PART I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Hearing the name Bharat, our inner beings must be suffused by the sense of pride and respect, and hearing the name Kerala the blood in our veins should boil to thrill us all through"

Mahakavi Vallathol,
Great Patriotic Bard of Kerala of Patriotic Memory
NEW STATE MAP OF
KERALA

Scale 1. C.M = 90 K.M

MAP No. 1
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Kerala the tiny geographical feet of Bharat has achieved definitely, many feats in the Archaeological horizon quite recently. Though always, politically turbulent, and socially advanced and enlightened in literacy, compared to the main stream of the rest of India, in modern times, she has successfully revealed to the enquiring seekers, her hitherto unknown treasures of antiquities too.

Shrouded in obscurity till now, in a way, Kerala too, was a "missing link" from the antiquarian point of view. Of course, it had elicited stray and distorted references, sometimes bordering on wild imaginations; right from the Indus and Vedic times. The Upanishads too supply similar clues nearing exaggeration. This tendency of either exaggerating or blind attitude, prevented all of us from exploring our geographical womb of Kerala. To say the least, the Parasurama Legend too and such other correlated references tended to prevent, instead of goading scholars from taking up the above mentioned task. The inference concerning the creation of Kerala described in the old 'Keralolpathi and Kerala Mahatmyam' works is that the land came to be called so after its first Perumal or twelve yearly president named Keralan. One peculiar trait about Kerala Geography and Geomorphology is that because of the congenial natural set-up, the land is
nowhere a desert. It is highly vegetated and densely populated. Naturally therefore, the problem of antiquarian past and bygone culture of our land requires thorough examination and study by scholars of multidisciplinary nature.

Before undertaking the study of Kerala culture one can't prevent himself being biased with the available data, authentic or unscientific. That means the archaeologist, though handicapped in a limited way, can absorb and assimilate knowledge supplied by Historians, Geologists, Geographers etc. As earlier discussed, this living-political laboratory-cum- anthropological museum viz. Kerala has, with all its other distractions, could manage to maintain and retain a diversified cultural unity for all these years and centuries put together. The present state consists of three former non-identical administrative units comprising of the former princely states of Travancore and Cochin and the Malabar District of the erstwhile Presidency of the British empire of the last century. But from the Archaeological point of view the 'Cherala' portions of the then 'Tamilakom' should attract the attention of the Archaeologist for his study.

Archaeological investigations, that way, have been going on for about century now with some fruitful research. Geographically this political entity has got mountainous barrier on one side and sea on the other with a prosperous continuous coastal line—the
facts mentioned here have played in moulding "the Human progress and civilization" of the Kerala antiqueman.

Even after years, people have not cared to record authoritatively the archaeological achievements of recent days probably due to lack of adequate probing and observation. Because of this, while assessing the cultural personality of Kerala, scholars approached the subject with prejudice that Kerala does not have a prehistoric-phase earlier to the megalithic period. This is completely wrong, for the problem discussed, in this dissertation is to prove that Kerala too had early stone age cultures, the evidence of which may not be that much abundant but, of course, occular and concrete. The problem discussed here only is that early man definitely made Kerala his abode. Surprisingly enough, an area which has been declared "archaeologically barren," have revealed antiquarian evidences of the caveman culture, comparable to that of the famous Alt-mira of Spain and of Bhimbetka of Madhya Pradesh in India. The evidences exposed and furnished here represented exactly in the same topographical situations with stone age correlations firmly wipe out the myth that Kerala does not have early prehistoric phases and stone age cultures. Equally scattered microlithic corroborating evidences from the length and breadth of Kerala, the reports of which have been subsequently published in the contemporary Government journals and reports, give the veracity
concerning the continuity and distribution of prehistoric archaeological cultures of Kerala. Though without doubt and argument all have agreed upon the existence of a full fledged megalithic iron age phase of prehistory, lack of exploration convinced many not to bother about its preceding cultural phases. Another interesting feature recently noticed, is that even the busy populous urban habitational areas have also yielded iron age evidences while their proximal areas have yielded neolithic cultural phases. The details of these will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

As we discussed earlier, the present Kerala together with the district of Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) of the present-day Tamil Nadu forms one composite unit of culture when we study the archaeology of Kerala, because, in a way the erstwhile Travancore had its early cultural relics in this part of the land. Dealing with the antiquity of Kerala, the major geographical portion of the now existing habitable land is occupied by Travancore. In evaluating the contribution of Kerala to the cultural heritage of India in the fields of religion, literature, science, visual and performing arts etc., is that way unique, and so occupies a prominent place among other Indian states. Richly endowed by nature, this integral part of peninsular India could evolve a distinct way of culture and pattern of socio-anthropological mould which has survived all those years.
It has been observed rightly that this part of the land is one of the fairest and most interesting regions that Asia has to show. This coastal belt lying between the ghats and the sea designated 'Kerala' in Sanskrit Literature and as 'Cheralam' in classical Tamil has got definitely an individualistic natural antique glory, to tell concerning its derivation and origin plus its resultant existence. The peculiar geographical position has given the conjecture relating to its topographical name in the vernacular as 'Malavaram'-meaning the foot-hills of the mountain or the lower valley—which itself was anglicised as 'Malabar'.

Thus our region entirely different from the rest of India, in its physical features, its flora-fauna, this home of the Malayalam speaking people, is at best convincingly an ancient land with a culture of singular excellence.

A critical study of the record of the earlier writers concerning the origin of Kerala is not so thought-provoking for many of them counted the first archaeological impact from the Parasurama Legend days. So goes the legend of the mythical hero of having reclaimed the land of Kerala, narrated in the fable, as Parasuramakshetra or the land of axe-holder, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The only assumption for this Periyapuranam episode is nothing but the reclamation of the land due to frequent— recurring tectonic geo-
Plate 1--Kerala, Land of Enchanting beauty with large number of lagoons, backwaters, rivers.
Plate 3—Water-transport and trade-commercial activities dating to Ancient times.
morphical phenomena, the result of which, lands may spring up or submerge in uneven fashions in earthcrusts. The 'Taittiriya Aranyaka' the earliest sanskrit work which has got special mention concerning Kerala, as the Chera-pada and Seri of the Buddhist Jataka and also as Caria in Asia Minor.

The State offering one of the most picturesque land was referred to as the land of the 'Kethala' or Keralaputhras by Asoka in his Girnar edicts. The Cheras thus referred seems to have inhabited the southern part of the Malayalam speaking area of the Tamilakom. Subsequent references have occurred in the great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Puranas, in the works of Pathanjali and Kathyayana and to some extent in Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa and Arthasastra of Kautilya--Chanakya.

The earliest references about the ancient Chera kingdom, were all confined to the literary evidences left by travellers in the form of memoirs or travelogues of which the record of Megesthanese in his Indica, Pliny (first century A.D.), the anonymous author of the Periplus (2nd century A.D.), Ptolemy, Sulaiman (9th century A.D.), Abu Syed (9th century A.D.), Almasudi (10th century A.D.), Alberuni (10th century A.D.), Abdul Rahiman (11th century A.D.), Marco Polo (13th century A.D.), Alkezmini (13th century A.D.), Ibn Batuta (14th century A.D.), Mabrun (15th century A.D.), Nicholo Conty (15th century A.D.), Abdul Razzack (15th century A.D.), Casparo Balbi (16th century A.D.)
Guiscepe Maria (17th Century A.D) Althanacius Nikitin (17th century A.D.) and such other travellers have given valuable and interesting information regarding Kerala's historic past. The list is too many, though not forgetting Cosmos, Visscher and Barbossa who made himself well versed in Malayalam.

Prof. Himansu Bagshon Sarkar has further narrated the earlier codified data. The name of Dakhinabades has been identified by him as the abbreviated derivation of the Tamilakom, as has been recorded in the Periplus of the Erythrean sea. The Javanese inscriptions of Joja, A.D.840, though believed to be unauthentlc we read Malaya, Singa, Chola, Karnakka, Hujaman etc. of which Malaya stands for Malayalam sea coast.

If this interesting note can be taken as the first clear reference to the connection between Java and Southern India, the name obviously refer to the people of Champe, Kalinga, Arya, Simhala, Gauda, Cole, Malayala, Karnataka of which the last two refer to the Malabar and Konkan coasts. It may be recolled that the Brhat Samhita (XIV) a location of the name of Aranyaka has been placed between Cerya and Ceylon.

The term again occurs in a central Javanese inscription dated 819 A.D. as having trade contacts. The inscription of Madiam 977 A.D. gives reference with the people from Ceylon, Pandya and Cera territory etc.

Early mediaeval reference of the Malabar and
Konkan occurs in the southern Kanara Bararuru inscription.

The Central Java reference indicates the presence of foreign merchants among others, Malayalam speaking people belonging to the Dravidian State, coming to the ports like Gresik and Surabaya. The inscription of 'Vimala Sarma' in eastern Java also speaks similarly of South Indian places wherein Malabar and Konkan traders had flourishing commercial activities.

New information regarding Malabar-Konkan Coast comes from the Javanese side by the 9th century A.D. The workings of Arab Geographers like Al-Ibasi refers to vessels coming to the port of Kulam of Mali, which is nothing but Quilon of Malabar (indicating ancient Kerala).

It is evident from the writings of Chou-Kafei in 1178 A.D. the pivotal role played by the port of Quilon to which they referred to as (Mu-lin), is well narrated. Shri.Vijayc. reference cites Malabar to be a lucrative field of business. Pepper export to China from Malabar is thus very well known.

Marco-Polo also records the kingdom of Malabar as the land of pepper and ginger. The accounts of Edris, Marco Polo, Oderic leave the impression that the ginger and pepper sometimes procured from Java and were re-exported to the West from Malabar countries through Arab merchants.

The field area of research undertaken for the topic of this thesis includes the major portions of Travancore as it existed then or as south central Kerala of today.
Of these my nerve centre of activity was concentrated around of High ranges. That way the area of research operation was between the two Nanchinads namely Tennanchinad and Vadananchinad meaning Southern and Northern Nanchinal respectively.

Like any other part of the world Kerala, the feet of India, too had a tribal society in prehistoric times, with slight variations meaning the Society had some kind of primitive and anarchocratic. Undoubtedly during the later periods it had diffusion of culture through trade and commerce, which existed between this part of the land and the far-east as is evidenced by literary, archaeological and numismatic discoveries and materials. Kerala was a museum of races and customs (K.V.Krishna Iyer observes that during the 11th century A.D. Kerala virtually separated from Tamilakom for disintegration. Of course, there was the dynamic development of the Malayalam language. The Chola wars effected a virtual fusion of the patrilineal and matrilineal peoples at once the greatest glory of Kerala culture and the cause of its many sidedness promulgated the intellectual heritage of its past.

As mentioned in the preamble this tiny naturally blessed topographical set up varies greatly from the rest of India in its physical outly, land system, climate rainfall, crops, customs and manners inhabitants which is singularly unique. Again this Ghats-guarded area, which, has
its own singular identity is preserving its unified Kerala culture over powering all the occurred impediments.

Physical features and topography:

The area lies between North latitude $8^\circ-18'$ and $12^\circ-48'$ and east longitude between $74^\circ 52'$ and $77^\circ 22'$. According to the lastest statistics our state measures (as on March 1981) 38664 sq. K.M. with a population of 254.03 lakhs practically occupying the entire area. While the state of Mysore bounds her on the north and north east, the state of Tamil Nadu defines her southern limits and the Arabian Sea washes her western shores. Physiographically the state consists of the low land, the midland and the high land. For a prehistoric Archaeologist the first and the last are of supreme importance.

As we have seen from our experience, as the inhabitants of this land, the Western ghat forms a continuous mountain chain with different altitudes from north to south isolating the land on the east and conferring a uniqueness on its history and culture. These mountains walling the state on the eastern boundary, the country undulates to the west over sylvan vegetation until it reaches the cultivated plains, which cover the back waters and the Arabian sea. The higher elevations having plantation crops like coffee, tea, cardamom, pepper etc. and ginger, turmeric, rubber etc. nourishing lower uplands—both covered by dense reserve forests filled with valuable timber such as rose-wood, teak-wood,
sandal etc. Of course the statement almost becomes untrue, thanks to the organised unauthorised encroach activities of hutmen dwellers, sugar cane growers as well as estate planters, resulting in the partial or total annihilation of the forest very soon. Of the above timber consists of virgin growth and scientific planting, while stretches of paddy cultivation are extensively carried on the valleys, midlands and backwater-reclamations. The irrigated cropped area forms 12.71% of the total cropped area in Kerala. The state has abundance of cash-crops. Rice and Tapioca are primary food crops, while cashew nut, arecanut, coconut, cotton, oil seeds, etc. are also grown extensively. The forests occupies 27.83% of the total area which has now yielded valuable and unforgettable prehistoric evidences. The land, lengthwise stretches 560 K.M. from north to south and breadthwise varies from 32 K.M. at both ends to 120 K.M. in the middle. The land so christened, Kerala, can be a derivation from the land of 'Keram' in Sanskrit meaning coconuts indicating Kerala to be the land of coconuts. The exquisite landscape beauty of Kerala is comparable only to that of Kashmir. Talking about the land system the hilly areas and the forests have supplied with large share of foreign currency earning economy, a phenomenon of which, was very much prevalent even from time immemorial, only with the difference that the brisk trade activity occurred in the coast. This lengthy picturesque sandy region, backwaters and the sea made this enchanting strip
of land into a mini-paradise. The Ghat sections guarding the gate of Kerala is studded with some major and minor irrigation projects of which the Idukki Dam is prominent. The ranges (mountain) has also got many mountain passes going to the neighbouring states, of which, the Palghat gap is the most important.

Discussing about the mountains, reference may equally be made about the rivers, more than forty four in number and their adjoining backwaters, lagoons which ultimately merge with the sea. The sandy beds and river terraces created due to the depositional activities of the rivers are of quite recent formation, so assumed, Archaeologists were doubting about the origin of the early man. Of the 44 important rivers taking its sources from the Western ghats locally known as the Sahya ranges, only three flow to the east side of the mountain while all other forty one, flowing west reaches the Arabian sea. Periyar still remains an enigma for prehistorians, while Palghat has yielded some stone age evidences. As earlier denoted the large number of backwaters with links (some of them seasonal and others perennial) to the sea, provide ample facilities for water transport from one end of the area to the other. Vembanad is the largest, of these backwaters.

Climate and environment

The diversified geographical factors have necessarily given birth to correspondingly variant forms of climate. In this manner, it ranges from the hottest in

(69°F)
the plains to the coldest in the elevation. Almost throughout the year climate remains cold in the highranges, while in the lowland it is not especially in the summer. The state gets abundant rainfall both from southwest and northeast monsoons. Highest rainfall occurs in the highranges (my field area) of Idukki District. A bracing cold climate exist in the highland region throughout the year while the rest of the State enjoys a temperate climate.

Geology

One primary reason which tempted the scholars to ignore prehistoric archaeology of Kerala might have been the non-availability of quartzite, the material in which early men largely chiselled out stone tools. But on the east coast the presence of Madras 'hand axe' industry projected much laterisation in the mid-pleistocene gravels. Geologically southern Kerala, the area to which the thesis is devoted has tertiary formations below the hills, representing the fossiliferous Myocene beds as typically found in the Varkly formations.

Modern geology confirms the view that Kerala with its ancient sea-bed is somewhat like a torpedo shape—broader in the centre and tapering to the north and south to a distance of six and three miles respectively from east to west.

Geologists consider the coast as having brought down sometime in the tertiary era with having larger lateritic gneiss and granite formations. In Kerala
region the available raw material for the stone tool is mostly quartz but we have collected stone celts in a dolerite material too. But of course the microlithic industries of south-central Kerala have yielded chert-chalcedony material also. The mesolithic industry of the microliths are equally visible on crystalline quartz and rock crystals. They are found in the lateritic gravel. The theory that early man never lived in the Pleistocene or early Holocene period—because, Ecologically and geomorphologically Kerala was unsuitable for his activities, is also now challenged. In quite recent times Archaeological evidences have established beyond doubt that prehistoric phase of Kerala Archaeology had its definite beginning even earlier to iron age periods and had successive lithic cultural phases too, prior to the megalithism.

As we have discussed here in this dissertation the cave man-artist had his definite habitational abode in the Sahya ranges as well as in the river deposits. The one handicap which the archaeological explorer has to confront is that due to the continuous habitational activities and frequent, at the same time, constant rainfall have practically eroded or wiped off the valuable river deposits and the possible archaeological remains. This is true almost even in a centrally located river like the Periyar.
In evaluating the geographical dimension and geological extension, the region of Kerala might have been a part of the great submerged continent called Lemuria extending from Australia to Africa, a major part of which, speculations as it may be, might have been engulfed by the sea thousands of years ago. The geographical slit between Sri Lanka and Kerala might have been one of them. (Upadhyaya 1977)

**Flora and Fauna**

It is possible to establish certain simple relations between climate and plant life, and it is remarkable how closely the relations hold with regard to the two elements of temperature and rainfall. The annual mean temperature of the West Coast is nearly the same throughout—79° to 80°. The rainfall of the summer monsoon is heavy all along the coast, and still heavier—on the ghats. In such a climate, the vegetation has all the luxuriance that is commonly associated with our ideas of the tropics. The strip is covered with coconut gardens and rice fields and the valleys embowered in groves of betel nut, palms, talpots and cassia, pepper and cardamon flourish wild in the jungle and forms staple products for exports. The mountains, forests, lively valleys with rivers and mountain streams provide large sum of faunal wealth typical of Kerala as well that of tropical India. Practically all the carnivorous and
Plate 4 -- The lush forest growth of Kerala has got all the variant fauna like tiger, elephant etc.
herbivorous animals like the wolves, bulls, jackals, bisons, elephants, panthers, porcupine, bear, rabbit etc. forms the major faunal specimens. While flora consist of major agricultural crops like rice, pulses, pepper, ginger, turmeric, arecanut, mangoes, tapioca, banana plus forest growth varying from larger teakwood to rosewood variety to sandal wood, bamboo to smaller cane and mimosa plants. Special mention may equally be made of eucalyptus. This is exclusive of the vast vegetation of shrubs, weeds, reeds and other wild plant growths which grow correspondingly with the divergent topography.

