

Mathias Metzger

Observations on the Scripts of the Jaipur Vakil Reports

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A. Introduction

For various reasons the study of the art of writing in India has not attracted much attention in the West or rather it has hardly gone beyond the horizon set by Böhlers monumental “Indian Paleography”. This magnificent work limits its scope to the time from B.C. 350 to A.D. 1300. Today, almost one hundred years after its publication, a similar reference work covering the period from A.D. 1300 to A.D. 1900 is still not available and whether it will ever be is more than uncertain. Thus whoever wants to take up the study of comparatively recent manuscripts dating from that period may find himself in the rather absurd situation that he is comparatively worse equipped with aids than e.g. his colleague who tries to cope with ancient copper-plate inscriptions.

A possible remedy is that whenever one deals with manuscripts due attention is given to the script utilized. Thus a corpus of scripts fit to be adopted into a reference work like this might grow eventually. Elisabeth Strandberg’s work on the Modi documents from Tanjore¹ provides a good example of the way how to put this proposal to practice.

Especially in contrast to the histrionic words above the observations made in the following pages might seem rather trivial in many cases. The identification of letters of a script - closely related as it is to the modern standard form of Devanāgarī - can hardly be regarded as a major achievement of scholarship. Moreover this article will not discuss the historical development of Devanāgarī, not even the position of the scripts presented below in this development.

As the aim of this piece of work is rather different more attention has been paid to the graphic reproduction of the material treated than to elaborate analysis. It aims at providing a tool for a better understanding of the texts dealt with. Although the material examined is of limited scope - it consists of Vakil reports and Arzdashts addressed to the rulers of Jaipur by just two individual authors of a period from approximately 1690 to 1720 A.D. - it should be helpful in dealing with other texts as well, from periods or regions adjoining, sometimes more - as in the case of the Marwar-correspondence, sometimes less - as in the case of the correspondence of the Kota-court which is much more difficult to read. Besides it may provide some interesting insights into the functioning of an elaborate bureaucracy in an early modern state.

The material presented here also deserves some attention in its own right. In Colin Masica’s work on Indo-Aryan languages “Dhundhari” is ranked among the languages which were never -

¹ cf. Strandberg (1983), pp.30ff.

I have not been able to see G.W. Leitner (1883), *A collection of the specimens of commercial and other alphabets and handwritings*, Lahore.

neither in the past nor in the present - cultivated for literary purposes². While this statement holds true for the present - only in very recent times measures have been taken to revive the use of this language in written form - it should be completely revised in regard to the past. True, there have been isolated works as a commentary on the *Veli Krisana Rukamañī rī*, a work in Old Rājasthānī dating from A.D. 1616³ and - sure enough - a translation of the gospel. But we will not find what we encounter in these documents: A fully developed, elaborate literary culture which rivals any contemporary production in India - both in size as in sophistication⁴. Parallel to the rise of Amber/Jaipur in terms of political power and cultural and artistic production, aspects which have been given due attention, there has also been a cultivation of the native language which so far evaded the attention of scholars. That this cultural asset deserves some kind of documentation goes without saying.

The material available consists of the letters of various authors on a broad array of subjects. Besides accounts of dramatic developments on the most exalted levels of politics there are written complaints on neighbourhood quarrels; descriptions of battles are rendered as accurately as mere gossip. Here as in my dissertation I have restricted myself to the correspondence of the emissaries of Amber/Jaipur at the Mughal Court with their rulers. The material utilized here consists of more than 100 letters and - if transcribed and printed - amounts to approximately 200 pages of text.

The letters of Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās, the Vakil (ambassador) of Jaipur/Amber at the Mughal Court (from 1690 until about 1720) form a substantial part of all documents available. His letters are written in two clearly distinguishable scripts or rather hands both of which are obviously the work of trained and professional writers rather than of Jagjīvan Dās himself⁵. The last observation is corroborated by the fact that at least the hand called “Script 2 ” in this essay is also met with in a small number of documents ascribed to Jagjīvan Dās’ colleague and brother Paṃcolī Meghrāj.

² Masica (1991), p. 427; Grierson, LSI 9.2. p.32;

Of course the coining of the language of the documents as Dhundhari must be taken cum grano salis as it draws heavily from both Marwari and Western Hindī and thus reveals itself as a kind of hybrid language (Tikkiwal, in his short essay in Sharma, G.N. (1992), calls this language “Shikast Dhundhari”). This notion does not come as a big surprise if we keep in mind that it is after all a formal language rather than the everyday language of a given area. Nevertheless it is evident that Eastern Rājasthānī forms the base of this language although this is not the subject of this article. This problem will be dealt with more extensively in my forthcoming dissertation.

³ cf. Smith (1974), p.434

⁴ Which does not mean that a fixed standard in grammar and orthography was set.

⁵ For convenience - and completely arbitrarily - I have termed these hands as Script 1 and Script 2 respectively.

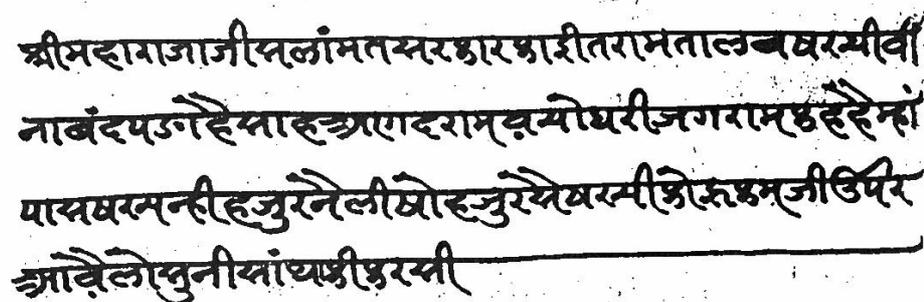
While the hands can be distinguished on first sight as belonging to different writers who moreover obviously preferred different types of pens, the orthographical conventions adopted therein are almost identical. The writers obviously belong to an identical “school”.

