

CHAPTER IV

MEDIEVAL TRADE, MARKETS AND MODES OF EXCHANGE

This chapter focuses on the trading activities of major trade centers, markets and their transactions, system of exchange, major trade routes and its developments, internal and external trade, overseas trade up to the end of the sixteenth century, urbanization of trading centers, trade guilds, organizational aspects of trade and administered trade etc. The advent of the Portuguese in 1498 opened the doors of a new era in the history and socio-economic and political life of India, especially of Kerala. Kerala witnessed a new experience of maritime trade quite different from that we experienced since the dawn of the first century AD. Its resultant impact on society, economy and the cultural diasporas also form a part of the study. The long-prevailing notion that medieval Malabar was a closed economy is subjected to an analysis. The Malabar economy which was confined to an agrarian and subsistence-oriented, economy positively responded to economic activities and daily markets consequent on the production of surplus, and began to play a predominant role in overseas trade and world economy due to the spice trade.

Agricultural growth in the hinterland, the availability of surplus, the amount of importance given to the commerce and overseas trade in the development of commodity production and exchange in the hinterland are certain necessary pre-conditions to urban growth.¹ Due to the availability of ample surplus in agricultural production active rural markets and trade centers developed in medieval Kerala. The process of urbanisation was gradually taking place in major trade centers and market places. Trade guilds and other

¹ M.R.Raghava Varier, 'Aspects of Urbanization in medieval Kerala. The case of Panthalayani Kollam', (Working paper) Department of History, Calicut University, p.5; Champakalakshmi .R, The Role of Ideology and Polity, Presidential Address, Session –I Ancient India, IHC, 47th Session, Srinagar, 1986, Pp.18-19

organizational arrangements gave a conceptual basis for this urban process. Various levels of commercial centers had functioned in medieval Kerala which can be classified into regional or local trade and markets, long distance overland trade and long distance overseas trade.

The distinctive geophysical elements and socio-political events like the Brahmin-headed agrarian settlements and the founding of the kingdom of the Perumals of Mahodayapuram as the pivot of the second Chera kingdom provided a favourable climate for the growth and development of internal markets, trade and overland and overseas trade.² According to *Keralolpathi* there were 32 Brahmin settlements which were centered around river valleys.³ The spread of Brahmin settlements was accompanied by the proliferation of agriculture. Better technological devices and managerial strategies accelerated the growth of agriculture and the introduction of a variety of crops. Wetland paddy cultivation attained new momentum by this time.

Proliferation of agriculture necessitated the exchange of products in the market places. This led to the production of several non-agrarian products to be exchanged in the market with the agricultural products. Exchanges might have developed between the various 'tinai's' very much earlier before the establishment of the kingdom of the Perumals of Mahodayapuram in the 9th century A.D. During the medieval period many markets and centers of trade developed and they give us vestiges of 'inter tinai' exchange.⁴

² See MGS Narayanan, 'Political and Social Conditions of Kerala Under the Kulasekhara Empire' (800-1124 AD), Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Kerala, 1972, p.7

³ For more details see, Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahmin settlements in Kerala*, Calicut, 1978. Also see Velayudhan Panikassery, *Keralolpathi(mal)*, Kottayam, 1962.

⁴ See, Sivathampi .K, *Early South Indian Society and Economy: The Tenai Concept*. Social Scientist, No.29 (1974) Pp.20-37. Also see, M.R Raghava Varier, *South Indian History Congress*, Calicut University: 1991 Pp.21-23; Also see, Radhika Rajamani, 'Society in Early Historic Tamizhakam', Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Javaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1993.

We could observe a holistic change in the availability of sources for the study of markets, exchange and trade during the early medieval period comprising of A.D 800-1200. There is an aggregation of information in ballads, anthologies and oral narratives. Those documents expose multifarious dimensions of markets and exchange.

During the early centuries of the Christian era there were brisk trade contacts between the Roman world and south India. We have ample archaeological, epigraphic and literary evidences to believe this. Hoards of Roman aurei and pottery were discovered from various parts of Kerala and Tamilnadu which point to the vigorous Indo-Roman trade in the early centuries of the Christian era. Contemporary Tamil classical writers, Greco-Roman authors like Ptolemy and Pliny and the author of the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* provide information regarding the Indo-Roman trade.

A decline in Roman trade with south India is witnessed by the fifth century A.D following the decline of the Roman Empire. Contemporaneous was the condescending of the *Sangam Age* or the 'Classical Age' and also the principal kingdoms of South India –the Cheras, Cholas and the Pandyas. Anyhow the Chera, Chola and Pandya powers were revived during the eighth and ninth centuries. Between the close of the classical period and the rise of the monarchies of the Pallavas and the revival of the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas was a space of gloom in the history of south India. Historians attribute this to the 'atrocious' invasion of the *Kalabhras* of which we lack information. This gloomy situation disappears by about the sixth century A.D with the establishment of the Pallava kingdom of Kanchi having ample epigraphic, archaeological literary and alien evidences. The seven years following the ordainment of Pallava kingdom (A.D 600) and the disintegration of the Chola kingdom witness the development of the various economic activities in south India of which the functions of the several trade organizations and guilds are worthy of special mention. *Anjuvannam, manigramam, nanadesikal,*

valanciyar, ayyavole are some examples. Their organizational and conceptual aspects are also discussed in the following pages.

As Kerala was part of the early Tamilakam we have to rely for the information regarding the economic life of Kerala on Tamil classical accounts and medieval Malayalam literature including the *sandesakavyas* and *champus* along with other epigraphic, archaeological and numismatic evidences. *Purananuru* one of the classical anthologies describes in detail the gifts given to bards by the chieftains for praising them, the paddy fields etc.⁵ It mentions the production of surplus, the distributive economy and the bountifulness of their chieftains.

Maduraikanci of *Pattupattu*⁶ compilations has excellent narrations of the sound of the drawing of water with ‘thulam’ and ‘thekotta’, threshing of sheaves by oxen with chimes from their necks, the howling of the farmers or guards to scare the birds eating cereals etc.⁷ The classic *Padirupattu* contains ten songs praising Chera chiefs. It gives beautiful narrations of *pulam*, paddy, plantain, *kazhmanellu*, *varambu* (ridge) etc.⁸

The medieval Malayalam literature, especially the *Campu kavyas* and *Sandesa kavayas* are rich in elucidation of farming activities. *Unniyaccicaritam* (13th century A.D) tells us about varieties of paddy cultivated in this period.⁹

⁵ *Purananuru*, 353, 376, 391 and 396

⁶ *Maduriakanci Verses* 88-97, Melangathu Narayanankutty, *Pattupattu*, (translated into Malayalam) Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 2000, p.170

⁷ *Ibid*, op.cit; 105-123

⁸ *Padirupatu* (translated into Malayalam by Vaidyanadha Ayyar, 1997 (1961), Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur) Part III, Song 8 and 9, Pp.64-66, Part IV Song 2 and 3, Pp.78-80

⁹ Elamkulam Kunjanpillai, *Unnunisandesam* (mal), Kottayam, 1983 (1954)p.75.poem:81.

Kokasandesam (14th century A.D) tells us about the making of balks in paddy field during rainy season and ploughing and gliding the fields for sowing seeds. *Unnichirutevicaritham* (14th century A.D) describes the *punchanilam* of Valluvanadu.¹⁰ The same describes the cultivation of pepper vines sugarcane, coconut and arecanut trees, places with mango trees, jack trees, beautiful paddy fields etc.

Growth and development of agriculture in the hinterlands brought about plentiful availability of surplus. The surplus food grains and other agricultural crops were to be exchanged for other necessities. More surplus necessitated more quantity of exchange and the increase in the quantum of commodities and of exchange brought this process out of rural households to distinctive places. These distinctive locations gradually developed as markets and trading centers and sometimes urban centers or *nagaram*.¹¹

Agricultural production was the main stay of the economy of Kerala in medieval period up to the last decades of the 16th century A.D, though this century witnessed the advent of European traders and vigorous trading activities. Land was given much importance as it was the main source of production. Agricultural settlements spread in the river valleys around various chiefdoms and *swarupams*.¹²

Cultivation of food grains was the main feature of agricultural production. Paddy was the main crop of food. The wetlands with paddy cultivation were referred by various names such as *nilam*, *kandam*, *ela*, *padag*,

¹⁰ Suranadu Kunjanpillai, *Unnichirutevicaritham*, Thiruvananthapuram 1954, p.26, gadyam II

¹¹ Champakalakshmi.R, Urbanization in South India; The Ideology and polity, Presidential address, Session I Ancient India, IHC 47th Session, Srinagar, 1986 Pp.18-19

¹² T.V Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*, Vol.I, Madras, 1940 Pp.62-63

punjai etc. according to the regional changes. Laterite hills that were interspersed with paddy field were known as *parambu*. Terms such as *vayal* and *kari* were also popular.¹³ Fruit trees like jack, tamarind¹⁴, vegetables such as cucumber, pulses and roots were grown.¹⁵

The very unique environmental peculiarities of Malabar supported the growth of several varieties of pepper, cardamom and ginger.¹⁶ Cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves were also cultivated.¹⁷ Pulses and other grains like ‘chamai’ and ‘thinai’ were also cultivated. The ‘*parmbus*’ and forests produced various species of trees such as teak, ven teak, veetti, trimbakam, angili, arani and mahagoni. The agriculturists mainly depended on different seasons for crops. The technology relied by the agriculturists belonged to the low level rural technology. The agrestic slaves depended on simple tools and implements which resulted in low level production.

Being the main source and criterion of wealth distribution of land was based on customary practices. There were a large number of tenures in which vast areas of the land held by land owners were parceled as a result of the interaction of several factors such as economic, political, social and religious.¹⁸

¹³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Trivandrum, 1922, Vol.III, Pt.1, Pp.21-23

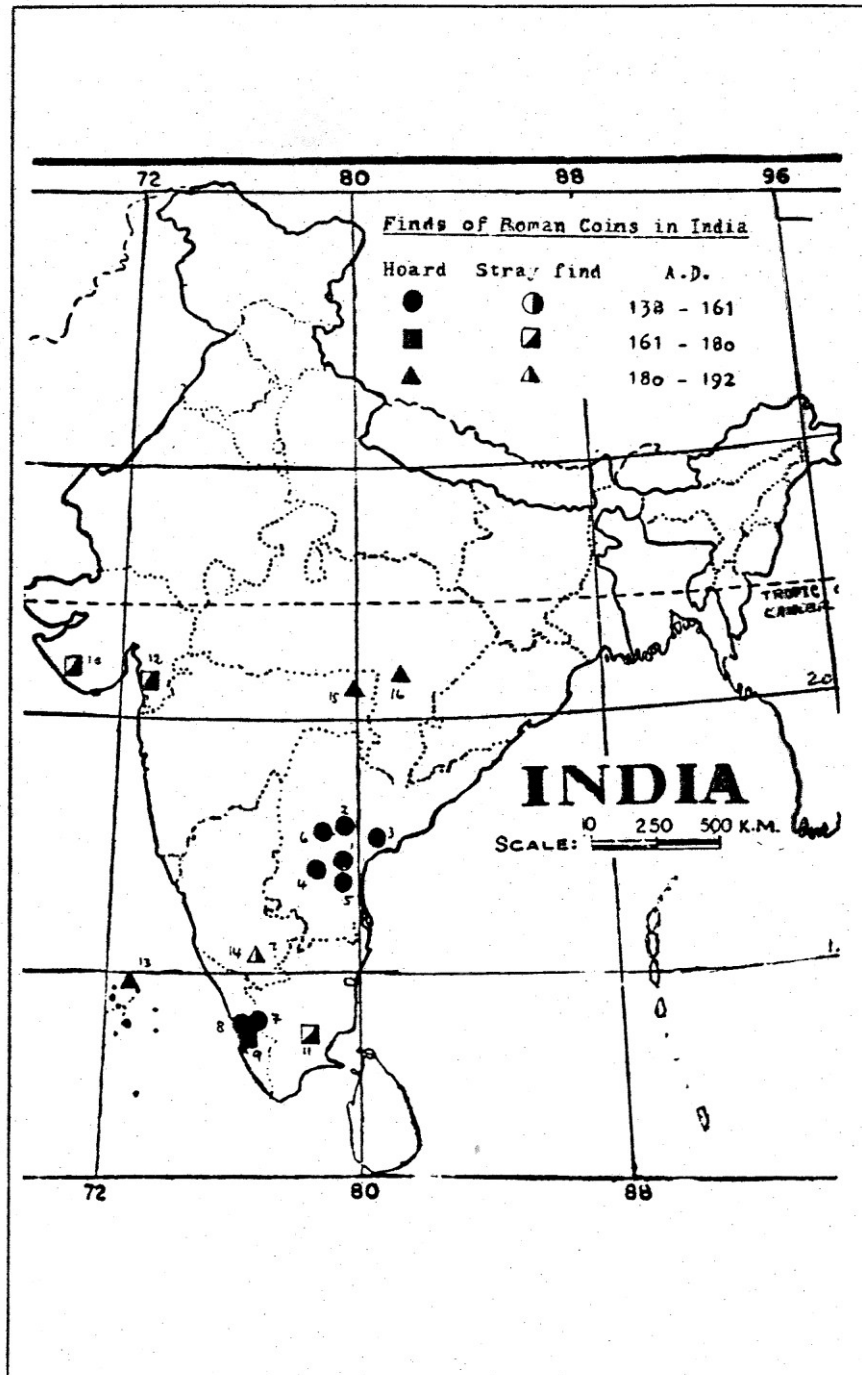
¹⁴ *Gracia da Orta, Coloquios dos e dogras e cousas da India*, Goa, 1563-
Critical edn. by Conde de ficalho in 2 Vols. London, 1891-95; Vol II, p.319 ft.

¹⁵ K.K Ramachandran Nair (ed) *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Trivandrum, 1986,
Vol. II, op.cit;p.8

¹⁶ Gracia, op.cit; Vo.I, p.174.

¹⁷ Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Barbosa: An account of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean and there inhabitation*, Trans. and ed. Manual Longworth Dames, 2 Vols. London, 1921; op.cit; p.228

¹⁸ T.K Ravindran, *Institutions and Movements in Kerala History*, Trivandrum,
1978, p.131



Finds of Roman Coins from India

In the social stratification the Nairs along with the Brahmins enjoyed the status of the high class *janmis* (the land-owning class). As the holders of land they performed the obligation or duty of the supervisor or *kanakar*. *Kanam* was a common tenure of Malabar. The *kanakars* gave the land in trust to the proper workers and collected the share of the produce from them¹⁹ or the so-called rent due to the authority. There were several tenures such as *Attipettola*, *Perumartam*, *Vidupar* etc. These usages sounded hereditary grants. It was *mupra* (three *paras*) per ten *paras* of produce in the wetlands in Kochi. In garden lands it was 1/8 of produce (*ettukonnu*).²⁰

There were substantial farmers who hired labour for cultivation of food grains for daily subsistence and the local markets. The population of Malabar on the eve of the advent of the Europeans constituted mainly the peasants, landless working class including agrestic slaves who were oppressed, exploited and who lived in a pitiable social status and economic conditions. The only claimants to the agricultural products were the landed *janmis*, entertaining similarity with European feudal social setup.²¹

Transmarine Commerce

Malabar had commercial relations with countries abroad since time immemorial. The demand for oriental goods increased in the western countries especially after the Crusades in the 12th century A.D. Even before that Malabar had active commercial relations with the countries of the west. In conventional historiography of South India, it has been viewed as a glorious epoch of

¹⁹ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol.I, Madras, op.ct; Pp.597-613

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Sathish Chandra, *Medieval India*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1978, op.cit;p.25

overseas trade in Tamilakam and hence an era of civilization.²² The conduct of scheduled transmarine commerce by a society must have certain unavoidable pre-requisites such as the production of surplus and potentiality of exchange, the presence of a permanent class of full time traders involved in overseas trade and developed state administrative machinery.²³

The oceanic trade of Malabar had its base strongly footed in the local markets and agricultural areas. The exchange of goods was visible at every strata of economic life. Production and distribution of goods were based on co-existence and inter-penetration of a commercial sector as there were both surplus as well as deficit areas regarding commodities.²⁴

Maritime trade rooted in rural markets and trade centers of Malabar brought immense wealth. The Indian Ocean, of course provided a highway linking several peoples and cultures. It had a prominent place in world economic scenario. The Indian Ocean borders the African continent and is connected to the Mediterranean, through the Red Sea and opens access to the central lands of the Middle East via Persian Gulf, washes both shores of the Indian subcontinent and across the Bay of Bengal links up with South China seas, beyond which is the Pacific. Ancient civilization in Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia, the Persian high lands, the Indian subcontinent and mainland and insular South East Asia had access to the Ocean and used to develop their

²² See Maloney, C. "The Bignings of Civilization in South India", JAS XXIX, No.3(1970) Also see his, "Archaeology" of South India : Accomplishments and Prospects", in Stein, B.(ed) Essays on South India, Delhi, 1976, Pp.1-33

²³ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Sukapuram,1992, op,cit, Pp23-24; also see, Sherin Ratnagar, *Encounters; The Westerly Trade of Harappan Civilization*, Delhi, 1981

²⁴ Roderich Ptak and Dietmark Rothermund (ed), *Emporea Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade* , 1400-1750, Germany, 1991, p.8

first maritime trading links.²⁵ The expansion of maritime trade across the Indian Ocean was the result of the growth of various economic systems in East Africa, the Middle East, south and South East Africa. The enabling conditions of maritime commerce were diverse. The techniques of ship-building and navigation had to be developed, as well as the study of the pattern of wind, ocean currents and the observation of stars. Further more for the sea to assure the function of a highway there had to be markets for foreign goods. All these are the pre-conditions for maritime trade.²⁶

The maritime trade in the Indian Ocean region is highly intensive as about one –fourth of the entire cargo and two –thirds of the oil carried in oceanic trade of the world are loaded in the ports of India Ocean. Thus for a long time Indian Ocean has been regarded as one of the world’s major storehouses of natural resources.²⁷ By the beginning of the Christian era, the oceanic trade network expanded to large parts of the Western Indian Ocean that a range of communities such as Nabataeans, Sabaeans, Homerites, Greeks, Arabs, Romans and Indians participated in trade. Trade in subsistence items and agricultural products sustained the Indian Ocean network as it is indicated by the presence of guilds of weavers, potters, oil millers and so on, and in the list of donors mentioned in the inscriptions on the Budhist monuments of peninsular India.²⁸

The great cities of the ancient and medieval world rose to importance and wealth either because they were directly engaged in the eastern trade or

²⁵ Kenneth Mc Pherson, *The Indian Ocean, A History of People And The Sea*, New York, 1993, op.cit;p.16

²⁶ Ibid.;op.cit; p.15

²⁷ Saral Patra, *The Indian Ocean and Great Powers*, New Delhi, 1979, p.11

²⁸ H.P Ray, *Monastery and Guild: Commerce Under Sathavahanas*, New Delhi, 1986,p.112

from the fact that they stood on the ancient trade routes along which spices and silk of the East were transported.²⁹ Ancient Chaldea had carried on trade with India, Ceylon, Arabia, Ethiopia and Egypt. During the reign of the Babylonian ruler Nebukkad Nessar, teak, ivory and spices were exported to Babylonia from Kerala.³⁰ The information available in the ‘Geography of Strabo’ that Eudoxus Cyzicus was the first Greek to cross the Indian Ocean bringing with him an Indian pilot from the Egyptian coast proves that Indians had undertaken the journey in the opposite direction prior to the Hellenistic seafaring activities of Egypt. It is understood that Hippalus was sent to India by the Egyptian king Ergattus (B.C 146-117) along with an Indian who had been taken from a ship in the Red sea and who guided him to reach India as happened in the discovery of the sea route to Malabar Coast by Vasco da Gama who was guided by a Gujarati.³¹ After Hippalus’s historic discovery, Pliny (A.D 23-70) describes the new sea route to India as follows:

“From Alexandria to Juliopolis is two miles there our cargo destined for India is embarked on the Nile and is carried to Keptos, which is 303 miles and the voyage takes twelve days from Keptos, goods are conveyed to Berenike on the Arabian Gulf halting at stations for water, a distance of 258 miles by caravan and his journey was finished on the twelfth day. About midsummer ships take their departure from Berenike and in thirty days time reach Okelis (Gella) at the mouth of Arabian Gulf or Kane on the coast of Arabia Felix. Then they sail straight in forty days of Mouziris the first emporium in India”.

