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# A New Inscription from Kunavayirkottam: Another Evidence to the Date of Cilappatikaram

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**Abstract:** *The Tamil epic Cilappatikaram was written by Elango Adikal in the temple at Trikkanamatilakam. This merchant guild was well-known to the Jains of South India. These unpublished inscriptions were deciphered and published by the author. This demonstrates that the year of the installation of the Trikkanamatilakam temple. The term Kunavayirkottam is mentioned in here. Ayiravar, a trade guild mentioned in the Alathur-Godapuram inscription is also mentioned here. Both stones are fragmentary. The significance of this inscription is that it adds one more to the list of Ceras of Makotai inscriptions.*

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**Keywords:** Trikkanamatilakam, Cilappatikaram, Jain, Kunavayirkottam, Inscription, Merchants, Vattezhuttu

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## Introduction

During the resurveying of the Cera inscriptions, the author noticed two granite pieces (Figure 1) now displayed at the Museum of Department of Archaeology, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. They were written in early medieval Vattezhettu script (Figure 2). The stones were found from Matilakam area, near Kodungallur, in 1993 and Prof. Rajan Gurukkal meant to donate them to the Museum, where they went unnoticed for two decades (Archaeology Register n.d.). This unpublished inscription (Tirukkunavay Inscription) was deciphered and published by the author.

Jainism in Kerala was evidenced from the 9<sup>th</sup> century C.E. onwards (Elamkulam, 2005). A few relics show the importance of Jainism in Kerala, they include the inscriptions of Putadi-Tazhekkavu, Alathur, Tiruvannur as well as the temples of Kallil, Chithral and Batheri in Wynad. A traditional prayer hall, *mandakappura*, with Jain idols in Mundur is located on the ancient trade route from Madurai to the early medieval port town of Pantalayini-Kollam in North Kerala (Rajendu, 2012). The Alathur inscription mentions the trade guild *nalpattennayiravar*; while *ayiravar* mentions a merchant group and *cittattani* a privilege to them (GopinathaRao, 1989).

Cilappatikaram, the Tamil epic written in the early medieval trade guild Trikkanamatilakam, was authored by Elamko Adikal, a Jain poet. Early Tamil



Figure 1: Tirukkunavay Inscription, Fragmentary Stones

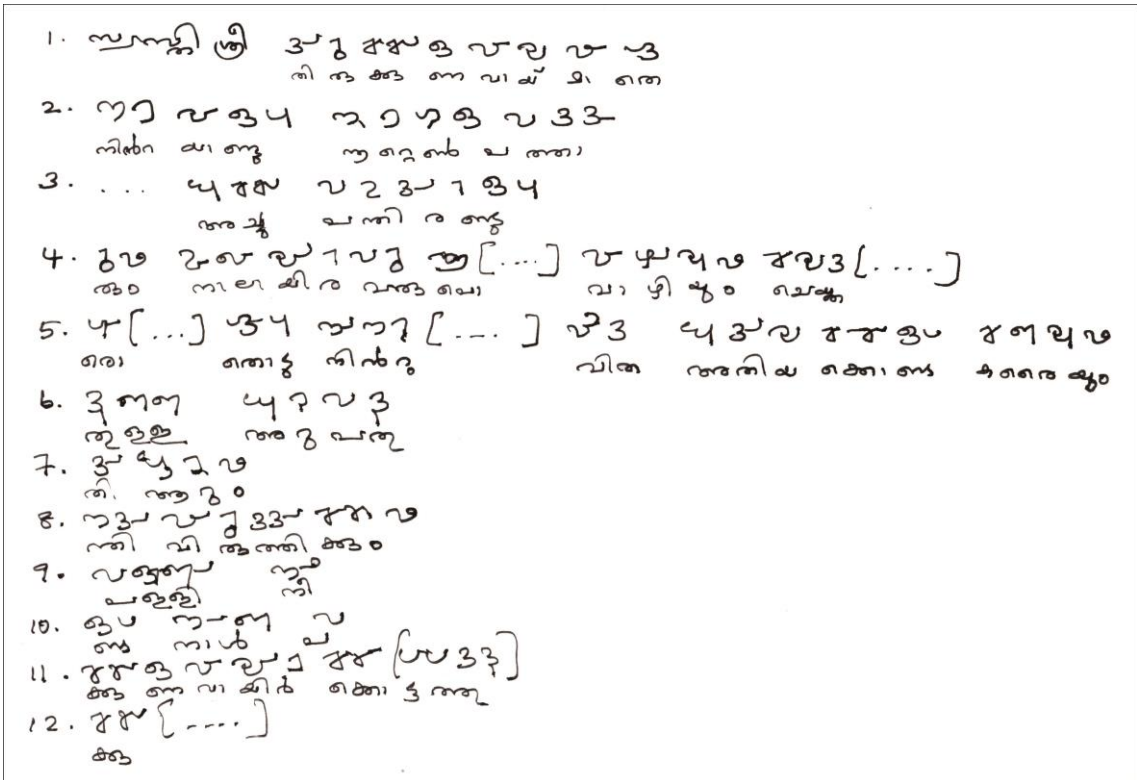


Figure 2: Text of Tirukkunavay Inscription, Vattezhuttu Script

historians believed that Cilappatikaram was written in 2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E. Based on the Putadi Tazhekkavu and Tiruvannur inscriptions; Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan established the date of Cilappatikaram to be the 9<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (Narayanan, 1996). Another

Kerala-born Tamil scholar, Prof. Chellan Govindan focused his research on Kannaki cult in Kerala and Sri Lanka, and established that the date of Cilappatikaram was in 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (Govindan, 2011)

### **Inscription - Text: Transliteration**

1. svasti sri! tirukkuṇavāymātē[varkku cellāṇi]
2. nṛayāntu nūrreṇpattā[rāmāṇṭekketira]
3. māṇtu accu pantiraṇtu [..... mūttā]
4. rum nālāyiravaru po[tuvāḷum ..... ]
5. ro [ ..... ] toṭuninra [.....] vāḷiyumceyta [.....]
6. ti [ .....] avirotā [ttā lceyta kaccamāvita] atiyakoṇṭa karaiy[um ...]
7. tuḷlaarupatu [.....]
8. paḷḷini [.....]
9. ṇṭa [ ....] tukku [.....]
10. kkuṇavāyirkkoṭṭattu
11. kku [.....]
12. [.....]

### **Translation**

In the 186<sup>th</sup> year of the installation of the temple of Trikkanamatilakam, this inscription was written, twelve *achu* a coin, the temple authorities like Muttar, Nalayiravar, Poduval, .... unanimously taken the decision, the land mentioned here for forty paras .... the palli (religious centre of the Jains), (of) Kunavayirkottam ....

### **Conclusion**

This demonstrates that the year of the installation of the temple. Putadi-Tazhekkavu inscription was written in the 156<sup>th</sup> year of the installation of the Trikkanamatilakam temple; but this inscription was written thirty years after the Putadi inscription. The term *Kunavayirkottam* in mentioned in here. *Ayiravar*, a trade guild mentioned in the Alathur-Godapuram inscription is also mentioned here. Both stones are fragmentary. The significance of this inscription is that it adds one more to the list of Ceras of Makotai inscriptions.

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