The low valleys are richly verdant with rice fields and the hill side with cash crops and dry crops whilst the gorges and slopes of the loftier mountains are covered with dense and luxuriant forests. Because of this we may observe the beginning of the transcontinental type of trade in valuable articles, like spices, dyes, precious stones to be distinguished from the heavy bulk trade in food stuffs which may be regarded as the beginning of the modern type of trade.

As can be expected from the climate and from the peculiar flora, Kerala possesses a richer fauna than certain other parts of India as regards both mammals and lower worms. Birds of attractive plumage like parrots, pheasants and peacocks once abounded in the forests. Monkeys, elephants, tigers and other animals also roamed
free in the forest sanctuaries of Kerala as mentioned earlier. There is also rich reptilian fauna, most of them are highly poisonous constituting a serious menace to man.

People--Inhabitants--Past and Present (Generalia)

This part of the land viz. Kerala--of lands, rivers, and mountains "glittering like a celestial flame," equally got a unique united Kerala culture and an enthralling social stream of history invoking a higher sense of tolerance, of sublime empathy broader perspective and of international outlook, for all the inhabitants, all these years. Meandering on the streams of Palaeo-Kerala Society, we can very well boast of a set of people who have projected glaring characteristics of all the known ethnic groups. Like any other prehistoric society here, too, there might have existed a distinct type of primitive communism which later on evolved into a perfectly settled Kerala culture (referred to earlier). The evolutionary revolution concerning habitations, inhabitants, and the resultant material culture will have to be traced from the Lemuria origin theory, for, even after centuries, this miniature India continues to be a museum of races and cultures. The cultural and mixing and pattern-behaviour of the contemporary society makes it well nigh impossible for even a trained ethnologist and social anthropologists to identify an average Keralite to be a
member of a particular race such as the negrito, nordic, semitic etc. A study of the racial history of ancient Kerala shows that the earliest inhabitants of the land were those who are now represented by the hill tribes living a sheltered existence in the jungles, as well as some of the Scheduled Castes living in the plains.27

The present Kerala society consisting of variant religious and caste denominations such as the Nampoothiris, the Nairs, the Christians and the Muslims, understandably enough had more or less singular ancestry. The socio-anthropological migration—with the resultant fusion gave birth to later divisions.

Kerala is still considered by many even today to be a 'living part' of the submerged lemurian continent of larger dimension—extending from Australia to Africa, a major portion of which might have been swallowed by the sea centuries ago as already mentioned.

The living anthropos here consist of earliest tribals to the most culturally advanced sets consisting of people belonging to Hinduism, christianity and Muslim religions "with the exception of the tribals almost all the others are handsome and clean," the fact of the statement which was true only in the earlier days. The present Kerala, the 'living geographical fragment' viz. 'Live, lemuria' had its inhabitants, belonging to mostly of the short-statured, curly haired, black-members of the Negrito
race. This element is pointed out as the earliest racial population of then Kerala comprised of Kaanikkar, Mālpandarans, Muthuvans, Malayarayans, Mala Vedans, Mala-Pulayans, Ulladans, Uralis, Mannans etc. (see for details I.A. Krishna Iyer—'Castes and Tribes of Travancore and Cochin) all of whom, the dwellers of Kerala forests, who have now gradually absorbed modern customs. Of the above mentioned, tribes like the Malayarayan, the Kuruchiar the Irular, the Karumpalar, etc. had flat nose long head and slight variations in the physical structures, indicating their origin to the black, Proto-astroloid race. The later Mediterranean race had more or less a well developed Dravidian Culture and the Nairs, the Ezhuvas, the Vellalas, constitute this group. Even then the early inhabitants such as the Negritos the Proto-astroloid and the Dravidians are collectively known again as the Dravidians, The Dravidians of Kerala, by custom, were of snake-worshippers. But with the Aryanisation of South India we have got tall, fair-askinned, long-headed and long nose ethnic group—namely the members of the Nordic race,—infiltrating into the then-existant Kerala Society.

In a way the earliest inhabitants of Kerala, from the broader prehistoric perspective, will have to be assumed as the hill tribes (who were the earliest inhabitants of ancient Kerala) who have left a definite wider culture, even while living in a partially sheltered manner in our forest area with the earliest occupations
PRIMITIVE TRIBES OF SOUTH KERALA
AND REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

ERNAKULAM

IDUKKI

KOTTAYAM

ALLEPPEY

QUILON

TRIVANDRUM

MAP-3

CLASSIFIED BY
L. A. KRISHNA IYER
(1937)
of hunting, fishing and on later days cattle rearing etc.

The present Kerala culture can safely be reckoned as a synthesis of the proto-native, Dravidian, Aryan and other existant and migrant cultural diffusions. While exploring the prehistoric phase of the antiquity of Kerala, one will have to arrive at the conclusion that, though the river terraces are not of a permanent nature, of course, the forests that envelope the hills, the hillocks and the mountains that guard the major portion of the Western ghats, locally known as the Sahya Ranges, (again referred to earlier) have maintained the cultural continuity and equilibration.

Including the primitive tribes such as the Kanikkar etc, there are about five hundred prominent castes and sub castes among the Hindus, ranging from the Brahmins, Nair to the backward castes and Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Initially some have been absorbed into Hindu religious fold, because of their contact with the locals as well of the similarity of ideas of worship, while some others embraced Christianity due to missionary activities. Like any other part of the world, Kerala too had a society based on equality, during the prehistoric periods, which is known in the Marxian terminology, "primitive communism." This was based on a low level of production and resultant consumption.28

According to 1971 census the Hindu population of Kerala consists of 59.41%, the Christians 21.05% and the muslims 19.50% and the rest includes people belonging
Nearly a century ago even high class Hindus - like the Aristocratic Nayar Ladies were moving about topless.

With the help of steel-and-stone as well by bamboo drilling, the tribals produced fire. All produced from L.A. Krishna Iyer's Social History of Kerala and other works on tribal and Kerala

Plate 5B
Plate 6a: Tribals - 50 years back
(Krishna Iyer)

Plate 6b: Hunter turned Agriculturist

Plate 6c: As in Plate 6b
shipped female deities and have retained all the physical traits.
to Jewish and Jains. Our study centres around the prehistoric cultures as mentioned of Kerala, the remains of which are now collected from the tomb builders and megalithic evidences collected in recent excavations. Every religion, every form of worship and every form of philosophy that received due attention in this part of the land irrespective of its givers, loudly proclaim the noble characteristic feature viz. the spirit of tolerance and empathy for all these years.

The megalithic builders of Kerala have had wider distribution throughout Kerala though concerning its earlier stone age phases we have ample evidence which lies hidden in the Sylvan ranges of Kerala topography.

Discussing the native tribes of Kerala one will have to bear one thing that this part of the land had more than twenty prominent tribes with distinct physical and cultural features other than the prominent upper castes members of the society.

Even today in the hilly tracts of Kerala we get the flint-fire makers like the Kanikars and Muthavans (see plate) who are the direct descendents of the prehistoric people. Their methods of making fire, internal structure of their society funeral ceremonies, occasions connected with hunting coupled with physical appearances and features, spread over the hilly belt of Kerala have many things in common with the early Keralamn.
In the social hierarchy of Kerala the Nampoothiries occupy highest position by way of caste-ridden superiority. Nampoothiries claim uninterrupted descent from the Aryan immigrants, while the Parayas, Pulayas and such other "lower castes" can have their origin in the proto-Dravidian settlement, but from the pre-historic archaeological point of view, the contribution to Kerala culture by the Brahmins, is really negligible. That way the representatives of the Pre-Dravidian are still in vogue among the hill tribes of the ghats sections bordering Kerala, we have got, even today pre-historic archaeological customs and manners. In the ancient society of Kerala pre-history, the tribes have contributed significant share in moulding material culture of bygone past. The tribes such as Kanikkar, Mala Kuravan, Mala Pandarans, Muthuvans, Ulladans, Pulayas, Parayas,—all of whom just as in the case of Kerala anthropology have equally contributed their share of culture in enlivening our past. The primitive communism of the old order, gave way to disparities among the present day inhabitants of the land resulting in social and economic inequalities in the contemporary society, lowering to a level of slavery. Broadly speaking, the Kerala Dravidians had many unique customs, correspondingly enough and enter realisation to the topography, and instance of which seen in the serpent worship, for fear of the region being heavily
infested with snakes.

The Aryan onslaught of the Dravidian Kerala had its deliberate share in Kerala culture by their fusion and assimilation and to Kerala posterity. In recording the synthesis of Kerala culture we will have to record that the present day caste ridden structure, was totally absent in ancient society, ancient Kerala. Basically Kerala, pre-history centres around the forest-dwellers rather than river valley habitations. The peculiar geographical set up of Kerala have enabled the cave man to establish his arena of operations even in the interior, otherwise impregnable hills and mountains. That way their recording of their own culture and everyday activity especially in the form of cave paintings, constitutes the subject matter of this thesis.

From that angle even to-day in estimating Kerala culture, when we talk of Kerala polity and social orders, people are tempted to have wrong ideas about the same. To cite an example even in modern times, people believe that the Nairs, the prominent community in the state practice polyandry and matriarchal system. Definitely the systems of successive democratic governments and spread of western educational culture have uprooted all such evils from the contemporary society though not completely.
As we discussed earlier we do not have authentic evidence as to who is the earliest inhabitants of this land. Revolutionary scientific discoveries doing the recent by African Scholars like the Scholarly President of Senegal, H.E.I.S. Senghor have prompted and provoked anthropologists and archaeologists to think again about the missing link connecting the larger Lemuria stretching between African continent and Indian Peninsula. Sometimes our limited present day knowledge persuades to establish whether the so called Dravidians and the African stone age cultural specimens were contemporary or successors of the same cultural realm.

Modern oceanographers and marine-archaeologists are trying their level best to trace out the connecting point as to when the break occurred. From that outlook the pre-Indo Aryan Cultural phases deserve special careful study.

The interaction of cultural diffusion of ethnic races as a resultant phenomenon of absorption and assimilations of the migrants and the early inhabitants have definitely made Kerala Cultural horizon and society an amalgam equally beautiful and clumsy. In other words during the days of primitive communism there might have occurred free mixing of blood among human races of this part of the land.
The biological fusions of cultural anthropus of Kerala is closely knit that we cannot decipher to-day a particular community belonging to Kerala to be of the proto-Austrloid, Mediterranean or Dravidian race.

The rigid caste-ridden society based on division of labour, cannot that way boast of any particular physical or racial superiority. At the same time the Harijans of Kerala, majority of them—exhibit the prehistorical cultural traits in very many things.

In assessing the origin, traditions, habitat living conditions infra-structure of the contemporary society, social customs connected with marriage, childbirth, family inheritance, religious features like ancestor-worship, customs and manners, occupational hazards, economic conditions, position of individuals of both sexes physical and ethnographic features peculiar techniques of making fire, collective hunting and overall—material prosperity and moral welfare of the sixteen tribes of ancient, Kerala have to be studied. In addition to the above, the so called forward communities like the Brahmins, Nairs and such other higher castes had all put together formed the bygone Kerala Culture of prehistoric Society. That commune was definitely one of classless, casteless occupational divisions, based on agrarian and other occupational divisions. Categorically the living monuments of ancient Kerala are found in the hilly regions amongst the tribes.
which are included in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes catalogue of the Indian constitution.

Towards the later phase of early Kerala History we have got the cruel Slavery System which in those days was considered to be more a necessity than an evil, definitely with no justification.

In this dissertation limited concentrated attempt is made only to examine the prehistoric society, correspondingly enough, with the consolidated evidences found scattered in different sites of South-Central Kerala with the fullest emphasis on the study of the Pre-Dolmen culture of the valley of Anjnad. Anthropologists and Archaeologists have located the geographical distribution of the megalithism coupled with the dolmen-stone heritage culture to be found from the south of Scandinavia to Algeria and from Portugal to Indian and Japan. But the distribution in very many cases are of universal application. The dolmenoid culture is very often taken to be of Dravidian origin which itself is a matter of importance, and open to discussion even today. At the same time prehistoric Archaeology in relation to the progress of earliest man in Kerala in the light of developments happened in India and Europe, had their Archaeological ripples in the stream of Kerala prehistory too. In a broader anthropological arrangement the serpent worshipping Nairs
or the serpent eating hill Panpu Pulayas are together known as the early Dravidian settlers. The Dravadianisation or the succeeding Aryanisation of Kerala Society is so compact, that it is very difficult to associate and thereby correlate one particular community or caste or creed or such other denominations of the present Kerala Society to be the direct descendant of the early nomadic races. The hypothetical resemblance of the negrito Africa traced out by African ethnologist and scholars compels to believe the lemuria theory of the larger African Continent and its geographical affinities with the peninsular India and especially that of ancient Kerala. There the Parasurama legend gets some attention not because of the mythic aspects involved in it but probably because the tectonic, the oceanic, the aquatic and similar geomorphic phenomena might have caused the inevitable geographic mitosis of the part of the land as we discussed earlier.

The ethnological recording and the settlement pattern study of Kerala in relation to the geographical factors viz. the highland, the midland and the lowland had in their own way influenced the modern as well as the prehistoric societies as already noted. The recent developments in Kerala prehistory which is the subject matter of this study can very well be a pointer for future examination that this land too had the premegalithic phases distinctly unique. Though Dravidian, it may appear to a layman the Kerala
society is some thing more of a full-fledged, self-sufficient economic society with little scope for caste restrictions.

The present day Kerala society with its contemporary habitant population, will have to be simply looked upon closely before analysing ancient past. The marked sociological features concerning Kerala to some extent even today is the matriarchal society and the cross cousin marriage systems amongst the Hindu population. The Malayalis, as the Keralites known having the abode of mountains and seas (in the vernacular) are universally known for their cleanliness and well-ordered habits and comfortable lives. Rice, the staple food forms the primary dietary habits in the form of a full meal, for all Keralites irrespective of caste and creed restrictions or denominations. Broadly speaking, the Hindus, Christians and the Muslims on that lines do not differ in their diet generally. Of course the latter two consume more fish and meat. This is so because the entry of religion like Christianity and Islam have been absorbed by high caste as well as the lower sections of the then existent society when these two religions entered Kerala. That means these religions though alien in nature, the embracers were totally of native origin. The modern Kerala Society is that way a combination of ancient heritage and sophisticated western base of life. This development is totally seen in all walks of Kerala life.
This is so in the case of consumption of soft drinks liquor, propagation of literature, communal ceremonies, customs and manners, amusements, recreations and the like.

This is referred to here because the present day hill tribes are also modernising themselves with the changing world and its resultant enlightening environment. Naturally so the Archaeologist will have to rely largely on presumptions based excavated materials—concerning the antique past.

On those lines the evaluation of Kerala's past riddles will have to be seen, for, the present state heavily vegetated and densely populated. Further even the so called perennial rivers have also not left permanent river-terrace denoting ancient habitations. But of course stray and lively settlements have been recorded from time to time.39 In a way, though in dormant form, the settlement-pattern and mode of behaviour of the modern inheritors of the primitive and hill tracts-dwellers can very well be taken as indicative of the remains of the ancient nomadic hunter cultures pecking on forests ingots. This is specially true as is seen in the case of Mala Pandarams, the belated starters of agriculture. On the other hand we have equally too the Muthuvan like tribes who can make fire by "Chuk Muck" the process of flint-friction-fire making technique.40
The continuous and successive onslaught of the sectarian divisions, sociological orders, religious denominations and resultant cultural fusion have undermined the retention activity of Kerala Culture to be a comparative academic mechanism. Even the distinct sixteen anthropological tribes and their specimens have been subjected to much cultural harassment, not to speak of the physical the least. Still the recent Archaeological postulations, discoveries exhibit the availability of cultural data solely because of the unchangeable ghat topography of the state. The sociological recording of the contemporary beliefs and the ancient tribes pointing to their beliefs of their life and life after death, prevalence of endogamous society, marriage customs, funeral functions and burial practices all go on to verify the primitive past. The consolatory factor is that the tribes are not completely extinct, have supplemented the work of Archaeologist by lessening it to a greater degree.

The ancient man in Kerala just as in the case of central Indian Africa and parts of Europe have found his abode in the hilly rock shelters and cave caverns of late researches in river deposits have yielded lithic phases of Kerala culture. Floral and faunal pattern development correspondingly enough with that of Kerala environment and climate have also made the life of the early man inspiring turbulent and equally adventurous.
The social and sociological research-oriented studies devoted to Kerala culture this exhibits a distinct entity. It is very often rightly observed that the enlivened growth of Kerala culture in accordance with its ecology and environment is in every way unique because of the fusion of finer aspects of artistic achievements of mankind such as arts, music, architecture, technology, religion and philosophy all of which emanates from distinct different sources and resources. 43

Concerning the burial customs, archaeological findings and investigations even to-day hold good in the case of many social and religious sets of Kerala Society. In a way even today the contemporary social mould is nothing but a racial conglomerate resultant of process of the Polynesian and Melanesian immigrants mixed with the proto-austroloid settlers in a primitive food gathering-economy during ancient times. This ambiguous conclusion is though not perfectly true, equally not erroneous either. The sophisticated progenies of the above mentioned constitute the primary antique wealth of Kerala Culture.

