

The Reign of Sūryavarman I and Royal Factionalism at Angkor

MICHAEL VICKERY

As the title implies, this paper deals with two questions which I believe may be related to one another in significant ways. The first is the rise to power of Sūryavarman I (1002–49), to which the present study is principally devoted; and the second is the dynamics of state and political development in Angkorean Cambodia, which will be illuminated by the discussion of Sūryavarman.

Sūryavarman has been a problem for all scholars of Angkor from the very beginning of Khmer studies, with, as one would expect, the most lengthy discussions coming from the pen of George Coedès, who, in several different contexts, gave prominence to the dynastic problems of Sūryavarman's reign.

Coedès' first version of Sūryavarman's accession, repeated by Briggs, was that Sūryavarman was a foreign invader, a prince of Tambraliṅga on the Malay peninsula, and that he conquered Cambodia, dethroning his more legitimate rival, Jayaviravarman.¹ This was based on a belief that Sūryavarman had favoured Buddhism, thought to have been the religion of the peninsular area, that one of his titles contained a Malay term, *tuan*, and that certain 16th century Thai chronicles recounted, more or less, the campaigns of his father and himself northward to central Siam and then into Cambodia. A first, logical and logistical, objection to that theory would have been that the apparent base of Sūryavarman's campaign, where his first inscriptions are located, was in north-eastern Cambodia,² but Coedès took no notice of the effect of this anomaly for his explanation. Briggs did, and he theorized that Sūryavarman "seems to have landed in eastern Cambodia and to have begun his march toward the capital",³ without trying to explain the logistics or noting that this theory negated Coedès' explanation of a campaign from Central Siam. Dupont chose a middle way, both geographically and logically, by suggesting that Sūryavarman moved on Angkor from Korat.⁴

Later, however, Coedès decided that Sūryavarman's title was not Malay, but Khmer, denoting matrilineal descent, and that therefore Sūryavarman was the more legitimate Khmer contender for the throne and his rival, Jayaviravarman, the peninsular invader. A serious logical objection to this new theory is that whereas Sūryavarman, with his supposed Malay title and adherence to Buddhism, seemed to show some genuine connections with the peninsula, these characteristics are lacking in the case of

¹G. Coedès, "Documents sur l'histoire politique et religieuse du Laos occidental", *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (BEFEO)*, XXV: 24–26; Coedès, *Les Etats Hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie* (1948); Lawrence Palmer Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire*, p. 166; Briggs, "The Genealogy and Successors of Sivāchārya", *BEFEO* XLVI (1952–54): 181.

²G. Coedès, "Ta Kev, III, Epigraphie", *BEFEO* XXXIV: 424–25.

³Briggs, *Empire*, p. 144.

⁴G. Coedès et P. Dupont, "Les stèles de Sdok Kak Thom, Phnom Sandak et Prah Vihar", *BEFEO* XLIII (1943–46): 72.

Jayaviravarman; Coedès, trying to maintain an argument after its main logical basis had been cut away, was forced to fall back entirely on the Thai chronicles, which by themselves are of insufficient precision for that time and place, and on some very speculative onomastic comparison between ‘*jayaviravarman*’ and certain names found in the chronicles and in Chinese records of the peninsula.⁵ Fortunately the latter question no longer needs to be argued in detail since it now seems accepted that the chronicles refer only to central Siam and have no bearing on Sūryavarman’s reign at Angkor.⁶

Even though none of the above theories is now tenable, it is worth noting that the most recent research on Sūryavarman agrees that in fact he was no more Buddhist than other Angkor rulers of his time, and that in particular his posthumous name, ‘Nirvāṇapada’, may also be associated with Sivaism.⁷ In the important study in which the last point is given prominence the author does not commit himself to any definite explanation of Sūryavarman’s origins, but accepts that he was somehow an usurper and that this fact explains certain anomalies of his reign, in particular the long inscriptions detailing an oath imposed on certain bodies of officials, which as well as being unique in Angkorean epigraphy, are also by far the most important royal inscriptions of the reign.⁸ Du Bourg also pointed out something which he found difficult to square with the idea of Sūryavarman’s usurpation, but he was unable to resolve the apparent contradiction. As he wrote, the inscriptions of the reigns of Rājendravarman and Jayavarman V in the half-century preceding Sūryavarman show a rapid development of the Angkorean administration, and he asked, “if the administration and judicial powers were in the hands of a large administration, how was it that an usurper was able, not only to occupy the throne at Angkor, but also remain there for several years and fulfil the functions which usually belong to a sovereign?”⁹

Very recently Claude Jacques has made the reign of Sūryavarman the subject of his course in epigraphy at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes.¹⁰ His attention to Sūryavarman was inspired in part by some of my suggestions in an earlier version of the present study,¹¹ subjects which will be discussed below, but of relevance here is Jacques’ conclusion that Sūryavarman’s rise to power was not necessarily usurpation and that “he seems ... to have been less illegitimate than his rival”.¹² Indeed I would agree that we know too

⁵G. Coedès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge (Textes) (IC)*, VII, pp. 168–71; and *Etats* (1964), p. 252. As a counter argument on Jayaviravarman’s origins we should note Coedès’ judgement in another context, that “titles were often transmitted from father to son”, and that in A.D.921 an older Jayaviravarman, with a title indicating he was probably a prince, was among the founders of Prāsāt Kravān at Angkor (“Inscriptions de Prāsāt Kravān”, *IC*, IV, p. 68).

⁶See Vickery, “Cambodia after Angkor: the Chronicular Evidence for the Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries” (Ph.D. thesis, Yale, 1977), pp. 369–77; and Vickery, review of Jeremias van Vliet, *The Short History of the Kings of Siam*, *Journal of the Siam Society (JSS)*, LXIV, 2 (July, 1976): 228–29 for the evidence and further bibliography. Although the discussions there turned around 14th-century events, the crucial point is that “Kamboja” meant Siam, not Cambodia, which was “Kambujā”.

⁷Hubert de Mestier du Bourg, “La première moitié du XI^e siècle au Cambodge: Sūryavarman I, sa vie, et quelques aspects des institutions à son époque”, *Journal Asiatique (JA)*, CCLVIII, 2 (1970): 283–84.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 293–94.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹⁰Claude Jacques, “Épigraphie de l’Inde et de l’Asie du Sud-Est I. Épigraphie khmère: la prise du pouvoir par le roi Sūryavarman Ier”, typescript 1982–1983, no pagination (cited further as Jacques, “Sūryavarman”).

¹¹Michael Vickery, “The Reign of Sūryavarman I and the Dynamics of Angkorean Development”, paper presented to the Eighth Conference, International Association of Historians of Asia, Kuala Lumpur, 25–29 August 1980, unpublished.

¹²Jacques, “Sūryavarman”, [5].

little about elite kinship and what were considered normal patterns of succession to accuse any Angkorean king of usurpation, even though it is possible to recognize conflicts in which one of the parties to the dispute must, *a priori*, have been a less legitimate successor than the other.¹³

We see, then, that from the beginning of Angkorean studies to the present all scholars have agreed that the reign of Sūryavarman was somehow anomalous, and that it marks an important break with the first two centuries of Angkorean development. In spite of this agreement on the nature of the problem, there has been disagreement over its specific form, and no one has arrived at a satisfactory explanation, even though several parts of the solution can be found separately in the various studies.

The first question which requires an answer is, if Sūryavarman was an usurper, what were his origins, especially now that the hypothesis of a foreign invasion has been rejected? Then there is the important question asked by du Bourg: how was an usurper able to overcome an entrenched, and already powerful administration? A partial answer to this had already been provided by Briggs who, after showing more clearly than anyone else the growth and inter-relationships among some of the leading official families, concluded that Sūryavarman had destroyed them.¹⁴ Since Briggs believed Sūryavarman to have been a foreign invader he took this as a natural political act, and for him the question ended there; but once Sūryavarman is seen as a local man we must ask how he first accumulated wealth and power to seize the throne, destroy a probably hostile official leadership, and impose loyalty on an already well-developed administration. On the other hand, if Sūryavarman was not an usurper, what was the nature of his conflict with at least one other branch of the royalty, and how did it happen that his rival occupied the capital first, requiring a civil war to displace him?

We should first note that a rather cyclical pattern of development at Angkor was recognized some time ago by P. Stern, but was treated mainly from an art historical point of view and has not been utilized for the study of economic or social history.¹⁵ Stern discovered a regular order of priorities in the construction activities of four of the great Angkor reigns — Indravarman (877–89), Yaśovarman (889–900), Rājendravarman (944–68) and Jayavarman VII (1181–1220) — for which he felt there was sufficient information in the form of inscriptions or architectural remains.

