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## INSCRIPTIONAL DETAILS OF THIRUMANANJCHERRI TEMPLE OF TANJORE DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT:

*Epigraphy which simply means the study of old inscriptions is a special branch of palaeography. It is a branch of scholarship devoted to the study of written matter recorded on hard and durable material such as stone or metal. As many early civilizations have left behind many epigraphs, 'epigraphy is a prime tool in recovering much of the first hand record of antiquity'. The early cultures have used for epigraphy many materials like stone, metal, clay. Terra-cotta, pottery, wood, papyrus, parchment etc., and techniques like cutting, carving, engraving, embossing, scratching, painting, drawing and so on.*



**KEYWORDS:** Parakesari VikramaChola, Inscriptions of South India, Rajaraja Chola -I, Rajaraja Chola -I, Parakesarivarma Alias Rajendradeva -II...

### INTRODUCTION

Certain subdisciplines may be included under the over -all canopy of epigraphy. A few among them are numismatics (it includes the reading of the legends on coins and medals) papyrology, reading of the palm leaves and so on. Inscriptions are generally classified into three groups: Monumental, Archival and Incidental.

### METHODOLOGY

Here both descriptive and analytical methods are followed to form the manuscript. Being intended for enduring display, the monumental inscriptions are executed on lasting materials like stone or metal.

Sometimes they may be inscribed in places out of ordinary reach, such as the Egyptian hieroglyphs in Tomb chambers intended to be sealed forever and the Bistun inscriptions of Darius I. Coins and seals with legends may be included as micro monumental inscriptions. The Babylonian and Minoan clay tablets, the Egyptian Papyrus and the Indian palm leaf manuscripts are archival inscriptions. The incidental inscriptions include those which are not seriously meant for preservation such as well scrawling and Graffitis on potsherds.

### ANCIENT INDIA

India's past was much bogged in legendary accounts. Only with the establishment of firm synchronism with outside date her past came to be anchored in historical time. One such link is the Seleucid embassy of Megasthenes to the court of Chandragupta Maurya at Pataliputra. After Bindusara the Greek sources become silent and Indian "tradition supplies only the usual web of timeless legendry'. At this point Asoka's edicts make a unique contribution in the form of the first authentic and datable documents. His 14 rocks edicts and pillar edicts in numerous versions and copies, together

with separate minor edicts are scattered over India. His edicts mention the names of his western neighbours, whose dates are known to historians. Thus Asoka supplied the synchronism that are the sheet anchor to ancient Indian chronology.<sup>2</sup>

### INSCRIPTIONS OF SOUTH INDIA

Literature is almost the only source of our knowledge of the Sangam Age (c. 300 B.C to A.D. 300), though there are nearly 80 short cave inscriptions in Brahmi with the emergence of the Pallavas, epigraphy assumes a significant importance. We have nearly 30 copper plate grants of these Pallavas and a progressively increasing number lithic inscriptions on the walls of their caves as well as structural temples. Afterwards epigraphy attains a very high status in South India, and the entire period from 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. to 16<sup>th</sup> century can be called the "Age of inscriptions" from the point of view of sources. Of the nearly 75,000 inscriptions long and short all over India commencing from the days of Asoka and coming almost to modern times, more than 60,000 are found south of the Vindhya of which about 25,000 and more have been found in the Tamil country. Dynastywise they are as follows: Pallavas: 300; Pandyas: 4,000; Cholas: 10,000; Vijayanagar Kings: 3,000; minor dynasties (like Konkan rulers, Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas and Nayaks): 3,000; and miscellaneous records of private nature: 5,000.<sup>3</sup>

### PANDYAS INSCRIPTIONS

Fixing the reign period of the Pandyas is a problem. From this point of view two inscriptions of the times of Jatila Parantaka Nedunjadaiyan are valuable the Anamalai Sanskrit inscription citing the Kali year 3871 (770 A.D) affords a date for him and the more important Tirupparankunram inscription on the lintel of the doorway of the Durga shrine citing the Kali year 3874 as the 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year of this king yields his year of accession as 767 A.D.

The Ayyampalayam inscription citing Saka year 792 as the 8<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Varaguna yield A.D. 862 as the initial year of Varaguna II. Though the Lithic inscription of the Pandyas after the 11<sup>th</sup> century are many, identification of the issuing king is a problem because these Medieval and the Imperial Pandyas had only six names often repeated. Vira Vikrama, Parakrama, Sundara, Srivallabha and Kulasekhara. Besides, often at a given period more than one Pandya with the same name and at times with the same cognomen- Maravarman or Jatavarma ruled the country.