On the other hand the script employed in the letters of Divān Bhikharī Dās, referred to here as “Script 3”, though similar in many respects to the other scripts, shows characteristic differences, both in the forms of letters as in orthographical conventions. This will be dealt with more extensively below. This differences are often due to an analogical difference in the language of the documents.

Here we face a general difficulty: Without a proper knowledge of the language it is representing the analysis of a script remains defective. Here again I have to refer the reader to my forthcoming dissertation dealing with the language of the documents. Of course there are numerous intersections if one deals with the phenomena language and script. These have been more often than not omitted in the present article.

B. Specimens of the individual scripts

A typical example of Script 1 (Vakil Report Nr.277)⁶:



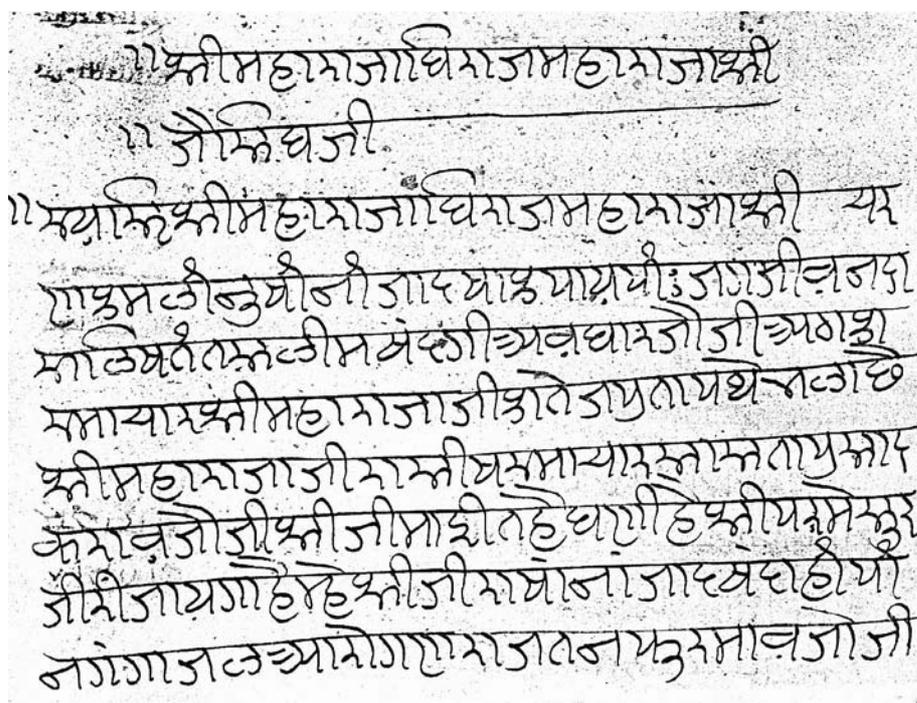
श्रीमहाराजाजीसलामतसरकारकाशीतरामतालबखरसीवी
नाबंदयजोहेसाहआणदराम्दसोघरीजगराम्दहहेमां
पासबखरसीहजुरनेलीघोरुजुरसोबखरसीजोसुडमजीउपर
आवेलेसुनीसांथडीडरसी

śrī mahārājājī salāmmata [-] sarakāra kā ūtarā matālaba ṣaracī bīnā baṇḍa paṛā hai sāha aṇada rāma va codharī jagarāma kaha hai mhām pāsa ṣaraca nhī hajura nai liṣo hajura sai ṣaracī ko hukama jī ūpara āvailo su nīsām thā kī karasī

⁶ cf. Rajasthan State Archives (1974), p.57.

“Respects to the Maharaja - Due to lack of money so many activities of the administration were cancelled. Shāh Anand Rām and Codharī Jagrām say: We do not have money. Write to His Highness (that) a money order shall come to His Excellence (The Vakil, i.e. the author). He will grant it to you.”

Script 2: The preamble of a letter (Vakil Report Nr.149), containing introductory formulas⁷



śrī mahārājādhirāja mahārājā śrī

jai sīghajī

svasti śrī mahārājādhirāja mahārājā śrī caraṇa kamalāṃnu ṣāṃnāṃjāda ṣāka pāya pāṃ.

jagajīvana dāsa liṣataṃ [-] tasalīma baṃdagī avadhārajau jī [-] aṭhā kā smācāra śrī

mahārājājī kā teja pratāpa the bhalā chai [-] śrī mahārājājī rā sīṣa smācāra sāsatā prasāda

karāvajau jī

[-] śrījī māīta hai dhaṇī hai śrī paramesurājī rī jāyagā hai mhe śrījī rā ṣāṃnāṃjāda baṃdā

hāṃ pāṃna gaṃgājala ārogaṇa rā jatana phuramāvajo jī

⁷ cf. Rajasthan State Archives (1974), p.31. As to the preambles of letters cf. M.Horstmann (1998)

“Śrī Mahārājādhirājā Mahārājā Śrī

Jai Singhjī

Hail to the Mahārājādhirājā, to the lotus-feet of Mahārājā Śrī ... Your most obedient servant has written. Obeisance and service may be accepted. The news from her is good by the grace of His Majesty. May news and orders from His Majesty secure everlasting blessing. His Majesty is my mother and my father, he is my lord, he is the residence of Śrī Parameśvara. We are the servants and slaves of His Majesty. His drink of Ganges water may give Him health.”

There is ample evidence of some kind of hierarchy among the writers. From the fact that Script 2 appears already in the earliest documents of Jagjīvan Dās it might be concluded that its writer is the senior of his colleague who is the writer of Script 1, in length of service as well as in position. This is also corroborated that in many cases documents written in Script 1 were obviously checked and - if necessary - corrected by the writer of Script 2 or rather by the Vakil with the assistance of the writer while the writer of Script 1 left no such traces in the documents of his colleague.

