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A NOTE ON VILVĒLI AND NELVĒLI.

BY

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The Vēlvikuḍi grant is the earliest copper plate grant of the Pāṇḍyan kings so far known. It contains a valuable account of the achievements of the Pāṇḍyan kings of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. This grant and the larger Śinnamanūr plates are the most trustworthy sources of our knowledge of the history of the kingdom in the extreme south of India for a period of nearly three centuries. It has not yet been possible to explain fully and satisfactorily all the events narrated in these charters. It is the object of this note to discuss one event in the reign of Arikēsari Asamasaman Śrī Māṇavarman C. 670-710 A.D.¹ This event is the celebrated battle of Nelvēli which is mentioned in ll. 53-54 of the Vēlvikuḍi grant in the words:²

Vilvēli—kkaḍaṭṭ-rāṇaiyai Nelvēlic-ceru Venṭrum.

The particular question that is first to engage our attention relates to Vilvēli. There are three ways in which this word has been understood by different writers. *First* as the name of a general. This is the interpretation originally proposed by Mr. Venkayya in his tentative summary of the Vēlvikuḍi grant given in his Annual Report³ for Epigraphy (Madras) in 1908. He says that Māṇavarman Arikēsari Asamasaman defeated the army of Vilvēli at Nelvēli. He has been followed by other writers also.⁴

1. My *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, p. 41.

2. Ep. Ind. XVII, p. 300.

3. Pt. II, para 28.

4. Krishna Sastri *Ep. Ind.* XVII, pp. 293 and 306; also S.I.I. III, pp. 441 ff.; Dr. S. K. Aiyangar, *Beginnings of South Indian History*, pp. 258 and 268-9. *Tinnevely Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 46. Also my *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, p. 51.

Second as the name of a place. This view is held almost alone by Mr. K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyar who, in tracing the campaigns of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I against the south says: "The army that marched against the Pāṇḍyas came from the city of Vilvēli which is perhaps identical with Villivalam in the Chingleput District".¹ *Third* and last, as an adjective to the expression which follows: This is the suggestion first made, so far as I can trace, by Mr. K. G. Sankara.² "The passage only means: 'the army fenced in (*vēli*) by bowmen (*vil*),' and all guesses as to whether Vilvēli was a person or place are needless. We shall now consider each of these interpretations more closely.

If Vilvēli was the name of a person, who was he? Dr. S. K. Aiyangar³ thinks that Vilvēli was a Pallava, because the Pallavas were also known by the name Villava. He refers us also to the hymn of Tirumaṅgai Ālvār on *Tirupparamēccuraviṇṇagaram* in which the Ālvār refers to a battle of Neṇmali, probably the same as Nelvēli. On the other hand, Mr. H. Krishna Sastri⁴ thinks that Vilvēli was 'perhaps a Cēra.' As Mr. Krishna Sastri assigns no reason in support of his surmise, it is not possible to test its correctness. There seems to be almost nothing in its favour except the identification of Nelvēli with Tirunelvēli,⁵ a town more within reach of the Cēras than of the Pallavas. But the identifications proposed by Dr. S. K. Aiyangar of Villavaṇ and Vilvēli, and of Neṇmali and Nelvēli, raise important questions which may be reserved for consideration later on. Meanwhile it may be observed that as the name of a person Vivēli lends itself to such diverse interpretations at the hands of scholars, and that it has so far received no epigraphical confirmation either as the name of a king or as that of a general commanding an army in a battle at Nelvēli or elsewhere. These circumstances may well raise a doubt as to whether Vilvēli is a personal name at all. It may also be observed that there is a serious difficulty from a grammatical point of view in treating

1. *Ancient Dekhan*, p. 40; also p. 123.

2. *Ind. Ant.* Vol. 51, p. 214. Mr. Krishna Sastri attributes this interpretation to Dr. S. K. Aiyangar *Ep. Ind.* XVII, p. 306 n. 6.

3. *Beginnings*, p. 268-9.

4. *S. I. I.* III, p. 447.

5. *S. I. I.* II, p. 364.

Vilvēli in the present context as a personal name. Our text, clearly and unmistakably, is:

Vilvēli-kkaḍarrāṇaiyai. But, by a well-known rule of grammar, if Vilvēli were a proper name, the initial *ka* of the succeeding word should not be reduplicated into *kka*.¹ The reduplicated form is clear in the plates and there is not the slightest doubt as to the reading here; it is, therefore, necessary to interpret the passage in some other way and drop the assumption, if it is possible to do so, that Vilvēli is a personal name.

The idea that Vilvēli is a geographical name is not more easy to sustain. This is clear from the reluctance of scholars to accept the suggestion of Mr. K.V.S. Aiyar in this matter. Moreover, Villivalam is referred to in the Udayēndiram plates of Nandivarman as Vilvala,² a form very different from Vilvēli.³

This brings us to the last of the three views outlined above, which makes Vilvēli an adjective to the succeeding phrase and a part of the description of the army against which Arikēsari fought at Nelvēli. The line thus means: "Having defeated in a battle at Nelvēli (the) ocean-like army fenced in by bowmen." We have here, in fact, a reference to a disposition of forces in battle array which appears to have been common among the Ancient Tamils, and this will become clear from some references in classical and later Tamil literature.⁴ Thus in the *Mullaip-p-āṭṭu* we read: *Pūndalai-kkundaṁ-gutti-kkiḍukuniraittu vāṅguvil-araṇam-araṇamāka vēṛuṇal perumbaḍai nāppaṇ* (in 41-43), meaning, "In the midst of large and diverse forces which had for protection the enclosure of drawn bows and ornamented pikes planted on the ground, and shields arrayed in regular order." Again, in the *Jīvaka-cintāmaṇi*, stanza 279, we read in the description of a fight: *Vēl-miḍaında-vēliyum-piṇandu*, meaning: "(After) breaking through the fence bristling with lances." In this case, it is the lancers, not the bowmen that fence the army; it is, in other words, a *vēlvēli* in the place of a *vilvēli*. Lastly, Kambaṇ in his description of Guha in the *Rāmāyaṇa*⁵ calls him:

1. See e.g. *Nannūl* Sec. 158, *Mayilainūthar* ed. Pandit Swaminatha Aiyar (1918). Also *Tolkāppiyam Eluttu*—153.

2. S. I. I. II, p. 369, l. 44.

3. Contra., *Ancient Dekhan*, p. 123.

4. I owe these references to Pandit M. Raghava Aiyangar and Mr. Vaiyapuri Pillai of the Tamil Lexicon.

5. St. 25 of the *Guha-p-paḍalam*.

"*Virṇḍittavēlaiyiṇān*," that is to say, "One possessing an ocean (like army) holding bows", which comes very close to the description in the Vēlvikuḍi grant : *Vilivēli-kkadarrāṇai*. These quotations must suffice, it is possible to produce others, to convince us that it was usual for armies in those days to surround themselves by a ring of lancers or bowmen, who apparently bore the first shock of the enemy's attack. There is no difficulty, therefore in interpreting the line from the Vēlvikuḍi grant in the light of this practice and to abandon once for all the attempts to identify Vilvēli with a person or a place.

