

VAIYAPURI PILLAI AS A LITERARY HISTORIAN OF TAMIL¹:

**AN ANALYSIS OF HIS IDEOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY AS SEEN
IN HIS 'HISTORY OF TAMIL LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE'**

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Vaiyapuri Pillai's writings have today become almost the bedrock of the history of Tamil literature as it is accepted in scholarly circles in that those have contributed immensely to the structuring of the chronological order of Tamil literary and grammatical works. In this the role of his *History of Tamil Language and Literature* (HTLL) (1956), published posthumously, has been great. Written in English and in a methodology so familiar and acceptable to Western scholars, the work became a very influential one. Kamil Zvelabil described it as "the most scholarly and the most critical, as well as very richly documented history of Tamil literature upto the age".² It remained the most important of the dependable and acceptable works in terms of "western" methodology, until such time as T. P. Meenakshisundaram, Kamil Zvelabil and others wrote on the history of Tamil literature.

While his HTLL was being accepted as the dependable history of Tamil literature, in certain sections of Tamil scholarly circles he was being attacked as "a traitor" to the Tamil cause, as one who had accepted the supremacy of North Indian influences over Tamil.

In the heat of the argument over his findings, there was never an attempt made to establish the ideological foundations of his writings and to see how his ideology and his methodology had interactions which determined the character of his writings.

An attempt is made here to ascertain his place in the field of Tamil scholarship, to identify the main characteristics of his methodology, the ideology that underlies his writings and to assess the academic significance of HTLL in terms of subsequent research.

1. Vaiyapuripillai the scholar and his achievements.

Vaiyapuri Pillai's name looms large in the world of Tamil Studies. The major Tamil lexicographer of this century (he edited the prestigious *Tamil Lexicon*) he was also an outstanding textual critic and editor of several literary and grammatical works, and the author of many articles and two books on the history of Tamil language and literature. He brought order into the chaotic area of the chronology of Tamil literary and grammatical works. He had covered this field with such thoroughness that now, after him, it is mostly a case of

either agreeing with him or discussing how and why he had taken an unsustainable position; there is no question of dismissing his findings as irrelevant.

Vaiyapuri Pillai, the son of Saravanapperumal Pillai and Pappammal of the Tirunelvely District, Tamil nadu, was born in 1891, into one of the Saiva-Vellala families, a group which in social terms was generally associated with anti-Brahmin politics (Vaiyapuripillai, as we shall see later, was a significant exception to this tendency.³) After his first degree (B.L. 1912) he practised as a lawyer for about eight years at Trivandrum, (1915 - 1923) the town where his wife's parental family was living, and for a short period (1923 - 1926) at Tirunelvely. Though a lawyer by profession, his main interest was in Tamil Studies which he was deligently cultivating since his student days. By 1926, the year he was appointed editor of the Tamil lexicon project of the University of Madras, he was already well known in Tamil scholarly circles for his erudition in Tamil studies and was able to count among his well-wishers such eminent Tamil researchers of the day like K.N. Sivaraja Pillai, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai V.V.S. Aiyar, K.G. Sankara Iyer, R. Raghavaiyengar and Chakravarthy Nayinar. Desikavinayagam Pillai the poet, and P.N. Appuswamy were his close friends.

When Vaiyapuri Pillai was appointed editor of the Tamil lexicon on 25.11.1926 only four parts (volume I was in three parts and the first part of volume II) running to 792 pages (only 21, 327 entries out of the 1,04,405 entries) have been published. The lexicon committee of the Madras University, however, was in existence from 1912. With Vaiyapuri Pillai, in the editorial chair, K.V. Krishnaswami Aiyar, the chairman of the committee was able to bring out the rest of the lexicon (the entire lexicon consists of six volumes, 3928 pages and 1,04,405 entries) within ten years a record time for such an undertaking.

After successfully completing his lexicon assignment, Vaiyapuri Pillai was Head, Department of Tamil, University of Madras from 1936—1946. It was during this time he established his friendship with K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, the then leading historian of South India who with his works "The Pandyan Kingdom" (1929) "Cōlās" (Vol I—1935, Vol II 1937) effectively brought Tamilnadu within the vortex of Indian history. The association was mutually beneficial, facilitating Sastri with a knowledge of the literary developments of Tamilnadu and Vaiyapuri Pillai with a knowledge of the political developments that helped him with his datings. Another important association he forged was with the Professors of Sanskrit, first with Prof. T.R. Chintamani and later with his successor Prof. V. Raghavan. It is told by some of his later day students and colleagues that Vaiyapuri Pillai leaned heavily on Dr. Raghavan for details relating to Sanskrit literature.⁴ This period saw the publication by the University of important research works on literary history. Vaiyapuri Pillai developed it as a full-fledged research department. It is significant that Vaiyapuri Pillai was not given the Chair of Tamil at the University of Madras. He retired from the University in 1946.

What the University of Madras failed to do, University of Travancore did with ample grace and dignity. It invited Vaiyapuri Pillai as Honorary Professor of Tamil under the Alagappa Chettiar Endowment. He was there from 1951 to 1954. This was a very fruitful period. It was here his posthumous publication "*Kaviya Kalam*" took shape, first, as the text of the mandatory lectures he had to deliver. He also continued his work on indexing the Cankam works—a project he had started when he was at the University of Madras. At that time this indexing was done by Vaiyapuri Pillai it was proceeding on lexicographical lines, not on linguistic lines. Later when V. I. Subramaniam took over the Honorary Professorship (1954) the project was structured on rigorous linguistic basis (see his *Index of Purananuru*- University of Kerala 1962).

Vaiyapuri Pillai was at Travancore University till 1954 and returned to Madras after his assignment. He passed away on 17.2.1956.

The most enduring of all Vaiyapuri Pillai's contributions will, no doubt, be the Tamil Lexicon, which, he completed within a period of ten years. His achievements in the field of textual criticism are in no way less important. It is regrettable that no major study has been done on the significance of Vaiyapuri Pillai's contribution in the field of editing. It is hardly realised and much less acknowledged that the texts we have now for Kamba Ramayanam and for the Cankam anthologies were largely arrived at through the critical insight and editorial brilliance of Vaiyapuri Pillai. He edited thirty - eight works in all— five Nikantus, four works on grammar (two of these were on Tolkappiyam, Porulatikaram — one Nachchinarkiniyar's commentary and the other Ilampuranar and twenty nine literary texts⁵.

But, in the field of Tamil studies, Vaiyapuri Pillai is better known as the editor of the major literary works. The following is the list of works he wrote on history of Tamil literature.

- 1947 — Ilakkiyaccintanai
- 1947 — Tamilin Marumalarchchi
- 1949 — Tamilccutar Manikal
- 1950 — Ilakkiya Utayam I
- 1952 — Ilakkiya Utayam II
- 1952 — Ilakkiya Teepam
- 1954 — Ilakkiya Manimalai
- 1955 — Kampan Kaviyam
- * 1956 — History of Tamil Language and Literature
- * 1956 — Ilakkanaccintanaikal
- * 1956 — Corkkalai Viruntu
- * 1957 — Kaviya Kalam
- * 1958 — Ilakkiya Vilakkam

(those marked with asterisk were published posthumously).

