

Dimitry N. Lielukhin (Moscow)

Structure of the Early Indian Land-Grants and the Problems of its Interpretation

Epigraphies one of the most important type of sources about the history and culture of pre-colonial India. Often our knowledge about some periods of history as the whole country, as any regions are based mainly upon the evidences of inscriptions. The last, simultaneously, one of the most complex types of sources on a history of India. It is stipulated, in many respects, by its shortness and abundance of a special terminology.

In consequence of the simplified approach to inscription, as to office document (in modern mean of this word), which is fixing simple and reliably (in the majority of cases) the certain (determined) events and separate facts of political, social or cultural life, there was a refusal of many researchers from the textual criticism of epigraphic texts. Meanwhile, from our point of view, necessity of statement the question about formation and evolution of an independent epigraphical tradition (as the special kind of textual activity) as well as the study of its interaction with other traditions - epical, tradition of shastras etc., is obvious.

Simplified approach to the epigraphies created, from our point of view, the opportunity to interpretation of the evidences and terminology of inscriptions to be guided by, mainly, representations of each researcher, which should be the society and the state. And they, being often under influence of general, modern to them concepts, saw in sources that wanted to see, modernising their contents. The offered paper about the structure and problems of early land grants interpretation is represented to the author not only, as the particular research, but also as an illustration of necessity the statement designated above problems.

The study of the early land grants (Vakatakas, Parivrajaka, Vaikh dynasty and other) represents the special interest, because their evidences often uses as the base to the characteristic of evolution of a sociopolitical and socio-economic structure of society in a transitive period from Ancient to Medieval India. Land-grants in their traditional for historiography interpretation specify, from opinion of many researchers, to important processes of changes in socio-political sphere, structure of society, in a sphere of landed relations and properties, and etc.. However their more detailed consideration forces to muse about the validity of a lot of rules, already become usual for the studies of early medieval India. The analysis of inscriptions (in frames of each complex as the branches of entire tradition), is facilitated by its often significant similarity, rather precisely within the framework of each inscription are allocated the number of parts, heads, which usually presents, as the formular of grant.

The analysis of the early land grants compels to muse, too, about the ways of evolution of a socio-economic structure of India in IV-VI AD. So, for example, the appearance already in the first land grants, known to us, so-called immunities is unequivocally interpreted by indologists as reflection of process of feudalization of society and, first of all, in state apparatus.

To the recipient of grant were transmitted (according to such interpretation) important administrative and fiscal rights, which earlier had only a state. The studies of "Arthashastra" and Maurya epigraphies by AA.Vigasin and the author of present paper permit to doubt of reliability of such representations. Ancient state could not transmit, which it did not possess. The state did not apply and could not apply for all completeness of administrative authority in villages on its territory, nation-wide fiscal system is simple did not exist. Besides the structural analysis of early land grants permits to doubt about correctness in interpretation of a administrative terminology, the sense of the immunities formulas and some other parts of inscriptions.

The more exact understanding of the contents and the sense of the immunity formulas (as, however the land grants as the whole) can be reached only within the framework of wide research of problems of formation and evolution the epigraphic text.

Primary analysis of a structure and contents of land grants has allowed us on a number of examples to show necessity of those. For example, the separate texts permit even to put a

question on, in what manner they (traditionally interpreted as the king's grants) they were the king's, to doubt of complete reliability of restoration of a mechanism of land granting.