A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE TAMIL BRAHMI INSCRIPTIONS

BY

R. PANNEERSELVAM

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 l l n r and i which are not common in the northern variety² 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

¹ C. Silvaramamurthy.
² K. V. Subramanlya Aiyar.
letters (no. 38). These inscriptions date to the period between the second century B.C. and the fifth century A.D. 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'. The legends of the coin run as follows:

Prakrit: vasiṭṭiputasa siri satakanisa raaño
Tamil: vaćiṭṭimakaŋku tiri catakaŋku aracaŋku

(the coin of Vasiṭṭiputa siri Satakanı 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, who first published the readings of these inscriptions, and Kamil Zvelebil in the introduction to his article The Brahmi hybrid Tamil inscriptions.

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5 I. Mahadevan.
4 R. Panneerselvam.
2 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 Airar, 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 Bakers 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 siriykuvaŋ' as 'nanta-a siriy kuvaŋ' considering 'kuvaŋ' as a personal name (cf. 2 and 3), while Mahadevan has taken

\(^7\) I. Mahadevan.
\(^8\) T. P. Meenakshisundaram.
\(^9\) Kamil Zvelebil.
\(^10\) I. Mahadevan.
the phrase as 'nanta asiriyka uvāŋ' and translated it as 'teacher' (living) 'yonder'.

In the Kīlavalavu inscription the eighth letter stands for 'ṭu' and not for 'ṭi' and I have suggested 'ṭonṭu' (duty/service) and the following word as 'ulavaŋ' (possessor) both to mean devotee. The inscriptions 33 and 34 of his Corpus are taken as one single inscription (25). In inscription 35 the 'iila' 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 'iila' as a caste name was possible.

Another notable difference in my reading is in the Pukalur inscription. There I read 'kurummakal' (and not 'kurummakkal' = sons) and translate it as grandaughter because the granddaughter is called 'kiraŋ noori' (Noori the daughter of Kiraŋ). Kiraŋ, who is mentioned in the preceding epigraph as 'Kiraŋ korrä', is described as the daughter of Pi jan taei. These conjunctures apparently lead us to translate the phrase 'Pi jan taei kurum makal' as granddaughter of Pi jan taei, and Noori as a female personage. I divided the compound as 'kiraŋ noori' in 41 and 'vaanikaŋ natti' in 42, differing from 'kiraŋ ooori' and 'vaanikaŋ atti'. The first word of inscription 43 is only partially extant, and we guess it to be [veŋ]maakan, as found in the early Tamil works.11

11 Early Tamil works generally are called Cankka iliakdiyam, consisting of eight anthologies and ten idylls: Naṟṟiṅal, Kuruntokai, Aiṅkurumuṛu, Paṭṟṟppattu, Paṟṟpaṭṭu, Kallitokai, Akanaṇṇuṟu, and Pūṟanaṇṇuṟu: and Tirumurukkaṟṟppaṭṭal, Pounaraṇṇaṟṟppaṭṭal, Ćiruppaṇṇaṟṟppaṭṭal, Perumpaṇṇaṟṟppaṭṭal, Mulaiṟṟppaṭṭu, Neṭunuvaṭṭal, Kuriiṟṟppaṭṭu, Muraṅkaṅṭal, Paṭṟṟppaṭṭal, and Mahalpaṭṭaḷaṭṭam.

Muraṅkal kollai veṇgaṅakaṇaṅ (Vennengaṅaṅ, the smith of Muraṅkal) Akam-363.
Ilaṅkiṅraṅ (father of Ilaṅkiṅraṅ), Kurontokai - 148.
Ilaṅkiṅraṅtal may be identified with [veṇ]maakaṅ of the inscription (no. 43). In that inscription Ilaṅkiṅraṅ was described as the son of [veṇ]maakaṅ (ven seems to make ilaṅkiṅraṅ); he is a goldsmith and a native of Muraṅkal 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 Aracalur 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 ‘elutu puṭaruttaṇ’ (and interpreted it as, he who has composed the letters/rhythm) and has discussed it elaborately in the Tamil magazine ‘Kalainakal’. 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 taṇam paṇvittan = seven beds (charities) caused to be made) is not satisfactory either, and I suggest my reading as ‘elutu nampaṭ vattaṇ’ and interpret it as ‘the writing of Nampaṭ vattaṇ’ 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 ‘Trumppai’. 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’.

