Tamil Polity

(c. A. D. 600 - c. A. D. 1300)

R. Rajalakshmi

Dr. (Miss) Rajalakshmi's work on the Tamil Polity (medieval) is an authoritative and definitive account of the administration and social institutions of Tamilnad during seven important centuries of the History of Tamilnad. The meticulous documentation and the exhaustive treatment of the subject make it calssic and it is not likely to be surpassed in the foreseeable future. The book is eminently readable and will be a welcome addition to the general readers' library as much as being necessary reading material for university scholars.

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Foreword

Research work on the governmental and social polities of ancient and medieval societies in our part of the country has been one of the earlier phases of scholarly activity among professionals and others: e.g., Mr. V. Kanagasabhai Pillai's 'The Tamils 1800 years Ago' set the pace for such work on the social life of the Tamils as seen in our classics. Contrary to the common belief that too much emphasis has been, all along laid, on the political and dynastic histories, it can be seen that no effort has been spared by English-knowing scholars as well as the pandits to explore all the material in any source which might help our understanding of the socio-economic, religious etc., activities of our ancestors. Mr. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar of the Madras University in addition to his valuable 'Studies in Tamil literature and history', explored the all-India field of Mauryan and Gupta polities as well. Professor Nilakanta Sastri encouraged Dr. C. Minakshi to study the administration and social life under the Pallavas; this was followed by Dr. T.V. Mahalingam who concentrated on the administration and social life of Vijayanagar and on the basis of that work wrote a more comprehensive 'South Indian Polity'. Dr. Appadorai was an exception who specialised in the economic history of the south from A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1500. These were good omens for the administrative-cum-social history of the Tamils. My own work on the 'Śaṅgam Polity' became a pace-setter to that kind of work and I had the opportunity of guiding Dr. (Miss) R. Rajalakshmi through her work on the Medieval Tamil Polity (c.A.D. 600 to c.A.D. 1300). It was but natural that under my supervision she modelled her work on mine. It was a privilege to guide an intelligent young scholar to a successful analysis of

the springs of public and domestic life of the Tamils of the medieval period. I have really no doubt that her work has become authoritative and definitive; and is not likely to be surpassed in the foreseeable future.

Dr. Rajalakshmi's work deals with the system of government and the way of life of the Tamils of the period she chose to concentrate upon. The main problem in such a study is to discover any signs of continuity of older institutions (governmental like the Ūr, Sabhā etc., and social like Caste) or data relating to newly emerging ones like the 'temple'; and while it was found that the pace of change was slow and its direction fairly well determined, these was no resistance to such change as was necessary for the smooth and continued operation of the accepted and cherished values of the society. Hence the co-occurrence of change as well as conservatism. One is delighted to see that Dr. Rajalakshmi has not been carried away by the well-known enthusiasm of cultural chauvinists, but in a welcome spirit of objectivity, allows spades to be called spades; she knows also that modern prejudices must not be read into ancient or medieval expression and behaviour. The resultant picture turns out to be credible and free from the romanticisation unfortunately too common in such writings. Though it might appear that the period of the study is nearly seven centuries, quite a long period for a whole society, the theme has been so deftly handled that the work presents an integrated picture which is as it should be. It is heart-warming to see that a subject like this can be discussed in such readable language (which cannot be said of many works on the history of the Tamils) as will attract students as well as finished scholars to it. I congratulate Dr. Rajalakshmi on this rare achievement which is a positive contribution to the administrative and social history of the Tamils.

N. SUBRAHMANIAN

Preface

TAMIL POLITY is the result of research conducted by me in the Department of Ancient History, Madurai-Kamaraj University during the years 1970-73. It tries to trace the contours of the governmental and social polity of the Tamils during the seven centuries from c.A.D. 600-1300. That was the second stage in the evolution of the native Tamil institutions, the first being the Śaṅgam age; that was the period during which the heroic age of the Śaṅgam Tamils yielded place to an age of religious dominance marked by the rise and spread of Śaiva and Vaishṇava Bhaktism a movement which successfully battled against heresy; that was the period during which the influence of Sanskrit culture began to impress Tamil life and thought in a more pronounced way; that was a period also during which a special type of local government at village level was reared and almost perfected; that again was the age when small kingdoms rose to attain imperial status.

The polity of the Śaṅgam Tamils which preceded the age under study in this thesis, and the Vijayanagar polity which succeeded the native Tamil empires of Chōḷas and the Pāṇḍyas have been portrayed by N. Subrahmanian and T.V. Mahalingam respectively. But the institutions of the intervening period, though more varied and colourful than the other two, have not so far been described in a single historical thesis although K.A.N. Sastri in his *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom* and the *Cōḷas* and C. Minakshi in her *Administration*

and Social life under the Pallavas have attempted peripheral portrayals.

The Tamil Polity has a character of its own. An integrated picture *does* emerge when the institutions are studied closely. This work claims to draw such a picture, and holds it as the justification for this piece of research.

The history of the Tamils like the history of the rest of India is meaningful more from the point of view of its private and public institutions - their structure and their functions - rather than that of the fortunes of royalty and the rise and fall of kingdoms; religion and literature, social organization and functions, the beliefs, the frustrations, the hopes and the daily doings of the common man are the real history of a people of any age rather than their politics and diplomacy. This criticism has been remembered in writing this thesis.

The relevant data in regard to this subject have so far not been put together in a comprehensive way and this work claims to have done that and in that endeavour contributed to the fuller comprehension in its proper perspective of the subject. The subject bristles with problems which have not so far been posed seriously, nor faced squarely, e.g., the succession problem in the Pallava and Chōla periods, the social consequences of the Bhakti age and the real nature of the autonomy of the Chōla village, the Tamil philosophy of law, the gap between theory and practice in warfare and so on.

The main sources are broadly and critically indi-cated in the chapter on 'sources'; a fuller list of

original and secondary sources is given as 'biblio-graphy of books consulted.' The quotations and sources are documented and the notes are appended at the foot of the concerned pages. The system of transliteration adopted here is the one used by the *Epigraphia Indica* and the scheme is explained in a Key to Transliteration.

Transliteration Scheme

அ: a;	ஆ: ā;	இ: i;	ஈ: ī;	உ: u;
ஊ: ū;	எ: e;	ஏ: ē;	ஐ: ai;	ஒ: o;
	ஓ: ō;		ஔ: au;	

$\dot{க}_1$: k;	$\dot{க}_2$: kh;	$\dot{க}_3$: g;	$\dot{க}_4$: gh;	ங: ṅ;
$\dot{ச}_1$: ch;	$\dot{ச}_2$: chh;	$\dot{ச}_3$: j;	$\dot{ச}_4$: jh;	ஞ: ñ;
$\dot{ட}_1$: ṭ;	$\dot{ட}_2$: ṭh;	$\dot{ட}_3$: ḍ;	$\dot{ட}_4$: ḍh;	ண: ṇ;
$\dot{த}_1$: t;	$\dot{த}_2$: th;	$\dot{த}_3$: d;	$\dot{த}_4$: dh;	ந, ன: n;
$\dot{ப}_1$: p;	$\dot{ப}_2$: ph;	$\dot{ப}_3$: b;	$\dot{ப}_4$: bh;	ம: m;
ய: y;	ர: r;	ல: l;	வ: v;	ழ: ḻ;
ள: ḷ;	ற: ṟ;	ஸ : ś	ஷ: sh;	ஸ: s;
	ஹ: h;		க்ஷ: ksh	

Abbreviations Adopted

A.R.E.	ANNUAL REPORT ON EPIGRAPHY
A.R.S.I.E.	ANNUAL REPORT ON SOUTH INDIAN EPIGRAPHY
E.C.	EPIGRAPHIA CARNATICA
E.I.	EPIGRAPHIA INDICA
E.R.	EPIGRAPHICAL REPORT
I.A.	INDIAN ANTIQUARY
I.H.Q.	INDIAN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY
J.A.H.R.S.	JOURNAL OF THE ANDHRA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
J.I.H.	JOURNAL OF INDIAN HISTORY
J.A.O.S.	JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY
J.B.O.R.S.	JOURNAL OF THE BIHAR AND ORISSA RESEARCH SOCIETY
K.A.N.SASTRI	K.A.NILARANTA SASTRI
M.A.R.	MYSORE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT
M.E.R.	MADRAS EPIGRAPHICAL REPORTS
S.I.I.	SOUTH INDIAN INSCRIPTIONS
S.K.AIYENGAR	DR. S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYENGAR
T.A.S.	TRAVANCORE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERIES
T.V.S.PANDARAT-TAR	T.V. SADASIVA PANDARATTAR
V.R.R.DIKSHITAR	V.R. RAMACHANDRA DIKSHITAR

Introduction

CHAPTER I

DEFINITION OF THE AGE

This study is concerned with the Tamil governmental and social polity of the seven centuries from the seventh to the thirteenth, and is based on the available source material. While epigraphical and foreign evidence has been drawn upon freely, the data available in literature, especially Tamil literature, have received special attention and such data have been sifted, scrutinized and corroborated with reference to epigraphy, archaeology and foreign evidence. Except some well-known passages like Śēkkiḻār's description of the judicial procedure in the *Taḍuttāṭkoṇḍapurāṇam*, the bulk of the evidence furnished by the literature of this period has remained unutilized by the historian of South India. This neglect specially applies to such mines of historical and sociological information like the *Peruṅgadai*, *Chintāmaṇi*, *Chūḷāmaṇi* and *Tirumandiram*. And this thesis is a first attempt in utilizing contemporary literary evidence in the understanding of the governmental and sociological concepts. Naturally, a brief discussion of the probable dates of the major works is called for by way of defining our chronological coverage.

Works like *Śilappadikāram*, *Maṇimēkalai* and *Nālaḍiyār* assigned to the Pallava period by scholars like S. Vaiyapuri Pillai have been treated as belonging to the age before A.D. 600 in view of the near consensus along our line of thinking on the part of most scholars. A further discussion of their age is not necessary here.

The *Muttoḷḷāyiram* and the *Peruṅgadai* are on the border-line between the Śaṅgam and the post-Śaṅgam ages. The *Muttoḷḷāyiram* deals only with the Chēra, Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya kings and is in Veṇba metre. The fact that social life is continuous and changes in social life are slow and imperceptible adds another reason for our considering this important text as relevant to our purpose. The *Peruṅgadai* has no internal evidence

as to its date, but it closely follows the epic style of *Śilappadi-kāram* and *Maṇimēkalai,* and it is therefore posterior to those epics and a post-Saṅgam date for the work seems reasonable.

Tirumūlar, though a chronological problem, is well within our purview. The fantastic longevity which he gives to himself cannot help our arriving at any date for him; but the Siddha mystic tradition, the style of his writing, his phrasing, his references to the Maṭhas etc., would take him out of the Saṅgam age and place him in the post-Saṅgam epoch. He is canonized as a Śaiva saint. Therefore he must be earlier than Sundarar, at least, and can well be assigned to a pre-Sundarar period well within the period of our study.

With the *Tēvāram* and the *Nālāyiram* one is on safer ground, and fully within the Pallava times. The only doubt can be in regard to the Mudal Āḷvārs, though there is the argument that they were either contemporaries of Narasimhavarman I or came after him, because they refer to Mahābalipuram, believed to be a derivation from Narasimhavarman's title, Māmalla. Anyway, they are ascribable at least to the dawn of the post-Saṅgam era. Once this is accepted, we have only to make the internal chronological adjustments on questions like the one regarding Sambandar's contemporaneity with Tirumaṅgaimannan[1], — whether the king who allegedly persecuted Appar was Mahēndra-varman I or a later Pallava ruler[2] — Nambiāṇḍār Nambi's contemporaneity with Āditya I or Rājarāja I, and Rāmānuja's alleged persecution by one of the Chōḷa rulers (Vīrarājēndra or Kulōttuṅga I or Kulōttuṅga II). These really do not matter seriously, for they are all within this period, whatever the order in which the alleged events took place. Kambar whose date has been greatly debated, must be a contemporary of Pratāparudra I of Wārangal. Even such clear cases as Māṇikka-vāchagar become subjects of controversy regarding chronology:

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1. Contemporary of Nandivarman II of the 8th century
2. M.S. Ramaswami Aiyangar holds that he was a contemporary of Mahēndravarman II. *Studies in South Indian Jainism* : p.66. But P. Sundaram Pillai has said that Appar and Sambandar were earlier and later contemporaries of Mahēn-dravarman I. *I.A.* Vol.XXV. pp.113, 149; *The age of Tiruñāna-sambandar.*

for some scholars go to the extent of giving him a date in the Saṅgam age or even earlier. These notions do not help us. Kāraikkālammai is an instance of an interesting minor chronological problem. Śēkkiḷār, and before him, Nambiāndār Nambi and Sundarar have included her in the canon. Besides, Sambandar praises the saint.[3] A 9th century date for the saint is impossible, and her works antedating Appar, are included in the *Eleventh Tirumuṟai*. Hence the saint may be given a date prior to Appar. Even then she is fully relevant to our purposes.

The date of Śaṅkara has been a point of controversy. We can well agree with T.V. Mahalingam that in respect of personalities like Śaṅkara there can be no unanimity of opinion as to their dates.[4] So much of emotionalism, subjectivity and sentimentalism is brought to bear upon the dates of hallowed personalities. For instance there is what might appear, the strange suggestion of P.N.Oak that Śaṅkara must be given a 6th century B.C. (!) date. He would choose to set much store by the *Guruparamparai* testimony. D.R. Bhandarkar's dating of Śaṅkara late in the 8th century A.D. seems reasonable.[5] He draws attention to Śaṅkara's reference to one Balavarma in his *Bhāshya* for Sūtra IV: 3, 5, and Balavarma could well be the person of that name mentioned in a copper plate charter of Rāshtrakūta Govinda III. Bhartrihari is criticized by Kumārila, who in turn is criticized by Śaṅkara, and Bhartrihari is known to have died in A.D. 650.

Sundarar was a contemporary of Nandivarman III. He refers to Kōṭpuli, a commander of Nandivarman's army, as his friend. So the Śaiva canon must have attained its final shape in the 9th century.

Thus, in regard to most of the crucial dates, apart from minor issues raised, we are comfortably within our period of study.

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3. *Periyapurāṇam* : 2906
4. T.V.Mahalingam: *Kāñchipuram in Early South Indian History* : p.125
5. *I. A.* Vol. XLI. 1212. *The date of Śaṅkara* : *Vide* also K.V. Subrahmania Aiyer : *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan* p. 14.

The period has been delimited to seven centuries, from the 6th to the 13th, in view of its constituting a historical continuity in the Tamil country. Again it is the most historically authenticated period in the history of the Tamils when they had a separate identity. Many new movements and traditions of government and society had their start during this period, and reached a definitive stage before the end of the period. It stands apart from the Saṅgam age whose social and governmental values were sharply different, and also the succeeding epoch of the Vijayanagar Imperialism which for the first time, brought foreign rule to the Tamil Country, and this resulted in the Tamil country losing, for ever, its separate identity as a political power or a distinct cultural entity, and its getting merged ultimately into the larger stream of Indian national life.

The epigraphic and the foreign notices are clear enough in regard to chronology, except in very rare cases when the king referred to cannot be identified. So these references are strictly contemporary beyond the shadow of any doubt.

The emphasis in this work will naturally be on governmental and social polity, and the common aspects of both the polities relating to the three crowned heads and notable variations would be brought up in an integrated approach.

CHAPTER II
SOURCES

Classification

The sources for a thesis on Medieval Tamil Polity are many and capable of easy classification. They are the epigraphs, monuments, literature, foreign notices, coins and legends. For this period, epigraphy plays a larger role than even literature which is practically the sole source for the polity of the Saṅgam Tamils. From the beginning of the Pallava period literature had become mostly religious in its content, and secularly informative only incidentally. On the other hand, epigraphical evidence, insignificant in the Saṅgam age, is the mainstay of the historian working on medieval Tamil History. In fact, there is such plethora of information in epigraphs (Pallava, Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya, often corroborated, and at times corrected by the epigraphs of other contemporary dynasties), that epigraphical evidence very considerably outweighs the utility of the literature of the period. The monuments which have been dumb witnesses and whose message has only to be guessed with the help of other sources, and to some extent, the coins of the period reflect the aesthetic taste and economic conditions of the people. Accounts of foreign visitors to India like Hiuen Tsang of China, Abu Zaid of Arabia and particulary those of the Venetian Marco Polo are very valuable. The legends and the myths, however, have to be carefully and correctly re-interpreted and reconstructed to be able to identify the historical elements in them; and this requires 'imagination' on the part of historians.

Literary sources

The value of a literary source can be determined only with reference to the author of the source. Though it is difficult to measure precisely the nature and amount of bias which characterise any source, a certain kind of source material, viz., mythical and religious, will always be open to doubt and controversies. It must also be remembered that the intellectual *élite* which creates literature is susceptible not only to inherited prejudices but also to exaggeration; and this naturally affects historical truth.

In the medieval period, the majority of the epigraphs were inscribed at royal instance. The literary sources are either frankly religious (either devotional or *purānic*) or neutral, like works on grammar of language. There are a few works of quasi-historical nature with an epic structure on the basis of some historical facts. But none of the sources is free of the element of exaggeration, flattery and distorted truth. There is no work which can be called purely historical. Therefore the responsibility of the historian of this period is very difficult indeed.

Taking literature first, it can be classified as follows : 1. devotional literature; 2. Tamil epics; 3. hagiology; 4. historical eulogy; 5. Tamil versions of epics in other languages and 6. grammar of the language and of literature. Of these, the *Tēvāram, Nālāyira Divyaprabandam, Tiruvāchagam* etc., belong to the first group. *Nilakēśi, Chūḷāmaṇi, Kuṇḍalakēśi,* and *Chintāmaṇi* belong to the second category; The *Periyapurāṇam* is the most important hagiological work. The *Muttoḷḷāyiram, Nandikkalambagam, Kaliṅgattuparaṇi, Mūvarulā* are historical eulogies. *Peruṅgadai, Perurdēvanār Bhāratam* and *Kambarāmāyaṇam* are Tamil versions of Sanskrit works of epic proportions. The commentary on *Iṟaiyanār Ahapporuḷ, Viraśōḷiyam, Yāpparuṅgalam* and *Tirukkōvaiyār* belong to the sixth category.

While dealing with literature, it must be remembered that the authors did not consciously distort history, for even that attitude would be possible only for historically-minded persons. Whatever distortions exist in literature must have been caused unconsciously and naturally by the motivations of the authors. The superior claims of religion, theology, metaphysics and everything pertaining to the realm of the suprahuman will automatically denigrate history. A careful sifting of these factors can save the evaluation of historical material from subjective influences which spoil the validity of historical conclusions.

The literature of the period at once raises the question of credibility. The mythological is an integral part of *Purānic* literature, and to separate the legendary from the factual is a hard task; but methodologically, it will not be proper to reject an entire source because it is vitiated in parts. The *Periyapurāṇam* and the commentary on *Iṟaiyanār Ahapporuḷ* are examples of sources containing a valuable core of historical material, but involved in an incredible

maze of palpably absurd stories. In handling the *Periyapurāṇam* material, care has been taken to apply principles of hermeneutics relevant to it.

The thesis is concerned with institutional and social history; so in spite of its availability in abundance, epigraphy is only incidentally useful. Literature can be expected to yield more information on our area of study, but even there one cannot be always certain whether an author is in the realm of conventions or hard realities; e.g., the *Peruṅgadai* mention of the *Aimpeuṅkuḻu* and the *Eṇpērāyam* can be a mere reference to a feature of the Saṅgam governmental polity or the reflection of a contemporary reality. In the case of *Kambarāmāyaṇam*, there is the suspicion that the author is projecting the local environment and norms into an essentially North Indian epic; but to what extent, and in what manner he has done so, cannot be stated categorically. Historical conclusions based on suspicions, feelings etc. are always questionable. In the utilization of the source material, the following views have been borne in mind: R.I. Crane said, "Social history centering round a study of polity will be concerned not only with institutions in their social *milieu* but also with the social *milieu* itself. It is the personality of the society which needs perfection and with reference to its various manifestations."[1] Max Weber's suggestion, that Hindu society is an ideal type, applies also to the Tamil society of our period, and religion during that period stood for a whole way of life of the Tamils.

The Periyapuranam

A special word about the *Periyapurāṇam* is necessary in a discussion about the medieval sources. That text contains abundant material which is concealed in a mass of mythologies. There are two methods which are literary devices employed by hagiologists and Paurāṇikas. 1. the expression of simple secular fact in terms of religious behaviour and 2. the creation of religio-mythical situation out of innocent statements like the *Naripariyāk-kiya* of Māṇikkavāchagar and *Namachchivāyappadigam* of Appar. A seasoned historian can understand the symbolism employed in these works and extract historically valuable information.

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1. O.P. Bhatnagar (ed): *Studies in Social History, Modern India: Technique and Method in Social History.*

There are three groups of characters among the saints treated in the *Periyapurāṇam*. The first is the group to which Nandanār belongs. In this case miracles like entering fire are central to the story. If these are taken away little will remain. Sambandar belongs to the second group. Miracles are associated with him, like his ability to compose verses at the age of three *extempore* and his final exit through fire. But a Sambandar *minus* these stories could be imagined, and his life story has value to the historian; Iḷayāṅguḍi Māraṇāyānār belongs to the third group. The incredible character of the story apart, the sidelights are historically of some value. The historian gets into real problems in regard to the first where miracle is *the* core of the story, but the second and the third categories can yield *some* material. Hence the historian has to use the *Periyapurāṇam* cautiously.

The *Guruparamparais* of the Vaishṇavas, which emerge as a class of literature by the end of our period, allegedly are a collection of traditional material on the Āḷvārs and the Āchāryas. They can be utilized with caution as they deal with the doings of real makers of the religion.

It is most heartening to the historian to have a work like the *Mattavilāṡaprahaṡanam* which reflects, possibly, with a high degree of accuracy, contemporary social developments, and gives a very good picture of certain facets of society.

Of the foreign sources Marco Polo is easily the most useful. As Eileen Power says, "It is almost impossible to speak too highly either of the extent of his observation or of his accuracy. It is true that he repeats some of the usual travellers' tales, and that when he reports from hearsay, he not infrequently makes mistakes, but when he had observed with his own eyes, he was almost always accurate. He had a great opportunity, and he was great enough to make the most of it."[2]

Epigraphy and Numismatics

Inscriptions, especially of this period, are superior to literature since, in the first place, most of the original inscriptions are not generally tampered with, and are strictly contemporary to most of the events mentioned in them; and in the secon place there are

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2. Quoted in A.E. Newton: *Travel and Travellers in the Middle Ages*: p. 135

also references to some social practices though they are often incidental. Rājarāja I initiated the system of elaborate stone inscriptions in set terms of chief events on temple walls.[3] The *praśastis* contain a brief account of royal achievements and are really useful. But the social historian of the period can tap very little information from the epigraphs. But we do have inscriptions like the Bāhūr inscription of Nṛupatuṅgavarman, the Tiruvālaṅgāḍu plates of Rājēndra and the Tirumukkūdal inscription of Vīrarājēndra which *do* throw a flood of light on some social institutions of the period.

Numismatics has a strictly limited range of utility. The legends and the symbols on the coins help us to relate them to the concerned dynasties or kings and to make shrewd inferences about contemporary conditions; but such data can be useful only for corroborative purposes. The *Periyapurāṇam* mentions Tuḷaikkanaham, which means gold coin bearing royal impress or a piece of gold bored through. This is borne out by some coins bored through, belonging to this period.

Apart from the above mentioned original sources, i.e., epigraphic as well as literary (and it is claimed that it is a distinction of this works that literature supported by epigraphy has sustained it), we have authoritative works of contemporary historians of rupute. K.A.N.Sastri is the most dependable authority on medieval Tamilnad. His *Cōḷas*, the *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom, Foreign Notices* and *Development of Religion in South India* are works whose authority is beyond question and whose assertions have to be carefully considered even if the weight of the present available evidence in respect of some of them would warrant their correction. Tamil writers like T.V.S.Pandarattar and M.Rajamanickam Pillai are equally respectable authorities. The Pallava period has inspired a good volume of historical literature on it; viz., R.Gopalan's *History of the Pallavas of Kāñchi*, C.Minakshi's *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas* and T.V.Mahalingam's *Kāñchipuram in Early South Indian History*. The structure of this work on Medieval Tamil Polity owes not a little to the *Saṅgam Polity* of N. Subrahmaniam while the *Hindu Polity* of Jayaswal and the *Mauryan Polity* of V.R.R. Dikshitar have been utilized with caution. The vast mass of epigraphic material, both

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3. *Vide* The corpus of inscriptions collected by T.N. Subrahmanian in his *South Indian Temple Inscriptions*.

published and unpublished, along with the editorial comments of learned epigraphists (which are our secondary source here) has been utilized. The numerous learned journals listed in the bibliography and a few unpublished theses have been used as source material for this work. The structure which may be considered special to this work and value judgements which may be detected in it are the author's own.

CHAPTER III

MEDIEVAL TAMIL POLITY

Every society develops a political system which is the natural product of its antecedent history; and the histories of societies being different, their systems are distinct from one another in details, though, as human systems, they are founded on basically common values. The similarity consists in the realization of the need for a civil government for organized societies. Beyond that, how exactly that government is to be constituted, where the sovereignty should be located, what the status of the ruled with reference to the ruler should be, how the power should be distributed in the governmental polity etc., are matters decided by the social traditions which have developed, as well as by the geography and the ecology concerned. When new factors interfere with the natural growth of a system, the system might yield to their pressure and undergo a change.

In the case of medieval Tamil polity, the governmental system both resembled and differed from, the earlier Śaṅgam polity. Both were monarchies surrounded by chieftaincies which owed loyalty, at least apparently, to these monarchies, and were essentially autocratic without necessarily being tyrannical. This tradition however was more the result of their religious credulity than political convictions. But since the social consequences were the same, the motivation mattered little. This situation generates a dichotomy between ideal powers and their actual exercise. "In a theoretical discussion it is methodologically unscientific to be constantly confusing the ideal with the practical", and this is what many historians, who have had anything to do with the study of Hindu polity, have been doing. This is being done in two ways: 1. Historical realities are rationalized with reference to the Śāstras; and 2. the Śāstras themselves are reinterpreted with reference to historical facts. Neither is the correct approach.

K.A.N. Sastri referring to Chōla society speaks of a distinction between 'state and society'.[1] A fundamental characteristic of Hindu society is that it is a totally integrated system which has internal divisions like religious, caste and economic all of which become irrelevant to the totalitarian hold of a certain way of life (*dhārmic*). This was fully common to state and society, so that they were just two wings of a bird called the Hindu *dhārmic* society. The pre-Hindu aborigines, and the non-Hindu side-lines, did not interfere with the zoology of this 'bird'. So a distinction between state and society except in their barely operative aspects will not be valid, for both functioned under the auspices of *dharma* with its sanctions and within the limits prescribed by it. Here again to remember the dichotomy between theory and practice referred to above will be helpful.

A society, which has ultimate ideas like the need for a hierarchical caste-system, and which cannot spell it out in its earthly outlines, without provoking opposition from the lower-downs in that scale, has necessarily to create myths, to keep up the camouflage of divine sanction for such arrangements. The divinity of kingship is one such; the sanctity of caste is another. The position of women had to be kept low, if the domestic power structure, and finally the social power structure, were to be maintained at the desired conservative level. The language of myths becomes natural even in the context of fairly innocuous things by sheer habit. When myths harden in the human mind they take on the aspect of realities, and though meaningless in themselves become meaningful in their effects.

The king was, by design, to be the sole rule of the world (*Ēka Chakrādhipati — Ulagam muḷuduḍaiyān*) but happens by accident to be one among many; and this irredentist situation must be changed by bringing the rest of the world under his umbrella by conquests which must not be called aggression. But every king had this kind of an arrangement, and inter-state conflicts of the kind we know of in medieval Tamil history became common. It is not to be imagined that there was this 'ideological'

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1. K. A. N. Sastri : *The Cōḷās* : p. 461. He was not quite right in speaking of an Indian society; so far as social arrangements went, it was just Hindu, no more and no less.

basis for every conquest, and such conscious argument on these lines existed in the mind of every conquering king, but it worked at subconscious level.[2]

K.A.N. Sastri has again a view that "Indian society did not commit to the care of government anything more than the tasks of police and justice."[3] But the theoreticians,[4] describing the king's onerous duties, liken his fate to that of one who has to drive his chariot through a marshy land, i.e., if he is careless he as well as the vehicle will be destroyed — an analogy not much different from the one in the English expression the 'captain of the ship of state'. There is enough evidence besides, to show that the kings were held responsible for everything good and bad that occurred in and to society.[5] So they were responsible really for much more than policing and judging, and if they took on themselves more than these, there was neither rule nor tool to prevent it.

There were particularly two special aspects of governmental arrangements in the Tamil country for which parallels are not easily got elsewhere: 1. The rule of five princes simultaneously in the Pāṇḍyan country leading to a kind of pentarchy and 2. the Chōḷa practice of joint rule by father and son for a period of time during which the father learnt to give up, and the son to take on, the functions of a ruler. In regard to the first, apart from the better known references[6] to this system of simultaneous rule, we have mention of *five* Pāṇḍyas in the *meykkīrtis* of Kulōttuṅga I.[7] While it is possible that political

2. The opposing chieftains were given the option either to pay tribute or to surrender their fortress. *Nandikkalambakam*: 72. This demand for payment of tribute comes naturally to one who considers himself already an overlord.

3. K.A.N. Sastri: *The Cōḷas* : p. 461

4. For example, *Chintāmaṇi* 2909

5. The *Sāntiparva* 66/23-27; *Manu* 7/80; Asoka's 2nd Rock Edict as well as numerous statements in Tamil texts.

6. 23 and 30 of 1909; 12 of 1901; 27 of 1905; 14 of 1900.

7. T.V.S. Pandarattar thinks that the divisions of the Pāṇḍyan kingdom into five nearly sovereign parts ruled over by members of the Pāṇḍyan family occurred during the political confusion which preceded the accession of Kulōttuṅga I. But it is certain that it is an older institution.

confusion and instability caused the plural monarchy, the
near sovereign rule of five princes itself led certainly to civil
wars. The Pāṇḍyan kingdom had more than its share of civil
wars,[8] as also disturbances of other kinds.[9] Other parts of the
country were not however entirely free from these troubles.[10]
The association of the crown prince with government after a
formal coronation signifies status that included the semblance
and even the substance of royal power. We know of this
practice from the early days of the Chōḷa Imperial rule, but
as an instance, one can mention Vikramachōḷa's co-rule with
his father Kulōttuṅga I.

A certain aspect of the diplomacy practised by medieval
Tamil kings related to diplomatic matrimonial alliances. The
Pallava-Rāshṭrakūṭa,[11] Chōḷa-Rāshṭrakūṭa,[12] and Chōḷa-Eastern
Chāḷukya[13] matrimonial alliances however did not yield the
expected results in any but the last case i.e., more durable
peace among rulers of neighbouring states for the obvious
reason that political considerations are always superior to and
more pressing than, personal and familial ones in inter-state
relations.

There is an instance in medieval Tamil history of a diplomatic
revolution. The interest which Ceylon showed in the affairs of
the mainland has been quite continuous. Often the Ceylonese
had been victims of Tamil aggression; but there were also waves of
Ceylonese counter-aggression, though a positive interference in
the succession issues of the mainland kingdoms is somewhat
unusual. But in the first civil war in the Pāṇḍyan country,
the interest which Parākramabhāhu evinced in espousing the

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8. As seen during the Ceylonese involvement in Pāṇḍyan politics
   and during the Muslim invasion.
9. Rebellions and rioting, 34 of 1910; communal disputes, 9
   of 1917; local fights, 34 of 1915.
10. Internecine troubles, 49 of 1902; 8 of 1891; Pāṇḍyan rebellion,
    40 of 1909.
11. Nandivarman II married a Rāshtrakūṭa princess.
12. Āditya I married in the Rāshtrakūṭa family.
13. Rājarāja I inaugurated the system of marriages with the
    northern state which endured till the two dynasties came
    to an end.

cause of one party against the other, even at the risk of inviting Chōḷa reprisals, is an instance in point. With this turn of events in Ceylon, what was usually a bilateral quarrel, became a tripartite contest bringing Ceylon practically into the vortex of mainland politics. Thereafter the Chōḷas befriended whichever side the Ceylonese did not support.

The principle of balance of power, though not mentioned in theory, operated in practice. It was not articulated as an inter-state behaviour pattern, but power balancing came with third-party interference quite naturally. This is most noticeable in the case of the Hōysala interference in Chōḷa-Pāṇḍya affairs. The Hōysala intervention on behalf of the Chōḷa i.e., the weaker power, shows that they understood the crux of the principle i.e., of balancing power, in a situation of contests between a stronger and a weaker power, the intervening power shall support the weaker as against the stronger.

In the medieval monarchical polity, the king's government was arbitrary, and was motivated by royal self-interest. Concepts like public right and public wrong were not known; for these are governed by the rule of law; it was a non-law-making polity, the law having been crystallized in the *dharma* and being unalterable by human agency. This was both an advantage and a disadvantage to unscrupulous kings — advantage because he could commit an iniquity and take shelter behind the *dharma*; disadvantage because he could not create new iniquities. So the breakdown of the *dharma* followed the violation of the social norms which the *dharma* upheld. The *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* says that there was a condition of socio-political chaos (or anarchy) before Kulōttuṅga I's accession, and that his rule restored the desired order. The text says the chaos was caused by: 1. the *Vēdas* not being chanted, and sacrifices being given up; 2. *Manu dharma* turning topsy-turvy; 3. inter-caste marriages, and the social hierarchy being upset; 4. temples remaining without worship; 5. women losing chastity; and 6. in short, all ways in which the prescribed way of life deteriorates.[14]

Certain aspects of the king-chieftain relationship are likely to create the impression that the medieval Tamil polity was feu-

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14. *Kaliṅgattuparaṇi* : 258-260

dal. There were two kinds of vassal chief in the Tamil state: 1. the hereditary vassals and 2. the newly subjugated subordinate chieftains. "Such chieftains often found themselves in possession of considerable areas of territory allotted to them by the king, partly in recognition of their past services, and partly with a view to enabling them to add a contingent of soldiers to the forces of the king in times of need".[15] This sounds *feudal*, no doubt, but there was no uniform pattern of relationship nor a philosophy governing such relations. In fact, there was no fixed obligation of a feudal nature on which a political generalization would be possible. The king-vassal relationship in each case was *ad hoc*. No doubt a compact between two chieftains by which each swears mutual loyalty and fealty will necessarily be aimed against the king which is a feudal tendency. This again prevailed independent of the feudal structure for such a structure did not exist.

There are two opposing views in regard to the feudal nature of such situations. L. Gopal says, "the state structure in Ancient India has been described by some scholars in terms connected with feudalism. This tendency to describe the peculiar social, political and economic institutions of India by employing terms from Western history, can be misleading".[16] Among Indian scholars, R.S. Sharma is the one who is very emphatic about the feudal nature of even Indian institutions. He follows the line of Marc Bloch who holds[17] that "it is by no means impossible that societies different from our own should have passed through a phase closely resembling the European feudal. If so, it is legitimate to call them feudal during that phase". Marc Bloch however had the Japanese example in mind. Marxian thinkers feel they are under an obligation to show that there was a feudal age in the evolution of every society and that it preceded the capitalist. The existence of features resembling the feudal will not be enough to label the society 'feudal'. Some caution is necessary to qualify this system, at least, as quasi-feudal. G.P. Sinha aptly says, "Feudalism cannot be an appropriate characterisation......, since the economic side of European feudalism was not developed

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15. K. A. N. Sastri : *The Cōḷas* : p. 373
16. *Feudal polity in Ancient India* : *J. I. H.* Silver Jubilee No. 1963, p. 405
17. *Feudal Society* : p. 446

in the Indian organization. It was more or less a tributary system."[18]

The medieval social structure in its political manifestation was power-oriented, and not necessarily expressed in terms of law. Though ultimately, all authority, derives from power, the Tamil polity was rather bare-facedly so, being devoid of the trappings of law or modern systems of public decision-making.[19]

18. *Post-Gupta polity* — A. D. 500-750: p. 219
19. Burton Stein distinguishes between two kinds of power centres: 1. that is the nuclear area with only the highest links to the great warrior families of Kāñchi and Tanjore, the capitals of the Pallava and the Chōḷa dynasties; 2. the other type of power centre consisted of isolated, tribally organized, upland and forest people.
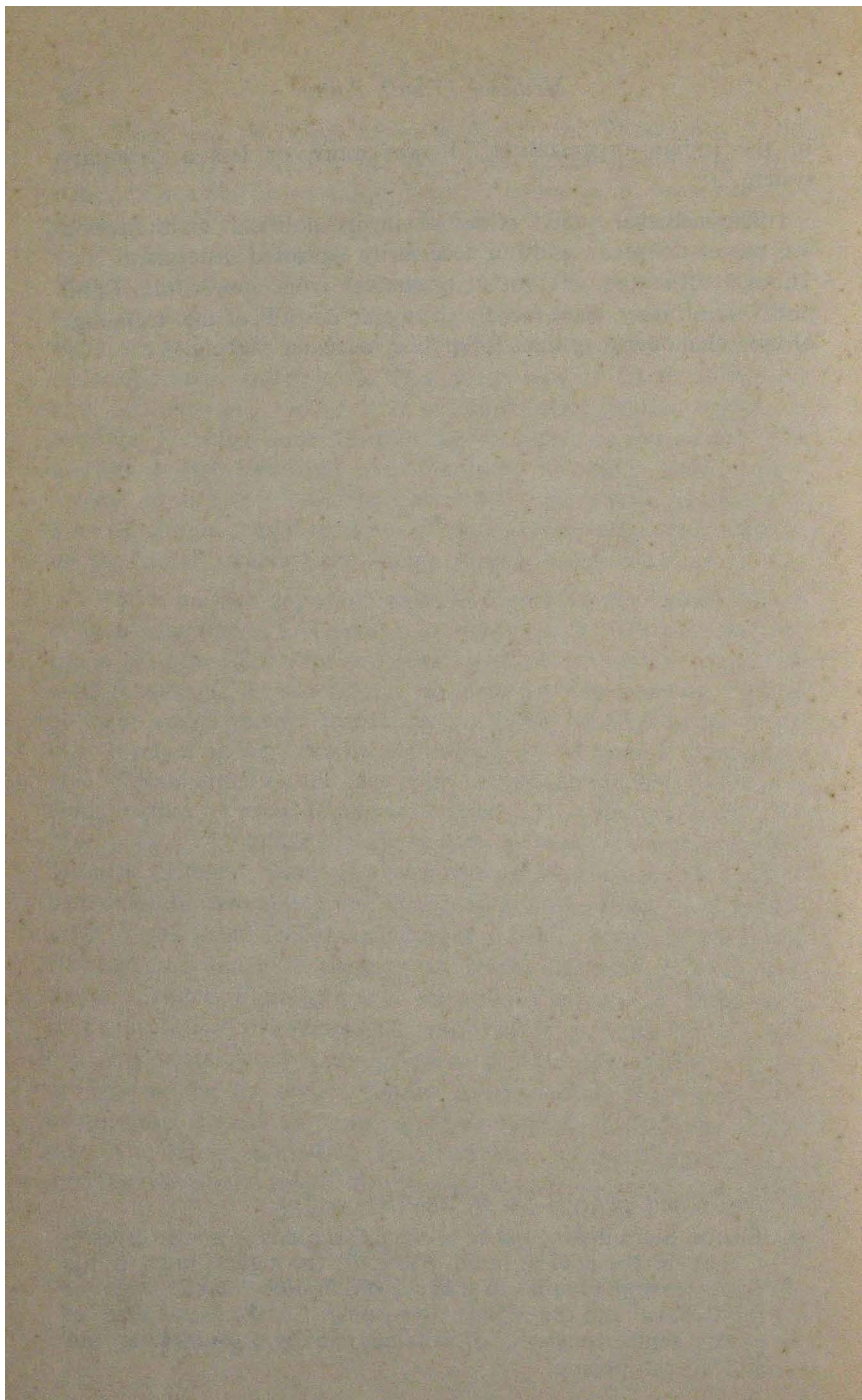
PART 1

Governmental Polity

CHAPTER IV
GOVERNMENT AT THE CENTRE

A. THE KING

Mythical origin

The origins of most of the ancient Indian monarchies are interesting for two reasons: 1. myths were women around such origins to impress the subjects, and 2. attempts were made to perpetuate them in religion, literature and art. The Tamil monarchies of the medieval period were but a continuation of Śaṅgam monarchies, the Chōḷas claiming a solar origin,[1] the Pāṇḍyas a lunar[2] and the Chēras deriving themselves from the fire-god.[3]

The Tamil royal families may have descended from ancient chiefs, fisherfolk or agricultural chiefs. In course of time, after the monarchical system of government had got stabilized, mythical origins substituted the real ones because the monarchs wanted to give themselves the halo of hoary and sacred ancestry. The tradition of mythical origins had been in vogue from pre-historic times, and society had invested royalty with divine sanctity. So the question of any popular challenge of any superhuman origin never arose in those times. In the case of the Pallavas, their origin, according to a tradition, is traced to a person born of a union between a Nāga princess and a Chōḷa ruler.[4] The Pallavas, known to epigraphy, however, traced their ancestry to Drōṇa the son of Bharadvāja, and in that way claimed a Brahminical descent.[5] Patently these two

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1. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* XII: 4: Kulōttuṅga I was called Ravi-Kulōttama
2. *Pāṇḍikkōvai* : 47
3. Compare the Agnikula of the Rajputs
4. *Vide.* S.K.Iyengar's preface to R. Gopalan's *History of the Pallavas of Kāñchi.*
5. The Kaśākkuḍi plates, the Vēlūrpāḷayam plates etc.; perhaps the Pallavas were after all a non-brahminical dynasty assuming the Purōhita gotra.

origins are confused mythologies; and as if not satisfied with this, they gave themselves a third origin, according to the interpretation of some historians, by which the first Pallava was the offspring of an Aśvattāma-Nāga alliance. Possibly, Brahminical descent for the Pallavas, the truth of it apart, might indicate a significant stage of Sanskritization on the part of the ruling families in Tamilnad.

The *Mahābhārata* says that three classes of persons may lay claim to sovereign authority: 1. persons of royal blood; 2. heroes; 3. commanders of royal armies.[6] Really scions of royal families, successful generals in war[7] or crafty politicians at court are found to be the only persons succeeding to power : the first through the principle of legitimacy and the second and third by sheer personal ability. Once monarchical rule is conceded, it may be supposed that some system regulating succession would operate in the polity. It might be primogeniture or nomination by the outgoing king; in any case, if the accepted order is violated, claims by royal authority could be based on revolutionary theory only.

It is well known that in the Tamil governmental polity, practically every dynasty ruling in historical times had proto-historical origins. The Chōḷas, the Pāṇḍyas, the Chēras, the Gaṅgas, the Kaḍambas (if they were the same as the Kaḍambar of Sangam times), the Pallavas (if they could be equated with the Tiraiyars) were all of ancient 'mythical' origin. Some scholars are inclined to derive the Pallavas from overseas sources.[8]

Divinity of kings

The Tamils held their kings in reverence bordering on worship. The poets equated them with the Māyōn or Tirumāl, as the latter is the Ruler of the Universe; i.e., all kings had an element of

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6. *Vide* also Spellman. J.W.: *Political Theory of Ancient India. A study of kingship from the earliest times to c.A.D.* 300: p.43. The classification here is, extremely defective for kings could lead armies and army commanders could be heroes. Further this does not shed any light on the royal origins.
7. *Muttoḷḷāyiram* : 1390
8. T.V.Mahalingam: *Journal of the Madras University*, Section A Vol. XXXII No. 2. *Pallava Rājasimha and South East Asia.*

Vishṇu in them.[9] The king acquired divinity evidently because he was performing the divine function of protection of the virtuous and punishment of the wicked. It has always been a moot point whether divinity was vested with royal functions, or royalty acquired divine functions. Whatever be the truth of it, the equation of king and god becomes complete with the application of the concepts of Dasāṅga, the *Soḍasopachāra* and the introduction of the regalia and paraphernalia common to both divinity and royalty.[10] The Dēvarāja cult also becomes meaningful in this context. A.L. Basham is forthright in his views on the divinity of kingship in India.[11] Charles Drekmeier, however, is not sure of this. He would admit that "the kings were held in great esteem as if they were gods, but the theory of a divine right to rule was never held in India."[12] The distinction which the latter draws seems to be somewhat tenuous. since temples were built in honour of departed kings and their images were worshipped. Verily kings became gods. The ascription of divinity to kings was due to "the Hindu pathological dread of anarchy", and the feeling that any king was better than none, and every king was to be supported even by conceding divine status to him. Myths were created by which kings performed rituals associated with divinity. When Kulōttuṅga III placed his foot on the enemy's head, it was perhaps not personal humiliation, but a re-enacting of Vishṇu's act of placing His foot on the head of Mahābali. These rituals deepened popular faith in and provided sustenance to 'the divinity that doth hedge the king'. The king is called Bhūbuk, in Sanskrit, 'swallower of the earth' - an idea familiar to the Tamils also. This idea is analogous to the story of Krishṇa swallowing particles of earth in one of his childish pranks. In Tamil literary usage the term Kōil stands for the palace as well as temple, since 'Kō' like 'Iṛai' is king as well as god.

Thus it was easy for the kings to give themselves divine origins and for their subjects unquestioningly to accept them. The medieval Tamil kings had at least legendary antecedents and needed

9. *Nandikkalambakam*: 64   10. *Kōilnānmaṇimālai* : 4

11. A.L. Basham : *The wonder that was India* pp. 85-89

12. Charles Drekmeier : *Kingship and community in early India* : pp. 230-231; 250-252

little justification for their title to royalty. They came of dynasties cherished and revered in the memories of the people. Even then, new respectable origins for royal dynasties, either on the basis of the older ones, or entirely new versions helped sustain popular imagination with a sense of the importance they should attach to rulers not only for themselves but for their great and venerable antecedents.

Eligibility and succession

The universal preference for the first-born male in matters of succession to property in general, and to the throne in particular, made primogeniture a prime consideration in the choice of a successor to the throne. Among the Tamils, even in the Śaṅgam age, the first son of the king was most eligible to succeed his father. This continued to be the ruie in post-Śaṅgam times also, though exceptions to this rule were not uncommon. If an exception was to be made, special reasons were required to be stated; but if the first born was overlooked, and another succeeded without obvious justification, the situation must be considered revolutionary, and the usurping successor, in the Greek sense, 'a tyrant'. This question has been discussed in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhārata*.[13] The primogeniture of Rāma and of Duryōdhana was their title to succession;[14] and if these had been disputed on valid grounds, the claimants must have accepted the position that the kingdom was the private property of the king to be disposed of as he pleased. Primogeniture in the Chēra country was accepted as valid title in the case of Śeṅguṭṭuvan; but in the post-Śaṅgam period, numerous instances of fraternal succession, and indiscriminate claims to the throne, occur. One notable instance of the son of a ruler being overlooked, and the throne captured by a descendant of a collateral branch of the royal family, is that of Nandivarman II Pallavamalla. The Pāṇḍyan armies, fighting on Pallava soil, really supported the cause of Chitramāya and it took some time before Nandivarman could stabilize himself. But if the latest theory of Ramesan[15] is to be accepted - and there is little

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13. These epics were done into Tamil during the period of our study and the discussion must have been familiar to the Tamils.

14. *Bhāratavenba* : 35

15. N. Ramesan : *Studies in Medieval Deccan History* : p. 51

reason why it should not be - Nandivarman becomes Paramēśvara-
varman's son, and the dispute is one between the first born and
the second. But even then, we do not know who the first born was.
A classic example of disputed succession is the bypassing of
Ariñjaya in favour of Gaṇḍaıāditya. Whatever be the merits of
that case, the continued rule of the Chōḷa country by the successors
of Ariñjaya, with the solitary interlude of Uttamachōḷa's reign,
confirms the absence of steadfast principles governing succession
to the throne. This is further confirmed by the confusion that
marks the succession of Kulōttuṅga III. Primogeniture or no,
succession was to be on the spear-side; but the *Kaliṅgattuparaṇi*[16]
says that Kulōttuṅga I who belonged to the distaff-side of the
Chōḷa family ruled the Chōḷa kingdom by 'right'; by what 'right',
it does not say, and we can only guess. It was evidently the right
of conquest.

Among the Pāṇḍyas, a different situation seems to have pre-
vailed. The joint-rule of the kingdom by five monarchs, a sort of
pentarchy, is discountenanced by K.A.N. Sastri[17] who toes the line
with L. D. Swamikkannu Pillai [18] and Sewell in this regard.[19] But
the weight of evidence in favour of joint-rule by five seems to be
overwhelming. The *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* mentions the 'five Pāṇḍyas'.
Marco Polo says, from personal knowledge, that five princes ruled
the Pāṇḍyan country when he visited the land. "There are five
crowned kings who are all own brothers born of one father and of
one mother."[20] The traditional title 'Pañchavar' meaning 'the Five'
for the Pāṇḍyas is also significant.[21] Scholars who have dealt with
this problem have taken rigid and extreme stands - either that the
Pāṇḍyan polity was a single-monarchical polity, and any one who
might be deemed a ruler contemporaneously with the real king
was no more than a chieftain, as Sewell holds, or that the country
was being ruled by five sovereign rulers though belonging to one

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16. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* : 2
17. K.A.N. Sastri : *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom:* p. 158
18. *I.A.* Vol. XLII, p.166   19. *Ibid.* Vol. XLIV, p. 176
20. *Travels of Marco Polo:* p. 293
21. It is tempting to associate the Pañchavar with the Pāṇḍavas or
    derive the word from their rule over the five tracts of land;
    but in view of the five ruler theory 'Pañchavar' must be deemed
    to stand for the Pentarchons.

family, as Marco Polo would testify. The truth seems to be that, for the sake of easy and efficient administration the country was divided into many (usually five) parts, each placed under the rule of a member of the royal family, the most assertive ruling from the major capital. It is not imperative that a monarchical polity should be completely centralized. Division of sovereignty pragmatically, on grounds of convenience, can be imagined. This near-equal division of royal powers among members of the same family naturally fostered conditions of civil war, which, historically was the case, in the Pāṇḍyan country.

The throne could be claimed not only by customary right but by conquest. In the case of the Chōḷa occupation of the Pallava country, it was the former, and in the case of Kulōttuṅga I, it was the latter. Any unusual form of succession is rationalized and justified by stories of popular approval etc. The tendency to bypass minor crown princes in the Chōḷa period was quite common. But the fiction of the 'legitimate' ruler was always kept in view; e.g., when Rājarāja II chose Vikramachōḷa's grandsons to succeed him, the formula 'since no proper successor to the throne is available' was adopted. The succession to the throne being decided and arranged by popular representatives, inviting a suitable prince to occupy the throne, does not seem to have carried much conviction in spite of the sculptures in the Vaikuntha Perumāḷ temple.[22] The choice of a king by election did not exist during that period, except that it does in the imagination of some modern romantic historians, keen on importing modern notions into ancient polity.[23]

Interregnums were not unknown. When Adhirājēndra died there was an interregnum of disputed succession until Kulōttuṅga I took over. Earlier, there had been an interregnum of confusion immediately after Rājēndra II. At least as far as we know there was really no arrangement to govern the country during the interregnum or any provision for any regency when the king was physically or mentally ill. The activities of Pallavarāya immediately after the

22. In view of Dr. Ramesan's latest discoveries there is need for reinterpreting the sculptures and the introductory part of Nandivarman's charters. These sculptures were the handiwork of a successful monarch and implications are obvious.
23. The acclamation of an achieved fact was a formality, in fact a ritual. *S.I.I.* Vol.IV.

death of Rājarāja II cannot constitute regency, for he merely pro-
tected the wives and children of the deceased king from the wrath
of the nominated one; otherwise he is not known to have ruled over
the kingdom.[24] It is doubtful, even when primogeniture was accep-
ted as the principle of succession, if the first born of the first queen
was the most qualified to succeed; we do hear of *Paṭṭattaraśi* i.e.,
the queen whose son is the legal heir-apparent, or is at least ex-
pected to succeed, and also of a Kōpperundēvi, meaning the chief
queen, and Vaḷipperundēvi, a junior queen.[25] On what basis the
status of the queen was decided, whether the first wife was entitled
to become queen-mother, or whether the king's most favourite wife
was entitled to that position - these are not clear.

The kings, in their might, decided, whenever they wished to,
the succession to the throne, and the decisions were never challen-
ged. This is evident from the choice of Vikramachōḷa, the fourth
son, as his successor by Kulōttuṅga I, overlooking the legitimate
claims of the first son Chōḷagaṅga.

Heirs to the throne

Unusual situations apart, there was a distinct priority order of
succession of the heir-apparent, and after him, a number of heirs-
presumptive like the other sons of the king and in the event of the
ruling king being sonless, the king's brothers and their sons in the
order of seniority.

It was usual for the king to associate the crown-prince with the
affairs of the government and designate him heir-apparent. Though
this system was common to all monarchies in the Tamil country,
the Chōḷas had a special system of anointing the heir-apparent as
Iḷaṅgo (junior ruler) and officially associating him on nearly an
equal footing with the king in all affairs of government. This meant
co-rulership of father and son over the kingdom from the moment
of the appointment of the crown-prince to the death of the king.

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24. T.V. Mahalingam in his *South Indian Polity*, pp. 47-48 however
cites this instance and says "during the minority of a king or
when he was weak and found wanting in ability the govern-
ment was carried on by a regency council presided over by a
regent or Chief Minister'(!) 'who did everything on behalf of
the ward."

25. *Peruṅgadai* : IV: 3: 109

During this period, royal orders were issued in the name of either, and the prince also assumed royal titles. At the same time, as did Rājēndra I, the crown-prince waged most of the wars and actively assisted in the administration; but if there were other princes equally able, they were also given responsible assignments Sundara Chōḷa was made governor of Madurai by Rājēndra, and the prince took the title Jaṭāvarman Sundarachōḷa Pāṇḍyan. This title suggests that the Chōḷa viceroy created a new convention by adopting the traditional alternate prefix to the Pāṇḍyan name Jaṭāvarman.

In whatever capacity the princes served, they were only equipping themselves for their possible future role as king. The princes were given the political and military training appropriate to royalty.[26]

There seems to have been no age-limit for succession to the throne.

Coronation

The coronation was the most important function in the career of royalty. It consisted in crowning the king. (*Corona* - the official royal head gear, in Tamil, *Muḍi*). The ceremony itself was known as '*Muḍiśūṭṭuviḷā*'. It was an elaborate one involving the anointment of the king who was seated on the throne with a fillet (*Paṭṭam*) wound round his head, while he held the sceptre.[27] The white umbrella was held as a canopy over his head, the fly-whisk was waved, the flag with the appropriate emblem was raised[28] and priests chanted the ritual formula of royal oath. The crowning act was the act of placing the crown, though the headband was equally important. As the crown symbolized royalty, the Pāṇḍyan king Rājasimha in order to save his crown from the Chōḷa enemy deposited it with the Ceylonese ruler; and Rājēndra I, conqueror of Ceylon, who was eager to possess it, recovered it. The coronation, though ultimately secular in its significance, proclaiming the commencement of a new reign, was given a religious import to instil a spirit of devoted submission in the subjects. If the king was married, and if he considered

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26. *Ibid.* I: 37: 26-41   27. 136 of 1919
28. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: V: 266

the queen worthy of sharing the throne,[29] she too was crowned on the same occasion. We are told that the queens assumed titles like Ulagamuḷududaiyāḷ and Bhuvanimuḷududaiyāḷ. The *Meykīrtis* speak of the queens enjoying practically equal status with the king; but the *Meykīrtis*, by themselves, need not be taken at their face value because, viewed in the background of the notions developed in the medieval Tamil country, they may be an exaggeration.

The Brahmins, usually the *Purohits*, performed the anoint-ment and placed the crown on the king's head.[30]   There is the episode of the Brahmin priests of the Chidambaram temple refu-sing to crown a non-Chōḷa in the *Periyapurāṇam* (*Kūṟṟuvanāyanār*). This means that participation of Brahmins in the act of coro-nation was most essential.   In the earlier Pallava period, the Ghaṭikayar (the executive of the college in Kāñchi) played the chief role in the coronation ceremony.

The king assumed new titles at the time of the corona-tion, - e.g., Paramēśvara became Nandivarman;[31] Aruḷmoḷivar-man became Rājarāja; Rājēndra became Kulōttuṅga, etc. This ceremony was held normally in the palace in any of the capitals, occasionally in a temple, like the one in Chidambaram; and, on an unique occasion, on the battlefield.[32]

It may be presumed that when the crown prince was installed in office, a mini-coronation took place; and perhaps the reigning monarch administered the oath of office. If the theory of pentarchy is accepted in relation to the Pāṇḍyan kingdom, how exactly the five kings were crowned, who managed the coronation, whether there were differences between the coronation of the chief king ruling from Madurai and the installation ceremonies of other kings ruling elsewhere are details of which we know little. Joint-rule by two brothers, Vīranārāyaṇa and Varaguṇa

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29. *Vide* 'Iraṭṭaittaviśu' *Peruṅgadai* I: 34:43. In *Kaliṅgattuparaṇi*, the chief queen Tyāgavalli is mentioned as being seated on the king's right and the other queen Ēḷiśaivallabhi on the left: 320

30. *Ibid* 263, 264

31. *S.I.I.* Vol. IV: Vaikuṇthapperumāḷ inscription

32. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi: Rājapāramparyam* 27; 87 of 1895; 270 of 1915

is mentioned in the Daḷavāipuram plates from the Pāṇḍyan country.

These ceremonial rituals could have no constitutional signi-ficance; for in an autocracy, there could be no room for institu-tional check from below on the king above; but they could have served the intended purpose of making the ruler con-scious of a moral responsibility.

The coronation was a red letter function in the career of the king. To mark the event, he remitted taxes, released pri-soners and distributed largesse.

If everything went well, the Tamil king's career was a life-long festival. His birth was celebrated; his natal star was known, remembered and annually made an occasion for state-wide rejoicing. The *Muttoḷḷāyiram* mentions *Rēvati* for the Chōḷa and *Uttirāḍam* for the Pāṇḍya as their natal stars.[33] Rājarāja's asterism was *Sadayam*.[34] These celebrations were organized at the instance of officials.[35] As on the coronation day, gifts were made and prisoners released on the birthday of a king. People were fed in newly-erected pandals; exiles were allowed to return home; festivals were ordered in temples;[36] the horos-cope was cast; the future was forecast by astrologers (Peruṅkaṇi).[37] The people showed their rejoicing by festivities and revelry.

The birthdays of other important members of the royal family were also celebrated, though not with such pomp. The celebration of the birthday of Śembiyanmādēvi was ordered by five queens of Uttamachōḷa with the funds available for that purpose.[38]

Samskaras

The princes were tutored suitably. They learnt the art of war and of government, and, by active association with the king, had

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33. *Muttoḷḷāyiram* : 1472, 1473. Since the Pāṇḍya and Chōḷa are not named in this text, one cannot say whether these stars were conventionally assigned to the rulers of these royal families or whether the poet kept any particular Chōḷa or Pāṇḍya in mind.

34. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* : 201

35. *S.I I.* Vol. V. No. 976: 136 of 1912　　　36. 285 of 1912

37. *Peruṅgaḍai* : V: 6: 48　　　　　　　　38. 494 of 1925

practical training in civil administration. The *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* is perhaps formal when it says that Kulōttuṅga learnt the four Vedas.[39] But we have instances of many learned princes who sat on Tamil thrones. Mahēndravarman I was a connoisseur of practically all the fine arts, and author of two plays in Sanskrit. Rājasiṃha Pallava could revel in the company of scholars of the eminence of Daṇḍin in his court, and appropriately enough, bore the title 'Śrī Vidya Vidyādhara'. Nandivarman III combined humility with knowledge.[40] Varaguṇa Pāṇḍya could match his religious fervour with that of Māṇikkavāchagar himself. Gaṇḍarāditya was the author of a piece in the *Ninth Tirumuṛai*. Rājēndra I was the Paṇḍita-chōḷan,[41] and Vīrarājēndra is spoken of as a man of letters.[42] Kulōttuṅga II was learned enough to appreciate the poetry of Sēkkiḷār. The literary and musical tastes and attainments attributed to Kulōttuṅga I by Jayaṅkoṇḍār were not mere flattery.[43] The achievements of the princes of this age in both the areas of peace and war are sufficient testimony to the excellent training they received in their youth. Once in a while they went on a hunt because it was their duty to protect their subjects from wild animals.[44]

The Tamil kings were not *dvijas*, for they were not qualified to be initiated into a second (spiritual) existence, which would entitle them to wear the sacred thread and chant the Vedic mantras. Jayaṅ-koṇḍār, however, says that Kulōttuṅga I had this initiation.[45] It may be that, taking the cue from the Pallavas who claimed a Brahminical origin, the Pāṇḍyas and the Chōḷas also Sanskritized themselves, and wore the sacred thread and behaved as if they were Kshatriyas.

The king generally married within his family, and chose a bride of his caste and status.[46] We have also instances of his marrying in distant families, possibly for political reasons, like Nandivarman II and Parāntaka espousing Rāshṭrakūṭa princesses. Rājarāja's

39. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* : V: 243
40. Vēlūrpāḷayam Plates : Verse: 21
41. *Vīrasōḷiyam : Sandhippaḍalam : 7
42. *Ibid.*   43. *Kaliṅgattuparaṇi* : 285
44. *Ibid.* 277   45. *Ibid.* 242
46. *Peruṅgadai:* I; 47: 137-138

matrimonial alliance with the Eastern Chāḷukya was, no doubt, a master-stroke of diplomacy. Parāntaka I married a Kēraḷa princess also and the Chōḷa domination of the west was assured. We hear of numerous wives in the case of most of the Tamil rulers. Uttama-chōḷa had at least five wives. Marco Polo was perhaps not exagge-rating when he said that King Ashar (Kulasēkhara) had 300 wives.[47] The harem, then, was a vast establishment which included the princesses captured in successful wars. But surely all of them did not enjoy equal status. They had their own retinue which looked after their comforts.[48]

Royal privileges included the right to have luxurious regalia and paraphernalia. The queens also enjoyed these privileges to some extent. Pañchavanmādēvi is said to have had the honour of a fly whisk with a golden handle.[49] The leading members of the harem had high official status which entitled them to sit in the court of the king, to issue orders which carried royal sanction, and to follow the king to the battle-field, though not to fight.

There are no instances of kings abdicating voluntarily or being dethroned by popular vote.[50] But the expulsion of a king by palace intrigue was quite possible.[51]

When a king died, his place was taken by his successor imme-diately and there was no theoretical gap between the end of one reign and the commencement of another. In conformity to a prac-tice, at least among the early Chōḷas, the dead king was deified and a shrine was built over his remains, as was done for Āditya I who was entombed and worshipped in Ādityēśvara.

Titles and honours

The assumption of titles and conferment of honours were public policy for the Tamil kings. The immediate ancestors of the reigning king were called Periyadēvar and their wives Nampirāṭṭiār. Monarchs assumed titles on occasions like conquests and setting up of endowments. Events of a significant nature also were indi-

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47. *Travels of Marco Polo:* p. 293
48. *Chintāmaṇi* : 197; *Peruṅgadai*: IV: 13 : 45
49. 491 of 1924
50. Though literary references continue to speak of kings' abdica-ting in the evening of their lives. *Udayaṇa Kumāra Kāvyam:* 21
51. *Vide* Nandivarman's accession.

vidually and collectively occasions for new titles (e.g., Madurai-koṇḍa Rājakēśari Sundara Chōḷa, Vîra Pāṇḍyan Talaikoṇḍa Parakēśari, Kāndaḷūrsālai Kalamaṛutta Rājarāja, Ponmāḷigait-tuñjiyadēvar etc.).

The Chēras played a subordinate role (if they played any role at all) during the seven centuries under review; but they retained their ancient titles like Kōdai,[52] Pūḷiyar,[53] Vānavar,[54] Kuḍanāḍan and Vañjikkōmān.[55] It is noteworthy that we do not hear of Chēra titles based on conquest or any other achieve-ments during this period.

The Pallavas assumed imperial status in theory, from the period of Simhavishṇu, and Mahēndravarman I assumed titles signifying imperial status. Mahārāja, Dharmamahārāja, Mahā-rājādhirāja etc., were a hierarchy of Pallava titles. Since the Pallavas claimed to have performed many Vedic sacrifices, they assumed titles like Agnishṭoma, Vājapēya, and Aśvamedharāja.

Each of the three dynasties - the Pallavas, the Pāṇḍyas and the Chōḷas - had its special titles which had a legendary or a historical origin. The title Pōttaraiyan is special to the Pallavas. The word 'Pōttu' can mean the tender leaves of a plant which is also what 'Pallava' meant. It can also stand for 'bull' which was an emblem of the Pallavas. The latter seems to be more acceptable. An interesting title, the meaning of which is not known, is Viḍēlviḍugu.[56] Its variants are Māṛpiḍugu and Kaḍum-piḍugu.[57] Dantivarman dug an irrigation lake in the Trichy dist-rict and called it 'Māṛpiḍugu lake'. Mahēndravarman I assumed a number of pompous titles, some of which alone were meaningful, and the rest ornamental. 'Anityarāja' meant 'one who will not abandon his desires'. These contradictory titles were borne by the same monarch indicating the different moods in which he assumed them. 'Saṅkīrṇajāti' shows the king's interest in music. The title Chitrakārappuli proclaims his interest in painting; Mattavilāsa and Vichitrachitta throw light on the king's character; Malla is a dynastic title. 'Kalahapriya', (one fond of quarrels), however is not quite complimentary, though, perhaps, was meant as a compli-ment.

52. *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1501 etc.   53. *Ibid.* 1532
54. *Ibid.* 1285   55. *Ibid.* 1564
56. 279 of 1916, *Nandikkalambakam :* 15   57. 1 of 1906

Titles, though sometimes significant, were often ornamental and conventional. The assumption by Rājasimha of martial titles need not mean a career of conquests[58] since his reign is known to have been peaceful. However, Vādyavidyādhara, one of his titles, conveys his knowledge of instrumental music. Nandivarman III bore the titles Ukramagōpan 'he who destroys his enemies'[59] and Avanināraṇan, meaning sovereign of the earth,[60] Mānābharan, Dayāparan, Dēśabandāri, Varatuṅgan, Mānōdayan etc., all of which are just ornamental.[61] The Pallavamalla Nandivarman II bore the titles Mahārājā, Dharmamahārāja[62] etc., indicative of a growing kingdom. Nandivarman III assumed the title Chandra-Kulaprakāśan i.e., luminary of the lunar race, a tradition not mentioned elsewhere.[63]

The Pāṇḍyas bore the following titles: Tenkoṛkai Kōmān, Tamiḻnarperumān, Vaiyaikkōmān, Maduraiyarkōmān, Kūḍalperumān,[64] and Tiṅgaḷkulamannan[65] showing their lunar ancestry. Kaidavan, Vaḷudi, Śeḷiyan, Mīnavan were common synonyms of Pāṇḍyan. Sēndan (a form of Jayantan) and Māṛan were common names of Pāṇḍyas. Their special patronage of Tamil literature qualified their assumption of the title Tamiḻvēndan.[66] The Pāṇḍya assumed the title Śembiyan meaning 'Chōḷa', since he conquered the Chōḷas.[67] The title *Pañchavan*, as we have explained earlier, can be derived from the fact of five rulers jointly ruling different parts of the kingdom. Parāṅkuśan and Arikēśari were titles indicative of the Pāṇḍyans' victory over their enemies. Neḍumāṛan was called Urumēndiyakōn[68] (the king who raised the thunder flag). Śeranaiveṇṛa, Kollamkoṇḍa and similar titles based on his military achievements were assumed by Māṛavarman Kulaśēkhara.

