Tārācuram / Darasuram, Airavateśvara temple, labels to Nāyaṉmārs' frieze

Emmanuel Francis

Author of digital edition: Emmanuel Francis

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Summary

Labels engraved and/or painted above panels of the Nāyaṉmārs' frieze.

Edition

Label (painted) to panel G1

〈1〉 [...]

Label (painted) to panel N1

〈1〉 tirun¡i!〈ī〉la(kaṇṭaṉ)

Label (painted) to panel N2

〈1〉 [...]

Label (engraved) to panel N3

〈1〉 Iḷaiyamāṟaṅkuṭi māṟar katai

Label (painted) to panel N4

〈1〉 [...]

Label (painted) to panel N5

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N6

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N7

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N8

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N9

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N10

〈1〉 [...]

Label (painted) to panel N11

〈1〉 [...]

Label (painted) to panel N12

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N13

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N14

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N15

〈1〉 murukāṉ

Label (painted) to panel N16

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (engraved) to panel N17

〈1〉 tirunāḷaippōvār

Label (engraved) to panel N18

〈1〉 (tirukkuṟipputtoṇṭar)

Label (engraved) to panel N19

〈1〉 ce〈y〉nallūr piḷḷaiyār katai

Label (painted) to panel N20

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N21

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N22

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N23

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N24

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N25

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (engraved) to panel N26

〈1〉 namina¡n̲!〈n〉ti Atikaḷ(ār)

Label (engraved) to panel N27

〈1〉 Āḷuṭaiya piḷḷaiyār

Label (engraved) to panel N28

〈1〉 Eyarkō¡n!〈n̲〉 kalikkāmāṇṭār

Label (painted) to panel N29

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N30

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N31

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (painted) to panel N32

〈1〉 cōmācimāṟaṉār

Label (engraved) to panel N33

〈1〉 cākkiyaṉār [3×]

Label (painted) to panel N34

〈1〉 ciṟappuli Āṇṭār

Label (engraved) to panel N35

〈1〉 ciṟuttoṇṭar katai ↝

Label (engraved) to panel N36

〈1〉 cēramāṉ perumāḷ katai ൹

Label (engraved) to panel N37

〈1〉 kaṇanātāṇṭā〈r〉 katai ൹

Label (engraved) to panel N38

〈1〉 kūṟṟuvaṉār ↝

Label (engraved) to panel G2

〈1〉 poyyātimaiyillāta ‡ pulavar ↝

Label (engraved) to panel N39

〈1〉 pukaḻccōḻaṉār

Label (engraved) to panel N40

〈1〉 (nara)ciṅka(muṉaiya)raiyar

Label (engraved) to panel N41

〈1〉 Atipattar katai

Label (painted) to panel N42

〈1〉 ≁ kalikkampāṇṭār katai

Label (painted) to panel N43

〈1〉 kaliya¡n!〈n̲〉ār

Label (engraved) to panel N44

〈1〉 cattiyāṇṭār

Label (painted) to panel N45

〈1〉 Aiyyaṭikaḷ kāṭavar kō¡n!〈n̲〉ār

Label (engraved) to panel N46

〈1〉 kaṇampulāṇṭār

Label (engraved) to panel N47

〈1〉 kāriyār

Label (engraved) to panel N48

〈1〉 neṭumāṟaṉār

Label (engraved) to panel N49

〈1〉 vāyilār

Label (engraved) to panel N50

〈1〉 muṉaiyaṭuvar

Label (engraved) to panel N51

〈1〉 kalaṟcinka¡n!〈n̲〉ār

Label (engraved) to panel N52

〈1〉 Iṭaṅkaḻiyāṇṭār

Label (engraved) to panel N53

〈1〉 ceruttuṇaiyāṇṭār

Label (engraved) to panel N54

〈1〉 pukaḻttuṇaiyār

Label (engraved) to panel N55

〈1〉 koḻppuliyāṇṭār ⇝

Label (engraved) to panel G3

〈1〉 pattarāyppaṇivār

Label (engraved) to panel G4

〈1〉 paramaṉaiyē pāṭuvār

Label (painted) to panel G5

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (engraved) to panel G6

〈1〉 tiruvārūr piṟantār

Label (engraved) to panel G7

〈1〉 mukkālum tirumēṉi tฺiฺ!〈ī〉ṇṭuvār

Label (engraved) to panel G8

〈1〉 muḻunฺiฺ!〈ī〉ṟupūciya muṉivar

Label (engraved) to panel G9

〈1〉 Appālum Aṭiccarnta Aṭiyār

Label (painted) to panel N56 (Pūcalār)

[1 possibly lost line]