Except two, all were collections of articles and forewords; the two exceptions being *History of Tamil Language and Literature and Kāvīya Kālam*. As mentioned earlier, the latter constituted the lecture he delivered at the Travancore University on that subject.

A closer look at his writings and at his development as a scholar would reveal that it was his interest and expertise in the field of textual criticism that constitute the core of his scholarship.

It was the expertise he showed in the edition of *Manōnmanīyam* (1922) and the scholarship he revealed in his various articles that enabled the Tamil Lexicon committee to appoint him as editor of the project.⁶

It was as editor of the various literary and grammatical works that he became interested in the dates of the works. As we shall see later, in the methodology he adopted for dating the texts, it was the study of the texts of the works that attracted his attention most, for, very often, one could see him trying to place the work concerned in relation to other works, quoting important lines, especially the use of words and the employment of certain grammatical forms. To this day his edition of Cankam texts is the most scientifically done edition. The recent editions of Kamparamayana are based on the spadework he had done on that epic.⁷

Within the field of textual criticism, which had such well known practitioners like C.W. Thamothersam Pillai and U. V. Caminata Aiyar, Vaiyapuri Pillai stand out because of the historical perspective he brings into his editions. His prefaces to his editions always indicate his ability to place the work he edits in its historical setting. It was his association with Nilakanta Sastri, the renowned author of 'Colas' (1935, 37 1955) and *A History of South India* (1966), that gave him this historical view. This association was not a one way traffic, Nilakanta Sastri himself had acknowledged his indebtedness to Vaiyapuri Pillai.⁸ Vaiyapuri Pillai was able to place the work and its author in the proper historical perspective. And it is exactly in this area he excelled his distinguished forbears. He could see the importance of the work he edits in terms of the literary and linguistic evolution of Tamil.

The following excerpt taken from his presidential address to the thirteenth All-India Oriental Conference, held at Nagpur in 1946 reveals to us the broad, and penetrating view he had of literary history.

“In the study of a single literature, we have four important branches viz; editorial work, literary criticism, literary history, and treatment of historical and other materials besides two helpful pursuits, viz; cataloguing and bibliography. In literary history, *chronology has to be settled for several works and authors and it will be a branch by itself*. By Literary biography including a dictionary of National Biography will come in for consideration here.

Then general literary histories have to be prepared. The latter comprise genre and periods, old, middle and modern. Under genre, we have to include drama, fiction, poetry and several types of literature. In this connection a dictionary of literature will be of great help. There are considerable historical material in our languages, especially so in Tamil, chiefly in the form of inscriptions and copper plate grants and these must engage our attention as a separate branch. Mythology, legend and folklore, comprising motif-index and comparative studies, yield us substantial historical and pre-historical materials and these along with proverbs and popular sayings, form another important branch. The history of specific subjects and topics such as medicine, astrology, amusements, riddles etc., makes a third branch of study. Social history, culture and civilization along with witch-craft, magic and spirits and practices, totemism etc., form yet another branch, the fourth of this group⁹.

This gives us an insight into his view of how the study of a single literature could lead one on to a comprehensive view of the entire literary tradition of the language. And that is exactly how Vaiyapuri Pillai functioned as a historian of Tamil literature, he came from the single text (textual criticism) to the entire literary corpus (history of literature).

Vaiyapuri Pillai, though a specialist in certain micro areas, also had a full and an all encompassing view of the literary tradition of Tamil. He showed great interest in modern Tamil literature. He was the first Tamil academic to assert that Subramania Bharathi (1882-1921) was the major Tamil poet after Kamban (c.13th century AD)¹⁰. He was a friend of Putumaipitan (1906-1948) one of the greatest short story writers in Tamil. Vaiyapuri Pillai himself had written a few short stories and one novel (*Kajee*).

It should once again be emphasised that inspite of the many attacks he faced in the battlefield of literary history, his editions of *Kampa Ramayanam* (*Palakantam* (1937) *Yudda Kantam* (1937) and the Cankam anthologies (1940) are considered the most scientifically done editions. The recent composite editions of *Kamparamayanam*— the Murray Company edition and the Kampan Kalakam edition owe a lot to Vaiyapuri Pillai.

II. Vaiyapuri Pillai's methodology in dating literary texts and the politico-cultural consequences of the datings

The method that Vaiyapuri Pillai used in dating the texts is one of analytical inference.

He starts with a description of the work and goes on to fix the *terminus a quo* (the starting point) and the *terminus ad quem* (the terminating point), i.e., the period within which the work could have been written, arguing that it could

not have been before a particular time or author or after a particular time or author. He does this by a reference to the dates of works and authors referred to in the work, on the dates of whom there is hardly much difference of opinion.

He also used the linguistic usages found within the text to establish the period. By this he was able to establish a fairly dependable time — span within which the work could have been written.

Along with these, he also tried to identify the literary influences that the particular Tamil text has had from Sanskrit texts. This enabled him to place the work concerned in relation to the history of Indian thought.

Vaiyapuri Pillai's methodology in determining the date of a text is best seen in the manner he has gone into the dates of Tirukkural and Cilappatikāram¹¹.

As the methodology stands, it is, within the limits of its frame of reference, a very useful one. But there was one conviction of his which began to seriously affect the impartiality of his findings. That was the belief he had in the inherent antiquity of Sanskrit Literature. Whenever he discussed a Sanskrit text in relation to a Tamil text he was of the opinion that Tamil one was invariably at the receiving end and that the Sanskrit text would not have imbibed a South Indian tradition. Much of Indu Shekar's argument that the origins of Sanskrit drama could lie in a Dravidian source would not have found favour with him¹². He was not as much interested in the cultural history of India that underpinned the intellectual and artistic interplay in aesthetic creativity, as he was in the "chapter and verse" citations of what were found in the Sanskrit texts.

In fact it is at this point that 'positivism' as a methodology reveals its weakness in relation to 'historism'. The following illustrates that weakness.

"V. holds that, since the Skt. Pancatantra belongs to a post - 500 AD date, Cilapatikaram, which has this story in it must belong to a later date. Almost all who have challenged of V's dating of Cil, have referred to the fact that *Pancatantra* is a collection of fables and to insist that *Ilanko* had used it only after it was codified in Sanskrit would be, to say the least, to be unmindful of the Indian conditions'.¹³

Vaiyapuri Pillai could often be seen to neglect the general historical forces at work during a period, in favour of bookish, lexical references. It could be said that the rigour with which he applied his methodology did not allow him to consider the material realities of history. This 'rigour' in application, it was quite evident, increased in his later years and was in fact his personal response to the virulent criticisms to which he was exposed.