The inscriptions 58, 59, and 65 as given in the Corpus, speak of Piṭantai and ‘Kiraṅ ḱorrṇa’, and remind us of a ‘vaṅavaṇ maṇavaṇ piṭṭau’ and ‘Piṭṭau korrṇ’ (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 Neṭūnceḷiyaṇ and his servant called ‘kaṭalaṇ vaḷuttiy’. This name Kaṭalaṇ is also found in the early Tamil works (Akam-81) as ‘maa vaṇ kaṭalaṇ’ (the charitable kaṭalaṇ) as an epithet of the Pandyan king Neṭūnceḷiyaṇ.

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12 R. Nagaswamy.

13 In an inscription of 8th century A.D. we find the name ‘Nampam aṭal’ (I.P.S. No. 241): In the Velurpalayam grant an officer who is executing the royal order had the name ‘Nampaṇ’: 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 Nalluuru (Paṭṭuṭṭaṭṭu-3), Kumuliḷāḷaḷ (Akaṭam-100), and Teemutukkuṟṟam (Akaṭam-197).

Nalluuru is described as located in Ḍaḷiḷaḷ and the place of the poet Nattatāṟṟ. This can be equated with Naliyur found in the inscription of Pukalar near Karur. Hence this place may be found somewhere around Karur. The place names 'Nalliḷaḷaiyam' and 'Nalliḷamaiyam' of recent times which are found distributed around this region also help us to fix Nalluuru in Karur.

Kumuliḷ-ur, which is found in the inscription 22, is another place which can be identified with Kumuliḷāḷaḷ, a place from where the poet Nappacalai hails. This Kumuliḷāḷaḷ may be located in the Pudukkottai division of Tiruchirapalli district since the epigraph in which the name Kumul-ur occurs is found in Cattanavacal, a place in Pudukkottai.

The name Teeṇuuru 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 Teemutukkuṟṟam of the Tamil works. Teemutukkuṟṟam belonged to a certain chief Kaṇaiṟṟ eṟṟ. 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, Teemutukkuṟṟam 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 'ceṇkaayapāṟṟ'. On the coin of Sata-
vahanas referred above,\textsuperscript{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, 'meyyīṯ iyāṉkai puḷḷiyōṭu nilaiiyal' (the nature of the consonants is to have the dot), and 'ekara okarattu iyāṉkaiyum arĪco' (the nature of the letters 'e' and 'o' is the same).

\textit{Distribution of the inscriptions:}

These inscriptions are distributed geographically as follows:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lll}
Araccalur & – 1 & Tiruvatavur & – 2 \\
Alakarmalai & – 10 & Pillaiyarpatti & – 1 \\
Anaimalai & – 1 & Pukalur & – 6 \\
Karunkalakuti & – 1 & Mankulam & – 5 \\
Kilavalavu & – 1 & Mamantur & – 1 \\
Konkarpuliyankulam & – 3 & Muttupatti & – 1 \\
Cittannavacal & – 1 & Melppattu & – 8 \\
Tirupparankunram & – 2 & Vikkiramankalam & – 2 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textit{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.

\textsuperscript{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.

Acknowledgement:

I acknowledge with thanks the kind permission of the Director of the Department of Archaeology, Madras, and I. Mahadevan, friend and promoter of my research in this study of Brahmi inscriptions to reproduce the facsimiles. The facsimiles were arranged so as to come out clearly, and slightly differently from the order found in the 'Corpus'. I also thank Eric Grinstead, of the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, for his fruitful suggestions in making this paper more readable.