The following specimen, some lines of Arzdasht Nr.357⁸, a letter from Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās to Mahārājā Jai Singh dated Śrāvaṇa Sudi 5 1769, i.e. 27th July 1712, shows such corrections, consisting of orthographical corrections (cf. line 2) as well as of additions regarding the content of the letter (cf. line 3):

तुमनीसांशोचुवोडोटवालीयबुतराडोतरीनातहे उमेह्या
हुजुहुमहोयजुरीजीगीरडोहासिलडीडोआमलउहेहेतीडेहवले
अरेजीराजीरायो जोडे
श्रीमहाराजाजीसलामतपातसाहीमैजितनामीरद्याबोबदरहेशु

The somewhat subordinate position of the writer of Script 1 might also be inferred from the fact that it obviously belonged to his duties to prepare forms which later were also to be used by writer 2, as in the following specimen (Vakil Report Nr.150, a letter from Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās to Mahārājā Jai Singh, dated Phālguna Sudi 11, 1768, i.e. 8th March 1712)⁹:

⁸ cf. Rajasthan State Archives (1992), p.119.

⁹ cf. Rajasthan State Archives (1974), p.31.

॥ श्रीमहाराजधिराजमहाराजजी श्री
 ॥ जे सिधजी

श्रीमहाराजधिराजमहाराजजी श्री यरनमलानुधाना
 जादबाप्रपायपां: जगजीवनदाप्रलिखतंतमलीमवंदगीअक्षरजोजी
 अमदाप्रमायारश्रीमहाराजजीरतिजपरतापधेजलाछे श्रीमहाराज
 जीराखीयप्रमायारशासतापरसादप्रराजजी श्रीजीमाजीनेहैधएणीहे
 श्रीपरमेसुजीरीजायगहैने श्रीजीराखानाजादवंदाहं पानगंगाजल
 अरोगणाराधणजतनप्रमादजी

अधुंयदाअजनिनेनारीजिलिगयाअनुप्रमायारतोपेदरपैअरजदासतोश्री
 योहैदासजीहजुरयोहयाहोखीजी

१ फाल्गुना १७७६ मजहासमाहजहामाहमपी
 अशंतीनुमोसयीमेयठप्रडासहाअजीमठपमहलंश्री

Again there is no evidence that Writer 2 assisted his colleague in a similar way.

A specimen of Script 3 from the writer of Divān Bhikharī Dās (Vakil Report Nr.29, a letter from Divān Bhikharī Dās to Mahārājā Jai Singh, dated Phālguna Badi 4, 1767, i.e. 27th January 1711)¹⁰:

कुंभमहुंजांजोमहावतथासोताभीदमरीन्वन्नावंअरुपुमोहोहमापीजरंतपारुषां
 रदारमीपाहेनीसमेवेठायअरलेआरोअरसेसैसाधीदोपलुगादयमडीआहहे
 नीनमोरधमेवेठायलेआवेतवतीसरेयेहेरीमहावतयाजीदरवारीगयाअरधां
 नथांनानीदरवारीआपेनवयातसाहजीशुरमायाजोनुमशोजलेजापगुमोलेआं
 जेनवथांनथांनान्अरजमरिजोमेरेहमोरआयेहैसोगुयमडाहैसोनजदीमन्प्रोपे
 नहीहैनजदीमन्आदेगातवमहावतथाजापलेआवेगांनवयातसाहजीशुरमाईजोनु
 मन्मोरहरमारेनेजोअरताभीदमरोजोसीतावलेअहैश्रीमहाराजाजीसन्गामनी

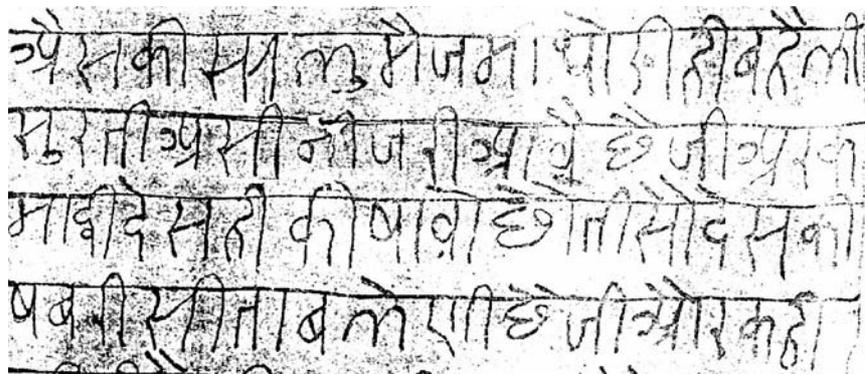
...

¹⁰ cf. Rajasthan State Archives (1974), p.7.

*hukama huvāṃ jo mahābata ṣā saum tākīda karī calāvom ara garu koṃ loha kā pīṃjarāṃ
 tayāra ṣāṃ-[-]-radāra kīyā hai tīsa mai baiṭhāya ara le āvo ara ūsa kai sāthī doya lugāī pakadī
 āī hai [-] tīna koṃ ratha mai baiṭhāya le āvom taba tīsarai pahairī mahābata ṣājī darabārī
 gayā ara ṣāṃ-[-]-na ṣāṃnā bhī darabārī āye taba pātasāhajī phuramāyā jo tuma phoja le jāya
 garu koṃ le āṃ-[-]-vo taba ṣāṃna ṣāṃnā araja kari jo merai harakāre āve hai so garu
 pakadyā hai so najadīka lyāve [-] nahī hai najadīka āvaigā taba mahāmbata ṣā jāya le
 āvaigāṃ taba pātasāhajī phuramāī jo tu-[-]-ma ora harakāre bhejo ara tākīda karo jo sītāba
 le āvai śrī mahārāṃjājī salāmatī ...*

“There has been an order saying: instruct Mahābat Khān and urge him to go; and for the Guru an iron cage with nails has been made, place him there and bring him; and besides that (his) two wives have been captured, make them sit on a chariot and bring them here. Then, at the third watch, Mahābat Khān went to the court and the Khān Khānān also went to the court. Then the Emperor ordered: Take the army and bring the Guru. Then the Khān Khānān announced: My messengers have come, the Guru has been captured, (but) they have not brought him near, when he will come near, then Mahābat Khān will go and bring him here. Then the Emperor ordered: Send more messengers and give the instruction, that they bring him quickly. Hail to the Mahārājā...”

