CHAPTER ONE

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THE TIRUMALAVADI TEMPLE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Temple Studies and their importance

The temples are created in a short time for all time, buildings human in scale, yet suited to the divinity of their gods. They dominate the ancient monuments of the country belonging to different regions and periods. The temples in South India are the only ancient religious institutions that have retained their importance and popularity down through the ages. Patronised both by royalty and the public, they have preserved age-old traditions and have fostered arts of different kinds in a remarkably noble way. During the medieval period, the South Indian temple was the hub of the socio-religious life of the people, the centre of all the activities of the village communities. It played also considerable role in the economic activity of the people and the fostering of administrative institutions. The vast documentary engraved on its walls offer valuable and useful data for an understanding of the main currents of the political,
socio-religious, art and economic history of South India. The temple complex with many additions and renovations through centuries provides a rich field for the study of Indian architecture through its many shrines, mandapas, gopuras and the like, inclusive of a good number of stone sculptures and bronzes.

All members of the society, irrespective of the strata from the common individual, through the rich merchant to the king, patronised the temples commensurate with their ability. Whatever may be the capital invested, land, gold or cattle, it was the permanence of the pious deed and the purpose behind such investments and gifts that was stressed upon, and this fact reflects the sincere motives behind such acts. A study of the architecture of the temples reveals the tale of its growth from a small sanctum, the central shrine of the early centuries to the most complex composite parts like the pillars of the period of the Nayaks. The monuments and sculptures bring out the variety and sublimity of art-expression even though there is a general uniformity in the theme.

In Hindu temples, worship is both individual and congregational. In addition to the daily ritualistic
worship at fixed periods of time, there is congregational worship during temple festivals, celebrations of victories in battles etc. (vīraḥbhīṣṇa, vijayābhīṣṇa), coronation, hiranyagarbha and tulabhāra ceremonies performed by the king of the land, and such other occasions. As an emblem of a living faith, the temple offers a rich field to study all the above ingredients. Interesting to be noted in this connection are the legends that have grown through centuries and are a mixture of history and story.

**Tirumalavāḍi and its temple**

Tirumalavāḍi, a historically ancient place, is situated in Ariyalur Taluk, Trichirāppalli District 55 Kms to the north-east of Trichirāppalli town, in the 'Pulāmpāḍi-Tirumāṅgūr Road', and on the northern bank of the river Coleroon. Situated within 6 Kms of Tiruvaliyāru, the famous centre associated with the saint-poet Tyāgarāja, Tirumalavāḍi (10° 53' N and 79° 5' E) forms a part of the Tirumāṅgūr Union in the Ariyalur Taluk. Taṇjavūr is situated 18 Kms away from Tirumalavāḍi, while Lālgudi is at a distance of 35 Kms and Ariyalur 26 Kms.

To think of Tirumalavāḍi is to think of her illustrious temple of Vaidyanāthasvāmi. This temple has
dominated the life of the place. Tirumalavadi is a typical example of the village which owes all its fame and glory to its sacred shrine. This temple stands majestically facing east, on the western bank of the river Coleroon. The Vaidyanathasvami temple is situated in the eastern part of the village Tirumalavadi. The river Coleroon which comes from the west, turns to the north in front of the temple, thus forming the southern and eastern border of the temple. The residential quarters, generally called maṇḍavilāgam, is to the north of the temple and the main street called Rājaviḍī is to the west of the temple.

Vaidyanathasvami temple is one of the most ancient temples of Tamil Nadu. It is rich in traditions and many legends of much religious significance have grown around it. It preserves as many as 137 long and continuous inscriptions on its walls, dating from the period of the Imperial Cholas to that of the Vijayanagara rulers. The temple complex has seen many additions and renovations of centuries. There are also a good number of stone sculptures and bronzes.

This temple has a unique place in the history of Śaivism. It is associated with the names of saints like
Tirumalavadi is situated in Ariyalur Taluk, the Udaiyarpalayam Taluk being situated to the east of Tirumalavadi, Tanjavur Taluk to the south, Lalgudi Taluk to the west and Perambalur Taluk in the north. Ariyalur Taluk contains mainly black soil, formed by volcanic materials. Sugarcane and paddy are the main crops. The alluvial soil brought by the river channels, has enriched its land. Wet crops form the main agricultural products. Mud found on the fringes of the tanks is used for pottery. Only in very few areas dry crops are cultivated. There is no trace of any kind of rock. Inspite of this, it is a wonder that a huge stone temple with the pillars, sculptures and mandapas all in stone is built in Tirumalavadi.

Interestingly, even though the village is on the northern bank of the river Coleroon, it is not irrigated
by this river. On the other hand, it is enriched by the water of the river Nandiyāgu which comes through Śembiyakkudī.

**Climate**

In Tīrumalāvāḍī, the temperature is fairly hot from March to May. After June, the temperature begins to fall and after October, when there is rainfall from the north-east monsoon, the temperature comes down to the normal. December onwards winter starts with cool nights and warm days.

**Rainfall**

The average annual rainfall at Tīrumalāvāḍī is 37.16". The northern part of this taluk gets more rain than the southern. Winter and early spring have poor rainfall. The south-west monsoon (May - August) yields 10.27", while the north-east monsoon (September - November) supplies 21.16". The month of October has recorded the highest monthly rainfall of 10.3". The distribution of rainfall throughout the year has an important bearing on the agricultural operations. Though the quantity of rainfall from the south-west monsoon is comparatively less, yet, it is spread over a longer period.
The hot months of April and May witness summer storms often accompanied by brisk showers. These summer showers are local and irregular. In the last century and half approximately floods and consequent damages to crops occurred in December 1818, November 1924, in November-December 1962 and in November 1977. Fortunately, such calamities are few and far between. Sometimes there will be heavy rains stormy or cyclonic which fill up the tanks, pools and lakes. There will be showers from January to April and in May there will be a summer rain of 3". In June and July there will be showers from 1" to 2". This rain helps the farmers to plough and make ready their lands for the production of crops. From August to October, there will be a good rain of 3.8", 4.51" and 10.8" respectively by the north-east monsoon.

