

*Reprinted from the Annals of Oriental Research
of the University of Madras Volume XIX Part II, 1964.*

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THE DATE OF TOLKAPPIYAM

BY

Dr. M. RAJAMANIKKAM

(1964)

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Dr. M. RAJAMANIKKAM

Reader in Tamil, University of Madras

(A) INTRODUCTION

Sangam Works :

It is well known that Tolkāppiyam, Tirukkural, Puṛanānūru, Ahananūru, Naṛṇinai, Kuṇṭokai, Ainkuṇūru, Paṇṇippattu, Paṇṇāḍal, Kalittogai, Pattuppāṭṭu, Silappadhikāram and Maṇimēkhālai fall under the category of Sangam Works.* The Sangam period ended by about 300 A.D.† The beginning of the Sangam cannot be definitely ascribed to a period or an age.

During this long period many works on grammar and literature must have been produced. Since they were written on palm leaves which were subject to damages of all kinds and since there were many deluges many of these works were completely lost to the world. The works listed above are the only available works and are called Sangam Works. Some of the names of the works that are lost to us are found mention in the commentaries of Tolkāppiyam, Silappadhikāram, Yāpparumgalam etc.

The purity of the Tamil language before Tolkāppiyam :

Tolkāppiyar has shown by the words *Enba* (என்ப) - (so say), *Enmaṇār* pulavar (என்மனார் புலவர்) - (so say the scholars) - *that there were grammarians who wrote grammar before his period.* In some places he has given some special attributes also to the grammarians who have gone before him. For example “yāppeṇa moḷiba yappari pulavar” (யாப்பென மொழிப யாப்பறி புலவர்) - that is, the scholars who are experts in prosody say that this is yāppu” (prosody). But when Tolkāppiyar made rules to use Sanskrit words in Tamil to suit the genius of the language, he does not use the words like ‘enba’ (என்ப), ‘enmaṇār pulvar’ (என்மனார் புலவர்) etc. From this it is evident that before

*Some say that Silappadhikāram and Maṇimēkalai fall just after the Sangam period.

†Kanchi became the Capital of the Pallavas at about 300 A.D. The Pallava period extended up to about 900 A.D. No mention has been made in the Sangam works about any of the Pallavas. Therefore it may be safely said that the Sangam period came to a close by about A.D. 300.

Tolkāppiyar alien words had not entered the Tamil language at all and there was no necessity for the grammarians who lived before him to frame rules for the use of alien words in Tamil. It is also clear that there was a period when purely Tamil words were in existence without any mixture of alien words. It is but natural that any language will be without any mixture of alien words for a long time till some impact comes on it. Therefore there is no wonder that Tamil stood as a pure language for a long time till the advent of the Aryans. This impact gave rise to alien words entering the vocabulary of the Tamil language.

In the first part of this long period of the Sangam age there were no Aryans or Northerners in the Tamil country. That is, we may say that long before the age of Tolkāppiyar there were no alien words in the Tamil language. Only in Tolkappiyam and other Sangam works a few Sanskrit and Prakrit words came to be used. Mostly, the words used were in particular relation to the religions of the North. The Puranic stories, and the stories in the Buddha Jatakas found their way into Paripadal, Kalittogai, Silappadhikāram and Maṇimēkhalai which might have been written in the second and third centuries A.D.¹ Considering the above, it is clear, that in the first part of the Sangam age, (B. C: — — B. C. 400), Tamil language alone, without any admixture of alien words, was in existence. It is only in the latter half after the advent of the Aryans (about B.C. 400—A.D. 300) Sanskrit and Prakrit words found their way into the Tamil language.

Tolkāppiyam :

Out of the present Sangam works that have come down to us Tolkāppiyam is the most ancient one. It is the only source which gives us all information of the various kinds of work that have been lost to us.

This grammar gives us all about Eḷuttu (எழுத்து)—Letters, (சொல்) - Words and Poruḷ (பொருள்)²—Matter, life etc.

If one carefully examines the work, it will be clear that many works on literature and grammar must have been in existence before Tolkāppiyar. Tolkāppiyar after going through

1. Dr. M. Rājamanikkam, Tamil moḷi-ilakkiya Varalāru, pp.—273—296.

2. The Tamil literature is divided into Aham and Puṇam. Aham deals with family life, and Puṇam deals with dharma, artha, and moksha. Poruḷ comes under these two categories.

the works on grammar and other literature written during his own age and also the then available works written prior to him has written his grammar Tolkāppiyam.

Tolkāppiyar has mentioned in his treatise in about 260 places about the grammarians of his own age and those who had gone before him.

