

ENGLISH
ESSAYS AND POEMS
OF
MAHAKAVI ULLOOR

Selected and Edited

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Travancore and Vijayanagar

Kerala has been described by Camoens as a smiling plain which, fair as a garden, spreads "from the mountain to the surging main." This remark is not inapt, and the name Malayalam given to the country in regard to its position is one by which it has been deservedly known ever since the days of Cosmas.² These two natural boundaries remained more or less permanently fixed, as, in general, the barrier in the east was no more overstepped by its rulers than the barrier in the west. Still there were occasions when the kings of Venad disregarded all tradition and carried their conquests into the very heart of the Pandyan Empire. Those were indeed days of bravery and daring and present a marked contrast to our more peaceful times.

It is in the early decades of the fifteenth century of the Christian era, that we first find Travancore, mistress of a considerable portion of Tinnevely as well. It has not been determined when this grand conquest was actually achieved by our sovereigns ; but it may be remembered that it was the great South Indian invasion of Malik Naib Kafur in 1324 that dealt the final death-blow to the prosperity of the Pandyans.³ On that memorable occasion, Parakrama

Pandya, the ruler of Madura, is said to have sought refuge in South Travancore, taking with him a golden image of his family deity, Narayana Vaitta Perumal, which, however, was subsequently lost there by him with much treasure in a mysterious manner.' We do not know whether Venad took immediate advantage of this disorder in the East, but from what Ibn Batuta " tells us in the middle of the fourteenth century, it may be gathered that the Southern Districts of the Coromandel Coast, or the Malabar Districts as he terms them, were wholly under the control of Muhammadan chiefs. The Sheik even adds that 'Kawlam' was the last city of Malabar and the whole coast was about two months journey.' Within the next fifty years, however, our kingdom appears to have grown so much in power and commercial influence that Nicolo De Conti, writing in the middle decades of the fifteenth century informs us that Quilon, the capital of the kings of Venad, was "a noble city the circumference of which was twelve miles."⁶ We also find an inscription on the inner-stone wall of the Chera-mahādevi temple, which commemorates a grant by the Venad king Chera Udaya Mārtānda Varma to that shrine in 1439 A.D.⁷ Abdur Razzack who visited Southern India in 1442 bears additional testimony to this trans-Ghatian sovereignty of Venad when he says that Malabar extended as far as 'Kabl,' a place situated opposite to the island of Zerendib otherwise called Ceylon.'

Some years later, a large hanging bell, about three feet in diameter at the base, was presented by king Aditya Varma of Venad to the temple of Tirukkuramkuti in Tinnevely.⁹ The Sanscrit verse recording this grant is as follows :-

श्रीमत् कोलंबवर्षे भवति गुणमणिश्रीगिरादित्यवर्मा
 वन्वापालो विशासः प्रभुरखिलकलावद्भूतः पर्यवधनात् ।
 द्वारालङ्कारघण्टां तिलकितजयसिंहान्वयः श्रीकुरङ्ग
 प्रोद्यद्वासो मुरारेरधिगताच्चिरवाङ्मण्डसेन्द्रो नरेन्द्रः ॥

The word भवति in the first line shows that the year of the grant was 644 M. E., corresponding to A. D. 1264. This Aditya Varma was known as Champaka Aditya Varma and consecrated an image of Siva at the northern gate of Krishnankoil in Vadasseri.

In one of his inscriptions found in the Suchindram temple, it is said that the southern limit of the territory of Venad was Vaipar, a town in the Tinnevely District.⁹ His successors, Sri Vira Rama Varma and Sri Udaya Martanda Varma, were also great princes, and we find inscriptions recording their grants in the temples of Suchindram and Warkkalay. Thus it may be concluded that during the whole of the fifteenth century of the Christian era Venad continued to possess territories on the Coromandel Coast, while its sovereigns appear to have been men of considerable prowess and glory.

We have, nevertheless, to pass to the beginning of the sixteenth century to view the full measure of splendour which our country was able to attain in those medieval ages. Sri Vira Udaya Martanda Varma, whose earliest grant, so far as yet known, is dated 1506, and whose latest is dated 1535, was the greatest and the most illustrious of the early sovereigns of Venad. He assumed the surname of Mankonta Pūtalavīrar (மண்கொண்ட பூதலவீரர்), or the hero of the earth who conquered kingdoms. We know from tradition and temple chronicles that he was also known as Puli Martanda Varma and Kalakkat Raja. Kalakkadu, or as it was called in earlier times Cholakulavallipuram, is known to have been a part of the dowry given to a Chola Princess whom Martanda Varma espoused. The word Puli also goes to indicate his connection with the Chola kings of Tanjore. Several donations in favour of the Nagercoil temple were made by this sovereign at the request of Gunavirapandita and Kamalavahanapandita, who were the then proprietors of the shrine. He belonged to the Jayasimhanad or Quilon branch of the Venad royal family and held his court at Quilon. The southern branch of the ruling dynasty lived in Tiruvancode, now a petty coast-town in the Eraniel Taluk, but once a capital of importance from which the country itself may rightly be believed to have taken its name.¹¹ Ludovico Varthema who visited Malabar at the beginning of the sixteenth century, says referring to Martanda Varma—"The king of Colon is a pagan and extremely powerful and he has 20,000 horsemen and many archers and is constantly at war with other kings. At that time the king of the city was the friend of the king of Portugal, but being at war with others, it did not appear to us well to remain

