

ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES.

Age of Ukkal and its Viṣṇu Temple.

THE village of Ukkal¹ is situated one mile to the east of Kūlampandal² which is another village about six miles to the south of Māmaṇḍūr near Conjeevaram (Kāñci). Dr. Hultzsch, who visited the place in 1893, describes the ancient Viṣṇu temple there thus:—"Of the shrine itself, only the lower portions remain standing and the maṇḍapa in front of the shrine threatens to collapse at any moment. The bases of the shrine and of the maṇḍapa bear 17 inscriptions. Of these, 14 were copied and published.³ The remaining three were omitted as they are incomplete."

Of the 14 inscriptions copied, two, the earliest in the list, belong to the reign of the late Pallava king Kampavarman. The first one⁴ inscribed on the south wall of the shrine, is dated the tenth year of Kampavarman's reign and records that one Saḍaiyan entrusted four hundred kāḍi of paddy with the Sabhā at Ukkal who pledged themselves to feed two Brahmins daily with the interest which amounted to 100 kāḍi per annum. The other inscription⁵ found on the same wall is dated the fifteenth year of Kampavarman's rule and states that the Sabhā of Ukkal received 1000 kāḍi of paddy from the same Saḍaiyan and agreed to collect 500 kāḍi yearly as interest on the 1000 kāḍi and hand it over to the annual committee (Samvatsara Vāriya Perumakka).

Excepting the above two inscriptions, the remaining twelve belong to the Cōla period. The existence of Kampavarman's inscriptions on the wall of the Viṣṇu temple enables us to infer that the village and the shrine are older than the time of the earliest Cōla king mentioned in the inscriptions from the same temple. However, Kampavarman's inscriptions do not tell us who the builder of the temple was. On the other hand, it is the Cōla epigraphy of the place that throws light on the antiquity of both the village and the temple.

Inscription No. 1,⁶ dated the twenty-third year of the Cōla king Rājakesarivarman, speaks of the other ancient names of the village of Ukkal—"Śivacūḍāmaṇimaṅgalam" and "Aparājita-caturvēdimāṅgalam," which are undoubtedly Pallava names. We know that Rājasimha bore the surname 'Śivacūḍāmaṇi'⁷ and that Aparājita was the last Pallava king. The village must have received its name Śivacūḍāmaṇimaṅgalam after Rājasimha in his time and then Aparājita-caturvēdimāṅgalam after Aparājita in the latter's regime. The name Śivacūḍāmaṇimaṅgalam takes the age of the village as far back as the seventh century A.D. Another name of the village referred to in the Cōla inscriptions is Śrī Vikramābharanacaturvēdimāṅgalam, which must have been given after some Cōla king subsequent to the Cōla conquest of Tondaimandalam.

Regarding the origin of the temple, the Cōla epigraphy tells us that its ancient name was Bhuvanīmāṇikka Viṣṇugrahaṁ. Dr. Hultzsch has admitted that Bhuvanīmāṇikka "The ruby of the world" might have been a *biruda* of the unknown founder of the temple. But it may be observed that the Pallava king Nṛpatungavarman had a queen by name Prithivīmāṇikkam,⁸ and that a measure was also known after the same queen.⁹ So far as the meaning of the two names 'Bhuvanīmāṇikkam' and 'Prithivīmāṇikkam' goes, there is absolutely no difference. Hence it may be suggested that it is not unlikely that this queen was the builder of the Viṣṇu temple at Ukkal. This tentative inference may be well substantiated if any of the fragmentary inscriptions on its walls could be assigned to the time of Nṛpatunga.¹⁰ And a proper and careful study of the architectural features of the ruined temple may yield additional support towards the dating of this temple.

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¹ Madras Survey Map of the Arcot Taluk.

² *Ibid.*

³ S.I.I., 3, Part I, p. 1, et seq.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ S.I.I., 3, Pt. I, p. 2.

⁷ See Nos. 24 and 31 in S.I.I., 1, where this surname of Rājasimha occurs.

⁸ Sewell's *List of Ant.*, 2, p. 30.

⁹ *Mad. Ep. Rep.*, 1905, 460 and 461.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1902, 412. A damaged inscription which belongs to the time of Gaudagopala.