EIAD 170. Gōraṇṭla plates of Attivarman, ca. 5th c. CE

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Summary

Grant of the village of Āntukkūra (or Āntukkūra) and of a field of 800 *paṭṭi*s in Tāṉṟikoṉṟa village to the Brahmin Koṭṭiśarman.

Palaeographic description

Late Southern Brāhmī, ca. 5th century. The *anusvāra* is in most cases placed at line height, close to the following character. The text contains two instances of the cluster *ṉṟ* in the vernacular toponym *tāṉṟikoṉṟa* (line 7). There are a few instances of small word-final consonant (e.g., line 8 *parihāraM*, line 9 *vasundharāM*). Separation of metrical and syntactic segments is sometimes marked by a space. We further note slightly different forms of *ja* (lines 2 and 3) and *jā* (lines 3 and 4). According to Sircar (1934, p. 733), "the characters of the Gorantla inscription resemble, in some respects, those of the Ikṣvāku inscriptions of Nagarjunikonda", which latter date to the 3rd century. We, for our part, would rather situate the inscription well after the Ikṣvāku period, perhaps contemporaneously with some of the later Śālaṅkāyanas or early Viṣṇukuṇḍins.

Edition

〈Page 1r〉 〈1〉 svasty atula-vipula-yaśasi śrīmaty ānanda-maharṣi-vaṁśa-samudbhūte bhagavato vaṁkeśvarādhi〈2〉vāsinas tri-bhuvana-kartuḥ ◯ śaṁbhoś caraṇa-kamala-rajaḥ-pavitrī-kṛte kandara-nṛpati-kule samu〈3〉dbhūtena sundara-sujāta-peśala-jana-paricāreṇāprameya-hiraṇyagarbha-prasavena pratāpopana〈Page 1v〉〈4〉ta-sakala-sāmanta-maṇḍalena mahendra-sama-vikrameṇa sura-guru-sadṛśa-buddhinā samyak-prajā-pālano〈5〉pārjjita-kīrttinā rājñā ◯ Attivarmmaṇā Anuparata-dharmma-kriyā-pareṇa _ kāśyapa-gotrā〈6〉ya _ Āpastaṁbha-sūtra-vide yama-ni〈ya〉mavate _ Ṛg-yajus-sāma-vide brāhmaṇāya brahma-kalpā〈Page 2r〉〈7〉ya koṭṭiśarmmaṇe kṛṣṇabeṇṇā-dakṣiṇa-kūle_ tāṉṟikoṉṟa-grāme cātur-ddiśam aṣṭa-śata-pa〈8〉ṭṭi-kṣetrañ cāntukkūra◯-grāmaś codaka-pūrvvan dattaḥ s{s}arvvā-bādha-parihāraM

1. Anuṣṭubh

[s]va-dattāṁ pa〈9〉ra-dattām vā
yo hareta vasundharāM_
gavāṁ śata-sahasrasya
hantuḥ pibati kilbiṣaM

2. Anuṣṭubh

〈Page 2v〉 〈10〉 (bh)ūmi-dānāt paran dānan
na bhūtan (na bhavi)ṣyati_
(tas)y[aiva haraṇāt pāpa]n
na bh[ūtan na bhaviṣya]t[i]

3. Anuṣṭubh

[bahubhi]〈11〉r vvasudhā dattā
bahubhi◯ś cānupālitā
yasya yasya ya(dā) bhū(mi)s
tasya (tasya) [tadā phalaM]

4. Anuṣṭubh

〈12〉 brahma-svaṁ 〈tu〉 viṣaṁ ghoran
na viṣaṁ viṣam ucyate _
viṣam ekā[ki]na[ṁ] (ha)nti
brahma-svaṁ [putra]-pautr[i]kaM

Apparatus

〈4〉 vaṁkeśvarādhi- F ◇ *(va/vaṁ)eśvarādhi-* F • It seems that the *anusvāra* is placed inside the hook-shape for *-e* in *ke*.