²⁹ O.K Nambiar, *The Kunjalis-Admirals of Calicut*, Bombay,1963, op.cit; p.1.

³⁰ Velayudhan Panikkasseri, *Sancharikal Kanda Keralam* (Mal), Kottayam, 2004 (2001), p.1

³¹ K.M.Bahaudheen , *Kerala Muslimgal*, Porattathinte Charithram (Mal), Kozhikode, 1995, op.cit; p.29

They begin their homeward voyage in the Egyptian month of ‘Thibi’ which answers to our December: they sail with the north-east wind and when they enter Arabian Gulf meet with a South or south-west wind and thus complete the voyage in less than a year.³² *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* gives valuable knowledge about the main ports and coastal towns like Sopara, Ozene, Kalyana, Tyndis, Naura, Muziris, Nelcynda, Masalia, Sopatma, Kolkar etc. and also Indias exports of spices, muslin, cotton, pearls and precious stones to Rome and other countries of the west. Indias received wine, olive oil, amphora, terracotta pots etc from Rome.³³

Romans

Solid proofs of India’s trade with the Roman Empire were revealed by the study of amphorae. The loan contract document on a papyrus of second century A.D recording the export of nard, excellent textiles, ivory and tusks on board the ship ‘Hermopollon’ which was lying at anchor at the famous port of Muziris in Malabar coast is an eloquent testimony to Indo–Roman trade relation. These luxury items were imposed a customs duty of 25% at the Roman warehouse in Alexandria. The most improved stage of voyages brought mariners and merchants from a Red sea port to Malabar in as quick a time as twenty days, which had taken forty days earlier.³⁴

³² Pliny, *Natural History*, cited in O.K.Nambiar, *The Kunjalis – Admirals of Calicut*, Bombay, 1963, op.cit; p.4

³³ Kishor K Basa and Karuna Sagar Behera, *Indo Roman Trade*, in K.S Behera(ed) *Maritime Heritage of India*, New Delhi, 1999, p.22.

³⁴ Lionel Casson, New light on Maritime Loans: P. Vinob G 40822, *Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Band 84, 1990, Pp.195-206; the English translation of the loan contract document is also incorporated in Nirharranjan Ray, B.D Chattopadhyaya, Ranbir Chakravarti and V.R.Muni, *A source book of Indian Civilization*, Calcutta, 2000, Pp.607-9

The study of alterations of monsoon wind-system known as Etasian and Hipalus wind in the classical literature had deeply influenced navigation patterns on the Indian Ocean.³⁵ Romila Thapar testifies the remarkable significants of the black gold, pepper of Malabar, in sea-born trade with the Roman Empire, which set the trend for huge volume of demand for pepper of Malabar in Europe which continued till the dawn of the twentieth century.³⁶

Arabs

Since the reign of Bahram V(A.D 420-39), Persia began to enjoy an important role in trade in the western part of the Indian Ocean³⁷ . Arab trade and navigation attained a new enthusiasm since the birth and spread of Islam. Since the ninth century onwards Malabar saw the establishment of many outposts of Muslim merchants.³⁸

Islamic scriptures considered the merchants as the messengers of the world. By the formation of the Abassid Caliphate in the ninth century A.D the Arab trade was raised to new esteems by its elaboration to Malabar trading

³⁵ S.Mazzario, The 'Hypalum of Pliny' in Federico de Romains and A T Cherina, (ed) *Crossings, Early Mediterranean Contacts with India*, Delhi 1997. Mazzarino explains that the popularly understood the 'hipalus wind' as mentioned by Pliny, is actually a misreading of the term hypalum. He ascertains that the wind-system was so named not after the Greek sailor Hypalus, but that the term hypalum stood for seasonal south -west wind.

³⁶ Romila Thapar, 'Black Gold : South Asia and Roman Maritime Trade' , South Asia, Vol.XV, New Delhi, 1992, Pp.1-28

³⁷ Charles Verlinden, 'The Indian Ocean : The Ancient Period and Middle Ages' in Satish Chandra, (ed), *Indian Ocean Exploration in History, Commerce, and Politics*, New Delhi 1987 op.cit; p.34

³⁸ N.P Hafis Muhammed, *Kozhikkodinte Paithrukam* (Mal), in Dr.B.P.Saleem, M.C.Vasisht, N.P Hafis Muhammed,(ed), *Malabar Paithrukavum Prathapavum*, Calicut 2011, Pp.278-279

centers and markets. According to Tara Chand, the first Muslim fleet appeared in the Indian waters in 636 AD.³⁹ The gold coins, four in number of Umayyad Caliphs(665-750 A.D) found in Kothamangalam (Ernakulam district) testifies the presence of Arabs in Kerala.⁴⁰ The Arabs and the Chinese were the long time trade partners of Malabar. The decline of land route to India by the second half of the eighth century A.D due to the struggles of both the Chinese and the Arabs with the regional tribes resulted in the increase of traffic by sea which was encouraged and promoted by the Abbasids⁴¹

Chinese Trade

The Chinese contact with Kerala should be viewed against the background of these trade relations between China and the Malabar Coast.⁴² Sulayman says that Chinese ships came to Kollam and that one thousand ‘dirhams’ were collected from each of them.⁴³ The Trade with Malabar resulted in the drainage of Chinese gold in abundance that the Southern Sang Government (1127-1279) proscribed the use of gold, silver and bronze in foreign trade in 1219 and silk fabrics and porcelain were ordered to be bartered against foreign goods.⁴⁴ Administrative statutes of the Sang dynasty includes Malabar among several

³⁹ Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Alahabad, 1946, p.31

⁴⁰ A.Sreedhara Menon, *District Gazateer*, Ernakulam, Trivandrum, 1965,op.cit; p.90

⁴¹ V.K Jain, *The Role of Arab Trades in Western India*, B.D Chattopadhyaya (ed), *Essays in Ancient Indian Economic History*, Delhi, 1957, p.165

⁴² M.R.Raghava Varier, *Aspects Urbanization in Medieval Kerala*, 800-1500, the case of Panthalayani Kollam, a working paper, Dept. of History, Calicut University, 1989.

⁴³ Nainar, Op-cit, p.45

⁴⁴ Lizhiyan and Chenguwen, *Chinese Pottery and Prorecelain*, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 1984, Op-cit, p.102.

other countries which were the recipients of Chinese goods. Marco Polo saw many ships of India at Saitum⁴⁵.

Ma Huan's account of *Ying Yai Sheng-Lan* (1433) gives information about 'the country of the little Kolam (Kollam), Kochin (Kochi), Kuli (Kozhikode)',⁴⁶ etc. Pepper, Coconut, Fish, Betel nuts, etc were exported from Malabar in exchange for gold, silver, coloured satin, blue and white porcelain, beads, musk, quick silver and camphor. Ma Huan provides information regarding the Chinese spice trade at Calicut. Pepper was weighed in terms of Po-ho (bahr). One Po-ho of pepper cost ninety-two hundred gold coins. One bahr was equivalent to 400 Chin of China. Five hundred grams of pepper was equivalent to 13 pounds.⁴⁷

Several place names around Kozhikode like Cinakota, meaning Chinese fort, Cinacceri meaning Chinese settlement at Kappad, Chinapalli or Chinese mosque at Panthalayani Kollam and Quilandy are the best examples left behind by the Chinese trade contact with Malabar.⁴⁸ Archaeological remains obtained from several sites on the Malabar Coast such as Kodungallore, Kollam, Panthalayini Kollam, Ponnani, Dharmadam and Kannur have brought to light Chinese pottery and potsherds. Contemporary Malayalam literature refers to the Chinese contacts. *Unnihilisandesam* refers to the Chinese junks coming

⁴⁵ P.J.Chერიан (ed) *Perspective on Kerala History*, Tvm, 1999, Pp.105-106 see also Yule (ed) *Marco Polo Book*, III Ch.XXV.

⁴⁶ Ma Huan, *Yin-Yai Sheng-Lai* (The overall survey of the ocean's shores) Translated from Chinese Text. Edited by Feng Cheeng-Chun, Published for the Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1970, Pp.130-146.

⁴⁷ J.V.G.Mills (ed) *Ying Yai Shang-Lai* (1493) of Ma Huan, Hakluyt Society, 1970 p.135.

⁴⁸ K.V.Krishna Ayier, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, p.85 also see, D.K.Nambiar, *Our Sea Farring in the Indian Ocean*, Bangalore, 1975, p.35.

ashore of Kollam and *Unniyaticaritam* refers Chinese in the bazaar of ‘Sriparvata’, a town situated in the old ‘nadu’ of ‘odanadu’.⁴⁹

The history of active Chinese contact since the time of Chinese dynasty (202 BC –AD 220) seems to have continued vigorously with the exception to certain intervals till the dawn of the advent of the Europeans, leaving long-lasting imprints on the socio-economic and cultural life. Chinese silk, porcelain, gold, precious metals, coins, handicrafts, pots, lamps, incenses like camphor etc had penetrated even into the interior households of Malabar, the remains of which are existing even today.

Jews

Among the foreigners who came, settled and traded with Malabar the Jews were in a dominant place. They have left still existing imprints on the trade economy and culture of Malabar. It is believed that the Jews reached the Malabar coast by 70 A.D following the attack of Nebukedanezar. They were dispersed throughout the world. By the fourth century there were many Jewish settlements in Malabar such as Kodungalloor, Parur, Palayur and Kollam.⁵⁰ Ordoric of Pordinon reported that ‘In the city of Fandrina, some of the inhabitants are Jews and Christians’.⁵¹ The Jews were provided with all facilities of livelihood in Malabar by the rulers of the *nadus* where they lived respectfully. They were actually soldiers and traders. They were always loyal to the Kerala rulers. King Bhaskara Ravivarman in the 38th year of his reign issued Copper Plates granting distinctive privileges and honors to Joseph Raban, the leader of the Jews, which was discovered at ‘Muyiricode’ and is

⁴⁹ Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai (ed) *Unnihilisandesam*, 1.70, Kottayam, 1970, P.V.Krishna Nair, *Unniyaticaritam* (ed) Kottayam, 1976, Gadyam 10.

⁵⁰ Segal, *History of the Jews in Kerala*, London, 1993, p.63

⁵¹ H.Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Vol.II, Hakluyt Society Second Series(1913) Krans reprint(1967), Pp-134-135

still preserved at the Synagogue at Mattancheri. The copper plates granted distinguished status in *Anchuvannam*, which might have been a powerful trading corporation. Even in the time of Theresapally Copper Plates, *ancuvannam* had become a distinguished commercial guild. The rights and privileges granted by the copper plates were extended to the whole family of Joseph Raban also and it is evident from the influence the Jews enjoyed in the domestic and foreign affairs of pre-modern Kerala⁵². Any how it was possible that the Jews in Malabar had a pocket in Panthalayanikollam. As centers of spice trade and as enter ports on the Malabar Coast Jews must have had some centers at different places including Panthalayani Kollam, Elimala and Kodungalloor. Barbosa located Jews at Madayi to the north of Kannur and an early settlement of Jews at Madayi is indicated by a toponomical survival, Jutakulam, meaning Jews Tank.⁵³ Ibn Batuta found Jews at a place called Kunjakari on his way from Kaliqut to Kawlam.⁵⁴ Kunjakari is believed to be on the banks of river Kanjirapuzha near Parur. The travels of Rabi Benjamin of Tudela also aimed at understanding the number of Jews spread in different areas.⁵⁵ The Jewish Copper Plates of 1000 A.D bring out the influence and importance the Jews exercised in Kodungalloor. Chendamangalam Near Kodungalloor was an important center of Jews where traces of a Jewish

⁵² Gopalakrishnan P.K, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*,(Mal) Thiruvananthapuram, 1974, (2000), op.cit; Pp.30-33)

⁵³ Basic Grey, TOCS, 36, Pp. 24-25

⁵⁴ Duarte Barbosa, *The Coast of East Africa and Malabar*, London, 1865,p.49; Also see Kerala State Gazetteer – Vol.II – Part II, p.110;and Mahdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, p.192

⁵⁵ R.H Major (ed), *India in the fifteenth century*(1857) Delhi, 1974,op.cit;p.XIV

settlement are still maintained. We are provided with valuable information regarding the Jews and their trading activities from the *Geniza letters*.⁵⁶

The Jewish communities of North Africa settled in Cairo and Alexandria took an active part in trade with India in the eleventh and twelfth centuries like the Arabs.⁵⁷ They formed a group called Al Karimi which constituted an “organization or corporation, an organized body of merchants closely knit together, a collective group of men who associated themselves for the pursuit of a common commercial goal trade in pepper and spices.”⁵⁸ This group of merchants had their contact with Calicut. Ali Ibn Muhammad Kalyubi who died in 1492 was one of the rich Karimi merchants who had trade contacts with Calicut in the second half of the fifteenth century.⁵⁹

Christians

Sources are available regarding the life and activities of the Christians in the Malabar coast since the early centuries of the Christian era. The St.Thomas tradition among the Marthoma Christians of Kerala centers around the belief that the Christian life in Kerala started in the same century of the birth of Jesus Christ whose disciple and apostle St.Thomas landed in Kodungalloor in 52 A.D and delivered the ‘gospel’ to the natives. The Christians reached Malabar in 345 A.D under the leadership of Thomas of Kana. “Four hundred people

⁵⁶ S.D Goitein, ‘From Aden to India’, JESHO, Vol.XXIII, Part I and II (1980), op.cit; Pp 43-66; *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, Princeton, 1973, p.175

K.N.Chaudari, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean, and economic history from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Delhi, 1985, op.cit.p.100

⁵⁸ Walter J Fischel, “The Spice Trade in Mamluk Egypt, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol.I, Leiden, 1958, p.165.

⁵⁹ Gaton Wiet “Les Marchands D’ Epices sous les Sultans Mamlouks” in *Cahiers D’ Histoire Egyptienne*, Serie VII, Fasc – I, Cairo, 1955, p : 128. See, also K.S.Mathew, Pius Malekandathil (ed) *Kerala Economy and European Trade*, Muvattupuzha, 2003, p.11

belonging to seventy two families of seven lineages from Syris landed the port of Kodungalloor in Malayalam Land in 345 A.D. They were accompanied by Beshop Ouseph of Edessa and some other priests. They met the Kerala ruler Cheraman Perumal and received from him certain royal designations, honours and titles and land to settle down in a Copper Plate, and built up a 'nagari' known as *kanan nagari* in Kodungalloor and settled down there."⁶⁰ The old songs of the Kananit Christians also mention about the migration of the Christians from Syria under the leadership of Thomas of Kana. The songs says:

Othu thirichavar kappal keru

Malanadu nokki purappettare,

(Together they set sail looking forward to Malabar)

The above songs of the Kananya Christians are the collections which were orally transferred from generations to generations until it was compiled and published. The coming of Thomas of Kana with 72 families having 400 people of seven lineages⁶¹ from Esra in southern Babylon (now southern Iraq) is now an admitted fact by almost all the scholars. They started from the port of Basra in the Persian Gulf in the year 345 A.D.

It is not certain that the Copper Plates which sanctioned Thoamas of Kana and his associates, titles, honours and designations 72 in number and tax free land for the construction of a city (*nagaram*) and church by Cheraman Perumal exist anywhere. The reports of Bishop Rose in the year 1604 A.D state that original copper plates were taken to Portugal by Franciscan missionaries.

⁶⁰ Joseph Chazhikat, *The Syrian Colonization of Malabar, Suriyanikarude Kerala Pravesam Athava Thekkumbaga samudhaya charitram* (mal), Kottayam, 1961, p.1

⁶¹ Seven lineages from Keenai – Bathi, Balkuth, Hadhai, Thejamuth, Kujalik, Koja and Majamuth; see, Fr.Thomas Karimpumkalayil, *Thanimayil Oru Janatha* (Mal), Kottayam, 2010, p.92)

The translation of the contents is included in the reports of Bishop Rose. The royal decree in the copper plate was inscribed in stone and exhibited in the northern gate of the temple of Thiruvanchikulam.⁶²

The presence of Christians is mentioned in the *Topographica Indica* of Cosmos Indico Pleaustus who is said to have reached Kerala in 522 A.D.⁶³ The coming of Christians under the leadership of Mar Sabir Iso and Mar Peroz are examples of active Christian association with Kollam. The use of Kufi Fleuri, Pahlavi and Hebrew scripts by the signatories of the Teresapally Copper Plates is an evidence for their relation with Persia.⁶⁴

Medieval Trade

In spite of obvious gaps in our knowledge of early Indian commerce, a more or less connected account of trade in India prior to the arrival of European powers and trading companies is now more or less intelligible to us.⁶⁵ It has been argued that the initiatives to trade in India were not indigenous and always came from elsewhere, particularly the west.⁶⁶ Taking into account of the overall dependancy of the people of the Indian sub-continent on agriculture for millennia, it is hardly surprising that the major pertinacity in the economic and social historiography of early medieval India would be towards its agrarian

⁶² Ibid, p. 39

⁶³ A.Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazateers*, Quilon, Thiruvanandapuram, 1964, p.74

⁶⁴ Meera Mary Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, Delhi, 1988, op.cit; Pp. 20-21

⁶⁵ Ranabir Chakravarthy, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, New Delhi, 2002, p.22

⁶⁶ Ibid; also see, E.H Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, London, 1974 (second edn.)Pp15-30

milieu. Therefore non – agrarian sector of the economy is mostly viewed only as secondary to the agrarian economy. It does not imply that the non-agrarian sector of the early Indian economy has been marginally treated in the economic historiography.

The historiography of early and medieval Indian trade shows a distinct preference for the study of long distance trade, exports and imports, routes of communication, identification and highlighting of Indian ports. The common feature in this historiography is to present urban centers almost invariably as thriving commercial centers and to hold exchanges as the principal causative factor towards urbanization. It must be emphasized that trade and urban centers can hardly be delinked from the agrarian sector. Early Indian urban centers can be characterized as agrocities.⁶⁷ The far South presents a scenario of inland commerce in which a new center, *nagaram* rarely appearing before the eighth century, gains considerable prominence. Our understanding of the *nagaram* as a locality-level center is enriched by the in depth empirical research of Hall.⁶⁸

The growth and development of trade and urbanization in medieval Kerala was a synchronized process. There were mutual dependency for growth. As analysed, agricultural prosperity in the rural areas accelerated the availability of surplus resulting in the promotion of economic activities in *angadis* followed by the trade and trading centers turning to *nagarams*.

The study of early medieval period (800-1200 A.D) is conspicuous by the lack of much epigraphic evidences. We come across comparatively little direct information regarding trading and commercial activities of the time. The kingdom of the Perumals of Mahodayapuram, the second Chera kingdom, was

⁶⁷ Ranbir Chakravathy, op.cit,p. 15

⁶⁸ Hall K.R, *Trade and State – craft in the Age of the Colas*, in Ranbir Chakravathy, Ibid p. 211

founded by the beginning of the ninth century A.D.⁶⁹ The period signifies the development of several *nagarams* on the western coast like *Matayi*, Panthalayanikollam and Kollam. Mahodayapuram emerges as the nucleus of socio-economic and political life of the period under our study in the premises of Muziris of Greek historians.

Systematized and administered trade replacing the earlier chaffering system in the market was in its transitional form though not fully disappeared from the rural agricultural production centers and *angadis*. Urbanization as an economic, social and cultural process manifests the tendencies of the transformation of a simpler society into a more complex one. The population in an urban center was not only more dense than in rural settlement, but was heterogeneous too. Newly emerged Malabar ports witnessed the arrival of a large number of foreign traders as evidenced by the Arab geographers.⁷⁰ Distinguishing features of the trade was subjected to notable variation in its character by the first half of the ninth century A.D. The trade centers of the preceding period remained the same. A major feature of this change was the emergence the full-time trade. The nature of exchange also underwent changes. The affluent surplus in commercial crops from interior agricultural sectors were channelized to the major trading centers on the coastal Malabar which were accessed through riverine and ghat routes. It is very clear that the agrarian potential could not best be exploited before the emergence of a consolidated political authority. The newly, emerged political authority of Mahodayapuram, the emergence of full-time trades and various organizational networks of traders and affluence of agricultural surplus, all provided a conducive situation for urbanization and forthwith intra–regional and inter- regional trade.

