

SANKARANARAYANAN TEMPLE AT THANJAVUR: AN EPIGRAPHICAL REASSESSMENT WITH REFERENCE TO UDAIYARGUDI, GOVINDAPUTTUR, SRIPURANTHAN, AND NARTHAMALAI

Jegan Sundararajan

Former Associate Professor, Sanskriti University; Independent Researcher

Abstract

The present study undertakes an epigraphical examination of selected Chola-period inscriptions from Udaiyargudi, Govindaputtur, Sripuranthan, and Narthamalai, with reference to their titulary formulations, institutional descriptions, genealogical evidence, and topographical correlations. The enquiry is based primarily upon records published in South Indian Inscriptions, Epigraphia Indica, the Annual Reports on Epigraphy, and the Anbil Copper Plates of Sundara Chola.

Particular attention is directed to the composite titulary expressions "Araiyan Mahimalayan alias Parantaka Muttaraiyan" and "Araiyan Sankaranarayanan alias Sola Muttaraiyan," examined in relation to their structural components and in comparison with genealogical material in Telugu Chola records and the Anbil Copper Plates, wherein the Sanskrit form Mutturāja occurs as a rank designation for junior princes. The study further demonstrates, through the Narthamalai inscriptions, that this tradition is attested within the Imperial Chola family itself from the ninth century — correcting the long-standing assumption that Muttaraiyar and Cholas were separate clans.

The Govindaputtur inscriptions record the construction of "Sri Kailasathu Alvar" by "Araiyan Sankaranarayanan alias Sola Muttaraiyan." A newly examined inscription of Rajaraja Chola I's 29th regnal year at Gangajatathesvarar Temple, Govindaputtur, establishes that this temple held the Moola Pandaram (main treasury) for the entire Kollidam sacred network, including the south bank temple at Thirupurambiyam where Rajaraja I's birth festival was celebrated. A critical misreading in South Indian Inscriptions Vol. 34 — "Narathonga Pereri" for "Parantaka Pereri" — is identified and corrected. On the basis of cumulative inscriptional evidence, the study examines the identification of the builder with Arunmozhi Varman and the implications for the Sankaranarayanan Temple at Thanjavur as a memorial foundation (pallippadai).

Keywords: *Rajaraja Chola I; Arunmozhi Varman; Sankaranarayanan Temple; Pallipadai; Thanjavur; Sripuranthan; Govindaputtur; Uttama Chola; Chola Epigraphy; Muttaraiyan; Araiyan Sankaranarayanan; Narthamalai; Vijayalaya Chola; Moola Pandaram; Kollidam*

1. Introduction

The present enquiry is concerned with a re-examination of Chola-period inscriptions from Udaiyargudi, Govindaputtur, Sripuranthan, and Narthamalai. These records, when considered conjointly, present recurring patterns in titulary formulation, institutional description, and sacred geography which admit of closer analysis than has hitherto been attempted.

The study proceeds within the established framework of epigraphical method, wherein interpretation is grounded in the internal structure of inscriptional records and in the contextual comparison of related chronological material. No conclusion is advanced independently of such evidence. The enquiry is directed toward identifying patterns of consistency across multiple inscriptions of related chronology and provenance, and toward correcting a fundamental historiographical error that has obscured the reading of these records.

That error is the assumption that the Muttaraiyar chiefs and the Chola royal family constituted separate and distinct political entities. The evidence presented below demonstrates that the Muttaraiyan designation was borne by junior Chola princes across multiple generations — a constitutional role within the dynasty, not an ethnic or clan identity external to it. This reinterpretation, grounded in the convergent testimony of the Anbil Copper Plates, the Telugu Chola genealogies, and the Narthamalai inscriptions, is the foundation upon which the subsequent argument rests.

Five principal questions arise:

1. The structural and functional significance of the designation Muttaraiyan within the Chola dynastic tradition
2. The identity and status of "Araiyan Sankaranarayanan" in the Govindaputtur inscriptions
3. The institutional character and Moola Pandaram status of the temple designated as Sri Kailasathu Alvar
4. The territorial and sacred geography of the Kollidam landscape administered from Sripuranthan

5. The historical character of the Sankaranarayanan Temple at Thanjavur in relation to these findings

These questions are examined in the context of the reign of Uttama Chola, a period during which Arunmozhi Varman had not yet assumed sovereignty.

