CHAPTER III.

POLITICAL HISTORY
Introduction:

Political History is studied to give a new precision, definiteness and solidarity to the principles of political science. It is a philosophy teaching by example and by warning. The discerning student can realise how powerfully the circumstances influence the feelings and opinions of society and how often vices pass into virtues and how paradoxes into axioms. History according to Lord Acton "is not woven with innocent hands. Among all the causes which degenerate and demoralise men, power is the most constant and active". These facts are more than exemplified into chequered political history of Thanjavur region.

Political Conditions:

The political history of this region prior to the Sangam age is somewhat obscure. Settlements on the banks of the river Kāviri and also along the seacoast date back probably earlier than 2nd century B.C. There is no evidence to determine the date of the earliest settlement in this region. Excavations conducted at Tirukkāmpuliyūr and Alagarai suggest the existence of village settlements in the 3rd century B.C.¹

¹ T.V. Mahalingam, Report on the Excavations of the Lower Kāviri Valley, pp. 15 and 65
Excavations at Uraiyur also confirm this date; however, it may go back to still earlier times. Recent excavations conducted at Pumpuhar near the mouth of the river Kaviri have revealed another important settlement dating back to 3rd century B.C. Apart from these settlements one is unable to understand the political conditions of this area during this period. The Asokan edicts refer to the Cholas ruling a kingdom lying on the South of the Nauryan Empire.

The history of the region becomes even more clear when we enter the Sangam age. We hear about the Cholas ruling this part of the country, generally known as Cholamandalam or Chonadu. The prosperity of this region was hailed by a galaxy of poets of the Sangam age. The Cholas ruled this territory from the capital at Uraiyyur, situated on the southern bank of the river Kaviri near the city of Tiruchirapalli. The political importance of this region probably centered around two places (1) on the western side, around the famous capital city Uraiyyur,

2. Excavations were conducted by the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Madras. The Report is yet to be published.
and (ii) around Kāvirippūmpattinam on the eastern sea coast near Sīrkāli.

The Kalabhra interregnum disturbed the tranquility and the rule of the Chōlas of this region for some time. Nothing is known of the Chōlas even after the end of the Kalabhra rule. Probably from the 6th century onwards this region was ruled by subordinate chiefs. At one time it was captured by a Pallava ruler, and was held as a cherished possession. What happened to the Chōlas in this area is little known. However, it can be stated that the territory was divided into a few principalities and was ruled by subordinate chieftains under the sovereignty of the Pallavas for sometime and by the Pandyas at other times. The Koñumbālur Vēlers ruled the territories west of the Kāviri, around Koñumbālur. They were considered as probably a feudatory of the Pandyas. The Kuttaraiyars, whose identification is a puzzle ruled the territory lying between the south of the river Kāviri and Koñumbālur, enclosing the present Thanjavur city. The Paluvēṭṭaraiyur ruled a principality around Kīlappaluvūr on the northern side of the river Kāviri.


These chieftains, though at times ruled independently, were subject to the authority of a powerful overlord.

By now the Chola had lost their significance. It has been supposed that a few Chola chieftains ruled the territory around Pulaiyarai. From Pulaiyarai a Chola chieftain gradually acquired power and established himself as an indispensable feudatory of the Pallava ruler. From humble beginnings Vijayalaya, the first ruler of this dynasty emerged as a great conqueror. He first helped the Pallavas against his Sindhan enemy and secured an important position in this region. Then he conquered the Kutteraiyars, captured their capital Thanjavur, and established his rule in that territory. The Viravalangadu copper-plates refer to the conquest of Thanjavur by Vijayalaya for his pleasure; he is also known to have founded a temple for the goddess Vismambhavasini (Surgü). The Leyden plates of Rajaraja and the Mayakunari inscription of Virarajendra refer to the construction of the new capital city of Thalajapuri after defeating the Kutteraiya chieftain whose name is not known.

8. Ibid., p. 110
   N.S. Govinandasamy, The Role of Feudatories in Pallava History, p. 83; T.V. Sasadiva Pandaratter, Pirakkala Cēlar Carittiran, pp. 7-12.

10. III., Vol. XXII, No. 34
11. III., Vol. XVIII, No. 42; TAE., Vol. III, No. 34
There is no reference to Thanjavur in the Sangam literature. The earliest reference to it comes from the Saivite and Vaishnavite literature. It is certain that Thanjavur existed in the days of the Pallavas. That it was occupied by the Muttaraiyars is evident from the Sendalai Pillar inscription, in which the "Muttaraiyar" chieftains were given the title Tanjaiikkon (the ruler of the Thanjavur). Again, Vijayalaya assumed the title Thaitai konde Koparakosari the captor of Thanjavur after his conquest of the Muttaraiyars. In the context of these circumstances it may be affirmed that the Muttaraiyars were in possession of Thanjavur, and the famous Vijayalaya conquered this prestigious capital city from them.

Vijayalaya:

Details of the early life of Vijayalaya who made Thanjavur famous in history are not known, what his status was before he made the historic 'capture' of Thanjavur, and what his original seat of power was, are all shrouded in mystery. That he was a Chola who rose from obscurity and attained fame

12. Malavira Divya Prabhanda, Yayappā, Irandal Tiruvandāti, V. 70.
14. Arr., No. 51 of 1936; Ibid., part II, p. 34.
and power by the seizure of Thanjavur are the better authenticated details of his political and public life. He extended the territory by conquering the neighbouring regions. He built a temple for Mūrundāśudhini, the consort of Śiva presumably in commemoration of the divine blessings bestowed on him; thereby he created the great Chōla tradition of building temples. An important event of his reign was the establishment of a new capital at Thanjavur. Evidently the capital was transferred from Palaśēri to Thanjavur.

Whether Thanjavur was newly founded by Vijayālaya or had existed before would be difficult to establish in view of conflicting statements. The Tiruvālangādu grant of Rājēndra I speaks of the city being seized from the Muttaraiyars. The Kanyakumari stone inscription of Vīrarājēndra refers to the city of Thanjāpuri being established in the Chōla country by Vijayālaya. The rapid improvement of Thanjavur after it became Vijayālaya's capital is beyond doubt. In the case of Rājēndra I, however, a number of places were associated with him as capitals. He was found in different times at different places like Gangaikondachōlapuram, Mudikondachōlapuram, and others.

16. HI. Vol. XVIII, No. 42.
17. ABE., No. 71 of 1926; Ibid., 1926, part II, para. 27.
18. ABE., No. 168 of 1906.
Punivalanallur\textsuperscript{19} (Chingleput District) and Viranārājana Chaturvedimangalam\textsuperscript{20}, in all of which he had palaces. Perhaps they were merely lodges for a king who was constantly on the move with his itinerant court; therefore it may not be appropriate to describe these places as full-fledged capitals.

As this thesis attempts to interpret many occurrences in the history of Thanjavur as a result of geo-political considerations, it would pay rich dividends now to pause to note the characteristics of such capitals and policies governing their transfer. In the history of the Cholas, there have been at least three transfers of capitals. The first was probably from Palaiyārai to Thanjavur, the second from Thanjavur to GangaikondaChōlapuram and the third from GangaikondaChōlapuram back to Thanjavur. Surely these changes could not have been arbitrary or purposeless. The reason for such changes can become evident if the capitals in the Thanjavur region are studied not merely from their geographical features but also from their political orientation, and hence the geo-political significance.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}\textsuperscript{17}


The basic factors for change of capitals seem to have been motivated by political, religious, cultural and sentimental considerations. But usually its rationale is governed by pragmatic considerations of environmental advantage. Even when a change of capital is effected, perhaps for novelty as in the case of Gangaikondacholapuram, or due to necessity as after the loss of Fūṣar, the dominant considerations are geo-political. Usually, a capital is constructed as the heart of a kingdom; the safety and prestige of which depend largely on its location. Vijayālaya had gained fame and prestige in defeating the Muẓaraiyars and by displacing them from Thanjavur. A transfer of capital from Paḷavārai to Thanjavur was a prestigious one coupled with geo-political strategy, it is easy for one to understand the motivation for the transfer, when it is seen that Thanjavur occupies a vantage position eminently suited to serve the needs and schemes which the Cholas had in view as a long term policy. The ambitious foresighted Vijayālaya was thus nearly equidistant from Rāmāpuram, the Pallava capital and Madurai, the Pandyyan capital. This equidistance seems to symbolize the subordination of Vijayālaya to both these powers. This meant that as the winds of power changed their direction, the loyalties of Vijayālaya also had to shift. Nothing can be more galling and wounding to the pride of an ambitious chieftain than to be a subordinate to more than one neighbouring power either simultaneously or in turns. So this plight of Vijayālaya made him resort to an advantageous geographical
location which would give him a greater leverage in poising
the power-balance between the Pandyas and the Pallavas. This
is however but a negative aspect of political ambition. A
positive move to the aspirant of power would be to play one
enemy against another and thereby weaken both to derive the
maximum benefit to oneself. This in fact, is what Aditya I
realised and this could have been reasonably contemplated
by Vijayalaya also.

The prevailing consternation of political circumstances
must have persuaded Vijayalaya to adopt this course of choosing
a capital not only in a geographical set up but
also providing politically a central position, in the Chola
country. This politically advantageous situation would afford,
as stated above, an opportunity to effectively participate
and turn the scales in a struggle between the southern Pandyas
and the northern Pallavas. It may not be too much to suppose
that the opportunities which his son availed of to such great
advantage could have well been anticipated by Vijayalaya. He
could, as a descendant of the Chola dynasty, have chosen
Uraiýur itself as his capital but did not do so and preferred
Thanjavur, because Uraiýur did not appear to him to be
strategically situated. It is evident that he wanted to
have Thanjavur as his capital since it is midway between Kâñchi

21. R. Rama Aiyar, The Rise of the Chola Kingdom, p. 10
and Madurai and he could take diplomatic sides with advantage according to the strength and power of either dynasty, after creating hostility between them as was done by Aditya I.

The establishment of more than one urban centre being simultaneously capitals of the kingdom was not unknown to the Cholas. Uraiyur and Puhar were considered as capitals during the Sangam age. This tradition continued even during the Imperial Chola period, when Palayari was favoured as a capital even though Thanjavur was the capital city.

