

JÁNOS HARMATTA

THE INSCRIPTION OF TIRAVHARṆA KṢATRAPA

Summary: The Karoṣṭhī inscription of Tiravharṇa kṣatrapa (discovered in the suburb of Jalālābād in 1923, kept in the Kabul Museum) was set up in honour of the satrap by a man bearing the Indian name Malaṣua. The purpose of the inscription was to commemorate the building of a lotus tank and its inauguration by the ceremony of libation with running water (*udagajaladhobuveṇa*), as well as to express the chief desire of the donor to have a son (*putreṣṭapareṇa*). Tiravharṇa was of Indo-Parthian descent and he did not acknowledge the authority of the Saka king Moga, ruling in Gāndhāra at that time (83 BC).

Key words: Karoṣṭhī, Tiravharṇa kṣatrapa, Malaṣua, Saka, Moga, Gāndhāra.

In spite of its shortness, the Karoṣṭhī inscription of Tiravharṇa kṣatrapa aroused keen interest in Indian epigraphic research. This inscribed stone, discovered during the opening of an irrigation channel in the southern suburb of Jalālābād in 1923, is currently kept in the Kabul Museum. S. Konow was the first to publish it on the basis of an excellent photo made by B. Rowland. He proposed the following reading and interpretation of the inscription (Figs 1–2):

line 1 Tiravharṇasa kṣatrapasa Puṣpa[urasa*]
line 2 vaṣa 20 20 20 20 III u[ṭaravi*] [ha]raṇmi
line 3 cobuveṇa Puṣpap[urasa*]
line 4 Malaṣueṇa karavida
line 5 ia p[u]karaṇi

Translation: “This tank was caused to be made by Malaṣua, Puṣpapura’s cobuva, in the North Monastery, year 83, under Tiravharṇa, Puṣpapura’s kṣatrapa”.¹

It was already clear from the first publication that the main difficulty in reading and interpreting the inscription is in part due to the damage of the inscribed stone surface, as a result of which several characters disappeared, and in part to the uniden-

¹ KONOW, S.: Kabul Museum Stone Inscription of the Year 83. *AO* 16, 1938, 234–240.



Fig. 1. The inscription of Tiranvharṇa kṣatrapa (after G. Dj. Davary)

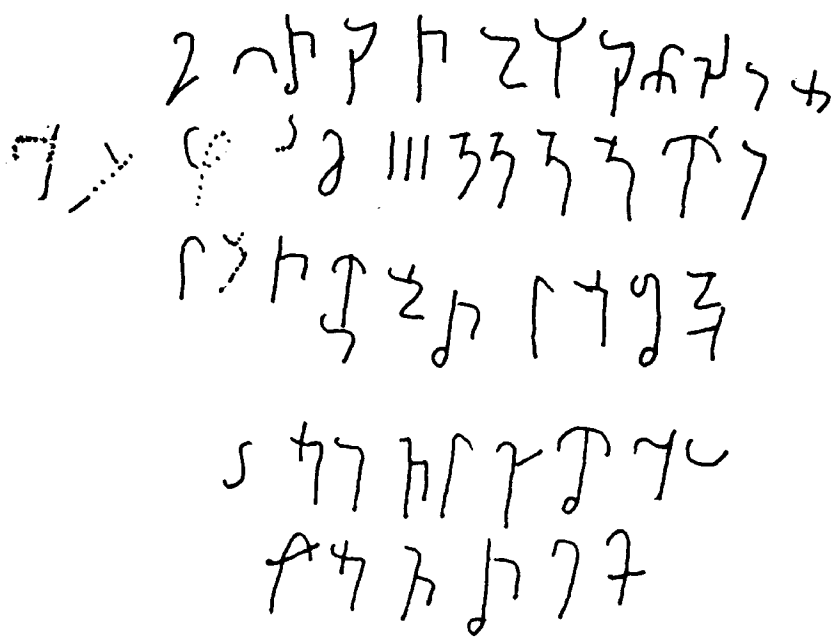


Fig. 2. Autography of the inscription, based on Fig. 1

tified word, read as *cobuveṇa* by Konow. All scholars who later studied this stone inscription tried to offer a plausible reading of its text and a convincing interpretation of the enigmatic form *cobuveṇa*.