Perhaps his basic training in law had its own impact. He was extremely 'legalistic' in his approach. The mere mention of a word was enough, he would connect it up logically to its Sanskrit source; he would not take into count the historical dynamism of the situation.

In a way, the question of dating the texts had become essential by the thirties and forties when Vaiyapuri Pillai was fully involved in his textual editorial work. By that time the major literary works have been re-discovered and published in print. The need to bring them with an all-India focus was becoming essential. *In the case of the earlier textual editors, the main task was one of the re-discovery and publication. As far as scientific dating was concerned it could safely be said that the pioneer editors did not confront the problems as Vaiyapuri Pillai did.*

The literary situation in the forties and thereafter demanded that a firm time sequence of the rediscovered classical texts be established. *It could be said that the main contribution of Vaiyapuri Pillai was to serialise the works in chronological order.* The excessive positivist approach he had, eroded the validity of many of his datings, but it is to his credit that sequence in which he placed the texts has, by and large, stood the test of time.¹⁴

Vaiyapuri Pillai's writings in this field had one major feature about them, i.e. they were the only ones which had an all-Indian readership. At the time when the rest of India, and soon the Western world, began to take increasing interest in the study of Tamil and of the non-Aryan strands in Indian culture, it was Vaiyapuri Pillai's writings that attracted them with a sense of objectivity which was not alien to them.

But this very same academic objectivity had political implications and as we shall note later, there was a prima-facie charge of cause-and-effect relationship between this 'academic objectivity' and politics.

Vaiyapuri Pillai was articulating these views of his at a time when the Dravidian movement in Tamilnadu was taking a crucial turn.

Annadurai formed the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in 1949 and quite unlike Periyar E.V. Ramasamy his mentor. with whom he parted ways, launched on a campaign broadcasting his newly formed party, through the appeal to those non-Brahminic symbols of Tamilian cultural supremacy. This meant an avoidance of anything Tamilian with noticeable Sanskrit influence-Bhakthi Literature, Art and Architecture etc.... and an insistence on the Pre-Pallavan Tamil cultural and literary norms. It thus became essential to highlight the "Pre-Brahminic" achievements. The literary antiquity of Tamil and its mythified grammatical excellence was a rich field to tap. As has already been shown "Tamilian national consciousness at a particular stage of its development had to have a 'Dravidian' ring about it and it did go off when it was not essential.

The word 'Dravidian' conjures up in the minds of the literati the image of the independence of the Tamils. It is significant that at the seminal stages in the first quarter of the 20th century, even Brahmins who were conscious of their Tamilian heritage identified themselves with the cry. T.R. Sessa Aiyangar wrote the famous book 'Dravidian India'¹⁵.

By the early fifties, at the time the D.M.K. was being launched into existence, Annadurai postulated that the integrity of Tamil literature and that its independence of Sanskrit constituted a major political difference between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. Any attempt to present Sanskrit as the fountain of Tamil culture was taken as an anti-Tamil move. The Tamil teachers and pundits who had long suffered intellectual indignity at the hands of the Sanskritists rallied round this new political voice of the oppressed Tamil culture. One form of establishing the greatness of Tamil was to speak of its great antiquity. The pure Tamil Movement, started by Maraimalai Atikal was taken over by Annadurai's movement not with its avoidance of Sanskrit words (it tried its best to minimise the use of Sanskrit words and to coin new Tamil terms) but with its insistence on the pre-Aryan aspect of Tamil culture. This Pre Pallavan literature began to loom large in these attempts at showing them as non Sanskrit and pre-Sanskrit. Besides, there was also an ideological need to show that Tamil culture, bereft of Sanskrit corruptions, is basically secular in nature.

Thus, there arose an ideological necessity to present Pre-Pallavan Tamil literature as belonging to pre-Sanskritic antiquity. It may not be 'history' in the the Rankeian sense (14 A) of the term but it was an intellectual need to legitimise the new political ideology.

It is important to recall what Vaiyapuri Pillai said in defence of his methodology and how in fact, he formulated his methodology.

In an article published in the very first issue of Tamil Culture (Vol.I, No.I-1952) he said,

"In our eagerness to parade our patriotism in all its glory, we write and say things which are very far from the truth. Facts are nothing, evidences are mere game pieces on a chess board and the only thing cared for is the glorification of our country, people, land, literature. We must resist this alluring temptation with our might. This tendency defeats its main purpose and we become objects of ridicule. Truth must be the sole aim and facts must guide our steps and govern our conclusion".

In this one could see how Vaiyapuri Pillai was responding to a situation in which he was increasingly distanced from the general trend of Tamil scholarship of the day.

Vaiyapuri Pillai's research findings began to create problems for those who were supporting the new political ideologies. In fact gradually the leading institutions connected with Tamil studies began to have scholars supporting or supported by Dravidian ideologies and ideologues. Vaiyapuri Pillai was vehemently opposed by them; thus the alienation.

Vaiyapuri Pillai would not have had much of the hostile reception, if the question of dating did not relate to two Tamil literary works, which had become the symbols of Tamilian greatness—one taken as the acme of Tamil wisdom and the other hailed as the epic of the common man written at a time when Gods were considered the fit persons to be depicted in epics. Tirukkural, the didactic work par excellence in Tamil, and Cilappatikaram, the epic of wifely devotion and of righteous revolt against monarchic indiscretions, were being used as the cultural symbols of the Dravidian movement, as popularised by Annadurai.

Vaiyapuri Pillai argued justifiably that Valluvar was Jaina (this angered the Saiva-Vellala traditionalists who maintained that Valluvar was a Hindu, in fact a pure bred Saiva Siddhantist), that Valluvar lived in early 6th century (this was not liked by the Dravidian ideologues) and, worse still, that Valluvar had borrowed his ideas from Sanskrit works (this of course, infuriated all the Tamilists)

Worse still was his dating of *Cilappatikāram*. In a radio talk he gave on 8-10-1945, he expressed the opinion that cil. should belong 7th, 8th centuries (AD¹⁶). The second edition (1953) of *Tamilccūtarmanikal* carries the same date. In *Kāvīya Kālam* he takes the position that both *Cilappatikāram* and *Manimekakai* must have been written around 800 AD.¹⁷ In *A History of Tamil Language and Literature*, which definitely was the last major work written by him, he argues "that the Silappadigaram was most probably composed about the middle of the ninth century AD."¹⁸

The Tamil opinion of the day took it as a major insult to the entire community. Instead of attempting to refute his findings (as some of those following Vaiyapuri Pillai's methodology later did ¹⁹.) he was attacked as a traitor to the Tamil cause.

Kural and *Cilappatikāram* were not the only works that were given late dates by him. He assigned a late date to Tolkappiyam. In Vaiyapuri Pillai's opinion Tolkappiyar lived in 5th C AD²⁰. This enraged the Tamil pandits with whom an old date (Sometimes as unbelievable as 2000 BC) for Tolkappiyam was an article of faith.