We may now turn to the battle of Nelvēli and the identification proposed by Dr. S. K. Aiyangar. Whether Vilvēli is identical with Villavaṇ, and Villavaṇ is another name for Pallava, cease to be matters of any great consequence, if the view urged above is accepted. It may, however, be observed, in passing, that there does not seem to be sufficient support for taking Villava to be another name for Pallava. The lines of Tirumaṅgai Ālvār on which this view rests are not altogether free from doubt. As they stand in the editions which are now current and as interpreted by the celebrated annotator Periyavāccāṇ Pillai these lines indeed seem to identify Pallava and Villava. The text is:

*Pallavaṇ Villavaṇ enru ulakil
ḥalarāy-ḥḥala-vēndar raṇaṅgu-kaḷal—Pallavaṇ.*¹

Here, undoubtedly, the author seeks to glorify the Pallava as superior in power to other kings who were subordinate to him, and one would normally expect the words before "*enru ulakil ḥalarāy*" to give examples of such subject kings as are collectively referred to as '*ḥalavēndar*'; and one can hardly resist, in the context, emending the first '*Pallava*' of the text into '*Vallava*', '*ḥa*' and '*va*' being orthographically so liable to be mistaken for each other. This slight emendation makes the passage very much straighter and more forceful than it is in its present form. For, then, the Cālukya and the Cēra (Villavaṇ) would be the examples of the kings subdued by the Pallava and obliged consequently to make obeisance to him. However that may be, it seems that more evidence is needed² than is

1. *Periya Tirumoli*, II 9, 1.

2. Dr. S. K. Aiyangar says that in St. 8 of *Periya Tirumoli*, II 9 Pallava is referred to as Villavaṇ. I am unable to see this.

furnished by this passage before one can accept that the Pallava was also called Villava.

The identification of Neṇmali with Nelvēli deserves more attention. The battle of Nelvēli is well-known in literature. Sundaramūrti in his *Tiruttonḍattogai* mentions this battle as the chief achievement of Niṇṇa-Śīr-Neḍumāra Nāyaṇār who may, with good reason, be identified with Arikēsari Māravarman of the Vēlvikuḍi grant.¹ Although the same fight is mentioned more than half a dozen times in the illustrative stanzas in the commentary to the *Iraiyāṇār-Ahaṇṇorūl*, the name of the enemy against whom Arikēsari fought on this occasion is unfortunately not once mentioned. As is well known, Sundaramūrti's list of the Śaiva saints furnished the basis of two works by Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi and Śēkkiḷār. Nambi, again, adds nothing to our knowledge about the battle of Nelvēli. Śēkkiḷār in his account of the life of Niṇṇa-Śīr-Neḍumāra Nāyaṇār tells us that the foes of the Pāṇḍyan king came from a distant country seeking a fight with him and that they were the chief rulers of the northern country.² These indications though vague in themselves, may be of some value in deciding whether Neṇmali can be taken to be Nelvēli or not. Udaya Candra the celebrated general of Nandivarman Pallavamalla, fought 'a terrible battle' at Nelvēli against a Śabara king.³ This battle of Nelvēli fought in the war of the Pallava succession by Udaya Candra against the Śabara king is different from and later than the fight in which Arikēsari Māravarman of the Vēlvikuḍi grant defeated his opponents.⁴ There seems to be, however, no reason to suppose that Nelvēli of Udaya Candra's campaigns was not the same place as the scene of Arikēsari's victory. It must, however, be observed that the location of Udaya Candra's Nelvēli must depend on the identity of the Śabara chieftain Udayana. Mr. R. Gopalan observes;⁵ "If the

1. See my *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, p. 53, ff.

2. See verses 3 and 7 of the life in *Periya purāṇam*; also Dr. S. K. Aiyangar—*Beginnings*, p. 276.

3. S. I. I. II, 367-8 and 372 and Gopalan *Pallavas*, p. 125.

4. See *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, pp. 51-2 and Dr. S. K. Aiyangar—*Beginnings*, p. 274.

5. *The Pallavas of Kāñcī*, p. 125. It will be seen that, rather inconsistently, Mr. Gopalan grants also that 'Nelvēli is probably identical with Neṇmali.' *Contra* Hultzsch, S. I. I. II, 364.

Śabaras are identical with the modern Sauras of the Ganjam and Vizagapatam District (*sic*) it would not be correct to identify Nelvēli where the Śabara king is said to have been killed with Tinnevely. It is, therefore, to be identified with some other place on the border of the Telugu districts."

Turning for a moment to Neṇmali made mention of by Tirumaṅgai Ālvār, we see that here the Pallava king is the victor and the enemy who suffered defeat was a Cēra (Villavaṇ).¹ It is not easy to decide who exactly the Pallava king was that is referred to and on what occasion this fight with the Villavaṇ took place. There are other incidents of a manifestly historical character mentioned by the Ālvār in this hymn. They are; (a) a victory against the Pāṇḍya (st. 2) who is said to have had a mountain fortress (*kunṇreyil*) (5); (b) A victory at Maṇṇai said to have been won of old (*munṇāḷ*) (3); (c) a victory against the Pāṇḍya near Karuvūr (7), the Pāṇḍya being mentioned here as the lord of the world (*ulakuḍaimaṇṇavaṇ Tēṇṇavaṇai*). Now, are these incidents to be treated as, all of them, relating to the reign of one Pallava ruler, possibly contemporary with the Ālvār? Or, are we to understand that Tirumaṅgai has just brought together some incidents in Pallava history to embellish his hymn in praise of a Pallava shrine?² There can not be the least doubt that, on the former hypothesis, the Pallava ruler referred to must be Nandivarman Pallavamalla. The mention of a powerful Pāṇḍya as the opponent of the Pallava, and the references to Maṇṇai and Kunṇreyil (which may be the Kālidurga of the Udayēndiram plates) may be taken to support this view. And an ingenious suggestion made by Pandit M. Raghava Aiyangar³ enables us to treat Neṇmali of the Ālvār's hymn as a reference to Udaya Candra's victory against the Śabara chieftain. The suggestion is that, though Villavaṇ normally means the Cēra king, we may, in this context, take the word to mean a hunter (Śabara). If this view is accepted, then Neṇmali *does* come to be another form of the epigraphical name Nelvēli. But, as the careful reader must have guessed already, there are difficulties in the way. First there is the difference in the forms Neṇmali and

1. Viḍaittirāḷ-villavaṇ Neṇmaliyil Veruva-cceru-vēḷ Valangai piḍitta Paḍaittirāḷ Pallavarkōṇ—*Periya Tirumoli*, II, 9, 8.

2. Compare Dr. S. K. Aiyangar *Ancient India*, pp. 410-11.

3. See *Ālvārkaḷ-kāḷanilai*, p. 101.

Nelvēli which is not easy to account for. Then we have the statement that Maṇṇai was an ancient battle (*munṇā!*) when the hymn was composed; and lastly the fact that the battle of Karuvūr is not mentioned in the inscriptions. It should be remembered also that there is a large assumption underlying this part of the discussion *viz.*, that Tirumaṅgai Alṽār has, in this hymn, mentioned only the incidents in the reign of his Pallava contemporary.

