

A Passion for Inscriptions: “Reading” Chola Temple Walls

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CHOLA INSCRIPTIONS—AN INTRODUCTION

One of the unexpected outcomes of my research over the past six years on the Chola milieu (circa 855–1280 CE) that resulted in their production of stunning sacred bronzes, has been my encounter with their intense passion for inscriptions. Just walking around temple after temple makes one realise that there are anywhere from 50 to over a 100 inscriptions cut into the stone walls of the shrine and *mandapa* of each temple. In fact, there are in the region of 13,000 inscriptions cut into the stone walls of the many temples built during Chola rule. Like a richly textured mantle these inscriptions, written largely in Tamil, and very occasionally in Sanskrit, cover the exterior walls of the several 100 temples that dot the deltaic plains of the Kaveri river. These inscribed records flow seamlessly across the light projections and recesses of the temples' walls. They run along the extensive base mouldings of temples and, incredible as it may sound, they are even carved against grill windows of temple *mandapas*. Every inscription on a temple relates in one way or another to the temple itself, and celebrates donations to the temple, speaks of rules pertaining to temple administration, and even records infringements of rules and the punishment meted out to offenders.

That such a practice was a routine occurrence is indicated by an inscription at the small temple of Neytanam, located along the south bank of the Kaveri river. The relevant portion of the inscription records an undertaking to perform two major festivals at the Neytanam temple, and it points us to the exact location of other sets of inscribed records that lay out stipulations regarding the performance of these festivals.¹ It tells us that one set of stipulations is engraved on the south wall of the temple's *ardha-mandapa*, and may be found in three descending levels below the eave—on the *uttiram* (uppermost level), on the *podigai* (platform), and on the *virikandam* (neck of the pilaster below). The second set of specifications is engraved along three levels of the base mouldings along the south side of the image bathing hall; here again the primary inscription is precise in telling us that the record is inscribed on the *jagati* (the lowest rectangular moulding), on the vertical panel and the recessed neck-transition of the *pattigai* (the uppermost narrow moulding), and on the angled *kumuda* moulding between. What we have here is a 'prime' inscribed record that makes reference to two other inscribed records. While such a record is unusual, it is nevertheless an indication of the manner in which inscriptions were regularly and routinely engraved along temple walls and mouldings. These records were also written on palm-leaf archives (*olai*), but the detailed instructions on the temple itself on exactly where to find the

inscribed stipulations would have been helpful to an official who wished to locate a record without having to work through the archives or scrutinise every single inscription on the temple walls. Might we say that what we are seeing here is akin to a card catalogue and footnote system all in one?

Of 13,000 such inscriptions on temple walls, only around 1,000 carved on the walls of Rajaraja Chola's Great Temple, Brihadishvara at Thanjavur, are available in a complete English translation. Another 2,000 are accessible in the form of a brief English synopsis, in a set of volumes published by TV Mahalingam in the 1990s.² The remaining 10,000 inscriptions—three-quarters of the material—have never been published. You can visit the temples and read the inscriptions directly from their walls. Or you can visit the offices of the Epigraphical Survey of India in Mysuru which carries somewhat unwieldy original rubbings taken from the temple walls, or hand-written copies of these rubbings. A colleague and I spent days working with this material, unrolling rubbings on hand-made paper across the floors, and trying not to transfer soot patches from our fingers onto our face and clothes! The inscriptions are in the Tamil of the 9th to 13th centuries that differs somewhat from modern Tamil.

As I explored the content of these inscriptions, I found a treasure trove of material that shed light on every aspect of the times—from socio-political circumstances, through the economics of agriculture, irrigation, and trade, to the religious milieu within which the temples functioned, and to the patronage of the arts. We learn of the wide range of individuals, residing in different towns in the vicinity, who were involved in supporting sacred rites, rituals, and ceremonials within the temples. They made gifts of bronze images of deities, gave jewels to adorn the bronzes, donated land or cash for lighting permanent lamps in the temple, for the provision of “sacred” food in the temple, to provide perfume, camphor, and flower garlands for the deities. The list is seemingly endless. In the midst of such details, we hear of a number of fascinating semi-judicial issues.

