

Notes on the
seven Pagodas

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NOTES ON THE SEVEN PAGODAS.

I.

A VISIT TO THE SEVEN PAGODAS—FIFTY YEARS AGO.¹

[1875.]

By SIR RICHARD C. TEMPLE, Bt.

I have at last been able to accomplish an object I have long cherished—that of visiting the celebrated remains known to Europeans as the Seven Pagodas, and to the natives of Madras as Mâvalivaram. As so much has already been written about these remains, it may seem superfluous to write anything more on the subject now, but it must be remembered that many years have elapsed since any account has been given of the Seven Pagodas; and some, though not many, changes have taken place in the contour of the country, and in the remains themselves. The late Captain Carr, as late as 1868, in editing the admirable papers of his predecessors in the examination of the remains, in his *Descriptive and Historical Papers relating to the Seven Pagodas*, gives no special account of their state at that time, and I am not aware of the existence of any later papers. Therefore, practically speaking, no account has been given of them since the dates at which his predecessors wrote. Of these, Mr. Chambers wrote in 1788, Mr. Goldingham in 1798, Dr. Babington in 1828, Mr. Braddock in 1840, Messrs. Mahon and Taylor, and Sir Walter Elliot in 1844 and Mr. Gubbins in 1853. Of the different accounts given, that of Mr. Chambers was written from memory; that of Mr. Goldingham is strictly what he has named it, *Some Account of the Sculptures at Mahabalipuram*, and is of little use in guiding the visitor; that of Dr. Babington is strictly scientific; and it is not till we come to Mr. Braddock's *Guide to the Sculptures, Excavations and other remarkable Objects at Mamallapur*, with the notes of Mr. Mahon, Mr. Taylor and Sir Walter Elliot, that we come to an account of these ruins that will really guide the visitor who has but a limited space of time to give to their exploration. Mr. Gubbins' account, again, is chiefly limited to scientific and archaeological discussion, and so may be classed in the same catalogue as that of Messrs. Chambers, Goldingham and Babington. So we may say that, in visiting the Pagodas with such lights as we have, we are visiting them by the light of 35 years ago [in 1875]. Not that that is not quite sufficient for those who can spare some days to the exploration of the place, so admirable is it; but the visitor who has only a day or so—or, as in my case, only one clear day—to devote to that purpose, will find that he will be somewhat puzzled by the descriptions given him. These considerations have emboldened me to give an account of my experiences during my short visit.

By what means visitors in former years used to reach the Seven Pagodas I have not discovered, but at the present day [1875] the best mode of reaching them is by boat through the Southern Canal; leaving Madras near the Adyar Bridge, and arriving at Mâvalivaram at a short distance from the Temples in from 9 to 12 hours; the distance being 28 miles. If the journey be made by night—and, especially, if by a moonlight night—it will be found to be a very pleasant one. For those who are not overcome by the enervating habits which the climate and customs of Madras so quickly produce, I do not think it necessary to take a tent, as shelter from the sun and the dews can be procured in a *mantapam* in the immediate neighbourhood of the remains; nor do I think it necessary to carry much in the way of food, as, although there is no bazaar in the place, fowls, fresh eggs, milk and rice can be easily procured, as well as cocoanut milk: and the water of the place is excellent. All liquor that may be required must of course be taken with one. I may add that those who wish to see all that can be seen, and have only one day to spare, must be prepared to go out a great deal in the sun, and that, unless their own knowledge of Hindoo mythology and sculpture is such as to render it unnecessary, they should not go there without a previous

¹ From the *Madras Times*, 4, 6, 9 Feb. 1875.

careful perusal of Captain Carr's book.² If they do, I may confidently state that they will not be disappointed in all they see.

For the reasons above given, I will here follow Mr. Braddock in his clearly-written and in every way admirable description of the Seven Pagodas, following also Colonel Mackenzie's plan of Mamallaipur made in 1808, which, for all practical purposes, is as useful now as it was when made. The Southern canal runs almost parallel with the coast, or N. and S., and the boat stops at a point almost opposite the quarries marked in Colonel Mackenzie's map, which are distant from the canal, I should say, about 100 yards. These quarries are still worked, and the difference between the old and modern style of working the rocks, which will be presently referred to, can here be seen. The canal runs along what is marked as the Eastern boundary of the "Marsh," (still in existence), shown in Colonel Mackenzie's map. The visitor should land, if possible at daybreak, and take a path running due east or at right angles to the canal, leaving the quarries on his right. To the south or right of the quarries are some small rock-cut temples, which will hereafter be referred to. These he had better leave alone for the present, and keep straight on passing through a grove of palms till he comes to the low hill of granite rocks on which the sculptures are cut. He should then keep to his left, and resist the temptation to examine what he may see on the way till he reaches the Sudra village, (not shown in the map), to the north of the hill. The reason I urge this is, that Mr. Braddock commences his examination from the north, and the various sights are carefully numbered in the map, and in his account so as to correspond exactly from north to south. Moreover, I hold that, without this or some such account, it would be useless to try and make a satisfactory examination of the ruins in a limited time. As I have no desire to reproduce Mr. Braddock's account in my own words, I will leave the intending visitor to his guidance, merely pointing out to him where changes have taken place, and any remarks Mr. Braddock has made which may be inapplicable to the place now, or which may be calculated to mislead the reader who has never seen the ruins before.

Before proceeding further, I will remark on the variety of the names given to the place. I will not enter into the origin of the name "Seven Pagodas"—already discussed at length by several writers—but will merely point out that, as far as the number of temples is concerned, it is a misnomer. There are not now—and probably never were—"Seven Pagodas;" and the visitor must not expect to meet with anything likely to give him such an idea. With regard to the native names of Mavalivaram, Mahabalipuram, Mamallaipur, Mama-laipuram, I may mention that the first is the ordinary local name for the place; that the second is also a common native name for it, arising, like the first, from an apparently erroneous idea that Bali was worshipped here, whereas—as I think Mr. Gubbins has pointed out—the worship of Bali was confined to the West Coast. The next two names have been taken from inscriptions found on the rocks there, and depend on reading the inscription with two or one "l"—a trifling discrepancy which makes a vast difference as to the meaning of the word, and in the speculations based thereon. These names are subject to slight alterations, depending on whether their Sanscritic or Tamilian form be used. One name known for the place among the Brahmans of Madras, viz., Mahabalishwaram or Mavalishvaram has apparently escaped the notice of Captain Carr and his predecessors. This name meaning the temple of "the great god Bali" or of "the great powerful god" is identical with the well-known Mahabaleshwar, of the Bombay Presidency: but it has no interest attached to it beyond the resemblance.

To return to the examination of the temples. The visitor will find a well-kept modern-looking shrine close by the village above-mentioned, and immediately beyond the northern termination of the hill. This is Mr. Braddock's No. 1, and was in his day a "dilapidated

² *Descriptive and Historical Papers relating to the Seven Pagodas on the Coromandel Coast.* Edited by Captain M. W. Carr, Madras Staff Corps. Printed for the Government of Madras by Caleb Foster, Madras, 1869.

temple" with its "roofing exposed to the weather," "completely overshadowed with trees, which had taken root in the walls, and whose branches, forcing their way through the joints of the stones, had contributed much to its dilapidation and present ruinous appearance." All these picturesque growths have disappeared. It now stands by itself, is entirely repaired, and used as a place of worship. An old Brahman, apparently the "oldest inhabitant" of the place, whose age was computed at 90 years, though I should say 80 was the number nearest the mark, said it was repaired about 10 years ago. His name was, as far as I can recollect, "Hiyam-Ragwar Chary," and he told me that he had given much information to Captain Carr—a statement which, judging by what he seemed to know, was very far from being correct. He also said that the images originally in this temple were taken away to England. I may mention here that no statement of a local man can be received as true unless backed up by good authority, and for this fact there is none that I am aware of. Mr. Braddock says nothing on this subject. No. 2, (I am referring, and shall subsequently refer, to Mr. Braddock's numbering, which will be found to correspond with the numbers in the copy of Colonel Mackenzie's maps in Captain Carr's work) or the image of the Monkeys will be found now to be entirely exhumed. Lord Napier, the late Governor of Madras, had it dug out of the sand, and placed on a stone bed, about four years ago [in 1875]. It is joined to its bed or pedestal by rough shell *chunam*. I may here mention that all my information comes from the Brahmans living in the place, and, as above stated, must be only taken as true with certain reservations. I am open to correction on these points and shall be glad of it if I have misstated facts.

The next object Mr. Braddock refers to, or No. 3, is the curious rock named locally "Krishna's Pat of Butter." This is on the *Eastern* face of the hill, and some little distance from the Monkeys, or No. 2. This numbering is, I think, a mistake, and likely to lead to confusion, because No. 4 is on the *Western* face of the hill, and close to the Monkeys. If the visitor bears this in mind, No. 4 will be easily found. In examining No. 4, I found great difficulty in discovering one object mentioned by Mr. Braddock. He says after describing the three large excavated niches to be found here, "The rock faces the north-west; and to the right or south of it is an imperfect representation of Durga eight-headed and trampling under foot the head of Mahishasura." It was the word "south" that misled me, to which may be added the imperfection of the representation. I kept going to the south face of the rock, whereas the figures were eventually found adjoining the niches abovementioned, so closely as to form part of them. I may say that the local Brahmans on this, as on many other points, were utterly unable to give any information or assistance. One's idea of Durga in connection with Mahishasura is a picture full of action, whereas this representation is of a still upright figure of Durga standing on a buffalo's head (Mahishasura). There is a well-sculptured picture of the same subject in No. 19, which is full of life and action. I may here remark that some modern, and apparently wanton, blasting operations have well nigh destroyed these valuable remains. A few yards to the right and south-west of No. 4—and not mentioned by Mr. Braddock—are some partially sculptured rocks called by the Brahmans "Bhima's cooking place." The work on this and on many other unfinished sculptures gives us an idea as to the ancient mode of preparing the rock for sculpture, *i.e.*, of cutting it into a vertical plane. Apparently they first drove in lines across each other about a foot apart, so as to leave squares between them deep enough to enable them to split off the intervening square; this tedious process is now changed for the modern drilling of square holes in the required line about an inch deep and a few inches apart, and then splitting the rock vertically by gunpowder. All over these rocks will be found traces of recent quarrying as the stone is still used for the purpose of building temples in several places in the neighbourhood.

Passing on to No. 8, Mr. Braddock remarks that in his day the deity-stone (Ganesa) was worshipped every Friday: such is still the case. Of No. 9, there is nothing new to

describe, excepting to note the ignorance of the Brahmans connected with the place at the present day. In Mr. Chambers', Mr. Goldingham's and Dr. Babington's time, the Brahmans seem to have known something of the stories connected with the sculptures; to say nothing of those mentioned by Mrs. Graham in her account in the early part of this [19th] century: now they may be safely said to know nothing. With regard to this subject, the invariable employment of the Sanscritic form of the names of the deities to whom these sculptures refer, in all the accounts here mentioned, is likely to puzzle the visitor, and to render it almost impossible to understand the local Brahmans' accounts, as they invariably employ their Tamil names: also the use of the Sanscritic form of the words referring to the various parts of the sacred objects renders it difficult to explain what is required to be shown, as uneducated people are well known to be unable to understand a word unless pronounced exactly as they pronounce it. Thus, though there is no great difference between the Sanscrit "*simha* or *singha*," and the Tamil "*singham* or *singam*" (a lion), or, or as they pronounce it at Mawaliwaram, "*simham*,"³ the use of the word *simha* is totally unintelligible to the Brahmans. Again, I could find no one who knew where the Dolotsava *mantapam* was, though it was immediately shown me on asking for the Ūriādi *mantapam*. On the right side from the entrance of this excavation, an incident during the Vāmana (5th) Avatāra of Vishṇu is portrayed; the Brahmans knew nothing in explanation thereof but the bare story. On the left side is a representation of the Varāha (3rd) Avatāra of Vishṇu, about which the Brahmans' account differs greatly from Mr. Braddock's. They say that the figure on Vishṇu's knee is Bhūdevi (the Earth) whereas Mr. Braddock⁴ says it is merely a woman. But, of course, Mr. Braddock is far more likely to be correct than they are. Draupadi's bath (No. 10)—a rough irregular cistern sunk in the rock, is now quite dry—a fact which struck me as rather curious at this time of year (January). No. 11, representing Arjuna's Penance, may be considered one of the show-sights of the place; certainly, it is one of the most prominent. The figures are still clear in many places, and some of them are admirably carved. The figures of the native mermaids, if one may call them so (half woman—half serpent), in the cleft of the rock, are good. Lord Napier had the front of this sculpture cleared away to the depth of some eight or ten feet, so as to show the whole of it; at the foot of the excavation lies part of the broken tusk of one of the elephants in the sculpture. Lord Napier endeavoured to leave it fastened in its place, but without success. The tusk was broken in the days of Dr. Babington.

I must now mention what I consider the most disagreeable object at the Seven Pagodas. With the laudable object of keeping the sand from again filling up the excavated space in front of this sculpture, some one—who it was I did not care to enquire—has caused the sides of it to be bricked up, and railings to be placed round the top. But how has this been done? Bright and very modern *chunam* has been used to fasten the bricks, and the railings are in the most approved European style (blackened) with bright-white chunamed brick posts, after the manner of railings round a second-rate buṅgalow compound! The whole appears to be about as much in keeping with its surroundings as those trumpery shrines or baldacchini, so common in continental cathedrals, are with the noble buildings they disfigure.

To the left of this specimen of modern European art is a *chunam*-mill (if one may use the expression) quite new, and used when they are repairing the modern temple close by. This is immediately in front of another excavation (No. 12) in the rock beside Arjuna's Penance. This is now used as a place for holding *chunam*, three receptacles of brick for which were built in its verandah about four years ago [in 1875]. It is still used also, during wet weather, as a shelter for cattle—a purpose to which it was put in Mr. Braddock's days. The bricks used in constructing the *chunam* receptacles above referred to were obtained from the foundations of ancient buildings—a custom common in this place, as has been

³ This is merely the Sanskrit word with a Tamil affix.—S.K. ⁴ Braddock is wrong in this case.—S.K.

previously mentioned by Mr. Gubbins. Going southwards to the left, the visitor will come to the part edifice, part excavation, known now as Krishna's *mantapam*, but formerly as Krishna's choultry. This is immediately in front of the street of the Aggirâram or Brahman village, one side of which is formed by the modern temple. The figures in this excavation, which are indistinct and bad, are covered by an opaque or chalky light-blue mould formed by leakages through the rock. There are also abundant signs of its having been used as a choultry, for which purpose, I am told, it is still used occasionally. No. 14 on the top of the hill above the last mentioned object is a very handsome and solid structure. Had it been finished—for, as Captain Carr thinks (a supposition very likely to be correct), it is the commencement of a Gopuram, it would certainly have been the most commanding object in the place. Even in its present state, though not more than 10 feet in height, it is, from its position, the first seen object from a distance, except the small finished temple (No. 18) standing on a higher point not far distant. | This temple (No. 18) is difficult of access, and its visitors will be required to bring forth their climbing capabilities. Captain Carr says "the Brahmans call this the Arakkennei⁵ temple as one *ollock* (about 1½ gills) of oil used formerly to be expended daily for lighting it." I can only say that this name is now apparently utterly unknown, as none of even the older Brahmans seemed to have heard of it, or to recognise it even written down for them in Tamil. On the south-eastern face of the outermost rocks is a much worn representation of Arjuna's Penance. The figures on the right (north) side have, according to the Brahmans, been covered with *chunam*; but when, they do not know. The truth of this story is borne out by the fact, beside that such is not likely to have been the case, that a substance very like *chunam*, as far as I can judge, is peeling off the rocks in several places, and can be easily picked away with a stick.

The examination of the objects strictly belonging to the hill had now taken me four hours (from 6 till 10), of what I may safely term hard work. I therefore returned to the *Mantapam* above mentioned (of which anon), to rest and to take some food. I had yet before me the famous monolithic temples or *raihas*, to the south of the hill, and the temples on the sea shore, about 400 yards from the hill to the east. Of these, the former are considered by some the most valuable remains, and the latter the most interesting in the place.

As soon as I could get the Brahmans together again, I proceeded at about midday to examine the monolithic temples lying about a mile to the South of the hill. These temples run North and South, and are cut from rocks standing in what is now heavy sand. The walk thither in the sun was very hot and heavy, as, except in the immediate neighbourhood of the village, the whole place is covered with sand. The Eastern or sea face of the monoliths is much more imbedded in sand than the Western face. I shall still adhere to Mr. Braddock's numbering in remarking on these temples.

Close to No. 20 still stand the Lion and the Elephant, exactly in the state in which they were found by Mr. Braddock. The sand has encroached upon them not at all during these 35 years. The Brahmanî Bull, on the Eastern side of the temple, was in Mr. Braddock's day covered with sand as far as its head and neck. Lord Napier had it dug out—or rather had the sand dug from round it, so as to expose the whole of it—but since then the sand has again encroached upon it, and now only the head, hump and top of the back are visible. The whole piece of sculpture seems to be in some danger of being buried altogether unless taken care of. I would suggest that an excavation something like that in front of the Arjuna's Penance, above referred to, be made here.

Mr. Braddock remarks with regard to No. 9 (Ganesa's temple), which is a rock-cut temple similar to these, that it is "ornamental according to a style of architecture wholly different from that of this part of India in the present day. The tope is elliptical and bears considerable resemblance to the Gothic style." It seems to me to be odd that he should

⁵ This is really Alakkennei; also called Olakkennei as now.—S.K.

not have remarked that the roof of the largest of these monoliths (No. 23), known locally as Bhima's Ratha, is identical in shape with that of No. 9, being in the form of an elliptical or Gothic arch. No. 24, the southernmost temple, is that which has attracted most attention from scientific visitors, on account of the inscriptions found on it, good reproductions of which will be found in Mr. Goldingham's and in Dr. Babington's accounts. The visitor will experience considerable difficulty in finding his way to the upper galleries of this temple. Mr. Braddock in speaking of similar remains—(No. 7) about half a mile to the west of the hill and north-west of these monoliths—appears rather to detract from their value as being unfinished and less elaborate than these; but it seems to me to be well worth the while of the visitor to see them, though not in the order given by Mr. Braddock—for reasons given below—as there are no signs such as basement, loose rocks, etc., now left of these finished monoliths to show at a glance that they are such, whereas the unfinished bases of the others show very clearly how they were made. As the monoliths marked No. 7 are half-a-mile west of the hill, and consequently are far nearer the Canal than the other objects of interest, I would advise the visitor to take them last of all on his way back to his boat in the evening.

The visitor must now be prepared to encounter a hot and wearying walk across the sands to the temples by the sea, distant, in a North-easterly direction, about a mile from the monoliths, and a quarter of a mile due east of the Brahman village. The sea washes quite up to the outer wall of the largest of the two temples, and may be seen breaking at a short distance out over some hidden rocks. This is the site of the supposed "Wave-covered city of Bali," which, if it existed at all, has suffered as much at the hands of modern archaeological science as ever it did from the sea. On the roof of No. 26 may be seen two beams of wood, apparently as old as the temple itself, the remainder of the beams having been removed. The Brahman said that they are of sandal wood. The sight of these beams reminds one of the wonderful woodwork to be seen at the Caves of Karli; this, however, is somewhat exposed to the weather, whereas the Karli woodwork is in an exceptionally protected situation. The large *lingam* in this temple was broken, according to local tradition, by an English officer some 80 years ago [in 1875], who took away the top of it—an act of vandalism one finds it hard to forgive. Traces of *chunam* still remain in various parts of these buildings, which are protected from further encroachment by the sea by the piling up of a quantity of large stones on either side. No. 27, a sculpture of Mahishasura, is now washed at the base by every tide.