It is argued that different capitals serve different purposes and hence their multiplicity. But the tradition really seems to have been independent of such considerations. During the Imperial Chola rule, mention is made of the cities of Thanjavur, Palayari, Gangaikondacholapuram, Vikramacholapuram, Kanchipuram, Chidambaram and Uttaramerur where the kings crowned themselves. No significance in

22. T.V. Mahalingam, South Indian Polity, pp. 76-77.
23. ARE, No. 73 of 1923.
24. ARE, No. 510 of 1926; Ibid., No. 121 of 1914.
25. ARE, No. 102 of 1926; Ibid., No. 182 of 1915;
27. ARE, No. 45 of 1921.
28. ARE, Nos. 163 and 547 of 1902.
functioning of these places is indicated. This perhaps means merely that the kings were constantly moving from one place to another in a continuous itinerary. They had to stay in various places for giving royal audience to their subjects and administering the affairs of the empire. The tradition of associating the king's name with that of places of importance is quite ancient. Cities, tanks, temples etc., used to be named after them or the members of the royal family. An inscription of Rājarāja I mentions a village name Vijayālaya-
chaturvedimangalam in Thanjavur district 30, which could have been named after his illustrious ancestor Vijayālava. This was in fact the tradition which was followed in the days of Rājarāja I when the Great temple that he built at Thanjavur came to be called Rājarājaswaram 31. The numerous other names like Mudikondacholapuram 32, Gaṅgaikondacholapuram 33, Javan-
konadcholapuram etc., also exemplify the same tradition. This is not peculiar to India or Tamilnadu but is found to be the practice, the world over, as in the cases of Constanti-
noble and Petrograd, or even Washington. In modern times

32. ARE., No. 271 of 1927.
33. ARE., No. 71 of 1926; Ibid., II, p. 27
it is probably a matter of personal vanity. But in ancient and medieval times it meant more than this. It indicated a sacred identity between the king and mother earth. The king was the lord of the earth i.e. Viśhṇu the ruler of the Universe and the consort of Bhūdevi, Territory and sovereignty are thus intrinsically connected making geo-politics a significant integrated concept. The relationship of the ruler to the land being more than that between the owner and the owned, that exist between lovers.34

The Cholas developed a few political traditions like the reigning king associating the crown prince with the administration; this practice created a small overlapping of the regnal period during which the predecessor and the successor enjoyed practically equal sovereign rights. Vijayalaya was succeeded by his Aditya I. If the former was the founder of the new capital which presaged the arrival of the new kingdom, the latter was the architect of new inter-state policy. Aditya’s foreign policy of matrimonially allying with the Rashtrakutas, though theoretically sound was practically infructuous, may

34. E.I., Vol. IX, p. 82.
fruitful event of disaster. His son Chēḷēṇṭaka I succeeded him to the throne. The exclusion of Pandīrāsvara, though probably and seemingly natural, led to Rāṣṭrakūṭa-Chōla hostility which again proved that matrimonial alliances were no bar to political conflicts. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa invasion of the Chōla country during the days of Parāntaka I, seemed an inevitable continuation of the traditional hostility between the Deccan and the Tamil country.

Parāntaka I paid for the mistakes of his father. When the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Krishna III roamed over parts of the Tamil capitals as the Pallavas did with Vatapi or the Chōlas with Polanaruva, but surprisingly he did not. Why he did not do so has not been satisfactorily explained. The Tamil capitals had escaped punishment at the hands of neighbouring powers. But the Tamils did not restrain themselves from devastating capitals of their neighbouring powers. Perhaps the Tamils had a different concept of the significance of a capital. They must have felt that a capital with its palaces symbolised the spiritual and sovereign aspects of the kingdom concretising the seat of the government. Perhaps, the other powers did not share this view and so to them the denigration of the king or his kingdom had not been achieved or accompanied by the destruction of the capital. The Romans who reduced Carthage to ashes and the Muslims who destroyed Vijayānagar
might have shared the Tamil’s view of the nature of a
capital and its totemic sanctity. This Sivaites I experien-
ced the unexpected consequences of this policy of his father
and the manifestation of a different geo-political attitude
on the part of non-Tamil, especially while dealing with the
Tamils.

For the first time in the Chola history, we come
across the Chola autonomous village under Parantaka I.
This is by no means novel nor an invention of the present
Cholas. It is a continuation of the tradition of village
autonomy not only under the Cholas but also in Tamilnadu.
The Uttararamarur inscription, though outside Thanjavur
region, gives a fairly full picture of a sabha, a Pr-Caste
village functioning autonomously. The other villages must
have had a similar structure and function involving committees
and sub-committees performing developed duties. But these
village institutions are not consequential in the matter of
governmental administration. Geo-politically this decen-
tralisation did have its consequences. The lack of communi-
cation facilities led to a substantial and effective
decentralization of power with the result that monarchy became

38. Act., No. 72 of 1923.
animal to some extent. There was a gap between the ruler and the ruled which resulted in the average subject being disinterested in the affairs of the state.

A problem of succession:

After Parāntaka I, there seems to have been a period of uncertain succession. Pujāditya, the crown prince, predeceased Parāntaka I; therefore Gandarāditya, the second son of Parāntaka I, succeeded to the throne. Gandarāditya had a son by name Uttamacholī. However, after the death of Gandarāditya his brother Ariñjaya was crowned as monarch. He had a short reign and was succeeded by his son Sundaracholī. His son Āditya II Karikāla was installed as crown prince, but he predeceased his father. After the demise of Sundaracholī, the throne was given to Uttamacholī, the son of Gandarāditya.

3. Parāntaka I (907-955)

3a. Pujāditya R (died as crown prince, heirless) 948-949

4. Gandarāditya R 949-957

5. Ariñjaya R (956-957)

6. Sundaracholī R (Parāntaka II) (956-970)

7. Uttamacholī (970-985)

Madurāntakan Gandarāditya (Officer)

7a. Āditya II P Karikāla (976-980) (died as crown prince)

8. Pājarāja I R (985-1014)

Kundavai Married Vallavaaraiyan (Vandyedōven).
This reconstruction of the troubled period of the Chōla history seems to have been the normal course of events leading to the accession of Uttama Chōla in A.D. 970. However, these events are viewed differently by two eminent historians. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri suggests that the accession of Uttama Chōla to the Chōla throne was not peaceful. Uttama Chōla himself usurped the throne and probably plotted for the murder of Aditya II, the then crown prince. According to K.A. Nilakanta Sastri the murder of Aditya II is testified by an inscription from Udayargudi. Nevertheless, the validity of this usurpation is questioned by N. Subrahmanian. According to him, it was the successors of Gandarāditya who should be called usurpers, and not Uttama Chōla. N. Subrahmanian holds that the rightful claims of Uttama Chōla were set aside by the successors of Gandarāditya on three occasions. Moreover, no piece of substantial evidence seems to support the theory advanced by K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, that Uttama Chōla coveted the throne and plotted for the murder of Aditya II, the crown prince.

37. RL. Vol. XXI, No. 27, p. 65.
38. N. Subrahmanian, History of Tamilnad (to A.D. 1336), pp. 174-177.
The allegations against Uttamachola may not, on a casual study, appear to have any geo-political significance, but indicative only of problems of dynastic rivalries. Nevertheless, a deeper study reveals that the pattern of succession had also a geo-political interest.

Generally speaking, the succession to Hindu throne was by primogeniture. This is apparent from various references which show that in the Tamil country at least the eldest son had the right to succeed to the throne of his father. This was violated occasionally when there was an usurpation. This usurpation could be either from outside the family or even from inside. Internally it could occur due to a disputed succession. Externally it is an episode of aggression.

Geo-political interpretation of history includes the migrations of dynasties due to political and non-political pressures. The splitting of a single family or dynasty and consequent settlement of these as independent political units in different areas has also a geo-political significance. The reverse of this phenomenon is the unification of two or more dynasties, by usurpation by one party moving into the realm of the other for integrating their governments under one rule. Rajaraja I's accession to the throne, argues N. Subrahmanian, was not a fresh usurpation but perhaps a continuation of the one which his father and grandfather had committed. But in any
case the circumstances under which a king succeeds to the throne cannot perhaps be mitigated by the subsequent benefit of his reign or the magnificence of his achievements.

The political condition from the last days of Parantaka I to the accession of Uttama Chōla is very uncertain. The last years of Parantaka I were marked by an invasion of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Krishṇa III who sent his army probably up to Chidambaram and captured the whole of Tondaimandalam. Krishṇa II claimed to have conquered, Thanjavur (Tāncaï) and Kēḻĉīpuram (Kēḻĉī). However, the conquest of Thanjavur is not well documented. The Chōla rule was established in Tondaimandalam also a little later. It was Sundara Chōla who established a firm rule here. He waged intensive war with the southern Pāṇḍya to regain the lost possessions of Parantaka I and assumed the title Maduraimonda Rajakāsari. His son Aditya II helped in regaining the Pāṇḍya throne and also in establishing a firm rule in Tondaimandalam. The eventful accession of Uttama Chōla was marked by peaceful rule, and some significant changes in the policy of the government.

Rājarāja I:

The reign of Rājarāja I is remarkable in many respects but only a few facts like the building of the Big Temple at Thanjavur, his patronage of Saivism and his extensive conquests
receive frequent mention. The building of a vast empire and an imposing temple, the Saivite renaissance, the victory scored against the Chālukyas when read together give a glorious picture of the stature of this king.

During the reign of Rājarāja I the foundation for the greatness of the Thanjavur region was laid. The three-and-a-half centuries since Vijayalaya, which the climax of power and prestige for Thanjavur can easily be called the 'golden age of Thanjavur'. From Rājarāja I onwards the region witnessed two processes: (1) consolidation of the region itself as a centre of political authority; (2) the rise of an empire extending to as far north as Vennai and as far south as Ceylon and not infrequently extending even to a few islands in the Bay of Bengal - an empire whose power and supremacy was based on military and naval might. This imperialism spread subjection abroad while priding itself on its autonomous villages. But it may be stated that in these processes there was neither a declared philosophy of freedom nor one of imperialist domination. The blessings of imperialism to subject nations abroad were neither proclaimed, nor was the freedom of the individual at home shaped into liberal systems of philosophy.
It is well-known that Rājarāja I's campaign was directed against the Cheras. It is suggested that this led to the destruction of the Chera fleet stationed in a place called Kandaññur Salai\(^{39}\), identified with a village near Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. The words used are such as can yield more than one meaning. 'Salai' in Tamil would mean a road, a roadstead, a teaching institution etc., and 'Kalam' would mean a vessel, an instrument, a weapon etc. The interpretation of this event has ranged from treating it as a naval expedition involving the destruction of the Chera fleet to treating it as the destruction of a military training camp. The former has been the usual interpretation so far given. But the tendency now is to treat the event as Rājarāja I's attempt to destroy a military training school as well as the armory attached to it. The extension of territories to form an empire required not merely defeat of the enemies but also the destruction of the source of their military strength. Rājarāja I, more than any other king, had realised the value of this. He was not content with merely the destruction of symbols and expressions of power but also the source of it. A fleet or fort, for instance, would merely mean such a symbol of

\(^{39}\) \textit{ARE}, No. 395 of 1922.
power but the destruction of a military school where the martial qualities are developed and military training is provided is an example of cutting at the very source of power. The destruction of such training centres is more vital though the devastation of the fort and the fleet might be more spectacular.

Rajaraja I had extensive campaigns in the north, west and south to his credit. His navy was perhaps mainly directed against Ceylon, the northern part of which he conquered. His northern expedition was mainly directed against the Chalukyas and his forces went as far north as Tungabhadra. This extension of the empire necessitated a new orientation to his foreign policy. He decided on driving a wedge between the Western and Eastern Chalukyas. Of these two, the Eastern were less powerful though more enduring. Rajaraja I allied himself with the Eastern Chalukyas against the Western. This paid rich dividends to the future of the empire. A new prosperity at home followed the imperial gains abroad.

The growth of the empire resulted in a higher standard of living among the people. This created a climate for religious fervour through devotional literature, temples and learned Brahmins. Consequently this led to Sanskrit gaining importance in the life and culture of the people. His conquests tempted him to assume several titles. The king
changed the names of conquered territories and bestowed his own name on them. Tondaimādu was named as Jayagondachola-mandalam. This happened even in the case of smaller territorial divisions like districts and villages. The practice of changing existing names of places and naming them after their own might have been due to the anxiety to establish the connection between themselves and those places. For kings to call their countries orbitacies after their names like Constantinople, Rome, Bāratavarsha etc., seems to be universal. This identity of the king and the kingdom is a politico-geographic equation making the ruler and the territory two essential aspects of a state.

