CHAPTER IV

THE ORIGIN

The Kongu Vellālas inhabited the present Coimbatore, Periyar and Salem districts and the outer fringes of Tiruchirappalli and Madurai districts that comprised the ancient Kongu territory. They form the majority in the Tamil population and are scattered in the border districts too. In independent India they migrated beyond the Kongu borders and settled in other parts of Tamil Nadu.¹ They extended their migration to the adjoining states of Kerala, Karnātaka and Andhra where they continued their agricultural occupation. This migration to adjoining states was a sequel to their entering into ties of matrimony with the natives. The Manrādiyars of Vellāṅgōtra who migrated and settled around Palghat regions of Kerala during the Nāyak period is an example.²

Despite their migration to far-off places from the ancient traditional habitats, a majority of them go over to
the Kongu region for purposes of annual worship of titular deities. It is an example of their faith in ancient traditions and ardent desire to preserve them in all their pristine purity. By their industry they are capable of changing the infertile soil into fertile one, notwithstanding the erratic monsoon and the barrenness of the soil. They raise cash crops unlike their forebears. Besides, many of them resort to trade in recent times for increasing the contents of their coffers.

There are two schools of thought regarding the antecedents of the Kongu Vellālas. One school refers to them as natives, while the other calls them migrants. The former lays stress on the regional and traditional aspects but the latter, on the lower and secondary status of the migratory settlers.

Pulavar Kulandai is an exponent of the native school. Three reasons are adduced by him in support of his arguments in the Journal Kongu. They are (i) the regional names being used as prefixes by the Vellālas, (ii) the use of clan names, and (iii) the unique customs and practices of the Kongu Vellālas.

Let us examine his arguments. First the regional names of the Vellālas belonging to other regions are based on the names of the areas wherein they lived. The medieval
inscriptions of Tamil Nadu on Vēḷḷāḷas do not refer to them on the basis of their provinces. The Vēḷḷāḷas of Tōṇdai, Cōḻa, and Pāṇḍya mandalams are simply called Vēḷḷāḷas in general without any reference to the areas. The Vēḷḷāḷas who occupy other regions of the Koṅgu country referred by Pulavar Kulanđai are in fact those who had migrated to these places only in the recent past. The regional prefixes denoting the regions are for identifications—an innovation of the British. Pulavar Kulanđai's classification of Tuluva Vēḷḷāḷas does not refer to those Vēḷḷāḷas who migrated from the Tulu country but a corrupt reference to Tuluva Vēḷḷāḷas. Therefore the Koṅgu Vēḷḷāḷas cannot be classified as natives, merely on the basis of regional prefixes.

The second reason adduced by Pulavar Kulanđai is the peculiar customs of the Koṅgu Vēḷḷāḷas. These customs are due to the assimilation by the Koṅgu Vēḷḷāḷas after their migration, from the natives of the area. The Vēḷḷāḷas who migrated to the eastern part of the Koṅgu country had to struggle with the natives of the region for setting their foothold and they succeeded in the venture. The vanquished Vēṭṭuvas, as a sequel, abandoned their traditional avocation of hunting and robbery and took to agriculture.

The abandonment by the natives of their traditional occupation and adoption in its place of the occupation of the victors, led the victorious Vēḷḷāḷas to admit into their
fold the Vēṭṭuva community for amalgamation. In support of this argument similar caste names in the two communities may be cited. Both the communities, viz., Vellālas and Vēṭṭuvas, have certain common clan divisions like Antuvan, Kiran, Kātai, Mañian, Kāri, Mūlan, Paṇaiyan, Paṇṭyān, Pavālaṇ, Pucsandai, Vilaiyan, etc.¹⁰

The practice of referring to a person by his clan name had its origin in the Caṅkam period. It was adopted by the Vellālas from the native Vēṭṭuva tribes. A later day copper plate ascribed to Vikrama Cōla states that when the Vellālas first migrated to the Koṅgu country, they had no particular clan name for identification. And that they were stopped at the outskirts by poet Kamban, who allowed them to emigrate to the Koṅgu country, after giving them their clan names, etc.¹¹

Third, thanks to the peculiar customs of the Koṅgu Vellālas, they ceased to have any relationship with the Vellālas of the rest of the Tamil country. Thus they maintained their separate identity. M. Srinivasa Iyengar opines that on the basis of the background of customs, the Koṅgu Vellālas do not come within the fold of Dravidians.¹² This view was expressed at a time when Tamil historiography had not reached a mature stage.
Customs of exceptional singularity were derived from the native Vēṭṭuvas. Anthropologists generally agree that there began a process of give-and-take when the two communities began to live in harmony. It was a process of naturalisation when the Koṅgu Vellālas freely adopted into their usage certain tribal customs of the Vēṭṭuvas.

The Vellālas while engaged in the occupation of converting forest lands into agricultural fields were confronted with native objections. Yet it led to an exchange of ideas. This trend was to be seen from the Pallava period.

A somewhat ironic factor accounting for the existence of tension between peasants and those of hills and dry plains in South India was that most of the latter shared to a greater extent than similar peoples elsewhere the culture of the peasantry. They were never a people apart—to be ignored or massacred—as in parts of Southeast Asia.

