

'PLACE-NAMES' IN COCHIN STATE.

BY

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It is now acknowledged on all hands that the study of place-names affords invaluable help to the antiquarian and archaeologist engaged in the difficult task of reconstructing a country's or a nation's past from extant survivals. It is particularly so in a state like Cochin, with a climate not in the least noted for its preservative qualities. The heavy rainfall and the general humid atmosphere of Malabar rapidly destroy all survivals from the dim past, in the shape of inscriptions and even structures in stone. Although place-names and the materials for historical research which they furnish, are safe from the destroying effects of climate, it cannot be said that they are altogether proof against the disturbing influences of time and the changes wrought by contact with foreign nations. There are numerous instances in this State, where place names have been transformed with the march of centuries, almost out of recognition. In many cases they become corrupted and overlaid by myth, by human transmission and reproduction and are seldom preserved in an absolutely untainted form. Witness the evolution, to quote a few instances illustrative of the point, of Bolghatty from Muḷavukāḍ or Muḷakukāḍ, Cranganore from Koḍungallōr and Shoranur from Cheruvannore. The necessity for a careful collection of extant place-names in this State, accompanied by a critical examination of their origins, wherever possible, becomes thus abundantly manifest. As in the case of archaeology, so in the case of place-names "the task of digging for foundations is not easy"; but that need not or should not deter the enthusiast from undertaking the attempt; for, when all is said and done, in the study of place-names, the risks of error are by no means staggering. The dangers of folly are almost negligible. Work of this kind needs to be done even if

its conclusions cannot claim the dignity of finality and even if it must remain for sometime at least in the nature of surface work, until reinforced and completed by exact knowledge. More and more it comes to be realised as the study proceeds that place-names rightly understood afford us interesting glimpses of the culture, the political and social organisations, the religion, the customs and manners of our forefathers. They are in fact links joining the new world with the old and as the study proceeds, we find that "dusty corners here and there which we have taken for granted come into the flood-light and disclose unsuspected treasures". Many of these names have roots which go long beyond the historical period made known to us by chronicles and inscriptions and old documents. They put back the historical horizon of a country to a period much earlier than what is known to the average student. They belong in fact to those long ages, 'which shade off into the gulf of time,' ages not discernible at all to the eyes of research or at best are dimly perceptible through time-mellowed beliefs, traditions and superstitions. If some part of the science of place-names has necessarily to be made to rest upon guessing, the student of place-names may derive consolation from Dr. Durant's dictum that 'most history is guessing and the rest prejudice'.

Materials for such study are not wanting in our State. Our State, small as it is, has got a repertoire of place-names, which for richness, variety and picturesqueness can challenge comparison with the place-names of any other country or State. This is by no means surprising. The Malayalees, as a race, are noted for their highly developed powers of imagination and quick perception of the aesthetic and the beautiful. The undoubted martial perfections of the ancient Nair Warriors and their alleged marital imperfection have all found a place in the interesting records left by the old world travellers; but it is a fact, surprising but nevertheless true, that little or no reference has been made by them to the names of even important places in Cochin. The famous Ptolemy does not refer to more than half a dozen places in what was ancient Cochin. Even there he has missed all the finer place-names, being preoccupied with coastal towns, whose names, in the very nature of things have a

