

Grantha script

Grantha is a script, developed by the Pallavas to write Prakrit and Sanskrit in the Tamil country.

It further evolved into the Tamil and Malayalam scripts.

The Pallavas had extensive contacts with the South-east Asian countries, which were influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism.

In these countries, the Grantha script was used to write Sanskrit scriptures.

In course of time scripts for the local languages grew out of the Grantha script

Here is the Grantha alphabet of today.
 It can be seen that many of the letters are similar to
 those of Tamil, but closer the Malayalam script

Vowels

ക	കൃ	ഈ	ഈ	ഉ	ഊ	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ	ഈ
अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः	

Consonants

ക	ഖ	ഗ	ഘ	ങ	ച	ഛ	ജ	ഝ	ഞ	ത
क	ख	ग	घ	ङ	च	छ	ज	झ	ण	त

പ	ഠ	ഡ	ഢ	ണ	ക	ഘ	ങ	ഞ	ന
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण	त	थ	द	ध	न

പ	ഫ	ബ	ബ	മ
प	फ	ब	भ	म

ഡ	ര	ല	വ	ശ	ഷ	സ	ജ	ഝ	ഞ	ഞ
य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ज	झ	ण	न



Grantha

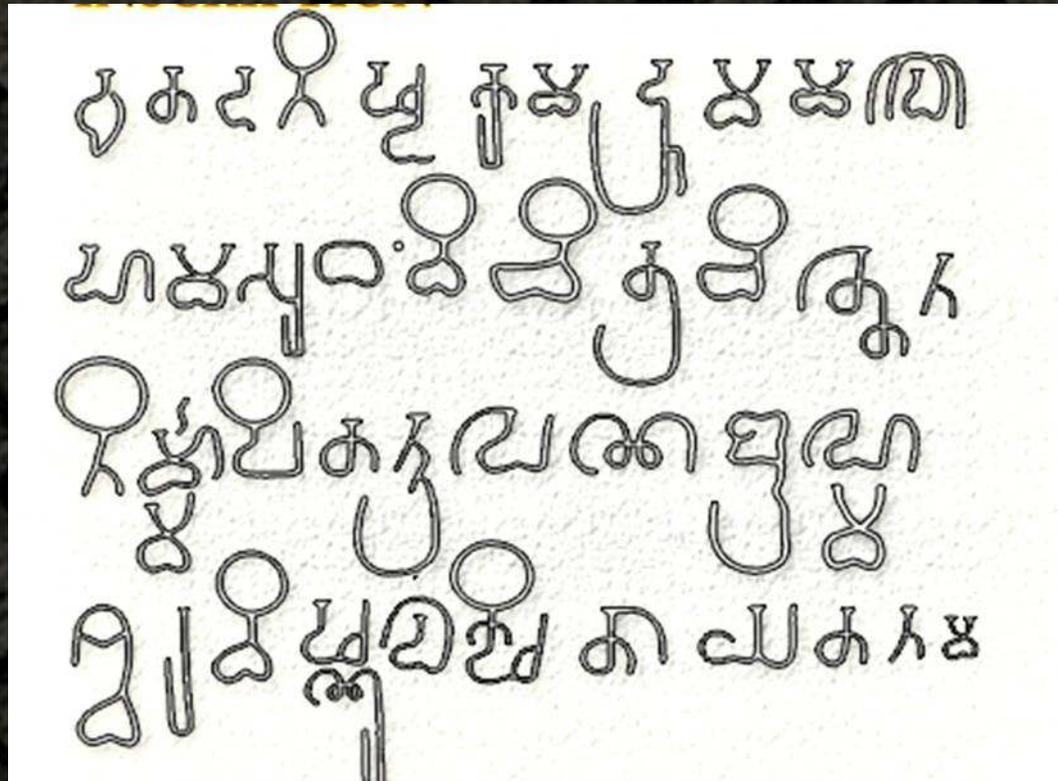
Mahendra Pallava, Mandagappattu, 7th century CE

Mahendra Pallava initiated excavating cave temples
in the Tamil country.

