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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIO – ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS EXISTED BETWEEN SOUTH INDIA AND SRI LANKA AS GLEANED FROM INSCRIPTIONS

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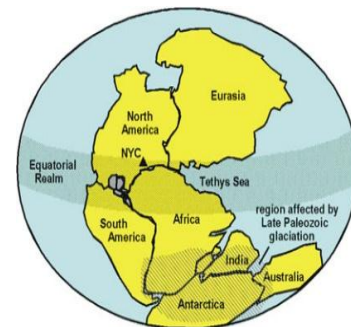
Abstract

South India and Sri Lanka had close relations from time immemorial. Due to their proximity, Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka have maintained close contact since proto-historic times. From the early period onwards, the South Indian mercantile communities like *Vanijha*, *Sattu*, *Aiyavole*, *Nānādesis*, and *Tisai Āiyirattu Aiñūrruvar* and their medieval, associated military communities like *Vīrakkoṭiyār* and *Vēḷaikkārar* in different periods, played an essential role in the economic and political history of the island. These relations can be testified not only from literary sources like Mahāvamsa and Saṅgam literature but also from the inscriptions and other archaeological artifacts. In this paper, an attempt has been made to gather historical facts highlighting the mutual relationship existed between Sri Lanka and South India through inscriptions. These inscriptions give evidence on three dimensions: trade, political and cultural. Here, it is supposed to pay attention to the pre-historic period to the end of the kingdom of Anurādhapura.

Keywords: inscriptions, trade, politics, culture, Tamil, Sinhalese

Introduction

From about 300-200 million years ago, all the continents existed as a single continent called Pangea. The name Pangea is derived from the ancient Greek word pan. Pan means entire or whole, and Gaia means mother earth.



If we observe the map, no more Sri Lanka is there. It is a part of India. It is said that Sri Lanka and India were separated in 5000 B.C.E. (Before 7000 years, Sri Lanka and India were linked together.).

Geographical Location

Sri Lanka maintained close cultural, political, and trade relations with South India. Tamil traders were very active in Sri Lanka from the 4th century B.C.E. to the 11th century C.E. Tamil traders played an intermediary role connecting two lands. Lionel Casson¹ has convincingly shown that, at the time of the Periplus, the starting point for ships leaving Egypt for India was the ports of Myos, Hormos and Berenice. It is now believed that the goods to be exported were brought via the Nile and, from there, transported across the desert by camel or donkey to the corresponding ports. The proper time to leave Egypt for India was July. By using the southwest monsoon winds, the ships sailed through the Gulf of Aden and reached the ports of the west coast of India in September or October. The return journey had to be scheduled for November, taking advantage of the North East monsoon winds. Merchants hardly had a month to sell their goods and load their ships with new merchandise. Sailors may have yet to continue their voyage up to Sri Lanka, for risk of missing the North-East winds which assured their return journey. It was certainly more profitable for the merchants to buy the Sri Lankan products from the Indian markets rather than spending a year on the island waiting for the next North East monsoon. Osmund Bopearachchi has also clearly explained the above fact in his commendable publication on “Tamil Traders in Sri Lanka and Sinhalese Traders in Tamil Nadu.”²

During this period, the South Indian traders may have played the intermediary role between the Roman traders and the Sri Lankans. The material evidence suggests that Arikamēdu and Kāvēripaṭṭinam had such Roman settlements. Likewise, the Tamil traders would have also visited Red Sea ports. The recent findings of Tamil Brahmi inscribed potshards yielding Tamil merchant’s names like “*kaṇaṇ*” and “*cātaṇ*” from Red Sea ports at Myos, Hormos has revealed I. Mahadevan.

Proto- history

The Proto-historic Sri Lanka was more closely linked with South India. In the excavations conducted at Gedigē in Anurādhapura, Mahātittha, Pomparippu, Kantarodai, and Ibbankatuwa, substantial quantities of potsherds were found which were parallel to the Iron Age and early historical wares of South India such as rouletted ware and Megalithic Black and Red ware. A comparative study carried out by K. Rajan and O. Bopearachchi on post-firing graffiti marks unearthed at Koḍumaṇal and Ridiyagama revealed the close relationship that existed between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka.³

Several symbols, both in simple or composite form, are attested with the shreds of evidence unearthed in Koḍumaṇal, Ridiyagama, and Kālāṇiya. Scholars have classified these symbols as potter’s, owner’s, or clan marks. S. Seneviratne has identified a few of these symbols as clan or family symbols. K. Rajan identified the graffiti marks, attested in the megalithic burials at Koḍumaṇal as clan symbols, and he made it clear based on statistical analyses. However, identical individual or composite graffiti marks in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu sites enable us to presume continuous cultural and trade contact between these regions.