To illustrate and corroborate the statement made above that the documents clearly reveal that they are written by skilled and professional writers a specimen of a letter (Arzdasht Nr.55, dated Caitra Budi 13, 1740 V.S., i.e. 3rd March 1684) which is obviously the work of a man not quite as skilled in the art of writing. The author (who is not necessarily identical with the writer), Vijay Rām, was a predecessor of Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās as an emissary at the Mughal Court. The contrast to the letters shown above is rather striking indeed.



C. The Varṇamālā in the three respective scripts

Vowel Signs

a	अ	𑀅	𑀆	𑀇
ā	आ	𑀅𑀆	𑀆𑀇	𑀇𑀈
i / ī / ĩ	इ ई	𑀅𑀉	𑀉𑀆 𑀉𑀇	𑀉𑀈
u / ū / ũ	उ ऊ	𑀅𑀊	𑀊𑀆	𑀊𑀇
e / ai	ए ऐ	𑀅𑀉𑀆 𑀅𑀉𑀇	𑀅𑀉𑀆 𑀅𑀉𑀇 𑀅𑀉𑀈	𑀅𑀉𑀈
o / au	ओ औ	𑀅𑀊𑀆	𑀅𑀊𑀇	𑀅𑀊𑀆 𑀅𑀊𑀇

None of the respective scripts shows clear differentiation in quantity between the representatives of Modern Devanāgarī *i/ī* and *u/ū*. The two letters for *i/ī* in Script 2 do not represent a distinction between short *i* or long *ī*. The first form appears in many texts almost exclusively while a minority of the texts uses the second form to represent *i/ī* mainly in non-initial position. Similarly any qualitative differentiation between the related “diphthongs” *e/ai* and *o/au* is not represented. The alternative signs given above are chosen with no discernible reason as is the case with all other alternative signs listed subsequently. Some of the texts stick to one particular form, others may use two or more different letters even in the same line.

This situation of course poses some problems regarding the proper transcription of these texts and neither possible solution is satisfactory in all respects. In this article the following conventions are adopted:

i/ī will generally be transcribed as *ī*. This is also in accordance with the conventions the writers adopt themselves in employing the vowel markers *-i/-ī* where they show a clear preference for the long variant, even in cases where one would expect the other form.

The form of this letter used in Script 1 and occasionally in Script 2 will be transcribed as *ī̄*.

On the other hand *u/ū* will be generally transcribed as *ū*. In the case of the vowel markers the writers prefer the short form even where one would expect a long *ū*.

The “diphthongs” will be transcribed as they appear in the text.

Consonant signs

Velars

ka	क	क़	कृ	कृ
kha	ख	ख़	खृ	खृ
ga	ग	ग़	गृ	गृ
gha	घ	घ़	घृ	घृ

Palatals

ca	च	च़	चृ	चृ
cha	छ	छ़	छृ	छृ
ja	ज	ज़	जृ	जृ
jha	झ	झ़	झृ	झृ

The sign *ṣa* always represents (the pronunciation of) Modern Devanāgarī *kha*, a common feature of many premodern North Indian scripts. Nevertheless - and in accordance with the conventions adopted in most of the recent publications - it will generally be transcribed as *ṣ* in this article. The discussion of the phenomenon of code language at the end of this article will provide further evidence that the insertion of this letter at this position is justified.

The letters *gha* and *dha* are almost - if not completely - identical (s.b.).

Cerebrals

ṭa	ट	ट़	टृ	टृ
ṭha	ठ	ठ़	ठृ	ठृ
ḍa	ड	ड़	डृ	डृ
ṛa	ṛ	ṛ़	ṛृ	ṛृ
ḍha	ढ	ढ़	ढृ	ढृ
ṇa	ण	ण़	णृ	णृ

Dentals

ta	त	त़	तृ	तृ
tha	थ	थ़	थृ	थृ
da	द	द़	दृ	दृ
dha	ध	ध़	धृ	धृ
na	न	ऩ	नृ	नृ

While the scripts employed in the letters of Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās clearly differentiate between *ḍ* and *r* no such distinction is made in script 3. This feature which is typical of Rājasthānī corresponds to the fact that the language employed in these letters is basically a form of Eastern Rājasthānī influenced to some extent by Western Hindī while the language of the letters of Divān Bhikharī Dās shows much more Hindī-influence¹¹ and is oscillating between Eastern Rajasthani strongly influenced by Western Hindī and Western Hindī heavily influenced by Eastern Rajasthani.

Another feature typical of Rājasthānī is the extensive use which is made of the letter *ṇ*. For instance one finds *Aṇada* for Ānand.

As mentioned above in the texts it is almost impossible to differentiate between *dh* and *gh*.

Labials

pa	प	प	प	प
pha	फ	फ	फ	फ
ba	ब	ब	ब	ब
bha	भ	भ	भ	भ
ma	म	म	म	म

Semivowels

ya	य	य	य	य
ra	र	र	र	र
la	ल	ल	ल	ल
va	व	व	व	व

The alternative form given for *pha* often makes it rather difficult to differentiate between *pha* and *phu*, especially as it is often, but in no way regularly, employed in cases where both readings are possible, e.g. *pharamāna* vs. *phuramāna* (Persian *farmān* / فرمان) while on the other hand there are many cases where this form of *pha* occurs in connection with e.g. an e-vowel marker.

A common feature of many North Indian scripts is the employment of a diacritical point to differentiate between *ba/va* (also, as in modern Bengali, between *ja/ya*). A faint echo of the

¹¹ As all designations of languages in this article also these, “Hindī” and “Western Hindī”, must be taken cum grano salis. Of course the language mentioned here is in no way identical with Modern Standard Hindī and even less with “śuddh Hindī”. Not too surprisingly - given the obvious source of the influence it exerted - the language borrowed from had to be identified as Urdu if one had to rely on the modern, official designations of languages.

latter phenomenon might be found in the sign for *ya* which is almost invariably written with the diacritic.