The Koṅgu country was full of forests. But references to Koṅgu forests are wanting in literature till Sundarar's experience with āṟalaikkalivas (highway robbers) on the Koṅgu highways. What Murton says about Vaṭakoṅgu is worthy of observation. He refers to the existence in this area of scrub-woodland and a transitional series between scrub-woodland and the dry deciduous forests in the lower hill slopes, with isolated
pockets of cultivation, a few temple centres, settlements of shepherds and cultivators. Murton's statement is quite applicable to the whole of the Koṅgu country. Before the Cōla rule, the area consisted of 90% forest land. Only some villages that depended on agriculture existed on river banks. Examples are Brahmīyam, Kolumam, Kōdaaimangalai, Veḷḷalūr, Erode, Antiyūr, Nanjaiyīyaru, etc. Inscriptions of the ninth century A.D. refer to Vaṭakarainādu and Tenkarainādu. There are other nadus like Aṇṭanādu and Puṇṇādu mentioned before the Cōla conquest.

Prior to the Cōla conquest and during their earlier years, certain places were called without the appendage 'nādu'. Burton Stein graphically narrates the plight of the Koṅgu country and its social trend before the advent of the Cōlas. According to him, prior to the Cōlas, it was a sparsely settled region, only occasionally disturbed by marauding warriors. 'At such times, Koṅgu was a shatter zone and, like other such regions in India showed complex overlappings of peoples and cultures.'

Cattle-breeding and shifting cultivation existed in forests. Though no direct evidence to that is forthcoming, internal references in literature emphasize it. Moreover, the inscriptions of the Koṅgu country speak of places with the suffix 'Toluvu', as in Kārattoluvu, Muruṅkaittoluvu,
Arattoluvu, Peruntoluvu, etc. Places with the suffix 'Toluvu' are not to be found in the rest of the Tamil country, as it is an exclusive feature of the Kongu country. Toluvu means cattlepens, the place where the cattle are herded together at night. This practice led to the direct manuring of the earth by cattle excretion. In the beginning stages of shifting cultivation such a practice was in vogue. The word is in vogue in Malabar meaning the garden in the backyard of a house. Tradition establishes that certain villages had the suffix 'toluvu' to their names owing to the existence of cattle-pens. This view of C. M. R. Chettiar is applicable to villages in the Kongu country with the suffix 'Toluvu'.

The recent discovery of a Brahmi inscription in Salem district mentions the village Kogur and its Kilair, the chieftain. This epigraph does not help in understanding the economic life of that period. The inscriptions of Pandya and Ganga kings from the fifth to ninth centuries A.D. describe the battle between kings and also their exploits. The villages mentioned in the Ganga charters are on the ancient highways of the Kongu country. Places like Ayiravelli, Ayilur, Perur, Pugaliyur, Tenur, Vaandi, etc., are mentioned in Pandya charters. Of these only Kodumudi is not on the highway. Ganga Durvinita copper plate mentions Alattur, Anderi and Pennadam. These places are situated on the northern
highways of the Koṅgu country. Besides these, certain villages mentioned in the *Patirruppatu* were considered to be in the Koṅgu country. As the places mentioned above are on the highways, it goes without saying that these places were trade centres. Places of agrarian centres may be considered negligible or nil.

Ravikodai plates of Erode Vishnu temple call the cultivable land 'Nāḍu'. The nāḍu divisions are plenty in the Koṅgu country as evidenced from the epigraphs of the twelfth century A.D. The villages within the nāḍu division are sporadically distributed. A major portion of the nāḍu is forest-dominated area. Hence several divisions of nāḍus in the Koṅgu country were referred to with suffixes Kā and Kāl and called Kānāḍu or Kālnāḍu, Kāavadikkānāḍu, Oduvaṅganāḍu, Poṅgalūrkkānāḍu, Valuppūrkkānāḍu, Vāyaraikkānāḍu and Venṭayūrkāl Vīrakērala Valanāḍu. Chūdamaṇi Nigandu says that 'Kā' or 'Kāl' means a forest. So even in the Cōla times forests dominated the region. Murton observes that by fourteenth century a considerable area of the scrubwoodland characteristic of the landscape of the tenth century, had been cleared, and much of the rest of it severely modified. The view of Murton can be accepted with certain modifications.
Before a study of the migration of people into the Kongu country is taken up, it is necessary to study the characteristic features of migration in medieval India. There is a school of thought which considers that medieval Indian people did not have any right to migrate from one place to another. Decline in trade prevents artisans and traders migrating from one part of the land to another. The medieval kings while promulgating grant of villages as endowments, the artisans of the villages were to carry out the orders of the donee of endowments. Two spurious charters of Samudragupta request the artisans and peasants not to leave the villages and not to migrate to tax-free villages. In Deccan and South India there are numerous instances when artisans were compelled to settle near temples and mutts. The colonisation of peasants, artisans and traders affiliated to a particular area led to the improvement of controlled and closed economy for the later emergence of regionalism. Their kings, priests and masters may change but no change was envisaged in the workers and peasant community. Whatever may happen to their masters, they are bound up with their soil. Peasants and artisans found it difficult to move from one place to another.

