Cheruvu Madhavaram plates of Viṣṇuvardhana V

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Identifier: DHARMA_INSVengiCalukya00022

Repository: Eastern Cālukya (tfb-vengicalukya-epigraphy)

File path: xml/DHARMA_INSVengiCalukya00022.xml

Language: Sanskrit [Southern Brāhmī (unspecified)]

Commit: 2026-10-28 17:37 (06a61a7), last modified 2026-09-18 17:45 (0273b8a)

Palaeographic description

Original punctuation. The only punctuation mark is at the very end; from the facsimile it could be a double dot, but Narasimhaswami describes it as ”two strokes, one above the other” and I assume he is correct.

Edition

〈Page 1r〉

1. Anuṣṭubh

〈Page 1v〉 〈1〉 sa(r)vv(ā)kāram aśeṣ¿ā?〈a〉sya
jagatas sa(r)vvadā ś(ivaṁ)
go-brāhmaṇ¿ā?〈a〉-nṛpāṇ¿a?〈ā〉ñ ca
〈2〉 śivaṁ bh¿ā?〈a〉vatu sa〈r〉vvataḥ

svast¿a?〈i〉〈.〉 śrīmatāṁ sakala-bhuvana-saṁst¿u?〈ū〉yamāna-mā〈3〉navya-sagotrāṇāṁ hārīti-putrāṇāṁ kauś¿ī?〈i〉kī-vara-prasāda-labdha-rājyānāṁ

m{m}ā〈4〉tṛ◯-gaṇa-paripāl¿ī?〈i〉tānāṁ svāmi-mahāsena-pādānudhyātānāṁ bhagava〈5〉n-nārāyaṇa-prasāda-sam¿a?〈ā〉s¿a?〈ā〉dita-vara-varāha-lāñchanekṣaṇa-kṣaṇa-vaśīkṛ〈6〉tā{ṁ}rāti-maṇḍalānām aśvamedhā〈va〉bhṛ¿t?〈th〉a-snāna-pavitr¿i?〈ī〉kṛta-vapuṣāṁ samadhi〈7〉gatāśeṣ¿o?〈a〉-mahāśabd(ā)nām pa(ḍ)a-ḍhakkā-pā¿h?〈ḷ〉i-ketana-śvetātapatra-¿mi?〈vī〉jyamāna〈Page 2r〉〈8〉-¿bha?〈cā〉mara-kalāpa-gopura-dvārobhaya-pārśva-pratiṣṭhāpita-gaṁgā-yamunā〈nāṁ cālukyānām anvaye〉〈9〉 pṛthivī-vallabha-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara〈ḥ〉 parama-brahmaṇya(ḥ) para〈10〉ma-〈mā〉heśva(ra)〈ḥ〉 māt¿a?〈ā〉-pitṛ-pādānudhy¿a?〈ā〉tas sarvva-lokāśraya-śrī-viṣṇuvarddha(na)-ma〈11〉hā◯rāja〈ḥ〉 tasya ¡suta! vijayāditya-¡mahārājasya! ¡putra! kali-viṭṭara〈12〉-¡nama(na)! śrī-viṣṇuvarddhana-¡mahārājñā!〈mahārājena〉 nagara-sahitena liṁga-pra〈ti〉ṣṭhā〈ṁ〉 kṛtvā〈13〉 vijayavāṭa-pure ¡tasya!〈tasmai〉 nagareśvara-bhaṭṭārak¿a?〈ā〉ya Aṣṭottara-śata-(kha)〈14〉ṇḍikā-〈ko〉dravāvāpa-kṣetra〈ṁ〉 kāśyapa-gotra-droṇakuṟṟa-bhaṭṭa-ha(ste) suv¿ā?〈a〉〈Page 2v〉〈15〉rṇṇa〈ṁ〉 ¡datta!〈dattvā〉 gṛhītvā datta〈ṁ〉〈.〉 Ujjay¡a!〈i〉nyā〈ṁ〉 gaṁgaṟa-guh¡a!〈ā〉-vāsin(o) balasoma-bhaga〈16〉¡vantasya!〈vataḥ〉 ¡śiyṣa!〈śiyṣasya〉 Amṛtasom¡a-Ā!cā〈r〉yyasya ¡śiyṣa!〈śiyṣāya〉 paśupati-bha〈ga〉v¿o?〈a〉t-p¿a?〈ā〉d¡a!〈āya〉

