A grant of land in the Tāvīra district

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〈Page 1r〉

〈1〉 (sva)s(t)[i]〈.〉

[4+] (d ā)yuktakagu[1+]ca(nd)r(o) 'dh[i]kara[ṇaṁ] mahattara [2+](pali)[5+](kṛ)[9+]bha[2+]virudra-brahma〈2〉sena-viṣṇudeva-satyaghoṣa-sat(va)rakṣita-vanadāma-jayaviṣ(ṇu)-prabhudāma-kuṭumbi-satyaviṣṇu-skandaviṣṇu-praiyaviṣṇu〈3〉-valapāla-guṇadeva-guṇaśarmma-bhavadeva-kuṇḍakṛṣ(ṇ)a(Ā)[1+] cirātaviṣṇu-śambhukīrtti-(bhakt)idāma-manaḥkṛṣṇa-kṣemarudra-bhavadāma〈4〉-lakṣ(m)a[ṇa-](mittra)soma-valadāsa-jayadāsa-ś(u)ṅgadāma-vyāghraśarmma-sthāvaradāma-yaśodāma-dāmodaradāma-kumāradāma-ga[1+]〈5〉 dāma-Adbhutaviṣṇu-rājyasiṅha-Upen(dra)pāla-premasiṅ(ha)-kṛṣṇasoma-rājyasoma-bhavadāma-purogāś ca viṣayakuṭumbina[ḥ]〈6〉 vidalaka-sannāhakuṭumbakayor brāhmaṇottarān sa-kṣudra-pradhānādi-kuṭumbinaḥ _ kuśalam āśāsya bodhayanti likhanti〈7〉 ca〈.〉

(Ihā)smān tāvīra-viṣaya-pati-dvīpasomas sva-puttra-varāhasomena vijñāpayati yuṣmākam iha-viṣaye dvi-dīnā〈8〉rikya-kulyavāpena śaśvat-kālopabhogyo 'kṣaya-nīvī-khila-kṣettra-vikkrayo 'nuvṛttas tad arhatha mamāpy anenaiva kkrameṇa (s)va〈9〉-puṇyāpy-āyanāya ca gac(ī)ku(ṇṭa)ka-vāstavya-kāśyapa-sa-gottra-vājisaneya-〈rā〉(j)āmātya-brāhmaṇa-guhadāmnaḥ pañca-mahā〈10〉-yaj(ñ)ānupravarttanāya matto catuś-catvārinśad dīnārān upasa(ṅ)gṛhyāpratikara-khila-kṣettra-kulyavāpā dvā-vinśatin dātum iti〈.〉

〈11〉 yata[ḥ] pustapāla-(s)umati-vīrasiṅhābhyām avadhāraṇayotpannam asty ayam asmad-viṣaye dvi-dīnārikkya-kulyavā(p)ena śaśva〈t〉

〈Page 1v〉

〈12〉-kālopabhogyo {viṣayo} 'kṣaya(n)īvī(kh)ilakṣettravikkra(yo) 'nuvṛttas tad a(s)ya tāvīra-viṣaya-pati-dvīpa(so)masya sva-puttra(-va)rā(ha)〈13〉somena vi-jñāpayato na kaścid virodhaḥ kebal¿a?〈aṁ〉 bhaṭṭāraka-pādānā(n dha)rmma-ṣaḍ-bhāg(o) viṣayena ca śaśvat-kālam anupālanīy(o)〈14〉 tad dīyatām iti〈.〉 yata Etad-avadhāraṇā-(k)ramā{ṇyā}d etasmād viṣaya-pati-dvīpasoma-puttra-varāhasomāc catuś-catvārinśaT〈15〉 d(ī)nārān upasa(ṁ)gṛ(h)y(o)bhayor (b)vi(da)laka-sannāhakuṭumbakayor dvā-vinśatir apratikara-khila-kṣettra-kulyavāp(ā) dattā(ḥ) ku 20 2 yatra〈16〉 vidalake kulyavāpā dvādaśa ku 10 2 sannāhakuṭumbake kulyavāpā daśa ku 10 Evaṁ ku 20 2〈.〉

_ yūyaṁ viṣaya-maryyādayā〈17〉 Aṣṭaka-navaka-nalābhyām apavi(ñ)cchya kuṭumv-ināṁ karṣaṇāvirodhisthāne (ca)tus-sīma-cihna-niyamitāni kṛtvā dāsyatha〈18〉 Akṣaya-nīvī-dharmmena ca śaśvat-kālam anupālayiṣya(the)ty〈.〉

ap¿e?〈i〉 ca vyāsa-manubhyām uktā ślo(kā) [bha](vanti)〈.〉

1. Anuṣṭubh

sva-dattām paradattāṁ (vā)
〈19〉 [yo hareta va]sundharāṁ
sa viṣṭhāyāṁ kṛmir bhūtvā
pitṛbhis saha pacyate _