The situation in South India was quite different. People of all sorts participated in internal migration. These migrations though sporadic were predominantly rural in character.
Migrations in the medieval period are of different kinds. Brahmins of that period were the foremost immigrants. Next to them are the invaders and royal officials. Certain people migrated due to the non-payment of government dues and taxes. No specific research has been ventured about the migrations in the medieval period. Barring Appadurai, no traditional scholar paid any attention to that aspect. In recent years some Western scholars pronounced certain conclusions regarding medieval migrations. To a certain extent this helps in understanding the characteristic features of medieval migrations in Tamil Nadu. And those scholars have notified the characteristics of medieval Vellāla migrations. On the basis of the background analysis a study of the Vellāla migration into the Kongu from the east may be undertaken.

In the centuries before and after the advent of the Vellālas in the Kongu country, socio-economic conditions of the area can be briefly described. The migration of the Vellālas is known by later-day folklores and charters, as inscriptive references are meagre. The population of the Kongu country before the tenth century A.D. was not appreciable. "The region of Kongu was, however, perhaps the least populated among the then known regions of South India. It is to this the work Colanpurvapattayam pointedly refers." This view of M. Arokiaswami has been accepted by Western scholars like Burton Stein, Brenda E. F. Beck and Murton who further
inquired into the socio-economic organisations of the Kongu region along that line. The results of their researches only confirm the reasoning of M. Arokiaswami. 39

Traditional folklore, inscriptions, copper plates, etc., help in studying the Vellāla migrations as primary source materials. Of the charters, mention may be made of CPP, MKP and Tirumurugan Poondi Pattavam. CPP speaks volumes of Vellāla migration. This charter records the construction of many temples in the Kongu country by Gōla king Karikāla and settling people in the region. As several of them are new villages they are suffixed with the title 'Puttur'. 40 All the migrants were enumerated. Eighteen different caste people like Kaikōla Mudaliyar, Vellāla, Četiyyar, migrated. 41 While speaking of the process of migration mention is also made of the ancient tribes that peopled the area. 42

Inscriptions of the Kongu country do not give direct evidence regarding the migration. Some of them record the clash between the migrated Vellālas and the native tribes. Singalāndapuram, near Musiri was plundered in the reign of Rājendra Gōla I by the natives. 43

Traditional ballads contain historical evidences. The song prevalent among Kongu Vellāla and sung after the Pōngal festival "Olaiyakka song" is an instance. 44 This
song mentions the migration of Olaiyakka in the western direction. She accompanies Nāṭṭārs during the migration. Medieval epigraphs refer to Nāṭṭārs as Vellālas. Hence this song may be taken to indicate the migration of the Vellālas from East to West.

Pālayakārs who settled here as royal officials and chieftains, had pattāyams to their credit. These charters invariably emphasise the Vellāla migration. The dates of the charters though not certain, point to certain valuable information regarding migration. While referring to their ancestral places, one group refers to Tondai mandalam and another group Cōla mandalam. It is only to impress upon others and to think high of themselves. As the fifty and odd charters unanimously refer to migration of one particular community, its credentials are beyond doubt. A section of the Koṅgu Vellālas state that they migrated from Tondai mandalam. Koṅgu inscriptions adduce to it. The Pālayapattu genealogies of British period record invariably these migrations. Kaifeits of Vānavarāya, Kālingarāya, Vēṇavudaiyar, Pallavaraṇam, etc., are some of the examples.

The Vellālas of Tondaimandalam, who were well versed in cultivation, were elevated to high offices in the Koṅgu regions. Brahmiyam inscription, near Dharāpuram, mentions one Māvali Vānādhirāyar in the twelfth century A.D. The
present Vānavarāyas of Samuthūr are descendents of this Māvali Vānādhirāyan. 49 Kālīṅgarāyan migrated to the Koṅgu country in the twelfth century A.D. 50 Saṅkarandampālayam Pattakkārar alias Vēṇāvudaiyār belonged to Vēṇāḍu of Tondaimandalam as their title indicates. In the Pāḷayapaṭṭu genealogy, Pallavarāyans are mentioned as those migrated from Tondaimandalam. 51 Pallavarāyans were called Kādaiyūr Maṅrādiyār in recent times. Pallavarāyans are mentioned in Alaṅgiyam, Dhārapuram, Brahmiyam and Pērūr inscriptions. 52

The charters that describe these migrations are considered to belong to later periods. They are discarded as they contain more of fiction than of fact. The reasons adduced for discarding them are quite acceptable. But the four groups mentioned above do not belong to the Koṅg country. Caṅkam literature while describing some of the groups mention them as belonging to Tondaimandalam prior to the tenth century A.D. 53 The habitat of Bāṅs were Tondaimandalam and Tagadūr. 54 Vēṇavudaiyārs are the original inhabitants of Vēṇāḍu. 55 Kālīṅgarāya was a title enjoyed by Naralōkavīra, a feudatory of the Cōlas. 56 Pallavarāyas are the descendents of Pallava dynasty. Their settlements in Koṅgunāḍu prior to the tenth century A.D. have not been evidenced. If they were the original inhabitants, then the Koṅgu literature and epigraphs must have referred to them.
MAP 5. THE KONGU COUNTRY
THE TRADITIONAL MICRO DIVISIONS
Moreover, they continue to maintain their ancestral traditions and place names even after their settlements in the Koṅgu country. Traditionally there were 24 Kōttams in Tondai Māndalam. Though the inscriptions may refer to a higher number, the figure 24 is retained for traditional considerations. Similarly it is to be noted that in the Koṅgu country too there were 24 nadus. Tondaimandala Veḷḷālas were sent to backward areas to improve agriculture. Nulambavadi alias Nigarilicōlamandalam had Veḷḷālas of Tondaimandalam settlements. Likewise they migrated to the Koṅgu country to improve the agriculture. These people while migrating must have brought with them their clan for assistance.