here. Therefore we took our way aforesaid and went to a city which is called Chayl, belonging to the same king, opposite from Colon fifty miles."² Duarte Barbosa too, observes a few years later, "Further along the sea coast is the Cape of Comeri where the Malabar country finished; but the kingdom of Coulam reaches thirty leagues further as far as a city which is called Cael."³ Many inscriptions of this sovereign are found in the temples of the Tinnevely District. Three of the best known are those recording first a grant of land to the Kalakkad temple in 1510 A.D., while the king was residing at the Vira Pandyan Palace there, second a grant to the Mannarcoil temple making provision for lighting a lamp in the palace where his uncle died in 1513, and third a grant to the Chera Chola Pandyesvaram temple at Trikkalur near Alwar Tirunagari in 1532.⁴ The memorable treaty with the Portuguese at Quilon was also concluded by the same monarch in 1516, according to which, King Martanda Varma agreed to build at his own expense, in the same style, and in the same place where it had formerly stood, the church of St. Thomas, and to endow it with the same revenues as it originally possessed. He also further promised to favour and protect the Christians as heretofore, to pay 500 bahars of pepper in three yearly instalments, to let the Portuguese have all the pepper and other spices at the same prices as they paid for them at Cochin and to export no drugs or spices without their consent. In case of war with a common enemy each party promised to assist the other. No ships of Quilon were to enter the strait of Aden, before Cape Guardafui, unless in the service of the Portuguese, and any of the king's subjects whether Natives or Moors who might desire to become Christians were to be at full liberty to do so.⁵ It would even appear, if we may believe what Logan says, that this great king exacted tribute from Ceylon, and kept a corps of three hundred female archers.⁶

While Bhautala Vira Martanda Varma was thus reigning over Venad, the country of Vijayanagar in the north was being governed by the greatest of its sovereigns, Krishna Deva Raya. From a small insignificant chiefship, it was destined for this Hindu kingdom, to grow to be the greatest and most glorious empire in the Dekhan. Even at the time of Abdur Razzack's visit it was the foremost of the kingdoms of Southern India, though till then it had not been able to subdue any portion of Malabar. That shrewd

Muhammadan traveller, after noting that a herald from Vijayanagar arrived at the court of the Zamorin with a letter that he should be instantly sent to the Raya, remarks, "Although the Sameri is not under his authority, nevertheless he is in great alarm and apprehension from him, for it is said that the king of Vijayanagar has 300 seaports every one of which is equal to Calicut and his cities and provinces extend over a journey of three months."¹⁷ Krishna Deva Raya reigned from 1509 to 1529, and the twenty years of his rule were some of the most prosperous and magnificent that South India has ever witnessed. He brought Mysore and the country along the Kavery under his authority, captured the forts of Udayagiri, Kondavid and Kondappalli, overcame the Muhammadans at the battle of Raichur, and invaded Orissa, whose prince was not only compelled to do him homage, but also to give his daughter in marriage to the conqueror.¹⁸ According to Nuniz, the now well-known Portuguese chronicler, the Zamorin of Calicut, as well as a number of other princes previously independent, were the vassals of Krishna Raya. "These," he observes, "when they come to the court of Bisnaga are not held in higher esteem than any other captains either by the king or by any other nobles."¹⁹

It is not possible to determine at what time exactly this relationship was brought about between Vijayanagar and Calicut. The fact, however, need not be questioned as Nuniz was present at the battle-field of Rachur²⁰ and knew too well about Krishna Raya to make an incorrect statement. It may also be pointed out in this connexion that the Keralotpatti records the tradition of an invasion of Malabar by Anagundi Krishna Raya. The Brahmans, so the story goes, thought that there was much confusion in Kerala and so requested Krishna Raya to send a king to rule the country every twelve years. The Raya, according to their request, sent Pandi Perumal and Cheramanperumal to rule the West Coast, but as the latter of these would not depart on the expiry of his term of office, Krishna Deva is said to have sent a considerable army against him to Malabar. The battle lasted for three days and was won for the Perumal chiefly by two youths, Manichchan and Vikkiran, the former of whom, however, lost his life in the field.²¹ This tradition is no doubt absurd in the extreme as the Perumal lived many centuries earlier than Krishna Raya.²² But it cannot be denied that it conceals some historical truth, as many

other passages of the Keralotpatti have been now unquestionably found to do. The vassalage however, if ever there was one, must have been of the slightest kind imaginable, as we fail to see any mention of it in the other Portuguese works on India.

Krishna Deva Raya, nevertheless, does not appear to have marched his victorious army to the extreme south of the Peninsula. That success was destined to be achieved by his successor Achyuta Deva Raya, who reigned over Vijayanagar from 1530 to 1542. In a Conjeeveram inscription of 1534 A.D., it is declared that Achyuta Raya despatched armaments to the kingdom of Tiruvadi or Travancore, planted a pillar of victory on the Tamravarni river, exacted tribute from Tiruvadi, received in marriage the daughter of the Pandyan king, and brought Tumbichchi Naikkan and Salva Naikkan into subjection. "Achyuta Raya conquered Ceylon also a few years later and proved himself to be a fit successor of Krishna Deva Raya." Mr. Sewell calls him a craven and remarks that under him the Hindu Empire began to fall to pieces.²⁵ This is not borne out by epigraphical records.