It can very well be equally observed that the present Malayalam language even be called as the child of Tamil, nurtured and nourished by the breast-milk of Sanskrit. In other words it is nothing but the lingua progeny of the proto-Dravidian and Indo-Aryan ethno-
ethics. This lucid phenomenon can be grasped by the territorial proximity with which Kerala and Tamil Nadu even today exist. Judging from this social angle, it can be emphasized that contemporary Kerala society gives no ground for racialism or ethnic dominance of any ancient feudal superiority.

The preliterate Kerala society, with cultural and religious beliefs such as serpent-worship, animism, megalithism, phallus cult, Mother goddess worship, ancestor-remembrance, witchcraft etc. finds even today its place among the hill tribes which has actually ushered in the study of Kerala prehistory. Equally today the national re-emergence of Kerala image in the all-India horizon does not assume the factor of the need for ethnocentric or revivalist leverage at all levels of contact with external realities. The cultural personality of a modern Keralite saturated with pan-Indian tradition is apt to fight for national causes rather than for provincial issues. This is strictly true even in the case of antique man of Kerala. Though late in Indian prehistory, archaeological investigation conducted in the seventies and eighties in this part of India, have proved beyond doubt that the hitherto dormant Kerala past is definitely a worthy competitor for any other part of country in the antique supply of the cultural heritage of India.
The primitive culture of Kerala with its practical value lies in the fact that it has a relation upon the intellectual, industrial and social state of the cultured peoples. On tracing out its revolutionary development from savagery to the present day civilization, it may very well be remembered that vitally important elements of this culture is preserved through the everyday life-behaviour of the descendants of the Tribes, a matter which will have to be oft to remembered. The primitive tribes of India with the so called 'jungle culture' have presented the key to the great historical outcome and cultural prowess of India for centuries together. This is exactly true in the case of Kerala also.

The complexity of Dakshinapatha or the South India is that it has all along exhibited the biologically singular and historically harmonised component of the Negrid-Negrito human race. But this is only true in the case of the hill tribes for the contemporary population has come in for heavy admixture of the proto Indian cross-breds studded with the Aryan influence coated above on the Dravidian element.

It is very often judged correctly that the geographical conditions of Kerala are such that the primitive tribes have had to lead a life of 'lotus-eaters' before shifting from their hunter-culture to agriculturist economy. But this too, to some extent,
largely depended on climate as to what crop the man cultivated and reaped. From the antiquarian point of view, equally the climate enriched the growth of forest extending the presence of nomadic culture for a period under transition. Further the ancient Keralite, the so called savage-the "men of the woods", has exhibited all the stonenge cultural characteristics in the contemporary society akin to ancient past.

While inviting the attention of historians and anthropologists, it may be remembered very often that the state can be regarded as a Museum, wherein we get living survivals of almost all ancient peoples religious, laws, manners and customs. But the way the old and new can be together evaluated in relation to the geographical area-limitation and localization. Anthropologists have considered that impediment, that the early inhabitants of Kerala to be of pre-Draavidian race.

In understanding the proper functioning of the primitive Kerala society, one can see that just as in the case any in other primitive society, here also, every member of the tribe considered himself to be an integral part and parcel of tribal structure and never separate identity. Again sociological development here, too from a primitive nomadic--but equality maintained society-adhered to a feudal set up, which came into existence heavily depended on caste-inequalities
in its turn again was based on division of labour. Further in its advent days, the caste system in Kerala had a racial, martial and functional approach. The creation of the peculiar caste in Kerala is traditionally ascribed to the legendary Brahmin coloniser viz. the Parasurama (a matter of dispute) because of which, Kerala is often referred as 'Parasurama Kshe-tram' the land or the arena of Parasurama.

From the archaeological point of view the anthropological tribes of Kerala with their distinct customs, show all the primitive evidence worthy of indicating Kerala's past, but, not of a Brahmin origin.

But when we visualise the present anthropology of modern Kerala, it is highly interesting and embarrassing to note, that probably nowhere in the world, there was this much racial admixing of races leaving that much far-reaching results creeping in. Even in the prominent geographical divisions of the High land, Midland and Lowland, we get all the living specimens of the exploreably known ethnological divisions, either proto-dravidian, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan and what not, a fact which we will have to remember in a recurring manner. Further it is equally difficult to distinguish individuals belonging to any particular caste or anthropological denominations.

The means of transport and communication
in this tiny geographical string is so neatly executed, that, unlike other parts of India, say, Madhya Pradesh, all parts of Kerala are easily approachable and communicable. Naturally blessed with flora and fauna, climate and rainfall the whole state, Kerala, can be called a single vegetated village. Even in earlier days this was true, for, the primitive tribes, the geographical conditions of Kerala are such that the so called 'aboriginal tribes' could afford to travel and live on a state of 'Plenty-today and poverty tomorrow'. As was referred to earlier, the favourable climate and resultant lush-growth of forests was the cradle of the hunter culture and even after the emergency of agriculture, the hunter habitational sites remained more or less the same.

Looking into the domestic life of the primitive tribes, Kerala ethnology, fundamentally the customs and manners, social order, etc. almost continued to be the same without much change till the medieval times. Clothing and decorations, 'products of the feelings of shame,' surprisingly, in the initial periods was a means of attraction from other members of the opposite sex. That way the sense of shame can be dubbed as the byproduct of modern civilization and of mature mind. The formative primitive form of dressing which comprised of the fig leaf state of society was later on transferred into barks of
trees, leather and animal hides, hand-woven cloths to the Modern mill-spun attires.

One thing to be noted in this connection, is that, this is applicable in the case of high caste Hindus like the Nairs even in the Medieval Kerala cultural phases. During that period all the women folk were not permitted to wear any upper garment and so walked 'topless'. This is equally true in the case of all inhabitants of the land irrespective of their being residents of the elevation areas or in the plains, or belonging to any particular caste-division of the then society. Except in the case of top class, (priestly class) Brahmin Women, i.e., the Antarjānam, (the female of Nambuthiris) who covered the entire parts with 'tunic' like clothing, all others were partially naked, though the affluent had ornaments in gold and other precious materials.  

Side by side with the pattern of dressing, we have to examine the 'self-torture' practices like mutilations and deformations including tattooing customs. Anthropologists refer to different types of practices for each tribes which are common as well as non-identical and unique. These type of beliefs and cultural tribes are referred to as Heliolithic or Sunstone culture. This varies from chipping upper incisor teeth to tattooing of moon to full circles on the forehead and back of the body. L.A. Krishna Iyer
gives vivid accounts of above same in his Travancore Castes and Tribes (Vol.III). He further gives details amount of the nature of painting the body etc.

Then just as in the case of any other aboriginal culture, herein also the settlement pattern coupled with its occupational hazards, the centre of human cultural activity gather around the food-guest economy. As we are all well-aware, food, shelter, and clothing—the primary needs of even the ultra-sophisticated society had its originator in the Food gathering-hunter culture of the primitive days. From this angle the aboriginal Keralites were blessed greatly by nature who supplied her natural resources and raw materials in plenty, in the form of jungle fruits, tubers and roots apart from rich fauna.

Scarcity of food supply prompted the earlymen, for, pastoral and agricultural economy. This is also true in the case of our ancestors. Of course, the never ending water resources, resultant luxuriance of vegetation, law of the jungle—the hunter and hunted—provided a worthy enviable paradise for the Early Kerala Man with his limited wants. As usual, smaller the number, easier was the distribution of food supply. Naturally so, the tribal economy of Kerala antique was one of self-sufficient economy practising carnivorous and herbivorous food habits.

In other words they did not have any consuming
edible roots and fruits to snakes and pythons-eating ones. This is equally true in the case of preparation of habitational abodes. Natural rock shelters, lithic concavities valley-ravines, cave-caverns, overhanging rocks, pits, hollow depressions all formed the residences of the primitives. Still settled life-idea was totally absent for ancient Keralitás. Here too temporary dwellings to escape nature’s wrath sawed the seeds of a residence at length and permanently. Decorating, adorning, cleaning the premises thatching all later developments had their pioneering beginnings. From the pit dwelling and cave shelters to the thatched roofing of houses made of bamboo and plastered, indicates a revolutionary transformation. Equally we have got evidences of the tree houses also, a product of fear instilled by the wild elephants and other wild animals on the early man. This type savage dwellings, we have got further corollary and contemporary evidences in other parts of the Indian sub-continent and as well as in different countries of Asia. As earlier mentioned the idea of collective abode and tree-house dwellings can very well be taken as a defence mechanism, the motive of which in later days gave birth to the idea of villages. The hut-making process was again there apart from the above for say bachelor hall or seclusion shed of the ladies. Then the purpose of storing food, by way of granary keeping was also very much in vogue.
Plate 7

a) Muthuvan Tribes used Blow Guns
b) Chakmuk (Flint) see pages 40-152 as in Plate 7 a
c) Tribes of South-Central Kerala Made Use of Bow and Arrow.
Plate A—Some of the implements used by the Tribals.
Plate B—A dolmen like Tribal temple.
Plate 9 (a) - Tribals now—Muthuvans—Anjunad Valley.
Plate 9 (b)

Plate Living Cultural-Tribal Specimen
Gradual development of the concept of settled life with definite social organisation, necessitated the advancement of civilization indicating more and more requirements for the Kerala antique man. The house-hold articles and utensils of the tribes had a cultural uniformity correspondingly enough with that of climate and environment. Major raw material for the preparation was bamboo and reed. With the discovery of metals, cane baskets gave way to the metallic vessels, though many of the tribes, who did not have much contact with the people of the plains, stuck on to the earlier ones. Th. 6 62 3

The pre-written Kerala culture had its fertile arena in the recesses of the hills. From the food gathering cultural phase to the food producing economy the transformation was glaring and remarkable. The nomadic savages indulging in the hunter culture were forced to prepare the production of fire. On the ravines of Kerala hills we have got tribal denominations who were experts in the art of making fire by ignition caused by friction of flint stones. (Muthuvan referred to earlier).

Referring to the tools and implements that facilitated the domestic life of the primitives one must observe that the earlyman had full semblance with his environment and that way exploited the test cut of the Cultural traits. The Food gatherer-hunter had

Th. 6 62 3
digging sticks, drilling spuds, soil-raking hoe, bowl, blow-gun etc. 56

The primitive hunter-culture of Kerala

Pre-history, had its living evidence, in the highland the midland and the lowland. We have got evidences of the Kanikkar of Nedumangad and Neyyattikkara, two suburbs of Trivandrum District to the Muthuvans of Anjumal valley of Idukki (see plate) District. The distribution of lithic cultural phases are found more on the ghat sections either as depictions on the cave walls or in the river deposits. The negrito and protoaustroloid denominations of Kerala ethnology, had many cultural features in common though anthropologically, primitive tribe differed greatly from one another.

This is specially true in the case of tool-technology. Similar marked distinctions are visible in the preparation of occupational and anthropological distributions.

From the social and sociological point of view, the tribal hierarchy, we have a leader and followers - the prototype of king ship in its antique form referring to weapon technology. We may assume special identity of cultural phases. Just as in the case of latter medieval periods here also the crude bow and arrow was developed and used. The raw material being one of bamboo and available
metals. The sling-tipped stone weapons are also mentionable generally they are of reed. The need for hunting larger animals provoked the creation of comparatively better weapons. Here also certain tribes, for eg. The Muthuvans had something unique. The blow-tube or the blow gun hurled by the hunter is a significant development in primitive technology mentioning about the tools. At the very outset it may be remembered that the first tool of the primitive man was his own hand.

The Social organisations of the ancient inhabitants of Kerala is built on the basis of exogamous system of matrimony dominated to some extent by elders. Equally they attached greater importance to this system together with matriarchal system of descent. Further the marriage institution was one of sanctimony, for, pre-marital and, extra-marital sex was considered to be taboo and sinful, chastity for women-folk was held in high esteem.

Enough importance was attached to the processes-connected with child-birth and rearing up of the young ones. Pre and post pregnancy care was given ample attention. With regard to social organisation, the tribals, whether, they are in the hunting culture or agriculturist the social order was one of monarchical nature, with the headmen at the helm of affairs. Say for eg. on the Cardamom hills.
practically every settlement had a Village headman affectionately referred to as the 'Muppen', with some Council of elders to advise him.60

Similarly in the case of every day life, there were peculiar funeral customs in disposing of the Dead. Of course, here again, the pre-vedic society in Kerala has resorted to burying the dead rather than cremation. For this also there were different types like fragmentary and full kind and also on clenched- or extended positions. There are some petty differences in the manner of selecting the burial ground, its location etc. among different primitives of the age-old Kerala. Basically the customs were almost the same.61

A close examination and study of these ceremonies will reveal the fact that utmost importance was attached to the proper disposal of the dead. In very many cases the dead was buried with all paraphernalia.

The antiquarian religions of the primitives of Tribal Kerala culture were more or less akin to crude form of Nature worship and animism, all of which later on was either partially or totally amalgamated to the composite Hindu culture of Kerala, with beliefs like life after death, ancestor worship indicating survival of the soul etc. Concerning their gods, one may find evidences of different
manifestations such of the Sun, the ancestor spirits, village deities, Nomadic and hunting spirits and tramp or ugly deities, apart from literally absorbing Hindu gods like Siva, Parvati etc. The more popular one was the tribal goddess of Kottavai. Of these worship of certain deities remain even today among the tribals as well as the followers of Hinduism.62

Concerning occupation, from the hunting, man, diverted his attention to cultivation; phase of food production from food gathering, which was greatly true even in the case of natives of ancient Kerala. With regard to highland cultivation definitely there was vocational difficulties for it was migratory. On the contrary in the lowlands it is permanent. Naturally so the method of cultivations also differed greatly in accordance with the terrain. As a result of that, improvement of tools was also necessitated. The digging stick (mentioned before) thus may be taken as the pioneer tool in the antique part of Kerala. Talking about the terrace and topography mention may be made about the terrace cultivation of the Muthuvan tribe of the Anjunad, the nerve centre of my field area of research. In the memoirs of the Survey of Travancore Ward and Connors refer to number less little glades.63 Some adopted to rice cultivation, scattered along the hilly table that overlooks the valley, whose inha-
bitants that are never tempted to settle within this space. This specially true of the Muthuvans of the Anjunad.

Referring to occupations of the different anthropological tribes of ancient Kerala shifting from the hunter economy to agriculture—was a gradual but revolutionary process. This is to because the process of hunting included catching animals both big and small by spears as well as killing by bow and arrows. Domestication of animals and pastoral economy was to replace the fishing by net and hook-spear occupation too. With that food habits also changed. Further these aborigines, the dwellers of the hill cliffs had to change their manner of living because of their contact with the people of the plains.

Any way judging from the archaeological explorations and its resultant anthropological evidences to this date, we are compelled to conclude that early inhabitants of this part of India had visually a proto dravidian culture which was later on tarned with the Aryan imigration. The Aryanisation of the ancient TAMILAKOM (three kingdoms of Chola, Chera and Pandy) might have occurred in the first millenniums B.C. of which they might have entered into Kerala by the 2nd century B.C. Probably this first wave of Aryans might have been repulsed by the natives as well as by the topography of the land.
which, was highly infested by snakes and the serpent-worshippers of the region (a controversial version). The second wave of Aryan colonization was marked by the cultural synthesis and fusion of the natives and well as the intruders. The Aryan entry into ancient Kerala had mixed result in our contemporary society. While primitive Kerala had no caste system or slavery, the Aryan admixture thoroughly re-modelled every segment with a caste-ridden society.66

The outburst of the Aryan invasion prompted the primitives as well the non-forest dwelling Dravidians to stand themselves isolated. This process being difficult they could not prolong their stand for a lengthier time.

The Keralolpathi version and Parasurama legend can be simply ascribed as the Aryan expansion of the land into further interior.67 Naturally the Dravidian and Aryan intermingling became more or less widespread through the land because of which scholars have been tempted to think about Kerala as a descendant of the Aryan heroes of the Mahabharatha. This has got very little credibility in determining and postulating Kerala's past.

Then the so called Dravidians of early Kerala, as already mentioned were serpent-worshippers, the region having been, supposed to be heavily infested with snakes throughout the early historic and mediaeval
annals of Kerala Archaeology, almost all Nayar (the prominent warrior community) houses had a Sarpakavu (domestic snake temple). Even today Malaysia, Singapore countries, have snake temples. These had a spiritual significance and bearing on almost all the ethnic groups of the world.

This is specially true even today amongst the conservative Hindu of contemporary Kerala Society. Old order giveth way to the New, so goes the saying, making cultural contacts of early Keralites to be a subtle reality. Cultural and otherwise contact with the people of lower elevations as well that of the outsiders had, in a way destroyed the complex web of customs and manners which was the key note of the tribal organisation and in that disintegration process, the law of nature namely 'Survival of fittest' emerged in due course of time. Further the hitherto archaeological evidences and anthropological customs recorded, prove beyond doubt that the Parasurama legend was nothing but myth and fable studded with imagination and whimsical fancy. 69

The natural phenomenon of the receding of the sea due to the several above mentioned geographical facts, the land might have definitely sprung up. That mainland after millions of years might have become habitational abode, the reminiscence of Gondwana-
Lemuria. Thus in the pre-historic past the foothills of the Western ghats, the rest of which might have been submerged under water. Then come the gradual reclamation of the occupied land. One need not have to wonder to record that the present city of Ernakulam might have been under the sea even in the second century B.C., withdrawal of sea might have occurred only very very gradually.

