

# DAMILICA

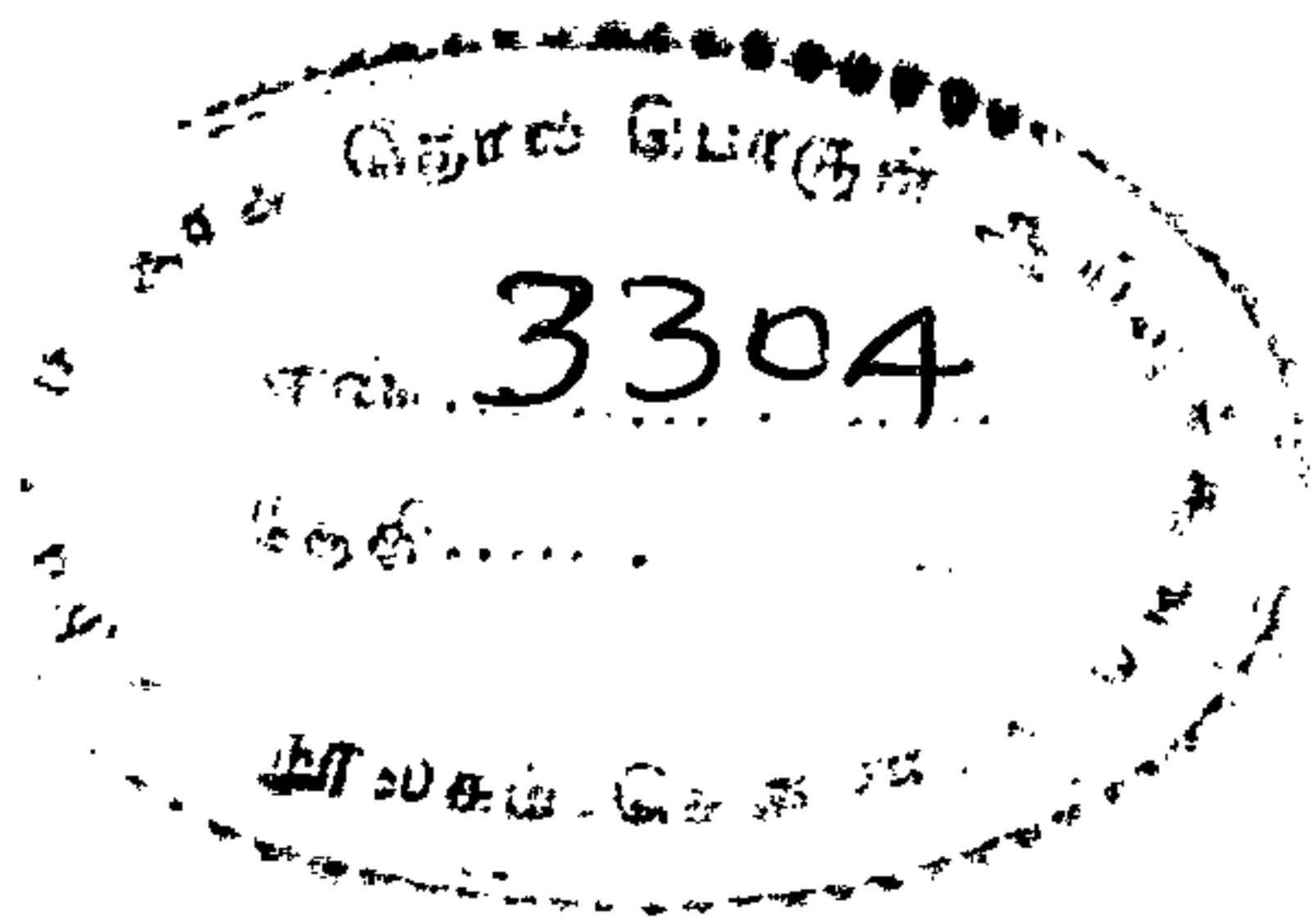
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A Sect of them have heard the word of God, and then  
perverted it after they had understood it.

(Koran Sura II, 70)

I

As is well known Muhammad, failing to convince the Jewish and Christian religious that the true significance of their religion was in his keeping, retorted by accusing them of falsifying their doctrinal records. They laughed at him in a manner fairly easy to understand and he was angered.

They laughed at him because in the face of their records reduced to order by centuries of civilised and sophisticated editing, Muhammad's incidental versions were risibly naive and primitive. Put in this way there is little need for explanation (or justification) of the prophet's angry reaction. In a way he was right. He was, and knew himself to be, asserting the (true) original versions of stories (myths) which had been subsequently changed, not to say deformed in the editing.

That this process of redaction has been the life of the biblical tradition is a common place to everyone. Indeed the modern science of biblical interpretation has progressed so far that it makes depressing reading. Almost every word can be interpreted in the light of various traditions of transmission. Anything can be explained, blessings can become curses and no matter what signify no matter what. Or almost.

Naturally the man of power was little concerned with this scholarship, and indeed if such matters could have been explained properly they would have seemed to him conclusive justification of his accusation. He had heard certain tales told in a way, in a numinous way, which made variation unthinkable - i. e. he had listened to folk tales which he quite correctly realised stood behind much of the testamentary scriptures and which had been deformed in the transmission. Possibly the Arabia of Muhammad's day constituted a fair repository for semitic folk tales. A borderland always in touch with the heartland but removed where the winds of change did not blow in their main currents.

This is not to maintain that scripture, or all that is significant in the scriptures, is folklore (and folklore the worse for wear). Even less that, to arrive at the pristine significance of scripture, all that is necessary is to look into the Koran. Few would maintain that the 'Mother of the Book' declared to be stored up in heaven is in reality the folk consciousness of the ancient (Semitic) world; and that the Koran corresponds with this as perfectly as it proclaims itself to do. Folklore or folk tales are one element, and one only in the scriptures - and the folk tales current in the Arabia of Muhammad included degenerate provincialisms, semi-barbarisations of what was once literary tradition.<sup>1</sup> Equally Muhammad's use of the material passed through the mill of a strong individual personality. However sufficient has been said to account for the rectitude of some of the prophet's indination. He was on occasion employing valid material and his opponents were appealing to records much altered in the writing.

This outlook abuts onto limitless discussion and could be tested against many examples. A single *mise-en point* is given in the following remarks, selected because of its extreme familiarity, although it is by no means a type example, indeed it falls but marginally in the foregoing frame of reference. It is perhaps the best known, the most 'popular', biblical story - the nativity. Here it will be made apparent that the Koran gives a statement of fact quite other than the Gospel and yet Muhammad merited no derision on this score.

## II

The birth of the Messiah took place at or on the outskirts of Bethlehem in a cave and he was laid in a manger (accommodation being very tight owing to the influx for the census). In contrast every order of nature attested the event - ox and ass, shepherds, eastern seers, angels. All are familiar with these circumstances, yet few indeed realise that the picture is made up in large part from extra-canonical details - i. e. from traditional iconography. The only New Testament passage which refers to the proximate circumstances of the nativity is Luke II 5-7<sup>2</sup> which states that the birth occurred on (or after) the arrival at Bethlehem and the divine child was laid in a manger. Later shepherds (being so advised by an angel with heavenly chorus) came to venerate him (v. 8-16). Where the manger was situate and (by inference) where parturition took place is not revealed.

In contrast to this, the Koran knows exactly the circumstances of the Saviour's birth. Sura XIX (of Mary) 20ff has: "So she conceived him and she retired with him into a remote place. And the labour pains came upon her at

the trunk of a palm tree, and she said 'O that I died before this and had been forgotten out of mind'. And he (*the divine child or Gabriel*) called to her from beneath her (or the tree) 'Grieve not.....'."

Here then is a rather curious and unexpected contrast. Christendom has accepted a nativity which, so far as the precise circumstances of birth are concerned, has no biblical foundation. On the other hand the Koran gives precise circumstances of birth, yet these have never been 'accepted' in Christendom. On the face of this, should contention have arisen on this question between Muhammad and Christians, it is difficult to see how any convincing orthodoxy could have been established for the Christian tradition. In point of fact the two versions of the nativity polarise the two basic forms of the myth of the birth of the Saviour - who is alternately *theos ek petras* and *theos ek dendrou*. To all this there is a fairly evident background.

The two manners of birth are readily taken as symbols. The symbolism of the rock is directed primarily to the spirit - order from formlessness, release of the spirit from imprisoning matter. The symbolism of the tree bears on life and its renewing, the wisdom and knowledge of life with its good and evil. However, like all symbols, they go back to the ancestral experience of the race in the flesh. To a time (palaeolithic?) when the emerging hominid found his security and salvation only in hill caves or stages set above the ground in trees. From these he came forth to live, from these was he born. Gods and man alike came forth from rocks and trees<sup>3</sup> - an almost universal concept, old in the days of Homer who makes Penelope say to the disguised Odysseus "Where do you come from, for surely you are not sprung from oak or rock as old tales tell" (Od XIX, 62,).

Mythology has worked on and over these symbols. Their direct expression underlies or has been reformed into a wider projection where 'anthropomorphism' has demanded that a deity in human likeness should be born from another divinity with such a likeness. Here the original understanding survives in that the place of birth is at or under a tree, or within a rock-cave. An even wider penumbra may be discerned where the legend refers to a raising or nurturing beneath a tree or in a cave. Here by extension the physical feature passes over from the 'true and only begetter' to (what, in fact, it originally was) a shelter for mother and/or child. Within this mythological continuum it is possible to see and characterise a development in terms of 'isms' - e.g. away from fetichism towards anthropomorphism; this however is in no way equivalent to 'progress' from 'primitive' to 'developed'. Gods like men are to be judged by their works, not by the circumstances of their origins; and there is no reason why the most spiritual or metaphysical deity should not be made manifest from the rock or tree.

Since these two images of origin correspond to man's basic ancestral memories of his own origin, it is not surprising that on occasion the two different images have been projected onto the same deity. Zeus (the Cretan Zeus) was known to have been born in a cave on Ida (or Dikte);<sup>4</sup> but equally Rhea is said to have born him in Crete beneath a poplar tree.<sup>5</sup> Hermes, a personification of the most elemental aspects of existence, is remembered for his birth in the Kyllenian cave – the account of this given in the fourth Homeric Hymn being as well known as anything in Greek literature. Hermes was markedly a god *ek petras* (his name can be derived from *herma*=rock, stone heap); on the other hand he carries the *cadeuces*, the staff/rood with serpents (*pars pro tota* for the tree of life). And thus the people of Tanagra said that he was nurtured under a perslane tree, the relics of which were shown in his temple there.<sup>6</sup>

### III

With so much by way of introduction it seems not untoward that these two birth legends have been attached to Christ – the rock-cave birth of traditional Christian iconography, and the tree birth given in the Koran Sura XIX. Both accounts be it noted 'anthropomorphised' – a mother goddess bore the divine child in a cave/beneath a tree, he did not issue directly from rock or tree.

The relationship of the Christian tradition of the nativity is immediately apparent. As the date of the event came to be accepted as the winter solstice, so are the details of the event parallel to the birth of Mithra. In the iconography of Mithraeism, the god *ek petras* is shown emerging from the rock (*petra genatrix*) and the scene sometimes includes a shepherd or shepherds who witness this miraculous birth.<sup>7</sup> The rock in its interior expression is the 'world cave', sometimes referred to as the 'Persian cave'. The simulacrum of the cave, the Mithraeum provides the way down and the way up, the path of spiritual death and rebirth whereby the soul enters into communion with the Saviour god.

Perhaps as having a more overt relevance to and manifestation in the physical world the symbol of tree birth has always been well known.<sup>8</sup> It formed, of course, a principal manifestation of the dying god, the genius of regeneration.<sup>9</sup> In considering its application to the Christian saviour, two well drawn instances may be mentioned – of interest because they stand at some discrete remove from, yet present aspects similar to the 'nativity'. Both these accounts are 'anthropomorphised': the birth takes place beneath a tree, with the help of a tree but mother-nature has a human form.

The Olympian god Apollo had a soteriological aspect to his manifold nature, an aspect which was emphasised in later antiquity.<sup>10</sup> Apollo (with his twin Artemis) was born by his mother, Leto, beneath a tree in the island of Delos<sup>11</sup> (v. Fig. 1.).

She flung her arms around a palm tree  
 Bowing her knees to the soft meadow;  
 The earth smiled. The god in her womb  
 Leapt to the light. (Homeric Hymn I)<sup>12</sup>

A prominent motif in this birth legend is the tribulation of the mother arising from the efforts of an ogre (the representative of the old order) to prevent the birth or survival of the divine child.<sup>13</sup> The adversary (Python) is represented by Herod in the background to the nativity according to Mathew.

The motif of the tree birth was received most emphatically into Buddhist scripture. It is well known that the Buddha, the divine child of the holy spirit and a woman, a queen, representing and named physical nature (Māyā) was born miraculously beneath a sāl tree. The queen stood beneath the tree, grasped a branch and so standing holding a branch of the sāl tree was delivered<sup>14</sup> (v. fig. 2.). The circumstances explaining the presence of Māyā in the natural setting parallel the Lucan account of the journey to Bethlehem. The queen needed to visit her family place of origin and on the journey rested at the Lumbini garden. This is to indicate that life is a journey, a pilgrimage to the place of origin and one enters it (and leaves it) on the road.

The iconography of this scene was of Western inspiration (although, at first, it eschewed any likeness to the Buddha, indicating his presence by a sign only).<sup>15</sup> Features in common with the traditional Christian nativity are easily recognisable: e. g. the adoration of the (four) kings or regents (representing space), and the prominence of the first bathing of the infant.<sup>16</sup>

The physical birth of the Buddha, however, by no means exhausts the motif of tree birth in Buddhist scriptures. The enlightenment, that experience which made Shakyamuni 'The Buddha', i. e. his spiritual birth, took place beneath the Bodhi (Bo) Tree at Buddhagaya<sup>17</sup> (v. Fig. 3). Here is seen most clearly and distinctly the tendency for the tree to assume two 'hypostases' – the tree of life and the tree of knowledge (of life, of good and evil).

Indeed Buddhist scripture and iconography cannot refer to birth or enlightenment of the supreme nature (*Tathagata*) without the accompanying figure of the tree. "In Sanchi and Barhut, for instance, the seven Tathagatas, i. e. Shakyamuni and his six predecessors, are represented in art . . . by the

seven trees under which they gained enlightenment".<sup>18</sup> Equally the birth of the future Buddha, Maitreya (Mithra), will be exactly parallel to that of Shakyamuni, "... then she will go to a grove ... and there, neither seated nor lying down but standing up holding onto the branch of a tree, she will give birth".<sup>19</sup>

#### IV...

The account of the tree birth in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo and in the Buddhist scriptures reproduce the same image as that given in the Koranic Sura of Mary. The mother stands beneath the tree (of life) clasping it to possess herself of its life-giving virtue which will enable her to bring to birth the 'life' of the world.

The Homeric Hymn was written somewhere about the time of the birth of the historical Buddha, the first written accounts of the Birth of the Buddha are contemporaneous with the composition of the Christian gospels (ca. 100 A.D.). The Koranic account of the nativity was written down 500 years later. Thus a correspondence in literature may be observed across an interval of more than a thousand years based on a tradition extending from Greece to India - i. e. the extreme limits of the Persian Empire and the Hellenistic World.

The nativity of Christ is central in time and space to this continuum - but the gospel account has no reference to tree birth. The account has let into Christian tradition the rock-cave birth which is characteristic of Mithraeism. However Mithra, while *theos ek petras*, is nonetheless still imagined as a god of life. He is also *ek dendrou* and is shown half concealed by a tree from which he seems to be emerging. This is the tree of life and the tree of knowledge (*genetrix sapientiae*).<sup>20</sup> No trace of this has passed into the traditional Christian nativity. It is curious.

Christ suffered and died on the tree (or its surrogate, the *stauros* - the rood, the pole, the stake) to ensure the renewal of life. This tree was always known to be a memorial of the tree in Genesis which occasioned the fall of man.<sup>21</sup> Correspondence would suggest that the tree image be associated with his birth. Such a correspondence is indeed manifested in the story of Buddha whose death equally with his birth took place beneath a Sal tree.<sup>22</sup>

The patent identity of the virgin *theotokos* and the tree of life could not be kept out of Christian consciousness. The primal *mater, materia*, that which is measured out, the hylic principle fittingly provided with a carpenter consort. Hailed as the Cypress of Zion, The Cedar of Lebanon, The Palm of Engedi.<sup>23</sup> She was the burning bush, the vehicle for the *logos* in Sinai:



" O moder Mayde ! O Mayde moder free,  
 O bush unbrennt brenning in Moyses' sighte . . . . "

She was the mirror image of the sinful mother Eva (Ave!)<sup>24</sup> and as closely involved with the tree when Christ suffered on the tree, when he returned to his mortal origin

*Stabat Mater dolorosa*  
*Juxta crucem lacrimosa.*

## V

Truly in the face of this consciousness it would be curious if no intimations of tree birth survived within Christianity. They exist but they are far to seek. One witness is the gospel of Pseudo Mathew, a latin compilation of Carolingian times.<sup>25</sup> Chapter XIII gives a detailed account of the nativity in terms of the rock-cave birth (three days later Mary transferred to a stable and laid the child in a manger - Chapter XIV). However on the flight into Egypt two episodes are introduced which would seem to be doublets of nativity stories - Chapter XVIII refers to the cave and Chapter XX gives the following account of the tree.