saltish twang about them, and are often far from being sweet. If Ptolemy's readers, whoever they were, formed the conclusion that there were no sweet or beautiful place-names in Cochin, then they were absolutely mistaken. When the Kingdom of Cochin emerges from the mists of legend and tradition, into the dim light of authentic history, most of the place-names now in use must have already become well-formed. It is a fact, which can easily be gathered from a comparative study of place-names all over the world, that a beautiful country has got beautiful towns and villages and beautiful place-names. That is almost a general rule and Cochin is no exception. There are in this beautiful State of ours, a number of places with names which 'form a line of buttery syllables that have in them the very taste of the romantic and picturesque country sides of Cochin; names, which are strongly reminiscent of our tall, waving cocoanut palms and prehistoric palmyra trees, smiling rivers with their flower-rimmed banks, the green rice-fields and meadows dotting our landscape like costly carpets, and our lofty hills and crags and mountain tops. There are names, such as Āmballūr, Pūmaṅgalam, Mullaśśēri, Kaiṭaccira and a host of others which leave behind them the enchanting perfume of the sweet scented flowers of Malabar. Names there are which carry all 'the witchery of the soft vowelled Indian syllables', names like Amarāvati, Kaṇimaṅgalam, Kiḷimaṅgalam and the like as sweet as 'sweet Mesopotamia', if not sweeter. There are of course a few names which look, in the words of a very entertaining writer in one of the English reviews, "like bits of strong cheese, harsh on the tongue, with a sour strength in them". Names such as Kulayērikara Kākkaraccōla, Kulukkāpāra, Varandarapiḷli, may properly be classed in this group. There are a few places with laconic, stumpy little names, such as Māla, Kāra, Chēnom, Pōtta, which defy all attempts at elucidation. I refuse to believe, however, that these names are mere meaningless nothings created or coined by some ingenious or deranged brain. If I have not been able to unravel their meaning, that only shows that my method of approach was faulty. They must yield to more competent research. There are again names such as Eḷankunnapuzha, Venḍurutty, Vypeen, Kaḍamakūḍi,

Azhikoṭe, through which we hear faintly but distinctly echoes of the soft music made by the splash of the pellucid waters upon sandy and pebbly beaches. Names of places such as Azhikoṭṭa, Koṭṭamukku, Kakkāḍ, Pōrkaḷam, Vālūr conjure up, at least in the minds of those with a fair knowledge of the past, well built fortresses, walls and fortified towns. We hear the march of tramping armies, the war cries of Nair warriors and the clash of steel upon steel. Classifications like this might, of course, be indulged in to any extent, but is bound to be largely imperfect or incomplete.

The further question as to how these place-names arose in Cochin is a more interesting field of enquiry, although more difficult. A careful study of these names will convince any impartial observer that they are, with very few exceptions indeed, Dravidian or Tamil names. It would, of course, be unwise, in the present state of knowledge regarding these place names, to form inflexible opinions or to assume unchangeable positions; but endings such as ūr, (in Muṇḍūr, Ollūr Trikkūr. etc); Cēri, (as in Maṭṭāncēri, Waḍakancēri, Ancēri and a host of others); Peṭṭa, (as in Puttenpeṭṭah); Kuḍa, Koḍe or Kuḍam (as in Iriṅjālakuḍa, Kaniyārkoḍe and Thaniyakuḍam); Paḷli, (as in Ayyampaḷli, Kuzhupaḷli); Thuruttu or Thurutti, (as in Veṇḍurutti, Ochanthuruttu); Thura and Thara, (as in Trippoonithura, Kadavanthara, Naḍattara, Moolattura), Cāvu (as in Akkikāvu, Muḷakunnathukāvu), Kara (as in Aranāṭṭukara, Mukkattukara); Kuḷam, (as in Eṇṇākuḷam, Thiruvaṅcikuḷam Eḷamkuḷam); Kuḍi, (as in Cālakuḍi, Kaḍamakudiy); Patti (as in Ozhalapatti, Vadakarapatti, Kozhipatti); and pāra, (as in Kulukkapāra, Kozhijānpāra) distinctly suggest or reveal their Tamil origin. It is an astonishing fact that ninety-nine out of a hundred of these place names in Cochin have one or other of these endings. It would be interesting to know also what these words mean in Tamil and in ancient and even in modern Malayalam. 'Ūr' means of course a place, 'Cēri' is a collection of hovels, huts or houses, 'Peṭṭah' is an assemblage of shops, Kuḍa, Koḍe or Kuḍam signifies generally a hilltop, Paḷli is a term generally applied to Palaces and religious places of worship, 'Turuttu or Turutti'