The Temple and the Economy:

The king distinguished himself by closely associating with various religious institutions. He augmented the revenue and the wealth of the country by appropriating the loot from the conquered regions. This is very characteristic of a non-productive economy. When the living standard of people did not rise by productivity, it had to be developed by the induction of wealth from outside. The Great Temple at Thanjavur is the most significant symbol of such an endowment. Since all means of production were primitive and remained unreformed, the prosperity of the Chola Kingdom was the result of and indirect proportion to the impoverishment
of the conquered land. This wealth however was not merely distributed among favourites but used for the foundation of religious institutions like temples where the looted wealth was kept as trust property. This created a community of hereditary beneficiaries living on the religious and charitable institutions contributing very little by way of economically productive activity. Employment and living were thus provided. Such provision was institutionalised as charitable and religious establishments. Such an arrangement, though temporarily providing employment and perhaps leading to an increasing prosperity, cannot be equated to a self-generating economic system. If at any moment the indution of wealth by successful wars and collection of loot stopped — as it actually did in the case of the Cholas during their decline — then the prosperity of the country also diminished. This kind of extension of an empire is an index only of power and that too of relative power. This cannot be a substitute for prudent promotion of economic potentialities. The hailing of these victories by historians can amount to no more than recognition of the relative superiority of the Chola arms.

40. SII., Vol. II, No. 95. (Rajarājadēvar Gēramāniyum Paṇḍiyarkalaiyum epindukoṇda paṇḍaramgalilum)
It may be recollected that the temples played a multi-dimensional role. The sacred relationship between the king and the territory is further confirmed by the king regarding the temples as social institutions too. Surely, the temples were more than merely religious in their functions. They were the archives for the kings and their chieftains containing the lithic records of their political and other activities. This makes the temple more than a place of worship. It is also a symbol attesting to the royal sovereignty. The Chōla king was crowned in the temple like the British Sovereigns at the Westminster church. Chidambaram was an alternative capital for the purpose of coronation. Rajaraja I's rule extended over practically the whole of South India, i.e. to the south of the river Tungabhadra, and this was about the first time when such a vast empire was established with a Tamil king presiding over its destinies.

Rājendrā I

Rājendrā I who inherited a large empire from his illustrious father Rajarāja I made it more extensive by further conquests. Infact, it comprised even of overseas territories in South East Asia. He tightened his hold over Veṅgi and the Pāṇḍya Kingdoms and established his rule over the islands conquered in South East Asia. Rājendrā I's most spectacular
military and political achievement was the conquest of
Mahipala I of Senwal. This was celebrated by the raising
of a new capital and adorning it with a temple and a tank
called Cholanganam. This temple, an architectural master,
piece, has been highly praised by Percy Brown. The tank
nearby continued to be vital source of irrigation till recent
times. These acts were not necessary in the case of subse-
quent rulers of this great dynasty. Yet he preforced to
demonstrate his greatness in this wise. Most of his conquests
were symbolic of expression of power rather than the seizure
and retention of power. Though there was a real territorial
expansion to be proud of, yet the symbols of power were over-
displayed. Rajendra I may be considered to have reached the
acme of truly oriental power, the foundation of which had been
laid by his foresighted – ancestors. As Karl Marx puts it,
"Men make history not under circumstances chosen by themselves,
but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted
from the past".

Rajendra I was an imperialist. He revelled in warfare and
the ceremonies connected with imperial expansion. True
to the Hindu tradition, he celebrated these events with rituals
and symbols. The irrigation tank mentioned above sanctified
by pouring the holy waters of Ganraj, and named Cholaganam,
is one such symbol. This unusual symbol of victory is
described in his inscription as "Jalamayan–Jayasthambam".42

(the pillar of victory with a plentitude of water). Yet another symbol was the new capital, Gaṅgaikondachōḷapuram. He styled himself as Gaṅgaikondachōla and named the capital after his new title. There is some difference of opinion with regard to the date of the construction of this capital, and its connection with the Gangetic campaign. Its chronology is a mute point because one is not certain when exactly the new capital was built. The king's own inscriptions do not seem to be abulliently expressive of this achievement.

Some scholars feel that a new capital was built and an irrigation tank was dug and that the Ganges expedition was undertaken for the purpose of consecrating these two. But K.A. Nilakanta Sastrī suggests that the construction of the capital had started earlier than the Gangetic expedition, but was completed only after the expedition. The former view that the capital was built first gives a motivation for the Gangetic expedition different from what K.A. Nilakanta Sastrī suggests.

The reason for the shift of the capital is not explained. This transfer may be a geo-political act. The extension of the

43. M. Rajamanickam, Chōlar Varamu, p. 248.
Chola empire and its sphere of influence was much beyond than what it was in the days of Vijayendra. It was not a question merely of centralization of capital. It involved also the additional prestige of building a capital a new to celebrate the recent victories of the king, for example, the Kedaram campaign. Though the new capital was built as a mark of his victories and associated with sentimental and geo-political consideration, yet the empire belied these, since it fell from this very capital. While the building of an empire was achieved from Thanjavur, we have no lack of scholars to hold that Gaṅgaikondacliṣapura was merely a symbol of royal ambition and achievement and was never the seat of government. But K.A. Nilakanta Sastri is definite that from Rājendra I to Rājendra III at least this city was the capital. Alberuni, the Muslim philosopher historian of Mediaeval India says that Thanjavur was in ruins and so the king built a new capital: It would not be out of place to mention that his new venture could have been motivated by a desire to imitate the traditions of his father, in constructing a grand new temple for Śiva. A very sensible alternative

45. T.K. Subramanian, Gaṅgaikonda Chōlam, p. 58.
suggestion is that the capital might have been changed to obviate the difficulty of the frequent crossings of the river Kollidam which hampered the pious visits of the king to Chidambaram, the seat of the family deity. The status of Gangaikondacholapuram as a capital seems to have survived even the decline of the Cholas, for Karavaran Sundara Sandyan was crowned the after he conquered the Chola country. Thus it will be seen that the fortunes of an empire, be its expansion or contraction, is attributed to the capital by the victors as well as the vanquished. A politically motivated shift of capital had to be legitimised, vitalised and popularised by creating a cultural complex. This enhanced the prestige and established a really strategic position for the new seat of the government. The same was true with Thanjavur where among other aspects temples were symbols of prestige. These shifts of capitals cannot be assigned to any one particular factor but to a complex of them.

49. ARE, Nos. 39 and 40 of 1916; Ibid., No. 28 of 1927.
The only struggle now was between the Chólas and the Rashtrakútas in the distant Békhan. Neither Udīya nor Parántaka I had any need to think of a capital to the north of Thanjavur. Rañjarāja I had every reason to think of a more central capital considering the vastness of his widened northern dominions. A shift to the north from Thanjavur could have been meaningful but was not implemented as Thanjavur had a sentimental time honoured attraction. Due to the Śaivite association in Thanjavur, Tiruvaiyar and its environs, Thanjavur was an integral part of his cultural ambitions. But, when his son spectacularly expanded the Chóla empire in all directions — north, east and south — a shift of the capital further north became apparently necessary. Many reasons might be advanced for the creation of Rajendra I's new capital: Gaṅgaikondachólapuram. One wonders if even from the purely logistical point of view, he could have done less since he was greatly inspired by military ambitions. Though Rañjarāja I also had the same ideas he had a sentimental attachment to Thanjavur which his son did not share. Thanjavur was practically on the southern most end of the Pallava territory which circumstances itself would have been sufficient justification for the shift of the capital northwards. By the time of Rañjarāja I a new tradition had evidently come in, where more than one capital of an ancillary nature came to share the honour of the royal abode. For example, Vikrama-
cholan had a palace at Vikramaśīla-pura. Subhadda I is known to have ordered the repeated invasion of Kalinga from his palace at Kāñchipuram. Sālaśiyārai seems to have continued as the capital of the Cholas even as late as Kājarāja II (1146-1167). Incidentally it is surprising that such a resented place should have no indication what so ever of its ancient splendour to-day. In the absence of known reasons, one is compelled to conjecture that Sālaśiyārai was either destroyed by the enemies of the Cholas or there were only secular structures there which have not survived the ravages of time.

There was a clear expansion of Kājendrap I's empire at the expense of the northern powers leading to the tightening of the grip over Vaiṣṇi and extension of the southern frontier, including probably the whole of Ceylon. It stands to reason to suggest that his shifting of the capital from Thanjavur to Gangaikondacholapuram was an essential geo-political administrative step towards locating the capital in a more central position. But this does not fully justify the events that followed. Ever since Aditya I defeated the Pallavas

50. ARS., No. 271 of 1927.
51. ARS., No. 163 of 1906.
and established the Chōla hegemony, Thanjavur and Kānchipuram served as alternate capitals. They equally merited the wrath of the Nāṣhṭrakūṭa Krishna III in the days of Perāntaka I, when the entire area between Kānchipuram and Thanjavur constituted the core of the empire. In view of these, a shift from Thanjavur to Gaṅgaikondachōlapuram though spectacular was politically ineffective. It could be alternatively suggested that this shifting of the capital was due to the new importance which Chidambaram had gained, to which place the devout Śaivite Chōla kings often repaired the solace and spiritual illumination. When these religious and political visits increased in number, naturally the king was anxious to avoid crossing the Kāviri and the Cōleroon too often which would be a burden on his army and its supplies - a logical and logistic consideration. But this would lead to the assumption that the Chōla imperial armies were mainly concentrated around Thanjavur. The distribution of the Chōla armies both on the north and south of the Kollidam was not without its disadvantage, since in an attack on the south, the forces stationed on the north of the river would be unable to readily participate, and vice versa.

More than the considerations mentioned above, it would appear that Rajendra I had the same motives like Vijayalaya in transferring the capital. He must have felt like Vijayalaya that successful campaigns of crucial nature should be ritually
associated with a ceremonial beginning like the founding of a capital. In the case of Thanjavur he overthrew the vittānaiyars and succeeded them, which was an epoch taking event. In the case of Gangaikondacholapuram also which was already in Chola possession, such ceremonial beginnings were associated. Perhaps ceremonial beginnings seem to be the climax of such events. It cannot be plausibly argued that the new capital was a symbol of Râjendra's successful campaigns in the far north and in the far east, for both and the Gangetic and Kâdâram expeditions came after the founding of the capital. The new capital, whose construction was probably started earlier, was commemorated by the designation of Gangaikondacholapuram because its construction was completed perhaps after the Gangetic expedition. Cholagangam and other names also belong to the same category. The other reasons which have been adduced for this events are only incidental and ancillary. The king did not stop merely with the founding of the capital. He embarked on building a temple, which was also dedicated to Brihadisvarâ. The architectural eminence of the temple suggests that the king was anxious to surpass or at least equal his father. That he did not surpass is clear; whether he equalled is a matter of doubt; but to posterity his intention and not his achievement is relevant. Even Râjarâja I must have had more than a religious motive in the construction of the temple as has been noticed earlier. That the institution
of a temple had an economic role has been already detailed. The same motive must have worked in the case of Rājendrā I too.

Rājendrā I's reign saw the zenith of the Chōla military and political power, in the vast edifice of the empire that he built. But it possessed none of the handicaps of a typical empire. His empire was not merely a large territory annexed and knit together by conquests. It was a wide area to the distant parts of which the political, administrative and cultural institutions of the mother country extended and integrated.