Unaware of S. Konow’s publication, H. Humbach again published the inscription thirty years later. He read and interpreted its text as follows:

	line 1	Tiravharṇasa kṣatrapasa p?āśa(h)a
	line 2	vasa XX XX XX XX III U[?-1?
	line 3	dhoburaṇaputreś-Tap?-a[?
	line 4	majhaṣueṇa karavida
	line 5	ia pukaraṇi
Translation:	line 1	“Under Tiravharṇa the kṣatrapa, in the Paśaha
	line 2	year 83, by U-
	line 3	dhoburaṇas’ son, Tapa-
	line 4	majhaṣua was caused to be made
	line 5	a tank here”. ²

Somewhat later, however, Humbach became acquainted with S. Konow’s paper and again studied this inscription.³ He noted that the reading and restoration *Puṣpa[urasa]*, proposed by Konow cannot be accepted and replaced it as well as his own initial proposal of *p?āśa(h)a* with the undoubtedly correct reading *puyae*.

Soon afterwards, G. Fussman again took up the study of this inscribed stone and being unaware of the second paper by Humbach, he proposed the following reading and interpretation of its text:

	line 1	Tiravharṇasa kṣatrapasa śi[va][e]
	line 2	vaṣa 20 20 20 20 III u[...]
	line 3	cobuveṇa Putreṣpap[...]
	line 4	Malaṣueṇa karavida
	line 5	ia pukaraṇi
Translation:	line 1	“For the prosperity of the kṣatrapa Tiravharṇa
	line 2	year 83, at U[...]
	line 3	the cobuva Malaṣua, the son of Putreṣpa(?)
		(alternately “the cobuva Putreṣpa [...] and Malaṣua”
		or “the cobuva Putreṣpap[...] Malaṣua”
	line 4	caused to be made
	line 5	this tank.” ⁴

² HUMBACH, H.: Die Inschrift des Kṣatrapa Tiravharṇa. *IJJ* 21, 1968, 29–33.
³ HUMBACH, H., *MSS* 23, 1968, 45–48.
⁴ FUSSMAN, G.: Inscriptions kharoṣṭhi du Musée de Caboul. *BEFEO* 57, 1970, 43–51.

Finally, G. Dj. Davary who published excellent photos of both the inscription and its latex squeeze also revised the reading of the inscription of Tiravharṇa. He rejected the reading *śi[va][e]* proposed by Fussman and confirmed the reading *puyae* preferred by Humbach.⁵ On the basis of the photos published by him, it is now possible to establish the text of the inscription of Tiravharṇa reassuringly.

Remarks on the reading:

Line 1. The reading of the word *puyae* (<**pūjāyai*, dative of *pūjā* ‘honour’) is absolutely certain. The misreading *śi[vae]* can be ascribed to taking the akṣaras *pu* and *ya* for one character instead of two and by neglecting the *u*-mātrā in the akṣara *pu*. However, both characters can be clearly identified and the *u*-mātrā can also be well discerned on Figs 3 and 4 published by Davary.⁶

Line 2. At the beginning of the line, the second akṣara should be read as *ṣe* in the word *vaṣa* because the *e*-mātrā can be clearly seen on Fig. 3 published by Davary. Otherwise, this line was correctly read already by Konow up to the gap caused by the broken surface of the stone in the form *vaṣa XX XX XX XX III u[]*. Even so, his reading and restoration of the text after the clearly visible *u*-akṣara, namely *[taraviha]raṇmi*, cannot be accepted. First of all, the gap is only sufficient for three akṣaras. Moreover, after the gap only the traces of one akṣara can be well observed. This is a vertical stroke that cannot be restored as *mi* because in this case the upper ends of the akṣara would be visible on the stone. The little damaged surface in the middle of the vertical stroke only suffices for the left side stroke of the akṣara *la*. Thus, the correct reading of this passage is *u[...]/la*.