1. *Enba* (என்ப) - So say - has come in 147 places in Tolkāppiyam.
2. *Enmanār Pulavar* (என்மனார் புலவர்) - So say the scholars (pulavār) - has come in 68 places.
3. *Varaiyār* (வரையார்) - Do not remove or omit-has occurred in 15 places.
4. There are about 30 places with special qualities attached to the phrases having their own sweetness and significance. These phrases can be well understood if read with the sections and sūtras.
5. Three examples are given below as illustrations.

Kaṇṇimai noḍiyēṇa avvē mātṭirai

Nunṇitiṇ uṇarndōr kaṇḍa vārē.

கண்ணிமை நொடியென அவ்வே மாத்திரை

நுண்ணிதின் உணர்ந்தோர் கண்ட வாரே.

(Eḷuttadhikāram - Sūtra 7)

Scholars who have carefully examined have found out that the time taken to wrinkle the eye brows is the time for one noḍi (the time measure of the snap of the figure).

2. Sūtra 158 of Solladikāram is as follows :—

Solleṇap paḍuva peyarē vinaiyeṇṇu

Āyiraṇ ḍenba Arindisi nōrē.

சொல்லெனப் படுவ பெயரே வினையென்று

ஆயிரண் டென்ப அறிந்திசி நோரே.

Those who are well versed will say that the words consist of nouns and verbs.

3. The Sūtra 403 in Poruladhikāram says :—

‘If the first letter of the first *Sīr* and the first letter of the third *sīr* are one and the same, that kind of prosody is called *Polippu* (பொழிப்பு).

Tolkāppiyar says that this is the definition of *Polippu* given by scholars of yore.

‘Polippena molidal *pulavar arē*’

பொழிப்பென மொழிதல் புலவர் ஆறே.

(B) THE ANTIQUITY OF TOLKĀPPIYAM

Many have said that Tolkāppiyam is anterior to the Eight collections and Tirukkural. But Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai has mentioned that Tolkāppiyam came after the Sangam collections. The reasons adduced by the learned Professor was criticised one by one by Vidvan K. Vellai Varanan in his research work on “Tolkāppiyam” published by the Annamalai University and has concluded that his reasons are untenable and Tolkāppiyam is anterior to the Sangam collections and not posterior to it.¹

An author who attempts a treatise on grammar would have naturally gone through all available works on literature and grammar during his period and then only will write his treatise. This is a common practice which cannot be denied. He would also lay down rules of grammar after studying carefully the words used by the people in worldly parlance and words used in poetry. If Tolkāppiyam belonged to a period later than that of the Sangam collection he would have made rules of grammar having in mind the words and phrases found in the Sangam works. If he had lived before the date of the Sangam collections, he would not be held responsible for any changes occurring in these works. Having this view in mind, we shall discuss the date of Tolkāppiyam.

Internal Evidences :

(1) The consonant Sa (ச) with vowels A (அ), Ai (ஐ), and Ow (ஔ) will not come as the first letter in the Tamil words. This is said in a sūtra by Tolkāppiyar.

Sahara-k kilaviyum Avarrō rarrē
AAi owvenum mūṇṇalang kaḍaiyē

சகரக் கிளவியும் அவற்றோ ரற்றே
அஐ ஔவெனும் முன்றலங் கடையே.

(Eḷuttu - Sūtra 62)

1. Vidwan K. Vellai Varanan, “Tolkāppiyam” published by the Annamalai University, pp. 88-127.

As against this rule, we find words in the Sangam collections which do not conform to this rule but are opposite to it.

In Puṟaṇānūru, words like Saḍai (சடை) - matted locks of hair, Samam (சமம்) - equal, Sakaṭam (சகடம்) - Wheel, are found (Verses 1, 14, 102). In Pattuppāṭṭu, we have Savatti (சவட்டி) - having bent or twisted, Salam (சலம்) - water, Sandu (சந்து) - peace - (Perumpāṇ āṟruppāḍai, 1.217; Madurai-k-kānchi, 1.112, Malaipaḍukaḍām, 1.392). In Paḍiṟrupuattu, we find the word Savaṭṭum (சவட்டும்) - Killing (v. 84). In Tirukkuraḷ, we have Saman (சமன்) equal, Samam (சமம்) - equal (Kuraḷ. 99,112).

2. Tolkāppiyar has laid down that the consonant 'ஞ' with the vowel Ā (ஆ), e (ஏ), o (ஓ) only will come at the beginning of a word. (Eḷuttu - Sūtra 64)

As against this rule, we find in Puṟaṇānūru,

ñamaṇ (ஞமன்) - Yaman,
ñamali (ஞமலி) - Peacock,
ñimiru (ஞிமிரு) - Bee.