The hostility to Vaiyapuri Pillai is well summed up in what Devaneyappavanar said about those who are not qualified to write on history of Tamil and its literature.

“Except those with a research experience in etymology, and with the courage of conviction to oppose Brahminism and the imposition of Hindi, none of the *Vaiyapuris* who betray Tamil, with any amount of knowledge of literatures or with any amount of Ph. D's or with appointment as Vice-Chancellors is fit to write a history of Tamil literature.”²¹

Further down in the same book he says,

“It is quite clear (from the above arguments) that Mr. Vaiyapuri Pillai had written the above mentioned books with the express aim of degrading Tamil. Therefore it is quite in order that the word ‘Vaiyapuri’ has come to mean a traitor to Tamil’.²²

It is true that other scholars were not so abusive. Yet there was almost a conspiracy of silence at that time at the level of the establishment scholars (by this term, I refer to those Tamil scholars who attained positions of official distinction as a result of the political gains made by Tamilian nationalism as expressed by the D.M.K. This would include those scholars who are taken as symbols of Tamil learning but were not politically partisan). Mr. Varadarasan the ideologue of secular Tamilian nationalism, once Professor of Tamil, University of Madras, later Vice-Chancellor, University of Madurai in his thesis on the treatment of nature in *cankam* literature for Ph.D. to the University of Madras in 1947, avoids any reference to Vaiyapuri Pillai. In fact there is no discussion in that thesis to the date of the *Cankam* texts.²³ Nor is there any reference to Vaiyapuri Pillai in the thesis submitted in 1956 on Love in Sangam poetry by V.Sp. Manickam, who later became Professor of Tamil at Annamalai University and Vice Chancellor, Madurai Kamaraj University.²⁴ In both these works, Vaiyapuri Pillai's name does not occur even in the bibliographies.

N. Subramaniam's thesis on Sangam Polity presented to Annamalai University (1954), and later published in 1966, refers to Vaiyapuri Pillai on the question of the dates of some of the texts. Here again one is able to note the hostile terms in which Vaiyapuri Pillai is referred; quite often the suffix ‘Pillai’ (indicating the Vellala Caste) is dropped and is referred to as just S. Vaiyapuri.²⁵ To anyone who is accustomed with South Indian Social proprieties this is something very hostile, if not derogatory.

By the sixties, at level of the ‘establishment’ scholars, there was a slight thaw. Vaiyapuri Pillai's name was not being discussed at length, but his views were being referred to and objected to without much discussion. Such a renowned scholar as T. P. Meenakshisundaram in his *A History of Tamil Literature* (Annamalainagar 1965) mentions Vaiyapuri Pillai's name only in matters not of vital importance. There is no reference to Vaiyapuri Pillai's name and his views on

the dates of the major texts in those places where the dates of those texts are being discussed.

But, by the late sixties and the seventies, and thereafter the situation had changed. Even though there is yet some hesitation (some well founded and some not so) to his datings there was no tabu relating to the mention of his name. A good example is "*An Introduction to Tamil Literature*" (Madras 1981) by N. Subramaniam the author of Sangam Polity. Subramaniam refers to Vaiyapuri Pillai in his full name, and uses the honorific suffix Pillai too, as in the sentence "Pillai was a creative writer".²⁶

In recent times there is renewed interest in Vaiyapuri Pillai.

It should however be mentioned that almost all of Vaiyapuri Pillai's Tamil writings are out of print and are not available even in the libraries of well known institutions of Tamil learning in Tamilnadu. A generation of Tamil students have been trained in Tamil without any reference to his writings. They know him only as some one to be avoided.

Vaiyapuri Pillai's contribution to Tamil Studies by

- (a) the introduction of a scientific methodology for dating the texts
- (b) familiarising the principle of historical criticism in Tamil
- (c) and thereby bringing Tamil within current internationalist perspectives on research

and (d) Viewing Tamil literary texts in all Indian perspective in relation to evolution of Indian thought

is getting recognised now. But it needs to be analysed further, for Vaiyapuri Pillai himself cannot be exempted from an examination by the very canons of historical criticism he sought to introduce in Tamil literary studies. In the heat of emotional arguments over the dates of texts, the more crucial question of the ideological stance of Vaiyapuri Pillai has never been taken up.

It is therefore important that an attempt is made to present his major work in English (History of Tamil language & literature) in terms of its content and ideology and to indicate its standing in the face of the developments in Indian and Tamilian studies since 1956, the year Vaiyapuri Pillai passed away.

II. HTLL and its 'Thesis'

As is told in the sub-title to that book a history of Tamil language and literature that is dealt with in that book is from the beginning to 1000 A.D."

The work has got to be taken as only a summary of his findings on the history of Tamil literature, for, the extensive argumentation and the elaborate documentations to support them, which are so characteristic of Vaiyapuri

Pillai's writings, are not given extensively here. For a full view of those features one should read V's Tamil works like '*Ilakkiya Teeepam*', '*Ilakkiya Cintanai*', '*Tamilcutarmanikal*',

'*Ilakkiyamanimalai*' and most importantly '*Kāviya Kālam*'. But this work has one distinction, this was the only work (he wrote) in English and is comprehensive enough to bring within it almost all of his major views on the problems of the history of Tamil literature.

S. S. Ramaswamy, his son-in-law (husband of Ms Sarojini, the author of Vaiyapuri Pillai's biography) informs that Vaiyapuri Pillai was working on this book around 1954-1955. It is told that Vaiyapuri Pillai who had, by then, completed the note on Tamil literature for use by Nilakanta Sastri in his *History of South India* (1955), was working on this book, realising the need for a comprehensive history of Tamil Literature in English.

The book is divided into two parts-part I from beginnings to 300 A. D. and Part II from 300 to 1000 A. D. Part I does not have a formal chapter division; it is prefaced with a chart of the topics analysed in that part. There are fifteen topics listed. This pattern is also seen in his "*Kaviya Kalam*" (Posthumously published) where he lists the problems discussed in a like manner

Part II, dealing with the period 300-1000 A. D. has five chapters-Anthologies, Grammatical works, didactic works, Bhakthi Movement and Secular Literature. The story of Manimekalai is appended to the book.

Vaiyapuri Pillai, in his attempt to delineate the literary development in Tamil in the period he has taken up for discussion, seems, at the outset itself, to take it into two major chronological units-beginnings to 300 AD, and from 300 AD to 1000 AD. The first phase, quite obviously deals with the "Caṅkam period". It is important to know how he comprehends the literary developments of this period, so much eulogized by the protagonists of Tamil culture. The pivotal portions in this work relating to this question are the following paragraphs:

"..... No poet of the Sangam Age seems to be earlier than the second century AD.

We are as yet far from the beginning of Tamil literature. Before the second century A.D. there must have been crude attempts at literary expressions and those attempts must have been going on for a pretty long time. Moreover, the style, the diction and metrical perfection of the Sangam poems require for their development a considerably long period. At a rough computation, we may put this period of development as three centuries.

