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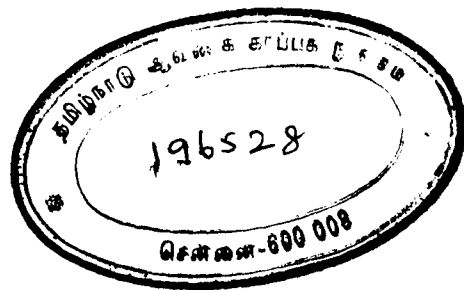
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N. Scuruman

I am extremely happy to be present here on the occasion of the 17th Annual Conference of the Epigraphical Society of India. I am greatly indebted to you and the Epigraphical Society of India for the kind gesture in electing me as the General President of this Conference. While I deem it a great honour and privilege done to me, I am also fully aware of my limitations because it is a known fact that I am a businessman turned epigraphist. I trust that with the co-operation of the fellow delegates and other friends I will be able to discharge my duties and responsibilities to the satisfaction of all.

This conference is held under the auspices of the Department of Epigraphy, Tamil University, Thanjavur. Honourable Vice-Chancellor Dr. C. Balasubramaniain is a well-known Tamil Scholar and his deep interest in history and epigraphy has enabled us to assemble in this hall. Dr. Y. Subbarayalu, Head of the Department of Epigraphy, Tamil University and Sri Raju, Associate Professor of Epigraphy, are known for their contributions to Tamil Epigraphy. I am sure these two dedicated scholars will conduct the three-day conference in a fitting manner.

In my early days I studied chemistry. Later I joined the Madras Institute of Technology (1950) and specialised in Automobile Engineering. In 1953 I worked

in the Hindustan Motors Factory, Calcutta. At that time my father was running a large fleet of transport buses and as in the case of every family, and in accordance with the wishes of my father, I took up the responsibility of running the bus transport. In 1962 I went to England and had special training in diesel engines and bus body constructions. After the demise of my father our buses were nationalised and so I turned my attention to the automobile industry, marketing and distribution. This is the short history about myself which you will find strange and odd when you read the subsequent lines.

Civil servants' and other interested private individuals' straying into the field of epigraphical researches is well-known in the historiographic traditions in our country. I fall in the latter category. The year 1975 was a turning point in my life. That was the first time I started reading historical literature. Curiously I found ambiguities in the narration of the same event by different authors. I used to get doubts in certain specified areas. When I referred to the text-books they also had the same doubts projected in different fashions and added much more confusion. In order to support their surmises the authors of the text-books quoted the same source materials. Most of them were

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epigraphs. The interpretations given to some of the inscriptions 50 or 60 years ago were religiously followed even though they did not agree with the new discoveries. This shows that a fresh and uninhibited approach should be made in the reading and the interpretations of those records in the context of new discoveries. Such an attempt revises earlier surmises and we come closer to the truth. This experience of mine prompts me here to quote Dr.K.V.Ramesh who, while addressing the Epigraphy section of the 37th Indian History Congress held at Calicut in 1977, observed thus: "Epigraphy is a strange subject and what is more, it tends to become stranger and stranger even as you try to get more and more familiar with it. No sooner do we propound seemingly flawless fool-proof and pet theories on such subjects as palaeography, chronology and history based on careful appraisals of the vast epigraphical materials already available than they are disproved by fresh discoveries of inscriptions".

Against this background I would like to state here about my maiden attempt in epigraphical research. The first innings starts with the Pallavarāyanpēṭṭai Tamil Inscription of Rājādhirāja Chōla-II, year eight (433/1924). At the moment I am not going into the details of the record because this is not the place for a full discussion on this inscription. I would like to project some important aspects of this inscription and the interpretation made by the scholars in 1934. The episode is a sample case and the researchers will understand the need for adopting new

methodologies in the investigation of the ancient records.

The record is a very long one. It speaks of Rājārāja Chōla, heir apparent (and some more details of Ceylonese war, Chōla invasion, etc. about which we are not concerned now). The inscription runs on small pillars and the little space in between them. In certain places there are damages. The gaps of the damaged portions vary from 3 to 12 cm. Earlier scholars filled up those gaps with certain letters for which there was not enough space on the walls and pillars. After filling up the gaps, they surmised as follows :

1. Rājārāja Chōla II of accession 1146 had two sons who were very young. Rājārāja became sick. Therefore, in 1163 he selected his relative Rājādhirāja as heir apparent and died in the same year.

