Some Mile Stones

IN THE

HISTORY OF TAMIL LITERATURE

FOUND IN AN ENQUIRY

INTO THE

AGE OF TIRU GNANA SAMBANDHA

BY

P. SUNDARAM PILLAI, M.A.,

Fellow of the Madras University, Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, London, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, London, and Professor of Philosophy in H. H. The Maharaja's College, Trivandrum.

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OPINIONS

ON

'THE AGE OF TIRU GNANA SAMBANDHA.'

Dr. E. Hultzsch, the Epigraphist to the Madras Government, wrote thus on the 13th Oct. 1891, when a manuscript copy of the paper was sent to him:—

"Last Saturday, I had a real treat in perusing your excellent paper on *Tirunanasambandar* with my assistant. I fully subscribe to all your conclusions. Both the general historical reasons and the special points which you have succeeded in establishing are thoroughly sound. There are a few details in which I would suggest alterations: (*e.g.*) * * *

"I would also suggest that your remarks on Drs. Burnell and Caldwell might be slightly softened down. This would make them still more effective. If you will return your MS. before 23rd Nov., when Mr. Fleet returns to India, I shall send it to him at once for early composition. [*i.e.* for the *Indian Antiquary*.] He will be so glad to have a paper which is equally perfect in matter and in form, and is delightful reading, though exhausting its subject.

"There is no doubt, after your remarks, that *Sankara* alludes to *Tiru Nana Sambandar*, and that the commentator and Professor Aufrecht (Oxford Catalogue, p. 108) who follows him are wrong."

Prof. Dr. Ernst Kuhn, of the University of Munich, wrote thus in German to a friend of his on the 28th May 1892 touching this dissertation as it appeared in the *Madras Christian College Magazine*:—

* * "I see that Mr. Sundaram Pillay has really treated his subject not only with full knowledge of the facts, but also with critical acumen and judgment, and has accordingly reached very interesting conclusions. I may be permitted humbly to express my opinion that Mr. S. P. should next set to work on the entire religious poetry of the Tamulians. This would certainly attract much interest in Europe, and especially in Germany." * * *

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1895.

DEDICATED AS A MARK OF ESTEEM

TO

DR. E. HULTZSCH,

The Leader of Historic Research in Southern India.

B.

PREFACE.

WITH the exception of a few paragraphs enclosed in square brackets, this pamphlet is substantially a reprint of what appeared in the last few issues of the *Madras Christian College Magazine* for 1891, under the title of '*The Age of Tiru Ñana Sambandha—a question of South Indian Archæology*', and my thanks are, therefore, due to the conductors of that periodical for so readily acceding to my request, when, pressed by a few earnest Tamil scholars here and there for copies of the original issues for reference, I applied to them for permission to republish the paper.

I owe it to Dr. E. Hultzsch to acknowledge that the inception of this dissertation is due entirely to him. But for his frequent and encouraging inquiries, it would never have been written. Having ventured to ascribe a higher antiquity to Sambandha than usual, in a review of *The Ten Tamil Idyls* in the Magazine above named, I was asked to support my statement with facts, and in my endeavours to do so, ensued this essay.

I am glad to acknowledge my obligations also to M. T. Ramanoutna Aiyar, B.A., L.T., of Patcheappah's College, Madras, who, though unknown to me, spontaneously offered to help me in any literary venture I might have in hand, and gladly under-

took to go through the proofs of this paper; and how carefully he has done it, it is needless for me to say.

Though it is now more than four years since this essay was written, I have not met with anything to alter the views expressed in it. A doubt, however, has arisen as to the priority of *Manikkavasagar* to *Sambandha*, and it has been daily gaining ground, particularly after I had the pleasure of hearing from Advocate C. Brito of Ceylon—another zealous and generous friend of Tamil letters. But I have not altered the incidental expression indicating their relative age in the essay for two reasons;—1st, it does not affect the general line of argument followed in it, and 2nd, the subject deserves an independent handling.

In conclusion, I beg to express my earnest hope that other Tamil scholars in the country, with better health and more leisure, will interest themselves in such inquiries concerning their own language and history, and push them on to wider and more positive conclusions than I have been here fortunate enough to reach. It is the hope of stimulating such continued activity in however small a degree on the part of a younger generation that constitutes my main justification for this republication.

MADHAVEYPURAM,
TRIVANDRUM,
24*th March* 1895.

P. SUNDARAM PILLAI.

SOME MILE-STONES

IN THE HISTORY OF

TAMIL LITERATURE

OR

AN INQUIRY ABOUT

THE AGE OF TIRU GNANA SAMBANDHA.

AMONG the Śaiva community of Southern India, no name is held in greater veneration than that of *Tiru Ñana Sambandha*. By *Śaiva* community, I mean the Hindus that regard *Śiva* as the head of the Hindu Trinity. Śaivas, in this sense, form the bulk of the population in the districts of Tinnevelly, Madura, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, South Arcot, Chingleput, Madras, North Arcot, Salem, and Coimbatore, and are also found in large numbers in certain parts of Ceylon, Malabar, and Travancore,—in short, wherever Tamil is the prevailing tongue. The Canarese people are also more or less exclusively Śaivas; but they adopt a bigoted form of the common faith, and are therefore known as *Vira Śaivâs* or *Linghaites*. Among the Brahmins too, there is a section specially called Śaivas, and the vast majority of the rest, though known as *Smârtâs*, venerate Śaiva traditions and ceremonials, and are Śaivas to all appearance.(1) For all the Śaivas, and

(1) For instance, the use of holy ashes, *rudrâksha* beads, &c.

particularly for the non-Brahminical Tamil Śaivas, *Tiru Ñana Sambandha* is the highest authority, and his works have all the sanctity of the Vedas.

In fact, the Tamil Śaivas have their own system of sacred literature, compiled and arranged, so as to match the Vedas, Purânas and Śastras in Sanskrit. The hymns of Sambandha, together with a few other songs, are in fact known as *Tamil Vêdas*. These hymns and songs were compiled and arranged into eleven groups, or *Tiru Murai*, by one *Nambi Ândar Nambi*, a Brahmin priest of *Tiru Nâraiyûr* in the Tanjore District, the sovereign who patronized this Tamil *Vyâsa* being *Râjarâja Abhaya Kulasekhara Chola*,(1) as will be seen further on. Of these eleven collections or *Tiru Murai*, the first three contain the hymns of Sambandha, and the next three, those of a *Vêlâla* saint, called *Appar* or *Tiru Nâvukkarasu*, an elder contemporary of Sambandha, and an earnest and pathetic writer, whose thorough renouncement of Buddhism(2) seems to have been the first of the irreparable reverses, that that religion experienced in Southern India. The seventh comprises the rather humorous hymns of *Sundarar*, a Brahmin devotee of a later generation.(3) These seven collections form the compilation called *Dêvaram*, also known as Adangal Murai, and are perhaps meant to match the hymns of the earlier portions of the Vedas, which they closely resemble in being but praises and prayers offered to the Deity. They are used also, much in the same way as the Vedic hymns, on ceremonial and religious occasions. The mere learning of

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(1) *Vide* stanza 2, *Tiru Murai Kanda Purâna*.

(2) Under this term *Buddhism*, I include all forms of *Anti-Vedic* heresy that prevailed in this age. Though they differed among themselves, all the schismatics, known variously as *Shapanâs*, *Buddhâs*, *Jains*, *Thêrar*, *Sâkyar*, *Arugar*, &c., were at one in rejecting the authority of the Vedas. Useful titbits of interesting information may be gathered from the *Dêvara Hymns* concerning all these sects of South Indian Buddhists.

(3) See stanza 16, *Tiru Murai Kanda Purânam*.

them by rote is held a virtue, and special provision is made in respectable Śaiva temples throughout the Tamil Districts, for their public recitation after the daily *pûjas*, by a class of *Vêḷâḷa* priests, called *Ôduvârs*. The earlier work[1] *Tiru Vâsakam* forms a part of the eighth *Tiru Muṟai* or collection. It is perhaps intended to take the place of the *Upanishads*, and there is decidedly no work in the Tamil language, more deserving of that distinction. There are, indeed, but few poems in any language that can surpass *Tiru Vâsakam* or 'the holy word' of Mânikkavâsagar, in profundity of thought, in earnestness of feeling, or in that simple childlike trust, in which the struggling human soul, with its burdens of intellectual and moral puzzles, finally finds shelter. The hymns of nine other minor authors, composed in apparent imitation of the *Dêvara* hymns, make up the ninth group called *Tiru Isaippa*. Among these nine authors was a Chola King named *Kaṇḍarâditya*,[2] and I am glad to find his name in Dr. Hultzsch's table[3] of Chola Kings, as the one, from whom *Râjarâja*, who ascended the Chola throne in 1004 A.D.[4] was the fifth in succession. The tenth collection contains the mystic songs of an old *Yôgi*, called *Tiru Mûlar*. The eleventh or the last evidently looks like a supplement, and was perhaps intended to provide room for all other sacred writings current at the time. It embraces a number of miscellaneous treatises, some ascribed to *Nakkîrar* of the old Madura College. The last ten pieces in this, the eleventh *Tiru Muṟai*, were written by *Nambi Ándar Nambi* himself; and of these ten pieces, the third

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(1) The priority of *Mânikkavâsagar* is generally accepted only on tradition, and on the genealogy of the Pandias given in the Madura *Stala Purâna*. Better evidence is found in the *Dêvaram* itself. *Vide* stanza 2, page 652 of Ramaswami Pillai's edition, where *Appar* directly alludes to a miracle ascribed to *Mânikkavâsagar*.

(2) *Vide* stanza 10 of his *Tiru Isaippa*.

(3) Page 112, Vol. I., *South Indian Inscriptions*.

(4) Page 169, Vol. I., *South Indian Inscriptions*.

or the *Tiru Toṇḍar Tiruvantâti* forms the basis of the Tamil Purâna, popularly called the *Periya Purâna;* and this completes the analogy we have drawn between *Nambi Ândar Nambi* and *Vyâsa*,—the compiler of the Aryan Vedas and the supposed author of all Purânas. These eleven collections, together with the Periya Purana, make up the sacred literature of the Śaivas, if we put aside the works of the *Santâna Âchâryas* called *Sidhânta Śâstras*,[1] 14 in number and professedly philosophical. These last correspond to *Vêdanta Sûtras* and their commentaries, which, though not held as revealed, form still an integral portion of the sacred Sanskrit writings.

From this short account, it must be clear what position *Tiru Ñana Sambandha* holds among the Tamils as a religious teacher. He is decidedly the greatest and most popular of the Tamil *Rishis*. There is scarcely a Śiva temple in the Tamil country where his image is not daily worshipped. In most of them, special annual feasts are held in his name, when the leading events of his life are dramatically represented for the instruction of the masses. All classes of poets, from his colleagues *Appar* and *Sundarar*, to the latest of Purâna writers; from the purest *Vêdântists* like *Tatuvarâyar*[2], to the most uncompromising Dualists like *Arul Nandi Sivâchâriyar;* from the iconoclastic *Kaṇṇudaiya Vaḷḷalâr*[3] to the *Vira Śaiva Śivaprakâsar*,

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(1) *Umâpathi* Śivâchârya was the last of the four *Santâna* Âchâryas, for whom the Śaiva Calendar provides an annual fast-day. They constitute, together with the devotees whose lives are described in the *Periya Purâna*, the canonized saints of the Śaivas.

(2) This excellent poet and subtle metaphysician deserves more attention than he now generally receives.

(3) The only work of this author now extant, called '*Oḷiviloḍukkam*,' is an endless mine of what Dr. Bain calls "intellectual similes." Compared with his merciless sarcasms on all kinds of idolatry, the words of *Sivavâkyar* and others, so frequently quoted, are the tamest of jejune platitudes. The author of the Tamil Plutarch does not mention this writer; he mistakenly ascribes his work to *Santalingar* of a totally different school.

unite in invoking his spiritual aid, at the commencement of their literary labours; and indeed any Tamil scholar ought to be able, at short notice, to compile a goodly volume of the encomiums paid to the memory of this religious teacher, by an appreciative posterity.

Even as a poet, Sambandha has more than ordinary claims to be remembered. His hymns, of which three hundred and eighty-four *Patigams*(1) or more than 19,000 lines are now extant, are models of pure and elevated diction, generally earnest and touching, but always melodious and well-turned. Most of them appear to have been uttered *impromptu*; and all of them, being lyrical, are set to music. The original tunes are now mostly forgotten. They were lost in the later airs introduced by the Aryan musicians of the north. Some of the old names(2) are however still retained; but it is difficult to believe that they denote, in the new system, the same old Dravidian melodies. The very instrument upon which these melodies were played, namely the *yâḷ*, is so completely forgotten that no small difficulty is felt in following the descriptions of it in such ancient classics as the *Ten Idyls* and *Silappatikâram*. The *vînai* now in use would appear to be of quite a different structure.(3) The melody of some of the hymns of Sambandha, therefore, may not be fully realised, since the tunes to which they were set are now lost. Taken all in all, Sambandha must be reckoned as a great genuine Tamil poet, certainly the greatest in the lyrical department. It is a pity that he composed nothing in any other line; with his masterly command over the language and his marked individuality, he might have left behind, more imposing monuments of his genius, in the epic

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(1) A *Patigam* is a collection of ten stanzas. *Sambandha* generally adds an eleventh, giving his own name, &c.

(2) Such as the tunes now called *Kuruncht*, *Kollt*, &c.

(3) *Tiruvâsagam* distinguishes the *vînai* from the old *yâḷ*. So also *Kalingattu Paraṇi* and other works of the middle ages.

or the dramatic line, if his vocation and circumstances had permitted him the requisite leisure.