Why did Achyuta Raya invade Tiruvadi? Nelson in his 'Manual of Madura'²⁶ and Taylor in his 'Tamil Historical Manuscripts' agree²⁷ in thinking that it was on the application of one Chandrasekhara Pandya of Madura, who had been forcibly dispossessed of his kingdom by Virasekhara Chola of Tanjore, that the conquest of the extreme south of the Peninsula was undertaken by the kings of Vijayanagar. But while the latter takes the event to Krishna Raya's reign, the former brings it down to some time after 1547. This last is manifestly absurd as even the final invasion of Travancore by Vijayanagar is definitely known to have occurred before 1545, and the conquest of Tanjore must have certainly taken place before it. We may suppose with Taylor that the conquest was begun in the early part of Achyuta Raya's reign and finished in 1532, at which date we find another inscription on the walls of the Conjeeveram Pagoda, commemorating the same victories of the sovereign. The reason of the invasion of Travancore by Achyuta is supposed by the Government Epigraphist of Madras to be the fact that King Martanda Varma was very powerful and he was looked upon as the ruler of Southern India.²⁸ "Coupled with this," he observes, "the fact that Achyuta received the daughter

of the Pandya king in marriage leads to the inference that the Vijayanagar king probably wanted to help the Pandya against the king of Travancore." 49 To these causes, I think, may be added the fact of the close connection by marriage which subsisted between Martanda Varma and Virasekhara Chola and of the possible assistance rendered by the former to the latter in the subjugation of the Pandyan kingdom. Whatever the cause, the armament was sent against Travancore by Achyuta, and tribute had to be paid by Martanda Varma to him. The Venad King is said to have challenged the Vijayanagaram ruler fearlessly to combat. 50 But the contest could not have been long, nor the result in any way adverse to the interests of Travancore, as we find Martanda Varma free enough in 1532 to make a grant of land to the Trikkalur temple in the Tinnevely District.

A more important expedition against Travancore than this was undertaken by Vijayanagar a few years later in the reign of Sadasiva Raya, the successor of Achyuta. We derive information concerning this invasion from two distinct sources, one, an inscription of Sadasiva Raya in the Tiruvidaimarutur temple of the Tanjore District, and the other, the memorable letters that Francis Xavier wrote from Venad about this time. The inscription records that one Virapratapa Sriman Mahamandalesvara Ramaraja Vittala Deva Maharaja led the expedition against Tiruvadi, in which he was joined by a warlike Brahman of Tiruvidaimarutur named Tiruchittambalabhattachan, and that they continued to fight from Anantasayanam in the south to Modugal in the north. 51

The following important questions may be answered before proceeding to a description of the invasion itself, viz., (1) Who was Vittala Deva? (2) In what year was the expedition undertaken against Travancore? (3) Who was the sovereign reigning over Venad at the time? and (4) Why did Vittala invade Tiruvadi?

A certain king, called Vittilappu Raja in the Sritala book and Vittalla Raja in the historical memorandum, has been found to have governed Madura from 1546 to 1558 as the viceroy of Sadasiva Raya. An inscription round the *garbhagriha* of the old Perumal temple at Madura informs us that the full name of this ruler was Ramaraja Vittala Deva Maharaja. Nelson thinks that as Vittala is no Tamil name and that Ramaraja was powerful

at the time "the great Ramaraja was the person meant by the Vittala or Vittala of our authorities and that he governed the Madura country more or less directly for a period of 12 years."²² It is, however, difficult to believe that Rama, virtually the king of Vijayanagar from 1542 to 1565, would have gone to Madura as the viceroy of Sadasiva. Nay, we even find him in 1553 leading an expedition against the Bahmini Sultans, which he could not have done successfully if he had occupied the extreme south of the Peninsula. Mr. Venkayya supposes more correctly that Rama Raja Vittala Deva Maharaja means Vittala Deva, the son of Rama Raya. It may be added in this connexion that Rama Raja, though practically sovereign, always contented himself with the title of Mahamandalesvara, reserving the higher one of Maha Raya for Sadasiva alone.²³ Xavier calls Vittala Beterbemali.²⁴ What became of him after the appointment of Visvanatha Naick as Governor of Madura is still a mystery.

Dr. Caldwell says that this invasion took place in 1543.²⁵ But we have St. Xavier's own evidence in this matter and he says that it was in the months of July and August 1544 that these northern soldiers oppressed the Christian converts of South Travancore. The Tiruvidaimarutur inscription is dated Sakasamvat 1466, which is equivalent to A.D. 1544-1545. The army of Vittala stayed on the Fishery Coast of Tinnevely during the month of September also, and hence the inscription must have come into existence at some subsequent time in the year.

