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Multilingualism in Indian Inscriptions: With Special Reference to Inscriptions of the Tamil Area

Emmanuel Francis

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Linguistic and Textual Aspects of Multilingualism
in South India and Sri Lanka

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in South India and Sri Lanka**

Edited by

Giovanni Ciotti and Erin McCann

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Multilingualism in Indian Inscriptions with Special Reference to Inscriptions of the Tamil Area

Emmanuel Francis

From its beginning, although at the margins in the very early period, Indian epigraphy evinces examples of multilingualism. Given the sheer amount of Indian inscriptions and the variety of languages that have served as epigraphical media in the area considered, it is beyond the grasp of any scholar to give an exhaustive account for such phenomena. In the present contribution, I will try to explore a variety of avenues for research. Being specialised in the epigraphy (in Sanskrit and Tamil) of present-day Tamil Nadu, I will only touch from a distance issues of multilingualism in the vast field of Indian epigraphy. I will thus, relying on earlier scholarship, offer only a basic introduction about certain corpora, present sometimes illustrative rather than representative examples—and even curiosities, which I will be sometimes at pain to account for—side by side with more detailed expositions for the Tamil case, even though for post-Cōla inscriptions, I will be able to propose only exploratory forays.

Research on the topic has long been scanty. The pioneers in the field of epigraphy have little to say about multilingualism in their general introductions on Indian epigraphy (Fleet 1907), except in passing (Sircar 1965). Salomon devotes a short paragraph to bilingual and multilingual inscriptions,¹ but often refers to such inscriptions elsewhere (see entry “bilingual inscriptions” in his index). In recent scholarship, it is impossible not to refer to the work of Sheldon Pollock and particularly his *Language of the Gods in the World of Men* published in 2006, which I will discuss below. Other recent path-breaking contributions, also much referred to below, are those by Leslie Orr on the interaction of Tamil and Sanskrit and on the

¹ Salomon (1998: §3.6, p. 109).

words for worship in the medieval Tamil area (2009; 2013) and by Timothy Lubin on legal diglossia in South and Southeast Asia (2013).

I will adopt, as far as possible, a chronological approach starting with Aśokan examples (3rd c. BCE), Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions (2nd c. BCE–4th c. CE) and Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit (1st–4th c. CE). I will then, for the period starting from the 5th century CE, focus on the Tamil area, with occasional references to other regions. I will successively examine loanwords, bilingual inscriptions, multilingual eulogies, Maṇippiravāḷam inscriptions and, finally, trilingual and quadrilingual inscriptions. A constant preoccupation will be to assess the reasons for the mixing of languages in inscriptions in various contexts and periods, exploring bilingualism (strict and non-strict²), and the question of linguistic division of labour (as proposed by Pollock). I will only scarcely consider late inscriptions. On the other hand, for comparative purpose, I will present examples of non-Indian inscriptions, namely from Southeast Asia. Before discussing specific examples of inscriptions, some preliminary remarks are necessary.

1. Preliminary Remarks

1.1 Variety of Documents and Variables

A statement by Orr about the complexity of the relation of Tamil and Sanskrit in the epigraphical context³ can be extended to the general situation of multilingualism in Indian epigraphy, as we find monolingual, bilingual, even trilingual and quadrilingual inscriptions, besides inscriptions or sections of inscriptions incorporating loanwords in varying

² By strict or true bilingual inscription, I mean an inscription where two texts in different languages are (almost exact) translations one of the other. By non-strict or untrue bilingual inscription, I mean an inscription where two texts in different languages are not translations one of the other, but differ in content.

³ Orr (2009: 97–8).

proportions. Besides language, we have to take into account many other variables such as script, support (temple wall, pillar, rock, stele, copper plate), genre (metrical eulogy, notarial prose), and content. It is in fact the entire context of production and use of inscriptions⁴ that is relevant here, as many actors were involved: commissioner(s), composer(s)/redactor(s), scribe(s), engraver(s), reader(s), viewer(s). Furthermore, the status of inscriptions is also relevant (royal vs. non-royal or local, public vs. private records⁵) as well as their purpose and even the function of different sections of a single inscription (eulogy vs. documentary, legalese), i.e. the “wide range of matters” dealt with in inscriptions, “from poetic to pragmatic”.⁶

The research on multilingualism in Indian inscriptions is in its infancy. So we lack diatopic and diachronic quantified data to assess the penetration of one language (Sanskrit for instance) into another one.⁷ A finer-grained analysis would in fact require even more context, taking into account the many variables just pointed out above. What kind of inscription (support, genre, purpose)? Composed for and by whom? We are also in need of dialectal and sociolinguistic studies of the epigraphical data. Some work has been done, for instance, on the dialectology of Tamil inscriptions, but it has remained for the most part unpublished (as academic dissertations). And even the published studies have been subject to criticism.⁸

In the present state of our knowledge and tools, any study of this question cannot but be preliminary. Digital humanities might one day help

⁴ Orr (2009: 110).

⁵ On royal and non-royal inscriptions, see Subbarayalu (2008: 104; 2009: 115), Orr (2009: 98), Francis (2013a: 61ff.); on public and private records, see Kane (1946: 308ff.).

⁶ Orr (2013: 325).

⁷ See however Lustig et al. (2007), Subbarayalu (2009), Lubin (2013), and Orr (2013).

⁸ See Agesthalingom and Shanmugam (1970), Kanapathypillai (2004, in fact the publication of his 1935 PhD), and Velupillai (1972; 1976). See, for instance, Subbarayalu’s (2008) remarks and criticism on Velupillai (1976).

for quantitative studies, but these will always have to be counterbalanced by a qualitative approach.

1.2 Multilingual Corpora and Multilingual Inscriptions

In dealing with multilingualism in inscriptions, several approaches suggest themselves. The issue can be treated within specific corpora, of various sizes. For instance, in the corpus of Aśokan inscriptions (3rd c. BCE), we find monolingual inscriptions in different types of Prakrit,⁹ but also a bilingual Greek/Aramaic inscription and two bilingual Prakrit/Aramaic inscriptions (§2). In the Pallava corpus (4th–9th c. CE), royal inscriptions, whether stone dedications or copper plates, are mostly in Sanskrit, but from the mid-6th century copper plates are generally bilingual Sanskrit/Tamil (#16).¹⁰ As for non-royal Pallava inscriptions, they are generally in the Tamil language, with Sanskrit loanwords in varying proportions.

Multilingualism can also be treated within one single inscription/artefact. On the one hand, we find inscriptions with discrete portions, each one in a different language (succeeding one to another, and even sometimes alternating), which I will call *multilingual inscriptions*, a label that comprises bilingual and even trilingual and quadrilingual inscriptions. On the other hand, there are inscriptions in one language but interspersed more or less heavily with words from another language, i.e. loanwords. I will call such inscriptions *mixed-language inscriptions*.¹¹ As pointed out by Ali,¹²

⁹ Salomon (1998: 136).

¹⁰ Epigraphical examples cited in this contribution are numbered and preceded by the sign #.

¹¹ In fact, most inscriptions could be labelled as such, because the use of loanwords is common practice. We can however make a distinction between inscriptions in which one language is predominant from the point of view of lexis, syntax, flexion, with few loanwords, that might not be felt anymore as such, and inscriptions with a higher proportion of loanwords, some of which, in Tamil Nadu, might be marked by the use of another script.

¹² Ali (2011: 284).

the latter type has to be clearly distinguished from the former where Pollock's linguistic division of labour (§1.7) operates the most clearly. Furthermore, in mixed-language inscriptions, one difficulty is to assess if a loanword is still considered as such, as it can be more or less assimilated by the receiving language (*tatsama* vs. *tadbhava* words). The question is whether the composer/redactor of a record is conscious of the foreign nature of the words he uses. This is particularly the case for inscriptions where one script only is used, which is the general rule in India, except for the Tamil region. It can also happen that in a single multilingual inscription, made of discrete sections in different languages, loanwords appear in each of these sections, as we will see below.

Both types of (multilingual and mixed-language) inscriptions will be dealt with here. But it will sometimes also be necessary to consider together discrete artefacts in different languages, closely related to one another (#24, #43).

1.3 Languages and Scripts

What are the languages involved in Indian multilingual inscriptions? In mixed-language inscriptions we find first Prakrit loanwords (§3). Then, when Sanskrit became an epigraphical medium in the first centuries CE, we also find Sanskrit infiltrating other languages. This happened first in a very specific language known as Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit (§4). Later on, once Sanskrit had replaced Prakrit in inscriptions and other vernacular languages became epigraphical languages, we find Sanskrit loanwords (§5.2ff.) in vernacular (sections of) inscriptions, while the reverse, vernacular loanwords in Sanskrit (sections of) inscriptions, is less common and mostly concerns proper nouns.

In multilingual inscriptions, as pointed out by Salomon, we mostly find "Sanskrit and one or more other languages".¹³ In chronological order, still following Salomon, we find Sanskrit and Prakrit in the 4th-5th century; then,

¹³ Salomon (1998: 109).

from the beginning of the 6th century, Sanskrit and one Dravidian language; furthermore, in “the medieval period, Sanskrit is often combined with one of the Islamic languages, especially Persian, or with one of the NIA languages”, but “we also find non-Sanskrit bilinguals, involving two NIA languages or an NIA and a Dravidian language”. Examples of the different multilingual configurations with basic information about frequency and date—including Southeast Asian records—are found in introductions to Indian epigraphy.¹⁴ To summarise: we find, depending on time and region, mostly Sanskrit bilinguals, with the second language being MIA (Prakrit) or Dravidian (Tamil, Telugu, Kannada) or NIA (Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Gujarati, Hindi) or Sino-Tibetan (e.g. Newari) or Southeast Asian (Khmer, Cam, Javanese) or Persian/Arabic. Less common are bilinguals involving Persian/Arabic and a Dravidian or a NIA language and those involving a Dravidian and a NIA language.¹⁵

Multilingualism, whether in multilingual or mixed-language inscriptions, does not in general imply multigraphism, as most Indian/Indic scripts for regional languages derive from Brāhmī (first used to write Prakrit, then Sanskrit) and are able to represent Sanskrit properly. Monoscript multilingual or mixed-language inscriptions are thus the rule. Even at the beginning of Indian epigraphy, we have the special case of Aśokan multilingual inscriptions from Afghanistan in which Aramaic and Prakrit (Māgadhi) portions are both written in Aramaic script (§2). In that case, it is possible that at such an early period no specific alphabet was yet available in the concerned area for writing down an Indian language. There are other unusual cases, such as (non-strict) bilingual inscriptions involving

¹⁴ See Sircar (1965: 34–5, 53–4, 57) and Salomon (1998: 100–4, 107–8, 150, 154–7, 159). See also Pollock (2006: 115ff.). Note that we also have bilingual coins, Indo-Greek or Sātavāhana (§7) for instance. See Sircar (1965: 308–9) on bilingual Sanskrit/Arabic Muslim coins of the 11th c.

¹⁵ For examples of trilingual/quadrilingual inscriptions, see below §9.

Tamil, but for which one script only has been used. K.G. Krishnan discusses the bilingual Tamil/Kannada Kirugoṭhāra inscription, in which the Tamil *meykkīrtti* (Tamil eulogy) of Rājendracōḷa I is written in Kannada script.¹⁶

1 — Kirugoṭhāra stone slab inscription — 1017 CE — ARMAD 1930, p. 150.

Krishnan mentions also the 13th-century Cintakāmantā copper-plate grant from Karnataka.¹⁷ In this bilingual record, the Sanskrit eulogistic section is followed by a Tamil documentary section (with occasional Sanskrit words), but only Grantha script has been used for both sections and languages, except for occasional Tamil characters for specific Tamil phonemes (*r*, *l*, *ḷ*), as exemplified in the two Tamil words *pērilē* and *kīlakku*.

2 — Cintakāmantā copper-plate grant — 1289 CE — EI 37.32. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

Fig. 1. Processed from facsimile in EI 37.32. *perile*, “in the name (of)” (line 47). A more proper transliteration might be *pērilē*, as in Grantha *e* and *o* represent Sanskrit *e* and *o*, which in this language are long vowels. In Tamil script, until, in the 18th century, when Beschi introduced new signs for *ē* and *ō*, பெரிலே *pērilē* was written பெரிலெ *perile*.

Fig. 2. Processed from facsimile in EI 37.32. *kīlakku*, “to the east (of)” (line 88).

¹⁶ K.G. Krishnan (1972: 240). For examples of Tamil in Kannada and Nāgarī scripts, see Krishnan (1972: 241ff.). For an example of the Tamil *meykkīrtti* of Rājendracōḷa I in Telugu script, see SII 5.41.

¹⁷ Krishnan (1972: 243).

The regional context explains here the use of Kannada or Grantha instead of Tamil script, presumably less commonly used in Karnataka.

As for multiscript multilingual inscriptions, we meet them at an early period quite exclusively in the Tamil area, a region which presents a particularism of its own. From approximately the middle of the 6th century CE, a specific script called Grantha¹⁸ was used for Sanskrit—and thus also often for Sanskrit loanwords in Tamil (sections of) records—while for Tamil we find two different scripts, namely Vaṭṭeḷuttu and Tamil script.¹⁹ It is important to note however that some letters (*n*, *t* and most often also *v* and *y*) are common to both Grantha and Tamil scripts (but not to Vaṭṭeḷuttu) and that a Sanskrit loanword can, in the course of time, be fully naturalised to Tamil (and thus written in Vaṭṭeḷuttu and Tamil scripts), with great variation across time and place. Note also that we occasionally find a word (proper nouns mainly) in one or the other Tamil script in the Sanskrit section of a bilingual inscription and, vice versa, a word in Grantha in the Tamil section of a bilingual inscription.

A crucial issue is whether the choice of Grantha to write down a Sanskrit loanword indicates or not the consciousness of its being a word in a different language. Orr has reservations, as she considers that the use of Grantha in Tamil inscriptions might be “a self-conscious appropriation of Sanskrit—a display of learning or sense of connection with a trans-regional cultural paradigm on the part of the scribe”, but also suggests that the alternative writing forms “were freely interchangeable and not loaded with a significance derived from their Sanskrit or Tamil derivation or appearance”.²⁰ I am however inclined to agree with Lubin, who proposed

¹⁸ I define Grantha along the lines of Bühler (1896: 60) as a script used at an early period in the region approximately corresponding to present-day Tamil Nadu, not to be mistaken with other related scripts (also derived from late Southern Brāhmī) from other regions.

¹⁹ Tamil script is also called Grantha Tamil, e.g. by Lockwood (2008).

²⁰ Orr (2013: 328–9).

“criteria for distinguishing differences of register in ancient South Indian texts” and for identifying degrees of consciousness of borrowing.²¹ These criteria are: (1) the “presence of Indo-Aryan *tatsamas*—loans that retain their original form, and have not been subjected to the modification required to represent the word within Tamil phonological parameters” as opposed to *tadbhavas*, modified forms, “less likely to be perceived as foreign or high-register lexemes on this basis”; (2) the “use of Grantha characters” which “may also provide some clues, at least to the perceptions of the actual writer”; (3) idiomatic usages (see below).

There are indeed, as pointed out by Orr, inconsistencies: writing differently the same word in a single record;²² using Grantha only for one or the other letter of the word. Usually the Sanskrit base is in Grantha and the ending in Tamil script, but there is a great variety of situations. It might also just be that scribes are as incoherent in script choice as they are in other respects. I, however, endorse Lubin’s point that Grantha means “that in general, scribes, though inconsistent, recognized at least part of the Indo-Aryan-derived technical jargon as “foreign”, or at least in need of a special, learned orthography”.²³ Lubin further notes that, “despite the highly unstandardized state of Tamil epigraphic orthography, one never (or almost never?) finds Grantha characters used in non-Indo-Aryan-derived words” and that, as far as he knows, “Grantha is used only for Sanskrit loans” as opposed to “Prakrit *tatsamas* (e.g., *āṇai*, *āṇatti*, *āvaṇam*, *veṭṭi*, etc.)” which are written in Tamil script. In fact, there are some examples of Grantha

²¹ Lubin (2013: 425ff.).

²² See Orr (2013: 328) about *dharmma* and *tarumam* in IP 80: *dharmmamahādeviy[ē*]ṇ* (line 1) vs. *tarumamādeviy[ē*]ṇ* (line 4). Other examples of inconsistencies in the same record are: *mahā* (IR 88, line 48) vs. *mahā* (IR 88, line 57); *tevardāṇam* (IR 88, line 51) vs. *tevatāṇam* (IR 88.63) (compare *devatāṇam* in IP 80); *maṇḍapam*, *maṇḍapam*, *maṇṭapam* (SII 5.762, lines 2–4; see Orr 2013: 350). For similar inconsistencies in a palm-leaf record, see Ciotti and Sathyanarayanan in this volume.

²³ Lubin (2013: 427).

characters used for non-Indo-Aryan words or texts,²⁴ but these do not undermine the general argument of Lubin, as these are very specific examples. In my view, the use of Grantha in a Tamil inscription denotes a consciousness about loanwords comparable to italicisation or quotation marks in modern writing. The naturalisation of a word does not mean however that it is no more felt as a loanword, at least by some people, but this is the sign of its gradual assimilation, a process which was probably slowed down in the Tamil context because of the existence of Grantha. This delay might also explain why the categories of *tatsama* and *tadbhava* are of relatively recent use in the Tamil grammatical tradition and were introduced at a time when, presumably, many words were assimilated and the Grantha script was no longer there to signal a loanword.²⁵

At a later period, there are multiscript multilingual (and mixed-language too?) inscriptions mixing Persian/Arabic and an Indic language or a NIA and a Dravidian language (#20).

Note finally that there are not only lexical borrowings (loanwords), but also morphological borrowings, as in the case of Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit (§4), and idiomatic usages, such as, for instance, the convention found in Prakrit inscriptions of “using the same verb in two forms, the second time with a causative stem, so as to cover both direct and indirect agency in following or breaking the law, and thus to avoid ambiguity and the use of loopholes in subsequent disputes”.²⁶

²⁴ See *kaḷvarakaḷvan* at Centalai (#26), a Tamil word also attested in Tamil script in the same place, and also #36. For a Tamil text almost entirely written in Grantha see #2.

²⁵ As far as I know, the categories *tatsama* and *tadbhava* were for the first time explicitly used in the Tamil grammatical tradition in the 17th-century *Pirayōkavivēkam*, a grammar which interestingly “tries to prove the common origins of Sanskrit and Tamil” (Wilden 2014: 314). On the earlier category *vaṭacol*, see for instance Chevillard (2011: 107 and note 7).

²⁶ Lubin (2013: 427). Compare, for instance, as pointed out by Lubin, Prakrit *pariharitavaṃ parihāpetavva ca* with Sanskrit *pariha[r]ttavya[m] parihārayitevyāñ* [read

Conversely and interestingly, multiscript inscriptions are not always multilingual. We have instances of biscript or digraphic inscriptions,²⁷ where a text is inscribed twice—whether on a single artefact or on two different but complementary locations of the same monument—in two different scripts. Biscript Sanskrit examples (written in a North-Indian alphabet and a local one) are known from South India (Pallava, Western Cāḷukya) and Cambodia,²⁸ all royal. Such inscriptions can be considered as visual claims to universal sovereignty by displaying the command of two distinctive scripts for the same language. I will deal with these biscript monolingual inscriptions on another occasion.²⁹

1.4 Bilingualism and Diglossia

In dealing with multilingual inscriptions, Salomon points out that Sanskrit bilinguals are for the most part not “true” bilinguals, that is, the same text repeated in full in two languages, but rather contain a single text divided on functional grounds between the languages concerned. Typically, the invocatory, genealogical, and concluding portions will be in Sanskrit, while the “functional” portions recording the specific details of the gift, transaction, and the like, will be in the other language.³⁰

Multilingual inscriptions are thus not *per se* bilingual inscriptions *stricto sensu*, which is the case where in a single inscription we have one text in language A and another in language B that are meant to convey basically the same information, whichever of the two might be considered the translation, paraphrase or gloss of the other. In fact, non-strict bilinguals—i.e. one inscription composed of discrete sections in different languages,

parihārayitavyāñ] ca, “(it) should be exempted and caused to be exempted”, in two Pallava records, the former dated to the 4th c. and the latter to the 5th c.

²⁷ Salomon (1998: 70).

²⁸ See Cox (2010), Estève and Soutif (2011).

²⁹ But see already Francis (2013d).

³⁰ Salomon (1998: 109).

closely related the one to the other, but with different contents and functions—are much more frequent than strict bilinguals, of which Salomon mentions examples.³¹ Another type of strict bilingual or trilingual inscription would be that of several discrete inscriptions to be considered together (#24, #43).

Elaborating on Salomon's statement about non-strict bilinguals, Pollock has theorised the notion of linguistic division of labour as "a relation of superposition of unrelated languages", which he calls hyperglossia,³² otherwise also called extended diglossia. Lubin has aptly summarised the different types of diglossia.³³ Suffice it to repeat here the initial definition by Ferguson:

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation.³⁴

The primary dialect is usually referred to as L (for low) and the highly codified superposed variety as H (for high). This is functional diglossia. Fishman (1967) has extended the notion so as to take into account other multilingual situations where the H and L varieties are not genetically

³¹ Salomon (1998): the Bāripadā Museum Oriya/Hindi inscription (p. 101, 109), the Dantewārā Sanskrit/Hindi inscription (p. 102 and n. 75), the Bhubaneswar Tamil/Oriya inscription (p. 101, 109) or "a rare true bilingual from Cambodia" (150, n. 9; see Cœdès 1918: 9), to which can be added the Aśokan bilinguals (see §2).

³² Pollock (2006: 118).

³³ Lubin (2013: 413–4). See also Jaspers (2017).