Looking back beyond these long centuries, we sight a period when the Brahmi inscriptions were in vogue. They show the Tamil script in its formative stage and from this stage up to its full development and its adaptation for literary purposes, the above estimate allows sufficient interval. Development in language, script and literature must have been going on at a rapid pace. Powerful influence must have been at work during this period as evidenced by the Brahmi inscriptions. The words 'Kutumpika' "Ila" and the circumstances in which the inscriptions were written tell their own tale. Contact with Sanskrit and Prakrit languages and literature, with adjacent countries like Ceylon, and with the Buddhist and the Saiva religions must have been largely influential in shaping the Tamil mind. The continuous influx of people from the North also must have had its influence. The Tamil language must have received new tributories in its stream. Thus the even tenor of the life of the ancient Tamilians was ruffled and invigorated, *a desire was created in him to emulate Sanskrit Literature. The religious and moral side of the ancient Tamilians was given a new turn by the new influences noted above. The secular side remained uninfluenced and it went on very much as before.* The earliest literature would have necessarily its roots in the native soil of the Tamils and this literature must have been in verse".

Any doubt relating to the period when this 'new turn' was manifest, is cleared up subsequently when he specifically mentions how these are reflected in Puranānuru and Patirrupattu.

"A detailed description of a Yaga performance in Puram 166 and frequent references to vedic gods in Puram (eg. 16, 23) Patirrupattu (eg. 11) and other early collections furnish evidence of the spread of the vedic religion among the Tamils. Buddhists were also propagating their religion in Tamil countries.....Some poets bear Buddhist names, eg. Illambodhiyar. Theradaran, Siru-ven-thēraiyaṛ etc. Jainism supplied a new religious force which was for centuries a powerful rival to Hinduism in the South. Jaina mythology is found in Puram 175 and Akam 59. Thus the Tamil land became a fertile nursery and the several religions noted above thrived in friendly rivalry".

It is quite clear that the *period of new turn* in which several religious ideologies flourished in Tamilnadu *was the Cankam period*. It is his contention that the period from the Brahmi inscriptions (according to him dating from 3rd century BC) to the end 100 AD was a period *preparatory* to the Cankam period and the Cankam period *was* the turning point.

Vaiyapuri Pillai takes this "new turn" as one essentially seen only in the religious and ethical life of the community. *It is his considered view that "the*

secular side remained uninfluenced and it went on very much as before". He takes the laudatory *puram* poems and the pre-marital and marital *akam* poems as coming from and depicting the earlier phase. As he concludes in discussion on the strength of the religious and the ethical fervour seen in the Cankam literary corpus, he makes the following comment.

"against this background lay scattered the several poetic pieces of the earliest times. They were secular, a good part of them praising Kings, and Chieftains and subtly introducing religious elements to attract and influence the nobility of the land, and the rest, dealing with love in all its aspects, to appeal to the literate among the masses".

The assumptions implicit in the above statement are far-reaching. He says (a) that the unadulterated secular *puram* poems—at least, some of them—must belong to an earlier phase than the Cankam period and (b) that the *akam* poems, as they stood were meant for the "literate among the masses". His understanding of the relationship of literature to (and in) society is that, while a major change is taking place in the religious life of the community, at the secular level, i.e. non-religious 'mundane' level of social existence those could have no effect.

Leaving those questions relating to the language of the Brahmi inscriptions and their affinity to (i.e. how far they were close to) the language of Cankam texts, which post-Vaiyapuri Pillai research has answered and taking only the assumption that religious changes in society have no relationship to the temporal power structure of that society, one would find Vaiyapuri Pillai taking quite an irreconcilable position which a scholar keen on the historical method could ill afford to. This is an important ideological facet of Vaiyapuri Pillai, not quite well noticed. but which needs close watch.

Vaiyapuri Pillai's delineation of the literary transition from the period of the Brahmi inscriptions cannot be sustained in the face of subsequent research done on the problem. Iravatham Mahadevan, who more than any other scholar of recent times, has been responsible for sorting out the problems of the date and the content of Brahmi inscriptions states that "linguistic analysis shows they (the Brahmi inscriptions) emerge in simple intelligible Tamil not very different in its matrix.....from the Tamil of the Cankam period".²⁷ He also states that "the assumption that several centuries must elapse for the full development of written language is not necessarily correct. The religious and cultural ferment generated in the Tamil country by the Buddhist and Jaina creeds and the enormous and perhaps sudden increase in prosperity on account of Indo-Roman trade must have triggered off a rapid development of the written language around the turn of the Christian era". Though this would be in agreement with the cultural ferment of which Vaiyapuri Pillai himself speaks the date is

clearly two hundred years earlier. Thus the date would be around 100 BC — to 100 AD a date which is not so appealing to Vaiyapuri Pillai. On the basis of Greaco Roman evidence and their congruity with some of the referrences found in Cankam literature, Vaiyapuri Pillai would place the period between 100 - 250 AD (p. 25)

There is one more opinion of Viayapuri Pillai which has been challenged quite effectively. Speaking of the Akam poems of the Chankam corpus, he said “Tall claims are sometimes made that the Aham poems are the sole monopoly of the ancient Tamils. Sanskrit literature abounds with poems of this nature and indeed some of these poems are very ancient. I may refer to the famous Hala Satassi. It is a collection of 700 erotic gathas in the Arya metre in Mahārāshtric Prakrit and it is ascribed to King Hala (AD 20—24)” (p.45)

In a comparative study of ancient Tamil poetry and its Sanskrit counterparts, George L. Hart II, went precisely into this question in detail and concluded,

“The Sattasai is filled with so many close parallels to Tamil verses that their close relationship cannot be questioned. Furthermore, because of the Dravidian meter and Dravidian rhyme that first appear in Indo-Aryan in the Sattasai and show how dependent that anthology is on the Dravidian tradition, *there can be little doubt that themes and situations that first appear in the Sattasai come from a southern tradition of poetry and not a northern one* and yet the agreement between situations and themes in ancient Tamil and *Sattasai* is not great enough for one to have borrowed directly from the other”.²⁹

Having dealt with the Cankam period as a turning point in Tamilian literary history in which there was a religious fervent which did not have anything substantial to do with the basic life of the people, he goes on to mark out the succeeding periods. It is true that an impression has been given at the outset that he tends to take the period ranging from 300-1000 AD as one era. But a closer look would reveal that he would reveal that he would phase it out into two units.

(a) from fourth century to the end of fifth century A.D. i.e. 300 A.D. to about 499 A.D.

and (b) from sixth century to the end of the ninth/beginning of tenth.

The dividing line between (a & b) is the Bhakti movement. “This movement began in the 6th century, caught the imagination of the people and spread rapidly. The controversy which had hitherto been conducted on a generally intellectual level became now coloured with emotion and the sectarian spirit consequently

deepened. It gathered momentum as time passed and changed to purely emotional level" (p.78).