The immediate successor of Raja Martanda Varma was Srivirarama Varma one of whose inscriptions is dated 1537 A.D. It was the successor of this prince, Bhutala Vira Sri Vira Kerala Varma, who was reigning in Travancore, at the period of the invasion of Vittala. Xavier calls him Iniquitribirim, which, considering the monstrous perversions of Indian names generally made by European authors, is not an altogether unfaithful reproduction of the name Unni Kerala Varma.²⁶ Xavier informs us that he was known as Maharaja or the great prince, and was one who was sure to decide what was just and who always maintained the rights of every class of his subjects.²⁷ He was a very staunch ally of the Portuguese and the indignation of St. Francis knows no bounds when he hears that a servant of this king was arrested by a Portuguese and taken over to Punical. In a spirited letter that he

writes from Manappad on the 24th of March 1544 he observed "No subject of an allied prince ought to have been seized and taken out of a place in his dominions without his being consulted. How absurdly we use our strength ! We spare our enemies and plunder our friends... Why should we do to the Indians what we don't wish to be done to ourselves ? Why should we be astonished that they like ourselves are indignant when they are injured ? There would be no doubt more to excuse the aggression if they denied us justice ; but what plausible excuse can we plead now when they undertake to do justice with the utmost faithfulness, observe exactly all the conditions of the alliance and when they keep the peace and deal with all the equity we could desire in their intercourse with us ?" ⁶⁰ This king also belonged to the Quilon branch of the Venad royal dynasty and maintained the prestige of the country to the same degree as his predecessors.

The cause of the invasion is unknown. It could not have been merely, as Caldwell suggests,⁶² the sympathy with Christian missionaries that the Venad rulers manifested. Nieuhoff writes more than a hundred years after—"There was a pagan temple of the Brahmans called Trichandurai against which and the priests thereof the Portuguese would frequently utter very injurious words which so exasperated the inhabitants that they entered into a league with their neighbours, viz., the Badagas of Narasinga in order to drive the Christians thence." ⁶⁴ This would show that the chief object of the expedition to Tinnevely was to drive away the Portuguese thence, but the extension of the conquest to Travancore must have been due to other political causes also.

The army of Vittala, called Badagas ⁶⁶ or northmen by Xavier first invaded the Fishery Coast of Tinnevely in the month of May 1544. "They have fallen upon the Christians of Cape Comorin with the sword," writes St. Francis on the 15th of June, "and driven them from their homes, plundered and made a great number of them prisoners and the rest have taken refuge in the caves of the rocks which run out into the sea where they are perishing of hunger and thirst." The Vadugas did not stop there. They seem to have continued their raid westwards and fallen upon the villages on the western slope of the Ghats. This invasion of Travancore according to Bartoli ⁶⁷ was made by a more regular and formidable

army than had been collected for the invasion of the Fishery Coast. Raja Kerala Varma himself moved with a considerable force of his subjects to resist the invaders. It was on this occasion that St. Francis is said to have performed the miracle of advancing alone, with a crucifix in his hand, and severely rebuking the invaders in the name of God. The whole army is said to have turned upon its march and left the country in peace.⁴¹ Bertrand says that the place where Xavier performed this feat lies only two leagues to the north of Kottar.⁴² St. Francis makes no reference to this incident in his letters. On the first of August he writes, "I went off after all by land to the Cape to visit those unhappy Christians who have survived the plundering and cruelties of the Badagas. A more miserable sight could nowhere be found; faces white with exhaustion, lived with hunger; the fields covered with dead and dying, the disfigured corpses which had no burial or the poor creatures who were at the point of death from wounds untended or sickness unrelieved. There were old men there utterly powerless from age or hunger, trying in vain to drag themselves along; there were women giving birth to children in the public roads, their husbands moving about them, but unable to help them. So universal and common to all was the very extremity of destitution. If you had seen this as I did, your heart would I am sure, have been pierced with a pang of pity you would never have got over." ⁴³ Vitthala seems to have been indeed a sworn enemy of the Christians. One of the Karyakkars had even told St. Francis, that the Vadugas had determined to lay waste the whole coast down to the water's edge. He therefore sent a letter to Raja Kerala Varma praying that he might lay strict prohibitions on these brigands from molesting the Christians of the Coast. He also wrote that if the Raja's authority was not enough to prevent their ravages he might get timely warning of the approach of the invading army to send all the Christians on board and thus escape the inevitable massacre.

After devastating the country to the north and west of Cape Comorin, the Vadugas invested Tutucorin, an important Christian centre. The Maharaja, however, sent a Brahman thither to try and persuade them into peace. This was in August. He was in all probability to be taken in a Portuguese ship to Tutucorin, but before this the Vijayanagar army had marched away to Cabelate

St. Francis observes on the first of August, "Those who were ranging through the interior of the country are still committing most cruel ravages there, nor will they cease from rapine and violence until peace or a truce is made with them by the authority of the Rajah of Travancore." At the end of August, however, the army again ravaged the Fishery Coast and Beterbemali and his blood-thirsty horsemen," as Xavier calls them, flew all over the country laying waste everything with fire and sword. A fresh provocation was given by the Portuguese when they captured the brother-in-law of Vitthala, at the beginning of September, and the Vadugas consequently swore vengeance against everything bearing the Christian name. A threatened attack of Vitthala by sea was averted by the timely conclusion of peace between Vijayanagar and Travancore in the middle of September 1544.