Fortunately each king has a different initial poetic expression with which his Prasasti begins, e.g. Jatavarmavarman Sri Srivallabha (1014-31 AD) Jatavarma Sri Srivallabha (1101-24 AD) Maravarman Sundara Pandya- I (1216-41 AD) and Jatavarmavarman Sundara- I (1251-83 AD).<sup>4</sup>

### The Imperial Cholas

The Cholas region has their richest crop of inscriptions perhaps in the entire nation. Out of about 400 temple- centres glorified in the hymns of Alvars and Nayanmars, about 250 are in the Chola region, mostly with inscriptions. Besides them, a number of new temples were built here during the heyday of the Cholas, almost all with many inscriptions. So now we have more than 10,000 of them in this region and they provide a lot of information about:-

1. The Chola Government
2. Territorial units (Mandalam, Valanadu, Kurram etc.)
3. Village assemblies (Sabha, Ur, Nagaram, Nadu) and their functions
4. Taxation and land survey
5. Social divisions
6. Trade organizations (e.g. Nanadesis)
7. Judiciary crimes and punishments
8. Coinage, weights and measures
9. Education and colleges (e.g. at Ennayiram, Tribhuvani, Tirumukkudal)
10. Religious condition and so on.

Rajaraja I set the pace for historical information in his Prasastis. Copper Plates of the Imperial Cholas: At present six copper plate grants are found.<sup>5</sup> In the present chapter Thirumananjcheri temple inscriptions are discussed. They are as follows:

### **INSCRIPTIONAL DETAILS OF THIRUMANANJCHERRI TEMPLE**

This temple is existed before the reign of Parantaka - I, but there was no inscriptions to support Parantaka-I. However Rajaraja-I Rajathiraja, Rajendradeva-II, Kulotunka Choladeva, Vikrama Chola, Rajarajadeva- III, and Rajakesarivarma's inscriptions are imprinted in the temple premises. More than 28 inscriptions are found and estempaged.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Rajaraja-I**

During the reign of Rajaraja- I his 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year, Aruvan Kamban alias Pichan who donated land to Thirumananjcherri Sri Utvahanathaswamy temple for lighting the lamp. The Donar is leaving at Vadakarai Kurukkai Nadu. This is a Brahmadeya land. In addition sixteen Kalanju pon was donated to the same temple for Santhiadeepa to the Lord. This donation was ordered by mother of UttamaChola ie, Udayapirattiyar.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Rajaraja-I**

In the sixteenth regnal year of Rajaraja- I ninety six coats were donated to Thirumananjcherri Utvahanathaswamy temple for lighting the lamp. This donation was given by Maramthittai whose is in Vadakarai Kurakkainadu. Thirumananjcherri is noted as Videltitugu Chuthurvedhi mangalatthu Thirumananjcherri. This donation was particularly to Sri ManavalaPerumal of Thirumanjcherri temple complex.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Rajaraja Chola -I**

Both Kadayanambi and Pitchanaruvan who ordered to the temple servants for the construction of the Thirumananjcherri temple premises. The whole order was issued by Udayapiratti who is the mother of UttamaChola. The name Kadayanambi is the executive officer of Thirumananjcherri temple.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Rajathiraja- I**

During the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Rajathiraja, land was given to Thirumananjcherri Utvahanatha temple. The 27<sup>th</sup> year is 1045 AD, in inscription and the Lord is noted as a Mahadeva.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Rajakesari Alias Rajathiraja**

Donation was given to Thirumananjcherri Mahadeva temple. This is the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Rajathiraja. Through the temple revenue, food is given to thousands of people in every year. This is an exact year of 1046 AD and is noted as the Valanadu of Rajasimha Valanadu.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Parakesarivarma Alias Rajendradeva- II**

In the year 1061- AD, especially the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Rajathiraja, Mudikonda Chola of Kottaiyur who has given Pon. The donar name is Vallavaraja Muvendavelan. In the inscription, Thirumananjcherri is noted as Kurukkainattu Gangaikonda Chathurvedhi Mangalam Thiruveruyethirpadi.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Rajakesari Alias Kulotunga- I**

Land was given to Thirumananjcherri temple by the order of Vikramasinga Vilupparasiyar. This order was done by Thirumanthira Olai Nayagam Munaiyatharaiyar. This is the eighth year of Kulotunga- I in 1078 AD.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Vikrama Chola Parakesari**

The third year of Vikrama Chola Parakesari an inscription was carved. This is the year of 1121 AD, here the king name is Parakesari alias Chakravarthigal VikramaCholadeva.<sup>14</sup>

### Parakesari Vikrama Chola

The Perumsabha of KarikalaChola Chadurvedhimangalam of Kurukkainadu who donated land for Sri Vinnagara Azhvar Sannathi. Here the term Kurukkainadu is the part of Vadakarai Virudhuraja Payankara Valanadu. The period of the inscription is fifth year Vikramachola Parakesari, who ruled the chola nadu is 1123 AD.<sup>15</sup>

His another inscription is also found in the Adhistana of Thirumananjcherri temple. The same Gangaikonda Chola Chathurvedhimangala's Sabha who has donated land to Thirumananjcherri Sri Utvahanathaswamy temple. Here the Lord is imprinted as Thirumananjcherri UdayaMahadeva.

