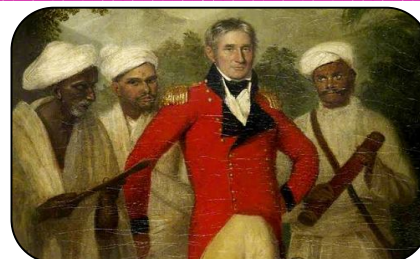




HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION OF MACKENZIE ON TONDAMANDALAM

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ABSTRACT

The subjects covered in the shape of historical papers and documents in the invaluable collections of Col. Colin Mackenzie, the indefatigable, Surveyor-General and prince of all record collectors in the last century, are so vast and varied that it is almost impossible to convey any adequate idea of their exact historical value in the compass of this chapter. Such an attempt would involve an elaborate and complete examination of these documents not only in India but also in London. Therefore the chapter is confined to briefly indicate the value of some of these collections which are connected with the early history of the Kingdom of the Pallavas known popularly to the Tamils as Tondaimandalam.

KEYWORDS: Tondaimandalam, Colin Mackenzie, Kanchipuram, Chola, Pallava, Kanchipuram.

INTRODUCTION

The Tamil Country may be likened to a magnificent column, and Tondaimandalam is its capital, the Chola-Kongu Mandalam, its shaft, and the Pandyamandalam, its base. It records a long series of remarkable invasions from the time of Bindusara to that of Shivaji. Hence there took place a lot of recorded events. Indeed Tondaimandalam was the heart of the Pallava Empire and the helmet of the Chola Empire. It was the scene of a triangular contest among the Pandyas, Hoysalas and Kakatiyas and of the ubiquitous activities of the Lion of Tondaimandalam. It was the nucleus of Saluva Narasimha's Power and it was the grave of the Vijayanagar Empire. At last it was the foothold of the British in South India.¹

Colin Mackenzie achieved unique fame because he was primarily a man of action with a wide outlook. Though by birth a highlander, by breeding a European and by vocation an instrument of British Imperialism in India, he was a universal man. His manuscripts throw considerable light on the political, social and economic conditions of the South India. For the history of South India, these manuscripts are of great value. These manuscripts supply detailed information for a study of local history of the different parts of South India.²

COLLECTIONS ON VARIOUS DYNASTIES

There are a large number of other historical documents in the collections bearing on various dynasties of Southern India and distributed in the several languages namely Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, Persian and Malayalam. Professor Wilson's catalogue alone enumerates no less than 200 documents connected directly or indirectly with the various periods of south Indian history. Even the most casual glance at the list of these enumerated in the catalogues of Messrs. Wilson and Taylor is sufficient to show that they are by no means confined to modern times alone but several of these records go back to much more ancient times, such are for example the accounts connected with the foundation of the Tondaimandalam, the exploits of Mayuravarman, the founder of the Kadamba rule at Banavasi, etc. The largest number of the documents are however connected with the medieval and

modern history, being connected with the dynasties of the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Kakatiyas, the Vijayanagar family, the Naiks of Madura, the members of the Mysore family, the Maharatta notables, the history of Tanjore, etc.³

TONDAIMANDALAM DOCUMENTS

The documents relating to Tondaimandalam or the region comprised by the districts of Chenglepet and the two Arcots (and forming the ancient kingdom of the Pallavas) in the Mackenzie Manuscripts consist of large numbers of *mahatmyas* local account and *Kyfeits* of various kinds as well as professedly historical accounts. These fall into three divisions, the first consisting of accounts relating to the state of the region in the dawn of history and its inhabitants, the second relating to the conquest of the tract by the Cholas under Tondaman or Adondachakravarthi while the third class of accounts relates to miscellaneous events and local history. Among these the following accounts are representative (1) The ancient history of Tondamandalam and its earlier inhabitants (2) 'Account of Tondaman-Chakravarthi in the district of Kanchi' (3) 'An account of Tondaman Chakravarthi and his war with Visvasuraja' (4) 'The, actions of the former Rajas of Pandimandalam, Choamandalam and Tondamandalam (5) 'Ancient kings of Pallavaram' (6) 'Legendary account of Mahabalipuram' (7) 'The details of the caves and sculptures of Mahabalipur ' (8) , The division of Tondamandalam into 79 nattams.)

