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Jost Gippert, Frankfurt 2015

An unusual account of the *Mi'rāṣ*

JOST GIPPERT (Frankfurt/Main)

When I published my first notice on a Maldivian copper plate grant containing a short account of Muḥammad's fabulous journey to Jerusalem and his ascension to heaven, the so-called *Mi'rāṣ* legend, in 2003,¹ JENS PETER LAUT drew my attention to the fact that he had just been supervising a comprehensive thesis on the Uyghur *Mi'rāṣnāme*,² a source that agrees with the Maldivian account in many a detail indeed.³ This is all the more remarkable in view of the geographical distance between the Maldivian Islands and the Central Asian homeland of the Uyghurs; it can, however, be regarded as the result of a common background, given that both the Maldivians and the Uyghurs were converted to Islam from Buddhism,⁴ and the question as to what extent Buddhist thought may have survived in the peculiar design of the Uyghur legend has been raised with good reason.⁵ In the present paper, I intend to outline the state of knowledge on the Maldivian text that has been achieved during the past 10 years, with a view to make it accessible for comparative studies and thus to gain more insights into the text itself, which is still far from being clear in all its details.

1. The Maldivian *lōmāfānu* grants

When the Maldives were converted to Islam in the middle of the 12th century AD,⁶ the islands looked back on a timespan of at least five centuries of literacy, witnessed to by a small set of Buddhist inscriptions on coral stone written either in Sanskrit or in a Prakrit⁷ that can be taken to be the ancestor of the Maldivian language (Divehi).⁸ In contrast to this,

¹ GIPPERT 2003, 31–47.

² SCHERBERGER 2003. My thanks are due to the author for providing me with a copy of the thesis.

³ Cf. GIPPERT 2003, 40, n. 21 with further reference to SÉGUY 1977, 34.

⁴ Cf. GIPPERT 2003, passim as to the circumstances of the Islamisation of the Maldives.

⁵ Cf. SCHERBERGER 2003, ch. V: „Religionswissenschaftlicher Ausblick“, 123–8.

⁶ Cf. GIPPERT 2003, passim as to the dating of the Islamisation of the Maldives.

⁷ Cf. GIPPERT 2004, 81–109 and forthcoming.

⁸ Cf. GIPPERT 2003, 31 n. 2 as to the name of the language.

the oldest extant monuments written in Divehi proper are three copper plate grants issued by the Islamic king Gaganāditya⁹ in the late 12th century, with other grants of this type following up to the 15th century; all these documents (named *lōmāfānu*, i.e. “great leaf of copper”, in Divehi)¹⁰ concern, as *waqf* decrees, the donation of land and other properties to newly-founded mosques. Both by their outer shape, which strongly resembles that of palm leaf *pustakas* (cf. Fig. 1), and by their style, which finds striking parallels in Buddhist copper plate decrees from Sri Lanka and Southern India, the *lōmāfānus* exhibit clear traits of the pre-Islamic written tradition of the Maldives.

1.1 The dating of the oldest *lōmāfānus*

Of the three *lōmāfānu* grants issued by king Gaganāditya, only one contains the short account on the Prophet’s *Mīrāj* thematised here. Although the first plate of this *lōmāfānu* (hereafter: L1) has been lost, it is clear from the dating contained on the recto of its second plate (plate “F” = “2”,¹¹ cf. Fig. 2) that it is one of the two oldest documents of this type. The actual dating as appearing in the three grants is remarkable indeed, given that it is not based upon the Prophet’s *Hiğra* as in most later Maldivian documents¹² but on a twofold calculation, one consisting in an addition of the years of the individual kings of the ruling dynasty up to the act of decreeing, and one, in a reference to the Prophet’s “attaining heaven”. The bulk of information assembled in this way can be illustrated by aligning the introductions of the two complete *lōmāfānus* issued by Gaganāditya, which are about the foundation of mosques on the islands of Isdū (L2) and Daṁbidū (L3) in Haddummati atoll¹³; it is obvious that the text of L1, the object of which is the island of Gamu in the same part of the Maldives, must have contained

⁹ Cf. GIPPERT 2003, 34 n. 13 as to the king’s name and its spelling.

¹⁰ Of a total of eight *lōmāfānus* that have been identified so far, only four have been available for investigation at the National Centre for Linguistic and Historical Research at Māle’ during 1999 and 2002. For surveys and former treatises of *lōmāfānu* documents cf. FRITZ 2002, 215–6; BELL 1940 and 1922–35. The two most voluminous *lōmāfānus* (L2 and L3) were edited by scholars from the Maldives and Sri Lanka; cf. *Loamaafaanu: Transliteration, Translation and Notes on Palaeography* 1982; and MANIKU/WIJAYAWARDHANA 1986.

¹¹ The plates are numbered with autochthonous digits applied on their verso; cf. Fig. 3 for pl. “F”. Cf. GIPPERT 2013, as to details.

¹² Esp. in decrees on paper and wood (so-called *fatkoḷus*, cf. FRITZ 2002, 217–8) and in inscriptions (tombstones etc., cf. ib., 219–23), which are attested since the 16th century AD.