The conqueror's language spreads along with his conquests often becoming the official language. Imperial military outposts are maintained as defensive bastions. While these flow out through other channels, economic benefits also flow which are not necessarily a quid pro quo of the former. In the case of the Chōla empire though the former characteristic of an empire did not fully exist, the latter benefits did come in. This is known from the fact that during conquests loot was collected and taken home, and the conquered paid tribute besides. This looted bounty would necessarily enrich and concentrate at the core of the Kingdom. This would provide the necessary economic base for future acts of aggression. Sri Vijaya, southern parts of Ceylon and Bengal would ordinarily be unthinkable as areas of conquests for a Thanjavur based power.
In the days of Rajaraja I and his son Rajendra, the economic benefits from the Chola kingdom provided the economic power to sustain the successful wars of Rajendra I. Here is an instance where the philosophy of imperialism operated through economic power. This would not have been possible but for the economic potentialities of the Thanjavur region. There were cultural consequences also rising out of this imperial situation. The capital of a vast empire, ruled by an autocrat of enormous power, must have influenced not only the royal court and those who directly or indirectly came under royal patronage but also the entire region. Through this cultural influence, the people of the regions came to be emotionally integrated with the empire. While economic activity, both industrial and trade (inland as well as overseas), increased the overall national wealth raised, the standard of living of the people. That is more significant is the feeling of pride and prestige which they must have felt at the expansion of the empire. But these feelings instead of deteriorating into a narrow local patriotism were channalised into religious sentiments. Political considerations of any kind did not weigh with early or medieval subject population and the people of Thanjavur were no exception. Whatever political pride of imperial achievement there was, it could have been felt directly in the royal court and only indirectly, if at all, by others mainly as a result of increasing prosperity.
The main extension of the Chola power in the south was over the Pandyam territory which had similar social and political institutions. During this period the Chola princes served as viceroys in the Pandyam country. This was in accordance with imperial traditions. But the non-imperial character of the Chola extended kingdom, will be obvious, when one considers Ceylon, southern part of Karnata and Andra Pradesh as also Kerala which continued to have their own traditions though they formed part of the Chola empire. This was one of
of the reasons why it was possible for the Chola-based Chola Power, to territorially expand and contract without serious handicaps to itself in a political or cultural sense. The real repercussion was in the economic sphere. The wealth brought from conquered territories improved the economy of the core country, making it prosperous.

Another important factor regarding Rajaendra I's "imperialism" is the extended use of the fleet. The conquest of Ceylon by Rajaendra I concerned an area of Tamil royal activity which was strictly within conventional limits.

The extension of this to include Sri Vijaya Kingdom was significantly characteristic of Rajaendra I since he was actually acquiring territorial possessions beyond the seas which continued to be within the empire for sometime at least, till the days of Kulottunga I. This extended naval activity required a more powerful navy with ships and more hardy sailors, as also suitable naval bases and ports on the east coast.

Considering the distance and magnitude of such naval operations, the equipment and facilities available for the navy at the starting point must have been considerably. It is not clear whether Nagapattinam or Kaviripattnam or Mahabalipuram was the chief naval base. Of these places, perhaps it was only Kaviripattnam which could have berthed these ships on these ships on the river for there were no harbours to accommodate
a powerful navy. There is however a suggestion that Rājendrā I's navy sailed from a port in Kalinga, identified as Pālūr. But there is no unanimity of opinion or positive proof regarding this suggestion and so one goes by Lord Acton's dictum that "praise is the shipwreck of historians".

From Rājendrā I to Kulottunga I the imperial position was at an apex. The empire's flourishing resources were mobilised for the benefit of the people. It may be supposed that from Rājendrā I to Adhirājendrā, the empire was moving on the momentum set by Rājarāja I. The rule of Kulottunga I marks the adoption of a different policy of building and retaining an empire opposed to that of Rājendrā I. While Rājendrā I followed a deliberate policy of territorial expansion overland and overseas, Kulottunga I favoured the shrinking of the empire. The philosophy of imperialism has been different in these two periods. Rājendrā I, like his father, felt that the prosperity of the kingdom depended on its increasing size and continuous waging of successful wars. But Kulottunga I's policy was that a compact, not-too-large a kingdom, well-knit and administratively viable, would be a surer safeguard for the survival of the empire.

The reigns of the successors of Rājendrā I viz. Rājadhirāja I, Rājendradēvāli, Virarājendrā and Adhirājendrā were eventless. After Adhirājendrā, the last of the Vijayālaya Chōlas, a new tradition was introduced by the Chōla-Chalukya ruler Kulōttuṅga I. The only significant event which merits the attention of the student of Thanjavur history from the Socio-Political angle is the death of Adhirājendrā which occurred under suspicious circumstances. It has been alleged that he died as a result of a revolt in the neighbourhood of Tiruvarur. There are suspicions regarding Kulōttuṅga’s complicity in this affair. But, what is of greater importance is that, more or less for the first time in the history of the Chōlas, there is an instance of a popular revolt sufficient to endanger royalty.

The theory of usurpation in this context is worth examining. While dealing with Rājarāja I’s accession, the principle of usurpation was discussed. Perhaps Kulōttuṅga I’s succession itself to some extent may be considered an ‘usurpation’, if his complicity in the death of Adhirājendrā could be proved. As Benjamin Disraeli surmises, “All great events have been

53. AR., 1904, para 21
distorted, most of the important causes, concealed, some of the principal characters never appear and all who figure are so misunderstood and misrepresented that the result is complete mystification......."

It has been a matter of speculation as to what Kulottunga I was doing or where he was sojourning before he ascended the Chōla throne. It is surmised that Kulottunga I was a Chōla viceroy at the time when Adhirājendra was on the throne. He hurried back either because he had a forewarning of what was to follow in the Chōla country or accidentally things turned out to be what they were soon after he arrived in the Vēṇgi country. Being aware of the glory and the value of an empire, he was only too ready to ascend the coveted Chōla throne. Other scholars hold that he was engaged in campaigns to the north of Vēṇgi in Cakkaraṇkottam and other places. The identification of most of the places has not been satisfactorily done. T.A. Nilakanta Sastrī tries to discover all of them to the north of Vēṇgi and in India. T. Balakrishnan Nayar, however, advances a different view. According to him Kulottunga I must have been a Chōla viceroy in Śrī Viśaya54 before his return to Vēṇgi. This view is based on treating

54. T. Balakrishnan Nair, *The Dewaleshwaras hoard of Badami Chalukya Coins*, Madras Government Museum Bulletin,
the expression Purva - dessa as eastern country and supposing that the suffix "Uttunga" in Kulottungawas prevalent in Southeast Asia. If this view of Kulottunga I's pre-regnal activities is true, then it may supposed that Kulottunga I was in one sense actively associated politically with the Chola emperors after Rajendra I.

Kulottunga I introduced new principles of government when he took over the Chola empire. His roots were in Vaingi and he was connected with the Thanjavur royal family on the distaff side. But perhaps his sympathies and affiliations were on the Chola side rather than on the Eastern Chalukyan. There could be no doubt that Kulottunga I was interested in the Chola throne but perhaps, he was not responsible for Adhirajendra's death. Still, when a vacancy on the throne was there he availed of the opportunity and lost no time in grabbing the kingdom. That he was approved of by the people and had a direct title to the throne is confirmed by a poet's imagination in his poetry. He hit out on a new policy of government by voluntarily shrinking the imperial boundaries and reducing the expenditure on distant commitments. To compensate the loss thus incurred he concentrated on increasing the economic viability of the core kingdom.

55. For another view vide., ARR., 1899, para. 51.
The last of these could have been his main concern. He 'abolished certain inland transit duties and made the mercantile transaction easy'. This abolition of duties (Suśahāsam) must have ceased trade movements and possibly this affected mostly the Gaṅgā country. This earned for him the title 'Sugamavāriṣṭha' Kulottunga. Another important measure he carried out was a general resurvey of lands. This survey is an indication of his concern for agricultural prosperity in general. These measures of positive nature very much differed from the economy of loot.

He attempted the militarisation of certain parts of the empire and particularly the Pāñcaya country. This consisted in establishing military out posts, bastions etc. in the conquered territories. Kulottunga I's militarisation of Pāṇḍi-Madu was perhaps an attempt to integrate it with the core kingdom while preparing himself to face peripheral liquidation of the empire in far-off places like Ceylon and Kālaṅga. A uniform and milder pressure on external territories could have prolonged the life of the empire. An uneven distribution

57. ARE, No. 288 of 1907; Iibid., No. 374 of 1908; K.A. Nilakanta Sastrī, The Coḷaś, p. 331, fn. 145.

58. ARE, No. 29 of 1927; T.V. Mahalingam, South Indian Polity, p. 157.
of the pressure was bound to result in thecession of the area under mild pressure and revolt in areas under heavier pressure. This is what happened in the Pandyas country where civil war broke out and with Ceylonese intervention, led the forces against the Chola imperialism, in Pandinadu. The interval of half-a-century between Kulottunga I and the break out of the civil war in the Pandyas country is perhaps not too long a period for the unsettlement to happen. But when it did happen, it indicated the successful interfer of other enemy forces in the affairs of the Tamil country. This was the beginning of the end to the unopposed rule of the Cholas of Thanjavur over Tamilnadu.

Decline of the Cholas:

Many reasons may be ascribed for the decline of the Cholas of Thanjavur. The external causes like foreign intervention etc., can account only for the loss of the peripheral areas but not for the fall of the dynasty itself. This could be traced only to internal causes of serious nature. Considering the mettle of the Cholas who followed Kulottunga I, it cannot be said that they were weak or powerless. This only proves that the decline of the Cholas was due to reasons other than their personal competence which they always possessed in full measure. Kulottunga failed to profit by a proper study of history, to Quote Macanlay, "He alone reads history alright, who observing how powerfully circumstances influence
the feelings and opinions of men and not how often virtues pass into vices”.

The seeds of internal revolt were sown even when Vijayalaya extended his territory at the expense of his neighbours. Though he supported the Pallavas in the initial stages, it was a part of the logic of events that his son should have turned against them and made feudatory insubordination a fact. The Pallavas who went down by the end of the 3rd century A.D. evidently did not die out as a political power. They could have been feudatories of the Cholas who conquered Tondaimandalam and made Kanchipuram a subordinate capital. It was necessary for the victorious Cholas to be in frequent official touch with Kanchipuram at least to keep watch over the Pallavas, thereby preventing them from resorting to insubordination.

Kulottunga I ordered the Kalinga campaign from his seat of power in Kanchi. It is significant that the military commander of that campaign was one Karunakara Thondaiman, a Pallava. This shows how leading Pallavas were allowed to hold key positions in the administrative and military hierarchy. This was not a healthy or safe concession to old enemies but perhaps this could not be helped. Rulers from Parantaka I to Kulottunga I had to choose between the Pallavas whose enmity was known and the Cholas whose loyalty

was under suspicion." The nature of the policy was such that a Chola government could not be administered without taking into confidence numerous chieftains, local and foreign. This inevitably led to the subordinate chieftains entering into compacts among themselves to over throw the Chola imperial regime.