Each of these reigns began with some kind of public works, usually large reservoirs (Indravarman, Yaśovarman, Jayavarman), or the rehabilitation of the capital, including its waterworks (Rājendravarman). Then they built ancestral temples in honour of their immediate ancestors, and finally a temple mountain for the worship of the central state cult. The pattern is clearest for the first two and last of those reigns, and appears somewhat attenuated in the case of Rājendravarman.

The period from Rājendravarman to Jayavarman VII was, according to Stern, a “zone of imprecision” because such a rhythm cannot be identified. This period of imprecision, however, includes two reigns — Jayavarman V (968–1001) and Sūryavarman I (1002–49) — with the greatest abundance of inscriptions and in which, together with the following reign of Udayādityavarman II (1050–66), many of the most impressive works of construc-

¹³For some discussion of the problem of succession at Angkor see Michael Vickery, “Some Remarks on Early State Formation in Cambodia”, Symposium on Southeast Asia, 9th to 14th Centuries, Australian National University, Canberra, 9–12 May 1984, publication forthcoming.

¹⁴Briggs, “Genealogy”.

¹⁵Philippe Stern, “Diversité et rythme des fondations royales khmères”, *BEFEO* XLIV, 2 (1951): 649–85.

tion were undertaken. The apparent change of rhythm, then, is not due to any relative lack of evidence, but must have been real, resulting from important changes in administrative procedures, social organization, or economic requirements.

There is also, as noted above, general scholarly agreement that the period of Jayavarman V and Sūryavarman saw a rapid development in the administrative apparatus, the bureaucracy, a conclusion which has been reached on the basis of the much greater number of inscriptions dealing with administrative questions: land acquisition and transfer, foundation of temples directly by officials rather than by kings, and inscriptions extolling the achievements of official families. The increase in official inscriptions is both absolute and relative to the number of royal inscriptions, that is, those apparently emanating directly from the king or dealing mainly with his activities and initiatives. Whereas in the reigns of Indravarman and Yásovarman the great majority of all inscriptions, and in particular the most important, dealing with the construction of important temples and other edifices, are royal, the number of such impressive royal inscriptions declines under Rājendrarvarman, and in the reign of Jayavarman V not only are there more official inscriptions, but some of the most impressive new works of construction are attributed to named officials and the king's initiative is ignored.

There is thus another rhythm corresponding to that found by Stern. The latter is accompanied by a distinctive royal imprint on the epigraphic record while in his "zone of imprecision" the records are mainly authored by officials. That is, Stern's rhythm is gradually attenuated as the epigraphic record indicates increasing importance of aristocrat-officials vis-a-vis the central royalty. The process seems to culminate in a poorly understood 'revolution' at the top in the reign of Sūryavarman I, and then after another "zone of imprecision" the pattern appears again with the impressively royal period of Jayavarman VII.

The Angkor Bureaucracy

The Angkorean administration has never been adequately described. Sahai implicitly treated the entire pre-Angkor and Angkor periods synchronically as a static whole and then compiled lists of phenomena without considering structure at particular times or changes over time.¹⁶ Briggs *did* emphasize diachronic diversity insofar as certain offices were concerned, but he did not push on to an analysis of structure or function, and he tended to follow Coedès in emphasizing the supposedly religious nature of the highest ranking official posts.

It is clear from the existing studies of Angkor that among the highest officials of the central government were those entitled *purohita* (or *rājapurohita*), *guru* (or *rājaguru*), a royal *hotar*, and various *ācārya*, all of which titles are in origin religious.¹⁷ Insufficient attention, however, has been given to the fact that even in India, whence these titles were borrowed, '*purohita*' had acquired a secular significance, as sort of prime minister, "his religious calling being decidedly in the background", already at a time long before Indian institutions or terminology were being transferred to Cambodia. Given this information, there is no need to assume *purohita* in Cambodia had ever been strictly cult officials, and we may start from the strong possibility that at the very least important secular functions

¹⁶Sachchidanand Sahai, *Les Institutions politiques et l'organisation administrative du Cambodge ancien (VI–XIII siècles)*, Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Vol. LXXV.

¹⁷Briggs, *Empire*, pp. 90–91, 94–95, 98, 105, 114, 123–24, 134, 145, 149; Sahai, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–70. There were also many other high officials with various types of functions and often unspecific titles, but the present study is concerned only with those who fit a certain pattern which helps to explain the reign of Sūryavarman.

were carried out under a religious guise. Moreover, at a time when the growing Angkor state may have been especially responsive to new Indian influences, the *rājaguru* of the Chola system was “the adviser in all matters temporal and sacred”.¹⁸

Thus although it still seems impossible to determine with any certainty the precise function of these titles, and the present study will not solve this problem either, we do not need to imagine *a priori* that any of them were *purely* religious or honorific.

Having said this much by way of preliminaries, we may go on to examine the records of the major reigns for the names of officials in order to observe their position in each reign, changes over time, possible conflicts within the bureaucracy, and between it and the royalty. Only the highest level of officials will be considered; and in contrast to other writers on the subject, who tended to assume that all epigraphic records, whether contemporary to the event or not, were equally factual, attention here will be concentrated first on *contemporary* inscriptions of the 9th–11th centuries.

Indravarman (877–89): Although in the reign of Indravarman royal inscriptions predominate and the monuments of that reign are presented as the king’s work, there is nevertheless mention of some of the highest level officials.¹⁹ We find thus that the king’s own *purohita*, probably a *rājapurohita*, was a certain Nivāsakavi (K. 923, K. 256), who in the contemporary record is said to have filled that position under Jayavarman III as well. Indravarman’s *guru* was Śivasoma (K. 809), whose claimed ancestry — grandson of Jayendrādhipatīvarman (an apparently royal title), who was an uncle of Jayavarman II — would have made him the social equal of royalty, something to which we shall return below. A third of the usual group of high officials is also recorded for Indravarman’s reign — his *hotar*, Nandikācārya (K. 937); and although the inscription is very short there is no doubt that, even if it should be argued that there were numerous *hotar* in different temples, Nandikācārya was *the* royal *hotar*.

Yaśovarman (889–900): None of the highest level of officialdom is mentioned in the extant contemporary record of Yaśovarman, whose inscriptions are of a much more pronounced royal character. There is a record of a military leader, Sri Jayāyudha, who claimed to have conquered Champa and other countries; another of a certain Somapāla, whose titles are missing from the partly destroyed inscription, but who was well established since his son appears in an inscription, of the next generation as *mantri* (minister) of Harṣavarman. Finally there is an inscription devoted to an official whose function seems religious, Amarabhāva, first an ascetic in charge of Indravarman’s monasteries and then *ācāryādhipati*, “chief *ācārya*” under *Yaśovarman*.²⁰

Jayavarman IV (928–42): This reign is still poorly understood, and many of its inscriptions are still unedited and untranslated, but since its innovations were rejected by the succeeding kings no detailed discussion of its possible significance is necessary here. This king established his capital about 60 miles to the northeast of Angkor, built an entirely new city, and possibly tried to establish a more thoroughgoing royal absolutism. Of interest to the present study is that he emphasized the cult of the *kamrateñ jagat ta rājya* or *kamrateñ añ ta rājya*, which is given no prominence anywhere else but in the 11th

¹⁸Citations from Romila Thapar, *A History of India*, Vol. 1 (Penguin), pp. 82, 200.

¹⁹See respectively inscriptions K. 923, K. 256, K. 809, K. 937. All inscriptions will be cited by number only. Their locations and bibliography can be found in G. Coedès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge VIII*, “Liste générale”.