〈17〉 kaṇḍeṟuvāṭi-viṣaya-vāsinaḥ rāṣṭrak¿u?〈ū〉ṭa-pramukhān kuṭuṁbinas sarvv¿a?〈ā〉n ittham (ā)〈18〉jñā◯payati〈.〉 viditam astu vo 〈'〉smābhi〈ḥ〉 Uttarāyaṇa-nimitte sodaka-pū〈19〉rvva〈ṁ〉 sarvva-kara-parihāra〈ṁ〉

tasyā(va)dhaya〈ḥ〉〈.〉 pūrvvataḥ mahā-pathaḥ〈.〉 dakṣinataḥ ma〈20〉h¿a?〈ā〉-pathaḥ〈.〉 paścimataḥ (ma)h¿a?〈ā〉-pa(thaḥ)〈.〉 (U)tt¿ā?〈a〉rataḥ ci(n)tagu(ṇṭh)[[ī]]〈〈a〉〉 (p?)unna nāma grāma〈ḥ〉〈.〉

〈21〉 Asyopari na kenacid bādhā karaṇ(ī)yā〈.〉 yaḥ karot(i) sa pañca-mahāp(ā)〈Page 3r〉〈22〉taka-saṁyukto bhavati〈.〉 vyāsen(ā)py ¡uktā!

2. Anuṣṭubh

bahubhir vvasudhā dattā
bahubhiś cā〈23〉nupālitā
yasya yasya yadā bhūmis
tasya tasya tadā (ph/p)alaṁ

3. Anuṣṭubh

sva-dattā(ṁ) pa〈24〉ra-dattāṁ vā
yo hareta vasundharāṁ
ṣaṣṭi(ṁ) varṣa-sahasr¿a?〈ā〉ṇi
viṣṭhāyā(ṁ jāya)〈25〉te ◯ kṛmiḥ

4. Anuṣṭubh

na viṣaṁ viṣam ity (ā)huḥ
(de)〈va〉-svaṁ viṣam u(c)ya(te)
viṣam ekāki〈26〉na〈ṁ〉 ha(nti)
deva-svaṁ putra-pautrika(ṁ)

5. Anuṣṭubh

Ājñaptir asya dharmmasya
viṣṇuvarddhana-m¿a?〈ā〉tu〈27〉l¿ā?〈o〉
vikram¿a?〈ā〉kr¿a?〈ā〉nta-bhū-cakr¿(e)?〈o〉
vikramāditya-bhūpatiḥ

nagareśvara-bhaṭṭ(ā)r(a-t)¿a?〈ā〉m¿ā?〈ra〉〈28〉-¿saśāna?〈śāsanaṁ〉 ¿saśāna?〈śāsanaṁ〉
maram¿a?〈ā〉c¿a?〈ā〉ryy¿a?〈e〉ṇālikhi〈taṁ〉 na¿k?〈g〉areśvara-bhaṭṭārak¿a?〈ā〉ya=

〈Page 3v〉

Apparatus

〈1〉 aśeṣ¿ā?〈a〉sya ◇ *aśeṣasya* HKN. — 〈1〉 -nṛpāṇ¿a?〈ā〉ñ ◇ *-nṛpā¿na?〈ṇā〉ñ* HKN.

〈3〉 hārīti- ◇ *hāritī-* HKN • The distinction between *i* and *ī* is minimal; HKN may be right, or both vowels may be short. — 〈3〉 kauś¿ī?〈i〉kī- ◇ *kauśikī-* HKN.

〈4〉 -paripāl¿ī?〈i〉tānāṁ ◇ *-paripālitānāṁ* HKN.

〈5〉 -sam¿a?〈ā〉s¿a?〈ā〉dita- ◇ *-samāsādita-* HKN.