"The growth in the number of such chieftains had two consequences", says A.A. Hilakanta Sastri. The first was to weaken the prestige of the king's government by increasingly restricting the sphere of its effective operation, and thereby to loosen its hold even on the rest of the administration. Another consequence of the new situation was that the local chieftains began to enter into political compacts calculated to regulate their conduct towards the emperor. These compacts seem to have had an important role in effecting the transition by which the class official nobility, which had at first grown with the growth of the Chola empire, converted itself into a number of petty local chieftaincies of a hereditary character. It is remarkable that the binding power of these compacts is often sought to be secured by the most fearful imprecations some of which are too shocking to be reproduced here. The earliest of these compacts are those found in the Ramanad district towards the close of the reign of Kulottunga I and in the beginning of Vikramasila's reign. In the forty-second year of the reign of Kulottunga I, as we learn from an inscription from
Sivapuri ( Parama Vraja), Maha-Lakshman alias Kuvarapati-Veljan swore a vow of alliance and fealty to Sundarattolun. Kundan alias Rajendra-Gola Kuvarapati-Veljan saying: 'I, Kundan Puri-Lakshman alias Kuvarapati-Veljan do hereby swear that I shall remain true to (your) life, wealth and honour, and that, if I fail, I shall incur the sin of him who becomes the husband of his mother and of consuming liquor (vara) and beef (gomesam). About ten years later, in the same place is registered another compact between Rajendra-Gola alias Misudarajan and Kundan Sundarattolun alias Kuvarapati-Veljan by which the former swore fealty to the latter in similar terms. Another instance comes from North Croot and belongs to the reign of Vajehiraja II, an inscription from Kedam dated in the eleventh regnal year of the king registers a similar compact among three chieftains of the Sengani family. It will become clear presently that under Kulottunga III this tendency became much more general, and there can be no doubt that we have here unmistakable evidence of the approach of the end. The empire is dissolving into a number of warring principalities before the eyes of the king, now no longer powerful to enforce his will on his vassals who, though they still own allegiance to him, generally act very much by themselves and as best suits their divergent interests."

Feudatories like the Malaiyamana, Adigamana, Sambuvarya, and Kadavarya developed minor feudatories and this

process went on till political sovereignty power in the land was eventually reduced to mutuallyarring stone. But the alarming thing was the attempt to regularise insubordination by seemingly legal compacts among feudal subordinates.

The <l>rajarāya</l> chieftain Koppanājī, who probably belonged to the old Pallava dynasty, was like his distant and famous ancestor Narashihavarsma I Pallava styling himself after lord Narasimha continued anti-Chōla traditions and rose against Vājarāja III and imprisoned him at Śeṇchāmbēlam. The entire Thanjavur region was politically disintegration, while the Hoysalas in the north-west and the Pāṇḍyas in the south were proceeding towards political integration and centralisation. The weakening of Chōlas as a whole and the emergence of powerful Pāṇḍyas resulted in the turning of the tables in the Chōla-Pāṇḍya relations. The internal chaos in the Chōla country encouraged the Hoysalas to take advantage of the unsettled conditions and to found a capital in the Tamil country at Kānnamūr, near Timachirapalli.
Pandyay Rule:

The decline of the Chola empire has hastened by the intermittent attacks of the Pandyas, who, by the end of the 12th century, established their rule in Madura. Naravarman Sundara Pandyaya I (1217-1263), the successor of Jatavarman Kulashekhara (1190-1217), invaded the Chola country shortly after his coronation, spreading devastation and burning the capitals, Thanjavur and Uraliyur. The Chola king Kulottunga III had to seek refuge in the Hoysala country and Naravarman Sundara Pandyaya celebrated a Virabhishekha in the coronation hall at Mudikonda Cholapuram. However, the Chola country was restored to the Chola prince, Rajaraja III. Narasimha, the Hoysala ruler, also intervened on his behalf to install him as the ruler, back in his ancestral dominion. A second expedition was also undertaken by Naravarman Sundara Pandyaya, which was but futile. Probably some portions of modern Pudukkottai and Tiruchirapalli came under the rule of the Pandyas. Under Jatavarman Sundara Pandyaya (1251) the Pandyas attained their greatest splendour. He won a victory over the Cholas and their allies in A.D. 1258 and compelled them to pay a handsome tribute. The Pandyayan forces carried their invasion

61. ARRE., No. 362 of 1906.
   K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, The Pandya Kingdom, pp. 127-128.

62. Ibid., p. 135.
deep into the Chōla territory, which resulted in the decline of the Chōla. The last ruler of this dynasty, Sājendra III, is not heard of after A.D. 1279. The Pāṇḍya empire now reached the height of its prosperity, and the whole of South India was brought under its suzerainty. The Chōla country was now completely absorbed in the Pāṇḍya empire.

The Nayak rule in Thanjavur:

After the invasion of South India by Mālik Kafūr, instability and confusion prevailed for quite some years in the Thanjavur region. Plundering expeditions were led by the Sultans of Delhi. The Thanjavur area came under Muslim occupation for some time. Kampana, the Vijayanagar ruler, captured this area probably from the Muslims in A.D. 1358. It is still debatable as to when the Thanjavur region came under the rule of Vijayanagar. It has been said that the northern parts of South India were conquered by Harihara I, driving out the Muslim rulers. His successor Kamāra conquered the Thanjavur region probably in A.D. 1358. Epigraphs also confirm this conquest. The Vārasāmbikaparivārasam refers to the

64. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, The Pāṇḍya Kingdom, p. 184.
65. A. Krishnaswami, The Tamil Country under Vijayanagar, p. 25
Southern expedition of Narasa Nayaka, and his victory over
the Chola and Pandyya territories, and the local rulers probably
accepted subordinate positions. This part of the country
received only a step-motherly care.

With the accession of Krishnadévarāya, the southern
principalities received greater attention. The Chola
subordinates of Thanjavur are said to have revolted against the
imperial power, and captured Madura. The aggrieved Pandyya
appealed to Krishnadēvarāya, their overlord. Nágama Nayaka,
the general, immediately rushed with his forces, defeated
the Chola rebel and reinstated the Pandyam ruler in Madura.
Thereafter, this part of the Chola territory was placed in
charge of a great general Vira Narasinga Nayaka. His ins-
criptions are seen all over South India ranging in dates from
A.D. 1510 to 1530. The provenance of his records show
that he ruled over the south-eastern provinces of the Vijayanagar
Empire, comprising the modern districts of North and South
Arcot, Chingleput, Tiruchirapalli and also part of Ramnad. His
rule extended in this area upto A.D. 1529. Intoxicated
with power, Vīranarasīngarāva Nayaka, rebelled against the
Vijayanagar ruler himself in A.D. 1531. Achyutarāya,

67. Varadābhikaraparīnāya Cauya of Tiruvellāke. (Ed.) Lakshman
31251, Introduction, p.5.

68. ARR., Nos. 91 and 92 of 1906 (Ramnad);
ARR., Nos. 361 of 1906, 349 of 1906, 487 of 1920;
V. Vridha Bagiriyar, The Nāyaka of Tāndur, p. 16.

69. Ibid., p. 17.

70. Ibid., p. 27.
the then Vijayanagar king, conducted an expedition against the rebel chieftain and won a great victory in A.D. 1532.\footnote{Ibid., p. 23}

Based on administrative and military strategy, Achyutaraya divided the southern territories into two and appointed Sevappa Nayaka\footnote{Ibid., pp. 23-24} (Chinnasêva, Sevampeti) the sole viceroy of the whole country.\footnote{Ibid., p. 23; R. Sathianathaiyer, Nayaka of Madura, p. 52}

Sevappa, the first of the Nayaka of Thanjavur, married the sister of Tirumalâmba, one of the queens of Achyutarâya. His administration extended up to a part of the Nort Arcot district.\footnote{V. Friddhagirisam, The Nayaka of Tanjore, p. 25.} His period was not marked by any notable events or wars, except for the transfer of Tiruphirapalli to the Madura Nayakaship in exchange for Vallam.\footnote{Taylor: Oriental Historical Manuscripts, Vol. II, p. 109; R. Sathianathaiyer, Nayaka of Madura, p. 52. V. Friddhagirisam, The Nayaka of Tanjore, p. 22, Foot Note 54; pp. 28-29.} He is known to have made charitable endowments. A sarvamônya gift of ten vêlas of land was made for the maintenance of a choultry attached to the temple in Mûvalur (Thanjavur District); he also repaired the Sivaganga tank at Thanjavur and named it after himself as Sevappaneri.\footnote{ARK., No. 27 of 1923 (S 1497-1575). V. Friddhagirisam, The Nayaka of Tanjore, p. 31.}
Achyutappa, the successor of Śevasa Nayaka, ruled as a faithful subordinate under the Vijayanagar ruler. He had a record reign of 53 years. He was ably assisted in his administration by his minister, the famous Gōvinda Dikshita. Venkātapati Rāya, the Vijayanagar emperor, depended on the Nayaka of Thanjavur for financial assistance in times of need. Achyutappa completed the building of the gopura in the Aruṇāchālaśāwerar temple at Tiruvannūmalai which was begun by Aruṇāchaḷadeva. He created many Brahmīn colonies and his renowned minister Gōvinda Dikshita renovated the famous Mahāmages tank in Kumbakonam. These activities reveal his religious ardour. This shown how the Telugu rulers accommodated themselves to local culture.

Achyutappa Nāyaka died in A.D. 1601 and his mortal remains were cremated on the traditional pyre of sandalwood. It is recorded that 570 women of his harem committed sati with him. His younger son murdered his elder brother who was previously imprisoned by his father and crowned himself as the ruler. This new ruler was none other than Raghunātha Nāyaka, perhaps the most distinguished and greatest among the Thanjavur Nāyakas. However, Vridhagirisen holds that Achyutappa

78. Ibid., p. 35.
79. N. Beral, The Aravinda Dynasty of Vijayanagar, p. 400
abdicated the throne in favour of his son Raghunātha Śāyaka in A.D. 1609. Raghunātha was a close and loyal friend of Vijayanagar ruler, who was however in those times beset with disloyalty from other quarters. The Śāyak of Madura who forged an alliance of hostile forces (the Pāṇḍya, Jaggarāya and others among whom the Śāyaka of Gingee was one) against the emperor was opposed by Raghunātha. In the battle of Toppur, Raghunātha decisively defeated this wicked combination. He was greatly honoured by the emperor therefor, and his position in the south was strengthened. His reign witnessed the arrival of European merchants like the Dutch, the Danes and the English on the east coast. The Portuguese had already established themselves at Nagapattinam in Thanjavur district, and Santhome at Madras about A.D. 1610. The English made an attempt to establish a factory in A.D. 1624, but however failed in these early attempts.

In A.D. 1617 Raghunātha married the daughter of Madura Nayak thereby effecting a union between the Nayak families of Madura and Thanjavur. In his time Thanjavur became a great seat of learning and culture and the home of Carnatic music.

81. C.K. Srinivasan, Maratha Rule in the Carnatic, p. 24
He was himself a scholar in Śāṅgīta and Śāhitya. It was during this time in A.D. 1665 that Chokkanātha Nayaka, the ruler of Madura, moved his capital from Madura to Tiruchirapalli. Trensen refers to Chokkanātha's change of capital and mentions that his idea was to provide famine relief in Tiruchirapalli. All the same, the main reason for this transfer may be superiority of Tiruchirapalli to Madura as a strategic stronghold. Though his move was justified from a strictly defensive point of view, the larger political implications of this move seem to have been overlooked by him.

Bṛhadnātha's successor was Vijayarāghava. Some scholars hold that he was the eldest son and legitimately succeeded to the throne. Others opine that he was an illegitimate son and usurped the throne after killing the legitimate heir. It has been suggested that "among those prisoners who were set free, there were two brothers of the Nayaka whom he had shut up in prison, after pulling out their eyes to remove all desire on their side of succeeding him." Sathianathaier however, holds that one cannot be certain if Vijayarāghava was really an usurper. Nevertheless, Vijayarāghava, though a scholar and a patron of arts, was not a competent ruler.

