

## TOWARDS A TEXTUAL APPROACH OF THE INSCRIPTIONS IN OLD KHMER

### ABOUT *TA* AND *MAN*

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1. The Old Khmer syntax gave rise but to a very few works (S. Pou, Ph. Jenner, J. Jacob, Ch. Sak Humphry). On this account, the publication of the *Old Khmer Grammar* by Jenner and Sidwell is an important event, as this work is the first one to give an overall view of the Old Khmer grammar. One of the main difficulties stems from the use of a series of grammatical markers (usually referred to as "particles"), such as *ta*, *man*, *gi*, *nu*, *pi*, etc. opening a wide range of various values (for a detailed inventory, cf. Jacob, 1991 and Jenner & Sidwell, 2010). The term 'particle' means that these units don't have any precise syntactic function but - as we will see later - a discursive function. This is confirmed by the notable divergences in the characterizations, and even in the translations of those words. A quite instructive statement of all the translations given for *man* can be found in Sak Humphry (2005: 228). The characterizations of those words wave between too highly abstract and general formulations on the one hand, and pell-mell local values with no link whatsoever, on the other hand.

2. In this talk, we argue that these words must not be studied only within the frame of the clause where they appear, but within that of the whole text forming the inscription. This comes down to grasping the inscriptions as texts as a whole. This textual approach leads to a more general question: the writing of the Khmer language from the VIIth century (or even before) started with the rising of another linguistic system, in particular at the syntactic level. On this matter, we share Sak Humphry's reservations about considering the Old Khmer (at least the pre-Angkorian Khmer) as a « spoken dialect which was recently reduced to writing » (Chakravarti, quoted by Sak Humphry 2005), and we conversely agree with Jenner when pointing out in the introduction of his Angkorian Khmer Dictionary that the Old Khmer specialists must face with the same theoretical and methodological difficulties as the Old English or Old French ones. Let's point out for example the invention of the anaphora construed with the reduplication of the deictic demonstratives *neh*, *noh*:  
*neh bhūmya ta roḥh neh ta ti vappā steñ 'añ vraḥ tannot chkā vraī* (K. 344: 18, A.D. 985)

“This land aforesaid on which the father of the *steri 'añ* of the *vrah* Tannot had cleared the forest”

3. This communication presents a study of two markers: *ta* and *man*. We notice that Jenner gives the same inventory for the values of those two markers in the pre-Angkorian and in the Angkorian Khmer dictionary. This does not however invalidate the differences in their uses from one period to the other. We will show that those two markers can be characterized through their contribution to building up the text. This "textual" characterization provides a framework for the description of their local syntactic functions.

#### 4. Study of *man*

*“At the moment I can think of no form more in need of clarification than man, an item which is at once pervasive in the inscriptions and still, after a century of study, largely unknown”* (Jenner 1992).

In this paper, Jenner distinguishes two classes of uses of *man*: 1. As a demonstrative pronoun; 2. As a relative pronoun. In the dictionary (2009) and in the *Old Khmer grammar* (2010) *man* is no longer defined as a demonstrative ; It comes under two entries:

*Man*<sub>1</sub>: “a general conjunction with two main meanings developing out of ‘at the time that’: ‘when’, ‘then’ and ‘for, because, since’”.

*Man*<sub>2</sub>: “introduces a clause of indirect discourse.” Let's point out that this use of *man* is only to be met in Angkorian Khmer.

We argue hereafter that there is no reason to distinguish *man*<sub>1</sub> and *man*<sub>2</sub>.

Let's point out that *man* disappears in post-Angkorian Khmer

In various uses (temporal subordination, indirect speech, relative, interpolated clause) *man* introduces a clause whose status comes from another clause working as the main clause. Its characterization as operating a "general subordination" means that *man*, from a discursive point of view, contributes to assessing the information according to its importance, integrating secondary pieces of information completing what makes the main topic. This quite general function can account for its syntactic under-determination, and may perhaps explain one of the reasons why it

disappeared in Middle Khmer, whereas various subordinating words appeared, each one of them with a precise syntactic function. Actually, this differentiation is at work very early (cf. d.).

