

# Roman Trade Centres in Malabar

(By P. J. Thomas, M. A., B. Litt., Ph. D.)

Malabar was the premier entrepot of Roman trade in the East, and no part of India was better known to the Romans than the Malabar Coast. This was due partly to the existence of rare commodities in Malabar, and partly to the direction of the monsoon winds which in the days of sailing vessels decided the course of navigation. The pepper, teak and ivory, and possibly also the beryl, ginger and cardamom of Malabar have always been known to the commercial nations of the world, and there is evidence going back to 3000 B.C. that some of these rare products of Malabar were being used in Babylon and Egypt, in China and Tartary. In historical times, the Phoenicians were the first to control the spice trade of Malabar; next come the Romans, and under them the trade received unprecedented encouragement and expanded considerably.

In the early days, apparently, this trade with the western nations was carried on along the coasts of the Arabian Sea, reaching the Mediterranean either through the Red Sea or through the Persian Gulf and thence by land. This was a circuitous route; it took a long time and the dangers of voyage were great. But sometime about the middle of the 1st century (possibly 47 A. D.) a venturesome navigator called Hippalus discovered that by availing themselves of the monsoon winds, ships could sail from the Red Sea ports straight across the ocean and reach India in 40 days. This secret seems to have been known among the South Indian and Arab sailors; but they jealously guarded it.<sup>1</sup> To the Romans,

therefore, the discovery of Hippalus marked a new era, and the wind itself came to be called 'Hippalus'.<sup>2</sup> The importance of this discovery and the fillip it gave to Roman trade is well-recognised in *contemporary Roman writings*.<sup>3</sup> It gave to Rome the control of the Indian trade and made it the leading commercial nation of the world. The direction of the wind led the ships straight to the Malabar Coast, and Muziris (now Cranganore) was the first port touched in India.<sup>4</sup> Ships would sail in July from Cape Guardafui and by throwing the ship's head off the wind with a constant pull on the rudder and a shift of the yard, Muziris was reached in 40 days. Pliny calls Muziris 'the nearest mart in India'. Those who wanted to go to other parts of India would then continue their journey by coastal vessels. The ships would then take cargo and would sail back to the Red Sea mouth in December, when the north-east monsoon sets in.

It was thus that Malabar became the chief scene of Roman trade activity in the East. Pliny's *Natural History* and the *Periplus* by an unknown author contain a fairly detailed account of Malabar ports, and in Ptolemy's *Geography* (about 150 A. D.) the account is much fuller. Not only ports but inland towns are mentioned and their distance from one another is roughly indicated.

Pepper was the staple commodity of Roman trade, and formed the great bulk of the cargo

2. *Periplus* (Ed. Schoff) Sec. 57, p. 45.

3. *Periplus*, *Ibid* and p. 227—230; Pliny, *Natural History*, VI. 26.

4. Pliny, *Ibid*.

1. See J. H. A. S., 1898, pp. 248—87.

of Roman vessels. Further at that time, all the pepper available for trade came from Malabar. Pepper was from ancient times an important culinary spice in Europe, and was used to season food and preserve meat. It was also an unavoidable ingredient of medicines, and is commended by Hippocrates (who calls it the "Indian remedy") and by Galen, Pliny, Celsus and other writers who deal with medicine<sup>5</sup>. In Rome, the use of pepper seems to have become very popular from the time of Augustus and according to Pliny (XII. 14) its price was as high as 15 denarii (about Rs. 7) per pound. The price in India was not more than half that sum and the profit realized was therefore 100 per cent, according to Pliny<sup>6</sup>. After the discovery of the monsoons and the consequent facilitation of transport its price seems to have fallen, but this made its demand elastic and such vast quantities had to be imported that about the year 192 A. D. special warehouses called *horrea piperataria* were erected near the Sacra-via. It was ground in pepper mills (*molas piperatariae*), or mortars, and sold in paper packets in Campus Martius and other market places. The pots or dishes (often of silver) in which pepper was brought to the table was called *piperatoria*<sup>7</sup>. Pliny attacked the atrocious tastes of those who needed pepper to whet their appetite. "It is quite surprising that the use of pepper has come so much into fashion seeing that it is sometimes their substance and sometimes their appearance that has attracted our notice; whereas, pepper has nothing in it that can plead as a recommendation to either fruit or berry, its

only desirable quality being a certain pungency; and yet it is for this that we import it all the way from India! Who was the first to make trial of it as an article of food? And why, I wonder, was the man that was not content to prepare himself by hunger only for the satisfying of a greedy appetite"<sup>8</sup>. In spite of such strictures the import trade in pepper grew and vast profits were made by merchants. In 408, when Alaric the Goth, laid siege to Rome, the terms he offered for raising the siege included the immediate payment of 3000 pounds of pepper along with other similar valuables<sup>9</sup>.

