

A NEW DISCOVERY:
THE FIRST
MISSION OF
ST. THOMAS
THE APOSTLE
IN INDIA
FROM A.D. 33 TO 46

REV. FR. PANCRAS M. RAJA



THE IMAGE OF OUR LADY DRAWN BY ST. LUKE,
WHICH ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE BROUGHT WITH
HIM AND PRESENTLY IS KEPT IN
ST. THOMAS MOUNT, CHENNAI, INDIA.

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INTRODUCTION

The New Testament gives a graphic description of St. Thomas, the Apostle's character. He was quite outspoken and daring. He was indeed chided by Jesus Christ for his lack of faith. "Still his incredulity has done more to strengthen the faith of all subsequent believers than the faith of all the other disciples, says St. Gregory.¹ And once he was confirmed in his faith, he made the most sublime act of faith declaring: "My Lord and my God", (Jn. 21:28) and thus avowing the divinity of Jesus Christ as well as His resurrection.

Taking seriously to heart the last command of Jesus viz. "Going therefore, teach ye all the nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Mt. 28:19), the Apostles went to different parts of the world to spread Jesus Christ's teaching and convert people to Christianity. And Jesus was with them in accordance with His promise: "Behold I am with you all days" (Mt. 28:20). His presence was felt in the many miracles wrought to confirm the teachings of the Apostles. Thus the mission of the Apostles could bear abundant fruits and Christianity

could spread far and wide within a short period.

It was St. Thomas' lot to come to India on his mission to preach the gospel. St. Peter the prince of the Apostles said: "The servant of God, our dearest brother Thomas, will follow his Master preaching in India, in Persia and among the Parthians, Medes, Hircanians, Brahmans, and Bactrians. He shall baptize the three Magi Kings, and, as they shall be attracted by the rumour of his preaching and his miracles, he shall instruct them fully in all things according to their expectations."²

His mission to the east was undertaken twice - first before the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (46 A.D.) and secondly after her Assumption. Just as he was impressed by the Resurrection of Our Lord, he was equally impressed by the Assumption of Our Lady. So much so he was particular in erecting churches in honour of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin not only in new places of his second mission but also in places where the converts of his first mission were residing. On his second arrival (52A.D.), their places of worship were turned into churches dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Assumed into heaven body and soul.

The time of his first mission is computed by this author as between 33 A. D. and 46 A.D.³ Authors have so far dealt with St. Thomas' mission to India as commencing from 52 A.D. But the author of this treatise Rev. Fr. Pancras M. Raja directed his research work on St. Thomas' first expedition in the places like the Southern Pandian Kingdom (Called Naarankottai or Maanaveeranaadu, situated between

Thiruchendur and Kanyakumari) and the Southern Chera Kingdom (called Venaadu or Travancore, situated between Kanyakumari and Maarthaandam) where St. Thomas sojourned in his first mission for thirteen years (from 33 A.D. to 46 A.D.) before the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He also includes the journeys of St. Thomas to countries like Ceylon, China and Japan during this first mission.

Rev. Fr. Pancras M. Raja has succeeded in tracing out the converts of St. Thomas' first mission who were scattered from the Kingdom of Naaraankottai (Maanaveera Naadu) to various places in course of time, and in explaining the destruction of that Kingdom in the seventeenth century because of a catastrophic cyclone carrying heavy loads of sand, caused by a curse.⁴ Hence the hitherto unknown history of the missionary activities of St. Thomas in his first mission and the regions and people who first embraced Christianity owing to his preaching and miracles, form the theme of this pre-historic research. The author has referred to ancient documents like "The Acts of Thomas", "The Gospel of Thomas", "The Catholic Encyclopedias" and all the website materials available. He deserves our congratulations.

Prof. K. Maria Pankiras M.A., M.Ed.
Tuticorin, India

1. St. Gregory, "Hom. in Evang." 26.

2. Bl. Mary of Agreda, "The Mystical City of God" Vol. IV No. 222.

3. Scripture scholars indicate that because of a miscalculation of Dionysius Exiguus,

The Christian era does not start with the birth of Jesus Christ, and Jesus' birth should have taken place between 6 B.C. and 4 B.C. "Most scholars generally assume a date of birth between 6 and 4 BC/BCE. Other scholars assume that Jesus was born sometime between 7-2 BC/BCE". But recent studies have proved that Dionysius Exiguus and St. Luke were correct in their accounts: "However, the common Gregorian calendar method for numbering years, in which the current year is 2011, is based on the decision of a monk Dionysius in the six century, to count the years from a point of reference (namely, Jesus' birth) which he placed sometime between 2 BC/BCE and 1 AD/CE". "For centuries, astronomers and scientists have used diverse computational methods to estimate the date of crucifixion, Isaac Newton being one of the first cases. Newton's method relied on the relative visibility of the crescent of the new moon and he suggested the date as Friday, April 23, 34 AD/CE. In 1990 astronomer Bradley E. Schaefer computed the date as Friday, April 3, 33 AD/CE. In 1991, John Pratt stated that Newton's method was sound, but included a minor error at the end. Pratt suggested the year 33 AD/CE as the answer. Using the completely different approach of a lunar eclipse model, Humphreys and Waddington arrived at the conclusion that Friday, April 3, 33 AD/CE was the date of the crucifixion".