The *Seehalawaṭṭupakaraṇaya*, one of the oldest existing literary sources, written in the 3rd or the 4th century C.E., states that the traders of Sri Lanka had sailed from Mahākoṇḍa and landed at Kāvēripaṭṭana in India and from there they had further been to North India and China. A story says that to worship the Bō-tree in the Uttarāpatha, nearly sixty monks from the down South in Sri Lanka (Rōhanadēsha) had entered and embarked on the journey from the Mahākoṇḍa and disembarked at the Kāvērapaṭṭana. The port Mahākoṇḍa is hitherto unknown. This might be the port of Mahātittha (Mānthai) located at the Mannar district. As mentioned, most of the monks might have used this route to visit the Bō-tree.⁴

Dating the Brahmi Scripts

The new evidence on scientific dates for Brahmi Script was revealed from the Porunthal and Kudumanal excavations by K Rajan and V. P. Yatheeskumar. The close observations of the Damili

(Tamil Brahmi) and Sri Lankan Brahmi scripts suggest that they had closer relations than the Asokan Brahmi. Historically, the village Porunthal is part of a territorial division known as vaikāvūr-nāḍu.

The Saṃgam poems Akanāṅūru and Purananuru mention this place belonging to the Vel chieftain Netu – vel -Avi. As per Saṃgam poem Patirruppatuu, another important chieftain vel-Avi-kko-Patuman had matrimonial relations with Cheras, who ruled this region with the capital at Karur. The Brahmi Scripts that have been found on the site have dated to 490 B.C.E.⁵ The date of Brahmi script can be pushed back two hundred years earlier to Asoka. Scholars mostly hold the view that the early historical period of Tamil Nadu began in the 3rd century B.C.E., but the present date demands a relook. Now, one may be justified in presuming that the early history of Tamil Nadu begins before the 5th century B.C.E, and there is a possibility of pushing this data further back to the time of Mahajanapadas. Thus, the date obtained for the paddy grains from the Porunthal site has the following implications. The Brahmi writing system in India can be pushed back to the 5th century B.C.E, and the intensive paddy cultivation goes back to the 5th century. According to S Deraniyagala's excavations, Brahmi Scripts, which were found in the citadel of Anuradhapura, date back as far as the 5th to 6th century B.C.E. As mentioned in the Mahāvamsa, Sri Lankans and Tamilians exchanged letters (or written documents) during the 5th B.C.E. As mentioned in the chronicles, people in both countries could read those letters carried by envoys.

Inscribed potsherds in the Prakrit (old Sinhalese) language

There is numerous epigraphic and literary evidence for the active role played by the Tamil merchants in the early phase of Sri Lanka's history. A study undertaken by I. Mahadevan revealed several inscribed potsherds in the Prakrit (old Sinhalese) language written in the Brahmi Script, found near ancient seaports along the east coast of India. The ten inscribed potsherds published by I. Mahadevan, bearing Prakrit Brahmi script, were reported from ancient trade centers like Kodumanal, Arikamedu, and Alagankulam.⁶ According to Paleographic and

linguistic features, these inscriptions can be dated from the second century B.C.E to the first century C.E. The eight of them have been discussed by Osmund Bopearachchi.⁷ To attest the fact, three of them have been discussed here.

