

TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES IN KERALA (A. D. 800 - 1500)

*Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the Degree of*
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By
VIJAYALEKSHMY. M

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
DECEMBER, 1997**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis "TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES IN KERALA (A.D. 800-1500)" is a bonafide record of genuine research done by Mrs. Vijayalekshmy. M. under my guidance for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and that it has not been submitted before for the award of any degree.



Chelia

06.12.1997

Dr. M.R. RAGHAVA VARIER

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DECLARATION

I here by declare that no part of this dissertation entitled "Trade and Trading Centres in Kerala (A.D. 800 - 1500)" has been submitted before for the award of any degree, diploma or any other title or fellowship.

Department of History
December 6th, 1997


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PREFACE

This dissertation is an attempt at examining the various aspects of trade and trading centres in Kerala during the period A.D. 800-1500. The developments in trade and urbanisation through the long span of seven hundred years are analysed in two distinct phases with their characteristic features. For the completion of this work I am deeply indebted to my teachers, friends and several institutions. I have received more intellectual help from them than I can properly acknowledge.

Infinite indeed is my indebtedness to my supervising teacher Dr. M.R. Raghava Varier for the precious guidance and unfailing support he gave me at every stage of this work. This indebtedness is beyond words and expression. I am extremely obliged to Mrs. Varier, Smt. Sarada Varasyar for her love and affection.

Though I registered for my Doctoral Degree as a part-time research scholar in December 1989, I could in fact pursue the work when the UGC awarded me a fellowship under the Teacher Fellowship Scheme in 1993. This one year fellowship enabled me to carry on the work at the Department of History, Calicut University Centre during 1993-94. I sincerely thank the UGC and the University of Calicut for their kind gesture in this regard. I am thankful to the manager of my college, N.S.S College,

Manjeri for granting me leave during this period. I am obliged to all the members of the Faculty, Department of History, Calicut University Centre. I express my deep sense of gratitude to Prof. K.K.N. Kurup for his constant encouragement and valuable suggestions. In fact this research work brought me in contact with a community of scholars and historians.

Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan helped me a lot by his valuable suggestions and constructive criticism. He was kind enough to throw open the treasures of his library for my use. I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan. Dr. Rajan Gurukkal, my teacher, has been a great inspiration for this work and I gratefully recollect his advice. I owe much to the discussions with Dr. Gurukkal.

Mrs. P. Narayanan helped me in this project in many ways. I express my heart felt gratitude for her. I owe much to the insightful comments and encouragement of Dr. M. Gangadhara Menon. In fact all our conversations included this project also. Gratefully I recollect the discussions with Dr. Michel Tharakan and Dr. Kesavan Veluthat in the early stage of this work. I am thankful to Dr. N.M. Nambuthiri, Dr. Kunjali and Dr. Padmaja for their suggestions. Gladly I recollect the advise of Dr. V.S. Nayar and Sri. Jayaprakash Raghavaiah, I specially

remember a brief, but illuminating talk over this topic with the late Dr. Muraleedharan.

I owe much to the active co-operation and assistance of my friends. My esteemed colleague Prof. Rajeswari Thampuran assisted me a lot by taking pains in going through the manuscript of the early chapters of this dissertation. Mr. Balakrishnan and Mr. Nandakumar rendered their liberal assistance in going through the drafts, besides giving valuable instructions. Radha, Gouri, Indira, Usha and Swarna have always been source of support and co-operation. I remember the sincere and whole hearted assistance of Mr. Varghese. V.J.

With gratitude I remember the staff of C.H. Muhammed Koya Library and the Library of History Department, Calicut University for their co-operation. I am thankful to the staff of the libraries of Feroke College, Feroke, Kerala Sahitya Akademy, Thrissur, Kerala High Court, Ernakulam, School of Social Science, Kottayam, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, Centre for Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and the library of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

I express my thanks to Smt. Jameela, Jas Typewriting Institute, Calicut University P.O., for the

preliminary typing of this work. I am grateful to M/s. Frontline, R.M. Road, Kozhikode for the final typing and allied works of this thesis. My sincere thanks for the dedicated work of Mr. Murali and Smt. Bindu Anil, Frontline.

My husband Dr. N. Rajan has been a constant source of inspiration throughout my work. I have received immense encouragement from my elder brother. The counsel of my father, late Sri. P. Chandrasekara Menon, has always been a guiding light to my studies.

A large number of Malayalam and Tamil words have been used in this dissertation and they are underlined and transliterated. Almost all these words have been explained as and when they appear in the thesis. A glossary of all the words and terms in Oriental languages used in this thesis has been given at the end of this work. The names of books in Oriental languages have also been transliterated.

Thanks, scholars and friends, each and all.

Dept. of History,
Calicut University,

December 6, 1997.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARE	:	Annual Report of (South Indian) Epigraphy
CJHS	:	Ceylon Journal of Historical Studies
EHR	:	Economic History Review
EI	:	Epigraphica Indica
ICI	:	Index to Cera Incriptions
IHR	:	Indian Historical Review
JCP	:	Jewish Copper Plates
JAIH	:	Journal of Ancient Indian History
JAS	:	Journal of Asian Studies
JEH	:	Journal of Economic History
JESHO	:	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JIAS	:	Journal of the Institute of Asian Studies.
JIH	:	Journal of Indian History
JMBRAS	:	Journal of the Malayan Branch of Royal Asiatic Society
JNSI	:	Journal of the Numismatic Society of India
JPS	:	Journal of Peasant Studies
JRAS	:	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
NIA	:	New India Antiquary

QJMS : Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society.
SBM : Śāsana Bhāṣā Mātṛukakaḷ (Malayalam)
SII : South Indian Inscriptions
TAS : Travancore Archaeological Series
TOCS : Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society.
TPCP : Teresa Pally Copper Plates
VRP : Vira Raghava Pattayam

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This work is an attempt to understand the various aspects of the growth of trade and trading centres on the coast of Malabar from A.D 800 to 1500.¹ The spatial unit chosen for the present study comprises areas which share almost the same geographical, economic, social and cultural characteristics. The time frame is significant in that it provides two distinct phases and a pattern of development for the study. It also gives an opportunity to characterise the shifting of the paradigms in the development of trade, including quantitative and qualitative changes in the nature of sources.

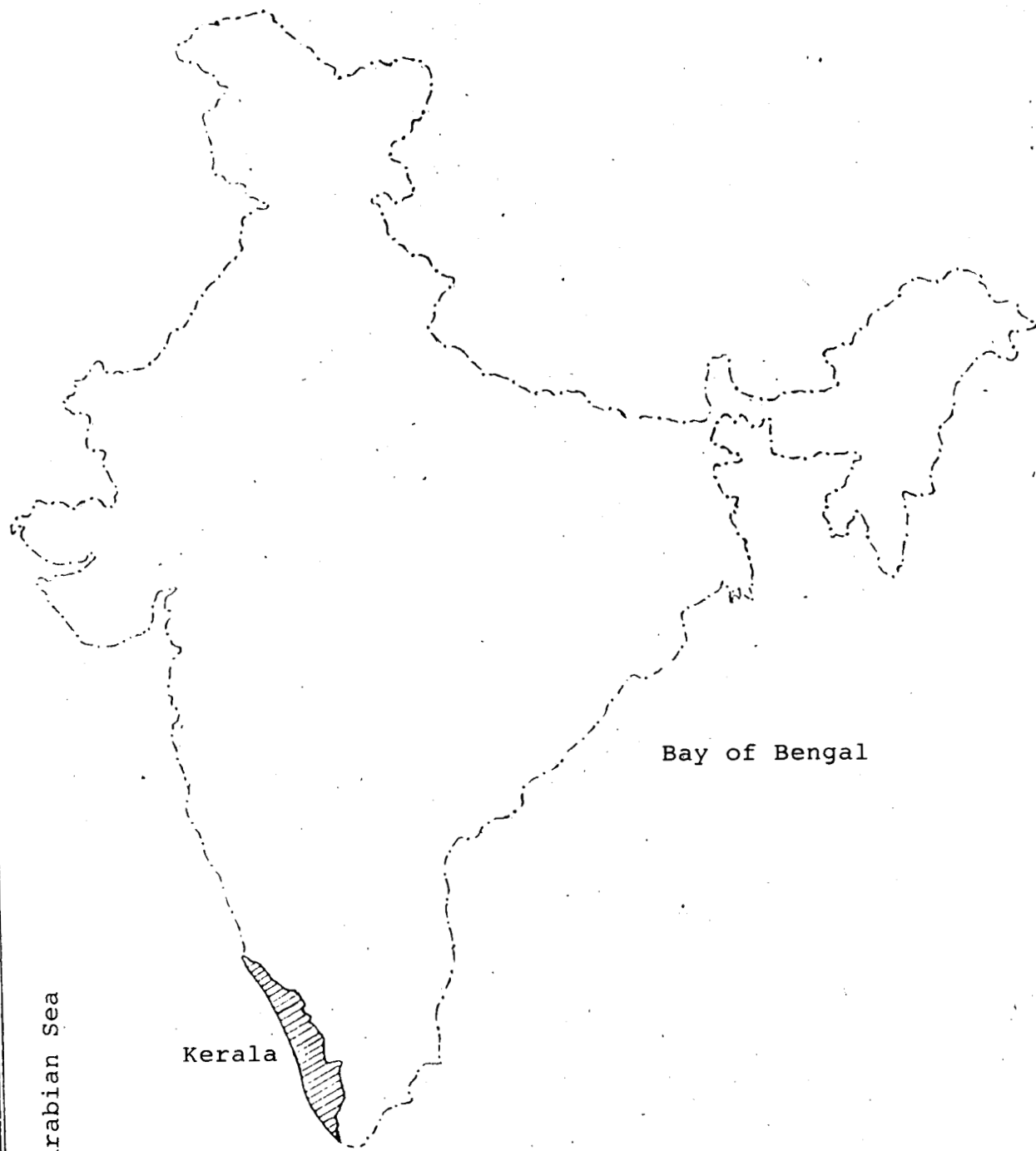
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1. The term 'Malabar' used in this study denotes the area which now comprises the whole of Kerala. In the early medieval records of the Arabs the area is referred to as Malibar and Manibar.

e.g. Sulayman - Manibar
Idrisi - "
Yakut - Malibar
Qazwini - "
Dimishqui - Manibar
Abul Fida - "

See S.M.H. Nainar, (ed), Arab Geographers' Knowledge of South India, University of Madras, 1942, pp.56-59.

Map.1

INDIA - KERALA



Arabic Sea

Kerala

Bay of Bengal

Owing to several constraints the present attempt is confined to the regional study of a wider topic which is hoped to provide assistance to further conceptualisation towards a comparative history of an area comprising vaster regions and variegated cultures. There is a considerable amount of literature pertaining to trade, commerce and urbanisation both in the forms of indigenous literary creations as well as foreign accounts by the Arab, Chinese and European travellers and merchants. But compared to this vast material the modern writings are neither sufficient nor proportionate. The studies on trade in medieval Kerala generally follow a trend of atomistic and compartmental perspectives. In such studies minute details are ignored and major questions and problems left unaddressed. Therefore even attempts to conceptualise the whole problem of medieval trade and formations of wider networks fail to understand the specific regional features. This can be explained as a result of the incomplete collection of data and incompetent handling of the subject without a clear perspective. To illustrate this point one could look at the characterisation of medieval Malabar trade as a luxury trade which according to some authorities has no more than skin deep impact on society. A perusal of medieval sources would show that the export items were not luxuries alone. Nor was the imports confined fully to finished

goods or luxury items. Such an examination of the existing data and a reassessment of existing views become a desideratum for further development in the areas of academic research.

1.2 SCOPE

Even though the scope of the present attempt is thus limited to that of a regional study it should address problems of maritime trade, political developments, geographical conditions, cultural developments and so on. That is to say that even a regional study has to be done with a holistic perspective. Though regional in nature two aspects of the topic call for special attention - the trading activity and the urban processes. Theories have been formulated to explain the causative factors which lead to the genesis and growth of trade and commerce. Our endeavour here is to explain the regional experience in the larger frame work of the existing theories. However we do not have any pretension of formulating new theories. But even a close examination of regional experiences would reveal interesting variants which present a picture of diversity. This study aims at, among other things, a description of the diversity of regional experience. The dissertation focusses on the urban centres of the period as well as the organisational aspects of trade. The impact of maritime trade on the society and the consequent

development of cultural diasporas also form part of this investigation. The traditional view that medieval Kerala was a closed economy is being re-examined here. Finally the role of Kerala in the Indian Ocean trade network and Kerala's integration into the world economic system are also enquired into within the scope of the present attempt.

The concepts about the impact of trade on society and culture are fast changing. Trade, be it internal or external, did penetrate into the society. Its impact was not at all peripheral. Even the trade in luxury articles had its own profound impact upon history, as has been highlighted by Schneider in her study related with the same.² In fact trade was behind the formation of urban centres in medieval Kerala.

Trade is being analysed in this study in relation to urban development. 'Trade and exchange across cultural lines have played a crucial role in human history, being perhaps the most important external stimuli to change, leaving aside the unmeasurable and less benign influence of military conquest'.³ There was no urban centre in

2. Jane Schneider, 'Was There a Precapitalist World System?' Journal of Peasant Studies VI, I, 1977, pp.20-29.

3. Philip D. Curtin, Cross Cultural Trade in World History, London, 1984, p.1.

India without the substantial presence of merchants, long distance trade and artisanal production.⁴ And in no civilization towns grew independent of trade. Trade is invariably related with market. Markets served as focal points in society. They were more than means of the circulation of goods. They also served as foci for the dissemination of knowledge.⁵

A study focussing on trade will bring to light many a causative factor in the development of the culture of a region. Pameela Nightingale shows how private trade was the motive behind the territorial expansion of the English East India Company on the Malabar Coast and how the interests of the private traders outweighed those of the government decisions at Bombay.⁶ Braudel's view of long distance trade and traders as the top of the floor of commercial capitalism is a reply to those who consider trade as a minor element in the economic activities of pre modern societies.⁷ The positive correlation between trade

4. Also see K.N. Choudhuri, Asia Before Europe, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.374.

5. M.G. Herskovits, Economic Anthropology, New York, 1952, p.x.

6. Pameela Nightingale, Trade and Empire in Western India. London, 1970.

7. K.N. Choudhuri, op. cit. p.6.

and the growth of urban centres is evident from the analysis of each and every trading centre of Kerala during the period of our study.

There is a view that urban centres in Kerala developed only with the colonial period. It has been pointed out in a recent study that 'both in the ancient and medieval periods one fails to identify any indigenous dynamics of urbanisation in Kerala. This was mainly due to the lack of development of the pre-requisites of urban growth such as centralised political power and technological improvements. It was the colonial initiative for systematic trade and political sovereignty that finally led to the emanation of spatial divide in the region'.⁸ But much before the advent of colonial powers there were brisk trading centres in Kerala which had all the general traits of contemporary urban areas. A study of the trade and trading centres of Kerala would reveal the fact that she has never been isolated from the rest of India and also from other parts of the world, and that she enjoyed a key position along with other parts of South India in the East-West trade. She has also been the meeting ground of different peoples and different cultures through the ages.

8. T.T. Sreekumar, Urban Process in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1993, p.19.

Attempt is being made at giving a comprehensive picture of the trading centres, including the geophysical set up in which they flourished. Due attention is paid to the functioning of the merchant organisations in the trading centres. The nature of the economy, especially the level of monetisation, is also analysed. As the development of agriculture is the motive force of trade, the study also analyses the proliferation of agriculture during the period under study which includes an account of the geographical features of Kerala. The study looks into the urban development in medieval Kerala. Development of towns and cities is an index of economic progress and a study of urbanisation is essential for the understanding of the material culture of a people. "Civilization is rural in base but urban in form".⁹ The habit of civility that civilization points to is possible only in an urban centre for, the cities provide ample venue and opportunities for the individuals to put their potential to greater use than in the countryside.¹⁰ In short the flowering of civilization is in the cities. The trading centres of Kerala, analysed in the ensuing chapters were the first of their kind in the region. A study of the

9. Will Durant, The Age of Faith, New York, 1950, p.228.

10. Will Durant, Our Oriental Heritage, New York, 1935, p.ix.

same is that of the material advancement of the region. And as such, it is crucial to the understanding of the culture and civilization of medieval Kerala.

1.3 TERMS AND CONCEPTS

This section is an attempt at explaining certain terms and concepts which are fundamental to this dissertation.

Trade is defined as 'the mutual appropriative movement of goods between hands'.¹¹ It is an exchange of goods and services and is distinct from a gift or grant.¹² It is a group activity comprising a number of elements like personnel, goods and two sidedness.¹³ It is a 'repeated sequence of exchange of goods'.¹⁴ Market is 'an institution produced by a regular trade between a multiplicity of traders'.¹⁵

-
11. Karl Polanyi, "Economy as Instituted Process," Karl Polanyi et. al., (eds), Trade and Markets in Early Empires, New York, 1957, p.266.
 12. Americana Corporation, Encyclopedia Americana, vol. 26, (1829), New York, International Edition, 1969, p.746 A.
 13. Karl Polanyi, op. cit. p.258.
 14. Richard F. Salisbury, 'Trade and Market' in International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, vol. 16, Mac Millan Company, 1968, pp.118-122.
 15. Ibid.

Economic anthropologists differentiate between three forms of trade, namely gift trade, administered trade and market trade.¹⁶ Gift trade involves reciprocal exchange and there would be little profit motive in it. Administered trade denotes active interference of the government in the affairs of trade and here the state or the agency of the state will provide the necessary infrastructure for the trade. Market trade is characterised by the operation of demand-supply mechanism. During the period under study these three forms of trade flourished in Kerala side by side. There are general categorisation of trade into internal and external trade. If the transaction is between contiguous groups of the society it is internal trade and if it is across the boundaries it is external.

The port towns of Kerala were entrepots in the East-West trade. An entrepot is a transshipment point where the transfer of goods and passengers takes place. Its location and development are determined by the layout of long distance sea routes and technology of the vessels.¹⁷ An entrepot may or may not have a

16. Karl Polanyi, op. cit. p.257.

17. K. Dharmasena, cited by Atiya Habib Kidwai, 'Conceptual and Methodological Issues; Port, Cities and Port Hinterland', Indu Banga, (ed), Ports and their Hinter-lands in India (1700 AD - 1950), Delhi, 1992, pp.10-11.

hinterland.¹⁸ Among the port towns some will be port terminals. Ports are transport nodes. Port terminals are locations for industries based on bulk imports.¹⁹ Distinction is to be made between ports and harbours. A harbour is a sheltered place in deep water. If it is to be a port some degree of safety is needed. A harbour will not attract ships if it is not located in an economically important region. A port is an economic concept where as a harbour is a physical one. Sometimes certain ports have poor harbours and good harbours may attract few ships.²⁰ A port is a meeting place of goods and cultures. It is the centre where ocean and inland transport system meet.²¹ There is difference between ports and ports of trade. At ports of trade a special area will be reserved for trade activities, having its own harbour, quay, ware-house and accommodation for foreign merchants. It is separated from local market and may be under the control of the state. "Ports of trade are major forms of long distance

18. Also see J. Anderson, 'Discussion on the Rise and Growth of Port cities in Asia', Dilip K. Basu (ed). Conference Proceedings, Centre of South Pacific Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1979.

19. Atiya Habib Kidwai, op. cit. pp.25-26.

20. Murphy Rhodes, cited by Atiya Habib Kidwai, op. cit. p.10-11.

21. G.G. Weigned cited by Atiya Habib Kidwai, op. cit.

administered trade."²² Towns and ports are to be studied in relation to their forelands and hinterlands. Forelands are the areas which are served by the city. They are the regions in the sea-ward side of the port and are to be seen in terms of the ships and merchants with whom the port is related. The hinterlands are land spaces on which the city is depended. They are connected with a port by means of transport system. The port city receives goods and raw materials from their hinterlands.²³ There is no definite size for hinterland or foreland. The prime function of the ports were 'to act as ambassadors of their hinterlands to the outside world'.²⁴ Port city is more than a city located at a port. As an urban settlement it has specific characteristics derived from its maritime functions. The economic base for its non-local market is its port.²⁵

As this study centres on cities and urbanisation these terms and concepts have to be dealt with in detail. The city is a major unit of settlement of communities that have achieved a degree of organisation that we describe as

22. Shereen Ratnagar, Encounters : Westerly Trade of Harappan Civilization, Delhi, 1981, p.226.

23. Atiya Habib Kidwai, op. cit.

24. James Bird, Centralities and Cities, London, 1972, p.115.

25. Atiya Habeeb Kidwai, op. cit. p.25-26.

civilization.²⁶ Urbanisation is the process by which an area becomes an urban centre. Urbanism points to the behavioural aspects of urban life, to the particular way of life in a city.²⁷ Cities have been units of settlements where population concentrate for non-subsistence activities like crafts, trade, administration and ritual functions.²⁸ The concept of a city is relative. It is related with time and space. What the 17th century Indian called a city need not be a city to the 19th century American or 20th Century Indian. So also city means many things. Urbanisation, for historians is a phase in historical development. To the archaeologists if a settlement exposes a few streets and buildings, it is a city. Sociologists and anthropologists see city through the perspective of population and ecological factors. Economists assess city in terms of economic factors.²⁹

Every instance of urbanisation is unique in its own way, and so it is meaningless to look for a universal model. Urbanisation is a complex process with ecological,

26. Ruth Whitehouse, The First Cities, Oxford, 1977, p.8.

27. John J. Palan, The Urban World, New York, 1975, pp.5-6.

28. S. Ghurye, Cities and Civilization, Bombay, 1962, p.189.

29. Kameswar Prasad, Cities, Crafts and Commerce under the Kushans, Delhi, 1984, p.7.

economic, social, political and psychological bearings. S.C.Misra points out that space-men ratio and occupational heterogeneity are the two factors that differentiate a city from village.³⁰ This implies that cities are not merely dense concentration of people, but concentration of people engaged in diverse occupations. Eric Lampard too underlines occupational heterogeneity as a dominant trait of urban character when he writes that the urban character derives more from the variety of activity than from sheer number. He sees the city also as a community with legal entity and possessing laws and institutions peculiar to itself.³¹ Mumford looks at the city as a structure specially equipped to 'store and transmit the goods of civilization and sufficiently condensed to afford the maximum amount of facilities in a minimum space'.³²

The above observations make it clear that urbanisation is the running mate of civilization. It emphasises the co-ordination of technologies, economic

30. S.C.Misra, 'Urban History in India, Possibilities and Perspectives', in Indu Banga (ed), The City in Indian History, Delhi, 1991, pp.1-2.

31. Eric Lampard, 'Historical Aspects of Urbanisation', P.M. Hauser and Leo F. Schnore (ed). The Study of Organisation, New York, 1965, pp.5-6.

32. L. Mumford, The City in History, Middlesex, 1966, p.40.

pattern, cultural innovation and social organization³³ and marks the material progress of a society in terms of economic development. A creative society invariably gives rise to urban centres and these centres serve as places for meeting the higher needs of the society.³⁴ As a place where the 'goods of civilization are multiplied and manifolded',³⁵ as the centre where the issues of civilization are focussed and as the point of maximum concentration of power and culture,³⁶ city is an index of value indicating, measuring and summarising civilization.³⁷

1.4 ANALYTICAL FRAME

The theories of urban geographers are examined to see if such accepted theories are applicable to the peculiar Kerala context. In connection with the urban-'revolution' in Mesopotamia Gordon Gihlde gives his ideas

33. K.V. Saundara Rajan, Mechanics of City and Village in Ancient India, Delhi, 1986, p.15.

34. Also see A.B. Bhattacharya, 'The Urban Process in Change', The Journal of Asiatic Society, July, 1977, pp. 78-79.

35. Lewis Mumford, Culture of Cities, London, 1838, p.3.

36. Ibid.

37. Paul Meadows, 'The City, Technology and History' in Addison Wesley, Urbanism, Urbanisation and Change: Comparative Perspectives, London, 1976, p.16.

about the same. He notes a dense population, non-food producing section of the society, a surplus production, an agency to extract the surplus production, monumental buildings, writing systems, division of labour, foreign trade, craft production, standardisation of weights and measures, a standard of value etc. as the traits of urbanism. Childe gives great importance to the development of technology in the process of urbanisation. He shows how the discovery of iron caused a great technological revolution in primitive societies and how it gave a fillip to foreign trade and social stratification.³⁸

The arguments of Childe, though they go well with the ancient bronze age cities, have been modified and simplified by several scholars with more penetrating insights into the nature and causes of urbanisation. The traits that he lists as the symptoms of urbanisation have been reduced to its half by the later scholars.

Braidwood lists eight traits as marks of urban revolution and they do not differ significantly from those of Childe. But Braidwood gives great importance to the

38. Gordon Childe, What Happened in History (1942), Penguin edition 1982, pp.100-111; and Man Makes Himself, translated into Malayalam by C.Achuthamenon, Kerala Sahitya Akademy, pp. 173-174.

cultural development of the people in the factors that led to urbanisation.³⁹ He criticised the conceptual scheme of Childe on the ground of weightage given to technological developments. To Braidwood the great change from the pre-civilized to the civilized human life came in the realms of culture rather than technological and economic.⁴⁰

Ruth Whitehouse gives importance to surplus production in the development of urbanisation.⁴¹ Economic specialisation, social stratification, centralisation of power, all are possible only in a surplus economy. But this surplus is more a social product than economic. Ruth Whitehouse stresses the role of a social and political agency that extracts the surplus of production. In the process of urbanisation a central authority thus becomes necessary to control the increasing number of economic activities and to manage the collection, storage and redistribution of surplus products.⁴²

Lewis Mumford stresses the role of political authority while discussing the crystallisation of the

39. R.J. Braidwood, The Near East and the Foundation of Civilization, New York, 1950, p.41.

40. Ibid. p.42.

41. Ruth Whitehouse, op. cit. pp.187-188.

42. Ibid.

city. Mumford considers the concentration of various kinds of occupational groups resulting in the complex nature of population and enormous expansion of human capabilities as an important factor behind urbanisation. But he gives the greatest importance to an effective ruling authority, as fundamental to urbanisation.⁴³

Robert Mc Adams considers political authority, increased size and density of population, social stratification and craft specialisation etc. as traits of urbanism.⁴⁴ Urban societies are complex with a greater degree of economic specialisation. Such complexities cannot be sustained unless regulated by a state mechanism, however rudimentary it may be.⁴⁵ In short, a favourable ecological base, a relatively advanced agricultural and non-agricultural technology and a complex social organisation with a well developed power structure, have been considered as the requirements for the emergence of cities.⁴⁶

43. L. Mumford, The City in History, pp. 40-42.

44. Robert Mc Adams, Evolution of Urban Society, Early Mesopotamia and Pre hispanic Mexico, Rocester, 1966.

45. Shereen Ratnagar, op. cit. p.19.

46. Richard Basham, Urban Anthropology: The Cross Cultural Study of Complex Societies, California, 1978, pp.37-39.

Medieval towns had features of rural society also and what we find is a rural urban continuum in such centres.⁴⁷ L. Mumford establishes the rural ways of the Greek city states of 4th century B.C.⁴⁸ Even though there were wide divergence between the bronze age cities of Greece and medieval South Indian towns, we see similarities in the case of the rural elements in the towns. Medieval trading centres of Kerala had a farming element as in the case of other South Indian towns.

Towns and cities have 'basic and non-basic' functions. Basic function is to support non-local demands that brings money into the town. Basic functions are related with the hinterland and foreland of the town whereas non basic are confined to the region to which it belongs.⁴⁹

Pioneering Indian authorities give their interpretation regarding the causative factors of urbanisation. While examining the cities in ancient India

47. Also see R. Champakalakshmi, 'Urbanisation in Medieval Tamilnadu', S. Bhattacharya and Romila Thaper (eds.) Situating Indian History, Delhi, 1986, p.37.

48. L. Mumford, The City in History, pp.126-33.

49. John W. Alexander, 'Basic Non Basic Concept of Urban Economic Functions,' Harold. M Mayor and Clyde F. Cohn (eds.), Readings in Urban Geography, Allahabad, 1967, pp.87-89.

A. Ghosh attaches importance to the social complexity and political authority in the development of urban culture. Ghosh takes urbanisation as a process of rural-urban migration.⁵⁰ But investigations with regard to this issue involving demographic factors are difficult in the cases of many of the pre-modern cities for want of reliable data. R.S. Sharma who follows the arguments of Gordon Childe holds the view that it is material culture and development in technology that influence urban growth. "What really marks out a town is not merely the size of the population, but the quality of material life and nature of occupation".⁵¹ A mere settlement of non-agricultists cannot be regarded as a town. "Concentration of crafts and money based economy are essential to an urban area".⁵² Sharma finds a close relationship between coinage and flourishing trade.⁵³ However, some scholars hold the view that monetisation is not indispensable for urban growth.⁵⁴

50. A. Ghosh, The City in Early Historic India, Simla, 1973, pp. 20-22.

51. R.S. Sharma, Urban Decay in India, Delhi, 1987, p.5.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., p.125.

54. For example Sherene Moosvi cites the case of the Incas who developed an urban culture even without monetisation. Sherene Moosvi, "Economy of Mughal India" Paper presented to the ICHR Workshop on Medieval India, October, 1990.

In his discussion on urbanisation in ancient India V.K. Takur lists a surplus of food supply, increase in population, specialisation in crafts, trade, social stratification, religion, education, administration, defence, warfare, irrigation, geographical location, etc. as causative factors for urban development. Takur considers a surplus of production and an authority to channel the surplus and a mercantile class for the exchange of goods as fundamental to urbanisation.⁵⁵ Urban development is the sum total of a series of determinants. The geographical factors of an area are basic to its economy and society and thereby to urbanisation.⁵⁶ Trade and markets became the most important determinants of urban development in many regions.

We have a concrete example from the well documented history of 16th century Diu, a Portuguese settlement, which, originally a countryside developed into a town because of trade, especially overseas trade.⁵⁷ In the wake of trade merchants halted at places which offered facilities for communication and security. There, a new middle class consisting of merchants, people engaged in

55. V.K. Takur, Urbanisation in Ancient India, Delhi, 1981, pp. 46-47.

56. Ibid. p.51.

57. K.S. Mathew, Portuguese and the Sultanate of Gujarat, Delhi, 1988, p.63.

loading and unloading, manufacturers of carts and boats etc. developed. People from surrounding areas flocked to such places seeking employment opportunities. This increase in population necessitated corresponding increase in craft and agricultural production. It led to division of labour and specialisation in craft production. The fortification of the town, establishment of various offices to collect revenue from trade, all were in response to the demands of trade. A new middle class, cut away from land, developed. People belonging to different culture and religion were unified by the bonds of trade.⁵⁸ These have been almost so in medieval Kerala, whether it was at Kollam, Kodungallur or Kozhikode.

In medieval Kerala the rise and fall of urban centres were closely connected with the development of trade. It was not a temple oriented one as in the case of contemporary Cōla Kingdom.⁵⁹ But in ancient Kerala, in spite of the development of exchange system, there was no development of towns. This is attributed to the lack of organisational frame for trade and the absence of an effective political authority. Trade alone cannot lead to

58. Ibid.

59. Also see R. Champakalakshmi, "Growth of urban Centres in South India Kudamuku - Palliarai the Twin Cities of the Colas," Studies in History, 1, No.1 (1979), pp.1-29.

urbanisation. There must be institutionalisation of trade.⁶⁰

1.5 In conceptualising urban growth in medieval Kerala one can see a series of developments in technological advancement, social organisation, political orientation, monetisation of trade, accounting and allied areas of activities. The technological advancement is attested by literary references to different types of tools and agricultural implements.⁶¹ A similar growth of boat building technology is abundantly praised by foreign

60. Also see Rajan Gurukkal, 'Aspectss of Early Iron Age Technology: Problems of Agrarian Expansion in Tamil Nadu', B.D. Chattopadhyaya (ed) , Essays in Ancient Indian Economic History, Delhi, 1987, p.47 and Champakalakshmi, Urbanisation in South India: The Role of Ideology and Polity, Inaugural Address, Indian History Congress, 47th Session, Sreenagar, 1986.

61. The literature of this period mainly consists of the Manipravālam texts. They refer to various objects which were exhibited in the market for sale. Lists of market goods include various types of spades and other agricultural implements. Though they are not technologically improved, their spread is noticeable. A remarkable achievement of Kerala in the period under consideration was in the field of metallurgy. Alloy technology which flourished in Kerala during the period is based on the availability of raw materials in the form of copper, zinc, lead etc. which were transformed into high quality alloy metal. And this alloy utensils were abundantly used by the contemporary society. That the technological development is both a cause and result of trade is the point that strikes here.

travellers like Varthema.⁶² We do not see any overt evidence for epistemological development with regard to this. But this does not mean that there was no technological development. The experts were well versed in practical side. The boat builders, even those who were illiterate, knew how to make the planks of the boats fit for rough seas. The stiched boats of Malabar were noted for their flexibility. The planks, if stiched together would be more flexible than the nailed ones. This boat building tradition alone speak elquently of the technological development of this period. This kind of knowledge was passed from generation to generation by means of oral traditions.⁶³ There existed a knowledge generating centres which were active in certain pockets. Every village had practitioners of scientific knowledge with which they satisfied their necessities. There was also considerable development in the field of social organisation. There emerged certain occupational groups like the bronze smiths and boat builders within the smiths and carpenters respectively. The emergence of these groups could be accepted as pointers to the level of

62. George Percy Badger (ed.), The Travels of Ludovico Di Varthema, A.D 1503 to 1508, London, 1863, pp.152-154.

63. In Indian tradition scientific knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation in terms of practical knowledge where the question 'why' does not arise; only the technical knowhow matters.

monetisation in artisanal and craft production. This went a long way in producing commodities in large scale and facilitating sea borne trade including periodical repair and maintenance of vessels. Political authorities who were fully aware of the importance of inland and overseas trade provided the necessary infrastructure for protecting commodities and also for the profitable exchange of the same. The ruling authorities maintained special officers to take care of the commerce and trade.⁶⁴ As a result there was an unprecedented increase in the number of markets towns, fairs and exchange nodes. To facilitate this increase in trade in different pockets there was a corresponding increase in the level of monetisation which is fully attested by Maṇipravālam⁶⁵ poets. It is these processual aspects of medieval trade and commerce that compel us or lead us to conceptualise an economic change in Kerala which can be qualified as urbanisation in a broad sense of the term.

The following points are to be remembered before launching into a detailed discussion on trade and trading centres of Kerala. Urbanisation in Medieval Kerala was the first of its kind in the region. It was no revival.

64. M.R. Raghava Varier, Village Communities in Pre-colonial Kerala, Madras, 1994.

65. For Maṇipravālam see note No. 126 below.

These medieval trading centres cannot be compared fully with their western counterparts. In these trading centres agrarian areas and commercial places existed side by side. By 'urban' we mean a non-rural centre which was called 'nagaram'. The terms 'towns' and 'cities' must not be taken to mean modern urban centres with palatial buildings, wide streets, etc. We are to go back at least six or seven hundred years to see the city in the light of the technological development of those remote ages. It is about the material culture of the people that this study is concerned. Quantification with regard to the demographic elements of these medieval trading centres has not been studied for want of reliable data.

The non rural centres under study can be grouped into three:

1. Developed urban centres with bazaars, commercial groups and linkage with intra and inter-regional commercial networks.
2. Marketing centres which cater to the local needs.
3. Local exchange centres.⁶⁶

The present study of trading centres focusses mainly on these three catagories.

66. M.R. Raghava Variar, 'Urban Experience in Medieval Kerala, Early Phase', Paper presented to the ICHR Workshop on Inscriptinal Terms, Mysore, August, 1989, p.2.

1.6 CHAPTERISATION

The Present study is divided into seven chapters. The introductory chapter chalks out the purpose, scope and plan of the study. It also includes a survey of literature and sources for the study. Various theories on trade and urbanisation are evaluated in this chapter. The geographical features of the region and their impact on agriculture and trade are analysed and explained in the second chapter. The third chapter examines trade and trading centres between AD 800 and 1200, the first phase of the process. Here the attempt is to study various trading centres, organisational aspects of trade, etc. The form and functions of the major trading centres of Kollam, Kodungallur and Pantalayani Kollam as well as the various minor trading centres are outlined in this chapter. The study of the trading centres between A.D 1200 and 1500 forms the fourth chapter. It also includes analysis of the trade diasporas and trade routes. Aspects of monetisation, weights and measures etc are discussed in the fifth chapter. The position of Kerala as a link in the trade network that connected various regions of Indian Ocean is examined in the sixth chapter. The conclusions of the study are detailed in the last chapter.

1.7 HISTORIOGRAPHY

Though historiography of the economic history of India has become moderately rich due to the contributions of both Indian and foreign scholars, there is no adequate attention on the economic history of Kerala especially that of ancient and medieval periods. Traditional sources have references to the brisk trade of Malabar region with the outside world. The earliest reference can be gleaned from the Old Testament where the glory of king Solomon is narrated.⁶⁷ The author of the Periplus of the Erithraean Sea makes frequent references to the trade between the West and the Malabar coast.⁶⁸ It is "the first record of organised trade with the nations of the East in vessels built and commanded by subjects of the Western world".⁶⁹ For a long time it has been the only record that could speak with authority on the early phase of the East West trade in its entirety. It gives information regarding the ancient ports of Malabar like Muziris, Tyndis, Baraca etc. Pliny refers to the trade with Malabar and laments the drain of Roman gold as a result of the trade with India. He speaks of Muziris as the most important port in

67. William Logan, Malabar Manual (1887), vol. I, Delhi, 1989 pp. 245-46.

68. W.H. Schoff (tr. and annotated), The Periplus of the Erithraean Sea (1912), Delhi, 1974.

69. Ibid., Forward by W.P. Wilson.

India.⁷⁰ Early Tamil anthologies contain innumerable references to the overseas trade of Tamilakam in the early period of her history. The accounts of foreign travellers, Arab, Chinese and European, also contain valuable information about the trade and trade pattern of Kerala in the period from 9th to 15th centuries. Mention may be made of traditional works like Kēraḷolpatti, which make occasional reference to Kerala's commercial contacts.⁷¹ Mūṣikavamśa, the historical kāvya which is attributed to the 12th century makes some reference to the trade contacts of northern Kerala with distant island in the sea and also to the abundance of foreign goods coming to the port of Marahi, the present Maṭayi.⁷² Perhaps the most valuable indigenous record of the medieval trade of Kerala are the early Maṇipravālam texts which contain innumerable references to various aspects of trade, traders and trading centres mainly in the second phase of commercial development.⁷³

Coming to modern works, the earliest available piece of literature dealing with the history of trade is

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70. J.W. Mc Crindle, Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature, reprint, Delhi, 1979, pp.121-22.
71. Herman Gundert (ed.), Kēraḷolpatti (1843), Thiruvananthapuram 1961.
72. Raghavan Pillai (ed) Mūṣikavamśam, Mūlavum Paribhāṣayam, Thiruvananthapuram, 1983.
73. See note no. 126 below

the manual of William Logan.⁷⁴ Logan compiled his Malabar Manual in order to meet the exigencies of administration. Tracing the early history of trade in Malabar he describes the ancient ports and towns of Kerala and refers to the concessions and privileges granted to the Christian and Jewish merchants. He has shown in particular how the grant issued to Mar Saporiso reveals the contemporary social economic and political conditions. The portion which refers to the medieval trade and commerce in Logan's Manual is based on the accounts of Arab geographers and his discussion forms part of the general history of the land. He does not look into the impact that trade made on the society and economy of Kerala. Sophisticated historiography regarding urbanisation had not started when Logan was compiling his work and he had to base his work purely on the then available sources. No wonder he could not integrate trade with urbanisation or even treat his sources according to the methods of history. Therefore Logan's work suffers from several inadequacies.

The history of Travancore compiled by both Pachu Muthatu and Shangoonny Menon appeared much before Logan's

74. William Logan, Malabar Manual, (1887), Thiruvananthapuram, 1981.

work.⁷⁵ But they give only the dynastic history of Travancore and do not provide information about the economic structure of the society. The Travancore State Manual by Nagam Aiya and that of Cochin by C. Achuta Menon, add much to the general historiography of the respective regions, but fail to deal with trade as a separate aspect.⁷⁶

The two volume work of K.P. Padmanabha Menon on the history of Cochin deals in extenso with the socio economic and political aspects of the region from the beginning to the end of 19th century.⁷⁷ Unlike his contemporaries Menon has done justice to the socio economic issues of the region. In the first volume, apart from discussing the trade, and pepper trade in particular of the region, the author has also dealt in detail with the major trading communities like the Jews, Christians and Muslims. Menon's History of Kerala gives a new

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75. Pachu Muthatu, Tiruvitāmkūr, Caritram (1863), Thiruvananthapuram, 1967.
Shangoonny Menon, History of Travancore, Thiruvananthapuram, 1878.
76. Nagam Aiya, Travancore State Manual, Thiruvananthapuram, 1906 and C. Achuta Menon, Cochin State Manual, Ernakulam, 1911.
77. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, Kocci Rājya Caritram (1914), Calicut, 1989.

perspective to the historiography of modern Kerala.⁷⁸ The work is based on a bunch of letters written by Visscher, the Dutch missionary who was in Kerala in the 18th Century. In this work Padmanabha Menon gives valuable information about the earlier ports, items of export and import, towns like Kodungallur and Kollam, different groups of merchants, different types of coins in circulation, etc. But the history narrated by Padmanabha Menon in both these works is descriptive in nature. He does not deal with the problem of the historical setting in which trade originated and developed in course of time. Nor does he differentiate between ancient and medieval trade. He also does not corroborate the contents of the letters of Visscher with any other related data. Above all Menon's view was in general atomistic in nature. But when Padmanabha Menon was writing his work, the questions raised by historians were totally different from what they are today and much of the sources for the history of Kerala were beyond his access.

The Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of Cochin State edited by Anujan Achan gives an account of the trading centre of Kodungallur on the basis

78. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, History of Kerala vol. I, (1924), Delhi, 1982, vol.II (1929), Delhi, 1983, vol.III (1933), Delhi 1984 and vol. IV (1937), Delhi, 1986.

of the archaeological excavations conducted in different parts of the town.⁷⁹ He has made use of the archaeological and literary evidences for the trade with the Arabs and the Chinese at Kodungallur in the 12th and 13th centuries and this report, for the first time brings to light the medieval urban centre of Kodungallur. Anujan Achan has successfully linked archeaeological evidences with foreign accounts. But the work of Anujan Achan is in the form of official report and is descriptive in nature. It is silent about the causative factors behind the evolution of the urban centre in medieval Kerala. Still this report is of immense help in understanding the history of the port town of Kodungallur as it existed in the medieval period.

Banking heavily on legendary and literary sources, K.V. Krishna Iyer made an attempt to reconstruct the history of the Zamorins of Calicut.⁸⁰ He narrates the role played by the merchants in the Zamorin's kingdom, the routes of trade, etc. based on the accounts of foreign travellers and the Zamorin's Grandhavaris.⁸¹ Interesting

79. Anujan Achan, Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of Cochin State, 1945-46, Ernakulam, 1947, and Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of Cochin State, 1946-47, Ernakulam, 1947.

80. Krishna Iyer K.V., The Zamorins of Calicut, Calicut, 1938.

81. Official documents written mainly on palm leaves.

details of medieval trade in Kerala are available, but his approach in general was that of dynastic history which was the master paradigm of his age. The work of P.K.S. Raja also falls into the same category.⁸² Depending on the travelogues of the Chinese and the Arabs, Raja narrates certain aspects of the trade in ancient and medieval Kerala. But we find him following Krishna Iyer blindly with no eye for new information or a different approach.

Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai who made invaluable contributions to the study of the ancient and medieval history of Kerala with his socio-economic approach deals with the present subject also.⁸³ He made an earnest effort to fill in the gaps in the work of Padmanabha Menon. By deciphering inscriptions and intimately connecting linguistic evidences, inscriptional sources, and literary sources Kunjan Pillai gave a new dimension to the history of Kerala. In many of his works he attempts to trace the background of medieval trade and commerce in Kerala. But the studies of Kunjan Pillai also is mere

82. P.K.S. Raja, Medieval Kerala, Annamalai Nagar, 1953.

83. Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, Cērasāmrajyam Ombatum Pattum Nūrrāntukalil, Kottayam, 1961, Kerala Caritrattile Irulatañña Etukal, Kottayam, 1963, Cila Kerala Caritra Praśnaññal, Kottayam, 1955, Unṅunili Sandēśam Caritra Driṣṭiyilkūti, Kottayam, 1966 and Studies in Kerala History, Thiruvananthapuram, 1971.

description of conditions. He does not trace the relationship between trade on the one hand and growth of economy of the region on the other. There is no attempt in his writings to grasp the problem conceptually and to corroborate the various category of evidences with one another. Yet to a large extent, Kunjan Pillai succeeds in answering the questions left unanswered in the works of Padmanabha Menon. In fact every aspect of the ancient and medieval history of Kerala engages his attention. 'Such nonspecialising exploratory studies of this great pioneer swept the entire range of Kerala history rather than delved deep into any one aspect of it.'⁸⁴ Kunjan Pillai had a weakness for swift generalisation as can be gleaned from his description of Mahodayapuram as the magnificent capital city and the Kingdom of the Ceras as an empire.⁸⁵

M.G.S. Narayanan gave new and rare insights into the study of Kerala Hisotry. By carefully examining inscriptions and other available sources, he modified several theories of his predecessors. Trade and trading centres of Kerala in the Kulasekhara period are dealt with

84. Rajan Gurukkal, The Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System, Vallathol Vidya Peetham, Sukapuram, 1992, p.4.

85. Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, Studies in Kerala History, Thiruvananthapuram, 1971, pp. 248-250.

in detail by Narayanan in his doctoral thesis,⁸⁶ and the account gives valuable information about the nagaram and various merchant guilds of South India. In his Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, Narayanan successfully integrates inscriptional evidences with other sources and lays bare the relation between trade, society and politics in medieval Kerala.⁸⁷ His Kērala Caritrattinre Atistāna Silakal contains interalia, inscriptional evidences for the study of medieval trade of Kerala.⁸⁸ He leaves out several questions pertaining to the sphere of urbanisation, categorisation of trade etc. owing to the reason that his scheme of general history does not have a slot for discussing minute details of a single problem. Conceptual frame works, fresh insights and totally new approach to the problem of urbanisation were introduced rather at a later date. At the same time Narayanan has dealt with the formal aspects of towns in medieval Kerala meticulously.

P.K. Gopalakrishnan deals with the trade and trading centres of Kerala as part of the various socio-

86. M.G.S. Narayanan, Political and social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala, 1972.

87. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1972.

88. M.G.S. Narayanan, Kērala Caritrattinre Atistāna Silakal, Kozhikode, 1971.

economic factors of the culture of Kerala.⁸⁹ But he does not differentiate between ancient and medieval trade. This and similar works do not either present a new source or provide a fresh explanation, but simply organise the known data which is not much different from the previous studies. The detailed history of Kerala in two volumes published by Kerala History Association has a separate chapter on trade both internal and overseas.⁹⁰ But it is another reiteration of the facts presented by previous studies. The text books of Sreedhara Menon also contain such accounts.⁹¹ Sreedhara Menon skillfully compiles the existing pieces of information and knowledge and this is highly commendable service to students of history, though his works keep aloof from specific conceptual frame works.

P.K. Balakrishnan's study of Kerala history deserves special mention in this connection.⁹² He presents a critique of Elamkulam's studies and recedes to

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89. P.K. Gopalakrishnan, Kēralattinre Sāmskārika Caritram, Thiruvananthapuram, 1974.
90. Kerala History Association, Kerala Caritram, vols. I and II, Thiruvananthapuram, 1974.
91. A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteers, Thiruvananthapuram, 1962-66, A Survey of Kerala History (1967), Thiruvananthapuram, 1976 and Social and Cultural History of Kerala, Delhi, 1979.
92. P.K. Balakrishnan, Jātiyavastitiyum Kerala Caritram (1983), Kottayam, 1987.

Padmanabha Menon for a 'more correct and reliable history'. Rejecting earlier interpretation, Balakrishnan presents the view that Kerala has never been a prosperous belt. He underestimates the importance of the brisk trade in medieval Kerala, her ports that hummed with activity and her commercial crops. He even goes to the extent of saying that wheeled vehicles were almost absent in Kerala even in the 18th century.⁹³ Though Balakrishnan claims to be a disciple of Kosambi, he lacks the skill to critically analyse historical sources and archaeological data. If he had made a thorough study of the available inscriptions and corroborated the same with literary evidences, he would not have made such sweeping generalisations underestimating the trade and commercial development of medieval Kerala. Balakrishnan viewed Kerala history through the eyes of a cynic and it is a philosophy of negation that we come across in this work.

E.M.S. Namboothiripad makes a study of Kerala history and culture in Kerala Caritram Marxist Vikshanattil.⁹⁴ This purely materialistic approach has made references to trade and the impact of trade and

93. Ibid., p.219.

94. E.M.S. Namboothiripad, Kerala Caritram Marxist Vikshanattil, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990. Originally this work was entitled Keralam Malayālikalūṭe Māthrubhūmi, Grandhasāla Sangham, 1964.

trading communities on the society of Kerala, in its first two parts that deal with the history of the land upto the advent of western colonial powers.

N.M. Namboothiri made an attempt to trace the evolution of Kozhikode as a city on the basis of foreign accounts and toponymical evidences. This can be treated as the first attempt to introduce a new category of evidence to the study of towns and markets in medieval Kerala. Namboothiri's reconstruction of medieval Kozhikode is unique in that it describes the city in detail with reference to the traditional ideals of town planning in the light of toponymical survivals.⁹⁵ This can be treated as a starting point in the new direction of our urban studies.

In Kēraḷattinte Innalekaḷ, K.N. Ganesh gives a socio economic interpretation of Kerala history from the earlier period.⁹⁶ He speaks of the commercial crops of Kerala, the spice trade, the various items of exports and imports from and to Kerala, production, distribution, and redistribution of wealth, resources from ocean and forests, the various arts and crafts of medieval Kerala

95. N.M. Namboothiri, Sāmutiri Caritratile Kāṇāpuraṅṅaḷ, Sukapuram, 1987.

96. K.N. Ganesh, Kēraḷattinte Innalekaḷ, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990.

etc. In particular he refers to the import of cotton to Kerala, the weaver class, various weights and measures, various kinds of coins of Kerala and the mode of conveyance etc. He has also laid threadbare analysis of the settlement pattern of medieval Kerala and the vast settlements in the port towns. In fact the author has gathered and presented facts from the length and breadth of Kerala history and the work is important as it supplies various pointers to our study, even though he admits at the very outset that the norms for writing history have not been followed in the work.

Earlier studies give emphasis to the formal aspects and the administrative aspects of trade. But recently studies have appeared giving importance to the organisational aspects of trade. Foremost among them is the one by Meera Mary Abraham on the Mañigrāmam and Ayyāvōle merchant guilds of South India.⁹⁷ By a thorough examination of inscriptions she gives details regarding the organisation and functioning of the important merchant guilds of South India. She traces the formation of the nagaram of Kollam and the role of Mañigrāmam guild in the medieval trade of Kerala. The study of Meera Abraham is

97. Meera Mary Abraham, Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India, Delhi, 1988.

highly useful with regard to the conceptual frame and insightful perspective.

M.R. Raghava Varier gives a new perspective to the economic and social history of Kerala. His papers on the urban centres of Medieval Kerala are the first of their kind and his studies on Pantalayani Kollam and Kozhikode set some new examples for the study of urbanisation and allied problems in Kerala.⁹⁸ Integrating place names, inscriptions, coins, literary and archaeological data Varier has prepared a theoretical frame work to analyse the problem of trade and urbanisation in Medieval Kerala. He analyses the origin and development of urban centres, the basic and non basic functions of the towns, the town-hinterlands relations etc., in a manner which is quite new to the students of Kerala History. In Kerala Caritram co-authored by Varier and Rajan Gurukkal medieval trade is treated separately.⁹⁹

98. M.R. Raghava Varier "Urban Experience in Medieval Kerala, the Early Phase" paper presented to the ICHR Workshop on Inscriptional Terms, Mysore, August, 1989, "Aspects of Urbanisation in Medieval Kerala A.D 800-1500, the Case of Pantalayanikollam," (Unpublished), Dept. of History, Calicut University, 1990, 'Trade between Kerala and China A.D 1200-1500' paper presented to the Indian History Congress, Calcutta, 1990. "Rise and Growth of Calicut", Souvenir, South Indian History Congress, University of Calicut, 1991 and Village Community in Pre Colonial Kerala, Place Name Society of India, Mysore, 1994.

99. Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Caritram, Vallathol Vidya Peetham, Sukapuram, 1990.

Varier's study on the formation of village communities in medieval Kerala forms a prelude to the study of medieval trade and commerce. Though the works of Varier heralded the dawn of a new scientific interpretation of the history of Kerala, his studies on urbanisation are confined to certain individual trading centres only. So also his study on medieval trade is not comprehensive.

The work of Rajan Gurukkal on medieval temples and agrarian system, though not directly related to this study is of importance because of its attempt to conceptualise medieval Kerala economy.¹⁰⁰ The work contains references to money, monetary system, exchange of food grains and other articles, the gold-paddy ratio, merchant organisations, etc.

The recent work of Kesavan Veluthat on the history of medieval South India is also relevant to this study.¹⁰¹ The author analyses the nagaram of medieval South India in a scientific way. He examines the views of Kenneth Hall, Champakalakshmi, B.D. Chattopadhyaya and Meera Abraham regarding the concept of nagaram and comes

100. Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Sukapuram, 1993.

101. Kesavan Veluthat, Political Structure of Early Medieval South India, Delhi, 1994.

to the conclusion that nagaram was a separately designated area inhabited by traders. Recently T.T. Sreekumar has come out with his work on urbanisation in Kerala.¹⁰² The book explores the origin and causes of the unique spatial formation of the towns of Kerala during the colonial period.