²⁰See respectively K. 832, K. 687, K. 686, K. 853.

century Sdok Kak Thom (SKT) inscription.²¹ Among his officials who are of interest to us were a *mrateñ* Śikhāvindu *khloñ vnam* (“officer of the [temple] mountain”), of *vraḥ kamrateñ añ jagat ta rājya*, and an unnamed *mratañ ācārya purohita* who was ordered to found a community for the *kamrateñ jagat ta rājya*, which makes him appear to have been the royal *purohita*. We should also note a *mrateñ* Rudrācārya who was somehow concerned with the *kamrateñ jagat ta rājya*, and who must have held a high position since the inscription concerning his precinct was written in the central temple of the king. In fact, if we were to rely on a later inscription which says that the *purohita* of this reign was named Rudrācārya, we could assume that the latter was the unnamed *mratañ ācārya purohita*.²²

Rājendravarman (944–68): The Jayavarman IV interlude ended with the death of his son in 944 and the capital returned to Angkor where the real growth of the bureaucracy began under Rājendravarman. It was a period of impressive architectural achievements which, in contrast to previous reigns, “were sponsored by officials or high-ranking Brahmans who must have taken advantage of the tender age of the sovereign to assure themselves of privileged positions at the court”.²³

The most important of these officials mentioned in the contemporary inscriptions was the *Rājakulamahāmantri*, “great minister of the royal family”, whose more precise identity is unknown. The king’s *hotar*, Śivācārya is named; there is also record of an *ācārya*, Rudrācārya, who was a pupil of Śivasoma, Indravarman’s *guru*, and who was related to a Śrī Jayendravarman, also a dignitary under Indravarman with a title indicating very high, perhaps even royal status. Rudrācārya also had the title Śrī Nṛpendrāyudha, under which he is mentioned in another inscription as a close associate of the king. Finally there was Vraḥ Mratañ Śrī Kavindrārimathana, whose precise function is unknown, but who was put in charge of much of Rājendravarman’s construction work and who left inscriptions giving as much prominence to himself as to the king.²⁴

Jayavarman V (968–1001): The pattern set under Rājendravarman continued in the reign of his son, Jayavarman V. The *Rājakulamahāmantri*, whether the same individual or not, remained one of the chief ministers, but increasing, and perhaps prime importance, seems to accrue to the royal *guru*, Yajñavarāha, who in one inscription provided a genealogy showing him on his mother’s side as a direct descendant of Kings Indravarman, Yaśovarman and Harṣavarman. This made him in a way closer to the old Angkorean royalty than the king he served, and adds a new dimension to the evidence about the growing importance of officials. There is also mention among the top officials of a *purohitācārya/ācāryapurohita*, unnamed, but who, given his prominence, might have been a royal *purohita*.²⁵

²¹G. Coedès, “Le véritable fondateur du culte de la royauté divine au Cambodge” in R.C. Majumdar Felicitation Volume, ed. H.B. Sarkar (Calcutta, 1970), pp. 56–66. For SKT seen n. 4, A more recent interpretation of *kamrateñ jagat*, previously considered to be ‘the god who is the royalty’, and which demonstrates that there was a simultaneous plurality of *kamrateñ jagat*, is Claude Jacques, “Les *kamrateñ jagat* dan l’ancien Cambodge”, unpublished ms., a version of which was presented to the thirty-first International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa, 1983, Tokyo, 31 Aug. –7 Sept. 1983. See proceedings of the conference, pp. 1025–27.

²²See K. 682, K. 189, K. 186, K. 834, and discussion of the last below. Rudrācārya, named in one of the recarved, and suspect, sections of K. 834 as *purohita* of Jayavarman IV, was certainly a high dignitary under Rājendravarman, and thus this section of K. 834 is at least plausible.

²³Coedès, *Etats* (1964), p. 217.

²⁴See K. 532, K. 180, K. 70, K. 266–68. Śivācārya is also named with Khmer titles in K. 265, K. 348–49. Pace Briggs, *Empire*, p. 124, Rudrācārya was not named *guru* and Śivasoma was not the same person as Ātmaśiva. On Jayendravarman see Coedès, *BEFEO XIII* (1913): 26, n. 1.

²⁵See K. 842, K. 558, K. 579, K. 617–18.

Sūryavarman I (1002–1049): When we come to the reign of *Sūryavarman I*, and his rival *Jayaviravarman*, there is a striking new development in the nature of inscriptions dealing with officials. As noted above, nearly all of the inscriptions of this reign are non-royal, and most of them deal with land claims and litigations involving minor officials who are not of interest here. The information about high-level officials comes from a series of historical genealogical inscriptions set up by hereditary official families for the purpose of recording their claims to property and rank throughout the previous two hundred years from the reign of *Jayavarman II*. Family historical inscriptions had been known before, but were rare, and were less intently concerned with property and hereditary rank.²⁶ But from the first years of the *Sūryavarman/Jayaviravarman* period, beginning in 1002, through the reigns of *Sūryavarman's* successors, ending in 1080, there are at least seventeen of these records of bureaucratic families.²⁷ It is as though these families were intensely preoccupied with their prerogatives and property and with the establishment of formal claims to them. As the Russian historian, Sedov, put it, “one senses a tendency on the part of the authors to use any pretext at all, even the most insignificant, to erect a stele listing the properties of their families”.²⁸

Besides providing the names of officials under *Sūryavarman* and his immediate successors, for which there are contemporary records, these family inscriptions also give the names and titles of ancestors going back to *Jayavarman II*, but who rarely figure in the contemporary records of the earlier reigns. Sedov suggested that one of the reasons for the sudden flowering of this genre of inscription was new tensions over land holdings as the Angkorean territory filled up with a growing population. If this was true we might expect to see evidence of rivalry among the great families in conflicting claims, either in the period in which the inscriptions were set up or with respect to ancestral positions. As I shall show, such conflicts did exist, but have been neglected in the historical picture presented to date.

The most famous of the family histories is the 11th-century (1052) inscription of *Sdok Kak Thom*, which was particularly useful in providing a nearly complete list of kings, omitting only *Jayaviravarman*, for the first 250 years of Angkor. It also claims that the family were hereditary priests of the *kamrateñ jagat ta rāja* (Khmer), or *devarāja* (Sanskrit), an institution supposedly established by *Jayavarman II* in order to keep Cambodia independent of Java. These *purohita* of the *devarāja* in the standard version of Angkor history have been considered as the king's *purohita*, and as part of the highest level of officials, even though they hardly ever appear in contemporary inscriptions; the term '*devarāja*' is found nowhere else at all, and the first contemporary mention of *kamrateñ jagat ta rāja* (*rājya*) is in the reign of *Jayavarman IV* (928–42).²⁹ Thus we find a family, obviously powerful in mid-11th century, claiming rank and prerogatives nowhere substantiated in earlier records, and a problem, rarely considered by historians, is the extent to which their claims are valid. Only Coedès, in a last, posthumous article, finally drew the conclusion that part of their claim, at least, was fraudulent; and Kulke found that the institution was probably less important than had been imagined, that the *kamrateñ jagat* were not the great royal *līnga* of each reign. Now Claude Jacques has

²⁶For example, see K. 53 of A.D. 667.

²⁷Inscriptions K. 91 (A.D. 1073), K. 92 (1028), K. 136 (1066–80), K. 158 (1003), K. 253 (1005), K. 275, K. 278 (1007), K. 289 (1066), K. 449 (1069), K. 598 (1006), K. 661 (1060), K. 693 (1003), K. 717 (1005), K. 814 (1004), K. 834 (reign of *Sūryavarman*), K. 998 (1008), SKT/K. 235 (1052).

²⁸L. A. Sedov, *Angkorskaia imperiia* (in Russian) (Moscow, 1967), p. 153.

²⁹Coedès, “Le véritable fondateur”; and see Jacques, “Les *kamrateñ jagat*”.

taken the study of *kamrateñ jagat* further, demonstrating that they were not representations of Śiva at all, that they were a class of traditional Khmer protective deities at all levels from the lineage up to the realm, and that during one part of the 10th century there were at least two *kamrateñ jagat ta rāja* simultaneously in existence.³⁰

Having indicated that there may be some doubt about all the claims of Sdok Kak Thom (SKT), I shall proceed to certain other inscriptions where conflicting claims of great families may be more clearly perceived.