As regards the disappeared three characters, several traces of their figures can still be observed. A short vertical stroke can be seen at the edge of the gap, after the *u*-akṣara. In view of its resemblance to the character *da* of the word *karavida* in line 4, it can also be considered the remains of the middle part of an akṣara *da*. Similarly, two short strokes can be observed on the opposite edge of the gap, too. The lower stroke slants slightly to the right, the upper one slants to the left and their inclination to each other is about 120°. The akṣara to be restored on the basis of these rests may be mostly *ja*. Even the faint contours of a third one can be discerned between these two letters. This character was incised so deeply that its faint traces remained visible even after the surface of the stone was broken. The contours of this akṣara resemble the Greek letter *phi*, accordingly it can be read as *ga* in the Kharoṣṭhī alphabet. Thus, the whole word can be read as *u[daga-ja]la*.

Line 3. The enigmatic word *cobuveṇa* does not exist here. The first akṣara can only be read as *dho*. True enough, the forms of *ca* and *dha* are similar, but the upper stroke of *ca* is curved, while that of *dha* is straight. Consequently, the character in question can only be read as *dho*. At the same time, the reading *dhobureṇa* of the whole word is again impossible because the third akṣara can only be read as *ve*. The forms of the characters *va* and *ra* are also similar, but the upper stroke of *va* is a straight horizontal one, while that of *ra* curves upwards at the end.

⁵ DAVARY, G. Dj.: Epigraphische Forschungen in Afghanistan. *St. Ir.* 10, 1981, 53–59.

⁶ DAVARY, *op. cit.*, Plate II.

The next word was read as *puṣpap[* by Konow, as *-putreś-Tapa[* by Humbach and as *putrespap[* by Fussman. These readings are rather divergent. Regarding the second character, there can be no doubt that its correct reading was found by Humbach and Fussman because the same akṣara can also be observed in line 1, in the word *kṣatrapa*. The readings of the third letter also differ. This represents a compound akṣara whose upper part is the character *ṣa*, while its lower part may be regarded as *ta* or *ra*. However, taking into consideration that the consonant cluster *-ṣr-* cannot occur in Gāndhārī Prakrit, the language of the inscription, the character in question should be identified as *ta* and the compound akṣara should be read as *ṣta*. Thus, the correct reading of the surviving part of the second word should be *pu-treṣṭapa[*.

The surface of the stone is broken after this word, but even so, traces of two akṣaras can still be discerned. The first akṣara appears to be a *ra* with *e*-mātrā, i.e. *re*, while the second one can be regarded as *ma*. Consequently, the whole word can be read as *putreṣṭapa[reṇa]*.

Line 5. Only one correction is necessary here. The third character *ra* in the word *pukaraṇi* (< *puṣkariṇi* 'lotus tank') should be read as *ri* because the *i*-mātrā can be clearly discerned on the photo of the inscription. Thus, the corrected text of the inscription is as follows.

line 1	Tiravharṇasa kṣatrapasa puyae
line 2	vaṣe XX XX XX XX III u[dagaja]la-
line 3	dhobuveṇa putreṣṭapa[reṇa]
line 4	malaṣueṇa karavida
line 5	ia pukariṇi

Remarks on the interpretation:

The inscription is written in Gāndhārī Prakrit, the language of North-Western India.⁷ Konow, Humbach, and Fussman have already correctly interpreted the greater part of its text from linguistic viewpoint. Thus, there are only some phrases which still need to be explained.