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.

\[
\begin{align*}
a & - \text{Volt} & e & - \text{E} \\
aa & - \text{Closed} & ee & - \text{E} \\
i & - \text{I} & ai & - \text{I} \\
ii & - \text{II} & o & - \text{O} \\
u & - \text{U} & oo & - \text{O} \\
uu & - \text{U} & au & - \text{U}
\end{align*}
\]
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
Ω — Zero
— — Optional
+ — Obligatory

2. Lexicon

a — excrement, 31
atūvaayi — personal name, N. 37
atījaāam — abode, N. 42
atījaāam — abode, N. 22
atāi — sage/father, N. 20
antūva — personal name, N. 34
antāi — sage/father, N. 3, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20
antāiy — sage/father, N. 12
aman... — amanṇaṇ N. 39
amanṇaṇ — Jain monk, N. 38, 39
araṭṭa — personal name, N. 37
arita — personal name, N. 6
arita — personal name, N. 37
aritā — personal name, N. 23
ariti — personal name, N. 14
ava-um — they and, Pn. 32
aruputta — which (was caused to be) cut, R.P. 38
arupīta — which was caused to be cut, R.P. 39
aruvai — cloth, V.N. 33
asutā — personal name, N. 3
aaka — while becoming, Inf. 38, 39
aatā — personal name, N. 38, 39
aatā—a — Aatan's, N. 24
aatāceelirumpūrai — personal name, N. 39
aatāceelirumpoŋai — personal name, N. 38
aay — a dynasty, N. 35
ita — this, Pn. 10
itta — this, Pn. 1
itta — this, Pn. 2
iravaataŋ — personal name, N. 15

* hyphen stands for hiatus or to show the pre-sandhi forms.
irumpurai – a dynasty, N. 39
irumporai – a dynasty, N. 38
ilankatunkoo – personal name, N. 38, 39
ilankiirang – personal name, N. 43
ilankoo – prince, N. 38, 39
ilancaitika – personal name, N. 2
ilam – young, Adj. B. 2, 38, 38, 39, 39, 43
ilay – young, Adj. B. 22
ilayar – servants, N. 22
iiva – these, Pn. 37
iila – a caste (tree climbers), N. 35
ulava – he who exists, C.N. 11
uraiy – abode, N. 38
uraiyul – residence, N. 37
upaguvan – personal name, N. 8
upaaaca – devotee, N. 7
upaaaca-aap – devotee, N. 8, 11
upu – salt, N. 25
uur – village N. 13
uurai – abode, N. 7
em – our, Pn. 13
eri – personal name, N. 37
erukaaltru – place name, N. 46
erukaalur – place name, N. 35
elitu – writing, V.N. 45
ela – young, Adj. B. 28
ela-a – young, Adj. B. 33
ela-a atan – personal name, N. 33
ela cantan – personal name, N. 28
ce-umi – place name, N. 22
eelai-uir – place name, N. 23
katala – personal name, N. 1
katutukoos – personal name, N. 39
kanatika – personal name, N. 25
kani-i – Jain teacher, N. 3
kaniy – Jain teacher, N. 1
kaniimaan – personal name, N. 44
karu-uir – place name, N. 42
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toṣtu — duty/service, N. 11
toṣṭulavaṇ — he who has duty (devotee), N. 11
natī — personal name, N. 42
nata — spiritual preceptor, N. 3
nataṇ — lord/chief, N. 37
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nanta-a — spiritual preceptor, N. 1
nampan — good man/friend, N. 45
nalli-ura-a — of Nalli-ura he, D.N.
nalliyyi-ura-aa — of Nalli-ura he, D.N. 40
naḷu — country, N. 22
nikamatuu — of merchantile guild, N. 3
nikamatoor — of merchantile guild they, D.N. 5
neṭim — great/elder, Adj. B. 2
neṭīṇcaḷiyyaṇ — personal name, N. 2
neṭu — great/elder, Adj. B. 27, 35
neṭucaṇṭaṇ — personal name, N. 35
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paḷi — abode, N. 23, 41
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paṇḍita — candy, N. 27
paṇta — food, N. 37
paṇtaṇataṇ — personal name, N. 37
piṇa — personal name, N. 12
piṇantai — personal name, N. 40
piṇaṇ — personal name, N. 10, 41
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poŋ – gold, N. 24, 42
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makaŋ – son, N. 12, 38, 38, 39, 43
mattiraŋ – place name, N. 24
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maṇiṇy – gem, N. 45
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maaṟaṇ – personal name, N. 29
yaṟṟu... – yaṟṟur, 39
yaṟṟur – place name, N. 38, 39
vaṇṇakkaŋ – examiner of gems, N. 45
vaṇṇikaŋ – merchant, N. 28
vaṭṭañ – personal name, N. 45
vaḻulttiy – the Pandya king, N. 1
vaaci – the resident, V.N. 29
vaṇṇikaŋ – merchant, N. 25, 27, 33, 42
vintairūr – place name, N. 36
vyakaŋ – personal name, N. 25
visuvaṉ – personal name, N. 16
veḷ-araĩ – place name, N. 5
veḷ-araĩy – place name, N. 3
veṇṇaakaŋ – personal name, N. 43
veṇṇapalīi – place name, N. 33
veepoon-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-ṅ – of Saapamita, N. 26
saalākaṇ – brother-in-law, N. 2
siriy – auspicious, N. 2, 3
siriyi – auspicious, N. 1
3. Classifications of names

