A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE TAMIL BRAHMI INSCRIPTIONS

BY

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1. *Introduction*

Brahmi inscriptions:

Inscriptions found written in Brahmi script are labelled as Brahmi inscriptions. Beginning from the period of Asoka and in successive periods inscriptions in Prakrit language were written in Brahmi script in northern India, and the inscriptions in Tamil language written in this script were found in the natural caves of Tamilnad. The great distance between these two geographical divisions—Tamilnad in the south and the Asokan empire in the north—and the addition of new letters in each division to satisfy linguistic requirements forced scholars to consider two different varieties of script, the northern and the southern. Palaeography of these inscriptions has been done in *Indian Epigraphy and South Indian scripts.*[1]

The major distinction between the two varieties is that the northern has additional letters for voiced and aspirated sounds, and the script is more angular. On the other hand, the southern has no signs for voiced and aspirated sounds with the exception of *dh* and *s*, but there are extra letters for the sounds ḷ ḻ ṉ ṟ and i which are not common in the northern variety[2] and the script as a whole is more cursive in character. Inscriptions in southern variety are taken up here for critical study.

Inscriptions found in Tamilnad are comparatively short ranging from one line of six letters (no. 20), to four lines of 61

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[1] C. Sivaramamurthy.

[2] K. V. Subramaniya Aiyar.

letters (no. 38). These inscriptions date to the period between the second century B.C. and the fifth century A.D.[3] These dates have been determined on the basis of palaeography. The historical evidences and the socio-cultural relations known from the contemporary inscriptions found elsewhere also help to confirm this dating.

Prakrit and Tamil:

The languages underlying the Brahmi script in these inscriptions are Prakrit and Tamil, and there is evidence of translation from Prakrit into Tamil. For instance most of the legends relating to Jain and Buddhist monks are considered to be translations from Prakrit. This problem has been discussed in my article 'Further light on the bilingual coin of Satavahanas'.[4] The legends of the coin run as follows:

Prakrit: vasiṭiputasa   siri   satakaṇisa   raaño
Tamil: vaciṭṭimakaṇku   tiru   catakaṇiku   aracaṇku

(the coin of Vasiṭiputa siri Satakaṇi king). If we compare both legends, we shall find that the Tamil legend is a word by word translation of the Prakrit legend. In it the genitive case endings -sa and -o of Prakrit legend are translated as -ku in Tamil. The proper names are merely transcribed in a Tamil form. A detailed analysis of all the available Brahmi inscriptions both in Prakrit and Tamil will give further good results on this problem.

Decipherment and earlier studies:

The history of the decipherment of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions has been discussed by the late eminent scholar and epigraphist K. V. Subramaniya Aiyar in *The earliest monuments of the Pandya country and their inscriptions,*[5] who first published the readings of these inscriptions, and Kamil Zvelebil in the introduction to his article *The Brahmi hybrid Tamil inscriptions,*[6]

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[3] I. Mahadevan.

[4] R. Panneerselvam.

[5] K. V. Subramaniya Aiyar.

[6] Kamil Zvelebil.

in which he has made a formal study. The details of the decipherment of these inscriptions and their publications are given by I. Mahadevan, in his *Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions.*[7] And therefore it is needless to repeat them here.

As far as the linguistic study of these inscriptions is concerned the works of T. P. Meenakshisundaram[8] and Kamil Zvelebil[9] should be mentioned here. But their analyses are based on earlier readings, chiefly those of K. V. Subramaniya Aiyar, which now have been considerably changed in the Corpus of 1968. The present decipherment offers some new readings which if accepted, will necessitate more formal analysis.

Corpus for the present critical study:

The material taken here for the critical study is from the 'Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions' published as one of the articles in *Seminar on Inscriptions.*[10] So far 76 inscriptions have been deciphered by I. Mahadevan, now the managing director of Modern Bakeries India, New Delhi, who has taken much pain to take his own estampages of these inscriptions.

Of these 76 inscriptions 46 were published with facsimiles. These facsimiles constitute the basis of our corpus for critical study. They are given with my own serial numbers and a table is provided for the reader wishing to refer to the Corpus at the end of the paper.

Emendations:

These facsimiles were read by me independently of other existing readings. Even if the reading of Mahadevan is substantially correct, I have made a few emendations here and there and some word divisions which have consequent effects on the translation.

For instance, in the first inscription I have divided the phrase 'nanta-a siriykuvaṇ' as 'nanta-a siriy kuvaṇ' considering 'kuvaṇ' as a personal name (cf. 2 and 3), while Mahadevan has taken

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[7] I. Mahadevan.
[8] T. P. Meenakshisundaram.
[9] Kamil Zvelebil.
[10] I. Mahadevan.

the phrase as 'nanta asiriyka uvaṇ' and translated it as 'teacher'
(living) 'yonder'.

In the Kilavalavu inscription the eighth letter stands for 'ṭu' and
not for 'ṭi' and I have suggested 'toṇṭu' (duty/service) and the
following word as 'uḷavaṇ' (possessor) both to mean *devotee*.

The inscriptions 33 and 34 of his Corpus are taken as one
single inscription (25). In inscription 35 the 'iiḷa' is a caste name
(tree climbers), while Mahadevan has taken it as a place name,
Ceylon. But in personal discussions Mahadevan agreed that the
suggestion of 'iiḷa' as a caste name was possible.