⁶⁹ For details, MGS Narayanan, ‘ Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara empire’ 800 – 1124 AD), unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Kerala, 1972, p.7

⁷⁰ Akbar Al-Sin Wa’l – Hind; S.Maqbul Ahammed (ed) *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China*, Simla, 1989, p.38

We could observe a determining element in the socio-economic and cultural scenario and that is the slow and steady process of urbanization along with trade. The difference between a city and a village is marked by the 'oldest and most revolutionary division of labour': between the work in the fields on the one hand and activities described as urban on the other.⁷¹ Analysis of trade, intra, inter and overseas throws light to the wider use of money, diversified exchange patterns and urbanization which is revealed from the growth of urban trade centers such as Kodungalloor, Panthalayanikollam, Matayi, Mathilakam, Thazhakadu, Kudavoor, Thazhakavu, Kozhikode and Kochi. Some of the essential hallmarks of a pre industrial urban center as put forward by Gordon Childe are that (a): an extensive place densely populated than many previous human settlement (b): peasants were often outside the city, the main inhabitants of the city essentially consisted of non- food producing people, that is to say, full-time specialist craftsmen, merchants, priests, rulers and administrative officers who were supported by the surplus produced by the peasants; (c): the primary producer is to pay a little part of the agricultural surplus to a deity or divine king; the concentration of this surplus is essential for the emergence of urban centers; (d): construction of monumental buildings is a distinctive mark of city life, which is indicative of the concentration of social wealth; (e): among the non-producing population of an urban center priests, civil and military leaders and officials enjoyed a position of pre-eminence; they claimed the major share of the concentrated surplus and that led to the formation of the ruling class; (f): the rise of a community of clerks and the elaboration of exact and predictive sciences is inevitably associated to the urban life; (g): flourishing practice of artists, craftsmen, sculptors, painters, seal cutters etc. according to sophistication and conceptualized styles; (h): a part of the concentrated surplus is meant for paying for the importation of raw materials; (i) trade and market and especially long distance trade are closely linked up with urban life; (j) the specialist craftsmen in an urban center are

⁷¹. Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life*, London, 1985, p. 479

provided with raw materials and guaranteed security in a state organization based on residence rather than kinship; the city is a community to which a craftsman can belong both economically and politically.⁷² Based on this socio-economic and cultural situation the trading activities of the above mentioned Malabar trading centers are analyzed briefly.

Major Centres of Trade

Kodungallor

Crangannoore (Kodungalloor) was considered as an important center of Roman trade probably next to Barukaccha on the western coast of India during the visit of the author of *Periplus*. The *Sangam* literature mentions the trade carried out by the Yavanas.⁷³

As mentioned earlier Kodungalloor was the seat of the royal authority, ie, the seat of the Perumals of Mahodayapuram. Kodungalloor is situated at the estuary of river Periyar which served as the most important means of riverine transportation of pepper and other spices produced in the hinterland and needed by the traders from abroad. The town situated at the mouth of the Periyar was linked with the land route running through Thrissure, Palgat gap and Tamil countries which were also flourishing paddy cultivation areas. Periyar originated from the Western Ghats bordering the Kizhumalainadu, the best pepper producing area of Malabar. The exact location of Mchiripattanam has not been identified, though excavations are going on under the auspices of

⁷² Gordon Childe, *The Urban Revolution, The Town Planning Review*, Vol. XXI, 1950 Pp.3-17

⁷³ The word *Yavana* initially meant the people of Ionia in Greece and later all the foreigners including the Roman and Greeks.

Muziris Heritage Project, Department of Archaeology, Government of Kerala, which has taken up Pattanam excavation near Kogungalloor recently.⁷⁴

A papyrus document of the second century A.D discovered from the Archives of Vienna in 1985 dealing with the maritime loan arrangement between the traders of Alexandria and Muziris shows that both these urban stations were closely linked up with commercial activities.⁷⁵ The value of commodities subjected to this agreement was so voluminous that it could purchase 2400 acres of farm land in Nile delta as per the calculation of the scholars.⁷⁶

The value of a cargo of a 'very big vessel' sailing back from Muziris could be enormous. The verso side of the Muziris papyrus specifies that the fiscal value of goods imported by a single ship returning from Muziris could be as high as 1,154 talents and 2852 drachmas = 6,926,852 sesterces. To buy them, western merchants had to export considerable quantities of Roman coinage, hence the outflow of money complained by Tiberius and Pliny. Much more money, however, was to be given to the state as custom duties. In Alexandria, Indian goods were charged a 25% tax. That means that the goods recorded in the verso of the Muziris papyrus were charged 1,731,713 sesterces: no less than 17,000 gold coins. No doubt they were bought in India for much less. So Indo-Roman trade eroded the monetary mass of the Roman empire

⁷⁴ See, *The Living Dead And The Lost Knowledge*, Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR), Department of Culture, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2008,.

⁷⁵ The Greek text is translated by Dr. Osmund Bopearachchi, Charge de Recherche au CNRS, Centre d'Archeologie Paris and published with notes by K.Rajan, ref. "Muciri-Alexandria Trade Contract: An Archaeological Approach" *Pondicherry University Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol.1, nos 1 and 2, 2000, Pp.93-104

⁷⁶ K.Rajan, op.cit; p. 98

(never less than 50 millions sesterces per year, Pliny complains), but enormously increased its fiscal revenues.⁷⁷

As rightly stated in the Roman senate the balance of trade was not at all favourable of the Roman empire when compared to the imports from Rome. The Roman exchequer was drained off gold as coins were brought to India for buying valuable spices from the Malabar coast. The decline of the Roman empire and spread of Islam brought to an end of this trade link and traders from Middle East and China began to concentrate on Quilon (Kollam) on the southern part of the Malabar coast. The trading groups like *manigramam* also shifted their activities to Quilon. The Vira Raghava Pattayam (VRP) and the Jewish Copper Plate (JCP) shed sufficient light on the trading centers and their function in medieval times.⁷⁸ Joseph Raban was granted the authority to collect *ulku* and *tulakuli* by which he became the authority to collect customs taxes. *Ancuvannam* was one of the leading merchant organizations of south India and its presence here denotes the institutionalization of trade. Prominent merchant chiefs enjoyed the *ancuvannam* status by payment of money.⁷⁹

The VRP was granted to Iravi Kortan, a merchant chief of Kodungalloor, by the ruler Vira Raghava. The status of *manigramam* and several other rights and privileges like monopoly of trade, right to collect ferry charge etc. were granted to him.⁸⁰ The *vaniyas* and *ainkammalas* who formed

⁷⁷ P.J.Churian, KCHR p. 42,

⁷⁸ Jewish Copper Plates were granted to Joseph Raban, the Jewish merchant by Bhaskara Ravivarman, the Chera king of Mahodayapuram in 1000 A.D, The grant conferred on the merchant chief several rights and privileges including the right to collect taxes, use day lamps, decorative cloths, palanquin, trumpet, gateway, arched roof and carrying of weapons and also the tittle of *ancuvannam*. The rights sanctioned were hereditary in character; JCP lines 7 – 15, 13-14, 20-28.

⁷⁹ Elamkulam Kunjanpillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1970, p.387.

⁸⁰ VRP line 7-11.

the five artisan classes were attached to the merchant chief Iravi Kortan as servants.⁸¹ Several other rights such as right to collect duties on articles in the area between the river-mouth and the city tower,⁸² controlling of *chungam* or duties on commodities handled in the market, the collection of *taragu* (brokerage) on commodities sold in the market etc. were also granted.

Iravi Kortan was called *nagarattuku kartavu*⁸³ meaning the ‘lord of the city’. And he was granted the title Ceraman Loka Perumcetti.⁸⁴ It is a unique experience that at Kodungalloor the merchant chief was considered ‘The Lord of the city’. The functioning of an assembly of ‘thousand minus one’ – *onnukure – aayiram yogam*, the origin of which is obscure was another peculiar element in the social system of this city. Its functions might have been that of a bodyguard or *nilal* of the ruler.⁸⁵ The presence of *manigramam*, the existence of standard weights and measures, systematised collection of customs duties and other taxes, the supervisory and executive authority exercised by Iravi Kortan, all points to administered trade in Kodungalloor. The archaeological excavations conducted by the Anujan Acchan at several spots near Kodungalloor like Thiruvanchikulam and Cheramanparambu reveal valuable evidences of foreign trade with the Arabs and the Chinese⁸⁶.

⁸¹ RP line 12

⁸² VRP line 12-17

⁸³ VRP line 13

⁸⁴ VRP line 19

⁸⁵ MGS Narayanan, *Political and Social Conditions of Kerala Under the Kulasekhara Empire*, op.cit, p.351.

⁸⁶ Anujan Acchan, Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of Cochin state, 1945-46, Ernakulam, 1947 and 48

The finds of Roman amphorae terra sigillata, turquoise glazed pottery (TGP), glass beads, semi-precious stone beads, cameo blanks, Roman glass bowls, terracotta lamps, iron objects, Chera coins, gold ornaments, Indian pottery, russet coated painted ware (RCPW), Chinese ceramics, grooved roof tiles etc. were the major attractions of excavations conducted (still going on) at Pattanam near North Parur in Ernakulam district located 7 km South of Kodungalloor in the delta of river Periyar.⁸⁷ The archaeological excavations carried out at Cheramanparambu, Thiruvanchikulam and the surrounding places of Kodungalloor in 1945-46 throw light to the severe floods that occurred in river Periyar in 1341 which brought about much geophysical change in the area leading to the rise of Cochin as an important harbor on the Malabar coast.

Kollam

Kollam was the most famous trading centre of the Malabar coast.⁸⁸ It was the capital of Venad and was also called Kurakenikollam. At present it is

⁸⁷ Cherian P.J, 'Archaeology of Death; The Urn Burials of Periyar Belt', Discourse(s), *A Journal for Multi-Disciplinary Studies*, 1998, (Alwaye: U.C College) Vol. I, Pp.101-113; Shajan K.P, Tomber .R, Selvakumar.V and Cherian P.J, Locating the Ancient Port of Muziris: Fresh Findings From Pattanam, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 2004, Vo.17, p.312-320, Cherian P.J, 'The Living Dead And The Lost Knowledge, International Seminar on Muziris Heritage Project: Trivandrum, 2008, State Archaeology Department. Chera Coins: One of the most outstanding findings in Pattanam excavations is the copper Chera coins from a stratigraphical context numbering 20. These coins are either circular or square with elephant on obverse and bow and arrow on the reverse and identified as early Chera coins.

⁸⁸ Kollam was known in different names to the early writers and travellers such as Chulam (Benjamin Tudela), Coilon (Abul Fida), Koulam Malay (Sulayman), Male(Cosmos), Kulam(Marco Polo, Wassaff, Rashiduddin), Polumban (Friar O' Doric) Koulam (Ibn Batuta), Kolumbum(John Maringoli), Columbo (John XXII); See,S.M.H. Nainar, *Arab Geographer's 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.

the headquarters of the district of Kollam in Kerala. The Theresapally Copper Plates of 849A.D (hereafter TPCP) provide valuable information regarding the urban life and commercial functions in the Kollam *nagaram*.⁸⁹ Grant of land to the church of Teresa in coastal area of Kerala is registered under these Copper Plates.⁹⁰ The grant of land is inclusive of occupational groups such as cultivators, craftsman, carpenters, oil mongers, washermen and other service personal who rendered various services to the *nagaram*.⁹¹ Their services were obligatory and customary and as such were not accounted in terms of monetary standards.⁹² The Copper Plates denote the agricultural and rural nature of the medieval agro-cities which is an important characteristic of south Indian medieval cities.⁹³

Kollam was the meeting point of foreigners and a centre of transmarine commerce. We see that the traders from the Middle East and also from China concentrated their activities to Kollam and the *manigram* traders who were functioning in Kaveripattinam shifted their attention to this place. It has been a port of call since the ninth century for Arab ships sailing to China. Medieval records mention about ‘hundred organisations’ like *Munnuruvar Arunnuruvar*

⁸⁹ See, M.G.S Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1972 Pp. 31-37 and 86-94, and TAS. Vol.II, No.9.A. Also Raghavari and Rajan Gurukul, *Kerala Charithram*, Sukapuram (1991),2011,p-118-119. The inscriptions deals with the grant of land by Aiyana Adikal Thiruvadi, the ruler of Venad to Maruvan Sapir Iso, the leader of Christian merchants at Kollam for the church of Teresa along with several rights and privileges.

⁹⁰ TPCP- plate I lines 1-4 (first side)

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² M.G.S. Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, p. 34, Ibid.

⁹³ Ranbir Chakravarti, 15, 22. Also see, Champakalakshmi. R, in S. Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar(ed), *Situating Indian History*, Delhi, 1986, p.37; Kuppaswami, *Economic conditions of Karnataka*, Dharward, 1975, p-95.

and *Elunnuruvar* which were local assemblies or *Nattukoottamgal* known according to their numerical strength.⁹⁴ In this context the mention in TPCP of Maruvan Sapir Iso as the founder of the Kollam *nagaram* cannot be fully relied upon and the reference to *nagaram* might not have covered the entire existing establishment, but a particular area with commercial concentrations. The extension of royal patronage and the rights and privileges granted to Maruvan Sapir Iso actually accelerated the growth of already existing *nagaram* towards new standards of developed trade and marketing. This is revealed from the extension of royal interference in the market by way of fixing the prices of commodities, standardization of weights and measures, imposition of duties on goods brought to and taken from the market (1/6th of the prices) and the levying of entrance fees and exit fees to the vehicles.

A significant feature of trade and other economic functions of the day according to TPCP was the use of coined money. A clear transition to a systematic monetisation is visible here. The coin *Kasu* is referred to in this instance as four *Kasu* for vehicles and two *Kasu* for boats levied as entry tax according to TPCP.⁹⁵ *Tulakuli* (weighing fee) and customs duties for overseas goods were also imposed.⁹⁶ Sulaiman (9th C A.D) mentions that one thousand ‘dirhams’ were collected from Chinese boats and 10 and 20 dinars from other boats.⁹⁷ Benjamine Tudela (117 A.D) refers to the formalities complied upon

⁹⁴ Elamkulam Kunjanpillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1970, p. 250. Also See also, TPCP lines 9, 21, 42’ and Tirukadithanam Inscriptions, line. 3-TAS. Vol. V, p-182; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1973, Pp 1-20; Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram*, Sukapuram 1991, op. cit, p.182.

⁹⁵ TPCP Plate II, line 10-11 and 30; Plate I- line. 10-11 respectively.

⁹⁶ TPCP-plate II line 32, 46

⁹⁷ S.M.H Nainar, *Arab Geographers Knowledge of Southern India*, Madras, 1942 p.

⁴⁵ Also see, P.K Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram* (mal), Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, Pp 242-243

in the port after the arrival of the foreign ships and the protection and control extended by the king to the traders and their cargo. The administrative vigilance and control over trade points to the Polanyian concept of administered trade.⁹⁸

The flow of Chinese commodities to the Malabar coast, especially to Kollam, flourished the economy of this trade centre. The Sung government of China banned the flow of coins and precious objects to the Malabar Coast.⁹⁹ The prosperity of Kollam has fascinated the authors of medieval *manipravalam* literature. They consider Kollam as a criterion of prosperity in depicting the glories of other contemporary urban centres like *Mattam annati(angadi)*¹⁰⁰, Thirumaruthur¹⁰¹ and Karianattukavu.¹⁰² Marco Polo acknowledges the products exported from Kollam like brazil wood, indigo and pepper. Chan-Ju-Kua refers to the silver and gold coins in circulation. To him 12 silver coins were equivalent to a gold coin. Coinage of Kollam is mentioned about by Ma Huan also.¹⁰³ By the advent of the Portuguese the socio-economic scenario of Kollam as a trade centre attained new standards.

⁹⁸ Karl Polanyi, 'Economy as Instituted Process,' Karl Polanyi et.al; (eds), *Trade and Markets in Early Empires*, New York, 1957, p. 266

⁹⁹ Lizhiyan and Chenwen, *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Foreign language Press, Beijing, (Eng.trans. Ooyang Calwei), 1984,p.104.

¹⁰⁰ *Unniaticaritam*, gadyam, 19, p. 47

¹⁰¹ *Unniaccicaritam*, gadyam no.4, p.17.

¹⁰² *Unnunili sandsam*, v,124,Pp.98-99

¹⁰³ J.V.G Mills (ed.and trans.) *Ying Yai Sheng-Lan(1453) of Ma Huan*, Hakluyt Society, 1970, op. cit; p. 130.

Pantalayani Kollam

Pantalayani Kollam is a traditional place linked with the Arabs who were pioneers in the propagation of Islam in northern Malabar. This place situated in the north of Calicut does not enjoy any importance in the trade networks of modern times. But it was a flourishing trade centre for several centuries during the medieval period.¹⁰⁴ Panthalayani Kollam is known to the Arab travellers of medieval period as 'Fadrina'. Idrissi refers to the prosperity of the inhabitants of the city due to the flourishing trade. There were also foreigners like Christians and Jews who traded with 'Fadrina'.

An important inscriptional source providing information about Panthalayani Kollam is the Jama-at-Mosque inscription of Bhaskara Ravi Varman I (922-1021. A.D) and it refers to the mereantile corporations of *Manigramam* and *Valanciars*. Their functions are pointers to trade, and institutionalisation of trade and social stratification in the society. The traders of the city were called *nagaratilullor*.¹⁰⁵ Pepper and Cardamom were the chief products of export from Panthalayani Kollam.¹⁰⁶

Manigramam and *Valanciar* groups were the itinerant traders who engaged in these spice trade. Inscriptions of *alankaracettis* who were merchants from Tamil Nadu denote commercial functions in Panthalayani Kollam. The place names like *kannati canta*, *thazhathangadi* etc denote the existence of market places. Thus we could undoubtedly reach at the conclusion

¹⁰⁴ See, M.R. Raghava Varier, *Aspects of Urbanisation in Medieval Kerala*, the case of Pantalayani Kollam, a working paper, Dept. of History, University of Calicut, 1990.

¹⁰⁵ M. R . Raghava Varier, op.cit; p.2

¹⁰⁶ SMH Nainar, *Arab Geographers Knowledge of South India*, Madras,1942 ,p. 35

that Panthalayani Kollam was a prominent trading centre of medieval Malabar along with Kollam and Kodungalloor.

Along with the major centres of trade and markets there flourished several minor centres throughout the length and breadth of medieval Kerala such as Matilakam near Kodungalloor, Kutavur and Karianattukavu near Thiruvalla, Matayi near Kannur, Thazhakavu near Pulpally in Wyanad, Thazhakadu near Irinjalakuda, Kulamukku near Pattambi, Valarpattanam near Varkala and Sriparvatham annati of Mattam . References to these market sites are found in medieval *sandesakavyas*.

Matilakam

Matilakam flourished as a satellite urban station or *upanagara* of Kodungalloor. Certain Chola coins belonging to Raja Raja Chola have been discovered at Matilakam. Scholars are of the opinion that Kunavai referred in the inscriptions can be identified as Matilakam.¹⁰⁷

Kutavur

The exact location of Kutavur is not identified and the scholars believe that it was nearby the SreeVallbha temple of Thiruvalla in the present Pathanamthitta district and on the delta of river Manimala. It is understood through the ‘Thiruvalla Plates’ that by the eleventh century Thiruvalla was a fabulously rich temple which had about three lakhs *para* of paddy a year allocated for various rituals and other services of the temple.¹⁰⁸ The land under the ownership of this temple was a vast area of about thirty square kilometers

¹⁰⁷ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, op.cit, Pp 18-21.

¹⁰⁸ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian system*, Sukapuram, 1991 p-11.

around the Thiruvalla settlement. Evidences bring down the fact that agriculture was the main stay of the temple-centered economy of Kutavur. The *angadi* of Kudavur met the needs of the daily life of the people as well as religious needs meant for the rituals in the temple. The articles of daily ceremonial needs in the temple such as oil, ghee, sandal, camphor etc were to be made available. Separate land was set aside for the purchase of sandal in the temple.¹⁰⁹

Camphor to the temple was imported by the Chinese merchants, and this points to the foreign contact of Kutavur. Temple inscriptions mention about a *rakshabhogam* of 18 ‘Kalancu of gold which was received by the temple corporation for the protection of the market.¹¹⁰ Any how the inscriptional and other literary sources make it clear that Kutavur had a well-settled market system supported by the agricultural hinterland and flourishing religious base of the temple which had deep social orientation.

