

## A COMPARATIVE GRAMMAR OF THE DRAVIDIAN LANGUAGES

Rt. Rev. R.Caldwell\*

Rev. Caldwell's *Comparative Grammar* is based on four decades of his deep study and research on the Dravidian languages. He observes that Tamil language contains a common repository of Dravidian forms and roots. His prefatory note to his voluminous work is reproduced here.

### Preface to the Second Edition

It is now nearly nineteen years since the first edition of this book was published, and a second edition ought to have appeared long ere this. The first edition was, soon exhausted, and the desirableness of bringing out a second edition was often suggested to me. But as the book was a first attempt in a new field of research and necessarily very imperfect, I could not bring myself to allow a second edition to appear without a thorough revision. It was evident, however, that the preparation of a thoroughly revised edition, with the addition of new matter wherever it seemed to be necessary, would entail upon me more labour than I was likely for a long time to be able to undertake. The duties devolving upon me in India left me very little leisure for extraneous work, and the exhaustion arising from long residence in a tropical climate left me very little surplus strength. For eleven years, in addition to my other duties, I took part in the Revision of the Tamil Bible, and after that great work had come to an end, it fell to my lot to take part for one year more in the Revision of the Tamil Book of,

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Common Prayer. I suffered also for some time from a serious illness of such a nature that it seemed to render it improbable that I should ever be able to do any literary work again. Thus year after year elapsed, and year after year the idea of setting myself to so laborious a task as that of preparing a second edition of a book of this kind grew more and more distasteful to me. I began to hope that it had become no longer necessary to endeavour to rescue a half-forgotten book from oblivion. At this juncture it was considered desirable that I should return for a time to my native land for the benefit of my health; and at the same time I was surprised to receive a new and more urgent request that I should bring out a second edition of this book-for which I was informed that a demand still existed. Accordingly I felt that I had no option left, and arrived reluctantly at the conclusion that as the first edition was brought out during the period of my first return to this country on furlough, so it had become necessary that the period of my second furlough should be devoted to the preparation and publication of a second edition.

The first edition-chiefly on account of the novelty of the undertaking was received with a larger amount of favour than it appeared to me to deserve. I trust that this second edition, revised and enlarged, will be found more really deserving of favour. Though reluctant to commence the work, no sooner had I entered upon it than my old interest in it revived, and I laboured at it *con amore*. I have endeavoured to be accurate and thorough throughout, and to leave no difficulty unsolved, or at least uninvestigated; and yet, notwithstanding all my endeavours, I am conscious of many deficiencies, and feel sure that I must have fallen into many errors. Of the various expressions of approval the first edition received, the one which gratified me most, because I felt it to be best deserved, was that it was evident I had treated the Dravidian languages "lovingly." I trust it will be apparent that I have given no smaller amount of loving care and labour to the preparation of this second edition. The reader must be prepared, however, to find that many of the particulars on which I have laboured most "lovingly," though exceedingly interesting to persons who have made the Dravidian languages their special study, possess but little interest for persons whose special studies lie in the direction of some other family of languages, or Who are interested, not in the study of any one language or family, of languages in particular, but only in philological studies in general, or in discussions respecting the origin of language in general.

It is now more than thirty-seven years since I commenced the study of Tamil, and I had not preceded far in the study before I came to the conclusion that much light might be thrown on Tamil by comparing it with Telugu, Canarese, and the other sister idioms. On proceeding to make the comparison I found that my supposition was verified by the result, and also, as it appeared to me, that Tamil imparted still more light than it received. I have become more and more firmly persuaded, as time has gone on, that it is not a theory, but a fact, that none of these languages can be thoroughly understood and appreciated without some study of the others, and hence that a *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* may claim to be regarded not merely as something that is useful in its way, but as a necessity.

I trust it will be found that I have not left much undone that seemed to be necessary for the elucidation of Tamil; but I hope this branch of work will now be taken up by persons who have made Telugu, Canarese, Malayalam and Tulu their special studies so that the whole range of the Dravidian languages and dialects, may be fully, elucidated. One desideratum at present seems to be a Comparative Vocabulary of the Dravidian Languages, distinguishing the roots found, say, in the four most distinctive languages -Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, and Malayalam-from those found only in three, only in two, or only in one. An excellent illustration of what may be done in this direction has been furnished by Dr Gundert, whose truly scientific "*Dictionary of Malayalam*" has given a fresh stimulus to Dravidian philology. Another thing which has long appeared to me to be a desideratum is a more thorough examination of all the South Indian alphabets, ancient and modern, with a careful comparison of them, letter by letter, not only with the alphabets of Northern India, ancient and modern, but also, and especially, with the characters found in ancient inscriptions in Ceylon, Java, and other places in the further East. It has been announced that a work on this subject, by Dr Burnell, M.C.S., entitled "South-Indian Palaeography," is about to be published in Madras, but I regret that a copy of it has not yet arrived.