In the case of *ba/va* only Script 3 employs this feature consistently while the other scripts reflect a kind of “hybrid” situation, where *va* shows the diacritic although *ba* is in almost all cases already clearly distinguished by the vertical stroke as in Modern Devanāgarī.

Sibilants

śa	श	व	र	
ṣa	ष	ष	श	ष
sa	स	स न	स	स

ha	ह	ह	ह	ह
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The equivalent of Modern Devanāgarī śa appears only in the letters of Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās and even there exclusively in relatively late documents. There it is exclusively employed to represent Persian š. Jagjīvan Dās’s earlier letters and the other script use *sa* or occasionally the ligature *sya* instead, both in representation of Persian š as in representation of Sanskrit śa.

The sign ṣa is invariably pronounced *kha* (s.a.).

Synopsis of the three scripts

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	अ	आ	इ		उ
ऐ	ए	ऌ	ॡ		ऐ	ए	ऌ	ॡ			ऐ	ए	ॡ	ॡ
प्र	ष	ग	घ		प्र	ष	ग	घ		प्र	ष	ग	घ	
च	छ	ज	झ		च	छ	ज	झ		च	छ	ज	झ	
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
त	थ	द	ध	न	त	थ	द	ध	न	त	थ	द	ध	न
प	फ	ब	भ	म	प	फ	ब	भ	म	प	फ	ब	भ	म
य	र	ल	व		य	र	ल	व		य	र	ल	व	
श	ष	स			श	ष	स				ष	स		
	ह					ह					ह			

D. Notes on the orthography of the documents

1. Ligatures

-ma	-ra
sma क्त मा	kra क क्त
	tra त्र त्र
	pra प्र प्र त्र
	śrī श्री श्री श्री
-ya	-ha
cya य्य	nha न्ह न्ह
ḍhya ढ्य	mha म्ह म्ह
tya त्य	lha ल्ह ल्ह
rya र्य	
yya य्य	
ṣya ष्य	
sya स्य स्य स्य	
hya ह्य ह्य	

While ligatures using *-ya* and *-ha* are quite common in all of the scripts, e.g. they are met with in past participles as *rahyo* or *caḍhyo* or pronouns as *mhāro* and thus represent an integral feature of the language, the situation is rather different in the cases of *r-* or *m-*ligatures. These usually

occur in tatsamas as *pratāpa* or pseudo-Sanskrit terms as *prauhīta* (*purohita*) or *smācāra* (*samācāra*), occasionally also in Persian names or loanwords.

Yet they are in no way used systematically. One may - and often does - encounter *pratāpa* and *parasāda* in the very same sentence.

2. Vowel markers

	ā	i	ī	u	ū	e	ai	o	au
1	mā मा	li लि	dī दी	su सु	sū सू	mhe मे	chai छे	hyo ह्यो	jau जौ
2	vā वा	si सि	kī की	jhu जु		de दे	hai है	tho थो	jau जौ
3	pā पा	li लि	tī ती	jhu जु		de दे	hai है	ko को	sau सौ

The situation prevalent with full letters is partially reflected in the vowel markers as well. To start from the rear: While all scripts have clearly distinguishable vowel markers representing the *o* and *au* of (modern) Devanāgarī, these are used interchangeably. Sometimes a document employs only *-au* or only *-o*, sometimes both, but with no clear distribution. For instance the forms *kau* and *ko* for the “genitive”-postposition may appear in the same letter or even in the same line.

In the case of *-e* and *-ai* the situation is similar. For the third person singular of the substantive verb *hai/chai* or *he/che* may occur, but the latter ones only in documents which omit *-au* altogether while documents in which *-e* does not appear at all do not exist.

Only Script 1 distinguishes *u* und *ū*, at least in a substantial number of documents. But even then the distribution is rather inconsistent and not logical. E.g. the orthography of the ablative postposition *su/sū* (Hindī *se*) may vary in the same document. To the other scripts a sign for *ū* is unknown, just as in initial or post-vocalic position.

Much better established is the distinction between *i* and *ī*. But this seems to be a rather “modern” feature as there is a substantial number of documents which employ *ī* only or - while they do employ *i* - prefer *ī* even in cases where one would clearly expect *i*.

The opposite case - writings as *mahārājāji* - may also rarely be met with.

Apart from occasional forms in which *ā* occurs where one would expect a the distribution of

these markers is rather fixed.

As in the case of ligatures with *r* as first member this letter also in connection with the vowel markers *-u* and *-ū* does not have the special status it has in modern Devanāgarī:

ru: रु *rū:* रू

While both examples have been taken from script 1 the same situation prevails in all other scripts as well.

The addition of the vowel marker *-u* to a letter often results in cursive writings which are occasionally hard to decipher.

In script 1 for instance one may encounter the following variants in writing the syllable *hu*:

हु हू

Cursive writings are also employed in *du* and *su* in script 2:

दु सु

Cf. also *hu* and *chu* in script 3:

हु चु

In initial position of a line, especially in cases where a new paragraph begins, one may encounter another variant of the *-u*-vowel marker as in the following example, representing the syllable *su*:

सु

This form is not restricted to the letter *sa*.

3. Nasalisation

To mark nasalisation the *anusvāra* is used exclusively. Its application varies slightly with the different authors of the letters.

In the documents of Paṃcolī Jagīvan Dās it is generally never placed above the vowel marker:.

Script 1: *bam* बे *bāmsa* बांस *dīm* दी

Script 2: *sum* सुं *tām* ती

In case of the nasalised letter *i* script one exclusively uses  while it avoids to nasalise the variant **दी** .