is of course an Island, Tuṅga in Tamil is a harbour; Taṅga is simply land in general, and in special, the term is applied to one of the tribal organisations of the old Nairs; Kara is almost the same with dimensions different. Kuḷam, is a tank or a low lying ground; Kuḍi, collection of huts (there are some who maintain that the word is of Buddhist origin); Patti is a village at the foot of the hills or as Dr. Gundert would have it 'Agricultural village or a cluster of hovels of mountain tribes' and Pāṅga is rock. The Tamil origin of the bulk of the place-names in Cochin is very strikingly confirmed or corroborated, when they are compared with place-names elsewhere in South India. Many of these names, are repeated word for word, suffix for suffix, in many parts of the Madras Presidency and even far north of it. To quote a few examples:— If there is a Vellore there, we have got a Vēlore in the Talappally Taluk of the State. If there is a Chittūr, in North Arcot, we have two places of the same name, one in the Chittūr Taluk and another near Ernākulam. If there is a Puthupet in Madras Town, we boast of a Puttenpeṭṭah in Trichur Town. If there is a Pondichery or Puthusseri near Madras, we have got a Putuśśēri, near Shoranur. Mukundapuram Taluk in the State is one of the biggest of its Taluks. It is surprising to find that one of the Railway Stations near Katpadi Junction bears the same name, Mukundapuram. Katpadi or Kāṭṭupatti itself is repeated in Kunnamkāṭṭupaḷi in Chittur Taluk. There are Putturs (lit. new ūrs or places) all over South India. Cuddalore in the Madras Presidency to Kaḍavallūr in Cochin, is not a far cry. Kāṭṭūr in Mukundapuram Taluk is obviously the same as Kādūr in the Madras Presidency. Nellore over there is repeated half a dozen times in various parts of Cochin. Even such an uncommon name as Pulla is met with in the same form near Ellore. A few days ago I read in the papers that a Harijan colony has been started in Pulla near Ellore. Viyyūr near Trichur with an undecipherable name, is almost the same as Vuyyur in Madras Presidency which is the seat of a Zemindari. The historic controversy over the capital of the Perumals, where every inch of ground was obstinately contested by those who held different view points, ranged over two Karurs, one near Trichinopoly and the other in the old kingdom of

Cochin. There are some who maintain that it was one of the names for Tiruvañcikuḷam and that the echo of that name is found in Karūpaṭanna. Paṭanna, as commonly understood means a salt pan: but a Tamil gentleman, who was very much interested in the controversy, once told me that the word Padannai or Padanthai in old Tamil, meant a landing place for boats. If this is correct, then it almost clinches the matter, for Karūpaṭanna would then be the landing place for boats to and from Karūr. Karūpaṭanna is barely three miles from Tiruvañcikuḷam and lies at the extremity of the land route. All this by the way. To proceed with my main point, Ālaṅgāḍ Taluk in old Cochin, is very strikingly reproduced in the Alangad Taluk of the Pudukottah State. Kaḍamakkūḍi in Cochin has got a brother in Karambakūḍy in the same State. Kolathūr Dēs'om in British Malabar on the outskirts of Cochin is again reproduced in Kolattur Taluk in Pudukottah. The famous Vaḷḷuvanāḍ Taluk of British Malabar finds its counterpart in Vaḷḷunāḍ in Pudukottah. Turn to Mysore. We find on comparison the same astounding similarity of place names in many instances. If Cochin has its Iravēli, opposite to Mattanchery, Mysore has got a larger Eraballi, a small town. If we have Erumapaṭṭi, Mysore has got its Nayakanhaṭṭy (Haṭṭy in Canarese would be Paṭṭy in Malayalam or Tamil). Cochin has its celebrated Kudirān hills. Mysore has a counterpart in the name Kudremukh. Melukote in Mysore is reproduced in Melārkoṭe in British Malabar near Cochin. A comparison of the place-names in Cochin with those in Travancore and British Malabar reveals a far greater similarity in many instances. The similarity, I would say, even identity, exists not only in place-names but even in house names, leaving alone the personal names. There is nothing remarkable in this, because nobody disputes that the three kingdoms of Cochin, Travancore and Calicut formed at one time parts of a larger Kingdom. The preponderance of competent authority is for holding that a common civilisation, possessing the same characteristics and substantially the same language, must have flourished in South India at some remote period; giving rise to the same beliefs, usages and habits and even place-names. Whatever that be, it seems to me that the

appearance of the same place-names in various parts of a country is a clear indication that the nomenclature is neither haphazard nor accidental but is almost certainly the result of causes, not yet fully understood but which undoubtedly have their roots in a common ethical origin and identity of language.