At least two Nelvēlis appear to be mentioned in the Cōla inscriptions—one of them in Īṅgā-nāḍu (No. 213 of 195) and the other in Nelvēli-nāḍu a subdivision of Tenkarai Paṇaiyār-nāḍu in Cōla-maṇḍalam—(276 of 1916). Though not conclusive as an argument, the suggestion may still be made that Nelvēli which gave its name to a *nāḍu* might have been the celebrated Nelvēli of Sundaramūrti's hymn.

The upshot of the preceding discussion is, therefore, this. We have two battles of Nelvēli and one of Neṇmali. The earliest of these was a Pāṇḍyan (Arikēsari's) victory, possibly against the Pallavas. The second battle of Nelvēli was a Pallava success against a Śabara chieftain. The battle of Neṇmali was either the same as the latter or altogether another historical incident. The questions whether the two battles of Nelvēli were fought in the same place and whether Tirumaṅgai's reference to Neṇmali does relate to the second battle of Nelvēli are too closely bound up with the identity of the Śabara chieftain Udayana for us to be able to answer satisfactorily in the present state of our knowledge about him.

ANCIENT BHṚGUS.

BY

A. PADMANABHAYYA, B.A.,

Pleader, Tirupathi.

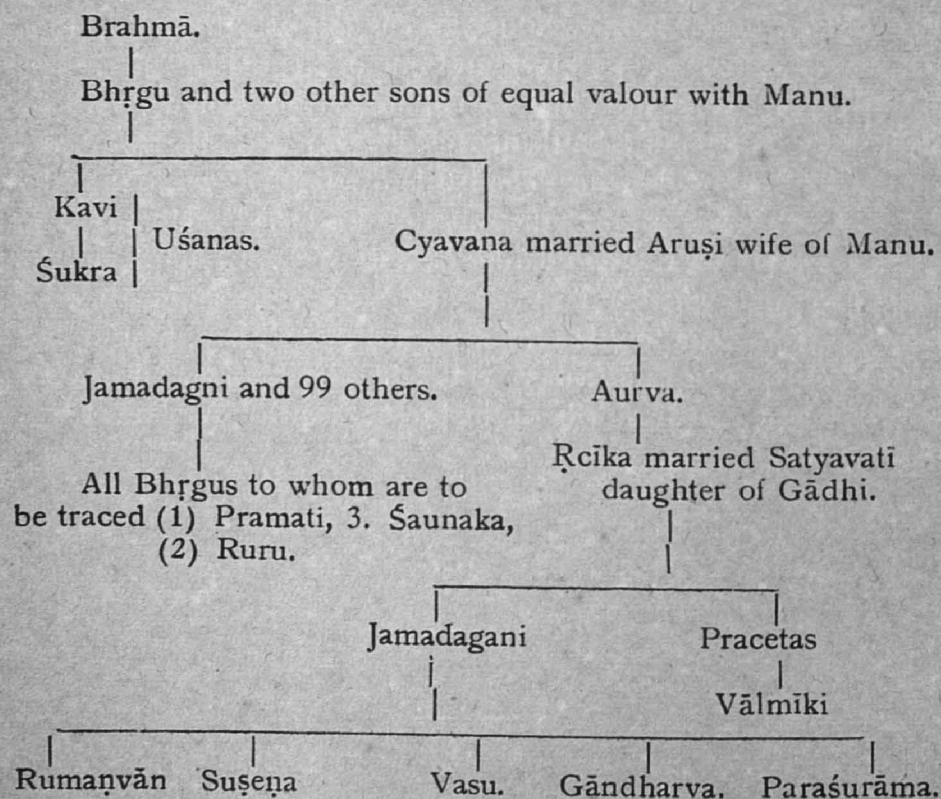
(Continued from page 67 of Vol. V. Part I.)

CHAPTER VI.

It is now necessary for us to consider, an account of the Chief Bhṛgu leaders, as we find them in our sacred literature.

The Mahā-Bhārata and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa give their account in some detail.¹

From the account given in the above works, the following geneological tree may be roughly formed.



1. See chapter V and VI Ādi Parva Mahā-Bhārata.
- " " XVI, Ādi Parva do.
- " , XXXIII, Vana Parva do.
- " " CXV, Vana Parva do.
- " Amśa III Ch. III, Viṣṇu Purāṇa.

SELECT OPINIONS.

Hermann Jacobi, Professor of Sanskrit, University of Bonn, 14th December, 1926.—I have perused your New Journal of Oriental Research with great interest. I heartily wish you success in your meritorious undertaking.

L. D. Barnett, School of Oriental Studies, London, 19th December, 1926.—It seems to me to be a good beginning to the enterprise which I hope will be very successful. Some of the matter is very good indeed.

J. Jolly Wurzburg, Germany, 20th December, 1926.—This evidently is a periodical of great promise, with every chance of success.

Q. Strauss, Professor of Sanskrit, Kiel University, 1st January, 1927.—Being very well pleased with the first number of your Journal of Oriental Research I ask you to enrol me as a subscriber.

Sir Richard Temple, Editor, Indian Antiquary, London, 6th January, 1927.—Your excellent Issue.

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Indian Review, November, 1927.—We welcome this new Quarterly of Oriental Research The influence of Professor S. Kuppuswami Sastri, the Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philology in the Presidency College, has been ceaselessly exercised in furthering the cause of such learning.

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The Madras Mail, 21st January, 1927.— The contributions are from persons who have specialised in particular branches and show striking evidence of original work.

Dr. Sylvain Levi, Paris.—" It deals with so many sides of Indian Science, and in such an interesting way. What I like most in it, is its genuine and regular Indian flavour, its proper 'Rasa'; Many of your contributors, if not all of them, know how to combine Pandit-learning and Western standards."

Dr. H. Luders, Berlin University.—" I was greatly impressed with the high standard of scholarship, the originality of thought and the soundness of critical methods displayed in your contributions."

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THE STUDY OF SOUTH INDIAN HISTORY¹

BY

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I

The duties attached to the chair of Indian History and Archaeology in this university are so varied and complex that it is with diffidence that I face the task before me. The material to be considered comprises the literatures of many languages, indigenous and foreign, varying in accuracy from mere poetry to minute itineraries; documents varying in authenticity from the wildest legends to the most exact grants and deeds; inscriptions, coins and monuments, of many periods and provinces, of which thousands have been unearthed and more are yet to see the light of day; and the mass of modern records preserved in private and public collections. In the treatment of this material the historian has to follow, as occasion demands, the various methods of anthropology, philology, archaeology, jurisprudence and the other sciences. Apart, however, from the inherent magnitude and complexity of my task, when I recall the achievement of the first Professor who held this chair for three successive terms after its foundation and the high standard of excellence secured by him not only in his own work but in all work carried out under his guidance, I confess that I do not find my apprehensions diminishing.

With the recent reorganization² of the Department of Indian History in this University we have realized some of the conditions that render possible the direction of research towards definite ends. It is therefore desirable that we should now consider with some care the state of historical studies in South India, the methods followed and the results obtained, and indicate the ways in which our Department of Indian History can further these studies.

