OBSERVATIONS

The study of the megalithic remains in the region under investigation noticed during the field work and also the published materials in the preceding chapters led to the following provisional observations.

1. In this region there are six megalithic types namely, cist, dolmenoid cist, burrow, topikal, rock cut cave and menhir.

2. Among the structural granite chambers the portholed cist and oblong cist are akin to Coorg, Western part of Mysore in Karnataka and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu regions.

3. The oblong chambers concealed under the burrows are akin to the Bison Valley and Palani groups, but with some regional variations ie., the erection of burrow concealing the chambers in the Palghat region raising structural wall of polygonal plan enclosing multiple chambers in the Palany Bison Valley area. The oblong chambers seem to be a link between the two distinct traditions suggesting some contemporaneity at some stage between the two traditions. The topikals and the rock cut chambers are not Buddhistic but definitely megalithic sepulchral chambers. The topikal may seem to be an advanced developmental stage of the megalithic type and possibly may have some vague inspiration of a stupa model with chuttery at the top. This needs further careful
investigation. The menhirs are largely sepulchral forming a class by themselves but in certain areas there appears to be mutual impact between the cist traditions as noticed at Sittannavasal. Even the Kudaikal appears to be an advanced type over the type of a pit burial with overlying cairn packing.

The occurrence of varieties of terracottas under a platform supported by pillars concealed under a burrow in Palakuzhy is very peculiar to this region—so far not reported from any other part of South India. Its location in the midst of sepulchral megalithic burrows is significant. It appears to be ritual platform of the megalithic builders of the site who used to deposit terracotta figurines during periodical rituals. If it be so, the nature and character of the ritual are to be ascertained through further work.

A critical study of the megalithic types, their contents, the overlap of the types, for example, Menhir and Cist, their probable affiliation with the corresponding megalithic types in the adjacent regions and especially of the coin evidence and beryl beads clearly indicate two phases of the megalithic culture in the region i.e., the early phase from 5th c.B.C. to 3rd c.B.C. and the late phase from 3rd c.B.C. to 2nd c.A.D.
EVERY DAY LIFE OF THE MEGALITHIC PEOPLE

Since no megalithic habitation site has been traced or excavated in the region in particular and Kerala in general, aspects of the every day life of the megalithic builders in the region could hardly be attempted. However, some objects from the megalithic burial are quite significant and they shed welcome light on their every day life.

IRON OBJECTS

Some of the iron tools such as spade, hoe-blade, sickles, crowbar etc., suggest agricultural practice on the part of the megalithic builders.

BEADS

The abundance of beads even in burials probably suggests that the megalithic builders were manufacturers of such beads especially of beryl. Besides they probably traded their products with the Roman merchants and got gold and silver coins, perhaps in a big way in as much as they could afford to deposit some coins even in the burial.

TERRACOTTA

A group of megalithic builders was preparing terracotta figurines of no less artistic excellence. They appear to be skilful
artisans. Such terracotta figurines were used in death rituals.

POTTERY

The white painted wavy line design on the pottery in the site at Thonipadom is significant as it indicates the indirect contact of contemporary cultural elements with south-eastern Tamil Nadu.

Although not much is known about the everyday life of the megalithic builders the above facts pertaining to their material and spiritual life are strikingly distinctive of this region in the iron age megalithic cultural pattern of South India.