

HISTORY OF MYSORE

CHAPTER I.

THE SOURCES OF MYSORE HISTORY.

Introductory—Principal sources—*Primary sources*: Inscriptions—Literary works—Coins—Travels and tracts—Contemporary chronicles and memoirs—The Records of Fort St. George—The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai; Selections from the Peshwa Daftar—*Secondary sources*: Quasi-historical works.

THE earliest attempt at writing a history of Mysore was made by Lt. Col. Mark Wilks (1760-1831), British Resident at the Court of Mysore (1803-1808). His work, *Historical Sketches of the South of India in an attempt to trace the History of Mysoor*, was first published in 1810¹ and has remained an authority on the subject since then. Wilks, however, carefully avoided giving his book the title of "History." Writing as he did in the early years of the nineteenth century when archæological and historical research in India was yet in its infancy and when he had to depend mostly on the uncritical summaries and translations of admittedly a few of the local sources (such as memoirs and chronicles of a later date) available to him, Wilks's treatment of the

1. London edition, in three vols. : Vol. I published in 1810, Vols. II and III, in 1817; reprinted in Madras, 1869 (in two vols.); revised and edited by Sir Murray Hammick, in two vols., Mysore, 1930. This last mentioned edition is referred to in the course of this work.

early history of Mysore, from the origin and founding of the Ruling House down to the usurpation of Haidar Ali (1399-1761), is neither exhaustive nor satisfactory judging from the critical demands of modern scholarship.²

The principal sources³ for the history of this period, now available, are, however, of a two-fold character—primary and secondary. Among the primary sources are : inscriptions, literary works, coins, travels and tracts, contemporary chronicles and memoirs, *The Records of Fort St. George*, *The Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai* and *The Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*. The secondary sources comprise later compilations.

Inscriptions⁴—lithic as well as copper-plate—of the rulers of the Wodeyar dynasty of Mysore, come, for the most part, from the present districts of Mysore, Hassan, Bangalore and Tumkur, and from parts of Salem and Coimbatore districts of the Madras Presidency. They are found scattered over the volumes of the *Epigraphia Carnatica* (including the supplemental volumes for Mysore and Bangalore districts), the *Mysore Archaeological Report*, the *Madras Epigraphist's Report*, the *Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency* and the *Mackenzie Collection* (in the Madras Oriental Manuscripts Library). They range from the middle of the sixteenth century to about the close of the eighteenth. Being mostly dated records in Kannada or Sanskrit, they generally relate to gifts, donations and grants of the rulers to institutions

2. Wilks has been invariably followed by all subsequent writers, notably by B. L. Rice in the *Mys. Gaz.* (I. 361-381), and by S. K. Aiyangar in *Ancient India*. The latter, in his brief but "imperfect sketch" (pp. 272-313), goes a step further in trying to utilise a few of the inscriptions, literary works and the *Palace History*, available to him.

3. For details about the sources indicated and discussed here, *vide* General Bibliography and text of Chapters (with f.n.) and the Appendices thereto.

4. Include *nirāpas* (Orders) also.

(such as temples and *maths*) and private individuals. A few of these, however, incidentally throw light on the pedigree of the ruler of the time and echo the event or events connected with his rule or his predecessor's. Though by no means an adequate source of information, these documents, used with care, are of great value in identifying and locating the rulers and in reconstructing their genealogy and the political and social history of their times.

Most of the literary works extant—in Kannada and Sanskrit—owe their origin to royal patronage in Mysore during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Only a few of these have been so far published, while the rest are preserved still in the form of manuscripts—palm-leaf and paper—in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Libraries at Mysore and Madras. Exceptions apart, these works are generally undated and the probable chronological limits of their composition are determinable only from their internal data and, in certain cases, from inscriptions referring to or quoting from them.⁵ Written in poetical or prose form, they relate, in the main, to religion, philosophy, poetics, morals, etc., and refer only incidentally to the reigning king of the time, his pedigree and achievements. Only a few of the productions, however, profess to deal with the traditional history of the Ruling House (down to 1610) and the genealogy and exploits of the author's patron—as, for instance, the *Kaṅṭhīrava-Narasarāja-Vijayam* (1648) of Gōvinda-Vaidya, the *Chikkadēvarāja-Vamśāvalī* (c. 1678-1680), the *Chikkadēvarāja-Vijayam* (c. 1682-1686) and the *Apratima-Vīra-Charitam* (c. 1695-1700) of Tirumalārya, and the *Saundara-Kāvya* (c. 1740) of Nūronḍa. And even these works are more literary in character than regular histories. Nevertheless the value

5. See, for instance, section on *Literary activity*, in Ch. XIV below.

of literary works—as a supplemental source of information—in historical reconstruction, is not inconsiderable, provided, in using them, due allowance is made for the literary flourishes, fulsome eulogies, etc., characteristic of them.

Although the available coin-types of the Wodeyars of Mysore are few, they are of unique importance as witnesses to contemporary history. Especially the coins issued by Kanṭhīravanarasarāja Wodeyar I (1638-1659) and Chikkadēvarāja Wodeyar (1673-1704), throw valuable light on the political evolution of the kingdom of Mysore and the religion of the Ruling House in the seventeenth century.