### Kulotunga-III

The second regnal year of Thiribhuvana Chakravarthi Kulotunga Chola Deva, donation was given to Thirumananjcherri Mahadeva temple. The period of the inscription is 1180 AD.<sup>16</sup> Another inscription is also found in the temple. The Kurukkai nadu is a part of Virudhuraja Payankara Valanadu. The donar of the temple is Thiruneelakanda Cheraman of Keeranur for lighting the lamp of this temple. Here the temple name is Thiruethir kolpadiudayar.<sup>17</sup>

### Rajaraja III

This is found in the temple premises of Thirumananjcherri Mahadeva temple and the period of the inscription is 1123 AD which is the seventeenth regnal year of Thiribhuvana Chakravarthi Rajaraja III. The donar is a former of Thirukkudi Village near Panaiyur Nadu. The donar has given 45 pons for Dweepasthamba.<sup>18</sup>

### Rajakesarivarma

The Udayapirattiar Sembian Madeviar who was the mother of UttamaChola deva who has donated revenue from fourteen veli and of Moolakkudi village which is a part of Nallatturnadu. This is the second regnal year of Rajakesari of Cholanadu.<sup>19</sup>

### Jatavarman Sundara Pandya

This inscription is the 11<sup>th</sup> regnal year Koppuramsingan otherwise called Jatavarma alias Thiribhuvana Sundara Pandya- I. the inscription highlights the unpaid tax of a farmer.<sup>20</sup> Another donation was found near the Pada part of the same temple. A farmer of Arkadu who donated 99 Coats to Thirumananjcherri Mahadeva temple. Another inscription of the same King, one of the donar of Thirupugalur village who has given Pon to Mahadeva temple. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Thiribhuvana SundaraPandya alias Jatavarma.<sup>21</sup>

The eleventh regnal year of the same King Virachetti a donar whose name as imprinted.<sup>22</sup>

Another inscription which is about the Musician of the temple. The music instrument is imprinted as Kudamuzha. This is one of the vital inscriptions of the Brahmaswamy of Thirumananjcherri.<sup>23</sup> The donar of another inscription is Arangam who donated Ponkalanju to Thirumananjcherri Azhwar.<sup>24</sup> A donar whose name is imprinted as Thiruvadikari donated gold to Thirumananjcherri Sri Utvahanathaswamy temple.<sup>25</sup>

One more inscription which is about the hymns of Agnipurana is printed on the wall of Sri Utvahanathaswamy temple.<sup>26</sup> Another donar his name is Arivalam Udayadeva Nayagam has given Kalanju to Thiruyethirkolpadi Thirumananjcherri Utvahanathar temple for renovation of the temple complex.<sup>27</sup> The Thanjavur Palace Baladevan Sidesani has donated 96 coats and Dweepasthamba to Thirumananjcherri temple. Here the Lord of Thirumananjcherri was named as Thirumananjcherri Paramaswamy.<sup>28</sup> A donar named as Sozhiavaniyan has given more lamps to Thirumananjcherri Utvahanathaswamy. The donar's another name is Mundhana Ranganayahi.<sup>29</sup>

### Kulotunga- III

The Thirty fourth regnal year of Thiribhuvana Chakravarthi Kulotunga -III, a donar named as Pillai Kulotunga Chola Kaniyadeva donated land to Thirumangalam Vikrama Choliswara Udayar. But

the land has under the contral of Kashiappar Thirunattamodi Arimutteeswaran Udayar alias AndanayagaPattar. The inscription also said Thirumananjcherri is printed as Payankaravalanadu. This is the actual year ie, 1121 AD the reign of Kulotunga –III.<sup>30</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The manuscript presents the following suggestions.The 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Virarajendra Deva donation was given for the construction of Thirumathil of Thirumangala Vikrama Chola Iswaramudayar. The donation is by Rajendra Chola Iswaramudayar temple treasury. As per the inscripational record the actual year is 1184 AD. From one temple to another temple donation has been given.<sup>31</sup>Here the donation is in the form of land and the King's name is carved as Kulotunga III alias Parakesari Virarajendra Chola. Another donar whose name is MathalaPerumal, has given the donation to Thirumananjcherri temple Musician.<sup>32</sup>Bhogamarthar Bhuvananyahi Manickam has donated to the Thirumananjcherri temple.<sup>33</sup> Another donar is Peri alias Viraperumal Manickam whose name is found in the inscription, the nature of the donation was not given.<sup>34</sup>

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