This characterization of *man* as a general subordinating item is not of a syntactic kind strictly speaking, but gives *man* a textual function related to what the so called hierarchical structure of the information delivered by the inscriptions. By general subordination, we mean that the sequence introduced by *man* adds further information to the main one. This makes it possible to understand its various uses.

a. *man* introduces a sequence used as a temporal reference to the main event:

(1) [...] *sthāpanā vraḥ śivaliṅga duk khñuṃ ta gi man vraḥ pāda parameśvara dau kuruṅ ni 'āy mahendraparvata steṅ 'aṅ śivakaivalya dau 'aṅvay ta nagara noḥ ukk paṃre ta vraḥ pāda parameśvara rūva noḥh 'nau [...]* (K. 235C: 69-70)

“[he] set up the holly *sivaliṅga*, [and] assigned slaves to it. When H.M. Paramesvara went forth to rule and hold sway in Mahendraparvata, the *steṅ 'aṅ* Sivakaivalya went and settled in that royal city as well, continuing to serve H.M. Paramesvara as before.”

(2) *871 śaka man loṅ 'ap vraī taṃvvaṅ slāp sūnya 'āśrama noḥ dau* (K. 215: 5-6, from *Old Khmer Grammar*, ex. (330))

“[In] *Śaka* 871 when the *loṅ 'Ap* of *vraī taṃvvaṅ* died, the said *'āśrama* fell vacant”.

- *man* *vraḥ pāda parameśvara pratiṣṭhā kamraten jagat ta rāja 'nau nagara śrīmāhendraparvata vraḥ pāda parameśvara kalpanā santāna 'nak stuk ransi bhadrappattana gi ta jā smin nā kamraten jagat ta rāja pradvaṅ dau* (K.235C: 56-58 (974 śaka))

“**when** H.M. Paramesvara established the sovereign High Lord of the World in the royal city of śrīmāhendraparvata, H.M. Paramesvara caused a family line of the people of Stuk Ransi of bhadrappattana to be the one to serve as officiants before the Sovereign Lord of the World from that time on”

b. *man* introduces a sequence expressing or making explicit the ins and outs of the main event:

(3) *tai kaṃbha khñuṃ vāp nos pralāy man vāp nos jā vargga ta kaṃsteñ oy tai kaṃbha kaṃsteñ jvan ta vraḥ* (K. 221N: 9-10, from Jenner: 1992, (25))

“*Tai Kaṃbha*, a slave of the *pater Nos* of *Pralāy*: because the *paterNos*, who is of the *Kaṃsteñ*’s chapter, gave her to the *Kaṃsteñ*, who offered [her] up to the *vraḥ*”

(4) *tai kaṃpit stuk cadoñ khum kaṃsteñ śrī virendravarmma sruk vasantāpurā ti oy ta teñ tvan pās khmau ta 'nak khloñ kaṃsteñ man teñ tvan pās khmau māt saṃvandhi nu kaṃsteñ śrī narapatindravarmma* (K. 221N: 2)

“*tai Kaṃpit* of *stuk Cadoñ*, a slave of the *kaṃsteñ Śrī Virendravarmma* of *sruk Vasantāpurā*, was given to the *teñ Tvan* of *Pās Khmau*, wife of the *kaṃsteñ [Śrī Virendravarmma]*, **because** she had a relationship by marriage with the *kaṃsteñ Śrī Narapatindravarmma*”

(5) *yal man neḥ tai kanhyañ ti vāp rau oy thlāy krapī [...]* (K. 233B:7, from Jenner: 1992, (8))

“Seeing **that** this *tai Kanhyañ* had been given by the *pater Rau* in exchange for a buffalo [...].”

c. *man* introduces a sequence attributing a property to a noun. This doesn't mean that *man* should be characterized as a relative pronoun. Neither *man* nor *ta* can be categorized as relative pronouns in Old Khmer (the only relative pronoun in Old Khmer is *tel*: ex. (7)). The sequence introduced by *man* can be characterized as an apposition (cf. (8)-(10)).