³⁴ Ferguson (1959: 336).

related. In other words, H and L can be two different dialects, varieties, registers of one language (simply diglossia or intralanguage diglossia), or two different languages (extended diglossia or interlanguage diglossia). In extended diglossia, Sanskrit can thus be considered as a register of Tamil, at least for a certain bilingual speech community, or rather a textual community in the case of epigraphical records. That is, Sanskrit is at the same time a sociolect (a social dialect) and an acrolect (a high register or variety of speech suitable in formal contexts).³⁵

Lubin has further convincingly argued for the existence, besides the extended diglossia in which Sanskrit is “used as an acrolect, either alone or in bilingual records, where it has primarily expressive or ceremonial functions”, of a another form of functional extended diglossia in India and Southeast Asia: legal diglossia, where we find “the use of a highly Sanskritized, formal and formulaic register of the local vernaculars”.³⁶ This Sanskritised legalese is found in mixed-language inscriptions, but also in multilingual inscriptions, i.e. in the vernacular section of a non-strict Sanskrit bilingual inscription. Legal diglossia implies that Sanskrit loanwords are not just acrolects (representing a higher variety of speech) or sociolects, but words used for their precision and reference to well-established formal categories. As Lubin puts it, the “use of the Indo-Aryan terms is not just for show; they are used because the legal categories and concepts being appealed to are most unambiguously expressible in those terms”.³⁷ Lubin adds that

³⁵ See Chevillard in this volume.

³⁶ Lubin (2013: 411). This leads Lubin (2013: 413) to propose another register of language, viz. L1a = “an artificial version of L1 infused with many elements of a learned language in the form of loan-words and foreign phrases” or “a mixed dialect for legal business” (NB: Lubin’s L1 is the “language of everyday life”, i.e. L; L2 is the “learned language deemed appropriate to certain uses and contexts”, i.e. H).

³⁷ Lubin (2013: 445ff.). There are, of course, exceptions, depending on time, place and

during the centuries when Brahmanically influenced legal systems were in full force in Tamil Nadu, Cambodia, and Indonesia (at least in certain social spheres), a specifically “legal” diglossia seems to have operated, whereby indigenous legal norms were rearticulated under the influence of a prestigious, transregionally recognized (viz. “global”), document-producing legal regime that was simultaneously adapted to local purposes.³⁸

He further notes, about the Tamil examples discussed, that

Indo-Aryan lexical items got introduced in the first place to denote technical features of the imported legal framework (official legal functions, śāstrically defined obligations and immunities, or the institutional elements of Brahmanical religion), while the vernacular supplied much of the local legal or administrative terms (e.g., divisions of land and financial arrangements).³⁹

This distinction between ceremonial diglossia and legal diglossia, as well as other distinctions which partly overlap it (eulogy vs. not eulogy, copper vs. stone inscriptions), are important and must be taken into account for appreciating Pollock’s linguistic division of labour.

Such a neat conceptual terminology, however, must not mask the complexity and variety of the instances of (strict and non-strict) bilingual inscriptions, given, as underlined above, the multiplicity of actors involved in the production of an inscription and the little we know about their relationships and roles in producing the epigraphical texts. A final remark is that these concepts were in the first place elaborated by modern linguistics and applied to speech communities, whereas we deal here with literate or textual communities.

context, in the sense that Sanskrit Śāstric terminology is not always resorted to.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

1.5 Status of Epigraphical Languages

In the case of Tamil for instance, Subbarayalu makes the distinction between spoken Tamil, literary Tamil, and epigraphical Tamil.⁴⁰ The latter is found in what “may be considered as legal documents written by specialist writers, following specific conventions” and evincing specific “structure, phraseology, idiomatic uses, etc., producing different kinds of discourse”. Subbarayalu also points out that epigraphical Tamil is a non-literary language (except for eulogies, such as *meykkīrttis*), but also not colloquial or slang, describing it as a “dynamic language peculiar to documents”.⁴¹ In any case, epigraphical Tamil, especially in the operative section of bilingual copper-plate grants, is of a specific genre, “notarial” as Brocquet characterised it.⁴² Subbarayalu also partially endorses Veluppillai’s hypothesis of a separate Brahmin dialect, marked by the “occurrence of unassimilated Sanskrit words”, that is written down in Grantha, but he is cautious too as he is aware that such words “are not confined simply to Brahmin-related documents, but are found in all sorts of inscriptions. Either we have to concede that the Brahmin dialect was quite widespread or we have to offer a different interpretation of this phenomenon”.⁴³ Subbarayalu suggests that this “may be due to the fact that Sanskrit was mostly preferred for temple-related rituals”.⁴⁴ He later (2009) more decidedly endorses this notion of a language of “Brahmin” inscriptions (as he labelled them), prone to borrow Sanskrit words (and, I add, to use Grantha). However, Orr’s study of words of worship (2013) demonstrates that the situation is more complicated, since the Brahmins were probably not the composers of these inscriptions. Subbarayalu also

⁴⁰ Subbarayalu (2008: 104).

⁴¹ Subbarayalu (2009: 115).

⁴² Brocquet (1997: 227).

⁴³ Subbarayalu (2008: 102–3).

⁴⁴ Subbarayalu (2008: 103n6).

argues that since “the bulk of the inscriptions were non-royal and produced in local centers, the language of these inscriptions may be taken to reflect the nature of the vernacular language of the day”.⁴⁵ Legalese, however, is also found in non-royal inscriptions, but surely one can contrast the language (and script usage) of hero-stones—reflecting villagers’ life, with their very few Sanskrit loanwords—with that of “official” or legalese records.

In other words, the language of inscriptions might be classified into sociolects, subcategorised as acrolects, mesolects, and basilects. Moreover, language variation should not only be considered from the point of view of regional or social variation, but also in terms of genres/types of document or functions of different sections of a single record. In the end, the question is to explain why Sanskrit loanwords were inserted and why this happened in varying proportion. How far is it related to the commissioner (Brahmin, king, etc.) and the composer (creative village accountants according to Orr; “lawyers” according to Lubin’s perspective)? How important is the prestige of Sanskrit or its technical precision (as “śāstric usage”) in reference to a formal body of legal terms?⁴⁶ It should be remembered that, even when the linguistic division of labour operates, the vernacular is somehow erudite. The diglossia observable in inscriptions, all the more so when Sanskrit is involved, is the practice of a rather narrow literate elite, which might have in due time influenced the language at large, witness the amount of Sanskrit loanwords in Tamil, even today after the Tamil purist movement.

At this point, before we examine examples of inscriptions, it is necessary to deal with the work of Pollock, his theories about the political and literary history of India, and the concepts he has introduced—namely, the Sanskrit cosmopolis, the linguistic division of labour and the process of vernacularisation—because they will be constantly in the background of the following discussion.

⁴⁵ Subbarayalu (2009: 115).

⁴⁶ Lubin (2013; 2015).

1.6 Pollock's Sanskrit Cosmopolis

Pollock (2006) has traced the emergence of Sanskrit as a cosmopolitan, public, and expressive language in the first millennium CE, in India and beyond, and its gradual replacement by vernacular languages in the second millennium. At the risk of simplification, there are two main arguments in Pollock's theory. Firstly, Sanskrit became the cosmopolitan language for its aesthetic power rather than for its religious connotation. Secondly, Sanskrit served as the paradigm for the literarisation of the vernacular languages.

Pollock emphasises the aesthetic power of Sanskrit and argues that it became a medium of public expression not so much because it was a *lingua franca* needed for the inter-comprehension between people speaking different vernaculars, nor because it was the language of a Brahmanism revived in the face of the success of Buddhism, but because Sanskrit was the only language fit for "the literary work of interpreting and supplementing reality and revealing it in its truth",⁴⁷ for describing power and its fame in aesthetic terms, and for representing reality in an expressive, literary mode. Sanskrit had such qualities less because of its status and prestige in Indian culture through its association with Brahmanical culture than because it was a stable language, endowed with a grammar, and had become available through its secularisation, notably at first by foreign dynasties. Pollock strongly emphasises the connection between Sanskrit, power, court, and culture, as *kāvya* (literature) developed simultaneously in the court and in the royal epigraphical *kāvya*. Pollock minimises points emphasised in earlier scholarship and criticises earlier explanations of the phenomenon. He downplays the Brahmanical impact, disconnecting the adoption of Sanskrit from religious developments, while he rejects Weberian legitimation theory.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Pollock (2006: 122).

⁴⁸ Pollock (2006: 511ff.).

I have in a previous publication (Francis 2013b) criticised this separation of Sanskrit from Brahmanism. Even secularised, Sanskrit continued to be associated with Brahmins, who remained a reference in the Indian world.⁴⁹ The choice of the language of the gods (celestial and terrestrial, i.e. the Brahmins) can be understood as motivated by the need to be located in a Brahmanical idiom, to be in conversation with Brahmin ideology and even to oppose it in its own linguistic realm. The Pallava kings of South India, for instance, articulated in their *praśastis* a counter-ideology to Brahmanism, which subordinates the king to his *purohita*.⁵⁰ In other words, Sanskrit was also appealing because royal panegyrics could be addressed to Brahmins in an ideological rivalry. The same reason might explain the adoption of Sanskrit by Buddhist authors: to fight Brahmanism in its own language, by appropriating the Brahmanical idiom (see #13). To put it simply, Pollock has added an important element to explain the success of Sanskrit—its aesthetic dimension—, but this does not, in my view, erase all other previous considerations.⁵¹

1.7 Pollock's Linguistic Division of Labour

Pollock's aesthetic approach to Sanskrit leads him to posit a linguistic division of labour between Sanskrit, the translocal language of expressive and eulogistic function, which supplements reality, and the vernacular language of the business or documentary section, which provides the specifics of the transaction recorded (limits of the donated land, list of donees, list of exemptions granted, etc.). Pollock provides an impressive tableau illustrating this division of labour in the epigraphy of South and Southeast Asia, but in doing so masks a more complex reality. If diglossic inscriptional evidence is abundant in Cambodia, it is virtually non-existent

⁴⁹ See also Bronkhorst (2010; 2011: 142ff.; 2012).

⁵⁰ Francis (2011; 2017).

⁵¹ See Chevillard in this volume.

in Indonesia.⁵² Another issue is the status of Persian, Arabic, and Pāli in bilinguals.⁵³ Moreover, we have to take into account a variety of supports (stone and copper plate inscriptions), differences across time and regions concerning the emergence of the vernacular as epigraphical language and the availability of bilinguals. There are also perplexing examples such as the Vārāṇasī copper plate inscription of Karṇa (1042 CE),⁵⁴ in which, “a Prakrit verse is ... included in an ordinary Sanskrit inscription”.⁵⁵

The notion that there is a neat and strict division of labour between Sanskrit and the vernacular as posited by Pollock has been criticised, for instance, by Daud Ali, who pointed out that

North Indian epigraphy from Gupta times is entirely in Sanskrit, and in south India, it is only some of the dynasties of the early medieval Deccan, along with the Pallavas, that divide their inscriptions between Sanskrit and local languages in this way. Inscriptions of such powerful dynasties as the Pāṇḍyas and Cōḷas, again, do not conform in any clear way to Pollock’s model.⁵⁶

The North Indian exception might partly be explained by the relatedness of Sanskrit with the MIA languages, which may have delayed, as compared with South India, the literisation and literarisation of the North Indian vernaculars. But the fact is that in North India Sanskrit longer remained the epigraphical medium par excellence, after it replaced Prakrit. The division of labour is more at play in a non-Indo-Aryan linguistic context and is especially relevant in Dravidian South India and in Cambodia. But, as

⁵² Salomon (1998: 159). In India, Marathi bilinguals are, for instance, more common than Oriya bilinguals (Salomon 1998: 101).

⁵³ In Southeast Asia we find, at a later date, bilinguals with Pāli instead of Sanskrit and “an exceptionally important late (A.D. 1476) bilingual (Pāli and Talain [Mon])” (Salomon 1998: 154–5).

⁵⁴ SI, vol. 2, p. 337–48.

⁵⁵ Salomon (1998: 80).

⁵⁶ Ali (2011: 238 and n13).

pointed out by Ali (2011), there remain major exceptions, particularly Indonesia, where bilingual records are unusual and where we shift almost directly from early 5th-century monolingual Sanskrit inscriptions in Java and Borneo to 7th-century Śrīvijaya inscriptions, which are non-Sanskrit bilinguals (Old Malay infused with Sanskrit loanwords and another unidentified language).

Orr has also criticised Pollock, pointing out that “often there is a blurring of the boundary that is supposed to mark the division of labour between” Tamil and Sanskrit.⁵⁷ She points out examples, in non-strict bilingual copper plates, where Sanskrit is also documentary,⁵⁸ a task it used to do, she admits, before Tamil became an epigraphical medium. It is true that we sometimes find, in the Sanskrit section of bilingual plates, details of documentary type (about the object of gift, temple service, the donee) not mentioned in the Tamil section. I have pointed out a kind of reverse situation,⁵⁹ i.e. the fact that the Tamil sections of bilingual plates are not just documentary or technical, but have an expressive tenor as far as they represent the king “in action”, when his order reaches the locality, is revered, and executed by the villagers (see #17.2). But one might in fact qualify the documentary task performed by Sanskrit. The Sanskrit section might be documentary as far as the details recorded concern the donee(s), the Tamil section as far as they concern the villagers, i.e. the tax-payers, who will have to redirect resources towards the grantee(s). Orr also points out early examples of expressive Tamil overlooked by Pollock,⁶⁰ but I see them more as undermining Pollock’s theory of vernacularisation than that of the division of labour, as they are monolingual Tamil inscriptions.

⁵⁷ Orr (2009: 100).

⁵⁸ See Orr (2009: 102n12; 2013: 329). See also Salomon (1998: 156) for Cambodia.

⁵⁹ Francis (2013a: 135).

⁶⁰ Orr (2009: 101 and n9).

Both Ali⁶¹ and Orr⁶² point out the copper plates of the early Pāṇḍyas and Cōḷas as a major objection to Pollock's theory of division of labour. The first are bilingual but with Sanskrit and Tamil both doing the work of praise and Tamil alone documentary (§7.2). The relevance of these as counter-examples should not be overstated. The Pāṇḍya copper-plate grants belong to a time when vernacularisation is already at play or, if one prefers, when Tamil, which was already a literary language, had become a medium for epigraphical eulogy. We are thus out of Pollock's Sanskrit cosmopolis, for which the division of labour best applies. Furthermore, we in fact deal here with rare instances where Pollock's vernacularisation theory works in Tamil Nadu. As for the royal Cōḷa copper plate grants (§7.3), they differ from the early Pāṇḍya ones as they follow the model of the bilingual Pallava precedents, except that a *meṅkīrtti* is often found in the Tamil section (but embedded, see below). As for the monolingual Tamil Cōḷa copper plate grants, they are not, in my view, royal. In content, they look like many Tamil stone records, not issued by the king or his chancellery, and, like them, some have a *meṅkīrtti* as preamble.

It is thus important to make the distinction between different types of inscriptions. The division of labour applies for many early bilingual copper plates (mainly from South India), which constitute a very specific type of document, in the sense that they are official documents, title-deeds, issued by royal chancelleries, and contain a royal eulogy. Consideration of the content (eulogistic or not) and the type of commissioning (royal or not) is therefore crucial. The documentary function is mostly reserved for the vernacular and sometimes complemented in the Sanskrit eulogy, where some information may be found that is absent from the vernacular section, but addressed to another audience. In the case of stone inscriptions from Tamil Nadu one may say that the situation grows even more complex with

⁶¹ Ali (2011: 283 and n13).

⁶² Orr (2009: 100–1).

the progress of time because they are often non-royal monolingual inscriptions, composed mostly in Tamil and rarely in Sanskrit. Ali, in his criticism of Pollock, focuses on a 7th-century Śrīvijaya inscription—the Sabokingking inscription,⁶³ of which shorter versions are known—and rightly emphasises its specific character, as it is “an explicitly performative or constitutive element for the political realm”, since it is “a sort of ‘oath’” serving “the explicit function of ‘binding’ servants and subordinates to the king”.⁶⁴ Importantly thus, this inscription, although bilingual, is not a eulogy.⁶⁵ For this very reason, it does not exactly parallel Pollock’s corpus of inscriptions evincing division of labour, whereby Sanskrit always bears the eulogistic function.

In such mixed-language inscriptions, which evince a deeper imbrication of languages, the insertion of Sanskrit words is not always explainable in terms of an opposition between eulogistic and documentary, the more so because this occurs in vernacular documentary sections of non-strict bilingual inscriptions or in monolingual inscriptions. One way of keeping a diglossic approach is via legal diglossia as proposed by Lubin (2013), with the overarching presence of Sanskrit Dharmaśāstric tradition. But this mixing occurs in non-legal too, as investigated by Orr (2013) about words of worship. Subbarayalu (§1.5) stresses the possible Brahmin impact on temple inscriptions. However, as argued by Orr,⁶⁶ the main agency for drafting these inscriptions are village accountants (*kaṇakku*), who sometimes possibly worked in close association with their Brahmin commissioner(s), but are nevertheless responsible for creating an epigraphical language, not entirely continuous with that of temple priests, presumably represented in the Āgamas. In the case of mixing in non-

⁶³ De Casparis (1956: 15–46).

⁶⁴ Ali (2011: 290).

⁶⁵ For a similar example of oath from Cambodia, in Khmer, also rife with Sanskrit loanwords, see K. 292 of 1011 CE (Cœdès 1951: 205–16).

⁶⁶ Orr (2013: 344).

legalese, it is less obvious that one can invoke Sanskrit as an overarching model. As underlined by Ali, we find there “a deep entanglement of Sanskritized ‘cosmopolitan’ elements with local usage” and while “Sanskrit words denoted some of the most quotidian elements of everyday administrative and material culture (belying any claim for a neat linguistic division of labour), some of the most exalted and highly ‘symbolic’ terminology was expressed in indigenous vocabulary”.⁶⁷

1.8 Pollock’s Theory of Vernacularisation

According to Pollock, from the end of the first millennium CE, the Sanskrit cosmopolis was gradually replaced by cosmopolitan vernacular polities, a process he calls vernacularisation with the accession of vernacular languages to the status of literary languages, by imitation of the superordinate Sanskrit literary tradition. For his demonstration Pollock focuses on the example of Kannada literature and convincingly points out, for instance, the production of vernacular versions of Sanskrit epic texts or the adoption of Sanskrit metres, providing as illustrations poetic pieces similar to some found elsewhere in this volume.⁶⁸ He notably discusses an early Pāṇḍya example from Tamil Nadu (#34), but, as we will see below (§7.2), such epigraphical pieces are exceptions and short-lived experiments rather than illustrative examples of what was at play in Tamil Nadu. In fact, as I have argued elsewhere (Francis 2013b), Tamil Nadu offers a strong counter-example to Pollock’s theory of vernacularisation, up to the point that one may argue that there was no vernacularisation in Tamil Nadu, in Pollockian terms at least, with the exception of these early Pāṇḍya inscriptions. One weakness of Pollock’s demonstration is that he almost completely ignores this Tamil side of the picture, underplaying the importance of Tamil Caṅkam poetry (early centuries of the first millennium) and thus overlooking a model for expressive Tamil, much more

⁶⁷ Ali (2011: 289).

⁶⁸ See Goren Arzony and Henry in this volume.

pregnant, I believe, than the Sanskrit literary tradition. Pollock is also unaware of early instances of Tamil used as public expressive medium and generalises from the specific cases of early Pāṇḍya inscriptions, which he puts, unduly, on a par with the development of Tamil *meykkīrtti*.⁶⁹

With this assessment of Pollock's stimulating theories end these long preliminary remarks. Let us look now at specific inscriptions.

2. Aśokan Inscriptions (3rd century BCE)

The corpus of Aśokan inscriptions—which is not a royal corpus *stricto sensu* in the sense that the inscriptions were not directly issued by Aśoka or a central chancellery, but that the royal proclamations (in 1st person) were dispatched, probably on palm-leaf, in the provinces and locally produced—is an example of a multilingual corpus with three different languages (Prakrit of three types, Greek, Aramaic) in four different scripts (Brāhmī, Kharoṣṭhī, Aramaic, Greek).⁷⁰ In this multilingual corpus we find bilingual inscriptions, all in present-day Afghanistan, as shown in table 1.⁷¹

The Kandahār I inscription is a rock inscription consisting of two successive parts: a Greek text in Greek script followed by an Aramaic text in Aramaic script. The two other examples of bilingual Aśokan inscriptions are on stone fragments: the Kandahār III and Pūl-I Darūnta inscriptions. The former consists, according to Falk, of “seven lines of Aśokan Māgadhī in Aramaic transliteration with Aramaic translation” and its text “is close to the 7th pillar edict as found on the Delhi-Toprā pillar”.⁷² The Pūl-I Darūnta text, according to Falk, “seems to be a mixture of phrases from Rock and

⁶⁹ Pollock (2006: 323).

⁷⁰ On Aśokan inscriptions, see Falk (2006).

⁷¹ For a complete bibliography and illustrations, see Falk (2006: 242, 246, 251) and also Rougemont (2012: 167) for the Greek text.

⁷² Falk (2006: 246).

Pillar edicts”.⁷³ Salomon describes both as consisting “of phrase-by-phrase renderings of the original Prakrit texts transliterated into Aramaic script and accompanied by glosses in the Aramaic language” and concludes that “these inscriptions thus constitute, in effect, bilingual Prakrit and Aramaic documents”.⁷⁴ Their case is thus different from that of the Kandahār I inscription as only one script (Aramaic) is used for a bilingual text, where each Prakrit sentence is followed by its paraphrase in Aramaic.⁷⁵ Fussman underlines that Kandahār I is not a translation of a lost Indian (i.e. Prakrit) inscription nor presented as a direct royal proclamation of Aśoka, but was probably composed directly in Greek and Aramaic by summarising the first eight Rock Edicts “pour l’édification des populations locales” (for the instruction of local people).⁷⁶ We thus basically have three strict bilinguals: two monoscript Prakrit/Aramaic (Pūl-I Darūnta, Kandahār III) and one biscript Greek/Aramaic (Kandahār I), which provides more or less the same information in both languages.

	Language	Script
Kandahār I 10 th RY, 22 lines	Greek (14 lines)	Greek
	Aramaic (8 lines)	Aramaic
Kandahār III No RY, 7 lines	Aramaic	Aramaic
	Prakrit	
Pūl-I Darūnta No RY, 8 lines	Aramaic	Aramaic
	Prakrit	

Table 1: Bilingual Aśokan Inscriptions, Afghanistan (3rd century BCE)

⁷³ Falk (2006: 251).