One such concerns the misbehaviour of two temple priests or *bhattars*, at the Shivapuram temple. Their list of misdemeanours commences with taking a pearl necklace of the goddess Uma and giving it to a concubine. The inscription accuses them of keeping false accounts, of stealing rice, of defying royal orders. The temple authorities met with the town council, and pronounced the two priests guilty of a crime, both against god Shiva (*Shivadroha*) and against the king (*rajadroha*). They were sentenced to be excommunicated, and their property, both immovable and moveable—these are judicial terms—was to



Inscriptions at the Brihadishvara Temple, Thanjavur
Courtesy of Richard Mortel via Wikimedia Commons

be handed over to the state.³

Another temple inscription gives expression to the principle that is known today in the USA as “eminent domain”. This enables a city or state to take over privately owned property for certain necessary common-interest purposes. The inscription records an agreement in the year 1207 CE that had the sanction of the Chola king. It was agreed that the street in front of a temple was not wide enough to accommodate the grand processions of bronze deities now being conducted by the temple. The authorities, who had been authorised to demolish the houses on one side of the street fronting the temple, were now required to make adequate repairs and alterations to the alternate housing that was being provided for the dispossessed house owners.⁴

THE NAGESHVARA TEMPLE

Since stone inscriptions are so visually dominant, and so liberally cover temple walls, let us consider one temple, the Nageshvara at Kumbakonam, to try and understand the sequence in which records were cut into the stone of temples. The temple was constructed soon after 905 CE when Parantaka Chola came to the throne. The temple’s 54 inscriptions were added to its walls over a period of roughly 125 years. First a quick introduction to the stone sculptures on the walls of the temple, especially the two female figures on the south wall of the shrine whose view is partly blocked by a modern construction around an ancient sacred image. Their dignity and bearing suggest aristocracy or royalty, while the sensuous and assured treatment of the figures speaks of the hands of accomplished stone carvers. Equally, one might look at the rear wall of the shrine that carries “portraits” of two male aristocrats. A standing moustached figure has the poise and confidence of a courtly aristocrat and was probably carved by the same talented sculptor.

For the purpose of this chapter, I will focus on the south face of the Nageshvara temple that, like the other two faces, reveals, somewhat surprisingly, that the placement of inscriptions on its stone wall seems apparently random. Green lines mark the earliest inscriptions, those of the reign of Parantaka Chola (905–955 CE). These are not royal inscriptions, but inscriptions dated in Parantaka’s reign solely to mark the exact year in which a donor made his or her gifts. One inscription runs almost the full length of the base mouldings, while the other two are placed

on its walls. Both the Tamil and Sanskrit scripts run from left to right in the same manner as English, so that a viewer walking around the temple in the ritually appropriate clockwise manner—pradakshina or circumambulation—would encounter the end of a line of inscription before its start, especially if you consider the record that runs the entire length of a base moulding. You would have to move from left to right and, since it is in three lines, you would have to repeat that movement twice more. It is clear, then, that reading inscriptions and the rite of worship did not go hand in hand; temple inscriptions were archival in purpose, and had no direct religious function. It is doubtful too whether literacy was at a level where visitors to a temple could read the inscribed records. Probably they were read by none other than the donors, priests, and adjudicators of disputes on the use of the recorded gifts of land, gold, and the like.

The next cluster of inscriptions, added in blue, belong to the three monarchs who ruled in the 30 years⁵ that intervened between the death of Parantaka and the accession of emperor Rajaraja, between 955–985 CE. These inscriptions are largely on the temple walls where they run across pilasters, but there is also one along the upper level of base mouldings.⁶ By 985 CE when Rajaraja Chola became king, space for inscriptions was running out. The record marked in red dates to the year 1015 and belongs to a woman donor who made a generous gift to the temple so that her Darling Lord (literally *chella piran*) would be honoured every day with a garland of red lotuses and a noonday meal that would then be distributed to temple employees and devotees.⁷ Despite the shortage of available space, Vasudevan Mahadevi managed to have her record engraved on this south face of the temple. The engraver was enterprising. He commenced his inscription across the entire available space above the niche carrying a sculpted image. On encountering a previously engraved inscription, in blue, he moved to the wall to the right of the image. There he was forced to stop halfway down on encountering an even earlier inscription—in green. But the text was not yet finished. And so he turned to the lightly raised pilaster to the right and inscribed the remaining text along its narrow vertical space.

Why use temple walls as the Public Records Office? The wording of the inscriptions indicates that the records were also written on palm-leaf manuscripts that, however, have clearly not survived the hot and humid climate of Tamil Nadu. Since judicial judgments would require revisiting as and



Inscriptions on South Wall of Nageshvara temple, Kumbakonam
Courtesy of Vidya Dehejia

when disputes arose regarding the many gifts to a temple, it would appear that inscribed stone constituted a highly reliable recordkeeping system. It was also right out there in the open for all parties to consult freely.