There is an inscription
in Sanskrit written in the Grantha script
in his first cave temple
in Mandagappattu in Villuppuram district

Grantha

Mahendra Pallava, 7th century CE



This is the Grantha inscription of Mahendra Pallava
in Mandagappattu

Mahendra Pallava inscription

A part of the inscription is given below
transliterated into the Tamil script and Devanagari

ஏ	த	த ₃	நி	ஷ்ட	க	ம	த ₃ ரு	ம	ம	லோ
ए	त	द	नि	ष्ट	क	म	दु	म	म	लो

ஹ	ம	ஸா	த ₄ ம்	வி	சி	த்ரா	சி	த்தே	ந
ह	म	सु	धं	वि	चि	त्र	चि	ते	न

The Inscription

ஏதத₃னிஷ்டமத்ருமமலோஹமஸூத₄ம் விசித்ரசித்தேந
நிர்மாபிதந்_௫ பேணப்₃ரஹ்மேஷ்வரவிஷ்ணுலக்ஷிதாயதநம்

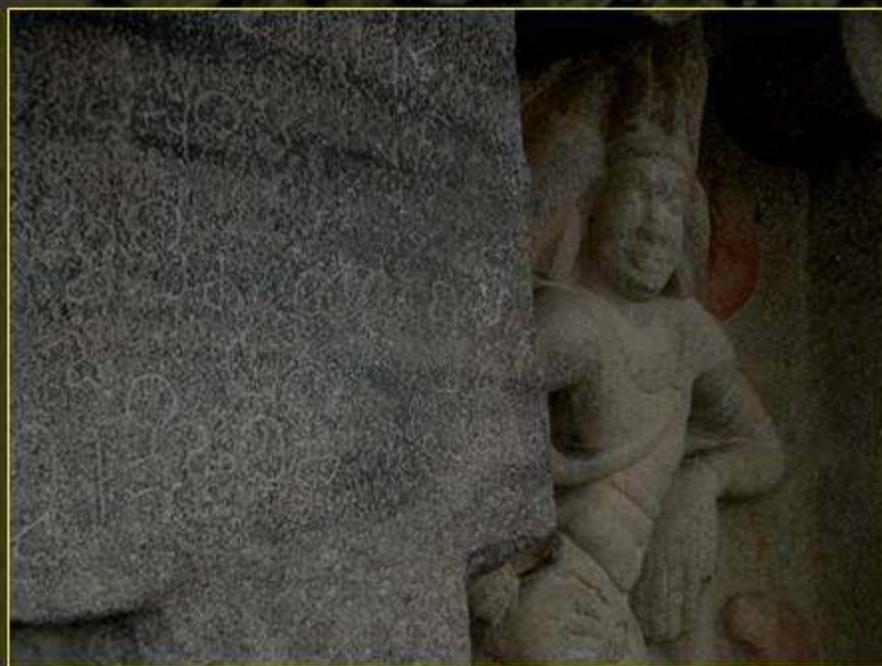
एतदनिष्टमद्रुममलोहमसुधंविचित्रचित्तेन
निर्मापितन्नुपेणब्रह्मेश्वरविष्णुलक्षितायनं

EtadanishTamadrumamalOhamasudham vichitra chittEna
nirmApitanrupENabrahmEsharaviShNulakSitAyanam

The Substance

செங்கல், மரம், உலோகம் மற்றும்
சுண்ணாம்பு பயன்படுத்தாமல்
பிரம்மா, சிவன் மற்றும் விஷ்ணுவிற்கு
விசித்ரசித்தன் (மஹேந்திர பல்லவன்)
இந்த (குகைக்) கோயிலை எடுத்தான்.

The (cave) temple dedicated
to Brahma, Siva and Vishnu
was excavated by
Vichitrachitta (Mahendra Pallava)
without using brick, timber, metal and mortar.