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus#Possible_year_and_place_of_death.
(See Appendix I)

Consequently this author comes to the conclusion that when Our Lord died at the age of 33, the year of the Christian era was 33, and he fixes 33 A.D. as the commencing year of St. Thomas' missionary work, and 46 A.D. as the end of the first part of his mission, which coincided with the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin that took place when She was 63 years old.

4. Cfr. History of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Sands at Ch. 4 of this book.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

As Jesus Christ was a historical figure who preached the Kingdom of God in Palestine, so was St. Thomas the Apostle a historical figure who evangelised India and merited The title “the Apostle of India”.

The tradition of the “Saint Thomas Christians” in South India also is very concrete and true. Recently on 27 September 2006 Pope Benedict, during his Angelus address at Vatican said that the Apostle Thomas preached the gospel in North Western India, from where Christianity reached also South India, meaning that the Apostle did not preach the gospel to south India personally. But when there was media uproar in India, the Vatican responded through its official website on 27 November 2006 that the Apostle St. Thomas had proceeded to preach the gospel also in South India.

Famous historians have tried to trace out the historicity of the time and place of the evangelisation of St Thomas the Apostle in India. For example: 1) The Rev. Henry Hosten S. J. in his “Antiquities from Sant Thome and Mylapore” (in 1927); 2) George Mark Moraes in his “A History of Christianity in India” (in 1964); 3) George Nedungatt S.J. in his “Quest for The Historical Thomas Apostle of India” (in 2008); and 4) James Kurikilamkatt in his book “First voyage of the Apostle Thomas to India” (2005) at 264 page

asks: “If St. Thomas reached India in 52 AD, where was he preaching in the years prior to this?” And he does not give the comprehensive answer to his question. But this research gives the answer with historical proof that St. Thomas was preaching the gospel in Media, Parthia and in the Southern Pandian Kingdom in India during the period A.D. 33 to 46.

The present “New Discovery on St. Thomas” dependant and independent of the *Acts of St. Thomas the Apostle*, attempts to bring out the undocumented history of “St. Thomas’ first visit to India” between 33 and 46 A.D. P. J. Thomas in his article: “Was the Apostle Thomas in South India?” published as a preamble in the above mentioned book of Fr. H. Hosten writes: “St. Thomas is also said to have converted a certain king called Kandapparaser” (Page xi). According to George Nedungatt “...where Thomas first arrived was the India ruled by king Gundaphar” (Page 186).



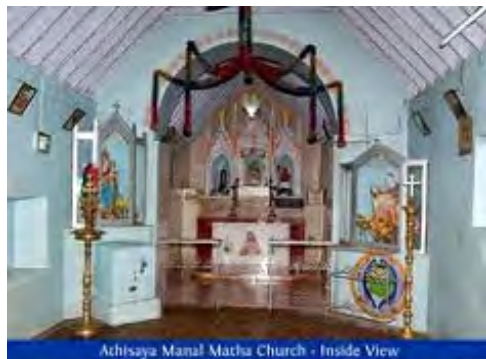
This Kandapparasa, one of the Magi kings (Gaspar) was ruling Jaffna a part of Ceylon and the Southern Pandian kingdom called Maanaveera Naadu. This Southern Pandian Kingdom in between Thiruchendur and Kanyakumari was covered by a huge sand hill since the year 1649. So the fact of St. Thomas converting Kandapparasa and performing his missionary activities from A.D. 33 to 46 could not be traced out by the historians until recent findings and documentations.

Excavations (1799) have revealed the existence of a church below the said sand hill of Maanaveera Naadu dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and an ancient wooden Statue of Our Lady. The admirable location of this underground church is a sure proof of the Southern Pandian Kingdom, ruled by Kandapparasa who was baptized by St. Thomas the Apostle.

“Athisaya Manalmatha Church” was built in First Century AD by St. Thomas, one of 12 Disciples of Lord Jesus. The church is located in Sokkankudieruppu, a village 39 kms away from Tiruchendur in Tuticorin District of Tiruchendur – TamilNadu- India. The church was built on three cents of land, donated by Pandya Ruler, Kandappa Rasa to St. Thomas, as a mark of respect for healing the diseases and sufferings of the king and his family. St. Thomas built the church with palm leaves as per the tradition in those days. This piece of 3 cents land was the first to be given in India to Christianity.¹

Alex Cruz Muthaiah (1995) in his research book called “Maanaveera Naadu of the Southern Pandian Kingdom” (pages 132 to 140), proves the Southern Pandian Kingdom ruled by Kandapparasa who had been baptized by St. Thomas the Apostle, and that he was one of the Magi Kings.

The “City of God” by Mary of Agreda (Spain 1665) reveals through the



Athisaya Manal Matha Church - Inside View

lips of St. Peter the Apostle that “The servant of Christ, our dearest brother Thomas, will follow his Master preaching in India, in Persia and among the Parthians. He shall baptize the three Magi Kings....”²

“Joao de Barros, the Portuguese historian in his book, “Asia de Joao Barros, dos fechos que od Portuguese fizeram no descobrimento&conquista dos mares & teras do Oriente,” published after 1563 relates “a king of the island of Ceilam, called Primal, went in a ship to the coast of Muscat, to join other kings, who were going to adore the Lord, at Bethlehem, and that he was the third.”