1. In Arikamedu: “ ku bi ra ha.” It is a complete inscription written on a Gray Ware in Sinhala Prakrit and Sinhala Brahmi. Kubira in Prakrit or Kubera in Sanskrit is the god of Fortune and wealth)

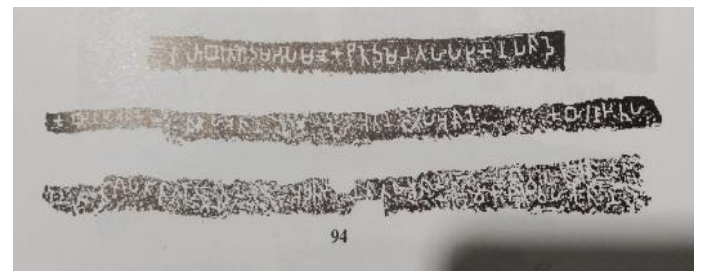
2. Alagankulam: on a Black and Red Ware, first Century B.C “sa ga”, in Sanskrit Saṃgha, Probably Saṃgha Buddhist.

3. Poompuhar (Kaveripattinam): on a Grey ware: first century B.C.E: abi ma ga t to”, of princess Maga. Skt. Magha.

I. Mahadevan himself emphasizes, in his remarkable article, “the recent discoveries in Tamilnadu of the Sinhala-Prakrit inscriptions on pottery from the port cities of Arikamēḍu, Alagankulam and Kāvērippūmptṭinam on the East coast and further inland at Koḍumaṇal, provide evidence of the presence of the Sinhalese traders in Tamilnadu in the same period, when the Tamil traders were active at Anurādhapura and Tissamahārama in Sri Lanka”.⁸

Brahmi inscriptions

The epigraphical evidence for the active role played by the Tamil merchants in the early phase of Sri Lanka's history is numerous.

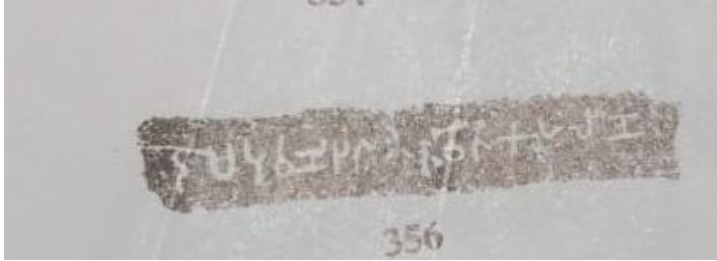


Inscription: No. 94 (a) Ilubaratahi Damedā-Samane karite Damedā-gahapatikana pasade (b) Sagasa asane (c) Nasataṣa asane (d) Ka... Tisaha asane (e) asane (f) Kubira Sujhataha (g) Na- vika-Kāravaha asane

Translation: (a) The terrace of the Tamil householders caused to be made by the

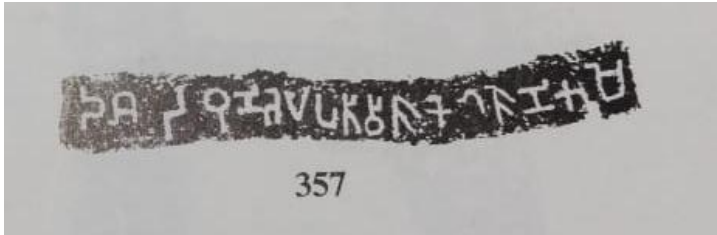
Tamil Samana of Ilubarata. (b) The seat of Saga. (e) The seat of Nasata. (d) The seat of Ka..Tissa. (e) The seat of (f) of Kubira Sujata. (g) The seat of Karava, the mariner.

The inscription found at Anurādhapura; Rock Boulder in Abhayagiri area records that terrace was of the Tamil householders (gahapatikana) and was made by Samana, the Tamil of Ilubarata.⁹



Inscription: No: 356 Damedā-vanijha ga[pa]ti-Visakaha liṇe

Translation: (The cave of the householder Visakha, the Tamil merchant)



Inscription: No: 357 Damedā-vanijha gapati-Visakaha seni-kame

Translation: (The work of the flight of steps is of the householder Visakha, the Tamil merchant.)

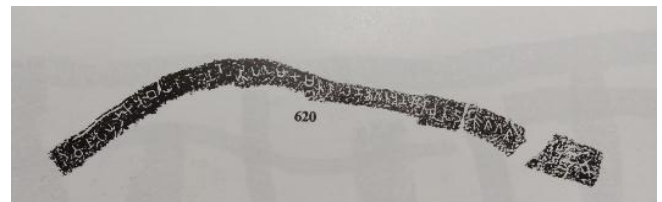
The above two Brahmi inscriptions no. 356 and 357 from Periya Puliyankulama, are both of the same personage, a Tamil merchant named Visaka, referred to as a householder (gapati).