Rājakēśari and Parakēśari were typical Chōḷa titles alternately assumed by Chōḷa kings. Literature and epigraphy speak about

58. For contra *vide* T.V. Mahalingam : *Kāñchipuram in early South Indian History:* p. 114
59. *Nandikkalambakam* : 24
60. *Ibid.* 18
61. *Ibid.* 100, 102, 94, 67
62. *E.I.* Vol. I: Hirahaḍagalli Plates.
63. *Nandikkalambakam* : 138
64. *Muttoḷḷāyiram* : 1506, 1530, 1538, 1540, 1556
65. *Pāṇḍikkōvai* : 96
66. *Ibid.* 2
67. *Ibid.* 12
68. *Ibid.* 149

them as if they were historical personalities, but they were merely titles assumed by Vijayālaya and his successors. Kōḷikkōmān, Śembiyan, Urandaiyarkōn, Śenni, Vaḷavan, Kiḷḷi were very ancient Chōḷa titles. Iruma(u)ḍichōḷan (Parāntaka I), Mumma(u)ḍichōḷan (Gaṇḍarāditya and Rājarāja) mean twice-famed and thrice-famed. 'Ponmāḷigaituñjiya' of Sundarachōḷa,[69] like 'Yānaimēltuñjiya' of Rājādhirāja,[70] was a tell-tale title meaning 'he who died in the golden palace'. Muḍikoṇḍa Chōḷa,[71] a title borne by Rājēndra I, like the Jayaṅkōṇḍār of Rājādhirāja I, meant, 'he who secured the crown of the Pāṇḍya'. Chōḷāntaka, meaning, 'the destroyer of the Chōḷas', was assumed by Vīra Pāṇḍya. Kings like Kulōttuṅga I bore any number of titles like Jayadharan, Vaḷavatuṅgan, Akaḷaṅgan, Abhayan, Kuladīpan and Tyāgasamudran. Queens also assumed titles like Vānavanmādēvi and Tribhuvanamādēvi.

Titles were conferred by kings on distinguished subjects. Ēnādi[72] (a military distinction) and Mārāyan[73] were two such titles. One Mārāyan Aruḷmoḷi assumed the name Uttamachōḷa Brahmamārāyan. Master-potters got the title 'Perumkuyavan'.[74] Eṭṭi (a title conferred on prosperous merchants) and Kāvidi (a title conferred on the most skilled agriculturists) are also titles heard of in Śaṅgam times. They continued in use in the post-Śaṅgam period.[75] The Ēnādis were also awarded rings in honour of their services, and the Kāvidis were presented golden flowers in token thereof.[76] Araiyan, Pēraraiyan, Rāja, Adhirāja, Piḷḷai, Mudali and Nāḍāḷvān were other title sconferred on distinguished persons.

Titles were conferred on women also. One such title was Mārāśi, though it is not certain whether the wife of a Mārāyan automatically became a Mārāśi as the wife of a Duke becomes a Duchess.

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69. 11 of 1919   70. 14 of 1912
71. 43 of 1909
72. In fact an abbreviation of Śēnāpati
73. *Kaḍigai* mārāyan, *Vāchchiya* mārāyan were titles indicating professions.
74. *Peruṅgadai* : IV 9: 48   75. *Ibid.* IV: 1: 37
76. *Ibid.* I. 42 : 276

Military and civil officials received appropriate titles. In A.D. 1004 an officer was granted a patta inscribed 'Kshatriya sikhāmaṇi Koṅgāḷvān'.[77] 'Mūvēnda Vēḷan' was a title conferred on distinguished government officials. On one of the ministers of Sundara Pāṇḍya was conferred the privilege of being greeted, on his entry into a temple, 'Hail!, Gurukulattambirān is come !'[78] Favourite chiefs were honoured with the right to bear the insignia of royalty like the fly whisk, palanquin and bugle.

Royal feasts, dress, ornaments and personal habits

The king, true to the tradition of Tamil royal hospitality, entertained guests lavishly in state banquets. Chau-Ju-Kua refers possibly, to one of the lavish royal banquets thrown by the Chōḷa which was enlivened by 3000 dancing girls. He says that the king never took wine, but ate mutton, and he wore cotton garments.[79]

The Venetian prince among travellers reports that the Pāṇḍyan king had 300 wives, "for in those parts the man who has most wives is most thought of."[80]

Speaking of the king's personal jewellery Marco Polo says, "he has a necklace entirely of precious stones, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and the like, so much that this collar is of great value. He wears also, hanging in front of his chest, from the neck downwards, a fine silk-thread strung with 104 large pearls and rubies of great price. The reason why he wears this cord with the 104[81] great pearls and rubies is (according to what they tell) that every day morning and evening, he has to say 104 prayers to his idols." The king wore a bracelet and a necklace, as also an anklet which signified his military achievement. He wore also golden ear-rings.[82] "The Tamil king's love of ornaments, let me tell you, what this king wears,

77. *E.C.I.* No. 46   78. *M E.R.* 1923; para 49

79. K.A.N. Sastri (ed.): *Foreign Notices of South India.* p. 143.

80. K.A.N. Sastri (ed.): *Foreign Notices of South India,* p. 179-180. This may be compared with the 700 wives of Dēvarāya II mentioned by Abdur Razaak. Elliot and Dowson : *History of India* Vol. IV. p. 114

81. K.A.N. Sastri rightly suspects it must be 108. *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom:* p. 172

82. *Peruṅgaḍai* : I : 47 : 18

between gold and gems and pearls, is worth more than a city's ransom."[83]

King's itinerary

The king believed in a really personal government. He was anxious to know personally the condition of his people, and to that effect he toured his kingdom.[84] As he was the head of the civil administration, he visited the different divisions of the kingdom, and had palaces in important and strategic places. He gave audience to his subjects in these places. The Tamil literary conventions regarding the *Ulā* suggest that the king ceremonially drove in state in his capital in the full gaze of his subjects of both sexes frequently. If it was not for the effect of pageantry, the king must be considered a conscientious ruler.

Royal Correspondence

Government, though to a great extent personal, involved correspondence also. The king had officers trained in drafting, taking notes and despatch. Royal letters were sealed with wax and they bore the royal seal. Soft earth hardened by exposure to fire which was used for sealing letters was superseded by the more sophisticated wax as sealing material.[85] Mandira Ōlai was a document containing secret message.[86] Medieval inscriptions speak of an official called Tirumandira Ōlai in charge of the despatch of (secret) messages or letters.

The king's religion

During the seven centuries from c.A.D. 600 to c.A.D. 1300, there was a religious ferment in the Tamil country which was reflected in the royal attitude to religion. In the Śaṅgam age, preference for particular faiths was not unknown; but it never assumed sharp features of exclusiveness bordering on fanaticism. Strong religious conviction became common in the later half of this period. The Bhakti movement, which was in full swing from the 7th to the 9th centuries, bore fruit between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries. This is evident from the

83. K.A.N. Sastri: *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom:* pp. 195-196
84. 109 of 1914; 21 of 1915
85. *Chūḷāmaṇi:* 512. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 25:31
86. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 25:39

Pallava efforts to attain a religious identity. We hear of kings changing their religion often, though members of the family or of the same dynasty pursued different religions. By the time the Chōḷas became imperial, the entire dynasty stuck to a single religion, and this attitude became common. The dynamics of the Bhakti movement are dealt with in the chapter on 'Religion and Philosophy', and here we shall be concerned only with the influence of religion on royalty.

By and large Śaivism was the favourite religion of kings - Pallava, Pāṇḍya or Chōḷa. In spite of Bhakti religious affiliations, the tradition of Vedic sacrifices was still in vogue to some extent. Śivaskandavarman performed the *Agnishtoma, Vājapēya* and *Aśvamēdha* sacrifices. Rājādhirāja I assumed the title Jayaṅkoṇḍa Chōḷa, and performed the *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice. A Māṟavarman Pāṇḍya performed the *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Tulābhāra* according to the Smaller Chinnamanūr plates:[87] Rājasimha Pāṇḍya performed many *Gosahasras, Hiraṇyagarbhas* and *Tulābhāras.*[88] Parāntaka I also performed the *Tulābhārā* sacrifice.[89] Arikēśari Māṟavarman performed many sacrifices to mark a victory of his.[90] The *Periyapurāṇam* extols the king by equating him with the eyes and the soul of the people, and, as if to be true to this, the king performed sacrifices and pleased the dēvas.[91] These Vedic sacrifices, which greatly benefited the priestly community, were performed by the kings because of faith in their efficacy. The normally poor Brahmin, and others who were not affluent, eked out a fairly comfortable livelihood from the king's interest in sacrifices for spiritual merit; and in this way, some wealth got distributed in the pluralistic society of those times.

Different religious values were struggling for acceptance during this period. *Dānā* (gift) was slowly trying to substitute any routine Karmic activity including sacrifice (*yōga*). This trend was congenial to the growth of the Bhakti movement. But none of the earlier phases disappeared fully all of a sudden, though the latter phases implied in this new welcome trend were becoming progressively

87. The Smaller Chinnamanur plates.
88. K.A.N.Sastri: *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*. p.59
89. *S.I.I.* Vol. II: No. 76
90. K.A.N.Sastri: *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*: p. 52
91. *Periyapurāṇam*: 99

pronounced. Gifts were considered extremely efficacious. The kings endowed lands and other valuables to temples. An illustration of what may be considered an extreme manifestation of *Dāna* is found in the gift of the Chōḷa crown and the territory to the defeated Chōḷa by Maṟavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya for his own religious merit.[92]

The kings were interested in religious and metaphysical discussions as a result of which they often developed a catholicity of outlook, even leading to their conversion to another faith.[93] Mahēndravarman I is considered a religious fanatic, first embracing Jainism and then Śaivism,[94] and while in each religion, proving aggressive. Kūn Pāṇḍyan was another instance, according to the *Periyapurāṇam*, whom the Jainas in Kāñchi and Madurai pressurized into persecuting non-Jainas.

Among monarchs of strong Śaiva learning may be mentioned Rājasiṃha Pallava, who built the Kailāsanātha temple in Kāñchi, Varaguṇa Pāṇḍya, the contemporary of Māṇikkavāchagar, and all the Chōḷa rulers, especially Parāntaka I, Rājarāja I, Rājēndra I and Kulōttuṅga II. Of these, Kulōttuṅga II reached and crossed the point of extreme devotion to his faith and started persecuting the Vaishṇavas. Raṅgapatāka, the queen of Rājasiṃha Pallava, constructed a Śiva shrine in Kāñchipuram - again an instance of royal devotion to Śaivism. Kōchcheṅgaṇān the Chōḷa, who ruled during the end of the Saṅgam age, became a Śaiva Nāyanār according to the *Periyapurāṇam*, but Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār says that the Chōḷa worshipped Vishṇu also. The Pallava ruler Siṃhavarman I identified with Aiyaḍigaḷ Kāḍavarkōn, was a contributor to the *Eleventh Tirumuṟai*, even as Gaṇḍarāditya was the author of *Tiruviśaippa*. These two monarchs take their places with the canonized Śaivas. Gaṇḍarāditya's wife Sembiyanmādēvi was a staunch Śaiva, and her benefactions to Śaivite institutions are famous.[95] Kulōttuṅga III is noted for a number of endowments to Śaiva shrines. Rulers like Nandivarman II bore a Śaiva name, and built a Vishṇu temple like the Vaikuṇṭhaperumāḷ temple at Kāñchipuram. Thus with rare

92. K.A.N.Sastri: *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*: p. 145
93. *Peruṅgadai* : I.36: 242-43: A Mon inscriptian from Prome of the reign of Kyanzittha (AD:1084-1112); K.A.N. Sastri(ed.): *The Foreign Notices of South India* : p.133
94. *Periyapurāṇam*: 146   95. *S.I I.* Vol. III: No. 146

exceptions, Tamil kings distinguished themselves for their religious fervour and toleration. As an instance of toleration, Rājarāja I permitted the construction of a Buddhist shrine in Nāgapaṭṭinam, himself being an ardent Śaiva.

The King's daily routine

The king led a busy life. The concentration of responsibility in the hands of one person naturally made his duties onerous. From dawn to dusk he kept himself busy with activities, public and private into all of which he entered with great zest. Hunting was a duty for the king. He went out hunting on days declared auspicious by the court astrologers.[96] It was incumbent on a king to defend his subjects from wild animals. He toured his kingdom regularly and extensively and meted out justice on the spot. Every time he visited a place there was a ceremonial drive during which he acknowledged the respectful greetings of his subjects.[97]

He woke up to the sound of the drum and the conch very early in the morning and took his bath.[98] He then recited his daily prayers for the merit of the Brahmins and the gods.[99] A time was allotted for the king to listen to religious discourses.[100] During the day, when he was free from official duties, he practised his favourite arts, spent some time in the gymnasium, received and rewarded those in need. The king was not to look at anything considered inauspicious, like a human corpse. Perhaps the first prince in history to have renounced the world after seeing a corpse was the Buddha, and after him princes in India were made to believe that it was inauspicious to see corpses. Wrestling, wordy duels among court scholars, cock-fights etc., were the usual pastimes of the king.[101]

The royal court

The royal court was rather a noisy place. The king surrounded himself with musicians, dancing girls and paid flatteres like the

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96. *Kāḷiṅgattupparaṇi* : 280   97. *Peruṅgadai* : III: 16: 29-30

98. *Rājarājan Ulā* says the king i.e., Rājarāja II bathed in the Kāviri. He could not have done so daily as he was reigning from Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram which is far away from the Kāviri.

99. *Mūvarulā* 43   100. *Peruṅgadai :* I: 47:35

101. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 276

Sūtas[102] and Māgadas, though the *Mahābhārata* prohibits the king from listening to flatterers. A body of close attendants shared a meal with the king at the time of his accession, and thereafter, were pledged to defend him with their lives. They were known as the Vēḷaikkārar under the Chōḷas and the Āpattudavigaḷ[103] under the Pāṇḍyas. The king witnessed dances and dramas in the court. The state banquets, as we have stated earlier, were elaborate and lavish. After dinner, the whole company present was treated to music and dancing.

The king received petitions presented by his subjects at almost all times, regardless of his other engagements.

This account of the royal court may conjure up a very chaotic situation in which it would have been very difficult to attend to any serious business of administration; but the historical fact that efficient administration was really carried on, in this informal atmosphere can only mean that there was a body of loyal officials who, unmindful of the pomp and pageantry of the court, carried on their business without feeling distracted. One might imagine that kings with such apparently permissive court-life could easily turn despots and prove unpredictably dangerous to deal with;[104] but rare were occasions on which court pageantry degenerated into any sadistic display of royal caprice. We have also the reassuring testimony of the *Chintāmaṇi* that "the king was circumspect in his government and his dealings with foreigners; but, as the local saying went, he was more dangerous than the fire for his subjects, for fire scorches only those who touch it, but the king can hurt even those at a distance."[105]

Royal palace

The palace was called Koil which stood for the temple also. There is a legitimate doubt as to whether the temple was named after the palace or *vice versa*. It is reasonable to suppose that the

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102. "An important figure in early days...... was the Sūta who combined the functions of royal Charioteer, herald, and bard and was often the friend and confidant of the King." A.L.Basham : *The Wonder that was India.* p. 90

103. Marco Polo quoted by K.A.N. Sastri : *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*: pp. 196-197

104. *Tiruvāchagam :* 35-39   105. *Chintāmaṇi:* 250

deity was made in the image of the king, and deference to concrete
and visible power must have preceded respect to an imagined divi-
nity, and the unknown should have been derived from the known.
So the Dēvarāja cult must have culminated in a process which
started with the *Rāja* and matured into the *Dēva*. This process did
not begin in the medieval period, but started much earlier in
proto-historic times.

There was a Chōḷa palace in Paḷayārai. In fact a hamlet near
that place is even now called Chōḷamāḷigai. In Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷa-
puram there was a palace called Chōḷakēraḷam. Rājēndra I built a
palace in Madurai[106] where Kulōttuṅgā III sat in audience. At
Kāñchi, Kulōttuṅga I stayed in a golden palace. One of his ances-
tors, Sundara Chōḷa, died in the golden palace at Kāñchi. There
was a Chittiramaṇḍapam (a gallery of paintings) in that palace.[107]
The king sat in the maṇḍapam on a throne with his queens, under
the royal umbrella, the fly whisk being waved by attendants on
either side.[108] The entrance to the palace had the royal emblem
inscribed on the gate, which was guarded by Maravas.[109] These
watchmen were armed with swords and canes.

Palace establishment

The king had a populous household. Reference has already
been made to the harem of the king, filled with his many
consorts, 'For whosoever he hears of as a beautiful damsel he
takes her to wife'.[110] The victorious kings took the wives of
defeated kings captive, and kept them in separate places called
Vēḷams.[111] Sometimes male captives were also put in the Vēḷams.
These Vēḷams were concentrated in the Tanjore Chōḷa palace,
in a section called Purambaḍimāḷigai.[112] The status of the members

106. 26 of 1918   107. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi :* 315
108. *Ibid.* 316-319   109. *Peruṇgadai :* III: 6:145
110. The Venetian traveller continues: "Indeed he did a very
     sorry deed as I shall tell you. For seeing that his brother
     had a handsome wife he took her by force and kept for
     himself. His brother being a discreet man took the thing
     quietly and made no noise about it." K.A.N. Sastri (ed.)
     Foreign Notices of South India: p.165
111. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 40; *Rājarājachōḷan Ula :* 79
112. 241 of 1926 etc.

of the Vēḷams was unenviable servitude; and the less sensitive among them might have reconciled themselves in course of time to their condition. Some of them were employed as temple servants.[113]

The residents of the harem went out, when necessary, in beautifully decorated palanquins.

The Tirumeikāppār who bore royal surnames were the Parivāras or the *entourage*.

Women were employed exclusively for certain services in the palace, one of these was the kitchen establishment. The talented ones were recruited as singers and dancers who entertained the royal court.

There was a body of personal attendants called the Vēḷaikkārar, who can in a sense be compared to the Praetorian Guard. They may be more appropriately likened to the feudal body-guards of the Japanese emperor. Abu-Zaid says, "when they mount the throne, some kings of India cause cooked rice to be distributed among a number of their attendants. When the king dies, or is killed, all those who have eaten of the rice should burn themselves voluntarily on a pyre to the last man on the very day."[114] Marco Polo says, "There are about the king a number of barons in attendance upon him. These ride with him, and keep always near him, and have great authority in the kingdom. When they put him on the fire to burn him, these lieges cast themselves into the fire round about his body and suffer themselves to be burnt along with him. For they say they have been comrades in this world, and that they ought also to keep him company in the other world".[115] These are the Vēḷaikkārar of the Chōḷa royal household and the Tennavan Āpattudavigaḷ of the Pāṇdyan household.[116] There was a strange group of attendants called the Pūvēḷaikkārar, who stabbed themselves when the flower on the king's head faded.[117]

There were the petty servants of the princesses who carried for their ladies, betel leaf boxes, waved the fly whisk, and

113. *Paṭṭinappālai* : p.246
114. K.A.N. Sastri (ed): *Foreign Notices of South India:* p. 128
115. Yule who translated and edited Marco Polo cites several analogies from Malaya, Bali etc.
116. 43 of 1918   117. *E.I.* Vol. XVIII: p. 334

entertained them in several ways. There were also the hunch-
backs and dwarfs, whose very presence was entertaining.[118]

It was a tradition that royal servants had to keep to a
distance of seven poles from the king, and in some cases it
could be five.[119]

There were female bodyguards too, and they were called
Vēḷaikkāris.[120]

The household of the king was the real centre of royal influ-
ence and authority; and the power of the real executive of the
kingdom emarated from there, for the persons who could really
influence the king were all in the palace.

The treasury

The treasury was housed in the palace. Kings desired to amass
wealth and augment it from generation to generation. They rarely
drew upon the treasury left by their predecessors.[121] Wassaf says,
"Dewar the ruler of Ma'bar died, and left behind him much wealth
and treasure. 7000 oxen laden with precious stones and pure gold
and silver fell to the share of the brother who succeeded him. Thus
it comes to pass that there is an immensity of treasure accumulated
in this kingdom."[122] The treasury was guarded by persons noted
for their integrity.[123] Evidently the revenues of the kingdom and
the tributes from the chieftains as well as the booty that fell to the
king in wars were deposited in the treasury.

Royal Paraphernalia

Royalty was the most exalted institution in the kidgdom. The
crown distinguished the king from everyone else. From the moment
he was authorised to wear a crown, he became king. The ceremony
of coronation invested him with the authority to govern. The shape
of the crown, especially of the emperor's, was long and conical.
The totemic emblems of the royal dynasty, like the particular flo-
wer sacred to the dynasty were embossed on the crown. We have

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118. *Peruṅgadai* : I: 46:202   119. *Ibid.* I: 47: 53-54
120. 16 of 1935
121. Marco Polo says, 'When the King dies none of his children
       dares to touch his treasure'. K.A.N.Sastri (ed.):*Foreign Notices
       of South India* : p.165
122. K.A.N.Sastri : *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom* : p.173
123. *S.I.I.* Vol. II: pp. 520-530

earlier mentioned the reason that prompted Rājasiṃha to deposit his crown for safety in Ceylon. The practice of presenting a crown on a platter to the prince-designate is sculptured on the walls of the Vaikuṇtha Perumāḷ temple at Kāñchi. It is suggested that the Pallava crown resembled an elephant's scalp, but the sculpture itself does not suggest that. The crown was set with costly gems, and was purified by holy water by Vedic Brahmins.[124] The expression 'Muḍiuḍai Vēndar' might suggest imperial status, but it merely meant a crowned monarch. Yuvarājas, when they were ceremonially initiated as crown princes, also wore some sort of a crown. A part of the diadem was called the Kōḍakam.[125]

The sceptre symbolized the concept of righteous government. The upright sceptre was the Śeṅkōl;[126] and when it was perverted or bent, it became tyranny i.e., Koḍuṅkōl.[127] We hear of Tanich-cheṅkōl[128] which means the exclusive right of the king to rule over the whole world. This is a common concept among ancient thinkers on government.

The umbrella stands for royal protection. The subjects are entitled to be protected by the king from himself, his officials, enemies, robbers, and wild animals.[129] The learned, the ascetics, the sanyāsins and the Brahmins are not to be harmed in any way, *but protected.*[130] The four Varṇas needed royal protection.[131] The umbrella is the visible symbol of the tutelary functions of royalty. Derivatively, it stands for royal jurisdiction also. Appropriate to the concept of peace, the umbrella is white. On the analogy of an umbrella for the king, the deity in the temple is provided with one; as protector of the universe the latter needs one.[132]

The umbrellas wars of three kinds: Chandrādittam, Nittavino-dam, Sakalabājanam.[133] The Pāṇḍyan umbrella had at least tassels of pearls around and a a gold ornamental handle.[134] The umbrella was also a symbol of royal victory,[135] and its capture in the battlefield was one of the objectives of war.

124. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: 265
125. *Pāṇḍikkōvai*:210
126. *Nandikkalambakam*: 39
127. *Muttoḷḷāyiram*: 1521
128. *Peruṅgadai*: II: 8:3
129. *Periyapurāṇam* : 121
130. *Chūḷāmaṇi*: 57
131. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* : 16
132. *Kōilnānmaṇimālai*: 1
133. *Peruṅgadai* : II: 2:133
134. 613 of 1920
135. *Muttoḷḷāyiram* : 1523

The king signified his displeasure at the insubordination of chieftains by ordering his umbrella to be moved forward, which meant that his army would follow soon. It indicated, incidentally, the exclusive theoretical right of the king to the sovereignty of the world.[136] The word Anabhāyan, a title which Kulōttuṅga II bore, means 'he who protects' and this was signified by his umbrella.[137]

Possibly equal in importance to the crown, the throne was another symbol of royalty. It was called *Ariyaṇai,* for leonine figures were carved on the flanks of the royal seat.[138] Everyday, the auspicious time for the king to occupy the throne was fixed. The king was expected to attend the official business, seated on the throne. There was a pearl canopy over it. It was often named after defeated princes. Kulōttuṅga I had a throne called Śēdirāya in his palace in Āyirattaḷi. The Pāṇḍyas specialized in this kind of naming thrones. They had thrones called Maḷavarāyan, Kaliṅgarāyan, Pallavarāyan, Munaiyataraiyan, Kaliṅgatturaivan (this throne was placed in the audience hall called Aḷagiyapāṇḍyan)[139] and Isaiaḷavukoṇḍān[140] in the audience hall called Mānābharaṇan.

The drum was a peacetime as well as a military appendage of the palace equipment. It was sounded on the occasion of the king's marriage. It was sounded to proclaim royal victory, and also to announce the outbreak of hostilities. It was taken to the battlefield, and most watchfully guarded, for the enemy had always an eye on it and its capture often shattered the morale of the forces of its royal owner.[141] The beat of the drum struck terror into the heart of the foe.[142] Nandivarman II had a drum called Samudraghosha. Its sound must have resembled the roar of the sea.

Associated with the drum was the bugle, which was sounded to announce the arrival of any distinguished person.[143]

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136. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi :* 211   137. *Periyapurāṇam :* 85
138. Simhāsana in Sanskrit and the idea that the lion is the king of the forest. *Bhāratam*: 163
139. 49 of 1918   140. 32 of 1910
141. *Peruṅgadai:* II: 2:31   142. *Ibid.* III: 24:209
143. 49 of 1923

The royal sword which was the king's weapon *par excellence* was a symbol of royalty too. It was the means of conquest. It had multiple functions, like the drum.[144]

The wheel represented sovereignty.[145] Its function was to run all over the realm, figuratively of course, proclaiming, as it were, that the royal writ runs everywhere. In Tamil it is the 'Āḷi' and in Sanskrit 'Chakra'. The wheel of royalty turned constantly, and protected the people.[146] Tirumāl, the Lord of the universe, is noted for his wheel 'Chakra', and it protects the righteous by destroying the wicked.[147] The wheel and the sceptre together stood for the protective role of royalty.

The royal signet ring was not merely the seal of authority but represented the king himself. It was the signature on the ring which gave it its authority.[148]

The king wore victorious anklets as a sign of victory in war. The anklet was made of the gold got from the enemy's crown.[149]

The royal family had its own crest or emblem which was carved or embossed or painted on important official places like the palace gate, the fortress wall, the flag, the royal vessels, the commodities for export and even the signet ring. The Victorious king added his enemy's crests to his, and exhibited them in prominent places. The tiger crest with the double fish in front engraved on Chōḷa coins proclaimed Chōḷa victory over the Pāṇḍyas. The Pāṇḍyan boast of engraving the fish emblem on the Himalayan rock front, referred to in the *Pāṇḍik-kōvai*,[150] did not belong to the medieval period, even if it was true. But our purpose in bringing it up here is to point to the hoariness of the tradition associated with the crest.

The subordinate chieftains of the crowned monarchs adopted the emblems of their kings.[151]

144. *Muttoḷḷāyiram* : 1550
145. *Nandikkalambakam*: 41; N.Subrahmanian: *Sangam Polity*: p.83
146. *Kambarāmāyaṇam*: *Araśiyalpaḍalam*: 11
147. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: 7
148. *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam*: 206. *Nāmamitta Āḷi Mōḍiram.*
149. *Peruṅgaḍai*: III: 5:4-5   150. Verse 35
151. *Muttoḷḷāyiram*: 1285

The bull (Nandi) emblem of the Pallavas was interchange-
able with the lion emblem. The Khatvāṅga, an emblem of Śiva,
was also adopted as crest by some Pallavas (e.g., Parameś-
varavarman I).[152] The Khatvāṅga is a staff with a skull at
the top. This was sported by a certain type of Śaiva ascetics
(the Kāpālikas). This crest was inscribed on the Pallava flag,
and the seals on royal correspondence. C.Minakshi says that
the Khatvāṅga was entwined with a serpent, but available
sculpture does not bear this out. Vikramāditya II who defeated
Nandivarman, took away, among other spoils of war, the
Khatvāṅga flag of the Pallavas.[153]

Official correspondence bore the royal signet seal which
also bore the crest. These pieces of correspondence were called
Viḍai-maṇ poṛi ōlai Viḍēl Viḍugu meaning 'the letter of the
Pallava bearing the bull crest on the seal'. The sealing material
for the Pallava was slimy clay.

The flag was another, but the most important visible symbol
of royal identity. Each ruling family had its flag with its crest
shown prominently on it. The victorious king included the
emblems of the vanquished ones on his flag and he raised not
only the flag of victory but also the flags of sacrifice and reputa-
tion. The Chōḷās, Chēras and Pāṇḍyas did not change their emb-
lems - the tiger, the bow and double carp from Śaṅgam times.[154]
But the thunder is also mentioned as a Pāṇḍyan emblem. The
Pallavas had the bull emblem. The *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam* speaks
about the white flag flying atop a certain town (Jayanti),[155] but
there is no reason to suppose that the flag meant surrender in this
context by modern notions. The royal flag was carried on the back
of an elephant; and, according to a text, the flag was of five
colours.[156] While on the march for war, there seems to have
been the convention of holding the flag to the right of the
king. To hold aloft one's own flag, and to pull down the
enemy's were complementary aims of warring parties.

The garland was no mere ornament. The garlands which
each of the three monarchs was to wear had been formalised

152. Kaśākkudi Plates: *S.I.I.* Vol.II. p.357; Vol. IV: No.135
153. *E.I.* Vol. IX: p.203; Vol. II: 33-36
154. *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1555   155. *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam:* 128
156. *Peruṅgadai:* IV: 7:238

in the Saṅgam age itself, if not earlier. The Chēra wore a garland of palmyra stems, the Chōḷa, a garland of Ār *(Bauhinea Tomentosa)*, and the Pāṇḍyas of Vēmbu (Margosa). These were perhaps totemic symbols of proto-historic times. Wearing a garland of these flowers did not preclude the use of more costly ones like pearl necklaces etc.[157] The Pallavas who inherited many of the traditions of the Tamil monarchs, wore the Toṇḍai garland.[158] The garland was zealously protected as a symbol of royal honour. The king did not remove the garland even while fighting on the battle-field. The loss of the garland was equal to the loss of the king's personal honour; to snatch it from the enemy was to humiliate him in battle. This must have been an ancient practice, even outside the Tamiḷaham. We are told in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that the simian brothers Vāli and Sugrīva fought each other with their own distinguishing garlands around their necks. Even in historical times the flower served the purpose of a mark of identification, as in the Wars of the Roses in England. The victorious king wore the enemy's garland in addition to his own, after the victory.[159]

The royal horse and the elephant had also their roles to play in state functions. Etiquette or sentiment demanded that the king rode on a particular horse, or a particular elephant, which was officially christened and appropriately decorated.[160]

Apart from the horse-drawn chariot which carried soldiers to the war front, and the ox-drawn vehicles which were used for conveying military baggage, the king had his own chariot which was of the same degree of significance as his horse and the elephant. That it was made of gold was perhaps not an exaggeration.[161]

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157. *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1286   158. *Nandikkalambakam:* 15
159. *Pāṇḍikkōvai:* 133

160. Udayaṇa's elephant was Badrāvati. *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam:* 110; Rājādhirāja's elephant was Attivāraṇa: K.A.N. Sastri : *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*; p.113; The Pāṇḍyan horse was Kanavaṭṭam. *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1515, and that of the Chōḷa Kōram: *Vikrama-chōḷan Ulā:* 272.

The Kūram plates say that Paramēśvara Varma's elephant was Mahivāraṇa and his horse was Adiśayam. Nandivarman II's elephant was Paṭṭavardhanam according to the Tandantōṭṭam Plates.

161. *Muttoḷḷāyiram :* 1515

Chariots which had wings and operated like helicopters belonged
to the realm of fiction, though we get accounts of such means of
quick transport in the *Chintāmaṇi* and a few other works.

King's gifts, donations and endowments

According to the Sanskrit polity, the rulers were Kshatriyas
who were *dvijas*. They performed sacrifices and earned spiritual
merit. In the Tamil country, however, as we have stated earlier, the
rulers were not Kshatriyas. The practice of performing Vedic sacri-
fices was adopted discreetly. The *Aśvamedha*, which was the most
prestigious of royal sacrifices was the least popular here. To make
up for the lack of spiritual merit in this way, Dāna or charity was
given to the needy and the requisite spiritual benefit was gained.
There were many major gifts, or Mahādānas which the kings gave
away, like the weight of the king in gold, a be-jewelled cow etc.[162]

A whole village called Udayachandramaṅgalam was granted by
Udayachandra on behalf of the Pallava king to 108 Brahmins.[163]

The Pāṇḍyan king gifted eleven houses in Tirunelvēli for
accommodating Maṭhas.[164]

Parāntaka I was the first Chōḷa king to provide gold roofing
to the Chidambaram Nataraja shrine. This kind of endowment was
far too common in the medieval period, and accounted for the
enormous riches of temples.

The provision of irrigation tanks was among the common gifts
to society as a whole.[165] Chidambaram was the recipient of nume-
rous donations which, by the end of the medieval period, made it
the capital of Śaivism in the Tamil country. Land was given by the
king as a gift to astrologers and Purohitas.[166] Kulōttuṅga I made
gifts of land and abolished taxes on such gifted lands, thus doubly
benefiting the poor.[167] Gifts of tax-free villages to groups of Brah-
mins, leading to the formation of Brahmadēyas, had been a common

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162. *E.I.* Vol.I: pp. 364-368   163. Udayēndram Plates
164. *A.R.E.* 131 of 1894
165. *Takkayāgaparaṇi:* 808. Though it is tempting to hold that
     this was a necessary function of government, Sambandar in
     Tēvāram 116-122 says that it was a charity to excavate tanks
     for the supply of drinking water. *Vide* The Chōḷagaṅgan of
     Rājēndra I.
166. *Chūḷāmaṇi:* 411   167. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 320

practice even in the Śaṅgam times, especially in Chōḷamaṇḍalam. Ministers were also recipients of such favours.[168] The *Peruṅgadai* statement that eleven cities, and a daily grant of 1000 gold pieces, were given to an attendant in the royal palace, seems to be nothing more than exaggeration.[169]

Educational institutions also received free grants for their maintenance. The details of the gifts were engraved on the stone walls of temples on the orders of the king.[170] Many educational institutions provided free boarding and lodging.[171]

The gifts made by others in the kingdom had to be ratified by the king. It is not clear whether this formality had reference only to the gifts made on behalf of the king. Important members of the royal family and prominet officials also made grants to public institutions. Anantapālan, one of the officials of Vikrama Chōḷa, founded many chatrams where ascetics, Brahmins and destitutes were fed.

B. MINISTERS AND OFFICERS

Ministers

The general complex of the medieval royal court, beginning with that of the Pallavas, was distinctly different from that of the pre-Pallavan period. After c.A.D. 600, the royal court in the Tamil country developed a type of hierarchy of officials, based mostly on the north Indian tradition and pattern perhaps reaching the Pallavas at Kāñchi through the Sātavāhanas. A direct result of this complexity was the phenomenal increase in the status of the king, which isolated him from the masses.

Even very able kings have to depend on honest and competent counsellors for governing their realm. There is the practical limit to the range of royal functions which can be personally performed; the rest of them have necessarily to be entrusted to dependable agencies. The advice of these agencies on policy decisions,

168. Anbil Plates : Sundara Chōḷa.
169. But it could be risky to be categorical about the behaviour of ancient and medieval Kings.
170. *S.I I.* Vol. II. 66   171. 159 of 1925

as well as on their way of implementation is needed, if not for acceptance *in toto* - at least, for some kind of a 'moral support', even in despotic governments.[172] There is no medieval text comparable to the *Kuṟaḷ* which can give us the accepted theory regarding the status of ministers and others indispensable to government; and epigraphical and literary references are too scanty to give us any clear picture in this regard.

Of all the employees of the king, the minister had to be the most competent, tactful, skilful and knowledgeable; he should be prudent, learned and polite in speech.[173] A determined mind and persuasive speech were generally found among the learned Brahmins of those times, and naturally, the kings preferred them as ministers.[174] This did not mean that other communities were totally disregarded; in fact, not a few of the ablest ministers of the period came from non-Brahminical communities.

Brahmaśrīrāja, the chief minister of Nandivarman II, was a Brahmin.[175] He is reputed to have persuaded the king to make a gift of a village to a Brahmin scholar.[176] Such was his hold on the king.

The Brahmin ministers were called Brahmarāy(j)ās.[177] The word 'Amātya' refers to the minister in the Hiragadahalli plates.[178] We hear of Amaichcharkuḷu i.e., a committee of ministers, each with a distinct administrative responsibility assigned to him. Amaichchar is but the Tamil corruption of Amātya. Namban Iṟaiyūr Uḍaiyān was a minister of Nandivarman III; and we do not know if he was a Brahmin;[179] and one

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172. A.L. Basham quoting Kautilya says, "a single wheel cannot turn, says the Arthaśāstra, rather inaccurately and so government is only possible with assistance. Therefore a king should appoint councillors and listen to their advice: *Arthaśāstra* 1:7" *The Wonder that was India*: p.99

173. *Peruṅgadai* : III: 22:7-9; *Chintāmaṇi*: 187

174. C. Minakshi : *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*: p.53

175. R. Gopalan: *History of the Pallavas of Kāñchi*: p.129

176. *Ibid.*

177. C.Minakshi : *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*: p. 9. Māṇikkavāchagar was called Tennavan Brahmarāya.

178. *E I.* Vol.I. p.5

179. *Vēlūrpāḷayam Plates*: *S.I.I.* Vol.II: para: 5: p.509

Aniruddha designated Mānyasachiva-'exalted minister', appointed by Sundara Chōḷa, is mentioned in the Anbil plates.[180] In the Pāṇḍyan country, the minister was called Mantri; the Uttaramantri was chief minister or the Mahāsāmanta. A Mahāsāmanta was usually a petty chieftain who sometimes functioned as a minister. One Māṟankāri, an officer under Pāṇḍyan Neḍuñjaḍaiyan (the third quarter of the eighth century), belonged to the community of medical men; Pallavarāyan an important minister of Rājarāja II and Rājādhirāja II was a member of the Pallava family. Karuṇākara Toṇḍaimān, who was also a scion of the practically extinct dynasty of Pallavas, was not only the commander of the armed forces of Kulōttuṅga I but also a minister. Thus there seems to have been no compulsion to appoint only Brahmins as ministers, though they were often preferred.

In times of war, certain special duties seem to have devolved on some of the ministers, though there was a war minister. We hear of some ministers, attending to the rationing of food to the troops during a war.[181] It was, of course, the primary duty of the war minister to look after the needs and interests of the army and also to inspect strategic positions beside military camps located at points of vantage.[182]

There are instances of some ministers strong-willed enough even to differ, in matters of policy, from the king and assert themselves. There is the instance of Kulachchiṟai the Pāṇḍyan minister disagreeing with the king's pro-Jain policy and attitude, and the queen, who supported the stand of the minister, invited Sambandar to Madurai to counter the increasing influence of the Jainas in the royal court. This also shows that the king sometimes set no limits to his freedom in the choice of his advisers and the use to which he should put them. Mahēndravarman I a senior contemporary of the aforesaid Pāṇḍya, was another instance in point.

The Rahasyādhikāris (meaning strictly speaking the secret officials, but translated pompously as Privy councillors)[183] deliberated with the king in secret on state matters.

180. *E.I.* XV: p.62   181. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 26: 96-98
182. *Peruṅgadai:* I: 46:328
183. R. Gopalan: *History of the Pallavas of Kāñchi:* p.148

The king had a number of ministers; and, though for some time a minister looked after one aspect of the administrative work assigned to him by the king, most probably on the basis of competence, it may be too much to imagine a permanent portfolio system, and a modern secretariat in that context. Kulōttuṅga I had a ministry of fifty members.[184] A Tamil text speaks of eighteen different officers waiting on the king to do his bidding, probably of ministerial rank.[185] The Chinese writer Chau-Ju-Kua attests to his having seen four ministers in the royal court. Thus the number of ministers may have varied from time to time, from court to court.

As stated earlier ministers were selected by the king and they were responsible only to the king. T.V.Mahalingam, who speaks of the 'people' approving of the king's choice of ministers, does not explain how the approval was sought, or given, and who represented the 'people' in this context.[186]

There are stray instances of ministerial corruption. Mahēndravarman I, after warning his ministers against succumbing to monetary temptation, ordered them to bring Tirunāvukkaraśu the religious rebel.[187] The prevalence of corruption among public officials, is admitted by the king himself in the *Mattavilāsaprahasanam.*

Two categories of officers

There had been two groups of royal servants engaged in a variety of duties in the earlier period (Śaṅgam) They were designated the Aimperumkuḻu and the Eṇpērāyam. The meaning of the former would be the Five Big Committees and the latter The Eight Big Establishments of Administration. The reference to these two classifications is found in the *Peruṅgadai*, ascribable to the period of our study.[188] But in the absence of corroboration from epigraphy and other sources we shall not be safe in the presumption that these two classifications continued to have currency in the later ages also, though perhaps the basic principles, at least some

184. *A.R.S.I.E.* for the year ending 31st March 1932; Part II: para 14.

185. *Piṅgalāndai*: 47

186. T.V.Mahalingam: *South Indian Polity:* p.19

187. *Periyapurāṇam:* 1355. This verse is given other meanings by glossators but they are not convincing.

188. *Peruṅgadai* : IV: 1:14; II: 5:6; II: 13:3.

of them, in their constitution, may have had a certain degree of impact on the later-day administrative pattern.[189]

In the medieval age there were many officials who served the ministers (or the king himself, directly) in different capacities.[190] They were of two kinds: 1. Perundan(r)am, and 2. Sirudan(r)am, the former being superior officers, and the latter subordinate ones. The king's court was directly concerned with the administration of justice, war, revenue-collection and public works. The officials looking after war, justice and revenue are dealt with in the appropriate chapters. We shall consider here only the miscellaneous officials whose functions were not specific but multifarious, or *ad hoc*, or intimately connected with the royal household.

Spies

Royal diplomacy in its actual operation was directed mainly towards avoidance of war, *if possible*. If unavoidable, war was declared. The king's interests also demanded a continuous appraisal of the feelings of the subjects, which never crystallized into public opinion because of the absence of media of mass communication.

The king employed a number of spies, to report from time to time on popular reaction to his government and the trends in other kingdoms. They were the spies whose qualifications have been admirably summarized in the *Kuṛal*. They can be compared in certain respects to the secret service of modern times. The spies themselves were under constant surveillance [191] They went about in disguise, and stayed in unsuspected places and mingled with different strata of society. They carried confidential messages written in cypher and communicated them secretly.[192]

Women were also employed as spies. There is reference to one Śaṅkiyattāi.[193] Possibly, Brahmins too served as spies.[194] There is a whole canto in the *Kambarāmāyaṇam* which deals with the activities of the spies of Rāma operating in Rāvaṇā's land and Kambar

189. N.Subrahmanian: *Saṅgam Polity* : p.88
190. There were women officers too who functioned at the behest of the female members of the royal family. They were called, 'Adikārachchis'.
191. *Peruṅgadai* : III: 23: 53   192. *Ibid.* III: 24:49
193. *Ibid.* I: 46: 116-118   194. *Ibid.* IV: 4: 65-66

was possibly referring only to the system of espionage in vogue in the Tamil country at that time. These spies enjoyed no diplomatic immunity and so, if caught, they could be summarily executed.

Envoys

There were no clear-cut rules governing inter-state relations then. These relations were determined from time to time by the personal interests of the rulers. It was natural that kings wanted to know the political leanings of neighbouring rulers, to inform them of their own, and to keep in continuous, if not constant touch with them. For specific purposes of political contact, envoys were despatched. The system of permanently accrediting ambassadors to foreign courts had not developed at that time in the Tamil polity. So a very important steadying force in inter-state relations was absent in that polity. Often, envoys were empowered to convey the feelings of a king and issue the *ultimatum* in situations of crises. The envoys were expected to conduct themselves, in foreign courts, with tact and persuasiveness. They carried messages (*ōlai* or *māḍai*) bearing the royal seal from their own government.[195]

Generally Brahmins were employed as envoys but not always. In the *Bhāratam* a Brahmin by name Daumya as well as a Kshatriya by name Krishṇa are mentioned as envoys (dūtas). There is an instance of a lady also being sent out as an envoy in literature.[196] This possibly suggests a flexibility in the choice of the envoys. The envoys enjoyed diplomatic immunity, which was denied to the spies, but there is mention of an envoy being tortured for the extraction of secrets. But such instances are rare.[197]

The influence of religious leaders in royal courts was always considerable; and often these persons could eclipse even the ministers in respect of their influence over the king. (e.g., Karuvūr Tēvar in Rājarāja II's court, Sēkkiḷār in the court of Kulōttuṅga II, or earlier, the Jainas in the Pallava and Pāṇḍya

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195. *Ibid.* I: 54: 96-105

196. *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam:* 131, 132: Auvaiyār of Śaṅgam times was Adigamān's envoy in the court of Malayamān.

197. *Peruṅgadai:* IV: 10:21-26: Luckily this is an instance in an epic and is probably not historical. But if it was contrary to prescription or practice, the poet is not likely to have permitted himself this lapse.

courts). These persons, along with the Rājagurus and the Purohitas, must have dominated the court and reduced the status of secular ministers considerably as executives. The reason is obvious; religion dominated the life of royalty, as it did that of the the whole of society; and when the choice was between the advice of a religious leader and a minister, the advice of the former naturally prevailed. There were kings, like Gaṇḍarāditya and Varaguṇa, whose religious zeal could hardly be excelled and little wonder that ministers had sometimes to reconcile themselves to a situation in which their advice was considered less acceptable than that of an important person of religion.

The Rajaguru

In Hindu courts, the religious adviser of the king was the Rājaguru. Hindu life was ultimately controlled by religion, and even the king, if he were a Hindu, could not escape the influence of religious men and their precepts. So wise men learned in the religious lore and respected therefore were maintained in royal courts. They were consulted on most matters, and their advice was treated with respect. Vasishṭa was such a Guru in Daśarathā's court. That was possibly legend. Historically, Īśāna-Śiva, Sarva Śiva and Uḍaiyār Swāmi Dēvar in the courts of Rājarāja I, Rājēndra I and Kulōttuṅga III[198] respectively were Rājagurus. Though they advised primarily in regard to religious endowments, their influence over the king was so great that they directly or indirectly influenced policies of administration, and on many occasions the kings themselves sought their advice on state matters as well.

The Purohit

The purohits were the royal chaplains also, advising the king on religious matters, like the auspicious hour for departure from a place, or performance of routine religious duties.[199] They presided over religious ceremonies and functions in the

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198. It is stated that he could even ask the king to revise his orders in regard to the appointment of priests in the temple at Tirukkaḍaiyūr. Rājēndra's Śaiva Guru Sarvaśiva Paṇḍita got annually two thousand kalams of paddy by a royal grant. *S I I.* Vol. II: No.20.

199. *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam:* 107

palace, kept count of royal birthdays, and assisted in the per-
formance of sacrifices and all other rituals.

The astrologer

The astrologers, who were also astronomers (*Kaṇi*), were
in constant requisition in the court to read the stars and fix
auspicious hours for royal ceremonies like sacrifices, coronation,
marriage and departure for battlefield. There was a class of
officials known as *Maṅgalamarabinar,* who acted as the heralds
and remembrancers of the royal routine.[200] The *Peruṅkaṇi* was
the chief astrologer. The Vaḷḷuvar who conveyed to the public
royal orders by beat of drum was also an astrologer.[201]

Others

The king actively participated in the public administration.
He listened to representations, decided on issues and dictated
orders.[202] Some permanent royal ordinances or proclamation and
directives had to be inscribed on stone walls of temples. These
and many other acts required the services of a number of
officials of different levels.

There was an office called *Āvaṇakkaḷari* for the registration of
deeds (Āvaṇam) for transferring property. The Āvaṇakkaḷari seems
to have followed a well-defined system of registration. Sale deeds
required attestation by witnesses.[203] When originals of documents
were lost copies were supplied by this office on payment of a speci-
fied fee.[204] If the lost documents were recovered after the duplicate
had been issued, the originals were invalidated.[205]

There was a kind of document that had to last 'as long as the
moon and the sun endured'. This was inscribed in deeds of transfer
of property to religious institutions like temples.[206] Possibly this
department was the authority for causing the deeds to be inscribed
on the stone walls of temples or incised on copper or silver plates.
The practice of renewing inscriptions on stones fading out due to

200. *Peruṅgadai* :II: 6:9   201. *Ibid.* II: 3:58
202. T.V. Mahalingam in his *South Indian Polity*, p.60., calls them
     royal *private* secretary. This does not seem to be correct for
     privacy characterised the communication rather than the
     office.
203. 45 of 1897   204. 16 of 1925
205. 364 of 1909   206. 610 of 1902

weathering was common in ancient Tamiḷaham. There is an instance of a re-transcribed document omitting the historical *prasasti* for want of space on the stone.[207] It follows that the inscriptions on stone-walls of temples are not necessarily contemporaneous wlth the events mentioned therein.

In Pallava times, Uḷpaḍukarumattalaivar[208] (private secretaries), Vāyilkēppār (secretaries) and Kiḷvāyilkēppār[209] (junior secretaries) are heard of. The Vāyilkēppār corresponded to the Tiruvāikkēḷvi of the Chōḷa. The officer in charge of the treasury was the Kōśa Adyaksha. There were customs officials called Maṇḍapis and superintendents of bathing places called Tīrtikas.[210]

The *Uḍankūṭṭam* of the Chōḷa times has been variously described, but to call it a cabinet of advisers is anachronistic. This body moved from place to place along with the king and attended to the daily administrative functions. It was perhaps a body of advisers in which representatives of different departments of government found a place which stood midway between the king and his ministers. They were known as Mudalis. K.A.N. Sastri is perhaps near the truth when he speaks of them as a staff of personal assistants who served as the *liaison* between the monarch and the bureaucracy.[211]

Two kinds of officers, or two types of functions for the same officers, i.e., receiving orders from the kings and issuing them to the chieftains on behalf of their overlords, are mentioned in a literary work of the late Chōḷa period.[212] There were officials to audit the accounts of temples and village sabhās.[213]

The correspondence section of the royal office was managed by the Tirumandira Ōlai who kept accounts of the tributes payable to the king and was a kind of secretary for official despatch. The register in which tributes were noted was Kaṇakkōlai.[214]

207. 39 of 1936   208. Hiragaḍahalli plates.
209. *S.I.I.* Vol. II. p. 361
210. R. Gopalan: *History of the Pallavas of Kañchi:* p. 148
211. K.A.N. Sastri : *The Chōḷas* : pp. 472-73
212. *Takkayagapparaṇi :* 179: commentary
213. 23 of 1915   214. *Ibid.*

The Ājñapti (Āṇatti) was in charge of actual despatch of letters.[215] When orders were communicated to local bodies, the order was Tirumukham. These orders could be issued by the king *suo moto*, or confirmed on his behalf by subordinate officers. The Leyden Grant says that such an officer took down the oral order of the king and functioned also as the Tiruvāikkēḷvi. T.V.Mahalingam thinks that Tirumandira Ōlaināyagam was the department presided over by the Tirumandira Ōlai.[216] It could rather refer to the chief among the many officials called by the generic name of Tiru-mandira Ōlai.

The Viḍaiyil Adikāri was also in charge of drafting replies to enquiries and was a liaison officer. The officials who drafted and forwarded royal orders to the village Sabhās were the Tirumukham Eḷuduvōr; they also came under the categories of Āṇattis.[217]

If it was a matter connected with revenue settlement, the offi-cial called Puravuvari would make an appropriate entry in the *Varippottagam* (revenue register) or *Varippottagakkaṇakku*, and get the entries checked by officers called Variyilīḍu, Mukavetti, Kaṅgāni (literally, supervisor) and forward the notes to the Nāṭṭār through the officer in charge of Paṭṭōlai, meaning a communication.

There were similar officials and procedures for the departments of local governments, charitable endowments and justice.

Most of these offices were held hereditarily.[218] Rājēndra I at least once, departed from this practice and recruited a new dance master instead of a relative of the deceased,[219] though on another occasion he recognized the hereditary right in respect of a similar appointment.[220]

The last grade public servants in the palace were the personal attendants, and they included: 1. *Vandiyar* (the professional flat-terers), 2. *Sūtas* (the heralds), 3. *Māgadas* (who praised the king's

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215. D.C. Sarkar, *Indian Epigraphy*, Vol. IV. pp. 118 and 143
216. T.V. Mahalingam: *South Indian Polity* : p. 142
217. K.A.N. Sastri : *The Cōḷas* : pp. 465, 466, 468
218. *Peruṅgadai* : I: 32:83-84　　　219. *A.R.E.* 23 of 1895
220. *S.I.I.* Vol. V. No.579

military exploits) and 4. Female attendants.[221] There was another kind of flatterers called *Kāraṇikas* who composed eulogies of kings on copper plates and kept literary company with the kings. The palace goldsmith made not only ornaments for the royal establishment, but also engraved on stones and copper plates the praise of the king. The goldsmith who made jewels for the chief queen was called *Mādēviperumtaṭṭār*. The sculptor and the carpenter, likewise, had their assignment of work on stone and wood, either in construction or in decoration. Poets were engaged for writing *praśastis*[222] or the eulogistic prefatory part of documents. The Royal Bodyguard consisted of the *Tirumeikkappār*.[223] The *Tennavan Āpattudavigaḷ* (helpers of the Pāṇḍyas in times of danger), who lived and died with the kings, corresponded to the *Vēḷaikkārar* of the Chōḷa period.[224] Little is known about the exact relationship between the Tennavan Āpattudavigaḷ and the Paḍaikkānavar and the Perumpaḍaiyar.[225] We also hear of minor officials who were in charge of royal entertainments and festivals.[226]

Members of the 'bureaucracy' were not remunerated in cash. They were given lands, from the proceeds of which they collected their wages. They were not hereditary assignments, but were settlements for life (Jīvita) with limited interests. No information is available regarding any system of recruitment of public officials other than those holding offices on a hereditary basis.[227]

It is necessary to remember that the status of the king's employees at the court was that of servants of the king. As servants they were expected to carry out his orders. They could have the bravado

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221. *Periyapurāṇam*: 106 says that all these varieties of attendants accompanied the young prince when he went out in the chariot on the day when the fatal accident occurred and the calf got killed. It is incredible that a sensitive prince could tolerate this crowd all the time around him.
222. C. Minakshi : *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* pp. 63-66
223. *Vide* Fn: 104 of this chapter
224. *E.I.* XVIII. p. 334; *S.I.I.* Vol. II : p. 10; *M.E.R.* 1913, part II, para 102; 203 of 1934-35 : Part II, para 16
225. *M.E.R.* 1911, p.112   226. *Peruṅgaḍai* : I: 37:247
227. China had developed the system of public competitive examinations for selection of bureaucrats and was far in advance of India in that respect.

to advise the king even when their advice was not sought, but they ran at least the risk of their advice being rejected. From the chief ministerial adviser to the personal attendant who looked after the king's personal comforts, irrespective of the nature of their duties, all the employees of the court were paid out of the royal treasury and were a charge on the public funds. This was a necessary concomitant of personal unlimited government.

Writers on medieval polity occasionally speak of administrative hierarchy. That there was an 'administrative system' cannot be doubted; but was it run by a hierarchy as we understand it today? We have earlier referred to the 'hierarchy' of medieval Tamil administration only in the restricted sense of an impressive variety of officials, not to a rigid pattern. Hierarchy connotes, in modern times, differentiated status vertically arranged, involving prestige and a sliding scale of emoluments. Was there anything like this in the case of medieval Tamil 'bureaucracy'? Status variations decided by seniority or efficiency, and above all, by favouritism *did exist*, but other factors, especially decided by law, were, in all probability, non-existent. Some officials were quasi-political, like the Rajaguru and the Purohit; some were quasi-public, for they were in attendance on the person of the king, and there was little distinction between the king, the individual and the king, the head of the state. The distinction between private and public functionaries was rather slender; and if it existed it was considered unusual. How were they recruited? The royal will, undeterred by other considerations, decided everything. Their functions were almost *ad hoc*, but broadly speaking, understood by *custom*. If they failed in their functions, or displeased the king, by such failure they could be punished for incompetence or dishonesty depending on why they did not come up to royal expectation. Corruption was there, though not approved of by the king. In a very broad sense, government, its needs, functions and functionaries were not much different from what they are in modern times.

C. SUBORDINATE CHIEFTAINS

The medieval age of the Tamils, like the earlier Śaṅgam age, had a governmental polity made up of the kings and feudatories. We have discussed earlier the implications of designating the

subordinate chieftains in the Tamil country as feudatories. They were of two kinds: 1. the hereditary chieftains whose rule in parts of the Tamil country had been as old as that of the crowned Tamil monarchs themselves, like the Adigamāns, Malaiyamāns and Muttaraiyars. 2. Newly emerging chieftains on whom rights of large landed proprietorship were conferred, or who acquired them by deeds of valour or flattery. These were over-grown local principalities, paying tribute to the monarchs and receiving favours from them, and behaving like sovereigns in their own territories.

Among the new feudatories who grew up during the Chōla period - the Kāḍavas, (Kāḍavarāyas or Pallavarāyas) or the descendants of the Pallavas are noteworthy, since one of them, Kōpperuñjinga, was powerful enough to challenge Chōla imperial authority, to the extent of imprisoning the monarch and assuming the sovereignty himself. He could be dislodged only by the effective intercession of the Hōysalas. The Sambuvarāyas, a minor hereditary chieftaincy, were better than the Kāḍavas, at least, during the earlier stages when they championed the royal cause in the Chōla wars against Ceylon. The Muttaraiyars were the subordinate chieftains of the Pallavas, but fell to the rising power of the Chōlas under Vijayālaya. The Bāṇās[228] (from North Arcot to the sea), the Gaṅgas (in the present North Arcot district), the Irukkuvēḷirs (of Koḍumbālūr, from 6th to 8th centuries), Paḷuvēṭṭaraiyar,[229] and the Eyinar or the Maṟavar were some of the more important subordinate chieftaincies of medieval times. These chieftaincies paid tribute to a crowned monarch of their choice (this would be generally decided by the geographical location of the chieftaincy), and they assumed the titles appropriate to that monarch; e.g., the Muttaraiyars assumed Pallava titles like Perumpiḍugu, Marpiḍugu, Vidēlviḍugu, and Pahāppiḍugu. One Mōhan Āṭkolli Kāḍavarāya called himself Kulōttuṅgachōla Kāḍavarāyan. Kulōttuṅga Chōla Vāṇakōvaraiyan was another chieftain who assumed royal title, likewise. There was one Vikramachōla Śambuvarāyan, a subordinate contemporary of Vikrama Chōla,[230] who, incidentally, had to manage

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228. Possibly the descendants of the Pāṇar of Śaṅgam times : Compare the Perumpāṇar of the Pattuppāṭṭu with the Brihatpāṇas of medieval inscriptions.

229. Of Paḷuvūr (9th to 11th centuries) claiming to be Kshatriyas.

230. 302 of 1897

thirteen subordinate chieftains.[231] The king in return for their loyalty and service assured protection to them, and this assurance of protection was given ceremonially by the king placing his royal feet on their heads.[232]

In the later Chōḷa period, when the country was in turmoil, the subordinate chieftaincies were in a political condition not different from what prevailed in medieval feudal Europe among the lesser states. They had to protect themselves by mutual compacts against common hostile forces. Some of these compacts have been recorded in epigraphy.[233] Most of them would appear to have been made in the reign of Kulōttuṅga III and his successors. A political compact between two chieftains of the Malayamān family was one such pact. Apart from political alliances of this kind, showing the troubled state of the declining Chōḷa kingdom,[234] there were less seditious arrangements like matrimonial pacts; e.g., between the families of two subordinate chieftains.[235] The king was not a party to these quasi-feudal compacts; possibly the king himself provided the provocation for such compacts.

231. according to the *Vikramachōḷan Ulā*

232. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* : 337

233. 435 of 1913; counterparts or duplicates of these instruments were also signed and kept by all the concerned parties: 252 of 1911.

234. 16 of 1935   235. 24 of 1922

GOVERNMENT AT THE CENTRE

KING

General Administration

Eṉpērāyam Aimperum-kuḻu

Pallavas
Mantrimaṇḍalam (Council of Ministers)
Chief Minister
Mantri (Amaichchu)
Uḷpaḍukarumattān (private secretary)
Kōśa Adyaksha (Official in charge of the treasury)
Vāyilkēḷpār
Kīḷvāyilkēḷpār
Maṇḍapis (customs officials)
Tīrtikas (Superintendents)

Chōḷas
Uḍankūṭṭam
Perudanam
Sirudanam
Rahasyādikārins
Rājaguru
Purōhit
Astronomer
Astrologer
Vaḷḷuvan
Tirumēikāppār
Tirumukameḷuduvōr
Vandiyar
Sūtas
Māgadas
Kāraṇikas
Perumtattār
Pāḍikāval

Pāṇḍyas
Uttaramantri (Chief Minister)
Mantri
Āpattudavigaḷ

War
Sēnāpati
Mahādaṇḍa-nayakam śeyvor
Daṇḍanāyakam śeyvōr or Perumpaḍaiōr

Justice
Nyāyattār
Dharmāśanattār
Dharmādikārins

Revenue
Āṇatti (Ajnapti)
Tiruvāikkēḷvi
Tirumandira Ōlaināyakam
Tirumandira Ōlai
Viḍaiyil Adikāri
Puravuvari
Varippottagakaṇakku
Variyilīḍu
Mukaveṭṭi
Kaṇkāṇi

King
(Commander of the armed forces)

Army   **Navy**

Infantry   **Cavalry**   **Elephantry**   **Chariotry**

Sēnāpati   Kudiraich-chēvagır   Āṉaiāṭkaḷ

Kaikkōḷap-paḍai

Mūnrukai-mahāśēnai, etc.

Adikāri - officials were generally called Adikāris

Eṉpērāyam and *Aimperum-kuḻu*
The reference of which can be had in a literary work of the early medieval Text - *Peruṅgadai*

CHAPTER V

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Introduction

Even as monarchical government at the capitals varied from kingdom to kingdom within the Tamil country under the Pallava, Pāṇḍya and Chōḷa rulers, local government too varied from territory to territory; nor was it uniform within the same territory. There was a greater hierarchy of governmental functionaries within the set-up of local government than that at the capital. The range and variety of interests and the duties of the functionaries were also great. The local government represented the entire government in the countryside.

We shall consider, in this chapter, the territorial divisions made by kings for efficient administration, and the duties which were discharged by the officers in charge of these units. Particular attention is paid to the government of the village, which is both important in itself, and is more copiously documented. Even in the case of village government, it may be noted the Sabhā is better known than the Ūr. Incidentally, the nature of the municipal services, functions and salaries of local government servants, etc. will be considered. The fact that most of the villages were isolated from one another, and, possibly for that reason, constituted autonomous units of government, might account for the differences in the constitution of the village assemblies and the rules governing their function. Hence a uniform picture of local government, or even the village government, will not be possible. The common points will emphasise the 'national' character of these institutions; and the differences will point to practical exigencies which compelled each village to go its own way albeit under monarchical authority.

Kingdom

The kingdom was obviously the largest territorial unit. It had no specific denomination, like any of its subdivisions, since the extent of the kingdom was not finite, and was constantly expanding to meet the goal of a *'Orukuḍaikkīḻ Ulagu'*. Additions to this territory

occurred in several ways. The territory of a kingdom was enlarged mostly by conquests and matrimonial alliances; but occasionally gifts, too, accounted for territorial expansion.[1]

The largest divisions of the kingdom were provincial in dimension and importance. The Pāṇḍyan country, after its conquest by Parāntaka I, was ruled at different times in different ways : 1. as a subordinate unit permitted to be ruled by the defeated king who paid tribute; 2. as a viceroyalty, especially under Rājēndra I and his immediate successors; and 3. as a military proconsulate under Kulōttuṅga I. The Chōḷa viceroy in Madurai was called Chōḷa-Pāṇḍya.[2] Similar institutions are not known in the government of the Pāṇḍyas over the Chōḷas or the Chōḷas over the Pallavas. In the case of Ceylon the Chōḷa occupation became straightforward military government on behalf of a distant imperial power.

Mandalams and other larger territorial units

The Maṇḍalams had their large assemblies. It is possible that the Maṇḍalam was constituted by the representatives of the lesser territorial units.[3] The Nāḍus had large assemblies in which representatives of the constituent villages and their accountants were present. They had a system of election similar to that adopted by the Sabhās for the selection of the members of the Vāriyams.[4]

The assembly of the Nāḍu looked after the classification of lands, land assessment and other land revenue details,[5] and possibly other functions we do not know of. From the Pallava records, we get an account of how the Ūṟṟukkāṭṭukkōṭṭattunāṭṭār were called upon to carry out the king's orders to transfer some property to a Brahman as a tax-free land-grant.[6] C. Minakshi suggests that the *Naṭṭār* may well be compared to the 'Janapada' which, according to Jayaswal, was a constitutional assembly that served as a check on provincial autocracy.[7]

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1. 481, 492 of 1908
2. Rājēndra's son Jaṭāvarman Sundara Chōḷa Pāṇḍya was the first of these Chōḷa-Pāṇḍya viceroys. *A.R.E.* 1918, p. 144; *A.R.E.* 1905; pp. 48-49
3. T.V.S. Pandarattar: *Piṟkāla Chōḷar Varalāṟu*, Part III: p. 49
4. 109 of 1906   5. Leyden Grant: *E.I.* Vol.XII No 34
6. Kaśākkuḍi Plates
7. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas :* p.122

We learn that Periyanāḍu, Paṭṭi and Niyamam were some of the other territorial units. The Periyanāḍu, according to Burton Stein, "encompassed a much larger area"[8] than the Brahmadēya, the latter being included in the Periyanāḍu, which literally means the great country assembly. Stein says, "while the Brahmadēya was an essentially management-body over a circle of neighbouring settlements, the Periyanāḍu was a legislative body[9] for the entire nuclear areas".[10] Chittiramēḷipperiyanāḍu was the village of Chittiramēḷi-viṇṇagar in Tiruviḍaikkaḷi in Tirukkōvalūr in Kuṟukkaikkōṭṭam. We do not know if the Periyanāḍu was analogous to the Brahmadēya or the Maṇigrāmam,[11] i.e., if it was land-based or trade-based. One feels that it may not be inappropriate to treat the Nāḍu as a corporation whose functions could vary according to the need of the hour. The Periyanāṭttār and the Paṇṇāṭṭār prescribed a *prayaśchitta* (penance, or expiation) for an accidental homicide at Olakkūr in South Arcot district in the 4th regnal year of Rāja-rāja II.[12] In the 19th year of Kulōttuṅga III, the Periyanāṭṭu Vishayattār of twelve Nāḍus gave some land as Tiruviḍaiāṭṭam to a temple in Nallūr.[13] The Dēvadānanāṭṭār of Tiruvoṟṟiyūr presented a petition to Kulōttuṅga III regarding the condition of a Dēvadāna village.[14] We hear of the Kulōttuṅga Chōḷapēriḷamainādu acting in consort with the Tirunaraiyūr Sabhā to adjudge a case of misappropriation of the livestock of a temple.[15]

From the above, it can be seen that the territorial divisions, large or small, had their administrative organs, and transacted business which was traditionally understood to be appropriate to their jurisdiction.

