

The Period of Religious Revival in Tamil Literature



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Reprint from
Tamil Culture—Vol. VI, No. 4—October 1957

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A study of the religious revival during the Pallava reign will not merely help students of Tamil literature and history to have a glimpse of the trends of Tamil literature during the period but will also serve as an introduction and suitable background for a proper understanding and assessment of the development of Tamil Literature during the time of the later Cholas. Even a cursory study of the literary works during the period will reveal two significant features. Firstly, the literature of the period distinctly religious in character having arisen with the sole objective of invigorating the indigenous faiths of the land, namely, Saivism and Vaishnavism, which were in conflict with Buddhism and Jainism. Secondly the evidence is clear that the Pallava kings were generally more anxious to patronise Sanskrit culture than to support, at any rate actively, Tamil literature, learning and education. A study of the numerous Pallava inscriptions brings out the fact that not one inscription relates to grants to any Tamil Colleges or institution for fostering Tamil learning and education, whereas we find a number of inscriptions relating to the promotion of Sanskrit learning and education.

The period roughly from 600 to 900 A.D. of the Pallava rule may be described as the age of religious revival in the History of Tamil Literature. During the Sangam Age, the prevalence of a spirit of religious tolerance and the study of the different religions of the times in a philosophic and friendly spirit, reinforced and strengthened the feeling of universal brotherhood fostered by the large-hearted and

far-seeing policy of the Tamil kings.¹ The Saiva, Vaishnava, Buddhist, Jaina and other faiths flourished, all side by side in a peaceful and tolerant atmosphere, not merely in the big capital cities like புகார் Puka:r or காவிரிப்பூம்பட்டினம் Kavirippu:mpat:t:inam காஞ்சிபுரம் Kanjipuram வஞ்சி Vanji and Ut:anthai or உறையூர் Ut:aiyu:r but also in rural areas. We have a large body of evidence attesting the existence side by side of temples of the gods of not merely the Saiva pantheon but also of Vishnu, Muruha, Bala De:va and Indra, and Jaina and Buddhist shrines and monasteries.² Religious toleration was an article of faith and not merely a matter of policy with the Tamil kings of the period and the kings made liberal grants to religious institutions, irrespective of their doctrinal affiliation. We come across Buddhist and Jain poets in the third Sangam.

But, after the Sangam age, there came an interval of literary quiescence for about three centuries, probably due to the Kalabra Interregnum. The adherents of Buddhist and Jain religions, who had hitherto been peaceful, began to adopt a policy of aggressive expansion at the expense of the indigenous Saiva and Vaishnava faiths. They spread rapidly in the South with settlements in Kanji, கொங்கு நாடு Kongu Na:du and மதுரை Madurai. Many of the Buddhists and Jains of the time were great Sanskrit scholars ; and, while they learnt the language of the soil (Tamil), became scholars and writers in Tamil, they not only imported Buddhist and Jain ideas and ideologies into Tamil but were also responsible for a large influx of Sanskrit and Pali words, phrases and idioms into the Tamil Language. They gradually exercised a powerful influence on the kings and chieftains as well ; in the hey-day of the Pallava rule in the early years of the 7th century their influence was at its zenith. King மஹேந்திரவர்மன் Mahendra Varman

1 *Manimekalai* — Kathai 27.

2 (i) *Silappatikaram* — Kathai V. Lines 169 to 181.

(ii) *Ibid* — Kathai XIV, Lines 7 to 14.

(iii) *Ibid* — Kathai IX, Line 60.

(iv) *Ibid* — Kathai IX, Lines 9 to 13.

(600 — 630 A.D.) was himself a Jain and greatly encouraged Jainism. If the story of his persecution of திருநாவுக்கரசர் Thiruna:vukarasar³ who reverted to Saivism from Jainism to which he had earlier become a convert is correct, it is an indication that conversions of Saivas and Vaishnavas to the Buddhist and Jain faiths were not uncommon. It is curious that this Jain king who persecuted Thiruna:vukarasar or Appar was himself converted in turn to Saivism by the very same Appar.