The expression “*īla-kuṭumpikaṇ*” at Tirupparāṅkuṇṇam (no. 55, 1st century C.E.) has been connected with “*Īlam*,” the Jaffna region of Sri Lanka. I. Mahadevan mentions “however, it is preferable to regard “*īla-kuṭumpikaṇ*” as a ‘householder of the family of toddy –drawers (*īlavar*)’ as personal names in this inscription betray the influence of Kaṇṇada,

pointing to Kaṇṇāṭaka rather than Sri Lanka.¹⁰ The personal name “*caiyaḷaṇ*” occurring in an inscription from Muttupatti (no.57, 1st century C.E.) has been interpreted as one, belonging to Sri Lanka. (Skt. Saimhaḷaka-one from simhala). The Tamil country, with its long coastlines, carried on extensive trade during the Saṅgam Age with Rome and the Mediterranean countries in the west and with Sri Lanka and Southeast Asian countries in the East.¹¹ These Brahmi inscriptions, in fact, shed a great deal of light on close relations of Sri Lanka and South India.

Earliest record

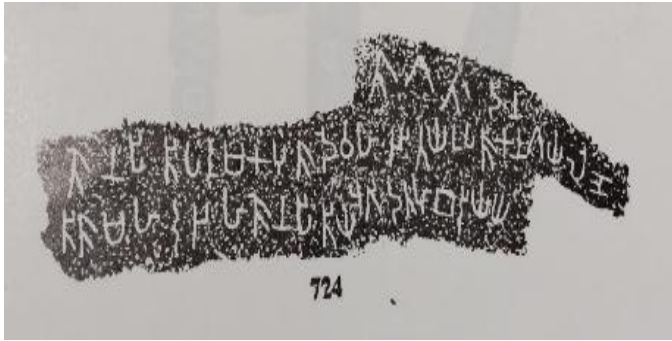
The earliest occurrences of the word “Tamil” goes back to the Saṅgam Literature and in the grammatical work Tolkappiyam, dating back to the countries immediately before the common era.¹² The Akitti Jātaka in Jātakaṭṭhakatā gives evidence on Damiḷaraṭṭha, the country of the Damila. As mentioned in that story, a learned called Akīrti has arrived at the Damiḷaraṭṭha and dwelled near a garden at Kāvēripaṭṭhana.¹³ The Prākṛit form of the word “Damedā” occurring in the Brahmi inscriptions in Sri Lanka about the second century B.C.E. The earliest occurrence of Tamils in the Pali chronicles in Sri Lanka were merchants of horses called Sēna and Guttika. As mentioned in the Mahāvamsa, they ruled the country justly. It does not mention that they are invaders. King Asēla, one of the younger brothers of King Dēvānampiyatissa wrested the throne from the Sēna and Guttika and ruled for ten years. After this, as Mahāvamsa records, a Tamil ruler from the Coḷa country invaded Sri Lanka, seized the kingdom, and reigned for forty-four years. King Dutugāmuṇu defeated King Elara (161-137 B.C.E.) with the help of his paladins. Few of these Paladin’s names can be identified through inscriptions of Sri Lanka. The Situlpavuva Koravakgala inscription gives evidence of paladin Mita, a famous warrior called Nandimitta, and the king Abaya was Duṭṭhagāmaṇi.¹⁴



Inscription: No. 620 Devanapiya-rajha-Abayaśa śenapati parumaka-Mitaśa leṇe agata-anagata-catu-diśa- śagaśa diṇe

Translation: The cave of the Chief Mitta, the Commander-in-Chief of King Abhaya, the Friend of the Gods, is given to the Sangha of the four quarters, present and absent.

The Vāla-ellu-goda-Kanda inscription speaks of Puśadeva, another of the paladins of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi.¹⁵



Inscription: No.724 (1) Tiśamaharajhaha-śenapitiya Agidataha bariyaya
(2) śenapiti-parumaka-Puśadevaha jhitaya upaśika-Nagaya leṇe
(3) śagaśa dine

Translation: The cave of the female lay-devotee Nāga, wife of Aggidatta, the Commander-in-Chief of the army of the great king Tissa, and daughter of the chief Phussadeva, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, is given to the Sangha.