Tirumalavadi gets 5" of rain in November and 2.33" in December. These statistics, indicate that the months of August, September, October and November are the rainy seasons and after this the intensity of rain is reduced. In winter and early spring there would be less rain. Even though the south-east monsoon brings lesser rain, it falls intermittently and so it is very useful for agriculture.
Vegetation

Tirumalavadi has rich natural vegetation on the bank of the river Coleroon and cultivated vegetation in the lands. Palm trees and bamboos are the most common types found on the bank. More important is the cultivated vegetation of the lands. The village is surrounded by broad stretches of verdant sugarcane lands. The high yield of sugarcane crops in the locality is ascribable much to the inherent richness of the soil. Nandiyaru, the northern river feeds the best part of the land of this region with its numerous channels. Besides sugarcane, coconut groves abound in various parts of the village, particularly on its western and northern outskirts. Palmyrah also flourishes in abundance. Indeed, the Palmyrah is as ubiquitous as the coconut. Among other trees, the tamarind, the punnai or laurel, the mango, the illuppal trees, and the pipal trees are commonly found. The poovaraunu (Thespasia-populnea) and the vambu or Margosa are on the sides of the by-ways and by-lanes, as also in the gardens attached to houses.

As this temple requires a large quantity of different kinds of flowers, flower-gardens here have always received great attention. Many were the gifts made by
patrons and devotees in the past for the supply of flower-garlands to the temple. The temple itself has a beautiful flower-garden in the third prākāra. Besides this enclosed garden, the maṭha of Svayamprekāśasvāmi which is on the backside of the temple, possesses a lovely flower-garden attached to it. Also flower-bearing shrubs are seen in abundance on the banks of the channels and tanks, as well as, on the bunds of the fields. Among the flowers common in Tirumāḷavāḍi, the most prominent ones are the arāḷi, the nandiyāvaṭṭam and pichchippū. The lotus, both the white and rose variety as also the lilies are found in abundance in some ponds. The aippavaruthi grows in several gardens.

The vast expanse of sugarcane fields, the wavy coconut and palmyrah groves, the mango, the margosa and banyan trees in between the inhabited quarters, the tanks and ponds, the rivers and their channels and above all, the delightful flower gardens offer a fascinating panorama. The entire landscape, seen from the top storey of the rājasāpuram presents an enchanting view. Nature is seen in her lavish beauty.

As already stated the Pūlayampāṭi-Tirumāṉūr road runs through Tirumāḷavāḍi, and it happens to be the only highway. The other streets are more in the form of
by-ways and lanes. They are too narrow and the houses are built too close to each other.

**Population**

The village has a population of 2,561 (male 1,272 + female 1,289). It is interesting to note the distribution of this population. The quarters of the Brahmins are located on both the rows of the north madavilam. The matha of Swayamprakāśasvāmi is situated to the west of Rajavidi while to the north of the Rajavidi are the houses of the temple servants. In the southern side, there are no houses. Some of the temple servants are living in the north and east parts of the temple. Others are living in the village proper which is 200 metres away from the temple.

The Śaiva Pillaimār, the Paḍaiyāchchi, the Kaikkōla-Mudaliyārs, the Muttaraiyars and some Brahmin families are living in the village on both sides of the main street. The Harijans including the Paraiyars are living in a separate area called chēri which is situated 400 metres away from the temple in the northern direction. There are also the goldsmiths, the blacksmiths, the washermen and the barbers living in the village. A few Muslims who have migrated, have their shops in the centre of the
village. Very few Christians are living in the southern side of main road. In Tirumalavadi, the Mudaliyars occupy a major part of the population.

Village Union

Tirumalavadi has a Panchayat Board under the Tirumangur Panchayat Union. It has a Government Higher Secondary School, an Elementary School, a Post Office, a Telephone Exchange, a Cooperative Society, a Primary Health Centre and a Bank. There are also some hotels, cloth shops and a rice mill.

Tirumalavadi of the past

The above is an account of Tirumalavadi of the present day. But this village has seen glorious days in the past and what we see now is a decadent form. On the other hand, literary and epigraphical sources clearly indicate that this was a flourishing town in the days of yore. From an analysis of those sources it can be said that this town with the Vaidyanathasvami temple at the centre had spread out on all the four sides to a distance of almost 7 Kms. The present day Coleroon had not then formed at all, but Kaveri was its southern boundary.
Coleroon has been referred to for the first time, in the records of Rājarāja III, besides in *Tirumalāvādīpurāṇam*, a work of the 16th century. Records of the rulers of other later dynasties speak of gifts made for bringing water from the Kāvērī for the anointment (abhisēka) of the deity in the temple. With the decline of the Vijayanagara power, this village also slowly lost its importance. This point may well be illustrated from literary and epigraphical sources.