Turning to the subject of sacred images, one might question whether inscriptions shed light on Chola bronzes. Every now and again they contain valuable information about the donation of an image, of the jewellery gifted to images, and occasionally the reason for the worship of a particular form of Shiva. Such information is usually conveyed in a roundabout way. To briefly introduce, there are two bronzes created by the Master of Tiruvenkadu, a superb artist who has not left us his given name. Consider the bewitching beauty of Shiva with the bull (bull missing today), gracefully poised to rest his weight on his left foot, his right foot bent at the knee and crossed in front, with toes resting lightly on the ground. Shiva's left hand is placed elegantly on his hip, while his right arm is bent to rest his elbow upon his now-missing bull. The firm tone of his lithe body gives him a commanding presence; the barest hint of a smile about his lush lips transforms him into an accessible figure whom the devotee may confidently approach. Our Master abandoned the usual mode of portraying Shiva with

his matted locks piled high on his head. Instead, he created a piece that is uniquely charismatic. Taking the length of Shiva's matted locks, the Master wound them around his head to create the effect of an elegant turban; emerging just above the locks to the left, for the viewer, is the serpent's hood, while to the right is the blossom of the trumpet flower. Shiva's face is framed by the usual diadem, his third eye adorns his forehead, and he wears a large circular ring in one ear, while the other ear remains unadorned—a characteristic of Shiva. He wears three necklaces and a sacred thread, and his narrow torso is emphasised by a high waistband. His short *dhoti*, slung well below his navel, is held in place by an elaborate jewelled belt with a lion-head clasp, while fabric bands rest as looped curves below the clasp. Completing his adornment is an elbow band, a wrist band, anklet, and rings on eight fingers and eight toes with only the middle finger and middle toe left ringless. The sensuous elegance reveals the artist's masterful touch. It is unfortunate that we have no information about this artist, and must refer to him only as the Master of Tiruvenkadu whose Shiva temple housed several of his masterpieces.

It is rare for Chola bronzes to be securely dated but at Tiruvenkadu we are fortunate in having several inscriptions on

temple walls and base mouldings that provide information about donors and their gifts. None of these inscriptions has been translated into English in its entirety, and even a complete Tamil version is not available in print or on-line.⁸ A trip to the offices of the Epigraphical Survey in Mysore is necessary to put together the entire series. In the case of our glorious Shiva, a partly damaged inscription along the base mouldings of the south wall of the central shrine, dated to the year 1011 CE, informs us that this bronze was set up by a military chief (*nayaka*) who belonged to a select military regiment named Rajaraja Jananatha after the emperor Rajaraja Chola who ruled from 985–1012 CE. The donor, Kadamban Kolakkavan, came from the town of Kazhamulan, 8 miles from Tiruvenkadu.⁹ The inscription further informs us that the military chief who had gifted the image of Shiva was now making a gift of jewelled ornaments to adorn his bronze, and specifies that these ornaments were made with money from taxes collected by officials under Kadamban's leadership. Damage to the stone of the inscription deprives us of details about these jewels, but we know from any number of other inscriptions that they would have been sumptuous. Inscriptions routinely speak of the lavish gold jewellery set with gems that was given to adorn bronzes that are already richly adorned in the medium of bronze. This bronze masterpiece is not a royal commission, but a gift from an official of high stature who had the wherewithal to commission an image from the Tiruvenkadu Master.

Several finely crafted early images of Shiva with the bull indicate its popularity during early Chola rule. Why so? Can inscriptions help? An inscription on the walls of the Punjai temple, dated in the year 1026 CE during the reign of Rajendra, suggests that worship of Shiva with the bull was believed to confer victory on the king's army. The Punjai record speaks of the daily worship of Shiva as Lord with the bull (*Rishabha-vahana-devar*), as well as a special annual festival dedicated to Shiva with the bull that was held in order to secure the monarch's victory (*sribhujangal varddhitarula vendum enru*).¹⁰

At the Tiruvenkadu temple, the companion image of Uma who always accompanies Lord Shiva, stands in serene elegance just over 3 feet tall. Gracefully poised in *tribhanga*, her oval face with its diadem is topped with a tall conical crown, while at the rear is a small 'circle of glory'. Her long skirt clings to her legs and is slung way below the navel and held in place with belts ending in a decorative clasp. Her slender torso, with its gently rounded breasts is adorned with three necklaces, while

a sacred thread snakes its way between her breasts. She wears elaborate armlets, a simple elbow band, a cluster of bangles, and rings on eight fingers. The distinctive treatment of the hands, the ringed fingers, and the gently rounded fingernails are among the signature touches of our Master.