But, evidently, his time was otherwise fully engaged. His life is narrated at great length in the *Periya Purâna*, but scarcely with such particulars as a modern historian would care to have. He was born of good Brahmin parents of the *Koundinnya Gôtra* at *Sri Kâḷi* or *Shiyali*, few miles to the south of Chidambaram. His father bore the name of *Sivapâdahrudaya*, and his mother was called *Bhagavati*. Evidently, they had no other children. At the age of three, Sambandha, who was then called *Piḷḷai* or *Âludaya Piḷḷai*, accompanied his father, one morning, to the bathing ghat of the local temple tank. Busy with his own ablutions, the father forgot the presence of his son; and the boy, left to himself, cried and wept, and called to his mother. The local goddess heard the cry; and appearing before the boy, gave him a cup of her own milk. The boy drank the holy draught, and forthwith became *Tiru Ñana Sambandha*, or the one related to (the godhead) through wisdom. In the meantime, the father having finished his ablutions, came up to his boy, and wished to know about the cup in his hand. The child broke out in verse, and pointing to the divine figure, still but vanishing through the sky, proclaimed the source of the gift. The hymn still exists, and is the very first of the compilation called *Dêvaram*, but it seems to give no support to the miracle narrated. Probably, Sambandha's was one of those cases of marvellous precocity now and then puzzling psychologists; and no doubt, he was a born poet who 'lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.' Anyhow, after declaring himself the elect, Sambandha could find no rest. Crowds of people came to have a look at the prodigy and to invite him to their villages. He responded to their calls, and commemorated his visit by composing a hymn of ten stanzas in praise of Śiva and the village visited.

It was, while he was thus travelling about, raising un-

bounded admiration among the people, and securing the staunch support of the leading men of his age,(1) that an invitation from *Mankaiarkkarasi*, the queen of *Kûn Pandia* of Madura, reached him at *Vêdârniam*. The Pandia had been converted to Jainism, but his queen and his minister, *Kulachiṟai*, retained their traditional faith; and wishing to reclaim their sovereign, they naturally looked to Sambandha, the marvel of the age. Nor was he slow to respond. Though the Purâna records no previous conflict with the Buddhists, it is clear from the uniform imprecations pronounced upon them in every one of his hymns—not even the first excepted—that he must have already encountered them frequently in the course of his incessant movements. It is, therefore, not unlikely that Sambandha was anxiously looking out for an opportunity for a decisive trial of strength. The invitation was accordingly accepted with alacrity, and the champion of the Śaiva faith appeared in Madura. It would be interesting to get a historical account of the meeting of the two opposing creeds of the time at the court of the Pandia. That there was such a meeting is beyond all dispute. Of this, the hymns connected with the proceedings at the meeting, bear ample, and so far as I can see, unquestionable evidence. But of the debate, we have no particulars; the story is replete only with miracles. Suffice it to say that the Buddhists were routed, and that Kûn Pandia was duly reconverted to the Saiva faith. This event is the most important historical fact connected with Sambandha's life. After re-establishing the traditional faith in Madura, he recommenced his travels. He appears to have been an indefatigable traveller, and to have visited almost every town and every village of any consequence then

(1) Six of these are expressly mentioned: *Tirunâvukkarasu* his fellow hymn-maker; *Chirutoṇḍar*, *Tirunîlanakkar*, *Murugar*, and *Tiru Nîlakaṇṭa Yâlpânar*, who accompanied Sambandha for the rest of his life, playing on his matchless *yaḻ* every hymn his youthful master produced.

in the Tamil Districts.(1) A marriage was at last proposed and settled with the daughter of a pious Brahmin called *Nambandar*,(2) but, at the end of the wedding, a miraculous fire appeared, in answer to the prayers of the bridegroom, and all present, including the married couple, says the Purâna, departed this life to Heaven.

Thus the life of Sambandha begins and ends with miracles.(3) But in spite of these supernatural elements, it is impossible not to see in him a powerful historical personality. If the downfall of Buddhism, at least in the Tamil Districts, can be ascribed to one individual more than to another, that individual is Ñana Sambandha. That he looked upon the final overthrow of the Jains and the Buddhists as the one object of his life will appear from every one of his numerous hymns, the tenth verse of which is uniformly devoted to their condemnation. Even after his glorious victory over them at Madura, the habit of cursing them is continued, showing that the schismatics, however vanquished, had still a hold on the land. An express mention of a subsequent debate at *Tiru Telichêri* is also met with. But from Kûn Pandia's conversion may be dated the downfall of Buddhism. Buddhism never regained its lost prestige, and by the time of Nambi Ândar Nambi, *i.e.*, the eleventh century, it was practically extinct in the Tamil country.

It is difficult, at this distance of time, to understand why so implacable a hatred was implanted against the Jains in the heart of our otherwise amiable author. The religion of Aruga must have deteriorated, no doubt, a good deal, after it got itself established under Aśoka in the

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(1) There exist hymns commemorating his visit to more than 200 places, mostly in the Tanjore District.

(2) The author of *the Tamil Plutarch* mistakes *Nambândar* for *Nambi Ândar Nambi*,—quite a different person.

(3) It is but just to add that some of these do find support in the Dêvara Hymns. There is clear evidence to prove that *Sambandha* believed in his own powers to work miracles.

north and equally powerful potentates in the south. Religious sects, like political parties, are generally good and promising, only till they attain to power. However corrupted the creed of Gautama had become, that fact alone could not have been the sole ground of Sambandha's intolerance, or the sufficing cause of its rather rapid downfall and disappearance. With the hopelessly impenetrable darkness that envelopes the history of this period, it is idle to open such questions. We should rejoice, if we could, with any tolerable certainty, determine what that period itself was.

It is scarcely possible to conceive greater confusion than what prevails with reference to the question of the age of Sambandha. Mr. Taylor places Kûn Pandia, and therefore Sambandha also, who converted him, about 1320 B.C.,(1) while Dr. Caldwell contends that he was reigning in 1292 A.D. Thus it would appear possible to assign Sambandha to 1300 B.C. or A.D. indifferently! This is certainly very curious: and I am not sure whether we can find the like of it in the whole range of history. Indeed, the truth is, South Indian Archæology is yet to begin its existence. We have not, in fact, as yet, a single important date in the ancient history of the Dravidians, ascertained and placed beyond the pale of controversy. It is no wonder, then, that, in the absence of such a sheet anchor, individual opinions drift, at pleasure, from the fourteenth century B.C., to the fourteenth century A.D.! I am not sure, whether even, the conditions under which South Indian Archæology has to proceed, have themselves been sufficiently attended to. Whatever else there exists or not of the ancient Dravidian civilization, there exist the Tamil language with its various dialects, including the classical dialect, now gone out of use, and the extensive literature written in that dialect. A critical study of this dialect and of this literature, would certainly, under ordinary circum-

(1) Nelson's *Madura Country*, Part III., Chapter II., page 55.

stances, be held as a pre-requisite for conducting South Indian antiquarian researches. But, unfortunately, for reasons that cannot be here explained, critical scholarship in Tamil has come to be regarded as not so essential to those researches.(1) Hence the absurdities that we sometimes meet with in the writings of those whose oracular utterances pass in certain quarters for axiomatic truths. For instance, Dr. Burnell, in an otherwise very masterly treatise on *South Indian Palæography*, goes out of his way to add the following foot note:—

"Buddhamitra, a Buddhist of the Chola country and apparently a native of Malakûta or Malaikûṟṟam, wrote in the eleventh century a Tamil Grammar in verse, with a Commentary by himself, which he dedicated to the then Chola king and called after him *Virasôḻiyam*. The Commentary cites a great number of Tamil works current in the eleventh century, and is therefore of much historical importance, for the approximate dates even of most Tamil works are hardly known. He cites: Amrita Sâgaram; Avinayanâr; Ârurkôvai; Eliviruttam; Kapilar; Kamban; Kaviviruttam; Kâkkaipâdiniyar; Kâtantras; Kândi; Kundalakêsi Viruttam; Kural; Sangai-authors; Sintâmani; Solarâjvarisai; Tandi; Tirussiṟṟumbalakkôvai; Tirumannivalaru; Tolkâpyam; Nambi; Nalavenba; Nariviruttam; Nâladiar; Niyayasudâmani; Nêminâdam; Perundevar's Bharatam; Manippiravâlam; Mayêsuranar; Virasôlanmêrkavi. This then represents the *old* Tamil literature prior to the eleventh century, and to it must be added the older *Śaiva* works. The above mentioned literature cannot be older than the eighth century, for in the seventh century Hiuen Thsang expressly states that the Tamil people were then indifferent to literature. That this litera-

(1) Dr. Hultzsch too seems to complain of this prevailing prejudice. "It is still a popular opinion," he writes in his preface to the first volume of *South Indian Inscriptions*, "that a colloquial knowledge of one of the vernaculars with a slight smattering of Sanskrit is sufficient for editing successfully the records of bygone times."

ture arose under North Indian influences and copied North Indian models can hardly be disputed; but it is time now to assert", so runs the emphatic edict, "that it is nothing more than an exact copy; if there be any originality, it is in some of the similes and turns of expression only."(1)

But it is time also to see that such assertions do not go uncontradicted. It was but the other day, I found this passage cited in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*,(2)—a work supposed to contain nothing but reliable matter. But the passage in question is a veritable nest of errors. In the first place, to say that Buddhamitra is a native of *Malakúta*, while there is his own authority for saying that he belonged to a place called *Ponparri*, argues either ignorance of the very opening verses of his grammar, or an inclination to substitute the unknown for the known! For to this day, nobody knows what *Malakúta* is. It is, in fact, Dr. Burnell's own conjecture for the Chinese *Mo-lo-kin-ch'a*; and its identification with the Tanjore District rests entirely upon an erroneous reading of his,—taking MANUKULA-*chúlamani chatur vêdi mangalam*, in an old Tanjore inscription for MALAKÚTA *chúlamani chatur vêdi mangalam*.(3) In the second place, to say that Buddhamitra wrote his grammar in the eleventh century, may be permitted as a venturesome conjecture; but, before we accept it as a bit of *terra firma* on which to build historical conclusions, we must demand better proof than what Dr. Burnell is able to offer. Here again, a mistaken identification is at the bottom of his argument. *Vira Chola* to whom the grammar is dedicated, is assumed to have been, the same as *Rajéndra Chola* who "reigned from 1064 to 1113," and whose coronation "took place in 1079."(4) But neither Tamil literature nor

(1) *Elements of South Indian Palæography*, page 127.

(2) Article Tamil by R. R. I find myself anticipated by this able writer in an investigation, I have been of late conducting, regarding the tense-formations of Tamil verbs.

(3) Page 240, Vol. XVIII., *The Indian Antiquary*.

(4) Page 40, *South Indian Palæography*.

the latest epigraphical researches, lend the least support to this identification. Nay, there can be now very little doubt that Dr. Burnell simply mistook for a genuine Chola king the Chalukya Prince *Vira Choda Vishnu Vardhana IX.*, who ascended the throne in 1079.(1) In the third place, it is hard to account for Dr. Burnell's supposition that the commentary was by Buddhamitra himself. The old grammarian was really more modest! The commentary was written by one *Perum Dêvanâr*, and not by that author himself.

It is harder still to explain how Dr. Burnell got the curious list of books he gives. Mr. Damodaram Pillai—the veteran editor of *Virasôliyam*—ought to be able to say, whether he found any such list in the many manuscript copies he examined in order to bring out his remarkably careful edition. But the list is its own best condemnation. It is full of enigmatic conundrums, sufficient to amaze and humble the proudest of Tamil Pandits! For, has he read *Eliviruttam* or *Nariviruttam?* He may know *Kundalakesi*, but does he know *Kundalakesi Viruttam? Kali Viruttam*, as a metre, he may be familiar with, but has he read *Kaviviruttam* as a book? *Kândigai*, as a mode of exposition, he may know, but what is *Kândi?* He may condemn *Manipravâlam*, as a mongrel sort of poetic diction, and may even be aware that it is referred to in the commentary in question, (for *here* we actually come upon something that has a basis in fact,) but has he had the rare fortune of meeting with it as the title of a Tamil work? But he must feel considerable relief when he comes to *Tirumanni-valaru*: for, he must know that that is but the initial phrase of a particular stanza in the book under reference, and cannot be *itself* the title of a treatise. But to be serious, it is a pure waste of time to examine the list. The errors in it are too many and too transparent to mislead any one with the least pretence to Tamil scholarship. In this fanci-

(1) Page 32, Vol. I., *South Indian Inscriptions.*

ful list, no doubt, some real names do occur; but even these show only what hazy ideas the author had of their bearing. For instance, "*Sangai-authors,*" if it has any meaning at all, must mean the poets of the Madura College. It might be too bad to suppose that Dr. Burnell could mistake the Augustan age of Tamil literature itself for a particular book; but how else are we to avoid the charge of cross division, which enumerates, as of co-ordinate importance, the class and some individuals of that class? Further, is there any justification for saying that even these real authors and works are cited in the commentary? The most patient study does not reveal a word of reference to most of them. On the other hand, there is evidence in the book itself to show that some of them did not exist to be cited. For instance, Buddhamitra alludes to the Sanskrit grammarian *Tandi* in a way that could leave but one impression—*viz.*, that the Tamil *Tandi* was yet to be born. With the exception of *Kural, Naladiyar,* and a few other works, the bulk of the illustrations are the commentator's own composition, as the new principles of this Sanskritizing Grammar could not find apt support in the old Tamil literature.

Turning now to the conclusion drawn, does it look probable that such an extensive literature, as must be assumed to have existed from the list given, started into existence in the course of but three centuries of those *backward* times? Even supposing there existed no works but those cited in the commentary, (which is really difficult to believe,) and omitting also the "*older Saiva*" works, which are allowed to have existed, though not cited by Buddhamitra, Dr. Burnell's list would give us ten important works for a century, that is, one standard work, worthy of being cited in a grammar, for every ten years; and yet, the Tamils were all but recently indifferent to letters! But the truth is, Dr. Burnell is simply indulging his fancy, and piling up conjecture upon conjecture, to construct his cloud-land. Hiuen Thsang says not a word about the Tamils.