King Ilanāga (33-43 C.E) was the first Sinhalese ruler to have invited foreign troops to take sides in a dispute to form the throne in Ceylon.¹⁶ The consort of Candamukha Siva (Ilanāga's son) was Tamil Princess and was known as Damila-devi. It is stated that during the reign of King Vaṅkanāsika Tissa (109-112 C.E), the Chola king invaded Sri Lanka, and 12,000 Sinhalese were taken to South India. As mentioned in Pūjāvalī these captives were employed as labourers in some work on the Kāvēri basin.¹⁷ It further mentions that in-return King Gajabāhu (112-134C.E), King Vankanasika Tissa's son invaded the Chola country and accompanied the 24000 people from India

including 12000 Sinhalese who captured by the Chola king. On his return, he brought the anklet of goddess Pattini,¹⁸ and it says that the worship of goddess Pattini woman of chastity in Sri Lanka began after this incident. The Minvila inscription Gamini Abaya alias Gajabāhu mentions the epithet of “yudaji”. The word “yudaji” means successor of war.

After King Mittasena's (432-433 C.E) period, six Tamil rulers became successful. Pandu, the first of these, ruled for about five years and was succeeded by his son Parinda, who reigned only for three years. He was succeeded by another son of Pandu named Khuddaparinda. Tiritara, Dathiya, and Pithiya succeeded Khuddaparinda in that order. Tiritara ruled for only two months. Dathiya was defeated after ruling for three years, with the defeat of Pithiya, whose reign lasted only seven months. S. Paranavitana has identified Mahadeli Mahana (Pali- Mahādāṭhika Mahānaga) and his father Sarataraya (Pali- Siridhara) mentioned in an inscription at Kataragama with the Tamil rulers Dāṭhiya and Tiritara.¹⁹ The above mentioned one of the Tamil rulers, Pārinda's name has been mentioned in an inscription at Aragama in Hiriyāla Hatpattu, Kurunāgala District.²⁰ It records the donations made by him to a Buddhist monastery. The benefactions made by the queen of Khuddaparinda to the Buddhist Monastery and the king himself is given the epithet of Budadasa ‘servant of Buddha’ have been recorded in another inscription.²¹



Inscription:

- 1 Siddham Mapurumu Budadasa La-Parideva ma-
- 2 haraja-apayah-aṭa biseva-r (e) jana Tiri-maha
3. Saba rej(e)na Acabalaṇa Valakaya Kadaba-namabara

4. m (e) d(e)-kariha kubura nava thama
ca (dukula dasa ca)va
5. la-vahiraṭa dina

Translation: Hail! Queen Tiri Maha....saba, queen of His Majesty the great king Budadasa Laparideva Apaya, gave Acabalana, Valakaya, Kadaba-namabar these two karisas of fields, nine pillars, (ten silk cloths) to the monastery ofla.

The inscription from Kataragama attributed to Dāṭhika also records the benefactions made by this king to a monastery.²² These Tamil rulers have patronaged Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

H.C.P Bell has discovered three Tamil inscriptions, which are considered the earliest known Tamil records in Sri Lanka. One of these epigraphs records the Building of a Buddhist monastery by a mercantile community called Nāṅku-nāṭṭar.²³ Two inscriptions are inscribed on a stone slab in a continuous form. Let us focus our attention on it. The object of the first inscription is to register the grant of money, thirty 'ilakkācu', for offering one sacred meal and the lighting of the perpetual lamp, evidently at one of the Saiva temples at Anurādhapura. The grant was made by the members of the 'kumārakaṇa' of this institution from the money obtained, presumably as a loan, from Cēkkiḷan Ceṭṭi Caṅkaṇ. The second inscription, set up two years later, registers another grant by the same group of the same amount of money for offering one sacred meal and the lighting of the perpetual lamp from the money given by Cekkilaṅ Cennai. Here, the term 'ilakkācu' is Ceylon money. As mentioned in the inscription, the donation was made during the reign of King Ciri Caṅkapōti Mārājan. This king could be any of the four kings: Kassasp IV (898-914), Udaya IV (946-954), Mahinda IV (956-972), and Mahinda V (982-1017).²⁴

During the reign of Mahinda V, Rājārāja I, who was the Chola emperor, invaded Sri Lanka; at this time, the king had already fled to Ruhuna, and forces of King Rājārāja were able to conquer the northern part of Sri Lanka and brought it under their rule. In the reign of Mahinda V, once again, a Chola army came to Sri Lanka under emperor Rājendra II. They proceeded up to Ruhuna and captured the king and members of the

royal family. Later, they were taken to the Chola country as captives.