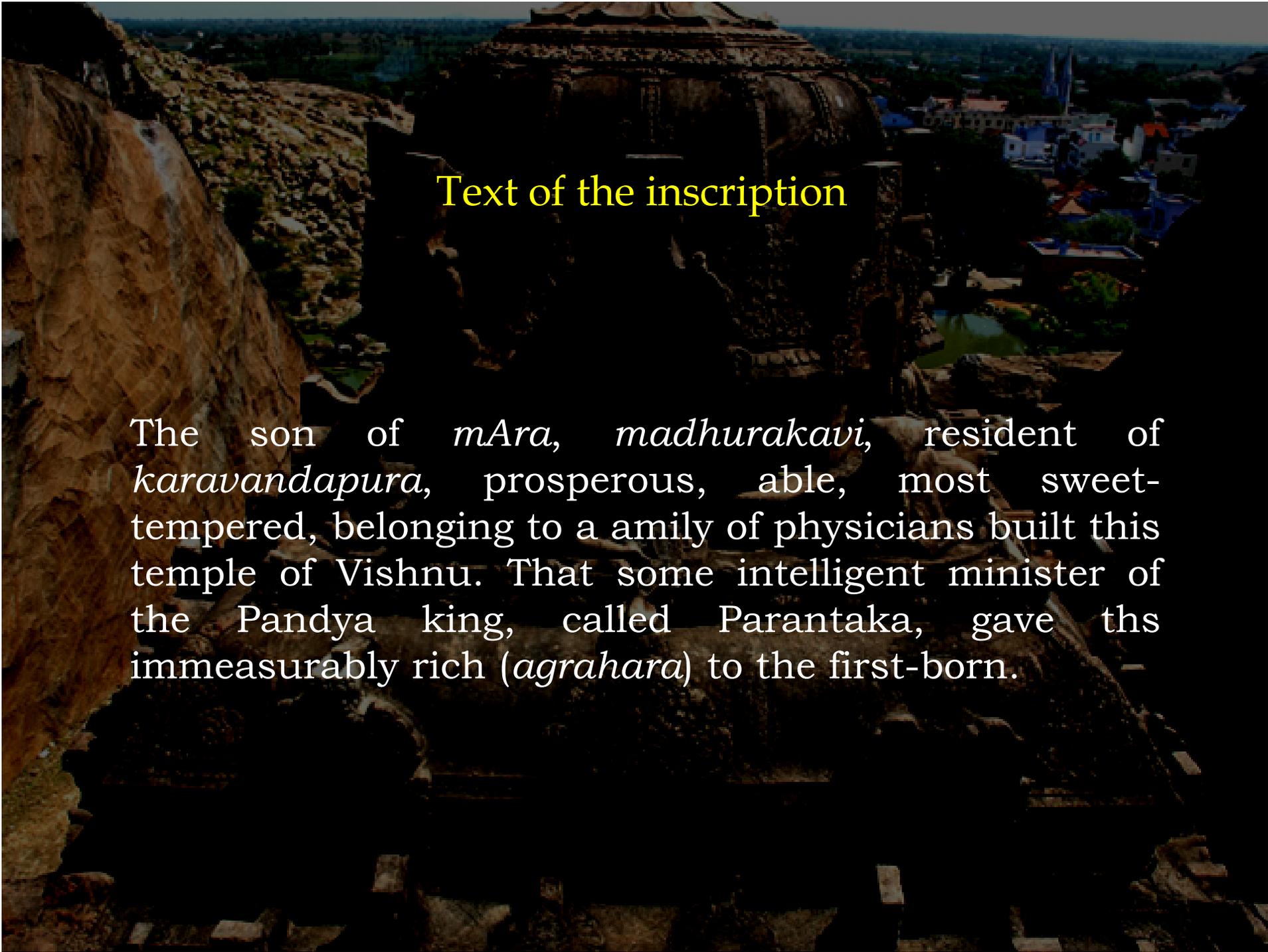




Grantha

Parantaka Pandya, Anaimalai, 8th century CE

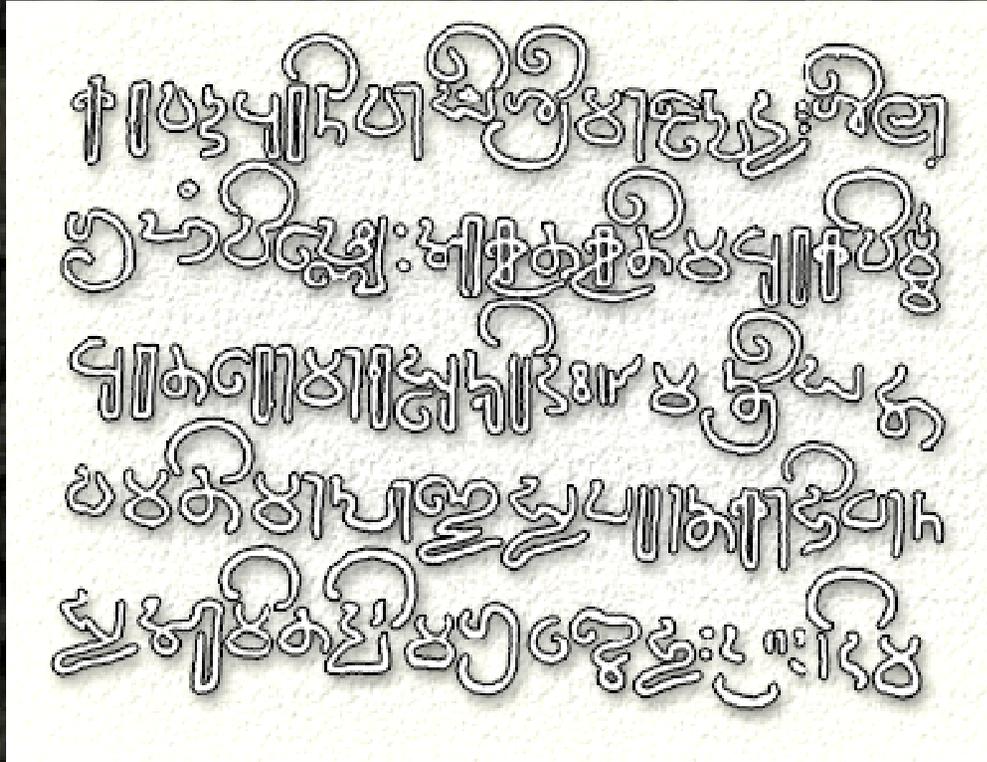
*As vaTTezhuttu was in greater currency
in the Pandya country than elsewhere in Tamilnadu,
we can see in inscriptions
vaTTezhuttu characters in Grantha inscription,
as we see in this Pandya sample.*