〈6〉 °ā{ṁ}rāti- ◇ *°¿a?〈ā〉{ṁ}rāti-* HKN • Possibly corrected from an erroneous *nāṁ* to *tāṁ*.

〈7〉 -śabd(ā)nām pa(ḍ)a- ◇ *-śabda-(jhaṁ)pada-* HKN • For *paḍa*, see also the commentary. I assume the word to be synonymous to *paṭaha*. — 〈7〉 -pā¿h?〈l〉i- ◇ *-pā¿h?〈l〉i-* HKN • The inscribed *h* is in all probability a scribal error for the similar-looking *l*, which could in turn be regularised to *l*. See also the commentary for related passages. — 〈7〉 -¿mi?〈vī〉jyamāna • The correction of *m* to *v* may have been made in the original; at least, the next character is very close to the right limb of the *m*, which implies that this limb is to be ignored.

〈8〉 ¿bha?〈cā〉mara- ◇ *(cā)mara-* HKN. — 〈8〉 -yamunā〈nāṁ cālukyānām anvaye〉 ◇ *-yamunā* HKN • I tentatively supply what is certainly missing from the passage, but the intended words may have been different, and a longer phrase may have been omitted. See also the commentary for some thoughts on this passage.

〈10〉 -lokāśraya- ◇ *-¿ma?〈lo〉kāśraya-* HKN • The first character does rather resemble *ma*, but it was definitely intended to be a cursive *lo*.

〈11〉 tasya ¡suta! vijayāditya-¡mahārājasya! • Understand *tasya sutasya vijayāditya-mahārājasya* or *tasya suto vijayāditya-mahārājas tasya*. — 〈11〉 ¡putra! kali-viṭṭara〈12〉¡nama(na)! • I assume that *putreṇa* and the non-standard form *nāmena* was intended, and a small *e* marker may in fact be attached to the body of *m*. Alternatively, the intent may have been *putraḥ kali-viṭṭara-nāmā tena*.

〈15〉 Ujjay¡a!〈i〉nyā〈ṁ〉 ◇ *Ujjay¡ā!〈i〉nyā* HKN.

〈17〉 kaṇḍeṟuvāṭi- ◇ *kaṇḍeṟuvāḍi-* HKN.

〈19〉 -parihāra〈ṁ〉 • Narasimhaswami restores *parihāraḥ kṛtaḥ* here and suggests a series of emendations to make coherent sentences in which the king is the explicit subject of *ājñāpayati* and the implicit agent of this sentence. The intended meaning is clearly along those lines, but the structure of the entire passage is too garbled.

〈21〉 (U)tt¿ā?〈a〉rataḥ HKN • There may have been a second vowel marker on the left of *ttā* (which would thus have been *tto*), and the marker on the left may have been deleted by a series of small cross-strokes. It is even possible that *datto* was first inscribed instead of *Utta*.

〈20〉 ci(n)tagu(ṇṭh)⟦ī⟧〈〈a〉〉 (p?)unna ◇ *cintagunṭi(punta)* HKN • It is clear in the original estampage that the *ī* marker has been crosshatched. I am confident of my reading except for the consonant for which I accept HKN's *p*, but which is indistinct (*m*? *v*? *dh*? *ṣ*?) and may have been corrected.

〈21〉 grāma〈ḥ〉 HKN • The *ā* seems to be attached to the following *m*, but since it extends down to the baseline, which *e* rarely does, I choose to read it as *ā* on *gr*.

〈22〉 ¡uktā! ◇ *uktaM* HKN • Understand, with HKN, *uktam*; or *uktāḥ ślokāḥ* may have been intended.

〈27〉 vikram¿a?〈ā〉kr¿a?〈ā〉nta- ◇ *vikrama-¿hra?〈krā〉nta-* HKN • Narasimhaswami's reading of *h* insted of *k* is probably a typo in his edition; the character is fairly clear. — 〈27〉 nagareśvara-... • The passage beginning here may have been intended for another *anuṣṭubh* stanza and was taken as such by HKN. See also the commentary. — 〈27〉 (-t)¿a?〈ā〉m¿ā?〈ra〉 ◇ *tām(r)a-* HKN • I have no better suggestion than to assume that *tāmra-* was intended here, but something quite different cannot be excluded, as *mā* is clear and may even be followed by a final *M* (although no final consonants occur elsewhere in the text).