He simply notes what somebody told him of the people of *Mo-lo-kin-chá*. But to the anxious ears of Dr. Burnell, *Mo-lo-kin-chá* sounds like *Malakúta*, and to his no less anxious eyes, the innocent word *Manukula* in the old Tanjore inscription, though written in characters "of two to three inches height," appears as *Malakuta*; and forthwith, he hurries to apply what is said of the people of *Mo-lo-kin-chá*, not merely to the village of *Manukula-chûlâ-mani-chatur-vêdi Mangalam*, nor even to the delta of the *Kâvêri* where that village is supposed to have been situated, but to the whole Tamil race itself! Untrustworthy as such sweeping assertions about whole nations generally are, the hearsay report of the Chinese pilgrim would appear to be extremely so, when taken along with another choice bit of news, his worthy but unnamed informant seems to have favoured him with. The capital of *Mo-lo-kin-chá*, Hiuen Thsang was told, was three thousand *li* from *Kânchi*; and General Cunningham, wishing to discover the place, finds himself quite at sea, having to go far out into the ocean beyond Cape Comorin to cover the distance given! Yet with Dr. Burnell, the hearsay evidence of Hiuen Thsang about the literary tastes of the people of that curious missing city and country, is sufficient evidence, to declare that the Tamil people had no literature till the eighth century A.D.! It cannot be untrue that *some* angels, in their flights, do extend their wings too far forwards to be good for their vision! With all my admiration, I can find no other explanation for the state of mind that could indulge in such gratuitous and unprofitable dogmatism. Possibly the indifference noted is also not to letters in general, but only to Buddhistic canons, in search of which the pious Chinese traveller came to India.(1) Lastly, as regards Dr. Burnell's emphatic assertion about Tamil literature being but an exact copy of Sanskrit works, it need not concern us much, seeing what proofs the author gives in the same

(1) This is the view adopted in my first article on "*The Ten Tamil Idyls.*"

paragraph of his scholarship in that literature. Even one that has studied no other Tamil classics than the popular *Kural*, may know, if pressed, what answer to give to this charge. I am sorry, only for the reputation of Dr. Burnell, that this unlucky note of his, as unlucky as uncalled for, has found its way into the stately columns of *the Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Be it far from me to disparage the labours of the few European scholars, to whose indefatigable endeavours alone is due whatever light there exists in this and similar branches of study. The blame, if anywhere, must rest with the native scholars themselves. If they fail to imbibe the historical spirit of modern times, and do not stir themselves to help forward the researches made regarding their own antiquities, they will have themselves to thank, if their favourite language and literature are condemned and thrown overboard, as is summarily done by Dr. Burnell.

Returning to our subject, I am aware of only two serious attempts to determine the age of Kûn Pandia, or which is the same thing, the age of Sambandha. The first is that of Dr. Caldwell[1] in his *Comparative Dravidian Grammar, Introduction, pages* 137—143, and *Appendix III., pages* 535—540, and the second is that of Mr. Nelson in his *District Manual* called the '*Madura Country*,' *Part III., Chapter II., pages* 54—70. Neither of these two attempts appears to me successful or satisfactory. It will take too much time to review their arguments in detail, but I shall briefly note what strikes me as the leading features of these theories.

Dr. Caldwell's hypothesis as to the age of Sambandha is based entirely upon two assumptions—first, that Kûn Pandya's name was Sundara Pandya, and second, that

(1) It was after the completion of this paper, that the sad news of the death of this venerable Tamil scholar, reached the writer. The loss to the Tamil language and literature is really great, and it may be long before that language finds so devoted a student and so patient an enquirer as The Right Rev. Bishop Caldwell.

Sundara Pandya is identical with the Sender Bendi of Marco Polo, that reigned in 1292. As Mr. Nelson also proceeds upon the first of these two suppositions, it is necessary to observe once for all that Sundara Pandya is hardly a proper name. The deity at Madura is called Sundara, and Sundara Pandya by itself is no more the name of any particular Pandya, than is *Sri Pudmanabha Dasa*, the individual appellation of any sovereign of Travancore. Hence we find the term Sundara associated with the name of so many kings of Madura. That it never stood by itself as the distinctive name of any individual Pandya, it may be hazardous to assert, but that it was too common a designation to yield us any historical clue, requires no proof. Still for the satisfaction of European scholars, I shall quote just one or two authorities. Dr. Hultzsch says with reference to the phrase 'Crown of Sundara,' "The name Sundara occurs in the traditional lists of Pandya kings. In the present inscription the term 'Crown of Sundara' seems to be used in the sense of "the Crown of the Pandya King."(1) So Sundara means nothing but Pandya. Be it also noted that this expression, 'Sundara's crown', occurs in an inscription of Rajendra Chola, who according to Dr. Hultzsch, ascended the throne about 1018 A.D., that is, 274 years before Polo landed at Kâyal.

It is possible also to trace the source of this common error that confounds Kûn Pandya with Sundara Pandya. When Kûn Pandya was converted by Sambandha, the Saivas in their exultation called him Ninra Sîr Nedu Mâran,—the tall or prosperous Pandya of established beauty or grace;—probably meaning thereby nothing more than a compliment, like the title 'Defender of the Faith,' conferred by the Pope on Henry VIII. I am not sure, whether the name Kûn Pandya itself was not an after designation, to be understood metaphorically and theologically, rather than, literally and physically. Anyhow, the Kûn Pandya

(1) *South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. I., page* 96.

of Sambandha still continues to be worshipped as a canonized saint, only under the name of Ninṟa Sîr Nedu Mâṟanâyanâr. When, however, the time came for the Sanskrit *Stala Purâna* to be written, the pandits, who must needs translate even proper names, rendered Kûn Pandya into Kubja Pandya and Ninṟa Sîr Nedu Maṟan into Sundara Pandya, exactly as they translated his queen's name Mankkaiarkkarasi into Vanitêswari, and his minister's name Kulachirai into Kulabandhana. The Purâna itself makes it clear that Sundara Pandya was simply a title assumed after the conversion (1); and the Tamilians know of no other title then assumed, but the name of Ninṟa Sîr Nedu Mâṟan. Be the explanation what it may, to build any theory upon the name Sundara Pandya, is simply to build upon quicksand. I shall add but one more testimony to this simple fact. The Rev. E. Leventhal in a fine paper on 'The Coins of Tinnevelly' says, "The name Sundara Pandya is found on such a multitude of coins, both in Tinnevelly and Madura Districts, that it sometimes is difficult to believe, that all those coins should have been struck by one king. Could it not be that some of his successors had used that name as a title on their coins, the meaning of the name being only 'beautiful.'"(2) Of course, such perplexities are unavoidable, when one proceeds upon a wrong hypothesis. For, it should be added, Mr. Leventhal goes upon Dr. Caldwell's theory that there was a particular Pandya, called Sundara Pandya, who reigned in 1292. Error in these regions of pure speculation is always infectious.

Now with regard to Marco Polo's Sender Bendi, Polo distinctly says, he ruled over Soli, 'the best and noblest province of India.' Madura does not answer this description, nor can we conceive how it can possibly be corrupted

(1) Stanza 68, Chapter 69, *Tiru Vilaiyadal Purâna*, and Stanzas 4 and 5, page 748, Tinnevelly *Stala Purâna*.

(2) *The Coins of Tinnevelly*, page 19.

even in the language of these flying foreign visitors, into 'Soli.' Colonel Yule may be right in identifying Soli with Tanjore, the then capital of the Chola country: but it looks more probable that it was the name of some province about the sea-coast yet to be identified. At any rate, it cannot be Madura. That in some undated (1) inscriptions in the possession of Dr. Caldwell, the expression 'Sundara Chola Pandi' occurs, will be scarcely accepted as an argument for confounding Soli with Madura, unless we have a foregone conclusion to maintain. More reasonable appears to be the conclusion arrived at by Colonel Yule, that Marco Polo's Sender Bendi was no sovereign of Madura, but some adventurer "who had got possession of the coast country and perhaps paid some nominal homage to Madura."(2) It is unnecessary for our purpose to follow Dr. Caldwell through the maze of dreamy tales he cites from two Mahomedan historians, to show that there was a king in Madura about 1292 called 'Sundara Bandi.' The earlier of the two, Rashiduddin, says that a Sundar Bandi ruled over Malabar, extending from Kûlam to Silawar, (which Dr. Caldwell interprets as Nellore!) with a Mahomedan minister, named Shaik Jumaluddin, and that he died in 1293, leaving his throne and seven hundred bullock loads of jewels to his lucky minister! Wassaf, the second historian, agrees as to Sundar Bandi's death in 1293, but amplifies the *seven hundred* bullock loads into *seven thousand*, and gives the treasure to a brother of Sundar Bandi, instead of to his Mahomedan minister. But not so harmless is his other exaggeration about the extent of Malabar, which is *here* described as stretching from the Persian sea to Silawar (or Nellore),—which, indeed, would be a noble province to rule over, but neither Malabar,

(1) I have now with me some inscriptions with this name which I should have published a year or two ago, but for want of time and health to make out their full bearing—*vide* my 'Early Sovereigns of Travancore,' page 58.

(2) Colonel Yule quoted by Dr. Caldwell; see Appendix III., page 537.

Madura nor Soli! Still more remarkable is another statement of this historical authority depended upon by Dr. Caldwell. The Sundar Bandi who dies in 1293 re-appears in 1310, and flees from Madura to Delhi for protection against a rebellious brother of his! But it is needless for our purpose to go into the evidence of these so-called historians, cited by Dr. Caldwell to support his view. Let us suppose that the reconciliations he proposes, between these and other queer statements of theirs, are satisfactory, and also that the identification of Marco Polo's Sender Bendi of Soli with their Sundar Bandi of Malabar, is as sound as the learned Doctor could wish; still are we any way nearer our conclusion? A distinctly different identification would yet remain to be made. Is the Kûn Pandya of Sambandha the same as the Sundar Bandi of the two Mahomedan historians? There is not the least shadow of evidence in favour of the supposition, while every historical fact known is decidedly against it. We need mention here but two. (1) The minister of Kûn Pandya was not the Mahomedan, Shaik Jumaluddin, but Kulachirai Nâyanar—one of the sixty-three canonized Saiva Saints(1). (2) The dominions of Kûn Pandya, instead of extending from Kûlam or the Persian Gulf to Nellore, did not go beyond Trichinopoly, where the three Tamil Kingdoms met in the days of Sambandha.(2) The Chola Kingdom itself did not embrace Cuddalore which was then a Pallava province.(3)

Now turning to Mr. Nelson—surely his procedure is more judicious. He has no decided theory to uphold, but arguing from certain premises, he concludes that "it is

(1) We have Sambandha's own evidence for this fact. For instance, he says "[illegible]," page 828.—Ramaswamy Pillay's Edition.

(2) Sambandha's *Mukkîchara Padigam*, page 344.

(3) See *Tiru Nâvukkarasar Purâna*, stanza 84. Tiruppâtirippuliyûr, now called old Cuddalore, was the capital of a Pallava province and the seat of a Buddhist University; hence its name, which is simply a Tamil rendering of Pataliputra.

very *possible* that Kûn Pandya reigned in the latter half of the eleventh century." The premises assumed are, (1) that certain conquests and feats, claimed for one Sundara Pandya in an undated inscription, are true and applicable to Kûn Pandya; and (2) that Mankairkkarasi, the queen of Kûn Pandya, was the daughter of Karikâla Chola, who persecuted Ramanuja. Now both these premises appear to me more than questionable: and I shall consider them separately.

The undated inscription appears suspicious on the face of it, and for the following considerations:—

(1). It is not as usual a single document but a composite one, containing an original grant, attributed to one Sundara Pandya, and two successive confirmations,—the first by a certain Rama Nara Bhûshana 'the Emperor of the three worlds', and the second, by some one else whose name and rank Mr. Nelson does not give.

(2). All these three documents are dated the eighth year of the reign of the respective executants;—surely a strange coincidence, if real.

(3). The last witness of the original grant appears also as the last witness of the first confirmation!

(4). The second witness of the original grant bears the title of Sri Vallavan Sundarattôl, which last word surely seems to be a corruption of Sundarattôlan,—a name *coined and given to Siva*, because of the familiarity with which Sundara Nayanar treated that deity. Here it occurs as the name of an attesting witness to a grant, which, if true, must have been issued before Sundara Nayanar himself was born! We may pass over the fact that the first witness to the first confirmation also bears the name of Sundarattôlan, as the date of *that* confirmation is not in issue.

(5). The original grant begins with the present tense but unconsciously lapses into the past; as for instance, when it makes the grantor speak of himself as one 'who *swayed* the sceptre everywhere avoiding sins in such wise

that the whole world *lived* in happiness under his one umbrella', &c.

(6). A composite document like the one under consideration can be, at its best, only an evidence of the *opinion* of the *last executant*, as to whom the original grant itself might be ascribed.

(7). That such inscriptions do exist, Mr. Nelson himself furnishes the best proof. He quotes another inscription at the end of the chapter, dated Saka 1495, purporting to be a confirmation of Kûn Pandya's grant of certain lands to the mosque of the 'Delhi Orukol Sultan'; but rightly considers it no evidence of the grant itself, (which would bring down the date of the great Saiva Constantine to a period later than 1324), but only an indication of the opinion of the executant, who in this case was one Vîrappa Nâyakar Aiyan Avargal.

(8). The only circumstance in Mr. Nelson's inscription, which entitles it to any consideration, is the alleged occurrence in it of the name of Mankairkkarasi, the patroness of Sambandha. Otherwise, the Sundara Pandya to whom the grant is attributed might be passed over, as only of as much historical significance, as the two Sundara Pandyas,(1) who appear as the third and eleventh witnesses in the third confirmation of the grant. But, as a matter of fact, the name of Mankairkkarasi *does not* occur in the document. Epigraphists now reckon it a mere misreading of Mr. Nelson for Avani Muḷutudaiyâl or Bhuvana Muḷutudaiyâl—a totally different person whose historical position is yet to be ascertained. This removes the only ground for any plausible identification of Sundara Pandya with the Kûn Pandya we are in search of, even allowing the genuineness of the grant in question.

(9). The only other historical allusion in the document

(1) Here is another bit of evidence, if further evidence be necessary, to show that the name Sundara Pandya can by itself give no historical indication. I know of some coppersmiths and common workmen in Travancore who are called Sundara Pandyas.

is the burning of Tanjore and Uraiyûr. Much is made of this by Mr. Nelson. But it is altogether fatal to his theory. Kûn Pandya *could not* have burned Tanjore, for the simple reason that Tanjore did not then exist. Neither Sambandha nor Appar nor Sundarar found such a place in their systematic incessant peregrinations. They do not even seem to have heard of such a place, which would be certainly inexplicable, seeing that all of them and particularly the third, spent so much of their time in what is now called the Tanjore District, where scarcely a village[1] was left uncommemorated in their endless hymns. Sundarar, indeed, mentions a Tanjore, as the birthplace of a particular saint, but it is not our Tanjore at all, but a village now called Poṭṭai Tanjâvûr, a hamlet near Negapatam. By the time of Karuvûr Dêvar, one of the nine authors of Tiru Isaippa, Tanjore makes its appearance with its temple of Râjarâjêswaram,[2] and in that supplement to the Dêvaram, a hymn is found for the first time for Tanjore. Nambi Ândar Nambi thus finds it necessary to qualify the original Tanjore of Sundara with a distinguishing epithet 'Maruga Nâṭṭu Tanjai'.[3] Though negative in itself, this is as clear an evidence as it is possible to obtain, about the origin of a town, from literary records.