In contrast Script 3 places the anusvāra exactly as modern Devanāgarī:

ल्रां *lyāṃ* रां *rāṃ*

4. Cursive letters of Script 3

Naturally the form of a particular letter is subject to certain modifications, whether this may be due to the speed in which a letter had to be produced, due to the quality of pen and paper used or due to the varying performance of the writer. Such modifications are negligible in most cases. Yet especially Script 3 often makes use of characteristic “cursive” letters which occasionally are hard to decipher or to distinguish.

ka क *jī* जी *na* न *bha* ब
ma म *ya* य *va* व

5. Abbreviations

Abbreviations are a characteristic if not universal feature of almost every literary production of a bureaucracy and the officers of the Jaipur State form no exception to this rule.

These abbreviations never occur isolated but are always accompanying either names of places or individuals or numbers. The most common form of abbreviation is to place a dot to the right of the first syllable of the word intended. Besides the first syllable may be modified.

Occasionally two dots or a vertical stroke are used instead and in a few cases abbreviations do

without such markers altogether.

Abbreviations in Script 1

प्र.	<i>paraganā</i> : Province; accompanied by a place name
सं०	<i>saṃvata</i> : year; accompanied by a number
मी.	<i>mīti</i> : Modern Rājasthānī <i>miti</i> ; a day of the week of the Hindu calendar; accompanied by a number/date
तार.	<i>tārīṣa</i> : pers.-arab. <i>tā'rīḥ</i> , a day of the Muslim Calendar; accompanied by a number/date
मो.	<i>mojā</i> : village

Abbreviations in Script 2

पं०	<i>paṃcolī</i> , to be followed by the name of the author, Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās
पं०	
सं०	<i>saṃvat</i>
रु०	<i>rupayā</i> : Followed by a number: Rupees
मु०	<i>mukāma</i> : Followed by a place name: i.e. the place from where a letter was issued

Abbreviations in Script 3

यी	<i>mīṭī</i>
चे.	<i>be-isma</i> (pers.-arab. <i>ba ism</i> (به اسم); in the name of)
मो.	<i>mojā</i>
मु.	<i>mukāma</i>
प्रे.	<i>prauhīta : purohita</i>
रु.	<i>rupayā</i>
सं.	<i>saṃvata</i>
तो.	<i>tārīṣa</i>
वागो.	<i>vagairaha: etc.</i>

6. Numbers/Figures

Numbers may appear in dates, in connection with money or also in defining the rank of a Jagīrdār (i.e. the number of his *savāra* and *jāta*).

Only in dates they are used consequently while in the other occurrences they may be substituted or accompanied by numbers written out in full.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	१	२	३	४	५	६ ६	७	८	९
2	१	२	३	४	५	६	७	८	९
3	१	२	३	४	५	६	७	८	९

Numbers in two digits:

Script 1 १७ (17)

Script 2 १० (10)

Script 3 ५० (50)

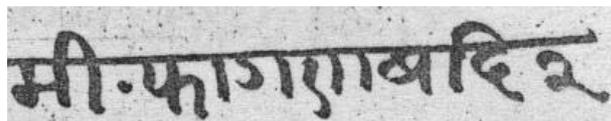
7. Dates

All letters bear a date at the end, telling the date of issue.

Often such dates also appear in the middle of letters, especially if events covering a longer duration of time are described in strict chronological order.

The Indian Calendar is used in most of the documents.

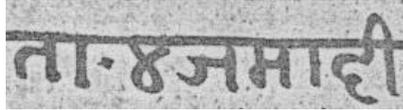
A date according to the Indian calendar (Script 1): *mī. phāgaṇa badi 2* (second day of the dark half of the month Phālgun)



Occasionally a second form of dating appears which uses the Islamic Calendar, even in letters which are in the concluding passage dated according to the Indian Calendar. This “intrusion” may result from a habit to be observed in other contexts as well:

Information the authors have gained from third parties is quoted literally rather than reported¹².

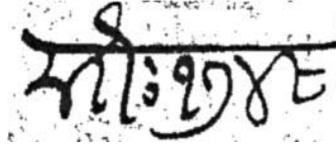
A date according to the Islamic calendar (Script 1): *tā. 4 jamā-dī* (4th day of the month Ğumāda)



For the *amāvasyā*, the 15th and last day of a half of a lunar month, the texts do not employ the number “15” but the following symbol:

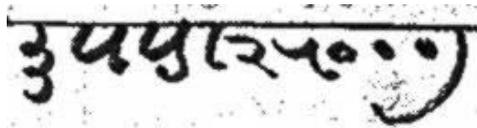


The year 1748V.S. in Script 2:



8. Money

25000 Rupees (*rupayā 25000*) (Script 3); the sum is generally closed by a kind of bracket.



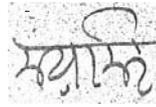
¹² E.g. one finds quotations in Hindī - or even in Persian written in Indian characters - in letters otherwise written in Rajasthani. The authors hardly ever fail to mention the source of these quotations.

9. Special graphemes in introductory formulas

The letters of Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās written in Script 1 generally start with the salutation *siddhi* (*siṃdhiṃ* in the orthography of the writers). A characteristic item are the four vertical strokes separated into two pairs by a kind of colon.



For *siddhi* Script 2 uses *svasti* instead:



Occasionally a vertical stroke marks the beginning of a new section which generally starts with *śrī mahārājājī salāmata*. The specimen given is in Script 1:

। श्रीमहाराजाजीसलामत

Double strokes may also be met with instead.

In these cases we have real sections which start at the left margin of the line.