2. The Udaiyargudi Inscription

The inscription from Udaiyargudi (SII, Vol. XIX, No. 61; A.R. No. 602 of 1920), assignable to the 3rd regnal year of Uttama Chola, records a gift for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp by Queen Panchavan Madevi^[1]. The record explicitly identifies her as the *araisi* (consort) of the royal personage styled:

"Araiyan Mahimalayan alias Parantaka Muttaraiyan."

The structure of this expression admits of analysis into its constituent elements: Araiyan — rank designation; Mahimalayan — epithet; Parantaka — dynastic reference; Muttaraiyan — terminal rank designation. The ordered sequence of these elements suggests a formal titulary construction rather than an incidental aggregation of names.

Further significance attaches to the manner in which the deity is referred to in this inscription. Rather than by the established Saiva name of the shrine, the deity is designated as "Chandrasekhara Perumal" — the Vaishnava honorific "Perumal" applied to a Saiva deity. A second record from Tirumalpuram similarly attributes to the same queen the Vaishnava honorific "Alvar" for the Saiva deity Manikandeesvarar^[2].

3. The Designation "Muttaraiyan": Genealogical and Dynastic Context

3.1 The Telugu Chola Records

The interpretation of the term Muttaraiyan requires consideration of its Sanskrit equivalent Mutturāja, as attested in genealogical records published in Epigraphia Indica, Vol. XXVII^[3]. These records exhibit a consistent structural pattern:

Ancestor	Elder Son	Younger Son (Mutturaja)	Period (approx.)
Nandivarman Chola	Sundarananda	Erikal Mutturaja Dhananjayavarman	6th century
Mahendra Vikrama Chola	Gunamudita	Erikal Mutturaja Punyakumara	7th century
Vikramaditya Chola	Uttamaditya	Erikal Mutturaja Satyaditya	8th century

Ancestor	Elder Son	Younger Son (Mutturaja)	Period (approx.)
Mahendravarman II	Ilanchozha	Kapibola Mutturaja	8th–9th century

The recurrence of this distinction across multiple genealogies indicates that Mutturāja functioned as a rank-bearing designation within a hierarchical system of succession^[4]. The Tamil form Muttaraiyan, when encountered in comparable structural contexts, is therefore to be considered in relation to this usage — not as a clan identity but as a positional title for the junior prince.

3.2 The Anbil Copper Plates: The Direct Tamil Chola Connection

The decisive bridge between the Telugu Chola genealogical pattern and the Imperial Tamil Chola tradition is provided by the Anbil Copper Plates of Sundara Chola — Rajaraja I's own father — published in *Epigraphia Indica* Vol. XV^[5]. The plates state that Vijayalaya, founder of the later imperial Chola line, was born in the Orriyur lineage. The Velancheri Plates of Parantaka Chola I likewise attest the same.

The Orriyur ruling genealogy recorded in the Madras Museum plates of Srikantha runs: Mahendravikrama → Ilanchola → Srikantha Chola. Critically, the plates record that Ilanchola's younger brother was Kapibola Mutturaja — the same individual listed in the Telugu Chola genealogical table under Mahendravarman II.

This convergence is decisive. The Anbil Plates, issued by Sundara Chola himself — independently corroborate the same genealogical tradition preserved in the Telugu records. The Mutturaja designation for the younger brother is therefore not a regional Telugu convention imported into Tamil Chola usage. It is a shared dynastic institution of the Chola family, traceable to at least the seventh century, carried into the Imperial Tamil tradition through the Orriyur lineage.

3.3 The Narthamalai Evidence: A.R. No. 216 of 1940–41

The ninth-century Tamil-tradition anchor for this argument is provided by the inscription A.R. No. 216 of 1940–41 from the Narthamalai hill complex^[6]. An inscription below the Dvarapalaka figures of the Vijayalaya Choleswaram explicitly records that the elder prince Sattan Budi Ilango Vadiyaraiyan built this primary temple. The adjacent cave temple — named Sattan Pazhiyileeswaram — was built by the younger prince Sattan Pazhiyili Ilango

Muttaraiyan. Both princes share the prefix “Sattan,” a patronymic derived from their father’s name, reflecting a common naming practice.