Some research monographs in the university deserves special mention in the study of trade in medieval Kerala. K.P. Velayudhan examines the organisation and functioning of the medieval merchant guilds of South India in his study on the trade guilds of South India.¹⁰³ But as this is a general study on South Indian trade we do not get much information about trade in Kerala. Velayudhan compiles the available information and no attempt is made to interpret the same in a new perspective.

A.P. Greeshmalatha has given an account of Kerala's trade and markets in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.¹⁰⁴ Her study is based mainly on literary

102. T.T. Sreekumar, Urbanisation in Kerala, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, 1993.

103. Velayudhan K.P., "Trade and Trade Guilds in Early Medieval South India", M.Phil Dissertation (Unpublished), University of Calicut, 1979.

104. A.P. Greeshmalatha, "Trade and Markets in Kerala as Reflected in Malayalam Literature (13th to 15th Century)" Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, University of Calicut, 1990.

sources like Sandēśakāvyaś and Campūs. The study of Greeshmalatha does not include the earlier phase of our study. Further this monograph does not attempt at an elaborate study of the trading centres.

There is a large number of recent studies on trade, trading centres urbanisation etc. in the larger context of India in general and South India in particular. Although they are not directly related with Kerala situation they are extremely useful in understanding the developments in Kerala in a historical perspective. They range from the pioneering works of Appadorai on the economic history of South India and that of Majumdar on the trade corporations of ancient India.¹⁰⁵ References have already been made to the views of A Ghosh, R.S. Sharma and Shereen Ratnagar with regard to urbanisation.¹⁰⁶ While Shereen Ratnagar deals with the bronze age cities of India, Ghosh looks into the features of the urban centres of ancient India. Sharma analyses the development and decline of towns in the last phase of classical age and in early medieval period. The works of

105. R.C. Majumdar, Corporate Life in Ancient India (1918), Calcutta, 1920, Appadorai, Economic Conditions in South India, vols. I and II, Madras, 1936.

106. A. Ghosh, op. cit., R.S. Sharma, op. cit., and Shereen Ratnagar, op.cit. and Enquiries into the Political Organisation of Harappan Society, Poona, 1991.

V.K. Takur, Kameswar Prasad, V.K. Jain, and K.T.S. Sarao on trade and urbanisation are studies on the same through different perspectives.¹⁰⁷ The works of Xinru Liu on the trade and religious exchanges between ancient China and India and those of Himanshu P. Ray on the trade under Satavahanas and ancient maritime trade of Asia also make us accustomed with the recent trends in the historiography on medieval trade and commerce.¹⁰⁸ The studies of Champakalakshmi on urbanisation and allied topics are highly relevant to the present study. Her studies set example for similar studies in the context of Kerala, apart from giving conceptual frame for the same. Champakalakshmi examines the formative forces of urbanisation in South India through an analytical study of certain urban centres of medieval Tamil Nadu. She studies

107. V.K. Takur, Urbanisation in Ancient India, Delhi, 1981. Kameswar Prasad, Cities, Crafts and Commerce under the Kushans, Delhi, 1984. K.T.S. Sarao, Urban Centres and Urbanisation as Reflected in the Pali, Vinaya and Sutta Pitakas, Delhi, 1990 and V.K. Jain, Trade and Traders in Western India, Delhi, 1990.

108. Xin ru Liu, Ancient India and Ancient China : Trade and Religious Exchange, AD 1-600 (1988), Delhi, 1994, and Silk and Religion, Delhi, 1996. Himanshu Prabh Ray, 'Monastery and Guild - Commerce under the Satavahanas', Delhi, 1986 and The Winds of Change: Buddhism and Maritime Links of Early South Asia, Delhi, 1994.

urbanisation as a processual change.¹⁰⁹ The works Burton Stein and Kenneth Hall on South India are significant with regard to the present study as they give insights and pointers by the elaborate study of similar conditions in other parts of South India.¹¹⁰ The work of Kenneth Hall is particularly important because of its elaborate discussions on the nagaram complexes, and the linkage of the Cola kingdom with the international trade network of the time, inspite of its drawbacks with regard to theoretical frame.

Under the auspicious of the Urban History Association of India studies have been published advancing understanding of the problem of urbanisation. The articles edited by Indu Banga and Greywall make detailed

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109. R. Champakalakshmi 'Growth of Urban Centres in South India: Kudamuku Palliarai, the Twin city of the Colas', Studies in History, 1., No.1 (1979), 1-29. 'Urban Process in Early Medieval Tamil Nadu', in Indu Banga (ed) The City in Indian History, Delhi, 1991, 'Urbanisation in Medieval Tamil Nadu' in S. Bhattacharya and Romila Thaper (eds) Situating Indian History, Delhi, 1986, Urbanisation in South india: The role of Ideology and Polity, op.cit, 'The Medieval South Indian Guilds: The Role in Trade and Urbanisation' in D.N. Jha (ed) Society and Ideology in India, Essays in Honour of R.S. Sharma, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 81-93. and Trade, Ideology and Urbanisation, South India 300 B.C. to 1300, Delhi, 1996.
110. Burton Stein, Peasant, State and Society in Early Medieval South India, Delhi, 1984 and Kenneth R. Hall, Trade and State Craft in the Age of the Colas, Delhi, 1980.

examination of the cities of India at different stages of her history.¹¹¹ The essays on ancient Indian Economic history edited by B.D. Chattopadhyaya and a recently published work, edited by Narayani Gupta on urban centres are relevant to the present study.^{111a} All these are comparatively new approaches which are highly influenced by recent theories and perspectives. But the literature at the national level is almost silent about the details regarding urban process on Kerala, even though they contain useful theoretical and analytical frame work.

Recent Western historiography with regard to the present subject offers studies which have a bearing on Kerala. Among these are the works of Wallerstein and Braudel regarding world system.¹¹² The Eurocentric views of these writers with regard to the oceanic trade of Asia has aroused criticism which give theoretical frame for understanding the nature of the overseas trade of Kerala. The works of Kenneth Mc Pherson, Abu Lughod, Snieder,

111. Indu Banga (ed), The City in Indian History, Delhi, 1991. Greywal and Indu Banga (ed) Studies in Urban History, Amritsar, 1992.

111a. B.D. Chattopadhyaya (ed), Essays in Ancient Indian Economic History, Delhi, 1987, Narayani Gupta, Craftsmen and Merchants, Chandigarh, 1993.

112. Wallerstein, Modern World System, New York, 1974. Fernand Braudel, The Wheels of Commerce: Capitalism and Civilization, 15-18th Century, vol.II Sian Reynolds (trans.), London, 1982.

K.N. Chaudhuri, Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills and M.N. Pearson give clues to reinterpret the maritime trade of Kerala and to assess her role in the Indian ocean trade.¹¹³ Reinterpretations of orientalism also lend frame work to the present study.¹¹⁴

Still the existing literature on the economic and urban history does not throw much light on the trade and trading centres of Kerala. No systematic study of the medieval trading centres of Kerala has been carried out so far. This is not because of the dearth of sources, but because of the lack of painstaking efforts. Any effort to study the economic history of medieval Kerala is baffled not by the lack of sources but by the variety of the same as can be seen from the next section.

113. Kenneth Mc Pherson, The Indian Ocean, Oxford University Press, 1984, M.N. Pearson, Before Colonialism, Theories on Asian European Relations, Delhi, 1988, Abu Lughod, Before European Colonialism: The World System - AD 1250-1350, New York, 1989, Jane Sneider, op. cit. K.N. Choudhuri op. cit., and A.G. Frank and Barry K. Gills (ed) World System, Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand ? London, 1993.

114. Edward Said, Orientalism, London, 1980.

1.8 SOURCES

The source material constitutes a variety of texts consisting of medieval inscriptions, accounts of foreign travellers, Maippravālam literature and folk narratives.¹¹⁵ A different type of evidence is in the form of archaeological relics including pottery and coins which in their own way narrate aspects of medieval trade and commerce.

The inscriptions are smaller in number, when compared to other regions and they are scattered in widely separated areas.¹¹⁶ These epigraphical records include royal charters which are attributed roughly to the period from the 9th to the 15th century. There are some temple inscriptions too which refer to various aspects of trade

115. These texts include literary as well as non literary categories. Their textuality and intertextual connections can be examined in the contextual setting. For a view about the historicity of texts and textuality of history see Lewis A. Mantrose in H.A. Weesar, New Historicism, Delhi, 1993.

116. These indigenous royal charters and inscriptions are available in neatly edited volumes. M.G.S. Narayanan, Index to Cera Inscriptions (ICI), Putusseri Ramachandran, Sāsana Bhāsha Māthrukakal (SBM), vol I and II, Travancore Archaeological Series (TAS), vol. I to VIII. These are only one category of inscriptional sources. There is another category which consists of temple inscriptions in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The Tamil Nadu inscriptions of the Cōla time refer to some trading centres which are now extinct. Hultz (ed), South-Indian Inscriptions (SII) Certain Karnataka Records are also relevant in the study of the present topic.

and commerce either directly or indirectly. Some of them are on copper plates and some on stones. These inscriptions, usually addressed to a contemporary society cannot be easily understood or interpreted at a later stage without the support of corroborative literary data. Various theories and concepts are necessary for interpreting these records. However earlier scholars have employed many concepts. One such apparatus is the feudal model. It has been shown how royal authorities received the trading chiefs, how they were provided for their maintenance and prosperity and also how they were endowed with privileges. Thus these records inform us about both the social and economic conditions of the trading chiefs. These inscriptions also reveal various functions of the trading centres and also the nagaram formation and their organisational aspects.

The information supplied by the epigraphical records can be divided into three broad categories.

1. Details of trade and trade facilities.
2. Details of the personnel who are involved in trade.
3. Urban centres and the process of urbanisation.

The information supplied by the epigraphical records help us to identify diverse forms of trade and exchanges and the necessary conceptual frame works are

also readily available to present our view in meaningful explanations.

Epigraphical records also provide us with a new insight into the study of coins. Earlier the interests of the scholars were on the physical features of coins such as weight - standard, emblem, legend etc. A coin from a soil layer is disappointedly silent about its use in the society whereas the textual references to them both in literary and non literary texts touch upon all the aspects of its circulation such as price of articles, level of monetisation, exchange rate and so on. In this study an effort is also made to integrate numismatic evidence with epigraphical and literary texts so as to get a comprehensive picture regarding the use of coins during this period.

The numismatic evidences for this study is supplemented by epigraphical sources. There is a comparative dearth of coins in medieval Kerala, especially of the first phase of our study. It has been opined that the knowledge about the medieval coins of Kerala is deplorably poor and nothing certain is known about the coins of Kerala, but for the coins of Vira Kerala.¹¹⁷

117. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, Coins and Currency System in Early South India, Delhi, 1977, pp.122-124.

This is not due merely to the lack of exploratory works but because of the neglect of the proper study of epigraphical and literary references to the coins and money - use in medieval Kerala. Earlier studies on the numismatics of Kerala deal only with the physical features of the coins.¹¹⁸ Coins are to be studied in their actual societal context or only in relation to the people who use them.¹¹⁹ Coins, in the context of literary and epigraphical references, are eloquent in various aspects of the circulation of money and the actual role played by money in a given economy. Assistance from relevant conceptual frames have been used to arrive at conclusions with regard to the use of money during the period under study. After the 12th Century A.D. coins began to appear in plenty in transactions. Smaller denominations of money show that the use of money had become common even in smaller transactions. The widespread use of money has been considered as a symbol of urban prosperity.¹²⁰ Coins in medieval South India had a wide circulation and the study of the coins in other parts of South India also has become necessary for this study, especially to have

118. Parameswari Lal Gupta, Early Coins from Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1962.

119. Also see Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed), Money and Market in India, 1100-1700 A.D., Delhi, 1994, p.3.

120. R.S. Sharma, op.cit. p.124.

details about the inter-relationship of coins. Again details regarding the use of money and coin of Kerala are scattered in different literary works and inscriptions and all these have been integrated to analyse the role of money and coins in the society and economy under study.

The trading centres of Kerala have not been subjected to proper archaeological excavations. Still the reports on the already excavated areas supply us with invaluable information for reconstructing the history of medieval trade and commerce of Kerala. The reports of the archaeological department of Cochin State give us valuable clues with regard to the material culture of Kodungallur.¹²¹ Types of ceramics unearthed from the trading centres of Valarpatanam, Kannur, Pantalayani Kollam, Ponnani, Kollam and the like centres throw light on the trade relation of Kerala with overseas countries, especially China. Recently the whole coast of Kerala have been explored by a team of scholars including experts from the University of Tokyo.¹²² They have collected medieval Chinese porcelain from several sites and these have shattered many a belief with regard to Kerala's trade with China.

121. Anujan Achan, Archaeological Reports of the Cochin State, 1946-47, and 47-48.

122. The team included Indian Scholars like Raghava Varier, Subarayalu and Shanmugham and Japanese scholars like Karashima.

The study of place names has been of great help in identifying the commercial centres and trade routes of medieval Kerala.¹²³ The streets, bazaars and palaces have disappeared leaving no traces. They can be identified only with the help of place names. Place name survivals of foreign contacts have been useful to find out centres connected with foreign trade and they corroborate the clues obtained from settlement registers. Certain concepts formulated by urban geographers have been used in analysing the form and functions of trading centres.¹²⁴

Indigenous literary works and foreign travellers' accounts have been of immense use in reconstructing the form and functions of the trading centres, identifying markets and analysing trade routes. Clues from indigenous Sanskrit works and Tamil devotional songs have been helpful for the same.¹²⁵

123. Relevant volumes of Settlement Registers of Kerala.

124. e.g. the concept of relative space and absolute space in understanding the basic and non basic functions of trading centres. John W. Alexander 'The Basic and Non-Basic concept of Urban Economic functions in Readings in Urban Geography, Allahabad, 1967, p.69.

125. P.K.Narayana Pillai (ed) Laghu Bhāskarīya Vyākhyā, University Manuscript Library, Thiruvananthapuram, 1949; K. Raghavan Pillai (ed) op. cit and K.P.K. Menon (trans.) Periyapurānam, Thrissur, 1988.

Maṅipravāla Kāvyaś, both Campūs and Sandēśa-kāvyaś¹²⁶ have been the important sources for the latter part of our study. These kāvyaś do not deal with trade as such, but trade and allied subjects come in the way of their general topic. In the Sandēśa Kāvyaś the messenger is informed of the descriptions of the way to the house of the heroine. The descriptions of the route include the accounts of trading centres, markets, fairs, etc. These texts also give pointers to the trading communities, modes of exchange, facilities offered for trade etc. The Campūs are about certain dancing girls and the places associated with them. They give a general picture of contemporary life and culture. In the detailed descriptions of the material culture of the urban centres associated with these dancing girls, nature of such

126. Campūs are literary compositions that include both prose and verse. Maṅipravāla stands for the mixed language of Sanskrit and Malayalam. The important Campūs made use for this study are Mughathala Gopalakrishnan Nair (ed.), Unniacci Caritam, Thiruvananthapuram 1990, (Here after Unniacci Caritam), P.V. Krishnan Nair (ed), Unniaci Caritam (1966), Kottayam, 1976, (Here after Unniaci Caritam), Ayamanam Krishna Kaimal (ed) Unniccirutēvi Caritam, Kottayam 1984. (Here after Unniccirutēvi Caritam). The Sandēśa Kāvyaś are poems in the form of message by a lover to his love who happens to be at a distance. The Sandēśakāvyaś relevant to this study are: Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai (ed). Unnunili Sandēśam (1954), Kottayam 1989 (Here after Unnunili Sandēśam), Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai (ed) Kōkasandēśam, Kottayam, 1959 (Hereafter Kōka Sandēśam), Madham Parameswaran Nambuthiri (ed), Sukasandēśam, Kottayam, 1968 (Hereafter Suka Sandēśam); N.P. Unni (ed), Kōkila Sandēśam of Uddanda, Thiruvananthapuram, 1972 (Hereafter Kōkila Sandēśam).

trading centres is revealed. These texts give clues to an affluent society. Description of market is an integral part of the Campūs and Sandēśakāvyaś. These information supplement and corroborate those extracted from medieval travelogues and inscriptions. While extracting facts from the literary texts due allowance has been given to poetical eulogy and exaggerations.

Insights from folk lore also have been helpful to analyse the various features of trade and market centres.¹²⁷ The Payyannūr Pāṭṭu is to be mentioned here specially as it gives numerous clues to the sea borne trade and traders of Kerala.¹²⁸ Regular commercial intercourse between north Malabar and Coorg is mentioned in some Thottam invocation songs of North Kerala.¹²⁹

127. For folklores see:

- a) Chummar Chundal, Christian Folk Songs, Thrissur, 1983.
- b) Achuta Menon and S.K.Nair, (ed.) Ballads of North Malabar, vol.I, Madras 1956, vol. II, Madras 1957 and vol.III, Madras 1958.
- c) C.N. Ahammed Maulavi and K.K.Muhammed Abdul Karim (ed), Mahattāya Māppīla Malayāla Sāhitya Pārambaryam, Kozhikode, 1978.
- d) Chirakkal T. Balakrishnan Nair (ed), Kerala Bhāsha Gānaññal, vol. I, (1979), Thrissur, 1993.

128. Antony P. (ed), Payyannūr Pāṭṭu, Pāthavum Pathanavum, Kottayam, 1994. (Here after Payyannur Pattu).

129. Cirakkal T. Balakrishnan Nair, op.cit., pp.462-68.

Jewish folk songs,¹³⁰ Mārgam Kali Pāttukal, Māppīḷa Pāttukal¹³¹ and Vafakkan Pāttukal¹³² have been made use for this study in one way or an other.

Traditional sources which have been dubbed by historians of early generation have been found useful. Many a clue to historical processes can be had from Kēraḷolpatti, if used properly.¹³³ We are not to discard a source simply because it is traditional. Poetics and politics of oral narratives have to be methodically analysed in order to use the traditional oral narratives for reconstructing history. The past is available in the form of texts and the oral narratives represent a folk textual reconstruction of the past. Each textual reconstruction is linked with the other texts of the period and the intertextuality of these texts presents a history. This history also is relevant in the study of the past since it reveals how a section of the society viewed the past in their own way.

Certain Jewish sources have been of immense value in reconstructing the history export and import trade of

130. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1972, p.82.

131. See note No.127a and 127c above respectively.

132. See note No.127b above

133. See note No. 71 above.

the Malabar area during the 12th century - These are in the form of letters, the Geniza letters sent by the leaders of Jewish merchants on the Malabar coast to their counterparts at Aden and vice versa. These letters have been edited by S.D. Goitein.¹³⁴

The accounts left by the Arab geographers form a mine of information. Sulaiman, Ibn Khurdad Bih and Idrissi provide us with rich material to the overseas trade relation of early medieval Kerala.¹³⁵ The distance between Arabian ports and Malabar ports, the goods available at Malabar, the people, flora and fauna etc. are the themes of the Arab accounts. The earliest among these are the accounts of Sulaiman.

134. S.D. Goitein, Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders, Princeton, 1973 and 'From Aden to India' specimens of correspondence of India Traders of the Twelfth Century', JESHO, vol. XXIII, Part I and II, 1980.

135. The accounts of Sulayman known as Akhbār al-Ṣīn wal-Hind (Accounts of India and China) formed part of the Silsilat al-Tawārikh (The Chain of Histories) a collection of reports on India, China and other countries compiled by Abu Zayed al Sirafia about 916 AD. There are difference of opinion regarding the author of Akhbār al-Ṣīn wal-Hind. It is believed that it was written by Sulayman. But his name appears only once in the text. It must not have been the work of a single person, but of several including Sulayman between 800 and 851 A.D. For the sake of convenience we call it Accounts of Sulayman. See S. Maqbul Ahamad (ed), Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China. Simla, 1989. The first part of this work is Al Masālik Wal-Mamālik (Roads and Kingdoms) of Ibn Khurdad Bih and Second part Akhbār al-Ṣīn wal-Hind.

The accounts of Al Idrissi, Yakut, Dimishqi Abul Fida, Ibn Battuta, Abdr Razzak have been used for his study.¹³⁶ Ibn Battuta gives details regarding the trading centres, the trading groups, etc. There is an element of exaggeration in the Arab accounts. Care has been taken to ensure that only facts are extracted from these overstatements. Literary sources, especially foreign accounts have been examined with due care, to have a correct view.

The travelogue of Marco Polo is a treasure house of information regarding various aspects of trade. It include description of important trading centres, export and import items, and so on.¹³⁷

The Chinese sources have been of great value in reconstructing the trade between China and Malabar Coast. The accounts left by Chow ju kwa, Mahuan, Wangta Yuan and Feihsin have been particularly useful to this study.¹³⁸

136. See H. Yule, Cathay the Way Tither, vol. II, Series II, Hakluyt Society, 1913. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices of South India from Megastanes to Mahuan, Madras, 1939, S.M.H.Nainar, Arab Geographers Knowledge of South India, Madras 1942 and Mahdhi Hussain, The Rehla of Ibn Battuta, Baroda, 1953.

137. Y. Yule, Cathay, the Way Tither, vol.II, Series II and vol. IV, Series II, Hakluyt Society, 1913.

138. For Chinese sources, Mahuan, Ying Yai Sheng Lan, J.V.G.Mills (trans.), Cambridge, 1970 and Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices of South India..... pp.137-156 and 293-298.

The foregoing discussion focuses only on those source materials which are of primry significance. Other sources are examined as and when they are referred to in the text of this dissertation.

This chapter seeks to highlight the aim and importance of the present study. It also examines the various causative factors behind the emergence of trading centres in medieval Kerala. A close examination of the historiography exposes the relevance of the present attempt. The analyses of the source materials also encourages one to venture the present study. We humbly admit in this context that due to several constraints we have not been able to make attempt to explore hither to unknown sources and bring them to light. Our endeavour is based on the analysis of the existing sources in the light of new perspectives and conceptual frames.

TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES IN KERALA (A. D. 800 - 1500)

*Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the Degree of*
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER II

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING AND PROLIFERATION OF AGRICULTURE

II.0 "The tillers are the linchpin of the world
And they really support the rest of the world."¹

All discussions on the trade of medieval Kerala should be prefaced with a detailed analysis of its terrain and agricultural set-up. These have a profound influence on the formation of settlement and agricultural production which have a corresponding impact upon the pattern of trade of a region. A descriptive account of the terrain, nature of soil, proliferation of agriculture and the pattern of settlements become necessary in this perspective.

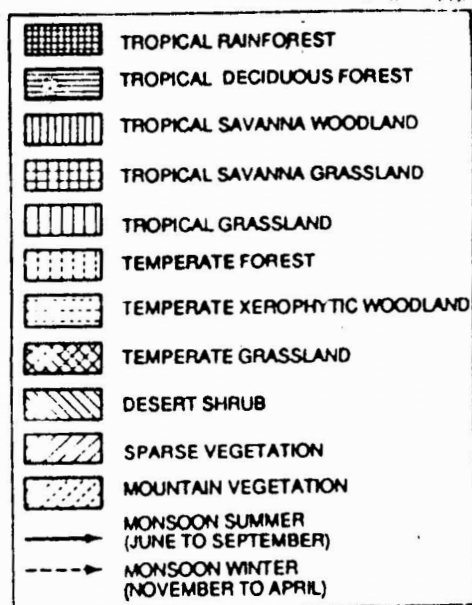
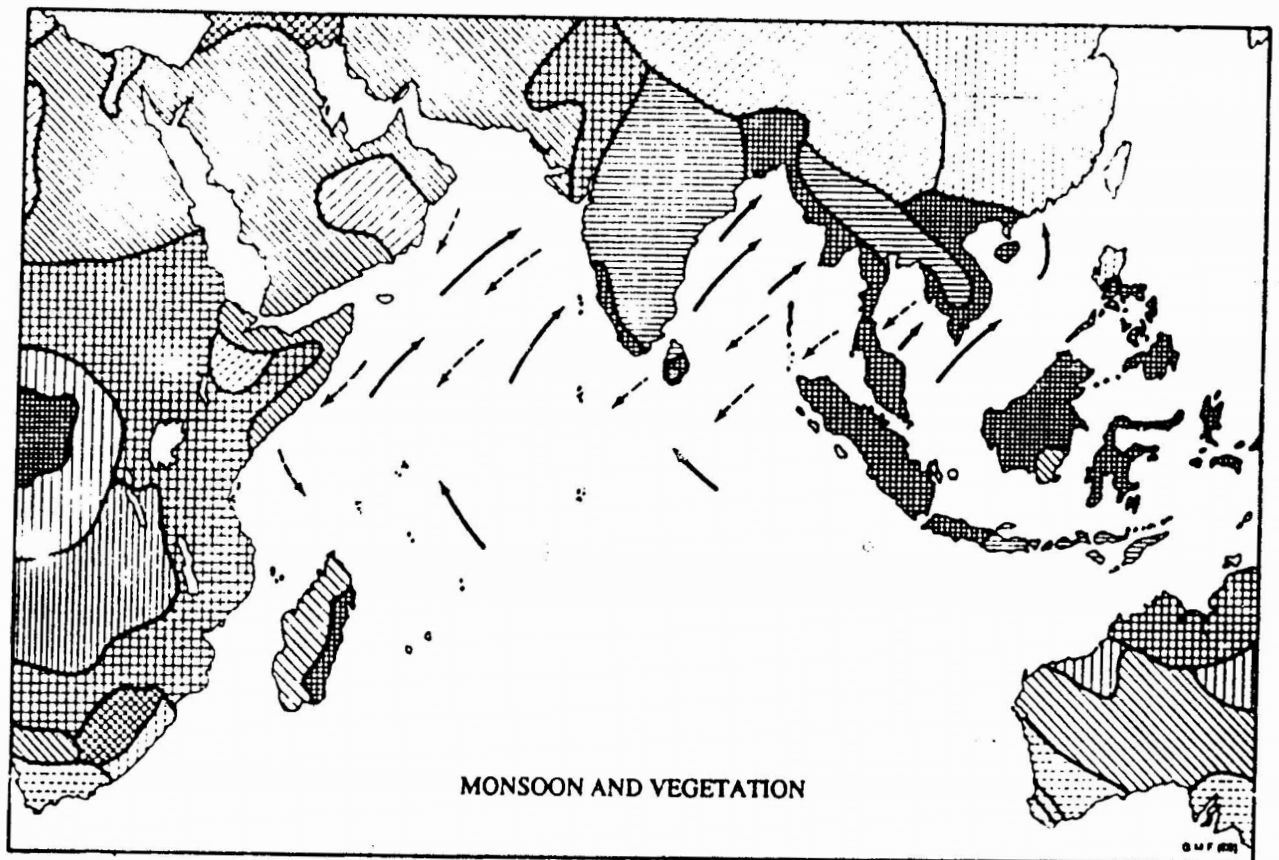
Geography of a region is an integral part of its history. Located between 8°17'30" and 12°47'40" north latitude and between 74°51'57" and 77°24'47" east longitude, Kerala is a narrow strip of land lying between the western ghats and the Arabian sea on the southern tip

1. Tirukkural, verse 1032. V.V.S. Ayar (trans.)
Tirukkural, Tiruparaithurai, Thiruchirapally, 1989,
p.25.

of the Indian sub continent. The total area of the region is approximately 38856.7 sq.kms. Its width ranges from 11.27 kms to 120.70 kms; its coast line is 579.36 kms long.² The geographical location of Kerala has brought her within the ambit of the monsoon winds, both the south-west and north-east, which set the rhythm of maritime traffic and overseas trade of the Indian Ocean region for centuries.³ Originating in the Indian Ocean between Australia and Malagasi, these monsoon winds blow south-west for six months, and north-east for the remaining six months of the year. Towards the end of May when the sun is in the northern hemisphere the higher plateaus of Asia get overheated and as a result of this, the atmospheric pressure of this region lowers. This makes the air above the southern sea move northwards to the continent. Thus is formed the monsoon wind. When these winds reach equitorial Africa they get tilted eastwards due to the rotation of the earth and blow unobstructedly, reaching straight to the Malabar coast of India and return by the

2. M.K. Devassy, Census of India (1961), vol.VII, Kerala Part IX, Delhi, 1966, p.3.

3. These winds known to the Arabs and Indians were brought to the attention of the Europeans by Hippalus in the 1st Century A.D. and were also called Hippalus. 'If the wind called Hippalus happens to be blowing it is possible to arrive in forty days at the nearest mart in India, Muziris by name', says the author of the Periplus of the Erithraean Sea. See W. Schoff (ed.), Periplus of the Erithraean Sea (1912), Delhi, 1974, p.233.



Source: Kenneth Mc Pherson, The Indian Ocean, Delhi, 1993, p.10.

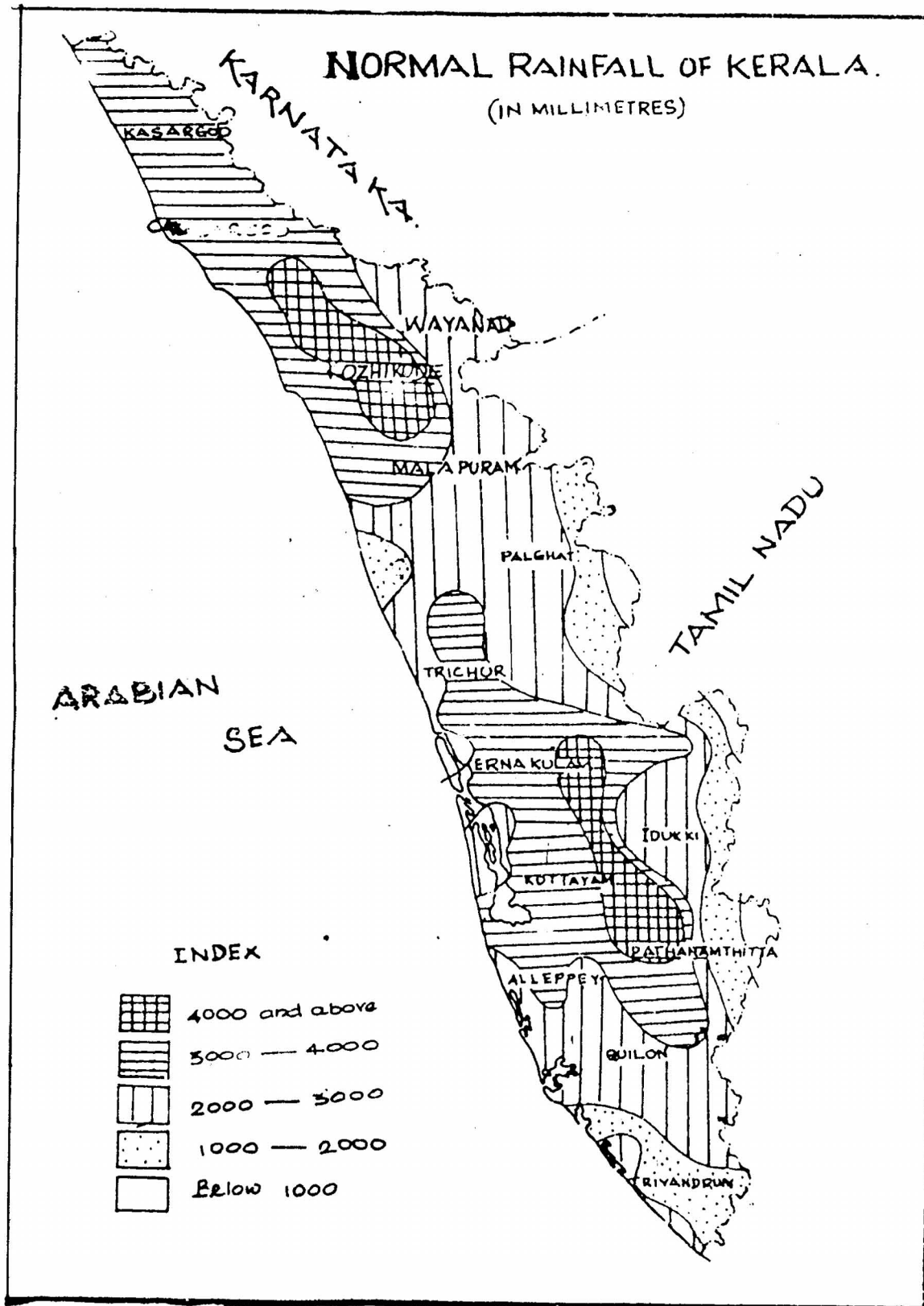
beginning of October. These winds have been regular, and the extreme regularity of the seasons in Kerala has been noticed by all including the medieval indigenous writers and modern foreign administrator-scholars.⁴ These monsoon winds have profoundly influenced the economy and society of Kerala. In fact, Kerala's trade with the Arabs and other nations of the West was monsoon oriented. The distance from Persian gulf to Malabar, 1,600 statute miles, was formidable for vessels dependent on wind power. It was to a great extent due to the facilities offered by the monsoon winds that trade developed over a region of this magnitude.⁵ Direct voyage to and from Kerala along with these winds was a regular feature of medieval period. Travellers set sail for India with the advent of the south-east wind and upon entering the Red Sea they got the south-west or southwind. The traders from the west who came to Kerala could go back only with the return of the winds and had to stay here waiting for the same. This led to the emergence of foreign cultural diasporas in Kerala.⁶

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4. William Logan, Malabar Manual (1887) Thiruvananthapuram, 1981, p.40. This fact was objectified by the medieval writers and they had developed the same into knowledgeable form. For reference in a medieval Manipravālam text see Chandrōtsavam, Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai (ed), (1962), Kottayam, 1985, v.51, p.34.
 5. G. Crone, Discovery of the East, London, 1972, p.1. Also see Himanshu P. Ray, The Winds of Change, Delhi, 1994, pp.85-86.
 6. For details regarding trade and cultural diasporas see chapter IV, Sec. 7.

The development of Islamic communities along the coastline of Malabar is partly traceable to these winds. Unlike the Arabs the Chinese traders had no need for staying here for long, waiting for the winds and this seems to explain the near absence of Chinese elements in the population and culture of Kerala.

II.1.1 The Tropic of Cancer passes through central India and thus, Kerala located in the southern tip of the sub continent, is bestowed with a maritime tropical climate. Kerala region is in the forefront both in rainfall and in the number of rainy days. She gets rain both by the south-west and north-east monsoons.⁷ When the south-western monsoon wind blows over Indian ocean it gets saturated with moisture which becomes rain as it reaches the coast of Kerala in June. This rain continues almost upto October. In October-November the wind from the Bay of Bengal reaches Kerala through the Palakkad pass and causes rain. The rainfall is not only heavy but also continuous. The pattern of rainfall is not uniform. It ranges from 200 to 400 cms. In the southern most region of the state and certain areas of Palakkad district rainfall is below 200 cms. There it varies from 150 cms.

7. M.K. Devassy, op.cit., p.11.



Source: State Educational Institute, Kerala Government, 1995.

to 200 cms.⁸ The position of the asterism of Āndra (Tiruvātira Ñārruvēla) is famous in Kerala as being the days of continuous rain.⁹ The cold season in Kerala is not bitter. During this cold weather the day times are warm. From March to May it is summer. The mean maximum temperature ranges from 28°C and 34°C, while the mean minimum temperature varies from 20°C and 25°C.¹⁰ Now, due to the problems of ecological imbalance the temperature is increasing and in the interior areas it will rise up to 37°C.

II.1.2 Continuous rain and warm climate, together with the varying altitudes, have created a flora of great variety. Medieval literature refers to the forest clad regions in different parts of Kerala.¹¹ The mountainous regions were thickly forested. Forests were not confined to the mountainous regions only but were seen scattered in the plains also. The thick forests of Kerala are of great economic value. Forest resources have been important

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8. M. Vijayanunni (ed.), Census of India 1981, Series 10, Delhi, 1988, p.4.
 9. The fourteen days when the sun is in the asterism of Āndra, from Mithunam (June-July) 7th to 21st.
 10. M. Vijayanunni, op.cit.
 11. e.g. According to Sukasandēsam the southern portion of Vempolinad (Tekumkur) was thick forest. See Madham Parameswaran Nambuthiri (ed.), Sukasandēsam, Part II, v. 60, p.64.

items of overseas trade through centuries. Among these timber, incense, honey, ivory etc. were the foremost. Trees like teak, blackwood, wild jack tree, rosewood, ebony, etc. were of commercial importance apart from their wide use for construction purposes within the region. Of these, teak was the most desired one. The rare quality of teak is its resistance to white ant and its durability. It is noted for its strength and beauty also. It was used for shipbuilding as it was not adversely affected by contact with water. According to Masudi ships of Indian ocean were built of teak.¹² Malabar was economically important to the Arabs because of the availability of teak.¹³ In addition to trees, several species of plants and shrubs were peculiar to the forests of Kerala. Various kinds of nuts, cinnamon, wax etc. were items marketed. The wonderful medicinal properties of the herbs and roots are evident from the Hortus Malabaricus.¹⁴ There is a corresponding variety in the fauna also and items like ivory have been valuables of export from very

12. George Fadlo Hourani, Arab Seafaring in Indian Ocean in Ancient and Medieval Times, New York, 1973, pp.89-90. Also see Wilfred Schoff (ed.), op.cit., p.152. But teak is not seen mentioned as an item of export from Malabar.

13. Ibid., p.71.

14. The monumental work on the medicinal plants of India compiled under the patronage of the Dutch in Kerala and published from Amsterdam between 1678 and 1703, in 12 vols.

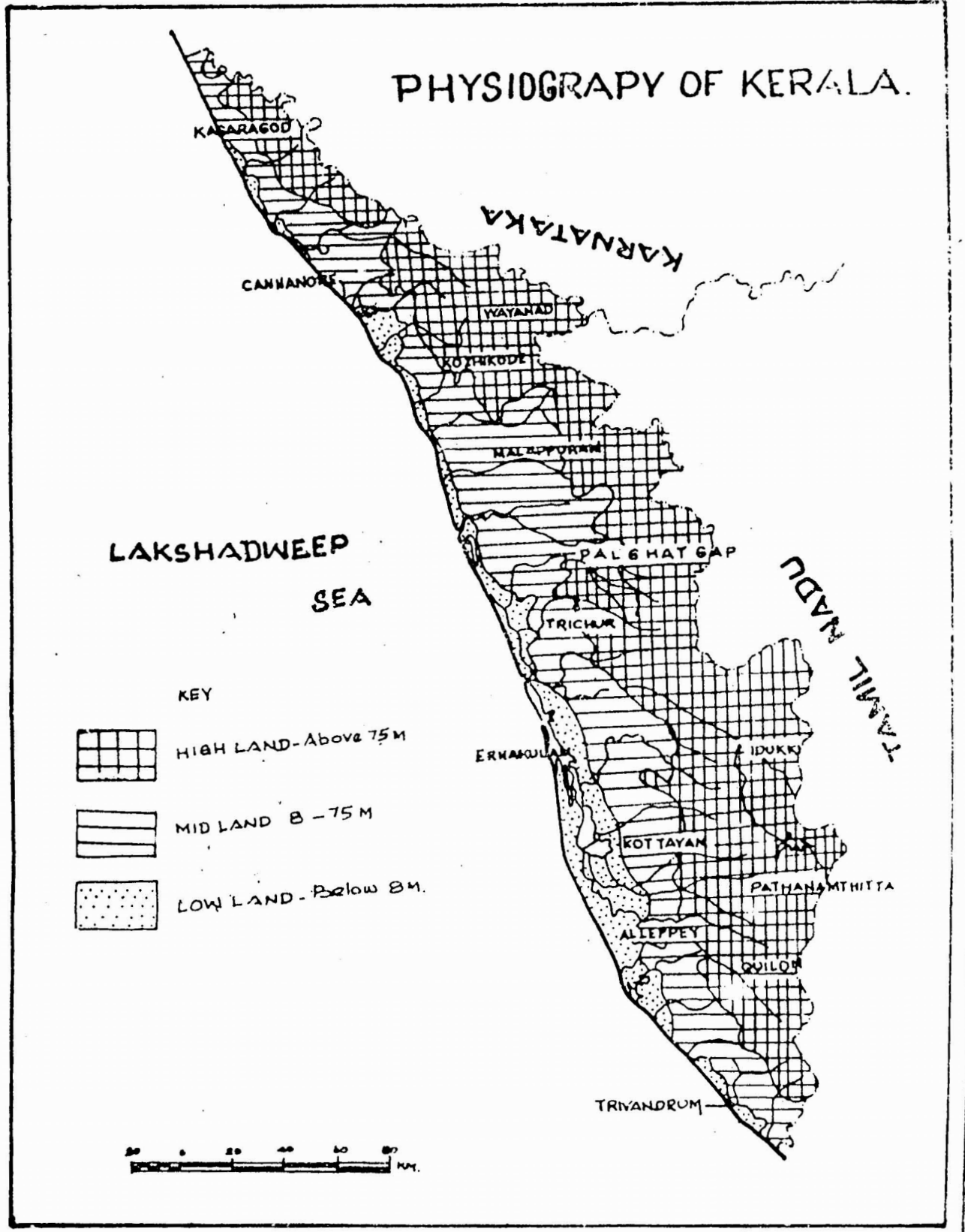
early times. Thus the nature of climate coupled with geographical peculiarities have been conducive to the growth of variegated forest resources.

II.2 Physiographically the region of Kerala presents diverse forms. The elevation of the land increases from the coastal area upto the western ghats where the average height is 4000 ft. above the sea level.¹⁵ Based on its height from the level of the sea the region is divided into three zones - the highland, midland and lowland. The area above 600 ft. is the highland, between 600 ft. and 300 ft. is the midland and between 300 ft. and 30 ft. is the seashore area. The highland comprises part of the western ghats. This area is hilly and forest clad and is rich in flora and fauna. Here the mountains are broken by natural passes.¹⁶ These passes have been of importance in the study of trade and trade routes of Kerala as being the links between Kerala and Tamilnadu on one hand and Kerala and Karnataka on the other. Thus the contact between the plateau and the low lying plains was brisk through all the periods of history. The midland is undulated with small hills, and hillocks, valleys and rivers. This is the main

15. A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteers, Quilon, Thiruvananthapuram, 1964, p.4.

16. The most important pass is the Palakkad pass, 30 kms wide, and the others are Aruvamozhi, Aryankavu, Kambam, Tamarasserri, Kuttiati and Periya.

PHYSIOGRAPY OF KERALA.



Source: State Educational Institute, Kerala Government, 1935.

agricultural belt. The low land is the coastal area, intercepted by rivers. The idea of various physiographical division of the land existed even from the period of early Tamil anthologies. During that period land was conceived as divided into five tinais - the coastal tract of neytal, the agricultural tract of marutam, the parched zones of pālai, the hilly areas and meadows of mullai and the forest area of kurinji.¹⁷ Of course there was overlapping. The people of each tiṇai had their own separate means of livelihood and each tiṇai had its own products.

II.3 The river system and backwater system of Kerala are peculiar and have bearing on the development of her economy. There are 44 rivers, 41 flowing west and 3 flowing east, the number of large rivers being very few. Hardly is there any land similar in area watered by so many rivers. Rising from the western ghats they take a round about course through undulated grounds and thus become a connecting link between the villages, which are spatially distributed in a wide region. The rivers carry

17. For the concept of tinais, see Sivathampi K., 'Early South Indian Society and Economy: the Tiṇai Concept.' Social Scientist, No.29 (1974) pp.20-37. Also see Radhika Rajamany, Society in Early Historic Tamizhakam, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1993.

KERALA RIVERS AND LAGOONS

RIVERS

Sl. No.	Name of Rivers	Length in the Kerala in KM
West Flowing Rivers		
1	Ponjar	244
2	Bharatapuzha	278
3	Pamba	196
4	Chalayar	169
5	Chalakkudi	130
6	Kudalundi	110
7	Acham Kovil	128
8	Kallada	121
9	Muvattupuzha	121
10	Valapattanam	110
11	Chandragiri	105
12	Manimala	95
13	Vamanapuram	88
14	Kuppan	82
15	Moolanthal	78
16	Kuliyath	74
17	Karamana	68
18	Saraya	67
19	Kannayir	64
20	Hulikal	56
21	Neyyar	56
22	Melic	54
23	Kochhar	51
24	Ponmudi	51
25	Uppala	30
26	Kannanur	48
27	Arjankudi	48
28	Tinar	48
29	Noddiyaru	46
30	Pallikal	42
31	Korapuzha	40
32	Mogral	34
33	Kavayapuzha	31
34	Puzhakkal	29
35	Telicherry	28
36	Madam	27
37	Chellan	25
38	Kallay	22
39	Rampuzha	19
40	Ayiroor	17
41	Bangramangal	16
East Flowing Rivers		
42	Kabbar	63
43	Bharani	38
44	Pambay	26

Source: State Educational Institute, Kerala Government, 1995.

sand and alluvium along their course and these are deposited at the places of their esturies. Sometimes this would form a separate island like Manappuram, the seabord tract at Chettuva in Thrissur District. The back water flows encircling the new formation.¹⁸ Islands of this kind have been of great commercial importance because of their water transport facilities. The wars waged for Chettuva by the Zamorin, the Dutch, the Mysore Sultans, the French and the English in later centuries were because of such commercial compulsions.

II.4 Kerala has an extensive backwater system. The continuous backwaters and lagoons that form a perennial water body is peculiar to Kerala. Unlike the rivers that become dry during the summer season, these backwaters and the canals connecting them are navigable through out the year and form a cheap and safe inland water communication system.¹⁹ The slow moving large boats laden with cargo have been a usual sight in the coastal areas of Kerala. With numerous branches to the interior the rivers and

18. James Emerson, Tennet's Sketches of the Natural History of Ceylon, cited by C. Achutha Menon, Cochin State Manual, Ernakulam, 1911, pp.9-10.

19. Ibn Battuta testifies to the water transport system from Kozhikode to Kollam. The two trading centres were at a distance of ten days journey. Journey was in day time only. See Mahdhi Hussain (ed.), The Rehla of Ibn Battuta, Baroda, 1953, p.193.

backwaters connect the different parts of the region. All the medieval trading centres were easily accessible through water mainly because of the backwaters. The Ashtamuti kāyal with its eight branches made it possible for the trading centre of Kollam establish connection with distant villages which formed part of her hinterland. The backwaters run almost parallel to the sea and because of their connections with the sea are subjected to the flood tides. The kāyals are bestowed with facilities for ports and Muziris and Thondi, Elimala and Kollam, the important ports that figure in the ancient and medieval history of Kerala respectively are adjacent to the sea. The kāyals are known for the wealth in fish, lime shell etc. The marshy areas on the banks of the kāyals are used for putrefying coconut husk. And it was in these regions that traditional coir industry of Kerala flourished. The marshy areas in kāyals are used for paddy cultivation and such karilands have been under cultivation during the period under discussion. Even today in the Kuttanad area which is the rice bowl of Travancore, there are large number of karilands. We have inscripational evidence for the huge quantity of paddy obtained from these lands, during the medieval period in the form of temple records.²⁰

20. e.g. the Tiruvalla Inscriptions, TAS, vol.II and III, (1908), Thiruvananthapuram 1991, pp.173-207 and The Valappally inscriptions, Ibid. p.24.

II.5 The sea had its permanent role in shaping the trade of Kerala. This is not merely because of the resources of the sea, but because of the rarities associated with it. It has been noted already that a peculiarity of the Kerala coast is the presence of mud banks.²¹ The characteristic feature of the mud bank is that a greenish oily mud rises from the bottom of the sea, becomes dispersed in water and stills the surf.²² The mud bank becomes more visible with the beginning of the monsoon. The churning up of mud has not been properly explained. As the mud banks obstruct the course of the waves, the sea around them would be like 'a pond without tumult.'²³ These mud banks were known to the mariners as safe and smooth anchorage even during the south-west monsoon. Mud banks are seen at Alapuzha,²⁴ Narakkal,

21. See Records of the Geological Survey of India, No.XVII and XXIII. The mud banks are calm areas of muddy water filled with minute vegetative particles found in the sea along the coast line. They are found along the coast of Kerala only. For reasons for the formation of mud banks see Innes and Ivans, Malabar I. (1908), Madras, 1951, pp: 7-8.

22. William Logan, op.cit., p.47.

23. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, Kochi Rājya Caritram (1914), Kozhikode, 1989, p.2.

24. Alapuzha has 'mud volcanoes' also which is a disadvantage. Mud volcanoes are 'huge cones of mud and water which come bubbling up from below, often bringing with them dead fishes and roots and trunks of trees,' Innes and Ivans, op.cit.

Kozhikode and Panthalayani Kollam along the seashore of Kerala. It was easy for mariners to load the ships or discharge cargo in the calm water of these areas. By the side of important port towns the shore is protected by protrusions as in the case of Kollam and Panthalayani Kollam. At Kollam protrusions are found at Thankasserri in the north and Varkala in the south. Panthalayani Kollam has protrusions at Elathur and Tikkodi.

II.6 The coast line of Kerala has undergone geomorphological changes through the ages. This has affected the spatial organisation of trading centres. In fact the ports of the west coast had fluctuating fortunes as a result of the silting up of inlets, springing up of new routes and the erosion of sea. The destruction of the port of Muziris in the flood of 1341 and the emergence of the port of Kochi are well-known in the economic history of Kerala.

II.7 In certain parts of North Kerala where the Western ghats come nearer to the sea, the sea water enters into the interior. This makes salt panning possible. The salt pans of Kozhikode district are the direct result of this geomorphological feature. There lies to the east of these areas of salt pans an extensive megalithic belt and these early historical settlements must have got the essential

article of salt from this coastal salt producing area and therefore the contact between the interior and coastal area was perhaps started from a very early historical phase.²⁵ This might have been the beginning of exchange network of this area.

II.8 The land of Kerala is intercepted by numerous rivers, backwaters, hills and forests. This is reflected in the nature of her cultivable area and crop pattern. The paddy fields are scattered among woods and mountains, hills and rivers and thus they are different from the vast stretches of fields in the Kaveri delta beyond the western ghats. It has been pointed out how in Western Deccan large expanse of land is not available for cultivation along the rivers.²⁶ The scattered nature of cultivable land has deprived the people of Kerala of the benefits of large scale holdings. The undulated nature of land makes the rain water percolate and this ruled out the need for large scale irrigation and collective farming in Kerala. The individual land holders were more or less free in their own holding of land to produce what they liked.

25. This megalithic belt extends from Kotal (a Kutakkal site) in the South to Pavandur in the north in Kozhikode district. Also see M.R. Raghava Varier, Souvenir, South Indian History Congress, Calicut University, 1991 p.21-23.

26. Himanshu P. Ray, Monastery and Guild: Commerce under the Satavahanas, Delhi, 1986, p.91.

This is an indication to the unique settlement pattern of Kerala. The disbursed settlements in Kerala differ from the nucleated villages in other parts of South India.²⁷ While in other parts of South India villages are huddled in streets, the Kerala people enjoy a considerable privacy in their own fenced compounds. While the undulated nature of land made such settlements a necessity, the ready availability of water made it feasible. There was no tendency for any particular caste to cluster together and this invariably led to the absence of any boundary as such for individual villages.

II.9 The cultivable land of Kerala is divided into three categories according to its nature - the low lying fields or vayal, the parambu (upland compouns) and the hill tracts. Vayal, the lower ground was mainly meant for the cultivation of paddy. Parambu, the higher ground is occupied by house sites and gardens with their characteristic cash crops. They are partly reserved for pastures and partly cultivated.²⁸ The traditional unit of settlement of the Malayalee has been a house and the

27. Also see M.R. Raghava Varier, Village Communities in Pre-Colonial Kerala, Madras, 1994, p.10.

28. Also see Francis Buchanon, Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, vol. II (1809), Delhi, 1988, p.365.

parambu around it.²⁹ Inscriptions pertaining to land endowments to temples specifically mention purayitams.³⁰ In the Chembrā inscription two third of the source of income to the temple of Chembrā was the parambu lands. And the inscription shows that products of parambūs like coconut, jack fruit, pepper etc. were among the items of regular income to the temple of Chembrā.³¹ These parambūs have been peculiar to Kerala and South Canara and the parambu economy has been a stimulating factor of trade. The plant growth of the parambūs consisted of wild trees, fruit trees, bushes and planted cash crop trees. Wild jack tree, jack tree, mango tree, tamarind and goose-berry tree were common to the parambūs. The main cash crop trees were the coconut and the arecanut. The cultivation of pepper increased the value of the parambūs. Akil,

29. Ibn Battuta points to this peculiarity of settlements in Kerala when he describes Malabar thus: "And in all the spaces of two months journey there is not a span free from cultivation. For, evrybody has here a garden and his house is placed in the middle of it and round the whole of it there is a fence of wood up to which the ground of each inhabitant comes". See Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices of South India from Megastanes to Ma Huan, Madras, 1939, pp. 235-36.

30. Mampally Inscription (A.D. 1210), line-3, Vellayani Inscription (1191 A.D.), line 6, Tiruvambadi Inscription (1191), line 53 and Kilimanur Inscription lines 7-8 in Putusseri Ramachandran (ed.), Sasana Bhāsha Māthrukakal - Kollam Nālam Satakam, Thiruvananthapuram, 1986, pp.86-87, p.91, p.82 and p.78 respectively.