Thus accounting for the early settlement pattern of early Keralites, one thing we have to bear in mind, the land being one of heavier fall, the evidences to be correlated might have been eroded subsequently from time to time due to constant showers. Still population is very dense and thick because of the fertile topography.

One peculiar factor in Kerala antiquity, is that, herein, we can get open-air river deposits as well as cave man dwelling. Rock shelters and river-terraces both provided the favourable atmosphere for the early-man of Kerala. Here also the problems confronted by archaeologists are many that the peculiar climate, environment together with incessant onslaught of the monsoon creates havoc in recording the antique date which very often are washed off. Fortunately the cave evidences are not that way destroyed. The cave anthropoid had a full-admirable
life in his part of land, the activities of which are nicely and neatly recorded in habitational walls. The recording of which forms the main stream and theme of this thesis as indicated elsewhere earlier. Enviably too the early Keralites had cave dwellings stretching to a very lengthy period covering almost all the known places of human culture.

The peculiar thing about Kerala antiquity is that, herein, we can get open-air river deposits, sites as well as cave-man dwelling, Rock shelters and river terraces both provided the favourable atmosphere for the early man of Kerala. Here also the problems confronted by archaeologists are many that the peculiar climate, environment together with the incessant-onslaught of the monsoon creates havoc in recording the antique data which very often are washed off. Fortunately the cave evidences are not destroyed in this manner, at least to a very considerable degree. The cave-anthropoid who had a full admirable life in this part of land, had his activities nicely and neatly recorded in habitational walls; fortunately these escaped vandalistic tampering as well. This recording forms the main stream and theme of this thesis. Enviably too, the early Keralites had cave dwellings stretching to a very lengthy period covering almost all the lithic phases of human culture.
The area undertaken for study by the author has got sites scattered throughout the south-central portions of the present Kerala State which can be collectively counted as Travancore as it existed then. Recording the antiquity of the sites, here again, the problem confronting archaeologists is the lack of authentic historical documents. In evaluating the material culture of the early Keralites the common thing is that irrespective of the topography, many megalithic sites have been recorded throughout Kerala with a larger distribution and continuity in the nearby and adjoining areas. Cave culture deposits equally are found in an abundant measure in the hilly tracts of Kerala especially in the High Ranges, the area which was referred by Ward and Conners as that tract of mountainous country lying west of Dindigul and in dispute with the Travancore Government and the Honourable British Company occasioned by the collection of Cardamom spontaneously produced there. This thesis is the summary of investigations and findings recorded by me during the course of archaeological field observations to prove the fact that prehistorically Kerala is only a virgin field of research and not a vacuum from the antiquarian point of view (pinpointed in the preamble).
In recording the geographical distribution and chronology of the sites that have been covered here, it may be noted that major portion falls within the hilly areas and a few sites occur in the plains. Recent investigations recorded by author have revealed that even in busy contemporary habitation sites, also we come across with megalithism. In dealing again with Kerala megaliths, it may study be noted that their distribution is a general phenomena throughout the state. Equally this is the only state in the entire Indian Sub-Continent where we get all the anthropological specimens in their living form, making it a mini-Africa and Europe.

Further in moulding a broader and receptive outlook by amalgamating different cultural streams and thereby creating a fascinating social history, the geography too played its marvellous role, admirably well. As a result of this peculiar factor, the present population of Kerala can in no way be correlated with the scheduled ethnic divisions.

Cultural distribution of different anthropological tribes with that of the high castes have proved to be a great success with mature anthropological yield of all known human races. That means contact with higher culture has proved pernicious in the beginning to the primitive. 75 morality,
though later on it became a blessing in disguise. With the advent of the Nambudiris, the Malayalee Brahmins, according to some writers the caste was gradually creeping into the realm of Kerala Mediaeval Society.

With archaeological evidences till now corroborated one will have to assume that the primitive Kerala Society initially was a self-sufficient society based on social equality while during the Mediaeval periods, it was studded with the influx of caste systems. So the systems of slavery as a recognized 'necessary evil' indicating bonded labour was also practised. Here again, that phenomenon too was totally absent in primitive society. Maritime and naval activities brought proselytizing expeditions by the Christian missionaries as well as the advent of Islam into this part of the land.76

Stone culture coupled with hunter economy could survive in the low land of Kerala only up to the date of the Aryan immigration into this land, while in the hilly regions it could exist and continue even to the modern days. The account here will have to be limited to the settlement pattern of the hill tribes and to 'civilised groups' of the explored sites undertaken by the author rather than the modern population.

In that context we will have to see that the
inhabitants of the area covered, had distinct traits of cultural affinity with the hill tribes compared to their counterparts.

Along with the regional distribution of the archaeological sites covered, we will have to take into consideration list-record of the geographical distribution of the primitive tribes prepared by Shri. L. A. Krishna Iyer, the well-known anthropologist who was the special officer in charge of the Ethnographic Survey of the erstwhile Travancore State.

Foreign contacts of Kerala in the field of trade and commerce in the ancient times have brought in world religions like Christianity, Judaism and Islam from outside, even when it helped the revolutionary transformation of Keralites' broader outlook and thereby promoted a higher sense of tolerance. Antiquity of place names have always recorded and postulated the cultural importance of the site too.

The area undertaken for this work, stretches from Ten Nanchinadu or Nar'Chinadu of the south to Vada Nanchinadu or Nanchinadu of the north consisting most portion of the former princely state as it existed then. The former refers to places like Tovala and Agastheeswaran of Kanyakumari of the present State of Tamil Nadu and the latter has reference to the southern Kerala portions.

Late Shri. Krishna Iyer has divided some 14
major aboriginal tribes as the inhabitants of the south-central Kerala region. But from the pre and proto historic point of view there are the potters, the artisans like (1) Marasaris (wood workers—Carpenters) (2) Kallasaris (stone masons) (3) Kollans (Black-smiths) (4) Moosaris (Bell-metal workers) (5) Thattans (Gold-smiths) (6) Tolkollans (Leather workers) etc., who in one way or other in their ancestry might have enriched the antique culture of our state. Unfortunately the age old primitive social systems of a particular sect discharging a primary function of social structure were branded as something of a menial or low-born caste. This evil practice later developed into the caste system (a well meaning society in the initial period based on division of labour) with all its inequalities.

In the primitive society there was no difference between the princely class, the warrior class, the artisans and toddy tapper or collector for any one had the liberty to change the occupations without any taboo or inhibitions.

In estimating Kerala prehistory, we are forced to explore the forest region for experience has convinced us that the Highland of Kerala never had an interval of cultural phrases. This is specially true of the entire Western Ghats that guard the present
Kerala. Cave habitations thus have been located in Northern Kerala as well as in the South. Quite recently suburbs of Trivandrum and quilon southern districts of Kerala too have yielded engravings chiselled pachking similar to that of Edakkal of Wynad.

The palaeo-cultural Causerie will have to be stressed upon the fact that the alien religions like Christianity and Islam had transformed the contemporary lives of the primitives, just as the pre-dominent Hinduism had been absorbed by them in the early years. Still the caste restrictions were not so rigid in the early years that an individual can change the profession which means changing the caste itself. But in later days these occupational distributions became so rigid that social strata also underwent tremendous changes.

Like a city set on a hill, Kerala had shed her cultural light to distant places and become a refuge to many a people who desired freedom of thought and worship.

Major portions of the research work discussed here pertains to the Anjunad Valley of the High Ranges and so other megalithic sites of south Kerala. Material culture of the people all these sites in many ways, now in the modern days correspond to that of the present habitations. Just as Kerala in general is one of the most literate states of the Indian Union, in
these tribal settlements also be lessings of educa tion
are gradually entering. The physical features, ecology,
geology, climate, rainfall, flora, fauna environment
etc. are all unique and peculiar to that of Kerala
alone, where the early man had definitely his first
roots of civilization in its fullest and finest expres sion.

This present study centres mostly around the
palaeo-artistic achievements of early man together
with the occurrence of the congenial terrain which
played an important part in the selection of sites
for habitation by the stone age man. A brief survey
of the palaeolithic age in stone technology as well
as cave art and its related problems can be seen
that this wonderful expression of human intelligence
was undoubtedly an important complex and in some
cases an essential part of the life of ancient
people.

Before the initiation of the study of Kerala
Prehistory is undertaken one will have to bear the
following rudimentary fact that our culture needs,
undoubtedly with all its merits and demerits of mo dern
sophistication, several long years of economic
and social equilibrium and the evil currents of
evolution or transformation, both material and moral,
should not become the holocaust of Malayali haven of
refuge. There is greater demand for a creative
school of antiquarian and anthropological thoughts
to come up in Kerala, that too, totally indigenous. Lack of co-ordination of scholastic works and systematised exploration are now the serious drawbacks in this realm of studies.

It may also be remembered that during those ancient days of primitive culture, there were no considerations of racial suzerainty or elitism of any ethnic variety. Even after many repeated cultural infiltrations, Kerala always retained its identity of culture through a process of anthropological evolution fostered by its physical structure and ecology while the biological resurgence and temper of hybridized community rendered it militant and agile of higher degree. The territorial proximity for a life-commune comprising of diverse racial elements was manifestly afforded by a coastal strip of southwest coast where the land with its rich vegetation provided effortless sustenance to a chance aggregate of racial elements. We are justified in assuming that the people of the old stone age devoted themselves intensely and continuously to the creation of pictorial, graphic, sculptural and other cultural works, for notwithstanding the inexorable destructiveness of time over many thousands of years, such works have survived in considerable numbers.

While giving prehistoric background of Indian
archaeology, Prof. Gordon has introduced the subject in these words 'every region in which civilization has developed, in which art, literature and science have flourished has a cultural background extending for thousands of years into remote past. It is true that as we endeavour to bring to light the evidence of man's past attainments and to reconstruct a picture of his way of life and his cultural progress, the further back we search the fewer clues we are likely to unearth. Equally the glorious prehistoric phases of human progress and civilization were dismissed in a few sentences which has been particularly true in the case of India too.

He further goes to record that stone age India is unfortunately lacking in such popular features as cave art, which is the case of the west typifies the same stone chipping-flaking cultures. At the same time he goes to record later (p.98) the works of J. Cockburn and C.W. Anderson. But the myth concerning Cave Art was thoroughly and effectively exposed the eminent archaeologist and prehistoric art historian, Dr. V.S. Wakankar whose untiring zest has inspired many native and alien—both young and old scholars to explore the sylvan regions of our country. Thanks to that pioneering work in the jungles of central and north India have provided ample evidence to show that more than anywhere else,
our country has got the largest distribution of cave-rock shelters—proofs concerning the lithic culture of the archaeological horizon of country.

In the same way Kerala and Assam were considered by many to be barren from the antique point of view. Recent research by scholars have proved the eastern tip of India viz. Assam and the southern and viz. Kerala too had effective stone age phases of Indian prehistory, even prior to pre-megalithic periods indicating cave art also. In the same way, two decades back, Padma Bhushan Dr. H. D. Sankalia has recorded that lack of stone age evidences may be due to the fact that the area has not been systematically or scientifically explored. He further adds (p. 275) that it appears however equally true that after receiving the varied cultural influences India has transformed them into something totally new; the fully urbanized (materialistic) Indus civilization, for instance, and this to be followed by a paradox a deep-rooted spiritual and detached outlook on all things of life. Formerly this attitude, first preached in the Upanishads, was credited to the Aryan. Now the pendulum has swung the otherway. It is variously attributed to the Dravidian or pre-Aryans even to the Tibeto-Mongolian element in our ethnic composition. At the same time he records earlier that some areas because of their natural resources and nearness to the highways attracted
settlements, some like Northern Gujarat, because of semi-aridity were settled late, and others, like Assam, Kerala and Central India forests—became refuge areas—areas of isolation—where the aboriginal tribes continued to live on in a hunting stage till today.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>K.V. Soundara Rajan -- Cultural Personality of Kerala, p.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A.S. Menon -- Survey of Kerala History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Author's recordings of the Anjuna valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Altamira -- Cave Paintings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dr. V.S. Wakankar's works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ancient India No.3(1947) and No.12 (1955) and K. Chandrasekharan's recordings in the Archaeology of Kerala: A Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Author's recent work in 1981 at Sabathamangalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1978 at Porumkadavila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Grant Duff quoted by Sir Charles F. Panikkar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sanskrit scholars derive 'Kerala' from 'Kera' meaning coconut, which is one of the staple products of the land, thus indicating the land of coconut. According to Harivamsa Chapter XXVI it was named after the four sons of Akrida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>According to W. Logan, the name of Malabar is of semi-foreign origin—a compound or combination of Dravidian word 'Mala' and Persian word 'bar' meaning mountains and country respectively (controversial)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Earliest reference concerning the belief of the people that Kerala was created by Parasurama is found in the Tamil Periapuranam. In Brahminical ritual and ceremony in Kerala is referred to as Parasuramakshetra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>P.T. Sreenivasa Aiyangar -- History of the Tamils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Prof. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar in his 'Origin and Spread of the Tamil asks can it not be that Caria is derived from Kera or Cera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Prof. Neelakanta Sastri in his 'A History of South India' tries to correlate the Aryanisation of South India from 1000 B.C. p. 70-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>In the chapter dealing with the search for Sita, the monkey chief, Sugriva refers to Kerala, viz. in Kishkindhakand of Ramayana as well as in the 'Aswamedha Parva' and 'Sabhaparva' there is reference about Kerala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the Arthasastra of Kautilya, he exhibits his preference for pepper, teak-wood etc. obtained from Kerala.

Prof. H. B. Sarkar refers about the people of Kerala and their early contacts while discussing the History and Economic life of the Malayar-Indonesian world.

Sulaiman records that Quilon was the only port in Southern India touched by huge Chinese ships.


H. D. Sankalia—PREHISTORY and PROTOHISTORY IN INDIA and PAKISTAN.

Cultured so in the 'BIRTH OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION' p. 59-60 by Bridget and Raymond Allchin after Bruce Foote discovery of stone tools at Attirampakkam in 1863.

T. K. Volu Pillai—TRAVANCORE STATE MANUAL.

Author's collection of Stone celts and microliths from different parts of Kerala for the State Archaeology Department.

L. A. Krishna Iyer—TRAVANCORE CASTE AND TRIBES (Vol. III)

B. M. S. Namputhiripad—Castes, Classes and parties in modern political development with special reference to Kerala.


L. A. Krishna Iyer—Travancore Caste and Tribes (Vol. III)

See L. A. Krishna Iyer—Castes and Tribes.

Inquest of Kerala—an Account publication.

L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer 'Cochin Castes and Tribes'

U. P. Upadhyaya—Kerala's Prehistoric ties with Negro-Africa as evidence by cultural and linguistic survivals.

R. V. Poduval—Megaliths of Travancore.


Refer 34

A. S. Menon—Cultural Heritage of Kerala.

Administration Reports of the State Archaeology Department, Trivandrum.

L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer 'Cochin Castes and Tribes'
42 G. Baldwin Brown—The Art of the Cave Dweller
Refer 41.
44 Ibid
46 Ibid.
47 Archaeological expeditions conducted by different native Kerala Archaeologists including the author trained by the Deccan College of Archaeology, Pune as well as the Archaeological Survey of India.
48 Prof. H.B. Sarkar refers about the people of Kerala and their early contacts while discussing the History and Economic life of the Malayar-Indonesian world.
49 Poet Tennyson's words are borrowed here to indicate the carefree irresponsibility behaviour of the primitive society.
51 L.A. Krishna Iyer 'Castes and Tribes of Cochin'
52 K. Mammen—Kerala Culture—Trivandrum 1942.
53 L.K. Ananchakrishna Iyer 'Cochin Castes and Tribes' Ibid.
54 Margiyur dwellings—See plate of thatched houses.
56 Refer 54
57 Ibid
58 Ibid
59 Ibid
60 Ibid
62 Refer 60
63 Ward and Connors—Memoirs of Travancore and Cochin.
Refer back for 62.
65 Kanaka Sabhai—TAMIL 1800 YEARS AGO.
66 Ibid.
68 Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastry—A HISTORY OF SOUTH INDIA
The inference in the Periapuranam of Sakkizhar and Kerala Mahatmyam all allude the Aryan expansion into the South.

Refer note and article mentioned in 34.

1. Maraiyur Paintings
2. Edakkal Engravings. Fawcett—Indian Antiquary.
3. L.A. Krishna Iyer—KERALA MEGALITH AND THEIR BUILDERS
5. L.K. Ananthakrishna Ayyer—Travancore Castes and Tribes (Vol,III)
7. Ibid.
8. L.K. Ananthakrishna Ayyer—Cochin Castes and Tribes.
10. Recent finds by Dr. Rajendran at Thanmalai as well as Maraiyur Paintings by the Author.
11. Ibid
15. Dr. H.D. Sankalia—Prehistory and Proto History in India and Pakistan, Bombay p.38—1963.
16. Ancient India.
17. Archaeology Department—Administration Reports.
19. INDIAN ANTIQUARY
20. Kerala Darshan (Madras 1958)
22. ANTHROPOLOGY ON THE MARCH—BALA RATNAM—Madras—1963 (Ed.)

For details kindly see Bibliography
Indian Archaeology is more than 100 years old, say precisely to 121 years while that of Kerala is about 87 years of age, to be very exact, for the department of Archaeology, Travancore was started in 1971 M.E. (1895-96 A.D.). The department in its present form represents the union of three separate units of the department in the erstwhile Travancore, Cochin and of the Malabar district of the Madras Presidency just as its political divisions, till the formation of present day Kerala State on November 1, 1956. The present department of Archaeology, Government of Kerala had its separate existence only from 1959 and (from 1953 to 1959) it was adjunct to the Department of Museums and Zoos, that means Kerala Archaeology is almost a quarter century old.

