

Vol. XVI Journal of the Annamalai University.

## Palaiyaru, The Chola Capital

*By*

PROF. T. P. MINAKSHISUNDARAM AND SRI T. V. SADASIVA PANDARATHAR



PALAIYARU, THE CHOLA CAPITAL <sup>80</sup>

BY

Prof. T. P. MINAKSHISUNDARANAR, M. A., B. L., M. O. L.,

AND

SRI T. V. SADASIVA PANDARATHAR

*Department of Tamil Research.*

THE literary sources of South Indian History have not yet been completely worked out. The interpretation of the Tamil inscriptions demands a careful scrutiny by the Tamil scholars. The Tamil Research Department of the Annamalai University, therefore, felt that a review of the history of the Colas was called for. This attempt has brought to light the existence and importance of a Cola Capital. It may not be quite correct to say that the capital is for the first time identified. Mudikondacolapuram was confused for a long time with Gangaikondacolapuram. But the reference to Mudikondacolapuram as Palaiyaru in the inscriptions themselves (Inscription 271 of 1927) has opened the eyes of the scholars to the truth. "This city (Gangapuri)" writes Mr. K. A. Neelakanta Sastri, "has often been confused with Mudikondacolapuram and the suggestion has been made that this was the earlier name of what later came to be called Gangaikondacolapuram. (S. I. I. (iii); S. V. on Mudikondacolapuram; also S. K. Aiengar—South India and Her Muhammadan Invaders, Page 42). There is no support for the suggestion in the epigraphy of the region. On the other hand, Mudikondacolapuram is clearly stated to be the alternative name of Palaiyaru, now a small village on the banks of the Mudikondan river within easy reach of Kumbakonam." Palaiyaru at present is but a small village. It is, therefore, little wonder that its importance is not brought out to any extent by this identification. The Madras Epigraphist's Report for 1927 states, "Palaiyaru near Kumbakonam was expected to throw some light on the history of the Colas but on examination the temple in the village was found to be in a deserted condition containing only two later records...." (Page 86).

But when all the references to Palaiyaru, under its various names, are pieced together, a beautiful city, in between the two rivers the Mudikondan and the Arisil Aru forming a moat around the city as it were, situated on an extensive and rich territory three miles by five miles, with fertile fields on all sides, proud of its palace wherein sits the Cola emperor on his time-honoured throne in the great coronation hall, rises before our mind's eye as an embodiment of Cola greatness with four military cantonments, new and old, and with a dozen and more of temples—those.

Note on the Transliteration: ச = c; ட = t or d; த = t or d; ற = r; டு = l; ன = l; ல = l; ன் = n; னு = n; னு = n.

architectural representations of the spiritual aspirations of the living Tamil land. The four cantonments were Āriyappaḍaiyūr, Pampaipḍaiyūr, Puduppḍaiyūr and Maṇappaḍaiyūr. Tirugnānasambandar, the Saiva psalmodist mentions another cantonment of the Maḷavas (Maḷapāḍi பழையாண்டி மதுபாடி in Paṭṭiccurappadikam, Verse 3). The temples even now existing are (i) Paḷayaṛai Vaḍa Tali (Northern Temple), (ii) Paḷayaṛai Mēl Tali (Western Temple), (iii) Kīl-t-tali (Eastern Temple), (iv) Paḷayaṛai-t-ten Tali (Southern Temple), (v) Paṭṭiccuram, (vi) Tiruccattimurram, (vii) Aruḷ Moḷi-t-tēvēccuram, (viii) Panchavan Mādēvēccuram, (ix) Aricandiram, (x) Rāja Rājēccuram, (xi) Gopinātapperumal kōil, (xii) Nandipura Viṇṇagaram and (xiii) Sundarapperumal Kōil. These contain innumerable inscriptions.]