The earliest reference to the place is found in the Tēvāram. The famous Śaiva saint Ayyādīgal Kādavār Kōn, identified with Śivavishnu III the Pallava king (6th century A.D.) mentions about 'Maḷāpādi'. He states that whoever even thinks of Maḷāpādi before death would achieve salvation. This place is considered as one of the twenty-four holy places (ksheṭra) of the Śaivas. Similarly, Sambandar and Appar who lived in the 7th century A.D., have sung hymns about Tirumalāvādi. Sambandar speaks of plenty of storeyed houses (*maḷigai āḻul Maḷāpādi*) at this place which is referred to as Maḷāpādi. Appar not only refers to such storeyed houses but also states that the town was echoing with vedic chants (*kali āḻul maḻam, marai kalanta Maḷāpādi*). Sundarar who belongs to 9th century, remarks that the place was full of flower-gardens (*Him*
Besides these, there was a "Vaichoba māligai", a double-storeyed cloister or mālikai. In Tirumaluvādipurāṇam, a later work, this place is also called as Tālavaṇam.

In the Chōla period during the reign of Āditya I, the god of Tirumalavādi was noted as Tirumalavādi (and Tirumaluvādi) Mahādeva. This place is also known as Mālapādi or Maluvādi. In a record of Āditya I, there is a reference to the place called Puṇālavāli, which had then been a suburb of Tirumalavādi. Gaṇḍarāditya founded a town called Gaṇḍarāditya-chaturvēdimāṅgalam near Tirumalavādi, another suburb of Tirumalavādi. While Tirumalavādi was a dēvadāna, Gaṇḍarāditya-chaturvēdimāṅgalam was a brahmādēva. An inscription of the 22nd year of Rājendra I refers to a big lake "Sembiyāgh Mādevip-pērēri" as situated in Tirumalavādi itself. Today it is near Gaṇḍarādityam.

In course of time, Tirumalavādi town grew in extent and became one of the capitals of Kulottunga I. When Vikrama-chōla ruled the country Kalaiyamaṅgalam had become a part of Tirumalavādi. A record of Kulottunga III, refers to Māḍaripugalnallūr, Kōdaḍarāmanallūr, Ediri-chōla maṅgalam, Chōlamādēvi, Kulottunga-chōla maṅgalam,
Nittavinōdamaṅgalam, Ulaguyyavandachōlanallūr, Pongarmēni-viṭāgam, Anapāyanallūr, Puṇalvāyil alias Vikramachōla-chandimāṅgalam and Tiruvellārāi, as the suburbs of Tirumalavādi. 17

A seventh year inscription of Rājarāja III speaks of Tirumalavādi alias Jīṇāchintāmaṇinallūr. 18 His 29th year inscription adds two more parts viz. Rājarājamaṅgalam and Vikramachōlanallūr. 19 Hoysala Vīra Somēśvara's inscription adds one more locality called Karuṇakaranallūr. 20 Similarly an inscription of third year of Jaṭāvarman Sundara-paṇḍya mentions a hamlet called 'Eduttapādanallūr'. 21

The following channels are also mentioned in the inscriptions: Kulamāṇikkam-vāyykāl, Sundarachōlan-vāyykāl, 22 Rājarājan-vāyykāl, 23 Kondakkamādevi-vāyykāl, 24 Virachōlan-vāyykāl, 25 Gaṇapati-vāyykāl, 26 Ariṇjigai-vāyykāl 27 and Kuṇjaramallān-vāyykāl. Inscriptions also speak of several vatis (a small path adjacent to the fields) while describing the boundaries of lands etc. such as Parekṣari-vati, 28 Chōlamādevi-vati, 29 Raviṅku-sūlamanī-vati, 30 Gaṇḍarāditya-vati, 31 Tiruvaranga-vati 32 and Tiruvellārāi-vati. 33 Nowadays these names are not in use and they cannot also be identified.
Present Condition of the Town

Today most of the locations do not exist. However, there has been a considerable change in the names of at least some of them which could be identified with those of the past, indicating that these villages were once parts of Tirumalavadi. For example, the original Gaṇḍarāditya-chaturvēdimangalam is today existing under the name Gaṇḍarādityam alias Gaṇḍarāchchiyam, although it is no more a chaturvēdimangalam. On the basis of the details given in records about the location of Puggārmeni-vilāgam we may identify the same with the present day village named Vilāgam. Likewise Pugalvāyil is today's Pugalvēsal, situated on the eastern bank of the river Coleroon. Some other villages expose their relationship with Tirumalavadi. They are Śembiyakudi, Kulamānikkam, Pudukkōttai, Aṟaṇmaṇaikkuruchchi, Pāḷiyappādi, Sēnappati, Muṉikoppān, Kāṟaiippakkam, Taṅgaśālai, Aṉiṉamangalam, Kāvattānkurichchi, Vaidyanāthanpēṭṭai, Perumpuliyūr and Vaidyanāthapuram.

A short description of the above mentioned places is given below:

Aṉiṉamangalam

It is a small village situated 6 Kms away from Tirumalavadi on both the sides of the Pullampādi-Tirumānūr
road. People of all castes live here. Sugarcane is the main crop. One Sévappa Maḷavarāyan-śōlagal gifted a land here for offerings to the god of Tirumāḷavādi, during the Vijayanagara period.

Arapamaikkurichchi

It is situated on the southern bank of the river Nandiyāru, 3 Kms away from Tirumāḷavādi. It is also a small village. As the name indicates once upon a time the palaces seem to have been located here. It is interesting to note that recently at a place called 'manalmādu' half a kilometre south-east of this village, two sculptures of Gaṇapati (Pillaiyār), a nandi and a stone pillar were unearthed at a depth of 10 feet. A small shrine has been erected enshrining Gaṇapati.