II

Not only here in India but elsewhere we have indications of a growing impatience with the manner of writing of many modern

¹ Inaugural Lecture.

² The Professorship of Indian History was established in 1914. It was only in 1928 that a Reader and a Lecturer were added to the permanent staff of the Department and Fellowships were instituted in addition to the studentships that were in existence before.

Historical works : ' There was a time not long ago when History was written in English ; now it is made in Germany and translated.' The age of great historical writing is apparently over and the monograph has begun to replace the history. The change is partly due to a natural reaction from picturesque narration which at one time almost obliterated the distinction between history and romance. Vivid and eloquent writing such as that of Grote, Froude, Macaulay and Mommsen gave currency to facile errors based on no evidence other than the predilections of the writers themselves. It was inevitable that by the successors of these literary historians the distinction between fact and opinion in works of history should be strenuously pursued. Moreover History has tended to adopt, under the influence of the exact sciences, the most rigorous standards of evidence and proof for every proposition that is advanced. The necessity for minute documentation seems somehow to act as an impediment to picturesque and eloquent writing. ' We dare not deplore Gibbon's limitations, for,' as Bury says, ' they were the conditions of his great achievement.'

Indian History has not yet found, and it will be many years before it finds, its Gibbon. But the works of Mill (1818) and Elphinstone (1839) are not unworthy of the period of great histories and despite the great advance in our knowledge since they wrote, they will continue to be read. In point of literary merit there can of course be no comparison between these historians on the one hand and Gibbon on the other. Moreover Gibbon's great work was reared on foundations laid by many generations of scholars from the Renaissance to his day ; the Histories of Mill and Elphinstone, however, were solitary efforts to interpret the story of an alien race with the aid of slight material that was often only half understood. Almost all that was then known of ancient India had to be drawn from the translation, for administrative purposes, of a few ancient law books and their commentaries.¹ In fact the systematic study of Indian Antiquities did not begin till late in the 19th century. Mackenzie's mass attack on the antiquities of South India led to no immediate results ; he died before he could use his material. Colebrooke and Wilson elucidated portions of Sanskrit literature ; and Sir James Prinsep (in 1836-8) found the key to the oldest epigraphy of the country by deciphering the bilingual inscriptions

¹ The mis-interpretation of some of these texts due to ignorance of their back-ground led to facile generalizations on Indian society and culture which some still cherish. See, for example, report of Sir Basil Blackett's speech to a meeting of the *Society of Arts* in London in January 1930. ' The fundamental reason for India's peculiar economic conditions is to be found in the Hindu social system, the doctrine of Karma, the absence of effort for material progress' etc. *The Hindu*, January 10, 1930.

on the coins of Surashtra. Still, as late as 1861, Colonel (afterwards Sir) Alexander Cunningham could write: 'During the hundred years of British dominion in India, the government has done little or nothing towards the preservation of its ancient monuments which in the almost total absence of any written history form the only reliable sources of information as to the early condition of the country.' Tempting as the subject is, I must not now try to tell the story of the growth of Indian Antiquarian studies from small and uncertain beginnings into a complex science of Indology valued as an important subject of study in many universities and other learned societies of Europe and America.

III¹

The earliest work in India on Indian Antiquities was done by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Some decades later (1841) the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society started a journal of their own, which was followed by the founding, in 1872, of the Indian Antiquary. Even the invaluable reports of Cunningham, the first Director-General of Archaeology, failed to convince Government for many years that the study of Ancient Indian History and culture was a far more extensive work than could be completed by a temporary department of Government. At last, it came to be realized that the work demanded not only the permanent continuance of a Department of Archaeology, but substantial aid to universities and learned societies engaged in this work. How far-flung the empire of Indian culture was in ancient times we are just beginning to see from the striking discoveries in Central Asia and the researches of French and Dutch scholars on Indian influence in Further Asia. The prehistoric discoveries in Sindh and the Punjab are equally impressive though their significance is still far from clear. But thanks to these recent additions to our knowledge, the old dogmas of the isolation of India and her disdain for the good things of this world have been finally exploded.

After Mackenzie's heroic, but for the time fruitless, effort in the early nineteenth century, Southern India was for two generations more or less completely ignored by students of Indian Antiquities. One reason for this neglect was that Indian Antiquarian studies properly began with Sanskrit and Pali and for a long time were chiefly occupied with these languages²; for in historical times the

¹ A detailed account of the progress of *Indian Archaeology* in its early stages is furnished by Cunningham in the introduction to the re-issue (1871) of his first four reports (1862-65) and the later history by Sir John Marshall in his introduction to the Director-General's Annual Report for 1902-3.

² 'Dans l'Inde on s'est occupé surtout des livres Vediques et du Bouddhisme', G. Jouveau-Dubreuil.

culture and civilization of the whole country, with the exception of the extreme South, was Sanskritic in origin and development. Another reason might be the peculiar difficulties of script, structure and idiom which the Dravidian languages would present to the foreign scholars who initiated the critical study of Indian Antiquities. Though the modern study of Dravidian Languages had begun in the days of the Company,¹ the motive underlying these early efforts was furnished either by the zeal of the European missionary for the christianization of the country or the desire of the Company to provide cheap methods of enabling junior civilians to gain a working knowledge of the languages of South India. But like the progressive Aryanization of Ancient India, Oriental scholarship of the disinterested kind extended in course of time to the farthest South. Brown, Gundert, Kittel, Winslow, Caldwell and Pope carried forward the critical study of the languages of the land. In 1874 the archaeological survey of the Madras Presidency was begun. Burgess and S. M. Natesa Sastri brought out (1886) a volume of Tamil and Sanskrit Inscriptions; Sir Walter Elliot gave the first, (and still the most illuminating), account of South Indian coins. About the same time (1882) the late Robert Sewell made a comprehensive list of the Antiquities of the Province. The appointment (in 1886) of Hultzsch as Epigraphist marks the beginning of a new epoch in the study of South Indian Archaeology. Fourteen years later Madras became a separate circle of the Archaeological Survey.

IV

At the present moment the Archaeological Department of the Government of India, though in many ways the most important, is not the only agency concerned with these studies. Owing mainly to the excellent results produced by this department and the stimulus and direction given to Indian Archaeology by Lord Curzon, there has sprung up a vivid realization of our duty to the memorials of the past. Mysore, Travancore, Hyderabad and Cochin have archaeological departments of their own which are doing good work each in its sphere. Pudukottah, on the border-land of the ancient Cola and Pandyan kingdoms, furnishes in its epigraphs a fair epitome of South Indian history. The texts of all these inscriptions have been published by the State together with a chronological summary of their contents. The authorities of the Tirupati Devasthanam, of whose obstructiveness Hultzsch had to

¹ See Mr. C. S. Srinivasachari's paper on '*The promotion of Dravidian Linguistic Studies in the Company's days*' read before the Indian Historical Records Commission (Lahore Session, November, 1925).

complain¹ to Government in 1889, have been employing an archaeologist with a view to publishing at an early date a full report on the inscriptions in the temples and mantapas under their charge. The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society, the Journal of Indian History and the Journal of Oriental Research are doing active work in promoting and popularizing research. Grateful mention must here be made of the pioneer service rendered by the late Mr. C. W. Damodaram Pillai and by Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit V. Swaminatha Ayyar and others by the publication of important Tamil classics, and of the valuable work, literary and historical, brought out in the monthly organ of the Madura Tamil Sangam. Lastly, let us add with due modesty the contribution made by our own University Department of Indian History and the more recent Institute of Oriental Studies to our growing knowledge of Indian historical subjects. We are thus on the whole well equipped for our task; and though much useful work has been done in the past, there is still so much to be attempted that the most careful direction is required in the employment of our resources.