Another notable difference in my reading is in the Pukalur
inscription. There I read 'kuṟummakaḷ' (and not 'kuṟummakkaḷ'
= sons) and translate it as *granddaughter* because the grand-
daughter is called 'kiiraṇ nooṟi' (Nooṟi the daughter of Kiiraṇ).
Kiiraṇ, who is mentioned in the preceding epigraph as 'Kiiraṇ
koṟṟa', is described as the daughter of Piṭantai. These conjunct-
ures apparently lead us to translate the phrase 'Piṭantai kuṟum-
makaḷ' as granddaughter of Piṭantai, and Nooṟi as a female perso-
nage. I divided the compound as 'kiiraṇ nooṟi' in 41 and 'vaaṇikaṇ
natti' in 42, differing from 'kiiran ooṟi' and 'vaaṇikaṇ atti'.

The first word of inscription 43 is only partially extant, and
we guess it to be [veṇ]ṇaakaṇ, as found in the early Tamil
works.[11]

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[11] Early Tamil works generally are called Caṅka ilakkiyam, consisting of eight
anthologies and ten idylls: Narriṇai, Kuruntokai, Aiṅkurunuuru, Patiṟṟuppattu,
Paripaaṭal, Kalittokai, Akanaanuuru, and Puranaanuuru: and Tirumurukaarrup-
paṭai, Porunaraarruppaṭai, Cirupaaṇaarruppaṭai, Perumpaaṇaarruppaṭai, Mullaip-
paaṭṭu, Neṭunalvaaṭai, Kuriñcippaaṭṭu, Maturaikkaañci, Paṭṭiṇappaalai, and
Malaipaṭukaṭaam.

Taṅkaal porkollaṇ veṇṇaakaṇaar (Veṇṇaakaṇaar, the goldsmith of Taṅkaal)
Akam-48, 108, 355: Kuruntokai – 217: Narriṇai – 313.

Maturai kollaṇ veṇṇaakaṇaar (Veṇṇaakaṇaar, the smith of Maturai) Akam-363.

Iḷaṅkiiraṇ – Akam – 3, 225, 239, 289, 299, 361, 371, 395, 399: Kuruntokai – 116:
Narriṇai – 3, 62, 113, 269, 308, 346.

Iḷaṅkiirantai (father of Iḷaṅkiiraṇ), Kurontokai – 148.

Iḷaṅkiirantai may be identified with [veṇ]ṇaakaṇ of the inscription (no. 43).
In that inscription Iḷaṅkiiraṇ was described as the son of [veṇ]ṇaakaṇ ([veṇ]ṇaakaṇ
makaṇ Iḷaṅkiiraṇ): he is a goldsmith and a native of Maturai according to the
literature: and he is residing in Karur since his name is found in the inscription
found in Pukalur.

The reading of the Araccalur epigraph is very difficult, and we make here some tentative suggestions. R. Nagaswamy, the Director of the Department of Archaeology, Madras, has read the beginning of the lines as 'eluttu punaruttaan' (and interpreted it as, he who has composed the letters/rhythm) and has discussed it elaborately in the Tamil magazine 'Kalaimakal'.[12] But his reading involves some assumptions about the text that do not seem to be proved. As far as the first line of the inscription is concerned the reading of Mahadevan (elu taanam panvittaan = seven beds (charities) caused to be made) is not satisfactory either, and I suggest my reading as 'elutu nampan vattan' and interpret it as 'the writing of Nampan vattan'[13] with some hesitation.

Historical importance of these inscriptions:

Of all the Brahmi inscriptions the Pukalur epigraph is the most interesting. In it, we find a complete genealogy of the kings who ruled from Karur, an ancient capital of the Chera kings, who ruled under the family name 'Irumporai'. This particular inscription was elaborately discussed by me, with reference to the literary sources in 'An important Brahmi Tamil inscription: a reconstruction of the genealogy of the Chera kings'.[14]

The inscriptions 58, 59, and 65 as given in the Corpus, speak of Pitantai and 'Kiiran korra', and remind us of a 'vaanavan maravan pittan' and 'Pittan korran' (a chief under the Chera kings) mentioned in the early Tamil works. (Akam-143: Puram-168, 170).

The Mankulam inscription (no. 1) speaks of a Pandya king Neluncaliyan and his servant called 'kaṭalan valuttiy'. This name Kaṭalan is also found in the early Tamil works (Akam-81) as 'maa van kaṭalan' (the charitable kaṭalan) as an epithet of the Pandyan king Nelunceliyan.

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[12] R. Nagaswamy.

[13] In an inscription of 8th century A.D. we find the name 'Nampam aatai' (I.P.S. No. 241): In the Velurpalayam grant an officer who is executing the royal order had the name 'Nampan': it belongs to the 9th century A.D. (S.I.I. vol. 2-5, No. 98).

[14] R. Panneerselvam.

Identification of place names in early Tamil works:

The place names found in the inscriptions to some extent help to identify or to confirm certain places mentioned in the early Tamil works. The most important are Nalluur (Pattuppaaṭṭu-3), Kumuḷiñaaḷal (Akam-160), and Teemutukuṇram (Akam-197).

Nalluur is described as located in Iṭaikaḷinaaṭu and the place of the poet Nattattaṇ. This can be equated with Nalliyuur found in the inscription of Pukalur near Karur. Hence this place may be found somewhere around Karur. The place names 'Nalli-paalayam' and 'Nalliyampaalayam' of recent times which are found distributed around this region also help us to fix Nalluur in Karur.

Kumuḷ-uur, which is found in the inscription 22, is another place which can be identified with Kumuḷiñaaḷal, a place from where the poet Nappacalai hails. This Kumuḷiñaaḷal may be located in the Pudukkottai division of Tiruchirapalli district since the epigraph in which the name Kumuḷ-uur occurs is found in Cittannavacal, a place in Pudukkottai.