On the third day Mary saw a palm and wished to rest under it. When she was seated there she saw fruit on it, and said to Joseph that she would like to have some. Joseph said he was surprised she should say that because the tree was so high; he himself was thinking more about water, of which they had very little left. Jesus sitting in Mary's lap with a joyful countenance bade the palm tree give his mother of the fruit. The tree bent as low as her feet and she gathered what she would. He bade it rise again and give them of the water concealed below its roots. A spring came forth and all rejoiced and drank of it.<sup>26</sup>

If it is indeed the child Jesus who speaks 'from beneath her' (Mary) in Sura XIX, then this is a parallel version of the Koranic story. "...he called to her from beneath her 'Grieve not for the Lord has placed a stream beneath thy feet; and shake towards thee the trunk of the palm tree, it will drop upon thee fresh dates fit to gather; so eat and drink!...".

In turn this recital forms the occasion to exhibit an unusual and interesting item of (East) Christian iconography. Among the well-known collection of orientalia exhibited in the house of M. Henri Pharaon at Beirut is a wooden iconostasis, carved and painted <sup>27</sup> (v. Fig. 4). It (now) comprises three registers of medallions with linking ornament. One

medallion shows the Virgin and Child beneath a palm tree (or rather two trees). This is certainly inspired by some such story as that given above, and is presumably a nativity scene. The iconostasis is said to be work of the fifteenth century from Asia Minor. Is it to be explained by Islamic influence or does it depict some Christian tradition similar to that included in Pseudo Mathew?

## VI

The answer to this question and the general issue of 'tree birth' in Christian records and tradition is by no means an impenetrable one. It would form the subject of an interesting study. However the conclusion to the present remarks is at hand.

"A sect of them have heard the word of God and then perverted it . . . Muhammad did not invent the idea of tree birth. He took it from a traditional (Christian) source in 600 A.D.<sup>28</sup> Comparative mythology indicates the story as entirely appropriate to the occasion. There is nothing deforming or degenerate about it, and in view of its temporal and regional currency, there is every likelihood that it was associated with the birth of the Saviour from earliest times. That it does not appear in the canonical scriptures hardly constitutes 'perversion' of the word. Nonetheless unenlightened contention on this score concerning the nativity may well have provoked the Prophet. His version of the nativity would seem to have as respectable an ancestry as any.<sup>29</sup> Specific motives may have operated on its exclusion from the Gospel. If so, such motives can be given a varied interpretation.

A final remark. Should contention have arisen between the Prophet and Christians concerning the circumstances of the nativity, how satisfying it would have been to make peace between them. The tree birth and the rock-cave birth are no wise different in spirit. The primordial 'swelling-up' of matter (the heap, the mountain) connotes a hollow interior (the cave) and on it or by it grows the tree. This is at the centre of all appearances where the power which redeems men from appearances is always born.

## FOOT NOTES

1. The worthlessness in terms of religion, of such 'idle tales' was specifically recognised by the Prophet, v. Sura II 72-3.
2. Matthew, the other gospel to encompass the event, avoids all reference to the circumstances of birth, stating merely that the child was born in Bethlehem where he was later found in a house with his mother by the wise men from the East.

3. A meaningful background to the concept is given by G. R. Levy *The Gate of Horn* London 1947.
4. v. (for convenience) H. J. Rose *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* London 1965, p 48.
5. v. Diodoros v. 66.
6. v. Pausanius IX, 22, 2.
7. v. L. Campbell *Mithraic Iconography and Ideology* London 1968 *pass*; for the shepherds v. Hastings *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (under Mithra).

Here it may be noted that no intermediary anthropomorphic figure has obscured the symbolism. The god springs directly from the rock-cave, and the cave of the world is the matrix of the god. His birth therefrom is the type for the deliverance of the soul from its worldly cares.

8. A useful conspectus of tree birth is given in J. H. Phillpot *The Sacred Tree* London 1897, pp 72 ff.
9. c. f. Sir James Frazer *The Golden Bough Pt IV (Adonis Attis Osiris)* London 1919 *pass*.

These legends represent tree birth in various stages of 'humanisation'. Adonis was born from the Myrrh or Balsam tree into which the sinfully pregnant mother had been transformed. Attis is said to have owed his being to his mother cherishing (in her bosom) an almond tree. Other developments of the Attis myth refer to him as imminent in the pine tree whence he is seasonally reborn with the spring, through the power of the *magna mater*.

10. City names derived from Apollo tended to become Sozousa in Christian times, c. f. Pauly-Wissowa R. E. IIIa Col 1257.
11. v. Rose p 114.
12. Allen and Halliday *The Homeric Hymns* Oxford 1936, p 218 gives the essential comment, including other literary reference. N. B. the tendency for the tree to double itself.
13. This matter is dealt with discursively by J. Fontenrose *Python* Los Angeles 1959.
14. A convenient digest can be found in A. K. Coomaraswamy *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism* New York 1964, p 14.

15. For the foundations of Buddhist iconography v. A. Foucher *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art* (trs F.W. Thomas) 1917; *L'Art Greco-bouddhique du Gandara* Paris 1945-51; *L' Origine grecque de l'image du Bouddha* Paris 1913.
16. A Ghandaran frieze showing the birth of Buddha is adduced as an analogy to the Christian iconography of the Nativity by A. Grabar *Christian Iconography* Princeton 1968 Ill. 311. The bathing seems an idiosyncratic feature c. f. Grabar Ill. 314; A. Foucher *La Vie du Bouddha* Paris 1949, p 49 discusses the matter.
17. v. Coomeraswamy *op. cit.* pp 30 ff. Convenient translations from Ashvoghosha are given by E. Conze *Buddhist Scriptures* London 1969, pp 47 ff.
18. v. E. Conze *Buddhism* New York 1965, p 36.
19. v. Maitreyavyakarana (*The Prophecy concerning Maitreya*) translated by E Conze *Buddhist Scriptures*, p 239.
20. v. L. Campbell *Mithraic Iconography and Ideology* Leiden 1968.
21. This is very directly expressed in Syriac liturgical writings c. f.
- \* "The Tree of Life is the cross  
Which gave a radiant life to our race."  
(Sancti Ephraemi Syri Hymni col. 769, 2).
- Traditions give devious accounts of the connection tracing relics through Adam, Seth, Moses, Solomon, Joseph, Judas etc. c. f. A. S. Rappaport *Mediaeval Legends of Christ* New York 1935.
22. v. Ashvoghosha III 5 as translated by E. Conze *Buddhist Scriptures*, p 60  
"Arrange a couch for me beneath those twin Sal trees. In the course of this night the Tathagata will enter Nirvana". N. B. the doubling of the tree motif.  
The myth of Attis likewise associates his birth and death with a tree, c. f. n. 9 *supra*.
23. c. f. Ecclesiasticus 24 (in praise of Divine Wisdom, Hagia Sphia) is used for the Feast of the Assumption. Here the connection between the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge is again in evidence.
24. c. f. *Ave stella maris* . . .  
*Mutans Evae nomen.*
25. This book, known also as the *Liber de Infantia*, much influenced popular Christianity in the later Mediaeval times. The nativity account derives largely from the Protoevangelium (Book of James) and the subsequent history of the

holy family from the Gospel of Thomas. (Both writings are from the second century.) However the incidents c. f. in chaps XVIII - XV are not given in either and it is difficult to to know their source.

26. v. the summary version presented in M. R. James The Apocryphal New Testament Oxford 1960, p 75.
27. The kindness with which M. Pharaon offers the collection to view is notable hospitality -- the collection is not set apart but lives in the fabric of his house ! v. D. Duda Innerarchitektur Syrischer Stadthäuser Beirut 1971, p92, Taf 5, 82.
28. For: Mohammad's (formative) contact with (Syriac) christians v. T. Noldecke Hatte Mohammad christliche Lehre ZDMG XII 1958, pp 699 ff. H. Hirschfeld New Researches into the Koran London 1902, pp 22 ff. W. Rudolph Die Abhängigkeit des Qurans von Judenthum and Christentum Stuttgart 1922. T. Andrae Der Ursprung des Islams and das Christentum Upsala 1926.
29. The general position is clecrlly put in another connection by J. Fontenrose Python p 4 :

“ Many writers . . . . assume an ancient author received his knowledge of a myth from earlier writers. Hence they are likely to confine themselves to a literary history of the myth and to suppose that any difference encountered must be an innovation of the author in whose work it first appears. Of course later writers were influenced by earlier writers and of course writers innovated and changed, but often a supposed innovation in a myth or feature that appears late in the literary traditions has a parallel in . . . cognates of the myth attested by much earlier sources. It is quite possible, sometimes probable, that the author took it from oral tradition, if not from literature now lost : he had the oral transmission of myths, or to assume that it did not exist after some unspecified early date ; yet it was surely alive throughout antiquity - in fact it never disappeared but took on Christian dress in the Middle Ages. ”

The circumstances under discussion focus the general issue very clearly since the Prophet is likely to have spent much less time reading (presuming he was literate) or in contact with literary men than most writers.

H. SARKAR

## The Bas-relief of Vishnu in the rock-cut cave at Alagiapandipuram, District Kanniya Kumari

There is a small cave at Kurattiyarai, a hamlet in the village jurisdiction of Alagiapandipuram<sup>1</sup> (lat. 8° 15'; long. 77° 25') in the Tovala taluk of District Kanniya Kumari, Tamil Nadu. Situated at a distance of about 16 km. to the north of Nagercoil, Alagiapandipuram is already known for its epigraphical records belonging to the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries A. D.<sup>2</sup> These inscriptions come mostly from the Venkātāchalapati temple, and it is interesting to note that the place was known at that time also as Adiyaṅūr.<sup>3</sup> Even Kurattiyarai appears to have had an ancient name as the "Mudaliyar Manuscripts, no. 6 refers to it as Kuśattiyarai.<sup>4</sup> Un-doubtedly, it is an ancient village in the Nāñjinād area; further, its location in a trough-like valley must have lent considerable strategic importance.

The rock-cut cave here, locally known as Auvaiyar Amman Kovil,<sup>5</sup> has not so far received the attention of the scholars. *The Travancore State Manual*, however refers to the existence of "a rock-temple" at "Alakiapāṇḍipuram," and the temple is "believed to be more than 1200 years old." According to its description, "The temple contains inscription of a Chola king. The Kuravas who are believed to have ruled over Nāñjinād for a time and the Muthaliyars who succeeded them had their headquarters at this place."<sup>6</sup> If the "rock-temple" referred to in the *Manual* is the same as the one found at Kurattiyarai, it does not contain any Chōla inscription, which, nevertheless, occurs at the same place in the Pillaiyar temple as well as in the neighbouring places including Darisanamkoppu.<sup>7</sup>

### THE CAVE-SHRINE

The unfinished cave-shrine is excavated at the mid-height of a hillock popularly called Chenthipparai, which may be the part of the hillock mentioned in the Survey of India maps as Anjugiri having a maximum height of 843 ft. (256.95m.) above the mean sea-level; both the hillocks

face the hill, the Tadakamalai, having a very imposing look. Facing south-west, the cave has been excavated to a maximum depth of 6 feet 3 inches (1.90m.) in the vertical scarp of the granite hill, having a mild gradient towards its foot. The space in front of the cave seems to have been made up, as the inclination of the ground-level here is clearly horizontal. From this surface, the cave, rather the sill of its doorway, is about a foot (35 cm.) higher than the surrounding level.

It is a one-celled cave with irregular sides roughly corresponding to an oblong plan measuring 5ft. 3in. (1.60m.) by 4 ft. 1 in. (1.25m.). The height of the cutting ranges from 6 ft. 6 in. (1.98m.) to 6 ft. 10 in. (2.08m.), and the variation is due to the fact that the ceiling in the centre has been cut upwards by a few inches to give the appearance of a domical top. A four-handed standing image of Vishṇu is carved on the back-wall of the cell. Practically, a niche, measuring 5 ft. 1 in. (1.55m.) by 3 ft. 3 in. (0.99m.), with an arch-like top enshrines the bas-relief having a height of about 1 ft. 6 in. (0.46m.) from the floor of the cave. On two corners of the back wall are to be seen roughly-hewn pilasters with shapeless corbels and capitals.

The vertical scarp outside is plain but for the two shallow squares sunk on either side of the cave. Originally, both of them contained reliefs but, at present, the one to the north bears a seated Gaṇeśa in *valampuri* pose. It is unfinished and crudely-chiselled, and belongs to the later times. The figure in the other square is totally defaced and nothing can be made out except the fact that it was a standing image with a club in one of the hands.

On the back wall of the shrine-cell is the bas-relief of Vishṇu, in *samapāda* pose, with two upper hands holding *śaṅkha* and *chakra*. It is clear that his lower left is in *kaṭi*, while the lower right possibly in *varada*. The *kirīṭa* and the *kunḍalas* have not been given clear shapes, and even the *vastra*, the hem of which reaches slightly above the ankle, has no fold except at two extremities. No lotus-seat or any pedestal is shown below the feet; nor is it possible to say due to smearing of sacred paste whether any attempt was made to show the *upavīta* over the body.

## THE COMPARISON

The one-celled cave is very common in the region to the south of the Kaveri occurring at places like Malaiyadippatti, Narttamalai, (Śiva

cave), Malayakkovil, Malaikkolundisvaram, Mangadu (District Tiruchirappalli), Tiruchuli, Mahipalanpatti, Piranmalai, (District Ramanathapuram), Sivagiri, Bhutapandi, Tuvarangadu (District Kanniya Kumari), Irunilancode (District Trichur, Kerala State) etc. In the Tondaimaṇḍalam, the rock-cut cell at Kilmavilangai, in District South Arcot, comes nearer to this group of cell-shrines. Needless to say, the Alagiapandipuram cave (District Kanniya Kumari) is a new addition to such a group. Significantly, in the Pāṇḍya and Muttaraiyar territories, such one-celled caves, so far as the present knowledge goes, are dedicated only to Śiva. Even the caves at Bhutapandi, Tuvarangadu, Sivagiri (District Kanniya Kumari) and Vizhinjam (District Trivandrum, Kerala State), all being situated in the area near to the Alagiapandipuram (District Kanniya Kumari) cave, are Śaiva shrines. Broadly speaking, these caves are located in the ancient Āy territory and the other bigger excavations like those at Tirunandikara, (District Kanniya Kumari), Airurpara, Kottukal (District Trivandrum, Kerala State), and Kaviyur (District Alleppey, Kerala State) are predominantly Śaiva in character. In fact, the cave shrine at Alagiapandipuram (District Kanniya Kumari) is the only exception to this trend in the far south including Kerala.<sup>8</sup> Architecturally, however, it does not differ from the rest. Yet the closest parallel to this cave so far as the sculptural accompaniment and architectural features are concerned comes from Kilmavilangai, which has also a bas-relief of a four-armed standing Vishṇu on the back wall of the cell excavated into a large outcrop; it has been dated on stylistic considerations, to the eighth century A.D.<sup>9</sup>

The figure of Vishṇu in the Alagiapandipuram cave shares all the general characteristics of the *samapāda sthānakamūrti* in the Pāṇḍya country; such bas-reliefs come from the cave-temples like Tirumalapuram, Virasikhamani (District Tirunelveli), Sevilipatti (District Ramanathapuram) and the lower rock-cut cave at Tiruchirappalli (District Tiruchirappalli). But the two reliefs of Garuḍāntika Vishṇu<sup>10</sup> in the Kunnakkudi caves are in the *tribhaṅga* pose. So far as the attributes, the *śaṅkha* and the *chakra* in the upper hands are concerned, there exists a uniformity throughout the Tamil country. Even in the *mudrās* of the lower left hand which is shown in *kaṭi*, one notices a uniform pattern. But some variations in the hand-poses of the lower right hands are to be seen in the bas-reliefs of both the Pallava and the Pāṇḍya countries. It is worth noting that the *mudrās* like *abhaya* and *sūchi* common in the Pallava tradition, are practically absent in the reliefs of Vishṇu in the Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam; however,



some of the figures in the lower rock-cut cave at Tiruchirapalli have been shown in *abhaya-mudrā*. Generally, the lower right hand of the Vishṇu figures in the Pāṇḍya caves shows either *varada* or *kaṭyavalambita-hasta*. At Sevilipatti (District Ramanathapuram), Tirumalapuram and Virasikhamani (District Tirunelveli) the hand-pose simulates a *varada*-pose, which is also the case with the bas-relief of the Alagiapandipuram cave.

The mode of wearing *antariya* or the lower garment of these *sthānaka* Vishṇu images varies from example to example. If the lower garment of the Alagiapandipuram relief is a finished one, it may be compared, to some extent, with the heavy *antariya* of Brahmā, Śiva and Harihara in the first *tala* of the Dharmarāja ratha at Mahabalipuram (District Chingleput). In the latter cases, however, the earlier Buddhist tradition of showing the wet cloth, in order to provide the full view of the body, has been followed. This feature as well as the *abhaya-mudrā* of the bas-reliefs of Vishṇu in the Pallava country are possibly derived from some earlier Buddhist tradition. On the other hand, the *vastra* of the Vishṇu figures in the Pāṇḍya country is hardly transparent. Anyway, the Alagiapandipuram example shows a loosely-fitted garment with a vertical fold at either extremity. Such cloth has been shown reaching slightly above the ankle. As a matter of fact, the *vastra* in the Pāṇḍya country practically covers the lower part of the Vishṇu image and the hem is rolled up: a central ridge, instead of a clear depression like the ones in the Pallava examples, is conspicuous by its presence. Similar features occur in the Pallava tradition also but the depression remains more prominent than the ridge representing the *guchchha* of the cloth. In many respects, the mode of wearing the *vastra* in the Alagiapandipuram Vishṇu may be compared with that of Sevilipatti (District Ramanathapuram) where the cloth almost reaches the ankle. The transverse folds noticed in the garments of the Vishṇu reliefs at Kunnakkudi (District Ramanathapuram), and Virasikhamani (District Tirunelveli) are absent here.