V

The oldest historical records and monuments of South India do not carry us beyond the third century B.C. The intricate problems, racial, linguistic and cultural, of pre-historic South India call for the most cautious handling in the light of the evidence furnished by pre-historic archaeology and philology. This warning is not unnecessary. South India has been claimed as the original home of Man and as the land in which gold was first discovered; the distinction between the Dravidian group and the Gaurdian or North Indian group of languages has been denied. These are examples of propositions which, however striking, have been put forward with undue haste and without due regard to evidence. It is too soon to decide the exact inter-relations between 'the Indus Valley culture', the Sumerian and Indo-European civilizations and the civilization of pre-Aryan India including pre-Aryan Dravida. The resemblances between the Sumerian and Indo-European languages and cultures are too profound to be the result of chance.² The identity of numerous terms bearing on agricultural, economic, technical and even military life; the astonishing concord in a

¹ G. O. No. 365, Pub. April 5, 1889.

² 'Or, la présence, la fortune en indo-européen oriental et ancien de notions doctrinales importantes, dont la plus ancienne expression actuellement connue se trouve en Sumer, fait un devoir à l'indo-européaniste de présumer ici quelque rapport inconnu. Quant à l'étendue, à la véritable nature de ce rapport, il est indispensable qu'il sache s'imposer une prudente réserve.'—C. Autran : Sumerian et Indo Européen, p. viii. Also ch. iv. See also A. K. Coomaraswamy : *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, pp. 3-5.

number of definite cosmo-theological and religious conceptions, such as those relating to the plant of immortality, the fire celestial and terrestrial, the role of Sirius and so on, that have been traced between the Sumerian world and the most ancient Indo-European—these are clearly more significant than the fortuitous resemblances that are always to be traced between two great cultures. But the paucity of documents concerning a great part of Indo-European pre-history and the large gaps in Sumerian scholarship that still remain to be filled impose a prudent reserve on statements regarding the exact nature and extent of the relation between them. Not less elusive is the task of determining the proper place of the Indus valley culture in the evolution of Indian civilization and deciding how the earliest culture of South India was related to that of the Indus valley. The evidence already available is sufficient, however, to furnish conclusive proof of the origin and development of an independent Tamil culture which flourished for centuries before it was touched by extraneous influences. However difficult it may now be to define, in a scientific manner, the content of that culture, to deny its existence altogether can only be the result of ignorance or prejudice. It is equally certain that, at a time before recorded history begins, this indigenous Tamil culture came under strong influences from Northern India which, for the sake of convenience and without any implications of race, may well continue to be called Aryan. It seems not unlikely that the literary dialect of Tamil was born and grew under Aryan influences; in any event there can be no question that that dialect was enriched and vivified by these influences.

The Literature of the Sangam Age forms the earliest body of Tamil literature that has come down to us. Notwithstanding all that has been urged to the contrary, the most satisfactory chronology of this literature appears to be that established by Mr. Kanakasabhai Pillai and, I must perhaps add Mr. Seshagiri Sastri. The attempt to dissolve the Sangam into thin air, by interpreting the word Sangam as an anthology, is misdirected; the evidence cited is too shadowy to prove anything and weighs as nothing against the overwhelming testimony of literary tradition.¹ But even

¹ See J. Or. Res. vol. II (1928) p. 149 ff. Mr. V. Narayanan in this paper appears to have overlooked the force of Daṇḍi's phrase *Sarga-bandhāmsabhūtātvaṭ*. Further, the *Drāvidasamghāta* of Taruṇavācaspati, like its companion *Sarat-samghāta*, must have been a well-known collection of verses on a single specific topic. It may be added that the *Tokai* of the Daṇḍiyalankāram comprises not only the Sanghāta but the Kōsa as well of the Kāvyaḍarsa. The phrase *mūvagaiccamam* of Pērasiriyaṇ and Naccinārkkiniyaṇ and the scholium on *Takkayāgapparaṇi* 714 are of no probative value. *Contra* Mr. T. G. Ārāvamudan in the *Hindu*, April 16, 1930. The practice of assemblies listening to new works and appraising them receives epigraphical confirmation from 198 of 1919

if we concede that the Sangam had no existence as a college of poets, the Sangam Age and its problems would still remain with us. The social, economic and political conditions reflected in this collection of works, and the linguistic and literary peculiarities that distinguish it raise important issues which have little to do with the historicity of the Sangam. The class of questions thus raised resemble those that have long been familiar to students of the R̥gveda. The Sangam literature, like the R̥gvedic, consists of separate poems composed on various occasions by different poets and grouped together in a schematic manner by later anthologists. The language and culture enshrined in either collection are unmistakably at the root of the later literature and civilization of historical times, but still differ from them sufficiently to be assigned to an earlier epoch and to merit separate study. The suggestion may therefore be ventured that the philological and linguistic line of approach which has proved so fruitful in Vedic studies will yield in competent hands results equally valuable in the history of Ancient Tamil Culture.

VI

Once we leave this early period of Tamil History, epigraphy comes to our aid, and as we advance through the centuries, we suffer not so much from a dearth as from a deluge of authentic material to work with. Hundreds of inscriptions have been copied annually for the last fifty years by the epigraphical department and more are being copied every year. It is extremely unfortunate that the texts of only a small proportion of them should be available for general study. It is admitted¹ that already the copies of several inscriptions have irredeemably decayed while of some the originals themselves have disappeared. At the present rate of publication it is clear that the arrears cannot be overtaken for the next half a century. It is imperative that this reproach to South Indian Epigraphy should be removed within a reasonable time, for unless an earnest effort is made by the Government to secure the early publication of the texts of these thousands of records, the loss to critical scholarship will be certainly incalculable. It is further necessary that Government should make it a rule that, in future, the inscriptions copied every year are published in full, as they are in Mysore, together with each annual report. Such publication may involve a

(inscription from Tribhuvani Pondicheri). Surely only an academy or college can be meant by மதுராபுரிச்சங்கம் வைத்தும் (ll. 102-3) of the Larger Sinnamanūr plates, *S.I.I.* iii, p. 454.