As mentioned earlier, Kerala Archaeology in its evolutionary phases having completed 87 years of age with its regional (Travancore, Cochin and Malabar) divisions—distribution, thriving and receiving ample patronage from royal dynasties, democratic and responsible governments. Even then in its total history of archaeology studies, Kerala prehistory is still an infant.

In its 87 years of existence (having set in 1896) the Department of Archaeology has undertaken
studies in different branches of Archaeology, like Exploration and Excavation, Preservation and Conservation, Epigraphy and Recording, Publications and establishing Museums of antiquities and archaeological gardens so as to create a general awareness in Archaeology among the general public and educated youths.

In tracing out the evolution of archaeological studies in Kerala, we are forced to examine the individual contributions done by the pioneers like William Logan in the three different departments of Archaeology viz. Travancore, Cochin and Malabar.

The growth of Archaeology in Kerala is primarily due to these scholars like Rao Bahadur P. Sundaram Pillai whose vibrant zeal and absorbing interest in the last quarter of the 19th centuries in the scientific study and survey of inscriptions, had contributed greatly to the beginning of a desire in the study of the past of the country. His collecting and codifying of about fifty inscriptions and his study of them, had succeeded in bringing to light the names of nine till then unknown kings to the dynastic list of the Travancore State. His venture, an amateur becoming a student of Archaeology coupled with his many sided knowledge and experience enabled him to deal with the documents in such a way as to
get the last drop of information from them. A mastery of the technique of the principles of historical criticisms and of Indian palaeography has been noticed in them. He had been studying inscriptions, hunting a holiday pursuit for some years and his achievement in the line resulted in the sanction of a small grant in aid from the Royal family in 1891 for his investigations. Sree Sundaram Pillai may thus rightly be called the pioneer in the field of Archaeology in Kerala, though he had only concentrated in the study of the subject viz., Epigraphy and palaeography.

Thus the Department of Archaeology was started (in Travancore) in 1071 M.E. (1895-96 A.D.) devoted to an all round interest and study in the different branches of Archaeology, thanks to the critical study of the inscriptions of the State by Prof. Pillay. This sowing of seeds of archaeological study prompted the then government to appoint an Advisory Committee in the next year to advise the royal administration on the ways and means of preserving historical relics and interesting sites or buildings associated with persons, who, have left a mark in the history of Travancore. A list of monuments to be preserved was received from the Committee and steps were taken to preserve them. In 1084 M.E. (1909) arrangements were
made for a series of papers entitled 'TRAVANCORE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERIES' to be published on the various inscriptions collected by the Department. At present nine volumes with various numbers for each volume, have been published comprising about five hundred inscriptions, copper plates etc. with learned articles on subjects like Iconography, Sculptures, Evolution of scripts, Paintings, Numismatics etc. Steps are being taken by the present department to revise them under the new title 'KERALA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERIES'.

The work of publication of inscriptions, documents and monographs was continued by the first Superintendent of Archaeology, Sree T.A. Gopinatha Rao and his successors Sri. A.S. Ramanatha Iyer and Sri. K.V. Subramonia Iyer. The monumental work 'ELEMENTS OF HINDU ICONOGRAPHY' in two volumes with two parts, which even to-day remains as the standard publication on the subject, was published in 1914 A.D. by its learned author, Sree Gopinatha Rao. The bewildering variety of images in the Hindu Pantheon with their mythological details and moral aim are delineated in this work in a simple and effective style. In 1932 a short monograph of the art of Pantomine Kathakali in Kerala with an explanatory note on the gestures and devices employed for the expression of various emotions, supplemented by diagrams.
of the principal hand poses was published. The principal temples, churches, mosques, forts, ancient sites etc. were visited by the Superintendent for purposes of preservation and study.

In 1938 A.D. (1113 M.E.) the Ancient Monuments and Sites Regulation of 1113 M.E. was issued to declare protected ancient sites, monuments and works of art on the lines of the Ancient Monuments and Sites Act of 1904 of the Government of India. Important palaces like the Padmanabhapuram Palace, Temples like Tirunandikkara, Chitral, forts like Pallippuram, Kottappuram etc. were declared 'protected' for purposes of preservation. Operating like mining, blasting, excavating etc. near protected monument or site were restricted by the Act. A penalty of fine or imprisonment has also been prescribed for those who injure, destroy, alter or imperil a protected monument. Since the passing of the Act, about thirty monuments and sites have been declared and brought within the purview of the Regulation of 1113 M.E.

Trial diggings were also undertaken by the Department. The digs at Ettikulam in Kottayam District had brought to light 184 punch marked coins. They have been deciphered as belonging to the Pre-Mauryan, Mauryan and Post-Mauryan periods. A monograph entitled 'COINS FROM KERALA' has been issued by Department on the find.
In trying to understand Kerala's past through archaeology, we must bear in mind the importance of epigraphy and numismatics (the study of coins) also. Sri. Anujan Achan records in the Administration Reports of Cochin State for 1947-48 that commercial and trade activities with the Mauryan empire is emphasized by the large hoard of coins collected from Eyyal of Trichur District. It had pre-Mauryan coins too. Some of these are kept in safe custody in the Archaeological Museum of Trichur. The District of Kottayam in Travancore area also has yielded pre-Mauryan numismatic data. These coins, also indicate the existed trade contacts between Kerala and the rest of India.

These coins and their legends on the obverse and the reverse along with the inscriptive data supplied by the epigraphical records help greatly, an archaeologist when he goes for his preliminary exploration. This is so because it is always quite natural that from known site to unknown site we travel for authentic data. So that was exactly true in my case also.

The Archaeological Department had its beginning in Cochin only in 1925 A.D. (1100 M.E.) The idea of conducting an Archaeological Survey of the State materialised when a Government communiqué was
issued embodying notices of inscriptions available in the State. An Officer on part-time was appointed to attend to the discovery of inscriptions in the State. A proposal to collect details on Epigraphy, Numismatics, Technology, ancient shrines etc. was approved and action on the lines suggested was pursued. Ancient Sites, Palaces and other monuments were visited and the details were collected by the Officer so posted. The conservation of some of the old inscriptions and monuments was also initiated. A regulation for the protection and preservation of Ancient Sites and Monuments was passed in 1110 M.E. (1935 A.D.) on the lines of the Ancient Monuments and sites Act of the Government of India.

A Survey of the megalithic and urn burial site was conducted in 1945-46. About two different megalithic sites were located. The Assistant Superintendent of Archaeology, Government of India was also deputed to conduct a survey of the megalithic site in view of its availability in large numbers. Porikalam, literally meaning a battle field in the north of Kunnampalam in the Talapally Taluk of Trichur District was selected for excavation as a result of which variety of monuments of the megalithic culture was noticed in the area.
The excavation work was undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India in close collaboration with the State Department. The Kerala region being walled up from the mainland, had naturally developed certain individualities of culture which are also manifest in her funeral customs. The characteristic monument of this area viz., Topi-kal or hat stones, Kudaikal or Umbrella stones and rock cut caves—do not occur elsewhere. (see plate 78) Apart from these, multiple dolmens, port-hold cists, menhirs and urns are also met within the area.

The Porkalam urn burial provides dual distribution of funeral furnishings. In the absence of a habitation site in the vicinity of Porkalam, a correlation of this typical megalithic culture with any corresponding culture at such a site has not been possible. The technique and fabric of the pottery recovered from this monument are absolutely identical with those recovered from similar monuments in other parts of South India.

The monument consisted of a crude variety of dressed laterite blocks with an average external diameter of 16ft. In the centre was a granite capstone flush with the ground, probably imported from the neighbouring outcrop. The excavation revealed in the centre a cylindrical pit. The pit seemed to have been further dug in a conical section.
also into the hard laterite rock to a depth of 9\textquotedbl. On the southern side was noticed a rough step or shallow ramp 9 to 10 inches in depth presumably to assist in the arrangement of funerary furnishings. At the bottom of the pit was placed a pyriform urn with a truncated round based 3'2\" in height and 1'9\" in diameter at the mouth and 2'9\" at the bulge. Inside the urn at its base lay seven pots, three iron implements 48 beads etc. (overlying the lid was arranged the bulk of the pottery, a group of not less than 18 pots).

Trial digs were undertaken in 'Cheraman Parambu' the traditionally famous site of the capital of the second Chera Empire. Five pits were laid in different sites in the area. The objects dug out from the sites are potteries of different types, glass and stone beads; glass bangles of different colour, copper and iron objects, pieces of chinese celadon wares, lead balls and quartz objects. The earliest date that may be assigned to these objects indicated medieval periods.

An important hoard of Roman gold and silver punchmarked coins, was discovered from the slope of a laterite hill in the Eyyal Village, Talappally Taluk. The Roman Coins are identified to be of Claudius, Nero, Trojan etc, and the punch-marked
coins of the Mauryan and post Mauryan periods.

An Archaeological Museum was started on the first-floor of the Trichur Town Hall in 1946 to exhibit and preserve the relics collected from different parts of the state. Subsequently the Kollangode House at Trichur was acquired by the Department for housing this museum. The museum today contains artefact of the prehistoric period, sculptures of different periods, copies of Mural paintings in different temples and churches, coins of Kerala and other parts of India and plaster models of Indian sculpture through the ages. The present museum can boast of much pride in the display of scientific techniques.

The Padmanabhapuram Palace in Kanyakumari of Tamil Nadu, the former capital of Venad, the pride monument of our Department is noted for its peculiar styles of Kerala architecture like dormer windows, narrow corridors, projecting caves, 'the Nalukettus' (the inner quadrangular courtyard) pointed gables, or classical impluvium etc. and the rich mural paintings on the four walls of the topmost floor popularly known as 'Uppirika Malika'. The earliest edifice in the complex is believed to have been constructed. Somewhere 1550 A.D. and Padmanabhapuram fort-city deserves worthy mention.
Talking about palaces, the Royal Palace of Mattancherry, now controlled by Government of India is also a store-house of attractive mural wealth—atleast a portion covered by the main quadrangle and the inner verandah surrounding it—first built by the Portugese and presented to the then ruling Chief, Vira Kerala Varma (A.D. 1537-61) of Cochin about 1555 A.D. in the erstwhile Cochin State. The Palace which underwent renovation, a hundred years later, under the Dutch and so became popular as the Dutch Palace. Even with traces of European elements in architecture and construction, it is equally congenial to our surroundings and climate.

Much of its mural glory remains in the west side room of the coronation hall, popularly known in the vernacular as the Palliyara. The walls had Ramayana scenes depicted all along it. Four-other rooms also in the upper and lower stories of the palace contain remarkable specimens of Mural Paintings indirectly throwing some light on the contemporary social life of Malabar.

Back to field archaeology, recently trial digs and explorations were undertaken by the Department in Crangannore, Marayur and other areas in collaboration with the Southern Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India. Trenches in several places were laid in Crangannore and surrounding places
to collect details and relics of the later Chera empire. An alignment of trenches had already been taken in the area by the then State Department in 1945 as earlier mentioned. The digs in 1969 were mainly concentrated at different sites around the Choraman Parambu and in areas close to it like Kizhthalli and Tiruvanchikulam. They yielded pottery, though not of any outstanding feature. For this water-level mark was also reached. At Kizhthalli the trenches yielded not much of an earlier phase to the 10th century temple levels. Same was the case at Thiruvanchikulam, the yield of which was much disturbed.

In the second session of the work which was resumed in 1970, on preliminary explorations had indicated that Mathilakam had a more adventitious location by its mediaeval cultural debris, reported urb burials, its line by backwaters to the mouth of the Periyar river and its temples.

These extensive explorations and resultant trial diggings had not than way brought to light any relic precisely datable except one or two Chola coins of the 11th century A.D. The important cultural index is the "Wavy Line Painted Ware" which overlaps with the megalithic 'black and red ware' in the opening centuries of the Christian era. A site then near Sukapuram in Ponnani, Malappuram District in
recent times has yielded the 'wavy line pottery' and with that optimism it is hoped further explorations in the area would throw fresh light on our antiquity, of the early centuries of the Christian era. But so far the rouletted ware, a type fossil of the Indo-Roman trade of the eastern-sea-board from Kaveripatinam in Tamil Nadu to Tamralipti, West Bengal, all along the sea-coast, much work will have to be noticed upon which hitherto not. This ware is specifically datable to the 1st century A.D.

In some of the sites in Cheramanparambu it was thought desirable and arranged mechanical borings to know better details about the substrates in the regions as the land was found sandy in its uppermost levels below the latter mediaeval deposits. The result of this boring has not been very successful and it is under ardent scrutiny for further investigations in the area.

Explorations were also conducted at Marayur in Devikulam Taluk of Idukki district (then Kottayam District) in January 1970. That has paved for further investigations in the valley of Anjunad of which Marayur is the most important village. Large clusters of megalithic monuments have been found in the site on the top, middle and foot of the hillock. Coarsed masonry has been used which hems in stone megalithic monuments through a heavy pack of cairn and rubble in between outer-walling, not
noticed in similar structures elsewhere. In some of them there are 10 coarses of masonry and the largest is about 32' long. All these chambered monuments are with single, double or multiple rooms and are closed by the capstone only in respect of the chambers proper. The number of capstone also is found in single, double or multiple. The areas which are not closed by capstones, apart, spaces for cairn packing, provide open courts which is probably expected to be the frontage of the monument's entry.

The parallel sides of the monument at the front narrows down, thereby giving the shape of a trapezium. The orientation has also been found to be varying from east, north and north-west and south-west, though, significantly enough a porthole has been noticed on the eastern side covered with a disturbed stone slab. The trial digs in the area are likely to bring to light the much desired habitation site near the vicinity of the monument.

The publication of a series of standard monographs, have also been initiated and undertaken by the Department. 'Coins of Kerala', Guide to Padmanabhapuram Palace, Temple Architecture in Kerala are some of the publications apart the Administration Reports and Travancore Archaeological Series.
Leaving aside the so-called Brahmin colonisation of this land, covering the origin of present Kerala, the modern tendency is to establish that the whole of South India once was a part of the submerged continent which was called Lemuria, as discussed earlier comprising of the whole of Australia, Africa, Sree Lanka and South India. Modern researchers believe that in those days of yore, there was no Indian Ocean as such and even the great Himalayas had not emerged as a great barrier in the borders of North India. The recent oceanic research conducted by the Soviet Oceanographers and native archaeologists in the ship Vittiar found a chain of mountains beneath the Indian Ocean. These mountains chains ranging from a height of 6000' to 8000' stretch from the southern tip of India and spread out to Australia and Africa connecting these with Sree Lanka and India. This shows that the Lemuria continent might have submerged into the sea forming the great Indian Ocean as a result of some volcanic eruption. The Ramayana reference of the Sethubandhanam also give strong support to this hypothesis. If the Indian Ocean which we have today was existing during
the time of the legendary Rama Ravana War, it
would have been impossible to span the ocean enabling
the army of Rama Ravana War, it would have been
impossible to span the ocean enabling the army of Rama to pass to Sri Lanka, the country of Ravana. Therefore it can be presumed that Kerala being a part of the vast Lemuria continent had an antique existence with her people and way of life.

With regard to political history, as far as we known, Kerala had first formed part of the bigger kingdom known as Chera, the seat of which with administration was in and around the city port of those days viz; Vanchi or Thiruvanchikkulam corresponding a place near the modern Cochinore. Literary evidences recorded in the Sangam works corroborating that reference. But the pitiable thing is that many of those works had practically nothing to contribute by way of pre-historic part of Kerala. To that extent they are literally widespread of little value. The Administration Reports of the departments of Archaeology of Travancore as well as Cochin have detailed notes and recordings relating to the exploration of antique sites and antiquities, deciphering and cataloguing of inscriptive evidences, preservation
and conservation of monuments, and publications undertaken in subsequent periods. Even from 1926 the archaeological reports were done in these two native states in an admirable manner.

Discovery of rusted swords of the historic periods from the river bank site of Thodupuzha in Central Travancore is recorded by the Superintendent of Archaeology as early as A.D. 1926. On all these years much antiquarian data was collected by the officials of the Archaeology, of course, mostly pertaining to historic archaeology. Discovery of an underground vault at Kuthirakulam near Pirappancode in the Nedumangad Taluk was reported. Almost at about this time, Sri. Anujan Achan, Government Archaeologist, Cochin State discovered "an ancient cave" in a private compound known as Paramal-Parambu-a garden on a rock'. It is scooped out of hard laterite and has the shape and symmetry of a large oval shaped earthen jar with a circular opening right on the top two feet in diameter. The cave is neatly designed and well finished to indicate human habitations. Another one at Chovannur on the northern side of the Kunnammulam-Wadakkancherri
road is also recorded.

As early as 1928, laterite caves were recorded in such areas of Cochin like Velakkad and Kakkad. Quite a large number of dolmens were located in the site near Porkalam. Shri. Anujan Achan, the Government Archaeologist of Cochin gives detailed description as to how he excavated two Dolmens located in the interior of forest at Vaniampara as well at Porkalam. Calcined bones and ashes together with iron implements were collected from these excavations (See Administration Reports of Cochin for details) which were kept in earthen jars. It was in the shape of a big rectangular room formed of six huge granite slabs, one slab lying horizontally forming the floor and the covering slab being supported by four upright stones. The length of the longer sides were seven feet and of the shorter four and a half feet and the height was about six feet— that way most of them are buried tombs. On the right side of inner floor a granite cot is kept which measures about two feet broad.

