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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON THE LITHIC RECORDS OF THE PANDYAN DYNASTY

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Abstract

Inscriptions constitute one of the main important source for the reconstruction of the dynasty. Epigraphical records are very few in the intervening period between the period of the Brahmi inscriptions and the commitment of the 7th century A.D. During Sangam age used the Brahmi script. Most of the inscriptions used Vatteluthu script. Earlier inscriptions were generally short. These inscriptions throw some light on the social economic condition administration and so on. Some land endowments to the temple and the expenses of the special poojas instituted in the Pandian records. The inscriptions furnish us with various particulars about the king, his regnal year, geneology, and conquest, extent of territory, bureaucracy thrones, and titles religious benefactions. On polity, economy, society, religion and culture too. The inscriptions furnished a good deal of information regarding Political history administration religion law and Justice social life trade and Commerce irrigation and agricultural script.

Keywords: Inscription, Brahmi, Vatteluthu, land endowments, Pandyan King, temple

Introduction

One of the most important sources of information for reconstructing the history of India and weaving the web of true and logical narration of facts is the study of inscription. Madurai is rich inscription and the considerable material already brought to light is indeed most valuable and interesting from different points of view.

Epigraphical sources constitute the main stay of the study. They are two kinds' plates and lithic records. This study based upon only the lithic records. The epigraphical sources consulted are the South Indian inscriptions, the annual reports on epigraphy and secondary sources, journals been axillary to me. The South Indian temple inscription, as they have been critically edited with introduction and notes and the contain their glossary of epigraphical terms or helpful to the study.

The inscription of the Madurai, Virudhunagar district and Tenkasi Pandyan inscription enlighten us about Pandian rule in that region. The chronological list there of supplying the gift of the inscriptions duly categorized ruler wise and extend of the empire. The inscriptions pertaining to the second Pandyan Empire are generally in excellent verse in Tamil though, some records have a smattering of Grantha script along with Tamil.

The inscriptions furnish us with various particulars about the king, his regnal year, genealogy, and conquest, extent of territory, bureaucracy thrones, and titles religious benefactions. On polity, economy, society, religion and culture too. We get valuable information.

Sangam Age Pandyan Inscriptions

Pandyan dynasty started with Sangam age. We have some lithic references from 3rd century B.C. In the early period all the inscriptions in the Brahmi script. According to the Ovamalai or Mangulam Brahmi inscriptions, we may know the name *Nedunchezhiyan*, a Pandya king and his officials, also *Nihamam* (traders union). They patronized jain monks and make arrangement these shelters.¹ Through *Kalinjamalai* Tamil Brahmi inscriptions identify the Pandya chieftains dating back to third century BC. This inscription have the name of *Athian and chezhiyan*, *Imayan* and also mentioned the name of the places like *Nelveli and Ilanji*. These are the places of southern Pandian region.¹

Kongarpuliyankulam, Tamil Brahmi inscriptions dating to second century BC. End of the 3rd inscription have two graffiti marks also found. This marks may be mentioned weight or counting of the gold coins for spent rock beds.

Varichiyur or Udhayagiri hillock has a very spacious natural cave with three Tamil Brahmi inscriptions dating back to second century BC. This is the first inscription mentioned the words of number and scale like *Kalam, Nel, Nooru, Karugiya, Muahzukai* and also mentioned first time donated *paddy* to the monks. Aanaimalai. Tamil Brahmi inscriptions dating back to first century AD.

Alagarmalai 12 Tamil Brahmi inscriptions dating back to second century BC that have the details of the village name as "Mathirai." Tirupparankundram Tamil Brahmi inscriptions dating to first century BC.

Mettuppatti is one of the natural and longest cave, have ten brahmi inscription and rock bed also. This inscription mentioned the name of *Amanan (jain saint) Athirai, visuvan, Chana, Pathin (name of the Place)*. VIII inscription mentioned the name *Kuvira (Kuberan)* In general, all the cave have inscriptions are belong to 3rd CY BC to 3rd CY AD. Samanar Malai archaeologists have also found 2000-year-old Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions and Vatteluttu writings.

