

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology
of Egypt / Egyptology

**AN ANALYSIS TO ROCK INSCRIPTIONS AND COPPER
INSCRIPTIONS RECOVERED FROM THE FOURTH CENTURY AD
TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY AD AS AN ANCIENT HISTORY OF
ASSAMESE LANGUAGE**

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**Chimpu Kalita , Lakhya Das , An Analysis To Rock Inscriptions And Copper
Inscriptions Recovered From The Fourth Century Ad To The Fourteenth Century
Ad As An Ancient History Of Assamese Language , Palarch's Journal Of
Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(8), 4139-4143. ISSN 1567-214x.**

**Keywords: Rock Inscription, Copper inscription, AD, Recovered, Assamese
language, King, Carved.**

Abstract

Script separates written literature from Oral literature. The root of literature such as language that the root of the written language is such a script. The recovery of different Rock inscriptions engraved during the reign of Ashoka and his later kings helped to outline Indian past history. Similarly, the old philosophy of Assamese language is highlighted by Rock and copper inscriptions engraved on various kings. These inscriptions are recovered in various excavation sinews. The earliest rock inscription of inscriptions recovered so far dates back to the fourth century AD. So far, these Rock inscriptions and copperinscriptions have been able to be recovered from the fourth century AD to the 19th century.

Selected as the subject in our research paper from among the rock inscriptions and copperscriptions recovery so far“**An analysis to Rock inscriptions and copperinscriptions recovered from the fourth century AD to the fourteenth century AD as an ancient history of Assamese language.**”

Purpose of study

Written literature has been possible due to the emergence of scripts. The purpose of our research paper is to introduce these Rock and copper inscriptions as the earliest example of Assamese language.

Scope of study

Our discussion has limited the details of the recovered Rock inscriptions and copper inscriptions between the fourth century and the fourteenth century as per the convenience of the discussion instead of taking all the inscription found in Assam.

Method of study

Analytical methods and narrative methods are basically used while preparing the research paper. IPA is used here to explain the Assamese alphabet.

Main Content

The Assamese script is a notable script in East-India. Most of the discussion on the origin and development of the Assamese script today have sought to suggest that the Assamese script was born from the Rocked inscription, a variant of the ancient Indian script Brahmi. The study of various inscriptions from the 4th century to the 19th century, which were recovered through excavations at different times, carries a clear chronological pattern of the evolution of the Assamese alphabet in chronological order. The Assamese script dates back to the beginning of the 5th century “SurendraBarmaUmachal Inscription” recovered in 1955. “The origin of the Assamese language can be traced back to the earlier inscription of “NagajariKhanikar”, although here difference of Assamese words “/b/&/w/”. It is thought to be the oldest Assamese inscription even written in Sanskrit. The Assamese script, which dates back to the 5th century is still in its infancy. The 13th century “Kanai-Boroxi Boa” inscription recovered in 1918, which gives the Assamese script its full shape. Subsequent salvage, such as the 7th to 9th century Copper inscriptions saw a dramatic change in character. In the same way, the letters of the 9th and 10th century Copper follicles are trying to capture the essence of modern Assamese letter’s characters. So, it can be said that the Rock and Copper inscriptions recovered from the fifth century AD show the origin and development of Assamese language.

Below is a discussion of Rock and Copper inscriptions recovered in Assam from the 4th century AD to the 14th century AD —

1. Rockinscription of NagajariKhanikar village (4th century AD)
2. Umachal inscription (5th century AD)
3. Barganga inscription (6th century AD)
4. Dubi Copper plate (7th century AD)
5. Nidhanpur Copper plate (7th century AD)
6. HarjaraVarman’s Copper inscription (9th century AD)
7. Parbatiya Copper inscription (9th century AD)
8. Copper inscription of Dighali village (9th century AD)
9. Copper inscription of Uttar Barbil (9th century AD)
10. Inscription of Gachtal (11th century AD)
11. Rock inscription of Kanai-Boroxi Boa (13th century AD)

12. Rock inscription of Ambari (13th century AD)

13. Gostol Inscription (14th century AD)

1. Rock inscription of Nagajari Khanikar Village

This inscription was recovered in 1972. This stone inscription is divided into upper and lower sections. The inscription on that stone is also incomplete. There are only Five (5) rows in the script. The inscription dates back to the late 4th century, as some of the letters in Allahabad Pillar of Samudragupta are very similar to this inscription. Dr. Mukunda Madhab Sharma talks about the features and timing of the script - "This inscription is very similar to the Umachal inscription and the Barganga inscription. However, looking at the difference in "/w/&/b/" alphabets, it seems to be written in Sanskrit as the Oldest Assamese script ever discovered".

2. Umachal inscription

The inscription was carved on the 5th century AD in the days of king Surendra Varma, and it was recovered in June, 1955. This plate was completed in just Four(4) rows. The total number of letters here is Thirty-three(33). There are several similarities between the /m/, /x/,/b/ modern Assamese letters in the inscription.