(6a) *gi neḥ vnok phoñ tel ge kloñ śobhājayā 'añ oy ta vraḥ kaṃmrātāñ 'añ śrītripurāntakeśvara* (K. 904B: 12-13)

“It is this team [of slaves] that the princess *Śobhājayā 'añ* has given to My Holy High Lord *Śrī Tripurāntakeśvara*” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (322))

(6b) *gi sre ta tel ti kurāk śūrāgrāma tve ai cdiñ vridāñ* (K. 927: 2)

“The ricefield which is being cultivated by the *kurāk* of *Śūrāgrāma* on the river *Vridāñ*” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (141)).

(7) *kñuṃ tāñ suvarṇṇa man pariḡraha ta kurāk vyādhapura* (K. 109N: 24)

“Slave of the *tāñ* Suvarṇṇa whom [she] received from the *kurāk* Vyādhapura” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (143)).

(8) - *khñuṃ man duk ta 'āśrama yogendrālaya* (K. 33: 24, A.D. 1017)

“Slaves **whom** (I) assign to the *āśrama* of Yogendrālaya” (Jenner, 1992: (5))

- *dravya man oy ukk khlās 1 jyañ praṃvyal vat 1 jyañ 3 taṃmrya 1 'so* (K. 420: 48, A.D. 878-977)

“Valuables **which** (he) has given in addition: 1 ewer (weighing) 7 *jyañ*, 1 *vat* (weighing) 3 *jyañ*, 1 elephant, white” (Jenner, 1992: (6))

(9) - *jmaḥ ge kñuṃ man mratāñ śakrasvāmi oy ta vraḥ* (K. 904A: 21-2, A.D. 713)

“Noms des esclaves **que** Mratāñ Sakrasvāmi donne au dieu...” (Jenner, 1992: (7)); C IV : 62)

d. *man* introduces a clause of indirect discourse (only found in angkorean period)

(10)- *svāmi nivedana man sre dai mvāy jeñ cval kamluñ gol ukk* (K. 262S: 25-6, A.D. 983)

“The owner stated **that** another ricefield of one *jeñ* also lay within the boundary markers” (Jenner, 1992: (4))

(11)- *ti vraḥ kamrateñ 'añ nāṃ dau samakṣa nu steñ 'añ vraḥ guru nu vraḥ sabhā vāp dharmma kathā man neḥ sre neḥ ta praṃvyal jeñ ti oy ta vraḥ kamrateñ 'añ 'āy dvijendrapura vyat* (K. 262S: 7-8 (904 śaka))

“Brought by V. K. A. into the presence of Steñ 'Añ Vraḥ Guru and the Holy Court, Vāp Dharmma declared that it was indeed really this seven-foot [foot as in 12 inches?] rice-field which he had given to V. K. A. Dvijendrapura”

e. Jenner (1992) mentions a series of uses of *man* combined with another marker: cf. *nu man*, *roḥ man*, *hetu man*. Those combinations point to a syntactic differentiation at work. It is possible to give *nu man* such meanings as *also*, *moreover*, *with that*, according to Jenner, which comes down to introducing additional information to a first one:

(12)- *nu man poñ chāñ ktiññ sre poñ tel poñ matisakti ta paṃre teṃ gui lañas ai kañjrap 'mac purandarapura soñ ktiñ ra gui ge 'nak vraḥ kanmeñ dār canlek yugala ta gui ukk yau 4 nu man gui sañ kara ta ge* (K. 493: 21-3, A.D. 657)

“Also, the *poñ* Chāñ who had owed (me) the ricefield of his which *poñ* Matisakti, his former servant, had leased to the prisoners of war assigned to Purandarapura, did indeed repay his debt. The devotees of the younger *vrah* asked of him 4 *yau* of double cloth besides, **in addition to which** he paid their fees”. (Jenner, 1992: (16))

Whereas *nu man* can be found in pre-Angkorian as well as in Angkorian, *roh man* and *hetu man* are only to be met in Angkorian – which can be seen as a syntactic differentiation at work.

