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Here is a new Clay Sanskrit Library translation of Volume Two (of two) of "Karna," Book Eight of the Maha·bhårata.

"Karna" narrates the eponymous hero’s two days as general of the Káurava army. Volume Two resumes the story on the war’s seventeenth and penultimate day. This will be a momentous day for the Bhárata clans and for a number of their most distinguished heroes, with several of the epic’s most telegraphed events reaching their climax.

Not only will the epic’s most anticipated duel between its greatest champions Árjuna and Karna be played out to its cruel and tragic end, but one of the epic’s more gruesome episodes will also take place with Duhshásana meeting the fate that has long waited him since his brazen maltreatment of Dráupadi in the assembly hall. Thus two narrative arcs, with their origins at least as far back as the dice games which sowed the divisions that led to the war, come close to their conclusion in this pivotal volume.

While rightly named after Karna, its tragic champion, this book can justifiably be said to belong to Draupadi; it is an ode to her degradation by the Dhártaráshtras and a celebration of her revenge.

"Karna," Book Eight of the Maha·bhárata, ends as it began with Karna’s death. In this key second volume much of the quarrel provoked during the dicing comes full circle, and much of the slight suffered by the five Pándava brothers – and especially by Draupadi, their common wife – is avenged.
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84–96
THE SLAYING OF KARNA
8.1 Duhśāsane tu nihate, putrāṃ tava mahārathāḥ,
mahākrodhaḥ/viśā virāḥ, samareṇāḥ alpāyināḥ,
daśā, rājan, mahā/vīryā Bhīmaṃ prācchādayāṁ śaraīḥ.
Niṣārīgī, Kavaci, Pāśi, Daṇḍadhāro, Dhanurdharaḥ,
Alolupāḥ, Śālaḥ, Śaṅdo, Vātavega/Suvarcasau,
ete sameteyā sahitā bhṛatṛ/vyasanaḥ/karṣitāḥ
Bhīmasenaṃ mahābhumī mārgaṇāḥī samavārayan.
sa vāryamāṇo viśikhaiḥ
samantā tair mahārathaiḥ,
Bhīmaḥ krodhāśañjrirakṭākṣaḥ,
kruddhaḥ Kāla iv’ ābabhau.

8.5 tāṃs tu bhallair mahājvegair
daśābhīr daśa Bhāratān
rukmī/āṅgagadān rukmaṇ/juṅkhaiḥ
Pārtho ninye Yamākṣayam.
hateṣu teṣu viṛesu, pradudrāvabalaṃ tava
paśyataḥ sūtāputrasya Pāṇḍavasya bhayājārditaṃ.
tataḥ Karṇo, mahā/rāja, praviveśa mahābhayam
dṛṣṭvā Bhīmasya vikrāntam, Antakasya prajāviva.
tasya tv ākāraḥ/bhāvaljñāḥ Śalyaḥ samitiśśobhanaḥ
uvāca vacanaṃ Karṇaṃ prāptaṃkālam ariṃḍamam:
SÁṆJAYA said:

But once Duśhśānas had been killed, king, ten of your courageous sons who were poisonous with rage, mighty warriors and heroes who never retreated in battle, enveloped Bhima with arrows. Nishāṅgin, Kāvachīn, Pashin, Danda-dhara, Dhanur-dhara, Alólupa, Shala, Shandha, Vata-vega and Suvārčas, listless due to the evil crime against their brother, together drew close to mighty-armed Bhima-sena and covered him in arrows. Obstructed on all sides by those mighty warriors with their arrows, Bhima was as radiant as Time the destroyer in rage, his eyes crimson with the fire of his fury. With ten high-speed broad-headed arrows having nocks of gold, Pritha’s son sent those ten Bharatas sporting golden armlets to Yama’s realm. With those heroes killed, your army fled, racked with fear of the Pāṇḍava, while the charioteer’s son looked on.