The most significant and pioneering work was done in the year 1947-48. The tiny native state,
Cochin, through its Archaeology department conducted a joint excavation programme with the then Archaeology Survey of India, Government of India, Delhi, findings of which are recorded in the Annual Report of the Archaeological Department, Cochin State. Shri. Anujan Achan, the local Government Archaeologist worked together with the recently retired Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, Shri. B.K. Thapar. There were two minor excavations of pre-historic burials during that year, one at Porkalam (in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India) and the other at Kottappuram in the Talappalli Taluk. The excavated monument at Porkalam was one of Capstone flush type often met with in other parts of the State. There are scores of this type in the Kodakallu-parambu at Cheramanged. But what was significant of the one discovered at Porkalam was that it lay among a group of Pre-historic burials within the sacred precincts of a Durga Temple. Among the monuments that lay scattered around the temple were two caves and about a dozen cists with stone circles. The excavators have admitted
that was not so scientific excavation. Still fruitful results have been achieved in this venture.

The monuments found at Perkalam could be classified into three groups (i) Port-hole cists with boulder circles around: One of these cists had been opened more than a decade ago, of course not by archaeologists. There was a port-hole, roughly rectangular in the eastern slab towards the northern half. At level with the rectangular hole was a stone bench on the southern side. The props of the bench, two in number, had semi-circular insulations at the top. The monument was covered with a capstone. The eastern port-hole was blocked externally by a slab. Potteries and bronze broken vessels were obtained from it. Within a short distance of the above monument could be seen the remains of an exposed 'double' cist encircled with a laterite boulder. While the capstone of that was missing, some of its side stones arranged in a clock-wise manner were still in tact at that time of excavation (ii) Underground caves cut into the laterite—Two such caves which had long ago been exposed could be seen on the western
side of the Durga Temple. Each of them had a port-hole entrance from the east. They were kept preserved by the department (iii) Capstone flush (granite and laterite) with boulders round—
Besides the above three types there were also traces of incomplete stone circles of laterite and cist slabs lying scattered throughout the compound.
In view of the disturbed state of the site it was decided to tackle the most prominent of the capstone flush gray at Porkalam. With regard to the finds that were collected from inside of the burial jar 'jug' out of this capstone-Flush excavations it could be said that from the point of view of scientific excavation, the discoveries made were unusually good. (for details see page 15 Administration Report—Cochin 1947-48).

In the same year the port-hole cist at Kottappuram was also dug up. The site lay about five miles to the east of Cheramangad. It was discovered under peculiar circumstances while breaking open a position of the top granite slab for private purposes by the Taluk officials. Further exposure yielded mud pots which had been deposited in the granite-cave. In this manner the officials of the
departments of Archaeology of the native state of Travancore they had their own limitations. Since the formation of the present Kerala State, the department of Archaeology Government of Kerala have recorded in their annual administrative reports, discovery of megalithic sites in the form of rock cut caves, menhirs, dolmens and such other monuments. Equally Edakkal Cave was revisited. Such sites like Cheengeri (Kozhikode), Poothamkara (Quilon), Pallavoor (Palghat), Koonamoochi (Trichur) and Pennani (Palghat), Naduvil (Cannanore) Kaller, Idukki all have yielded megalithic evidences.

About twenty urn burials were unearthed and explored at Trichur by late Shri. Vasudeva Poduval and Mr. R.A. Edington in 1934 in the month of September. During the same year itself Shri. Poduval has recorded the largest distribution of dolmens in the Anju Nad valley. As a matter of fact, though Kerala has got megalithic monuments throughout with an uneven distribution, this particular area in the foot-hills of High Ranges has got the biggest number, which are being destroyed by the local people even today. Local population refer to them as 'Vali Vidas' or abode of the monkeys.
after the name of their leader, Bali referred to
in the Mahabharatha (Ramayana Story is narrated inside it
as a sub-theme). Uralli a local hill tribe refers to
them as 'Pandukuzhis' pits made by the Pandavas
with treasures hidden underneath. Sri.Paduval
further goes on as to record that certain archi-
technical methods and principles were adopted in
their construction. In the first place by the use
of orthostatic block, the maximum of wall area is
provided with the minimum thickness. Secondly
there is no use of mortar in its masonry which
itself is course and rugged, and each block of
stone on its side and not on its edge.

The dolmens according to Colonel Meadows
Taylor are of two kinds, the first consisting of
four stones, three supporting stone and one cap
stone leaving one side open, and three in which the
chamber is closed by the fourth stone. In the
latter case the fourth stone has invariably a
circular opening in it.

The dolmens found at Marayur of the Anjunad
Valley (the land of dolmens—see plate) are situated
on a flat level rocky table land and are in groups
of three, four or five, around each of which is
visible, rough hewn stones. Though on later days, in some dolmens they have retained the capstone and re-built and thereby re-arranged the monument with brick-block-construction (see plate). The majority of them is in east to west orientation, but there are a few situated north to south direction also. Many of them had, floor paved with flat stone slabs about 108 inches long, 50 inches broad and on the lower slabs of some are seen rubble stone packing. On closer examination of the monuments we find many aspects of the Anju Nad dolmens are even more akin to the megaliths of Europe irrespective of their being menhirs or dolmens (see comparative plates). This is equally true in the case of prehistoric paintings also.

Regarding the alignments and distribution of the megaliths, we have to say it was totally widespread on the two ends of Western Ghats and especially the High Ranges. At the same time the monuments on the other side of Anamalai were subsequently converted into Sati-Worshiping temples. Of course, the tendency was not at all completely absent in the valley of Anju Nad for we have in the Dintikombur on the hillock—on the way to Kanthalloor from
we get the above mentioned evidences. There we could locate depicted engravings also inside the dolmen.

Broadly speaking, the archaeological recordings undertaken by the departments of Archaeology, Government of Travancore, Cochin and subsequently by the present Kerala State, were more on historic archaeology. From that general approach much work was done in the fields of epigraphy, preservation, research, publication and conservation. The exploration-cum-excavation (trial digging and trial trenching) was executed in a limited scale. Further as we recorded in the preamble as well in the introduction, the most commendable work done by the pioneers of Kerala archaeology—anthropology, has the ethnographic survey of the forest tribes and castes of the plains in the Travancore and Cochin areas. The names of the illustrious names of the father-son team of anthropologists viz. Ananthakrishna Iyer and Krishna Iyer.

Then compiling of the State Manual of Travancore and Cochin have helped us greatly in examining the past date of our native states. For this noble task, of preparing this encyclopaedic nature of work concerning Travancore we are greatly indebted to late Diwan Bahadur V. Nagam Aiya (1908) then to late Sadasivatilak T.K. Velu Pillai for revising it after 32 years (1940) and equally grateful to late Shri. C. Achutha Menon who prepared the Cochin State Manual.
These works were large guide book—information directory dealing with generalia while regularly published administration reports of the Cochin State Archaeology that late distinguished archaeologist, Sri Anujan Achan also have greatly helped young archaeologists in their efforts.

Further with regard to the antiques of Malabar of Madras Presidency, Robert Sewell has prepared 'A list of Antiquarian remains in the presidency of Madras' which gives much details about the hatstone, umbrella stones, menhir etc. type of archaeological monuments. From the historical and antiquarian point of view just as in the case of any other country's history, here in Kerala, geography played its role very effectively and consistently.

The Western Ghats and as well as the proximal lengthy central line had at times enforced confinement and solitude of culture on the one side while on the other, opened the vista of international naval outlook and maritime trade activities. Just as in the case of archaeological exploration, historical events that rocked the rest of India reached here slowly or after its diminution of violent cultural minds. That means, not that our state was completely cut off, from the rest-mainstream of India for eg. the attempted invasion of Krishna Deva Raya (A.D. 1509-1530) and the successful gun road expedition
of Haider Ali and Tippu Sultan through the mountain-piercing passes and the Palghat gaps. That was the reason, that Kerala was saved from the North Indian invaders of the mediaeval times. At the same time these barriers blockaded the friendly cultural intercourse, the result of which, even a universal religion like the Buddhism had to wait for centuries after the death of its founder, to reach this soil where unfortunately did not have its permanent foothold. An archaeological evaluation of the influence of geography on Kerala history is very well proclaimed as the native system of fighting and evolution viz. that of 'Kalarippayattu' or fencing-fighting, the peculiar product of the topography of Kerala, with its ups and downs, deep and narrow lanes, the former discouraging heavy arms, the latter long handled weapons (K.V. Krishna Ayyar).

A systematised examination of the Administration reports published by the State Department of Archaeology clearly show that the present Kerala State had the largest of megalithic monuments throughout the length and breadth of Kerala, occurring at each site with urn burials and other iron age implement. But the pathetic aspect is that, the local people who are the first to notice these have damaged almost all the evidences. Practically all
Plate 10 Nilgiri Dolmen—Converted into Temple

Plate 11 Hero Stones—Sunk Deep—Excavated by the Author

Plate 13. Polished Celts Collected from Agali.
types of known megalithic monuments are found in Kerala. But the recording sometimes become difficult for the explorer to trace out its entire structure, for, it is covered with thick bushes and vegetation. Dolmens, cist, cromleches, sarcophagus, menhirs, stone circle, gairn-circle, rock-cut caves, gairn-circle with cap stone and barrow, urn burials, umbrella stones, hat-stones all these are located in subsequent years in this part of the land.

Equally megalithic alignment was located near the famous Edakkal engravings also. Then in the tribal settlements of Mannarghat Taluk in Palghat district, viz. of the Attappady valley, the villages of Agali, Kottathara and Swarnagadha have yielded the largest influx of hero stones, some of which have been unearthed by the State Archaeology and kept in the museums (see the plate). In one particular site itself there were about 150 hero stones lying sunk deep in soil, all of which could not be taken when the author led an expedition to that site in the year 1979.

Apart from the above, from the Palghat terrain itself, I could collect about 5 polished stone celts, which the tribals have kept as object of worship, underneath a banyan tree. The material is of dolerite.

That way all these years Kerala has been recorded Prehistorically too as can be referred to as the jungle of megalithism.
and Subsequently of the iron age. As referred to earlier, Dolomoid cists had the use of burying the dead in full or fragmentary form and the forms and the monument had a prominent lid-stone with a slit. Or in some other cases it was chambered with partition and windows. Secondly the cap-stone flush type had the dead body kept in a jar with a flatstone on the top. On the centre of the cap-stone there will be a hole. Next one have got the stone circles, where the body was allowed to be kept as a carcass for birds of prey while getting decomposed. Fourthly in the case of umbrella stones, the dead body was buried after which a circular-top-stone was kept by supporting it on stone legs. This is also found in Kerala. In some cases, this hat stone will be fixed to the ground without support. For those further we have got the menhirs--solitary tall single stone pillars erected on the top of the burial and lastly the urn burials, the representatives of which are many in Kerala. One peculiar thing about Kerala megalithism is that we have got all types of these monuments in accordance with out topography. This we will be dealing separately. But the problem here is due to variation in topography stratigraphical evidence may not be fully convincing.

Though we have got a continual lengthy period of megaliths, except in the seventies or in the eighties.
no attempt was done by scholars to explore the preceding cultural phases. As has been indicated the attempt here is to justify my findings in the line of my limited observations coupled with other works of contemporary archaeologists to show that our state was never lagging behind in stone cultural evidences.

Archaeological investigations undertaken by the scholars in the seventies and eighties are keenly taken here along with my own observations to modify the maxim of Kerala prehistory, which is an infant only from the stone age cultural standpoint of view. Before that another will have to be noticed again concerning that megalithic monuments viz. rock cut caves. There are two opinions as to these belonging to the megalithism and or not. Definitely these chambers monuments in Kerala might have been subsequently occupied by the people of later cultural phases, but no doubt in the initial periods, they were megalithic monument only. But the remarkable thing here is that in the case of these rock cut caves, in very many cases, they were burial-cum-habitational abodes, because we have come across with chair-like and cot-like formations inside the rock-cut caves.

Thus recording the hitherto work done in the archaeological phase of Kerala, one will have to see
megaliths of Kerala showed and indicated all the well-meaning characteristics of the universal periodization of iron. But with regard to the pre-megalithic settlements scholars were all along hesitant to record.

So as indicated in the previous paragraphs, my venture in this is to reconstitute the earlier phases of Kerala prehistory, this home of the Malayalam speaking people. In this attempt, my greatest help, I must record might have come from the reference concerning the engravings at Edakkal, Wynad in South Kerala.

Further as noted above, the palaeolithic evidences discovered by my friend and colleague at Deccan College, Pune, Dr. Rajendran (at present doing his post-doctoral research at Pune) have greatly enhanced and enabled me to record my observations. Prior to our work of the seventies, the excavations conducted by Shri. B.K. Thapar, Senior former Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India as well as by Dr. A.Aiyappan, the former Vice-Chancellor of the Kerala University and a distinguished anthropologist all have yielded only megalithic evidences. The work of Shri. K.R. Srinivasan (1946) in the light of Tamil literature and tradition centered around megalithism only, which was practised on a large scale in Kerala and other parts of the then Tamizhakam which has got references in the early Sangam literature. Anyway almost all
agree on the view that they were earliest iron using people in this country. (still a controversy).

At the same time scattered works and archaeological recordings concerning microliths of the Neolithic industry were recorded even earlier by K.R.V. Todd at Chevayur near Calicut which according to him were of a factory site beside a pond, which once upon a time was covered by thick layers of soil and later on exposed again by erosion. Drs B & R. Alchin have correlated the parallels with that of the discoveries from the Mysore Plateau, for the entire assemblage is of crystalline quartz and thereby united the Calicut Industry with that of South Mysore, as well indentified their techniques to those employed at different parts of the Deccan. Admirably too, the so-called pygmy implements have been reported by Cammiade during his unearthing of Wynad urn burials as well a by Fawcett, the Administrator-cum-explorer of the Rock carving in the Edakkal Cave, equally Sri. Chandrashekaran, Technical Assistant of Archaeological of India, who was for sometime in the State Government Department of Antiquities have collected microliths, the reports of which have been subsequently published in the Indian Archaeology--A--Review (details not available). Of late Dr. Rajendran together with Professor of Deccan
College, Dr. R. V. Joshi, discovered Lower Palaeolithic and Microlithic sites in the valleys of Bharathapuzha and Beypore—as well from the gravel, bed and alluvial terraces in Palghat District.

Because of non-availability of proper state-graphical data, we cannot definitely predict as to the fact the Neolithic phase of Kerala prehistory was preceded by a full-fledged Microlithic phase. Equally no stratigraphical evidences have been obtained though the polished stone axes (cults) of the Neolithic period were obtained from Wynad, Kalpetta, Alwaye and Thiruvalla of our state. To some extent the Neolithic traits of food production and cattle rearing associated with pottery and polished stone axes were traced in rare cases only. Further corroborating all these evidences, they are found mostly in north Kerala and as well as Central Kerala. But quite recently city-habitations have yielded iron age evidences and Edakkal type rock engravings located by explorers, goes on to prove that South Kerala too is definitely rich in prehistory. The Samadhi Hill in the northern part of Trivandrum have yielded megalithic burial about a decade back which was excavated by the then Director of Archaeology. In addition to that, in the year 1976, I have unearthed burial jars in the Perinthalmanna Taluk of Palghat District. The Administration Report
of the State Archaeology Department gives report as to how Edakkal engravings were re-discovered almost a century after it was located by Powest. In maintaining the pre-historic monuments, hitherto known, the State Department have undertaken and executed many better methods of preservation and conservation. Actually even during the early days of Indian Archaeology, megalithic monuments were recorded by our State Departments. Shri. B.K. Thapar’s excavations at Pookalam (1952) was a great success during that period, thanks to the help rendered by the staff of the then Department of Archaeology, Cochin State under the leadership of late Shri. Anujan Achan. As early as the post-war work periods, as well post Indian Independence periods of Archaeology of Travancore as well as Cochin have recorded unearthing and trial digging of burial jars in different parts of their administrative divisions. The dolmens of the valley of Anjuman had been measured and recorded by the then Superintendent and later Director of Archaeology of Travancore State, late Shri. Vasudeva Poduval. Our attention is strictly concentrated on prehistory only. Even then a general mention may be made on other sister wings of archaeology viz., epigraphy, preservation, conservation, numismatics etc. In all these fields Kerala had achieved tremendous success. As a matter of fact
Travancore Archaeological Series give the list of the largest number of inscriptions concerning the Chera Empire in subsequent periods, the administration reports records the largest number of palm leaves collection obtained from the royal dynasty as well from different public and private agencies. The ethnographic survey of the Travancore and Cochin—Castes and Tribes even today appreciated by both Indian as well as international anthropologists to be one of monumental nature. Then the bible of iconography by late Sri, T.A. Gopinatha Rao viz. 'Elements of Hindu Iconography' is also a unique piece of literature in that line.

Then early as the first quarter of this century ancient temples with murals, like the Vadakkunathan of Trichur and Tirunandikkara of Travancore were taken for proper preservation and conservation. The work in Malabar area was covered by the Europeans for it was an integral part of the Madras Presidency of British India. Robert Sewell has published the 'List of Antiquarian Remains in the Presidency of Madras. In between it won't be out of place to record a brief summary of the early history of Kerala origin if we discuss Kerala prehistory and its place in pre-Indian culture. This is done because of lack of proper and continuity of cultural data, we cannot fix exact
date of the starting of prehistory and early history. The transition might have occurred only gradually. For eg., at the present time, basing on given inference we are forced to believe that during the Aryan period of Indian History, Kerala might have been in the Iron Age or megalithic phase of prehistory—again a matter of controversy. Naturally so we have to glance through history also. Further even today there are prehistoric tribes living on the ravines of Kerala, perhaps, due to little contact with the people of the plain or of civilized areas. With that as the clue we have very little knowledge concerning the prehistoric past of Kerala. There always existed close contacts and active cultural exchange between Kerala and the foreign countries. The lengthy coastline has facilitated this. No state in India excels Kerala in its contribution to literature and science. The influence of the sea on Kerala culture has been no less profound than that of the Sahya ranges.