It has been my chief object throughout this work to promote a more systematic and scientific study of the Dravidian languages themselves-for their own sake, irrespective of theories respecting their relationship to other languages-by means of a careful inter-comparison of their grammars. Whilst I have never ceased to regard this as my chief object, I have at the same time considered it desirable to notice, as opportunity occurred, such principles, forms, and roots as appeared to bear any affinity to those of any other language or

family of languages, in the hope of contributing thereby to the solution of the question of their ultimate relationship. That question has never yet been scientifically solved, though one must hope that it will be solved some day. It has not yet got beyond the region of theories, more or less plausible. My own theory is that the Dravidian languages occupy a position of their own between the languages of the Indo-European family and those of the Turanian or Scythian group-not quite a midway position, but one considerably nearer the latter than the former. The particulars in which they seem to me to accord with the Indo-European languages are numerous and remarkable, and some of them, it will be seen, are of such a nature that it is impossible, I think, to suppose that they have been accidental; but the relationship to which they testify -in so far as they do testify to any real relationship-appears to me to be very indefinite, as well as very remote. On the other hand the particulars in which they seem to me to accord with most of the so-called Scythian languages are not only so numerous, but are so distinctive and of so essential a nature, that they appear to me to amount to what is called a family likeness, and therefore naturally to suggest the idea of a common descent. The evidence is cumulative. It seems impossible to suppose that all the various remarkable resemblances that will be pointed out, section after section, in this work can have arisen merely from similarity in mental development-of which there is no proof-or similarity in external circumstances and history of which also there is no proof much less without any common cause whatever, but merely from the chapter of accidents. The relationship seems to me to be not merely morphological, but-in some shape or another, and however, it may be accounted for genealogical. The genealogical method of investigation has produced remarkable results in the case of the Indo-European family of languages, and there seems no reason why it should be discarded in relation to any other family or group; but this method is applicable, as it appears to me, not merely to roots and forms, but also to principles, contrivances, and adaptations. I have called attention to the various resemblances I have noticed, whether apparently important or apparently insignificant not under the supposition that anyone of them, or all together, will suffice to settle the difficult question at issue, but as an aid to inquiry, for the purpose of helping to point out the line in which further research seems likely-or not likely to be rewarded with success. An ulterior and still more difficult question will be found to be occasionally discussed. It is this: Does there not seem to be reason for regarding the Dravidian family of languages, not only as a link of connection between the Indo-European

and Scythian groups, but-in some particulars; especially in relation to the pronouns-as the best surviving representative of a period in the, history of human speech older than the Indo-European stage, older than the Scythian, and older than the separation of the one from the other? Whilst pointing out extra-Dravidian affinities wherever they appeared to exist, it has always been my endeavour, as far as possible, to explain Dravidian forms by means of the Dravidian languages themselves. In this particular I think it will be found that a fair amount of progress has been made in this edition in comparison with the first-for which I am largely indebted to the help of Dr Gundert's suggestions. A considerable number of forms which were left unexplained in the first edition have now, more Or less conclusively, been shown to have had a Dravidian origin, and possibly this process will be found to be capable of being carried further still. The Dravidian languages having been cultivated from so early a period, and carried by successive stages of progress to so high a point of refinement, we should be prepared to expect that in supplying themselves from time to time with inflexional forms they had availed themselves of auxiliary words already in use, with only such modifications in sound or meaning as were necessary to adapt them to the new purposes to which they were applied. Accordingly it does not seem necessary or desirable to seek for the origin of Dravidian forms out of the range of the Dravidian languages themselves, except in the event of those languages failing to afford us a tolerably satisfactory explanation. Even in that event, it must be considered more probable that the evidence of a native Dravidian origin has been obliterated by lapse of time than that the Dravidians, when learning to inflect their words, borrowed for this purpose the inflexional forms of their neighbours. It is a different question whether some of the Dravidian forms and roots may not have formed a portion of the linguistic inheritance which appears to have descended to the earliest Dravidians from the fathers of the human race. I should be inclined, however, to seek for traces of that inheritance only in the narrow area of the simplest and most necessary, and therefore probably the most primitive, elements of speech.

In preparing the second edition of this book, as in preparing the first, I have endeavoured to give European scholars, whether resident in Europe or in India, such information respecting the Dravidian languages as might be likely to be interesting to them. I have thought more, however, of the requirements of the natives of the country, than of those of foreigners. It has been my earnest and constant desire to stimulate the natives of the districts in which the Dravidian