31. Raghava Varier, Kēraliyata Caritramanaññal, Sukapuram, 1990, pp.99-101.

sandalwood, clove, cinnamon etc were common to the parambus and forest. Among the other crops which were of importance as items of export were ginger, turmeric etc. Cereals, peas, tubers, plantain and the like items needed for daily life also were cultivated in the purayitams according to the season. In convenient purayitams paddy also was cultivated. For this a special variety of seed paddy, the mōṭan was used. Even today such mōṭan cultivation can be seen in paraṃbūs, amidst coconut trees and similar perennial crops. The paraṃbūs expanded at the expense of forests, paddy fields and sandy areas. This shows the economic importance of the paraṃbūs and the diffusion of paraṃbu-purayitam economy was the most important feature of Kerala economy towards the close of the 15th century.³² The paraṃbu acquired importance as the source of food for daily life and this form of economy enabled the people to live with least dependence on the feudal lords. The paraṃbu supplied them with products which could be exchanged for other essential articles in the market. In fact with the exception of the serfs who were attached to the soil the people were self-reliant to an extent in their respective holdings. This helped the development of local markets or annāṭis. Unlike the paddy fields, the paraṃbūs did not have labourers attached to

32. Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, 'Paraṃbu Purayita Sampatvyavasta' Vijñāna Kairali, April, 1995, pp.293-302.

them and for the work of cultivation in them wage labour also was essential. Often part of the commodities given as wages³³ to the labourers would be taken to markets to be exchanged either for money or for other articles. This means that money reached the lower strata of society also. The records of the period mention lower denominations of coins and this shows that money had been in use even in smaller transactions. Money must have reached the artisans also. The artisans were not liable to render their service to those other than the land lords. So the tenants had to pay for their service. Those who had vayals or nilams had parambūs also. But those who had parambūs did not need to have nilams. This means that the latter was dependent on the former for staple food. In many areas parambūs and woods were mixed together.³⁴

II.10 Soil, the chemical laboratory of nature is of vital importance to the material development of a people. Depending on its quality, the soil of Kerala can be divided into five categories - the sandy, alluvial, laterite, laterite red, and forest and hill soils.³⁵ The

33. The term 'wage' is used here in a general sense.

34. Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, 'Parambu Purayitā Sambat Vyavasta', op. cit.

35. K.N. Ganesh (ed.), Kerala State Gazetteers, vol. III, Thiruvananthapuram, 1989, pp.27-31.

sandy soil forms a narrow strip of about 1 to 7 Kms width along the west coast. This soil is poor in plant nutrients, lime and organic matter and the fertility of this region is low. Coconut has been the major crop in this area. Rice can be cultivated here well with heavy application of manures and certain areas of this region, the present Karthikapally, Karunagapally and Kuttanad areas have been important rice producing areas of Kerala. Widely seen on the banks of the rivers the alluvial soil is rich in organic matter. This soil is conducive to the cultivation of rice, coconut, sugarcane, plantain etc. The Kuttanad tract and the fertile areas of Thrissur and Mukundapuram taluks have this soil. Laterite soil found mainly in the mid land is of low fertility, but responds well to proper manuring and ploughing. In certain areas of midlands where rain fall is comparatively low the laterite soil does not have the visicular structure. This soil, red in colour found in parts of present Neyyattinkara and Thruvananthapuram taluks is backward in plant nutrients and this soil also needs heavy application of manure. The peaty or kari soil found on the banks of backwaters in the Kuttanad, Varkala and Chertala areas has a high content of organic matter and high acidity. It also is not fertile. The forest and hill soils which form nearly 26% of the region are rich in nitrogen and plant nutrients and are favourable for the

growth of forests. A variety of black soil found in the Palakkad-Chittur area is suited for the cultivation of cotton.³⁶

The soil by the side of backwaters is suited for certain kinds of paddy, but the entry of salt water into the field is to be prevented. Such fields are called kari nilams or kōl nilams. The uneven nature of land created low lands which during the monsoon become water logged. This in turn demanded the frequent emptying of water from the low land. The reclamation of marshy lands for cultivation was an ongoing practice ever since the period of the Perumals. 'Nature determines the route of development while man determines the rate and stage.'³⁷ There are references to reclaimed marshy lands or the karilands in many an inscription. They are mentioned as fields yielding income to the temples.³⁸ These fields were not means of marginal production. Large amount of paddy was obtained from those lands.³⁹

36. Ibid.

37. Tailor Griffith, Geography in the 20th Century, pp.14-15, quoted by Balram Srivastava, Trade and Commerce in Ancient India, Varanasi, 1968, pp. 1-2.

38. Kilimanur Inscription, Valappally Copper Plates, an inscription of Sri. Vallabhan Kotai of Venad and the Tiruvalla Inscriptions etc. TAS vol. V, 1908, pp.78-85, vol. II and III, p.14, Ibid. p.24 and Ibid. pp.173-207 respectively.

39. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, lines 60, 65, 78, 79, 92, 115, 131, 138, 160, 179 and 180, Ibid.

Towards the north of Kerala, especially from Korapuzha to the north, the distance between the western ghats and the sea decreases, as a result of which sea waters enter into the interior upto 19 kms, contaminating the soil with salt. Here paddy fields get shrunk in between the mountains and the sea and this accounts for the absence of large areas of paddy fields in north Malabar.⁴⁰ The structure of the soil of this region shows that paddy cannot be profitably cultivated here. The soil survey reports bear testimony to this fact. Hence the annual yield from the fields is only half or one-third of what fields of similar size produce in the southern regions. Apart from periodical floods and droughts, the presence of certain oxides in the soil also adversely affects the cultivation. The large scale drain of water makes it difficult to plough the fields in dry season. In certain areas especially at places where the Vadakara series of soil of Kozhikode district is found the ratio of iron ore and clay in the soil is bigger and this renders the loam sandy. The traditional name given to this area - Pūlināṭ becomes meaningful because of this peculiarity.⁴¹

40. An example for exception is the Etayatakkam Vayal.

41. Annual Report of Soil Survey, 1967

See also M.R. Raghava Varier, Vaṭakkan Pāttukalūṭe Paṇiyāla, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Sukapuram, 1987, pp. 65-66.

During the period of our study the numbuthiris were the major land owning community, and they seemed to have spared northern Malabar, (except Taliparamba) and settled in the fertile area of central Kerala. Later a king of Kolathunad invited twenty four Nambuthiri families to come and settle down in his kingdom.⁴²

Though rice was the staple food of the people domestic production of the same was not sufficient to cater to local needs. So rice had to be imported. The scarcity of rice in Kerala has been noticed by writers in various periods. Wang Ta-yuan, the author of the Chinese text Dào i Shiliu (1349) has recorded that soil in certain parts of Kerala was not fertile and that the people had to depend upon the grain imported from Orissa.⁴³ In the beginning of 16th century condition of Kochi was not better. The people of Kochi had to rely on Muslim traders for rice. The Portuguese admiral Pacchico won over the

42. Tiruvattur Inscription, ICI, B.16.

43. Regarding Kayamkulam Wang Ta-yuan writes thus: the people were indolant even though the land was fertile. Regarding Ezhimala he wrote: 'the soil is far from good for tilling' and regarding Calicut, 'the land is flat and the soil poor...' Each year the people depend upon the shippers from Orissa for sufficient grain. See K.A. Nilakanta Sastri (ed), Foreign Notices of South India from Megastanes to Mahuan, Madras 1939. pp.293-95. The scarcity of rice is repeatedly referred to in Tuhafatul Mujahiddin of Sheikh Sainuddin. K. Musankutty Maulavi (trans.), Tuhafatul Mujahiddin, Thirur, 1986.

leaders of such Muslim merchants as they were capable of creating famine conditions.⁴⁴ In the beginning of the 19th Century Buchanan observed thus regarding the production of food grains in Malabar: The areas near the sea are very much sandy and the extent of paddy fields is not large. Hill rice is not cultivated except in the inner parts of the country. The bulk of the paddy fields is single cropped. According to the same author the average produce is 13 bushels per acre.⁴⁵ Logan observes how the English at Talassery, the Dutch at Kannur and the French at Mane suffered nearly famine conditions when the king of Bednore prohibited the export of rice to Kerala in 1756.⁴⁶ In the erstwhile Travancore area also the condition was more or less similar. In the beginning of this century Nagam Aiah observed thus: the climate of Travancore was conducive to the growth of trees, roots etc., but not to rice and cereals. The wetland suffered from the disadvantage of undeveloped irrigation system. On the whole the soil was not rich. The general return of arable land was only 20 fold at the maximum. Large areas

44. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, Kochi Rājya Caritram, pp.160-61.

45. Francis Buchanan, op. cit., p.396.

46. William Logan, op. cit., p.251.

were laid waste as the yields would not compensate the cost of production.⁴⁷

The soil has been unprofitable for paddy cultivation, but it has been quite favourable for cash crops, fruit trees and vegetables. In fact the diversity both in the structure of land and in the texture of soil did result in a divergence of crop pattern. And this diversity has been the hall mark of agriculture in Kerala. Perennial crops like coconut, arecanut, jack fruit etc., cereal, pulses and a variety of spices were cultivated in different parts of the region.⁴⁸ They were cultivated not as monocultural plantations, but as multi cultural.

II.11 Variety is seen in each item of crop in paddy, vegetables, spices and other cash crops and this diversity added to the growth of markets. We have literary reference to a variety of paddy.⁴⁹ The cultivation of kalama rice and white dry rice is referred to in the

47. Nagam Aiah, Travancore State Manual, Thiruvananthapuram 1905, pp.2-3.

48. K.N. Ganesh, op. cit., p.27 and p.81.

49. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai (ed.) Unnunili Sandēśam (1954), Kottayam, 1983, v. 81, p.75.

The poem refers to various kinds of rice like kūran, cōlan, paḷavari, veṇṇakkappan, cennel, mōṭen, kāṭan, koṭiyan, ānakōṭan, viravittan and kuravakoṭian.

Unṇiyacci Caritam.⁵⁰ The Manipravāla Kāvyas refer to the paṛambūs replete with various fruit trees, arecanut, coconut, sugar cane etc.⁵¹ Sugar cane is referred to as cultivated in fields.⁵² Sugar cane as a side crop in paddy fields is mentioned in a Sandēṣa Kāvya⁵³ of 14th century. But this crop is not referred to in any of the inscriptions. Plantains were grown abundantly both as a side crop and interim crop and as main crop in the paṛambūs. Unṇunīlisandēṣam speaks of Valaṛkadali a fine variety of Plantain.⁵⁴ Literary works give a picture of corn and vegetables displayed for sale.⁵⁵ The accounts of foreign travellers corroborate the evidence from these indigenous works. Ibn Battuta speaks of the abundance of bananas in Malabar.⁵⁶ Ma Huan refers to melon gourd, cucumbers and other vegetables along with jack fruits and mangoes.⁵⁷ We have inscriptional evidence for the cultivation of these products.

50. Unṇiyacci Caritam, gadyam - 3, line 1, p.14.

51. Unṇunīli Sandēṣam, v.41, p.124.

52. Unṇiccirutēvi Caritam, gadyam 12, p.25.

53. Kōkasandēṣam, v.83, p.82.

54. Unṇunīli Sandēṣam, v.41, p.124.

55. Unṇiāṭi Caritam, 1966, gadyam, 19, p.47 and K. Ratnamma (ed), Ananthapura Varṇanam, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, v.52.

56. Mahdhi Hussain, Rehla of Ibn Battuta, p.187.

57. Ma Huan, Ying Yai Sheng Lan (1433), translated and edited by J.V.G. Mills, Cambridge, 1970, p.144.

Kerala has been famous as the land of spices. The cultivation of spices and other cash crops has been testified by medieval writers, both indigenous and foreign. Certain foreign travellers like Yakut and Al Qazwini have mistaken pepper to be a wild growth.⁵⁸ Idrissi speaks of the pepper cultivation at Pantalayani Kollam.⁵⁹ Marco Polo gives details of pepper cultivation of the Malabar coast.⁶⁰ Ibn Battuta describes the pepper plants, as to how pepper is dried in the sun and how it was planted along with coconut⁶¹ and this corroborates the evidence from Sukasandēsam.⁶² Ma Huan gives an account of cropping, storing and sale of pepper at Kochi and Kozhikode⁶³. Wang Ta-yuan also speaks of pepper cultivation and trade. According to him 'the pepper of all other foreign ports is all the surplus product of the country (Elimala)'.^{63a} Santa Stephano describes the

58. S.M.H. Nainar, Arab Geographers Knowledge of Southern India, Madras, 1942, p.202.

59. Ibid. p.35.

60. H. Yule, (ed), Travels of Marco Polo, pp.363.

61. Mahdhi Hussain, op.cit., p.187

62. Suka Sandesam speaks of pepper growing among other plants. see Suka Sandēsam, Part I, v.34, p.44.

63. J.V.G. Mills (trans.), Ying Yai Sheng Lan, Cambridge, 1970, p.134 and 143.

63a. Nilakanta Sastri (ed.), Foreign Notices of South India..... pp. 294-95.

cultivation of pepper at Kozhikode.⁶⁴ Pepper was not a monocultural plantation.

Ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, clove and turmeric were the other spices cultivated in Kerala. Idrissi refers to the cardamom cultivation on the slope of the hills near Pantalalyani Kollam.⁶⁵ The cultivation of ginger is testified by Marco Polo and Santa Stephano.⁶⁶ Marco Polo refers to the great demand for cinnamon from Malabar and to the cultivation and processing of Indigo.⁶⁷

References to coconut and arecanut are numerous in the Maṅṅiṅṅavāḷa kāvyās⁶⁸ and in the accounts of foreigners. Ibn Battuta refers to the export of coconut to China and he describes how coconut was grown amidst other crops.⁶⁹ Ma Huan also describes coconut cultivation.

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64. R.H. Major, Journey of Hieronimo De Santa Stefano, R.H. Major (ed), India in the Fifteenth Century (1857), Delhi, 1974, p.5.
65. S.M.H. Nainar, op. cit., p.35.
66. H. Yule, op.cit, p.363.
R.H. Major, op.cit.
67. H. Yule, Travels of Marcopolo, op. cit. Also see Nilakanta Sastri, op. cit., p.181.
68. Uṅṅunilīsandēṣam, v. 44 and Sukasandēṣam, v. 34, p.44.
69. Mahdhi Hussain, op. cit., p.187.

He says as to how the wealthy cultivators had thousands of coconut trees and describes the various uses of coconut.⁷⁰ Arecanut trees also were grown amidst other plants and were good support for betel and pepper creepers.⁷¹ As a cash crop arecanut had wide circulation. Another important commodity as important as arecanut was betel. For the use and the price of arecanut and betel we have inscriptional evidence.⁷² The Tiruvalla Inscriptions mention various agricultural products and their price in terms of paddy. The list of commodities required for the feast of Ōnam festival, given in the inscription, includes a variety of vegetables and pulses, the bulk of which must have been local products.⁷³ The parambūs of Kerala had a variety of agricultural products like cheera, muringa, brinjal, tubers, cucumber, tamarind, ash gourd, bitter gourd etc. These must have been meant for domestic use. But a part of them reached the market for sale or exchange.

Medicinal herbs like cheruthina, uluva, munja, the rhizome of lotus and the like were displayed at the

70. J.V.G. Mills, (ed), op. cit., p.143.

71. See Śukasandēśam part I, v. 34, p.44 and Unniccirutēvi Caritam, gadyam, 5, p.19.

72. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, lines 423-424.

73. TAS, vol. II and III, pp. 149-151.

market. Unniāti caritam describes them among the articles exhibited for sale.⁷⁴ Ayurvedic medicine had not been commercialised then. But the presence of these articles in the market shows their wide use. Unnunīli Sandēsam refers to the three great families of physicians in Kerala.⁷⁵ Marco Polo also testifies to the presence of physicians at Kollam.⁷⁶

II.12 It is to be noted that the increase in agricultural productions was not because of any great technological advance. The peculiarities of the soil of the wetlands did not demand specific technological devices like heavy ploughs. However the introduction of iron ploughs must have led to a considerable increase in production. The abundance of rainfall, the excessive heat of the long summer and the resultant natural vegetation made the maintenance of the fertility of the soil rather easy. Large scale irrigation was not needed due to the heavy rainfall and undulated nature of land. Instead, excess of water had to be pumped out from waterlogged areas to make the same fit for cultivation. For this, the simple

74. Unniāti Caritam, Gadyam, 19, pp.48-49.

75. Unnunīli Sandēsam, Part II, v. 13, p.112. The three families of Physicians are Arñhāvu, Ayirūr and Alattūr.

76. Yule, Travels of Marco Polo, vol. II, p.364.

mechanism of wheel and bamboo or wooden baskets were enough. Forest, wetland, and parambu were interspersed with each other as noted before. We have repeated references to the nature of land as kāṭum vayalum purayitavum meaning forest, wetland and parambu uplands in inscriptions.⁷⁷ For the extension of cultivation into new areas parts of the forests areas were cleared and the clearing of forests and the reclamation of marshy lands were an ongoing process during the period of our study.

The existing village system was congenial to the spread of agrarian settlements into new areas. A tradition was followed in the allocation and spatial distribution of necessary tillers and artisan service groups.⁷⁸ Necessary service in the sphere of agriculture was made available by attaching the service groups with the land in which they worked.⁷⁹ When a new settlement came into existence this pattern was followed. This practice can be traced back to

77. The Tirukkatithanam Inscription, TAS. vol. V. p.182 and the Mampalli Inscription, TAS. vol. III, pp. 76-85.

78. For details see M.R. Raghava Varier, Village Communities in Pre-colonial Kerala, Madras, 1994.

79. Teresapally Copper Plates or Kottayam Copper Plates, TAS. vol 11, (Hereafter TPCP) pp. 80-82. Also see mention of 'Peruvayal Pūmiyum Pulayarum' in the Trikkakara inscription of 959 A.D. (Line 6-7) TAS vol. III, Part II, pp.166-68.

the 9th and 10th centuries. The organisation of Brahmin settlements reflected in the inscriptions shows that they provided effective management of their land.

The extension of cultivation can be gleaned from temple records.⁸⁰ Reference to the kari lands or marshy lands brought under cultivation also points to the expansion of agriculture.⁸¹ Brahmin settlements also increased and there are evidences for such settlements

80. In the Tiruvalla Inscriptions it is seen that 12634 kalams of seed paddy were set apart for feeding the cāttirārs or Brahmin students. The traditional method of measuring nilam or wet land was in terms of the seed paddy that could be sown in an acre. For cultivating one acre of wet land 20 parās of paddy was needed. So in order to sow 12634 kalams of seed paddy, there must be at least 631.2 acres of land (a kalam = 20 parās). This acreage of land was only part of the endowments. When we consider the endowments for other purposes also we can see that vast expanse of land were brought under cultivations. See Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System, Sukapuram, 1992. p.p. 32-33.

81. Valappally records speak of the Kari lands which yield 30 kalams of paddy for the temple of Valappally every year. See TAS. vol.II and III, p.14, An inscription of Sri. Vallabhan Kotai mentions the kari lands set apart for the temple of Bhattaraka at Thiruvananthapuram, Ibid. p.24. The Tiruvalla Inscriptions mention a number of kari lands earmarked for perpetual lamps, naivēdya, festive occasions etc. in the temple of Tiruvalla. Ibid. pp. 173-207.

apart from the traditional thrity two ones.⁸² The increase in the number of settlements meant the extension of land under cultivation.⁸³ All these account for an agrarian economy with a firm foundation. Development of agriculture in Kerala provided the base for the brisk trade and commerce. Along with this medieval Kerala society witnessed the emergence of division of labour and social stratification.

11.13 The above description shows how the various aspects of the terrain and the agricultural products have been favourable to the development of trade in medieval Kerala. The very geographical location brought her with in the influence of the monsoon winds that set the rhythm of Indian Ocean trade. The unique sea board features like the mud banks boosted the sea borne trade. The peculiarities both in the climatic conditions and geographical features of the region resulted in the

82. e.g. Etanur in the Cembra Inscription (955 A.D.) M.R. Raghava Varier 'Cembra Lighitāññal', Keraliyata Caritramāññal, Sukapuram, 1990, p.99, Valiceri (modern Balusseri near Kozhikode), mentioned in the Cokkur inscriptions, SBM, Kollam Rantam Satakam, Thiruvananthapuram, 1986. Kilimanur figuring in the Kilimanur inscription (1168 A.D.) was a new settlement in Southern Kerala. See TAS. vol. V. pp. 78-85.

83. Also see James Heitzman, 'Temple urbanism in Medieval South india', The Journal of Asian Studies, vol.46, No.2, May 1987, pp.814-815.

growth of rarities in the resources of Kerala and they in their turn enriched trade, both internal and overseas. The soil has been conducive to the cultivation of cash crops and not to the staple food, rice, and this scarcity of rice has been a characteristic feature of Kerala economy. This necessitated the production of other cash crops in plenty for exchanging the same for paddy. Every region had something to exchange for the goods that were scarce there. At least from 9th Century A.D. there are indirect references to the proliferation of agriculture. The parambūs produced diverse crops and this diversity added to the development of trade. The numerous rivers and backwaters provided means for transport throughout the region and all the medieval trading centres of Kerala were near rivers or backwaters. The passes in the western ghats provided the region with means of transport and communication with the neighbouring Tamil and Kannada speaking areas and this facilitated the brisk trade relation of Kerala with those regions beyond the ghats through the centuries. And above all the long coast line made Kerala open to overseas trade and commerce.

TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES IN KERALA (A. D. 800 - 1500)

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CHAPTER III

TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES (A.D 800 - 1200) -

THE FIRST PHASE

III.1 The peculiar geophysical factors described in the previous chapter created a congenial atmosphere for the development of both internal and external trade in medieval Kerala. These factors were supplemented by certain socio-political developments like the spread of Agrarian settlements as well as the establishment of the kingdom of Perumāls.¹ The Brahmin settlements centered around fertile river valleys.² In addition to these settlements there existed a large number of non-Brahmin settlements. Owing to the scarcity of evidence one finds it difficult to make inferences about their size, number etc. However, the non-Brahmin agrarian units must have

1. The kingdom of the Perumāls of Mahodayapuram founded around the beginning of 9th Century A.D. with Mahodayapuram as the head quarters or the second Cera kingdom. For the relation between the Brahmins and the ruling family see M.G.S.Narayanan, Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire (800-1124 A.D.) Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala, 1972, p.7.

2. For the details regarding the original Brahmin Settlements (32 in numbr according to Kēralōlpatti), see Kesavan Veluthat, Brahmin Settlements in Kerala, Calicut, 1978.

far out numbered the Brahmin settlements. There was also the proliferation of agriculture facilitated by the use of new technological devices and better managerial techniques.

The logical conclusion of the extension of agriculture along with the spread of settlements is a considerable increase in paddy production. The rise and growth of the Perumāls of Mahodayapuram was thus contemporaneous with and consequential to the rapid improvement both in the pattern of agriculture and in the variety of agricultural crops.

The agricultural settlements required several non-agrarian products for which they had to exchange what they produced in their paddy fields and parambu uplands. This was the background of the beginning of trade and exchange in the region. Exchanges must have taken place between the geophysical division of the tipais much before the beginning of our period of study and the emergence of the village communities. Iron age relics which represent an early historic phase show that the builders of this culture must have depended on the coastal area for goods like salt and the inhabitants of the coastal area in their turn must have relied on the megalithic settlements for agricultural products. During the period of our study

important centres of trade developed and these centres show the traces of inter-tinai exchange.³

Compared with the earlier historic phase, we see a shift in trade during the period under study. There is a marked difference in the form of exchanges. During the early historic phase as is gleaned from the early Tamil anthologies, the trade in the rural settling, which was rudimentary, was by and large in the form of barter. The foreign trade was mainly in luxury articles, the export items being gold coins, best quality wine etc. The beneficiaries of this luxury trade was upper sections of the society including the ruling family, their dependents and retainers, local chieftains, mercenary groups etc. When we come to the first phase of the development of medieval trade a clear shift noticeable in the sources themselves catches our attention. A characteristic change occurred in the nature of sources. Instead of oral narratives and songs, a corpus of direct sources made its appearance during the period under review. For the first phase we do have inscriptional evidences. These documents throw much direct light on various aspects of trade, commerce etc. From these direct sources we are able to gather much reliable information regarding the trade in the first phase.

3. See note No: 17 and 25 in Chap. II.

Even during the earlier phase of luxury trade there were certain centres of trade and exchange. Muciri, the famous Muziris of the early Greek geographers is a good example Muziris developed into a nagaram⁴ and royal seat and a religious centre under the Perumals of Mahodayapuram. Apart from the old sites there appeared a few new centres on the western coast such as Kollam, Pantalayani Kollam, and Matayi. The emergence of full time traders was yet another important feature of the trade of this period. During the earlier epoch the intermediaries between the producers and consumers are seen only in the case of salt trade.

These significant changes show a transition from the higgling haggling of the earlier period to a systematic trade. This is evident from the writings of early Arab geographers.⁵ The ports of Kerala were frequented by foreign merchant ships and the arrangements for safety at the port and trading centres were praiseworthy.⁶

4. For the discussion on nagaram see section III-2 below.

5. e.g. Akbār Al-Sīn Wāl-Hind . S. Maqbul Ahmad (ed), Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China, Simla, 1989, p.38.

6. R.H. Major (ed), India in the Fifteenth Century (1857) Delhi, 1974, pp. XLVI - XLVII.

At the port towns merchants chiefs were held in high esteem and sometimes they were given monopoly of trade as is revealed in the Jewish Copper plates⁷ and Vira Raghava Pattayam.⁸ The institutionalisation of trade in the form of nagaram and other merchant organisations was the most remarkable feature of the trade of the period under discussion. At the trading centres of Kerala there flourished what may be called an administered trade.⁹

In the exchange system of the agrarian settlements the cāliyās (weavers) and vāniyās (oil producers and sellers) were crucial elements. As the only fuel of lighting lamps oil was very important and inscriptions show instances for setting apart vast areas of land for keeping perpetual lamps in the temples.¹⁰ These lamps were of paramount importance as a dependable source of light for the village. Indeed, lamps had their ritualistic significance too. The vāniyās were mainly engaged in extracting oil from gingelly and coconut that was widely cultivated in parambūs and in the wetland. The

7. EI, III 68-69

8. EI, IV, 41.

9. See note No.12. in I - 3.

10. e.g. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, TAS, vol.II and III, pp.173-207. Also see Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, Kēraḷa Caritram Sukapuram, 1992, pp.102-103.

vāniyās were early traders and later the term was suffixed to other craftsmen and traders. e.g. the Kala Vāniyās (Potters) seen mentioned in medieval inscriptions.¹¹ These two occupational groups were both producers and traders and the existing social system ensured their services to each settlement. Cotton was rarely cultivated in the region of Kerala and the raw materials for weaving cloths had to be brought from outside. The weavers of Kerala were the cāliās and what distinguishes them from other social groups is that they lived in separate streets.¹² The important nagarams of Kerala had such Cāliya terūs. These professional weavers must have come from outside and settled here. Dying materials like brazil wood and indigo were grown here, but, they didn't ^{have} much indigenous use. The near absence of cotton cultivation made import of cloths and the raw materials needed for production of cloth a necessity. The scarcity of the staple food of rice as detailed in chapter II made the import of rice indispensable. Though cotton was rare and rice scarce in Kerala, the region had abundant supply of other articles in which she had monopoly in the markets of the day. They were the spices of which the most important was pepper. Exchange of these spices led to the

11. Kilimanur Inscriptions, TAS, vol. V, pp.78-85 and Tiruvalla Inscriptions. op.cit.

12. Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, Kērala Caritram, Sukapuram, 1991, pp. 102-103.

growth of overseas trade with other regions countries. This trade necessitated full time traders. It also necessitated store houses, arrangements for safety, keeping of accounts and all such parapharnilia.

Annātīs or markets developed as the centres for the transactions of the small scale producers. At Kollam we see such a typical annāti where goods were brought and taken out in carts and boats. At the same time merchant organisations like Añcuvannam and Manigrāmam¹³ were functioning at Kollam and these groups of traders must have been the intermediaries between the actual producers and consumers. As these organisations had overseas connections they must have bought goods from the markets and the hinterland and stored and exported the goods to distant regions. There developed two kinds of trade and traders at the coastal settlements of Malabar-small scale transactions by producers cum traders and large scale transactions by full time merchants. Inscriptional evidences show that the markets were not temporary ones as the morning markets and evening markets (Nālahñātīs and Allaññātīs) of the earlier historical phase. Reference to the presence of officers¹⁴ to collect duties on goods and

13. See. section 10 below.

14. The TPCP, TAS vol. II No.9.

clear cut laws regarding collection of such duties points to a market with permanent shops, customs offices and the like. This change in the nature of the ānṇātis is yet another demarcating feature of the trade of the period. Inscriptions show the functioning of similar markets at Kodungallur, Patinjattupotta at Irinjalakuda, Pantalayani Kollam and the like trading centres. The spatial organisations of these trading centres reveals certain common characteristics. The major trading centres were along the coast line. They were located at nodal points of water transport system. This facilitated the transport of goods to and from the markets through rivers, backwaters and canals. Around great temples also exchange centres sprang up in order to cater to the wants of the temples and the temple oriented communities. The best example for such market centres is Kutavur in Tiruvalla.¹⁵

In the discussion on trade and trading centres there naturally arises the question, who the traders were. Both inscriptional and literary sources show the predominance of foreign communities in the trade activities of Malabar coast. Throughout the period under study the Arabs and Chinese were the important trade partners of Kerala. The Jews and Christians reached the Malabar coast at an early period for trade. Even before

15. See Section on Tiruvalla, in III - 5 below.

the rise of Islam the Arabs were familiar with the coast of Malabar and its rarities.¹⁶

The rise of Islam gave great impetus to Arab navigation and trade. Koran was favourably disposed towards trade. Profit from commerce was considered as the bounty of God. Merchants were regarded as messengers of the world by Islamic scriptures. Islam's views on trade have been beautifully expressed thus: 'If God let dwellers in paradise, the Prophet is claimed to have said, 'they would trade in fabrics and spices'.¹⁷ With the formation of Abbassid Caliphate in the 9th Century A.D. Arab trade in general gathered momentum which was beneficial to the Malabar coast also. From the latter half of the 8th century the land route through Central Asia was cut off by the struggles of both the Chinese and the Arabs with the tribes of the region. This decline of land route led to an increase in traffic by sea and this was encouraged by the Abbassids.¹⁸ The Arab conquest of

16. This is evident from certain similies used by Arab poets, 'In that plain you can see deer dung spread like pepper', Sahihul Bukhari, translated by C.N. Ahammad Maulavi, See Kerala History Association, Kērala Caritram, vol. I, Ernakulam, 1973, pp.1110-11.

17. Maxim Rodinson, Islam and Capitalism, Brian Pearce (trans.), Penguin edition, 1974, p.14.

18. V.K. Jain, 'The Role of Arab Traders in Western India', B.D. Chattopadhyaya (ed) Essays in Ancient Indian Economic History, Delhi, 1987, p.165.

Persia, Egypt and Sind gave them control over the strategic sea board including Persian gulf and Red sea. Starting from Red Sea the Arabs established trade contact with the littoral countries upto Canton. This long sea route is described in the Akhbār Al-Sīnā wal-Hind.¹⁹ The competition between the Italian traders and Arab traders affected the trade in Indian ocean. In the 12th century the Italian cities obtained trade privileges in Egypt and Alexandria. In order to stop the further east ward spread of Italian merchants, by the end of the 12th century, the European merchants were prohibited entry into Red sea. This protectionist policy helped the growth of Kārimi merchants of Egypt who for two centuries dominated the trade in Indian ocean.²⁰ The Kārimi merchants were mainly engaged in spice trade, especially pepper.²¹ They obtained these spices at Yemen. There must have been traders to fetch these goods to Adan from Malabar. Aidhab was a meeting place of Kārimi merchants and the traders from the Western coast of India.

19. For the sea route see S. Maqbul Ahmad (ed), op. cit. pp.33-41.

20. Meera Mary Abraham, Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India, Delhi, 1988, pp. 151-52.

21. For details regarding Kārimi merchants see Walter J. Fischel, 'The Spice Trade in Mamuluk Egypt', JESHO vol. I, 1958, pp.160-170

The writings of Islamic scholars, and geographers worked up to the commercial interests of the Arabs. In the context of the horse trade the Persian historian Wassaff (1300 A.D.) wrote thus: "It was a providential ordinance of God that the Western should continue in want of Eastern products and Eastern world of Western products".²² In the accounts of the Arab travellers Malabar is famous as the land of pepper, it being the most important item transacted by the Arabs. Apart from this, other spices like cardamom, ginger and cinnammon and incenses like akil and sandal, were the items exported by the Arabs from the Malabar coast. These goods had a ready market in Egypt. Among the other goods exported were silk and porcelain for the trade of which Kerala was an entrepot. The port towns of Kerala served as entrepots for Chinese trade. Trade between the Malabar coast and the West was dominated by the Arabs from Morrocco, Tunis and Triopoli. Aidhab in the Red sea was the western most point of this oceanic trade.²³

It was believed that the overseas trade of Kerala was mainly on the basis of barter. But Jewish sources

22. Wassaff, Tazjiyathu - 1 - Amsār, Elliot and Dowson, (ed) History of India, vol. III, Delhi, 1990 p.34.

23. Basil Gray, TOCS, No:36, p.46.

reveal exchanges in terms of money.²⁴ The Egyptian dinār was the standard coin of this period in international trade and the value of goods transacted in the East-West trade was calculated in terms of dinār. The Jewish sources also reveal the import of copper and allied metals and the export of iron from the ports of Malabar.²⁵ All these transactions were not on the basis of immediate exchange. Accounts were kept and prices, were fixed after taking into account freight charges and the like.²⁶ The Arabs who came to Malabar coast settled along the coastal trading centres and became Islamic cultural diasporas.²⁷

The Jewish trade flourished in the routes developed by the Arabs. The Jews were among the earliest overseas traders in Kerala. But the exact date of their settlement cannot be correctly established. According to legends the Jews arrived here by 70 A.D. in the wake of the attacks on Hebrews by Nebuchaddanessar. In the 4th century they came in large numbers and settled at Kodungallur, Palayur, Parur and Kollam.²⁸ The Jews were

24. S.D. Goitein, 'From Aden to India', JESHO, vol. XXIII, part I and II, 1980 pp. 43-66.

25. Ibid. pp. 58-63.

26. Ibid.

27. For the discussion on cultural diasporas see section IV - 6 in chap. IV.

28. Segal, History of the Jews of Kerala, London, 1993, pp.5-6.

dispersed throughout the world. One of the objectives of Rabi Benjamin of Tudela in his travel was to ascertain the number of Jews who were dispersed in different regions.²⁹ The supreme position of the Jews as traders at Kodungallur is revealed in the JCP of 1000 A.D.³⁰ Chendamangalam 6 KM south of Kodungallur, was an important Jewish settlement.³¹

The Jews who settled along the west coast of India must have been the intermediaries in the Jewish trade between Malabar and the West. The trading centres of Kerala such as, Kodungallur, Kollam, Pantalayani Kollam and Matayi had Jewish settlements. We get precise information about the involvement of the Jews in the East-West trade from the Geniza letters.³² They give valuable details with regard to the goods transacted by them, the mode of payment and the like. The Jewish trade was spread over a vast area between Europe and China. The Radanya

29. R.H. Major, op.cit. p. XLV.

30. See III - 4 below.

31. Ibn Battuta has recorded that on the fifth day of his journey from Kozhikode to Kollam he came to a place called 'Kunjakari' inhabited by Jews (Mahdhi Hussain, Rehla of Ibn Battuta, p.192). Kunjakari must have been on the banks of river Kanjirapuzha to the east of Chendamangalam, which was an old Jewish settlement.

32. S.D. Goitein, op.cit. and Lettes of Medieval Jewish Traders, Princeton, 1973, p.185.

jews used to start from France and reach the Tygris by land. From there they used to follow the route of the Arab traders.³³ By the 12th century the area of the trade operations of the Jews came to be restricted, and it was later confined to the area between Egypt and India. There were very powerful and wealthy shippers among the Jews like Ramshit figuring in the Geniza lettres.³⁴ The signatures at the end of the Teresapally copper plates point to the fact that the trading centre of Kollam was much familiar to the Jews.

Epigraphical evidences show the presence of a powerful community of Christian traders in the trading centres of Malabar. As early as 9th century there was a flourishing christian community at Kollam and this has to be seen against the back-ground of the sea-faring and commerce between the Malabar coast and West Asia. The earliest reference to the Christians of Kollam is found in the Topographica Indica written by Cosmos Indico Pleaustus who is believed to have visited Malabar coast in 522 A.D.³⁵ In the second half of the 8th century the

33. Charles Verlinden, 'The Indian Ocean: The Ancient Period and Middle Ages,' Sathish Chandra (ed) Indian Ocean, Delhi, 1987, The term Radanya comes from the Persian 'ran-daw' meaning 'those familiar with the route' - a term indicating their profession.

34. S. D. Goitein, from Aden to India, p.64.

35. A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteers, Quilon, Thiruvananthapuram, 1964, p.74.

Christians must have come under the leadership of Thomas of Cana and later in the 9th century under Mar Sabir Iso and Mar Peroz. The use of Kufi Fleuri, Pahlavi and Hebrew scripts by the signatories in the Teresapally copper plates is a proof for their connection with Persia.³⁶ The titles and privileges conferred on Mar Sabir Iso and the Church of Teresa at Kollam show the esteem with which the Christians were held.

Trade with China and Malabar Coast also flourished by the beginning of the period under study.³⁷ But sufficient sources for the study of Chinese trade become available only in the second half of our study and so the aspects of Chinese trade are analysed in the next chapter.

Except for the information we get on the foreign communities mentioned above, the inscriptions do not give details regarding the indigenous trading communities. The Cettis, the trading community frequently referred to in the epigraphic sources came from the Tamil speaking areas. At Pantalayani Kollam there developed the trading

36. Meera Mary Abraham, op.cit pp.20-21.

37. This is attested by Sulayman in a reference to the levy of tolls at the port of Kollam. S. Maqbul Ahmad, op.cit. p.38.

community of Rawari nairs. The foreign traders stayed along the coastal towns and there must have been itinerant traders to supply them with the products of the hinterlands. In the absence of reliable sources we are not in a position to speak in detail about such traders. But Tamil inscriptions of the 12th and 13th centuries give evidence to the presence of merchants from Kerala regions in Tamilnadu.³⁸

The trade of the early historic period was incapable to promote urbanisation in the region. The absence of organisational coherence has been considered as the main reason for the same.³⁹ However the pattern of trade underwent considerable changes at least by the beginning of the ninth century and urban centres flourished along with the expansion of trade. It is important to note that the shift took place only in the nature of exchange and not in the location of the trading centres. The centres mentioned in the medieval literature were the same as cited by the ancient geographers and referred to in the early Tamil anthologies. At the same time changes had taken place in the form and functioning

38. e.g. ARE No.470 of 1902, No.313 of 1906 No. 263 of 1910 and No.202 of 1925.

39. R. Champakalakshmi, Urbanisation in South India: The Role of Ideology and Polity, Presidential Address, Indian History Congress, 47th Session, Srinagar, p.3.

of these trading centres. The changes were visible in the crystallisation of a stratified society. The emergence of full time traders had been the most outstanding feature of this stratified society.

The spread of agrarian settlements and a considerable surplus of production in commercial crops were conducive to the development of trading centres. Organisational aspects of trade were becoming more effective with the presence of merchant organisations with supra local trade connections. Above all the state machinery had realised the necessity of an adequate infrastructure for administering trade. These went a long way in the development of trading centres.

It is against this historic background that attempt for an analytical study of Kollam, Kodungallur and other important trading centres of early medieval Kerala is made here.

III.2 KOLLAM

The Teresapally Copper Plates (hereafter TPCP) give valuable clues to the nature of trade at Kollam and

the form and functioning of the nagaram at that place.⁴⁰ The information obtained from this source is supported by narrations of Sulayman.⁴¹ Kollam has been famous as one of the earliest coastal trading centres of Kerala.⁴² But it does not seem to have been emerged as a trading centre during the early historical phase. Since this is not referred to by the early Tamil anthologists, while they are eloquent in praising the emporia like Muciri Tondi, etc.⁴³ Politically during this period Kollam was both the capital and the most important nagaram of Venad, the southern most part of the kingdom of Perumals.

From 9th Century A.D. Kollam has been steadily developing and has remained a flourishing town through

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40. TAS vol. II, No.9, Also see M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1972 pp.31-37 and 86-94. The inscriptions deal with the grant of land to Maruvan sapir Iso, the leader of the Christian merchants at Kollam for the church of Teresa along with various rights and privileges.
41. S. Maqbul Ahmad (ed.), op.cit, Book II p.38.
42. It has been referred to by different names by early writers like Male (Cosmos), Koulam Malay (Sulayman) Chulam (Benjamin of Tudela) Coilon (Abul Fida) Kulam (Marco Polo, Rashiduddin and Wessaff), Polumbam (Friar O' Doric) Columbam (Jordanus) Columbo (John XXII) Koulam (Ibn Battuta), Kolumbum (John Marignoli), and Coilon (Niccolo Conti), See S.M.H. Nainar, Arab Geographers Knowledge of South India, Madras, 1942 op.cit. and K.A.N. Sastri Foreign Notices of South India from Megasthenes to Ma Huan, Madras, 1939.
43. V.R. Parameswaran Pillai (trans.), Puranānūru, Thrissur, 1969, V-343 and G. Vaidyanatha Iyer (trans.) Patirrupattu, Thrissur, 1961, V - VI-5.

the ages.⁴⁴ The geographical features of the town are significant in her development as a trading centre. The town is situated between the sea and the backwater of Astamuti kāyal. While the sea gave the town an easy access to the outside markets, the eight branches of the Astamuti kāyal enabled her to have close commercial connections with the interior villages. The name of the town owes probably to the Kurakkēni meaning a bent water-logged area. The town was the nodal point of water ways and land routes.⁴⁵ Ecological factors played a very important role in developing Kollam as a centre of foreign trade.⁴⁶ The presence of mud banks along the shores of Kollam rendered safe anchorage of ships.⁴⁷ Further the shores of the trading centre were protected by the two

44. The town is also called Kurakkēni Kollam, most probably to distinguish it from Pantālayani Kollam of Northern Kerala. In modern period Kollam is called Quilon in almost all the records. At present the town of Kollam is the head quarters of Kollam district and Kollam Taluk. The town has an area of 6.3 sq. miles. The location of the town is between 8°50' North latitude and 76° 35' East Longitude. See, A. Sreedhara Menon, Gazetteer of India, Kerala, Quilon, Tiruvanantapuram, 1964, p.684.

45. This can be evidenced from the TPCP (lines-1st plate 30-31) which refer to the collection of tolls from carts and boats coming in and going out of the town.

46. As has been pointed out by urban geographics a favourable ecological base has been crucial to the formation of a town. See Richard Basham Urban Anthropology, The Cross Cultural Study of Complex Societies, - California, 1978, pp.37-39.

47. Note No. 22 & 23 of Chap. II.

portrusions, at Varkala in the south and Thankasseri in the north. The bay thus formed enhanced the facilities of the port. Environmental influence has been thus a formative force in the growth of the trading centre of Kollam. Nature establishes its rights even on an organism as complex as a town.⁴⁸

The copper plates refer to an annāṭi and matil suggesting a market place and a fortified area.⁴⁹ This suits well to the concept of Gordon Childe with regard to the form of a town. The copper plates register the grant of land to the church of Teresa in the coastal area of Kollam. This grant of land is inclusive of the cultivators, craft groups and other service personnel.⁵⁰ These occupational groups were of various services to the nagaram. In the social system of the ninth century the services of those occupational groups were not measured in terms of money. Such services were rather obligatory and formed part of the accepted customs of the land.⁵¹

48. P.K. Venketa Subrahmanyam, Environment and Urbanism in Early Tamilakam, Tanjavur, 1988, pp.14-16.

49. TPCP line - 16.

50. To be specific, four families of Ilavas, one family of washerman, one family of carpenter and two families of oilmongers. TPCP first plate, first side lines 1-4.

51. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, p.34.

Reference to cultivating groups points to a farming element and rural nature. This rural-urban continuum has been pointed out to be an important feature of medieval South Indian towns.⁵²

The signatures in TPCP indicate the presence of various overseas trading communities like the Arabs, Jews and Christians in the town.⁵³ These people had made their settlements along with their religious institutions in all the important trading centres of Kerala.

The TPCP mention Maruvan Sapir Iso as the founder of the nagaram of Kollam. It has been argued on the basis of reliable evidence that nagaram means the trade organisation and not the entire urban area. The town of Kollam had its beginning long before Maruvan Sapir Iso developed it. A town like Kollam could not have been created by a mere grant of concessions and privileges. Long before the advent of the Christian merchant chiefs, Kollam was the meeting place of overseas traders and this is best attested by the signatures at the end of the

52. Champakalakshmi, in S. Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar (ed) Situating Indian History, Delhi, 1986, p.37. Also see Kuppuswami, Economic conditions of Karnataka, Dharwad, 1975, p.95.

53. Towards the end of the inscriptions there are eighteen lines of Pahlavi script, ten lines of Arabic script and three lines of Hebrew script. These were all used for signatures.

inscriptions. The copper plates refer to king's officers like tiyamālvān, and matil nāyakan and make it particular that they must not enter the nagaram for collection of duties.⁵⁴ This points to an administrative set up with various officers and the infrastructure needed for a town. The reference to the Arunūrruvar⁵⁵ shows the presence of such a representative body of the Hundred Organisations. Various incomes to the state are also referred to in the copper plates. The emerging picture is that of a town protected and administered by Arunūrruvar and frequented by King's officers for collection of duties. Attracted by the material prosperity and social status, Sapir Iso actively associated himself with the brisk trade at Kollam.

54. TPCP - 1 lines 17-18.

55. Medieval records refer to several hundred organisations like Arunūrruvar, Munnūrruvar and Elunūrruvar. They were local assemblies and were known after by their numerical strength. According to Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai these, Nāttukūttāññal were the representative assembles of of the people. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, Studies in Kerala History, 1970, p.250. Medieval Inscriptions refer to these nāttukūttāññal. e.g. The TPCP mention arunūrruvar (Line 9, 21 and 42). Tirukatithanam Inscription mentions Kilumala Arunūrruvar, Venad Arunūrruvar and Nanṟulai Nādu Munnūrruvar, Tirukadithanam Inscription line 3. TAS vol. V, page 182. Nāttukūttāññal were consulted in all important matters with regard to the society and administration in the nādūs. These nāttukūttāññal are also considered to be the armed forces of the Nāduvāzhis. For a detailed discussion of the "Hundred Organisations" in Kerala see M.G.S. Narayanan, Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1973, pp. 1-20. Also see Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal Kēralacharithram op.cit. pp.134-135.

The capture of Viliñjam by the Pandyas in the southern boundary of the kingdom of Perumals was an irreparable loss to the ruling dynasty. To compensate for the loss of such a port, the Perumals extended support for the development of a place like Kollam⁵⁶ which had all the blessings of a good commercial centre at the time. The geographical peculiarities and the hinterlands rich in agricultural produce made Kollam a promising centre of trade. Trade transformed the area into a nagaram and the patronage extended by the ruling chief accelerated its growth. The references to the king's office, standard weights and measures and administrative organisations like the Munnūrruvar, Arunūrruvar etc. point to a town at Kollam when the nagaram the organisation of Kollam was founded by Maruvan Sapir Iso.

The term nagaram has much more connotations than its literal meaning, city. The terms nagara, paṭṭiṇa and pura have been used to mean a town. But they had differences. In ancient Indian context nagara was a commercial centre, paṭṭiṇa a trading port and pura a fortified town.⁵⁷ In the South Indian context the nagaram

56. M.G.S. Narayanan, op.cit. p.32.

57. K.T.S. Sarao, Trade and Trading Centres as Reflected in the Pali, Vinaya and Sutta Pitakas, Delhi, 1990, pp.40-41.

was a commercial centre as distinct from an agricultural settlement.⁵⁸ Writing in 1935 Nilakanta Sastri observed that nagaram was primarily an assembly of merchants in trade centres where mercantile interest was dominant.⁵⁹ But nagaram was their settlement also. It was 'a separately designated area inhabited primarily by men of the trading community and others who earned their living largely by the commercial and artisanal activities.'⁶⁰ The corporate body of the nagaram was composed only of the merchants of the locality. It was mainly a marketing centre co-ordinating the exchange of the surplus in agriculture and locally available commodities.⁶¹ Through the market place of the nagaram these goods could be sent to wider commercial networks. It was the meeting place of both the itinerant merchants and local traders. According to Burton Stein nagaram is a trade settlement controlled by a merchant group.⁶² Kenneth Hall considers nagaram "as a self governing institution which administers a nagaram

58. For a detailed analysis 'nagaram' see Kenneth R. Hall, Trade and State Craft in the Age of the Cōlās, Delhi, 1980, pp. 51-104.

59. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, The Cōlās, Madras, 1935, p.503.

60. Kesavan Veluthat, Political Structure of Early Medieval South India. Delhi, 1993, p. 213.

61. Ibid. p.215.

62. Burton Stein, Peasant, State and Society in Early Medieval South India, Delhi, 1980, p.282.

and its market place", having more or less the duties assigned to modern municipal bodies.⁶³

Epigraphical records of the Colas reveal nearly one hundred nagarams. Many of these had the prefix puram.⁶⁴ Hall states that these South Indian nagarams served as Skinner's 'network and centres' serving a series of villages and connecting them to wider marketing system.⁶⁵ Similarly Hall is of the opinion that there was only one nagaram for one nādu.⁶⁶ But this frame work cannot be applied to the nagarams of Kerala. The validity of this theory with regard to the Cōla kingdom itself has been questioned.⁶⁷

Nagaram acted as an administrative institution and as a marketing centre. Kenneth Hall describes the role of nagaram in both these capabilities under the

63. Kenneth Hall, op.cit. p.104.

64. Ibid. p.51.

65. Ibid. p.124. See William Skinner, Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China, Ann Arbor, Association for Asian Studies, 1974.

66. Kenneth Hall, op. cit. p.124.

67. B. D. Chattopadhyaya, "Urban Centres in Early Medieval India, an Overview", and R. Champakalkshmi, "Urban Process in Medieval Tamilnadu, in Sabiasachi Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar (eds) Situating Indian History, Delhi, 1986.

Colas.⁶⁸ The most important organ of the corporate body of the nagaram was the nagara vāriyam. Cōla inscriptions refer to officers of the nagaram the mānagaramālvan, nagarakkanattān and nagarakkanakku. Like the rural corporations of Tamilnadu, the nagaram possessed communally owned land called nagarakāpi.⁶⁹ But in the context of medieval Kerala we do not see references to such designated officers or property of nagaram. The nagaram collected revenue as an agent of the state like the nādu. Cōla inscriptions refer to taxes like antarāyam, kadamai kudimai padikāval etc., collected by the officials of the nagaram. Nagaram owned property in the form of land also. It was also assigned land on service tenure.⁷⁰ The nagaram co-ordinated artisanal production and facilitated exchange. It is to be noted that nagaram was conforming to the existing feudal pattern of the society. It had local autonomy within the nādu.⁷¹ In the case of Kollam, TPCP show the autonomy enjoyed by the nagaram. The nagaram of Kollam was assigned artisanal-occupational groups as in the case of feudal lords. Further Kollam gives an example for the creation of nagaram under royal patronage.

68. Kenneth R. Hall, op.cit. pp.51-104.

69. Kesavan Veluthat, op. cit. p.214.

70. Ibid. pp. 214-16

71. Ibid.

Like the brahmadēyam, the nagaram, had 'pockets of social groups which were different from the rest of the agrarian groups'.⁷² The nagaram of Kollam was thus a separately marked trade settlement. It can be convincingly established from the TPCP that Maruvan Spair Iso was awarded rights and privileges over a fully developed trading centre.

Thus the nagaram of Maruvan Sapir Iso refers to the market area and not to the entire region of Kollam. The inscriptions clearly mention the boundaries of the nagaram area, Vayal Katu in the east, Cirvatikkal matil along the palace in the south east, the sea in the west, Toranantottam in the north and Antilantottam in the north east.⁷³ The TPCP thus encouraged the commercial community to settle down permanently at Kollam. We have similar instances of ruling power making commercial groups settle down in a particular area for the purpose of the development of trade in the Pandyan kingdom. A Pandyan inscription of Palliyarpathi in the Thirupathur Taluk of

72. Ibid, p.216. Even though the trading centre had agrarian elements, the inhabitants of the nagaram were mainly traders and artisans. Also see Kenneth Hall, op.cit pp.106-110. In the case of the nagaram of Kollam the TPCP specify that artisan classes are attached to the land granted to the nagaram authorities.

73. TPCP, II Plate, lines 11-14.

Ramanathapuram district records the purchase of land for founding a colony of Vaisyas called Rajanarayanapuram at Marutangudi.⁷⁴ Inscriptions show the development of nagaram in other parts of Kerala also. The Thazhakkavu inscription near Pulpalli in Wayanad deals with the establishment of a nagaram. Here the merchant organisation of Nālpāttennāyiravar establishes a nagaram.⁷⁵ Nagarams developed in the trading centres of Kodungallur and Pantalayani Kollam also.

The TPCP refer to the nature of trade at Kollam. They point to the intervention of the ruling authority in the market. The fixing of prices at the instance of the state is mentioned.⁷⁶ The standardization of weights and measures is also referred to.⁷⁷ Duties were imposed on goods that were brought to the market and taken out of the market. It was one sixtieth of the price.⁷⁸ Vehicles were to pay entrance fee and exit fee to the authorities. In this context the copper plates give evidence to the use of coined money. The coin kāṣu is referred to. Four kāṣu each were to be paid for the vehicles at the time of entry

74. ARSIE, No. 150 of 1935-36.

75. TAS, vol. VIII, pp. 39-40.

76. TPCP, second plate, line 51.

77. TPCP, first plate, line 10-11.

78. TPCP, second plate, line 30.

and, exit and two kāṣu each for boats.⁷⁹ Customs duties were imposed on goods brought from overseas countries.⁸⁰ Weighing fee (tulākūli) also is referred⁸¹ to. These significant changes show the transition from the higgling haggling of the earlier period to a controlled trade. This has been corroborated by the writings of Sulayman and Benjamine of Tudela. Sulayman (851 AD) gives clues to the brisk commercial activities at the port of Kollam. There was a military outpost at Kollam where the dues were collected from incoming vessels. From the Chinese boats one thousand dirhams were collected and from other boats between ten and twenty dinārs. Sulaiman also refers to the storing of sweet water from Kollam and the departure of ships along with winds.⁸² Ibn Khurdad Bih (9th century) mention the pepper cultivation at and the import of pepper from Kollam.⁸³ Benjamine of Tudela (1170AD) describes the protection accorded to the traders and their goods at the trading centre of Kollam and refers to the formalities at the arrival of overseas traders. He has recorded the trustworthiness of the people in matters of

79. TPCP, second plate, line 30-31

80. TPCP, second plate, line 32 and 46

81. TPCP, second plate, line - 46.

82. S. Maqbul Ahmad (ed), op.cit. p.38.

83. B. Maqbul Ahmad (ed), Kitab Al-Masālik Wal Mamālik, op.cit. page 5 and p.7.

trade. When the foreign ships arrived at the port, the king's officers would enter the vessels and write down the details regarding the traders and report the same to the king. The king would there upon give security for their property. Arrangements for safety were so good that traders might leave their cargo without any guard. One of the officers of the king would sit in the market and receive goods that were found without owners. If the owners come and identify the goods, the same would be given back.⁸⁴ All these practices show the active intervention of the royal authority in matters of trade. The above mentioned features of trade at Kollam fit well with Karl Polanyi's concept of administered trade.⁸⁵ Kollam served as a port of trade.