2. In the fourth year after the selection, i.e., in 1166 Rājādhirāja became the Chōla emperor.

The above surmise does not agree with other records and historical events. The records of Rājārāja Chōla are available upto 1173 A.D. But the scholars had already surmised that Rājārāja died in 1163 A.D. If this is so how can his records appear for another 10 years after his death? Scholars explained this anomaly by stating that the Chōla officers were not aware of the king's death and so they continued engraving the records in his name (vide, Pandarathar, *Chōlar Varalāru*, Annamalai University). This surmise is illogical and cannot be accepted.

It was surmised that in 1163 when Rājārāja died Rājādhirāja was selected heir apparent and in the fourth year i.e. in 1166 only he was crowned as Chōla emperor. It means that in these four years nobody sat on the Chōla throne and it was empty. This is also illogical.

Scholars considered 1163 as the accession year of Rājādhirāja. This was based on the calculations done by Kielhorn in 1906. He consulted the astronomical data in the then available five inscriptions. In one record the data are imperfect. In another record the quoted star falls on the next day. Kielhorn was not satisfied. He said that the accession date 1163 proposed by him was based on approximation, probability and assumption. He clearly said that he was not fully convinced of the correctness of his general result. (*Epigraphia Indica, Vol. IX*). He stated that new discoveries could help in revising the date. He kept his surmise under reserve and did not publish it. Kielhorn died in 1906. The dates proposed by Kielhorn about which he too was not convinced were published in 1907. Scholars relied on this surmise and religiously followed it in spite of the caution and warning given by Kielhorn.

Some of the inscriptions of later discoveries quoted the Śaka and Cyclic years. Certain records furnished the solar day of the month also. These records confirm the accession of Rājādhirāja in 1166. The question arises whether 1163 or 1166 was the accession date. Therefore, scholars corrected the regnal year of the records and took it to be 1163. This

is also not logical. We have no business to touch the numerals which are the letters of the language of mathematics. (Had Kielhorn lived longer, he would have certainly revised his own surmise in favour of 1166 because the astronomical data of the records of Rājādhirāja agree with this date).

The above anomaly was again justified by filling up the damaged portions of the Pallavarāyanpēṭṭai inscription. It was suggested that Rājādhirāja was selected in 1163 and crowned in the fourth year, i.e., 1166. This suggestion was proposed in order to satisfy Kielhorn whose proposed date was 1163 and also the later discoveries of inscriptions which pointed out 1166 as the accession date. Sastri went to the extent of stating that in certain records Rājādhirāja counted his initial year from 1163 and in others from 1166 (*E.I.XXXI* p. 271). There cannot be two initial dates for the same king.

I found that Rājārāja ruled till 1173. In 1166 he crowned Rājādhirāja as his successor. Both ruled jointly for seven years. Other historical events were extracted from the earlier and later records. This research experience of mine helped me in reconstructing the historical events of this period.

There is no harm in attempting to restore the missing letters in the gaps of a damaged record. But such an attempt should not be harmful to earlier records. Any guess undertaken in filling up the damaged portions should not make the earlier records null and void. Otherwise

such a guess may be accepted as historical truth and the earlier records may become false. Therefore in such cases it is better to leave the gaps as they are and try to make the interpretation with the help of other known authentic records. For example, let us see the Kudimiyāmalai record (Pd. 221). It is a later copy of an earlier record. But the engraver of the 13th century, in the reign of a Pāṇḍya king, while re-engraving the earlier record of Kulōttuṅga Chōḷa, states that twenty letters are missing in the first gap and seven letters in the second gap. He did not try to restore them. Thus he avoided confusion and set an example to the future epigraphists.

While reviewing my above research on the Pallavarāyaṇpēṭṭai inscription Dr.K.V.Ramesh said that Sethuraman took the measuring rod as a reliable approach in the investigation of the damaged records. It is true. In my subsequent researches I used another scale which is used for the measurement of space called time. I mean astronomy. I started learning it.