⁷⁴ Salomon (1998: 152–3).

⁷⁵ See Caillat (1966) on the formula “SHYTY”, which marks the end of Prakrit and the beginning of its paraphrase in Aramaic.

⁷⁶ Fussman (1974: 383).

Multilingualism was necessary because in this province of Aśoka's "empire" Middle Indo-Aryan languages were not historically the official languages. As noted by Schlumberger, the Kandahār I inscription is not in the local Iranian language, but in the administrative languages (Greek and Aramaic) of the two great states to which the region of Kandahār previously belonged, presumably addressing an audience of officials accustomed to these languages.⁷⁷ As elsewhere in the northwest of Aśoka's realm, a form of Prakrit was introduced as an official language in monolingual inscriptions (in Kharoṣṭhī), but also, maybe at an earlier stage, in Aramaic script, along with a translation/paraphrase in Aramaic, in order to inform the entire audience aimed at.⁷⁸

3. Mixed-Language inscriptions I: Tamil-Brāhmī Inscriptions (2nd c. BCE–4th c. CE)

Leaving these rather exceptional Aśokan examples of bilingual inscriptions and moving further in time, let us examine now the earliest inscriptions in Tamil, i.e. Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions, which contain Prakrit loanwords. These inscriptions are written in a script adapted from the northern Brāhmī script in order to write Tamil.⁷⁹

Mahadevan has analysed the language of his corpus of 96 Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions (ca. 2nd c. BCE–4th c. CE),⁸⁰ providing figures⁸¹ and discussing the

⁷⁷ Schlumberger (1958: 4).

⁷⁸ Note also that we find in Bactria, in the two centuries BCE, bilingual coins (Greek in Greek script, Prakrit in Kharoṣṭhī) of Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian kings.

⁷⁹ See Mahadevan (2014: 210) and Kothandaraman (2006) *contra* Kasinathan (2004). See also Hanlon (2018), especially for criticism of the imposition of a North Indian nature on the Brāhmī script.

⁸⁰ Mahadevan (2014: 137–50).

⁸¹ See Mahadevan's table 3.2 (2014: 140): Dravidian stems (72.82 %), Indo-Aryan stems (24.55 %), doubtful (3.63 %).

types of Indo-Aryan loanwords:⁸² all are nouns and “[a]part from personal names, the borrowed vocabulary comprises mostly religious ... terms”, such as *atiṭṭāṇam* (Prakrit *adhīṭṭhāna*), “permanent fixed abode”, especially “stone beds”, *tāṇam* (Prakrit *dāna*), “religious gift”, *dha(m)mam* (Prakrit *dhamma*), “religious endowment”, or “cultural terms”, i.e. “mostly titles and names of some professions”, such as *kaṇaka* (Prakrit *gaṇaka*), “accountant”, as well as miscellaneous terms, such as *kaṭikai* (cf. Sanskrit *ghaṭikā*), “institution of higher learning”. Mahadevan notes that the loanwords in Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions are “invariably from Prakrit, while those in the Early Vaṭṭeḷuttu inscriptions (ca. 5th–6th century C.E.) are from Sanskrit or survival of borrowings from Prakrit in the earlier age”.⁸³ Mahadevan associates this corpus with Jainism,⁸⁴ criticising the association with Buddhism or Ājīvikas assumed in earlier scholarship.⁸⁵ Whatever the religious obedience of those responsible for these inscriptions, it was—like the script used—North Indian in origin. No wonder thus that, with this influence of North-Indian culture, technical terms were imported.⁸⁶

4. Mixed-Language inscriptions II: Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit (1st–4th c. CE)

In most of India, for several centuries, epigraphy was restricted to Prakrit (MIA), with the exception of the (rather small) Tamil-Brāhmī corpus. In the

⁸² Mahadevan (2014: 146–7).

⁸³ Mahadevan (2014: 150). For the Early Vaṭṭeḷuttu inscriptions (21 inscriptions), see Mahadevan (2003: 449ff.) On the earliest Indo-Aryan inscriptions found in the Tamil area, see Mahadevan (2009), where some items discussed are not of unquestionable authenticity. It is also uncertain whether the artefacts were inscribed in the Tamil country or imported.

⁸⁴ Mahadevan (2014: 164ff.).

⁸⁵ Mahadevan (2014: 162–3).

⁸⁶ See Mahadevan (2014: 164ff.) on titles of monks and nuns.

first four centuries of the common era, inscriptions mixing Prakrit and Sanskrit appear.⁸⁷ Theo Damsteegt, inspired by Edgerton’s Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (henceforth BHS), coined the term Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit (henceforth EHS) to designate them in his eponymous book (1978). This EHS label applies to inscriptions mostly found in northern India (especially in and around Mathurā), as well as in central India, and sometimes also in southern India.⁸⁸ These inscriptions are neither fully Sanskrit, nor fully Prakrit. Their language has been described by epigraphists as a “mixed dialect”, “Sanskrit influenced by Prakrit”, or “Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit”. EHS can be characterised, according to Salomon, as “more or less Sanskritic in orthography but Prakritic in morphology and syntax” and is “by no means a standardised or unified language”, since it is in fact unpredictable, because the corpus displays “various grades or degrees of hybridism”.⁸⁹ Damsteegt makes the distinction between two types of inscriptions: those basically in MIA, but with Sanskrit features, and those basically in Sanskrit, but with MIA features.⁹⁰ According to Salomon the Kaṅkāli Ṭīlā (Mathurā) *torāṇa* inscription is a typical EHS text.

3 — Kaṅkāli Ṭīlā *torāṇa* inscription — 2nd c. CE — Lüders (1961: §20); Damsteegt (1978: 16, 20, 30, 38, 44–45, 61–62, 71, 98, 102, 105, 113, *ad* inscription M 20). Text and translation after Salomon (1998: 81). Brāhmī script.

⁸⁷ My main source here is Salomon (1998: 81ff.), which I summarise and quote extensively.

⁸⁸ See Damsteegt’s lists (1978): 16 inscriptions in MIA or Sanskrit (pp. 144–9), 3 inscriptions in EHS, MIA or Sanskrit, with doubt (pp. 149–50), 51 inscriptions in EHS (pp. 150–6).

⁸⁹ Salomon (1998: 81–2).

⁹⁰ Damsteegt (1978: 143).

bhadatajayasenasya aṃtevēsiniye dhāmaghoṣāye dān[o] pāsādo, “The temple (is) the gift of Dhāmaghoṣā (Dharmaghoṣā), the female disciple of the venerable Jayasena”.

For Salomon,

[n]otable here, among other characteristic features, is the juxtaposition of the Sanskrit genitive masculine ending *-sya* with the Prakrit feminines in *-āye* and *-īye*; the semi-Sanskritized stem of the proper name *dharmaghoṣā-* (according to Lüders’ interpretation) contrasting with the un-Sanskritized stem of *pāsādo* (Skt. *prāsāda-*); and the spellings, influenced by MIA orthography, of *bhadata-* (for *bhadanta*) and *aṃtevēsiniye* (for *aṃte-*).⁹¹

Another example is the Sārṇāth umbrella shaft inscription dated to the 3rd year of Kaniṣka,⁹² that is 130 CE, according to the most recent dating of Kaniṣka’s reign, where we find, for instance, line 3, *bhikṣusya balasya*, “of the Monk Bala”, as opposed to Sanskrit *bhikṣoḥ*, MIA *bhikkhus(s)a* and *bala(s)sa*. According to Salomon, a “clear example of Sanskritization in Kharoṣṭhī/Gāndhārī is the Sui Vihār copper plate inscription (CII 2.1, 138–41), whose orthography is strongly Sanskritized, e.g., using *-sya* (rather than *-sa*) for the genitive singular ending”.⁹³

One must note the contrast between the label “Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit”, coined by Edgerton to describe texts he considered as “incomplete or imperfect translations into Sanskrit of texts originally written in MIA dialects”,⁹⁴ and the label “Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit”. From one to the other the religious connotation has disappeared. Indeed, we find EHS in Brahmanical and Jaina contexts. It is just that most

⁹¹ Salomon (1998: 81). On epigraphical MIA, see also Ollett (2017).

⁹² See: EI 8.17.III; SI, Vol. 1: 136–7; Damsteegt (1978: 178ff.); Salomon (1998: 270ff.).

⁹³ Salomon (1998: 49n146).

⁹⁴ Salomon (1998: 83).

inscriptions at that time were Buddhist.⁹⁵ EHS is thus a transversal, trans-sectarian phenomenon. According to Salomon, what these inscriptions also prove is that such mixed languages (EHS, but also BHS) are not simply literary artefacts, in contrast to Edgerton's opinion concerning BHS.⁹⁶ As we have examples of inscriptions where EHS goes along with proper Sanskrit (§6.1), EHS does not seem to be just an attempt by people unfamiliar with the Sanskrit language.⁹⁷ When good Sanskrit was needed it was available. According to Norman, the donor/commissioner spoke in Prakrit and the scribe translated, according to his competence, into Sanskrit.⁹⁸ But we must note that good Sanskrit is specifically found in performative or expressive sections of inscriptions.

In any case, why choose Sanskrit? Damsteegt identifies two simultaneous factors: the influence of the North-West Kṣatrapas (but this is already questioned by Norman⁹⁹) and the geographical situation of Mathurā in Āryāvarta, a region of Sanskrit and Brahmanical culture.¹⁰⁰ From the fact that this language arose under Kuṣāṇa and Śāka rule, one is tempted to link it to the appeal of Sanskrit for foreign dynasties, in need of legitimation, an appeal which also gave rise to Sanskrit eulogistic epigraphical *kāvya*.¹⁰¹ According to Salomon, EHS attests the growing importance of Sanskrit as a prestigious and elite language, as it seems that EHS in its historical

⁹⁵ Salomon (1998: 85).

⁹⁶ Salomon (1998: 83).

⁹⁷ See Salomon (1998: 84): "Thus the combined evidence of grammar and usage speaks against the assumption that the hybrid language simply represented failed attempts to write Sanskrit and supports the notion that hybrid was a coherent (though not rigidly standardized) language in and of itself, and that those who wrote it did so intentionally".

⁹⁸ Norman (1979: 293).

⁹⁹ Norman (1979: 293).

¹⁰⁰ Damsteegt (1989: 302).

¹⁰¹ See Pollock (2006: 511ff.), notably for his criticism of Weberian legitimation theory.

development becomes more and more Sanskritised.¹⁰² EHS thus appears more as a Sanskritised Prakrit than a Buddhist Sanskrit. Another explanation, adduced by J. Filliozat, is the need of intercommunication between Buddhist communities, whose different Prakrits became unintelligible.¹⁰³ It seems likely that all the factors emphasised above to explain the rise of the Sanskrit cosmopolis were simultaneously at play: standardisation, prestige, legitimation, aestheticisation (but the latter not exclusively, as EHS does not affect only expressive portions). EHS seems to mark a transition phase in the replacement of Prakrit by Sanskrit in inscriptions. Even though EHS is not exclusively Buddhist, the reason for the adoption of Sanskrit might be the same as that which urged certain Buddhist schools to have their texts translated or composed in Sanskrit, i.e. to compete and converse with Brahmanism in its own language, associated with learning and prestige.¹⁰⁴ In other words, *contra* Pollock, the Brahmanical denotation of Sanskrit, even if secularised, remained important.

5. Mixed-Language inscriptions III: Loanwords

We have briefly described early types of mixed-language inscriptions, one involving Prakrit (lexical) borrowings into Tamil (§3), the other involving Sanskrit (lexical and morphological) borrowings into Prakrit (§4). With the accession of vernaculars to the status of epigraphical medium, Tamil being in the forefront, we find, after a first influx of Prakrit words, a second influx of Sanskrit words, once this language had become an epigraphical medium, into (sections of) inscriptions composed in a vernacular language (and conversely, but less often, vernacular words in Sanskrit sections). I will

¹⁰² Salomon (1998: 86).

¹⁰³ J. Filliozat (1969: 111).

¹⁰⁴ On the adoption of Sanskrit in Buddhism, see Pollock (2006: 56ff.) and Bronkhorst (see note 49, above).

focus here on inscriptions from South India, especially from Tamil Nadu. I will show examples of insertion of Tamil syllables/words into Sanskrit (sections of) inscriptions and, conversely, insertion of Sanskrit syllables/words into Tamil (sections of) inscriptions. I must recall the peculiarity of the Tamil area from the 6th century onwards that is the existence of different scripts for Sanskrit and Tamil (with, however, some characters common to both scripts), as opposed to the earlier situation when Tamil was written with an adapted form of Brāhmī and to the contemporary situation in other regions, where one script is used both for Sanskrit and the vernacular. We will start with examples, where the insertion of words of one language into a text in another language is still limited.

5.1 Tamil Loanwords

The first example comes from a Pallava charter in Sanskrit from Āndhra datable to 450 CE. The whole inscription is written in late southern Brāhmī except, maybe, one syllable, in the name of the donated village.

4 — Viḷavaṭṭi copper plates — 450 CE — EI 24.43; IR 18. Plate 3r1 = line 13. Brāhmī script in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

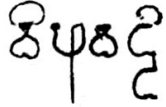


Fig. 3. Processed from facsimile in EI 24.43. **viḷavaṭṭi** (alternatively **viḷhuvattī**).

Krishnamacharlu (EI 24.43) reads *viḷavaṭṭi*, which he identifies possibly with the modern Vavvēru and more probably with Viḷavalūru, both in Kōvūr Taluk. Somasekhara Sarma (1940) reads *viḷhuvattī*, which he identifies with the same Viḷavalūru. I am inclined to follow Krishnamacharlu. The use of

Tamil *la* in Āndhra is not so much a surprise if one considers bilingual Sātavāhana coins of an earlier period (see §7).¹⁰⁵

The next example is from the Sanskrit portion of the 9th-century bilingual Pallava Vēḷaṅcēri copper-plate grant. When mentioning the place of the victory of a Pallava over a Cōḷa king, the Tamil name is written partly in Tamil characters.

5 — Vēḷaṅcēri copper plates — 9th c. — Nagaswamy 1979; IR 92. Plate 2v2 = line 19. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

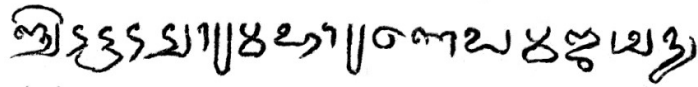


Fig. 4. Processed from author's photo. ...ścīrṛārūrāmahāraṇe samajayad y..., “he vanquished (the Cōḷa king) at the great battle at Cīrṛārūrā”. Note that this Tamil toponym is inserted in a Sanskrit verse and its prosodic weight is thus assessed in Sanskritic terms.

The alveolar *r* of the Tamil toponym—Cīrṛārūr, “the village of the small river”—a character not available in Grantha, has been kept here in the Sanskrit section. Note also that the Tamil toponym ending in *r* in Tamil is treated as a Sanskrit noun of the *a*-stem declension.

For further Pallava examples see: (1) IR 35, in the Sanskrit Grantha section, where Tamil script is used for Tamil toponyms (plate 5r1 = line 49: °ūrṛukāṭṭukk[ō]ṭṭamadhye nīrveḷūrṇāmamanyavāntararāṣṭre). But in the next line we find *kūra-*, in which the Tamil toponym Kūram is fully Granthaised, as there is no problem of conversion of script here. We further find (plate 5r8 = line 56) *kūrattācāryya-*, in which even the Tamil inflexion is—if not Granthaised, as *t* is the same in Grantha and Tamil script—at least present in the Sanskrit section (*kūrattu* is the Tamil oblique stem of *kūram*).¹⁰⁶ (2) IR

¹⁰⁵ Note also that Telugu place-names in early inscriptions of Āndhra also contain specific characters for Dravidian phonemes.

¹⁰⁶ Note that the morphology and *sandhi* remain Tamil. Granthaisation appears thus most clearly, in this instance, to be a graphic rather than linguistic phenomenon.

92, where in the Sanskrit Grantha section, we find Tamil toponyms in Tamil script or Grantha: *kunravattanak[ō*]ṭṭāntaḥ* and *pūtūrasamāhvayaṃ* (as opposed to *pūtūr* in the Tamil section; note that the Grantha form is *pūtūra* and not *pūdūra*, as would presumably be its pronunciation) (plate 3v2–3 = lines 38–9); *-kottāntaḥ* (plate 3v7 = line 44) with Grantha *ko* in contrast to the earlier occurrence of the word; *meliriñceru-* (plate 3v8 = line 45).

Here are examples from the Sanskrit section of a bilingual 11th-century Cōla copper-plate grant.

6 — Tiruvālaṅkāṭu copper plates — 1018 CE — SII 3.205. Plate 9v.
Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

jayaṅkoṅṭacolaṃaṅḍalamaṅḍane, “(in the city) which was the ornament of Jayakoṅṭacōlaṃaṅḍalam” (line 256, territorial subdivision of the residence of the recipient god).

ammaiyappasamākyāya, “to him whose name is Amaiyappa” (line 258, name of the recipient god, i.e. Śiva).

tiruvālaṅkāṭsamākyasya (SII reading; alternatively, *tiruvālaṅkāṭa-samākyasya*), “(of the village) whose name is Tiruvālaṅkāṭu” (line 261).

5.2 Sanskrit Loanwords

In the Tamil section of the 6th-century Paḷḷaṅ Kōyil copper plates, we find several words in Grantha characters.

7 — Paḷḷaṅ Kōyil copper plates — 550 CE — Subramaniam (1959a); IR 21. Grantha characters in bold, Tamil script in Roman. Note that the characters *ṇ*, *t*, *ṇ*, *y*, and *v* are common to Grantha and Tamil scripts in this inscription (they are marked below as Grantha or Tamil script according to context).



Fig. 5. Processed from facsimile in Subramaniam (1959a).

kōvicaiyasimhavarman̄ku (line 27)

vajranandik̄kuravar̄k̄ku (lines 30, 54, 63)

°in̄nār̄kel̄laiȳ akat̄tum̄ °akapaṭṭa bhūmiȳum̄ (lines 61–62)

paradatti cen[.]ratu narabhayaṅ āṇat̄tiyāl̄ | si ||— ||— (lines 63–64)

Sanskrit words in Grantha appear for personal names (Siṃhavarman, Vajranandin, Narabhaya) but with Tamil flexion. We have also more or less technical terms: *bhūmi*, for the land donated, usually replaced in later inscriptions by the Tamil *nilam*; *paradatti*, donation by another, i.e. the king sanctions (for what he is concerned, i.e. revenue) a donation initiated by another. As for *si*, which ends the record, it appears as an abbreviation for *siddham*. Note also *āṇatti* (Sanskrit *ājñapti*), an older loanword, through Prakrit, and thus naturalised (although this is not clear in this very instance, because *ṇ*, *t*, and *y* are common to both alphabets).

We find also Sanskrit words inserted into the Tamil portion of the larger Leiden plates.

8 — Larger Leiden copper plates — 1025 CE — EI 22.34. Tamil section, plate 15v = line 309. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

Fig. 6. Processed from author's photo. **rājendrasimhavaḷanāṭṭu**, “the *vaḷanāṭu* (literally: fertile land) of Rājendrasimha (Lion among kings of kings, a royal title)”.

The term “**rājendrasimhavaḷanāṭu**” is the name of a territorial subdivision, which is the residence of one of the executors of the royal order and it is named after a Sanskrit *biruda* (glorifying soubriquet) of the king.¹⁰⁷

In the above examples (in §5.1 and §5.2), all from diglossic copper-plate inscriptions, most of the loanwords are proper nouns—personal names,

¹⁰⁷ See also **kṣatriyaśikhāmaṇivaḷanāṭṭu** (in the same inscription, lines 306–307), **pāṇḍyakulāśanivaḷanāṭṭu** (#28.3).

titles, place-names incorporating a royal title—which naturally may become a source of problems when used in another language. A scribe skilled in both scripts used in the Tamil area could write them down in the needed script in a section in another language (and script) or naturalise them (partially or not). We also find technical terms, for instance names of *gotras* and *sūtras*, written in Grantha when the qualifications of grantees are mentioned in Tamil (sections of) inscriptions. I have not focussed on these because we have the contributions by Orr (2009; 2013) on the epigraphical vocabulary of worship and by Lubin (2013; 2015) on legalese. Note that the technical loanwords are mostly (or even exclusively?) borrowed in one direction: Sanskrit terms in Tamil (sections of) inscriptions. As we will see, in many cases, it seems that these were used because of their accuracy, as the notion is properly defined by the term of the superordinate Sanskrit culture from which they are borrowed.

5.3 Assimilation of Sanskrit Loanwords

Historically, in Indian epigraphy, borrowing is first from Prakrit, for long the sole administrative and epigraphical medium, then from Sanskrit. In the course of time, loanwords could come to be naturalised by adapting them to the phonetics and scripts of the receiving language.¹⁰⁸ They thus technically come close to what are called *tatsamas* and *tadbhavas*, even though these categories are *stricto sensu* morphological rather than orthographical and might not be relevant at an early period in Tamil grammatical analysis. This process of naturalisation affected first the Prakrit loanwords because they were borrowed earlier, although they sometimes retain a learned spelling.¹⁰⁹ In the Tamil context, assimilation means for Sanskrit words that they are, as a first step, no longer written in Grantha. This assimilation in Tamil can

¹⁰⁸ Rules for the adaptation of Sanskrit words into Tamil were theorised in the Tamil grammatical tradition (see Chevillard 2011: 107).

¹⁰⁹ Lubin (2013: 426).

be gradual (one syllable only in Tamil script), varying in space and time. As in the case of EHS, we do not find a standardised practice, but a lot of variation. Interestingly, it affects some (types) of words earlier than others.

For instance, the Sanskrit *sabhā*, which designates the Brahmin assembly of a village, can be found as **sabhai**, *capai*, or *cavai*.¹¹⁰ As pointed out to me by Jean-Luc Chevillard, this word is attested as *avai* in the *Tolkāppiyam*. The word *deva*, “god, king”, is attested as *deva(ṅ/r)* or *t[ē*]va(ṅ/r)*.¹¹¹ One can follow across time and place how the same word is realised. Take for instance names of *mahādānas*, for which we find a variety of loan practices. Obviously *tulābhāra* was phonetically easier to assimilate into Tamil than *hiraṇyagarbha*.