SUBSTANCE OF THE DOCUMENTS

Without giving all the details enumerated in these accounts it can be pointed out their substance somewhat in the following words:- In the earliest period of history the region which in after times became known as Tondaimandalam was a big belt of forest inhabited by wild beasts. There arose here long afterwards a class of people known as the Kurumbar who were at first destitute of any civilization but who in course of time evolved a rude organization and agreed to abide by the decision of one among themselves called Kammanda-Kurumbaprabhu whom they made their chief. He is credited with having divided the region inhabited by the Kurumbas into 24 districts with a fortified stronghold in each of these.⁴

CHOLA- KURUMBA CONFLICT

The head-quarters of this chief was at Pulal near the modern Red-hills near Madras. During this period (Second century A.D.) there was an active commerce between these parts and the merchants at Kaveripattinam. It was shortly after this that the Chola prince or according to some accounts the illegitimate son of the contemporary Chola king invaded the region of the Kurumbas, then known as the Kurumhabhumi, presumably on behalf of the Chola kings. Two battles of this campaign against the Kurumbas are recorded, one at Pulalur itself the head-quarters of the Kurumba chief and the other at Tirumullaivasal near Saidapet. In the former encounter the Chola prince is said to have sustained a defeat. In the battle at Tirumullaivasal he is credited with having completely routed the Kurumbas with the aid of the god Siva who is said to have helped him.⁵ He is then recorded to have set himself as the ruler of the region with his head-quarters at Kanchipuram. The region was since then renamed as Tondaimandalam and many inhabitants were brought to settle there from different parts of the country, who included several agricultural classes.

ORIGIN OF TONDAMANDALAM

It is now necessary to examine the historical value and bearing of this account of the foundation of Tondamandalam and the rule of the first Tondaman in Kanchipuram. There are indeed scholars who have tried to underestimate the value of this traditional version of the origin of Tondamandalam.⁶ According to these scholars the account is supposed to be a late Chola invention. Others such as Sewell have ascribed the event to the days of Kulottunga Chola in the eleventh century A.D.⁷ But there are many difficulties in ascribing the events connected with the conquest of the region around Kanchipuram to a period as late as the eleventh century A.D.

In the first place the state of society and government portrayed in these manuscripts is too primitive to apply to a period like the eleventh century A.D. as it is impossible to think that after nearly eight or nine centuries of enlightened rule by the Pallava kings the region could have remained in a semi-civilized condition as depicted in the manuscripts. On the other hand the earliest copper-plate charters issued by one of the Pallava kings from the city of Kanchipuram, about the middle of the third century A.D. exhibits an elaborate governmental organisation which must have come into existence only since the coming of the Pallava kings. From the evidence of Tamil literature belonging to the Sangam period it is known learn that (about -the 2nd century A.D.) Kanchi was under the occupation of one of the Chola princes kings of Kanchi. It is also clear from earliest Tamil literature that the region around Kanchi and the borders of the Tamil country, were inhabited by a class of people known to the Tamils as the Vadukar, Aruvalar and Vadavar, etc., who in all probability corresponded to the Kurumbas and Vedas of the Mackenzie manuscripts.