¹³ Cf. GIPPERT 2003, 34 n. 10 as to the atoll name.

the same information on its lost first plate, given that its text joins that of the others within the formulaic series of Sanskrit epithets praising the grantor, Gaganāditya.¹⁴

1.1.1 The two complete *lōmāfānus* begin with the following enumeration of kings' reigns:¹⁵

svasti śrī somavaṁśa ādipati śrī tīmuge śrī mānābaraṇa mārasun

Hail (to) His Majesty, the ruler of the Moon Dynasty, Mānābharāṇa,¹⁶ the Mahārāja of the Tīmu (house),

puṇa dese reda vuṇadai ekaviṁśatī avurodun ikit vī kal

after 25 years had passed since his having taken over the reign over all the land

reda obun side

(and) when (his) reign had passed away,

mi rasunsia beni svasti śrī tribuvanaādītya mārasun

this king's brother, hail (to) His Majesty Tribhuvanāditya the Mahārāja,

reda vuṇad^hai paṇṣatrimśatī avurodun ikit vī kal

after 35 years had passed since his having taken over the reign,

mi rasunsya mal svasti śrī buvanābarṇa mārasun

this king's nephew (?), hail (to) His Majesty Bhuvanābharāṇa the Mahārāja,

reda vuṇadai nuvavana avurodun ikit vī kal

after 9 years had passed since his having taken over the reign,

mi rasunasya beni svasti śrī darmmānānda nam mārasun

this king's brother, hail (to) His Majesty Dharmānanda the Mahārāja,

¹⁴ The "common" text printed below represents a simplified transcription; a more fine-grained transliteration is currently being prepared in the frame of a comprehensive edition of Old Maldivian written documents. Bold characters are used to indicate the common wording of all three *lōmāfānus*. As to the rendering of Sanskrit and other foreign terms in Maldivian writing cf. GIPPERT 2004 [2005], 173–94, and GIPPERT in print, *passim*.

¹⁵ This and the following translations are meant to render the original wording as closely as possible, the left-branching syntax of Maldivian with deeply embedded participle and absolute constructions causing a rather awkward style in right-branching English.

¹⁶ Cf. MONIER-WILLIAMS 1899 [1951], 1331 for this Sanskrit compound appearing as the name of a king in "Inscr(iptions)"; the meaning might be something like "ornament of thought".

reda vuṇadai nuvavana avurodun ikit vī kal
after 9 years had passed since his having taken over the reign,

reda ni vuṇu side (<<<< L3)
(and) when (his) reign no longer existed,

mi rasunsya beni (L3: *mal*) *svasti śrīmat*
this king's brother (L3: nephew), hail (to) His Majesty,

somabaṁśotdaraṇa kanakārocaṇa āsaṁlastamba śavālakṣadīparakṣaṇa
the uplifter of the Lunar Dynasty (Skt. *somavaṁśoddharaṇa*), shining like
gold (Skt. *kanakarocana*), an unmovable pillar (Skt. *acalastambha*),
protector of all 100,000 islands (Skt. *sarvalakṣadvīparakṣaṇa*),

batdracandarabib^{hi}hāvidyāvinoda śakaḷakamīlāṇa anuragesvara
skilful in the recognition of prosperous moon-discs (Skt.
bhadracandrabimbasaṁvidyāvinoda [?]), **with beautiful limbs** (Skt.
śakalakalyāṇa), **a lord of affection** (Skt. *anurāgeśvara*),

ratunākara maṇimakūṭaband^{hi}ta śrīmat gag^{ha}anādītya mārasun (L1: *māras*)¹⁷
a maker of pearls (Skt. *ratnakara*), **braided with gem(s and) crown(s)** (Skt.
maṇimakūṭabandhita), **His Majesty Gaganāditya the Mahārāja**,

ekarādya vuṇadai (L3; om. L2; <<]*ṇadana* L1)¹⁷
after having become the sole king (L3; om. L2; being [?] L1)

tinvana (L1, L2) / *sataruvana* (L3) *avurodun ...*
in (his) third (L1, L3) / fourth (L3) **year ...**

1.1.2 This enumeration is by and large confirmed by the so-called *Rādavaḷi*, an autochthonous chronicle compiled before the 18th century, which exists in several copies.¹⁸ The divergences between the *Rādavaḷi* and the *lōmāfānus*, esp. in the name forms, can clearly be explained as resulting from errors in secondary transmission. The relevant passage of the *Rādavaḷi* text can be established as printed below;¹⁹ note that the chronicle provides us with the pre-enthronisation names of the kings, beginning

¹⁷ Of the present plate ("F") of L1, about one third has been broken off so that appr. 16 of the average of 48 akṣaras per line are missing.

¹⁸ Cf. FRITZ 2002, 218 as to the three copies known so far (here styled A, B, C).