[Of these, Vada Tali has been praised by Tirunāvukkarasar; Tiruccatti Murram and Paṭṭiccuram by Tirugnānasambandar and Mēl Tali by Sundarar, all these three being the great trio of Tēvāram hymnalists. Nandipura Viṇṇagaram is a Vaishnavite temple as the name itself reveals. Viṇṇagaram is a Tamil form of the word Viṣṇugrahaṁ, the Sanskrit word for Viṣṇu Temple. Tirumangai Ālṅwār sings the glories of this temple built by Nandivarman Pallavamalla. This identification of Nandipuram is really crucial, but unfortunately this had not been done till now in spite of the clear statements in the inscriptions. Mr. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, in his monumental work on Colas, refers to Nandipuram on Page 190 and 321, but fails to identify it with Paḷayaṛu. Inscriptions No. 365 and 367 of 1924 and No. 30 of 1931 describe this place Paḷaiyā rākiya Nandipuram (Nandipuram which is Paḷaiyaru). Paḷaiyaru Ten Tali (Southern Temple) is found mentioned in the inscriptions of Raja Raja I. Aruḷ Moḷi-t-tēvar is the name of Rāja Rāja, the great. Aruḷ Moḷi-t-tēvēccuram must therefore be taken to have been founded by him. Rāja Rājēccuram is the temple built by Rāja Rāja II. Paḷaiyaru kīl-t-tali is situated in what is now known as the Paḷayaṛu or Kīlāip-paḷaiyaru village. Vānādirāyanāyanār *alias* Narasingadēvar constructed, according to an inscription there (Ins. No. 9 of 1927), the big maṇḍapa and the gopura of the Kīl-Tali. This is also known as the temple of Sōmanātha Dēva. It is because Paḷayaṛu was identified with this Kīlāip-paḷayaṛu alone, the epigraphist wrote in 1927 that a place of so much importance now contains no inscription of the Colas and that Mr. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri wrote "Paḷayaṛu possesses an ancient Siva temple of remarkable construction in the later Cola style which contains however no inscription" (Colas Page 281). The other temples were probably of later origin. When all these references are taken together, the description of Paḷayaṛu by Sekkilār<sup>1</sup> does not appear to be a poetic exaggeration.

1. "தேரின் மேலிய செழுமணி வீதிகள் சிறந்து  
பாரில் நீடிய பெருமைசேர் பதி பழையாறை"

Tērin mēviya ceḷumaṇi vītikaḷ ciṛantu  
Pāril nidiya perumai cēr pati Paḷaiyārai

(i. e.) "the city of Paḷayaṛai renowned far and wide and great because  
it resounded with rich bells of the chariots".

[The city included within its compass as its suburbs the places which are now known as Paḷayaṟu, Muḷaiyūr, Paṭṭiccuram, Tiruccattimurram, Tirumattāḍi, Sōlamāligai, Āriyappaḍaiyūr. Pambaippaḍaiyūr, Puḍuppaḍaiyūr, Maṇappaḍaiyūr, Sundarapperumāl Kōil, Dārācuram, and Nāthan Kōil. Paḍaiyūrs were the cantonments and their names preserve the history of the four armies of the later Cola period. Maṇappaḍaiyūr is today an Adi Dravida residence. Probably this extended upto Tiruvalancuḷi. The ancient cantonment of Maḷapāḍi of Tirugnanasambandar's times we are not in a position to locate unless Muḷaiyur can for any reason be looked upon as a corruption of Maḷapaḍi. Tiruccattimurram and Paṭṭiccuram, with a Saiva temple each, are close to each other. Paḷayaṟu is a village sometimes known as Kīḷappaḷayaṟu. Nāthan Kōil is the old Viṣṇu temple, Nandipura Vinṇagaram. Dārāsuram is a railway station west of Kumbakonam and the name is a corruption of Rājarajapuram or rather of Rājarājeccuram. The western portion of Kumbakonam is even now called Rājarājeṇḍrappēṭṭai. A Cola mint was located therein. Sundarapperumāl kōil also has a railway station. The name Tirumattāḍi is a corruption of the ancient name Tirumēṇṇali. So also the name Kōnapperumāl Kōil is a corruption of the old name Gōpinātapperumāl Kōil. What goes by the name of Sōlamāligai may be safely identified with the place where the ancient Cola palace once arose in all its grandeur. The old men of the locality and the late Dr. V. Swaminatha Ayyar used to speak of the rampart which alone remained of the old palace as having been demolished by the Government some 75 years ago. The whole extent is now covered with bricks and an excavation may throw more light on the Cola history. It is fervently hoped that what is stated here will induce the Archaeological Department to fix upon this place for starting their next excavation work in Southern India. Inside the Paṭṭiccuram temple there is an idol which is now called Kōṭṭai Vāyil Durgai (the Durga at the Fortress gate); one may not be wrong in assuming that this was the idol which presided over the gateway of the palace fortress.]