Gaṇḍarādityam

It is a big village situated 1 Km away from Tirumāḷavādi in the north-west direction. It is named after the Chōḷa king Gaṇḍarāditya and near it there is a big irrigation tank now called "Gaṇḍarādityam ēri" also named after him. This is the same as Ṣambiyaṇmādaṇipparāri which figures in the Chōḷa records. There is an old Śiva temple which had been covered by earth only the gopuram being seen. Later, the temple was unearthed. The
temple is today known by the name Chokka-nātha. On the walls of this temple two inscriptions of the 13th and 14th years of Parakāśarivarman are found engraved. These may be assigned to Uttama-chōla. The 14th year inscription mentions that Sembūruḷaṇ Utta manitī alias Uttamaśōla Mūvendavelaṇ of Kollikurumbu erected at Gāndarāditya-chaturvedimangalam, a temple to Śivalokattu Mahādeva. This Śivalokattu Mahādeva appears to have been the original name of the deity of this temple.

There is also a temple for Vishnu, the Perumāl kovil at Gāndarādityam. It was in a ruined condition and recently renovation work has been undertaken. A new small temple is under construction, using the old stones and sculptures.

It is said that there is another Vishnu temple buried under the earth at a depth of 5' in a field, 200 metres south of this village. Sixty years ago, some pillars were removed from this site for the construction of a temple in the chōri. Some more pillars and images are stated to have been lying buried even now. The existence of a temple, probably the same as this, is proved by the fact that a land, 10 acres in extent, is even today in the name of a Perumāl temple which might be
the Vishnu temple noted above. Also nearby, there is a small lake called Kviŋadai-ēri. Near this place, there is an old circular well, built of bricks, and some broken sculptures without heads, are also seen here.

In the fields further south are seen the sculptures of Vishnu about 6' in height and Vaṣṇugopāla about 5' in height besides those of Lakshmi and other goddesses in various sizes. Thus Gaṇḍarādityam appears to have been a flourishing big town once.

Kulamāṇikkam

Situated on the Puḷḷampādi-Tirumāgūr road, 5 Kms away from Tirumalāvādi in the western direction, is a big village Kulamāṇikkam, the western part of which is known by the name Kulamāṇikkam while the eastern part is called Šembiyakkudi. Kulamāṇikkam was a residence of the Chōla queen Šembiyan-mādevi. There is a tradition that Šembiyan-mādevi lived here and so the place was named after her. Šembiyakkudi obviously means that it was the place of residence of that queen. The Šembiyan-mādevip-pārāri referred to above extends from this Šembiyakkudi upto Gaṇḍarādityam. There is also a channel called Kulamāṇikkam-vāykkāl.
Papaiyûr

It is about 1.5 km away from Tirumâlavaḍî on the south-east and on the southern bank of the river Coleroon. Tirumâlavaḍî was formerly known as 'Tālavanam' in the Sthala Purāṇam. This name is almost a synonym of Papaiyûr which must have been a part of Tirumâlavaḍî before the formation of the river Coleroon.

Perumpuliyûr

It is on the southern bank of the river Coleroon and very near to Kaduveli. It has found mention in one of the inscriptions of Tirumâlavaḍî.

Pumalvàyil

Forming the eastern border of Tirumâlavaḍî town, this place is mentioned in Aditya I’s inscription. Now it is called as Pumalvásal, 4 Kms from Tirumâlavaḍî. There is a temple of Vināyaka and the deity is called Gaṇapathi-bhaṭṭārar.

Viḷāgam

It is 10 Kms away from Tirumâlavaḍî in the north-west direction. As noted above in the Chōla period, it
was called Poontharmendi-világam. Now it is known only as Világam. A village about 1 km from here is called Tangaišalai and local tradition avers that this was the place where the mint existed.

It may, incidentally, be noted that some other places like Sēnapati, Vaidynāthanpōṭṭai, Pālaiyappādī and Nandarmēdu, according to local tradition, formed a part of Tirumalāvādi. But there are no substantial evidences to corroborate such assertions and they may not, therefore, be taken cognisance of.

The Origin of the Tirumalavādi Temple

The origin of most living temples are shrouded in mystery and it is equally so with regard to the beginnings of the Vaidyānāthasvāmi temple at Tirumalāvādi. Worship of the bāla tree even today in the temple may be cited as an evidence of the existence of pre-historic cults like the tree-worship. But this Tirumalavādi temple can be distinguished from some other types of temples which were erected either as memorial monuments (pālippadai) or built at royal bidding. The temple has been in existence from quite an early period since its praise is sung in the Tavārāms dating back to the 6th century A.D. Already by then the temple, be it in whatever form, existed
and had also become quite a popular centre considered holy. Either it was renovated or further additions made to it in later centuries. As can be seen, it has a long and continuous history perhaps from the early historic times and has played a large role in the theistic currents. It has not entirely depended on princely creations and munificence, though at the same time it has received substantial royal encouragements. However, the exact period of construction of this temple cannot be fixed.

According to Lewis Moore this temple "is supposed to have been founded by Bhima, one of the Pândava brothers." We do not know on what basis he has made such a statement. However, the Tirmaluvādipūrāṇem attributes the construction to Bhima. An account of this is given below (pp. 35). It says that Bhima constructed the temple beautifully with a double-storeyed enclosure called Vāichcha-māligai and the deity of the temple is referred to as Vāitta-māligai paramāl. This name finds corroboration in the tāvārams of the three Nāyanmārs - Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar. Thus the antiquity of the temple goes to the early historic period.

The Names of the Deity

The main deity of the temple is called by various
names in different periods.

