Nerūr plates of Pulakeśin II

Dániel Balogh

Author of digital edition: Dániel Balogh

Identifier: DHARMA_INSBadamiCalukya00009

Repository: Bādāmi Cālukya (tfb-badamicalukya-epigraphy)

File path: xml-provisional/DHARMA_INSBadamiCalukya00009.xml

Language: Sanskrit [Southern Brāhmī (unspecified)]

Commit: 2026-09-09 14:24 (d6495b0), last modified 2026-09-09 14:20 (7bd04b4)

Palaeographic description

Halantas. The halanta M is a slightly reduced and simplified form; instead of a line above, it has the left arm extended into a circular stroke resembling an i mātrā but open on the right bottom. The halanta N looks like a full-sized regular na.

Original punctuation. All punctuation marks (unless otherwise noted) are double verticals.

Edition

〈Page 1v〉

〈01〉 (□) śrī〈02〉 svasti||

1. Mālinī

〈1〉 jayati vimaḷ!|!〈l〉a-daṁṣṭrā-rājitaṁ loka-bharttuḥ||
praśamita-ripu-[−−−◡−−] [mu?]〈2〉 rāreḥ||

Avani-ta¡!!〈l〉a-vi[–]tābhinna-pātāla-mūlaM||
sva-bhuja-[⏑⏑⏑––]〈3〉d ūrddhvam ¿ū?〈u〉rvv¿i?〈ī〉n dadhānaṁ||

2. Mālinī

tad anu jayati nityaṁ vallabhasyāpi bāhu[ḥ||]
[⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑––]〈4〉 harṣṣa-viccheda-hetuḥ||
dvija-vara-kṛta-śāntiḥ sarvva-lokasya pā¡!!〈l〉aḥ||

a(ne)[ka-rāja-parājayopārjjita?]〈5〉-kīrttīnāṁ deva-dvija-(g)[u](r)[u]-[ca. 6+] [hā]ritī-putrāṇāṁ mānavya-sa(g)[otrāṇām] [ca. 6+]〈Page 2r〉〈6〉[ca. 5+]ṣāṁ bahu-(s)u[varṇ]ṇ[a] [ca. 5+] dakṣiṇopeta-(gu?) [ca. 12+]〈7〉 (-yā?)gāvabhṛtha-snānodaka-pavitrī-kṛ(ta-śa?)rīraḥ〈.〉 tasya putraḥ srī-kīrttirājaḥ〈.〉 [tasyātmajaḥ srī-sa]〈8〉tyāśrayaḥ polekesi-vallabha-māharājaḥ ¿kuva(ḷālaha?)su? [1×][ca. 6+]〈9〉 mahā-dānaṁ viprebhyaḥ dattavān|| tadā kāle idam api śāsanaṁ|| va(cca?)-sagotra-[ca. 7+]〈10〉rācāryyasya pañca-viṅśati-nivarttan¿ā?〈a〉ṁ rāja-mānena kṣetraṁ dattaṁ〈.〉 tatra pa [1×][ca. 1+]〈11〉 [1] [1×] (vātā?)pī-grāme [ca. 15+] (mahā-patha)-[ca. 6+]

Apparatus

〈1〉 [mu?]〈2〉 rāreḥ ◇ *[su]〈2〉 rāreḥ* JFF • Fleet translates, “who allayed … the hostile … enemies of the gods.” I believe that *murāreḥ* is a much more likely restoration. As Fleet agrees, the subject must be a lost word meaning “the form”, and it is easily conceivable that *loka-bharttuḥ* is in apposition to the possessor of that “form” in the genitive. The line may have run something like *praśamita-ripu-śakti kroḍa-rūpaṁ murāreḥ*, but I prefer not to show such a conjectural restoration in the text.

〈2〉 vi[–]tābhinna ◇ *vi(ghā?)tābhinna* JFF • The gap does not seem to be wide enough for *ghā* (unless it was compressed horizontally), although there may have been three vertical strokes in this glyph. From the vestiges, the consonant *p* seems more likely, but *vipāta* is not attested, though *vi-pat* “burst asunder” is. The vowel may well be *ā*, though *o* and *ī* are also quite conceivable. See the commentary for further speculation. — 〈2〉 -bhuja-[⏑⏑⏑––] JFF • The lacuna may be restored along the lines of *bala-gurutvā*, again too conjectural to show in the edition.

〈3〉 bāhu[ḥ||] ◇ *bāhu[r]* JFF.

