

specifies, apropos Citamparam, that "though the temples structurally cannot be pushed to a date earlier than that of the imperial Chōlas, the inscriptions take us at least to the 7th c. A.D. and the literature to Patañjali's time"²⁶ and, even though he recognises that the chronology of the Patañjalis and of the Vyāghrapādas is not certain, he envisages the first wave of Pāsupata Śaivism in the South occurring in the 2nd c. B.C.

Due importance as correlations with the cultural background of the *Tēvāram* should be given not only to the rather vague agamic references from dedicatory inscriptions of Pallava kings nor those almost too technical ones of the *Tirumantiram* by Tirumūlar, the date of which is uncertain, but also to other indirect yet much more valuable witnesses who cannot be suspected of partiality in this debate. As well, the *Avantisundarikathā* of Daṇḍin (7th c. at Kāñcīpuram) apropos the quasi-miraculous mending of the broken arm of Viṣṇu, sleeping on the serpent at Mahāmallapuram, by the Sthapati Lalitālaya in speaking of which, makes mention of "ninety-six kinds of temple" and Daṇḍin himself refers to his visit to this sanctuary. The story is repeated in his *Avantisundarikathāsāra*.²⁷ Another sanctuary found in Tamil lands is mentioned in the *Araṇya kāṇḍa* (sarga 126, śl. 27, ed. Bombay, 1914, Gujarathi printing press) of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* that of Tiruveṅkaṭu andhakāsurasamhāramūrti with reference to the mahātmya of the temple. Late as it may be, the reference is still earlier than the Nāyaṇmār and confirmed in three commentaries. The least disputable and most enjoyable reference comes from the *Kādambari*²⁸ where Bāṇa takes manifest pleasure in the description of an old priest of Tamilnad (*jaraddraviḍa dhārmika*), in charge of a Caṇḍikā forest temple, begging Durgā for the boon of ruling over all of Draviḍa territory, wagging his head all day long as if to avoid mosquitoes but to the rhythm of his mantra, dancing and chanting devotional songs to Bhāgīrathī in his mother tongue (*svadeśa-bhāṣā-nibaddha-bhāgīrathi-bhakti-stotra-nartakena*) which should be seen as a homage to Śiva Jaladhārin, bearing Gaṅgā in his tresses, a favourite theme in *Tēvāram* hymns known as early as the *Paripāṭal*, he spends his nights sleeping in different temples in spite of the misadventures this exposes him to and he is naturally outraged when he sees a mistake in the established order of the arrangement of the flowers in the *aṣṭapuspikāpūjā* a rite which is well defined in agamic texts but which Bāṇa's literary commentators could not understand. This authentic *gurukkaḷ*, unwilling to relinquish his Śaivite pride, (*avimukta śaivābhi-*

26. o.c. p. 63.

27. Daṇḍin, *Avantisundarikathā*, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series n° 172, 1954 pp. 12-13, and *Avantisundarikathāsāra*, pp. 4-5 ed. M. Ramakrishna Kavi, Madras.

28. Bāṇa, *Kādambarī*, Nīrnaya Sagar ed., Bombay, 1948, pp. 459-464. On the *aṣṭapuspikā* mentioned by Bāṇa, see the *Śaivāgamaparibhāṣāmañjari* of Vedajñāna, VIII 67-71a, in Bruno Dagens', *Le florilège de la doctrine śaivite*, P.I.F.I. N° 60, 1979, p. 312 and references given *ad loc.*, of which *Somaśambhuppaddhati* in P.I.F.I. N° 25, Vol. I pp. 292-293.