That is, the consonant 'ஞ' with the vowels அ and இ, coming at the beginning of a word (verses 6, 74, 93). In Ahaṇanūru, we find (ஞிமிரு) - Bee; (ஞமலி) - peacock (verses 59, 140, 385). In Paḍiṟruppattu, we have (ஞரல) to make sound (verse 30). In Paṭṭiṇappālai (ஞமலி) - peacock is found (1.140),

3. The consonant *ya* (ய) with the vowel ā (ஆ) only will come at the beginning of a word. It will not come with the other eleven vowels.

Āvō dalladu yahara mudalādu.

ஆவோ டல்லது யகர முதலாது.

(Eḷuttu - Sūtra 65)

As against this rule, we find the word yavaṇar (யவனர்) in the Sangam collections.¹

1. Puṟaṇānūru, 56

Perumpāṇāṟruppāḍai 1.316

Mullaippāṭṭu, 1.61

Neḷunalvāḍai, 1.101

Silappadikāram, Kāḍai 5, 1.10; Kāḍai 14, 1.67; Kāḍai 29, 1.25.

Maṇimekhalai, Kāḍai, 19, 1.108 etc.

4. Some words mentioned in Tolkāppiyam have lost their usage and not found in the Sangam works. They are the demonstrative words with the ending i (இ)

Adōḷi (அதோளி) - that place,

Idōḷi (இதோளி) - this place,

Udōḷi (உதோளி) - the place in between here and there.

(Eḷuttu, Sūtra 159)

These words are not found in the existing Sangam literature.¹ If Tolkappiyar would have lived after the Sangam Collections, he would not have composed a sūtra for the usage of these words.

5. Tolkāppiyar has laid down some rules of grammar how the numeral word Nāngu (நான்கு) - Four - will combine with other words, and how it will change during combination with other words. (Sūtra 442, 453, 462, 467, 475).

But in Ahanānūru, v. 104 we find: 'Nannālku pūṇḍa, Kaḍumpari Neḍuntēr" (நன்னால்கு பூண்ட கடும்பரி நெடுந்தேர்). Here Nāngu (நான்கு) has changed into Nālku (நால்கு) and for this we do not find any rule in Tolkāppiyam.

6. Tolkāppiyam lays down definite rules for the combination of numeral words from one to ten, hundred, thousand, hundred thousand (Eḷuttu, Sūtra 438-471). Tolkāppiyar has not mentioned the word Kōḍi (கோடி) hundred thousand, Crore. Here it is evident that the word Kōḍi (கோடி) was not in use in the days of Tolkāppiyar. But the word Kōḍi (கோடி) is found in Puṇanānūru.

1. Further, Perāsiriyaṇ, one of the commentators of Tolkāppiyam, has said that the above three words Adōḷi (அதோளி), Idōḷi (இதோளி) and Udōḷi (உதோளி) ending with i (இ), has gone into disuse in the last Sangam period itself as follows:

"Words which were in existence at one age, have fallen into disuse at a later age. The words Adōḷi (அதோளி), Idōḷi (இதோளி), Udōḷi (உதோளி) and Kuyiṇ (கூயின்) mentioned by Tolkāppiyar have now fallen into disuse." Rules would not be formed for words like these which were not used at the age of the Commentators but were in existence before. So Tolkāppiyar is anterior to the Sangam Collections.

Onrupat taḍukkiya kōḍi Kaḍai-iriya
Perumait tāhaniṇ Āyul tānē.

ஒன்றுபத் தடுக்கிய கோடி கடையிரீஇய
பெருமைத் தாகநின் ஆயுள் தானே.

(Verse 18)

Kōḍi is the highest number.

May you live long for a number of years.

In Tirukkural, we find 'Kōḍi tohuttārkkum tuittal aridu'.

கோடி தொகுத்தார்க்கும் துய்த்தல் அரிது.

(Kural 377)

They cannot enjoy even if they have saved a crore (Kōḍi - கோடி) of rupees.

7. Tolkāppipar ssys that the plural ending Kaḷ (கள்) will come only in neuter gender.

Kalloḍu sivaṇum avviyaṇ peyaṛē

Koḷvaḷi uḍaiya palavaṇi soṛkē.

கள்ளொடு சிவனும் அவ்வியற் பெயரே

கொள்வழி உடைய பலவறி சொற்கே.