## CONCLUSION

It is evident from the above that the bas-relief of Vishṇu in the Alagiapandipuram cave bears all the characteristics of the Pāṇḍya art-tradition. Structurally also it is more Pāṇḍya than anything else, despite its closest similarity with the Kilmavilangai Vishṇu cave. The latter is just an exotic element in the rock-architecture of the Pallavas. Though situated in the Pallava country, the Vishṇu figure of Kilmavilangai (District

South Arcot) possibly partakes of a few Pāṇḍya features like the acute bend of the lower left arm and somewhat oblong *kirīṭa-makuṭa*. Thus, the Kilmavilangai relief shares both the Pallava and the Pāṇḍya characteristics, while the bas-relief of Viṣṇu in the Alagiapandipuram cave is primarily a product of the Pāṇḍya style of art. Chronologically, the image falls in the main phase of Pāṇḍya rock-architecture, as there is hardly any stylistic or iconographic evolution in the bas-reliefs of various Viṣṇu images. It may tend to show that all such caves, at least the ones with Viṣṇu might have come into existence within a short span of time. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to date these caves on firm grounds except to say that they must have been excavated during the hey-day of the Pāṇḍya rock-architecture, which coincided with the rule of Jaṭila Parāntaka Neḍuñjaḍaiyaṅ (A. D. 765-815) or Varaguna I. It was the period when the caves at Anaimalai (dated to A. D. 770) and Tirupparankunram (dated A. D. 773) (District Madurai), both containing bas-reliefs of Narasiṃha tearing the entrails of Hiraṇyakasipu, came into existence. The area around Alagiapandipuram must have been included in his dominion, as he waged successful war against the Āys.<sup>11</sup>

It seems that the figures of Viṣṇu in the Alagiapandipuram (District Kanniya Kumari) and Kilmavilangai (District South Arcot) caves are unfinished but whether originally they had had the same appearance or not is not easy to surmise. For, they could have been left unfinished intentionally with a view to finishing them either in paint or in stucco, the unfinished surface serving as teeth for holding the paint or plaster.

One more aspect of rock-architecture may be emphasized here: each and every cave need not owe its emergence solely to the royal patronage. A period of proliferation, generally speaking, depends more on popular participation in a movement than on an exclusive royal endeavour. The phenomenon of multiplicity of cave-shrines in the Pāṇḍya country can be explained only by this factor. Admittedly, the rock-architecture in the south, is an outcome of the *bhakti* movement in which both the Śaiva Nāyanmārs and the Ālvārs took active participation. For them there were hardly any political or geographical boundaries as they moved from place to place visiting sacred spots. It was these saints who brought about a spiritual resurgence influencing equally the common man and the royalty; the trend eventually created

preconditions for the general people to take part in the rock-architecture. Many of the cave-temples, specially the one-celled ones, came into existence largely due to popular support arising out of the spiritual upheaval in the south. Viewed in this light one cannot but ascribe the authorship of the cave shrines at Kilmavilangai (District South Arcot) and Alagiapandipuram (District Kanniya Kumari) to some modest popular enterprises; and that is why they lack the individuality and grandeur of bigger or royal undertakings.

### FOOT NOTES

- 1 The name is spelt differently by different authorities. K. K. Pillay spells it as Alakiyapandipuram. See his *The Sucindram Temple* (Madras. 1953). *The Travancore Archaeological Series*, hereinafter abbreviated as *TAS*, prefers to use *ga* instead of *ka* and spells it as Alagiyapandiyapuram. The spelling followed here is according to the Survey of India maps.
- 2 The Venkatachalapati temple here has yielded no less than six inscriptions two of which are dated in Kollam 252 and 299 respectively. See *TAS*, III, pt. I, pp. 56-59 and VII, pt. II, pp. 106-107.
- 3 This name has given rise to some speculation about its connexion with Atikan of Sivaraja Pillai's genealogy of the Ay rulers. See K. K. Pillay, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.
- 4 It does not occur in the list of place-names in the Survey of India maps. The spelling followed here is that of K. K. Pillay's, *op. cit.*, p. 32. In the *TAS*, the name is spelt as Kurattiyara. There are two inscriptions from the Pillaiyar temple here, and a third one on a rock near the hamlet. See *TAS*, VIII, pt. I, pp. 25-26.
- 5 According to Pillay, *op. cit.*, p. 16n., "In and around Alakiyapandipuram, there are several shrines dedicated to Auvai." Auvai is a poetess of Sangam celebrity.
- 6 *The Travancore State Manual*, IV (Trivandrum, 1940). p. 619.
- 7 The earliest dated Chola inscription in the Nanjinad area is from Darisanamkoppu. It is dated in the eighth year of Raja Raja I.
- 8 The rock-cut caves in Kerala may be divided into two groups: caves situated in the ancient Ay territory and those located in the Chera country. The caves at Kaviyur (District Alleppey), Airurpara, Kottukal, Vizhinjam (District Trivandrum), Sivagiri, Tirunandikara etc. (District Kanniya Kumari), belonged to the former, while the excavations at Trikkur, Irunilancode (District Trichur), and Bhrantanpara (District Palghat) to the latter. The Saiva character is more pronounced in the southern group whose sculptural art bears close similarity with the Pandya style. Of all the bas-reliefs, the standing figure of a chieftain in the Kaviyur cave is the most cons-

picuous and marks a connecting link between the two groups: as almost similar portraiture with identical head-dress occurs in the Tirumayam (District Tiruchirappalli) and Virasikhamani (District Tirunelveli) caves in the heart of the Pandya country. All the caves in Kerala are dedicated to Siva: the figure of Vishnu at Airurpura (District Trivandrum) seems to be later in date than the period of main excavation. At Irunilancode (District Trichur, Kerala State), however, there is a relief of an image of Vishnu, its main image being that of Dakshinamurti carved on the back wall of the cell. These representations remind one of the plastic tradition of the Atiya country. Further, the incomplete excavation at Bhrantanpara (District Palghat) shows the adoption of the Pallava technique of cutting by dividing the scarp into blocks. Perhaps the northern group of caves in Kerala derived much of their features from the Pallavas or the Atiyamans.

- 9 K. R. Srinivasan, *Cave-Temples of the Pallavas* (New Delhi, 1964), pp. 130-32.
- 10 R. Nagaswamy, "Some Contributions of the Pandya to South Indian Art" *Artibus Asiae*, XXVII, 3, pp. 268-74 and figs. 4 and 9.
- 11 K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India* (Oxford, 1966), p. 157.

DEBALA MITRA

A frieze from Goli in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.  
New York

In his *Buddhist Sculptures from a Stupa near Goli village Guntur District* (Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, New Series-General Section, I, Pt. 1, Madras, 1929), Shri T. N. Ramachandran mentions the following sculptures of Goli as not having been removed to the Madras Museum.

- (i) a seven-hooded *nāga*,
- (ii) a long frieze,<sup>1</sup>
- (iii) a slab relieved with a *stūpa*, and
- (vi) a slab relieved with foot-prints of Buddha.

Of these the *nāga* (no. 1) was housed in a modern shrine near the *stūpa* and the rest fixed to the walls thereof.

When I visited Goli (about 4 miles from the Rentachintala Railway station on the Guntur-Macherla line) to examine and photograph these sculptures on the 11th August, 1959, on my way to Nagarjunakonda, I found all of them non-existent at the site, except the *nāga* (no. 1). My local enquiry revealed that one night, several years back, the sculptures, now missing, had been removed surreptitiously by some unknown persons and that the wheel-marks of a truck could only be traced next morning. Afterwards, I learnt from Shri Ramachandran that the long frieze (no. 2), seen by him last in 1929, represented the conversion of Nanda.

Later on, I noticed the photograph of a portion of a frieze reproduced in the *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, February, 1960,<sup>2</sup> wherein it is described as 'Detail of the Conversion and Ordination of Nanda. Amaravati region, Andhra Period, III century. Height 11½ in. Rogers Fund, 1930.' Its style and height indicated to me the possibility of its being in reality the missing Goli frieze. I then succeeded in securing an enlarged print of a negative showing the Goli frieze (pl.1)<sup>3</sup> as fixed to the Nāga shrine<sup>4</sup> from the South-eastern Circle of the Archaeological

Survey of India. I also obtained five excellent photographs showing different parts of the frieze (pl. 2)<sup>5</sup> from the Metropolitan Museum of art through the kind courtesy of Shri Aschwin Lippe, at that time Associate Curator of Far Eastern Art in that Museum, who was also good enough to inform me that the frieze had been acquired in the Museum in 1930 from a New York dealer (the finder and findspot being unknown) and that it had been previously published in the *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, XXV 5 (May 1930). Unfortunately, I could not consult that publication as it is not available in the Libraries within my reach.

A comparison of the photographs obtained from the two sources, however, clearly shows that the Metropolitan Museum piece is no other than the missing Goli Frieze. It is now damaged at a few places, evidently as a result of hurried dismantling from the shrine or careless handling during transportation.

These facts are recorded here so that the present whereabouts of an important frieze missing from Goli are known to the interested and its findspot is correctly recorded in the Museum.

#### FOOT NOTES

- 1 According to Sri Ramachandran the frieze originally formed part of the southern side of the *stupa*, those on the other three directions having been taken to the Madras Museum.
- 2 P. 187.
- 3 Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India.
- 4 *List of Archaeological Photo-Negative of the Madras Presidency and Coorg stored in the Office of the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Southern Circle' Madras (1936)*, p. 44, B. 321. (Modern Naga shrine built near the Buddhist Stupa).
- 5 Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A copy of this note was sent to the Metropolitan Museum of Art

3304  
C. MARGABANDHU

## A note on some Antiquities from historic sites of Tamilnadu and their cultural significance

Excavations at many sites in the past two decades in Central India, Deccan, and South India have revealed objects that throw light on the material culture of the people during the Early Historic Period. They provide ample evidence to reconstruct the life of the people to a large extent. Some of the objects found testify their contemporaneity with similar finds to other neighbouring regions. A few common techniques of manufacturing objects have been found to be followed by the artisans in society which reflect upon the technological contact between different places, though widely separated by long distances.

In this paper a few objects found in the excavations of sites in Tamil Nadu have been compared to those found in contemporary horizons at Central India and the Deccan. They have been selected for discussion in view of their wider provenance and frequent occurrence. They include bronze hand mirrors, various types of ear-ornaments and one typical amulet.

Out of the many metal objects reported in urn-burials at Adichanallur,<sup>1</sup> a few bronze objects are of notable importance. They have been described as frying pans. Five of them have been reported. They consist of a circular flat plate with incised concentric circles on the upper surface; one of them has a knob or *omphalos* at centre with a projecting triangular handle (Fig. 1-4). Identical specimens elsewhere found testify that they were really handled mirrors and not frying pans. Similar ones occur in sites of North India and the Deccan viz., at Basarh, Brahmapuri, Rairh, Taxila etc. They comprise of a circular disc furnished with a tang at base which is fitted into a handle. The mirror or the disc part is smooth or a little convex, the back at times, rather often with a broad wavy rim and raised boss or *omphalos* (or miniature knob) in the centre. The rim is perhaps intended to preserve and protect the polish on it. The metal used is bronze and it is likely that the face portion was coated with some preparation viz., mercury which gave it a silvery lustre.

One of them at Taxila<sup>2</sup> has been found with an ivory handle, in Saka-Parthian levels. Marshall<sup>3</sup> suggests them to be copies of Graeco-Roman prototypes (Fig 2.12). Rairh<sup>4</sup> (Fig. 1.3) has yielded them in Sunga-Kushana period.

By far the finest specimens have been reported from Brahmapuri<sup>5</sup> in Late Satavahana levels datable to the first and the second century A.D. All of them are made of Bronze and bear excellent finish (Fig. 1.1; 2.14). It appears the surface was polished after fashioning them on lathe. All of them have *omphalos* or knob at centre. *Omphalos* is commonly found in the Roman metal work and was perhaps derived from earlier articles of Graeco-Roman workmanship. A copper mirror has also been reported from Basarh<sup>6</sup> in Mauryan levels.

These evidences suggest the popularity of handled mirrors in North and South India during the period of C. 200 B.C.-200 A.D.

In the light of the above evidence, specimens from Adichanallur pose a problem: either they represent an early type datable to C. the third century B. C. or even earlier or they represent imported specimens sometime during C. the first century<sup>2</sup> B. C. or later, when South Indian ports were busy trading and exchanging goods with the Western World.

Various types of ear-ornaments have been reported from many sites of Tamil Nadu. Three varieties of them deserve mention since similar types have been reported in many places of central and Western India datable to comparable times.

At Arikamedu<sup>7</sup> (Fig. 2, 8, 10.) a type of shell ear-ornaments have been found along with a large number of sawn and cut conch-shells. They occur in post-Arretine layers (C. 50-100 A. D.). They are crescent-shaped with conical ends. They were prepared by sawing the conch vertically. Very likely they were hung from the ear-lobe with a hook-like arrangement.

Similar ear-rings have been reported at many sites in Central India and the Deccan, for instance at Karad<sup>8</sup>, Maski<sup>9</sup>, Ujjain<sup>10</sup>, (Fig. 1. 5.) etc. ascribable to C. 200 BC -100 A. D.

A large number of terracotta crescent shaped ear-rings are also known from many sites. Most of them have been cast from moulds with ends decorated with beading or threading; a few of them bear surface decorations. A typical specimen comes from Bhir Mound<sup>11</sup> (Taxila) (Fig. 3) in Mauryan levels. It has been decorated with a beaded border and two holes for suspension. This indicates how similar ear rings of shell found at Arikamedu, Karad, Maski Ujjain etc. were worn.

The second one is a type called 'pulley-shaped ear-ornament' It comprises of a disc face, conical or convex shaped ends with a deep channel in



the middle like a pulley. Some of them resemble gamesman with cylindrical stalk at ends.

At Arikamedu<sup>12</sup>(Fig. 2·9) two of them have been reported. They have been described as 'two gaming pieces one depicting human head with a projecting stout'. Similar one also has been recorded at Kanchipuram<sup>13</sup> (Fig 1.2) circular in shape with biconical terminal having a deep groove in the middle. It belongs to the early medieval times. Korkai<sup>14</sup> has yielded them in levels datable to the early centuries of the Christian Era.

Many sites in Central and Western India and the Deccan have yielded similar ear-ornament in levels of C. 400 B.C.-200 A.D. They come from Dharanikota,<sup>15</sup> Maheshwar,<sup>16</sup> Maski,<sup>17</sup> Nagarjunakonda,<sup>18</sup> Salihundam,<sup>19</sup> Sisupalgarh,<sup>20</sup> Ujjain<sup>21</sup> (Fig. 4)

They are made of various materials such as rock-crystal, jasper, shell, ivory, bone, glass and terracotta. By far the largest number of them are made of terracotta. The finest and some of the best specimens have been reported at Sisupalgarh<sup>22</sup> (C. 300 BC-100 A.D.) (Pl. 4).

Decorated ear-ornament belongs to the third variety. A unique and artistically prepared ear-disc has been reported from Kanchipuram<sup>23</sup> (Fig. 2·11) in levels of the Pallava Period. It has been decorated with floral designs and incised motifs in concentric circles on one side. Such big ear ornaments have also been found depicted in the sculptures at Mahabalipuram. In addition fine samples of decorated bangles, pendants, finger-rings have also been reported at Kanchi<sup>24</sup> in contemporary times.

Similar decorated ear-ornaments have been found in large numbers in sites of central India and the Deccan and are datable to the Satavahana Period and later. Decorations are found either on one or both sides. At Nagda<sup>25</sup> (C. 200 B.C.). The decorations consist of star-shaped designs, taurine symbols and floral patterns. A few specimens with floral designs come from Kasrawad<sup>26</sup> also. At Sisupalgarh<sup>27</sup> decorations consist of concentric lines, floral patterns etc. One of them from Salihundam<sup>28</sup> has been decorated with lotus designs and perforations on both sides. Some of the finest specimens have been reported from Maski,<sup>29</sup> (C. 100 A.D.), comprising of lotus designs, floral patterns having a central boss, geometric designs etc. Similar lotus designs also occur in granite specimens at Piklihal<sup>30</sup> (Fig. 1·7). Kanchi specimen is quite similar to the ones reported at Maski and Piklihal.

At Arikamedu<sup>31</sup> (Fig. 1'6) has been found a unique frog bead (Pendant) at present lying in the Pondicherry Bibliothéque. It is made of green glass perforated vertically for threading. Its actual stratigraphical context has not been mentioned, but it is quite an ancient bead, as revealed by evidence from other places.

Since ancient times frog seems to have been a favourite animal for amulets. Frog has been considered to be efficacious against fever in the Vedic literature.<sup>32</sup> Flinders Petrie<sup>33</sup> informs that in Egypt frog amulets have been commonly used as a symbol of fertility. Perhaps it had the same significance in Mesopotamia where frog amulets are very common.

Many sites in Central and Western India and the Deccan have yielded frog amuletic pendants in levels datable to C. 300 B.C.-600 A.D.

At Sambhar<sup>34</sup> (Fig. 2'13) a frog bead made of green glazed faience has been dated to C. 200-100 B.C. Some from Dharmarajika Stupa<sup>35</sup> (Taxila) are made of amethyst, garnet and glazed quartz. Others from Sirkap<sup>36</sup> are of agate, quartz, carnelian and shell. They were found at Taxila in the time-span of C. 100-500 A.D. At Eran,<sup>37</sup> two models in shell have been reported from the Late Historic Period (C. 600 A.D.). A fragmentary specimen of shell has also been recorded at Maski.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, a number of amulets of this shape have been found in the sites of Gangetic valley as well as from north-west parts of India.<sup>39</sup>

The frog, therefore appears to have had a universal appeal in the ancient world and this accounts for the apotropaic character of the amulets.