Immediately after peace was concluded between the two states, Unnikritbirim or Unni Kerala Varma must have died, as we find an inscription of Bhutala Vira Rama Varma in the Suchindram temple dated 722 M. E., corresponding to A. D. 1546-1547. This sovereign made provisions for special offerings being made to the Vaishnava shrine at Suchindram on the birthday of Vittala's Maharajah. "The grant," it has been observed, "was made, not by a private individual, but by the king himself, and establishes the political relationship between the Vijayanagara empire and the Travancore king. There is no doubt that in this grant the latter acknowledged the former as his suzerain lord and that this position was conceded to Vitthala on account of his successful invasion of Travancore." This is perfectly true, and ever afterwards for a period of over a century and a half Venad was looked upon as a chiefship in direct subordination to the Vijayanagara empire, and after its downfall to the Nayak kingdom of Madura. The conditions on which Kerala Varma signed the peace of 1544 could certainly not have been servile. But as Travancore thereafter sank in glory and prowess every neighbouring power was enabled to lord it over her and carry on a course of successful pilage for several unhappy years to come.

In Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels, we read that the countries of the Malabar coast during the supremacy of the Portuguese were seven in number, viz., Kananoor with twenty

leagues of Coast; (2) Calicut extending 27 leagues; (3) the little kingdom of Cranganore; (4) Cochin; (5) Porca; (6) Koulam; and (7) Travancore near Cape Comorin subject to Narasinga or Vijayanagar.³¹ John Nieuhoff again writing in 1662, after the Portuguese power had become wholly extinct, notes—"the King of this country is by some styled the great king; because he possesses larger territories than any of the Malabar kings. He is served in great state and maintains abundance of commanders whom they call Mandigals and many councillors called Pullas and owns superiority over neighbouring princes, but of this I am convinced to the contrary by my own experience; it is true they reverence him, as a potent king, but pay him no obedience. Others will have him to be a vassal of the king of Narasinga."³²

The Nayaks of Madura always pretended that they had been merely the servants of the Vijayanagar emperors and compelled all the countries subjugated by the latter in olden times to pay tribute to them. One of the boldest of these governors was Muttuvirappa Nayak, the elder brother of the great Tirumala Nayak of Madura and his predecessor on the throne. About 781 M.E., corresponding to A.D. 1606, he with a large army marched to the south, reduced the Fishery Coast to subjection³³ and advanced to Cape Comorin. From an inscription at the Cape dated 782 M.E., it is clear that he took possession of Cape Comorin, while it is likely that he may have levied tribute on the whole of Nanjinad. Sri Vira Ravi Varma Kulasekhara Perumal was the ruler of Venad at the time. The tribute, however, was paid by our state only when compelled to do so,³⁴ and so in 810 M.E., corresponding to A.D. 1635, the great Tirumala Nayak himself, who had come to the throne in 1623 had to lead an expedition against Travancore.³⁵ The details of this invasion are not known, but it may be gathered that he reduced to subjection the whole of Nanjinad, called this new province Malayalam³⁶ and made arrangements for tribute being regularly sent over to Madura from Venad. He seems to have also plundered a rich south Travancore shrine which Manoel Faria Y. Souza calls 'Trivate'³⁶ and which may, for aught we know, be the Tiruvattar temple of the Kalkulam Taluk.

A popular Malayalam ballad in South Travancore serves to commemorate this grand invasion of Tirumala Ramappayyan.

the Nayak's great Brahman general led the army against Nanjinad and advanced as far as Kalkulam. Rama Varma was then king. At his command, Iravikkutti Pillai the Dalawa is believed to have marched against Ramappayyan's forces, but was defeated and slain in the battle. Subsequently Ramappayyan is said to have been driven away by the Travancore army, though there is no more evidence than bare tradition in support of this incident.⁵⁷

The power of Venad became gradually weakened until at last in 850 M.E. all the administrative authority had come to be shared by the Yogattil Pottis and Ettuvittil Pillamar, and she no longer possessed the least capacity for resisting foreign aggressions, and the invasions of the Badagas, or Madura forces became almost annual.⁵⁸

There existed in those days a partition wall the relics of which may still be seen on the way from Manarkudi to Porraiya in Nanjinad, and the triangular piece of land on the other side of his wall including Variyur, Mahadanapuram, Cape Comorin, Agastisvaram, &c., went by the name of Purattayanadu or foreigner's country, because a force of the Nayaks was stationed there which personally carried on the administration of that part.⁵⁹ Bertrand therefore did not understand the real situation of the country when he wrote—"Il lui serait cependant assez facile de se mettre à couvert de leurs incursions et de rendre même son royaume inaccessible de ce côté-là ; car les Badagas ne peuvent guère entrer dans le Travancore que par un défilé de montagnes. Si l'on fermait ce passage par une bonne muraille et qu'on y postât un petit corps de troupes les plus grosses armées ne pourraient le forcer ce qui délivrerait ait Cotate et le reste du pays d'un pillage presque annuel. Sans cela le roi de Travancore ne saurait tenir tête à tant d'ennemis qu'il n'a jamais vaincus, hormis une fois par leur imprudence."⁶⁰ The virtues of the Aramboli pass are no doubt great and Father Paolino was perfectly right when he wrote that Travancore is really impregnable to her enemies.⁶¹ But the Madura soldiers, shrewd military men that they were, could also see this and permanently occupied the pass to facilitate expeditions into the interior.