83. A. Sathianathaier, Tamilakam in the 17th century, pp. 59-60.
There were strained feelings between Vijayarāghava and Chokkanātha, all the same the latter broached for a matrimonial alliance with the Thanjavur Nayak family. When this was declined, the feel out and sent an army under the command of Alagiri, a son of the nurse who reared him. Alagiri who proceeded to Thanjavur, over threw the Nayak's army, entered the fort and was soon at the gates of the palace. Vijayarāghava, with his son Mannardās fought to the last and fell in battle. Alagiri was now made viceroy of Thanjavur by Chokkanātha in A.D. 1675. On the eve of Alagiri's sack of Thanjavur, Vijayarāghava had ordered the senana in Thanjavur to be blown up to save the honour of its inmates. But before that was done, Vijayarāghava's queen managed to send her son through a nurse, who took him to Nāgapattinam where he was brought up by a wealthy chatty.

In course of time Nayasan Venkanna, a Telugu Brahmin, and a former Secretary of Vijayarāghava, now in the service of Alagiri, came to know of the existence of this young prince. When his old sense of loyalty to Vijayarāghava returned, he wanted this young prince Sēngamaladās to become the Nayak of Thanjavur. To achieve this he sought the help of Adilshah, the Sultan of Bijapur. The latter ordered Venkaji to render all necessary help for the installation of Sēngamaladās as the Nayak of Thanjavur by dethroning Alagiri who though originally only a viceroy, had made himself independent.
Alagiri, fearing treachery among his own followers, gave up the fort and fled to Ysore after a battle at Aiyamettai. Venkāji alias Skōji took possession of the fort and kingdom of Thanjavur. Then he marched against Tiruchirapalli as his intention was to deprive the Madura Nayak of a large part of his dominions. After his victory, Skōji helped Venkānna to crown Sengamaladas as the lawful Nayak of Thanjavur. Thus it was with the help of the Marattas he became the ruler of Thanjavur. Sengamaladas showed his gratitude to his saviour - the wealthy merchant who saved him - by appointing him as his minister and commander-in-chief. Venkānna, disappointed at the loss of his office, comproised with Skōji to grab Thanjavur from the recently installed prince. Skōji, who hesitated initially fearing objection from the Sultan of Bijapur, however, was ultimately emboldened to attack Thanjavur and depose Sengamaladas. Sush was the tragic extinction of the Nayak rule at Thanjavur giving place to the Marattas.

Maratta rule in Thanjavur:

The Nayaks were succeeded by the Marattas, a Hindu dynasty, established by Shahji, a scion of the Bhonsle family. They spoke Marathi, and came from Maharashtra. It was an accident of history that brought these rulers to the Kaviri delta
They governed lightly and left vanishing footstea's on the sands of local time. Theirs can be retrospectively looked at only as a passing episode in the long cultural history of Thanjavur. But this new government took its roots from stage to stage imposing different trends of a developing culture. However, this Maratha culture failed to fuse into a composite social pattern.

A significant feature of Maratha rule in Thanjavur is the contrast in the character between the rulers and the ruled. The Marathas were 'a hardy brave and active people' 'rude but independent'\(^\text{84}\), while the natives were devoted to learning culture and religion.

\(^\text{84}\) E.S. Warning, *History of the Marathas*, p. 14—quoting Mr. June's account of the Marathas. Warning proceeds to say "The true nature of the Marathas cannot be hidden though rude or cunning; indolent yet mean; brave still treacherous and without the polish, still possessing the vices of the most refined courtier" - This sounds like too subjective an assessment but on the whole suggestive.

As early as 7th century A.D. Yuan Chwang said of the Marathas: "To their benefactors they are grateful; to their enemies relentless", quoted by P. Krishna Rao Naunale in his "A brief note on the Marathas of South India" in the *Silver Jubilee Souvenir of the Maratha Education Fund*. 
After the disintegration of the Vijayanagar Empire, the Islamic successor - states of the Bahmani kingdom, as socially Bijapur and Golconda, drove the tentacles of power deep into the South. The Moghul authorities treated the Deccan Muslim rulers as their provincial governors. The Bijapur province included Bangalore, Kolar, Hoskote and Dodballapur to which Gingee, Thanjavur and Porto Novo were added later. Shahji I, a Maratha who was in the service of Bijapur Sultan was appointed governor of this extensive territory. This was the starting point of Maratha interest in the Thanjavur region. Shahji I had two sons by his two wives: Shivaji born of Jiji Bai and Venkaji alias Ekoji of Tukka Bai, Ekoji expelled Sangamalada, the son of Vijayaraghava, the last of the Nayak rulers of Thanjavur, and thus became first Maratha ruler. He ruled for some time as a subordinate of Adil Shah till the latter's death in A.D. 1675. To him goes

85. The date of acquisition Thanjavur by Ekoji is given in some papers as 1674 and in others as 1675. A statement given in the Marathi language by an old servant of the Thanjavur palace sometime before 1787 and of which a translation is printed in appendix 6 of Fullarton's A view of English interest in India mentions it as 7th February 1675. But this specific date was probably that of Ekoji's formal installation - The Manual of the Tanjore District, p. 759.
the credit of throwing off the yoke of Bijapur and making Thanjavur the capital of an independent Maratha principality. According to the Bōsālavamsāvali, Ekōji captured Arni, fought the Nayak of Tiruchirapalli, released Thanjavur from his control and halted at Tirumalāpādi near Tiruvanniyar. Hindu popular philosophy seems to concede that God appeared in his dream here and commanded him to stay Thanjavur. The extent of Thanjavur territory under Ekōji seems to have been rather limited since it did not extend even as far as the Vellar, the traditional boundary of the Chōla kingdom.

The legitimacy of Ekōji's claims on Thanjavur is worth examining. Since his father Shāhji was Bijapur's governor of Thanjavur (in addition to a few more places) Ekōji might have claimed it as a paternal inheritance. But his claims do not appear to be well founded since the Bijapur Sultan himself had no right to confer on Shāhji Thanjavur - a territory where Nayak rule was well established. Scholars who hold that Ekōji claimed Thanjavur as an ancestral province say that his father actually conquered Thanjavur thereby meaning

87. C.I. Srinivasan, Maratha Rule in the Carnatic, pp. 87-87.
that Ekoji could naturally succeed to it. But this view has not been substantiated. However, it is possible that Shahuji invaded Thanjavur and even levied tribute. Perhaps it may be charitable to hold that he claimed Thanjavur through conquest. Since this involved the treacherous dethronement of Sengamaladas, the last of the Nayak rulers, the obvious conclusion is that Ekoji was an usurper.

It is strange that one should be arguing about legitimacy in a context in which it was really a struggle between two usurpers. The Nayaks were as much guilty of usurpation of Thanjavur as the Maratta Ekoji who overthrew Sengamaladas. Thus history repeated itself with the unseen hand of nemesis. While Ekoji claimed Thanjavur through conquest, Sivaji based it on patrimony. Sivaji’s attempt to obtain Thanjavur from his half-brother and the subsequent meeting of the two brothers on the banks of the Kolliyar and the compromise that followed whereby Thanjavur stayed with Ekoji are well known. But sarkar holds that Ekoji never met his brother but escaped to Thanjavur on 23rd July avoiding him. Sivaji had to return.

89. Ibid., p. 159.
90. Ibid., p. 160.
disappointed. After Sivaji’s return Ekajo attacked the troops left by him in the Carnatic but was repulsed at Valikandapuram with great loss, thanks to Sasteji, an experienced Brahmin general of Sivaji and a half-brother of his (illegitimate son of Shahu Bhonsle), the bravest military genius in those regions. Sivaji wrote a conciliatory letter to his erring brother expressing the desirability of accord and cordiality in the family. On payment of a considerable sum of money, Ekajo managed to retain Thanjavur while he had to part with the Mysore jagirs to Sivaji. In A.D. 1680 the legal fiction of Bijapur sovereignty over South India was reaffirmed by the cession of the Carnatic region together with the principality of Thanjavur to Sivaji, but the grantee died that year and the rift between the Satara and Thanjavur Marathas widened only to become permanent. When Ekajo was grappling with Sasteji, Sivaji’s illustrious general, Chokkanath Nayaka of Madura tried to fish in the troubled waters of Thanjavur by negotiating with Sasteji for the return of Thanjavur to the Nayaks. But the treaty between the two Marathas upset the Nayak’s plans and he returned in disgrace to Tiruchirapalli. This was the last futile attempt of the Nayaks to retake Thanjavur.

92. William Hickey, The Tanjore Mahatta Principality in Southern India, pp. 75-76.
93. C.K. Srinivasan, Maratha Rule in the Carnatic, pp. 163-166.
Ekōji’s period is characterised as maladministration nevertheless it is rightly reputed for improvement of the Thanjavur region and he exemplified the usually overlooked political truth, that cruel government is not necessarily opposed to a welfare state. Thanjavur in his days is acclaimed to have been a green garden. The details of his beneficent government are known but it would be reasonable to surmise that traditions of Marāṭṭa culture and administrative practices began taking strong roots even in his days. Native objection and opposition to this foreign rule, even if it existed, should have ceased by the end of Ekōji’s region (A.D. 1684-84).

There is some controversy regarding the date of Ekōji’s death. Ekōji died according to the Marathi inscription in the Thanjavur temple, in Šaka 1604, Rudirodgāri (A.D. 1682) which means that he reigned for only seven years – confirmed by the British Commission of 1799 and by the Rev. Fr. Schwarts. But Wilks observes, in his History of Mysore that Ekōji was alive in 1696-97 when re-negotiated the sale of Bangalore to

94. C.K. Srinivasan, Maratha Rule in the Carnatic, p. 173.
the Mysore ruler Chikka Deva Nāya. Orme dates the capture of Thanjavur by Šāhji as 1680 and feels that he reigned for six years\(^96\). The inscription of Pattakotāl mentions Šāhji as Maharāj in 1686 which means that Šāhji died in the beginning of that year. Ranade also supports the same for Šāhji's death\(^97\).

Šāhji had three sons: (1) Šāhji II (2) Serfōji I and (3) Tukkōji. These sons succeeded their father one after another in the order of seniority. Šāhji II and Serfōji I, both happened to die childless. Šāhji II became ruler in A.D. 1684\(^98\). He proved to be the ablest and the most distinguished of all the Marāṭṭa rulers of Thanjavur. He ruled gloriously for nearly a quarter of a century and maintained peace and order in the kingdom. His identification with the people and his care for them is commendable. According to Hickey, Šāhji improved the fort at Thanjavur, built ablutions, chatramas and hospitals for which he secured foreign physicians from Arabia. He reformed the civil and criminal courts of

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96. Orme, Historical Fragments, p. 297.
98. AMR., 1925, p. 25.
justice. Šāhji practised an active diplomacy and joined hands with Ramnad and Mysore to weaken Madura and if possible to grab Madura territory. During Šāhji’s reign there was also an extension of Moghul power to the extreme south. Aurangzeb was then the Moghul emperor. Gingee was held by Rajaram, the Maratta general (A.D. 1690). The Moghul emperor thought of an expedition to the South. Sulfiqar Khan led by the Moghul army but Gingee stood firm. Šāhji, 'the other Marāṭa in the south' tried to help Rajaram. Thanjavor was declared a tributary of the Moghul empire in A.D. 1691. The main purpose of Aurangzeb was to subjugate the power of the Marattas. Paucity of resources counselled the Moghul commander to levy tribute on the way from the salindars of southern Carnatakas in A.D. 1694. The imperial army marched towards Thanjavur, capturing several forts on route. Šāhji, finding the resources of the Moghul army, to be inexhaustible, submitted to the Moghul ruler. He promised to pay an annual tribute of 50 lakhs of rupees to the emperor in addition to ceding the forts of Sittāmūr and Tungamūr and agreed to stop aiding Rajaram.