languages are spoken to take an intelligent interest in the comparative study of their own languages; and I trust it will be found that this object has in some measure been helped forward. Educated Tamilians have studied Tamil, educated Telugus have studied Telugu the educated classes in each language-district have studied the language and literature of that district with an earnestness and assiduity which are highly creditable to them, and which have never been exceeded in the history of any of the languages of the world-except, perhaps, by the earnestness and assiduity with which Sanskrit has been studied by the Brahmans. One result of this long-continued devotion to grammatical studies has been the development of much intellectual acuteness; another result has been the progressive refinement of the languages themselves; and these results have acted and reacted one upon another. Hence, it is impossible for any European who has acquired a competent knowledge of any of the Dravidian languages-say Tamil-to regard otherwise than with respect the intellectual capacity of a people amongst whom so wonderful an organ of thought has been developed. On the other hand, in consequence of the almost exclusive devotion of the *native literati* to grammatical studies they have fallen considerably behind the educated classes in Europe in grasp and comprehensiveness. What they have gained in acuteness, they have lost in breadth. They have never attempted to compare their own languages with others-not even with other languages of the same family. They have never grasped the idea that such a thing as a family of languages existed. Consequently the interest they took in the study of their languages was not an intelligent, discriminating interest, and proved much less fruitful in results than might fairly have been expected. Their philology, if it can be called by that name, has remained up to our own time as rudimentary and fragmentary as it was ages ago. Not having become comparative, it has not become scientific and progressive. The comparative method of study has done, much, in every department of science, for Europe; might it not be expected to do much for India also? If the natives of Southern India began to take an interest in the comparative study of their own languages and in comparative philology in general, they would find it in a variety of ways much more useful to them than the study of the grammar of their own language alone ever has been. They would cease to content themselves with learning by rote versified enigmas and harmonious platitudes. They would begin to discern the real aims and objects of language, and realise the fact that language has a history of its own, throwing light upon all other history, and rendering ethnology and archaeology possible. They would

find that philology studied in this manner enlarged the mind instead of cramping it, extended its horizon, and provided it with a plentiful store of matters of wide human interest. And the consequence probably would be that a more critical, scholarly habit of mind, showing itself in a warmer desire for the discovery of truth, would begin to prevail. Another result-not perhaps so immediate, but probably in the end as certain-a result of priceless value-would be the development of a good, readable, respectable, useful, Dravidian literature a literature written in a style free at once from pedantry and from vulgarisms, and in matter, tone, and tendency, as well as in style, worthy of so intelligent a people as the natives of Southern India undoubtedly are.

I trust the interest taken in their language, literature, and antiquities by foreigners will not be without its effect in kindling amongst the natives of Southern India a little wholesome, friendly rivalry. If a fair proportion of the educated native inhabitants of each district were only to apply themselves to the study of the philology and archaeology of their district with anything like the same amount of zeal with which the philology and archaeology of Europe are studied by educated Europeans, the result would probably be that many questions which are now regarded as insoluble would speedily be solved, and that pursuits now generally regarded as barren would be found full of fruit.

Native *pandits* have never been surpassed in patient labour or in an accurate knowledge of details. They require in addition that zeal for historic truth and that power of discrimination, as well as of generalisation, which have hitherto been supposed to be special characteristics of the European mind. Both these classes of qualities seem to me to be combined in a remarkable degree in the articles recently contributed by learned natives to the Bombay Indian Antiquary on subjects connected with the languages and literature of Northern India; and, those articles appear to me to be valuable not only in themselves, but also as giving the world a specimen of the kind of results that might be expected if learned natives of Southern India entered, in the same critical, careful spirit, on the cultivation of the similar, though hitherto much-neglected, field of literary labour, which may be regarded as specially their own..

I was much gratified last year on finding that this Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages had ceased to be the only Indian Comparative Grammar that had appeared. Mr Beames has followed up this line of philological research by the publication, of the first volume of a Comparative Grammar of the

Modern Aryan Languages of India-that is, the North-Indian Vernaculars. I regret that the second volume of that valuable work has not yet been published. A Comparative Grammar of the Kolarian tongues, the third great Indian family, has probably not yet been contemplated; but I am inclined to think that it would be found to be productive of important and interesting results.

I have endeavoured to make the second edition of this work I more easily available for reference, as well as more complete, than the former one, by providing the reader with a full table of contents and an index of proper names, together with paradigms of nouns, numerals, pronouns, verbs, &c. I have also given a list of the books and papers bearing, directly or indirectly, on Dravidian philology which have appeared since the first edition of this work, and which have been referred to or made use of in this edition.

### **Introduction**

It is the object of the following work to examine and compare the grammatical principles and forms of the various Dravidian languages, in the hope of contributing to a more thorough knowledge of their primitive structure and distinctive character. In pursuing this object, it will be the writers endeavour to point out everything which appears likely to throw any light on the question of the relation which this family of languages bears to the principal families or groups into which the languages of Europe and Asia have been divided.

Whilst the grammatical structure of each Dravidian language and dialect will be investigated and illustrated in a greater or less degree, in proportion to its importance and to the writers acquaintance with it, it will be his special and constant aim to throw light upon the structure of Tamil-a language which he has for more than thirty-seven years studied and used in the prosecution of his missionary labours, and which is probably the earliest cultivated, and most highly developed, of the Dravidian languages-in many respects the representative language of the family.