From the above details of the provenance of frog-beads and their amuletic hearing it is quite clear the frog bead from Arikamedu is of great significance. It indicates the possible cultural and trade contacts between different places of South India and the Deccan and beyond during the Early Historic Period.

These are some of the objects chosen to study the various interacting cultural influences between South India and neighbouring regions. It is difficult to say the source or origin of their manufacture, as the material evidence is quite scanty. Though many excavations have been conducted, no detailed reports have been published. Much more evidence is needed, before saying anything regarding the cultural forces working during the Early Historic Period.

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- 2 Marshall, *Taxila*, III. Pl. 182, b; other mirrors are shown in Pl. 181 f; Pl. 182. a.
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- 10 *Annual Administrative Report of the Archaeological Department of Gwalior State (AARADGS)*, 1938-39, Pl. XXIV.b.
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- 30 Allchin, F. R., *Piklihal, Excavations*, Hyderabad, 1960, PL. 55.4, 569. No. 1,
- 31 Wheeler et al, *Anc. India*, 2. (1946), P. 98, F. 41.60.
- 32 *Sacred Books of the East* XLII. P. 4. Atharva Veda (VII. 116) refers to this. Kshemendra in his *Kalavilasa* (IX. 12) points to a popular belief that a man applying frog's fat became the beloved of the heavenly maidens (Bloomfield, *ibid* PP. 565-68)
- 33 *Amulets* P. 12.
- 34 Daya Ram Sahni, *Archaeological Remains and Excavations at Sambhar* (1936-38), Jaipur, P. 45, No. 2968, PL. XV. 1.
- 35 Beck H. C., *The Beads from Taxila*, MASI, 65, 1941, PL. VII. 30.31; GHOSH A, 'Sirkap, (1944-45) *Anc-Ind.* 4 (1947-48), PL. X. 22.
- 36 Beck, *Op. Cit.* PL. VII, 32, 33.
- 37 *IAR*-1964-65, P. 18.
- 38 *ARADND*, 1935-36, PL. VI. f.
- 39 Dikshit M.G., Notes on Some Indian Amulets' *Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum*, No. 2, 1953, PP. 89-90.

Some Reflections on Pandi - Mandalam C. 700 - 1300

The limits of Pāṇḍi - Maṇḍalam as borne out by inscriptions of the 7th-13th centuries and corroborated to certain extent by late literary evidence<sup>1</sup> were the Vellāru river (flowing near Pudukkottai) on the north-east, the hilly area in the Melur and Tiruchirappalli Taluks on the north, the Virupākshi Pass on the north-west, the Western Ghats on the west, and sea on the south and the east. The modern Districts of Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli and portions of the Arantangi Taluk in Thanjavur District and Alangudi and Tirumayam Taluks in Tiruchirappalli District and the Agastisvaram and Thovala Taluks in the Kanyakumari District were included within these limits. In the Palani Taluk of the Madurai District, only the eastern half was included in this Maṇḍalam, the western half having been included in the Kongu Maṇḍalam. Only from the beginning of the 13th century the name 'Pāṇḍi Maṇḍalam' came into use to denote this area. Before that it had been known simply as Pāṇḍi-Nāḍu at first, as Rājarāja-Vaḷanāḍu from 991 or so after the conquest of Rājarāja I,<sup>2</sup> as Rājarāja - Maṇḍalam from 1012<sup>3</sup> and Rājarāja-Pāṇḍi - Nāḍu from 1022 through the earlier half of the 12th century.<sup>4</sup>

The important territorial units of this Maṇḍalam that we are concerned with are the 'Nāḍu-s'. There are about hundred of these in this area. About sixty of these units have the nominal suffix 'Nāḍu'. Ten have the suffix 'Kūrṟam'; ten, the suffix 'Kuḷak-kīḷ' (including one 'Ērik-kīḷ'); four, 'Irukkai'; five 'Muṭṭam' and nine others 'Vaḷa-nāḍu'. The name of a unit is Nāṭṭārṟuppōkku. All these units are to be considered as similar in nature since the 'territorial assemblies' of all these are uniformly called 'Nāḍu' (or *Nāṭṭār*). The units that went with the suffix 'Vaḷa-nāḍu' should be distinguished from their namesakes that came into existence during Rājarāja I's reign and thereafter. These had existed even before the reign of Rājarāja I in Pāṇḍi-Maṇḍalam and it seems these got the 'Vaḷa-nāḍu' suffix by renaming after the attributes of some kings like Pāṇḍimārṭtāṇḍa, Tiruvaḷudi, etc. This is clear from the following instance: Tuvvūr Kūrṟam *alias* Mayimākara-Vaḷa-Nāḍu.<sup>5</sup>

Comparatively speaking the total number of Nāḍus (See Appendix I) in Pāṇḍi Maṇḍalam (about hundred) is poor beside the numbers of the same in Chōḷa Maṇḍalam and Tonḍai Maṇḍalam, they being respectively hundred and forty and hundred and eighty. Approximately the area of Chōḷa Maṇḍalam and Pāṇḍi Maṇḍalam are equal. The poor number for Pāṇḍi-Maṇḍalam should be attributed to the relative poor soil and irrigation facilities of this area. Even here they are in certain concentrated patches:—1) (The densest patch is in) the area covered by Tiruppattur, Sivaganga and Paramakudi Taluks; (2) Koyilpatti Taluk (3) Srivaikundam and Tiruchendur Taluks (4) Nanguneri and Tirunelveli Taluks.<sup>6</sup> Compared to Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli Districts, Madurai District is found to contain only smaller number of Nāḍus. Most of the district lies in comparatively higher altitudes lacking good irrigation facilities.

The Nāḍus are usually considered to be administrative divisions artificially constituted by the State. The names of the Nāḍus having the nominal suffix 'Vaḷa Nāḍu' might be adduced in support of this. But this has been pointed out above rather as a case of re-naming. The Nāḍus themselves had predated the time of this re-naming. Then it is pertinent to note that a considerable space in this Maṇḍalam does not have any Nāḍu at all. That is, the distribution of the Nāḍus are non-contiguous. Thirdly, the lay of boundaries of these are non-artificial. In the case of artificial political units natural geographical features like rivers, channels form, wherever they are available, one or other of the boundaries. But in our case Nāḍus have rivers and channels well in the middle of them. Mulli Nāḍu, for example, lay on both the banks of the Tambraparni river. This phenomenon led to a curious happening later. That is, each of the Nāḍus lying on both the banks of a river went to two different Vaḷa-Nāḍus set up during Rājarāja I's reign, since these Vaḷa-Nāḍus had the river as a limit. Fourthly, the area of each of the Nāḍus is very small. Leaving a few aberrant cases (such as Miḷalai kūṟṟam which measured about hundred and fifty square miles) the average area would be around twenty-five square miles. Lastly, no Nāḍu seems to contain an administrative centre. The seemingly important name-giving villages of the Nāḍus are not found to be administrative centres at all. They must have been important in some other way. All these facts go against the view that the Nāḍus were state-made administrative divisions.

A close scrutiny of all the relevant facts urges us to take the view that the Nāḍus were basically agricultural regions. Being groupings of agricultural settlements, their formation should have been influenced by natural factors conducive to agriculture like irrigation, soils, etc. This reasoning explains well the concentration of the Nāḍus in certain localities, which was pointed out above. The Nāḍus which end with the suffix 'Kuḷak-kī!' obviously came into existence under the respective irrigation tanks. The Nāḍu called 'Nāṭṭāruppōkku' is the one that had grown along the banks of the river 'Nāṭṭāru'. A few Nāḍus which contain sub-divisions are found to have them based on irrigation channels, e.g., Koḷuvūr kūṟṟam had the sub-divisions Mī-kunḍāru and Kīḷ-kunḍāru. Miḷalaik-kūṟṟam had, besides others, two divisions called Mī-Pāmbāru. These hints amply suggest the agrarian basis of these territorial units.

The etymology of Nāḍu does not help much to the present discussion. Though generally 'Nāḍu' meant 'land' or 'country', it was also used many a time with a special meaning. In a *Pura-nānūru* verse a Chēra king is extolled as a scion of a family of benevolent rulers who had the good fortune of being obliged by the hills, the forest and the 'Nāḍu' under their rule.<sup>7</sup> Here Nāḍu obviously denotes the civilized and inhabited space of the country. In support of this we can cite the *Paṭṭinappālai* wherein it is stated that Karikala created 'Nāḍu' (*nāḍu ākki*) by clearing forests (*kāḍu koṇru*).<sup>8</sup> These quotations support the agricultural basis of the Nāḍus.

The point may be made more clear by a study of the set-up and functions of the assembly called *Nāḍu* (also *Nāṭṭār*) based on these territorial units. The common use of Nāḍu to denote the territory as well as the assembly is itself telling. It has been elaborated elsewhere by the present writer that the assembly, *Nāḍu* (or *Nāṭṭār*) is nothing but a group of the representatives of the *veḷḷānvagai* landholders, i.e., the *ūrār*.<sup>9</sup> Being the only influential and authoritative group in virtue of their agricultural landholdings they are the people usually addressed to by the king whenever a grant is made; they are the people who receive the royal communication and proclaim the grant after fixing the boundaries of the gift land. The signatories to the transaction of a *Nāḍu* are all found to belong to the *Veḷḷāla* community and the accountants of the *Nāḍu* assembly bear invariably the title *Vēḷān*.<sup>10</sup>

Since the Nāḍus contained only small areas it is possible that each Nāḍu was a cohesive group of agricultural people tied together by marriage

and blood relationships, the seemingly chief name-giving villages forming the core of each group at the beginning. Because of this cohesive character of the segment of the society which each Nāḍu contained, the *Nāḍu* (assembly) functioned mostly only within the limits of the respective territorial units. From the beginning of the 12th century the *Nāḍus* functioned at times transcending their territorial limits through the assemblies of *Chittira-mēḷi-Periya-Nāṭṭar*. The *Periya-Nāṭṭar* were the *Nāṭṭar* belonging to many Nāḍus assembled together for a common purpose. The true nature of the composition of *Chittira-mēḷi-Periya-Nāṭṭar* cannot be explained unless the *Nāṭṭar* are considered to be the *Vellānvagai* group.

It is true these naturally evolved Nāḍu Units came to be used for some sort of administrative purpose when the 'State' came into existence. The chief and in a way the only source of the State revenue of our period being derived from agricultural land, 'Nāḍu' the agricultural region was naturally the main focus of the governmental system. And the *Nāṭṭar* of these Nāḍus came in handy for negotiation. The supreme authority of the Nāḍu over the land was tacitly acknowledged by all the ruling Kings. The *Nāṭṭar* were the final endorsing authority of the royal grant and only after their endorsement the grant was entered in State records. The *Nāṭṭar* who were the chief spokesmen of the agricultural people of the Nāḍus had their due share and say in any political set up. We hear that the consent of the Nāḍu along with that of the '*uḍankūṭṭam*' was obtained by Pallavarayan for installing Rajadhiraja II on the Chola throne.<sup>11</sup> This inherent influential position of the *Nāṭṭar* was well recognized by all rulers, who enlisted people from among them for most of their administrative staff and bestowed the titles '*vēḷān*' and *Mūvēndavēḷan* on them.

The '*Vaḷa Nāḍu*' that was brought into existence by Rājarāja I was certainly a State contrivance. Rājarāja I seems to have got inspiration for the name '*Vaḷa Nāḍu*' from the Pāṇḍya country where there had existed already Nāḍus with '*Vaḷanāḍu*' suffix. The '*Vaḷa Nāḍu*' set up was introduced in the Pāṇḍi Maṇḍalam by Rājēndra I, son of Rājarāja I, about 1021.<sup>12</sup> The entire country was divided into four *Vaḷa Nāḍus*: (1) Rājēndra Chōḷa *Vaḷa Nāḍu* comprised all the Pāṇḍya territory to the north of the Vaigai river; (2) Madurāntaka *Vaḷa Nāḍu* comprised all the territory south of the Vaigai up to the river Vaippār flowing through the Sattur and Koyilpatti taluks; (3) Muḍikoṇḍa Chōḷa *Vaḷa Nāḍu* was situated in



between the Vaippār and the Tambraparni; (4) Uttama Chōḷa Vaḷa Nāḍu had in it all the territory lying to the south of the Tambraparni. This set up disappeared along with the Chōḷa rule after the end of Kulōttunga I's reign. Only Madurāntaka-Vaḷa-Nāḍu with its new name Madurōdaya-Vaḷa-Nāḍu lingered on to the 14th century.

Lastly some problems that are to be tackled further may be suggested. The study of the Nāḍu units will not be complete unless all these are plotted on large-scale maps. The true ecological positions of each of the Nāḍus can be known only through a study of such maps. Again, the study of Nāḍus must be historical. The chronology of the advent of various Nāḍus will help to a large extent the study of the growth of the Pāṇḍya State. Many prevailing conceptions as to the hoary antiquity of the Pāṇḍya realm could be questioned by this study. For instance the account of the forty-nine Nāḍus said to have been swallowed by sea as related in some medieval commentaries seems to be a palpable concoction. It is said in this account that there were seven Nāḍus with the name Madurai-Nāḍu (Ēḷ Madurai Nāḍu). But we do not get a 'Madurai Nāḍu' even around the capital city Madurai. Madurai was included in the Nāḍu called 'Māḍakkulak-kīḷ'. Then there is so close a similarity in the names of the Nāḍus, Kīḷ Iraṇiya Muṭṭam and Mēḷ Iraṇiya Muṭṭam near Madurai on the one hand and that of Hiraṇya Rāshṭra, north of Nellore that it cannot just be dismissed as accidental. These and other such things, if properly studied, will help much to elucidate the knotty problems of the Pāṇḍya history in particular and of South Indian history in general.

#### FOOT-NOTES

- 1 Pandi - mandala - Satakam, v. 98.
- 2 ARE. No. 332 of 1923 & SII., Vol. III, No. 9.
- 3 ARE. No. 210 of 1932-33.
- 4 ARE. No. 213 of 1932-33.
- 5 ARE. No. 34 of 1946-47.
- 6 Vide Appendix II.
- 7 Verse 17 - *Kunru malai Kadu Naḍu onru pattu vali moliya.*
- 8 1. 283.
- 9 Y. Subbarayalu, The Political Geography of the Chola Country, 800-1300 (Madras : Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology Publication, 1973), pp. 33-36.
- 10 *Inscription of the Pudukkottai State* - Nos. 155, 287, 371.
- 11 E. I. XXI No. 31 pp. 190-193.
- 12 ARE No. 400 of 1916.

## APPENDIX I

### NADUS IN PANDI-MANDALAM

<i>Nadu</i>	<i>Taluk &amp; District</i>
Achchankāṭṭ-Irukkai	Sivaganga, Rd. (Ramnad).
Āchūr-Nāḍu	Kovilpatti, Tn. (Tirunelveli).
Adaḷaiyūr-Nāḍu (Tēnārruppōkku)	Tirumayam, Tp. & Tiruppattur, Rd.
Aḷagiyapāṇḍiyakuḷak-kīḷ	Sivaganga, Rd.
Aḷa(1)-Nāḍu	Periyakulam, Mr. (Madurai).
Aḷarrur-Nāḍu	...
Ālattur-Nāḍu	...
Āḷḷūrkkulak-kīḷ	...
Amitaḡaṇa-vaḷa-Nāḍu	Sri vaikuntham & Tiruchchendur, Tn.
Aṇḍa-Nāḍu	Palani, Mr.
Āṇmā-Nāḍu	Kovilpatti, Tn.
Āri-Nāḍu	Sankaranayinarkoyil, Tn.
Arumbūr-Kūrṇam	...
Kiḷ-Chembi(1) - Nāḍu	Paramagudi & Ramanatha- puram, Rd.
Vaḍatalaich-Chembi(1) - Nāḍu	Paramagudi, Rd.
Chengāṭṭu-Irukkai	Aruppukkottai, Rd.
Chengudi-Nāḍu	...
Chev virukkai-Nāḍu	Ramanathapuram, Rd.
Chōḷakēraḷa-kuḷak-kīḷ	...
Chōḷa-Pāṇḍiyakuḷak-kīḷ	...
Chōḷa-Pāṇḍiya-vaḷa-Nāḍu (s. a. Koḷuvūr- Kūrṇam)	Tiruppattur, Rd.
Chura(vi)-Nāḍu	Melur, Mr.

Chūraṅgudi-Nāḍu	Kovilpatti, Tn.
Ēlūr-Chembil-Nāḍu	...
Idaikkula-Nāḍu	Mudkulattur, Rd.
Kīl-Iraṇiya-Muṭṭam	Madurai, Mr.
Mēl-Iraṇiya-Muṭṭam	...
Irunjōl(a)-Nāḍu	Sattur, Rd.
Ten-Kalavaḷi-Nāḍu	Sivaganga, Rd,
Vaḍa-Kalavaḷi-Nāḍu	Sivaganga, Rd.
Kallaka-Nāḍu	Sankaranayinarkoil, Tn.
Ten-Kallaka-Nāḍu	Tirumangalam & Nilakkottai, Mr.
Kalvāyil-Nāḍu	Tirumayam, Tp.
Kānai-Irukkai	Sivaganga, Rd.
Kāna-Nāḍu	Tirumayam Tp. (Tiruchira- ppalli).
Karungudi-Nāḍu	Paramagudi, Rd.
Karungula-vaḷa-Nāḍu	Nanguneri, Tn.
Karunilakkudi-Nāḍu	Sattur, Rd.
Kīl-Kalāk-Kūṟṟam	Tirunelveli, Tn.
Kīl-Kuṇḍāru	Tiruppattur, Rd.
Kīranūr-Nāḍu	Sivaganga, Rd.
Koḷuvūr-Kūṟṟam	Tiruppattur, Rd.
Kuḍa-Nāḍu	Srivaikuntham & Tiruchchendur, Tn.
Kūḍalūr-Nāḍu	Tirumayam, Tp.
Kuṇḍūr-k-kūṟṟam	...
Kuṇr(u)-Irukkai-Nāḍu	...
Kuṟumarai-Nāḍu	Tenkasi, Tn.
Māḍakkulāk-kīl	Madurai, Mr.
Manalūrkulāk-kīl	...
Mānavīra-vaḷanāḍu	...
Mērkudi-Nāḍu	Sivaganga, Rd.
Mīlalaik-kūṟṟam	Arantangi, Tanjavur & Tiruma- yam, Tp.
Muḍikoṇḍachōḷap-pērērik-kīl	...