In the Pallava period and kingdom, Maṇḍalam, Kōttam, Nāḍu, Mūdūr and Ūr were the main territorial divisions of an administrative nature. In the Chōḷa period and empire, Maṇḍalam, Vaḷanāḍu,

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8. not necessarily in the physical sense.
9. It could not have been a delegated function for passing regulations, for routine social activities could not be termed legislation. Even the king, we have seen, did not 'legislate'.
10. *Vide A.R.E.* 117 of 1900
11. a corruption of Vāṇigagrāmam literally meaning a collection of merchants.
12. 352 of 1909   13. 197 of 1894
14. 368 of 1911   15. 543 of 1921

Kōṭṭam (which was a corruption of the earlier Kūṟṟam), Nāḍu, Mūḍūr and Ūr, and in the Pāṇḍyan times and kingdom Maṇ-dalam, Vaḷanāḍu, Nāḍu, Kūṟṟam, Nagaram, Pērūr and Ūr consti-tuted the administrative units. In the 10th and 11th centuries a Nāḍu was also called Kūṟṟam in some places.[16] In the 9th, 10th and the succeeding centuries, the Vaḷanāḍus were a popular division [17] Often, in the Pāṇḍyan country, the Vaḷanāḍu was dropped from the territorial hierarchy.[18] But the Chōḷas gave prominence to the Vaḷa-nāḍu in conjunction with the Nāḍu and the Ūr.[19] Maṇḍalam was one territorial unit common to the whole of Tamilnadu as well as North India.[20] Kaliṅga, a conquered territory, was divided into seven parts in the days of Kulōṭṭuṅga I.[21] In the Pallava period, Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam had twenty four Kōṭṭams, mentioned in later Pallava inscriptions.[22] The Kōṭṭam was Sanskritized into Kōshṭaka and the Maṇḍalam was known as Rāshṭra. The Vishaya and the Rāshṭra were the larger and the smaller units mentioned in the Hiragadahalli plates while referring to the non-Tamil areas of Pal-lava territory.[23] But in the Tamil country they had other divisions like the Kōṭṭam and the Nāḍu. Early Pallava grants speak of dis-trict officers, Āyuktakas and Adyakshas and also Ūr. These names stood not only for the territorial divisions but also for the assem-blies.[24] Vaḷanāḍu was not a division known to the Pallavas.[25]

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16. *Inscriptions of the Pudukkottai State:* Nos. 382, 386, 387 and 399
17. *E.I.* XXI No.17   18. *S.I.I.* V: 298, 296, 300-302
19. *S.I.I.* V: 456 and 637 etc.
20. Maṇḍalam was current in the eastern parts of the Gupta empire. G.P. Sinha in his *Post-Gupta polity* p. 72 refers to this. An inscription of Dharmaditya A.D.567 refers to Varaka as a Maṇḍalam. *Vide*, also *I.A.* XXXIX p. 200
21. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: 341
22. and enumerated in the Mackenzie manuscripts as also the *Chingleput district Manual* p. 438
23. *E.I.* Vol. I., p.5; The Uruvapaḷḷi plates and the Pikara grant.
24. C.Minakshi : *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas* : p. 121; N. Subrahmanian draws attention to similar practice among Anglo-saxons: See words like Comitatus and Wapentake: *Saṅgam Polity :* p. 8; Fn. 18
25. *Periyapurāṇam's* reference to Toṇḍaivaḷanāḍu in the context of Sundarar's sojourns v: 3447 is anachronistic.

From the days of Rājarāja I, Vaḷanāḍus came to be organized, and the special names assumed by the king for one reason or other, were given to local divisions also. The administrative divisions were in the following hierarchical order from above: Maṇḍalam, Vaḷanāḍu, Kūṟṟam and Village. The empire at its zenith consisted of eight or nine Maṇḍalms (provinces), including Ceylon, and at no time was this number exceeded.[26] Each Maṇḍalam consisted of many Vaḷanāḍus, each of the latter of many Kōṭṭams or Nāḍus, and each one of these of a number of Tani Urs; (e.g., Jayaṅkoṇḍachōḷamaṇḍalam consisted of twenty four Kōṭṭams in the time of Kulōttuṅga I). The entire Chōḷamaṇḍalam was at one time divided into nine Vaḷanāḍus. There were Chaturvēdimangalams, many of which constituted a Nāḍu, and each included many Siṟṟūrs or hamlets. The Vaḷanāḍus were renamed from time to time, as can be seen in the names, Kulōttuṅga Chōḷavaḷanāḍu, Virudarāja Bhayaṅkara Vaḷanāḍu etc., in the days of Kulōttuṅga I.[27] Rivers and channels were the boundary lines between Vaḷanāḍus. From the 17th regnal year of Rājarāja I, the practice of mentioning in the inscriptions and other documents the Ūrs and Nagaras in conjunction with the Nāḍu, Vaḷanāḍu etc., was adopted; (e.g., Chōḷamaṇḍalattu Kshatriyasikhāmaṇi Vaḷanāṭṭu Tirunaraiyūrnāṭṭu Vaṇḍalamchēri, Tanjavūr Kūṟṟam of Pāṇḍya Kulāsani Vaḷanāḍu).[28] Kūṟṟam, Vaḷanāḍu and Maṇḍalam were roughly equal to a taluk, a district and a province respectively of modern times.

Capitals and other urban centres

The capital was the nerve-centre of the kingdom. Ultimate power resided there. We have seen in an earlier chapter how the king held his court in the palace in the capital, and that he had many capitals from which to govern the kingdom. Sovereignty

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26. In the days of Kulōttuṅga I, the kingdom was divided into Chōḷamaṇḍalam, Jayaṅkoṇḍachōḷamaṇḍalam, Rājarājapāṇḍi-maṇḍalam, Mummudichōḷamaṇḍalam, Malaimaṇḍalam, Vēṅgaimaṇḍalam and Adirājarājamaṇḍalam.

27. Under Rājarāja I, the name Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam was changed into Jayaṅkoṇḍachōḷamaṇḍalam, after one of the surnames of the king, and this name lasted till Vijayanagar times.

28. Rājarāja I: 26th year; *S.I.I.* II: 1

moved with him to wherever he went; but physically there was a recognized capital for the kingdom. We hear of Tañjai and Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram as the chief Chōḷa capitals; Paḷayāṟai, from where Vijayālaya ruled before he captured Tañjai, Uṟandai of Śaṅgam fame, and Chidambaram, the politico-religious capital of the Śaivite Chōḷas, are mentioned as ancillary capitals. At times the king treated the capitals taken over from enemies as his own, and was crowned in them; (e.g., Kāñchi, the Pallava capital from where Kulōttuṅga I directed the conquest of Kalinga, Madurai the Pāṇḍyan capital where Kulōttuṅga III crowned himself, and Polannaruva in Ceylon, which became the Chōḷa capital and was renamed Vijayarājapuram). The capital of the earlier decadent Chōḷa kingdom was Uṟaiyūr in Pallava times, and the Chōḷa ruler was called Uṟandaiyarkōn.[29] The capitals of Vañji[30] and Māndai[31] are also reminiscent of ancient times. Kāñchi the Pallava capital was also called Kachchi and Kāñchipuram;[32] Mallai or Māmallapuram and Mayilai (Mylapore), though important ports, never assumed the status of capitals. Madurai, the famous Pāṇḍyan capital, had an alternative in Koṟkai, a port, in the pre-Pallavan period. A number of towns and ports which were famous in early medieval times were already reputed as market places or capitals in the Śaṅgam age: Uṟandai[33], Mayilai[34], Puhār[35], Kūḍal or Madurai[36] and Mallai or Mahābalipuram.[37]

The urban centres, whether they were capitals of kingdoms or trade or religious centres, developed their own administrative complex. Chau-Ju-Kua, referring to Chu-lian (The Chōḷa country), says: "Its capital is 5 *li* distant from the sea. In this kingdom, there is a city with a sevenfold wall, seven feet high extending 12 *li* from north to south and 7 *li* from east to west. The different walls are 100 paces distant from each other. Four of these walls are of brick, two of mud and one, in the centre, of wood. There are flowers, fruit-trees and other trees planted on them. The first and second walls enclose the dwellings of the people. They are surrounded by

29. *Nandikkalambakam*: 48
30. *Pāṇḍikkōvai*: 13
31. *Muttoḷḷāyiram*: 1517
32. *Nandikkalambakam*: 26, 33
33. *Pāṇḍikkōvai* : 130
34. *Ibid*. 55, 56
35. *Ibid*. 59
36. *Ibid*. 53
37. *Nandikkalambagam*: 7, 38

small ditches. The third and the fourth walls surround the dwellings of court officers. Within the fifth dwell the king's four sons; within the sixth are the Buddhist monasteries where the priests dwell. The seventh wall encloses over 400 buildings forming the royal palace. There are thirty one pu-lo (pura) in this kingdom".[38]

This description does not tally with the layout of any city described in epigraphs or literature, but still could be true, since urban areas were constructed in such a way as to accommodate different communities and interests in different places within the walled town.

Some tenants who had built houses on temple-land were obliged to shift to new quarters to facilitate the widening of streets by the temple, at its own expense, and bearing the cost of construction of the new quarters for the evicted tenants. The taxes on the newly-built houses were also remitted.[39]

The capital city, as well as other urban centres, had roads and parks, besides public buildings like the temple, and the Maṇḍapa. We do not know if real roads were laid out or what were called 'roads' were merely the space between two rows of houses on which fresh sand was laid periodically. Poetic references to streets becoming muddy through the movement of elephants and horses may indicate the poor condition of the streets and roads. Possibly the road in front of the palace was an exception, and was well maintained; but we get a reference to the reconstruction, of a road by the garden committee of a village during the rule of Parāntaka I.[40]

The streets were named after important institutions therein like Yānaikaṭṭu (elephant stables) teru, Paṭṭāḷa (barracks) teru, and after the communities or artisans living there, the Śalaiyar (washerman) teru etc.[41]

Tiruttakkadēvar describing the Yēmāṅgata country in effect, describes a typical Tamil town in that country.[42] There were many towns, and these contained *pandals* to accommodate wayfarers, chatrams to feed them, halls where marriages could be celeb-

38. K.A.N. Sastri (ed): *Foreign Notices of South India*, p. 144 ff.
39. 407, 408 of 1925   40. *S.I.I.* 9 of 1898
41. *Peruṅgadai* : III: 3:65, 77, 87   42. *Chintāmaṇi* : 75-77

rated and even beauty salons for ladies and market places where all commodities were available. Exaggeration apart, Tamil towns had many amenities, at least, in their nuclear condition. Separate places were provided[43] for toddy shops. The Paḍaichcheri was a suburb where the soldiers dwelt.[44] Religious communities like the Buddhists dwelt apart as a colony, and this was called Buddharcheri. There were separate colonies for weavers, artisans and pariahs. Another category of persons who lived apart as a colony were the hetaerae. In Tanjore, the devaradiyar (women dedicated to temples) were housed around the temple; and we have reference even to the door numbers of the houses they occupied. They must have formed a big colony, as 400 of them were absorbed in the service of the great temple alone.[45]

There were colonies of alien settlers like the Yavanas who guarded the city. In the case of the capital, the royal palace was in its centre, and shared that honour with the temple.

More important towns or cities of strategic significance were walled and surrounded by moats. In the reign of Rājarāja I, big cities had their extended colonies, and the outer part of the city was called Purambaḍi; and some of the wards were named after the king, like the Aruḷmoḷittēvarcheri and the Rājarājacheri. A high road named Surasūtamaṇiperumteru was laid in the days of Parāntaka I.[46] A cheri, like a grāma, was literally a 'collection' of houses, and stood for a hamlet or a Sabhā. The towns were divided into mutually exclusive cheris. Our knowledge about the administrative set-up of these urban centres is unfortunately scanty and none too specific.

Ports

Mallai and Mayilai were important Pallava ports,[47] Hiuen Tsang speaks of ships proceeding from Kāñchi directly to Ceylon.[48] Either he took Mallai as an extension of Kāñchi, or the river Pālār was navigable in the 7th century A.D., and ships actually sailed on that river. T.V.Mahalingam, however, says that

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43. *Peruṅgadai :* II: 8:68   44. *Ibid.* III: 3:36

45. *S.I.I.* II., p.66   46. 187 of 1912

47. *Periyatirumoḷi:* 266   48. Watters: Vol.II., p.227

Kāñchi could never have been a port.[49] Nāgapaṭṭinam, another port, had trade contacts with China in Pallava and Chōḷa times. Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam, famous in Śaṅgam times as Puhār, was much diminished in size and activity in the post-Śaṅgam period, but still the port was not insignificant. Marco Polo, visiting the Pāṇḍyan country in the 12th century, mentions Kāyal as an important port which received "ships laden with horses and other things for sale from the East and the West."[50]

Village

'Tamil Nāḍu' as a cultural area was known even in the days of the *Pāṇḍikkōvai*[51] (8th century). Into this country, groups of men from outside came and settled from time to time, and specific numbers of families were allowed to settle in particular localities; and these numbers were associated with the names of the villages. It is recorded in an inscription of Dantivarman "the '3700' of the Tiruvallarai village were to protect the charity".[52] There is mention of 8,000, 48,000 etc., and these numbers could have decreased or increased in course of time, but the association with the original numbers was retained in the names of the villages. The famous village Eṇṇāyiram (8,000) in the South Arcot district had perhaps a similar origin.[53] Villages existed from very ancient times, but new ones were also formed. Rājēndra I constructed the village of Vanamaṅgai, and settled in it 4,000 Brahmins.[54] Rājēndra III confirmed an earlier grant of land for the formation of a new village.[55] The extension to a settlement in the environs of the Agastyēśvara temple

49. T.V.Mahalingam: *Kāñchipuram in Early South Indian History*: p. 89

50. *The Travels of Ser Marco Polo* p. 293

51. *Pāṇḍikkōvai*: 319   52. *E I* Vol. X

53. Mentioning Iraṭṭapāḍi 7½ lakhs; Gaṅgapāḍi 96,000; Nuḷambapāḍi 32,000; Banavasi 12,000; Vēṅgaiṇāḍu 6,000 etc., T.V.S. Pandarattar says, "these numbers refer to the number of cultivating land-strips in the concerned localities, and he rejects the view that the numbers stand for the local population. It is true that they had no device to determine the exact population figures; but that these numbers stand for agricultural strips is not convincing. *Piṛkāla Chōḻar Varalāṛu* P.III: pp. 92-93

54. 232 of 1931   55. 188 of 1921

in Chingleput is mentioned in an epigraph of Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya.[56] A record from Chidambaram relates to the foundation of a new village named after Sundara Pāṇḍya's brother or father Vikramapāṇḍyachaturvēdimaṅgalam. It was to settle 101 brahmins well-versed in the Śāstras.

New settlements were created also for providing asylum for those displaced or driven out of their homes during wars or rebellions. Such settlements were called Añjinānpuhaliḍams. A village (or a part of it) called Vīrarājēndrapuram was renamed Chōḷatuṅgan Āḷavaṇḍān Āñjinānpuhalidam and a number of refugees were settled in it.[57] A similar colony was created in the Iḍaippāṟai village, and named an Añjinānpuhalidam by Kulaśēharagaṅga Nārāyaṇa Chakravarti a chieftain. He collected a nominal sum of one-fourth paṇam per family from the communities settled in the colony.[58] There is an instance of the Sabhā of two villages resolving to unite them into a single village in the days of Parāntaka I.[59]

There were, broadly speaking, two forms of local territorial jurisdiction at the village level : 1. the *Brahmadēya*, which was a tax-free grant of village exclusively for Brahmins and Brahmin-dominated areas with their Sabhās. 2. The *Ūr*, or the mixed village and its administrative organization. To these two customary local units, one could add a third, viz., the Periyanāḍu[60] which is considered by some scholars as a 'Satśūdra - controlled extended locality'.[61]

Ancient and medieval polity was made up of not only the organized government of the king functioning from the capital, but also village assemblies, trading corporations and territorial organizations of varying types and sizes. These bodies functioned somewhat like the planets in the solar system wherein the larger planets keep the

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56. 281 of 1901
57. This was created on the orders of one Nēmināta, who was in charge of Gaṇḍarādityam Perumpaḷḷi in the reign of Rāja-rāja III. *A.R.E* 448 of 1937-38
58. *A.R.E.* 141 of 1941-42
59. *S.I.I.* Vol. II. p.370   60. *A.R.E.* 117 of 1900
61. Burton Stein: *Historical Ecotypes in South India: Proceedings of the Second International Conference of Tamil Studies:* Vol. II. p. 284

smaller ones in their orbit by mutual gravitational pulls. There was no tight-knit public administrative system by which all these corporate bodies, with their distinctive functions, operated without overlapping of jurisdiction, but directly subject to the ultimate authority of the king. Our knowledge of the mercantile guilds of early medieval times is limited, and they will be discussed in the chapter on *Economy*. The other major local governmental unit was the village assembly.

The village was the smallest administrative unit, largely looking after its own affairs through the wisdom of local elders whose competence was beyond dispute. Revenue and judicial administrative matters were resolved mostly at the local level and taken to the royal court only when necessary. The king was, however, interested in the revenues of the village, and in the welfare of the subjects, and he could *suo moto* interfere, if necessary.

The Imperial Chōḷas developed an autonomous village administrative system. No other dynasty can be credited with operating such unique system of village administration as the one which became famous under the Imperial Chōḷas. However, this system was not invented by them. It was inherited in some form and improved upon by them. The self-sufficient nuclear village had always been a feature of ancient Indian history. In Śaṅgam times, Ūr was governed by the Ūrār who met in the Ambalam or Podiyil and transacted public business.[62] In Pallava times the system continued, but the villages became part of a slightly more centralized royal government. The Śaṅgam references, however, relate only to judicial functions; but by Pallava times, the management of endowments and public works, as also the collection of revenues, had come within the purview of village administration. So, as its functions increased, subcommittees became necessary. Thus we hear of tank committees even in the days of Dantivarman.[63] This was how villages developed new limbs of self-government; and their autonomy was the result of the king's interest in them as revenue-yielders, and his capacity to create and maintain a full-fledged bureaucracy. The cost-benefit ratio was against interference, and the king prudently kept aloof,

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62. *Puṟanāṉūṟu* : 39; *Aham* : 93; *Naṟṟiṇai* : 400
63. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*: p. 106

retaining the benefits of the revenue for himself and leaving the duties of local administration to the elders.

An inscription of the 35th year of Māranjaḍaiyan i.e., Varaguṇa Mahārāja (c.A.D. 800) mentions the village government of Mānūr in Tinnevelly district.[64]   The village was governed by committees of an assembly, membership of which was open only to persons possessing the prescribed qualifications. Only members of the assembly could sit on committees or Vāriyams. Vāriyam literally means a committee looking after incomes.[65]   There are details in the Mānūr epigraph that appear an anticipation of many of the details of the Uttaramērūr epigraphs of Parāntaka I dated a century later. Though the Mānūr inscription does not furnish any data as to how the members of the assembly were chosen and how the committees were constituted, in actual functioning, Mānūr could not have been much different from the better known Uttaramērūr. The Mānūr record speaks of shareholders in the village, which was a *Brahmadēya*. This is interesting because we have already seen evidence of a whole village being granted to a body of Brahmins each one of whom had a specific share in the village property. This anticipates a similar village proprietory system which becomes clear in the Chōḷa period. R. Gopalan, referring to the Pallava period, points out that [66] "no information is available regarding the rules that regulated the actual working of the village assembly, its constitution and its relation to the central government". But he adds, "the village Sabha of the Pallava times functioned especially in the *Brahmadēyas*."[67]

Village government other than the Sabha

There were four kinds of village assemblies: (1) the Sabhā, (2) the Ūr, (3) the Dēvadāna Sabhā, and (4) the unclassified, including the Nāḍu, and the Nagarattār. The Sabhā related exclusively to Brahmin settlements which were called Maṅgalams,

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64. *A.R.E.* 1913; Part II: para 23
65. K.A.N. Sastri reluctantly admits the Tamil origin of the word. C. Minakshi derives it from Sanskrit. *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*: p.126
66. R. Gopalan: *Pallavas of Kāñchi*: p.154
67. *Ibid.* p.153

Agrahārams and Brahmadēyas. The Sabhā functioned as a governmental institution for the village. Maṅgalams and Agrahārams stood for the community in the village, and the concept of Brahmadeya implied a gift to Brahmins, as the Dēvadāna was a grant to a temple. There were lesser village groups which were concerned with particular interests, while the Sabhā stood for all the interests in the village. The latter could regulate the former, not *vice versa*.

The Ūr was an exclusively (or nearly exclusively) non-Brahminical settlement. It is admitted that our knowledge of the Ūr is next to nothing. So to infer from the Sabhā the nature of the Ūr, or even from one Sabhā about the rest, will be illogical, and it will be more so to generalize for the whole country. Still, such a village administrative system could well have been a prevalent pattern with only minor changes in detail here and there. 'Ūr' literally means town. The Ūr, like the Nādu, was not only a place, but also an assembly.[68] Its exact composition is not known. The Ūr co-operated with the Sabhā in the drafting and engraving of documents.[69] The Maṅgalams and the Sabhās were later additions to the Village system, the Ūr being the native unit of administration. At times, a Sabhā was imposed on a Ūr, and we have an instance of the old Ūr and the new Sabhā agreeing to co-exist in the same locality. This is to be distinguished from the Sabhās of the neighbouring villages agreeing to merge into a single unit in the reign of Parāntaka I.[70] The approval or sanction of the king does not seem to have been necessary for such action.[71]

A study of the inscriptions of the medieval period shows that a great majority of the villages were non-Brahminical, and adopted the Ūr organizational pattern. The Ūr was historically much anterior to the Sabhā.[72] But most of the inscription which give details of composition and function of village organization relate only to the Sabhā leaving the Ūrs with

68. *Vide* Ūrāi Iśainda Ūrōm   69. 279 of 1903; 285 of 1906
70. *S.I.I.* Vol. II: p.370   71. *E.I.* Vol. III. pp. 145-147
72. N. Karashima: *Allūr and Īśanamaṅgalam - Two South Indian villages of the Chōḷa times*: Proceedings of the First International Conference - Seminar on Tamil Studies: Vol. I; pp.426-36

but the mention of their names. This may be due to the practice of inscribing details regarding the composition and function of the village community of the Brahmins influenced by the northern tradition, while the Ūr, the Manigrāmam and other non-Brahminical local communities allowed the details of their local government to go unrecorded, and were content with a continuation of the ancient system of rural government. It is not safe to suppose that the Ūr was a replica of the Sabhā. Further, the Sabhā system of local government was possible only when the communal interests (which were really political and not economic or administrative) were identical, as in the case of Brahmin villages. But when these interests became varied, as was the case with the Ūr, such a local government would be difficult to organize and impossible to operate. The old Ambalam or Podiyil system of Government had an administrative organization directed by the elders of the village chosen on the basis of property ownership, age and wisdom. There is clearly no reason why a non-Brahminical Ūr should have followed the Sabhā pattern in all its details. Hence to say that in the early medieval period, every Tamil village was patterened on the Sabhā and its committees, seems to be unwarranted, though presumably all the villages were equally autonomous within the king's suzerainty.

The local assemblies of different types like the Paḷḷichchandam, Kaṇimuṟṟuttu, Veṭṭipēṟu, Araśaḷabhōgam, Dēvadāna etc.,[73] at times functioned co-operatively in managing an institution. The Sabhā, the Nagaram and the Dēvakanmis of a temple in Tiruviḍaimarudūr once co-operated in managing a temple.[74] The proceedings of the Sabhā, the Ūr and the Nagaram were of the nature of folk meetings in which everyone who was interested could participate.

Now let us see the relation between the village communities and the government and how settlements of land revenue were made. At the outset it may appear that the government would arrange with a certain important individual, like the headman or an elected representative of the village, so as to hold him responsible for the collection and payment of land revenue. The

73. *S.I.I.* Vol. III. p 402   74. 199 of 1907

'communal system' of land-tenure in the joint village originated first among the pre-Dravidians such as the Muṇḍās and others. Later on, it spread into the far South, and was adopted largely by the Dravidians.[75] The Dēvadāna committees, which were in the nature of groups of trustees, got their accounts audited by royal officials, but were generally subject to the supervisory authority of the village assembly so that they had two authorities to consider: 1. the king, through his officers; and 2. the village assembly. The Dēvadāna committee itself being merely a group of executives, the king should have treated his own officials and the village associated with the temple; but surely it was not a parish, and their function was administrative and not religious. There were groups other than the Dēvadāna committees which also had a share in the management of a temple, like the Sāttagaṇattār, Kāḷigaṇattār, Krishṇagaṇattār and Kumāragaṇattār. These were evidently bodies looking after particular shrines for Sāttan, Kāḷi, Krishṇa and Kumāra respectively. In villages where there was Dēvadāna land as well as private cultivation, there were two kinds of Sabhās 1. to manage the temples and 2. for the general administration of the village.[76]

The Sabha and its committees

The Uttaramērūr[77] Sabhā is the most typical example of Brahminical village administration. Membership of a Sabhā in such a village was open to all male adults. These members were called *Tiruvaḍis*. The Sabhā was also called Kuri, Perumkuri or the Mahāsabhā. A distinction was made between the primary members of the Sabhā and those who could participate in its deliberations. Scholarly qualifications were fixed for the latter.[78] The strength of the membership varied from village to village, naturally. Ukkal had 98 members in its assembly in the days of Rājarāja III.[79] The assembly attended to all duties relating to the entire village. A number of wards constituted a village, and each ward was made up of one or more families. Uttaramērūr consisted of thirty wards (Kuḍumbūs) and twelve suburbs (chēris). So the assembly had thirty

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75. *J.A.H.R.S.* Vol XIII. Parts I-IV: 1942
76. *S.I.I.* Vol.III. Nos. 13, 125,185
77. *A.S.I.* 1905, *A.R.E.* 1930. Vol.II. p. 16
78. 241 of 1922   79. 23 of 1924

members. The number of wards varied from village to village, de-
pending on its size and importance. The Kuḍumbūs were regrouped
into cheris, and members were chosen for both the Kuḍumbūs and
their cheris. Qualifications of membership of the assembly included:
1. ownership of at least one-fourth veli of land; 2. some acquain-
tance with the Śāstras; 3. age between 35 and 75; and 4. a break
of three years between two terms. Those who were disqualified from
membership were : 1. persons who had not maintained proper
accounts as members of any committee; 2. persons who had violated
the major commandments; 3. those who had embezzled public pro-
perty; 4. those who had been black-listed by the police; 5. foreig-
ners; 6. those who had ever ridden a donkey as punishment for a
proven offence; 7. those who had taken bribes; 8. those who had
acted against the interests of the village and 9. the relatives of the
aforesaid. These regulations could be changed from time to time.[80]

The members were selected as follows: 1. A day was fixed by a
government official. 2. The venue was also fixed, and people were
to assemble there. 3. A pot (*kuḍam*) was placed at the centre. 4. The
eldest in the group held up the pot to show that it was empty.
5. The names of eligible candidates written on palm-leaf strips (*ōlai*)
mentioning the ward were read out and the strips were deposi-
ted in the pot. 6. A boy was asked to pick up a strip at a time, from
the pot and to give it to a Kaṇakkar who then read out the name
on the strip. The leaders in the assembly also read out the name.
The name was then written on a separate strip. Thus all the thirty
members were selected. This system was called *Kuḍavōlai*.[81]

The reason why we have brought up for consideration what
may be considered a hackneyed theme in the history of local govern-
ment under the Chōḷas (the Uttaramērūr inscriptions have come in
for a lot of attention) is that too much seems to be made of an ima-
gined voting by the secret ballot in the election to village bodies
under the Chōḷas. For one thing, the system in *actual* vogue was *not*
election *as we understand it today*. It was more a *selection* and ana-
logous to the Greek system of *election by lot* in which god's will,

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80. *Vide* The Uttaramērūr inscription dated A.D.921 alters cer-
    tain particulars found in the earlier inscription dated 919. *Vide*
    also *M.E.R.* 120 of 1928
81. *Ahanāṉūṟu*: 77

combined with human anxiety to choose the right person for a political office, played the dominant role.

Out of these thirty members, twelve were chosen for the annual committee, or the Samvatsaravāriyam;[82] and these twelve were the wisest and the oldest. From among the rest, some were chosen for each of the committees such as the garden, irrigation, tank and gold committees. Usually the vāriyams were constituted by the Sabhā, but occasionally[83] by the Mūlaparushai, also a large assembly, generally a group of temple trustees.[84]

For the first year of their tenure, they were to draw no remuneration. They were designated the Āḻumgaṇattar or the Perumakkaḷ, also called Gaṇappērumakkaḷ or Ganavāriyapperumakkaḷ.

The Samvatsaravāriyam[85] heard local petty causes, and supervised charitable endowments. The garden committee was concerned with the condition of the lands, and the tank committee with irrigation. The gold committee ensured that copper and gold coins were not counterfeit, and scrutinized them. The taxation committee called Pañchavāravāriyam looked after the allocation of the tax revenue between the village and the king.

There was also a committee called Udāsīnavāriyam.[86] The function of this committee is not clear but since the word 'udāsīna' means neglect (or the neglected) the committee may have looked after the orphans, the destitutes and others who needed help and protection.

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82. The thirty wards were regrouped into twelve cheris especially for the purpose of election to the Samvatsaravāriyam; possibly members of this committee functioned by rotation, each member for one month in the year. Hence twelve members.

83. 596 of 1904

84. Mūlaparushai is often mentioned in inscriptions as an equivalent of Sabhā, but it seems it was mainly concerned with the temples; for we hear of the Tirunāgēśvaram temple Mūlaparushai dissolving itself and merging in the Mahāsabha of the village. It seems that the temple priests constituted the Mūlaparushai; and they were, in the case of Śiva temples, Śivabrāhmaṇās and in the case of Vishṇu temples, the Vaikhānasas.

85. For a reference to this Vāriyam in the Pallava period, *vide S.I.I.* Vol. III. Part: I. p.9

86. 269 of 1912: 38 of 1911 etc.

Besides the above, there were the following Vāriyams also: The Kaḷani, Kaṇakku, Kaliṅgu, Taḍivaḷi and Kuḍumbu which attended to 1. cultivable lands, 2. the auditing of accounts, 3. regulation of water supply, 4. measurement of lands and 5. preparation of the list of persons qualified for election.

The manner of assembling these bodies was by beat of drum and proclamation, announcing the place, time and purpose of each meeting. The Sabhā could meet either during day-time or at night, but always avoided the hours of the day when the members, who might be otherwise busy, could not attend. A Sabhā resolved [87] not to hold meetings during nights in view of the expenditure on oil for lighting, and the general slovenliness of committee-work during nights. The committees usually met in the village temple[88] and could meet elsewhere, also.[89] But Dēvadāna committee invariably met in the temple. Even the poorly attended meetings were declared as having had the participation of the entire membership. Decisions were not voted, but imposed by the *elite* of the village, and made to appear unanimous. When the Sabhā was not able to decide on any matter, it could refer the issue to another local body.[90]

The transactions of the Sabhā consisted in 1. payment to the officials; 2. punishment of erring persons; 3. assignment of rights; 4. remission of taxes;[91] 5. lending money to or borrowing money from individuals or corporations;[92] and 6. collecting the taxes on behalf of the king. The Sabhā levied a small cess called Sabhāviniyōgam to meet any extra-ordinary expenditure. It provided irrigation tanks, well and other agrarian amenities of an economic nature. One of the functions of the Sabhā was to cause public documents to be engraved on durable media

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87. 500 of 1925
88. 322, 326 of 1910
89. 260 of 1915
90. 89 of 1931-32
91. This must be distinguished from remission of taxes by royalty; an example of the former is the allotment of tax-free lands for the maintenance of the expounders of Purāṇic stories. The *Bhārata* was evidently the most popular among rural folk, and the land grant for this purpose was called the Bhāratappaṅgu: 63 of 1897
92. The Sabhā of Siṟṟanaichchūr owed money to a Kaikkōḷan, and the latter demanded, through the king, the repayment of the debt. The Sabhā borrowed from the temple and repaid the loan. 105 of 1925

like stone and copper, and to prepare and preserve palm leaf copies of these documents. This practice had started even in the Pallava period, and assumed much importance in later times.[93] When these deeds were lost or damaged, they were ordered to be renewed.[94] On important occasions, a royal official was present at the meetings of the assembly, and represented the views of the government.[95] The king passed orders to regulate the constitution and functions of the assemblies.[96] He could ask the assembly to meet for this purpose.[97]

Village officials

The Sabhā and its committees consisted of unpaid part-time workers; but there was a class of paid officials who worked full-time, and were appointed subject to the immediate authority of the Sabhā, and ultimately of the king. There was a Kāṇiālan who looked after royal interests in the village. A Taṇḍuvān (collector) conveyed royal orders to the village, and collected revenues. Ūrāḷvān and Nagarāḷvān are two officials often heard of,[98] but their functions are not clear. The Madyaśtas or arbitrators, whose functions were probably judicial, were not to take sides in any function in the village. They were remunerated for their services. Accountants, who maintained the village revenue accounts, had to prove their rectitude in an ordeal by fire. Generally the Madyaśtās were appointed accountants. An accountant was the Karaṇattān who was paid four nāḷis of paddy, seven Kaḷañjus of gold and two pieces of cloth. He had a subordinate called Kiḷkaṇakkan. Each ward had its accountant. The Pāḍikāppān[99] did policing duties. An inscription of A.D. 1221 says that four velis of land were endowed for the construction of police lines. This land was not alienable but could only be used. For the maintenance of the police force, the following rates were levied: One kalam of paddy on every *mā* of wet land; one-sixth paṇam on every areca palm; five paṇams on every *mā* of land producing sugarcane

93. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*: p. 124; 150 of 1927
94. 213 of 1924
95. *A.R.E.* 30 of 1920
96. 120 of 1928: 148 of 1927
97. 148 of 1927
98. *S.I.I.* Vol. III: 128, 156
99. 27 of 1909

etc., and two paṇams a year on every house. The Pāḍikāval
rights were hereditary; and occasionally, these rights could be
transferred to others.[100] Kāvalkārar were employed to look
after the security of property, especially at nights, and the
fee paid to them for the service was called kāvalkūli. We
hear of Perumpāḍikāval[101] and Mērpāḍikāval[102] as also Siṟu-
pāḍikāval.[103] K.A.N. Sastri thinks that the *mēl* or superior in
this Mēlkāvalpāḍi refers to the wider functions of a certain
order of police, but it seems that the *mēl* or *perum* refers to
a large contractor who untertook to maintain a police force,
and the *kīḷ* or *śiṟu*, the actual watchman, so that a picture
of the duties of employing and maintaining a rural police force
being farmed out emerges. This is supported by the fact that
in later Chōḷa days, "we find these duties increasingly falling
into the hands of the overgrown vassals whose rise was a symptom
of the imminent dissolution of the empire."[104] This was another
feudal tendency. Besides the Pāḍikāppān, there was another
servant, Aḍikkīlniṟpān who ran errands and did odd jobs.
There was a Ūr-paṟaian[105] whose duty was to proclaim official
order by beat of drum.

The most common method of remunerating officials was
by granting some land which the assignee held for life (jīvita).
Full cash payments were not known.[106]

Of late, scholars have been trying to understand and analyse
the power structure in the Chōḷa countryside: and theirs is a
comparative study of the structure and functions of the various
corporate badies. Burton Stein has been concerned with the
trade groups, and the problems of social integration in the
nuclear areas of the Chōḷamaṇḍalam. The Chittiramēḷiperiya-
nāḍu[107] was evidently an assembly of peasant proprietors
constituted probably like the Sabhā, but enjoying jurisdiction
over a large area. But this assembly is not known to have

100. 407 of 1927. *Inscriptions of Pudukkottai State.* p.751
       It was also customary for the king to commission bands
       of villagers to patrol rural areas: 58 of 1893
101. 157 of 1902   102. 502 of 1904
103. 199 of 1912   104. K.A.N. Sastri: *The Cōḷas:* p.534
105. 167 of 1902   106. K.A.N. Sastri: *The Cōḷas:* p.464
107. 177 of 1900: 21 of 1903 etc.

been a universal supervisory body bringing all landholders under its control. Only if this had happened could we imagine that even the Brahmins in the Brahmadēya villages were subject to the control of the peasant assembly. Even if, in certain restricted localities, such a power structure existed, the Brahmins would have come under the assembly's control only for purposes of land-holding; and the distinction and special status which they enjoyed in other areas of society would not have been affected.

N. Karashima[108] studies two Chōḷa Brahmadeya village and generalises that there was a tendency for Brahmin proprietory domination over non-Brahmin workers in the Brahmadeya and other villages. But this generalization overlooks the fact in the Ūr, which was a predominantly non-Brahmin village, non-Brahmin proprietory domination over non-Brahmin labour prevailed. Even if it is granted that there were no Brahmin labourers at all, the power structure cannot be generalized in terms of Brahmin landed proprietorship at the top and non-Brahmin labour down below, though this picture could be true of the Brahmadēyas alone. When all the constituent elements of social power on the rural side are accounted for, one must admit that an integrated power structure involving a logical hierarchy will not emerge, since Hindu society was, as it now is, complex and pluralistic.

The autonomous village declined after the Imperial Chōḷa and Pāṇḍyan age i.e., c.A.D. 1300. The short Hōysala and Muslim interludes, followed by the Vijayanagar Imperialism, destroyed, if not deliberately at least by neglect, this native institution which, in one form or other, had existed for over thirteen centuries in the Tamil country. Many reasons have been given for this abrupt end of a great heritage.[109] It is incredible that alien rule generated individualism in the conquered

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108. *Proceedings of the Second International Conference: Seminar on Tamil Studies, Madras,* 1968, p.233 etc., and *Allūr and Īsānamaṅgalam, two South Indian villages of Chōḷa times: Proceedings of the First International Conference: Seminar on Tamil Studies:* Vol. I: p. 426-39

109. T.V. Mahalingam: *South Indian Polity:* p. 380

territory; therefore, the correct approach seems to be to under-stand the phenomenon as the result of the philosophy going with the new government which, perhaps, had no use or place for the concept of the decentralized village administration which native Tamil rulers had nurtured zealously for long. The village Sabhā and the system of autonomous rural government yielded place to semi-military outposts manned by the Āyagārs and the Paḷayagārs.

CAPITALS AND PORTS

Arabian Sea

Bay of Bengal

Indian Ocean

Mayilai
Māmallapuram
Tagaḍūr
Kāñchi
Gaṅgaikoṇḍa
Puduchēri
Kōvalūr
chōlapuram
Chidambaram
R. Kāviri
Vañji (Karūr)
Nāgappaṭṭinam
Uṟaiyūr
Tiruvārūr
Toṇḍi
Tanjore
Musiṟi
Madurai
Kāyal
Koṟkai
Kumari
Lanka

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

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                          KING
                            |
        _____
        |                                         |
  Government                              Local Government
   at the                                         |
   Centre                                      Maṇḍalam
                                                  |
                                               Vaḷanāḍu
                                                  |
                                                Kōṭṭam
                                                  |
                                                 Nāḍu
                                                  |
                                           Village (Gramam)
                                                  |
      _____
      |                      |        |         |            |                |
  Sabha (includes          Ūr    Nagaram    Dēva-       Guilds          Perianāḍu
  Brahmadeya)                                dāna           |
      |                                                 Maṇigrāmam
  _____                                  |
  |                      |                              Valañjiyar
 (Vāriyams)        (Paid Officials)                         |
                                                         Nagaram
Samvatsaravāriyam     Kāṇiāḷvān                             |
                                                        Aiṉṉūṟṟuvar
Tōṭṭavāriyam          Taṇḍuvan                              |
                                                       Añjuvaṇṇattār
Ērivāriyam            Ūrāḷvān                               |
                                                        Nānādēśiś
Pon Vāriyam           Nagarāḷvān                            |
                                                     Paḷiyili-Aiṉṉūṟṟuvar
Pañchavāravāriyam     Madhyastas                            |
                      (sometimes appointed             Eṇḍiśai Āyirattār
Udāśinavāriyam         accountants)
                            |
Kaḷaṇi               Karaṇattān
   |                        |
Kaṇakku              Kiḻkaraṇattān
   |                        |
Kaliṅgu              Pāḍikāppan (Kāvalkāran)
   |                        |
Taḍivaḷi             Aḍikkiḷniṟppān
   |                        |
Kudumbu               Ūr Parian
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Maṇḍalam - Common to both North and South India.

Vaḷanāḍu - an innovation of the Chōḷas but dropped during the Imperial Pāṇḍyan times.

Kōṭṭam - a lesser unit than nāḍu in the Pāṇḍyan country.

Nāḍu - equated with Kūṟṟam in the 10th and 11th centuries in Chōḷa & Pāṇḍyan times.

Nāḍu was called Rashtra in the days of Pāṇḍyas.

Nagaram, Dēvadāna - mostly occupational and functional institutions but occassionally related to a given territory.

Perianāḍu - A functional institution as above.

Mūlaparushai - managing assembly of temples.

Gaṇapperumakkaḷ - Ruling Committee of the village.

Tānattār - Executive Committee of the temple.

Paḷḷichchandam - Jaina villages.

Nyāyattār - Judicial authorities setting disputes in the village.

CHAPTER VI

WAR

Introduction

We do not know of a people who could, but did not, choose to wage war on principle. Inability, and rarely unwillingness on grounds of pacifism or non-violence, inhibited war. In the unusual instance of an Aśoka, remorse and wisdom came after the event; and the decision not to wage war was supported by the disincentives to potential enemies provided by a powerful army. The Jainas, as a religious sect, are extremely non-violent in their profession; but Jaina rulers are not known to have eschewed war.[1] The metaphysical heights reached by the Vedantic Brahmins approved of warlike Kshatriyas. The religious consciousness of the medieval age witnessed, if it did not create, religious wars like the Crusades, the Thirty Years' War, the Islamic onslaught on Hindu society and Hindu reaction to it; and these were not less ferocious or destructive than the secular ones. Thus war has been man's instrument of self-preservation and survival (called defensive war) for some, and of aggrandisement and glory (called the *digvijaya* in Hindu culture) for others. Some cultures were uninhibited in their glorification of war. The wise among the Tamils enjoined upon fathers to make their sons warriors.[2] Some people theoretically condemned war, but in fact practised it.

The regular practice of war (so far), in human history, is a fact: but that will neither justify it nor make it inevitable. needs justification since it involves destruction of lives and to hold it inevitable will be a reflection on human nature. Certain kinds of conflict in society involving bloodshed were deemed necessary and desirable by certain ideologies like the theological assumption of conflict between good and evil. Its

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1. For example: Vishnuvardhana Hōysala, even before his conversion to Vaishnavism.
2. *Puranānūru*: 312

secular variant is stated by the Marxists in their idea of 'class war'. But a world which has known the consequence of atomic war sincerely wishes to end war - at least the one involving nuclear weapons. War limited to conventional weapons, is not looked upon as so reprehensible by some: but everywhere war is waged (by the parties concerned) in the name of a desired, approved and publicised principle.

The medieval Tamils, who constantly waged pretty destructive wars, never felt the Wilsonian urge to abolish war. Why, in spite of the prevailing climate of Indian opinion in favour of *Ahimsa*, and in spite of daily experience of warlike acts, the Tamils should not have, at least, declared themselves in favour of the abolition of war, is not very difficult to see. It is clear they were caught between nice moralisings at the ethical level, practical exigencies at the pragmatic level and the traditional principle of martial activity for the ruling class at the prescriptive level. The *Gītā*, called upon the ruler to fight, for it was his duty (*Svadharma*) to fight. A comparable command from an equally respected text is not heard of, though Islam was not averse to using force for religious ends. Thus war was practised, and considered at times desirable, but deemed always inevitable, by the Tamils. It was not only permissible for the king to wage war, but *Iṟaimātchi* even demanded it of him.

Apart from the consideration of the utility of war, whether it was morally permissible or not was a philosophical question, especially when war meant aggression or resistance to authority. We know of an instance of the recognition of the right of private warfare among local chieftains as long as it did not interfere with the peace of the villagers in the neighbourhood. Here we have a combination of permission for war for professional fighters, and prohibition of injury to non-combatants.[3] Such a situation is possible only if war is somebody's inescapable *dharma*, and taboo for others. Since the majority of the civil population (with the exception of kings, commanders and the professional soldiery) was often relatively passive,

3. 359 of 1914: 'Megasthenes had noted the occurrence of battle and fighting in the immediate neighbourhood of ploughing and digging in perfect security'. (V.A. Smith: *Early History of India*: p. 460).

unconcerned with, and little affected by war, the nonpartici-
pants could have no interest either way in war, could not share
the loot or the glory, but should suffer all its horrors, if ever
war became total, as it often did, including its economic
consequences. The social effect of such division of interests
between the civil and the military sections of the community
were that war could not be fought on patriotic grounds, and
the masses of the people could not identify themselves with
the forces of war. They had no institutional means for or-
ganizing themselves for peace: they did not have the motivation,
or the wits, to create such institutions. So they put up with
what to them was inevitable and treated war as divine punishment,[4]
and peace as divine mercy. Thus society at large developed a
stoical attitude to war and was not concerned about the
morality of war as such.

The ethics of War

This did not prevent the men of letters of those times from
conventionalizing certain ethical attitudes to war.[5] These spokes-
men of the community were not men of religion but the custodians
of the social wisdom reaching them through the ages, and expressed
by them as social fomulae of commendable behaviour. The *Kaliṅ-
gattupparaṇi*, a chronicle in verse of a military theme, but adorned
with all the permissible poetic frills, mentions a certain ethical code
which the victorious have to observe on the battlefied.[6] In the first
place, a certain category of persons deemed harmless, useful or
incapable of defending themselves, were exempted from the political
consequences of a military defeat. This category included ascetics
of all kinds, Brahmins, artisans, women, bards, pilgrims and prac-
titioners of fine arts. Some of those exempted, however, defy ratio-
nal analysis. With a measure of unconscious humour, Jayaṅkoṇḍār
speaks of genuine warriors among the defeated also escaping the

4. Which was the same as royal will so far as the subject
   was concerned.
5. not to violence as such, but only to situations of military enga-
   gement.
6. In Hindu ethical thought, as in others, there was an invariable
   tendency to provide handicaps to the victorious and the opu-
   lent, and weight the scale in favour of the weaker and the
   poorer.

fury of the victors by disguising themselves as belonging to one or the other of the exempted categories. There is an interesting exemption from war-service which benefited newly-married persons.[7] It is a commentary on the rigidity of the moral code that male warriors attired in female dress were treated with the consideration due to the weaker sex.[8] The earlier Śaṅgam texts also mention different kinds of exemption which the commentators rationalize. It is reasonable to hold that the clemency to be shown to cattle and women was based on economic and eugenic consideration respectively.[9] Even in the middle ages, Tamil economy was peasant-centred; and so the cow was still a major factor in the scheme of rural production and general food habits. Even though some slight change in the economic structure from primitive agricultural to medieval semi-industrial might have been caused by imperial expansion in traditional societies the old loyalty to the cow persisted, as beliefs and customs die hard. The medieval Hindu believed that all material prosperity and spiritual advancement depended on the welfare of brahmins and their pursuit of prescribed functions. The immunity provided for musicians and the like was due to their being classified as pursuers of soft professions, and nothing was gained by harming them. To see in the exemptions any well-conceived attitude of the religious toleration by which Hindu, Jaina and Budhist ascetics were allowed to co-exist peacefully and any proof of royal anxiety to save art and letters, is to import wishful thinking.

It was believed that a person standing in, or wading through water, was not to be proceeded against in war[10]. It was also deemed unethical to kill 1. defenceless animals, 2. warriors too young or

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7. *Chintāmaṇi*: 420   8. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: 466-469

9. It must be remembered that even in modern India, sentimental deference to the cow persists; and this is independent of the economic structure. In the context of social structure and functions, it is common knowledge that structures disappear leaving functions intact even as functions disappear leaving the structures intact. In Hindu India, the latter has happened in the eminent case of caste, for instance.

10. *Pāṇḍikkōvai*: 34: *Peruṅgadai* III: 24: 54-56. It is interesting to see that the same idea occurs in one of the eighteen minor Śaṅgam works, *Siṟupañchamūlam*, 41.

too old to defend themselves[11] and 3. those who were already sub-ject to attack from others.[12] That unarmed persons should be left unharmed in war was another ethical prescription.[13]

Even as some *persons* were exempted from being harmed in battle, some *places* were also considered out of bounds for military offensive. Sacrificial halls, Brahmin colonies, ascetic resorts, tem-ples and palaces were to be exempt from the hostile attention of the soldiery.[14] There was another, rather strange, belief that kings must not kill (their?) ministers.[15] It is anomalous that a minister who might be very responsible for war should be given this consideration. It is known that even a commander of an army was a minister by virtue of the office he held.

Showing mercy to, and providing relief for, the innocent and the defenceless was different from praising, and even rewarding the valour of the enemy. Rājarāja I *admired* the tough defence put up by an enemy in the western hilly country and conferred on him the title 'Kshatriyaśikhāmaṇi Koṅgāḷvān', and granted a village called Mālavi for his government.[16]

The ethics of war did not relate merely to injunctions against fighting with certain *persons* and in some *places* and under specific *circumstances*. They also permitted fighting in certain circums-tances. One of these was that a king must fight his enemy if the latter were preparing for an offensive. This might be honourable open war or pre-emptive war. In either case, it was justifiable, i.e., it was *dharma*.

All this is theoretical, and found in literary texts which, inciden-tally, mention war-ethics as being scrupulously upheld by their heroes. There are two kinds of sources of information regarding

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11. It is difficult to believe that very young warriors were recrui-ted, or too old warriors retained in service by the military authorities.
12. *Chintāmaṇi:* 2261
13. *Kuṛaḷ:* 773: *Kambarāmāyaṇam: Mudaṛpōrpuripaḍalam:* 256
14. *Peruṅgadai* I: 43: 171-177: But when palaces had military and Political significance how could they be exempt?
15. *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam:* 55
16. Rajamanickam Pillai, *Chōḷar Varalāṛu:* p. 201

military affairs: 1. Literary texts of a conventional nature;[17] (these usually mention what, according to them, were ideal morals in war.) 2. Inscriptions and other matter-of-fact sources which, though anxious to depict the concerned kings as the doers of great deeds, incidentally speak the truth about the exact manner of their achievements, implying that the very manner added to the royal stature of the kings concerned. From these we understand that very often enemy property was wantonly destroyed, residential houses were set on fire, standing crops were destroyed, womenfolk of the enemy were injured in capture and dishonoured by molestation.[18] The gap between theory and practice in the waging of war was indeed wide, and we shall turn to this again, somewhat later in this chapter.

Causes of War

War broke out often for a variety of reasons. Even the most irrational war must have a cause; in some cases, the *bellicose temperament* of the person in power might be a cause, when any ruler who sat on the throne was endowed with the *dharmic* right to wage war because every war was but an irredendist one according to the *Sastras*,[19] he may be normally tempted to commit aggression[20] for personal gain of property, power and/or glory. The *digvijaya* concept was borrowed by the Tamils from Sanskrit polity, but very few among Tamil rulers performed the *Rājasūya*[21] (imperial sacrifice); and though some kings claim to have performed the *Aśvamēdha*

17. *Chintāmaṇi, The Ramāyaṇa, The Periyapurāṇam* and *Peruṅgadai* belong to this category. But even here, the heroes are shown as upholding war ethics, and their enemies as violating them, e.g., Rāvaṇa waged Aśurayuddha and Rāma - Dharmayuddha.

18. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* : 469

19. That is, the theory that 'the king' was by right the only legitimate ruler-sublunar, and that every other king was an usurper, and that this king was entitled to wage a war for the recovery of territory of which he was temporarily dispossessed. This theory is implicit in the familiar phrase 'Oru Kuḍaikkil Ulagāṇḍa' i.e., 'he who rules the world under one umbrella'.

20. This word has no exact equivalent in pre-modern Tamil, for war was war, and it could be waged in those times without provoking moral objections.

21. Apart from Rājasūyam Vēṭṭa Peruṇarkiḷḷi of Śaṅgam times, a few early medieval kings, especially the Pallavas, performed the Rājasūya - at least, this is their claim.

these claims cannot be easily verified. This sacrifice was unknown to the Śaṅgam Tamils but Pallava kings like Śivaskandavarman who styled himself Dharmamahārājādhirāja, performed the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice.[22] But justification of military aggression by religious ritual blunted the edge of moral righteousness, and the field was clear for aggression in the name of *Rājadharma*.[23] So there could be no aggressive war, theoretically speaking. If a ruler had the infamy of being a 'tyrant', it was open to 'a king' in the neighbourhood to depose him, and take over the territory and provide benevolent government to the distraught subjects.

The kings and their military supporters inherited the traditional view that death in battle was as glorious as retreat was ignominious and so the hero who fell in battle was honoured as a divine person: a hero stone was set up for him and even worship was offered to him.[24] The kings and their warriors were intoxicated with this desire to enter the Tamil Valhalla; and they plunged into war with whatever valour they could muster.

There was then the class of warriors - the Maṟavas - meaning both a community of fighters and any brave people, who had to be employed and kept busy. They came of the material classes, and could do no more than fight. The professional and mercenary recruits to the army when disbanded would prove a menace to the king's authority in many ways, and it was necessary to canalize their energies into genuine wars against others so that they might not use them against their own king. The communal composition of the army was liberal and included even the Brahmins. The *Brahmarāyās* and *Brahmamārāyās* were Brahmins in military service. This violation of *Varṇadharma* was frequent, and occurred until as late as early 19th century. Afterwards communal barriers to military service broke down. That camp-life was not exactly suited to the careful

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22. *Vide* Hirahadagalli plates.
23. A.L. Basham: *The wonder that was India:* p.43. "It was the ambition of every important king to perform a horse sacrifice, and the effects of the sacrifice on interstate relations were felt to the end of Hindu period."
24. *Tiruvārūr Mummaṇikkōvai*

observance of caste-rules possibly meant that only a certain
order of unorthodox Brahmins opted for military service.[25]

That 'war begets war' is borne out by history and is
wholly true. Victors of ancient times gloated rather coarsely
over their victories, and the defeated were put to shame in a
rather crude and uncivilized manner. The punishment meted
out to enemy chiefs by Rājādhirāja, the provocation offered
to those who sought refuge in him, his disgusting treatment
of the emissaries of Āhavamalla (one of them was compelled
to wear a woman's dress and the other was provided with
knots of hair known as *Aimbāl* in Tamil, and both were named
Āhavamalli) are illustrative of Chōḷa capacity for studied insult
to enemies.[26] These insults were not easily swallowed or for-
gotten and revenge naturally bided its time. Notwithstanding
the pompous ethical principle found in formal enunciation,
battles in reality were waged freely, fiercely and often unmindful
of ethics - and that was as it should have been; and pious
platitudes do not alter the nature of man. We have instances
of Chōḷa military behaviour which was just short of savagery.[27]

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25. Kautilya said that the troops would have to prostrate before
    the Brahmins to win the war. *Arthaśāstra* IX :ii, 345. If
    so, would the warriors kill Brahmins in battle? Perhaps,
    Brahmin participation in battle as a fighting force was
    not contemplated by Kautilya. Either this is an indication
    of a difference between Sanskrit polity and Tamil polity, or
    between theory and practice everywhere.

    Krishnan-Raman i.e., Raman son of Krishnan had a title
    Mummuḍi chōḷa Brahmamahārājan: Kuravan Ulahaḷaṇḍān
    (the former does not refer to a caste) bore also the title
    Rājarāja mahārājan; these were both generals, the former
    a Brahmin and the latter a non-Brahmin. Their wives
    were called Mahārāṇiyar.

26. N. Subrahmanian, *History of Tamilnad.* p. 198

27. K.A.N. Sastri: *The Cōḷas:* p.176. "An inscription of Satyaś-
    raya from Hottur (Dharwar) dated Saka 929, or A.D. 1007,
    states that the Nūrmadi Chōḷa Rajendra Vidyādhara, the son
    of Rājarāja Nityavinōdha and the ornament of the Chōḷakula
    advanced as far as Doṇūr in the Bijapur district with an army
    of 900,000 troops, plundered the whole country, killed
    women, children and Brahmins, caught hold of girls and dest-
    royed their caste … This account given by the Chāḷukya ins-
    cription of Rājēndra's invasion of Raṭṭapāḍi rings very true
    and may be accepted as substantially correct."

The policy of repression of conquered peoples with the help of the army, unknown to the preachers of social *dharma*, was however familiar to the Chōḷa imperialists.[28]

War motivated by lust for territory must be distinguished from punitive war waged by the royal overlord against disloyal subordinates. The former may be justified by expediency, while the latter is legally justifiable, and is somewhat like an over-grown police action. It was usual for kings of those times to unilaterally suppose that a neighbouring king was a subordinate, and that he owed him a tribute, and, for non-payment of an imaginery tribute, to wage war. The philosophy of *digvijaya* assumes that rulers of neighbouring lands are only defaulters of tributes due. War followed under two circumstances in respect of subordinates. 1. If once powerful rulers of neighbouring countries, temporarily reduced to subjection by the accident of defeat in battle; failed to pay the agreed tribute, like Ananthavarman Chōdagaṅga of Kaliṅga, war followed. 2. Any attempt on the part of the subordinate perpetually subject to the overlordship of a king, was considered rebellion and this necessitated military action. In such circumstances, or rare occasions, the king might be defeated and his subordinate might gain power.[29]

Diplomatic reasons often impelled prudent kings to exhibit the might of their arms in defence of their allies, or to militarily stabilize buffer territories. Narasimhavarman I's naval war in Ceylon was not motivated by his personal hostility to the ruler of Ceylon but was intended to provide military help to his political ally Mānavarman in a condition of civil war. Kulōttuṅga I tried to subjugate Kaliṅga since the borderland between Vēṅgi and Kaliṅga could be in reasonable peace only by offering assistance to a weak neighbour in the north which was the political motivation for Kaliṅga War II. Military combination of like-minded powers against a common political target was characterised by politico-military relations in the

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28. K.A.N. Sastri: *The Cōḷas*: p.253
29. *Vide:* S.R. Balasubramanian: Kōpperuñchiṅga

medieval Tamil country.[30] The confederacy of allied enemies permitted the individuality of its component members by letting each to display his flag, possibly for easy identification.[31] The Kaḷabhras were aided by the Chōḷas whom they had earlier defeated in their defence against the Pallavas under Buddhavarman of the 6th century A.D.[32] The *Peruṅgadai* gives an instance of eight kings forming a confederacy in a war against a single foe.[33]

A particularly interesting military practice of a quasi-professional nature was for able commanders to establish secret contacts with kings not so prosperous and help them to organize and execute a successful war in return for stipulated consideration after the war. These generals were able agents of incompetent principals.[34] This seems to be rather unprecedented in Indian polity.

War was not merely the exhibition of royal bestiality or the manifestation of political pride, vanity, jealousy or revenge. Though, on the surface, one or more of these might appear to be the immediate cause, economic factors were ultimately behind many public engagements including war, as those implied the expectation of tribute from a vanquished foe, the hope of gaining booty and the impulse to create and maintain public charities and religious institutions like temples and maṭhas.[35]

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30. This practice was so common that it is mentioned even in epics dealing with mythical stories. The combination of Saṅgamannar against Darusaka the king of Magadha, is found in *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam:* 164. Among the groups of kings who so combined, we have a S̄ali araśan who can be identified with a king of Nellūr: S̄ali meaning paddy, or a place bearing that name in Sumatra; another is *Eḷichcheviyan* which might be Lichchavi - the identification is not improbable since the scene of action of Udayaṇa's adventures is in Madhyadesa (north India), not far removed from the foot-hills of the Himalayas where the Lichchavis dwelt.

31. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 19: 215-221

32. M. Rajamanickam Pillai: *Pallavar Varalāṟu:* p. 241

33. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 19: 34-43

34. *Tiruttoṇḍarpurāṇam: Munaiyaḍuvār Purāṇam.*

35. *Udayaṇakumāra Kāvyam:* 321; *Chintāmaṇi:* 1285; *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 255, 429; T.V.S.: *Piṟkāla Sōḷar Varalāṟu:* p. 166

Among the items of war-loot, we get mention of elephants, horses, chariots, camels, costly jewellary, famous idols from temples,[36] gold vessels and heaps of beads of various kinds. Victors in battles appropriated the womenfolk of the defeated, and they were admitted into the palace establishment called *Vēḷams*. Apart from this forceful acquisition of enemy women, victorious kings attracted matrimonial offers from defeated foes who had eligible girls.[37] This is different from diplomatic matrimonial alliances among royal households in times of peace.

Military Organization

The military organization in the medieval Tamil country was composed of a standing army to which mercenary forces were added when needed. The infantry, the elephantry, the cavalry and the requisite conveyances for the movement of military goods were the major limbs of the military organization.[38]

The traditional Indian army consisted of the four divisions we are told: infantry, elephantry, cavalry and chariotry. This might have been the case once; but in the medieval period, it is open to doubt whether the Tamilian armies included the fourth division or limb, the chariots, as military weapons; and whether they were used in the manner in which the Roman cohorts used chariots. The *Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa* and other traditional accounts of battles, always refer to the four limbs

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36. *Vide* Narasimhavarman I brought an image of Ganēśa from Vātāpi. It is possible to consider this a case, not of loot, but recovery. Rājēndra I brought a similar idol in the course of a military campaign.

37. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 255

38. The infantry was mostly drawn from a professional class of fighters who came from certain communities. There was a group of bodyguards who waited on, and protected the king. They were the Vēḷaikkārar, and protection of the body of the king in the field of battle was their special duty. This group must have been recruited from persons noted for their courage, strength and loyalty. The 'Chariotry', though a conventional one-fourth of the Hindu army, is not known to have been actually in use in medieval Tamil warfare, though literary references are not wanting to give it a status equal to that of the other three arms. *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1561

of the amry. Literature repeats, tediously enough, statements about the limbs.[39] This is perhaps a mechanical perpetuation, in some later-day works of a tradition that was not current. We have references in other literary texts to only three limbs of the army, 'muppaḍai' - whatever it might mean.[40] S.K. Iyengar says that the army was twofold, though the use of the expression *Chaturaṅga* is continued.[41] K.A.N. Sastri agrees with him and says there is no tangible evidence of the chariot having played any part in battles.[42] The position was the same even in the Pallava period according to C. Minakshi.[43] In the sculptures of the Vaikuṇtha Perumāḷ temple, numerous war-elephants are represented but no chariot figures there. So the reference to the chariot must be conventional. N. Subrahmanian however, feels that the horsedrawn chariot was a feature of the Saṅgam army and he relies for his view on literary texts; and it may be true for the period of his study; but in the medieval age, when sculpture, painting and epigraphs can be expected to corroborate literary references, the total absence of chariotry in these sources seems to confirm the three-arm view of the Tamil military machine.[44]

There are other groupings of army division like the advance guard, the divisions on the flanks and the rear-guard.[45] Again we have the following divisions: Mūlappaḍai (standing army); Kūlippaḍai (mercenaries); Nāṭṭuppaḍai (recruits from the countryside; to call this a national militia would be anachronistic); Kāṭṭuppaḍai (guerilla army); Tuṇaippaḍai (allied army) and Pahaip-

39. *Peruṅgaḍai:* I: 47: 113-114; I: 48: 8-31. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 349
40. *Chintāmaṇi:* 436
41. S.K. Iyengar: *Hindu administrative Institutions:* p.307
42. K.A.N. Sastri: *History of South India:* p.16
43. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* p.66
44. *Vide* T.V.S. for *contra. Kulōttuṅga I.* p.99 N. Subrahmanian holds that the system might have continued even after the Saṅgam period, to some extent. *History of Tamilnad:* pp.316-317
45. Koḍippaḍai, Puḍaippaḍai, Kūlippaḍai referred to in this context may be 'hired soldiery'. *Peruṅgaḍai:* III: 24: 39-40.

paḍai (probably a regiment recruited from prisoners of war).[46] Mūlappaḍai and Nilaippaḍai are also heard of.[47] Mūlappaḍai is generally construed as a standing army; but it would be better to give the term the meaning of 'reserve force'.[48] The Nilaippaḍai might not mean a standing army in the usual sense but an army stationed at vital points in the conquered territory.

We are told about other ways in which an army was, though not invariably, divided. We hear of thirty one divisions of the army. They included the Ānaiāḷ (the elephant-men i.e., warriors fighting from backs of elephants). Then, we have divisions like Terindavilligaḷ (chosen archers); Uḍanilaichchēvagar (a sort of cavalry-guard of the king); and the guards of the fort. The infantry had twenty five sub-divisions including Aṇukkar, Meikāppār, Vāsalkāppār etc.; Parivārameikkāppār (personal bodyguards); Aṇukkavāsal Mei-kāppār (guards of the inner palace gates); Kēraḷāntaka Vāsal-kāppār - a certain special type of the former; Parivārattār (those who accompanied the king); Parāntaka Koṅguvaḷār (swordsmen recruited from the Kongu country); Mūlaparivāram (the core army); Kāvalar (watchmen among the infantry) of whom Śiṟudanattu Vaḍuga Kāvalāḷār is a further subdivision; Paḍaigaḷilār - literally, 'military men' — further subdivided into Valaṅgai and Palvahai Paḷam Paḍaigalilār. Then we have fourteen divisions among vēḷaik-kārar who are sworn bodyguards of which twelve are Vēḷaikkārar and two are Vēḷaikkārappaḍaigaḷ. They are subdivided into Peruda-nam and Śiudanam.[49] The elephantry and the cavalry would also

46. It is interesting to note that the commentary by Parimēlaḷagar (*Kuṟaḷ* 762) refers to this sixfold division. This is also men-tioned in the *Nandikkalambakam* 35, which speaks of Paḍai Āṟu; it is tempting to ask whether Murugan's Āṟupaḍai had anything to do with the sixfold division of the army, since he was the commander-in-chief of the army *par excell-ence,* in mythology.