The devotees of Siva and Vishnu viewed such conversions with consternation and horror and were anxious to check the spread of these alien faiths. It was at this time that the great Saivite and Vaishnavite saints came on the scene and while arresting the spread of the new faiths, strengthened and deepened their own faiths. Travelling from one place of pilgrimage to another with their followers and devotees, singing the praise of their Lords, Siva and Vishnu, these Saiva and Vaishnava Acharyas, popularly known as நாயன்மார் Na:yanma:rs and ஆழ்வார் A:l-va:rs spread the bhakti cult.⁴

3 (i) *Tirunavukkarasar Tevaram — Tiruvarur Palamoli Pattu — Verse 10 — Last line —* The term கரும்பிருக்க இரும்பு கடித்து எய்த்தவாறு is taken to mean a pathetic reference to his original faith of Saivism described as கரும்பு or sugarcane and adopting the foreign faith of Jainism described as இரும்பு or iron. In fact the terms கனி and காய் in verse 1 of this patikam, அறம் and மறம் in verse 3, விளக்கு and மின்மினி in verse 7, and தவம் and அவம் in verse 9 are taken to refer to these faiths only in turn.

(ii) *Ibid — Tiruchenkattankudi Patikam — Verse 4 last lines 3-4.*

(iii) The following lines refer to his having been once a Jain and the peculiar habits and practices of the Jains some of which are no doubt exaggerated.

Ibid — Tiruvaiyaru Patikam — beginning with குண்டனாய்ச் சமண ரோடு verses 7, 5, 4, 3, 2 & 1 and 8.

(iv) *Ibid — Tiruppuhalur — Tirunerisai — Verse 4.*

3-A *Tirunavukkarasar Tevaram — Namaccivayattiruppatikam — Verse 1.*

(ii) *Ibid — Tirunanipalli Patikam — Verse 5 lines 3-4.*

(iii) *Ibid — Tirunilakkudi Patikam — Verse 7.*

4 (i) *Tirumalisai Alwar — Nanmukan Tiruvantati, Verse 6.*

(ii) *Ibid. Verse 14.*

(iii) *Ibid. Verse 26.*

(iv) *Ibid. Verse 84.*

Thus arose the religious revival of the period ; and thus the Tamil works of the period happened to be mainly religious in tone, character and sentiment and propagated the Saivite and Vaishnavite doctrines of bhakti and mukti. It was a period of continuous feud and enmity among the votaries of the different faiths. The hymns of some of the Nayanmars and Alwars of this age make specific references to some kings,⁵ personalities and incidents, which help us greatly in fixing their chronology.

THE:VA:RAM OF APPAR AND SAMBANDAR

The The:va:ram hymns sung by அப்பர் Appar, சம்பந்தர் Sambandar, and சுந்தரர் Sundarar in this period, were collected and codified later by Nambiyandar Nambi (நம்பியாண்டார் நம்பி) into the first seven volumes of Saivite Tirumurais or sacred books ; Sambandar's hymns comprising the first three volumes, Appar's the next three and Sundarar's the seventh are in praise of Lord Siva and His divine attributes and are of exceeding elegance and sweetness. Unlike other literary works which betray the conscious efforts of their authors, these hymns evidence a spontaneous overflow of the religious zeal and love for God of these three Saivite saints. திருஞான சம்பந்தர் Tirunja:na Sambandar was originally known as ஆளுடைய பிள்ளை A:l:ut:aya Pil:l:ai (the child blessed with the Grace of the Lord.) Thirunavukkarasar was otherwise known as Appar and ஆளுடைய அரசர், the kingly person blessed with the

(v) The same Alwar — Santa viruttam — Verse 69.

(vi) சாக்கியம் கற்றோம்.....பின் பழகிய. குரு பரம்பரை பக். 10.

(vii) Tirunavukkarasar ஆதி புராணம் verse 2, 3, 7, 9 and innumerable places in his Tevaram describing Vishnu.

(viii) *Ibid.* இலங்க புராணம் — Whole.

(ix) The 9th verse of all the Patikams of Sambandar describing Vishnu.

⁵ (i) Appar and his reference to King Mahendra Varman 600-630.

(ii) Sambandar and his reference to King Ankesari.

(iii) Sundarar and his reference to Kadavar Kon Kalarchingam.

(iv) Manikkavacakar and his reference to Varaguna II.