The travels and tracts include the letters of Father J. Bertrand (S. J.) included in the *La Mission Du Madurè* (1659-1686), John Lockman's *Travels of the Jesuits* (1701), Dr. John Fryer's *Travels in India* (c. 1676-1680), Niccolao Manucci's *Storio Do Mogor* (1653-1708) and the gleanings and extracts from documents published in Robert Orme's *Historical Fragments*, William Foster's *English Factories in India* and the *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*. These records generally contain the observations of the Jesuit missionaries and foreign travellers and settlers, on the political events, customs and manners in South India in general, and Mysore in particular. Their chief merit consists in that they supplement the local sources by throwing a flood of light on the foreign relations of Mysore, which, but for them, would have been lost for ever. Foreign observers are, however, not always accurate in their accounts, are sometimes found to be misinformed and are not infrequently known to exaggerate. While, therefore, their writings are indispensable authorities for the history of the period (c. 1630-1705), they are to be used with caution.

Of the contemporary chronicles and memoirs, the *Muhammad-Nāmāh*, recently brought to light by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in the columns of the *Modern Review*, is an undated manuscript official history in Persian, of the reign of Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijāpur (1627-1656), by Zahur bin Zahuri. It deals, among others, with the campaigns of the Bijāpur generals in the Karnāṭak and Mysore between c. 1638-1654, a period practically covered by the reign of Kaṅṭhīrava-Narasarāja Woḍeyar I (1638-1659) in Mysore. Its chief peculiarity, however, is that while it corroborates and supplements other sources of information, it contradicts them also. It requires, therefore, to be handled with care, as an authority for the history of Kaṅṭhīrava's reign. The *Tuzak-i-Wālājāhi* (1781) of Burhan Ibn Hasan of Trichinopoly, recently translated from Persian and published in part under the auspices of the University of Madras, deals with the history of the Nawābs of Arcot (c. 1700-1761). Written from the point of view of the contemporary Indian chronicler, it embodies a wealth of detail relating to the history of South India during the eighteenth century that is worthy of note. Its chief value for us, however, consists in enabling us to understand and estimate the foreign politics of the kingdom of Mysore (c. 1740-1761), from the larger perspective of South Indian affairs of the period. The *Haidar-Nāmāh* (1784), an old paper manuscript (*Bakhar*) from H. H. the Mahārāja's Palace Library, Mysore, is a memoir in Kannaḍa, of the life and times of Haidar Alī (1717-1782).⁶ It is an anonymous work, the writing of which, according to internal evidence,⁷ was finished in June 1784, *i.e.*, a year and a half

6. See also and compare *M.A.R.*, 1930, pp. 79-106, noticing a copy of this Ms. from a private source (*i.e.* from Nallappa's family).

7. *Vide* ff. 110, referring to the date of the completion of the *Haidar-Nāmāh Bakhar* as, "Krōdhi, Āshāḍha sū. 11, Tuesday" (June 29, 1784).

after the death of Haidar. The manuscript bears throughout the stamp of freshness of outlook and independence and vigour of judgment on the part of the author. While the work is a source of first-hand information for the history of the period of Haidar's usurpation in Mysore (1761-1782), it is an equally reliable authority for the reign of Krishnarāja Wodeyar II (1734-1766), particularly in regard to Karāchūri Nanjarājaiya's struggle for Trichinopoly, the early career and rise of Haidar Ali and the course of events leading to his usurpation (1751-1761). Though not exhaustive, it supplies, on these topics, the genuine contemporary point of view of the local historian, while the chronology of events recorded in it, stands the test of comparison with the other sources for the period. The *Haidar-Nāmāh* even records, with a fair degree of accuracy, certain details connected with the general history of South India (c. 1740-1761).

The Records of Fort St. George,⁸ bearing on Mysore thus far published, comprise, the *Diary and Consultation Book*⁹ (1679, 1694, 1696, 1698, 1733-1734, 1739, 1752-1756), *Country Correspondence* (1740, 1751, 1753-1755, 1757-1758), *Selections from Public Consultations, Letters, etc.*, (1740-1741), *Fort St. David Consultations* (1740), *Letters to Fort St. George* (1682, 1712, 1738-1741), *Letters from Fort St. George* (1698, 1736, 1739-1740, 1743-1744), *Despatches to England* (1701-1702 to 1710-1711, 1711-1714, 1727-1733, 1741-1742, 1743-1746), *French Correspondence* (1752), *Letters from Tellicherry* (1732-1733, 1733-1734, 1734-1736), *Tellicherry Consultations* (1732-1733, 1734-1735, 1737-1738,

8. For a guide to these *Records*, see *Press List of Ancient Records in Fort St. George* (1670-1796); also Dodwell's *Hand-book of Madras Records*.

9. The *Diary and Consultation Book* and *Country Correspondence* contain documents of Military and Public Departments of the Government of Fort St. George, Madras. They are the same as the *Military Consultations* and the *Military Country Correspondence* in the unpublished form.