“.....An early king of Jaffna was one of those who paid his adoration to the infant Jesus; also Christianity was in existence in Lanka, since from the very beginning of the Christian era.”³

There is a tradition that this Peria Perumal (Kandapparasa) came from Sri Lanka to South India and was baptised by St. Thomas the Apostle as Gaspar. This fact is described by Fr. Motha Vaz in his “History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India” (1971, pages 32 and 33) as follows; “Peria Perumal, the King of Jaffna (Ceylon) journeyed to India to meet the Apostle. As soon as he saw St. Thomas, he requested him: “O Apostle of the Redeemer of the world! I am one of the Magi Kings who at the sight of the star in the East, followed it and visited the Holy Infant Messiah at Bethlehem. Therefore, please explain to me His life and teachings and baptise me. The Saint, accepting the request and having instructed on the life and teachings of the Saviour, baptised him as Gaspar.”

St. Francis Xavier while tracing out the places of St. Thomas (1542) has visited this church, as recorded by Fr. F. W. Faber D.D. (1923) in his “The Life of St. Francis Xavier” (page 67). More excavations on this spot will reveal the Kingdom of the magi king Gaspar, where St. Thomas first came to preach the Kingdom of God, before the death of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (See details in Chapters 4, 14 and 15).

The King’s store house (Pandakasaalai) and the settlement of his accountants (Kanakkaayars) near the lake gave the name of the place as Kanakkankudiyiruppu. It was also called Naaraiyoor because of the settlement to Naarais (Pelicans) on the trees around the lake. These names are found in the letters and the life of St. Francis Xavier. (See Chapter 14).

A critical study on the existing story of “Thiruvalluvar”, the “Deiva Pulavar” will show that the super-eminent character of the person, the divine eloquence of the doctrines, and the un-equivalent style of the literature could be attributed to the Christian doctrines of St. Thomas written at the request of Kandapparasa. It is astonishing to find that Kandapparasa was one of the petit kings of “Ukkiraperuvazhuthi”, the Pandian King at Madurai to whom “Thirukkural”, the “Deiva Nool” was submitted! (See Chapter7).

The “Act of Thomas” is filled in by this South Indian tradition. Chapter one to six speak about his sojourn in Maanaveera Naadu and Venadu (Travancore) building churches and monuments, working miracles and preaching the Kingdom of God. These events of the six chapters are

given here with their proper locations followed by the original text. There is no mention about his journey to China and to Takshasila. But we are told in the “De TansitaMariae” that from his mission at Takshasila the Apostle was summoned to be present at the bed side of the Blessed Virgin in her last moments.

George Moraes in his book “A History of Christianity in India” admirably noted a lacuna in the Acts of Thomas (page, 34). Lacuna means cavity or space. Between chapter six and chapter seven, many things are omitted. His journey to Ethiopia, Armenia, Hyrcania etc. in A.D. 46, and his second journey to Kerala in A.D. 52 and there finding seven churches etc. are omitted in the Acts of Thomas. The Act of Thomas begins once again at the end of his mission in Kerala and narrates his journey to Mylapore, the conversions and miracles, and ends with his glorious martyrdom. The texts of hapters 7 to 13 of the Acts of Thomas are given in the Appendixes.

Readers are welcome to express their opinion. It will be of much help to improve this documentation and correct mistakes.

Fr. Pancras M. Raja

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- 1 <http://catholiconline.in/category/catholic-churches/page/13/>
 2. City of God Vol. IV Nos.227, 229, 230
 3. www.bahamaswriter.com/magi.html-48k-

CHAPTER ONE



BIRTH, VOCATION, AND MISSION OF ST. THOMAS

Family and Birth

St. Thomas was born of a Jewish family at Bethsaida in Galilee most probably between the years 20 to 30 B.C. His Hebrew name was Siriacus, which means The Twin or Didimus Thoma or Judas Thomas. While discussing the proper name of St. Thomas, Dr. Burkitt in his 'Early Eastern Christianity' says: "We all know that Thomas means 'twin', and the Syriac tradition had it that the name of the Apostle whom we



call Thomas was Judas the Twin. Consequently the earliest Syriac text of the Gospels calls Judas who was not Iscariot (Jn. 14: 22) by the same name as Judas Thomas.”¹ He was also called Petrus (Malayappar) as mentioned in a traditional prayer of devotion to St. Thomas in use among the St. Thomas’ Christians of the Tamil Country.²