The name Teeṇuur is found in the Mamantur epigraph. Mamantur is in the Chingleput district and very near to the Telugu region. This place may be identified with Teemutukuṇram of the Tamil works. Teemutukuṇram belonged to a certain chief Kaṇṇaṇ eḷiṇi. The normal tendency of the poets describing the sufferings of the heroine on parting from the hero, is that they used to say even if he crossed over the country of the Vadugas (the Telugus), he would not stay longer and he would come back soon. Hence, Teemutukuṇram so described will be considered as a place in the border region of Tamilnad, and that the epigraph found in such a region is a confirmation of the identification.

Linguistic peculiarities:

These inscriptions, apart from historical and sociological interest, have some linguistic importance. The change of *s* into *y* and *c* in Tamil is worthy of mention here. In the Mankulam inscription (no. 1), this *s* is still written as *s*; it belongs to 2–1 century B.C. In the Pukalur inscription (no. 38) we find it written as *y* in the word 'ceṅkaayapaṇ'. On the coin of Sata-

vahanas referred above,[15] we find c in the place of s in the word 'vaciṭṭi'.

The dot over the primary consonants which is a characteristic feature of the Tamil script, is not found in these inscriptions, while it is found on the coin mentioned above. The use of a dot to show the short variety of e is found in the Araccalur inscription, which is dated to a later period. The rules are to be found in the earliest Tamil grammar, Tolkaappiyam, which dates back to the pre-Christian era, 'meyyiṉ iyaṟkai puḷḷiyoṭu nilaiiyal' (the nature of the consonants is to have the dot), and 'ekara okarattu iyaṟkaiyum aṟṟee' (the nature of the letters 'e' and 'o' is the same).

Distribution of the inscriptions:

These inscriptions are distributed geographically as follows:

Araccalur	– 1	Tiruvatavur	– 2
Alakarmalai	– 10	Pillaiyarpatti	– 1
Anaimalai	– 1	Pukalur	– 6
Karunkalakuti	– 1	Mankulam	– 5
Kilavalavu	– 1	Mamantur	– 1
Konkarpuliyankulam	– 3	Muttuppatti	– 1
Cittannavacal	– 1	Mettuppatti	– 8
Tirupparankunram	– 2	Vikkiramankalam	– 2

Summary:

This critical study consists of four parts.

1. Lexicon, in which all the words are given with their English equivalents and grammatical notes, followed by the number of the inscription in which the particular word occurs. The words are segmented to the smallest possible unit, and also given in compounds as they occur in the inscription.

2. Classification of names and culture-bearing words. This will help the reader to compare names in the early Tamil works, as well as give information about social and cultural affairs of that period.

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[15] R. Panneerselvam.

3. Grammar, in which is given a sketch of the main functional elements.

4. Text, consisting of transliteration, translation, and the facsimiles of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions.

System of transliteration:

[Except in the place names given in the introduction and elsewhere.]

Modern Tamil script is given first and next is the Brahmi script available in the facsimiles: scripts for [ai] and [au] are not available in them; and there is no distinctive script found for [o] and [oo].

There are two non-Tamil scripts listed at the end of the table.

k	ன்		y	
ṅ			r	
c			l	
ñ			v	
ṭ			ḷ	
ṇ			ḻ	
t			ṟ	
n			ṉ	
p			s	
m			dh	

List of abbreviations:

Adj. B.	–	Adjective Base
Akan.	–	Akanaanuuru
Ap.	–	Appositional
Cau.	–	Causative
C.N.	–	Conjugated Noun
'Corpus'	–	Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions
D.N.	–	Derived Noun
F.V.	–	Finite Verb
I.A.T.R.	–	International Association of Tamil Research
I.I.J.	–	Indo Iranian Journal
Inf.	–	Infinitive
I.P.S.	–	Inscriptions of Pudukkottai State
N.	–	Noun
Pn.	–	Pronoun
Pnag.	–	Person, Number, and Gender
Puran	–	Puranaanuuru
R.P.	–	Relative Participle
S.I.I.	–	South Indian Inscriptions
St.	–	Stem
T.M.	–	Tense Marker
V.N.	–	Verbal Noun

Ø	– Zero
—	– Optional
+	– Obligatory

2. *Lexicon*

a	– excrement, 31
atuvaayi	– personal name, N. 37
atiṭṭaaṇam	– abode, N. 42
atiḷaaṇam	– abode, N. 22
atai	– sage/father, N. 20
antuvaṇ	– personal name, N. 34
antai	– sage/father, N. 3, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20
antaiy	– sage/father, N. 12
amaṇ...	– amaṇṇaṇ N. 39
amaṇṇaṇ	– Jain monk, N. 38, 39
araṭṭa	– personal name, N. 37
ari-itaṇ*	– personal name, N. 6
aritaṇ	– personal name, N. 37
aritiṇ	– personal name, N. 23
ariyti	– personal name, N. 14
ava-um	– they and, Pn. 32
aṟutta	– which (was caused to be) cut, R.P. 38
aṟupita	– which was caused to be cut, R.P. 39
aṟuvai	– cloth, V.N. 33
asutaṇ	– personal name, N. 3
aaka	– while becoming, Inf. 38, 39
aataṇ	– personal name, N. 38, 39
aataṇ-eeṇ	– Aatan I, Ap. 9
aataṇa-a	– Aatan's, N. 24
aataṇceellirumpuṟai	– personal name, N. 39
aataṇceellirumpoṟai	– personal name, N. 38
aay	– a dynasty, N. 35
itta	– this, Pn. 10
itta-a	– this, Pn. 1
ita	– this, Pn. 2
iravaataṇ	– personal name, N. 15