(v) Nammalvar and his reference to King Parantaka Nedunjadaiyan.

(vi) Tirumangai Alwar and his reference to Kings Nandi Varman and Vairamekan etc.

Grace of the Lord and Sundaramurthi as ஆளுடைய நம்பி the youth blessed with the Grace of the Lord. Their songs generally dealt with Lord Siva of the various temples, situated in the sacred places of the Tamilakam and even beyond திருக்கேதீச்சரம் like Thirukke:di:ccaram and திருக்கோண மாமலை Thirukko:n:ama:malai in Ceylon திருப்பருப்பதம்-ஸ்ரீசைலம் Thirupparupatham or Sri Sailam in the district of Kurnool and திருக்கைலாயம்-திருக்கேதாரம் Thirukkaila:yam or Mount Kailas and Tirukkedaram or the modern Kedar-nath temple in the Himalayas, most of which these saints had actually visited. These songs were generally in the form of பதிகம் patikams, or sets of ten verses each; the patikams of Sambandar and Sundarar contained eleven songs and, in the eleventh, it was their practice to mention their own name, as an indication of the authorship.

The The:va:rams of all the three saints are the manifestations of the popular bhakti cult in South India; they stand superb not merely in point of melody and in their power of being set to music or பண் pan:, but also from the point of view of emotional expression, religious fervour and literary excellence. Like their counter-parts in Vaishnavism, the Alvars, these Tevaram authors appeared on the scene when the aggressive domination of Buddhism and Jainism in the Tamil land filled the Saivites with dismay and set out to assert the worth of their own faiths and thereby put an end to proselytising by alien faiths. Devoting their lives to the cause of their faiths, these Nayanmars and Alvars preached Bhakti or love for Lords Siva and Vishnu; they are reported to have worked miracles with the help of their Gods and defeated the Buddhist and Jain missionaries in open religious discourses. Sambandar⁶ condemns Jainism for its contemptuous attitude towards the vedas and vedic rites. Thirunavukkarasar often attacks Buddhists and Jains in a language of unusual pungency. It is strange that this saint, who was himself attracted to the Jain faith from Saivism once and who came back to

6. வேத வேள்வியை நிந்தை செய்துழலுவர்.

Saivism through the untiring effort and tenacious persuasion of his elder sister, should refer to the adherents of the Jain faith in somewhat unseemly^{6-A} language. Thirunavukkarasar or Appar as he is popularly known, was the elder contemporary of Sambandar. Appar lived upto a ripe old age of 81. Apart from tradition, we have ample literary and epigraphic evidence for fixing his age; these pieces of evidence cover the period from the last decades of the 6th century to the latter half of the 7th century A.D. i.e. during the reigns of Mahendra Varman I, the Pallava king (600-630) and நெடுமாறன் Neduma:tan, the Pandiyan king (670-710). According to Periyapuram, Appar converted Mahendra Varman to Saivism. The king had persecuted him for having deserted Jainism and gone back to Saivism, but the miraculous powers by which he escaped the tortures to which he was subjected (references to which appear in Appar's own hymns⁷) apparently moved the king himself to embrace Saivism. The king embraced Saivism probably about 620 A.D. and then constructed a number of rock-cut temples for Siva at Vallam, Mahe:ndrava:di, Dalavanur, Si:yamangalam, Palla:varam etc., besides the rock-cut temple at Tiruccirappal:l:i, in which are found two of his inscriptions^{7-A}. These record that the king Gun:abhara constructed a temple on the top of the mountain and installed therein a linga and a statue of himself and include a prayer for long life to the king Gun:abhara, who returned from 'Vibaksha Vrutti' or hostile conduct through the Grace of the Linga. Vibaksha Vrutti evidently refers to the king's initial adherence to Jainism. குணபரன் Gun:abhara is one of the titles occurring in the inscriptions of Mahendra Varman. Periyapuram affords literary evidence in support. It states that the Pallava king of the times built a temple for Siva at Tiruvadikai called 'Guna-

6-A (i) Tirunavukkarasar Tevaram Tiruvaiyaru Patikam — All the 10 verses.

(ii) *Ibid* — Tirupalayarai Patikam — Verse 1-9.

(iii) *Ibid* — Tiruvarur Palamoli — Verse 1, 3, 8.