Matayi

Another prominent trade centre of medieval times was Matayi,¹¹¹ (situated near the present day Payyannur in Kannur district), reference of which is seen in literature since the 11th century. The town is described as Marahi Pattanam in *Musikavamsa*. The geophysical peculiarities extended a favourable situation for Matayi being developed as a port and centre of trade and commerce. Jewish and Muslim traders had active trade activities in Matayi.

¹⁰⁹ Thiruvalla Inscriptions, line – 200

¹¹⁰ TI line 330-342

¹¹¹ K.Ragavan Pillai(ed), References in the historical Kavya of Atula, *Musikavamsam-Mulavum Paribhashayum* (mal), Thiruvananthapuram,1983.

Inscriptional sources provide information regarding the presence of merchant organizations like *Manigramam* in this area.¹¹²

Thazhakadu

The Thazhakad Church inscription (1028-1043) throws light to the functioning of an interior market where the *manigramam* was active.¹¹³ The exact location of the market at Thazhakad is not identified. Thazhakad is a place close to Iringalakuda in the district of Thrichur, Kerala. An inscription speaks of merchants belonging to *manigramam* named Vatukan Cattan and Iravi Cattan conducting their trade in a specified area. The coastal cities of Kollam, Kodungallur and Panthalayani Kollam were spots of transmarine commerce. Iringalakuda was hence forth associated with foreign trade.¹¹⁴ The relevance of Iringalakuda as the pre-medieval Jain centre and an original Brahmin settlement also cannot be ignored.¹¹⁵

Thazhakavu

Thazhakavu inscription throws light to the *nagaram* that flourished in Pulpally of Wynad in Kerala. It was established by the trade guild of Nalpathennayiravar which seems to be associated with Jain centres.

¹¹² Genevieve Bouchon, *The Regent of the Sea*, translated by Erick Louise Shackly, Delhi, 1988, op. cit; p.11, M.G.S. Narayanan, *Kerala Caritrattinte Atistanasilakal* (mal), Thiruvananthapuram, 1974, p.89

¹¹³ TAS vol. VIII, Pp.39-40

¹¹⁴ Meera Mary Abraham, *Two medieval merchant guilds of south India*, Delhi, 1988, op.cit. Pp.33-34; Also see, P.J. Cherian (ed) Perspectives on Kerala History, the second Millenium Trivandrum, 1999 *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Vol.II, part II, Pp117-118

¹¹⁵ Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahmin settlement in Kerala*, Calicut, 1981, Pp 26-27

Calicut

The rise of Calicut has been described as at once a cause and a consequence of the ascendancy of the Zamorins. The monocausal explanation suggested that the Zamorin, who had his original home at Nediyruppu near Kondotti in the interior Eranad, wanted an outlet to the sea from his land-locked domain. The place which he had on the coastal area was transformed¹¹⁶ into a port. Writing in 1938, K.V.Krishna Ayyar, the author of this opinion had no other source except some legendary accounts to explain the development of a port-town in the territory of a minor principality, nor had he any conceptual frame to suggest a causal connection between the internal developments in the region and the emergence of a centre of trade.¹¹⁷

Markets, towns and ports hardly spring up from nothingness. The rise and growth of urban centres and trade networks imply a corresponding economic development in the region with which they maintain contacts. It is highly probable that the early conflict between the Chief of Polanad and the Zamorin was mainly for the ownership of areas of economic importance and also for the control over the network of trade routes which spread all over the hinterland providing outlet not only to the sea but also to the regions which lay beyond the Western Ghats. Calicut has always been a deficit area for rice, the staple food. But there are extensive low-lying fields in and around Calicut below the sea-level. This geographical feature was suitable for saltpanning. Arrangements were made to store the water in suitable places with the help of baulks and then it is dried up in the sun. Saltpanning in this form along the lengthy coastline of South India can be traced back to very early times.

The Tamil heroic poetry gives references to the prevalence of large scale salt – producing in the coastal strips. The salt which was produced in the *neytal*

¹¹⁶ M.R.Raghava Varier, *The Rise and Growth of Calicut*, Calicut, 1991.

¹¹⁷ M.G.S.Narayanan. (ed)*Malabar*, Calicut 1991.Pp.56-60

coastline was taken to the interior regions upto the hill tracts. There are picturesque descriptions of salt caravans moving through the agricultural fields, pastoral areas and thick forests in carts laden with heavy bags of salt. Recently a cultural connection has been established between the early Tamil literary texts and the megalithic monuments which are seen in plenty in all parts of South India. In the present context the question would be whether there was a megalithic society in the surroundings of the present day Calicut which had to depend on the coastline for essential articles like salt. ¹¹⁸ The social and economic developments in the hinterland of Calicut which comprised the agricultural tracts and garden lands upto the eastern hill ranges are mentioned in the 9th and 10th century A.D documents. Stone inscriptions refer to the annual income of the temples from paddy fields and garden lands thereby implying the existence of a large number of cultivators including tenant cultivators and labourers. Besides these agricultural groups there were non-cultivating sections of Brahmin landowners, temple functionaries, royal families, local militia known as Hundred Organisations like *arunuttuvar*, (the Six Hundred) *elunuttuvar*, (the Seven Hundred) etc, several craftsmen, artisans,

¹¹⁸ The casual survey would reveal that a megalithic belt extending from the village of Kodal to the south east of Calicut to Pavandur in the north east could be easily traced. Eastern parts of Calicut such as Nellicode, Kovur and Cheyayur have yielded several megalithic objects. The society which was responsible for erecting such monuments must have obtained the essential supply of salt from the coastline of the area of present day Calicut. Probably this was the beginning of an exchange network in this area. The early emergence of this exchange role was a slow process which cannot be expected to have been recorded in any historical document. The connection between the coastline and the megalithic people of the eastern fringes of the area is only a logical inference which will remain so perhaps for ever.

ritualists, medicinemen and astrologers. A corresponding increase in the need for more food grains and other resources also have to be considered.¹¹⁹

The pre-thirteenth century indigeneous inscriptions and accounts of foreign travellers were silent about the town of Calicut. It seems that Calicut as a seaport and urban centre rose to prominence comparatively later. This may be due to the reason that the hinterland took more time to become sufficiently resourceful in articles which were demanded by the foreign traders. Further, more suitable ports like Pantalayini Kollam developed in the neighbourhood which was rich in spices. Threat of pirates all along the coast of Malabar is mentioned by medieval navigators. When the Zamorin emerged as a political power in Malabar with his headquarters in Calicut he realised the importance of the overseas trade and took effective measures to provide protection to mariners and their merchandise.

Ibn Batuta, who visited Calicut in the first half of the fourteenth century, is full of praise for the protection given to the foreign traders in Calicut. This must have enhanced the attraction of Calicut. Ibn Bututa saw no less than thirteen Chinese ships of different size in the harbour of Calicut. He records that Calicut was one of the chief harbours of the country of Malabar, where people from China, Sumatra, Ceylon, the Maldives and Yemen came and

¹¹⁹ The author of the Chinese book *Daoyi Zhilu* (1349) has observed that the region was not very fertile and also that rice was imported to the coast of Malabar from Orrissa' The soil is inferior and the paddy fields are scattered among hills and hillocks but the parambu uplands and the hill slopes are good for pepper, coconut, and arecanut. Medieval inscriptions show that coconut, arecanut and pepper were yielding income to religious institutions in Malabar as early as the 10th century A.D. The Arab and Chinese accounts of the coast of Malabar inform us that spices, coconut and arecanut were exported from the ports of Malabar.

gathered merchants from all quarters of the globe. This description would show that Calicut had become a famous centre of foreign trade by that time.¹²⁰

Calicut might have started trade relations with the Arabs much earlier from the time of Al - Idrisi (1154 A.D). There were Muslims on the coast of Malabar and they had established several trade diasporas, which rendered support to the Arab traders in their economic activities. They were also instrumental in the proliferation of Islam in Malabar. Ibn Battuta refers to some of such establishments. From his travel account we learn that these establishments acted as resting places for the local Muslims and as alms-houses for the poor and the destitute. Calicut also was a 'diaspora' where there were mosques and a considerable Muslim population who enjoyed patronage from the ruling authority. A *Vattezhuthu* inscription in the Maccunti mosque at Kuttichira in Calicut informs that the Zamorin granted some landed property to the mosque for meeting certain expenses.¹²¹

China's trade relation with Calicut must have started during the early medieval period. By the end of the thirteenth century Marco Polo saw several Chinese ships at Zaitun which were on their way to the coast of Malabar. They traded with Malabar, ie. Calicut as observed by Basil Gray where they exchanged silk, gold, silver, cloves and spikenard for the product of these countries. The Chinese ships had crews of 200 or 300 each. They carried home from Malabar 5000-6000 baskets of pepper besides buckram, a fine variety of cloth and medicinal herbs and other rarities. Indigenous literary texts of the period support the description of Calicut in the foreign accounts as a big flourishing trading centre. *Unnunistandesam*, a poem which is assigned to the mid fourteenth century refers to Calicut as a busy centre of commerce. It is

¹²⁰ M.R.Raghava Varier, *studies in Indian Place Names* vol.II, Mysore, 1982, p-39

¹²¹ M .G. S. Narayanan, *Kerala Caritrattinte Atisthanasilakal*, Calicut, 1971, Pp.61 -68

mentioned in the *Unniyaticaritim* as a prosperous centre of the Zamorins. *Daoyi Zhiue*, the Chinese text of 1349A.D. describes Calicut (ku-li-fo) as the most important of all the maritime centres of trade.

Ma Huan (1433) describes the trade in Calicut in great detail¹²². From his description it can be understood that trade in Calicut could be described as administered trade in which storage facilities, protection for merchandise, fixing of price, shipping etc. were arranged by the government. Fei-Hsin records that the goods used in the trade expeditions of Cheng- Ho were gold, silver, coloured satin, blue and white porcelain, beads, musk, quicksilver and camphor. The export items from Malabar included pepper, coconut, betel-nuts and fish. According to Ma Huan, the people of the country take the silk of the silkworm, soften it by boiling, dye it in all colours and weave it into kerchiefs with decorative strips at intervals. Each length of such silk clothes measuring 25 feet and 5.9 inches long and 4 feet 7 inches broad was sold for one hundred gold coins. The Che-ti (Chettis) had separate residential streets in Calicut as indicated by the palace manuscripts of 6th century A.D. People mostly dealt with all kinds of precious stones and pearls and they manufactured coral beads and other ornamental objects. As to the pepper, the inhabitants of the mountainous countryside had established gardens. When riped it was collected by big pepper collectors and brought to the market at Calicut. An official gives permission for the sale. The duty was calculated according to the amount of the purchase price and is paid to authorities. The pepper was weighed in po-ho (bhara). Each bhara of pepper was sold for two hundred gold coins (equal to 19s. 3d according to a calculation of the year 1970).¹²³

Coins of gold and silver were minted for current use. The gold coin was called *Panam* and the silver, *Taram*. The silver coins were used in petty

¹²² Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-lan*. (Overall Survey of the Oceans' Shores) Hakluyt Society, Cambridge 1970. Pp. 130-146

¹²³ Ibid

transactions. Legendary accounts as well as palace manuscripts bear testimony to the coins and coinage of the Zamorins. Place name survivals of the Chinese contacts are available in and around Calicut. At Calicut there is a field named Cinakkotta,¹²⁴ meaning the Chinese fort". The silk street in Calicut is significantly situated near this area. At Kappad, the famous place where Vasco Da Gama is said to have landed, there is one *cinacceri*, a Chinese settlement. Cinappallis or Chinese mosques are there in Pantalayini Koliyam and at Koyilandi, which are nearby places.

Being the royal seat of the Zamorins, Calicut became famous both in the east and the west. The traditional city had a big bazaar from the western wall of the royal fort to the sea - shore. The fort was one mile in circumference. There were separate streets for weavers, potters, flower merchants etc. The entire city was planned and constructed according to the traditional principles of house construction. Separate quarters for foreigners and different sections of dignitaries, functionaries and communities were set apart as prescribed in those texts. New palaces were constructed when the number of the members of the Zamorin's family increased.

Calicut was a prosperous city with all traditional features on the eve of the advent of the European mercantile. The arrival of the Portuguese on the shore of Calicut in 1498 brought about a shift in the destinies of Calicut. The whole of the Indian Ocean and the Eastern Mediterranean was held together by the urban gravitation of Calicut, Cambay, Aden, Cairo, Alexandria and Venice. The artificial flow of goods and men on the east-west axis is inconceivable without the history of these trading cities.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Garcia Da Orta, *Colloquies on the Simples and Drugs of India*, Delhi, 1979 , p.122

¹²⁵ K.N.Chudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of the Islam to 1750*, New Delhi, 1985, p.99

Kochi

An event of utmost importance which radically affected the history of Kerala took place in 1341. As a result of the heavy and incessant rainfall especially in high ranges there was a cataclysmic flood in river Periyar that silted up the harbour mouth of Kodungallor which gradually lost its importance and resulted in the formation of a new estuary comparatively smaller to the one of the Muziris and hence came to be called 'Kochazhi', that eventually became Kochi. By the time the Perumpadappu Swarupam, looking for a place outside the orbit of the Zamorin's attacks, shifted its headquarters from Mahodayapuram (Kodungalloor) to Kochi, it had emerged as an important port¹²⁶.

Ma Huan is the first foreign traveller to mention about Kochi as a trading centre.¹²⁷ Kochi had agrarian hinterland located in the neighbouring areas including the Kingdoms Vadakumkur (Kizhumalainadu) known for its best quality of Pepper, and Thekkenkur. The principal spice growing belt of central Kerala was demarcated by the river Periyar in the north, a plain on the Vembanadu lagoon in the west and river Achankovil in the south. According to Ma Huan one can reach Kochi from Kollam in a journey of one night and one day.¹²⁸ He also mentions about the trading communities of Kochi like the Muslims and Cettis. Ma Huan points to the pepper cultivators and the facilities for storing pepper for sale to the merchants from foreign countries.¹²⁹ Cettis functioned as the intermediaries in international spice trade. They also traded

¹²⁶ Pius Malekandathil and T.Jamal Muhammed (ed) *the Portuguese, Indian Ocean And European Bridge heads 1500-1800*, Tellicherry, 2001, op.cit, p.242-243, Also see, P.M.Jussary, *The Jews of Kerala*, Calicut, 2005, p.27

¹²⁷ J.V.G. Mills (ed and trans) *Ying Yar shong-Lan (1453) of Ma Huan*, Haklayt society, 1970 op. cit, P.132-137

¹²⁸ J.V.G Mills, op.cit;p-132

¹²⁹ Ibid.p.133

in pearls, gem stones, aromatic products etc. Ma Huan provides information regarding standard of weight in measuring pepper. Pepper was weighed in 'Poho' which was valued at hundred local gold coins of Kochi.¹³⁰ *Fanam* and Silver *Tara* were current coins in Cochin. *Fanam* was coined in gold with 90% purity.¹³¹

The political expansion of the Zamorin and the commercial expansion of the Muslim traders went hand in hand to a vast area in Kerala starting from north Kerala stretching down to south up to Kochi. The political and economic developments were having almost a pan-Kerala dimension in which the Zamorin of Kozhikode expanded his territorial hegemony while the Muslim merchants had the commercial ambition of extending their trade networks.¹³² The economic growth of Kochi which depended greatly on the rich pepper producing hinterland located in the neighboring areas invited Zamorin's interference.¹³³

Kochi gradually emerged as an important port town and with the settlement of the Portuguese at Cochin it received the attention of the Europeans and superseded Calicut in importance. The Dutch and the English in turn occupied the port town of Cochin. The areas where Europeans set up their factories and fortresses turned out to be urban centers with settlements of foreigners, local agents, institutions catering to their needs, and clubs meant for the overseas residents. A new type of centers of trade and markets came into existence. Typical example is Cochin where there were upper Cochin and lower Cochin. One was the area where the native people settled down and the

¹³⁰ Ibid, p.143

¹³¹ Ibid op.cit; p.136

¹³² Pius Malakandathil & T. Jamal Muhammed, (ed.), op.cit; p.243.

¹³³ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime trade of India: 1500-1663*, Unpublished Ph. D thesis submitted at Pondicherry Central University, 1998, Pp47, Also see Pius Malekandathil &T. Jamal Muhammed, p.243

other was the area where the foreigners set up their establishments.¹³⁴ Anyhow by the end of the 16th century Kochi had become a great emporium of overseas trade eclipsing several other trade centers of medieval Kerala.

Portuguese Trade

The Portuguese were the first among the European merchants who came directly to the Malabar Coast via Cape of Good Hope for trade, followed by the English, the Dutch, the Danes, and the French. They all considered the Malabar Coast as an important region for the trade in pepper, ginger, cardamom and other spices. The Portuguese set up a number of factories and fortresses to procure the products of the Malabar Coast and store them till the arrival of the ships and their departure in favourable season for Europe. A notable feature of the Portuguese trade with the Malabar Coast was the declaration of royal monopoly on pepper and the signing of contracts with various rulers for the estimated quantity of pepper.

The price of spices fixed in the first decade of the sixteenth century was insisted upon till the third quarter of the century to the great detriment of the spice producers and merchants of Kerala. This led the way for the diversion of the flow of these products to other regions of the world even though the Portuguese tried their maximum to stop this. Their aim was to check the trade through Red Sea and Persian Gulf and direct the entire trade through the Cape of Good Hope. Taking into account the details of the Portuguese enterprise on the Malabar Coast in the period between 1500 and 1506 the following calculations are made regarding the financial position of the Portuguese. The

¹³⁴ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India 1500-1663*, New Delhi, op.cit, Also see, K.S.Mathew and Pius Malekandathil, *Kerala Economy and European Trade*, Muvattupuzha, 2003, p.21

annual income of Portugal amounted to 3,50,000 ducats out of which 3,00,000 ducats were spend on the ordinary expenses of the kingdom. The king supplied only one-fourth of the total amount needed for the purchase of the commodities. The merchant financiers provided the rest of the amount. Commodities worth 25,000 ducats were imported into Malabar every year from Europe via Lisbon. Therefore the Portuguese had to depend on the co-operation of others for conducting trade with the Malabar coast.

King Dom Manuel who ruled Portuguel from 1495 to 1521 obtained immense profits from the trade in pepper. The newly-started overseas trade with the Malabar Coast helped him to increase the revenue of his kingdom from 173,000 cruzados in 1506 to 245,000 in 1518. The Portuguese did not have sufficient means either in cash or in materials to trade with the Malabar Coast. So they had to seek the cooperation of the Italian and German merchant financiers. Italians, especially the Florentines occupied an important place among the financiers who were connected with the Portuguese trade on the Malabar coast. The role played by Bertholomeau Marchioni, Gualteroti, Frescobaldi, Girolamo Semigi, Aandrea Corsali, Leonardo Nardi, Giovanni Francesco de Affaitati and Lucas Geraldi was very significant.¹³⁵ They supplied cash and copper. Bertholomeu Marchioni of Florence had his establishments in Lisbon even before the discovery of the direct sea-route to India.

Since 1500 A.D the Italian financiers were closely associated with the fitting out of ships to the Malabar coast under the Portuguese. On the basis of the permission granted by the Portuguese king in 1500, a consortium of merchants was formed under Bertholomeu Marchioni. Two out of the four ships that came from Portugal to the Malabar coast in 1501 were owned by the consortium. Bertholomeu Marchioni appointed Femando Vineti as the captain of his ship. Again in 1502 he sent the ship Santiago in partnership with the king

¹³⁵ K.S. Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century*, NewDelhi, 1983, Pp.158-63

Of Portugal to the Malabar coast under Joao de Bonagracia and the ship took a cargo of 110163 to 115409 kgs of spices half of which went to the king¹³⁶. The Italian merchant financiers also took an active part in fitting out ships in 1505 under the Portuguese flag to the Malabar Coast. Some of them had factories in Flanders, England, Seville, Valencia and Medina el Campo besides Lisbon, which gave better opportunities of interaction between the Portuguese merchants and themselves.

