Introduction: The Vividhatirthakalpa as historical source and coherent text

This presentation emerges from an experiment on how a historian should treat a single text as a historical source, respecting the integrity of that text as a whole and working from the premise that it is making an argument. In this vein the VTK presented a great challenge. It has been treated as a collection of loosely related writings, with one foot each in two medieval genres, encyclopedia (*prabandha*) and "institutional biography." Yet I wanted to see if it was possible, by doing a close reading, to see clues in the text that would suggest it could be read as a continuous narrative that makes an argument over the course of its seemingly loosely connected chapters. I present here one of the coherent narratives I argue is present in it, focusing on the text's use of time, specifically the idea of the Kaliyuga as a Dark Age imperiling the Jain tradition. So, I see this paper as both an exercise on how to treat a single text as a historical source as well as a (hopefully entertaining) account of the ways that a Jain monk in the early fourteenth century lobbied a Sultan to protect Jains so they could continue the practice of pilgrimage in a time of political transition.

VTK

The *Vividha-tirtha-kalpa* ('The Guidebook to Various Pilgrimage Sites') was written by the Svetambara Jain monk Jinaprabhasuri (1261-1333 CE). The colophons of the individual chapters are dated between 1308 and 1333 CE. Of the 63 chapters, 27 are in Sanskrit, while the remaining chapters are in one of two Prakrits, covering 48 different pilgrimage sites, mostly in northern India. Jinaprabhasūri acknowledges various sources for his descriptions of the sites, including other written texts, oral traditions, memoirs of his own travels, and song lyrics. It describes and eulogizes sacred mountains and towns that were pilgrimage destinations, miraculous images, includes the narratives of two guardian deities, as well as the story of the author's encounter with the Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq (r.1325-1351). It was composed just after the Delhi Sultanate took direct control of Gujarat in western India from the Hindu Caulukya-Vaghela (Solanki) dynasty, which had afforded Jains a prominent place in its courts. As will become apparent in my presentation here, this text is concerned with situating these

places in a Jain theodicy of time to make sense of the tradition's place in this new political configuration. I turn now to my reading of the text, focusing on the points of connection between the opening chapter, a glorification of the sacred mountain Satrunjaya, and later chapters telling the encounters Jinaprabhasuri has with Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Śatruñjaya: The Great Tīrtha

Śatruñjaya is located on the Saurastra Peninsula in present-day Gujarat state. It was built up during the Caulukya dynasty beginning from the tenth century, with renovations and new construction continuing well into the present. As we learn from Jinaprabhasuri, this site is significant because twenty-three Jinas preached there, including the first, Rsabhnatha, whose temples are its most significant. Further, countless millions of ascetics, kings, princes, royal seers, and even the Pa□□ava brothers and their mother, Kuntī, attained liberation there. Jinaprabhasūri begins the VTK with an extensive eulogy of this site in 133 Sanskrit verses. After invoking the first Jina, □□abhanātha, he opens by discussing his source and the benefit of the chapter:

> I will tell in brief the greatness of the blessed Śatruñjaya *tīrtha*; it was formerly told by the enlightened Atimuktaka to the seer Nārada, so that I and others may contemplate it. Those pious people who desire the destruction of sin should listen. vv. 2-3 (Cort 1990: 246).

He continues on to discuss the countless millions who have attained liberation (*mok□a*) there. Then, in a somewhat unexpected turn, v. 9 states, "Dhanka, etc., are the five peaks which have deities, and are distinguished by their quicksilver mines, gem mines, caves and herbs" (ibid.), suggesting that there are more than soteriological benefits to be gained by going on pilgrimage to Śatruñjaya.

We learn that the current configuration of temples, images, etc. as one finds at Śatruñjaya is part of a vast history of great patrons:

> "Countless images and countless temples have been engergetically established at this great *tīrtha*. By the devotion of bowing down to images commissioned by Bharata at

> small tanks and in caves, one will enjoy only one more rebirth. Samprati […] and Datta are remembered as those who restored its temples" (Cort 1990: 247).