(iv) *Ibid* — Tirutturutti Tirunerisai — Verse 9.

⁷ Vide 3-A supra.

7-A 5 I. I. Vol. I No. 33 — Page 29.

dhare:ccuram'.⁸ Evidently it ought to be 'Gunabhare:ccuram', the i:ccuram or Siva temple built by Gun:abhara.

Appar was the elder contemporary, as we have seen, of Sambandar, with whom he had stayed and travelled now and then.⁹ Along with Sambandar, he met some of his (Sambandar's) other devotees and friends like சிறுத்தொண்டர் Situtton:dar, முருகர் Muruhar and நீல நக்கர் Ni:la Nakkar. Siruttondar was the Commander-in-Chief of King Paramesvara Varman I during the Pallava invasion of the Chalukyan territory and the storming of Vatapi the Chalukyan capital and Appar might therefore have met him about 677 A.D.

When Thirunavukkarasar was a Jain, he was acclaimed as a leader of the Jainas, as he was well versed in the Jaina tenets. In fact, the king gave him the title of தர்ம சேனர் 'Dharmase:na'¹⁰. The time of re-conversion to Saivism may probably have been about 620.

Sometime after re-embracing Saivism he is reported to have met the boy-saint Sambandar at சீகாழி Si:ka:l-i just after the latter's holy-thread investiture at about the age of seven. Sambandar was anxious to meet Tirunavukkarasar, who had withstood triumphantly through the Grace of Lord Siva, the persecutions of the Pallava king, Mahendra I; Tirunavukkarasar was equally anxious to meet the famous boy-saint, who was blessed with the Lord's Grace when he was only three years old. Assuming that Sambandar met the Commander-in-Chief of Parame:svara Varman I somewhere in 677 in his thirteenth year, he had probably met Tirunavukkarasar for the first time a few years earlier. Tirunavukkarasar was, according to Periyapuranam, old enough at the time of his meeting Sambandar first at Sikali, to be called by him in veneration and awe as

⁸ *Periyapuranam* — Tirunavukkarasar Puranam — Verse 146.

⁹ *Ibid* — Verses 152, 187, 231, 34, 267, 396, 397, 250-60.

¹⁰ *Periyapuranam* — Tirunavukkarasar Puranam — Verse 39.

'Appar'¹¹ or father. He was already showing signs¹² of old age ; probably he was looking older than his real age due to the suffering he had undergone as a result of persecution by the Jain king. The account of his life in Periyapuram indicates that a number of years must have elapsed between their first meeting in Sikali and the death of Appar. By comparing the incidents of his life with those of Sambandar, we are able to arrive at some clear chronological sequences. If we presume, that Appar was about 75 years in 671 when he first met Sambandar and allowing about 6 years for the pilgrimages he made before his last days, he died probably in 677. In this period (from 671 to 677) he met also Nedumaran¹³, the Pandiyan king, the கூன் பாண்டியன் Ku:n Pa:n:t:iyan who was converted to Saivism by Sambandar. Accepting the tradition^{13-A} that Appar lived to the age of 81, we may roughly fix his period as 596 to 677 A.D.

Sambandar, the "precocious Saiva saint" was born at Sikali (the taluk headquarters of that name in the Tanjore District).¹⁴ His parents were சிவபாத இருதயர் Siva:pa:da Hirudayar and பகவதியார் Bagavathiya:r. They were both great devotees of Siva. Sambandar is said to have been fed by Goddess பார்வதி Pa:rvathi (consort of Siva) herself, who gave him her own milk, when he was crying of hunger, on the banks of the tank near the local Siva temple, where his father who had taken him there was bathing.¹⁵ Having drunk the holy milk of divine wisdom, he became known as Tirunjnana Sambanda (*lit.* one related to divine knowledge) ; the child was also called ஆளுடைய பிள்ளை A:l:ut:aiya Pil:l:ai the child that received the grace of God. From then on he began to pour forth sweet melodious hymns on Siva ; these are spontaneous expressions of the saint's inmost experience

11 *Ibid* — Verse 182.

12 *Ibid* — Tirugnanasambandar Puranam — Verse 270.

13 *Ibid* — Tirunavukkarasar Puranam — Verse 405.