The TPCP mention the merchant organisations of Añcuvannam and Mañigrāmam.⁸⁶ The presence of these merchant organisations shows the institutionalisation of trade, and this institutionalisation is yet another remarkable feature of the trade at Kollam,⁸⁷ as noted before. The Añcuvannam and Mañigrāmam were mercantile

84. R.H. Major (ed), op.cit, Introduction, p.XVII.

85. See note No: 12 in Chap. I.

86. TPCP, second plate, lines 21-22, 25,45 and 49.

87. Also see note No.39 above.

corporations having intra and interregional trade connections.⁸⁸ Through these associations Kollam was linked with the trade system that stretched from Red Sea to China.⁸⁹

In the 10th and 11th centuries 'Trade between the Malabar coast and the West was dominated by the Arabs from North Africa and Aidhab on the Red Sea was their sea terminus. It has been noted that from Aidhab half of the ships went to Gujarat and the other half to Malabar'.⁹⁰ The reference to ulku in the TPCP become more meaningful in the context of overseas trade. Ulku (cungam) was regularly collected on the incoming goods. The gold dinār of the Caliphate was the international medium of exchange from 7th to 11th century and the use of dinār as the standard coin at Kollam points to her connection with overseas traders.

With the founding of the nagaram organisation at Kollam, the nagaram enjoyed autonomy in economic as well as judicial matters. The king's officers were forbidden from

88. For merchant organisations see III-10 below

89. For the details of Indian Ocean trade network see chapter VI

90. Basil Gray, 'The Export of Chinese Porcelain to India', TOCS, No.36, p.24.

exercising their powers in the nagaram.⁹¹ The nagaram was entrusted with the church of Teresa. The occupational classes were placed under the control of the church.⁹² The protection of the nagaram of Kollam was entrusted with the local body of Arunūrruvar.⁹³ The nagaram thus had autonomy within it and was responsible for its defence. It appropriated the powers and functions of the state including judicial powers and was like a state within a state. In the feudal set up of the age the nagaram also was feudalised. It collected tax from the people over whom it had jurisdiction and accepted the overlordship of the Nāṭuvāli.⁹⁴

Kollam was among the earliest centres of Chinese trade along the west coast. The trade with China began around 7th century A.D. and records prove that there was a regular flow of gold and silver to the Malabar coast. Realising the seriousness of this drain the Southern Sung government of China (A.D. 1127-1279) banned the use of precious metals and coins in foreign trade. Instead, silk

91. TPCP, second plate, lines 17-18.

92. TPCP, first plate, lines 1-4 Ist plate.

93. TPCP, second plate, lines 21 and 42. Also see note No: 55 above

94. TPCP, second plate, lines 36-37.

and porcelain were to be bartered for foreign goods.⁹⁵ In other words Chinese silk and porcelain were elevated to the position of a medium of exchange. This accounts for the widespread presence of Chinese porcelain along the coast of Kerala. It is from Kollam that the finest variety of Chinese Porcelain has been collected.⁹⁶

We get scattered references to the inhabitants of the nagaram at Kollam from the TPCP. Of course there were agricultural people. There is specific evidence to this effect in the records granting land along with the cultivators. This agricultural community ranged from tenants to service groups. There are references to the presence of artisan groups like the taccar and others, service groups like the vannan and elava toddy-tappers. Among the trading groups were the Christians, Muslims and Jews. The grant itself is in favour of Christians. The signatures in Arabic ^{and} Khufi script in the TPCP testify that Arabs and Jews were familiar with the nagaram of Kollam. Benjamin of Tudela makes a vague reference to the presence of Jews at Kollam.⁹⁷ Social stratification, and

95. Lizhiyan and Chenwen, Chinese Pottery and Porcelain. Foreign Language Press, Beijing (Eng. trans. Ooyang Caiwei), 1984, p.104.

96. See note No: 87 and 89 in Chap. IV.

97. R.H. Major (ed), op.cit. p.XLVIII.

presence of merchant organisation undoubtedly prove the urban nature of the society. The urban society of Kollam was multi-cultural. The overseas traders belonged to different countries and different cultures. Thus Kollam presented what may be called a plural society,⁹⁸ a society consisting of indigenous population, of agricultural people, traders, craftsmen, and ruling classes and foreign trading communities belonging to different cultures. Cities are not merely dense concentrations of people. They are concentration of people doing different jobs. Urban nature arise more from the variety of activity than from sheer number.⁹⁹ The trading centre of Kollam continued to flourish in the second phase of our study which is analysed in the next chapter.

III.3 KODUNGALLUR

Almost contemporary with the trading centre of Kollam is Kodungallur which had been referred to as Muziris in the records of ancient period and Muyirikode, Makotai etc. in the indigenous and foreign accounts of

98. Also See Philip D. Curtin, Cross Cultural Trade in World History, London, 1984, p.8.

99. See note No: 31 in Chap. I.

medieval period.¹⁰⁰ The reports of the Archaeological Department of Cochin State, and the archaeological remains from Kodungallur and its surroundings give information regarding the nature of this medieval trading centre.

Located at the estuary of river Periyar and Arabian sea Kodungallur was the seat of royal authority.¹⁰¹ At present it is a flourishing town and the head quarters of Kodungallur taluk, in the south western part of Trissur district. Along its southern border flows river Periyar still it joins the Arabian sea.

100. In the early Tamil anthologies the region is referred to as Muciri. See P. Viswanatha Menon, *Nenmara* (trans.), *Akanānūru*, 3 vol., Thrissur, 1981-84, song 149 and V.R. Parameswaran Pillai (trans.), *Puranānūru*, Trissur, 1969, song 56: Also see M.G.S. Narayanan, *Reinterpretations of South Indian History*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1977, pp.28-29. *Periyapurānam* refers to this trading centre as Mākōtai, Turuvanchikulam, Kodumkōlūr and Vañchi. K.P.K. Menon (trans.), *Periya Purānam*, Thrissur 1988. Alberuni (970AD) speaks of the region as Jangli, Benjamine of Tudela (1170) Gingaish, Friar O' doric (1281 A.D.) Cyngilin, Chinese Annals (14th Century) Shinkali, Rashiduddin (1330 A.D.) Chinkali, Dimishqui (1320 AD), Shinkli, Friar Jordanus (1238AD) Singuiyli and Abul Fida (1330 A.D.) Shenakala. See K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala* vol. I (1924), Delhi, 1982. p.313. In the Jewish copper plates (1000 A.D.) Kodungallur is referred to as Muyirikōde and in Vira Raghava Pattayam (1225 A.D.) as Kodumkōlūr. In modern times the place came to be known as Kodungallur whose anglicised version was Cranganore. The similarity in the ancient name Muziri and the medieval inscriptional name Muyirikōdu persuades one to identify the one with the other.

101. The headquarters of the Perumāls of Mahodayapuram.

The Pattinam of ancient period has not yet been definitely located. But the Jewish copper plates (here after JCP) and the Vira Raghava Pattayam (Here after VRP) specifically deal with the trading centre in the medieval period and they reveal its form and functions.¹⁰²

The location of Kodungallur was highly conducive to the development of a trading centre. Situated at the estuary or river Periyar with the Arabian sea, it had facilities of trade from within and outside. As in the case of Kollam the presence of mud banks along the coast helped the smooth anchorage of the ships. The Kodungallur kāyal endowed the town with facilities of transport to the north. The town was connected with other trading centres of Kerala by several routes. The town was at one end of the trade route that connected the eastern paddy cultivating region and the hill tracts of spice cultivation with the sea coast. This route via Thrissur, Alathur and Palakkad ran to the Tamil regions crossing the Palakkad gap. It was a short cut across the peninsula,

102. Jewish Copper plates (hereafter JCP), EI, III, 68-69 and Vira Rāghava Paṭṭayam, (hereafter VRP), EI, IV, 41. While the Jewish Copper Plates give clues to the Urban nature of the trading centre, the Vira Raghava Pattayam sheds more light on the form and functions of the trading centre. Evidences from the Vira Raghava Pattayam which appeared a little later than 1200 A.D. (1225 A.D.) also is incorporated in this chapter, as the two records are complementary.

the other way being the round about coastal route.¹⁰³ The town was supported by its rich hinter lands where there was a proliferation of agriculture. Every urban centre is ultimately related with its surroundings and other hinterlands settlement.

The JCP were granted to Joseph Rabban the chief of the Jewish merchants by the Cera King Bhaskara Ravivarman from his capital at Mahodayapuram in 1000 A.D. The grant conferred on the merchant chief various rights and privileges.¹⁰⁴

The JCP were silent about the urban centre as such. But they reveal urbanism in the trading centre. They list the rights enjoyed by the merchant chief and speak of the place as a nagaram.¹⁰⁵ The rights and

103. See the section on trade route in chapter IV.

104. The grant conferred on the merchant the title of Ancuvannam along with seventy two privileges which included the right to collect tolls on vehicles and boats. He was given the right to have daylamps, decorative cloths, palanquin, trumpet, gateway, arched roof and to carry weapons. He was also given the right to collect customs duties and was exempted from the purview of taxation. At the same time he could enjoy all the amenities in the town enjoyed by those who paid taxes. Rights thus conferred were hereditary in character. It is interesting to note that such grants were also attested by major provincial governors of the Cera Kingdom. JCP lines 7-15, 13-14, 16.19, and 20-28.

105. JCP, line - 13.

privileges enjoyed by the merchant chiefs were similar to those enjoyed by the chieftains of the age and this indicate the coveted position of the merchant chief. The statement that Joseph Rabban could collect ulku and tulākūli,¹⁰⁶ is important. Here the merchant becomes the authority to collect customs duties and the custodian of royal balance. Prominent merchants used to enjoy on payment the title of Añcuvannam and other privileges.¹⁰⁷ Añcuvannam was among the leading merchant organisations of South India and the presence of this mercantile corporation at Kodungallur, as in the case of Kollam, shows the institutionalisation of trade. The merchant organisations contributed much to urban development. As already pointed out the lack of organisational frame work among traders have been noted out as a reason for the absence of urbanisation in ancient South India.¹⁰⁸

The merchant organisations of South India had a wide network connecting different countries. Political boundaries were no impediment to them.¹⁰⁹ The fact that

106. JCP, line 12.

107. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, Studies in Kerala Historoy, Kottayam, 1970, p.387.

108. See note No: 39 above.

109. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India (1966), Madras, 1978, pp.330-331.

merchant organisations like Añcuvannam were functioning at Kodungallur testifies to her connections with various other trading centres.

The VRP was granted to Iravi Kortan, a merchant of Kodungallur, by Vira Raghava Chakravarthy. By the time of this grant, the rule of the Perumals had ended. The king granted to Iravi Kortan the status of Maṇigrāmam along with several other rights. The merchant was given the monopoly of trade, the right to collect ferry charges etc. and the privileges of having royal insignia.¹¹⁰ The Vāṇiyās and Aiṅkammālās (the five artisan classes) were given as attached servants to the merchant chief.¹¹¹ As in the case of Kollam, in the existing structure of the society it was not easy to have the services of these artisan's groups on payment of cash. So in order to ensure their services to the nagaram they were given as service groups. The merchant chief was also given the monopoly of the trade over the four settlements in the town¹¹² and brokerage on all commodities counted, measured and weighed and the right to collect duties on articles in the area between the river mouth and the city tower.¹¹³

110. VRP, line 7-11.

111. VRP, line 12.

112. VRP, line 12.

113. VRP, lines, 13-17.

He also controlled the levying of duties (Cungam) on commodities brought to or taken from the market. The rights conferred on Iravi Kortan could be enjoyed by his successors as well. Iravi Kortan was given the right to collect brokerage (taragu) on all commodities ranging from salt to Kastūri (musk). This shows that trading in things ranging from basic necessities to ultimate luxury was transacted there. Reference to Manigrāmam is again an evidence to the functioning of merchant organisation in the area.

D.D. Kosambi shows how in the 6th Century A.D. families of rich and influential merchants controlled the activities of other merchants and artisans and how they dominated the economic activities of a town. Sometimes the growth of towns are associated with the presence of such rich merchants and their dependents which resulted in a concentration of wealth, in the town.¹¹⁴ The VRP depicts one such merchant. Iravi Kortan was called the chief of the city (Nagarattūku Kartāvu)¹¹⁵ and was granted the little Cēramān Lōka Perumceṭṭi.¹¹⁶ Thus both at

114. D.D. Kosambi, Indian Trade Feudal Charters', JESHO 2 (1959) pp. 281-293. Also see Kenneth hall, op.cit. p.149.

115. VRP, line 13.

116. VRP, line 19.

Kollam and at Kodungallur inscriptions reveal that the merchant chiefs were held in high esteem. At Kollam Maruvan Sapir Iso was considered to be the 'founder of nagaram' whereas at Kodungallur the merchant chief was considered to be 'lord of the city'. All these show how the state recognised the importance of trade and commerce in urban centres.¹¹⁷

The VRP indicates the existence of an intermediary between actual traders and the state. This appointment of the intermediary between the state and the actual traders was probably an extension of the system which was prevalent in Kerala in the agricultural production. The record also testifies to the active interference of the ruling authority in the mechanism of trade.

The alienation of royal power to the merchant chief must have had social implications. Here a foreign power was becoming the custodian of trade by exercising monopoly of trade and the right to collect duties. This practice continues even today in one form or another. The only difference is that at present the public is aware of such trade agreement through communication media and the

117. Also see Meera Mary Abraham, op.cit, Delhi, 1988, p.38.

people of that remote age might not have known about such things.

As at Kollam, trade at Kodungallur had become systematised. The reference to weights and measures, the system of collection of customs duties, etc. point to this fact.

The VRP clearly states the name of the town as Kodumkolur. It comprised an area between the 'Alī' (estuary) on the sea coast and Gōpuram.¹¹⁸ (tower). Reference to Gōpuram shows that it was a fortified town.¹¹⁹ The trading centre was located along the sea shore and built in a semi circular shape. It was in the form of a 'Kārmuka' (bow). In this type of town planning, there will be a main street running from north to south with lanes cutting it at right angles. The sea shore will be like the string of the bow.¹²⁰ Literary works like Laghu Bhāskariyam show that as early as 9th century

118. VRP, line 17.

119. The term fort is employed here to denote a fortification probably using mud, wooden, planks and other perishable materials. Systematic exavations have not been conducted to find out such remains.

120. M.G.S. Narayanan, Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under Kulasekhara Empire, op.cit, p.217.

A.D. Mahodayapuram was a developed town.¹²¹ As the headquarters of the Perumals it had the amenities of a capital town. The town was rendered magnificent by wide streets, beautiful mansions, palaces and towers. There were arrangements for announcing the correct time at regular intervals of ghatikās (24 minutes). The various divisions of the town were Kodungallur, Tiruvanchikulam, Kottakkakam, Senamugham, Gotramalleswaram and Balakrisdeswaram. Laghu Bhāskariya Vyākhyā speaks of the cantonment also. There was a well equipped observatory also.¹²² The inscriptional reference to Gōpuram (tower) is to be seen in the light of the old structural temples of the town and the literary reference to the mansions of the capital town. 'Kōde' or 'Kodu' means a fort or settlement. As the capital of the kingdom this trading centre must have been fortified.¹²³ Excavations at Cherman Parambu have brought to light some foundation of walls, wells etc.¹²⁴

The palace of the king (referred to in the VRP as Perumkōyilakam') was at Mahodayapuram. Around the king

121. P.K. Narayana Pillai, (ed), Laghu Bhāskariya Vyākhyā of Saṅkaranārayana, Manuscript Library, Thiruvananthapuram, 1949, Chapter III śloka 18, 20, and 22, and Chapter IV śloka, 26.

122. Ibid.

123. See note No. 119 above.

124. Anujan Achan, op.cit.

and his office, groups of non producing classes must certainly have flourished, and the trading centre has been catering to their needs. The inhabitants of the area evidently possessed the necessary purchasing power and it must have, in its turn added to the urban nature of the town. As commented by Ibn Khaldun 'Cities close to the centres of political power would naturally grow wealthy living off the public treasury in much the same way that the water of the river made everything green around it.'¹²⁵ 'What really marks out a town is not merely the size of the population but the quality of the material life and the nature of occupations'.¹²⁶ As indicated above reference to the ainkammālas clearly proves social stratification and specialisation in craft production.

Inscriptions as well as literary works give clues regarding the content of the social groups at Kodungallur. As the seat of the government it undoubtedly had the cream of the society, the royal class, nobles, royal officers and men of letters and art who adorned the court and this points to the possibility of an affluent society. As Kodungallur had a contonment area, soldiers and their

125. K.N. Chandhuri, Asia Before Europe, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.341.

126. R.S. Sharma, Urban Decay in India, Delhi, 1987, p.5.

dependents formed part of the population.¹²⁷ Age-long trade connections with overseas countries must have led to the settlement of groups of foreign traders like the Jews, Christians and the Muslims. Kodungallur was an important region for the development of these trade and cultural diasporas.

The native traders of Kodungallur had established linkage with interregional trade net works. The presence of traders from Kodungallur in the famous religious centres of South India testifies to their itineraries and activities in different parts of the peninsula.¹²⁸

Apart from traders, officers, royal retinue etc. there was a cultural element in the nagaram population which included priests, temple functionaries, performing artists poets and scholars. Further there were technocrats and scientists like astronomers and mathematicians¹²⁹. The artistic nature throbbing in the life of the trading centre is perhaps attested by a sculptural representation of a dancing scene depicted on the balustrade of Trikulasekharapuram temple.

127. See Note No. 121 above.

128. ARE, No.350 of 1904, ARE No.313 of 1906.

129. The Kodungallur had an observatory as mentioned in the Laghubhaskariya. See note No: 121 above. Also see Elamkulam Kunjan Pillas, Studies in Kerala History, p. 248.

The archaeological excavations conducted by Anujan Acchan at Ceramanparambu and Tiruvanchikulam give unmistakable proofs of Chinese and Arab trade.¹³⁰ Pottery and pot-sherds of various types of designs, glass and stone beads, glass bangles of different colours, copper and iron objects, pieces of Chinese celedon wares, lead balls and quartz objects etc. have been found out from the excavated sites at Thiruvanchikulam and Ceraman Parambu. Ornamentation, incised designs, pattern impressed from mats and baskets etc. are the features of the pottery discovered.¹³¹ The potteries discovered from Arikamedu are very similar to those found out from the early medieval layers of Kodungallur.

The nagaram of Kodungallur emerged from a feudal complex. The four talis, the seat of the representatives of the Brahmin settlements, near Mahodayapuram shows this. The four Brahmin grāmas of Airanikkulam, Iringalakuda, Muzhikulam and Paravur sent their representatives, the talīyātīris (two celebrate Brahmines appointed for a period of three years) to the head quarters of the kingdom

130. Anujan Achan, Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of Cochin State, 1945-46, Ernakulam, 1947, and the same of 1947, Erakulam, 1948.

131. Ibid. The earliest date in the stratigraphical basis is the middle of the 14th century. This reminds one of the flood of 1341 which destroyed the port of Kodungallur.

and they had their seat at Kiltali, Chingapuratali, Meltali and Netiyatali respectively.¹³²

The four talīs can be traced through a study of place names in the present day Kodungallur. Kiltali or Tali of the East is known by the same name. Trikulasekharapuram near the present Metala village is the old Meltali, Sringapuram the Chingapuratali and the Netiyatali, Tiruvanchikulam. In each of these talīs there are temples which have been the centre of religious and cultural life of the people.¹³³ The architectural style of the temples can be traced back to the medieval period. The term tali survives in the form of plot names and family names also at Kodungallur.¹³⁴

Place names like Methalapatam and Taliyaḷḷchapāṭam¹³⁵ in Metala vilage reminds one of a farming element in the urban centre. Not far from these

132. The talis are described in the Kēraḷōlpatti. Herman Gundert (ed.) Kēraḷōlpatti (1843), Balan Publications, Thiruvananthapuram, 1961, pp.26-27.

133. The Tiruvanchikulam Siva Temple, the Srinagapuram Shiva Temple (Both on the high way, the former to the East and latter to the West), the Kiltali Siva Temple and Trikulasekharapuram temple (both to the West of the high way).

134. The wetlands of Taliyazhcha patam and family names like Taliyazhchayil, survey No. 542, 543 and 545 and 534, 1-5 and 631-1, Descriptive Memories of Villages, No.3 Metala of Kodungallur Taluk.

135. e.g. Ibid. survey No. 558-2, 559-2 to 5 etc. and 542, 543, 545 etc.

wetlands there are plots of lands named Peetika Stalam meaning venue of shops.¹³⁶ Thus kodungallur conforms to a general pattern of development of similar centres.

Every town is part of a wider economic system. Like other trading centres of medieval Kerala Kodungallur was a link in the trade network that connected the various regions of Indian ocean. Even before the development of industrial capitalism there existed world economic system and Kodungallur was a link in that system.¹³⁷ Trade relations with distant regions adds to the scope of basic functions of a town.¹³⁸

Attracted by the facilities of trade in the town foreign trading groups came and settled here. Ruling chiefs supported them and the JCP is a clear proof for the esteem in which these foreigners were held. This is often described as religious toleration. But beneath this aspect there are more reasons for both the traders and rulers to behave friendly with each other for making profit and extracting surplus. On one hand it was necessary for the rulers and chieftains to ensure revenue.

136. Ibid, 60, 61, 62, 64 etc. and 1015-2, 1016-5 etc.

137. For the concept of World System, see Chap. VI.

138. See note No: 49 in Chapter I.

On the other hand traders needed such privileges and powers for carrying out trade in a profitable manner. So the rulers and traders were mutually dependant groups. The traditional policy of religious toleration followed by the ruling chiefs of Kerala is to be seen in this light also.¹³⁹

Kodungallur also was the meeting place of various foreign communities, the Jews,¹⁴⁰ Christians and Arabs. There are Jewish folk songs regarding the honours conferred on Joseph Rabban.¹⁴¹ Place names like Jutakkulam at Mettala village in Kodungallur reminds one of the old Jewish settlements.

Like the Arunūruvar of Kollam, Kodungallur had its Onnukure Āyiram Yōgam (Meaning an Assembly of Thousand minus one). For ages this assembly has been working there.¹⁴² Its origin is obscure. It must have been the

139. Also see M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1972 p.5.

140. Tradition ascribes the beginning of Jewish Settlement in Kodungallur to the first century A.D. But there is no direct evidence to it.

141. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala pp. 83-85.

142. At present it is associated with the administration of Bhagavati temple and is composed of the members of the leading nair families of the area.

nilal or the bodyguards of the king.¹⁴³ The Kollam Rameswaram Inscription shows the presence of this kind of a body called Ayiram at Kollam.¹⁴⁴

Kodungallur continued to be a great emporium of trade for about one and a half centuries more.

III.5 PANTALAYANI KOLLAM

Pantalayani Kollam has been a flourishing centre of trade for centuries during the medieval period.¹⁴⁵ Situated a few kms north of Calicut, the town looms large as an emporium of trade in the foreign accounts of Malabar of the medieval period.¹⁴⁶ It does not figure in the early Tamil anthologies. On the basis of the similarity in sounds Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai tries to identify the

143. M.G.S. Narayanan, Political and Social Conditions of Kerala Under the Kulasekhara Empire. p. 351.

144. Kollam Rameswaram Inscription, line 45, TAS, vol. V, pp.44-46.

145. Also see M.R. Raghava Varier, 'Aspects of urbanisation in Medieval Kerala, the case of Pantalayani Kollam, a working paper, Department of History, University of Calicut 1990.

146. Situated 26 Kms north of Calicut, on the National Highway No.17, Pantalayani Kollam is now a small village on the sea coast in the Quilandy Taluk of Kozhikode District. Its area is 537 acres. See Settlement Register and Village map 267. of Kollam desam in the Viyyur village of the erstwhile Kurumbranad Taluk.

Pantar mentioned in Patirrupattu with Pantalayani Kollam.¹⁴⁷ But this identification is not supported by sufficient evidences. Integrating the evidences obtained from inscriptions, toponyms and travellers accounts, the form and functions of this trading centre in medieval period is reconstructed as follows.

Geographical features themselves made Pantalayani Kollam fit for a port and trading centre. The mud banks along the coast of Pantalayani Kollam facilitated smooth and safe anchorage of ships. At the same time mud volcanoes as found at the port of Alapuzha were absent at Pantalayani Kollam.¹⁴⁸ When compared with the nearby port of Kozhikode it was safer as the former suffered from the presence of reefs that made it sometimes dangerous for the passage of vessels.¹⁴⁹ But Pantalayani Kollam was free from all these defects and it was one of the safest ports on the Malabar coast. Mariners could easily identify this

147. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, Studies in Kerala History, Kottayam, 1970, p.63.

148. Mud volcanoes are huge cones of mud and water mixed with dead sea organisms which come bubbling from below especially during the rainy season. They were so dangerous that they would cause even shipwreck. See Innes and Evans, Malabar, Madras, 1951, pp.7-8.

149. Ibid. pp. 9-10. The Coots Reef and Juliana Reef.

port because of a hill on the sea shore called Mayyathukunnu.¹⁵⁰

The fragmentary Jama-at-Mosque inscription¹⁵¹ gives the earliest available inscriptional evidence for the trading centre of Pantalayani Kollam. This inscription belonging to king Bhaskara Ravi Varman I (962-1021 A.D.) mentions Pantalayhani Kollam in connection with the mercantile corporations of Maṇigrāma and Valaṅciars. The functioning of these merchant associations at Pantalayni Kollam undoubtedly points to the nature of the place as a trading centre. This single reference to the trading groups unveil the institutionalisation of trade, social stratification in the trading centre and the like. The inscription is almost contemporaneous with the famous JCP issued by Bhaskara Ravi Varman to the chief of the Jewish merchants at Kodungallur in 1000 A.D. The Jama-at inscription that mentions the Kōyil and Kōyiladhikārikal

150. This place has become legendary, since it is connected with the Arabs who are said to be responsible for propagating Islam on the coast of Malabar. There are several grave yards with inscribed stones there. It is believed that Malik Dinar and his companions are buried in these grave yards. Pantalayani Kollam is described by Ibn Battuta in his itinerary. He refers to some Muslim institutions which existed in this area. See Mahdhi Hussain (ed.), Rehla of Ibn Battuta, p.188. The place name Mayyattukunnu is closely connected with the sacred grave yards on the top of this hill.

151. SII, vol. VIII No: 162 p.69 and ICI, op.cit., No.A-51.

points to the political infrastructure needed for a trading centre.

Settlement terminologies with regard to Pantalayani Kollam are of help in reconstructing the nature of that trading centre. The trading groups of Pantalayani Kollam are referred to as nagaratilullōr.¹⁵² The term nagaram of course, denotes an urban space. At the same time in another inscription of the very same area it is referred to as ūr, denoting a rural area.¹⁵³ But this raises no contradiction as in the medieval town the urban and rural natures existed side by side. The farming element was present in all the trading centres of Kerala in the medieval epoch. The fact that the area was an urban centre is evident in the name of the temple of Nagareswaram, owned by a trading group in the town namely Rāwari Nairs.¹⁵⁴

A fragmentary stone inscription discovered from a compound in Pantalayani Kollam gives us further clues with

152. M.R. Raghava Varier, Aspects of Urbanisation in Early Medieval Kerala, p.2.

153. SII vol VIII, No.165, p.69 and ICI, A72.

154. Survey No. 69, Subdivision 2,3 in the Settlement Register, Kollam Desam, Viyyur Village op.cit. The term Rāwari Nairs is the colloquial form of Vyapari nairs meaning merchant nairs.

regard to the urban nature of Pantalayani Kollam.¹⁵⁵ This inscription gives certain field names which are traceable even today. Among other things the inscription makes mention of an Alānkāra ceṭṭi. Ceṭṭis were merchants from Tamilnadu and the presence of a ceṭṭi in a trading centre adds to its commercial importance. The fact that the ceṭṭis were among the inhabitants of the medieval town is clear from certain field name near the Bhagavati temple of the area.¹⁵⁶ Near the sea shore there is a plot of land called Pāṇḍakaśāla Valappu meaning ware house compound.¹⁵⁷ This must have been the site of an old ware house and this points to the commercial importance of the area. Near the Pāṇḍakaśāla Valappu there are compounds called Pīṭikastalam and Pīṭikakkal Paṛambu¹⁵⁸ meaning sites of the shops.

Place names in the village remind one of the old township. There is an area called Talathangadi meaning down bazaar. The place is also called Kaṇṇāṭi canta,

155. M.R. Raghava Varier. Aspect of Urbanisation..., .p.p 4-5.

156. Paludharathil parambu. Survey No.50. Sub Division 1,2,3 of the Settlement Register op.cit.

157. Survey No. 73, Subdivision 4, Ibid.

158. Survey No. 75, Subdivision 2,3 Survey No. 76 Subdivision 4 and Survey No. 78 Subdivision, 13,14 and 15 and survey No. 89 subdivision 4 and 5 respectively, Ibid.

meaning mirror market. But that market does not exist now. The area has a cluster of four temples, and this again suggests temple oriented, non producing classes. The relation between the temples and markets are quite evident. The temples were the largest consumers of goods and services in medieval Kerala and as such they were directly connected with the trading centres.¹⁵⁹ The other noncultivating groups of the area like local officials, members of the sabhās, craftsman etc. are mentioned in contemporary inscriptions dealing mainly with the affairs of the temples.¹⁶⁰ These inscriptions also give an idea about the development of agrarian communities in the hinterlands of Pantalayani Kollam and with the resultant production of a surplus from the land which was channelised into the market places. The soil of Pantalayani Kollam and its surroundings was not suited for paddy cultivation and even the existing paddy fields were scattered due to the nature of the terrain. But the hill slopes and paṛambu uplands were highly conducive to the

159. See the discussion on the trading centre of Tiruvalla below.

160. Cokkur Inscription (No.13 of 1901, SII, vol.VII 173).
 Thalakulathur " (No. 2 of 1901, SII, vol.VII 161).
 Porangattur " (No.17 of 1901, SII, vol.VII 171).
 Kinalur " (No.14 of 1901, SII, vol.VII 174).
 For Kolathur inscription see M.R.Raghava Varier
 'Kulathūr Likhitavum, Kūrumbranād Rāja Swaroopawum',
Keraliyata Caritramanānāl, 'Sukapuram, 1990, p.120.

cultivation of pepper, coconut and arecanut. The parambūs were suitable for the growth of millets and pulses. Coconut is mentioned as a regular item of income to the temples along with pepper in the Cembra Inscription.¹⁶¹ This accounts for the surplus of cash crops and the deficit of staple food. It was this innate contradiction in the field of production that led to the development of trade in this region also. The cash crops of the area had a steady demand from overseas countries and they could be exchanged for articles of daily consumption. The presence of Maṇigrāmam and Vaḷaṅciārs points to the itinerant traders who were engaged in the exchange of these goods. It must have been pepper, which had great demand from overseas countries, that attracted the Maṇigrāmam organisation into Pantalayani Kollam.

In the annals of the Arab travellers of this period Pantalayai Kollam is Fandarina. Idrissi refers to Pantalayani Kollam as a town and a port. Idrissi notices the flourishing trade at Pantalayani Kollam and says that the inhabitants were rich. The chief items of export from the port were pepper and cardamom. He particularly mentions the cardamom plants grown abundantly on the slope

161. M.R. Raghava Varier, Kēraḷiyata Caritramānannal, pp. 99-103.

of the hills.¹⁶² Idrisi also states that the town was at the mouth of a river.¹⁶³

The accounts of foreign travellers give clue to the content of the trading community at Pantalayani Kollam. It included Jews, Muslims and Christians also. These traders, especially the Arabs were able to get the help from their locally stationed counterparts who acted as middlemen between them and the natives. Thus Pantalayani Kollam was also one of the earliest centres of trade and cultural diaspora. Pantalayani Kollam continued to flourish in the succeeding centuries also.

Besides the major trading centres discussed above, there developed certain minor centres also during the period under discussion. They were not fullfledged market towns and also did not have uniform features. These minor trading centres were Kutavur in Tiruvalla, Matilakam near Kodungallur, Bhaskarapuram near Irinjalakuda Thazhakkavu near Pulpalli in Wayanad and Matayi near Elimala. During the next phase of our study (A.D. 1200-1500) there developed more trading centres like

162. S.M.H. Nainar, Arab Geographers Knowledge of South India, p.35.

163. Idrissi may be referring to the canal that connected the area of the port with the interior of the village.

Puthitam near Varkala, Kariyanattukavu near Tiruvalla Sriparvatam annāti of Mattam, Kulamukhu near Patambi and Valarpattanam near Kannur which figure in the medieval Manipravāla Kāvyaś.

III.5 KUTAVUR

The settlement of Tiruvalla had its exchange centre at Kutavur.¹⁶⁴ The Tiruvalla Inscriptions which deal with the endowments made to and arrangements made for the day to day functions of the temple of Tiruvalla show the expansion of agriculture in the area and the enormous wealth of the temple, derived mainly from land endowments.¹⁶⁵ It was the temple centred consumerism that led to the development of an annāti at Kutavur. Tiruvalla, one of the traditional Brahmin settlements of Kerala, had the necessary precondition needed for the growth of a market. The elaborate rituals in the temple and the endowments made for the same show an affluent society. Temples were 'perhaps the most sensitive institutions for registering changes in the surrounding

164. Tiruvalla is one the bank of the river Manimala and on the Main Central Road, in the present Pathanamthitta district. But the location of Kutavur has not yet been identified. It must have been somewhere near the temple of Tiruvalla.

165. It has been calculated that the annual income of the land was about three lakh paraś of paddy. See Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Temple and Early Mediēval Agrarion System, Sukapuram. 1993. p.10.

society in South India'.¹⁶⁶ The expansion of agriculture made the surplus necessary for a flourishing market centre. The añhāti was the mediating factor between the temple and the settlement, catering to the needs of both.

For the day to day functioning of the temple articles ranging from salt to camphor were needed, both for ritualistic and material purposes. Among the articles of daily rituals were oil, ghee, akil, sandal, camphor etc. Some of these were locally available while others had to be brought from outside. The Tiruvalla Inscriptions mention the land set apart for buying sandal.¹⁶⁷ Here the income from land is used to purchase goods that were not locally available. Camphor was among the goods brought from overseas countries and was a regular item of imports by the Chinese merchants. Separate land was set apart for this single item.¹⁶⁸ Camphor was used not only for rituals but also for medicines. This points to the intrusion of the influence of overseas trade into the interior areas of the region. The temples also were the biggest employers and the Tiruvalla temple had a large number of functionaries ranging from learned brahman

166. Burton Stein (ed.), South Indian Temples, New Delhi, 1978, p.3.

167. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, line 200.

168. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, lines 407m and 425.

scholars to menial servants, including artists. Besides, under the auspices of the temple there was an educational institution, and a hospital and these institutions had their own functionaries. The remuneration given to the functionaries was in the form of land or paddy, and paddy was the most important income.¹⁶⁹ Paddy was to be exchanged for getting other goods for daily use. There are repeated references to the carpenters, bronzesmith etc. who were catering to the needs of the temple.¹⁷⁰ In the Inscriptions there is reference to a merchant from Ceylon who had come to Tiruvalla.¹⁷¹ The fact that traders from distant countries visited Tiruvalla points to its commercial importance. There are frequent references to vāṇiās and cettīs in the inscriptions,¹⁷² The presence of vāṇiās and cettīs points to the nature of the settlement as a commercial centre. The region of Kutavur and its market was made over to the temple of Tiruvalla along with the right to collect taxes and market duties by the chief of Vempolinad, Irvi Cirukantan. For the protection of the market place, the temple corporation

169. e.g. The remuneration of Śāntikkār (priests) was 200 nāli of rice per month Tiruvalla Inscriptions, lines 32-34.

170. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, lines 426, 115 and 593

171. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, line 250. referring to Ilattuninum Vanna Vāṇian.

172. e.g. Tiruvalla Inscriptions lines 539 and 155-157.

received a rakṣhābhōgam of eighteen kaḷaṅcu of gold.¹⁷³ References to temple functionaries, employees of the śālai and hospital, members of the temple corporation, craftsmen, traders, artists, and the like give the picture of a stratified society. All these sections of the people were non-agricultural people. Thus the Tiruvalla Inscriptions give pointers to a well developed agricultural settlement with a temple as its institutional base, a highly stratified society, and a marketing centre which are all indeed traits of urbanism.

III.6 MATILAKAM

Matilakam, the prestigious jain centre of medieval Kerala was also a trading centre. Located nearly eight kms. north of Kodungallur, Matilakam developed as an upanagara of that great emporium of trade. Indigenous literature belonging to the second phase of our study praises the glory of this trading centre. But evidence with regard to the nature of the trading centre during this period is scanty. Certain scholars identify the Kunavai referred to in the inscriptions with Matilakam.¹⁷⁴

173. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, lines 329-342.

174. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala pp. 17-22. If this identification is correct the Tirukunavai mentioned in the fragmentary vatteluthu inscription of 10th century A.D. found at Kavasseri Amsom in Alathur Taluk is Matilakam. This inscription that records an agreement by the Nālpattēṇṇayiravar, two Pattakal and Adhikārar of Tirukunavai regarding the pallikal of Valaṅciārs and their property give valuable pointers to the nature of the trading centre. For the text of the inscription see Ibid p.19. Again, if this identification is correct, the Tazhakkavu inscription dates back the antiquity of the trading centre to 8th century A.D. Ibid. p.20.

It is believed that Silapathikāram the celebrated Jain work was written at Matilakam. Archaeological investigations at Matilakam have brought out remains of a citadal wall and foundation of an early medieval temple. A few Cola coins belonging to the period of Raja Raja Cola also have been found out.¹⁷⁵

The remains of the wall and temple suggest the existence of structural buildings. These remains were found out from a compound called Madham parambu. The area has been a thick habitat and an extensive excavation is difficult. At present while digging wells and constructing houses ruins of pillars, images etc. are obtained, denoting the existence of structural buildings. Matilakam continued to flourish even after the decline of Kodungallur as is evidenced from the references in the indigenous literary sources belonging to the next phase of our study.

III.7 THAZHAKKAD

Bhaskarapuram near Irinjalakuda was an inland trading centre. The exact location of this market centre has not yet been identified, but we have inscriptional evidence of the Tazakkad Church Inscription (1028-1043) for the functioning of the Manigrāmam guild in the

175. Ibid. p.23.

area,¹⁷⁶ The inscription deals with the founding of a market. It speaks of the four boundaries of the market - to the west of Cirupally, to the north of the banyan tree, to the east of Kalpalli and to the south of the lands of Tevar Tirukoyil. Within this area the merchants belonging to the Maṇigrāmam called Vatukan Cattan and Iravi Catten were given permission to put up shops. These merchants were exempted from certain taxes on shops. The local people were free to buy from the market. The Maṇigrāmam guild is invariably associated with overseas trade and their presence in an interior market means that the overseas goods also reached the market. Here we see a local demand for the overseas goods.¹⁷⁷ A record of Iringalakuda deals with a grant of land to for persons to establish a township called Bhaskarapuram.¹⁷⁸

There are toponymical evidences for an old settlement of traders at Talakhad. The name Vasupuram which recalls Bhaskarapuram is prefixed to many a compound

176. For the Text of the Inscription see TAS vol. VIII, pp.39-40. Tazhakkad is two Kms east of the present Irinjalakuda town, in the present Mukundapuram Taluk of Thrissur Dt. and Irinjalakuda is 14 Kms north of Kodungallur, in the Thrissur Kodungallur bus route.

177. Meera Mary Abraham, op. cit. p.34.

178. M.G.S. Narayanan, Political and Social Conditions of Kerala..... p.305 and ICI A-74.

and wetland of Tazhakkad.¹⁷⁹ Plot names like Vaniyampatam and Chungathu Paṛambu¹⁸⁰ point to the old commercial importance of the area. There is a compound called Kōṭṭakkakattupaṛambu at Tazhkkad and this shows perhaps the existence of a fortified area.¹⁸¹ All these suggest the possibility of Bhaskarapuram to be somewhere near Tazhakkad. The plot name of Kaṭuppilly Ciṛappādam¹⁸² reminds one of Kalappalli figuring in the Talakkad inscription as a boundary of the land granted to the shopkeepers. Plots of land Ciraēri Paṛambu¹⁸³ and Ciṛa Paṛambu¹⁸⁴ recall Cirupalli, another boundary. In the near by village of Pullur there are wet lands called Tēvarkulaṅgara padam.¹⁸⁵ This may perhaps be the Tevar Tirukoyil mentioned in the inscription as another boundary. But in the absence of other reliable sources

179. e.g. Survey No.285-3, 286, 288, 289 366-1, and 367-2. Descriptive Memorirs of Village No.34, Tazhakkad of Mukundapuram Taluk, Settlement of 1082 K.E.

180. Survey Nos. 931 to 937, 978 to 983, 984, 985, 986, 1030, 1036, 1037, 1042 ... Ibid and survey No. 772-1 to 3, Ibid.

181. Survey No. 1040, Ibid.

182. Survey Nos. 689, 690, 691 - 2 to 5 and 772 - 1 to 3. Ibid.

183. Survey No. 1029 Ibid.

184. Survey No. 1035 Ibid.

185. Survey Nos. 87 to 103, 54, 59 and 60 in Survey and village settlement register of village No. 23 Pullur in the Mukundapuram Taluk

we are not in a position to identify the boundaries of the land mentioned in the inscription.

Irinjalakuda was among the original brahmin settlements and about fourteen kms north of it is the settlement of Perumanna on the banks of Karuvannur puzha. A few kms east of Irinjalakuda is the settlement of Avattiputhur on the banks of Kurumalipuzha.¹⁸⁶ The products of these fertile areas must have reached the market place of Irinjalakuda. The town has a jain tradition also the present Kutalmanikkyam temple is said to have been a jain shrine. And the jains were associated with trade and commerce.

III.8 THAZHAKKAVU

Wayanad has been a converging point of trade and culture through the ages. The fertility of the soil, abundance of agricultural products and the richness of natural resources increased the possibility of market and exchange centres in the area. Proximity to Kongunadu and Coorg added to the development of exchange centres in Wayanad. The geography of Wayanad was conducive to such developments. River Kabani gives access to the eastern regions upto Manantawadi. There were forest path ways that connected the area with the nearby market centres of Karnataka.

186. Also see Kesavan Veluthat, Brāhmin Settlements in Kerala, pp 25-27

The Tazhakkavu inscription¹⁸⁷ found out from Tazhakkavu near Pulpally in Wayanad refers to the nagaram established by the Nālpattennāyiravar in the area. Functioning of merchant organisations like the Nālpattennāyiravar and the establishment of a nagaram point to a developed trading centre. Nagaram of course points to its non rural nature. In Kerala the group of Nālpattennāyiravar appears in connection with Jain centres. The trade relations of Pulpally were mainly with the Kongunadu. The presence of Nālpattennāyiravar supports this view as this organisation had its centres mainly at Thiruchirapally and Chingalpet districts of Kongunad. Inscriptions related with the Ayyāvōle organisation of merchants have been found out along the banks of Kabani in southern Karnataka and this adds to the fact that river Kabani was an important trade route used in the trade between Karnataka and Wayanad area.

III.9 MATAYI

The most important port town to the north of Pantalayani Kollam was Matayi, the celebrated Marahi pattanam described in the Mūṣikavamsā.¹⁸⁸ The historical

187. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, p.19 and note No. 7 on p.49.

188. At present Matayi is a Panchayat in the Payyannur block of Kannur Taluk, Kannur district. Its headquarters is Palayangadi.

reference to this trading centre goes back to the 11th Century A.D.¹⁸⁹ Matayi is on the mouth of the river Thaliparamba and its access to the sea is blocked by a strip of land which diverts its course. It was the silting of the river-mouth that decided the destiny of the trading centres in this area.

The foundation of the town of Matayi (Marahi) is described in Mūsikavamśa in four lines that points to its location and commercial prosperity. The town is described as being on the confluence of the river and the ocean and having a market place that bears the riches from overseas countries brought by the ships.¹⁹⁰ The geographical peculiarities of the area, the nature of the soil and the patronage extended by ruling chiefs were all favourable to the development of commercial towns in the area. The Elimala projecting into the sea provided natural facilities for a port. The soil was conducive to the growth of spices that had great demand from overseas countries. The rivers of Taliparamba and Kawai connected the trading centres with the interior agricultural villages rich in spices and arecanut. It is these facilities of trade that attracted merchant organisations

189. References in the historical kāvya of Atula. K. Raghavan Pillai (ed), Mūṣika Vamśam - Mūlavum Paribhāṣhayum, Kerala University, 1983.

190. Ibid, chap. 14, V. 67, p.30.

like the Maṇigrāma to this region. The presence of these merchant organisations at Elimala is best attested by the Elimala Narayan Kannur inscription.¹⁹¹ The foreign travellers have pointed out that the region was infested with pirates and it shows the prosperity and the frequent visits of merchantile ships.¹⁹²

What the medieval geographers have been referring to as Mount Eli must have been the grouping of Payyannur, Kunhimangalam, Matayi and Palayangadi.¹⁹³ The fact that as early as the 12th century Matayi was a centre of Muslims indicates its commercial importance. The Matayi mosque bears an inscription dated 1124 A.D. The mosque have certain large blocks of Arabian marble believed to have been brought by Malik Dinar. Matayi was the royal residence also.

Mount Eli was a port of call for ships from Persian gulf. Ships from Kollam used to frequent it to have fresh water, wood etc. The Ramantali inscription (927) is the oldest record related with the port of

191. M.G.S. Narayanan, Kērala Caritrattinṅe Aṭistānaṣilakaḷ, Thiruvananthapuram, 1974. p.89.

192. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices..... pp, 182-83.

193. Genevieve Bouchon, The Regent of the Sea, Translated by Erick Louise Shackley, Delhi, 1988, p.11.

Elimala.¹⁹⁴ It refers to a prosperous port. This is corroborated by Mūṣikavamśa, through the description of Acalapattana.¹⁹⁵ Acalapattana must have been between Kunhimangalam and Payyannur.

Matayi is on the mouth of the river Taliparamba on its northern bank. The archeological investigations of Sewell have brought to light traces of temples near the city.¹⁹⁶ Mūṣikavamśa refers to Matayi as the seat of the ruling power. Matayi had a very ancient trading community of Jews and Muslims.¹⁹⁷ A secular origin is ascribed to these people at Matayi. Certain toponyms like the Jewish tank at Palayangadi reminds one of the old Jewish settlement.

By the beginning of the 12th century the Islamic people had been well established in the region as is evidenced from the building of the mosque in 1124 A.D. The merchant organisation of Maṇigrāmam was active at Elimala as known from the Elimala Narayan Kannur

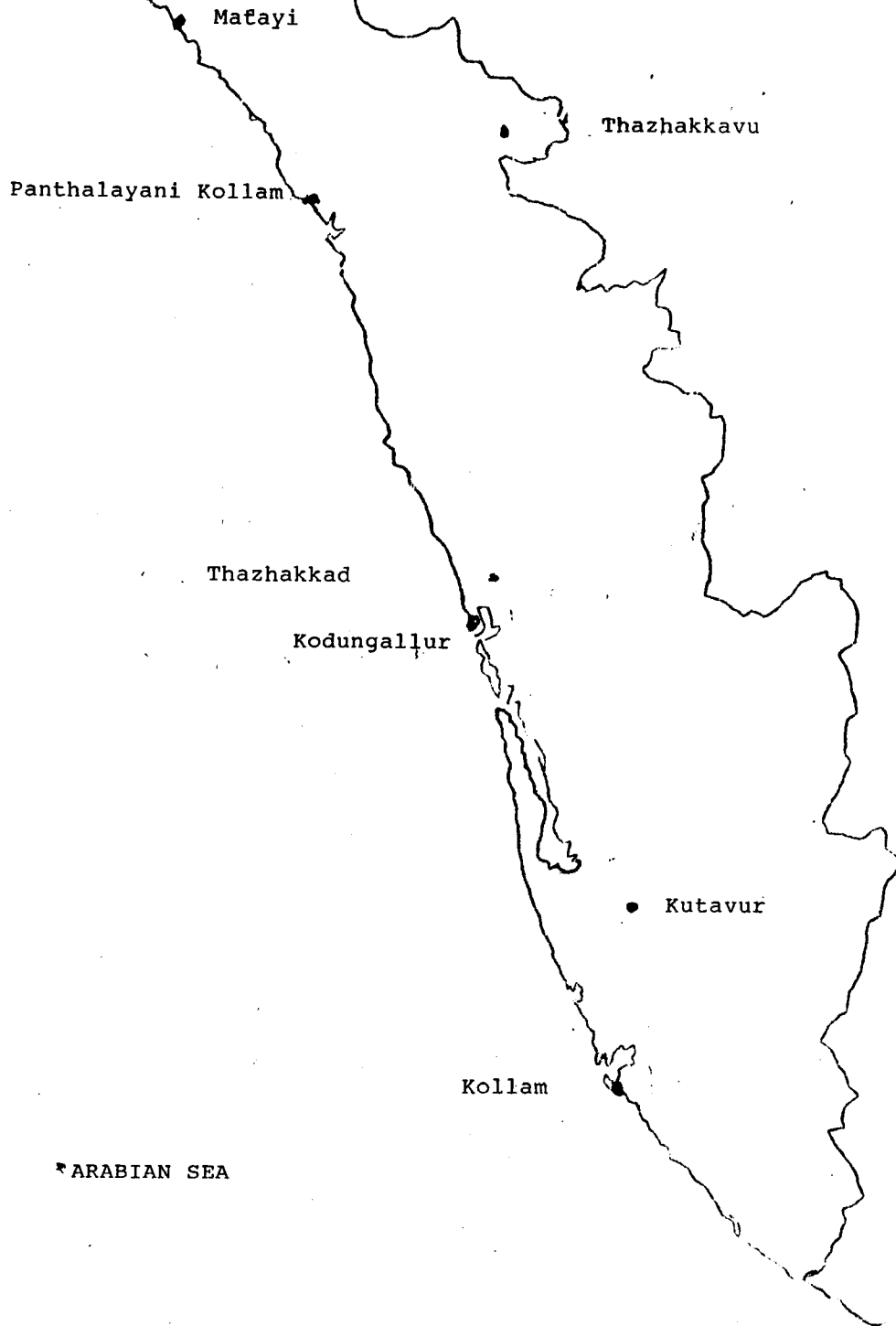
194. The Ezhimala Narayan, Kannur Inscription. See note No. 191 above.

195. K. Raghavan Pillai (ed), Mūṣikavamśam Chap. II, V. 69, p.219.

196. Genevieve Bouchon, op.cit

197. Ibid., p.7.

Map 6 TRADING CENTRES OF KERALA (AD 800-1200)



inscription. The nearby town of Matayi also must have come within the fold of its influence.

A study of these minor trading centres shows that even in interior centres merchant organisations associated with long distance trade were functioning. Maṇigrāma organisation invariably associated with overseas trade was functioning even at places like Tazhakkad near Irinjalakuda. Overseas goods also reached the area and there were local demands for the same. Here there is no question of a subsistence economy. Villages were not self sufficient economic units. They were opened for trade. There is no signs of a fully closed economy in these areas. Along with the development of trade there was attempts to cut across the boundaries of the village economy.¹⁹⁸

III.10 ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRADE

The development of merchant organisations showing the institutionalisation of trade has been an important demarcating feature of the trade of the period. From 9th to the 13th centuries we have inscriptional references to these organisations in connection with various trading centres. These mercantile corporations, especially Añcuvannam, Maṇigrāma and Valañciārs, were very

198. Also see Meera Mary Abraham, op.cit p.34.

significant in the economic set up of Kerala. These organisations have been generally called guilds. But 'guild' is an 'association of professionals with a well defined structure, a carefully framed code of conduct, rules and membership governed by certain regulations and qualifications'.¹⁹⁹ In the absence of evidences we do not know whether the merchant organisations in South India had any such rules for membership or the like and whether they could be called 'guilds' as in the case of the guilds of Medieval Europe or Egypt.²⁰⁰ In other parts of South India especially in Karnataka there were organisations of professionals formed for a common purpose. Even ferry men had their own powerful guilds.²⁰¹ But such powerful autonomous corporations of craftsmen and professionals do not seem to have developed in Kerala. The commercial corporations of Kerala were mainly of traders and the most important among them were Añcuvannam and Mañigrāmam. Organisations like Valañciārs, Nānādēśīs, Nālpattennayiravar, Tiṣṣaiyāyirattainnūrruvar etc. were also functioning

199. R. Champakalakshmi, 'The Medieval South Indian Guilds: Their Role in Trade and Urbanisation', in D.N. Jha (ed) Society and Ideology in India, Delhi, 1996, p.80.

200. Ibid.

201. Sivanna, 'Doni One Thousand' paper presented to the South Indian History Congress, Calicut University, February, 1991.

in medieval Kerala. These organisations were not confined to Kerala and were part of wide mercantile networks having intra and inter-regional trade relations. So they cannot be studied in isolation. All these organisations are referred to in many inscriptions of South India. Political boundaries were no obstructions to these organisations and were not much affected by wars and change of governments.²⁰² They were, in a sense, extra territorial bodies cutting across the political boundaries and regional power centres.