A general statement that where place names are similar or resemble each other, it can be predicted that the same civilisation or the same types of it, gave birth to them, may be far-fetched and may not be universally accepted but recent researches in this direction have shown that a statement like this could be hazarded without raising the eyebrows of your hearers or readers. This is hardly the place for taking up an extended investigation of that kind and for attempting to follow the trail of Tamil or Dravidian Civilisation, across Ceylon, Japan, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Continental Europe, Great Britain, America and countries like Australia, Antarctica, Madagascar. Keeping well within the region or domain of place-names, let me take a rapid survey of a few place names in one of these countries namely Ceylon, our nearest neighbour which bear more than a superficial or accidental resemblance to place-names over here. Lake *Tamblegam* in Ceylon sounds very much like *Tamilakom* if it does not actually mean that '*Ambanpola*' must, I think be *Ambanpozha*, closely related to *Ambalapola* in Travencore. *Wariyapola* looks suspiciously like *Varāpuḷa* and *Karunagale* is very intimately related to *Karunāgapilly*, of the neighbouring State Travencore. *Karaitivu* point and *Kalmina* compare very favourably with *Karappuram* and *Karamuna*; *Wellawette* Temple bears a strong resemblance to *Vilvaṭṭom* near Trichur or *Vallivattom* near *Karūpatanna*. *Kokkilai* is almost the same as *Kokkālai*, a landing place in Trichur. *Puttalam*, in Ceylon has its counterpart in *Pattalam*, in Trichur Town. *Mulur*, south of Trincomalee, is the same as *Mullūr* to the west of Trichur. *Tirukkivil* is first cousin to *Pootrikkōvil* in Cochin. Even a place like *Maraḍu*, with such a prosaic ugly name would be much relieved to find that there is a place in Ceylon named *Moratuwa*, of probably the same origin. A hair

raising name like Bambala pitiya, (actually the name of a place in Ceylon) holds no terrors for us. Bembāla in Ceylon is Vempala or a Cobra in Cochin. Pitiyan is 'one who catches' in both the places. I do not know if the name really means Cobra Catcher in Singhalese but I shall not be surprised if it does. Ceylon like Cochin and the rest of Malabar, is the land of snakes. Mankulam in Ceylon can easily be substituted by Manakkulam of Cochin and nobody will notice the change. Kactchaveli, Nilaveli, Kattiravili of Ceylon do not stand in need of any formal introduction to Cochinites who have got in their midst, Iravēli, Kīḷuvēli and PuttENVēlikkara. Mullaitiri is almost as fragrant as our Mullas'sēri. Instances like this could be multiplied but an attempt in that direction is really unnecessary as the examples quoted are surely more than sufficient to make out that these place names are commemorative of the days when a civilisation similar to that which gave rise to the place names of Cochin must have flourished in early days, in Ceylon. It would also advance the case for holding that Ceylon formed part of the main land in the not distant past. Traces of place-names resembling those of South India and Ceylon can be found in the place-names of China and Japan, although the evidence gets thinner and thinner as we proceed. The *'Encyclopaedia Britannica'* in the article on Hanumān, records that Hanumān, mistakenly but popularly called the Monkey-God, is worshipped in many places in Japan. There are shrines in his honour and many districts and towns are said to be called after him. If, as is believed by some, Hanumān was a great Dravidian Saint, then this fact would be cogent evidence of the spread of Dravidian culture, long before Buddhism got there.

The vast bulk of place-names in Cochin are Dravidian in origin and must have come into existence with the beginning of the great Nair civilisation which flourished in Kerala, long before the birth of the Christian Era. History does not chronicle the date of the advent of the Nairs into Malabar, nor even who they were; speculation is rife on these matters. But it is fairly certain they conquered and made slaves of the aboriginal inhabitants, the Malayāns (forest dwellers), the