An inscription dated to the year 1012 CE, and engraved along the north wall of the central shrine, contains intriguing information about the joint donation of this copper image of goddess Uma to accompany Shiva as Lord with the bull. The gift was coordinated by a certain Lord Sarpan, headman of Andanur, who was also accountant and chief supervisor and, like the donor of the Shiva bronze, belonged to the select military regiment of Rajaraja Jananatha. Sarpan Devar ensured that eleven other individuals contributed their share towards the expenses involved in commissioning the image of Uma, and also that of the bull, to accompany the Shiva bronze created the previous year. The inscription is damaged along its central segment; yet, with its repetitive use of an ending to each name



Shiva and Uma, Tiruvenkadu temple, 1011 & 1012
Courtesy of Vidya Dehejia

that corresponds to “also” (*ivarum, avarum*), it clearly indicates that a varied group of eleven individuals pooled their money to commission the bronze of the goddess, and the bull for Shiva, thus completing this important commission.¹¹ This unexpected and hitherto unknown information speaks to the possibility of other joint collaborative commissions of Chola sacred bronzes.

Immediately thereafter, in the same year of 1012, chieftain Sundara Cholan from the Vel family of Kodumbalur donated a three-stringed necklace for this image of Uma, as well as a gold flower to be placed on the knotted locks of Shiva when the bronze lord “took pleasure in his sacred bath,” a reference to the ritual bathing of the bronze. There has been a tendency to assume that the finest works of art owe their origin to royal sponsorship—an all too easy assumption.¹² But frequently, as with the evocative bronzes from Tiruvenkadu, this proves not to be the case.

Bronzes were indeed commissioned by royalty and one such important patron was queen Sembiyan Mahadevi who was active between 941–1002. Among her commissions were two magnificent bronzes—Shiva with the bull and consort, and Shiva as Tripuravijaya (Victor of Three Forts) and consort. We learn this from an inscription of the year 979 that consists of one hundred lines of Tamil prose, and is engraved on the walls of the temple at Konerirajapuram, along the east and north walls of the central shrine. The inscription is the order of queen Sembiyan's son, the ruling king Uttama Chola, who provided extensive funds and lands to ensure that the wishes of his mother, regarding worship in the temple, were fulfilled with the grandeur she desired. Part one of the inscription gives us details of the king's newly gifted land, its exact boundaries, and the various rights and privileges it carried, that we will ignore here. Part two provides fascinating details that partake of the quality of an accounts book. It specifies the payment, to be made in measures of rice, to various temple employees, together with details of temple administration, and that incidentally provides a number of details regarding temple ritual relating to these bronze images.¹³

I start with the payments made to three men whose sole duty was to guard the sacred bronzes,¹⁴ a wise precaution that the temples might do well to reinstitute in the 21st century in the context of the international art market and smuggling! The record speaks of payments made to temple employees engaged to bathe the bronzes with milk, curds, ghee, sugar

and honey;¹⁵ to a brahmin who brought water from the river Kaveri to further bathe them;¹⁶ to brahmins who crushed the sandalwood to make the fragrant paste applied to the bronzes;¹⁷ for the purchase of cloth used to drape the images;¹⁸ to those who watered the temple's flower gardens;¹⁹ those who picked and strung flowers into garlands;²⁰ to five brahmins whose job was to hold a canopy over the bronzes when they were taken in procession;²¹ and to servants who swept the temple floors.²² The inscription's provisions clarify that the drapery and adornment we see on the images today is not a newly instituted practice, but dates back over a thousand years in the case of bronze. The inscription speaks too of payments made to those who sounded eight varieties of musical instruments including cymbals and drums;²³ to those who blew conch shells;²⁴ to two singers of the hymns of the saints;²⁵ to the astrologer who carried the sacred calendar;²⁶ and to the official *srikaryam* or Sacred Works officer who checked the temple's financial transactions.²⁷ Additionally a variety of payments were made to ensure the everyday smooth running of the temple and for maintenance that included renewal of screens and canopies, and a range of other repairs.²⁸