Chola Inscriptions at Velgam Vehera

Velam Vehera is situated at the Kattukulam Pattu of the Trincomalee district. The excavation work undertaken by the archaeological department in 1953 discovered many impressive architectural remains at this premises. There is an image house brick with characteristic of Dravidian mouldings at its base. This is the only Tamil Buddhist temple so far existing. The sixteen Tamil inscriptions have been found on the site,²⁵ and most of these inscriptions belonged to Cholas and were badly damaged. The fourteen inscriptions are published in the Epigraphia Tamilica, Volume I, and here much attention has given on nine inscriptions.

This place was rebuilt during the period of Chola rule, renamed Rājārāja Perum-Palli, and patronized by the Tamils of the area. Having defeated the Cholas by King Vijayabāhu I patronaged the same place by restoration. The name of the Velgam Vehera is mentioned under the renovation work carried out by King Vijayabāhu I in Mahāvamsa.²⁶ This reflects the honoring of the opponent by the other party. According to the Priti-dānaka-Maṇḍapa rock inscription of Nissankamalla, this place was considered one of the five sacred shrines.²⁷ The inscription found on a rock near the ruins belongs to the reign of a Batiya Maharaja (Bhatikatiss)(140-164 C.E). This denotes the gift of revenue from certain fields to the Abagara-Vihara at Velgama by a senaviti (general) Abaya.

Inscription No 2646: This was discovered in 1953. There are 29 lines. This is a fragmentary record inscribed on a stone slab. This is an eulogy of Rājendra I. The date of the record is not earlier than the 10th regnal year of Rājendra I. It mentions the battle of the Muyaṅgi against Cālukyās.

Inscription No 596: This was found on a guard stone.²⁸ This inscription was discovered in 1929 and cannot be later than the 12th regnal year of Rājendra I. This inscription sheds light on the gift of 84 cows by a person called Atitta-Pēraraiyan for the purpose of maintaining a perpetual lamp set up by him at the Velka-vēhera alias Irājarāja-perum-paḷḷi in the Mānāvati- Vaḷanātu. It is said to be situated in the district called Mānāvati- Vaḷanātu.

Inscription No 596: This is comprised of twelve lines and dates to the 12th regnal year of King Parakēcari-panmar alias Sri Rājendra-Cōla-tēvar. The ruler may be Rājendra I²⁹A devotee called Tariyanan pūvaṇa-tēvan of Kolam granted four Kācu (money) and the perpetual lamp to the god Velkam-Vēram. The members of the saṅgha (caṅkattār) are requested in the record to provide the oil for the lamp, evidently with the money deposited by the donor.

Inscription No 2236: This was discovered in 1953 and has seventeen lines. This record may be a continuation of no. 2246. This is a eulogy of Rājendra I. Only the last part of the prasasti remains.

Inscription No 775: It is dated in the fifteenth, regnal year of Rājendra I. As mentioned in the inscription, “The 15th year of the illustrious Rājendra Pāttaravita Rāmaṇ of Mānāvattuḷakāmam in Mēvānaṅṅaṇu parakēcari-vaḷanātu in Mummuti-coḷa-maṅṭalam granted to the Buddha of Velkam-vēram alias Rājarāja perum-paḷḷi, for the sake of merit,

35 cows and five buffaloes.” The inscription refers to a gift of 35 cows and five buffaloes to the Buddha of Velkam-vēram alias Rājarāja perum-paḷḷi by a person called Pāttaravita Rāmaṇ.