¹⁹ The text is established on the basis of C, the only copy that has been available for thorough inspection so far. C₂ denotes the repetition of information contained in p. 9 of C (cf. FRITZ 2002, 218). Note that the *Rādavaḷi* has been preserved in both *Dives akuru* and *Tāna* scripts (cf. GIPPERT 2013, as to the interrelationship of the different scripts), which implies that in the transcripts, (*Dives akuru*) *p* and (*Tāna*) *f* are equivalents.

with the name of the founder of the dynasty, *keimalā* (v.ll. *keimalei*, *kēmalā*), which obviously represents Skt. *ketumāla* denoting a 'wearer of a garland of banner(s)' as a *bahuvrīhi* compound.²⁰

ekkala (*ekkalē* C, < C₂) *tīmugē* (+ *ran* B) *keimalei* (*kēmalei* C₂, *kēmalā* C) *kalōa'* (*kalege'* A)

At this very time, Lord Keimala (+ the Golden B) of the Tīmu house,
suvastī sirī tīmuge (> A) *rannapireru* (*ranfirēru* C, < AC₂) *mānābānna* (A, *miniabāruṇa* C, *bānābāruṇa* C₂) *mahāraduna ve'*
 was enthroned as – hail (to him)! – His Majesty Mānābharāṇa the
 Mahārāja, shining like gold (?),²¹ of the Tīmu house;
mi kalā raskan kuḷa aharu : 21 (20 B) :
 the reign of this lord (extended over) 21 (20) years.

mi radunāi (*rasgeāi* AC₂) (+ *ebbaḍu* A) *ekkihun ufan henevi māvākiṇage* (-*kilage* A, -*kilege* B) *fut funei* (*donei* BC₂, *dovemi* A) *kalamunjā'* (*kalamijjā'* AB)

(After him,) Prince Funei (Donei, Dovemi), son of Senāpati Māvākila, born
 from the same (A: belly and) womb as this king,
sirī buvanādittā (-*ātitta* C) *mahāraduna ve'* (+ : 2 : A)
 was enthroned as His Majesty Bhuvanāditya the Mahārāja (+ no. 2);
mi kalā islān nu ve raskan kuḷa hai duvahāi
 all the days of the reign of this lord not being a Muslim and
islān dīnugai (*dina'* A; *kamu* C₂)²² *raskan kuḷa hai duvahāi* (+ *eku* A) *aharu* :
 25;²³
 all the days of the reign of this lord in the Islamic faith (+ altogether)
 (sum up to) 25 years.

mi abāruṇa rasgeāi ekkihun nufan malei māvākiṇage fut mutei kalamunjān
 (After him,) Prince Mutei, son of Malei Māvākila, born from the same

²⁰ Cf. MONIER-WILLIAMS 1899 [1951], 309 for a mythical person (son of Āgnīdhra) and a people bearing the name of *ketumāla*. The question whether the use of the compound for "one of the nine great divisions of the known world (the western portion or *varṣa* of *jambū-dvīpa*, called after *ketu-māla*)" (ib.) can be taken to indicate the provenance of the founder of the Maldivian dynasty requires further investigation.

²¹ The interpretation of *ran(na)pireru* as "shining like gold" is based upon the assumption that the word is a synonym of *kanakarocana*, one of the epithets of king Gaganāditya in the *lōmāfānus*, with *ran(na)pireru* representing a formation like Skt. *hiranya-prarocana* or *-prarocita* (*-purūruc* 'shining brightly' is less probable as this formation occurs only in Vedic texts).

²² End of the repetition contained in C₂.

²³ End of the transcripts of A and B in BELL 1940, 198–9.

womb as that (first) king (bearing a name with the element) -*ābharaṇa* ('ornament'),

sirī buvanaabāruṇa mahāraduna ve'

was enthroned as Bhuvanābharaṇa the Mahārāja;

mi kalā raskan kuḷa aharu : 19 :

the reign of this is lord (extended over) 19 years.

rekehiriā māvākiṇage fut alī kalamunjān

(After him,) Prince Alī, the son of Rakṣasūrya (?) Māvākila,

sirī furanāda mahāraduna ve'

was enthroned as Parānanda the Mahārāja;

mi kalā raskan kuḷa aharu : 9 :

the reign of this is lord (extended over) 9 years.

fatihiriā māvākiṇage fut donei kalamunjān

(After him,) Prince Donei, the son of Prāptasūrya (?) Māvākila,

sirī gannāditta mahāraduna ve'

was enthroned as Gaganāditya the Mahārāja;

mi kalā raskan kuḷa aharu : 7 :

the reign of this is lord (extended over) 7 years.

As we can see, the only noteworthy difference between the *Rādavaḷi* text and that of the *lōmāfānus* consists in the amount of years assigned to Mānābharaṇa = Keimalei (as the last Pre-Islamic king), (Tri)bhuvanāditya (as the king during whose reign the islands were Islamised) and his successor, Bhuvanābharaṇa, with the sum of the two latter reigns remaining the same (25 + 19 vs. 35 + 9); there can be no doubt that the information given in the *lōmāfānus* is more reliable in this respect, given that they are near to contemporaneous.