Travancore was invaded by the Nayak army of Madura on several occasions from 852 to 869 M.E., which correspond to

A.D., 1677 to 1694 of the Christian era. The Travancore Field Assistant of Archaeology says that the forces belonged to Tirumala Nayak ;⁴² but it has to be remembered that Tirumala died in 834, and that his successors Chokkanatha and Ranga Krishna Muttuvirappa were on the throne between 852 and 869. Madura itself was overrun by the Maharattas at this time,⁴³ but that does not appear to have weakened the brigandish propensities of her forces in the south. An inscription on a pillar stone of Kutiraipanti Vilai in Vadasseri notes that in November 1698, the reigning king of Travancore relinquished his claims to a number of taxes payable by the inhabitants of Nanjinad.⁴⁴ Prince Iravi Varma was the ruler of Venad at the time. He ascended the throne in 1684 and ruled until 1718. He was, if we may believe Father Bertrand, a prince of no inconsiderable foresight and skill. "Ce Prince," writes the Father, "presente plus d'esprit et de courages que n'en ont d'ordinaire lcs Indiens."⁴⁵ He was annoyed to see the eight ministers usurp all the authority and revenue of the Kingdom. He therefore entered into a secret alliance with the Nayak's troops, according to which it was stipulated that Iravi Varma should give up the fortress of Kalkulam,⁴⁶ if they would first suppress the power of the Pillamar. This was acceded to and as the army of Iravi Varma had been already disbanded, the Vadugas fearlessly marched into the interior of the country, and easily defeated the army of the Ettuvittu Pillamar. The Maharaja, however, now turned round and collecting his scattered forces wrought such destruction upon the Vaduga army that they fled in disorder towards the Aramboli pass and thousands perished in the struggle. Father Bertrand gives a vivid account of this success of Iravi Varma and adds that after his victory the king of Travancore re-entered his capital in triumph and kept in his own hands the government of the country thereafter.⁴⁷

But he was not allowed to enjoy this position long. Mangammal, whose name has become in subsequent ages a proverb of charity throughout the whole of Southern India, was the Queen regent of Madura, during these troublous times. She was a woman of conspicuous capacity and praiseworthy foresight, and immediately despatched Narasappa Aiyar the Dalawa with a large force to Travancore. The fact ought not to be forgotten that during the 17th and 18th centuries, some of the greatest generals of Southern

India were Dravidian Brahmans. Ramappayyan under Tirumala Nayak,⁶⁵ Narasappayya under Mangammal⁶⁶ and Rama Iyen Dalawa under Maharaja Martanda Varma deserve prominent mention. Narasappaya is said to have conquered the people of Malayala and after much fighting received the tribute money from them and also many valuable jewels and many cannons with the whole of which he returned to Trichinopoly. On all the guns brought from Malayala the Queen's Dalawa marked the number in order, 1, 2, and so on, and these pieces of ordnance were afterwards mounted on the bastions of the forts of Trichinopoly and Madura. In the *Lettres Edifiantes* " we read that in 1700 Travancore was wholly under the authority of Madura and that the Vadugas entered the Venad territory year after year to exact tribute."⁶⁷

This exasperated the people of South Travancore, beyond all measure. They were no doubt glad when the Vaduga army was thoroughly extirpated by their sovereign, but the invasion of Narasappaya rudely awakened them from all fancied security. On the 1st Alpsi 878 M.E., the people of Nanjinad met at Vadaseri in despair and indignation and passed certain resolutions as to how they should in future safeguard their interests. "As our land has," so run the resolutions, "from the year 852 M.E. been the scene of distress on account of foreign invasions from the east and of troubles from within the state, we having failed, owing to lack of union (and emigration ?) to make a bold stand and to have our grievances heard, in that our property holdings and services are being usurped by others, the village cheiftains oppressing us in doing things not heard of before, the Government listening to tales carried by backbiters from the country and harassing us on account of old discharged padukalam deeds and debt bonds and false padukalam deeds and false documents produced by individuals, so much so, that baskets are opened and documents produced with ease from any place where they happened to be at the time, Government getting hold of debt-bonds executed by Pottis and Pillaimars (accountants) of the eleven Mathams appertaining to Sri Padmanabha Perumal and Adikesava Perumal are not allowing us to sow our seeds and take the harvest; in that they try to enforce the redemption of Sora Ottis and obtaining extra moneys for submortgages in addition to taxes in that

we are deprived of our possessions by the (arbitrary) fixing of inscription stones ; our houses and things distrained after ousting the inmates, our Paraya slaves taken away by the Sircar and made to work for them as they please and such other calamities have befallen us ; we do hereby resolve and determine that we do form ourselves into a body for union (and emigration?) and that whenever any casualty should happen to any man in our country or to any village or to any Pidakay or any affair occur that might cost some ten or sixteen fanams, the country should pay the same from the common funds and decide how best it could do under the circumstances ; and that whenever a calamity should happen to the country or to any village the aggrieved persons should meet in a common place and give intimation to the Pidakaikkars, when we all should assemble, resolve and decide according to circumstances, and that the causes of those persons who in contravention of the terms of these resolutions fail to attend and weaken the cause thereby would also be considered and decided in the public meeting. Upon the holy feet of Lord Thanumalaya Perumal these resolutions are irrecoverably passed. All the Nattars of the southern portion of Nanjinad north consenting, Arumugaperumal signed." 17 A bold step was thus taken by the people of Nanjinad, and the good Ravi Varma must have indeed been sincerely sorry, that he was not able to see his subjects happy.