I Pandyan Empire Inscriptions

Most of the inscriptions mentioned donated land or granaries or oil to the temple. Especially the royal family members and Royal officers donated Nanda lamp to the temple.

Arikesari Maravarman's lithic inscription mentioned the irrigation facility provided by him and a tank known as Arikesari tank. Srivilliputhur tank was named after him as a Parankusa Pereri.¹

The Manur inscription inspired during Varaguna I 35th regnal year throws light on the rules that govern the election process and administrative system of Sabha. These inscription was inscribed 100 years earlier than the famous Uttiramerur inscription of the Cholas. 67 The Tamil epigraphy²

Varaguan Pandyan inscription (E.I.vol.XXXII No 31) stating four generations of the chiefs of the family. It's belonged to the 9cy A.D. The inscription introduces him with his three predecessors along their participation and victory on behalf of their overlord.³⁸

Manur inscription is a unique and outstanding inscription form Tamilnadu. It records the resolution passed by the Mahasabha of Brahmadeyam Mananilainallur in Kalakkudinadu. This inscription belonging to King Maranjadayyan during his regnal year 35 and historical year 898 A.D.

II Pandan Empire Inscriptions

Most of the inscriptions belong to Vatteluthu script and made some land endowments to the temple and the expenses of the special poojas instituted in the Pandian records. As per the political Geography noticed from the inscription. Thiruthangal was a Devadhana Brahmadeya settlement was administered by the Brahmin Sabha Mulaparushai. This locality was well irrigated by certain tanks.¹

Tenkasi Pandiyan Inscriptions

Deevadana inscriptions mentioned the donated lands to the temples by Paraakrama Pandian. Another inscription mentioned Paraakrama Pandian gave gift of land to Suryapattan for the temple servant.¹ Another inscription with Granda and Tamil scripts seems to be record of land donation made by the king.²

Tenkasi vishwanath Temple inscription through the lights on the constructions of the temple. Jatila Varman Aarikesari Deva Prarakrama Pandian played the foundation of the temple in his regnal year. According to the inscription states that Prarakrama died 6 years after the beginning of the stone gopura. His brother Alagan Perumal Kulesekara completed this Temple.²

Cataloging of Pandiyas Inscriptions

The inscriptions through light on the life of sovereign and the people over whom they ruled. Important incidence or recorded in them. The inscriptions furnished a good deal of information regarding Political history administration religion law and Justice social life trade and Commerce irrigation and agricultural script Art. Many important historical information are gleaned through the study of early Tamil inscriptions which were written in Tamil and Brahmi Script. They are available in the form of inscriptions on stone. After the discovery of the archaeological evidences, many kings and chiefs referred to the Sangam classics have been accepted with their period without any suspicion by the international scholars.

Administration

Administration of ancient period could be understood by analyzing the records pertaining to

village administration, revenue administration and temple administration. Some of the lithic records reflecting the administrative aspects which prevailed in Pandyan kingdom are reproduced.

This inscription belongs to Sundra Pandya in the year 1261 A.D. This inscriptions refer the elaborate arrangements to the temple administration made to tackle the complexities in in the administration of the temples. Another inscription contains the order issued in the name of the deity dealing with same type of constitution. These inscriptions are clear evidences for the constitution of various committees represented by many group of servants to look after the day to day affairs as well as execution, management and protection of all the properties, both movable and immovable.²

Another record belong to Sundara Pandya I in his 18th regnal year. The subjoined record is of the sanction of the King's grant made to 24 bhattas as Chaturvedimangalam in the name of the deity Varata Nayaka. It also mentioned the boundaries of the land are elaborated and it also stated that the lands already donated ass devadana, Thiruvidayattam, Pallichandam and Bhattavritti had to be excluded.²