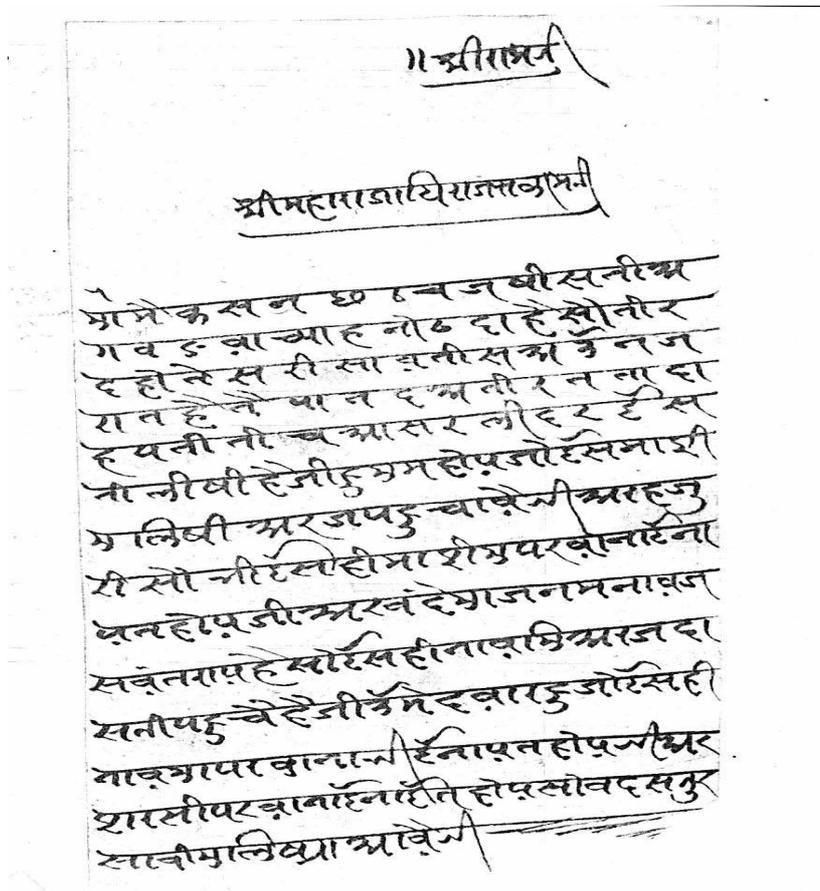
These strokes are the closest equivalents to punctuation marks to be used in the documents. Unfortunately they are employed only exceptionally. The usual practice is simply to add new sentences, ideas or sections to the preceding text, what means to the preceding letter.

Signs marking the end of a sentence are missing completely. Yet there is the practice of the authors place a *jī* denoting respect for the addressee at the end of a section, even at the end of smaller sections which need not start with *śrī mahārājājī salāmata*. So wherever an honorific *jī* occurs and does not either follow or represent a proper name - especially so after a verb form - the reader may take it for a full stop.

E. Code Language

Coding of letters is and has always been an important feature of diplomatic correspondence. Given the internal situation of India at the time in question the reasons for coding important messages are obvious. More mysterious is the fact how clumsily this coding was effected. The specimen given below is rather telling in this matter.

Vakil Report 147, dated Phālguna Sudi 2, 1768, i.e. 27th February 1712, a letter by Divān Bhikharī Dās addressed to Mahārājā Sawāī Jai Singh.¹³



This is a variant of the most popular and at the same time most primitive type of coding. Given the fact that texts coded this way can be read with ease the popularity of this method is rather surprising.

¹³ cf. Rajasthan State Archives (1974), p.80.

The coding is effected in a way that a given number of lines, five in this case¹⁴, which contain an identical number of akṣaras, build a unit. The first akṣaras of each line are read from top to bottom until line 5. This is repeated with the second akṣaras and so on. This type of coding appears in variants ranging from three up to ten lines building a unit or in combinations of these variants. For the text given here this leads to the following result which at the same time documents an important motive for the coding of letters:

// śrī rāmajī
 śrī mahārājādhirāja salāmatī
 5

kā ↓	mai	ka	sa	na	cha	ṭha	ca	ja	ṣī	sa	tī	a
ga ↓	ba	ṛa	vā	cyā	ha	no	ḍha	dā	hai	sau	tī	ra
da ↓	ho	te	sa	rī	sā	va	tī	sa	a	ū	na	ja
rā ↓	ta	hai	tai	pā	ta	da	a	tī	ra	ta	tā	dā
ha ↗	pa	tī	tī	ca	ā	sa	ra	lī	da	ra	ī	sa

i.e.:

*kāgada rāha mai bahota pakarate hai tīsa vāsatai tīna cyārī pāca chaha sāta āṭha no va dasa caḍhatī arajadāsati līṣī hai ara dasa sau ūtaratī tīna tāī arajadāsa-
 -tī līṣī hai jī [/] (hukama hoyā jo īsa māphī-
 -ka liṣī araja pahucāvai jī [/] ara haju-
 -rī sau bhī īsa hī māphīka paravānā ūnā-
 -yata hoyā jī [/] ara ...)*

“Often papers (i.e. letters) are snatched on the road. Because of this the Arzdasht has been written (in blocks) ascending (from) three (to) four, five, six, seven eight, nine and ten lines and descending from ten to three (lines)...”

This goes to say that the document these lines are taken from displays a special form of this type of coding: In contrast to most of the documents coded in this way the size, i.e. the number of lines of the blocks, varies.

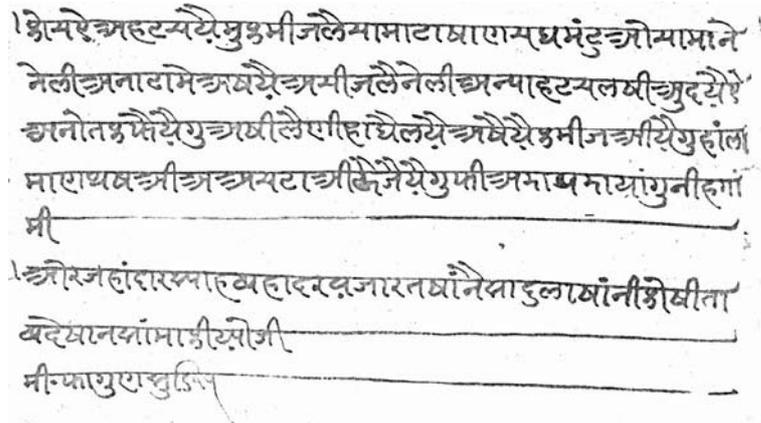
A more sophisticated, though by no means safe type of coding occurs in one text only, Arzdasht Nr.347, dated Phālguna Sudi 15, 1768, i.e. 11th March 1712, a letter from Paṃcolī Jagjīvan Dās

¹⁴ One may mark the number “5” on the letter the writer was bold enough to insert at the top of the coded text.

written in Script 1¹⁵. It is a simple monoalphabetic coding. The principle is well known from Captain Kidd's message in E.A. Poe's story "The Gold Bug" where one may also find the proper method of deciphering a document like this.