Mulli-Nāḍu	Ambasamudram, Tn.
Murappu-Nāḍu	Srivaikuntham, Tn.
Ten-Muṭṭa-Nāḍu	Tirumangalam, Mr.
Vaḍa-Muṭṭa-Nāḍu	...
Muttūru-Kūrram	Arantangi, Tj. & Tiruvadanaī, Rd.
Nāñchi(1) - Nāḍu	Agastisvaram, Kanyakumari.
Nāṭṭāruppōkku	Nanguneri, Tn.
Nechhura-Nāḍu	Kovilpatti, Tn.
Ollaiyūr-Kūrram	Tirumayam, Tp.
Pāganūr-Kūrram	Madurai & Nilakkottai, Mr.
Pālaiyūr-Nāḍu	Tiruppattur, Rd.
Panaṅgalūr-Nāḍu	Sivaganga, Rd.
Pāṇḍimārttāṇḍavaḷa-Nāḍu	...
Parāntaka-vaḷa-Nāḍu	Srivaikuntham, Tn.
Paruttikkudi-Nāḍu	Aruppukkottai, Rd.
Perumbūr-Nāḍu	Tiruppattur, Rd.
Pōḷiyūr-Nāḍu	...
Pūngā-Nāḍu	Tirumangalam, Mr. & Aruppukkottai, Rd.
Pūngunra-Nāḍu	Tiruppattur Rd.
Puramalai-Nāḍu	Alangudi, Tp. & Tirupṭāṭṭur, Rd.
Purapparalāi-Nāḍu	Sivaganga, Rd.
Purattāya-Nāḍu	Agastisvaram, Kanyakumari
Rājasinga-Kuḷak-kīḷ (or Irāsingan- Kḷuak-Kīḷ)	Sivaganga, Rd.,
Srīvallabha-vaḷa-Nāḍu	Tiruchendur, Tn.
Tālaiyūr-Nāḍu	Tiruppattur, Rd.
Ten-Paramba-Nāḍu	Madurai & Melur, Mr.
Tiruk-kānappēr(ūr) - Kūrram	Tiruvadanaī & Sivaganga, Rd.
Tiru-Malli-Nāḍu	Srivilliputtur, Rd.
Tirumalai-Nāḍu	Tiruppattur, Rd.
Tiruttiyūr-Muṭṭam	Tiruppattur, Rd.

Kīlai-Tiruttīyūr-Muṭṭam	Tiruppattur, Rd.
Mēlai-Tiruttīyūr-Muṭṭam	Sivaganga, Rd.
Tiruvāḷudi-vaḷa-Nāḍu	Srivaikuntham & Tiruchchendur, Tn.
Tiyandaikudi-Nāḍu	Sivaganga & Paramagudi, Rd
Tuvarāvati-Nāḍu	...
Tuvvūr-Kūrṛam	Paramagudi, Rd.
Vaḍavallatt-Irukkai	Paramagudi, Rd.
Vānava-Nāḍu (Pachchāṛruppōkku)	Nanguneri, Tn.
Ten-vāra-Nāḍu	Tenkasi & Shencottah, Tn.
Vaḍa-vāra-Nāḍu	Shenkottah, Tn.
Varaḡaṇa-vaḷa-Nāḍu	Tiruvadanaī, Rd.
Vēlūr-Kuḷak-kīḷ	Sivaganga, Rd.
Kīḷ-Vēmba-Nāḍu	Tirunelveli, Tn.
Mēl-Vēmba-Nāḍu	Tirunelveli, Tn.
Veṇbaikkudi-Nāḍu	Sattur Rd.
Veṇbu-Nāḍu	Aruppukkottai, Rd.
Vikkiramakāma-vaḷa-Nāḍu	...
Vīranārayaṇa-kuḷak-kīḷ	...

## APPENDIX II

## RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT

## TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

<i>Taluk</i>	<i>No. of Nāḍus</i>	<i>Taluk</i>	<i>No. of Nāḍus</i>
Tiruppattur	11	Koyilpatti	4
Sivaganga	14	Srivaikundam and Tiruchendur	6
Paramakudi	5		
Aruppukkottai	3	Tirunelveli	3

Sathur	3	Nanguneri	3
Tiruvadanai'	2	Sankaranayinar Koyil	2
Mudukulathur	1	Tenkasi	2
Srivilliputtur	1	Ambasamudram	1
Ramanathapuram	1	Shenkottah	1
	<hr/> 41 <hr/>		<hr/> 22 <hr/>

## MADURAI DISTRICT

## OTHER AREAS

Tirumangalam	3	Tirumayam (Tiruchi Dt.)	5
Madurai	2	Arantangi (Thanjavur Dt.)	2
Melur	2	Agastisvaram (Kanyakumari Dt.)	2
Nilakkottai	2		<hr/>
Periyakulam	1		9
Palani	1	(Nadus yet to be located)	20
	<hr/> 11 <hr/>		

N. HARINARAYANA

## Report on the Cleaning of Paintings at the Venugopala Shrine in Srirangam

### Location and Description of the Paintings :

The Venugopala shrine is one of the principal shrines in the Sri Ranganathaswami Temple at Srirangam and is noted for the excellence of the sculptures on the exterior of the walls of the shrine. As one enters the temple from the southern gateway it is situated at a slightly elevated level to the left of the Sri Rangavilas mandapa. In front of the Venugopala shrine, there is a small four pillared mandapa about ten feet square and fifteen feet high. The paintings, which have been the subject of chemical treatment, are found on the ceiling of this mandapa and on the cornices below the ceiling.<sup>1</sup>

The painting on the ceiling (or what remains of it) consists of a square central panel surrounded by four oblong panels on each side. The central panel depicts Krishna as Venugopala. The panels on the eastern and northern sides depict Krishna with his consort attended on by gopis. The panel on the southern side has only figures of gopis. The one on the western side has almost completely fallen down and contains no figures and so it is not possible to know what it represented.

### Condition before Treatment :

The painting was minutely examined prior to the commencement of treatment. In the middle of the central panel, two hooks are inset in the ceiling, connected by an iron rod. This is an arrangement for hanging lamps. It was found that the paint was applied on a carefully prepared ground. This ground consisted of first a coat of plaster spread directly on the stone ceiling slabs and then on this was floated a coat of fine plaster. It is possible that a further finishing coat of some nature may have been laid on the fine plaster, but this can only be determined after microscopic examination of samples.

It was also found that paint has fallen off on a large scale in all the panels. The panel on the western side is almost completely gone. Near the north-west corner, the ground is actually visible to the rough plaster layer. The face

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1. A historical introduction to the temple and its painting is given at the end of this article. - Editor.

and body of Venugopala in the central panel has also come away especially nearer the western side. The animals nearer the bottom of the figure as well as the legs of the figure have survived in sizable patches. The figures on the eastern and northern panels have survived in recognisable form, though flaking has occurred in them also. The figures on the southern panel are much less well preserved than these two, but enough survives to trace the features of the figures.

The decoration on the sides has also suffered enormously from flaking, that on the western side and that on the western half of the southern and northern sides having completely disappeared. The widespread loss of paint in all the panels has given the painting a patchy appearance with the white and brownish patches of fine plaster dimming the appearance of the remaining traces of painting.

Moreover the deposition of extraneous layers of dust and dirt has discoloured the original pigments of the painting so that the whole picture looks very dull, and the details have been lost. A few cobwebs were found here and there. There was an insect cocoon at the middle of the joint between the ceiling and the cornices on the Eastern side.

It must be said however that wherever the painted layer is present, it is well attached to its ground and there is no evidence of present continuation of flaking. Subsequent treatment with solutions also confirmed this observation.

Before proceeding with the treatment, small samples of the different layers were collected mostly from the western side where the preserved trace of painting are too small to have any artistic value. These samples will be thoroughly examined both by chemical analysis and under the microscope for studying the technique of painting and the pigments used.

Before commencing the treatment, a photographic record of the paintings was made panel by panel, both in black and white and in colour. This work was done by the photographers of the Department of Archaeology, Tamilnadu.

### Treatment given :

First, all superficial dust and the cobwebs were removed using a 2½" paint brush having soft bristles. Care was taken to see that no paint layer was removed in the process. The insect cocoon was also mechanically removed, and the spot brushed. No trace of any staining was found there.



The cleaning was then commenced on the panel on the southern side. Here sufficient remnants of the painting existed for determining suitable chemicals to effect the removal of the disfiguring accretions, but there was no complete figure which might suffer through the experimental work. The traces on the western side were not sufficient for this purpose. The panels on the Northern and Eastern sides were too good to be subjected to such a process.

The following organic solvents were tried first: Petrol benzene mixture (equal quantities), rectified spirits and trichloroethylene. They were applied with cotton swabs. These were found to be not effective. Then a dilute solution of ammonia (5%) and Teepol (2%) in water was tried. This was effective in removing some of the accumulated dirt and dust and in revealing the details of the painting below. It was immediately removed using cotton swabs dipped in water. But on drying, it was found that a light white 'bloom' developed on the treated portions. The 'bloom' could be removed with water slightly acidified with a few drops of hydrochloric acid which was applied with a soft brush. Another process tried consisted of the preparation of a putty of French chalk, Sodium carbonate and rectified spirits and the application of the same to the painted layer. This was left to dry and the dried paste was removed with damp cotton swabs. Apart from being quite ineffective, this process resulted in whitish traces of French chalk being left on the painted portions. This chalky appearance detracts the aesthetic quality of the painting.

Next a thin solution of soap powder (surf) was prepared and to this an equal volume of amyl acetate was added. This mixture was applied with a sable-hair brush and proved effective. Slight foam was formed on brushing it over the painting and it could be noticed that a little of the discolouring dust and dirt came off. Wet cotton swabs were used gently to remove the excess solution and the loosened dirt also came off on the swabs. This was repeated until there was no sign of dust on the swabs. Care was taken to see that no pigment was removed in the process, by periodically checking the swabs. All traces of the chemicals were thoroughly removed on completion of the treatment. After the painting dried out, two coatings were given of a 5% solution of polyvinyl acetate in a toluene-acetone mixture.

The treatment of the other panels was then done as follows: first the painting was brushed with a soft painter's brush dipped in water. This was followed by applying the mixture of soap solution and amyl acetate and working it upto a gentle lather. This was removed with wet cotton swabs. The application of the mixture and its removal was repeated until the discolouring accretions were satisfactorily cleared away. Then the painted portions were allowed to dry completely after which two coatings of polyvinyl acetate solution were given.

The paintings were taken up for cleaning in this order: those on the cornices, the Southern panel, the eastern panel, the northern panel and the central panel.

### Result of treatment:

The removal of the accretions brought to light figures and decorations which were not previously visible. The most obvious of these were a series of animal figures presumably prancing horses or yalis in reddish brown-alternating with white scroll-work on the cornices on the southern and eastern sides. These figures are very impressive both in colour and line. The jewellery and the costumes on the various figures were also revealed. The removal of the accretions of dust and dirt brought out the fine colours of the paintings. An example is the decorative motif of leaves in the scroll-work on the cornices of the southern and eastern sides. Before cleaning, they were lost in a dull grey surface covering-of dust. After cleaning, they emerged as white leaves with serrated edges. All these decorations in the cornices were executed against a background of brownish grey colour. The strikingly different designs on the costumes of the various figures of the gopis also appeared to great advantage with the removal of the discolouration.

One thing which was noticeable was that after cleaning, the fine plaster ground, where revealed, formed white patches so prominent as to be distracting in their effect. This was specially noticeable in the cornice decorations, and it was considered whether retouching the whitish patches to match the background would improve the appearance of the painting as a whole. This was done around one of the animal figures using ordinary water colours which could be removed easily if found unsatisfactory. The retouching of the background does bring out the existing painting by subduing the distracting patches. If this is found satisfactory, judicious retouching to tone in the unseemly patches of plaster may be undertaken generally.

Another thing which may have to be done is to make the surface on the western side uniform by plugging some gaps where the fine and rough plaster ground has come away.

It should also be considered whether the iron rings and the iron rod at the centre of the ceiling are to be removed. If these are recent fittings, it would be better to remove them so that the central panel may be free of this distracting fixture.

### Acknowledgements :

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### Note on the venugopala temple and its paintings :

From inscriptions in the temple we learn that the Venugopala temple of Srirangam was built in the 15th regnal year of the Hoysala, Vīra Rāmanātha, by Alagiyamanavāla Bhaṭṭar or Kacciya Rāya Brahmādhirāya of Ranadīra chaturvedimangalam, said to have been a “brahma-deya” in Ariviyūr nadu, of Tirumunaippāḍi, in the sub-division of Rājarāja Vaḷanādu. The temple was consecrated on a Sunday, corresponding to Ekadasi, in the month of Ani. During the consecration, this Brahmādhirāya gifted one hundred thousand *kasus* into the treasury for daily *pujas* food offerings, and festivals to Kuḷal ūthi aruḷum Pillai and Nāchchiyār. The inscription also gives details of various measures for foodstuffs, flower garlands etc. It is stated that the Brahmādhirāya requested the Jīyar of the temple and others connected with the construction of the temple to arrange for regular worship.

Vīra Rāmanātha was anointed sometime in 1254 A.D. It may, therefore, be stated that the Venugopala temple came into existence sometime in 1269-70.

The architectural details and the sculptures of the temple follow the Hoysala idiom, foreign to the Tamil tradition. The beautiful *gopika* figures, one playing the vina, another sporting with a parrot, a third carrying a parrot in a *pancara*, a fourth entwined by a lovely creeper and yet another looking into the mirror, are elegant sculptures of this temple. But the outstanding beauty of this group is the bashful *nagna nāyika*. The central niches of the *garbhagraha* carry images of Venugopala on all the three sides. The sculptures of Nārada and Tumburu

are good specimens of this school. So are the sculptures in the basement. The ornamental details, the intricate carvings, and the iconographic concepts are clearly in the Hoysala style.

The paintings in the front Mandapa were noticed by me, some time back. Though the paintings looked like a monochrome painting in deep black colour, the high quality of the paintings and the mastery of lines were immediately recognized. The similarity between the Srirangam paintings on the one hand and the well known Lepakshi paintings on the other were also observed.

Quite befitting the Venugopala shrine the central panel of painting, depicts Venugopala, surrounded by animals deeply absorbed in his music. The side panels depict Krishna sporting with gopis.

In the absence of any inscription on the painting, it could only be dated on grounds of style. The paintings though bear very close resemblance to the sculptures found on the shrine show some later characters. The Srirangam temple has a number of painted panels that could be dated to 16th-17th centuries A.D. On a comparison, we find that the paintings in the Venugopala temple are definitely earlier than the later Vijayanagar and Nayak schools. 14th century A.D., would not be far off the mark for the paintings.

The paintings seem to clearly show the evolution of the early Vijayanagara school from the late Hoysala idioms and form an important land mark in the history of South Indian paintings. In the Srirangam temple complex these paintings are the earliest surviving ones. It gives me great pleasure to record that these have been chemically cleaned and preserved with the cooperation of the State Department of Archaeology, the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department and the Government Museum, Madras.

-EDITOR

D. DEVAKUNJARI

## The Mahadeva temple of Tillaisthanam

### The village :

The small village of Tillaisthānam lying seven miles (11 k.m.)—north west of Tanjavur and one and a half miles (2.5 k.m.) due west of Tiruvaiyāru is a place of hoary antiquity and is regarded as one of the seven *saptasthānakshētras*. The ancient Śiva temple here has been sung by Appar and Sambandar. The deity is called the Mahādēva of Tiruneyttānam in the *Dēvāram* poems and in the epigraphs, while popularly he is known as Neyyāḍiyappar in Tamil and Ghṛitasthānēśvara in Sanskrit. Saraśvati is said to have worshipped the deity here. Originally the temple may have been, like many other early ones, made of impermanent material, while the present all-stones structure, covered with many early inscriptions, dates back to at least the ninth century on grounds of style and epigraphic evidence.

### The temple - Architecture :

The temple has two *prākāras*. The outer *prākāra* contains at the north east a large Amman (*Dēvi*) sanctum, facing south, while the inner *prākāra* contains the east-facing main sanctum and a covered cloister running round the inner face of the four walls. A *dvitala vimāna* of medium size, the main sanctum is a very fine example of a typical all-stone structure of the early period. The *garbhagriha*, about twenty feet (6 metres) square, has three projecting bays on the three sides, the central one being wider and containing a *dēvakōshṭha*. The well moulded *adhishṭhāna* has an *upāna*, large *jaḡati*, *tripaṭṭa kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. The recesses between the bays contain a niche with two tetragonal semi-pilasters complete with capital parts. The corner bays have octagonal pilasters with square bases while those of the central bays are circular. The *idals* have no *muṇai* and the early level corbels have *taraṅga* and median *paṭṭa*. Below the main *kapōta* of the *garbhagriha* is a large-*bhūtavari* with a figure of a crouching lion at the corner angles of each of the projecting bays. The *kapōta* of the early curved type is decorated with early style *kūḍus* and *kodikkarukku* (creeper ornamentation)

in the centre and at the corners. The large *vyālavari* above the *kapōta* has *makara* heads at the corners.