Although the pepper trade brought vast profits to individual Romans its effect on public finances was ruinous. While exporting valuable commodities in large quantities India imported very little from Rome, and therefore the trade with India led to a drain of gold from Rome. Malabar, in particular, had plenty of valuable commodities to export but needed little in return. In result, gold and silver coin had to be shipped to Malabar to pay for imports to Rome. In this way, a vast quantity of Roman coins came into India and this country came to be regarded as the 'sink of precious metals'. The numerous finds of Roman coins in South India bear eloquent testimony to the heavy importation of gold and silver into this country. Of the several thousand coins that have been discovered in India, the greater part was found on the Malabar coast and the adjoining districts of Coimbatore and Madura. They are mostly of the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius and Claudius. The Tamil poems of the time also bear testimony to the importation of gold to Malabar ports. In *Akananuru*

5. Warmington, *Roman Trade with India*, pp. 181-83; Schoff, *Periplus*, pp. 21-15.

6. Pliny, VI. 101.

7. Warmington, *op. cit.*, pp. 183, 303

8. Pliny, XII. 14.

9. Schoff, *Periplus*, p. 214.

a Tamil work written in the first or second century A. D., it is stated that 'the Yavanas came in large vessels carrying gold and returned with pepper'<sup>10</sup>.

## II

The principal centres of Roman trade in Malabar were Muziris, Tyndis, Barake (or Bakare) and Nelynda. Besides these, several inland towns and minor places are mentioned by the Geographer Ptolemy (150 A. D.) whose knowledge of Malabar was rather minute for a foreign writer of that time.

Muziris, called Muchiri in Tamil and Muzirikkodu in Malayalam, was the capital of the Chera kingdom in ancient days<sup>11</sup>. It was formerly identified with Mangalore, but the mistake soon became clear

10. There are also similar passages in *Purananuru*, a contemporary work.

See Kanakasabai Pillai, *Tamils 1800 years ago*.

11. See Mr. K. G. Sesha Aiyar's paper on Vanchi, pages 249—256 ante.

—T. K. Joseph

In early Tamil works the capital of the Chera kings is also called Vanji, Karur and Makodai, and in certain Malayalam works Tiruvani-kulam. Possibly these are all parts of the same city, and Muchiri must have been the port adjoining the capital. Karur occurs in the name Karurpadanai, a village near Cranganore, and Makodai is mentioned in certain Tamil works and old Syrian Christian documents. Ptolemy called it Karoura. Warmington, *op. cit.*, pp. 59 & 114, identifies Karoura with Parur, a town adjoining Cranganore on the other side of the river, but this identification is not correct. To Dr. Burnell belongs the credit of having identified Muziris with Cranganore.

and Burnell identified it with modern Cranganore. Being located on the mouth of the river Pariyar (Ptolemy called it Pseudostomos, false-mouth) it was accessible to traders from the interior. Early Tamil works speak of Muchiri as a great port, and quite probably it was the port where Phoenicians and Arabs collected Malabar produce. But it was during the Roman connection that it reached the zenith of its fortune. The discovery of the monsoons by Hippalus made Muziris the gate of India, the first and foremost port of call for trading vessels from Alexandria or Arabia, from China and Siam. According to all accounts it must have been an extremely busy place, crowded with ships and craft of all kinds at its harbour, with large warehouses and bazaars adjoining it, and with stately palaces and places of worship in the interior. There the native traders came with their cargo in 'vallams' hewed out of a single tree and emptied it into the large and spacious Yavana ships and Chinese junks. The merchandise taken at Miziris consisted of pepper, in large quantities, Malabathrum, beryl, pearls, ivory, silkcloth, spikenard, diamonds and sapphires and tortoise-shell. What malabathrum exactly was there is still some doubt. Earlier writers like Heeren, Vincent and McCrindle, translated the word into 'betel', but more recent writers like Schoff and Warmington think that it was the leaf of the cinnamon tree (*Tamala-patra*, Sans.)<sup>12</sup>. Ginger in those days was exported chiefly from Ceylon and does