(Sol. 169)

As against this we find the plural ending Kaḷ (கள்) comes in uyartipai - (high caste nouns denoting human beings) eg. words like Maṇṇaiyavarkaḷ (மற்றையவர்கள்) other people; pūriyarkaḷ (பூரியர்கள்) base or low people - (Kural 263, 919) and in Kalittokai Ivargaḷ (ஐவர்கள்) five persons - (verse 26).

8. The ending (விருதி) An (அன்) of a word will come only in the third person and that too in masculine gender.

An, Ān, Al, Āl ennum nāṇḡum

Oruvar maruṇḡiṇ paḍarkkaic collē.

அன்ஆன் அள்ஆள் என்னும் நான்கும்

ஒருவர் மருங்கின் படர்க்கைச் சொல்லே.

(Sol. 205)

As against this rule, we find in Purāṇāpūru, uraittanāṇ yānāha (உரைத்தனன் யானாகு) - I said this -; Andāṇ pulavaṇ koṇḍuvan danāṇē (அந்தனன் புலவன் கொண்டுவந் தனனே) - I, who is a Brahmin poet, brought this - (verses 136, 201). Here we find that the ending an (அன்) has come in first person

singular. In *Ahanāṇṇu*, we have, *Ninakkiyān Kilaiṇan allanō* (நினக்கியான் கிளைஞன் அல்லனோ) - Am I not your relation? *Yān vājalāṇē* (யான் வாழலனே) - I am not able to live; *Mikuti kaṇḍanrō ilanē* (மிகுதி கண்டன்றோ இலனே) - I have not seen much; *Nāni aṇindaṇro ilanē* (நனி அறிந்தன்றோ இலனே) - I have not understood much (verses 342, 362, 379, 384). In *Narṇṇai*, we have *Kūruvan Vāḷi tōḷi* (கூறுவன் வாழி தோழி) - I shall tell you, my blessed friend; *Uḷḷinan allanō yāṇē* (உள்ளினன் அல்லனோ யானே) - Have I not thought of it (verses 233, 326). In *Kuṇṇtokai*, we find *Aliyen yāṇē* (அளியென் யானே) - I am to be pitied; *Niyalan yāṇ ena* (நீயலன் யான்என) - You are not the person; *yāṇi-ḷandaṇṇē* (யானிழந்தனனே) - I have lost it; *yāṇ kaṇḍanrōilaṇō* (யான் கண்டன்றோ விலனோ) - I have not seen (verses 30, 36, 43, 311).

9. The *viyangōḷi viṇai* (வியங்கோள் வினை) verb in the optative mood will not come in the first and second persons is the rule laid down by *Tolkāppiyar*.

Munnilai taṇmai yāyi riḍattoḍu
Maṇṇā dāhum viyangōḷi kiḷavi.

முன்னிலை தன்மை யாயீ ரிடத்தொடு
மன்னா தாகும் வியங்கோள் கிளவி.

(Sol. 226)

As against this, we see that the *Viyangōḷi viṇai* (optative mood of the verb) has come in the Second person in *Puṇāṇṇu*.

Naḍukkinṇi Niliyarō (நடுக்கின்றி நிலீஇயரோ)

(verse 2)

May you live long without dislocation.

10. *Tolkāppiyar* has said that the Metrical syllable (அசை) *mō* (மோ), will come in second person only.

Miyāyika mōmadi ikuṇṇi ennum
Āvayin ārum munnilai yasai-c-col.

மீயாயிக மோமதி யிகுஞ்சின் என்னும்
ஆவயின் ஆறும் முன்னினை அசைச்சொல்.

(Sol. 274)

As against this, we see in *Puṇāṇṇu*, "*Senmō Peruma em Viḷavuḍai nāṭṭēna*" (சென்மோ பெருமன் விழவுடை நாட்டென) - we will go to our country full of festivities (verse 381). Here we see that *Mō* (மோ) has come in the first person.

11. All ahapporul matter from Kaikkilai to Peruntinai are best sung in Kalippā (a kind of verse) and Paripāḍal (a kind of verse) is Tolkāppiyar's view.

(Poruḷadhikāram, 56)

But we see in the Sangam collections, all aham poems are mostly in Ahaval metre. If Tolkāppiyar belonged to a period later than the Sangam collections he would not have laid such a rule. **This itself is sufficient proof to show that Tolkāppiyar lived before the present Sangam collections.**

12. In Tolkāppiyam, we find Sēyōṇ, Māyōṇ, Varuṇ, Vēdan, the gods of the four divisions of land. Koṟṟavai (Durga) and the Omnipresent One are all described (Poruḷ 5, 85). But in the Sangam collections we clearly note that Muruga, S'iva, Kanna, and Balarama are treated as the four great gods (Puṟanānūru, verses 56, 58). The Sun, the Moon and the Rain are praised as Gods in Silappadhikāram. Even Manmata (Kāma) was worshiped (Silappadhikāram, Kāḍai 9, 1.60).