Kāḍars, the Nāyaḍis or hunters and the comparatively more civilised Pulayās. Although place-names in Cochin are the heirs of a far greater antiquity than can be assigned to what are known as the historic ages, there are no indications anywhere that these primitive dwellers of Cochin have made any contribution to the long list of place-names in Cochin. There is no record to show when these supremely unsophisticated jungle dwellers or their palaeolithic ancestors came to Malabar. Whoever they were, these half-naked savages of the steaming tropical jungles, must have led a hand-to-mouth existence, living in improvised shelters, on tree-tops, and more often, as the Nāyaḍis do even now, in caves; engaged in a grim fight against nature and a grimmer fight against the wild denizens of the thick-wooded forests. They had no 'places' and naturally no place-names could have arisen. Social life, in the old stone-age, to which they properly belonged, seems, as Mr. Perry puts it, to have moved from one source of raw material to another. Even the Pulayās who represented a civilisation only one degree higher than that of the earliest roamers of the jungles, do not seem to have had settled habitations. They must have lived in flimsy palm-thatched huts, on the outskirts of the forest and very often by the side of the rivers and the backwaters, engaged in fish-catching and making crude attempts at cultivation of the low-lying lands. Even laying aside the traditional origin of Kerala, it is a matter of controversy whether these people were the first colonisers and cultivators of the newly formed reclamations that were Kerala. I do not propose to go into that question here, as, even if they were, it is fairly evident that they had no place in the formation of place-names. The subsequent wave of Aryan or Nambūtiri immigration into Cochin also seems to have had very little influence upon the place-names of Cochin. It is accepted generally now that the Nambūtiris do not form part of the indigenous population of Malabar. Whence they came and what their origin is do not concern me. Their influence upon place-names, in any case has been negligible. Whether as a result of their influence or because of the growing familiarity of the Nairs with the Puranas and the sacred Books and literature of the Aryans generally, a few names do indeed seem to have sprung up

afterwards, which do not seem to have any relation to the original Dravidian names. The nomenclature becomes more pretentious, flamboyant and even meaningless. The arrogant pompousness of names such as Ramēśwaram, Trikkulaśekhara-puram, or Dēs'amangalam distinctly suggest a Non-Dravidian ancestry.

I will now pass on to deal specifically with a few leading place-names in this State. In the nature of things, the enquiry is bound to be incomplete. There are so many place-names that it would be an impossible task to deal with all of them. One has to content oneself therefore with a reference to the more well-known among them; but before doing so, I would request your leave to make a short reference to the words 'Malabar' and Malayalam. I do not propose to deal at any great length with the name Malabar. That has been subjected to an exhaustive treatment by Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon, in his monumental work 'The History of Kerala'. The consensus of qualified opinion is in favour of holding that the word means Land of Hills, literally Malanād or 'Terra Montis' as an ecclesiastical writer calls it. Even if 'vāram means slope, the meaning Mountain slopes will not be inapposite as applied to Malabar; but the word Malayalam which is the indigenous word for Malabar, has been the subject of diverse interpretations. There is no dispute about Mala. That means Hill. There are some who maintain that the word 'Ālam' means Ālam or depth. The word would then mean Hills and dales 'Vallis montis'.

I pass on to the name 'Cochin', by which both the State and a portion of it, the shore opposite Ernakulam is known. Among the indigenous inhabitants of this State it is known as Cocci. Cochin is an anglicised form of it, just as Vypeen which stands for Vypu, is. Very soon after its formation, the port of Cochin acquired a world famous reputation. Foreign nations came to her impelled by hopes of gain and often times by wander lust, and return home with their ships well-laden with pepper, ivory and the spices of the East, which they bought in exchange for swords of steel, glassware and muskets. Whether it was the 'old age lure of substantial things' or 'the