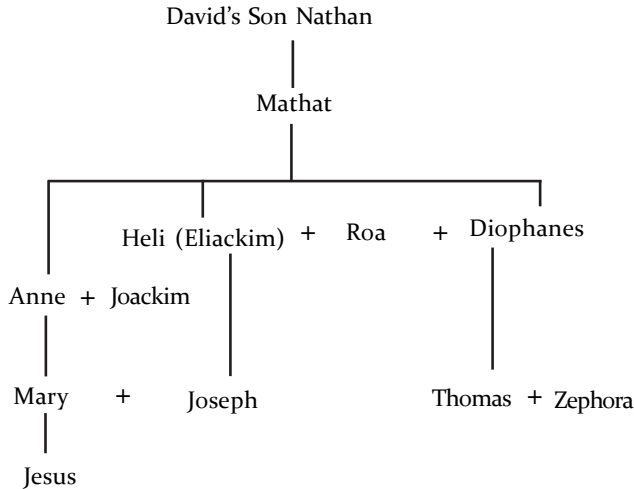
According to tradition the parents of St. Thomas are known as Diophanes and Rhoa, and he was born with a twin sister Lysias or brother Eliezer. This fact is cited in the 1911 Encyclopedia as follows:

“Tradition has it that he was the twin brother of a sister Lysias (his parents being Diophanes and Rhoa, and his birthplace Antioch; “XII. Apost. Patriae,” in Chron. Pasch. ii. 142), or of a brother Eliezer (Horn. Clem. ii. i), or, according to the Syriac *Ada Thomae* (ed. Wright, Eng. trans.pp.155, 180), or of Jesus Himself.”³

Actually his twin was not a sister, nor was it Jesus, but a brother who was called Thaddaeus Thomas or Addai Thoma, who was one amongst the Seventy Two disciples of Jesus Christ. And this is confirmed by another website source by Pof. M.M. Ninan as follows:

“Thomas in Hebrew means “The Twin”. So he was also known as “Didymus” which meant ‘The Twin’ in Greek. The Gnostics consider Thomas as the twin brother of Jesus. We have no evidence for this in the Bible. After the resurrection of Jesus, Jesus did sent Thadues, one of the Seventy (Two) disciples to Abgar and healed him. This Thadeus was the twin brother of Thomas.”⁴

The diagram below shows how closely St. Thomas is related to Jesus Our Lord.



Heli or Eliackim died after giving birth to Joseph and Diophanes married Rhoea and gave birth to Thomas.⁵

We do not know who his other brothers and sisters were. The following statement which the Saviour spoke to Judas Thomas, recorded by Mathias the Apostle, was only to affirm that the Apostle St. Thomas had been known or called as a twin brother and true companion, but definitely not the true brother of Jesus Christ: “Now since it has been said that you are my twin and true companion, examine yourself, and learn who you are, in what way you exist and how you will come to be. Since you will be called my brother, it is not fitting that you be ignorant of yourself.”⁶

Though he was from an uneducated and poor family, he was talented in many kinds of arts. He was a poet, a

carpenter, a sculptor, and a very famous architect. All the same his main occupation was fishing. He was called by Our Lord Jesus Christ as one of His Twelve Apostles. He was married according to the custom that prevailed among the Jews, expecting the Messiah in their progeny. Most probably the name of his spouse was **Sepphora**, one of the three virgins in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary mentioned in 'The Passing of Mary' (De Transita Mariae): "And she had along with her three virgins, **Sepphora, Abigea, and Zael.**"⁷ "And having heard this from the holy archangel, she returned to holy Bethlehem, having along with her three virgins who ministered unto her. And after having rested a short time, she sat up and said to the virgins: Bring me a Censer that I may pray. And they brought it, as they had been commanded".⁸

We do not know whether he had children or not. But when he was called by Jesus, he left his family for good and followed Jesus. His spouse was known for extraordinary fidelity to her husband and for love of chastity. She vowed, after the call of St. Thomas by Jesus, to remain a virgin dedicating herself to the service of Our Lord in the company of Our Lady. It is not a wonder if, in view of the highest vocation and ministry of St. Thomas, they always kept their virginity by a special grace of God.

We do not know exactly at what occasion Our Lord called St. Thomas as His Apostle, but ever since he left everything for Jesus, he decided to "go and die with Him" (Jn: 11: 16). It is to him that Our Lord said; "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father,



but by me” (Jn: 14; 6). He was the external testimony of the divinity and resurrection of Jesus Christ to the world; and it was in him the command made by the Lord God, “Behold, I have given thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation even to the farthest part of the earth” (Is. 49: 6; Acts 13: 47), was fulfilled first.

The Mission of St. Thomas The Apostle

St. Thomas as all other apostles directly received from Our Lord the mission to go and preach the gospel: “Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16: 15). Accordingly, after the day of Pentecost, St. Thomas together with all the other Apostles received instructions and directions from Our Lady, on the divine mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity of the Hypostatic Union and of the Incarnation. While preparing the Apostles for the coming of the Holy Ghost, Our Blessed Mother was “speaking to them for an hour every day and explaining to them the mysteries of the faith taught Her by Her divine Son.”

