

PERITALLY: AN IDENTIFICATION.

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Peritally was an ancient principality comprised within the limits of modern Travancore. Opinion is not unanimous as to where exactly it was situated. When the late Diwan Bahadur V. Nagam Aiyar wrote the *Travancore State Manual*, he consulted me on the question of the location of Peritally, and I told him that it was the country of Nedumangad, a conclusion at which I had arrived so early as 1904 A. D., when I published my paper on "Dutchmen in Travancore", in the *Malabar Quarterly Review*.¹ Mr. Nagam Aiyar accepted my opinion.²

Subsequently, Mr. C. Achyuta Menon wrote, in reply to a query from Mr. A. Gallatti who was engaged in the preparation of notes for his publication *The Dutch in Malabar*: "No name resembling Peritally is locally known as the name of a kingdom." Mr. Gallatti, however, observes: "The Travancore Manual identifies Peritally with Nedumangad, formerly Elavallur, correctly."⁴ He also states that the Portuguese form of the word is Pevagatalli.

John Nieuhoff, the Dutch Captain, writing in 1662—64, points out that the kingdom of Travancore at that time bordered to the east on the Kingdom of Madura and to the west on the countries of 'Pertaly' and 'Kotarkery' (Kottarakara). He also notes that, on travelling from Quilon to Kilikollūr, a suburb thereof, he was informed by his guides that the ways were rocky and impassable, and that it was five tedious days' journey to the country of Pertaly.⁵ Jacob Canter Visscher, the Dutch Captain at Cochin, writing in 1723, says: "The Raja of Peritally, sprung

1. *The Malabar Quarterly Review*, Vol. III, p. 142.

2. *The Travancore State Manual*, Vol. I, p. 308.

3. *The Dutch in Malabar*, p. 55.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Churchill's Collection of Voyages and Travels*, Vol. II, p. 228.

from the third sister of Attingal, governs the district between Quilon and the mountains. Kully Quilon (Kāyankulam) is at the present time united to his country by adoption. It possesses no sea-coast".¹

The late Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon, in his *History of Kerala*,² observes: "The identity of this State, it is somewhat difficult to make out from the name mentioned", and proceeds to point out that Lieut. Horsley gives Nedumangād the name of Elavallūrñād,³ that Francis Day in his *Land of the Perumals* has stated that "the cause of the Princess of Elleda Suruwam (Svarūpam) or Ellertoo Soorupam (Elētaṭṭu Svarūpam) was taken up" by the Dutch envoy, Van Imhoff "and a protest sent in 1740 to the Raja of Travancore retaining her territory".⁴ He therefore presumes that Peritally is another name for Kottarakara, and thinks that Peritally may possibly stand for Pattazhi, a village now included in the Pattanapuram taluk, and possessing a celebrated shrine dedicated to Bhagavaṭi.

I have recently come across an old Tamil-Malayalam folk-song, which settles the issue in favour of Nedumangad once and for ever. This song is entitled PĒRAKATTĀZHI VĀTA PĀTTU (the song concerning the spirit of Perakattazhi). Perakattazhi is an abbreviation of Perakattavazhi, meaning the Tava-zhi or (Royal) branch of Perakam. The song commences as follows:

“അമ്പിനൊടു പേരകത്താഴിതന്നിലിമ്പമൊടു
അഴകുനെടുമങ്ങാട്ടുകോയിക്കൽ
ഇമ്പമൊടു ചെമ്പകവാഴമ്മതമ്പുരാനും
ഇന്ദതിരുക്കും നാളതന്നിലെ
അമ്പിനൊടു നാടാളവരചരില്ലാമലേ
അമ്മതിരുമനതതിലെകേതമായ്
കേതമൊടു തിരുമനതിൽ കെണചതി നല്ലോമമും
കിറവയൊടു പലനേട്ടു നേർവരാം”

(ambinōtu pērakathāzhi thannilimpamodu
azhaku Netumangattu kōikkall, etc.)

From this extract it will be seen that the Nedumangād Palace is situated in the country of Pērakattāzhi. There is a

1. Visscher's *Letters from Malabar*, edited by Drury, p. 59.
2. *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, pp. 59—60.
3. Ward and Conner's *Survey of Travancore and Cochin*, Vol. II, p. 78.
4. *The Land of the Perumals*, p. 131.

village, known as Pērakam, near the town of Nedumangad, even now, and I take it that the name of Royal branch which ruled over that part of Travancore was derived from that village. The above song describes the birth of a son to the Queen of Perakattazhi, by name Virakeralavarman, and details some of his martial exploits and untimely death at the hands of assassins. Certain other villages of Nedumangad, such as Aryanad and Karakulam are also mentioned therein. The *Kerala Society Papers* refer to a Pokattavazi¹. This expression is a mistake for Perakattavazi. In the Tamil script the difference between 'po' and 'pera' is negligible, and the confusion has to be attributed to this circumstance. The old records of the Sripadmanabhaswami temple in Trivandrum make mention of only Perakattavazhi. I need hardly point out that Peritally is a corruption of Perakattavazhi. The Portuguese corrupted the name into Pevagattalli, retaining the syllable 'ga', but converting 'ra' into 'va'. The Dutch were free from the latter error, but they omitted the syllable 'ka', possibly because the word was pronounced as Perattazhi, which is by no means unnatural.

Van Gollanese, the Dutch Governor of Cochin, writing in 1743, correctly says that the kingdom of Travancore "was formerly divided among five houses, Travancore, Attinga (Attingal) Elleda Surovam (Kottarakkara), Peritally (Nedumangad), and Singnatty (Desinganad or Quilon)²." Kāyamkulān was also related to these, and hence there was an adoption between that State and Nedumangad about 1723, to which fact Visscher makes reference. When Golonese wrote his memorandum, Nedumangad and Kottarakkara had come under the sway of one ruler as seen from his observation: "Peritally and Elleda Surovam bound on Travancore in the north-east; by extinction of the families of former rulers they have come under the sway of one ruler who is called the king of Peritally.....adopted from the princes of Ellerta Surovan or Corporam. The King of Travancore³ took possession of this State in 1734, led away the royal family into captivity and had them imprisoned in a Pagger (stockade or fort), where the king died two years ago.

1. *Kerala Society Papers*, Vol. I, pp. 124 and 349.

2. *The Dutch in Malabar*, p. 53.

3. Vira Martanda Varma who ruled from 1729—58.

The other princes and princesses are still there with the exception of one princess, who was fortunate enough to escape from the hands of this usurper and to get safely to Tekkencur (Tekkinkur); in the year 1740, she was brought back from there by the Hon'ble Company to her State and re-instated as ruler; but in the year 1742, she again had to leave it and withdrew into the State of Cochin where she resides with her relations at Corporam (Karappuram or Shērtallai) and still receives 45 fanams (Rs. 2½, 18 Cochin fanams=one rupee) daily from the Hon'ble Company towards her own support and that of her suite.¹ "

The Valiya Kōyikkal Palace at Nedumangad was the place of refuge of Umayamma Rani when she fled from her enemies about 1679. The princesses living at Kottarakara were adopted into the Travancore Royal Family in 1748, along with two others from Pallikkovilakam in Kōlattunad, North Malabar. What became of the Princes mentioned by Golonnesse is not known. The Peritally branch in any event may be treated as having become extinct in that year.

1. *The Dutch in Malabar*, p. 55.

vide also the *Land of the Perumals*, p. 130. Golonnesse calls Eledattu Svarupam Karappuram, because the last Rani of that Royal House was living there.