Another difference consists in the fact that in the *Rādavaḷi*, the enumeration of the kings is preceded by an explicit reference to the Prophet's Hiḡra, the ascension of the throne by Keimalei being dated into the 536th year after it:

*afurenge (apuremenge B, afunge C) kau muḥammad rasūl (nabīy BCC₂)
fētānbarun (kalegepānu B, -nge C, kalōge C₂) hiḡrāin*²⁴

²⁴ Note that in version A, the word *hiḡrāin* is paraphrased by *furaituru makkāin hubahiriā madīnāa' gima' voḍigat* '(when he) deigned to go from excellent Makkā to sun-radiant Madīna', a formula found widespread in older Maldivian sources.

From the *Hiḡra* of our Lord Muḡammad the Messenger (and) Prophet
fāssatta (*passateka* B, *fassatēka* C, *fāssatura* C₂) *satirīs* (*satrīsvana* B, *tirīsvana*
 C) *aharu* (*averudu* C₂) *ha mahun* (+ ... A)
 in the five hundred and thirty-sixth (C: thirtieth) year (counted on from
 this), in the sixth month,
ekkala (*ekkalē* C, < C₂)...
 at this very time...

Taking this dating seriously, we have to assume January, 1142 AD for Keimala's enthronisation. Adding the reigns as given in both the *lōmāfānus* and the *Rādavaḷi*, we arrive at a time span of 78 (25 + 35 + 9 + 9) or, at least, 73 (20 + 25 + 19 + 9) years that would have passed between this event and the enthronisation of King Gaganāditya; if these were lunar years, we should then have to assume that the latter took place in 1217 or 1212 AD and the acts of decree that are thematised in L1, L2 and L3, in 1220/21 or 1215/16 AD. However, these calculations do not agree with the secondary dating provided by the *lōmāfānu* documents.

1.1.3 Of the three copper plate grants, only L1 proceeds immediately after the common introduction with the dating according to the Prophet's "attaining heaven", while the two other *lōmāfānus* first mention "preparatory" deeds of the Maldivian Mahārāja:²⁵

d^habuduvu matye (L3) ***pūṛbb^he kāpuru rasun*** *isd^huvu* (L2) ***keruvī verumāna bide***
Having destroyed the monasteries built formerly by the infidel kings on
Darḡbidū / Isdū (islands),
budu upurai
having uprooted the buddha (statue),
budāi mi budu vere ganna kulasagumāṇunāi mi emmen māle gen ais (L2)
 having taken the buddha (statue) and the members of the congregation
 that was hosted in this Buddhist monastery all together to Māle,
b^hujāi veraṭa mudala din tak māpansodāi rāja baṇḡāra aṭa balai gene (L2)
 having conspacted and confiscated the Buddha (statue) and all the
 tributes that had been given as taxes to the monastery, for the royal
 government,
sād^hat nu kī k^hāpurun maram evie vidārai (L2)
 after declaring: 'I shall kill all infidels that do not proclaim confession',
mahammadu petāmbarunge daruṣaṇa aṭa vadumā vī tak kāpurun nu marai (L2)
 (but) not killing all infidels that have declared 'we enter into the faith of
 Muḡammad the Prophet',

²⁵ In the following transcript, the text of the two *lōmāfānus* is aligned with compliant passages printed in bold letters again.

kāpurun (L3) *ṣādat kiavai*
by causing the infidels to proclaim confession (and),
sunnat koṭu
by undertaking circumcision
petāambarunge ṣerīā tibī alikun roda sipai (L3)
 by keeping the fasts in the way indicated in the prophet's *ṣarī'a*,
namādu koṭu (L3)
 by committing the prayer(s and)
devatāinaṭa aḷukamu kranāṭa (L3) *vīdelai ...*
ordering (them) to do a service to God ...

After these statements, L2 and L3 proceed to the dating according to the prophet's "attaining heaven", which is styled in quite the same way as in L1:

śrī mahammadu petāambarun dunien (L2) / *dunie vīdelai* (L3) *svargga vaḍaigat*
After His Majesty Muḥammad the Prophet ascended to heaven from earth /
 (while / after) ruling on earth,
pasuṣatt^ha *baāsi* (L1, L2) / *teāsi* (L3) *avurodu vī side* (L2) / *avurodu* (L3, L1
 def.)²⁶ ...
 when it was (L2) / in (L3) the five hundred eighty-second / -third year
 (after this) ...

After this lapidary notice, L2 and L3 continue with the deeds of Gaganāditya in connection with the mosques to be built, L2 resuming this "service" explicitly:

śrī gaḡ^hanādītya mārasu devatāinaṭa krana aḷukamak sintā koṭu (L2)
 His Majesty Gaganāditya, considering a service to be done to God,
śrī isuduvu (L2) / *dabud^huvu* (L3) *veru vatye bala avasu ṣobum bimak*
pennerepāṇu obai
by cleaning the ground ... and the paths leading to the water on the
monastery ground of famous Isdū / Daṃbidū,
pāsāṇa kātṭa aneka sitt^hra karmmaen (L2) *masudid^hu karuvai*
by causing a mosque to be built in another wonderful act ...²⁷

L1, however, deviates enormously from the common structure at the given position. First, it adds a few items that may be taken to indicate a more exact date, comprising the name of a lunar constellation, *mraggasīra*

²⁶ In L1, only the first akṣara of *avurodu* 'year' (Skt. *saṃvatsara*) has been preserved.