12. Schoff, *Periplus*, pp. 218—19; Warmington, *op. cit.*, p. 186. Cinnamon seems to have been a trade monopoly of the Somalis of African Coast, and it is not mentioned as an article of import by Roman writers. This was a trade secret of the Somalis.

not figure definitely among the exports from Malabar. Beryl, or blue-stone, possibly existed in Malabar but it was chiefly the produce of Coimbatore and Salem<sup>13</sup>. Ivory and tortoise shell are distinctly Malabar produce, but the rest may have come from other parts of the Peninsula.

The merchandise imported into India consisted of Roman coin in large quantities, topaz, thin clothing, figured linen, antimony, coral, crude glass, copper, tin, lead, wine, realgar and orpiment<sup>14</sup>. The bazaars of Cranganore must have been like those of Colombo and Cairo in modern times abounding in all kinds of luxury goods, strange drinks and beverages and curious trinkets. The Tamil poet, Nakkirar writes of the Pandya King drinking "the cool and fragrant wine brought by the Yavanas in their good ships"; and references to Yavana wine are numerous. Among the imports at Barygaza (Broach), mention is made by *Periplus* of singing boys and pretty maidens for the harem, and although such wares are not expressly mentioned among the imports to Malabar, there is evidence to believe that Malabar too had a share in that trade. Nor were the Romans mere travelling pedlars, but powerful merchants with political power at the back, and so important had Malabar trade become to Rome and so prominent a resort of Romans had Muziris become that, according to the Peutinger Table, a Roman temple dedicated to Augustus was erected in that city and two Roman cohorts were stati-

oned there to guard the warehouses<sup>15</sup>. This statement is not supported by other evidence, but we have a statement in a contemporary Tamil poem that there were Yavana soldiers and mercenaries in the service of the Chera king and that they struck terror into the hearts of the beholders by their stern looks.

Muziris was then and even subsequently the centre of all non-vedic religions. Tamil literature speaks of the Buddhist viharas and Jaina chaityas there; it had also the celebrated shrine of Kannaki, whose story is related in *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai*. Jews and Arabs and Persians had perhaps colonised at Muziris for trade purposes and each such colony occupied a separate quarter of the town. In 50 A. D. the Apostle Thomas is believed to have landed at Muziris, the exact place of landing being Maliankara, which was formerly a Christian pilgrim centre. In 345, a Syrian merchant called Thomas Knayi (Thomas of Cana) is believed to have settled down there with 400 colonists, and Cosmas who wrote about 526 A. D. speaks of the Persian colonists in Ceylon. The Christian headquarters was Makodai, close to the Chera King's palace, and nearly every Syrian Christian family north of Tiruvalla still claims Makodaipattanam as its original home. After the Romans withdrew, these Syrian colonists shared with the Jews the foreign trade of Muziris, and they were responsible for the collection of the king's customs. Tradition says that sometime after the 9th century, the Arabs set fire to Makodai and that the Christians fled to Angamali (near Kaladi) which then became their headquarters.

15. Warmington *op. cit.*, p. 58; Charlesworth *op. cit.*, p. 70.

13. Charlesworth's statement (*Trade Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire*, 1924 p.69) that "the Beryl mines of Cranganore were famous" does not seem to be based upon fact.

14. *Periplus*, Sec. 56.

The great flood of 1341 seems to have changed the course of trade as well as of rivers. It opened a passage from the Cochin back-water to the sea and made the land-locked town of Cochin one of the first harbours in India. It was also in that year that the Vaipin island was formed and the era of Puduvaippu starts from 1341<sup>16</sup>. Cochin and Calicut then took the place of Cranganore as the premier trade centres in Malabar.