(13)- *gi rohh man ti sabhācāre xxx* (233A: 4, A.D. 878-977),

“**this is how** ... by the council’s agent.” (Jenner, 1992: (18))

(14)- *vāp jinendrānanda pandval vrah śāsana ta vāp vrahma rohh man ti kamsteñ pandval oy sre neḥ ta vāp vrahma siddhi* (K. 566B: 1-2, A.D. 978-1077)

“The *pater* Jinendrānanda communicated the royal instruction to the *parter* Vrahma (and), **as** (he) had been charged by the *kamsteñ*, gave this ricefield to him in perpetuity...” (Jenner, 1992: (19))

(15)- *ka gi noḥ bhūmi noḥ ta srac ti jau hoñ hetu man mān 'apavāda nu 'nak vrah thpall vyahāra* (K.348: 2-3, A.D. 954)

“It came about that this piece of land was eventually acquired **because** there had been opposition (to its sale) by the people of the *vrah* Thpal, who had taken the matter to court.” (Jenner, 1992: (20)).

## 5. Study of *ta*

The particle *ta* in Old Khmer is most frequent, showing numerous uses (much more indeed than *man*) and is commonly to be found three or four times in the same sequence

(16)- *nau ge ta lopeya neḥ dau jā ta dvātriṃśanaraka nau ge ta vardheya gi dau sthita ta svarga* (K. 742: 9-11)

“Those who do damage to them – [they] shall go to deserve the thirty two hells. Those who promote them – [they] shall go to abide in heaven” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (333)).

It seems difficult to find a coherence in all those various uses. *ta* is still used in modern Khmer, with one use only, introducing a qualitative:

(17a)- *koat ciə sih Ø ləʔa: muəy neak*  
3SG. to be student Ø good one CL.  
“He is a good student”

(17b)- *koat ciə sih ta (/da:/) ləʔa: muəy neak*  
3SG. to be student **ta (/da:/)** good one CL.  
“He is a **very** good student”: He is unique/special. *Ta* is translating here by “very” in the way that “to be good” is given as a new and important element in the sentence.

Jenner, at the end of his paper (1981), gives the following conclusion: “*The evidence suggests that the various irreconcilable fonctions that have been imputed to ta are the result of reading our own grammatical categories into a language which does not necessarily have the same categories.*” The *Old Khmer grammar* (2010), gives the following characterization for *ta*: “*optional subordinating conjunction, untranslatable. Widely misunderstood, it was first recognized for what it is by the linguist François Martini, who called it a particule d’inhérence – an insight promptly forgotten (...). The sole function of ta is to relate a modifier to its head when such marking is felt to be needed*” (2010: 34).

We can see that this grammar takes up Martini's suggestion, just adding a consideration at the discursive level: “*when it is needed...*”. But in order to determine the conditions “*when it is needed*”, the further question of “*when it is not needed...*” has yet to be answered. This dual question shows the author's point of view: when introduced by *ta*, the sequence is given a special importance as regards its informative content (in his comments of some examples, Jenner points out the discursive function of *ta*). Concerning this point, unlike Jenner, we don't think that *ta* is a subordinating conjunction, but a discursive particle, which is why we often see sequences with either  $\emptyset$  or *ta*. In other words, the scope of *ta* is discursive one, but not syntactic one.

Our analysis of *ta* will be limited to four types of data

A. Constructions showing an alternative  $\emptyset$  / *ta*. In his paper dated 1981, Jenner draws attention to many sequences where, with the same lexicon, *ta* is either present or absent

(18a)- ...            *ji*            *ge*    *ta*    *si*    *ge*    *ta*    *kantai*... (K. 451N : 4, A.D. 680)

[Their] ancestors    ones    *ta*    male    ones    *ta*    female...

“Their male and female ancestors...” (Jenner, 1981: (48))

(18b)- ... *kñuṃ*     $\emptyset$     *si*    [*vā* .....]            *kñuṃ*     $\emptyset$     *kantai* [*ku* ...] (K. 712, A.D. 7<sup>th</sup> Cent.)

slave     $\emptyset$     male [names...]    slave     $\emptyset$     female [name...]

(19a)- *ge ta daṇi sak gi māś vraḥ prak laṅgau saṃrit canlek sre daṃriṇ tmur... dau nirayasthāna nu 'ji ge ta si ge ta kantai 'me ge 'tā ge kon cau* (K.451N: 1-4; A.D.680)

“Persons who seek to divert gold belonging to the divinity, silver, copper [...] – they shall go to hell along with their ancestors male and female, their mothers, their grandfathers [...]” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (318)).