For undertaking my field observations, I got guidelines from the officials of the State Archaeology Department concerning the existence of a large number of dolmens and other megalithic monuments in the valley of Anju Nad on the lower plains of the High Ranges. This valley of Anju Nad is very often taken to be as Nanchinadu Vadavakai or Nanchi-
nadu of the north while parts of the present Kanyakumari area is known as Ten Nanchinadu or Nanchinadu of the South. There are many theories relating to the origin of the name 'Anju Nad' of which, one school of thought hold the view that Anchinan in Tamil means one who is depressed or defected, humiliated. The other theory says that 'Anchu' in Tamil or Dravidian language means five and so the valley is known as the land of the places (villages) such as Maraiyur, Kizhanthoor, Kanthalloor, Karyoor, Kovilloor, while opinion differ for the last two as Vattawadai and Kottakombur. Of these, Maraiyur was the centre of activity, though another tribal settlement viz. Champakad (10 miles away from Maraiyur) also had yielded rock shelters with paintings. The funnel shaped valley of Anju Nad, my main field area of research operations have, all the topography, terrains, flora-fauna—all comparable to that of Central Indian rock shelters, though in the geomorphic formations, there is slight variation. My field area occurs in the granite-laterite infested area, though it has got chert-chalcedony vein formations too in the rocky surface.

The attempt in this thesis is only to study and compare prehistoric paintings of Kerala with that of other Indian sites like the Shibetka as well with the local rock engravings discovered about fifty
years at Edakkal in Wynad in North Kerala.

Then the problem before me was as to why the paleolithic men had left Kerala, a question which was already answered by my colleague, Dr. Rajendran. His sites of stone cultures have occurred in North Kerala, while my area forms major portion of South Central Kerala. Here one thing we have to record that not very late than the discovery of stone tools by Robert Bruce Foote, the rocky regions of Kerala with her dense forests figured in the megalithic phase of Indian prehistory, Ward and Connors in their 'Memoirs' have recorded the special nature of this part of the land. The whole High Ranges have got scattered megalithisms, the major portions of which even today remains forest or have been converted into tea or coffee estates. Those forest regions only have helped the prehistorians in recording the part of Kerala, where we get living representatives of the bygone culture in the form of groups of tribes as well as their abodes, utensils and other household articles etc. all of which have exhibited antique data for the archaeologist. Due to the
contact with the people, though many of them have modernised themselves, and have civilised as well as 'polluted' from the archaeological point of view, for their eagerness to attempt sophisticated amenities for survival and thereby compelling them to adopt modern means of cultural communications and transformation.

Recording the antiquarian work that has been carried on all these years, one has seen almost the entire archaeology centered around historic and mediaeval phases of Kerala's past referred to above. Geographically, isolated to a limited extent all the cultural streams and links on the North had its ripples and repercussions beyond this side of the Vindhya also. These cultural remains have been represented in Kerala in the Folk Art-wealth of our state. Equally the hunter-nomadic way of life, the predecessor to the Mesolithic-Neolithic phases of human progress is also represented the symbols of wild life viz. the Pulikkali (Tiger dance) Kummattikali (mask dance) etc. During those days also music and dance played an important part in their every day life.
Quite recently a general awakening has been creeping in the mind of mature as well as western scholars to devote much of their time for the study of Keralalogy just like Indology, the instance of which seen by the conduct of the Athiratra Yagna (sacrifice) in accordance with the vedic rites in the village of Panjal in Central Kerala (1975) by Dr. J.F. Stoll of the University of California and the publication of such works like George Woodcock’s ‘Kerala- a portrait of the Malabar Coast’ and C. Fuller’s Nayars To-day (1976).

Still it is a matter of great regret, contemporary scholars like Sreedhara Menon does not care to notice and examine the archaeological explorations and its achievements carried out in the sixties and seventies in the archaeological horizons of Kerala pre-history. In the special Marq issue (Kerala Special 1979)---Splendour of Kerala, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand observes in the introductory chapter that one feature seems to have been a constant factor in Kerala History. Throughout the centuries the people remained creative with an intensity, which has thrown up dynamic art works that can compete in their own integral images with the finest
handiwork of any other part of India some of the expressions being vital contribution even to world culture. For instance, the theatre of imagination, which is Kathakali, has anticipated many of the recent innovations in the Western theatre like the expiation of pain through the drama of terror.

In its newest and most activist phase the contemporary Kerala culture may offer examples of resurgence of other heritages of our country and the world.

Ronald M. Bernier is of the opinion that Kerala has developed its ancient artistic identity, the development of which has occurred through thousands of years, again is not compromised but enriched by contacts with the traditions of the sub-continent as a whole. Kerala remains apart yet integrated, both borrower and creator. It is a place unlike any other, home of peat living monuments. In Kerala the natural world was not so forcefully or so finally removed from the temples as it is true in other parts of India. The life of the people of Kerala has always been moulded by the vast spectrum of the magnificent legacy that is in their folk culture.
The same is equally preserved in the 'Arts and Crafts of Kerala', also, the antiquity of which goes as far back as the date of spice-pepper trade of the pre-Christian Eras. From that perspective our state is richly endowed with the credit of a variety of exquisite handicrafts. The highly resourceful and gifted craftsmen have invented, modified and adopted many special novel patterns peculiar and unique to Kerala. The state is privileged to have at 32 different crafts to her credit. The important among them are carvings in woods, ivory and horn, mat-making, koraggrass, screwpine, palm leaf, bamboo, reed bell metal wares, coconut shell products, moulding work in clay etc. The state is famous for jewellery and lapidiary industry. Ivory carving, which is one of the earliest crafts practised by mankind, in Kerala it had originated about 3000 B.P., still the technique and specimens of the crafts are now only a matter of legend. Same is the case in the art of ceramics and pottery. Of the former we have less or practically nil excavated evidences. But of the latter we have got the black and red ware—wavy line types, Kanaka Sabha and other records that it was most probably from Tamilakom that ivory, agal, peacock...
Plate No. 14 Prehistoric Monument
Menhir-Trichur: ADM Report Chchin Arch Dept.
Plate No. 14

Prehistoric Monument Menhir-Trichur ADM
Report Cochin State Arch. Dept.)
during the reign of Solomon (about 1000). Further in all references we come across Musiris or Muyiricode or Mahodayapuram or Makoti (near present day Crangannore-Kodungalloor). According to geological survey conducted by then Government of India 1910, Malabar stood about five hundred feet lower than the present and portions of Cochin and Kodungalloor were submerged beneath the sea.

The site of the ancient port on the mouth of the river Periyar, which to the early Greek and Roman travellers was known as Muziris (see Plate). Muziris is the same as port Muziri or Muchiri or Muyiricode of the Tamil classics. Karuvur or the Karoura of Ptolemy is believed to have been Karur, the capital of the ancient Chera kins of the Sanghom literature. This is identified equally by scholars with the present Thiruvanchikulam of the former Cochin State. It is to this last monarch of Chera dynasty that the royal dynasty of the erstwhile Cochin State traced their ancestral descend. The location of Muziris of the Greek Geographers was fixed by scholars like Burnell, Caldwell and Yule at 'Muyirikad or Muziri which Kodungalloor or Cranganur
(10° 14', N, 76° 11'E) was an important port in mediaeval times. Their argument was based on the 7000 stadia named in the Periplus as the distance between Barygaza and Damirica (Dravidadesa). From Barygaza or Broach on the mouth of the Narmada, "the whole course to the end of Damirica is seven thousand stadia but the distance is greater to the Coast Country". 7000 stadia is approximately 7000 miles.

After naming the several market towns beyond Baryagaza, the Periplus continues; "Then came Nauna and Tyndis, the first markets of Damirica and then Muziris and Nelcynda which are now of leading importance. Tyndis is of the kingdom of Cornbothra, it is a village in plain site by the sea "Wilfred Schoff has identified Tyndis with the modern Pennani (10° 48', N, 75° 56'E) as the distance of 500 stadia between Tyndis and Muziris indicated this more than any other place". Muziris of the same kingdom, says the Periplus, abounds in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia and by the Greeks; it is located on a river, distant from Tyndis," by river and sea about 500 stadia and up the river from the shore twenty stadia. Nelcynda is distant from Muziris by river and sea about 500 stadia and is of another
kingdom the Pandian.

The limits, therefore of the kingdoms of Cothalothra and of the Pandian according to the Periplus, are marked within the 500 stadia or 50 English miles, between Muziris and Nelcynata. Moreover the text tells that Muziris was distant from Tyndis, "by river and sea, 500 stadia, and Nelcynata from Muziris, "by river and sea 500 stadia. Schoff says that "this can hardly refer to anything by the Cochin backwaters".

Pliny who wrote between 73 A.D. and 77 A.D. describes Muziris as "the first emporium of India", where reigned Cothalothras. He mentions another port "Neycyndon" where he says "reigned Pandian.

In Ptolemy's "treatise on Geography" (135 A.D. 150 A.D.) Muziris is described as an "Emporium" along the coast of Dimirica" and in his map of Asia "Muziris Emporium" is marked at 14° latitude and 117° longitude on the mouth of a river named "Pradostomos". About some distance further south is also marked the town "Nelkinda". Though Ptolemy's assessment may be defective, the names of some of the places around Muziris marked in his map are almost identical with then present equivalents: for instance "Padoperura"-
Paidopatana of Indikoooolteer—may be identified with the present Karurpadanna Paloura is the same as Paloura, and the coastal town “Corura” is perhaps the present Paroor near Cranganur. To some extent the above evidences may unhesitatingly indicate that the Muziris of the Greek Geographers is to be located somewhere about the present Kodungalloor or Cranganur.

At the site known as Cherman Parambu in the Cranganur Taluk an experimental pit-trench was dug (as referred to in Administration Reports, Cochin). The work was done in the month of April-May 1945. The digging yielded a number of soft and glazed potteries of various shapes and sizes, a few metallic stones, one iron implement and some pieces of granite after digging for seven strata. The metallic stones and iron implement were got from stratum 6 and the granite pieces from the top of stratum 7 along with a number of potteries and potsherds. The new pit was named B1, for sometime ago not far from this another was dug earlier, A1. Pit B1 was operated to a depth of 16 ft. The potteries discovered from this were mostly wheel made and they were mainly of the red variety. Some of the pots were undamaged, while those slightly
damaged were mended. One of the pots discovered from the fourth stratum was glazed red and painted with broad black wavy line round below the neck. There is reasons to believe that these potteries and the rest of the objects discovered below the fourth stratum are of earlier period and they have to be assigned to the early 15th century A.D.

The most important thing to be noted here in some detail is the outcome of the study of objects discovered from the pit in relation to the different strata found while digging.

The administration reports of the Travancore State Archaeology Department of the thirties and the forties show the exploration conducted by the then Superintendent of Archaeology (later Director of Archaeology) late Shri. Vasudeven Poduval in the High Ranges as well as in the Quilon District and Shenkottah division of the present day Tamil Nadu State. Now that area only we have come across the engravings at Thenmala. The site from Shenottah (then Cenkotta) has yielded a large number of urn burials, (will be dealt with in detail later) while digging trenches for the P.V.D. trial excavation in the year 1939 two black thin glazed pots were
found inside, one round bored and the other with pointed bottom. Vandipuriyar region of the High ranges had yielded megalithic sites. This was located and conducted by the then Director of Archaeology in the estate of one Mr. Fullbrook Leggatt at Thangakkal. Trial diggings were conducted on another site at Veilimalai near Ernaiel in the Cape Comorin District of Tamil Nadu (a site about 64 K.M. away from Trivandrum).

In the year 1940, Excavation work was conducted at Periakanal in the High Ranges and at Karuppukottai, a small village near Nagercoil. In the High Ranges, burial urns, some of them containing pieces of rusted iron dagger, broken pots etc. were discovered, and at Karuppukottai, three stone images, one inscriptive stone and a number of sepulchral pots were exhumed. The megalithic monuments found during 1940 were found in the area of Bison Valley. Just as in the case of Maraiyur they are also of large makes of granite rocks than stones. In the same year a large menhir (containing a few fragments of an inscription was also discovered at Kallanpara, Pottankotu, Puppera Village about 32 K.M. from Devikulam.

Though the Archaeological Department was
established, in 1895, as early as 1891 archaeological work in Travancore was commenced under the auspices of the Government and all these years the main activities of the department were in the field of epigraphy. Late Sri. Poduval further records thus that some considerable work has been done during these years; and both in quality and quantity, it does not seem to compose unfavourably with what has been done elsewhere in British India and the Native State of Mysore. But as the systems adopted in the collection of material and the publication of results was rather desultory and wanting in arrangement, it is somewhat difficult, to say conclusively how much of the epigraphical work has been completed and what exactly remains to be done.

The State Departments of Archaeology of the erstwhile Travancore-Cochin States have recorded the amount of work done in the field of epigraphy, numismatics as well as conservation. As early as 1936, the departments have undertaken works of conservation. Of these pre-historic sites and dolmens in that area were taken for proper preservation. This was executed in the form of copying and reproducing mural-paintings
that were located at the Padmanabhapuram Palace, on the temple Gopurn at Ettumannur, and in the cave temples at Thirunandikkara now in Tamil Nadu. The mural paintings of Nataraja Dance was acclaimed by Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy as the oldest specimen of Dravidian painting. Now, after 87 years of existence the department is gradually undergoing a phased programme of re-organisation has established a Regional Conservation Laboratory, Mural Art Centre and a Centre for Numismatic to study conservation, Mural Arts and Coins respectively. Thus we have got now trained technical hand too. Further the department of Archaeology, looks after about 60 protected monuments of both prehistoric and historic archaeology. Before summing this chapter, the attempt on this dissertation is only to prove that antique Kerala had all phases of lithic and other human cultural periods. The excavation of the Kerala megaliths were first recorded after trial diggings during the period 1933-34. Afterwards subsequent attempts at different sites of Travancore and Cochin were conducted with fruitful research, Urns with glazed pots inside were dug out by Late Shri. Vasudevan Puduval at a place...
called Manjapalli Parambu about 1½ miles north of Irinjalakuda in Trichur District (See Administration Reports p.3—1934). About twenty burial urns were unearthed after getting information from M.R.A. Edington, the then Railway line construction work. All of them were seen buried in the water channel on the slope of the mound. Some of them were found decorated on their exterior with either a bead pattern or leaf pattern drawing.

In the same year Maraiyur dolmens were recorded. The people in the vicinity of Maraiyur and of Anjunad Valley call them 'Vali Sidus' (refer back). Anjunad dolmens some of them could with stand the habitational activity and resultant disturbance to the monuments even today. One noticeable features of this valley is that the scattered dolmens are with varying dimensions of length, breadth and height. They are even today found on the top of rock as well as a plain ground. Those on the top of the rocks are in rows of pairs and triplets with stone heaps around them. Many of them are bichambered and some have three chambers also. These dolmens are called by the Uralis 'Pandukuzhis' pits made by
Pandav or Pandu and they believed those to be abodes of treasures, kept hidden in the burrows underneath. Late Sri. Poduval further observed, agreeable to all, that in their erection certain architectural methods and principles are greatly in evidence. In the first place, by the use of orthostatic block, the maximum of wall area is provided with the minimum of thickness. Secondly there is no use of mortar in its masonry which itself is coarse and rugged and each block of stone is placed on its side and not on its edge (observations were made about half a century ago) when Indian archaeology was in its infancy. Contemporary reference by Colonel Melvows Taylor was that the dolmens are of two kinds in Indian prehistory those consisting of four stones, three supporting stones and one cap stone leaving one side open and those in which chamber is closed by a fourth stone. In the latter case, the fourth stone has invariably a circular opening in it. Most of the dolmens found at Narniyur and in the Anjuned Valley are situated on a flat level rocky table land and are in groups of three, four or five, around each of which is visible rough hewn stone
circles. The majority of them is meant to west directions, but there are a few situated north to south also. The floor of these is paved with a flat stone slab about 108 inches long, 50 inches broad and on the lower slabs of some are rubble stone packing. Flattened dolmens have also been located in Kerala (L.A. Krishna Iyer-1937) in the forest division of Ranni of Quilon District. Compared to the Nilgiris dolmens (William A. Noble) that of Anjunad are big and sometimes with complex variations. Massive and gigantic dolmens were recorded on the Muthukad ridge of Porlukanal of the High Ranges. Trial diggings were made at three different spots. Excavations here yielded pots megalithic urns and small, along with rusted iron swords, iron dagger, cupshaped bowl etc. (see for details Travancore Archaeological Reports 1940) In the same year, another site at Nagercoil, Keru-ppukottai was also excavated which also has yielded megalithic evidence.

The most significant and pioneering work was done in the year 1947-48. The tiny native state Cochin, through its Archaeology department conducted a joint-excision programme with the Archaeological Survey of India, Government of India,
Fig. 1
(Reproduced from K.M. George's Megalithic Excavations of Machad - 1978)
Indian Peninsula
Southernmost Ranges and Peaks

MAP NO: 6

South Indian Hill Ranges (rep. Nilgiri Dolmens - William Noble)
Investigations Recorded Rock Shelters Located.
Megalithic sites in the form of rock-cut caves, menhirs, dolmens and such other monuments were recorded and Edakkal cave was re-visited. Such sites like Cheengeri, Kozhikode, Poothamkara, Quilon, Pallapoor Palghat, Koonamcochi, Trichur and Palghat, Ponnani, Naduvil, Cannanore, Kalloor, Idukki all have yielded megalithic evidences.