I consulted the astronomical data furnished in the inscriptions of the Chōḷas and Pāṇḍyas. I discovered twenty-six new Pāṇḍya kings and four Chōḷa viceroy-princes. This helped me in not only reconstructing the history of these two dynasties but also in finding the dates of many Tamil poems which are very famous in Tamil literature. This sort of exercise also gave me an opportunity to consult the records and poems of the adjacent Karnataka and Andhra

States and also Śrīlāṅkā.

In Tamil, *āṇḍu* means year. *Yāṇḍu* also means year. But there is a vast difference between *āṇḍu* and *yāṇḍu*. *Āṇḍu* is a solar or calender year and it contains 365 to 366 days. *Yāṇḍu* is a lunar year and it is based on the position of the moon. In the ancient Saṅgam Tamil literature *Yāṇḍu* refers to age also. Age is based on the star in which the moon stood at the time of birth. Naturally age is of lunar measure. In the lunar year there will not be 365 days. It will vary from 354 to 385 days. All the Tamil inscriptions mention the regnal year of the king as *yāṇḍu* only. It means that the regnal year is of lunar measure. It is counted on the basis of the star in which the moon stood at the time of the coronation of the king. Let us see some sample cases.

It has been already proved that Rājendra Chōḷa I came to the throne in the middle of 1012 A.D. We will now consider two of his records, apply the Indian calender system and find his exact accession date. His Eṇṇāyiram record (341/1917) quotes year 30, day 27 of the regnal year, month Kaṇṇakaṭaka, Aparapaksha Daśami, star Kṛittikā and Thursday. The data correspond to 25th June 1041.

Year 30, day 27 = 25th June 1041

Year 30, day 1 = 30th May 1041 = Mṛigaśīrā in Āṇi (Mithuṇa)

Year 1, day 1 = Mṛigaśīrā in Āṇi in 1012 = 20 th June 1012.

Therefore Mṛigaśīrā was the accession star of Rājendra Chōḷa I and he came to

the throne on 20 th June 1012 A.D.

S.I.I., XVII, Kāḷahasti No.326 of Rājendra quotes year 23, day 4 of the regnal year, Thursday and Pushya.

1. Year 23 begins on the day of Mṛigaśīrā in Āṇi in 1034 corresponding to 17th June 1034.

2. The 4th day of the 23rd year was Thursday the 20th June on which day star Pushya was current. This date agrees with the data of the record.

3. The above calculations establish that every year the regnal year of the king changes on the day of the accession star Mṛigaśīrā in the month Āṇi (Mithuṇa).

Accession date of Kulōttuṅga Chōḷa I

Śrīraṅgam, S.I.I. XXIV, No. 93 of Kulōttuṅga Chōḷa I quotes year 41, day 352, month Āṇi, Tuesday, Rōhiṇī which correspond to 6th June 1111 A.D.

Year 41, day 352 = 6th June 1111 A.D.

Year 41, day 1 = 20th June 1110 A.D. Puṇarvaśu in Āṇi (Mithuṇa)

Year 1, day 1 = Puṇarvaśu in Āṇi in 1070 agrees with 12th June 1070.

Puṇarvaśu was the accession star of Kulōttuṅga Chōḷa I. He came to the throne on 12th June 1070. Bāpaṭṭa, S.I.I. VI, No. 167 and Kāñchīpuram, No. 45 of 1921 state that the birth star of Kulōttuṅga was Pushya. Śrinivāsanallūr inscription, S.I.I. VI, No. 659 states that the accession star of Kulōttuṅga was Puṇarvaśu. Every year the regnal

year of Kulōttuṅga changes on the day of Puṇarvaśu in the month Āṇi (Mithuṇa).

In the above cases records supply the regnal year, day of the regnal year and astronomical data. This helps us in finding the exact accession date of the king. In many cases we do not get the day of the regnal year. With the help of other records we can find the shortest interval during which period the king would have come to the throne. The date thus obtained will help us in identifying another king of the same name who existed in the same period or in different periods.