²⁷ The first two elements of the clause remain unclear.

nakṣattra, i.e. the lunar mansion (named) *Mṛgaśira*,²⁸ possibly with the day of the respective month being indicated by *bārggava* = Skt. *bhārgava* 'Friday' and **candra ekdi (?) netthi* 'one day missing of (full) moon'. Then it seems to name a certain *kehālava* as a helper (? *karaṇadāti*) and "another 1000 men (*aneka cāsra piri*) selected and taken with him (*gene ais balai*) for his own help (*timan eṣī*)", before it starts with a lengthy report on God's creation of heaven and earth, which also includes the account of the *mi'rāḡ* legend but which yields no further dating (cf. below).

We are thus left with the 582 (lunar) years indicated in both L1 and L2 as having passed after Muḥammad's "attaining heaven", which would yield AD 1196 if this means his death (in AH 632); if it means the prophet's *mi'rāḡ* (in AH 621), we arrive at AD 1185 instead. How, then, to cope with the difference as to the dating of Gaganāditya's reign implied in the *Rādavaḷi*? Possibly, we have to assume that the *hiḡra* dating that is associated with the enthronisation of Keimala/Mānābharaṇa in the chronicle, was rather meant to indicate the enthronisation of his successor, Tribhuvanāditya, under whom the islands were converted to Islam. This would roughly agree with the *hiḡra* year 548, i.e. AD 1153, indicated for the latter event in another epigraphical source, the *Gan filā fatkoḷu* of 1652,²⁹ as well as the so-called *Tāriḡ*, an account of the history of the Islamised Maldives compiled in Arabic by a certain Ḥasan Tāḡ ud-dīn in the beginning of the 19th century.³⁰ According to the latter source, Tribhuvanāditya's (spelt بونا آديت) reign ended in AH 561 (~ AD 1165), followed by Bhuvanābharaṇa's (بونا ابارن), Dharmānanda's (دمر ناج, in AH 580 ~ 1184), and Gaganāditya's (فناديت, in AH 588 ~ AD 1192),³¹ with the last date coming pretty close to the information given in the *lōmāfānus*, even though the extent of the individual reigns still differs. In any way, we can exclude on this basis that the dating of the *lōmāfānus* was reckoned according to the *mi'rāḡ* as this would again enlarge the differences.

2. The *mi'rāḡ* and its embedding in L1

As stated above, the account of the Prophet's *mi'rāḡ* is included in L1 in a lengthy report on God's creation of heaven and earth. To be more precise,

²⁸ For the names of the lunar mansions and the days of the week in Maldivian cf. FRITZ/GIPPERT 2000, 139–52.

²⁹ Cf. GIPPERT 2003, 43–5 as to this source.

³⁰ Cf. the edition by YAJIMA 1982, 10, l. 18.

³¹ Cf. ib. 1984, 11, ll. 20, 22, and 25, and the Table displaying the "Mohammadan Dynasties of Maldivian Islands" printed in App. C, p. 188.

the report is a re-narration of the most important legendary events extending from creation up to the destruction of the pagan idols at Madina, which is taken as an incentive or model for Gaganāditya's destroying all Buddhist monuments on the islands ruled by him. The narrative in L1 can easily be divided into three parts, the first thematising the creation of heaven and earth, the second, of men and former prophets, and the third, Muhammad's revelation, his ride to Jerusalem on the steed Burāq, the *mi'rāğ*, and lastly, the destruction of the "Arab triad" of idols, Al-Lāt, 'Uzzāt and Al-Manāt;³² all three parts are unparalleled in their verbosity in older Maldivian sources. Unfortunately, much of the first part remains unclear, due to the fact that one third of the plate containing it ("F" = "2") has been broken off and lost and the surface of the remaining part has been severely damaged; the general lines can be established with confidence, however.

2.1 The report on God's creation of heaven and earth

The report on God's creation begins on line 4 of the recto of plate "F" with the words *ekadevatāinge rahimatun*, followed before the breakage of the plate by the two syllables *upe*, which can be restored to either the absolutive, *upede*, or the past participle, *upeduvī*, of the verb meaning 'to create';³³ together with the syntagm preceding it ('by mercy of the One God'), the participle seems to be preferable if it was used as an attribute to a governing noun lost in the lacuna ('X created by mercy of the One God'). The next line begins with *-t birun*, obviously to be completed to *devatāinaṭa gat birun* 'by fear of God', lit. 'by the fear gained towards God', a formula frequently appearing elsewhere;³⁴ what follows is likely to be about the emergence of water (*pen ve* 'having become water') and steam (*kekuṇu dumu* 'boiled vapour'?). Line 6 of plate "F" contains a sequence of six Arabic names of paradises, possibly introduced by *radis-* as the last element discernible in the line before; the items preserved (*-ralu salāmu dāralu karālu dāralu damālu dāralu kuludu dannatalu adin dannatalu na-*) obviously represent *dār al-salām* 'House of Peace', *dār al-qarār* 'House of Steadfastness', *dār al-ğamāl* 'House of Beauty', *dār al-ḥuld* 'House of Eternity', *ğannat al-'adan* 'Paradise of Eden' and *ğannat al-na'im* 'Paradise of

³² Cf. the Qur'ān, Sur. 53.19–20; cf. the articles by FAHD "al-Lāt" and "Manāt", and by MACDONALD/NEHMÉ "al-'Uzzā" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill Online, 2013.