The charters and traditional accounts of the Malayālis of Kollimalai, Paccaimalai and Shervarāyaṇ ranges supply evidences to corroborate this view. The Malayālis of Shervarāyaṇ range call themselves Koṅgu Veḷḷālas. All their traditional accounts, unanimously refer to Kāñchipuram as their ancestral home. The Malayālis of Kollimalai and Shervarāyaṇ ranges had copper plates of Gōla period. Of these some have seen the light of the day. They refer to their migration from Kāñchipuram. Thruston dates their migration to these hilly ranges in the sixteenth century A.D. on the basis of their traditional accounts. They might have shifted to these places to escape the heavy taxation imposed by Muslims. But the truth is otherwise. They
call themselves migrants (Vanderikal) and they have in their possession Cōla period copper plates. Hence they might have migrated and settled here in the Cōla period itself.

The place names of the Konangu country came in handy in the study of Konangu Vellālas migration. In the medieval Konangu country the names of several villages end with the suffix 'Ericcil' as exemplified by 'Ericcil Poḷilvāyaci', 'Purrericcil', 'Cirakkericcil' and 'Velliericcil'. Villages with ericcil suffixes are to be found only in the Konangu and Kōnādu. Of the two nāduś those in Kōnādu with ericcil suffixes are older than the Konangu nādu. One Čaṅkam poet hails from Kōnāṭṭu Ericcilūr. In the recently discovered Pūlāṅkuricci epigraph, a village is called Paccericcil. Both in the ancient and medieval periods the emigrants took with them their village suffixes, or prefixes. They retained their old village nomenclature for their new settlements.

A section of the Konangu Vellālas claim their antecedents to Cōla territories. As Cōlamandalam was close to the Konangu country, migration became quite easy. In the historical periods, a highway that passed through the Konangu country connected the Cōla capital and trade centres in its course. This highway is referred to in Cōla inscription as 'Konųguperuvali'. The names of Konųgu villages too
help in studying Cōla migration. Notable place names of
the Cōla country are attributed to Koṅgu villages. There
is one Uttama Cōlapuram in Salem district. Inscriptions
refer to this place as Meṟralai Kāviripūmpatṭinam. 68 Anṇūr
in Coimbatore district is mentioned in epigraphs as Meṟralai
Tanjavur. 69 Pērūr is called Meḷai Chidambaram. 70 The
migrants had a tendency to call their new settlements after
their ancestral homeland—a historical truth. The prevalence
of several places having the same name is due to migration.
CPP extensively deals with migrants to the Koṅgu country from
certain places in Cōla mandalam.

Cīvaka Cintāmaṇi and AṃS Katal vividly portray the
marital relationships that obtained in Cōlanādu and Kōṇādu.
The hero, Jeervaka of Cintāmaṇi married his uncle's daughter
as one of his wives. 71 The conflict, if any, is resolved
easily on the basis of rightful matrimony among the kith and
kin. Hence Jeervaka easily marries his uncle's daughter.
This matrimonial right was prevalent among the Koṅgu Vellālas
till recently. Considerations of age are bypassed in these
types of marriages. This practice was brought into the Koṅgu
country by the Cōla and Kōṇādu Vellālas. This is an evidence
of Cōla Vellālas' migration into the Koṅgu region. The two
ballads KEP Ammānai and AṃS Katal refer to the migration of
Pāṇḍya and Kōṇādu Vellālas. 72
Appadurai who is the first to speak about migration divides migration into two categories—internal and external. According to him migration is due to five different causes, viz., religious, official duties, trade considerations, military expedition and colonisation.\textsuperscript{73} Besides these, migrations are due to certain other auxiliary causes like population explosion, tax burden and financial difficulties.\textsuperscript{74}

As religious conditions have no economic background migrations due to religious causes are quite few in number. Those that did not evince interest in religious causes did not stay for long in a particular place. Hence migrations to the Koṅgu country due to religious causes are rare indeed. Even if there had been any, they belong to quite earlier periods.\textsuperscript{75}

The Cōla empire was one of the famous dynastic hegemonies in India. In its durability and the scope of its authority, the Cōla state was one of the greatest states in medieval India.\textsuperscript{76} The Cōla empire encompassed several regions like the Koṅgu country in its expansion. It ruled the entire Tamil country under its flag thereby paving the way for people's migration to any part of the kingdom, including the Koṅgu territory. "The great cause for it was the freedom of movement which the unified empire gave the people to move from place to place."\textsuperscript{77}
The magnum opus of Indian polity, *Arthasastra*, categorically states that there should be no waste lands in the king’s sovereign lands. Kings all over Indica endeavoured to turn barren lands into cultivable ones. To encourage such an activity those that turn arid lands into fertile ones were given incentive like tax relief. South Indian kings too acted in this fashion. T. V. Mahalingam points out instances of tax concessions offered by the government to the people to induce them to settle down in particular areas and improve lands for agricultural purposes. Before the advent of the Gōlas vast acreage of the Koṅgu country was not brought under cultivation. After Gōla entry into the Koṅgu country, the Vellālas migrated from developed areas to barren lands to improve agriculture and fill the treasury. Traditional anecdotes and later day charters allude to this fact, paucity of inscriptive evidence notwithstanding. CPP is an exemplary evidence of this variety. Ādālakuravaṇci sings about migrations encouraged by kings. CPP refers to tax reliefs for cultivation carried out in hills.