The Pāṇḍyas occupied the Chōḷa-maṇḍalam (Thaṇjāvūr area), Toṇḍai-maṇḍalam (Kāñchīpuram area) and part of the extreme southern areas of Āndhra, etc., during the period from 1252 to 1371. Therefore, if we find any Pāṇḍyan record in this area with the palaeographical features of 13th and 14th centuries and with the title *Tribhuvanachakravarti* we can immediately conclude that the record was engraved in the above period and the astronomical data given in the records should be applied to this period only. On this basis let us see three records in which the name of the king is Śaḍaiyavarman Sundarapāṇḍya.

1007, Nandalūr Records of Śaḍaiyavarman Sundarapāṇḍya:-

Record No.590 quotes year 13, cyclic year Virōdhi, month Kumbha, Pūrvapaksha Daśami, Puṇarvaśu and Monday. The data correspond to 20th February 1290. Accordingly Puṇarvaśu

in Kumbha in 1277 belongs to regnal year Zero. The date falls on 15th February 1277.

Record No. 594 quotes year 17, cyclic year Nandana, month Mīṇa, Pūrvapaksha Pañchami, Rōhiṇī and Saturday. Accordingly, Rōhiṇī Mīṇa in 1277 falls in the first year. The date was 11th March 1277.

15-2-1277 = regnal year zero.

11-3-1277 = regnal year one.

Śaḍaiyavarman Sundara came to the throne between 16th February and 11th March in 1277. The shortest interval is 24 days only. Twenty records of this king supply astronomical data and all of them agree with the initial date February-March 1277. Let us see another record (376 of 1929) which comes from Tiruppālaivaṇam near Chingleput (Tamil Nadu). In this record also the name of the king is Śaḍaiyavarman Sundara. The data are Year 14, month Āṇi (Mithuṇa), Solar day 8, Makha and Sunday. In the 13th and 14th centuries, during which period the Pāṇḍyas ruled this track, the data produce only one date and it was 3rd June 1291.

June 1291 of Sundara = 14th Year

June 1277 of Sundara = year zero

June 1278 of Sundara = year one

We have already seen that the former Sundara was a king in June 1277. The latter Sundara was not a king in June 1277. But he came to the throne prior to June 1278. Eleven records of this Sundara with the astronomical data agreeing with the initial year 1278 are found.

Here the Indian calendar system helps us in identifying two kings of the same name coming to the throne in 1277 and 1278 respectively. Such phenomena are not unknown in the history of the Pāṇḍyas. For example, two Śaḍaiyavarman Vīrapāṇḍyas of accession 1253 and 1254 are discovered. In 1303 a Śaḍaiyavarman Sundarapāṇḍya and a Māravarman Sundarapāṇḍya came to the throne. In the next year 1304 another Śaḍaiyavarman Sundara alias Kōḍaṇḍarāma also came to the throne. The Indian calendar system helps us in identifying the kings who had the same names and who existed in the same period or in different periods.

Certain records supply the day of the regnal year in thousands. Though it may look curious the fact remains that they are calculated from the date of coronation. For example, the Tiruchchendūr record of Varaguṇa (of accession 863) quotes 5001st day from the date of coronation. If we divide it by 365 we get 13 years passed and balance 256 days. It means that the regnal year is 14 and it is elsewhere confirmed by the record itself.

Śaḍaiyavarman Kulaśēkhara of Pūtalavaṇitai Tamil praśasti came to the throne in the middle of 1237 A.D. His Tiruvāliśvaram record (370 of 1916) quotes the following data:

Year 3, day 2690 also called

Year 10 - month Mārgaḷi (Dhanuṣ) = 16th December 1246 A.D.

20th Solar day, Pūrvapaksha Saptami, Uttirattādi, Sunday.

Therefore, year 3, day 2690 = 16-12-1246

Less days 2589 = Less days from the above date.

Year 3, day 1 = 6th August 1239, the day of star Svāti in the month Āvaṇi

(Śrāvaṇa) in 1239.

Therefore year 1, day 1 = 1237 Āvaṇi, Svāti correspond to 30th July 1237, the accession date.