The first *tala* of the *vimāna* has a *hāra* of *karnakūṭas* at the corners and large *bhadraśālās* along the middle while the *hārāntara* in between is decorated with *kshudranāsika* pairs. The second *tala* has no *hāra* and the wall is decorated only with four tetragonal pilasters and two circular pilaster-like motifs on each side. The *kapōta* here has a *hamsavari* below and a *vyālavari* above. At the four corners above the *kapōta* are *nandis*. The original features of the square *grīva* and square domical *śikhara* are much obscured by latter stucco work.

The antiquity of the temple is also indicated by the presence of two small but prominent circular pilasters found on each of the four sides of the second *tala* of the *vimāna*. These pilasters have a circular shaft over which comes a *kapota* (cornice) with small *kūdus*. Above the *kapōta* is a *pañjara* with a *stūpi* at the top, perhaps a *śikhara* motif. This interesting feature evidently standing for a miniature circular-*vimāna* motif, occurs in a few early temples as for instance, the Tiruttalinātha temple at Tiruputtūr, District Ramanathapuram, the central shrine of the Mūvarkōil complex at Koḍumbāḷur, and the Vijayālayachōḷisvaram at Nārttāmālai, both in District Tiruchirappalli, and the Ananthēśvara temple at Uḍayārguḍi, District South Arcot, as well as the medieval Kampaharēśvara temple at Tribhuvanam, District Thanjavur. Most probably, these motifs are what are termed *vrittasphuṭitas* in the *śilpa* texts like *Silparatna*. They are highly reminiscent of the *vēsara* type of miniature shrine motifs, circular from base to top, carved inside the gable-end arches of the Gaṇēśa Ratha at Mamallapuram datable to the eighth century A.D. The broad tetragonal pilaster motifs with *kapōta* and *vimāna* (*pañjara*) top occurring along the wall of the second *tala* in the Valaiyan-kuttai Ratha at Mamallapuram is perhaps an attempt at the *Nāgara* variety of the same motif, although the base mouldings seen in the circular type are absent here. Yet another early feature in the Tillaisthānam temple is the *hamsavari* below the *kapōta* of the second *tala*.

### Sculpture :

The three central *dēvakōshṭhams* of the *garbhagriha* contain standing four-armed figures sculptured in an early style, wearing *jaṭāmakuṭa* and holding *akshamāla* and *mṛiga* in the upper hands while the lower

ones are held in *abhaya* and *varada*. This is rather peculiar as the *dēvakōshṭhas* of the *garbhagriha* are usually occupied by the figures of Dakṣiṇāmūrti in the south, Ardhanāri or Liṅgōdbhava in the west and Brahmā in the north. In the *bhadraśālā* niches of the first *tala* of the *vimāna*, there is a seated Dakṣiṇāmūrti in the south, a seated four-armed Viṣṇu on the west and a seated four-armed Brahmā on the north. The large *nāsikas* of the *grīva* contain in the south a four-armed seated Śiva locally known as Śaṭṭanātha; (the deity holds a *śūla*, *kapāla*, *damaru* and *mṛiga*), on the west, a slim two-armed standing figure with hands in *abhaya* and *kaṭi* and on the north a standing two-armed figure with hands in *abhaya* and *kaṭi*.

Besides some of the uncommon *dēvakōshṭha* figures, a number of unique and early architectural features are found in the *vimāna*. The niches of the *karnakūṭas* of the first *tala* contain on each side the figure of a seated kneeling man on the proper left and a seated kneeling lady on the right. This unusual feature is found in some early temples only, as for instance, the Daṇḍīśvara temple at Vēlāchēri and the Chendrasēkhara temple at Tiruchendurai. Its significance however, is not evident. Very likely they represent *gandharvas* and *surasundarīs* whose figures are often represented in early structures as looking out of *nāsikas* and *kūḍu* centres, as for instance, the cave temples at Bhairavakonda and many of the Pallava cave temples and monoliths at Mamallapuram.

### Ardhamandapa :

The rectangular *ardhamandapa* in front of the *garbhagriha* has a base continuous with that of the *garbhagriha* with mouldings and features of a similar style, although the wall surface is not drawn out into bays here. The entrance to the *mandapa* is flanked by two large two-armed *dvārāpālas* about six feet (1.8m.) in height and carved in an early style. The one on the proper right faces front, holds the right leg bent, with the right arm held in *sūci* and the left arm resting on a club. That on the left stands straight in *samapāda*, holds the left arm in *sūci* and rests the right on the club. The *mandapa* has four pillars, of which two are early ones with octagonal shafts, circular capital members, *idaḷ* without *muṇai*, large square *phalaka* and a low bevel corbel with *tarāṅga* and median *paṭṭa*. The two others are modern nondescript ones.

### Mahamandapa :

The five-aisled closed *mahāmaṇḍapa* in front of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* is also in an early style, with pillars having two *śadurams* and a *kaṭṭu* in between, low bevel corbels with *taraṅga* and *paṭṭa*. The *mahāmaṇḍapa* begins after an intervening space of about five feet (1.5 m.). At present this space is connected by a plain wall both on the south and the north and the floor is also of the same level. Originally the *mahāmaṇḍapa* might very likely have been a free-standing structure as it was in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram.

Attached to the front of the *mahāmaṇḍapa* is an open five-aisled *mukhamaṇḍapa* with rather plain pillars. Along the southern edge of this *maṇḍapa* are two early pillars with fluted shafts and sedant lions at the base. Of the original capital members, the *idals*, *phalaka* and corbels are now missing, their place being now taken up by latter bevel- and -tenon cross corbel blocks. The presence of these early lion base pillars also helps to assign the temple to an early period.

### The Amman shrine :

The outer *prākāra* contains the large south-facing *ēkatala* Amman *vimāna* with a large circular brick and mortar *śikhara*. Stylistically it may be assigned to about the 13th century A. D. A rather peculiar though common local variation is the installation of *nandis* instead of the usual lions just below the *śikhara* at the four corners of the *vimāna*. The goddess Bālāmbika holds *akshamāla* and *padma* in her hands, this being yet another local characteristic.

### Epigraphs :

The ancient Mahādēva temple at Tillaisthānam appears to have been a great favourite of royal donors from all the contemporary leading dynasties of the Tamil country, viz., Pāṇḍya, Pallava, Chōla, and Chēra, as well as chiefs of the Irukkhuvēl family. The door jambs of the *ardhamaṇḍapa* contain two epigraphs which are probably the earliest in the temple viz., those of the fourth year of the Pāṇḍya Mārañjadaiyan<sup>1</sup> and of the tenth year of an unnamed king in which the Pallava Nandi, the victor of Tellāru" figures as the donor.<sup>2</sup> Mārañjadaiyan was evidently Varaguna II (acc. A. D. 862) who had made extensive conquests in the Chōla country and given many gifts to various temples in this region. The fourth year record of Mārañjadaiyan engraved on the



right side door jamb, details the gift of 423 *kāśum* ade to the God Mahādēva for the “Varaguṇa Mahārāja lamp”. The money was received from three individuals; Nambirāṭṭiyār, perhaps a royal queen, Kōn Parāntakanār and Venbanāṭṭu Vēḷān. The date of this record is *circa* A.D. 865. If the name Nambirāṭṭiyār is analysed as “Nam(“our”) pirāṭṭiyār”, one would be tempted to identify the lady as the queen of Varaguṇa II himself. Very likely Kōn Parāntakanār was Varaguṇa II’s younger brother Parāntaka Vīranārāyaṇa (acc. c. A.D. 860) who jointly ruled with the former. Incidentally this record indicates the presence of this joint ruler also in the traditional Chōḷa country during this period. Apparently, both the brothers have taken an active part in the various campaigns in the region. The name “Venbanāṭṭu Vēḷān” reminds one of Aṇḍanāṭṭu Vēḷān who appears to have enjoyed the confidence of Varaguṇa II and conveyed various gifts of the royal donor to the concerned temples or parties in this region. Apparently Venbanāṭṭu Vēḷān was also another such important dignitary.

The tenth year record of the unnamed king is on the opposite door jamb and mentions a gift of 60 *Kaḷaṅṅju* gold for a lamp to the God by Tellārreṇḍa Nandipōttaraiyar. This epigraph is often taken to be one of Nandivarman III. Since the record merely begins with “Svasti Śrī yāṇḍu pattāvadu” it is highly doubtful whether it could be assigned to him.<sup>4</sup> In view of the fact that both the records are written on the two door jambs and that both are in the same script and also probably written by the same hand, the tenth year record may also have to be assigned to the Pāṇḍya Mārṅaṅjaḍaiyan.

Among the early Chōḷa epigraphs in the temple, one of the most interesting is that of a Rājakēsarivarman, also called Kōkkaṇḍan, the Chōḷa “with many elephants”, who conquered Toṇḍai Nāḍu.<sup>6</sup> He is generally identified with Āditya I.<sup>5</sup> This undated epigraph records the gift of 100 sheep for a lamp to the God by Kadamba Mādēvi, the wife of Vikki Aṇṇan on whom the Chōḷa and Chēra king Sathāṇu Ravi had jointly conferred many honours and privileges and the title of “Smbiyam Tamiḷavēḷ”, perhaps in return for meritorious military service.

A record of the eight year of Parakēsarivarman assignable to Parāntaka I (A.D. 907-955) mentions a gift of gold for a lamp by Kiḷavan Dēśappugaḷ, the queen of the Pāṇḍya king (“Pāṇḍiyanār”) Mānābharāṇa, a further gift in the sixteenth year, and yet another gift in a

year, the figure of which is lost. The same queen figures as a donor in two other records of Parakēsarivarman dated in the fifth and eleventh years from Tiruchchōrrutturai and Tiruppalanam, which are nearby Tillaithānam.<sup>8</sup> The Pāṇḍya king in these two records is called Parāntakan Mānābharana. Evidently these inscriptions refer to Parāntaka Viranārāyaṇa, the younger brother of Varaguṇa II.<sup>9</sup> If so the record reveals for the first time that he had the title “Mānābharana”. Or he was probably son of Parāntaka Viranārāyaṇa and a brother of Rājasimha II.

A few among the other royal donors to the temple were Āditya I's son Kannaradēva,<sup>10</sup> Parāntaka I's son prince Ar kulakēsari,<sup>11</sup> the Chōḷa queens Tennavan Mahādēvī<sup>12</sup> and Tavayūr Kiḷāradigaḷ.<sup>13</sup> By far the most interesting and valuable of the records from the architectural point of view is one of the twentyfifth year of Parāntaka I, which besides mentioning a temple enquiry and the institution of a *Tiruviśākam* festival in the month of *Vaikāśi* specifies in detail the parts of the temple on which the inscription was to be engraved. It thus says that the record was to be engraved<sup>14</sup> on the southern side of the *ardhamanḍapa* covering the *uttiram*, *pōtigai* and (*vir*)-*kaṇḍam* (*i. e.*), *Vīrakaṇṭham*; on the south side of the *namanamaṇḍapa* on the *jagati*, on and over the *Paṭṭikai*, *kaṇḍam* and *kumudam*. The record is written on the south side of the *ardhamanḍapa*. The *Namanamaṇḍapa* is evidently the present *mahāmanḍapa*. A record of the fourteenth year (c. 883) of Rājakēsari-varman<sup>15</sup> assignable to Āditya I, states that a gift of gold for a lamp was used by the assembly of Tiruneyttānam for constructing a *namana manḍapa* (evidently *snapana manḍapa*—“Bathing Hall”) for the God. This is most likely the present *mahāmanḍapa* in the temple. If so, it must have been built in Āditya I's time in about A. D. 883.

### Conclusion :

The Mahādēva temple at Tillaisthānam is generally dated to Āditya I's time. But the inscriptions, architectural and sculptural features will show that it is definitely earlier than Āditya I. Most likely the stone structure was built by the Pāṇḍya Māraṅjadaiyan *alias* Varaguṇa II during his sojourn in the Chōḷa country. Even so, there are many stylistic features in the temple earlier than the mid-9th century. Possibly the early features of the earlier temple of impermanent material were faithfully reproduced in the stone *Karrai*. The temple is stylistically quite similar to the Tiruttalimātha temple at

Tiruppattur, District Ramanathapuram, which was built about the same period in the reign of Varaguna II.

## FOOT-NOTES

1. A.R.S.I.E. 51 of 1895; *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. V. No. 608.
2. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. V, No. 609; A.R.S.I.E. 52 of 1895.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 12 and 12-B, from Tiruvellarai and Lalgudi. *Ibid.*, No. 10 from Tiruchirappalli also appears to mention him.
4. See also *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, p. V. f. n. 4.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, No. 89; ARSIE 286 of 1911.
6. In the light of the Dalavaypuram Plates of the Pandya king Parantaka Viranarayana (ARIE 14 of Apx. A, 1958-59), one is tempted to identify Kokkandan with the Renadu Chola, Srikantha, of the Madras Museum Plates (ARSIE 1935-36, p. 56), who is mentioned as an ancestor in the Anbil Plates of Sundara Chola (*Ep. Ind.* XV, pp. 44 ff.). Further research may help clarify his position in the Vijayalaya line of Cholas. See also *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XLI, pp. 291 ff.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. V. No. 583; ARSIE 26 of 1895.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX, Nos. 149 and 239; ARSIE 133 of 1931 and 152 of 1928.
9. See also *Ibid.*, Vol. XIX, pp. iv-v.
10. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. V, No. 595; ARSIE 38 of 1895.
11. *Ibid.*, No. 582; ARSIE 25 of 1895.
12. *Ibid.*, No. 599 and 601; ARSIE 42 and 44 of 1895.
13. *Ibid.*, No. 598; ARSIE 41 of 1895.
14. *Idib*, No. 538; ARSIE 31 of 1895.
15. *Ibid.*, No. 593; ARSIE 36 of 1895; same as 284 of 1911.

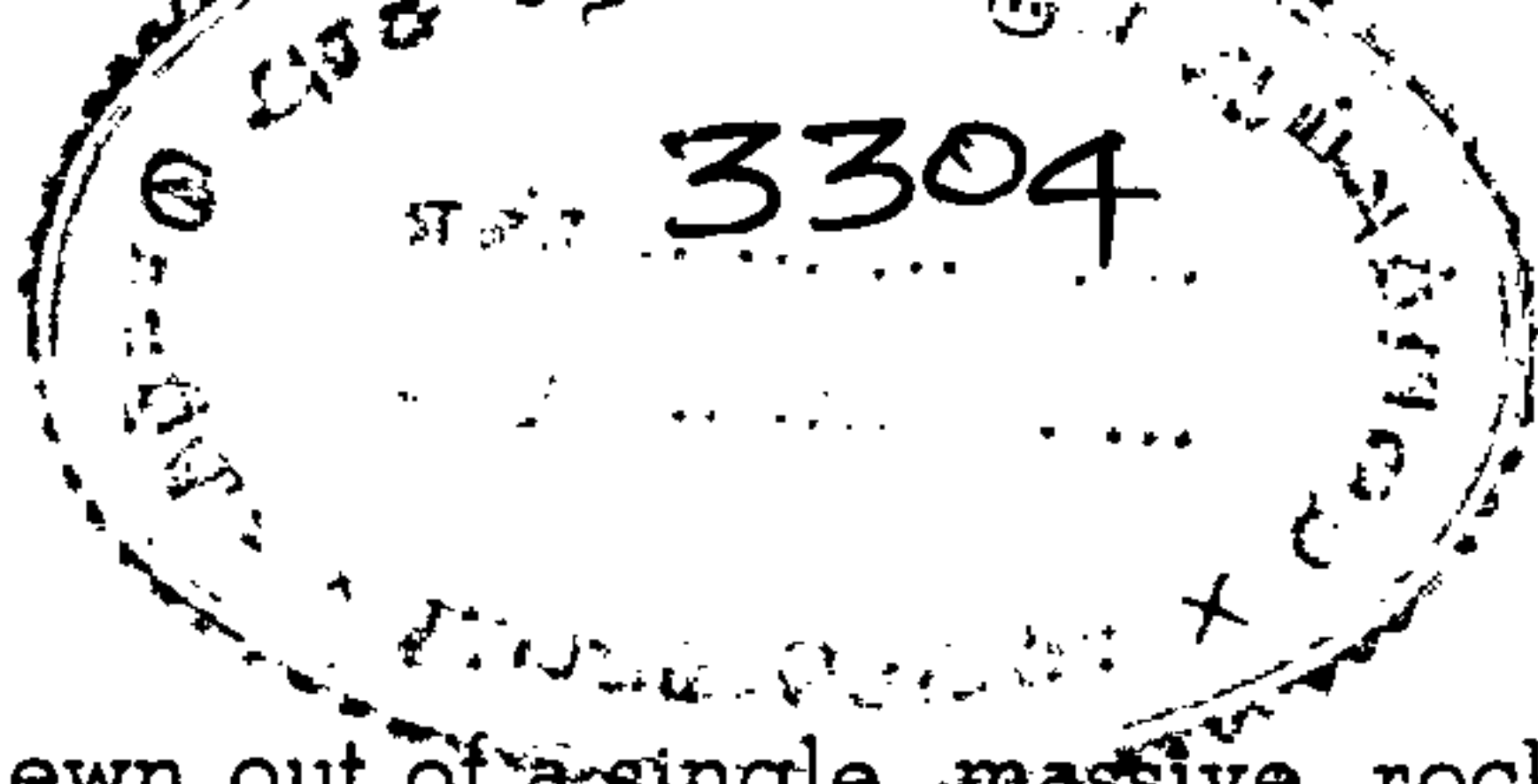
M. S. CHANDRASEKHAR

## MONUMENTS AND THEIR VEGETABLE ENEMIES

Monuments are much in the fore to-day, just as perhaps they were at the time of their construction. In the preservation of monuments many problems crop up and call for the services of well-trained experts to solve them. Of the several such problems those created by vegetation also need our attention. Seemingly stationary but saturated with strength and armed with acrid juices, plants form a band of formidable enemies to the monuments.