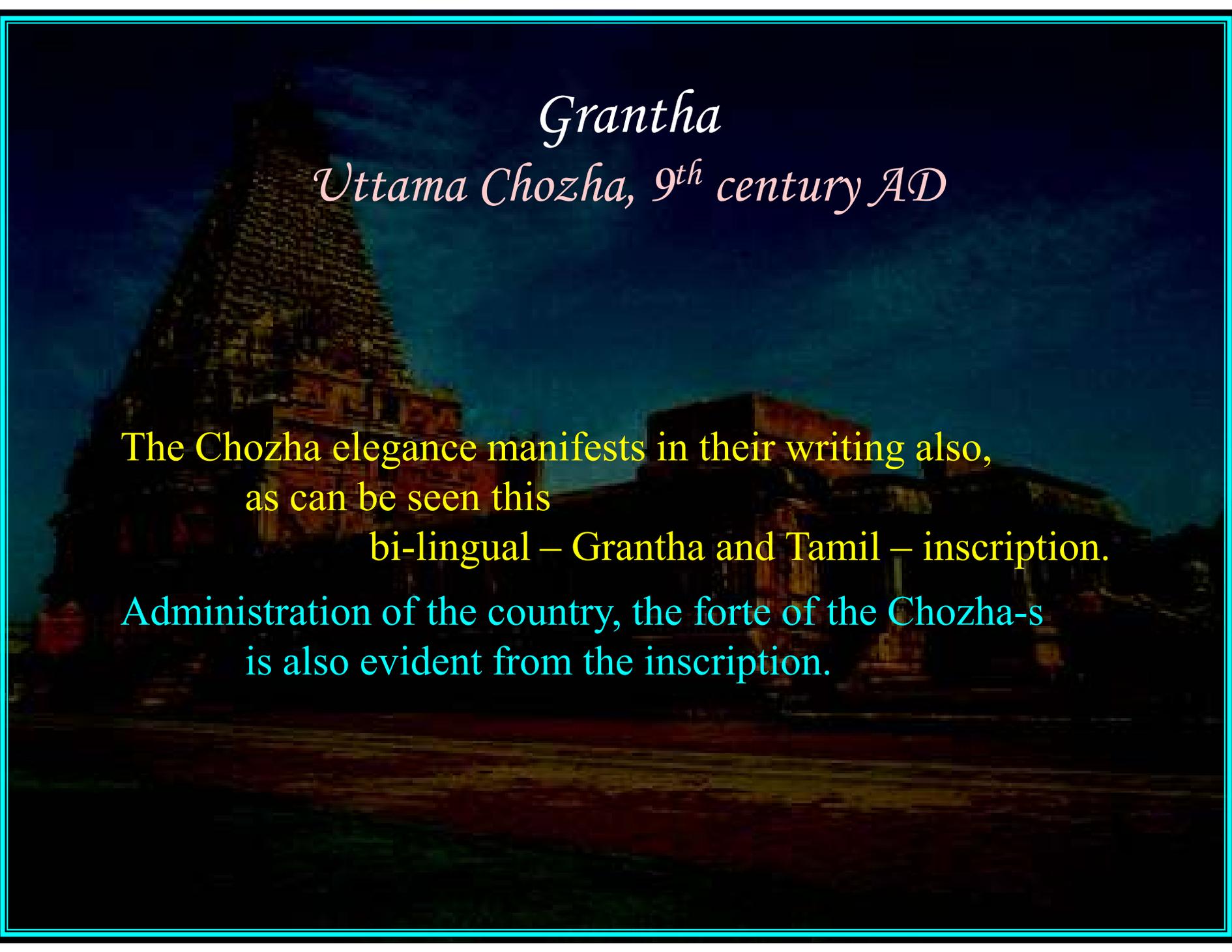
Text of the inscription

The son of *mAra*, *madhurakavi*, resident of *karavandapura*, prosperous, able, most sweet-tempered, belonging to a family of physicians built this temple of Vishnu. That some intelligent minister of the Pandya king, called Parantaka, gave this immeasurably rich (*agrahara*) to the first-born.

Here is the text transliterated into Devanagari



करवन्दपुरनिवासि श्रीमान्वैद्यः शिला
गृहं विष्णोः अकृत कृति मधुरकविर्म
धुरतरो मारसूनुरिदम् । मन्त्री स ए
व मतिमान्पण्डयस्य परान्तकाभिधान
स्य अमितार्द्धिमग्रेजेभ्यः प्रादादिम



Grantha

Uttama Chozha, 9th century AD

The Chozha elegance manifests in their writing also,
as can be seen this
bi-lingual – Grantha and Tamil – inscription.

Administration of the country, the forte of the Chozha-s
is also evident from the inscription.

Text of the inscription

Being ordered by Chola, the destroyer of Madhura, that in consideration of their poverty, no taxes like royal dues should be levied; it was also authorised by the city magnates. The house-holders living in *chola-niyama* along with the managers of the temple of Hari, situated in the *Uraka* should individually prepare monthly accounts of income and expenditure and show them to the royal weavers living in the four quarters. In the 16th year of the prosperous king Parakesarivarman alias Uttama Choladeva, when (this) Lord was pleased to be present in the Chitra-mandapa hall to the south withi the palace of *kachchipEDu* the officer *chOzha mUvEndavELAr* (requested) the king that (for the eity) of this *kachchippEDU*