For these reasons, I do not hesitate to pronounce Mr. Nelson's inscription as of no value, so far as it relates to Kûn Pandya. It can only show that in the opinion of the unnamed third confirmer, the original grant of the lands in Sundar Pandya Pura, to the temple of Sundarêswaram Udaiyar might be ascribed to one Sundara Pandya,—which, because of the identity of the names, might, indeed, appear natural to any one who has no other means of

(1) Over five hundred and twenty-five such villages are mentioned in the Dêvara Hymns, nearly half of which are in the Tanjore District.

(2) Probably built by Rajaraja Chola who reigned in 1004 [now proved to be such. *Vide* Vol. II., South Indian Inscription.]

(3) *Vide* Stanza 66, Tiruvantâti. Sêkkilar does the same. See Stanza 1, *Cheṛuṭunainâyanâr Purâna.*

information but what might be evolved from his own consciousness!

Now for Mankaiṙkkarasi being the daughter of Karikâla, which is Mr. Nelson's second assumption, it rests entirely upon a statement of Dr. Wilson, that she is called so in an account of the Gôpura of the Buddha temple 'Pudcovaily,'—a place I am not able to identify with any known Tamil town. We cannot estimate the historical value of this account unless more particulars are given. But so far as the question in hand is concerned, the account, whatever it may turn out to be, cannot prove of much consequence. There is but one Karikâla known to Tamil literature,—the hero of so many immortal poems of classical antiquity. There may have been several others of a later generation who passed under that honoured name: but there was apparently none about the time of Sambandha, who would have surely commemorated the father of his royal patroness, if he had had any independent importance. In one of the Dêvara hymns,(1) the word Karikâla actually occurs, but it means there the god of death and not a Chola Prince. But even supposing that Karikâla was the name of the father of Mankaiṙkkarasi, we should show that *that* Karikâla was the real persecutor of Râmânuja, before we can draw any inference with reference to the question in hand.

I find in Dr. Caldwell's arguments too, a reference to Râmânuja,(2) and I am afraid, it indicates too serious a distortion in the view taken of the religious history of Southern India, to be passed over in silence. We cannot here go into the question in detail, and must be content with pointing out certain well-marked stages in the religious development of the Tamil nation. There was a period, lost altogether in hoary antiquity, when the native Dravidian religion, with its peculiar forms of sacrifices, pro-

(1) See page 983, Ramaswamy Pillay's edition.

(2) See Comparative Dravidian Grammar, Introduction, page 140.

phecies and ecstatic dances, dimly visible still in Veriyâṭṭu, Vêlan Aḍal, and other ceremonies of mountain races, was alone in vogue. The first foreign influence brought to bear upon the primitive form of worship was that of the Vêdic religion, which, with its usual spirit of toleration and compromise, adopted and modified the practices it then found current in the country. For a long time the influence was anything but strong: but it accumulated as time elapsed, and some traces of this foreign influence may be observed in such fragments of the Pre-Tolkâpyam works, as now and then turn up in old commentaries. By the time this famous Grammar came to be written, the Dravidians would appear to have adopted a few of the social institutions, myths, and ceremonies of the Aryan settlers. But it was even then only an *adaptation*, and no *copy*. The most ancient of the works of the Maḍura College were composed during this period. Next came the Buddhist movement; and after a long period of mutual toleration and respect, during which was produced the bulk of the extant Tamil Classics, the creed of Gautama supplanted the older compound of Dravidian and Vêdic worship. After attaining to power, the mild doctrines of Buddha seem to have undergone rapid degeneration and to have otherwise offended the followers of the original cult. Then followed the revival of Hinduism. In the course of its long contact with Buddhism, the old Dravidio-Aryan religion was considerably modified in principles and practice; and the Hinduism that was now revived was altogether therefore a higher and more complex chemical compound. The first who raised their voices against Buddha were those who worshipped Śiva, a name that the Tamils had learnt to use for the Deity, ever since they came under the Aryan influence, if not earlier, as contended by Dr. Oppert. The question was then, not between Śiva and Vishnu, for no such antagonism was then conceivable, but, between the Vêdic ceremonies and the teachings of Buddha. The struggle must have continued for a long while, but the

time was ripe when Sambandha appeared. Already had Appar—a learned and earnest Buddhist monk in the most famous of the southern cloisters[1]—renounced publicly his faith in Gautama; and in a generation or two appeared Sundara. They had to fight very hard, but they succeeded nevertheless in turning back the tide of Buddhism; and though the schismatics lingered long in the land, they never regained their lost position. Thus was inaugurated the period of piety and miracles, which, no doubt, impeded for a while the cause of sound learning and culture. It was during this period that the country came to be studded all over with those temples, which to this day form the characteristic feature of the Tamil provinces. As this process was going on, there appeared the Âlvars, to add to the general excitement and to accelerate the decline of Buddhism. Though they represented the community that loved to feature the Deity in the form of Vishnu, I do not think they ever set themselves in direct opposition to the Saivas as their later adherents do.[2] The common enemy, the enemy of the Vêdas, was still in the field. It was while these sects of Hindus were thus re-establishing themselves in practice, that the Âcharyâs or the theological doctors rose to supply the theory. Even to the earliest of them Sankarâchariar, was left only the work of formally and theoretically completing the religious revolution that was already fast becoming, in practice, an accomplished fact, at least in Southern India.[3] He is usually said to have established, by his Bhâshayams or philosophic interpretations of Vêdic texts, the six orthodox systems of worship, Saiva

(1) I mean Tiruppâtirîpuliyûr, named after Pataliputra.

(2) The fable of Tiru Mankai Âlvar's quarrel with Sambandha, whose trident he is said to have snatched, reflects only the modern feelings of the sect. Even as a story it fails; Sambandha [illegible] pair of cymbals, and never a trident.

(3) Even in Northern India, the [illegible] work of confuting and overthrowing the Buddhists fell to the lot of Bhatta Kumâra,—the redoubtable champion of Vedic Karma—and [illegible]kara, rather than to Sankara, who followed them after several generations.

and Vaishnava forms inclusive. The assertion ought to be carefully interpreted, for there can be no greater mistake than to suppose that he invented, or originated, these six systems. Forms of religion are founded, not by philosophers and theologians, with their interpretations and argumentations, but by heroic men of faith—faith in God and faith in themselves, to such an extent that they can induce not only others but themselves, too, to believe in the miracles they perform. The former come later on, to justify and sanction what already exists, with their elaborate exegetics, written solely for the learned and thoughtful—not to say the sceptical. Sankarachariar himself is personally a S'aiva, but he suppresses his individual inclinations, and takes his stand upon the common ground of the Vêdas, and so supports all sects accepting the authority of those hoary compilations, in order to show a united front against the common foe. It is expressly to meet the heresy of Nirvana that he formulates the Advaita or non-dualistic theory. But the common enemy soon disappears, or at least sinks into unimportance; and later Âcharyâs, not feeling that external pressure, find the Non-Dualism of Sankara a little too high pitched, if not dangerous also, to the current pietist forms of worship. Accordingly Ramanuja slightly modifies the original Non-Dualism, and distinctly puts a Vaishnava interpretation on the Vêdic texts. But he still retains the Non-Dualism of Sankara to some extent. His system is not Dualism but *Vis'hishtâdvaitham*, meaning qualified Non-Dualism. When we come, however, to the days of Mâdhvâcharya, the Buddhistic theory is so far forgotten, that all forms of that original Non-Dualism, with which alone Sankarachariar was able to confront the heretical Nihilism, are completely rejected in favour of pronounced Dualism, which perhaps was always the theory implied in the S'aiva and Vaishnava practices. And what is more, this last of the Âcharyâs adopts some of the very principles for the sake of which Buddha revolted against the Vêdas—as for

instance, substituting animal images made of flour, for the veritable and living ones required for Vêdic sacrifices. But except in the matter of such minor details, the dogmas of none of these Acharyâs affected the forms of public worship. The temples and the processions remained, exactly as they were, in the days of the fiery votaries of old—the S'aiva Nâyanmars and the Vaishnava Âḻvars; only, as time rolled on, these latter crept, one by one, into the sanctuaries they themselves worshipped, and secured those divine honours that are now their undisputed rights. With the last of the Âcharyâs[1] we reach fairly into the Mahomedan times: and the arrest that all native activities in religion, literature and other walks of intellectual life then experienced is a matter of history, and not of speculation.

From this short account, it should be clear in what period we ought to look for Sambandha. The confused talk about Ramanujâcharyar and Kûn Pandya, which we find in both Mr. Nelson and Dr. Caldwell, betrays such an absence of the sense of historical perspective, as cannot but produce the most amusing and most grotesque results. For instance, it is now pretty well established that the independence of the Tamil countries was completely lost by the early years of the fourteenth century. It was about the year 1324 A.D., that the notorious and cruel hearted chieftain, Malleck Naib Cafoor of Ferishta, popularly known in Tamil as the Âdi Sultân Maleck Nêmi, took possession of Madura, razed to the ground the outer walls of the town with their fourteen towers, and demolished the temple and despoiled it of its valuables, leaving behind nothing but the shrines of Sundarêswara and Mînâkshi. The Moslem clouds must have been hanging over the Tamil kingdoms a good many years before they at last broke and overwhelmed the southernmost of them.

(1) There can be no dispute as to the age of Madhavâchariar. He died in Saka 1120 Pingala year, or 1198 A.D. Sattiavira Tirtar, who died 1879, was the thirty-fifth in succession.

Whether or no the Mahomedans actually subverted the Pandya kingdom about 1100, as Mr. Nelson[1] is inclined to think, the Pandya kingdom could have enjoyed little peace during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Yet it is at the very end of the thirteenth century, that Dr. Caldwell would place Sambandha and therefore the beginning of that grand struggle between the Buddhists and the Saivas that finally led to the disappearance of the former. That Kûn Pandya, the most powerful monarch of his age, was a Buddhist is as certain as that he really existed. That Buddhism was the prevailling religion, though on the point of decline, is evident from every hymn of Sambandha and of his elder contemporary, Appar, who incessantly complains of the persecutions he experienced, at the hands of the heretics, in his native district of Cuddalore. Such was the posture of affairs in the reign of Kûn Pandya: and yet Dr. Caldwell would have us believe that Kûn Pandya ruled in 1292, because Marco Polo happens to talk of a 'Sender Bendi of Soli', in that year of grace! And the consequence is, we have also to believe that by some miracle or other, the whole scene had completely changed by 1324, when Maleck captured Madura: in other words, that within the short space of thirty-two years, the Buddhistic religion with its wide-spreading organisations, half a dozen holy orders and thousands of monks in each, all disappeared as if by magic, and that the ready-made Saiva religion stepped into its place with its richly endowed temples, with golden images and outer walls having fourteeen towers! If such a theory does not violate all the analogies of history, I wonder what can! To add to the miracle, it was during the subsequent centuries of foreign oppression, of Mahomedan Generals and of Nayak and Telugu viceroys, that the bulk of our existing literature arose!

Unless, therefore, no better hypothesis can be found,—

(1) Madura country, Part III., Chapter III., page 76.

better founded on facts, more natural and consistent in its consequences, and better confirmed by collateral evidence, —we cannot but decline, with all our deference to the esteemed authors concerned, to accept either of their theories, as answering to truth.

The truth is, such theories are the fruits of pure despair, —are advanced, as the drowning man clutches the straw. Literary Tamil is a difficult dialect to master, and the literature in it, too extensive and complicated to be compassed, without years of patient study and prolonged attention. The conviction too is abroad that these literary records are utterly devoid of historical implications. "We have not," says Dr. Caldwell, "a single reliable date to guide us, and in the midst of conjecture, a few centuries more or less seem to go for nothing. Tamil writers, like Hindu writers in general, hide their individuality in the shade of their writings. Even the names of most of them are unknown. They seem to have regarded individual celebrity like individual existence, as worthless, and absorption into the universal spirit of the classical literature of their country, as the highest good to which their compositions could aspire. Their readers followed in their course, age after age. If a book was good, people admired it; but whether it was written by a man, or by a divinity, or whether it wrote itself, as the Vedas were commonly supposed to have done, they neither knew nor cared. Still less did they care, of course, if the books were bad. The historical spirit, the antiquarian spirit, to a great degree even the critical spirit, are developments of modern times. If therefore, I attempt to throw some light on the age of the principal Tamil works, I hope, it may be borne in mind that, in my opinion, almost the only thing that is perfectly certain in relation to those works, is that they exist."(1) Under such circumstances, it is no wonder, that for historical purposes, the literary works are treated as if they

(1) Page 128, *Introduction, Comparative Dravidian Grammar.*

were as good as non-existent. If the authors systematically hide even their own individualities, what light are they likely to throw on the history of their times? That the vast majority of *modern* Tamil writers,—the stereotyped *Purânam* makers and the authors of cut and dry *Kalambakams* and *Antâtis*—are guilty of this curious kind of literary suicide, can never be gainsaid. But I would beg to submit at the same time, in extenuation of their crime, that writers of this class can never possess any individuality either to be preserved or submerged. They are poets only in name,—with a ready made *Book of Similes*(1) and other equipments to suit; they dispense with nature and her promptings, as they wriggle themselves up, from rhyme to rhyme, and alliteration to alliteration. But putting aside these products of stagnation and ascending to the fountains of Tamil literature, we meet with well marked individualities both in the authors and in the characters they create, and can observe no great inclination on their part to obliterate their personalities. On the other hand, their individuality may be found sometimes even obtruded upon us. For instance, every hymn of Sambandha uniformly closes with a benedictory verse, where his own name, his native place, and other particulars are given. Only, in keeping with the general Indian failing as to chronology, the old poets, as well as the new, give us no dates. They nevertheless specify the names of their patrons, sovereigns, friends, and so forth, as occasion offers itself, and otherwise furnish us with much historical information, which is waiting only to be gathered up and collated, to yield the most reliable data, for reconstructing extinct societies and social conditions.(2) I cannot, therefore, make up my mind to believe that the old and true

(1) This is a curious book attributed to Pugalênthi. There are hosts of other treatises telling us with what letters, words, &c., we should begin a verse and what dreadful consequences will follow otherwise, and so forth.