Label (engraved) to panel N57

〈1〉 pāṇṭimātēvi

Label (engraved) to panel N58

〈1〉 necāṇṭār

Label (engraved) to panel N59

〈1〉 kō-ciṅka-p-perumāḷ

Label (engraved) to panel N60

〈1〉 tiru-n¡i!〈ī〉lakaṇṭa-p-perum-pāṇaṉār

Label (engraved) to panel N61

〈1〉 caṭaiyaṉār

Label (engraved) to panel N62

〈1〉 Icaiñāṉiyār

Label (engraved) to panel N63.1

〈1〉 Uṭaiya-nampi E̱luntaruḻukiṟār

Label (engraved) to panel N63.2

〈1〉 Āvaṇa-Olai kāṭṭiṉa paṭi

Label (engraved) to panel N63.3

〈1〉 Uṭaiya-nampiyai Āṇṭu koṇṭ-aruḷiṉa paṭi

Label (engraved) to panel N63.4

〈1〉 Uṭaiya-nampikku Ō¡ll!〈l〉 eṉṟ-aruḷiṉa paṭi ⇝

Label (engraved) to panel N63.5

〈1〉 Uṭaiya-nampiyai vēṭar vaḷi pāritta v-iṭam

Label (engraved) to panel N63.6

〈1〉 tiru-murukaṉ-pūṇṭiyil peṟṟa paṭi ⇝

Label (engraved) to panel N63.7

〈1〉 Avināciyāṇṭār mutaḷaivāy piḷḷai

Commentary

The Nāyaṉmārs' frieze comprised 78 panels, as described in Marr 1979: 62 panels for 62 different Nāyaṉmārs (N1 to N62), 7 panels for Cuntarar (N63.1 to N63.7), 9 panels for groups of saints (G1 to G9). They are distributed clockwise, from eastern edge of southern base of the *maṇḍapa* up to the eastern edge of northern base of the *maṇḍapa*, as follows: G1, N1-N38, G2, N39-N55, G3-G9, N56-N62, N63.1-N63.7. Most of the Nāyaṉmārs' panels are labelled, with engraved and/or red-painted labels.

The palaeography of the engraved and painted labels appears to be similar. It is possible that all panels were intended to be labelled and first received a painted label to be converted into an engraved label. The conversion from painted to engraved labels was started from the eastern edge of northern base of the *maṇḍapa* with the panels concerning Cuntarar and, for some reasons, not completed up to the eastern edge of southern base of the *maṇḍapa*. All the 78 panels are thus represented in the above edition even though presently no trace of painted label is visible.

As for the existing painted labels, it is possible that they have been reproduced exactly in the course of the past centuries. Note that some engraved labels have also been

painted, that is, the engraved letters have been enhanced with paintings.[1] This might explain why some engraved labels have been wrongly taken for painted labels only.[2] Some red-painted labels seem to have escaped attention so far (for instance, N1 and N15) and might be exact reproductions of earlier painted labels or additions.

Bibliography

Reported in ARIE 1907–08 (ARIE/1907-1908/C/1908/16).

Edited in Marr 1979. Edited counterclockwise and translated in Srinivasan 1987 in two discrete groups, on for engraved labels (a.XV, that is, 43 labels) and the other for painted labels (a.XVI, that is, 8 labels).

This digital edition by Emmanuel Francis based on previous editions and photos (E. Francis, 2025). The labels are here given in clockwise order following the nomenclature in Marr 1979 (N for Nāyaṉmār, from 1 to 63).

Primary

[S] Srinivasan, P.R. 1987. "Epigraphical study." In: *Darasuram. Epigraphical Study. Étude architecturale. Étude iconographique*. Edited by Françoise L'Hernault. Mémoires Archéologiques 16. Paris: EFEO. Pages 30–31, items a.XV-XVI.

Marr, John Ralston. 1979. "The Periya Purāṇam frieze at Tārācuram: Episodes in the life of the Tamil Śaiva saints." *BSOAS* 42, pp. 268–89.

Secondary

ARIE 1907–08. *G.O. No. 574, 17th July 1908. Epigraphy. Recording the progress report of the Assistant Archaeological Superintendent for Epigraphy, Southern Circle, for the year 1907-1908*. Edited by V. Venkayya. No place, 1908. Page 41, appendix C/1908, item 16.

ARIE 1919–20. *G.O. No. 985, 31st August 1920. Epigraphy. Annual report ecording, with remarks, the progress report for the year 1919-1920 of the Assistant Archaeological Superintendent for --, Southern Circle. Recorded with remarks*. Edited by G. Venkoba Rao. No place, 1920. Pp. 102-107 and pl. II-VI.

Sivaramamurti, C. 1960. *The Choḷa temples*. New Delhi: ASI. Pages 37–43.

[1] The label for panel N17 is peculiar in that the painted label starts on the left of the shallowly engraved label.

[2] For instance, the labels for panels N3, N19 and N26 are engraved, not only painted, *pace* Marr 1979.

Sivaramamurti, C. 1992. *The Choḷa temples*. Fifth edition. New Delhi: ASI. Pages 40–46.

L'Hernault, Françoise. 1987. "Étude iconographique." In: *Darasuram. Epigraphical Study. Étude architecturale. Étude iconographique*. Edited by Françoise L'Hernault. Mémoires Archéologiques 16. Paris: EFEO. Pages 96–107.