[A geographical picture of the place may be of some use and it is therefore attempted here. The South Indian Railway line runs on the southern bank of the Arisilāru and within the territory we are considering, stand east to west the railway stations of Kumbakōṇam, Dārāsuram, Swami Malai and Sundarapperumāl Kōil. Some one and a half miles north of the Arisilāru runs the Kāvēri. The doab, in between the rivers, consists of extensive and rich cultivable lands. About one mile to the south of the Arisilāru runs the river Tirumalairājan. Some one mile to the south of this runs the river Muḍikōṇḍan. These measurements are given more or less approximately, taking Paṭṭisvaram or Paṭṭiccuram as the centre. This Paṭṭiccuram is about four miles to the southwest of Kumbakōṇam. At a distance of more than four furlongs to the east, stands Muḷaiyūr on the northern bank of the Tirumalairājan. In Muḷaiyūr stands the famous Vāḍatali, a māḍakkōil, probably one of the 78 temples built by the ancient Cōla Kōccenkannān. The word muḷai of the name Muḷaiyūr, it is suggested, refers to the pāli or cave like mutts of the Buddhists, referred

to as having been in existence at Palayāru in certain verses,<sup>1</sup> quoted as illustrative of the rules of prosody in *Yapperunkalaviruttii*. Mr. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri had already brought out the importance of the Buddhist settlement at Palayāru and the cordial relation existing between the Colas and the Buddhists (Colas Vol. I, Page 190). More than half a mile to the south west of Paṭṭiccuram stands Kīlaippalaiyāru, almost opposite to Muḷaiyūr on the southern bank of the Tirumalairājan. The Sōmanātha temple therein, is probably the Ten Tali of Rajaraja's inscriptions. Nearly a mile to the west of Kīlaippalaiyāru stands Mēlaippalaiyāru which is a wide stretch of cultivable land.

Going back once again to the northern bank of the Tirumalairājan we find that at a distance of more than a mile to the west of Paṭṭiccuram stands the village Tirumattadai or Tirumēṇṇāli with its temple. Gōpinātaperumāl kōil stands midway between Paṭṭiccuram and Tirumēṇṇāli. Here are two temples back to back one of which, containing inscriptions, is in ruins. North of Paṭṭiccuram at a distance of six furlongs stands a village called Sōlan Māligai or the Cola palace which is only an extensive open space full of bricks. On the four sides of this place stand the four paḍaiyūrs: Puḍupadaiyūr on the west, Āryappaḍaiyūr on the east, Pampaippaḍaiyūr running along the northern bank of Tirumalairājan on the south, and Maṇappaḍaiyūr on the north. This Maṇappaḍaiyūr is an Adi-dravida residence on the southern bank of Arisilāru and there stands now the Swamimalai railway station. The next station on the west is Sundarapperumāl kōil. One may hazard a guess that this Viṣṇu temple was built by Sundaracōla Parāntaka. On the east of Swamimalai station is the railway station of Dārāsuram. East of this is Rājarājendrapēṭṭai on the northern bank of Arisilāru. This is almost the western portion of Kumbakonam. At a distance of some four furlongs to the east of Sōlamāligai stands Ariccandrapuram, probably the temple of 'Ariccandirattār', mentioned by Tirunāvukkarasar in one of his hymns. But no temple stands to day; there are the idols of the defunct Siva temple, lying all over the place; and recently a temple tank was discovered therein. Tirunāvukkarasar couples a Pārkuḷam with Palayāru and the people of the locality speak of Pārkuḷam at a distance of some half a furlong to the east of this Ariccandrapuram. We may hazard a guess, though it may be nothing more than a wild guess, that Ariccandrapuram is the Kīl-t-tali. South of Tirumattadi on the northern bank of Tirumalairājan stands Panchavanmādēviccuram or Panchavan madēvisvaram. This is now known as the Rāmanāthan kōil. It is stated in one of the inscriptions of Gangaikondacōla, the son of Rāja Rāja I (Ins. No. 271 of 1927), that it