### III

To the north of Muziris, the principal ports mentioned by Ptolemy (150 A. D.) are Naura<sup>17</sup> and Tyndis. Naura may be Neromara, but Schoff identified it with Cannanore. Tyndis has been identified with Kadalundi near Beypore<sup>18</sup>. As inland towns are mentioned Naroulla, Kouba and Paloura. Of these Paloura must be Palayur, in South Malabar, where a Jewish colony and a Syrian church existed from ancient times. It seems to have been also a celebrated Brahmin centre in by-gone days. Kouba has been identified, with Goa, but it might as well be Kavvayi, 10 miles north of Cannanore.

To the south of Muziris, the principal centres of trade were Barake (Bakare) and Nelcynda, which were both on the river Baris. Between the Periar and Baris rivers,

16. See *Indian Antiquary*, 1902, p. 339.

17. Naura sounds very much like Naravu (നറവു) the name of a place near the west coast, where resided Adukodpattu Cheralatan (ആദുകോട്ടപാട്ടുചേരരാജൻ) step brother of Chenkuttuvan who reigned in Vanchi. Cp. *Patittuppathu*, VI. —T. K. Joseph

18. Ptolemy's Geography (Ed. McCrindle), p. 50.

a few inland towns are mentioned by Ptolemy—Passage, Mastanour, Kourellour, Pounnata, Aloe, Karura, Arembour, Bideris, Pantipolis, Adarima and Koreoura. As coastal towns are mentioned Podopereura and Semne.

It is difficult to identify these towns, especially as Ptolemy's map is very defective. Passage may be Puzhaku, a town in the hilly region of North Travancore. Mastanour may be Mattanur in North Malabar, and by mistake mentioned as having been in the south. Kourellour may be Kudallur, a town in the Cumbum valley, Madura District. Pounnata may be Poonjat (Poonjar) the seat of a chieftain who was formerly a tributary of the Pandya king. According to some, Pounnata was a town in Mysore, but the only reason for this identification is that Beryl which is associated with that town, existed chiefly in those parts<sup>19</sup>. Aloe is doubtless<sup>20</sup> Alwaye, the celebrated bathing resort on the Periar which was well-known formerly as the seat of a Hindu temple.

Karura is marked as the royal seat of the Cheraputras, and is located on the Periar river. This is quite probably Tirukarur, in North Travancore, which although now a petty village is mentioned in the Keralolpathi as a Chera capital. It is believed that there were Buddhist and Jain viharas there and that the Tamil work Silappadikaram, was written there. Kanakasabhai Pillai

19. Warmington, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

20. Identification based on similarity of sounds in place names may or may not be correct. Such identifications are in most cases made on the gratuitous assumption that those places were important and also bore those names in the first and second centuries.

—T. K. Joseph

was the first to make this identification and his line of reasoning in this matter is convincing<sup>21</sup>. Adarima may be Adirampuzha, near Kottayam, an ancient market place. Koreoura may be Kothora, near Vaikam in Travancore, or Karur, the well-known town on the Amravati river in Coimbatore district. Podopereura and Semne seem to have been Udiyamerur (the Diamper of the Portuguese) and Chemp, two towns of historical importance on the shores of the Vempanad lake in North Travancore. They were both centres of trade and had Syrian Christian colonies from ancient times.

Baris is evidently the river Pampa (or Pampayar), which flows across the region formerly celebrated for pepper. That river and the country south of it seem to have been in the kingdom of Pandya in Roman times. Pliny (50-60 A. D.), the author of the *Periplus* (60 to 75 A. D.) and Ptolemy (150 A. D.) agree in this view. When Ptolemy wrote, however, the power of the Pandyas seems to have been waning and the Ays (the earliest ruling dynasty of South Travancore) seem to have dominated the country extending from Baris down to Cape Comorin. Possibly between 60 and 150 A. D., the Ay chieftains had established their power and had become independent of Pandyas, whose capital was Madura<sup>22</sup>.

21. Kanagasabai, Tamils 18 Hundred years ago; *J. A.*, 1902, p. 813-14. (For another identification by Mr. K. G. Sessa Aiyar, see *ante*, p. 250. —T. K. J.)

22. *Periplus* (ed. Schoff), para 54 (p. 44); Pliny op. cit. VI. 26; Ptolemy (ed. McCrindle); Kanakasabhai, *Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, *passim*; Warmington, op. cit. 59.