Three more records of this king supply the regnal year and the days in thousands. Astronomical data are not given. However, with the help of the above Tiruvāliśvaram record we can find the dates of these records. They are tabulated below:

673/1916	Śērmādēvi	Year 3 day 2594	12-9-1246
665/1916	Śērmādēvi	Year 3 day 2638	26-10-1246
507/1916	Idaikāl	Year 3 day 2766	2-3-1247

The authors who have written the Pāṇḍyan history did not notice the above Tiruvāliśvaram record. They said that the king ruled for 3 years and then died. They did not understand the meaning of the days which run into thousands. With the help of other records internal and external evidence I established that this king ruled for 26 years.

A record of Parāntaka Chōḷa (of accession 907) comes from the village Grāmam situated on the southern bank of the river South Pennār. It quotes the data as follows:

1. Regnal Year - 36
2. Kaliyuga current - 4044
3. Day of Kaliyuga - 14,77,037
4. Month Makara
5. Saturday and star Rēvatī

Kielhorn found the correct date 14th January 943. From this date he deducted 14,77,036 days and found that the Kaliyuga era commenced on the day of Mēsha Saṅkrānti (Mēsha first day) in the year 3102 B.C. This agrees with the Indian astronomy and it is in vogue even today. There are three more records which quote the Kaliyuga days running into several lakhs and all of them are found in Tamilnadu. They agree with initial data Mēsha Saṅkrānti 3102 B.C. Internal evidence of the records shows that the days of the Kaliyuga were probably calculated by the astronomers of Kerala.

Elsewhere above I said that the Indian calendar system will help us in identifying kings who ruled in the same period or in different periods. I give below three interesting cases:

Case - I

195/1908 = Vaḍakōyilūr

Rājarāja

Year 20

Makara

Śu 7

136/1932 - Tirūppūndurāi

Rājarāja

Year 20

Makara

Śu 7



Aśvati
Monday =
10th January 1166
(Rājarāja II of accession 1146)

Aśvati
Wednesday =
16th January 1236
(Rājarāja III of accession 1216)

Case - II

414/1908 - Tiruvilimilalai
Śaḍaiyavarmaṇ Sundarapāṇḍya
year 9
Tulā
ba 7
Pushya
Sunday =
22nd October 1285
(Sundara of accession 1277)

15/1894 - Vikkiramangalam
Śaḍaiyavarmaṇ Sundarapāṇḍya
Year 9
Tulā
ba 7
Pushya
Saturday =
18th October 1326
(Sundara of accession 1318)

Case - III

Kōvilūr temple, south wall

Left side
Pd 450
Vīrapāṇḍya
year 34
Āṇi 8th day
Star Makha
.....
4th June 1367
(Māṇavarmaṇ Vīrapāṇḍya of
accession 1334)

Right side
Pd 451
Vīrapāṇḍya
Year 33
Vaikāṣi 29th day
Star Viśākha
Wednesday =
24th May 1374
(Māṇavarmaṇ Vīrapāṇḍya of
accession 1341)

In the first table the name of the king and the astronomical data are the same except the week days which expose the existence of two kings of the same name. The second case is also an interesting example. The week days point out the existence of two Śaḍaiyavarmaṇ Sundarapāṇḍyas of accession 1277 and 1318. The distance between the two villages where the records are found is 300 kilometers.

The third case is an important one. Two records are found on the same wall. In each record the name of the king is Vīrapāṇḍya and the palaeographic features are in characters of 14th century. Both the records supply the solar day of the month. Swamikkannu Pillai found the correct dates. They indicate that the first Vīrapāṇḍya came to the throne in 1334 and the second in 1341. Since the records quote the same name for the king,

Pillai suggested that in the second record the regnal year 33 should be corrected as 40.

I took up this case in 1986. I was always against correcting the regnal year. I came to the conclusion that two Vīrapāṇḍyas could have existed with the accession dates 1334 and 1341 respectively. Unfortunately the dynastic title Śaḍaiyavarmaṇ or Māṇavarmaṇ is absent in the above two records. At any rate it is definite that as per the traditions they should be either Śaḍaiyavarmaṇs or Māṇavarmaṇs. I collected the astronomical data given in the records which bear the name Śaḍaiyavarmaṇ Vīrapāṇḍya. The data did not agree with either 1334 or 1341. Next I collected the records which bear the name Māṇavarmaṇ Vīrapāṇḍya and in which the astronomical data are given. There were thirty two such records. Astonishingly seventeen of them agreed with 1334 and fifteen with 1341. Thus I discovered two Māṇavarmaṇ Vīrapāṇḍyas of accession 1334 and 1341.