Evidences pertaining to medieval population census were not taken properly. Hence the population explosion and the method of dealing with such contingencies are not to be understood in the proper perspective. In the tenth century A.D. when the Gōlas dominated the Koṅgu country the total number of villages of the Gōla country was half that obtained
in the previous three centuries, hence Y. Subbrayalu attributes this to the population increase. His conclusion is that the density of population in the Cōla mandalam had reached its saturation point in the first half of the eleventh century A.D. and then registered a gradual decline. Burton Stein opines that Y. Subbarayalu's opinions are difficult to accept in the absence of corroborative evidence. But he has inferred that creation of new cultivable lands were necessitated by population increase or demands of the settlements. Evidences for the increase in population density in medieval Europe are plenty in the form of clear documents. Evidences for medieval Tamil Nadu population data are meagre if compared with those available for medieval Europe. Population has to be inferred on the basis of extension of villages. Y. Subbarayalu shows that population increased in the Cōla country till the thirteenth century A.D. In this period there were the creation of new settlements in villages in Nadumādu. It may be due to migration from the Cōla country. In Kongu country too several new villages came into existence after the twelfth century A.D. In the later half of tenth century A.D. the total number of such villages was less than fifty. But at the end of thirteenth century A.D. the number rose to three hundred. This is more due to the influx of population into the Kongu country from the Cōla mandalam.
Such a large influx in the Koṅgu country means a corresponding decrease in the population figures of the Čōla country at the end of the thirteenth century A.D.

In the later Čōla period tax burdens increased in the Čōla country. And many inscriptions can be cited in support of this fact. Manyārgudi inscriptions refer to tyrannical tax collections. The inscription speaks about the plight of tax burden of people, thus. The inscription speaks of how arbitrary imposition of tax had made life burdensome to the people. 88

Studies about medieval famines were not made properly. Scholars writing on Čōla history have made a passing reference to famines. How the people tackled famine conditions, and how they migrated in those days of scarcity were not studied properly. In the medieval period the fury of famine was at its worst at certain times. And the hopeless Vellālas had to migrate to other places of better living conditions. The later Čōla period is replete with information about these migrations. Some Vellālas sold themselves and their offsprings during times of famine. An inscription of the twenty third regnal year of Kulōthunga III from Tirupāpuram mentions that one Vellāla by name Kāṭṭudaiyān sold himself and his two daughters for 110 Kasus to mutt when he languished for food. 89 Inscriptions containing such information are available in the Čōla country. They deal with migration
during famines and selling the persons for monetary returns, etc.

The Vellālas clans dwelling on the hilly ranges were those that escaped political torture. The traditional accounts of the Malaiyālis of Kolli, Paccai and Shervarāyan ranges speak about their escape from the clutches of tyrannical kings. The kings approached the Vellālas for the hand of their daughters and the reluctant Vellālas escaped to secret hideouts in the ranges. The reason for Paḷayakōṭṭaḷi Paṭṭakārār's migrations is along similar lines. Cōla kings asked for the hand of Vellāla daughter, whereupon the unwilling Vellālas migrated to the Kongu country to escape the Cōla kings' wrath. A Cōla king gave his daughter in marriage to a Cēra king and as marriage gift sent Vellālas with his daughter. The bride herself requested her father to send Vellālas as marriage gift. In her opinion the Vellālas alone could convert the forest studded lands of the Cēra country into cultivable lands.

The last days of the Cōla period was one of confusion and rebellion. The subordinate kingdoms bordering on the Cōla country became powerful. Kādavarāyas, Atiyamāns, Sambuvarāyas, Bānas and other rose in revolt against the Cōla kingdom. Köpperumā/nga was a thorn in the flesh of the Cōla king. The growing power of Pāṇḍyas of South
heralded the decline and fall of the Cōla power. Added to this was a war of succession to the Cōla throne. Generally commotion prevailed in those fluid times.95 This state of affairs continued till the Vijayanagar period. Kōpperuṅciṅga, invading the Cōla country destroyed the lush green lands on the north of the Cōlamandalam.96 The invasion of the Cōlamandalam by Oddars from Orissa created disturbances in the empire.97 This was followed by Periya Vadugan’s onsalught which led to further deterioration and distintegration of the empire. Srirangam inscription reveals this.98