Vegetation is many-folded and each fold is composed of varying kinds of plants ranging from the microscopic bacteria, the tiny algae and the spongy fungi to the delicate herbs, thorny bushes and gigantic trees. These plants generally group themselves together selectively and form communities which succeed one another in a rather fixed chronological order. Thus we find among the bacteria, for instance, the sand-bacteria, the iron-bacteria, the rock-bacteria, etc., which by their growth and activities, pulverize the material of their substratum. The pulverized material retains water and facilitates the growth of the algae which cause further changes in the substratum and prepare it for the accumulation of humus and consequent growth of fungi. The establishment of these organisms though invisible at first, becomes invincible later. The soil crumbles more and more and harbours the liverworts, the mosses, and the more-advanced plants. These cyclic changes in vegetation constitute a part of the never-ending evolutionary process in Nature. Any interruption at any one stage of the cycle, will only delay at the most, the processes of destruction.

Most of our monuments are plagued by the more-advanced plants, and the field is prepared for them by the less-advanced ones. To go into the root-cause and prevent the vegetation from taking the upper hand, the best plan is to prevent the accumulation of moisture. This can be achieved only through constructional changes in the monuments, which is as good as obliterating them or erecting a new monument in place of the old. The object should therefore be to make the monuments unsuitable for the growth of plants through a phased programme of study of the succession of plant communities and eradication of the same without damaging the construction. If a method ideal on these lines is invented, the inventor may become in no time a millionaire! In other words there is much work yet to be done in fighting these forces of Nature.



Monuments in South India are either hewn out of a single massive rock or built of smaller rocks, bricks, etc. which are joined up in various ways. Whatever be the mode of construction, the plants can make inroads on a monument in the sequence referred to earlier. Growth of lichens, liverworts and mosses, promoted by bacteria, algae and fungi, causes the hardest and smoothest rocks to peel off into flakes most easily. The higher plants require for their establishment, cracks and crevices, nooks and corners, troughs and pits in the flaking rocks. The growing plant relentlessly grows and increases the girth of its stems and roots in the interstices of the rocks, and thus break them asunder.

In these circumstances a few suggestions on the control (total eradication being impossible) of the vegetation on the monuments, will be of use.

If the monument is one that is hewn out of a single rock and if the vegetation has not developed beyond the stage of bacteria, algae, fungi, lichens, liverworts and mosses, the best method of preserving the monument is to wash its surface with 1.5% solutions of acids and alkalies alternately, separately and periodically, so that the acid-loving vegetation dies out when the alkali is applied, and *vice-versa*. This would of course mean damage to the rock in a way, but certainly not to the extent the vegetation could make. The lower the strength of the solution the lesser the probable harm to the construction medium.

The advanced plants may grow on the monuments or on their sides or close to them, and thus become divisible into three convenient sub-sects. They may also be conveniently grouped under two categories, viz., the shallow-rooted and narrow-leaved category, and the deep-rooted and broad-leaved category. The shallow-rooted forms are harmful only when they grow on the monuments or on their sides. Their examples may be the grasses and other plants of a similar stature. With them may also be clubbed some of the woody plants with smaller stature. They soften the substratum, widen the crevices, and arrest the flow of run-off waters on the surface. A few examples of these plants are mentioned in the Annexure I.

The deep-rooted plants of larger stature are potential sources of immeasurable destruction. When they can break even the rocks asunder and roll them down, and also when they can grow on the monuments or on the sides of the monuments, the danger from them calls for no exaggeration. Their mode of action is: The fine and minute roots seek and enter the crevices which might have been caused already by mechanical factors or by organic factors. The negatively heliotropic movements of the roots are responsible for this

trouble. Inside the crevices the roots expand in girth and develop enormous pressure to overcome resistance to their growth, which (pressure) causes the damage.

The deep rooted plants growing close to the monument either by accident, or by prior occupation of the site (before the monument was built), or by later cultivation (for raising a garden), have a different tale to tell. They send out their roots under the ground in search of water. The roots radiate in all directions to a fairly long distance and extend even below the foundation of the monument. When this happens, the growth in girth of such roots, coupled with the immeasurable strength, rocks the monument from the foundation. The consequent damage needs no description. Some examples of these plants are mentioned in the Annexure II.

This may, of course, dampen all plans for raising a garden of an aesthetic value around the monuments in our efforts to make the monuments attractive and focus attention on them. These gardens become a necessity not only to promote tourism but also to protect them from rank vegetation and unwanted plants. A careful choice has to be made in selecting the location for the different plants that should go to make the garden. More details about them will be found elsewhere.

The problem of destruction of some of the deep-rooted advanced plants may be solved in various ways. The most important of them is to pull or cut them out physically, but that alone will not suffice, since a trimmed plant will produce more branches and leaves, and absorb more and more soil-water, and expand in girth causing an up-heaval of the over-lying constructions. It is also not possible to remove these plants *lock stock and barrel* for such an act will necessitate digging into the monuments themselves and defeat the very purpose of conservation. In such circumstances the best plan is removal of all the aerial portions of the plants upto the level of the surface on which they grow. A little of the cut surface of the stump is then scooped out into a cup. A 2% solution of SODIUM ARSENATE is poured into the scooped-out hollow and allowed to seep through. This will cause the plant to dry up; and those parts of the plant which remain embedded or intruding into the construction, may be allowed to remain so and form a reinforcement to the building.

The foregoing account of some of the methods of eradication of vegetation in, on, and around monuments expects a sustained effort from the custodians. Since this is an arduous task an easier one is to treat the unwanted plants with selected harmones sprayed from knapsacks. The harmones act by contact and help us increase or destroy the plants at will. The destructive harmones are of two principal kinds. Those (T.C.A.) that act only on the

narrow-leaved plants, and those (2, 4, 5-T.) that act only on the broad-leaved plants. If in a given community the vegetation is of a mixed kind, both the kinds of harmones have to be used alternately. The best time for the use of these harmones is the one before the flower-buds appear. Care in the application of the harmones is very essential especially when a garden is to be maintained around the monument.

The harmones do not keep off the plants permanently, however. In spite of the sprayings with them the monuments are subject or liable to fresh plant attacks which are brought on them by agents like the water, the air, and the birds. Hence a constant vigil with periodical inspection and spraying are necessary to keep the monuments in good condition.

The preservation of monuments against the attacks from the invading forces of vegetation, is therefore no easy task as generally presumed to be. It needs a knowledge of plants and their behaviour, knowledge of harmones and their influence on the Physiology of the plants, and knowledge of the succession of the plant communities in the area, and this article gives only a short gist of the probable ways of combating the vegetable menace to the monuments.

#### ANNEXURE I

##### *SOME EXAMPLES OF NARROW-LEAVED PLANTS ON AND AROUND MONUMENTS*

*Commelina benghalensis*  
*Cyperus rotundus*  
*Phoenix humilis*  
*Scirpus articulatus*  
*Actiniopteris radiata*

*Cynadon dactylon*  
*Fimbristylis argentia*  
*Scilla indica*  
*Typha angustata*

#### ANNEXURE II

##### *SOME EXAMPLES OF BROAD-LEAVED PLANTS ON AND AROUND MONUMENTS*

*Acacia arabica*  
*Achyranthes aspera*  
*Ageratum conyzoides*

*Acacia leucophloea*  
*Adenantha pavonina*  
*Argemone mexicana*

<i>Blepharis borrhavia</i>	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i>
<i>Carica papaya</i>	<i>Cassia auriculata</i>
<i>Cleome aspera</i>	<i>Datura fastuosa</i>
<i>Enterolobium dulce</i>	<i>Feronia elephantum</i>
<i>Ficus bengalensis</i>	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>
<i>Gomphrena decumbens</i>	<i>Jatropha glandulifera</i>
<i>Leucas biflora</i>	<i>Melia azadirachta</i>
<i>Mimosa pudica</i>	<i>Mollugo cerviana</i>
<i>Morinda citrifolia</i>	<i>Murrya exotica</i>
<i>Prosopis specigera</i>	<i>Sida rhombifolia</i>
<i>Sphaeranthus indicus</i>	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>
<i>Thespesia populnea</i>	<i>Toddalia aculeata</i>
<i>Vernonia anthelmintica</i>	<i>Zizyphus jujuba</i>

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M. CHANDRAMURTI

## Dated Chola Bronzes in Ambar Mahalam

### The village :

The village Ambar-Māhālam is situated on the northern bank of the river Arisilar which lies four miles south-east of Peralam railway station on the Madras-Tanjavur railway line. The impressive temple of Ambar-Māhālam is located in the heart of the village. The devotional Dēvāram hymns, refer to this place as 'Māhālam'<sup>1</sup> while epigraphical records refer to this place as Ambar.<sup>2</sup> It is evident from the epigraphical records that Ambar was included in Ambar-nāḍu, a subdivision of Uyyakkonḍār vaḷa-nāḍu.

### The temple :

The temple of this village was known as Kōilmāhālam. The epigraphs in the temple refer to the presiding deity of this place as Thirumāhālamuḍaiyār and Mahākālattu Mahādēvar,<sup>3</sup> and the temple as Ambar-Māhālam.

The origin of the village name, Ambar-Māhālam has a mythological background. Goddess Kāli is said to have annihilated two demons by name Amban and Ambāsuran. To atone for the sin, Kāli worshipped Mahākāla in this place. There is an allusion to this episode in the Dēvāram hymns.<sup>4</sup> There is a shrine dedicated to Kāli in the southern prākāra of the temple.

Māhālam is a shortened form of the word Mahākālam meaning the abode of Lord Śiva in his Mahākāla aspect. The epigraphical records refer to the Lord as Mahā-Kālattu Mahādēva.

The temple has acquired great name and fame in the religious history of Tamilnadu, from the 7th Century A.D. Jñānasambandar, who was a contemporary of the Pallava, Nārasimhavarman I, had visited this place and sung the praises of the Lord.

### Epigraphs :

The earliest inscription on the wall of the central shrine dates back to the period of Kulōttuṅga I (1070-1120 A.D.). Evidently the original temple structure has been rebuilt in the middle of the 11th century A.D. According to one inscription, the enclosure (*thirumāḷigai*) wall built by Vikrama Chōḷa (A.D. 1118-35) in his 10th regnal year.<sup>5</sup>

Three records of Kulōttuṅga I (1112 A.D.) all dated in his forty-second regnal year refer to gifts of three dēvadāna villages by different individuals. The villages gifted are Puravariviḷāgam,<sup>6</sup> Eyinikuḍi<sup>7</sup> and Vādaṇḍūr.<sup>8</sup>

### The bronzes :

There is a fine group of bronzes in this temple representing Śiva and Umā standing by the side of a bull. The favourite mode of Śiva known as Vṛsabhāntika is generally found in important Śiva temples throughout Tamilnadu. This form is most dexterously presented in the Vṛsabhāntika group at Ambar-Mākāḷam.

### Vrsabhantika :

The Vṛsabhāntika is standing with his right leg placed firmly on the lotus-pedestal and the left one is kept slightly bent like Vēṇugōpāla. The Lord is only two armed, a notable feature of Vṛsabhāntika figures as seen in Vṛshavāhana of Thiruvenkādu,<sup>9</sup> Vēdāraṇyam<sup>10</sup> and Taṇḍantōṭṭam.<sup>11</sup> The left arm is bent and its wrist is resting on the head of the bull standing close to him. The right hand is held in the *kaṭaka* pose. The head is adorned with jaṭāmaḷa. His face itself expresses illimitable illumination of Cosmic power with calmness and beaming with the feeling of Supreme bliss of the universe. Modelling is fine. The treatment is excellent and limited. The figure closely resembles, the bronze figure in Thirukkāravāśal.

### Uma :

The image of Dēvi is gracefully standing to the right of Śiva, with the left leg kept firmly on the lotus-pedestal and the right one slightly bent. The right arm of Dēvi is bent in the attitude of holding a lotus. The left hand is hanging down freely in the *lolahasta* pose. The execution of the figure and its broad hip is excellent and the delicate details of

the beautiful lower garment are pleasing. The workmanship of *karanda-makuta*, lola-hasta, necklaces and other ornaments enhance the charm. She has a wonderful grace in its poise, restraint and dignified appearance. She is rendered by the master artisan as the very embodiment of feminine beauty, grace and tenderness.

### Nandi .

The bull is standing by the side of Śiva and as high as the thighs of Śiva. And the massive strength and vigour of the bull are expressed by its movement. The flexion is especially fine. The figure is an excellent example of Chōḷa style in animal motif. There is a twinkle in the eye of the bull that seems to make it live and move. The mastery of the artist is easily seen here especially in modelling. The modelling is excellent and its grace and vigour is enhanced by the fine finish reverberating reality in simplicity.

All these figures were probably made by one and the same master craftsman and belong to the Chōḷa idiom.

The whole group of bronzes present a parallel to the groups of bronzes at Thiruveṅkāḍu,<sup>12</sup> Taṇdantōṭṭam,<sup>13</sup> Thirukkāravāśal<sup>14</sup> and Vēdāraṇyam.<sup>15</sup>

### Date :

In dating these bronzes two inscriptions in the same temple are of great interest. One inscription<sup>16</sup> refers to the gift of paddy for offerings to the image of Āṭkoṇḍa-Nāyakar in the tenth regnal year of Vikrama Chōḷa. And other record<sup>17</sup> of twelfth year of Kulōttuṅga II, mentions a gift of land for offerings to the images of Āṭkoṇḍa-Nāyakar and the Goddess, both of which were presented to the temple of Thirumākālam by the ancestors of Amudan Thiruchchiṇṇambalamuḍaiyān alias Udaya Mārtāṇḍa-Mūvēnda Vēḷāṇ, a native of Śiruvēḷūr in Paṇaiyūr-nāḍu which was a subdivision of Kshatriyaśikhāmaṇi-valānāḍu.

From the above description it may be seen that a group of bronzes representing Śiva and his Consort, was under worship in the temple before the 10th year of Vikrama Chōḷa. In the epigraphs the images are referred to as Āṭkoṇḍa-Nāyakar and his consort.

The image now under worship in the temple is called Kāṭchi-koḍutta Nāyakar. This term is used always in Tanjavur region to refer to Śiva standing with Pārvati by the side of a bull. The term Āṭkoṇḍa-Nāyakar also refers to the same deity. In all probability the images now in the temple are identical with the images referred to in the inscriptions.

The inscription states that the images were presented to the temple by the ancestors of a certain Amudan Thiruchchiṟrambalamudaiyan alias Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Mūvēnda Vēlān. It is dated in the reign of Kulōttuṅga II (A.D. 1123-46). We have seen that the images were under worship even earlier in the reign of Vikrama Chōḷa. It is therefore, possible that the images were presented to the temple atleast two generations before the reign of Kulōttuṅga II. We may not therefore be wrong in assigning the images to the middle of 11th century A.D. On grounds of style also the period seems to be a most acceptable one.

The Chōḷa bronzes within Tanjore region may broadly be divided into regional schools (families) represented by the Thiruvenkāḍu<sup>18</sup> bronzes and the other Sembian Mahādēvi school represented by the Konērirājapuram and Thiruvīḷimiḷalai bronzes. The images under discussion are more akin to the Thiruvenkāḍu school than the Shembiyan Mahādēvi school of bronzes.

#### FOOT NOTES

1. Manarikol Pūmpolillarisiḷin Vadakarai Varupunan Makalam-Devaram Ambar-Mahal antane-Devaram.
2. ARE No. 113 of 1910.
3. ARE No. 108 of 1910, 107 of 1910, & 113 of 1910.
4. Kali Ettum Alaganar Arivaiyodiruppidaṁ Ambar Makalantane - Devaram.
5. ARE No. 99 of 1910.
6. ARE No. 94 of 1910.
7. ARE No. 96 of 1910.
8. ARE No. 95 of 1910.
9. C Sivaramamurti. 'Indian Bronzes' 1960. pp. 54 - Fig. 48.  
R. Nagaswamy - 'The Art of Tamilnadu' 1972 - Fig. 98.
10. O. C. Gangoly, 'South Indian Bronze' PL XCIV.
11. R. Nagaswamy, "Some Adavallan and other Bronzes of the early Chola period, 'Lalit Kala, No. 10, 1961. pp. 34, 40. Fig. 2.
12. T. N. Ramachandran, "Bronze Images from Thiruvankadu - Svetaranya (Tanjore District)" Lalit Kala, Nos. 3 - 4. pp. 55 - 62.  
R. Nagaswamy, 'New Bronze Finds from Tiruvenkadu', Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India 1959 - 60, pp. 109 - 112.