47. *S.I.I.* Vol. III: 73

48. *Vide Kambarāmāyaṇam: Mūlabalavadaippaḍalam.*

49. S.K.Iyengar: *Hindu Administrative Institutions:* p.307 ff.
Perundanattu Ānaiyāṭkaḷ,Paṇḍita Śōḷa terinda Villigaḷ,Uttama-śōḷa terinda Aṇḍālagattāḷar, Nigarili śōḷa terinda Uḍainila Kudiraichchēvagar, Mummuḍiśōḷa terinda ānaipagar, Vīra-śōḷa Aṇukkar, Parāntaka Koṅgavaḷār, Mummuḍiśōḷa terinda Parivārattār, Kēraḷāntaka terinda Parivārattar, Mūla parivāra

need to be manned, so that we have Kunjaramalla or Ānaiāṭkaḷ
and Kudiraicchēvagar who are elephant and horse soldiers respec-
tively. The infantry was, in spite of its many subdivisions, generally
known as Kaikkōḷappaḍai.[50] Some of the army divisions were
named after kings or their particular achievements like Mummuḍi-
chōḷa-terinda Anaiāṭkaḷ, Gaṇḍarāditya terinda Kaikkōḷar.[51] We
hear of more than 12,000 Maṟava soldiers being ordered to enter
the palace of the enemy for hostile action, and destroy the standing
crops and other valuables.[52]

The Maṟavas were (and still, are) the martial community *par
excellence* of the Tamil country; they formed the traditional domi-
nant section of the native infantry. They fought with bows and
arrows; and if the *Peruṅgaḍai* is to be believed, they were as good
as the Parthians in their archery. The infantry must have included
recruits from among the children born and bred in the Vēḷams;[53]
but these could not have formed more than a small proportion of

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Vitteru alias Jananātha terinda Parivārattār, Śiṅgalāntaka
terinda Parivārattār, Śiṟudhanattu Vaḍugakkāvalar, Valaṅgai
Paḷambaḍaigaliḷār, Perudanattu Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārappaḍaigaḷ,
Śiṟudanattu Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārappaaḍigaḷ, Aḷagiyśōḷa terinda
Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārar, Aridurga langhana terinda Valaṅgai
Vēḷaikkārar, Chanda Parakrama terinda Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārar,
Kshatriya Śikhāmaṇi terinda Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārar, Mutta
Vikramābharana terinda Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārar, Nittavinōda
terinda Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārar, Rājakaṇtīrava terinda Valaṅgai
Vēḷaikkārar, Rājarāja terinda Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārar, Rāja
vinōdha terinda Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārar, Kēraḷāntaka Vāsaltiru-
meykāppār, Vikramābharaṇa terinda Valaṅgai Vēḷaikkārar,
Aṇukkavāsal tirumeykāppār, Parivārameykāppārgaḷ, Palavagai
Paḷampaḍaigaḷilār; (*S.I.I.* II. Introduction, p.9).

50. The Kaikkōḷar today means a class of weavers. But in the
    medieval age, they were equivalent to the foot-soldiery. This
    process of social transformation of an official class into a
    community is now difficult to trace.

51. T.N.Subrahmanian. *Gaṅgaikoṇḍān.* p.119, T.V.Mahalingam:
    South Indian Polity: p.262

52. *Peruṅgaḍai* III: 24: 145; Koṅguvēḷir though writing the story
    of a north Indian prince may be taken to represent Tamil tra-
    dition when he deals with military practice, governmental
    routine etc., since he mentions the Aimperumkuḷu and the
    Eṉpērāyam, unknown to north Indian polity.

53. 627 of 1909

the vast infantry. The reference to those born in the Vēḷams (unless it refers to the children of the female captives who were with child when they were taken captive), perhaps explains clearly what happened to these captives in the Vēḷams and their offspring. If these Vēḷams could be treated as a source of military recruitment, the ethics we come across in Tamil texts can be taken to be polite convention. Regiments were given their individual denominations.[54] The infantry had also major sub-divisions like the Mūnṛukai Mahāsēnai.[55]

A very important section of the infantry was the royal bodyguard. It kept close to the king, like all royal bodyguards elsewhere, and defended his person; but what was unique, its members died with him.[56] They guarded the king not only on the battle-field, but everywhere. Their relations with the king can be described only as spiritual. They were, in fact, 'wedded' to him, and like the queens, followed him to the other world. In Indian tradition, even ministers and devoted friends are known to have chosen immolation on the master's death, impelled by loyalty, deep sentiment or habit.

S.K. Iyengar has a theory that the Vēḷaikkārar were originally merchant groups who became militant. In course of time, during their treks in search of markets for their wares they learnt the use of arms [57] as they had to defend themselves against robbers. This is an interesting suggestion; but he does not tell us where he got this theory from. He concedes that they were military men, but admits his ignorance about the real significance of the term Vēḷaikkārar. K.A.N.Sastri says that they were so called because, "they were the most permanent and dependable troops in the royal service, and their designation implies that they were ever ready to defend the king

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54. K.V.Subramania Iyer: *Historical sketches of Ancient Dekhan* : p.245: for example: Irumuḍiśōḷan terinda villigaḷ, Nityavinō-dha, Vikramābharaṇa, Raṇamukhabhima etc., meaning the expert bowmen designated after Irumuḍiśōḷan.

55. 120 of 1905 which K.A.N.Sastri translates as the great army of the three arms, by which, perhaps, he means the army divided into the infantry, the cavalry and the 'elephantry'. In this reference to the Senai, not only their military activities, but their religious inclinations are also mentioned.

56. On the battlefield, or at home.

57. S.K. Iyengar: *Hindu Administrative Institutions*: p.310-311.

and his cause with their lives when occasion (*vēḷai*) arose".[58] This
is plausible but one could venture another suggestion that the
Vēḷaikkārar made up the regiment formed out of the children of the
Vēḷams as best suited to be the bodyguards of the kings, with the
understandable motivation to die with him. The fact that the word
is always spelt Vēḷaikkārar, not Vēḷakkārar, makes no difference,
since such unapproved variations are common in epigraphy as well
as in literature. K.A.N.Sastri's suggestion perhaps contains greater
plausibility, if we compare the Vēḷaikkārar with the Tennavan
Āpattudavigaḷ where the second expression is self-explanatory, and
means helpers in crises.[59] The military officers in general were
called Daṇḍanāyakam Śeyvōr and Perumpaḍaiyōr.

The members of the royal family were often in charge of armies,
e.g., Vandiyattēvar the husband of Kundavai defended a Brahma-
deya region.

During peace time, the warriors took to agriculture and some
like Śiṟuttoṇḍar, devoted themselves to pious life. In the reign of
Rājarāja III an army officer called Narasinga Vikkiaṇṇa Vīrar built
a temple at Pulivāi and made some gifts to it.[60] Notable endowments
were made by warriors and generals to temples and to public
charity.[61] In a quasi-military capacity, these men helped civil offi-
cers to maintain the temple routine. The Kaikkōḷar were a regiment
known to have undertaken the celebration of festivals in temples in
many places.[62] They functioned as corporations and interested
themselves in civil affairs. One of these corporations was called
Paḷiyili Ainūṟṟuvar i.e., 'the faultless five hundred'. How they were
'faultless' is not known, nor are we told about their functions and
the details of their organization. The Mūṉṟukai Mahāsēnai, for
instance, was once engaged in protecting a temple.[63] One does not
know the need for, or the nature of, the protection in this case. The
following divisions were popular: The Kaikkōḷapperumpaḍai;[64] the
Villigaḷ (the bowmen); Vāḷpeṟṟakaikkōḷar (the swordsmen); the

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58. K.A N. Sastri., *The Cōḷas:* p.454

59. The Tennavan Āppattudavigaḷ were the Pāṇḍyan bodyguards
    and along with them the Munaiyediramōhar formed important
    infantry divisions. Marco Polo refers to the former.

60. 159 of 1923

61. 67 of 1890, 353 of 1904　　　　62. 364 of 1906

63. 189 of 1895　　　　　　　　　64. 253 of 1907; 120 of 1905

Veḷaikkārar of the Valaṅgai (right hand); and those of the Iḍaṅgai (left hand). Though they are mentioned only in Chōḷa times one could presume that they constituted a continuation of divisions that existed even earlier.

The cavalry was an essential feature of the Tamil medieval army.[65] The cavalry, though described in glorious terms in literature, was not really the mainstay of the Indian army, which depended rather on the elephants and the infantry. The Tamils, like other Indians, were not good at breeding and training horses, nor was the climate suitable for an ideal equestrian wing for the army. The Mlēchchās or the non-Indians are described in contemporary sources as perfect horsemen.[66] The reason might be that the horse was not a native of India. It came perhaps, with the Āryans, and never became completely Indianized.

The elephants, however, were native to the soil. Whatever be the worth of these elephants as limbs of the war-machine, they were extremely popular and useful, especially in seige-warfare. They were used to smash the gates of fortresses.[67] Great fame attached to the king who destroyed a thousand elephants in the battle-field; and his praise was sung in a *Paraṇi*. Chau-Ju-Kua of the 13th century says,[68] "the government owns 60,000 war elephants, every one 7 or 8 feet high. When fighting, these elephants carry on their backs houses, and these houses are full of soldiers who shoot arrows at long range, and fight with spears at close quarters. When victorious, these elephants are granted honorific names to signalize their merit." Wassaf, the Muslim historian[69] says, that the Pāṇḍyas tried to oppose the invading Muhamadens with a large army served by numerous elephants of war. There were special officers in charge of elephants.[70] The elephants used their long trunks to snatch the white umbrella of the enemy and throw it away on the battle ground —a sure prelude to victory.[71] Most Kings and generals rode out to battle also on elephants because they were the most impressive and powerful.

65. *Muttoḷḷāyiram*: 1529   66. *Peruṅgadai*: III: 26: 74
67. *Muttoḷḷāyiram*: 1389
68. K.A.N.Sastri (ed) : *Foreign Notices of South India*. p.144
69. Elliot and Dowson Vol. III. p.50 and pp. 90-91 and 204
70. Madras Museum Plates.   71. *Muttoḷḷāyiram*: 1388

Natural defences and forts

Wars were waged on plains and around defences natural as well as artificial. In the Chōḷa country, the terrain is unrelieved even by dimunitive hills, or thick jungles so that natural defences are few. Even defences like artificial fortresses, if they were to be built of stone, were a problem, since stone had to be transported from neighbouring regions. So most of the existing forts may have been of brick and mud plaster, but were as strong as stone forts. Another natural means of defence is usually the river; but except the Kāviri and the Coleroon, particularly when they are in flood, no serious riverine obstruction could be offered to the invaders. But even these relatively small rivers were good enough for checking quick movement of enemy troops and that was perhaps what motivated the construction of Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram as the new imperial capital by Rājēndra I. Though some scholars would ascribe other reasons for the transfer of the capital from Tāñjore to Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḷapuram the military reason is more probable, since the capital was shifted under the strain of imperial expansion and the need for constant army movements from the south to the north across the rivers. The rivers were easily fordable at many points during the dry season, or could be crossed at the narrowest points during floods, but such tactics were not suitable for the mobility of an army constantly in demand in the North to fight the Chāḷukyas. In parts of the Tamil country natural defences were made use of. In the Pāṇḍyan, Koṅgu and Chēra countries, forests and hillocks were the main defence points. We hear of siege-warfare in Śaṅgam literature also. Vañji and Madurai were fortified towns. Similarly, in the post-Śaṅgam period, Tañjai, Kāñchi and Madurai were possibly fortified capitals, though no relics of these early fortifications can be found today. The literary references to storming of forts might be based on traditional knowledge, if not on actual contemporary happenings. The siege of Laṅkā by Rāmā, however, is clearly a case of conventionalized treatment. The *Puṟapporuḷ Veṇbāmālai* (A.D. 10th century) merely repeats the *Tolkāppiyam* without reference to contemporary realities. The storming and destruction of a fort was no easy task. One Saḍaiyan Karunandan defended his fortress so well that a number of warriors died in storming it.[72] A Trivandrum Museum stone inscription mentions a warrior by name Raṇakīrti falling in

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72. 43 of 1908

battle before the fortress of Karaikkōṭṭai. The *Maduraikkāñchi*, a Saṅgam work, mentions the citadel of Madurai being guarded by Yavanas, or foreign recruits, who were perhaps good at that kind of defence. Perhaps the use of the Yavanas in the defence of forts was continued in the post-Saṅgam period also.

It was usual for local garrisons to be set up for patrolling conquered, but not subdued, territories. They were a sort of cantonments, and were called Kaḍagams.[73] Kulōttuṅga I established permanent cantonments in the Pāṇḍyan country. These were planted along the trunk road from the Chōḷa country to places like Kōṭṭāru.[74]

War weapons

The weaponry employed by the army consisted of the bow and the arrow, supplemented by the spear, the long sword and the cutlass. Weapons were mythically classified as human, divine and mixed. But the more practical, and the most common division was into weapons that are shot are thrown, like arrows, discus, or spears and those that are used to hack the enemy without losing hold of the weapon, like the sword, and the mace. The weapons that are thrown are *Astras* and those that are retained in the hand and used are the *Sastras*. We sometime hear of infantry divisions well-trained in fencing. The spear (Vēl) was the best known weapon, because of its sacred accociation with Muruga, the favourite deity of the Tamils, and because it could be used as an *Astra* as well as a *Sastra*.[75] It is referred to either as the long spear or the short one. The Kundam or the mace, the Daṇḍu (the staff), the Śeṇḍu (a kind of spear), the Koḍuvāl (scimitar)[76], the Maḻu (a king of mace), the Karmukham or Vil (arrow), the Tōṭṭi (prod); the Chakra or the Āḻi (discus), the Triśūla (trident), the Vāḷ (sword), the Kappaṇam (spiked mace)[77] are the weapons of war more frequently referred to. They used also Salibai, a type of helmet. Oil was applied

73. 394 of 1921; *Vide* Expressions like Ivvūrppaḍaittalaivar: *T.A.S.* IV pp. 134-135

74. *T A.S.* Vol. I. p. 246; *S.I.I.* Vol. III: 69

75. *Peruṅgadai* I: 46: 100: *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 829

76. *Ibid.* I: 56: 238

77. *Chintāmāṇi:* 285

to metallic weapons to prevent their rusting .They had Ambuppuṭṭi (quivers) in which arrows and lances were lodged.[78] They used the drum to announce the opening of hostilities, to rouse the soldiers and to recruit new troops.

The Navy

The medieval Tamil machine included the navy. The king was the head of the army as well as of the navy. "The impress that the people of the Tamil states have left on the naval history of the anciet Hindus is the deepest and most indelible. It was under the Chōḷa that the naval power of the Tamil land attained its culminating point."[79] Contemporary literature also refers to the Kadaṟpaḍai, the navy.[80] The traditional commentators mean by the expression 'Kadal-padai' an ocean-like army, but in view of a phrase in the *Pāṇḍikkōvai* (269) 'Śēralartankōmān kaḍaṟpaḍai Kōṭṭaṟṟu aḷiya' i.e., 'the defeat of the Chēra fleet at Kōṭṭāru' leaves no alternative to the meaning: it is clearly a navy that is meant. The Pallava navy, besides being a wing of the military establishment, was also used for commercial purposes. The existence of a powerful fleet even in Pallava times can be inferred from direct and indirect reference to it in inscriptions. In the Vayalūr inscription there is an indirect reference to Rājasiṃha's conquest of the Laccadives, though as a political fact it is not beyond controversy.[81] The successful invasion of Ceylon by Narasiṃhavarman I: and the conquest of neighbouring islands as well as Ceylon by Rājarāja I are, however better authenticated.

The greatest achievement of the Tamils in the naval field was the conquest of Śrīvijaya by Rājēndra I. The 'numberless ships' which then sailed forth eastward find proud mention in the Tiruvālaṅgāḍu Plates. This resulted in the temporary occupation of Śrīvijaya by the Chōḷas. The Chōḷa naval hegemony reduced the Bay of Bengal to the status of a Chōḷa lake. This hegemony commenced with Rājarāja's maiden attack on Kāndaḷūr-

78. *Peruṅgadai*: I: 53:10
79. P.C. Chakravarthi, *Naval Warfare in ancient India.*, I.H.Q. VI. p.658
80. *Nandikkalambakam* 22: *Pāṇḍikkōvai* 66.
81. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* p.70

śālai. But we have little information on the size, shape, fighting capacity and the armament of the ships. We do not know either where the ships were anchored in peace time. We cannot think of a port on the Coromandal coast capable of sheltering ocean-going vessels fit for overseas conquests. It follows that either there were port facilities which have since disappeared, or that the ships were only such as did not require elaborate sheltering arrangements. Mayilai, Māmallapuram, Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam, Nāgapaṭṭinam were some of the ports from which the ships could have sailed.

Ferrand in his *Voyage* says, "Ahmed-Ibn-Majid an Arab writer of the 15th century and author of nautical works makes a frequent allusion to the opinions of the Chōḷas which he approves or modifies. He must have had before him a specialised nautical literature of Tamil" (Chōḷa origin) which he compared with Arab documents of a like nature.[82]

Recruitment and tenure

The recruitment and tenure of warriors for land-warfare and marine service are not known in any detail. The highest ability must have been insisted upon necessarily in this field of public service. The warriors were remunerated by grants of land.[83] These assignments were 'Jīvita' (gifted for life) and no further cash emoluments were paid. Referring to the Tamil military tradition, Sulaiman says, "the king convokes the army in case of holy war. The troops then take the field and realize for themselves the cost of their maintenance. The king furnishes them with nothing for this purpose."[84] The soldiers could, of course, help themselves to enemy property. Assignments of whole villages, or even districts were made for military service. This led to the rise of communities bearing tell-tale names, like Uḍaiyars (holders). Since these assignments were transferable, abuses could creep in, but were kept down to a minimum by careful official recording of grants and transfers.

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82. Quoted in *Journal Asiatiqal* 11 and 14 (1919) pp.171,172
83. 419 of 1923; K.A.N. Sastri: (ed) *Foreign Notices of South India*. p.127
84. *Ibid.*

The method of recruitment must have been twofold since one part of the army was permanent (standing) and the other part mercenary. We get no information regarding the nature and the duration of the training given to the warriors. They must have received excellent training in the use of arms as their performances in inland and foreign wars would testify. The Śalais, of which the Kāndaḷūrśālai was the most famous, were defence colleges where military science was taught, and included an arsenal. The Ghaṭika of Kāñchi also included a military section where *Dhanurveda* was taught.

The economy of war

The economic motivation for war is understandable. Even as imperialism and colonialism in recent world history were essentially economically motivated, in medieval kingdoms the same motivation should have prompted states to declare war on each other. Moral and righteous causes could be invented, but the basic economic urge could not be dismissed. Successful wars augmented royal revenues. War booty, legal tribute, and forced extortions could considerably augment revenues. If employed on profitable labour, prisoners of war could be an economic asset. Wise kings could increase the standard of living in their own kingdoms with the wealth brought from conquered lands. To some extent, this seems to have happened in medieval Tamil kingdoms which waged successful wars with their neighbours. The Chāḷukyans and the Ceylonese were indirectly responsible for the vast increase in temple-building activities and welfare measures in the Tamil country. This was at least some kind of sensible imperialism. But if the economic benefits derived from wars are not socially distributed but selfishly concentrated in the hands of the king and his warriors, wars could only be a social disaster. They could also ruin all the warring parties.

There were other economic consequences of war. Normally war would mean 1. increased production of war-materials and other accessories which could bring employment to more people, and a general boom to the economy; 2. a concentration of the produced consumer-goods among those involved in the war, leading to a scarcity of such goods for the civil population who would suffer by the consequent increase in prices; 3. such economic impact would

have been felt only in the capital cities, and those centres directly
involved in military activity, and not the countryside in general,
since the villages were isolated and autonomous in their economy,
and war itself was fought on the enemy's bill. Hence the economic
impact on the decentralized social life of the medieval times was
evidently minimal. Of course, taxes were sometimes levied to meet
extraordinary military expenditure.[85] The absence of a cash nexus,
and the continued operation of customary rights, minimised the
influence of economic phenomena on the society as a whole.

In the case of the Tamil country the economic impact of war
was not widespread but localized in certain relevant areas. It is
surprising that in this context when surplus wealth flowed into the
heart of the conquering states like Rājarāja's Tañjai, instead of
the wealth being socialised, it was concentrated on religious endea-
vours. It did not provoke people who were kept away from the eco-
nomic benefits of war perhaps, because, the very religious endea-
vours created an atmosphere of contentment and non-resistance.

The amount of booty that fell to the Chōḷas as a result of
foreign wars must have been enormous; and Chōḷa inscriptions
make no secret of the benefactions of the monarchy often being
only the donation of plundered wealth to public institutions. The
booty captured in war belonged to the king, who disposed of it at
his will. In his sixth regnal year Rājarāja I ordered that 900 sheep
captured from Sitpuli and Paki Nāḍus were to be endowed for the
maintenance of ten lamps in his own name in the temple of Durga
at Kāñchi.[86] Warfare thus generated not only *Viram* but also
Tyāgam.

The waging of war

War was heralded by the beating of drums.[87] Side by side with
the drum, the bugles sounded;[88] and even as these heralded the
war, they announced also the successful completion thereof. The

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85. In the days of Rājendra I a war-tax of one Kaḻañju of gold
    per veli was levied. *A.R.E.* 21 of 1920 Part II para 35; *S.I.I.*
    Vol. II: Nos. 98 and 99.
86. This practice of sheep-lifting was an ancient one. *vide S.I.I.*
    Vol. II. pp. 91-93: Āḍukōṭpāṭṭu Chēral Āḍan
87. *Pāṇḍikkōvai:* 193; *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1331
88. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 344

declaration of war was officially communicated to the enemy through proper channels. Sometimes the preparations were demonstrative so that the intentions of the aggressor were undisguised and the defender came to know of them even without a formal declaration. A challenge to fight was made, at times.[89] In the Śaṅgam age, it was usual to lift cattle as a prelude and a provocation to hostilities. But in the medieval period, this practice became outmoded and had no more than theoretical value.

Some kings rode on horse back. The king led the army in person as Narasimhavarman did when he attacked the Chāḷukyar capital, or he ordered his general to invade the enemy's country, as did Kulōttuṅga when he orded Karuṇākaran to march against Kaliṅga.[90] Not infrequently, the king led the army personally upto a point and beyond that, left it to his generals the Śēnāpatis, the Daṇḍanāyakas and the Mahādaṇḍanāyakas to march on, as did Rājēndra I when he led the Chōḷa armies to the Ganges. At times, more than one prince of the royal family commanded the troops, as Rājādhirāja I and Rājēndra II did at the battle of Koppam. On occasions, there were wars, in which a confederacy of rulers fought a common enemy as in Tiruppuṟambiyam, in which Aparājita Pallava, Prithvipati I Ganga, and Āditya I Chōḷa fought the Pāṇḍya, Varaguṇa II. The more important leaders of armies were on elephant-back which, perhaps, was a matter of prestige. Rājāditya the son of Parāntaka I who died fighting at Takkōlam earned the posthumous title 'Yānaimēltuñjiya' or 'he who died on the back of an elephant.'

The battle-field was naturally a bloody one.[91] Mercy was neither shown nor asked for. Most of the fighting, it appears, occurred at close quarters, for there are more references to the lance and the sword than to the bow and the arrow. The elephants and

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89. As when Śōmēśvara I invited Vīrarājēndra to meet him at Kūdalsaṅgamam; that Śōmēśvara did not turn up was a rare performance.

90. The generals could be from any caste. Even Brahmins bearing the title Brahmamārāyas led the armies; Śiṛuttoṇḍar who led the Pallava armies to Vātāpi belonged to the Physicians' caste.

91. The *Kaḷavaḻinārpadu*, a Śaṅgam text and *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* describe gruesome battles. Though part of it could be true, much of it seems to be conventional.

horses which crowded the battlefield, with the risk of their hampering the movement of the infantry in the absence of any organization, were attacked by swordsmen as easy targets. Each regiment had its own banner, and fought under it. This practice was as old as the *Mahābhārata*.[92] Allied armies fought under different banners, and the consequent confusion would have been enhanced by the banners being the favourite targets of the enemies.

Prior to marching to battle, the soldiers, wearing red robes and sashes, took terrible oaths indicating their determination either for victory or revenge. This rather strange custom has been mentioned in a few sources.[93] The warrior who had sworn to defeat the enemy used to put a golden disc in his mouth and proceed to the battle. This unusual practice receives no explanation anywhere.[94]

Apart from Tamil literary descriptions of war, and the naturally laudatory accounts in epigraphic *Praśastis*, we have a few foreign accounts which are interesting as throwing cold water on Tamil patriotic claims about the valour of their ancient soldiery. Ma-Twan-Lin a Chinese chronicler says, "the Indians are timid in battle. Their weapons are the bows and arrows and shield. They have also (like the Chinese) flying or winged ladders - scaling ladders".[95] These flying ladders are called *Nūl Ēṇi* in Tamil. Marco Polo has, perhaps, the most damaging account of the Tamil fighters. He says, "the people of the country go to the battle all naked, with only a lance and a shield, and they are most wretched soldiers. They will kill neither beast nor bird, nor anything that hath life, and for such animal food as they eat, they make the Saracens or others who are not of their own religion, play the butcher".[96]

In the course of a war, or immediately before one, soldiers disguised as tradesmen, lapidaries etc., were sent out to mingle with the enemy to know his secrets and to report on them. This was a

92. *Bhāratavenba* III: *Peruṅgadai* III: 19: 217. Even warriors had their individual banners. Spellman compares them to the royal ensigns of medieval Europe in which one of the objects of war was to hoist one's own banner upon the castle battlements: Spellman: *Political theory of Ancient India*: p. 134

93. *Peruṅgadai* I : 46; 91-100   94. *Chintāmaṇi*: 778, 2303

95. K. A.N. Sastri (ed) : *Foreign Notices of South India : p.* 93

96. *The Travels of Ser Marco Polo:* p.280. The World's Popular classics.

specialized branch of espionage.[97] In the course of the battle, the
different sections of the army clashed with their opposite numbers -
infantry against infantry, cavalry against cavalry, and so on. This
might not be sustained as the battle became confused. But this is
made much of in sources, possibly because it was considered an
ideal arrangement in war.[98] The *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* gives a descrip-
tion of the battle of Kaliṅga war II which may be treated as the
pattern applicable to all great battles. It is mentioned that the Chōḷa
armies raiding Kaliṅga set fire to all places and destroyed them
completely. Fortresses were reduced, farm lands destroyed; and
people in the countryside fled to save themselves.[99] During the reign
of Rājarāja III, Sundara Pāṇḍya invaded Tāñjore in 1219 and set
that capital city and Uṟaiyūr ablaze.[100] The *Paraṇi* says, elsewhere,
that Vairāgaram was destroyed by fire by Kulōttuṅga.[101] Rājādhi-
rāja, in his Chāḷukyan war, committed similar acts of ravage, and
destroyed the palace at Kampili. Narasimhavarman is known to
have destroyed a good part of the capital of the Western Chāḷukyas.
The savagery of the war which the Chōḷa led into Ceylon is on
record in the *Dipavamśa* and the *Mahāvamśa*.

After these acts of destruction had earned the expected victory
for the invading army, victory-pillars were erected.[102] The enemy's
dynastic symbols and crests were removed, and the conqueror's
substituted, as marks of victory. Among the war-booty collected
by the victor, apart from the normal valuable property left
behind, certain objects whose presence on the battle-field, it is
difficult to understand, were also captured. For instance, Vikra-
māditya II defeated Narasimhavarman II (733-746), and took
possession of certain musical instruments called Kaṭamukhavāditra,
the Samudraghōsha and the Khatvānkhadvaja. These were certainly
war-instruments; and R. Gopalan draws our attention to their
reference in the Paramēśvaraviṇṇagaram verses of Tirumaṅgai
as well as in the mutilated inscriptions at the Vaikunthaperumāḷ

97. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 17: 90   98. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 404
99. *Ibid.* 370-374
100. Tiruveḷḷaṟai Stone inscription published in *Sen Tamil.* XLI.
     p. 215
101. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 252
102. *S I.I.* Vol. V. No. 978: *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 26

temple.[103] In the case of siege-warfare the soldiers used ladders to climb the fortresses. The fortresses were provided with battlements, turrets etc., and these were demolished by battering rams and other mechanical devices.[104] The reference to Malaikalli and Paṟappana[105] i.e., earth movers and 'flyers' cannot mean tanks and aircraft, though V.R.R. Dikshitar sports the idea that these modern engines of war were known to ancient Indians.

The wounded were well taken care of; and in the mobile camps, medical facilities were available. Ointments called 'nei', pasted on cloth, something like modern medicated plaster, were applied to the wounds.[106] As special compensation, presents were given to the wounded in battle.[107]

In contrast to the care that was taken of one's own warriors, the defeated were humiliated. They were given women's clothes to wear. The defeated kings had to hold their royal umbrellas over the conqueror's head and wave whisks.[108] Rājādhirāja I seized in battle Vīrakēraḷa, 'whose ankle rings were wide', and got him trampled upon by a furious elephant named Attivārana.[109] Ādityā II assumed the title 'Vīra Pāṇḍyan Talaikoṇḍa' which meant either that he decapitated Vīra Pāṇḍya or placed his foot symbolically on that king's head. The latter seems to be nearer the truth in view of Kulōttuṅga III's treatment, in a similar symbolic manner, of another Vīra Pāṇḍya at Madurai.[110]

The victorious king celebrated the victory by organizing bardic praise of the event and was himself the hero in the poems called *Vaḷḷaippāṭṭu*.[111] Usually, on the battle-field itself the victor got himself anointed by way of enforcing his right over the conquered territory; (and this was called Vīrābhishēkham or Vijayābhishēkam)[112] and wore a crown called Vijayamāmuḍi or Vīramāmuḍi.

A brief account of some of the decisive battles of this period is given in an appendix to this work.

103. R. Gopalan: *History of the Pallavas of Kāñchi:* p.121
104. *Chintāmaṇi:* 100-105   105. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 352
106. *Chintāmaṇi:* 818-819   107. *Ibid.*
108. *Kaliṅgattuparaṇi:* 325
109. K.V.Subrahmania Iyer: *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan:* p 152
110. N.Subrahmanian: *History of Tamilnad:* p.247
111. *Kaliṅgattuparaṇi:* 535   112. 383 of 1914

CHAPTER VII

LAW, CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Medieval Tamil Jurisprudence

Ancient Hindu Society, judged by fairly strict standards, was civilized, and medieval Tamil society was an integral part thereof, though it enjoyed certain unique features within the larger framework. A general characteristic of Hindu society was the absence of a system of man-made law, i.e., legislation as we know it now was unknown to that society. There were no amendable written laws and royal orders were but royal proclamations. The *Āṇai*, a Tamil corruption of *Ājña*, was royal order. The commands of the king, which were merely regulations, 'prescribed' or 'prohibited' within the framework of the *dharma* which was understood with reference to ancient and nearly anonymous texts of wisdom (in Tamil, *Aṛa Nūl*). This *Nūl* was not exhaustive in its legal prescription, but laid down the contours of a social genre the nature of which was felt more as an influence than as specific command. But the society reacted as if these prescriptions were statutorily established and set forth. In fact, the all-inclusive *dharma* was the basis of a way of life. The state was competent to issue only such commands as would promote this way of life, and had to punish the forces which threatened it. Hence the state became an administrative agent of the impersonal *dharma*. Any regulation or order which did not conform to the philosophy of *dharma* was deemed unrighteous, and anyone, not excluding the king, responsible for such acts, placed himself automatically beyond the pale of dharmic protection.[1] A legislative body in that polity would be either unnecessary or undesirable; hence there was none. Thus the sovereign in that society was subject to the *dharma*, at least theoretically, and was different from the secular sovereign of modern times whose legislative competence is practically unlimited.

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1. Even the authors of the *Dharmaśāstras* were only interpreting and proclaiming ancient wisdom, but not creating it.

Nārada, Bṛihaspati, Yājñavalkya and Manu included civil litigious matter in the concept of *dharma* (*Aṟam*) and excluded *artha* (*Poruḷ*). To them, crimes were taken care of by *daṇḍa* (*Oṟuttal*). *Aṟam* connoted a socio-religious entity, rather than a political one. Hence the sacred nature of law. It was, however, a nexus between the sacred and the secular governing social activities completely. It is necessary now to know whether Tamil social polity had a jurisprudence similar to that understood by the makers of the *Dharmaśāstras*.

Some relevant questions in this context are: 1. what was the basis of justice in that polity? 2. Was the personal law declared? 3. Did that society follow the principles of Manu and other makers of the *Darmaśāstras*? 4. How were acts of succession to property, contractual obligations and partnership decided? In short, what was the Tamil counterpart of *Vyavahāra*?[2] Let us briefly consider these in this chapter.

Tamil civil society in medieval times

Tamil society of those times was basically a tribal one on which, by contact with northern Brahminical communities, a *varṇa* scheme was imposed in a somewhat indifferent manner. The Brahminical tendency to keep aloof and the tribal tendency to Sanskritize, cancelled each other, and the *Dharmaśāstras* eventually concerned only the Brahmins, and for the rest of society their validity was purely theoretical. The rules of civil ownership of property for the non-Brahminical sections were derived largely from ancient social traditions and customs. Each tribe in a locality followed its own customary law which was never codified or committed to writing. Available evidence does not help us know how that law was actually enforced.

C. Minakshi says that women held property of their own, and this, she infers from the occurrence of Strīdhana;[3] but *Strīdhana* is settlement of property, and may be customarily obligatory, but cannot be the equivalent of the male right of succession to ancestral property. Hence to speak of women's title to property as such is to misinterpret the *Strīdhana* concept. The general inferiority of the

2. *Vide Kuṟaḷ* : Parimēlaḷagar - introduction
3. C. Minakshi : *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas* : p. 168; 31 of 1898.

status of women in Hindu society was largely due to this legal dis-
ability in the matter of ownership of property. The South, which
generally followed the *Mitakshara*, was particularly generous and
partial to the males in this regard. But a limited right to property
(the nature of the limitation, and of the property, is not known)
seems to have been envisaged for women. In Chōḷa times, the pro-
prietory right of a widow in disposing of her husband's property
was recognized.[4] Instances of widows inheriting their husbands'
property, inclusive of its incomes and obligations, are also known.[5]

The Southern Brahmins followed abhorrent practices deviating
from the *Gṛihyāsūtras* in certain details. Hence Baudhāyana was
obliged to prescribe special rules of conduct for them. Any violation
of these provisions resulted usually in being declared outcaste (the
Hindu equivalent of excommunication).

In the matter of criminal offences, differential treatment, as
contemplated in the *Dharmaśāstra*s with slight modifications, was
accepted and practised. That the Brahmin deserved only lighter
punishment for offences for which others would receive heavy
penalties was accepted as an axiom without question. Loyalty to the
Dharmaśātras was, in many instances nominal, and they were supple-
mented by local practices. Expiation for crimes by endowment of
perpetual lamps to temples was not the kind of atonement contem-
plated by the *Dharmaśāstras*; but medieval inscriptions, especially
those of the Chōḷas, are full of references to such practice.

As for the conventions regarding marriage as a sacrament,
adoption, etc., the lower strata of the tribal population were
unaffected by the Sanskritic *dharma*. Easy divorce, generally
followed by remarriage in the case of both sexes, prevailed
among many tribes. Cross-cousin marriage was legal and common
among the Southerners, including the Brahmins; but was
considered incestuous in the North. This variation was permissive
dēsāchāra.

K.A.N. Sastri says that there was no system of positive
law, fastidious and sophisticated enough to settle possible

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4. 37 of 1913 - *Vide* N.Subrahmanian. *The Status of women in
   Ancient Tamiḷaham. J.I.H.* Vol. XXXVIII. Part: III: Dec.
   1960
5. 12 of 1935

differences among corporations whose jurisdictions, rights and
duties were never even vaguely defined.[6]   This was so, no doubt,
but the conclusion he draws does not necessarily follow that
much of what was not expressly provided for must have been
left to goodwill on all sides.   It is common knowledge that
when there are lacunae in legal provisions, they will be
exploited, not necessarily by men of goodwill, but certainly
by antilegal forces. The real answer to this situation was that
they lacked the means to organize inter-group relations largely
because the functions of various groups were not defined.

The Judiciary

There was a bureaucratic judicial organization at the capital
presided over by the king or an officer functioning on his
behalf.   In the countryside there were local courts dispensing
justice in by no means uniform manner, mainly inspired by local
custom.   Still the king was the ultimate judicial authority for
the kingdom as a whole. So far as the Pallava judiciary was
concerned, it seems that the *Adhikaraṇa bhōjakas* were the city
civil court in which sat the *Dharmādhikārins*.   The king was the
highest authority in the administration of justice. His court of
justice was the *Dharmāsana*,[7] also called *Adhikaraṇa*, which sat
at the *Adhikaraṇa maṇḍapa*.   The *Dharmāsana* included a number
of jurists, mostly Brahmins.   These Brahmins were called the
Dharmāsana-bhattas.   The judges, as a class, were called the
Nyāyattār, or the *Dharmāsanattār*. We do not know if the judi-
ciary consisted of a fixed number of judges. *Ad hoc* courts of
varying sizes heard emergent causes, as when the 3000 Brahmins
of Chidambaram heard Tirunīlakaṇṭars's plaint.[8]   The Chittira-
mēḷipperunāḍu of the seventy nine Nāḍus ('79 Nāṭṭōm'), acted
as judges in a case of accidental homicide at Jambai.[9]   The
Sabha of Rājasundari-chaturvēdimaṅgalam dismissed the village

6.   K.A.N. Sastri: '*The Coḷas*' - p. 491
7.   162 of 1912
8.   *Periyapurāṇam:* 389, 390: The '3000', as it refers to the Tillai
     Mūvāyiravar, need not be, in this context, the specific number
     '3000', but the traditional number associated with the
     priestly community of Chidambaram.
9.   76 of 1906: The 3rd regnal year of Kulōttuṅga II

accountant who had been found guilty of cheating, and disqualified his descendants from maintaining the accounts of the village.[10] These two groups were not *ad hoc* but permanent.

Even women could be judges.[11] In the Sanskrit polity, Brahmins were in control of the court-system, and the chief judge had to be a Brahmin; "sometimes a Kshatriya or a Vaiśya could be appointed, but never a Śūdra; but the Śūdra was, however, authorized to summon witnesses, litigants, etc".[12] But these injunctions do not seem to have been very strictly followed in the Tamil polity. Local assemblies seem to have pledged to the *Dharmāsana* that they would perform their duties properly, failing which they agreed to pay stipulated fines to the *Dharmāsana*.[13] We learn of a Sabhā of Manali binding itself to pay a penalty in case it failed to carry out its functions properly.[14] The Ūr and the Sabhā also heard small causes.

There were also the popular and lesser courts which dispensed justice in their own way; and these courts included the village assemblies, merchant guilds and the caste elders, meeting in the local temple or the village public hall, to decide the cases which came within their purview. There are instances of appeals from these lower courts going up to the king.[15]

The local judiciary had a certain measure of freedom in the manner of its function. Local chieftains were entrusted with the duty, and enjoyed the right, to collect judicial fines and to remit a fixed sum to the treasury. This resulted occasionally in a certain amount of corruption among unscrupulous agents.[16] This was a feudal practice, evidently, and its prevalance in the Tamil country can only be inferred.

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10. 583 of 1904

11. In the time of Sundara Pāṇḍya, one Peruṅkaruṇaiyāṭṭi *alias* Dēvargaḷ ammai was one of the Nyāyattār in Uttaramērūr. *A.R.E.* 1910, Part II, para p.35

12. Spellman J.W.: *Political Theory of Ancient India. A study of kingship from the earliest times to c.A.D.* 300: p.124

13. 161, 163, 189 and 190 of 1912

14. 162 of 1912; 189 of 1912

15. 372 of 1906

16. Rice - *Mysore Gazetteer:* Vol. I, pp. 584-85

Judicial procedure

A simple, but adequate, judicial procedure was adopted by the courts to discover the truth and pronounce judgment. When witnesses took an oath, they had to hold objects considered sacred, like a lighted lamp.[17] The innocence of persons was presumed, while guilt had to be proved. But the procedure of proving the guilt or otherwise of persons by ordeal meant the opposite of this presumption; for trial by ordeal virtually tended to punish a person, whether guilty or not. This procedure was quite common in the medieval world, and it combined a sense of justice with crass credulity. Ordeal by fire is prescribed in Yājñavalkya and Nārada; the latter gives a detailed account of this mode of discovery of truth.[18] It will suffice to cite one case of trial by ordeal, and this happened in the 13th century.[19] Some Śivabrāhmaṇas stole a sacred ornament from a temple in Kuḍumiyāmalai. A full bench from the neighbourhood heard the case, and decided to test the guilt of the accused by ordering them to hold a red-hot iron rod. All the accused except the one who turned approver submitted to the ordeal, and got their hands burnt; and they were adjuded guilty and imprisoned. The one who turned approver was naturally let off.

We have instances of claimants to landed property having to dip their fingers in boiling oil or melted butter,[20] or enter fire to prove their claims.[21]

Even the priestly community, it would appear, was not exempt from trial by ordeal. Priests were punished, not ostensibly for theft *per se*, but for Śivadrōha (treachery to Śiva); and so the cause of action was shifted from the secular to the religious level. Hence, perhaps, the severity of the punishment.

A part of the judicial procedure resembling trial by ordeal but not actually that, was that officials, particularly revenue officials, had to take an oath with a similar procedure. For instance, revenue

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17. *Bhāratam*: 714
18. Ramiah Panthulu: *Judicial procedure in Ancient India: J.A. H.R S.* Vol. IV: 1929
19. A Manual of Pudukkoṭṭai State. Vol. I. p.421
20 66 of 1924   21. 21 of 1925

accountants had to swear to the accuracy of their accounts by holding a red-hot iron which, incidentally, may show that there was the possibility of embezzlement,[22] the rigours of the legal system notwithstanding. In certain situations witnesses committed self-immolation to prove a point of law;[23] but how this could prove anything is difficult to see.

There was a good system of establishing evidence which, in some respects, appears quite modern. The evidence of an eye-witness was known as *kātchi*, meaning 'knowledge by sight', distinguished from hearsay. The Indian Evidence Act does not treat hearsay as acceptable evidence. The practice of attesting documents was known, and the attestors were known as Mēleḻuttiṭṭār.[24] Comparison of handwriting for identification of signatures and preventing forgery was known.[25] The burden of proof was on the plaintiff as in every civilized code.[26] Sureties and witnesses were to be carefully selected. Marco Polo, testifying to this, in his account of the judicial administration in the Pāṇḍyan kingdom, says, "they have made a rule that wine-drinkers and sea-faring men are not to be accepted as sureties. They say that to be a sea-faring man is the same as to be an utter desperado. His testimony is good for nothing."[27]

Criminal law

In criminal as well as civil law, the most notable cases are found in the *Periyapurāṇam*. The *Manunidhikaṇḍapurāṇam* narrates the story of Manu Chōḻa punishing his son, the crown prince, with death for having slain a calf through negligence in the course of a ride through the town in his chariot. The wheels of the chariot, which killed the calf, were ordered to be driven over the body of the prince. The ministers did not carry out the royal orders in this case (one of them preferred to take his own life) and their plea was that it was contrary to tradition to invoke the death-penalty for such offences.[28] Therefore, the king took upon himself the task of punishing the prince.

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22. 226 of 1915
23. K.A.N. Sastri : *South Indian History:* p. 204
24. *Periyapurāṇam:* 206   25. *Ibid.* 206, 207
26. *Ibid.* 201
27. Yule and Cordier (ed): *The Travels of Ser Marco Polo.*
28. *Periyapurāṇam:* 123

The implications of the plea of the ministers are far-reaching.
1. There was a tradition in such cases, though the details are not
available. 2. Such offences were not to be punished with death;
this was so, at least in the case of princes. 3. The ministers could
refrain from executing royal orders, obliging royalty to administer
its own justice. 4. The Hammurabian nature of the penalty was not
acceptable to the advisory body. 5. The advisory body's advice
could be spurned by the king, who relentlessly meted out Hammura-
bian justice.[29] The question whether it was *Manu dharma* to adminis-
ter this kind of justice has been raised and answered negatively.[30]
The principle of equal justice, involved in this case, had been stret-
ched to the extent of the king giving his son the penalty which any
other of his subjects committing the same crime would have got.

The *Periyapurāṇam* which records this incident was composed
in the 12th century while the event itself is alleged to have taken
place many centuries earlier, perhaps, in the B.C.'s. So the legal
implications we have mentioned above may appear irrelevant to the
medieval period of Tamil history. It is, however, interesting that
Sēkkiḷār who narrates the story seems to feel that the legal princi-
ples involved in this case were eternally valid.

If the *Periyapurāṇam* is to be relied upon, the devotees as such
exempted themselves from law. In the case of Eripattar who killed
an elephant and its drivers because a basket of flowers intended for
the deity was tossed by the animal, a cognizable offence was praised
by the king as laudable virtue. Sandēśar who cut off his father's
feet committed, in the eyes of modern law, culpable patricide.
According to ancient Hindu hieratic tradition, it was trebly heinous
because the victim was: 1. a Brahmin in addition to being 2. his
father and 3. Guru. But in this instance, the perpetrator was
honoured by being canonised!

Special treatment for ecclesiasts, even in the realm of law, was
not unusual in medieval Europe where the 'clergy' had a 'benefit'.

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29. *Ibid.* 126. T.N. Subramanian says, "the principle of tooth for
    tooth was not in vogue in the Imperial Chōḷa period." *Gaṅgai-
    koṇḍān* p. 115. But Sēkkiḷār who lived then praised Manu
    Chōḷan for applying this very principle, and the contemporary
    moralists and intellectuals evidently agreed with this attitude.
30. N. Subrahmanian: *Saṅgam Polity:* p. 193; *History of Tamilnad:*
    p. 312. Buhler: *Manu*, Book VIII 296-297

This generated a conflict between the temporal and the religious sections of European society. The crux of the problem was to deprive the clergy of judicial benefit in excess of those enjoyed by the laity. The conflict ended only when, in the days of Edward I, and later of Henry VIII, spiritual powers were eroded by lay majesty. A similar situation arose in the Pāṇḍyan country. Five Brahmins and a few others turned highwaymen. They were caught and fined but not imprisoned. The highwaymen continued their depredations. A detachment of the army was despatched to capture them. Two of them were caught, but the other three forcibly liberated the captured ones. On this, the king (Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya) ordered that they be caught and *punished as members of the lower communities should be*. Their possessions were to be confiscated, and endowed to temples.[31]

In this case, the contemplated punishment was double punishment, strictly speaking, in as much as the Brahmin culprits were *first* to be reduced to a lower stratum of society, and *then* to be punished according to the law appropriate to the latter. Reduction in caste status for a Brahmin was, at least, as severe a punishment as for a medieval European clergyman to be deprived of his clerical status. The penalty that follows this deprivation of status is superfluous, and constitutes double punishment; but whether the Tamil rulers ever looked at this from this standpoint is not known. In Hindu India there was no scope for the kind of conflict we see in the European situation, since in the Hindu arrangement there was only one arm and that was the heiratic arm. Little wonder, then, that secular authority had to yield to the religious. The instance mentioned here may lead one to jump to the conclusion that in Tamil society, the secular arm had, after all discovered a means of punishing guilty Brahmins just as non-Brahmins would be punished for similar offences. Even if that were so, different punitive provisions *normally* prevailed for the upper and lower classes.

Crimes of all kinds were common then, as always. The system of investigation and the mode of punishment were different. Crimes like treason, murder and adultery were severely punished. Treason was dealt with by the king himself evidently because he was the person most affected by it. Rājarāja I ordered the confiscation of the

31. 316 of 1909: *A.R.E.* 1910: Part II, para: 34

possessions of the murderer of Āditya II.[32] In the reign of Rāja-rāja III, the lands of *drohins* (traitors) were sold in auction. Traitors against the village public were called *grāmadrōhins* (*grāmakaṇṭakas*) and were similarly punished.[33]

A merchant of Jambai had a concubine whom a native of Nāvalūr (Tirunāmanallūr) attempted to outrage. The latter was stabbed to death by the merchant; and as the offender was dead he could not be prosecuted for his alleged misconduct of attempted adultery. The merchant, along with a relative of the deceased, endowed gold for a lamp in the temple by way of expiation.[34] The principle arising out of this case is that one could take the law into one's own hands, bypassing the judicial machinery, and was not proceeded against legally, provided the necessary expiation had been made.

When a Nāḍālvān killed the commander of a regiment of bow-men, Rājēndra II ordered the culprit to endow a lamp to a temple.[35]

A husband pushed his wife so rudely that she died. The '1500 men of the four quarters' tried the case and found the husband guilty of murder. But he had only to provide a perpetual lamp in a temple as punishment for the crime.[36] (We do not know who the '1500' were and in what capacity they tried the case.)[37]

A clash between two watchmen in a temple ended in the death of the son of one of them, who had probably intervened, at the hands of the other. The offender was ordered to make a gift of seventy-two sheep for three-fourth lamp to a temple.[38]

A buffalo which destroyed crops in a field was beaten to death by the owners of the field. The court, possibly a village court, punished the offenders by ordering the endowment of forty-eight

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32. 577 of 1920   33. 30 of 1911   34. 77 of 1906
35. 227 of 1904   36. 91 of 1906
37. If '1500' meant that number, such a crowd could never be a court — it might be a group referred to by its traditional number.
38. 554 of 1921

sheep for a lamp to a temple.[39] Does this mean that killing animals was also a cognizible offence?

One Vāmanabhaṭṭa was murdered by a person who absconded; the property of the murderer was confiscated and gifted away to a temple. But he was killed as an act of private revenge. His son claimed restitution of his father's property. It was effected on the son paying 800 paṇams.[40]

From the above instances we may generalize that the penalty varied according to the circumstances of each case, and in all the cases, the penalties also constituted expiation.

Not infrequently persons in responsible positions were also involved in serious crimes. An epigraph from Tiruppattūr[41] (Ramnad District) contains the story of the misconduct of a temple manager towards a Brahmin widow who had evidently come from some other place for worship.

A temple priest had embezzled gold and silver ornaments, bronze utensils etc., belonging to the temple. On being detected, he was required to make good the theft. In a similar case, the lands and sites of the guilty were all sold and the proceeds remitted into the treasury.[42]

In homicide, there could be wilful as well as unintentional murder. A Veḷḷāḷa accidentally killed another. The judgment, on the advice of the Bhaṭṭars was that the murderer was not to be given the death penalty as he was a Veḷḷāḷa.[43] The assumption is irresistible that Veḷḷāḷas enjoyed special rights of exemption from extreme judicial punishment like the Brahmins. What the rationale of such exemption could be is hard to see unless it is that, like the priestly class that took care of the spiritual needs of society, the Veḷḷāḷas who took care of food-production were considered worthy of leniency.

All this apart, it is interesting to know what Chau-Ju-Kua has to say about the nature of punishment for offences in the Tamil

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39. *A.R.E.* 1919: II, 22. Some scholars, interpreting this defective inscription, hold that it was the owner of the buffalo that was beaten to death; but whatever it is, the penalty is the standard one.

40. 301 - 303 of 1929   41. *A.R.E.*: 1909: Part II, para:28

42. 308 of 1927; 189 of 1929   43. 200 of 1929

country. Says he, "when any one of the people is guilty of offence, one of the court ministers punishes him; if the offence is light, the culprit is tied to a wooden frame and given fifty, seventy or up to a hundred blows with a stick. Heinous crimes are punished with decapitation or being trampled to death by an elephant."[44]

Civil law

The question of contract loomed large in the civil transactions of that society. In the *Amarnidhi* and *Tirunilakaṇṭār Purāṇams* we have instances of violation of pledge, and the court going into the matter. It was agreed that pledged property was to be returned safely, and intact, to the owner, irrespective of the nature or the value of the property. The contract was sacred; but insistence on the specific return of the pledged property itself was contrary to the option to return property of equal value. Since these transactions are narrated in a hagiology (*Periyapurāṇam*), and the stories invariably end in miracles, it is difficult to draw secular legal conclusions therefrom. All the same, the principle enforced by these is interesting.

Contracts for mutual assistance were common.[45] Extra-judicial, and purely political contracts such as were entered into by chieftains, for or against the reigning monarch, fell beyond the jurisdiction of courts.

The most important example of a civil case which took on the aspects of a criminal suit is to be found in Śekkiḻār's account of the life of Sundarar. The plaint was as follows: An old Brahmin (of course, Śiva in that form) intervened on the occasion of the marriage of Sundarar (the Brahmin youth) and insisted that the wedding proceedings be stopped pending disposal of his (the old Brahmin's) allegations against the bridegroom. He claimed that the youth was the descendant of one who had bonded himself in slavery to the plaintiff (the old Brahmin) and so he too was bound in slavery to him, and he had no freedom of any personal action. The matter was taken to a court of law and there it assumed a criminal aspect, as Sundarar, who had, naturally, been upset by the unseemly interruption at his wedding, had denied the claim, and even torn up the document produced by the plaintiff in support of his

44. K.A.N.Sastri (ed) : *Foreign Notices of South India.* p.143
45. 496 of 1902

claim. The court looked into the different aspects of the case, examined witnesses, raised judicial issues and concluded that the matter could not be proceeded with in the absence of the original instrument of contract. The plaintiff promptly produced the original deed (*mūla ōlai*) stating that the document that had been destroyed was only a copy of the original (*padi ōlai*). An incidental issue was whether a Brahmin could be held a slave, and not whether a Brahmin could hold slaves. The question was overruled. This meant that even Brahmins could be enslaved.[46] When the plaintiff was called upon to give his residential address the old Brahmin (Śiva) disappeared into the temple. The story goes on that the bonded slave became the famed 'third' of the *Tēvāram* trio.

Whatever the veracity, in details, of the story, the legal principles involved and the procedure mentioned, are interesting. It may be noted that the plaint was concerned only with the tearing up of the document and not the dispute about the enslavement.[47] The court wished to know: 1. what the current practice in regard to any matter under dispute was; 2. what the specific provisions in the relevant document were and 3. what the witnesses had to say about the substance of the plaint.

There were civil disputes arising from conflicting claims to ownership of waterways. In the days of Māṛavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, there was a dispute between the inhabitants of Kuḷattūr and the temple trustees on the one hand, and a certain Vikrama Chōḷa Nāḍāḷvān[48] on the other, regarding the ownership of a channel and the rights of fishing in it. It was agreed, on arbitration, that water might be baled out within the specified boundary limits, that half of the taxes on fishing were paid to the temple and the other half to the Nāḍāḷavān.[49] There was a dispute among the Bhaṭṭas of a temple near Kāṭṭumannārkōil of South Arcot regarding the right to perform *pūjā* in the temple. The assembly

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46. One does not know if a Brahmin could be enslaved by only another Brahmin; for to say that a Brahmin could be enslaved by any other than a Brahmin would be contrary to the spirit af the *Śāstras*.

47. *Periyapurāṇam:* 197

48. Nāḍāḷvān is almost a translation of Zamindar meaning a land holder. Here it stood for a chieftain.

49. 380 of 1914

arbitrated. One party pleaded prescription and claimed to have enjoyed the right from the time of Kulōttuṅga II. How the dispute ended is not known. What interests us in both the cases is the judicial recognition of prescription as a title to ownership or a right.

Disputes for one reason or other, among different communities, were also known. A dispute involving twenty-four villages in the Ramnad District arose between caste Hindus and the pariahs, resulting in loss of life on both sides. One Gaṅgaiyarāyan, an official, interceded and settled the dispute in the following manner: The *pariahs* should beat the drum for the caste people on all occasions, auspicious and otherwise, and receive, in return, a *padakku*[50] of paddy and a fowl.

The principle of judicial limitation was known to the Tamils. The incident of Manu Chōḷa who punished his crown prince for negligent driving,[51] construed as murder, is an instance in point. The *Palamoḷi* says that the king meted out punishment to his son "after much time had elapsed."[52] From this N. Subrahmanian infers that, in those days, the law of limitation did not apply to criminal cases as is the case even now.[53] But the *Periyapurāṇam* does not mention any significant interval between the crime and the punishment. It is difficult to account for the variation in the versions between *Palamoḷi* and *Periyapurāṇam*. But it may not be correct to conclude that limitation operated in criminal jurisdiction in the later Chōḷa period. It is possible that Śēkkiḻār was impelled by religious reasons to introduce the supernatural to end the story in the desired way, and this motive would have been incompatible with any considerable interval between the crime and the punishment.

Penalties

The penalties meted out to criminal and civil offenders are noteworthy. As noted earlier, they varied from situation to situation. However they could be very severe. In one instance, a person was tied to the leg of a buffalo and dragged along for having mur-

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50. One padakku is equal to 1/24 of the standard measure.
51. *Vide Pēriyapurāṇam: Manunīdikaṇḍa Purāṇam.*
52. *Palamoḷi:* 93
53. N. Subrahmanian: *Sangam Polity:* pp. 185-186

dered a Brahmin.[54] Impalement was a penalty given by Kūn Pāṇḍyan to the Jainas for an attempt to set fire to a Śaiva maṭha.[55] Paṭṭinattuppiḷḷai, suspected of theft of royal funds, was ordered to be burnt at the stake, though a miracle saved him.

Punishment for persons who caused trouble to Brahmins, Veḷḷāḷas[56] and the temple was very severe, and in terms of fines very heavy. A fine of 2000 *kāśus* was imposed on some persons who rioted and set fire to the house of a Brahmin. For failure to pay the fine, an extra sixty *kāśus* was levied, and the amount was recovered by destraint of property.[57] It is not known if these penalties had anything to do with the caste identity of the victim. The property of those who absconded without paying the fine was to be sold for any price it would fetch, and the money credited to the treasury. Gold diadems to deities were made out of the fine collected from defaulting temple servants.[58]

Collective fining of a group, a community or a village, was also a common mode of punishment. The Sabhā of Uttaramērūr decided that, for offences committed in public places like the entrance to the palace, the concerned communities should be held responsible for the offences committed by their castemen, and they should pay a collective fine.[59]

Marco Polo records what he observed in the Pāṇḍyan country: "They have in this country the custom that when a man is doomed to die for any crime, he may declare that he will put himself to death in honour of such or such an idol, and he is permitted to do so."[60] He does so, and is honoured by the community, which forgets his crime and remembers his piety.

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54. *A.R.E* 1909: Part II: para:28
55. *Periyapurāṇam:* 1705: Arson has always been a serious crime.
56. Probably because, these two categories were deemed essential service for the society by contemporaries. This must have been a sort of Tamil attitude; for we find Nittārperumai (the virtues of the ascetics) and Vānsiṭappu (the importance of agriculture which depended upon the rains) being clubbed along with Kaḍavuḷ Vāḷttu in the *Kuṟaḷ Pāyiram.*
57. 379 of 1923   58. 199 of 1917
59 *E I.* XXII : p:207
60. Yule and Cordier (ed) : *The Travels of Ser Marco Polo.*

Notwithstanding all that has been said above, there were corrupt courts selling justice for a consideration. We have the testimony of a high authority, king Mahēndravarman himself, pronouncing judgment on his judges in his *Mattavilāsaprahasana*. The Kāpālika in the play would not go to a law court since the magistrate was sure to favour the rich Bauddha Bhikshu whose wealth was itself the product of corruption in the monasteries.

There was no law which could give protection to the subjects if the law-breakers were influential with the king. There is on record, in the reign of Rājarāja I, a case of oppression and torture of people by the Paḍaiyilār (the militia) with an unsuccessful appeal to the king by the victims.[61]

61. 159 of 1895.

CHAPTER VIII

REVENUE AND FINANCE

A. REVENUE

An impressive variety of levies

Medieval autocrats had the fullest control of all the resources of the state, including finance; and this was true of the monarchs of the Tamil country also. One cannot be on safe ground when making the generalization that the king was the owner of all property in the kingdom. The normal presumption is against this; for, if it were so, there would be no need for taxation. The king had to devise ways and means of collecting sufficient finance to operate the public service, and maintain himself and his expensive palace establishment. Money, or its equivalent in kind, was required to provide welfare (as it was understood then) to his subjects.

The most important source of royal revenue was land. It was called *Kaḍamai* or *Kāṇikkaḍan* or *Iṟai*. Two other important sources of revenue were excise and tolls (*suṅgam*). The periodical tribute which chieftains and defeated enemies paid was known as *Tiṟai*, and this augmented the royal treasury. The booty in wars,[1] the fines levied against all types of crimes[2] and civil offences, and the income from the crown lands also formed part of the revenue treasure troves belonged to the king.

Apart from these commonly-known sources of income, new levies were also collected from time to time.

1. An inscription of Rājarāja I speaks of a booty of siver vessels captured in the campaigns in Malainādu against the Chēra and the Pāṇḍya: 36 of 1897

2. In the days of Rājarāja III the lands of certain persons who had swindled temple property were sold, and the proceeds paid into the royal treasury, or the *Rājaphaṇḍāra*. It is interesting to note that the loss to the temple was not made good, but the proceeds went to the treasury: 308 of 1927

R. Gopalan lists eighteen varieties of levies collected from villages[3] by the Pallavas. Numerous cesses that made up the royal revenue are mentioned in the Kaśākkuḍi, Kūram and Bāhūr plates: Among these may be mentioned: 1. Nīrkūli (Water cess); 2. Kośakkāṇam (a cess on pottery); 3. Kaṇṇāḷakkāṇam (marriage tax - it was 1/8 paṇam payable by both the bride and the groom on the day of marriage);[4] 4. Taṟi Iṟai (tax on looms i.e., on weavers); 5. Tarahu (brokerage); 6. Taṭṭārappāṭṭam (tax on goldsmithy); 7. Iḍaippāṭṭam (tax on shepherds); 8. Ōḍakkūli in Chōḷa times (service rate on ferries) which corresponds to Paṭṭikaikkāṇam of the Pallava times (a tax on ferry or ferry-men— Paṭṭikai = boat); 9. Śekkiṟai[5] (tax on oil press); 10. Vaṇṇarappārai in Chōḷa times (tax on washermen) which corresponds to Pāṟaikkāṇam of the Pallava times; 11. Vaṭṭināḷi (a tax on manufacture of baskets); 12. Pudanāḷi (a tax in kind i e., 1/8 of the measure of grain on new grains); 13. Neyvilai (tax on sale of melted butter); 14. Nāḍukāval (police cess); 15. Īḷampūtchi[6] (probably a special levy to meet the additional expenses in resisting surprise raids from Ceylon). This was a kind of a war-tax.

Rājēndra I levied one Kaḷañju *per* vēli of land as war tax.[7] An inscription of Rājarāja II mentions what is possibly a special pre-war tax.[8] But C. Minakshi thinks that it could be a tax on toddy-tappers.[9]

Cattle-breeders were taxed; and they paid Iḍaipūtchi in Pallava times, corresponding to the Iḍaippāṭṭam of Chōḷa times. Manṟupāḍu was possibly a tax payable to maintain the community hall. It is considered by some scholars as a fine payable to the court of justice. According to others, it might have been a small

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3. R. Gopalan: *History of the Pallavas of Kāñchi:* p.152
4. In the case of marriages among the Kallar, one piece of cloth alone was received as tax and nothing was to be obtained for the second and subsequent marriages.   K.V. Subrahmania Aiyar: *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan:* p. 348
5. 258 of 1910   6.   *S.I.I.* Vol. II: Nos. 98,99
7. *A.R.E.* 21 of 1920: Part II, para: 35
8. 35 of 1921
9. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* p. 72

cess paid by cowherds, 'Manṛu' means a public hall, a court of justice and a public cattleshed - hence the different interpretations.

Iravu frequently mentioned was a benevolence. Marco Polo says, "of all the non-agricultural sources of income, the royalty from pearl-fisheries which was one tenth of the produce was quite lucrative."

There were horticultural taxes also, e.g., the tax on Kuvaḷai-malar (blue bells) Whether this tax related to its cultivation or the sale of the flowers is not known. It was known as Kuvaḷaikkāṇam in the Pallava period. A tax on sale of garlands (Kaṇṇi) was also levied.

The emissaries from the king to the village councils levied a tax called Tirumukhakkāṇam which was a levy on royal correspondence i.e., a sort of postage or conveyance charge.[10]

Kattikkāṇam was a tax on the manufacture of weapons.

The Sabha Viniyōgam was a special cess to meet extraordinary expenses levied and appropriated by the Sabhā and, therefore, strictly speaking, not royal revenue. Similarly, Pāḍikāval was collected and paid to village watchmen, and was not remitted to the treasury. The watchman had the right to collect certain taxes as remuneration for his duties at the rate of 1 kalam of paddy on every *ma* of wet land and 1 paṇam on the same area of dry land; 1/16 paṇam on every area palm, 5 paṇams on every *ma* of land producing sugarcane, ginger, gingelly and plantain and 2 paṇams a year on every house. Veṭṭi was a payment to a village servant *in lieu* of his services. The local authorities levied a tax on worshippers of Śiva and Vishṇu. It was a 'devotee-tax', more comprehensive than a pilgrim-tax.

A community tax on the Valaṅgai and Iḍaṅgai castes (perhaps, a poll-tax) was also levied.

Brāhmaṇarāśakkāṇam was a profession tax on Brahmin priests, according to C.Minakshi. K.V.Subrahmania Aiyer thinks that it was a Kāṇam on the profits of Brahmins,[11] and this, in essence, does not controvert our assumption; but what is worth enquiring

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10. *Ibid.*

11. K.V.Subrahmania Aiyer: *Historical sketches of Ancient Dekhan.*

into is whether or not the Kāṇam is connected with the community of Brāhmaṇarāsas, corresponding to Brahmakshatriyas of the North. In medieval Tamiḻaham they were known as Brahmarāyas; and we have also the Brahmavaiśyas. This Kāṇam might, after all, be a community - profession tax.

In Pallava times, Neḍumpaṟai was a tax on drummers. Paṭṭi-nachēri was either a tax on fishermen, or a fee paid for the right to angle in specified places.[12] Salt, sugar,[13] cattle, grain-baskets in the market and arecanut were taxed. Buhler suggests that salt was royal monopoly, and the Hiragadahalli plates mention sugar manufacture by the state. Since most taxes were paid in kind, it is reasonable to suppose that the taxes fell on commodities and services which might be personally useful to the king.

From Pallava times onwards, taxes were collected from land-owners other than Brahmins and temples in enjoyment of tax-free gifts of land.