Copper supplied to the Portuguese in Flanders by the Italians was taken to the Malabar Coast for the exchange for spices. The Portuguese were in need of copper as part-payment for the pepper from the Malabar Coast besides sales in Gujarat. Portugal did not have copper and she had to depend on the Italian merchant financiers for the same. Copper was included as part-payment in the agreement of trade with Cochin right from the first decade of the sixteenth century. Giovanni Battista Revaresco of Milan along with others concluded a contract with the Portuguese king for the export of pepper and other spices from the Malabar coast to Portugal in 1580 and 1585¹³⁷.

¹³⁶ Marino Sanuto, *I Diarli di marino Sanuto*, 1946-1533 (58 Vols) Vanice, 1897-1903, tom V; col 131

¹³⁷ MSS. Archive General de Simancas, Secretarias Provinciales, cod. 1571, fls. 14 ff.

Table No.4.1
Quantity of export of pepper from Kerala to Portugal
1501-1600

Year	Pepper (in kg)	Year	Pepper (in kg)
1501	1,04,920	1582	11,27,675
1502	52,459	1587	6,29,715
1504	5,24,590	1588	12,04,409
1505	11,54,120	1589	15,75,703
1513	10,50,249	1590	12,42,121
1514	10,70,865	1592	8,15,021
1517	3,09,875	1593	2,62,336
1519	18,36,065	1594	3,41,792
1523	3,93,442	1595	9,23,697

source:K.S.Mathew and Pius Malekandathil, *Kerala Economy and Europe*, Muvattupuzha 2003,p.38

Another group of merchants who came to the help of the Portuguese in finding cash, precious metals, and other commodities for exchange with the Malabar coast consisted of the German merchant financiers, like the Welsers, Fuggers¹³⁸, Herwarts, Hochstetters, Imhofs and Hirschvogel. They supplied cash, copper, silver, vermilion, quicksilver, brass and other items for exchange on the Malabar coast.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ For details see, K.S.Mathew, *Indo-Portuguese Trade and the Fuggers of Germany*, New Delhi, 1997, Pp 180

¹³⁹ Bairos, Da Asia, Decadal, parti, Pp.464,473, Gaspar Correa, *Lendas da India*, tom. I, Pp. 233-235

Apart from their limited resources the Portuguese, had to borrow money from merchants residing on the Malabar coast. Kunhali Marakkar and Mamale Marakkar in the first quarter of the sixteenth century delivered commodities on credit to the Portuguese at Cochin. Sometimes the kings of Cochin and Cannanore stood as guarantors for the Portuguese and made the merchants supply commodities to the Portuguese on credit. The Portuguese contracted with the St. Thomas Christians in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for supply of pepper to the factory at Cochin. When the Portuguese were confronted with the competition of the other European merchants in the seventeenth century the Bishop of Angamalee and the Archdeacon persuaded the St. Thomas Christians who were the producers of it to supply pepper to the Portuguese at Cochin¹⁴⁰.

The huge profit generated by the Portuguese through the trade on the Malabar Coast tempted the Dutch to initiate action to raise their claim for a share in the trade with the Malabar Coast. Admiral Steven van der Hagen heading the first fleet owned by the Dutch East India Company reached the Malabar coast in October 1603 and on 11 November 1604 a treaty with the Zamorin was concluded. This was the first contract of the Dutch East India Company with a ruler of India. Admiral Verhoft renewed the terms of the treaty of 1604 and concluded in 1608 a new treaty with the Zamorin. In 1610 another treaty with the Zamorin was concluded. The engagements of 1616, 1619 and 1621 with the Zamorin paved the way for the stronger relations between the Zamorin and the Dutch which were advantages to both of them.

The Dutch brought into effect agreements with the rulers of Quilon, Karthikappally, Purakkad (Chempakasserry), Calicut and Kolathunad, Travancore, Cochin, Thekkenkur and Kayamkulam. They got themselves involved in the local politics and tried to keep up monopoly of trade in spices

¹⁴⁰ Afzal Ahmad, *Indo-Portuguese Trade in the Seventeenth Century 1600-1663*, Delhi, 1991, p.84

and pepper. United Dutch East India Company (VOC) had establishments in Quilon, Kayamkulam, Purakkad, Cranganore, Vypin, Chettwaye, Calicut and Fort Cochin. Besides, they had lodges at Tengapattam and Ponnani. The rise of Martandavarama in Travancore was a great menace for the Dutch. He defeated the Dutch in the battle of Colachel in 1741. The Dutch lost the monopoly over trade in the wake of the establishment of monopoly of pepper by Martandavarama of Travancore. They sold the fortress of Cannanore to the Ali Raja of Cannanore in 1771 and Cranganore and Vypin to the King of Travancore in 1789¹⁴¹. Finally by the articles of capitulation signed on 19 October 1795 the Dutch surrendered Cochin to the English¹⁴².

A notable impact of European trade on the agrarian and trade economy of Malabar was that the hinterlands of the port towns on the Malabar Coast began to be extended. The products of Malabar before the arrival of the Europeans were taken either to China, West Asia and the East African coast and from there they were taken by other merchants to several parts of the world. After the discovery of the sea-route via the Cape of Good Hope, the commodities from the port towns of Malabar began to be taken directly to the European centres of trade like Lisbon, Antwerp, Amsterdam, London, and other areas of France and Denmark. “This development could be considered an important dimension of the trade economy of Malabar in the wake of European contacts. In view of the great demand felt on the port-towns for products like pepper, ginger and other spices, cultivators moved further into the interior places, felled trees and brought under cultivation the uncultivated areas. The regions of the hinterland especially the hilly tracts began to be cultivated very actively catering to the needs of the foreign merchants. This must have led to the rationalisation of agriculture and also commercialisation. The cash crops to

¹⁴¹ Owen C Kail, *The Dutch in India*, Delhi, 1981, p.182.

¹⁴² For Details see, M.O. Koshy, *Dutch Power in Kerala*, Delhi, 1989.

the detriment of goods of daily consumption received momentum in the cultivation”¹⁴³.

Another important impact of European contact on the trade economy of Malabar is the concluding of a number contracts and diplomatic engagements between the local rulers and the foreign merchants. Right from the Portuguese till the French, the European merchants concluded commercial treaties with the rulers of Malabar. It was a new experience in the history of trade on the Malabar coast till the arrival of the Portuguese.

Among the European powers that came to India the Portuguese and the French retained their hold on the Malabar Coast till 1663 and 1662 respectively: while the former were thrown out by force of arms of the Dutch and the latter withdrew peacefully and through shrewd diplomacy. The Dutch ceded their possessions to the English towards the end of the eighteenth century and the latter became the paramount power in India and continued their hold till Independence¹⁴⁴.

Trade through ghat routes

The notion of south India as one geo-physical unit got all the more crystallized and intensified by the end of the fifteenth and beginning of sixteenth centuries onwards with the increasing movement of commodities, people and ideas through the various terrains of deepsouth. As early as the beginning of fifteenth century there were many traders from the Tamil coast frequenting west coast of south India procuring pepper and other spices in return for textiles, rice and cereals from Coromandel. Chetties from Coromandel coast formed a major mercantile segment that got distributed all

¹⁴³ Pius Malekandathil and K.S. Mathew; Op.cit;p.23

¹⁴⁴ Ibid; Also see, M.O. Koshy, op.cit;p.69 & Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade-1740-1800*, Cambridge, 1967, Pp.33 ff.

over Kerala in the process of networking the spice-producing and trading centres of Kerala with Tamilnadu. Ma Huan writing in 1409 says that the Chetties were the leading merchants and capitalists in Cochin, buying pepper from the farmers and selling it to foreign ships that frequented its port. The oral traditions of Kannannoor Chetties and the Vellalas of Kanjirappally, an interior market of Kerala, maintain that their forefathers had reached there in the twelfth century from Chettinadu near Dindigal¹⁴⁵.

On the eve of the Portuguese arrival, the Marakkar traders of Coromandel coast like Cherina Marakkar, Nino Marakkar, Pate Marakkar and Mammale Marakkar had turned out to be the leading merchants in most of the ports and kingdoms of Cochin, Calicut, Cannanore etc¹⁴⁶, which clearly shows the scale and proportion of their trading activities that cut across the political barriers and limits of various kingdoms of the south.

¹⁴⁵ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India, 1500-1663* (A Volume in the South Asian Study Series of Heidelberg University, Germany), New Delhi, 2001, see also his *Trading networks and region formation : The making of South India, 1500-1750, Seminar Paper, CHS, JNU, March 2009*

¹⁴⁶ Cherina Marakkar's name was differently written as Cherina or Karine; but it stood for Karim Marakkar. For details see "Reisebericht des Franciscus Dalberquerque vom 27.December 1503", in B.Greiff(ed.), *Tagebuch des Lucas Rem aus den Jahren 1494-1541*, Augsburg, 1861,p.148; Femao Lopes Castanheda, op.cit.,tom.I,p.74;Gaspar Correia, *Lendas da India*, tom.I, Lisboa, 1921, Pp. 430 - 431; Mamale Marakkar of Cochin was the "richest man in the country". See Ludovico di Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India and Ethiopia: 1503-1508*, London, 1863, p.106. For details on supply of spices to the Portuguese by Cherina Marakkar and Mamale Marakkar see *As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo*, tom.IV, Lisboa, 1964,p.132; See also R.A. de Bulhao Pato(ed-), *Cartas, de Ajfonso de Albuquerque seguidas de documentos quo as elucidam*,tom.I, Lisboa, 1884, p.320;tom.II, p.361; K.S.Mathew, "Indian merchants and the Portuguese Trade on the Malabar Coast during the Sixteenth Century", in Teotonio de Souza(ed.), *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues- New Questions*, New Delhi, 1985,Pp.6-7

The Portuguese on their arrival realised that the different eco-zones of south India had different uses and functions within the larger format of their imperial edifice. The south-western India, because of the availability of spices at cheap price and because of the need to control the movement of Kerala spices to the ports of Red Sea and eastern Mediterranean, was developed as the core area of official Portuguese trade and expansion¹⁴⁷. The Portuguese state tried to control this region by several military and naval devices including chain of fortresses at strategic commercial centres and regular patrolling of the coast by a well-equipped fleet as well as the system of cartazes to control the movement of native ships between coastal western India and the ports of Red Sea as well as the Persian Gulf¹⁴⁸. However the south-eastern coast was kept as a liberal space for the commerce of the Portuguese private traders and for the purpose of materializing that intention, the Portuguese authorities refrained from introducing control devices like fortress and patrolling armada and cartaz system in the Bay of Bengal including the Coromandel coast¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁷ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India*, Pp.40-49; 148-150

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., Pp.125-6; 148-151

¹⁴⁹ For details on keeping the eastern space of Indian Ocean as a liberal and free space for the commerce of casado traders during the post-Albuquerquean period, see Vitor Luis Caspar Rodrigues, "O Grupo de Cochin e a Oposicao a Afonso de Albuquerque:", in *Studia*. 51, Lisboa, 1992, Pp. 119-144; Luis Filipe Thomaz, "Diogo Pereira, O Malabar", in *Mare Liberum*, 5, 1993, Pp.49-64; Genevieve Bouchon and Luis Filipe Thomaz(ed.), *Voyage dans Les Deltas du Gangs et de l'Irraouaddy. Relation Portugaise Anonyme(1521)*, Paris, 1988, Pp.58-68; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History*, London, 1993, p.97; Maria Emilia Madeira Santos, "Afonso de Albuquerque e os feitores", in *Actas do II Seminario Internacional de Wstoria Indo-Portuguesa*, ed. By Luis de Albuquerque and Inacio Guerreiro, Lisboa, 1985, pp.201-20; Pius Malekandathil, "The Portuguese Casados and the Infra-Asian Trade: 1500-1663", in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Millenium (61st) Session, Kolkata, 2001*, Pp.3 84-5

Pepper, being the most important element in Tamil food culture, turned out to be the highly-marketed Kerala commodity in Tamilnadu and as a result a large volume of pepper was taken from the ports of Kerala by the Portuguese casados to Coromandel ports clandestinely. In Tamilnadu it was used for obtaining textiles, which they further carried to south east Asia as exchange ware for obtaining nutmeg, mace and cloves¹⁵⁰. However, the easiest way to obtain pepper from the ports of Kerala, which always was a food-deficient zone, was to take rice from the Kaveri basin. This increased the frequency of rice-pepper circuits between east-west coast through the commercial intermediaries of Portuguese casados and during the period between 1587 till 1598 about 3, 11, 15, 257 kilograms of rice were imported to Cochin alone and a major share of rice came from Tamil ports. The annual average of rice import to Cochin was about 3,86,830 kilograms¹⁵¹.

Meanwhile the Tamil Brahmin Pattars and Ravuthar Muslims linked with Madurai and the other markets of Tamilnadu used to travel through the routes across the western ghats and took pepper on a large scale from the interior Kerala in return for clothes, rice and cereals brought from

¹⁵⁰ ANTT, Corpo Cronologico , I, Ma?o 48, doc. 47; Baselio de Sa.,), Documenta?ao para a Historia das Missoes do Padroado Portugues do Oriente-Insulindia, vol.1, Lisboa, 1954, doc.20, p.132; Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the maritime Trade of India*, Pp. 121-2

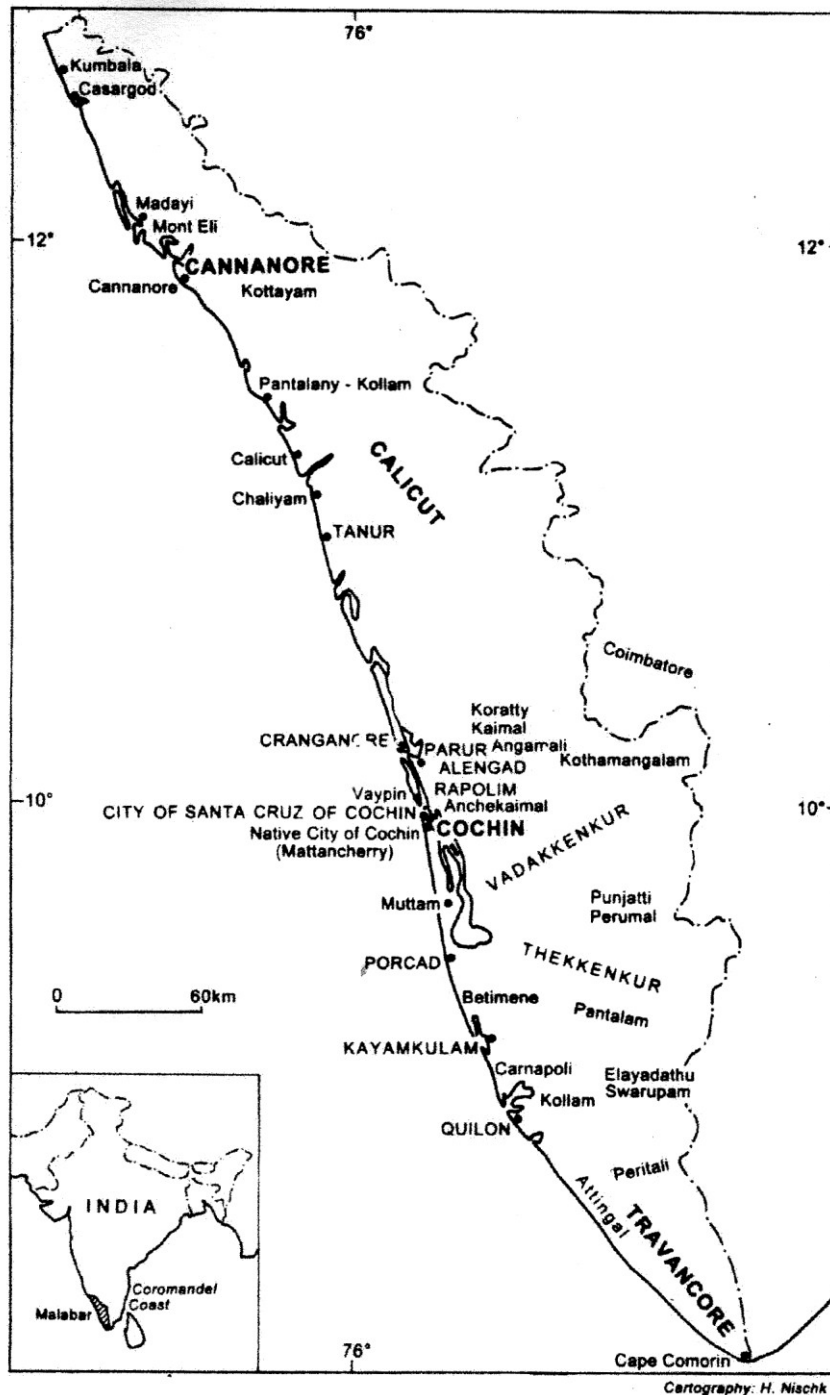
¹⁵¹ BNL, Fundo Geral, Codice No.1980, *Livro das Despezas de hum porcento Taboada, fols. 7-15*; Pius Malekandathil, *Merchant Capitalists and the Estado da India: Changing Pattern of Portuguese Trade with India, 1570-1663*, in *Indo-Portuguese History: Global Trends*, ed. By Charles Borges, Fatima Gracias and Celsa Pinto, Goa, 2005, Pp. 357-8

Tamilnadu¹⁵². For the sake of conducting the trade effectively between Kerala and Tamilnadu across the ghat, a large number of Tamil Pattars and Ravuthar Muslims eventually settled in the heartland of pepper-producing zones and pepper trading centres of Kerala.

Following the defeat of the Pandyas in 1311 and the conquest of the region by the forces of Delhi Sultanate, that the Ravuthar Muslims from Madurai moved to the major trading centres of inland Kerala. Later with the Vijayanagara occupation of Madurai in 1371 we find a scattering of Muslim traders from Madurai to Kerala's inland markets of Kanjirappally, Erumely, Erattupetta, Thodupuzha, Muvattupuzha and Kothamangalam, where they eventually evolved as significant traders exchanging Tamil rice and textiles in return for pepper¹⁵³. In fact these inland markets of Kerala, with intricate networks of trade routes linked with Tamilnadu and having almost same distance to Madurai, had earlier been the principal supplying centres of pepper to Madurai, particularly since 1223, when the Pandyas retained their hold over the region defeating the Cholas.

¹⁵² Antonio de Gouveia, *Jornada do Arcebispo*, Coimbra, 1606, p.208. This work is translated into English and the subsequent quotations are from the English translation Pius Malekandathil, *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes: A Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*, Kochi, 2003,p.(Henceforth quoted as Antonio de Gouvea, Jornada) Pius Malekandathil, *Winds of Change and Links of Continuity: A Study on the Merchant Groups of Kerala and the Channels of their Trade, 1000-1800 AD*, in Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol.. 50, Part 2,-3/2007, Pp.279-280; Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India*, Pp. 55-6; 70-1

¹⁵³ Pius Malekandathil, *Kothamangalam Roopathayude Charithra Pachathalavum Kraisthava Koottaymakalude Verukalum*, in Pius Malekandathil (chief editor) *Anpinte Anpathandu: Kothamangalam Roopathayude Charitram*, 1957-2007, Kothamangalam, 2008, Pp.40-1; 81-2.



Ravuthar Muslims of central Kerala according to their oral tradition maintain that it was in 1373 the first batch of Ravuthar Muslims consisting of Mossavannan Ravuthar, Kulasekhara Khan and Mollamiya Labba came to Kanjirappally from Madurai. From Kanjirappally, they got distributed to Erumely on the one side and to Erattupetta, Thodupuzha and Muvattupuzha on the other, which are all located on the middle upland zones of Kerala on the slopes of Western Ghat and were then mutually connected by extensive trade routes. On these channels of commerce of the Ravuthar Muslims were also located several dargahs (tombs) of Sufi Sheikhs, whose spiritual *wilayat* (jurisdiction) was believed to have provided protection to the Muslim merchants traveling between Tamilnadu and Kerala through the ghat-routes. These traders used to contribute liberally to such *dargahs* and *kanqahs* located on the branches of ghat-routes, in return for the safety and protection for their travel within the spiritual *wilayat* of the Sufi Sheikhs. The most important centres of Sufism along these routes were Peerumedu (which got its name from Pir (a Sufi Sheikh) and Medu (hill), literally meaning hill of the Sufi Sheikh) and the *dargah* of a Qadiriyya Sheikh in the midst of Thodupuzha market, the limit of whose spiritual *wilayat* was believed to have extended even up to Madurai, from where pilgrims used to flock here even today for prayer¹⁵⁴.