13. Tolkāppiyar has stated that ahapporul matter will be sung in Paripāḍal.

Koccaham Arāham suritaham eruttoḍu
Ceppiya nāṅgum taṇak-k-kuṟup pākak
Kāmaṇ Kaṇṇiya Nilaimait tāhum.

கொச்சகம் அராகம் சுரிதகம் எருத்தொடு
செப்பிய நான்கும் தனக்குறுப் பாகக்
காமங் கண்ணிய நிலைமைத் தாகும்.

(Sūtra 121)

As against this, we find, that most of the verses in the present work on Paripāḍal praises Lord Muruga and Lord Vishnu.

Therefore, Tolkāppiyam must be a work written before the present Paripāḍal was composed; that is, a long time before the third Sangam period. If Tolkāppiyar belonged to a period later than this Paripāḍal he would have written definite rules for these poems which do not fall under Ahapporul.¹

Thus there are many differences between Tolkāppiyam and the Sangam collections. These are pointed out in "Tamil

1. R. Raghava Ayyangar, Tamil Varalāṟu, pp. 306-307.

Varalāru" and "Tolkāppiyam" published by the Annamalai University.¹ Maha vidwan R. Raghava Ayyangar in his work on Tamil Varalāru published by the Annamalai University has said this : "It is difficult to show examples to some of the rules laid down by Tolkāppiyar with the help of the existing Sangam collections. Moreover, the present Sangam Collections contain (as pointed above) some grammatical usages not found in Tolkāppiyam. Hence it is crystal clear that Tolkāppiyam preceded the Sangam collectins" (p.268).

Thus it is quite clear that Tolkāppiyam is earlier than the present Sangam collections.

Vidwan V. Venkatarajulu Reddiyar² in his research work on Paraṇar (Madras University Publication) has mentioned the following : "The author of a grammar would write his grammar after carefully studying the works of the period and those that have appeared before his period. If Tolkāppiyam belonged to a period later than Paraṇar, Kapilar and Nakkirar of the last Sangam period then he would not have framed rules which are against the usage of words by the poets mentioned. The great variance found in the usage of words by the poets mentioned and the rules of grammar framed by Tolkāppiyar is itself sufficient proof to say that Tolkāppiyar must have lived long before the poets of the last Sangam.

Prof. M. Raghva Ayyangar has said that Tolkāppiyar must have lived long before the age of the Sangam works giving strong and valid reasons.³

The internal evidences so far mentioned go to prove beyond doubt that Tolkāppiyar must have lived long before the age of Puṇanāṇṟu and other Sangam Collections. The external

1. Maha vidwan R. Raghva Ayyangar, has in his work on "Tamil Varalāru" clearly shown that Tolkāppiyam preceded the Sangam Collections (pp. 268-273 ; 308-309).

Also Vidwan K. Vellai Varanan of the Annamalai University in his research work on "Tolkāppiyam" has clearly stated the same view (pp. 90-94 ; 213).

Also Prof. T. R. Sesha Ayyangar in his "Dravidian India" has pointed out the same view (pp. 175-178).

2. Also V. Venkatarajulu Reddiyar, Paraṇar, Madras University Publication, pp. 172-173.

3. M. Raghava Ayyangar, Araicci-t-toguti, pp. 101-120.

evidences also strengthen the above truth. Let us now consider them.

External Evidences :

In his *Siṛappu-p-pāyiram* (special Introduction) to *Tolkāṇṇiyam*, *Paṇampāraṇār* has mentioned that Kumari is the Southern boundary of the Tamil Country. The commentators who wrote commentary on this *Pāyiram* has taken Kumari to mean the River Kumari.

Pērāsiriyaṇ has said that before the deluge, as there were other Countries in the north and the south of the Tamil Country, the Southern boundary was mentioned. As there was no country after the Tamil country in the east and west, the boundaries in the east and west were not mentioned. On account of this, the Siṛappu-p-pāyiram of Paṇampāraṇār has mentioned Kumari as the southern boundary.

Therefore it is clear that the River Kumari and a part of the Pandya country was submerged under the sea.¹

Vaḍakkum Teṟkum kuṇakkum kuḍakkum
Vēgaḍam Kumari timpunur pauvameⁿru
Innaṅ gellai ahavaiyir kiḍanda
Nūladin unmai vālidin virippin”

The boundaries of the Tamilnad are given as follows: In the north it is bounded by Vēnkaḍam, in the south by Kumari, and in the east and west by seas.