Going westwards towards the Brahman village about 150 yards due west of the last mentioned temples near the large tank, I saw a *lingam* and *yonis* lying on the ground. They had been dug up out of the sand close by from a depth of about 3 feet by some boys about a year ago [in 1875]. They were as usual, of basalt, well carved and polished and in a good state of preservation. Lying near them, and taken from the same place, was a rough and coarse piece of granite sculpture, representing apparently Siva, with four arms, seated. There are two smaller figures over either shoulder of the principal one. The stone is $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet long and $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet broad. The *lingam* is 2 feet in length, and the *yonis* $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet long from lip to back, and $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet broad. Passing on to the Dolotsava or Uriadi *mantapam*, I noticed that its *kalaśa* or pinnacle was of brick, and much decayed. This *mantapam* stands on the eastern side of the street running north and south, and connecting the Brahman with the Sudra village. On the western side of this street, and immediately opposite the *mantapam*, is the commencement of the Gopuram of the modern temple, never finished and very like in appearance to the foundations (No. 14) above mentioned, though not so handsome. This street is bounded on the north by a street running east and west along the Sudra village, leading to the northern end of the sculptured hill, and immediately opposite the termination of the first-mentioned street is the Gangana *mantapam*, at which I put up. But of this presently, passing into the outer court of the modern temple through the unfinished

Gopuram, I saw a quantity of sixteen-sided pillars and roofing stones lying about. These were said to come from a small ruined temple on the right of the outer court, and from a small four-pillared *mantapam* in front of the inner court of the large temple. The Brahman said that the ruined temple above referred to was destroyed by the weight of a banyan tree growing on its roof about twenty years ago [in 1875], which broke through the roof and brought much of the wall with it. It is undergoing repair by slow degrees, but I should say that its prospects of surviving for many years are limited, as I remarked that some roots of plants had already found their way between the interstices of the newly-laid stones. A small well-carved image of Vishnu on a slab of granite was found in this temple, and is now set up outside it. The face and attitude are of the ordinary Buddhist type so common in Burmah; and it is only by the liberal distribution about the sculpture of the marks peculiar to Vishnu that the identity of the figure is proved.

It was now past 3 p.m. and I had seen everything that Mr. Braddock had described, and, though I had been unable to visit the objects of interest noticed by Mr. Taylor and Sir Walter Elliot, which lie at some distance from the village, I felt that I had done enough for one day, and that I might now legitimately take some rest. I therefore retired to the Ganga *mantapam*. This *mantapam* was built some sixty years ago [in 1875] by a wealthy man, and the stones used in its construction were, according to the Brahmans, taken from the temples and buildings about. Three of these stones are inscribed, but the inscriptions are very faint. One of them is about 4 feet from the ground, the other two are immediately under the roof. The inscription I saw is in Tamil, but is too faint for a hasty reading. While sitting in this *mantapam* I collected some forty old coins from the boys of the village. They say that they find them at a place called Cassimode about a mile distant. They are found in the sand during wet weather, but not, as far as I could understand, on the sea shore itself. But how far these statements are true, I am not in a position to judge. I may mention however that three of these coins I bought were *cash* (much worn) issued by the East India Company, bearing date of about 100 years since. Captain Newbold says, in favour of his argument of the existence of a submerged city here, that Chinese and other coins are often washed ashore during storms; but I should be sorry to assert that the coins shown me hardly supported this theory. All the coins brought me were of copper.

An incident illustrative of the native character occurred here. The old Brahman above mentioned had stumped about after me everywhere, always turning up about ten minutes after I had arrived at any point requiring lengthy examination. How the old man managed to do so I don't know, as my wanderings covered a considerable space of ground. In the end he, of course, begged for some money, and I gave him a rupee in consideration of his great age and the exertion he had undergone, not to mention the wonderful tales he insisted in relating about every place I visited. The village Munsiff afterwards told me he was the rich man of the place, and worth Rs. 10,000 prudently stored in a Madras Bank.

A little to the east and south of this *mantapam*, on a mound covering the ruins of an old temple, is a large basalt *lingam* in the open air opposite seven rough iron sculptures in granite of some village gods. These are from 2 to 4½ feet in height: the *lingam*, which is partly hidden in the ground, is said to be 9 feet in length. At about 5 p.m. I started for my boat, taking the monoliths (No. 7) above-mentioned on my way. I was accompanied by a rabble of hungry Brahmans, two of whom had instruments—I won't say of music—with which they kept up a disagreeable discord, in the desultory manner peculiar to the natives, until my departure. One of these produced a sound something like the drone of a bagpipe, and the other was played with notes sounding somewhat like those of a flute out of tune. They said they were playing English airs, but I can't say I recognised them. During my journey back to Madras, the wind was in my favour, and I consequently arrived at the Adyar Bridge at about three in the morning, having experienced a pleasant ending to a very pleasant and interesting trip.

II.

NOTES ON THE SEVEN PAGODAS.

By R. GOPALAN, M.A.

This celebrated group of monolithic and structural monuments by their proximity to Madras has been visited more often by travellers and visitors than any other single group of monuments in India. There exist as a result numbers of descriptions of the monuments in this locality, some of which, such as the paper of William Chambers on the "Sculptures and Ruins of Mavalivaram" and that of J. Goldingham were published in the *Asiatic Researches* as early as the close of the 18th century. The more prominent among the visitors to the place in the first half of the 19th century were Colonel Colin Mackenzie, whose collection includes⁶ detailed plans of the monuments as well as a description of the sculptures, and Messrs. Babington, Braddock, Taylor, Elliot and Gubbins, whose impressions have been published in the account of the place published by Captain Carr in 1868 entitled *Descriptive and historical papers relating to the Seven Pagodas*. Since then many others have visited the place including Fergusson, Burgess, and the members of the Archæological Survey and those of the Epigraphical Department. Descriptions of the monuments here and notices of the epigraphs appear in the *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, *The Cave Temples of India*, *South Indian Inscriptions* (vol. I), *the Epigraphia Indica* (vol. X), and the *Annual Reports* of the Superintendent for Archæology and Epigraphy (Southern circle). An interesting descriptive paper on the monuments of the place with plan and details appeared in vol. 26 of the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (pp. 82-232) from the pen of Lt.-Col. R. B. Branfill, G.T.S.; Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil in his *Archæologie du Sud de l'Inde* has an interesting chapter on the evolution of these monuments and their age (675-112). More recently a hand-book dealing with the monuments was published by Mr. Coombes with numerous illustrations. The monuments and their iconographical interest formed the subject of a learned paper by Dr. Vogel in the pages of the *Annual Survey of the Director-General of Archæology*. (1913). To these accounts may be added the account on the *Antiquities of Mahabalipur* by Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, embodying the impression of his visits and examination of the monuments there in 1917 (*Indian Antiquary* for 1917).

The monuments at the Seven-Pagodas are situated on the sea-shore about 35 miles south of Madras and about 5 miles north of the old Dutch settlement of Sadras. The place is popularly known as Mahābalipuram, Māvalivaram and Mahābalēsvaram, and is familiar to European visitors as the Seven Pagodas. How the visitors arrived here in early times is unknown. Presumably they took the high road from Chingleput to Tirukkalukunram, which is about 9 miles in length and reaches Mahābalipuram from the latter place. This road must have evidently existed in the seventh century A.D., in the days of Narasimhavarman I, the Mahāmalla, and is apparently alluded to by the well-known Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang, when he described the city of Kānchī as extending to the coast. An alternative to this route which is sometimes preferred is the boat-journey, which can be done from the Adyar bridge near Madras, through the Buckingham Canal and lasts about ten hours or so. One can also nowadays reach the Seven Pagodas in a few hours by motor from Madras, taking the Chingleput-Tirukkalukunram route. By whatever means the journey is pursued the visitor may rest assured that there are enough monuments to compensate for any trouble or inconvenience he may have to undergo to reach the place.

⁶ Col. Mackenzie visited the monuments in 1816 and has left a collection of 37 drawings of the sculpture of the place which are now in England.

Before giving an account of the monuments themselves it is necessary to say something about the origin of the name and the historical aspect of the locality in order to help to a better understanding of the monuments. The actual age and name of the place are the subjects of considerable amount of controversy among scholars and there exist various opinions thereon, some of which may be mentioned here. According to the version of the elders of the village it is the reputed capital of Mahâbalichakravarti and is therefore known as Mahâbalipuram. But careful investigation of the inscriptions of the locality commencing from the eighth century A.D. have shown that the place is invariably called in epigraphic records Mâmallapuram and never once Mahâbalipuram. It is therefore probable that the forms of the name which include the word Bali in one spelling or other are based on false etymology. According to the epigraphists, Venkayya and Hultzsch, the modern name Mahâbalipuram is really a corruption of the name Mahâmallapuram, by which name the place was originally called. It is contended that the place had no existence prior to the days of Narasimhavarman I *alias* Mahâmalla (*circa* A.D. 640), who is credited by these to have founded it and named it after himself. This is the view adopted by the official archæologists and a few private scholars as Professor Jouveau-Dubreuil also. But recent discoveries at this place and the testimony of Vaishṇava religious literature show that this view is not correct. There is no positive evidence to warrant the conclusion that Mâmallapuram had no existence prior to the reign of Narasimhavarman I. On the other hand there are certain facts which lead us to infer that it must have continued to exist centuries before the days of Mahâmalla. In the hymns of Tirumangai-Āṭvār and in the Vaishṇava literature the place is invariably called Mallai, Kadanmallai,⁷ and Mallāpuri, and is the reputed birth-place of Bhūtattu-Āṭvār, who has mentioned it in his work. He is one of the earliest of the Vaishṇava saints and has been assigned to the second or third century A.D. The fact that the place is referred to as a great port in the hymns of Tirumangai-Āṭvār (8th century) agrees with the testimony furnished by classical writers, and it is noticeable that the name Mallai has a close resemblance to the southern port Maliarpha mentioned by Ptolemy. Apart from this, one of the monolithic caves known as the Ādivarâhasvâmi Temple has been found to contain in bas-relief the statues of two early kings of the Pallava dynasty who preceded Narasimhavarman I. [This discovery alone, if the sculptures are contemporary with the persons whom they represent, would at least carry the age of this particular monument to the end of the fifth or the commencement of the sixth century, when one of these kings is believed to have ruled. These two kings are respectively Simhavishṇu, the well-known contemporary of Bhâravi, and his son Mahēndravarman I, the illustrious emperor poet, musician and warrior. The identity of these two individuals has been put beyond the shadow of a doubt by the description given of them in the label above their heads.

Two other theories about the origin of the place are not correct. One of them seeks to translate the name of the place as "the city of the great-mountain" by taking the name as Mahâmalaipuram. Dr. Babington fell into this error by an inaccurate reading of one of the inscriptions, which was pointed out by the Rev. Mr. Taylor in one of the papers included in Captain Carr's book (p. 111). According to Lewis Rice the place is called Mâvalivaram, because it was occupied by Mâvalis.⁸ A more satisfactory explanation, however, appears to be that the place which had been known from early times as Mallai was renamed Mahâmallapuram in the days of Narasimhavarman I who beautified it. But there is nothing to prevent the possibility that one of the earlier kings, such as Simhavishṇu, had a similar surname and renamed the place even in his day.

The visitor, having arrived at the locality, usually commences his examination of the monuments in any order he may find suitable. Earlier visitors, such as Braddock⁹ and

⁷ *Periya Tirumôli*, II, 5 & 6.

⁸ *Mysore Gazetteer*, I, 301.

⁹ *Mad. Jour. Lit. & Sci.*, 1844, p. 12 ff.

others, began from the extreme north of the village from a place known as Gangonnaman-dapam (Gangaikondānmanṭapam), and proceeded southward, taking the caves and bas-reliefs indiscriminately on their way finally reaching the Rathas on the extreme south, and separately taking the Shore Temples and the remains at Sāluvankuppam. The monuments are as a matter of fact scattered without any order, and the caves in particular are excavated wherever a suitable piece of rock could be found on both sides of the ridge of hills, so that it becomes extremely difficult to hit on any scientific order of describing them. Neither is it possible to describe them according to their relative importance, as in the matter of richness of ornamentation they are uniformly the same, with the exception of one or two. The common classification of the Rathas, the caves and the structural temples have been usually followed, but in the following description, an attempt is made to describe the monuments from the extreme south in the manner in which the writer visited them during a stay of about six hours.

1 to 5. The Rathas. (Plates 1 to 4.)

The most important of the Rathas are situated about three-fourths of a mile south of the hill in which the caves have been excavated and about half-a-mile from the sea. They consist of five monolithic monuments probably connected, prior to their excavation, in the shape of a continuous ridge. That on the extreme south in the line of the four monoliths is known popularly as the Dharmarāja-Ratha or Yudhisṭhira-Ratha. Though unfinished like the rest it is one of the finest and most interesting of the group. Its dimensions are roughly 27 feet by 28 feet and 35 feet in height. It is a building of four stories arranged in a pyramidal form. Although it is associated with the name of Dharmarāja, a careful examination of the inscriptions of as well, as the bas reliefs in the interior, clearly shows that it was intended to be a Śaiva temple. Two of these inscriptions state that it was the Íśvara temple of Atyantakāma-Pallava, also called Raṇajaya. A large number of figures of the Hindu pantheon adorn the sides and the upper walls. The cell at the top row contains a bas-relief representation of Śiva as Somaskanda, with Pārvatī and Subrahmanya. As regards the age of the temple there is a slight difference of opinion. According to Dr. Hultzsch the Atyantakāma of the Dharmarājaratha inscription is no other than Narasiṃhavarman I, whose name also figures in the other epigraphs discovered here.¹⁰ Others, like the late Mr. Venkayya, held that Atyantakāma *alias* Raṇajaya, was Rājasimha = Narasiṃhavarman II, and attributed the monument to him. Among the Gods represented in the *ratha* we find Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva in their various characters, such as Ardhanārī. The lower storey contains representations of some figures with only two hands, which it may be presumed were intended to represent either the kings or others responsible for the excavation of the temple. Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar identifies one of these with Narasiṃhavarman I. (See Plate 7.)

Immediately adjoining the Dharmarājaratha the visitor notices an oblong 'waggon-roofed' building called Bhīmaratha, the dimensions of which are 48 feet in length, 25 in breadth and 26 feet in height and two storeyed. In the middle there is a rent in some parts three inches wide which is variously explained. According to Fergusson this is a result of unskilfulness on the part of the artist or mason working at the monument. Others think that this is due to a convulsion of nature, which overtook the monuments and explains their being unfinished. The northern verandah is not finished.

Adjoining the Bhīmaratha in the north is the Arjunaratha. It is also pyramidal in shape and is three storeyed. Its dimensions are 16 feet × 11 feet × 20 feet. Its roof is like that of the Bhīmaratha adorned with dormer windows, while the side and the back walls contain five niches with finely carved figures some of which may represent princes. The central niche at the back wall has a mounted figure on an elephant presumably that of Indra.

The most northern and the smallest of the temples is that known as Draupadhi Ratha. At the back wall is a cell in the group (measuring about 16 feet high and 11 feet square) containing a relief representation of a four-armed Goddess attended by armed *Ganas* and two kneeling figures whose identity is not known. This was identified by Fergusson with Lakshmi, while Dr. Vogel thinks it probably represents Durgā.

The fifth and the last of the rock-cut temples with apsidal termination is called Sahadeva Ratha and is in a most unfinished state. Its dimensions are 18 feet × 11 feet × 16 feet. It is a very interesting specimen of an apsidal temple and is three storied. It stands separated from the others and resembles a horse-shoe in shape. Near the Rathas stand an elephant and a lion, the former of which is nine feet in height, while the latter is much larger than a life-size. Both are cut out of single rock well executed and are singularly true to nature. One peculiar feature of these Rathas is that although they are situated very near the beach, they have not suffered appreciably from the corrosion of the sea air, which is attributable to the peculiar character of the granite here, as contrasted with that on the hill, which shows a considerable amount of decay.

6. The Varāha Cave.

Proceeding to the north from the *rathas* the visitor arrives, after about ten minutes' walk at a cave temple known as Varāhasvāmi-Shrine. Being still in use for worship, its interior is not accessible to non-Hindu visitors. This probably accounts for the fact that its sculptures and inscriptions have not been fully noticed before. In front of this rock-cut temple a modern *Mandapa* has been built, which prevents the interior from being seen from outside. The temple faces the west and the three sides of the cave contain bas-relief representations of Brahma, Vishṇu, Hārīhara, Gajalakshmi, eight-armed Durgā, and Paraśurāma. In the central wall in the interior we find a relief of the Varāha incarnation of Vishṇu, which is very much the same as a similar representation at the Varāha Mandapa in the north of the village to be noticed below. A little to the west are the figures noted above. The most important from a historical point of view are the sculptured figures of two kings, Simhavishṇu and Mahendra-varman I, represented here with their queens. This leads to the presumption that the Varāha Cave with its royal sculptures is contemporaneous with these kings, and belongs to the end of the sixth century. The cave contains inscriptions, the most ancient of which might belong to the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh century. On the floor of this cave is a Tamil inscription dated in the 65th year of Nandi-varman, the highest regnal year known in South Indian history. In his Memoir on the *Two Statues of Pallava kings and five Pallava inscriptions in a Rock-cut temple at Mahabalipuram* the late H. Krishna Sastriar gives a description of the bas-reliefs at this cave temple but seeks to assign a date to the sculptures considerably posterior to their real age.¹¹ (See Plates 5 & 6.)

7. The Mahīsa Mandapa. (Plate 8.)

About 150 yards towards the north-east of the Varāha Cave is a fine lofty cave temple of Śiva 33½ feet long, 13 feet high and 15 feet wide, known as the Mahīsa Mandapa or Yamapuri. On the southern wall there is a large bas-relief representation of Vishṇu reposing on Sēśha (Plate 9) and forms one of the most animated scenes in this cave. At the opposite end of this hall is another sculpture 12½ feet × 8 feet representing *Mahishāsura-vadha* (Plate 10). The spirited character of this representation especially of Durga which is executed with great skill and ability has arrested the attention of every visitor here. Babington felt that it was one of the most animated of Hindu sculptures he had ever seen. Goldingham said "the figure and action of the Goddess are executed in a masterly and spirited style," Lieut. Newbold found that "the best executed figure of the king of beasts is that on

¹¹ *Memoirs of the Arch. Sur. India* No. 26, p. 5.

which the Goddess Durgâ is seen mounted in the sculptured cave near the summit of the hill." Mahishâsura is here represented with a buffalo's head, but with a human body holding a large club with both hands and wearing the royal emblems. The figure of Durgâ is 5 feet high and mounted on a lion. The Goddess is eight-armed and carries a bow in the left arm, while the other arms bear bell, *chank*, sword, discus, etc. She is attended by eight *prathamâs* armed with swords and bucklers. It is probably this scene that has given the name to this cave, but it is in fact a Saiva Temple. This is evident from the relief on the back wall representing Śiva seated with Pârvatî and Subrahmanya at his side, the bull Nandi as well as Brahma and Vishṇu in the back-ground.

8. Olakkannêśvara Temple. (Plate 11.)

Above this cave dedicated to Śiva is an unfinished structural temple known as Olakkannêśvara temple. On account of its elevated position, occupying, as it does the highest part of the rocks, it was used at one time as a light house. Its dimensions are 22 feet by 16 feet and 16 feet in height and is one of the most conspicuous objects viewed from whichever part of the village around. It perhaps represents an attempt to complete what the original excavators commenced but is according to Burgess and Fergusson an erection of a *later age*.

9. Krishṇa Mandapam.

Nearly a furlong north of Mahiṣa-Mandapa and not far from the Zamindâr's Bungalow we find the Krishṇa Mandapa. This consists of a large porch erected in front of a great bas-relief, the principal representation of which measures 45 feet in length and 11 feet in height. It represents Krishṇa in the act of holding up the Hill of Govardhana. Besides Krishṇa are to be found his half-brother Balarâma and about twenty familiar figures of men, women and children and cows representing scenes at Gokula. In another part of the sculpture Krishṇa is represented playing on the flute. The execution of this panel is not as good as that of the Penance of Arjuna. Towards the northern end of this sculpture is a finely executed figure of a Bull in full relief. That of a cow in the middle, licking its calf while being milked, is equally good.