1745-1751) and the extracts from documents published in Dodwell's *Calendar of the Madras Records* (1740-1744) and *The Madras Despatches* (1744-1755, 1754-1765) and in Talboys Wheeler's *Madras in the Olden Time* (History of Madras) and *Early Records of British India*. These records, including the unpublished volumes of *Military Consultations* and *Military Country Correspondence* (for 1760-1761), contain information of a varied character. They generally relate to the administration of the affairs of the English East India Company on the Coromandel and West coasts and to the colonial and commercial rivalry between the English and the French in India, particularly during 1746-1761. They refer only incidentally to the course of political events in South India in general and Mysore in particular, in so far as they affected the Company's commercial interests in the country and brought them into contact with the Indian powers of the time. While the *Tellicherry Letters* and *Consultations* yield some light on the early relations of Mysore with Malabar (1733-1746), the remaining series of records, to a considerable extent, supplement the other sources of information on the foreign and political affairs of the kingdom of Mysore, roughly during c. 1679-1761. So valuable, indeed, are these records (especially the *Diary and Consultation Book*, *Country Correspondence* and the unpublished volumes for 1760-1761), that they become an indispensable authority for the period 1751-1761. *The Records of Fort St. George*, as is usually the case with foreign sources, are not, however, always accurate in their references to the internal affairs of Mysore and are, in such cases, to be used with caution.

The Private Diary of Ananda Ranga Pillai (1747-

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Selections from the Peshwa Daftar.

1761) and the news-letters contained in the recently published volumes of the *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar* (1746-1761), likewise constitute a

supplemental source of information of considerable value, on the affairs of Mysore during 1746-1761, from the French and the Mahratta points of view. They, however, are, as of necessity to be used with great care, especially as they often record from hearsay and are, sometimes, not well-informed.

Among the secondary sources, unpublished and published, are, the *Mysūru-Dhoregaḷa-Pūrvābhyaḍaya-Vivara*¹⁰ (c. 1710-1714), *Mysūru-Nagaraḍa-Pūrvōttara*¹¹ (c. 1734-1740), *Mysūru-Dhoregaḷa-Vamśāvaḷi* (c. 1800), *Mysūru-Rājara-Charitre* (c. 1800) by Venkaṭaramaṇaiya, the *Kaifiyats* (c. 1800-1804), the *Keḷadi-Nripa-Vijayam*¹² (c. 1800), a *Hala-Kannaḍa Champu* by Lingaṇṇa-Kavi, the *Kaḷale-Arasugaḷa-Vamśāvaḷi* (c. 1830), the *Rājāvaḷi-Kathā* (1838) of Dēvachandra and the *Annals of the Mysore Royal Family*¹³ (first compiled in the Mysore Palace, in 1864-1865). Although these sources, in Kannaḍa, are, as indicated, compilations of a later date, they are by no

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10. This is one of the few later compilations relied upon by Wilks. For a detailed account of the Ms., vide Ch. XV and Appendix VII—(2).
11. This paper Ms. from the *Mad. Or. Lib.* (No. 18-15-18, pp. 24-30), is the same as the one referred to as having been in the possession of Mr. Muddarāja Urs, a former Bakshi of the Khās Samukha Department of the Mysore Palace (*Annals*, II. 86-88). The *Annals* (II. 86), however, speaks of it as having been written in 1785 (s. 1707). But the Ms. from Madras, examined by us, is undated and stops with the beginning of Krishṇarāja Wodeyar II's reign (1734-1766). It appears to have been compiled, in all probability, between c. 1734-1740, though it is not impossible that a copy of it was made in 1785. Wilks, as we shall see, makes use of this Ms. also, in his work.
12. The *Editorial Introduction* (p. vii) to this published work, fixes it between c. 1763-1804. For convenience of reference, the medium date, c. 1800, is adopted here.
13. This Kannaḍa work, otherwise known as *Palace History*, was first published, during the reign of H. H. Śrī Chāmarājendra Wodeyar (1881-1894), as *Vamśaratnākara*. It has been revised, enlarged and republished in two parts (Part I in 1916 and Part II in 1922), under the title *Vamśāvaḷi*, by Mr. B. Ramakrishna Rao, late Palace Controller, Mysore. Part I deals with the period 1399-1868, and Part II contains a detailed account of the reign of H. H. Śrī Krishṇarāja Wodeyar III (1799-1868).

means to be ignored. Based as they generally are on earlier writings, they are chronicles of a quasi-historical character. Often they reflect genuine local tradition and sometime enshrine valuable material and sometimes throw sidelights which enable the modern historian to invest his characters with flesh and blood and give a complete picture of their lives and times. Especially where other sources fail, he has to rely, to a certain extent, on these sources. Their reliability, however, is one of degree. Sometimes their statements are loose and their chronology defective and confused, while some of them interpolate and are actually gossipy in character. Extreme caution and great discrimination are, therefore, necessary in utilising them. For it is a critical and comparative study of these writings alone which must precede any serious attempt at historical reconstruction.