Only one inscription, K. 834, shows clear signs of unmitigated fakery. It presents the names of thirteen men, said to have been brothers, who served the kings from Jayavarman II to Sūryavarman, a period of at least 200 years. In addition to this impossibility, the stone shows that parts of the original text have been effaced and rewritten so that the original, and possibly genuine, information is lost: that is, *a priori* we do not know whether there were really thirteen brothers (or possibly brothers and cousins) who served under Sūryavarman and his immediate predecessors, or thirteen members of a family who really served throughout the 200 or more years, or that neither was the case. Coedès' conclusion was that "a family whose oldest members held posts of no great significance at the court of [Sūryavarman] or his immediate predecessor, wished subsequently to raise its prestige and go back to Jayavarman II". He reached this conclusion because three of the names are found in genuine inscriptions of the reign of Jayavarman V. He missed, however, the fact that the name Rudrācārya, said in K. 834 to have been *purohita* of Jayavarman IV, is also found in the Koh Ker inscriptions of that king in posts which may have been equivalent to *purohita* of the *kamrateñ jagat ta rāja*, which could mean a conflict with the evidence of SKT, since that family also claimed to serve at Koh Ker.³¹

Another interesting detail of K. 834 is that in its contemporary section, which has the best chance of being true, it presents Śivācārya as *Purohita* of Sūryavarman; and, as Coedès wrote, this was almost certainly the same Śivācārya as in the inscription of the Takev, who, as Briggs showed, was likewise the Śivācārya of SKT, said there to have been *purohita* of the *Devarāja* and who in that generation was the heir of three inter-related families.³² Is K. 834, then, an additional claim by descendants of that Śivācārya in a different line? Still another difficulty is the claim that the last of the thirteen brothers, Bhūpatīndravallabha, was *hotar* of Sūryavarman, since the inscription of the Saptadevakula family, who were particularly close to Sūryavarman, shows one of its members, Śānkara, as *hotar*.³³

Indeed, the conflicting details of K. 834 resist any final explanation, but they are important in demonstrating that there were rivalries among the official families and that these rivalries led to conflicting claims in the time of Sūryavarman. One reason for conflict was undoubtedly the war between two claimants for the throne, and it is significant that in K. 834 Jayavarman, Sūryavarman's defeated rival, has been omitted from the list of kings. It is thus possible that the erasures of this inscription were designed to efface the family's previous service at his court.

Coedès' attention was drawn to the peculiarities of K. 834 by its erasures, but there is one more inscription, K. 989, which shows the same stretching of generations, but which was not noticed by Coedès and in which the artificial genealogy was fixed before the text

³⁰Coedès, "Le véritable fondateur"; Herman Kulke, "Der Devarāja-Kult", *Saeculum*, XXV, Heft 1 (1974): 24–55; and Jacques, "Les *kamrateñ jagat*".

³¹Inscription K. 834. Quotation in *IC*, V, 249. See also discussion of Jayavarman IV above.

³²Briggs, "Genealogy".

³³Inscription K. 136, and see discussion of it below.

was incised. The authors of K. 989 claimed their family had held the post of chief (*mūla*) of the corps of “fan-carrying” pages (which, as we shall see, is interesting in itself) from the time of Jayavarman II who married one of their ancestors, thus making the family in a way a branch of royalty. Another ancestor married Jayavarman IV, and the sister of the inscription’s author was a queen of Sūryavarman.³⁴

The first anomaly is that the two members of the family who served Jayavarman II and Jayavarman III respectively are said in the genealogy to have been five generations apart, and the grandmother of the second is said to have been born during the same 27-year reign in which her grandson officiated, a clear impossibility. Following this we find five members of the family who were brothers or first cousins, that is, of the same generation, serving successively from the reign of Jayavarman III (834–77) through the reign of Harṣavarman II (942–44), a period of 67 to 110 years, which if not an absolute impossibility seems very unlikely.³⁵

The evidence of tinkering with the record is as palpable as in the previous inscription, and although the precise reasons and true details cannot be ascertained, the adjustments undoubtedly had something to do with the conflict associated with Sūryavarman, who in the early years of his reign was showing considerable favour to this family.

It is also significant to note that this family was of the *varṇa* of Aninditapura, its principal domain was in the territory of Śatagrāma, and its first noteworthy acts were in connection with certain foundations of Jayavarman II in Indrapura. All these details correspond precisely to the situation of the famous family of SKT. Moreover, whereas the first important claim of SKT is that their ancestor, Śivakaivalya, was *rājapurohita* all through the first Angkor reign, K. 989 says the *rājapurohita* was a certain Vrahmaṇadatta who married one of their ancestors. This inscription, then, is a direct challenge to some of the prerogatives of the SKT lineage.

There are still other conflicts and challenges among the official families which may be discovered from the inscriptions. One of the more interesting, K. 956, appears shortly after the reign of Yaśovarman (889–900) in an inscription of a family who left two other important records over one hundred years later.³⁶ First of all, this family, like several others, claimed that one of their ancestors was married to Jayavarman II, and that another was married to an ancestor of Indravarman, thus giving them a double association with different branches of early Angkor royalty. Like SKT, one of the main purposes of K. 956 was to substantiate land holdings, but in a different part of the country. Where it seems to challenge SKT is in its mention of a ceremony conducted by order of Jayavarman II to keep Cambodia free from Java, and in connection with which the first royal grant of land to this family was made. Other grants were made by succeeding kings.

Now in SKT this ceremony for Cambodian independence is presented as something uniquely connected with the destiny of that family, and finding a second family which claims to have participated in another ceremony for the same purpose takes some of the lustre away, particularly since the SKT family and its *purohita* are nowhere mentioned in earlier contemporary records. Coedès assumed that there had been two separate ceremonies. That is of course not impossible unless it were shown that the postulated connection between Cambodia and Java is historically unlikely, a problem which cannot

³⁴Inscription K. 989.

³⁵The date 834 is from Claude Jacques, “La carrière de Jayavarman II”, *BEFEO* LIX (1972): 217; my conclusions are not affected by that modification of the reign of Jayavarman III.

³⁶See K. 956, K. 289, K. 449.

be discussed here. However, Coedès finally concluded that the SKT family had backdated the foundation of the Devarāja cult,³⁷ and if so, *their* account of a ceremony for Cambodian independence, and indeed everything SKT says about the reign of Jayavarman II, is equally suspect.

A large group of these genealogical inscriptions have already been studied in detail by Briggs and Dupont from different points of view.³⁸ Briggs' interest was in showing that some of these hereditary families had been suppressed by Sūryavarman, and to that extent he was undoubtedly correct. But Briggs believed that Sūryavarman was both a foreign conqueror and of a different religion, which accounted sufficiently for hostility to Angkorean nobility, and he therefore paid insufficient attention to conflicts among the families themselves. Dupont on the other hand was interested in the career of Jayavarman II and he utilized the 10th–11th century inscriptions for their retrospective information about the early 9th century. He therefore had to assume that their details were true, which meant that he also neglected to study conflicting claims even where he had extracted the evidence about them in some detail.

With one important exception the great 11th century families did not claim high status for their ancestors earlier than the time of Jayavarman II. This contrasts with the situation in earlier reigns where among a much smaller group of known high officials two were of royal descent from an ancestor of Indravarman, and a third, Indravarman's *purohita*, was of a family which dated its origins in the ancient city of Śreṣṭhapura to a time before the reign of Jayavarman II. Most of the 11th century families claimed that their rise to power began in association with Jayavarman II, and that one of their ancestors was wife to that king. Such a plurality of wives, all of whom founded noble families, is plausible, but one implausibility is that two separate families claimed their own ancestors to have been chief queen (*agramahisī*), a presumably singular position.³⁹

Another conflict is that four different families claimed an ancestor who was *rājapurohita* of Jayavarman II, an implausible situation, even if Dupont passed it off with the remark that Jayavarman was generous with titles, in contrast to later kings who respected the traditional values of such ranks.⁴⁰ Other, less complex, conflicts concern the position of *hotar* under Yásovarman, claimed in retrospect by two families,⁴¹ and the position of *guru* under Jayavarman V, claimed by the family of Yogīśvarapandita against the contemporary records of Yajñavarāha.⁴² There are even conflicts for the period of Sūryavarman, for which the records are either contemporary, or from the next reign, that is, from a time when accidental error is unlikely. Thus two, possibly three, different

³⁷Coedès, "Le véritable fondateur", 62. Jacques, "Les *kamrateñ jagat*", even while drastically revising the concept of *kamrateñ jagat/devarāja*, accepts the authenticity of SKT and seems to believe that the term '*kamrateñ jagat*' must have been in use in the time of Jayavarman II, and even earlier, long before it is attested in the epigraphy. I disagree, and consider that although the institution was part of ancient Khmer culture, the term '*kamrateñ jagat*' was not devised until the 10th century when it first appears in inscriptions.

³⁸Briggs, "Genealogy", Pierre Dupont, "Les débuts de la royauté angkoriennne", *BEFEO* XLVI (1952–54): 119–76.

³⁹Dupont, "Débuts", 145; and on the importance of multiple royal wives, see Claude Jacques, "Nouvelles orientations pour l'étude de l'histoire du pays khmer", *Asie du Sud-est et Monde Insulinien, Cambodge I*, Vol. XIII, 1–4 (1982): 39–58.