(2) It is upon this conviction that the *Ten Tamil Idyls* have been taken up elsewhere for analysis.

Tamil literature is as barren of historical import as is generally assumed.

To see what light the works of Sambandha and his colleagues throw upon the historical conditions of their age is too large a topic to be taken up in this connection. But confining ourselves to the prior question of the age of Sambandha, the question we have already propounded for our consideration, we may examine the literary works connected with the subject, to see whether they cannot furnish us more reliable indications than Marco Polo's 'Sender Bendi of Soli'! The sacred S'aiva works may not, perhaps, enable us to discover when Sambandha did actually live; but they are certain to show *at least* when he *could not have lived;* and considering the confusion that reigns in connection with the subject, even so much of light cannot but be welcome.

I shall now try to trace the influence of Sambandha, from the middle ages backwards to the earlier times, confining myself to such leading facts as might be inferred from the sacred S'aiva works themselves.

Let us begin with the last of the canonized S'aiva Saints, Umâpati Sivâchârya. Umâpati Sivâchârya is the fourth of the *Santâna* Achâryas, and is the author of eight of the fourteen *Siddhânta Sastras,* besides six minor works devoted to sacred history and geography. Of these latter, one is on the life of *Sêkkiḻâr,* the author of the *Tiru Toṇḍar* or *Periya Purâna,* another on that Purâna itself, while a third gives an account of the eleven sacred S'aiva Books, as compiled by Nambi Âṇḍâr Nambi. From all these three, I have borrowed valuable facts in the earlier parts of this inquiry. Evidently the author had a historical and critical spirit, and all his philosophical disquisitions bear ample testimony(1) to this. But the fact I would here

(1) No difficult philosophical doctrine of his need be quoted to illustrate the liberal critical spirit of this writer. It is enough to point to his preface to *Sivaprakâsam.* He there wisely remarks:—

"தொன்மையவா மெனு மெவையு நன்றுகா வின்று-தோன்றிய

mention in evidence thereof is one that is directly connected with the question in hand—a fact for which Dravidian Archæology can never be sufficiently grateful. In his preface to *Saṅkalpa Nirâkaraṇam*—a subtle and able metaphysical dissertation—he tells us the object for which the lecture was written out, the audience to which it was addressed, and the date on which it was delivered. This date was the 6th day of Âni festival in the Chidambaram temple(1), in the Saka year 1235. Here then is a date which may prove a veritable loadstar to guide us through the conjectural cloudland of current chronology. It is not a date prefixed by some unknown hand, as in Kamban's *Râmâyâna* or in *Skanda Purâna*, and therefore open to question. It occurs on the other hand, just in the middle (lines 26-29(2)) of a long sentence, extending over 54 lines of *Agaval* metre, in which the author speaks in the first person, and introduces his treatise, which immediately follows without any further ceremony or word of explanation.

தூலெனு மெவையுந் தாகா தணிந்து ; நன்மையினர் நலங்கொண் மணி பொதியுமதன் னனங்கம், நவையாகா வென வண்மை நயந்திடு வர் நடுவரந் ; தன்மையினர் பழமை யழகாராய்ந்து தரிப்பர்-தவறு நலம் பொருளின்கட் சாரானாய்ந்தறித லின்மையினர் பலர் புகழிலேத் தவரேதிலருற்-றிகழ்ந்தன ரேலிகழ்ந் திடுவர் தமக்கென வொன்றி லரே."

(1) *Umâpati Sivâchârya* was one of the 3,000 Brahmin priests attached to this temple.

(2) The lines run thus :—"……ஏழுஞ்ரு தூற்றெடுத்த வாயிரம் ; வாழுநற்சன மருவாநிற்பப் ; பொற்பொதுமலித்த வற்புதனனி ; யாழும்விழவிற் பொற்றோலயத்து"

Mr. Damodaram Pillay, says in his perface to *Virasôliyam* that our author composed his *Koyil Purâna*, about Saka 1200; but he does not state his authority.

The Tamil Plutarch begins its account of *Umâpati Sivâchârya* dogmatically thus :—"This celebrated poet and philosopher flourished in the 17th century"; but ends with nescience and doubt. "The time of his existence is not known ; but we find his name mentioned in the Introduction to *Sidambara Purâna*, which dates A.D. 1513." It is hard to conceive how the author can make the two ends meet of this, his small paragraph of twenty-three lines!

If *Saṅkalpa Nirâkaraṇam* was written in Saka 1235 or A.D. 1313 Umâpati Sivâchârya must have composed his account of the *Periya Purâna* much about the same time. Can we seriously then seek for Sambandha in 1292? The Purâna that narrates his miracles was old enough about 1313, to need an account of its origin to be written.

That Purâna itself must have been in 1313 *at least* a century old. For, Umâpati Sivâchârya does not write as if he were a Boswell writing the life of a Johnson. No one can read his account of the way in which the *Periya Purâna* came to be written without being convinced that there was a respectable interval of time between that *Purâna* and his account of it.(1) To Umâpati, the author of the *Purâna* was already a canonized saint, worthy of worship along with those commemorated in the *Purâna* itself. The work had become by his time so sacred that the first line of it is ascribed to the direct inspiration of the God at Chidambaram, who is further made to announce the completion of the holy treatise to King *Anapâya* by *Asarîri* or 'word divine.' No doubt, myt do grow rapidly in the tropical East; but can we seriously think of ascribing those under notice to the imagination of Umâpati himself, the leading characteristic of whose intellect was, as far as we can judge of it from his writings, a spirit of matter-of-fact, almost prosaic, Realism. The myths must have been current, not only in his own age, but for some generations preceding, to have grown to some extent venerable. We are led to the same conclusion by another well known fact, viz.: that *three Santâna Acharyas* followed Sekkilar, the author of the *Purâna*, before Umâpati, the fourth in the list, appeared. I say therefore *at the very least*, a century must have elapsed between the composition of the *Periya Purâna* and the account of it, written as we have just seen, in 1313. In all probability, the interval was longer. The work is un-

(1) *Vide* particularly stanzas 9 and 10.

questionably the oldest of the existing Tamil Purânas. Frequent references to incidents narrated in it will be found in almost every other Purâna, including the *Skânta* itself(1). It was composed, we are told,(2) with the express object of superseding the Buddhistic Epic *Chintâmani*, which was evidently the only narrative poem of any magnitude then in existence. The Chôla Prince, at whose instance Sêkkiḷâr wrote his *Periya Purâna*, is well known in Tamil literature under the name of Anapâya Chola Pallava. He is sometimes called also Tiru Nirru Chôḷa(3) probably to indicate the regard he had for that symbol of the S'aiva faith. His religious fervour seems to have proved largely beneficial to the temple of Chidambaram, which he is said to have covered with gold(4)—probably in the way of repair of what was done by his forefather Parantaka I. Though it would appear from the *Tiru Toudar* or *Periya Purâna* that Anapâya was holding his court at Tiruvarûr,(5) near Negapatam, when that Purâna was composed, a stanza(6) cited in the com-

(1) *Vide* for instance stanza 52, *Avaiyugu Padalam.*

(2) *Vide* stanza 10, *Umâpati Sivâchâryа's account of Periya Purâna.*

(3) Stanza 12, *Pâyiram Kôyil Purâna. Tiru Nîru* means the holy ashes. I am glad to find that in the preface to the Purâna, its editor, the late Mr. Arumuga Nâvalar, the greatest of modern Tamil Pandits, notes the date we have assigned above to Umâpati Sivâcharya.

(4) *Vide* stanza 12, *Pâyiram Kôil Purâna* and stanza 8, *Pâyiram Periya Purâna.*

(5) Stanza 12, *Tiruvârûr Chirappu, Periya Purâna.*

(6) 'வண்புயலைத் தீப்படுத்து வானத்தருமலைத்து
மண்குளிரச் சாயல் வளர்க்குமாங்—தண்கவிகைக்
கொங்கா ரலங்க லரபாயன் கொய்பொழில்குழ்
கங்காபுரமாளிகை.

Chollani sutra 95, *part* 14.

According to Mr. Kanakasabai Pillay, *Gangâpuram* was the capital of the Chôla Empire under *Abhaya* also, (see page 337, Vol. XIX., *The Indian Antiquary*). But the stanza 92, *Canto* XIII., *Kaiṅgattu Parani*, depended upon for this statement, is, at best, ambiguous. *Gangâpuri* there appears more as a conquered place than as the capital,—so favouring Mr. Fleet's statement, (see the *Indian Antiquary* for August 1891,) that *Abhaya* succeeded to the Chôla throne, not wholly as the lawful heir to it. Probably after capturing this old Chôla capital and with it the Chôla crown, *Abhaya* held his imperial court in the more central station *Kânchi.*

mentary on the Tamil *Tandi Alankâra* leaves no room for doubt that his real capital was the same Gangâpuram or Gangai Koṇḍa Chôḷapuram, where the successors of Parântaka bore rule. Probably he was attracted to the former city by religious considerations. In an inscription of his, at Tiruvârûr, dated the seventh year of his reign, offering gifts of "land, gold, brass, silver and other excellent treasures" to the images of Sambandha and the other two authors of the Dêvâra Hymns, set up in that shrine, he calls himself, Kô Râjakêsari Varman, alias, Tribhuvana Chakravartin Srî Kulôttunga Chôladeva.(1) [Referring to this inscription, Dr. Hultzsch writes, "The characters of the Tiruvarur inscription of this prince are decidedly more modern than those of the Tanjavur inscriptions of Rajaraja and Rajendra Chola. Accordingly the *Periyapuranam* must have been composed after their time. On the other hand, the subjoined inscription proves that the legends which Sekkirar embodied in his work were not of his own invention, but must have grown up in the time of the predecessors of Rajendra Chôḷa."(2). Of course, for this last conclusion, we stand in no need of any proof. In the very opening chapter, Sêkkiḷar himself expressly states how the lives of the sixty-three saints he embodies in his work were commemorated in the hymns of *Sundarar*, and how they were subsequently amplified by Nambi Ândâr Nambi(3).

But the inscription alluded to by Dr. Hultzsch is certainly a remarkable one. It records the setting up of a copper image with the rather telling legend "Tattâ Namarê Kâṇ', or 'O Tatta! He is one of us!' inscribed below it. The reference, of course, is to the dying words of *Meipporul Nayanâr* imploring his attendant, *Tattan* by name, to spare the life of his murderer out of veneration for the form of a *Saiva* devotee the assassin had assumed. The date of

(1) I owe this information to the kindness of Dr. Hultzsch.
(2) *South Indian Inscriptions, No. 40, Part II., Vol. II.*
(3) Stanzas 38 and 39, *Tirumalai Chirappu.*

the inscription is the third year of Rajendra Chola's reign; and there can be no question that this Rajendra was the immediate successor of the now well known Chola Emperor Rajaraja Dêva; since the person who sets up the image is the old temple-manager, *Poigai Nâdu Kilavan Adittan Sûryan alias Tennavan Mûvênta Vêḷan*, figuring so frequently in the published inscriptions(1) of that great monarch. It is not unlikely that the old and shrewd temple-manager found his new youthful sovereign anxious to exercise a rather inconveniently strict supervision over the management of the temple endowments so profusely made by his predecessor on the throne, and in consequence, wanted to read to him a practical sermon by thus setting up the image of a king, who held it profane even to touch the hair of his own assassin, because he had come covered in *S'aiva* garments! However that be, the question of absorbing interest to us here is, whence did our clever manager borrow his text to be thus utilized for his purposes? Is it or is it not from the *Periya Purana?* If it is, it must unquestionably establish the priority of that treatise to the third year of Rajendra's reign. The words of the legend appear temptingly similar to those in the *Purâna.* Dr. Hultzsch himself observes, "The words தத்தாநமரேகாண் bear a close resemblance to those of the verse 'நமர்தத்தா.'" The resemblance, however, is really closer. The line in the *Periya Purâna* reads not 'நமர்தத்தா,' but 'தத்தாநமர' exactly in the order given in the legend engraved under the image. Probably the mistake arose by referring to *Tiruttondar Purâna Sâram*(2), or the abstract of the *Periya Purâna* by *Umâpati*, instead of, to the Purâna itself. In the face of the identity, I am not sure that Dr. Hultzsch's inference about the relative age of *Sêkkilar* and Rajaraja will be accepted by all as conclusive. For, it is possible to contend, in the first place, whether there lived but one Anapâya, as the argument assumes, and in the next place,

(1) See Vol. II., Parts 1 and 2, *South Indian Inscriptions.*
(2) Stanza 7.

whether South Indian Palæography is yet in a position to be dogmatic about dates, independent of corroborative evidence *ali unde*. Nevertheless I am not inclined to contest the point, partly out of deference to the opinion of so careful a writer as Dr. Hultzsch, but more because I think, I have a better hypothesis, as to the source of the Tanjore Temple Manager's text, than ascribing it to the *Periya Purâna*.