In 1916 a record of Māṇavarmaṇ Vīrapāṇḍya (64 of 1616) was discovered at Tirukkalakudi near Madurai. It states that the Vijayanagar prince Kampana destroyed the Mohammadans and established orderly government. When did this happen? The record supplies the data year 31, month Kanyā, pūrvapaksha, tritigai, Svātī and Friday.

What was the date? None could suggest it because as on 1916 the researchers were not aware of the existence of two Māṇavarmaṇ Vīrapāṇḍyas of accession 1334 and 1341 respectively. Scholars said that the historic event should have happened prior to 1373 because the records of Kampana dated 1373 and 1374 are found in this tract.

The Tirukkalakudi record belongs to Māṇavarmaṇ Vīrapāṇḍya of accession 1341. It gives the date Friday the 12th September 1371. On this date Kampana drove out the Mohammadans and established orderly government. This date agrees with the Madurai temple chronicle which states that Kampana destroyed the Mohammadans at Madurai in Śaka 1293, cyclic year Virōdhikṛitu corresponding to 1371. Sanskrit and Telugu poems corroborate this historical event and support the date 1371. My principle is always against correcting the regnal year. It paid me rich dividends.

In the course of seven hundred years (1000 to 1700 A.D.) scores of Pāṇḍya kings existed. They had only six names often repeated. They are Kulaśēkhara, Sundara, Vīra, Vikrama, Śrīvallabha and Parākrama. These are the royal (*abhishēka*) names bestowed on the princes at the time of coronation. They had the dynastic titles either Māṇavarmaṇ or Śaḍaiyavarmaṇ. Princes with same or different royal names and

with same or different titles ruled jointly or concurrently. Overlapping of the reigns is common. Brothers and relatives may also have anointed names. The princes are identified by their *Prasastis*, titles, surnames, birth star, accession dates and other internal and external evidences. Sometimes princes with same name will also have same epithets. The

personal names bestowed on the princes at the time of their birth are not known. Records mention the anointed names only. In the midst of these oddities we can identify and find the dates of the princes with the help of the Indian calendar system. For example, I give below the number and names of kings who existed in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries.

Pāṇḍyan Records

12th, 13th, 14th - Centuries

Number of Records with Astronomical Data

(They quote regnal year, month, tithi, star and weekday)

Number of king	Names of kings	Discovered upto 1920	Addition	As on 1973
4	Mār. Sundara	18	23	41
3	Mār. Kulaśekhara	71	76	147
2	Mār. Vīra	17	15	32
7	Mār. Vikrama	16	12	28
2	Mār. Parākrama	10	4	14
2	Mār. Śrīvallabha	13	4	17
9	Śaḍa. Sundara	88	69	157
3	Śaḍa. Kulaśekhara	19	17	36
5	Śaḍa. Vīra	63	38	101
2	Śaḍa. Vikrama	5	2	7
4	Śaḍa. Parākrama	14	8	22
4	Śaḍa. Śrīvallabha	7	2	9
47	TOTAL	371	270	641

The above table is self-explanatory. As on 1920 astronomical data were found in 371 Pāṇḍyan records only. The earlier scholars consulted the data and identified 22 kings. Later, in the course of 53 years, 270 more records supplied the astronomical data. In all 641 records contain the data. With the help of the Indian calen-

dar system I was able to identify 25 new kings and also revised the dates of the 22 kings already identified.

Reconstruction :

In the beginning of this century little was known about the history of the

Pāṇḍyas. In spite of the scarcity of source materials, earlier scholars made honest attempts in proposing the dates of some of the Pāṇḍya kings. The repetition of the names confused them. Records of many kings who had same names were mixed up. Earlier savants were aware of this. They said that the dates proposed by them were only tentative and they were subject to revision in the after years. Kielhorn the pioneer chronologist, while proposing the dates of some of the Pāṇḍya kings who existed in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, said in 1901:

"..... How my results will fit into the history of the time to which the dates refer, others may decide; I have been solely guided by the dates and have not allowed myself to be influenced by other consideration (E.I. Vol. VI, p.301)".