Text transliterated

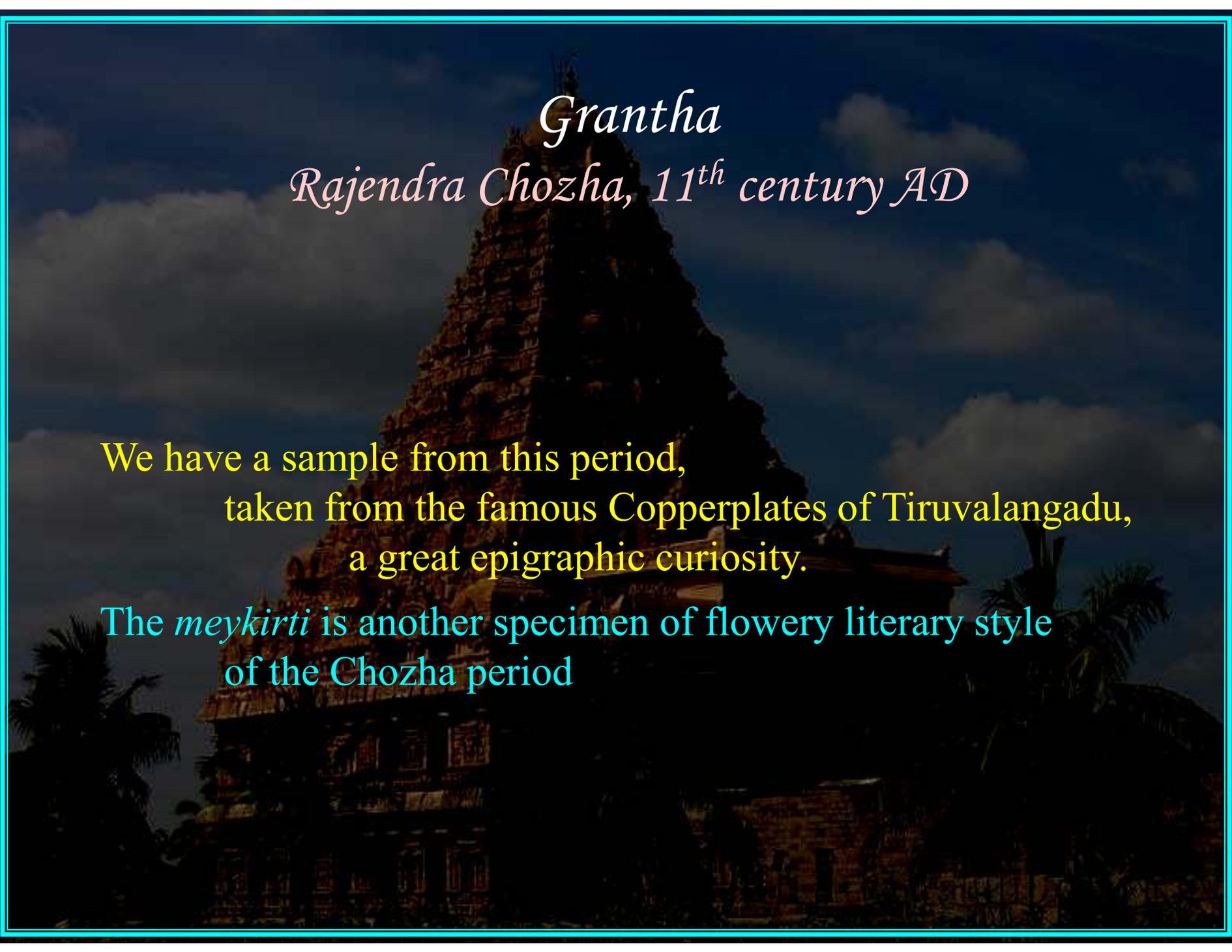
Tamil Grantha

செய்யாஜகாயம் கரிமதிமபுரோன்மாதினா சூன்யமாवाच्चोलेनाज्ञापितै
स्तैरथ नगरजनैरप्यनुज्ञातमेतम्॥ आयव्ययावथालिख्य चोलानियमवा
सिभिः मासक्रमेण चैकैकन्दर्शनीयो कुडुम्बिभिः राजवस्त्रकृतामेषाञ्चतु
र्वाटनिवासिनाम् हरेः कार्यनियुक्तैश्च सार्धंमूरकवासिनः॥ஸ்ரீ கோப்பர

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देयं राजभाब्यं करमितिमधुरोन्माधिना शून्यभावाच्चोलेनाज्ञापितै
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கேசரி பநாரன ஸ்ரீ உத்தம சோழ தேவர்க்கு யாண்டு பதினாராவது உடை
யார்க்கச்சிப்பேட்டு கோவிலினுள்ளால் தெற்கில் சித்திரமண்டபத்தெழுந்
தருளி இருக்க அதிகாரிகள் சோழமுவேந வேளார் எம்பெருமான் இகச்சிப்பேட்டு¹
த



Grantha
Rajendra Chozha, 11th century AD

We have a sample from this period,
taken from the famous Copperplates of Tiruvalangadu,
a great epigraphic curiosity.