We do not have evidences for the beginning of these organisations in Kerala. But the Cola records from Uraiurcottam in Tiruccirappalli district²⁰³ give clues to the assumption that Maṇigrāmam originated from a collection of itinerant merchants who had no permanent centre. The traders must have found it better to join together for mutual protection. Under the Colas the Maṇigrāmam was known after the base of their operation.²⁰⁴ Maṇigrāmam was part of bigger mercantile corporations like

202. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, A History of South India, (1955), Madras 1984. p.330-331. Also see Romila Thapar, A History of India, vol.1, Delhi, 1966, p.209.

203. SII 13, 28 and 51 of 1905. Also see Kenneth Hall, op.cit. pp. 150-151.

204. e.g. The Maṇigrāmam of Kodumbalur, Manigramam of Uraiur etc. See Kenneth Hall op.cit. p.150.

Tiṣṣaiyāyirattainnūruvar which had local and inter regional trade networks. Such big corporations were called Samāyam.²⁰⁵ The earliest available inscriptional reference to Maṇigrāmam is from Kollam. It is in the TPCP.²⁰⁶ They refers to the Añcuvannam and Maṇigrāmam. The inscriptions make no mention that Maṇigrāmam was a subordinate body of any other institution. It was a free organisation with Kollam as its base. But considering the nature of merchant organisations in other parts of South India and trade networks of the period the Maṇigrāmam of Kollam is to be considered as a constituent of a large body having pan Asiatic trade relations.²⁰⁷

In Kerala the community of Christians seems to be predominant in Maṇigrāmam. And the term Maṇigrāmam first appears in association with the privileges granted to the Syrian Christians of Kollam. But this cannot be taken to suggest that merchant organisations corresponded to specific caste or community. Actually these organisations cut across the frontiers of castes and religions.²⁰⁸

205. For details see Ibid. pp.141-150. Samāyam means a group organised on the basis of a contract.

206. See the section III-2, on Kollam above.

207. Rajan Gurumkkal, The Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System, p.83.

208. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, Trade and Urban Centres in Early Medieval North India', The Indian Historical Review, vol. I, No.1, 1974, p.211.

The Maṇigrāma is referred to in the Ezhimala Narayan Kannur Inscription.²⁰⁹ The Maṇigrāmam at Elimala was entrusted with certain duties connected with the temple of Ramantali, Narayan Kannur. As in the case of Kollam and Kodungallur the Manigramam merchants must have established themselves earlier in the coastal regions of the hilly areas of Elimala which was away from the Brahmin settlements and the Maṇigrāmakkār, who were the merchants of the area became the protectors of the temple. The fragmentary inscription found at the Jama-at-Mosque, Pantalayani Kollam assigned to Bhaskara Ravi Varman in the 10th Century A.D. shows the functioning of this corporation at that trading centre.²¹⁰ Maṇigrāmam is also referred to in the Tazhakkad church inscription.²¹¹ This record shows the functioning of this mercantile corporation in an inland trading centre, near Irinjalakuda in the present Thrissur District. The VRP records the grant of Maṇigrāmam and Añcuvannam to the merchant chief Iravi Cortan of Kodungallur.²¹² This association is referred to in the Payyannūr, Pāttu²¹³ in later period.

209. See note No: 191 above.

210. See note No:151 above.

211. See Note No. 176 above

212. EI, IV, p.41. See III-3 the section on Kodungallur, above.

213. P. Antony (ed) Payyannūr Pāttu Pāthavum Pathanavum Kottayam 1994, V.92, p.28.

The Maṇigrāma was thus 'a large organisation of big merchants with numerous regional base through out South India',²¹⁴ and this mercantile corporation was functioning in the trading centres of Kerala from Kollam in the south to Ezhimala in the north from the 9th to 14th century A.D. It was also functioning in overseas countries as is evident from the Takuapa inscription at Siam.²¹⁵

The TPCP make Añcuvannam and Maṇigrāma responsible for the safety and maintenance of the church and its property and settlers. In the case of the nagaram of Kollam the ruling authority alienated certain administrative rights and duties to the merchant organisations. It was in connection with the collection of duties from the nagaram.²¹⁶ The king's officers were forbidden from levying duties from the nagaram. The members of the merchant organisation were to be consulted before fixing the prices of goods brought to the nagaram. This instance of alienating the royal rights is seen in the JCP and VRP also. This delegations of powers points

214. Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System. p.118.

215. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Takuapa and its Tamil Inscription, JMBRAS 22, part I (1949) pp. 25-30.

216. TPCP. line 33-34, Also see K.A.N. Sastri. The Cōlās, (2nd revised edition) Madras, 1975, p. 217 and p. 242.

to the diffusion of political powers among various bodies like the merchant associations in medieval Kerala.²¹⁷

Wherever it is the authorities of the merchant organisations co-operated with the ruling powers and it ensured their long life and prospects.²¹⁸ In the case of Kerala the ruling chiefs conferred rights and privileges on the leaders of the merchant organisations often when they were facing a political and economic exigency. Meera Mary Abraham shows how the Pandyas were particular in obtaining the services of the Ayyāvōḷe guild and how they sponsored the same.²¹⁹ In Kerala the heads of such organisations were held in high esteem as is revealed in

217. Also see K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, South India and South East Asia, Mysore, 1978, p.70. The alienation of managerial rights to merchant guilds was characteristic feature of medieval Europe also. This was in return for payment and obligation. The very same practice in medieval India represents a particular phase of Indian feudalism. M.G.S. Narayanan, Re-interpretations of South Indian History, Thiruvananthapuram, 1977, p.56.

218. G.S. Dikshit 'Trade Guild under the Chalukyas of Kalyani, B.D. Chattopadhyaya (ed) Essays in Ancient Indian Economic History, Delhi, 1987, p.184. The leader of the organisation with his powers and privileges was a check on royal authority. In the North Indian context Kautilya says that, the master of the Srēni (guild) must be supplied with a piece of land that is constantly under trouble so that he would be too busy to interfere in the affairs of the govt. See Arthaśāstra, Chap. V. Also see R.C. Majumdar, Corporate Life in Ancient India (1918), Calcutta, 1920, p.26.

219. Meera Mary Abraham, op.cit. p.75.

the titles conferred on them.²²⁰ Even in Mahābharata we have evidences for the fact that the heads of merchants and craftsmen were taken to be honourable.²²¹ But we do not see such all powerful merchant chiefs as seen in Kerala Inscription elsewhere. One inscription from Valikantapuram in Tiruchirappally Taluk shows a case of a merchant chief who had rights including the supervision of the collection of certain revenues. But he did not dominate trade.²²²

The important centres of the Manigrāmam and Añcuvannam in Kerala were littoral towns and it points to their participation in maritime trade. That these associations had overseas contacts is testified by the signatures of foreigners in the TPCP.

Inscriptions of Kerala refer to merchant organisations like the Nānādēsis, Nālpattēnṇāyiravar,

220. As seen in the JCP and VRP.

221. When Duriyodhana was defeated by the Gandarvas, he refused to go back to the capital city for fear of facing the leaders of the Srēṇi (guild) and the elites among citizens. 'What will the head of guilds (and others) say to me and what shall I tell them in reply'? Maha Bhāratam, Vanaparava, V.15. vol. II Kodungallur Kunhikuttan Thampuram (trans.) Sri Maha Bhāratam vol. II, N.B.S. Edition, Kottayam, 1981, p.669.

222. Kenneth Hall, op.cit. p.14.

Valaṅciars, Patineṅbhūmitiśśaiyāyirattainnūrruvar, Patine-
ttupattānattār, and the like. They were functioning in
the regions of present Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and
Karnataka also. These organisations are referred to
separately in Kerala inscriptions. The Nālpattēṅṅāyiravar.
figures in the inscriptions obtained from Alathur²²³ and
the Tazhakkavu inscription from Wayanad.²²⁴ These two
regions were the centres of Jains and this points to the
relationship between the organisation and the Jains.

The Eramam Calappuram Inscription refers to
Valaṅciārs and Nānadēśikal.²²⁵ The earlier inscriptions
refer only to Aṅcuvannam and Maṅigrāmam. There is an
argument projected by historians that the advent of new
organisations might have been in the wake of the Cola
aggression.²²⁶ A fragmentary inscription of Thrissur
Archaological museum records an agreement of
Nālpattēṅṅāyiravar, two Paṭṭakal and Adhikārar. of
Tirukunawai regarding the Pallikal of valanciars and their
property.²²⁷ The Valaṅciārs figures in the literary

223. ICI, No. C-29.

224. See note No: 187 above

225. ICI, No: A-40.

226. M.G.S. Narayanan, Reinterpretations of South Indian
History, op.cit p.56.

227. M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala,
p.19.

composition of the 13th century.²²⁸ The Paṭṭanaswāmis are mentioned in the Payyannur Paṭu.²²⁹ In addition to the protection of nagaram these organisations were often entrusted with the duty of protecting religious institutions. The merchants contributed to charitable works and made donations to temples irrespective of caste and religion. Patronage of religious institutions was an important source of social and political prestige for prominent individuals and was a means for the allocation of surplus resources.²³⁰ This seems to indicate some interesting feature of medieval Indian society and economy. Those organisations which were mainly commercial in character were not completely cut off from other spheres of life. Such practices are seen in other regions also. The involvement of individuals and trading groups in religious institutions was most probably part of a process of legitimisation. On the one hand, the wealth accumulated could be channelised for activities which brought them religious merit. On the other hand the institutions received patronage as well as economic support from the commercial groups. Thus this symbiotic

228. Aimanam Krishnakaimal (ed) Unniccirutēvi, Caritam, Gadyam, 26, p.39.

229. Payyannūr Paṭtu, v. 93. p.29.

230. Cynthia Talbot 'Temples, Donors and Gifts Pattern of Patronage in Thirteenth Century South India', Journal of Asian Studies, vol.50, No.2, May 1991.

relation between the trading organisations and the religious institutions was a mutual benefit oriented arrangement. This arrangement was strengthened and regularised by religious sanction and social practice.

In Kerala sometimes the merchant associations were entrusted with the duty of probing into the cases of dereliction of duties by the temple functionaries and other obstructions to various rituals.²³¹ The merchant organisations often seems to function with an institutional base. This base was often temples or churches. These organisations had military power and had their own troops also. It seems that during this period the state system had not developed much or did not have enough resources to give protection to individual traders or caravans. So the merchant organisations developed their own forces and sometimes hired the same. Often armed men accompanied caravans. It is in this background that the Virakkals of Wayanad, found along the old trade route from Wayanad to Karnataka become significant.²³²

231. The Vellayani Inscriptions of Vira Rama Varma (1196 AD). The Valaṅciārs along with the Six Hundred was to inquire into the matter of making default of payment for the daily offering of rice and ghee to the temple. TAS vol.II and III part I, pp.35-37.

232. Such Virakkals are now preserved in the Heritage Museum of Wayanad, inaugurated in September, 1996.

The process through which the complex of religious commercial amalgam came into existence is not very clear from the sources which are available in Kerala. The troops of merchant caravans were called erivīrās or munnaivīras and the regions protected by them came to be known as Erivira pattaṇās.²³³

In the inscriptions of Kerala, the names of the officers of merchant organisations are not seen. But the counterparts of these associations in other parts of South India had separately designated officers. For example under the Chalukyas the mercantile corporation had officers like Vadda Vyavahāri and Pattaṇaswāmi meaning a caravan leader and administrative officer of the nagaram respectively.²³⁴ The mercantile corporations had their own seals. The TPCP enjoins that after the collection of duties of each day the Maṇigrāmam was to affix seal on the account.²³⁵

By the end of the 13th Century the merchant organisations seem to have lost their prominence. Recent European historiography finds a cause-effect relation

233. K.R. Venkata Rama Aiyar, 'Medieval Trade, Craft and Merchant Guilds' Journal of Indian History, vol. XXV, Part 3, December, 1947, No.5.

234. G.S. Dikshit op.cit.

235. TPCP, II plate, line 35.

between the disappearance of these merchant organisations on the one side and the deepening of the Muslim control over the trade of South India.²³⁶ However further evidence is necessary in support of support this view in Kerala. The change was perhaps brought about by some internal transformations including the decline of exchange relations in the inland areas. Though there was a sharp rise in the volume of sea-borne trade, it was mainly in the hands of the Arabs and the Chinese in the medieval period. One of the reasons for the decline of the merchant organisations was perhaps the fragmentation of political power and the rise of local ruling families into prominence.

III.11 ITEMS OF TRADE

Before concluding our discussion on the trade of the Malabar coast during A.D. 800-1200, it seems quite justifiable to examine the main items that were transacted here. Though lack of statistical data precludes one from quantifications, the fragmentary evidences from inscriptions and the scattered references in literature help us to arrive at an overall picture of the major items transacted during this period. The location of Kerala as an entrepot in the east west trade made her a meeting

236. Burton Stein, Coromandal Trade in Medieval South India, All the Kings Mana, Madras, 1984, p.2.

ground of the goods destined to other regions and countries also. The items exchanged at transit points as well the local market are quite often mixed together, thus preventing one from arriving at concrete conclusions. At the same time the items referred to in the temple inscriptions give us an idea about the items of local transaction. With the help of the available data the following grouping of selected items can be made. The Geneiza letters have been eminently useful in arriving at the conclusions here.²³⁷

SPICES

Pepper was the most celebrated item of export. The early medieval geographers have made frequent references to the pepper producing areas of Malabar.²³⁸ There are clear cut evidences for the export of pepper by the Jewish merchants to Aden. The price of pepper per bāhr at Aden was 34 dinars.²³⁹ (1 bāhr was 300 rātī). In internal transaction the price of pepper was 10 nali of paddy per one nali of pepper.²⁴⁰ The Kārimi merchants of

237. S.D. Goitein, From Aden to India - Specimen of Correspondence of India. Traders in the Twelfth Century', JESHO, vol. XXIII, Part I and II, pp.4-66.

238. Ibn Khurdad Bih, Ibnul Faquih, and Idrissi. S.M.H. Nainar, op.cit. p.201.

239. S.D. Goitein. op.cit.

240. Tiruvalla Inscriptions, op.cit.

Egypt were specialists in pepper trade. They got pepper from Yemen, which in turn received it from Indian merchants. The Kārimi merchants supplied pepper to the Mediteranean countries.²⁴¹ Cardamom, Cinnamon and clove, the native products of the land also were much in transaction.

METALS

Iron, steel, and copper formed the major metals that were transacted in overseas trade. There was no dearth of iron ore in Kerala and the rich deposits of lemonite and heamalite were found along the hillocks.²⁴² Processed iron was exported in the form of woots cakes of one inch thickness and five inches diameter.²⁴³ The Jews were the main promoters of iron export. The price of iron per bahr at Aden was 17 dinars.

Vessels loaded with copper, tin, lead etc. frequently reached the Malabar coast. Copper from the West was handled by the Jews.²⁴⁴ Later sources

241. Walter J. Fischel, 'The Spice Trade in Mamuluk Egypt, Contribution to the Economic History of Medieval Islam, JESHO, vol. I, 1958, 161.

242. N.R. Banerjee, The Iron Age in India, Delhi, 1963, pp.190-91.

243. S.D. Goitein op.cit. p.58.

244. Ibid. p.39.

convincingly prove that copper and allied metals were brought from the East by the Chinese.²⁴⁵ The price of copper inclusive of transportation cost was 415 Maliki dinars per 5 bahr of copper.²⁴⁶ Thus it can be seen that low priced high bulk commodities also figured in the export list of Kerala.

INCENSE AND MEDICINES

Akil, camphor and sandal were the major items of this category. Akil and sandal were export items whereas camphor was among the goods imported by the Chinese. Akil is a resin used both in rituals and medicines. Akil figures prominently in the accounts of Arab geographers. The price of Akil was two hundred dinār per mann.²⁴⁷ Camphor is another resin used widely as an incense for ritual purposes and in medicines. In internal transactions the price of camphor was 10 nāli of paddy per kāṇam.²⁴⁸ Sandal, an indigenous item was abundantly available in Kerala and it was used in rituals as well as in preparing medicine.

245. See the section on Chinese Trade in IV.2.

246. S.D. Goitein, op.cit. p.60.

247. S.D. Goitein, op.cit.

248. See table No. V.4. in chap. V.

Tabāshīr a product from bamboo, was a very precious item of export. It was used as an ingredient of medicine and one mithqual of tabāshīr was worth one hundred mithqual of gold.²⁴⁹

MISCELLANEOUS

Items like arecanut, betel leaves, myrobalam and Brazil wood, are included in this category. Apart from its wide indigenous use arecanut had a ready market outside Kerala. It was a regular item handled by the Jews. Its price, according to the Tiruvalla inscriptions, was 15 parai of paddy for 10,000 betel leaves and proportionate quantity of arecanuts.²⁵⁰ Mylorabalam used both as a medicine and dying agent also figured in the list of transactions.²⁵¹ Brazilwood, used as a colouring material, has been frequently referred to by the Arab geographers as an item of export.²⁵²

It is interesting to note that rice does not figure in the list of imports to Kerala during this period. At the same time it is clear from the peculiar

249. S.M.H. Nainar, op.cit p.190. Tabashir was among the items handled by marine merchants. We have not been able to identify correctly this material.

250. See Table III-3-in chapter V.

251. S.M.H. Nainar, op.cit p.200

252. Ibid. p.191.

geographical pattern that our soil was not so conducive to paddy cultivation. Rice, however, was the staple food of the region and naturally the question arises how sufficient quantity of rice to cater to the demands of the population was obtained. Invariably there might have been regular flow of rice from other parts of India as well as from overseas countries. We have evidences for the same in the second phase of our study. Equally important is to note that certain items of import to Malabar coast included paper dates, mats and mailing and items of clothing.²⁵³ These articles might have been exclusively meant for the foreigners who lived on the various parts of the Malabar coast.

The trade in horses for which the Kutirai Cettis of Kerala were famous had its beginning during this period. We have inscriptional and literary references for the same in the century immediately following this phase of our study.

III.12 The foregoing analysis reveals a major shift in trade. Trade became systematised when compared with the earlier epoch as is evident from the development of administered trade and mercantile corporations. An

253. S.D. Goitein, op.cit, p.60.

important feature of this period was the slow monetisation process.²⁵⁴ The advent of money restructured foreign trade. Along with the development of trade the urban centres flourished. Kollam exhibits the traits of a typical medieval South Indian nagaram. The existence of divergent communities reflects the cosmopolitan nature of the life in nagaram. The institutionalisation of trade coincided with the development of nagaram. The powers and privileges enjoyed by the nagaram make it equal to the a feudal lord, thereby literally feudalising the whole pattern of trade. Use of systematic weights and measures, collection of tolls and customs, keeping of records, maintenance of warehouses and active interference of the government in the administration of trade and the development powerful merchant organisations were the important features of trade both at Kollam and Kodungallur. Literary and epigraphical records discuss the traders both at Kollam and Kodungallur. We came across only foreigners as traders engaged in overseas trade, even though the names of Kerala traders are referred to in records associated with temples in other parts of South India. The Jews, Christians and Islamic people were the important foreign people who had been professional traders in Kerala. In the beginning these communities formed trade and cultural diasporas, described

254. Aspects of coins and money are analysed in chapter V.

as part of Chapter IV. Along with the major trading centres of Kollam, Kodungallur and Pantalayani Kollam, minor centres like Matilakam, Matayi, Irinjalakuda, and Kutavur also flourished during this period.

Towards the end of the period under discussion a change was visible in the form of the disappearance of the trading organisations which were very powerful in the early years and a corresponding strengthening of the Muslim traders. The former can be explained in terms of the political fragmentation which resulted in additional burden on the commercial activities. Whereas the latter was due to the continued importance of sea borne trade which was practically in the hands of the Arabs. These Arabs conducted trade through their middlemen.

TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES IN KERALA (A. D. 800 - 1500)

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CHAPTER IV

TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES (A.D. 1200-1500) -

THE SECOND PHASE

IV.1. By the beginning of the 13th century Kerala witnessed remarkable changes in the political set up and economic growth. While the disintegration of the kingdom of Perumāls and the consequent emergence of independent swarūpams¹ formed the major political scenario, the expansion of trade was the most visible factor in the economic field. The growth of trade was preceded by the expansion of settlements.² New market centres and ports also emerged. In the wake of the development of trade new trading centres like Kozhikode came into prominence. The rulers who held sway over such centres ascended to political supremacy. Along with new centres of trade old centres also flourished. But by the middle of the 14th

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1. Swarūpams were ruling families which came to control the nādu divisions. They were large joint families whose political authority was organised on the basis of Kūru of order of seniority.
 2. New Settlements were Tiruvattur figuring in the Tiruvattur inscription, ICI, B-16, Kilimannur mentioned in the Kilimanur inscriptions, TAS, vol. V. pp 78-85 and Venganad referred to in the Sukasandēsam, Part I, v.62, p.67 and several others.

century Kodungallur suffered an eclipse following certain sudden geographical changes.³ This was followed by the development of Kochi as a port-town. Soon Kochi became one of the major port towns of Malabar coast. A marked feature of the trade of this period was the gradual disappearance of mercantile corporations like the Mañigrāmam, Añcuvannam and Valañciārs which were very active during the first phase. Some of them were functioning in the 13th century as attested by stray references in inscriptions and literary works. Along with the progress of navigation and overseas trade, ship building industry also flourished. The Arabs and the Chinese dominated the trade in Indian Ocean, but after the 14th century the Chinese trade in Kerala declined and the Arabs became supreme in Indian Ocean. Neither the Arabs nor the Chinese demanded the monopoly of trade. But the whole situation changed with the advent of the Portuguese who wanted to oust the Arabs from Indian Ocean and establish their supremacy. Yet another important feature of the trade of this period was the increased use of coins and money. Various coins with their smaller denominations are mentioned and referred to in contemporary inscriptions and literature.

3. The flood of 1341 as a result of which the port of Kodungallur got silted and the new island of Vaipin emerged.

Trade of this period is to be analysed at two levels - local trade and long distance trade, both overland and overseas. Local trade was mainly in the articles of daily use. The development of new settlements and the expansion of agriculture point to an increase in population. An important feature of this population growth was the increase in non-agricultural people as is revealed in contemporary inscriptions and literature.⁴ The growth of these non-producing classes resulted in a corresponding increase in exchange system. It was the abundance of certain agricultural products and the scarcity of certain others and the rich variety of goods that helped in the growth of markets rather than the surplus in production. The institutional base for the exchange system was the cantās or aññāṭīs or markets. Cantās denotes the venue of the exchange where goods are exhibited for sale and to which buyers, sellers and intermediaries flock. Some of these cantās were day markets and some evening ones. There were weekly markets also. The goods exchanged in these markets were mainly catering to the wants of the day to day life of common man. These goods included the products of the crafts men

4. e.g. The inscriptions of Cokkur, Talakolathur, Kinalur, Porangattiri and Kolathur. See No.13 of 1901, SII vol. VII 173, No.2 of 1901, SII, vol. VII, 161, No. 14 of 1901, SII VII, 174 No.11 of 1901, SII VII, 171 and M.R. Raghava Varier, Keraliyata Caritramānaññal, Sukapuram, 1990, pp.120-121 respectively.

and artisans.⁵ These annāṭīs were a cross section of the economy of the region.

Apart from the regular cantās, seasonal fairs were held in connection with the festivals in religious institutions. Festivals were usually in times of harvest and this provided wider markets for agricultural products. The māmāṅkam festival was famous for its fairs also.⁶ The proliferation of these markets points to the increased exchange of goods, diffusion of money and the importance of exchange system in the life of common man. Kings and chieftains patronised the annāṭīs of their respective regions. For example the king of Venad has been praised as the Lord of Kollam. Infrastructural arrangement for trade as well as regulation of prices remained within the jurisdiction of the rulers.

Long distance overland trade was mainly with the neighbouring Tamilnadu and Karnataka areas. The passes on the western ghats facilitated this. Contemporary literary compositions refer to the traders from different parts of

5. Unniāṭi Caritam, gadyam, 19, pp.47-49.
Unnuṅṅili Sandesam, part I, ślōkās 80-85, pp. 75-76.

6. Māmāṅkam was the great pan Kerala assembly conducted in every twelve years at Tirunavaya on the banks of Bharatapuzha. It lasted for twenty eight days. The president of the assembly assumed a theoretical supremacy over other kings of Kerala.

the sub continent as well as other distant regions, who flocked to the annātīs.⁷

The foreign trade of Kerala has been sea oriented from the very beginning. We get clear information regarding the oceanic trade of Kerala from various foreign accounts and indigenous literature. There are folksongs that depict the seaborne trade and ship building of Malabar.⁸ Oceanic trade and navigation touched the imagination of contemporary poets.⁹ The culture reflected in the Maṅṅapṛavāḷa Kāvyaś is not of a simple agrarian community but of a commercial and urban one.

Allied with seafaring was the building and repair of vessels and there were groups of specialists in this craft, the ōṭāyīs. The wintering port of Pantalayani Kollam was a centre of these ōṭāyīs. Barbosa praises the shipbuilding at Kozhikode.¹⁰ In the boats

7. Unṅiāṭi Caritam, gadyam, 19, p.50. Unnunīli Sandēśam, ślōkāś 63-65. pp.68-69. Ananthapura Varṅṅanam, stanza 94-95.

8. Payyannūr Pāṭṭu, v.35-38, pp.12-13.

9. e.g. In Chandrōtsavam, a medieval Maṅṅapṛavāḷa Kāvyaś, the advent of fortune is compared to the raising of mast, lust to mat, deligence to wind and prudence to ship. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai (ed) Chandrōtsavam, part III, v. 52, p.93 and v. 65. p.96.

10. M.L. Dames (trans.), Book of Duarte Barbosa, vol.II, (1812), Delhi, 1989, p.73.

manufactured in the region of Malabar planks were stiched together. The Arabs preferred the Indian type of sewn boats instead of the nailed ones popular in the Mediterranean.¹¹ Sea faring in Kerala was confined to the lower strata of the society and so it formed little documentation in the literature of the higher strata.¹² These sea men, with all their practical wisdom were nearly illiterate and this also stood in the way of documentation. Foreign traders were stationed along the coastal areas. There were itinerant merchants who collected goods from the producers and sold the same to these foreigners merchants. The cettīs were important among such intinerants. In the absence of reliable records we are not in a position to analyse the activities of these itinerants.

IV.2 Chinese Trade

By the 8th and 9th centuries the Chinese entered the Indian Ocean for trade. The maritime contact of China with Kollam is attested by Sulāyman and Ibn Khurdad

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11. G.F. Howrani, Arab Seafaring in Indian Ocean in the Ancient and Early Medieval Times, New York, 1975, p.96. Vessels were made of stiched planks in order to increase flexibility. In order to encounter rough seas, one had to depend on stiched boats which were more flexible than nailed ones.
 12. Also see B. Arunachalam, "Indigenous Traditions of Indian Navigation with Special Reference to South India", K.S. Mathew (ed), Studies in Martime History, Pondicherry, 1990. pp. 27-30.

Bih.¹³ By the time of Southern Sung dynasty (A.D. 1127-1279) the overseas contact of China and increased much.¹⁴ By the time of the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1279-1368) it was developed further. The Chinese had comparatively advanced knowledge of ship building and navigation. In the Dāo i Shilu (Synoptical Accounts of Foreign Countries), we see the increased knowledge of the Chinese about western seas.¹⁵ The Chinese ships were like large houses with all amenities and were armed against pirates. Friar O' doric of Pordenon who visited China in the 13th century marvels at these ships. Spices, coconut and arecanut of Kerala had great demand in China and the Chinese brought to Kerala coast silk, porcelain, copper, quick silver, tin, lead etc.¹⁶ The increasing prosperity and urbanisation under the Sung dynasty necessitated the import of bulk commodities like cheap cloth, pepper, sugars, etc. apart from items of luxury. The Sung government encouraged mass production ceramic.¹⁷ Kerala

13. See note No. 37, 82, and 83 in chap. III.

14. Also see Jeannette Mirsky (ed.), The Great Chinese Travellers (1964), London, 1974. p.240.

15. Wang Ta-yuan, Dāo-i Shilu, A.D. 1350, translated by W.W. Rockhill, T'oung Pao, XVI, 1916. Also see Hara Prasad Ray, 'China and the Western Ocean in the Fifteenth Century', Sathish Chandra (ed.), Indian Ocean, Delhi, 1989 p.110.

16. Jeannette Mirsky, op.cit, p.242

17. Kenneth Mc Pherson, The Indian Ocean, Delhi, 1993, p.99.

was an entrepot for the Chinese goods in the East-West trade and the merchants from the West, especially the Arabs got Chinese goods from Kerala. Silk and porcelain were brought in abundance for trade. In the early medieval period import had caused considerable drain of gold and silver from China and this made the rulers of the Sung dynasty prohibit the use of precious metals in foreign trade. Instead silk and porcelain were to be bartered for foreign goods.¹⁸ This accounts for the wide spread presence of Chinese porcelain in the centres of Chinese trade along the coast of Kerala. Silk has been fundamental to Chinese tradition and economy. By the time of the Han dynasty (202 B.C. - A.D. 220) silk became an absolute value in itself. Values were calculated in length of silk. It was used as currency.¹⁹ For a long time after the Han dynasty the rulers of China collected tax in the form of silk. This created an oversupply of silk in the state treasury and the Chinese government was eager to spend the same in exchange of foreign goods.²⁰ The Chinese coins were of cheap metals and were not

18. Lizhiyan and Chenwen, Chinese Pottery and Porcelain. Foreign Language Press, Beijing (Eng. trans. Ooyang Caiwei), 1984, p.104.

19. L. Boulnois, The Silk Road, London, 1966, pp. 19-22.

20. Xinru Liu. Ancient India and Ancient China (1988), Delhi, 1994, pp.84-85. Also see Watson, "Back to Gold and Silver", EHR, second series, 20, No.1, 1967, p.21.

preferred by foreign traders. In this circumstance also silk replaced coins.²¹

Marco Polo has testified to the brisk trade between China and Kerala coast. He describes the Chinese ships found at the port of Zaitun which were bound for the Malabar coast. These ships from the East brought copper in ballast, gold, silver, silk, items of clothes, spikenard etc. to the Malabar coast and took with them pepper, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, buckram (a kind of cotton fabric), etc. Marco Polo emphasises that the ships that went to the East from Malabar were ten times to those went to West. Marco Polo also gives an idea about the Chinese ships. The number of their crew ranged from 200 to 300 and every year the Chinese ships carried 5000 to 6000 basket of pepper from Malabar.²²

Ibn Battuta also reveals many details regarding the Chinese ships that called at the ports of Kerala. He found thirteen Chinese ships at the port of Kozhikode. These ships were of three kinds - juñks, sau and kākam. Juñks were large ships while saus were of medium size. Kākams were small ships. Junks were so large to have

21. Xinru Liu, op.cit pp. 70-71.

22. Book of Marco Polo, vol. III, Chapter XXV. See Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices.... pp. 183-84.

sails from three to twelve. There were separate cabins for the passengers and their family, traders, etc. The oars were so large that each needed about fifteen oarsmen. Each of the ships was served by 1000 men of whom 600 were sailors and 400 soldiers. The commander of the ship was like an amīr with retinue including armed body guards and musicians.²³ The soldiers in the ship must have been for fear of pirates. The description of the ships agrees with the one given by Marco Polo. The Chinese junks of the 13th and 14th centuries were technologically the best vessels of the period.²⁴

In the 15th century under the leadership of Grand Eunuch Cheng Ho, the Chinese emperor Kublaikhan sent many voyages to the West. Most of them called at the ports of Malabar coast. These missions were sponsored by the emperor and were entrusted with the eunuchs because being the employees at the court they would be personally known to the emperor. This 'yellow gate', the Department of Eunuchs, was the corner stone of trade.²⁵ The Confucian tradition did not like trade. But the government

23. Mahdhi Hussain, The Rehla of Ibn Battuta, pp.190-91.

24. Simon Digby, 'Maritime trade in India', Tapan Ray Choudhuri and Irfan Habib (ed) Cambridge Economic History of India, vol.I, Delhi, 1991, p. 131.

25. Jeannette Mirsky, op.cit. p.237

encouraged trade as it brought much profit.²⁶ So trade ventures were undertaken in the form of voyages for bringing tribute. One such series of voyages for tributes were led by Cheng Ho under the auspices of the Ming court between 1405 and 1433. The need to keep the navy active, desire to have exotic and precious goods and to increase imperial prestige were also among the motives of these missions. Tributes were in the form of presents and valuables, and goods like timber, copper, sulphur and spices which were not produced in China.²⁷ Cheng Ho made seven voyages in twenty years and called at thirty countries. Each voyage consisted of a fleet of 100 to 200 ships.²⁸ In China foreign trade was the monopoly of the government. Cheng Ho and his associates were to bring back tributes as a token of friendships and information about the land they visited. In 1407 Cheng Ho visited Kozhikode. The accounts left by the associates of Cheng Ho, Ma Huan and Fei Hsin have been of inestimable value for analysing the Chinese trade on Malabar coast. At China, two inscriptions were erected by Cheng Ho himself, one at Liujiagang and the other at Changla, in the Fujian province in connection with these voyages. They are of

26. Also see Patricia Buckley Ebrey (ed.), Chinese Civilization and Culture, New York, 1981, pp. 23-25.

27. C.P. Fitzgerald, The Southern Expansion of Chinese People, Delhi, 1972, p.87.

28. Haraprasad Ray, op.cit., pp.116-117.

great importance, in giving authentic information about these missions. Cheng Ho's party consisted of 100 large ships, each measuring 143 metres in length. The first three voyages did not go beyond Kozhikode. Kozhikode and Kollam are said to have sent their ambassadors to China. During the second voyage these ambassadors were brought back. A memorial stone was installed for the Chinese emperor at Kozhikode, in the heart of the city.²⁹

Ma Huan gives the details of Chinese trade at Kozhikode. The Chinese also were drawn to pepper. They weighed pepper in terms of Po-ho (bahr). One bahr was equal to 400 chin of China. The price of one Po-ho of pepper was ninety or hundred gold coins. Five hundred grams of pepper was equal to more than thirteen pounds.³⁰ Even though Chinese trade was a concern of the government, no official trading companies were formed, as in the case of later European age.³¹ There were settlements of South Indian traders in the Chinese city of Quanzhou, the 'Zaitun' of Marco Polo in the province of Fukein, which

29. Ibid. pp. 117-119.

30. J.V.G. Mills (ed. and trans.), Ying Yai Sheng-Lan (1453) of Ma Huan, Hakluyt Society, 1970, p.135 and notes no. 1 and 8. For further details see the section on Chinese trade at Kozhikode below.

31. Haraprasad Ray. op.cit p.122.

had traders from Kerala also.³² One Shi-ban (Samanthan - perhaps an official of the Zamorin), accompanied Cheng Ho to China. He was employed as a judge in the Nanking garrison. On return he was awarded with the military rank of Vice Battalion Commander by the emperor Xuande.³³

There is no instance of a struggle between the Chinese and the people of Malabar. There was no attempt on their part to alter the order of the existing trade in Malabar. They accepted the rules of the market system in Malabar. This was in contrast with the Portuguese, who by a show of strength tried to monopolise the trade on Malabar coast. But the Chinese had stationed garrisons in South East Asia and interfered in the affairs of the Majapahith Kingdom.³⁴

After Chang-Ho's mission the Chinese began to withdraw from Indian Ocean. The menace from Japanese piracy, poor return from maritime trade and the

32. Haraprasad Ray, "Indian Settlements in China - An Exploration of the Phenomenon of Indian Diaspora from 1015 (the Cola period) to 1487 (End of Cheghua Reign in China)", K.S. Mathew (ed) Indian Ocean and Cultural Interactions (A.D. 1400-1800), Pondicherry, 1996 pp. 52-74.

33. Ibid. pp. 71-72.

34. Haraprasad Ray, "China and the Westrn Ocean in the Fifteenth Century", pp. 121-122.

government's suspicion of the traders' loyalty were responsible for the same.³⁵

Contemporary indigenous literature contain references to Chinese trade. Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam mentions the Chinese ships at the port of Kollam.³⁶ Uṇṇiāti Caritam says that among the merchants who flocked to the Sriparvatam āṇṇāti near Mattam there were Chinese traders also.³⁷

Certain place names of Malabar coast remind one of the trade relationship with China. At Kozhikode near the silk street there is a field called cīnacōṭṭa meaning the Chinese fort and at Kappad there is one cīnaccēri meaning Chinese settlement. At Koyilandy which is about 25 Kms north of Kozhikode there a cīnappally. At Pantalayani Kollam also there is a cīnapally. Among the Chinese who came to Kerala there were Muslims and the mosques with prefixes cina become meaningful in this context. The proximity of the cīna cōṭṭa to silk street also is a pointer towards the trade in Chinese silk at Kozhikode.

35. C.P. Fitzgerald, op.cit pp.87-88.

36. Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam, part I, verse 70, p.70.

37. Uṇṇiāti Caritam, gadyam 19, p.50.

Various kinds of Chinese ceramics have been found out from the coastal towns of Kerala, especially from Kollam, Kodungallur, and Pantalayani Kollam. The excavation conducted under the auspices of the Department of Archaeology, Cochin state have brought to light Chinese pottery and potsherds from Kodungallur.³⁸ Rich varieties of porcelain have been obtained from Pantalayani Kollam and Kollam.³⁹ The earliest date of these has been calculated to be in the 13th century. The wide distribution of Chinese ceramics at Pantalayani Kollam shows that the view that Chinese ceramics were popular only among the Muslims is incorrect.⁴⁰

The Chinese trade has direct impacts upon Kerala society. Reports of the excavations show that the Chinese porcelain was widespread along the coast, showing they reached the common people also and not among the higher strata of the society alone. Chinese trade did penetrate in to the sections of the common people also. Among the imports from China goods like silk were for catering to the needs of the wealthy. But this was not the case with

38. See note No. 130 and 131 in chapter III.

39. The recent explorations along the coast of Kerala by a team of scholars from the University of Tokyo and various universities of South India have brought to light remains of pottery that speak eloquently of Chinese trade. See note No. 87 below,

40. Also see TOCS, No: 36, p.7.

articles like camphor. Camphor was used as an incense in the temples and reached the innermost villages also. Among the goods brought to Malabar coast by the Chinese ships were copper, tin etc. Copper was widely used for making pots and lamps and other materials by itself and in the manufacture of bronze and brass. For this a group of craftsmen, the bronzesmiths, developed in Kerala. The livelihood of this section was closely related with the Chinese imports of copper, tin, lead etc. Copper and such metals were catering to the needs of the middle class. Chinese trade of the medieval period has its bearing not only on the economy but also on the society and culture.

In the back ground of the East-West trade dominated by the Muslims on the one hand and the Chinese on the other an attempt is made to analyse the form and functions of the important trading centres of Kerala during A.D. 1200-1500, in the ensuing pages. Along with the old centres of Kollam and Kodungallur, Kozhikode had developed into a famous trading centre by this time. Kochi and a number of other exchange centres flourished showing the commercial prosperity of Malabar coast.

IV.3.i. Kozhikode

The port town of Kozhikode⁴¹ was synonymous with Malabar in later medieval period. It became famous as a great emporium of trade by the 14th century and has been commercially important through the centuries. It was among the most popular port towns of medieval world and was noted for its excellent facilities of trade and powerful and prosperous business community.

Kozhikode does not figure as a trading centre in the early medieval period when Kollam and Kodungallur had become famous as emporia of trade. Marco Polo who voyaged through the Malabar belt in the 13th century, does not refer to Kozhikode. Arab and Chinese sources furnish valuable information about the crops and trade of Kozhikode. The details regarding the trading centre from

41. Qualiquit of Arab records Kulifo and Ku-li of Chinese and Calicut of modern records.

Situated between 11°10' North Latitude and 75°45' East Longitude, at present Kozhikode is the head quarters of Kozhikode District. It is on a straight coast line near the mouth of Kallai river, an open roadstead and extends from Elathur in the north to Kadalundi in the south. See A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteers, Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram, 1962, 'p.2. According to tradition the last of the Kulasekhara rulers partitioned the kingdom among his kith and kin and gave a small tract of land consisting of Kokozhikode and Chullikkadu to the two Eradi brothers Manichan and Vikkiran with the injunction to die kill and seize', and it was these two areas that became famous as Kozhikode. See Herman Gundert (ed.) Keralōlpatti (1843), Balan Publishers, Thiruvananthapuram, 1961, p.81.

indigenous literature is corroborated by the accounts of foreign travellers Arabs, Chinese and European.

Like any other pre-modern town Kozhikode also was greatly influenced by ecological factors. As the coast line was open, it was not safe as a wintering port. But the presence of mud banks along the sea board increased the facilities of the port. Rivers endowed the town with cheap means of communication with different parts of the region and access to its hinterlands. Along the coast line of Kozhikode there were extensive areas below the sea level. Sea water would be trapped in these low lying fields to make salt. Thus the salt manufacturing on the area was facilitated by nature itself.⁴² On one side of the town is the sea, and the other three sides are surrounded by a row of hills at a distance in a semi circular way. These hills which are 16 to 400 ft. high from the sea level are like a fort built by nature.⁴³

There are substantial proofs for the existence of forts and kalaris⁴⁴ around the town of Kozhikode. These

42. M.R. Raghava Varier, "Some place Names in and around Calicut Suggesting Salt Industry," Studies in Indian Place Names, vol. III, Mysore, 1982, pp. 39-45.

43. N.M. Nambuthiri, Sāmūtiri Caritrattile Kāṇāpurāṇṇal, Sukapuram, 1987, pp. 52-53.

44. Traditional military training centres.

forts were devices for defence consisting of a structure made probably of mud and a kaḷari for military training. At Kalathinkunnu there was a kaḷari. At the present second railway gate there was another, the paṭiññāre kaḷari.

The town of Kozhikode was on a slightly elevated area which slopes towards the east. This location of the town was strategically important as one could have an overview of the entire area including the river from there. The town was fortified and the four sides of the fortified area are traceable.⁴⁵ Place names like Kottaparambu (compound of the fortress) and Kallai (the stone paved street) etc. point to the old fortified port town.

There were separate streets⁴⁶ and areas of settlement for certain artisan groups and traders. The area called cinacotta near the silk street is particularly interesting in the light of the Chinese trade and the transactions in silk. The Kalavāṇiya teru denotes the settlements of potters. At the present Panniyankara there were settlements of caliyās (weavers).

45. One side was at Muthalakkulam, another at the present buildings of Manualsons, another near the subway at Palayam and another near the Purushotam and Company.

46. The Silk street, Sweet Meat Street, etc.

Kozhikode with its forts and palace reflects the nature of a medieval European town. The Kalavāniya teru, Cakaravāniya teru, the festival of mamaṅkam and the post of Kōya of Kozhikode - all are meaningful pointers. The structure of the town resembled that of Kaveriperumpattanam which was in the shape of a square centred at two poles.⁴⁷ Based on the theories of the town planning of the medieval period, Kozhikode was a well planned one. According to Niccolo Conti the town was eight miles in circumference and was a noble emporium of trade for all countries.⁴⁸ Portuguese were greatly impressed with the town. To them it was greater than Lisbon. It is recorded that the town was enwalled and endowed with a long beach.⁴⁹

The hinterlands of Kozhikode were rich not only in cash crops and forest resources but also in minerals. The areas of Mannur, Cheruvannur and Chaliyam were endowed with fine quality clay and this made Kozhikode a centre of the potters. Eliot mountain near Chelannur had iron deposits. In different parts of the Kozhikode and Wayanad districts there were gold deposits. Depending on these, there developed craftsmen and artisan groups.

47. N.M. Nambuthiri, op.cit, pp. XII-XV. See map No.7.

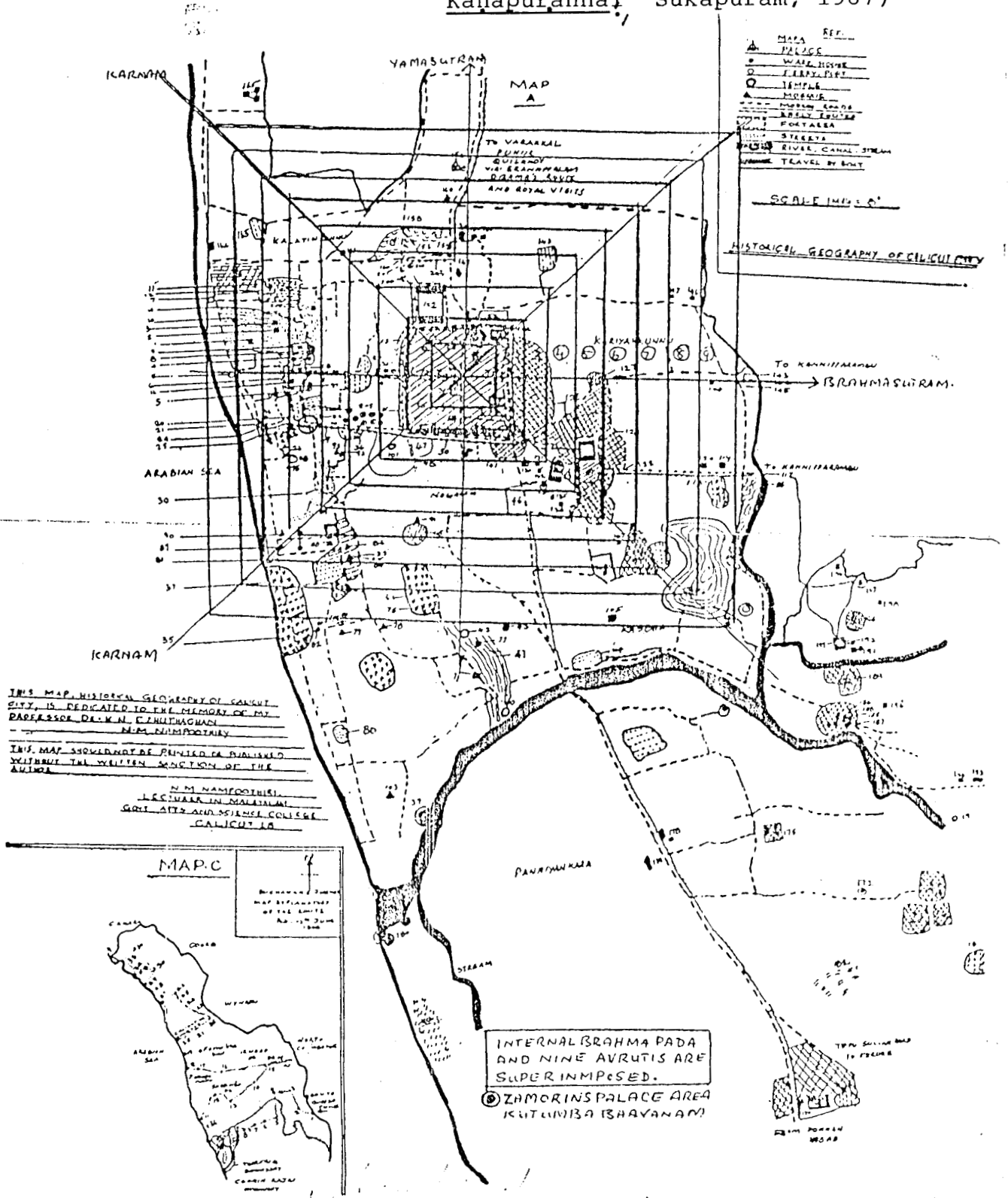
48. R.H. Major (ed), 'Travels of Niccolo Conti', India in the Fifteenth Century, p.20.

49. G.R. Crone, The Discovery of the East, London 1972, p.25.

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF CALICUT CITY

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Note: This Map is only to show the shape of the city in the form of a square centred at two poles. Note the nine avrutis also.

The political and commercial ascending of Kozhikode is to be traced back to her conquest by the rulers of Nediyruppu. Kozhikode was part of Polanad ruled by the Poralatiri. Polanad with its port at Kozhikode was noted for its overseas trade. The main item of trade was the spices part of which was from the near by Ernad region ruled by the Nediyruppu Swarūpam. Ernad was land locked which deprived her of the benefits of overseas trade. Naturally the Chief of Ernad wanted an out let to the sea and the port of Kozhikode. By means of prolonged war the rulers of Nediyrupu Swarūpam conquered Polanad. It is these rulers of Nediyruppu who became the Zamorins of Kozhikode.⁵⁰

According to legend the two places granted to the founders of the kingdom of Kozhikode were Kokozhikode and Chullikkad. These places are not merely legendary, but historical. At present they are in the Kasba Amsom of Kozhikode Taluk. Chullikkad is called as Chullikkad Patanna in Settlement Register.⁵¹ Salt panning has been the important economic activity in the area.⁵²

50. K.V. Krishna Iyyer, The Zamorins of Calicut, Kozhikode, 1935, pp, 82-83.

51. Survey field No: 5, Settlement Register - A, Kasba Amsom, Kozhikode Taluk.

52. This has been testified by Buchanon. F. Buchanon, Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, vol. II (1807) Delhi, 1988, p.479. ff.

It has been suggested by some investigation that an exchange node emerged at Kozhikode due to the presence of salt pans. Towards the east of Kozhikode there are remains of megalithic settlements. It can be inferred that these megalithic people obtained the necessary item of salt from the coastal areas and they must have exchanged paddy or other agricultural products for the same.⁵³ As the soil was not conducive to the growth of paddy Kozhikode had always been in scarcity of the staple food. This helped the growth of the exchange centre.

Merchants from various countries frequented Kozhikode and one of the chief reasons for the brisk trade was the safety and security in the town. Medieval navigators have mentioned the threat of pirates along the coast of Malabar.⁵⁴ But at Kozhikode the traders were safe. The Zamorin had taken effective measures to provide protection to mariners and traders and their merchandise.⁵⁵ Ibn Battuta is full of praise for the protection accorded to the merchants at Kozhikode. He describes how even if there was a ship wreck the law full

53. See note No. 42, above and No.25 in chapter II.

54. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, (ed.) , Foreign Notices of
..... pp. 182-183.

55. Logan, Malabar Manual, p.319.

proprietors could collect what ever were thrown up by the sea.⁵⁶

Kozhikode was famous as a centre of Chinese trade. Ibn Battuta gives an eye-witness account of the Chinese ships at the port of Kozhikode. According to Ibn Battuta Kozhikode was one of the chief ports of Malabar in which merchants from all parts of the world are found. He also describes the envious position enjoyed by the Muslim traders at Kozhikode. Ibn Battuta speaks of the merchant chiefs and a great ship owner who possessed great riches and many ships that are sent to different parts of India, China and Yemen. He also refers to the brisk Chinese trade at Kozhikode.⁵⁷

The Chinese sources reveal the nature of trade at Kozhikode. Wang Ta-yuan describes the pepper trade. Pepper was stored in public godowns. Pepper was weighed in terms of bähr (po-ho which was of 375 catties of weight). The customs dues was two tenths. Wang Ta-yuan mentions rose water, jack fruit, coral, pearl, frankincense. etc. as the other articles transacted at the market. He refers to the ship load of fine horses

56. Mahdhi Hussain (ed), op.cit p.192.

57. Ibid. pp. 188-191.

imported to Kozhikode from the West. The Chinese traveller also refers to the import of rice from Orissa.⁵⁸

Fei Hsin has recorded that the market was on the sea shore. He also refers to the pepper godowns. Fei Hsin also speaks of the horses imported from the west which were worth hundreds of thousands of gold coins. According to him the goods transacted by the Chinese at Kozhikode were gold, silver, coloured satin, blue and white porcelain, beads, musk, quick silver and camphor.⁵⁹

Ma Huan gives details regarding the various aspects of trade at Kozhikode.⁶⁰ When a ship of cargo arrives at Kozhikode the king's officers would examine the same for fixing the prices. These officers would be a chief and a cetti. They would discuss the matter with the commander of the ship and between the two parties there would be a broker. A day would be chosen for fixing the price. Price of each article brought by the foreigners would be fixed one by one. When the price is fixed an agreement would be written, stating the amount of the price. The price thus fixed would never be changed. The

58. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices pp. 294-95.

59. Ibid. p. 298.

60. J.V.G. Mills (ed), op.cit pp. 136-145.

wealthy men in the town would come with their precious stones and the like and the price of the same would be calculated. Chinese hemp silk was given in exchange of native products. Calculation were made by using the fingures of both hands and feet.⁶¹ The gold coin of paṇam and silver coin of tāram were in circulation and the king used gold of 60% purity to mint coins. Ma Huan also gives an account of the weights used at the market. A pair of scales were used for testing comparative weights. The people of Kozhikode also made silk out of silk worms. A length of 12 feet and 2.9 inches of silk was sold for one hundred gold coins.⁶²

Ma Huan gives details of pepper trade. When the pepper gets ripened pepper collectors would come and collect and take the same to official store houses. The duty was imposed according to the selling price. Each poho of pepper was sold at two hundred gold coins. It has been calculated that the price of pepper at Calicut was 34% more than at Kochi⁶³ The cettis transacted in precious stones and pearls. They manufactured coral

61. Ibid. pp. 140-141.

62. Ibid. p.142.

63. Ibid. pp. 142-143. One po-ho = 1 bhār = 300 rātī or pounds.

beads.⁶⁴ The sales would be supervised by kings officers and revenues collected. From the description of Ma Huan it is clear that there was strict government supervision on trade. The spice merchants insisted on payment in gold and silver. The principal means of exchange was Egyptian dinārs. Venetian and Genoan ducats were also in circulation.⁶⁵

Abdr Razzak who visited Kozhikode in the 15th century speaks of the safe harbour, trustworthy nature of the people and the wealthy Muslim traders. By this time the Chinese trade had ended. But the seafaring people were called 'Chini Bachims'. Goods were brought to Kozhikode from Abyssinia, Zindbad, and Zañsibar.⁶⁶ From Kozhikode vessels continuously sailed for Mecca. The bulk of cargo taken was pepper. 1/40 of the selling price of an article was given to the government as duty. Abdr Razzak also notes that pirates did not dare to attack the vessels of Kozhikode and at the market of the port everything was available.⁶⁷ Niccolo Conti refers to

64. Ibid. p. 136.

65. G.R. Crone, op.cit., p.35.

66. R.H. Major (ed.) op.cit. 'Journey of Abdr Razzak', pp.13-14.

67. Ibid. p.19.

pepper and other spices at the port.⁶⁸ Barbosa, in the beginning of the 16th century describes the ship building and trade at Kozhikode. Keeled ships of 1000-1200 bāhr weight were built in the dockyards of the town. Every year ten to fifteen of these ships sailed to Red Sea, Aden, and Mecca. Goods were taken to Cairo, Alexandria and Venice. The goods listed by Barbosa includes pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, tamarind, canafistula, precious stones, seed pearls, abergeries, aloeswood, cotton cloths, copper, quick silver coral, coloured velvets rose water, gold, silver, etc. Barbosa specially notices the presence of Gujarati traders at Kozhikode⁶⁹ Indigenous literature also refers to the splendour and glory of Kozhikode.⁷⁰

Regarding the content of the trading community there were Muslims, both indigenous and foreign, ceṭṭīs, and Gujaratis. Our sources do not mention indigenous trading community. Being the capital city Kozhikode had an affluent society consisting of the royal family, chiefs, officers, soldiers, men of arts and letters etc. The local demands arising from these section added to the

68. Ibid. 'Travels of Nicolo Conti' p.19.

69. M.L. Dames, (trans.) Book of Duarte Barbosa, vol. II, pp.73-77.

70. Unṇunīli Sandēṣam, part I, v. 124, pp.97-98 and Kōkila Sandēṣam, v. 62, 65, 66 and 67.

development of the exchange centre. Kozhikode has been famous and an important centre of Islamic diaspora and the Muslim settlements stimulated the development of the area as an urban centre.