〈7〉 tāṉ̲ṟikoṉ̲ṟa- ◇ *tānthikontha-* F • Hultzsch (1923–1924) corrected to *tāṉ̲ṟikoṉ̲ṟa-*. But the fact is that the body of the *akṣara* above *ṟ* in both cases shows a loop on the left side, which is not found in the occurrences of *n* in these plates and which likeswise does not correspond to occurrences of *ṉ*. This appears to be a device meant to denote alveolar *n*, i.e., *ṉ*. — 〈7〉 cātur-ddiśam ◇ *catur-ddiśam* F.

〈12〉 brahma-svaṁ 〈tu〉 viṣaṁ ◇ *brahma-svaṁ viṣaṁ* F • Fleet (1880, p. 103, p. 29) comments: "The metre requires us to correct this into *brâhmaṇa*." The metre indeed requires one more syllable. We restore as per the variant recorded in BEst_0098v02. — 〈12〉 -pautr[i]kaM • The small final *M* appears clearly on Fleet's estampage.

Translation by Fleet 1880

〈1–8〉 Hail! By king Attivarmā,—who is born in the family of king Kandara, which is possessed of uneqnalled and extensive fame, and which is glorious, and which is descended from the lineage of the great saint Ānanda, and which is purified by the pollen of the lotuses which are the feet of (the god) Śambhu, the holy one, who resides at (the temple of) Vakeśvara, and is the maker of the three worlds; who is attended hy beautiful and well-born and clever people; who is of the posterity of the inscrutable (god) Hiraṇyagarbha; who has reduced the territories of all chieftains by his prowess; who is equal in valour to (the god) Mahendra; who resembles in intellect the preceptor of the gods; whose fame has been acquired by properly governing his subjects; and who is intent upon (maintaining) the uninterrupted practices of religion,—a field of (the measure of) eight hundred *paṭṭi*s, including (its boundaries on) the four quarters, at the village of Tanthikontha on the south bank of (the river) Kṛṣṇabeṇṇā, and also the village of Antukkūra, were given, with libations of water, free from all opposing claims, to the Brahman Koṭṭiśarmā, of tho Kāśyapa *gotra*, who knows the Āpastambha *sūtra*, and who practises the major and the minor observances, and who is acquainted with the Ṛg and the Yajur and the Sāma (Vedas), and who is a Brahman, and who is almos equal to (the god) Brahmā himself.

1.

He incurs the guilt of the slayer of a hundred thousand cows, who confiscates land that has been given, whether by himself, or by another!

2.

There has not been, and there shall not be, any gift ⟨better⟩ than a gift of land; there has not been, and there shall not be, any sin ⟨greater⟩) than confiscating the same!

3.

Land has been given by many, and has been preserved in grant by many; he, who for the time beiing possesses land, enjoys the benefit of it!

4.

The property or a Brahman is said to be a terrible poison, (but, in comparison with that), poison is not called poison; ⟨for⟩ poison kills only one person, ⟨whereas⟩ the property of a Brahman, ⟨if confiscated⟩, kills one's sons and sons' sons!

Translation

⟨1–8⟩ Hail! By the king Attivarman (*rājñā attivarmaṇā*) who arose (*samudbhūtena*) in the lineage of the kings of Kandara / of king Kandara (*kandara-nṛ̊pati-kule*),[1] of unequalled and wide fame (*atula-vipula-yaśasi*), glorious (*śrīmaty*), which arose in the lineage of the *maharṣi* Ānanda (*ānanda-maharṣi-vaṁśa-samudbhūte*) ⟨and⟩ which is purified/cleansed by the dust of the lotus-feet (*caraṇa-kamala-rajaḥ-pavitrī-kṛ̊te*) of the lord (*bhagavato*) Śambhu (*śaṁbhoś*) residing in V[a/aṁ]keśvara (*v[a/aṁ]keśvarādhivāsinas*) and creator of the triple world (*tri-bhuvana-kartuḥ*), who is attended by people charming, well-born and pleasant (*sundara-sujāta-peśala-jana-paricāreṇa*), who has his origin in an immeasurable Hiraṇyagarbha (*aprameya-hiraṇyagarbha-prasavena*),[2] by whose splendour the circle(s) of all neighbouring/feudatory kings are subdued / all the circle(s) of neighbouring/feudatory kings are subdued (*pratāpopanata-sakala-sāmanta-maṇḍalena*), whose valour is same as that of Mahendra (*mahendra-sama-vikrameṇa*) who possesses an

[1] Sircar (1934: 733): "sprung from the family of King Kandara." Kandara is generally considered as the name of an ancestor. But could it just be a place-name? "in the family of the kings of Kandara(pura)" / "in the kingly family of Kandara"? The Maṭṭepād Plates of Dāmōdaravarman are issued from Kandarapura. See also the Cejarla stele inscription, face A, lines 10-11: *kandarapura-vara-janapada-dvitayādhipateḥ kandara-rājasya priya-sutāyām*, "the daughter of King Kandara / the king of Kandara"?