Inscription 2245: This is a stone slab. It is dated to the fifteenth regnal year of the king. This ruler can be identified as Rājendra I. The record denotes the grant of a certain number of buffaloes as an offering to obtain three ‘uḷakku’ of ghee daily for maintaining one perpetual lamp, which was set up so that it may be lighted as long as the sun and moon last for the benefit of the Puttar (Buddha) of the Velkam-vēram alias Rājarāja perum-paḷḷi by one Amutan-Cāttan, presumable Chola official.³⁰

Inscription No 478: Rajendra’s conquest in the Deccan and Eastern India are mentioned in this inscription.

Inscription No 776: This is dated to the fifth regnal year of Rājendra II. (1067A.D) as mentioned in the inscription “the 5th year of King Parakēcari-varmar alias the illustrious Rājendradeva to the puttar (Buddha) of Velka-vēram alias Rājarāja-perum-paḷḷi Mānamattu” gift for the Buddha has been granted.

Although the oldest inscription on this site goes back to the 2nd century, this place became famous after the eleventh century. There is no reference to it in any literary sources before the 11th century. These records clearly show that the Buddhist establishment at Periyakulam enjoyed the patronage of Tamils. Most probably, the administration of the monastery was also controlled by Tamil Buddhist monks.

Inscription from Fort Hammenheil

The Fort Hammenheil is an old Dutch fort guarding the entrance to the fort of Urkavarrurai (Kayts).³¹ Although there are two inscriptions, only one could be deciphered fully. It says, “Hail prosperity! (in) Mātōṭṭam alias Irācarācapura (Rājarājapura), the commander in chief Jayaṅkoṅṭa Vēlār, who conquered the whole of Ceylon and took away the king of Ceylon (his) queen and (his) treasures.....”. The date of the record is not given. But it is clear that it was set up sometime after 1017 C.E., for it refers to the conquest by the Cholas of the whole of Ceylon, which event took place in 1017. It also refers to the Chola commander-in-chief Jayaṅkoṅṭa Mūvēnta Vēlār as the one who took away the King of Ceylon. (his) queen and (his) treasures.

Chola inscription from Medirigiriya

This record is dated in the second year of Ko Parakēcari Paṅmar Sri Rājendra Cholar. This ruler could be either Rajendra I or II, as both bore the consecration name of Parakesari. This inscription consists of fourteen lines. This records the grant of a perpetual lamp and twenty-six cows to the Lord of Paṅṭita-cōḷa-īśvaram at Nittavinotapuram alias Maṅṭalakiri by Vaḷavan Piṭavaṅ Piṭāṅ Caravaṅ of the (military class called) Perumpaṭi (who was a member) of the (regiment named) Iḷaiya Mummuti Cōḷa Aṅukkar. The grant was made in the name of the donor’s son Ku.....Nārāyaṅaṅ. This inscription denotes that there was a Saiva shrine at Medirigiriya during the Chola regime. Medirigiriya was renamed by the Cholas as Nitta-vinōta-puram, after Rājarāja I who bore the title of Nityavinoda.³²

The inscription of Pālamōṭṭai

This was found from a Saiva Kovil at a place called Pālamōṭṭai near Kantale in the Trincomalee District of the Eastern Province. The main purpose of this inscription is to register a donation to the God Siva in the temple name Teṅ-Kailāsam at Kantale by a Brahmin woman named Nāgaiccāni in memory of her husband. The shrine was named Vijayarāja Īśvaram, and the Kantale was also called Vijayarāja Caturvedimaṅgalam. S. Paranavitana mentions, “As it

was called Caturvedimaṅgalam there must have been a colony of Brahmins who lived under the protection of Vijayabahu I.”³³ The charity was placed under the protection of regiment called Sri Vikkrama-Calāmeḡa-t-terinda Vaḷaṅgai Vēlaikkāraṅ.

Polonnaruwa slab inscription of the Vēlaikkāras

This has forty-nine lines, including the five more lines at the top. This inscription can be divided into two parts. The first part denotes the introduction of King Cri Saṅgha bodhi Varmar alias Cri Vijaya-Bāhu-Devar. The second part of the inscription sheds light on the entrusting of the Sacred Tooth Relic Temple built by Deva Senapti to Vēlaikkāra.