Their subsequent designations differentiate rank: the elder bears the “Ilango Adiraiyan” rank indicator; the younger bears “Ilango Muttaraiyan” — in which “Ilango” (prince) combines with “Muttaraiyan” to produce precisely the Tamil equivalent of the Sanskrit “Mutturaja.” Both temples were built during their princely lives, before either had achieved sovereignty.

The subsequent political history is essential to the argument. After the Pandya king Varaguna captured the region, the younger prince Sattan Pazhiyili Ilango Muttaraiyan ruled while the elder Sattan Budi Ilango Vadiyaraiyan was sidelined, resting at Pazhaiyarai for approximately eighteen years. After the Battle of Tellaru, the elder prince — subsequently known as Vijayalaya Chola — recaptured Thanjavur from his younger brother and established the imperial Chola line.

This sequence fundamentally reframes the received narrative of Vijayalaya "capturing Thanjavur from the Muttaraiyar." Vijayalaya did not capture Thanjavur from a separate clan. He recaptured it from his own younger brother, who bore the Muttaraiyan designation precisely because he was the junior prince of the same Chola family. The assumption that Muttaraiyar and Cholas were different clans has been the source of persistent misreading. The Narthamalai inscriptions, the Anbil Copper Plates, and the Telugu Chola genealogies together demonstrate that both designations belonged to the same house — Muttaraiyan marking the junior branch, the Chola royal identity belonging to the family as a whole.

A further biographical parallel is of direct relevance. Just as Vijayalaya was sidelined for approximately eighteen years before recapturing Thanjavur, Arunmozhi Varman remained without sovereignty for approximately sixteen years during the Uttama Chola interregnum following the death of Aditya Karikala. The Thiruvallangadu copper plates record that the latter refrained from claiming the throne and permitted his uncle to rule^[7].

4. The Govindaputtur Inscriptions

4.1 The Foundation Record

The inscription from Govindaputtur (SII, Vol. XIX, No. 331; A.R. No. 157 of 1928–29), belonging to the 13th regnal year of Uttama Chola, records that "Araiyar Sankaranarayanan alias Sola Muttaraiyan" constructed the temple designated as Sri Kailasathu Alvar^[8]. The record further specifies the allocation of irrigated lands under the Vadakudi tank,

the regulation of ritual observances including Ayana-Sankranti and Vishu-day services, and comprehensive institutional provisions for maintenance under the supervision of the local assembly and Sivabrahmana families of Periya Sri Vanavanmadevi-chaturvedimangalam.

Such features — construction of a structural stone temple, land grant from irrigated sources, specification of a full ritual calendar, engagement of named priestly families, and assembly-backed enforcement clauses — are characteristic of formal royal or princely temple foundations rather than minor endowments. The scale and organisation of the institutional provisions imply authority of a kind ordinarily associated with high political standing.

4.2 Prosopographical Distinction

The inscriptions from the same site also refer to “Sekkilan Araiyan Sankaranarayanan alias Sola Muttaraiyan,” identified with a specific locality—Kavannur in Pazhuvur-kottam of Tondai Nadu^[9]. This individual is further attested in SII Vol. XIII, No. 146, A.R. No. 585 of 1920^[10]. A separate individual, bearing the same lineage marker “Sekkilan” and associated with a similar locality, is independently attested in A.R. No. 183 of 1931^[11].

Feature	Sekkilan Individual	Araiyan Sankaranarayanan (Builder)
Lineage marker	Present (Sekkilan)	Absent
Locality specified	Yes (Kavannur, Tondai Nadu)	Not specified
Role	Donor (Year 12)	Builder and founder (Year 13)
Status indicated	Regional — defined social context	Higher rank — no territorial qualifier

The absence of locality markers in the builder's titlature conforms to known epigraphical conventions for higher-ranking individuals. In Chola epigraphy, it is not uncommon for royal or princely figures to be designated without reference to place of origin, their status being sufficiently conveyed by titlature alone. The distinction between donor and builder is not merely functional but reflects a difference in the level of authority and resource control.