Twenty-three years elapsed without any definite agreement being concluded with the court of Trichinopoly. In 901 M. E. Rama Varma Maharajah in consultation with his nephew, afterwards well-known in South Indian History as Vira Martanda Varma the great, renewed the old alliance with the Nayaks and bound himself to pay Rs. 3,000 annually as tribute. A force under the command of Venkatapati Nayak and Trippati Nayak was got down to punish the Madampimar and the Ettuvittu Pillaimar. Immediately, however, Martanda Varma ascended the throne, he raised a corps of Marava troops and a small troop of cavalry from Nanjinad and erected mud-walls on the Tinnevely frontier to secure the country from foreign invasion. A force was sent under Kumaraswami Pillay to relieve the Dalawa who had been imprisoned by the Vadugas, and the Nayak army stationed in Travancore to preserve internal order was sent back to Trichinopoly, as the Maharajah thought its services to be no

longer required. If Tirumala had sat then on the Nayak throne, these acts of our sovereign would certainly have not gone unrevengeed. But Vijayaranga Chokkanatha who sat on the throne then was a man who loved pleasure and ease above all. An army was sent under Azhagappa Mudalliar to instal Pappu Tampi, son of the Maharajah's uncle on the throne, but by the arguments that Rama Iyen who was sent as the ambassador on the occasion urged, the Mudalliar was so far convinced of the injustice of the course that he was on the point of adopting, that he desisted from the attempt and went his way back to Trichinopoly. There was no more trouble after this from the Vijayanagar Viceroys for Travancore, nay, the Vadugas all during Rama Iyen Dalawa's administration of the country were held in unmitigated contempt and hatred. It is even supposed that the rigid ruling of Rama Iyen Dalawa regarding the admission of foreigners into Travancore through the Aramboli Pass, was specially intended to cast out all Tclugu-speaking people most of whom were dependants of the Nayak dynasty of Madura. The Nayaks themselves were extirpated by Mahommedan forces from the north and then it became a struggle between the Nawabs of Arcot and the Rajahs of Travancore as to who should rule supreme in the south-west corner of the Indian Empire. Maharajah Martanda Varma did much for Travancore, indeed as much as all the other sovereigns who have sat on her ancient throne have found it possible to do for her collectively.

Notes and References

The Empire of Vijayanagar was founded in the year 1335. It grew rapidly in wealth and power and soon dominated the whole of Dekhan. Being a Hindu state it championed the cause of Hinduism against the growing power of the Mohammadans. Travancore, another growing Hindu state in the South of India didn't require the helping hand of Vijayanagar mainly for two reasons one: She had a mountainous barrier. Two: She had able warriors as her Kings and subjects. But as the two powers aimed at supremacy over the neighbouring Tamil Nadu, clash between them became quite unavoidable. Thus came in the year 1503 the first battle between Travancore and Vijayanagar which went decidedly in favour of Travancore. Since then for about a century or so the two states were in perpetual war. Nayaks of Madura, who were the representatives of Vijayanagar Empire in South India also jumped into the fray. This research paper by Ulloor records the fluctuations of the fortune of these two powers engaged in a fight unto the last for supremacy.

1. Mickle's translation of Camoen's 'Lusiad,' Book VII. This book also deals with the exploits of Vasco da Gama.
2. Cosmas calls the country 'Male' in the sixth century A.D. Vide Hough's 'Christianity in India,' Vol. I, p. 72. It is an English translation of the proceedings of the Synod of Diamper (1599).
3. Elliot's 'Muhammadan Historians', Vol. III. p. 204.
4. Nelson's 'Madura Manual', Part III. p. 81.
- 4(a) Moslem traveller (1304-1378) travelled more widely than any other Medieval man. He visited Calicut 6 times and has left an interesting account of his visit.
5. Lee's translation of 'Ibn Battuta's Travels,' p. 172.
6. 'India in the Fifteenth Century', Part III. p. 17.
7. P.S. Menon's 'History of Travancore', p. 34. The inscription has to be reexamined. Vide Prof. Sundram Pillay's 'Some Early Sovereigns of Travancore in the Sixth Century N.E.' p. 15. But this does not affect the main line of argument here advanced.
8. 'India in the Fifteenth Century,' Part, I. p. 19.
9. Indian Antiquary, Vol. II. p. 360.
10. Indian Antiquary, Vol. II. p. 361.
11. Barbosa's 'East Africa and Malabar,' p. 163. Vide notes for "Ancient sea Ports of Kerala."
12. Vartbema's 'Travels,' p. 182. Vide notes for Ancient seaports of Kerala.'
13. Barbosa's 'East Africa and Malabar', p. 163.