**Małapādi**

In the 6th century A.D. this deity was known by the name "Małapādi Ṭṇḍāg" referred to in a shorter form Małapādi, by Sambandar and Appar in the 7th century. This, as mentioned by Sambandar, is a name applied not only to the lord but also to the village. Sundarar who lived in the 9th century describes the lord as Małapādivul māṇīkkamā (emerald of Małapādi) which also signifies the name of the place as well as the god.

**Małuvādi**

Another name of the god is "Małuvādi Ṭsar". This name "Małuvādi" points out the village also. The 27th regnal year inscription of Āditya I, mentions 'Tirumāluvaḍi perumāṇaḍigal'. An inscription of the third year of Uttama-chōla mentions 'Tirumālapādi Mahādevar'. But the 5th regnal year inscription of the same king refers to the place as "Tirumāḷavādi". Hence the place is called as Tirumāḷavādi, Tirumāluvaḍi and Tirumālapādi. In course of time, the deity is called by various names as 'Tirumāluvaḍi Ṭḍaiyar', 'Tirumāluvaḍi Mahādevar', 'Tirumāluvaḍi Ṭḷvar', 'Tirumāluvaḍi Perumāṇaḍigal', 'Tirumāluvaḍi
Udaya Mahadeva', 48 Tirumalapadi Udayanayanar', 49 etc. This would show that the deity was known more after the name of the village than with any other significant name.

We have instances to show that even individuals were named after the place like Malapadi, Mahuvadi and Malavadi. In Rajaraja I's reign, Paraman Malapadi alias Mummudi-chola was a chieftain in Karugudi, a subdivision of Tanjavur-kurram. 50 One of the officers of Jatavarman Sundara-purya was 'Alagiyar Tirumalapadi Udiyan Teggavadaraiyan'. 51 We know about him from the inscription of Kovila. Malapadi thus came to be used almost as a surname indicating that such individuals hailed from Malavadi. There are a number of persons who added the word 'Malapadi' with their names and this is known from the inscriptions of the Brihadisvara temple, Tanjavur. For example, we can cite the name 'Chippan Malapadi alias Keralantaka-peruntaiyan'. 52

One of the signatories in an inscription of Kulasakara-purya is called Sundara-purya Malavaraya. 53 Sevappa Malavaraya-Sohagal is mentioned in an inscription of the Vijayanagara ruler. 54 Malavaraya founded a Jami in 1405 A.D. 55 at Ariyalur and Vijaya Oppilada Malavaraya donated a land to the temple. 56
Yavirattun nathar

Yavirattun means a diamond pillar. Saint Appar in his patigam praises the god of this place as Yavirattun of Malavadi. Sekkilar, the author of Pariyapuram refers to the same as Yaviramathitun. According to the sthalapuram this deity is known as Manivayirattun, or Vasal Vavirattunar. The story goes that when Purushampiga, by his severe penance made the linga appear there, Brahma who hurried to the place to take it back, pulled it out, but the linga grew as a pillar and he wondered whether it was Yavirattun. Yet, no epigraph refers to this deity by this name, although this seems to have attracted several individuals who bore their personal names after such a name given to the deity. A record of Kulottunga III refers to a person as Pañchanadi Vavirattun hailing from (or a chief of) Agaimangalam (Agaimangam-udaiyam).

Vaidyanathar

The main deity of the temple is called Vaidyanathar, the lord of physicians. Legend has it that he cured sage Vedavyasa from paralysis and also showed mercy on the moon to grow his reduced parts (kalai), a reason why he is called
Vaidyanātha. In the tāvāram of Sambandar he is described as the medicine residing at Maḻapādi, (Maḻapādiḻumāya marundu) and the great medicine (māmarundu) of Maḻapādi. However, in these early literary sources we do not find the name Vaidyanātha. In inscriptions, for the first time he is called Vaidyanātha only in the records of the 13th and 22nd regnal years of Rajendra I.

The concept of this god being a physician of all (spiritual) ills appears to have been in vogue from quite an early period, as seen above. But the name Vaidyanātha was given during the period of Rajendra I. It may be noted that in this period the temple as it existed then underwent renovation under instructions from Rajarāja I and the work was completed during the period of Rajendra I, when all the epigraphs that originally were engraved on the temple walls, but were got copied in ledgers because of the renovation work, came to be re-engraved once again on the renovated walls. At this juncture the god came to be referred to as Vaidyanātha, probably in cognisance of his being described as a 'medicine' in literary works. This name later on gave full scope for legend-makers to weave stories around it, in the 16th century.

However, one interesting point may be noted here. A record of the 6th regnal year of Rajarāja III, while
registering the grants refers to the deity Aluḍaiya-nāyanār also as Vaidyanātha. Normally, the main deity of a temple is referred to as Aluḍaiya-nāyanār. But then why is there a reference to god Vaidyanātha also is a question that cannot be satisfactorily answered. To the left of the mahāmandapa of the temple is a shrine for the deity of what now is known as Junesvara. In the records of Rājarāja III and Hōysala Vīra Rāmanātha found there god Vaidyanātha is mentioned. In a record of the 4th year of Rājarāja III, it is stated that Bāyāppāk-kilāṅ Embirāṅ Sambandan, one of the mahāśvaras consecrated god Vaidyanātha (Alundi vitta). Could it be that the present shrine for Junesvara was consecrated then under the name Vaidyanātha? But then, why should it have been named so when the main deity itself was known by that name? This cannot be easily explained.