4.3 Titulary Correspondence

A structural comparison of the two inscriptions yields the following:

Titulary Element	Udaiyargudi (Arunmozhi Varman)	Govindaputtur (Builder)
Rank indicator	Araiyān	Araiyān
Secondary epithet	Mahimalayan	Sankaranarayanan
Dynastic qualifier	Parantaka	Sola
Terminal designation	Muttaraiyan	Muttaraiyan
Structural formula	Araiyān + [epithet] + [dynasty] Muttaraiyan	Araiyān + [epithet] + [dynasty] Muttaraiyan

The variation is confined to the intermediate epithet and dynastic qualifier, while the structural framework remains exactly consistent. Such variation of epithet within a stable titulary structure is well attested in Chola epigraphy and cannot in itself be taken to indicate distinct identity. The secondary epithet "Sankaranarayanan" — combining the names of Siva (Sankara) and Vishnu (Narayana) — is entirely consonant with the Saiva-Vaishnava synthetic honorific idiom observed in the Udaiyargudi record.

5. Institutional and Topographical Context: The Moola Pandaram

5.1 The Rajaraja I Year 29 Inscription at Gangajatheesvarar Temple

An inscription of Rajaraja Chola I's 29th regnal year, engraved at the Gangajatheesvarar Temple, Govindaputtur, and published by L. Thiagarajan in Aavanam Vol. 17 (2006)^[12], is the most institutionally significant record bearing on the present study. The inscription records an assembly of perunguri perumakkal drawn from several cheris, convening on the northern bank of the Sri Parantaka Pereri — the Sripuranthan lake. Three findings of decisive importance emerge from this record.

First, the Sri Parantaka Pereri is explicitly identified as the site of the Moola Pandaram — the main treasury of the institutional network. Second, the assembly decided to celebrate the Panguni Sadayam festival at the Aditya Esvarar Udaiyar temple at Thirupurambiyam, located on the south bank of the Kollidam. Panguni Sadayam — the Panguni month Sadayam nakshatra festival — is Rajaraja Chola I's own birth celebration. Third, the assembly convened on the north bank at the Moola Pandaram and the decision was engraved in the

Gangajatheesvarar temple at Govindaputtur, confirming that Govindaputtur, Sripuranthan, and the Sri Parantaka Pereri lakeside formed a single integrated administrative complex.

The institutional implications are considerable. The Sri Kailasathu Alvar temple at Sripuranthan, holding the Moola Pandaram, functioned as the administrative headquarters for a sacred network spanning both banks of the Kollidam — funding and administering south bank temple services including the reigning king's birth festival. This is precisely the institutional character expected of a primary royal foundation.

5.2 The Kamarasavalli Inscriptions and the "Narathonga Pereri" Misreading

South Indian Inscriptions Vol. 34, Inscriptions Nos. 61–95, from the Karkotakesvara Temple at Kamarasavalli (Tirunallur), Udaiyarpalayam Taluk, Ariyalur District, provide corroborating evidence^[13]. Inscription No. 73 (Kulottunga I, year 26, 1096 CE) records services in the temple of "Ivvor Kailasamana Sri Rajendra Chola Esvaram Udaiyar" — "The Udaiyar of Sri Rajendra Chola Esvaram, which is the Kailasam of this village." Inscription No. 72 (Rajendra I, year 8, 1019 CE) records an assembly convening "at the Sri Kailasathu Udaiyar" temple as it holds the status of a Moola Pandaram.

The same inscription No. 72 also refers to a large lake whose name the SII Vol. 34 editor reads as "Narathonga Pereri." The editor further notes explicitly that this inscription "has many errors." Three grounds establish that this is a misreading of "Parantaka Pereri." First, "Narathonga" is not a Tamil word, not a Sanskrit term used in Tamil epigraphy, and not attested as a place name or institutional designation in any Chola inscription. Second, "Sri Parantaka Pereri" is the established name for the Sripuranthan lake, attested in the adjacent Govindaputtur year 29 inscription. Third, the palaeographic confusion of ழ (Pa) for ற (Na) and the corruption of ரந்தக (rantaka) into ரத்தொங்க (rathonga) is consistent with documented scribal errors in records of this period.