(Perum) Kākkai pāḍiniyār has mentioned the River Kumari as the southern boundary of Tamilagam. Hence Perāisiriyaṇ considers that (Perum) Kākkai Pāḍiniyār must have been a colleague of Tolkāppiyar.

(Siru) Kākkai pādiniyār who came later than (perum) kākkai pādiniyār has given the seas as the boundaries of Tamiḷagam except for the north.

Vaḍatisai maruṅiṇ Vaḍugu varambāhat
 Teṇṇisai yullit teṇjiya mūṇṇum
 Varaimaru! Puṇariyoḍu karaiporudu kiḍanta
 Nāttiyaḷ vaḷakkam

“வடதிசை மருங்கின் வடுகு வரம்பாகத்
தென்றிசை யுள்ளிட் டெஞ்சிய மூன்றும்
வரைமருள் புணரியொடு கரைபொருது கிடந்த
நாட்டியல் வழக்கம்.”

1. Tolkāppiyam, Marapiyal, Sūtra 94, commentary.

In this stanza it is stated that the northern boundary of the Tamilnad is the language of the Vaḍugar (Northerners), and the south, east and west are bounded by the seas.

Perāsiriyaṛ has clearly mentioned that she (Siṛu kākkai-Pāḍiṇiyār) is later than Tolkāppiyar.¹ Naccinārkkiniyaṛ says about her as 'piṇ tōṇṇiya kākkai pāḍiṇiyār' - Kākkai pāḍiṇiyār who came later than the first Kākkai pāḍiṇiyūr)

Silappadhikāram, a work of the 2nd century A.D.,² has mentioned the same boundaries for Tamilagam.

Neḍiyōḷ kunṇamum toḍiyōḷ pauvamum
Tamilvaram baṛutta taṇṇuṇal nāḍu.

நெடியோன் குன்றமுந் தொடியோன் பௌவமுந்
தமிழ்வரம் பறுத்த தண்டினல் நாடு.

Kāḍai 8, 11. 1-2

The northern boundary is the Vēnkaṭam Hills; the southern boundary is the present Cape Commorin; the east and west are bounded by the seas.

From these it is clear that at one time Kumari was the southern boundary of the Tamilnad, and at another time the sea has become the southern boundary. Even at present the sea is the southern boundary.

Paṇampāraṇār and (Perum) kākkai pāḍiṇiyār have noted Kumari as the southern boundary of the Tamilnad, but (Siṛu) Kākkai pāḍiṇiyār and Ilangōvaḍigaḷ have mentioned the sea as the southern boundary. Most of the scholars opine that the date of Silappadhikāram is the 2nd century A.D. and the Sangam came to a close by about 300 A.D. Considering all these facts it is proper to hold that at the time of Tolkāppiyar the southern boundary was the Kumari River. Hence he must have lived before the deluge; and the deluge must have taken place after the composition of Tolkāppiyam and that is why the later poets mention the sea as the southern boundary.

2. Paṇampāraṇār in his Pāyiram (Introduction) to Tolkāppiyam has said that Tolkāppiyam deals with Eḷuttu (எழுத்து), Sol

1. Tolkāppiyam, Seyyul Iyal, Sūtra 1, Commentary of Perāsiriyaṛ.

2. Dr. M. Rajamanikkanar, Tamiḷ moḷi-Iḷakkiya Varalaru. pp. 273-296.

(சொல்) and Poruḷ (பொருள்). Tolkāppiyam as said by the commentators contains only the three Adhikārams, Eḷuttu, (எழுத்து), Sol (சொல்) and Poruḷ (பொருள்). In the later period, when (Siru) Kākkai pāḍiṇiyār lived, the grammar of the Tamil language contained in addition to the above three adhikārams another section called Yāppu (யாப்பு) - Prosody as is clear from the following lines :—

Nāṭṭiyal Vaḷakkam nāṇmaiṇir kaḍaikkaṇ
Yāppina tilakkaṇam araihuvaṇ muṇaiyē.

“நாட்டியல் வழக்கம் நான்மையிற் கடைக்கண்
யாப்பின திலக்கணம் அறைகுவன் முறையே.”

The commentator of Irāiyanār Ahapporuḷ has said that Tamil has four kinds :

Tamiḷtāṇ nāṇgu vahaippaḍum
Eḷlutum, Sollum, Poruḷum, Yāppumeṇa.

Tamil grammer has four sections - they are - Eḷuttu alphabet, Sol (சொல்) word, Poruḷ (பொருள்) matter, and Yāppu (யாப்பு) prosody.