9 — *Mahādānas* in Tamil inscriptions.

hṛṇyagatbhamu[n] [tu][ā]**bhāramum** (*Āvaṇam* 18.1, Iḷaiyāṅ Puttūr plates, plate 2v1-2 = lines 31-32; 10th-c. copy of an 8th-c. original (?); Grantha in bold, Vaṭṭeluttu in Roman). Note **hṛ** for *hira*, and **tbha** for *rbha*. Clusters comprising Sanskrit *bh* are prone to misspellings. Compare, *mutatis mutandis*, e.g., *kulotbhava* for *kulodbhava* (IP 76, line 105, ca. 750), which betrays the Tamil origin of the composer/scribe, accustomed to the fact that the Tamil letter *t* represents both the surd and sonant dental *t*.

hiraṇyagarbhamu[n*] *tulāpāra*[mum] (IP 178, line 1; later copy of a 9th-century original). One *mahādāna* name is here in Grantha while the other is in Tamil script.

tulāpāram and °*iraṇyagarbham* (SII 23.42, lines 9 and 10; 1013-4 CE).

¹¹⁰ See **sabhaiyārai**yum (IEP 29, lines 12-13), *capai* (SII 14.36, line 42), and *cavaiyār* (IEP 95, line 7).

¹¹¹ See *deviyār* (IP 178, line 1), **mahādevaṅku** (IP 143, line 2; IEP 37, line 5; IEP 38, line 1). See also **dharmma** and *tarumam* attested in the same record (IP 80; above note 22).

Another interesting case is that of the recurrent phrase “as long as the moon and sun”, which expresses the perpetuity of a gift in Tamil inscriptions. Various forms are attested and show different degrees of naturalisation of loanwords into Tamil, such as:¹¹²

- cantirātittam* (PI 61, line 7)
ca[n]drādittavaṛ* (SII 13.2, line 11)
cantrādittavaṛ (SII 13.54, line 3)
cantirā[tit]tavaṛ (SII 2.24, line 19)
cantirātitta[vat] (SII 2.24, line 21)
cantirātittaval (SII 14.18, line 5)
cantrādittaval (SII 7.810, lines 5 and 6 = PI 9)

Most of these represent the Sanskrit *candrādityavat*, although I have not found the latter attested in monolingual Sanskrit inscriptions. A further step in Tamilisation is attested by the form *cantirātittavaraiyum*¹¹³ or *cantirādittavarai[yu]m*,¹¹⁴ in which the Tamil word *varai* replaces the Sanskrit suffix *-vat*.

Another formula which illustrates the various ways of accommodating loanwords is the ubiquitous benediction in which the donor declares that he honours the feet of the protector of his endowment. What follows is just a sample from late Pallava and Cōḷa inscriptions:

°*idharmam* °*aḷiy[ā]mai k[ā]ttān aṭi eṇ muṭi m[ē*]latu*, “This pious deed (i.e. the gift), he who protects it (literally: who has protected it, i.e. the donor speaks in the future) without damaging it, his feet are upon my hair-tuft” (IP 80, line 4; 8th or 9th c.)

°*itu kāttān aṭi °eṇ talai m[ē*]liṇa*, “This (i.e. the gift), he who protects it, his feet are upon my head” (IP 125, lines 34–39; 9th c.)

¹¹² For more examples, see PI, vol. 2, pp. 354–5, s.v. *cantirātittam*.

¹¹³ SII 1.87, lines 59–60.

¹¹⁴ SII 1.79, lines 9–10.

°itu rakṣittār aṭi °eṇ talai m[ē*]laṇa (IP 146, lines 39–41; 9th c.)

°iddharmma(ma)m °irakṣittār śrīpādadhūli °eṇ talai m[ē*][laṇa] (IP 225, lines 5–6, 9th c.) “This pious deed (i.e. the gift), he who protects it, the dust from his glorious feet of is upon my head”

°ivai k[ā][p*]pāṇ (p)pāta[n talai] m[ē*]laṇa (IP 175, lines 39–43; 10th c.)

°itam[mam*] rakṣippār śrīpātam talai m[ē*]liṇa (PI 49, lines 13–14; 10th c.)

°itu °ira[kṣi]ttāṇ aṭi °eṇ talai m[ē*]latu (SII 3.212, line 7; 10th c.)

°idharmmam rakṣi[t]tār śrīpāda °aṭi yen talai m[ē*]lana (SII 13.2, lines 13–14)

°idhanmam °irakṣittāṇ śrīpātam eṇ talai m[ē*]liṇa (SII 13.79, lines 16–17)

°ittarmam rakṣittār śrīpātam °en talai m[ē*](l)liṇa (SII 13.185, line 2)

°idhanmam rakṣippār śrīpātam °en talai m[ē*]laṇa (SII 13.187, line 9)

ittarma[m.*] °irakṣippār śrīpātam °en talai m[ē*]lana (SII 13.196, line 3)

°ittanma[m.] [ra/ra]kṣippār aṭi talai m[ē*]latu (SII 13.269, lines 16–17)

°idarmam· [rakṣittār p]ātātūli °eṇ talai m[ē*]laṇa (SII 13.322, line 6)

Longer variants of the formula are also found:

°iddharmmatṭiṇai ira[kṣi]kkinra tiruttaiyāḥ sabhaiyār śrīpātam °eṇ talai m[ē*]lanav ākavu[m], “Let the glorious feet of the members of the assembly of Tiruttaiyāḥ who protect this pious deed be upon my head (IP 246, lines 16–18; 9th c.). Note here that °iddharmmatṭiṇai is inflected.

°idhammam· rakṣippār mahāsabhaiyōrum panmāheśvararum °itu rakṣippār śrīpadam °eṇ śrissin [i.e. śirassin; whether a typo or as in original, I cannot say] m[ē*]laṇa svasti śrī (PI 52, lines 41–42; 10th c.). Note the Sanskrit śiras for talai.

The word *dharma* is found written fully in Grantha or naturalised (completely or not). Different choices are made between *kā-ttal* (purely Tamil) and *rakṣi-ttal* (Sanskrit loanword, which itself is variously naturalised, see *ira* vs. *ra*), between *aṭi* (purely Tamil) and *pāda* (Sanskrit

loanword, which could be naturalised, fully or not). The word *dhūli* (naturalised or not) can be added. For “head” we usually find *talai* (purely Tamil), but occasionally *śiras* (as in one of the longer variants). We also find examples where the formula is purely Tamil in lexicon:

marri[ta]ṇaik kāt̄tār malarāṭi °eṇ muṭi m[ē*]l* (IEP 7, plate 10r3 = line 151).

marritaṇaik kāt̄tār eṇ malarāṭi °eṇ muṭi m[ē]lana* (IEP 11, plate 6r4–5 = lines 81–82).

The last two examples are found in the Tamil section of bilingual early Pāṇḍya copper-plates (§7.2), while the above examples come from Tamil stone inscriptions. Interestingly, although these early Pāṇḍya plates are rare examples of Pollockian vernacularisation in Tamil Nadu, the formula, in their Tamil section, is purely Tamil.

5.4 Creative borrowings

The usage of loanwords is accompanied by shifts of meaning, which can be approached as a form of localisation and result in “false friends”. Instances of such creative borrowing are met with in several contexts. For legalese, Lubin has pointed out that in Southeast-Asia “many Sanskrit terms underwent semantic developments not found in Indian usage”.¹¹⁵ Orr pointed out the same phenomenon for Sanskrit words of worship borrowed in Tamil, identifying different types of alteration, from radical shift to adaptation by restriction or expansion of meaning, which are not paralleled in the *Tēvāram* or the *Āgamas* and thus constitute a specific epigraphical vocabulary.¹¹⁶ Among the terms discussed (besides purely Tamil vocabulary) by Orr, let us mention *bali/pali*, *dharmatarumam* and *nibandha*.¹¹⁷ Some terms are Tamil/Sanskrit hybrids such as *uṇṇālikai* for a temple’s inner

¹¹⁵ Lubin (2013: 423–4).

¹¹⁶ Orr (2013: 343).

¹¹⁷ Orr (2013: 341–2).

sanctum, with a shift of meaning sometimes difficult to account for.¹¹⁸ In the course of time Tamil words also displace, entirely or not, Sanskrit loanwords, as Orr shows for *havis*, “sacrificial oblation”, which, as the *tadbhava avi*, “is adapted for use in the context of temple *pūjā*” with the meaning of “offering to the god”, and is later displaced by *amutu*, *amirtu*, *amitu*, *amutam*, from Sanskrit *amṛta*.¹¹⁹

An interesting case is the word *tirumukam*, from *tiru* (Tamil equivalent of Sanskrit *śrī*) and *mukam* (Tamil *tadbhava* of Sanskrit *mukha*). The word literally means “glorious mouth, face”. It is used as early as the mid-6th century in the Paḷḷaṅ Kōyil plates (IR 21) in the sense of “royal order” (content and container) because, as many inscriptions explicitly mention, the origin of a royal donation is often an oral instruction uttered by the king while in his palace. The oral instruction of the king is mentioned in Pallava Sanskrit copper plates, for instance, most of which come from Āndhra, but apparently only in Tamil did it result in creating the word *tirumukam*.¹²⁰ It can be used along with the older Prakrit loanword *tiruvāṇai*,¹²¹ but seems to have eventually displaced it. Similar words, purely Tamil except for *tiru*, are known: *tiruvāymoḷi*, “utterance of the glorious mouth”, synonym of *tirumukam*, and *tiruvāykēḷvi* “hearing, sound, word of the glorious mouth”, in which the focus is not on the king’s speech, but on hearing his speech.¹²² The word *tirumukam*—apparently known only in South India¹²³—was later on instantiated by a calque into Tamil as *tiruvāymoḷi* (or is it the reverse?). The latter, according to Subbarayalu, was subsequently rendered into the Tamil *tadbhava tirumantiram*.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ Orr (2009: 109; 2013: 332).

¹¹⁹ Orr (2009: 109; 2013: 329–30, 339).

¹²⁰ On the mention of the king’s “own mouth”, see Lubin (2013: 429ff.).

¹²¹ See instances in Lubin (2013).

¹²² See Orr (2006: 108); Lubin (2013: 429).

¹²³ In the Tiruvāḷaṅkāṭu copper plates (early 10th c.) we find *śrīmukham* (v. 132 of the Sanskrit section) and *tirumukam* (line 143 of the Tamil Section).

¹²⁴ Subbarayalu (2009: 117).

Another frequent term, also possibly created as a *tadbhava*, is *tiruppatiyam* and its variants *tiruppatikam* from *tiru* and *padya*, “a verse, metre, poetry”. The word denotes Tamil Bhakti hymns, for the recitation of which provisions were made in the temple from at least the mid-9th century onwards. The usage was apparently restricted to Śaiva hymns (*Tēvāram*), whereas the word *tiruvāymoḷi* was used in a Vaiṣṇava context to denote hymns of the *Tivviyappirapantam*, and especially (or exclusively?) Nammālvār’s poems.

5.5 Calques

Besides borrowing, another strategy is possible: creating calques. It is not always easy to determine which is the giving language and which the receiving one. For instance, we find the toponym Kāñcivāyil in Tamil (IR 11, plate 1r2 = line 2) and Kāñcidvāra in Sanskrit (IR 81, plate 4v1 = line 73).¹²⁵ Another example is Paścimāśrayanadī, “eastern Āśrayanadī” (IR 81, plate 4r3 = line 63), where Kielhorn identifies Āśrayanadī as the calque of Tamil Aṭṭaiyāru,¹²⁶ attested in the territorial subdivisions Aḍeyārarāṣṭira, i.e. Aḍeyārarāṣṭra (IR 11, plate 2v1 = line 11, Sanskrit in Grantha) and Mēlaṭṭaiyārūnāṭu (SII 2.76, lines 72–3, Tamil in Tamil script). In an inscription from Tiruvārūr, we find Sanskrit calques of the Tamil names of two of the *Tēvāram* poets.

10 — Tiruvārūr inscription — 1140 CE — SII 2, p. 153–4; SII 4.397.¹²⁷ See verse 1.

¹²⁵ For Kāñcivāyil, see also SII 2.10.

¹²⁶ Kielhorn (EI 3, p. 145).

¹²⁷ According to SII 2 (p. 153), what is edited as one discrete inscription under the number SII 4.397 is in fact the end of an inscription dated to the 7th RY of Kulottuṅgacōḷa.

As pointed out by Venkayya, Vāgadhīpati, itself a name of Bṛhaspati, is there a calque for Appar's name (Tiru)nāvukkaraiyar/araicar, while Svasvāmimitra is a calque for Cuntarar's name Empirāṇ Tōlār.¹²⁸ As for Tiruñānacampantar, he is designated by the allonym Brahmaṇḍa.

5.6 Loanwords in Context

The study of Sanskrit loanwords should be made diachronically, geographically, and thematically in order to discern patterns and trends. Digital tools promise to open new insights. For the time being, we have preliminary forays, such as Lustig et al. (2007) on the penetration of Sanskrit loanwords into the Khmer language or Gonda (1973) on Sanskrit in Indonesia.

As for the Tamil case, Subbarayalu has a table which shows the growing influence of Sanskrit in Tamil inscriptions, with a peak in the last period considered (1600–1800).¹²⁹ He observes:

Whereas earlier a native word and a synonymous loan word were at times used alternatively, later the loan word was given more importance, even to the extent of the native word being eliminated. For instance, the Tamil word *āṇṭu* (year) is more or less replaced by *varuṣam* [i.e. *varuṣam*] in later inscriptions.¹³⁰

By examining the context of the occurrence of Sanskrit terms according to thematic categories, Subbarayalu (2009) furthers his analysis and concludes that apparently “the impact of Sanskrit affected the elite sections of the society more than the general run of the people”,¹³¹ that is, in the context of the temple of “pan-Indian Agamic tradition” and Brahman villages.

¹²⁸ Venkayya (SII 2, p. 154).

¹²⁹ Subbarayalu (2009: 116).

¹³⁰ Subbarayalu (2009: 118).

¹³¹ Ibid.

Orr (2013) broadens the perspectives, underlining the shift of meanings and concludes that “words for worship seem to constitute a vocabulary in large part specific to and developed within the inscriptional context” and that they have “different meanings and application in the inscriptions than they do, for example, in *Tēvāram*”, while “very few of the Sanskrit base words are part of the vocabulary of temple worship found in the Āgamic literature”.¹³² Concerning language choice, Orr doubts that “some prestige or even sacrality” is “associated with the use of Sanskrit” in the context of temple worship and observes that the source for Sanskrit usages in inscriptions is not the Āgamic corpus.¹³³ Drawing on Ali’s insight about the “deep entanglement of Sanskritized ‘cosmopolitan’ elements with local usage”,¹³⁴ she concludes that “the logic of language choice is not at all transparent”. She suggests that the inscriptional discourse reflects the perspective of devotees and donors rather than that of priests. She underlines the important role of the authors of inscriptional texts: not the priests, but the temple and village accountants (*kaṇakkus*), whose “expertise was not only required in drawing up documents of agreements, land transfers, and contracts but” was also “*formative* in the development of a particular type of language that had widespread currency in inscriptions and other types of records. Their knowledge and use of Sanskrit would have been quite different from that of the temple priests—who may indeed have been conversant with the vocabulary of the Āgamas.”¹³⁵ These are important observations. I am however less skeptical than Orr about the fact that these accountants were consciously using Sanskrit loanwords, particularly in legalese sections as Lubin’s notion of legal diglossia illustrates.

¹³² Orr (2013: 343–5).

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Ali (2011: 289).

¹³⁵ Orr (2013: 343–5).

6. Bilingual Inscriptions

We now have to go back earlier in time to account for the appearance of bilingual inscriptions. Whatever the reason for the appearance of Sanskrit as an epigraphical medium, it is a fact that from the 2nd century CE onwards it became used more and more, and particularly in eulogistic (sections of) inscriptions. From the 4th century onwards we see a shift in royal copper-plate inscriptions, from Prakrit to Sanskrit. Later on, a further shift occurred, from monolingual Sanskrit copper plates to bilingual copper plates, in which the eulogistic Sanskrit section is followed by the documentary section in vernacular language.

6.1 Early Examples of Bilingual Stone Inscriptions

This shift from Prakrit to Sanskrit is also attested in stone inscriptions, in which we find discrete sections in different languages. Let us mention just a few early examples, some of which bring us back to EHS. An early example is found at Nāsik.

11 — Nāsik inscription of Kṣatrapa Uṣavadāta — 1st c. CE — EI 8.8.10; SI, vol. 1, pp. 167–70; Ollett (2017: 39ff.).

As pointed out by Salomon,

[the] opening portion of this inscription (ll. 1–3), eulogizing Uṣavadāta, is written in a fair approximation of standard Sanskrit with some hybrid features such as frequent sandhi hiatus (e.g., *dharmātmāna idaṃ*, l. 3) and hybrid morphology such as *bhojāpayitrā* (l. 1). The remainder of the inscription, recording the actual donations, is in a somewhat more hybridized style.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Salomon (1998: 89).

Importantly, as Salomon adds in reiteration of Senart,¹³⁷ “the first half of the eulogistic portion is virtually a Sanskrit rendition (or, as Senart puts it, a “reproduction in Sanskrit orthography”) of the description of Uṣavadāta in the Prakrit Kārle cave inscription of the time of Nahapāna (SI I.171–2 [i.e. SI, vol. 1, pp. 171–2])”. This goes well with Norman’s view, already referred to above, about the translation of Prakrit into Sanskrit, which, in the present case, concerned only the eulogistic portion.

Another similar example is the Morā well inscription. According to Salomon, this inscription “comprises portions both in hybrid and in more or less standard Sanskrit, distributed according to function”¹³⁸ and “seems to record the dedication of a shrine to five epic heroes. The opening portion of this fragmentary inscription, recording its date, was written in the hybrid dialect (*mahakṣatrapasa rājūvulasa putrasa svāmi ...*), while the remaining three lines are in Sanskrit, evidently including a verse in the *Bhujāṅgavijṛmbhita* meter”.¹³⁹

12 — Morā well inscription — 1st c. CE — EI 24.27.I; Lüders (1961: §113).
See Pollock (2006: 69n58, 117n7).

For a slightly later period, Salomon points out the

Nāgārjunakoṇḍa examples of both standard and hybridized Sanskrit in both Buddhist and Brahmanical records, and all from a period when Prakrit inscriptions were also still being written. The determining factor in the linguistic choice seems to be neither sectarian nor chronological but verse versus prose: standard or near-standard Sanskrit is used in versified inscriptions, while hybridized Sanskrit appears in the prose

¹³⁷ Senart (EI 8: 79).

¹³⁸ Salomon (1998: 84).

¹³⁹ Salomon (1998: 87).

texts. This distinction is reminiscent of similar patterns in earlier inscriptions from the north, notably the Morā well inscription.¹⁴⁰

A recently discovered inscription at Phanigiri illustrates the same practice. Dated to the 18th regnal year of Rudrapuruṣadatta, it records in 10 lines the erection of a *dharma* wheel. The record starts with a *maṅgala* and the date (prose, Sanskrit, line 1), goes on with four Sanskrit verses (lines 1–8: status of donor and mention of the erection of the wheel, superiority of the Buddha over Śiva and over Viṣṇu, eulogy of the Buddha) and ends with Prakrit prose (lines 8–10: proclamation of the erection of the wheel, motivation of donor, name of executor).

13 — Phanigiri — Early 4th c. — Skilling and von Hinüber (2011); Baums et al. (2016).

Baums et al.¹⁴¹ observe that in the Ikṣvāku corpus Sanskrit is used primarily for donations to non-Buddhist gods and consider this inscription as an example of appropriation of the language of the other gods. The polemical tone against Brahmanism (verses 2–3) seems indeed to account for the choice of Sanskrit, which represents the adoption of a Brahmanical medium to challenge Brahmanism in its own language, a motivation that might also explain the effort of translating Buddhist scriptures into Sanskrit in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

6.2 Bilingual Copper Plates

We can also trace the shift of languages in copper-plate grants.¹⁴² One of the early examples is the 4th-century Bāsim plates of Vākāṭaka Vindhyaśakti II. Its genealogical portion (which is not yet a *praśasti*) is in Sanskrit, while the operative section is in Prakrit.

¹⁴⁰ Salomon (1998: 91).

¹⁴¹ Baums et al. (2016: 370–1).

¹⁴² See Salomon (1998: 82n35, 91); Pollock (2006: 117ff.).

14 — Bāsim copper plates of Vākāṭaka Vindhyaśakti II — 355 CE — CII 5.23.

The corpus of copper plates of the Śālaṅkāyana dynasty of northern Āndhra is a good example of the transition from Prakrit to Sanskrit in this medium. Between ca. 300–350, we have four sets entirely in Prakrit prose (that is genealogy and business portion) except for the concluding Sanskrit imprecatory verses. Between ca. 350 to 450, we have five sets entirely in Sanskrit prose. In a time-span of one century we thus pass from fully Prakrit (except admonitory verses) to fully Sanskrit copper plates.¹⁴³

15 — Śālaṅkāyana copper plates — 300–450 CE — 9 sets. In putative chronological order: EI 9.7; EI 35.18; EI 31.1A; EI 36.1.1; Laksmana Rao (1930); Fleet (1876); Subba Rao (1926); EI 31.1B; EI 25.7.

The corpus of copper plate grants of the Pallavas spans from the 4th to the 9th century with an even more complete sequence of shifts.

16 — Pallava copper plates — 38 sets. See Francis (2013a: 70; 2013c: 131).

Ca. 300–350: Prakrit prose charters with minimal Sanskrit portions (imprecatory verses and/or legends on seals).

Ca. 350–550: Sanskrit prose charters, with *praśasti* in the form of a prose genealogy (*gadyakāvya*).

Ca. 550–900: bilingual charters, with Sanskrit metrical *praśasti* (sometimes also with prose) and Tamil prose operative section.