“During those days She explained to them the mysteries of the Blessed Trinity in terms most exalted and mysterious, yet suited to the understanding of all. She explained also the mystery of the hypostatic union, and those of the Incarnation.”⁹ “...they frequently consulted Her, and She called them to the meetings and conferences.”¹⁰

Confirming this fact, Rev. B. Rohner O.S.B. explains the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary as the teacher and mistress of the Apostles and how She taking the place of the Divine Master, taught them the divine mysteries with a wonderful holiness, extraordinary wisdom and heroic fortitude, and how She was the means of so inspiring the Apostles that they remained together, united by Her benign influence. He says: “Mary was here not only the heart of their little assembly, but She was also their head, for She became their teacher. Even at this late date, many important truths connected with the life of the blessed Master, especially regarding the Incarnation and His early life in Bethlehem, Egypt and Nazareth may have been unknown to these future teachers of all nations. Who could have been better fitted to instruct them on these important truths than His own Mother who had witnessed them and shared largely in them?”

And he adds: “In Her presence and with Her cooperation, the Holy Ghost was pleased to accomplish the great work of transforming the hitherto vacillating Apostles into the Pillars of the Church and the foundation stones of eternal truths.”¹¹ The most Blessed Virgin Mary asked each of the Apostles to define an article of Faith, according as the divine Spirit should inspire them. Thereupon Saint Thomas defined the fifth article of the Apostles’ Creed: “He descended into hell, arose from the dead on the third day.”¹²

St. Thomas used to sit at the feet Our Lady for several hours to hear Her instructions on the sublime truths of eternal life. On one occasion Our Lady admonished him for

his unbalanced attachment to the human presence of Jesus and advised him gently to understand that instead of relishing the company of Jesus in a sensible manner, one should raise himself from his material sphere and learn to enjoy His Divinity by the light of faith and love and through the mirror of Christ's Humanity and thus be united with God the Son, the Eternal and Incarnate Wisdom.

In Her spiritual conferences, The Blessed Virgin Mary imparted to the Apostles the necessity of the growth of the Church, the mystical body of Christ and the highest dignity of its eternal union with Her Divine Spouse. For this highest ideal she urged them to sacrifice their desires of the body, travel to the ends of the world, suffer persecutions and give their lives. She taught them to practice the highest form of spiritual exercises like contemplation and mental prayer; and to offer thanksgiving to God for their noblest call to be the Apostles of Jesus Christ and the founders of His Holy Church on earth.

In addition to these teachings, Our Blessed Mother gave some personal information and guidance to St. Thomas. She informed him of his task of finding the Magi Kings, baptizing them and enlightening them with the Light of Faith. Then at last, She made him recall how Her Divine Son showed the wounds of His Risen Body to him as a special privilege in order to strengthen his faith, and foretold that one day the body of St. Thomas also would be pierced with a lance in order to witness his faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And then in order to know the Will of God in the assignment of the kingdoms and provinces in which each

one was to preach, the Apostles at the advice of Our Lady fasted and prayed for ten days. These exercises being completed, St. Peter proceeded to allot the provinces and he said to St. Thomas; **“The servant of Christ, our dearest brother Thomas, will follow his Master preaching in India, in Persia and among the Parthians... He shall baptize the three Magi Kings....”**¹³ “And Chrysostom said that when Thomas came in to the parts of the three kings which came to worship our Lord he baptized them, and they were made helpers and aiders of our Lord and of Christian Faith”.¹⁴

Our Lady was filled with grateful jubilee and She exhorted the Apostles to give themselves up to this work with all their heart, to set out joyfully and confidently for the conversion of the world. St. Thomas commending himself to Her protection, took leave of the great Queen.¹⁵

For each one of the twelve, Our Lady had made a woven tunic similar to that of Christ our Saviour. St. Thomas received from the hands of Our Lady a set of garments and a small metal case in which She had placed three of the thorns from the crown of Her Divine Son, some pieces of the cloths in which She had wrapped the infant Saviour and of the linen with which She had wiped and caught the Most Precious Blood of Our Lord at His Circumcision and Passion. When She handed them these relics Our Lady said that in these relics they would carry with them vivid remembrances of Her Divine Son and the certain assurance, that the Lord loved them as His children and as the ministers of the Most High. St. Thomas received these relics with tears of joy and

consolation and commenced his mission in the Year A.D.33.

When he started for India he brought with him a colour portrait of Our Lady painted on wood by St. Luke the Evangelist. This fact has been recorded in the History of the Shrine of St. Thomas' Mount as follows: "As soon as we enter the church, our attention is attracted by a beautiful colour portrait Our Lady. This has been painted on wood by St. Luke the Evangelist. Tradition says that St. Thomas brought it with him when he came to India he prayed before it. Tradition also says that St. Thomas carried it with him wherever he went."¹⁶



“This image of Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, was painted by St. Luke. It was carried by St. Thomas the apostle to India about one thousand, nine hundred and ninety years ago. Today, Mary continues to be venerated through this painting. It is kept at the main altar in the Church of Mount St. Thomas in Chennai, India, the place where St. Thomas was martyred for the Catholic Faith. We see that devotion to Mary goes back to the time of the Apostles who were personally devoted to the Mother of God. The apostles, wherever they went encouraged all the disciples

to honor Mary as their Mother because Jesus gave Her to be the Mother of us all”.¹⁷

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15. *Ibid* at p. 235
16. History of The Shrine. <https://stthomasmount.org/history-of-the-shrine/>
17. Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ - Painting. <https://stlukescatholic.com/mary-the-mother-of-jesus-christ-painting>

CHAPTER TWO



THE VISIT OF ST. THOMAS TO MEDIA AND THE BAPTISM OF ABGAR (BALTHAZAR) THE FIRST OF THE MAGI KINGS



Abgar (Balthazar)¹

PPrince of Africa and King of Saba (Edessa), Balthazar brought myrrh to the Christ Child. He died at the age of 112 on the Feast of the Epiphany. The city of Edessa in Media

was founded by King Abgar the Black (from Africa) one of the Magi Kings who was ruling Media when Christ was born in Bethlehem. He was led by the miraculous light of a star with the other two Magi Kings to Bethlehem to adore Jesus with an offering of Myrrh. Christians call him by the name Balthazar.