1. தாழி யோங்குமலர்க் கண்ணவர் தண்ணடி  
பாழி யோங்கு புனலார் பழையாற்றுள்  
காழி நின்ற மதியான் மதிசேர்ந்து  
வாழி யென்று வணங்க வினாவாரா.

was founded as a paḷḷippadai. Are we to understand by this that the temple was raised in memory of Panchavanmādēvi, the queen of Rāja Rāja the Great, on her death? Arunmolittēvēccuram unfortunately is known only through the inscriptions elsewhere. ]

[South east of Kīlaippalayāru on the northern bank of the Muḍikonḍān stands the Viṣṇu temple Nandipura Viṇṇagaram. Nandipuram is also known as Āyirattali (Inscription No. 173 of 1931) and *Viracōliyam* explains this as a place having 1000 'Talis' or rooms. ஆயிரத்தளி கூடின இடம் ஆயிரத்தளி. (Vira cōliyam, Tokaippaḷalam commentary under Verse 3). One of the inscriptions of Paḷayāru (S. I. I. IV, p. 108-9) speaks of "ஆடகப்பரிசை ஆயிரத்தளியில் சேரமுனவன் அபிஷேக மண்டபம்" (மெய்க்கீர்த்தி of Sundara Pāṇḍya I See Ep. Ind. Vol. XXII, No. 10) "the coronation hall of Cola in the Āyirattali" where the word probably means a palace. True to this interpretation, this term is used only in connection with the capital towns where a palace could be expected to have existed such as Niyamam, the capital of the Muttarayars (S. I. I. Vol. II No. 66) and Gangaikondacōḷapuram of Colas. If Nandipuram was known as Āyirattali as well there must have been a palace of Nandivarma II. ]

[A short history of this place, as far as it is possible, is here attempted for the purpose of bringing out its significance, all through its existence. The name Paḷaiyāru requires explanation. Paḷaiyāru is a corruption of the term Paḷaiyārai. Ārai is usually the shortened form of Ārrūr, meaning a village or city on the banks of a river. Paḷayārai should mean the city on the banks of the old river. That this city was known as Ārai<sup>1</sup> is made clear by the songs of Sundarar who speaks of the Ārai mērrāli. It is known that Kāveri in and near its delta had been changing its course and probably the old beds were utilised as irrigation channels. When one such change took place, the old river bed ought to have come to be known as the old river. Therefore Ārai might also have come to be known as Paḷayārai. Unfortunately it is not possible to fix the period of such a change. The Kāveri is the river of the Cola country and Paḷayāru can mean only the old Kāveri (Paḷankāveri). This term Paḷankāveri is even now retained in some places, for instance at Māyavaram. Tirugnana-sambandar makes a distinction between Paḷankāveri and Kāveri in his hymns on Tiruvilanagar. But the Kaveri has since his time probably, rechanged its beds so that what was the old Kāveri in his time has since then become the new Kāveri and what was the new Kāveri in his time has since then become the old Kāveri. His song on Śivapuram speaks of the temple being on the southern bank of Paḷankāveri and close to the Arisilāru, a branch of the Kāveri. Here also the rivers interchanged their beds since the age of Tirugnana-sambandar; for, the temple stands now on the banks of the Arisilāru.

1. Ellan Ārai in Tondaimandala is mentioned in *Tonḍaimaṇḍala-satakam* Verse 10. This Ārai is probably Ārrūr near Chengleput on the bank of Pālār.

The Arisilāru and the Kāvēri had probably changed, rechanged and interchanged their beds. The Sangam work *Narīṇai* speaks of the Arisilāru encircling the city of Ambar<sup>1</sup>. *Sēntan Tivākaram*<sup>2</sup> of a later date, speaks of Ambar as being on the banks of the Kāvēri. Palaiyārai also is not now on the banks of the Kāvēri, which is a few miles away from this place, but on the banks of the Arisil. Therefore, the name Palaiyārai must have come into vogue only after the Kāvēri changed its bed and flowed through a different bed. J