1. Place names:
   a. suffix: -ur/uuru, uur = village
      erukaatuur, erukaatuuuru, eejai-uur, karu-uur, kumul-uur,
      kuŋŋatuu, teequur, nalli-uur, nalli-yi-uur, paakaŋ-uur,
      yaqquur, vinta-i-uur, veenpala-i
   b. suffix: -il = house, locative form
      cirupooi, tiiti-il
   c. suffix: -ara = room, plot
      vel-ara, vel-araia
   d. suffix: -pa-li (-palii) = monastery, temple of Jains/Buddhists
      veenpala-i
   e. suffix: -kaa-la (kaa-li) = forest/dry land
      paahkaatla
   f. common form:
      matirai, matira (Matural) ee-umi

2. Personal names:
   a. isolated forms:
      altuvaayi, antuvaŋ, araʃa, aritaŋ, ari-itaŋ, ariyti, asutaŋ,
      aataŋ, uupaŋuvaŋ, eri, kaʃaļan, kaayipaŋ, kaasapaŋ, kaaijiti,
      kuvaŋ, ku-াŋ, kuva, kuvira, ca-a-taŋ, caaltaŋ, caataŋ,
      cašikaŋ, cantaŋ, cantaʃiŋ, caŋaŋ, ceenta, caiy-a-laŋ,
      tavira, taviri, taar-aŋi, natti, nanta, nanta-a, para-acuu,
      pikaŋ, pilaŋ, pinaa, vattaŋ, viyakaŋ, visuvaŋ, saapamila
   b. compound forms:
      b 1. Adj. + Noun
         ilaŋkaatunкоo, ilaŋkiiraŋ, ilaŋcaʔiŋaŋ, e-la-a-a-taŋ, e-la
         cantaŋ, kaʃunko, ceŋkayapaŋ, neʃiʃaliyaŋ,
         neʃucaataŋ, neʃuʃaliyaŋ, neʃumalaŋ,
         peruŋkaatunkoop, peruŋkiiraŋ
      b 2. Noun + Noun
         kiiraŋ korra, kiiraŋ noori, teeqaŋ caataŋ
b 3. **Noun + antai**
   ceentantai (ceentaŋ + antai)
   piṣantai (piṣaŋ + antai)

b 4. **Noun + aataŋ**
   iravaataŋ (ira + aataŋ)
   peeraatat (peer + aataŋ)

b 5. **other compounds**
   aataŋceellirumparai, aataŋceellirumpurai, kaṇatikar, kalumaaraŋ, cantaritaŋ, paatanatat