⁴⁰Dupont, "Débuts", 158. The four claimants were Śivakaivalya (K. 235/SKT), Vrahmaṇadatta (K. 989), Madhusūdana (K. 289) and Keśavabhatta (k. 534).

⁴¹Sikhāsiva (K. 253) and Sikhāsānti (K. 382).

⁴²Yogīśvarapandita (K. 275). For Yajñavarāha see above on Jayavarman V.

families claim to have provided his *rājapurohita*, two his *guru*, and two his *hotar*.⁴³ It cannot be excluded, of course, especially in the case of Sūryavarman, who initiated many changes during a long reign, that the different men could have served one after another; this seems particularly likely in the case of his *rājapurohita*, of whom Nārāyaṇa's inscription dates from 1006, when Sūryavarman had just taken Angkor, and who could have been followed by Sadāśiva of the SKT family and finally by Śaṅkara of the Saptadevakula.

For the earlier reigns, however, some, if not all, of the conflicting claims are false, and once this has been established no single claim of a non-contemporary record may be taken *a priori* as true, which means that even the famous SKT inscription is of no more inherent value for the time of Jayavarman II than the crudely faked K. 834.⁴⁴

As Briggs already described clearly, most of the family inscriptions are concentrated in the time of Jayaviravarman and Sūryavarman and, together with the rivalries which he did not treat in detail, there was also accumulation of power through intermarriage which resulted in the political heritage of three great families being concentrated in one man, Śivācārya, who, in the reign of Jayavarman V was concurrently *purohita*, *hotar*, and "inspector of qualities and defects". This concentration of functions and prerogatives involved the family of Sdok Kak Thom, a family which claimed to have provided the royal *hotar* since the time of Jayavarman II, and which claimed important functions at the Ta Kev, the "temple-mountain of Jayavarman V". In addition to this, Dupont added evidence of their joint concentration of land-holdings, an obvious source of wealth.⁴⁵

The Campaign of Sūryavarman

Just at the time when this great concentration of power and property seems to have been reaching a climax another group of inscriptions show the beginning of a movement which later became a civil war and led to the enthronement of Sūryavarman. We must emphasize again that there is no evidence of a foreign invasion. Jayavarman V was succeeded by a nephew, Udayādityavarman (1001), whose reign lasted only a year or less, and who was followed by Jayaviravarman from 1002–1006. Although there is no record of the latter's genealogy, his name was traditional in one sub-branch of the royalty (above, n. 5); his accession apparently did not provoke disturbances at the capital, for the administration carried on normally, and some of the more important family inscriptions were set up under his administration. He also controlled considerable territory.⁴⁶

Certain basic lines of the power struggle have been established with a fair degree of certainty. Jayaviravarman's inscriptions are from the beginning of his reign in the capital and in surrounding areas of the modern provinces of Siemreap, Battambang, Kompong Thom and Kompong Cham. In contrast the first texts which mention Sūryavarman are to the east, northeast and southeast of Angkor and are not royal edicts but records of foundations by officials who refer to him as their ruler.⁴⁷ This has permitted the inference that Sūryavarman's base was somewhere in eastern Cambodia.

⁴³*Rājapurohita*: Sadāśiva (SKT), Nārāyaṇa (K. 598), Śaṅkara (K. 136); *Guru*: Yogīśvarapandita (K. 275), Kavīśvarapandita (K. 91); *Hotar*: Bhūpatīndravallabha (K. 834), Śaṅkara (K. 136).

⁴⁴The truth or falsity of any particular 9th–10th century claim is not of concern here, only the fact of rivalry; but the details of those conflicts may affect interpretations of the first reigns of Angkor.

⁴⁵See respectively K. 253, K. 275–78, Dupont, "Débuts", pp. 139–44.

⁴⁶See Jacques, "Sūryavarman", [4].

⁴⁷The inscriptions which mention Jayaviravarman, in order of date, where dated, are: K. 143, K. 158 (Kompong Thom), K. 693 (Battambang), K. 944 (Siemreap), K. 196 (Kompong Thom), K. 216 (Battambang), K. 717 (Siemreap, Roluos), K. 468 (Angkor), K. 542 (Angkor), K. 598 (Siemreap), K. 856 (Siem-

In his recent work on Sūryavarman, Claude Jacques has contested this inference and has attempted to redefine the attribution of some of the inscriptions of the first decade of the 11th century, with the result that the importance of Sūryavarman in the northeast would be diminished.

The four crucial texts in this exercise are K. 125 from Sambor, dated 923 *śaka* (1001/02 AD); K. 817 from Chikreng to the southeast of Angkor, dated 924 *śaka*; K. 720 from Vat Phu in southern Laos, dated 924; and K. 216 from Battambang with sections dated 927 and 928; all of which, in whole or in part I would associate with Sūryavarman,⁴⁸ although Jacques is mistaken in saying that I situate Sūryavarman in the east “only because he [Vickery] believes that K. 125 designates him”.⁴⁹ Also important in that respect are K. 153, K. 89 and K. 161, from Kompong Thom, Kompong Cham, and northern Kompong Thom respectively, and dated 923 (K. 153) and 924 in the beginning of Sūryavarman’s reign, the circumstance that Sūryavarman’s first inscription in the capital is K. 542 of 928 (1005/06 AD), and the fact that the first inscription of Sūryavarman west of the capital dates only from 930.⁵⁰

Although K. 125, K. 817, K. 720 and K. 216 all refer to a king or to kings, they do not provide any royal names, and Jacques’ analysis is concerned with the royal titles which they contain. He says that the titles in these inscriptions include “all or part of the expression *vrah karuṇa prasāda ta paramapavitra*”, which is not in itself a coherent section from any true title, but a sequence of terms from which royal titles were formed. Because of the presence of such terms in the four inscriptions in question Jacques stated that they must have been part of “royal titles of the time, not of any king in particular”, which assumes what is to be proved, that they are not attributable to a single king. Jacques then attributes K. 125 to Udayādityavarman I on the basis of its proximity to the other inscriptions of that king, likewise assigns K. 720 to him with less certainty, and gives K. 817 to Jayaviravarman because of its site in “a zone which was undoubtedly Jayaviravarman’s”.⁵¹

Let us examine these titles in detail.⁵²

K. 125: *dhūli vrah pāda dhūli jeñ vrah kamrateñ añ ta paramapavitra
kamrateñ kamṭvan añ*

reap), K. 989 (Battambang). Sūryavarman’s inscriptions in the same period (1001–1008 A.D.) are: K. 153 (Kompong Thom), K. 89 (Kompong Cham), K. 161 (Kompong Thom), K. 542 (Angkor), K. 278 (Siem-reap), K. 342 (Kompong Thom), K. 989 (Battambang). Sūryavarman’s K. 290 at Angkor is dated 927 *śaka* (1005 A.D.) in Coedès’ “Liste générale”, but in his publication of it in *IC* III, 231–33, he noted that the ‘2’ of the date could be a ‘3’; giving 937 (1015) which is more likely in view of the evidence for Jayaviravarman’s occupation of Angkor in 927 (1005).

⁴⁸The first dated section of K. 216, 927 *śaka*, names Jayaviravarman.

⁴⁹Jacques, “Sūryavarman”, [5].

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, cites K. 542 of 928 *śaka* as Sūryavarman’s first record in the capital. There is thus a consensus to place K. 290, which Coedès first dated with some hesitation in 927, ten years later in 937, no doubt because the earlier date conflicts with what is now known about the reign of Jayaviravarman. The figures ‘2’ and ‘3’ in texts of that period are sometimes difficult to distinguish. K. 989, dated 930, and from Battambang, is the first record of Sūryavarman west of the capital.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, [1–2].

⁵²Although the meaning of these terms is of no relevance in establishing their patterns, it may be of interest. “*Vrah*” indicates whatever is royal or sacred, and it may be translated as ‘god’, ‘holy’, ‘sacred’, ‘august’, ‘royal’. “*Dhūli vrah pāda*” is ‘dust of the royal feet’ and “*dhūli jeñ*”, ‘dust of the feet’, with Khmer “*jeñ*”, ‘feet’ instead of Sanskrit “*pāda*” *Vrah kamrateñ añ* and *kamrateñ añ*” are “His Majesty”, of which the former is more prestigious. “*Paramapavitra*” is ‘great’ + ‘pure’; “*karuṇa*”, ‘gracious’ and “*prasāda*” ‘clear’, ‘gracious’ and, particularly in Angkorean usage, ‘grant’. “*Kamṭvan*” indicates matrilineal descent and “*svey vrah dharmarājya*” means ‘ruling a just realm’.

