S. SANKU AIYAR B. A., B. L.
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KALAM ARUKKAL

A new interpretation of a doubtful phrase

(N.V.Krishna Warrior)

"KANTHALUR SALAI KALAM ARUTTU" is a phrase occuring in several inscriptions of the Chola kings Rajaraja I, Rajendra I, Rajadhiraja and the Pandya king Parantaka (1). This phrase has been variously interpreted by scholars. The historians are not unanimous as to whare the exact location of KANTALUR SALAI. Some maintain that it was at Trivandrum while others hold that it was near Vizhinjam(2). It is however agreed that the KANTALUR SALAI, like the SALAS at Muzhikkulam, Thiruvalla and Parthivapuram, was an institution for higher education where students were given free accommodation. The Rules and Regulations of the KANTALUR SALAI were made applicable to the Salai at Parthivapuram, when that Salai was established in the 41st year of the Kollam Era by the Ay king Karunanta Takkan (3).

If the KANTALUR SALAI was an ordinary educational institution it the question naturally arises why king after king should deem it a matter of pride to attack and subdue it. Professor Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai offers the following explanation: "In the second century of the Kollam Era, when the rule of the Ay kings in south Travancore weakened and subsequently these areas passed under the rule of the Cholas, the KANTALUR SALAI and Vizhinjam came to be on the southern boundary of the Chera Empire. These places were strongly garrisoned by the Chera monarchs in order to resist the Chola invasion from the south. This resulted in Vizhinjam and highly fortified Kantalur becoming the scenes of bloody warfarexduring battles during the terrible wars which took place between the Cheras and the Cholas from t he period of Rajaraja to that of Kulottunga(4)" Again: " The Kalams (seats) of the Salas at Kantalur, Talakulam, Karakandiswaram, etc., might have been greatly increased in order to resist the ascending power of the Cholas. Military training was imparted in these Salas from early times. When the Kalams of Salas were increased to thousands, the places like Kantalur became centres of military training. That is probably the reason why Rajaraja came first to south Travancore with his army in order to destroy the Malams of these Salas(5).

Now let us see what the word Kalam means. We know that Kantalur was on the sea shore from the description of it as the place where the Chera kings used to wash their blood-stained lances. (6) From this fact some historians jumped into the conclusion that the KALAM destroyed at Kantalur was MARAKKALAM, i.e., ship. (7). S. Desikavinayakam Pillai, on the other hand, took Kalam to mean an eating plate. He interpreted the verb ATREX ARUTTU to mean "regulated". According to him the Chola and Pandya kings took legitimate pride in regulating the free distribution of food at the Kantalur Salai. (8). As the verb Aruttu does not possess such a meaning , Professor Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai finds it difficult to agree with this interpretation. He says that the word Kalam may mean "Place" and that the phrase KALAM ARUTTU signifies the abolition of seats allotted to students undergoing military training(9). Sri S. Sanku Ayyar has advanced a fourth interpretation. According to him Kalam means Armoury (Ayudhappotu). Kalam Aruttusignifies in this interpretation the capturing of the armaments kept at Kantalur. (9). Sri K.V.Krishna Ayyar agrees with this interpretation. In his opinion the phrase granting KANTALUR SALAIYUM KONTU occuring in three inscriptions and the phrase TANTAR KONTU occuring in two inscriptions lend support to this interpretation. Kentu in both these phrases naturally means "having taken". It is also significant that thisxfeetxef KADAM ARUKKAL is stated to be an emploit of the army called MUNRUKAIMAHASENAI. For a land force to engage a navy and destroy a fleetseems highly improbable. ((0)

The purpose of the present paper is to show that a more cogent interpretation of the Kakam phrase KALAM ARUTTU is possible and that it is supported by literary evidence.

In his Arthaeastra Kautalya stipulates the breadth required for reads intended for different purposes. This subject is dealt with in the fourth chapter in the 22nd Prakarana called "Durganivesa" in the 2nd Adhikarana called "Adhyakshapracara" (11). Among others the road going to SAMYA*-NITA should be eight Dandas broad, which is the maximum breadth prescribed for any kind of road. This shows that SAMYANIYA is a very important place. In the Kautaliya commentary of Arthaeastra Samyaniya is translated as KALAMURUPATTINAM. As it is the word does not make much sense. I hold that the first U is a scribal error for A and that the correct word is KALAM ARU PATTINAM, the place where Kalam Arukkal is usually done.

Now the meaning of the phrase KALAM ARUKKAL becomes plain from the description of Sthaniya. This is given in the 3rd chapter, 21st Prakarana, 2nd Adhikarana of thearthasastra. According to this description the Sthaniya is the place sorthe collection of revenew. It should be established in the midst of inhabited area on the confluence of rivers or banks of perenniallakes or tanks and should be accessible both by land and water. Sthaniya in the standard as PANTAPUTABHEDANA. (13) Commenting upon this word the Kautaliya says that packets (Ranyaputankal) of merchantise (Panyaputankal) sealed by the boundary guards should be opened only at the Sthaniya (14)

Taken together, this means that Sthaniya is the place where the revenew is collected and Samyaniya is that part of Sthaniya where the dutiable import goods are kept pending the assessment of import levies. It is necessary to have broad roads to Samyaniya so that the movement of goods may be speedily effected. The word KALAM ARU PATTINAM which is used to describe Samyaniyam is a literal translation of the term PANYAPUTABHEDANAM, which signifies the place where the seals placed by Antapalas on packets of imported goods are broken off preliminary to the assessment and collection of the levies. This is also the meaning of the word Putabhedana used along with the word Pura in the following lines from Mahabharata:

SA HASTINAPURE RAMYE KURUNAM PUTABHEDANE

Gradually this specific significance of the word rutabledana was lost sight of and at the time of Amarakosa it was regarded as mere

The phrase KANTALUR SALAI KALAM ARUTTU has now become quite easy of explanation. It means that the invading monarch supervised over the breaking open of the seals on imported goods collected at Kantalur Salai, a such breaking being symbolic of the actual collection of the revenew. itxis indeed kantalur salai, a such breaking being symbolic of the actual collection of the revenew. itxis indeed kantalur salaix and internationally famous emporium is indeed a proud achievement for a conquering hero worthy of being commemmorated. That is why this phrase recurs in successive inscriptions. The phrases KANTALUR SALAYUM KONTU, TANTAR KONTU, etc., also been fall in line with the above explanation. Many of the imported goods in those times such as wine, olive oil, etc., were transported in jars. This might have been the origin of the use of the word KALAM in the sense of merchantise in general.

There is no doubt that Kantalur had a famous seat of learning. It is quite likely that a large part office also was located in the xxisinity afathisxisstitution. this town. The reference to Kantalur as a place abounding

in splendour and wealth (KANTIYUM CELVAMUM MIKKA KANTALUR SALA) in the old poem Anantapuravarnam is a sure evidence that Kantalur was a centre of a large import-export trade.

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