³³ Both forms occur later on in the same source, on plates "D" (recto, 2 and verso, 4, resp.); cf. below.

³⁴ Two times on pl. T (recto, 1, cf. Fig. 6); cf. below.

Happiness', most of which are attested in the Qur'ān.³⁵ Of the verso of plate "F" (cf. Fig. 3), the first line describes the utmost heaven (*utthara svargga loka*, a Sanskritism) as a 'land made from gold, silver and jewels' (*ran risi maṇikkatun seduṇu raṭu*), while the second line remains obscure – it begins with 'made from' again (*seduṇu*, with the preceding *-n* obviously representing the ablative ending) and continues with a list of 'name(s) received' (*namu ladu*) none of which has been identifiable so far.³⁶ In contrast to this, the next line offers well interpretable text again: it begins with the names of three of the 'seven hells' (*sat naraka-*), with *sairu*, *sakaru*, and *ṣavvā* obviously representing the Arabic names *al-sa'ir* 'flaming fire', *saqar* 'hell', and *al-hāwiya* 'depth, nethermost hell', all of which are attested in the Qur'ān, too.³⁷ The text continues with the creation of the sun (*ādītya mulu koṭu ṣadān* 'making [?] the sun first', lit. 'as the root') and the earth (*pr̥tthivi loka upaduv[ai]*), and in the following two lines (4–5), it names first the *Kawṭar* river (*kautar eviana gagu svarggai*, 'the river in heaven named Kawṭar')³⁸ and then a series of countries of the Muslim world, comprising Syria (*ṣaur eviana raṭu* 'the country named Syria'), Iraq (*erāk eviana raṭu*), Babylon ~ Mesopotamia (*bābhil evi[ana raṭu]*), Persia (if *-rīṣ* in the beginning of line 5 is a remnant of **pāris* ~ 'Fārs'), the Arabian peninsula (*dadhīra* ~ Arab. *ḡazīra*), the Panjab (*sind*), and India (*jabuduv* ~ 'Jambudvīpa'), 'all these countries' (*mitak raṭ[u]*).

2.2 The creation of men and former prophets

The last line of the damaged plate "F" introduces Adam as the first human vitalised (*prāna dī*, 'giving breath')³⁹ and Eve as his derivate (*mīn arddha*

³⁵ Sur. 10.26; 40.42; 41.28; 9.72; 5.70; cf. LEAH KINBERG, "Paradise" in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, Brill Online, 2013; W. RAVEN (personal communication of 19.5.2004) draws my attention to the Arabic *Kitāb al-'Aẓama* (cf. RAVEN 1993), which contains a similar list of names, here applied to the gates of the garden created by God on the right hand side of his throne.

³⁶ Possibly, *sākinā* contained in the list reflects Arab. *sākina* 'tranquillity, peace', and *adamut-* appearing as the head noun of *seduṇu* 'made' might represent Arab. 'azamūt 'power, majesty'.

³⁷ Sur. 4.10; 54.48, 74; 101.9; cf. CHRISTIAN LANGE, "Hell (Jahannam, nār, sa'ir, saqar, Zaqqūm) in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE. According to W. RAVEN (personal communication of 14.5.2004) the names also occur in the Arabic *Kitāb al-'Aẓama*.

³⁸ The word *svarggai* appears a first time in the beginning of line 5, possibly pertaining to the mention of the second heavenly river, *salsabīl*, in the preceding lacuna.

³⁹ Possibly, the *-i* appearing before this at the beginning of the line is the rem-

aṅgāin śauā upaduvai, lit. ‘creating Hawwā from this one’s half body’, Skt. *ardhāṅga*) as well as their sojourn in paradise (*mi de mapirin svargga vaṣai* ‘lodging this [couple consisting of] mother-and-husband in heaven’). The text continues in the first line of the recto of plate “D” (~ “3”, cf. Figs. 4–5) with the children born from “Adam the Prophet’s” sperm drop (*ādamu petāmburun suktrabīdāin*, Skt. *śukrabindu*) out of the womb of Eve (*śauā baḍun upan genīn dari ve*), these children constituting mankind on earth (*dunīe mīsūn ve vī*). It further relates that after Adam, who is regarded as the first prophet (*ādamu petāmburun ādi koṭu paṭai* ‘starting with Adam the Prophet making the beginning’), 124,000 other prophets (*eklakka śauvīs cāśra petāmburun*) were created and died again (*upede nivana gat pase*, Skt. *nirvāṇa*) before Muḥammad the Prophet was born (*upan mahammadu petāmburun*).