At the end of the Chōla rule, the name Vaidyanātha was popularised among the people. The name Vayichchiyānātha-bhaṭṭaṅ, Vayichchiyānāthaṅ, Vayichchiyānātha-kōṅ, etc. are found in the inscriptions of Kulottunga III. Hōysala Vīra Rāmanātha's inscription speaks of a Kōvil-samudāyak-kaṇṭakku Vayichchiyānātha Mūvāndavāḷāṅ, while an 11th year inscription of Kulottunga III, refers to a street named Vayichchiyānātha paruntaru.
Another popular name of the god was Ponŋārmenīniyaṁ. Appar and Sundarar in their patigams give this name to the god. The former describes him as ponṇiyalum tirumēṇi uḍaiyān while the later addresses him as Ponŋārmenīniyaṁ. According to the local legend, when Brahma could not take back the liṅgā, he built a temple wherein some deities and processional images were consecrated. One of those images was known by the name Ponŋārmenīniyaṁ or Hāmēśvara, made of gold.

Śenādipati Arāyaṇa Kaḍakkanākoṇḍa-chōlan Animurimendra-nāḍālaṁ, son of Kūtaṅ Uttama-śilīyār and the anukkkiyār of Rājēndra I, presented a copper image of "Ponŋārmenīniyaṁ" in the 8th regnal year of Rājarāja II. Records of Kulōttunga III and of Vīra Rāmanātha mention a village called Ponŋārmenī-viṭṭāgam. In A.D. 1740, Viḷayā Oppilaḍa Mahāvaḷīyar of Ariyaḷūr, presented a land for the offering of god Ponŋārmenī. From the period of Kulōttunga II, we find individuals named Ponŋārmenī, Ponŋārmenī-bhaṭṭān or Ponŋārmenī-Vaiyichchiyanathan.

Māduvaram Tirittān and Maṟai Aṇi Nāvinān

A verse in Appar's Tiruvālimīlasai patigam describes
the lord of Tirumalavādi as "Māduyaram tīrṭṭān".

"Māduyaram tīrṭṭānai Uyyakkondar
Maḷapādi Mēya Maḷuvāḷanaṛ"75

This epithet is given as a name to an individual who figures as an officer of Tirumeykkāval-nāyagar in this Maḷapādi temple,76 in the 27th regnal year inscription of Rājarāja III.

Similarly Sambandar uses the epithet Maṟai Āpi Nāvinān77 to the god of Tirumalavādi and it was also later used as the name of a person Maṟai Āpi Nāvinān-bhaṭṭān78 in the 15th year inscription of Hoysaḷa Vīra Rāmanātha. Interestingly, we have the instance of an individual combining both these epithets in his name calling himself as "Māduyarantīrṭṭān Maṟai Āpi Nāvinān".79

The Sources

We shall now examine the main sources for the study of the subjects. They may be considered under three broad heads, Archaeological, Literary and Modern.

Archaeological

As is usual in such studies, under archaeological
sources, inscriptions form the majority. In Tirumalavadi
temple itself there are as many as 137 inscriptions
engraved on its prakara walls, pillars, etc. Almost three-
fourths of them, 100 to be exact, belong to the Chola kings. They are all listed in the appendix below. One
factor has to be noted here. During the reign-period of
Rajaraja I, that king ordered the reconstruction of the
central shrine (sri vimana) and instructed that all the
inscriptions found there originally be copied in ledgers
and then re-engraved once again after the renovation work
was over. This work was completed in the period of
Rajendra I when the earliest records were re-engraved on
the walls of the central shrine. Hence, so far as the
records of early Chola rulers from Aditya I to Rajendra I
are concerned, the question of their study on the basis
of palaeography does not at all arise, since all of them,
as they are today, came to be engraved in the reign-
period of Rajendra I. Thus 23 records ranging from Aditya I
to Rajendra I are all re-engraved. Only one undated
record of Rajaraja I20 engraved on a wall in the ruined
mandapa in the second prakara is to be seen in its original
form. Four records are assignable to the Chola kings
but being damaged neither the names of the kings nor their
date can be made out. There are 72 other records of
Rajendra I and his successors. Besides, there are 19
epigraphs of the Hoyasalas, 11 of the later Panjayas, 1 of Vijayanagara, 5 of their chieftains and 1 of Malavarayas. Thus these account for 137 epigraphs at Tirumala

These inscriptions give us a fairly good account of the history of the place under study, as can be seen in this survey made in the next chapter. However, some interesting points from the epigraphs may be noted here. As stated earlier, the majority of the records belong to the Chola kings. The temple itself underwent a renovation during the periods of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I. According to the record of the latter, the renovation work was completed in the 14th year of the rule of Rajendra I. One of the Chola records dated in the 27th year of Aditya I registers a gift of gold by his senior queen, Pankoo Pichchi. Queens of Ganga радitya, Uttama-chola and Rajendra I named respectively Parantakan Madavadiga, Naka Tola Alagiyar and Vana Vad Madovi, also figures in the inscriptions as donors. Pranar alias Arumoli- nangaiyar, a daughter of Rajendra I is found making a grant of brass lamps and ornamental pearl-umbrella and this record meticulously registers the weights of all the endowed articles. A record of Vikrama-chola refers to the renovation work Tillai-tiruppani. Rajaraja II's 17th
year inscription registers a gift of sheep by Śākkiḷār, the famous author of Parivapurāṇam. The Pāṇḍya inscriptions attest their sway over the Chōla country in general and the Tirumāḷavāḍī region in particular. Similar is the case with the Hoysaḷa rulers who interfered in the politics of the Chōlas and the Pāṇḍyas. The Vijayanagar records indicate the rebellious attitude of the feudatory chieftains. Two records of Śivāji and Hyder Ali Khān found at Tānjāvūr throw interesting light on the history of Tirumāḷavāḍī.