Pre-Portuguese churches of St.Thomas Christians of this region, especially the rich churches of Kothamangalam, Muthalakodam, Aruvithara,

¹⁵⁴ The notion that Sufi Sheikhs would provide protection and safety to those traveling within their spiritual *wilayat* (spiritual jurisdiction) was prevalent in all parts of India, which made traders frequently visit *kanqahs* and *dargahs* (tombs of Sufi saints) and seek the blessings of the Sheikh. For details on the notions of spiritual *wilayat* see Simon Digby, *The Sufi Shaykh as a Source of Authority in Medieval India, Pumshartha*, vol. 9, 1986, Pp. 57-77; Simon Digby, *The Sufi Sheikh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India*, Iran, vol.28, 1990, Pp.71-81. Many pilgrims from Madurai frequent the Sufi dargah of Thodupuzha even today.

Kanjirappally etc.,¹⁵⁵ were located on one or another of the several trade routes running to Madurai from these inland markets, evidently suggesting the participation of pepper-cultivating-cum- trading group of St. Thomas Christians of these places in the ghat-route trade with Tamilnadu. It was the share of wealth from the ghat-route trade that made these churches rich and wealthy.¹⁵⁶

The ghat routes between Madurai and upland markets of interior Kerala became a major channel for communication and movement of people. When the Italian Jesuit Robert de Nobili traveled from Madurai in 1613 to reach Cochin, he took the path across the mountains.¹⁵⁷ It seems that on this occasion Robert de Nobili had taken the ghat -route running from Madurai via Udumpannoor, Muthalakodam and Thodupuzha, about which detailed descriptions are given by Ward and Conner in 1815. They refer to the ghat-route that emanated from Thodupuzha (Thoduvully) and passed by Udambannoor (a large village -chiefly Nairs) from where commodities were further carried to Keezh Periyar (Keel Pereeear) located about thirteen miles further beyond. From Keezh Periyar they were further taken to Perinchamkutty (Perringincooty) located about fourteen miles away and then traveled twelve

¹⁵⁵ For details see Antonio de Gouvea, *Jornada do Arcebispo*, Coimbra, 1606; See its English translation, Pius Malekandathil (ed), *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes: A Portuguese Account of the sixteenth Century Malabar*, Kochi, 2003, Pp.176-9, 267, 330, 432-3; 334, 440-1.

¹⁵⁶ The place names like Muthalakodam evidently explains that it was a place of wealth -accumulation. The word Muthalakodam is derived from the words Muthal (wealth) and *Koodunidam* (place of accumulation), meaning place of wealth accumulation.

¹⁵⁷ S.Rajamanickam, *The First Oriental Scholar*, p.37. The ghat-route was the main channel through which Jesuit missionaries from Cochin used to travel to Madurai. Ibid., p.27

miles' journey to reach the hill by ascending which the traders used to reach Thevaram (Thaywarram)pass, which opened the doors to Tamil territory¹⁵⁸.

Ward and Conner also refer to another ghat-route from Thodupuzha that passed by Velliamuttum (Velliamattam), from where the merchants used to carry goods to Nadgunni ghat (Nadukani) and then to Sirdhoney (Cheruthony) located eleven miles away from it. Crossing the river of Cheruthony they traveled thirty-three miles further to reach Peermode (Peerumedu), from where they used to make another seven miles' journey to reach Perear (F'eriyar or Vandi Periyar). From Periyar they used to travel twenty-three miles and three furlongs further to reach the Kurrungkull-aar(?) crossing the rocky bed and then finally to Cumbum (Kambam), from where commodities were further taken to Madurai mostly by Tamil merchants. The distance from Cumbum (Cumbam) to Thoduwully (Thodupuzha) by this ghat-route was 52 1/2 miles, out of which five-sixths of the travel was through mountainous forest region. The distance from Thodupuzha to Cumbam was covered by the oxen and pack animals that used to carry the commodities within eight days. Merchants were said to have frequently used this trade-route for commodity movements between Thodupuzha and Tamil territories.¹⁵⁹ In fact the Tamil towns of Kambam and Theni evolved out of the profit flowing from the trade between Madurai and Kerala markets of Thodupuzha, Erattupetta, Kanjirappally and Erumely. There were occasions when Robert de Nobili travelled from Madurai also through Shenkottah and Ariankavu pass to reach Quilon.¹⁶⁰

The trade-route from Kothamangalam ran to Madurai via Thattekadu, Kuttampuzha, Pooyamkutty, Munnar and Udumalpettai. This was one of the

¹⁵⁸ Ward and Conner, *Memoir of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin States*, vol.1, Trivandrum, 1994, Pp.15; 50

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. Pp 50-1

¹⁶⁰ S.Rajamanickam, p.40

oldest trade routes that connected the regional economies of the Chera, Chola and Pandya territories. It was through one of the branches of this route that bishop Mar Baselius, who landed on the Coromandel coast, reached Kothamangalam in 1685.¹⁶¹

Another important land-route started from Vadakkenkur, the principal pepper-growing terrain in central Kerala and terminated in Cape Comorin in the land of Tiruppur swarupam. Joao de Cruz mentions in 1533 that a large bulk of pepper used to flow through the land routes to Cape Comorin from the production-centres in central Kerala. This route started from the land of Chempenecoy (king of Chembu or the Vadakkenkur chief), and passed through the lands of Lerta Morte Treberery (Ilayidathu Mutha Tiruvadi, whose principality was located near Arthinkal in the vicinity of Shertalai). The trade routes from the lands of Teqe Cute Nayre (king of Thekkenkur) Cherabacoy (chief of Chiravay kovil) and Ylamana Lambeatry(Lambualur Nampiyathiri or the southern portion of the principality of Edappilly) also used to merge into the artery of trade running towards the extreme south. From Cape Comorin pepper was further distributed in the southern tip of Tamilnadu and Vijayanagara territory. This land-route was the principal channel through which Joao de Cruz used to take horses from Cochin in 1537 and 1538 to the

¹⁶¹ Pius Malekandathil, *Kothamangalam Roopathayude Charithra Pachathalavum Kraisthava Koottaymakalude Verukalum*, Pp.26-7; Nagam Ayya, *Travancore State Manual*, vol.1, Trivandrum, 1906, p.14. Kothamangalam is located in the vicinity of Thrikkariyoor, which having one of the oldest temples in central Kerala is believed to have been the initial power base of Kizhmalainadu, before its shifting to Thodupuzha. The place names of several places of this area evidently suggest that it must have been a significant power centre. See also V.V.K.Valath, *Keralathile Sthalacharitrangal-Ernakulam Jilla*, Trichur, 1991, Pp.68-70; 316

terrains of Tiruppapur swarupam in the extreme south where they were used for waging the wars of expansion.¹⁶²

Most of these trade-routes started from several upland markets, which were also the converging centres for bulk trade in spices in interior Kerala. From these upland markets there was large scale flow of pepper to Tamilnadu and Kamataka, through different channels of trade running across the ghat. Moreover, these ghat-route traders offered higher price to spice producers in contrast to the Portuguese at the sea-side, who fixed the price at 2.66 cruzados per quintal and did not allow it to be changed for almost 124 years despite fluctuations in the market.¹⁶³ As Ferdinand Cron, the German trade agent of the Fuggers in Cochin observed in 1587, there were ghat-route traders who used to take along with them as many as 1000 oxen for carrying pepper from the

¹⁶² ANTT, Corpo Cronologico, I, Maco 52, doc. 25. Joao de Cruz mentions repeatedly in his several letters that he was a distant relative of Zamorin and later became a Christian when he was sent to Portugal by Zamorin in 1513 to "see its king and his things". He was made afidalgo (nobleman) in Portugal and was given the title of Dom. However on coming back to India (1516), he had only temporary stay at Calicut, and in 1525, when the relationship between the Portuguese and Zamorin got strained, he shifted his residence to Cochin and began to engage in trade in horses imported from Hormuz. For details see Pius Malekandathil. *Merchants, Markets and Commodities: Some Aspects of Portuguese Commerce with Malabar*. in Pius Malekandathil and Jamal Mohammed (eds.), *The Portuguese, Indian Ocean and European Bridgehead: Festschrift in Honour of Prof. K.S. Mathew*, Fundacao Oriente, Lisbon, 2001, Pp.253-6.

¹⁶³ According to the price-fixation done in 1503 for pepper, the price of a bhar (166.3kg.) of pepper was fixed at 152.5 panams (8.3 cruzados). See for details, Thomes Lopes, 'Navegacao as Indias Orientaes' in *Collecao de Noticias para a Historia e Geografia des Nacoes ultramarinas que vivem nos Dominios Portugueses ou ilhes sao visinhos*, tom.II, nos. 1 and 2, Lisboa, 1812, Pp. 199-200; Luys da Costa, in Antonio da Silva Rego, *Documentacao Ultramarina Portuguesa*, vol.111, Lisboa, 1963, p.373; Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin*, Pp.154;285

production centres of upland Kerala to Tamil markets.¹⁶⁴ One of the frequented channel in the south was the Ariankavu pass, through which pepper that should had been taken earlier to Quilon for maritime trade was diverted from Kottarakara and the neighbouring regions and was made to flow to Thenkasi and Madurai route.¹⁶⁵ Koratty, Kothamangalam, Thodupuzha, Eratupettah and Kanjirapally where the most active were the upland markets of medieval central Kerala, because of the concentration of Tamil merchants in these places for the purchase of spices in return for textiles, cereals and rice from Tamilnadu. These major upland markets, from where ghat-routes to Tamilnadu originated, were then located in the midst of intensified spice-producing belt; however they were distanced away from the sea-port of Cochin by about 75 to 120 kilometers. But their vitality towards the end of the sixteenth century depended on their trade with Tamilnadu, particularly with the nayakdoms of Madurai, Tanjavur and Gingee.¹⁶⁶ The volume of pepper annually carried off to Tamil territory by ghat route traders from Erumely was 3000 bhars or 7740 quintals and from Erattupetta was 1000 bhars or 2580 quintals.

It was from Thodupuzha that the greatest volume of pepper moved annually to Madurai via Kumily: it was 5000 bhars or 12,900 quintals.¹⁶⁷ The different trade routes from Erumely, Kanjirappally, Erattupetta and

¹⁶⁴ *Furstlich und Grafllich Fuggersches Familien und Stiftungs Archiv*, Dillingen Donau, MSS Codex no.46.1, fols.50-lv

¹⁶⁵ F.C.Danvers, *The Portuguese in India: Being a History of the Rise and Decline of their Eastern Empire*, vol.11. New Delhi, 1988, p.346

¹⁶⁶ Pius Malekandathil, *The Portuguese and the Ghat-route Trade: 1500-1663*. in *Pondicherry University Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol.1, nos.1 and 2, January and July, 2000, Pp.129-154

¹⁶⁷ The report of Francisco da Costa, "Relatorio sobre o Trato da Pimenta", in Antonio da Silva Rego, *Documentacao Ultramarina Portuguesa*, vol.111, Lisboa, 1963, p.315

Thodupuzha used to get converged at Kumily or Kambam Medu, from where they moved to Kambam, Theni and Madurai, the latter being the seat of Nayaks of Madurai. The lion share of pepper from Kothamangalam went through the old Munnar route via Kuttampuzha, Pooyamkutty and Munnar and finally merged at Theni with the stream coming from Kumily and moved towards Madurai. However a considerable share of spices from Kothamangalam used to move to Udumalpettai from Munnar.¹⁶⁸

Pepper from Korattykara also used to join this stream and the annual flow of pepper from Korattykara to Tamil territories was 3000 bhars or 7740 quintals. Palakkad was the northernmost upland market of Kerala from which large volum trade was carried out with Tamilnadu, particularly with the Kongu terrain. Francisco da Costa says that about 3000 bhars or 7740 quintals of pepper were taken annually from Palakkad to Tamilnadu by inland merchants.¹⁶⁹

The pepper that was taken through land routes into the interior of Tamilnadu was circulating within the region and the excess was taken further to the ports of Coromandel. like Nagapattanam, Mylapore, Pulicat and

¹⁶⁸ Nagam Ayya, *Travancore State Manual*, vol.1, Trivandrum, 1906, p. 14; Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin*, pp.56; A.Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteers* :Ernakulam, Trivandrum, 1965,p.851

¹⁶⁹ The report of Francisco da Costa, "Relatorio sobre o Trato da Pimenta", in Antonio da Silva Rego, *Documentacao Ultramarina Portuguesa*, vol.III, p.315

Masulipattanam for further distribution in China, Pegu, Bengal and Mughal territory.¹⁷⁰

During the period between 1606 and 1609 (both years inclusive) no ship departed from Cochin to Lisbon, as the Portuguese got very little pepper during this period. Quantity of pepper they collected during these years was only 4,170 quintals of pepper, which they sent to Portugal in 1610.¹⁷¹ This was much lower than the volume of pepper trade during this period from one single interior upland market of Kerala, viz., Thodupuzha, where the volume of annual trade with Tamilnadu was estimated to be 12900 quintals.¹⁷²

With the expansion of spice production and concentration of ghat-route trade in the uplands, a considerable political process of this period also began to revolve around these upland markets. While the powerful political houses of Kerala had already established their power bases in and around maritime centres of exchange like Calicut, Cochin, Cannanore and Quilon, obviously for drawing wealth from maritime trade, the secondary political players preferred to keep their bases in and around the upland markets at the mouth of the ghat routes, which ensured for them considerable share from the trade profit. The Thekkenkur rulers while retaining Kottayam as one of their seats, kept Kanjirappally as the seat for his brother, and both of them used to get 100

¹⁷⁰ Furstlich und Graflich Fuggersches Familien und Stiftungs Archiv , Dillingen Donau(F.A.), Mss Cod.46.1.The letter of Femand Cron, sent from Cochin , dated 26-12-1587, fols 50-51; Francisco da Costa, "Relatorio sobre o Trato da Pimenta",p.351. Also see AHU, Caixas da India, Caixa 2, doc. 107. The letter of the city council of Cochin sent to Philip II(Philip III of Spain) giving an account of the economic condition of Cochin dated 21-12-1613; Pius Malekandathil, " The Portuguese and the Ghat-Route Trade:1500-1663", in Pondicherry University *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol.1, no.1 and 2,2000, Pp.145-6

¹⁷¹ AHU, Caixas da India, Caixa 1, doc.101, dated 25 February 1611.

¹⁷² The report of Francisco da Costa, "Relatorio sobre o Trato da Pimenta", p.315

xerafins each from the Portuguese authorities for preventing the flow of spices to Tamil territory from 1565 onwards.¹⁷³ Poonjar, a principality that was very much linked with Madurai but got established in the vicinity of Erattupetta, controlled the south eastern part of High Ranges and its ghat-route trade. Consequently it emerged as a powerful political unit in the upland and hilly terrains, as the Portuguese documents testify.¹⁷⁴ The chief of Kizhumalainadu, who controlled the north eastern part of High Ranges and its ghat-route trade, shifted his base to Karikode near Thodupuzha and with the intensification of trade from this upland market, the queen of Vadakkenkur adopted the king of Thodupuzha as the heir for Vadakkenkur principality by the last decade of sixteenth century and the capital of Vadakkenkur was shifted from the low-lying paddy-cultivating terrain of Muttuchira to the upland of Thodupuzha.

¹⁷³ Panduronga S.S. Pissurlencar, *Regimentos das Fortelazas da India, Bastora/Goa*, 1951, Pp.217-9; Vitorino Magalhaes Godinho, *Les Finances de l'etat Portugais des Indes Orientates (1517-1635): Materianx pour une Etude Structurale et Conjoncturelle*, Paris, 1982, pp.306-8. In 1605 the subsidy to each king of Thekkenkur was raised to 120 xerqfins. See the report of Francisco da Costa, "Relatorio sobre o Trato da Pimenta", in Antonio da Silva Rego, *Documentacao Ultramarina Portuguesa*, vol.111, p.310

¹⁷⁴ Antonio de Gouvea, *Jornada do Arcebispo*, p.330. Jornada says that the king of Poonjar was initially the lord of Pandya kingdom and because of the wars with the Nayaks of Madurai, the vassals of the Vijayanagara rulers, he came to Poonjar and purchased land from the king of Thekkenkur and started wielding authority over a section of people who earlier had belonged to Pandya kingdom. *Ibid.*, p.330

The ruler of Thodupuzha was given an annual amount of 240 xerafins by the Portuguese for taking measures to prevent flow of spices to Tamilnadu.¹⁷⁵

The nature of the unique social formation that appeared in the upland spice-producing centres was distinctively different from the type of temple-cum-Brahmin-centered social formation that happened in the low-lying paddy cultivating zones of Kerala.¹⁷⁶ The relative absence of low-lying paddy cultivating wet zones in these upland parts of Kerala was a major reason that

¹⁷⁵ Francisco da Costa, "Relatorio sobre o Trato da Pimenta", in Antonio da Silva Rego, *Documentacao Ultramarina Portuguesa!*, vol.III, p.310. It was only after 1598 that the name of king of Thodupuzha figures as the ruler of Vadakkenkur and was given the subsidy of 240 xerafins and the queen of Vadakkenkur then residing at Muttuchira was given 220 xerafins. The Portuguese documents say that from 1564 onwards the king of Vadakkenkur was given 200 pardaos, while the queen was given 100 pardaos every year. For details see Panduronga S.S.Pissurlencar, *Regimentos das Fortalezas da India*, pp.217-219; Vitorino Magalhaes Godinho, *Les Finances de L'etat Portugais des Indes Orientales(1517-1635)*, pp. 306-308. The adoption of king of Thodupuzha as the king of Vadakkenkur happened because of the absence of male members in the Vadakkenkur royal family, as all the male members in the royal family were killed in the continuous wars waged between the forces of the Vadakkenkur, Calicut and Tanor on the one side and the combined forces of the Portuguese and Cochin on the other side during the period between 1548-1552. The wars initially broke out between Cochin and Vadakkenkur on the question of taking temple money of Vaduthala. For details see ANTT, *Corpo Cronologico*, II, Maco 242, doc. 44; ANTT, *Gavetas*, 15-20-8; Elaine Sanceau, *Collecao de Sao Lourenco*, vol.III, Lisboa, 1975, p.15; D.Ferroli, *The Jesuits in Malabar*, vol.1, Bangalore, 1939, pp.130-7, Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin*, pp.173-4. For the details of adoption of king of Thodupuzha as king of Vadakkenkur see Antonio de Gouvea, *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes*, pp. 176-9. For details on the extent of his kingdom see *Ibid.*, Pp.333-7

¹⁷⁶ R.Champakalakshmi, *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India 300 BC to AD 1300*, New Delhi, 2010, Pp.38-43; 59-60; 96-7; 206-212; Rajan Gurukkal, "The Socio-Economic Milieu of the Kerala Temple: A Functional Analysis", *Studies in History*, vol.11, No.2, Jan-June 1980, Pp.1-14; Rajan Gurukkal, "Forms of Production and Forces of Change in Ancient Tamil Society", *Studies in History*, vol.II, No.1, 1979.

kept Brahmins reasonably away from these upland pockets. In the relative absence of Brahmins, it was the St. Thomas Christians and the Ezhavas who dominated the social processes of this region, whose subsistence actually came from the wealth derived out of spice production and ghat-route trade. The churches of St. Thomas Christians, out of which 83 were constructed before the arrival of the Portuguese,¹⁷⁷ and the *kavus* (shrines) of Sasthavu of the Ezhavas,¹⁷⁸ were the principal cultural agencies that gave cohesion and cogence to the inhabitants of these places. The St. Thomas Christians, who used to control a major share of spice production of central upland Kerala, amassed a considerable amount of wealth by linking their spice-production with ghat-route trade and this enabled them even to resist and throw away the Portuguese cultural hegemony and lusutaniam practices thrust upon them in the name of reforming their faith.