The idioms which are included in this work under the general term Dravidian, constitute the vernacular speech of the great majority of the inhabitants of Southern India. With the exception of Orissa, and those districts of Western India and the Dekhan in which Gujarati and Marathi are spoken, the whole of the peninsular portion of India from the Vindhya mountains and the river Nerbudda (Narmada) to Cape Comorin (Kumari), is peopled, and from the earliest period appears to have been peopled, by different branches of one and



the same race, speaking different dialects of one t and the same language-the language to which the term Dravidian is here applied; and scattered offshoots from the same stem may be traced still farther north, as far as the Rajmahal hills in Bengal, and even as far as the mountain fastnesses of Beluchistan.

Gujarati, Marathi (with its offshoot, Konkani), and Oriya, the language of Odra-desa, or Orissa, idioms which are derived from the decomposition of Sanskrit, form the vernacular speech of the Hindu population in the peninsular portion of India within their respective limits: besides which, and besides the Dravidian languages, various idioms which cannot be termed indigenous or vernacular are spoken or occasionally used by particular classes resident in Peninsular India.

Sanskrit, though it is improbable that it ever was the vernacular language of any district or country, whether in the north or in the south, is in every southern district read, and to some extent understood, by the Brahmans-the descendants of those Brahmanical colonists of early times to whom the Dravidians appear to have been indebted to some extent for the higher arts of life and a considerable portion of their literary culture. Such of the Brahmans as not only retain the name, but also discharge the functions of the priesthood, and devote themselves to professional studies, are generally able to understand and interpret Sanskrit writings, though the vernacular language of the district in which they reside is that which they use in their families, and with which they are most familiar. They are styled, with reference to the language of their adopted district, Dravida Brahmans, Andhra Brahmans, Karnataka Brahmans, &co.; and the Brahmans of the several language-districts have virtually become distinct castes; but they are all undoubtedly descended from one and the same stock, and Sanskrit, though now regarded only as an accomplishment or as a professional acquirement, is properly the literary dialect of their ancestral tongue.

Hindustani is the distinctive language of the Muhammedan portion of the population in the Dekhan most of which consists of the descendants of those warlike Pathans, or Afghans, and other Muhammedans from Northern India by whom most of the peninsula was overrun some centuries ago. It may almost be regarded as the vernacular in some parts of the Hyderabad country; but generally throughout Southern India the middle and lower classes of the Muhammedans make as much use of the language of the district in which they

reside as of their ancestral tongue, if not more. Hindustani was never the ancestral language of the class of southern Muhammedans, generally called by the English Lubbais, but by Indians on the eastern coast Sonagas (Yavanas), and by those on the western coast Mappillas. These are descendants of Arab merchants and their native converts, and speak Tamil or Malayalam.

Hebrew is used by the small colony of Jews resident in Cochin and the neighbourhood, in the same manner and for the same purposes as Sanskrit is used by the Brahmans. Gujarati and Marathi are spoken by the Gujarati bankers and the Parsi shopkeepers who reside in the principal towns in the peninsula. The mixed race of country-born Portuguese are rapidly forgetting (except in the territory of Goa itself) the corrupt Portuguese which their fathers and mothers were accustomed to speak, and learning English in stead: whilst French still retains its place as the language of the French employees and their descendants in the settlements of Pondicherry (Puduchcheri), Carrical (Kareikkal), and Mahe (Mayuri) which still belong to France.

Throughout the British territories in India, English is not only the language of the governing race, and of its East-Indian, Eurasian or Indo-British offshoot, but is also used to a considerable and rapidly increasing extent by the natives of the country in the administration of justice and in commerce; and in the Presidency of Madras and the principal towns it has already won its way to the position which was formerly occupied by Sanskrit as the vehicle of higher learning. Neither English, however, nor any other foreign tongue appears to have the slightest chance of becoming the vernacular speech of any portion of the inhabitants of Southern India. Indigenous Dravidian languages, which have maintained their ground for more than two thousand years against Sanskrit, the language of a numerous, powerful, and venerated sacerdotal race, may be expected successfully to resist the encroachments of every other tongue.

#### **Use of the Common term "Dravidian"**

I have designated the languages now to be subjected to comparison by a common term, because of the essential and distinctive grammatical characteristics which they all possess in common, and in virtue of which, joined to the possession in common of a large number of roots of primary importance, they justly claim to be conferred as springing from a common origin, and as forming a distinct family of tongues.

This family was at one time styled by European writers Tamulian or Tamulic; but as Tamil is the oldest and most highly cultivated member of the family, and that which contains the largest proportion of the family inheritance of forms and roots, and as it is desirable to reserve the terms Tamil and Tamilian (or as they used sometimes to be erroneously written Tamul and Tamulian) to denote the Tamil language itself and the people by whom it is spoken, I have preferred to designate this entire family by a term which is capable of a wider application.