3. Barganga inscription

Archaeologist Rajmohan Nath reveals that the carved inscription was made in the days of king Bhuti Varma on the 6th century AD. After that, details of the plate were presented by N.K. Bhattacharya in All-India context. Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sarkar informs us about this inscription that the letters in this script are similar to the Umachal inscription.

4. Dubi Copperplate

The inscription was carved on the 7th century AD in the days of king Bhaskar Varma and it was excavated in 1950 near Pathsala in Barpeta district. Later it was protected in the Assam State Museum. This plate contained total of Six(6) Copper plates, although the last plate was lost during the rescue. The total number of rows here is One hundred and seventeen(117). Also there are Seventy-five(75) verses, the opening part is written in prose. The difference between the /x/ sound of Assamese consonant characterised here is not found.

5. Nidhanpur Copper plate

Nidhanpur Copper inscription was recovered in 1912 near Nidhanpur village in Sri Hatta district. It was carved on the 7th century AD in the reign of king Vaskar Varma. A total of One hundred and forty (140) rows are found in this inscription. The letter '/x/' of this inscription has become almost modern Assamese form and the letter '/n/' of Dubi Copper plate is almost old form but this letter is in modern Assamese form in Nidhanpur Copper inscription.

6. Harjara Varman's Copper inscription

Sir Adward Gaite is the first to mention this inscription of the 9th century AD and plate is completed in Nine(9) rows. Plate is carved on a huge rock in the 'Bhenukhana' hill near the 'Vairabhadra Temple' on the west side of Tezpur.

7. Parbatiya Copper inscription

This Copper plate was carved on the 9th century AD in the days of Banamal Varma. It was found in the Parbatia hill of Tezpur. 'Sri Premadhar Choudhury' and 'Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sarkar' was the first to recover the text of this Copper plate. This Copper plate of king Banamal Varma consisted of a Royal sealed ring with Three(3) Copper plates. The letters /a/, /z/, /g/, /Kh/ in this Copper plate have completely taken the Assamese form.

8.Copper inscription of Dighali village

This Copper plate was recovered by Sri Nomal Chandra Bora of Kaliabor. The Copper plate of Dighali village was carved on the 9th century AD in the days of king Banamal Varma. 'Dr. Dharmeswar Chutia' (Secretary of Assam Research Society) reads this rule and publishes it with English translation. There are a total of Fifty-three (53) rows in this inscription. Also Three (3) Copper plates are found in this Copper inscription.

9.Copper inscription of Uttar Barbil

This inscription was carved in the reign of King 3rd 'Bala Varma' on the 9th century AD. It was recovered at 'Uttar Barbil' in the Howraghat region of Karbi-Anglong district. This inscription consisted of Three(3) Copper plates. Dr. Pratap Chandra Choudhury was the first to recover the text of this Copper plate. The letter '/t/' in the Copper plate have completely taken the Assamese form.

10. Inscription of Gachtal

This inscription was recovered in 1966 and the place name is Gachtal nearby Doboka in Nagaon district. Gachtal inscription was carved in the days of king "Gopal Varma" on the 11th century. There are Two (2) plates his rule has Two (2) piece of plates. 'Dr. Pratap Chandra Choudhury' has first published the original text of this plate.

11. Rock inscription of Kanai-Boroxi Boa

Till now, this is the first plate recovered which is completely written in complete Assamese script. The Kanai-Boroxi Boa inscription was carved on the 13th century AD and it was recovered in 1918. Sonaram Choudhury is the first to comment on this inscription. Various scholars have discussed the context of this plate and its historical significance. Maheswar Neog has given a brief discussion on this Rock plate in his book Prasyo Xakhonawali. There is a lot of discussion on this inscription.

12. Rock inscription of Ambari

The Rock inscription of Ambari was engraved on the reign of king Samudra Pal. A worker recovered this Rock plate while digging on the soil of textile institute in Ambari, Guwahati. This inscription is now preserved in the Assam State Museum. This Rock inscription was first read by Dr. Pratap Chandra Choudhury.

13. Gostol Inscription

Gostol inscription was carved on the 14th century AD. It was recovered by Dr. Birinchi Kumar Boruah from the ruins of a Shiva temple at Gastal' and deposited at the Assam State Museum. The inscription is engraved in Twenty-four (24) rows. Dr. Dinesh Chandra Sarkar and Rajmohan Nath has first tried to retrieve the text of this inscription but eventually Dr. Pratap Chandra Choudhury was able to retrieve the full text.

Conclusion

Between the fourth century and the fourteenth century AD various Copper and Rock inscriptions were engraved on the reigns of different kings of the old kamrup kingdom. These Copper and Rock inscriptions are about to be recovered at different times as discussed above. All these inscriptions show the ancient Assamese language. Copper inscriptions and Rock inscriptions are the early examples of the emergence and development of Assamese language.

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