There is no Sri Kailasathu Udaiyar temple in the Thirunallur-Kamarasavalli zone separate from the Sripuranthan primary institution. The only institution of this name and Moola Pandaram status in the region is the Sri Kailasathu Alvar at Sripuranthan. The Kamarasavalli assembly therefore convened at the bank of the Sri Parantaka Pereri — at the Sripuranthan lakeside — confirming the Sri Kailasathu Alvar as the primary administrative hub for the entire zone.

5.3 Toponymic and Institutional Continuity

Later inscriptions of Rajaraja Chola I^[12] refer to Sri Parantakan Chaturvedimangalam and Sri Parantakan Pereri in the same locality. This continuity of toponymic and institutional references across the reigns of Uttama Chola and Rajaraja I establishes the persistence of the site as an active administrative and sacred centre. The village identified in the records as Sri Paranthakan Chaturvedimangalam corresponds to the modern Sripuranthan, and Sri Paranthakan Pereri to the extant Sripuranthan lake.

An inscription of the 29th regnal year of Rajaraja I, engraved in the Gangajatathesvarar temple at Govindaputtur, records an assembly convened on the bank of this Pereri in this very village — confirming the identification and demonstrating that the institutional life of the site continued actively into Rajaraja I's own reign, long after its foundation during the pre-accession period.

6. The Kollidam Sacred Landscape

The territory under consideration spans both banks of the Kollidam river. On the north bank lies Sripuranthan — ancient Sri Parantaka Chaturvedimangalam, earlier named Periya Sri Vanavan Madevi Chaturvedimangalam — the site of the Sri Kailasathu Alvar temple and its Moola Pandaram. An inscription records that Sri Kundavai Chaturvedimangalam, situated on the south bank, was carved out from Periya Sri Vanavan Madevi Chaturvedimangalam[14].

On the south bank lies Konthagai — identified with ancient Sri Kundavai Chaturvedimangalam — a site locally and traditionally associated with the burial of Vijayalaya Chola. Thirupurambiyam, site of the Aditya Esvarar Udaiyar temple where Rajaraja I's birth festival was administered from the north bank Moola Pandaram, lies on the south bank but falls within the Andartru Kootram (northern bank administrative division), confirming institutional connectivity across the river.

The Sri Kailasathu Alvar temple at Sripuranthan and the Konthagai Vijayalaya Cholan memorial site stand in a relationship of near-axial correspondence across the Kollidam.

7. The Naming Evolution of the Sripuranthan Temple

The naming history of the Sri Kailasathu Alvar temple can be charted across four phases through the inscriptional record, each reflecting a significant moment in the institutional and royal history of the foundation:

Phase	Name	Period / Source	Significance
I	Sri Kailasathu Alvar	Uttama Chola yr. 13 (c. 984 CE)	Vaishnava honorific "Alvar" applied to Saiva deity; pre-accession family idiom
II	Sri Kailasathu Udaiyar	Rajendra I period; yr. 8 (c. 1019 CE) SII Vol. 34, No. 72	"Alvar" upgraded to sovereign honorific "Udaiyar"
III	Sri Rajendra Chola Esvaram — Kailasam of this village	Kulothungan I yr. 26 (c. 1096 CE) SII Vol. 34, No. 73	Rajendra I re-consecrates institution; Kamarasavalli assembly convenes at this temple
IV	Brihadisvara (popular)	Post-medieval	Popular name by analogy with Thanjavur; driven by shared Periyanaayaki consort name

The Sripuranthan temple and the Thanjavur Brihadisvara share three independent naming elements: the "Sri Kailasathu" institutional identity, the popular designation "Brihadisvara," and the consort deity name "Periyanaayaki." In Chola temple practice, the consort deity name is temple-specific. The duplication of "Periyanaayaki" at both Sripuranthan and Thanjavur indicates a deliberate act of institutional replication by the same founder.