3. **Groups of related people:**
   a. caṭikaŋ, ilaṅcaṭikaŋ, netiṅcaṭiyaŋ
   b. aataṅceellirumporai, peruṅkaṭuṅkooŋ, ilaṅkaṭuṅkoo
   c. piṣantai, kiṣraŋ koṛga, kiṣraŋ noori
   d. ..naakaŋ, ilaṅkiiraŋ

4. **Kinship terms:**
   tantai = father; makaŋ = son; ciraṅ = son; makaŋ = daughter;
   kuruṃmaakaŋ = granddaughter; saaḷakaŋ = brother-in-law

5. **Names of dynasties:**
   aay, irumporai, ceel (ceeral), coora, valutliy, caṭiyar, maaraŋ

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

7. **Professional names:**
   aṟuvai vaṇṇikaŋ = cloth merchant
   uuṟu vaṇṇikaŋ = salt merchant
   kojú vaṇṇikaŋ = ploughshare seller
   paṇīta vaṇṇikaŋ = candy seller
   poŋ kolavaraŋ = goldsmith
   maŋi vaṭṭakkaŋ = examiner of gems
   taceŋ = carpenter
   ilaṭar = attendant
   paṇ-ąŋ = servant
8. Religious terms:
   amaṇṇaṇ – Jain
   upaacaṇ – devotee
   tavirai – lady disciple/devotee
   antai – great man/sage

9. Things:
   aruvai – cloth; uuru – salt; koṭala – mat; koḻu – ploughshare;
   paṇita – candy; poṇ – gold; maṇi – gem

10. Adjectives:
    iliṣam, kuṟu, ciṟu = younger, small
    kaṭum, neṭum, peru = elder, big

4. Grammar

1. Verb and Conjugation:
   aru – to cut
   arutta – which was cut
   arupita – which was caused to be cut
   aruvai – cloth (that which was cut)
   aa – to become
   aaka – while becoming
   urai – to live
   uraiy – abode
   uraiyul – residence
   elutu – to write
   elutu – writing
   kaṇ – to think
   kaṇi – sage/monk, astrologer
   kuṭu – to give
   kuṭupitoh – he who caused to give
   ku(y) – to thatch
   ku-itṭavaṇ – he who thatched
   kuṭu – to give
   koṭtuupitta-a – which was caused to be given
koḻuπiṭoṭ - he who caused to be given
koḻi-oor - they who had given
koḻu - giving
koḻupitavan - he who caused to give
koḻuπitoon - he who caused to give
koḻuupitovan - he who caused to give
cey - to do
ce-iyā - which was done
cey-a - which was done
ceyta - which was done
ceyitaṉ - did he
ceyipta - which was caused to be done
taa - to give
tanta - who gave (who overcame)
pīṟa - to be born
piṟanta - who was born
vee(y) - to thatch
veepoṇ - he who will thatch

2. Grammatical elements (verbs):
   1. Causative: -pi- St. + -pi-
      Eg. aṟupita
   
2. Tenses:
   1. Past: -t-, -tt-, -nt-, -i-
   2. Future: -p- St. ± Cau. + T.M.
      Eg. ceyta
         aṟutta
         koḻuπitooṇ
         koḻuupitooṇ
tanta
veepoṇ

3. Person, Number, and Gender marker:
      Eg. ku-ittavaṉ
ceyitaṉ
koḻuπitoon
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
      piṟanta