Occasional or extra-ordinary taxes

Varippon was an occasional tax collected in the days of the Chōḷas. This was not a tax *on* gold or goldsmiths, but tax collected *in* gold.[14] Parāntaka I levied an impost of 3000 Kaḻañjus of gold on the assembly of Kumbakonam to pay to the Pāṇḍippadai-yar who were, perhaps, the distinguished core of the Chōḷa army that conquered the Pāṇḍyan country.[15] Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, in A.D.1251, levied a cess from the inhabitants of the neighbour-hood of Coleroon for building a new flood embankment.[16] Certain tolls and octroi were collected by local bodies and corporations with the permission of, and subject to, the control of the king's government.[17] At times, local bodies functioning in judicial capa-city levied fines from the litigants, but paid the king a fixed contri-bution.[18] Stray heads of cattle were impounded, and a poundage was levied.[19]

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12. C.Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*: p. 76

13. *E.I.* Vol. I: p. 6   14. 200 of 1892; 196 of 1911

15. *A.R.E.* 1912, p.56: para:15

16. *A.R.E.* 1919: Part:II: para:261, 510, 518 of 1918

17. 180 of 1919

18. Rice: *Mysore Gazetteer*: Vol.I: pp.584-85

19. X.I.: VIII: p. 304.

Perhaps the most interesting instance of a levy for that period of time was the death-duty, though the exact nature of such duty is not known.[20]

Payment of revenue and mode of collection

Revenue was based on fertility of the soil, nature of the crop, and facilities for irrigation. Land revenue itself was paid either in cash, or in grain, or both.[21] When paid as paddy, it was *nel ayam* otherwise known as *kasayam*. T.V. Mahalingam says that the tax called *kadamai*, levied on wet land, was paid in kind, and other taxes called *Antaraya*, were paid in cash.[22] When taxation was too heavy, the assessees resorted to borrowing, or they sold their lands. We do not get instances of mortgaging of property for paying taxes. Defaulting in payment resulted in the confiscation of land, and its sale by the Sabha of the village, the sale amount being remitted into the royal treasury. Many of those, thus deprived, left their homes and migrated. But tax was extracted from those who did not pay, but stayed back. Immersion in water, being made to stand in the sun, and similar inflictions, were some of the modes of torture employed by the collecters, who were authorised to enter the houses of defaulters and distrain and break vessels. K.A.N. Sastri doubts[23] if such measures were really adopted or were merely threats rarely carried out. But one need not doubt such tortures being employed in the actual handling of defaulters. The tax-collectors were billeted on the defaulters, and even on regular tax-payers. This was called *echchoru*.

Even the Brahmadeyas were not exempt from these, rather oppressive, methods of collection.[24] The members of the Sabha of Mahendramangalam were put to no small harassment by the tax collectors, and the victims repaired to Tanjore and appealed

20. 233 of 1939-40: para 3
21. *S.I.I.* Vol. II: 4-5
22. T.V. Mahalingam: *South Indian Polity:* p.180
23. K.A.N. Sastri: *The Colas:* p. 526
24. We have seen that even tax-free lands were not entirely tax-free but enjoyed that freedom after compounding at a nominal rate the future dues. Besides these, the Brahmadeyas were exempted only from land-tax while other minor taxes had to be paid.

to king Rājarāja I in A.D. 1001. The king referred back the matter to the local officers who, however, did not withdraw their original order.[25] Rājarāja I ordered the confiscation of lands cultivated by some privileged persons called Kāṇiudaiyār whose defaulting had been winked at for some time, and taken serious note of only later.[26] For the offence of denying her liability to pay a certain tax, a woman was obliged to suffer an ordeal during Rājarāja II's rule. What the ordeal really was is not known, but it was tortuous and humiliating enough to drive her to commit suicide. The concerned officer expiated his sin by endowing a lamp to the local temple.[27]

In the days of Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, heavy and oppressive taxation led to the total impoverishment of the people of two villages to whom life in the jungle appeared far better. So an effort was made to lighten the burden by altering the standard of land measure.[28] In the reign of Māravar-man Kulaśēkhara the village of Marudam could not pay any land tax, since there were no people to cultivate the land. The whole Nāḍu undertook to pay the revenue due to the king, and was authorised to give away the village to two persons who were to pay to god for the restoration of prosperity to the village.[29] In the days of Sundara Pāṇḍya, a tenant absconded, and a friend who stood surety had to pay the arrears of tax.[30] Māravarman Kulaśēkhara I, a certain chieftain, took forceful possession of a part of the country, billeted his forces on a village, and fixed 4000 gold pieces as the tax to be paid by the village. The village paid the tax by selling most of its pro-perty.[31] Kōpperuñjiṅga is said to have remitted the taxes due from a village, and invited those who had migrated because they were unable to pay heavy taxes to return.[32]

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25. 159 of 1895   26. *S.I.I.* Vol. III. No. 9
27. 80 of 1906   28. Nos. 73, 91 of 1924
29. 357 of 1922   30. 93 of 1911
31. *A.R.E* 1916: Part II: para: 30: 81 of 1906: K.A.N. Sastri plays down this incident and considers it an occasional act of oppression, not sanctioned by the state (*The Pāṇḍyan king-dom* p. 219) but the fact is that the chieftain, when he indulged in this act of oppression, had arrogated to himself the role of the state itself:
32. 229 of 1925

The village assembly was responsible for collecting the revenue and remitting it into the king's treasury.

The excessively taxed villages did not always take the oppressive collection lying down. Some of them organized massive resistance to the excessive demands of tax and the extremely extortionate methods of collection. There is an instance of six Nāḍus joining together and resolving to pay only the legitimate tax and to refuse to yield to oppression.[33] It is therefore evident that the demand of a tax, in excess of royal fixation and assessment was not uncommon, and that consequently, unable to bear the inquisitorial methods of the officials, people fled the villages, appealed to the king, took their own lives, or organized resistance.

The tax-collecting officers were not always above corruption. An interesting inscription of Jaṭāvarman Pāṇḍya says that some villagers bribed the tax collectors with the money got from the Vāram and Kaḍamai incomes, and enjoyed at least freedom from harassment, if not unmerited concessions.[34]

Conscientious and reasonable tax-collectors collected whatever they could, from the common funds of the Sabhā, and for the balance, held the entire Sabhā responsible.

Rate of land tax

The one sixth share of income levied as tax, even if it prevailed as an official tax rate, should have related to land tax only, and not on the total income.[35] This is borne out

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33. 96, 98 and 104 of 1894   34. 8 of 1913

35. In practice, the rate has always been more than 1/6. Bishop Caldwell says, "the established practice throughout this part of the peninsula has been to allow the farmer 1/2 of the produce only of his crop, for his use, while the other is appropriated to the circar": *I.A.* XLV. p. 36: Note 74: Ellis (quoted by A. Appadurai) says, "a general assessment was introduced on the basis of the classical 1/6, and has been, in successive stages, considerably increased." *Economic conditions of Southern India*: 1000-1500, Vol. II. p.674: Dr. Burnell was of the view that "the king's share in India has been usually 50%". *S.I. Palaeography* p 112, Note: 3; In fact, Manu never spoke strictly about the 1/6 share. Though he recommended 1/6 as a normal levy, he permitted its raising to 1/4 or reduction to 1/12 according to the exigencies: *Dharmaśāstra*: VII: p.130.

by an epigraph of Parāntaka I.[36] The one-sixth was, however,
a notional ratio, and in actual practice, it was much more as
high as even fifty percent as some authorities would testify. In
some of the epigraphical sources of the later Chōḷa period, one
fifth of the produce from dry lands and one third from wet lands
have been specified as the king's share (mēlvāram).

The tax on wet lands in the Dēvadāna villages of
Tirumālpuram was 187 kalams of paddy and 26 kaḷañjus and 1/2
a Mañjādi of gold according to the inscription of the 14th regnal
year of Uttamachōḷa. This tax was called Iravuvari of which we
get no details.[37] However, these figures may have reference to
one, or the other, of the rates current at the period.

Irai and Vari

Iṟai is a common term for land tax, and Vari a general
term for other taxes. But exceptional usage is not unknown,
like Taṟi Iṟai (loom tax) and Sil Iṟai (minor taxes). Land on
which tax was in arrears and could not be collected, was forfeit
to the village community.[38] Conversely Vari is used in connection
with land revenue also. *Examples:* Varippottagam (tax register);
Puravuvari (land tax); Varikkaṇakku (land revenue account);
Variyiliḍu (entry in the register). Often these terms also stood
for the officials in charge of these functions.

Iraiyili

Iṟaiyili was tax-free land as distinct from Iṟaikaṭṭinanilam,
but this exemption, as we shall see was not total. There
were instances[39] in which the exemption did not affect royal
revenues, for the Sabhā paid the taxes on behalf of the donee.
If the exemption had been granted by the king himself, it
would be total: but when any remission of tax affected royal
measures, and when this was made good by other agencies,
the fact was clearly indicated. There was another practice, i.e.,
of providing for Iṟaiyili lands for a nominal consideration. This
was a lump sum. This related usually to lands donated to temples,
Maṭhas etc., by persons who paid cash down to cover the value

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36. *E.I.* Vol. IV: p. 328   37. *Sōḷar Varalāṟu*: part III: p.5
38. 17 of 1898   39. 133 of 1914

of the land and the dues on it.[40] Iṟaiyili related to Paḷḷichchandam, Dēvadāna, Bhaṭṭavritti, Agarappaṟṟu, Tiruviḍaiāṭṭam and so on.[41] The exemption in many cases was not absolute, for we hear of an 'Iṟaiyilikkāśu' [42] This was not collected from a certain land during a particular year; but later, it had to pay five kāśus per year, as a cess; Iṟaiyili Paḷḷichchandam of Tiruppāṉmalai paid two cesses. This amounted to a payment, apart from Iṟai.[43] Kāśukkoḷḷa Iṟaiyili is an expression interpreted by K.A.N. Sastri as lands exempted from the payment of Iṟaiyilikkāśu.[44]

The *Periyapuraṇam* mentions the king's share of the income of the subjects as the first charge on the subject, i.e., he had to meet the other demands on his resources out of what was left after the payment of the royal dues.[45]

Classification of land

There were fourteen kinds of lands according to one epigraph.[46] Land was divided into *pāyal aḍai*. The former was intended to be cultivated as king's share, and the latter, as that of the landholder.[47] There was the classification of land into Iṟai and Iṟaiyili. Kāṟai nilam was land subject to periodical redistribution. There were three kinds of lands meant for the use of the cultivator. Veḷḷānvahai corresponded to the *Ayan* land of today (owned by individuals holding paṭṭās, confirmed absolutely in their favour, in the ryotwari settlement). Jīvita was an annuity in land. Gifted land was the third category consisting of Brahma-

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40. 'Vilai diraviyamum, Iṟai diraviyamum aṟakkoṇḍu' is the expression used in this context. Iṟai diraviyam was an amount equal to the capitalised value of the future dues. This is indicated by the expression 'Iṟaikāvaldiraviyam'.

41. 522 of 1912   42. 525 of 1912   43. 19 of 1890

44. K. A. N. Sastri : *S.K.Iyengar Commemoration volume* : Iṟai, Iṟaikāṇi, Iṟaiyili: 1936

45. *Periyapuraṇām*: 76: This means that the subject must first pay his tax and then if anything be left, meet other commitments. That 5/6 left, in any case, will be meaningful to the subject only if it is sufficient to meet other demands. N. Subrahmanian in his *Saṅgam Polity* holds that the *Kuṟaḷ* mentions the royal dues as the ultimate charge, on the mere fact that in *Kuṟaḷ* 43, the royal dues are mentioned at the end of the verse; but this seems to be rather slim reasoning: *Tirukkaḷumala Mummaṇikkōvai*: 25

46. *S.I.I.* Vol. VIII: No. 701   47. *S.I.I.* Vol. II: p.351

dēya, Dēvadāna, Pallichchandam, Śalābhōgam etc. Rights over land were two-fold. 1. Kārāṇmai (the right only to cultivate) and 2. Mīyātchi (the right to hold land), corresponding to Kuḍivāram and the Mēlvāram of modern times respectively. Brahmadēyā and Dēvadāna villages belonged to a special category, since they were exempt from taxes. Lands which were assessed were Taramperra, the non-assessed were Taramili.[48] Lands were further classified as Nansei (wet land), Punsei (dry land), Nattam (Common) and Tōṭṭam (garden). The rate of revenue varied, and lands which yielded 100 kalams of paddy per vēli were distinguished from those yielding less.

Land Surveys

It was customary for the governments of medieval Tamil country to periodically survey, measure and settle the lands. The first systematic survey in the Chōḷa empire was undertaken in A. D. 1002;[49] and this was corrected in 1004 for minor errors. Rājarāja's second survey was so minute as to cover even $\frac{1}{52,428,800,000}$ of a vēli of land. Rājēndra I ordered a fresh land survey[50] and this was entrusted to one Vīranārāyaṇa Māvēndavēḷān.[51] The duty of measuring and marking the boundaries of lands was discharged by a body of officials. They used rods to measure the lands, and these rods bore the king's titles. Kulōttuṅga I resurveyed the country and ordered the use of a rod equal to the royal foot.[52] Perhaps the royal foot was a unit of measurement. The lands were measured in terms of *vēli*, *kuḻi* and *mā*. Having marked the boundaries, stones were fixed on them, and these stones were called Puḷḷaḍikkal. When lands were to be given away as gifts, "the boundary of the village to be given away was generally fixed by following the beat of a female elephant that was let loose for the purpose."[53] Gift lands donated to Śiva temples were marked by a stone called Tiru (or Tri) śūlakkal, and in the case of Vaishṇava temples, by

48. 3 of 1935 - 36: para. 43

49. *S.I.I.* Vol. VIII: Nos. 222, 223: This job was entrusted to Kuravan Ulagaḷaṇḍān Rājarāja Nārayan: the title Ulagaḷaṇḍan was earned by the achievement - Rājarāja's second survey.

50. 347 of 1907   51. 18 of 1922   52. 125 of 1896

53. K.A.N. Sastri: *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom:* p. 88

Tiruāḷikkal. On the boundary stones of Jaina temples the three umbrellas (mukkuḍaikkal) were inscribed.[54]

In Pallave times, the measurement of land was by the plough i.e., the unit was the land cultivable with a plough and two bullocks by a person. In Choḷa times, the common measuring rod was called Ulagaḷandakōl. There were other rods, Śiṟṟambalakkōl and Paṅgiṭṭakōl, each of which was sixteen spans long.[55] We hear of rods measuring 12, 14, 16 and 20 feet, besides other rods like Koḍigaikkaḷattukkōl, Māḷigaikkōl and Śrīpādakkōl.[56] The boundaries of lands in Pallava times were measured and fixed differently. The unit was decided by making a person go round the land within a specified time. This would vary from person to person, but still this was better than no system, and was known as Nivartana or Paṭṭi.

Land Assessment

The unit of assessment was usually 1/28 of a vēli, i.e., a *mā*, but it varied with different crops. In the days of Rājarāja I, the assessment was 100 kalams of paddy per vēli. When assessment was permanent, it was Nilai Iṟai or Ninṟu Iṟai.[57]

There are a few indications as to the assessment of land revenue. An inscription of Sundara Pāṇḍya says that the Kaḍamai on some temple lands was fixed at 3 kalams on each *mā* of land, or half of what prevailed among other Dēvadāna, lands, and for purposes of assessment crops of full yield alone were taken into consideration. Another record speaks of the same rate of Kaḍamai,[58] but stipulates, that each *mā* should yield 40 kalams, at least, to be eligible for assessment. The rate of dues depended on the nature of the soil, and the crops raised i.e., one tūṇi of paddy was assessed on wet lands and 1/2 tiramam (dramma: a coin), if dry.

An assembly of all the Dēśams, including 78 Nāḍus of Chōḷa-maṇḍalam, 48,000 Bhūmis of Jeyankoṇḍamaṇḍalam and the Perumpaḍai Valaṅgai Mahāśēnai, was held at the suggestion of the king to fix the schedule of taxes to be levied in the eighteen Vishayas.

54. *A.R.E.* 135 of 1939-40   55. *S.I.I.* Vol. II. p.62
56. 104 of 1928; 229 of 1910; 261 of 1902; 413 of 1922; 160, 172 of 1921: 99 of 1914: 87 of 1900.
57. Tiruvālaṅgāḍu plates   58. 39 of 1924

Revenue Administration

The village administrative system of the Pallavas constituted the nucleus of the Chōḷa revenue administrative system. The department of revenue administration, in the medieval Tamil country, called the Puravuvaritiṇaikkalam, was the most important department, with a number of divisions such as Varippottagam, Puravu kaṅkāṇi, Mukaveṭṭi, Taravusāttu, Variyilīḍu, and Paṭṭōlai; all these were manned by different officers. In Pallava times, the officers of the land revenue department were known as Nilaikkaḷattār. There were two distinct kinds of officers: one to maintain records and another to collect revenue. An official who maintained the registers relating to the assessment, demand and collection of taxes etc., was the Puravuvarippottagam or Varippottagam, i.e., the Variyilīḍu. There was a Varippottaganāyakam who was the chief of the Varippottagam. Varippottagakkaṇakku was a minor official who maintained current accounts regarding demand, collection and arrears. When new villages were created, revenue registers like the Varippottagam were opened, and the entries of assessees made therein.[59] The Varikkūṟuśeyvōr made entries in revenue registers, especially in the case of tax-free lands.[60] The Viḍaiadikāri maintained revenue correspondence, and replied to queries in ōlais. The Nāḍuvahaiśeyvōr decided the classification of lands into categories. The Ulagaḷandān was the settlement officer who measured the lands. The Kaṅkāṇi was the supervisor; the Kaṅkāṇināyakam a senior supervisor.[61] The Paṭṭōlai maintained a diary of daily collections, and other details, regarding revenue administration. The Mukaveṭṭi is equated with a sort of police official.[62] T.V. Mahalingam doubts this equation, and in his turn equates it with Tirumukam.[63] The Tirumukkūḍal inscription of Vīrarājēndra speaks of thirty-two officers in the revenue department working in ten sections, but details are lacking. The members of the Puravuvarittiṇaikkaḷam inspected the revenue accounts maintained by the village committees. When land was sold, prior claims to it could be debarred, with

59. *M.A.R.* 1917: pp. 42-44   60. 201 of 1912
61. 232 of 1939-40; para 5
62. S.K.Iyengar: *Hindu Administrative Institutions* : pp. 140, 272, 327
63. T.V.Mahalingam: *South Indian Polity:* p.143

reference to title deeds.[64] These documents called Āvaṇam were drawn up, and registered in the Āvaṇakkaḷari; and when they were damaged there was provision to transcribe them.[65] The ōlai was a royal order relating to land revenue. The Uḷvari was a kind of title deed which the government granted to donees, and was signed by a number of revenue officials. There were other ōlais which dealt with non-revenue matters as well. When an assessee died without paying the arrears of land revenue, the village as a whole, sold his land, and met the demand.[66]

These revenue officials regulated receipts and expenditure of public funds in villages, temples etc.,[67] inspected temple accounts,[68] to prevent or detect misappropriations, attested public documents, bought lands from village assemblies in public interest, and exercised limited magisterial powers for the punishment of the tax-defaulters.[69]

Farming out of Revenue

There is reason to believe that the right of collecting land revenue was farmed out. Tax collection in excess of assessment with impunity, followed only by inconsequential popular reaction, and the king interfering mostly to enforce the tax collector's demands, and rarely to uphold the subjects' rights not to be taxed beyond assessment, may prove that the right of tax collection was farmed out to those who agreed to pay the highest amount to the treasury, or who were most capable of extracting the maximum from the people; but the point in assessment itself was to indicate to the administration the assessee's capacity to pay. Excessive demands, followed by torture to extract tax, could not have been so widespread, and the consequent popular misery so much in evidence in our sources, if the tax collectors had not been mere contractors. K.A.N. Sastri says, "where rights were assigned to high officials or nobles, or where, *as often happened, the collection of the land tax was farmed*, both the rate of tax, and manner of collecting

64. *S.I I.* Vol. III: p.143   65. 24 of 1925
66. Rājēndra III Chōḷa: 25 of 1925; 336 of 1925
67. *S I.I.* Vol. III: No. 57   68. 183 of 1915
69. 630 of 1916

it, might have pressed hard on the cultivator.' [70] Even the members
of Sabhās and municipal organizations seem to have been helpless
in the face of these corrupt officials; (or if they were merely
contractors of land revenue - can they be called corrupt?). The
system, however, must have yielded more agony than revenue;
if the assessment had been reasonable, and collection mild,
there would have been less evasion and corruption, and royal
revenues would have increased instead of intermediaries eating
up a good slice of the revenue cake; but such a situation, though
strictly speaking quasifeudal, must have become necessary since
a modern system of revenue bureaucracy could not have been
imagined, and, even if imagined, not operated due to the poor
communication system.

Remission of taxes

Tax exemption was granted to particular groups and institu-
tions as a policy, and for special reasons, and on particular
occasions, to individual cases. The Brahmins were the biggest
social group enjoying most tax-exemption. Learned Brahmins
were settled in tax-free villages, which they collectively enjoyed.
The Brahmins who did pūjā in temples were given grants called
Archanābhōgam. Other Brahmins were given tax-free lands called
Bhaṭṭavṛittis and Bhārata vṛittis, (granted for the recitation of
Bhāratam). Śalābhōgam and Brahmadēyas, were other tax-free
provisions for Brahmins. These exemptions were called *Bhōgam*,
Kāṇi and *Vṛitti* if perpetual, and *Jivita*, if an annuity. Of these
Śalābhogam was an exemption granted to lands owned by Śalas
or schools. These exempted categories are to be distinguished
from the Veḷḷānvahai which corresponded, as we have noted
earlier to the *Ayan land-hold*. Nṛittabhōgam was an exemption
granted to public entertainers like dancers. A Similar exemp-
tion to physicians was Vaidyabhōga. In every village or town,
the residential part i.e., the Ūr nattam, washerman's quarters,
temples, tanks, canals passing through the town, paraichchēri,
kammāṇachchēri (kammāra seems to be the correct form), the
burning ghat, and the way to it etc., were exempt from all taxes.
Those who violated the freedom from tax of temple lands were

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70. K.A.N. Sastri: *History of South India:* p. 329; but the same
    author does not elaborate this point in his *'Cōḷas'*.

treated as grāmakaṇṭakās i.e., rebels in the village, and suitably punished.[71] Fresh lands brought under cultivation enjoyed tax freedom. This was probably to encourage the cultivation of new lands. Jaina religious institutions, viz., Paḷḷichchandams also enjoyed tax-exemption. The grant of such exemptions to religious institutions and committees was due to the king's belief that such grants earned him spiritual merit.[72]

In the 14th year of Rājādhirāja II, certain reductions in the rate of rent were effected; and the resolution to this effect was made by the village assembly. After the reduction, the position was that the Śevvāram rights (i.e., the right of the cultivator to a share of the produce) would be 1/2 the produce for the cultivator, and the other 1/2 for the owner. For lands cultivated with dry crops, Kaḍamai was reduced from 20 kāśus to 17, and a general reduction of 2 kāśus for all those who paid from 18 to 5 kāśus. The reasons for such reductions are not, however, mentioned anywhere.[73] It was also stipulated that rent collectors should not enter residences, nor evy fines, and no cultivator should be made liable for the dues of another.

Karashima and Sitaraman[74] say that when certain tax terms occur oftener than others, and when they relate to exemption of taxes, they do not mean abolition, but indicate that taxation had been heavy before; but this also can indicate intentional heavy taxation, keeping in mind evasion, appeal for exemption, as also leakage, in the process of collection and transmission.

Kulōttuṅga I abolished certain tolls called *śuṅgam*, and so came to be called 'Śuṅgam Tavirtta Chōḷan'.[75] This epithet is so often tagged on to the king's name that it seems that the abolished duties had been repressive and that the abolition was an act of kindness, and was gratefully acknowledged and remembered. When certain undue levies were demanded from the wife of a grantee of a Paḷḷichchandam, she appealed to Rājarāja I who remitted these dues.[76] A person who built a rest house and supplied water was

71. 133 of 1914   72. *A.R.E.* 173 of 1940-41
73. *A.R.E.* 538 of 1918
74. *Journal of Asian and African Studies:* Tokyo: No. V. 1972
75. *Kulōttuṅga Chōḷan Ulā:* lines 51-52   76. 19 of 1890

granted land, tax-free, by the Āḷumśabhai.[77] The Śaṇkaradēvan Aṛachchālai which fed Brahmins and ascetics was granted some tax-free land by an army chief.[78] When private individuals undertook to reclaim waste lands for cultivation, and also to provide tanks, channels, sluices, embankments etc., they were exempted from taxes. In the days of Sundara Pāṇḍya some lands near Chidambaram, being too close to the sea, had become filled up with sand, and overgrown with weeds, and earned remission of taxes.[79] It was usual to grant remission of taxes on the occasion of the king's coronation.[80] Remission was not given for damage to crops caused by floods.[81]

Absence of norms

In the matter of income and expenditure, there were no norms which could control royal discretion. The ceiling for revenue was decided by the king's requirements for what he thought were the functions of government. Naturally land revenue accounted for much of his income. Budgetting, in the modern sense, did not exist, and therefore there was no audit, though inspection of public revenue, receipts and expenditure to detect and punish misappropriation was common.[82] The king's own receipts and expenditure were not subject to definition, ceiling or audit. Public utility services like irrigation tanks, wells, hospitals, roads and schools were the concern of the king. The faith of the age made kings spend a good part of the revenues on temples, maṭhas and other religious institutions or charities like feeding the poor. In modern times, perhaps, this kind of expenditure might be considered unproductive, but the contemporary society needed these social institutions, in a way that is difficult for modern people to comprehend. In the case of institutions below the level of royalty, income and expenditure had limits, both natural and imposed; e.g., there was a ceiling of 2000 kāśus for any Vāriyam in a Sabhā to spend without the permission of the Sabhā. It was, as we shall see later, an age in which charity i.e., Dana, had displaced sacrifice (yāga), though the latter had not completely disappeared. Dana had become the religious fashion of

77. 105 of 1923   78. 159 of 1925   79. 289 of 1913
80. 80 of 1905   81. 24 of 1900
82. K. V. Subrahmania Aiyar: *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekkan*: p.345

the day, and in fact was spoken of as a superior kind of sacrifice. Whatever be the motives of the managers of society who brought such a change about, this resulted in important consequences to the economy of the land; i.e., when sacrifice was held in esteem, the idea was that the gods would be pleased thereby, and bring prosperity to humanity. Without prejudice to the ultimate validity of that belief, it can be stated that it is, at least, not secular. When charity takes its place, the economy is directly affected by a human arrangement, which is a voluntary equalizer of economic status, or at least an effort in that direction. The eleemosynary institutions were a primitive substitute for modern socialism, the difference being that the latter is organized scientifically, and based on force, and the former is just its opposite and demands good-will, which may or may not be forthcoming. The king set an example in charity. The members of the royal family led the way. The nobility followed suit. The rest of the society was expected to imitate royal example. It is difficult to estimate whether the beneficiaries in this scheme outnumbered those who provided the benefits. By and large, it was a society in which the economic situation was pretty confused, but people still looked up to providence for the solution of personal and social problems. In that sense, there was a pervasive religiosity, of which the ever-increasing number of temples during the period is evidence.

B. COINAGE

Evolution of metallic coins

Coinage was not unknown to the Tamils even in the pre-Pallavan times; but its use was very limited in an economy dominated by barter. The circulation of Roman and Chinese coins, and to a very limited extent, local coins of a relatively primitive type, led to the evolution of a better system of coinage in the Tamil country than was in use in the early period. Gold and silver were primarily and ideally suitable for coinage; but the non-availability of sufficient quantities of these precious metals was a reason for copper being preferred. Lead was sometimes used as a substitute for copper. The square and ill-shaped Pāṇḍyan coins of the Saṅgam age, bearing the Ashṭamaṅgalam, double fish and other emblems, without any legend yielded

place to a better type of coins in the Pallava period. The coinage of the Pallavas and the Pāṇḍyas of the post-Saṅgam period were influenced by the Ceylon coinage;[83] and the coinage of the former, at least, had the influence of those of the Sātavāhanas and Chāḷukyas. In Hindu India, silver coins were at a discount. Gold coinage was preferred since the 'Vedas forbid giving away silver'; and religion thus played a great part in determining the metal of the coinage of the country.[84]

It has been an unanswered question whether the state had a monopoly of coinage, or the merchants shared that right with the state. M. Babelon in his *Origines de la monnaie*, says that originally the merchants had the monopoly, and later the state took over.[85] Many punch-marked coins have no inscriptions, and so could have been issued either by the state or by private parties. Vincent Smith believed that all punch-marked coins were private issue: but it is not clear why this should have been so. The *Kaḷañju, Pon, Māḍai* and *Kāśu* were the main coins of the Chōḷa period - 2 kāśus being equal to one māḍai. *Ponmāśai* is mentioned in literature as a kind of gold coin.[86] The Gadyāna was the same as Kachchāṇam in Tamil, and was in circulation in the middle Chōḷa period. Kaḷañju and Kāśu are equated, though we have no idea about the weight of either.[87] *Mā* was 1/20 of the unit of currency whatever it was.[88] A particular type of gold known as Śiṅgachchuvaṇam was preferred in the making of coins.[89] Tuḷaippon was perhaps a punch-marked gold coin, or the coin had possibly a hole to facilitate many such coins being strung together.

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83. 236 of 1911: 70. Iḷakkāśus were offered to a temple.

84. Srinivasa Raghava Iyengar: *Ancient South Indian Gold Coinage*: 1926: *J.O.A.H.R.S.* Vol. I, Part I: p. 133

85. S.K. Chakravarti: *The State in relation to coinage in Ancient India: I H.Q.* Vol. VI. p. 529

86. *Peruṅgadai:* V: 6:44

87. K A.N. Sastri says, however, that Kaḷañju may be taken to be about 70 grains. *History of South India:* p.324

88. *Periyapurāṇam:* 3291

89. *Peruṅgadai:* IV: II: 23

Pallava coins

In the Pallava period, coins were mostly of gold and silver.[90] *Kāṇam*, *Paḷaṅgāśu*, *Tuḷaippon*, *Pon*, and *Viḍēlviḍugu pon* are mentioned in Tamil inscriptions. The expression 'Nigaḷ paśumpon' occurring in the *Periyapurāṇam* means gold currency. This was in the days of Narasiṅgamunaiyar, a contemporary of Nandivarman III.[91] Kaḷañju was also in circulation then. Most of the Pallava coins bore, on the obverse, the Nandi as their mark, and some of them bore the mark of two boats. On the reverse, the figures varied, and included, the lamp, swastika, conch, wheel, bow, fish, umbrella, temple, horse and lion. Coins of Mahēndravarman I, Narasiṃhavarmans I and II have been examined, and their dates or periods determined on the basis of the figures on them; but this method does not appear dependable, since their age would depend upon the meaning we give to the figures considered as symbols. There can be different interpretations of the symbols.

Chola coinage

The earliest gold coin of the Chōḷa belongs to Uttama Chōḷa. It has a tiger in the centre, facing a fish on the right. The king's name is inscribed around the coin. Rājarāja I struck coins bearing, on one side, the inscription 'Rājarāra', and on the other the figure of a man in standing posture. The standard Imperial Chōḷa coins, especially those of Rājēndra, carried the figure of a tiger, majestically accosting the double carp. The Chōḷa Kaḷañju was 72 grains. Inscriptions mention Akkam, Gaṇḍagōpālan māḍai, Bujapalan māḍai and Kumārakkachchāṇam.

The value of coins was fixed after careful scrutiny, and the use of the touchstone was known. The value of coins deteriorated in

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90. There is no unanimity of opinion on this point. Dēśikāchari (*vide Proceedings of the Madras Literary Society*. 7.1.1916) states, "the Pallava coins are die-struck and well executed and occur in copper and silver. Gold coins, I have not met with". C. Minakshi, however, says that references in Pallava epigraphy mainly relate to the gold coins: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*. p.92. The non-availability of Pallava gold coins may be due to the coins being melted on occasions when the metal was more valuable than the coin.

91. *Periyapurāṇam*: 3986

times of national confusion or civil war. The Ilakkāśu was a gold coin equal to 1/2 Kaḷañju in weight, imported from Ceylon as tribute by the conquering Chōḷas. There is mention of Ilakkaruṅgāśu. There is difference of opinion as to whether it was copper or silver.

Standardisation of coins, in view of the large variety in circulation, would have been impossible.

Occasionally wages were paid in gold, when gold constituted monetary currency. This indicated prosperity. Gold was inherited, or seized in successful wars.

Pandya Coinage

In the pāṇḍyan country the currency seems to have comprised different varieties of coins, and a particular type was specified in each transaction, like Palañchōḷan kāśu and Virapāṇḍyan kāśu. The coins with the legend Sōnāḍukoṇḍān are generally ascribed to Māṟavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I, though many Pāṇḍyas conquered the Chōḷa country. Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I issued coins bearing many legends. Hultzsch thinks that 'Ellāntalaiyāna' coins should be ascribed to Jaṭāvarman Sundara. Coins with the double fish on the obverse, and the legend Kōthaṇḍarāma, on the reverse, belong to the Pāṇḍyas. Drammas (derived from the Greek drachmas) were common in the Pāṇḍyan country. Some of the titles of Pāṇḍyan kings known to us from inscriptions are found on coins also, like Avanipasēkaraṇ, Koḷakai, Sōnāḍukoṇḍān, Ellāntalaiyāna. The usual weight was one Kaḷañju per coin. The emblem was the double carp. The king's name occurred on the reverse. Ten Kāṇams made up one kaḷañju and we learn that one kāśu was equal to ten pon.[92]

90. There is no unanimity of opinion on this point. Dakshinan (vide Proceedings of the Madras Literary Society, 7.1.1916) states, "the Pallava coins are die-struck and well executed and occur in copper and silver. Gold coins, I have not met with." C. Minakshi, however, says that references in Pallava epigraphy mainly relate to the gold coins. Administrative and Social life under the Pallavas, p. 93. The non-availability of Pallava gold coins may be due to the coins being melted on occasions when the metal was more valuable than the coin.

91. Periapuranam, 1956.

PART II

Social Polity

CHAPTER IX

SOCIETY

Medieval Tamil Society

The whole of medieval Tamil society has to be looked at through the spectacles of religion. This is evidenced, beyond the shadow of a doubt, by the character of our literary sources, which accent religion directly or indirectly.

Again, Tamil society was aristocratic in its outlook, and it thought that the world meant its *élite*. This was surely because the attitude itself belonged to the *élite*.[1]

Apart from the religious sphere of social activity, there were the daily secular activities which were theoretically geared to the *Dharmasāstra* and *Gṛihyasūtra* injunctions. These, however, were given religious sanction, which made them rigid. Thus it was a period when social norms were stabilized.

A study of the beliefs and habits, the purely social institutions and their functions, the Tamils can unmistakably reveal their individuality as a people better than a study of their political institutions. Armies led by kings, merchant-caravans and isolated groups of pilgrims moved out of their homelands on their own respective purposes. But large numbers of the people were stay-at-home, and they helped preserve the basic aspects of the regional culture. Physically, lack of communications, and spiritually, lack of freedom to innovate, resulted in a diversified social system ultimately, though loosely, integrated into a Hindu society.

Within the Tamil country, there were periodical movements of groups of people who carried with them their local characteristics. These movements were necessitated by inter-dynastic royal marriages, after which small groups migrated to different kingdoms. The movement of such groups, which included artisans, craftsmen,

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1. The *Tolkāppiyam* Sūtram: *Ulagam enbadu Uyarndōr māttē.*

and teachers[2], introduced, to a small extent, foreign characteristics, to otherwise stagnating social groups.[3]

Structure and functions : A basic issue

In the description of any polity, its structure and functions are relevant. While the structure tends to endure in the Indian context, functions tend to get distorted and even destroyed. The gap between structure and function goes on widening till functions divested of their original purpose and spirit hang on to the structural entities like the caste, joint family and so on. Theoretically the polity is a continuation of the old one, but practically with the passage of time and the exposure of Hindu society to alien or inner pressures, the gap between prescription and practice reaches a point at which one need not be strictly derived from or related to the other. This aspect of social dynamics becomes important in the context of the major Hindu structural element, viz., caste.

The structure of medieval Tamil society can be studied in two ways : by considering it a complex of tribes, communities and castes, based partly on allegedly ethnic and partly on occupational grounds *or* as a power structure. *Élite* concepts and analyses of power structure are modern techniques of understanding the society. The methodology can be mechanically applied no doubt to medieval societies, but the contemporary motivations, ideologies and faiths will alter the value of our conclusions based on *élite* theories. How social power was distributed in that society is a major question. So far studies have proceeded on the basis of an assumption that politico-military power or the influence of *dharma* has enough operative force to order the affairs of Tamil society.[4] But a sociological study whereby ultimate economic and social-power sources could be located has become necessary now. The difficulty however in this endeavour is the insufficiency of information relating to land tenure and commercial matters. This forms a handicap to such a

2. The induction of Brahmins into Brahmadēyas is an instance in point. Priests, it would appear, were also imported to take charge of the numerous temples that were coming up.

3. 'The migration of Telugu Brahmins to the Chōḷa country occurred as early as the 7th century A.D.' says, C. Minakshi, *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas* : p. 202

4. *Vide* K.A.N. Sastri's *The Cōḷas* and N. Subrahmanian's *The History of Tamilnad*.

study and a dangerous temptation to draw whatever conclusions one wants to on the basis of one's own ideologies. Thus it would be safer to try not to lose sight of the limits of traditional treatment of the subject, while the application of the methods of scholars like Burton Stein and N. Karashima should also have their own value.

The privileged Brahminical group

Medieval Tamil society was, at bottom, tribal, and in parts of the superstructure communal and caste-based. In rural areas, uninfluenced by urban conglomerations the tribal element persisted. At other levels, caste and sub-caste formation went on apace. The process of progressive Sanskritization was evident. Brahminization involving notions of Brahminical superiority was the dominant feature of that period. In the Tamil country, however, the entire society divided itself sharply into the Brahminical and the non-Brahminical - a division which still endures. The Tamil society was only very loosely and notionally subject to the *Varna* division, possibly *not at all* to the *Varna dharma* of the *classical* type, and the rulers were Tamilians professing Kshatriya customs. Nor were Tamil peasants śūdras. From king to peasant inter-marriage was imaginable without restrictions based on the narrownesses of sub-creeds. The Brahmins, however, stood apart as a privileged entity in an otherwise integrated society. And the influence of this ornament on the body-social was enormous. Their numbers, could never have decided the enormity of their influence and the respect they commanded with even kings, let alone the masses. What then was the explanation of this fantastic prestige and pampered position enjoyed by the Brahminical group, and finally the power directly or indirectly exercised by it? One plausible explanation is that all this was due to the desire on the part of the rulers, the chieftains, and the nobility to secure religious legitimization of their status; and, in that age of belief, this was possible only by recognizing the priestly class of Brahmins who had the exclusive access to the *Vēdas, the Revelation of God*; and the Brahmins had been enjoying special status in north India. Brahminical or priestly legitimization of secular authority and status had no substitute on the Tamil soil. As in medieval Europe, in which the clergy exercised powers of 'investiture' and similar socially permitted prerogatives, in India, and in Tamilnad, particularly during this period, Brahminical supremacy was taken for granted.

An apparent contradiction explained

A problem which has confronted students of medieval Tamil society and history is the apparent contradiction between the cosmopolitanism implied in the Bhakti movement (which we treat more fully in a later chapter) and the ever increasing rigidity of the caste structure. The truth of the matter is that the Bhakti movement was not intended expressly as a social-reform movement. Strictly speaking it was not a movement, it was an 'escape' spiritually speaking, of certain god-conscious and god-saturated individuals who gave vent to their ecastatic excesses through their lyrical outpourings, which by an accident caught up with large masses of the people. This process being sustained, eventually originated the Bhakti movement of Tamilnad, nay of India, and it came in quite handy to counter the Jainism and Buddhism. Its popularity with large sections of the masses was due to its easy pursuit even by the 'uninitiated', because all that it demanded for salvation was total surrender to god without recourse to ritual, and even the karmic process could be bypassed. The supremacy of the Vēdas, the efficacy of the laws of Manu and the virtues of Śanātana and Varṇāśrama dharma were all 'found' in the lyrical outpourings. But the Bhakti leaders were wise enough not to pretend to substitute any of these traditional scriptural authorities but in all humility professed only to substantiate them in the language of the people. This kept the Brahmins in their exalted position; the Vēdas and other scriptural texts remained as they were for those who would or could utilise them direct and the caste-scheme was left untouched. There was even a naive attempt at discouraging the caste-scheme, but this did not take place in the form of a deliberate anti-caste campaign, but was slowly enforced by legends and anecdotes emphasizing the equality of all humans and even lesser creation before god. Thus a situation was created in which there was the possibility of the co-existence of orthodox Hinduism and the new Bhakti cult. In the former were found unhealthy accretions like caste-hierarchy, caste distinctions and approval for such distinctions. In the latter there was cosmopolitanism which did not offend or militate against the traditional order, so that those who came into its fold from the traditional order came of their own choice without provoking the orthodox who were willing to let the new cult prosper so long as it seemed to take orthodoxy' itself to the masses in the language of the masses. The

orthodox thought that the Bhakti cult was only a means of propagating orthodoxy; and the Bhakti leaders were unoffensively active, creating invisible, yet effective, dents into orthodoxy. Again orthodoxy, which had all along wanted a big stick to beat Jainism and Buddhism with, found Bhaktism suitable for that purpose.

The *Mānava-dharma* provision, that a male of a caste may marry a woman of the same or a lower caste, but not a superior one, is *mentioned* approvingly.[5] Confusion of communities was looked upon as a calamity from which it was the duty of the king to save society. It is stated that the land was fertile because each varṇa minded its appointed tasks.[6] Maintaining the caste and communal structure was an essential function of kings.[7] The *Tēvāram* hymnists insisted on the Brahminical social institutions being maintained intact. Mixed castes, viz., Anulōma and Pratilōma[8] were quite common. They took the position lower than that of the lower community among the parents. Whatever be the theory about caste, its actual functioning both in regard to structure and in regard to duties was conditioned by the necessities of life. The peripheral jātis were nearly untouchables, the actual communities of untouchables known as the chaṇḍāḷas, the pariahs etc., were beef eaters and so beyond the pale of Hinduism.

While the Varṇa *dharma* had its own philosophy of social structure the tribes developed a detailed code of mutual segregation, taboo and pollution. Pollution by touch, pollution by sight and pollution on hearing a piece of news etc., were integral parts of a fabric of social beliefs which kept society perpetually divided. Even the Jainas spoke of *Kaṇḍu muṭṭu* and *Kēṭṭu muṭṭu*.[9]

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5. *Chintāmaṇi:* 742   6. *Nīlakēśi:* 19
7.   Kaśākkuḍi and Kūram Plates.
8. The Bhaṭṭas of a certain village in the reign of Kulōttuṅga I laid down the professions to be followed by the Anulōma caste. Architecture, coach and chariot building, the manufacture of sacrificial instruments were some of their functions; the Śākkiyar of Malabar were Anulōmas whose function was the stage. The Rathakaras belonged to the same category, 497 of 1908.
9. Pollution by sight and pollution by hearing respectively. *Periyapurāṇam:* 2581

Communities other than Brahmin

Among the native tribes were the Eyinar (hunters),[10] Kānavar (foresters), the Maṟavar,[11] the Veḷḷāḷar (tillers), the Siladar (palanquin bearers), the Kammāḷar[12] (carpenters, goldsmiths etc.,) and the Pāṇar[13] (the wandering bards). The Mlēchchas were the aliens, and were equated with the Yavanar or the Sōṇakar.[14] It is interesting to note that the commentator means by 'Mlēchcha' people who speak an unrefined tongue and this reminds us of the label 'barbarian' given by the Greeks to non-Greeks.

A curious caste division, viz., Valaṅgai and Iḍaṅgai, (the right and the left hand castes) is heard of during this period. Many conjectures have been made to identify them, and trace their origin, but none seems satisfactory. These castes had their sub-sects;[15] they served in the army;[16] they managed temples.[17]

Bhaktism and cosmopolitanism

The Bhakti movement was not exclusive, and involved the entire community, irrespective of caste or tribe. Among the seventy-two classified devotees of Śiva mentioned in the *Periyapurāṇam*, sixteen were Brahmins. But these Brahmins were not the sacrifice-performing Vēdic type, but the Śivabrāhmaṇas who did service in temples, and were also called Ādiśaivas. Among the Vaishṇavas, Periyāḷvār was a Śōḷiyabrāhmin (i.e., those whose tuft of hair was collected in a knot in front or *pūrva-śikhās*). Like the Śivabrāhmaṇas, the Śōḷiyars were also considered inferior by the sacrificing Brahmins who had become stabilized as a compact social group

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10. *Vide Kaṇṇappa Nāyanār.*
11. Tirumaṅgai Āḷvār was a highwayman.
12. They were given the privilege of using the double conch and the big drum on occasions of festivity or funeral, of wearing sandals and plastering their houses - 66 of 1890; In the reign of Kulōttuṅga I the Kammāḷar of a certain village were granted the privilege of getting the services of washermen. 43 of 1905; 38 of 1911.
13. *Vide* Tiruppāṇ Āḷvār and Tirunīlakaṇṭa Yāḷppāṇar.
14. *Chintāmaṇi:* 2216.
15. 47 of 1921
16. 32 of 1933
17. *Ibid. M.E.R.* 1913; ii, 39

following the *Smṛtis* thanks to Śaṅkara's lead. Among the fore-lock Śaiva Brahmins the priests of the Chidambaram temple, traditionally known as the 'Tillai Three Thousand' are the most famous. The Nambūdiris of Palghat and Central Malabar, also with the fore-lock hair-do, were immigrants from the Chōḷa country.

Thus even among Brahmins there were distinctions, and segregation on account of these distinctions led to isolation, migration and conversion.

Inter-caste disputes

The existence of many communities with varying notions of status is bound to lead to friction. We have references to disputes between the Kurumbars and Pariahs,[18] between the Pariahs and the caste-people[19] and between the Viśvakarmas (artisans-like carpenters and goldsmiths) and the Brahmins.[20] In Pāṇḍyan times, a sort of a 'synod' was held to settle these feuds.[21] The feuds between the Valaṅgai and the Iḍaṅgai led to near social anarchy. Within the village, disputes arose among them about their respective quarters. In the towns, they were constantly competing with each other for royal favour.

Brahmins as the elite

The position and status of the Brahmins are best understood with reference to the famous definition of '*élite*' by Mosca and Pareto. "In all societies, two classes of people appear - a class that rules, and a class that is ruled. The first is always less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second is directed and controlled by the first."[22]

The *élite* in any society is a small minority which plays a disproportionately influential role in political and social affairs. Its members may be visible or invisible in their status and exercise of power. They are the source and the purveyors of values.

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18. 101 of 1927   19. 34 of 1924
20. *I.A.* Vol. V, p.353. In this case, it is to be noted that the Viśvakarma also wore sacred thread and competed with the Brahmins for the honours of presiding over marriages.
21. 35 of 1915
22. *Classical elitism* quoted by G. Parry in his *Political elites*: p.15

Such a position was occupied by the Brahmins in medieval Tamil society. In that society there were two historically important features: 1. There was an invisible struggle for the capture of eliteship. The struggle was between the custodians of local and traditional wisdom, magical powers, religious leadership etc., and 2. the incoming Brahminical tradition.[23] This struggle had commenced earlier than our period. Undoubtedly there were wise men before the Brahmins in the Tamil country, and the influence of this local *élite* must have been as high as that of any priesthood in early society. Their continuation in that society as an influential group was not challenged overtly by the incoming group which, however, gained the upper hand slowly. In the pre-Pallavan period, there was a kind of well-adjusted co-existence between the native *élite* and the exotic one. But by A.D. 600, the Brahminical élite ingratiated itself into the power and influence of kings and chieftains. They performed sacrifices for them; they conducted worship in temples; they accepted positions as ministers and envoys of kings. They slowly and surely moved into the inner corridors of political power as Rājagurus and Purōhitas. They were also active in the Bhakti movement.[24] They became the leaders of philosophical thought.[25] They were in charge of colleges and higher education as at the Ghaṭika of Kāñchi, and the Vēdic schools in Eṇṇāyiram and other places. They enjoyed special privileges in society, like freedom from taxation and discriminatory treatment in the eyes of the law. This new *élite* completely took over leadership, without provoking any opposition or rivalry.

A special characteristic of this *élite* was that it retained effective and ultimate power, and became the sovereign behind the throne without having to face the consequences of public decisions. They voluntarily declined opportunities for exercise of visible political power, or the securing of economic benefits; but the returns by way of superiority in status and freedom from the irksome effects of law more than compensated such self-

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23. The bionomy of this social struggle has been described at some length in an unpublished paper on the *Brahmin in the Tamil country* by N. Subrahmanian.
24. *Vide* Sambandar and Periyāḻvār
25. *Vide* Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja

imposed sacrifices. There is an excellent echo of this situation in Bagehot: "The real rulers are secreted in second-rate carriages; no one cares for them or asks about them. But they are obeyed implicitly and unconsciously by reason of the splendour of those who eclipsed and preceded them".[26]

The frist phase of the struggle for power entailed three types of efforts on the part of the incoming Brahminical group: 1. It had to tackle the already existing monopoly of power by the native wise men. 2. It had to deal with the Bauddha and Jaina heretical forces which did not aspire to total power in that society but were potential rivals. 3. It had to win the favour of the princes, without whose patronage, or at least permission, it could not have got a foothold in that society.

A distinction must be made between the Brahminical *élite* formation in North India when the Āryans first entered the Gangetic valley. There they behaved like conquerors; and the technique needed for creating an oligarchic leadership was different there. But the Brahmin's advent in the Tamil country was not as a conquering minority, but as a group seeking asylum and social accommodation, and, obtaining these, it created conditions conducive to its oligarchical leadership. Thus these Brahmins became a sort of positive, creative minority in the Tamil country. Again, by Brahmin, it was meant in the Tamil country not merely that community of persons designated as such but also the willing adherents who joined the oligarchic bandwagon in the hope of collecting the fruits of *élite* leadership in case it succeeded. *It was a process of Brahminization more comprehensive than mere Sanskritization.* The Brahminical myths created the legitimization of power needed by Tamil kings, and this earned, for the Brahmins, considerable social benefits and status. This took on the form of a contract, unexpressed, but surely intended. The Brahmins were able to achieve this measure of succeess because, as stated by James Meisel, it had the three 'c's, viz., (group) consciousness, coherence and conspiracy. Here conspiracy does not mean a secret mechination, but a common will to action.

Two favours were received by the Brahmins during this period: 1. they got tax-free land grant with a facility to run the administrative affairs of their villages. This kind of land-grant was not

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26. *The English Constitution*: 1963 edition: p.249

special to this period, nor did it commence then. We hear of it even in the Śaṅgam age.[27] But they grew more numerous during the medieval period, possibly because royal power of imperialistic proportions was being built up now and needed regular legitimization.
2. They obtained a monopoly of conducting rituals, including 'investiture' during coronations. As one who could invest the king with power, they were, in a sense, above the king, and beyond his power.

The Brahmins who were respected in that society were learned in the Vēdas. They were looked upon as the *dēvas* (gods) on earth [28] They had six duties to perform: (1) learning, (2) teaching, (3) giving, (4) taking (offering and accepting gifts), (5) performing sacrifices and (6) presiding over them.[29] They maintained the sacred fires and performed rituals thrice a day. They had their *gōtras* and *pravaras*. Depending upon their proficiency in the Vēdas they were called Chaturvēḍin, Trivēdin, Sōmayājin, Shaṭaṅgavid, Vājapeyin etc. The copperplate grants of the Pallavas mention 104 Chaturvēdins, 20 Saṭaṅgavids, 20 Trivēdins etc., The uniqueness of the Brahmins were also immortalized in the names of their village e.g., Chaturvēdimaṅgalams, Agrahārams.[30]

They lived in separate quarters in towns and their exclusiveness was accepted by the rest of society. Separate colonies or whole villages were granted to them.[31] Their functions increased in course of time. In addition to the recitation of Vēdas, and the pursuit of other normal Brahminical activities, they practised devotional music, gave religious discourses and expounded the epics, the *Purāṇas* and the philosophical literature. The best known Brahminical group localized in a place and practising priesthood was the Brahmin community of Chidambaram known as Tillai Mūvāyiravar or Tillaivāḷ Andaṇar (the Three Thousand of Tillai or Chidambaram).[32]

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27. *Vide* Vēḷvikkuḍi grant   28. *Vide* Kaśākkuḍi plates
29. *Peruṅgaḍai*: II: 3: 9. The Brahmins who performed Vēdic sacrifices called themselves Dīkshitas. This title strangely enough was assumed even by Kings who performed Vēdic sacrifices e.g., Kulaśēkhara Dīkshsta, 65 of 1918
30. Founding of such agrahārams was an act of merit. 31 of 1922
31. K.A.N. Sastri : *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*. p. 87; 54 of 1918
32. *Periyapurāṇam*: 357

It was a common belief that Brahmins must not cross the seas. Baudhāyana applied this rule particularly to the South Indian Brahmins. But we hear of a Kauṇḍinya, i.e., a Brahmin of Kauṇḍinya gotra founding a dynasty in Kambōja (Cambodia) and another Kauṇḍinya in Bali. Describing the Chinese priest Kien-Tchen's voyage from China to Japan, his disciple says, "there were three monasteries of Po-lo-men (Brahmins) in China."[33] Two inferences follow: one is that the taboo on sea-travel was ignored by some venturesome Brahmins;[34] and the other is, that Brahmins could become rulers and merchants.[35] This un-Brahminical behaviour must have earned for a section of the community inevitable odium, which literature does not fail to convey. Varṇasankara (pollution of caste) was contributed to, by the Brahmins too, and we hear of Brahmarāyas and Brahmavaiśyas.[36] The aberrations in social practice and personal behaviour on the part of some Brahmins, could not have but generated contempt for the community as a whole at the hands of the traditional critics of Brahminism.

All this notwithstanding, Brahminism had its heydey of prosperity and prominence during this epoch and the opposition of anti-Brahminical forces, which died hard, had very little effect on the evergrowing influence of the Brahminical community.

Psuedo-Hindu creeds

The Kāḷāmukhas, the Pāśupatas and other primitive sects of Māhēśvaras were still in evidence in the 7th century A.D. But partly by the rise of the Bhakti movement and partly due to their grotesque practices, these sects began to dwindle in numbers and importance. We hear of them once in a while, till the end of the Chōḷa period. In the days of Vīra Pāṇḍya, a contemporary of Āditya II, Chōḷa inscriptions speak of Kāḷāmukhas of a certain

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33. K.A.N.Sastri (ed) : *Foreign Notices of South India,* p. 118
34. Was it a mere accident that we hear of them belonging to the Kauṇḍinya gotra?
35. 29 of 1918; *Travels of Marco Polo:* p. 289
36. 363 of 1899; 177 of 1911; 413 of 1902; 208 of 1919. We have discussed the question of Brahmarāsas being equated with the Brahmakshatriyas in the context of the Brāhmaṇarāsakkāṇam a tax levied in Pallava times.

Paḷḷimadam.[37] Parāntaka I made gifts to the members of this sect.[38] The Kāḷāmukha and the Lakuliśa Paśupata sects were in evidence even in the days of Rājarāja II but they were not quite popular. We hear of certain Vaishṇavas of the days of Rājaṟāja II attracting Māhēśvaras into their fold. This was construed as social confusion and punished.[39]

The ascetic order

The ascetic order was part of that society as of any other. A certain sect of Vaishṇava ascetics were Ēkadaṇḍins or those that carried a single staff, resting shoulders. They are to be distinguished from the Tridaṇḍins, who were Śaiva ascetics who carried on a three-pronged staff.[40] The ascetics begged their food from the householders, generally of the same sect. They lived a hard life by choice, ate little, dressed sparsely and wore matted hair. Ideally it was held that these symbols were not necessary for a true ascetic.[41] Some Śaiva ascetics wore a broad belt of human hair called '*Pañchavaṭi*'. Asceticism had to compete with sainthood of a higher order as exemplified by the Āḻvārs etc. When sects like the Kāḷāmukhas styled themselves ascetic, asceticism ceased to be respectable.[42] But with Śaṅkara the nature of true asceticism was revealed as a combination of knowledge, sacrifice and devotion.

Beliefs and superstitions

The Tamils held beliefs—some of them shared by people everywhere—and were superstitious to a great degree. To them the right hand, in fact the right part of the body, was preferred to the left on sacred and other important occasions. To give or receive by the left hand was impolite. Circumambulation in the clockwise direction was considered auspicious while counter clockwise circumambulation was inauspicious.[43]

If the left eyelid of a male trembled it was an evil omen for him. A woman would consider a similar event a good omen, for women stood for opposite values.[44]

37. 31 of 1915   38. 37 of 1909   39. 20 of 1925
40. 38 of 1912   41. *Kuṇḍalakēśi:* 4
42. *Periyapurāṇam: Māṇakkañjāra nāyaṉār Purāṇam:* 29
43. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 19: 191
44. *Peruṅgadai:* II: 18: 32; *Nandikkalambakam:* 65

Among the four directions, the east, west, north and south were auspicious in this order, the east being the most auspicious and the south to be avoided.[45] The people believed in the evil eye.[46]

The hunters believed that on the day when the Veṅgai blossomed a marriage would occur in their family.[47] There was a double superstition involved in the *Kūḍal Iḷaittal*, which consisted in a girl, blindfolded, drawing a circle clockwise, and if the ends met, to imagine that the wished-for would happen.[48] They believed that anyone who donned the raw hide of an elephant would be destroyed thereby.[49]

They believed in ghosts and goblins. These spirits they thought never rested at nights.[50] They thought that diseases increased in intensity, and could be fatal on the birthdays of the patients.[51] There seems to have been some method in this madness. The more precious a thing the more free it was from pollution, e.g., milk purified while water caused pollution.[52] Mud pots were good conductors of pollution while golden and silver vessels never polluted. Precious stones sanctified, protected persons and buildings - the former when worn and the latter when buried underneath.[53]

The supreme faith of the Hindus was in their *Karma*, a logical doctrine incapable of proof, bringing hope to the frustrated and bringing humility to the proud. Birth was caused by Karma; and birth caused all miseries: this was the summation of their philosophy.[54] Good deeds and bad ones were both Karma, and would lead to perpetuation of life, which was in any case to be avoided. Karma involved a *Pūrvajanma* (past birth). There is mention also of the past birth being remembered by some.[55]

45. *Ibid.* I: 42: 108
46. *Rājarājachōḷan Ulā:* Line: 299
47. *Peruṅgadai:* II: 20: 58; *Sambandar Tēvāram:* 327:9
48. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 51; *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1538
49. *Chintāmaṇi:* 2787   50. *Periyapurāṇam:* 3477
51. *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1560   52. Appar: *Tēvāram:* 5:4
53. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 98   54. *Vaḷayāpati:* 5
55. *Nīlakēśi:* 886

This belief in Karma however did not prevent their resorting to
astrology. They cast horoscopes and believed in the effect of the
planets on the lives of the human beings.[56] A person born under
the influence of Baraṇi asterism, it was thought, would rule the
world.[57] The eighth and the ninth days of the lunar fortnight and
certain evil stars like Kritikai, Pūram and Pūrāḍam were inauspi-
cious for travel purposes. The month of Mārgaḷi (December-
January) was both auspicious and inauspicious in the sense that it
was a month for singing devotional hymns and dedication, and also
a month in which no auspicious event should be fixed. Particular
days in the week like Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
were great favourites, while Saturday was objectionable.[58] Saturn
in Maham asterism was particularly evil, as Sundarar said.
Exceptional devotees like Sambandar trusted in the mercy of
god and could defy the planets. The common run of people
however believed in the good and evil of particular days. It
was an astrological superstition that a combination of one's
natal star, Tuesday and the Scorpis (the eighth sign of the
Zodiac) would kill a man.[59] It was a great virtue to know the
future, and those who said that they knew it were respected.[60]

Verses beginning with inauspicious phrasing could kill the
hero of the verse.[61]

Omens and dreams were at the basis of many superstitions.
Any damage to the royal flag was a portent.[62] Cobwebs inside
the royal umbrella, poisonous insects sheltering in the royal
drum, crows nesting on tops of chariots, rusting of weapons
were evil omens for royalty. When women forgot their status
and spoke without inhibition, surely there was trouble. The
flight of a bird, the hour of the day, the hooting of the owl in
day-time, thunderstorms unaccompanied by clouds, the breaking
of the flag staff etc., meant ill for kings.[63] Marco Polo had
noticed the Tamil practice of refraining from a journey if a
single person crossed one's path.

57. *Ibid.* 1813
58. There has been an universal objection to Saturn. *Vide* the
    word Saturnine.
59. *Peruṅgadai: III: 27: 133*   60. *Nandikkalambakam:* 133
61. *Ibid.* 113   62. *Takkayāgapparaṇi:* 641
63. *Chintāmaṇi:* 1775

The dreamlore of the Tamils was impressive. They had a work on dreams called *Kaṇā nūl*.[64]

Sacrifices

Sacrifice meant different things to different persons. To the orthodox Brahmin, it meant the sacrificial offering poured into the sacred fire, and the performance of *Yajnas*. To the medieval Tamil kings and nobles it was *dāna*. In temples, the sacrifice was made on the altar which was an essential part of the temple complex. It could vary from sacrifice of flesh and blood[65] to coconut and flowers. Sacrificing oneself, or sacrificing others at the altar of the deity were also quite common. Human sacrifices were made, especially to malignant goddesses.[66] When the body-guards killed themselves when their liege lord died, or when wives committed ritual suicide, it was sacrifice of a kind. Private individuals committed suicide for the good of the village.[67] A military officer killed himself for the merit of the king.[68] Referring to the practice of sacrifice in the Pāṇḍyan country, Marco Polo has described how condemned criminals were given the option to sacrifice themselves to some god or other of their choice.

Dress and ornaments

Medieval Tamil civilization, like its preceding phase, was not a great believer in sartorial abundance. The climate demanded frugality in dress and habit inured them to semi-nudity, which was mistaken by Marco-polo for full nakedness. Their indifference to dress was matched only by the love of ornaments. The old Tamil words *Kañjukam* and *S'attai* denote tailored garments. But they had contempt for such garments and those who wore them. The mere existence of tailors cannot mean stitched garments. Says Marco Polo, "you must know that in all this province of Ma'bar, there is never a tailor to cut a coat or stitch it, seeing that everybody goes naked."[69] Silk, cotton and other textiles were used as material for male and female dress. The reference in a certain order of literature to foliage as dress worn around the loins, seems to be quite primi-

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64. *Ibid:* 221   65. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 112
66. Such sacrifices went on till at least 1889; *I.A.* Vol. XXVIII. p. 252
67. 21 of 1913   68. 22 of 1913
69. Quoted in the *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom* by K.A.N. Sastri. p.197

tive. Simultaneously with these references to nudity or near nudity we hear also of flattering references to gaudiness in dress.[70]

The hair-do of the Tamil girls finds frequent mention in the literature. Five types of hair-do were known to them. They were called the *Aimpāl* which means five divisions.[71]

The Tamils knew a variety of ornaments. Tatooing was popular. It was popular among the Tamils of the Pallava period.[72]

"Ornament has its root not in the craving of vanity or in the love of beauty, but in the need of housing guardians and scaring evil influences."[73] The Tamils wore gold and silver ornaments. A golden chain adorned the parting of the hair on the head. *Ponnari-mālai* and *Sutti* or Sridevi ornamented the head, and the top of the forehead. The mark on the forehead called Tilakam was more an ornament than a caste-mark in those times. *Paṭṭam* was a golden strip wound round the forehead. *Makaram* was worn on the shoulders; *Kuṇḍalam, Toḍi, Kuḷai, Kudambai, Kaḍippiṇai* and *Tōḍu* were ear-rings. *Viḍukambi* and *Vali* were also varieties of ear-rings. *Kalavam* was a single pearl necklace. *Vaḍam* was another kind of pearl necklace. *Aimpaḍaittāli* consisted of a golden string carrying the five emblems of Vishṇu, and was meant as a protection to the wearer. *Ēkavalli* and *Taṇimuttu* were golden and pearl chains res- pectively. Another chain which beautified the neck was *Kaḷigai*. *Vaḷai* was the bangle or wristlet. Around the waist a bejewelled ornament called *Mēkalai* was worn. It was either in plain gold or studded with gems. It was also called *Kāñchi* and *Kalāpam*. It was a golden belt.

The aristocrats wore anklets inlaid with gems. *Patakam* was a kind of anklet. Literature mentions and painting confirms the use of these ornaments in those times.[74]

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70. *Peruṅgadai:* I: 32: 64   71. *Chintāmaṇi:* 335
72. C. Minakshi : *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* p. 152
73. J.M.Campbell: *Spirit basis of belief and custom.* I.A. Vol.XXV. p.128
74. In *Peruṅgadai, Kaliṅgattuparaṇi, Chintāmaṇi* and the *Tēvāram* there are numerous references to these ornaments.

The above mentioned were ornaments worn by women, but men too loved ornaments. The *Kulai* corresponded to the *Tōḍu*. The *Bahuvaḷayam* was the male counterpart of the *Tōḍu*. The *Kaḷal* of the warriors answered to the *Śilambu* of the lady. If Marco Polo is to be believed, the Pāṇḍyan king was found wearing a number of ornaments which were normally worn by women.

The Tamil women were exceedingly fond of flowers, which were both beautiful and fragrant in the tropical climate. The practice of decorating oneself with beautiful flowers was as old as the Śaṅgam times. In fact, the Tamils were famous all over India for their special liking for flowers.

Hospitality

The Tamils were a hospitable people. Their economy and religion enjoined upon them the need for voluntary sharing of wealth by the rich with the poor. But hospitality did not mean merely the giving of food[75] or money, but *included an attitude of the mind* in which hosts were pleased when guests arrived and unhappy when there was none. When he sighted a guest, the host went out to receive him, and when the guest was to leave, the host followed him seven feet to bid him good-bye. The delicious dinner which the happy host served is elaborately described in the *Chintāmaṇi* and the *Periyapurāṇam*. The delicate, yet most heartwarming link between host and guest is described as the one between generosity and gratitude which meant more than friendly bonds. To the Tamils, all charity consisted in hospitality, and one of the purposes of family life was the entertainment of guests. The Brahmins had a special role as ideal guests, though, as householders, they too had to be hospitable to others. Feeding a Brahmin earned spiritual merit, and endowments to this effect were made by many.[76] When important guests arrived, they were received by persons, holding in their hands, pots containing sacred water.[77] On their arrival their feet were washed and seats offered to them.

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75. It meant also dining etiquette, reception manners etc. Food was served on leaves, and the side dishes on special napkins called '*Pāvāḍai*'. A day lamp also was provided. *Periyapurāṇam*: 3871.