Uraiyūr was the great cōla capital; உரை யூர் எனப்படுவது உறையூர் (Ūṇappaḍuvatu uraiyūr). "Uraiyūr is the city", thus goes the ancient saying. Pukār or Kāvērippūmpaṭṭiṇam, the great emporium Khaberis of Ptolemy, was the great sea port and the favourite city of Karikāla. When the Cōla rule extended northwards, we will not be far wrong in assuming that this became the northern capital, while Uraiyūr continued to be the southern capital. The northern half of the Cōla territory rose in importance and Kudavayīrkirattanār<sup>3</sup> of the Sangam age describes that the Colas kept their treasury safely guarded at Kudavayil, the modern Kodavasal. Erosion by sea practically erased Pukār. Palaiyāru in course of time became the capital of the Cōla country, superseding Pukār. Kocchenkaṇan probably built one of his 78 temples in this place. After the Sangam age the Cōla history is shrouded in darkness. "We see then" writes Mr. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, "that in the long historical night that envelops the Colas from the third or fourth to the ninth century A. D. their condition is best described as one of suspended animation".

From the Seventh Century onwards we have definite references to Palaiyāru and its greatness. That was the century of Saivite revival under

1. ஏந்துகோட் டியானை இசைவெங் கிள்ளி  
வம்பணி யுயர்கொடி அம்பர்குழந்த  
அரிசிலந் தெள்ளநல் அன்ன இவன்  
விரியொலி கூந்தல் விட்டமைகலனே.—(Narīṇai 141)
2. வருநற் கங்கை வடதிசைப் பெருமையுந்  
தென்றிசைச் சிறுமையும் நீக்கிய குழுமுனி  
குண்டிகைப் பழம்புனற் காவிரிப் பெரும்பதி  
அம்பர்க் கதிபதி.—(Tivākaram)
3. ....வென்வேற்  
கொற்றச் சோழர் குடந்தை வைத்த  
நாதெரு நிதியினுஞ் செறிய  
அருங்கடிப் படுக்குவன் அறனில் யாயே.—(Akam 60)

the joint leadership of Saint Tirugnanasambandar and Saint Tirunāvukkarasar. Tirunāvukkarasar sings of Paḷaiyārai vaṭa taḷi as

ஆதியைப் பழையாறை வடதளிச்  
சோதியைத் தொழுவார் துயர் தீருமே.

Ātiyaip paḷaiyārai vaṭa taḷic  
Cōtiyait toḷuvār tuyar tīrumē.

(i.e.) The misery of those who worship the Primeval and the Bright one of Paḷaiyārai vaṭa taḷi will disappear". Saint Tirugnanasambandar sings of Paḷaiyārai paṭṭiccuram thus :—

மாலைமண நாறுபழை யாறைமழ பாடியழ காயமலிசீர்  
பாலைமன நீறுபுனை மார்பனுறை பட்டச்சுரம் பரவுவார்.

Mālai maṇa nāru paḷaiyārai maḷapādi yaḷa kāya malicīr  
Pālai yana nīru puṇai mārpaṇurai paṭṭiccuram paravuvār.

(i.e.) "Those who worship Paṭṭiccuram where resides He with the sacred ash on his chest as white as the milk and which is beautiful and great along with Paḷaiyāru and Maḷapādi full of the fragrance of the garlands". Sundarar speaks of Ārai Mēraḷi. Sēkkilār in his Periyapurāṇam states that when Tirugnanasambandar was passing from Tiruvalanjūli to Paḷaiyāru through Ārai Mēraḷi and Tiruccattimurram, a canopy of pearls descended by the grace of Siva to protect him from the midday sun, on his way to Paṭṭiccuram. These references make it clear that Paṭṭiccuram Vaṭa Tali, Mēraḷi and Tiruccattimurram were part and parcel of Ārai or Paḷaiyārai. Cēkkilār in recounting the story of Tirunāvukkarasar gives us in his Periapuranam the episode of a Cōla King of Paḷaiyārai restoring the Sivalinga hidden away by the Jains of that place. From other references,<sup>1</sup> literary in character, we learn that Paḷaiyārai was a seat of Jain and Buddhist culture. The wife of Kūn Pāṇḍya whom Tirugṇānasambandar

1. ஏறுயர்கொடியி னிருவிசம்பதிரு மெறிமுகச் சதிர்கடற் றுளை  
வீறுயர்மணிக்கால் வெண்குடை யோங்கு தண்டுறையின் பழையாற்று  
மாறடு படிவ மதியுறுந் தருண மாதவ னேதமில் பாதம்  
வீறடு கதிக ளாழ் கதி வீழ விலங்கிய விழுத்துணை யாமே.