3. Declension of Nouns: Cases:
   1. Accusative: -a (ai)
      Eg. itta
   2. Dative: -ka, (in genetive sense); -ke (ku)
      Eg. kaaljikka (to Kaaljiti)
      taviraike
   3. Genitive: -a, ø,
      Eg. ca-atana-a
      piṟaŋokurummakaj
      koono kuṟu

4. Constructional Types:
   1. Nominal:
      Eg. matira antai visuvaŋ
       antai ceenta-a taŋa
       paņita vaŋikaŋ neʃumalaŋ
   2. Finite:
      Eg. antuvaŋ koʃupitavaŋ
       nikamatoor koʃi-oor
   3. Participial:
      Eg. kuvira antai cey-a taŋa
       teequur tanta koŋ...ceyitaŋ
       kumuʃ-ur piṟanta kaavutʃ-i
       ilaŋkoo naka arutta kal
5. Concord rules:
   1. Number concord:
      1. Singular:
         Eg. piṭṭaṁ . . . veepooṇa
            vaṭṭikaṇṭaḷaṇaṁ
      2. Plural:
         Eg. nikaṇṭaṭaor koṭṭ-oor
   2. Gender concord:
      Eg. eeyitaṇṭ laçaṇ ciṟuvaṇṭ
         kuṟummaṇkaḷ kiiraṇ noori

5. Text and translation of the inscriptions
   Mankalam

1. kaṇṭi nanta-a siriṣ-i
   kuvaṇke dhāmmam i
   ittal-a neṭūṇaṭiyyaṇ pa
   ṇa-aṇ kaṭaḷa-aṇ vaḷuṭṭi
   y koṭṭupiṭṭa-a paḷi-iy

   Charity (given to) the auspicious Kuvaṇ the great Jain monk. This abode was caused to be given by Kaṭalaṇ vaḷuṭṭiy, a servant of Neṭuṇaṭiyyaṇ.

2. kaṇṭi nanta siriṣ ku-aṇ
   dhāmmam ittal neṭiṇaṭiyyaṇ saḷaṇaṇaṇ
   ivaṭṭaṭiyyaṇ tantai caṭiṇaṇ
   ce-iya paḷi

   Charity of auspicious Ku-aṇ, the great Jain monk. This abode was done by Caṭiṇaṇ the father of Ivaṭṭaṭiyaṇ and brother-in-law of Neṭiṇaṭiyaṇ.

3. kaṇṭi-i nata siriṣ kuva
   veḷ-araṇi nikamatu
   kaṭaḷiṇī kaṭaḷiṇika antai
   asutaṇ pɪṇa koṭṭupiṭṭiṇ

   This/here is the auspicious Kuva the great Jain monk. Asutaṇ pɪṇa the father of Kaḷti the merchant chief of the guild from Veḷ-araṇi caused to give.
4. cantaritaŋ koṭuupitoonyg
   Cantaritaŋ, who caused to give.

5. vel-aṟai nikamtoor koṭi-oor
   Those who gave were the merchantile guild of Veḷaraį.

_Tiruvavur_

6. paṅkaaṭa ari-itag koṭuupitoonyg
   This was caused to be given by Aritaŋ of Paṅkaaṭu.

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

_Konkarpuliyanalkulam_

8. kuṟa koṭupilavan
   uupaac-ag uupaṟuvan
   The roof was caused to be given by the devotee Uupaṟuvan.

9. kuṟa koṭala ku-ittavan coora aataŋ-eeŋ
   He who thatched the mat for the roof was I, Coora aataŋ.

10. paakaŋ-uur peeraaṭaŋ piṭaŋ itla veepoonŋ ūŋ
    Peeraaṭaŋ piṭaŋ of Paakaŋ-uur is he who will thatch this.

_Kilavalu_

11. uupaaca-ag toṭu
    javaŋ koṭu paḻi-i
    The abode was given by the devotee who has duties.

_Vikkiramankalam_

12. antaiy piṅaŋ makaŋ cey-a taṅaŋa
    Charity was done by the son of the great man Piṅaŋ.