As a matter of fact hundreds of megalithic sites have been located throughout Kerala though due to the busy hectic habitational activity most of the evidences are being destroyed by the local population either accidentally or deliberately. Even dense forest areas have become the area of operation of the people of Kerala for encroach-settlements, resulting in the correlation of archaeological data-process become really difficult. Still that way the High Ranges and its foot-hills primarily the valley of Anju Nad has retained its never-ending antique charms, Sorry to record that also won't be able to retain and sustain its this blissful topographical virginity. Thanks again to the local population.

This is a primary reason why I had to concentrate my field research activity in the Anju Nad with Maraiyur as the nerve academic centre. Then as a part of my official functions, I could locate
neolithic and megalithic sites in and around the capital-city of Kerala, Trivandrum. Not only that quite recently, archaeologists all over India and outside have agreed upon the existence of pre-megalithic phases for Kerala pre-history, especially in my case, the emphasis is on cave-art and rock engravings singularly unique and unique nature.

The Neolithic-Megalithic cultures of Kerala and Tamil Nadu have got most of the things in common. Though there are differences of opinion as to which was the earlier or were they contemporary, one thing is certain, the northern and southern geographical borders of Kerala as well as the eastern foothills of the Western Ghats have in recent times yielded cultural sequence data to prove that Kerala too had all the lithic phases of stone cultures, the remains of which are found even in the sophisticated residences of the original Trivandrum population. For eg, even today there are stone-quern used in every day life for grinding purposes, for the simple reason habits die hard.

Another interesting thing is that, quite recently a friend of mine has handed over a piece of worn-like slag which was used for iron-smelting which he collected from Palai Taluk of Kottayam District. This indicates that megalithism was spread
in throughout Kerala, with iron using cultures.

But the thought provoking affair is that the ancient sea port of Muziris viz. modern Kodungalloor has not yielded much antique data when both the state and Central Archaeology Departments conducted excavations about a decade back. The trade contacts that occurred in this port with countries of the then known world, was towards the advent of the proto-historic cultural phases if the sanghom literature and references in the Tamil Manimekhalai were to be believed. There also the latter work was composed in the early centuries of the Christian era. But it gives clear picture of various types of burial practices and disposing off the dead, practised by different groups of people, who obviously were a set of people living in a cosmopolitan city. This area now also disturbed by present day habitations, though large scale geological-archaeological expedition can unearth many things of the past.

The reason being thus obvious. I have recorded my observations in the High Ranges especially at Maraiyur for this is the only site in Kerala which can be called even today as the land-jungle of dolmens. In this connection a small description of the topography of the High Ranges as recorded by
Ward and Conners may be remembered. They have referred to as that tract of mountainous country lying west of Dindigul Valley and in dispute between the Travancore Royal Government and Honourable British Company occasioned by the collection of cardamom spontaneously produced on them. They have further narrated beautifully details regarding the High Ranges, the information of which is a real treasure trove for student of Kerala history. In that they have incorporated ecological data which will be of great help for the archaeologist also. References and inference concerning, mentioned in that data, can be counted as the pioneering attempt in understanding the rock art cultures of South-Central Kerala as well as the megaliths of the Anamalai Hills. Kerala megaliths, as earlier noted, that they exist in the High land, midland and low land in all its peculiar specimens. Equally we get all the types of megaliths hitherto known to archaeologists. Ward and Conner have collected urn burial at Chokkanad estate of the High Ranges which have yielded charred grain pieces. Prof. Ayyappan has recorded bone pieces inside the megaliths at Feroke. One thing we will have to record that not all the rock cut caves in Kerala are burial for we have come across stone-cots-beds inside some of the rock-cut caves, of course with provisions for ventilations,
protection from rain and sun, as well for storage purposes. At the same time fragmentary burials were also kept.

In evaluating the role of Kerala Archaeology in Indian prehistory up to the seventies, is that this particular state, the former Chera has yielded probably the largest number of megaliths both in quality and in quantity. For eg. the caves of Porikalam and Iyyal are of chambers with pillars in the centre while that of Kattakambal is one of large multi-chambers. The monuments at Kattakambal gives some misgivings as to whether they are simple rock cut caves or something more than that of a burial chamber, denoting a continual cultural sequence site even for the pre-Buddhist and Jaina phases of Kerala History. Doubts on these lines are so raised by Shri P.K. Gopalakrishnan, Statemon Scholar of Kerala also. The appearance of the Iron age in India has been postulated by Sir Mortimer Wheeler to be between 5th and 6th centuries B.C. Almost in the same period it has come into the southern part of India too. At the same time, the evidences from Brahmagiri and Chandravalli (Karnataka) Arikamedu (Pondicherry) and Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) and the megaliths of Thiruvilvamal of Kerala prompted him to record that the megalithic age might have ended by 1st century A.D.
Similar inference can be had from the Sanghom literature. No work on the line has been taken up. Probably towards the end of Neolithic-Copper Age the use of iron might have been brought to use by the people of the Mediterranean who came into with the people of the Sahya Valley who had the copper-bronze age tradition.

The first attempt at Kerala historiography was made by Pachu Moosad of Vaikom, the Court chronicler of the Travancore dynasty in the year 1860. He published 'TRAVANCORE' history or Thiruthankoor Charitram in Malayalam. Contemporary to this, Dr. Gundert published his 'Kerala Pazhama' dealing with the advent of the Portuguese and other European traders. But the first historical literature appeared was published by Gundert in the year 1843 which may be taken as the re-edition of an earlier text of the original Kerala pathi written by an anonymous writer. In addition to that C. Achutha Menon published another version of Kerala pathi from the Madras University while a third version of Kerala pathi viz. 'Kerala Charitram' was published from the Kerala University. But as a historical authentic document, the work has got very little value. Pachu Moosad has written some historical work which unfortunately is studded with exaggerated praise for Travancore kings and little historic data, though he was very much independent in outlook.

During the contemporary periods, the then Dewan of Travancore, Sir T. Madhava Rao also wrote a history
of Travancore in Kerala which dealt with the reign of Marthandavarma and Rama Varma Dharma Raja only, thus refers to Medieval Travancore history. But the pioneering commendable work was done towards Travancore history viz. 'A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times.' This was published in 1878 by Dewan Paishkar P. Sankunni Menon. But this work also had the above mentioned defect that it throws very little light on the early history prior to the rule of Marthanda Varma and for the later period it is really a treasure-house of knowledge. For compiling this book Shri. Menon even relinquished the prestigious post of Dewan Chief Secretary to the Royal Government of Travancore.

Almost at the same time William Logan then Collector of Malebar undertook the work of preparing the 'Malabar Manual' in three volumes which was published in 1887. For this, he studied all the fables, legends, anecdotes etc. because of which the book is an inevitable reference guide for any student of Kerala's past and-history. The matter is dealt with in an unbiased manner for he had more independence and liberty because of his official status. Probably that is one of the great assets of this book. Malabar District Gazetteer prepared by Innes and Evans is also equally an important reference book.

Logan's study paved the way for scholars to think on those lines of Kerala historiographical studies. The royal dynasties of the native states of Travancore and Cochin separately appointed Sri.V. Nagan Aiyer and Shri.C. Achutha Menon for the preparation of concerned state Manuals respectively. The former published 'Travancore
State Manual' in three volumes in 1906 followed by the latter publishing Cochin Manual in 1911. Both authors have utilised the Portuguese Dutch records in their respective works.

In 1936 Sadasya Tilaka Shri. T.K. Velu Pillai was appointed by the then Travancore Government to revise the work of Nagam Aiya. But instead of that he wrote newly four volumes of the same. Of those, the first deals with religion, language and castes, in the second there is information about administrative history while the last has details concerning agriculture, industry, education and history of different departments of the state.

The landlord-tenancy report (Jenmi-Kudiyan Report) by Shri.P.Raman Tampl and the Revenue Manual of Sri.R.Mahadeva Iyer also are valuable pieces of information for Kerala historians and scholars.

Then the archaeological findings of early Kerala, supplied by such eminent European scholars like Babington, Buhler, Burnell, Caldwell, Fawcett can be considered as the pioneering attempts done in Kerala prehistory. As earlier referred to their works were followed by the research conducted by that great philosophy Professor Sundaram Pillai whose untiring spirit towards the codification of the inscription that were hitherto lying scattered on the temple walls, old houses etc. resulted in the establishment of the department of Archaeology. In 1894, as a prelude to this, a book entitled 'Some Early Sovereigns of Travancore' was published. He discovered many inscriptions and interpreted them with his scholarship, because of which he could explore different aspects of Kerala culture and history. His untimely death
was followed by the appointment of that great brilliant iconographer-Indologist, Shri.T.Gopinatha Rao, who after 17 years of dedicated work codified the Vattezhuthu inscription and published them as Travancore Archaeological Series a veritable stream of knowledge the re-edition of which is being undertaken by the present State Department of Archaeology. Successive efforts by Shri.K.V. Subramonia Iyyer, M.S.Ramanathan and that great illustrious (first) Director of Archaeology late Shri.R. Vasudeva Padoval also have contributed a great deal to the study of Kerala antiquity. Of these the last can be referred to as the first Malayali Archaeologist in the true sense of the term. In the same way 'Kerala Society Papers' published by Shri.T.K. Joseph is also one of scholastic attempt at Kerala's part on the lines of the archaeological series.

Caste and Tribes of Southern India in seven volumes by Edgar Thruston. The Tribes and Castes of Cochin by L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, The Travancore Castes and Tribes by L.A. Krishna Ayer (all already referred to earlier) and Tribes of Kerala by A.A.D.Louis are also of great information dealing with the anthropological researches that were conducted among other divisions of Kerala population.

Apart from the facts mentioned above the following contribution also will have to be taken into consideration. Mention may be made about Shri.K.P.Padmanabha Menon, [the illustrious son of an equally scholarly father, Shri.P.Sankuny Menon] By writing the 'History of Kerala' in four volumes in the form of Canter Vissher's letters, Mr.Padmanabha Menon has immortalised his name in the annals of Kerala History. For this he has collected majority of the travelogues of the foreign writers who have supplied information concerning
Kerala. In 1912 he has equally published a history of the Cochin native state (in Malayalam). Almost at this time another Cochin History was also published by an anonymous writer who has, simply identified himself as 'an old teacher'. After the death of Padmanabha Menon in 1919, Shri.T.K.Krishna Menon published the subsequent volumes of Kerala history in the period between 1929 and 1937. The works of Attur Krishna Pishoroti and Dr.P.J. Thomas concerning Kerala History are also worthy of mention.

A History of Kerala' by Shri.L.V.Krishna Ayyar and Survey of Kerala History (1967) by Prof.A. Sreedharan Menon are valuable cultural history-Directories as regards Kerala. The former leftist Chief Minister and intellectual E.M.S.Nambuthiripad has written about 'Kerala the Land of the Malayalis' (written from the Marxian ideological point of view). K.Demodaran's 'History of Kerala' too have got some information from a new perspective in understanding Kerala antiquity and history.

Scholars like Prof. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai have dealt with different periods of Kerala History (early history) after much scholarly research. Regarding socio-political conditions of the early Cheras, Kulasekhara Administration, the emergence of the Nambuthiris etc. he has written and published detailed studies. Sardar K.M.Panikkar has written authentic work on the emergence of European imperialism in Kerala politics during the Medieval periods, like 'Malabar and the Dutch' Shri.T.M.Ponnann has written the best work authoritatively about the 'Dutch power in Malabar' Dr.P.C.Alexander too has a similar book on that line. 'The Zamorins of Calicut' by K.V.Krishna Ayyar and 'Kerala Culture' by Prof.K.Memon, the works of P.A.Sayed Mohammed (in Malayalam) viz. 'Charitra Kerala' and Sancharikal
Kandethiya Kerala, the works of S.Sankara Ayyer and the district Gazetteer published by Sreebhara Menon (in English) are of great use to the students of history and archaeology of Kerala. The work of Chattambi Swamikal 'Prachina Malayalam' (in Malayalam) Kerala Sahitya Charitram (literary history of Kerala in Malayalam) by Mohanraji Ulloor S.Parameswara Ayyer. 'Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages' by Bishop Caldwell: religious history—works about and by native and foreign Christian and Muslim Scholars about the then Kerala society. scholarly and research oriented publications of recent and contemporary writers like the late Kesari A.Balakrishna Pillai, Chirakkal T.Balakrishnan Nair, V.P.Parameswara Sarma, Pazhayannur Rama Pisharoti, K.R.Pisharoti, T.K.Joseph, Dr.A.Ayyappan, Chitramazhuthu K.M.Varghese, Dr.Sooranad Kunjapillai, Dr.M.G.S.Narayanan, Dr.C.K.Kareem, Dr.K.K.Pillai (recently died) Dr. Marthanda Varma, Shri.V.R.Parameswaran Pillai, Valayudhan Shri. Panikkasser, Edamaruku P.K.Gopalakrishnan, many of whom are still engaged in the research-oriented works of Kerala antiquity even today. Of these names of Shri.P.K.Gopalakrishnan (that statesman-scholar and author of Keralathinte Samskariko-Charitram—cultural History of Kerala—an authoritative work published by the Kerala State Language Institute in 1974) and Dr.M.G.S.Narayanan, Professor and Head of the Department of History and Archaeology, Calicut, University also deserve special mention. Of the two the latter is leading and training a brilliant group of youngsters devoted and dedicated to the cause of Archaeology.

In the early Tamil Literature, we have ample sources of data for the study of Kerala's past. Hundreds and thou-
sands of songs in the form of literature is available in that language, like the Patirru Pethu, Agammannoor, Purammannuru Silapathikaram, Kurumthokai, Nattinai, Periapuranam, Thak­
kayaka Bharani etc. These supply major resources concerning Kerala's past.

Archaeologically regarding Megaliths and the High Range area, Ward and Corner refers to this, "that whole tract of land" has got this antique remains. It is something peculiar that they are found in far off places as well on the top­por­tions of the hills or peaks. Cardamom hills have got these dolmens at its highest elevations locally referred to, Pandukuzhis, we can say whether they are completely man-made or not. In one such burial-chambers was unearthed at Chokkanad which has yielded earthen pot and burned grain foils.

Almost at this time J.B. Sabington has explored and re­corded these dolmens. It has been mentioned in the Malabar Gazetteer that an alignment of capstones are located near the Thirurangadi in a place called Pazhapuram. Equally in the village of Koduvayoor near the Ramanattukara road on the bank of the Kadalundi river, cap-hatstone megaliths were located. Between Perinthalmanna and Mannarghat many monhirs along with urn-burials were dug out. These types of megaliths were located at Thuppakkad on the Palghat-Mannarghat road side as well on the Tongasseri village of Attapady too. Quite recent­ly, stone-celt-kept as objects of worship were collected by me from the tribal settlement at Attappady. Vaniamkulam, a site twelve kilometres away from Pattom also has yielded urn burial as well as stone circles. Some is the case with Edakkal caves that stone monuments have been located at
Mankada also.

The Ghent section of Kerala occurring in the Kottayam Idukki District also has yielded dolmens. Different types of megaliths are located at such sites as Muttakkad, Tengakhal, Malayattoor, Kodanad, Udumbanoor, Kottukulanji, Thiruvilva-mala, Anappara, Ariyannur, Cheramangad etc. (1962). Devagiri near Ettumannoor in Kottayam District monhirs were located. Locally known as Kudakkallu or umbrella stones sometimes referred to as Topikkallu or that of Hatstones, they are thus found scattered in the Malabar as well as the Cochin area. Similar to these types were located in different parts of India as well that of Europe. Microlithic Industry of the Mesolithic culture has been located by K.R.U. Todd in the form of microliths at Chevayur. In the year 1960, Padmaprabha Gounder collected a stone celt from the forest area of Kalpetta in Wynad. In the year 1967 journalist-writer Shri.Edamaruku collected a neolithic celt from Erankavu near Thiruvalla in the Alleppey District which was examined by the then Director of Archaeology.

As earlier discussed due to the brisk and busy habitation activity of the ever-increasing Kerala population, the south-central portions of Kerala cannot boast of an arid or semi-arid area. Because of this every inch of the surface of soil is utilised either for agriculture purposes or for building construction. Equally torrential onslaught of the monsoon erodes of strata occupation irrespective of the topography. Even then the monuments of megalithism could survive overcoming even deliberate destructive activity of the local people. This is true in the case of cave art and engravings. Naturally the attempt here is to concentrate more
on these two and to correlate all the lithic cultural phases of Kerala history with that of the sites of India especially of South.

That means the emphasis here is more on the later phases of prehistory (Kerala). Still some mention may be made about the Sanghem literature and its times. During the three centuries of the Christian Era, there supposed to have existed a set of Tamil-chronicler-poets in the Pandya Capital at Madurai, which had of course, as the name wrongly indicates, no relation with the Sangha of the Buddhist period. Equally funny is the description of their duration of activity. Legends refer to that there were three Sanghoms or groups of poets who had a period of 9990 years antiquity. Of these exaggerated period only the last group have left a fund of literature concerning contemporary societies. Our interest herein is that they give an account of our ancient geography which will be of some help to any archaeologist or historians. Almost all portion of the present day state of Kerala comprising an area from Kanyakumari to Mangalore—the whole coastline in addition to the major portions of the Sahya Ranges. Further the records refer to Cenkotta(present Shencottah) Kolikud (present Kozhikode) etc. That means an extensive area from Kozhikode to Purakkad on one side and from Pazhani to Shencottah (on the eastern front of the Western Ghats) was referred to as the land of the Chera who for a very long time ruled from Vanchi, their capital which is referred to by some as Thiruvanchikulam which is near their main port of trade and commerce, Machiri (a controversial view).