There were other channels of trade, as well that linked the various terrains of south India. The most prominent among them were the ports of Cannanore and Bhatkal. Cannanore was a major maritime door through which horses from Ormuz were taken to Vijayanagara. This was also the route through which pepper from the hinterland of Cannanore including from that of Wynadu entered the interior of Kamataka in the sixteenth century. Two routes connected Cannanore with Srirangapattanam, the capital of Wodeyars of Mysore: The first one was the Perambadi route, which passed through Irukkur lying within the domains of the Kolathiris and the other was the Peria Ghat route passing through North Wynad, under the control of the Raja of Kottayam.

¹⁷⁷ Antonio de Gouvea, *Jornada do Arcebispo*, Pp. 120-449

¹⁷⁸ In the upland part of central Kerala we find a long chain of *kavus* (shrines) dedicated to Sasthavu, which are in most cases located on the top of hillocks. Some of these dilapidated shrines are recently renovated and modified and given new meanings and interpretations against the background of recent pan-Hindu revival movements.

The process of inland ghat route trade integrated the various territorial enclaves and the different eco-zones of south India, particularly its highly stimulated upland regions as well as the maritime zones. The maritime trade centres of Kerala were made to become the focal centres of political processes of major rulers like that of Calicut, Cochin, Quion and Cannanore.¹⁷⁹

Markets (*Angadies*)

Anyhow by the ninth century the picture of economic activities become more clear in medieval Kerala.

“The material transformation manifested itself in the shift of the landscape-base of contemporary economy. The shift symbolized a series of inter-related and culturally significant transformations. Firstly, the shift meant the shift of economic geography in the sense that it was the transformation of the millet-dominated economy into the paddy-dominated one. The birth of a new political structure that was also a major simultaneous process with the development and the expansion of wet-rice agriculture marked the period as the period of the transformation of chiefdoms into monarchy. These transformations put together make the period an epoch of ‘the great transformation’. On top of all, the land emerged as an independent cultural entity in the ninth century with a homogenous linguistic base, called *malanattu vazhakkam* as distinguished from the language and culture of erstwhile Tamilakam. In short it was the culmination of a great transformation in the history of Kerala”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Pius Malekandathil, *Trading Networks and Region formation: The making of South India, 1500-1750*, National Seminar Paper, CHS JNU, March 2009.

¹⁸⁰ Rajan Gurukul and M.R Raghava Varrier (ed) *Cultural History of kerala*, Vo. I, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, p.272

A congenial socio-political and agricultural atmosphere paved the way for the emergence of a large number of rural exchange nodes, interior markets and bazaars on the travel ways and diversion points of ghat passages, period fairs, festival markets and comparatively big emporia of trade and exchange. The spread of agriculture with improved rural technology and agrarian settlements and the availability of considerable surplus etc. promoted the development of markets and exchange and also big trading centers.

Exchange nodes and centers mentioned in the Tamil classics and anthologies are same as mentioned by ancient geographers in the period under study. But the nature and character of their function have changed in an improved manner along with barter in the higher strata of society. Emergence of trading groups, organised trade and the stratification of the society was more visible. Intra-regional and inter-regional trade was promoted as a result of the enhanced agriculture in the hinterland. Overseas linkages of the rural markets encouraged spice cultivation and feeble rays of commercialisation of agriculture was visible.

A considerable amount of agrarian development led to the emergence of markets or trade centers. The availability of surplus can be taken as an indicator of evolutionary change in society. In one way it accounts for material resources prevailing above the requirements of subsistence of the society and it will appear with the technology and productivity in an advanced manner. On the other it brings out anabolic effects like certain socio- economic output like markets, urban centers, new social classes and civilization aspects.¹⁸¹ Market is

¹⁸¹ Karl Polanyi, *Economy As Instituted Process*, Karl Polanyi. et.al, (ed), *Trade and Markets in Early Empires*, Newyork, 1957,op.cit, p.321

an institution produced by a regular trade between a multiplicity of traders.¹⁸²
To Polanyi 'Trade is a mutual appropriative movement between hands'.¹⁸³

Trade can be classified as gift trade and administered trade.¹⁸⁴ The first one is complementary, refluxive and lacking profit. Official patronage by the ruling authorities is the main feature of the second one, and the mechanism of demand- supply controls the third one. The above mentioned three aspects were the significant features of the economic period of medieval Kerala from ninth century A.D to the pre-modern times denoted by the advent and trade operations of the Europeans. In the light of the above observations a brief analysis of medieval markets and trade centres, major and minor; trade organizations and their functions upto the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of A.D. ghat routes, advent of the Europeans and their trade activities in brief up to the dawn on of the sixteenth century is attempted in the proceeding paragraphs.

Medieval Markets and Modes of Exchange

There was a change in the mechanisms of trading and market system in the early medieval period when compared to the historical phase. We can see clearcut difference in social systems and power centers like local chieftains. Writing of foreign travellers, Arab geographers and Tamil anthologies gives sufficient evidence for this. During the early medieval phase of our study trading activities began to be systematised. Different levels of marketing centers came into existence in various parts of Kerala. We can classify this as

¹⁸² Richard F Salisbury, *Trade and Market in International Encyclopedia of the Social Science*, Vol.16, Mac Millan Company, 1968, Pp.118-122.

¹⁸³ Karl Polanyi, *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, op.cit; p.257

regional or local trade and market, long distance overland trade and long distance overseas trade.

Kerala had a subsistence-oriented economy but there was agricultural and craft-based surplus which was used for the procurement of items of daily necessities. A part of the remuneration, gift or alms received in kind was also exchanged for other objects of daily life. Certain areas produced surplus of some articles but lacked some other items which had to be acquired by exchanging the surplus.¹⁸⁵ An important feature of economic activity in the period was the institutionalisation of trade in the form of merchant organizations, *cantas* of different natures and *angadi-s* or annual markets.¹⁸⁶ *Angadi-s* were shops or bazaars in villages and towns.¹⁸⁷

The *Campus Unniyaccicaritham*, *Unniyadicharitham* and *Unnichirutevicharitham* were written by the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th centuries. These three are related to the Thiruvidadamaruthur temple, the trade center of Wayanad, Kayamkulam-Cochi ports, trading spots in the Nila river basin, Ponnani port, Kulamukku angadi and Thrithala. Poyilathangadi in the basin of the river Nila (Bharathapuzha) is described in *Unnichirutevicharitham*. It is in the description of the *angadi* that the urban character of trade centers appears for the first time in Malayalam literature. *Manipravalam* literature also provides the same type of information. *Unnuneeli sandesam* and *Ananthapuravarnam* throws clear light to the growing urban

¹⁸⁵ P.J. Cherman (ed), *Perspectives on Kerala History, The Second Millennium*, Kerala State Gazetteer Vol.II. Part II- Thiruvananthapuram, 1999, Pp. 99-100

¹⁸⁶ Herman Gundert, *Malayalam-English Dictionary*, Kottayam, 2000 (1872), p.342

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p.35

character of *angadis* and temple locations. *Ananthapuravarnanam* draws a clear picture of the ‘temple *nagaram*’ of the 14th and 15th centuries.¹⁸⁸

Various needs for commodities of day to day life of the people were satisfied by the local *cantas*. Description of different articles of exchange or sale or productions are mentioned in the *sandesakavyas*. Names of more than 250 commodities are mentioned in *Anandapuravarnanam* while about 80 in *Unnuneelisesandesam*, 28 in *Unniyachicharitham* and more than 180 in *Payyanur pattu*. All these commodities were produced and consumed by the people of various regions on this strip of land and also brought from alien regions. They include food items, medicines, textile goods, perfumes, home appliances and other luxury items. The mention of markets or *angadi-s* appear in medieval literature in two contexts, one as the description of consumer item available for sale and the other in the form of conversations and higgling-haggling associated with selling and buying.

The fairs associated with festivals in Kerala are the best examples of market mobilization. *The mamankam* was a great gathering and festival of Kerala. Valluvakonatiri was the leader of *mamankam* and he was known as *the rakshapurusha* or protector of this spectacular festival. The power and control exercised over a prosperous region with fertile soil, flourishing agricultural hinterland and craft and trade groups might have made Valluvakonatiri the *rakshapurusha* of the spectacular *mamankam* festival. The *mahamagam* or

¹⁸⁸ N.M Namboothiri and P.K Sivadas (ed) *Kerala Charithrathinte Nattuvazhikal* (mal), Kottayam (2009), 2011 op.cit; p.29

mamankam which meant the great feast of Kerala celebrated for 28 days and attended by *naduvazhi-s* was a genuine occasion of market mobilization.¹⁸⁹

The geographical position of Thirunavaya in Valluvanadu with comfortable and convenient access to land and water routes facilitated the trading groups for large scale market mobilization. The region around Thirunavaya is conspicuous by the presence of a large numbers of *kavu-s* where festivals were celebrated annually. Festivals facilitated the operation of seasonal markets and regional trade. *Pathiruvanibham* was an important transaction associated with this *kavu* festivals of Valluvanadu which provided occasion for inter-regional exchanges especially between interior and coastal regions. A large number of *angadis* and *cantas* which were active trade centers like Angadipuram, Kalady, Palapuram, Nellikode, Poyilam, Vaniyankulam, Mukoottangadi etc flourished in this area.

Morning *cantas* or markets were called *nalangadi* and evening markets or *cantas* were called *allangadi* or *anthicanta*. Another category of markets were the weekly *cantas* for which a particular day and place was fixed. It seems that these weekly markets were conducted on meeting spots of various routes linking long distant places and costal markets with agricultural hinterlands. References on weekly markets are in abundance in our literature. They dramatize the economic interdependence of villages and provide conclusive refutation of the idea of economic self sufficiency.¹⁹⁰

The relations between the producers and merchants gradually developed. The *vaniyas* and *chalias* were the merchant groups who maintained relations

¹⁸⁹ Gundert Hermen, *Malayalam English dictionary*, NBS, Kotayam, 2000 (1872), p.733; also see, Sreekandeswaram G Padmanabhapillai, *Sabdatharavali*, NBS Kottayam, (29th edn) 2005 (1923, Chathanath Achuthanunni and M.R.Raghava varyar (ed), *Kokasandesam(mal)*, Vallathol Vidyapeedom, Sukapuram, 2007, p.44

¹⁹⁰ Sreenivas M.N; *Villages, Cast, Gender and Method*, Delhi, 1996 p.18

with the market centers earlier. The *angadis* with various *terus* or streets of handicraftsmen began to develop. Coastal *angadis* of Kodungalloor, Pantalayani kollam and *angadis* like Chalayangadi of Thiruvananthapuram, Irinjalakuda, Eramam, Thirumarutoor are some of the examples. *Unnicirutevicaritam* and *Anantapuravarnanam* provides information regarding the nature of *angadis* of Thirumaruthur and Chala respectively.¹⁹¹ Some of these *cantas* were specialized centers of various items. Vaniankulam and Coyalmandam were famous cattle *cantas* in Valluvanadu. Vaniankulam was a famous center of commerce¹⁹² where cattles from distant regions were brought and sold. The weekly *cantas* were elaborate ones while the *allagadis* and *nalangadis* were smaller in size. The former and latter made available subsistence oriented and luxury items.

The names of the coins mentioned in this contest are either Malayalam or Sanskrit. *Aanayachu*, *kasu*, *tiramam*, *panam* were coins in circulation in Kerala during those times. Medieval literature or inscriptions does not speak about other coins and we have no information about them. Suranattu Kunjan Pillai is of the opinion that they might have been minted by the merchants or trade guilds.¹⁹³ *Panantramam* may be *panam* and *thiramam*. *Thiramam* is the Malayalam version of the Greek Drachmae.¹⁹⁴ About nine verses in *Anandapuravarnanam* describes the *ponvaniyateru* or street of gold merchants, various gold items, ornaments and merchant's conversations.¹⁹⁵ An interesting and valuable description is provided with regard to transactions in the *meen*

¹⁹¹ Ganesh K.N, *Keralathinte Innalalal* (mal), Department of Cultural Publications, Govt. of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997, op.cit; Pp.79-80

¹⁹² William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Vol.I, AES, New Delhi, 2004, op'cit; p.181

¹⁹³ Suranattu Kunjan Pillai, *Unichirutevicharitam* , Tvm, 1954, p.64.

¹⁹⁴ See, the Kolloor Madam Copper Plates of 1189 A.D (364 KE), TAS 30-34

¹⁹⁵ *Ananthapuravarnanam*, verses 73-81.

teru or fish market. Evidences regarding higgling-haggling are seen here. Poems explain various varieties of fishes which can be exchanged for other agricultural products and grains. Clear evidences of barter system and exchanges are available¹⁹⁶

Any how Ananthapuri of fourteenth century represents the culture of the people of southern Kerala and Venad. The *terus*, items of trade, coins in circulation, presence of itinerant and alien merchants, economic life and various aspects of urbanization makes Ananthapuri a distinctive market town and trade center with a flourishing agricultural hinterland.

Before the 9th century there were several trading centers and market places like *Muziris* which developed into a *pattanam* or *nagaram* . It was the pivot center of the Perumals of Mahodayapuram. Muziris which was identified as Kodungalloor had been filled with ships as a result of the vigorous trade¹⁹⁷ between Malabar and the West, and continued as a great center for the shipping to China and Arabia until the sixteenth century. ¹⁹⁸ The rise of Islam in the seventh century was followed by the arrival of the Arabs to the Malabar Coast. New centers of trade developed on the Malabar coast like Kollam, Panthalayanikollam, Matai etc. Foreign ships frequented Malabar ports for trade and the safety measures for the ships in these ports were admirable.¹⁹⁹ The Jewish Copper Plates and the Vira Raghava Pattayam reveals the importance given to the merchants in port centers.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, verse 83 – 87, See Apendix IV-2

¹⁹⁷ K.V.Krishna Aiyar, *Zamorins of calicut*, Calicut, 1938 , op.cit; p.292
Henry Yule, op. cit; Vol.IV, p.72ff. For details on the ports of Malabar, see, Jean Deloche, *Geographical consideration in the localization of ancient sea ports of India* in IESHR, Vol. 20, no.4, Delhi 1983, Pp.483-448.

¹⁹⁹ R.H.Major (ed) *India in the Fifteenth Century (1857)*, Delhi, 1974, op.cit;
Pp.XIVI - XIVII

Exchange–Barter

There was a belief that the overseas trade of Kerala was mainly carried out by the system of barter. But many evidences of coins and money use in early medieval period are available. Dinar was a standard coin of this period. This was widely used in international trade. The value of goods in overseas trade was calculated in terms of Egyptian *dinar*. The evidences from Jewish sources also bring out the transactions in terms of money.

Administered trade:

Trade guilds and organisational aspects of trade

A study of the merchants of early India has to address the problem of the formation of mercantile associations or professional organizations of merchants. As early as the second century B.C a particular body of merchants, *Vanigrama* (*Vanig*, merchant and *grama*, collection) figures in an epigraphic record from Karle. Their first appearance is noted in the context of the Western Deccan, but in early sixth centuries A.D such *Vanigramas* attained much greater prominence in Western India. This is known from a recently discovered inscription from Sanjeli (Gujarat) in regnal years of the Huna Ruler Toramana (A.D 503).²⁰⁰ That the importance of the *Vanigrama* continued to grow in Western India is amply evident from the famous inscription of Visnusena, dated to AD 592.²⁰¹ The *Vanigrama* rose to considerable prominence in early medieval south India under the name *Manigrama*. The same area

²⁰⁰ Ranabir Chakravarti, p.25-26, R.N.Mehta and A.M.Thakkar, *The M.S.University Copper Plate Grants of Toramana*, Baroda, 1976, see also, K.V.Ramesh, Three Early Charters from Sanjeli, EI, Vol.XL, 1986, Pp 175-86 and D.D.Kosambi, 'Dhenukakata, JBAS, vol.XXX, 1955, p.66

²⁰¹ See, D.D.Kosambi, *Indian Feudal Trade Charters*, JESHO, vol.2, 1958, Pp 281-93

simultaneously witnessed the rise of two other important bodies of merchants, viz, the '500 swamis of Ayyavole' and the *Nanadesi*.²⁰²

It was during the period between the establishment of Pallava Kingdom in south India (A.D.600) and the decline of the Chola Kingdom (A.D 1300) that South India witnessed the appearance of corporate activities of traders, which was a distinctive feature of the socio-economic life. This shows the institutionalization of trade. Merchant organizations are termed as guilds, an association of trading groups disciplined itself by organizational membership, qualifications, rules, and regulations.²⁰³

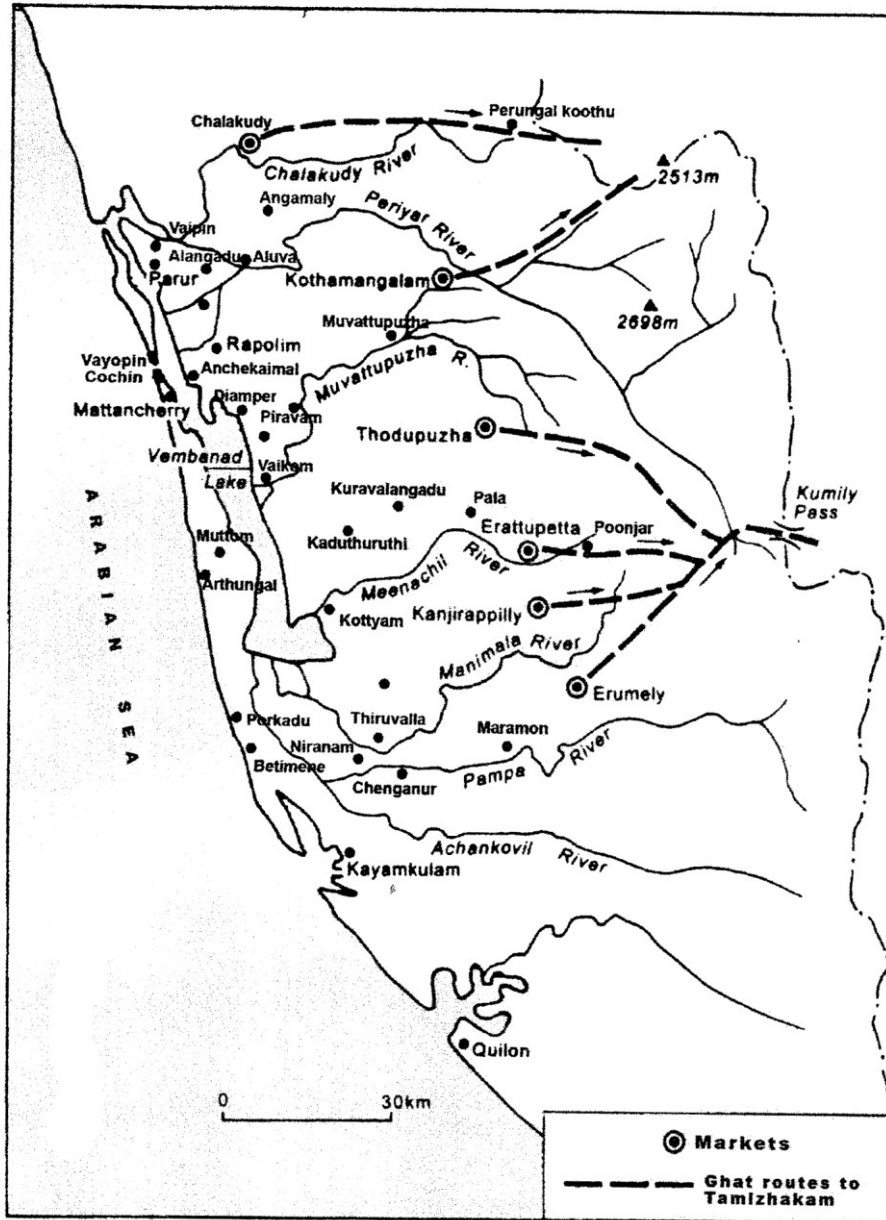
Trade organizations appear into full view of history only in the records of the post-Sangam period. The term *Nikama* is seen in a Tamil Brahmi inscription discovered from a cave in Mankulam near Arittapathi the Madurai district of modern Tamil Nadu.²⁰⁴ The word *Vanigana* which is connected with Sanskrit word *Vanik* or the Tamil *Vaniyan*, or *Vanikan* is mentioned in another Tamil Brahmi inscription discovered from Alagarmalai in Tamil Nadu.²⁰⁵ The inscriptions of the Pallavas, Pandyas, Cheras Cholas and other Kingdoms of south India mention about merchant guilds such as Manigramam, Anjuvannam, Nanadesi, Ayyavole, (Ainnuruvar), and Valanciar etc, of which the first two were more relevant in the context of Kerala.