One letter is simply substituted by a second and the other way round, the principle is A=B, B=A, C=D, D=C etc.

To strain the decipherer not more than absolutely necessary vowel markers, second members of ligatures, and the full letter *e* remain unchanged.



The first line of this chart gives a transcription of the code, the second line the uncoded text.

ko	ca	e	a	ha	ṭa	ca	yai	mu	ka	mī	ja	lai	cā	mā	ṭā	ṣā	ṇa	ca	gha	maṃ	ṭu	o	cā	mā	ne
o	ra	e	ka	ṣa	ba	ra	chai	ju	a	jī	ma	nai	rā	jā	bā	hā	da	ra	va	jaṃ	bu	ko	rā	jā	le

ne	lī	a	nā	ṭā	me	a	ṣa	yai	a	cī	ja	lai	ne	lī	a	nyā	ha	ṭa	ca	la	ṣī	aü	da	yai	e
le	nī	ka	lā	bā	je	ka	ha	chai	ka	rī	ma	nai	le	nī	ka	lyā	ṣa	ba	ra	na	hī	ku	ṇa	chai	e

a	nō	ta	ka	phai	yai	gu	a	ṣi	lai	ṇi	hā	ghai	la	yai	a	ṣai	yai	ka	mī	ja	aī	yai	gu	hām	lā
ka	lo	tha	a	ṭhai	chai	su	ka	hī	nai	dī	ṣā	vai	na	chai	ka	hai	chai	a	jī	ma	kī	chai	su	ṣām	nā

mā	ṇa	tha	ṣa	aī	a	a	ca	ṭa	aī	ḍai	jai	yai	gu	phī	a	ḍā	ya	ḍā	yām	gu	nī	ha	gām
jā	da	ta	ha	kī	ka	ka	ra	bā	kī	pai	mai	chai	su	ṭhī	ka	pā	cha	pā	chām	su	lī	ṣa	sām

mī
jī

¹⁵ cf. Rajasthan State Archives (1992), p.113. Letters of this author employing code language are invariably written in Script 1.

So the coded passage reads as follows:

ora eka ṣabara chai ju aḷīma nai rājā bāhādara va jāmbu ko rājā le le nīkalā / bāje kaha chai karīma nai le nīkalyā / ṣabara nahī kuṇa chai / eka lotha aṭhai chai su kahī nai dīṣāvai na chai / kahai chai aḷīma kī chai / su ṣāṃnājāda tahakīka kara bākī pai mai chai (or: tahakīka karabā kī pai mai chai) / su ṭhīka pācha pāchāṃ su līṣasāṃ jī /

“There is one more news that Rājā Bahādur and the Rājā of Jammu escaped together, having taken Azīm with them. Some say that they escaped with Karīm. There is no information as to who he is. Here there is one corpse which they do not show to anybody. It is said that it is Azīm’s (body). As soon as the Khānānzād has investigated (this matter) the rest is (delivered) in due course. (Or: The Khānānzād is presently (engaged) in investigating this (matter)). We will write this information afterwards.”

The substitution of the akṣaras is not executed at random though the principle underlying this coding is not too complicated. The following chart is just one of many possible ways to visualize the way it is accomplished. Whether it actually represents the key available to the readers of the coded message or not, it will illustrate the technique:

k	ṣ	g	gh	n	c	ch	j	jh	ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ	t	th	d	dh	p	ph	b	bh	m	y	r	l	v	s	h	a
---	---	---	----	---	---	----	---	----	---	----	---	----	---	----------	----	---	----	---	----	---	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

The bold stroke in the center represents an axis of symmetry. Each letter is replaced by the symmetrical value, a *t* in the coded text is to be read as *th* and vice versa, a *d* as *ṇ* etc . Although the sequence of letters we have here is not fully consistent- e.g. one would not naturally expect the positioning of the values *a* and *n* at the places they occupy here - there can be no doubt that it represents the sequence of letters in the varṇamālā and that this is exactly what the inventors of this type of coding had in mind.

In addition one can note that the letter *ṣ* is obviously classified as an aspirated *k*.

An analogical method is used in some older documents. The only difference to the method above is that in this case letters are not substituted by other letters but by numbers. In the case described above the letters form pairs, so the method employing numbers is more difficult to decipher and must therefore be regarded as the most sophisticated of all.

Why it was given up in favour of more primitive methods remains an enigma.

The following specimen is a passage from Arzdasht Nr.3, a letter addressed to Mirzā Rājā Jai Singh by Raghu Nāth and Keśav Dās, dated Mārgaśīrṣa Budi 15, 1698, i.e. 22nd November 1641.¹⁶

¹⁶ cf. Rajasthan State Archives (1992), p.2.

i.e.

... ĩna kĀ bahauta bharosĀ raṣatĀ thĀ , mutalaka ĩna sau kĀma na huvĀ , aba ṣāṇṇa daurĀ bahādara ṣĀ kau yĀ phateha nasĭba hai ara bĀje kahai pĀtĭsĀha lĀhaura sau kuca kari bahauta pachĭtĀyĀ phĭra jĀtĀ baṇai...

“He (the emperor) put great trust in them, (but) they were of no use at all, now this victory of Khān Daurān and Bahādur Khān is mere luck, and some say that the emperor, having set out from Lahore, has regretted (his trust in them) very much (and) is turning back...”

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