- K. 817: *vrah pāda kamrateñ añ ta paramapavitra ta svey vrah dharmarājya*
 K. 720: *vrah karuṇa ta paramapavitra*
 K. 216, at date 927: *dhūli vrah pāda dhūli jeñ vrah kamrateñ añ śrī Jayaviravarmadera*
 at date 929: *vrah karuṇa*.

While it is true that none of these titles except the first from K. 216 can be connected with certainty to any specific king, none of them matches the paradigm with which Jacques began his demonstration, “*vrah karuṇa prasāda ta paramapavitra*”. None of them contains the term “*prasāda*”, only two show “*karuṇa*”, three have “*paramapavitra*”, but the certain titles of Jayaviravarman have none of these terms except “*vrah*” which, as an element in all royal and sacred expressions, is non-diagnostic. Moreover, Jayaviravarman’s titles as shown in K. 216 are typical of all his inscriptions, a circumstance which, if such title patterns are important, should eliminate him from consideration as the object of K. 125, K. 817, or K. 720. Furthermore, one of the inscriptions containing “*paramapavitra*”, K. 125, also makes use of “*kamṭvan añ*”, a title long recognized as associated almost exclusively with Suryavarman I.⁵³ Jacques’ second argument about K. 817, that it was in “a zone which was undoubtedly Jayaviravarman’s”, is more plausible, and since its titles to a large extent are also uncharacteristic of Sūryavarman (“*svey vrah dharmarājya*”, and absence of “*dhūli*” before “*vrah pāda*”),⁵⁴ I shall consider its attribution moot.

The only text cited by Jacques with “*prasāda*” among the royal titles is K. 468, with which he continued his demonstration, and in which we find “*prasāda*”, along with “*karuṇa*,” in an explicit reference to Sūryavarman, “*vrah pāda kamrateñ añ śrī Suryavarmadeva vrah karuṇa prasāda*”, which is particularly relevant in that similar terminology is found in the very first of Suryavarman’s inscriptions, K. 153 dated 923, with “*brah karuṇā prasāda ta dhūli brah pāda kamrateñ añ śrī Sūryabarmadeba*.”⁵⁵

⁵³“*Kamṭvan*” is also found in one retrospective reference to Yaśovarman in an inscription of Jayaviravarman, K. 158.

⁵⁴No other inscription of either Sūryavarman or Jayaviravarman shows the phrase “*svey vrah dharmarājya*”, which is found in K. 444 of their predecessor, Jayavarman V; but, given the date of K. 817, it must be of either Sūryavarman or Jayaviravarman.

⁵⁵Jacques ignored K. 153 with its early date, a year before the date which Sūryavarman subsequently recorded as the official beginning of his reign. The official date of 924 *śaka*, however, does not mean that K. 153 should be rejected, since it is an inscription of an official, not of Sūryavarman, recording an establishment of the official on land given to him by Sūryavarman. Particularly if Sūryavarman was not an usurper, as Jacques emphasized, he might well have been reluctant to date his reign within the reign period of Udayādityavarman, whose name (‘rising sun’ + *varman*) indicates that he and Sūryavarman (‘sun’ + *varman*) may have been relatives rather than rivals. (See further below.) Neither is K. 153 one of those inscriptions in which confusion of the figures for ‘2’ and ‘3’ might suggest dating it ten years later (933 rather than 923). Coedès gave full attention to this problem in his “Épigraphie” of the Ta Kev (*BEFEO*) XXXIV [1934]: 417–27, where he accepted 923 and where his photographic reproductions of dates from the texts in question indicate that K. 153 really is dated in 923, or if there is any doubt at all, it is between 923 and 922. In fact, the date of K. 153 is clearer than that of K. 125 which no one has called into question, and in Coedès’ publication of K. 153 (*IC* V, 194–97), he remarked that it is “carefully engraved and well preserved”. Moreover, the figure ‘2’ occurs at least four times in the text, in addition to the date, for quantities of offerings, and not only did Coedès not express doubt about its clarity, but in one case the expression ‘2 *guṇa*’ (‘double’) is duplicated in writing, *guṇa vyar*. (See lines 9–10.) Coedès’ question mark after the date 923 in his “Liste générale des inscriptions du Cambodge”, *IC* VIII, must refer, not to the clarity of the date within the inscription, but to the problem of an inscription referring to Sūryavarman before the official date of his reign. Given its location in Kompong Thom and content I do not consider this a problem, and in this respect, its unusual spelling, with ‘b’ instead of ‘v’ in certain contexts, suggests provincial usage in an area not yet under control of the capital. Finally, this inscription, written after the event, may have back-dated it, either inadvertently or by design.

Jacques used another section of K. 468 to continue his argument. He wrote that in K. 468 “where one can infer almost certainly the name of Jayaviravarman, it is possible to read just about all of the titles considered to belong exclusively to Sūryavarman I”.⁵⁶ It is true that all those titles occur in K. 468, but not with any certainty in reference to a single king. There is first “*dhūli jeñ vraḥ kamrateñ añ śrī jaya*” —, reasonably Jayaviravarman, then after a break in the text, “*vraḥ karuṇa ta paramapavitra*”, and following a still longer break, — “*pāda kamrateñ kamtvan añ*”. This suggests that more than one king was named and that “the titles considered to belong exclusively to Sūryavarman I” really were his, and not Jayaviravarman’s. Such a conclusion is particularly attractive in that the inscription was authored by an official who also referred to other previous kings, Harṣavarman I, Iśanavarman II, and either Yaśovarman or Jayavarman IV;⁵⁷ and Sūryavarman, as I noted above, was responsible for another section of K. 468. In fact the epigraphy of the Khleang monuments, site of K. 468, is dominated by Sūryavarman, although there is also one Sanskrit text completely devoted to Jayaviravarman. The section treated by Jacques would then date from the time of Sūryavarman, with reference to Jayaviravarman and other royal predecessors.⁵⁸

Neither can any of the controversial inscriptions be attributed to Udayādityavarman on the basis of their titles. There are only two inscriptions in which this king is named during his reign, K. 356 which is in Sanskrit and thus does not contain the relevant terminology, and K. 682 in which he is styled “*vraḥ pāda dhūli jeñ vraḥ kamrateñ añ śrī udayādityavarmanadeva*”, simply conventional indications of royalty without any personally characteristic terms.

It is true that both of these texts are from the northeast, at Koh Ker, formerly capital of Jayavarman IV (K. 682), and Prāsāt Khnā, about 50 km to the northeast of Koh Ker. Because of this Jacques wished to suggest that K. 125 was Udayādityavarman’s and that his realm extended to the Mekong river. This is unlikely both because of the patterns of royal titles and because in 923 *śaka*, the year of Udayādityavarman’s two certain inscriptions, Sūryavarman is named in another northeastern centre, Robaṅ Romeas (K. 153), closer to Sambor (K. 125) than Udayādityavarman’s inscriptions, and with some of Sūryavarman’s characteristic terminology, “*braḥ karuṇa prasāda*”, of which other elements, “*kamrateñ kamtvan añ*”, are found in K. 125.⁵⁹ As for K. 720, dated a year later than Udayādityavarman’s inscriptions, a year in which there are two more inscriptions of Sūryavarman, and containing characteristic Sūryavarman titles, there is no reasonable way to attribute it to Udayādityavarman, and it must be considered Sūryavarman’s, simply because he is the only available candidate.

This digression, then, to answer Jacques’ arguments about certain questionable inscriptions, establishes that K. 125 and K. 720 are most probably inscriptions of Sūryavarman I, and this reinforces the view that his base area was in northeastern Cambodia.⁶⁰

⁵⁶Jacques, “Sūryavarman”, [2].

⁵⁷These kings are named by their posthumous titles and damage to the text prevents complete identification of the third posthumous title recorded there.

⁵⁸There is no record of a posthumous title of Jayaviravarman.

⁵⁹K. 125, like K. 153, is also authored by an official, not by the king himself.