(ஏறுயர்கொடி refers to the Pallava flag with the bull inscribed)

—(Yapparunkala Virutti)

முழங்கு களியானை மூரிக் கடற்படை முறிதார் மண்ணன்  
வழங்கு மிடமெல்லாம் தன்புகழே போக்கிய வைவேல் வின்ணன்  
செழுந்தண் பழைசயுட் சிறந்து நாளுஞ் செய  
எழுந்தசேதி கத்துளிருந்த அண்ணல் வடி  
விழுந்தண்பு மலர்களால் வியந்துநா ளுந்தொழத்  
தொடர்ந்துநின் நவ்வினை துறந்துபோ மாவரோ.

—(Yapparunkala Virutti)

Paḷacai is another contraction of Paḷaiyārai.

Viṇṇaṇ was probably a Cola vassal of the Pallava.

reconverted to Saivism was according to Periyapuramam, the daughter of a Saivite Cōla King. It will not be a wild conjecture to identify this father of Mangayarkarasi with the Cōla who came to the help of Tirunāvukkarasar. As by this time Mahēndra Varma I had come to power, this Cōla king ought to have been but a vassal and eclipsed by the glory of the Pallava.

When the Pallava rule extended to the south, Palaiyaru became their southern capital, as important as their northern capital Conjeevaram. The Cōlas who were but vassals, probably moved to the south, but not without any resistance. Pallava supremacy over this place had left a permanent memorial in the form of the Viṣṇu temple Nandipura Viṇṇagaram, constructed by Nandivarma II. Palaiyaru came to be known after Nandivarma as Nandipuram (*i.e.*) the city of Nandi. It is probable that he built a palace as well. It was, according to the Udayendram Plates (S. I. I. Vol. II 74), in this city that *Udayachandra*, Commander-in-chief of Nandi, rescued his king whilst the latter lay besieged inside the city by Citramāya and the Tamil kings, who probably thus attempted to wrest the city from his hands, and had it restored to the original Cōla family of that city. Even during the life-time of his grandson, *viz.* Nandivarma III the conqueror of Tellāru, there were many a battle fought in and near Palaiyaru, as is borne out by many references to them in *Nandikkalambagam*,

பாடிய நாவலரோ வேந்தரோ பார்புரவிப்  
பீடியன் மாகளிற்றூர் பிச்சத்தார்—கடார்  
படையாறு சாயப் பழையாறு வென்றான்  
கடையாறு போந்தார் கலந்து.—(Verse 31)

a poem sung in honour of the king Nandivarma III by a grateful bard of his times. When Palaiyārai fell into the hands of the mighty Pallavas the helpless Cōla family, during those dark days of their downfall, moved to Tanjore from where they rose to power.

Nandipuram is referred to by that name many a time in the latter day Cōla inscriptions. The importance of Nandipuram as the capital city, preserving the traditions and customs, is clearly brought out by those inscriptions (365 and 367 of 1924) which state that in the reign of Sundara Cōla and of Rāja Rāja I the ancient standard of Nandipuram was adopted in the levy of Maṇṇupāḍu, in the towns of Mēlapaḷuvar and Tiruccengōḍu.

If Palaiyaru was the important northern capital of the Cōlas, the Cōla revival must have aimed at the recapture of this important and ancient stronghold of theirs. Parāntaka II alias Sundara Cōla is eulogised in a few Tamil verses of the tenth century, which are preserved as quotations in *Viracōliyam* (named after *Virarājendra Cōla* 1063–70 under *Kārikai* 11 of *Yāppuppaṭalam* and under *Kārikai* 10 of *Alankārappaṭalam*;) and these verses speak of Parāntaka as the Sundara Cōla of Palaiyaru and