One of the earliest terms used in Sanskrit to designate the family seems to have been that of *Andhra-Dravida-bhasha* the Telugu-Tamil language, or rather, perhaps, the language of the Telugu and Tamil countries. This term is used by Kumarila-bhatta, a controversial Brahman writer of eminence, who is supposed to have lived at the end of the seventh century A.D.; and, though vague, it is not badly chosen, Telugu and Tamil being the dialects spoken by the largest number of people in Southern India. Canarese was probably supposed to be included in Telugu and Malayalam in Tamil; and yet both dialects, together with any sub-dialects that might be included in them, were evidently regarded as forming but one *bhasha* (language).

The word I have chosen is Dravidian, from Dravida, the adjectival form of Dravida. This term, it is true, has sometimes been used, and is still sometimes used, in almost as restricted a sense as that of Tamil itself, so that though on the whole it is the best term I can find, I admit that it is not perfectly free from ambiguity. It is a term, however, which has already been used more or less distinctively by Sanskrit philologists, as a generic appellation for the South Indian peoples and their languages, and it is the only single term they seem ever to have used in this manner. I have, therefore, no doubt of the propriety of adopting it.

Manu says (x. 43, 44): "The following tribes of Kshatriyas have gradually sunk into the state of Vrishalas (outcasts), from the extinction of sacred rites and from having no communication with Brahmans, viz.-*Paundrakas, Odras, Dravidas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Sakas, Paradas, Pahlavas, Chinas, Kiratas, Daradas, and Khasas.*" Of the tribes here mentioned the only tribe belonging to Southern India is that of the Dravidas. This name, therefore, appears to have been supposed to denote the whole of the South Indian tribes. If any of those tribes were not intended to be included, it would probably be the Andhras, the Telugus of the interior, who had

already been mentioned by name in the *Aitareya Brahmana* and classed with *Pundras*, *Sabaras*, and *Pulindas* as degraded descendants of Visvamitra. The same statement is made in the *Mahabharata*; and in the two lists of degraded Kshatriyas therein given, the Dravidas are the only South Indian tribe mentioned. It must be concluded therefore, that the term is generically used, seeing that the more specific names of Pandyas, Cholas, &c., had become well-known in Northern India by that time. Doubtless it is in the same sense that Satyavrata, the Indian Noah, is called in the *Bhagavata Purana* the lord of Dravida (Muir's "Sanskrit Texts," vol. i.).\*

The more distinctively philological writers of a later period used the term Dravida in what appears to be substantially the same sense as that in which I propose that it should be used. The principal Prakrits that is, colloquial dialects of ancient India were the Maharashtri, the Sauraseni, and the Magadhi. Amongst minor or less-known Prakrit dialects the Dravidi, or language of the Dravidas, was included. A Sanskrit philologist quoted by Muir (vol. ii. 46) speaks of the language of Dravida as a vibhasha, or minor Prakrit; and another (p. 50) speaks of the language proper to Dravidas (in which persons of that race should be represented as speaking in dramas) as the Dravidi. It is evident that we have here to understand not the Tamil alone, or any other South Indian language alone, but the Dravidian languages generally, supposed in a vague manner by North Indian writers to constitute only one tongue. This language of the Dravidas was evidently included in what was called the Paisachi Prakrit, a name which appears to have been applied promiscuously to a great number of provincial dialects, including dialects so widely differing from one another as the language of the Pandyas (Tamil), and that of the Bhotas (Tibetan). The only property these languages can have possessed in common must have been the contempt in which they were held by Brahman philologists, in virtue of which it must have been that they were styled also Paisachi, the language of pisachas, or demons. The more accurate term Dravidi has continued to be used occasionally by northern scholars up to our own time. As late as 1854, the learned Hindu philologist Babu Rajendra Lal Mitra (quoted by Muir, vol. ii. 127), speaks of the Dravidi as one of the recognised Prakrits, equally with the Sauraseni, and as being, like it, the

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\* The tradition is recorded in the ancient Tamil classics which speak of a large continent which once existed contiguous to Southern India, and which was submerged by the ocean during a certain inundation not far removed from human recollection.-*The Tamilian Antiquary*.

parent of some of the present vernaculars of India. It thus appears that the word *Dravida*, from which the term *Dravidian* has been formed, though sometimes used in a restricted sense, as equivalent to *Tamil*, is better fitted, notwithstanding, for use as a generic term; inasmuch as it not only has the advantage of being more remote from ordinary usage, and somewhat more vague, but has also the further and special advantage of having already been occasionally used by Indian philologists in a generic sense. By the adoption of this term, *Dravidian*, the word *Tamilian* has been left free to signify that which is distinctively *Tamil*.

### **High antiquity of the literary cultivation of Tamil.**

The relatively high antiquity of the literary cultivation of *Tamil* being a matter of interest considered in itself, irrespective of its bearings on the question of *Dravidian* comparative grammar, I shall here adduce a few of the evidences on which this conclusion rests.