The significant changes in the social life of people of Cauvery regions in the last days of Cōla power tormented the Vellālas. Chiefs of army personnel turned them into big landowners.99 Suritimāns and Pallis were the warrior tribes who inhabited the mountains in the early Cōla periods. In the days of Rājarāja I and Rājendra I, they were selected for the army.100 And these tribes took part in wars that converted the Cōlas into an imperialist power. When the Cōla power declined, these tribes utilised the occasion to their advantage and acquired large chunks of land and became landowners.101 Certain big temples of the Cōla country and Brahmins of the times became big landlords leading to bankruptcy of Vellālas who lost their landholding and were driven to the status of agricultural labourers. Recent
studies about the changes that took place in the Cauvery plains of the "Gōla country are very extensive. Towards the close of the Gōla rule private land owning was prevalent. Many land transfers were effected between individuals and between individuals and temples. The net result was the accumulation of landed property in the hands of a few on the one hand and the deprivation of property for a few on the other. Inscriptions of this period speak of social conflicts and consequent disorder. The next task for the study then, should be to clarify what arose from this turmoil. 102

These studies only point to the decadence of the Gōla polity and culture and social moorings. CPP emphasises this state of affairs. Scholars are yet to assess the result of the turmoil. But CPP graphically describes one result of the turmoil—that of the migration of the Vellālas to the Kongu country. 103 This historical fact of CPP point to a situation in the thirteenth century A.D.

It is quite appropriate to call the Kongu country a land of migrants. Researchers have concluded that the process of migration to the Kongu country was a continuous phenomenon right from the Cankam age. 104

Under Gōla rule all the fallow lands were brought under cultivation. To effect this, the services of the
Vellālas who were conversant with the agricultural techniques were required. Therefore, Vellālas from Cōlamandalam colonised the Koṅgu country. When exactly these Vellālas migrated to the Koṅgu country, it is difficult to say with certainty. There was one migration in the period of Koṅādu rulers. Another took place in the reign of Kulōthuṅga III. And a third one at the time of Amś Katalī.

Inscriptions of Koṅādu kings occur in the eastern Koṅgu region even from the tenth century A.D. They record the migration of the two persons from Koṅādu and Malanādu. M. Arokiaswami deals with the migration of those people extensively. Burton Stein contradicts the view of M. Arokiaswami and argues that the Vellālas must have migrated to the Koṅgu country even before the advent of the Cōlas. Burton Stein considers that agriculture reached its peak in the Koṅgu country even before the advent of the Cōlas. But there is no inscriptional evidence to suggest that the Koṅgu people employed new irrigational methods and utilised the water sources to the optimum. Ganga inscriptions predominate the Tagadūr region. South Indian scholars consider that Tagadūr region belongs to the Koṅgu country. And this has led scholars like Burton Stein to express contradictory ideas.

Barring Salem plates, no Ganga plates have been found
in the Kon̄gu country. It is doubtful whether these plates describe the Kon̄gu country. Therefore, M. Atmiaswami's view can be accepted.

In the reign of Kulōthunga III, confusion and rebellion prevailed. And the tributary kings of the Kon̄gu country took advantage of the situation and rose in revolt against the Gōlas. And Atiyamāns of north Kon̄gu played a leading role in this sordid affair. And this necessitated Kulōthunga III's invasion of the Kon̄gu country to suppress the rebellion and ultimately conquer Atiyamān. To mark his victory he had his coronation at Karūr. During this invasion, people of the Gōla country migrated to the Kon̄gu country, and indeed this migration was the only well planned migration. Besides Vellālas, persons belonging to Kaikkōlas, Čettiars, etc., of the eighteen different caste people too joined the migration. CPP extensively deals with this migration. The contents of the Pāṭṭyam are dated thirteenth century A.D. whereas the date of the charter is eighteenth century A.D.\textsuperscript{110} Certain new villages came into existence in the thirteenth century A.D. as a result of migration and majority of them are located in the Vatapāricāranādu.\textsuperscript{111} This migration brought in its wake Gōla administrative tenets. The natives opposed the new innovative techniques of the migrants and a conflict ensued. To express their opposition, they resorted to destruction of forests, and the Gōlas successfully met the
challenge. And a compromise was effected between the migrants and the natives by means of an assimilation of native customs and rituals with the great tradition. CPP records the details of compromise thus effected between the two warring groups of natives and migrants. The villages were named after the leader of the natives and the native Vēṭṭuvās were given the power of looking after the villages. Irumborgai Mūdür of Vallimankai is an example. Thus the second migration took place successfully in the thirteenth century A.D.

The third migration was effected when the Gōla power was on the decline. And the Vellālas led the migration in the absence of strong government. The two ballads AMS Kataći and KEP Ammanai deal with this migration. The fluid political situation of those times is well brought out in the ballads. The Gōla king of the ballads, seeks the assistance of Ānnāmār who are feudal chieftains, to suppress troubles created by the Vēṭṭuvās. This exposes the weakened position of the empire in those times. The decline of the royal power enabled the Vellālas to assume leadership. At that time Vellālas of Kōṇāḍu migrated to Mēnāḍu, the region of the Vēṭṭuvās. The migration saw in the course of its progress, bitter conflicts between the natives and the settlers resulting in heavy loss of human lives on both sides. In spite of these losses the migration of the Vellālas into
the region of the Vēṭtuvas were successfully accomplished.