The temple at Brihadisvara Temple retained the name "Rajarajesvaram" throughout all periods because it was the imperial capital temple, protected by continuous state administration. The Sripuranthan institution received the Rajendra-period name because Rajendra I took filial custody of his father Rajaraja I's pre-imperial memorial foundation, while preserving the imperial Rajaraja identity at Thanjavur unchanged. An inscription of Kulottunga I records the temple as *ivvor Kailasam ana Sri Rajendra Chola Isvaram Udaiyar*.

8. Architectural Recapitulation and the Three-Node Pattern

The architectural evidence, taken together with the biographical parallel between Vijayalaya and Arunmozhi Varman, points to a deliberate three-node system of dynastic recapitulation:

Node	Site / Temple	Builder / Period	Institutional Role
1	Narthamalai: Vijayalaya Choleswaram	Vijayalaya Chola (9th c.)	An early Imperial Chola foundation, built in the pre-accession phase.
2	Sripuranthan: Sri Kailasathu Alvar / Brihadisvara	Arunmozhi Varman as Sola Muttaraiyan (c. 984 CE)	Pre-accession recapitulation; Moola Pandaram; axially opposite Vijayalaya memorial site

Node	Site / Temple	Builder / Period	Institutional Role
3	Thanjavur: Rajarajesvaram / Brihadisvara	Rajaraja I (c. 1003–1010 CE)	Imperial recapitulation of Node 1 at monumental scale; institutionally parallel to Node 2

Rajaraja I's Brihadisvara at Thanjavur is architecturally modelled on the Vijayalaya Choleswaram at Narthamalai — a relationship widely acknowledged in architectural scholarship. This modelling was a deliberate act of dynastic self-representation: by replicating his ancestor's temple at imperial scale, Rajaraja I declared himself the fulfilment of what Vijayalaya began. His pre-accession foundation at Sripuranthan stood in the same relationship: a pre-sovereignty act of territorial marking, consciously positioned in the landscape of the founding ancestor's memorial zone.

9. Observations on Identification

No inscription explicitly equates "Araiyān Sankaranarayanan" with Arunmozhi Varman. However, the following observations, taken cumulatively, permit a considered position on the question of identity:

1. The titular structure of the Govindaputtur builder corresponds exactly to that of the princely designation applied to Arunmozhi Varman in the Udaiyargudi inscription — same rank indicator (Araiyān), same terminal designation (Muttaraiyan), variation only in secondary epithet.
2. The designation Muttaraiyan, as demonstrated from the Telugu Chola genealogies, the Anbil Copper Plates, and the Narthamalai inscriptions, aligns across four centuries of evidence with the positional designation of the junior Chola prince — not a clan outsider.
3. The scale of the temple foundation — structural stone construction, irrigated land grant, full ritual calendar, named priestly families, assembly oversight — indicates authority and resource control beyond the range of local or regional donors.
4. The chronological setting corresponds precisely to the pre-accession phase of Arunmozhi Varman (Uttama Chola years 12–13, approximately 983–984 CE), during which he occupied a position of acknowledged princely status without sovereignty.
5. The Moola Pandaram status of the Sri Kailasathu Alvar — established by the year 29 inscription of Rajaraja I — places this temple in the same institutional tier as the

Thanjavur Brihadisvara, both founded by the same individual at different phases of his political life.

6. The topographical continuity of the site — Sri Parantaka Pereri attested across inscriptions of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I— establishes institutional persistence into the period of confirmed Rajaraja I patronage.
7. The naming parallels between Sripuranthan and Thanjavur — Sri Kailasathu, Brihadisvara, Periyanaayaki — form a system of institutional identity linking both foundations to a single founder.

Taken together, these observations permit the conclusion that "Araiyar Sankaranarayanan alias Sola Muttaraiyan" cannot be satisfactorily explained as a merely local donor or regional chieftain. The cumulative weight of the evidence renders the identification with Arunmozhi Varman in his pre-accession phase highly probable, and alternative explanations increasingly untenable.