1. *Classical Tamil*, which not only contains all the refinements which the *Tamil* has received, but also exhibits to some extent the primitive condition of the language, differs more from the colloquial *Tamil* than the classical dialect of any other *Dravidian* idiom differs from its ordinary dialect. It differs from colloquial *Tamil* so considerably that it might almost be considered as a distinct language: for not only is classical *Tamil* poetry as unintelligible to the unlearned *Tamilian* as the *Aeneid* of *Virgil* to a modern Italian peasant, but even prose compositions written in the classical dialect might be read for hours in the hearing of a person acquainted only with the colloquial idiom, without his understanding a single sentence. Notwithstanding this, classical *Tamil* contains less *Sanskrit* not more, than the colloquial dialect. It affects purism and national independence; and its refinements are all *ab intra*. As the words and forms of classical *Tamil* cannot have been invented all at once by the poets, but must have come into use slowly and gradually, the degree in which colloquial *Tamil* has diverged from the poetical dialect, notwithstanding the slowness with which language, like everything else, changes in the East; seems to me a proof of the high antiquity of the literary cultivation of *Tamil*.

2. Another evidence consists in the extraordinary copiousness of the *Tamil* vocabulary, and the number and variety of the grammatical forms of *Shen-Tamil*. The *Shen-Tamil* grammar is a crowded museum of obsolete forms, cast-off inflexions, and curious anomalies. Many of these will be pointed out from time to

time in the body of this work. I may here refer especially to the extreme and almost naked simplicity of some of the conjugational forms of the oldest Tamil, particularly to the existence of an uninflected form of the verb, and of another form in which only the first rudimentary traces of inflexion are seen. These particulars, as will be shown in the Part "on the Verb," seem to me to point to the arrest of the development of the Tamil verb at a very early period by the invention of writing, as in the still more remarkable instance of Chinese. The extraordinary copiousness of the Tamil vocabulary is shown by the fact that a school lexicon of the Tamil language, published by the American missionaries at Jaffna, contains no less than 58,500 words; notwithstanding which, it would be necessary to add several thousands of technical terms, besides provincialisms, and thousands upon thousands of authorised compounds, in order to render the list complete. Nothing strikes a Tamil scholar more, on examining the dictionaries of the other Dravidian dialects, than the paucity of their lists of synonyms in comparison with those of Tamil. The Tamil vocabulary contains not only those words which may be regarded as appropriate to the language, inasmuch as they are used by Tamil alone; but also those which may be considered as the property of Telugu, Canarese, &c. Thus, the word used for house in ordinary Tamil is *vidu*; but the vocabulary contains also, and occasionally uses, the word appropriate to Telugu, *il* (Tel. *illu*), and the distinctive Canarese word, *manei* (Can. *mane*); besides another synonym, *kudi*, which it has in common with Sanskrit and the whole of the Finnish languages. The grammar and vocabulary of Tamil are thus to a considerable extent the common repository of Dravidian forms and roots. We may conclude, therefore, that the literary cultivation of Tamil dates from a period prior to that of the other idioms, and not long subsequent to the final breaking up of the language of the ancient Dravidians into dialects.

3. Another evidence of the antiquity and purity of Tamil consists in the agreement of the ancient Canarese, the ancient Malayalam, the Tulu, and also the Tuda, Gond, and Ku, with Tamil, in many of the particulars in which modern Canarese and modern Telugu differ from it.

4. The fact that in many instances the forms of Telugu roots and inflexions have evidently been softened down from the forms of Tamil, is a strong confirmation of the higher antiquity of the Tamilian forms. Instances of this will be given in the section on the phonetic system of these languages. It will suffice now to adduce, as an illustration of what is meant, the transposition of vowels in

the Telugu demonstrative pronouns. The true Dravidian demonstrative bases are *a*, remote, and *i*, proximate; to which are suffixed the formatives of the genders, with *v* euphonic, to prevent hiatus. The Tamil demonstratives are *avan*, *ille*, and *ivan*, hic. The Telugu masculine formative answering to the Tamil *an*, is *du*, *udu*, or *adu*; and hence the demonstratives in Telugu, answering to, the Tamil *avan*, *ivan*, might be expected to be *avadu* and *ivadu* instead of which we find *vadu*, *ille*, and *vidu*, hic. Here the demonstrative bases *a* and *i* have shifted from their natural position at the beginning of the word to the middle, whilst by coalescing with the vowel of the formative, or as a compensation for its loss, their quantity has been increased. The altered, abnormal form of the Telugu is "evidently the later one; but as even the high dialect of the Telugu : contains no other form, the period when the Telugu grammar was rendered permanent by written rules and the aid of written compositions, must have been subsequent to the origin of the corruption question, and therefore subsequent to the literary cultivation of, Tamil.

5. Another evidence of antiquity consists in the great corruption of many of the Sanskrit *tadbhavas* or derivatives found in Tamil.