The importance of restoration is emphasized throughout this account. Not only past and present, but future renovations are accounted for as a result of the conditions of the ever-worsening world epochs, including the present Dark Age (*kaliyuga*). At the end of this descending cycle of time, when the world will be as morally and physically stunted as it ever will be and the Jain community will no longer exist, Śatruñjaya will endure.

The pilgrim acquires merit (*pu□ya*) in massive quantities from doing the simplest devotional acts, such as performing image worship, or by feeding mendicants or other pilgrims. How much more, then, for those who build and maintain temples and images on the mountain? He writes, "there is 100 times as much merit in installing an image as in doing *pūjā*, 1,000 times in building a temple, and endless times in maintaining [a temple]" (Cort 1990: 248).

After describing the images to be found in the temples there, Jinaprabhasūri abruptly moves into describing the means to uncover the quicksilver mines and treasure troves: "A stone cistern sits five hundred bow-lengths to the east. A wise man should perform offerings correctly. From the merit of two fasts, he will find a quicksilver well by pulling up a slab." John Cort notes that in the medieval period Jain monks were "renowned as magicians and wizards." However, here Jinaprabhasuri does not talk about the use of treasure troves or quicksilver, but merely mentions that they are present at this site (and others). This, I believe, has more to do with discussing the power infused in these sites, since these descriptions immediately follow lists of the amount of merit (*punya*) to be gained by doing ordinary acts of worship. He seems to be arguing that Śatruñjaya gained its power and significance by being the site of so many souls' liberation throughout this cycle of time, and so it would seem more consistent to read the account of treasure troves and quicksilver mines as part of the description of the mountain's intrinsic power.

Shifting gears, Jinaprabhasūri warns people not to interfere with those who would go on pilgrimage or do ascetic practices on Śatruñjaya, while praising those who support

them: "Whoever oppresses pilgrims to this place, or steals goods, will from the weight of his sin fall into a fierce hell along with his descendants. One who performs pilgrimage, *pūjā*, protection of wealth, praise of pilgrims, or hospitality here is praised along with his lineage even in heaven." He then describes the destruction and restoration of an image from one of the temples, offering a theodicy of sorts for how it was allowed to happen: "In 1369 of the Vikrama era the image established by Jāva□i was thrown down by the barbarians [*mlecchas*], due to the strength of [the] Kali [-yuga]. In 1371 of the Vikrama era, the good blessed Samara restored the main image." This attitude toward the destruction of images by "barbarians," repeated in other chapters, seems to reflect a certain acceptance that this is prone to happen due to the degenerate age in which we live. It becomes an opportunity for Jains, then, by restoring these images and temples to acquire "endless merit." The final verse of this kalpa is addressed specifically to the Sultan Mu□ammad bīn Tughluq; it reads: "The king of kings has been pleased by [my] beginning of this, and so this Kalpa will always be victorious as the Grace of the King."

We see in the opening kalpa of Śatruñjaya an interesting juxtaposition of mythic history, cosmology, chronology, magical and mundane descriptions that situates its present within the larger Jain understanding of the universe. These strands are not easily separated, since to remove any one element renders the chapter either incomprehensible or meaningless. It seems that the most expedient way Jinaprabhasūri can explain Śatruñjaya's importance to his contemporaries is to situate the site within a larger cosmological and chronological picture that delivers a rich understanding of exactly how this pilgrimage site is important to the Jain community and how the place's interaction with Jains over a long history renders the site powerful and intrinsically Jain.

Transition

To recall my argument briefly, the chapter on Satrunjaya establishes a model for reading the remaining chapters that eulogize other pilgrimage sites. As I will show below, the chapters describing the various pilgrimage sites find direction in the two chapters on Jinaprabhasuri's interactions with the Sultan. Through the glorification of these sites, we are prepared as readers to grasp the significance of what he accomplishes

with the Sultan in securing edicts and recovering a Jina image. Further, we obtain a particular way of understanding the fates of these sites in light of the kaliyuga.