the Sundara Cōla of the King of Nandipuram.<sup>1</sup> The question was already raised whether Sundaraperumāl Kōi in Palaiyārai was built by this Sundara. Therefore by the 10th century the later Cōlas had come to live in Palaiyāru making it once again the seat of their government. An inscription of Rāja Rāja the Great (985-1014) places Palaiyāru in the Tirunaraiyūr nādu, a subdivision of Kshatriya sikhāmaṇi vaḷanādu. Kshatriya sikhāmaṇi was one of Rāja Rāja's titles and therefore by naming the district itself after him, he had unmistakably expressed his great interest in the area in and around Palayāru. Panchavanmadēvīccuram and Aruṇmolitēveccuram show his love of Palayārai. His favourite city was Tanjore which he beautified by constructing the Great Temple. But the fact that temple women were brought to Tanjore from Palayāru, from Palayāru Tentali, and from Palayāru Vaṭatali, spoken of by many an inscription of Tanjore (S. I. I. ii 280, 284, 287, 290, 292 and 294) proves conclusively that Palaiyāru was the heart of Cola greatness wherefrom flowed all the accessories of their civilisation.

Passing on to the 11th century, we find the elder-sister of Rāja Rāja I, Kuntavvaippirāṭṭiyār had a palace of her own in Palaiyāru (Ins. No. 639 of 1909, 350 of 1907 and 249 of 1923) She, from her Palayāru palace, issued in 1015 an order instituting an endowment for the hospital "Sundara Cōla Vinṇagara Ātura Sālai" founded by her (248 of 1923). In one record, she refers to the village as the royal home of her nephew, Rajendra I *alias* Gangaikonda Cola (1012-1043). From another inscription, (463 of 1908) we find that Rajendra *alias* the Mudikonda Cola, issued an order whilst he was seated in the Southern half of his palace at Palayāru. In 1015, he issued the order for the survey of the temple lands of Ūyyak-kondān Tirumalai (Ins. No. 463 of 1908). In 1017, from the same palace, he sent out an order now found inscribed in Embār in North Arcot District (Inscription No. 585 of 1907). In 1019, he issued the famous Tiruvalan-gadu Plates preserved in the Madras Museum (S. I. I. Vol. III No. 205). Palayāru was a favourite resort of his. No wonder, he christened it as Mudikonda colapuram. The river Mudikondan, the southern boundary of Palayāru, dug by him and named after him, still bears witness to the

1. பவளச் செழுஞ்சுடர் மரகதப் பாசடைப்  
பசும்பொன் மாச்சினை விசும்பகம் புதைக்கும்  
போதியந் திருநீழற் பரவுதும்  
மேதகு நந்தி புரிமன்னர் சுந்தரச்  
சோழர் வண்மையும் வனப்பும்து  
திண்மையும் உலகிற் சிறந்து வாழ்கெனவே.

—(commentary on Vira Cōliyam Yappu, Karika II)

இந்திர னேறக் கரியளித் தார்பரி யேழுளித்தார்  
செந்திரு மனேரித் தினகரற்குச் சிவனார் மணத்துப்  
பைந்துகி லேறப் பல்லக் களித்தார் பழையாறைநகர்ச்  
சுந்தரச் சோழரை யாவரொப் பார்க்களித் தொன்னிலத்தே.

—(Vira Cōliyam, Alankarappatalam under 10th Karika)

interest he took in Palaiyāru and its agricultural development. Till he conceived of the grand plan of building the new city of Gangaikonda Colapuram he continued to rule from Palaiyāru. Kulottunga the first honoured the place by living in a palace there. One record (Inscription 93 of 1910) gives more particulars about this palace. In 1112, Kulottunga I issued an order to the Ambar Mākālam temple, seated on the throne named "Vānātīrāya" in the Hall renowned as Rajendra Cola mandapa within his palace at Mudikondacolapuram. The hall was probably built by Rajendra Cola.