path of blazing glory' that drove these foreign adventurers, 'path-breakers of the sea' into Cochin, is of no consequence. The fact remains that at the mere mention of the name Cochin, there pass in rapid succession before our mind's eye a thousand historical events, which have beaten about it, as a turbulent sea about a rock and we wonder how such a historically big city had such a small name and a mysterious name, for the matter of that. Before attempting to investigate the origin and the significance of the word 'Cocci', there is one essential fact that has to be decided first, as it undoubtedly has a direct bearing upon the question and that is, when exactly the famous harbour was formed. Both Mr. C. Achutha Menon the author of the Cochin State Manual and Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon, author of the 'History of Kerala,' state that the harbour or estuary was formed in 1341 A. D. That was also the date on which the Island of Vypen opposite Cocci was thrown up by the sea. Mr. Padmanabha Menon is inclined to agree with Nicolo Conti, (who wrote in the fifteenth century) and Fra Paolino (who wrote in the 18th century), in their view that the town was called Kocci after the small river that flowed by it and poured into the sea through a small opening. 'It is locally known as Kocci and Koccu in the Malayalam language means small. It is also significant that the Sanskrit Kerala Māhātmyam calls it Bālapuri, a small town'. Thus observes Mr. Padmanabha Menon. The great difficulty which I feel in accepting this derivation is that it does not really tell us when the name Kocci came into use. If it owed its existence to the small river which flowed by then clearly it would not have waited to come into use, till the historic flood of 1341 A. D. when the modern harbour arose as a result of this extraordinary happening of that year. Mr. Achutha Menon, I think realises this difficulty. "The first portion of the name" he writes in the State Manual is undoubtedly the Malayalam word 'Koccu', meaning small or young, but what this word qualifies can only be conjectured. In the Kerala Māhātmyam and other recent Sanskrit works, the town is called Bālapuri, small or young town, but Nicolo Conti writing in the 15th Century and Fra Paolino in the 18th say that it was called Cocci after the small river that flowed by that place, that is

the river that connects the backwater and the sea. I would therefore hazard the conjecture that the word is a contraction of Koccali, the small or new harbour, as distinguished from the large or old Cranganore harbour which was frequented for centuries by merchants from all parts of the world". The suggestion is extremely ingenious but speaking with all deference to the brilliant author of the Cochin State Manual, it is hardly satisfying. Its greatest draw-back so far as I can see is that it does not tell us what the place was called before the new harbour was formed. There was, as both he and Mr. Padmanabha Menon state, a small river which found its way to the sea in the very place even before 1341 and surely it is not too much to support that it must have had a name. It seems to be clear that the inhabitants of this State, would not have waited for the occurrence of 1341 for finding out a name for the Ali which existed according to all accounts even before. Another difficulty which I feel in wholly accepting the suggestion is that it does not seem to me very probable that the name 'koccali' would have been given to an ali which if what is stated is true, increased its size and became the magnificent harbour of today in 1341; even though it may be conceded for purposes of argument that it was smaller than the Cranganore opening. The simultaneous coming into existence of the harbour and the Vypeen Island in 1341, seems also very unlikely. There could not have been both a washing off and a reformation of land, in the same place at one and the same time. If Vypeen came later, then it follows that the Ali must have been a very broad one prior to 1341, much broader than what it is today and the name Koccali would have been singularly inappropriate.

Another aspect of the matter which has not been sufficiently kept in mind by those who have so far dealt with the origin of the word Cocci' is the possibility of its being a word coined by the foreign merchants who were in the habit of frequently visiting the harbour, ever since it was formed in 1341 A. D. The ease and rapidity with which Cochin has forged ahead of other States in cultural progress, is in no small measure due to the start she received early in her history, by contact,

through commercial intercourse, with the great maritime nations of the world. The earliest to touch at the port since the harbour was formed were the Chinese and if we suppose for a moment that the name of the harbour was given to it by the foreign merchants, who came there in search of pepper, ginger, and spices, then undoubtedly we must look to the Chinese to have been the originators of the name Coccu or Cocci. Two processes are generally at work when foreigners first start to give a place a name. Sometimes a local vernacular word is used, which would not inaptly denote some outstanding peculiarity of the place and would then be twisted into a shape, almost out of recognition in its altered form; oftentimes the nomenclature employed would be based on one of the words in their own language, that would compendiously describe, the topographical or other peculiarities of the place. If we look to the Chinese as the originators of the name 'Coccu or Cocci,' then undoubtedly it must have been the latter process that must have been at work. The prevalence of such names as *Kionchoo*, *Fu-choo*, in China, and even of Cochin-China in the neighbourhood would point that way. Investigations along this line, led me to the startling discovery that the word *Go-chu* Chinese means the Five Provinces. *Ko-chu* means nine Provinces and *Go-chu* would mean five Provinces. Now it is a well-known fact that the portion of Kanayannore, opposite the Cochin shore and its surrounding parts went by the name of Añjikaimal District, a term which has not gone out of use even now. Añjikaimal or Five jurisdictions or Five Provinces would be easily be *Go-Chu* in Chinese. I do not, of course, claim that this coincidence has lifted the question from the region of uncertainty to that of established fact but I certainly claim that the line of enquiry opened by this fact, deserves to be pursued by others more well-equipped and better qualified than I am. China has, as I have pointed out elsewhere, contributed a number of names to the Malayalam language and it would not be surprising in the least, if the word Kochu or **Kochi** is also of Chinese origin. Trade with China was so well established in the early days of the Cochin port that people went to the length of calling all

sailors by the name of *Tehini* and all vessels by the name of China.