For I find in the *Antâti* of *Nambi Andâr Nambi*, upon which the *Periya Purâna* is avowedly based, the identical expression, letter for letter, with the simple omission of the expletive '*Kâṇ*' at the end of it. It is not impossible that the temple manager added this word, '*Kaṇ*,' meaning 'Look' or 'Behold,' not as a part of the dying exclamation of the pious king whose image he was now setting up, but as a warning of his own, a word *in terrorem*, to such impudent profanity as would venture to subject to the secular law, the acts of the holy servants of God. But whether we regard it as a pure expletive or a sly hint, the absence of '*Kaṇ*' will not stand in the way of our tracing the text to *Nambi's Antâti*. The principal word in it is 'Namaré'; and no Tamil scholar can feel any scruple as to its being a classical term, unknown to colloquial Tamil, even of the age of Rajaraja, if we may judge from the style of the many voluminous inscriptions of his, now placed before the public through the indefatigable labours of Dr. Hultzsch. The only question possible, to my mind at least, is whether *Nambi Andâr* and Rajaraja's temple manager might not have both borrowed the expression from some common prior source in verse. But even in the days of *Sêkkilar*, there was no work extant on the subject except this *Antâti* of *Nambi* and the famous *padigam* of *Syndarar*. The expression not being found in the latter, the *Antâti* is the only classical source from which the temple manager could have borrowed his text, unless, of course, we indulge in the assumption that there existed a poem of which *Sêkkilar* himself was not aware, and imagine

also at the same time, that so practical a man as the temple manager could have been foolish enough to believe that so rare a text could have carried home, to the reader of his legend, the lesson he was intent on teaching. I, for one, am not prepared to accept such an alternative, as gratuitous as unavailing. It seems to me, therefore, the best course now open to us is to take the expression as borrowed from the *Antâti* itself. I am not aware of any fact that can militate against such a view. On the contrary, all that we are able to glean from the *Antâti*, or the account of its author given by *Umâpati*, goes only to strengthen the easy inference we have drawn. According to this last authority, the patron of Nambi was *Rajaraja Abbaya Kulasêkhara Chola*: and we know from his Tanjore inscriptions that the glorious reign of the great Rajaraja, who in his latter days assumed the title of *Sivapâda Hridaya*(1), was exactly the period when such a grand undertaking as that of *Nambi*, the compilation of the Tamil Vedas, could have been taken up. Seldom does a great deed in letters or religion synchronize with national dejection: nor is it often that such exceptional national prosperity as the Tamilians enjoyed under Rajaraja fails to leave its high-water-mark in some branch of learning or other. It is true that *Nambi* does not mention Rajaraja by name in his *Antâti*, but it is well known that in the host of titles and *Birudus* under which he passed, Rajaraja was but one, and one, by no means the most prominent in his own days, nor the earliest assumed. Allusion however is made to his conquest of Ceylon, one of the early acheivements of Rajaraja(2). Nambi refers also more than once to the munificence of the Chola, who covered with gold plates the roof of the temple at Chidambaram, and we know this prince is now generally taken to be Parantaka I., the forefather of Rajaraja Deva. But from the tone in which

(1) Part II., Vol II., *South Indian Inscriptions*.
(2) Stanzas 50 and 65.

this reference is made, as well as from the fact that Nambi embodies, in his eleventh or last volume of S'aiva sacred writings, the poems of *Gandarâditya Varma*, a later prince of the same dynasty, the upper limit of Nambi's age may be safely fixed. After the days of *Gandarâdyitya*, we know of no Rajaraja in the same dynasty, who could have encouraged Nambi in his grand undertaking, except the great Rajaraja Deva, whose accession is now calculated to have taken place in 988 A.D.(1) Do not these circumstances then render it extremely probable, if not certain, that Rajaraja's temple manager was quoting but the words of the great Saiva Sage of the period, patronized by his own old glorious Sovereign Master, when he engraved the legend under the copper image set up as a practical lesson to the new Chola Prince Rajendra, in the third year of his reign? I scruple not to answer in the affirmative, and to conclude that *Nambi Ándár Nambi* was a contemporary of Rajaraja Ko Parakêsari Varma of the Tanjore inscriptions. If then *Nambi* wrote his *Antâti* before the close of the 10th century, when could Sambandha worshipped in that poem have lived? Not surely at the end of the 13th. An inscription(2) in the Tanjore Temple now places it beyond all doubt that Sambandha and his colleagues were objects of even popular worship in the age of Rajaraja. It records the setting up of the images of *Nambi Arûranar (i.e.)* Sundarar, *Nangai Paravaiyar (i.e.)* Sundara's consort, *Tirunavukkaraiyar* and *Tiru Ñana Samhandhigal*, in the 29th year of the reign of this famous Chola Emperor. Adverting to this record, Dr. Hultzsch writes: "This inscription is of great importance for the history of Tamil literature, as it forms a *terminus ad quem* for the time of the reputed authors of the Devaram. Dr. Caldwell was inclined to assign this poem to the end of the 13th century. But the present inscrip-

(1) I take this as the more appropriate date for my own reasons. I am glad Mr. Venkayya agrees with me—*vide* his paper in the *Christian College Magazine* for December 1894.

(2) No. 38, Part II., Vol II., *South Indian Inscriptions.*

tion shows, it must have been written before the time of Rajaraja Deva." It was more with a sense of relief than of gratification that I received the first intimation, from Dr. Hultzsch himself, of this extraordinary confirmation of the view I ventured to advocate, four or five years ago, against the esteemed and then unquestioned authority of Dr. Caldwell. The inscription under reference puts it now beyond all possible doubt, not only that the Devaram was composed before the days of Rajaraja as concluded by Dr. Hultzsch, but also that its authors, including Sambandha, were in the days of Rajaraja objects of worship, as much to the public at large, as they were to *Nambi Andar Nambi*, patronised, in all probability, as we have just seen, by the same Chola Emperor.][1]

The authors of those hymns must have lived surely long before that century. To estimate the interval that must have separated the compiler, Nambi Andar Nambi, from Sambandha and his colleagues, one has only to reflect upon the account, given by so early an authority as Umâpathi Sivâchârya, of the difficulties that the former had to overcome in the course of his collection. Of 1,02,000 Padigams, that originally constituted the *Dêvara* Hymns, Nambi Andar was able to secure not more than 795. All the imperial authority and influence of the greatest conqueror of the age was of no avail; and the gods[2] had to interfere for securing even so small a fraction of the sacred songs. If so difficult it was, to reclaim and restore to existence, the works of Sambandha about the tenth century, can there be any question, at least as to the centuries that could not have been graced by the living presence of that saint?

With the evidence offered by *Tiru Isaippa*, the tenth of the sacred books of the Saivas, we may ascend to still earlier ages; but even then, we find Sambandha's apo-

(1) The parts enclosed in square brackets are additions made in this edition.

(2) See Stanzas 18, 19 and 20, *Tiru Murai Kanda Puranam*.

theosis as complete as it is to-day. Observe, for instance, the tone in which Nambi Kâḍa Nambi alludes to him in his *Koil Tiru Isaippa*.(1) To Sundara too, who came after him, the same divine honours are paid.(2) With regard to the age of this tenth collection, we find a not altogether despicable clue in the name of one of its nine authors. Kaṇḍarâditya is the fifth of these nine poets, and his central position in the list may be taken, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, as significant of the average age of the whole collection. Kaṇḍarâditya describes himself as the Chôḷa King of Uraiyur and 'the lord of Tanjore',(3) and makes particular mention of a predecessor of his, who "conquered Madura and Ceylon and covered with gold the Chidambaram temple."(4) The latter, we know, is the famous Parântaka I. that "conquered the King of Lanka and Rajasimha Pandia"; (5) and we find Kaṇḍarâditya in Dr. Hultzsch's table, as the third in succession from Parântaka. Rajaraja, who ascended the throne in 984,(6) being the tenth Chôḷa in the same list, the age of Kaṇḍarâditya may be assumed provisionally as the close of the ninth century, allowing an average of 25 years' reign, for the intermediate four Chôḷa Kings. If then, by the close of the 9th century, Sambandha's apotheosis was perfect, how preposterous is it to seek for him in the close of the 13th century! Surely, if literary records have any value, Sambandha must have lived long before Kaṇḍarâditya, and the only possible question is, how long before?

To answer this question precisely, we have no materials in sacred Tamil literature, so far as I can recollect at present. Still, there are several indications to show that the

(1) *Vide* stanza 4.
(2) Stanza 5.
(3) See stanza 10 of his *Tiru Isaippa*.
(4) See stanza 8 of his *Tiru Isaippa*.
(5) Page 112, Vol. I., 'South Indian Inscriptions.'
(6) Page 169, *South Indian Inscriptions*.

interval between Kaṇḍarâditya and Sambandha must have been of considerable length,—nothing short of three or four centuries. Among these, I may mention the following :—

(1). We have already alluded to the fact that Tanjore was not in existence in the days of Sambandha, or even in the days of Sundara who came a few generations after him, say, a century. Kaṇḍarâditya speaks of himself, as we have just seen, as the "Lord of Tanjore." Karûr Dêvar, another of the nine authors of *Tiru Isaippa*, describes Tanjore as a flourishing town of considerable extent and importance. He uniformly speaks of it as 'the fortified Tanjai.'(1) Possibly, the old Tanjai of Sundara came to be called 'Pottai Tanjai' or 'open Tanjore,' by way of contrast to the 'fortified Tanjai' of Karûr Dêvar. Thus then it was in the interval between Sundara and Kaṇḍarâditya, that our modern Tanjore rose into existence, and developed itself into that fortified and flourishing city of which the latter so proudly speaks of himself as the Lord.

(2). Nowhere in the *Dêvara* Hymns—not even in those dedicated to Chidambaram—is there any mention of the celebrated Chôḷa, Parântaka I., who covered that temple with gold and who preceded Kaṇḍarâditya by two or three generations. (2) The silence is certainly remarkable, considering the unique celebrity of this victorious and religious-minded Chôḷa and the zeal with which every opportunity is taken by later writers to allude to him. Nambi Âṇḍâr Nambi, for instance, often goes out of his way to compliment Parântaka. In his account of Pugaḷ Chôḷa, he refers to Parântaka's conquest of Ceylon, in that of Eḍangaḷi Nâyanâr, to his victory over Râjasimha Pândya and to his roofing the Chidambaram temple with gold, and again in his notice of Ko-Chengaṇ Choḷa, he recurs to the same act of extraordinary munificence.(3) Sêkkilar, the

(1) See his *Tiru Isaippa on Rojarâjeswaram*.
(2) See page 112, *South Indian Inscriptions*.
(3) See Stanzas 50, 65 and 82, *Tiruvantati*.

author of *Periya Purâna*, is equally anxious to commemorate the pious gift. Is it not then remarkable that, *if* Sambandha lived *after* Parântaka, he should not have a word for this glorious monarch, even when he was standing before and celebrating the glories of that very temple which Parântaka covered with gold? The Brahmin priests of the place are referred to, but not the king Parântaka. Appar is as silent on the point as Sambandha, and so too is Sundara, who followed them after some generations. The fact that Nambi Andâr Nambi claims three royal saints, of equal rank with Sambandha,—*viz.*, Pugal Chola, Edangali, and Ko-Chenganṇan as remote progenitors of Parântaka, is suggestive of the distance of time, by which Sambandha must have preceded Parântaka.

On the other hand, it might be argued that as the expression *Ponnambalam* occurs in the Hymns of Appar,[1] both Appar and his younger contemporary, Sambandha, lived after Parântaka, who on the authority of the *Kongu Chronicle*[2] is generally believed to have built that 'Golden Hall' at Chidambaram. But this last supposition appears to me a grave error, though a common one. *Ponnambalam*, first translated by Sanscrit Pandits as *Kanaka Sabha* and then rendered by modern scholars as the 'Golden Hall,' was originally but an endearing name for the temple at Chidambaram. It is sometimes known simply as 'Koil' or *the* temple. Parântaka's covering the roof of it with gold plates was, perhaps, only an illustration of the curious, but well-known, tendency of names to realize themselves. The pious Chetties of to-day too assign no other reason for their costly undertaking to cover the roof and walls of the same temple with gilt plates, but the fact that

(1) Stanzas 4, 5, and 6, page 5, Ramaswamy Pillay's edition.

(2) I am not sure whether the *Kongu Chronicle* itself is responsible for this error, or only its translators. Dr. Hultzsch speaks of Parântaka as only having '*covered* the Siva temple at Vyâghrâgrahâra with gold', though in the passage he quotes the word 'built' occurs.

it is called *Ponnambalam!* Probably in his age, Parântaka was actuated by no better reason. At any rate, Nambi Andar Nambi of the eleventh century, who surely ought to know better than the *Kongu Chronicle*, gives Parântaka, in the very act of proudly and flatteringly alluding to his munificence, only the credit of having *covered* the roof of the hall with gold, but not of having constructed the hall itself.(1) It must be further remembered that according to Sêkkilar,(2) his own patron, Anapâya, had also the honour of gilding the roof of this same temple. Umâpathi Sivâchârya, who lived in the 14th century, to whose statements we are bound to accord some consideration, ascribes the building of the Golden Hall and the town itself to a certain Hiranya Varma of immemorial antiquity.(3) But whoever built the Ponnambalam, in the days of Manikkavâsagar, or well nigh the classical or the *Sangam* period of the Tamil literature, the name had not any more connotation about it than its well known synonym *Puliyûr*, or Tiger-Village. From the mere occurrence, therefore, of the expression *Ponnambalam*, in the hymns of Appar, we cannot jump(4) to the conclusion that Appar lived after Parântaka. Such an inference would be not only unwarranted but absurd also, in the face of the facts we have mentioned above. In fact, we have unmistakable evidence to show that in the Dêvara period, Chidambaram was not even a Chola possession, but a strong-hold of the

(1) "[illegible]," Stanza 65, *Tiruvantati*.

(2) *Vide* stanza 8, *Payiram*, Periya Purâna.

(3) Vide *Hiranya Varma Sargam*; *Koil Purânam*. Hiranya Varma is here said to have constructed the temple with a gold roof: and it is not impossible, that Parântaka was himself anticipated in his 'golden feat' by a remote predecessor of his, exactly as the Chettis of our days are, by himself. Or may it be that the temple was called *Pon Ambalam*, because built by Hiranya Varma?

As to the era that Hiranya Varma is said to have commenced, see stanza 5, *Tiru Vila Sargam*.

(4) For an example of such a jump in the dark, see page 63, Chapter II., Part III., *The Madura Country*.

Pallavas.[1] After it was re-annexed[2] to the Chôḷa dominions under the dynasty of Parântaka, the town did not go out of the hands of his successors, till long after the days of Anapâya, the patron of Sêkkilar. The period of Pallava supremacy at Chidambaram must have been, therefore, long anterior to the reign of Parântaka;—an inference that strongly supports the conclusion we have otherwise arrived at, with respect to the relative age of Sambandha and that sovereign.