Barake (Bakare)<sup>23</sup> was a port on the mouth of river Baris (Pampayar) and Nelcynda was an inland city on the river. At the time of Pliny (50 to 60 A. D.) Barake was apparently a more convenient port than Muziris. He says: "This (Muziris), however, is not a very desirable place for disembarkation, on account of the pirates who frequent its vicinity, where they occupy a place called Nutrias;<sup>24</sup> nor, in fact, is it very rich in articles of merchandise. Besides, the roadstead for shipping is a considerable distance from the shore, and the cargoes have to be conveyed in boats, either for loading or for discharging. At the moment that I am writing these pages, the name of the king of this place is Caesobothras<sup>25</sup>. Another port and a much more convenient one, is that which lies in the territory of the people

23. Pliny gives it as Barake, and Pliny has given fuller details of the place than any other writers (VI. 26.)

24. Almost all early travellers speak of pirates on the Malabar coast. *Periplus* speaks of pirates, just to the north of Tyndus (page 53). Pliny, too, says they were near Muziris; and Ptolemy calls Malabar the land of pirates. This is confirmed by Marco Polo (III, Chaps. 24, 25). This simply testifies to the existence of native shipping at the time, and to the fact that all ports were not regarded open to foreigners.

25. Keralaputra, curiously enough the same name as used in Asokan edicts. That was not the name of the particular king but the common family name. Pliny did not know the custom among eastern kings to have a common surname. Pandyan is equally

called Neacyndi, Barake by name<sup>26</sup>. Here king Pandian used to reign, dwelling at a considerable distance from the mart, in the interior, at a city known as Modiera. The district from which pepper is carried down to Barake in boats hollowed out of a single tree, is known as Kottonara. None of these names of nations, ports and cities are to be found in any of the former writers, from which circumstance it would appear, that the localities have since changed their names." Periplus, which must have been written after Pliny, does not agree with the above statement. It clearly states that Muziris was the principal port and calls Barake a village, where ships laden with pepper from Nelcynda "drop down", because the river is 'full of shoals and the channels are not clear'. "And as a sign to those approaching these places from the sea, there are serpents coming forth to meet you, black in colour, but shorter, like snakes in the head, and with blood red eyes."<sup>27</sup> Evidently, therefore, Muziris had the bulk of the pepper trade.

By Ptolemy's time, Barake and Nelcynda seem to have ceased to be legal marts. In his map, Barake is marked in the territory of Cheraputra and Nelcynda in the Ay region. It must have been due partly to the withdrawal of Pandyan patronage, and

possibly also to the deliberate suppression of those marts by the Cheras who were interested in giving the monopoly to Muziris<sup>28</sup>. At any rate, the result was that for a long time afterwards and till the foundation of Kollam (Quilon) in the 9th century, Muziris had no serious rival on the West Coast. But the change came in 1341, as mentioned above.

The question of identifying Barake and Nelcynda has exercised the imagination of several scholars. Yule thought Nelcynda was Kallada, an otherwise unknown village in Travancore. Kanakasabhai Pillai identified Baris with Meenachil river and Barake (Bakare) with Vaikkarai, near Kottayam, and as for Nelcynda, he found for it a little-known interior village called Nirkunnam in Minachil. Mr. Vincent Smith approved of Kanakasabhai's identification and gave it currency among historical writers. But all this was the work of people who knew little of the history and topography of Malabar. The Meenachil river was hardly ever navigable except during the Monsoon Season and Vaikkarai was never a port. There is every likelihood of Baris having been river Pampa (Pampayar), which is next to Periar the largest and most navigable river on the West Coast, and Barake must have been Poracad, south of Alleppey. The fertile and extensive valley of the Pampa has always been celebrated for pepper, and its depth and width made it navigable for a fairly long distance. The single-stem boats have always been used in its waters and sailing was not dangerous, except for the numerous brood of alligators which flourished there. Poracad is phonetically allied to Barake; it was called

26. The river Pampa was wide and deep at its mouth and apparently afforded excellent anchorage. (Baris may be the Greek form of the latter part of the name *Pam-payar*, meaning the Pampa River. — T. K. J.)