    C.K. Srinivasan, Maratha Rule in the Carnatic, p. 209.
In A.D. 1691 Thanjavur was invaded by Zulfikar Khan. On this occasion he exacted an acknowledgment of liability to pay an yearly tribute, perhaps 4 lakhs—2 lakhs as regular tribute and 2 lakhs as Durbar Charges. Again in A.D. 1696, Zulfikar Khan defeated the Marāṭṭas near Šenukonda resuming his operations in the south and collecting tributes. Local tradition speaks of this invasion by a general called 'Mulla' in 1696. There is apparently no allusion to this in any of the histories or Rou's compilation of Tanjore papers; but Grant Duff mentions on the authority of Scott's Deccan, that in the same year Zulfikar Khan compelled the Raja to restore several places which he had wrested from the Nāyak of Tiruchirapalli. Perhaps, this 'Mulla' was an officer of Zulfikar Khan and that his invasion was a part of the action taken by the governor of the Carnatic in A.D. 1696. Thanjavur agreed, in the face of the renewed aggression, to pay 20 lakhs of rupees and to maintain 4,000 horses and 1,000 foot of the Moghul army. It is not clear what other demands were made but it was largely the failure to pay this tribute that in later times caused the trouble between the king of Thanjavur and the Nawabs of Arcot, the southern representatives of the Moghuls. The miserable pillage and plunder perpetrated by Zulfikar and his army resulted in widespread dislocation of the subject population.

A minor dispute between the Marāṭṭa of Thanjavur and the Nayak of Tiruchirapalli regarding land near Tirukkattupalli, which was irrigated from the waters of the Grand Anicut, arose in 1699\(^1\). The Tondaiman of Pudukkottai aided the Nayak of Tiruchirapalli and defeated the Marāṭṭa ruler of Thanjavur. He obtained for Tiruchirapalli a significant tract of land to the west of Tirukkattupalli in A.D. 1700. From this date onwards until Thanjavur came into the hands of the English, the Thanjavur Rāja was very often in difficulties with reference to the irrigation of the Thanjavur kingdom. This condition continued for quite some time due to the interference of the Nawabs of Arcot. This paved the way for British involvement in the affairs of Thanjavur later.

Meanwhile a Thanjavur general, Balkâjî Pant, wanted to avenge Tondaiman for his victory over Tirukkattupalli. He collected an army and defeated Tondaiman. Subsequently, in A.D. 1709 there was a great famine in Pudukkottai which depleted its resources. It also encouraged Thanjavur to compass its defeat in collaboration with the šetupati of Rannad. In the engagements that followed the Tondaiman was successful and the southern ambitions of Thanjavur Marāṭṭa was foiled.

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102. C.K. Srinivasan, Maratha Rule in the Carnatic, p. 224.
Another important conflict by the Marattas was with Mahzammal, the regent of Madura. She, obtaining the help of Kilavan Sethupati of Rammay, declared war on Thanjavur in A.D. 1700. Dalavai Narasappaiya, the Nayak Commander, endangered the safety of Thanjavur but the plans of the Nayak were not successful and an agreement was made between Madura and Thanjavur as a result of which these newly formed allies attacked Rammad, but the latter was too powerful and was successful in shattering the allied forces. Thanjavur obtained peace by ceding Arantangi to Rammay.

Shahji was noted for his persecution of the Christian missionaries which the Hindus called 'defence of their religion' while the Christians termed it 'persecution'. When Shahji passed away, the missionaries heaved a sigh of relief. The Christians hold that Serfoji was "inferior to him (Shahji) in years but not in barbarity". This shows that Serfoji continued the persecution instituted by his predecessor.

Serfoji I succeeded his brother Shahji in A.D. 1711 and ruled up to A.D. 1727. His reign was singularly free from serious political developments. His successor Tukoji reigned during a period of rapid developments. Thanjavur resorted to

105. Ibid., pp. 226-228.
buying off invaders paying them large sums of money. In the days of Tukkōji an important constitutional issue cropped up in regard to the Carnatic. Aurangzeb invaded the Deccan and his reputed general Zulfikar Khan occupied the Carnatic. They compelled the southern rulers to accept loyalty and pay tribute to the grand Moghul. The grand mansabdāri hierarchy had at its helm the emperor at Delhi, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and the Nawabs of Carnatic at Arcot, in descending order of their political power. The Nawab of Arcot missed no opportunity of reminding the petty rulers of the Carnatic of their political subordination. This was not obviously called for since they had neither the ability nor the intention to resist the Moghul authority. The clash between Arcot and Thanjavur became pronounced during Tukkōji’s rule. It was also during his period that conflicts between Thanjavur, Madura, Tiruchirapalli, Pudukkottai and Hammad began. The subjection of all these powers to Arcot was taken for granted inspite of the vacillating moods of these powers. In A.D. 1736, Chandā Sahib, on behalf of Arcot, seized Tiruchirapalli and brought the old Nayak dynasty to an end. The weakness of Minākshi, the Nayak Queen of Madura, was as much responsible for this as the treachery of Chandā Sahib. The role of Thanjavur was

104. Ibid., p. 251.
far from glorious in this episode. She was perhaps obliged to take this attitude of vacillation and duplicity because she was herself under pressure from Ramnad. The successors of Kilavan Sethupati in Ramnad were ambitious but lacked the competency of that illustrious rulers. The south eastern part of the Carnatic, consisting of the southern parts of Thanjavur and the zamindaries of Pudukottai and Ramnad, had frequent petty wars among themselves which was an imitation of what obtained all over the Tamil country. The Nawab of Arcot, the Marattas of Thanjavur and the Nayaka of Madura were the three major powers who struggled among themselves for balance of power if not for supremacy. The same conflict was reflected with Ramnad-Pudukottai-Thanjavur conflicts. The area of conflict and the interests involved though different, the nature was the same. Even as Arcot assumed a natural supremacy in the entire Carnatic region, Thanjavur thought it was entitled to a position of arbitration among the three lesser powers of South eastern Carnatic. The death of Kilavan Sethupati marked the commencement of hostilities and intricate settlements among those powers. It was during Tukkoji's period that this policy on the part of Thanjavur commenced. When the British East India company succeeded the native political powers, the major powers got eliminated first and the lesser ones were tolerated. It was also a part of the grand strategy of the British, to be in alliance with the
most powerful like the Gaikwad and the Nizam, to abolish the intermediate ones like Oudh and Bengal and to eliminate in principle (through the doctrine of Lapse) lesser inconvenient powers like Jhansi and Thanjavur but generously permitting the continuation of innocuous powers like Rammad and Pudukkottai. The history of the Carnatic in the 18th century clearly shows that full domination of the entire area was possible only for those whose commanded enormous resources like the British East India Company, which could not be managed by any of the local powers, either singly or in combination.

Tukkoji had five sons. There was a quick succession of kings after Tukkoji. His son Bavinji or Baba Sahib died in the year of his accession. His widow Sujana Bai continued the rule for two years. Sahuji, the second son of Tukkoji, was driven out of the kingdom by internal factions and took refuge in Chidambaram before opening negotiations with Dumas, the Governor of Pondicherry. Some of the chief nobles of the kingdom, resenting to be ruled by a woman, plotted to deliver the town to the Mughals, but their intrigues were discovered and punished. This was however an indication of the aspirations of the subject population. It was this which ultimately helped Sahuji to ascend the throne in A.D. 1798. The tortuous diplomacy in the Thanjavur kingdom did not
end with this. Pratāp Singh, the illegitimate and the fifth son of Fukkoji (the 3rd and 4th having died prematurely) aspired to the throne. He conspired against Sāhuji with the help of one of the officers at court named Syed who continued to be the power behind the throne for sometime after Pratāp Singh's accession. Pratāp Singh has been hailed as one of the greatest among the Maratā rulers of Thanjavur. Despite his 'illegitimacy' he seems to have been popular. He was undoubtedly competent and free from religious fanaticism. An English despatch observes commenting on Pratāp that the king of Thanjavur acts as justly as Eastern politics allow. Pratāp Singh succeeded in holding power at Thanjavur for a decade during which they expelled Sāhuji. The people later moved the English to champion Sāhuji's cause by tempting them with the offer of the fertile tract of Devikkottai.

105. The Maratā rulers married many wives. The first was the Chief Queen and her son was the rightful heir to the throne. It was considered that the other wives were married to the sword. It is not clear what this expression means. Perhaps the other wives were not married to royalty but to heroism. Hence their offspring were deemed illegitimate.


and undertaking to bear the expenses of the expedition. In fact 'the English had no right to interfere in Thanjavur against Pratap Singh'\(^\text{108}\) . There seems to be no reason for C.K. Srinivasan to suggest that the Tanjoreans would not welcome Kattu Raja nor would they wish to lose their ruler Pratap Singh.

The tripartite struggle between Arcot, Fort St. George and Pondicherry resulted in the overthrow of Pratap Singh and restoration of Sahuji.

Before the deposition of Pratap Singh he had granted 81 villages dependent on Karaikkal. This tract was valued at Rs. 106.00 a year to the French Company. Pratap Singh lived on till A.D. 1763. There are some who feel that with his death the unity and independence of the Thanjavur Maratta kingdom vanished. An important development during the second term of Sahuji’s rule was the renewed pressure on Thanjavur by the Nawab of Carnatic in A.D. 1762. The Madras Government helped the Nawab indirectly and compelled the king to pay to the Nawab 22 lakhs of rupees as arrears and thereafter a fixed tribute of 4 lakhs annually.

In A.D. 1730 there was a very severe famine in the Thanjavur delta area. During the middle of that century the Kumbakonam, Thanjavur and Tiruchirapalli regions became the centre of almost continuous fighting. The Austrian war of Succession and the Seven Year's war had also their repercussions in the Carnatic. This brought the two European competing powers into the picture and added new dimensions to the usual contents in the locality. It is said that as a result of continuous shooting and marching, the entire area at the mouth of the delta was deprived of standing crops and trees. The central location of Thanjavur was one of the reasons for its being most affected by the happenings in the 18th century. The devastating invasions of Hyder Ali and Tippu reduced Thanjavur to a pitiable condition, worse than a desert. Reclamation and rehabilitation from such inhuman damages could only come after a century of peaceful rule under the British. The British extended their influence and ruled over Thanjavur by degrees. In A.D. 1749 they interested to restore Sahuji. In A.D. 1787, 1792 and 1799, they gradually acquired to start with the right of collecting revenues and later the kingdom itself except the fort of Thanjavur and the palaces and villages which formed the personal possession of Serfoji II. The reduction of the status of Thanjavur as an independent principality was the result of many years of diplomacy coupled with a show of force.
In A.D. 1799 its actual power had been relegated to the company; even the shadow of power passed in A.D. 1855 under the Doctrine of Lapse. The representative of the East India Company at Fort St. George wrote as follows to the Raja of Thanjavur (26-4-1800) "I congratulate your excellency on the conclusion of a treaty which is calculated to produce the most lasting advantages to your Excellency's country and to secure to both parties the benefits of the connection so intimate established between your Excellency and the Honourable Company" 110.