IV.3.ii Kollam

Kollam continued to be a prosperous trading centre during this phase also. The glory of the town was praised by contemporary poets. In a Sanskrit Sandēṣa Kāvya it has been styled as the gem among cities to which traders from all parts of the world longed to come.⁷¹ The town was so prosperous that it has been a measuring rod to compare the glory of other towns, in the hands of the Maṇipravāla poets. Thus Mattam aṅṅāṭi is described as the one that excells the glory of Kollam and⁷² Thirumaruthur as winning of over Kollam in prosperity.⁷³ In order to show the prosperity of the aṅṅāṭi of Karianattukavu it is described as the one that defeated Kollam and Kozhikode in glory.⁷⁴ The town has been praised as the capable of winning over Amrapuri.⁷⁵ There

71. Śuka Sandēṣam, v. 54 and 56, pp. 59-61.

72. Unṅiāṭi Caritam, gadyam, 19 p.47.

73. Unṅiacci Caritam, gadyam 4, p.17.

74. Unnunīli Sandēṣam, v. 124, pp. 98-99.

75. Ibid. v. 69 and 71, pp. 70-71.

is no need to describe Kollam as beautiful or magnificent, the very name will do. There is no city like Kollam in the fourteen worlds. The poet also refers to the ships from overseas countries like China at the vast port of Kollam.⁷⁶ This reminds one of the description of the port of Kozhikode by Ibn Battuta.⁷⁷

Kollam figures in the accounts of foreign travellers as an important port of Malabar coast. Yakut, Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta speak of the brisk trade at Kollam. Yakut mentions the goods associated with Kollam, like aloeswood, camphor, resin and bark of trees.⁷⁸ Abul Fida has recorded that it was from Kollam that travellers set sail for Aden and that there was a separate quarter for Muslims in the city.⁷⁹ Marco Polo testifies to the presence of many ships at the harbour of Saitun destined for Kollam. He describes the products exported from this town especially brazil wood, pepper and indigo. He stresses the fact that pepper was not a forest product but a crop regularly cultivated. He also describes the manufacture of indigo and the export of the same to the

76. Ibid. v. 70, p.70.

77. Mahdhi Hussain (ed.), op.cit p.187.

78. S.M.H. Nainar, Arab Geographers Knowledge of Southern India, Madras, 1942, p.40, 181 and 195.

79. Ibid. p.48.

West. Among the other items of exports was buckram, a kind of cotton fabrics. The merchants from Manzi, Arabia and Levant came to Kollam for trade and amassed wealth. Marco Polo also testifies to the presence of trading communities of Jews and Christians at Kollam.⁸⁰

Ibn Battuta describes Kollam as one of the most beautiful places in Malabar with magnificent bazaars. The merchants of the town, are so wealthy that one of them could buy a ship with everything in it. Ibn Battuta also speaks of the well established Muslim community of Kollam with their own institutions and offices.⁸¹ John De Marignolli who lived for fourteen months at Kollam characterises it as 'a very noble city where the whole world's pepper is produced'. He gives a true description of cultivation and processing of pepper.⁸²

Chinese sources give us information about Kollam. Chau Ju-kua speaks of the goods transacted by the Chinese at Kollam. They included ho-chi silks, porcelain ware, camphor, cloves, sandal wood, cardamom and ghāru wood. Chau Ju-kua also testifies to the use of coins at the markets of Kollam. According to him twelve silver coins

80. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices..... pp.180-81.

81. Mahdhi Hussain, op.cit p.193.

82. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, op.cit. p.286.

were worth a gold coin. Every year ships from Sumatra called at Kollam.⁸³ Chau Ju-kua also testifies to the missions sent to the court of Kublaikhan from Kollam in 1280 and 1286. The envoys from Kollam were received in audience. In 1344 a Chinese mission was sent to Kollam.⁸⁴

Ma Huan refers to the products and coinage of Kollam⁸⁵ The most eloquent testimony to the Chinese trade at Kollam is the pottery and pot shreds obtained from the coastal areas of the town. References have already been made to the circumstances in which the Chinese bartered away porcelin and silk in overseas trade instead of precious metals.⁸⁶ Referencies have also been made to the exploratory works in search of Chinese porcelain along the coast of Kerala. The team of explorers obtained different types of Chinese porcelain like celedon, blue white, brown glazed ware, dehua, and quasi dehua and white yuan pottery. Islamic imitations of the same also have been found out.⁸⁷ Here we recall Friar O' Doric of

83. Ibid. pp. 139-140.

84. Ibid., pp. 152-156.

85. J.V.G. Mills (ed) op.cit. p. 130.

86. See note No. 18 above

87. M.R. Raghava Variar, "Aspects of Urbanisation in Medieval Kerala, The case of Panthalayani Kollam", p.24.

Pordenon who wonders at the variety and abundance of the wares brought for sale at Kollam.⁸⁸ The Chinese ceramics found along the coast of Kerala have been identified to be the products the klins of Longguan as Jingdeszhan.⁸⁹

Writing in the 15th century Niccolo Conti says that Kollam had a circumference of 12 miles.⁹⁰ In the beginning of the 16th century Kollam was among the best towns in the region of Kerala. Barbosa says that Kollam is a great city and a good sea port. Many Moors, Gentiles and Christians live there and they are great merchants. They are very rich and own ships with which they trade with Cola Mandalam, Ceylon, Malacca, Sumatra and Pegu.⁹¹

The merchants from Kollam are referred to in contemporary South Indian inscriptions also, showing their inter-regional connections.⁹² Kollam is among the eighteen countries whose merchants figure in the inscriptions of Bhagandeswara Temple at Bhagamandala in

88. H. Yule, The Travels of Friar O'Doric, Cathay and the Way Tither vol. II (1913) Kraus Reprint, 1987 pp. 136-137.

89. M.R. Raghava Variar, op.cit.

90. R.H. Major (ed), 'Travels of Niccolo Conti', op. cit. p.17.

91. M.L. Dames (trans.), op.cit., pp. 60-65.

92. ARE, No.202 of 1925.

the Matikeri Taluk of Coorg.⁹³ Certain terms in the Settlement Register of Kollam reminds one of the commercial prosperity and the nagaram complex of the bygone ages. The area of Punnathala held by the Punnathalapaty, the witness of the TPCP is still inhabited mainly by commercial and artisan classes. Nairs and the other communities who are high in caste hierarchy seldom seems to have settled in the area up to 19th century. Settlement terminologies like Valiakatasseriyl reminds one of the commercial importance of the area.⁹⁴ Certain plot names remind one of the old nagaram. For example the Pandakasala purayitam is reminiscent of the old store houses and the plot name of Kottakkakattu shows traces of the old fortified nagaram.⁹⁵

IV.3.iii Kochi

Kochi rose into prominence as an emporium of trade in the 14th century.⁹⁶ The earlier literature on the trading centres of Kerala does not mention Kochi and Ma Huan is the first foreign traveller to refer to this

93. K.G. Krishnan , Studies in South Indian History and Epigraphy, Madras, 1981, p.56.

94. Settlement Register, Kollam Pakuthi, part II.

95. Survey No. 788, 789 and 648 respectively, Ibid.

96. The famous port town of Cochin

trading centre.⁹⁷ The flood of 1341 effected certain geophysical changes in the region which resulted in the decay of the port of Kodungallur. From this flood emerged the new kara of Vaipin and the natural harbour of Kochi. But it is not this geographical change alone that developed Kochi into a port town. The hinterland of Kochi was rich in agricultural products especially coconut and spices. Kochi was the best port linked with the pepper producing areas of central Kerala. Placenames like Mulavukad near Kochi reminds one of pepper gardens. Kochi was at the one end of Vembanad kāyal which gave uninterrupted facilities for water transport upto Kollam. River Periyar connected the various agricultural villages that fed the port town.

The Perumpadappu Swarūpam which had its head quarters at Perumpadappu near Ponnani had shifted the same to Kodungallur in the 13th century and by the 14th century they seems to have made Kochi their capital. Under the aegis of this Swarūpam Kochi with its port developed into a brisk trading centre having overseas trade connection and at the time of the advent of the Portuguese she had developed into one of the most powerful ports on the Malabar coast.⁹⁸

97. J.V.G. Mills (trans.), op.cit. p.132-137.

98. A. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala District Gazetteers, Ernakulam, Thiruvananthapuram, 1965, pp, 110-111.

Ma Huan records that with a journey of one night and one day one can reach Kochi from Kollam.⁹⁹ The Chinese traveller describes the houses in the city as built of bricks and mud and thatched with coconut leaves. He refers to the trading communities of Muslims and cettis and to the brokers.¹⁰⁰ The very presence of brokers, wealthy cettis and Muslims points to a flourishing trade. The transactions of buying and selling was similar to those of the central country in China. Ma Huan also describes the pepper cultivation and the provisions of warehouses to store pepper for sale to the foreign merchants. The pepper was weighed in poho (bāhr) as at Kozhikode. Each poho was sold for hundred or ninety local gold coins of Kochi.¹⁰¹ Ma Huan gives indications to the to the system of administered trade at Kochi. The king used to send chiefs to accompany the treasure ships that set sail from Kochi to China.¹⁰²

Fei Hsin also refers to the abundance of pepper at Kochi. Pepper was stored in large godowns. A part

99. J.V.G. Mills, op.cit p.132.

100. Ibid., p.133

101. It has been calculated that the price of pepper at Kochi was 34 percent less than that of Kozhikkode. Also see Ibid. p. 143, note No.6.

102. Ibid. p.137.

from pepper, the goods traded at Kochi were coloured satins, white silk, blue and white porcelain ware, gold and silver, etc.¹⁰³ Fei Hsin also refers to the coin panam of Kochi. The king of Kochi used to send envoys to China with presents.¹⁰⁴

The cettis have been the intermediaries in foreign trade. They would buy pepper from local producers, store the same and sell to foreign merchants. The cettis transacted in gem stones, pearls and aromatic goods and such costly articles. Polishing of coral was an important craft. The polishing of low quality coral is referred to by Ma Huan. Fanam and silver tāra were current in the trading centre. Fanam was cast in gold of 90% purity.¹⁰⁵

By the 15th century Kochi had developed into a port town attracting foreign traders. Vasco da Gama made alliance with the Raja of Kochi because of its great commercial importance. Later Kochi became the commercial head quarters of the Portuguese in India. It was the facilities at Kochi, and not the availability of pepper alone that attracted the Portuguese to the port of Kochi.

103. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices p.297.

104. Ibid.

105. J.V.G. Mills, op.cit. p.136.

IV.3.iv Kodungallur

With the end of the rule of the Perumals in the beginning of the 12th century, Kodungallur lost its prestigious position as a capital city. But she continued to be a flourishing trade centre upto the middle of the 14th century.

The splendour of Kodungallur in the beginning of the 14th century is described in the Unṅiāṭi Caritam. The city is pictured to be on the banks of the river Periyar. The kāvya mentions the walls around the four taḷis. It refers to the area of the town as lying between the sea and river Periyar and describes the high palatial buildings and temples. In particular the poem refers to Tiruvanchikulam.¹⁰⁶ A Sanskrit Sandēṣa Kāvya of the 14th century refers to the taḷis and the Brahmins who consecrate the kings of Kodungallur.¹⁰⁷ Referring to the glory of Kodungallur Kōka Sandēṣam adds that a city like it cannot be seen in Kerala.¹⁰⁸ This work also refers to the various parts of Kodungallur, like the town, the seat of the Bhagavati temple, Chingapuram, (Sringapuram), Tiruvanchikulam and Arakulam.¹⁰⁹

106. Unṅiāṭi Caritam, gadyam 13, p.41.

107. Suka Sandēṣam, v. 69, p.74.

108. Kōka Sandēṣam, v.76, p.77.

109. Ibid. v.55, 56 and 57, pp. 63-65.

Joseph the Indian describes the town of Kodungallur and its inhabitants in A.D. 1500. According to him the town had no wall and among the inhabitants there were Christians and Jews.¹¹⁰ He also notices the coins of saraph, parānte and tāre which were in circulation in the trading centre.¹¹¹

The decay of the trading centre of Kodungallur is linked with the destruction of the port. The gradual chocking of the port must have made it difficult for the ships approach Kodungallur. In 1341 there was a great flood as a result of which the Kodungallur ali was closed. There after Periyar began to flow south-wards, creating a new ali at Kochi.¹¹² This rendered the port of Kodungallur useless. With the decline of trade the urban centre also declined, eventhough it continued to be the head-quarters of the petty principality of Kodungallur. It is to be noted that the Settlement Registers of

110. Antony Valluvanchara (ed), India in 1500 AD, the Narratives of Joseph the Indian, Mannanam, 1984, p.96.

111. Ibid. p. 185. Saraph was equalent to one ducat, parānte to six Dutch schilling and tāre to one Dutch schilling, Ibid. p. 288.

112. Achuta Menon, "Kodungallur Nurrāntukalilūte," in Kodungallur Directory, Varta Publications, P. Vemballur, Kodungallur, 1992, p.69.

Kodungallur abound in place names and plot names reminiscent of the old trading centre.¹¹³

IV.3.v Matilakam

Medieval indigenous literary compositions shower praise on the trading centre of Matilakam. Even after the decline of Kodungallur, Matilakam continued to flourish. In order to express the magnificance of Tirumaruthur the author of Unniacci Caritam, says that it is greater than even Matilakam.¹¹⁴ Ṣuka Sandēṣam also refers to Matilakam.¹¹⁵ In Kōkasandēṣam the town is styled as Gunakapattanam. Nālika koṭṭu, the practice of announcing time at the interval of gaticās was in vogue at the town.¹¹⁶ Amenities like this point to an urban life. The kāvya also refers to the temple and the traders in the streets.¹¹⁷ The Maṇipravāla poets shower more praise on Matilakam than Kodungallur. This points to the decline of the latter.

113. The place name Chandapura in the present town and plot names like Gopuranthinkal (Survy No. 490-2 and 3, 491-1 and 493, Survy and Settlement Register of Village No. 2, Lokamaleswaram in Kodungallur Taluk,) remind one of the old fortified trading centre. Also see note No. 134 and 136 in Chapter III.

114. Unniacci Caritam, gadyam, 4, p.17.

115. Ṣuka Sandēṣam, v.14, p.27 and v. 72, p.76

116. Kōka Sandēṣam, v. 46-48.

117. Ibid. v.49, p.59.

Throughout her history Matilakam does not seem to have been a major trading centre and it can be considered as an upanagara of Kodungallur. Following the fall of Kodungallur as a trading centre Matilakam became part of the kingdom of Kozhikode under the Zamorins.

IV.3.vi Pantalayani Kollam

The trading centre of Pantalayani Kollam is referred to by Arab and European writers from 13th to the 16th century also. Friar O' doric speaks of the Jews and Christians of the 'city' of Flandrina.¹¹⁸ Dimishqui (1328) says that the town was on the mouth of the river (it must have been the canal). Ships from other parts of India used to call at the port. Dimishqui refers to the rich 'inhabitants of the town, the well supplied market and flourishing trade' of Pantalayani Kollam.¹¹⁹ In the travelogue of Ibn Battuta Pantalayani Kollam is described as a large and beautiful town with gardens and bazaar. There were three quarters of Muslims with their religious institutions. Ibn Battuta specially mentions the congregational mosque with halls and galleries facing the sea.¹²⁰

118. Y.Yule Cathay the Way Tither, vol.II and IV, Kraus Reprint, 1967, pp.134-135.

119. S.M.H. Nainar, op.cit. p.35.

120. Mahdhi Hussain, (ed.) op.cit p. 188.

Pantalayani Kollam continued to be a centre of Chinese trade and archaeological remains stand as supporting this. We have the report of systematic surface collection and trial digging for Chinese porcelain at Pantalayani Kollam.¹²¹ These remains of pottery belong to the period from 13 to 18th centuries. Pantalayani Kollam and Kollam are specially mentioned as regions to where the export of precious metals from China was forbidden, by the end of the 13th century. This points to the booming trade between these regions and China.¹²²

With the advent of the Portuguese this medieval trading centre began to decline. Being centre of Muslim traders and navigators it was a target of the attack of the Portuguese.^{122a} These attacks of the Portuguese destroyed this port town.

IV.3.vii Matayi

With varying fortunes Matayi also continued to be a flourishing trading centre and this is attested by Marco

121. Chart appended to 'K̄erala C̄ina Bandhaññal', M.R. Raghava Varier, Keraliyyata Caritra Māhaññal, pp. 176-178.

122. Meera Mary Abraham, 'Currency System and Monetisation in Karnataka in Vijayanagar Times', QJMS, 69, January-June, 1978. p.26.

122.a) K.V. Krishna Iyyer, The Zamorins of Calicut, p.198.

Polo and Ibn Battuta. It continued to be a centre of Chinese trade. Politically the area was under the Kolathunad. Marco Polo specially notices the absence of a harbour near mount Eli. But there were navigable rivers. Ships that were not bound for mount Eli would be seized and plundered at Mount Eli. But the ships bound for the region would be received and protected. As there was no harbour, foreign ships would leave the region within a few days.¹²³ Ibn Battuta refers to the region as Hili Maravi. According to him the distance between Hili and Jurbattan is three parasangs. This is the distance between Matayi and Valarpatanam. Ibn Battuta speaks of the region as a large and well built town situated on a bay navigable for large ships.¹²⁴ It was frequented by Chinese ships. Matayi was a centre of Islamic diaspora which again points to its commercial importance. The great mosque at Matayi attracted all. Ibn Battuta describes the function of this great mosque¹²⁵ which throws light into the secular aspects of the Islamic diaspora. Matayi is referred to in a contemporary Maṇipravāla kāvya also.¹²⁶

123. Yule and Cordier (ed), Travels of Marco Polo. Book III, Chap. XXIV. Nilakanda Sastri, Foreign Notices... pp. 182-183.

124. Mahdhi Hussain (ed.), op.cit, pp.185-186.

125. Ibid. p.186

126. Unniāti Caritam, gadyam, 19, p. 50.

Ecological changes affected the development of Matayi. By the second half of the 15th century following the silting of the river mouth, the port and the town dependent on it declined. As the waters of the port were not sufficiently deep the passengers of ships had to get down at the bar and to resort to small boats.¹²⁷ By the beginning of the 16th century Matayi had declined as a trading centre. In 1500 AD when the Portuguese explored the possibilities of trade in northern Malabar they went to Kannur and not to Elimala.

IV.4.i. Minor Exchange Centres

Apart from the centres mentioned above, by the end of the 15th century small trading centres sprang up along the coast of Kerala. In the beginning of the 16th century Barbosa refers of such towns as Chaliyam, Parappanangadi, Paravanna, Tanur and Ponnani. These towns traded in various kinds of goods and were inhabited by rich merchants. There were powerful ship owners at Chaliyam and Ponnani.¹²⁸ These centres were under the political control of the Zamorin and the Zamorin received much revenue in the form of dues from these traders and ship owners. Similarly South of Kochi developed new centres like Purakkad. North of Kozhikode, apart from the old

127. Genevieve Bouchon, Regent of the Sea, op.cit. p.10-11.

128. M.L. Dames (trans.), The Book of Duarte Barbosa, vol.II, pp.87-88.

centres of Pantalayani Kollam and Matayi, new port centres like Kannur, developed. Kannur is styled as a 'place of much, trade and navigation' by Barbosa · Dharmadam and Valarpatanam had already been brisk centres of trade.¹²⁹

Ibn Battuta refers to the trading centres of Jurbattan (Valarpattanam) Dahfattan (Dharmapatanam) and Budfattam (Putupattanam). All these had Muslim traders and their institutions.¹³⁰ Valarpatanam is described in the Payyannūr Pāṭṭu as a town with a fort.¹³¹ Payyannur also had brisk trade and Payyannūr Pāṭṭu contains a detailed description of the item of trade displayed at the bazaar of Payyannur.¹³² Dahfattam is described by Ibn Battuta as a large city with gardens. There was a congregational mosque at Dahfattan.¹³³ Budfattan also is referred to as a large city at a large bay. The Muslim in the city were foreigners. The Chief item of export from this centre was arecanut.¹³⁴

129. Ibid. p.79.

130. Mahdhi Hussain (ed), op.cit. p.186-87

131. Payyannūr Pāṭṭu, p.xxx.

132. Ibid. v.102, p.104.

133. Mahdhi Hussain, op.cit. p.187.

134. Ibid. p.188.

IV.4.ii The Campūs and Sandēṣa Kāvyaṣ give details of a number of trading centres and bazaars. Actually what is unbelievable in the Sandēṣa Kāvyaṣ is only their story. What they depict as the route of the messenger, aññātīṣ, temples etc. are true historical facts. They are in fact a treasure house of knowledge regarding the social and economic history of medieval Kerala. Much information and details regarding the trading centres of the period can be culled out from them. The campūs are said to be works dedicated to the narration of the beauty of the dancing girls who are the heroines of such works. But this kind of narration forms only a minor part of the campūs and the rest is devoted to the description of aññātīṣ and towns. Here one is inclined to believe whether the aim of these Maṇipravālam works were to project the aññātīṣ and towns by giving pen pictures of the same. These market centres were Thiruvananthapuram, Muccanti, Mattam etc. An attempt is made in the following section to give an analytical and descriptive account of these exchange centres as revealed in the Maṇipravāla Kāvyaṣ.

IV.4.iii Thiruvananthapuram emerged as a flourishing coastal trading centre much before it became famous as a capital city. Ananthapuravarṇanam¹³⁵ an indigenous

135. Suranad Kunjan Pillai (ed) Ananthapura Varṇanam, Manuscript library, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1971 and the same work edited by K. Ratnamma, Thiruvananthapuram, 1986 .

literary composition assigned to the beginning of the 14th century gives us a detailed description of the market centre at Thiruvananthapuram. Consumerism centered around the temple of Sripadamanabhaswami has been a stimulous to the growth of the market centre. The poetic imagination compares the splendour of the trading centre to that of Alakapuri.¹³⁶ The rivers of Karamana and Vamanapuram connected the trading centre with inland agricultural villages and facilitated the transport of goods to and from the market. While the Aruvamoli pass gave the traders beyond the ghat access to the town the sea exposed her to seaborne trade. Paradēsis like the Kalingar, Tulikar, Conakar, Gaudar, Pāndikkār etc. flocked to the annāṭi.¹³⁷ There were separate streets for different goods. The long list of goods displayed for sale includes food stuffs, medicines, incense, utensils, tools, weights and measures and the like which have been accustomed to the rural life in Kerala through the ages.¹³⁸ Goods were brought to the annāṭi in Marakkalam and the poem describes the goods thus brought from distant regions through the sea. Barter system prevailed along with transactions in terms of money.¹³⁹ The goods of the coastal area were

136. Ibid. v.40, p.24.

137. Ibid. V.100 and 101, p.36.

138. Ibid. v. 42-66.

139. Ibid. v. 102, p.36

exchanged for the products of the inland agricultural tracts. Fish was exchanged for paddy.¹⁴⁰ Measures like kurupi, nārāyam, para, nāli and etanāli were in prevalence.¹⁴¹ The touch stone to know the purity of gold also is mentioned. This points to transactions in gold also.¹⁴² References to coined money like the ānaiaccu and various measures show a systematic trade which is quite distinct from a mere barter system. There is reference to separate streets of the ceṭṭis.¹⁴³ Later this trading centre attracted the attention of the ruling authorities and became the capital of Travancore.

IV.4.iv Unnūnīli Sandēṣam describes the exchange centres of Muccanti and Puthidam which were the upanagarās of Kollam. Muccanti is depicted as a highly prosperous trading centre to which traders from different regions flocked. In the poem the messenger is directed to note the bazaar around.¹⁴⁴ The items for sale at the bazaar at Muccanti included various articles of daily use, from items of basic necessities to luxuries, like furniture,

140. Ibid. v. 82-87, p. 32-33.

141. Ibid. p. 29-30.

142. Ibid. v.69, p.30 and v. 74. p.31.

143. Ibid.,v. 104, p.37

144. Chulala Maruvum Vāṇiyam, Unnūnīli Sandesam, v.79, p.75.

different varieties of paddy, various kinds of fish, spices, medicines, incense, etc.¹⁴⁵

IV.4.v Puthidam was a prosperous exchange centre south of Kollam and Varkala. The Unnūnīli Sandēṣam refers to the conversation of the foreign traders here.¹⁴⁶ Coins like accu, and tināram were in circulation at the āññāṭi of Puthidam.¹⁴⁷

IV.4.vi Unñiāṭi Caritam gives a detailed account of the trading centre of Sriparvatam near Mattam in Vempolinad. The exact location of the āññāṭi of Sriparvatam is not known. According to Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai it was between Thattrambalam and Kantiyur.¹⁴⁸ It was a centre of local trade as well as long distance overland trade. In the āññāṭi of Sriparvatam traders from different regions were found. Among them were the Chinese also. Here the presence of the Chinese in an interior āññāṭi indicates the penetration of overseas traders to the interior regions. The poem gives a long list of goods exhibited

145. Ibid. v. 80-85, pp.75-76.

146. Ibid. v. 62-5, p.68.

147. Ibid. v.64.

148. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, Unnūnīli Sandēṣam Caritra-drishtiyilkūṭi, (1953), Kottayam, 1969, pp.69-70.

for sale at the Sriparvatam annāṭi and all these were articles accustomed to Kerala life and not created by poetic imagination. The list also shows that consumers of all sections were drawn to the market. The goods included not only fruits, vegetable and corn but also utensils, implements and medicines. Sriparvatam annati was thus the meeting place of agricultuists, craftsman, local traders and long distance traders. The poem also mentions different types of coins in circulation at the annāṭi and the cārtu or group of merchants.¹⁴⁹ The reference to cārtu is important. It points to the advent of traders in groups from distant regions. As such the annāṭi and its suburbs must have had amenities needed for a floating population as well as provisions for the boarding and lodging of traders. These dancing girls depicted in these kāvyaś were not meant only for the elites of a temple oriented community as is believed, but also to those of a commercial and urban community.

IV.4.vii The exchange centre of Kandiur in Odanad is described in Unniāti Caritam. It is narrated as capable of defeating pride of Amaravati.¹⁵⁰ Kandiur is near Thattrambalam in Kollam District.

149. Unniati Caritam, gadyam, 19, pp.47-50.

150. Unniati Caritam, v.42, pp.44-46.

IV.4.viii Mattam is referred to in Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam as a place north of Kayamkulam.¹⁵¹ According to Kunjan Pillai it was part of Kandiyur.¹⁵²

IV.4.ix The trading centres of Kayamkulam also is narrated in the Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam. Kayamkulam was a centre of weavers. The bazaar of Kayamkulam was noted for textile goods. Brahmin traders from Tamilnadu reached here via the pass in the western ghats and they brought with them chilly, rice and the like and took with them pepper and other spices. A stanza in Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam says that the customers of the market were not pleased with the clothes of the pāndikkārs or Tamil speaking people and quarrels arose between the natives and the traders.¹⁵³ The surrounding areas of this market centre were noted for the rich variety of spices, sugar cane and paddy. The Kayamkulam lake offered cheap means of transportation also. It can well be assumed that merchants from different regions flocked to Kayamkulam.

IV.4.x The exchange centre of Karianattukavu is depicted in Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam. Kariyanattukavu was a day

151. Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam, Part I, v-III. p.92-93.

152. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam Caritṛadriṣhtiyilkūti, pp.69-70.

153. Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam, part I, v.93. p.81.

market. The poem says that judged from the stand point of the goods exhibited and transacted at Kariyanattukavu not even the markets of Kollam and Kozhikode can be compared to it. According to the poem such a brisk centre of market would have nobody or no goods in it by the evening, pointing to the fact that it was only a day market.¹⁵⁴ Kariyanattukavu is hardly two kms. away from Tiruvalla temple. The temple centred consumerism also must have been behind this flourishing bazaar. It is to be noted that Kutavur, the market centre figuring in the Tiruvalla inscriptions is not mentioned here. Kutavur must have been replaced by Karinattukavu.

IV.4.xi Unṇiacci Caritam describes Tirumuruthur, near Tirunelli in Wayanad. According to the poem Tirumaruthur would easily defeat the trading centres like Kondungallur, Kollam and Kunavai in prosperity.¹⁵⁵ The poem describes a theatre for drama near a market.¹⁵⁶ It points to the facilities for recreation offered to the traders.

IV.4.xii Anayarcira Nagaram is referred to in Unṇiccirutēvi Caritam.¹⁵⁷ The centre was some where

154. Ibid. part I, v.123, p.98.

155. Unṇiacci Caritam gadyam, 4. pp. 17-20.

156. Ibid. gadyam, 14, p.49.

157. Unṇiccirutēvi Caritam, gadyam, 21, p.34.

near Sukapuram and Panniyur in Valluvanad. In the poem the different variety of coins available in the market of Anayarcira Nagaram and the sale of paddy are referred to. The poem also refers to the bargaining of the merchants at the bazaar.¹⁵⁸

IV.4.xiii Kulamukku, the trading centre referred to in the Unniyāṭi Caritam was famous for horse trade.¹⁵⁹ There are Cola records referring to the horse traders hailing from Kulamukku.¹⁶⁰ No material remains are there at Kulamukku to remind one of the old brisk trading centre. Archaeological excavations may yield better results. There are a series of plot names in Pallippuram near Kulamukku having the name Attāṇi paṛambu. This points to the importance of the area as a trade route and commercial centre.¹⁶¹ Bharatapuzha gave access to Kulamukku to the port at Ponnani. It was convenient to take horses from Kulamukku upto Palakkad and from there to Tamilnadu

158. Ibid.

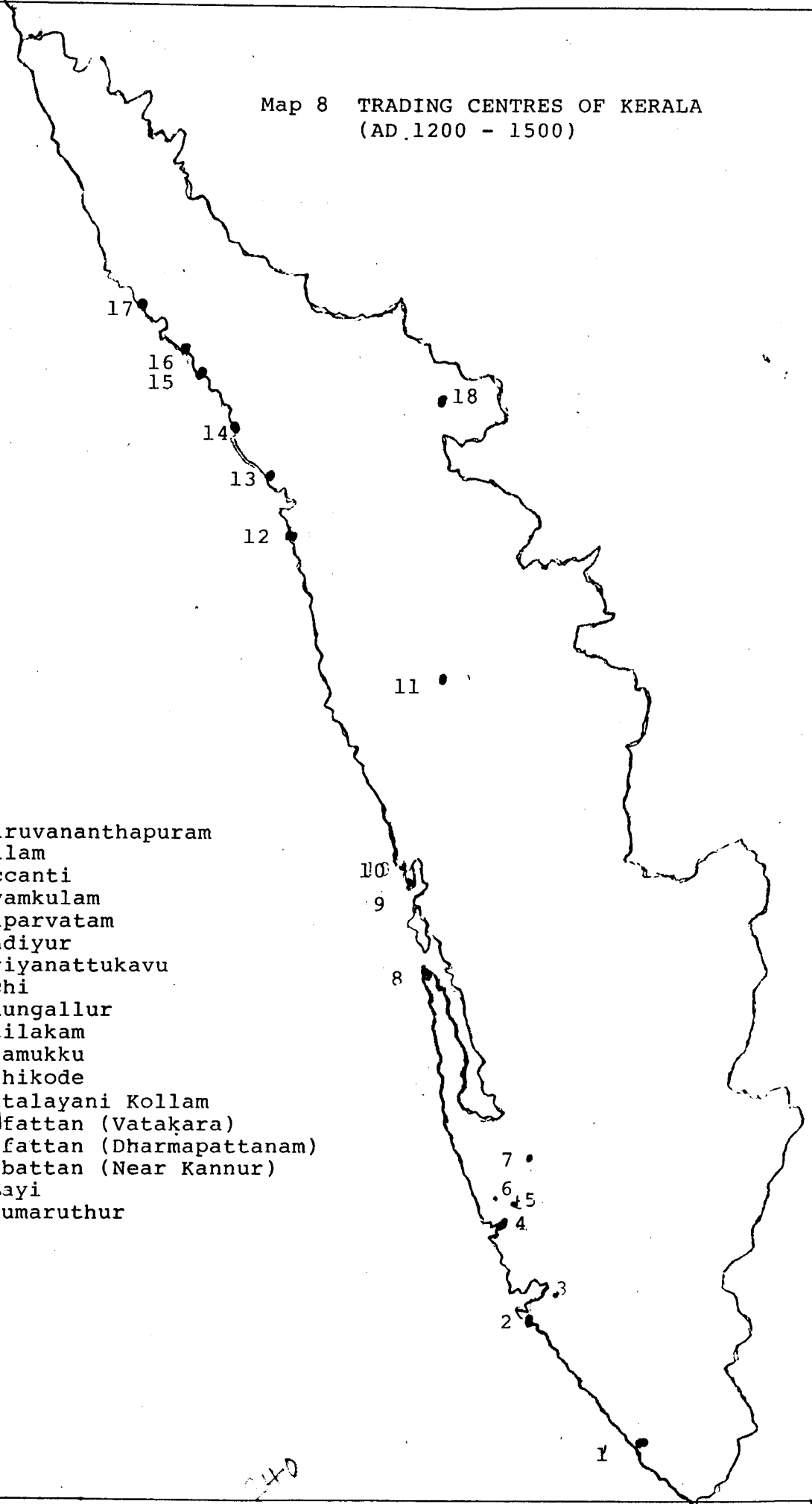
159. Unniāṭi Caritam, gadyam 19, p.50. Kulamukku is in the Pallippuram Amsom of Ottappalam Taluk, Palakkad Dt. Now it is an insignificant Village.

160. See the section on horse trade below.

161. Attāṇis are the resting places for the goods carried as head loads, placed along old trade routes. Survey No.3, 1-9 and 4, 1-6 in the Settlement Register of Pallippuram, Amsom, Ottappalam Taluk.

Map 8 TRADING CENTRES OF KERALA
(AD. 1200 - 1500)

1. Thiruvananthapuram
2. Kollam
3. Muccanti
4. Kayamkulam
5. Sriparvatam
6. Kandiyyur
7. Kariyanattukavu
8. Kochi
9. Kodungallur
10. Matilakam
11. Kulamukku
12. Kozhikode
13. Pantalayani Kollam
14. Budfattan (Vataḡara)
15. Daḡfattan (Dharmapattanam)
16. Jurbattan (Near Kannur)
17. Maḡayi
18. Tirumaruthur



through the Palakkad pass. As a centre of horse trade Kulamukku must have had all amenities for holding rich traders. It flourished upto the advent of the Portuguese.

The above said minor exchange centres were not fulfilled trading centres like the major port towns. But they had definite urban characteristics when compared with the indigenous rural experience. Some of them were inland exchange nodes catering to the wants of rural communities also.

IV.5.i As the items exported and imported are described in the discussions on various trading centres, a separate section on the same is not included here. Articles transacted in internal trade included the whole range of commodities consumed by the contemporary society, as is evidenced from the prolonged discussions on the same in Maṇipravāla Kāvyaś.¹⁶² References have already been made to these. But two main items of trade, rice and horses deserve special mention here, as they often go un noticed. In spite of the expansion of agricultural settlements, the production of rice was not enough to meet local demands and this scarcity also is analysed in the forgoing chapters.¹⁶³ Wang Ta-yuan gives evidence for the import

162. Uppunīli Sandēśam, v.79-86. Unniāti Caritam, gadyam, 19.

163. Section II-11, Chapter II.

of rice from Orissa.¹⁶⁴ While narrating the goods exhibited in the market places the Maṇipravāla Kāvyaś mention the names of different varieties of paddy some of which came from regions outside Kerala, as the very names of those varieties indicate.¹⁶⁵ Unnunīli Sandēśam refers to the Tamil Brahmin merchants who brought to Kerala rice also along with other items of trade.¹⁶⁶ The import of rice must have been from near by regions in the subcontinent. If it were involved in the long distance overseas or overland trade, it must have been noticed by the Arab writers, who refer to the various items of trade. But this is not the case with the 'big business' in horses for which we have concrete evidences in the contemporary records and an attempt is made in the following section to examine the various features of this horse trade.

IV.5.ii Horse Trade

Horse was an important item of import to South India from Arabia and this horse trade has a particular bearing on medieval Kerala because in this the traders

164. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices...., pp.293-95.

165. See note No. 49 in Chapter II.

166. The Tamil Brahmins used to bring rice for sale to Kayamkulam on ox back along with other goods. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai (ed.), Unnunīli Sandēśam, p.81.

from Malabar, the kutirai cettis figure prominently. Despite the immense utility of horses as a component of the army and a means of transport in the medieval period, the breeding of horses didnot develop in South India ¹⁶⁷ and good quality horses were always brought from overseas countries. Thousands of horses were imported from the littoral countries of Red sea and Persian gulf, especially from Kish, Aden and Hormuz every year. These first reached the ports of Gujarat and Malabar. These ports of western coast were easily accessible to those who came from the west and the horses imported to these ports could be taken to peninsular India following a cross country route. A clear proof for the maritime trade in horses is an inscription from northern Srilanka with regard to trade regulations.¹⁶⁸ Abdr Razzak refers to the horses that were carried in ships to India.¹⁶⁹

Cola inscriptions of the 13th and 14th centuries make references to the kutirai cettis of Malabar.¹⁷⁰

167. Travels of Marco Polo, vol. II, pp. 340 and 373-74.

168. El, XII, 22. This inscription reads that if a ship of elephants and horses gets wrecked 1/4 of the loss would be borne by the treasury and 3/4th by the owners of the cargo. Another inscription from Belgaum issued by the Mummuri-dandās refers to the passage of horses from North India to South India. See I, XIII, 3.

169. Journey of Abdr Razak, R.H. Major (ed), op.cit. p.9.

170. K.D. Swaminathan. 'Horse Dealers of Malainadu', JIH. XXXII, 11, pp 139-48.

These inscriptions show that some of these horse dealers hailed from Valluvanad. Kulamukku, on the banks of Bharatapuzha was an important centre of this trade.¹⁷¹ Kulamukku had transport facilities through the river to reach Ponnani on the sea coast. Ponnani was connected with Tamilnadu through the Palakkad pass.

The business of the kutirai cettīs of Malabar were concentrated at Tanjavur, Tiruchirappally and South Arcot districts of Tamil Nadu. There were settlements of traders from Malabar known as Malayalamgudi in the heart of the Cola kingdom and in the Putukkottai region. In this region these cettīs, also called the nāyakās, had their merchant organisation. A record of Rajendra III from Purataneswara temple, Tiruccirambalam, Putukkottai Taluk, Tanjavur mentions a horse dealer from Kulamukku.¹⁷² Another horse trader from Kulamukku Kandan Era Nambi figures in a record of Raja Raja III. This inscription records a grant of 33 cattles and a lamp stand to the temple by the a cetti Kandan Era Nambi.¹⁷³ Another record of Raja Raja III speaks of a gift of two lamps to the temple of Arulala Perumal by Satan Semmi Chettian, a

171. For details regarding Kulamukku, see section IV.4.xiii

172. ARE, No. 182 of 1926.

173. ARE, No. 597 of 1919

native of Muranothamangalam in Valluvanad.¹⁷⁴ There are various other inscriptional evidences for the functioning of these nāyakanmār of Malaimāṇḍalam.¹⁷⁵ There was brisk trade between these horse dealers of Malabar and the Pandyan kingdom and there are epigraphic evidence for the same.¹⁷⁶ These nāyakanmār were so wealthy that they could set up even villages and agrahārās. A horse dealer Tuppa nayaka seems to have set up an agrahāra.¹⁷⁷ He also figures in an inscription of Jatavarman.¹⁷⁸ Navayan Konda Nambi, a Kutirai ceṭṭi from Kulamukku made a gift of vllage (of Kumaranambinallur) for providing offerings to Alakiya Manavalan Perumal temple of Tiruwarangam and the same is recorded in an inscriptions of Maravarman Sundara Pandya II.¹⁷⁹

Horse trade at Malabar is referred to in indigenous literature and foreign accounts. Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam makes references to the horses of Aditya Varma

174. ARE, No. 399 of 1919

175. ARE. No. 361, 538, 393, 537 and 503 of 1919., and ARE No. 322 of 1958-59.

176. ARSIE No. 34 and 50 of 1926-27 and No. 77 of 1936 - 37.

177. SII V, No. 514

178. ARSIE, No. 34 and 50 of 196-27.

179. ARSIE, No. 77 of 1936-37.

and the horses brought from sind in the cavalry stationed at Kaduthuruthy.¹⁸⁰

Unniacci Caritam refers to the high price of and profitable trade in horse.¹⁸¹ It is to be noted that classical writers on East West Trade do not refer to the horse trade. But medieval writers refer to the unceasing demand for horses in India and the poor quality of horses in India.¹⁸²

Wang Ta-yuan and Fei Hsin make mention of the fine quality horses imported to Kozhikode.¹⁸³ That the horses were a precious commodity can be seen from contemporary literary sources. A medieval indigenous literary composition refers to the price of one horse as two thousand accūs.¹⁸⁴ Wassaff, the Persian historian estimates that the price of one horse was 220 dinār.¹⁸⁵

180. Uppunīli Sandēśam, v. 35 and v. 60.

181. Unniacci Caritam, gadyam, 18, p.66.

182. Abdulla Wassaff, Tazijya-thu-l-Amsār, in Elliot and Dowson, History of India vol. III, Delhi 1990. p.34.

183. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices of South india ...pp. 294-298.

184. See note No. 181 above.

185. Wassaff states that 10,000 horses were sent to Malabar coast ports and Cambay during a particular period from Baharain at a cost 22 million dinārs. So the price of one horse comes to 220 dinars. Elliot and Dawson, op.cit.

Horses were among the costliest goods taken by the Chinese from Malabar.¹⁸⁶

There was a brisk trade in horses between Vijayanagar and Kolathunad. The title of Kolathiri 'Lord of the Horses' becomes meaningful here. Profit from horse trade was a principal source of wealth for Kolathiri. The coast of Kannur was unimpeded by estuary bar and its sandy bay was very much suited for the disembarkment of horses. The price of a horse was 25 ducats at Kannur.¹⁸⁷ These horses could be taken to the ghats through roads. At Kottayam in Kolathunad there was a horse market. Agents from Vijayanagar reached here to have horses.¹⁸⁸ But reliable accounts regarding the number of horses sold or the nature of payment etc. are scarce. Horses must have been given in return for the staple food of rice which was scarce in the kingdom of Kolathunad. The fact that horse traders at Kannur were exempted from all other duties suggest the pristine position enjoyed by them.¹⁸⁹ The

186. Ranbir Chakravarthi, "Overseas Transportation and Shipping of Horses in Medieval India", K.S. Mathew (ed) Indian Ocean and Cultural Interaction, Pondicherry, 1996. pp. 149-160.

187. See Genevieve Bouchon, Regent of the Sea, Delhi, 1988, p.21.

188. ibid. pp. 24-25.

189. Barbosa, H.J. Stanley (trans & ed.), A Description of the Coast of East Africa and Malabar, vol. II, London, 1985, p.94.

unproductive soil of Kannur was transformed into a 'Provision store of rice to Calicut and horses to Vijayanagar'.¹⁹⁰ Horse trade at Kannur was dominated by Muslims. With their arrival on Malabar coast the Portuguese interfered in this horse trade.

By means of force the portuguese tried to monopolise this trade. With the capture of Hormuz they could dominate the horse trade in western India and they could shift the centre of this trade from Kannur to Goa.¹⁹¹ Thus ended the horse trade at Kannur. Horse trade is thus a classical example for the purposeful destruction of a native trade network by the Portuguese for their commercial progress. Ofcourse before the rise of the West, there was the decline of the East.¹⁹²

IV.6 Trade Routes

The provisions of roads and other amenities for the commercial growth in medieval Kerala have not been studied systematically and one has to cull out details from a variety of sources like literature, oral narratives, historical relics and toponymical evidences. The literary

190. Genevieve Bouchon, op.cit.

191. M.N. Pearson, The New Cambridge History of India (1987) Hyderabad, 1990, pp. 49-50.

192. Abu Lughod, Before European Hegemony: - The World System, 1250 - 1350, New York, 1989. p. .

sources are mainly in the form of Sandēśa Kāvyaś and historical relics in the form of virakkals (hero stones) and attānis.¹⁹³ The historical relics do not supply any direct information about trade routes. But a close examination of the pattern of the distribution of these would come out with ideas about routes on the banks of which these relics are erected. Logical inferences from the interconnection and mutual dependency of towns, markets and exchange nodes also help to have a picture of the old trade routes.

Evidences from Sandēśakāvyaś show that long established path ways were in use connecting distant points and intergrating these points to an effective network of trade. We have literary reference to the main roads in the trading centres like Kodungallur.¹⁹⁴ But the trade routes that spread throughout the region were country path ways spread over mountains and hills and forests. They do not present an unobstructed continuous path. They were often hindred by rivers. These roads were meant mainly for way farers and pack animals. We

193. The virakkals of Wayanad are collected and preserved in the Heritage Museum, Ambalavayal, Wayanad, inaugurated in August, 1996. For attānis see note No. 161 above.

194. See note No.121 in chapter III.

have literary references to cārtu or groups of traders.¹⁹⁵ Due to the insecurity of remote routes traders must have moved in groups, as has been the practice of the period and they must have been accompanied by armed personnel.

The main trade route was the one that stretched along the coast line from north to south. Many a road that ran across the main route towards east and their branches connected the same with different trade centres of the region. Routes across the western ghats connected this main route with the trade centres of Tamilnadu. In the northern part, the major coastal route deviated towards the east and reached Karnataka via Tirunelli. This stretched upto Kanchi in the coromandal coast. This route is described by Uddanda Sastrikal in the Kōkila Sandēṣa.¹⁹⁶ In this Sandēṣakāvya the messenger starts from Kanchi on the eastern coast and crosses the Peninsula to reach Wayanad plateau. Through the plateau the path descended to the low lying plains. Here it joined with the route that touched the main coastal route. A branch of the northern route mentioned above went towards north east from Kannur and reached Coorg in Karnataka. The Tōrṅam narratives that describe the story of Mannappan,

195. Unpiāti Caritam, gadyam, 19.

196. Kōkila Sandēṣam, slokas, 23-47.

the hero of Kathivanur Viran describes the route running from the surroundings of Kannur to the hilly regions Coorg.¹⁹⁷

In the South a branch of the main coastal route ran through the Aruvamozhi pass and across Pandyan country reached the Coromandal coast. Suka Sandēṣam describes the route from Rameswaram to Matilakam in Central Kerala.¹⁹⁸

The Palakkad pass was the most important link that connected the coastal trade route with Tamilnadu. The road that connected Salem Coimbatore region with Kerala coast ran through this pass. This road started from Kodungallur and via Thrissur, Alathur and Palakkad pass reached the Coromandal coast. This must have been the route followed by Sundaramurthi Nayanar to reach Thiruvanchikulam.¹⁹⁹ The importance of this short cut across the Peninsula is greater when compared with the round about coastal route.

Along the trade routes that connected Wayanad with Karnataka virakkals (hero stones) are found.

197. Chirakkal T. Balakrishnan Nair, 'Kathivanūr Viran Tōṟṟam', Kerala Bhāṣa Ganaññal, vol.I, Thrissur, 1992, pp.462-66.

198. Suka Sandēṣam, v. 28-74, pp.35-79.

199. K.P.K. Menon (trans.) Periya Purāṇam, Thrissur, 1988.

Vīrakkals were erected for those who showed great valour and died as martyrs. For self protection the traders used to have armed men with them and these vīrakkals must have been for those who died in their attempt to save the traders and their goods. The presence of these historical relics reminds one of the old trade routes and the passages of the traders.²⁰⁰

Wayanad was a meeting place of traders and it was connected with Coorg and Karnataka area on the one hand and Kōngunad on the other. From Wayanad there were pathways to reach Bandipur and Gundelpet in Karnataka. From the borders of Karnataka there were pathways upto Mananthavadi and from there pass roads upto Kannur, Thalassery and Kozhikode.²⁰¹

Jainism was intimately connected with trade and the spatial distribution of the Jain shrines in Kerala shows that they were all on trade routes. The jain centre of Tiruchanathumalai is near the old trade route that passes through the Aruvamoli pass. It is a short cut from Thirunelveli to the ports of Puwar and Vilinjam. Beyond the high ranges on the same route were the jain centres of

200. See note No.193 above.

201. M.R. Raghava varier, Kēralīyata Caritramānaññal, pp. 80-81.

Devathur and Uttamapalayam in Tamilnadu. The jain temple of Kallil was located on another route that connected the high ranges of Idukki and Munnar with the Trikkakara Kodungallur regions on the coastal plain.²⁰²

In the absence of reliable sources we are not in a position to know the facilities along the routes. In trading centres like Kollam carts were used, as is evidenced from the TPCP. But we do not know whether country pathways had amenities for carts. Often in the villages goods were transported as head loads. As distance and quantity of goods increased animals were used to transport goods. Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam refers to the Brahmin traders who came to Kayamkulam with their goods on pack animals.²⁰³ The Tōṛṛam invocation of Kathivanūr Vīran refers to vāṇiās on ox back.²⁰⁴ Horse breeding was almost absent in Kerala and the imported horses were too expensive to be used for transport.

Sometimes the trade routes were obstructed by rivers and forests. There are bridges across rivers. Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam refers to the bridges across river

202. Ibid., p.71.

203. Uṇṇunīli Sandēṣam, v.92, pp.80-81.

204. Chirakkal T. Balakrishnan Nair, op.cit.

Pampa.²⁰⁵ In the route that went from Kollam to Tiruvalla, the area of Thekumkur was thick forest.²⁰⁶ There were dangers from thieves in these forests and we do not know whether there were arrangements for the safety of the traders. The traders must have had the service of caññātams.²⁰⁷

The numerous rivers and backwaters provided a cheap water transport system. The backwaters together with the canals that connected them provide an interrupted water transport system along the coast line. Ibn Battuta refers to this water way from Kozhikode to Kollam. It was a ten days journey. Journey was only during day time.²⁰⁸ The backwaters provided means for even large scale transport of goods. Slow moving large boats (Kettuvallaññal) laden with cargo were the usual sights along the backwaters.

Ferries have been points for collecting cungam because of the transporting of goods. Ruling chiefs coveted the possession of such ferries. Because of the undulating nature of the land the rivers take a round

205. Uññunīli Sandēsam, part I, v.98, p.84.

206. Ibid. part I, v. 126, p.100

207. Trained troops supplied for hire.

208. Mahdhi Hussain, op.cit., p.189.

about way connecting different villages and production centres.