27. The passage is of doubtful import. The serpents referred to may be alligators which till lately infested the deeper rivers and backwaters of Malabar. The description given "like snakes in the head and with blood red eyes" fits in with alligators.

28. Warmington favours the latter view (op. cit. p. 114.)

Porca or Porcai by the Portuguese and the Dutch. It is an ancient Malabar port and till the rise of Alleppey in the late 18th century, it was the principal port of the coast-land between Cochin and Quilon. It is mentioned by Varthema (1503) and by Tavernier (1648) and figures prominently in the Portuguese and Dutch records. They had fortified it and ruins of the fortifications stood there until fifty years ago. Even after the foundation of Alleppey, ships used to call at Porakad in the Monsoon Season. The people of Porakad have been seafaring and even as late as 1770, they owned ships and pattamars and traded with Ceylon and with the coastal ports of South India <sup>29</sup>.

Nelcynda is called Meacindi by Pliny, Melcynda by Ptolemy and Nincylida by the Peutinger Tables. Its identification is difficult, but if Baris is Pampa, as argued above, then Nelcynda must be Niranam, about 12 miles east of Porakad. In *Keralolpathi*, one of the southernmost of the 64 Nambudri brahmin gramams of Malabar is called Niganda

29. The Pampa river now empties itself into the Vempanad lake and not into the sea, but this must have been due to a change of course. Even now a blind stream of the Pampa comes upto Porakad.

— P. J. T.

I have been of the opinion that Barake is very probably Porakad. Roman coins are known to have been discovered in Niranam, Puthenkavu, and Ranni all along the Pampa River. Such coins must have been discovered in other Syrian Christian villages on the banks of the Pampa River, but the finds must have been kept secret or regarded as of no historic

(Nirmannu),<sup>30</sup> and as it is mentioned along with Chengannur and Tiruvalla and as there was no Brahmin gramam south of Kānnetti (in Karunagapalli.) we may identify it with modern Niranam. Neacindi (Niganda) might have subsequently become Niranam. The church at Niranam is one of the seven

30. All the printed *Keralolpathis* and one manuscript copy that I have examined give the name as Nirman or Nirmann<sup>o</sup> (നിർമ്മൻ നിർമ്മണ<sup>o</sup>). The form Niganda was found by Gundert in one MS. only, and he gives it in his edition in a footnote, retaining Nirmann<sup>o</sup> in the text, which is the very form occurring in oral tradition too. So Niganda had better be regarded as a copyist's error, and Nirman or Nirmann<sup>o</sup> taken as the correct form. If, however, Nelcynda be taken as a mistake for Nelmynda it will bear some resemblance to Nirmannu. But can Niranam be a corrupt form of Nirman or Nirmann<sup>o</sup>?

Meacyndi and Melcynda are the forms found in Pliny and Ptolemy. Mushikakhandam, the name of the southernmost of the four divisions of ancient Kerala, sounds approximately like these two forms. It may be that Pliny's "territory of the people called Meacyndi" is perhaps this Mushikakhandam, although according to some texts of the *keralolpathi* it is not the southernmost division, and the river Pampa, Porakkad, and Niranam are included in another division called Kerala-khandam extending from Putuppattanam to Kānnetti. Nedunkanda near Warkala is south of Kerala-khandam.

The confusion of capital alpha, lambda and delta in Greek (Α, Λ, Δ) is possible as in Damylika-Lamylika and Meacyndi-Mel



churches said to have been founded by the Apostle Thomas. According to the 'Periplus', Nelcynda was 500 stadia away from Muziris and 120 stadia from Barake. These distances are fairly correct if we take Nelcynda to be Niranam and Barake to be Porakad. The commercial importance of Niranam possibly explains why it is mentioned as one of the principal places visited by St. Thomas in Malabar<sup>31</sup>.