The *meykirti* is another specimen of flowery literary style
of the Chozha period

Text translated

May Bhavani grant you prosperity, who seeing a reflection of herself in the gem on the head of the lord of serpents (serving as) neck-jewel of Shrikantha and suspecting that to be another woman and consequently, bashful and jealous tremulously looks askance all the time at her husband praying prostrate at her feet with his heart yearning to embrace her. May the family of the Cholas long rule the earth (the family) which is the lake of the sport of glorious royal swans of heroism, the sun to (gladden) the lotuses (in the shape of) scholars, the leader of the caravan on the two routes of (merit) seen and unseen (ie, herein and hereafter), the overlord of the royal races, the ocean wherein all collections of gems of good qualities are born and the remover of the distress of the world. . .

Text with transliteration

ಸ್ವಸ್ತಿ ಶ್ರೀಕಣ್ಠಕಣ್ಠಾಭರಣಭುಜಗರಾಟಮೂಢಿನಿ ಮಾಣಿಕ್ಯಮಧ್ಯೆ ದೃಷ್ಟವ
 ತ್ಮಿಯಾಂ ಸಲಜ್ಜಾ ಪ್ರತಿಕೃತಿಯಪರಾಮಂಗನಾಂ ಶಂಕಮಾನಾ ಅಶ್ಲೆಷಾಲೋ
 ಲಚಿತ್ತಂ ಕೃತಚರಣನತಿಪ್ರಾರ್ಥನಮ್ ವೋ ಭವಾನಿ ದಿಶ್ಯಾತ್ ಪಶ್ಯಂತ್ಯಧಿ
 ರಾನ್ನಿಜಪತಿಮನಿಶಂ ಸೆರ್ಷ್ಯಮರ್ಧೇಕ್ಷಣೇನಾ|| ವೀರಶ್ರೀರಾಂಜಹಂಸೀವಿಹ
 ಣಸರಸೀ ವಿಧ್ವದಭುಜಭಾನ್ದುಡ್ಡೆಟಾಡ್ಡೆಟಾರ್ಥಮಾರ್ಗದ್ವಯಪಥಿಕಮ
 ಹಾಲೋಕಸಾರ್ಥೋಕನಾಥಃ ಸರ್ವ್ವಕ್ಷತ್ರಾಧಿನಾಥಸ್ಸಕಲಗುಣ
 ಮಣಿಶ್ರೇಣಿಜನ್ಮಾಮ್ಬುರಾಂಶಿರ್ವಿಶ್ವಕಲೇಶಾಪಹಾರೀ ಚಿರಮ
 ವತು ಮಹೀಮಣ್ಡಲಚ್ಚೋಲವಂಶಃ|| ಪञ्चाशदेव लिपयः प¹

स्वस्ति श्रीकण्ठकण्ठाभरणभुजगराटमूढिन माणिक्यमध्ये दृष्टव
 त्मीयां सलज्जा प्रतिकृतियपरामंगनां शंकमाना अश्लेषालो
 लचित्तं कृतचरणनतिप्रार्थनम् वो भवानी दिश्यात् पश्यन्त्यधी
 रान्निजपतिमनिशं सेर्ष्यमर्धेक्षणेना|| वीरश्रीरांजहंसीविह
 णसरसी विध्वदभभोजभानुदृष्टादृष्टार्थमार्गद्वयपथिकम
 हालोकसार्थो कनाथः सर्व्वक्षत्राधिनाथस्सकलगुण
 मणिश्रेणिजन्माम्बुरांशिर्विश्वकलेशापहारी चिरम
 वतु महीमण्डलच्चोलवंशः|| पञ्चाशदेव लिपयः प¹

स्वस्ति श्रीकण्ठकण्ठाभरणभुजगराटमूर्ध्नि माणिक्यमध्ये दृष्टव

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Two lines of the inscription are given here
with transliteration

India

India from the very early times was obsessed with sound and structure of language, which in turn produced a extremely logical, highly functional script, that inspired almost the entire continent.

On the other hand, China, the other mighty civilisation, resorted to putting anything of value to writing and focused on aesthetics of form also.