2. Anuṣṭubh

ṣaṣṭim varṣasahasrāṇi
svargge vasati bhūmidaḥ
〈20〉 Ākṣeptā cānumantā ca
tāny eva narake vaseT _

3. Anuṣṭubh

pūrvva-dattāṁ dvijātibhyo
yatnād rakṣa yudhiṣṭhira _
mahī〈ṁ〉 mahīmatāṁ śre〈21〉ṣṭha
dā¿ṇ?〈n〉āc chreyo 'nupāla(n)a*M*

4. Upodgātā

{de} puruṣasya bha(va)n(t)i ye sahāy¿ā?〈āḥ〉
kaluṣe karmmaṇi dharmma-(sañcaye)[1+]
(A)vagacchati (me)〈22〉 ta(v)āntarā(tmā)
niyataṁ te 'pi janā(s ta)d-a¿n?〈ṁ〉śa-bhāja Iti _

saṁ 100 (50) 9 _ j(e)ṣ(ṭha)di (1) _ li(khitaṁ) teṇa {to} sumatinā〈.〉

Apparatus

〈2〉 -praiya° • Emend -priya-?

〈9〉 -vājisaneya-〈rā〉(j)āmātya- • Emend *-vājasaneyirājāmātya-*. Cf. my note on Raktamālā #2, line 6.

〈11〉 śaśva〈t〉 • The same misspelling occurs in Raktamālā #2, line 11.

〈13〉 kebal¿a?〈aṁ〉 bhaṭṭāraka-pādānā(n dha)rmma-ṣaḍ-bhāg(o) • Cf. Damodarpur #5, lines 12–13, published as *kevalaṁ śrī-parama-bhaṭṭāraka-pādena dharma-pa[ra]tāvāpti[H]*, but certainly to be read/restored as follows: *kevalaṁ śrī-parama-bhaṭṭāraka-pādānāṁ dharmma-ṣaḍ-bhāgāvāptiḥ*. — 〈13〉 anupālanīy(o) • The reading of the final *akṣara* is very doubtful. If indeed there is the vowel *-o*, as seems to be the case on some of the photos, then it needs to be emended to *anupālanīyaḥ* or *anupālanīyaM*.

〈14〉 Etad-avadhāraṇā-(k)ramā{ṇyā}d etasmād • Emend *Etad-avadhāraṇā-kramād etasmād*. Cf. the Paharpur plate, line 17 *anenāvadhāraṇā-kkrameṇāsmād*; Damodarpur #5, line 14 *anenāvadhāraṇā-krameṇa etasmād*.

〈15〉 (b)vi(da)laka- • Emend *vvidalaka-*.

〈17〉 -niyamitāni • In the light of what precedes one initially expects *-niyamitāḥ*, but see the Jagadishpur plate, line 22 *catus-sīmā-niyamita-kṣetraṁ*.

〈21〉 dharmma-(sañcaye)[1+] • Emend *dharmma-sañcaye vā*.

〈22〉 ta(v)āntarā(tmā) • Emend *yathāntarātmā*. — 〈22〉 saṁ 100 (50) 9 • The sign here read as 50 appears to have a somewhat different shape from that seen in the Raktamālā grant #1 (see Griffiths 2018, fig. 10 and the Paharpur plate . But no other sign for any of

the multiples of 10 seems to be more plausible. — 〈22〉 teṇa {to} sumatinā • The *akṣara* to likewise seems intrusive (cf. line 11 *sumati*) and is ignored in my translation.

Translation

〈1–7〉 Hail! From [4+], the officer [1+] -candra, the council and the landholders of the district — led by the notables [names of about six persons undeterminable due to damage] -virudra, Brahmasena, Viṣṇudeva, Satyaghoṣa, Sattvarakṣita, Vanadāman, Jayaviṣṇu and Prabhudāman; and by the landholders Satyaviṣṇu, Skandaviṣṇu, Praiyaviṣṇu (?), Balapāla, Guṇadeva, Guṇaśarman, Bhavadeva, Kuṇḍakr̥ṣṇa, Ā[1+]cirātaviṣṇu (?),[1] Śambhukīrtti, Bhaktidāman (?), Manaḥkr̥ṣṇa, Kṣemarudra, Bhavadāman, Lakṣmaṇa, Mitrasoma, Baladāsa, Jayadāsa, Śuṅgadāman, Vyāghraśarman, Sthāvaradāman, Yaśodāman, Dāmodaradāman, Kumāradāman, Ga[1+]dāman (?),[2] Adbhutaviṣṇu, Rājyasiṁha, Upendrapāla, Premasiṁha, Kr̥ṣṇasoma, Rājyasoma and Bhavadāman — greet the landholders at Vidalaka and Sannāhakuṭumbaka, both modest and prominent, etc., consisting chiefly of Brahmins,[3] inform them and write:

〈7–10〉 Dvīpasoma, chief of the Tāvīra district, through his own son Varāhasoma, petitions us here: "In your district here, the custom is sale of waste land as permanent endowment to be enjoyed in perpetuity with a *kulyavāpa* for (the price of) two *dīnāra*s. Thus (tad) for me too, with this very procedure and for the purpose of (my) own merit being increased, be so kind as to take from me forty-four *dīnāra*s and give twenty-two *kulyavāpa*s of waste land that yields no tax to the Brahmin Guhadāman, a 〈royal〉 adviser and Vājasaneyin belonging to the Kāśyapa *gotra*, residing at Gacīkuṇṭaka (?), for the purpose of the regular performance of the five great sacrifices."

〈11–16〉 Because it has appeared from the certification of the record-keepers Sumati and Vīrasiṁha: "Indeed (asti), the custom in our district is sale of waste land as permanent endowment to be enjoyed in perpetuity with a *kulyavāpa* for (the price of) two *dīnāra*s, so that (tad) there is no conflict whatsoever (with the interests of the king)

[1] Cf. the name of the *uparika* Cirātadatta in Damodarpur #1.

[2] I initially thought that gu[ha]- could be read at the end of line 4, in which case we would have had here the same name as that of the Brahmin beneficiary Guhadāman of this grant — and a possible case of beneficiary's membership of council. But it now seems unlikely to me that the last legible *akṣara* on line 4 is *gu*.

[3] The expression *brāhmaṇottarān* occurs in several other plates: Raktamālā Grant no. 1, year 159, line 2; Baigram Charter of the Time of Kumāragupta I, line 2 ; Paharpur Charter of the Time of Budhagupta, line 3; Nandapur Plate of 169 GE, line 1 and A second grant concerning the Raktamālā line 2. The translation suggested here corresponds to the specific meaning of the compound *brāhmaṇottara-* reported by Apte 1890, p. 1174. If we only follow the meaning given by Apte 1890, № 8, p. 408 and Monier-Williams 1899, p. 178 for the word *-uttara in fine compositi*, the translation would be "followed by Brahmins".

when this Dvīpasoma, chief of the Tāvīra district, respectfully requests (such a sale) through his own son Varāhasoma, (but on the contrary) only the sixth share of the merit for his majesty,[4] and it is to be protected in perpetuity by the district. So let the gift be made." Therefore, consequent to this procedure of investigation, twenty-two *kulyavāpa*s, ku 22, of waste land yielding no tax have been given at both Vidalaka and Sannāhakuṭumbaka — among which twelve *kulyavāpa*s, ku 12, in Vidala, ten *kulyavāpa*s, ku 10, in Sannāhakuṭumbaka, so ku 22 — after having taken forty-four *dīnāra*s from this Varāhasoma, son of the district chief Dvīpasoma.

〈16–18〉 You shall[5] separate them off using two reeds, eight by ninefold according to the convention of the district, in a place that does not conflict with the cultivation of the landholders; shall make (the fields) delimited by markers of the four boundaries; shall make the donation and shall protect it in perpetuity according to the law on permanent endowments.

〈18–22〉 And there are also verses pronounced by Vyāsa and Manu:

1.

The one who would steal land given by himself or another becomes a worm in excrement and is cooked with his ancestors.[6]

2.

The giver of land resides sixty thousand years in heaven; the one who challenges (a donation) as well as the one who condones (the challenge) will reside as many 〈years〉 in hell.[7]

3.

[4]The king usually takes a sixth of each transaction as it is mentionned in *Manusmṛti* 7.131-132. In a case of land donation, the benefit for the king is only meritorious and due to his act of protection. It is mentioned by the verse I.331 from Yājñavalkya's *Dharmaśāstra*: "*puṇyātṣaḍbhāgamādatte nyāyena paripālayan | sarvadānādhikaṁ yasmānnyāyena paripālanam ||*" "He (the king) takes a sixth portion of the merits by providing protection justly, because providing protection justly greater than all gifts." (Translation Olivelle 2019, p. 107).

[5]The use of future verb forms where we might expect imperatives is rather common in these inscriptions. Cf. the forms *dāsyatha* and *anupālayiṣyatha* in the citation from the Baigram plate in Griffiths 2018, p. 43, and, from a similar context, *dāsyatha ... anupālayiṣyasi* in the Raktamālā grant #1, lines 21–22 (with disagreement of number, see Griffiths 2015, p. 19); see also *viditam bo bhaviṣyati* (i.e. *viditam vo bhaviṣyati*) in the Kalaikuri-Sultanpur plate, lines 2–3. On this usage, see Oberlies 2003, §6.2.9.