76. *Peruṅgadai* : I: 39: 55   77. *Periyapurāṇam*: 2132

Food and drinks

A great majority of the population was non-vegetarian in food habits. Rice, however, was the staple food. Whatever they ate, they used only the right hand in taking it. They always bathed before taking their food; and religious men wore the sacred ashes after bath, and before food. Food was served on banana leaves. Brahmins, Buddhists and Jains were as a class strict vegetarians. Sacrificing Brahmins, perhaps, took a very small particle of the sacrificed meat as a ritual food offering. This was more a part of the sacrifice-ritual than non-vegetarianism.[78]

Intoxicants were consumed by most sections of society. It varied from common toddy to costly wines.[79] Chau-Ju-Kua remarks that the Chōla king did not drink wine, but ate meat and flour cakes. So it would appear that all meat eaters were not necessarily wine-drinkers. Women too drank wine and other kinds of intoxicants.[80]

Marco Polo tells how the Tamils drank from drinking vessels. Every person had his own drinking vessel. "They do not put the vessel into the lips, but let the drink spout into the mouth. They do not allow the stranger to touch the vessel, and will pour the drink into his hands, and he may thus drink from his hands as from a cup."

Chau-Ju-Kua says that father and son, elder or younger brother, had their meals cooked in separate vessels and served in separate dishes.[81]

After food, the betel leaf was a necessity for most people. The betel leaves were such a favourite with the chewers that they got boxes with artistic workmanship made for them.[82] The betel leaves were used not only for the digestion of food every time but also for giving the lips a reddish colour a natural and healthy kind of lipstick of those times. Exchange of betel leaves among lovers, or

78. *Yasōdharakavyam*: 184   79. *Muttollāyiram*: 862
80. *Chintāmaṇi*: 74
81. K.A.N. Sastri. (ed): *Foreign Notices of South India*: p. 144
82. *Peruṅgadai*: I: 46: 227; the word betel is a derivative from the Tamil Veṟṟilai. In Sanskrit it is Tāmbūlam which is made into Tambul by Marco Polo.

spouses, was part of love-play.[83] Guests used to be received with the offer of betel and betelnuts. During marriages betels were indispensable even as a religious article (Tāmbūlam).

Games and entertainment

Tamil social life was enlivened by sports and pastimes. Dancing was not only an art fit for the stage, its origin being traced to Śiva, but commonly practised by tribal people in many ways. It was Kūttu in Tamil. There were two kinds of Kūttus: 1. The Śandik-kūttu and 2. Vinōdakkūttu. The more sophisticated type of dance was practised and performed in temples. The dancing girls in the temples were experts in the art. The people of the Kuṟiñji land danced the Kunṟakkuravai which had for its theme love, victory, wealth or reputation.[84]

Men and women had different games Playing with a number of balls coloured and fanciful was also a pastime among girls of the royal noble families. They played with twenty one to thirty two balls at a time.[85] This would look more like a circus jugglery than a game for modern girls.

Among the rural folk the Nilaichcheṇḍu and the Parichcheṇḍu were the different favourite games. The former consisted of stationary players making balls bounce without break and the latter was something like golf.[86]

Men indulged in acrobatic feats.[87] Entertainment was provided also by cock fights,[88] goat fights, bull-fights and elephant-fights. Monkeys and parrots were taught some human speech and taken on the streets as performing animals.[89]

Feasts, festivals and ceremonies

The traditional society that it was, there were innumerable feasts, festivals and ceremonies. The festival of the spring (*Vēnil Viḻa*),[90] the festival in honour of the god of love (*Kāman Paṇḍikai*)[91] the festival of the sacred bath (*Maṅgaḷaniṟāḍal*)[92] were some of the socio-religious festivals of the Tamils. On the last

83. *Chintāmaṇi:* 1987
84. *Peruṅgadai:* II: 12: 135
85. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 133
86. *Periyapurāṇam:* 3873
87. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 488
88. *Chintāmaṇi:* 120
89. *Periyapurāṇam:* 333
90. *Yaśōdhara Kāvyam:* 13
91. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 5: 30
92. *Ibid.* II: 5: 122

day of the festival fo⸳ Kāman lavish presents were made, and perpetual lamps were lit in temples by virgin girls.

The bathing festival, according to *Peruṅgadai*, lasted for twenty one days.[93] All types of intoxicants, flower garlands, incense, scented powder, jewels, various types of clothes etc., were sold and bought in shops set up during festivals.

Margaḷinirāḍal, a specialized version of sacred bathing is immortalized in the hymns of Āṇḍāḷ and Māṇikkavāchagar. The *Pāṇḍikkōvai* speaks of a festival of Madurai (Maduraiviḷavu)[94] and of *Paṅguniuttiram* which was celebrated even in the days of the Śaṅgam and had always been a popular festival, now dedicated to Murugan.[95] A four day festival (*Chaturtaviḷa*)[96] meant ceremonial functions connected with marriage. The four day marriage of later times seems to have stemmed from this *Āvaṇiavittam* festival in Madurai, *Paṅguni uttiram* in Uṛaiyūr and *Uḷḷiviḷa* in Karūr, i.e., Vañji, were other famous festivals.[97] One does not know whether *Āvaṇi avittam* had the same significance then, as now. Now it is a Brahminical occasion for renewing the sacred thread, and expiating for omissions of religious duties; but then it seems to have been a folk festival.

The life of the aristocracy - delights

While the poor lived in humble homes constructed of clay, the rich had their mansions. They lived a luxurious life. They lived in exclusive areas, and each household had its own establishment of servants. The references to *māḷigai* (mansion or palace) in medieval literature are frequent.

The rich commanded all facilities. The *Peruṅgadai* gives an elaborate description to the transport used in those days by the nobility. The vehicle was artistically built and drawn by bullocks. Palanquins artistically designed were also in use. One of the varieties of palanquins was called *Māḍachchivigai* which had a single seat and curtain all around.[98] Though umbrellas were used even by the common folk, more fanciful ones, with peacock feathers, were used by aristocratic ladies.

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93. *Ibid*. I: 38: 103　　　　　　94. *Pāṇḍikkōvai*: 231
95. *Periyapurāṇam*: 3200　　　　96. *Peruṅgadai*: II: 3: 131
97. *Iṛaiyanār Ahapporuḷ*: Sūtram 16　98. *Peruṅgadai: I*: 38: 148

The luxurious manner in which the rich led their lives may best be exemplified by what Marco Polo has to say about the beds that rich people lay on. "The men of this country have their beds made of very light cane work so arranged that when they have got in and are going to sleep they are drawn up by cords nearly to the ceiling and fixed there for the night. Not that everybody does this but only the nobles and great folks, for others sleep in the streets."[99]

The family

The joint family system was in vogue. It was a father-dominated family and the mother unlike the mother of the Saṅgam age, had a less active role in the upbringing of children. Practically in all families, the family profession craft or trade was learnt by the younger ones from the male parent except in rare circumstances in which youngsters sought the preceptorship of some person outside the family. Male children seemed to have enjoyed greater freedom in the house than the female children. Some kind of a higher status was given to the male, and women and girls had to submit themselves to a number of restrictions. Girls were guarded by the parents especially after they came of age. The younger members of the family treated elders with consideration and respect. It was a duty enjoined on young people that they should care for their king, parents, teachers and their own elder brothers.[100]

Women were not given equality of status with men, though theoretically the importance of the housewife was conceded and in Brahminical households the importance of the wife rose during ceremonies which necessitated the presence of the wife near the husband. During marriages of sons and daughters both the parents had a role. Every grown up member of a family had his duty; and the family had, during this period, become stabilized as a significant unit with the name of Kuḍumbu in villages and had a social significance especially when members of the Sabhā or the Ūr had to be chosen.

The position of subordination occupied by women during this period is sometimes explained as due to her having no

99. Quoted by K.A.N. Sastri: *Pāṇḍyan kingdom:* p.200
100. *Chintāmaṇi:* 1728

property rights. Widows enjoyed some reversionary rights to property and newly-wed girls brought Strīdhana; but all this did not mean the same thing as inheriting property by right.

Widows had to lead a life of misery or accept death, either by a ritual suicide or by over austerity.[101] But there can be no sweeping generalization on this, because in a large number of cases women who outlived their husbands led pious lives and looked after their children or were taken care of by them. Widowhood imposed not merely emotional hardships, but signs indicative of loss of status by the removal of ornaments and the tāli.[102] Tonsuring of the head was also prescribed for widowhood[103] in many communities.

Marriage

The eightfold classification of marriage is mentioned in Tamil sources of this period, but marriage custom varied from community to community, though the generalization could be made that the old '*Kaḷavu*' had disappeared and '*Karaṇam*' had become the vogue. The Braminical marriages involed elaborate rites, and the most essential aspects of any Brahminical marriage were the *Saptapadi* (seven steps by the bride and the bride-groom) and the holding of the hand of the bride by the groom (*Pāṇigrahaṇam*).[104] It was possible that a great deal of this ritualistic element got into the marriage system of some other communities also; but the tribes and clans probably continued to hang on to their old practices. The Gāndarva form of marriage[105] may have existed without social recognition, as near elopement.

Marriages were not as between two lovers who had pledged their love, as in the Śaṅgam period, but mostly arranged ones.

Inter-caste marriages were not totally absent. Generally marriages were contracted within the same caste, and even the subcastes.

There is a lot of controversy over when the Tāli (sacred yellow thread) came into vogue; and the belief is often sustained that it was a unique Tamil practice in currency at least from the Śaṅgam age. Whatever the origin of the Tāli, which today is the most important symbol of married life for a women, it is interesting

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101. *Ibid.* 1706
103. *Bhāratam:* 140
105. *Ibid.* III: 13: 14
102. *Vikramachōḷan Ula*: 77
104. *Peruṅgadai:* II: 3: 4

that even the Brahmin community adopted the Tāli, and Brahminical marriage became Tirumāṅgalyadāraṇam (wearing of the sacred yellow thread) instead of pāṇigrahaṇam, though the traditional name Pāṇigrahaṇam still presists. There is specific mention of the Tāli in *Mūvarula*[1 6] and *Kambarāmāyaṇam*.[107]

One important variation from the free marriages of the Śaṅgam age was that the auspicious hour for marriage was fixed by an astrologer, and a regular ritual was enforced. Brahmin priests officiated in marriages, even in many non-Brahminicial homes. The marriage cermononies seem to have lasted for as long as even seven days sometimes and four days later.

A new code was accepted in respect of girls and women. According to this a girl till her marriage was to be under the control of her father, after marriage under the control of the husband, and after her husband's death to be a dependent of her sons.

We are not aware of any *Svayaṃvara* having taken place in the Tamil country though descriptions of them palpably with the North Indian background are found in the literature of the Tamil country.

We are also not aware if there was anything like divorce as we understand it today, though desertions on either side were not uncommon. Polygamy was permitted, and concubinage was part of the social system, so that there was not that degree of social stigma attaching to visits to a concubine's house as perhaps there is today.

Among the tribes and pockets of the community not so much affected by the new pattern of life, marriages were preceded by an act of valour or skill like taming a bull or hitting a difficult target with an arrow.

Marriages were occasions of pomp and festivity. The family gods were worshipped[108] both before and after marriages. The newly wedded pair went to the temple and offered its worship to the deity.

106. *Kulōttuṅgachōḷan Ulā:* 231
107. *Kambarāmāyaṇam: Kishkinda Paḍalam:* V. 22
108. *Ibid.* II: 6: 5

Hetaerism

It was almost a male prerogative, socially not sufficiently condemned, to have concubines or mistresses. The hetaerae might be of two categories, viz., the refined courtesan and the slum-dwelling slut.[109] In the medieval period, apart from the professional ones, the temples had their dēvaraḍiyārs who to begin with, were respectable religious women dedicated to the service of the Lord; but many of them did not hesitate to serve men too and their condition became depraved. Whatever the intentions of the donors of these dancing girls, the result was the creation of a large group of semi-religious women who were not affiliated to anyone, and so were available to all. Rājarāja I donated 400 girls to the big temple. Some of these dancing girls married[110] and changed the direction of their lives; but this did not happen often. Marco Polo describes them graphically.

Sati

Satī was a form of religious suicide. The word really means a good or chaste wife. A good wife was supposed not to survive her husband.

Mostly women in the royal and noble families committed satī, while the ordinary folk preferred widowhood. Appar's sister Tilakavati, when she lost her husband, thought of committing satī, but refrained from doing so as she had to take care of her younger brother.[111] Women who lost their husbands in battle-fields threw themselves into the funeral pyre.[112]

There has been a doubt as to the definition of satī.[113] S.K. Iyengar defines a satī, "a woman who burns herself on the pyre of her husband".

Men, too, committed acts of self-immolation. The Vēḷaikkārar and the Āpattudavigaḷ died with their kings. But these could not be considered acts of satī.

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109. *Iṟaiyanār Ahapporuḷ* : Sūtram: 35
110. 411 of 1925   111. *Periyapurāṇam:* 32
112. *Muttoḷḷāyiram*: 1433
113. S.K. Iyengar has a paper on *Self-Immolation which is not satī:*
      I.A: Vol.XXXV. p.139

It is possible that most satīs were voluntary.[114] The queens of Parāntaka II and of Rājēndra I committed satī. Among the common folk, there were rare instances of satī, like the wife of Mūkkaiyan who died with him.[115] Dēvapperumāḷ, the Vēḷaikkāri of Rājarāja Malaiyakularājan vowed satī and exhorted others to kill her if she failed to keep her vow and uttered foul imprections against those who failed to do so.[116] Among the religious folk, Kalikkāmar's wife, and Nāvukkaraśar's mother committed religious suicide.

Slavery

The slave was an *aḍimai* (lowliest). Slavery was caused either by religious considerations, as in the case of sale of girls to temples, or economic deprivation. When people were driven to destitution, they sold themselves and their descendants as slaves. A decision taken by a certain village assembly prohibited the labourers from keeping slaves.[117] The *Periyapurāṇam* gives a classic example of slavery in the case of Sundarar. The saint raised a pertinent doubt as to whether Brahmins could be slaves.[118] The plaintiff said they could be and the court concurred with him. A Brahmin could hold slaves or sell people into slavery.[119] Due to famine, women sold themselves;[120] and they were branded with the emblems according to their buyers. Once four girls were sold for 700 kāśus as dēvaraḍiyars to the Tiruvālaṅgāḍu temple.[121] Absconding slaves were ordered to be recovered, and put to work again.[122]

The temples held three kinds of slaves: 1. Women dedicated to temple service; 2. persons gifted to the temple and 3. self-sold slaves.

Like the temples, the Maṭhas owned slaves.[123] Five women sold themselves along with the descendants for all time to a Śālai where paddy was to be husked.[124] The sale-deeds, witnessing the sale of slaves, were called Āḷvilaipramāṇa Iśaivuttīṭṭu.[125]

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114. 156 of 1936   115. *M.A.R.* 1917; p.42
116. 156 of 1906   117. 538 of 1918
118. *Periyapurāṇam:* 186
119. T.V. Sadasiva Pandarattar: *History of the later Chōḷas.* Part III, p. 101
120. 90 of 1926   121. 80 of 1913   122. 94 of 1926
123. 409 of 1925   124. 110 of 1892   125. 296 of 1911

Funerary practices

The dead were disposed of in several ways. The ascetics were usually buried.[126] Tirumūlar refers to cremation as the dominant funerary practice in society.[127] The first two *Ulās* of the *Mūvarula* speak of urn-burial. This may be the continuation of a practice of the Śaṅgam age.[128] Referring to funerary practices in Quilon, Benjamin of Tudela says, "The natives do not bury their dead, but embalm them and keep them in a certain part of their house; and as the corpses resemble living beings, everyone of them recognizes his parent, and all the members of his family for many years to come."[129] Cremation, of course, was the common practice, and the Arab traveller Sulaiman refers to it.[130]

The Mores of the Tamils

The society held to certain fundamental beliefs which could be distinguished from corresponding modern beliefs. In modern times, dying for the nation, and killing others therefor, are meritorious. In the medieval period, dying for one's religion, and killing others therefor, could be justified. The belief in the mechanical operation of fate was given up in favour of divine grace, and men became more religious-minded than ever before.[131]

The medieval Avvaiyar, who wrote a few didactical texts like *Āttisūḍi*, has perpetuated familiar Tamil ethical ideas, all of which reconcile freedom and security, Karma and self-effort, a benign world and an evil world and so on. The traditional prejudices against women, and the prescription of hospitality as a virtue etc., also were part of their mores. But the inevitability of moral consequences was an underlying feature of Tamil social philosophy. These ideals were platitudinous, and the axioms pronounced by the wise men of pre-literate society were accepted, revered and propagated. "The Hindu version of *noblesse oblige* is rather one-sided. It took little account of rights, while it detailed duties most elaborately. There was no conception of individuality, of reciprocal obligation, of the matching of work

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126. *Peruṅgadai:* II: 9: 258   127. *Tirumandiram:* 189
128. *Vikramachōḻan Ula:* 1. 8
129. K.A.N. Sastri (ed): *Foreign Notices of South India:* pp. 134-135
130. *Ibid.* p. 125   131. *Tirumandiram:* 2804

and reward. Only the nature of the station and duties apper-
taining to it were understood."[132] Though there was little solici-
tude for the common man, the burdens of the privileged were
heavy.

A handicap

In the foregoing account of medieval Tamil society are set
forth facts and opinions which might lead to different conclusions
regarding the nature of the Tamil civilization of that period.
The idealistic literary references (whether the ideals please or gall
the moderns) and the matter of fact 'real' facts of history recorded
in epigraphs as well as in the observations of foreign visitors,
which could be coloured for lack of an objective approach,
present different standpoints, from which sifting of historical
truth is a near impossible task. For reconstructing social history,
whenever there are divergences among sources, one would prefer
to depend upon one's own historical 'feeling' to choose what
is 'probable', what historiographers call 'historical imagination'.
But when these sources give identical information, though clothed
in literary or pedestrain style, facts may be accepted without
doubting their veracity. That is how the source material has
been utilized; but there can still be areas of social life rightly
subject to doubt, like the contemporaneity of Śaṅkara with the
Kāḷāmukhas, a deep piety compounded with ruthless savagery
in war, as can be seen among the empire builders of the Tamil
country, the unqualified despotism of the king, reconciling itself
to autonomy of local government, the hierarchical caste-system
getting more and more rigid all the time, even in the face of
the democratic and cosmopolitan Bhakti movement, a theoretical
respect for womanhood, and a practical debasement of women's
status are some of the contradictions in the social life of these
people. *The explanation seems to be this:* The voice that speaks
to us through the sources is that of the *élite*; and the *élite* had a
vested interest which should naturally colour the language and
substance of what it has said. The proletariat, understandably
enough, had no spokesman. The common people are described
to us by the *élite*, whether it be the intellectual, religious or
political. In so far as these three *élite* groups were in league

in their own interests, against the rest of society, they can be depended upon to communicate only facts of interest to themselves, the opinions favourable to themselves; and no one can, therefore, interpret the available sources from a non-existent point of view. Hence any picture of society is bound to remain unsatisfactory to the critical student of sociology.

We do not have dependable monographs on important phases of social life like standard of living, population pressure on land and educational syllabi. It is not possible now to have data on these. The ancients did not consider these of importance. In fact, they were not satistics-conscious. Since existing data are either unreliable or inadequate or both, in certain areas one has to content oneself with the traditional treatment of the subject.

CHAPTER X

ECONOMY

Introduction

The economy of the Tamil country during the period of our study continued to be peasant-centred. A high percentage of the population lived in villages. The economy of the Śaṅgam age had been marked by a prosperous foreign trade, which was possible by the availability of raw materials in which the Tamils had a monopoly, and in the manufacture of which they had a tradition of special skills. These two features continued in the medieval period; but foreign trade, which had shifted its direction from the West to the East, played but a minor role in the economy. The trade with Rome had vanished, that with Arab countries had diminished. The Tamil merchants, supported by the state, directed their merchant vessels to eastern shores. The trade with Cathay (China), Burma (Kāḷaham), Malaysia and Indonesia increased considerably, and the traditional trade with Ceylon was as brisk as ever.

This age, as the early one, was marked by nearly continuous war all over the land; and whatever rationalization might be made about wars in general, their devastating nature cannot be explained away. They crippled the economy of the defeated and boosted the economy of the victorious. Wars played a more important role in the medieval Tamil polity than ever before. In fact, they became integral to the economy in the sense that successful foreign wars pumped wealth (though ill-gotten) into the country and increased the prosperity of particular sections of the community. Since the economy was not dominantly monetary, involving widespread circulation of (metallic) currency, inflationary trends, as in modern times, could not have been felt. The defeated country yielded after wars to the victorious, consumer goods and services in the shape of captured personnel, who were enslaved. So it was an economy basically sustained by agriculture (its effective contribution to the Tamilian economy was unevenly distributed over the area),

strengthened by foreign trade and boosted intermittently by success-
ful wars. An important feature of such an economy was that pros-
perity and poverty tended to be localized, and there was no means
of wealth percolating from the top to all areas of society. This is,
no doubt, a feature shared by the capitalist economy; but medieval
Tamil country enjoyed a prosperity which was ultimately equal to
that of the agriculturist. The rich royal court ensured prosperity for
the courtiers, the officials, the generals, and perhaps the more
successful merchants. The kings and chieftains apart, we do not
know if there were vast land-holders; a great many agriculturists
were either tillers, or small land-holders and owners of tax-free
holdings. A number of small tradesmen, underemployed persons,
casual labourers, unemployed mercenaries, the hangers-on on the
nobility and royalty, and of course, the destitutes constituted the
general economic universe.

In the context of this economy, one must not overlook the
temple, which had an economic complex integrated into the larger
economy. The temple employed persons, extracted service, owned
property, lent money and functioned as a bank. It had a social
projection alongside its religious one. The temple had its economic
foot rather firmly planted.

The ultimate picture which emerges from a study of the eco-
nomy is one of extreme opulence in the royal court, and extreme
poverty in the countryside, especially among the landless.

Population

In any economy, production or the available wealth and
population or the number of mouths to be fed are two essential
factors. Though we get at least partial accounts of the former, we
get no account at all of the latter. The Chōḷas kept a minute record
of landed property, but never thought of taking a census. We do
not have even indirect indications which might help us to deduce
roughly at least, the size of the population. The population of a
certain village in Pallava times (Kūram, in Chingleput district)
consisted of 108 Brahmin families. Since it was a Brahmadēya
village it can be assumed that all the families there were those of
Brahmins. On the assumption that each family in the village was
'average' and that an average family had five members, Kūram
had a population around 500 persons, and this was in the 8th

century. But the figure itself means nothing in relation to the total population of the country.

The standard of living of the people is also an elusive factor; for in the absence of knowledge of the spread of the population in the urban and rural areas, and the income and wealth levels of these strata being unevenly distributed over indeterminate areas, it can only be stated that the ruling families, the nobility and the merchant princes along with the large landed aristocracy, enjoyed a high standard of living and the rest were indigent and economically dependent, which is not saying much or being specific.

A very small indication of the standard of living of a people is however provided by the residential structure. The agriculturists lived in huts with mud walls and thatched roofs. Mansions built in bricks and roofed with tiles belonged to the rich. Structured buildings required a royal license to build and this shows that mansions or houses of brick and mortar were definitely luxuries, which the poor could ill afford.

Famines

There is no period in the history of the Tamil country which is not associated with famine conditions in one or other of its parts. Famines lasting for twelve years were not unknown. The general causes of famines in the Tamil country were continued drought, excessive rains, flood and possibly destruction of crops by pests, or wanton revenge, or other circumstances.

The *Periyapurāṇam* mentions a famine in the days of Appar and Sambandar. The temple authorities issued gold coins to the poor by way of relief. The *Kōṭpulināyanārpurāṇam* says that there was a terrible famine in the Chōla country, and even those expected to lead pious lives ate up the grain-stock reserved specifically for religious services. There was a famine during Rāja-siṃha's time. A Chinese source mentions another famine in Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, and narrates how a Bauddha ascetic by name Vajrabodhi went to Kāñchi and relieved the distress of the people by a miracle. Narasiṃhavarman II, it seems, appealed to the ascetics to cause rains to fall.[1] The commentator on the *Iṟaiyanār*

1. C.Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* pp. 114-118

Ahāpporuḷ speaks of a twelve-year famine in the Pāṇḍyan country; but one cannot be certain whether the reference is to the Pallava or pre-Pallava period. P.N.Ramaswami[2] mentions a famine when grains were sold at seven maunds per paṇam, and 'men ate men'.[3] Mr. Rice follows this with the remark 'things were apparently left to their own course'.[4]

During the Imperial Chōḷa and Pāṇḍyan epochs, conditions of famine were frequent, and sometimes not capable of easy handling. Famines in the Chōḷa country are on record in A.D. 1189, 1200 and 1289.[5] In the 23rd regnal year of Kulōttuṅga III, there was a famine, and one can understand its severity when one hears that people sold themselves. A peasant sold himself and his two children for 110 kāśus.[6] In the 6th regnal year of the same king the state had to go to the succour of the afflicted subjects by totally remitting the taxes, and redistributing the lands. A cyclonic storm caused unprecedented damage.[7] In the reign of Vikrama Chōḷa, famines ravaged territories now included in the North and South Arcot districts.[8] In the reign of Rāja-rāja III human beings were sold - such were the conditions.[9]

Famines were caused by ravages of war as well as exorbitant taxation. These were man-made, and distinct from famines resulting from natural causes. The ravages of war included the destruction of fertile land and the pollution of drinking and irrigation water. Heavy taxation[10] and inhuman methods of collection led to the depopulation of villages. The villagers suffered from either scarcity of goods or inability to pay taxes.

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2. *I A.*: Vol.LII: *Early History of Indian Famines:* p.192
3. *E C.*: Vol.IV. No 108 of 1940
4. *Mysore and Coorg*: Chapter IV: p.179
5. *S.I.I.* Vol. VII: No. 393 mentions floods, destroying crops during the reign of Kulōttuṅga III
6. *M.E.R.* 86 of 1911   7. *M.E.R.* 171 of 1925
8. *S.I.I.* Vol. VII; No. 496; 87 of 1900
9. 20 of 1905
10. *Burnell* in his *South Indian Palaeography* says, 'there is ample evidence to show that Manu's proportion of 1/6 was never observed and that the land tax taken not only by the Mohammaden but Hindu sovereigns also was fully 1/2 of the gross produce.

Daṇḍin, the court poet of Rājasiṃha, narrates the consequences of a famine as follows: "Family women were molested; Agnihotras were stopped; the granaries became empty. Householders were driven out ...... Honour was destroyed. Rows of trees and gardens were devastated .... Sacrificial sheds were destroyed ...... Kali was the sole monarch."[11]

The famines were as severe as the remedial measures were inefficient. The Pallava kings prepared for famine relief by building up a buffer stock of the harvest yield for distribution during famines. "The duties were discharged by the Pañchavāravāriyam," says M. Rajamanickam.[12] Evidently, he derives famine (Pancham) from the designation 'Panchavāravāriyam'. C. Minakshi thinks likewise.[13] This derivation is more ingenious than acceptable.

The teaming millions of India were then, as now, engaged in agriculture, and were exposed to all the vicissitudes of recurring famines. But kings, at least some of them, did their best to relieve the distress of the people. Such efforts, however, were not always on an adequate scale and were naturally productive of very limited results only.

It was a society marked by intense religious feeling, rank materialism and a fairly high-level of intellectual endeavour. The men of religion and the businessmen got on very well. Sundarar, speaking on behalf of the intellectuals, remarked on the pathetic poverty of the poets and the lack of patrons.[14] It seems incredible that poets could have had it very bad then, though the evidence is from a most respected source.

Communication and markets

Transport was a problem. Roads within urban limits were maintained by local authorities. Trunk roads were not officially

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11. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* p. 114

12. M. Rajamanickam Pillai: *Pallavar Varalāṟu:* p.245

13. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* p. 119; but S.K. Iyengar and Venkayya think that Pañcha is only five and not famine in the context of the Pañchavāravāriyam.

14. Sundarar: *Tēvāram:* 34:8

the concern of anybody, but were maintained by their users,
viz., the traders and the pilgrims. Of these categories, the
traders moved from one trade centre (shandy) to another round
the year, but when the trade began to prosper, the state came
forward to profit by the traffic.   We hear of toll-gates, and
accountants who maintained the accounts of the tolls.[15] The
trunk roads were three kōls wide, occasionally four *kōl* roads
were also constructed. Safety on the roads was ensured by the
merchants travelling in groups, and taking guards with them.
Probably the Pāḍikāval also provided some protection. We hear
of a Rājagambīrapperuvīdi which was an important highway in
the days of Rājarāja II.[16]

Wharfs, store-houses and light-houses were provided in busy
ports. Weekly, and other periodical mobile markets grew in all
places. Every village had a market place where people bought
and sold. Barter was still the dominant mode of transaction.
Coinage was known and used, but mostly in respect of foreign
trade, and wholesale trade locally. Entrance to a market was
obtained on payment of a fee called Aṅgāḍikkūli.[17]

Economic transactions

Apart from sales and leases of property, there were simple
mortgages, mortgages with possession and usufructuary mortga-
ges.[18] Money lent out bore interest, and we have some idea of
the rates of interest which prevailed. Ten Kaḷañjus of gold
got interest which could buy one-fourth measure of oil every
day.[19] The Tanjore temple inscriptions of Chōḷa times mention
a $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ rate of interest, and it is understood that there were
rare cases of 15% rate also. One Kaḷañju equal to two kāśus,
bore interest at four kalams of paddy per annum.[20] Interest
rates could go upto 15%[21] and even to 25%[22]. Lending money
and taking interest, though permitted, operated in different ways
within the society. The higher castes were to be charged less

15. *Peruṅgaḍai:* IV: 2: 42-46   16. 26 of 1915
17. 321 of 1910   18. *A.R.E.* 129 of 1939-40
19. 67 of 1895   20. 90 of 1928
21. A. Appadorai : *Economic conditions of Southern India:* (A.D.
     1000-1500), Vol. I: p. 432
22. 8 of 1928

interest and the lower castes more. The Brahmins were nearly exempted.

The inscriptions in the Tanjore temple are very helpful in understanding the wage-rates of those times. A washerman got eight *nālis* of paddy per day; a gardener six *nālis*, a wood-cutter four; the palanquin bearers four; water carriers (men) eight; (women) four; reciters of sacred hymns (Padikams) *twenty four*; Brahmin cooks *sixteen*; permanent servant *twenty four*; temple accountant *fifty-four*; Brahmins chanting Vēdas *ten*; Dēvaraḍiyārs *twenty seven*; dancers, *one kalam of paddy per dance*, and so on. This scale of wages can give us an idea of the relative importance of different services and professions.

We get an idea of price level which prevailed in the Pāṇḍyan country in the 8th century A.D. One kāśu[23] could by 1000 bananas equal to 11,200 betel leaves, 10,100 arecanuts, 150 *nālis* of fragrant flowers, and on a capital investment of 100 *drammas*, a perpetual lamp could be maintained. Negotiable instruments facilitated easy banking operations.

Agriculture

Agriculture was the most important economic activity in the country. The principle of ownership of land has been much disputed, some holding that the king was the ultimate owner of all land, and others that individual ownership existed alongside the obligation to pay tax to the king. Again there is difficulty over the question whether the tax was a lease amount or revenue for maintenance of government. Either view can be sustained, and there are authorities for each. Buhler in his translation of *manusmṛti* says that the principle of royal ownership of all land is recognized. He is supported by Medhātithi, the commentator of Manu. But U.N. Ghoshal is of the view that land was merely to be protected by the king, and he has the right to a share of the produce for the protection of the land.[24] Sama Sastri supports the view expressed by V.A. Smith that the king was the owner of both land and water, and that people could own everything *except these two*. It is not

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23. Roughly equal to thirty five paise.
24. *A History of Indian political ideas:* p. 158

safe to be dogmatic on this point, since the origins of land owner-
ship in society go back to pre-historic times.[25]

The relationship of the social structure and land-control in an
essentially agrarian society is elaborated by Burton Stein as follows:
"The reduction of forest, and expansion of regularly cultivated land
was a continuous process. This may be regarded as the ecological
concomitant of the social displacement and co-simulation of tribal
peoples." This was a perpetual process from early times.[26] Trade
and agriculture, and consequently, general cultural standards, dis-
tinguished the villages situated in the midst of intensely cultivated
agricultural lands.

Ownership of land was, by and large, the largest source of
social and economic power in that dominantly agricultural polity,
and Burton Stein states with conviction that "dependence of power,
livelihood and status on control of land is manifest".[27] Though
generally speaking, the above analysis of power may be correct, the
polity as a whole maintained its equilibrium only by the interaction
of political, military and economic power.

Land was held under a variety of tenures: 1. private sole
ownership; 2. joint tenure; 3. special tenure like service and tax-
free; 4. lease-hold. Lands could be alienated on sale, mortgage or
lease and the right of collecting taxes on land belonged to the
king.[28]

The following were the crops grown in the Tamil country in
the middle ages: cereals, wheat, barley, rice, *varagu*, *tinai*, and

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25. Spellman is of the view that there is stronger evidence to allow
    an interpretation that the king was the owner of the soil.
    Political Theory of Ancient India. pp. 207-208; *vide* also the
    popular saying that the king is the husband of *Bhūmi*. What-
    ever the theory may be, ownership has to be in the hands of
    the cultivators and the theory can change with the times depen-
    ding on the definition of sovereignty. In a despotic monar-
    chical polity the king is the sovereign and ultimate owner of
    all that the land holds and grows. In a popular sovereign state
    the people collectively own all property theoretically.
26. '*Kaḍu Konṛu Nāḍakki*', '*Kuḷam tottu Vaḷam perukki*' - *Paṭṭinap-
    pālai.*
27. *Agrarian integration in South India.*
28. A. Appadorai: *Economic conditions of Southern India:* (A.D.
    1000-1500). Vol. I; p. 98

millets, pulses, peas; green, black, bengal and horse grams; beans, gingelly, sesame, castor, sugarcane, cotton, indigo, lac, sandalwood, pepper, ginger, mustard, cardamom, nutmeg, cloves, and among vegetables, melon, gourd, turnip, brinjal, onion, garlic, besides turmeric, tamarind, betel leaves and arecanut.[29]

There were lands yielding three crops, two crops and a single crop.[30] In addition to the kind of cultivation detailed above, dairy farming was known and, in fact, the available evidence tends to prove its popularity Milk and milk-products were in great demand. Melted butter was used not only for food but for burning lamps in temples.

Land was measured and demarcated. In Pallava records we have details of the following methods of measuring the land: Plough, Nivartana or Paṭṭika. Plough means a piece of land cultivated by a person with a plough and a pair of bullocks. This was standardized as a unit of land. The area covered by a person going round a place within a specified time was Nivartana. This could not however be a standard measure since the area would depend upon the person who measured the land. Paṭṭika was a piece of land used as a pen of sheep. Vēli and Kuḻi were standard units of land. After measuring the land it was fenced mainly for two reasons: 1. to prevent damage from the cattle and 2. to avoid boundary disputes. Boundaries were marked by stones and shrubbery.[31] By royal order the entire cultivable land in the Chōḻa kingdom was periodically surveyed in the reigns of Rājarāja I, Rājēndra I and Kulōttuṅga I.

There were residential and non-residential land-holders. The Karandai plates of Rājēndra I mention two bits of land in two different villages held by the same Brahmin. So he had to be non-owner of one of the two bits. Persons who were unwilling to cultivate their lands and migrated, had their lands confiscated by the king, who granted them to others who undertook to cultivate them.[32] Agriculture depended upon irrigation. The problem of containing the flood-waters of large rivers like the Kāviri was faced by Karikāla, who succeeded in taming that river and converted its furious and wasteful waters into useful irrigation channels which

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29. *Ibid*. p.331
31. 28 of 1919
30. 271 of 1915
32. 531 of 1931

criss-crossed the delta area.   In the reign of Kulōttuṅga III some
lands damaged by Kāviri floods were reclaimed [33] The foundations
of the 'Granary of South India' were then laid thus, by ensuring a
good system of irrigation and regular cultivation. Canals from
rivers were supplemented by irrigation tanks and wells. Even the
tanks had to be saved from storm water. The Sabhās arranged for
the removal of mud and silt from the beds of lakes by boatmen
engaged for that purpose, who used the mud from the lake to put
up the bund. These boatmen were hired from time to time.[34]

Irrigation tanks were constructed partly by the state and partly
by individual benefaction.[35] There was a well-knit system of canals
which supplied water to the fields through stone pipes and sluices.
We are told about some village Sabhās seeking royal permission to
dig wells for irrigation purposes.[36] Some irrigation tanks were dug
by royal orders and were known as Rājataṭākas.[37] They were
named after particular kings.[38] One of the tanks was called Madhu-
rāntaka Pērēri and it was maintained by the tank committee of a
village.[39] For deepening a tank, Kulaśēkhara Pāṇḍya made a grant
of 100 drammas.[40] It was usual to divide the lands irrigated by
tanks among persons who were required to look after the tanks.
Rājēndra I dug a large lake near his new capital Gaṅgaikoṇḍaśōḷa-
puram and this was used for irrigation purposes. A canal-tax
called Vāikkālpattam was one of the taxes which maintained the
irrigation system. Certain officials were deputed to look after the
dams and the sluices which controlled the flood waters.[41] Water
for irrigation was sold to the cultivators at varying rates in the
Pāṇḍyan country.[42]

Lease tenancy was a common form of agricultural holding.
It is recorded[43] in one instance, that the lessee or tenant

33. *M E.R.* 113 of 1927   34. 43 of 1914; 26 of 1914
35. Kanakavalli Taṭākam, Māṟpiḍugu Perumkiṇaṟu were examples
     of private and public benefaction.
36. Taṇḍamtōṭṭam Plates and the Vēlūr Pāḷayam Plates.
37. *E.I.* Vol. VIII. p.145
38. Māhēndra Taṭākam, Chiṭramēga Taṭākam, Vairamēga Taṭā-
     kam, Paramēśvara Taṭākam etc.
39. 192 of 1919; Rājēndra II.   40. 459 of 1905
41. *A.R.E.* 1909: Part II; para 26   42. 26 of 1916
43. 66 of 1916

should enjoy the lands after repairing the tanks in disuse and bringing under cultivation such of the lands as were covered with jungle and that while the lands were being enjoyed, he should pay to the temple a *Mēlvāram* of one out of three. In the case of lands which had been brought under cultivation by clearing jungles, he should pay one tenth in the first year, one ninth in the second year, one eighth in the third, and so on for all subsequent years. A permanent *Mēlvāram* of 1:3 should be paid. A similar record gives different rates of *Mēlvāram* for certain other crops; but it is stipulated that the lessee must not keep the land fallow. Kūṭṭu-kuttahai was the payment made by the chieftains to the emperor, and this was also in the form of a lease-hold. When the lessees did not keep to the terms of the lease, the lease was transferred to others.[44]

Merchant-guilds

The merchants of medieval Tamilnad organized themselves into guilds and were affiliated to similar associations in other parts of India. Among the trade guilds the Nānādēśis were the most widespread. They were divided on a linguistic basis as may be seen from a statement by an official who led the 4000 Kannaḍa mummuri daṇḍas.[45] They were the itinerant guilds with members from many parts of India. They operated over the whole of South India and even beyond. They maintained their own police forces to defend their caravans (*Vāṇigachchāttu*). They traded in elephants, horses and precious stones. They gifted part of their wealth to temples. They even controlled some temples and market towns. We hear of a merchant guild called *Tisaiāyiraṭṭu Aiñūṟṟuvar* who are mentioned in a Sumatran inscription. They were five hundred companies of merchants from a thousand cities in all the four directions. The Vaḷañjiyār of South Ceylon and the Añjuvaṇṇam[46] (meaning five artisan castes) of Kerala were other merchant companies in the neighbourhood of Tamilnad. The Maṇigrāmam[47] (Vāṇigagrāmam)[48] was a self-regulating corporation of merchants.

44. 410 of 1918   45. *S.I.I.* Vol. IX. Part I, No. 297
46. 46 and 47 of 1927
47. *E.I.* IV: pp. 210-6; *A.R.E.* 1927; Part II: para 46-48
48. Vaṇiga: merchant; Grāmam: collection.

These merchant associations traded in different articles, were exempted from certain taxes and enjoyed honours and privileges. A merchant belonging to the Koḍumbāḷūr Maṇigrāmam gave five Kaḷañjus of gold for feeding Brahmins in a temple.[49]

The Maṇigrāmam was organized even in Malaya. The Takuapa inscription mentions such a Maṇigrāmam. Maṇipallavam near Jaffna in Ceylon could have been named after a Pallava colony and meant Vāṇiga Pallavam i.e., a Pallava trading centre.[50]

The medieval guilds were both craft and merchant. The craft guilds were professional associations in which caste and heredity played an influential role which gave these guilds an identity apart from their profession. These economic units varied from a single to a multiple group. They could sue and be sued as units.

The Aiññūṟṟuvar (different from Tisaiāyirattu Aiñūṟṟuvar) styled themselves 'the five hundred Svāmis' of Ayyavōlpura[51] (Aihole, also called, Ayyapoḷil) in western Maharashtra. They imitated royalty by having their own praśastis which recounted their antecedents and achievements. They were the protectors of the Vīra Banaju dharma i.e., 'the law of the noble merchant,' and perhaps issued their own coins with royal permission.

The Nagarattār were another class of merchants who affiliated themselves to some merchant towns. The Maṇigrāmattār, the Vaḷañjiyār, Sankara Pāḍiyār, and Parmattēśvarar were the mercantile groups looking after their guild activities. The Nāḍu[52] is also listed as a mercantile unit, and so the Nāttār, like the Nagarattār, were merchant groups, and it is possible that the Perianāḍu was a large mercantile corporation. The Nagaram was the local assembly of mercantile towns. We hear of 'Vaiyāpuri Nagarattōm' and 'Chōḷiya Nagarattōm'.[53] When the Nagaram transacted serious, or very important business, the meetings were attended by royal officers.[54] The Cheṭṭis, derived from the Sanskrit Śrēṣṭi, along with the Banajigas and Kōmaṭis, and rarely the

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49. *S.I.I.* Vol. IV: p. 147
50. If it be so since the word is known to the Manimēkalai, the political meaning of the word Pallava must have been familiar to the Tamils even in the late Śangam period.
51. 32 of 1910   52. 521 of 1912
53. 268 of 1921   54. 1 of 1898; 692 of 1904

Brahmins, took to trade.[55] In the days of Kulōttuṅga I, there was a restriction on the artisans and professional men of Tribhuvani. They were permitted to serve the residents of other villages. This was considered an offence against the law (i.e., custom of the village).[56]

Trade

Trade was both inland and overseas. Inland trade was mostly by barter. They exchanged goods for corn; e.g., salt and venison were exchanged for paddy. Ghee was converted into gold at nine *kuruṇis* per Kaḷañju. The practice of postponing sales, awaiting a price rise seems to parallel the operation of 'bulls' in the economic market, which indicates speculative economy quite natural for those times.[57]

There are two different views on the suitability of India (and that includes the Tamil country) as a land to trade with. The Jewish traveller Benjamin Tudela (1170) referring to Quilon (Kollam) said, "this nation is trust-worthy in matters of trade, and whenever foreign merchants enter their ports, three secretaries of the king immediately repair on board their vessels, write down their names and report them to him. The king thereupon grants them security for their property which they may even leave in the open fields without any guard."[58] But there is an uncomplimentary view also, though that relates to general conditions. "India has no date-tree, and no grapes".[59] "There are no towns in India. India is not as healthy as China, and hence, normally proneness to sickness is greater in India than in China."[60]

The economy of the country calls for the following observations: 1. It was partly charity-based, and therefore depended on the goodwill and pleasure of the donors, and not on any well-defined principle or even secular state policy. Charity had a slight religious overtone which is secular welfarism. The charity-based economy merely meant the disbursement of the tax got

55. A. Appadorai. *Economic conditions of Southern India:* (A.D. 1000-1500) p. 357
56. 205 of 1919   57. *Peruṅgadai:* V: 1: 15-22
58. Quoted in K.A.N. Sastri's *History of South India:* p.334
59. Babar also reacted like this in his Memoirs.
60. K.A.N. Sastri (ed): *Foreign Notices of South India:* pp.127-28

from the rich, as charity to the poor. The only objection to this philosophy and arrangement can be that it tends to stabilize charity as a prepetual disincentive to productive work and self-help. 2. The medieval Tamil craftsmen had no machines to produce tools, the iron gadgetry to produce carpenters' aids; and the agriculturists' implements and the fisherman's tool alone were available. The loom was simple and manually created. So there was a quasi-primitive domestic industry which was restricted to conversion of manual energy into mechanical, like the weaver's loom, the potter's wheel, and the pulley and the pikōṭas; with the help of these the simple rural economy could be managed, carpentry for house building, hand-loom weaving for textiles, and agriculture for food. 3. The *Periyapurāṇam* describes a famine from which it can be inferred that prices rose with a fall in production due to the failure of monsoons. This is demonstrated by the Śaiva saints getting sufficient commodities to feed the devotees by exchanging genuine gold pieces. Since there was no corresponding facility for large-scale minting of coins to meet the shortage of currency, there was a currency famine also. This would mean that the economic laws operated, and there was no means of checking the adverse effects for the benefit of the people; 4. The system of cash payment for service, whether it was gold bullion, or coined money, shows the prevalence of monetary currency. This currency co-existed with barter. It was not centralized coinage, and it became nearly so only in the Vijayanagar period. When there was no gold currency, it can be presumed that there was a *decline* in currency; gold currency indicated prosperity, i.e., an increase in the gold hoarding in the royal treasury. In Chōḷa times, from the days of Rājarāja I to those of Kulōttuṅga I, gold coins were current, (the earliest known Chōḷa coin belonged to Uttama Chōḷa). This increase in gold currency was due to successful wars abroad.

Royal possession of gold increased in three ways: 1. through inheritance of a rich gold treasury; 2. by wars; and 3. by collecting tribute from feudatories compulsorily in gold. If these are absent, the amount of gold in royal possession naturally decreases, giving place to silver or copper. Wages for Vedic teachers were paid in gold. But the fabulous expenditure of gold in providing golden Vimānas to temples, and the provision of a golden tiled roof to the

Chidambaram temple are instances of their ability to keep the bulk of the precious metal for their own purposes. The economy was not, however, currency-centred, in the sense that the vast quantities of gold were used to restore economic equilibrium during times of crisis.

Inland trade

Internal trade was conducted in mobile shandies and in capital cities. Imported goods reached these centres through the ports on the western and eastern sea-boards. Articles of trade were transported over the trunk roads, connecting the trade centres with the places of production. Usually articles of production were locally consumed, and this led to marked differences in food habits. Freshwater fish being scarce, marine fish was transported to inland towns and bartered for grain. Salt was another commodity which had to be transported inland from coastal areas.

Foreign trade

Favourable foreign trade was still an important source of the country's wealth. Even ordinary businessmen traded directly with countries overseas.[61] Tamiḷaham's trade with China rather than with any other country is more copiously referred to in contemporary sources. The export to China included pearls, ivory, coral, betelnut, sandalwood, cardamom, cloves and other spice, cloth, glassware and dyed silk. The Pallava and Chōḷa kings exchanged envoys with the Chinese emperors for the purpose of improving their trade. At times, these kings, paid the Chinese what is loosely termed a 'tribute' which, in fact, was only a trade concession. This trade seems to have been lucrative enough to persuade Rājēndra I to undertake a naval offensive against Śrīvijaya to remove the obstacles in its continuance abroad.

Pearls,[62] conch, cocoanut,[63] fine cloth, cotton,[64] silk, rat fibre[65] were important exports. Koṛkai was famous for pearl-

61. *Peruṅgadai*: V: 1:15
62. Marco Polo has a classical description of pearl fisheries in the Pāṇḍyan east coast. K.A.N.Sastri (ed) : *Foreign Notices of South India* : p.162 ff.
63. Argellia - The Nārikēḷa of the Sanskritists
64. *Chintāmaṇi* : 167
65. Famous even in the days of the *Śilappadikāram Ūrkāṇkādai* 205-207; *Chintāmaṇi* speaks of blankets made of the hair of rats: 1874, 2471.

diving.[66] The Pāṇdyan king derived a huge income by way of royalty in pearl trade. Ivory, betelnuts, cardamom, cotton stuffs, sandalwood, pepper and the like continued to be exported from the Chēra country.[67] Musk obtained from musk-deer, and kōśikam, a kind of fine textile fabric mentioned in the *Chintāmaṇi*[68] were also famous exports. The imports were goods like intoxicants, glass products and camphor. Mallai, Mayilai, Muśiri[69], Toṇḍi,[70] and Viḷiñam[71] were some of the ports through which the foreign trade passed. There are numerous references to harbours, ships navy, mariners and fishermen and to precious commodities like pearl, coral and conch.[72]

Horse trade

The horse trade finds abundant mention in Marco Polo. According to him, the horse trade at Kāyal was quite important, and much of the Pāṇdyan royal revenue was spent on the import of horses.[73] The Venetian says that the Tamil country bred no horses. "The merchants of Kis, Hormes, Doyer and Soer and Aden collect great numbers of destriers and other horses, and they bring these to the territories of this king." Wassaf confirms this.[74] Marco Polo further testifies that it was in the port of Kāyal that the horses arrived from overseas. He incidentally says that the horse was not a native of the Tamil country, and that the Tamils were strangers to horse-breeding and they did not know or learn how to manage the animal, and the best-bred horses did not flourish here.[75] The tax on the horse-trade was a source of considerable revenue to the king.

Manufactures and special skills

The manufacturing industry was usually confined to spinning, weaving, carpentry, blacksmithy, goldsmithy, sugarcane, salt,

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66. *Muttoḷḷāyiram*: 1566
67. K.A.N.Sastri (ed): *Foreign Notices of South India*: p.144
68. 1650   69. *Pāṇdikkōvai*: 12
70. *Ibid.* 11. Tyndis of Ptolemy   71. *Ibid.* 64
72. Sambandar: *Tēvāram*: 16:10; 173:2; 217:9; 376:7.
73. Māṇikkavāchagar's involvement in the purchase of horses for the Pāṇdyan king is part of the story of one of Śiva's sports mentioned in the *Tiruviḷaiyādalpurāṇam*.
74. Elliot and Dowson: Vol.III: p.3
75. K.A.N.Sastri (ed): *Foreign Notices of South India*: p.171

and oil (extracted in large wooden presses). It seems that the permission to manufacture particular items of goods had to be obtained from the king.[76] Tailored garments called Kuppāyam[77] were made only by inferior servants, and these were worn by the guards. The kings usually preferred to remain bare-bodied above the waist, as Marco Polo observes. There is mention of clothes.[78] Flint-like stones were used to light a fire.[79] We hear of an entrance gate which could be operated mechanically.[80] There is persistent reference to the Yavanas (Greeks, Romans, or the foreigners from any of the middle east countries) who are said to have made beautiful chariots and mechanical vehicles[81] which were a matter of wonder to the natives.[82] The Yavanas made golden caskets of rare beauty.[83]

Weights and measures

The commercial economy of the urban centres (and to a lesser extent, in the rural areas) required not only a system of currency and coinage but also weights and measures. Naturally the modern techniques of accurate definition of weights and meaures were not known; but every care was taken by the authorities to see that false measures were avoided in transactions. Vīra Pāṇḍya (Chōlāntaka) devoted himself to the regulation of weights and measures in his country.[84] The people knew linear as well as cubic measures and had balances to weigh articles against standard weights as also against other substances. They had to know the weight of gold, measure cloth and the volume of liquid.[85] The kings took special delight in naming even the weights and measures after themselves or after the gods they worshipped; and some standard weights were: Viḍēlviḍugu (after Pallava kings), Dakshiṇamēruviḍaṅgan (after

76. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* pp. 138-139
77. *Tiruvāchagam:* 17
78. *Chintāmaṇi* 71: *Kaḍi uṇḍa Pūntuhil*
79. *Periyapurāṇam: Kaṇṇappanāyanār Purāṇam:* 99
80. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 13: 95-96   81. *Ibid. III:* 5: 48-49
82. *Ibid. IV:* 10:40: *Chintāmaṇi:* 103   83. *Chintāmaṇi:* 114
84. K A. N. Sastri: *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom:* pp.103-104
85. *E.I.* Vol. XXI, No;17, p.105; *S.I.I.* Vol. V. Nos.737, 749

Lord Natarāja), Prithivimāṇikkam (after the wife of Nripatuṅga Pallava) and so on.[86]

Gold and gems were measured in terms of Kaḻañju, Mañjāḍi, Kuṇṟi etc. Silver, brass, copper and bronze were measured in terms of *palam* and *kahśu*; liquids and grains in terms of *nāḻi, uṟi, uḻakku, āḻakku, śōḍu, marakkāl, kalam, kuṟuṇi* etc. Linear measures were in terms of *Śāṇ, vil, kōl* and distances *yojana* and *Kāḍam*.

A table of equations relating to these measures is appended.

CHAPTER XI

EDUCATION, LITERATURE AND FINE ARTS

A. EDUCATION

The system of Education

Two important factors must be remembered in connection with education in early medieval Tamil country: 1. that the means for institutionalizing education were much greater for the imperial powers of this period than for the petty monarchies of the earlier period; 2. at the same time, this opportunity for improvement and diversification of education, especially in the secular fields, was offset by religion dominating the life of the society, and education getting narrowed down to religious requirements. Hence, liberal education, as we understand it today, could not be expected then. More institutions, more teachers and students, higher emoluments, greater interests in the welfare of the educational personnel were naturally in evidence. The curriculum was expanded but not necessarily improved, the system of teaching and learning remaining essentially the same as in the earlier period.

Ideal education should strive to secure the imparting of information selected with a view to promoting and improving understanding, of creating originality of thought and independent judgment, and also training pupils in the technique of organizing and using chosen material logically and scientifically. Anything else will be inducting pupils into a narrow philosophy or what modern educators call indoctrination. The effect of the indigenous system of education must have been to 'wash brains'.[1] The ideology dictating this procedure might be justifiable from one angle, but the consequence still is bound to be 'totalitarian'.

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1. I-tsing pays a glowing tribute to the Brahminical system of education and states that if one respectfully commits to memory the holy text, the intellect is developed. K.A.N. Sastri (ed): *Foreign Notices of South India:* p. 113

Education of a certain order was institutionally imparted to a certain stratum of society. This consisted in the learning of the sacred Sanskrit texts and similar studies in the mother tongue. The other kind of education was the learning of the crafts and arts at home by the pupils, the youngsters learning them from the elders. This was strictly hereditary, preserving knowledge of these arts and crafts within the community of artisans and craftsmen; and these communities became castes, identifiable by their exclusive knowledge and practice of particular arts and crafts. In the first type of education also, the technical teaching tended to become a hereditary occupation. Vedic studies were confined to the Brahmins[2] and non-Vedic studies of a secular nature were thrown open to whosoever desired them.[3] The Tamil religious lore and the recitation of devotional hymns were a local counterpart of Sanskritic studies;[4] and the profession of teachers teaching them also tended to be hereditary. Secular studies did not extend beyond logic, grammar, religious philosophy and the rudiments of arithmetic. Disciplines which, if pursued in an unrestricted way, might lead to social criticism, whether by accident or by design, did not find place in the curricula. That is how we have to explain the fact that the literature of the period did not include works on the social science to which might inspire criticism of life.

In the sources available, we get more information on Sanskritic studies which were exclusive, than on popular studies. The reason for this overweightage on the former type of education was that it was had in institutions liberally endowed by the kings and the nobility, and the latter in centres created by private initiative. There

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2. The grant of land to learned Brahmins partly in recognition of their scholarship, and as remuneration for their services was called Bhaṭṭavṛitti, *S.I.I.* Vol. III. No.200 and 223 of 1911: In the days of Kulōttuṅga III we hear of a Bhāshyavritti at Kāñchi for the *Rāmānuja Bhāshya* being expounded. 493 of 1919. There is also mention of Bhāratavṛitti in the Taṇḍantōṭṭam plates.

3. This education was managed by village teachers who were remunerated with the proceeds from a share of the cultivable land in the village or other kinds of endowments.

4. The recitation of the *Bhārata* was provided for at Sēndalai: 9 of 1897; at Tiruvalandurai: 42 of 1910; as a test in *Tiruvāymoḷi* in Tamil schools: 56 of 1923.

were Hindu educational institutions like the Ghaṭikas, the Śālas and the Pāṭaśālas.

Among these institutions the Ghaṭika of Kāñchi was very famous in Pallava times.[5] It was a centre of Sanskrit learning,[6] partaking of the character of a Śāla with a department of military science attached to it. This department had also an arsenal, and the internees of this department were given practical training in the use of arms.

The Tālaguṇḍa inscription detailing the circumstance of one of its royal pupils, Mayūraśarman, leaving it furnishes an idea of how the institution had functioned over a long period of time. At least, the Sanskrit sections of the Ghaṭika were manned by Brahmins.

There were Ghaṭikas at Kaṇṇanūr,[7] Shōḷingar and other places also, and a college at Kāñchi even in the days of Rājēndra I.[8] The Pāṭaśāla was an institution of predominantly religious studies in Sanskrit. We have instances of such institutions in Bāhūr,[9] Tiruvoṟṟiyū.,[10] Tribhuvani,[11] Tirumukkūḍal,[12]

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5. Even in the days of Rājasimha we hear of a Ghaṭika which functioned in the Kailāsanātha temple.
6. C. Minakshi says that in the Ghaṭika the sacred lore (*Pravachana*) was 'critically' studied: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas:* pp. 192-193: but one does not see what she means by 'critical study'; for the sacred texts were only memorised and recited, and could not be criticised for they were sacred.
7. 35 of 1933   8. 12 of 1931
9. This is exclusively a Brahminical institution where the sacred Sanskrit texts alone were taught. The village itself was a Brahmadēya grant to the institution. All the 'fourteen branches' of learning were taught there. *Vide* Fleet *Gupta inscriptions* pp: 113-115; Āyurvēda (medicine), Danurvēda (archery), Gandarvavēda (music) also were taught.
10. The school here specialized in Pāṇini's grammar.
11. The hospital attached to the Tribhuvani Institution is elaborately described. It seems that the hopital was more important than the teaching institution; or a medical college that incidently taught other subjects (!) though Āyurvēda dominated the curriculum.
12. The Tirumukkūḍal inscription of Vīrarājēndra (182 of 1915)

Eṇṇāyiram[13] and Nāgai.[14]

The Kāndalūr Śālai and the Śāla at Pārthivēndrapuram[15] specialised in military science; and Rājarāja I was well-advised in destroying the Kāndalūr Śālai before completing the conquest of Kerala.

K.A.N. Sastri refers to endowments to temples for the recitation and exposition of the epics and the Purāṇas, and he would call such expositions 'adult education'. But this kind of 'adult education' did not involve literacy, much less stimulate the thinking faculty of the participating adults. The audience merely listened to the recitation and had more of diversion and entertainment than enlightenment.

The educational institutions of the period depended for their maintenance on royal endowments; and there was no schedule system of fee-levy. Incentives (stipends) were given to students, and in one case the stipend amounted to one kuruṇi

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sets forth the details regarding a Vishṇu temple and mentions a hospital and a school attached to it. In the school there were 60 students who specialised in Brahminical studies. Students of the hostel and temple servants who were ill were looked after in the hospital which had fifteen beds for in-patients. A paid physician was in charge of the hospital which had a surgery under a qualified surgeon. Medical herbs and medicines prepared from herbs were available in the hospital.

13. 333 of 1917: In the 11th century A.D., there existed, in this place, a Vēdic teaching institution. There were fourteen teachers, 270 bachelor boys and seventy senior students. Students were fed and lodged freely. The teachers were given paddy and gold as remuneration, for which forty-five vēlis of land were assigned in two villages. Among the subjects taught here, we are told, the *Rūpāvatāra*, by one Dharmakīrti a great grammarian, was important. A Viśishtādvaita text which preceded the famous *Bhāshya* of Rāmānuja was also taught. To the students who graduated from the school a golden flower and ring were presented as tokens of graduation.

14. There was a Ghaṭika here with provision for 200 Vedic students; fifty *Śāstra* students and six teachers with a librarian - the total being 256 on the establishment.

15. *Vide* Pārthivaśēkarapuram plates.

and two nāḷis of paddy *per* head. A few students paid *gurudakshiṇa*[16] i.e., an honorarium to the teacher. The Guru-Śishya relationship was considered sacred. The student always held the teacher in great veneration, and the teacher in turn, loved the student.

Here is an example of teacher-pupil relationship: Vallabha, the Guru of Rājāditya the Chōḷa crown prince, on knowing of the prince's death, renounced worldly life, and assuming the name Garuḍānana Paṇḍita, retired to Tiruvoṟṟiyur where he lived the life of a recluse.

Education was not universal in the sense that it was available for all; and a vast majority of the population had no need to participate in it. Government service did not require specialists of any kind; nor was it the practice to recruit the employees from the general public as the Chinese did. There was no system of public examination of a general or special character. Thus, education other than knowledge of the arts and crafts, was the business of a small minority which perpetually shared it with the members of the *èlite*, and was maintained by noble philanthropy for that purpose. The educational face of the moon of medieval Tamil society was a crescent, a small fraction of it being lighted and the rest dark.

Mathas as educational centres

Apart from the Ghaṭikas and the Śālas, there were the Maṭhas which functioned as educational institutions. The Maṭhas were not merely religio-educational centres. They were also feeding houses for the poor and the infirm, and rest houses for pilgrims. In the main, they were endowed only as centres of religious propagation.

There were Śaiva, Vaishṇava, Jaina and Bauddha Maṭhas. Endowments were made for articles and necessities of life like oil, and they were placed under the Maḍattupperumakkaḷ, or the Seniors or Elders of the Maṭhas. Possibly the Maṭhas enjoyed internal autonomy. Though royal endowments maintained most of the Maṭhas some of them throve on private charity.[17]

16. *Chintāmaṇi*: 1595
17. C.Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*: p. 208

The curriculam in these Maṭhas was predominantly religious;[18] subjects like grammar and logic were also taught as ancillaries. The denomination of the Maṭhas decided the nature of the instruction. The Saiva Maṭhas taught the *Saiva dharma*, *Siddhānta*, *Yōga*, the ethical texts, *Purāṇas*, poetics, logic, music and grammar.[19] They had been functioning in the Tamil country even before the days of Tirumūlar whose section on *Gurumatha darsanam* in his *Tirumandiram* shows his knowledge of the Maṭhas. They had become famous even then so that *Guru darsana* and *Maṭha darsana* were considered indispensable for spiritual merit. In the 7th century, Appar and Sambandar stayed in Saiva Maṭhas of their own in the course of their perigrinations.

The ascetics who presided over Saiva Maṭhas were known as Sivayōgins. There was an endowment in the days of Kulōttuṅga I by the Tirukkaḍavūr Mahāsabhā to the Mārkaṇḍēya Maṭha for feeding the ascetics propagating *Sivanāma*. This particular Maṭha was one of those that carried on various activities including those relating to the dissemination of religious and spiritual knowledge and practices. Saiva Maṭhas are mentioned in the inscriptions of Rājarāja III, Rājēndra III and Jaṭāvarman Parākrama Pāṇḍya (an unidentified king). In the days of Kulōttuṅga III, a Kālāmukha Gōmaṭha and a Chaturānana Pāṇḍita Maṭha were establised.

The Saiva Maṭhas of the Pallava and the early Chōḷa periods must be distinguished from the well-established Maṭhas of the post-eleventh century like the Tiruvāvaḍuturai and Dharmapuram Saiva Maṭhas. The tradition of imparting Saiva education was continued by the later Maṭhas, and such tradition is still maintained in a few of the surviving Maṭhas.

We hear of Sattrās which were essentially feeding centres, but occasionally served as educational venues. A Sattra founded by Rājarāja I, and a gift to a Sattra by Kulōttuṅga I are mentioned in epigraphs.[20]

There were Brahminical as well as non-Brahminical Maṭhas since Sankara's time. In the twenty-third regnal year of Kulōttuṅga III, there was a widespread disturbance and the destruction of

18. 50 of 1923
19. M.V. Krishna Rao, *Gaṅgās of Talakad*: pp. 257-269
20. A.R.E. 249 of 1894; 250 of 1894

a few Guhais,[21] i.e., Maṭhas. For instance, a Guhai at Tirutturaip-
pūṇḍi was destroyed;[22] but no further information is available
about it.[23] K.A.N.Sastri mentions a similar *Guhai-iḍikkalaham*
(riot) of which a record of the second year of Rājarāja speaks.[24]
These 'kalahams' or riots, leading to acts of vandalism, may indi-
cate the last phase of the struggle between the Hindu denominations
and Buddhism and Jainism if not for supremacy, at least for
survival.

Besides the Maṭhas and temples, there were also the various
sects of Hinduism receiving endowments and gifts from the king as
well as the nobility because these sects were looked upon as
exemplars of the ideal religious life. These were considered the real
teachers of the society teaching not merely through precepts but by
the actual practice of what they preached.

We hear of Śanyāsins of two kinds viz., Ekadaṇḍa and
Tridaṇḍa.[25] In the Vēdavyāsa Maṭha in the Pāṇḍyan country
there were Ekadaṇḍa Sanyāsins.[26] They carried a single staff,
a symbol of their religious conviction. Tridaṇḍa Śanyāsins
who carried the triple staff are mentioned in a record of
Māṭavarman Kulaśēkhara I.[27] There were a few Tridaṇḍa
Sanyāsins in the Muḍivaḷangum Perumāḷ Maṭha mentioned in
this record. These men of austerity, piety and detachment
from the mundane world exerted no small moral influence on
the masses of the people because they lived what they preached.

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21. 42 of 1913   22. 471 of 1912

23. V.R.R. Dikshitar suggests that northern scholars who stayed in
    the Chōḷa court as Rājagurus were jealous of the scholarship
    and popularity of local ascetics residing in the Guhais, and so
    used their influence with their king to get the Guhais destroyed.
    According to him, Kulōttuṅga III took no steps either to
    prevent the destruction of these Guhais or punish the vandals.
    Kulōttuṅga III: p. 92-93.

24. 471 of 1912: K.A.N. Sastri is more guarded than V.R.R.
    Dikshitar when he says, "we cannot even say whether it was
    directed against this particular Guhai or Guhais in general. On
    the latter assumption, it is indeed very strange that we hear
    nothing more of it than this casual reference". *The Chōḷas*:
    p. 652

25. 544 of 1911   26. 38 of 1912   27. 12 of 1917

There were the Vaishṇava Maṭhas engaged in similar activities. Possibly these were fewer in number since we get less epigraphical references to them than to the Śaiva Maṭhas. A record of Kulōttuṅga III[28] mentions the collection of two kāśus from each person in Tiruniṟṟuchchoḷapuram for maintaining a person to look after the affairs of a Śri Vaishṇava Maṭha. Presumably this Maṭha did all the functions of a Maṭha, and being a Vaishṇava institution it propagated the *Prabhandam*. There was a Chittiramēḷi Maṭha founded and maintained for the benefit of Śri Vaishṇavas.[29]

Śaṅkara, one of the greatest religious teachers of the world, established his Maṭhas in many parts of India. His Maṭha in Kāñchi, like his other Maṭhas, was the centre for the dissemination of Vedāntic knowledge and the Advaita philosophy.