²⁰² Meera Mary Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, New Delhi, 1988, op.cit, p.118..

²⁰³ R.Champakalakshmi, *The Medieval South Indian Guilds: Their Role in Trade and Urbanisation*, in D.N.Jh (ed), *Society and Ideology in India*, Delhi, 1996, op-cit, p.80

²⁰⁴ T.V.Mahalingam, *Early South Indian Palacography*, Madras, 1967, p.25. Also see, K.P.Velayudhan, 'Trade and Trade Guilds in Early South India (C 600-1300 A.D)', unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, University of Calicut, 1979, op.cit, 0.16.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.237



The Map of the Hinterland of Cochin with Ghat routes : 1500-1660

Manigramam

In Kerala *Manigramam* is first referred to in the famous ninth century Syrian Christian Copper Plates and *ancuvannam* in the Jewish Copper Plates. The plates illustrate the emergence of *manigramam* as an administratively autonomous corporation with Kollam (Quilon) as its regional base of operation.²⁰⁶ *Manigramam* and *ancuvannam* make appearance in the south Indian epigraphy from the Pallava period onwards.²⁰⁷

Malayalam literary works like *Payyanur Pattola* also mentions *manigramam*.²⁰⁸ There had been much controversy regarding the character of *manigramam*. Burnell and Dr.Gundert believed that *Manigramam* was a colony of Christians²⁰⁹. Their various views are based on the fact that the Syrian Christian Copper Plates of Mar Sapir Iso were found in the possession of the Syrian Christian Church at Kottayam. T.A.Gopinatha Rao and several others disagreed with this view and held that it was not exclusive of the Malabar Coast but present in the interior areas of south India and other places where there was no presence of Christians. Moreover members of this guild possessed Hindu names, they were also found to make offerings to Hindu Gods and undertake to protect Hindu temples.²¹⁰

M.D.Sampath opines that ‘the Manigramam, a variant of *Vanikagramam* was an association of merchants, named after a place Valar manikkan in

²⁰⁶ Rajan Gurukul, *The Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Sukapuram, 1992, p.23.

²⁰⁷ K.A.Neelakanta Sastri, *The Colas*, Madras, 1975, p.459

²⁰⁸ Ullur.S.Parameswara Ayyar, *Kerala Sahitya Charitram*, vol.I, Trivandrum, 1953, Pp 342-44.

²⁰⁹ *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (MJLS), XIII, pt.1. p.116.

²¹⁰ T.A.Gopinatha Rao, “A Note on Manigramattar”. E.XVIII, No.9, Pp 69-93, E.1.Epigraphica India.

Pudukkottai State”²¹¹ M.G.S.Narayanan thinks that *Manigramam* was an organization of Syrian Christians.²¹² The royal charter of TPCP clearly illustrates the establishment of a quarter in the market town *nagaram* of Kollam by the big Syrian Christian merchants of *manigramam* under the leadership of Maruvan-Sapir Iso, in the name of Tarisapally, with high social status. The founding of the *nagaram* by Sapir Iso mentioned in the charter does not mean the founding of an exchange centre but the proprietary occupation of it by the Syrian Christian merchants of *manigramam* through a royal charter.²¹³

Manigramam is also mentioned in the Ezhimala Narayanan Kannur Inscription.²¹⁴ The tenth century fragmentary inscription of Bhaskara Ravi Varman found at Jama-at-Mosque, Pantalayani Kollam points to the functioning of *Manigramam* there. The Thazhakkad church inscription provides clues to the functioning of *Manigramam* in that area.²¹⁵

The dignified status of *manigramam* is again attested by the VRP granted to the merchant chief Iravikortan in the thirteenth century by which the merchant was honoured by the grant of 72 privileges. He was attributed with the title of *Ceramanloka perumcetti*, the great merchant of Kerala, and the authority of the Makotai Pattinam (city of Mahodayapuram). From the provenance of the inscription referring to this guild, its activities spread over

²¹¹ M.D.Sampath, “*The Chitrameli*”, *Studies in Indian History and culture*, Dharwar, 1971, Pp.314-319

²¹² MGS Narayanan, *The Political and Social conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, Kerala University, 1972, p.485

²¹³ Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrararian System*, *Sukapuram*, 1992, Sukapuram, P.96.

²¹⁴ M.G.S.Narayanan, *Kerala Charithrathinte Atisthana Silakal*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1974, p.89

²¹⁵ See TAS vol.VIII, Pp.39-40.

large areas of south India.²¹⁶ This organization functioned also in south east Asia as evident from a record at Takua Pa in Siam.²¹⁷ It seems that *manigramam* had enjoyed proprietary occupation signified with economic and political control over the markets they were involved in.

Ancuvannam

We are provided with information about *ancuvannam* (*anjuvannam*) from both the Teresapally Copper Plates of Aiyar Adikal Thiruvadikal and the Jewish Copper Plates (JCP, A.D 1000) issued by King Bhaskara Ravi granting certain chiefly privileges to Joseph Raban, the merchant chief of *ancuvannam* corporation. The JCP provided for seventy two privileges like the right to use day lamp, decorative cloth, palanquin, umbrella, trumpets, Kettledrum, arch, arched roof, gateway and weapons. The grant recognizes his proprietary status and also a hereditary succession in the enjoyment of these rights and privileges.²¹⁸ *Ancuvannam* appears mostly in Chera inscriptions and at Tittandadanapuram on the east coast of South India. It has been explained as the native form of *Anjumam*, the term for corporations in the Persian language.²¹⁹ MGS Narayanan believes that *Ancuvannam* was probably a corporation of Jewish merchants. He points out that the JCP of Bhaskara Ravi un equivocally registers the grant of *Anjuvannampperu* to Joseph Raban whose memory is cherished in the old community songs of Jews in Cochin and the

²¹⁶ *South Indian Inscriptions* (S11) IV, No.147, ARE, 439 of 1917.

²¹⁷ JRAS, 1913, Pp-333-39, EI., XVIII.p.71

²¹⁸ P.K.Gopalakrishnan, *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, (Mal), Thiruvananthapura (1974), 2000, op.cit, p 303, Also see, *Rajan Gurukul, Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System* , op cit Pp 94-98.

²¹⁹ MGS Narayanan, op cit, p.480, *Burnd and Gundert opines that Anjuvannam was a colony of Jews*. M.J.L.S., XIII, I.P.116

grant itself has been preserved by those people.²²⁰ The terms *janjama* on *Janjamana* found in the same Telugu and Kannada inscription also appear to be a reference to the *anjuvannam* guild.²²¹

Nanadesi

The Eramam Calapuram Inscriptions mention about *Nanadesikal* and *Valaericiars*.²²² According to a Bellary inscription of AD 1177, *Nanadesi*, merchants traded in Lata, Cola, Malayala, Kannada and Telunge regions and they met in an assembly and made certain gifts to a temple.²²³ A term *Ubhaya Nanadesi* occurring in certain records has been taken to denote the twofold classes of mercantile guilds trading inside and outside the country.²²⁴ Certain Pandyan inscriptions also refer to *Nanadesikal* in its territory.²²⁵

An elaborate *prasasti* of the *Ubhaya Namadesis* and gifts to a Budha-Vihara and a temple of Taradevi in the presence of the sixteen *settis* of Dharmavolal and Mahanagara are referred to in a record from Dambal²²⁶ (Dharwar district). All the above mentioned evidences points to the fact that *Nanadesai* had enjoyed a significant role in the commercial process of Medieval South India.

²²⁰ M.G.S.Narayanan, op.cit, p.489, also see, *K.P.Velayudhan, Trade and Trade Guilds*, Calicut 1979, P-24

²²¹ Ibid also see, D.C.Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p.21

²²² M.G.S.Narayanan, *Keralathinte Atisthana Silakal*, Pp.79-92, also see ICI, No:A40

²²³ S.I.I, Vol.IX, Pt.I No.297

²²⁴ PB.Desai, *Jainism in south India* , Calicut, 1993, Pp.275-76

²²⁵ K.V.Raman, *Same Aspects of Pandyan History in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, Madras, 1972

²²⁶ IA, Vol.X, 185 F

Valanjiyar

Valanjiyar was an important trade guild which had actively functioned in medieval south India of which several references are found in the Cera inscriptions of Eramam Pantalayani Kollam, Muduvallur Peruvamba and Godapuram.²²⁷ Medieval *manipravalam* literature, *Unnichirutevi caritam* refers to *Valanciyar* as follows:-

“Enrivannam Vassi Parannu Valanciyarapica

Pariccantarun enrirukurunday dristadrista

Phalabhavangal iranduntunayayporinro

Cila nayanmareppa syaresakutuha lamp”²²⁸

Besides these merchant organizations several other organizations were also prevalent during medieval times like *Nalpathennayiravar*, *Aiyavole pathinenbhumitissai*, *Ayiratti ainnootttuvar* and *pathinettupattenathar*. The main area of functioning of *Manigramam* and *Anjuvarnam* was the coastal towns of Kerala which were linked with international transmarine commercial network. It is evident from the signatures of foreigners in the TPCP.²²⁹

The institutional base and character of merchant guilds is evident from the nature of their undertakings. They made donations to religious institutions and contributed to charitable works irrespective of caste and religion. Institutions received patronage as well as financial backing from these trading groups. The institutional and administered character is evident from the right to

²²⁷ ICI op.cit; Nos.A.40, 51, 78c, 28 and 29

²²⁸ Aimanam Krishna Kaimal, (ed), *Unniccirutevi Caritam*, Gadyam, 26, Kottayam, 1968, p.39

²²⁹ Raghava Varrier, Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram* (Mal), Sukapuram ,1991, op cit, p.149

collect taxes and other privileges in the case of Maruvam Sapir Iso at Kollam and 7 privileges and their hereditary enjoyment in the case of Joseph Raban of Kodungallor and over the *nagaram* and the dignified title of ‘Cheraman Perumcetti’ in the case of Iravi kortan of Makotai Pattinam. The merchant guilds also had military power and they maintained their own troops. As the state system, had not developed, the troops of merchant caravans called *eriviras* or *munnaiviras* extended their service to the protected areas known as *Erivira pottanas*.²³⁰ These trade organizations lost prominence and gradually disappeared.²³¹

Some Aspects of Modes of Exchange

Medieval coins were already discussed in Chapter III. In continuance of the discussion of medieval markets certain aspects of modes of exchange and transactions are discussed briefly in the coming pages as a conclusion to this chapter. From the tenth to twelfth centuries a gold-paddy ratio, i.e., 1 *kalancu* of gold is equivalent to 20 *paras* of paddy was prevalent in Kerala.²³² By the tenth and eleventh centuries paddy had become a criterion of value and the prices of commodities were assessed in terms of paddy also. It was not an exclusive barter system of exchange. The Thiruvalla inscriptions provide the exchange rates of several commodities in the market. (See the table below).

²³⁰ K.R.Venkata Rama Aiyar, *Medieval Trade, Craft and Merchant Guilds, Journal of Indian History*, vol.XXV, pt.3 December, 1947, No.5

²³¹ Burton Sterin, *Coromandel Trade in Medieval South India*, Madras, 1984, p-2, Vijayalakshmi.M, *Trade and Trading Centres in Kerala, AD 800-1500*, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Calicut, 1997, op-cit p.176.

²³² *Kollur Madham Copper Plates*, line 15-2. SBM, Kollam Nalam Sathakam, p.11 and Tirukkadithanam Inscription, 943 A.D, TA, Vol.II, Par. II, Pp.36-37

Table No.4.2

Price of Select Commodities in terms of paddy

Sl.No	Commodity	Quantity	Price
1.	Sandal paste	10 kanam	5 nali of paddy
2.	Camphor	5 kanam	40 ”
3.	Akil	10 kanam	10 ”
4.	Oil	5 nali	26 para
5.	Pepper	1 nali	10 nali of paddy
6.	Cumin	1 nali	10 ”
7.	Asafoetida	1 palam	2 para of paddy
8.	Green gram	10 nali	2 ”
9.	Betel leaves and proportionate number of arecanuts	10,000 numbers	15 ”

Source : TI, lines 403 and 438; TAS Vol.III, Trivandrum, 1990, Pp.149-51

Along with the indigenous coins *kasu*, *palamkasu*, *calaka* and *panam*, *dinar* was used in the case of large amounts and in foreign transactions. Though coin-use was very limited during the early medieval period gold-paddy ratio remained almost stable for about 300 years. During the twelfth century there seems a limitation and scarcity in the use of coined money in Kerala, but its abundance is visible in the thirteenth century. This is evident from the contemporary *manipravalam* literature wherein coins such as *kasu*, *accu*, *panam*, *pakam*, *calaka*, *taram* and *thiramam* etc. are referred to several times.²³³ There are a large number of references about *accu* in inscriptions.²³⁴ The presence of smaller denominations of the above mentioned coins like *arapanam* (*half panam*), *aratiramam* (*half tiramam*), *kaltiramam* (*1/4 tiramam*) *kal panam* (*1/4 panam*) etc. gives clues to the use of these coins in smaller transactions also. The table below provides a general picture of coins under circulation in medieval Kerala till 1600 A.D.

²³³ *Unniaticaritam*, gadyam, 19; *Unniccirutevicaritam*, gadyam , 21; *Unniaccicaritam*, gadyam,18; *Ananthapuravarnanam* V- 69-73

²³⁴ *Kilimanoor Inscription*, TAS, Vol.V. Part.I, p.63

Table No.4.3

Pre- modern coins of Kerala(till 1500 A.D)

Sl.no	Coin	Area of the Source	Period of circulation	Source of information
1.	Kasu	Kollam/Venad	9th century and 13th to 15 th century	Inscriptions and indigenous literature
2.	Palamkasu	Trikkakara	9th to 10th century.	Inscriptions
3.	Dinar	Vazhapalli / Nanrulai nadu (Tiruvalla, Chengannur)	9th century	Inscriptions and foreign accounts
4.	Accu and anaiaccu	Venad and Wayand	12th to 14 th century.	Inscriptions and Indigenous literature
5.	Alakaccu	- do -	12th century	Inscriptions
6.	Calaka	Venad and Wayanad	12th to 14 th century	Inscriptions and Indigenous literature
7.	Pakam	Valluvanad (Present Ponnani- Perinthalmanna)	11th to 13 th century	- do -
8.	Panam	Venad, Kochi, Valluvanad and Kozhikode	12 th to 15 th century	Inscriptions and Indigenous literature
9.	Pon	Venad	13 th to 14 th century	Inscriptions literature
10.	Guiika	Vempolinad (Vaikam -	14th to 15 th century	Indigenous literature
11.	Tiramam	Valluvanad	14 th century	Inscriptions literature
12.	Taram	Kozhikode and Kochi	15 th to 15 th century	Foreign account
13.	Mummuri	- do -	- do -	- do -
14.	Muntiyavattu	- do -	- do -	- do -
15.	Makani	- do -	15th century	- do -

Source M.R.Raghava Varier, *Madhyakaala Keralama, Sampath, Samooham, Samskaram*, Calicut and Vijayalakshmi.M, *Trade and Trading Centres in Kerala, A.D 800-1500*, Ph.D dissertation, University of Calicut, 997

As pointed out earlier in Chapter III, attention has been drawn by scholars to almost a total absence of indigenous currency in large areas of south India between the seventh to tenth centuries.²³⁵ In contrast to these positions we could observe wider and increased level of monetization in Kerala according to the inscriptions and medieval *manipravalam* literature. The range of the coins in circulation was not limited to Kerala, but it had a wide span

²³⁵ Chattopadhyaya B.D, *Coins and Currency Systems in South India*, New Delhi, 1976, p.118

throughout present day Karnataka and Tamilnadu, with certain amount of standardization as to the values concerned. Wider level of coin and money use is explicit from the abundant availability of copper and silver coins in Kerala.

The medieval inscriptions shed light on certain exchange rates of some commodities in terms of paddy like that of 10 *kanam* of sandal paste for five *nali* (*nazhi*) of paddy, five *kanam* of camphor for 40 *nali* of paddy, 10 *kanam* of akil for 10 *nali* of paddy,²³⁶ 5 *nali* of oil for 26 *parai* of paddy, 1 *nali* of pepper for 10 *nali* of paddy, 60 bunch of ripe plantains and seven bunch of unripe plantains for 100 *nali* of paddy, 10,000 *betal* leaves and proportionate quantity of arecanuts for 15 *nali* of paddy and 10 *kanam* of camphor for 40 *nali* of paddy.²³⁷

The decree of Moovidam by Sthanu Ravi of A.D. 861 provides for lands with income of 160 *para* of paddy for the special rites regarding the celebration of *Aavani Onam* in Thiruattuvay Siva temple at Thiruvalla²³⁸. *Thirupuliyur Grandavari* also mentions provisions for 120, 80, 125 *paras* of paddy from various *nilams* (paddy fields) respectively for ‘Thiruvonam’ festivals in Sree Vallabha Temple at Thiruvalla. A measurement of *narayam* is mentioned in the *Grandhavari* for measuring paddy.²³⁹ *Narayam* or *naracham* is a vessel used for measuring cereals in temples. The term *para* as a unit of measurement was used also to denote the area of agricultural land where paddy was cultivated. It is on the basis of the *paras* of seeds sowed in *nilams* of a specific area. This usage still exists all over Kerala. The commonly accepted standard of measurement in *paras* is that one *para* is equivalent to 10 *edangazhi*, 1

²³⁶ TI, line 407-408.

²³⁷ TI line no: 419-431

²³⁸ Vol.II, Part.1, p.85. also see, P.Unnikrishnan Nair, *Thirupuliyur Granthavari*, SSS, MahatmaGandhi University, Kottayam, 2002, Pp.19-20

²³⁹ Ibid,p.19

edangazhy equivalent to 4 *nali*. 1 *para* of 'seed paddy' is required for cultivating 1 acre of *nilam* and hence 1 acre paddy field was called '1 *para nilam*'. (This measurement prevails even today with slight regional variations).

Desabhogam was a regional tax collected by temples in several areas of central Kerala. According to a record, Thirupuliyur temple received 6000 *paras* of paddy as 'pattam' or share from the temple-owned lands (both *nilam* and *purayidam*) per year. The criterion of collection was 1 *edangazhi* of paddy for 10 *edangazhi nilam* (equivalent of 1 *para*)²⁴⁰ The measurement of land in paras can be seen in *Thirupuriyur grandhavari*.²⁴¹ It refers to *narayam* also.²⁴²

In short, the above discussion on medieval trade and markets extends further scope for investigation into the components of market formation, urban growth, triangular inter-relationship with production, distribution and consumption, increased use of coined money and institutionalization of trade. The seven centuries from 800 A.D expose the growth of urban centres on the coastal Malabar which were linked with trans-marine commercial network.

By the close of the period of the study chaffering in *angadis* seems to diminish considerably and trade in terms of wider use of coined money was manifested. A significant element of trade of this period was the active presence of trade guilds with intra and inter-regional footholds. The social and economic life of medieval Kerala pictures in a glittering manner in the rural markets, known as *cantas*, or *angadis* which were modal points that answered to the daily needs of the people. Agricultural products, ideas and information were exchanged in these rural *angadis*. The *malangadis* and *allangadis* and the weekly fairs point to the institutionalization of the system. The doors of our interior markets were open to inter-continental commerce as Jews, Christians,

²⁴⁰ P.Unnikrishnan Nair, op,cit;p.27

²⁴¹ Ibid,p.54 and 65

²⁴² Ibid, pp.30-31 and 34

Chinese, Arabs and finally by the eve of fifteenth century the Portuguese traded with this land. The period witnessed the spread of cultivation of spices and other cash crops catering to the needs of the foreign traders. This commercialization of agriculture enriched the economy though the beneficiaries of this richness was not the common man. Trade exposed our rural economy to inter- national money market in terms of the price of spices which resulted in the enhanced use of coined money.