⁶⁰Jacques’ alternative suggestion about Sūryavarman’s origins, after attributing K. 125 and K. 720 to Udayādityavarman, was that Sūryavarman might have come from the south, since he left inscriptions at Phnom Chisor in Takeo province. They, however, are in 1017 and 1019, well after he had established his authority at Angkor, in contrast to his pre-reign inscriptions in the northeast, and Phnom Chisor appears to have been important as one of the four cardinal points of his realm, where he simultaneously, in 1018,

Thus Sūryavarman, following Udayādityavarman I, first consolidated his power in northeastern and eastern Cambodia and apparently began a campaign toward Angkor. By 1005 Jayaviravarman was issuing warnings to those in revolt who were “tearing up the boundary markers”, and a year later there are inscriptions of Sūryavarman at Angkor.⁶¹ By that time, or shortly thereafter, he had campaigned in western Cambodia where much destruction (“tearing down *vrah*”, religious images) occurred. His power was fully consolidated by 1011, at which time the famous oath imposed on officials was dated,⁶² and after that his long reign was devoted to construction and expansion.

Since it is now clear that Sūryavarman’s campaign for the throne began in a time of increasing tension and rivalry among leading officials, and when there may have been three claimants to the throne, an attempt should be made to put him in his proper place within that context.

There is no clear statement of Sūryavarman’s lineage or position before he began to claim kingship. His own inscriptions make no mention of his parents and say little about his more distant ancestry. But the apparently peaceful succession of Sūryavarman by Udayādityavarman II, named identically to Sūryavarman’s predecessor Udayādityavarman I, which name, like Sūryavarman, means ‘sun’- *varman*, suggests a family connection with his predecessor, and this would place him in one legitimate line of royal descent.⁶³ This interpretation draws strength from Sūryavarman’s origins in the northeast where Udayādityavarman’s records are also located.

One Sanskrit inscription, an aristocratic family record, refers vaguely to Sūryavarman as descending from the maternal family of Indravarman; and a Khmer stele says very explicitly that he was of the family (*rājakula*) of Indravarman.⁶⁴ If the king of K. 125 was Sūryavarman, as I believe, then he was a descendant of four (or more likely one of the four) original founders of the establishment, who were themselves described as relatives of Parameśvara, that is Jayavarman II. Moreover, one of the four founders named in K. 125 appears as a contributor to a foundation in the same place dated 803 AD, a year after the official accession of Jayavarman II;⁶⁵ in this latter inscription the earliest mentioned ancestor in the royal genealogy is Indraloka, a name which appears in only one other place, Indravarman’s inscription at the Bakoñ, K. 826. Thus even if all of these connections are of the vaguest sort, they provide both a second hint of Sūryavarman’s descent from the family of Indravarman as well as a connection with Jayavarman II.

The same vague connection to Indravarman is suggested by the official family genealogy with which Sūryavarman has been most closely associated, the record of the Saptadevakula family, which enjoyed royal favour during the reigns of Sūryavarman and his

established lingas in his name, Sūryavarmēśvara, which means that Phnom Chisor, no more than the other three locations, can be given any special consideration as his place of origin. (See Jacques, “Sūryavarman”, [5] and K. 380.) Moreover, with respect to Jacques’ comments, it was not only Indravarman (Phnom Bayang) and Sūryavarman I (Phnom Chisor) who erected foundations in the south. Rājendrarvarman and Yaśovarman also left inscriptions at Phnom Bayang. There is thus no real evidence to place Sūryavarman’s home in the south.

⁶¹Coedès, “Ta Kev: III, Epigraphie”, p. 424; and see K. 196 for Jayaviravarman’s warning. Sūryavarman’s first inscription at Angkor was K. 542 dated 928/1006 A.D.

⁶²Coedès et Dupont, “Les stèles de Sdok Kak Thom, etc.”, 121; Du Bourg, *op. cit.*, 288 and K. 196.

⁶³This rather obvious connection must have been ignored by Coedès and Briggs because of their conviction that Sūryavarman was a foreign invader. ‘Udaya’ is more precisely ‘rising sun’.

⁶⁴The less precise Sanskrit text is K. 253, which refers to Sūryavarman as “moon of this ocean of milk which is the maternal family of Śrī Indravarman” (retranslated from the French of Coedès). The other, Khmer, inscription is K. 380, from one of Sūryavarman’s own foundations at Preah Vihear.

⁶⁵The inscription of 803 is K. 124 at Sambor. Coedès noted the connection in his publication of it.

successors. The inscription is one of the last great family inscriptions of the 11th century, and was inscribed during the reign of Sūryavarman's second successor, Harsavarman, sometime between 1066 and 1080.

The Saptadevakula claimed descent from a King Rudravarman and Queen Narendralakṣmī, of whom the former was probably Indravarman's maternal grandfather rather than the Rudravarman of Funan. As in most such lineages, rank and family leadership devolved in matrilineal succession, from uncle to nephew, through a sister in each generation. The only names in such records are the important male power-holders and occasionally the women who link them. Their fathers are genealogically unimportant and are never mentioned unless holding some other rank or position in their own right. The hereditary function of the Saptadevakula was "chief of fan-carriers" (*adhipovyajanadhāriṇām*), and their inscription lists the family's ranking members from the reign of Jayavarman II to that of Harṣavarman III.

One damaged passage of the stele seemed to indicate that Sūryavarman himself belonged to the family, and it was translated in that way by Barth, but Claude Jacques has recently determined that the text cannot be read in that way, even though damage makes a new definitive reading impossible. Jacques considers that the passage is simply another reference to Sūryavarman's descent from Indravarman's maternal line.⁶⁶

However that may be, the Saptadevakula too claimed descent from Indravarman's maternal ancestors and thus whatever the exact wording of their genealogy, Sūryavarman was related to them. Sūryavarman and the Saptadevakula, who were obviously his allies, belonged to a branch of the aristocracy descended from the direct ancestors of Indravarman, and they constituted a royal-aristocratic faction different from those families who traced their descent directly from Jayavarman II.

The original site of the Saptadevakula inscription is unknown, and the toponyms contained therein cannot be identified. Thus we cannot know whether their alliance with Sūryavarman was partly because of territorial proximity or strictly because of common descent.⁶⁷

The official function which the Saptadevakula claimed to hold from the time of Jayavarman II, "chief of fan-carriers", suggests a position at the central court close to the king's person, but does not necessarily mean a useless servile task. It is thus likely that their conflict with other families began over central government functions and prerogatives; and a clear sign of this possibility is in the appointment of two members of the family as priests (*yājaka*) at the Hemaśrīṅgeśa (Ta Kev) which was otherwise becoming a monopoly of the families united in the person of Sivācārya (see above). In addition, the leader of the family in the next generation, Kavīśvara, was put in charge of the sacred fire, which was possibly an encroachment on the office of *purohita* of the *kamrateñ jagat ta rājal/Devarāja*, held by the SKT family.⁶⁸

This hypothesis about the administrative and geographical location of Sūryavarman's revolt is strengthened by another inscription, dated from 1060 in the reign of Sūryavarman's successor and thus a record of other survivors of the civil war. It is from Prasat Khnā, site of one of the inscriptions of Udayādityavarman I,⁶⁹ in the district of Mlu Prei

⁶⁶Jacques' explanation is in a personal communication dated 31 March 1983.

⁶⁷Dupont, "Débuts", pp. 149–50. Briggs, *Empire*, p. 177 seems to have been overly speculative in identifying Dviradadeśa with the region of Lovék.

⁶⁸See Kulke, *op. cit.*, p. 43, for the evidence in favour of a hypothesis for a "functional proximity" of the *devarāja* and the sacred fire.

⁶⁹Udayādityavarman's inscription at Prasat Khnā is K. 356.

in the northeast, and is a record of a family who served thirteen kings from Jayavarman II to Sūryavarman as “fan-carriers” (*vyajanadhara*), though not claiming to be chiefs (*adhipa*) of that corps.⁷⁰ They would have thus been administrative subordinates of the Saptadevakula and they continued on in high positions under Sūryavarman and his successor, furnishing a minister (*mantri*) for the latter.

Still a third relevant inscription of a family allied with Sūryavarman is that of Praḥ Nōk dated 1066. Their function, said to have been granted by Jayavarman II, seems equally as exotic and courtly as that of the preceding families. They were hereditary “fly-whisk carriers” (*cāmaracārin*), but since they are also said to have been generals in the time of Jayavarman II, and chiefs of armies of Jayavarman V and Sūryavarman, and since the hero of the inscription, Saṅgrāma, conquering general of Udayādityavarman II, is explicitly called “the servant with the fly-whisk” it seems likely that in Angkorean terminology “fly-whisk carrier” denoted a military officer, perhaps a very high-ranking one.⁷¹

Although the temple containing their inscription is at Angkor, the identifiable toponyms among their landholdings are all northeast of Angkor, between Phnom Bok and Phnom Kulen, again in the general area in which Sūryavarman’s campaign began.⁷²

One more inscription of interest to the argument dates from 1073, or even later, and it thus obviously represents a group of survivors allied to Sūryavarman and his successors.⁷³ The genealogy, in part, seems to cross the Saptadevakula in the period of Jayavarman V–Sūryavarman in the person of Kavīśvara (*paṇḍita*), one of five brothers in the Saptadevakula record and who has one unnamed and two named brothers in K. 91.