He takes the period from the beginning of fourth century A.D. as marking "a new epoch in the history of Tamil language and literature even as it does in the political and social history of the Tamil land". He does not mention what the epoch making political and social events were, but he mentions the major literary event; it was the effort to collect the ancient poems and arrange them in handy and systematic anthologies" (p.49) But, "the collections were made after the first grammatical treatises were written or at least after grammatical speculations had crystallized into conventional terms" (p.51) Tolkappiyar, the author of Tolkappiyam, is taken as belonging to the second half of the fifth century A.D." (p 65)

The emergence of the concept of 'Centamil' (standard Tamil) is also traced to this period.

Vaiyapuri Pillai takes Jainism as the dominant religion in this period and considers the formation in 470 AD of the Dramila Saugha by Vajranandi, as "an event of first rate importance (that) occurred in the history of Tamil language and culture" (p.58) for, according to him, "inspite of the paucity of direct evidence the remarkable output for grammatical and ethical works soon after the establishment" (p. 61) He was of the opinion that "the smooth and gently flow of harmony (that characterised this period) existed till the end of the fifth century" (p.78). It is perhaps the extent and the manner of achievements of the Jains that prompted him to say that "so far as the Tamil region is concerned, we may say that the Jains were the real apostles of culture and learning." (p.60)

It is refreshing to note that Vaiyapuri Pillai has not failed to highlight the socio-political significance of the acceptance of the concept of 'Centamil'. He speaks of the importance of Madurai as a city in social, economic and cultural terms and adds that Centamil must have been the language of the upper class and quotes Tolkappiyam to justify his surmise (p.75)

Inspite of his emphasis as a period of great socio-political importance in the history of Tamilnadu, he has not discussed what these important socio-political matters were.

A close reading of what he has written on the subsequent period (from the beginning of the sixth century to the end of the ninth) would show that Vaiyapuri Pillai identifies four literary trends with the second one (the bhakthi movement) dominating the other three.

The four major trends are

- (i) the rise of gnostic and didactic works, ushered in by the great Tirukkural of Valluvar. This was essentially the result of the Jaina option for proselytism, 'to gain the allegiance of the people' (p. 79)
- (ii) The bhakthi movement of the Vaidic religions (Saivism and Vaisnavism). This movement was a response to the success of the Jains. "The success of the Jains set them a thinking and a rival religious force strong enough to stem the tide of overspreading Jainism had to be created". "Political powers also took sides in this grim battle of religion" (p.101). Vaiyapuri Pillai says that it began in the sixth century and its culminating point was about the first quarter of the seventh century. "The Saivate movement preceded the Vaisnavaite movement, the latter represented by the twelve Alvars who flourished between AD 700—900".

This was the dominant trend and it leaves its imprint on the entire literary production of the period.

- (iii) The continuity of "other and more ancient forces" (p. 134) as could be seen in the highly stylized forms like Kovai. This was a feature seen in the secular literature of the period.
- (iv) The rise of the Kavyas, another literary offshoot of the highly resourceful Jains. "The Jains tried to gain the allegiance of the people by writing stories about royal personages who figured largely in the history of their religion and culture and about their saints and other great men" (p.137) The epics dealt with in their chronological order are Perunkatai, Cilapati-kāram, Maṇimēkalai, Cīvakacintāmaṇi, Kuntalakēci, etc.

Vaiyapuri Pillai, concentrating most, as he has, on the history of ideas, seems to consider the religious disputes and controversies as pivotal in the conflict between Jainism and Buddhism on one side and Hinduism on the other. In his analysis the bhakthi movement seems to be, at least the start, not a primary cause but only a secondary one; "There was one element which fanned the flame of controversy to red heat and that was the bhakthi". (p.78)

It is important to observe the manner Vaiyapuri Pillai deals with the bhakthi movement. Though he stated the importance of the movement in the literary formation of the period, and had emphasised the popular character of the movement, he does not go into the all-important questions of

- (a) who reacted against the Jains or who led this reaction against the Jains?
- and (b) Why did they react, in other words, what was the need for such reaction?

The highly positivist approach he has adopted would have naturally shunned him from raising these questions. Nevertheless, as these are the questions, which had determined the exact character of the movement and the nature of its literary output the questions are important. It is redeeming to note that he describes the chief challenge the Bhakthi movement had to face thus: "Neither in the *ghatikas* nor in the *Yagas* were the people at large allowed to participate. Brahminism had to be transformed into Hinduism in which all and sundry could take part" (p.100)

From the manner he has structured the periods and the phases, it is quite clear that Vaiyapuri Pillai was trying to get at a history of the people and the region in so far the history of that literature was concerned: he was not concerned with literary history, in the sense it is an interaction of literature and history. i.e. as one of studying the role of literature in history.

When compared with the periodization given in his '*Kaviya Kalam*' the one given in the *History of Tamil Language and Literature*, looks better structured.

The periodization given in *Kaviya Kalam* is as follows:

1. Murcanka Kalam (Early Cankam Period) AD 100-350
2. Tokai cey Kalam (period of anthologization) AD 400-500
3. Pircanka Kalam (Later Cankam Period) AD 600-750
4. Bhaktinurkalam (period of Bhakti works) AD 600-900
5. Neeti Nurkalam (period of didactic works) AD 600-850
6. Murkaviyakalam (Early epic period) AD 750-1000
7. Pirkaviya Kalam (Late epic period) AD 1100-1300
8. Tattuva Nurkalam (period of Philosophical works) AD 1000-1350
9. Viyakkiyana kalam (Period of the commentaries) AD 1200-1500
10. Purana pirapanta kalam (period of puranas and prabandhas) AD 1500-1850
11. Tarkkalam (Modern period) AD 1850-

The period covered in HTLL is only up to the sixth mentioned above. The concept of periodization in *Kaviya Kalam* seems to be one of finding a chronological format for placing the major literary activities and literary forms in Tamil in a 'development' perspective. Compared with such and extreme form of empiricism, the one in *History of Tamil Language and Literature*, seems to have an underlying ideology and that is literature is primarily a product of ideas. The manner Vaiyapuri Pillai applied it was from above, i.e. he saw ideas as factors motivating the change and the people act as agents for the ideas. Vaiyapuri Pillai, in other words, has been Hegelian in his approach.

It is also clear from the manner he had described the "new turns" and developments, Vaiyapuri Pillai had not paid much heed to the indigenous poetic traditions of akam and puram (which he himself praises-p 46) and had not tried to explain the ideological and the aesthetic significance of the new influences in relation to the indigenous poetic traditions. It could be said that he failed to see the process of literary formation in Tamilnadu as a process of acculturation, of the ideas that came into Tamilnadu, but saw them supersessions which did not owe much to the earlier traditions. Vaiyapuri-Pillai, also failed to realise that the Tamil tradition too had an important place in the composite Indian tradition and that what has been taken as the general Sanskrit culture was itself an outcome of the mingling of the Aryan and non-Aryan trends. Vaiyapuri Pillai, a victim at the hands of 'Dravidian' ideologues, did not want to accept this concept of shared themes.