¹ See Mr. Krishna Sastri's preface to vol. iv, South Indian Inscriptions (Texts) and under Nos. 1336 and 1340 in the same volume. Also *Annual Report on Epigraphy* for 1918-19 part I paragraphs 3 and 4.

greater liability to error in the first issue; but the example of the *Epigraphia Carnatica* goes to show that such errors are less serious than the inaccuracies and contradictions which are found scattered in the departmental reports on inscriptions whose originals are not available to the public. It is also necessary that the Topographical list of Inscriptions of the Presidency, a useful work of reference, should be revised and rearranged chronologically and provided with more copious indexes and kept up-to-date by periodical supplements. In this and similar work the Universities of the province should be willing to co-operate with the Archaeological Department.

In the inscriptions of South India are to be found many technical terms bearing on social, economic, military and administrative matters. A correct understanding of these terms is an essential preliminary to the reconstruction of the social life of the period. It is obviously within the province of the Tamil Lexicon to take up the systematic study of such terms and the omission to do this has caused some disappointment.¹ It may be hoped however that the Lexicon authorities will make arrangements for the issue of a supplement in the preparation of which the Oriental Research Institute and the Department of Indian History may furnish useful assistance. A Research Fellow of our university has studied the Economic condition of Southern India from A.D. 1000—A.D. 1500; and despite the difficulties of a pioneer undertaking, he has brought together much useful and authentic information which can serve as a good basis for further work.

The study of South Indian monuments is in no better case than that of our epigraphs. There is still ample scope for making excavations in selected sites in various parts of the presidency.²

¹ Prof. Jules Bloch, for example, wrote to me under date Oct. 8, 1929 the following: 'The Madras dictionary does not help me to explain *kōnērin-maikōṇḍān*. By the way, it is a pity that the compilers of that dictionary neglected so much the inscriptions. Perhaps it would be time now to compile a vocabulary of the technical terms and of the archaisms generally contained in old inscriptions—perhaps also a list of the proper names of persons and places.'

² 'Although a considerable amount of excavation has been conducted in Southern India by this department in the past, many interesting and ancient sites still await investigation. The importance of this branch of archaeology in tracing the early history and development of the arts in South India cannot be over-estimated, and in all probability, it will be found that no fresh discoveries of antiquarian importance will come to light so long as this work remains neglected.' (*Annual Report, Arch. Dept., Madras, 1912-3, part i, para 10.*)

'The Director-General of Archaeology. . . . proposed (June 1915) that no further excavation works should be undertaken in this Presidency for the present so as to leave more time for the preservation of existing monuments. However, unless this branch of Archaeology receives attention, there is no hope of recovering and reconstructing the Pre-historic or early history of Southern India and we shall continue to remain as profoundly ignorant of this period as we are at present.' (Same series—*Report 1915-16, part i, para 8.*)

Ancient Madura, Uraiyur and the neighbourhood of Kancipuram, to mention only a few of these sites, hold, in all probability, hidden treasures of great value to the historian. The vexed question of the site of Vanji has hitherto been discussed entirely on the basis of literary evidence of an inconclusive nature; and it may not be a vain hope that, as in Kushan chronology, scientific excavation of the alternative sites of the ancient Cera capital might lead to more decisive results. There is also a great need for a systematic survey, excavation and description of pre-historic sites; only a few of these, like Adiccanallur and Perumbair, have so far been scientifically studied.

The literature of any country is an invaluable aid to the interpretation of its monuments and epigraphs and there is an abundance of ancient South Indian literature that awaits critical study. I shall leave out of account works that have become accessible through printed editions, though these are not all of the same degree of accuracy. But the wealth of manuscript material in the Madras¹ and Tanjore libraries deserves the most careful attention. Far and away the most interesting section of the Madras Library from our point of view is that comprising the Mackenzie Manuscripts and Browne's Local Records. The Mackenzie collection in Madras comprises what has survived of 'the books and tracts in the scripts and in the languages of the South of India' that were transmitted to Madras (1828) after 'a considerable portion of the collection' had been sent off to England or otherwise disposed of. Sir Walter Elliot pressed upon the Government (1855) the urgent need for Mr. Taylor being encouraged to collate, translate and publish this 'collection of unrivalled value and extent.' The company's government was unwilling to accept the scheme and after the lapse of three quarters of a century, the question how this great collection can be used to the best advantage still remains unsolved. For though catalogued twice by Wilson and Taylor, the Mackenzie collection is still much of a mystery. The Browne collection has also been included in the voluminous but ill-arranged catalogues of Taylor. Mythology and sthalapuranas, kafiyats or local chronicles, ballads and songs, and

Since, under the Reforms of 1921, Archaeology became a central subject, Archaeological excavation in the Southern Circle has come to be in a worse plight. As in Mughal days, Delhi is still distant.

Our debt to French scholarship in this sphere must be acknowledged with gratitude. As early as 1821 Langles included an accurate description of many South Indian monuments in his '*Monuments de l'Hindustan*.' The penetrating study of M. G. Jouveau-Dubreuil in his '*Archaeologie du Sud de l'Inde*' (1914) is the most important contribution of recent years to a critical interpretation of the architecture and iconography of South India.

¹ By the Madras Library I mean the Government Oriental MSS. Library. There is another excellent Manuscripts Library in Adyar. But it seems to contain few MSS. of an historical character.

eye-copies of inscriptions are scattered pell-mell in the manuscripts. They have been occasionally drawn upon by students of South Indian History.¹ But a proper use of such material in the scientific reconstruction of the history of the land continues to be impossible in the absence of an accurate catalogue with copious indexes and cross references. Some parts of the collection may be found, on a survey, to deserve more thorough treatment than the rest and some manuscripts may be so valuable as to call for publication *in extenso*. It is hoped that systematic work on this section of the manuscripts library, which has been lying practically idle for over a century, will soon begin and that as a first step an accurate descriptive catalogue will be prepared.

VII

The scientific study and interpretation of the sources of South Indian history has not advanced far beyond the elementary stages. The temptation is very strong to forge ahead with sweeping conclusions drawn from stray facts without waiting for the chain of evidence to be completed. But this temptation must be resisted. A few random examples will make my meaning clear. In the 7th regnal year (A.D. 1152) of Rajaraja II the sabha of Urumur (Chidambaram Tq., S. Arcot) borrowed 60 kasu from the local temple owing to 'bad time' and 'akkam' (scarcity of grain or money). In the 27th regnal year (A.D. 1204-5) of Kulottunga III a temple was built in Tadavur (Attur Tq., Salem) by selling some of the jewels belonging to the temple. These two facts are taken together² to support the conclusion that there was a continuous famine in the whole area which included the two villages, about fifty miles apart, for the entire intervening period of over fifty years. My next example is also from the reign of Kulottunga III. In the 13th year of the king, two local chieftains of Aragalur (Salem) and Trikkovalur (S. Arcot) come to an agreement about 'the extent of the country belonging to each' and undertake to aid each other and to act together in the service of the king. Four years later, an endowment of 1,100 kasu is made for a charitable purpose in Chidambaram and a condition is stipulated that the principal of the endowment should be produced by the trustees once in five years before the authorities of the temple (the *mūlaparuṣaiyār*, the *sthanikas* and the managers). In the 35th year of the king a chieftain agrees to be

¹ Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol. i (1810), p. xv; Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship* (1868); Heras, *The Aravidu Dynasty*; Dr. N. Venkatramanayya, *Karikala and Trilochana Pallava*; and others.