Besides aspects of political history, these inscriptions throw welcome light on the socio-religious, economic and other such faces of life of Tirumāḷavāḍī. As would be seen in the later chapters, a certain pattern was adopted in making the gifts and this pattern itself changed in course of time.

Barring one record of Gōpayya Tippa, all other records of Tirumāḷavāḍī are in Grantha script and in Tamil language. These records are noticed in the Annual Reports on Epigraphy for the years 1895 and 1920. Texts of only 50 of them are published in volumes III, V, XIII and XIX of South Indian Inscriptions.

Next to inscriptions, monuments are the most
interesting and instructive sources. Originally, a small shrine, the temple grew into a complex in later periods. The first major renovation was carried out during the period of Rājarāja I - Rājendra I. It is quite possible that some additions also were made in that period and later on. Parīvanāṭṭān-tirumadil was renovated during the Pāṇḍya period while the Kōnāṭāya-panḍapa was built during the Vijayanagar period. This is also the period when several images for worship were got carved and bronzes cast. These are helpful for the study of the art history of the reign. However, no coin has so far been found in and around Tirumalāvāḍī which would have a bearing on the subject.

Literary

Next to archaeology, literary sources are of great use in the reconstruction of the history of Tirumalāvāḍī. As will be seen below, Maṭavars were the earliest inhabitants of this town and we come to know more about them through Puranāṇūru, Aganāṇūru, Nagriṇai and Patīrṇupattu which forms the part of the Āngam literature. Next in point of time is the Kanātra-yaṇbā of Ayyaṭigal Kāḍavar Koṭ included in the eleventh tirumuraj of Tāvārams. This mentions 24 holy places where salvation could be easily attained. Herein, we get the direct reference
to Tirumalavādi and its temple. Next in importance are the 6 patigāms of Tāvāram of Sambandar (3 patigāms), Appar (2 patigāms) and Sundarar (1 patigām). Each of these patigāms contains 10 verses and thus there are 60 verses in praise of the god of Tirumalavādi in the Tāvāram. Ayyādīgal Kādavār Kōṇ and the three nāyamāras lived between 6th and 9th centuries. It becomes evident that already by that time, Tirumalavādi and its temple had been considered as a holy place and it shows the antiquity of that place. The next literary figure is Sēkkilār, a minister of Rājadhirāja II who has won fame more in the literary history of Tamil as the author of Periyapurāṇam wherein he delineates the life history of the nāyamāra. As an official, he appears to have visited all the holy places described in the Tāvāram which enabled him to give a clear picture of those places with personal experiences. He elaborately describes the visit of Sundarar to this temple. The patigāms in the Tāvāram also supply philosophical concepts. Appar, for example, says that the god of Tirumalavādi stands as the core of ūṟkāra (ūṟkārat-
uttapporulai nippan), the source of dayā (dayāmūla) the way for salvation (tumavalī) and the guide for righteous path (vaḷittunai). Sambandar says that this place was filled with the chanting of hymns and reciting of Vēdas, performance
of sacrifices by the brāhmaṇas (Maṇḍai and nāvināṇ, antaṇaṁ vājyuṁ aru maṇḍai tulanīyam). Appar describes the god as Vēdas mixed with mantras and Maḷapāḍi filled with Vēdas (Maṇḍai Kalanta mantram; Maṇḍai kalanta Maḷapāḍi) etc.

The local legends (sthālapuṛāṇams) form another type of literary source. In South India in general these local legends came to be collated and written from the 14th century onwards when the whole of south came under hegemony of Vijayanagara. Then legends were highlighted to a great extent in an effort to emphasise the importance of several places which were either capital cities or pilgrim centres. A lot of myth came to be mixed with some amount of history to give it a historical touch. Being a religious centre Tirumalāvāḍi also came to have its own sthālapuṛāṇam known by the name Tirumalāvāḍi-puṛāṇam. This was written in 1565 A.D. by Kamalai Jñānaprakāśa-dēśikar of Tiruvārūr. His original name was Śēkamalappop̣ṭana. It contained 610 verses in Tamil, but only 581 are now extant. It was published by Sachchidananda-śvāṁgai with the assistance of Ulaganāthan, a Tamil scholar. It contains 7 charukkāma besides a prayer and an introduction in the form of invocatory verses of deities (pāviraṁ). The first charukkam (chapter) glorifies the place which was once filled with palm groves. An elephant having crossed
the Kāvēri came near the lingam in the temple and sprayed water over it. By this act, the elephant went to heaven. Formerly offered food was kept on the balipitham and an eagle ate it. Once a hunter killed it by a shot from the arrow. A yāli ate that eagle and circumambulated the temple. Both the yāli and the eagle went to heaven.

The presiding deity of this temple, is Mānjikka-vajralingam. A sage, Purushāmpīga, by his penance made this lingam appear from the world of Brahma. Brahma who was in search of it, at last, came to this place and quarrelled with the sage. At that time, lord Śiva appeared before them and pacified Brahma and ordained him to worship Him daily at that place itself.