Barake was the chief port for pepper and the region where pepper grew in large quantities was called Cottonara<sup>32</sup>. That place has been identified by Burnell with Kolathu-nad (in North Malabar) and by Buchanan with Kadathanad (in South Malabar). It is true that North Malabar has for long produced good pepper, but as Pliny clearly states that pepper was taken from the interior to Barake by boats on the river Baris (Pampa), Kottanara must be the name of the region lying on the banks of the pampa river — i. e., the taluks of Chengannur, Tiruvalla and Ambalapuzha in Travancore. Kuttanad is the name of one of the ancient divisions of Kerala, and its location is now indicated by the fact that the only place now claiming the name Kuttanad is in Ampalappuzha taluk, on the banks of the Pampa. Possibly, the whole valley extending to the east was for-

merly known as Kuttanad<sup>33</sup>. Indeed, at present the banks of Meenachil river are perhaps more famous for pepper, but its pre-eminence is rather modern and some of the principal settlers of that region hailed from the lands adjoining Pampa.

"Beyond Barake", says *Periplus*, "is the Dark Red Mountain<sup>34</sup> and another district stretching along the coast towards the south, called Paralia." (para 58). This certainly refers to the red bluffs, which abut on the coast of Varkalai (8 - 42' N.), called 'Varkalai Beds' by Indian geologists<sup>35</sup>. The

33. Kottonara, the district from which pepper was carried down to Bakare in boats must have been Kuttanadu. This name now denotes only a certain water-logged area in Ampalappula taluk where pepper does not grow at all. But we know that more than a century ago Kuttanad comprised a vast pepper-growing area. For we find in Ward and Conner's Memoir of the survey of Travancore and Cochin, 1816—20 A. D., the following statement: "OF KUTANAAD it comprises twenty-two parities; twelve in Umbalapooly, four in Kotiam, three in Shenganachayra, and three in Yaithumanur." (Pages 57 and 58 of the reprint of 1863.) Of these the first taluk (Ampalappula) is a water-logged tract producing rice and coconut in abundance and having the Vembanad lake in the north and the sea in the west. The other three (Changanasery, Kottayam and Ettumanur) are elevated inland taluks abounding with pepper. The Minachil river flows through Ettumanur and Kottayam.

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34. This is the translation of the word 'Pyrrhon'.

35. See Imperial Gazetteer, Vol. XXIV, p. 300.

31. The credit for properly identifying Nelcynda with Niranam belongs to Mr. I. C. Chacko, formerly Geologist and Director of Industries of the Travancore Government, who cleared up the point in articles written by him in Malayalam newspapers.

32. *Periplus*, Para 56; *Pliny, Nat. Hist.*, VI, 26.

country south of Baris and extending down to Cape Comorin is called 'Paralia' by *Periplus*, but Ptolemy calls it Aioi (Ay), where chieftains of the Ay (Yadava?) clan ruled. Paralia<sup>36</sup> is known to Tamil literature, and denotes the country around Cape Comorin, part of which is now under the sea. The Maharajas of Travancore have even now the title of 'Puralisan', lord of Purala<sup>37</sup>.

The towns mentioned in Paralia by the *Periplus* are Balita and Comari, but *Periplus* gives little guidance about the country south of Baris. Ptolemy, who has a fuller account, mentions Elankon, Kottiarā, Bammala and

36. Rather, the River Pahruli (പാഹുരി) mentioned in *Purananuru* 9, and *Chilappadhi-karan* XI, 18—20. This was south of the Kumari (Comorin) River and Mount Comorin all three of which are said to have been engulfed in the sea. There is now a river called Paraliar flowing through South Travancore.

—T. K. J.

37. Travancore Maharajas are not called Puralisas, although Yule, Barnell Gundert, and some others say so. Puralisas are really the kings of Kottayam in North Malabar. The fact that a famous Puralisa, Kerala Varma, King of Kottayam in North Malabar acted as Regent of Travancore in the troublous times of Umayamma Rani in the 17th cent. may have given rise to the notion that the Travancore Kings are known as Puralisas. Purali kings (പുരളീയന്മാരാണ്) are referred to in *Kokilasana lesa*, I, 43, and Purali (പുരളീയിൽനിന്നുവന്ന പുരളി) in an introductory sloka in a Kathakali song by a younger brother of Kerala Varma mentioned above. In both these cases Purali is Kottayam in North Malabar.

—T. K. J.