² Inscriptions Nos. 397 and 458 of 1913 as also the *Annual Report on Epigraphy, Madras*, 1914, part ii, para 17. The texts of the inscriptions mentioned in this and in the next note have not been published.

friendly with three others who in their turn promise not to set up people against him. These three facts¹ are said to point to an unsettled state of government and the decline of the power of the Colas. Again sometime in 1907-8 the Archaeological Department of Burma came across two octagonal granite pillars near Pegu and for no apparent reason announced that their find was no other than the pillars of victory set up by Rajendra Cola after his conquest of the country in the eleventh century. As a matter of fact Rajendra never conquered the kingdom of Pegu. It must be added that the mistake was acknowledged and the pillars removed from the list of Ancient Monuments as early as 1922. But only the other day an illustration of one of these pillars appeared in a leading Indian weekly and was there described as Rajendra's pillar of victory². These are solemn warnings against hasty inferences and prove the great need for caution in interpreting the silent monuments and obscure epigraphs of other times than ours.

Some amongst us are apt to grudge what they consider to be the undue amount of attention devoted to political history.³ They say that the names of kings and their monotonous victories are of less consequence to us than a picture of the daily life of the people, their religious observances and their literary and artistic achievements. Such criticism, whatever its validity at other times, appears to be somewhat inopportune at the present moment, because it is yet too soon to turn our attention away from the study of political history. The stress on political history is not accidental or perverse and it does not proceed from a failure to realize the value or importance of social history. Any picture of social life, if it is to be of real significance, must have a firmly established framework of chronology to fit into. And this framework, which alone could support and hold together the reconstructions of social and religious history, cannot be built up except by fixing the details of political history. This is true in some measure of the history of all countries and is especially so of our own. Most of the dates and sometimes even the names of our poets and artists are irrecoverably lost to us; but events in which kings and chieftains took part are oftener and better preserved in records which either bear their own dates or can be easily dated.

¹ Nos. 440 and 264 and 435 of the Epigraphical collection for 1913, Madras, and the *Annual Report*, 1914, part ii, para. 17. Also 1919, part ii, para 21.

² *Burma Epigraphical Reports*, 1907-8, paragraph 25; 1922, paragraph 14. 'The Hindu Illustrated Weekly' of May 11, 1930. Also G. Coedes,—*Le Royaume de Sri Vijaya*—B. E. F. E. O. XVIII 6, p. 6-7.

³ 'Les recits de batailles, de conquêtes, de successions de dynasties, qui remplissent les livres d'histoire ne servent le plus souvent, qu'à cacher le cours véritable de l'existence des peuples'—Gustave Le Bon; also Mr. P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, *History of the Tamils*, p. 55.

It is not as if the sum of our achievement in the study of political history is substantial enough to justify a slackening of effort. The accounts that we possess of the Pallavas and the Pandyas are still tentative;¹ the publication² of a monograph on the Kadambas may soon be expected. Even on Vijayanagar,—which has been much studied since Sewell's time—fresh light is apparently forthcoming from the side of Kanarese literature.³ With the exception of the obsolescent notices of Fleet and Bhandarkar in the Bombay Gazetteer and the unco-ordinated discussions of the reporting epigraphists, there has been produced little work on the other leading dynasties of South India.⁴ Very much then remains yet to be done before we can arrive at a definitive political history of the South Indian kingdoms.

The mute grandeur of our numerous temples is a constant invitation to the study of local history. A study of each of these ancient foundations is bound to reveal how the rich and many-sided life of the people centred round the temple as its nucleus. In India as in Greece art was the handmaid of religion and the genius of the people, their ideas and aspirations, attained exuberant expression in the houses of their gods. By its legendary associations, by its mural inscriptions, by the richness and beauty of its architecture and sculpture, by its icons and jewels, every one of the more important temples is worthy of a separate and sumptuously-produced monograph, which would show how closely interwoven were the fortunes of gods and men in the web of national life.

Among the most striking features of the ancient and mediaeval polity of Southern India were the management of local affairs by

¹ G. Jouveau-Dubreuil, *The Pallavas* (1917). *Pallavas of Kanchi*, R. Gopalan, (1928) and the *Pandyan Kingdom*, K. A. Nilakanta Sastri (1929).

² By the Bombay Historical Society.

³ Besides the valuable papers of Mr. H. Krishna Sastri in the Director-General's Annual Reports on Archaeology we have '*The Sources of Vijayanagar History*' by Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, '*The Nayaks of Madura*' by R. Sattianathan, '*The Aravidu Dynasty*' by Rev. Henry Heras and '*The Foundation of Vijayanagar*' by the same. There are numerous articles in learned periodicals, which need not be noticed here. Mr. M. H. Rama Sarma in his papers in the Q. J. M. S. and the Journal of the Bombay Historical Society has brought together much useful information that is new on the Kingdom of Kampli which immediately preceded Vijayanagar in Central Dekkan. Almost the same ground is traversed by Dr. N. Venkataramanayya in his *Kampili and Vijayanagara*.

⁴ G. Jouveau-Dubreuil's *History of the Dekkan* is indeed valuable as an outline sketch to be filled in by further work. Mr. Gopinatha Rao's *Cōlavamśa Caritam* (Tamil) is now a rather weak book on a great subject. There is no up-to-date survey of the Cālukyas, the Rāshtrakūṭas, the Hoysalas, not to speak of many local dynasties that could be mentioned. The history of Kerala continues to be exceedingly obscure. Mr. K. P. Padmanabhan Menon's comments on Visscher's Letters published under the heading '*The History of Kerala*' vols. i & ii contain useful hints on the subject but do not constitute a history of Kerala.

the people themselves and the richness and stability and the cultured fullness of the rural life of the country. But no serious attempt has yet been made to study the structure of rural institutions and the details of administration. Few would be led to expect, from the current writings on the subject, that there was any evidence on rural institutions other than the celebrated Uttaramallur records. In reality, however, a great many other inscriptions furnish data which, if analysed and co-ordinated, would yield a comprehensive view of the classes of villages, the constitution and functions of the sabhas, their relations as among themselves and with the central administration and other matters of absorbing interest.

It is remarkable how in matters of institutional history even acute scholars are sometimes betrayed into easy assumptions. Baden-Powell gave currency to the notion that the grain-share (balute) system of remunerating village servants was Dravidian in origin. This view Mr. Altekar has conclusively disproved.¹ But though he has thus repulsed the Dravidian hypothesis on a small front, he is utterly captivated by it in the end and he declares that the system of village-government by regularly constituted assemblies and their standing sub-committees must have been Dravidian in origin. Owing, no doubt, to an imperfect appreciation of the evidence at hand he rashly extends to all councils what is true of only one class of them and lays down the following strange dicta: 'Dravidians were converts to Hinduism and their zeal in carrying out its orthodox behests was, as is usually the case with converts, far more intense than that of the Hindu Aryans themselves. Superstition and orthodoxy were therefore rampant in the South Indian villages. Thus Brahmanas alone were eligible for election to a council.'