13. em uur ca-aṭaŋ-a taṅaŋa
    Charity of Caمتاز of our village.

_Mettupatti_

14. antai ariyti
    The great man Ariyti.
15. antai iravaatap
   The great man Iravaatap.

16. matira antai visuvaat
   The great man Visuvaat of Matira.

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

18. ceentantai cantaq
   Cantaq (son of) the great man Ceenta.

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

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

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

   Cittannavacal

22. ee-umi naatu kumul-uur piranta kaavut-i
   tepek ciṟupooocil iļayar ceyta aṭīta-aqam
   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 Ciriupoocil.

   Karunkalakuti

23. eeļaiy uur aritq paļi
   The abode of Aritin of Eelai-uur.

   Alakarnalai

24. mattiraiy poŋ kolawaŋ aataŋ-a taapa
   Charity of Aataŋ the goldsmith of Mattiraiy.

25. maŋ taviraikye uupu vaŋikaŋ
    viyakaŋ kaŋتاҚaŋ
    To the great lady devotee/disciple, by the salt merchant
    Viyakaŋ kaŋتاҚaŋ.
26. saapamita-iŋ pomitti
   (To) Saapamita the nun.

27. paanita vaṅikaŋ neṭumalaŋ
   The candy seller Neṭumalaŋ.

28. koḷu vaṅikaŋ eḷacantaŋ
   The ploughshare merchant (smith) Eḷacantaŋ.

29. vaaci kaḷumaaraŋ taapa
   The resident, Kaḷumaaraŋ’s charity.

30. taar-aṇi-i koḷupita-avarg
   Taar-aṇi, who caused to give.

31. kaasapaŋ-a tavira-a
   Kaasapaŋ, the spiritual teacher.

32. avaruum kuṭupito
   He also caused to give.

33. veṇpaḷi-i aruvai vaṅikaŋ eḷa-a aṭaŋ
   Eḷa aṭaŋ, the cloth merchant of Veṇpaḷi.

_Tirupparankunram_

34. antuvarg koḷupitavaŋ
   Antuvarg who caused to give.

35. erukaaṭur iḷa kuṭumpikaŋ
   poolaalaiaŋ ceyta aay cayaŋ neṭucaataŋ
   This was done by Poolaalaiaŋ, a husband/man of the
tree-climber caste of Erukaṭur. (The occupants) Cayaŋ,
the Aay, Neṭucaataŋ.

_Muttupatti_

36. vintai-uur caiya-aḷaŋ kaaviy
   The abode of Caiyaāḷaŋ of Vintai-uur.

_Animalai_

37. iiwa kuṭatu-uṟaiyul paataṇataŋ
   taaga eri aritaŋ aḷuvaayi araṭṭa kaayipaŋ
These are the charities of Paatanataṅ the resident of Kuṟratuṟur. (The occupants) Eri, Aritaṅ, Attuvaayi, Araṭṭa, Kaayipāṅ.

Pukalur

38. taa amaṅṇaṅ yaṟṟuṟuṟ ceṅkaayapaṅ uraiy
koo aṭṭaṅ ceellirumpōrai makaṅ
puṟuṅkaṭuṅkooŋ makaṅ[i]ḷaṅ
kaṭuṅkoo[i]ḷaṅkoo aaka aṟutta kal

(This) is the abode of Ceṅkaayapaṅ, a Jain monk of Yaṟṟuṟuṟ. This stone was cut while Iḷaṅkaṭuṅkoo, the son of Puṟuṅkaṭuṅkooŋ, the son of the King Aṭṭaṅ Ce[ra]llirumpōrai, was becoming the heir apparent (prince).