13-A Srinivasa Pillai Tamil Varalaru Part II — p. 68.

14 *Ibid.* Tirugnanasambandar Puranam — Verse 14-15.

15 *Ibid.* Verse 67-68.

in praise of Lord Siva and his Grace. The first¹⁶ pathikam contains the songs sung in reply to his father's demand for an explanation of the cup of milk in his hand, out of which he was drinking.

This miracle is reported to have taken place in the third year of his life. After his sacred thread-wearing ceremony, which is usually done at the age of seven, Sambandar met Thirunavukkarasar, whose fame had already reached him.

After a short sojourn at Sikali¹⁷ with Thirunavukkarasar whom he called அப்பர் "Appar" (father), Sambandar went on a pilgrimage to the Siva shrines of the Chola country, visiting more than 100 temples. With the difficulty of transport existing in those distant days, travel, especially with hundreds of devotees following the saint, was probably very slow. We will not be wide of the mark if we allow five to six years for completion of this Cholanadu pilgrimage; he finally reached திருச்செங்காட்டங்குடி Tiruccenkattankudi,¹⁸ the native place of பரஞ்சோதி Paranjoti popularly known as Siruttandar, who received Sambandar with all respect and honour and entertained him. Sambandar in turn honoured him by recording Siruttandar's devoted service to Lord Siva in his patikam¹⁹ in praise of the lord of the local temple.

Siruttandar, according to historians, happened to be the commander-in-chief of the then Pallava king Narasimha Varman I (630-688). The northern contemporaries of this king were King Pulakesin II of the Chalukyas whose capital was at Vatapi and King Harshavardhana of Kanauj. Narasimha Varman invaded the western Chalukyan kingdom and laid waste its capital Vatapi in 642 and erected

¹⁶ Tirugnanasambandar Tevaram — Tiruppiramapura Patikam.

¹⁷ (i) Vide 9 — V. 182-187.

(ii) Vide 9.

¹⁸ (i) *Periyapuranam* — Tirugnanasambandar Puranam V. 468-70.

(ii) *Ibid* — Siruttondanayanar Puranam V. 23.

¹⁹ (i) *Ibid* 420 and

(ii) Sambandar Tevaram — Tiruccenkattankudi Patikam V. 1-10.

a pillar of victory. According to Periapuranam,²⁰ Siruttondar went on an expedition to the north as the commander-in-chief of this army and brought home to his king, an enormous booty. After this heroic battle, he retired from official duties and devoted himself to the service of Lord Siva in his native village ; it was at this time that Sambandar paid him a visit.²¹

At the time of this visit Siruttondar had a child named சீராள தேவர் Sira:l:a De:var of three years of age.²² Allowing, say, three years between Siruttondar's return from the war and the birth of the child, we can assume 648 as the year of this meeting. From this Siruttondar—Vatapi synchronism, the age of Thirunjna:na Sambandar has been fixed round about 642 by historians.

At the time of his meeting Appar for the first time at Sikali, just after his sacred thread-wearing ceremony, Sambandar was probably seven years of age and allowing six years for his pilgrimage as explained earlier, he would have been about 13 years of age when he met Siruttondar at his birth place in 648. After a short tour of Saivite shrines from this place in the company of Appar, Sambandar at the invitation of the Pandiyan queen²³ மங்கையர்க்கரசியார் Mangaiyarkkarasiya:r (The Queen among women) and the Pandiyan Prime Minister குலச்சிறையார் Kulaccitaiya:r went to the Pandiyan country. The Pandiyan king Nedumaran alias கூன்பாண்டியன் Kun Pandiyan—the hunch-backed Pandiyan had at this time renounced his Saivite faith and embraced Jainism ; many of his followers and subjects presumably followed suit. This caused great anxiety and concern to the queen and it was with this purpose that they sent out an invitation to Sambandar to tour the Pandiyan kingdom. Sambandar readily accepted the invitation and went to

²⁰ *Periapuranam* — Siruttondar Puranam — V. 6.

²¹ *Ibid* — V. 8-11.

²² *Ibid* — V. 17 & 22.

²³ *Periapuranam* — Tirugnanasambandar Puranam 603-616.