There are traditions connecting this King Abgar with the life of Jesus in different circumstances. First of all when he came to adore Jesus in Bethlehem, he remained together with the other kings for several days with the Holy Family and he was instructed by the Blessed Virgin Mary on Christian doctrines. "They consulted the heavenly Mother in regard to many mysteries and practices of faith, and concerning matters pertaining to their conscience and to the government of their countries... As a teacher and an instrument of divine wisdom She answered all their questions, giving them such high precepts of sanctity that they could scarcely part from Her."²

The historian Eusabius records the story of Abgar, King of Edessa, who wrote to Our Lord asking Him to come and cure him of the terrible disease with which he was afflicted. Jesus sends back a written reply praising his faith and assuring him that although he could not come in person he would certainly send one of His Apostles, after His Ascension, to heal him.³ St. Thomas was the Apostle designated for this purpose. H. Leclercq gives the texts of these two letters in an article published in the Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. I Page 42. The letters of Our Lord and of the King of Edessa are as follows;

“Abgar Ouchama to Jesus, the God physician who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting;

“I have heard of Thee, and of Thy healings; namely that Thou dost not use medicines or roots, but by Thy word openest the eyes of the blind, makest the lame to walk, cleanest the lepers, makest the deaf to hear; how by thy word also Thou healest sick spirits and those who are tormented with lunatic demons and how, again, Thou raisest the dead to life. And learning the wonders that Thou doest, it was borne in upon me that, (of the two) one: that either Thou art God, who hast come down from heaven, or else Thou art the Son of God, who bringest all these things to pass. Wherefore I write to Thee, and pray that Thou wilt come to me, who adore Thee, and heal all the ills that I suffer, according to the faith I have in Thee. I also learn that the Jews murmur against Thee, and persecute Thee, so that they seek to crucify Thee. I possess but one small city, but it is beautiful, and large enough for us two to live in peace.”

When Jesus had received the letter, in the house of the high Priest of the Jews, He said to Hannan, the secretary, “Go thou, and say to thy master, who has sent Thee to me: ‘Happy art thou who hast believed in Me, not having seen Me, for it is written of Me that those who shall see Me shall not believe in Me, and that those who shall not see Me shall believe in Me. As to that which thou hast written, that I should come to thee, (behold) all that for which I was sent here below is finished, and I ascend again to my Father who sent me, and when I shall have ascended to Him, I will send thee one of My disciples, who shall heal all thy sufferings,

and shall give thee health again, and shall convert all who are with thee unto life eternal. And thy city shall be blessed forever, and the enemy shall never overcome it.” According to Eusabius, it was not Hannan who wrote the answer, but Our Lord Himself.

There is another account given below according to the origins of Christianity in Edessa:⁴ “Osrhoene was a buffer State between the Roman and Parthian empires till AD. 216 when it became a Roman colony. When did Christianity come to Edessa and who brought it? There is an Assyrian tradition that the wise men that came from the East to visit infant Jesus were from Edessa and that they went to Bethlehem in fulfillment of a prophecy made by Zoroaster in the seventh century BC. On their return to Edessa they had told of the wonderful things they had seen and heard and this prepared the minds of the Edessians for the reception of the Gospel.”

Eusebius of Caesarea (Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History* 1.13.), the church historian of the fourth century tells of another tradition about the coming of the gospel to Edessa. It tells of an invitation sent by King Abgar V (Ukkoma, the Black) of Edessa to Jesus himself to visit Edessa and cure him of leprosy. In Jesus’ reply to the king, he promised that after his ascension, he would send one of his disciples to cure the king of the disease. The tradition is that according to the promise made by Jesus, the Apostle Thomas (Didymus) sent Thaddeus (Addai), one of the Seventy, to Edessa. Addai on coming to Edessa first preached to the Jews there and thus began the church in Edessa.

Abgar and the First Baptism

Under the ruling of the aged Abgar, nephew of Tigranes the Great, the whole territory of Armenia was subdued to Rome. The Roman officials arrived to Armenia to take a census. They brought with them numerous statues of the Emperor Augustus.

Later, Abgar planning to revolt against the Roman tyranny settled in Mesopotamia and founded the city of Edessa. He transported there his Court, the Treasury, and the Archives of the Armenian Kings. That is why the Armenian sources designate him as King of Armenia while some Greek and Roman sources mention Abgar, Ruler of Edessa. When Abgar heard about the miracles Jesus Christ was performing in Galilee he was already ailing, (in his declining years). Astonished he came to believe in Christ and wrote a letter to Him. Abgar asked the Savior to heal him and invited Him to Edessa.