The Sanskrit contained in Tamil may be divided into three portions of different dates.

(1.) the most recent portion was introduced by the three religious schools which divide amongst them the allegiance of the mass of the Tamil people. These are the school of the Saiva-Siddhanta, of that of the philosophy of the Agamas, the most popular system amongst the Tamil Sudras, the school of Sankara Acharya, the apostle of Advaita, and the chief rival of both, the school of Sri Vaishnava, founded by Ramanuja Acharya. The period of the greatest activity and influence of those sects seems to have extended from about the eleventh century A.D. to the sixteenth; and the Sanskrit derivatives introduced by the adherents of these systems (with the exception of a few points wherein change was unavoidable) are pure, unchanged Sanskrit.

(2.) The school of writers, partly preceding the above and partly contemporaneous with them, by which the largest portion of the Sanskrit derivatives found in Tamil were introduced, was that of the Jainas, which flourished from about the ninth or tenth century A.D. to the thirteenth.\* The

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\* Modern researches point to a much earlier date than that given here. *Editors*.

period the predominance of the Jainas (a predominance in intellect and learning—rarely a predominance in political power) was the Augustan age of Tamil literature, the period when the Madura College, a celebrated literary association, appears to have flourished, and when the Kural, the Chintamani, and the classical vocabularies and grammars were written. The Sanskrit derivatives found in the writings of this period are very considerably altered, so as to accord with Tamil euphonic rules. Thus *loka*, Sans. the world is changed into *ulagu*; *raja*, a king, into *arasu*.

Nearly the whole of the Sanskrit derivatives found in Telugu, Canarese and Malayalam belong to the periods now mentioned, or at least they accord on the whole with the derivatives found in the Tamil of those two periods, especially the former or more recent. They are divided, according to the degree of permutation or corruption to which they have been subjected, into the two classes of *tat-sama*, the same with it i.e., words which are identical with Sanskrit and *tad-bhava*, of the same nature with it derived from it i.e., words which are derived from a Sanskrit origin, but have been more or less corrupted or changed by local influences. The former class, or *tatsama* words, are scarcely at all altered, and generally look like words which have been used only by Brahmans, or which had been introduced into the vernaculars at a period when the Sanskrit alphabetical and phonetic systems had become naturalised, through the predominance of the later forms of Hinduism. Sanskrit derivatives of the second class which have been altered more considerably, or *tadbhava* words, do not appear to have been borrowed direct from Sanskrit, but are represented by Telugu and Canarese grammarians themselves as words that have been borrowed from the Prakrits, or colloquial dialects of the Sanskrit, spoken in ancient times in the contiguous Gaura provinces.

(3.) In addition to the Sanskrit *tatsama* and *tadbhava* derivatives of the two periods now mentioned—the modern Vedantic, Saiva, and Vaishnava periods, and in the Jaina period Tamil contains many derivatives belonging to the very earliest period of the literary culture of the language—derivatives which are probably of an earlier date than the introduction of Sanskrit into the other dialects. The derivatives of this class were not borrowed from the northern Prakrits (though much more corrupted than even the derivatives borrowed from those Prakrits by Canarese and Telugu), but appear to have been derived from oral intercourse with the first Brahmanical priests, scholars, and astrologers, and probably remained unwritten for a considerable time. The Sanskrit of this period



is not only greatly more corrupted than that of the period of the Jainas, but its corruptions are of a different character. The Jainas altered the Sanskrit which they borrowed in order to bring it into accordance with Tamil euphonic rules; whereas in the Sanskrit of the period now under consideration the earliest period-the changes that have been introduced seem to be in utter defiance of rule. The following are instances of derivatives of this class:

(a.) The Sans. *sri*, sacred, was altered into *tiru*, whilst a more recent alteration of the Sanskrit word is into *siri*, *siri*, and *si*.

(b.) The Sans. *karman*, a work, is in the Tamil of the more modern periods altered into *karumam* and *kanmam*; but in the older Tamil it was corrupted into *kam*.

(c.) Several of the names of the Tamil months supply us with illustrations of early corruptions of Sanskrit. The Tamil months, though now solar siderial, are named from the old lunar asterisms, the names of which asterisms, and still more the names of the months borrowed from them, are greatly corrupted. E.g., the asterism *purva-ashadam* is changed into *puradam*, *ashadam*, also, is changed into *adam*, from which is formed *adi*, the Tamil name of the month July-August. The name of the asterism *asvini* has been corrupted into *eippasi*, which is the Tamil name of the month October-November. The change of *purva bhadra-pada*, the Sanskrit name of one of the asterisms, into *purattasi* is still more extraordinary. *Purva-bhadra-pada* was first changed into *purattadi*, the name of the corresponding asterism in Tamil; and this, again, by the shortening of the first syllable and the change of *di* into *si*, became *purattasi*, the Tamil month September-October. The corresponding names of the asterisms and months in Telugu, Canarese, &c. , are pure, unchanged Sanskrit; and hence the greater antiquity of the introduction of those words into Tamil, or at least the greater antiquity of their use in Tamil written compositions, may safely be concluded.