39. amaṇ...yaṟṟu ceṅkaa......
koo aa,...llirumpurai makaṅ puṟuṅ
kaṭuṅkooŋ makaṅ kaṭuṅkooŋ[i]ḷaṅkaṭuṅ
koo[i]ḷaṅkoo aaka aṟupita kal

This stone was caused to be cut while Kaṭuṅkooŋ Iḷaṅkaṭuṅkoo, the son of Puṟuṅkaṭuṅkooŋ, the son of King Aa[ṭaṅ Ce[ra]]llirumpurai, was becoming the heir apparent.

40. nalliyi-uṟru-aa piḻantai makaṅ kiiraṅ korra
Kiiraṅ korra the daughter of Piḻantai of Nalliyuṟu.

41. nall-i-uṟru-a piḷaṅ kuṟummaṅkaḷ
kiiraṅ noori ceypita paḷi

The abode was caused to be done by Kiiraṅ Noori, the granddaughter of Piḷaṅ of Nalliyuṟu.

42. karu-uṟru poṇ vaanikaṅ
natti aṭṭaṅaṟam

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

43. ...ṇaṅkaṅ makaṅ iḷaṅkiiraṅ
Iḷaṅkiiraṅ son of ...ṇaṅkaṅ.
Mamantur

44. kaṇīmaṇṇ
teeṇuur tanta koṇŋ kūṛu
ceyītaṇŋ tacaṇŋ ciṟuvāṇ

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

Araccalur

45. eḻutu nampaṇ vattaṛ maniy
vaṇṇakkaraṇ teevan caattan

(This is) the writing (of) the good man (friend) Vattaṇ; Teevan caattan.

Pillaiyarppatti

46. erukaṭṭuruk koṇ peruṅkiṟṟaṇ
Peruṅkiṟṟaṇ, the lord of Erukaṭṭuru.

6. Tamil Brahmi inscriptions

Maaṅkuḷam
2 திருமுத்தரா சோமோ சான் தங்குடன்
1. வருடம் செக்கிட்டு போட்டு போர்

3 திருமுத்தரா சோமோ சான்

4 திருமுத்தரா சோமோ சான்

5 திருமுத்தரா சோமோ சான்

6 திருமுத்தரா சோமோ சான்

Tiruvattuvur
Vikkiramaṇkalam

12  ಯಿತ ಪೋಣ ಕಪ್ಪು ಇ

13  ಹಿತ ಪಿ ಹಿ

Meelluppaṭṭi

14  ಪಿಲಿ ಹಿಪು ಕನ
15  ಹಿಲಿ ಬಿಬಿ

16  ಪಿಲಿ ಹಿಪು ಕನ
17  ಹಿಲಿ ಬಿಬಿ

18  ಪಿಲಿ ಹಿಪು ಕನ
19  ಹಿಲಿ ಬಿಬಿ

20  ಕ್ಯಿ ಇಳ ಇ
21  ಬಿ ಹಿ ಬಿಬಿ

Cittannavaacal

22  ಪಿಲಿ ಹಿಪು ಕನನನಬಿಬಿ

13 Acta Orientalia, XXXIV
30  கைத்தை ட்டுத்து சுவாஜ

31  துஞ்ச மா

32  ஹெல்லங்க்

33  திருப்பாய்க்க்ரம்

Tirupparaṅkunram

34  த்யாதி முற்யர்

35  கால் துர்க் 1374

Muttupattì

36  மாம்பராய் துறைய் தித்தா
Aanaimalai

Pukajuur

37

38

39

40
41  குறுக்குத்துன் வேளியுள்ளது தன்னில்
42  இரு கற்களை வைத்தே கையெடுக்காணா
43  இருக்கத் தன்னில், வைத்தெடுப்பில்

Maamaqļuun

44  இருக்கும் வைத்தை வைத்தை

Aracceļuun

45  ஒரு வேளியுள்ள வைத்து வைத்து
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Mahadevan, I. 'Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions', Seminar on Inscriptions, Madras, 1968.
Panneerselvam, R. 'An Important Brahmi Tamil Inscription: a re-