Following the Armenian tradition, Abgar's messengers met Jesus in Jerusalem. Jesus would not accept the offer to visit Edessa but wrote a response to Abgar's request. After Christ's ascension Thaddaeus, one of the disciples arrived to Edessa bringing a piece of cloth that some researchers identify as the Shroud of Turin. According to Moses of Khorene, Abgar and all inhabitants of his city were baptised.

In order to prove that it was St. Thomas the Apostle who had sent Addai and that it is not said anywhere that King Abgar was baptised by Addai but by St. Thomas, a

portion from “The Doctrines of Addai” has been quoted below:

“I will send to thee one of my disciples, who will cure the disease which thou hast, and restore thee to health; and all who are with thee he will convert to everlasting life. Thy city shall be blessed, and no enemy shall again become master of it forever.

When Hannan, the keeper of the archives, saw that Jesus spake thus to him, by virtue of being the King’s painter, he took (a brush) and painted a likeness of Jesus with choice paints, and brought with him to Abgar the King, his master. And when Abgar the king saw the likeness, he received it with great joy, and placed it with great honour in one of his palatial houses.



**Sacred
Mandylyon**

The Mandylyon icon, *Icon of Our Lord Jesus Christ Not Made by Hands*, is the first icon painted by a new iconographer in the Byzantine tradition. King Abgar V of Edessa communicated with Jesus by his messenger, Hannan. These letters are reportedly in the archives of Urhoy. **In one version of the Mandylyon Hannan painted a likeness of Jesus during one of these visits with Him.⁵**

Hannan, the keeper of the archives, related to him everything which he had heard from Jesus, as His words were put by him in writing. **After Christ had Ascended to heaven, Judas Thomas sent to Abgar Addai, the Apostle**

who was one of the Seventy-Two Apostles.

Then Abgar said to Addai, “Of a truth thou art the disciple of Jesus, that mighty one, the son of God, who sent to me saying I send thee one of my disciples for healing and for life.” Addai said to him, “Because that from the beginning thou didst believe in Him who sent me to thee, therefore have I been sent to thee, and if thou believest in Him, everything in which thou dost believe thou shalt have.” Abgar said to him, “So have I believed in Him, that with respect to those Jews who crucified Him, I desire to take with me an army, and to go and destroy them; but because the Kingdom belongs to the Romans, I was restrained by the covenant of peace, which was confirmed by me with our lord the emperor Tiberius, like my forefathers.” Addai said to him, “Our Lord has fulfilled the will of His Father. And when He had completed the will of His Parent, He was taken up to His Father, and sat with Him in glory, with whom he was from eternity.” Abgar said to him: “I also believe in Him and in His Father.” Addai said to him: “Because that thou so believest, I place my hand on thee, in the name of Him in whom thou believest.”

“At the moment that he placed his hand upon him, he was cured of the plague of the disease, which he had had for a long time.”

“Hear, all of you, and understand that which I speak before you; that I am not a physician of medicines and roots, of the art of the sons of men; but I am the disciple of Jesus Christ, the Physician of troubled souls, and the Saviour of

future life, the Son of God, who came down from heaven, and was clothed with a body and became man; and He gave Himself and was crucified for all men. And when He was suspended on the wood, the sun He made dark in the firmament; and when He had entered the grave, He arose and went forth from the grave with many. And those who guarded the grave saw not how He went forth from the grave; but the angels of heaven were the preachers and publishers of His resurrection, who if He had not wished, had not died, because that He is the Lord of death, the exit of all things. And except it had pleased Him, He had not again clothed Himself with a body, for He is Himself the framer of the body. For the will which inclined Him to the birth from a virgin, also made Him condescend to the suffering of death, and He humbled the majesty of His exalted divinity, who was with His Father from eternity, He of whom Prophets of old spake in their mysteries; and they represented images of His birth, and His suffering, and His resurrection, and His ascension to His Father, and of His sitting at the right hand. And, behold, He is worshipped by celestial spirits, and by the inhabitants of the earth, He who is worshipped from eternity. For although His was the appearance of men, His might, and His knowledge, and His power were of God Himself; as He said to us, Behold, now is the son of man glorified, and God glorifies Himself in Him, by miracles and by wonders, and by honour of being at the right hand. But His body is the pure vestment of His glorious divinity, by which we are able to see His invisible Lordship. This Jesus Christ, therefore, we preach and publish, and, with Him, we praise His Father, and we extol and worship the Spirit of His

divinity, because that we were thus commanded by Him, to baptize and absolve those who believe in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

“And all who believed in Christ, Addai received, and baptized them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And those who were accustomed to worship stones and stocks, sat at his feet, learning, and being corrected of the plague of the foolishness of paganism. The Jews also, conversant with the Law and the Prophets, who carried on merchandise in silks, were also persuaded and became disciples, and made confession in Christ, that He is the Son of the living God. But neither Abgar the king, nor Addai the Apostle pressed any man by force to believe in Christ; because without the force of man, the force of the signs compelled many to believe in Him. And all this country of Mesopotamia, and all the regions round about it received his doctrine with love.”⁶

J.F. Goggin observes King Abgar as “The Black”, and says that the promise of Our Lord to Abgar was fulfilled after the Ascension, when Thaddeus (in Syriac Addai), the twin brother of St. Thomas and one of the seventy two disciples, was sent by St. Thomas to Edessa to cure the king.⁷ This Thaddeus or Addeus, also called Addai Thoma went to Edessa first to heal the King and then to prepare the ground for the preaching of the Gospel by St. Thomas the Apostle himself.