Kielhorn continued his research and proposed the dates of some more Pāṇḍya kings. The dates furnished by certain records did not agree with the known results. In 1905, while winding up his discussion on the subject, Kielhorn said,

"..... of the nineteen new Pāṇḍya dates here published, Nos. 44 to 56 confirm the general results previously arrived at I have 35 other dates which seem to belong to 18 different Pāṇḍya kings. These cannot be published till more dates of the same kings have been discovered. (E.I. Vol. p. 274)".

The statements of Kielhorn are very clear. He expected that the future scholars would revise the proposed dates on the basis of other considerations and also

discover some more Pāṇḍya kings. Again Kielhorn was aware of the existence of not less than 37 kings. After c. fifty-five years, his statement has come true. To-day in 1991 we see 47 kings in the table.

Kielhorn said that the dates were subject to revision due to other considerations. What are they? They are internal evidence, historicity, literature, information extracted from the poems and records in other languages of the contemporary periods and the Indian calendar system. Jacobi, Sewell and L.D. Swamikkannu Pillai continued the research. Revisions, based on new discoveries and consequent reconstructions were proposed from time to time.

The discovery (1978) of the measure of the regnal year, the application of the Indian calendar system and other considerations stated above help us in the identification of the kings who had same or different names and who ruled jointly or concurrently in the same or different period. They not only help us in revising the earlier surmises but also in discovering the existence of the hitherto unknown kings. I give below an interesting sample case.

Kulōttuṅga Chōḷa III had another name Vīrarājendra. Kielhorn surmised that Kulōttuṅga *alias* Vīrarājendra came to the throne in the month Karkaṭaka in 1178. Later discoveries of inscriptions pointed out the accession date in the month Mithuṇa in 1178. This shows that the records of some other king who had the same name Vīrarājendra

were mixed up. I collected all the data and found that there was another Vīrarājendra Chōla of accession 1244 and he ruled till 1291. He was a Telugu Chōla prince.

His records are available around Madras and also in the districts of Nellore and Cuddappah. His chieftain was Manumasiddhi who patronised Tikkana Sōmayājin the author of *Nirvachanōttara Rāmāyaṇamu*. The poet was held in high esteem in the court of the Kākatīya king Gaṇapati. Thus a change in the accession month Kaṇṇaka to Mithuṇa exposed another king of same name who came to the throne sixty six years later. (N. Sethuraman 'Hoysalas in Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam', *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India*, Vol. 16, pp. 55 to 66.

The Chronologist and the Historian:

In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the scholars to an important distinction to be drawn between the approaches of a chronologist and the historian. The chronologist is very much concerned in finding the date of the record. He has to face too many things who had same names. He proposes the dates on the basis of the then available materials. Later discoveries prompt him to revise the earlier surmises. He is fully aware of his responsibility cast on him in the matter of justifying mathematics and historicity.

The position of the historian is different. He relies on the dates proposed by the chronologist and writes the his-

tory. When the chronologist comes up with fresh proposals, the historian is very much upset because he has no chance or opportunity to understand the problems faced by the chronologist and the amount of pain the latter suffered in his labour in delivering the goods. For example, let us see what the veteran historian Sastri states in his monumental work *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, 1929 edition. He says-

"These astronomical results yield different results in the hands of different scholars and often in the hands of the same scholar at different times. New kings have been postulated and given up in a manner that has tended to make the chronology a game of nine pins. As one wades through the results of Kielhorn, Jacobi, Swamikkannu Pillai and Sewell, one almost gets the feeling that ignorance at least of astronomy is bliss"

Such a frustrated statement coming from a stalwart probably frightened and caused fear among the students of Pāṇḍya history. What was the result? In the past sixty years no researcher either from the Government side or any University took up the case of the Pāṇḍyan chronology. The long interval has created a vacuum and in the result most of the present day students do not know the previous research and also the technique of applied astronomy with reference to epigraphy. Sastri should have stated the other way. He should have encouraged and advised the students to take interest in the science of Astronomy. Had he done it, the result would have been dif-

ferent.