〈28〉 -¿saśāna?〈śāsanaṁ〉 ¿saśāna?〈śāsanaṁ〉 maram¿a?〈ā〉c¿a?〈ā〉ryy¿a?〈e〉ṇā-

likhi〈taṁ〉 ◇ *-¿saśāna?〈śāsana-〉¿saśānama?〈śāsanM〉r¿a?〈ā〉m¿a?〈ā〉c¿a?〈ā〉ryy¿a?〈e〉ṇā-likhi〈taṁ〉* HKN • I prefer to emend slightly differently than HKN in the first part of this segment; simple dittography is also possible, in which case one of the iterations is to be ignored. However, if the text was indeed meant to be verse, then HKN's emendation is preferable. For the latter part of the segment, note that a Maramācārya was the writer of the Zulakallu plates of Vijayāditya I; he may have been the grandfather of the present Maramācārya.

Translation

1.

Let all manner of thing always be well for all the world, and let it be well in all regards for cows, Brahmins and kings.

〈2–16〉 Greetings. 〈In the dynasty of the Cālukyas〉—who are of the Mānavya gotra which is praised by the entire world, who are sons of Hāriti, who attained kingship by the grace of Kauśikī's boon, who are protected by the band of Mothers, who were deliberately appointed (to kingship) by Lord Mahāsena, to whom the realms of adversaries instantaneously submit at the 〈mere〉 sight of the superior Boar emblem they have acquired by the grace of the divine Nārāyaṇa, whose bodies have been hallowed through washing in the purificatory ablutions (*avabhṛtha*) of the Aśvamedha sacrifice, who have attained the five great sounds[1] 〈and whose insignia of power are?〉 the ¿kettledrum? (*paḍa*), the ¿hand drum? (*ḍhakkā*), the pennant garland (*pāli-ketana*), the rippling cluster of chowries, and (images of) Gaṅgā and Yamunā stationed on the two sides of the doorway of their ceremonial gate (*gopura*)—〈was born〉 His Majesty King (*mahārāja*) Viṣṇuvardhana (IV), the supremely pious Emperor (*mahārājādhirāja*) and Supreme Lord (*parameśvara*), beloved of the Earth (*pṛthivī-vallabha*) and shelter of all the world (*sarva-lokāśraya*), the supreme devotee of Maheśvara, who was deliberately appointed (as heir) by his mother and father. His son King (*mahārāja*) Vijayāditya (II)'s son His Majesty Viṣṇuvardhana (V) who is named Kali-Viṭṭara has, jointly with the town assembly (*nagara*), installed a *liṅga* and has granted land (sufficient) for sowing a hundred and eight *khaṇḍikā*s of *kodrava* seed to that (deity) Nagareśvara Bhaṭṭāraka in the town of Vijayavāṭa, having purchased (the land) by handing over gold to Droṇakuṟṟa Bhaṭṭa of the Kāśyapa *gotra*. 〈The donation was made?〉 to His Reverence (*bhavotpada*)[2]

[1]The expression *pañca-mahāśabda* probably refers to being honoured by the sound of five musical instruments, but may also mean five titles beginning with "great". See Fleet 1888, pp. 296–298, n. 9 for a discussion.

[2]Intended for *bhagavat-pāda* or *bhavat-pāda*.

Paśupati, disciple of the preceptor (*ācārya*) Amṛtasoma who was the disciple of His Reverence (bhagavanta) Balasoma, who lived in the Gaṁgaṛa cave in Ujjayini.

〈17–19〉 〈Viṣṇuvardhana V〉 commands all householders (*kuṭumbin*)—including foremost the territorial overseers (*rāṣṭrakūṭa*)—who reside in Kaṇḍeṛuvāṭi district (*viṣaya*) as follows: let it be known to you that we 〈have given this land〉 with exemption from all taxes on the occasion of the winter solstice, 〈the donation being〉 sanctified by (a libation of) water.