* hyphen stands for hiatus or to show the pre-sandhi forms.

irumpuṟai	– a dynasty, N. 39
irumpoṟai	– a dynasty, N. 38
iḷaṅkaṭuṅkoo	– personal name, N. 38, 39
iḷaṅkiiraṉ	– personal name, N. 43
iḷaṅkoo	– prince, N. 38, 39
iḷancaṭikaṉ	– personal name, N. 2
iḷam	– young, Adj. B. 2, 38, 38, 39, 39, 43
iḷay	– young, Adj. B. 22
iḷayar	– servants, N. 22
iiva	– these, Pn. 37
iiḷa	– a caste (tree climbers), N. 35
uḷavaṉ	– he who exists, C.N. 11
uṟaiy	– abode, N. 38
uṟaiyuḷ	– residence, N. 37
uupaṟuvaṉ	– personal name, N. 8
uupaacaṉ	– devotee, N. 7
uupaaca-aṉ	– devotee, N. 8, 11
uupu	– salt, N. 25
uur	– village N. 13
uuṟai	– abode, N. 7
em	– our, Pn. 13
eri	– personal name, N. 37
erukaaṭṭuuru	– place name, N. 46
erukaaṭur	– place name, N. 35
eḷutu	– writing, V.N. 45
eḷa	– young, Adj. B. 28
eḷa-a	– young, Adj. B. 33
eḷa-a aṭaṉ	– personal name, N. 33
eḷa cantaṉ	– personal name, N. 28
ce-umi	– place name, N. 22
eeḷai-uur	– place name, N. 23
kaṭalaṉ	– personal name, N. 1
kaṭuṅkooṉ	– personal name, N. 39
kaṇatikaṉ	– personal name, N. 25
kaṇi-i	– Jain teacher, N. 3
kaṇiy	– Jain teacher, N. 1
kaṇimaaṉ	– personal name, N. 44
karu-uur	– place name, N. 42

kal	– stone/rock, B. 38, 39
kalumaaran	– personal name, N. 29
kaayipan	– personal name, N. 37
kaaviti-iy	– merchant chief, N. 3
kaaviy	– abode, N. 36
kaavuti-i	– merchant chief, N. 22
kaalitika	– to Kaaliti, N. 3
kaasapan	– personal name, N. 31
kiiran	– personal name, N. 40, 41, 43, 46
kiiran korra	– personal name, N. 40
kiiran noori	– personal name, N. 41
ku-an	– personal name, N. 2
ku-ittavan	– he who thatched, C.N. 9
kutupitoon	– he who caused to give, C.N. 32
kutumpikan	– husband, man, D.N. 35
kumul-uur	– place name, N. 22
kuva	– personal name, N. 3
kuvan-ke	– to Kuvan, N. 1
kuvira	– personal name, N. 21
kura	– roof, N. 8, 9
kurum	– young, Adj. 5. 41
kurummakal	– granddaughter, N. 41
kunratuu	– place name, N. 37
kunru	– hill, N. 44
kottuupitta-a	– which was caused to be given, R.P. 1
kottuupitoon	– he who caused to be given, C.N. 6, 7
kotala	– mat/roof, N. 9
koti-oor	– they who gave, C.N. 5
kotu	– (that which was) given, R.P. 11
kotupitavan	– he who caused to give, C.N. 8, 30, 34
kotupitoon	– he who caused to give, C.N. 3
kotuupitoon	– he who caused to give, C.N. 4
kolavan	– family-he/smith, N. 24
kolu	– ploughshare, N. 28
korra	– personal name, N. 40
koo	– king, N. 38, 39
koon	– king, N. 44, 46
catikan	– personal name, N. 2

cantaritan	— personal name, N. 4
cantan	— personal name, N. 18, 28
cayan	— personal name, N. 35
caḷiyan	— personal name, N. 1, 2
ca-atana-a	— of Cattan, N. 13
caattan	— personal name, N. 45
caatan	— personal name, N. 35
ciṛu	— small/young, Adj. B. 22, 44
ciṛupoocil	— place name, N. 22
ciṛuvan	— boy (son) N. 44
ce-iya	— which was done, R.P. 2
ceṅkaa...	— Ceṅkaayapan, 39
ceṅkaayapan	— personal name, N. 38, 39
cey-a	— which was done, R.P. 12, 21
ceyta	— which was done, R.P. 22, 35
ceyitaan	— did he, F.V. 44
ceyipita	— which was caused to be done, R.P. 41
cem	— pure, Adj. B. 38, 39
ceenta-a	— personal name, N. 17
ceentantai	— personal name, N. 18
ceellirumpuṛai	— personal name, N. 39
ceellirumpoṛai	— personal name, N. 38
caiya-aḷan	— personal name, N. 36
cooṛa	— the Choḷa family?, N. 9
ṇaakan	— veṇṇaakan, 43
tanta	— who overcome, R.P. 44
tantai	— father, N. 2
tacan	— carpenter, N. 44
tavira-a	— personal name, N. 31
taviraike	— to Tavirai, N. 25
taa	— (prob. this), 38
taar-aṇi-i	— personal name, N. 30
taaṇa	— charity, N. 12, 13, 17, 19, 21, 24, 29, 37
tiṭi-ila-a	— he of the place Tiṭi-il, D.N. 19
teṇku	— south, N. 22
teeṇuur	— place name, N. 44
teevan	— personal name, N. 45
teevan caattan	— personal name, N. 45