Jinaprabhasuri and Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq

Jinaprabhasūri's own account of his encounter with the Sultan appears in the 22nd chapter, in Prakrit. As Phyllis Granoff notes, it is more of a memoir, a recollection of the events that unfolded around this image, than autobiographical writing per se. It begins in the first person with Jinaprabhasūri stating, "…I shall say something of the events associated with the image of Mahāvīra of Ka□□a□aya." It was commissioned in the Cola kingdom in South India in 1176 CE. The image was made of marble and moonstone and "when struck gently against a person's finger nails it resounds like a fine bell." Further, "when brought into contact with a certain mineral compound of earth, is capable of effecting miracles." The image was hidden in a sandbank to protect it from invading Turks, where it remained for almost 60 years until a famine struck. In a dream, a god told a sculptor where to find the image. The image was recovered and remained in worship, "spared the depredations of the Muslims" several times.

The image remained in place until 1328 CE, when the "feudal lord of the city… took all the [Jains] captive. The image of Mahāvīra was loaded onto a wagon and taken to Delhi where it was placed in the treasure house of the Sultan… [in] Joginīpura [Delhi]..." Here, Jinaprabhasūri enters the story in the third person:

In the meantime, in the course of his monastic wanderings, the Glorious Jinaprabhasūri, who had succeeded the Glorious Jinasi□hasūri, the ornament of the Kharatara lineage, as head of the Kharatara community, chanced to come to the city of the Sultan, Delhi. Now one day, when the ruler had gathered an assembly of learned men in his court and asked of them who was most wise, the scholar of astrology...praised Jinaprabhasūri. The great king at once sent him to bring the monk to him with all due respect. […] The king met with the monk. He bade him take a seat near him and inquired respectfully of his welfare; he listened to the monk's words of blessing, words that showed his cleverness and originality as a poet. The two talked together alone there until late in the night. The monk slept there that night and as soon as the sun rose he was once again summoned into

the presence of the king. The king was so pleased with the monk that he wanted to give him a thousand cows and much money… At this the monk said, "A monk may not accept such gifts." And enlightening the king on this point, he refused all those gifts.

But then he reconsidered, for he feared that the great king might become angry with him, and he accepted after all some blankets and clothing when the king kept pressing him to take those gifts. The king then had him engage in debates with scholars who had come from many distant lands. When this was over the king had two great elephants brought. On one elephant the king seated the master Jinaprabha, and on the other sat the Glorious Jinadeva, the learned teacher…

The lay devotees celebrated his return with great pomp and splendour…Then the Great Muslim overlord presented the community with a decree that granted safety from harm to all of the Śvetāmbara Jain community…

On another occasion the master, Jinaprabhasūri, asked the king for a decree that would guarantee the safety of the great Jain holy places like Śatruñjaya, Girinar, and Phalavaddhi. And as soon as it was asked for it was granted by the ruler of the world…

Now on one Monday the master Jinaprabhasūri arrived at the palace [...] And when the monk had given his blessings and praised the king with finely wrought verses that he then explicated for him, the great king marveled at his cleverness and was delighted. He knew that this was the perfect moment, and so he asked the king for the image of Lord Mahāvīra, explaining to him everything about it. And the lord who ruled the entire world unchallenged gave him that image after chatting with him about many different things. He had it brought from the treasure house at Tugulakābād. In front of the entire assemblage of his courtiers he had the image brought before him…and after he had a good look at it he handed it over to the monk Jinaprabhasūri (Granoff 1992: 5-6).

Echoing the language in the first chapter in which the images at Śatruñjaya were cast down by "barbarians (*mlecchas*)" due to the power of the Kali age, he declares, "Seeing the great deeds that Muhammad Shah did in the service of the Jain faith, people thought that perhaps this was not the evil age [*kāla□ Kali□ta*] after all."