Navigation was much familiar to Kerala. Ships from Tamilnadu and Gujarat reached Kerala coast. Wang Tayan gives evidence for the import of rice from Orissa to Kerala.²⁰⁹ Ibn Battuta refers to the ship owners of northern region of Kerala.²¹⁰

The trade centres are often at the converging points of trade routes. This is best illustrated by Kozhikode. Towards the east of the Kozhikode Taluk, there was a mountain road from Puthupadi to Cheruvadi and this connected the region of Kozhikode with the regions beyond the hills. Two branches of this route entered the town one via Thamarasseri and the other via Kanniparamba as a single road. Through out these roads there were landing places for goods and carts. These roads were almost parallel to the rivers so as to avoid the crossing of the same. From the northern side another route reached the town crossing the Elathur river. This road became famous with the advent of Vasco da Gama. A main road reached the town from south via Kadalundi and Beypore.²¹¹ In the

209. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, op.cit., p.294

210. Mahdhi Hussain, op.cit.

211. N.M. Nambuthiri, op.cit., pp.54-55.

cliff that surrounded Kozhikode, there are two passes which are important trade routes that connected the town with the Mysore region. Another road that entered the town along the banks of river Kallai linked the town with the Gudalloor and Coimbatore area.²¹²

The Sandēśakāyas give us a picture of the roads that connected certain trading centres. The Sandēśa Kāvyaś reveal trade routes that connected the various parts of Kerala. Unṇunīli Sandēśam describes the route from Thiruvananthapuram to Kaduthuruthy.²¹³ The route from Thiruvananthapuram to Kollam was via. Palkulangara, Trippapur, Muthalapozhi, Varkala, Nadayara, Ayirur, Puthamkulam, Cherukara, Nedungolum, Ottaplamude and Umayanallur. This path way came to be known as Kollaperuvazhi.²¹⁴ From Trippapur upto Muthalapozhi this road was almost along the coast line.²¹⁵ So also the main road towards south from Kodungallur was via. Chendamangalam, Paravur, Cheranallur, Varapuzha and

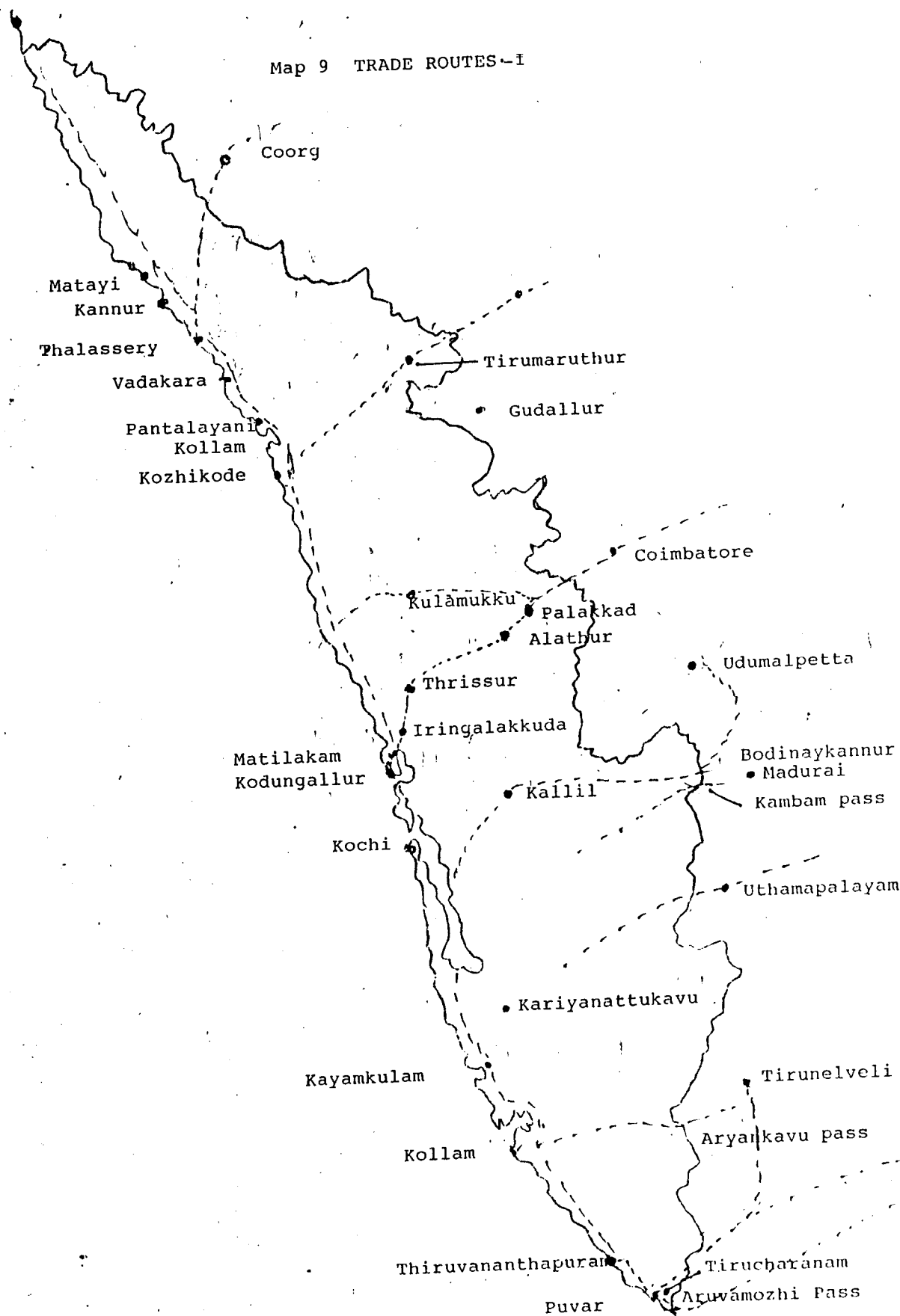
212. Ibid., p.52.

213. Unṇunīli Sandēśam, part I, v.51, p.136.

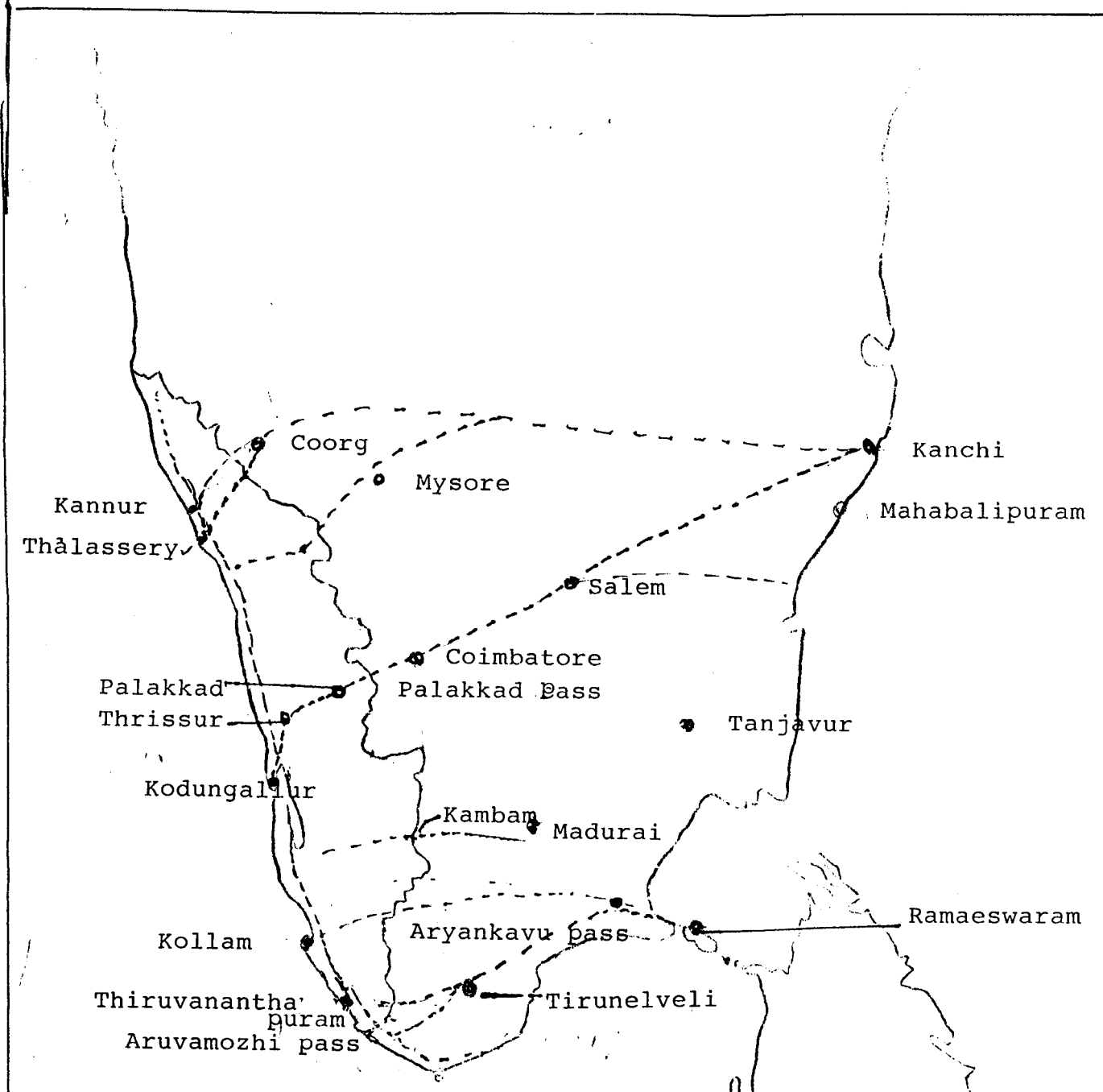
214. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, Unṇunīli Sandēśam Caritra-driṣṭiyilkūṭi, pp.104-105.

215. Ibid, pp.95-96.

Map 9 TRADE ROUTES-I



Note: 1. The routes are only approximately correct.
2. See this map against Map no. 5 showing the rivers to note how the routes are intercepted by rivers.



- Note
1. This map gives a general picture of the inter-regional trade routes
 2. Note the advantage of cross Peninsular routes when compared with round about coastal route
 3. Note how the southern most route leads to Srilanka

Edappali.²¹⁶ There was a famous path way from Kodungallur to Mathilakam.²¹⁷

The network of roads and communication shows that the trade and commercial connections in all practical purposes were cutting across the boundaries created by political entities. In other words the economic life world comprised areas which were larger than the minor principalities and spread all over peninsular South India. The means of exchange and the spread of culture show that the actual sphere of activities of the people was not the areas of local power centres.

IV.7 THE ISLAMIC TRADE DIASPORA - A CASE STUDY

A direct impact of the overseas trade of Malabar has been the development of trading and cultural diasporas²¹⁸ along her coast. Trading diasporas are the groups of traders settled in foreign countries for the sake of trade whose main secular function is to be

216. Suka Sandēsam, explanation in p.70.

217. Ibid, v. 72, p.76.

218. The term diaspora originated from a Greek word meaning scattering as in the case of scattering of seeds. Trading diaspora is a 'notion of socially interdependent but spatially dispersed communities' Abner Cohen, 'Cultural Strategies in the Organisation of Trading Diasporas, Claude Meillassoux (ed), The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa, London, 1971, p.267.

intermediaries in trade between the host country and their kinsmen. The origin of the Jews, Christians and Muslims in Kerala has been in the form of such trading diasporas. The settlements of Islamic traders in the coastal towns of Kerala have been typical of such diasporas. Studies in new perspectives are emerging about diasporas and this section is an attempt at understanding Islamic diaspora in Kerala in the light of such new studies.²¹⁹

It is said that religious fervour has been the most important characteristic feature of Islamic society. But as far as Kerala is concerned this conclusion has little relevance. Islam spread along the coast of Kerala in the early years of Hijira itself and it is wellknown that this was the result of a steady commercial and cultural contact and not the aftermath of military attacks. And it is not possible to date the history of such a cultural relation that evolved through centuries.

Trade was inseparably related with Islam and Arab trade got a great stimulus with the rise of Islam. As the Prophet himself was a trader, the profession of trade was

219. Philip D. Curtin, Cross Cultural Trade in World History, London, 1984, Abner Cohen, op.cit. G.N. Spencer, 'Indian Trade Diaspora and Cola Maritime Expansion.' JIAS, vol.VI, No.1, September, 1988, p.1-13.

held in high esteem in Islamic society.²²⁰ There are direct and indirect references to the presence of an Islamic community along the coast of Kerala in the accounts of Arab travellers. Ibn Battuta reveals that there were Muslim merchants in every port along the coast of Malabar.²²¹ Most of these merchants were from southern Arabia and Persian gulf. This accounts for the Arab Islamic culture in Kerala in contrast with the Turko-Persian Islamic culture in others parts of India.²²² In the beginning of the 16th century important settlements of Muslim traders in northern Kerala were Ponnani, Veliancode, Tanur, Parappanangadi, Tirurangadi, Paravanna, Kakkad, Kozhikode, Panthalayani Kollam, Thikoti, Kannur, Edakkad, Pazhayangadi and Ezhimala.²²³

Those who were proficient in trade and commerce would go for the same to other countries and settledown there. They would be like guests to the new region.

220. In Islamic tradition, trade is a superior way of earning one's livelihood. "If thou profit by doing what is permitted, thy deed is a djihad". See Maxim Rodinson, Islam and Capitalism, Brian Pearce (trans.) Penguin edition, 1974, p.14.

221. Mahdhi Hussain (ed) op.cit., pp.185-192.

222. Also see Stephen Dale, The Mapilas of Malabar, 1498-1922, Oxford, 1980, p.26.

223. Sheik Zainuddin, Thahafatul Mujahiddin, Velayudhan Panikkasseri (ed.), Thrissur, 1972, p.71.

These group of guests would study the language and customs of the host and would act as intermediaries between their kinsmen who are coming for trade from their country and the host country.²²⁴ The early Islamic settlers of Kerala were typical of such intermediaries. In pre-industrial economies overseas traders were faced with the problems of storage, credit payment, transportation, information regarding supply and demand, settlement of commercial disputes, creation of bonds of confidence etc. in alien countries. These problems could best be solved by the formation of trading diasporas.²²⁵

From the very dawn of civilization trade settlements has been the institutional arrangement for cross trade. Examples are the settlements of the Phoenicians along the Aegean shores and those of the South Indian traders under the Colas in South East Asia. This kind of trade relationship would create deeper impacts than military conquests.²²⁶

Foreign traders who come in group would create a series of settlements in the land of the host. They would

224. Philip D. Curtin, op.cit., p.2.

225. Abner Cohen, op.cit., p.266-70.

226. Philip D. Curtin, op.cit., p.3.

also create trade network with the traders of their home land. There will be distinction between these settled traders and those traders who are coming and going. There was a cohesive force among these settlements and that was the solidarity of a common culture. It is the cultural difference between the overseas traders and the host country that created the need for intermediaries in trade. In course of time such trading diasporas would become cultural minorities in the host country.²²⁷ It is in this theoretical background that the Islamic Settlements in Malabar is to be studied.

Sulayman who visited Kollam in the 9th century do not speak of any indigenous Islamic trading community at that trading centre. At the same time there were Islamic people in the trading centres of Kerala and this is attested by the signatures at the end of the TPCP. The very fact that the Islamic people were signatories to an important record like the TP CP points to their social recognition and the local support enjoyed by them. Abul Fida speaks of the separate quarter of Islamic community at Kollam.²²⁸

227. Ibid., p.4.

228. S.M.H. Nainar, op.cit., p.49.

The Islamic traders who came to Kerala settled in the coastal trading centres and there were other foreign communities also. Thus these people were members of not only of urban society but also of a plural society consisting of different cultures.²²⁹ In such a plural society certain diasporas would be very particular to keep their identity and not to merge with indigenous community. At the very same time they will have cultural unity with their own kinsmen who are scattered in the host country. It is the belief in a common brotherhood that united the Muslims coming from different countries and differentiated them from the host societies. In spite of this religious bond, the Islamic diaspora exhibited secular characteristics that fostered their trade in Malabar.

The host societies received the diasporas in different manner. In Kerala they were welcomed wholeheartedly. The Jews and Christians who had come for trade were received in the same manner. In course of time there evolved a cultural co-existence among all these communities. The Hindus, despite the rigid belief in their tradition did not harass the Muslims or their trade. Instead they were tolerant towards their faith. The Jews and Christians who had come for trade were received in the

229. Philip D. Curtin, op.cit., p.11.

same manner. The merchants enjoyed similar powers and status which were enjoyed by the Hindus.²³⁰

We have inscriptional evidence for Zamorin's patronage of Islamic religion, in the Muccunti mosque inscription.²³¹ But it was out of secular motives that the Zamorin patronised Islam. Economic and political needs of man lead to the diffusion of religion also.

The material culture of Islamic people were entirely different from that of Kerala. The religion of Islam had only practical ideals. Islam preferred a life of pleasure and prosperity to the one filled with miseries and poverty. In the stories about Islamic merchants, popular in the coastal towns of Malabar it is their wealth and attraction towards the same that are projected and not their religious zeal.

Islamic diaspora was a stimulating factor in the development of the urban centres in Kerala. These early Muslim traders lived in groups and around each group there developed personnel to fulfill their needs. The availability of all goods and services needed for a

230. Also see M.G.S. Narayanan, Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, p.4.

231. Ibid., pp.38-42.

civilized life was the peculiarity of Islamic settlements. When compared with the existing society of Kerala there was a liberal variety in the case utensils, dress, and all other luxury goods in such Islamic settlements. Urbanism flourished in and around such settlements. "Wherever Islam made its presence felt as an indivisible combination of power, communication and exchange, urbanisation flourished and expanded".²³²

Speaking of Diu K.S. Mathew shows how the settlement of foreign traders leads to urbanisation.²³³ In the case of Kerala the rhythm of monsoon forced trading communities to stay in the ports. Each community had its own quarters in the trading centre. Each was a window to foreign culture. They were vital players in the process of cultural interaction and diffusion.²³⁴ Kozhikode had separate quarters for foreign traders.

Certain regions had official arrangements that reduced the need for trade diasporas. The Muslim Mediterranean had important institutions that minimised

232. K.N. Choudhuri, Trade and Civilization in Indian Ocean, Cambridge, 1985, p.344.

233. K.S. Mathew, Portuguese and the Sultanate of Gujarat, Delhi, 1986, p.63.

234. Also see Kenneth Mc Pherson, op.cit., pp.130-131.

the need for brokers and there by trade diasporas. One of them was the office of the Wakil al tujjār who served as legal representative for foreign merchants. The Wakil al tujjār would help the merchant to collect dues, to have storage facilities and the like. He was like the Commission Agent under the English East India Company.²³⁵

The host society was a 'whole society' consisting of various groups of producers. But the guests - the merchants were specialised only in one profession, trade.²³⁶ So the latter had to depend on the former. The institutions of the rulers came forward for the safety and protection of the traders. Provisions were made for their material and spiritual happiness.

The Islamic diaspora in Kerala do not seem to have used force against their host, either for the expansion of trade or for the propagation of their faith. The society of the traders were multinational and multi-cultural and for the survival of such a society and for the progress of their trade a secular outlook was necessary. That is why they followed a peaceful policy towards their host society also.

235. Philip D. Curtin, op.cit., p.113.

236. Ibid, p.5.

It is important to note the secular aspects of the religious institutions of the early Muslim settlers of Kerala. Ibn Battuta describes the Islamic diaspora and their institutions. The Islamic people of Ezhimala were those who came from Hormuz and Oman. The mosques of this region were not mere religious institutions. (The mosques had students and they were granted scholarships from the funds of the mosques. There were arrangements in the mosque to provide food for the students, visitors and way farers.²³⁷ Ibn Battuta refers to the foreign Muslims of the city of Budfattan and the mosque used by them. He also makes mention of the three muslim quarters in the trading centre of Pantalayani Kollam. The judge (Khāsi) and khatib (orator) of this trading centre was a man from oman.²³⁸ At Kollam the immigrant Muslims and local Muslims had separate leaders. Ibn Battuta says that the head man of the Muslims merchants at Kollam belonged to Iraq. The judge of the town also was a foreign Muslim. Ibn Battuta also speaks of the head of local Muslims. All these indicate that even in the 14th century the native Muslims had not risen to prominence in the Islamic institutions. This also shows that even in the 14th century immigration had not ended and these Islamic diasporas were keeping their separate entity. Otherwise

237. Mahdhi Hussain, op.cit, pp.186-188.

238. Ibid., 193.

Map 11 CENTRES OF ISLAMIC TRADE DIASPORA
(14th CENTURY)

Matayi
Jurbattan
Dahfattan
Budfattan
Panthalayani Kollam
Kozhikode

Kodungallur

Kollam

they would have preferred native Muslims also to be at the top of social and religious hierarchy to their own kinsman who came from their native country.

The foreign merchant chiefs interfered in the administration of the host country. According to the accounts left by Ma Huan, the Zamorin had two Islamic officers.²³⁹ Reference to the head of the community, the chief justice and the like among the muslim traders point to the fact that the muslim traders enjoyed autonomy to an extent.

As the host society was a whole society, its members need not have to bow before the foreigner. At the same time in the feudal society of Kerala there were drop outs and it is these drop outs who joined with the incoming traders and followed their faith in the beginning. The interest of trade dominated the life of Islamic diaspora in Kerala and that is why they exhibited secular characteristics.

This chapter looks in to the various aspects of the trade and exchange centres of medieval Kerala from A.D.1200 to 1500. The Chinese trade is specially dealt

239. J.V.G. Mills, op.cit., p.140.

with. The chapter gives a descriptive and analytical account of the trading centres during the period under study. The trade in horses is discussed seperately. So also an attempt is made to give a picture of the trade routes. Finally the chapter gives an analytical study of the Islamic diaspora along the Kerala coast.

TOWNS, MARKETS AND FAIRS IN MEDIEVAL KERALA (A.D. 800-1500)

NAME	LOCATION	PERIOD	SOURCE	WHETHER MAJOR/ MINOR	NATURE
1. Thiruvananthapuram [Trivandrum]	At Thiruvananthapuram in Thiruvananthapuram Dist.	Second phase	Indigenous literature	Minor	Port town and trading centre
2. Kollam [Quilon]	At Kollam in the present Kollam Dist.	First and Second	Indigenous literature, Foreign Accounts Archaeological remains and inscriptions	Major	Port town, trading centre and head quarters of a small kingdom
3. Kayamkulam [Kaylankan]	At Kayamkulam in the present Kollam Dist.	Second phase	Indigenous literature Foreign Accounts	Minor	Inland trading centre
4. Karunattukavu [Kariyanattukavu]	Near Tiruvalla in Pattanamthitta Dist.	Second Phase	Indigenous literature	Minor	- do -
5. Kutavur	Near Tiruvalla in Pathanamthitta Dt.	First Phase	Inscription	Minor	Inland trading centre (Loca- tion not iden- tified)
6. Muccanti	Unidentified	Second Phase	Indigenous literature	Minor	- do -

Contd....

NAME	LOCATION	PERIOD	SOURCE	WHETHER MAJOR/ MINOR	NATURE
7. Sriprvatam	- do -	-do-	- do -	-do-	- do -
8. Kandiyurmattam	At Mattam in the Ernakulam Dist.	-do-	- do -	-do-	- do -
9. Kochi [Cochin]	Kochi in Ernakulam Dist.	-do-	Indigenous literature and foreign accounts	-do-	Port town and headquarters of a kingdom
10. Kodungallur [Muyirikode/ Kodumkolur]	At Kodungallur in Thrissur Dist.	First Phase and the early part second phase	Indigenous literature Foreign accounts inscriptions and Archeological remains	Major	Port town, religious centre, a coastal trading centre and capital city
11. Matilakam [Gunaka]	8 kms north of Kodungallur in Thrissur Dist.	First and Second Phase	Indigenous literature and Archaeological remains	Minor	Coastal trading centre and a religious centre
12. Bhaskarapuram and Patinnattupotta	Near Irinjalakuda in Thrissur Dist. [Exact location not known]	First Phase	Inscription	-do-	Inland trading centre

Contd...

NAME	LOCATION	PERIOD	SOURCE	WHETHER MAJOR/ MINOR	NATURE
13. Thazhakkad	Near Irinjalakuda in Thrissur Dist.	First Phase	- do -	-do-	- do -
14. Kulamukku	Near Pattambi on the banks of Baratapuzha in Palakkad Dist.	Second Phase	Indigenous literature	Minor	- do -
15. Kozhikode	At Kozhikode in Kozhikode Dist.	-do-	Indigenous literature, Foreign accounts, inscription, and Archaeological sources	Major	Port town, coastal trading centre and headquarters of the Zamorins
16. Panthalayani Kollam [Fandarina]	Panthalayani Kollam near Koyilandi in Kozhikode dist.	First and Second Phase	Foreign Accounts Archaeological and epigraphical sources	Major	Port town and coastal trading centre
17. Tirumaruttur	In Wayanad Dist.	Second Phase	Indigenous literature	Minor	Inland trading centre
18. Thazhakkavū	Near Pulpally in Wayanad Dist.	First Phase	Inscription	-do-	- do -

Contd...

NAME	LOCATION	PERIOD	SOURCE	WHETHER MAJOR/ MINOR	NATURE
19. Budfattan [Vatakara]	In Kozhikode Dist.	Second Phase	Foreign accounts	-do-	Coastal trading centre
20. Dahfuttan [Dharmapatanam]	Kannur Dist.	-do-	- do -	-do-	- do -
21. Jurbattam [in Kannur]	-do-	-do-	- do -	-do-	- do -
22. Matayi	Near Ezhimala in Kasargode Dist.	First and Second Phase	Indigenous literature Foreign Accounts Archaeological remainings	-do-	- do -

Apart from the centres mentioned in the chart, Valarpatanam, Tikkodi, Tirurangadi, Parappanangadi, Ponnani, Purakkad and the like coastal towns had become brisk centres of trade on the eve of the advent of the Portuguese.

TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES IN KERALA (A. D. 800 - 1500)

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CHAPTER V

CURRENCY SYSTEM AND THE UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

A very relevant problem with regard to the trade of the period under a study is the use and circulation of coins and aspects of weights and measures and this chapter looks into the same. The first part deals with the nature and extent of monetisation and the second part with the various weights and measures. Attempt is also made at a comparative study of the prices prevailing in the region of Kerala and Tamilnadu during a given period of time.

V.1.i COINS

Different things have acted as money through the ages and coin is one among them, which was noted for its durability and acceptability. 'A coin is merely a piece of metal having definite shape and weight and bearing recognised symbols on its face, impressed on it by a responsible authority.'¹

The rarity of the physical presence of coins during the period under study has made certain scholars conclude that there was little monetisation in Kerala.

1. D.C. Sircar, Studies in Indian Coins, Delhi, 1968, p.2.

That is why even in specialised studies on money and coins in South India medieval Kerala is given little importance.² The fact that either the Perumāls or their immediate successors did not have any mint in the region has strengthened the above attitude of scholars. But the silver punch marked coins and Roman coins found out from certain parts of Kerala, belonging to the early historical phase have been subject to serious studies.³

The study of numismatics has undergone considerable changes. Earlier the interests of the scholars were with regard to the physical features of the coins, like, weightstandard, emblem etc. A coin from a soil layer is almost silent about its use in society. 'Money is a social reality'⁴ and it is to be studied in its actual societal context. Here epigraphical and literary sources help us to have a correct understanding of the use of coins and money. They touch up on all the aspects of money, like circulation, price of articles, level of monetisation, rate of exchange etc. The

2. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, Coins and Currency System in South India, Delhi, 1977.

3. Parameswari Lal Gupta, Early Coins from Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1967.

4. Francois Scmiscend. See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, (ed.) Money and Market in India 1100-1700 A.D., Delhi, 1994, p.3.

physical absence of coins is no longer considered to be their actual absence.

By the beginning of our period of study there is a change in the conceptual value of coins. Earlier, coins were considered as prestige goods⁵ or as a store of value. During the period under investigation coins had all the use of money - a means of payment and exchange and a standard of value. Modern money is impersonal and commercial but primitive money had 'pedegree and personality' sacred uses or moral and emotional connotations'.⁶

Coins of medieval South India had a wide circulation and the coins current in Kerala were in circulation in other parts of South India. So it is essential to consult sources related with other parts of South India also to have a clear picture of the use of money and coins in Kerala.⁷

5. For the use of money in primitive societies, see Karl Polanyi 'Economy as Instituted Process', in George Dalton and Karl Polanyi (eds), Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economics, New York, 1965, pp.166-169.

6. George Dalton, Economic Anthropology, New York, 1971, pp.167-68.

7. M.R. Raghava Varier, 'Coins and Money - Use in Kerala', paper presented to the XIIth Annual Conference, Epigraphical Society of India, Tamil University, Tanjavur, 1991, p.2.

In the epigraphical sources pertaining to the first phase of our study reference to coins are scarce. This might have been because of the fact that records referring to coins and money were not procured or preserved. Or the coins must have been in use only in restricted areas and confined to certain contexts. Still regarding the first part of our study our source is mainly epigraphical. Even though the inscriptions referring to coins are very few, they shed much welcome light on hitherto unknown facts about their functions and contexts. Regarding the second phase there are abundance of literary sources also in addition to epigraphical.

V.1.ii The earliest reference to coin is found in the Vāḷappally copper plates⁸ of Raja Sekhara (assigned to 832 AD) which lays prescriptive rules for punishing dereliction of duties in the temple of Tiruvarruvay. A sum of 100 dinārās were to be realised as fine from those who obstructed the daily offerings in the temple. The very same record prescribes to collect fine in paddy also. It seems that if the fine was small it was remitted in paddy. Dinārās were used in cases where higher amounts were involved. There is a Pandyan record also in support

8. Vāḷappally inscription, TAS, vol.II, line 13, p.13-14.

of this.⁹ This inscription deals with the donation of 10 dinārās to a temple. In both cases dināra seems to have been associated with the wealthy class and involved in cases of larger transactions. The Vāḷappally inscription also refers to the income from a particular purayit̃am and paddy field which included three dinārās and 150 tūpi of paddy.¹⁰ Here income is calculated in terms of money also and dināra is used as a measure of value. The dināra was invested in profit oriented transactions and this is evident from the Pandyan inscription mentioned above. According to this inscription provision was to be made for a perpetual lamp in the temple from the interest of the dinārās that were donated.

Sulayman refers to dināra in the context of collecting duties from the ships at Kollam. From the Chinese ships one thousand dirhams were collected and from others ten to twenty dinārs.¹¹ Thus in the context of medieval Kerala dināra had all the functions of money. Dināra was universally accepted in medieval world.

9. SII, XIV, No.9. Also see K.G. Krishnan, Literary and Epigraphical Reference to Coinage in Ancient Tamil Nadu, JNSI, vol.XX, Part I, 1988.

10. Vāḷappally Inscription, line 9-10.

11. S. Maqbul Ahmad (ed) Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China, p.38. This is the singular context of the occurrence of the coin dirham. One dirham = 2.97 grams of gold, Ibid. 'Al-Masālik Wal Mamālik', p.26.

The Jews used dinārās in their transactions in Kerala and they gave Egyptian dinārs for purchasing pepper, iron etc. from Malabar coast. Even the registration fees for the goods bought were in terms of dinār. Dinār was divisible into quirats. One dinār was equal to 24 quirats.¹² Overseas trade of Medieval Kerala was no more ceremonial exchange or gift trade. It did not have much to do with reciprocity. In order to get pepper the foreign traders had to give gold currency.

Studying the epigraphical documents, M.G.S. Narayanan comes to the conclusion that one dināra was equal to 3 kalañcu of gold.¹³ This again presents a new piece of information. Coins and gold were in circulation simultaneously. This can be explained as a result of the lack of involvement or interest of the political authorities in exercising effective control over exchange, minting, coinage etc. This may be partly due to the immature stage of state machinery or due to the practice in the contemporary economy. However our sources are almost silent about such matters.

12. S.D. Goitein, 'From Aden to India', JESHO, vol.XXIII, Part I and II, 1980, pp.64-66.

13. M.G.S. Narayanan, Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire, p.475.

The TPCP mention kāṣu in the context of collecting duties from the carts and boats coming to the market centre of Kollam nagaram. Eight kāṣu were collected from each cart and four kāṣu from each boat.¹⁴ The same inscriptions also mention ālkāṣu, an amount collected from those who owned slaves, suggesting the possibility that such income was collected in kāṣu.¹⁵ The Tiruvalla copper plates refer to kāṣu in connection with the fine imposed on the temple functionaries who rebuked the cāttirārs.¹⁶

Kāṣu was also the common name for money in Malayalm. It has been observed that kāṣu was struck in copper, silver and gold. In the absence of evidences we are not sure whether indigenious ruling powers struck coins during the period under discussion.

The paḷamkāṣu is mentioned in a few inscriptions of the 9th and 10th centuries. An inscription of the 17th regnal year of Stanu Ravi (861 AD) refers to gold paḷamkāṣu.¹⁷ The Trikkakara inscription of 968 AD also

14. TAS vol.II, PP. 80-82.

15. TPCP I Plate, line 29, TAS vol.II, PP.67-68

16. TAS, vol.I part II, p.33. Cāttirārs are Brahmin students of the educational institutioins attached to temples.

17. The Tiruvārṟuvāi inscription, TAS vol. II, pp.85-86.

mentions paḷamkāṣu.¹⁸ But for these two inscriptions, no other record refers to paḷamkāṣu. By the 10th century AD coins were falling out of circulation and gold of specific weight and fineness began to replace coins in higher transactions.¹⁹

Inscriptions of 10th century refer to transactions in terms of gold also. The Tripunithura inscription (947 A.D.) of Kotai Iravi prescribes a fine of 12 kaḷaṅcu of gold to the temple of Tripunithura.²⁰ The Trikkakara inscription (959 A.D.) of Indu Kota refers to an offering of 10 kaḷaṅcu of gold to the temple of Trikkakara.²¹ Another record of 975 A.D. assigned to Sri. Vallabhan Kotai speaks of a fine of twenty five kaḷaṅcu of gold.²² There are inscriptions which refers to fines both in terms of coins and gold.²³ In the 10th century there

18. TAS vol.III, part II, pp.180-181.

19. M.R. Raghava Varier, op. cit. p.4.

20. SBM, Kollam Raṅṅām Śatakam, p.28.

21. TAS vol.III, part II, p.166-168.

22. TAS vol.II part I, p.23.

23. e.g. The Trikkakara inscription (968 A.D.) of Bhaskara Ravi which mentions a donation of forty pon kāṣu and 150 kaḷaṅcu of gold. TAS vol.III, p.180-181.

was also the practice of lending gold, often by the temple, at a stipulated rate of interest.²⁴

A Trikkakara inscription of the 6th regnal year of Bhaskara Ravi shows that the rate of interest was 5% (pattu-arai - half/ten)²⁵. From 10th to 12th century there prevailed a gold-paddy ratio in Kerala - 1 kaḷaṅcu of gold = 20 parās of paddy.²⁶

But by the 12th century coins again came into circulation as is evidenced by their appearance in inscriptions. New coins like accu, paṇam, and calāka appear in inscriptions. The Thiruvananthapuram inscription of Kotai Marthanda refers to calāka, accu, etc. It records the donation of three calākās and thirty alakāccus for the daily offerings of the temple. The inscription also mentions that the interest of the three calākās was fifteen alakāccūs and four paṇams.²⁷ Sometimes different kinds of coins are found involved in a

24. Trikkakara Inscriptions (No.7 and 9) of Bhaskara Ravi. TAS, vol.II p.41-42 and p.47 respectively and the Perunnai inscription of 1050 A.D., TAS vol. V, p.35.

25. M.G.S. Narayanan, Political and Social Condition of Kerala....., p.488.

26. Kollur, Madham copper plates, line 15-2. SBM, Kollam Nālām Śatakam, p.11. and Tirukatittanam inscription, 943 A.D., TAS, vol. II, Part II, p.36-37.

27. TAS, vol. III, part I, pp. 51-53.

single transaction. The Thiruvambadi Inscription (1196 AD) records the grant of three kinds of coins alakāccu, paṇam, and calāka for a single offering.²⁸ This may be because of the different values of the coins.

Inscriptions are silent about the authorities who issued the coins. Even with regard to the coins of 12th century we do not have knowledge about their minting. Nor do we have information regarding the purity of metals used for minting.

During the 10th and 11th centuries paddy had been a common measure of value and the prices of commodities were stated in terms of paddy also. But this was not a mere barter system, but a money based exchange system. The Tiruvalla inscriptions give the prices of certain goods of daily use in terms of paddy.²⁹ Paddy was a standard of value and medium of exchange in smaller transactions. This was the case in Tamilnadu under the Colas also. Kenneth Hall cites two inscriptions for the same.³⁰ The Tiruvalla inscriptions give us the exchange

28. TAS, vol. III, part I, pp.50-51.

29. See table No.V-4.

30. See table V.5. Kenneth Hall, 'Price making and market Hierarchy in Medieval South India', IESHR, vol. IV No.2, April-June 1977, pp.210-212.

rate of various commodities.³¹ Certain Jewish sources supply us with the prices of bulk commodities like iron and copper besides spices, with minute details.³²

V.1.iii From a study of the coins of this early period we can arrive at the following conclusions:

The important coins were kāṣu, paḷamkāṣu calāka and paṇam. These were indigenous coins current in various parts of South India. Dinār was used where large amounts were involved and in foreign transactions. The circulation of money was very much limited when compared with the next phase of our study. There was a gold-paddy ratio that remained stable for about three centuries. Even the exchange of goods for goods was based on money. In smaller transactions often paddy was accepted as a common measure of value. This is best evident from a table prepared on the basis of the Tiruvalla inscriptions, table no. V.4, given below.

V.2. During the second phase of our study, and corresponding to the proliferation of trade and markets, coin-money became more widespread. We have noted a dearth

31. TAS vol.II and III, pp.150-151.

32. S.D. Goitein, op cit., pp. 58-60.

of coins by the middle of the 12th century and increased references to transactions by means of gold. But from the beginning of the 13th century coins appear in abundance. A remarkable feature of the coinage of the period was the increase in the variety of coins. Contemporary Maṅiṇṇavāḷa works furnish lists of various kinds of coins.³³ Accu, kāṣu, pākam, paṇam, calāka, tiramam and tāram were the important coins referred to in the literature and epigraphical records of the period. These coins had a wide circulation and were not confined only to Kerala. There were smaller denominations of these coins like ara paṇam, (1/2 paṇam) ara tiramam, (1/2 tiramam), kāl tiramam (1/4 tiramam), kāl paṇam (1/4 paṇam) etc.^{33a} These small denominations show that coin were used in smaller transactions also. Accu is mentioned in various inscriptions.³⁴ Different varieties of accu were prevalent in South India.³⁵ Of these ānai accu and aḷakaccu were popular in Kerala and are frequently

33. Uṇṇiāṭi Caritam, gadyam, 19, Ananthapura Varṇanam, v. 69-73, Uṇṇiccirutēvi Caritam, gadyam, 21 and Uṇṇiacchi Caritam, gadyam, 18.

33a. Uṇṇiccirutēvi Caritam, gadyam, 21 p.34.

34. e.g. The Kilimanur inscription, TAS vol. V, Part I, p.63.

35. Ānai accu, nallanai accu, ānaiaccu siruvāikkipōlan etc. Also see K.G. Krishnan, 'Literary and Epigraphical References to the Coinage in Ancient Tamil Nadu', JNSI vol.XX Part I, 1958, p.12.

referred to in literary compositions.³⁶ Accu seems to have been the standard coin in Kerala.³⁷ The Killimanur inscriptions furnish us with an accu-paddy ratio, 1 accu = 1 para of paddy.³⁸ Accu was a gold coin. The contemporary gold paddy ratio was 1 kalañcu of gold = 20 parās of paddy. Thus the accu-gold ratio was 1 accu = 1/20 kalañcu of gold. Ānaiaccu was so called because of the figure of the elephant (āna) inscribed on them. A Sandēṣa Kāvya refers to ānaiaccu in the context of the big business of horse trade. From the conversation of the traders in that work it seems that the price of each Arab horse was 2,000 pieces of ānaiaccu.³⁹ According to Wassaff the price of an Arab horse was 220 dinār. From this we get an ānai accu - dinār ratio i.e. 220 dinār = 2000 ānaiyaccu.⁴⁰ Alakaccu is mentined in temple

36. Alakaccu is mentioned in the Thiruvattar inscription, TAS, vol.I, p.296. Ānaiaccu is referred to in the Mithranandapuram inscription, TAS, vol.III, Part I, p.125 and Unniacci Caritam, gadyam, 18, p.66. Accu is mentioned in Unnunīli Sandēṣam, v. 64 and Unniacci Caritam, gadyam, 18, p.65.

37. K.G. Krishnan, op.cit. p.13.

38. Kilimanur inscriptions, TAS, vol. V, pp.78-85. Also see P. Sundaram Pillai, Some Early Sovereigns of Travancore, reprint, Madras, 1986, p.112.

39. Unniacci Caritam, gadyam, 18, p.66.

40. Abdulla Wassaff, 'Tazijiyathul - Amsār' in Elliot and Dawson, History of India vol. III, Delhi, 1990, p.34.

inscriptions and not seen in the transactions in bazaars.⁴¹

Malayalam literary works refer to the gold coin ponnu.⁴² As the name itself indicates it must have been a gold coin. Ponnu has been equated with the gold coin of gadyāna and varāha.⁴³ The honnu of Karnataka must have been the ponnu of Kerala as it is used to denote gadyāna.

The above mentioned coins appear in big transactions and in the context of big donations. But we have coins like pākam which are frequently referred to connection with the transactions in the bazaar. The literary works make frequent references to the same.⁴⁴ Pākam or bhāgam means a part. It denotes the fraction of a big gold coin. It is equated with the hāga of Vijayanagar empire. Hāga was 1/4 of a panam.⁴⁵ Pākam is

41. The Thiruvambadi inscription of Kotai Marthanda, lines 14 and 20. This inscription also refers to alakaccu as interest derived from a particular amount of calāka. TAS vol. III, part I, p.50-51.

42. Unṇīati Caritam, gadyam, 19, p.49.

43. Meera Mary Abraham, 'The Currency System and Monetisation in Karnataka in Vijayanagar Times', QJMS, LXIX, Nos. 1 and 2, January - June 1978. Also see T.V. Mahalingam, Economic Life in Vijayanagar Empire, Madras 1951, p.178.

44. Ananthapura Varṇanam, V. 22, Unṇiacci Caritam, gadyam 18 and Unṇiccirutevi Caritam, gadyam 21.

45. Meera Mary Abraham, "Currency System and Monetisation in Karnataka" op.cit.

not seen mentioned in the inscriptions of Kerala. Pākam must have been used for smaller transactions in the market and such minor transactions and dealings might be too trivial to be inscribed.

The coin panam with its smaller denominations was widespread during later medieval period as is evidenced by the literary texts of the period.⁴⁶ The term panam is synonymous with money in Malayalm language. Foreign travellers of the 14th and 15th centuries refer to panam.⁴⁷ Speaking of the panam of Vijayanagar, Abdr Razzak says that the component of panam was gold mixed with alloy.⁴⁸

The Chinese accounts also refer to panam. Ma Huan has recorded that the kings of Venad, Kozhikode and Kochi used to mint panam. Its purity and weight differed from kingdom to kingdom. Panam was cast in silver and copper also.⁴⁹ The Manipravālam texts refer to silver

47. e.g. Ma Huan, J.V.G. Mills, (ed.), Ying yai Sheng lan Cambridge, 1970, pp.130-46 and Abdr Razzak, R.H. Major, 'Journey of Abdr Razzak', India in the Fifteenth Century, p.26.

48. 'Journey of Abdr Razzak', R.H. Major, (ed.) India in the Fifteenth Century, p.26.

49. J.V.G. Mills, (ed.) op.cit.

paṇam.⁵⁰ Copper paṇam and such coins of lower value show that they were used in smaller transactions and by common people. All these point to the increasing monetisation of the economy and the increasing and easier market transactions.

Another coin referred to in the Manipravāla kāvyās is tiramam.⁵¹ Eighteen tiramam was equal to one accu. One accu = 0.5 kāṇam of gold.⁵² Another coin of the 15th and 16th centuries was tāram, a silver coin. Ma Huan describes it in detail. It was a very small coin and was used in petty transactions. According to Ma Huan the ratio between paṇam and tāram was 1:15.⁵³ Kozhikode and Kochi and had their own separate tārams. According to Abdr Razzak 6 tāram was equal to 1 faṇam.⁵⁴

Calāka, mummuri, gulika, makāṇi and muntiyavattu were the coins mentioned in the indigenous literary works of the period.⁵⁵ Calāka is mentioned in an inscription of

50. Unṇiati Caritam, gadyam, 21, p.34, Unnunili Sandēsam, part 1, v. 63 and Unniccirutēvi Caritam, gadhyam 21.

51. Unniccirutevi Caritam, gadyam, 21, Unnunili Sandesam, part 1, v.63 and Unniati Caritam, gadyam, 19, p. 49.

52. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai says that 1 accu is 10 kāṇam of gold this is not correct. See Unnunili Sandēsam, p.69.

53. Ma Huan, J.V.G. Mills (ed) op. cit. p.136.

54. R.H. Major, 'Journey of Abdr Razzak'..., p.26.

55. Unniati Caritam, gadyam, 19, p. 49.

Kota Marthanda which states the interests on the three calākas given as loan.⁵⁶

Kāṣu is among the oldest coins of Kerala and by the time of the period under study it had become the most common coin in Kerala. The Maṇipravālam texts of the period speak of different types of kāṣu like the cōliyār. kāṣu, turushka kāṣu, vellikāṣu, etc. There were gold, silver and copper kāṣu. The cōliār. kasu refers to the coins of the Colas and Turushka kāṣu to the kāṣu of the Muslim kings. Vellikāṣu means silver kāṣu. All these coins are mentioned as being used in the transactions in the bazaar.⁵⁷

Ma Huan furnishes valuable information with regard to the use and value of coins at Kozhikode in the 14th century.⁵⁸ Prices of goods were fixed in terms of money. If goods were to be exchanged, the price of such goods also were fixed first. Faṇam and tāra were the popular coins. The former was in gold and the latter in silver. The king of Kozhikode used gold of sixty percent purity to mint coins. The price of pepper was two hundred

56. See note No.41 above. The interest on three calākas were fifteen alākaccu and four faṇams.

57. Unpiāti Caritam, gadyam, 10, p.49.

58. J.V.G. Mills, op.cit., pp.140-143.

fanam per poho. The gold content of two hundred fanam was 695.751 grams. The price of one length of silk was one hundred fanam i.e. 345.375 grams of gold.⁵⁹

From the writings of Ma Huan we get details regarding the size, weight and purity of the gold coins current at Kollam, Kochi and Kozhikode as is shown in the table below. In the 14th century, these regions must have had independent mint.

Table V.1

Region	Weight	Size	Purity of Gold
1. Kozhikode	3.45 grams	0.46 inch	60%
2. Kochi	6.33 grams	Not known	90%
3. Kollam	5.75 grains	Not known	Not known

Source: J.V. G. Mills, op. cit. p.100, 141 and 143.

By the time of advent of the Portuguese the use of money for buying and selling was well established at Kozhikode.⁶⁰ Contemporary records do not supply us with information with regard to the minting of coins but we

59. Ibid. One length of silk was 12 feet and 2.9 inches long.

60. Ravenstein E.G. (ed), A Journal of the First Voyage of Vascode Gama, London, 1890, p.59.

have definite evidences for the import of metals to the port towns of Kerala. Venetian ducats were in circulation at Malabar.⁶¹ By the end of the 14th century Chinese government seems to have prohibited the export of precious metals again and coined copper was to be used in transactions. This accounts for the large scale influx of copper from China to South Indian port towns including Kollam and Pantalayani Kollam. The rate of exchange of copper coins and gold coins was arrived at. Nine thousand Chinese copper coins were equal to one hundred and ninety two gold coins.⁶² On the eve of the arrival of the Portuguese, copper was imported to Malabar from Mecca.⁶³ Barbosa testifies to the import of gold, silver and copper to Kozhikode from the Red sea ports in the beginning of the 16th Century.⁶⁴

The following table gives precise information with regard to the coins of medieval Kerala.

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61. T.G. Aravamuthan, Catalogue of Venetian Coins in the Madras Government Museum, Madras, 1938, p.63.
 62. Meera Mary Abraham, op.cit. p.26.
 63. Ravenstein, op.cit. pp.96-99.
 64. T.G. Aravamuthan op.cit.

Table V.2

Coins of Medieval Kerala (A.D. 800-1500)

Coin	Region of the Source	Period of circulation	Source
<u>Dinār</u>	Vazhapalli/ Nanrulai nadu (Present Tiruvalla- Chengannur area)	9th century	Inscriptions and foriegn accounts
<u>Kāṣu</u>	Kollam/Venad	9th century and 13th to 15th Century	Inscriptions and Indige- nous litera- ture
<u>Paḷamkāṣu</u>	Trikkakara	9th to 10th century.	Inscriptions
<u>Accu and Ānaiaccu</u>	Venad and Wayand	12th to 14th century.	Inscriptions and Indige- nous litera- ture
<u>Alakaccu</u>	- do -	12th century	Inscriptions
<u>Calāka</u> or <u>kampi.</u>	Venad and Wayanad	12th to 14th century	Inscriptions and Indige- nous litera- ture
<u>Gūḷika</u>	Vempolinad (Vaikam - Meenachil area)	14th to 15th century	Indigenous literature
<u>Mākāni</u>	- do -	15th century	- do -
<u>Mummuri</u>	- do -	- do -	- do -
<u>Muṇṭiya- vaṭṭu</u>	- do -	- do -	- do -
<u>Pākam</u>	Valluvanad (Present Ponnani- Perinthalmanna area)	11th to 13th century	- do -

Contd....

Coin	Region of the Source	Period of circulation	Source
<u>Paṇam</u>	Venad, Kochi, Valluvanad and Kozhikode	12th to 15th century	Inscriptions and Indigenous literature
<u>Pon</u>	Venad	13th to 14th century	Indigenous literature
<u>Tāram</u>	Kozhikode and Kochi	14th to 15th century	Foreign accounts
<u>Tiramam</u>	Valluvanad	14th century	Indigenous literature

A study of coin and money prevalent in Kerala during the period under study shows an increased level of monetisation when compared with the early phase. But we are not in a position to arrive at conclusions with regard to the inter relationship of various coins. The survey of the coins under circulation in medieval Kerala leads us to the following conclusions:

- 1) In the case of coins and money Kerala maintained contacts with her neighbouring regions, especially Tamilnadu and there was no clear cut regional boundaries for the use of coins.
- 2) The fact that coins of one region was valid in another region shows that there must have been a kind of standardisation with regard to the weight and fineness of the metal used for minting coins.

3) The use of copper and silver coins and the spread of smaller denominations of coins show that money was used even in smaller transactions and that the use of coins and money percolated to the lower strata of the society. This points to a higher degree of monetisation, when compared with the first phase of the study.

V.3.i WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

The analysis in the foregoing two chapters as well as in the ensuing pages involves the names of various weights and measures. From the 9th century onwards we have inscriptional and literary references to the same. These included measures like nāli, para, etc. and weights like kalañcu, palam, tulām etc. In spite of slight regional variations these weights and measures were universally accepted in the region. But these weights and measures were not peculiar to Kerala and they were in use in other regions of South India also. This points to the fact that as in the case of coins, regarding weights and measures also Kerala was part of a wider world, South India.

List of the various weights and measures and their comparative value are presented in the following table.

Table V.3

Weights and Measures

1.	10 <u>mañcāṭi</u>	1 <u>kāṇam</u>
2.	10 <u>kāṇam</u>	1 <u>kaḷaṅcu</u> (33 grams)
3.	4 <u>kai</u>	1 <u>palam</u> (116.6 gram)
4.	100 <u>palam</u>	1 <u>tulām</u>
5.	5 <u>cevitu</u>	1 <u>āḷakku</u>
6.	2 <u>āḷakku</u>	1 <u>uḷakku</u>
7.	2 <u>uḷakku</u>	1 <u>uri</u>
8.	2 <u>uri</u>	1 <u>nāḷi</u> (375 Cubic c.m)
9.	4 <u>nāḷi</u>	1 <u>itaṅṅaḷi</u>
10.	10 <u>itaṅṅaḷi</u>	1 <u>para</u>
11.	20 <u>para</u>	1 <u>kalam</u>

Source : TAS and the Maṅipravāla literature

In addition to the above weights and measures there were certain units to measure length. They are aṅgulam (inch) aṭi foot length, and kai (arm length) and kōḷ. (approximately 3/4 metre) Mañcāṭi, kāṇam and kaḷaṅcu were vegetable seeds and as weights they were used for weighing small quantities, especially of very precious articles. Apart from palam and tulam there was another weight called tōḷa. 1 tōḷa = 11.66 gram, 10 tōḷa was equal to 1 palam. In foreign trade, for weighing large quantities the unit of bāhr was used. It was the po-ho

used by Ma Huan. 1 bāhr = 300 rāṭl or pounds. 1 rāṭl = 453.6 gram. The Jewish sources show the transactions of iron, copper, pepper etc. in bāhr.⁶⁵ Measures from No.5 to 11 in the table were for measuring liquids, cereals etc. Apart from those shown in the table there were measures called kurūṇi, māṭa and tūṇi. One Kurūṇi was equal to 10 iṭannāḷi. 10 māṭa was equal to 1 para. Tūṇi was commonly used for measuring paddy. 1 para = 6.67 tūṇi. To measure very large quantities of paddy the measure of poti was used. There was also a unit called nārāyam. One nārāyam was equal to 6 nāḷi. The units of para, tūṇi etc. had slight regional variations, which was the case with the measures before the introduction of metric system.

V.4 COMPARISON OF PRICES

A study of the items transacted in the markets enable us to have ideas about their prices. Temple inscriptions of Kerala contain the prices of various articles of daily use. We have records regarding the prices of the same in other parts of South India. This enables us to make a comparative study of the prices.

The market rates of certain items of common use in medieval Kerala are tabulated in the following.

65. S.D. Goitein, op. cit

Table V.4

Market Price of Select Commodities

Commodity	Quantity	Price
Camphor	5 <u>kānam</u>	40 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
Sandal paste	10 <u>kānam</u>	5 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
<u>Akil</u>	10 <u>kānam</u>	10 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
Betel leaves and proportionate number of arecanuts	10,000 Nos.	15 <u>parai</u> of paddy
Asafoetida	1 <u>palam</u>	2 <u>parai</u> of paddy
Ghee	8 <u>nāli</u>)	25 <u>parai</u> of paddy
Oil	5 <u>nāli</u>)	
Pepper	1 <u>nāli</u>	10 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
Cumin	1 <u>nāli</u>	10 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
Green gram	10 <u>nāli</u>	2 ¹ / ₂ <u>parai</u> of paddy
Ripe plantain	360 Nos.	100 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
Unripe plantain	420 Nos.	100 <u>nāli</u> of paddy

(Prepared from Tiruvalla inscriptions, lines 403-438. See the explanation in TAS vol. III, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990, pp. 149-51).