The first example of a Pallava bilingual charter is the Paḷḷaṅ Kōyil plates, dated to ca. 550 for the content, but possibly a later copy of an original of this date. The summary of its content illustrates how the linguistic division of labour operates.

¹⁴³ One monolingual Sanskrit Śālaṅkāyana inscription is known on stone (EI 42.11).

17 — Paḷḷaṅ Kōyil copper plates — 550 CE — Subramaniam (1959a); IR 21.

17.1 — Summary of Sanskrit section (9 stanzas, lines 1–26).

St. 1: invocation to the Jina.

St. 2–3: genealogy of the Pallavas (up to Siṃhavarman).

St. 4–5: praise of the donor Siṃhaviṣṇu (son of Siṃhavarman).

St. 6: praise of the donee Vajranandin (belonging to the Nandisaṅgha).

St. 7: gift of a village to Vajranandin by the king.

St. 8: praise of Narabhaya, the executor of the grant (i.e. the officer overseeing the transaction).

St. 9: praise of Medhāvin, the author of the *praśasti*.

17.2 — Summary of Tamil section (lines 27–64).

Order of donation addressed to the *nāṭṭārs*, content of the order of donation, execution of the order by the *nāṭṭārs* (they receive the order, revere it, and place it on their head, and mark with stones and bushes the boundaries of the donated land), description of the four boundaries of the granted land, extension of the gift (various types of land, forest, etc.), description of a second piece of granted land (including description of its boundaries), and a short mention of the executor (**Narabhayaṅ**, Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman).

The opening Sanskrit section in verse contains 9 stanzas of invocation and praise, while the Tamil prose section that follows contains the details pertaining to the donation. As pointed out insistently by Pollock, such bilingual copper plates are not strictly bilingual since one section is not the translation of the other and since each section has its own specific content and purpose. In the case of the Paḷḷaṅ Kōyil copper plates, as in many other early examples of copper plates, the notion of a division of labour between languages advocated by Pollock is clearly valid.

6.3 Auspicious Words and Verses

Another type of bilingualism is found in inscriptions composed in vernacular languages, but which contain a Sanskrit *maṅgala* (auspicious phrase) or *maṅgalaśloka* (auspicious verse), usually at the beginning as an invocation, but sometimes also at the end.¹⁴⁴

Among the *maṅgalas* or blessings, from the 8th century onwards, the phrase ***svasti śrī*** in Grantha is ubiquitous at the beginning of monolingual Tamil inscriptions.¹⁴⁵ Later on, during the Vijayanagara period, we find ***śubham astu*** (see #42) or different combinations of auspicious words: ***śubham astu svasti*** (see #38, #40, #42), ***śubham astu svasti śrī*** (#41).

Maṅgalaślokas can be, although rarely, quotations from famous poets. Others are composed at the same time as the rest of the inscription and can be reused in later inscriptions. For instance, the *maṅgalaśloka* invoking Śiva of Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita* is frequently quoted in Western Cāḷukya and Vijayanagara inscriptions of South India.¹⁴⁶ Sanskrit invocations to other deities or revered figures are also common and, again, some are found recurrently.¹⁴⁷ As it is not possible to be exhaustive here, let us look at just two more examples that are exceptional insofar as the Sanskrit consists of a *mantra*. The 11th-century Tirunelveli plate of Bhāskara Ravivarman of

¹⁴⁴ *Maṅgalas* or *maṅgalaślokas* are also met with in Sanskrit monolingual inscriptions.

¹⁴⁵ We also find ***svasti śrīḥ*** (SII II.1 = #28.1, II.9, II.10, etc.; SII 12.124, 157, 159, 209), occasionally with auspicious signs (SII 4.398: **𑀓 *svasti śrīḥ***), or ***śrī*** only (IEP 50 = SII 5.405), or ***śrīr astu*** (IEP 52, line 1). The phrase *svasti* or *svasti śrī* is also found at the beginning of Sanskrit (sections of) inscriptions in the Tamil area and elsewhere.

¹⁴⁶ See Salomon (1998: 235); Griffiths and Southworth (2007: 371). For Vijayanagara examples (also along with other invocations), see V. Filliozat (1973, inscriptions Nos. 14, 25, 36–7, 39, 44–6, etc.). See also EI 14.19A (#45); EI 14.19B (where the remaining text consists of mixed Kannada verse and prose).

¹⁴⁷ See V. Filliozat (1973) for invocations to the Jina (inscriptions Nos. 28, 34–5, 63, 114–5), to Vidyātīrtha (Nos. 14, 43), to Harihara (No. 14) and to Rāmānuja (Nos. 91–2), for instance.

Kerala, written in Tamil and Vaṭṭeluttu, concludes with the Vaiṣṇava *mantra* “*om namo nārāyaṇāya namaḥ*” written in “the triangle-headed North Indian alphabet”.¹⁴⁸

18 — Tirunelveli copper plate — 1021 CE — EI 16.27.

The 14th-century Śrīvīrarāghava Cakravartin plate starts with the *mantra* of Gaṇeśa in Grantha: *hari śrī mahāgaṇapate [na]ma*, i.e. *mahāgaṇapataye namaḥ* (line 1). The rest of the record, except for a few Sanskrit words in Grantha, is, according to Venkayya, in Tamil prose with a few words in Old Malayalam (in Vaṭṭeluttu and Malayalam script respectively),¹⁴⁹ while for Godavarma it is entirely in Old Malayalam.¹⁵⁰

19 — Śrīvīrarāghava copper plate grant — 1320 CE¹⁵¹ — EI 4.41.

In the course of time *maṅgalas* or *maṅgalaśloka*s in vernacular languages are found in monolingual inscriptions in vernacular languages, but also sometimes in non-Sanskrit bilinguals. We find, for instance, a Telugu homage to Rāma in Telugu script at the beginning of a Tamil plate dated 1608 CE,¹⁵² as the grant is from a Tanjore Nāyaka (of Telugu origin).

All the above examples of *maṅgala(śloka)*s are instances of performative sentences, as the purpose is to attract auspiciousness by explicitly invoking the gods. These invocations address the gods in the first place and not men. Sanskrit seems here to be the preferred medium since it is the language of the gods and since it has *mantric* power. A case similar to *maṅgala(śloka)*s is that of imprecatory verses found at the end of grants and endowments.

¹⁴⁸ Sircar (1965: 47).

¹⁴⁹ Venkayya (EI 4.41).

¹⁵⁰ Godavarma (1937: 963).

¹⁵¹ For this date, see Godavarma (1937: 965; after Kielhorn, satisfying the astronomical clues).

¹⁵² Nagaswamy (1978: 117–8).

They are also performative as they are meant to protect the gift by blessing its protector and cursing its obstructor. They are often introduced as quotations. But here, too, Sanskrit, as the language of imprecation, is gradually emulated by vernaculars (see benediction, §5.3).¹⁵³

6.4 Later Examples of Bilingual Stone Inscriptions

Regarding bilingual stone inscriptions, let us first review examples not involving Sanskrit. Salomon¹⁵⁴ mentions the 14th-century Bhubaneswar Oriya/Tamil inscription, more or less strictly bilingual, or the strict 14th-century bilingual Oriya/Hindi Bāripadā Museum inscription.¹⁵⁵

20 — Bhubaneswar Oriya/Tamil inscription — Late 14th c. — EI 32.29.

In both these inscriptions there is no division of labour, as both languages convey the same information and there is no real eulogy.

The above-mentioned 12th-century Tiruvārūr inscription (#10) intercalates a Tamil phrase (*āḷuṭainampi mātākkaḷ icaiñāṇiyār*) between Sanskrit stanzas of low quality in orthography and grammar as pointed out by Hultsch's footnotes (SII 2, p. 153): stanza 1 mentions king Anapāya's donations; in stanza 2 Anapāya pays homage to kings who will protect these; then comes the Tamil phrase *āḷuṭaiyanampi mātākkaḷ icaiñāṇiyār*, "The mother of Āḷuṭaiya Nampi (i.e. Cuntarar) (was) the venerable Icaiñāṇi"; stanza 3 conveys the same information, calling her simply Ñāṇi, and moreover mentions her birthplace, father's name, etc. In that case one wonders why only this information about the name of Cuntarar's mother was provided in two languages.

A 10th-century bilingual inscription from Kirāmam comprises 3 Sanskrit stanzas (lines 1–15), followed by 24 lines in Tamil prose (lines 16–39). The

¹⁵³ On Sanskrit imprecatory verses, see Jolly (1890: 350–9); Sircar (1965: 170ff.); Willis (2009: 84–9, 153–8). On Tamil imprecations, see Karashima (2009).

¹⁵⁴ Salomon (1998: 101, 109).

¹⁵⁵ De (1954).

Sanskrit section consists of a praise of the founder of a Śiva temple and an invocation of the god. The Tamil section contains the date and mentions that the donor, whom it also praises, consecrated an image in that temple. We find here both languages performing at the same time both similar and mutually exclusive tasks.

21 — Kirāmam inscription — 943 CE — Venkayya (1909).

Of another type is a group of three inscriptions about the status of Kammālas in Tamil, but containing quotations in Sanskrit from different *smṛtis* (some identified, others not). Interestingly, the Sanskrit text is sometimes translated/paraphrased into Tamil. We have here citation inscriptions in which the authoritative Sanskrit textual sources used by Brahmins consulted in the matter as basis for their decision are quoted.

22 — Inscriptions on the status of Kammālas — 12th c. — ARE 1904.558, SII XVII.603; ARE 1908.479; ARE 1925.479. See Derrett (1971).

From Burma, a 13th-century Pagan inscription gives, after the usual *svasti śrī*, a verse in Sanskrit from the *Mukundamāla* by the South Indian Vaiṣṇava saint Kulacēkara/Kulaśekhara Ālvār (9th c.?), in which he proclaims his disdain for merit and wealth and his unswerving devotion to Viṣṇu.

23 — Pagan inscription — 13th c. — EI 7.27.

The remaining part is in Tamil prose and records, again after the usual *svasti śrī*, the meritorious gift (*taṇmam*, i.e. Sanskrit *dharma*)—i.e. the erection of a *maṇḍapa*, the installation of a door and the placing of a perpetual lamp—of Cikulac[ē*]kararampi (i.e. Śrī-Kulaśekhara Nampi) from Kerala in the temple of Nāṇā**de**śiviṇṇakarālvār (Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman). The poet and the donor thus bear the same name. This probably explains in part the choice of the poet quoted, in addition to the content of the specific quotation. And so the bilingual character of the inscription might be so-to-say incidental and not sought for *per se*: it might

have just happened that the citation was chosen in the first place for its content (note that Kulacēkara Ālvār also wrote poems in Tamil).

In conclusion, the bilingual inscriptions considered here offer a variety of situations. Some Sanskrit bilinguals illustrate quite well Pollock's linguistic division of labour (§6.1; §6.2 especially), including the special case of performative Sanskrit (§6.3). Other inscriptions—whether non Sanskrit bilinguals in which two vernaculars are used in documentary function (#20) or Sanskrit bilinguals in which Tamil shares functions with Sanskrit (#21), the overarching status of which is thus not so clear—show no neat functional differentiation between languages and are in line with the multilingual eulogies that we will consider now (§7). Some other examples of citation inscriptions defy straightforward analysis (#23), except #22, which is in fact a particular example of legal diglossia.

7. Multilingual Eulogies

Whatever the merit of Pollock's vernacularisation theory and its application in the whole Indic world, it is a fact that vernaculars, at times varying across India, became capable of doing the epigraphical work of praising kings through poetry. We thus find multilingual inscriptions in which the division of labour is no longer rigorous: Sanskrit and the vernacular share the same function of praising, while the documentary function remains in the hands of the vernacular. This is thus no more a situation of diglossia, but of what I will propose to call eulogistic amphiglossia. Such an amphiglossia is at play in multilingual inscriptions, considered in §7, and in mixed-language inscriptions, considered in §8, only in the Tamil context.

In criticising the application of Pollock's vernacularisation theory to the Tamil case (Francis 2013b) I showed that examples of expressive public Tamil are not as rare in the second half of the first millennium as he

argued.¹⁵⁶ This rise of Tamil as an expressive language gave rise to examples where Tamil and Sanskrit occupy the same function. For instance, in Taḷavāṇūr, we find in the same cave a Sanskrit *anuṣṭubh* and a Tamil *veṇṇpā*, possibly but not clearly later than the *anuṣṭubh*, which both praise the Pallava founder of the cave.¹⁵⁷

24 — Taḷavāṇūr paired Sanskrit and Tamil inscriptions — Early 7th c. —
EI 12.27A–B; IP 19–20; IR 23.

I will in the following pages limit myself to multilingual inscriptions. To start with, I should mention the early example of Sātavāhana coins of around the beginning of the CE which present a strictly bilingual case: two legends bearing the name of the king are found, in Prakrit on one side of the coin, in a Dravidian language (proto-Dravidian, Tamil, or Telugu, according to the interpretations) on the other.¹⁵⁸ This is not yet a eulogy, but nonetheless an instance of a Dravidian language used as medium of public expression along with another more pan-Indian language (Prakrit) in order to make a statement about a king. Mahadevan suggests that the Sātavāhanas used Tamil because of the commercial relationship they had with the Tamil kingdoms.¹⁵⁹ It might also be that they were also addressing their Tamil or Dravidian subjects.

7.1 Rise of the “Vernacular” under the Pallavas

If we move further in time, in the Pallava dominion and cultural sphere, from the beginning of the 7th century onwards, we find examples of the use of Tamil as the language of public or political discourse along with Sanskrit. I enclose the word “vernacular” between quotation marks because the Tamil case is not that of the literarisation of a vernacular language as

¹⁵⁶ See also Orr (2009: 101).

¹⁵⁷ Francis (2013b: 372ff.).

¹⁵⁸ See Francis (2013b: 367); Mahadevan (2014: 237ff.), with bibliographical references.

¹⁵⁹ Mahadevan (2014: 243).

theorised by Pollock, but the accession of an already literary language (as evinced by the Caṅkam corpus) to a new usage, that of epigraphical praise.

In the upper cave on the Trichy rock-fort, datable probably to the first quarter of the 7th century, we find in several places multilingual *birudas* (glorifying soubriquets) in praise of Mahendravarman I, the Pallava royal patron of the cave. Some are in Sanskrit, others in Tamil and even in Telugu (as some have the Telugu ending *-ambu*). Take, for instance, the list found on the right pilaster of the front row of pillars.

25 — Trichy, Mahendravarman I Pallava's lists of *birudas* — 625 CE — SII 12.8; IR 28. See Lockwood (2001: 193ff.), for improved readings and tentative interpretations; Francis (2013b: 363ff., with translations).

25.1 — Front row, right pilaster — Grantha script in bold, Telugu/Draavidian *r* in Roman.



Fig. 7. Lines 1–3. Author's photo.



Fig. 8. Letter *ru* (line 3, second letter). Processed from author's photo.

- (1) *svasti śrī mahendravikramah*
- (2) *mattavilāsaḥ mayamayakku*
- (3) *marumārra mahāmeghaḥ*
- (4) *manprāvu miḍelcu_ro*
- (5) *mūrkhavijja moggara*
- (6) *[mah]i[ce_rra]kāri*

Some *birudas* here are clearly in Sanskrit, others not, even though the same Grantha script is used to write them all. Note the use of a specific character for alveolar *r*, unknown in MIA, NIA and Sanskrit. Looking now at the architraves and bases of the pilasters and pillars of the front row, we find the same mixing of *birudas* in at least two languages.

25.2 — Front row, pillars' and pilasters' architraves (from left to right) — Grantha only (bold). *vañjavalava* — *sarvvana[y]{ah}* — *saṃkīrṇajātīḥ* — *satyasandhaḥ* — *{la}litāṃkuraḥ* — *lakṣitaḥ*

25.3 — Front row, pillars' bases (from left to right) — Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman. *[da][...]kku* — *cit[t]i{rakā}[ra]ppu[li]* — *piṇapiṇakku* — *kucañāṇa*



Note that Sanskrit *birudas* are entirely in Grantha and that *birudas* with Tamil elements (partially or entirely) are either in Grantha (*vañjavalava*), Tamil script (*cit[t]i{rakā}[ra]ppu[li]*, with Sanskrit element naturalised), or both (*piṇapiṇakku*, where the double-stroked *k* is Grantha), although the distinction between the two scripts at this early stage is disputable.¹⁶⁰

In Centalai, on four pillars in the Mīṇāṭcīcuntarēsvarar temple, we find early examples of Tamil epigraphical poems (24 *veṇpās*) praising a Muttaraiyar chief, perhaps datable to the 8th century. Besides the Tamil verses, each pillar also bears a list of four *birudas* of the Muttaraiyar chief.

¹⁶⁰ Some characters (*p*, *c*) are, however, clearly in Tamil script.

In fact, we have two different bilingual lists, each engraved twice (with the first item in the lists damaged except on pillar 3A).

26 — Centalai — Lists of *birudas* of a Muttaraiyar chief — 8th c. — EI 13.10. See Francis (2013b: 376ff.) for translations. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

Pillars 1B and 2D	Pillar 2D	Pillars 3A and 4A	Pillar 4A
{ <i>śrīmāraṇ</i> }		<i>śrītamarālayaṇ</i> .	
<i>śrīśatrukesarī</i>		<i>śrī°abhimānadhīraṇ</i> .	
<i>śrīkaḷvarakaḷvaṇ</i> .		<i>śrīkaḷvarakaḷvaṇ</i> .	
<i>śrī°atisāhasan</i> .	Fig. 9. Author's photo.	<i>śrīśatrukesarī</i>	Fig. 10. Author's photo.

It is noteworthy that the Tamil *biruda kaḷvarakaḷvaṇ* “Thief of what is related to thieves”, is in Tamil script on pillars 3A and 4A, but is entirely written in Grantha (with the alveolar final *ṇ* of the 3rd person singular written as Grantha *n*) on pillars 1B and 2D.



Fig. 11. Pillar 1B. Processed from author's photo.

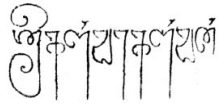


Fig. 12. Pillar 3A. Processed from author's photo.

As for the Sanskrit *birudas* of the *a*-stem declension, entirely in Grantha, they end with the Tamil 3rd person suffix *-aṇ*, Granthaised as *n*. These examples of bilingual lists of *birudas* are in fact mixed-language rather than

multilingual inscriptions. I thus could have treated them in §8, but my point here is to show that already quite early on Tamil could serve along with Sanskrit as a language fit to proclaim the grandeur of kings. The *veṅpās* of Centalai show that Tamil was even able to perform this task alone. Although many examples show that, when praising, Tamil often appears in association with Sanskrit, the Tamil epigraphical praises rely on the Caṅkam literary conventions and themes rather than on the Sanskrit literary tradition (*contra* Pollock's theory of vernacularisation).¹⁶¹ The chronological precedence of Sanskrit *praśasti* probably stimulated the appearance of Tamil epigraphical eulogy, but as a complement rather than as an imitation.

7.2 Pāṇḍya Copper Plate Inscriptions (end of 8th to mid-10th c.)

The culmination of this interaction with Sanskrit is found in the copper-plate grants of the early Pāṇḍyas. Dated from the end of the 8th to the mid-10th century, some are in fact rare instances where Pollock's vernacularisation is fully realised in the Tamil area. Although not entirely without connection to Caṅkam poetry, their Tamil eulogies show a substantial influence from the Sanskrit literary model. This is also the case for a mixed-language stone inscription such as the Vaikai inscription (#34). I will argue, however, that such inscriptions are rather exceptional and that the early Pāṇḍya plates have no real heirs and very few later parallels in the Tamil area.

We have in total seven sets of early Pāṇḍya copper plates.¹⁶² All start with a Sanskrit section (from 1 to 39 verses; composed anew for each set), followed by a Tamil metrical section and a Tamil operative section in prose, itself usually interrupted by some additional Sanskrit verses of imprecation and/or praise of different agents involved in the production of the plates.

¹⁶¹ See Francis (2013b).

¹⁶² See IEP 7, 11, 16, 61, 79, 90 and the ḷaiyāṅ Puttūr plates (*Āvaṇam* 18.1). See also TPC. The ḷaiyāṅ Puttūr set appears to be a 9th-century copy of an early-8th-century original.

In two sets, the Sanskrit section consists of invocatory verses only (one in the ḷaiyānḷ Puttūr plates; two in IEP 16), while in the remaining sets, the invocatory section is followed by a genealogy, containing a longer description of the last member and donor and a summary of his donation.¹⁶³ Similarly, the Tamil versified section is a eulogy in the form of a genealogy praising the donor king and his lineage, except in IEP 11, where only the donor-king is praised.¹⁶⁴ This Tamil eulogy is explicitly named *praśasti* in IEP 7 (line 139), as is its Sanskrit counterpart (line 30). In her analysis of the content of these early Pāṇḍya copper plates, Orr notes that in IEP 11 the two eulogies “seem continuous with one another, while in other cases we see what are effectively two versions of the same record” (IEP 79 and 90).¹⁶⁵

Whatever the specificities of these individual sets, at least some of their Tamil eulogies can be considered as examples of accommodation of the Sanskrit model, as shown by the adoption of a genealogical account. Also noteworthy is the relatively high proportion of Sanskrit loanwords written in Grantha characters in the Tamil eulogistic sections, making some portions of them mixed-language passages.¹⁶⁶ But in fact such Tamil eulogies that fit Pollock’s vernacularisation theory constitute a short-lived experience, “a once-only experiment” as Tieken puts it.¹⁶⁷ The Cōḷa and later Pāṇḍya *meḷkkīrttis* are not heirs to this type of Tamil eulogy,¹⁶⁸ while the royal Cōḷa copper plates follow the Pallava model (§7.3).

¹⁶³ We miss at least one plate at the beginning of IEP 79, but we can presume that it also started with an invocation section.

¹⁶⁴ The Tamil metres used are not those of the Caṅkam corpus, but new metres. Note also that in IEP 7 the Tamil eulogy is framed by a longer narrative about the grant (see Gillet 2014).

¹⁶⁵ Orr (2009: 100ff.).