Let me conclude with an aspect of daily ritual, relating to Chola temple food, that finds detailed description in temple inscriptions. It has aroused little interest among scholars but I find it fascinating. In temples across Chola territory, endowments were made to provide food offerings to the many bronzes that every temple housed. Sacred food (*tiru amudu*, literally sacred nectar) was prepared in the temple's kitchens, ritually offered to the bronzes, and then distributed to the temple's various stakeholders that included the priests and a range of temple functionaries. And several inscriptions go out of their way to specify that the sacred food was to be distributed in this manner.²⁹ Rajaraja's inscriptions name individual villages in his empire and specify the exact quantities of the various ingredients that they were required to provide to the temple to be converted into food offerings to each of the many bronze images in his Thanjavur temple.³⁰

A lengthy inscription on the walls of the Tyagaraja temple at Tiruvarur provides a similarly comprehensive list of the food ingredients that the temple kitchen required in order to prepare cooked food for the daily worship of the three major Shaiva saints, Sambandar, Appar, and Sundarar, as well as for annual festivals in their honour.³¹ In 1145 CE, Chola emperor Kulottunga II created three tax-free villages; two were

to provide food ingredients for celebrating bronze images of Saint Sundarar accompanied by his wife Paravai, while the third village was to provide food offerings for festivals focusing on bronzes of the child saint Sambandar and of the older saint Appar. The items listed are rice, a range of vegetables, salt, mustard seed, black pepper, cumin, turmeric, ginger, tamarind, jaggery, dried mango, ghee, curds, cane sugar, areca nuts, betel leaf, oil, honey, and the perfumed roots and bark of *sitari*, sandal, and *akil*. Especial ingredients like jackfruit, bananas, coconut, dhal, and milk were added to the list for the two major festivals in March–April and in October–November.³² There are no potatoes, no tomatoes, no green chillies that are all items that the Portuguese brought to India from Brazil after 1500. India's famous black pepper is there, but not green chillies. It bears emphasising that all of this food, prepared in temple kitchens and offered ritually to the sacred bronzes, was not a drain on temple resources but quite the opposite since it was then distributed to temple employees and devotees.

The similarity of the ingredients to what would be required in a standard traditional south Indian kitchen of today speaks of the remarkable persistence of food habits over the past 1,000 years in Tamil Nadu.³³ Food for a celebration, then as now, appears to consist of three courses of rice, first with *rasam*, then with *sambhar*, and rice with *dahi*, accompanied by milk *payasam*, all served on a banana leaf. And concluding the meal was *vettalai-pakku*, the traditional aromatic and digestive offering of betel leaves rolled around areca nuts.

CONCLUSION

The 13,000 inscriptions, so liberally covering the walls of Chola temples, are visually a stunningly dominant feature. They were clearly important in their time and I believe they would have served a decorative function as well. Neither the Pallava kings ruling before the Cholas, nor the Vijayanagar rulers after them, placed inscriptions in this manner on their walls. In fact, no other dynasty in India, to north, west or east, used script—in this case the Tamil script—to cover the walls of their temples, making the Cholas unique in this practice. In Tamil Nadu, starting around the year 850 CE when the Cholas appeared on the scene, inscriptions of local import, historical and otherwise, began to appear in large numbers on the walls of every temple in the Kaveri delta. Any study of the architecture, sculpture, or bronze art of the Chola period that ignores the inscriptions seems to me to be a partial and incomplete exercise.

This invaluable inscriptional heritage—an unpublished heritage—that yields such fascinating information, needs to be made more readily available to scholars. Reading inscriptions from temple walls is not a simple exercise. You need a ladder for the upper levels; you must squat on the ground for base mouldings; and stand for the better part of the day to read the rest of the wall surfaces. Since three-quarters of the 13,000 inscriptions have not been published, it seems appropriate to skip the step of publication in hard copy and go straight to digitising these amazing inscriptions. It is time to make this invaluable heritage easy to access.