That the Chinese had trade with Quilon or Kollam is now well-established. Ma Huan tells us that Quilon was known to the Chinese navigators of the Tang-dynasty (618-913 A. D.) Kollam has an all Kerala importance, since the Malayalam era is also known as the Kollam Era. Now what does the place-name Kollam as applied to this ancient sea-port represent? One view is that the place-name comes from the old Malayalam word *Kolu* or *Kolla* meaning high ground. The topography of the place, it is said, lends some support to this derivation. A more plausible derivation is that attempted by Mr. K. P. Padmanabha Menon, who thinks that it means a tank, being a variant of the word *Koḷam*. This is hardly satisfying although ingenious. Dr. Gundert says that Kollam was in old days the seat of a Raja and that in Malabar, other residences of king were formerly called *Kollam*. If this is so, I would venture to suggest that the word might really be a compound of the two old Malayalam words *Kō* meaning King and *Illam* meaning a house owned by Royalty or nobility. The same would be the meaning of the word 'Kollam' as it appears in the place-name Kollenkōṭe.

Another possible line of enquiry into the place-name is started by the now well-established fact that in very early days (say the 8th or 9th century A. D.), the Chinese had trade relations with this part of the Malabar Coast and had even started settlements in Cochin and Kollam. It is very remarkable that the Chinese word for 'a great market' is either *Kollam* or something surprisingly like it, on the authority of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. In speaking of 'Cholon', a town of French Indo-China, the largest commercial centre of Cochin-China, it says that the town was founded by the Chinese immigrants about 1780 and that the place-name 'Cholon' means 'a great market'. I am not putting forward this origin of 'Kollam' as a final conclusion but merely as a suggestion. It seems to me to be worth further investigation.

Trppūñittura, the seat of H. H. the Maha Raja of Cochin is a place sacred to all Cochinites and has been long famous in the history of Cochin. There are, in my estimation, excellent reasons to suppose that Pūñitturah or Trppūñittura is the *Pounata* of Ptolemy. Kanakasabhai indeed thinks that it stands for Pūññār near Meenachil; but judging both from the order in which the places are described, as well as the description of the place, as the one 'where there is beryl', a kind of emerald, the probabilities are that the reference is to Pūñittura. Possession of emeralds suggests prosperous Royalty. There has been, so far, no authoritative derivation, etymological or otherwise suggested as to the origin of the name. Added to this is the absence of early records, which throw any light upon the meaning of this and other names, even though place names are preserved in a mutilated form in some records. Any attempt at elucidation or explanation can, in these circumstances, be only in the nature a guess or a speculation. 'Tiru' means 'Śree' or 'Lekshmi' and 'Pūñ' or 'Pūñḍavan' means, I am told Maṇavālan or husband in Tamil. That would make Trppūñittura the abode of Lord Vishnu, which is what it is. The change from Pūñittura Ēśan to Pūñnatyēśan is also, if this derivation is accepted, easily understandable. In the Trippunitturai inscription of King Kodai Iravi printed in the Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of the Cochin State for the year 1103 M. E. (1927-1928) the place is called "പുനിക്കുളം". I should not omit to point out here that in one of the issues of the old Malabar Law quarterly Review Mr. Ponnambalam Pillai, following Kanakasabhi told that Trippunithura must have been a port in olden times and that it was actually Theru porum thoray the great sacred harbour referred to in Theruvasgam, the great work of Manikka Vasagar.

I have touched only the outer fringe of the subject, but I fervently hope that others will follow me and will gently and firmly correct the mistakes which I have made. The subject is dear to me and nothing will gladden my heart than the knowledge that I have succeeded in attracting the attention of others.