6. The higher antiquity of the literary cultivation of Tamil may also be inferred from Tamil inscriptions. In Karnataka and Telingana every inscription of an early date and the majority even of modern inscriptions are written in Sanskrit. Even when the characters employed are those of the ancient Canarese or Telugu (characters which have been arranged to express the peculiar sounds of Sanskrit), Sanskrit is the language in which the inscription is found to be written, if it is one of any antiquity. In the Tamil country, on the contrary, all inscriptions belonging to an early period are written in Tamil; and I have not met

with, or heard of, a single Sanskrit inscription in the Tamil country which appears to be older than the fourteenth century A.D., though I have obtained facsimiles of all the inscriptions I could hear of in South Tinnevely and South Travancore-integral portions of the ancient Pandyan kingdom. The number of inscriptions I have obtained is about a hundred and fifty. They were found on the walls and floors of temples, and on rocks and pillars. The latest are written in Grantha, or the character in which Sanskrit is written by the Dravida Brahmans; those of an earlier age either in an old form of the existing Tamil character, or in a still older character, which appears to have been common to the Tamil and the ancient Malayalam countries, and is the character in which the ancient *sasanas* or documentary tablets in the possession of the Jews at Cochin and of the Syrian Christians in Travancore are written. This character is still used with some variations by the Muhammedan colonists in North Malayalam. It presents some points of resemblance to the modern Telugu-Canarese character, and also to the character in which some undeciphered inscriptions in Ceylon and the Eastern Islands are written.\* The language of all the more ancient of these inscriptions is Tamil, and the style in which they are written is that of the classical dialect without any of those double plurals (eg., *ningal* yous, instead of *nir*, you), and other unauthorised novelties by which modern Tamil is disfigured, but it is free also from the affected brevity and involutions of the poetical style. As no inscription of any antiquity in Telingana or Karnataka is found to be written in the Canarese or the Telugu language, whatever be the character employed, the priority of Tamil literary culture, as well as its national independence to a considerable extent, may fairly be concluded.

I may here remark that the Cochin and Travancore *sasanas* or tablets which are referred to above, and which have been translated by Dr Gundert, prove amongst other things the substantial identity of ancient Malayalam with ancient Tamil. The date of these documents is probably not later than the ninth century A.D., nor earlier than the seventh; for the technical terms of solar-siderial chronolgy (derived from the *Surya-Siddanta* of Arya-bhatta) which are employed in these inscriptions were not introduced till the seventh century. The *sasanas* were written at a time when the Kerala dynasty was still predominant on the Malabar coast; but though words and forms which are peculiar to Malayalam may be detected in them, the general style of the language in which they are

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\* *Journal of the Madras Literary Society, vol. xiii.*

written is Tamil, the inflexions of the nouns and verbs are Tamil, and the idiom is mostly Tamil; and we are therefore led to infer that at that period Tamil was the language at least of the court and of the educated classes in the Malayalam country, and that what is now called Malayalam, if it then existed at all, was probably nothing more than a patois current among the inhabitants of the hills and jungles in the interior. The fact that the *sasanas* which were given by the ancient Malayalam kings to the Jews and Syrian Christians are in the Tamil language, instead of what is now called Malayalam, cannot be accounted for by the supposition of the subjection at that time of any part of the Malayalam country to the ancient kings of Madura; for the kings in question were Kerala, not Pandya kings, with Kerala names, titles, and insignia; and it is evident from the Greek geographers themselves, from whom alone we know anything of an ancient Pandya conquest, that it was only a few isolated places, on or near the Malabar coast, that were really under the rule of the Pandyas. The only part of the Malayalam country which at that period could have belonged bona fide to the Pandyas, was the southern part of the country of the Aii or Paralia, i.e. South Travancore, a district which has always been inhabited, chiefly by Pandis, and where to the present day the language of, the entire people is Tamil, not Malayalam.

From the various particulars mentioned above, it appears clear that the Tamil language was of all the Dravidian idioms the earliest cultivated; it also appears highly probable that in the endeavour to ascertain the characteristics of the primitive Dravidian speech, from which the various existing dialects have divaricated, most assistance will be furnished by Tamil. The amount and value of this, assistance will appear in almost every portion of the grammatical comparison on which we, are about to enter. It must, however, be borne in mind, as has already been intimated, that neither Tamil nor any other single dialect, ancient or modern, can be *implicitly* adopted as a faithful representative of the primitive Dravidian tongue. A careful comparison of the peculiarities of all the dialects will carry us up still further, probably up to the period of their mutual divergence, a period long anterior to that of grammars and vocabularies; and it is upon the result of such a comparison that most dependence is to be placed.

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