In the twelfth century, Palaiyārai rose to greater prominence. The record of Kulottunga I referred to belongs to this century. Vikrama Cola, the son of this Kulottunga the First, issued from his palace at Palaiyāru his order making known his endowments to the Elavanasur temple in South Arcot (Inscription No. 168 of 1906). Palaiyāru captivated the heart of his grandson Rāja Rāja II. Beautified by him, it came to be known after him as Rajarajapuram and the mandapa bears the name of Rājagamthiran Tirumandapam<sup>1</sup> and Rajarajapuri as contrasted with Rajarajeccuram (Tanjore Temple) of his illustrious predecessors and namesake. The temple built by him, as usual came to be known as Rajarajeccuram (iccuram=siva temple). Oṭṭakūṭta, the famous court poet of three generations of Colas, Vikrama, Kulottunga II and Raja Raja II sings of the beauty and the glory of this city as newly built. The scheme of his poem *Takkayāgapparaṇi* is such that the poem itself is made to appear as a recital for the benefit of the damsels of Rajarajapuram, who are therefore requested in the 1st canto to open their doors and lend their ears to the narrative.<sup>2</sup> The poet makes it appear as though it is the Lord of this newly built temple that went to bless the penitent sinner Takka.<sup>3</sup> There can arise only one conclusion that Palaiyāru became the favourite capital of Rajaraja II. Rajarajapuram mentioned in the poem has been wrongly identified with Tanjore, by the learned editor of the poem, the late lamented Dr. V. Swaminathier (p. 9). But there is not a single reference to Tanjore as Rajarajapuri or Rajarajapuram in any of the inscriptions or literary sources. This failure to identify Rajarajapuram kept Palaiyāru in an insignificant position in the minds of scholars. That Rajarajapuram is

1. Rājagambran is one of the titles of Rajaraja II. (See verse 774) The verses 772 to 777 of *Takkayakapparaṇi* must all be held to refer to Rajaraja II. The other Rajarajas were Rajakesarise. Rajaraja II alone was a Parakesari and Verse No. 807 openly mentions this title.
2. உம்ப ராஜம ராபுரந்தவிர லோகபால ரெயில் காவல்கர்  
செம்பொன்மாடநிறை ராசராசபுரி வீதிமாதர்கடை திறமினே (Verse 17)
3. ஒருமருங்குடைய மூலநாயகியோ டொற்றைவெள்ளீவீடை யூர்திமேல்  
இருமருங்குமறை தொழமுந்நருளி இராசஇராசபுரி யீசரே (Verse 778)

Palayāru is not a mere guess but a historic fact. One inscription (Ins. No. 392 of 1908) states that Tiruccattimurram was within Rajarajapuram and another (Inscription No. 495 of 1907) made this statement clearer by identifying Rajarajapuram with Kilaippalaiyāru or eastern Palayāru. Rājarājapuramagiya Kīl Palayārñilulla Tiruccattimurra muḍaiyār.)

The thirteenth century witnessed the fall of the Colas; but the records reveal another important fact about Palayāru that it was the coronation Hall as well. Maḥavarman Sundara Pāṇḍiya I conquered Rajaraja III and brought the whole of the Cola territory under his rule. His coronation of conquest and valour (Viajayapiṭegam and Virābiṭegam) was performed in this very city probably because of the ancient tradition and powerful precedents. His inscription recites (Inscription No. 9 of 1926) that later on, he made a gift of this city where he was thus crowned, along with the Cola territory to the Cola king who took refuge under him.

With the disappearance of the Colas, the glory of Palayāru began to set. The precedents and the traditions came to be forgotten. It however continued to be of some importance, drawing now and then the attention of a few patrons. The channel now running between the Arisilaru and the Mudikondan is called the Tirumalairāyan āru and goes as far as Karaikkal by the side of Tirumalairāyanpaṭṭinam there. Tirumalaraya, a vassal of the Vijayanagara kings of the 15th century who ruled from Tirumalairāyanpaṭṭinam, should be taken to have dug this channel. In 1453 Vāṇādirāyanār Narasingadēvar constructed, according to an inscription (No. 254 of 1927), the big mandapa and the gopura at the Kīl Tālī. This Vāṇādirāya probably comes of the family of the Vāṇādirāya after whom the Cola throne of Palayāru was named. There seems to have been a king in this place even in the 17th century whose daughter had a spirit cast off her by the Sittar Sivaprakasar. This is according to the "*Turaiyūr Sivaprakāsa Śwāmigaḷ Varalāru*" given in one of the Mackensies manuscripts. There is a mutt in the name of this Sivaprākāsa at Paṭṭicouram. Nemesis finally overtook the fate of this beautiful city, which proud of its coronation hall displaced Pukar, competed successfully with Tanjore, Uraiyūr and Gangaikondācōlapuram, won the heart of Nandivarma II of the 8th century, Muḍikondā cōla of the 11th century and Rajaraja II of the 12th century, is today no more than a few villages with a buried palace waiting for the spade of archaeologist for another turn of the wheel of time.