2.3 The Prophet’s revelation, his journey to Jerusalem, the *mī’rāḡ* and the destruction of the idols

Immediately after mentioning Muḥammad for the first time, the text relates his revelation by the archangel, Gabriel, which took place in his fourtieth year (*mahammadu petāmburun ṣālīs āvurodun mi petāmburun kraṭa dabarīlū ais buṇe gos* ‘in the fourtieth year of Muḥammad the Prophet, Gabriel having come to this Prophet, having talked [to him] and having gone away [again]’). Without any further dating, the text proceeds with Muḥammad’s being taken by Gabriel and Michael to Jerusalem on a steed named Burāq (*mi dabarailāi mikailai mi de malāikatun peṇe burāk eviana asu puṭe mahammadu petāmburun aruvai baitalu magadeṣaṭa gene gosu* ‘this Gabriel and Michael, these two angels, having appeared, having caused Muḥammad the Prophet to mount the back of a horse named Burāq, having taken him to Bait-al Maqdis’) and with the *mī’rāḡ* proper, i.e., Muḥammad’s ascension to heaven on a ladder and his meeting first all angels, then God himself residing in his *maṇḍala*:

de pia ran risi sarak puṭe petāmburun aruvai gene
 having caused him to mount upon a ladder⁴⁰ (consisting) of two wings
 (made) from gold (and) silver,
mārāḍaṭa gamani ve negī misatuḍu matī t^{hi}bi tak malāikatun deke ṣalāmu dī
buṇe
 (he, Muḥammad), having seen all the angels being on that peak (*misatuḍu*

nant of the absolute *upadavai* ‘creating’ as appearing further below.

⁴⁰ It remains unclear whether *sarak* really means ‘ladder’.

?), which was built like a residence (*gamani* ?) for a Mahārāja, and having talked to them saying *salām*,
mi ettre tibi tak sévu nu sevu deke
 having seen all happy and unhappy (beings) being inside there,
devatāinge vede in maṇḍala mi puṭe aneka navaratnain seduṇu sat kaḍattrain ek kaḍattraak māttra tibai vede
 having entered upon this (ladder) the *maṇḍala* where God resides, which is made from another nine jewels, having the measure of seven *kaḍattras* by one *kaḍattra*,⁴¹
d^hevatāinge buṇi subaganda bas asai
 having listened to the agreeably-scenting (Skt. *śubhagandha*) words spoken by God (who),
ṣādat kiai musulimān ve ekmasu roda sipai pas namādu koṭu vuṇu mahammadu petāmbarunge darivarun svaṛgga vaṣam evie
 by saying, “those children of Muḥammad the Prophet who have become Muslims by proclaiming profession (Arab. *ṣādat*), keeping the fast (Pers. *rōza*) of one month (and) performing the five prayers (Pers. *namāz*) I will lodge in heaven”,
svaṛgga ḷoka mahammadu petāmbarun dakvai
 revealed heaven to Muḥammad the Prophet (and who),
ṣādat nu kkai musulimān nu ve vuḷe kāprun budu paḷḷi nagai budu ṣadai mi budu devatāina ve sitai vede gene kūpurukamu koṭu rāsikaru boi devatāi timan svāmīn bavu nu dene vuṇu timan upeduvī aḷun naraka vasam evie
 by saying, “those servants created by myself who have remained infidel by not proclaiming confession (and) not becoming Muslims (and) who do not believe in God being their own lord, performing infidelity in building Buddhist temples, forming Buddha (statues) and persisting in the belief that this Buddha is a deity (and) by drinking palm wine, (those) I will lodge in hell,”
mi petāmbarun naraka {va}su dakvai
 revealed the residents of hell to this Prophet,
petāmbārun adamut-ul aṭbāi lī side
 when (after all this) the Prophet had written down the grandeur of (the one consisting of) eight parts,⁴²

⁴¹ The provenance and exact meaning of the measure term remains unclear.

⁴² It is extremely unclear what is meant by this, the interpretation given here being tentative. For *aṭbāi* cf. the term *athabagiya* occurring (in relation to the Buddha's relics) in the Aśoka inscription of Lumbini (cf. FALK 2012, 204–16; *adamut-* is taken to represent Arab. *‘āzamūt* ‘power, majesty, grandeur’ as further above.

(His Majesty, Gaganāditya the Mahārāja,
mi mahammadu petāmbaṛun buṇi apūrbba^ha asai
 having listened to the unparalleled (words) spoken by him, Muḥammad
 the Prophet, (having heard about)
mi petāmbaṛun kīamaṇ gene
 this prophet having gained resurrection (Arab. *qiyāmat*),
ekadevatāin tedu bavu dene musulimān vī timange ummatnāi gene
 having taken with him his own community who had become Muslims by
 acknowledging that the One God is a true being,
kāpurun makā miskit vesī lātu ud^hāt evyana mi de budu bide
 having destroyed the two idols named Lāt and ‘Uzzāt lodged at the
 infidels’ mosque at Makkā,
petāmbaṛun devatāinaṭa gat birun mi⁴³ asai
 having heard about (all) these⁴³ (deeds committed) by the Prophet with
 fear of (lit. gained towards) God,
mahumūdu rasuge devatāinaṭa gat birun manāt eviyana budu binnamus asai
 having heard about the destruction of the idol named Manāt
 (committed) by King Mahmūd with fear of (lit. gained towards) God,
śrī gag^hanāditya māras
 His Majesty, Gaganāditya the Mahārāja,
timās mi de darun peṇe nama devatāinaṭa biru ganvai
 gaining fear towards God as if these two children⁴⁴ had appeared to
 himself,
timan ladu kela aḍḍuvu me mede tibī tak raṭu pūrbba^he kāpuru rasun keruvī
verumāna b^huḍu paḷli vairoṣanā bide ...
 by destroying on all islands hold (lit. received) by himself that are
 between Kela and Aḍḍū⁴⁵ the (Buddhist) monasteries founded (lit.
 made) by the former infidel kings, the Buddha temples (and) the
 Vairocana (statues) ...

