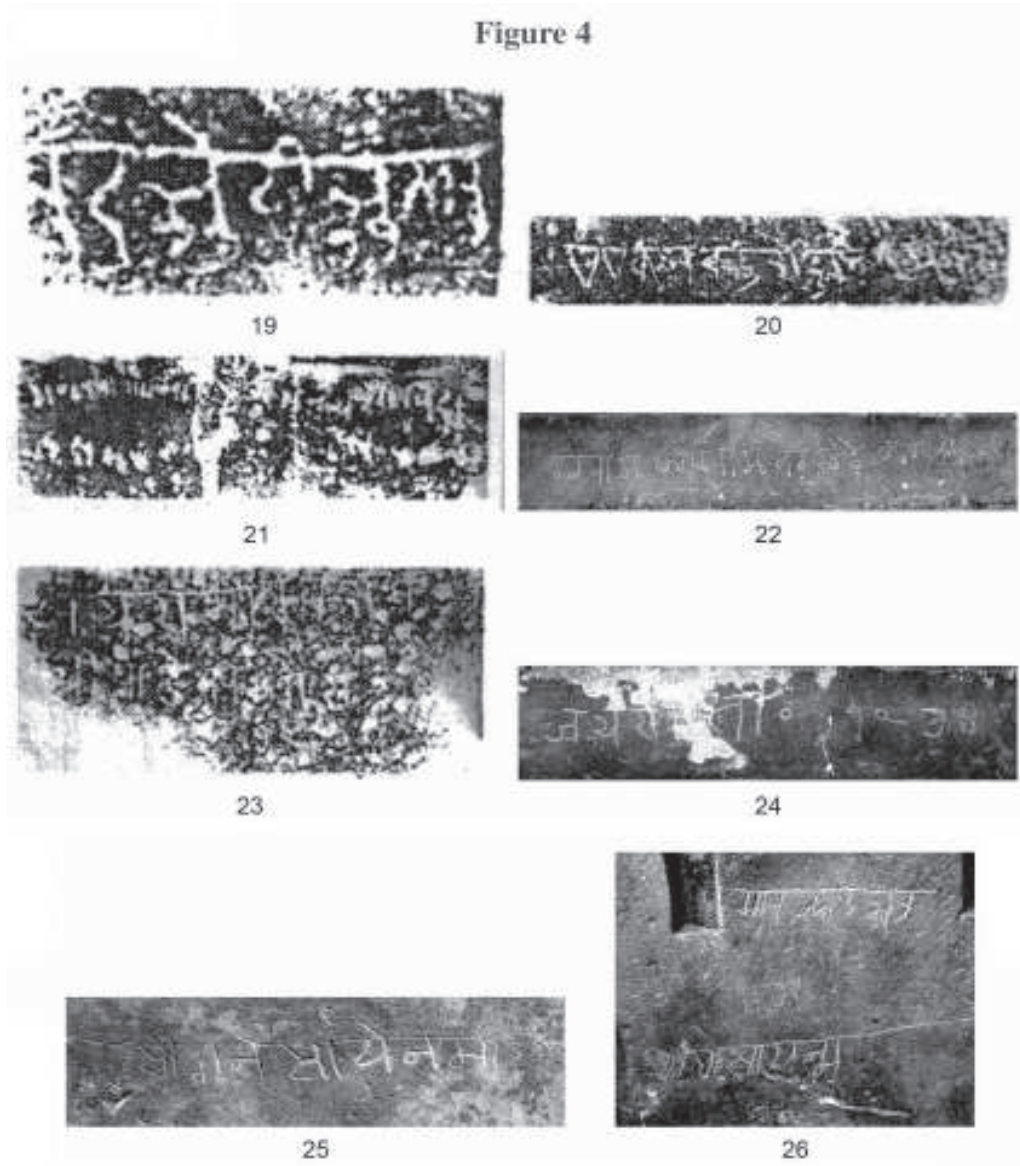


Figure 4

- No. 19
- No. 20
- No. 21
- No. 22
- No. 23
- No. 24
- No. 25
- No. 26

- Devanagari Inscription No. 19
- Devanagari Inscription No. 20
- Devanagari Inscription No. 21
- Devanagari Inscription No. 22
- Devanagari Inscription No. 23
- Devanagari Inscription No. 24
- Devanagari Inscription No. 25
- Devanagari Inscription No. 26

While focusing on the Devanagari inscription No. 1, one could reach the conclusion that the Yadava ruler may have built the Markandesvara temple in twelfth century based on available inscription and stylistic evidences.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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