Agriculture was the main occupation that essentially requires fertile lands and potentially good irrigation sources. The first migration thrived on the banks of Cauvery and Amarāvathi. Nanjaidaiyārū, Singalāndhpuram, Cādurvēdimāngalam, Kokkarāyanpet, Erode and Kāvēripuram are places of settlements on the banks of Cauvery in the beginning. The settlements were already established in Kodumudi and Bhavani on the banks of Cauvery. Veṅcamāṅkūdal, Brahmiam, Dharapuram, Alāngiyam and Kōṅgū on the banks of Amarāvathi were the first settlements. In Āraṇāḍu of the Kōṅgu country the settlements were in plenty. Āraṇāḍu comprised of present Coimbatore, Avināshi and Palladam areas. It is a corrupt term for Ārunāḍu, so called because, of the many rivulets and brooks in the area. Two-fifths of the work of the renovation by Cōḷa are in this nāḍu. At the time of migration it had abundant water resources. The construction of dams was mainly done in the Kōṅgu country to store water for irrigation purposes in the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. 114 After twelfth century A.D. tanks and lakes came into being. 115 Hence the commencement of the migration was on the basis of natural water resources.

The later day migrations took place by destroying the forests in the interior of the Kōṅgu country.
Qelakkarichil, Sarkar periapatayam, Paṭṭali, ḏiyur, Kunnathur, Idikarai, Pollachi, etc., are examples and prove the nature of the settlements by destruction of forests.

Even after the migration to the Kongu country, the life of the eastern Vellālas remained unstable. The charters of the Kongu Vellālas point to their internal migration necessitated by famine conditions, harassment by the Vēṭṭuvas, etc. Kaṇṇan clan of the Vellālas who lived in Kaṇṇivādi area on the banks of Amaravathi shifted to Morūr in Salem district due to Vēṭṭuva disturbances. The Vellālas of Kangayanādu moved out of their famine-stricken areas and settled in Āyakkudi region. The Vanādirāya of Kīrānūr settled in Nallūrkkānādu and converted forests into cultivable lands. The Thooran clan of Melipalli region crossed Cauvery and settled in Veṅkambūr amidst the Vēṭṭuva opposition.

The place names of villages in both the eastern and western parts of the Kongu country are identical. The villages of Muthūr, Mūlaṇūr, Kīrānūr, Velliericecil, etc. on the eastern part of the Kongu country are the settlements of the tenth century A.D. In the western part of the Kongu country there are villages with the names, mentioned above but they belong to a later date. It is, therefore, evident that migration was from the east to the west.
For certain groups of the Kongu Vellālas there are temples dedicated to their titular deities in both the Cōla country and Kōnāḍu. This proves that they have migrated from those places of those two countries. The temples of deity of the Vellālas of the western part of the Kongu country are on the eastern side. This too indicates that the migration of the Vellālas from the east to the west.

**Kgp. Ammānai** says that Annanmār conquered the villages of the Vēṭṭuvas one by one from the east. The Vellālas lived in those conquered places of the Vēṭṭuvas. Puliyūr, Vavālūr, Kūdlūr, Thalaiyūr, Kannivādi, Mukilāgūr, Neelambūr, Majanakar Kurukkadai and Ilavanoor are the villages where the Vellālas settled after driving out the Vēṭṭuvas. The **AMS Katai** echoes the same with some new names of the villages to it. Hence this too establishes that the migration was from the east to the west.

In due course the Vellālas acquired the Kāṇi rights and landownership rights from the Vēṭṭuvas. The Vēṭṭuvā Pūrva Pattayam from Tennilai mentions that the Vellālas bought these rights from the Vēṭṭuvas by paying cash. The Cōla inscriptions never mention any kāṇi rights enjoyed by the Vellālas. But Vēṭṭuvas and Kurumbas were mentioned as possessing kāṇi rights. Therefore it is but clear that at the time of migration, the migrant Vellālas did not possess
any kāṇi rights. In course of time agriculture and cattle-breeding yielded wealth. And the wealth thus accumulated enabled the Vellālas to purchase these rights and to establish their strong foothold in the migrated region.

From the time of the zenith of the Čōla hegemony there was wavy pattern of Vellāla migration to the Kongu country. The migration was a continuous process irrespective of the rise or decline of the Čōlas. Even under the later dynasties of Pāṇḍya, Hoysala, Vijayanagara and Nāyak kings migration continued and was encouraged too, but it was on a low key. 131 In the British times too migration went on well. But these later migrations differed in nature and number.
References


3. Pulavar Kulandai, 'Vēḷālar' in Kōngu, 3 (1973) 73-76.


5. Pulavar Kulandai, op. cit., pp. 73-76.


7. Information from R. Poongundran, Registering Officer, Department of Archaeology, Ramnagar, Coimbatore-9.


9. Inscription from Kokkarāyappottai in Salem District, Copied by Pulavar S. Raju, Department of Epigraphy, Tamil University, 'Tanjavur-1.


Ed. R. Nagaswami; There was a particular rite 'Pillai pugutal' which represented the Vellāla assimilation into Vēṭṭuva fold. Informant No. 3; Also kurukała kāviyam, Unpublished manuscript, from Paṭṭakkār, Appicicmār Madam, Tīngalur, Erode Taluk, Periyar District, gives a list of clan names that indicate the Vellāla assimilation.
11. Copper plates, in the possession of Canapati Kurukkal, Tirumuruganpundi, Coimbatore District.


21. C.M. Ramachandra Chettiyar, "An Analysis of the Names given to Towns and villages in Kongu nadu" in *Indian Geographical Journal*, 1, 2 and 3 (July and October 1930), 81.