〈4〉 a(ne)[ka-rāja-parājayopārjjita?]- JFF • Fleet prints *ne* as clear, but none of it is discernible in the scanned estampage, and at least part of it must be broken off. Fleet’s restoration seems a bit long compared to the earlier lines.

〈5〉 -(g)[u](r)[u]-[ca. 6+] ◇ *-(guru)-[pādānuddhyātānāṁ?]* JFF • Since we now know that

pādānuddhyāta does not normally mean "meditating at the feet of", I think Fleet's restoration must be discarded. Instead, I suggest *vṛddhāpacāyināṁ* on the basis of the Kopparam plates of Pulakeśin II, but there are other possibilities such as *sādhubhaktānāṁ*, etc.

〈6〉 [ca. 5+]ṣāṁ ◇ *[ca. 3+]-[yaju?]ṣāṁ* JFF • Fleet's suggestion does not seem very plausible. Compare *aśvamedhāvabhṛtha-snāna-pavitrī-kṛta-vapuṣāṁ* in numerous later Cālukya plates. All this would probably not have fit in the space at the end of l5 and beginning of l6, but something shorter may have, e.g. *aśvamedha-pavitrī-kṛta-vapuṣāṁ*. The problem is that this restoration is too similar to the compound with *pavitrī-kṛta-śarīraḥ* below, though that one is for Pulikeśin I, while this is for the dynasty as a whole.

〈7〉 (yā?)gāvabhṛtha ◇ *ga[ṁ]gāvabhṛtha* JFF • The first character is indistinct in the scan but could well be the right-hand part of *yā* (most of the right limb, plus a vowel mark bending down on the right-hand side), and *-yāgā°* seems to be much more likely in view of related plates. — 〈7〉 [tasyātmajaḥ srī-sa]〈8〉tyāśrayaḥ JFF • While Fleet's restoration is perfectly plausible, it is not necessarily accurate in every detail. Line 8 begins with an indent of 3 to 4 characters because of the binding hole, and while no vestiges are visible in the scanned facsimile to the left of the hole, it is possible that *sa* was in fact inscribed there. Moreover, Fleet apparently used this restoration as a basis for estimating the length of the lacunae at the ends of other lines, but it seems possible that each of those lacunae are in fact a few characters longer.

〈8〉 ¿kuva(ḷālaha?)su? [1×][ca. 6+] JFF • The characters Fleet tentatively reads as *ḷāla* are wholly indiscernible in the scan; the following *ha* (which Fleet prints as clear) is also unclear and could plausibly be *h*, *ph*, *ḍh* or *ṣ* with *a* or *ā*. For the last, partially extant character he notes that it "must be" *c*, *ḍ*, *d*, *p*, *ph*, *m*, *ṣ* or *h*, and he proposes *nāmadheya-grāmaṁ* for the lacuna (or for the remainder after the partial character). In the scan, the partial character looks likely to be *va*, which Fleet for some reason does not mention as a possibility. Perhaps something about *suvarṇṇa* rather than the name of a village? It also seems likely that the type of *mahādāna* would have been specified before the word. Moreover, if a village was mentioned here, I would expect boundaries and prerogatives, so I think Fleet's restoration is unlikely. But then of course the extant unintelligible string needs to be interpreted; it could still be a place name, but in the locative, saying where the donation ceremony took place. (The extant *su* could even be the ending of that locative, in which case of course there is no *suvarṇṇa*.)

〈9〉 va(cca?)- ◇ *va(rcca?)-* JFF • I see no *r* in the scan, but Fleet may have had a clearer reading. I assume *vacca* is a vernacular form of *vatsa*; reading *vaccha* may also be possible.

〈10〉 tatra pa JFF • No trace of these characters is visible in my scan. I adopt but Fleet's reading, but suspect that *tatrāghāṭāḥ* may have been engraved, with Fleet's *pa* being the left half of *ghā*.

〈11〉 -grāme JFF • Though the reading is clear, it is also possible that *grāmo* was engraved, with the right-hand part of the vowel marker lost in the lacuna. As the line may be concerned with the boundaries of the donated land, a nominative is distinctly possible. — 〈11〉 [ca. 15+] mahā-patha- • Fleet estimates the lacuna at 20 characters. This seems excessive: in the previous line there are about 15 characters across the same span. Also, *mahā-patha* (which Fleet prints as clear) is not visible at all in the scan. I do not know how clearly he could see these characters, but perhaps the end may rather have been *mahā-pātakais saṁyuktas syāt*.

Translation by Fleet 1879

〈01–02〉 Hail! 〈May there be〉 good fortune!

1.