13. C. Meenakshi, "Tandantottam Bronzes", Journal of the Mythic Society, Bangalore 1957 - 58.  
R. Nagaswamy, "Some Adavallan and other Bronzes of the early Chola Period" Lalit Kala, No. 10, 1961, pp. 34 - 40, PL XXIV.
14. Douglas Barrett. 'Early Chola Bronzes' Plate - 40.
15. O. C. Gangoly, 'South Indian Bronzes' PL. XCIV.  
T. P. Gopinatha Rao, "Elements of Hindu Iconography", Vol. II, P. I, PL CVIII & CIX.
16. ARE No. 108 of 1910.
17. ARE No. 102 of 1910.
18. R. Nagaswamy, "The Art of Tamilnadu" 1972. pp. 12 - 14. Fig. 98, 99 & 100.

IRAVATHAM MAHADEVAN

## ARIKAMEDU GRAFFITI : A SECOND LOOK

This paper presents revised reading of four of the Brāhmī inscriptions occurring as graffiti on potsherds excavated at Arikamedu. These are found numbered as items 3, 9, 19 and 20 in Wheeler's Report (*Arikamedu, Ancient India, No. 2 (1943), Figs. 46 & 47 at pp. 112-113*). I have personally checked the readings from the originals preserved in the Archaeological Survey of India, Pottery Collections at Safdarjung, New Delhi (items 3 and 9) and at the Bibliotheque, Pondichery (items 19 and 20). The line drawings of items 3 and 9 (Figs. 1 & 2) are reproduced from Wheeler's report, while those of items 19 and 20 (Figs. 3 & 4) are taken from the report on the earlier French excavations, *Les Fouilles d' Arikamedou*, P. Z. Pattabiramin, Pondichery (1946), Planche XXI, Nos. 3 and 5 (corresponding to Wheeler's Nos. 20 and 19 respectively). The fifth inscription noticed here (Fig. 5) has so far remained unpublished and is found on a potsherd from Arikamedu, now in the collections of the Bibliotheque, Pondichery. The photograph of this unpublished inscription is by courtesy of Institut Francais, Pondichery. The line drawing of the inscription (Fig. 5) is based on my eye-copy from the original. I am grateful to the authorities in charge of both the collections for permission to study the originals.

### I. Item No. 3 (Fig. 1):

The inscription is in Prakrit. The earlier reading was: *Yakhamitasa*. The correct reading should be *Yakhamitrassa* (यक्वमित्रस), meaning 'of Yakhamitra (Skt. Yakshamitra)'. The fourth letter is not *ta* as read earlier, but *tra*, as shown by the downward lengthening of the right limb of the letter. The graphic form of *tra*, the hybrid orthography (*mitrassa* standing between Skt. *mitrasya* and Pkt. *mitassa*) and the palaeography of the inscription are all characteristic of the Kushāṇa period (C. 1 Cent. A.D.). The pottery was probably imported from North India; or, at any rate, the scribe was a Northerner. Incidentally this is the only Prakrit inscription found in Wheeler's Report. The other inscription (No. 20) described as in Prakrit is in fact in Tamil as noticed below.

### II. Item No. 9 (Fig. 2):

This is the longest inscription recovered from Arikamedu, containing as many as 19 letters and is complete. The language is Tamil. The earlier reading was :

*Chāttan̄ Āvi in̄ koti Īchan̄ Āditaipan̄*

This was translated thus :

‘ Īchan̄ Āditaipan̄, a relation of Chāttan̄ Āvi ’.

An examination of the original (in 3 fragments) shows that the sherds have been damaged by scouring and root action. The two ‘dots’ on either side of the 11th letter seem to be the result of root action and similar ‘dots’ are also found by the side of the 12th and the 13th letters. The 11th letter is, therefore, not *ī*, but *ru* or, more probably *ra* (judging from the context, and treating the horizontal line at the bottom of the vertical line as a scratch). The 15th letter is clearly *ti* and not *di*. The 16th and 17th letters touch each other in the original and not separated as in the line drawing. What has been read as *tai-pa* is in fact *rai-ya*. The confusion has been caused by taking the left limb of *ya*, as part of the previous letter thus misreading *rai* as *tai* and *ya* as *pa*. The proposed revised reading is :

*Cāttan̄ āvi-in̄ kōtiracaṇ̄ ātiraiyaṇ̄*<sup>1</sup>

(சாத்தன் ஆவிஇன் கோதிரசன் ஆதிரையன்)

This may be translated thus :-

‘ Ātiraiyaṇ̄, the *gotraja* of Cāttan̄ Āvi ’

Cāttan̄ and Āvi occur as personal names in Old Tamil, though the present inscription is the only one where both are found as part of one composite name. The name Cāttan̄ was very common and was generally associated with the mercantile community. Āvi is a Vēḷir name (cf. “ Neṭuvēḷ Āvi ” mentioned in “ *Akam.*, ” 1). Ātiraiyaṇ̄ is an epithet of Śiva derived from the sixth asterism “ ātirai ” (Skt. ārdra), and is used here as a male personal name. (cf. *arum peḷal ātiraiyaṇ̄*, *Kali.*, 150-20). The term “ Kōtiracaṇ̄ ” is the Tamilised form of Skt. *gotraja*, ‘born in the gotra of’. The *Tamil Lexicon* records the form “ kōttiracaṇ̄ ” in this sense. But its occurrence at such an early date and in association with names which do not appear to be Brahminical, are noteworthy. Another Tamil adaptation of the term *gotra* is found in item No. 19 below.

### III. Item No. 19 (Fig. 3):

The inscription is in Tamil. The beginning of the text seems to be lost.

1. There is a cross-like mark at the end of the text. The original Report suggests that this could be taken as a punctuation mark.

The earlier reading was :

..... *ṅtēva vaittatai kotti rā-ālu* (?)

This was, with some reservation, translated as :

‘having carved that which was bestowed by ..... *ṅtēva*’

Subsequently Filliozat suggested that the last three letters are in fact numerals and to be read, from right to left, as 275 (*Les Relations Exterieures de l'Inde*, Jean Filliozat, Pondichery, 1956, pp. 19-22). I had earlier accepted this identification. I have however reconsidered the matter and now think that the resemblance to the numerals is in fact accidental. Judging from the context, there appears to be no good reason why the characters should not be given their normal ‘alphabetic’ values. The revised reading suggested by me is:

..... *ṅ tevvaṅtattai kōttirā-āḷ*

( ..... ன் தெவ்வை தத்தை கோத்திராஅள் )

which may be translated thus :

‘Tevvaitattai (Skt. Devadattā), of the gotra of .....’

*Tevvaitattai* seems to be the Tamil form of the Skt. feminine name Devadattā. Proceeding on the assumption that the last three letters represented numerals, I had earlier suggested the reading *Tevvaitattai - k = otti*, meaning ‘mortgaged to Devadattā’. However, on reconsideration, I have discarded this reading as improbable. The last two letters appear to be *-āḷ*, feminine pronominal termination whose use is consistent with the occurrence of a feminine personal name earlier in the text. The word “*kōttirā-āḷ*” may mean ‘she of the gotra of’. This term may be compared with *kōtiracaṅ* (Skt. *gotraja*) occurring in No. 19 above.

IV. *Item No. 20 (Fig. 4)* :

This was considered to be in Prakrit and the earlier reading was :

*Yadu* (?) *Valabhutaya pati*

which was translated thus :

‘This is the platter (Skt. *Pātrī*) of Yaduvalabhuta (Skt. *Yadubalabhūtā*)’.

The second letter is not *du* but *ḍu*, though it appears here reversed. Karunaratne has noticed a similar reversal of the letter *ḍa* in Ceylon Cave



inscriptions and has suggested that the reversed form should be read as *ḷa* (Palaeographical Development of the Brāhmī Script in Ceylon, Karunaratne, 1969 : mimeograph). However, the context does not seem to require the value "ḷu" in this case. The term "yaḍu" may be compared with Skt. *yadu* and Ta. "iṭai" both equivalent clan names. The fifth letter is probably "bhū"; the sixth letter is not *ta* but *ti*, the medial sign being marked by the slight curvature at the top. The seventh letter is taken to be *y*. The name thus reads "valabhūti-y" (Skt. Balabhūti). It is a male personal name and not 'the name of a lady' as suggested in the earlier report. The name is Tamilised by the addition of the characteristic paragogic suffix -y. However the retention of the letters *ḍu* and "bhū" even in the Tamil form are noteworthy. This is a very early anticipation of the later practice of using Grantha letters in Tamil inscriptions. The inscription is not in Prakrit as, in that case, we should expect the genitive suffix after the name which is however not present. The use of the nominative form in this context is a characteristic Tamil construction. The revised reading proposed here is :

*Yaḍu Valabhūti-y pati . . . . .*

which may be translated thus:-

'The vessel (?) of Yaḍu Valabhuti - y' .

V. ( Fig. 5 )

This is an unpublished inscription on a potsherd in the collections of the Bibliotheque, Pondichery (Museum No. I-13). It was presumably found during the earlier French excavations at Arikamedu. The record, which is incomplete at the beginning, is in Prakrit and reads as follows :

. . . . . *yya de dhamo*

( . . . . . य दे धमो )

This can be translated thus :

' Votive gift given by . . . . . yya ( name ? lost ) ' .

*De dhamo* was the standard formula used in early Bhuddhist votive inscriptions. The fuller forms were *Deya dhamo*=*yam* or sometimes *Deva dhamo*=*yam*, followed generally by the name of the devotee in the genitive case. Nalanda has yielded scores of votive objects with similar inscriptions; but none of them is earlier than the Gupta Period (*Nalanda and its Epigraphical Material*, Hirananda Sastri, No. 66, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey

of India; pp. 108-113). For example, one of the Nalanda texts (S.I. No. 469, *ibid*) reads "*De dharmo = ya (m<sup>x</sup>) Dāmodarasya*". The Arikamedu text is however much earlier and is probably one of the earliest Bhuddhist votive texts found so far in the South. Even though the language is Prakrit, the characters are Southern in style, especially *mo*. This votive object attests to the probable existence of a Buddhist place of worship or monastery at Arikamedu in C. 1 Cent. A.D.

NATANA. KASINATHAN

## Kaval System in Tamilnadu from 300 A.D. to 1600 A.D.

### KĀVAL

The term Kāval literally means protection and is also used to denote the functionary who protects the temple, village or other administrative units.

### IN SANGAM AGE

Tamilnadu had a well organised set up for protection even from the beginning of the Christian era. Sangam Literature dated from 1st century to 3rd century A.D. throw some side-lights on this organisation. Malaipaḍukaḍām, one of the ten idylls refers to the watchman of forest. 1 A verse in Puraṇānūru mentions the *Ūrkāppār*, guardians of the village, were roaming the streets in midnight bearing torches in their hands. 2 Maṇimēkalai, one of the twin epics states that the *Ūrkāppār* were beating the drum during midnight times. 3

### IN PALLAVA PERIOD

The earliest epigraphical reference on Kāval system dates back to 9th Century A. D. to the period of Nandivarman III (846 - 869 A. D.). It mentions Nāḍukāval. 4 *Nāḍukāval* means Kāval of Nāḍu, i. e., the protection of Nāḍu. It also stands for the protector of Nāḍu. Nāḍu was a bigger division consisting of many *Nagarams* and *Ūrs*. So the *Nāḍukāval* was the protector of a big division. But it is not known whether there were separate officers at that time to protect the smaller divisions like *Nagaram* or *Ūr*, or the *Nāḍukāval* himself had to protect the whole area. It is also not known how the appointment of Nāḍukāval was made and what was his remuneration.

### IN CHŌLA, PĀṆDYA AND VIJAYANAGARA PERIODS

Coming to Chōla, Pāṇḍya and Vijayanagara Periods, from 900 to 1600 A.D., there are enough epigraphical evidence on *Kāval* system. They give a clear picture of the different posts, method of their appointment, nature of their work and their remuneration.

## DIFFERENT POSTS

The epigraphs of Chōla and Pāṇḍya periods refer to *Pāḍikāval*, *Perumbāḍi kāval* and *Nāḍukāval*. The Vijayanagara inscriptions state *Pāḍikāval* and *Arasu Suandiram*. *Pāḍikāval* literally means the protection of a pāḍi, i.e., village or land. *Perumbāḍikāval* means big pāḍi-kāval i.e., protection of a big village or more lands. The name also stands for the functionary. The tax collected for the execution of the work was also called after it. The *Arasu suandiram*<sup>5</sup> of Vijayanagar period was the equivalent of *Perumbāḍikāval* of Chōla and Pāṇḍya periods.

## APPOINTMENTS

Generally the *Pāḍikāvals* were appointed by the village people themselves. For protection of the village lands, the *Pāḍikāval* was appointed by the village assembly.<sup>6</sup> In the case of *Dēvadāna* lands they were appointed by *Dēvakanmis*.<sup>7</sup>

The authority to appoint the *Perumbāḍikāvals* was perhaps solely vested with the king. It is known from an inscription of Perumāḷ Parākrama Pāṇḍyadēvaṅ, where Visayadēva is mentioned to have been appointed by the king<sup>8</sup> During the period of Rājādhirājadēva, Attimallaṅ Sokkapperumāḷ alias Rājagambhīra Chēdiyarāyaṅ<sup>9</sup> and Periya Udaiyaṅ Rājarāja Chēdiyarāyaṅ<sup>10</sup> were working as *Perumbāḍikāvals*. In the time of Kulōttuṅga III, a certain Periyudaiyaṅ Attimallaṅ alias Vikrama Chōla Vāṅakularāyaṅ<sup>11</sup> held the post of *Perumbāḍikāval*.

## DUTIES

The duty of *Perumbāḍikāval* was to keep vigilance over a defined area and book the culprits. In one instance the area over which a *Perumbāḍikāval* had to guard is clearly defined. An inscription from Tiruvadi, South Arcot District records the appointment of one *Perumbāḍikāval* and defines that he should watch over the area lying in between the river *Vellāru* at the South, *Muñji* river on the north, the highway to Sēndamaṅalam and the Sea in the west and east respectively.<sup>12</sup>

The *Perumbāḍikāval* had also to check some community people (palli) who were expected to report to him daily. It is interestingly described in the inscription that if the Pallis fail to see the *Perumbāḍikāval* daily on duty, the *Perumbāḍikāval* should excommunicate them.

(தன்னைக் கண்டு இராத பள்ளிகள் உண்டாகில் அறச்செய்து அடிகழகைக் கொள்ளவும்).<sup>13</sup>

## DUTIES OF PĀDIKĀVAL

The Pādikāval guarded the smaller area i.e., a village or town. There were two or more Pādikāvals even to guard a single village or single town. They had to protect the property from theft. If anything was stolen away they had to detect the thief and punish him. If they were not able to detect the culprits they had to make good the loss, otherwise they were themselves liable to be punished. These are all reflected also in the statement of Abdur Razak, the Persian ambassador who visited South India in 15th century. He says "The business of these men (Policemen) is to acquaint themselves with all the events and accidents that happen within the seven walls and to recover anything that is lost, or that may be abstracted by theft, otherwise they are fined."<sup>14</sup>

## PAYMENTS

The *Perumbādikāval* and *Pādikāval* were paid in kind and cash. They were also provided with house sites and lands. The remuneration paid to them seem to be almost in the same standard during Chōḷa, Pāṇḍya and Vijayanagar periods. In the time of early Chōḷa king Āditya, land was gifted for the maintenance of *Pādikāval*.<sup>15</sup> Further in the time of Kulōttuṅga II the assembly of Madurāntakachaturvēdimāṅalam had granted a land as *Kāval kāṇi* for guarding the village.<sup>16</sup> In one instance the *Pādikāppār* was given house-site<sup>17</sup> during Rājēndradēva's period.

Sometimes the *Pādikāvals* were given the products of the land as payment. During Kulōttuṅga III period Rājarājadēvaṅ Poṅparappiṅṅāṅ Vāṅakōvaraiyaṅ, the *Pādikāval*, was given millet in specified quantity for each *Vēli* of land in the *dēvādāna* lands.<sup>18</sup> A Vijayanagar inscription that belongs to Viruppaṅa Uḍaiyār, dated 1391 A.D. says that the *Pādikāvals* were given one Kalam of paddy for one *mā*, *Tūṅippadakkū* of paddy for lands which yielded *Ādikkuruvai* crop, *Tūṅippadakkū* of paddy for dry land.<sup>19</sup> This inscription also says that 1 Paṅam was given to *Pādikāval* by those who had settled from outside. Not only these products but anything that the people of the area could afford was also taken by the *Kāval* officer as fee for their duty. The hunters who were able to give rabbit, gave one rabbit in the month of *Āḍi* and one in the month of *Kārttigai*.<sup>20</sup> Likewise the *Paraiyars* and *Pallars* gave two chickens in the month of

*Ādi* and two in the month of *Kārttigai*.<sup>21</sup> The *Perumbādikāvals* were also paid house-sites, land and money.<sup>22</sup>

### PĀDIKĀVAL AND PERUMBĀDIKĀVAL TAXES

The remuneration paid to the *Pādikāval* and *Perumbādikāval* were the products or money collected from the people as tax for *Pādikāval* or *Perumbādikāval*.

### FOOT NOTES

1. 11. 234-290.
2. Puram 37, l. 9.
3. Tuyileluppiya kathai, 1.69.
4. SII. Vol. II, No. 98.
5. IPS. No. 687.
6. Ibid. No. 176, 669, 715.
7. Ibid. No. 452.
8. ARE. 407 of 1921.
9. Ibid. 134 of 1934-35.
10. Ibid. 204 of 1934-35.
11. Ibid. 79 of 1935-36.
12. ARE. 407 of 1921.
13. Ibid.
14. Elliot, History of India, IV, p. 122.
15. ARE. 122 of 1914.
16. Ibid. 135 of 1932-33.
17. Ibid. 207 of 1925.
18. Ibid. 152 of 1940-41.
19. IPS. No. 687.
20. Ibid. No. 715.
21. Ibid.
22. ARE. 407 of 1921.