(19b)- *'aṃṇoy poñ [...]* *'āy ta vraḥ kamratāṇ 'añ śrī.. kñuṃ*     $\emptyset$     *kantai* *ku* (K.559I: 1; A.D.6<sup>th</sup> C.)

“donation of *pater* [name] to the Lord [*śrī* + name]: female slaves [names]...”

(20a)- *neḥ ti mratāṇ khloṇ śrī nṛpendropakalpa sruk cās varṇna 'nindittipura teṃ 'anumoda nu kule ta jmaḥ vāp mādhava vāp vrahmaśiva vāp dharmma caṃnat oy gussa ta vraḥ kaṃsteṇ 'añ śrī lakṣmīpativarmma* (K.1198B: 5-6; A.D.1014)

“This was given outright by the chief lord Śrī Nṛpendropakalpa of the old *sruk* [...] the Aninditapura order with the consent of [his] kinsmen the *vāp* Mādhava, the *vāp* Brahmaśiva [and] the *vāp* Dharmma, [all] of the settlement, to the holy My Kaṃsteṇ Śrī Lakṣmīpativarmma” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (336)).

In the translation ‘*ta jmaḥ*’ is not translated.

(20b)- *mahāsenāpati mvay jmoḥ śrībhūbanāditya īśvaradvīpa nāṃ śāsana rājādhirāja mok ta kurūṇi sunat ta prabhutva nā dhānyapura pandval pre jvan bhūmi sre nibandha braḥ pūjā kamrateṇ jagat* (K.966/II: 12-17; A.D.1167)

“A commander by the name of Śrī Bhūbanāditya of Īśvaradvīpa brought a directive from the overlord of kings to the *kurūṇi* Saunatta, headman at



Dhānyapura, bidding [him] offer up riceland dedicated to the holy worship of the High Lord of the World” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (350)).

(21a)- *si tai neḥ ta 'aṃpāl neḥ 'aṅvay ta caṃnat stuk vryaṅ prasap bhūmi vnaṃ vvak thve raṅko thlvaṅ praṃvyal mi mvay śaka caṃnāṃ ta kaṃmrateṅ jagat liṅgapura* (K. 249: 11-13, A.D. 1116)

“These males [and] females of this group are to reside in the settlement of Stuk Vryaṅ, adjacent to land belonging to Vnaṃ Vvak, [and] are to produce seven *thlvaṅ* of milled rice each year [as] an allowance to the High Lord of the World Liṅgapura” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (341)).

(21b)- *vā ta daṅ kmi sakk neḥ kñuṃ pradāna droṅ neḥ raṅko caṃnaṃ ge 'āy ta vraḥ kamratāṅ 'aṅ śrī 'amareśvara 'aṃpall kula ge phoṅ yāvat sūryyacandrasya tāvat narakaduḥkhitāḥ* (K. 127: 11-13, A.D. 684)

“Miscreants who would seek to steal these slaves given [by the sovereign] and milled rice Lord for their provision at [the sanctuary of] My High Lord Śrī Amareśvara shall know the sufferings of hell with all their kinsmen for as long as the sun and the moon [shall shine]” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (320)).

(22a)- *khloṅ vala jraleṅ jvan khñuṃ Ø 4 ta vraḥ thmur piy danyim* (K. 369: 9-10, A.D. 10<sup>th</sup> C.)

“The Chief of the population of Jraleṅ offered **four slaves** to the God [and] three pairs of oxen”

(22b)- *(man) khloṅ vala chok phlāṅ 'aṃvi lā śarira pi nu divaṅgata jvan khñuṃ ta pvan* (K. 523D, A.D. 1118)

“(par la suite) le Chef de la population de Chok Phlāṅ, en quittant son corps pour aller au ciel, a offert encore **quatre esclaves**” (Coedès, *IC. III : 136*)

(23a)- *vvaṃ 'āc ti 'nak ta hīnajāti yok dau pi paṅjā 'nak Ø khloṅ* (K. 444B: 3-4, A.D. 974)

“Les gens de la classe inférieure ne pourront les [ti=cette femme] prendre pour en faire leurs **épouses (wives)**” (Pou, *NIC III : 133, 2001*)

(23b)- *pre saṅ gol ta gi bhūmi noḥ vvaṃ āc ti āyatta ta 'nak ta khloṅ ni nā vraḥ kamrateṅ 'aṅ ta paramēśvara* (K. 933B: 10-11, A.D. 978)

“Il ordonna de planter les bornes de cette terre. Qu'elle ne relève pas de l'autorité des **gens qui sont khloṅ (chief)** au service de K. A. Paramēśvara” (Coedès, *IC. IV : 50*)

In all those examples, the presence of *ta* has no real syntactic justification. *Ta* seems to do no more than point out the importance of the information given by the sequence.