The book, inspite of its title, has much less on language and the little that is found is more philological in nature than rigorously linguistic. Viewed in terms of linguistics, what is found in this work cannot be described as history of Tamil Language.

And that takes us on to an assessment of the work in relation to the subsequent development in the fields of knowledge concerned.

IV. Research Developments in areas connected with Tamil Literary History since 1956.

It would be grossly unfair by any scholar to judge him by those developments in the fields of his/her concern, subsequent to the person's death. Nonetheless such an attempt is essential to establish his/her continuing academic significance and to see how intuitive the scholar was of the developments that were to take place soon.

It would not be possible to go into each of those specialized areas which meet at the interdisciplinary confluence of Literary History. It is only possible, in a note like this, to chart out the contours of the change.

It is rather ironic that Vaiyapuri Pillai was summarising his views in Tamil with almost inflexible rigidity at a time when there were challenges to the existing historiographical notions of Northern/Aryan supremacy in Indian culture formation and Indian historiography was changing. It is all the more disheartening to note that he was not unaware of these changes; he refers to them in an enpassant manner in his presidential address.

"Those very exhaustive and intensive studies made of the culture of the Gangetic valley, its authors and its diffusion into other parts of the Sub Continent and even beyond in the South Asian region began to reveal that there was something

more in that culture-complex, which until then was considered exclusively 'Aryan' and 'Sanskrits'. The linguistic researches of Burrow and Emeneau, the archaeological excavations of Wheeler, the cultural studies of Filliozot and Suniti Kumar Chatterjee revealed the urgent need to explore Dravidian South more closely. *And Tamil perhaps the only non-Aryan language in India that records the changes that were taking place with the penetration of the Aryan influence began to attract the intellectual attention in a manner that it had not in the earlier days*".³¹

This led to a fundamental questioning of some of the hitherto held basic assumptions. The emerging notion was "there cannot be any conception of India without either Dravidian (and other pre-Aryan) or Aryan. Like the warp and woof of a piece of woven stuff, Aryan and Dravidian have become interlaced with each other to furnish the texture of Indian civilization".³²

All these led to a serious erosion of the carefully constructed and consciously preserved historiographical notions of some South Indian scholars that South India and Tamilnadu were always at the receiving end of the cultural transmission and have had nothing to offer.³³

The late fifties and the early sixties also marked a definite departure in Indian historiography in general and with the arrival of scholars like Kosambi, R.S. Sharma and Romila Thapar, concepts of Aryan supremacy and Sanskrit dominance ceased to be keypoints in viewing Indian historical development. There was an effort to synthesise anthropology and archaeology epigraphy and sociology to get a comprehensive picture of the over all Indian development, in which folkways figured as prominently as sanctified literary sources.³⁴

All these led to the emergence of a historical viewpoint of development unsustainable from the standpoint of Vaiyapuri Pillai. For instance, studies in the field of linguistics, (which received great impetus in the sixties) showed:

".....the earliest vigorous bloom of Tamil culture began before the Sanskritization of the South could have had any strong impact on Tamil Society. It is now an admitted fact by scholars in historical Dravidian linguistics that Proto-South Dravidian linguistic unity disintegrated some time between the 8th—6th cent B. C. and it seems that Tamil began to be cultivated as a literary language sometime about the 4th or 3rd cent. B.C.

Besides linguistics, archaeology also began to provide a picture of a South Indian development based on the use of iron, which has a remarkable continuity of culture. Raymon Allchin, an archaeologist of distinction, has found the descriptions in Perumpānārupatai very useful in identifying and explaining the Neolithic ash-mounds of South India. He has related them to the general mullai culture of the Cankam poems. Viewed in terms of the function of

literature within that social formation this evidence is enough to establish the historical significance of Cankam literature and the past it refers to.

More important, from the point of Vaiyapuri Pillai's view, is the advances made in the study of the Indian literary culture and the place of Sanskrit and Tamil within it. George Hart's study of "the shared literary themes" in ancient Tamil and Indo Aryan literature is important in this respect. The very concept of shared themes ruled out any questions of "emulation of Sanskrit literature" or being at the receiving end. Going into the specific question of Hala's Sattasai, about which Vaiyapuri Pillai makes unjustifiably provocative statements, Hart concluded that the Sattasai came from the southern tradition.³⁷ Hart locates the origin in "a common popular and undoubtedly oral tradition".³⁸

The concept of the shared themes should remind us also of the dynamic interrelationship the southern religious tradition of Bhakthi had in the formulation of the Indian precept and practice of religiosity, which has attracted scholarly attention in recent times.³⁹

A close analysis of Vaiyapuri Pillai's writing on the early Tamil literature reveals that his concept of that literature is one of "written" literature. He has not taken into account the possibility of an oral base for Cankam Corpus. Kailasapathy in fact starting off from a hint from Vaiyapuri Pillai himself that Cankam literature should be "heroic" in terms of Chadwick's Heroic Age".⁴⁰ had argued the case for an oral literary base for Cankam poems. This has constituted a major shift of emphasis in viewing Cankam literature.

Vaiyapuri Pillai dismissed oral traditions and myths out of hand in considering the dates of texts. With the previously mentioned change in Indian historiography myths are now treated with some respect and are considered "inverted" history.

An attempt made to delineate another 'cultural product' from within the same culture viz; drama has shown that other cultural institutions have not been as dependant on Sanskrit as literature has been made to appear in Vaiyapuri Pillai's presentation of its development.⁴¹ In terms of the Social production of the arts, it cannot be argued that, (granting fully the relative autonomy of each of the art forms), the pattern could have differed basically. The question is one of acculturation and integration and not one of borrowings and emulations

There are some of the major developments since the death of Vaiyapuri Pillai which have brought about conceptual changes in the approach to Tamil literary history.

It should not however be forgotten that these conceptual changes were effected by scholars and researchers, standing firmly, as they did, on the findings

of Vaiyapuri Pillai, especially the serialisation of the ancient Tamil literary texts, which were for the first time given a chronological span to work out the dynamics of Tamil literary and cultural formation. *So understood properly, these are only advances on Vaiyapuri Pillai thesis, not condemnations of it.*

The abiding value of HTLL lies in that it serialised the major Tamil literary works in a time sequence. In saying so, one should hasten to add the time sequence is correct, except in the case of Cilappatikaram. The amended serialisation would be that Cilappatikaram is pre-pallavan i.e. pre - 700 A.D. and was written about 450 - 550 A.D. This would necessitate, without dislocating the basic chronological sequence of the literary works.