From what has been said above, it is clear that Tolkāppiyam was written when the River Kumari was the southern boundary of the Tamil country and (Siru) Kākkai pāḍiṇiyār lived after the great deluge when the land between the River Kumari and the present Cape Comorin was washed away by the Sea, and the sea alone came to be the southern boundary of the Tamil land after Tolakāppiyar.

(C) DATE OF TOLKĀPPIYAM

Even before Tolkāppiyam, the Northerners, who were speaking Sanskrit, came to South India and settled themselves. Therefore Sanskrit words came to be used by the Tamils and found entry into the Tamil language and literature of the Tamils.

(1) On account of this

Vaḍasoṟ Kiḷavi Vaḍaveḷut tori
Eḷuttoḍu puṇarnda Sollā kummē.

“வடசொற் கிளவி வடவெழுத் தோரீஇ
எழுத்தொடு புணர்ந்த சொல்லா கும்மே.”

“Sidaindana varinūm iyaindana varaiyār

சிதைந்தன வரினும் இயைந்தன வரையார்.”

Solladhikāram, 402

(1) If a Sanskrit word is to be used in Tamil it should be Tamilised according to the rules of grammar. (For example, the Sanskrit word Rama (ராம), must be written in Tamil as Irāmaṇ (இராமன்).

(2) Even Prakrit words, if suitable to the genius of the Tamil language it may be included.

Further, he has given the rules relating to Sūtra (சூத்திரம்), paḍalam (படலம்), piṇḍam (பிண்டம்), ambōdharangam (அம்போதரங்கம்), Kāṇḍikai (காண்டிகை) etc. If grammarians before Tolkāppiyar had given the rules for using Sanskrit words in Tamil language, Tolkāppiyar would certainly have referred to these rules and end his sūtras as ‘Enba’ (என்ப), ‘Enmmanār pulavar’ (என்மனார் புலவர்) etc. Since he has not mentioned any references to such rules of grammar, it is evident that Tolkāppiyar himself framed these rules. In his days some Sanskrit words must have found entry into the Tamil language and it was perhaps not possible for the people to be without using those words; and hence Tolkāppiyar found it a necessity to frame rules of grammar for using such words to suit the genius of the language.

Prof. V. Rangachariar has mentioned that the Aryans (Sanskrit speaking people) would have come to the Tamil country in about the 7th century B.C.¹

Only in the beginning of the 14th century A.D. the Islamic religion began to spread itself in the Tamil country. Kumara-gurupara swamigal, who lived in the 17th century A.D. has used the Hindustani words Salām (சலாம்), Cokkai (சொக்காய்), in his poems. On seeing this evidence, it is clear that it will take about two to three centuries for the words of one set of people to find entry into the language of the other set. If we take this view, it will not be wrong to say that it is only three centuries after the advent of the Aryans into the Tamil country some of these words would have found entry into the Tamil

language. From this point of view, if the Aryans had come to the Tamil country in about the 7th century B. C., then Tolkāppiyar may be said to have lived in or about the 4th century B.C.

(2) Visaka Munivar, a disciple of Badrabāhu spread Jainism in South India. Badrabāhu belonged to the period of Chandragupta (322-298 B.C.). There are some inscriptions in Brahmi script in Madurai District which are said to belong to the 3rd century B. C. by scholars of repute. Therefore, Jainism has in vogue in the Tamil country in the third century B.C.) 'But in Tolkāppiyam we find no mention of Jainism.'

(3) In the second Rock Edict of Asoka, it is mentioned that facilities for hospitals for both peoples and animals were provided for in the Cēra, Cōla and Pandiya countries. Further, it can be said that Buddhism found its entry in the Tamil Country only during the period of Asoka (273-232 B. C.)

In Kuḷugumalai and other places in the Tamil country, we find Buddhist inscriptions in Brahmi script. These inscriptions, it is said, belong to the later half of the 3rd century B. C.

There is no reference to Buddhism in Tolkāppiyam.* Hence it is clear that Tolkāppiyam was written before the spread of Buddhist influence in the Tamil land.