Karna then began to feel great trepidation, great king, after seeing the courage of Bhima which was like that of Death towards living things. Shalya, who dazzled in battle, recognized what his expression meant and spoke to Karna, a conqueror of enemies, these words suitable for the moment:
84.10 दुःखसानसया रुधिरे पियमाने महाज्ञात्मना,
व्यापनांजेतासाच्छोवौ ओपहाताजेतासा,
धृश्योधनां उपासारे परिवर्या समाप्ताताना
क्रपप्रभुङ्कारासाहेतौ हैं हातलेशाह सहिःोदराह्।
पाण्डवां लाबधालकसाहूस धनांमजयांपुरोगमाह
tवाम एवं भैंविमुखहार् शुरू युद्धाया समुपास्थिताः।
सात्वम, पुरुशान्दर्दुः, पार्भूष्णा समास्थिताः
क्षत्राञ्जहरमां पुराञ्जक्र्या प्रत्युद्याहि धनांमजयांम।
भारो हि ध्वारस्त्रेना त्वाय वर्धे समाहिता।
तमुद्वा हि, महाहाभो, यथाजात्रित्याथालभलम।
जैय स्या धीरुपुः कीर्तिर, ध्रुवान स्वर्गाशा परायथे।

84.15 व्तस्तनासाह धृदे, सामकुट्त्धसाह तनयास तवा
tवायू मोहां समाप्तानुष्ठान पाण्डवान्न अभिधावति।
एतं चर्तुवा तु वासानां सलयस्यां अमितातेजासाह,
हर्दी च अवायकांम भावम् चक्रे युद्धाया सुभिताम।
“Don’t despair, son of Radha! It’s not right for you! Racked with fear of Bhima-sena, the kings flee, and Duryódhana is insensible, traumatized by the evil crime against his brother. Led by Kripa, the remaining warriors and his brothers—their minds deranged and overwhelmed by grief on account of that mighty man drinking Duhshásana’s blood—completely surrounded Duryódhana and sat down at his side. The Pándava champions have achieved their goal and, led by Dhanañ·jaya, have turned towards you and approached for battle. You, tiger of men, must apply yourself with courage and, honoring the warriors’ code, charge out to meet Dhanañ·jaya! Dhrita-rashtra’s son has placed this entire burden on you, mighty-armed man, and you must bear it to the best of your ability and strength! In victory there shall be wide fame and in defeat ever-lasting heaven. Your son Vrisha-sena, furious on account of you becoming demoralized, son of Radha, has attacked the Pándavas.”

After hearing these words from Shalya, whose fiery energy had no limit, Karna decisively made up his mind that battle was inevitable.
tātaḥ kruddho Vṛṣaseno ‘bhyadhāvad
avasthitam pramukhe Pāṇḍavam tām
Vṛkṣodaraṁ, Kālam iv’ āṭta|daṇḍaṁ,
gadāḥ-hastaṁ yodhayantaṁ tvādiyān.
tam abhyadhāvan Nakulaṁ prāvīro
rośad amitraṁ pratudan prṣatkaṭiḥ
Karṇāsya putṛsaṁ samare prahṛṣṭaṁ,
purā jighāṃsur Maghav” ēva Jambham.
tato dhvajam sphāṭika|citra|kaṇcukam
ciccheda vīro Nakulaṁ kṣureṇa,
Karṇa ‘atmajasya ‘ēvasanaṁ ca citraṁ
bhallena jāmbūnada|citra|naddham.

84.20 ath’ ānyad ādāya dhanuḥ sa śighraṁ
Karṇa ‘atmajāḥ Pāṇḍavam abhyavidhyat
divyair mah”|āstair Nakulaṁ kṛt”|āstro
duḥśānasasya ‘āpacitīṃ yiyāsuḥ.†
tataḥ kruddho Nakulas tām mah”|‘atmā
śārair mah”|ōlkā|pratimair avidhyat.†
divyair āstair abhyavidhyac ca so ‘pi
Karṇāsya putro Nakulaṁ kṛt”|āstrāḥ,
śarābhīghāṭāc ca rūṣa ca, rājan,
svayā ca bhaś” āstrāṣamīraṇaḥ ca,
jajvala Karṇāsya suṭo ‘timātraṁ
iddho yath” ājyāḥuṭibhir huta|āśaḥ.
Karṇāsya putro Nakulasya, rājan,
sarvān asvān aksīpod uttam’|āstrāḥ,
Vanāyujaṁ vai Nakulasya subhṛān
udagra|gān|hemajāl”|āvanaddhān.
Then in rage Vṛisha-sena rushed at Wolf-belly Pāṇḍava who stood before him fighting your men with club in hand like Time the destroyer wielding his staff. In that battle the hero Nākula rushed at Karna’s ecstatic son, furiously running his enemy through with arrows, just as Māghavan had done long ago in his eagerness to kill the demon Jambha. With a razor arrow the hero Nākula next cut to pieces the crystal-speckled cloth banner of Karna’s son, and with a broad-headed arrow splintered his bow that was beautifully inlaid with gold.