〈19–20〉 Its boundaries 〈are as follows〉. To the east, the high road. To the south, the high road. To the west, the high road. To the north, the village named ¿Cintaguṇṭhapunna?.

〈21–22〉 Let no-one pose an obstacle (to his enjoyment of his rights) over it. He who does so, shall be conjoined with the five great sins. Vyāsa too has said,

2.

Many 〈kings〉 have granted land, and many have preserved it 〈as formerly granted〉. Whosoever at any time owns the land, the fruit {reward 〈accrued of granting it〉} belongs to him at that time.

3.

He who would seize land, whether given by himself or by another, shall be born as a worm in faeces for sixty thousand years.

4.

It is not 〈actual〉 poison that is 〈properly〉 called poison: it is the property of a god that is said to be poison. Poison kills just the one man, while 〈seizing〉 the property of a god 〈destroys〉 his progeny.

5.

The executor (*ājñapti*) of this provision (*dharma*) is the maternal uncle of Viṣṇuvardhana: King (*bhūpati*) Vikramāditya, who has conquered the circle of the earth with his valour.

6.

〈This〉 copperplate charter (*tāmra-śāsana*) of Nagareśvara Bhaṭṭāra is a royal decree (*śāsana*), written (*ālikhita*) by Maramācārya for the sake of Nagareśvara Bhaṭṭāraka.

Translation into French by Estienne-Monod 2008

1.

Prospérité éternelle pour l'univers entier, ici, Que les vaches, les brahmanes et les rois aient en toutes choses la prospérité !

〈1–16〉 Prospérité ! 〈Ornement de la lignée des Calukya〉 illustres, du même *gotra* que les descendants de Manu, honorés dans l'univers entier, fils de Hāritī, qui obtinrent leur royaume grâce à l'excellente faveur de Kauśikī, protégés par la troupes des Mères, méditant aux pieds du seigneur Mahāsena, dont le cercle des ennemis fut soumis en un instant à la vue du signe illustre de l'excellent sanglier, faveur octroyée par le bienheureux Nārāyaṇa, dont les corps furent purifiés par le bain purificatoire de l'*aśvamedha*, celui qui a érigé sur les deux rives de la Gaṅgā et de la Yamunā des portails et des Gopura en grand nombre, qui sont le blanc parasol et le chasse-mouches que l'on agite, emblèmes des souverains des Ḍhakka, 〈environnés〉 des clameurs-bruits intenses- de tous ceux qui s'y pressent, 〈est〉 Pṛthivīvallabha, roi suprême des grands rois, seigneur suprême, très pieux, illustre dévôt de Maheśvara, méditant aux pieds de sa mère et de son père, fils du grand roi Vijayāditya, 〈lui-même〉 fils du grand roi illustre Viṣṇuvardhana, refuge de tous les hommes, 〈cet〉 illustre grand roi nommé Kali Viṭṭara a donné, après avoir érigé avec un conseil de marchands[3] un *liṅga* dans la ville de Vijayavāṭa, un terrain, où l'on peut semer cent huit *khaṇḍikā* de *kodrava*, qui a été acheté[4] à l'excellent chef des marchands, par l'intermédiaire Droṇakuṟṟabhaṭṭa,[5] du *gotra* de Kaśyapa, aux pieds du bienheureux Paśupati, disciple du maître Amṛtasoma, 〈 lui-même〉 disciple du bienheureux Balasoma d'Ujjayinī, habitant à Gaṅgaṟa-Guhā.

〈17–19〉 A tous les chefs de familles habitant dans le viṣaya de Kaṇḍeṟuvāḍi, *rāṣṭrakūṭa* en tête, 〈le roi〉 ordonne ceci : qu'il soit connu de vous que par nous, à l'occasion du solstice d'été, après avoir fait une libation d'eau, 〈ce terrain〉 est exempté de toute taxe.

〈19–20〉 Ses limites sont : à l'est la grande route, au sud la grande route, à l'ouest la grande route, au nord le village nommé Cintaguṇṭipunta.