10. Penance of Arjuna. (Plates 12 to 15.)

Adjoining the Krishṇa Mandapa the visitor notices a huge sculptured rock on the eastern face of the hill representing the penance of Arjuna, or as some others have suggested of Bhagiratha. The scene is carved in two parts adjoining each other, the rock measuring 96 feet × 43 feet and about 30 feet in height. It is divided by a fissure, and the cleft is skilfully used to show a Nâga coming up from the depths of the earth. The principal scene is that of the Penance of Arjuna and represents the occasion of the appearance of Śiva to confer on him the much-coveted *astra* (the weapon *Pâśupata*). The southern part of the rock, which contains a four-armed god with attendant *Gaṇas*, is presumably intended to represent Śiva. To the left of the god is the emaciated figure of Arjuna, standing on the tip of his left foot and performing penance. Below him is a miniature representation of a temple in the Pallava style with a niche and figure of Vishṇu, near which are assembled about 13 or 14 human beings. The presence of deer, hares, lions, elephant, etc., clearly gives the scene the appearance of a hermitage. The upper part of the bas-relief on the other side represents the *Gandharvas*. Scholars have long doubted whether the scene depicted here really represents Arjuna's penance.¹² Dr. Vogel, who made a careful examination of this sculpture, thinks that all that is typical in that episode is absent here, and considers that the cleft in the centre is the true object of the whole sculpture. Sir John Marshall thinks that the real object of worship was probably a detached image standing in front of the rock, now lost. The suggestion has also been made that a sacred spring might have existed at this place. Following Mon. Victor Golubeau's surmise Jouveau-Dubreuil has made the suggestion (*Pall. Ant.*, vol. I, p. 64) that the scene really depicts Bhagiratha's Penance. This view is

¹² What is intended to represent is still a puzzle, Fergusson, *Hist. Ind. & East Arch.*, p. 341.

adopted by Mr. A. K. Coomaraswami. The subject is examined in detail by Mon. Goloubeau in the *Ars Asiatica* (vol. 3). Mr. A. H. Longhurst has fallen in with this view and offers some interesting remarks in the latest *Arch. Sur. An. Report* for 1924-5. This view appears quite untenable, as it does not explain several scenes in the panel, such as the boar-hunt, which clearly forms part of the story of Arjuna's Penance. The descent of the Ganges cannot moreover be represented in the novel manner indicated by the suggestion made by Jouveau-Dubreuil. This view is examined in detail in Prof. Krishnaswami Aiyangar's contribution, to which attention is invited. It is also noteworthy that in the duplicate copy of Arjuna's Penance at the foot of the hill, near the light-house, the Nāgas are omitted as well as the miniature temple, while the boar hunt is given prominence to. (Plate 33. *Pall. Arch.*, part II, by A. H. L.) The actual date of this relief is not known, but it may be presumed that it was probably inspired by Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya* composed towards the close of the sixth century A.D., when his view of Śiva's grace made a special appeal to the people, as is also seen by the references to this in the *Tēvāram* hymns.

11. Gaṇeśa Ratha. (Plate 16.)

Proceeding a little north of the bas-relief the visitor arrives at a little monolithic temple, removed by about three-quarters of a mile from the other Rathas in the south of the village. This is popularly known as the Gaṇeśa Ratha, although it was found to have nothing to do with this deity when excavated. Though small, it is a singularly elegant and highly ornamented temple, measuring 19 feet in length, 11 feet in breadth and 28 feet in height. It is in the same wagon-roofed style as the Bhīma Ratha, but is the most finished of the Rathas. It must have originally contained the *liṅga* of Śiva in the space which is now occupied by the figure of Gaṇeśa. It is in three storeys with very elegant details. As to its age, some idea can be got from the inscription in Pallava *grantha* incised on the back wall, which states that it was excavated by Atyantakāma Pallavā, and intended to be dedicated to Śiva. The inscription consists of 11 *ślokas* full of *śleṣha*. Atyantakāma has been identified by Dr. Hultzsch with Paramēśvaravarman I, whose name also occurs in the second verse of this inscription.¹³

12. Varāha, Vāmana and Other Sculptures. (Plates 17 & 18.)

Proceeding about 70 or 80 yards to the south of the Gaṇeśa temple we arrive at an excavation containing some of the most beautiful representations of deities in bas-relief. On the right-hand wall is a fine relief of the Vāmana Avatāra. This has been frequently described and admired, and bears a close resemblance to the same representation in the cave at Bādāmi. On the wall to the left is a representation of the Varāha or boar-incarnation of Vishṇu. Adjoining this is the bas-relief of Gajalakshmi. In the opinion of Havell this relief, like all other Māmallapuram sculptures, is treated with a freshness and directness which appeal to the European artists. On the back wall to the south is a representation of Durgā with her usual emblems and attendants. There are two *dvārapālas* outside the *garbhagrha*, though nothing is known as to which deity it was intended to describe.

13 (a), (b), (c). Krishṇa's Butter Ball, Lion-Throne, Etc. (Plates 19 & 20.)

In the middle of the hill and a little to the north of Gaṇeśa's temple is the large round piece of rock known as the "Butter-ball of Krishṇa." This is a loose mass of rock resting on a slope of the hill and measures about 25 feet high and 68 feet in circumference. Proceeding back to the south on the top of the hill the visitor notices the so-called Dharmarāja's lion throne, which is a rectangular polished stone-bed about 10 feet in length with the lion 18 inches high, 3 feet 6 inches in breadth, couchant on the south end. Not far from this, is the Bath of Draupadi situated in the middle of the hill. Other spots are shown such as the place where Bhīma is said to have cooked and washed rice. Towards the northern-most part of the hill are found representations of monkeys freeing themselves from vermin and not far from the Gangonḍamanḍapam.

14. Shore-Temple. (Plates 21 & 22.)

With the exception of the modern temple of Sthalaśayanasvāmi, the Dôlôtsava Mandapam and one or two smaller excavations in the hill, this account has included the more prominent monuments at the Seven Pagodas. The most important of the structural monuments lying on the sea side has yet to be dealt with. This is the Shore Temple lying at a distance of about half a mile east from the village on the seashore. It has been doubted in some quarters whether the Shore Temple is or is not a Pallava temple. The failure to discover any Pallava inscription here till recently has lent support to this view, although the references to Kshatriyasimhapallavêśvara, and Râjasimhapallavêśvara in the Chola inscriptions of this monument contain clearly an allusion to its Pallava origin. The doubt has been removed recently by the discovery of Grantha-Pallava inscriptions on the plinths of platforms excavated near it, which mention the surnames of Râjasimha and make a clear allusion that he was the ruling sovereign. As Kshatriyasimha is a well-known *biruda* of Rajasimha, it is now clear that the temple of Kshatriyasimhapallavêśvara of the Chola inscriptions is no other than the Shore Temple. It is therefore clear that the Shore Temple belongs to the close of the 7th century A.D. The more lofty of the two structures, which is in the more eastern direction, contained a huge granite *lingam*, sixteen sided, and on the *Garbagraha* the representation of Siva, in the Somaskanda attitude, with Pârvatî and Subrahmanya. The temple is originally believed to have been enclosed by seven walls. In a side chamber within the second wall lies a colossal figure of Mahâvishnu on the ground with his head to the south. In the other temple facing west there is a similar representation of Somaskanda on the back wall. Here we find a four-armed Siva, with high conical head-dress, seated and at his left side Pârvatî holding Subrahmanya on her left knee. On either side are found both Brahma and Vishnu with their respective emblems. There has been some doubt whether this temple was intended to be dedicated to both Siva and Vishnu, but reading the hymns of Tirumangai-Ālvâr about it, and comparing it with our observation, it seems that this temple, with the close proximity of Siva and Vishnu, answers to the description of the Ālvâr's Kadanmallai Talaśayanam. The Vishnu deity, mentioned as Pallikondaruliya-dêvar, seems to be the same as the Vishnu lying in one of the chambers, while the two other temples presumably represent the Râjasimha and Jalaśayana temples mentioned in the Chola inscriptions discovered in this temple. The marked similarity of this structure to the Kailâsanâtha temple at Kânchipuram and the Panamalai temple of Râjasimha, together with the inscriptions of this king discovered here, lend support to the view that the Shore Temple was probably built by Râjasimha towards the close of the seventh century A.D.

There is a local tradition that the greater part of the temple and city is submerged in the sea, which is said to have encroached the place. According to the account of Mr. Chambers (1798) "the natives of the place declared to the writer . . . that the more aged people among them remembered to have seen the tops of several pagodas far out into the sea ; which being covered with copper were particularly visible at sun-rise." But some of the subsequent writers have failed to believe in this account and have doubted whether the vicinity of the Shore Temple has suffered any encroachment from the ocean, especially as the rest of the Coromandel coast has risen from the sea. Mr. Gubbins, who visited the Seven Pagodas in 1853, is inclined to suspect this belief in a vague "wave-covered metropolis" of Bali and calls it one of the aerial castles of Indian tradition.

15. Other Monuments.

In this account the modern temple of Sthalaśayana Perumal, the Pidâriyamman Ratha, the Valayankuttai Ratha, the Gopi's Churn and a few other minor excavations, as well as the tiger caves at the sea-shore of Sâluvankuppam (Plate 23) about three miles to the north of the Seven-Pagodas, have been omitted.

III.

THE ANTIQUITIES OF MAHABALIPUR.¹⁴

BY PROF. S. KRISHNASWAMI AIYANGAR, M.A., (HONY.) PH.D.

Mahābalipuram, popularly known Māvalivaram, is a village about 20 miles east-south-east of Chingleput and lies in a narrow strip of land between the Buckingham Canal and the Sea. It is now a small hamlet with but a few houses, though it has in it a Vaishṇava temple of some importance and considerable antiquity. Excepting an old light-house and the bungalow of the Zamindar of Nallāttūr there is nothing to indicate that the place is of any consequence at present. It is nevertheless a place of very great importance to the Archæologist, since the monuments left there are regarded as at the very foundation of Dravidian civilization on its architectural side.

The monuments in this particular locality fall into three classes :—

- (1) Monolithic rock-cut shrines.
- (2) Excavation in the shape of caves of various kinds.
- (3) Structural buildings—such as temples.

‘If we do not know all we wish about the antiquities of Māmallapuram,’ says Fergusson,¹⁵ ‘it is not because attempts have not been made to supply the information. Situated on an open beach, within 32 miles of Madras, it has been more visited and often described than any other place in India. The first volume of the *Asiatic Researches* (1788) contained an exhaustive paper on them by Wm. Chambers. This was followed in the fifth (1798) by another by Mr. Goldingham. In the second volume of the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1830) there appeared what was then considered a most successful attempt to decipher the inscriptions there, by Dr. Guy Babington, accompanied by views of most of the sculptures. Before this however, in 1816, Colonel Colin Mackenzie had employed his staff to make detailed drawings of all the sculptures and architectural details, and he left a collection of about forty drawings, which are now in manuscript in the India Office. Like all such collections, without descriptive text, they are nearly useless for scientific purposes. The *Madras Journal* in 1844, contained a guide to the place by Lieutenant J. Braddock, with notes by the Rev. G. W. Mahon, the Rev. W. Taylor, and Sir Walter Elliot; and almost every Journal of every traveller in these parts contains some hint regarding them, or some attempt to describe and explain their peculiarities or beauties. With the exception of the Mackenzie MS. the most of these were collected in a volume in 1869 by a Lieutenant Carr, and published at the expense of the Madras Government, but, unfortunately, as too often happens, the editor selected had no general knowledge of the subject, nor had he apparently much local familiarity with the place. His work in consequence added nothing to our previous stores.’

Since then, however, a great deal more attention has been bestowed upon the place, by archæological and other experts in those branches of study to which in particular each turned his head or hand. Fergusson has embodied his architectural views in two monumental works: *The Cave Temples of India* and his *Hand-book on Indian and Eastern Architecture*, which has received the approval of, and revision by, James Burgess. Mr. Rea

¹⁴ Reprinted from *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XLVI, pp. 49-65.

¹⁵ *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, I, 328 (New Edn.).

Note.—This paper embodies the subject matter of two special University lectures delivered before the University of Madras in November, 1916. It gives me the greatest pleasure to acknowledge my obligations to Mr. A. H. Longhurst, Superintendent of Archæology, Madras Circle, for his ready kindness in allowing me the use of his photographic negatives and photographs, both for illustrating the lectures and the paper as it appears now. I am similarly obliged to Dr. F. H. Gravely for a few of the plates appearing in this.—S.K.

has brought out a book on Pallava architecture, on behalf of the Government of Madras. The Madras Epigraphists, Dr. Hultzsch and his successors, have done their part in deciphering and interpreting the inscriptions. Others have been equally busy. There is a handy and very useful guide book recently published by Mr. Coombes of the Education Department, better known by his connection with the Chingleput Reformatory.

Last of all, there is the work of the Professor at Pondicherry, Jouveau-Dubreuil, whose recent work on *South Indian Architecture and Iconography* has perforce to allot considerable space to this locality.

With such an array of expository effort extending over a whole century and more, it would be rash indeed to attempt any further exposition of the subject which, at best, could result only in adding 'another hue unto the rainbow.' It turns out happily that it is not so, because so far no one has succeeded in expounding what actually this place signifies in South Indian History. Even in respect of some of the details that have already been examined by archaeological specialists there has not been the co-ordination of evidence leading to conclusions for historical purposes. This it is proposed to attempt, with just the necessary amount of examination of various archaeological details for co-ordination with a view to the historical significance of the antiquities of Mahâbalipuram.

The modern name of the village is Mâvalivaram, or the Sanskritized Mahâbalipuram, the city of Mahâbali, the great emperor of the Asuras, who, legend has it, was too good and too powerful to be suffered by the gods gladly. The god Vishnu in his dwarf incarnation outwitted him. Praying for a gift of three feet of earth, he measured the nether and the other world in two, and demanded room for the third foot promised. Great Bali prayed that his humble head give the room demanded. When the foot of the Great One was placed upon it Bali sank under the earth, where he is said to reign supreme monarch of the world below. The unwary visitor to the shore-temple in the village is occasionally informed that the recumbent figure in the seaward chamber of the smaller shrine of the shore-temple is Bali on his couch.

There is a panel of Trivikrama (Plate 17) in the Varâhâvatâra cave and beyond this there is nothing particularly to associate this place with the demon-emperor Bali. This form of the name, perhaps, became familiar in connection with the dynasty which was known in the interior of this region as the Mahâbalis (Mâvalis popularly) or Bânas, with their capital at Tiruvallam in the North Arcot District, and with their territory taking in portions of Mysore also. So far as our knowledge of this dynasty goes at present, they seem to have flourished in the period intervening between the death of the last great Pallava king Nandivarman and the rise of the first great Chola king Parântaka. There is a reference to a Mahâbali ruler, who was the father-in-law of the reigning Chola king Killi in the *Manimékhalaï*¹⁶. This work has to be referred to a period anterior to the Pallavas, as even the late Rai Bahadur V. Venkayya¹⁷ allots the great Chola Karikâla to the sixth century A.D., postulating a period of interregnum between the great Pallava Dynasty and the dynasty that preceded it.

16 நெடியோன் குறளுருவாகி நிமிர்ந்துத
னடியிற் படியை யடக்கி யவன்னுள்
கீரிற் பெய்த மூரிவார் சிலை
மாவலி மருமான் சீர்கெழு திருமகன்
சீர்த்தி யென்னுந் திருத்தகு தேவி.

Manimékhalaï, Canto XIX, ll. 51-55.

17 ASR., 1906-7, p. 224, note 1.

In the days, however, of the great Pallava dynasty, the place was known as Māmalla-puram, generally taken to mean the city of Mahāmalla (Māmalla), the Pallava Narasimhavarman I. Tirumangai Ālvār refers to the city invariably as Mallai and has often the adjunct Kaḍal (Sea) before Mallai. In one verse he refers to the Pallava king Paramēśvaravarman as ‘Mallaiyarkōn’¹⁸ the king of ‘the ‘people of Mallai,’ or of the people ‘Mallar.’ The latter meaning is taken to find support in the expression *Mahāmallakulam* in lines 24 and 25 of the copper plate grant of the Chaulukya Vikramāditya¹⁹ I; but the expression Mahāmallakulam need not refer to a people, and probably refers to the family of Mahāmalla, the Pallava king Narasimhavarman of Kānchi.

The title Mahāmalla was the title assumed by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman²⁰ I. It is this Pallava king that sent out two naval expeditions to help his friend Mānavarma of Ceylon, who ruled the island from A.D. 691 to 726.²¹ Of the first invasion we have, in the chronicle, ‘Mānavarma then took ship and crossed over the sea (with his army) and having made a fast voyage, landed at Lanka with his forces, and began to subdue the country (around.)’ The following passage contains a more detailed reference to the second. And Narasimha thus thought within himself: “This my friend, who seeketh most resolutely after fame, hath spent now many years of his life in my service that so he might get back his kingdom. And lo! he will soon have grown old. How then can I now reign (in comfort) and see him (thus miserable)? Assuredly I shall this time restore to him his kingdom by sending my army thither. Else what advantageth my life to me?” Thereupon the king collected his army together, and having equipped it well gave Mānavarma all things he desired to have, and himself accompanied the army to the sea-coast, where a mighty array of ships of burden, gaily ornamented, had been prepared for them. And when the king reached the harbour he gave orders to all his officers that they should embark and accompany Mānavarma, but they all showed unwillingness to do so (without their king).

‘And Narasimha, having pondered well over the matter, resolved on this strategem. Keeping himself so that his army might not see him, he gave over to Mānavarma all his retinue and insignia of royalty together with the ornaments with which he adorned his person, and sent him (secretly) on board the ship, bidding him take the royal drum, the *koffa*, with him, and sound it from the deck of the vessel. And Mānavarma did as he was directed; and the soldiers thinking that it was the king (who was sounding the call), embarked leaving him alone on the land. Then Māna began his voyage with the army and all the material of war, which, with the ships in which they were borne, was like unto a city floating down the sea. And in due time he reached the port and disembarked with the army.’

In regard to these transactions the following details have to be noted. Mānavarma came to India some time after the accession to the throne of Hattadatha II (A.D. 664). He lived for sometime alone, and then brought his wife over and she had by him four sons (say ten or twelve years). Then took place the war between Narasimha and the Vallabha (who must be Pulakesin or Pulikesin II). This war and the destruction of Vallabha’s capital Vātāpi are ascribed to the year A.D. 642 by Dr. Fleet. Then took place the first expedition to Ceylon in aid of Mānavarma. It proved a failure and Mānavarma returned and waited till four kings had ruled in Ceylon. In other words he had to bide his time during the rest of the reign of Hattadatha II and the reigns of his successors till, in A.D. 691, he was able to reinstall himself on the throne in Anurādhapura. He ruled afterwards for thirty-five years. Assuming that he came to India a young man, about 65 years of active life seem possible; but there is a discrepancy of about 35 years between the Ceylonese and Indian chronology. Let that pass. The synchronism is near enough, notwithstanding this discrepancy, to justify this assumption that Mānavarma and Narasimhavarman I. Mahāmalla were contemporaries.

¹⁸ *Periya Tirumoli*, 2nd Ten. 9th Decad. Stanza 1.

¹⁹ *Asie*, vol. VI, pp 75-78.

²⁰ *ASR.*, 1906-7, p. 228 and refs. in note 9.

²¹ *Mahāvamsa*, Tumour and Wijesimha, Ch. XLVIII.