10. Implications for the Sankaranarayanan Temple

The cumulative evidence indicates that the Sri Kailasathu Alvar foundation at Sripuranthan functioned as the principal pre-accession royal institution of Arunmozhi Varman. It may be understood as a Mula Pandaram that administered an interconnected sacred and institutional network extending across both banks of the Kollidam.

The designation "Sankaranarayanan" itself may preserve an important historical association. It can plausibly be linked to the pre-accession titlature of Arunmozhi Varman, who is known to have borne the title Araiyar Sankaranarayanan alias Sola Muttaraiyan.

Within this broader institutional framework, the Sankaranarayanan temple complex at Thanjavur assumes particular significance. The site preserves a sculptural representation of a royally adorned female figure, identifiable through her elaborate ornamentation and courtly iconographic features, shown in an attitude of worship before an east-facing Siva linga presently known as Kasi Viswanathar. Earlier identifications of this figure as Avvaiyar or Karaikkal Ammai are unlikely, given that these saintly figures are conventionally depicted in ascetic or non-royal forms, which stand in clear contrast to the regal attributes observed here.

The presence of an east-facing memorial linga in a subsidiary yet ritually significant position within the complex, attended by a royally represented female devotee, corresponds closely to the spatial and functional characteristics associated with established pallippadai temples. A relevant parallel may be noted in the pallippadai of Pancavan Madevi at Patteswaram, attributed to Rajendra I, where comparable commemorative and spatial features are attested.

From a topographical perspective, the Sankaranarayanan temple occupies a strategically significant axial position in relation to the Brihadisvara Temple complex. It aligns with the Rajaraja Chola nulaivaayil and is situated along the processional route leading to the Rajaveedhi, at an approximate distance of 500 metres. This spatial placement suggests deliberate integration within the royal and ritual landscape of Thanjavur.

Taken together, the iconographic, spatial, institutional, and titular evidence supports the identification of the Sankaranarayanan temple as a pallippadai associated with Rajaraja Chola.

11. Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that:

1. The designation *Muttaraiyan*, in Chola inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries, admits of consistent interpretation as a rank-bearing title for junior princes — documented from the seventh century in the *Orriyur* genealogy of the Madras Museum Plates, through the ninth century at *Narthamalai*, to the tenth century at *Govindaputtur*.
2. The assumption that *Muttaraiyar* and *Cholas* were separate clans has obscured the reading of these inscriptions. The *Narthamalai* evidence demonstrates that *Vijayalaya* recaptured Thanjavur from his own younger brother, who bore the *Muttaraiyan* designation as the junior prince of the same family.
3. The *Govindaputtur* inscriptions record a temple foundation associated with a high-ranking individual whose titular structure is exactly parallel to that of *Arunmozhi Varman* in the *Udaiyargudi* inscription.
4. Prosopographical analysis distinguishes the builder from similarly named regional donors, and the scale of the foundation is consistent with princely agency.

5. The Rajaraja I year 29 inscription at Gangajathesvarar Temple establishes the Sri Kailasathu Alvar as a Moola Pandaram administering temples on both banks of the Kollidam, including the Thirupurambiyam temple where Rajaraja I's birth festival (Panguni Sadayam) was celebrated.
6. A critical misreading in SII Vol. 34 — "Narathonga Pereri" for "Parantaka Pereri" — is identified and corrected on philological and institutional grounds.
7. The cumulative evidence — titulary, genealogical, prosopographical, institutional, territorial, architectural, and toponymic — permits, and indeed strongly supports, the identification of the builder with Arunmozhi Varman in his pre-accession phase, and the interpretation of the Sankaranarayanan Temple at Thanjavur within the category of royal memorial foundations.

The conclusions offered here remain provisional, as is appropriate to epigraphical inference, and are subject to revision in light of further evidence. The most immediate priority is the systematic examination of the Sankaranarayanan temple at Thanjavur for inscriptions, many of which are presently obscured by later lime plaster, reportedly applied during the Maratha period. In addition, the application of ground-penetrating radar at the suspected burial marker may help clarify the sub-surface context and yield further archaeological insight.

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