22. R. Poongundran, Tāramangalam, Tit Bit. n. pag.

24. Pandyan Copper plates, pp. 26, 52, 58 and 126.


26. Personal discussion with Pulavar S. Raju, Associate Professor, Department of Epigraphy, Tamil University, Tanjavur-1.

27. Appendix D.

28. Ibid.


32. Ibid., p. 10.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid., p. 9.

35. Ibid., pp. 10-11.


42Ibid.


44Kovaikilar, Enqal Nattuppuram, pp. 172-73.

45Y. Subbarayalu, Political Geography of Chola Country, p. 36.

46Copper Plates in the possession of Samathur and Puravaipalayam Pattakkarang.


48ARE 194 of 1920.


50Tanga Vinayakan, "Kalvāy Vetṭiya Kālingarāyāy" in Kongu Velāla Gowenderkal Manañna Manattu Malar.


53. Akananūru, Verses 325 and 386.

54. Thirty Pallava Copper plates, p. 102.

55. The name itself reveals it. There were three micro regions (nadu) in Tamil Country with the name Venadu. Genealogy of the Poligars suggest that they would have migrated from Venadu of Cōḷamandalam.


62. ARE 442 of 1928-29.


65. Puranānūru, Verse 54, Colophon.

Highway is referred to in Cola inscription as Kōnguperuvāli, S.I.I. Vol. IV. No. 433. This highway was used from Čan̄kam age by the soldiers and merchants community. Till date this highway is considered to have important trade connections. The connection between the kongu and Čol̄amandalam can be well established by means of the Roman coins collected from the villages dotting this highway such as Vēlantēvalām, Veḷalūr, Sūlūr, Sāvadippālayam, Karūr etc. There are certain other highways that originated in Čol̄amandalam and terminated in the Kōngu country. Srirangam epigraph refers to Vaṅcipperuvāli. It must have meandered about the Northern Cauvery. Another highway runs via Namakkal and Turaiyur and connects Vaṅcipperuvāli. This is the highway mentioned in the Tiruccenkōdu copper plates as the south bound from Turaiyur. Thanks to these highways, the transport connections between the Čol̄a and Kōngu countries increased considerably. As such the migration of Čol̄a people to the Kōngu country is not a surprising phenomenon.


ARE 220 of 1972.

C. M. Ramachandra Chettiyar, "Tirupperur in Pandya Carita Varalarug in Perur Purana Vačana Curukkam, p. 46.


AMS Katai, p. 167.
A. Appadurai, op. cit., p. 301.

Ibid., p. 309.


Burton Stein, op. cit., p. 4.

Arokiawami, 'Social Development under the Imperial Colas' in Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India, p. 3.

N.C. Sircar, Landlordism and Tendency in Pre-Aryan and Medieval India as Revealed by Epigraphical records, p. 5.

T. V. Mahalingam, South Indian Polity, p. 199.

Palanisami Pulavar, Alagumalai Kuravañci, p. 104.

K. Nachimuthu, Cōlan Purva Pattayam Kūrum Kongunāṭṭu Urkai, p. 41.

Y. Subbarayalu, op. cit., p. 21.

Burton Stein op. cit., p. 97

Harbans Mukhia, 'Was there feudalism in Indian History?' The Journal of Peasant Studies, 8, No. 3 (April 1981), 277.

Y. Subbarayalu, op. cit., p. 31.

Appendix D.

Ibid.
The Tribes of Kurumbas and Vēdas are considered to have come from Koṅgana territory. The opinion that both Kudagu and Koṅgu have the same root words was prevalent among certain scholars. Even if allowance is made for this opinion,
there is no evidence to substantiate it that they had come from Kongana or Kodagu. M. Arokiaswami based such a conclusion after the study of megaliths of the two regions, which are identical. This identity is not the result of migration. It is not uncommon to find two societies incidently functioning on the same pattern and consequently leading to similar evidences of cultural sequences. Such a categorization has led the historian to surmise that the Kongu Vellālas could have migrated from Coorg region, as they have assimilated the customs of coorgs. Whatever be the similarity or identity of evidences it is clear that migration to the Kongu country took place in the medieval period only.

105 ARE 190 of 1920.

106 M. Arokiaswami, op. cit., p. 270.

107 R. Ramamurthy, "Kālakkānippu" in AMS Kātai, n. pag.

108 M. Arokiaswami, op. cit., 269.


111 K. Nachimuthu, op. cit., p. 46

112 C. M. Ramachandra Chettiar, ed. Cōlanpūrvāvatāyam, p. xii.

113 AMS Kātai, p. 221.

114 ARE 176 of 1965-66; Kongu, 2 (1972), 15.

116. Inscriptions from Celakkericcil, Copied by the Registering Officer, Department of Archaeology, Ramnagar, Coimbatore-9.

117. ARE 315 of 1905.


119. Inscriptions from Atiyur, Copied by the Registering Officer, Department of Archaeology, Ramnagar, Coimbatore-9.

120. ARE 205 of 1967-68.

121. ARE 29 of 1923.

122. ARE 443 of 1928-29.

123. Copper plates of Kannan Clan, Taluk Police Station, Pollachi, Coimbatore District.


127. ARE 166 of 1911, 247 of 1920.


129. AMS Katai, p. 221.