Victorious is [the form, which was that of a boar,] of the lord of the world,who allayed [...] the hostile [...] enemies of the gods,—which was adorned by spotless tusks; which had the unbroken foundations of hell [...] the surface of the earth; which [...] by its own arms; and which lifted up the world on high!

2.

After that, victorious for ever is also the arm of Vallabha,—which is the cause of the interruption of the joy[1] [...], and which effects the tranquillity of the best of the twice-born, and which is the protector of all mankind!

〈4–11〉 [In the lineage of the Calukyas],—who are possessed of fame [acquired by defeating] many [kings]; [who meditate on the feet of] the gods and the twice-born and spiritual preceptors; who are the descendants of Hāritī; who are of the lineage of Mānavya; [who sacrifice] [...]; and who [...] which cost much gold [...] endowed with donations [...],—〈there was〉 [...],whose body was purified by the water of the 〈river〉 Gaṅgā which was used for his purificatory bathing. His son was Śrī-Kīrttirāja. His son, Śrī-Satyāśraya, the Great King Polekēśi-Vallabha, gave to the Brāhmaṇs a great gift, 〈the village named〉 ¿Kuvaḷālahasu? [...] At that same time, also, this charter 〈was given〉. A field, 〈of the measure of〉 twenty-five nivartanas by the royal measure, was

[1]There is evidently a punning allusion here to the conquest of Harsha or Harshavardhana.

given to [...]rācārya of the ¿Varca?[2] *gotra*. There [...] at the village of ¿Vātāpī? [...] the high-road [...]

Translation into French by Estienne-Monod 2008

〈01–02〉 Prospérité ! Fortune !

1.

Victoire à [la forme] brillant grâce aux défenses immaculées du maître du monde, qui a détruit l'hostile [...] les ennemis des dieux ! qui a brisé le fond intangible du Pātāla [...] à la surface de la terre, par son propre bras, [...] qui porte haut la terre !

2.

Puis, victoire éternelle au bras [...] de Vallabha qui causa la mort de Harṣa[3] [...] !

〈4–11〉 Lui qui fait la sérénité des excellents deux-fois nés, protecteur du monde entier, [ornement de la lignée des Calukya, qui ont conquis leur renommée en vainquant les nombreux rois],[4] [méditant aux pieds des] dieux, des deux-fois nés et des savants, fils de Hāritī, du même gotra que les descendants de Manu, [...] muni des récompenses [...] du *bahusuvarṇa*,[5] lui dont le corps fut purifié par l'eau des bains purificatoires faits dans le Gange. Son fils fut l'illustre Kīrtirāja. Le fils de celui-ci, l'illustre grand roi Satyāśraya Polekeśin Vallabha, fit ce grand don aux brahmanes 〈du village nommé〉 Kuvaḷālahasu. Et au même moment il donné cet édit. Un terrain de vingt-cinq nivartana, calculés selon les mesures du roi,[6] est donné au maître [...] du *gotra* de Varcca. Là [...] dans le village de Vātāpī [...] sur la grande route [...]

Translation

〈01–02〉 Glory! Greetings!

1.

Victorious is that [boar form of] the lord of the world [Mu?]rāri (Viṣṇu), which has suppressed the [might?] of its enemies, which has ¿uncovered? the fundament of the

[2] Dániel Balogh: Fleet spells "Varcha" here, but his transliteration in the text is "Varchcha."

[3] Harṣavardhana mentionné in insc. n° 5, str. 23.

[4] Les termes entre parenthèses traduisent les suggestions de l'éditeur qui reconstitue le texte.

[5] Sur le terme *bahusuvarṇa* cf. insc. n° 7 où il apparaît sous la variante suvarṇaka, il est aussi mentionné sous la forme bahusuvarṇa in insc. n° 8.

[6] Le *nivartana* est le plus souvent calculé en fonction de la longueur du pied du roi.

underworld by [striking?] the surface of the earth,[7] and holds the wide earth on high by the [great strength?] of his own arms.

2.

After that, also and always victorious is the arm of Vallabha, [...] the instrument that cuts off joy {has broken Harṣa}, the protector of all the world for which excellent Brahmins have performed propitiatory rites.[8]

〈4–11〉 [In the lineage of the Calukyas who have earned their] fame by vanquishing [many kings], who [respect] the gods, Brahmins, teachers [and elders?], who are the sons of [Hā]ritī and are of the Mānavya [*gotra*], [...] [and whose bodies have been purified by sacrifices?] involving gratuities (*dakṣiṇā*) of lots of gold[9] [...] [was born Pulikeśin] whose body has been hallowed by the bathing water of the ablutions of [...] sacrifices.[10] His son was His Majesty Kīrtirāja. [His son, His Majesty] King [Sa]tyāśraya Polekeśi Vallabha has given a Great Donation[11] (*mahādāna*) to the priests [in?] ¿Kuvaḷālaha? ... At that time this decree too 〈was made〉: Land comprising twenty-five nivartanas by the royal measure was given to ...rācārya of the ¿Vacca? *gotra*. With respect to that, [the boundaries are?] [...] the village ¿Vātā?pī [...] great road [...]