After Shahujhi, Pratap Singh's son Tulajáji ruled for 22 years. Talajáji, though an able ruler was handicapped by inheriting the long standing boundary dispute between Thanjavur and Pudukkottai. Where this issue was taken to the British, they quickly availed of the situation to reduce their powers so that a balance of power was maintained. In A.D. 1763 there was a successful invasion of Thanjavur by Pudukkottai but the presence of a superior power like the English prevented these local hostilities from assuming dangerous proportions. In A.D. 1773 Thanjavur refused to pay tribute to Nawab Wajah,


110. R. Sewell, *Historical Inscriptions of Southern India*, p. 310.
so he persuaded the Government of Alexander Wynch (Governor of Madras) to depose the king of Thanjavur for this refusal. Wynch sent an army under General Joseph Smith, who captured Thanjavur and deposed its ruler. The role of Mysore in the Carnatic was assuming a serious dimension when Hyder and Tippu made the Carnatic their sporting ground. In A.D. 1771 there occurred the first Arouck-Thanjavur war. The reason for this war may be said to be due to the King's refusal to send his forces to help the Nawab in his war with Hyder Ali. On the other hand, the Thanjavur king made an alliance with Hyder. Further Thanjavur appeared to have forgotten that its aggression against Pudukkottai and Ramanad were under the protection of the Nawab of Arouck, this also aggravated the situation. The delay in payment of tribute by Thanjavur to Arouck was yet another reason. The arrested ruler of Thanjavur allowed the Nawab to take possession of Vellam and Koviladi. He had to pay a large sum of money, nearly 50 lakhs of rupees, as arrears of tribute. Tulajaji was obliged to relinquish many territories due to pressure from the north. Arni, which continued to be a nominal dependency of Thanjavur until, A.D. 1771, was relinquished by Tulajaji to Nawab Mohammad Ali. It would appear that the Macttas of Thanjavur never seriously considered a strong army worth retaining for which they paid dearly. In A.D. 1772 the Dutch East India company purchased Nagapattinam from the king of Thanjavur. The relationship of obtaining an army from the triple powers of Fort St. George, Arouck and Thanjavur became strained again in A.D. 1773. The Nawab of Arouck could not resist the temptation to annex Thanjavur,
to his dominions. His campaigns in Thanjavur in A.D. 1773 is known as the Nawab's second war with Thanjavur. The Nawab's pretext for invasion was the alleged insubordination of Thanjavur to Arcot, who looked upon the ruler of Thanjavur as his Zamindar or tenant-at-will. Fort St. George, Udukkottai and Arcot joined to reduce Thanjavur and it was captured on 17-9-1773. The king and his family, Nanōji the General and a great many people were taken prisoners. Tulajji the king was deposed and the fort and the country of Thanjavur were made over to the Nawab. But these transactions were not held valid by the court of Directors who ordered the reinstatement of the king in the interests of the East India Company. This was carried out by Lord Pigot, Governor of Madras in December 1773. Thereafter, the Company became a potent protector of the interests of Thanjavur region and gained its alliance, stipulating payment of an annual subsidy of 4 lakhs of rupees to the company. All this meant a direct and final repudiation of the old political fiction of Thanjavur's subordination to Arcot. Arcot however was pacified by the grant of certain villages around Nagapattinam in compensation.

111. T. Venkassami Rao, Manual of the Tanjore District, pp. 801-805
This diplomacy proves that the East India Company had already become a paramount power at least so far as Thanjavur was concerned. Tulajāji was restored in A.D. 1776, but with considerably reduced powers. The road to the elimination of the Karāṭṭas as rulers of Thanjavur had been cleared. The king of Thanjavur had become a tributary prince. The treaty of A.D. 1776 achieved in a single stroke three conditions all of which were beneficial to the East India Company, release of Thanjavur from Nawab’s influence, restoration of Tulajāji by which the friendship of Thanjavur to the East India company was obtained and the establishment of Company domination over the Thanjavur region. The king had become a grateful subordinate ally. The waning of the power of Thanjavur region commenced with Tulajāji and this is the anti-thesis of the original process of the expansion of the Thanjavur region into an empire under the Chōlas.

Tulajāji offered the Company Nagore and 277 villages adjacent to it which came to be known as the Nagore Settlement as a further token of his gratitude. In the early years of the last decade of the 18th century, there was a severe famine

112. Ibid., p. 607.


in Thanjavur which affected East India Company too, as their export trade was affected considerably. The invasion of Hyder and Tippu, added to the economic depression, wrought ruin to the rich district of Thanjavur ultimately this situation was retrieved by the British.

While Tulajajji was in unsound state of mind, his wife adopted on only son of a family for the throne of Thanjavur. After Tulajajji's death in A.D. 1787, his half-brother Amar Singh succeeded. He contested the legality of the above adoption of the only son. The Sāstras were quoted against this practice. The East India Company earlier decided in favour of Amar Singh but later preferred the adoption and found the interpreters of Sāstras equally obliging to them on both the occasions. Amar Singh during his period of regency ill-treated the young adopted prince as well as the widows of brother Tulajajji and this matter went even upto Lord Cornwallis. The deposition of Amar Singh and the elevation of Sarfoji II (the adopted son of Tulajajji) followed.

Ibid., Vol. 3460, pp. 9-19
Ibid., Vol. 4352, pp. 36-76
This marked another important stage in the decline of the Maratha power in Thanjavur. In A.D. 1792 Amar Singh tried to pacify the English protectors by emphasizing his subordinate position, but Serfoji II strengthened his position by further subordination by improving the treaty of A.D. 1722. The treaty of 1792 stipulated that the Raja would pay 3½ lakhs of Pagodas, failing which the company was authorized to assume the management of the specified districts (Mannargudi, Tiruvadi, Kayavaram and Pattukottai) and collect the revenue thereof. During war time the position would be reversed. The Company would rule Thanjavur but pay Raja 1 lakh of pagodas annually for his expenses. This treaty reduced Thanjavur to a British Province with a provision for a suitable allowance for the young king. He was allowed to exercise his power over a small area around the fort of Thanjavur. In A.D. 1841 this was further confined to the fort alone. Thus, on the 26th of April 1799 the Company became the de facto ruler of Thanjavur.

Raja Serfoji, a prince among scholars, was a man of culture and a great patron of arts and letters, Indian and European.


He was a connoisseur of and a believer in the liberal arts. The Saraswathi Mahal Library, mainly of oriental manuscripts, at Thanjavur acclaimed to be one of the largest of its kind owed a good part of its collections to this enlightened Raja. Posterity has cherished his memory to the extent of commemorating his name in recent times by christening the first college of Thanjavur as Raja Serfoji College. But in the realm of state craft these qualities pay no dividends. In a land of culture his failure as a statesman or warrior is not either remembered or if remembered not regretted.

The British

The treaty of A.D. 1799 by which Serfoji lost most of the governmental powers to the British, saw virtually the end of the native rule in Thanjavur. In fact, under the Governor General Lord Wellesley (in 1799) the Maratta principality of Thanjavur was annexed to the British possessions of India. The British interest over Thanjavur had commenced even earlier. Now, they tightened their hold over the native principality by curbing and censoring their correspondence and preventing them from associating with one another. In A.D. 1784 a letter was found on a person suspected to be the king's messenger. But Raja Dwar Singh denied having written to the Peshwa. In a communication sent by Fort St. George to Amar Singh in A.D. 1793, it was stated that the Company's acceptance of Serfoji, as the heir presumptive in preference to Amar Singh was in the best interest of the maintenance of peace and prosperity in Thanjavur. While Serfoji was the heir presumptive, the
Governor wrote to him asking him to improve his knowledge of the English language which would be of infinite importance to Serfoji and also to listen to the advice of Schwarts. The Company thus felt that English educated princes would be an asset than others. Serfoji seems to have taken this advice quite seriously, he wrote to the Resident requesting him to send him a certain book inorder to perfect himself more in learning fundamentals of the English language, an attitude which would feign wish the present generation in India had.

The British further tried to create a subdued animosity in the midst of native rulers against other European powers particularly the French. In A.D. 1805 when England and France were at war, Mr. Benjamin Torinfrim from London wrote to Serfoji advising him to be faithful to the English and 'look upon the French who are the enemies of the English as his enemy'. He further cautioned that "the French are the treacherous lot, who might hold out to his spurious promises which in appearance sweet and flattering, are in reality designed for his ruin".  

The Residency which was the connecting link between Thanjavur and the British was considered useful and essential.

118. Tanjore Raj Records, Bundle 5484, pp. 53-65.
more by the king than even by the Company. In A.D. 1831 the king suggested the Residency should not be abolished when the British were in contemplation of abolishing it. The king went even to the extent of offering to bear the maintenance expenses of the Residency. The British replied that it was beneath their dignity to accept the king’s offer. The king was anxious for preserving the Residency, since, according to him a native state with a Resident enjoyed a higher status thereby. The British Government finally withdrew the Residency since they were satisfied about the conduct of the king and Residency was superfluous. The status of the king progressively declined and a stage was reached when it was necessary for the king to request the Resident to obtain the sanction of the Government for his son to be addressed as ‘His Highness’ by the public officers. In A.D. 1821 the king who wished to send a letter of condolence to king George IV, was precluded from doing so, in view of the fact that the ‘inferior rank assigned to the Raja of Thanjavur in the Bengal scale of native princes reduces the chances of his receiving a reply’. In A.D. 1823 a communication was received from England prohibiting

120. Tenjore District Records, Vol. VIII
120. Letter from the Raja to the Resident of Tenjore Vol. 4429 dated 1.7.1821, pp. 271-273.
all native princes from carrying on any correspondence with
the government of other presidencies or private individuals.\textsuperscript{121}

Sarfoji II died on the 8th March 1832. The popularity
of this ruler was evident on that occasion. Great grief
and sorrow were displayed by all classes of people who assembled
in large numbers to pay their last homage to a king whose
throne was founded in their hearts. It was with great difficulty
that his beloved queen was persuaded not to commit Śati.\textsuperscript{122}
Sivāji II, the last Marāṭṭa ruler of Thanjavur ascended the
throne with the consent of the Company and to the happiness
of his subjects on the 24th March 1832. The government of
Thanjavur was virtually in the hands of the British; and the
region, except for the town of Thanjavur was already under
British administration. The Rāja Sahib of Thanjavur ceased
to exist in A.D. 1855 when the last king Sivāji II died
leaving an only daughter. The advice of Mr. Forbes, the
Resident of Thanjavur, that Sivāji's daughter may be considered
for the Thanjavur succession was not favoured by the higher
authorities. On the 18th October, 1856 Thanjavur fort was

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., Vol. 4426, dated 6.9.1823, p. 136.

\textsuperscript{122} Thanjavur District Records, Vol. 4445, pp. 88-90.
occupied by the Company's garrison\textsuperscript{123}. The private property of the king, the jewels, the valuable dresses, the armoury and all the other belongings were confiscated by Mr. Forbes, the Resident at Tanjore\textsuperscript{124}, however, under the rule of Viscount Canning, the entire property was restored to the family\textsuperscript{125}. This is the swan song of the great Marāṭha empire in Thanjavur.

\textsuperscript{123} James Burgess, \textit{The Chronology of India}, p. 360.

\textsuperscript{124} C.K. Srinivasan, \textit{Maratha Rule in the Carnatic}, p. 340.