Komaria. McCrindle identifies Elankon with Quilon<sup>38</sup>. Kottiarā is doubtless Kottaru, still an important place in South Travancore. This place is called 'Cottara' by Pliny and in the Peutinger Tables. As for Bammala<sup>39</sup> and Balita,<sup>40</sup> there is some doubt. Balita may be Valiatura (big port), a coastal town near Anjengo. Schoff<sup>41</sup> identifies it with Varkalai, but it is not convincing. Komaria (Comari) is evidently cape Comorin (Kanya-kumari). There stands the ancient temple of Durga, the virgin goddess (Parvati) and it is an important place of pilgrimage.

#### IV

It is clear from the topography sketched above that the coast line of Malabar in ancient times was different from what it is now. The sea in those days must have extended up to the edges of the laterite hills. The whole of Chertalai and a good portion of Vaikam, Kottayam and Ambalapuzha taluks and parts of the coastal taluks of the Cochin State must have been then under sea

38. Elankon may be the ancient port of Viliñjam mentioned in a Maranchadayan inscription of the eighth century. A. D. There is a place called Olukana-sseri in South Travancore. There is Elukon also near Kottarakkara.

—T. K. J.

39. Could Bammala be the Greek form of the latter part of Marut—*ramalai*, the name of a very conspicuous hill famous for Rishis and rare medicinal herbs in South Travancore?

—T. K. J.

40. I take Balita to be the latter half of Tiru-vallattu, the name of an old port south of Trivandrum.

—T. K. J.

41. Schoff, op. cit. p. 234—35.

Page 206, col. 1, 1. 2. Moor till two: read—  
since two

„ 206 „ 1 „ 8. he belonged to: he descended from

„ „ „ 2 „ 13. other treasure: gold or treasure

„ 207 „ 1 „ 3. which lay (apart): which lay  $3\frac{1}{2}$  .. distant from the door of the house of the Apostle on the...

„ „ 1 „ 28. went to his kingdom: went home (Reyno, i. e. Portugal)

„ „ „ 1 „ 37. ornament and embellish: prop and garnish

„ „ „ 2 „ 2. ditch: foundation

„ „ „ 2 „ 11. cave (cova): grave

„ „ „ 2 „ 23. China copper-box: China coffer

„ „ „ 2 „ 28. adorn the sanctuary: prop the vault

„ „ „ 2 „ 33. sepulchre of the Apostle and: sepulchre of the Apostle and that they feared that the vault might come down And...

„ 208 „ 1 „ 3. They ordered also the witness to return here: And they also called the witness, who had returned here.

„ „ „ 2 „ 28. of Malabar palm leaf: of an olive-leaf entirely of Malabar iron ..

„ 209 „ 1 „ 11. there apart from: there at the side of the disciple

„ „ „ 1 „ 29. They examined the said Rodrigo etc: They searched for it and made the said Rodrigo Luis declare under oath and he declared"

he was asked: the first point he was asked about.

The above are some of the corrections kindly supplied by the Rev. Fr. N. Figueiredo of San Thome, Mylapore. 'All corrections', he says, 'are based on the text published in *Esplendores* (April 1930) and the corrigenda to be found at the end of its issue of Oct. 1930.' Fr. Carmel was unfortunately unaware of the corrigenda.

## GRAVE & FOUNDATION

(Pages 216, 217)

Fr. Figueiredo says "Re. your quotations on page 216, I would prefer to translate them as follows: 'on the outer border' as 'on the Gospel side, outside.....' 'To ornament and embellish' as 'to prop and embellish', since the document says that the sanctuary was in danger of collapse. 'The rest of the bones and cave lay under the foundation of the sanctuary' as 'the rest of the bones and grave lay under the foundation of the sanctuary'.

The Catholic Register perhaps of January next will [publish] the Portuguese original (from the photo copy) and its English rendering." (Letter of 12—12—1932).

But in his letter of 21-10-1932 the Rev. Fr. Carmel says: "as to your Note 16 after the end of the first Document, I have to observe that the phrase *on the Gospel side on the outer border* cannot be taken as *the outer side of the wall* encircling the sanctuary, without distorting the meaning of the original text. The obvious meaning of that phrase, as it lies in the original, would be *the farthest extremity of the altar on the Gospel side, or the farthest corner of the sanctuary on that side; never the outer side of the wall encircling it*. So also the phrase *under the foundation of the sanctuary* most likely means the *basement of the sanctuary itself, not the foundation of the wall around it*. *Basement* would be perhaps a more appropriate word in the translation."