B. *ta* after a verb. For a series of verbs *ta* is used to introduce one of the arguments of the predicate: the beneficiary in the case of the "give" type of verbs, the 'source' for the 'receive or 'get' type of verbs

(24)- ...*ḍadhikuṇḍasāgara pradāna sre ta vraḥ* (K. 688 : 2-3, A.D. 719)

“[the Lord] Dadhikuṇḍasāgara [has] given ricefields to the Shining One”  
(Jenner, 1981: (1))

(25)- *kñuṃ tāñ suvarṇṇa man parigraha ta kurāk vyādhapura* (K. 109N: 24, A.D. 655)

“Slaves of the *tāñ* Suvarṇṇa which [she] received from (=ta) *kurāk* Vyādhapura” (Jenner, 1981: (8))

With the "give" type of verbs, the following constructions are found:

- (Subject) + COD + V + Ø + beneficiary
- Subject + V + *ta* + beneficiary + COD
- Subject + V + COD + *ta* + beneficiary
- Subject + V + COD + *ay (ta)* + beneficiary

(26)- *kñuṃ 'aṃṇoy jaṃ 'añ ai ta vraḥ kamratāñ 'añ mahāgaṇapati [...] kantai ta pos oy (ya)jamāna kpoñ* (K. 557: 2-3, A.D. 611)

“Slaves given by Jaṃ 'Añ to V.K.A Mahāgaṇapati: [list of donation...], religious females [are] **given** to the sacrificer of the *kpoñ*”

(27)- *mratāñ śrīprathivinarendra oy ṛdval ta teñ vasudevi oy sratāc ta teñ indrāni* (K. 956: 17-18)

“Mratāñ Śrīprathivinarendra gave [the land] Rḍval to *teñ* Vasudevi, and gave [the land] Sratāc to *teñ* Indrāni”

(28)- *[date] poñ uy oy kñuṃ ai ta kpoñ kamratāñ 'añ* (K. 557N: 1, A.D. 611)

“[date] *poñ* Uy gave slaves to *kpoñ* Kamratāñ 'Añ”

With the "give" type of verbs, the new item is the beneficiary / recipient of the transfer (the relation between the subject and the object transferred is preconstructed). Using *ta* means focussing on the beneficiary's identity.

In the locative constructions, the preposition *ai* can be used alone, but also combined with *ta*: either *ai ta* or *ta ai* (with "give" verbs, *ai ta* is only to be found). In the case of *ta ai*, the localization as a whole is considered as new. In the case of *ai ta*, the identity of the place only is new.

(29)- *jmaḥ ge kñuṃ tāñ ta ai puran ta tel oy ta vraḥ* (K.904B : 19)

“Names of the slaves of the *tāñ* à Puran which were given to God [list of names]” (Jenner, 1981: (37))

(30)- *gi ti sthāpanā 'āy bhadrapattana* (K. 235D : 16)

“This was set up at Bhadrapattana”(Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (31))

(31)- *sañ braḥ buddharupa ai ta śhāna pākāña neḥ* ( IMA 2 : 20-21)

“[I] set up the images of Buddha **in/at** (= *ai ta*) the Bakang” (Jenner, 1981: p. 79)

### C. Apposition.

This term is used to characterize a series of uses. Let's point out two of them:

– *ta* is used to individuate an underspecified N:

(32)- *dāsa ta paṅgan pos chol caṃ'in vraḥ śivayajña* (K. 470 : 25, A.D. 1327)

“Slaves detailed to clean up the remains of cooked food from holy offerings to Śiva (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (354)).

(33)- *vraḥ pre nāṃ kule ta strī puruṣa mok ukk* (K. 235C : 63-64, A.D. 1052)

“The royal one bade [him] bring also the members of his family, female and male”.