[7] My translation is for the restored and emended reading *avani-tala-vighātodbhinna-pātāla-mūlam*, which seems to be the most semantically relevant among several alternatives that may be technically more plausible on the basis of the preserved characters.

[8] I am not sure what exactly the composer had in mind when he wrote *dvija-vara-kṛta-śāntiḥ*. Fleet translates "which effects the tranquillity of the best of the twice-born." This is possible, with the commonplace purport that this king protects peace and the status quo, so the priesthood can feel safe. However, it involves an inelegant compound construction, and I expect *śānti* to have a ritual connotation when mentioned next to *dvija*s. In this case, as translated above, the king's arm may stand metonymically for the king himself, and the message may be that there are expert ritualists in charge of the metaphysical protection of the king and thus the kingdom from adversities. Finally, there may be a more loaded interpretation intended, and perhaps implied by the literal meaning of *harṣa-viccheda* earlier in the verse: perhaps the propitiatory rituals were performed against his arm, to prevent its excessive aggression, and it is the result of this propitiation that this arm is now the protector, rather than the destroyer of the world.

[9] I assume that *bahusuvarṇa* is not a technical term here.

[10] It is not clear whom the extant fragments of compounds in lines 5 to 7 qualify. Bodies sanctified by the water of sacrifices were probably mentioned twice, first in connection to the dynasty as a whole, and second in connection with one specific king. This specific king may have been Kīrtirāja; or, as translated above, more likely Pulikeśin I whose name is not preserved but who must have been referred to by some epithet in one of the lost bits of text.

[11] *Mahādāna* is in all probability a technical term here (q.v. Kane 1930, II: 869ff), and unlike Fleet, I believe that the land donation recorded here was an ancillary to that Great Gift (which may have been specified in the lacuna at the end of line 8 and the preceding unintelligible text), rather than a great gift in itself. The sentence *tadā kāle idam api śāsanam* below is thus in my opinion an explanation that an additional grant has been ordered, instead of a reference to the copper plate itself, as Fleet understands it.

Commentary

The plate begins with two short marginal lines distinct from the body text. Fleet does not read the mangala symbol (unclear, apparently a dextrorse spiral resembling a figure 9) in the top left corner and reads svasti (slightly above the level of l2 but well below the level of l1 in the body) at the beginning of l1 and before śrī. I believe śrī belongs with the mangala symbol in the marginal field. In this way the first three lines of the body text have a straight vertical margin just to the right of the hole; the subsequent lines begin further to the left, near the edge of the plate.

〈2〉 In verse 1, I have some doubts about abhinna, though I do not have a good alternative suggestion, unless -tābhinna is to be emended to -tād bhinna (or read as tobhinna and emended to todbhinna). Could the text be vikhātābhinna, he dug up the entire fundament of hell for [=in search of] the surface of the earth? But a dative tatpuruṣa would be really unusual. An autopsy would be helpful here.

〈5–8〉 How could this passage work? We certainly want something like calukyānāṁ vaṁśe saṁbhūtaḥ at some point, and if ...ṣāṁ in l6 still qualifies the dynasty (and the preceding lacuna can be filled up as I suggested above), then this must come at the end of l6. Or perhaps kulam alaṁkariṣṇuḥ instead of vaṁśe saṁbhūtaḥ. But Pulikeśin I also ought to be introduced at the end of l6, and the space is simply not enough.

There are only three pādas to stanza 2.

Bibliography

First reported by General George LeGrand Jacob (1851, p. 210). Edited by J. F. Fleet (1879) with estampages and translation. The present edition by Dániel Balogh is based on a collation of Fleet's edition with the published facsimile.

Primary

[JFF] Fleet, John Faithfull. 1879. "Sanskrit and Old Canarese inscriptions, no. LII." IA 8, pp. 43–44.

Secondary

Jacob, George LeGrand. 1851. "Observations on inscriptions on copper-plates dug up at Neru'r in the Ku'dal division of the Sa'want Wa'ri' State in April 1848." JBBRAS 3 (2), pp. 203–212. Page 210.