Another Inscriptions of Virapandya issued his 4th regnal year. According to this inscription donated house sites to the persons for reciting *Thirujnanam* before the god and the construction of the mutt for their residence. One more inscription belonging to Maranjadaya, in his 3rd regnal year in the 8 cy A.D This is an illustrious inscription which gave information about the school (Palli)²

Law and Justice

In the inscriptions many reference could be seen; they were required duly by the authorities and the punishment awarded. Both criminal and civil cases were disposed of by the authorities concerned as it was considered their responsibility. One of the inscriptions belongs to Parantaka Viranarayana proclaimed his 45th regnal year and 911 AD in the historical year.

The inscription records civil case of property dispute between the Shivabrahmanass and the temple from this one could ascertain some points pertaining to

civil cases of Pandyan country. Though the king was the judge, the enquires has been made in site and both the parties involved were thoroughly interrogated by the officials sent by him Producing the written document was considered as very important piece of evidence. The theoretical enjoyment and claim of right by some transactions were not sufficient to prove the ownership of property.the actual parties and those who were directly or indirectly involved in the said property were also enquired.This inscription registered the land donation ass Utirappatti to one Kunratan

Trade and Commerce

Madurai was famous for its trade activities from very early times particularly with western countries. Kezhadi excavations and discovery of Roman coins haroads in Madurai were evidences for this fact along with early sangam literature. That the religions of Jainism and Bhuddhism were patronized by the traders and merchants is also revealed by the references for and in the Tamil- Brahmi inscriptions of very early period. Merchants of gold, salt textile and their nigamas are in these inscriptions. After some period of interval, trading of natural resources with western countries waned. By the way of recording their charities and involvement in them, many inscriptions engraved in Madurai.

169The subjoined inscriptions are some which record the charity of building the enclosure the wall and the installation of goddess Durga at the entrance of the palace. Another inscription records the presentation of a lamp and arrangement made to burn a perptual lamp in the ambalam called nagarattar erected in the name of Nagarattar

Sundara Pandya's lithic records the gift of levy amount on pepper, collected at the tollgate whether crossing through it or the goods going through bypass to the deity Jeyangondalisvaramudaiyarby Nangudisan Patinen Vishayattar who met Vikramapandyan madigai at saarikaikkottagai (toll gate) 12th regnal year-historical year 13cy A.d. The Piranmalai inscription records the unanimous decision taken by the guild of merchants from the several places of Tamilnadu. Srimara Srivallabha Pandya in his 18th

regnal year in 829 A.D. This is one of the interesting inscriptions, which records a number of beneficial work done by one Iruppaikudikilavan. He constructed many temples of Hindu and Jain religion, pillared halls for providing food and water.

Maranjadayan King 770A.D Anamalai inscription gave information of the creation of the stone temple of Vishnu and the donation of agraharas to the Brahmins by Mathurakavi son of Mara.¹

Inscriptions of Alagar Koil

Most of the inscriptions started with Meigirti. The inscriptions mentioned about the name of the places, donated lands, and religious festivals. Some of the inscription started Meikirthi with POOVIN KIZHATHI about sadia Varman Kulasekharan. Most of them inscriptions belonging to the Pandyan dynasty. Some chola inscription also there.¹

Conclusion

Inscriptions are very supportive for the reconstruction of the history as they not only gave us perceptions into the political happenings of the concerned period but also about the socio-economic conditions as well as the cultural aspects of the period. Many inscriptions are found in Pandyan region. Mostly endowment of lands to the temple. The above work is a micro study of Pandyan inscriptions. Selected inscriptions from various kinds are taken for my work. From this study I may conclude the Pandyan kings were excellent all fields. We are all known about the pioneer of the local government was the Cholas. But through my study Pandyans were pioneer of the Cholas in the local government. Inscription is very helpful to the historians to chronological sequence of the pandyan kings. More than that we know about the extent of the empire. However we must bear in mind that these inscriptions were not made with the intention of giving us the histroy of our past.

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