What was the port of embarkation of this grand Armada? Narasiṃha's capital was at Kānchī, and Narasiṃha's name or title figures prominently in several of the structures in Mahābalipuram, considered the oldest according to architectural standards. The natural inference then would seem to be that this Mahābalipuram, as it is now called, was the chief port of the Pallavas, and that, since the Pallava ruler, Mahāmalla Narasiṃha attempted to enhance its importance by building these structures, it came to be known as Māmallapuram. This conclusion finds support in the following passage in the life of Hiuen Tsiang. 'The city of Kānchīpura is situated on the mouth (bay) of the Southern Sea of India, looking towards the kingdom of Simhala, distant from it three days' voyage.' The city²² of Kānchīpura here referred to can be no other than the 'port of Kānchīpura,' in all likelihood Mahābalipur. This probability is enhanced by what follows regarding the arrival of the two Buddhist Divines, Bôdhimêghêsvara and Abhayadaṃshṭra, because of a revolution in Ceylon. They are said to have just arrived at the city, and this could only be in the port and not at the capital 40 miles inland. The corresponding passage in Watter's *Yuvan Chwang*, Vol. II, p. 227, is 'Kānchīpura is the sea port of South India for Ceylon, the voyage to which takes three days.'

Compare with this the following description of Talaśayanam by Tirumangai Ālvār :—' Oh my foolish mind, circumambulate in reverence those who have the strength of mind to go round the holy Talaśayanam, which is Kaḍalmallai, in the harbour of which, ride at anchor, vessels bent to the point of breaking laden as they are with wealth, rich as one's wishes, trunked big elephants and the nine gems in heaps.'²³

There still remains the form of the name Mallai, distinguished often as Kaḍalmallai, 'the Mallai close to the sea.' This is the name invariably used by Tirumangai Ālvār, who lived one generation later than Narasiṃha. Even Bhûtattālvār, whose native place it was, refers to it as Mallai. This must have been an anterior name therefore, and the distinction 'Kaḍalmallai' raises the presumption that there was another Mallai, and possibly a people called Mallar, referred to by Tirumangai Ālvār in the designation of Paramêśvara-varman, 'Pallavan Mallaiyarkôn' (the king of Mallaiyar). Similarly Mallai and Mayilai (Mailapore) in Madras are spoken of as chief cities of Nandi of Teḷḷāru in the poem *Nandikalambakam*.

Plates 1 to 4 represent what is usually known as the Pancha Pāṇḍava Ratha. This name seems to have arisen at a time when the significance of the 'rathas' had long been forgotten and the story of the *Mahābhārata* was in great vogue. The origin seems simple enough. Of the five structures one differs from the rest the smallest with a peculiar roofing—a roofing that seems formed on the pattern of a small hut with the roof overlaid with paddy grass as village houses and huts often are. Of the four other structures three are quite similar in form. The whole five struck the popular imagination as houses built for the five brothers, the twins counting as one, as is often the case in the original *Mahābhārata*. Hence the name must have appeared peculiarly appropriate, having regard to the magnificent bas-relief which goes by the name of Arjuna's Penance.

The illustration (Plates 1 and 2) exhibits the structural differences between the so-called Dharmarāja and the Bhīmaratha clearly. The Dharmarāja, Arjuna and Nakula-Sahadêva Rathas are of one pattern—the conical; the Bhīma Ratha is of a different pattern—the apsidal; while the Draupadi Ratha is of the conical pattern likewise, but exhibits the roof smooth

²² Beal's *Hiuen Tsiang*, p. 139.

²³ புலன்கொள் சிதிக்குவையோடு புழைக்கைம்மா களிற்றினமும்
நலன்கொள் நவமணிக்குவையும் சமந்தெற்கும் நான் றுருசிந்து
கலங்களியங்கும் மல்லைக்கடன் மல்லைத்தல சயனம்
வலன்கொள் மனத்தாரவரை வலன்கொள்ளென் மடநெஞ்சே.

showing even the details of the over-lying paddy grass. The difference between the other three and the Bhîma Ratha is one of structure—the structure of the originals of which these are but obvious copies. The originals are no other than village houses, which are of the same two patterns all along the coast. The roofing material is almost universally plaited cocoanut fronds overlaid in more substantial dwellings by dried paddy grass. Such a structure necessitates certain structural features in the roof, which in the copies develop into ornaments. The tale of their origin is disclosed often by the names that stone masons and others engaged in architecture make use of. Inscriptions on them make it clear that these were intended to enshrine gods and goddesses. The work was begun under Narasimhavarman I, Mahâmalla, was continued under Paramésvaravarman I, and Narasimhavarman II, Rajasimha, and had not been quite completed even under Nandivarman Pallavamalla, the last great Pallava : in all a period of more than a century. The Dharmarâja Ratha has inscriptions of all these except the last, while the Gaṇeśa Ratha and the caves of Sâluvankuppan contain inscriptions of Atiranachanda taken to be a surname of Nandivarman while it might possibly be one of Rajasimha himself.

Plates 12 to 15 represent the bas-relief which goes by the name of Arjuna's penance. The sculptor has made use of a whole piece of rock-with a hollow right in the middle, perhaps caused by the erosion of running water. The first gives the general view of the whole. The striking feature of the whole scene depicted appears to be the water course towards which every figure represented seems to move. As is always the case in Hindu temple building, one will see a small shrine on the left side of the cascade containing a standing figure. Just outside the shrine an old looking man is found seated to one side in the attitude of one performing *japa* (repeating prayers). Almost in a line with this, but above is seen another figure of an old man standing on the left leg, the right somewhat raised and bent, and both his hands held above his head in an attitude of god-compelling penance. In front of this old man is seen the majestic figure of a god, standing in an attitude of granting the prayer, with four hands, two of them holding weapons and the other two in the poses known as *abhaya* (no fear) for the left, and as *varada* (giving boons) for the right. The dwarf figures about and close to the personage deserve to be noted, as they are characteristic of Śiva : the dwarf figures being representations of various *ganas*.

What this bas-relief represents has been agitating the minds of archæologists very much. Their doubt that this does not represent Arjuna's penance has shown itself in protean forms. Fergusson has it in his *Cave Temples of India* (pp. 155—6) : "It was popularly known as Arjuna's penance from the figure of a Sannyâsi standing on one leg, and holding his arms over his head, which is generally assumed to represent that hero of the *Mahâbhârata*, but with no more authority than that which applies his name with that of his brothers and sister²⁴ to the Ratha above described."

"In the centre on a projecting ledge, between the two great masses of rock, once stood the statue of the great Nâgârâja, who was the principal personage for whose honour this great bas-relief was designed." This opinion is apparently shared by Burgess who collaborated with him in the publication of his standard work, the *Cave Temples of India*. These doubts, however, are thus summarised by a recent archæologist in the following words :—

"Concerning the latter bas-relief, it is well to recollect that we cannot any more call it 'Arjuna's penance.'" The merit of having given a satisfactory explanation of this scene goes to Mr. Victor Goloubeau who has proved (*Journal Asiatique*, 11th series, vol. IV, July-August 1914) :—

1. That the principal object in the scene is the vertical crevice in the rock, for it is towards it that all the personages are turned ;

2. That the presence of *nâgas* in the crevice proves the presence of water.

²⁴ This was no sister but the common wife of the five brothers.

In that case all is clear. During the Pallava epoch the rain water flowed through the crevice. This cascade then represented the Ganges descending to the earth from the heights of Kailāsa. On the rock Śiva is seen giving an ear to the prayers of Bhagīratha. Thus the personage who has so long been mistaken for Arjuna is no other than Bhagīratha, and this grand sight must be called not 'Arjuna's penance,' but 'Bhagīratha's penance.'²⁶

This authority, who is no other than my friend Prof. Jouveau-Dubreuil of Pondicherry, whose methodical work in this branch of Archæology has my sincere admiration, refuses to accept the popular designation of the relief and recognises that it represents Bhagīratha's penance.

The bas-relief has to be carefully examined alongside of the story of Arjuna's penance in the *Mahābhārata* to accept or reject the popular name. The new suggestion has to be equally critically examined to establish a superior appropriateness. We shall prove by such an examination that the now prevalent name is the correct one, and the one suggested is hardly appropriate; and, as a consequence, no further suggestion of a name is called for. The story of Arjuna's penance, as described in the *Kairāta sarga* of the *Mahābhārata*, is briefly as follows:—

Arjuna, while in exile with his brothers and their wife Draupadī was advised, as a measure of necessary preparation for the war then almost certain, to go to the Himālayas, perform a penance to the god Śiva, and, by pleasing him, obtain from him the *pāsupata*, the weapon characteristic of Śiva, which, therefore, could be given only by him. Arjuna, went as directed and performed a long and severe penance. Śiva was well pleased with the penance, which was of sufficient severity to make the gods feel perturbed as to consequences. All the same the weapon *par excellence* could not be conferred upon him without testing his worth. For the purposes of this test Śiva assumed the form of a hunter and went in pursuit of a boar, the form assumed by one of his attendants. The boar, as was intended, dashed into the sequestered glade of the forest, where Arjuna was rapt in contemplation in the course of his penance. The inrush of such an unwelcome intruder created such a disturbance about him that he opened his eyes and saw the wild boar. The instinct of the Kshatriya got the better of him; he took up his bow and with a single arrow, shot from it, transfixed him as he thought. Simultaneously with his action the hunter, who came in the trail of his game, shot also and the dead beast shewed the marks of both arrows. The huntsman and the hermit both claimed the honour of the chase and the possession of the quarry. The opposing claims ended in a combat in which they fought hand to hand. Finding in the course of it, the weapon that Arjuna cherished the most proved of no avail, and feeling his own strength ebbing away in the combat, Arjuna bethought him of what he had forgotten. His Kshatriya blood was up and he had forgotten, for the nonce, Śiva. During the respite given for gaining breath, he set up a mud image of Śiva and placed on its head a bunch of wild flowers which he had at hand. He was surprised to find the bunch on the head of his antagonist. Finding at once that he was fighting hand to hand with no other than the god Śiva, he threw himself into the attitude of a penitent, who was determined to wipe out the guilt of this sacrilege by a severer penance than any he had yet done. Then Śiva shewed himself in his usual form to assure Arjuna that he was pleased with the valour he shewed in the combat, which he had brought on for the purpose of testing him. Śiva then asked him to state the boon that he would have. Arjuna, of course, demanded the gift of the *pāsupata*, which Śiva gave with pleasure and benignity.²⁶

The whole of this story is exhibited in three tableaux in the bas-relief. The sculptor has chosen the characteristic incidents in the story; (1) the lower part exhibits Arjuna in penance, (2) the second exhibits the chase, the boar galloping away ahead while the other

²⁵ Prof. G. Jouveau-Dubreuil's *Pallava Antiquities*, vol. I, page 64.

²⁶ Cantos 42 & 43, Book I, Kumbhakonam Edition.

animals are quiescent in the relief, (3) the third is where Śiva appears before Arjuna and bestows upon him the boon demanded by the penitent as a result of the penance. The three taken together make it clear that the relief is a representation of Arjuna's Penance on the surface of the rock. The trend of the various other beings towards the middle is not because of the watercourse there, but because of the chief character, Śiva, being there. The watercourse is merely incidental and cannot be held to represent the Coming of the Ganges (*Gaṅgāvataraṇa*). The story of the Coming of the Gaṅgā, so far as it relates to this particular, requires that Gaṅgā should be shown as descending upon the matted coiffure of Śiva, getting lost there almost, issuing therefrom in a small stream by means of a loosened lock. The aspect of Śiva in the relief has nothing in it to indicate this.

There is much other evidence on the point, but it is other than archæological. The archæological features of the bas-relief leave little doubt that it was of the period of Narasimhavarman I, Mahāmalla, who was a contemporary of the two *Tēvāram* hymners, Appar and Sambandar. Both of these mention the incident of giving the *pāsūpata* to Arjuna as one of the more prominent acts of beneficence by Śiva²⁷. The inscriptions on the Rathas and the caves make it absolutely clear that Narasimhavarman laboured to make them Śiva shrines and make a Śaiva centre of the place. Inscriptions Nos. 17 and 18 on the Dharmarāja Ratha make it clear that it was intended to be called 'Atyantakāma Pallavésvara.'²⁸ The same name occurs in the so-called Gaṇéśa Ratha and in the Rāmānuja Maṅṭapam. This Atyantakāma was a title of Paramésvaravarman the grandson of Narasimhavarman I, and father of Narasimhavarman II, Rajasimha. The name "Narasimha", is used twice among the number of inscriptions specifying the names and titles inscribed on this Dharmarāja Ratha. Since several of the titles were borne by more than one Pallava sovereign, it would be difficult to decide which of the two Narasimhas this actually refers to. On grounds of palæography Dr. Hultzsch has given it as his opinion that the characters in which these epigraphs are written are older than those in the Gaṇéśa Ratha, and the florid characters in the Kailāsanātha temple at Conjivaram. While this may not be quite a decisive test, it is probable that it is Narasimha I that is under reference here. (For the remarks of Dr. Hultzsch, see *Epi. Ind.*, vol. X, p. 1 ff.) The larger number of buildings in rock therefore began to be excavated by Narasimhavarman I, and reached their completion if they ever reached it at all under Narasimha II, Rajasimha, Śaiva sovereigns in a Śaiva age. Among the statues in relief in the Dharmarāja Ratha in several tiers, there is one in the first tier in the south-west panel which seems intended to represent a human figure (Plate 7). It has an inscription on the top like the other reliefs. But this contains no name among the titles inscribed on the top of the panel, that will lead us to the identification of the statue being that of Narasimha I. It must, however, be remarked that this is the only two handed figure in the whole group, and there are features in the drapery and the attitude of the figure itself, which would make it distinct from the other figures in the other panels of the Ratha. Since undoubtedly the names and titles on the Ratha were the names and titles of a Narasimha, this

²⁷ ஓரியல் பல்லா வருவமதாகி யொண்டிறல்வே

டன துருவது கொண்டு

காரிகை காணத்தனஞ் சயன்றன்னைக் கறுத்

தவற் களித்துடன் காதல்செய் பெருமான்.

(சம்பந்தர்). திருவெங்குரு. 3.

பாடகஞ்சேர் மெல்லடி நற்பாவை யாளும்

டீயும் போய்ப்பார்த் தனது பலத்தைக் காண்பான்

வேடனும் வில்வாங்கி யெய்தநாளோ.

(அப்பர்). திருவாரூர்த் திருத்தாண்டகம். 3.

²⁸ *Epigraphia Indica*, X, p. 8.

lay figure should be that of Narasimha I, as we have already indicated.²⁹ He probably made the relief on the rock not far off represent one of the most popular of Śiva's acts of beneficence to humanity, which both the *Tēvāram* hymners refer to very often in the course of their works, the more so as Bhāravi's *Kirātārjunīya* must then have been in great vogue at Kāñchi in his time. This is the more natural seeing that the other bas-relief has reference to one of Krishna's achievements, the holding up of the hill, Gōvardhana, to protect the cowherds and cattle from a shower of stones. We shall revert to this later, but must mention here that this place finds no mention in the *Tēvāram* as a place holy to Śiva, though these hymners refer to Tirukalukkuṇṇam; nor is the place included among those peculiarly sacred to Śiva now. It seems to be then beyond the possibility of doubt that this bas-relief represents Arjuna's Penance, not as an incident in the *Mahābhārata* but as a representation of one of Śiva's many acts of beneficence to humanity, perhaps because it formed the subject of the *Kirāt-ārjunīya*; not so much that it is so depicted in the hymns of the *Tēvāram*.

This interpretation finds unlooked for support in the archæological remains of a few pillars recently unearthed at Chandimau in the Behar District of the Patna Division. These are sculptures that exhibit the same incident and the monument belongs, according to Mr. R. D. Banerjee, to the 5th or the 6th century A.D. as the inscriptions found on the pillars are in the Gupta characters.³⁰

Another point in regard to this bas-relief is whether it is the work of foreigners. That foreign workmen from other parts of India and outside did do work in this part of the country on occasions, is in evidence in the Tamil classics.³¹ Jewellers from Magadha, smiths from Mahārāṭṭa, blacksmiths from Avanti (Malva), carpenters from Yavana, laboured with the artisans of the Tamil land.

Admitting this possible co-operation, it requires more to prove borrowing either the inspiration or the execution. None of the details of these works seem foreign either to the locality or to the prevalent notions of indigenous art. The suspected "Cornucopia" held in the hand by one of the figures at the bottom of the central water-course is none other than

²⁹ Plate 7 is from a photograph taken by my colleague, Mr. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, Reader in Indian Philosophy. That this might be the statue of Narasimha I, I investigated by a detailed examination of the figures in the Ratha, when I took Professor Franklin Edgerton of the Yale University to see the place, and he kindly took a photograph for me and sent me a copy. This was lent to Mr. T. G. Aravamuthan, M.A., B.L., who wanted a loan of it for making a block. The photograph was not returned to me, and I understood subsequently that he had lost it. I found it necessary, therefore, to make another arrangement, and in the course of another visit to the place with my friend, Dr. Kalidas Nag of the Calcutta University, I took Mr. Suryanarayana Sastri also. The photograph of Narasimha and the small one representing the hermitage in Arjuna's Penance are both of them taken by him. (The boy in shorts standing in the middle of the group is my son, and obviously does not belong to the group). I regret the loss of Professor Edgerton's photograph, as it was taken with a view to the epigraph over-head coming out clearly.

³⁰ *ASR.*, for 1911-12, p. 162, *et seq.*

³¹ மகதவினை ஒருமராட்டக் கம்மரும்
மவந்திக் கொல்லரும் யவனத்தச் சருந்
தண்டமிழ் வினைஞர் தம்மொடு கூடிக்
கொண்டி னிதியற்றிய கண்கவர் செய்வினைப்
பவளத்தி ரள்காற் பன்மணிப் போதிகை.

Maṇimēkhalai, XIX, 107—110.

யவனத் தச்சரும் மவந்திக் கொல்லரு
மகதத்துப் பிறந்தமணி வினைக்கா ரரும்
.....பசம்பொன் வினைஞருந்
கோசலத் தியன்ற ஓவியத் தொழிலரும்
வத்த நாட்டு வண்ணக் கம்மரும்.

Perungadai, *Unjaikkāṇḍam*, passage quoted under above in Pandit Svaminatha Aiyar's edition of *Maṇimēkhalai*.

a sling containing the sacrificial platter of wood, which one of the disciples has washed and put together to carry home to the hermitage, while his companion carries on his shoulder a vessel of water.

There is in a cave a little to the south of the Gaṇeśa Ratha, a relief exhibiting the man-boar according to the *Vaikānasāgama*. Of the three kinds of boar form, this is what is called the Ādivarāha type. This must be exhibited with four hands, two of them carrying the conch and the disc; the colour grass-green, left foot planted upon the hooded head of the king of the serpents (*śeṣha*).

The figure of Bhūvarāha should have, according to the *Vaikānasāgama*, the face of a boar in association with the body of a man. It has four arms, two of which hold the *śankha* and *chakra* as usual. The right leg should be slightly bent and be made to rest upon the jewelled hood of the mythical serpent Ādiśeṣha, who must be sculptured as in company with his wife. Of the remaining two hands, the left hand should be shown as supporting the legs of Bhūmidēvi, seated on the god's bent right leg, with her own legs hanging down, while the right hand has to be thrown round the waist of the same goddess. The boar face of the god should be slightly tilted up, so as to make the muzzle approach the bosom of the goddess as though he is engaged in smelling her.³² The colour of the image of Varāha-Vishṇu is represented by the darkness of the twilight. The associated figure of Bhūmidēvi should have her hands in the *añjali* attitude. She should be decked with flowers and dressed in clothes and should be adorned with all suitable ornaments. Her complexion has to be black. Her face should be slightly lifted up and turned towards her lord, and should be expressive of shyness and joy. The top of her head should reach the chest of the figure of Varāha, and her image should be made in accordance with the *pañchatāla* measure. Such is the description given in the *Vaikānasāgama*. (Mr. T. A. Gopinatha Rao's *Hindu Iconography*, pp. 132-3).