(3). The only Chôḷa that Sambandha refers to is the red-eyed Ko-chenganṇan—the hero of an archaic poem of Poikaiyar called *Kaḷavaḷi Nârpadu*,—one of the eighteen didactic pieces compiled by the *pandits* of the old Madura College. The dynasty of Parântaka I. is a distinctly different line, probably an offshoot of an alliance of the old Chôḷa family with the Pallavas of Kânchi. *Kalingattu Parani*, the historical poem we have already referred to, seems to break off rather abruptly[3] with this Red-eyed King, in its poetical account of the old Chôḷa line, and to begin afresh when it takes up the story of the dynasty of Parântaka. A long period of confusion would seem to have prevailed, between the demise of Ko-Chenganṇan, and the establishment of the new Chola-Pallava dynasty to which Parântaka and Kaṇḍarâditya belonged. Sambandha, most probably, lived in this period of transition, when the old Chôḷa Kingdom had gone to pieces, and the new Pallava-Chôḷa Kingdom was in the course of forma-

(1) See Stanza 9 of *Sundarar's Koil Padigam*, where he speaks of the god of Chidambaram as a terror to those who refuse rightful subsidies to the Pallava rulers.

(2) For according to the *Koil Purana*, the town was founded by a Chôla Prince. Again, in the Periya Purâna, the Brahmins of Chidambaram are said to have declined to crown *Kûṛruva Nâyanar* on the ground that the Chôḷas were alone entitled to that honor.

(3) See stanza 19, chapter 8, but much stress cannot be laid on the arrangements of stanzas in the work. The whole poem requires careful editing by capable Tamil scholars in touch with the modern historical spirit of inquiry.

tion. At any rate, such is the impression left on my mind by the *Dêvara* Hymns, and if it is confirmed by the experiences of others, the estimate here formed of the interval between Sambandha, in whose memory the old Chôḷa line was still fresh and green, and Kaṇḍarâditya, one of the later princes of the new dynasty, will not be regarded as excessive.

(4). The same conclusion would be forced on us, if we consider the practical extinction that had come over the Buddhistic religion by the time of Kaṇḍaraditya. The creed that was, in the days of Appar and Sambandha, so universally predominant, as to lead to the former's persecution, and to need the curse of the latter in every one of his *padigams*, evidently attracts little attention from the authors of *Tiru Isaippa*.

Do not such considerations as these (and they may be multiplied, if necessary)[1] raise a strong presumption in favour of a long interval of time between Sambandha and Kaṇḍarâditya of the ninth century ?

Thus then, we need not go beyond the sacred literature of the Śaivas, to establish two important positions, with respect to the question in hand. In the first place, the facts I have mentioned enable us to trace the influence of Sambandha, successively backwards through the 14th, 12th and 11th centuries, to the close of the 9th, the age we have assigned to Kaṇḍarâditya. If there is any force in facts, these prove beyond all doubt, that Sambandha *could not* have lived later than the 9th century. In the second place, certain other typical facts that I have grouped together conjointly point to a probability of his having lived a considerable time, say three or four centuries, before the Chôḷa king and poet, Kaṇḍarâditya. But there are one or two other considerations to enforce the same conclusion, and I shall now proceed to explain them.

(1) For instance, the rise of the temple of *Gangai Konda Choleswaram* at the capital of the revived Chôḷa dynasty of Parântaka which finds no place in the *Dêvara* Hymns, but which has a *Tiru Isaippa* for itself.

Let us, for example, inquire whether Sanskrit literature can throw any light on the subject, corroborating our position or otherwise. From the summary inquiry we held in a previous part of this paper, we found reasons for believing that Sambandha preceded, not only Ramanuja and Madhvâchârya, but Śankara also, the greatest of modern Hindu Philosophers. Now the age of Sankarâchârya is diversely estimated. The Hon'ble Mr. Telang [1] adduces certain sound reasons for placing Śankara in the sixth century, while Mr. J. F. Fleet, C.I.E., [2] has equally cogent reasons for believing that he lived about 630—655 A.D. The latest date yet assigned to this philosopher is the eighth century. We have then in Śankara, an Indian celebrity who lived about two or three centuries before *Kandarâdítya*, or much about the time to which we have been able to trace Sambandha by means of purely literary records in Tamil. The history of the religious development in Southern India, pointing as it does in the same direction, raises a strong antecedent probability in favour of finding Sambandha somewhere about the time of, or immediately before, Śankara.

The presumption thus raised is verified beyond all expectations by a stanza of Śankarâchârya himself. The tone of veneration in which this philosopher refers to Sambandha proves beyond doubt, not only that the latter lived before him, but that there was a considerable interval of time between the two. The stanza referred to is the 76th in a poem called *Saundrya Lahari*, a well-known and evidently genuine work of Śankara, and particularly sacred with the *Śâktas* and *Tântrikas*. The first forty stanzas, which by themselves constitute the first part called *Ánanda Lahari*, are especially so with them ; and they do not allow their composition to be ascribed even to Śankarâchâryar himself. That revered philosopher is not sufficiently

(1) The Indian Antiquary, Vol. XIII., page 95.
(2) The Indian Antiquary, Vol. XVI., page 41.

remote in their view; and they vouchsafe to him only the honour of having completed this holy fragment, found inscribed on the mountain of Kailasa by a certain *Rishi* called *Pushpatanta*, and handed down to Sankara by his master, *Gaudâpada*.(1) The epigraphical tradition, however, does not affect the authenticity of the stanza under reference; for all parties agree that the last sixty slokas of the work are of the Acharya's own making. It runs thus:—

"O! Daughter of the mountain! I consider thy breast milk an overflow of the sea of wisdom from thy heart. For by tasting it, the 'Dravidian Child' to whom it was so mercifully granted, became such a charming poet among the great poets." (2)

To those that know the story of Sambandha, the allusion is as clear as daylight. Even to purely Sanskrit scholars, the knowledge of the incident referred to ought not to be difficult of access. They have only to open Chapter 47 of the Sanskrit treatise *Baktavilâsa*, where Sambandha's life is given in full detail. We cite below three stanzas (3) which narrate the miraculous nursing of the Dravidian child by the goddess Pârvati. That this very incident was

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(1) See stanzas 3 and 4, Introduction to Tamil *Saundarya Lahari* by *Ellappa Navalar*.

(2) तवस्तन्यम् मन्ये धरणिधरकन्ये हृदयतः
पयः पारावारं परिवहति सारस्वतमिति ।
दयावत्या दत्तं द्रविड शिशु रास्वाद्यतवयत्
कवीनांप्रौढानामजनि कमनीयः कवयिता ॥

(3) अथमूर्तिमतीदेवी जगतां जननी शिवा ।
आगत्योस्यान्तिकं बालं अङ्केकृत्वा शुचिस्मिता ॥
दुग्ध्वास्तन्यामृतापूर्णम् चषकं हेमनिर्मितम् ।
ददौ ग्रहीत्वा तद्वक्त्रे क्षुधत स्सचतत्पपौ ॥

the most distinguishing feature in the life of Sambandha, will be clear from the opening verse of the Chapter which may be thus rendered :—

"O Saints ! I shall now tell you the story of Ñana Sambandha, to whom the daughter of the Himalaya Mountains vouchsafed the nectar of her breast milk, and acted, therefore, the part of a mother." (1)

The interpretation of Letchmi Dhara, (2) otherwise known as Lolla, which identifies the 'Dravidian child' with the author Sankarâchârya himself, deserves therefore no refutation. It is, no doubt, on account of such blunders as these, that Bhâskara Raya, who flourished in the last century, treats him with such unqualified contempt.

वेदान्त बोधमयमम्बिकया वितीर्णम्
स्तन्यामृतं तदनु पीतवताऽर्भकस्य ।
उद्गारपूरइव सूक्ति सुधाप्रवाहो
वक्त्रादजायत जगत्रय तापहारी ॥

(1) अथवक्ष्ये कथांज्ञान सम्बन्धस्य मुनीश्वरः ।
स्तन्यामृतप्रदानेन यस्यधात्री हिमाद्रिजा ॥

(2) My attention was first drawn to this interpretation of Letchmi Dhara by Mr. V. Venkayya, the Assistant Epigraphist to the Madras Government. It would appear, Professor Aufrecht adopts the same mistaken interpretation in his Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts. But the absurdity of it is nevertheless self-evident. The Achârya was no poet at all; his fame rests entirely upon his philosophical exegetics called *Bhâshyam*. To identify the *Dravidian Sisu* with Sankara himself would be, therefore, to charge that revered thinker with unbounded arrogance; but even supposing he had the vanity to speak of himself as *the distinctly lovable among great poets*, where do we find any tradition of his having been suckled by Pârvati, when he was an infant? The old Metrical Tamil Translation of this stanza (vide page 118) by *Virai Kaviraya Panditar* gives the correct rendering here adopted. The distinguished Tamil Poet of the last century, *Saiva Vellappa Navalar*, proceeds also upon the same view in his commentary on that Translation. Indeed, the absurdity of *Lolla's* interpretation is so patent, that every Sanskrit Pandit (including that foremost Sanskrit scholar in Southern India, the Valia Coil Tampuran of Travancore, to whom I shewed the stanza) heartily agrees with me in condemning it.

"Such nonsense", says Bhaskara in another connexion, "can proceed only from madness."(1)

The word '*Sisu*' or '*child*' in the stanza which has given room for such gross misapprehension, is peculiarly appropriate when applied to Sambandha. The proper name in Tamil of the famous saint, at the time when the goddess was supposed to have appeared to him, was, as I have already pointed out in my first article, *Pillai* or *Aludaya Pillai*.

In his *Siva Bhujanga* (2) and *Sivánanda Lahari*, (3) the Âchârya pays similar homage to four other Saints, of whom one was a contemporary of Sambandha, and another a huntsman or *Kirâta* by birth, but none of them half as well known as our Brahmin Saint of the *Koundinya Gôtra*.

The conclusion then is irresistible, that in the days of Sankarâchârya, Sambandha was a well known character—an inspired poet, worthy of being spoken of as the distinctly lovable among the greatest poets of India, and a saintly person, sufficiently remote in time to be then believed that he had been suckled by the goddess Pârvati

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(1) इति लोल्लिन यत्प्रलपितं तत्प्रामादिकम् ॥

(2) नशक्नोमिकर्तुं परद्रोहलेशम्
कथम्प्रीयसेत्वम् नजाने गिरीश ।
तदाहिप्रसन्नोऽसिकस्यापिकान्ता
सुतद्रोहिणीवा पितृद्रोहिणीवा ॥
॥ इति शिवभुजङ्गः ॥

(3) मार्गाविर्चितपादुकापशुपतेरङ्गस्यकूर्चायते
गण्डूषाम्बुनिषेचनं पररिपोर्दिव्याभिषेकायते ।
किञ्चिद्भक्षित मांसरोषकबलं नव्योपहारायते
भक्तिः किन्नकरोत्यहो वनचरो भक्तावतंसायते ॥
॥ इति शिवानन्दलहरी ॥

herself. Taking then the age assigned to Sankara by Mr. Fleet, we may now safely assert that Sambandha could not have lived later than the seventh century; and that in all probability, there was an appreciable distance of time between Sankara and himself. What this interval actually was, it is impossible to determine with the existing materials. We cannot, however, be far wrong if we take it as a century or two.

That we are not attributing too high an antiquity, will appear from the age usually assigned to Sambandha by enlightened native scholars, of whom I shall here mention but two or three.

Mr. Simon Casie Chitty, the author of the Ceylon Gazetteer and the Tamil Plutarch, says in the latter work of his :—"In our opinion as the date given in the *Cholapûrva Pattayam* for the accession of Cheraman Perumal seems to admit of no doubt, we may place the period of the existence of Sundara and his two fellow champions in the fifth century of the Christian era for a certainty; and thereby clear it from the monstrous chronology of the Puranas."(1) Mark the last expression. In the opinion of this Native Christian Tamil Scholar, to assign Sundara to the *fifth* century—not the 13th advocated by Dr. Caldwell—is *only* to clear the age of that Author, from the monstrous chronology of the Puranas! If Sundara lived in the fifth, Sambandha, who, as we know, preceded him by a few generations, must have lived some where about the fourth century. But until we know more of the history of the *Cholapûrva Pattayam* here depended upon, we cannot afford to be as positive as Mr. Chitty. We know also, on the other hand, the slippery indefiniteness that is inherent in so vague and general a designation, as *Cheraman Perumal*—perhaps as misleading as its notorious counterpart, '*Sundara Pandya*.' Anyhow, the opinion of so well-

(1) See page 21.

informed a person as Mr. Casie Chitty, and the *Cholapûrva Pattayam* he cites, cannot but show, that it is not a violent assumption, to allow an interval of a century or two, between Sambandha and Sankara of the seventh century.

The second Native Scholar I have in view, is Mr. Damodaram Pillay, the erudite editor of so many valuable Tamil Classics. He is decidedly of opinion that Kûn Pândya (and therefore Sambandha) lived more than 2,000 years ago. To support this conclusion, primarily based upon the usual Puranic lists of Pândyas, he makes a statement[1] which, if historically correct, ought to enable us to arrive at a more or less accurate approximation. The present head of the *Tiru Ñana Sambandha Matam* of Madura, it would appear, claims himself to be the 114th in lineal succession from the Saiva devotee, in whose name the monastery is established. If the assertion is well-founded, it will indicate, no doubt, a lapse of fifteen to twenty centuries, according to the average we assume for each of the 113 deceased heads of the monastery. To urge an antiquity of 2,000 years, appears to me to be rather unsafe. It would scarcely leave time for Jainism to develop itself in Southern India, and to assume those formidable proportions, which brought about the reaction in the age of Sambandha. But, however that may be, Mr. Damodaram Pillay himself announces, in another foot-note, [2] a fact that cannot but affect the value of the testimony for scientific purposes. The present *Matam* in Madura, it would appear, was established only as a branch or subordinate monastery to another of the same name in Tinnevelly, of which, however, no trace is now left. Nor was the Tinnevelly *Matam* itself the original institution. Until, therefore, more of the history of this interesting

(1) Preface to *Vira Sôliyam*, page 17. According to Mr. Nelson, the present Head is the 277th hereditary manager. Mr. Damodaram Pillay explains the discrepancy as due to Mr. Nelson's including in his account even those anointed as heirs apparent.