toṇṭu	– duty/service, N. 11
toṇṭuḷavaṇ	– he who has duty (devotee), N. 11
natti	– personal name, N. 42
nata	– spiritual preceptor, N. 3
nataṇ	– lord/chief, N. 37
nanta	– spiritual preceptor, N. 2
nanta-a	– spiritual preceptor, N. 1
nampaṇ	– good man/friend, N. 45
nalli-uura-a	– of Nalli-uur he, D.N.
nalliyi-uur-aa	– of Nalli-uur he, D.N. 40
naaṭu	– country, N. 22
nikamatuu	– of merchantile guild, N. 3
nikamatoor	– of merchantile guild they, D.N. 5
neṭim	– great/elder, Adj. B. 2
neṭiñcaḷiyaṇ	– personal name, N. 2
neṭu	– great/elder, Adj. B. 27, 35
neṭucaataṇ	– personal name, N. 35
neṭuñcaḷiyaṇ	– personal name, N. 1
neṭum	– great/elder, Adj. B. 1
neṭumalaaṇ	– personal name, N. 27
nooṛi	– personal name, N. 41
paṇa-aṇ	– servant, N. 1
patiṇa...r	– unclear, 20
para-acuu	– personal name, N. 7
paḷi	– abode, N. 23, 41
paḷi-i	– abode, N. 11
paḷi-iy	– abode, N. 1
paḷiy	– abode, N. 2
paakaṇ-uur	– place name, N. 10
paaṅkaaṭa	– place name, N. 6
paaṇita	– candy, N. 27
paata	– food, N. 37
paatanataṇ	– personal name, N. 37
pikaṇ	– personal name, N. 12
piṭantai	– personal name, N. 40
piṭaṇ	– personal name, N. 10, 41
piṇava	– personal name, N. 3
piṛanta	– who was born, R.P. 22

peruṅkaṭuṅkooṇ	– personal name, N. 38, 39
peruṅkiiraṇ	– personal name, N. 46
perum	– great/elder, Adj. B. 38, 39, 46
peeraataṇ	– personal name, N. 10
pomitti	– nun, N. 26
poṇ	– gold, N. 24, 42
poolaalaiyaṇ	– personal name, N. 35
makaḷ	– daughter, N. 40
makaṇ	– son, N. 12, 38, 38, 39, 43
mattirai	– place name, N. 24
matira	– place name, N. 16
maṇiy	– gem, N. 45
maa	– great, Att. 25
maaṟaṇ	– personal name, N. 29
yaaṟṟu . . .	– yaaṟṟuur, 39
yaaṟṟur	– place name, N. 38, 39
vaṇṇakkaṇ	– examiner of gems, N. 45
vaṇikaṇ	– merchant, N. 28
vattaṇ	– personal name, N. 45
vaḷuttiy	– the Pandya king, N. 1
vaaci	– the resident, V.N. 29
vaaṇikaṇ	– merchant, N. 25, 27, 33, 42
vintai-uur	– place name, N. 36
viyakaṇ	– personal name, N. 25
visuvaaṇ	– personal name, N. 16
veḷ-aṟai	– place name, N. 5
veḷ-aṟaiy	– place name, N. 3
veṇṇaakaṇ	– personal name, N. 43
veeṇpaḷi-i	– place name, N. 33
veepooṇ-ṇ	– he who will thatch, C.N. 10

Words with non-Tamil script in the beginning:

dhammam	– charity, N. 1
dhamam	– charity, N. 2
saapamita-iṇ	– of Saapamita, N. 26
saalaakaṇ	– brother-in-law, N. 2
siriy	– auspicious, N. 2, 3
siriyi	– auspicious, N. 1

12*

3. *Classifications of names*

1. *Place names:*

   a. *suffix: -ur/uuru, uur* = village
   erukaaṭur, erukaaṭṭuuru, eeḷai-uur, karu-uur, kumuḷ-uur,
   kuṉṟatuu, teeṉuur, nalli-uur, nalli-yi-uur, paakaṉ-uur,
   yaaṟṟuur, vintai-uur, veeṇpaḷi-i

   b. *suffix: -il* = house, *locative form*
   ciṟupoocil, tiṭi-il

   c. *suffix: -a̱rai* = room, plot
   veḷ-a̱rai, veḷ-a̱raiy

   d. *suffix: -paḷi (-paḷḷi)* = monastery, temple of Jains/Buddhists
   veeṇpaḷi-i

   e. *suffix: -kaaṭa (kaaṭu)* = forest/dry land
   paaṅkaaṭa

   f. *common form*:
   mattirai, matira (Maturai) ee-umi

2. *Personal names:*

   a. *isolated forms:*

   attuvaayi, antuvaṉ, araṭṭa, aritaṉ, ari-itaṉ, ariyti, asutaṉ,
   aataṉ, uupaṟuvaṉ, eri, kaṭalan, kaayipaṉ, kaasapaṉ, kaaḷiti,
   kuvaṉ, ku-aṉ, kuva, kuvira, ca-ataṉ, caattaṉ, caataṉ,
   caṭikaṉ, cantaṉ, cantaritaṉ, cayaṉ, ceenta, caiya-aḷaṉ,
   tavira, tavirai, taar-aṇi, natti, nanta, nanta-a, para-acuu,
   pikaṉ, piṭaṉ, piṇava, vattaṉ, viyakaṉ, visuvaaṉ, saapamita