¹⁶⁶ Sanskrit terms in Grantha script are regularly used in the Tamil portion, but the reverse is quite rare (for example IEP 79, lines 60 and 68).

¹⁶⁷ Tieken (2001: 137).

¹⁶⁸ Late Pāṇḍya *meḷkkīrttis*, from the 12th c. onwards, will adopt the Cōḷa model, being

The Pāṇḍya copper plates illustrate, like other Sanskrit bilinguals (§7.4), that the vernaculars, as public expressive languages, can also do the task of literary praise while remaining the language of the business portion. The Tamil eulogistic sections of the Pāṇḍya copper plates are examples of a cosmopolitan vernacular, as Pollock puts it¹⁶⁹: as in the Sanskrit sections, the Pāṇḍyas pretend in the Tamil eulogy to be universal sovereigns of India, as possessors of Śrī and Bhū or performers of a *digvijaya*.¹⁷⁰ The notion of linguistic division of labour remains valid to a certain extent as the operative section is in Tamil prose, while Sanskrit is not documentary to any significant extent (the details about the donation in the Sanskrit section are donee/donor-oriented, not payer-oriented, while the additional Sanskrit verses are performative or eulogistic). As for the eulogistic section, which is bilingual, Sanskrit does not stand alone because Tamil, however influenced by Sanskrit literary tradition, is not restricted to the documentary. The universal, pan-Indian status of the Pāṇḍyas is expressed in both languages deemed literary in the area. There is nonetheless sometimes also a specific Tamil flavour in the description of the Pāṇḍya kings in the Tamil eulogistic section, such as the reference to the establishment of the Caṅkam academy in Maturai or to the fostering of Tamil literature, which appears only in Tamil.¹⁷¹

As an example of Pāṇḍya copper-plate grants, let us compare a parallel portion of the Sanskrit and Tamil eulogies of the larger Ciṅṇamaṅūr plates. I have chosen the mythical genealogy from both sections, in which no king is named since it is a collective eulogy of the dynasty. Right after that begins

even more conservative from the metrical point of view.

¹⁶⁹ Pollock (2006: 261, 356ff., 380ff.).

¹⁷⁰ *Contra* Tieken (2001: 137–8) and in agreement with Orr (2009: 101), we cannot say that the Tamil section is concerned with local history, as it also contains claims to universal sovereignty and mythological accounts.

¹⁷¹ On such references see Wilden (2009: 133ff.; 2014: 10 and 221n196).

the historical genealogy, where names of kings and their kin relationship are stated.

27 — Larger Ciṅṅamaṅūr plates. — Early 10th c.¹⁷² — SII 3.206; TPC: 141-76; IEP 79.

27.1 — From the Sanskrit eulogy, stanza 3 (*upendravajrā*), plate 1r4-6. Grantha script.

*hatākhilārātimahīpatīnām himācalāropitaśāsanānām·
purohito bhūd avanīpatīnā[m·] [yad]udbhavānām· bhagavān agastyah ||*

Of the kings born in that (lineage, i.e. the *vaṃśa* of the Pāṇḍyas), who slew all their enemy kings and had their orders set on the Himācala, the lord Agastya was the chaplain.

27.2 — From the Tamil eulogy, plate 6rv. {n} = metrical line (acc. to Cuppiramaṅiyam 1983). Grantha in bold, Vaṭṭeḷuttu in Roman.

{7} *poruv aruñ c[ī*]r °akattiyaṅai purohitaṅākap perratu*, “(lineage) which obtained as purohita Akattiyaṅ (i.e. Agastya) of unmatched fame”.

{15} *teṅ ramīḷiṅ karai kaṅṭum*, “and having seen the bank(s) of sweet Tamil (*teṅ tamīḷ*)”.

{20-1} *oṅ ṭamīḷum vaṭamoli°um ... tāṅ ārayntu*, “having themselves researched the bright Tamil and the northern speech (*vaṭa-moli*)”.

{24} *vacai°il māḱ kayal puli cilai vaṭavarai nerri°il varaintun*, “and having inscribed on the top of the northern mountain the unblemished and great carp, tiger, and bow”.

{29} *maḥābhāraṭan tamīḷp paṭuttum madhurāpuric caṅkam vaittum*, “and having had the *Mahābhārata* translated into Tamil and having established

¹⁷² 926-7 CE (IEP), 907-31 CE for the reign of the issuing king (Cuppiramaṅiyam 1983: 205).

the Caṅkam in the city of Madhurā (*madhurāpuri*, literally “the sweet city”, i.e. Maturai”).

Both eulogies agree that Agastya was the *purohita* of the Pāṇḍyas. This is again mentioned in the Sanskrit section about an individual king (stanza 6: *agastyāśiṣyaḥ*). Common too is the mention that their orders (their emblems in the Tamil eulogy) were inscribed on the Himālaya.¹⁷³ But there are also feats, relevant for one audience only, mentioned only in one of the eulogies. Only in Sanskrit is mention made of the *aśvamedha* and *rājasūya* Vedic sacrifices (stanza 9), only in Tamil of the expertise in Tamil language and the establishment of the Caṅkam academy. We thus have a distribution of certain themes between the two sections. Pollock puts such Pāṇḍya records (and especially the Vaikai river-bed inscription, treated below) in the line of development that led to *meykkīrtti*¹⁷⁴—misled, I believe, by the hybrid nature of the word and its definition given in the *Madras Tamil Lexicon*. I have explained elsewhere why I cannot agree with his assessment,¹⁷⁵ mostly because *meykkīrtti* is closer to Caṅkam poetry than to Sanskrit *praśasti* in many aspects. Consequently the *meykkīrtti* genre—different in many aspects from the Tamil eulogy of the early Pāṇḍya plates—does not fit Pollock’s theory of vernacularisation.¹⁷⁶

7.3 Cōḷa Meykkīrttis and Copper-Plate Grants

We will now look at an example of *meykkīrtti*, not just because it is an illustration against Pollock’s description of the genre, but because in the instance selected it is part of a longer inscription, which starts before the

¹⁷³ Others feats common to both sections are for instance the participation in the churning of the ocean or the possession of Indra’s garland and the breaking of his crown.

¹⁷⁴ Pollock (2006: 323).

¹⁷⁵ Francis (2013b).

¹⁷⁶ For a list of the differences between *praśasti* and *meykkīrtti*, see Orr (2009: 103ff.), Francis and Schmid (2010: xviff.).

meykkīrtti with a Sanskrit verse. Moreover, the inscription contains, in the Tamil section following the *meykkīrtti*, occasional Sanskrit loanwords (whether entirely or partly written in Grantha). In other words, this is a Tamil *meykkīrtti* example from a bilingual inscription.

Meykkīrtti becomes a standardised and mass-produced genre under the reign of Rājarāja I Cōḷa (r. ca. 985–1014). Each Cōḷa king had his own standardised *meykkīrtti* which focussed only on his own achievements, without referring to his ancestors, and was gradually updated throughout his reign. Cōḷa *meykkīrttis* are found in abundance in monolingual Tamil stone inscriptions. They are also regularly found in the Tamil section of diglossic copper-plate inscriptions, but embedded (that is, it is not juxtaposed to *praśasti* as in the case of the dual eulogies of the early Pāṇḍya plates).

As an example, here is the *meykkīrtti* of Rājarāja I, in a version which could be considered a very official one as it is found on the base of the Rājarājīsvaram temple (nowadays Bṛhadīśvara) founded as his “state temple” at Tanjore. This inscription is considered as the first inscription of the temple as it sets up its epigraphical program, i.e. recording the donations of Rājarāja I and his relatives. The *meykkīrtti* is that of the 26th year of Rājarāja I (1011 CE), but this date in fact corresponds to the decision made by Rājarāja I to have his donations and those of others engraved on his temple.¹⁷⁷

28 — Tanjore, Bṛhadīśvara, stone inscription on the base — 1011 CE —
SII 2.1 (with facsimile and translation). The inscription starts on the
northern base of the *vimāna* and continues on the western base. It is

¹⁷⁷ The inscription indeed records gifts made by Rājarāja I and his relatives to the lord (Uṭaiyār) of the Śrīrājarājīsvaram from his 23rd (1008 CE) up to his 29th year (1014 CE).

divided into successive sections (nine on the north, four on the west).
Tamil script in Roman, Grantha in bold.

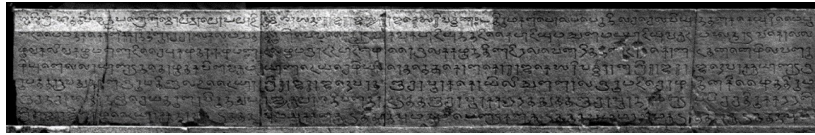


Fig. 13. 1st section. The highlighted section is Sanskrit in Grantha (see #28.1).
Author's photo.

28.1 — Section 1, line 1: *śloka*.



Fig. 14. Author's photo.



Fig. 15. Author's photo.



Fig. 16. Author's photo.

svasti śrīḥ

°etat viśvanṛpaśreṇimaulimālopalāḷitam·

śāsanaṃ rājarājasya rājakesarivarmmaṇaḥ |||—

“This, which is fondled by the rows of crowns (or: the garlands on the crowns) of all the kings, is an order of Rājarāja Rājakesarivarman”.

This Sanskrit *śloka* is similar to those found on the seals of copper-plate grants of other Cōla kings.¹⁷⁸ It makes clear that this inscription, which records the gift of Rājarāja I and his relatives, is—as copper-plate grants are—an order of the king, and this is stated again in the Tamil section of the

¹⁷⁸ There are no extant copper-plate grants issued by Rājarāja I.

inscription after the *meykkīrtti* (see *veṭṭuka enru tiruvāy molīncaruḷa* below).¹⁷⁹
After the *śloka*, starts the *meykkīrtti*.

28.2 — Section 1, lines 1–4: *meykkīrtti*. {n} = metrical line (acc. to Cuppiramaṇiyam 1983).



Fig. 17: Author's photo.

tirumakaḷ p[ō*]lap perunilac celviyun
 taṇakk[ē*]y urimai pūṇṭamai manakkōḷak
 kāntaḷūrc cālai kalam aruttarūḷi
 v[ē*]ṅkaināṭuṅ kaṅkapāṭiyun
 taṭikai pāṭiyum noḷampapāṭiyun {5}
 kuṭamalaināṭuṅ kollamuṅ kaliṅkamum
 °eṇṭicai pukaḷ tara °īlamaṇṭalamum
 °iraṭṭapāṭi [°ē*]larai °ilakkamun
 tiṅṭiral venrit taṅṭār koṅṭa taṅṅ
 eḷil vaḷar ūḷiyuḷ ellāyāṅṭun {10}
 toḷutaka viḷaṅkum yāṅṭ[ē*]y
 celiyar[ai]t t[ē*]cu koḷ
 k[ō*]rājakesarivarṃmarāṇa śrīrājārājadevarkku ...

Like the Lady Fortune, the Lady of the great Earth realised her yoking by right to him (that is, she too is his spouse);
 He graciously apportioned plates in the *cālai* (a feeding hall) at Kāntaḷūr;
 While the country of Veṅgī, the country of the Gaṅgas, the country of Taṭikai, the country of the Noḷambas, the country of the western mountain, Kollam, the Kaliṅga, and Laṅkā granted him glory in the eight

¹⁷⁹ The same *śloka* is found at the beginning of other Tamil inscriptions of Rājārāja I in Tanjore (e.g. SII 2.31, 33, 45) and also in Kāḷahasti (SII 17.322). It is also found in Tanjore at the beginning of an unpublished Sanskrit stone inscription (Brocquet 1993).

directions, he also conquered, with his victorious and frightfully strong army, the seven and half thousands (villages) of the Iraṭṭapāti;
 In this bright year, he deserved praise (like for) all the years in this age of growing splendour:
 The glorious king Rājarāja alias the king Rājakesarivarman, who took the lustre of the Ceḷiyar (the Pāṇḍya king).

Note that there is not a single Grantha character except in the name of the king at the end, which does not properly belong to the *meykkīrtti*. Most of the terms in what precedes are purely Tamil words. As for the Sanskrit loanwords (according to the *Madras Tamil Lexicon*), all are naturalised (*śrī* > *tiru*; *manas* > *manam*, not the more usual *maṇam*; *śālā* > *cālai*; *diśā* > *ticai*; *lakṣa* > *ilakkam*; *daṇḍa* > *taṇṭu*; *tejas* > *tēcu*). One thus cannot but think that Grantha script is avoided on purpose, so as to obtain a eulogy of pure Tamil appearance that accords well with Tamil prosody. The inscription then goes on.

28.3 — Section 1, line 4 – Section 2, line 1: date and introduction.

yāṇṭu °iruppattārāvatu nāl °irupatiṇāl °uṭaiyār **śrīrājarājadevar** tañcāvūr
 k[ō*]yiliṇ uḷḷāl °irumaṭic[ō*]laniṇ kiḷait tirumañcanacālai **dāṇaṇ**
 ceytaruḷāviruntu **pāṇḍyakulāśani**vaḷanāṭṭut tañcāvūr kūrattut tañcāvūr nām
 °eṭuppicca tirukkarrali **śrīrājarājīśvaram**uṭaiyārkkku nāṇ kuṭuttanavum °akkaṇ
 kuṭuttanavum nam peṇṭukaḷ kuṭuttanavum mar[ru]m kuṭutt[ā]r kuṭuttanavum
 śrīvimāṇattilk kallil[ē*] veṭṭuka °enru tiruvāy molīñcaruḷa veṭṭina

... in his twenty-sixth year, twentieth day, while, graciously rejoicing of making gifts (while we were) in the ablution hall, east of the (hall named) Irumaṭicōḷa inside the palace at Tanjore, our glorious mouth graciously uttered: “Our gifts (literally: what we gave) to the Lord of the glorious Rājarājīśvaram of the glorious stone temple that we have had built in Tanjore, in the vaḷanātu (province) of Pāṇḍyakulāśani, in the kūrram (district) of Tanjore, the gifts of our elder sister, our wives, and, besides,

other donors, let it be engraved on the stone of the glorious *vimāna* (temple)!” What has been engraved (is as follows): ...

Here, in contrast with the *meykkīrtti*, we find a Tamil text with a few Sanskrit loanwords (entirely or partially) in Grantha, whereas others are fully naturalised (*tirumañcanacālai*).

In contrast, thus, to the early Pāṇḍya experiments with Tamil eulogy, much influenced by the Sanskrit literary model, we see that in *meykkīrttis* a distance is consciously taken from this model. Relying on the Puṛam tradition (heroic poetry) of the Caṅkam corpus of the beginning of the first millennium CE, rather than on Sanskrit *praśasti*, the Cōḷa *meykkīrttis* mark a clear break with the Pāṇḍya tradition in that they are more pronouncedly antiquarian.¹⁸⁰ The Sanskrit literary tradition of *praśasti* was probably a trigger for the emergence of public expressive Tamil inscriptions, but the Cōḷa *meykkīrttis* stand out as an example of conscious and extreme localisation of public eulogy, not fitting Pollock’s theory of vernacularisation. They attest to a tangible Tamil particularism and are an expression of awareness of Tamil literary history as well as of a strong (pre-nationalist) regional Tamil identity.

In Cōḷa-period stone inscriptions, which are ubiquitous on temple walls in Tamil Nadu, the expressive and eulogistic function is almost exclusively occupied by the Tamil language in the form of the *meykkīrttis* that are found as preambles, even if many are not royal inscriptions.¹⁸¹ Expressive Sanskrit stone inscriptions are relatively rare in Tamil Nadu where Tamil can also express cosmopolitan pretensions of universal lordship. In Tanjore, which is replete with royal inscriptions, Sanskrit is rare. We have seen the case of the introductory Sanskrit stanza specifying, as on the seal of a copper plate grant, that the inscription records a royal order, and there is a Sanskrit *praśasti* inscribed on stone (also beginning with this *śloka*).¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Francis (2013b).

¹⁸¹ See Orr (2009: 98).

¹⁸² Brocquet (1993).

In the meantime, we still find bilingual copper plates. I count 20 Cōḷa copper-plate grants in Tamil Nadu, but I must here make an important distinction. There are, on the one hand, copper plates issued by the Cōḷa kings, explicitly involved in the transaction as donors, and bearing their royal seals. The earliest examples are bilingual, with a division of labour between eulogistic Sanskrit and documentary Tamil, in continuation with the later Pallavas plates and in contrast with the earlier Pāṇḍya ones.¹⁸³ Plates produced after the spread of *meykkīrtti* (around 1000 CE) most regularly contain in their Tamil section a *meykkīrtti*, but “embedded”.¹⁸⁴ Indeed it is not placed prominently at the beginning of the Tamil section, like in the Tamil eulogy of the early Pāṇḍya plates, but included, almost incidentally, when it is narrated how the royal order reached the locality.¹⁸⁵ On the other hand, there are copper plates issued under the Cōḷa kings, not by themselves, but by a subordinate chief or a temple authority.¹⁸⁶ The king is here in no way involved in the transaction or statement recorded, but appears only in his regnal year used for internal dating. That these are not plates issued by the chancellery is confirmed by the absence (or at least absence of mention in the reports) of an authenticating seal soldered onto

¹⁸³ See Utayēntiram I (SII 2.76), Vēḷaṅcēri (Nagaswamy 1979), Aṅṅil (EI 15.5), Madras Museum (SII 3.128), Tiruvāḷaṅkāṭu (SII 3.205), Karantai (Krishnan 1984), Ecālam (Nagaswamy 1987), Larger Leiden (EI 22.34), Tiruvintaḷūr (Caṅkaranārāyaṅaṅ 2011), and Cārāla (EI 25.25) plates. Only the Smaller Leiden plates (EI 22.35) are entirely in Tamil, but they are in fact an annex to the Larger Leiden plates. The Paḷḷaṅ Kōyil plates (Subramaniam 1959b) are incomplete (only 6 plates in Tamil) and possibly originally begun with a Sanskrit section. The Utayēntiram II plates (EI 3.14) are incomplete (only 2 plates in Sanskrit).

¹⁸⁴ Orr (2009: 102).

¹⁸⁵ The royal order is dated to a Cōḷa regnal year and preceded by the *meykkīrtti*.

¹⁸⁶ These are the two Tirucceṅkōṭu sets (SII 3.212–213) and the Tirukkaḷar set (SII 3.207–211), which in fact comprises five different plates (and is thus counted as five plates in my total of 20 Cōḷa plates) of different internal dates concerning properties of the Tirukkaḷar temple.

the ring. These examples of the appropriation of a royal medium by local authorities are entirely in Tamil and the Cōla regnal year is occasionally preceded by a *meykkīrtti* as a way of attracting royal prestige or attention.¹⁸⁷ So there is, I believe, a marked difference between royal and non-royal Cōla copper-plate grants and we should take care to always compare coterminous specimens.

7.4 Later Examples of Bilingual Eulogies

We may now turn to some examples of bilingual eulogies from Karnataka and Āndhra, where the two languages do the work of praising in discrete portions of the same inscription, as well as an example from Tamil Nadu, which I believe is rather exceptional.

In Karnataka, the Gadag inscription begins with Sanskrit verses followed by Kannada verse and prose. It contains a eulogy of the Cālukyas and records the establishment of a Mīmāṃsā school by the Brahmin Someśvara.

29 — Gadag beam inscription — 1098 CE — EI 15.24.

In Tamil Nadu, at Cidambaram, Naralokavīra/Naralōkavīraṅ is praised in thirty-one Sanskrit verses (of various metres) and thirty-seven Tamil verses (*veṅpās*).

30 — Cidambaram — Early 12th CE — SII 4.225. See Vēnkaṭacāmi 1959: 36–43; Cox 2016: 182ff.

In Āndhra, on three sides of a pillar at Phiraṅgipuram, we find twenty-two Sanskrit stanzas and three Telugu stanzas composed by Śrīnātha.¹⁸⁸

31 — Phiraṅgipuram stone pillar inscription — 1410 CE — EI 11.33A.

¹⁸⁷ SII 3.207 consists almost exclusively of the *meykkīrtti* of Rājendracōla I and specifies in just two lines the extent of a temple's land.

¹⁸⁸ On Śrīnātha, also known for his transmitted poems, see Rao and Shulman (2012).

The Sanskrit verses consist of invocations and a eulogy of the Redḍi kings of Koṇḍaviḍu, record the foundation of a tank by a queen, describe this tank, and mention the poet (Śrīnātha). Two of these stanzas are also found in the *Śrīgāradīpikā*, a commentary on the *Amaruśataka* by Kōmaṭi Vēma, whereas three others are taken from the *Mahābhārata*. The Telugu stanzas record the completion of the tank and also describe it.

Another vantage point on multilingualism is to address the topic corpus-wise, i.e. dynasty-wise, assessing which languages are used for praising the king and how (in discrete portions of one inscription or in separate inscriptions), but I must delay this task for another time.¹⁸⁹

8. Mixed-Language inscriptions IV: Maṇippiravāḷam

We have already encountered above several cases of loanwords in otherwise monolingual inscriptions. In the Tamil epigraphical context, scholars sometimes describe as Maṇippiravāḷam the language of inscriptions in which Tamil and Sanskrit words are mixed, even though a clear definition is not always explicit.¹⁹⁰ We have also underlined the specificity of the Tamil context where Sanskrit loanwords can be graphically marked as such by writing them down in Grantha as opposed to another script (Tamil, Vaṭṭeluttu). I will argue below for a narrower definition of epigraphical Maṇippiravāḷam, first restricting it to a graphic phenomenon (i.e. when Sanskrit loanwords are written in Grantha, not when they are naturalised) and second applying this label *stricto sensu* for the cases where Sanskrit and Tamil share the same roles. To begin with, let us determine to what kind of

¹⁸⁹ For an analysis of the discursive spheres and styles of Tamil and Sanskrit in Tamil epigraphy, see Orr (2009: 98ff.).

¹⁹⁰ See Krishnan (IEP, intro); Orr (2009); Orr (2013: 327–8): “mixed Tamil-Sanskrit language — an inscriptional *maṇipravāla* in which Sanskrit words are combined with Tamil ones”; Lubin (2013: 445).

non-epigraphical texts the term Maṇḍipiravāḷam (“rubies and coral”) has been traditionally applied.