TONDAMAN-ILAMTIRAYAN- THE EARLIEST CHOLA-PALLAVA KING

These and other considerations lead to the conclusion that the picture that one obtain from the Mackenzie Manuscripts as regards the early history of the region really belongs to the epoch of the pre-epigraphy Pallavas. Neither Sivaskandavatman the earliest known Pallava King of Kanchipuram nor his father claim to have acquired Kanchipuram or set up the Pallava power for the first time. It is therefore probable that the Adondachola of these manuscripts, who is presumably identical with the Tondaman-Ilamtirayan of the Tamil classical authors, was the earliest Chola-Pallava Kings who ruled in the city of Kanchipuram before the days of the Pallavas of the Sanskrit charters in the third century A.D. This hypothesis is all the more confirmed by the fact that the word 'Tondaman' like the other Tamil words 'Tondayarkon,' and 'Tondayar-Marugan,' is almost synonymous with the Sanskrit term Pallava sovereign.⁸ It is not known about the actual relation between the Pallava kings of the Prakrit and the Sanskrit chatters with those of Tamil literature but the probability of the accounts in the Mackenzie Manuscripts relating to Tondaman-Chakravarthi being a member of an earlier Pallava family has been indicated.

It is not necessary to examine the other documents in the collection as they mostly relate to local history or as in the cases of the papers on the Seven-Pagodas, to matters of archeological and epigraphic interest. It should have become clear from what has been said in the above going paragraphs that the collection of Col. Mackenzie's Manuscripts in the Madras Oriental library contains many valuable records, which if properly used and carefully interpreted, would throw much valuable light upon many a dark corner in the history of the country

To conclude, the collections relating to the Pallavas by themselves may not be classed as first class historical records, but they represent, at any rate, valuable traditional accounts of a period of time in the Pallava history of which very little is known even now namely the period before the days of the Epigraphy Pallavas. The value of the other documents relating to the medieval and modern times is however even greater than these, and they deserve to be more extensively used. The preparation of a new descriptive catalogue of these valuable collections in the light of the researches carried on in South Indian history since the old catalogues were published would go a long way in stimulating interest among scholars in these records.

END NOTES

1. Sathianathaiyer, R., *Studies in The Ancient History of Tondaimandalam*, Madras :Prof. R.Sathianathaiyer Commemoration Committee, 1987, p.1
2. Mahalingam, T.V., *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, Vol.I, Chennai :University of Madras,20111, pp.xviii-xxviii.
3. The titles of the most important historical documents in the Mackenzie collections are : 'A history of the Kongu Country,' (Vol I, p. 1-47), ' Ancient narrative of the Pandyan kings' Vol. 3, p. 15, 'Cholapurvapattayam,' 'Historical memoir of the ancient dynasty of the Kadamba kings,' 'History of the Rajas of Vijayanagar,' , Account of the Sivaji Raja and his war with the emperor of Delhi," An

account of the ancient Rajas of Warrangal,' 'Account of the city of Poona,' 'Historical account of Srirangapatam,' 'Accounts of Ramaraja and KrishnadeVaraja' , An account of Prataparudra the Kakatiya king, etc.'

4. This represents the earliest division of the region into administrative divisions and probably was effected many centuries prior to the times of the stone and other records of the region where they begin to figure from about the seventh century A.D. onwards. About ten of these are mentioned in these collections. The complete list is as follows : 1.Pulalkottam, 2-Ikkiidu,,3.Puliyur, 4-Sengadu, 5-Peyur, 6-Manaiyir, 7 Eiyil, 8-Damal, 9 -Urukadu, 10-Kalattur, 11-Sembur, 12 Amur, 13 Venkunram, 14 Palgunram, 15 llangadu, 16 Kaliyur, 17 Sengarai, 18 Paduvur, 19 Sendirukkai, 20 Kunravattanam, 21 Kadihur, 22.Vengadam, 23 Velur, 24 Sethoor.
5. This is alluded to in the hymns of Sundaramurthiswami who thus confirms the tradition of the Chola conquest of the region by Tondaiman. See Verse 8 of the hymns of Tirumullaivasal by Sundara in the Devaram collections.
6. Richards, F.J., *Madras District Gazetteers*, Vol. I, Madras: 1916, Government Press, p. 46
7. Sewell, Robert, *List of the Antiquities in the Presidency of Madras*, Vol. I, Madras : E.Keys , 1882, p. 177.
8. *A. S. R. for 1906-1907*, p.220