– *ta* introduces a property qualifying an individual already identified:

(34) *teñ tvan 'lo nu vraḥ mūlasūtra ta putra sruk bhadreśvarāspada [...] yugapat jvan bhūmi piñ chkar [...]* (K.475: 1-2, A.D. 1136)

“The *teñ tvan* 'Lo and the Holy Mūlasūtra, **her son**, of *sruk* Bhadreśvarāspada [...] have joined together to offer up a tract of land at Piñ Chkar [...]” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (348))

(35)- *syañ ta gāl pi bhagavat pāda kamrateñ 'añ ta guru śrīdivākarapaṇḍita chlañ havirvāda* (K. 194A: 5-6, A.D. 1121)

“[These] were ones who were in attendance so that the *bhagavat pāda* My High Lord **the spiritual preceptor** Śrī Divākarapaṇḍita might celebrate the *havirvāda*” (Jenner&Sidwell, 2010: (344))

D. About the expression *kamrateñ jagat ta rāja* (see Thach, 2008)

Since Georges Cœdès' paper (ALB, 1961), the interpretation of *kamarate"n jagat ta rāj(y)a* (k. 235) remains problematic. Cœdès' translation, taken up by many researchers, leads to « God –king » (*kamrate"n*: “God” + *jagat*: “world” + *ta*: “who is” + *rājya*: “kingdom / king”). In her paper (JA, 1998), Saveros Pou suggests translating this expression by « the god of the king /kingdom ».

Chhany Sak-Humphry (2005) translates the expression as « *the Sovereign High Lord of the World* ».

Adopting any of these translations has specific consequences about how royalty is represented in ancient Khmer culture. Interpreting the expression as referring to a god identified to the person of the king (first interpretation of G. Coedès) means that the king himself is the embodiment of the god. So the god bestows power and legitimacy to the king.

The interpretation of Chh. Sak-Humphry does not lay down any relationship between the god in question and the king (or the kingdom). Thus, the god is held as intrinsically unique, i.e. as the very sovereign of the gods, thus Indra. This translation does not render what is semantically conveyed by *ta*.

As for S. Pou's translation it implies a direct relationship between the god in question and the king or the kingdom. S. Pou chooses to interpret *ta* as having a “genitive” value which is one of the possible translations of this word.

In *kamrateñ jagat ta rāj(y)a*, *ta* introduces an **external** determination, meaning that *rājya* “kingdom” or *rāja* “king” is not an integral part (as an individual) of the corresponding divinity.

The expressions **kamrateñ añ** or **kamrateñ jagat**, do not designate intrinsically a unique god (the god) but a god among other gods with a comparable status. **ta rājya** or **rāja** attributes a differential property (making it singular) to this god-individual, making him different from other gods of the same order (i.e. who can also be referred to by the expressions **kamraten jagat** or **kamraten añ**) as unique.

The presence of **ta** means that a god, amongst other gods, becomes unique as he is defined in reference to such king/ such kingdom. This god, because he is chosen by the king, becomes singular, unique, not on account of his identity, but because he is the god of this particular king. In other words, it is the king, a human being, who chooses a deity to be **his personal “god”**. When the king or the kingdom changes, this change applies to the god as well.

(36)- *man vraḥ pāda parameśvara pratiṣṭhā kamrateñ jagat ta rāja 'nau nagara śrīmāhendraparvvata [...]* (K. 235C : 66-58, A.D. 1052)

“When His Majesty Parameśvara established the Sovereign High Lord of the World in the royal city of Śrīmāhendraparvvata [...]” (Sak-Humphry, 2005: p. 93)

This presentation of *ta* is not exhaustive. Various uses remain to be examined, in particular the frequent combination of *ta* with *gui* (*ta gui*, *gui ta*). This implies a systematic preparatory study of *gui* (which we do not consider as a *weak demonstrative* as defined by the authors of the *Old Khmer Grammar* (2010)).

This study of *ta* in its various uses show that in this case, the syntax of Old Khmer is not quite stabilized. *ta* has a textual value, indicating that the sequence it introduces is of special / main / new importance for the understanding of the text. This is what can be understood by “*when it is needed*”.

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