Yet Karna’s son was skilled with his weapons and, grabbing another fast bow in his eagerness to avenge Duḥshāsana, wounded Nākula with his powerful divine weapons. Mighty Nākula was infuriated and he wounded him with arrows that seemed like massive meteors. And Karna’s son, an expert in weapons, also wounded Nākula with his divine weapons. With a rage brought on by blows from arrows and with his own radiance brought on by his hurling of missiles, Karna’s son flared up beyond measure, like a fire kindled with offerings of ghee. King, Karna’s son destroyed all Nākula’s horses with superb missiles—Nākula’s beautiful horses with elevated gaits that were covered in golden mail and bred in Vanāyu!
tato hat'ajśvād avaruhya yānād,
adāya cārma āmala'rūkma'candram,
ākāśa'asūkṣāsam asim pragrhyā,
dodhūyamānāh khagavac cacāra.

84.25 tato 'ntarikṣe ca rath'āśvānjāgar

ciccheda tūrṇaṃ Nakulaś citrāyodhī;
te prāpatann asinā gāṃ viśāstā,
yath' āśvalmedhe paśavaḥ śāmitrā.
dvīśaḥasrāh pātita yuddhaśauṇḍā,
nānādesīyāh, suṣbhrāh, satya'asāndhāh
ekena śīṃhrā Nakulena κṛṣṭāḥ

jai'epṣun" āśvutama'candana'āṅgāh.

sa taudamāno Nakulaḥ prṣatkair
vivyāda virām. sa cūkopa viddhaḥ.

mahābhaye rakṣyāmāno mahā'ātmā
bhratā Bhūmen' ākarot tatra bhīmaṃ.
taṃ Karna'putro vyadhāmantam ekaṃ
tar'āśvāma'tāṁgarathān anjēkān

kriḍantam aṣṭādaśāh prṣatkair
vivyāda virām Nakulaṃ suroṣaḥ.

sa tena viddho 'tibhrāṃ taarasvī
mahā'āhār Vṛṣasenaḥ, rājaṃ,

kruddhena dhāvan samare jīghāmsuḥ

Karṇā'ātmama Pānduṣṭro nṛvīraḥ.

84.30 vitatya pakṣau sahasā prapatram
śyenāṃ yath' āiv' āmiṣālubdhham ājau,
avākiraṃ Vṛṣasenaś tatās taṃ

śitaīḥ śarair Nakulaṃ udāra'vīryam.
With its horses dead he then leaped from his vehicle and, seizing his shield decorated with spotless golden moons and grabbing his sky-like sword, he flew off like a bird, waving them ferociously. And then, employing various martial arts through the air, Nákula quickly cut up chariots, horses and elephants. Dismembered by his sword, they collapsed to the ground like animals in a horse sacrifice cut up by the carver. Two thousand well paid men from various places who were true to their promises, keen for battle and whose bodies were sprinkled with the finest sandal, were single-handedly felled and quickly cut up by Nákula in his hunger for victory.

As Nákula flew towards him Vrisha-sena ran at him and wounded him all over with arrows. Yet while he was being punished, Nákula wounded that hero with arrows. Wounded, Vrisha-sena boiled with rage. Mighty Nákula terrorized that place while his brother Bhima protected him whenever there was serious danger. Karna’s furious son wounded Nákula with eighteen arrows as that hero cavorted about and struck down many men, horses, elephants and chariots on his own.