[2] Compare *a[vandhya]-go-saha[srāne]ka-hiraṇyagarbhodbhavodbhavasya* in the Maṭṭepād Plates of Dāmōdaravarman (1b2-2a1). Fleet (1880, p. 103): "who is the posterity of the inscrutable (god) Hiraṇyagarbha." Fleet had later "withdrawn his original opinion" (Dynasties of the Kanarese Districts, 2nd ed., p. 334) according to Hultzsch (1924: 328). Hultzsch (1924: 328): "who is a producer of (i.e. who has performed) innumerable Hiraṇyagarbhas." Sircar (1934: 730ff.): not a ṣaṣṭhī-tatpuruṣa (producer of H) as Hultzsch understood it, but a bahuvrīhi: "one whose prasava (origin, producer, progenitor) is the H." See other examples which are pañcamī-tatpuruṣa (produced by H). The performer of H = newly-born child. Sircar (1934: 735): "one whose producer is the H."

intellect like that of the spiritual master of the gods (*sura-guru-sadṛśa-buddhinā*), who possesses a glory acquired by his proper/appropriate/just protection of his subjects (*samyak-prajā-pālan=opārjjita-kīrttinā*), who is occuped with / intent upon the uninterrupted practice of *dharma* (*anuparata-dharmma-kriyā-pareṇa*), to the Brahmin Koṭṭiśarman, of the Kāśyapagotra, versed in the Āpastambasūtra, practiser of the major and minor observances, versed in ṛg, Yajus and Sāman, who is like Brahmā (*kāśyapa-gotrāya āpastaṁbha-sūtra-vide yama-ni[ya]mavate ṛg-yajus-sāma-vide brāhmaṇāya brahma-kalpāya koṭṭiśarmmaṇe*), a field of 800 *paṭṭi*s within four limits (*cāturdiśam*) in the village of Tāṉṟikoṉṟa on the southern bank of the Kṛṣṇaveṇṇā and the village of (Ā/A)ntukkūra is given after water aspersion (litt. preceded by water) ⟨and⟩ with exemption of all annoyances/obstacles (*kṛṣṇabeṇṇā-dakṣiṇa-kūle tāṉṟikoṉṟa-grāme cātur-ddiśam aṣṭa-śata-paṭṭi-kṣetrañ cāntukkūra-grāmaś codaka-pūrvvan dattaḥ sarvvā-bādha-parihāram*).

Commentary

The text is laid out in 12 lines over both sides of two plates (3 lines per plate), which are accompanied by a third plate, on which Fleet (1880, p. 102) commented: "One side of the third plate is blank. But parts of three lines of writing, in the same characters those of the extant inscription, can be distinctly discerned about the centre of the other side of the plate; thus, in l. 2 I can clearly read *para-[da]tt[âṁ] vâ*, and, in l. 3 *[piba]ti kilbiṣa[m]*, and many other letters are recognisable, though I cannot make a connected passage out of the first line. This obliterated writing has all the appearance of having been beaten down with a hammer, by way of cancellation, after heating the plate. And the plate was evidently then attached to the other two, as a guard to protect the writing. Probably there was another blank plate, now lost, attached to protect the writing at the other end of the grant."

The text contains no internal date. If Attivarman is to be identified as the Vaiṅgeyaka Hastivarman of Samudragupta's Allāhābād *praśasti*, line 20, this would situate the charter around 350 CE and would make it one of the earliest instances of a Sanskrit land grant. Another possibility is that the Vaiṅgeyaka Hastivarman of Samudragupta's Allāhābād *praśasti* had a homonymic descendant. The palaseographic aspect of the inscription, as well as its language and formulaics, rather clearly point to a date well after the mid-4th century, and hence to the latter hypothesis.

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