There is mention of nunneries in the *Periyapurāṇam*. It is said that a girl intended for Sambandar entered a nunnery after she was declined by the saint.

The Pallis and the Viharas

What the ghaṭikas were to the Brahmins, the paḷḷis were to the Jains and the vihāras to the Buddhists. The Buddhist monasteries followed, in the main, the activities of the Hindu maṭhas. We hear of a Jaina monastery at Pāṭaliputra in the South Arcot district. Jaina Śaṅgas or denominational subdivisions propagating the tenets existed in Kāñchi and Madurai. The *Tēvāram* and the *Periyapurāṇam* make frequent mention of these as institutions that Śaivism had to contend against. The influence of these institutions waned after the Śaiva attacks on them. A Jaina monastery was called *Tāpatappaḷḷi*.

From Hiuen Tsang we learn that Kāñchipuram was still a great centre of Buddhist learning and that there was a Buddhist monastery in Śriśaila which was later taken over by the Brahmins.[30] The Buddhist monasteries sheltered Hīnayānists and probably taught Hīnayānism. The *Mattavilāsaprahasanam* says that the monasteries of the Bauddhas were rich and influential.

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28. 505 of 1922   29. 341 of 1921
30. C. Minakshi however refutes this and says there must have been two Śri Parvatas in one of which there was a Śaiva Maṭha and in another a Buddhist monastery.

We do not get detailed accounts of institutions specializing purely in Tamil studies, except mention of endowments for the teaching and learning of Tamil hymnical literature in temples. What happened to the Tamil Śaṅgam of Pre-Pallavan times cannot be answered with any definiteness; but this much can be said; it must have lost its original status and might have lingered on for some time. All the same, the Śaṅgam tradition was green in the memory of the race as evidenced by references to it in epigraphs and literature of the period of our study.

B. DOMINENT AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

Areas of knowledge

Let us consider briefly the extent of the knowledge of the people of the period as reflected in literature and epigraphs. Their knowledge of the geography of the neighbourhood was gained at first hand. They knew by experience the lie of the country, the rivers, mountains etc. The geographical features of the Tamil country find fairly accurate mention. But when they speak of different parts of India, their knowledge is based mostly on hearsay. Their descriptions of rivers etc., outside Tamilnad are merely based on their knowledge of local rivers with suitable imaginative changes.[31] From Vēnkaṭam in the North to the Cape in the South (the two boundaries of Tamilnad) they had first hand knowledge of the country. The *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* and inscriptions mentioning Rājēndra's invasions of Bengal speak of the Godāvari, Kaliṅga, Ujjain, Avanti, Kāśi, the Himalayas, Bengal and the Daṇḍakāraṇya. Ceylon and Java are well-known foreign places which are mentioned without descriptive details. In his *Bhāratam* Perundēvanar makes the characters in the epic speak of the western and the eastern sea.[32] But such local references are unavoidable by a Tamilian handling a theme of northern India.

Certain rare geographical concepts like the poles were also known to them. The *aurora borealis* (northern lights) was possibly known as the Vaḍavāmukhāgni.[33]

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31. *Vide* the *Kambarāmāyaṇam* description of the rivers Sarayu and Ganges and the country Kōsala.

32. *Bhāratam:* 723   33. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 415

Their knowledge of the fauna was confined to the native animals like the elephant, the tiger and the monkey. Cattle, of course, were so common as to find frequent mention in literature. The lion and the camel, not natives of Tamilnad, were referred to in general terms, while the horse, an imported species never got completely acclimatized but always remained a reluctant domicile.

They thought that the sands on the seashore had been thrown up by the waves of the sea constantly beating on the seashore.[34] They could locate sources of subsoil water.[35] Perhaps they had the intuitive power of water-divining.[36] They knew the destructive properties of lightning and (possibly) installed lightning-conductors resembling a trident on tops of tall buildings.

Their knowledge of technology is perhaps exaggerated by literature. The *Chintāmaṇi* mentions a peacock and an elephant equipped with contrivances for long distant flights.[37] This reminds one of the flying chariot of Rāmāyaṇa and the flying horse and the magic carpet of the Arabian nights. All these have to be consigned to the realm of imaginary technology.

They knew by experience that images on the retina would become blurred if one repeatedly winked at an object.[38] Appar, a conservative Saint, believed in planetary influence, though the revolutionary Sambandar thought less of the powers of the planets and believed that their evil effects could be easily counteracted by invoking divine grace.[39]

Astrology

Their knowledge of astrology[40] also evidences their knowledge of astronomy. Rāhu and Kētu, which were mythically explained in the *Purāṇas* as the two cut-pieces of a poisonous snake with the ocean of milk threw up when it was churned, were understood correctly by the Tamils as *Niḻaṟkōḷ* ('shadow-planets').[41] They

34. *Muttoḷḷāyiram:* 1556
35. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 12: 53-54
36. *Ibid.* III: 12:52
37. 39, 40 and 235
38. *Chintāmaṇi:* 72
39. *Tēvāram: Tiruttāṇḍagam:* 2514; Sundarar said that Saturn in the Makham asterism was very inauspicious. 54:9
40. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 226; *Chintāmaṇi:* 554
41. *Takkayāgapparaṇi:* 637

knew many asterisms, the lunar days, as well as the week-days[42] and the twelve months of the year. The Kaṇi and the Perunkaṇi, minor officials in the court, predicted the appearance of astronomical phenomena and told the auspicious hours. Time was measured, in the absence of a clock or clepsydra, from the length of the shadow cast by the Sun, and during nights by the position of the stars.[43] The Tamils had the week-days in the following order originally: Saturn (Šani), Jupiter (Vyāḷan), Mars (Ševvāi), Sol (Nyāyiru), Venus (Veḷḷi), Mercury (Bhudan), Moon (Tiṅgaḷ) and then the earth (Bhūmi);[44] but later fell in line with the Greek system of beginning with Sunday.

They also believed in physiognomy i.e., the art of divining the qualities of a person from the formation of the limbs of the body and appearance, especially the features of the face. Marco Polo refers to the practice of physiognomy among the natives of the Pāṇḍyan kingdom and the popularity of horoscopy, magic, necromancy etc.[45]

In simple Arithmetic, especially in dealing with fractions, they were experts. They could count up to ten millions (a *kōṭi*) and imagine fabulous numbers like Veḷḷam and Tāmarai.

Medicine

The medieval Tamils had some medical knowledge and a sense of hygiene. They knew that drinking-water must be pure not only for taste but also for health.[46] They had medicines for internal use and ointment for external application. Massaging, fomentation and bandaging were known.[47] Sulaiman's statement that in India "medicine and philosophy are practised" applied to the Tamil country also.[48] As ancillary studies to medicine, Botany and Chemistry were studied by the physicians. Lands

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42. Sambandar: *Tēvāram:* 183:8; 222:1, 11; 3:10:7

43. *Peruṅgadai:* I: 52: 3-5

44. *I.A.* Vol. III: p. 90: 1874; perhaps the earlier order began with the planet farthest away from the sun and moved towards the centre of the solar system. Anyway, the Sunday-to-Saturday week had been regularized by Sambandar's time.

45. K.A.N. Sastri quotes in *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom:* p. 199

46. *Peruṅgadai:* III: 12: 59-62   47. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* 55-56

48. K.A.N. Sastri (ed.): *Foreign Notices of South India:* p. 127

were set apart for the cultivation of medicinal herbs. Śeṅgoḍivēli is a running plant whose root is a powerful caustic. The cultivation of this plant was commercialised and taxed.[49] Uḷḷi or garlic had medical properties and its cultivation was encouraged. There was also a medicine which could cure poisonous snake-bite.[50] Possibly herbs existed that could be used in the treatment of quite a number of diseases, and many of them were identified in the over-growths of mountains and hills.

C. LITERATURE

The post-Pallavan-pre-Vijayanagar period witnessed the development of a kind of Tamil literature which was the product of an unequal fusion of Sanskritic literary modes and Tamil traditions. It differed considerably from that of the Śaṅgam age. There is practically unaniminity of opinion on the estimate of the Śaṅgam period as the golden age of Tamil literature. That being so, the Imperial Chōḷa period was the silver age of Tamil *kāvya* literature, the earlier Pallava period of the golden age of devotional literature, and the later Pallava and the Chōḷa periods the epoch of the renderings of the Sanskrit epics into Tamil. The early Chōḷa period also saw the beginning of a tradition of commentaries on ancient grammar and literature.

Since the Pallava period, the practice of inscribing on stone and copper, public and private transactions, became common. The epigraphs were in a linguistic style, partly literary and partly colloquial. The Vēḷvikkuḍi, Chinnamanūr, Daḷavāipuram and other important Pāṇḍyan charters and the Pallava charters like the Kaśākkuḍi plates and the *praśastis* of the later Chōḷa-Pāṇḍya inscriptions contain pompous poetry on the one hand, and pedestrian prose, on the other.

In regard to certain literary pieces, there is the doubt whether they belonged to the pre-Pallavan or post Pallavan period. The *Kuṛaḷ*, *Śilappadikāram* and *Nāladiyar* among others, have created a controversy as to their dates. The controversy is irrelevant to our purposes. We shall consider only the authors and works, accepted on all hands, as post-Pallavan.

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49. *Asiatic Researches* Vol. IV: p. 255
50. *Chintāmaṇi*: 1276

Tamil language was undergoing a great change during this period, and was absorbing Sanskritisms profusely and rapidly. The script was Vaṭṭeḻuttu, Grantha or modified Tamil-Brahmi growing with the times. A script close to the modern Tamil script came to be employed, for the first time in the Imperial Chōḻa period. In the inscriptions, we find the Nāgarī script also being freely used. We also know of the old Vaṭṭeḻuttu inscriptions being re-transcribed in Tamil script during the days of Rājarāja I.[51]

During this period, new literary modes and traditions developed. Some interesting features of the new literature are: 1. an invariable invocation verse dedicated to different deities at the beginning, and to Vināyaka invariably, in the later period; 2. the poet submitting himself to the reader's criticism in great humility, in a section called *Avaiaḍakkam,* in a few verses prefixed to the text; 3. mention of the spiritual advantages of pursuing the work; and 4. adoption of the *viruttam* metre as the ideal form of versification. The new forms of literature, classifiable into minor poetry included in *Kōvai* (Tiruchchiṟṟambalakkōvai), the *Kalambakam* (Nandikkalambakam), the Ulā(Tirukkailāya ñana ulā,the Nānmaṇimālai (Kōil nānmaṇimālai) and the Andādi (Aṟpudattiruandādi). Prototypes were also created during this period. Minor grammatical works following on, and elaborating, the principles of the *Tolkāppiyam* like the following became the minor classics of this period: the *Daṇḍi Alankāram, Yāpparuṅgalam* and *Kārikai, Viraśōḻiyam, Ahappoṟuḷ Viḷakkam,* and above all, *Nannūl.*

The *Peruṅgadai* and *Muttoḷḷāyiram* written at the dawn of this period, strongly resembled the style and substance of the Śaṅgam classics, the former comparable to the twin epics, and the latter dealing exclusively with the Chēras, Chōḻas and Pāṇḍyas. The devotional literature produced by the Śaiva and Vaishṇava saints, constitutes a considerable part of the post-Pallavan literature. In fact, religious literature dominated the period, whether it was straightforward devotional pieces, or Hindu epics like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhārata,* hagiologies like the *Periyapurāṇam* or Bauddha-Jaina works like the *Chintāmaṇi, Vaḷaiyāpati, Kuṇḍalakēśi, Nīlakēśi* and *Chūḷāmaṇi.*

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51. 455 of 1917

In the post-Pallava period, while denominational influences like Buddhism and Jainism, on the one hand, and classical Vedism, on the other, were conspicuous by their absence in works of literature in Tamil, the influence of Sanskrit, though subtle, was unmistakable and was on the increase. Literary styles and modes in Tamil were Sanskritized to a great extent. The Pallavas, who brought with them to Kāñchi the Sātavāhana tradition of Sanskrit patronage, also maintained in their court Sanskrit poets and scholars like Bhāravi and Daṇḍin. The *Kāvyādarśa* had its impact on the Tamil *Daṇḍi-alankāram*. Similarly, Tamil epic-poetry towed the Sanskritic line in its imagery, description and general treatment. The *Purāṇa* literature was popular next only to the devotional, with the Āgamas laying the foundation for religious practices during that period. Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīyam*, whether it influenced the massive sculptural pieces in Māmallapuram or not, was a great classic. That the Ghaṭika in Kāñchi promoted Sanskrit learning is recorded in the Talaguṇḍa inscription of Kākusṭavarman. Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* had radically altered the norms of literary appreciation set by the *Tolkāppiyam* in the *Uvama iyal*, and new forms of poetry began following Sanskrit patterns in addition to the prescriptions of *Tolkāppiyam* in the *Seyyuḷ iyal*. Dignāga the logician was also a resident of Kāñchi; and Mahēndravarman himself set an example by composing in Sanskrit two plays. *Yāppuruṅgalam* and *Vīraśōḷiyam* indicated the greater currency of Sanskrit literary forms and norms. Even in epigraphs the Sanskrit part preceded the Tamil, and the ratio of Sanskrit to Tamil words, in most of the compositions of this period, was weighted in favour of Sanskrit, contrasted with that of the Śaṅgam period.

Prose writing was popularized during the period, and we have two kinds of prose: 1. the rigid purist hard-line Tamil, such as one comes across in the *Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ* commentary, and 2. the hybrid style, such as one sees in the prose passages of the *Bhāratavenba*, which was a forerunner to the Maṇippravāḷa of the Vaishṇavite commentators. There was a struggle between these two forms for survival, the purist style being promoted by the standard commentators and the pedestrian style adopted by others.

It is interesting to note that two opposite trends could be generated at the same time, and maintained with equal fervour, i.e., Sanskritization of Tamil literature going hand in hand with popularization of that literature through devotional hymns. The motiva-

tion, in spite of this difference, was possibly common. The Bhakti literature took religion to the masses, while the consequential deviation from basic orthodoxy was offset by embracing Sanskrit. Thus the literature of the period witnessed a great transition.

We shall consider what one might regard the seminal contribution of this period to Tamil literature, by reviewing briefly the *Tēvāram, Nalāyiram, Chintāmaṇi, Kambarāmāyaṇam, Periyapurāṇam* and *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi.* The *Tēvāram* and the *Nalāyiram* belong to the same classification of literature. They are religious and deliberately non-secular. They do not reflect life, nor do they preach morals, but merely contain the god-hungry outpourings of the heart of their authors. The last verse of each *padigam* in Sambandar's *Tēvāram* calls upon mankind to follow his religion and this is true of the works of the other hymnists also. The historian can have only indirect interest in this kind of literature.

Chintāmaṇi is an interesting piece, an original performance, and a prototype, followed by most of its denigrators. That it was a Jaina epic provoked the Śaiva Kulōttuṅga II to commission Śēkkiḻār to prepare a counterblast with intent to nullify its popularity. Devout Śaivites and Vaishṇavas condemn its religious implications and reluctantly admits its literary merit; and stalwarts like Kambar and Śēkkiḻār followed the *Chintāmaṇi* loyally in the structure of their epics. For phrases, figures of speech, descriptions and even characterization, they drew on the *Chintāmaṇi* freely. Its eminence, looked at merely from the literary point of view, was granted by Nachchinārkkiniyar, who chose to write a brilliant gloss on this work, even ignoring the *Kambarāmāyaṇam* and *Periyapurāṇam.*

The *Rāmāyaṇam* of Kambar is a colossal piece of literature in itself, one third of it excellent, and two thirds mere padding which swells the volume without improving the literary genre of the work. It is unique for the complete mastery of versification of all types the author exhibits, and the freedom he claims to change the story to suit his own moral notions. He has something of the Milton in him (the reference is not to the grandeur of the style - but to a somewhat unusual and subdued advocacy of the villain of the piece); Rāvaṇa is to Kambar, what Satan is to Milton. This is a rare experience in Indian literature. The phenomenal popularity

the work enjoys, and the eclipse into which it has thrown its compeers, is an index of Hindu literary taste.

The *Periyapurāṇam* is perhaps the only hagiology in Tamil literature. The most obvious feature of the work is the total sincerity of the author, and his devotion to Śaivism. A very small percentage of the work may be classed really good poetry, the rest of it being mere narration in verse. An objective literary criticism of the work may be impossible for extraneous sentiment often prevents, an objective evaluation.

The *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* is a class by itself. It deserves tribute for at least one reason: It is perhaps the only Tamil literary work of early and medieval periods which has any humour in it. Even in handling traditional themes the author is original and nowhere is he anything but vivacious. In the battle scenes, and in the goblins' dinner, he is absolutely in his element. It requires some talent to be most humorous while narrating the most grotesque and gruesome, and there is not another in Tamil literature to compete with him in this regard. For the historian, the *Kaliṅgattup-paraṇi* is a mine of information; for it comes nearest to history. Of the vast repertoire which constitutes Tamil literature, this work of Jayangoṇḍār is most useful to the historian, as it excels even Bilhana's *Vikramāṅgadevacharitam* in its historical value.

The representative pieces apart, the *Kallāḍam*, the mystic poetry of Paṭṭinattār, the Bhakti outpourings of Māṇikkavāchagar and the semi-historical *Nandikkalambakam* are on the side-lines of medieval Tamil literature, indicating social trends. The end of the period witnessed the *Śivañānabhodam* of Meykaṇḍār, followed by numerous works of Śaiva Siddhānta in Tamil, and the *Śri Bhāshya* of Rāmānuja in Sanskrit, followed by the Maṇipravāḷa works of his successors. There was a small area of literature appropriated by the ethicists, who wrote didactic verses ranging from one to four lines, and addressed evidently to children but needed even by adults, like the *Āttisūḍi*, and the *Konraivēndan* by an Auvaiyār, who was clearly different from her namesake of the Śaṅgam age.[52]

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52. The word Auvai means a female ascetic not necessarily old.
   Chintāmaṇi: 26-37

D. THE FINE ARTS

The arts and religion

The Tamils developed a taste for, and a proficiency in the fine arts including painting, dance, drama and music. All art in India tended to subserve religion. Music was devotional, the sculptor's art fashioned the forms of the deity, and the painter rarely came down from celestial levels, dramatic themes centred around divine doings. A few stray cases of secular representations were exceptions which proved the general rule. This was a desirable state of affairs in so far as art was disciplined to serve the highest purposes and values of the society. But it was greatly deficient because art could not be free. Free art will not ignore the secular or even profane themes. While in other countries there were periods of specialization in religious art, and at the same time, different artists dealt with different aspects of art, in India (in spite of the immense possibility of improvisation within the four walls of conventions) religion made its scope limited and saved it from subserving lower purposes.

Painting

There were manuals dealing with painting on canvas enclosed in a frame.[53] On the medium of transparent marble, painting was visible both ways. In Śittannavāśal cave, at the beginning of this period, and in the Tanjore temple, at its end one gets a sample representation of medieval Tamil painting. The Tanjore paintings are frescoes to be contra-distinguished from the Ajanta paintings. The Śittannavāśal paintings, also frescoes, are attributed by some to the Pallava Mahēndravarman I and to Śrivallabha Pāṇḍya of the 9th century by others. The latter cannot be a good guess, since the Pāṇḍya is said to have merely renovated, or added to existing paintings. The themes of these paintings are somewhat stereotyped, and the objects painted are generally lotus ponds, lilies, the swastika, *trident* and occasionally celestials (nymphs) bathing or flying in the sky; the colouring and ornamentation are exquisite, but the human forms lack character. The faces and the poses, as in the case of Ajanta, tend to be stereotyped. The dancing girls in the Tanjore paintings are good, but honestly cannot compare with those in Ajanta. Sculptures in medieval temples, were invariably painted,

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53. *Peruṅgadai:* III 10: 79

though the colour has faded out completely. Traces of ancient green and blue can be discovered here and there. In painting, the artist preferred to show their subjects in dance poses or as playing on the harp, thereby unmistakably indicating a contemporary character of the fine arts, viz., combination of two or more arts in the same theme.[54] Colours derived from organic matter alone were used, and so they had to confine themselves to red, yellow, deep green and blue; and they did not know synthetic paints. The shading is invariably poor. There is mention of a *Dakshiṇa Chitra*, a treatise on painting in the Māmandūr inscription of Mahēndra-varman I; possibly they had some literature on the subject, and Mahēndravarman I, one of whose titles was Chitrakārapuli, must have been proficient in that fine art.

We also hear of an art which consists in making figures on leaves by perforating them, and also in etching figures on plantain leaves.[55]

Dance and drama

The twin arts of dance and drama were famous even in Śaṅgam times. In the medieval period, naturally, they attained new heights of excellence. The temple became the centre of artistic activity; and with the growth of temples, the arts also grew. We hear of a hall in the Niruttamaṇḍapam of the Ēkāmbarēśvara temple at Kāñchi. Theatres where dances and dramas were performed were known as 'Nānāvidha nāṭakaśālas'.[56] Among dances there were the Āryakkūttu,[57] Tamilakkūttu,[58] and Śākkaikkūttu,[59] and endowments were instituted for the encouragement of all the three. One Kumāran Śrīkāṇṭan was given a grant of land to Nṛityabhoga for acting in the seven parts of the Āryakkūttu during festival days.[60] Rājēndra I made an endowment of land to enable a Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭādittan to read a poem called *Rājarājavijayam,* about which we know nothing.[61] Rājarāja I was also the hero of

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54. C.Minakshi in her *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*, p.280 says, "*Chitrasūtra* of Viṣṇudharmōttara says that a painter should possess knowledge of dancing also".

55. *Peruṅgadai* : II: 14: 30; *Ibid.* III: 1: 27

56. 13 of 1925; 12 of 1930   57. 398 of 1921

58. 90 of 1932   59. 65 of 1914

60. Rājarāja I: 120 of 1925

61. *M.E.R.* 1931; No.120 of 1931

a play called *Rājarājēśvaranāṭakam*, which was staged in the days of Rājēndra II in the Tanjore temple.[62]   So far as we know, the most famous contribution to dramatic literature during our period was Mahēndravarman's play *Mattavilāsa prahasana* (a one act comedy). The *Bhāgavatajukīya* (a semi-tragic play, ending in the Indian fashion in a compromise) which is also attributed to Mahēndravarman I is also high-class, though not of the level of the *Mattavilasa prahasanam*.   The royal author deleniated the religious set-up of Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam in his days. It is delightful to hear him call his own magistrates corrupt.

Music

Music has been a favourite art in India. Karnatic music, traceable to a past going back to early Śaṅgam times, is a significant contribution of the Tamils to the field of art. While music in the North was greatly affected by the Persian style, in the South, it retained to a high degree its pristine purity, resting on its own tradition, and perfecting itself at vocal and instrumental levels.

The benefits of music were many. They were both spiritual and sensual. Music relaxed the weary mind and was a medium of religious expression. In the pre-Pallava period, music was related both to secular expression and religious communication; but in the post-Śaṅgam period, it was harnessed mainly to religious and spiritual communication. In the *Śilappadikāram* and the *Paripāḍal*, we have music serving religion. In the Kānalvari of *Śilappadikāram* music adds weight to human emotions. In the Pallava and post-Pallavan traditions, music becomes the handmaid to religion, and it has mostly remained so since then. The leaders of the Bhakti movement were musicians of great emidence.   Sambandar was a saint poet, reformer, propagandist, and, above all, a musical composer and singer. Māthaṅgi, the goddess of music, was deemed worthy of worship.[63] The Tamils knew all about the basis as well as the superstructure of musical systems, both vocal and instrumental. They knew the seven notes, the *Ēḷiśai* (*Saptasvara*) in the ascending and descending orders.[64]   'Paṇ' was *rāga* and they knew the basic *rāgas* as well as the derivative *rāgas*, the former being

62. *S.I.I.* Vol. II; No.67; 120 of 1931
63. *Chintāmaṇi*: 411   64. *Ibid.* 238

'perfect' (Niṟainarambu) and the latter imperfect (Kuṟainarambu).[65] A *rāga*, to be pleasing, was to be *Niṟainarambu*.[66] According to the usual tradition, the Tamils related music also to the geographical divisions of the country - Kuriñji, Mullai, Pālai, Marudam and Neidal. The 'paṇ' appropriate to Pālai was Pañjuram. There are obscure references in obsolete terminology describing contemporary music. They can be related to the later modes.[67] We know about the paṇs from the *Silappadikāram*, and *Divākaram, Piṅgalam* and other Nikaṇḍūs.

There were different kinds of musical instruments familiar to them: Percussion instruments like the Iyamaram, a kind of drum,[68] stringed instruments likè the Vīna and wind instruments which are sounded like the bugle[69] and the conch etc. Ekkāḷam was another musical instrument which was sounded when the deity was about to be taken out in procession. The drum and cymbals belong to the percussion group.

From the beginning of the 7th century A.D. music began to play a great part in the artistic endeavours of the Tamils. The art began to evolve new forms. The Kudumiāmalai and Tirumayam music inscriptions indicate a middle stage. Mahēndravarman I was a musician. Clearly the Kudumiāmalai inscription belongs to him. He bore the title 'Saṅkīrṇajāti' and that means he invented a kind of musical mode called 'Saṅkīrṇajāti' and this could be played on a seven or eight stringed instrument called the Parivādini. The *Tēvāram* mentions the particular paṇs in which the hymns were sung, though their exact mode of rendering is not known now. Sambandar was accompanied

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65. *Peruṅgadai:* IV: 3:56
66. *Chintāmaṇi:* 80. In Sanskrit, this should be Sampūrṇa Rāga.
67. Considerable research has gone into this question; and many 'paṇs' have been equated with the rāgas of later times; e.g., by a careful study of the *Ānāyanāyanār Purāṇam* in the *Periyapurāṇam*, the 'Mullaippaṇ' has been equated with Mōhanam. A few more equations are: Takkarāgam - Kāmbōdi; Kauśikam - Bhairavi; Paḷampañjiram - Śankarābaraṇam; Mēgarāgakuriñji - Nilāmbari; Kuriñji - Harikāmbōdi. S. Ramanathan: *Silappadikārattu Iśainuṉukka Viḷakkam* p. 65
68. *Peruṅgadai:* V: 6: 63
69. A bugle made out of deer horn was called Kalaikkōḍu. *Peruṅgadai::* I: 55: 115

on the lyre by Tirunīlakaṇṭayāḷpāṇar, which means that the system of instrumental accompaniment was known even then. At times, a vocalist accompanied a main instrumentalist.[70] Nambi who edited the *Tēvāram* and Nadamuni who edited the *Nālāyiram* knew enough music to preserve the original musical traditions in the codified canonical texts. Kūlottuṅga I was a great musician. His wife bore the significant name Ēḷiśaivallabhi. His own contribution to music was not insignificant.

The Yāḷ was musical instrument, par excellence of the Tamils. It may be called the proto-Vīṇa, though we find the Yāḷ and the Vīṇa being mentioned in the same sources and contexts to indicate the difference. The Yāḷ was kept at the left side when it was played.[71] The Yāḷ, Vīṇa, flute, Dundubi, Kuḍamuḷa (drum), Takkai, Uḍukkai, Tālam (cymbals), Kokkai, Sachchari, Mondai, Domarugam, Manmuḷa (Mridangam) and many others were Tamil musical instruments.

The basic tune of the Yāḷ was the drone of the bee.[72] We are told about the Deyvapēriyāḷ (21 strings), Ādiyāḷ (1000 strings), Makarayāḷ (19 strings), Śakōṭayāḷ (14 strings), and the Śeṅgōṭṭuyāḷ (7 strings). The Ādiyāḷ, it seems, was not for human use, but only for the celestials.[73] The Śiriyāḷ was the dimunitive harp played at dawn to wake up kings. It was also called the Karunkōṭṭuyāḷ.[74] The face of the Vīṇa was made to resemble a swan or any other pleasing figure. One hears of a Kūnalyāḷ which was so called perhaps, because, the stem was curved as in the case of a harp.[75] That means that they had the other kind of lyre also. In view of the large number of musical instruments in use, and in demand, making these instruments must have been a flourishing industry.

Music was encouraged by grants of land to the artists. In the 6th year of Vikramachōḷa, land was granted as Vīṇaikkāṇi to a Sivabrāhmaṇa for playing on the Vīṇa in the temple.[76] We also hear of Naṭṭuvakkāṇi granted to a dance master.[77]

70. 141 of 1900
71. *Peruṅgadai: IV*: 3: 101
72. *Chintāmaṇi*: 853
73. *Peruṅgadai: IV*: 3: 53-54
74. *Ibid.* I: 47:241
75. *Vikramaśōḷan Ulā*: 274
76. 47 of 1910
77. 361 of 1924

In the days of Rājarāja I, the local residents were given grants of land for maintaining seven musicians in a temple.[78] A similar grant in favour of dancers and musicians is mentioned as being made by Kulōttuṅga I.[79] The Tanjore temple had a number of musicians attached to it.[80]

Thus were the fine arts encouraged.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

A. RELIGION

Main features

The period of six centuries from the beginning of the 7th to the end of the 12th is notable for a climax of religious rivalry which ended in the rout of heterodoxy and a decisive division between the two major Hindu denominations. It also saw the elimination of the primitive expressions of Śaivism. The end of the period is significant as the starting point of a schism within Vaishṇavism.

In the early part of the period, Bhaktism spread through Śaivite and Vaishṇavite channels and submerged Buddhism and Jainism in its ever-increasing floods. During the 10th and the 11th centuries, the Bhakti (devotional) literature was collected, edited and popularized. That was also the period during which devotion was justified by metaphysical theses - the most notable being those of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja.

During the period of our study, religion was progressively associated with temple worship. The whole technology of temple-building, icon-making and worship-offering developed with the rise of the Āgamic philosophy with its fertile literature. The Āgama movement itself was traceable to a very early period, but it got crystallized about the period of our study. The rapid development of the resultant temple movement also connoted the ultimate triumph of classical Hinduism over the Buddhist and Jaina heresy, while symbolizing the newlook given to it by Āgamic inspiration.

Religion, to the Hindus, was the ultimate point of beliefs with different origins, and flowing in different directions. The primitive association of religion with the worship of the hero still continued, and hero stones were erected. But we hear little about the Pattini cult or Pattini temples during this period. An interesting development, however, was the specific identification of the king with god

and the rise of the Dēvarāja cult.[1] Gods bacame royal personages;
and kings were deified. Temples were built over the remains of
dead kings. These were not mere tombs; and worship was offered
in them. An elaboration in the sculpture and architecture relating
to icons and temples was a parallel development, keeping pace
with the growth of religion in all its Hindu forms.

The growing popularity of temple-worship meant a rapid
decadence in Vedism or classical Brahminism. The Vedic sacrifice
was slowly, but steadily superseded by Bhakti or worship in a
spirit of dedication and self-surrender. The injuctions of the *Karma-
kāṇḍa* were subordinated to the prescriptions of Bhakti. It is usual
to derive the principles of the Vaishnava Bhakti from the *Bhagavad-
gītā*. The worship of the Liṅga in Śaivism goes back to proto-
historic times if Marshall's identification of certain objects
discovered in the Indus Valley sites with the Liṅga is correct. The
worship of Śiva (the Three-eyed One) and Vishṇu, called Māl, was
known to the Śaṅgam Tamils. Murugan was also passionately
worshipped. A polytheistic heaven was very much in evidence.
The cremation ground was a place of religious activity. Though
Śiva the god dancing in the crematorium had not fully emerged,
a hint was already found in the opening verse of *Kalittogai*,
speaking about the competitive dance between Śiva and His
spouse. For reasons not yet clear to this historian, Bhaktism
became pronounced early in the 7th century and the hold it has
since got over the minds of people has not relaxed. In fact, it has
spread to the rest of India.

Bhaktism

As is to be expected, Vaishnava Bhaktism had an earlier begin-
ning with the work of the first three Āḻvārs, all of whom belonged
to Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam. Though they were ambivalent in their devo-
tion, equally praising Śiva and Vishṇu in the common formula of
Harihara, there is no mistaking their Vaishnavism.

The 7th century, however, saw the rise of militant Bhaktism.
Appar, the elderly saint, sober and timid, supported by Sambandar,
young and zealous to the point of being extremely sensitive, initiated

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1.   *Vide* Rājarājēśvaram, Aruḷmoḻidēvēśvara, Ādityēśvara, Ariñ-
     jikaiēśvara, and the prevalence of the concept in Cambodia
     also.

the Śaiva Bhaktism. The social consequences of this movement (for it was a veritable movement developing rapidly and spreading everywhere) belong to the chapter on *Society*. From the 7th century onwards, till it inspired the growth of the parallel metaphysical movement with its culmination in the 10th and 11th centuries, Bhaktism was growing in terms of its inspiring sources in Tamil and Sanskrit, and the permanence of its effects.

From Appar to Māṇikkavāchagar, from the Mudal Āḻvārs to Kulaśēkhara, Śaivism and Vaishṇavism became Bhakti-oriented and created problems for Vedic orthodoxy. Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja 'justified' Bhaktism by reinterpreting the *Brahmasūtras* (supposed to be the cream of the *Upanishads*) in such diverse ways that the embarrassment was obvious. But the process took nearly five centuries to re-orient Vedism to make it suit the new time-spirit, and remove possible fears of its totally supplanting Vedism.

Another important feature of the religious conflict of this period was the Siddha tradition, which was specially native to Tamilnad. Its origins are difficult to trace. N. Subrahmanian identifies them with the Aṟivar of the Saṅgam age.[2] The legendary Agastiyar, Tiruvaḷḷuvar, the more substantial Tirumūlar, the later medieval Paṭṭinattār and their successors, of whom Tāyumānavar the mystic is the most renowned, belong to this tradition. During our period, Tirumūlar must be assigned to the early part and Paṭṭinattār to the 10th century, indicating the continuity of the tradition. This indigenous tradition had distinct anti-Vedic features, because it decried sacrifices and the Varṇa divisions, and had little sympathy with Brahminical institutions. That tradition combined mysticism, a certain egalitarianism, a contempt for rituals and something of asceticism.

Brahminism

All this apparently posed a challenge to the Brahminical heritage in the Tamil country. The occurrence of a number of Brahmins among the Nāyanmārs and the Āḻvars does not mean orthodox Brahminical participation in the Bhakti process, or in the evolving of the Āgamic tradition. But it is surprising that, in the Pallava and Chōḷa epochs, there was an unprecedented patronage of Brahmins, gifts of Agrahārams, creation of Brahmadēyas and even

2. N. Subrahmanian: *Saṅgam Polity:* p. 14

some support to Vedic sacrifices by the kings and chieftains of the
Tamil country. Colleges of higher education taught the Vedas and
handsomely rewarded Brahmins well-versed in them. The prota-
gonists of the Bhakti movement itself paid open homage to the
Vedas; and the devotional lyricists 'acknowledged' with becoming
pride that they were only freely drawing on the Vedas, and
expounding Vedic truths. The destiny of the Vedas, as Renou
remarked, was to serve other causes by permitting their name to be
used for the promotion of every tradition among the Hindus.[3]

The transition from primitivism

Amidst all this, there was a concurrent pursuit among different
sections of society of different religious practices, from primitive
animism and savage human sacrifices to highly enlightened religion
based on love and mercy. The former was being progressively
discouraged, though it died hard; the latter was gaining ground,
though it never became universal in the sense of its affecting the
last common man. However it came to stay as a vital socio-religious
factor, indicating the renovation of the fundamentals of Hinduism
divested of its grotesque overgrowths.

The gods dwelling in the burning ghats,[4] the deities residing in
the hero-stones,[5] the divinity of the tombs built over the remains of
ascetics,[6] the occurrence of human bones underneath the *sanctum
sanctorum* in several temples,[7] were the marks of what managed to
survive of the primitive religious beliefs. The Kāpālika, the Pāśu-
pata, the Mahāvrata, the Bhairava, the Śākta had been the chief
cults of primitive Śaivism. Even as late as the early Pallava period,
the Kāpālikas, Pāśupatas and Kāḷāmukhas worshipped Śiva, and
were a deadly orgiastic crowd. They sported the human skull, smeared
ashes all over their bodies, went about with a skull-bowl in their
hands and offered wine and blood to their gods and goddesses.
They did not desist from human sacrifice, "with their chaplets of
bones round their heads and necks, inhabiting holes and crevices of

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3. Renou: *The destiny of the Vedas.*
4. *Chintāmaṇi:* 314   5.   283 of 1916
6. K.V. Subramania Iyer : *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan:*
   pp. 384-385.
7. has been revealed when their renovation was started. K.A.N.
   Sastri: *The Cōḷas.* p. 453

the rocks like Yakshas who haunt the places of tombs".[8] These sects were found mostly in Kāñchi, Tiruvoṟṟiyūr, Mayilai and Kodumbāḷūr. The *Periyapurāṇam* testifies to the prevalence of Pāśupataism, in the 7th century, in the *Siṟuttoṇḍar Purāṇam*, in which a Śaiva devotee demands human sacrifice and gets it from this Nāyanār. The Nāyanār in this case was the devotee of Śiva who appeard in the form of a cannibal. It is not known whether the practice was historical. The Kāḷāmukha and other primitive forms of Śaivism, though countered effectively by the upcoming religion of love did not die an early or easy death. They lingered on for many centuries later, no doubt with dwindling fortunes and their identity lost. A person called Lakuliśa Paṇḍita, who belonged to the Kāḷāmukha sect, was patronised by Rājēndra I.[9]

Murugan and Ganapati

Murugan, an ancient Tamil deity, continued to be worshipped both in the primitive way by the lance-bearing ascetics, and in the Vedic style by others by the chanting of manṭras. The Kaumāra cult specialized in the exclusive worship of Kumara (Muruga). In addition to this, a significant development was the introduction of Gaṇapati as a popular deity. He is mentioned possibly for the first time, in the *Tēvāram* hymns of Appar and Sambandar. He became the remover *par excellence* of obstacles. Iconographically His body was human; and head that of an elephant. His rise to popularity was most phenomenal, considering his comparatively late arrival in the pantheon.

Mother Goddess

The worship of Goddess as Mother was not new to the Tamil country. The goddess used to be called by names like Kāḷi, Koṟṟavai, and Dēvi. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* gives Śiva's spouse a residence in the desert. She is surrounded by goblins and she-dwarfs; their grotesque devil-dance described in the *Paraṇi* fills one with horror and exasperation. The month of Aippaśi (i.e., October-November) was specially sacred for Dēvi and in that month worship was specially offered with sacrifices by devotees.[10]

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8. Beal: *Life of Hiuen Tsang:* p. 162. Appar: *Tēvāram:* 20: 3, *Mattavilāsa prahasanam.*
9. 271 of 1927   10. *Yasōdharakāvyam:* 136

Durga found sculptural representation in the evolving temple. Human sacrifices and head offerings to Durga were common in early Pallava times.[11] Durga-worship continued till the days of Kulōttuṅga I. Pārvati[12]; the goddess of earth;[13] the goddess of chastity;[14] Nappinnai[15] (one of the spouses of Kṛshṇa); the goddess of learning[16] and Koṟṟavai[17] were some of the female deities worshipped. Evil feminine spirits residing on hill-tops (Varai aṟamagaḷir), on water (Nīr aṟamagaḷir) and the Mōhini - the fatal Seducer - (Sūr aṟamagaḷir) are celestials mentioned in the literature of this period.[18] They were appeased through worship and offerings.

Saivism and Vaishnavism

Śaivism took the offensive against heresy and was supported by Vaishṇavism till the common foe was eliminated. The two allies later parted company with more of mutual good-will than ill-feeling: and their 'polarisation' was only to be expected, as they had eliminated heresy and each had begun to develop features of uniqueness and individuality, some of which, naturally, were not always reconcileable.

Of the two religions, Śaivism had the more difficult task in the fostering of the Bhakti movement for it had to get rid of the accretions of primitivism, purify itself and raise itself to the level of a religion of love and mercy. Vaishṇavism was comparatively free from this kind of initial problem and so it could straightaway develop its mysticism and devotional character. This level had been reached by Vaishṇavism earlier, as Nammāḷvar's hymns would testify. Śaivism could reach the acme of its true form only under Māṇikkavāchagar, very much later. The *Periyapurāṇam* gives us a glimpse into the stages through which the destinies of Śaivism had to pass. Māṇikkavāchagar was such an exclusive worshipper of Śiva that he could be called a monotheist. But that is not to

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11. C. Minakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*: p. 181, Paḷḷaṅkōil Plates.

12. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: 1

13. *Chintāmaṇi*:45; *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: 13

14. *Śilappadikāram*.   15. *Nālāyiradivya Prabhandam*: 3280

16. *Udayaṇakumārakāvyam*: 1; *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: 13

17. *Peruṅgadai*: 1: 52: 11-21   18. *Pāṇḍikkōvai*: 2

make him a borrower from any cult. It had been a fashion with some scholars to derive medieval Hindu theism in South India from foreign sources. Tara Chand, for instance, thinks that Lingayatism was not merely influenced by, but was the offspring of, Islam in India. The same has been suggested about the cult of Māṇikkavāchagar. This seems to be unnecessary, if not unwarranted, for from the start Hinduism has been distinctly pantheistic, and *could accommodate a variety of theistic cults.* In fact, the difference between Islam and medieval Hindu theism is really the difference between *monotheism* and *henotheism.* This difference is quite vital. The mere fact of Māṇikkavāchagar's emphasis on love and mercy cannot associate with him any Christian inspiration or leanings. Nor could his exclusive devotion to Śiva be construed as of exotic inspiration.

In worship forms also, Śaivism had a problem which never confronted Vaishṇavism. Śaivite sacred symbols were as sacred to the Śaivas as Śiva Himself. The Guru, the Maṭha and the Śiva-chinnas, i.e., the symbols of the god and the faith, were equally sacred to them. The stories of Puhaḷchōḷan and Meippoṟuḷ Nāyanār in the *Periyapurāṇam* illustrate this principle. The matted hair, the sacred beads and the holy ashes are the three basic symbols of Śaivism.[19] Anthropomorphism, by and large, is subject matter of the Āgamas which governed the temples, because a personal god had already evolved for that religion with His manifestations.

Bhaktism came naturally to the Vaishṇavas, but for the Śaiva, to whom the linga had been the basic form of the god, Śiva had to be provided a human and attractive form. It should have been rather a slow process, alongside the difficult task of divesting the religion of its primitive grotesque aspects (e.g., Kāpālika). Naṭarāja and Dakshiṇāmūrti marked a great stage in the evolution of a personal god for Śaivism. Bikshāḍana (Śiva, the beggar) was derived rather from the Paśupati cult, and so could not match the beatific Naṭarāja. These worshippable forms of the god, with their basic inspiration provided by Āgamic texts, got concretized in sculpture and architecture. But all this took a long period; but Vaishṇavism had an in-built, captivating theistic cult, and it could have a straight and easy start in Bhaktism.

19. *Kallāḍam:* V. 55

The cosmic plays (*Lilā*) of Śiva mentioned in the *Kallāḍam*, and later detailed in the *Tiruviḷaiyāḍal Purāṇam*, invested the Śaivism of this age with features of great esoteric and emotional appeal to new devotees.[20] By the time the *Tēvāram* hymns were discovered and codified, and Māṇikkavāchagar gave new mystic dimensions to the religion, Śaivism had no doubt, made plenty of headway and its Bhaktism had crystallized distinctly.

After Śaivism had thus caught up with Vaishṇavism both began to run a parallel course. But one contrast is unmistakable. There was a more pronounced streak of asceticism in Śaivism than in Vaishṇavism. It was a pleasanter route to salvation in Vaishṇavism while the path to the Śaivite *mukti* was an apparently hard one. Suffering, fasting, sacrifice of material possession etc., become the inescapable 'obligations' of the Śaiva devotee. The devotee of Vishṇu, on the other hand, had a relatively less demanding code. But both Śaivism and Vaishṇavism, between themselves, represented a two-pronged attack on the heretical creeds. The Vaishṇavas attacked the asceticism of heresy through an emotionally satisfying ecstatic Bhakti, while the Śaivas took the wind out of heresy by a counter-ascetism not any the less demanding or awe-inspiring than that of heretical creeds.

In one sense, the existence of many gods within the Hindu-fold does not make that religion *really* polytheistic. Each sect held only one deity supreme, with the other deities having no primary status or status at all. Thus each sect was theistic, and for all religious purposes, self-contained. In fact it was henotheistic, as stated earlier. This is exemplified by an alleged Śaiva-Vaishṇava controversy. There is a story which mentions a confrontation between Tirumaṅgai Āḻvar and Sambandar. There is only one version of the result of the confrontation available, (debate) and it is possibly of Vaishṇava origin. According to it, Sambandar had to concede victory to his Vaishṇava contemporary. But all this has to

20. During this period the Śaivites developed the idea of Śiva's incarnations for earthly sports. Vaishṇavites had however started the tradition of Daśāvatāra much earlier. The entire idea of incarnations ultimately goes back to the Buddha, whose Jātaka stories are the prototype for this kind of religious literature.

be consigned to that level of any religion at which the less enlightened among its devotees invent or fabricate anecdotes to prop up their own religion and assert its superiority. It is possible that at a certain level there was mutual distrust between the two, but apart from these small differences and prejudices, the two movements were supplementary and complementary to one another. They both developed the highest forms of mysticism known to the Tamil country, created a grand galaxy of saints, developed a marvellous hagiology with its unmatched devotional literature with common traditions such as the one in which the sacred texts of each are lost for some time and recovered under miraculous circumstances and get codified by an outstanding leader of the faith on each side. This fascinating story gets its completion in the case of Śaivism, in the Śaiva Siddhanta of Meykaṇḍār and in the case of Vaishṇavism in the Vishishtādvaita of Rāmānuja, both furnishing the kernel of the doctrinal background in respect of their own philosophies. With this culminating point, both the faiths get settled with little doctrinal addition of a fundamental nature, though the process of refinement and interpretative nuances continue.

The Tevaram and the Nalayiram

The edition of the *Tēvāram* and the *Nālāyiram* was not a mechanical anthology. Apart from the knowledge of geography, religion and music which the editor naturally required for this work, it should have been necessary for him to know *what to include in the collection* and *what not*. Nādamuni said that apart from the four thousand hymns the rest was not available for selection; Nambi said that all the available Ōlais (leaves) containing the *Tēvāram* hymns were decaying, and he could select and edit only from the available ones from the pile under the ant-hill. More important, though by divine grace and direction what was irrelevant and unsuitable was destroyed. But it is surprising that a *padigam* not included in Nambi's edition is available in an epigraph, and has been saved by God's grace! Which proves that there had been really a selection involving rejection also, and that there must have been a design in the collection *which was really a judicious one*. So the editions seem to have been made from the *religious* and not the *literary* point of view.

The status of the Vedas in Bhaktism

The truly orthodox Hindu mode continued, though in the midst of divergent religious expressions. More than even the Bauddhas and the Jainas, the Siddhas - the native non-Brahmaṇas - had serious differences of opinion with the sacrifice-conscious Brahmin. The *Tēvāram* mentions the efficacy of sacrifice, and the Bhakti saints, in general, professed to take the Vedas to the masses through their own mother tongue. Thus the Vedas continued to enjoy the high status they had occupied and religious innovations took place only in their name.

Brahminical role in Bhaktism

It is interesting to note that Brahmins played an important role in the Bhakti movement, which was basically free from the injunctions of the *S'mṛtis* which underlined features like caste differences, sacrificial rituals etc. But there is really no contradiction here; for the Brahmins who led the devotional movement were Śiva Brāhmaṇas (e.g., Sambandar and Sundarar) and were not sacrificing brahmins.

When such Brahmins took service under the king, or joined the Bhakti movement singing hymns in the regional language, discarding Sanskrit as the medium of religion, became priests in temples, and took to other secular professions, the sacrifice-conscious orthodox sections of Brahminism looked down upon the 'neo-Brahmins' as degenerate. It was this 'reactionary' core which constituted pure Vedic orthodoxy. Śaṅkara stabilized the sect of Smārtas, the followers of the Smritis, by insisting on the monistic interpretation of the Brahmam of the *Upanishads*. Rāmānuja, a believer in the Smritis who joined the Bhakti fold, reconciled the main trends of Bhaktism (found in the Pāśurams of the Āḻvars, especially Nammāḻvār) with the *Brahmasūtra*; he had necessarily to turn theist, and to that extent deviate from Vedic tradition. The emergence of the Smārta and Vaishṇava Brahminical sects is notable in the background of the overwhelming Bhaktism of the period. But it represented only an adjustment. Śaṅkara tried to conserve whatever remained of Vedic orthodoxy. He combined in his teachings the 'atheism' (at the metaphysical level) of the Buddhists, the Tantrism of Śakti worship, the theism (at the religious level) of Śiva worship, the catholicity of the Smārta, the orthodoxy of the Vaidīka, the religiosity of a traditionalist etc.,

so that his achievement was composite, and his attack on heresy, in effect, became multi-faced During this period 'pure' Vedic Brahminism had to accept a humble status while the Śaiva Vaishnava Bhaktism forged ahead and Brahminism of other levels had either accepted or adjusted itself to the new upsurge.

Religious rivalry

Inter-religious rivalry was on the increase in this period. Tirumaṅgai Āḻvar plundered a Buddhavihāra[21] and took away the golden image of the Buddha, and built the fourth prakara of the Raṅganātha temple at Śriraṅgam. This shows both his chronic hostility to Buddhism and fanatical attachment to his own faith, as also indifference to the means to be adopted to subserve both. The *Guruparamparai* does not mention this; but one can believe a robber-turned-saint making use of his past professional skill to serve his religion. Disputes regarding temple management occurred often among the managers and the priests.[22] At a certain level of the followers of Bhaktism there were also Śaiva-Vaishṇava quarrels.[23] The *Periyapurāṇam* speaks of a debate between Daṇḍi Aḍigaḷ and the śramaṇas, who were expelled from the city by royal orders after their defeat.

Buddhism and Jainism

Buddhism and Jainism, though different religions, became the common foe of Brahminical Hinduism represented by its new Tamil off-shoots Śaivism and Vaishṇavism. The conflict opened with Appar's resistance to the Jainas in Kāñchi and Sambandar's onslaught on the Jainas in Madurai. Hiuen Tsang, who visited Kāñchi in the 7th century, speaks of a hundred Saṅgharāmas, 10,000 priests studying the Sthavira school of Mahāyāna Buddhism and mentions a number of stūpas around Kāñchi. In spite of this, the pilgrim admits that the fortunes of Buddhism were on the wane in the Pallava country. The *Periyapurāṇam* narrates the incident of Sambandar cursing a Bauddha leader, and the latter dying of a cracked skull consequently.[24]

21. The Buddha vestiges of Nagappattinam: *vide I.A.* Vol.VII; pp.224 ff.
22. *A.R.E.* 1914, Part II; para: 23; 571 of 1920
23. *Ibid.* 1907; Part II; para: 26; 387 of 1906
24. *Periyapurāṇam:* 2806-2808

As a result of the concrete opposition of the Hindus, these two religions declined as religious expressions. On the other hand, their standing in the field of Tamil literature continued to be respectable, and their contribution to Tamil literature was phenomenal. *Chintāmaṇi, Vaḷayāpati, Kuṇḍalakēśi, Nīlakēśi, Chūḷāmaṇi, Yāpparuṅgalam* and *Viraśōḷiyam* are only a few of the names of works in Tamil that have kept up the memory of religions which have practically ceased to be even a minor factor to reckon with. *Nīlakēśi,* disputes the contentions of the Buddhists, the Ājivikas, Śaṅkyas, Vaiśēshikas, Vaidīkas, and the Naturalists and tries to establish the supremacy of the Jina Dharma. This shows that all these forms of religion had still some currency in those times. Though, on the whole, these were beneath notice, their indirect moral influence on the Hindus was considerable; i.e., they sustained the fatalism of Hinduism, cried down sensualism and presented a code of conduct in conformity to moral values. Their austere life in the days of their popularity, both as ascetics and as lay persons, did not fail to have an impact on those pursuing other faiths.

Ascetic life was allowed to woman among the Buddhists and the Jainas, and Hinduism, that at first forbade women from asceticism, conceded it later, at least to the Vaishṇavites from the days of Rāmānuja.[25]

Yoga and its significance

Yoga is an integral part of asceticism. The *Upavāśas* (fasts) and other rigorous acts of physical suffering accepted by the Jainas were believed to be fruitful spiritually. The Siddha 'discipline'[26] was more sophisticated, aimed at the attainment of *mōksha* while still alive (Jīvanmukti). In *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* we have the definition of Yoga as a means of concentration.[27] In the *Periyapurāṇam* we have the statement that Tirumūlar, who was one of the greatest Yogins, practised Kuṇḍalinī Yoga and had Kapāla-mōksha, i.e., (the attainment of the (mahāsamādhi) release from bodily state by 'prāṇa' leaving through the Kapāla or head). Sundarar converted even *bhōga* (union with his wife)[28] into Yoga. It is just how one looks at actions.

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25. Rāmānuja permitted Embār's wife to become an ascetic. N. Jagadeesan: *History of Śrī Vaishṇavism in the Tamil country* (post-Rāmānuja)

26. Tirumūlar: *Tirumandiram*   27. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*: 9

28. *Periyapurāṇam*: 327

Mysticism

Yoga is associated with mysticism. Mysticism is the doctrine of union with the Absolute. It implies a mystic way of attaining that objective. The intellectual formulation of the Absolute naturally involves a negative approach: - 'not this, not this' as the *Upanishads* say, and as Māṇikkavāchagar often repeats.[29] Yoga and Dhyāna, the two modes of spiritual mysticism, are not communicable, are personal and a means to individual salvation. In Indian thought, religion and ethics are not usually separated. ''In India ethics is not regarded as an independent branch of philosophy, or of religion, but as preparatory to the exercise of the highest religious practice - Dhyāna which leads to emancipation.''[30] Moral precepts were usually formulated in ascetic circles and their *summum bonum* was emancipation. Mystical experience means direct human communion with god and assumes the possibility of the soul's union with god. Here is a combination of the psychological and the metaphysical. Personal mysticism has been the whole personal experience of man when he is all by himself and meditating.

Among the medieval Tamils, there were Śaiva, Vaishṇava and Siddha mystics. Mystic experience being personal, the mystic considers spiritual experience with an achievable reality. He expresses it in symbolic language which may be cryptic or figurative. The statements of mystics lend themselves to varied interpretation (literary as well as esoteric). When Appar speaks of a drowning man (drowning in the ocean of family-life) being saved by the 'sacred five letters' of Śiva (the Pañchāksharam) he is thinking of a situation of spiritual despair and the only possible redemption from it. But Śēkkilār the story-teller makes the event historical, and gives a literal meaning to the saint's utterance. The same applies to the *Nari Pariyākkiya Tiruviḷaiyāḍal*[31] (Śiva's *līlā* or cosmic play of converting jackals into horses. All this is to come back to our point, that the mystic songs of the Bhakti saints abound in expressions replete with their own spiritual experiences.

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29. *Tiruvāchagam: Sivapurāṇam:* 11: 70-74
30. *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics:* Vol. II., p. 802
31. In a *Tēvāram* verse Appar uses the expression *Naripariyākkia* which is the standard formula for a miracle and this occurs three centuries before Māṇikkavāchagar with whom the divine sport is associated.

Paṭṭinattār, his disciple Badragiriyar and Śivavākkiyar were mystics in the tradition of Tirumūlar, and the burden of most of their songs is the transitory nature of ea tily existence and of its 'pleasures'. Tirumūlar speaks elaborately on Yoga and combines in himself a knowledge of astrology, medicine and philosophy. The mystic have a special aversion to women, an attitude not shared by Tiruvaḷḷuvar, but reminiscent of the Jainas. Siddha mystics, however, have this in common with the Bauddhas and the Jainas: They object to caste distinctions. Nammālvār the Vaishṇava mystic was perhaps typical of medieval mysticism which is inextricably linked with Bhakti outpourings.[32]

A situation of similarity

The Vaishṇavas who spearheaded the Bhakti movement were the twelve Āḷvārs. They came from different strata of society. Two of them were Brahmins and one was a pariah. Bhakti transcended caste. The Śaiva saints, sixty-three in number, are sometimes considered a numerical manipulation to agree with the Jaina 'sixty-three', which perhaps is farfetched. But we are not wanting in parallelisms in respect of both Śaivism and Vaishṇavism. Ideologically and temperamentally Māṇikkavāchagar (though a male) may be compared with Āṇḍāḷ his Vaishṇava counterpart; likewise Appar may be compared with Nammālvār, Tirunīlakaṇṭayāḷpāṇar with Tiruppāṇālvār, and Kaṇṇappar with Tirumaṅgai. The pleasant situation of identity connoted by the pairs just now listed does not stop there. How about the circumstances of the 'recovery' of the canonical texts? A Nādamui does it for the Vaishṇavas and a Nambi Āṇḍār does it for the Śaivas. What is more interesting as close parallelism is how the texts are recovered by both the Āchāryas. Perhaps the highlight of this identity is reached when there is also close parallelism in the matter of how the philosophical and metaphysical sustenance is provided in both instances.

32. To be properly translated as 'qualified non-dualism'
33. Poygai, Būdam, Pēy, Tirumaḷiśai, Nammālvar, Madhurakavi, Kulaśēkhara, Periyāḷvār, Āṇḍāḷ, Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi, Tiruppāṇ and Tirumaṅgai. The first four flourished in the land of the Pallavas; the last three of the Chōḷas and the seventh of Kēraḷa and the rest of the Pāṇḍyan country.

Ethics of Transcendentalism

Extreme devotion involving total surrender to the Lord means surrender of moral judgment also, so that formal morality is irrelevant in a religious context for the Hindu. Mūrkhanāyanār was apparently a gambler; Tiruniḷakaṇṭar was suspected of infidelity in married life; Iyarpagai gifted away his wife; Kaṇṇappar was 'cruel' to the denizens of the forest; Māṇikkavāchagar 'misappropriated' public funds; Tirumaṅgai was a 'robber'; but theirs was deemed transcendental morality.

Religious toleration

The onset of the Bhakti movement had apparently two opposite effects. It unified people and in a sense divided them also. It unified in the sense that there was a sense of theoretical unity and equality among devotees in the presence of god. But at the same time it divided them practically, in the sense that affiliation to particular deities exclusively tended to lead even to fanaticism, and often a situation of exclusive identity among the devotees. Tolerance of other sects is possible only when there is the realization that the basic Truth is one, and only in the approach to it there is difference among the different creeds; but if the pursuit of a faith or creed leads to the belief that all other creeds are based on sin and untruth, there can only be rivalry, intolerance and hatred. A small, yet highly intellectual minority of the society with their Upanishadic knowledge, spoke of the oneness of the Brahmam, and its absolute nature. If people belonging to small sects also spoke of universalism, it was because they felt that their sect alone was the true one and valid, and the rest deserved to be condemned. This was mostly the true picture though superficially it passed for eclecticism. The reason why fanaticism did not lift its head frequently or why and how so many sub-sects managed to co-exist apparently reflecting mutual 'give and take', is that Hinduism the parent of these sects is comprehensive enough to accommodate a multiplicity of creeds even with diverse tenets; and each creed can derive itself from the parent religion and sustain itself.

We could assess the religious attitudes of the king, the royal family etc., and those of the common people. The former could impose their will on their subjects, even coerce them to follow particular sects, as Mahēndravarman I or Neḍumāran did. The kings themselves followed different faiths within the same dynasty;

e.g., Nandivarman and Parameśvaravarman were Śaivas, Nara-simhavarman a Vaishṇava and Mahēndravarman first a Jaina and then a Śaiva. Also, among the Pāṇḍyas, Neḍuñjaḍaiyan was a Vaishṇava and Varaguṇa a Śaiva. The Chōḷas were Śaivas without exception but with varying degrees of attachment to that religion. Vikramachōḷa was a Śaivite, but he renovated the Śriraṅgam temple. According to the Hosakōte plates[34] Mahēndravarman's grandmother was a Jaina. The Udayēndram grants says that his father was a Vaishṇava.

In temples also, icons of different faiths like Śiva, Vishṇu etc., were enshrined in the same campus.[35] In the composition of the early Āḻvars, who may be placed in the 5th century A.D., there is a true eclectic spirit which treats Śiva and Vishṇu on an equal footing.[36] Even devout Śaivas did not lack a sense of toleration. Kulōttuṅga III was tolerant towards Jainism. He had also a Jaina official by name Maṇḍiyankiḷan Kulōttuṅgachōḷan Kāḍuveṭṭi. This particular case could have been an appointment based on ability, and not on religious considerations; but his endowments to Jaina institutions are clear indications of his tolerance of non-Śaivism.[37] Gaṇḍarāditya, a Śaiva hymnist, endowed a Jaina paḷḷi and a Vishṇu temple.

Fanaticism

These instances of religious toleration do not tell the whole truth. There was also intolerance, even fanaticism. Some of the *Tēvāram* hymns are not content with praising Śiva. They are equally eloquent in condemning other religions, particularly Buddhism and Jainism. Some Śaivas did not hesitate to refer to Vishṇu irreverently; and some Vaishṇavas repaid the compliments eloquently. The status of Brahmā, particularly in the Tamil country, had never been enviable. To some of the Vaishṇavas, if their Prabaṇḍas meant anything, it was that Śiva was a lesser god. But to both Śaivas and Vaishṇavas, more to the Śaivas, than to the Vaishṇavas, the heretical Buddhists and the Jainas deserved the worst insult and condemnation and the harshest treatment. The impaling of the

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34. *M A.R*: 1938
35. *Vide*: The monuments of the Pallavas at Mahābalipuram.
36. *Nālāyiradivya Prabhandam*: 2344
37. *S I I*. Vol. IV: 366: Vol.IV; 1011-1014

Jainas in Madurai could well have been an act of persecution but it was one of self-immolation according to the *Takkayāgapparaṇi*.[38]

Kulōttuṅga II's persecution of Rāmānuja, his destruction of the Vishṇu shrine in Chidambaram and other acts of anti-Vaishṇavism only led to the strengthening of their sect, though the Āchārya had to flee to Mysore where Vishṇuvardhana who had all along supported Jainism discarded that religion on the arrival of Rā nānuja, and started persecuting the Jainas, reminding one of Mahēndravarman I. Derrett accepts the main core of this story, and rejects the embellishments which make the story itself suspect.[39] It would be difficult to accuse Kulōttuṅga II of persecuting the Vaishṇavas because it was he who made liberal grants to the Śrirangam temple. It is probable that he had a personal score to settle more with Rāmānuja than with Vaishṇavism, even as Pontius Pilate probably took a political view of the activities of Jesus of Nazareth. Kulōttuṅga must have imagined that Rāmānuja's organization of Vaishṇavism was calculated to discredit the Śaiva king. His destruction of the Vaishṇava shrine of Gōvindarāja at Chidambaram, had perhaps something to do with difficulties arising out of the need to renovate a Śaiva shrine and possible non-co-operation on the part of the Vaishṇavas. When the king was furious, naturally he gave vent to his fury by oppression bordering on torture.

Concluding this section we may say that, generally speaking, the picture was nothing startling or unusual and reflects human nature at the normal level. But many were the occasions when fanaticism came to the surface.

B. PHILOSOPHY

The religious philosophy of the Tamils during this period was dominated by the Bhakti inspirations. The transition from primi-

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38. *Takkayāgapparaṇi:* 7 and 170. This rationalisation was complete by the time of Oṭṭakkūttar but his contemporary Sekkiḷār suggests that the king ordered the Jainas to be executed and Sambandar who could have intervened did not. *Pattinattuppiḷḷaiyār Pāḍalgaḷ: Podu:* 39: *Periyapurāṇam:* 2751, 2752, 2753 and 2769.

39. Derrett: *Hoysalas:* pp.222-223.

tive forms of worship, animism, bloody sacrifice etc., to enlightened devotion made god the personification of love. To the Śaivas, 'Śiva is love' i.e., *Anbē Śivam.* Kaṇṇappar and Māṇikkavāchagar are supreme examples of human love to god. In the story of Kaṇṇappar the 'superiority' of this kind of rough love to the traditional, ritualistic worship is brought up. Even as ethics was subordinated to religion, life was subordinated to faith. Its most essential feature was the dogma of impermanence including the ups and downs of life. This period has been called one of transition from 'sacrifice to self-awareness'. *Karma* or duty was defined as the dictates of conscience.[40]

The Jainas followed Hindu ideas in many respects, like the cyclical theory of life, the survival of the soul after the body and that fear (bhaya) causes misery.[41] They gave in return ideas like the inferior character of sensual pleasure.[42] The Buddhists also believed in the Karma theory.[43]

The moral philosophy of the Tamils did not change radically from that of early times, i.e., the elite of the society who were the preceptors though not pace-setters in matters of social and individual morals had more or less fixed notions on moral philosophical problems. Their prescriptions and prohibitions, i.e., the *Aṟam* and the *Maṟam* of the Tamils, remained intact, so that what we hear in the Śaṅgam age from Tiruvaḷḷuvar is echoed in the later Chōḷa period by an Auvaiyār: generosity, hospitality, chastity, self-discipline, frugality bordering on abstemiousness, conservative caution in preference to forward adventure, classical virtues bordering on prudery, an emphasis on learning, whatever it was, and the need to have it early etc., are constant iterations of the moral code.[44] This would not mean that if history had been encouraged, a different value-system would not have emerged, considering the changed times. It is also quite possible that the gap between theoretical prescriptions and pragmatic realities was as wide as ever.

It is a truism to say that in India one never had a system of philosophy divorced from religion, as we have in European thought,

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40. Sundarar: *Tēvāram*: 41:6   41. *Yasōdharakāvyam*: 35
42. *Chintāmaṇi*: 211   43. *Kuṇḍalakēśi*: 19
44. Most of the sayings in the *Āttisūdi, Konṟaivēndan* etc., seem to be medieval summaries of *Tirukkuṟaḷ.*

e.g., Plato, Descartes and Kant. Śaṅkara is perhaps the solitary instance of a philosopher who revelled in pure metaphysics also; for he transcended the formal limits of religion, and reached beyond a personal god to a transcendant reality. Whatever one might say about Māyā and other aspects of Śaṅkaraism, the ultimate monistic principle cannot be challenged without sentimental deference to a deity. Matter and spirit coalesced into one ultimate principle which, for the sake of social harmony, Śaṅkara called god. One can easily see that Śaṅkara went beyond the Buddha who, at least, thought that a rigorous moral code was needed for Nirvāṇa. Sankara's *mōksha* was value-free. An intellectual etherealization would land a strict logician like Śaṅkara at a point beyond even morals. This tended to support the general characteristic of Hinduism, which is to make morals relative and subordinate them to a deistic religion. The differences in the epistomology of Śaṅkara and of Rāmānuja or of Meykaṇḍār arise from a need to link pure intellectual excursion into the field of knowledge with the needs of religion. The *Upanishads* were conveniently ambiguous, and the *Brahmasūtras* sufficiently enigmatic. It was possible for the philosophers to differ among themselves in interpreting the same text and arriving at even opposite points of view. The philosophical systems propounded by the *Brahmasūtra* Bhāshyakāras had, if at all, an impact on only intellectual *èlite* in society.