Though he was horribly wounded by Vrisha-sena in that great battle, king, Pandu’s bold son—a hero of a man!—continued furiously running at him in that fight in his eagerness to kill Karna’s son. Vrisha-sena then sprayed that man of immense courage with sharp arrows as Nákula flew at him like an eagle spreading its wings and flying over the battlefield in search of prey. Nákula took various paths with his sword, rendering the waves of Vrisha-sena’s arrows ineffective.
sa tān moghāṁs tasya kurvaṁ śar’āughaṁś
cacāra mārgān Nakulaś citaṛūpān.
ath’ āśya tūṛṇaṁ carato, naṛ’ēndra,
khadgena citraṁ Nakulasya tasya
mah’ēśubhir vyadhamat Karṇaṁputro
mah’āhave carma sahasṛtāram.
taṁ c’ āyasam, niśitaṁ tīkṣṇaḥdharám,
vikośam, ugram, guruḥbhaṁsāham,
dviṣaṁccharir’āntaṁkaraṁ, sulghoram
ādhunvataḥ, sarpam iv’ ēgraṛūpam,
kṣipraṁ śaraiḥ śadbhir amitralaṁsāhaś
cakarta khadgaṁ niśitaṁ su/vegaiḥ,
punaś ca diptair niśitaḥ pṛṣṭakaiḥ
ṣtaṁāntare gāḍham ath’ ēbhyavidhyat.
kṛtvā tu tad dušṭkaram āryajjuṣṭaṁ
anyair naraṁ karma raṇe mah’ātmā
yayau ratham Bhīmasenasya, rājaṁ,
śar’ābhitapto Nakulas tvaraṁvān.

84.35 sa Bhīmasenasya ratham har’āśvo
Mādrīṣutaḥ Karṇaṁṣut’ābhitaptatḥ
āpupluve, sīṁha iv’ ācal’āgraṁ,
samprekṣayamāṇasya Dhanamjayaṁsya.
With huge arrows Karna’s son destroyed Nákula’s shield that was covered in a thousand stars as he speedily and spectacularly careered onwards with his sword in hand. And as Nákula waved his keen and formidable unsheathed sword, a terrifying weapon capable of immense tasks that could destroy the bodies of enemies like a fearsome snake, that vanquisher of enemies quickly cut down that sword with six sharp and fast shafts and, furthermore, badly wounded him in the center of the chest with sharp blazing arrows.

After performing such deeds that were admired by noble people and which were difficult for other men, king, in the battle mighty Nákula, seared by arrows, hastily went to Bhima-sena’s chariot. His horses dead and seared by Karna’s son, like a lion on to the summit of a mountain Madri’s son sprang into Bhima-sena’s chariot while Dhanañ-jaya was watching.
tataḥ kruddho Vṛṣaseno mah"śaṁ
vavaraṁ tāv isujālana vīraḥ,
mahārathaṁ ekajrathe sametau
śaṁhitṛaḥ prabhindann iva Pāṇḍaveyaṁ.
tasmin rathe nihaṁ Pāṇḍavasya
kṣiṣpṛam ca kẖadge viśikhair nikṛte,
anye ca saṁhitṛaḥ Kurulpravrīṁ
 tato nyaghnaṁ śaṁkṛṣaṁ upetya.
tau Pāṇḍaveyaṁ paritauḥ sametāṁ,
saṁhūyamāṇāṁ iva havyāvahau,
Bhīmārjunau Vṛṣasenāya kruddhau
vavaraṁ śaṁkṛṣaṁ suḷghoram.
ath' ābravīn Māruṭī Pṛalagaṁ ca,
«paśyav' āṁnaṁ Nakulaṁ pīḍyāmānam!
ayaṁ ca no bādhate Karṇalputras,
tasmād bhavāṁ pratṛupāyātu Karṇim!’»

84.40 sa taṁ niśāmy' āva vacaḥ Kṛṣṇi
rathaṁ samāsādyā Vṛkṣarāṣya,
ath' ābravīn Nakulō viśyaṁ viṁ
upāγataṁ, «sātaṁ śīṛham ānam!’
ity evaṁ uktaḥ sahasā Kṛṣṇi
bhratrā saṁkṛṣaṁ Nakulena saṁkhyaṃ,
kapiḍḥvajāṁ Keśavaṁ saṁgrhaṁ
praiṣīḍ udagro Vṛṣasenāya vāham.
Vrisha·sena was then furious and with a spread of arrows that mighty hero rained down on both of them and almost ran through each Pándava with shafts as those mighty warriors huddled together on the one chariot. When the Pándava's chariot had been destroyed and the sword quickly cut to pieces by arrows, other Kuru heroes joined together and then attacked, striking them with showers of arrows. Like a pair of sacrificial fires being fueled with oblations, the two furious Pándavas Bhima and Árjuna rained a dreadful shower of arrows down on Vrisha·sena and all over those who had joined together there.