Coedès felt that there was still some doubt about the identity, but since Kavīśvara of Saptadevakula was made priest (*yājaka*) of Sūryaparvata by Sūryavarman and Kavīśvaraṇḍita of K. 91 is called priest (*gurutapovana*) of four places, including Sūryaparvata, I feel the grounds for doubt to be very slight.⁷⁴ The older generations of the family would be a different line beyond Kavīśvara, perhaps going through his father rather than his mother as in the Saptadevakula genealogy. As for their territory, the inscription is from Choeung Prei, which is excentric both to that of Sūryavarman and of his principal rivals, but from the point of view of function they claimed to have served since Indravarman’s time as *purohita* at Jalāṅgeśvara and at Haripura, which seems to suggest a rivalry with the Hyañ Pavitra family who claimed to be *guru* of Jalāṅgeśvara and hereditary proprietors of Haripura.⁷⁵

In addition to questions of family function and territory there is another interesting aspect of these genealogies. As Dupont noted, the Saptadevakula was the only one of the great families studied by him who claimed an illustrious lineage going back beyond Jayavarman II, the only case, assuming the information to be true, “in which Jayavarman II seems to have had among his followers people belonging to a powerful family”⁷⁶: that is, as we have seen, their ancestor was called son of King Rudravarman and Queen

⁷⁰Inscription K. 661.

⁷¹Inscription K. 289; see verses 17, 18, 20, 32, 35, B4.

⁷²Dupont, “Débuts”, 147, n. 102.

⁷³Inscription K. 91.

⁷⁴Coedès, *JC II*, 128; inscription K. 136, verses 10–11, K. 91, lines 19–21. Sūryaparvata is Phnom Chisor.

⁷⁵The modern name, in transliteration “*jo’ñ brei*”, “foot [of the] forest”, probably derives from a name in the inscription, “*jeñ chdiñ kaṅluñ vrai*”, “foot [of the] river within the forest”. For the Hyañ Pavitra family, see K. 278 and Dupont, “Débuts”, p. 145.

⁷⁶Dupont, “Débuts”, 150.

Narendralakṣmī, probably Indravarman's maternal grandparents. He could thus have been of the same generation and equal status to Jayavarman II, whereas the other families usually began their rise to power only with the activities of the latter. Can we see in this an 11th century reaction of genuine old aristocracy against a group of upstarts who were rapidly acquiring wealth and position — particularly if the newer families, some of whose ancestral claims are patently false, in reality only began their rise with the rapid bureaucratic expansion of the 10th century?

A partly effaced passage in the genealogy of the “fly-whisk” generals, apparent allies of the Saptadevakula, gives some weight to this argument. In a passage dealing with events sometime between Jayavarman II and Indravarman there is mention of a chief-queen Narendralakṣmī. Dupont suggested that she was a queen of Jayavarman II, but given the ancestry of the Saptadevakula, I suggest the reference is to Indravarman's ancestor from whom Saṅgrāma's line was also claiming descent.⁷⁷

It is also worth noting that the family of Choeng Prei, even if its genealogy really began with Jayavarman II in a now destroyed part of the inscription, emphasized Indralakṣmī, a queen of Indravarman, in connection with early generations of the family.⁷⁸

Thus the Saptadevakula, and possibly two groups of their supporters, emphasized an aristocratic status higher and more ancient than the family of SKT and its close allies, and this higher status was linked to the family of King Indravarman. As we saw above, among the contemporary records of the 9th–10th centuries there were also two cases of high officials tracing descent from the family of Indravarman, which suggests that there may have been a group of courtier families who originated among the cohorts of that king.

In another discussion of Angkor kingship I have demonstrated evidence for a royal lineage branch ranking and succession pattern resembling what some anthropologists call a ‘conical clan’.⁷⁹ All members are ranked hierarchically from the clan ancestor, real or putative, and lineage branches are also ranked according to the rank order of sons. Succession to chief status in principle passes through males of the same generation before descending to the highest ranking member of the next generation. *Normal* succession is not father-to-son, but brother-to-brother, or even cousin-to-cousin, and minor branches become the higher aristocracy, filling the ranks of the ‘bureaucracy’ as it develops.⁸⁰ As generational distance increases, such a system may become very unstable, with frequent conflicts and reworking of the theoretical lineage history. Official genealogies, it must be emphasized, will more often be fictional than historically true.

⁷⁷Inscription K. 289; Dupont, “Débuts”, pp. 147–48.

⁷⁸Inscription K. 91.

⁷⁹Vickery, “Some Remarks on Early State Formation in Cambodia”. For the concept ‘conical clan’, see Paul Kirchhoff, “The Principles of Clanship in Human Society”, in *Readings in Anthropology II, Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Morton H. Fried, (1959) pp. 259–70; on the possibilities of conical clan organization in state formation see Jonathan Friedman, *System, Structure and Contradiction: The Evolution of Asiatic Social Formations* (Copenhagen, 1979). Since my presentation of the above paper some anthropologist colleagues have objected to my use of ‘clan’ for the type of hierarchical structure found at Angkor, thus I must emphasize that whatever the validity of ‘conical clan’ for anthropology in general, I am simply using the term as it was coined by Kirchhoff and developed by Friedman as a tool for describing the royal genealogies of the Angkor records.

⁸⁰Note the evidence that one of Sūryavarman's ancestors may have been ‘only a minister during the reign of Yaśovarman’, and that Sūryavarman may have built his palace at the site of the family temple. Claude Jacques, *Études d'épigraphie cambodgienne X (BEFEO)*. “Autour de quelques toponymes de l'inscription du Prasat Trapān Ruñ K. 598: la capitale angkoriennne, de Yaśovarman Ier à Sūryavarman Ier”, p. 314.

Claude Jacques has insisted, and I concur, that the records of both Jayaviravarman and Sūryavarman I contain evidence inconsistent with usurpation by a totally illegitimate contender, and my proposal here about the Angkor succession system makes such questions of legitimacy nearly irrelevant.⁸¹ All descendants of the dynastic founder, real or mythical, have some claim to the throne, and with each generation the ranking becomes more complex and subject to reinterpretation. The most ‘illegitimate’ among the pre-11th century Angkor kings would have been the sons of Yásovarman, Harṣavarman I and Ísanavarman II, and Harṣavarman III, son of Jayavarman IV, all three of whom, significantly, enjoyed only brief ephemeral reigns.

The succession of kings in the first two centuries of Angkor, rather than indicating parallel dynasties,⁸² or cases of simple usurpation, suggests such a rotation of kingship among lineage branches, marred by attempts at ‘usurpation’ when Yaśovarman and Jayavarman IV attempted to secure succession for their sons rather than allowing the throne to pass to brothers or cousins or nephews. In these cases, then, the definition of ‘usurper’ and ‘legitimate successor’ is the opposite of the conventional view. In particular, Jayavarman IV, long viewed by modern scholars as the Angkorean usurper *par excellence*, now appears as legitimate successor to Yaśovarman, and the seemingly conflicting statements about his family position are only made coherent, as I have shown, by the hypothesis that he was grandson of Indravarman via Mahendradevī.⁸³

Thus in the factional conflicts of the early 11th century, Sūryavarman and his supporters were legitimate heirs of Indravarman’s branch of the extended royal family, Jayaviravarman represented another branch now lost from the records but possibly apparent in the earlier Jayaviravarman of Prāsāt Kravañ,⁸⁴ and the aristocratic families opposed to Sūryavarman and claiming descent from Jayavarman II were of still another branch which had been relegated to non-royal bureaucratic status ever since the throne passed from Jayavarman III to Indravarman.

⁸¹Jacques, “Sūryavarman”, [5].

⁸²P. Dupont, “La dislocation du Tchen-la et la formation du Cambodge angkorien (VIIe-IXe siècle)”, *BEFEO* XLIII (1943–46): 17–55.

⁸³See Vickery, “Some Remarks on Early State Formation in Cambodia”.

⁸⁴See above, note 5.