[6]This verse corresponds to the verse numbered 132 among the Stanzas on Bhūmidāna listed by Sircar (see Sircar 1965, appendix II, pp. 170–200).

[7]This verse corresponds to the verse numbered 123 among the Stanzas on Bhūmidāna listed by Sircar (see Sircar 1965, appendix II, pp. 170–200), except for the verb used in the *pāda* b.

You, Yudhiṣṭhira, most excellent of kings, must strenuously protect land previously given to brahmins. Safeguarding is even better than giving.[8]

4.

My inner spirit understands that those companions a man has in action that brings defilement or for collecting merit inevitably also get a share of it .[9]

〈22〉 Year 159, (month of) Jyeṣṭha, day 1. Written by that Sumati.

Commentary

This plate measures 15.3 cm in height and 32.7 cm in width. In its left margin we see a circular extension with a triangular hole in the middle: this is where a seal would originally have been affixed. The seal was already lost when the first known photos of the plate were taken at an antique shop in Dhaka, showing it then to have been in fully bent state .[10] When the same plate was acquired by its present owner in 2016, and photos were sent to me, I at first did not recognize that these showed the same as that previously photographed in folded state, because it had now been returned to its original, flat state, the place of the former fold only being identifiable to one who has seen the plate in folded state. As shown in the 'before' photos, the plate was covered with a thick greenish patina; much of this remains at present, although some attempt seems to have been made to remove the encrustation presumably at the same time that the plate was unfolded.

The name of the place where this inscription was issued is unfortunately lost. An officer (*āyuktaka*), whose name is not entirely preserved, addresses himself, along with the council, to householders at the villages Vidalaka and Sannāhakuṭumbaka, to order

[8]This verse corresponds to the verse numbered 131 among the Stanzas on Bhūmidāna listed by Sircar (see Sircar 1965, appendix II, pp. 170–200).

[9]This verse matches more or less with the verses 5.76-8 of Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* (edition and translation Johnston 1935–1936: "*sulabhāḥ khalu saṁyuge sahāyā viṣayāvāptasukhe dhanārjane vā | puruṣasya tu durlabhāḥ sahāyāḥ patitasyāpadi dharmasaṁśraye vā || 76 || iha caiva bhavanti ye sahāyāḥ kaluṣe karmaṇi dharmasaṁśraye vā | avagacchati me yathāntarātmā niyataṁ te 'pi janās tadaṁśabhājaḥ || 77 || tad idaṁ parigamya dharmayuktaṁ mama niryāṇam ito jagaddhitāya | turagottama vegavikramābhyāṁ prayatasvātmahite jagaddhite ca || 78 |*" "75. Easy it is to find companions for battle, for the pleasure of acquiring objects of sense and for the accumulation of wealth; but hard it is for a man to find companions, when he has fallen into distress or attaches himself to dharma. 76. Moreover as for those who are companions in this world whether in action that brings defilement or in resort to dharma, undoubtedly they too, as my inner soul realises, take their share of the fruit. 77. Understand therefore, O best of steeds, this my departure from here to be connected with dharma for the benefit of the world, and strive with speed and courage in a matter which concerns your own good and the good of the world alike."

[10]I owe these photos to a source who wishes to remain anonymous.

execution of a donation paid for by Dvīpasoma, chief of the district named Tāvīra, who is represented by his son Varāhasoma. He spent the sum of twenty-four *dīnāra* coins, to purchase waste land to be given to the Brahmin Guhadāman, a royal advisor (*rājāmātya*) residing in a village the reading of whose name as Gacīkuṇṭaka is rather tentative. A record-keeper named Sumati figures both as authority confirming the local price of a *kulyavāpa* of waste land and, at the end, as scribe. Three of the usual admonitory stanzas are cited at the end, but followed by a stanza not found in any other inscription. The grant closes with a colophon containing a date in year 159 of the Gupta era.

Bibliography

First edited by Arlo Griffiths. Re-edited here with small improvements based on direct inspection of the plate. The text has been encoded by Amandine Wattelier-Bricout.

Primary

[G] Griffiths, Arlo. 2018. "Four more Gupta-period copperplate grants from Bengal." *Pratna Samiksha: A Journal of Archaeology* New Series 9, pp. 15–57. [URL]. Item II.2, pages 30–5.

Secondary

[G] Griffiths, Arlo. 2018. "Four more Gupta-period copperplate grants from Bengal." *Pratna Samiksha: A Journal of Archaeology* New Series 9, pp. 15–57. [URL]. Item II.2, pages 30–5.