Madurai, the Pandiyan capital, where he was received with great respect and enthusiasm²⁴ by the chief minister himself. The Jainas of the place attempted to kill him by setting fire to his residence, but fortunately he survived this attempt. The queen visited him²⁵ after this incident. In the religious disputations between the two sides, the Jainas²⁶ on the one side and Sambandar on the other, the latter came out victorious and the king, who was suffering from a severe illness, was also cured by Sambandar. Thereupon the king re-embraced²⁷ his original faith, Saivism.

Leaving Madurai for a while, the saint went on a further tour in the Tamil Nad. Considering the number of places he visited, we may surmise that this tour lasted about 3 years. He was then probably 16 and married, as that was the traditional age for marriage in those days. On the day of the marriage, Sambandar is believed to have attained salvation along with his bride at the very altar of the marriage. This accords with the tradition according to which he lived for 16 years.²⁸

Thus according to the historians, who base their arguments on the contemporaneity of Siruttondar and Sambandar, Sambandar lived around 642 and if he had, as we have shown before, met Siruttondar at the age of thirteen somewhere about 648 A.D., he married in say, 651. His date would thus be 635 to 651 A.D.

We are confronted however with the difficulty of reconciling the contemporaneity of Sambandar and Siruttondar (648) with the other contemporaneity of Sambandar with the Pandiyan king Nedumaran, whom he converted to Saivism. Prof. Nilakanta Sastri identifies this Nedumaran with Arike:sari Para:nkusa Ma:tavarman,²⁹ the

²⁴ *Ibid* — 655-659.

²⁵ *Ibid* — 725-28.

²⁶ *Ibid* — 770.

²⁷ *Ibid* — 810.

²⁸ *Tamil Varalaru* — Srinivasa Pillai Part II p. 68.

²⁹ *Pandiyan kingdom* — p. 53 et seq.

4th king of the First Pandiyan empire according to the Ve:l:vikkudi grant and the 1st according to the larger Sinnamanu:r plates. He is said to have reigned from 670-710 A.D. If it was indeed this king, who was converted to Saivism by Sambandar, then Sambandar must have lived even beyond 651, i.e., during the period of 670 to 710 A.D.

This conflict in dates cannot be explained satisfactorily unless either (i) Sambandar actually lived for a much longer period than 16 years, i.e., up to between 670-710 A.D., which makes it possible for him to have been the contemporary of both Siruttondar and Nedumaran, or (ii) Siruttondar led an expedition on Vatapi twice, the second one being between 670-710 A.D., and that he retired to a religious life after this second expedition. As for literary evidence for this later raid, we may take the stanza in Periyapuram's account of Siruttondar mentioned before, to mean not the raid during Narasimha Varman's reign, but the one during his successor Paramesvara Varman's reign. For, in the stanza³⁰ under reference, neither Narasimha Varman, whose commander Siruttondar has been assumed to be, nor the year 642 A.D. are specifically mentioned. It merely contains the word மன்னவன் Mannavan and வாதாபித் தொன்னகரம் Vatha:pittonnakaram without the date. Mannavan merely means the king and Vatapittonnakaram means the old city of Vatapi.

Narasimha Varman was called in his inscriptions³¹ வாதாபிகொண்ட நரசிம்மவர்மன் 'Vatha:pi Kont:a Narasimha Varman'—he who took Vatapi—and this is clearly an indication of his having stormed the city of Vatapi. Somewhere about the closing years of his father's reign, Pulikesin II advanced as far south as the capital of the Pallavas, forcing the Pallava king to retreat behind the wall of

³⁰ Vide 21.

³¹ (i) Epigraphica Indica Vol. VI. P. 11.
 (ii) Indian Antiquary Vol. VIII. P. 275-276.
 (iii) S. I. I. Vol. I. P. 114 and 152.
 (iv) Salem Manual Vol. II. P. 356.

Ka:nji. Subsequently, we learn from the Ku:ram plates of Paramesvara Varman that Narasimha Varman inflicted a crushing defeat on Pulikesin in the battles of Man:imangala, Periya:la and Su:rama:ra. Shortly after the repulse of the Chalukyan armies from the neighbourhood of Kanji, Narasimha Varman prepared for a counter invasion of the Chalukyan territory presumably under the command of Paranjoti alias Siruttondar. The victorious march of the commander and his successful assault on the capital of Vatapi which has been identified with the modern Badami in the Bijapur District, are facts of history. The Velu:rpa:l:ayam³² plates of Nandi Varman III and the mutilated inscription at Vatapi³³ refer to Narasimha Varman's victory over his enemies and his capture of "the Pillar of Victory standing in the centre of Vatapi".