NOTES

1. The writer wishes to thank Thiru. S. S. Ramasamy, Vaiyapuri Pillai's son-in-law, for readily discussing some aspects of Vaiyapuri Pillai's biography, and Thiru. T.M.C. Ragunathan and Thiru. R. Parthasarathy for the encouragement they gave. Thiru. Parthasarathy's comments on the first draft were very helpful.
2. Zvelabil K. *The smile of Murugan on Tamil literature of South India.* Leiden 1973 P 339.
3. For a fuller biography of Vaiyapuri Pillai see Sarojini. V. Vaiyapuri Pillai Valkaikkurippukal, Madras, 1957 (Tamil).
4. I am grateful to Prof. V.I. Subraminiam for giving this information.
5. Rm. Sundaram, *Vaiyapuri Pillaiyin Aivu Muraiyum Tiranum* in his *Col. Putitu Cuvai Putitu-Madras-1978.*
6. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai Akarati Ninaivukal - (1959) Madras - p 7.
7. No effort has yet been made to trace the textual history of the major literary works in Tamil
8. Sarojini V. op. cit. Nilakanta Sastri K. A. *A Comprehensive History of India.* Orient Longmans.
9. Vaiyapuri Pillai. S. presidential Address; All India Oriental conference- Thirteenth Session : Nagpur University-1946 pp 125-6 (emphasis added).
10. Sivathamby K and Mary. A. "*Bharathi Maraiyu mutal Mahakavi Varai*" N.C.B.H. Madras 1984.

11. Vaiyapuri Pillai - *Tamilccutar Manikal* - Madras 1952-pp 61-80. Vaiyapur Pillai - Kaviya Kalam - Madras 1957 pp-95-164.
12. Shekhar L. Sanskrit Drama.
13. Sivathamby K. *Vaiyapuri Pillai's dating of Cilappatikaram in Vidyodaya Journal of Arts Seicnce and letters*. Vol 5 No. 182-1972/76. Nugegodai Sri Lanka.
14. Subramanian V. I. *Landmarks in the history of Tamil literature*. paper presented to IATR - IInd conference Madras 1968.
- 14(A) Leopald Von Ranke : A German Pragmatists - Historiographer who "insisted on systematised erudition in-exorable logic a scientific attention to the arrangements of facts in next catagories". "The gate way of History"- Allan Navini p 42.
15. Sivathamby K. "Understanding the Dravidian Movement-problems and perspectives" - Keynote paper at the seminar on the Dravidian Movement in Tamilnadu" organized by N.C.B.H. Madras-Feb. 1983.
16. *Tamilccutar manikal* - Madras 1952 - p. 63.
17. Vaiyapuri Pillai S. *Kaviyakalam* - Madras 1957, P.141.
18. Vaiyapuri Pillai S. *History of Tamil Language and Literature* - Madras- 1956. p. 153.
19. See Rm. Sundaram - op.cit Sivathamby K. loc. cit. Arunachalam.p. *Cilappatkaraccintanai*
20. *Tamilccutarmanikal* p.38. Currently the view is that Tolkappiyam is not a work of unitary authorship. Zvelabil-op cit.
21. Devaneyan.G. *Thamil Ilakkiya Varalaru* North Arcot - July 1979 in a note. "Those who are qualified to write a history of Tamil literature" coming prior to the introduction to the book. (not paged)
22. *ibid* p. 277
23. Varadarajan M. *The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature*. Madras - 1957.
24. Manikam V. Sp. *The Tamil Concept of love*. Madras 1962.
25. Subramanian N. *Sangam Polity*. London 1966. p 30-32.
26. Subramanian N. *An Introduct;on to Tam l Literature* - Madras 1981. p. 95.
27. Mahadevan I. *Tamil Brahmi inception of the Cankam Age*. IATR (Madras) 1968.
28. *ibid*.

29. Hart III G. L. *The poems of Ancient Tamil*. Berkley. 1975 p. 252. It would be interesting to know of Madhivanan's comment on Vaiyapuri Pillai's statement referred to in the body of this work. Madhivanan who has done a Tamil translation of the Sattasai and classified them thematically as is done traditionally in the case of Akam poems, makes a sneering reference to the fact Vaiyapuri Pillai has said Sattasi as Sanskrit literature (overlooking another-fact that Vaiyapuri Pillai does refer to Maharashtri Prakrit) and goes on to say the following :

"The dimensions and repercussions of literary prevarications of truth on hearsay evidences have not only misled Tamil scholars and reading public, but also tend to fantastic concept of the perpetual literary mortgage of Tamil language to Sanskrit not warranted by historical evidences and facts. For the benefit of such men in Tamil literary world, I affirm that I adopted appropriate Tamil literary thematic classifications in these love poems when rendering these translations from original Prakrit work."...

(Madhivanan, R. *Antiranattu Akananuru* - Madras. 1978. pp VI—VII) This is an apt illustration of the type of attack Vaiyapuri Pillai had to face. As has been already made clear, the cause for all this 'righteous indignation' was because Vaiyapuri Pillai has said that Sanskrit too has poems of the Akam type. This quotation is also representative of the polemical stance and the sense of bravado displayed by some Tamil publicists when they were able to challenge Vaiyapuri Pillai successfully.

30. For the contents and extent of the discipline of Literary History see Sivathamby K.- "*Literary History in Tamil - a Historiographical Analysis*"- Tamil University, Thanjavur. 1986
31. Sivathamby. K.- "He responded to the call of Indian Historiography" in TAMILARAM. - a volume of tributes to the memory of Fr. X. S. Thaninayagam Jaffna 1983 p.54 (emphasis added).
32. Chatterjee S. K. Dravidian - *Annamalai agar* 1965 - p.49.
33. Cf. Sastri. K.A.N. called the Pre-Aryan culture in Tamil Nadu as "rather primitive and poorish" - *Culture of History of the Tamils* - Calcutta 1966-p 7. and contrast this with the writings Kamil Zvelabii and the Allchins.
34. For a description of the activities on the field of Indian historiographical studies, see Morrison, M.Barrie, "Sources, Methods and concept in Early Indian History" in *Pacific Affairs*. VI XLI NO. 1968 (USA).

35. Zvelabil.K. *The Smile of Murugan* - Leiden. 1973. p.4. (emphasis added).
36. Allchin F.R. *Neolithic cattle keepers of South India*. 1963-p 110.
37. Hart III G. L. *The Poems of Ancient Tamil Society*. Berkely 1975 p. 252.
38. *ibid.* (It is important to note that Basham has also referred to the common origin of both. He of course, locates it in the common folk song. - Basham. A.L. *Wonder that was India* - London. 1954 p 461. It is worth mentioning here the present writer has argued "that the origins of Akam poetry lie in the primitive songs of ancient South India and that the evidence for the antiquity and the continuity are seen in Hala's Saptasutaka and Toda Oral poetry").
39. Hardy, Friedhelm, *VIRHABHAKTHI - The Early History of Krsna Devotion in South India*. Oxford. Delhi 1988.
40. Kailasapathy. k. *Tamil Heroic Poetry*. Oxford - London 1968. Vaiyapuri Pillai - Kaviya Kalam p. 7i.
41. Sivathamby K. *Drama in Ancient Tamil Society* - NCBH P Ltd., Madras, 1981.