In the 51st chapter, Vidyātilaka, a junior monk in Jinaprabhasuri's order, writes "An Addendum to the Account of the Mahāvīra from Kanyānayana". At what remove this is from Jinaprabhasūri is unclear, but the kalpa narrates events that happened three years after Jinaprabhasūri recovered the Mahāvīra image. Vidyātilaka opens thus,

> The chief head of the monastic community, the Glorious Jinaprabhasūri, prevented the Muslims from destroying the temples made by the Jain lay devotees…by showing them an edict of the Muslim overlord that granted freedom of worship to the Jains. He performed many great deeds that redounded [to] the glory of the Jain faith (Granoff 1992: 12-13).

Later, we see the Sultan in Delhi desiring to see Jinaprabhasūri again. Desiring clarification on matters of religious debate, the Sultan sends for him. Jinaprabha's send-off is described thus:

> …he was accompanied by many faithful Jains, laymen and monks. And wherever he passed through along the way, there was much rejoicing, and as he went he broke the pride of the Age of Evil by doing so much good, and he struck wonder in the hearts of the people and their leaders in every district he crossed through.

Again, the theme of counteracting the moral turpitude of the Kali era plays a significant role in how Jinaprabhasūri's exploits are understood.

Later, he accompanies the Sultan in his military encampment as he goes out to conquer new lands. When the Sultan returns home victorious, "festival after festival was celebrated in the many Jain temples." Jinaprabhasūri is lavished with more gifts from the Sultan. In closing Vidyātilaka writes,

> And just as monks did when the Hindus ruled, and the times were not so evil, Jinaprabhasūri roams freely, spreading the Jain faith. […] And followers of other religions wait patiently at his door to serve him, eager to be admitted into his presence… Both those who agree with his philosophical position and those who hold to other views respectfully carry out his wishes… And this leader of the monks, the supreme head of the community, discourses on the Jain system of thought and all other systems in a novel and unique manner (ibid.: 16-17).

Conclusion

To conclude, we see in the first chapter a description of Śatruñjaya that links its present predicament—of being subject to periodic sackings and restorations—to the power of the Kali age. He takes great care to describe the site and situate its physical and supernatural attributes within the larger Jain cosmos. As we later encounter Jinaprabhasūri negotiating with the Sultan to recover the plundered image and secure the Jains' ability to continue practicing pilgrimage unharmed, we encounter a problem for Jinaprabhasūri the author. His ability to speak of himself seems constrained by conventions that do not favor self-aggrandizement, and yet his own chapter remains an incomplete assessment of the Jain predicament under the new political configuration. It is here that he turns to another author to complete the story. Ultimately we arrive at an image of harmony in which Jains and Muslims coexist in symbiosis, due to the talents of Jinaprabhasuri and the largesse of the Sultan Tughlaq, averting the imminent threat of the Kaliyuga and the Turks as its agents.

I have not attempted to say here what the VTK is 'really' about; instead I wanted to read the text as a coherent whole to determine what *work* its seemingly documentary tone is doing; what the seeming disparity of the chapters glorifying the various pilgrimage sites on one hand, and Jinaprabhasuri's encounters with the Sultan on the other, '*do*' together. As a text the VTK has more to tell the historian than what pilgrimage sites were standing at its time of composition, or even what Jinaprabhasuri's life and relationship to the Sultan empirically was like, if indeed there was any. The refrain of time allows for a coherent reading of the VTK in which the destructive potential of the Kaliyuga, focused on holy sites, images and pilgrimage itself, is averted by the positive relations built between Jinaprabhasuri and Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Negotiating the anxieties brought about by the end of the Jain "golden age" of the Chaulukya-Vaghela dynasty, we see the new political alliance with the Delhi Sultanate happily recalls that time.