The question is whether there was a second raid of Vatapi by his successor Parame:svara Varman I (670-685 A.D.) and whether Siruttondar continued as his commander and undertook this second raid also, somewhere about 671 A.D., i.e., when Arike:sari Nedumaran, the 'Ku:n Pa:ndiya', was cured of his malady by Sambandar and was thereby converted to the Saiva faith. If we can establish that there was a second raid of Vatapi by Siruttondar, the meeting of (i) Sambandar and Siruttondar and (ii) Sambandar and Nedumaran the Pandiyan king (670-710 A.D.) were both possible. In that event, after his return to his village after the second expedition in 670 A.D., Siruttondar met Sambandar some six years later, i.e., about 677 A.D. in his 13th year. In this view, the period of Sambandar would be between 664 and 680 A.D.

Considering the inimical relations which persisted between the Pallava king Paramesvara Varman and his Chalukyan contemporary Vikrama:ditya I, the possibility of a second assault on Vatapi cannot be dismissed. Accord-

³² S.I.I. Vol. II. P. 511. Verse 11.

³³ Indian Antiquary Vol. IX. P. 199.

ing to the Godval plates,³⁴ Vikramaditya conquered Kanjipura and went as far south as Ugrapura on the southern bank of the river Kaveri, identifiable with modern உறையூர் Utaiyu:r (a suburb of Tiruchirapalli) which was the capital of the Cholas during the Sangam days. According to Kielhorn³⁵ and Dr. Fleet, the year of Vikramaditya's encampment at Ugrapura was 674 A.D. Both the Kuram records and the Velurpalayam plates³⁶ refer to the rout of the enemy by the Pallava king though no details are furnished. On the other hand the Udayendram plates³⁷ of Nandi Varman Pallava Malla mention the site of the battle as Peruval:anallu:r about 16 miles north-east of Tiruchirapalli in the Lagudi Taluk. High praise of the valour of Paramesvara Varman's men in the struggle with the enemy is given by the Kuram plates, from which we understand that the Pallava king's war elephant and his steed were called Arivarana and Atisaya respectively. As on the earlier occasion in 642 when Narasimha Varman pursued the retreating Pulike:sin to his very capital, it is not improbable that in 674 A.D. Parame:svara Varman pursued the retreating Vikrama:ditya as far as Vatapi and raided it. In an inscription of Parame:svara Varman in the Kailasana:thar Koil at Ka:njipuram, he is described as "Ugradandar, who destroyed the city of 'Rana Rasika'." ³⁸ The surname ரணரசிகன் 'Ranarasika' is enjoined by Vikrama:ditya and the term "City of Ranarasika" obviously refers to Vatapi. In an article on the subject,³⁹ Venkataramanaiya comes to the same conclusion, i.e., that Vatapi was attacked a second time. In an article on Kodumbalur Vellirs, A. Rangaswami Saraswathi⁴⁰ establishes that Vatapi was totally destroyed by the Pallavas during a second attack in the reign of Paramesvara Varman.

³⁴ Epigraphica Indica Vol. X No. 22. P. 100-6.

³⁵ R. Gopalan. Pallavas of Kanchi. P. 105.

³⁶ (i) S.I.I. Vol. I. P. 144 and 152.

(ii) S.I.I. Vol. II. P. 511. Verse 12.

³⁷ S.I.I. Vol. II. P. 371.

³⁸ *Alwarkal Kula Nilai* by M. R. Iyengar (1931) P. 108.

³⁹ Christian College Magazine 1927 — P. 236-247.

⁴⁰ Vizianagaram College Magazine 1930-31.

It would be worth while investigating whether epigraphical and other historical evidence could be found to support this hypothesis of a second attack on Vatapi by Siruttondar, as the other alternative is to discard the tradition which gives the age of Sambandar as 16 years and admit the probability of his having lived at least another twenty years.



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