The son of the Wind-god then said to Phálguna, “Look! Nákula's being hard pressed! Karna's son hampers us, so you'll have to counterattack Karna's boy!” When he heard these words, the Wearer of the crown drew near Wolf-belly's chariot. Then Nákula saw that hero approach and said, “Kill him quickly!”

Spoken to like this in the battle by his brother Nákula who stood before him, the fierce Wearer of the crown urged on his monkey-bannered vehicle steered by Késhava towards Vrisha·sena.
MAHA-BHĀRATA VIII – KARNA II

SAMJAVA uvāca:

81.1 Nakulam atha viditvā chinnaṁbhāṇasatśāsiṁ,

viratham, ariṣṭāṁ āraṁ, Karnaṁputerṁāstraṁbhagnam,
pavanaṁdhutaṁpatākā, hrādino, valgitāśvā,
varaṁpuruṣāṁniyuktāṁ te rathāṁ śighram iyuḥ,
Drupadāsutāṁvaristhāḥ paṁca, Śaineyajāstḥā,
Drupadāduhitṛputerāḥ paṁca cāmitraṁsahāḥ,
dviradārathaṁnarāśvāṁ śudayantas tvadīyāṁ
bhujagalpatiṁnikāśair margaṇair āṭtaśstraṁ,
atha tava rathaṁmukhyāṁ tāṁ pratīyauṣvaranto
KṛpaṁHṛdikasutau ca, DrauṇiṇɪDuryodhanau ca,
ŚakunīsutaiṁVṛkāś ca, KrāthaīDevārđhau ca
dviradājalaṁghoṣaiṁ syandanaṁ kārmukaiś ca.
tava, nṛpa, rathīṁvīrāṛ tāṁ daśāikaiṁ ca vīrān,
nṛvara, śaralīṁāṛgyaiśṛ tādayanto bhyarundhan.
navaljalaṁsavarnaṁ hastibhis tāṁ udiyur
giriśīkharaṁnikāśair bhīmaṁvegaiḥ Kulindāḥ.

1Drāupadi, who had one son to each of the five Pāṇḍavas
SÁŚJAYA said:

Then when they realized that Nákula had been injured by his foe’s arrows, stripped of his chariot, routed by the weapons of Karna’s son and that his bow and sword had been splintered, raucous chariots driven by the finest men quickly arrived with their horses galloping and their flags buffeted by the wind. The five superb sons of Drúpada, a sixth in Shini’s grandson, and the five enemy conquering sons of Drúpada’s daughter wielded their weapons and destroyed your elephants, chariots, men and horses with arrows that were like snake-lords.

Then on their elephants and chariots that thundered like clouds your foremost warriors Kripa, Hridika’s son, Drona’s son, Duryódhana, Shákuni’s son, Vrika, Kratha and Devávidha* quickly went out to meet them with their bows. Then, king, your heroic chariot-warriors repulsed all eleven heroes, finest of men, pounding them with the very finest arrows. But Kulindas rose up against them on elephants of fearsome speed that had the color of new clouds and that seemed like the peaks of mountains.
81.5 sujkalpitā Haimavatā mad’ōrkaṭā
raṇ’ābhikāmaḥ kṛtibhiḥ samāsthitāḥ
svaṃajālair vitatā babhur gajās
tathā, yathā khe jala’dāḥ saṃvidyoutaḥ.
Kulindaṃputro daśabhir mah’āyasaḥ
Kṛpaṃ saṣūr’āśvam apiḍayad bhrṣām.
tataḥ Śaradvatutsaśāyakair hataḥ
saḥ’ āiva nāgena paṃpata bhūtale.
Kulindaṃputr’āvarajas tu tomarair
divākar’āṃṣu[pratimair] avas[mayaiḥ]
rathaṃ ca viśaṃbhya nanḍaḥ; nardatas
tato ’śya Gāṇḍhārapatiḥ śiro ’harat.
tataḥ Kulindeṣu hataṣu teṣāḥ atha
prahṛṣṭajrūpās tava te mahā’rathah
bhrṣām pradadhur lavanaṃbṣaṃbhavanān,
parāṃś ca bāṃjāsanalpāṇayo ’bhya[yuḥ.
ath’ ābhavat yuddham at’īva dāruraṃ
punah Kurūṇaṃ saha Pāṇḍūṛṣṭijaya[iḥ
śa[r’]āśiṣkṛtyaṛṣṭilgadā[parasvadha]īn
nar’ āśiva[nāg’] āṣujaḥ[imaḥ bhṛṣ’]āku[laṃ.
81.10 rath’āśvaṃmataṅga[padātibhis tataḥ
parasparaṃ vipraḥat’ āpataṇ’+ kṣitau,
yathā saṃvidyutstanita balahakaḥ
samāhata dīgbyha iv’ ōgra[mār]utaiḥ.