From this position on, the text continues in quite a similar way as that of
 the two other *lōmāfānus* issued by Gaganāditya (cf. 1.1.3 above),
 mentioning the preparatory work necessary for the foundation of a
 mosque on Gamu Island (including the appointment of ten “wise regents”,
dasa vidīṣa lokapālavarun), and the further circumstances of his *waqf*
 endowment.

⁴³ Reading very uncertain.

⁴⁴ Cf. 3. below.

⁴⁵ The northernmost and southernmost islands of the Maldives, in Gaganāditya’s
 times as today.

3. Conclusion

It will be obvious from this preliminary treatise that the account of the *mi'rāḡ* proper plays but a minor rôle in the given context, providing a vindicative background for Gaganāditya's campaign against Buddhist monasteries and idols. This is especially true for God's statements on believers and unbelievers it cites, which are adapted by Gaganāditya for his purposes in "proclaiming, 'I will kill the infidels that do not enter the family of the community of Muḥammad the Prophet'" (*mahammadu petāmbaṛunge ummatun kula aṭa nu van kāpurun maram evie vidārai*; T1, l. 4). Another remarkable analogy approaching Gaganāditya to the Prophet is the explicit reference to Muḥammad's encounter with the two archangels, Gabriel and Michael, which Gaganāditya imagines as a miracle for himself (with the curious substitution of "angels" by "children, boys" or, rather, "young men", *darun*).

It may be surprising that the *lōmāfānu*, in addition to the "mythical" allusions concerning the founder of Islam and his life, also mentions a certain "King Mahmūd", in connection with the destruction of the third of the "Arab idols", *Manāt*. It is obvious that the text here refers to the raid by Sultan Mahmūd of Ġazna of the Hindu temple at Somanātha, which was identified with the pre-Islamic shrine of the Arabian peninsula in popular belief (via a reinterpretation of its name as representing a compound *su-manāt*).⁴⁶ The Maldivian copper plate grant may be taken to be one of the earliest witnesses of this Indian legend.

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⁴⁶ Cf. BOSWORTH's 1997/2013 article on "Sūmanāt", according to which the raid took place in AD 1015/16; other sources indicate AD 1025/26 (cf. e.g. T.W. HAIG 1934/2013). Cf. T. FAHD 1991/2013, as to *Manāt* proper.

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Figures



Fig. 1: The “Isdū lōmāfānu” (copper plate grant L2)



Fig. 2: The “Gamū lōmāfānu” (copper plate grant L1), pl. F = 2 recto

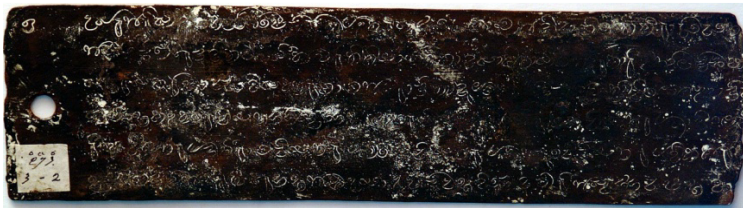


Fig. 3: id., pl. F = 2 verso with plate number indicated in the upper left corner

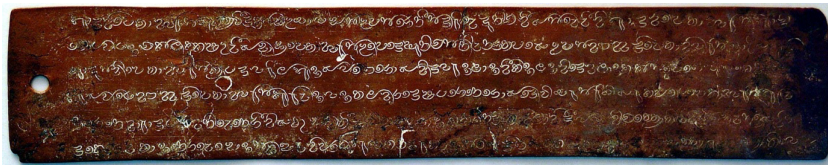


Fig. 4: id., pl. D = 3 recto



Fig. 5: id., pl. D = 3 verso

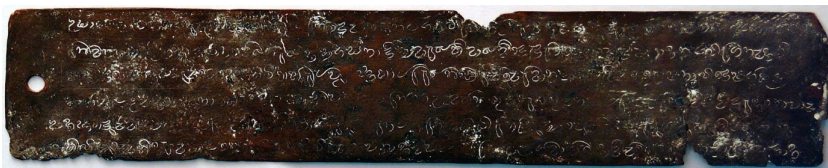


Fig. 6: id., pl. T = 4 recto