The Ṛṣvikrama panel in the same cave (Plate 17).—The image of Ṛṣvikrama may be sculptured it is said, in three different ways, namely, with the left foot raised up to the level of the (1) right knee, or (2) to the navel, or (3) the forehead. These three varieties are obviously intended to represent Ṛṣvikrama as striding the earth, the mid-world and heavenly-world respectively; and are all exemplified in sculptures also. The image of Ṛṣvikrama, with the left foot lifted up only to the level of the right knee is, however, rarely met with among available pieces of sculpture. The rule is that Ṛṣvikrama images should be worked out in accordance with the *uttamadaśa-tāla* measure, and their total height should be 124 *angulas*. Ṛṣvikrama should have either four or eight hands. If there be only four arms, one of the right hands should be made to hold the *śankha* and one of the left hands the *chakra*: or it may even be that the left hand carries the *chakra* and the right hand the *śankha*. The other right hand should be held up with the palm upwards and the other left hand stretched out parallel to the uplifted leg; or this right hand may be in the *abhaya* or the *varadā* pose. On the other hand, if Ṛṣvikrama is sculptured with eight arms, five of the hands should carry the *śankha*, *chakra*, *gada*, *sāṅga* (bow) and *hala* (plough), the other three being kept as in the previous instance. The right leg of Ṛṣvikrama is to be firmly planted upon the earth; and the left should be used in taking the stride of world-measure. The colour of the image is to be dark as that of the rain-cloud; it should be clothed in red garments and decorated with all ornaments. Behind it there should be sculptured the tree called *kalpaka*, and Indra should be shown holding over Ṛṣvikrama's head an umbrella. On either side Varuṇa and Vāyu should be made to wave *chāmaras*; and over them on the right and the left there should be the figures of Sūrya and Chandra respectively. Near these again there should be seen

³² This attitude of amorous dalliance is sometimes described, of course absurdly enough, as playing the baby at the breast.

Sanyasa, Sanaka, Sanatkumâra. Brahma should be made to take hold of the uplifted foot of the Trvikrama with one of his hands and wash it with water flowing from a *kamandala* held in the other hand; and the water flowing down from the washed foot of Trvikrama should be shown as being of a snow-white colour. Śiva should be sculptured with his hands in the *anjali* pose and as sitting somewhere in space above the height of the navel of Trvikrama. Near the leg upon which Trvikrama stands, there should be the figure of Namuchi, a *rākshasa*, in the attitude of bowing in reverence to the great god Trvikrama. On the left Garuḍa should be shewn as taking hold of Śukra, the *guru* of the *rākshasas*, with a view to belabour him for obstructing Bali in giving the gift asked for by the Brahmanical boy Vâmana; on the right Vâmana himself should be made to stand with an umbrella in his hand and ready to receive the promised grant of three feet of space. Near him and opposite to him Bali should be shown as standing golden in hue and adorned with ornaments and carrying in his hands a golden vessel to indicate that he is ready to pour the water ceremonially in proof of his gift. Behind the emperor Bali there should be his queen. Above the head of Trvikrama the figure of Jâmbavân should be shown as sounding the drum, called *bhêri* in Sanskrit, so as to exhibit the joy of the celestial beings at their coming delivery from the rule of the *asura* emperor Bali. So says, the *Vaikhânasâgama*. (*Op. cit.*, pp. 164-7).

Plate 16 represents a huge panel, about eight feet by six in size, carved on the north wall of the rock-cut shrine situated to the south of what is called Ganêśa Ratha at Mahâbalipuram. In this group of images the central figure is that of Trvikrama. It has eight hands; three of the right hands carry the *chakra*, the *gada*, and the *khadga*, and the remaining right hand is held up with the palm turned upside, as required by the *Vaikhânasâgama*. Three of the left hands carry the *śankha* (conch), the *ketaka* (shield), and *dhanus* (bow), and the fourth left hand is stretched out parallel to the uplifted leg. This leg itself is raised up to the level of the forehead. Near the foot of the leg stretched out to measure the heaven-world, Brahma is shown as seated on a *padmâsana* (a form of squatting) and as offering with one of his right hands *pûja* (worship) to that foot. His image is given four hands and is made to wear the *jaṭa-makuṭa* (coiffure of matted hair) and *karna-kunḍalas* (ear-pendants). In the corresponding position to the right of Trvikrama we see Śiva also seated in *padmâsana*. His image also has four arms, one of which is held in the pose of praise. It is also adorned with the *jaṭa-makuṭa* and *kunḍalas*. Immediately below Śiva is Sûrya, the sun-god, with a halo. The way in which the legs of this god and also of Chandra, the moon-god, are worked out, suggests that they are both residing up in the heavenly world without any terrestrial support. This sun-god has only a pair of hands, both of which he holds stretched out in the act of praising Trvikrama. Chandra is sculptured below the shield of Trvikrama, with a halo round the head, and is also shown to be in the attitude of praising Trvikrama. In the space between the head of Trvikrama and Brahma there may be noticed a peculiar figure turned towards Brahma. It has the face of a boar and is made to carry what is evidently a drum. This figure is obviously that of old Jâmbavân, sounding the drum in joy due to the victory of the Dêvas over the Dânavas. At the foot of Trvikrama sits Namuchi to the right; and the other three figures, that are to be seen, are perhaps representations of Bali and some other prominent *asuras*. There is one other figure shown as if cutting somersaults in the air, and carrying something like a staff in the right hand. It is not possible to say whom this figure is intended to represent. The *Brahmânda-purâṇa* states that when Vâmana grew to be gigantic in size, and became Trvikrama, some of the Dânavas were hurled up into the air as if by a hurricane. This figure is perhaps one of the Dânavas so tossed up.

These two, as also several others of the figures of gods and goddesses in the locality, conform to the norms of Iconography as laid down in the *Vaikhânasâgama* and shew

marked differences of features from representations of the same icons in other localities and of other ages. This has to be noted carefully, as no conclusion in point of chronology can be drawn from these without regard to the school of architecture or sculpture.

Govardhana Krishna :—This represents Krishna as carrying the hill Govardhana to protect the cowherd settlement of Gökulam where he was being brought up. When the annual feast intended for Indra, the Vêdic god of rain, came round for celebration, Krishna accepted the offerings intended for Indra, who, in anger, rained stone and other destructive material upon the sacrilegious village. Thereupon Krishna performed this feat to save the villagers from harm and exhibit to the wondering world that what was offered to Krishna is as good as offered to all the gods. Architecturally this piece of workmanship is rather crude in comparison with that of Arjuna's penance; but it seems none the less to belong to the same school of art. If it be so, this may be the first work of an artist or the first work of the school, the work of which, in an advanced stage of its skill, is exhibited in the other bas-relief. Behind the Krishna in this relief, one will notice in the original a young shepherd boy playing upon the flute. This is sufficiently far away to indicate that it represents another of the many aspects of Krishna's life, and refutes the theory that Vênugôpâla (young Krishna playing on the flute) is not found represented before the 13th century A.D. One stanza of Tirumangai Âlvâr of the twenty devoted to this place seems specifically to refer to this relief.³³

Mahishâsuramardani (Plate 10):—The goddess Durgâ should have ten hands according to the *Śilparatna*, which describes her further as having three eyes; she should wear on her head a *jaṭa-makūṭa* and in it there should be the *chandra-kalâ* or the digit of the moon. The colour of her body should be like that of the *atasi* flower, and the eyes should resemble the *nîlôtpala* or the blue lily; she should have high breasts and a thin waist and there should be three bends in her body (of the *trbhanga* variety). In her right hands she should carry the *trîśūla*, *khadga*, *śaktyâyudha*, *chakra*, and a stringed bow; and in the left hands the *pâśa*, *ankuśa*, *kêtaka*, *paraśu*, and a bell. At her feet should lie a buffalo with its head cut off and with blood gushing from its neck. From within this neck should be visible the half-emerged real *asura* bound down by the *nâga-pâśa* of the Dêvi. The *asura* should be made to carry a sword and a shield, although the Dêvi has already plunged her *trîśūla* into his neck and he is bleeding profusely. He should have a terrific look with knitted eye-brows. The right leg of the Dêvi should be placed on the back of her lion and her left leg should touch the buffalo-body of Mahishâsura.

The *Vishṇudharmôttara*, as quoted in the *Vâchaspatya*, describes Mahishâsuramardani under the name of Chandikâ thus :—This Dêvi has the complexion of gold and is a very handsome youthful woman in an angry mood, sitting on the back of a lion. She has twenty hands; the right ones carry, respectively, the *śūla*, *khadga*, *śankha*, *chakra*, *bâṇa*, *śakti*, *vajra*, *abhaya*, *damaru*, and an umbrella; while the left ones are seen to hold the *nâga-pâśa*, *khêtaka*, *paraśu*, *ankuśa*, *dhanus*, *ghanṭa*, *dhvajagada*, a mirror and the *mudgara*. The buffalo-part of the *asura* is lying decapitated with the real *asura* proceeding out from the neck. His eyes, hair and brows are red and he vomits blood from his mouth. The lion of the Dêvi mauls him, and the Dêvi herself thrusts the *trîśūla* into his neck. The *asura*, who is bound down by the *nâga-pâśa*, carries a sword and a shield.³⁴ The peculiar feature of the Mahishâsuramardani here depicted is that the panel exhibits her as pressing back her enemy Andhakâsura in war. At this stage she has a benign aspect and shows nothing of the ferocity in combination with beauty which is usually associated with this aspect of the Goddess Durgâ.

The Shore Temple :—General view (Plates 21 & 22). This temple in general view shows a double *vimâna*, both parts shaped exactly alike, but of proportions that seem intended to serve

³³ *Periya Tirumôli*, II. V. 4.

³⁴ T. A. G., *Iconography*, p. 357, et seq.

the purpose of shutting off the smaller from view on one side. The shoreward tower is the smaller and seems the older. It has a hole in the middle of the pedestal to hold a stone image or *linga*. An image has since been recovered which is of the *Sarvatôbhadrâ*³⁵ type. There is within the shrine a representation of Śiva as *Sômaskanda*³⁶ in the central panel.

Beginning at the south end of this little shrine and at the back of it looking towards the sea is what now looks a comparatively dark chamber, holding a large-sized image of Vishṇu *couchant*. (See Plate 9.)

Then comes the seaward shrine just covering this in front, and of proportions to shut off altogether from view on the seaside both the Vishṇu and Śiva temples above described. This contains a huge *lingam*, with sixteen fluted faces. These three in Chola times were known as Jalaśayana or Kshatriyasimha Pallavêśvaram, Paḷḷikondân and Râjasimha Pallavêśvaram, respectively, notwithstanding the statements of the epigraphists to the contrary. The significance of this will follow.

The Atiraṇachandêśvara Cave in Sâluvanguppam : Plate 23. This Atiraṇachandâ was taken to be Nandivarman, the last great Pallava. It looks, on palæographical grounds, to be a surname of Narasiṃhavarman II, Râjasimha.

Vishṇu in the lying posture as the Sthala-śayanamûrti : Plate 9. 'This is a recumbent image of Vishṇu with only two hands; about a fourth of the body should be somewhat raised, and the remaining three-fourths should be lying flat upon the serpent bed. The right hand should be placed near the pillow, so as to touch the *kirîta*; the other hand, bent at the elbow, should be held in the *kaṭaka* pose. Or, this left hand may be made to be parallel to the body, so as sometimes to touch the thigh. The right leg has to be stretched out, while the left should be slightly bent. The image itself should be adorned with various ornaments. The eyes must be somewhat opened. The colour of the image should be a mixture of black and yellow. By the side of this recumbent figure there should be Bhṛgu and Mârkaṇḍêya, and near the feet, the demons Madhu and Kaitabha, while on the lotus issuing from the navel there should be Brahma. On the back wall of the shrine and above the level of the image of Vishṇu should be sculptured the images of the Âyudha-purushas, of Garuḍa, of Vishvaksêna, and of the Sapta-rishis, all standing with their hands in the *añjali* pose. On the south wall should be shown Brahma, and on the north wall Śiva,—both in the sitting posture. Such a group constitutes the *uttama* class of Yôgaśayanamûrti. If the figures of the Saptarishis and Vishvaksêna are absent, the group belongs to the *madhyama* class; if the Pûjakamunis and Madhu and Kaitabha are also absent, it is conceived to belong to the *adhama* class.'³⁷

In regard to this Yôgaśayanamûrti in the Shore Temple, some of these features adjunct to such a representation are wanting. The omission is explained away by the tradition that the God was there himself alone and had to exhibit himself to Rishi Pundarîka in the Yôgaśayana. Therefore the usual adjuncts are wanting. Of course the tradition is kept up in the modern temple, where the name of the goddess is Bhûdêvi (the Earth). This tradition and the name of the goddess indicate some connection between the locality and the Varâhâvatâra of Vishṇu. No definite statement of such a connection has so far come to my notice.

The Shore Temple is a feature of the antiquities of Mahâbalipuram, which has been a puzzle in archæology. Being structural, it has been taken for granted that it must have

³⁵ A column with four faces, each face with a head of Śiva, the top is surmounted by a head also.

³⁶ Śiva in the company of his consort Umâ and their son Skandha (Subrahmanya).

³⁷ T. A. G., *Iconography*, pp.90, &c.

been a late structure, at least later than the rock-cut ones. But material is now available to set these doubts at rest, although more definite light would certainly be welcome. Before proceeding to an explanation, the following facts require to be noticed. The original structures seem to have been the smaller shrine and the Vishṇu chamber behind it, with *very probably an apsidal vimānam surmounting the Vishṇu shrine*. As we have it at present, this last is covered in front by the larger shrine facing the sea. (See Plate 22.)

The Chola inscriptions found in Mahābalipuram published in the *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. I, pp. 63-69, go to prove the existence of three shrines (1) Jalaśayana or Kshatriyasimha Pallavésvaram; (2) Palligondaruliya-dēva and (3) Rājasimha Pallavésvaram. According to these inscriptions Māmallapuram belonged to Āmur Nāḍu of Āmūr-kōṭṭam. No. 40 of the *South Indian Inscriptions* uses the name Pudukkudaiyān Ēkadhīran,³⁸ fifty, as an alternative name for Āmur Nāḍu. Āmūr, a village near by, gives the name both to the larger and smaller divisions. Reverting to the names given in these epigraphs to the shrines, we have no doubt about the Palligondaruliya-dēva. This can refer only to the god on his couch, Vishṇu. The names are not quite as clear in respect of the two others. Jalaśayana-Pallavésvara can have no direct significance, as there is nothing to connect Jalaśayanam (sleeping on the primeval waters) with Śiva. This name can only mean the Pallavésvara of the place Jalaśayanam, which must necessarily have been an anterior name. This would apply more appropriately to the smaller temple looking shoreward than to the seaward-looking bigger shrine. Even so there is an error in the name, which was according to the almost contemporary authority of Tirumangai Āḷvār Talaśayanam (Sthalaśayanam) and not Jalaśayanam. The mere proximity to the sea cannot give a shrine this name, and the Śiva shrine close to the sea has nothing of śayanam (couch) in it, containing as it does only a sixteen-sided prismatic *lingam*.

The Sea-ward Temple seems built with the design to shut off the Vishṇu Temple, which Tirumangai Āḷvār describes as a Vishṇu temple 'where Vishṇu is in the company of Śiva, whose proper place is the crematorium.'³⁹ The Talaśayanam must have got modified into Jalaśayanam by an error and assumed the alternative Kshatriyasimha Pallavésvaram, if Kshatriyasimha made benefactions to the temple by extending and improving it.⁴⁰ Rājasimha Pallavésvaram must be the sea-ward-looking temple, which is obviously of later construction from its own position. The prismatic *linga* is quite characteristic of Rājasimha's buildings, as a comparative study of Pallava monuments seems to indicate.⁴¹ Rājasimha is further described 'a very pious prince, the illustrious Atyantakāma, the chief of the Pallavas, who crushed the multitude of his foes by his power (or spear), whose great

³⁸ This name or title which means 'the unparalleled hero of the new umbrella' seems intended to designate Nandivarman Pallavamalla. The first word seems to contain a hint that the throne was to him a new acquisition and not one coming in hereditary descent. The Kaśākuḍi plates of this Nandivarman call the village under gift by the new name Ekadhīramaṅgalam, which was probably in honour of the sovereign regnant. If this interpretation is correct, it is clear that Nandivarman restored the temple to the *status quo ante*. (*S. Ind. Ins.*, II. iii. p. 359.)

³⁹ பிணங்களிடு காடதனுள் நடமாடு பிஞ்ஞுகளேடு

இணங்கு திருச்சக்கரத் தெம்பெருமானார் கட்டம்விசம்பில்

கணங்களி யங்கும்மல்லைக் கடன்மல்லைத் தலசயனம்

வணங்கு மனத்தாரவரை வணங்கென்றன் மடநெஞ்சே.—(*Periya Tirumoli*, II. vii. 9.)

⁴⁰ Para. 9, *Epigraphist's Report* for 1913.

⁴¹ Cf. Rājasimha-Pallavésvara, the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchi,

statesmanship was well known, and who had got rid of all impurity (by walking) in the path of the Saiva doctrine.⁴²

In his zeal for extension for the Siva shrine he might have consciously thrown the Vishnu shrine into the shade, and might even have destroyed parts of it, as that must have faced the sea from the disposition of the image now, both in the shore-temple and in the more modern temple in the town. The tradition is living yet that this latter was built to house the god, left homeless by the pious vandalism possibly of the Pallava sovereign, it may even be by his own successor Nandivarman Pallavamalla who was a Vaishṇava and in whose time Tirumangai Ālvār probably lived.

Māmallapuram is not mentioned as a Saiva holy place by either Sambandar or Appar, who have composed hymns upon Tirukkalukkuṇṇam; nor even by Sundaramūrti, as far as I am at present able to make out. It is not mentioned among the recognised Saiva centres of worship even now. Tirumangai Ālvār celebrates it separately in two parts of ten stanzas each, and makes other references besides. Another of these Ālvārs, Bhūtathālvār, believed to be much anterior to him in time and born in the town itself, refers to the temple by the name Māmallai.⁴³ We have already referred to the primitive character of the bas-relief in the Krishnamantapam.

It seems, therefore, that before Narsimhavarman I took it upon himself to beautify the place with the various rock-cut temples and other works of art, it must have been a place of Vaishṇava worship in some manner connected with one of the oldest Vaishṇava temples in Kāñchi. In one of his verses, Tirumangai Ālvār refers to the god at Mallai, as 'he who was abed in Kachchi.'⁴⁴ This may be explained away in a general sense, but the reference seems to be specific, and there is some similarity in regard to the traditions of both. The shrine in Kāñchi referred to is that of Yadōktakāri or Vehkā, the only temple referred to in the *Perumbānāruppadai*. This poem by Rudran Kaṇṇan has for its object the celebration of the liberality of Tonḍamān Ṇandiraiyan of Kāñchi, and refers to a time certainly anterior to that of Simhavishṇu, the founder of the great Pallava dynasty, and may go back to the 2nd century A.D. It must be remembered that this Simhavishṇu himself was a Vaishṇava, according to the Udayēndiram plates of Nandivarman I., Pallavamalla,⁴⁵ while Rājasimha is described in the same document as a devout worshipper of Śiva (Paramamāhēśvara). A Vishṇu temple in the locality seems quite possible, either of sufficient nearness or remoteness in point of time.