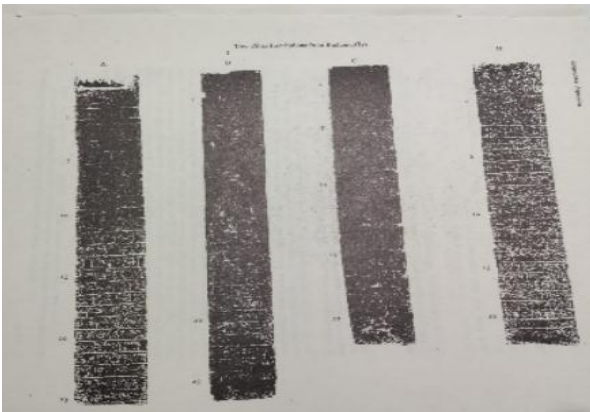


Two Tamil pillar inscriptions from Budumuttāva

The Village Budumuttāva is situated in the Kuruāgala district. There, one can find a Buddhist temple belonging to the Kandyan period. The compound of this temple was built by using pillars that belong to the kingdom of Polonnaruwa. Two of these pillars bear Tamil inscriptions. The dating of the inscription is somewhat controversial. The names of two kings was closely associated with the dating of this inscription. These two names are Jayabhāhu I, the younger brother and successor of Vijayabhāhu I and the

Manābarana, the father of Parakkramabāhu, as he has also used the name Virabhāhu in Mahāvamsa.³⁴ As a custom, the blacksmiths should be received the kottācaḷu (the clothes that are used for the puberty ceremony), v-um pāva-ḍai-yum (foot clothes), mugat-tiḍum (clothes for covering the faces of the dead). As mentioned in the inscription, the washermen disputed the claims of the blacksmiths, which caused them to inscribe this inscription. As further mentioned, the pillar was engraved by persons namely Mākkaliṅgam Kaṇavadi, Kummaracena Nambāṇaṅ, Kācampaṇḍāraṭṭuḷ and Paytāṅgi Kallānāva. It seems all these inscribers are Tamils.

The second inscription of Budumuttāva dated to the eight year of the Jayavāgudēvar. It denotes the daughter of Kolottuṅga-Coḷadevar, the princess called (Cu)ndhamalliyālvār, the wife of Vīrapperumāl, the Pāṇḍyan, has given ten Kācu for maintaining one sacred perpetual lamp may last and burn as long as the moon and sun endure to the lord Vikkirma-Calāmēga-Īsvara in Māgala alias Vikkirma-Calāmēga-pura. Here, the king can be identified as Kulottuṅga I.³⁵ These inscriptions are significant from a linguistic point of view. The first inscription begins with the Sanskrit word 'Svasti'. The second inscription begins with the word 'Sri Jaya'. Here, some Sanskrit words are mixed with Tamil language. For example, 'cakrava-tthigal' and 'panca-pradhāni-gal'. As regards the orthography, it seems that many Tamil words have joined to the Sinhalese language, such as 'kottācaḷu' and 'v-um pāva-ḍai-yum'. These inscriptions are very helpful in studying the hidden corners of social, cultural, and linguistic history.



There were Tamil professionals in the statecraft of Sri Lanka as well. They are Demil Adikari,³⁶ the land plots allocated to the Tamils were named Demil Kebali,³⁷ the taxes or the revenue collected from the above plots are called Demil Kuli,³⁸ the special lands enjoyed by the Tamil were called as Demelen valandamin, the villages which belonged to Tamil were called as Demil Gambim. Some other inscriptions shed light on words like Demel kinigam lad, Demel pamunu.

Conclusion

Tamil inscription are not found out before the 10th century. All the Tamil inscriptions are issued after the 10th C.E. Studying these inscriptions is very important to develop the harmony existed between Tamils and Sinhalese. The Sinhalese kings have patronized Hindu temples, and at the same time, Dravidian kings have also patronized Buddhist temples too. Sinhalese kings have chosen to marry Dravidian princesses. This makes it clear that the nations are co-existing in the ancient period. There are much more forgotten aspects of relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Sri Lankan kings obtained the assistance of South Indian kings to establish their power. South Indian kings, too, sought the help of the Sri Lankan kings to safeguard their royal power and establish their authority. In time memorials, Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka had economic, political, and cultural links. One should not forget these mutual relationships and social bondings. Both have to stand together and tighten our hands; they are inseparable and they should show their strength and cultural bond to the world.

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