   b. *compound forms:*

   b 1. *Adj. + Noun*
       iḷaṅkaṭuṅkoo, iḷaṅkiiraṉ, iḷañcaṭikaṉ, eḷa-a aṭaṉ, eḷa
       cantaṉ, kaṭuṅkoo, ceṅkaayapaṉ, neṭiñcaliyaṉ,
       neṭucaataṉ, neṭuñcaḷiyaṉ, neṭumalaaṉ,
       peruṅkaṭuṅkooṉ, peruṅkiiraṉ

   b 2. *Noun + Noun*
       kiiraṉ koṟṟa, kiiraṉ nooṟi, teevaṉ caattaṉ

b 3. *Noun + antai*
    ceentantai (ceentan + antai)
    pilantai (pilan + antai)

b 4. *Noun + aatan*
    iravaatan (ira + aatan)
    peeraatan (peer + aatan)

b 5. *other compounds*
    aatanceellirumporai, aatanceellirumpurai, kanatikan,
    kalumaaran, cantaritan, paatanatan

3. *Groups of related people:*
    a. catikan, ilancalikan, nelincaliyan
    b. aatancellirumporai, perunkalunkoon, ilankalunkoo
    c. pilantai, kiiran korra, kiiran noori
    d. ..naakan, ilankiiran

4. *Kinship terms:*
    tantai = father; makan = son; ciruvan = son; makal = daughter;
    kurummakal = granddaughter; saalaakan = brother-in-law

5. *Names of dynasties:*
    aay, irumporai, ceel (ceeral), coora, valuttiy, caliyan, maaran

6. *Royal titles:*
    koo = king, koon = king, kaavuti/kaavuti = merchant chief

7. *Professional names:*
    aruvai vaanikan   – cloth merchant
    uupu vaanikan   – salt merchant
    kolu vaanikan   – ploughshare seller
    paanita vaanikan – candy seller
    pon kolavan   – goldsmith
    mani vannakkan – examiner of gems
    tacan   – carpenter
    ilayar   – attendant
    pana-an   – servant

8. *Relgious terms:*

amaṇṇaṇ	– Jain
upaacaṇ	– devotee
tavirai	– lady disciple/devotee
antai	– great man/sage

9. *Things:*

aṛuvai – cloth; uupu – salt; koṭala – mat; koḷu – ploughshare; paaṇita – candy; poṇ – gold; maṇi – gem

10. *Adjectives:*

iḷam, kuṛu, ciṛu	=	younger, small
kaṭum, neṭum, peru	=	elder, big

4. *Grammar*

1. *Verb and Conjugation:*

aṛu	– to cut
aṛutta	– which was cut
aṛupita	– which was caused to be cut
aṛuvai	– cloth (that which was cut)
aa	– to become
aaka	– while becoming
uṛai	– to live
uṛaiy	– abode
uṛaiyuḷ	– residence
eḷutu	– to write
eḷutu	– writing
kaṇ	– to think
kaṇi	– sage/monk, astrologer
kuṭu	– to give
kuṭupitooṇ	– he who caused to give
ku(y)	– to thatch
ku-ittavaṇ	– he who thatched
koṭu	– to give
koṭṭuupitta-a	– which was caused to be given

koṭṭuupitooṇ	– he who caused to be given
koṭi-oor	– they who had given
koṭu	– giving
koṭupitavaṇ	– he who caused to give
koṭupitooṇ	– he who caused to give
koṭuupitooṇ	– he who caused to give

cey	– to do
ce-iya	– which was done
cey-a	– which was done
ceyta	– which was done
ceyitaaṇ	– did he
ceyipita	– which was caused to be done

taa	– to give
tanta	– who gave (who overcame)

piṛa	– to be born
piṛanta	– who was born

vee(y)	– to thatch
veepooṇ	– he who will thatch

2. *Grammatical elements (verbs):*

1. Causative: -pi- St. + -pi-
    Eg. aṛupita

2. Tenses:
    1. Past: -t-, -tt-, -nt-, -i-
    2. Future: -p- St. ± Cau. + T.M.
    Eg. ceyta
        aṛutta
        koṭupitooṇ
        koṭṭuupittooṇ
        tanta
        veepooṇ

3. Person, Number, and Gender marker:
    1. Singular: -aṇ, aaṇ, -ooṇ St. ± Cau. + T.M. + Pnag.
    Eg. ku-ittavaṇ
        ceyitaaṇ
        koṭupitooṇ

2. Plural: -oor
   Eg. koṭi-oor

4. Participle:

   1. Infinitive: -a-   St. ± Cau. ± T.M. + Inf.
      Eg. aaka

   2. Relational: St. ± Cau. + T.M. + R.P.
      Eg. tanta
          piranta

3. *Declension of Nouns: Cases:*
   1. Accusative: -a (ai)
         Eg. itta

   2. Dative: -ka, (in genetive sense); -ke (ku)
         Eg. kaaḷitika (to Kaaḷiti)
             taviraike

   3. Genitive: -a, ø,
         Eg. ca-ataṇa-a
             piṭaṇøkuṛummakaḷ
             kooṇø kuṇṛu

4. *Constructional Types:*
   1. Nominal:
         Eg. matira anṭai visuvaaṇ
             anṭai ceenta-a taaṇa
             paaṇita vaaṇikaṇ neṭumalaaṇ