〈21–22〉 Aucune charge ne doit lui être imposée, celui qui en impose est lié aux cinq grands crimes. Vyāsa a dit :

2.

[3] D.C. Sircar, 1966, p. 208.
[4] unique mention de notre corpus sur un échange de valeurs lors d'une donation.
[5] littéralement : ayant donné de l'or à Droṇakuṟṟabhaṭṭa.

beaucoup ont donné une terre, beaucoup l'ont protégée, celui qui possède la terre en possède le fruit.

3.

Qu'elle soit donnée par lui ou par un autre, celui qui prend une terre renaît ver de terre dans les excréments pendant soixante mille ans.

4.

Le poison n'est pas un poison, dit-on : c'est le bien d'un dieu qu'on appelle 〈poison〉 : un poison tue un seul homme, le bien d'un dieu tue le fils et le petit-fils.

5.

L'exécuteur de cette donation est l'oncle de Viṣṇuvardhana, le seigneur Vikramāditya, dont le vaillance a conquis le cercle de la terre.

6.

Le commandement que contient cette charte de cuivre, émanant de l'excellent chef des marchands, a été gravé par le maître Rāma pour le compte de l'excellent chef des marchands.

Commentary

For the strange and in all likelihood corrupt passage in lines 7-8, compare grants of the Western Cālukya Vijayāditya, which include some variations of the phrase *gaṁgā-yamunā-pāḷi-dhvaja-paḍa-ḍhakkā-mahāśabda-cihnaka-māṇikya-mataṁgajādīn* [as things that Vijayāditya conferred on (or acquired for the sake of?) his father], e.g. Fleet 1880, lines 23-24 and Sankalia 1921–1922 lines 24-25. Compare also *gaṁgā-yamunā-pāḷi-dhvaja-daḍakkādi-paṁca-mahāśabda-cihne* in lines 13-14 of an inscription of Pulikeśi I ((1878). Narasimhaswami cites the parallel *dvāri pratiṣṭhāpita-gaṅgā-yamunā-candrāditya-pāli-ketana-samadhigataḥ pañca-mahāśabda* from the Sātalūru plates of Vijayāditya III.[6] The composer of the present inscription probably intended the compound ending with *-yamunā* in a way similar to my restoration in the edition, though it is also possible that this compound was meant to qualify Viṣṇuvardhana (rather than the dynasty), and was intended to end in something like *-lakṣaṇaḥ*.

The concluding verse may have been intended for another *anuṣṭubh* stanza and was taken as such by Naradimhaswami. If so, then quarter c is probably meant to be a

[6] Narasimhaswami or the *Bhāratī* editor emends *-samadhigataḥ* to *-samadhigata-*, but this is not warranted in that context.

na-vipulā or bha-vipulā (but metrically defective in both cases), and I see no possible way to fit the last quarter to an *anuṣṭubh* template.

Bibliography

Reported in ARIE 1953–54, p. 14, appendix A/1953-1954, № 1 with discussion in ARIE 1953–54, p. 2. Discussed before edition by N. Lakshminarayan Rao in Journal of Oriental Research (Madras), vol. 23, p89ff.[7] Edited (with estampages, no translation) by H. K. Narasimhaswami (1967–1968). The present edition by Dániel Balogh is based on a collation of Narasimhaswami's text with his facsimiles and with estampages preserved at the ASI (Mysore).[8] Metadata associated with this edition have been published separately in Balogh 2026, available on Zenodo.

Primary

[HKN] Narasimhaswami, H. K. 1967–1968. "Cheruvu-Madhavaram Plates of Kali-Vishnuvardhana." EI 37, pp. 41–44.

Secondary

ARIE 1953–54. *Annual report on Indian epigraphy for 1953-54*. Edited by Dines Chandra Sircar. Delhi: Manager of Publications (Department of Archaeology), 1958.

Balogh, Dániel. 2026. "Metadata for the DHARMA editions of Veṅgī Cālukya copper plates." Zenodo. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22827003. [URL].

[7] Not traced; the year is probably 1953; article title and page range not known.
[8] The estampages are accompanied by a Devanagari transcript.