Was the place of sufficient importance to deserve this honour before the age of the great Pallavas, specifically before the date of Narsimhavarman I, Mahāmalla, whose name was attached to the place even long after the fall of the dynasty. It is in point to notice here that it is not only the works of the Ālvārs that call the place Mallai; the same designation is given to it uniformly in the work *Nandikkalambakam*, a Tamil work celebrating the exploits of Nandivarman, victor at Tellāru. The age of this monarch is now definitely fixed. He came later, being a grandson of Nandivarman

42 Tēshām vamāé prasūtāt Raṇarasika purōrnmardhānād (a)gradandāt (u)
Subrahman aḥ kumārō Guha iva Pramādiśvarādātta janmā
Saktiksuṇṇāri vargo viditabahunaya Śaiva siddhānta mārgō
Śrīmān Atvantakāmeḥ kshatasakalamalo dhūrdharah Pallavānām

43 *Iyarpā*, II, 70.

44 கச்சிக் கூடந்தவனூர்க் கடன்மல்லைத் தலசயனம்.

45 Simhavishṇu—the grandfather of Narsimhavarman I, was a devout Vaishṇava. (Udayēndiram Plates, S. I. I., Vol. II, Pt. iii, p. 370) 'Bhaktiyārādhitā, Vishṇuḥ Simhavishṇuḥ'

(S.I.I., Vol. I., No. 24, verse 5).

Pallavamalla. How far back the name Mallai goes, we have not the means of deciding, but a coin of Theodosius has been discovered of date A.D. 371-395, which would indicate, although the evidence must be regarded as but slender, that the place was a port of some importance commercially.⁴⁶ The genealogy of the Pallavas of Kāñchi goes back ten generations at least before Simhaviṣṇu—the father of Mahēndra, the monarch who excavated most of the caves of Southern India.⁴⁷ If we can take the time occupied by these at about two centuries, this will take us to about A.D. 400 from the known dates of Narasiṃha I. There are three other names to be accommodated perhaps, before we come to Vishṇugōpa of Kāñchi, who suffered defeat at the hands of the Samudragupta—about A.D. 350. One of these very early Pallavas, Simhavarman, is said, in the Amarāvati Pillar Inscription now in the Madras Museum, to have gone up to the Himālaya to imprint his ‘*lāñhana*’ on its face, as symbolical of his universal sovereignty.⁴⁸ This is in obvious imitation of the crowned kings of the Tamil land, the Chera, the Chola and the Pāṇḍya. We have to look for the particular Pāṇḍya, Chola and Chera much anterior to his time—whatever that time be.

This would, under all legitimate canons of criticism, bring us to the earlier centuries of the Christian era, and the geographical data of the classical writers ought to give us the clue.

We have already noted that the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tshang refers both to the capital and the port, as if they both had either the same name, or as though they could be regarded as the capital and its port, so intimately connected with each other as to be confounded by even an eminently intelligent foreigner such as the enlightened ‘*Master of the Law*’ was. Ptolemy, the geographer, writing in the middle of the 2nd century A.D. refers to a port, as well as an interior city, named Malange.⁴⁹ The *Periplus*, written about 80 A.D., refers to three ports and marts north of the Kāveri; Camara, Poduka and Malanga.⁵⁰ Without going into the details of this geography here, we may take the port Malanga to be the Mahābalipuram that is at present. The description of Māvilangai we find in the *Śirupānārrupadai* would answer to this very well, as well as in Hiuen Tshang’s time, when it was the port of embarkation for Ceylon. The interior⁵¹ Malange was, according to Ptolemy, the capital of Bassarnagos, which, on the analogy of Sorenagos of the same writer, must be the capital of the land of a people Bassar, which is a Greek modification of Vēdar or Vēttuvar, who constituted, if not the sole, at least an integral part of the population. This possibility requires to be worked up more fully.

It must be noted in this connection, however, that there is a place containing a Pallava cave temple near Tindivanam called, even now, Kilmāvilangai (*i. e.*, East or Lower Māvilangai). Another Malingi (Kan. for Māvilangai) in Mysore is called in the 11th century A.D. Idaināṭṭu Māvilangai.⁵² These adjuncts to the two names imply the existence of other places of the name in the neighbourhood or about the same region. As far as I am able to make out at present, there is no authority for taking Māvilangai to mean a country as Mr. Kanakasabai has taken it⁵³—the passage of the *Śirupānārrupadai* not lending itself to that interpretation. If then the capital and the port bore the same name,

⁴⁶ *JRAS.*, 1904, pp. 609 and 636.

⁴⁷ *Origin and Early History of the Pallavas*—J.I.H.

⁴⁸ *S. Ind. Ins.*, vol. I., p. 27, ll. 33-34.

⁴⁹ *Ante*, vol. XIII, pp. 333 and 368.

⁵⁰ W. Schoff’s *Periplus*, p. 46, Section 60.

⁵² *Epig. Karnāṭaca*, Mysore, Pt. 1, T. N. 34 and 35.

⁵¹ *Pattuppāṭṭu*, S. Iyer’s Edition

⁵³ *The Tamils 1800 Years Ago*.

there is some reason for the careful Chinese traveller calling the two places by the same name, though different from this one, but well-known in his days. In fact, it is stated that to Ōymānāṭṭu Nalliyakkōḍan, the hero of the *Śirupānārrupadai*, belonged the region comprising the cities and fortresses of Āmur, Vēlūr, Eyiḷpaṭṭinam, Māvīlangai, Kiḍangil, etc., but Kāñchi in the same region does not find mention as such. His time, I take it, is intermediate to those of Tondamān Iḷandiraiyan of Kāñchi, and the Vishnugopa of Kāñchi defeated by the famous Samudragupta.

This would take us to the vexed question of the origin of the Pallavas, and whether they were an indigenous dynasty or a dynasty of foreigners. The study of their monuments at Mahābalipuram makes it quite clear that their civilization at any rate, must have been Brahmanic; their architecture shews clear traces of its indigenous origin. These would support the contention of the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*,⁵⁴ that the Pallavas were a race of Kshatriyas, who fell from their high estate by giving up the Vaidic duties enjoined upon them, meaning perhaps that they had become Buddhists. When they come into view in South India, they seem bent upon making amends for their past remissness by an extraordinary amount of zeal for Hinduism. It would seem reasonable to infer that they had as little to do with the Pahlavas or Parthians, as their contemporaries the Chāḷukyas had to do with the Seleukians of Asia.

Having come so far, it would seem pertinent to ask the question whether these Pallavas, who present themselves to us through the antiquities of Mahābalipuram, are the same as those known in the locality from the earliest times, or whether these were new-comers. That these powerful Pallavas of the dynasty of Narasimhavarman were Āryans in culture must now seem clear. There is one particular motive in these buildings that strike one as a remarkable feature, and that is the lion-base for the pillars. This, with the maned lion upon their coins, seems to indicate unmistakably that they were the feudatories of the Andhras, who advanced southwards from across the Krishṇa River, both in the lower and upper part of its course. There seems, therefore, some reason to distinguish between these Pallavas and the Pallavas or Kurumbars of the coins, which have for their characteristic device a standing bull. On this subject the following remarks of Professor Rapson seem apposite. "In the same region lived the Kurumbars, a people of considerable importance before the 7th century A.D. Between the coins of these two peoples no accurate discrimination has yet been made. The coins of this region fall into two classes:—(1) Those which in style bear some resemblance to the coins of the Andhras (e.g., E. CSI. Pl. II, 55-58, called Kurumbar; and perhaps also *id.* I, 31-38 called Pallava or Kurumbar), and may therefore possibly belong to the same period (2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.). The occurrence of the ship as a reverse type testifies to the foreign trade for which the Pallavas were famous. (2) The other class is of gold and silver and undoubtedly later; but here again there seems to be no evidence from which to determine the exact date. These coins all bear the Pallava emblem, the maned lion, together with Kanarese or Sanskrit inscription."⁵⁵

That the Kurumbars were different from the Pallavas, and that the Pallavas were northerners, seems to find an echo in Tamil literature. There are two or three poems, which are ascribed to different authors, who must be allotted, on very substantial evidence, to the first century, or a little later, of the Christian era. Among them a certain chief by name Nannan had for his territory the region called, in Tamil literature, Pūḷināḍu⁵⁶, round about

⁵⁴ Bk. III, Ch. iii. Wilson's Translation. Original *śloka* (15-21).

⁵⁵ *Indian Coins*, by E. J. Rapson, Plate V, 16 and p. 37.

⁵⁶ This is also called in Tamil Konkāṇam (Konkan).

the region of Cannanore now. One of the hill forts belonging to that chief was called Ējil Malai (a hill about 18 miles north of Cannanore now). That hill-fort had fallen into the possession of the northerners, as the Tamils called them (Vaḍukar), and the territory was recovered by a certain Chola King, by name Ilanjêchenni, victor at Śeruppāli or Pāli over these northerners (Vaḍukar).⁵⁷ The same incident is referred to in connection with the same king in *Puram* 378. That is for the west coast. In regard to the east, the Tamil chief Kâri, ruler of Malai Nāḍu round about Tirukkivilur in the South Arcot District, is said similarly to have beaten back an Āryan force which laid siege to his hill fort of Mullūr.⁵⁸ These references in classical Tamil literature make it quite clear that at the commencement of the Christian era there was a general forward movement of the northerners (Āryans or Vaḍukar) into South India, which was resisted with all their power by the Tamilians across the whole width of the peninsula. The boast, therefore, of the Pāṇḍyan ruler, who figures prominently in the *Śilappadhikaram*, that he defeated an Āryan army, and the various northern achievements of Śenguttuvan seem founded on a basis of fact. The native Kurumbars, therefore, who must have figured in this general opposition, must have been gradually overcome by the invaders and their territory occupied completely by the Pallavas, who figured prominently in South Indian history at least from the commencement of the 4th century A.D. This would satisfactorily account for the hiatus between the Tamilian rulers of Kāñchi, generally known as Tondaimân, and the later rulers of the same region, usually known by the Sanskrit name Pallava, though this is but a translation of the word Tondaimân.

Special Note.

The Varâha cave, which is on the canal side of the lighthouse, has not been mentioned above, except in Mr. Gopalan's note. This contains a representation of the Varâha Avatâra of Vishṇu. Being under worship, people are not freely admitted at all times, and the cave has often to be given up, as it is difficult to suit oneself to the convenience of the priest in charge. It has recently become one of the most important features of Mahâbali-puram, as it contains the two panels of representations of Simhaviṣṇu and his son Mahêndravarman, with their queens one on either side of the front verandah of the cave (Plates 5 & 6). These are represented with their queens, Simhaviṣṇu seated, while his two queens are standing. Mahêndravarman is standing leading his two queens, as it were by the hand. The sitting figure is that of Simhaviṣṇu, as the inscription on the top unmistakably shows, and the standing figure is that of his son, Mahêndravarman. The discovery of these reliefs increases the probability that the place was one of very considerable importance in the days both of Simhaviṣṇu and his son Mahêndravarman. As we know that Simhaviṣṇu was a Vaishṇava,⁵⁹ the presence of his representation in the Varâha cave would be nothing strange. This newly discovered feature enhances the probability that it was regarded as a Vaishṇava holy place rather than a Śaiva. It would be difficult to explain the presence of the relief of Mahêndravarman, as traditionally he was regarded as first of all a Jain, later on converted to Śaivism. Although this by itself is no insuperable objection to the presence of this panel of his relief in the Vaishṇava temple. The appearance of the relief in company with that of his father would perhaps indicate that early in his life, and as a prince, who had not developed any pronounced partiality for any of these particular faiths like Indian sovereigns generally, he visited this place of worship impartially. Hence the conclusion seems justifiable that the reliefs were cut out in the reign of Simhaviṣṇu himself. If so, the place must have been of some importance in his reign, and the existence of this Varâha shrine may be inferred from a reference in Tirumangai Āḷvar's *Peria*

⁵⁷ Akam 375 or 374 in the MS. copy in the Govt. MSS. Library at Madras.

⁵⁸ *Narṇai*, 170.

⁵⁹ See p. 28 *ante*.

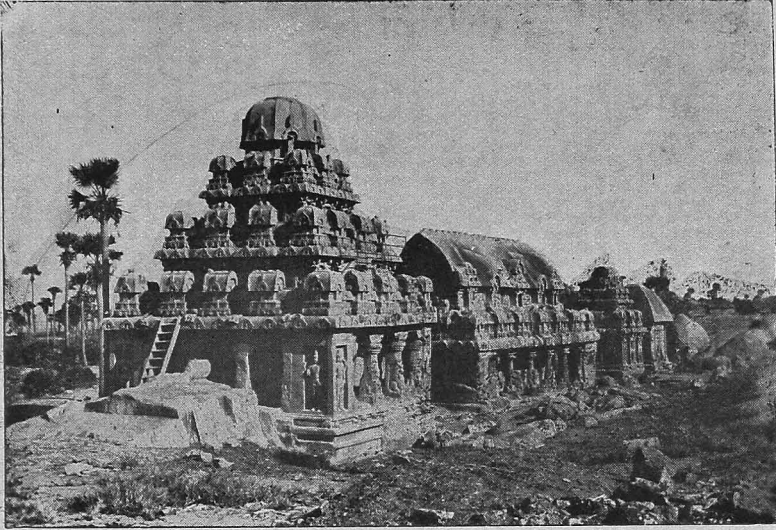
Tirumoli, (II, 6. 3). On the suggestion made above that in the relief in the Dharmarāja Ratha the two-handed figure (Plate 7) is that of Narasimhavarman, it is just possible there are other figures which may very likely represent other sovereigns of the Pallava dynasty. This, however, requires a very careful and quite a detailed examination of all the reliefs in the place.

One further point of very considerable importance is that the cave contains an inscription of Nandivarman Pallava Malla's 65th year, his latest regnal year so far known. The occurrence of this inscription in the cave, taken along with the others to which reference has already been made, shows that the place was one of considerable importance in his reign. This was already inferred from the reference to the locality in the hymns of Tirumangai Ālvar, who was a contemporary of this sovereign. This Ālvar's reference to the place as still possessed of long streets cannot be regarded as a description of an obscure village or a place in ruins.

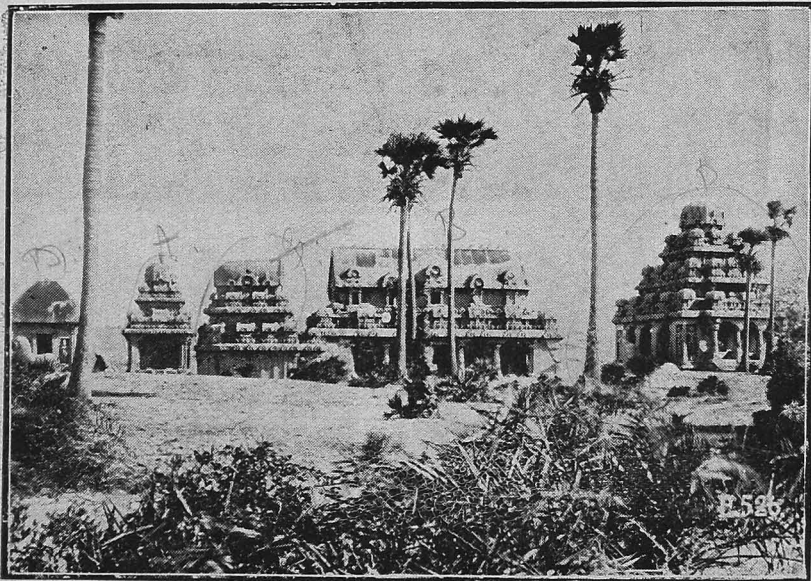
We may conclude that the various details given above would justify the inference that the place was one of some importance, and known by the Tamil native term "Mallai," otherwise, "Kaḍal Mallai". When it assumed a certain degree of importance, it probably was called "Māmallai" or "Māmallapuram"⁶⁰ to distinguish it from other villages of the name. It seems probable that Narasimhavarman I took it into his head to beautify the already considerable place in his own way, possibly in imitation of what his father did in various other places. In so doing, he followed the practice of Indian sovereigns by renaming the place with one of his titles, the most striking of which perhaps was at the time "Mahāmalla." Hence the place enjoyed the alternative designation "Mahāmalla", which, written in Tamil, would assume the form "Māmallapuram" and is identical with the previous Tamil name. There is no need, therefore, to make any effort to derive the one name from the other, being, as they are, two different names historically, though by chance they assume the same form finally.

⁶⁰ See p. 28, n. 43, *ante*.

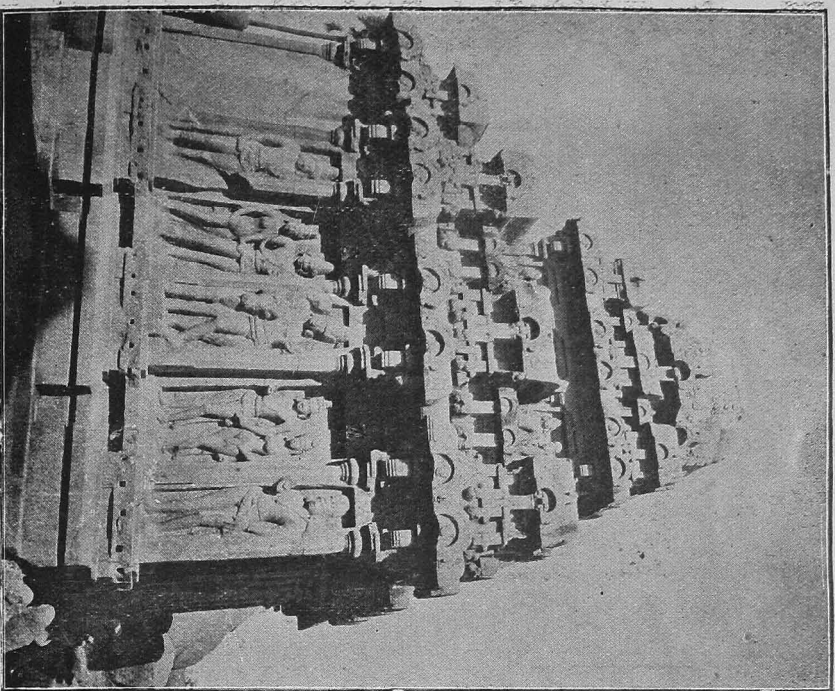
GENERAL VIEW OF THE RATHAS.



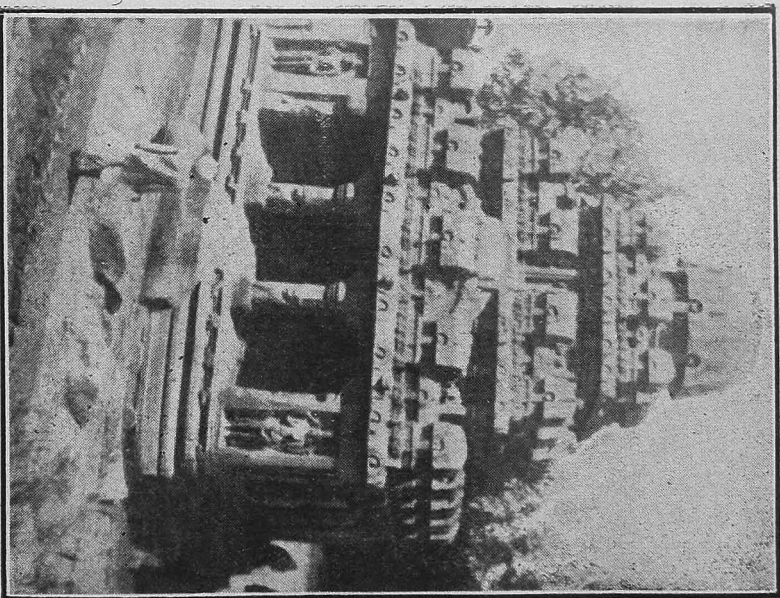
SEAWARD VIEW OF THE RATHAS.



ARJUN'S RATHA : FIGURED PANELS.



DHARMA RAJA RATHA.