The philosophies of Rāmānuja and Mēykaṇḍār are considered to have had their origin in the devotional or semi-devotional literature of earlier centuries. Perhaps too much is imagined by such methods of identification of later trends in earlier epochs. More than the Śaivas, the Vaishṇava Āchāryas and commentators try to identify the grains of Viśishṭādvaita philosophy in Nammāḻvar. Perhaps this temptation is pardonable because even philosophers of the stature of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja read in the *Brahmasūtras what they wanted to read* in them. Vaishṇava interpreters, including the great Āchāryas, see Viśishṭādvaita in the hymns of the Āḻvārs. While there can be no denying the truth that the philosophy itself was nothing more or less than generalizations inspired by earlier texts including the lyrical pieces of the Āḻvārs, a scientific history would hesitate to approve of such modes of establishing historial continuity particularly in the writing of religious history. But the principle behind this tendency is that religion

and philosophy mutually provide artificial links and invest any tradition between themselves with sanctity.

The philosophy of asceticism associable not only with the native Siddha practices but also with the Jainas and Bauddhas also lead to its being interpreted differently in respect of its hoariness and sanctified background. The Siddha literature, unfortunately, was too obscure to become popular and Siddha philosophy, identifiable in punned phrases and pedestrian verses, appealed only to the most sophisticated or spiritually the most attuned. Therefore the Siddha tradition ran parallel to the comprehensive Hindu philosophical thought.

The religion of the Bhakti movement was understood at its surface-value by the people at large who did not care much about the Śaiva Śiddhanta or the Viśishṭādvaita which was embedded in it. The philosophical speculation of the three famous commentators on the *Brahmaśūtras* was the high water-mark of Hindu philosophical thought, and it has become classical since. In the case of the Jainas and Bauddhas, the canonical texts had been definitively fixed soon after the masters had passed away.

RELIGION

- Village Gods
- Hinduism
  - *Vēdism*
    - Smārthaism (strengthened by Śankara)
  - *S'aivism*
    - Proto Śiva Cults
      - Kāḷāmukhas
      - Pāśupatas
      - Kāpālikas
      - Mavratas
      - Bhairavam
      - Śaktaism
      - Kaumāras
    - Sophisticated Śaivism of Nāyanmārs
  - *Vaishṇavism*
    - Pāncha-rātnam (popularised by Rāmanujā)
    - Vaikānaśam
- Jainism
  - Digam-bara
  - Śvēdām-bara
- Buddhism
  - Mahāyāna (Mentioned by Hien-Tsang)
  - Hīnayāna
- Ājivikas (around Toṇḍai-maṇḍalam till the 14th century)
- The Siddha mystics (Tirumūlar)

PLACES OF IMPORTANCE (CULTURAL)

Arabian
Sea

Bay of
Bengal

Indian Ocean

Kāñchi
(edn)

Tirumukkūdal
(edn)

Eṇṇāyiram
(edn) Bāhūr

Tribhuvanam ● (edn)(edn)

Mahābalipuram
Uttaramērūr(Temple)
(Local Govt.)

Gaṅgaikoṇḍachoḷapuram
(Temple)

R. Kaviri

Chidambaram
(Temple)

Nāgappaṭṭinam
(Buddhavihār)

Tanjore
(Temple)

Madurai
● (edn)

Mānūr
(Local Govt.)

Kāndalūrsālai

Kāyal
(Pearl)

Lanka
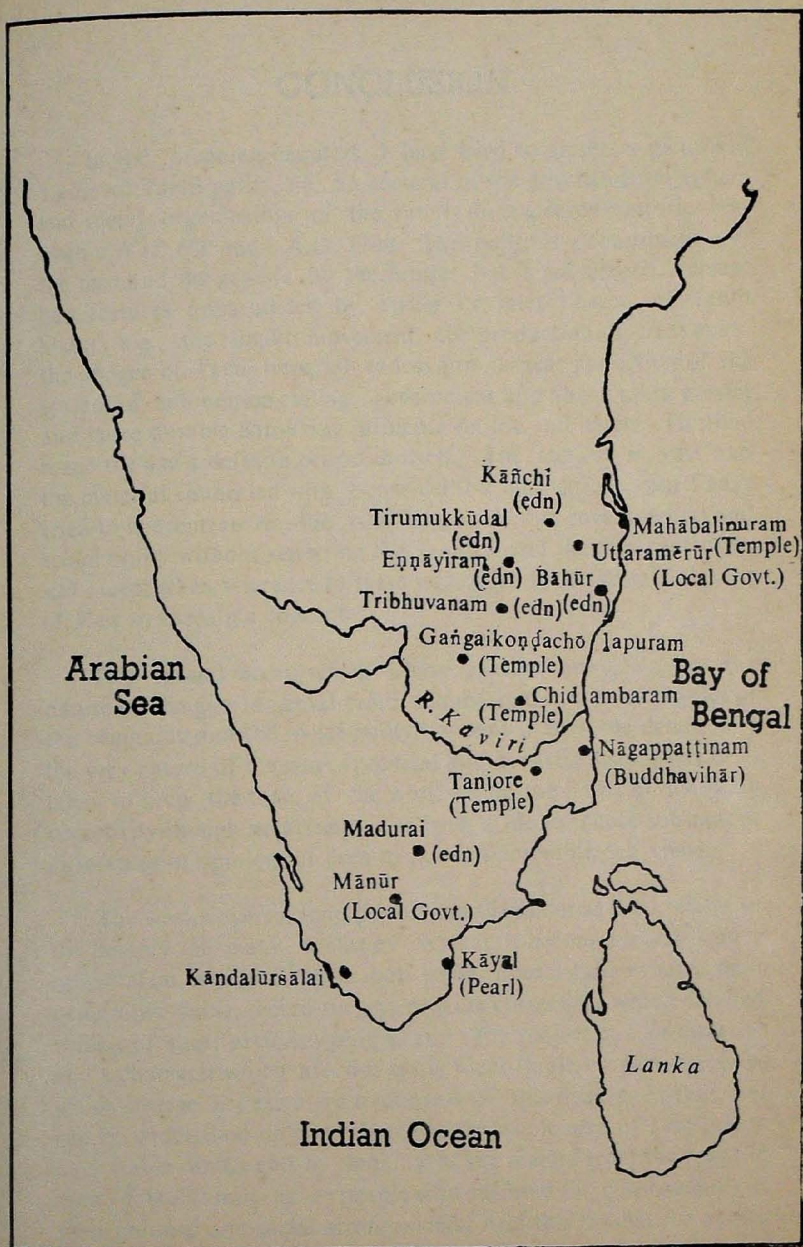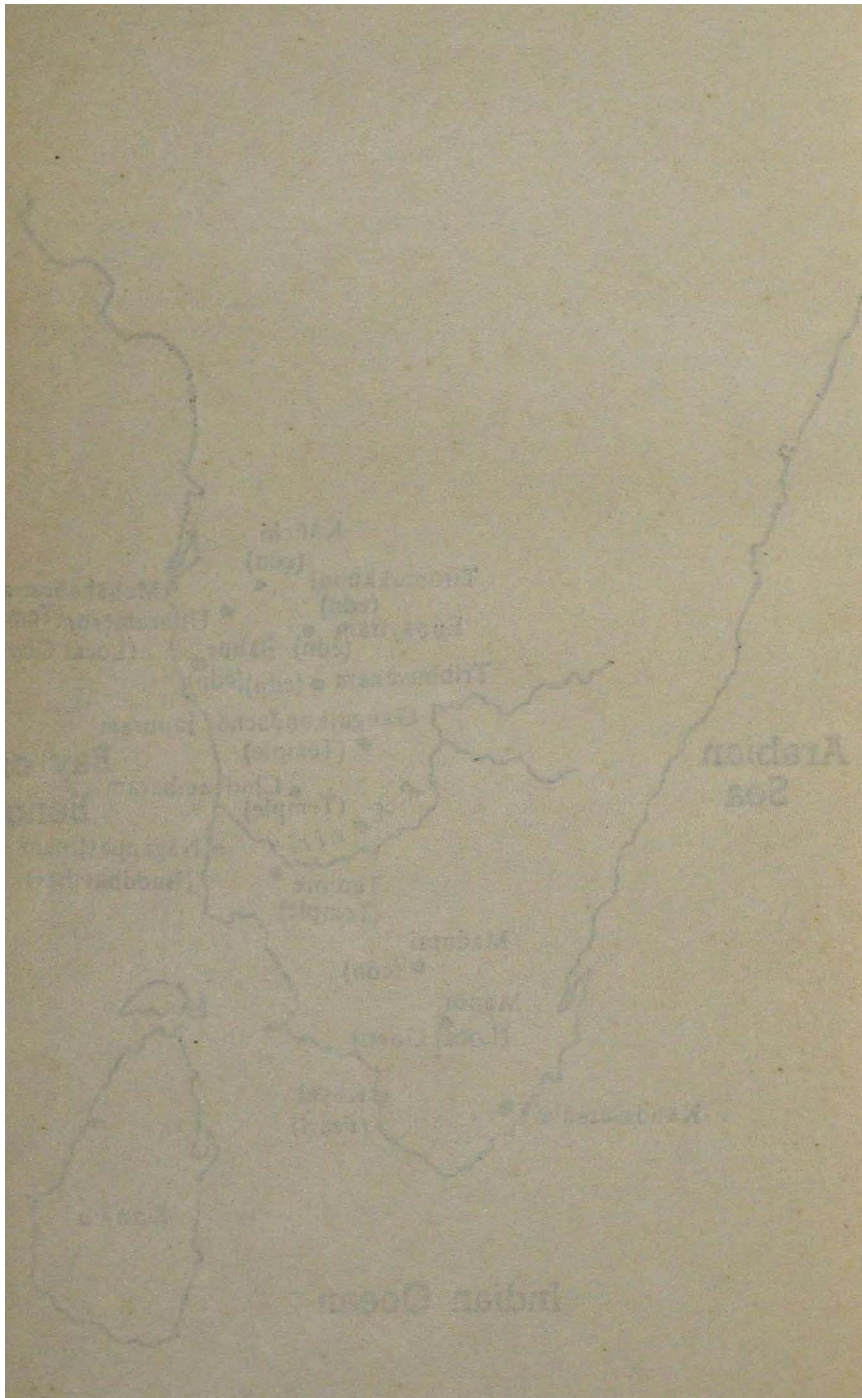
CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters, I have tried to present a picture of medieval Tamil polity, i.e., an account of the governmental system and social organization of the Tamils during seven centuries between c.A.D. 600 and c.A.D. 1300. This polity is a continuation of the past and the genesis of the future, but is *sui generis*, since it has features unparalleled by earlier or later phases, of Tamil history e.g., the Bhakti movement, the production of great epics, the apogee of Tamil imperial endeavours, a near perfection of the system of autonomous village government and above all, a greater and more durable Sanskritic influence on life and letters. This had made the age a definite period in itself. The subject is vast and the material connected with it considerable and varied; but I have tried to concentrate on the vital aspects of the governmental and social polity without repeating the familiar and the non-controversial except when reference to these was called for to sustain a point of view or explain a concept.

Two special areas which I have tried to emphasize are, the nature of the governmental polity summarized in a brief chapter at the beginning and the social polity, presented in some detail. By the very nature of the work, political and dynastic history has been taken to keep the tone of the work within the limits of scholarly objectivity though no attempt has been made to ignore substantial differences of opinion, or even to put forth credible new views.

The work covers a long period and the material used relates to the history of many dynasties so that it becomes macro-survey rather than a micro-study; but while micro-studies have their penetrative value, macro-surveys provide correctives which detailed studies of short periods would need. The subject had an integrity and a character which are not easily identifiable in partial studies which emerge as exclusive treatments of this dynasty or that, but can be understood only as relating to the whole area of Tamiḻaham as a viable unit, and by looking at the themes from the point of view of the Tamils as a people who suffered the consequences of their political and social arrangements. And this is what the author of this work claims to have done.

Appendices

1. ANNOTATED INDEX OF LITERARY WORKS

BHĀRATA VEṆBA, PERUNDĒVANĀR

There was a poet by name Perundēvanār in the Śaṅgam period who translated the *Bhāratam* from Sanskrit into Tamil prose and verse (*urai iḍai iṭṭa pāṭṭuḍai śeyyuḷ*). This must be the work referred to in the Vēḷvikkuḍi inscription (having translated the *Mahābhāratam*, and having set up in Madurai the Śaṅgam). A few centuries later, another poet bearing the same name, i.e., Perundēvanār (Mahādēvanār), either by accident, or by design, wrote another translation of *Mahābhārata*, and it also happened to be *urai iḍai iṭṭa pāṭṭuḍai śeyyuḷ* with *veṇba* dominating the verse pattern. Some confusion between the two works existed in the minds of earlier scholars: but now it is agreed that these are different works, the latter belonging to the period of Nandivarman III. The prose and poetic diction employed by the two poets are so different that there should really have been no room for the confusion.

In the latter work written in the 9th century, which is relevant to our period, only 830 verses covering portions of *Udyōgaparvam*, *Bhīshmaparvam* and *Drōṇaparvam* are extant.

CHŪḶĀMAṆI

is one of the minor epics in Tamil. It was composed by Tōlāmoḷi Tēvar, a Jaina whose real name is unknown. His name, however, is derived from the use of the word 'tōḷā', occurring in a number of places in the epic. The author was a follower of Tiruttakka Tēvar in the organization of the epic, and a sort of forerunner to Kambar. *Chūḷāmaṇi* is an adaptation of the story found in *Śripurāṇam* of Guṇabhadra. There is no evidence (internal) to fix the date of this work, but it is probable that the work belongs to the later half of the ninth century, i.e., to the post-*Chintāmaṇi* period. The occurrence of Jainas as authors of literary works, as

distinct from treatises on grammar, reaches its final stages with *Chūḷāmaṇi*. This poet was a protege of Vijayan a chieftain of Kārveṭṭi. This work consists of 2130 verses in *viruttam* metre.

DIVĀKARAM, ŚENDAN

The *Divākaram* is the earliest Tamil lexicon extant. It is a *Nikaṇḍu* and not a dictionary. It resembles more a thesaurus, and gives synonyms in classified groups, subject-wise, and not alphabetically. The editor of this work, (published by the Śaiva Siddhānta works Publishing House), is of the view that the author of the work was one Divākara Munivar, and that it was compiled at the instance of one Śendan, and thinks that the word Śendan refers to Murugan. But K.A. Nilakanta Sastri has taken 'Śendan' for a Tamil corruption of Jayantan. He also disputes the interpretation that it is a lexicon called *Divākaram* after its author Divākarar who was patronized by one Śendan. This is the obvious meaning; but it can also be that *Divākaram* was just the name of a lexicon called after the illuminating sun and that it was written by Śendan. K.A.N. adopts the latter view and gives a number of reasons none of which completely clinches the issue really (e.g., his following suggestion: "It is quite probable on the supposition that the real authorship of *Divākaram* was, for some reason, forgotten in later times, that the entry was put in this form by some scribe who pinned his faith on the theory current in his time that Śendan patronised the work". *(Paritimālkalaiñar Com. Vol.*1970, *p.*193.) It would be safer to hold that the work was originally written by one Divākaran, but later embellished and brought up to date by Śendan who thus became not only an editing author but also an indirect patron of the work. It must be noted that, even now, we are only guessing; but it is claimed that ours is a much better guess. An eighth century date ascribed to Śendan need not be the date of the original work which, however, cannot be determined.

This work seems to have been a forerunner of two similar works, viz., 1. *Piṅgala Nikaṇḍu*, and 2. *Chūḍāmaṇi Nikaṇḍu*, whose dates are also uncertain. There is no confirmation for this statement outside the introductory part of *Piṅgala Nikaṇḍu*.

IRAIYANĀR AHAPPORUḶ URAI

This is a commentary, allegedly, by the Śangam poet Nakkīrar on a grammatical text dealing with *Ahapporuḷ* in sixty *sūtras*. This is said to be the work of one Iraiyanār who is known to be one of the Śangam poets (*vide*, verse 2 of *Kuṛuntogai*). While the authorship of the *sūtras* need not be doubted, the commentary is widely held to be of a much later date, i.e., the 7th century A.D. The reasons for this assumption are: 1. that the commentator refers to Nakkīrar in the third person; 2. that verses from *Pāṇḍikkōvai* which is in praise of a Pāṇḍyan king Ninṛa Śīr Neḍumāṛan - a contemporary of *Ñānasambandar*, are widely quoted in this commentary; and 3. that numerous words and phrases, unusual in the Śangam context, are found liberally used herein. There is a view supported by N. Subrahmanian that the nucleus of the commentary could well have been written by Nakkīrar, and that in the course of centuries it has been amplified by generations of scholars, and it is the finalised version which we have now before us. While there can be no serious error in calling the commentary essentially Nakkīrar's, it is taken up for consideration here since the finalised version is post-Śangam.

The account of the three Śangams, given in the commentary to *sūtra* 1, has provoked acrimonious debate regarding the historicity of the Śangams.

Since it would have been more natural and proper for *Iraiyanār Ahapporuḷ Urai* to quote from *Tirukkōvaiyār* rather from *Pāṇḍikkōvai*, if it had been written during the time, or after Māṇikkavāchagar, one may think that the *Urai* must have been written before Māṇikkavāchagar and surely after *Pāṇḍikkōvai*. Most probably the commentator who finalised the commentary on *Kaḷavial* was a contemporary of the author of *Pāṇḍikkōvai*.

JĪVAKACHINTĀMAṆI

One of the five great epics, the other four being *Śilappadikāram*, *Maṇimēkalai*, *Vaḷayāpati* and *Kuṇḍalakēśi*. The first two belong to the Śangam (some would say late Śangam and a few others post-Śangam) age. The latter two are not extant is *Chintāmaṇi*. The author of this work is Tiruttakkatēvar, a Jaina. The

work is in 3145 verses, of which, the commentator Nachchinārk-
kiniyar will not vouch for the authenticity of more than 2700. The
work is in 13 cantos of which eight relate to the hero's marriages
and hence the work is called *Maṇanūl*.

Chintāmaṇi answers to the definition of kāvya (Kāppiam in
Tamil). The author uses the story of Jīvakan, the hero, as the
pretext for propounding Jaina moral and philosophical truths. Its
enormous influence among men of faith, and among men of letters,
it is said, persuaded the Chōḷa monarch Anabhāya i.e., Kulōt-
tuṅga II, to commission Śēkkiḷār to write the stories of the Śaiva
saints. It is agreed on all hands that *Chintāmaṇi* was a proto-
type, and an example for later epics, not excluding Kamban's
Rāmāyaṇam. It is estimated that the work belongs to the 9th
century A.D. This date is suggested by T.A. Gopinatha Rao in
S'en Tamiḷ Vol. V. p. 95. The view that this work was perhaps
written before A.D. 600 is tenuous, because: 1. of the persistent
tradition that Śaiva revivalism in the Chōḷa days was occasioned
by the embarassing popularity of *Chintāmaṇi* and 2. of its funda-
mental distinction in the matter of style, form of poetry and epic
treatment from even *Nandikkalambakam* and *Bhāratavenba*, not to
speak of *Peruṅgadai* and the earlier works.

About the author, little of an authentic nature is known,
though we do hear of some miracles he performed. That he was a
Jaina ascetic, and was an outstanding poet, are unquestioned. The
classic commentary by Nachchinārkkiniar provides an insight into
Tamil epic tradition, and presents his best performance as a
commentator.

KALIṄGATTUPPARAṆI

A literary work in 596 verses and 13 cantos by Jayaṅkoṇḍar -
a court poet of Kulōttuṅga I. We do not know to which religion
he belonged, though it is safe to consider him a Śaivite, in view of
his invocation to Śiva in the first canto of the *Paraṇi*. The view
that he was a Jaina first, and that he was converted to Śaivism later
cannot be sustained. It lauds, in the conventional style the
achievements of the king in his second Kaliṅga campaign (c. A.D.
1110). The bloody field of battle is described in all its gruesome

details; and the ways of the goblins, and their plaint to their leader
Kāḷi, make interesting reading. This work contains some really
humorous passages - a rather unusual feature of classical Tamil
works. Its historical worth consists in the eighth canto which deals
with the Chōḷa royal succession *albeit* beginning with Tirumāl,
and skipping even well-known Chōḷa rulers like Āditya I. Still this
is one of the most important among the ancient Tamil works from
the historical point of view.

Paraṇi is a Tamil literary mode designed to praise the exploits
of a king who is victorious in a battlefield, claiming a casualty of
1000 elephants on the enemy side. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* is the first of
its kind in Tamil literature, but remains unique in its perfection of
style and treatment. *Kaḷavaḻi* (i.e., *Kaḷavaḻi Nāṟpadu*) was a fore-
runner of the *Paraṇi*.

KALLĀḌAM

A Śaivite religious work with one hundred verses by one
Kallāḍanār who is clearly post-Sambandar, mentioning as he does,
the sixty-four adventures of Śiva. He bears the name of a Saṅgam
poet Kallāḍanār. The work itself is in the *Āśiriyam* metre inter-
spersed with a few *viruttam* and *veṇba* verses. Possibly he was also
the author of *Tirukkaṇṇappatēvar Tirumaṟam,* included in the
Padinōrām Tirumuṟai. That *Kallāḍam* is not included in the
Padinōrām Tirumuṟai needs no special explanation. It is also
possible that he was the commentator on *Tolkāppiam.* Śaivites
consider this work as of equal worth with works of the Saṅgam
period, and there is a proverb that one shall not dare to argue with
a student of *Kallāḍam.* Contrary to the estimate of the work by
traditional scholars, Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri has a poor opinion
about the literary merit of this work. The learned professor may
have his own standard of literary criticism but there can be no
denying its real worth as literature. Tentatively the author of this
work can be dated in the 9th century A.D. (i.e., post-Māṇikka-
vāchakar and Pre-Nambiāndār Nambi): post-Māṇikkavāchakar
because he prefixes to each one of his verses a verse from Māṇikka-
vāchakar's *Tirukkōvaiyār* as setting the context of the verse.

KAMBA RĀMĀYAṆAM

The Rāmāyaṇa by Kamban (or Kambar) is a Tamil version of Vālmiki's original in Sanskrit. The author takes many liberties with the story so that the Tamil version is nearly an *adaptation*. He enlarges in some places where the original is brief, and summarises some cantos which are elaborately dealt with in the original. He shifts the emphasis from the human aspect of Rāma the divine, and gives Rāvaṇa a hero's personality. It is deemed by most Tamil lovers the best product of the Tamil Muse. This verdict proves, at least, the immense popularity of the work; but scholars who might be more exacting in their standards hold other views. It is surprising that none of the medieval commentators illustrates any grammatical point with reference to any verse in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, while *Chintāmaṇi* and other works of that kind do come in for copious quotation. The 17th century poet Andakakkavi Vīrarāghava Mudali estimated *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam* as follows: "It is one-third ripe fruit, one-third unripe fruit and the other third pure chaff". This is perhaps not being too hypercritical, coming as it does from another poet. This work was written in the court of Kulōttuṅga II, though the poet's date is supposed by scholars to be the 9th century on the basis of a phrase beginning a verse.

The work consists of nearly 12000 verses - a tribute to the author's intellectual fertility and perseverence. His narrative powers and deft employment of simile are his forte. The author gave his work the name '*Rāmāyatāra*'. The Rāma cult became popular in the Tamil country largely because of this version of this epic.

It is believed that Kamban was a contemporary of Oṭṭakkūttan, the court-poet of three successive rulers after Kulōttuṅga I. Kamban wrote the first five *kāṇḍams* (major divisions) of the epic, ending with the coronation of Rāma. The rest of the story according to tradition is told in the *Uttarakāṇḍam* written by Oṭṭakkūttar; but this tradition has not been corroborated more substantially.

There are some legendary accounts relating to the circumstances in which the *Rāmāyaṇa* was composed and published. The author, who according to the story, was a priest in a Kāḷī temple and therefore was a Śaiva by faith wrote a Vishṇu epic impelled by an urge". "Āśai paṟṟi aṟaiyaluṟṟēṉ". (I wrote this impelled by an irresis-

tible urge or love). Love, for whom, or for what? The author does not explain; perhaps it was love of the theme apart from the religious context. His treatment of the epic is not fanatically pro-Vaishnava. He does not denigrate Śiva or Brahmā anywhere. His exaltation of Rāvaṇa was possibly due to the latter being a Siva-worshipper. It seems he met with much opposition from the Vaishnava priests of Śrīraṅgam when he tried to release his *magnum opus* there. He had to work miracles to convince people about the divine sanction for this work. If these anecdotes mean anything, the orthodox Vaishnavas did not consider Kamban sufficiently Vaishnavite to undertake a literary endeavour of this kind. This is understandable in view of the religious atmosphere which prevailed in the 12th century.

Kambar was patronized by one Śaḍaiyappa Mudali whom he does not fail to gratefully mention frequently in the epic.

KUṆḌALAKĒŚI

One of the five major epics in Tamil of which nineteen verses are extant. It is a Buddhist text and is anonymous. The available verses are found in commentators' references. The doctrines of Kuṇḍalakēśi are narrated and refuted by Samayadivākara Munivar, a commentator on Nīlakēśi. The Buddhist work *Therīgāthā* narrates this story.

MINOR DIDACTIC WORKS

Long after the 18 minor works of which a few like *Kuṛaḷ* and *Nālaḍiyār* were didactic, about the 11th or the 12th century A.D., there was a new spurt of didacticism in Tamil literature. A name-sake of the famous Auvaiyār, of Śaṅgam fame, wrote the famous *Āttiśūḍi*, *Konṛaivēndan* and *Mūdurai* (the last one, also called *Vākkuṇḍām*). This later-day Auvai is, by tradition, supposed to be a contemporary of Kamban. This may be legend; but the wisdom of the author of these works cannot be doubted, as she completely conforms to traditional notions of ethical propriety. These works are of the aphoristic type and repeat the moral cliches of the society. Some sound like cant, but to the conscience of the Tamil through the centuries, it has appeared quite satisfactory. Bharati of

the 20th century has re-written parts of *Āttisūdī* which indicates the survival value of the original and the tempor of Bharati's times.

MUTTOḶḶĀYIRAM

A eulogistic work in *veṇba* meter, written by an anonymous author some time late in the Śaṅgam age (perhaps one of the earliest in the post-Śaṅgam period). As the title indicates, it was in three sections of 900 verses each, altogether making 2700 *veṇbas*. Some scholars like N. Sethuraghunathan hold that the work should have contained only 900 verses in all. Each section was on one of the three crowned monarchs of Tamilaham-the Chēra, the Chōḷa, the Pāṇḍya. The work as a whole is not extant, but parts of it (109 of them) are luckily preserved in an anthology called *Puṛattiraṭṭu*. The fragmentary *Mutttoḷḷāyiram* extant has one invocatory verse, 22 on the Chēra, 29 on the Chōḷa and 56 on the Pāṇḍya, while the 109th is available in an imperfect form, and possibly relates to the Chēra (*note* the occurrence of the word *Kōdai* in the verse).

The verses praise these monarchs' valour and person, and ostensibly set forth the experiences of distraught girls who see these kings pass by, mounted on horse or elephant, in their routine civic rounds. This kind of composition later came to be called *Ulā* ('the rounds'), and the first of its kind so designated was *Tirukkailāya Ñāna Ulā* by Chēramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār.

Muttoḷḷāyiram is rightly famed for its fine poetic sentiments and a kind of humour mixed with pathos.

The invocation perhaps indicated the Śaivite learning of the author.

MŪVARULĀ

Ulā is a kind of Tamil poetical work which describes the birth and achievements of a hero. Oṭṭakkūttar, the author of this work, which is a triad of *Ulās* was a Śaivite. He was the court poet of three successive Chōḷa rulers viz., Vikrama, Kulōttuṅga and Rāja-rāja II. The *araṅgēṛṛam* (formal release) of these *Ulās* took place in the courts of the respective kings.

NAḶAVEṆBA

This is a beautiful little poem of Puhaḷēndi, consisting of 427 verses in three cantos. This number includes ten introductory verses and one benedictory verse. Each of the second and third cantos has two invocatory verses. This poem tells the story of Naḷa, the gambler king and his travails. The story has been crisply told in the basic Tamil metre (*Veṇba*). This meter is not ideally suited to epic narration, but in spite of the handicap, the story has been enchantingly told. The author is not known to have written any other work, though many unworthy minor poems have been fathered upon him. He was a contemporary of Oṭṭakkūttar, and is said to have been part of the dowry which a Pāṇḍian princess took with her to the Chōḷa Kingdom. Kūttar is known to have been poet-laureate in three successive Chōḷa courts. We do not know whose court Puhaḷēndi adorned. There is internal evidence in the poem (*vide*, verse 17) to show that he was patronized by one Chandiran Suvarkki, a chieftain, and that he was born in Ponviḷaindakaḷattūr of Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam.

NĀLĀYIRAM

This is a collection of hymns by the twelve Āḷvārs. Their contributions are unequal, ranging from more than a thousand by Tirumaṅgai, to just a decade by Madhurakavi. The most voluminous is Tirumaṅgai's, the most popular Āṇḍāḷ's, the most moving Periāḷvār's and the truly sublime that of Nammāḷvār, for which reason his contribution has been distinguished from the rest by the designation *Tiruvāimoḷi*. It is the most prestigious core of the 4000. Its authors belong to different dates from the first Āḷvārs of the sixth century or the 5th century A.D. to Kulaśēkhara of the 9th, many communities and both sexes. It is an indication of the cosmopolitan nature of Bhaktism. These were collected and edited by Nādamuni, a 10th century scholar-devotee who started the *Āchārya Paramparai* (the succession of teachers as distinct from the hymnists or Āḷvārs) of which Rāmānuja was later to be the most distinguished. This collection is significant for its manifestation of man-god relationship in all possible forms. It is supposed that the mystic philosophy enshrined in these hymns is the source from the Tamilian Bhakti side for the Śrī Vaishṇavite philosophy of Śrī Rāmānuja.

There are two views in regard to the total number of verses in the Vaishṇavite canonical texts, collectively generally called the *'Four Thousand'*. One is that the total is only 3774 or 3776 - by splitting a certain verse into two. The other is that the total is fully 4000, by treating the subdivisions of longer verses as independent ones. A still another calculation in regard to the 4000 is to make it up by adding 3774 according to the first view with 40 verses of *Śiṟiya Tirumaḍal* + 78 of *Periya Tirumaḍal* of *Rāmānuja Nūṟṟandādi*, a later-day work but held in sufficient esteem by the Vaishṇa-vites to be equated with the Āḻvār's verses. Perhaps there is a little over-doing in regard to the number 4000. Some traditionalists would consider the 'Four' before thousand as symbolizing the four Vedas, and would point to internal claims, if not evidence, for considering the whole collection itself as the substance of the four Vedas.

NANDIKKALAMBAKAM

This is a work by an anonymous author who was a contemporary of Nandivarman III, the famous victor at Teḷḷāṟu. It is the earliest *Kalambakam* in Tamil literature. It consists of 114 verses in different metres, and a few more of uncertain authorship, supposed by some to belong to this work. This is contrary to the convention that a *Kalambakam* in praise of a king shall consist only of 90 verses, but either the convention itself belongs to a post-*Nandikkalambakan* period or 24 of these verses are spurious. The story goes that a kinsman of Nandivarman III persuaded a poetaster to compose this poem with the idea of causing the king's death by using therein expressions believed to have lethal effects by overemotionalization, and bringing about the end of the hero (here Nandivarman). Here is, perhaps, a mixture of some real history, and a bit of legend intended to embellish the former.

The word *'Kalambakam'* means 'mixture', and here, of meters and verse structures: like *taravu, arāham, tāḻiśai, ambōtaraṅgam, tanichchol; veṇba, Kattaḷaikkalitturai, viruttam, kalippa, vañjitturai* etc,, and *Puṟam* and *Aham* ideas. The author, in view of the invocatory verse, was possibly a tolerant Śaivite, for there is a short verse on Tirumāl also. The book details many of the victories known to have been achieved by Nandivarman III mainly, and a few other events.

NĪLAKĒŚI

A Jaina work; one of the five lesser epics. The earliest quotations from this are found in *Yāpparuṅgalavirutti*. This is called, for short, *Nīlam*. The works ending with '*kēśi*' like *Kālakēśi*, *Nīlakēśi*, *Kuṇḍalakēśi*, etc., it appears, were works of religious disputations. This is also known occasionally as *Nīlakēśittiraṭṭu* or *Nīlakēśitteruṭṭu*. This work was a rejoinder to *Kuṇḍalakēśi*, which is a Buddhist work. As in *Maṇimēkalai*, this work also describes the religious philosophies of other religions and refutes them. The authorship of this work is not known. The text itself makes it clear that the story of this epic was invented by the author, and therefore, was neither an adaptation nor a translation. The heroine of this story is popularly known as Paḷaiyanūr Nīlakēśi. It is the story of an unfortunate woman who had been murdered and turned ghost, and scared the people in a village. The innocent elders who under estimated her evil propensities, had to keep their pledge of self-immolation, as the ghost had let them down and turned treacherous. Paḷaiyanūr was the village where this happened; hence the name *Paḷaiyanūr Nīli*. This work has an old commentary by one Samayadivākara Vāmaṇa Munivar.

PADINŌRĀM TIRUMUṚAI (THE ELEVENTH TIRUMUṚAI)

This is a collection of Śaivite religious works by Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi; the editor himself has included *Tiruttoṇḍar Tiruvandādi*, one of his compositions, in this Tirumuṛai. The inclusion of verses by Kapiladēva Nāyanār, Paraṇadēvar and Nakkīradevar has raised controversies regarding the identification of these persons. We have Śaṅgam poets bearing these names, but surely the authors of the poems included in the 11th Tirumuṛai are distinct from the earlier poets; but the most intriguing poem is *Tirumurugāṛṛuppaḍai* by Nakkīrar included in *Pattupāṭṭu*, a Śaṅgam anthology, as well as the 11th Tirumuṛai lived in the 10th century or so and bore the names of the illustrious prototypes as was usual in those times; (e.g., the medieval Auvaiyār) and *Tirumurugāṛṛuppaḍai* seems to have been included as an afterthought; but any idea bearing on these matters is necessarily to be at best an intelligent guess. One thing seems to be certain - the uncertainties and the surmises seem to have started as early as the days of Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi himself.

PĀṆḌIKKŌVAI

Kōvai is a kind of poem consisting of nearly 400 verses in the *Kaṭṭalaikkalittuṟai* meter, in praise of a human, or divine person. The theme in a *kōvai* is the development of various situations in the course of a hero's love to his lady-love from their first meeting in grove, to their marriage, and beyond. This class of literature is called *kōvai* because the verses are presumably in ordered, sequence of events. This is the earliest *kōvai* extant in Tamil literature. It contains many references to a Pāṇḍyan king who is referred to in this poem as Neḍumāṟan etc. This has made many scholars equate him with the Ninṟa Śīr Neḍumāṟan, the Pāṇḍya contemporary of Tiruñānasambandar. This equation is confirmed by that king also possessing these titles as well as winning the battles of Pāḷi, Śennilam and Nelvēli.   But Prof. K.A.N.Sastri would date this poem in a much later period, say, late 8th or early 9th century, and make its author as earlier or later contemporary of Māṇikka-vāchakar. R.Nagaswami, in a paper on *Pāṇḍikkōvai*, thinks that Arikēśari Māṟavarman could have been the hero of *Pāṇḍikkōvai*, (not the Pāṇḍyan converted by Sambandar). According to him, the Pāṇḍyan contemporary of Sambandar was Māṟavarman Avaniśūlā-mani. This does not work out satisfactorily in view of the fact that we have to consider Sambandar as a very junior contemporary of Appar, the former of whom lived for only 16 years, and the latter died in his ripe old age. K.A.N.Sastri's view is based on the consideration that the battle of Viḷiñam was fought later. This view seems to overlook the possibility of Ninṟa Śīr Neḍumāṟan having won a Viḷiñam battle, otherwise unrecorded. If that was so this *Kōvai* can well have been written in the 7th century A.D. K.A.N. Sastri's view expressed in his preface to V. Doraiswami's edition of the *Pāṇḍikkōvai*, that this work was perhaps composed sometime, before or after the *Tirukkōvaiyār* by Māṇikkavāchakar contradicts his own view expressed almost immediately after, in the same preface, that *Pāṇḍikkōvai* is the earliest of the extant *kōvais*.

This work consists of 350 stanzas of which 316 are known from quotations in the *Iṟaiyanār Ahapporuḷ* commentary, and the rest from *Kaḷaviaṟkārigai* and quotations from the *Tolkāppiam* commentators. This work along with *Nandikkalambakam* and Peurndēva-nar's *Bhārata Veṇba* is a trio of post-Śaṅgam literary works con-taining authentic (though sparse) historical information. Some of

the verses in this work are identified as part of the *Paṇḍikkōvai* by the Kaḷavialkārigai; hence it was possible to identify the entire body of these verses as part of a work bearing that name. In the *Iṟaiyanār Ahapporuḷ* commentary, however, the traditional apathy to the mentioning of sources specifically withholds authorship of the verses.

PAṬṬINATTUPPIḶḶAIYĀR

Paṭṭinattuppiḷḷai is the commonly known name of Tiruveṅkāḍar which merely means 'he who hails from Tiruveṅkāḍu' a suburb of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam. He was a merchant whose young son taught him the eternal lesson of the futility of earthly belongings and longings. He turned ascetic, saint and mystic. Religious songs of a mystic nature burst forth, and he spread his ideas of Śaivite mysticism in simple, yet classical style, till he reached Tiruvoṟṟiyūr where according to legend he was transformed into a Liṅga by his own will. Numerous legends have collected around him. One of his trite sayings is, "no one takes with him even 'a needle without an eye' when he leaves this world". A chieftain by name Bhadragiri became the saint's disciple. His religious outpourings in verses were the *first of their kind* in Tamil literature as Śaivite religious hymns; *Tēvāram* and allied works may be considered his prototypes; but the mystic element is novel. *Tirumandiram* is nothing, if not mystic, but it lacks the element of easy communication to the masses which is a speciality of the *Paṭṭinattuppiḷḷai* verses. He may be considered to be the pioneer of a system of religious communication which in later times marked the writings of Tāyumānavar and Rāmaliṅga-swāmi.

Five of his poems viz., Kōil Nānmaṇimālai, Tirukkaḷumala Mummaṇikkōvai, Tiruviḍaimarudūr Mummaṇikkōvai, Tiru Ēkam-bamuḍaiyār Tiruvandādi, and Tiruoṟṟiyūr Orupāorupahdu form part of the 11th Tirumaṟai. He has numerous other poems however like *Kōil Tiru Ahaval*, *Kāchchittiru Ahaval* etc., of which the *Arut-pulambal* is probably the most popular. The poems composed in a similar vein by Bhadragiriyār known as *Meiñānappulambal* i.e, 'the lament of the truly enlightened' is even more popular. The popularity of these poems is in direct proportion to their pessi-mism. Wealth and women come in for most of their derision. This is neither mysticism nor pure religion but an ascetic trait greatly resembling the Jaina attitude to life.

PERIYAPURĀṆAM

The 12th book of the Śaivite canon, written by Śēkkiḻār *alias* Aruṇmoḷittēvar, a protege of Anabhāya, i.e., Kulōttuṅga II. Possibly he was an official in the court, but usually designated as a minister.   The then prevailing popularity of Jainism obliged the Śaivite Chōḷa king to persuade Śēkkiḻar to tell the tales of the Śaiva saints in verse.   Śēkkiḻar was indebted to *Tiruttoṇḍattogai* of Sundarar as well as to *Tiruttoṇḍartiruvandādi* of Nambiāṇḍār Nambi. *Periyapurāṇam* which is the most important hagiology in Tamil literature was originally called *Tiruttoṇḍarpurāṇam* or the lives of the saints. He deals with 63 individual saints and 9 collectives.   Two circumstances have led some scholars to derive this *Purāṇam* from a Jaina original. The Jaina purāṇam 'Māpurāṇam' is a synonym of 'Periyapurāṇam' and the number 63 is common to both denominations; but it would be difficult to be categorical on this point. The similarity seems to be accidental.

Periyapurāṇam arose when Śaivism was almost a state religion in the Chōḷa empire. It caused the religion to rise higher in popular esteem. It was an age in which the Śaivites had to contend not only with the vestiges of Jainism but also the Vaishṇavism of Rāmānuja.

The Śaivites consider this work as by no means inferior to the canonical texts edited by Nambiāṇḍār Nambi, and have given it the status of the *12th book* of the canon. The work is in 2 *kāṇḍas* and 12 *sargas*, and has a total of 4286 verses. Śēkkiḻār has depended not only on the *togai* and the *andādi*, but also on legends, traditional accounts, some written records maintained in the Maṭhas, and possibly epigrapic data too. His testimony has been accepted as genuine, uncorrupted and true as he saw it. The dates of Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and many other Śaiva saints have been inferred from references in this work. It constitutes, therefore, a major source of historical material not so much for political data as for clear details regarding social life.

PERUŃGADAI

Peruṅgadai of Koṅguvēḷir is a long narrative poem in the ahaval meter: it is considered to be an adaptation of Guṇāḍya's

Bṛihatkathā. Guṇāḍhya, one of the ministers of Śālivāhana, was also a distinguished poet. He wrote this in the Paiśāca language in A.D. 78. This work consisted of the stories of seven Vidyādharas; the first six were destroyed and the last one related to the life of Udayaṇa. This work, which is not extant, was translated into Sanskrit by one Durviṇīta, the king of the Gaṅgas in A.D. 570-580. This Sanskrit translation could have helped Koṅguvēḷir, to write this work in Tamil. Koṅguvēḷir, one of the chieftains of the Koṅgu country was a Jaina. The date of this work is uncertain, but definitely post-Śaṅgam, for if it is based on Durviṇīta's work, it must be later than A.D. 590. The work is not fully extant. *Peruṅgadai* consists of five divisions, each one of which has a varying number of sub-divisions. The first canto begins with the 32nd division and the last one ends abruptly.

TAKKAYĀGAPPARAṆI

A *paraṇi* in 815 couplets by Oṭṭakkūttar. The theme of his work relates to an infructuous sacrifice performed by Takkan who defied Śiva. The infuriated Śiva destroyed him, with the aid of Bairavan sprung from him at his will. This work structurally differs from the *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*. It is second only to that master-piece though it exhibits greater depth of scholarship. It has a learned commentary by an unknown scholar. Probably this work was composed at the instance of Rājarāja II.

TĒVĀRAM

This accounts for the major portion of the Śaiva canon which consists of forty religious works divided into eleven *Tirumuṟais* by Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi in the tenth century A.D. *Tēvāram* itself sung by Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar, constitutes the first seven *Tirumuṟais*, Sambandar's *Tēvāram* being the first three, and Sundarar's the last one. Appar and Sambandar belonged to the seventh century A.D. and Sundarar to the middle of the ninth. Thus by the end of the ninth century the *Tēvāram* movement had reached its culmination. It is not merely a body of devotional hymns, but specifically intended to be sung, and was set to a kind of music which is now archaic and represents a certain stage in the evolution of Karnatic music. A unique inscription from Tiruviḍaivāyil

(Tanjore) preserves an otherwise unknown *Tēvāram* hymns of
Ñānasambandar. *Tēvāram* has no standard commentary.

TIRUKKŌVAIYĀR

This is a *kōvai* (literally a string of verses) of 400 verses written
by Māṇikkavāchagar, a saintly Śaivite poet of the late 9th century
i.e., a contemporary of Varaguṇa II Pāṇḍya. The author is credited,
by the Śaivite tradition, with Śiva's special grace. His devotional
hymns are collectively called the *Tiruvāchagam* or the *Sacred
Sayings*. *Tirukkōvaiyār*, however, is an obviously secular poem
dealing with the physical and psychological aspects of an imaginary
hero's love. The invariable introduction of one or other of Śiva's
names under some pretext in every verse is no justification for clai-
ming religiosity for the work; but the Śaivites consider the entire
poem as an allegory dealing with the devotional love of man to his
maker who according to Śaivite concepts appears as the Guru to
save the mortal from the sin of ignorance. This poem was the first
kovai and possibly is still, *the best of its kind*. The editors of the
Śaiva canon have classified this work as part of the *eighth division*.
This has a learned commentary by Pērāśiriyar.

TIRUMANDIRAM

This consists of nine *Tantras* making, in all, 3000 verses. Each
verse is a mantra. Some claim a fundamental distinction between
the Sanskrit mantra and the Tamil mandiram, though the claim is
not well substantiated. The author of this work Tirumūlar is the
subject of about the most impossible legends in the entire range of
Tamil literature (e.g., Tirumūlar was contemporary of Nandidēva
himself; he transferred his soul into the dead body of a cowherd; he
wrote the Tirumandiram at the rate of one verse a year and so
forth). But the historian has to bate his breath in all humility when
he is told by the learned editor of the *Tirumandiram* (Śaiva Sid-
dhānta edition) that the date of Tirumūlar was c. 6000 B.C. This
is a clearly mystical work, definitely pro-Śaivite and couched in
language described fairly correctly by K.A.N. Sastri as "unredeemed
in its total obscurity". It has esoteric meanings preserved by tradi-
tional scholarship. He is classed among the Siddhas of whom the
original was Agastiya, and among whom Vaḷḷuvar and others are

included by Śaivites. The mysticism of *Tirumandiram* has no parallel in Tamil. The genesis of Śaiva Siddhanta philosophy is found in it. He could belong to any period between the 6th century A.D. and the 11th century A.D. Tirumūlar is said to have been originally designated, Sundaranāthan, a fact mentioned in the *Śiṟappuppāyiram* of the work.

This is the tenth *Tirumuṟai* of Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi's edition of the Śaivite canonical literature.

TIRUTTOṆḌARTIRUVANDĀDI

by Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi is based on *Tiruttoṇḍattogai* of Sundarar. It is 'a single-verse' biography of each of the Śaiva saints, each verse dealing with one saint. Nambi was the collector and editor of *Tēvāram* hymns. Perhaps he set them to music too. In all probability, he was a contemporary of Rājarāja I. He is the Śaiva counterpart of Nādamuni, the redactor of *Nālāyiram*.

TIRUVĀCHAGAM

The *eighth book* of the canon of the Śaivites. This is by Māṇikkavāchagar, the last of the four great Śaiva Samayāchāryas or Saints. He lived in the 9th century, and was a contemporary of Varaguṇa II (Pāṇḍya). The verses are renowned for their pious sentiments and touching phrasing. *Tiruvembāvai* is considered a counterpart of Āṇḍāḷ's (the Vaishṇava hymnist - a teen-aged girl) *Tiruppāvai*.

UDAYAṆAKUMĀRA KĀVYAM

This work is one of the five lesser epics, and is an adaptation of Koṅguvēḷir's *Peruṅgadai*; it is in simple *Viruttam* meter, enabling even the common folk to read and understand the story of Udayaṇan. This work, however, gives a full account of the story of Udayaṇan. The author is anonymous and is poor as a poet. It contains a sixth canto (Tuṟavukkāṇḍam) which is missing in the *Peruṅgadai*.

VAḶAIYĀPATI

One of the five major epics of anonymous authorship. Of this, sixty six verses found in *Puṟatṭirattu* alone a e available now: from commentators we get six - making it a total of seventy two. It is a Jaina text. S. Vaiyapuri's view that it belongs to the 15th century is contradicted by reference to the work in much earlier texts like *Yāpparuṅgalam* and *Aḍiyārkkunallār*.

VĪRASŌḶIYAM

A Tamil grammatical work by Buddhamitra, a contemporary of Vīra Rājēndra (1063-1069). It has a commentary by Perundēvanār. a disciple of the author. It has a *pāyiram*, or poetical introduction of three verses evidently by the author himself. It is in five chapters: Orthography, syntax, *aham* and *puram*, prosody and rhetoric. It consists of ten snb-chapters in all. The text and the commentary make direct references to historical events of Chōḷa times. This is an instance of Tamil grammatical studies in the middle Ages being largely in the hands of the Jainas and the Buddhists. The author seeks to establish a Sanskrit grammatical base for Tamil linguistic and literary structure. This work consists of 181 verses. This, perhaps, provided inspiration for Īśāna Dēsikar and Subrahmaṇya Dīkshitar of later times, who also tried to derive Tamil grammatical principles from Sanskrit theory. Nilakanta Sastri calls this work 'curious', and calls it a "Tamil grammar conceived on ultra-Sanskritic lines by Buddhamitra who calls himself a chieftain of ponperri" This place is identified by Venkayya with Pompeṭṭi in the Pattukkottai Taluk of the Tanjore District. (A.R.E. 1899, S.I I. Vol. III. p. 197)

YĀPPARUṄGALAKKĀRIGAI

This is by Amitasāgaranār. the author of *Yāpparuṅgalam* and is an abridged form of that work, and has served ever since it was composed as the standard text-book on Tamil prosody. This was written before the author wrote his *Yāpparuṅgalam*. This work is in *Sūtrams* and is mainly mnemonic in character. *Chūḍāmaṇi Nikaṇḍu* by Maṇḍala Purusha mentions the Kārigai, but the date of *Chūḍāmaṇi* itself is uncertain. The *Kārigai* became very popular, and it seems that the place where it was composed came to be called *Kārigaikkuḷattūr* (*vide* 534, 535 of 1921). These inscriptions

state that an ancestor of Kandan Mādhavan of Kuḷattur persuaded Amitasāgaranār to come and live in the Śiṛukunṛanāḍu of Jayaṅgoṇḍachōḷamaṇḍalam. The name Jayaṅgoṇḍachōḷamaṇḍalam occurs only in the inscriptions, and we do not know if Amitasāgaranār lived after this name came into vogue. Thus it would be difficult to accept K.A. Nīlakanta Sastri'ssuggestion that *Yāpparuṅgalam* and the *Kārigai* must have been written after the last year's of Rājarāja who held the title Jayaṅkoṇḍachōḷa.

The *Kārigai* has a commentary by Guṇasāgara the author's disciple. The author mentions Poigaiyār, Paraṇar, Nakkīrar, Kapilar, Kallādar, Iḍaikkāḍar and others; but it is not certain whether the Poigaiyār referred to is the same as Poigai Āḻvār.

YĀPPARUṄGALAVIRUTTI

This is the standard work on Tamil prosody, next to the *Seyyuḷ Iyal* of *Tolkāppiam*. This work is by Amitasāgaranar a Jaina ascetic, a disciple of Guṇasāgarar. He wrote the commentary on this work himself. He was the author also of the *Yāpparuṅgalakkārigai*, a lesser work on the same subject. He is quoted by *Virasōḻiam* of the 11th century, and it quotes *Chintāmaṇi* and *Chūḷāmaṇi*; so, in all probability it belongs to the 10th century. In the *Virutti* commentary on sūtram 48 of *Yāpparuṅgalam*, he quotes himself from the *Kārigai*; and so it follows, the *Kārigai* was written first and *Yāpparuṅgalam* later. It exhausts Tamil poetics. In the commentary on this work there is mention of *Chintāmaṇi, Chūḷāmaṇi, Kuṇḍalakēśi, Nīlakēśi and Amirtapati* (a work not otherwise heard of).

YASŌDHARAKĀVYAM

A Jaina work - one of the five lesser epics - has for its hero one Yasōdhara, king of Avanti. The story of Yasōdhara in another form is found in the Uttara Purāṇa in Sanskrit by Guṇabhadra. The Tamil work consists of 330 verses, in five cantos. The author of this work is anonymous. The epic is written in simple style, and speaks of moral consequences to good and bad. The literary merit of this work is less than that of *Chūḷamaṇi* and *Nīlakēśi*. It follows the familiar pattern of preaching Jaina moral philosophy through stories. It is obvious that the stories were invented in a hurry to provide illustrative material for the preaching.

2. PANNIRU TIRUMURAI

(The Twelve holy texts of Saiva canonical literature)

Tirumuṟai No.	Author	
I, II and III	Sambandar	
IV, V and VI	Appar	Tēvaram
VII	Sundarar	
VIII	Māṇikkavāchagar	Tiruvāchagam and Tirukkōvai
IX	1. Tirumāḷigai Tevar	
	2. Sēndanār	
	3. Karuvūr Tēvar	
	4. Pūnturutti Nambi Kadanambi	Tiruvisaippa etc.
	5. Gaṇḍarādittar	
	6. Vēṇāṭṭaḍigaḷ	
	7. Tiruvāḷi Amudanār	
	8. Puruḍōttama Nambi	
	9. Chēdirāyar	
X	Tirumūlar	Tirumandiram
XI	1. Tiruvālavāiyuḍaiyār	
	2. Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār	
	3. Iyaḍigaḷ Kāḍavar Kōn Nāyanār	
	4. Chēramān Perumaḷ Nāyanār	
	5. Nakkīra Tēva Nāyanār	
	6. Kallāḍa Tēva Nāyanār	Tirumugap-
	7. Kapila Tēva Nāyanār	pāśuram etc.,
	8. Paraṇa Tēva Nāyanār	
	9. Iḷamperumān Aḍigaḷ	
	10. Adirā Aḍigaḷ	
	11. Paṭṭinattuppiḷḷaiyār	
	12. Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi	
XII	Sēkkiḷār	Periyapurāṇam

3. SOME DECISIVE BATTLES

Sack of *Vatāpi* (642)

Narasiṃhavarman I Pallava invaded the Western Chāḷukyan country and sacked Vātāpi its capital which was defended by Pula-kēśin II, who was himself reputed as the conqueror of Harsha. This is one of the few wars fought by the medieval Tamils far beyond their frontiers and in which they secured decisive victories. Apart from revealing the individual military genius of Narasiṃhavarman, this throws light on a little suspected aspect of Tamil military tradition. *The destruction of Vātāpi* is in clear contrast to the civilized treatment of Kāñchi by Vikramāditya I Western Chāḷukya who had every reason to remember Vātāpi and avenge it at Kāñchi. But he did not do so. The Tamil military tradition seems to partake of the cult of the vandal in which there is the sadistic pleasure over destruction of enemy property in a manner and to a degree little known to others. Victory in this war gave the victor the title *Vātāpikoṇḍa-Narasimhavarman.*

Battle of *Teḷḷaṟu*

This battle was won by Nandivaram III against Pāṇḍyan Śrīmāṟa Śrivallabha. It is interesting that Teḷḷaṟu is very near the Pallava capital, and it was possible for the Pāṇḍya to come so near the capital, having, *en route*, won a battle at Kumbakōṇam. This could mean that the Pallava defence except near the capital was not in good shape. All along, this seems to have been the case in the Pallava kingdom. This view is further strengthened by the defeat of Pulakēsin II at Maṇimaṅgalam. The numerous defeats which Nandivarman II suffered at Pāṇḍyan hands in the southern stretches of his kingdom before he was saved by Udayachandra are also well-known. This could only mean that militarily the Pallava territorial defence structure left much to be desired. Victory in this battle gave the victor the title *Teḷḷaṟerinda Nandi.*

Tiruppuṛambiyam (c. 885)

When the Pallava power reached its fag-end, an epoch-making battle was fought at Tiruppuṛambiyam by Aparājita Pallava supported by Pṛthivīpati I, the Gaṅga ruler and Āditya I the Chōḷa, against Pāṇḍya Varaguṇa II. This battle was decisive since it broke the Pāṇḍya power for the time being; and before the latter could recover, Āditya I strengthened his position and his son Parāntaka I could easily defeat the Pāṇḍyas, and become *Maduraikoṇḍa Parāntaka.* This battle is significant, however for two reasons: (1) for the first time in Tamil History a Tamil King (Pallava) sought the help of a non-Tamil ruler (Gaṅga) against another Tamil King (Pāṇḍya). As a consequence non-Tamil interference in Tamil politics became progressively consequential.[1] (2) This battle was fought in the plains near Kumbakōṇam. This means that the battle was fought in the absence of natural defences and also that in spite of Āditya's (whose capital was at Tanjore) alliance, the Pāṇḍya was permitted to cross the Kaviri and push upto Kumbakōṇam.

Takkōlam (949)

This was a tragic battle which ended fatally for the crown prince Rājāditya who led the Chōḷa army to battle. The crown prince seated on elephant was directing the hostilities like a veritable Porus, and was killed in action. He has been appropriately cherished in memory as 'Yānaimēltuñjiya': 'he who died on the back of an elephant'. On his death, the Chōḷa army broke and fled, which means that the army could not fight leaderless nor choose a leader on the spot. The interesting principle enforced by this battle in respect of medieval wars is that individual or personal valour counted for much, especially that of the commander. *Yānaimēltuñjiya* tells two stories at the same time: 1. the total collapse of Chōḷa morale after the death of the prince and 2. that the prince *fought to the end* choosing to die *in harness,* as its were.

Kāndaḷūrlsālai (c. 988)

Rājarāja I tasted the fruits of a maiden victory at Kāndaḷūr śālai. A large controversy has raged around the exact nature

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1. *Vide* Krishna III Rāshtrakūṭa down to Vīra Ballāla III Hoysala

of this battle: One view is that it was a naval battle wherein
a Chēra fleet was destroyed. Another view is that Kāndaḷūrśālai
was not a roadstead *but a college of military science* which also
housed an armoury. This engagement is significant because, one
of the greatest of Tamil warriors started by destroying the armoury
instead of the warriors - an original war-strategy of a farsighted
soldier. This earned Rājarāja I the title *Kāndaḷūrśālai Kalamaṟuttu
aruḷiya Vēndan.*

Kaḍāram naval campaign (c. 1025)

This was a naval battle fought by Rājēndra I and the greatest
naval battle on record in Indian history, ancient and medieval. That
this first and last major naval war on such scale was undertaken by
a Tamil power is interesting. The provocation for this is in dispute:
K.A.N. Sastri[2] holds that perhaps the war was provoked by Śrī
Vijaya obstructing the Chōḷa trade with China and N. Subrah-
manian[3] holds that the Chōḷa intention was to found and retain
overseas political power. The latter reason seems to be more
probable. This conquest was followed by the appointment of some
members of the Chōḷa royal family as viceroys overseas. It is
significant that Vīrarājēndra also claims to have conquered Kaḍāram
again. K.A.N. Sastri says, 'in any case there is no evidence to
show that the Chōḷas made any attempt to rule these lands as
provinces of their empire'. *But surely there is no evidence to the
contrary either* while the probability is very high. The Karandai
plates mention the king of the Kamboja Sūryavarman I, seeking
Rājēndra's friendship by soliciting his protection which might
mean that Rājēndra's armies operated on a much wider front
than one imagines.[4] This battle earned for the victor the title
Kaḍāramkoṇḍaśōḷan.

Koppam (1054)

This was another fateful battle fought between Rājādhirāja I
and Sōmēśvara I. In this battle *the king died in action* but his

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2. K.A.N. Sastri. *The Cōḷas:* p. 269
3. N. Subrahmanian. *History of Tamilnad:* p. 194; also *Maritime
   tradition among Ancient and Medieval Tamils.*
4. *Ibid.* pp. 194-195

younger brother converted a possible defeat into a certain victory. A significant thing happened soon after; Rājēndra the younger brother of the deceased king crowned himself on the battlefield K.A.N. Sastri says that this was unprecedented, but N.Subrahmanian points out that there is sanction for such procedure in the *Tolkāppiyam*.[5] The principle we have earlier elucidated in reference to the battle of Takkōlam is again proved here though the details are different.

Kūḍalśangamam (1061-62, 1067-68)

Two battles go by this name, of which one was fought and the other was not. In Kūḍalśangamam II a challenge went forth from Āhavamalla to the Chōḷa emperor to dare to meet him in battle. The Chōḷa turned up in full strength. The battle was 'fought' *exparte* since the host did not turn up. The Chōḷa declared himself the victor of a battle that was never fought, set up a pillar of victory and returned. Āhavamalla, in the meantime, had drowned himself in the Tuṅgabhadra.

Kaliṅga II (1110)

This battle was fought by Kulōttuṅga I against Anantavarman Chōdagaṅga of Kaliṅga. The Chōḷa armies were led by Karuṇā-karan, a scion of the ancient Pallavas. The battle is described in epic detail in the *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*. The magnitude of the battle deserved a *Paraṇi*, which is, by convention, sung in praise only of a prince *who destroys a thousand elephants in battle*. The savagery of medieval Tamil warfare is well brought out in this contemporary text. In Indian epic tradition, it is claimed that significant battles are won in 18 days, or 18 months or 18 years. The celestial battle between the Devas and the Asuras was fought for 18 years, the *Rāmāyaṇa* battle for 18 days; The author of the *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi* says that the Kaliṅga battle was fought in 18 nāḷis or seven hours and twelve minutes!.[6]

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5. N.Subrahmanian: *Saṅgam Polity:* p.44
6. *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi:* Iḷangō Aḍigaḷ said the same thing about Chēran Śenguṭṭuvan's battle against Kanaka and Vijaya on the banks of the Ganges: Śilappadikāram: XXVII: 8-10. These statements seem to be conventional eulogy.

IMPORTANT BATTLE-FIELDS
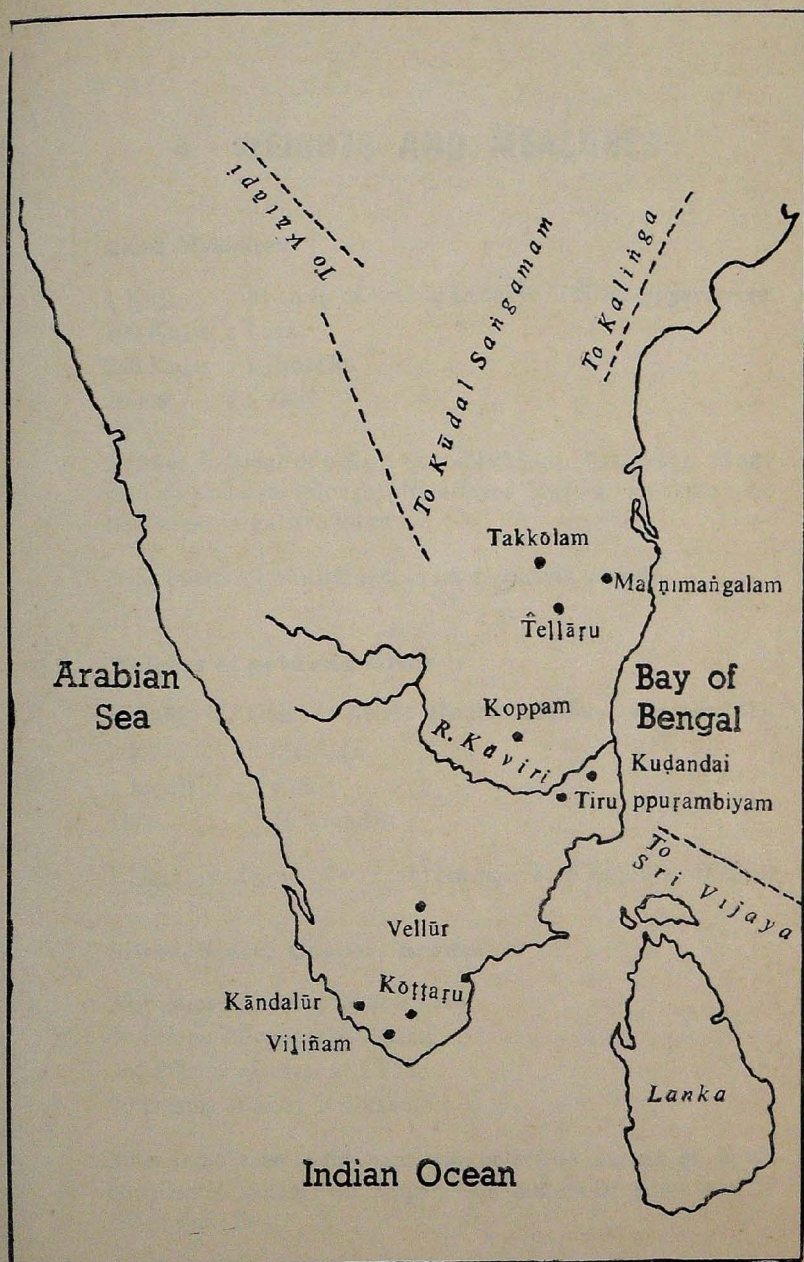
4. WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

1. Land Measures

1 Kuḷi	: 81 sq.ft. of land in the days of Nripatungavarman
100 Kuḷis	: 1 mā
240 Kuḷis	: 1 Padākku
20 mā	: 1 Vēli

Further divisions of a Kuḷi were Mukkāṇi, Araikkāṇi, Mun-dirikai, Kalappai (plough) Nivartana, Paṭṭika, Patakam were land areas in Pallava times.

20 sq.cubits : 1 Nivartanam in later Pallava period.

2. Weights of gold and silver

Kaḷañju (72 grains in weight theoretically but going upto 83).

2 Kāśu	: 2 Mañjāḍi
1 Mañjāḍi	: 2 Kunṛi
1Mā	: 1/10 Manjāḍi

1 Kaḷañju of gold of standard fineness: 8.66 Kaḷanjus of silver

Silver, Brass, Copper, Bronze

35 Palams of brass sold at 2 kāśu
30 Palams of copper at 2 kāśu
26⅔ Palams of silver at 2 kāśu
70 Palams of alloy at 2 kāśu

So at some time in the medieval period 35 palams of brass, equalled 30 palams of copper, 26⅔ palams of silver and 70 palams of alloy.

3. Linear Mesure

2 Śāṇ   : 1 muḻam
1 Śāṇ   : 12 Viral
1 Viral   : 8 Tōṟai (paddy)
8 Śāṇ   : 1 Vil

Linear measuring rods

4, 12, 15 Śāṇ Kōl
12 Śāṇ Kōl was used for survey purposes
A measuring rod was called Śiṟṟambalattukkōl
4 Kādam : 1 Yōjana

4. Cubic Measures

5 Śevuḍus (or Śōḍus)	: 1 Āḻākku
2 Āḻākku	: 1 Oḻakku
2 Oḻakku	: 1 Uri
2 Uri	: 1 Nāḻi
8 Nāḻi	: 1 Kuṟuṇi
2 Kuṟuṇi	: 1 Padakku
4 Kuṟuṇi	: 1 Tūṇi
12 Kuṟuṇi	: 1 Kalam

Karunāḻi, Mārāyanāḻi, Peyanāḻi, Nārāya(ṇa)nāḻi were the different kinds of Nāḻi in use. Jayaṅkoṇḍa Śōḻaraiyan, Soḻiyam, Rājakēśari Aruṇmoḻidēvan and Dinachintāmaṇi were some of the cubic measures.

Grain Measures

Śōḍu, Nāḻi, Marakkāl, Padakku, Kuṟuṇi, Kāḍi, Kalam were the more important grain measures.

Śivam was a measure lesser than drōṇam. Āḍavallān (after Lord Naṭarāja); Rājakēśari (after the king); Tirumaṟaikkāḍan named after a village was another grains measure.

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