READING CHOLA TEMPLE WALLS

1. Marxia Gandhi, ed., *Thanjavur Vattak Kalvattigal, Volume II* [Also known as *Tamilnattuk Kalvettukal Vol. VIII*] (Chennai: State Dept of Archeology, 2015–2016), no.104/2014, 163.
2. TV Mahalingam, *A Topographical List of Inscriptions in Tamil Nadu and Kerala States*, 8 vols. (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1985–1992).
3. Mahalingam, *A Topographical List of Inscriptions, vol. 7: Thanjavur District* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1991), no. 228.
4. Mahalingam, *A Topographical List of Inscriptions, no. 1746, Reign of Kulottunga II*.
5. *One Gandaraditya record only*: Marxia Gandhi, ed., *Thanjavur Taluk Inscriptions, Vol. I* (Chennai: State Department of Archaeology, 1979) no. 59 of 1979, but missing today; *Aditya Karikala* (seven/eight records): Marxia Gandhi, *Thanjavur Taluk Inscriptions*, nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 32 of 1979, plus three missing today, Marxia Gandhi, ed. *Thanjavur Taluk Inscriptions*, nos. 47, 60, 61 of 1979; and four records of *Uttama Chola*: Marxia Gandhi, ed., *Thanjavur Taluk Inscriptions*, nos. 19, 20, 21, 28 of 1979.
6. *Ibid.*, nos. 28 and 20 of 1979.
7. Vasudevan Mahadevi, wife of Korran Damodaran of the Gautama gotra, gifted land, paddy, money and a house plot to the temple. The gold given was utilised for making a garland of sengalunir flowers, and for midday offerings to the deity, Chella piran (Dearest Lord). See *Ibid.*, no. 36 of 1979.
8. Job Thomas, *Tiruvankadu Bronzes* (Madras: Cre-A, 1986), provides valuable extracts of several of the

relevant inscriptions in his footnotes.

part III, no. 151A, 315–316: line 80–84.

9. Kazhumalan and Tonipuram are alternate names for Sirkali. See Indira Peterson, *Poems to Śiva: The Hymn of the Tamil Saints* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 68 that quotes, in translation, Appar hymn IV/82 & IV/83.
10. Mahalingam, *A Topographical List of Inscriptions, vol. 7: Thanjavur District* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1992), no. TJ 1191, 280–281. I am grateful to Dr. Muniratnam for access to the transcript of Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1925, no. 182. The phrase literally translates as “in order to strengthen the king’s arms/shoulders.”
11. *ARE 1918*, no. 457. Courtesy of Epigraphical Survey, Mysore. The names are as follows:
 1. Devar Sarpan, of the Sri Rajaraja Jananatha select military regiment, headman of Anatanur, supervisor, leader, of the.....
 2. from north street of Nangur
 3. Narayanan from Avishvaram
 4. Ranganar svami
 5. Nilakantha of the Shankara gotra
 6. Butana, son of Satakarni from Talaishangatu
 7. Shatanilayan, son of Satakarni
 8. Shantanu, son of Satakarni
 9. Kani-ilaiyan, son of Satakarni
 10.varan from Turukka
 11. Vadakkan
 12. from maran ko...
12. For instance, speaking of a magnificent Dancing Shiva and consort in a temple at Kumbakonam, a knowledgeable and respected authority wrote: “I have no hesitation in concluding that both must be royal consecrations, so great is their majesty and power.” R Nagaswamy, “On Dating South Indian Bronzes,” in *Indian Art & Connoisseurship: Essays in Honor of Douglas Barrett*, ed. John Guy (Chidambaram Ahmedabad, India: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in association with Mapin Publishing, 1995), 116.
13. H Krishna Sastri, *South Indian Inscriptions*, vol. III,
 14. *Ibid.*, 315: line 59.
 15. *Ibid.*, 316: line 85.
 16. *Ibid.*, 315: line 67.
 17. *Ibid.*, 314: line 40.
 18. *Ibid.*, 315: line 72.
 19. *Ibid.*, lines 76 and 78.
 20. *Ibid.*, 315: line 46.
 21. *Ibid.*, line 42.
 22. *Ibid.*, line 48.
 23. *Ibid.*, line 49.
 24. *Ibid.*, 315: line 58.
 25. *Ibid.*, line 61.
 26. *Ibid.*, line 75.
 27. *Ibid.*, line 69.
 28. *Ibid.*, line 70.
 29. See for instance an inscription of the year 1229 that records a gift for rice offering to the Consort of the bedroom chamber in the Mayuram temple. It specifies that after offering it to the goddess, the food was to be distributed among members of the temple establishment. GV Srinivasa Rao, ed., *South Indian Inscriptions XXIII*, no. 372 (Madras: Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India, 1979): 258–259.
 30. Hultzsch, *South Indian Inscriptions*, vol. II, part I, no. 6, 74–75.
 31. KV Subrahmanya Aiyer, ed., *South Indian Inscriptions VII*, no. 485 (Calcutta: Government of India,

Central Publication Branch, 1932), 298–301. Also Mahalingam, *A Topographical List of Inscriptions*, no. TJ 1653, 386. The inscription is of Kulottunga II in the year 1145 CE.

32. The lists of ingredients, very similar in content, are repeated in their entirety for the daily worship of each saint, and for the festival of each saint.
33. The inscription repeats these closely similar lists for the various festivals and for each of the three saints' images.