¹ Shākuni

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Mounted by skilled men keen for a fight, those ruttish and well-equipped Himalayan elephants encased in golden mail were as dazzling as clouds in the sky filled with lightning. A Kulinda prince badly hurt Kripa and his charioteer and horses with ten huge iron weapons. Then Sharådvat’s son struck him with arrows and he collapsed to the ground with his elephant. But a younger brother of the Kulinda prince rocked his chariot with lances made of iron that were like rays of the sun and then roared. But while he was roaring, the lord of Gandhåra then lopped off his head. Once these Kulindas were killed, those mighty warriors of yours were in rapture and blew their ocean-born conches and then attacked their enemies with bows in hand.

Again there was a terribly violent and appallingly chaotic battle between the Kuruś and the Pândavaś and Sríñjayas which stole the lives of men, horses and elephants with arrows, swords, spears, javelins, clubs and axes. They struck one another with their chariots, horses, elephants and footsoldiers and collapsed to the ground like clouds filled with thunder and lightning struck by formidable winds from every direction.
tataḥ Śatānikehatănāḥ mahāgajāṃś,
tathā rathān, pattirganāṃś ca tān bahūn;
jaghāna Bhojas tu hayān; ath’ āpatan
kṣanād viśastāḥ Kṛṭavarmaṇaḥ śraśāḥ.
ath’ āpare Drauṇīhatā mahādvipās
trayaḥ saṣarv’|āyudhajyodha|ketanāḥ
nipetur urvyāṃ vyasavo nipātirās
tathā, yathā vajralhatā mah”|acalāḥ.

Kulindajraj’|āvaraljād anantaraḥ
stan’jāntare patrij|varair atādayat
tav’ ātmaljaṃḥ; tasya tav’ ātmaljāḥ śraśāḥ
śītaiḥ śarīraṃ vyahanad, dvipam ca tam.

sa nāgajrajaḥ saha rājajśūnunā
papāta, raktaṃ bahu sarvataḥ kṣaraṇ,
Mahendra|vajra|prahato ’mbud’|āgame
yathā jalaṃ gairika|parvatas, tathā.

85.15 Kulindalputra|prahito ’paro dvipaḥ
Krāthaṃ saṣūt’|āśvajrathaṃ vyapothayat;
tato ’patat Krāthajśar’|abhidhāvitaḥ
sah’|ēcāvaro, vajralhato yathā girīḥ.

rathī dvipajsthena hato ’patac haraiḥ
Krāth’|ādhipaḥ parvataljena durjayaḥ
sa|vā|jśūt’|śv|asana|dhvajas tathā,
yathā mahāvataḥ|hato mahādrumāḥ.

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Next many mighty elephants, chariots and divisions of foot-soldiers were slain by Shatanika.* But the Bhoja Krita-varman then killed his horses and they immediately collapsed, dismembered by his arrows. Then three other massive elephants with all their weapons, warriors and flags were struck by Drona’s son and fell to the ground lifeless like huge mountains struck by thunderbolts.

The next of kin to the Kulinda king’s younger brother wounded your son in the center of the chest with fine arrows. With his sharp arrows, your son struck his body and his elephant. That king of elephants collapsed together with the prince, streaming all over with copious amounts of blood like a red ocher mountain struck by mighty Indra’s thunderbolts and streaming water under a newly arrived cloud.