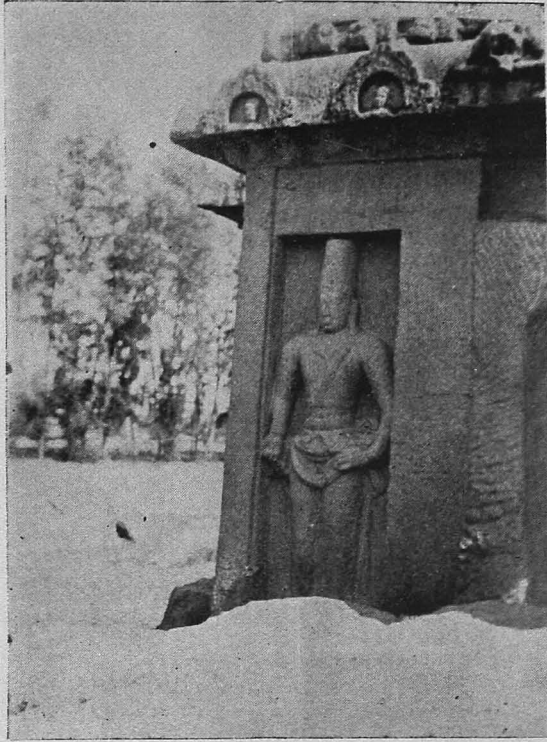
VARĀHA TEMPLE : SIMHAVISHṆU AND HIS QUEENS.



VARAHA-TEMPLE : MAHENDRAVARMAN I AND HIS QUEENS.



NARASIMHAVARMAN-MAHAMALLA,
(DHARMARAJA RATHA).



To face page 32 & refer pp. 10, 22 & 23.

MAHISHA MANDAPAM.



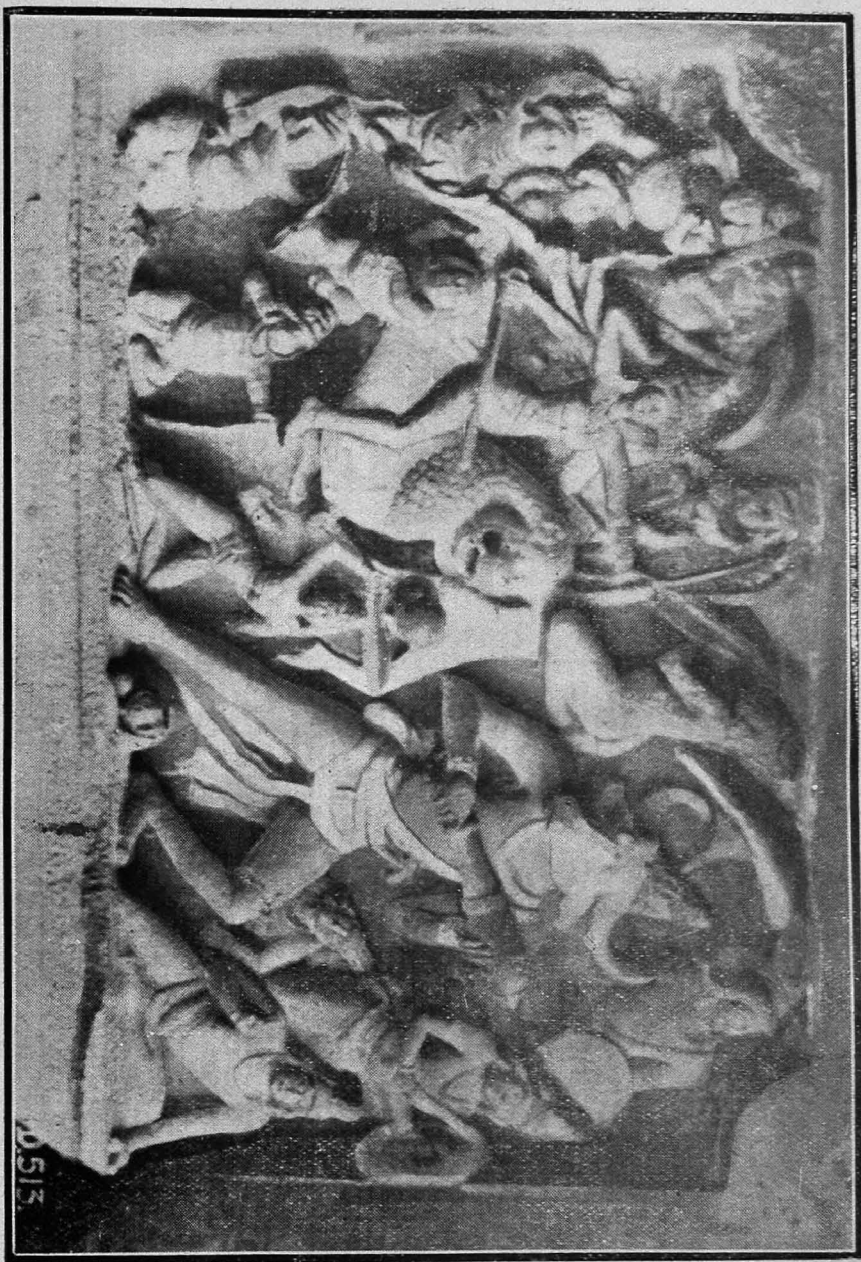
To face page 11.

STHALAŚAYANA-VISHNĪ IN MAHISHA MANDAPA.
(VISHNĪ ABED ON EARTH.)



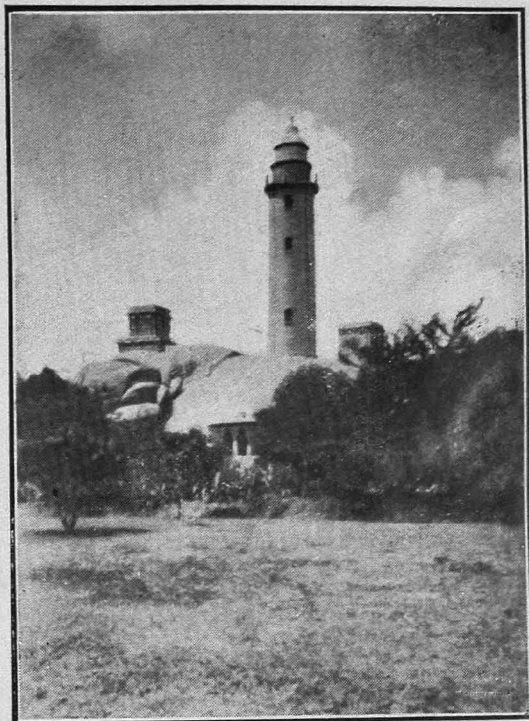
To face page 26, Refer p. 11.

MAHISHASURA MARDHANI.



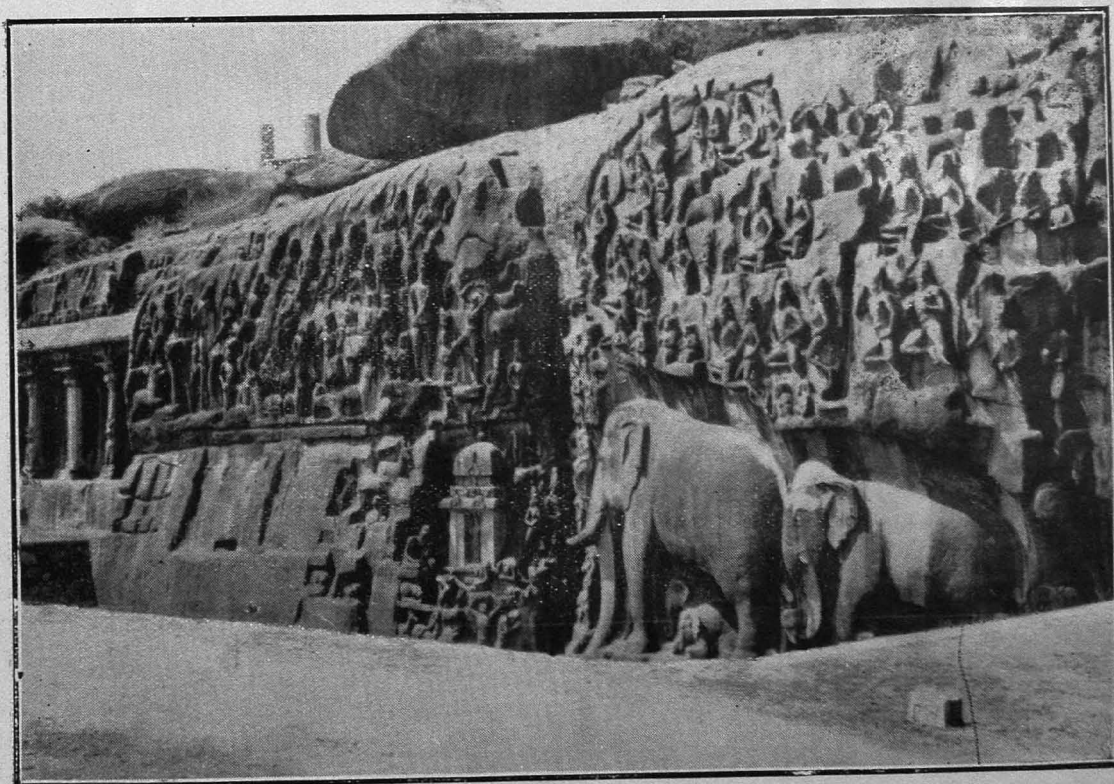
To face page 25. Refer p. 11.

INCOMPLETE TEMPLE ON LIGHT-HOUSE ROCK.



To face page 12.

ARJUNA'S PENANCE—RIVER SCENE AT THE HERMITAGE.



To face page 20 & refer p. 12.

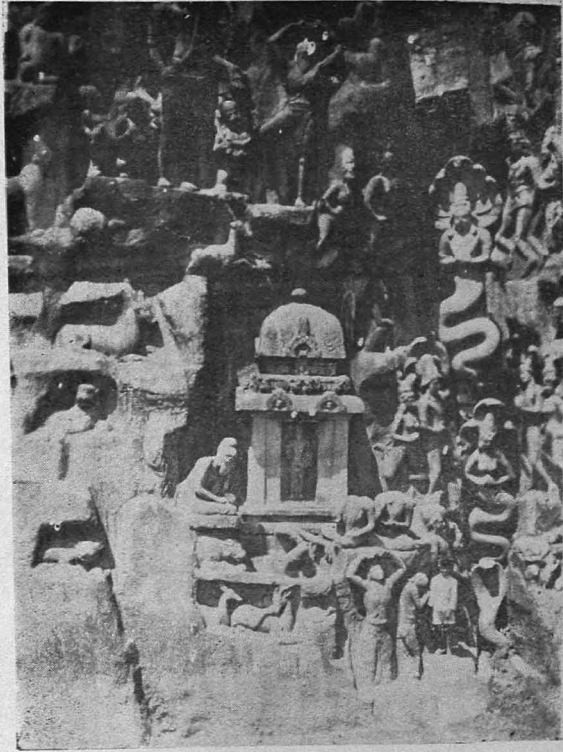
ARJUNA'S PENANCE : THE BOAR-HUNT.

Indian Antiquary



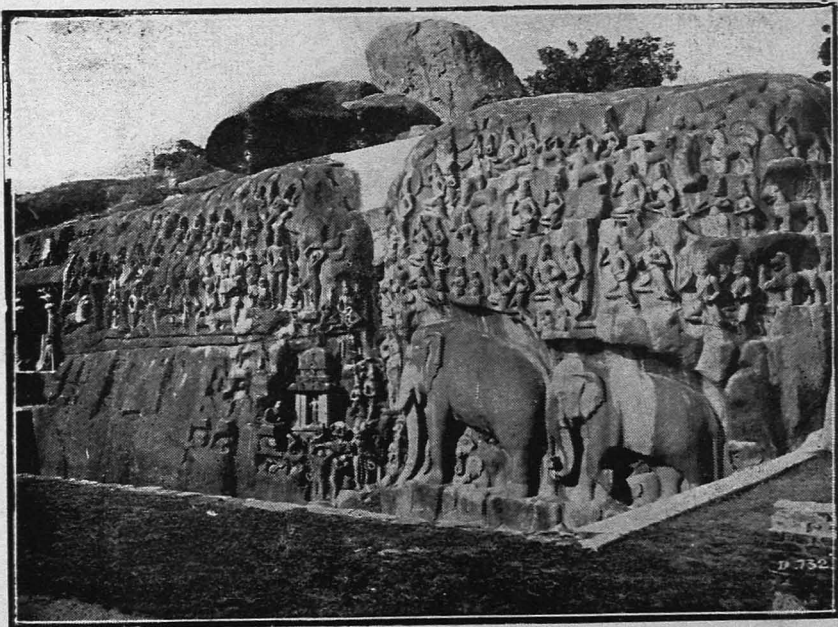
To face page 21 & refer p. 12.

ARJUNA'S PENANCE—THE HERMITAGE.



To face page 20 & refer p. 12.

ARJUNA'S PENANCE—GENERAL VIEW.



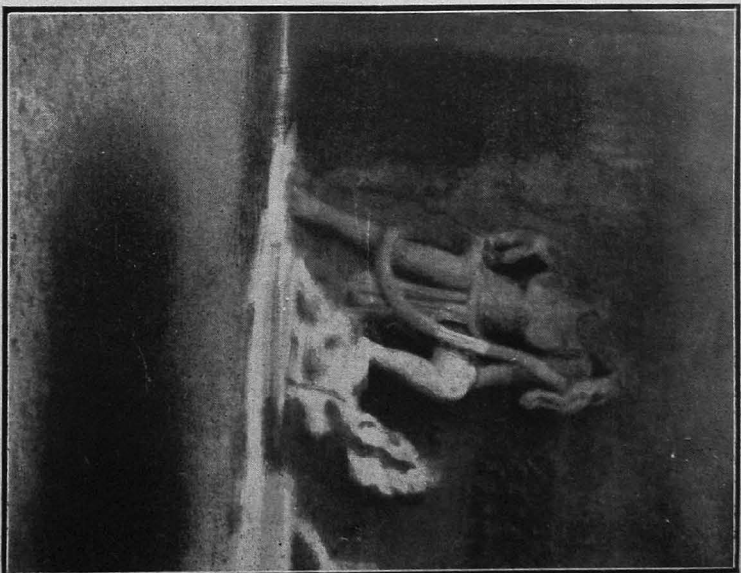
To face page 19 & refer p. 12.

VARĀHA PANEL, MAHĀBALIPŪR.



To face page 23.

VARĀHA IN THE CAVE AT UDAYAGIRI IN MALWA OF THE TIME OF CHANDRAGUPTA II. c. A.D. 400.

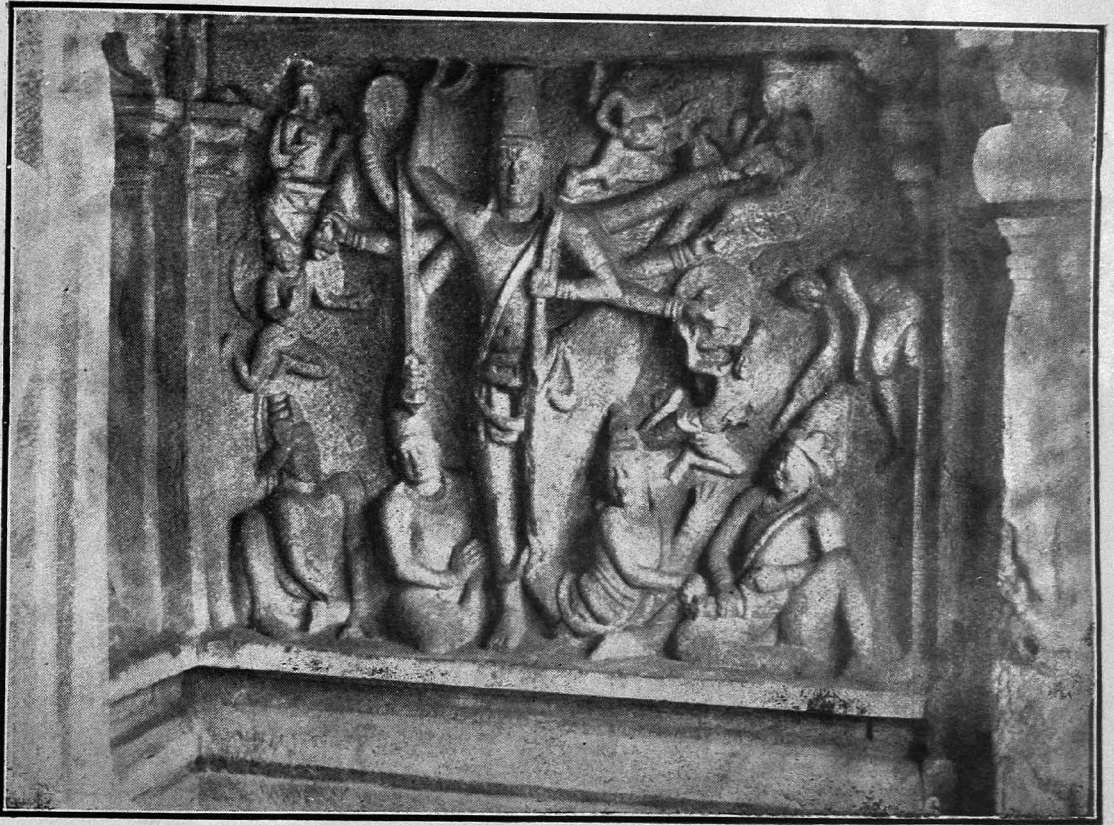


For comparison.

GANESA RATHA,



VISHNU-TRIVIKRAMA.

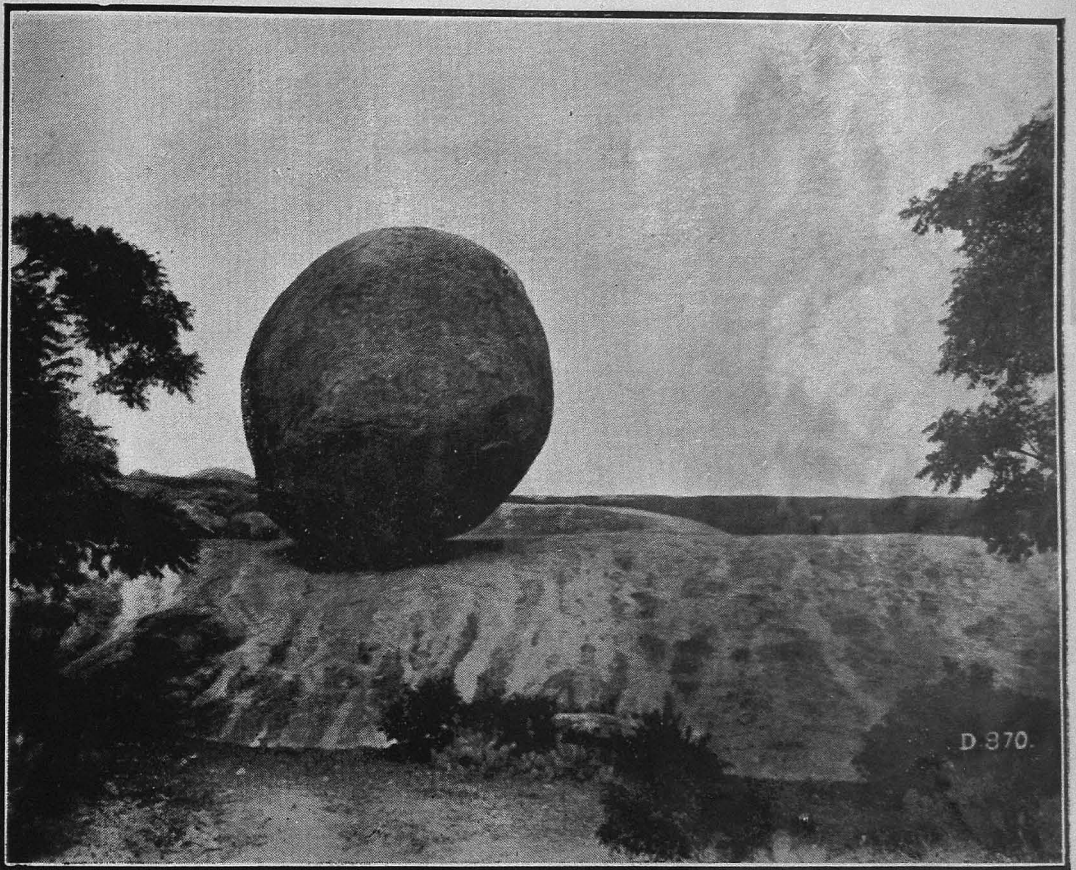


GAJALAKSHMI.