In the past sixty years the Department of Epigraphy, the wing of the Archaeological Survey of India, discovered thousands of Pāṇḍya inscriptions and they are reported in the *Annual Reports*. The epigraphists, while making their comments, pointed out the variations. They have also furnished the clues which could help the researchers in reconstructing the chronology and the history. Unfortunately, no researcher came forward to make the best use of the fruits of the labour of the epigraphy department.

Recently the department of epigraphy, Archaeological Survey of India, Mysore, opened their branches at Jhansi and Madras. We must thank Dr.K.V.Ramesh, Director of Epigraphy, who is responsible for opening these two branches. I trust that the epigraphic researchers of these regions will be happy and come forward to utilise the services of the new branches.

Friends, I realise that I have crossed my limitations, tested your patience and delivered a long talk. The sample cases quoted above will show the importance of the Indian calendar system which was neglected for a long time. The laws of astronomy are same throughout India. However, Tamil inscriptions alone supply the data in different colours and fashions. The quoted instances help us in extracting necessary equations and formula which, when applied to the other areas, will definitely yield fruitful results. I trust

the present and future students will use the system and bring out major discoveries.

Inscriptions and Literature :

In this connection I would like to mention here one more important thing. An epigraphist must also have acquaintance with the contemporary literature of not only his mother tongue but also those written in Sanskrit and other languages of the adjacent areas. Inscriptions and literature are complementary to each other. Where epigraphs are not able to deliver the goods, particularly in finding the genealogy, literature comes to our rescue. I have written many articles on the subject and at the moment I do not want to elaborate on the subject because it will consume your valuable time. However, I will quote some examples and leave you free. I identified the heroes of two Tamil poems *Śaṅkara Chōlaṇ-Ulā* and *Kulōttunga Chōlaṇ Kōvai* which were discovered some ninety years ago. In 1947 during the partition of the country the manuscripts of the Sanskrit poem '*Pāṇḍya Kulōdaya*' were transferred from the Lahore Museum to the Punjab University which started the investigation of the poem in 1981. With the help of my books the princes mentioned in the poem were identified. I also found the hero of the poem. In turn the poem helped me in the construction of the genealogy of the Pāṇḍya kings who existed in certain important periods.

In her Sanskrit poem *Mathurā Vijayam*, Gaṅgādēvī, the queen of

Kampaṇa describes the contemporary historical event. She says that her husband Kampaṇa killed the Śambuvarāya king. The Sanskrit poems *Rāmābhyudayam*, *Sāḷuvābhyudayam* and the Telugu poem *Jaiminī Bhāratham* state that Kampaṇa defeated the Śambuvarāya and again established him on the throne. The Maḍam inscription of Kampaṇa states that the Śambuvarāya was defeated. Scholars compared the poems and the inscriptions and came to the conclusion that in narrating the same event the contemporary source materials were contradictory to each other. It is not so. With the help of the Indian calendar system, I proved that at that time there existed three Śambuvarāya kings with the same coronation (*abhiśhēkha*) name Rājanārāyaṇa. Rājanārāyaṇa I *alias* Mallinātha and Rājanārāyaṇa II *alias* Poṇṇiṇ Tambirāṇ were brothers. Tiruṇiṇṇu champan *alias* Rājanārāyaṇa III was the son of the elder brother. Kampaṇa killed the younger brother Rājanārāyaṇa II and established the elder brother Rājanārāyaṇa I and his son Rājanārāyaṇa III. Indian calendar sys-

tem came to the rescue of both literature and epigraphy and solved a very big issue which was a puzzle for the past sixty years. (N. Sethuraman, Śambuvarāyas of the 14th Century', *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India*, Vol. 13).

Before concluding my speech, I would like to offer some tips to the young epigraphists who have assembled here. India is the biggest country in the population of inscriptions. We have materials which the epigraphists can consult at least for another two hundred years. In the mean time future discoveries will also be added to stock. Sky is the limit for epigraphical research. So friends, please do your research freely in any field. Do not take things seriously. Stop worrying and start living with your research, in a happy mood. If any comment is made against your surmise, please take it easy and do not get upset. Nothing serious will happen and the sky will not fall down. What we want is truth and truth only. Please try to cultivate the sense of appreciation in favour of truth. This should be the goal of every epigraphist.

Jai Hind.

