CONCLUSION

From the foregoing analysis it may be gathered that the authors of the inscriptions of the earlier part of the ancient period were more original in thought and skilled in poetic composition. Some of the inscriptions of the earlier part of the ancient period, although they possess a lesser degree of literary brilliance, do not reflect the sign of any influence of other Sanskrit authors. Even the literary portion of the Dubi Plates of Bhaśkaravaraṃ, which consists of 76 verses, does not exhibit any sign of the influence of any other author. The contents of the Midhanpur Plates of Bhaskaravaraṇa present a piece of standard Kavya. In this composition the author expresses his rich ideas by the use of words having puns. But the verses of the Midhanpur Plates giving very rich ideas do not betray any sure mark of the influence of other reputed classical authors. In the epigraphs of Harja-varman also one may hardly notice any influence of other Sanskrit authors. In certain places of the grants of Vanamala, however, there are some evidences of influence of Sanskrit authors, particularly of Kālidāsa and Bānasbhāṭṭa. In the grants of Brālavaraṇa, the influence of Kālidāsa is more prominent and many of the verses therein are coined on the model of Raghuvamsa. In the grants of Ratnapāla and also in the grants of Dharmapāla some of the verses appear to have been composed laboriously. In the epigraphs of the subsequent days more words are used for presenting a particular idea.
The true genius of a poet lies in conveying the rich ideas with a fewer words. Thus, the composition of the Midham-pur Plates of Bhaskaravarman can be regarded as the best specimen of Kavya among all the compositions of the inscriptions of ancient Assam. The poets of the early period of ancient Assam had much originality while the poets of the later days of the period appear to have severally imitated the model of the famous Sanskrit poets. Thus the poetic talent of the composers of the inscriptions of later days is found to be of a comparatively lower order. This may perhaps be due to the following reasons:

1. The rulers of Kamarupa brought the composers of the inscriptions of the early period from outside Assam, particularly from the other centres of learning. These scholars of outstanding talent were competent to compose the Kavyas of very high order.

2. It is presumed that the scholars who had come from outside, settled in Assam and gradually they lost their contact with notable centres of learning.

3. It may also be the reason that the scholars who had hailed from other centres of study started the cultivation of Sanskrit learning in this region. But the new born poets of the soil could not exhibit the same degree of literary talent, presumably because of lack of training and lack of competition.

4. The poets of the later period perhaps could not keep an easy contact with major centres of learning in other parts of India.
Now, after a short concluding note on the literary values of the inscriptions of ancient Assam, it is proposed to sum up the foregoing discussion with a brief note on the medieval epigraphs.

Most of the more important epigraphic records of medieval Assam were left by the Āhom kings and their ministers and a few records were left by the Koches. The compositions of these epigraphs are more or less similar in pattern and they exhibit almost an equal degree of literary beauty. The purpose of the Sanskrit texts of these inscriptions is to make an eulogy of the patron kings and their respective high officials, and the description of a long line of predecessors is not found in the inscriptions of this period. Most of these records are in prose, some are in verse and a few are in both prose and verse. The prose passages of the inscriptions are generally very beautiful in construction. Some of the passages of these inscriptions are as excellent as the compositions of the prose writers - Subandhu, Dandin and Bāṇabhatta. In the foregoing detailed discussion an attempt has been made to indicate the influence of Bāṇabhatta and Dandin on the prose passages of certain epigraphs. Certain terms and expressions for presenting particular ideas seem to have been borrowed from the works of these famous prose writers. Apart from these works, the composers of the epigraphs also seem to have studied the texts of the earlier inscriptions.

The purpose of the works of the Sanskrit prose writers and the poets is to present a Kāvyā containing some story element,
but the purpose of the composers of these epigraphs is to praise the kings and their officials. The complete Kavya of a poet be it in prose or verse deals with many aspects and naturally such a work has a much better scope for a free play of imagination so as to become much richer in thought and expressions. But the texts of these epigraphs are comparatively very short in extent, and they deal with only a particular aspect. The scope of the poet composers of the texts of these inscriptions is very limited. Because of this limitation they cannot exhibit their complete literary merit.

The inscriptions of ancient Assam, particularly the land grant copper plate charters of the period, possess comparatively longer descriptions. Apart from the descriptions of the donor kings these charters contain some other aspects such as the invocations to particular deities, descriptions of the predecessors of the donor kings, descriptions of the donees followed by the description of the donated land. The language of the entire texts of these inscriptions is Sanskrit. It is for this reason much more literary elements can be seen in the passages of these inscriptions. But in the medieval epigraphs Sanskrit is confined to the descriptions of the kings and their deputies alone. Therefore it is natural not see more literary elements in such very brief narratives.

The poet composers of the inscriptions of ancient Assam gave equal stress both on ideas and expressions. It has been noticed
that some of the verses of certain inscriptions possess very rich ideas. But the authors of the medieval epigraphs gave more stress on expressions. Some portions of the literary texts of these epigraphs are very nice to be recited. The choice of long metres gives the scope for using more words for presenting a particular idea more elaborately.

The composers of the inscriptions of Assam were learned Sanskrit scholars. They seem to have duly studied the epics, Kavyas and the purānas. They also seem to have been acquainted with the norms of poetics. The Sanskrit texts of these inscriptions may further lead one to suppose that their authors also composed some other literary works of equal merit. But even the corpus of the Sanskrit inscriptions themselves deserves to be recognised as an important contribution of Assam to Sanskrit literature.