(4) Paṇampāraṇār in his Pāyiram (Introduction) Says :—

“Aindiram niṇainda Tolkāppiyar”

“ஐந்திரம் நிறைந்த தொல்காப்பியன்”

Sanskrit writers believe that Aindiram is a grammatical work which was written long before Panini. From the above lines of Paṇampāraṇār, it is clear that Tolkāppiyar must have had a deep knowledge of the old Pre-Panini grammar Aindiram. This grammar lost its place after the grammar of Panini. If Tolkāppiyar had known the grammar of Panini, then Paṇampāraṇār would have mentioned this also in his Siṇappuppāyiram (special

1. Mayilai Seeni Venkataswami, Samanamum Tamilum, pp. 34-36.

2. M. Srinivasa Ayyangar, Tamil Studies, p. 8.

T. R. Sesha Ayyangar, Ancient Dravidians, p. 109.

3. “The famous Tamil grammatical work, the Tolkāppiyam, may be assigned the period (B. C. 325-B. C. 188) under survey; it is said to exhibit the influence of Aindira vyakaranam, a pre-Panini system of Sanskrit grammar, but it is free from Buddhist influence”. R. Satyanatha Ayyar, History of India, Vol. I pp. 170-171.

introduction). Since he did not mention the grammar of Panini, we may say that Tolkāppiyar must have lived before Panini,⁵ or it may be said that Tolkāppiyar lived during the time of Panini, but his grammar was not known to Tolkāppiyar who lived far away in the south. Therefore, it may be taken that Tolkāppiyar lived before Panini or during his period, when his grammar was not known in the South. The western scholars have fixed the date of Panini as the 4th century B.C.⁶

Kapāṭapuram, the Capital of the Pandyas, was washed away by the sea only after the period of Tolkāppiyar is seen from the Commentary of Iṟaiyaṇār's Agapporul. Valmiki Ramayanam and Vyasa Bharatam mention about Kapāṭapuram. Winternitz says, that Vyasa Bharatam with all its interpolations is not later than the 3rd century B. C. Hence, Kapāṭapuram might have been in affluent circumstances during the 3rd and 4th centuries B.C.

To strengthen the above statement, we find that Chanakya, the minister of Chandragupta Maurya (325-301 B.C.) has mentioned in his Arthasastra 'Pandya Kavāṭam,' as one kind of pearls when mentioning the names of pearls taken from the sea. It is clear that the pearl 'Pandya Kavāṭam' denotes the pearls taken from Kapāṭapuram, the Capital of the Pandyas. It is not proper to say that after the deluge of Kapāṭapuram, the name would have been used to denote a pearl taken from that area. In the Sangam works, only pearls from Koṟkai is mentioned after the deluge of Kavāṭapuram.⁷

From the history of Ceylon, it is found that out of the three deluges, the first deluge was in 2387 B. C. This separated Ceylon from India. The second deluge was in 504 B. C. There was no serious loss in the second deluge. The third took place in 306 B. C. when Devanampriya Tissa was ruling in Ceylon. This period corresponds to the period of Asoka. On account of this deluge, one lakh of villages, 910 small fishermen villages, and 400 villages where pearl-divers lived were submerged under the sea.⁸

5. Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai had said that some of the sūtra's of Tolkāppiyar resembles some of the sūtras of Panini and some resembles that of Bharata's Nāṭya Sūtras in his work on "History of Tamil language and literature" (p. 68). Vidvan K. Vellai Varanan of the Annamalai University in his research work on 'Tolkappiyam' has refuted the views of the Professor (pp-106-127). A study of these two will be very useful.

6. History of Ceylon, Volume I, Part I, p. 203.

7. R. Raghava Ayyangar, Tamil Varalaru, pp. 37-38

8. Sir James Emerson Tennent, Ceylon, Volume I, p. 7 foot-note,

As the first deluge divided Ceylon from India, it is natural that the second deluge would have made some havoc in India. That is why the commentary on Iṛayaṇār's Agapporuḷ says that one deluge caused the destruction of the south of Madurai, and the other destroyed Kapāṭapuram.

In Silappadhikāram, we find the following lines which refers to one deluge :

Pahrūḷi yāṛṛudaṇ paṇmalai yadukkattuk
Kumarri-k kōḍum Kōḍunkaḍal Kollā

பஃறுளி யாற்றுடன் பன்மலை யடுக்கத்துக்
குமரிக் கோடும் கொடுங்கடல் கொள்ள "

The deluge has swallowed the River Pahrūḷi and the Kumari mountain which formed a part of the Kumari Range.

These lines denote a great deluge, and hence it may be the first deluge which divided India from Ceylon. Therefore, it follows, that the River Kumari must have been the southern boundary of the Pandya country after that frust deluge.

Therefore, the second or third deluge must have been the cause for the destruction of Kapāṭapuram. The second deluge had not made much impressionable damages is said by the History of Ceylon. Hence, the third deluge must have been the cause of the destruction of Kapāṭapuram.

Hence, unless otherwise proved by proper evidences, it is right to say that Tolkāppiyar might have lived during the 4th century B.C.

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