Lines 2–3. One of these phrases is the enigmatic *u[dagaja]ladhobuveṇa*, the Old Indian antecedent of which can be restored in the form **udakajaladhavapūrveṇa* on the basis of the phonetic development of Gāndhārī Prakrit. This compound consists of four elements: *udaka-jala-dhava-pūrva-*. The first word, *udaka-*, represents a well-known term in Indian inscriptions meaning 'libation (of water)', the second and third one, *jala-dhava-*, means 'running water', while the fourth one is used to denote 'together, with'.⁸ Accordingly, the meaning of the whole compound phrase is 'with libation of running water'. The compound *udagajaladhobuva-* has some parallels in Indian inscriptions. Such phrases with similar meaning include *udakadhārā-*,

⁷ For Gāndhārī, cp. KONOW, S.: *Kharoshthī Inscriptions with the Exception of Those of Aśoka*. CII Vol. II, Part I. Calcutta 1929, XCV–CXV; BURROW, T.: *The Language of the Kharoshthī Documents from Chinese Turkestan*. Cambridge 1937; BAILEY, H. W.: Gāndhārī. *BSOAS* 11, 1946, 764–797.

⁸ SIRCAR, D. C.: *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*. Delhi–Varanasi–Patna 1996, 347.

udakapūrvam, and *udakātisargeṇa*, meaning ‘with libation of water’.⁹ All these phrases refer to the ceremony of pouring water on the hand of the recipient, while making a ceremonial gift of an object that cannot be placed into his hands.¹⁰

The other still unexplained phrase is *putreṣṭaparena*. This is again a compound consisting of three elements: *putra-iṣṭa-para-*. Of these words *putra-* does not need any commentary. The meaning of *iṣṭa-* being ‘desire, wish’, the compound *putreṣṭa-* can be interpreted as ‘desire, wish to have a son’. Lastly, the meaning of *para-* may be ‘having as chief desire’. Thus, the whole phrase *putreṣṭapara-* can be interpreted as ‘having the chief desire to have a son’.

Line 4. The name *Malaṣua* also requires some commentary. Konow and Fussman regarded this name as an Iranian one of unknown etymology. However, such an assumption would only be acceptable if one could propose a plausible Iranian etymology for this name. As a matter of fact, the name *Malaṣua* can be explained as a name of Indian origin without any difficulty. On the basis of the phonetic development of Gāndhārī Prakrit, its Old Indian antecedent can be restored in the form **Mālāśruta-*¹¹ which may be interpreted in the sense ‘renowned by wreath (or rose-wreath used in praying)’.

On the basis of the above remarks, the text of the inscription can be interpreted as follows:

- line 1 “In honour of Tiravharṇa kṣatrapa.
- line 2 In year XX XX XX XX III. With libations
- line 3 of running water, having the chief desire to have a son,
- line 4 Malaṣua has
- line 5 this lotus-tank made.”

The inscription is dated to year 83 of the so-called Era of Eucratides, discovered by P. Bernard on the basis of an inscription at Ay Khanum.¹² The beginning of this era can be put at 166 BC.¹³ Thus the date of the inscription corresponds to 83 BC. This was the historical period in the course of which the Sakas invading North-Western India across the Karakorum pass, established their first kingdom there. The first known Saka king was Moga, mentioned in the Taxila copper plate inscription of the era-year 78¹⁴ (his name is spelt *Maues* in the Greek legend of his coins). Fussman had already noted that the inscription at Jalālābād did not mention the king Moga/Maues and he tried to explain this by assuming that he had perhaps already died in 83 or that his authority was never acknowledged by Tiravharṇa.¹⁵ For lack of historical data we cannot ascertain when Moga died, but in any case the name of Tiravhar-

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ For the phonetic change *śr* > *ṣ* and the disappearance of *-t-*, cp. BURROW, *op. cit.* 8,14.

¹² BERNARD, P.: Campagne de fouille de 1987 à Ai Khanoum. *BEFEO* 68, 1980, 22-27.

¹³ HARMATTA, J.: *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*. II. Unesco 1994, 424.

¹⁴ KONOW, *op. cit.* (note 7), 23 ff.

¹⁵ FUSSMAN, *op. cit.* (note 4), 51.

ṇa is of Parthian origin and he may have belonged to the Indo-Parthian aristocracy that later established the Indo-Parthian kingdom under the leadership of Guduvhara/Gondophares. Thus, even through this short Kharoṣṭhī inscription, we can obtain a modest glimpse into the complicated history of Ancient North-Western India.

Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities
H-1361 Budapest P.O.B. 107