We hear now-a-days a great deal too much of things Dravidian and things Aryan; it is to be wished that persons who talk with

¹ Altekar, *History of Village Communities in Western India*, 1927, pp. 25-29, 91 & 123-4. Mr. Altekar wisely observes: "It is indeed high time for scholars to realize that (the) real and reliable history of India's past can be reconstructed not by wide generalizations but by intense research, province by province, century by century." (p. 26.) But in his sweeping extension (p. 123) of the rules of the Uttaramallur Sabha to all village-councils in Southern India, Mr. Altekar forgets the warning he has himself uttered. The Sabhas constituted only one among several types of local bodies and together with their mahasabhas they appear to have been characteristic of *caturvedimangalam*s, Brahmadeya villages. Of such sabhas we know the typical constitution from the Uttaramallur and Manur inscriptions (*Annual Report for Epigraphy*, 1914, part ii, para. 23). In some devadana villages besides the sabha, the Ūrōm is another body which acts with the sabha (Inscr. Nos. 186 and 180 in *S. I. I.*, vol. iii). In other villages only the Ūrōm appear (No. 47 of 1919). Then there were nagarattar in some places who performed duties identical with those of the sabhas and 'Ūrōm' of other localities (Nos. 127, 130, 134, 138, 141 and 144 of 1919). Lastly, in one instance a case of murder is tried and punished by 'a nāḍu' and the Brahmanas (No. 33 of 1919).

such assurance on these difficult matters make clear to themselves as well as to others by what methods and with what criteria they effect this distinction.¹

In interpreting evidence we are apt to slide into vague romanizing if we disregard the inherent limitations of our sources. The utmost patience and skill may not avail to satisfy our curiosity in many matters. Despite the obscurities and contradictions in the records bearing on the reign of an ancient monarch like Rajaraja I or Sundara Pandya we do not lack the means of deciding with sufficient precision the course of public events during the reign; but except when, as rarely happens, a keen foreign observer describes the appearance and character of a monarch we cannot recall him to life. Contemporary poems and inscriptions, by adopting the mode of conventional adulation, often idealize into an unvarying perfection all the heroes they commemorate and hence we fail to form clear outlines of their individual lives and characters. Thus we know many things that Rajaraja did; but of what he was it seems as if we shall have to remain for ever ignorant. And this is typical of the way our curiosity is baffled at every turn.

VIII

The study of the modern history of South India touches us most intimately and is to be approached, partly for this very reason, with due caution. 'The records of the company's governments in India,' said Grant Duff,² 'are probably the best historical materials in the world: there we find the reasons for every undertaking; the steady rules intended for conduct; the hurried letter from the scene of action; the deliberations of the council, the separate opinions of the members composing it, and their final judgment. The scrutiny, censure or approval of the Court of Directors from a remote situation and after a long interval bring to recollection all that was done and all that was speculated; what has occurred in India in the meantime and what opinions have stood the test of events.' But it

¹ 'The absence of any really early Dravidian evidence as to culture deprives us of any assured knowledge of pre-Indo-European conditions such as would enable us effectively to gauge Dravidian influences in Vedic religion or philosophy. This leads to the necessity of relying on conjectures of which many may be easily shown to have no solid foundation or at most to be mere possibilities. We may of course accept such possibilities if we like, but in doing so, we cease to be judicial, and arrive merely at subjective judgments which have no lasting value.' *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*—Keith, pp. 629–30. The entire appendix from which this extract has been made is well worth careful study.

² Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, Ed. S. M. Edwardes (1921)—vol. i, p. 549.

is hardly to be expected, at any rate in the near future, that our government would follow the example of the European governments and throw open its archives to the close scrutiny of historical research. Indeed, in the special conditions obtaining in India, such scrutiny of recent history might unduly tax the students' capacity for impartiality and sound judgment. In spite of these difficulties the modern side of the history of Southern India is entitled, on account of its interest and importance, to receive more attention than it has so far obtained.

The records of the Madras Government are the primary source of our knowledge after the advent of the European powers.¹ Much information of value can also be gathered from the publications of the India Office and the Imperial Records Department and for the period of the French struggles from the archives of Pondicheri. These sources are to be supplemented by the diaries, memoirs and biographies that are published from time to time. Of all the Indian record-offices, Madras has the largest collection of Dutch records and a Research Fellow of our University is at present engaged in writing the history of the Dutch in India.

IX

The study of all History is an ennobling discipline and to us that of South Indian History is an inspiration as well. For in high endeavour and worthy achievement we can look back on a great and glorious past. Though in the organization of free government Ancient India must rank below some other lands and far below ancient Greece, yet even here the continued vigour of the village institutions of the South mitigated for many centuries the evils of a weak central government. In all the other arts of civilized life Southern India was the peer of any other country. From the very earliest times South India carried on and developed a maritime trade which linked her with the empires of Rome and of China. She gave Burma her earliest script and profoundly influenced the art and religion of distant Indo-China. Her social economy was securely based on the harmony of divers groups, each free in its own sphere to pursue its proper methods and cherish its distinct ideals. Each of her dialects developed into a copious language and gave birth

¹ What has been published of the Madras Records is a small portion of a great mass, of which there is an excellent Press list available for consultation in the Records Office. Mr. Dodwell's *Report on the Madras Records* also furnishes valuable guidance to them. The existing rules throw open records only up to A.D. 1800, while the archives of the India Office up to 1858 can be inspected by students. The publications of the '*Societe de L'histoire de L'inde Francaise*' should not be neglected by any student of modern Indian History.

to a literature which by its richness and power is the most precious treasure inherited from the past. These literatures vividly portray the thoughts and lives of her saints, philosophers and kings and give moving and musical expression to the joys and sorrows of her people.

History is often said to furnish lessons for the future. It can however offer no direct or specific guidance to present day politics and statesmanship. But the memory of what was good and great in olden days may serve to fill us with hope and inspire us with patriotic energy.

Considered merely as a discipline, the study of history is indeed ennobling. For the task of the historian is twofold ; it is severely scientific as well as genuinely artistic ; first to make sure of his facts by patient investigation and close analysis, and then 'by the light of imagination and the living touch of sympathy' to make clear the significance of these facts to himself and to his generation.

The pursuit of facts, simple as it may appear, is an arduous task. It is essential not only that each fact is correctly discovered and set forth but that no relevant fact is overlooked. And the historian must be content to go where his facts lead him. When history is studied without this detachment, when preconceived theories are allowed to warp, or present prejudices to cloud, the understanding of the past, there is no limit to the harm that results alike to History and to Politics. It has been said that propagandist history was, in part, the cause of two recent European wars. There are many subtler evils that flow from the spread of false historical values, and these cause as much suffering as the overt horrors of war. That is why, as Dollinger said, it is catholic to take ideas from history but heresy to carry them into it. We, in India, have been blamed as a race for lack of the historical sense and works of a professedly historical nature are rare with us. But the ancient Tamil poet who wrote

காய்த லுவத்த லகற்றி யொருபொருட்கண்
ஆய்த லறிவுடையார் கண்ணதே,

has laid down once for all the basic qualities requisite for sound historical work.