(2) Preface to *Vira Sôliyam*, p. 20.

institution is known, particularly of the way in which the tradition as to lineal succession has been preserved, it is possible to exaggerate the probative force of the statement in question. But we are citing the fact and Mr. Damodaram Pillay's conviction, only as showing that in the opinion of competent native scholars, to assign Sambandha to the fifth or the sixth century is not to advocate an extravagant theory.

[The Hon'ble P. Kumaraswamy[1] of Colombo argues that since the miracle of the *Vanni* tree, with which Sambandha is associated in the *Tiru Viḷaiyâdal Purana*, is alluded to by the heroine of *Śilappadhikaram*, said to have been born in the reign of *Kari Kala*, the grandfather of *Seṇkuttuvan*, who was visited by Gaja Bahu of Ceylon between the years 113—135 A.D., the age of Sambandha ought to be accepted as at least prior to the birth of Christ. Supposing the age of the exceedingly interesting poem, *Śilappadhikaram*, is determined beyond all question with the help of the old chronicles of Ceylon, where more than one Gaja Bahu is mentioned, I am not sure whether the first link in the chain of argument, which alone connects Sambandha with that ancient classic, will be accepted by all parties as sound and irrefragable. For, however admirable as a work of art, the *Tiru Viḷaiyâdal Purana* is not distinguished for historical accuracy, and it stands alone in associating the *Vanni* tree story with Sambandha. Nor does it agree in its account with the earlier and the more authoritative treatise, the *Periya Purana*, even as far as the latter goes. As the matter is of some real importance, I would first solicit attention to the difference in the two versions of the tradition itself.

The *Periya Purana* version of the story is briefly this :— A trader of the *Vaṇiga* caste in the town of Vaippûr, by name *Tâman*, promises to give in marriage to his nephew[2]

(1) His last letter to me on this subject is dated 1st March 1895.

(2) It is usual in this caste to marry a maternal uncle's daughter.

the eldest of his seven daughters, but tempted by lucre, he repeatedly forgets his promise and gives away to different other parties his first six daughters in succession. The seventh, moved by love and pity for the disappointed suitor, escapes with him, proposing to solemnise their marriage in the village of the poor nephew. On their way, they halt at a place called Marunganûr, (1) near Negapatam, where Sambandha was then sojourning. Here the intended bridegroom is bitten by a snake, and in a few hours he expires, leaving his lonely love in indescribable sorrow. Her cries of anguish, however, reach the ears of Sambandha who, repairing to the spot and becoming aware of the melancholy situation, improvises a hymn invoking the mercy of the local Deity; and the man revives as if from sleep. Sambandha then observing the decorous behaviour of the *Vaniga* woman who, because a virgin, would, neither in the worst moments of her sad tribulation nor in the rebound of joy, go within touching distance of her lover, although he was but her cousin, causes their wedding to be solemnised at once, so that they might be a help to one another even on their way; and the married couple resume their journey, while he himself returns to *Cheṅkâttaṅkudi* at the request of that famous devotee who, when required, scrupled not to slaughter and cook up his only child as food for Siva. Such is the *Periya Purana* version (2) of the story from which the *Tiru Viḷaiyâdal* (3) chooses to differ in some essential particulars. Shocked probably by the amount of freedom which the earlier version would allow the fairer sex, this comparatively recent production gives an account of its own of the way in which the lonely couple came to be travelling together. Instead

(1) The name of this village is significant. It means the *town of the nephew*. Could it be that it was so named because of this very incident? If it bore this name in the days of Sambandha, would not the tradition be still older?

(2) *Vide* Stanzas 473—484, *Tiru Ñana Sambandha Mûrti Puranam.*

(3) *Vide* Chapter 64, *Tiru Viḷaiyadal Purana.*

of the seven daughters and the six successive disappointments to the poor nephew, this Purana would allow but one daughter to the *Vaniga* merchant, whose name and native place, however, it does not care to specify. This Vaniga again is here not a sordid but a superior person, who, instead of selling his daughters as in the old tradition, piously promises away all his wealth, and his only child, too, to a nephew of his in Madura, who, to boot, is already married and well settled in life. Some time after making known to his townsmen this his wish and will, the trader dies, and his widow dies with him on his funeral pyre—a poor substitute for the more natural acts of feminine heroism which this later version feels bound to suppress. The fortunate nephew in Madura is then for the first time informed of the gifts made to him by his deceased uncle including his only daughter, and he forthwith hurries to the spot to remove them all to his own city. But for reasons not so easy to understand, he sends in advance, not only all the treasures he so inherits but also all his relatives excepting the virgin girl—an arrangement extremely unnatural from a Hindu point of view. It is, thus, the couple come to travel together according to this Purana. The cobra bite and death, the subsequent revival through the virtue of Sambandha's verse, and the improvised marriage ceremony at the instance of that saint, all follow in due course, though there would seem to be no necessity for the unseemly haste in that last act, since according to this Purana there were all along plenty of servants, man and maid, near at hand to render all needful service on the way. Such are the two versions of the story, and it does not require much insight to see what liberties are taken with the old tradition in the later of the two. I mention the fact, as I believe it would prove helpful to us in appreciating the historical value of the episode, which this later version adds to the story, and on which the argument of my Hon'ble friend entirely turns.

The scene of this episode is laid in Madura. To that city the married couple return, and in due course is born a son. A childish quarrel between this boy and the children of the first wife, gives occasion for an altercation between the mothers, during the course of which the first wife ventures to question the legal status of the second, and tauntingly inquires as to what sort of proof the latter could offer for her alleged marriage on the way. Unable to adduce better evidence, the innocent woman cites the *Vanni* tree, the temple well and the Siva Linga before which the marriage was solemnised at the melancholy spot of cobra fame, which, according to this Purana, is not Maruganûr as in the earlier version, but *Purambiyam* which I am unable to identify. "Good witnesses and meet indeed!" jocosely replies her rival; and it may indeed well surprise any one why she had such confidence on these inanimate objects, and none at all on any of the many servants of her husband who according to the Purana accompanied her from her father's house to Madura, and some of whom at least must have witnessed the rite, even supposing Sambandha and his large retinue had retired to their lodgings before the actual ceremony was performed. Anyhow, one and all the three witnesses cited did present themselves next morning, within the precincts of the Madura Temple, to the joy of innocent faith and the discomfiture of ill-natured jealousy. Such is the episode of the *Vanni* tree miracle (1) found tacked on to the story in the *Tiru Viḷaiyâdal Purana*; and the question for us is, whether, on the strength of this Purana, the incident may be taken to have occurred in the life of that very *Vaniga* lady whose marriage was arranged at Maruganûr by Sambandha.

(1) The miraculous nature of the incidents here dealt with is no objection to their being used, under certain conditions, for sifting historical testimony. If tradition invariably ascribes a particular incident, however miraculous, to a given historical individual, it serves in innumerable ways, direct and indirect, in estimating the age of that individual. Subjective belief in such cases is tantamount to objective existence.

As already pointed out, the earlier and the more reliable treatise, the *Periya Purana*, is silent on this point. But this negative evidence in itself cannot carry much weight since it may be met by the consideration that it is no part of the business of that Purana to relate all the incidents in the lives of every one with whom its own heroes come in contact. There being, then, as far as I know, no extraneous evidence, for or against, the accuracy of the episode has to be accepted or rejected, according to the estimate we may form of the general historical veracity of the Purana in which it is found. It is not possible in this connection to open an explicit discussion on the historical value of the *Tiru Viḷaiyâḍal Purana*, but from what has been already said with regard to the version contained in it of the earlier part of the very story in question, I trust it may be inferred that it is not altogether a safe ground to build historical theories on.(1) My own impression is that in adding on this episode, the Purana is but trying to patch together two independent old traditions. Who knows whether this penultimate chapter in the Purana is itself not written to flatter the pride of the Naick rulers of the times ? (2) That this and the two chapters immediately preceding it should have Sambandha for their hero would seem also not devoid of meaning, when we remember that the author belonged to a monastery which still claims Sambandha for its founder. It is quite possible, too, that the life of *Mânikkavâsagar* is given in an earlier chapter just to enable the author to conclude his work with the life of Sambandha, the patron saint of his convent. But such speculations apart, I would earnestly beg to repeat that for my part, I would prefer to wait till better evidence

(1) I mean no disparagement to the Purana as a literary work. So charming is its diction and so great its powers of clear description that for years together I have been in the habit of reading a few stanzas of it every day.

(2) The word Naick appears several times in this chapter itself—*vide* for instance stanza 11.

is found to take the tradition of the *Vanni* tree miracle as originating with or in the time of Tiru Gnana Sambandha.

This position would appear to be further confirmed by the way in which the miracle is alluded to in Silappadhikaram. There the heroine couples with the tree that appeared in the temple to attest the marriage, not a well and the Siva Linga as in the Purana, but a kitchen. (1) The Vaniga lady for whose sake the tree appeared is claimed again as a native of *Pûm Pugar* in the Chola kingdom, and not a nameless seaport town in the Madura country as in the Purana. The version of the episode in the *Tiru Viļaiyâdal Purana* then would seem to differ in essential particulars from the one referred to in Silappadhikaram nearly as much as the earlier part of the same story in the work does from what is found in the more trustworthy treatise of *Sêkkilar*. Taking then into consideration these suspicious variations in details, as well as the conspicuous absence of the historical sense in the *Tiru Viļaiyâdal*, I humbly submit, I am not prepared to take the allusion in *Silappadhikaram* to the *Vanni* tree miracle as proving that Sambandha lived before the composition of that indisputably old and genuine classic. On the other hand, critics may not be wanting who may look upon this very allusion in the more ancient work as discrediting the date assigned to the miracle in the *Tiru Viļaiyâdal*. Nevertheless the opinion of so able and enlightened a gentleman cannot but be of immense value for the purpose for which it is here cited, *viz.*, to attest the modesty of the theory I am advocating.

To the opinions of these native scholars, I am glad, I am now in a position to add the view of so esteemed an authority in South Indian Epigraply as Dr. Hultzsch. He writes: "As poems in the Tamil Language are thus proved to have been composed in the time of the early cholas" (*i.e.*) Kari Kala and Ko Senkannan "there is

(1) *Vide* lines 5 to 35, Chapter XXI., *Silappadhikaram*.

no objection to assigning the authors of the Devaram to the same period." The moderation of the hypothesis here advocated which assigns them to a later period cannot, I hope, be then be questioned.]

For after all, we allow, it is only a hypothesis. All that we are *sure* of is that the age of Śankarâchârya is the lower limit of the age of Sambandha;—whatever century we assign to Śankara, the sixth, seventh or the eighth as may be hereafter finally determined—*that century* will form the *latest* period that can be assigned to Sambandha. We reach this conclusion in a diversity of ways. The religious history of Southern India points to the priority of Sambandha to Śankara. The absence of all traces of Non-Dualistic Philosophy in the *Dêvara* songs is a well-known fact enforcing the same conclusion. The independent historical facts gathered from the sacred Saiva works, not only enable us to trace the influence of Sambandha, step by step, from the thirteenth backwards to the close of the ninth century, but raise also a strong presumption of his having lived three or four centuries earlier. And finally, the stanza we have quoted from Śankarâchârya's *Saundarya Lahari* serves to demonstrate that Sambandha did actually precede that revered philosopher. We scruple not, therefore, to maintain that the age of Śankara constitutes the *lower limit* to the age of Sambandha. If with Mr. Flee[t] we believe that Śankara lived between 630 and 655 A.D., the opening of the seventh century is the *latest* possible period that can be assigned to Sambandha.

We should be glad, if with equal certainty, the upper limit could also be ascertained. It is impossible to undertake this part of our problem without transgressing the bounds we have set to this paper. We can here only indicate one of the main lines of inquiry we should like to pursue. We have already pointed out that Sambandha frequently refers to the famous Chola Prince Ko-Śenkannan, the hero of the classical war-song called *Kaḷa vaḻi*. On one occasion, he speaks of a temple at

Vaikal, a village near Kumbakonam, as having been constructed by Ko-Senkannan in "former days."(1) Clearly then, Sambandha must have lived a considerable time after this temple-building Red-eyed Chola. But when did this Red-eyed Chola live? The question opens a field of inquiry as wide as the whole range of ancient classics in Tamil—a sphere obviously more beset with historical difficulties than that of the sacred Saiva literature with which we have been hitherto concerned.

The farther we proceed into antiquity, the darker naturally becomes the view around; and it is well, for more than one reason, to leave this part of our subject to be taken up on a future occasion, for an independent and separate handling which the range and importance of those ancient classics would otherwise also demand.

All that we would, therefore, now say with regard to the upper limit of the age of Sambandha is, that it would be found in the age of Ko-Senkannan. Sambandha, in fact, forms the line of partition between ancient and modern Tamil. With regard to the lower limit, no such indefiniteness need any longer be allowed. The facts we have mentioned demonstrate as conclusively as the nature of the subject will admit, that Sambandha could not have lived later than the opening years of the seventh century.

In conclusion, we may indicate the main purposes subserved by this paper.

(1) It gives a bird's-eye view of the sacred Tamil literature of the Saivas.

(2) It shows the position of Sambandha as a Saiva Saint and a lyrical Tamil poet, and also as the first great adversary of Jainism in Southern India.

(3) It controverts the gratuitous opinions of Dr. Burnell with regard to the antiquity and value of Tamil literature.

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(1) வையமெடுத்தரவைகன் மேற்றிசை
செய்யகண் வளவன் முன் செய்த கோயிலே.
Page 449, Ramasawmy Pillay's Edition.

(4) It proves the utterly unfounded nature of the hypotheses advocated by Dr. Caldwell and Mr. Nelson with regard to the age of Sambandha.

(5) An attempt is made to trace an outline of the religious history of Southern India with a view to fix the relative ages of Sambandha, Śankara, and Ramanuja.

(6) Facts are deduced to prove with the help of the latest archæological researches that Sambandha could not have lived in any period later than the early years of the seventh century, leaving the upper limit to be fixed by an inquiry into the age of Ko-Seṇkaṇṇan.

Standing as Sambandha does at the close of the ancient and the opening of the modern period of Tamil literature, the attempt we have made here to fix his age will, it is hoped, prove of some service to further inquiries into the history of the Tamil language and of Dravidian civilization in general. At any rate, I earnestly trust, the few milestones in that history discovered in the course of this investigation will serve to ward off future speculation from altogether losing its way.