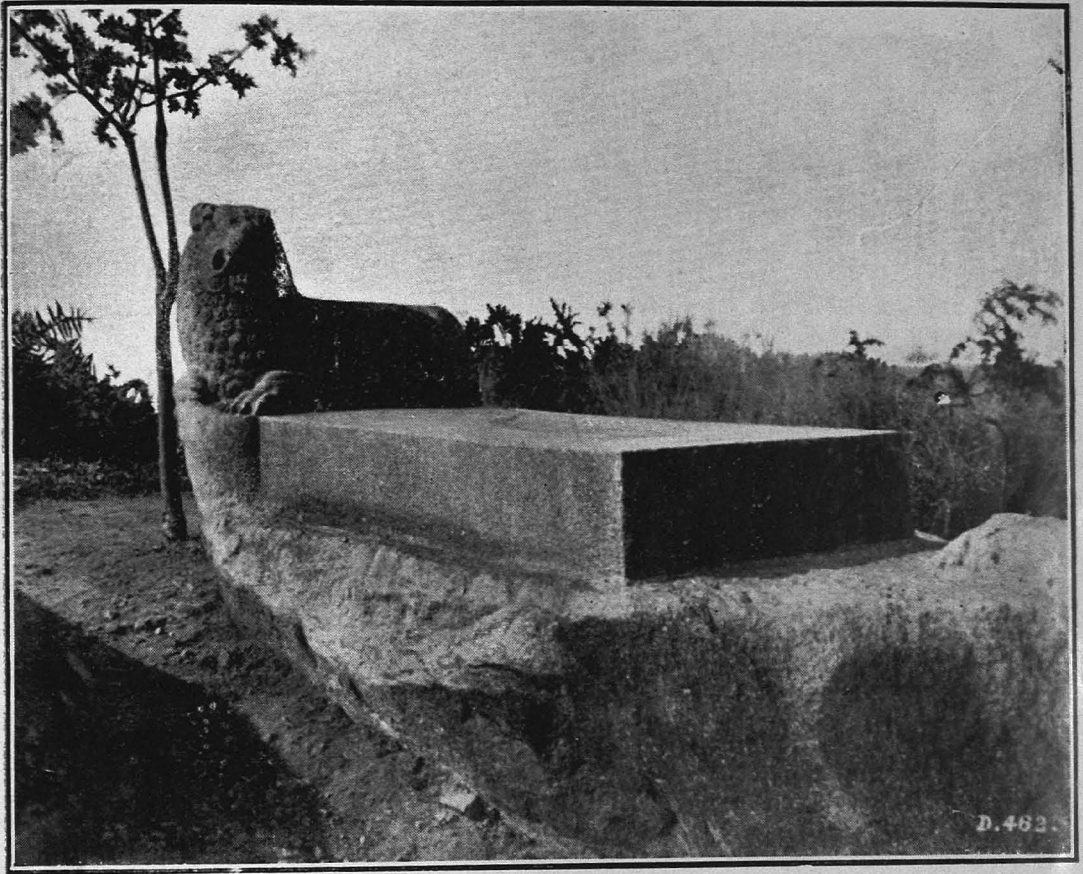
To face page 13.

KRISHNA'S BUTTER BALL.



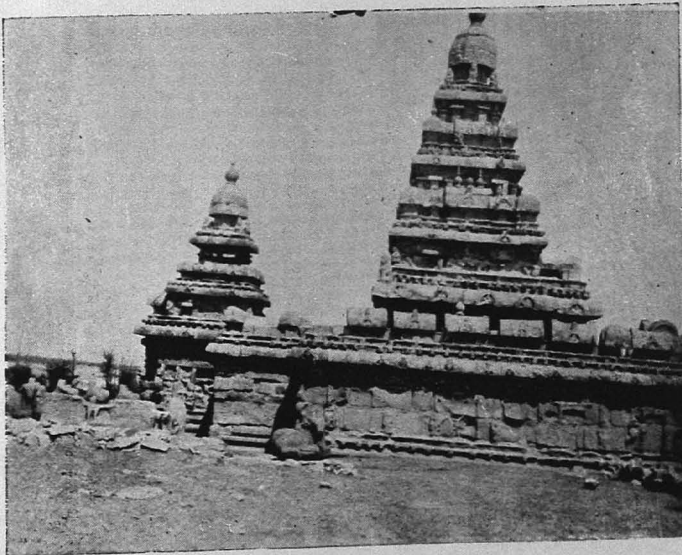
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DHARMARAJA'S LION THRONE.



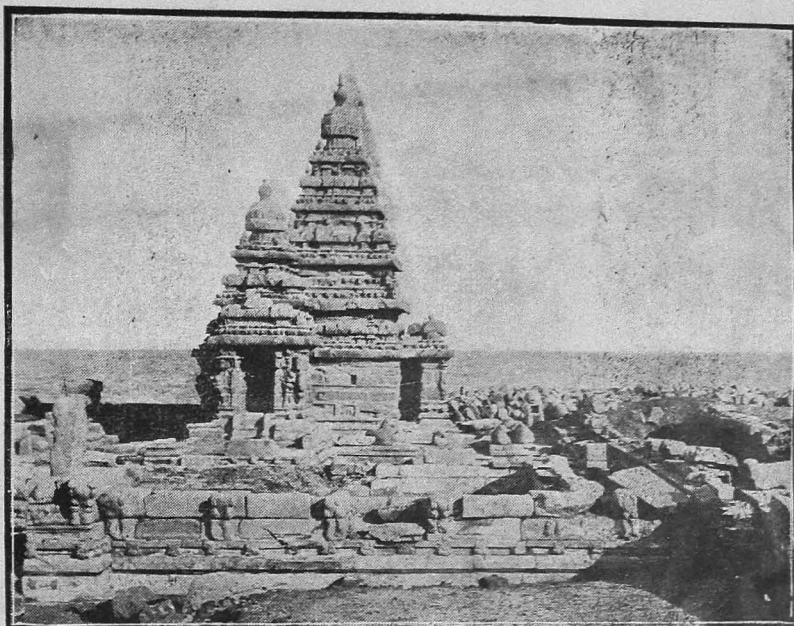
To face page 13.

SHORE TEMPLE—SIDE VIEW.



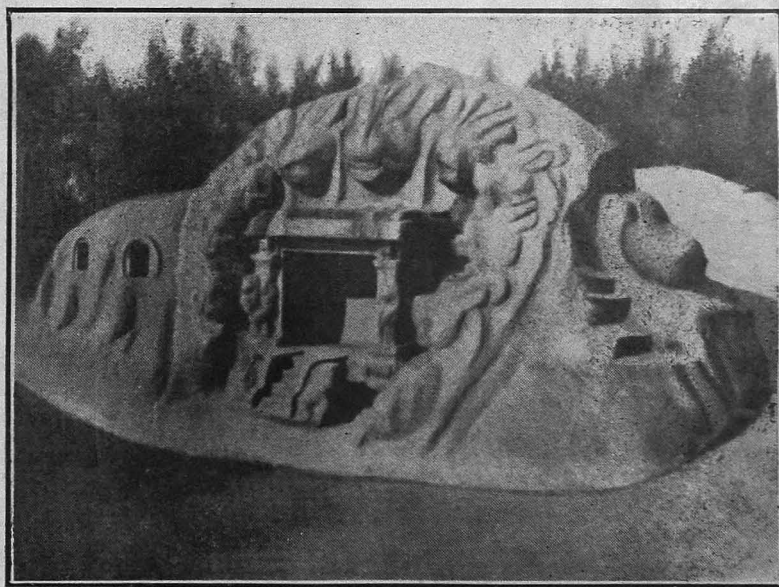
To face page 14 & refer p. 25.

SHORE TEMPLE.



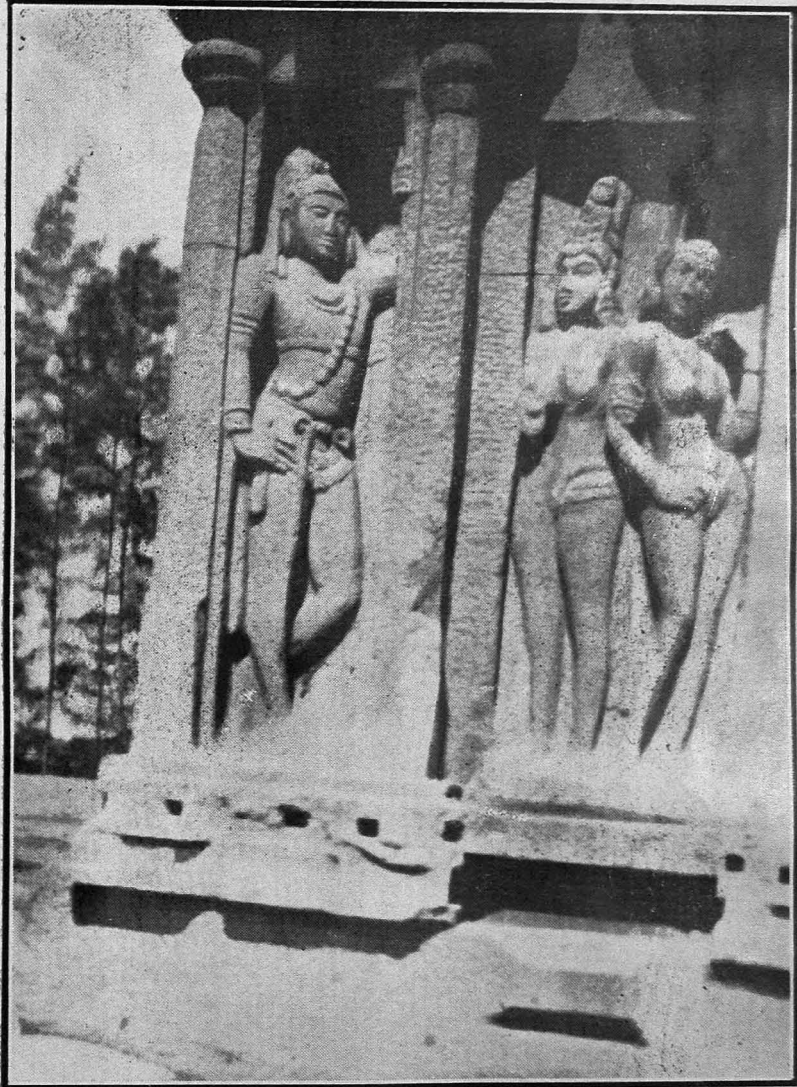
To face page 25 & refer pp. 14 & 27.

TIGER CAVE—SALUVANGUPPAM.

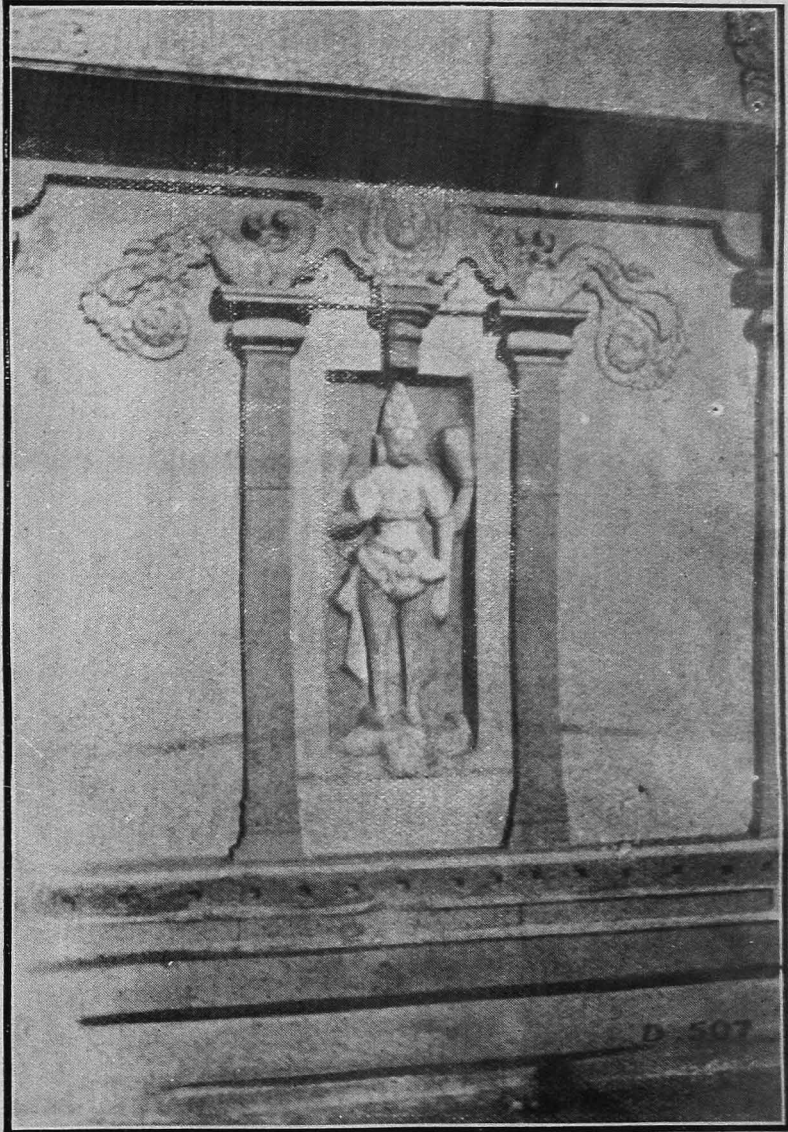


To face page 26 & refer p. 14.

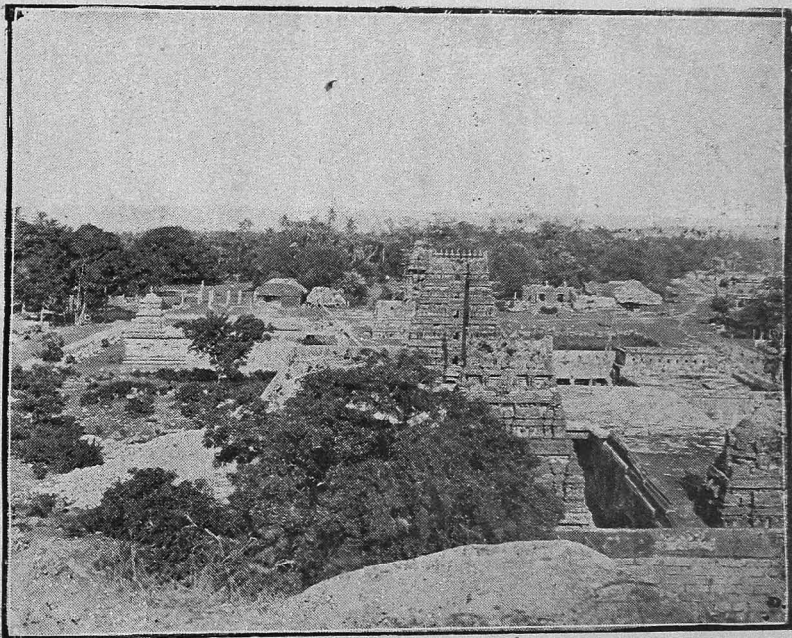
PANELS OF KING AND QUEEN: ARJUNA RATHA.



PANEL OF DURGA.



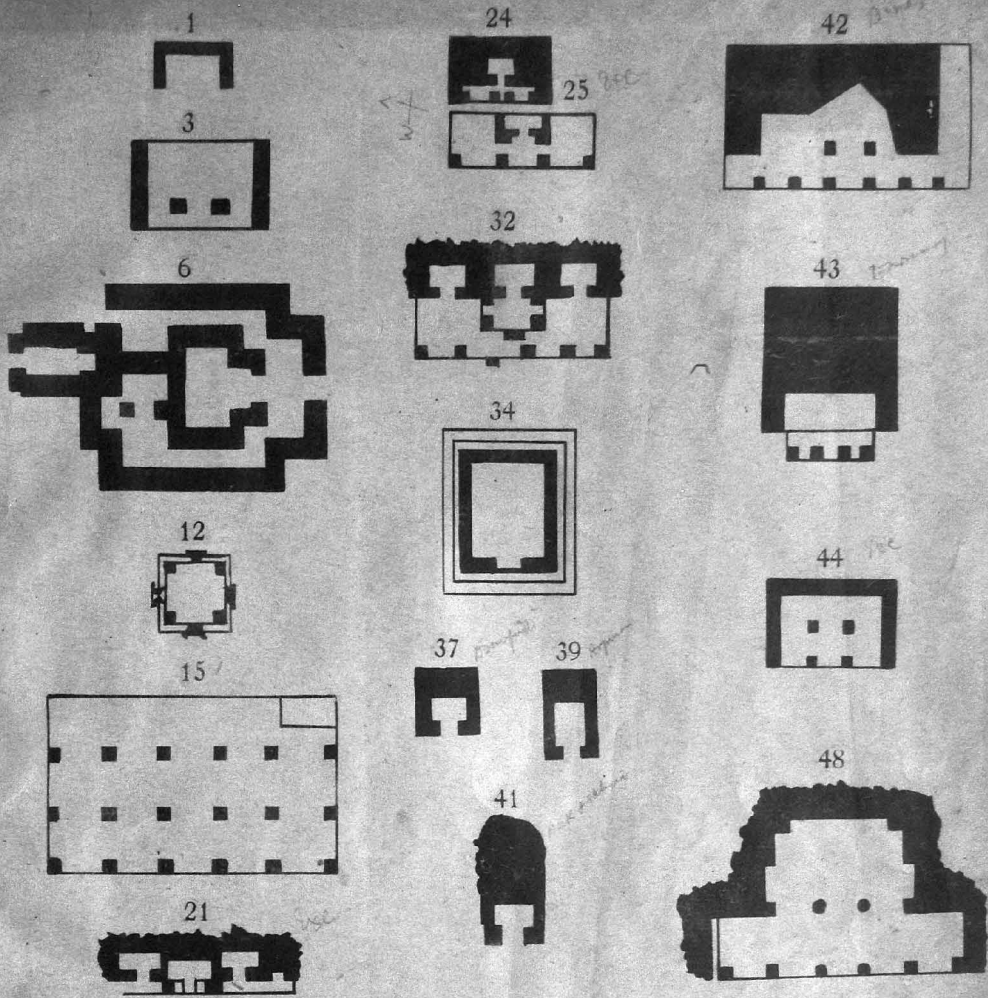
MAHABALIPURAM—BIRD'S EYE VIEW.





The Seven Pagodas at Mavalivaram
with the village of Saluvankuppam 1869

0 Feet 500 1000 1500 2000 Feet



GROUND PLANS OF TEMPLES AT MÂVALIVARAM.

Scale, 11 Yards = 1 Inch.



REFERENCES

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| 3. Pidâriamman Rathas | 24. Ganesa Temple | 39. Arjuna's Ratha |
| 6. Shore Temple | 25. Excavation | 41. Nakula & Sahadeva's Ratha |
| 12. Dolotsava Mandapam | 32. Mahishamarddini Mandapam | 42. Bhima's Ratha |
| 15. Krishna Mandapam | 34. Isvara Temple | 43. Dharmarâja's Ratha |
| 44. Excavation | 48. Râmânujajiyyar Mandapam | |

Note :—The numbering on the Original Plate has been retained.

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