8.1 Defining Maṇḍipiravāḷam

Maṇḍipiravāḷam (Tamil spelling) or Maṇḍipravāḷa/Maṇḍipravāḷa (Sanskrit spelling) has been primarily used in the history of Indian textuality to refer to the mixed language of texts involving, on the one hand, Sanskrit and, on the other hand, a Dravidian language. In Kerala, the term denotes a literary, poetic, and metrical language mixing Keraḷabhāṣā (i.e. early Malayalam) and Sanskrit, as theorised in the *Līlātilakam* (late 14th century).¹⁹¹ In Tamil Nadu, the term refers to a commentarial Vaiṣṇava idiom in which Sanskrit is mixed with Tamil.¹⁹² However, I have not been able to find early attestations of the term applied to such Vaiṣṇava commentaries, which appear as early as the end of 12th century (*Ārāyirappaṭi* by Tirukkurukaippirāṇ Piḷḷai on *Tiruvāymoli*) and deal with Vaiṣṇava Tamil Bhakti hymns.¹⁹³ Sanskrit appears there in the form of supporting Sanskrit scriptures (recast or not) or concepts in the form of loanwords. In Tamil Nadu, besides Vaiṣṇava Maṇḍipiravāḷam, there is also Jaina Maṇḍipiravāḷam, examples of which are the *Śrīpurāṇa*, narrating the life of 63 “heroes”, and commentaries.¹⁹⁴ Reference has also been made to Śaiva Maṇḍipiravāḷam.¹⁹⁵

However, as pointed out by Hopkins, referring to Venkatachari,¹⁹⁶ Maṇḍipiravāḷam is not “purely a matter of the Tamil and Sanskrit

¹⁹¹ See Freeman (1998; 2013) and Goren Arzony in this volume.

¹⁹² See Venkatachari (1978); Hopkins (2002: 30ff.); Raman (2007: 62ff.); Anandakichenin and McCann (2020); McCann and Anandakichenin in this volume.

¹⁹³ See Raman (2007: 64 and n54) for an anonymous, undated Vaiṣṇava verse mentioning Maṇḍipiravāḷam, but in a different sense.

¹⁹⁴ See Chakravarthi (1974: 126); Emmrich (2011: 631, 633).

¹⁹⁵ Raman (2007: 63 and n50).

¹⁹⁶ Venkatachari (1978: 167).

languages".¹⁹⁷ Jinasena (9th c.), in the *Jayadhavala*, refers to the mixture of Sanskrit and Prakrit in the *Ṣaḍkhaṇḍāgama*. Abhinavagupta (11th c.), in the *Abhinavabhāratī*,¹⁹⁸ mentions *śāṭakula*, a style mixing Sanskrit and Kashmiri dialect, and compares it to the *maṇipravāla* of *dakṣiṇapatha*, which mixes *saṃskṛta* and *deśabhāṣā*.¹⁹⁹ The term Maṇipravāla has been used in other literary contexts,²⁰⁰ but the notion is applied there by modern scholars to texts not traditionally described as such, as far as I know. To be complete, mention must be made of another early definition of Maṇipravālam:²⁰¹ in the *Vīracōliyam*, an 11th-century Tamil grammar, *maṇipravālam* is contrasted with *viraviyal*.

iṭaiyē vaṭavelut teytil viraviyal iṇṭetukai
naṭaiyētu millā maṇippira vāḷanar reyvaccollin
iṭaiyē muṭiyum patamuṭait tām ...
 (*Vīracōliyam*, *Alaṅkārappaṭalam* 40abc = *Vīracōliyam* 182abc, p. 711)

If one inserts northern letters (*vaṭav eḷuttu*) in the midst, (this) is *viraviyal* (something that has the nature, *iyal*, of mixing, *viravu*). *Maṇipravālam* is that which possesses *pada* (*patam*, foot or line of a stanza; i.e. a metrical composition) which is complete (in) the midst with good divine words (*nal*

¹⁹⁷ Hopkins (2002: 250n19).

¹⁹⁸ *Abhinavabhāratī* (p. 379 ad *Nāṭyaśāstra* 32.384).

¹⁹⁹ See also Raman (2007: 63), who suggests that Jinasena does not in fact refer to a hybrid language.

²⁰⁰ See Venkatachari (1978: 170–1) for the Telugu literary tradition, or Panikkar (1946) for Old-Javanese Kawi poetry. In present-day Tamil Nadu the term seems to be used for Tamil texts containing many Sanskrit loanwords, whether naturalised or not. For the term applied to what is also known as Brahmin Tamil, see Ciotti and Sathyanarayanan in this volume.

²⁰¹ For an early Caṅkam attestation, but of another purport than mixing languages, see Raman (2007: 63).

teyvac collin = Sanskrit words), without any occurrence of *etukai* (rhyme) here. (...)

According to Monius, this means that when “Sanskrit letters are interspersed with Tamil, the style is known as a “mixture” (*viraviyal*); when Sanskrit words are mixed with Tamil, the style is known as rubies and coral”.²⁰² The *Vīracōḷiyam* is presumably concerned here only with metrical compositions, acceptable poetic forms which contain Sanskrit words. The term *vaṭav eḷuttu*, “northern letters” rather than “Sanskrit letters”, is an issue as *eḷuttu* can refer to phonemes as well as to letters. It seems to me possible that *vaṭav eḷuttu* refers here to script, i.e. Grantha. This is why I would restrict the label epigraphical Maṇippiravāḷam to inscriptions with Sanskrit loanwords written in Grantha (that is, not when Sanskrit loanwords are naturalised, as *tatsamas* or *tadbhavas*, and written in Tamil script, for instance). In other words, epigraphical Maṇippiravāḷam is a graphic phenomenon.

I would also restrict the label to inscriptions in which both languages share the same role. Since I lack information about Jaina and Śaiva Maṇippiravāḷam, my argument here is based on Kerala and Tamil Vaiṣṇava Maṇippiravāḷam. In the Tamil Vaiṣṇava context the term applies to the language of a certain type of commentary, mixing prose and verse quotations, as well as to doctrinal texts (*Rahasyagrantha*) and hagiographies. In Kerala it applies to metrical compositions, as it also seems to do in the *Vīracōḷiyam*. Another difference is the presence or not of Sanskrit case-endings. They are found in Kerala Maṇippiravāḷam, where even Malayalam words can be inflected as Sanskrit words, whereas in Vaiṣṇava Tamil Maṇippiravāḷam, the syntax and the endings, even for Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha, are Tamil.²⁰³ What seems common to both types is

²⁰² Monius (2001: 119).

²⁰³ There are, though rare, a few exceptions to this general rule. See McCann and Anandakichenin in this volume.

the equality of both languages. In Kerala, their mixing itself characterises proper poetry. In the Vaiṣṇava Tamil context, Maṇippiravāḷam developed in the context of Ubhayavedānta, which claims that both Sanskrit and Tamil are proper and equal languages for religious scriptures.²⁰⁴ To summarise, Maṇippiravāḷam is a poetical and metrical style/genre/language in the *Vīracōḷiyam* and in the *Līlātilakam*, which both have an aesthetical literary approach of the notion. In the Tamil Vaiṣṇava context, Maṇippiravāḷam is defined from the doctrinal point of view of Ubhayavedānta, which asserts that Sanskrit and Tamil scriptures are equally valid. In any case, what seems to me important is that both languages involved stand on an equal foot.

8.2 Epigraphical Maṇippiravāḷam

I thus propose to use the label Maṇippiravāḷam for (sections of) inscriptions in which both languages are mingled not only textually in the sentence itself, but also functionally. In other words, extending the notion from verse (as in *Vīracōḷiyam* and *Līlātilakam*) so as to include prose, epigraphical Maṇippiravāḷam applies, *stricto sensu*, in my definition, to literary, expressive, eulogistic (sections of) inscriptions where Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha occur in a large proportion (that is, not just a few words) and where the expressive function is equally carried by both Sanskrit and Tamil. In such cases there is no diglossia (a higher code and a lower one), as both languages fulfil the same function, not one after the other like in the early Pāṇḍya copper plates, but in their mixing itself. This said, in the examples given below, we will see that Sanskrit often has the lion's share, but this share will seemingly decrease as Sanskrit loanwords were naturalised to Tamil (and presumably cease at a certain point of time to be perceived as loanwords).

²⁰⁴ On Ubhayavedānta, see Carman and Narayanan (1989). The unidentified Vaiṣṇava verse quoted by Raman (2007: 64 and n54) mentions “the Vedas in both languages” (*irumōḷiyiṅ āraṇam*).

For instance, the Viriñcipuram inscription that Lubin describes as an example of “a full-blown epigraphic *mañipravālam*”,²⁰⁵ would, for me, be just an example of epigraphical Mañippiravālam *lato sensu*, whatever the amount of Sanskrit loanwords, because a legal diglossia operates in that case, with an overarching Sanskrit formal vocabulary.

32 — Viriñcipuram — 1425 CE — SII 1.56. See Lubin (2013: 442–5).

More tendentious, but equally loosely defined, in my view, as epigraphical Mañippiravālam is a Teñkāci inscription quoted by Orr, where we find architectural terms (which could have been naturalised, and were so in other inscriptions) in Grantha (*mañḍapa*) because, I guess, these are technical terms in consonance with Sanskrit Āgamic terminology and supposedly actualised that way in reference to that norm.

33 — Teñkāci — 1474 CE — SII 5.762. See Orr (2013: 305–1).

So we might say that in loose epigraphical Mañippiravālam, where Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha mostly refer to realia, titles, proper names, or formal notions, there is often a form of diglossia with Sanskrit vocabulary chosen for its prestige, normative authority, or accuracy. But of course, in the course of time, this diglossia might gradually fade with the naturalisation of loanwords. Nevertheless, I must admit there is a grey zone where we can ponder whether we are dealing with epigraphical Mañippiravālam *stricto* or *lato sensu*.

As for epigraphical Mañippiravālam *stricto sensu*, I would, for instance, consider passages from the Tamil eulogistic sections of early Pāñḍya copper plates where we find Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha, in whatever proportion, as the type of plates itself shows that both languages are equally

²⁰⁵ Lubin (2013: 445).

able to express praise.²⁰⁶ Another telling example is also an early Pāṇḍya inscription, the Vaikai river-bed slab inscription. Particularly interesting is the long phrase preceding the date, which is a eulogy of the king Cēntaṅ.

34 — Vaikai river-bed slab inscription — 650–750 CE²⁰⁷ — EI 38.4; IEP 4.
Lines 1–9. The distribution of lines corresponds to the metrical structure identified by Krishnan (IEP).²⁰⁸ Grantha in bold, Vaṭṭeluttu in Roman.

pāṇḍyakulamaniḥpradīpanāy prādurbhāvañ cey[.]tu
vikramañ[.]kaḷāl araiçaṭak·ki marañ· ketut·taram· peruk[.]ki
°**agrāhāram**.²⁰⁹ pala cey·**taparimitamākiya**²¹⁰ **hiraṇyagarbha-**
gosahasratulābhārat·tu **mahādānañ**[.]kaḷār· kali kaṭin·tu
maṅgalapurannagaram āk·ki viṛ·rirun·tu ceñ·k[ō*] [i.e. ceñkōl] naṭāvi
nin·ra k[ō*]c[ē*]n·taṅ marraim·patāvatu **rājyasamvatsarañ** cel·lāniṛka ...

He made his appearance as the jewel(-like) lamp of the Pāṇḍya lineage.²¹¹

He claimed kingship with his acts of heroism. He destroyed the heroism [of other kings]. He made virtue prosper.

He made many *agrahāras*. He drove off the Kali (age) with his innumerable/immeasurable *mahādānas*,²¹² that were the Hiraṇyagarbha, the Gosahasra, and the Tulābhāra.

²⁰⁶ See the larger Ciṅṅamaṅūr plates (#27.2), even though in that sample Sanskrit words are few and sometimes technically precise such as *purohita*; see also the *biruda* titulature from the Vēlvikkuṭi plates (#36).

²⁰⁷ 7th c. (EI 38.4), ca. 630 (IEP), “perhaps eighth century” (Pollock 2006: 322).

²⁰⁸ During the February 2016 NETamil workshop none of the participants could identify the metre.

²⁰⁹ On *agrāhāra* instead of *agrahāra*, see, as pointed out to me by Arlo Griffiths, Ghosh (2015: 18).

²¹⁰ In *cey**ta**parimitamākiya*, for the syllable **ta**, of which the *t* (for *t'*) belongs to a Tamil word (*ceytu*) and the *a* belongs to a Sanskrit word (*aparimita*), a choice between Grantha and Tamil script was made in favour of the first.

²¹¹ The string of absolutives at the beginning are here translated by finite verbs.

²¹² *Mahādānas* “great gifts” are described in the Purāṇas.

He created the city of Maṅgalapura: the king Cēntaṅ who constantly sat with majesty and ruled with his upright sceptre. While his fiftieth regnal year was current ...²¹³



Fig. 18. Photo: Babu N. Ramaswamy.

The alternation of script reflects the intimate mixing of Sanskrit and Tamil in the praise of the Pāṇḍya ruler. Such a mixture contrasts with the praise in verse of another Pāṇḍya king found at the beginning of the 9th-century Erukkaṅkuṭi stone inscription (IEP 18) entirely written in Vaṭṭeḷuttu with very few Sanskrit loanwords (all naturalised). Pollock commented upon the Vaikai inscription to demonstrate that vernacularisation was also at play in the Tamil cultural sphere,²¹⁴ a point with which I agree, except that it was not a main-stream practice and that it was a short-lived experience. According to Pollock, we have here “apparently one of the earliest instances of an aestheticized public political discourse in Tamil” and of “the language and style of Sanskrit political poetry gradually being domesticated to the ways of the Tamil world” as “a number of the topoi familiar from Sanskrit

²¹³ The remaining portion of the inscription is lacunose and concerns hydraulic works, possibly by Cēntaṅ or by another individual.

²¹⁴ Pollock (2006: 322–3).

praśasti discourse—the troped beauty of the king (“jewel lamp”), his martial valour, moral perfection, and generosity—reappear here in local garb”.²¹⁵ We have seen that the first statement is an over-generalisation in the sense that we have earlier examples of expressive Tamil than those Pollock mentions. As for the second statement, I agree: it indeed fits my definition of epigraphical Maṇippiravāḷam, but it applies to a few inscriptions only. As for presenting such a piece as part of a line of development which leads towards *meykkīrtti*, I must disagree (see above).

The Vaikai inscription, whether metrical or not, compares nicely with samples of Kerala *maṇippiravāḷam*, except that we do not have Sanskrit case-endings here. It thus compares even better with early poems in Kannada, as no Sanskrit case-endings are used there. The only difference is that there is no script distinction in these Kannada poems, as Kannada and Sanskrit are written in the same script in the Kannada area.

Another early example of epigraphical Maṇippiravāḷam *stricto sensu* is to be found in the southern corridor of the Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl at Kāñcīpuram, with some of the prose labels to narrative panels describing the reign of Nandivarman II, such as the first in the series.

35 — Kāñcī, labels in the Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl temple — 750–800 CE —
SII 4.135. See Francis (2013b: 382ff., where the text of label A is given).

Here we have not a eulogy, but a historical political narrative. How to explain the choice of this hybrid language here? Why not simply have a Sanskrit text as previously? The reasons are not clear but we must note that, as a series of labels to narrative panels explaining how the king of a collateral line—who will be known under his *abhiṣekanāman* Nandivarman II—ascended the throne, this is, in many aspects, a very unusual type of inscription.

²¹⁵ Pollock (2006: 322).

8.3 Biruda Titulature

Another area where epigraphical Maṅṅipiravāḷam *stricto sensu* can be sought is in royal titulatures consisting in lists of *birudas*. There are inscriptions consisting only of such lists, but also sections of inscriptions consisting of a string of *birudas* when a king is described. We have already encountered inscriptions which could equally have been discussed here as illustrative examples, e.g. the list of *birudas* of Mahendravarman I Pallava (r. ca. 590–630) mixing Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil *birudas*, with script peculiarities (#25). Approximately one century later, Narasiṃhavarman II (r. ca. 700–730) has an impressive list on the miniature temples at the Kailāsanātha complex in Kāñcī. All are in Sanskrit, and the same list is engraved four times, in four different scripts (i.e. two varieties of Grantha and two varieties of a northern script), on four superposed elements of the base of these miniature temples.²¹⁶ In Centalai (8th c.; #26), we find Sanskrit and Tamil *birudas*. Again in the Kailāsanātha complex in Kāñcī, we find a bilingual inscription (ca. 1000 CE) in which the middle section (lines 21ff.), at the transition between the (lacunose) Sanskrit and the Telugu sections, is a long list of Sanskrit *birudas* of Jaṭācoḍa Bhīma (SII 1.144; EI 21.7).²¹⁷ In the Tamil section of the early Pāṇḍya Vēḷvikkūṭi plates the king Neṭuñcaṭaiyaṅ is praised in a string of *birudas*, most of them Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha—marked with 3rd person singular Tamil suffix *-aṅ* Granthaised as *n*, like in Centalai—as well as some *birudas* in Tamil.

²¹⁶ Actually the fourth list is shorter as the script is more florid and requires more room. This is also an example of digraphic, even quadrigraphic inscriptions.

²¹⁷ Sankaranarayanan (2009) argues that this inscription is not a commission of Jaṭācoḍa Bhīma, which would prove his occupation of Kāñcīpuram at the very beginning of 11th c., but a copy of a lost inscription from Drākṣārama, made in order to praise Rājarāja I Cōḷa by showing the valour of the rival king he defeated.

36 — Vē|vikkuṭi — Second half of 8th c.²¹⁸ — EI 17.16; TPC: 1–48; IEP 7.
Plate 7r2–7 = lines 98–103. Grantha in bold, Vaṭṭe|uttu in Roman.

śrīvaran· śrīmanoharan· cinac·c[ō*]laṅ· puṇaṅ·pūliyan· vitakan·maṣan·
[i.e. -**kaḷmaṣan·**] **vinayaviśrutan·** [i.e. -**viśrutan·**] **vikramapāraḷakan· vīrapurokan·**
marud·balan· mānyasāsanan· manūpaman· mardditavīran· giristhiran·
gītikinnaran· kṛpālayan· kṛtāpatānan· kalippakai kaṇḍakanīṣṭuran·
[i.e. -**niṣṭhuran·**] **kāryyadaṭṣiṇan· kārmukhapārtthan·** [i.e. **karmuka-**] **parāntakan·**
paṇḍitavatsalan· pariṇṛṇan· pāpabhūru kurai°urukaṭar·paṭait·tāṇaiguṇaṅṛḥyan·
gūḍhanṛṇṇayan· [i.e. -**nirṇṇayan·**] nirai°urumalar·maṇinīṅ·muṭineriya[r.*]koṅ·
neṭuñ·cāṭaiya[n*]

Note in particular: (1) the combination of Sanskrit in Grantha and Tamil in Vaṭṭe|uttu in the compound ending in **-guṇaṅṛḥyan·**, an instance of mixed-language *biruda*; (2) the influence of Tamil spelling in **vikramapāraḷakan·** (where *-pāraḷa* stands for *-pāraḷa*, but was probably pronounced the same); (3) the spelling *tṣ* for *kṣ*, usual in the Tamil area, in **kāryyadaṭṣiṇan·** (i.e. *-daksīṇa*); and (4) that Sanskrit overpowers Tamil in quantity.²¹⁹

Moving further in time, the Vijayanagara kings also had *biruda* titulatures, which were found at the beginning of inscriptions along with the date in a fashion similar to *meykkīrtti*. These heavily Sanskritised titulatures were used throughout the empire in Telugu, Kannada, and Tamil records²²⁰ and were also freely used by subordinates in the Vijayanagara realm. I provide here only a sample from Tamil Nadu. Let us start with two

²¹⁸ Ca. 770 CE (IEP), 768–815 CE for the reign of the issuing king (Cuppiramaṇiyam 1983: 169).

²¹⁹ For another example of a string of *birudas* in Sanskrit and Grantha in the Tamil section of an inscription, which is available in two copies (one on copper, the other on stone), see lines 155ff. of the Cārāla plates (EI 25.25) and lines 420ff. of the Kaniyākumāri pillar inscription (EI 18.4), both dated to 1069 CE.

²²⁰ See: V. Filliozat (1973); Cuppiramaṇiyam (1983: 281ff., 292ff.) for comments on the *birudas*, and 313ff. for references, with the caveat that he heavily Tamilises the original texts (replacing Grantha by Tamil script).

inscriptions from the same site (again the Kailāsanātha complex in Kāñcī) and same year, containing an order of the same person (Koppaṇṇaṇ) to the authorities of the same temple, but with marked differences in spelling and script.

37 — Kāñcī — 1364 CE — SII 1.86–87. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

SII 1.86	SII 1.87
svasti śrīmaṇumahāmaṇḍaleśvara [i.e. śrīman-] °arirāyavibhaṭaṇ pāṣaikku tappuvarāyar kaṇṭaṇ pūrvvapaścīmasamudrādhīpati śrī kampaṇa°uṭaiyar pridhivirājyam [i.e. prthivī-] paṇṇi °aruḷāniṇra śakābdam °āyirattu irunūrru °eṇpattu °āriṇ m[ē*] cellāniṇra vi svā vasuvaruṣattu ...	sva[sti śrī] maṇumahāmaṇṭalīcaraṇ [i.e. śrīman-] °ari°ir[ā]yavipāṭaṇ pā[caikku] [i.e. pāṣaikku] tappuvarāya[r*] kaṇṭaṇ pū[rvva]paccīmasamudrāt[ti] ratipati śrī virakumārakampaṇa°uṭaiyar prituvi °iracciyam paṇṇi °aruḷāniṇra cahāttam °āyirattu irunūrru °eṇpattu °āriṇ m[ē*] cellāniṇra vi svāt ivaruṣam ...

For the sake of comparison, here is the same titlature (or elements of titlature) in later inscriptions.