   2. Finite:
         Eg. antuvaṇ koṭupitavaṇ
             nikamatoor koṭi-oor

   3. Participial:
         Eg. kuvira anṭai cey-a taaṇa
             teeṇuur tanta kooṇ...ceyitaaṇ
             kumuḷ-uur piranta kaavuṭi-i
             iḷaṅkoo aaka aṛutta kal

5. *Concord rules:*

1. Number concord:
    1. Singular:
        Eg. piḷaṉ .....veepooṉ
            vaṇikaṉ eḷacantaṉ
    2. Plural:
        Eg. nikamatoor koṭi-oor

2. Gender concord:
    Eg. ceyitaaṉ tacaṉ ciṟuvaṉ
        kuṟummakaḷ kiiraṉ nooṟi

5. *Text and translation of the inscriptions*

Mankulam

1. kaṇiy nanta-a siriy-i
   kuvaṇke dhammam i
   tta-a neḷuñcaḷiyaṉ pa
   ṇa-aṉ kaṭala-aṉ vaḷutti
   y koṭṭuupitta-a paḷi-iy

   Charity (given to) the auspicious Kuvaṇ the great Jain
   monk. This abode was caused to be given by Kaṭalaṉ
   vaḷuttiy, a servant of Neṭuñcaḷiyaṉ.

2. kaṇiy nanta siriy ku-aṉ
   dhamam ita neṭiñcaḷiyaṉ saalaakaṉ
   iḷañcaḷikaṉ tantai caṭikaṉ
   ce-iya paḷiy

   Charity of auspicious Ku-aṇ, the great Jain monk. This
   abode was done by Caṭikaṉ the father of Iḷañcaḷikaṉ and
   brother-in-law of Neṭiñcaliyaṉ.

3. kaṇi-i nata siriy kuva
   veḷ-aṟaiy nikamatu
   kaaviti-iy kaaḷitika antai
   asutaṉ piṇava koṭupitooṉ

   This/here is the auspicious Kuva the great Jain monk.
   Asutaṉ piṇava the father of Kaaḷiti the merchant chief of
   the guild from Veḷ-aṟaiy caused to give.

4. cantaritan kotuupitoon
   Cantaritan, who caused to give.

5. vel-arai nikamatoor koti-oor
   Those who gave were the merchantile guild of Velarai.

Tiruvatavur

6. paankaata ari-itan kottuupitoon
   This was caused to be given by Aritan of Paankaatu.

7. uupaacan para-acuu
   uurai kottuupitoon
   The abode was caused to be given by the devotee Para-
   acuu.

Konkarpuliyankulam

8. kura kotupitavan
   uupaac-an uuparuvan
   The roof was caused to be given by the devotee Uuparuvan.

9. kura kotala ku-ittavan coora aatan-een
   He who thatched the mat for the roof was I, Coora aatan.

10. paakan-uur peeraatan pitan itta veepoon-n
    Peeraatan pitan of Paakanuur is he who will thatch
    this.

Kilavalavu

11. uupaaca-an tontu
    lavan kotu pali-i
    The abode was given by the devotee who has duties.

Vikkiramankalam

12. antaiy pikan makan cey-a taana
    Charity was done by the son of the great man Pikan.

13. em uur ca-atana-a taana
    Charity of Caattan of our village.

Mettupatti

14. antai ariyti
    The great man Ariyti.

15. antai iravaatan
    The great man Iravaatan.

16. matira antai visuvaan
    The great man Visuvaan of Matira.

17. antai ceenta-a taana
    Charity of great man Ceenta.

18. ceentantai cantan
    Cantan (son of) the great man Ceenta.

19. titi-il-a taana
    Charity of him who is of Titi-il.

20. patina..r atai
    The great man of Patina..r.

21. kuvira antai cey-a taana
    Kuvira, the great man, who has done the charity.

Cittannavacal

22. ee-umi naatu kumul-uur piranta kaavuti-i
    tenku cirupoocil ilayar ceyta atila-anam

    The merchant chief, who was born at Kumul-uur in the
    country Ee-umi, (for him) the abode was done by the
    attendants of south Cirupoocil.

Karunkalakuti

23. eelaiy uur aritin pali
    The abode of Aritin of Eelai-uur.

Alakarmalai

24. mattiraiy pon kolavan aatan-a taana
    Charity of Aatan the goldsmith of Mattiraiy.

25. maa taviraike uupu vaanikan
    viyakan kanatikan

    To the great lady devotee/disciple, by the salt merchant
    Viyakan kanatikan.

26. saapamita-in pomitti
    (To) Saapamita the nun.

27. paanita vaanikan netumalaan
    The candy seller Netumalaan.

28. kolu vanikan elacantan
    The ploughshare merchant (smith) Elacantan.

29. vaaci kalumaaran taana
    The resident, Kalumaaran's charity.

30. taar-ani-i kolupita-avan
    Taar-ani, who caused to give.

31. kaasapan-a tavira-a
    Kaasapan, the spiritual teacher.

32. avaruum kulupitoo
    He also caused to give.

33. veenpali-i aruvai vaanikan ela-a atan
    Ela atan, the cloth merchant of Veenpali.

Tirupparankunram

34. antuvan kolupitavan
    Antuvan who caused to give.

35. erukaatur iila kulumpikan
    poolaalaiyan ceyta aay cayan netucaatan

    This was done by Poolaalaiyan, a husband/man of the
    tree-climber caste of Erukaatur. (The occupants) Cayan,
    the Aay, Netucaatan.

Mullupalli

36. vintai-uur caiya-alan kaaviy
    The abode of Caiyalan of Vintai-uur.