14. P.S. Menon's 'History of Travancore', p. 35.
15. Danver's 'Old Portuguese Records,' p. 9
16. Logan's 'Malabar', Vol. I. p. 310. (William Logan's Manual of Malabar District).
17. 'India in the Fifteenth Century', Part I.
18. Wilson's Descriptive Catalogue of Mackenzie MSS., 1881 edition, p. 267.
19. Sewell's 'A Forgotten Empire' p. 122.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.
21. Keralotpatti, C.M.S., Edition, pp. 32-42.
22. Logan's 'Malabar Manual,' Vol. I. p. 234.
23. Madras Archaeological Report for 1900, pp. 28-29.
24. Logan's 'Malabar Manual', Vol. I. p. 310.
25. Sewell's 'A Forgotten Empire,' p. 165.
26. Nelson's 'Madura Manual', Part III. p. 89.
27. Taylor's 'Tamil Historical Manuscripts,' Part II. p. 123.
28. Madras Archaeological Report for 1900, p. 53.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
30. Logan's 'Malabar Manual,' Vol. I. p. 310.
31. Madras Archaeological Report for 1900, p. 30.
32. Nelson's 'Madura Manual', Part III. p. 85. Vide also Sewell's 'List of Antiquities,' Vol. II, p. 224.
33. Sewell's 'A Forgotten Empire', p. 179.
34. Coleridge's 'Life and Letters of Francis Xavier,' Vol. I., p. 234. Xavier was a portuguese missionary who resided in south Travancore during the first half of the 8th C. and did considerable evangelical work.
35. Bishop Caldwell's 'History of Tinnevely', p. 68.
36. "The name," says Coleridge," is so given in the Letters, but it is said to be hopelessly unlike any conceivable Hindu name". Xavier's 'Life and Letters', Part I. p. 191.
37. Coleridge thinks that this name was probably acquired by his success shortly before, in bringing under his authority a number of petty princes, or more properly speaking nobles, who had up to that time ruled the country each as the small tyrant of his own neighbourhood. These were the Pulas or Poligars who dwelt in small castles or fastnesses on the high grounds and held the country round them in terror and subjection. We may, however, believe that the subjugation of these chiefs was the work of the great Martanada Varma who first assumed the title of Bhutala Vira.
38. Xavier's 'Life and Letters', Vol. I. p. 192.
39. Xavier's 'Letters,' edited by Coleridge, No. XVIII.
40. Caldwell's 'History of Tinnevely', p. 69.
41. Churchill's Collection of Voyage and Travels', Vol. II, p. 257.
42. Father Bertrand writes "Les Anciens auteurs ecrivent Badagas ; mais les Indiens ecrivent et Prononcent Vadhougher. Ce sont des peuples venus du nord (du royaume de Bisnagar.)" 'La mission du Madure' Tom. II., p. 2. Caldwell was completely in the wrong

when he said that they were soldiers of the Nayaks of Madura. Vide 'History of Tinnevely' p. 69. "The name Badaga" it may be added "is a Canarese corruption of a Telugu word Vaduka, the name of a class of Telugu speaking Sudras. These Vadugas were an agricultural class of strong and muscular physique and they were ready to enlist in the army of the Rajas of Southern India who were glad to have such soliders among their troops. The Vijayanagar sovereigns especially took a fancy to this sturdy and warlike race and were always ready to enlist the Vadugas and to raise even to the highest position in their armies such as distinguished themselves. Some Vadugas rose to the rank of generals and sometimes they were sent down as Governors of different provinces that recognised the kings of Vijayanagar as suzerain."—Madras Christian College Magazine, Vol. IX., p.830.

43. Bartoli's 'Asia', Tom. I. Livre I., p. 72.
44. Coleridge's 'Life and Letters of Xavier', Vol. I. p. 214.
45. Bertrand's 'La Mission du Madure', Tom. IV., p. 18.
46. Xavier's 'Letters', edited by Coleridge, No. XXVII.
47. 'Life and Letters of Xavier', Vol. I., p., 226. St. Francis Xavier, it is believed played an important part in arranging the settlement of the conflict between Venad and Vijayanagar.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
49. Madras Archacological Report for 1900, pp. 30-31.
50. Astley's 'Collection of Voyage and Travels,' Vol. I. p. 29.
51. Churchill's 'Collection of Voyages and Travels', Vol. II. p. 228.
52. Laerzio's Letters quoted by Bertrand.
53. Nelson's 'Madura Manual', Part III. p. 144.
54. Travancore Government Gazette, Supplement for 1899, p. 252.
55. Taylor's 'Tamil Historical Manuscripts', Vol. II. p. 165.
56. 'Portuguese Asia', Vol. II. Part IV, Chapter IV.
57. Govinda Pillay's 'History of Malayalam Literature', Vol. I., Part II. p. 2. The author's date, 670 M.E., is evidently wrong.
58. Bertrand's 'La Mission du Madure', Tom IV, p. 18.
59. Travancore Government Gazette, Supplement for 1900, p. 39.
60. 'La Mission du Madure', Tom IV., pp. 187-189.
61. 'A Voyage to the East Indies', p. 104.
62. Travancore Gazette, Supplement for 1900, p. 39.
63. Nelson's 'Madura Manual,' Part III., p. 201.
64. Travancore Government Gazette, Supplement for 1900, p. 41.
65. La Mission du Madure, Tom IV. p. 19.
66. The word Kalkulam has been wrongly supposed by Nelson to signify Quilon. Vide 'Madura Manual', Part IV. p., 220.
67. 'La Mission du Madure', Tom IV. pp. 19-20.
68. Nelson's 'Madura Manual,' Part III. pp. 230-235.
69. Taylor's 'Tamil Historical MSS.' Vol II. p. 224.
70. 'Letters Edifiantes,' Tom X., p. 77.
71. Travancore Government Gazette, Supplement for 1900, pp. 112-113.
72. P.S. Menon's 'Travancore History' Chap. II
73. Travancore Administration Report 1881, p. 88.