38 — Tirumalai — 1374 CE — SII 1.72. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

śubham astu svasti śrīmaṇumah[ā]maṇṭali[ka]raṇ [i.e. **śrīman-**]
°arirāyavipāṭaṇ pā[lc]aikku [i.e. **pāṣaikku**] tappuvarāyar kaṇṭaṇ
pūruvadakṣiṇa-**paścimottarasa[mu]drādhīpa[ti]** śrīvirakampaṇa°u[t]ai[ya]r
kumaraśrikampaṇa-°uṭaiyar kumārar **śrī**°ommaṇa°uṭaiyaṅku **pridhivirājyam**
[i.e. **prthivī-**] cell[ā*]niṇra cekābdam ...

39 — Kirāmam — 1395 CE — SII 22.194. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

*svasti śrīman·mahāmaṇḍaliśvaran· harirāyavibhātan· bhāṣai*kkut tappuvarāyar kaṇṭaṇ *śrīharihararāyar* kumārar *śrī*viraviruppaṇ[ṇa°uṭaiy]ar [*piruthvirā*]jyam· paṇṇi °aruḷāniṇra cakāptam ...

40 — Tirumalai — 1452 CE — SII 23.67. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

śubham astu svasti śrīmanmahāmaṇḍal[ē][cu]raṇ hariyar[ā]yavipātaṇ pāṣai*kkut tappuvarāyar kaṇṭaṇ mūvarāyar kaṇṭaṇ kaṇṭaṇātu [koṇṭu*] koṇṭaṇātu koṭātāṇ °inturāyacuratāṇa °irācātirācaṇ °irācaparam[ē*]curaṇ pūruvadakṣiṇapaccima-°uttaracamuttirātīpati *śrī*viraketaṇṭai kaṇṭaruḷiya pīratāpa°immaṭit[ē*]varāya-*mahār*āyar *prti*[vi*]°irācciyam paṇṇi °aruḷāniṇra cakāttam ...

41 — Pūvālaikkuṭi rock inscription — 1549 CE — SII 23.148. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

śubham astu svasti śrī śrīmanmakāmaṇḍal[ē]cura m[ē*]tiṇimicurakaṇṭakataṭṭāri cāluva°a[riya]rāyavipātaṇ pāṣai*kkut tappuvarāyar kaṇṭaṇ mūvarāyar kaṇṭaṇ kaṇṭaṇātu [ko]ṇṭu koṇṭaṇātu koṭātāṇ tulukkar taḷavipātaṇ tulukkar m[ē*]karan taviḷttāṇ pūruvateṣaṇapaccima°uttiracattacamuttirātīpati °emmaṇṭalamuṇ ko[ṇṭ-aru]ḷiya °irācātirāca°irācaparam[ē*]cura*śrī*virapīratāpaśrīcatācivat[ē*]vamaḱārāyar pīrituvirācciyam paṇṇiy aruḷāniṇra cakāttam ...

This random selection, if it is illustrative of a trend in chronological terms, indicates the gradual naturalisation of the Sanskrit loanwords. In the last example, except for the initial *maṅgala*, the Grantha letters are those that are nowadays still in use in Tamil texts. In other words, we have here the highest possible degree of naturalisation of Sanskrit loanwords. The following example, the knowledge of which I owe to Leslie Orr, is a list of the *birudas* of the Vāṇātarāyar (Bāṇa) chief Vīrapratāpa Cuntarattoḷuṭaiyār

Mahābali. This 15th-century example still contains many Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha, and serves as caution against any over-generalisation.²²¹

42 — Nekkōṇam temple-wall inscription — 1483 CE — IPS 672. Grantha in bold, Tamil script in Roman.

śubham astu °alakar tiruvullam **śubham astu svasti śrīman**·mūvarāyar· kaṇṭan·
rajayīśvarakaṇṭan **rāja**vibharan· **rājarākṣasarāman**· matiyātamaṇṇar
maṇavāḷaṇ **samarak**[ō*]lāhalaṇ vīrakañcukan· v[ē*]tiyar kāvalaṇ
bhuvane kavīraṇ **bhū**pāla-gopālaṇ **bha**ṭṭamānaṇ kātṭāṇ **para**rājadaṇḍadharan·
navakhaṇḍapara[kha]ṇḍan· **setu**mūlarakṣā[thu]randharan· [i.e. -**dhurandharan**·]
mathurāpurimahānāyakaṇ mānabhūṣaṇan· **rāja**puṅgavan· vaḷitiśekharaṇ·
rāji[ku]lasarpagaruḍan· pāṇṭiyakulāntakaṇ **garu**ṭak[ē*]tanaṇ **gaṇ**gākulottamaṇ
°alakar tam ciruttan **śrī**matuvīrapratāpacuntaratt[ō*]luṭaiyār **mahābali**-
vāṇādharāyar **prathi**virāja [sic] paṇ[ṇ]i °aruḷāninra **śakā**bdam ...

To summarise, as far as *biruda* titulatures in the Tamil area are concerned, we find purely Sanskrit lists in the early period only, then examples with varying proportions of Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha, with a tendency towards almost monoscript Tamil titulatures—with most loanwords naturalised, which makes one wonder whether there was still consciousness that these were loanwords. However, late examples with abundant Sanskrit loanwords in Grantha are still met with.

²²¹ For other Bāṇa examples, see Orr (forth.). Nagaswamy (1978: 119–21) provides, but only in translation, a string of *birudas* of Raghunātha Nāyaka of Tanjore from a Tamil copper-plate charter dated to 1608 CE.

9. Trilingual and Quadrilingual Inscriptions

Before concluding, let us mention examples of inscriptions in which more than two languages appear.²²² We may start with what appears to be a bilingual inscription supplemented by another inscription in a third language.²²³ At Sravanabelagola, in Karnataka, there is, at one side of the feet of the colossal statue of Gomateśvara, a strict bilingual Tamil/Kannada inscription, while a Marathi inscription is found at the other side.

43 — Sravanabelagola — End of 10th c. and beginning of 12th c. — EI 7.14.

On the proper right of Gomateśvara:

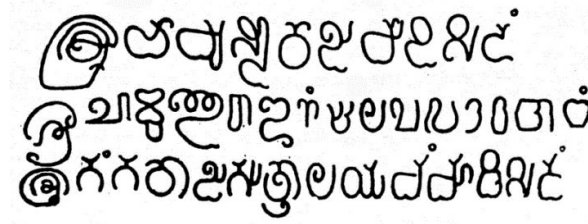


Fig. 19. From Rice (1909): plate facing p. 47.

(R1) *śricāmuṇḍarāja māḍisidaṃ* (Kannada script and language; late 10th c.)

(R2) *śricāmuṇḍarājan*· *ceyv-vit-tāṇ*· (Grantha in bold; Vaṭṭeluttu in Roman; late 10th c.)

(R3) *śrīgaṃgarāja suttālayavaṃ māḍisidaṃ* (Kannada script and language; early 12th c.)

²²² See also Sircar (1965: 35n1, 53, 73ff.), notably Sanskrit/Telugu/Oriya and Persian/Sanskrit/Gujarati examples; Salomon (1998: 102, 109), for other examples, many referred to here; and # 25.1.

²²³ Each of these three records, separately considered, can be labelled as mixed-language inscriptions, since they contain Sanskrit loanwords.

On the proper left of Gomateśvara:

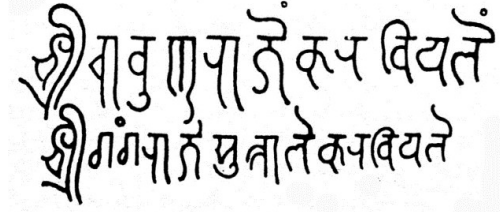


Fig. 20. From Rice (1909): plate facing p. 47.

(L1) *śrīcāvunḍarājeṃ karaviyaleṃ* (Nāgarī script and Marathi language; early 12th c.)

(L2) *śrīgaṅgarāje suttāle karaviyale{ṃ}* (Nāgarī script and Marathi language; early 12th c.)

It thus appears that at the end of the 10th century the commissioning of the statue by Cāmuṅḍarāja was recorded in Kannada (R1) and Tamil (R2). When Gaṅgarāja, more than a century later, added the enclosure this was recorded in Kannada (R3) and Marathi (L2). And the initial commissioning by Cāmuṅḍarāja was then also recorded in Marathi (L1).

In Āndhra, in the Kurkiyāla rock inscription—a record of the pious deeds of Jinavallabha, a relative of the famous poet Pampa, who is mentioned in the record—three different languages are used. We find successively an opening *maṅgala* in Sanskrit, a long prose passage in Kannada, three Sanskrit stanzas, six Kannada stanzas, three Telugu stanzas, and a short prose passage in Kannada (stating the name of the engraver).

44 — Kurkiyāla rock inscription — Mid-10th c. — *Epigraphia Āndhrīca* 2.3.

In the late-12th-century Kurgōḍ trilingual from Karnataka, we find successively three Sanskrit stanzas (invocations, the first being the *maṅgalaśloka* of Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*), one Prakrit stanza (an invocation in Śaurasenī-like Prakrit), and twenty-one Kannada stanzas (invocations, eulogy of the Cālukya king and of his Sinda vassals, of the place and other people) where verses alternate with prose.

45 — Kurgōḍ stele — 1173/4 and 1181/2 CE — EI 14.19A.

And finally, what follows are two even more exceptional items. First is the Galle (Sri Lanka) trilingual stele, of the beginning of the 15th century.

46 — Galle trilingual stele — 1409 CE — EZ 3.36.

The stele is inscribed on its front face with three sections in three different languages: Tamil in Tamil script, Chinese in Chinese script, and Persian in Arabic script. It was apparently prepared in China and brought by the Chinese admiral Zheng He (1371–1433). This is not a strict trilingual as each section concerns different donations by the Chinese emperor—one to a Buddhist temple (Chinese section), one to Teṇavarai Nāyiṇār [sic] or Ālvar (Śiva; Tamil section), one to a Muslim holy place (Persian section)—, but the structure of each section (for what has been deciphered) is similar: a eulogy of the Chinese emperor is followed by the details of the donation. The goal was to endow and address similarly three different communities. For the Buddhist audience, the language of the donor was chosen. According to Sen, this inscription “suggests that the Ming representatives conducted trade with Tamil and Persian merchant guilds in addition to other local traders”.²²⁴

From Burma, we have an exceptional strict quadrilingual (Pāli, Burmese, Pyu, Mon) on four faces of a pillar.²²⁵

47 — Rājakumāra’s Myinkaba Kubyaukgyi pillar inscription — 1113 CE — Taw Sein Ko and Duroiselle (1919); Griffiths and Lammerts (2015: 997, 1001–2).

²²⁴ Sen (2016: 624).

²²⁵ In fact, two pillars each engraved with the same four texts were found.

10. Conclusions

After the few Aśokan inscriptions in Aramaic and/or Greek, Indian inscriptions were composed for centuries in Prakrit, with the exception of the small corpus of Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions in Tamil from the Tamil area, with Prakrit loanwords. Then Sanskrit entered the game, first creeping into Prakrit (EHS) and then appearing in monolingual Sanskrit inscriptions, many of eulogistic purport. But Sanskrit was also documentary, in the monolingual Sanskrit copper plates for instance. In the meanwhile, other vernaculars, with Tamil at the forefront, became common epigraphical media. We thus find Sanskrit bilinguals, evincing a linguistic division of labour, mostly in non-MIA linguistic areas. Later again, Persian/Arabic and European languages came to be used, but this was beyond the scope of the present contribution.

The linguistic and functional variety of epigraphical languages in India gave rise to different kinds of inscriptions—multilingual and mixed-language—in which the relation between the different languages involved is of a varying nature. I propose to make the distinction between two types of relation:

- Diglossic (in the sense of a functional diglossia), when each language has an exclusive (or almost exclusive) discursive sphere.
- Amphiglossic, when one or more discursive spheres are shared by both languages.²²⁶

10.1 Inequality Between Languages: Diglossia

Several types of diglossic configurations are possible.

²²⁶ The opposition diglossic/amphiglossic corresponds more or less to that of heteroglossic/polyglossic (Maier 1993). A substitute for amphiglossic could be equiglossic. As for biglossic, I refrain from proposing it as Fellman (1975, not available to me) apparently uses biglossia in the sense of extended/interlanguage diglossia.

(1) *Ceremonial diglossia (Lubin) or hyperglossia (Pollock)*

Bilingualism can result from a clear-cut linguistic division of labour. In that case we have a diglossic relation between two separate sections of a single record. As Pollock puts it: Sanskrit for the eulogy, the vernacular for the documentary. This dichotomy works fairly well with many multilingual inscriptions, i.e. bilingual copper-plates as well as some stone inscriptions, the more so if they are early and royal, contain a eulogy, and come from a non-MIA linguistic environment (§6.2).

It can be objected that, even in such inscriptions, Sanskrit is still sometimes documentary. But this documentary function of Sanskrit might be residual, from the period of monolingual Sanskrit plates when Sanskrit had to be documentary. Furthermore, the function and manner of documentation in Sanskrit and in the vernaculars might not be exactly the same: Sanskrit documentary material addresses the donee(s), praising him/them as a suitable recipient of the gift, specifying what will have to be done with the gift (cult, etc.); vernacular documentary addresses the “payers”, specifying what resources they will now have to divert from the royal treasure to the recipient(s). An important point is that the vernacular does not do the work of eulogy in such a configuration. As for North Indian inscriptions, they are less relevant as counter-examples since vernacularisation occurred later in that part of the subcontinent because of the linguistic proximity between Sanskrit and North Indian vernaculars as compared to the Dravidian languages of South India.

(2) *Performative diglossia*

We also have the case of inscriptions where the performative function (*maṅgala*, invocation, imprecation) is reserved for Sanskrit (§6.3). But we have seen that, in the course of time, the vernaculars emulated Sanskrit in that function.

(3) *Legal diglossia (Lubin)*

Rather than between two separate sections of a multilingual inscription, the diglossic relation can also take place within the vernacular section of a multilingual inscription or within a monolingual vernacular inscription. This is the case of mixed-language inscriptions where legal diglossia operates, that is, as Lubin (2013) puts it, when Sanskrit terms are used not for prestige but for their precision as they refer to a formal norm conceptualised in Sanskrit Dharmaśāstric tradition.

(4) *Technical diglossia*

This notion of legal diglossia may in fact be considered as a particular case of a more generic type of technical diglossia, that is, any situation where a Sanskrit word seems to be used for its precision, for example in architectural vocabulary (#33). It remains to delineate more clearly in which lexical domains loanwords tend to occur more frequently.

A diglossic relationship is more clearly at play in multilingual inscriptions, that is, ceremonial diglossia (1) or performative diglossia (2). Legal diglossia (3) is also fairly recognisable as Lubin (2013) has demonstrated. I must admit that technical diglossia (4) is less conspicuous, and disputable.

10.2 Equality Between Languages: Amphiglossia

Several types of amphiglossic configurations are also possible.

(5) *Both languages are expressive/eulogistic while one of the two is documentary/informative*

With the rise of vernaculars—whether or not according to a process of vernacularisation as Pollock puts it, that is, with the overarching Sanskrit literary tradition as model—, there are instances where Sanskrit and the local language can have complementary roles in multilingual inscriptions. Such is the case with the early Pāṇḍya copper plates (§7.2), as far as the eulogistic section is concerned, as, along with the Sanskrit, we find a Tamil

eulogy, also metrical and deployed, as much as Sanskrit, to serve as an expressive language. The documentary function does, however, remain the almost exclusive domain of Tamil. Such complementarity does not imply that the content is strictly the same in the two eulogistic sections. These are not strict bilinguals. As we have seen with the larger Ciṅṅamaṅūr plates (#27), certain statements are found only in the Tamil eulogy, such as the mention of patronage of Tamil literary tradition, or in the Sanskrit eulogy, such as the performance of Vedic sacrifices. Another type, this time in mixed-language inscriptions, is epigraphical Maṅṅipiravāḷam *stricto sensu*, as in the Vaikai inscription (#34). Furthermore, amphiglossic eulogy can take place not only in single inscriptions, as in the examples just mentioned, but also across a corpus. For instance, we find in the Cōḷa corpus Sanskrit eulogies (mostly in copper-plate grants) and Tamil eulogies (mostly in stone inscriptions).

I propose to call such a configuration (in its three types) ceremonial amphiglossia.

This concept of ceremonial amphiglossia is in part incompatible with the analysis of Mitchell, who seems to assume a neat division of labour between languages in premodern India.²²⁷ Drawing on Maier (1993), she identifies a transition, completed in the 19th century, from a heteroglossic situation to a polyglossic one. In the heteroglossic situation, she argues that languages “were recognized as distinct, but the use of each was governed by task and content rather than by a linguistic identity claimed either by the speaker or his or her interlocutor”, that is, there was a continuum of registers, each associated to a particular language. In the latter, polyglossic, situation, “anything that could be said or done in any one language should be able to be said or done in any other language, audience notwithstanding”, that is, one language is able to assume all registers. Such a compartmentalisation of languages does not entirely hold if epigraphical sources are taken into account. As early as the 11th century, Cōḷa kings were praised in inscriptions,

²²⁷ Mitchell (2009: 162–4).

both in Sanskrit and in Tamil, sometimes in the same epigraph (as in some copper plates). But admittedly, the content and audience might differ in the two types of eulogies.

(6) *Both languages are documentary/informative*

This is found in non-eulogistic records, which address different literate communities/audiences in their own languages: for instance, the Aśokan bilinguals (§2), the trilingual at Sravanabelagola (#43), or the Bhubaneswar Oriya/Tamil bilingual (#20)—as far as multilingual inscriptions are concerned. Mixed-language inscriptions, which are not eulogistic but just informative in tone, would also be concerned.

I propose to call this configuration informative amphiglossia.

(7) *Both languages are expressive/eulogistic and documentary/informative*

Such is the case of the Galle trilingual (#46) in which a eulogy of the Chinese emperor and a specific donation are recorded in three inscriptions on the same stele. The paired inscriptions at Taḷavānūr, even though mostly eulogistic, could be considered another example (#24).

I propose to call this configuration ceremonial-cum-informative amphiglossia.

While in ceremonial amphiglossia (5) we have non-strict bilinguals, we find strict (or almost strict) bilinguals in informative diglossia (6) and ceremonial-cum-informative amphiglossia (7).

The relationships between languages in multilingual and mixed-language inscriptions can be summarised as I do in the following table. Note that a mixed-language inscription might in fact be the vernacular section of a multilingual inscription.

	Multilingual inscriptions	Mixed-language inscriptions
Diglossia	(1) Ceremonial (non-strict bilingualism) (2) Performative (non-strict bilingualism)	(3) Legal (4) Technical
Amphiglossia	(5a) Ceremonial (non-strict bilingualism) (6a) Informative (strict bilingualism) (7) Ceremonial and informative (strict bilingualism)	(5b) Ceremonial (Maṇippiravāḷam) (6b) Informative

Table 2: language relationships in multilingual and mixed-language inscriptions

What this table does not take into account is the issue of literate communities addressed in each and every case. In strict bilingualism, two different literate communities are the targets of the communication act. As for non-strict bilingualism, while it seems *a priori* that only one literate community is addressed in each section, this might in fact not be the case. We can have multiple literate communities addressed, one bilingual, addressed by the two sections of the record, and the other monolingual, addressed only by the vernacular section.

Attestations of diglossia and amphiglossia vary in time and space, with Tamil being in the forefront for the shift towards amphiglossia, as it had an early independent literary tradition. But it might also happen that the diglossic configuration is not or rarely attested in single inscriptions, as in Indonesia. This issue will have to be examined across corpora and by considering the type of documents: the Sabokingking inscription, which is the focus of Ali's criticism of Pollock, is not a eulogy, but an oath!

10.3 In Between Diglossia and Amphiglossia

The above configurations are easier to detect in multilingual rather than in mixed-language inscriptions. But even some multilingual inscriptions are problematic. For instance, a citation inscription can fall within a diglossic configuration, as with the citations of *dharmasāstra* (#22), while the nature of the configuration is less obvious in the inscription from Pagan (#23). Even more problematic are mixed-language inscriptions because they present a deeper imbrication of languages and because it is not clear whether the loanwords are still perceived as such when they are naturalised into the receiving language. Loanwords might be perceived as such by the learned or the modern researcher, but what about the composer? Furthermore, loanwords or borrowed features (such as endings in the case of EHS) are present in inscriptions in various proportions and there are no standard practices, whether we are dealing with Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions, EHS, or the insertion of Sanskrit loanwords in Tamil (sections of) inscriptions and Tamil loanwords (mostly proper nouns) in Sanskrit (sections of) inscriptions.

In mixed-language inscriptions, cases of legal diglossia can be discerned more easily than those of technical diglossia in the broader sense. It remains difficult, from case to case, to determine if Sanskrit loanwords are used because of their precision (as referent to a particular notion), because of the prestige of Sanskrit, or just because the word was available. Subbarayalu's concept of a Brahmin dialect infused with Sanskrit loanwords in temple-related records might point to some kind of cultic diglossia, but Orr's investigations suggest a more complex situation. However, epigraphical Maṇippiravāḷam *stricto sensu* is amphiglossic, even if sometimes one language is more present than the other.

In the end, we are back at our preliminary remarks. It is important to underline the variety of the documents (in genres and supports), the variety of actors involved (commissioners, redactors, engravers, audience), and the diachronic dimensions of the issues, as usages changed, as attested for instance by the script-shift in *biruda* titulatures in the Tamil area (§8.3).

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations for epigraphical publications are found in the bibliography.

BHS: Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

EHS: Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit.

MIA: Middle Indo-Aryan.

NIA: New Indo-Aryan.

RY: regnal year.

Epigraphical conventions

Unless otherwise mentioned, in quotations of inscriptions from the Tamil area, Grantha characters are in bold, Tamil or Vaṭṭeḷuttu characters are in Roman.

[a] Proposed reading of unclear letter/sign.

[a/b] Alternative readings of unclear letter/sign.

(a) Letter to be deleted.

{a} Illegible letter/sign, restored by conjecture or from another witness.

[a*] Letter/sign missing in the original and entirely restored.

[ā*] Vowel length not marked in the original and entirely restored.

· *virāma* or *puḷḷi*.

° Marks an initial vowel.

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