Another elephant urged on by a Kulinda prince crushed Kratha along with his charioteer, horses and chariot. Then along with its lord it was assailed by Kratha’s arrows and collapsed like a mountain struck by a thunderbolt. That indomitable chariot-warrior the lord of the Krathas had been struck with arrows by that mountain-born warrior straddling his elephant and he collapsed with his horses, charioteer, bow and banners, like a huge tree swept aside by a powerful wind.
Vṛko dvipaśtham girijrājāvāsinaṁ
bhṛśam śarair dvādaśabhīḥ parābhinat.
tato Vṛkṣam sāśvaramaṁ mahādvipo
drutan caturbhiś caraṇair vyapothayat.
sa nāgajāhaj sajniyāntaṁ patat
thā hato Babhrusurśeśubhir bhṛṣam.
sa cāpi Devāṛdhajśūnur arditaḥ
papāta nunaḥ Sahadevajśūnunā.
viśāṅgalgāṛjāvarayodhālapṭinā
gajena hantu Ṣakunim Kulindaljāh
jagāma vegaṁ bhrīc ārdayaṁś ca taṁ.
tato 'hya Gāndhārājpatiḥ śīro 'harat.

85.20
tataḥ Śatānikahatā mahālajā,
ḥayā, rathāḥ, pattrīgaṇāś ca tāvakāḥ,
Suparnaśvātajprahatā yathā ṥragās,
thā hata gāṁ vivaśa vicūṁrītāḥ.
tato 'hyāvadhyad bahubhīḥ śitaiḥ śaraṁ
Kalingajputro Nakulāṁjmaṁ smayan.
tato 'hya kopād vikakarta Nakuliḥ
śiraḥ śureṇ 'āmbujāsaṁniḥbājanam.
tataḥ Śatānikam avidhyad āyasais
tribhiḥ śitaiḥ Karnajuto, 'ṛjunām tribhiḥ,
tribhiḥ ca Bhimān, Nakulāṁ ca saptabhir,
Janaradanaṁ dvādaśabhīṣ ca sāyaṁkāḥ.
tad asya karmā 'ārmanusyaṁkarmanāṁ
samikṣya hṛṣṭāḥ Kuravo 'hyāpājayan;
parākramajāṇas tu Dhanamjayasya ye,
-huto 'yam agnāv! iti taṁ tu menire.

1 Shruta-karman 2 Babhru
With twelve arrows Vrika brutally penetrated that elephant riding warrior who lived on the king of mountains. But then that mighty elephant quickly crushed Vrika and his horses and chariot with all four of his feet. Brutally struck by arrows from Babhrú’s son that king of elephants collapsed with its mahout. But, wounded and driven back by Sáha-deva’s son, Devávridha’s son fell.

A Kulinda prince sped towards Shákuni to kill him, brutally assaulting him with his elephant that could fell warriors with its tusks or its limbs. The lord of Gandhára then removed his head.

Then mighty elephants, horses, chariots and hordes of your foot-soldiers were struck down by Shataníka and, like snakes swept aside by the wind of Supárna’s wings, fell to the ground helpless and crushed. Next a grinning Kalinga prince wounded Nákula’s son with many sharp arrows. With a razor arrow Nákula’s boy then furiously tore off his head with its lotus-like mouth.

Karna’s son then pummeled Shataníka with three iron arrows, Árjuna with three arrows, Bhima with three, Nákula with seven and Janárdana with twelve. As they witnessed this deed of that man of superhuman deeds, the Kurus were exhilarated and paid tribute to him. But those who knew of Dhanañ-jaya’s strength reckoned he was an offering for a sacrificial fire!
Adam Bowles is Researcher in the School of Historical Studies at Monash University and an Honorary Research Fellow in the Asian Studies Program at La Trobe University, both in Melbourne, Australia. He has also translated Volume One of *Maha·bhárata* Book Eight, "Karna," and is the author of *Dharma, Disorder and the Political in Ancient India*.

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**Karna,** Book Eight of the *Maha·bhárata*, ends as it began with Karna’s death. In this key second volume much of the quarrel provoked during the dicing comes full circle, and much of the slight suffered by the five Pándava brothers – and especially by Draupadi, their common wife – is avenged.

Not only will the epic’s most anticipated duel between its greatest champions Árjuna and Karna be played out to its cruel and tragic end, but one of the epic’s more gruesome episodes will also take place with Duhshásana meeting the fate that has long waited him since his brazen maltreatment of Dráupadi in the assembly hall. Thus two narrative arcs, with their origins at least as far back as the dice games which sowed the divisions that led to the war, come close to their conclusion in this pivotal volume.

While rightly named after Karna, its tragic champion, this book can justifiably be said to belong to Draupadi; it is an ode to her debasement by the Dhártaráshtras and a celebration of her revenge.

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