Anaimalai

37. iiva kunratuu-uraiyul paatanatan
    taana eri aritan attuvaayi aratta kaayipan

These are the charities of Paatanataṇ the resident of
Kuṇṟatuur. (The occupants) Eri, Aritaṇ, Attuvaayi,
Araṭṭa, Kaayipaṇ.

Pukalur

38. taa amaṇṇaṇ yaaṟṟuur ceṅkaayapaṇ uṟaiy
    koo aataṇ ceellirumpoṟai makaṇ
    peruṅkaṭuṅkoon makaṇ[i]ḷaṅ
    katuṅkoo[i]ḷaṅkoo aaka aṟutta kal

> (This) is the abode of Ceṅkaayapaṇ, a Jain monk of
> Yaaṟṟuur. This stone was cut while Iḷaṅkaṭuṅkoo, the son
> of Peruṅkaṭuṅkooṇ, the son of the King Aataṇ Cee[ra]l-
> lirumpoṟai, was becoming the heir apparent (prince).

39. amaṇ...yaaṟṟu.ceṅkaa......
    koo aa....llirumpuṟai makaṇ peruṅ
    kaṭuṅkooṇ makaṇ kaṭuṅkooṇ[i]ḷaṅkaṭuṅ
    koo[i]ḷaṅkoo aaka aṟupita kal

> This stone was caused to be cut while Kaṭuṅkooṇ
> Iḷaṅkaṭuṅkoo, the son of Peruṅkaṭuṅkooṇ, the son of
> King Aa[taṇ Cee[ra]]llirumpuṟai, was becoming the heir
> apparent.

40. nalliyi-uur-aa piṭantai makaḷ kiiraṇ koṟṟa
    Kiiraṇ koṟṟa the daughter of Piṭantai of Nalliyuur.

41. nalli-uur-a piṭaṇ kuṟummakaḷ
    kiiraṇ nooṟi ceyipita paḷi

> The abode was caused to be done by Kiiraṇ Nooṟi, the
> granddaughter of Piṭaṇ of Nalliyuur.

42. karu-uur poṇ vaaṇikaṇ
    natti atiṭṭaaṇam

> (This is) the abode of Natti, the goldsmith of Karu-uur.

43. ...ṇaakaṇ makaṇ iḷaṅkiiraṇ
    Iḷaṅkiiraṇ son of ...ṇaakaṇ.

Mamantur

44. kaṇimaaṇ
    teeṇuur tanta kooṇ kuṇru
    ceyitaaṇ tacaṇ ciṟuvaṇ

    The great Jain. The hill of the lord who overcame Teeṇuur.
    Son of a carpenter did it.

Araccalur

45. eḻutu nampaṇ vattaṇ maṇiy
    vaṇṇakkaṇ teevaṇ caattaṇ

    (This is) the writing (of) the good man (friend) Vattaṇ;
    Teevaṇ caattaṇ.

Pillaiyarpatti

46. erukaaṭṭuruk kooṇ peruṅkiiraṇ
    Peruṅkiiraṇ, the lord of Erukaaṭṭuru.

6. *Tamil Brahmi inscriptions*

Maaṅkuḷam

2

3

4

5

Tiruvaatavuur

6

7 ᒪ·ᑕᑐᒪᑕᑭᖋ ᕳ
ᒪᔮᖶ ᑕ ᕲ ᒌ ᐱ ᒥ

Koṅkarpuliyaṅkuḷam

8 ᒢᕼ ᖶᕲ ᖶᕲ ᒪᒉ ᐱ ᕲ ᒪ
ᒪ ᒉᕲᔪᒌ ᒪ ᒪ ᕲ ᕲ ᒥ

9 ᒉᕳ ᖶᕲ ᒇ ᒪᒉᒥᒌ ᒉ ᐱᒉ ᕳ ᕴ ᒪ ᖶ ᒉ ᕲᒉ ⊞

10 ᕵ ᖶᒉ ᒪ ᒒ ᖶᕲ ᕲ ᒉ ᒇᕲ ᒉ ᕴ ᒉᒌ ᒥ ᒉ ᕲ ⊞

Kiiḷavaḷavu

11 ᒪ ᒌ ᖶ ᖋ ᕲ ᖗ �I ᕳ
ᒒ ᕲ ᕲ ᖶ ᕲ ᕴ ᒋᒌᒥ·

Vikkiramaṅkalam

12 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]

13 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]

Meeṭṭuppaṭṭi

14 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]   15 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]

16 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]   17 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]

18 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]   19 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]

20 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]   21 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]

Cittannavaacal

22 [Tamil Brahmi inscription]

[Tamil Brahmi inscription]

Karuṅkaalakkuṭi

23

Aḷakarmalai

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam

34

35

Muttuppaṭṭi

36

13*

Aanaimalai

37

Pukaḷuur

38

39

40

41

42

43

Maamaṇḍuur

44

Araccaluur

45

Piḷḷaiyaarpaṭṭi

46

Conversion table:

R.P.S.	I.M.	R.P.S.	I.M.
1	1	27	37
2	2	28	38
3	3	29	39
4	5	30	40
5	6	31	41
6	7	32	42
7	8	33	43
8	10	34	48
9	11	35	51
10	12	36	52
11	9	37	55
12	13	38	56
13	17	39	57
14–21	18–24	40	58
22	27	41	59
23	28	42	66
24	30	43	73
25	33 + 34	44	71
26	36	45	72
		46	75

R.P.S. = R. Panneerselvam.   I.M. = Iravatham Mahadevan.

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