Purushāmpīga had been living on the Kīlaka hill. At that time Bhīma, one of the five Pāṇḍavās, came there in order to capture the sage for sacrificing in a yāga. Both of them entered into a wordy duel and they went to Dharma-rāja for justice. After his judgement, Bhīma beautified the temple and constructed a compound wall called tiruchchurupu madil and a storeyed prākāra which was called vāchcha-māligai or vaitta-māligai. He also called the lord as Vaitta māligai-p-arumān and worshipped Him. This story is also mentioned in the Tāvāram.
The second chapter, named *Māluvāḍich-charukkam* recounts that at the time when Śiva's danced at Chidambaram, Mārkaṇḍeśya had gone to Kērkkaṇḍal for bathing and so lost the chance of witnessing the dance. Afterwards he visited and worshipped Śiva in several places. At last he came to Tīrūmāḷuvāḍi and made severe penance for many years, pleased with which Śiva asked him to be ready to witness the dance in the next year on the *paurnāmi* day of the month of Vaiśāsi in Viśāka-nakshatra. As promised, lord Śiva ordered Maḷu (axe) to go and dance before Mārkaṇḍeśya in His form. Mārkaṇḍeśya worshipped Maḷu in the form of Śiva and requested Him to dance there each year on that particular day. As Maḷu had danced in this place, from that day onwards, this place known till then as Pāṇāṅkāḍu came to be known as "Tīrūmāḷuvāḍi".

The third, *Śiva-Gāṅgaich-charukkam* relates stories about several individuals who received boons from god Śiva in several forms by getting salvation, regaining health, etc.

The next, *Vaidyanātha-charukkam* explains how the lord came to be known by the name Vaidyanātha. Chandrāṇ (moon) had married 27 daughters of Daksha, among whom Rōhiṇī was the most beloved. Other wives appealed to their father and so Daksha cursed the moon to reduce day by day.
In order to free himself from the curse, he worshipped lord Vayirattūn-nātha who saved him from the curse. By His grace the reduced rays (kalaigal) of 15 days, would grow in the next 15 days. He also put the moon (pirai chandran) on his head. As He cured the curse, He came to be called Vaidyanāthan.

In Dāvāti-charukkam, which forms the fifth chapter, it is related that the sun having lost his brightness which had been covered by the sins of such sinners to avoid whose presence, sages and saints who had to meet the sinners, looked at the Sun. On the advice of Narada, the sun went to Tirumāḷavādi and prayed to the lord as a result of which he got back bright lustre. Similarly, it is stated that sacred deities like lord Tirumāl, Agni (fire-god), Muruga, goddess Durgā and others also worshipped the god of Tirumāḷavādi and got their wishes fulfilled.

The sixth, Vaśiṣṭha-charukkam relates the story of the sages Vyāsa and Vaśiṣṭha who suffered bodily ills and after performing penance at Tirumāḷavādi and being graced by the lord came to be freed from their troubles. Similarly, in Agastya-charukkam the story of Agastya's gaining strength to prevent the mount Vindhyā grow higher up only after worshipping the god of Tirumāḷavādi is narrated.

All these stories are narrated to extol the greatness
of the god of the place. Some other legends are also current, one of them recounting the story of the marriage of Nandikesvara, the chief of the ganas with Svayam-prebha, the grand-daughter of Vasishta, daughter of Vyaghrapada and the sister of Upamanyu. The image of Nandikesvara in this place is not in the form of a bull but of a man holding the axe and deer (mán) in two of his hands. He is described as Adhikara Nandi with the right of guarding the shrine even from the first gate. A festival to celebrate his marriage is held in the temple every year in the month of Panguni (March-April).

In fact, there is nothing special in such legends which are associated with any religious centres of the country. But in the present context what is noteworthy is the fact that such legends seem to have gained currency in a much early period, say that of the Cholas, for, some sculptures depicting these stories are found carved on the gopuras, walls and pillars which had come into existence by then. The sculptors were making use of such stories for depiction of sculptural art. But later these stories were collated and with addition and distortions were made to be associated with the place.

Modern works

Finally we come to modern works. So far as the
The present study is concerned mention should be made of a Tamil work called *Tirumalavadi* by Sri S. Ramachandran, published by the Department of Archaeology of Tamil Nādu, in 1978, one year after I started my research work. This is divided into three parts, giving details about the village and the temples, the lithic records herein in the first two and what is called 'news flashes' (śaydaśidaralga) in the third part. I have gone through this work carefully and with due respect and regard to the scholar I may say that in several places I have disagreed with him. With due apologies I may be permitted to state that mine is a result of research in depth and more academic.

I have studied works of a similar nature - *The Śucindram Temple* by Dr. K.K. Pillay (published 1953), which is the earliest effort made in the direction of such studies and *Sri Varadarājamātī Temple - Kānchi* by Dr. K.V. Raman (published 1975) two decades later. Dr. Sundaram has likewise worked on the Simhachalam temple a monograph on which is published by him. These works, in fact, encouraged me to select the Tirumalavadi temple as the subject of research. For this purpose, I have been to that village several times, copied such of those of the inscriptions engraved on its walls, pillars and gopuras which were easily accessible to me, taken several photographs of the different parts of the
temple, its sculptures and bronzes, which have been subject to thorough examination.

Some modern works, helpful in sketching the history of the place like 1) *The Kongu Country* by M. Arokiyarswamy, 2) *The Cōlas, The Pandyan Kingdom and History of South India* by K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 3) *Political Geography of the Chola Country* by Y. Subbarayalu, 4) *A Manual of Trichinopoly District* by Lewis Moore (1878), 5) *The Gazetteers of Trichinopoly and Tanjaur Districts* each of them in 3 volumes, have all been consulted by me. These are helpful in providing the historical background. Several other books in English and Tamil have also been utilised in course of study and they are all listed under Bibliography. Some relevant papers published in Journals like the *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society, Šan Tamil, Journal of Ancient Indian History*, etc. also have been examined and noted.
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