The table reveals that prices are in terms of paddy. The same can be presented in terms of gold or coins like kāṣu. We have a definite gold paddy ratio⁶⁶ Plantain is presented in terms of numbers. Till recently

66. See note No. 26.

in Kerala countable goods like fruits, fish etc. were not weighed but counted. It would be quite fruitful to have a comparison of these prices with those of the neighbouring region of Tamil Nadu during the same period. As a prelude to this the market price of select commodities of Tamil Nadu is given in table below:

Table V.5

COMMODITIES AND PRICES IN A TANJAVUR INSCRIPTION OF
IITH CENTURY

Commodity	Quantity	Price
Cardamom seeds	1 <u>kuruni</u> and 4 <u>nāli</u>	1 <u>kāṣu</u> of gold
Champaka buds	1 <u>padakku</u>	1 <u>kāṣu</u> of gold
Khaskas roots	605 <u>palam</u>	1 <u>kāṣu</u> of gold
Dhal	1 <u>nāli</u> , 3 <u>uḷakku</u> and 1 <u>āḷakku</u>	5 <u>nāli</u> , 1 <u>uri</u> 1 <u>āḷakku</u> of paddy
Pepper	1 <u>āḷakku</u> and 1 3/4 <u>cevidu</u>	5 <u>nāli</u> and 1 <u>uḷakku</u> paddy
Mustard	1 <u>āḷakku</u> and 1 <u>cevidu</u>	2 <u>nāli</u> and 1 <u>uḷakku</u> paddy
Cumin	15/16 <u>cevidu</u>	1 <u>nāli</u> (of paddy)
Sugar	3 <u>palam</u>	1 ¹ / ₂ <u>Kāṣu</u> of gold
Ghee	1 <u>uḷakku</u> , 1 <u>āḷakku</u> and 3 ³ / ₄ <u>cevidu</u>	1 <u>kuruni</u> and 1 <u>nāli</u> paddy
Tamrind	1 <u>palam</u>	1 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
Curds	3 <u>nāli</u>	1 <u>kuruni</u> , 1 <u>nāli</u> of paddy

Contd....

Commodity	Quantity	Price
Gram	3 <u>cevidu</u>	1 <u>uḷakku</u> of paddy
Salt	1 <u>uḷakku</u> and 1 <u>āḷakku</u>	1 <u>uḷakku</u> and 1 <u>āḷakku</u> (paddy)
Tender leaves	12 Nos.	2 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
Areeanuts and betel leaves	30 Nos.	4 <u>nāli</u> and 1 <u>uḷakku</u> paddy
Camphor	3 <u>caḷañju</u>	1 <u>kāṣu</u> of gold

Source : SII, 2, 27 of Raja Raja I, 29th year. See Kenneth Hall, op. cit. p.120.

This table highlights the fact that the prices of precious articles were in terms of gold whereas those of lesser value was in terms of paddy. In the light of the information from the above two tables an attempt is being made to compare the prices of certain articles in Kerala region and the Cōḷa kingdom. The following table gives the comparison between the prices of select commodities prevalent in Kerala and Cōḷa kingdom during the same period.

Table V.6

Comparative Price in Select Commodities
of Cōla Kingdom and Kerala

Commodity	Quantity	Price as per Tiruvalla Inscriptions (Table V - 4)	Price as per the Cōla inscription of Tanjavur (of 29th year of Raja Raja (Table V.5)
Betel leaves and proporti- onate no. of arecanuts	10000 Nos.	15 <u>parai</u> of paddy	17.71 <u>parai</u> of paddy
Camphor	5 <u>kānam</u>	40 <u>nāli</u> of paddy	1 <u>kāṣu</u> of gold
Cumin	1 <u>nāli</u>	10 <u>nāli</u> of paddy	42.68 <u>nāli</u> of paddy
Green gram	10 <u>nāli</u>	2.5 <u>parai</u> of paddy	33.33 <u>parai</u> of paddy
Pepper	1 <u>nāli</u>	10 <u>nāli</u> of paddy	311.1 <u>nāli</u> of paddy

(Source: Table V-4 and V.5).

The pepper which was available in Kerala at the rate of 10 nāli of paddy/1 nāli of pepper became 311.1 nāli of paddy at Tanjavur. It became 34 dinār per bāhr, at Aden.⁶⁷

The comparative price of paddy was higher in Kerala. In Kerala the gold-paddy ratio of the period was 1 kalañcu of gold = 20 parās of paddy whereas that of

67. S.D. Goitein, op.cit. p.58.

Tanjavur was 1 kalañcu of gold = 320 paras of paddy.⁶⁸ In table V-5 prices of articles, including camphor of high prices are in terms of kāṣu. The kāṣu-gold ratio was 1/2 kalañcu of gold = 1 kāṣu.

The above facts are, however, deplorably insufficient to attempt any further conceptualisation regarding exchange system in the contemporary situation.

V.3.ii The above discussion help us to have an idea about the level of monetisation in medieval Kerala. It also gives us details regarding the weights and measures which were valid up to the introduction of the metric system. The study of the prices prevalent in Kerala and contemporary Cōḷa kingdom gives us interesting glimpses into the economy of the respective regions.

68. Kenneth Hall 'Price making and Market Heirarchy in Early Medieval South India', op. cit.

TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES IN KERALA (A. D. 800 - 1500)

*Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut
for the Degree of*
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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CHAPTER VI

MEDIEVAL KERALA IN THE INDIAN OCEAN TRADE NETWORK

Having discussed the various aspects of trade and trading centres of medieval Kerala, it is relevant to examine her role in Indian Ocean trade network.¹ New studies are emerging with regard to oceanic trade and commerce and in the light of these new studies an attempt is made in this chapter to look into the status of Kerala as a link in the East-West trade. The theories of world economic system introduced by Wallerstein and Braudel and their critics have been adopted as a guideline for this study.²

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1. Indian Ocean trade network means the entire area from Red Sea to China, covering the Coast of East Africa and South Africa in the West to the littoral areas of south eastern China in the East.
 2. Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World System, Orlando, 1974, Fernand Braudel, The Wheels of Commerce - Civilization and Capitalism, 15-18 Centuries vol. II (1979), translated by Sian Reynolds, London, 1982. Janet Abu Lughod, Before European Hegemony, The World, System, A.D. 1250-1350, New York, 1989, Samir Amin, Eurocentrism, London, 1989, M.N. Pearson, Before Colonialism - Theories on Asian European Relations, 1500-1700, Delhi, 1988, K.N. Choudhuri Asia Before Europe - Economy and Civilization of Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750, Cambridge University press, 1990, Kenneth Mc Pherson, Indian Ocean, Cambridge, University Press, 1992 and Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills, (ed), The World System, Five Hundred Years on Five Thousand? London and New York, 1993.

The concept of world system is beyond the scope of a simple definition. It "denotes a largely self contained economic system which need not include the entire world but is bigger than any modern political unit".³ "It is a world system not because it encompasses the whole world, but because it is larger than any juridically defined political unit and it is a world economy because the basic linkage between the parts of this system is economic..."⁴ According to Wallerstine the present world system began in the 16th century. Before this there existed a few world empires of which the Indian Ocean - Red Sea complex was one.⁵ To Wallerstine the world economies before 16th century were 'empires.' Wallersteine's theory is essentially Eurocentric.

The continuous accumulation of capital and the long distance trade in necessities are the essential features of the world system of Wallerstine. The existence a core and periphery is fundamental to it.⁶ The core or the centre would be exploiting the periphery.

3. M.N. Pearson, op. cit. p.9.

4. I. Wallerstein, op. cit. p.15.

5. Ibid. p.17.

6. Ibid. pp.300-344, and Wallerstein, "Incorporation of Indian Sub continent into Capitalist World Economy". Economic and Political Weekly, XXI, 4 January, 1986.

There are also peripheries which protect the core. There would be changes in the centre-periphery relations. In this context Modelski speaks of 'hegemony and rivalry'.⁷ Hegemony refers to the political and economic supremacy of a centre of accumulation which varies with period of rivalry among other such centres. Samir-Amin speaks of the 'metropolis' and 'tributaries' which are akin to the 'centre' and periphery".⁸ A.G. Frank put forward the concept of 'metropolis' and 'Satellite' in the place of metropolis and tributaries.⁹

M.N. Pearson traces the development of this system back to the period before colonialism.¹⁰ Abu Lughod in a critical discussion on Wallerstein's thesis described a 13th century world system which begins in 1250 and ends in 1350 and which is distinct from all such systems.¹¹ According to her the present world system emerged from what developed in the 13th century Europe.

7. George Modelski, Long Cycles in World Politics, London, 1987.

8. Samir Amin, "Ancient World-Systems Versus the Modern Capitalist World System", Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills, op.cit. pp. 247-276.

9. Andre Gunder Frank, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America, New York, 1969, p.9.

10. M.N. Pearson, op. cit.

11. Janet Abu Lughod. op. cit.

Middle East, India and China and the "fall of the East preceded the rise of the West". The central regions of this system were Central Asia and Indian Ocean and later the Mediterranean was appended to it.¹² The rise of the West by the 16th century was but a hegemonic shift from East to West and not a new one. Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K.Gills stretched the world system back to five thousand years.¹³ According to them it existed in the ancient, medieval and modern world.¹⁴ It has been continuing, with of course shifts in hegemony.¹⁵

The Eurocentric view of Wallerstine suffers from certain basic flaws. it neglects the case of certain societies like the America before colonisation which definitely had a trade system. So also the world system of the Wallerstein centred on U.K. and the U.S.A. cannot hold a candle with the empires like Mongol or Ming. The acceptance of A.D. 1500 as a dividing line is also losing ground. The continued accumulation of capital can be seen much before 15th century, as is highlighted by Elkhome and

12. Janet Abu Lughod, "Discontinuities and Persistence". A.G. Frank and B.K. Gills op.cit., pp. 278-291 and Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills. op. cit. p.9.

13. Ibid. p.1.

14. A.G. Frank and Barry K.Gills, op.cit., pp.81-115

15. Barry K. Gills, "Hegemonic Transition in World System", A.G. Frank and B.K. Gills (ed.), op.cit pp.115-193.

Friedmen.¹⁶ Actually capitalism was global from its very beginning. It is clear that there existed a world economic system much before the 16th century. The characteristics of this system changed through the ages. The concept of world system is to be analysed through a humanocentric view rather than a Eurocentric one.¹⁷ Then it can be applied to older empires and regional economies. Orientalism provides an alternative approach to Eurocentrism.¹⁸ The traditional view that the Indian ocean trade net work developed only with the advent of European naval powers has been subject to several critical analysis. Re-examining the Eurocentric theory recent studies have concluded that the Indian ocean trade net work was well knit long before the advent of European powers. Kerala was a link in this system.

On the one hand Kerala was part of a world system that connected together the various littoral states of Indian ocean. At the same time there developed a regional economy and culture that could be compared with any of the existing system in other regions. These are facts that

16. Elkhom and Friedman, "Capital Imperialism and Exploitation in Ancient World System", Ibid., pp.59-81.

17. Ibid., p.11

18. Ibid., p.12

often go neglected in a grand narrative. Medieval trade of Kerala is to be viewed from two angles, one within its regional boundaries and other as a link in a wider economic world. The former part has been analysed in the foregoing chapters whereas the latter will be discussed in this chapter.

We cannot find a single maritime tradition for the entire Indian Ocean region. Instead there are a series of local traditions and histories of local technologies, each suited to a particular maritime environment and set of human needs.¹⁹ Medieval Kerala is an example to this.

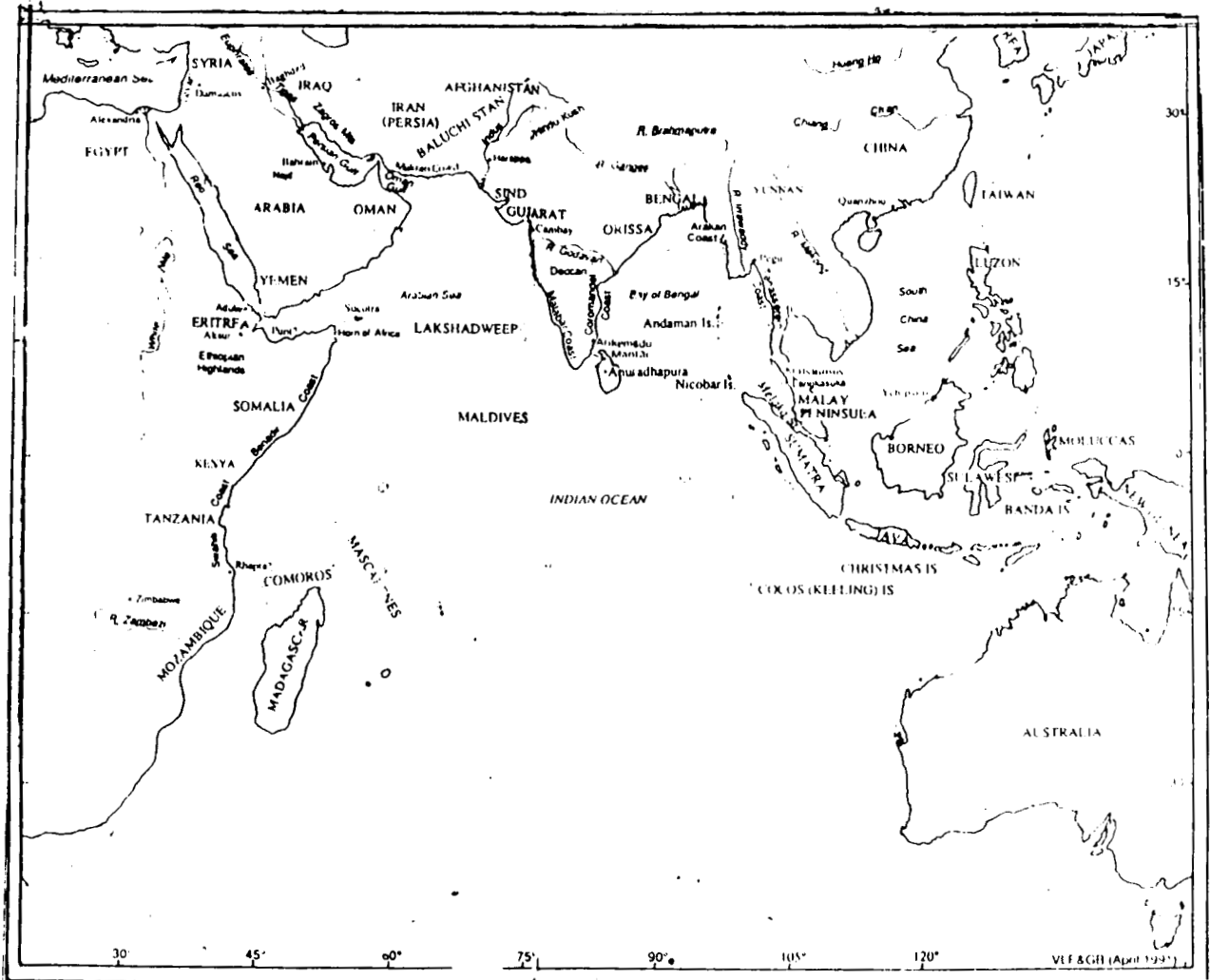
The hall mark of Kerala's trade history is a seaward orientation resulting from her extensive coast line and peculiar sea board features.²⁰ As cited earlier the geographical location of Kerala brought her with in the ambit of monsoon winds which set the rhythm of Indian Ocean trade. More than any political and social factors, the oceanic trade of Kerala was determined by what Braudel styled as the longue duree.²¹ The peculiarities

19. Kenneth Mc Pherson, op.cit p.18.

20. For details of the geographical peculiarities of Kerala see chap. II

21. Fernand Braudel's famous theory of the slow moving component of time, historical features that change only imperceptibly over time. K.N. Choudhuri, op.cit p.428.

Map - 12. THE INDIAN OCEAN TRADE WORLD



Source: Kenneth Mc Pherson, The Indian Ocean, p.1.

both in climatic conditions and the geographical factors of the region resulted in the growth of rarities in her resources and they in turn enriched trade, both internal and overseas. The Arabs and Chinese, the important trade partners of medieval Kerala had extensive trade relations. With the rise of Islam trade got great stimulus as the religion was favourably disposed towards trade.²² The Jews, Christians and Muslims who came for trade to Malabar coast connected Kerala economy with the international trade network.

With the formation of Abbassid Caliphate in the 9th century the Arab trade gathered momentum which affected Kerala also. Along with the development of this trade Kerala coast was studded with the settlements of traders. These settlements were due to commercial and climatic compulsions. Traders had to wait for favourable winds or stay in the port for collecting cargoes. In the wake of the south west monsoon traders from the West would come to the western ports of India. As they were unable to reach Malacca and Canton in a single monsoon, they were forced to stay along Malabar coast and thus the region became a stopover for the merchants from the west. This

22. See note No. 17 in chap. III and note No. 220 in chap. IV.

along with other factors made the ports of Malabar entrepots in the East-West Trade.

The Jews who were famous for their intercontinental trade relations had made their settlements in the important trading centres of Kerala. In the early medieval period their trade covered a vast area between Europe and China. In the 12th and 13th centuries the main commercial activities of the Jews were between Egypt and Malabar coast. And through these Jews the goods Malabar got wider markets.²³ The letters written by a Jewish merchant chief at Aden to his counterpart at Malabar reveal the systematic trade of the Jews and give pointers to the nature of the prevailing trade in the Indian ocean region. In all the transactions money, the māliki dinār was used. The way in which the Jews kept accounts and calculated freight charges and the like reminds one of the mechanism of modern export trade.²⁴

The Eurocentric view integrates Indian Ocean trade with the world system only with the advent of European capitalism. That is to say till the development

23. For details of Jewish traders, see notes on the trading communities in Chap. III

24. S.D. Goitein, 'From Aden to India', JESHO, vol. XXIII, Pt. I and II, 1980, pp.41-66.

of Western capitalism Indian ocean trade was rather isolated. But recent studies show that the Indian ocean trade network was well organised long before the emergence of European capitalism.²⁵ How Kerala was linked with the Indian Ocean trade scenario can be gleaned from the following grounds.

To understand the maritime trade system of Indian ocean is to know how the bulk of the pre-modern societies in littoral regions of Indian ocean were integrated into a unique world.²⁶ The accounts of medieval travellers on South India reveal facts on oceanic trade system extending from Red sea to the China sea which was linked with eastern Mediterranean. The centres of this oceanic trade system were Venice, Alexandria, Hormuz, Aden, Cambay, Kollam, Kozhikode, Malacca, Canton and the like port towns.

These maritime cities had links among them closer than the centres of their political power. The spice importing ports of Aden, Jiddah and Hormuz were situated at the out let of land routes through which the products of Middle East and Mediterranean were carried by caravans.

25. M.N. Pearson, op.cit.

26. K.Mc. Pherson, op.cit p.17.

Through these ports they could be carried to overseas countries.²⁷ The vigorous activities of the international traders of Asia was facilitated by the establishment of powerful governments in contemporary China, Indo-China, Burma, South Indian states and Egypt. These traders focussed on the two ends of Asia; Mediterranean in the west and China in the east. According to Fernand Braudel the Italian cities of Venice, Genoa and Florence formed the centre of economic life in the fifteenth century Mediterranean. K.N. Choudhuri extended this ideal of world economy to the Indian ocean. He affirms that the whole of Indian ocean and eastern Mediterranean was held together by the urban gravities of Malacca, Calicut, Cairo and Alexandria.²⁸ 'For nearly 300 years from the end of the seventh century the Middle East, South Mediterranean and the ports of Western Indian ocean constituted an area of political, economic and cultural unification which shared some of the core periphery relations of a world

27. Genevieve Bouchon and Denys Lambard, "Indian Ocean in the Fifteenth Century". Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson (ed.), India and Indian Ocean, Delhi, 1987. p.57.

28. K.S. Mathew, Cochin and the Portuguese Trade in India in the 16th Century. Heras Institute, Bombay, 1992, p.77. See Fernand Braudel, Mediterranean and Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II, Sian Reynolds (trans.), London, 1972. Also see Kenneth R. Hall, Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Colas, Delhi, 1980, pp.162-163.

system.²⁹ A chain of oceanic and caravan trade that stretched all the way from Indian ocean to the straits of Gibraltar supplied the practical means of binding local production in the trans-oceanic system of distribution and consumption.³⁰

In the absence of modern technological devices voyages were strenuous and risky. And as it was very difficult to touch all these centres in a single stretch, the commercial voyages were split into various sections. Usually merchant ships from Hormuz and Aden travelled upto the Malabar coast. Merchants from Siam and Malaya continued the trade from Malaya to China. Thus the trade arc was completed. This trade network was dependent on international co-operation. Merchants worked beyond political considerations.³¹ The establishment of powerful governments in the various littoral states of Asia had its impact on Indian ocean trade, especially on the trade at Malabar. The development of the Caliphate and the consequent strengthening of East West trade dominated by Islamic traders, the establishment of the Yuan dynasty and the unprecedented development of Chinese trade under this

29. K.N. Chandhuri, op.cit p.384.

30. Ibid. p.385

31. G. Crone, Discovery of the East, London, 1990. p.37 and p.9.

government, all had been stimulus to the oceanic trade of Asia. There were powerful merchant families which dominated the trade of a region like the Kārimi merchants of Egypt, in the 12th and 13th centuries.³²

These Kārimi merchants specialised in spice trade and were known as merchants of pepper and spices. They purchased these goods from Yemen to where they were transhipped by the merchants of Malabar coast. From Cairo or Alexandria these articles were sold to the merchants from Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Marseilles or Barcelona.³³ Thus 'commodities were transported over a surprisingly long distance, some times traversing the whole breadth of Eurasiān continent'.³⁴ The Kārimi merchants were members of a powerful mercantile corporation dedicated to spice trade namely Genossenschaft and under this organisation a trade net work functioned very actively connecting Europe on the one hand and Aden and Malabar coast on the other. In the early decades of the 15th century the government of Egypt put effective control on these merchants and this led to their decline. But they continued their trade

32. Walter J. Fischel, "The spice Trade in Mamuluk Egypt, A Contribution to the Economic History of Medieval Islam" JESHO, I (1958) pp. 157-17, 5.

33. Ibid. pp.161-165

34. Meera Mary Abraham, Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India, Delhi, 1988, p.6.

until the discovery of the Cape route by the Portuguese and the establishment Portuguese power over the major ports of Malabar. In supplying Egypt and Europe the products of the East especially the pepper of Malabar the Kārimi merchants played the role similar to those of the Portuguese, the French and the English East India companies in later centuries. Indeed they were the forerunners of these European naval powers in the East-West trade.³⁵

By the beginning of the 14th and 15th century Malabar became the focal point in pepper trade. We have seen how trade in the Malabar coast was focussed mainly on Kollam, Kochi, Kodungallur, Kozhikode and Pantalayani Kollam and other exchange centres. These towns were flourishing local trade centres having the infrastructure for overseas trade. Even in the 9th century the port town of Kollam was a brisk trading centre with all facilities for foreign trade.³⁶ Regarding the overseas trade of Kollam Marco Polo records thus: "The merchants from Manzi and from Arabia and from the Levant come tither with their

35. Walter J. Fischel, op.cit, pp. 170-75

36. See section on Kollam, Kodungallur and Panthalayani Kollam in chap.III and IV.

ships and their merchandise and make great profits by what they import and by what they export.³⁷

By the beginning of the 15th century Kozhikode had developed into a great emporium of international trade. Foreign traders could be seen there in all diversity. The traders were not only from Arabia and Persia, but also from Syria, Egypt, East Indies and China. Foreign traders and their merchandise were safe at Kozhikode. This feature is all the more important when we consider the fact that pirates were very active in a number of ports along west coast.³⁸ The security of her waters as well as the efficient facilities for trade attracted foreign trades to Kozhikode. Wealthy merchants and ship owners linked Kozhikode with other trading centres of Indian ocean. Ibn Battuta makes special reference to a wealthy merchant ship owner who possessed many ships that were sent to different parts of the sub-continent and also to China and Yemen.³⁹ Like Kollam Kozhikode was famous for its trade with China. Its port was so large as to hold the massive Chinese fleet.⁴⁰ These

37. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, Foreign Notices of South India....., p.181.

38. Genevieve Bouchon and Denys Lambard, op.cit, pp. 59-60.

39. Mahdhi Hussain (ed), Rehla of Ibn Battuta, p.192.

40. Ibid.

foreign ships could winter at the near by port of Pantalayani Kollam which was safe from the travails of weather.

The Chinese annals reveal the brisk trade at the port of Kozhikode, especially the trade in pepper.⁴¹ The chinese travellers refer to the fine quality horses imported to Kozhikode.⁴²

The spice traders at Kozhikode insisted on payments in gold and silver. Egyptian dinars and Venitian ducats, the standard coins of the period in international trade were in circulation at Kozhikode.⁴³ In the beginning of the 16th century Varthema speaks of the money changers and brokers at Kozhikode.⁴⁴ The very presence of these money changers and brokers indicate a brisk trade involving foreign peoples and foreign currencies. Abdr Razzak testifies to the goods brought from Zindbad and Zansibar to Kozhikode. From Kozhikode vessels

41. See the section on Chinese trade at Kozhikode in chapter IV. Also see Note Nos. 60 to 65 in chap. IV.

42. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, op.cit, pp. 294-98

43. G.R. Crone, op.cit. p.25

44. George Percy Badger, (ed) The Travels of Ludovico Di Varthema, London, 1863, pp 168-170.

continuously sailed for Mecca.⁴⁵ The quantum of trade between China and Malabar is evident from the fact that Kollam and Panthalayani Kollam were among the trading centres to where the export of precious metals from China was banned by the Chinese government in the 13th century.⁴⁶

There was a colony of South Indians at Quanchow (Zaitun) which formed the Indian diaspora in China. In the light of the naval expeditions of Cheng Ho and the diplomatic exchanges between the China and the trading centres of Kerala, one is inclined to believe that there were traders from Malabar also in that settlement.⁴⁷ The abundance of pottery and pot sherds found along the coast of Malabar is a brilliant testimony to the trade with China. But when the world economic system of medieval period is evaluated the trade between Malabar and China seems to have been neglected.

45. R.H. Major (ed.), "Journey of Abdr Razzak", India in the Fifteenth Century, pp. 13-14.

46. Meera Mary Abraham, "Currency System and Monetisation in Karnataka in Vijayanagar Times", QJMS, 69, January-June, 1970, p.26.

47. Haraprasad Ray, "Indian Settlements in China, An Exploration in the Phenomenon of Indian Diasporas from 1015 (Cola period) and 1487 (End of Cheghua Reign in China)", K.S. Mathew (ed.), Indian Ocean and Cultural Interaction pp. 52-74.

Barbosa testifies to the brisk trade between Kozhikode and the west in the beginning of the 16th century. Every year ten to fifteen ships sailed to Red sea, Aden and Venice from Kozhikode. The goods carried by these ships included spices, items of clothing, metals etc.⁴⁸

The trading centre of Kochi, by the mid-fifteenth century further exposed the Malabar coast to the overseas trade. Kochi had powerful merchant families with wide connections in the inter Asian trade. One such family was that of the Mamale Marakkar who had well established trade connections with the East Indies. In the beginning of the 16th century, this merchant used to supply pepper to the Portuguese in large quantities in return for copper.⁴⁹ By the closing decade of the 15th century trade at Kochi was comparable with that of Lisbon.⁵⁰ All these reveal that before the advent of the Portuguese Kochi had developed into a brisk overseas trading centre. The trading centres of Kerala had been well acquainted with the West and the westerners knew about the facilities and prospects of trade in these centres.

48. M.L. Dames (trans.), Book of Duarte Barbosa, vol. II, pp. 73-77.

49. K.S. Mathew, Cochin and the Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century, Heras Institute, Bombay, 1992. pp. 80-82.

50. M.L. Dames, op.cit. p.93.

The functioning of the port towns of Kollam, Kodungallur, Kozhikode and Panthalayani Kollam shows that they were core areas fed by their hinterlands which were like peripheries. In Kerala we cannot find an overarching core exploiting the periphery. Instead there are a number of cores and peripheries.

That trade developed connecting different centres over such a distance from Aidhab to Canton was facilitated by the institutionalisation of trade. During the period under review powerful merchant organisations having intra and international trade connections developed in various parts of South India. The Añcuvannam and Mañigrāmam and the like mercantile associations were active in the exchange system of Kerala.⁵¹ The Mañigrāmam had special interest in foreign trade. The Takuapa Mañigrāmam inscription gives a clue to the fact that these organisations sent their members to distant countries to establish overseas trading stations.⁵² Among the goods transacted by the Ayyāvōle guild in international trade there were articles which were the monopoly of Kerala.⁵³

51. See the section on merchant organisations in chap. III

52. EI, XVII. p.71.

53. Meera Mary Abraham, Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India, pp. 156-175.

The Valañciārs, functioning in the trading centres of Kerala were seaborne traders. All these mercantile organisations were very active in Kerala from 9th to 14th century, connecting each exchange centre and port town with the Indian ocean trade. Political boundaries were no impediment to them.

The medieval overseas trade of Kerala and the advent of foreign traders to the exchange centres are reflected in indigenous literary works. There are references to foreign ships that call at the ports.⁵⁴ In the market places described in the Mañipravāla kāvyās there are traders from different countries.⁵⁵

Overseas trade in Kerala was facilitated by the formation of trading diasporas along her coast. The secular functions of these Jewish, Christian and Islamic diasporas were to be brokers in the trade between their host country and the traders coming from their own home land. These diasporas were effective institutional arrangements for cross cultural trade. Their commercial functions resemble those of a Wakil al tujjār of Muslim

Malik-w-tujjar

54. Uṇṇunīli Sandēśam, part I, v. 70, p. 70.

55. Uṇṇiāti Caritam, gadyam, 19 and Uṇṇunīli Sandēśam, part I, ślōkas, 80-85. See Note no. 38 in chap. IV

Mediterranean and the commission agents under the English East India company.⁵⁶ The very formation of these diasporas testifies to the age old overseas and over land trade. It is to be noted that the settlements of foreign traders along the Malabar coast have been typical of the trade and cultural diasporas.

Malabar ports were the entrepots for the trade in horses which was very significant in the inter-Asian trade system. Kulamukku and Kannur were centres of the lucrative horse trade.⁵⁷ Thousands of fine quality horses were imported to the ports of Malabar from the trading centres of Red Sea, especially Hormuz. The ruling powers of the Deccan especially Vijayanagar obtained horses from Kannur and this trade thus had political significance also. It was because of the great economic and political significance of this trade that the Portuguese wanted to monopolise the same trade. With the capture of Hormuz and Goa the Portuguese managed to monopolise the horse trade. They shifted the centres of this trade from Kannur to Goa. The Portuguese could get the support of the Vijayanagar rulers mainly because the former was the suppliers of horses to them. The horse trade gives a

56. Philip D. Curtin, Cross Cultural Trade in World History, p. 113.

57. See the section on horse trade in chap. IV.

classical example as to how the Portuguese destroyed a flourishing indigenous trade for their own commercial progress. Here we recall Abu Lughod "the fall of the East preceded the rise of the West".⁵⁸ Here what we see is not a creation or a development of a new trade by the Portuguese but a shifting of a centre - a shifting of hegemony. The rise of the European traders in the East was at the expense of the native traders.

The traditional belief is that luxury items formed the bulk of the commodities exported from Kerala. But from the 12th century there was a change in the nature of commodities traded and in the quantum of trade. Necessaries like pepper for mass consumption, iron, copper, and the like became important.⁵⁹ Marco Polo lists copper in ballast, silk, porcelain etc. among the goods imported from China to the Malabar coast. Among the goods exported from Kozhikode there was a fine variety of cotton called the bukram.⁶⁰ Horse which was an essential commodity was among the items of import from Arabia to Kerala. That goods like iron, brass etc. were exported by

58. See note No. 12 above

59. Basil Gray, 'Export of Chinese Porcelain to India', TOCS No. 36, pp. 24-25.

60. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri (ed), op.cit., pp. 83-84.

the Jews from Kerala to Aden is well attested by some of the Geniza letters. But for a long time the export of iron from Malabr coast went unnoticed. Jews also transacted in the vessels from Malabar.⁶¹

Overseas trade of Kerala had direct impact on the production of necessities inside the region. This is best evident from the import of copper from the East by the Chinese and from the West by the Jews. The traditional metal smiths of Kerala were depended on this item of external trade. Here an external origin of internal trade can be seen. Polanyi says that the acquisition of goods from a distance may be practiced either because of status motive or profit motive.⁶² The Jewish sources show that in Kerala the transactions in copper and iron were out of profit motive. Thus the trade in high bulk necessities, a characteristic feature of the modern world system was common in Kerala.

Thus the trading centres of Kerala were well acquainted with the West even before the advent of the Portuguese. Gama has made references to the Tunisian merchants who spoke Castilian and Genoise and the Jews who

61. S.D. Goitein, 'From Aden to India', JESHO, vol.XXIII, part I and II, 1980, pp.60-66.

62. Karl Polanyi, "Traders and Trade" in J. Sabloff and C.C. Lamberg Karlovsky (ed.), Ancient Civilization and Trade, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1975, p. 154 and pp. 135 to 137.

spoke Venitian and German at Kozhikode.⁶³ Actually in the intra Asian trade the Portuguese were one among many. They had to engage in this in order to have the purchasing power for the goods from Kerala.⁶⁴ They accommodated themselves in this system 'forming new diaspora that operated along with the old one, using the same commercial technique'.⁶⁵

The above analysis reveals that the trade of Kerala during the period under discussion was not confined to luxury items only. Instead it centred around a wide variety of articles and embraced the entire region from China to Mediterranean. Trade of Kerala was quite comprehensive both in its scope and subject matter. Marco Polo testifies to the large number of ships at Zaitun, bound for Malabar coast⁶⁶ and Ibn Battuta speaks of the Chinese ships lying anchored at the port of Kozhikode.⁶⁷ More convincing is the fact that the five signatories of

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63. M.N. Pearson, The New Cambridge History of India, The Portuguese in India, Delhi, 1990, pp.12-13.
64. Andre Gunder Frank, World Accumulation (1492-1789), London, 1978, p.37.
65. Georgia Borsa, 'Recent Trends in Indian Ocean Historiography', Trade and Politics in Indian Ocean, Delhi, 1990, p.8.
66. Nilakanta Sastri, op.cit. pp.83-85
67. Mahdhi Hussain, op.cit. pp. 188-189.

the TPCP belonged to different regions of West Asia.⁶⁸ All these reveal the truth that the trade and commerce of Medieval Kerala was conducted on a broad spectrum and it would be a terrible injustice to reduce it to a narrow canvas like 'isolated' and confining to high priced, low bulk commodities. Actually the trade and commerce of Medieval Kerala was on commodities ranging from necessities to luxury items.

According to Wallerestine in the 12th century the eastern hemisphere contained a number of empires and small worlds and the Indian Ocean Red Sea complex formed one such world.⁶⁹ But the very fact that medieval Kerala had a brisk trade with China breaks the notion of such isolation.

The Indian Ocean trade of Kerala was not based on stereo type. Through the centuries there were steady developments in maritime technology, skills and trade. The process was indeed complex. It was not at all a 'monotonous repetition of the same event'.⁷⁰ The word

68. Meera Mary Abraham, Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India, pp. 20-21.

69. Immanuel Wallersteine, op.cit. p.17.

70. Kenneth Mc Pherson, op.cit. p.124. See Fernand Braudel Civilization and Capitalisim in 15-18 Centuries, vol.3, 1986, p.485.

luxury items has been over estimated in connection with the medieval trade of Kerala. By the 14th century pepper had become a necessary commodity meant for mass consumption in Europe and shipments of pepper came from the Malabar coast. This increased demand was in response to the increase in population and wealth.

In the 16th century the Portuguese also traded in very same articles as in the 15th century, as noted by Varthema. There was only an increase in the quantum of trade.⁷¹ And the basis of Portuguese trade in Kerala was their intimate collaboration with the native merchants who had well established connections with the countries of the West and East. Till the advent of the Portuguese there was a near absence of documentation with regard to trade. It may be this absence of documentation which made historians minimise the Indian Ocean trade of medieval Kerala. In the 18th century the British built up a well knit commercial net work in the Indian ocean. It was not only because of their capital and technology but because of the use of force.⁷² It is simplistic to discard a

71. K.S. Mathew, op.cit.

72. Pameela Nightingale, Trade and Empire in Western India, London, 1974, p.236.

historical process because it is non-European. All reconstructions of history with preconceived concepts are "dangerous and misleading".⁷³ Here is the relevance of Edward Said's warning that the non-European world should not be viewed negatively.⁷⁴

73. K. Mc Pherson, op.cit. pp. 18-19.

74. Edward Said, op.cit.

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing analysis is aimed at bringing to light certain important aspects of trade and commerce in medieval Kerala. The available data and information show that the climatic influences and the peculiar geophysical features of the region played a decisive role in shaping the contours of the economic life and activities of the people. While there was an abundance of production in cash crops and natural resources there has always been a deficit in the production of the staple food grain paddy. The available information regarding the import of rice during the period under discussion is of course not very rich. However, several foreigners who had visited Kerala from the early medieval period to the time of the occupation of Malabar by the British have mentioned that the country had to import rice from other regions and this set of evidence is supported by the indigenous literary works of this period which have references to several varieties of paddy denoting their origins in regions outside Kerala. These apart there are of course certain direct references to the import of rice into Kerala via traditional routes from the Cola and Pandyan territories

to Kerala. The above said contradiction in the pattern of production necessitated the import of the products which had enjoyed a steady demand in the countries like China in the East and West Asia, Egypt and Europe in the West. Hence the coast of Malabar became an interface for the traders of the East and the West.

The changes which were occurring in the long span of the seven centuries from A.D. 800 to 1500 have forced us to analyse the problem of trade and trading centres in two distinct phases with their characteristic features. Previous studies have shown that the nature of trade in the first phase itself reveal the existence of nagaram and other such bodies and also some communions of traders which are usually described as guilds. This seems to be a new feature of the early medieval trade and commerce. Further the earlier practice of higgling - haggling and arbitrary exchanges were replaced by a price fixing market and a regular exchange system. Epigraphical references to the sporadic use of money or gold with specific purity and weight standard can be taken as indication to this change. This development was instrumental in the formation of towns which served as the foci of an urban development. The functioning of the merchant organisations with intra and inter-regional trade connections was an important feature of this phase.

Besides these centres of exchange and foreign trade and urbanism, there were other nodal points to cater to the necessities of the rural communities. The existence of morning bazaars, evening bazaars, weekly fairs etc. show that the market system was institutionalised. It has been suggested that majority of the towns and centres of urbanism developed along coastal lines, thereby implying their connections with foreign people and their cultures. An atomistic view of these developments is likely to miss the socio-economic and cultural underpinnings of this development. But a holistic view would show that there were considerable consequences which were far reaching in the areas of society, economy and culture of Kerala. It was believed that the overseas trade of Kerala was mainly on the basis of exchanging articles. There are some Jewish sources which show the involvement of money in trade and commercial exchanges. Correcting our earlier notion it has been recently pointed out that the export items of Kerala included finished goods, processed metals and so on. Accounts were kept and the prices were fixed after taking into account the cost of production, freight charges etc. Recent researches have enabled us to enhance our view regarding the quality as well as the quantity of Jewish trade between the coast of Malabar and the western world. The presence of Jewish elements on the Malabar coast was not without social and economic results.

The first phase of these developments shows the character of an urban experience. By the phrase urban experience one need not necessarily equate it with its western counter parts. Instead this indigenous urban experience becomes distinctively clear when it is positted against an indigenous rural experience. The first phase is roughly ascribed to a period between A.D. 800 and 1200. The second phase of our study which falls between A.D. 1200 and 1500 shows some significant changes. In the second phase there is an increase in the number of fairs, markets, port towns and urban centres. Beneath this superficial feature several internal transformations which include the crystallisation of regional power centres and their interest in the trade and commerce, the strengthening and proliferation of administered trade, monetisation of economy at a higher level when compared to the earlier epochs and above all new sections coming up in the society with interests which are clearly different from that of the traders and agriculturists and land owners of early historical developments. The spatial distribution of the port towns, middle size markets and towns and the rural fairs and exchange nodes were integrated into a market system. The relation between these centres had cultural implications. The coastal lines studded with port towns became cultural diasporas of the foreign elements in the life of Kerala. The agents of

the foreign traders, at least several of them penetrated into the interior. It is interesting to note that on the one side these diasporas sprang up due to some necessities created by the climatic conditions and the wind system in the western sea. On the other side, they were tools in forming the cultural mosaic of the medieval life world. These trade diasporas had secular characteristics. The settlements of these foreigners especially the Islamic settlements were noted for their wealth and the rich variety in the elements of material culture which became formative forces of urbanisation. While the ruling chiefs were granting rights and privileges to merchant chiefs and alienating a part of their rights, the common people were losing their freedom of trade to an extent. With regard to coins, their variety and widespread use point to the urbanism in the existing society.

The study finally concludes with the following remarks. Different from the earlier notions created by an atomistic view, it can be clearly shown that several far reaching changes were occurring in almost all walks of life including trade and trading centres. The ideas about trade in necessary goods and luxury articles need to be revised. In the first phase the items of export trade included not raw materials alone. Instead there were several necessary articles including agricultural products

which were luxuries for one section where as necessities for the other. Finally the explanatory models like the world system theory which look at the peripheries with a Eurocentric view may not be able to understand and evaluate the importance and centrality of the human life and activities of those peripheries. In the first place the commodities of Kerala ranged from luxuries to necessities. Secondly the Indian Ocean trade of Kerala was not confined to necessities. The Indian Ocean trade of Kerala was not based on a stereo type and it was not at all a monotonous repetition of the same event. It is to be noted in this connection that what was considered to be luxury at an earlier stage became necessary afterwards. For example, earlier the pepper was considered to be a luxury item. But by the 14th century pepper had become a necessary commodity meant for mass consumption in Europe. In China also there was a steady increase in demand for Indian pepper. Contrary to earlier findings, Kerala was an integral part of the Indian Ocean trade net work and a link in the existing world system. World system is not the contribution of modern capitalist society. It existed in one form or other in ancient and medieval times.

Trade did penetrate into the society. Trade affected internal mobility and led to social stratification. Medieval Kerala was not a closed economy

for long. Even during the early medieval period there were attempts to cut across that closed economy and Kerala did not need the advent of western naval powers for the same. The network of roads and communications, the merchant organisations, coins etc. show that the trade and commercial connections in all practical purposes were cutting across the boundaries created by political entities. In other words the economic life - world comprises areas which were larger than the minor principalities and spread all over the peninsular South India. The actual sphere of activities of the people was not the areas of local power centres.

Growth of trade led to the spread of cultivation of spices and other cash crops that had a ready demand from outside. Here is the beginning of the commercialisation of agriculture. Trade also caused the increased use of coined money and the accumulation of the same in the hands of cultivations and traders. This money was invested on landed property which became more wide spread during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The foreign trading communities that settled in Kerala were not incorporated into the existing feudal society. Taking to trade these communities acquired private property other than land and were to an extent,

free from feudal oppression and the rigours of caste system.

Trade across cultural boundaries had resulted in the formation of multi-cultural society in the trading centres. This society was noted for the peaceful co-existence between various religious sects. The interest in trade forced them to desist from committing religious excesses. The rulers and the merchants followed a give and take policy and this also accounts for the religious and communal harmony that prevailed in Kerala through the ages.

Though there was a brisk trade and commerce in the western sea between the East and the West, the partners were competitors in a trade net work without any monopolistic ambitions. Therefore there was general peace and prosperity. This situation was disturbed by the advent of Europeans on the coast of Malabar in 1498. The Portuguese navigators entered the western sea with a view to monopolising the rights over the rarities of the coast of Malabar. However this does not come under the purview of the analysis. Before conclusion we would suggest that the monopolising efforts and the emergence of a world system was another part of change.

Inspite of the flourishing trade that continued for centuries there was no development of merchant capitalism. This was because of the near absence of indigenous investment in trade. The ruling chiefs were not interested in investment on trade. They were satisfied with the cungam or revenue obtained from trade. In the absence of correct statistics we are not sure whether even these were collected effectively during pre modern period. The bulk of the profit went to the individual traders. This accounts, to an extent, for the backwardness of the region through the ages inspite of the rich resources endowed by nature and the brisk overseas trade that flourished through centuries. Actually the contest for trade at Kozhikode was not between the Portuguese and the native entrepreneurs, but between the former and the traders belonging to other regions and countries.

Unlike the Portuguese period there was little documentation with regard to the trade and commerce of the period. When the history of this period was reconstructed it was heavily Euro-centric. When viewed through Eurocentric eyes the trade of the region during the pre-colonial period was underestimated and it was minimised to be confining to luxuries only. But it is simplistic to

discard a development in a region simply because it is non-European. The trade of the European age was a continuation of the development in medieval period. We are to follow a humano centric view to see facts as they are. Eurocentrism leads to distortion of facts and it is a fetter to historians.

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TRADE AND TRADING CENTRES IN KERALA (A. D. 800 - 1500)

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GLOSSARY

Accu	A coin
Adhikārar.	An official
Agrahāra	A brahmin village
Aiṅkammālās	Five artisan classes
Akil	An incense
Aḷakāccu	A coin
Āḷakku	A cubic measure
Aḷḷaṅṅāṭi	Evening market
Aḷi	Estuary
Amīr	A wealthy man
Amṣom	A unit of administration, a village
Ānai	Elephant
Ānaiaccu	A coin
Anṅuvaṅṅam	A merchant organisation
Aṅgulam	Inch
Aṅṅāṭi	Market
Antarāyam	A tax collected by the merchant organisation in Tamilnadu
Ārdra	A star
Arunūṅṅruvar	An assembly of six hundred persons
Aṭi	Foot length
Attāni	Resting places for goods carried as head loads, placed along the old trade routes. Usually they would be granite blocks in rectangular shape placed on pillars about 5 feet high

Āyiram	One thousand
Ayyāvōḷe	A merchant organisation
Bāhr	A weight (100 ṛāṭl)
Brahmadēyam	Land donated to Brahmins
Chakaravāṇiyateru	The street of jaggery merchants
Calāka	A coin
Cāliyās	Weavers
Cāliyateru	Street of the weavers
Campu	A work consisting of both prose and poem
Caṅṅātam	Troops owned by chiefs, for whose service the beneficiary was to give a fee
Canta	Market
Cārtu	Groups of merchants
Cāttirār	Brahmin students studying military arts
Ceera	Amaranthus
Cerutina	Aeruva, a medicinal herb
Cetti	The name of an indigenous merchant group
Cevitu	A small cubic measure
Champaka	Champa, a flowering tree
Chin	A weight used in medieval China
Cinaccēri	Settlement of the Chinese
Cinakōṭṭa	Chinese fort
Cinapally	Mosque of the Chinese
Cōliyārkaṣu	A coin
Cōnakar	Muslims

Cuḷalamaruvum vāṇiyam	Bazaar around
Cungam	Customs duty
Dēṣam	An administrative unit composed of a few villages
Dinār	A foreign coin
Dirham	A foreign coin
Eḷunūṛruvar	An assembly of seven hundred persons
Erivīras	Troups accompanying merchant groups
Erivīrapaṭṭinam	Towns protected by troupes of the merchants
Faṇam	A coin
Gadyam	Prose
Gatika	A unit of time, twenty four minutes
Gauder	A merchant group
Gōpuram	Tower
Grandhavari	Official records of ruling chiefs, usually on palm leaves
Gulika	A coin
Hāga	A coin
Īlattuninum vanna	One who came from Srilanka
Iṭaṅṅali	A cubic measure
Junk	A big Chinese ship
Kai	A weight . Also an arm length
Kākam	A Chinese ship
Kalam	A cubic measure
Kalaṅcu	A small weight (caesalpina seed)
Kalari	A training centre in the traditional martial arts of Kerala
Kalavāṇian	Potter

Kalavāṇiyateru	Street of the potters
Kaliṅger	People from Kalinga
Kampi	A coin
Kāṇam	A small weight
Kaṇṇāṭicanta	Mirror market
Kārimi	The name of a merchant group from medieval Egypt
Karinilam	Cultivable areas reclaimed from water logged areas and marshy lands
Kārmuka	Bow
Kastūri	Musk
Kāṣu	A coin
Kaṭamai	A tax collected by the merchant organisations of medieval Tamilnadu
Kāṭu	Forest
Kāvya	A book of poems
Kāyal	Backwater
Keṭṭuvallaṅṅal	Large cargo boats
Khāsi	A judge
Khatīb	Orator
Kōd) Kōdu)	Fort or settlement
Kōlṅnilam	Paddy fields reclaimed from water logged areas and marshy lands
Kōṭṭa	Fort
Kōyil	An administrative unit
Kōyiladhikārikal	A ruling chief
Kūru	Order of seniority
Kuruṅji	Forest area

Kuruni	A cubic measure
Kuṭakkal	Umbrella stone (a megalitic relic)
Kuṭimai	A tax collected by the merchant organisations of medieval Tamilnadu
Makāṇi	A coin
Māliki Dinār	A foreign coin of medieval period
Māmāmkam	The great pan Kerala assembly held in every twelve years in medieval Kerala
Mañcāṭi	A small weight (adananthera seed)
Maṇigrāmam	A merchant organisation
Maṇiprāvāḷam	A mixed language of Sanskrit and Malayalam (literal meaning - composed of both pearl and coral)
Mann	A weight
Marakkalam	Ship
Marutam	Agricultural tract
Māṭa	A cubic measure
Matil	Wall
Matilnāyakan	An officer in medieval Kerala
Māppila	Muslim
Mithqual	A foreign coin
Mullai	An area of meadows
Mummuri	A coin
Mummuridaṇdas	A merchant organisation
Munja	A medicinal herb
Munnūruvar	An assembly of three hundred persons
Muringa	Drumstic
Muṇṭiyavattu	A coin

Nādu	An administrative unit
Nāduvāli	Ruling chief
Naivēdya	Food offering to a temple
Nālanṇāṭi	Day market
Nallaṇai accu	A coin
Nāli	A cubic measure
Nālika kottu	The practice of announcing time at correct intervals
Nagaram	A trade settlement
Nagarattār	An officer in a nagaram
Nagarattilullōr	Those who reside in a town
Nagarakkaṇakku	An officer of a nagaram
Nagarakkāṇi	Property of a nagaram
Nagaramalvan	An officer of a nagaram
Nagarattukukartāva	Lord of a nagaram
Nagara Vāriyam	Assembly of a nagaram
Nalpattennāyiravar	A merchant organisation
Nānādēṣikal	A merchant organisation
Nārayam	A cubic measure
Nāṭṭukuttāṇṇal	A village assembly
Nāyakanmār	Horse dealers
Neytal	Coastal area
Nilal	Body guards
Onnukure āyiram yōgam	An assembly of thousand minus one
Oṭāyīs	Carpenters specialised in ship building
Pākam	A coin

Pālai	Parched zones
Palam	A weight
Paḷamkāṣu	A coin
Pallikal	Non-hindu shrines
Paṇam	A coin
Paṇṭakasāla	Warehouse
Pāṇṭikkār	People from Pandinadu
Paṛa	A cubic measure
Paradēṣi	Foreigner
Paṛambu	Upland
Parānte	A coin
Parasāṅg	A unit of distance
Paṭaku	A unit for counting flowers
Pāṭam	Wet land
Paṭanna	Waterlogged area
Paṭikāval	A tax collected by merchant organisations of medieval Tamilnadu
Paṭinenḥbhūmi tiṣṣaiyāyira- ttainnūruvar	A merchant organisation
Paṭinetḥpatta- nanāttar	A merchant organisation
Pattakal	Brahmin scholars
Pattanaswāmi	An administrative officer of a nagaram
Pattanaswamis	A merchant organisation
Pattayam	A document
Pattina	Town
Pattu	Ten
Pāttukal	Songs

Perumcetti	Great trader
Perumāl	Title of the kings of Kulasekhara kingdom or the second Cera kingdom
Peruvali	Main road
Pitika	Shop
Pitikastalam	Venue of a shop
Pōho	A weight used by the Chinese merchants
Ponnu	A coin
Pōralātiri	King of Polanad
Poti	A very large cubic measure
Pula	River
Pulaya	A caste of toiling people
Pura	Fortified town
Purayitam	Compound of a house
Quiraṭ	A coin
Rāwari nairs	A merchant group among the nairs
Rakṣābhōgam	Protection fee
Sabha	Assembly
Sālai	Educational institution attached to a temple
Sāmantan	An officer under the Zamorin of Kozhikode
Samāyam	An organisation formed on the basis of contract
Sandēśam	Message
Sandēśakāvya	Poem in the form a message
Sarāph	A coin
Satakam	A century

Sau	A Chinese ship
Shāh Bandur	An officer under the Zamorin
Shibān	An officer under the Zamorin, in Chinese language
Siruvāikippōlan	A coin
Ślōka	A poem in Sanskrit metre
Śrēṇi	Guild
Swarūpam	A family of ruling class whose political authority was organised on the basis of the order of seniority
Tabashīr	A product extracted from Bamboo
Taccar	Carpenter
Tālattanāṭi	Down bazar
Tali	Temple. Also the seat of the representatives from the four Nambuthiri gramās at Mahodayapuram, the capital of the Perumals
Taliyātiri	A celebrate Brahmin representing a Tali
Tāram	A coin
Tāre	A coin
Teru	Street
Tiṇai	Geophysical division of land in ancient Tamilakam
Tiramam	A coin
Tiyamālvān	An officer in the nagaram of Kollam
Tiśśaiyāyira-ttainnuruvar	A merchant organisation (meaning five hundred people of a thousand directions)
Tōla	A weight
Tōṛṛam	A ritual dance
Tulākūli	Weighing charge

Tulām	A weight
Tulikkaṛ	Muslims
Tūṇi	A cubic measure
Turuṣkaṛ	Muslims
Uḷakku	A cubic measure
Ulkku	Customs duty
Uluva	Metha, used as a spice and medicine
Upanagara	Satellite town
Ūr	A rural area
Uri	A cubic measure
Vaddavyavahāri	Caravan leader
Valaṅciar	A merchant organisation
Valappu	Upland
Vaṇṇān	Washerman
Vāṇiyam	Bazaar
Vaniyan	Oil monger and trader
Varāha	A coin
Vatteluttu	Old malayalam script used in inscriptions
Vayal	Wet land
Vellikāṣu	A silver coin
Vīrakal	Hero stone
Wakīl-ul-tujjār	Legal representative of merchants
Zamorin	Title of the king of Kozhikode

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