Thus in the year 33 A.D. before starting for India St. Thomas paid a visit to King Abgar and baptized him, in

accordance with the Mandate given to St. Thomas by the Prince of the Apostles St. Peter. When he proceeded to allot the provinces he said to St. Thomas: “The servant of Christ, our dearest brother Thomas, will follow his Master preaching in India, in Persia and among the Parthians. **He shall baptize the three Magi Kings....**”⁸

According to tradition, this King Abgar is called Balthazar. “In about the 8th century the names of three Magi—Bithisarea, Melchior, and Gathaspa— appear in a chronicle known as the *Excerpta Latina Barbari*. They have become known most commonly as Balthazar, Melchior, and Gaspar (or Casper). According to Western Church tradition, Balthazar is often represented as a King of Arabia, Melchior as a king of Persia, and Gaspar as a king of India.”⁹

St. Thomas baptized him and entrusted the preaching to Addeus and started in the same year (33 A.D.) to Parthia to meet King Gondophernes (Melchior), the second of the Magi Kings.

King Abgar and the people of Edessa knew well that St. Thomas was the Apostle of Edessa and that Edessa had been entrusted to the care of Addeus by the Apostle himself. It was because of this close connection between Edessa and St. Thomas that Edessa later asked for the relics of St. Thomas and kept them as its treasured possession. St. Thomas used to make several visits to strengthen them in the faith. After converting the whole of Edessa, Addeus preached the Gospel at Arbela, Nisibis, Bethgarma and Mosul, and came to India to continue the work of St. Thomas.

Edessa thus owed the Faith indirectly to St. Thomas, to whom, therefore, it was grateful. The Apostle had also endeared himself to the Christians of Edessa by the letters he wrote from India. They had these letters among their priceless treasures and wished to express their gratitude in a permanent manner by raising a noble monument in which they treasured his relics.¹⁰

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1. www.roman.com/fontanini/fonthome.html
 2. Ven. Mary of Agreda, 1670. *The Mystical City of God*, trans. F. Marison, Chicago, The Theopolitan, 1902, Nos. 567.
 3. Dom Bernard Orchard (General Editor) "A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture" No. 949, p. 125.
 4. Chapter 2 : Christianity in Edessa, in T.V. Philip, *East of the Euphrates : Early Christianity in Asia*. <https://www.religion-online.org/book-chapter/chapter-2-christianity-in-edessa/>
 5. Sebastian Brock, "Transformations of the Edessa Portrait of Christ", *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18/1 (2004)
 6. G. Phillips, *The Doctrine of Addai, The Apostle*. London, Trubner & Co., 1876
 7. Cfr. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol. I, New York, The Encyclopedia Press Inc., 1907, p. 136
 8. Ven. Mary of Agreda, 1670. *The Mystical City of God*, trans. F. Marison, Chicago, The Theopolitan, 1902, Nos. 227, 229, 230
 9. Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Balthasar". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11 Dec.2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Balthasar>. Accessed 26 May2022.
 10. George Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552*, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964.

CHAPTER THREE



THE VISIT OF ST. THOMAS TO THE PARTHIAN KING, GONDOPHERNES (MELCHIOR) THE SECOND OF THE MAGI KINGS



Gondophernes (Melchior)¹

King of Arabia and India (Parthia), Melchior was the eldest of the three kings. He was given the honor of being in front of the others at the Infant's crib. He gave gold, silk, and precious stones to the Christ Child.¹

The mission of St. Thomas to the court of Gondophernes in Parthia took place on his way to India. It is described in the 'Acts of St. Thomas' written by Bardesanes. In the first Act of St. Thomas Our Lord is said to have sold him to the merchant Habban that he might go down to India. But St. Thomas was feeling reluctant to go and therefore said: "I have not strength enough for this, because I am weak. And I am a Hebrew; how can I teach the Indians? While he was reasoning thus, Our Lord appeared to him in a vision and said to him: "Fear not, Thomas, because my grace is with thee". But he would not be persuaded at all, but said: "Send me O, Lord whithersoever Thou wilt, only to India I will not go". The typical character of St. Thomas is thus manifested, (refusal signifying the acceptance more faithfully than anyone else).²

"Then certain merchant, called Habban, an Indian who happened to come into the south country, was sent by Gudnaphar to procure for him a skillful carpenter."³ This statement of George Moraes reveals that **there was a king called Gudnaphar (Gandhappar) ruling in the "south country" of India**, which is the Southern Pandian Kingdom of Maanaveera Nadu (from Thiruchendur to Kanyakumari in the South East Coast of India). This fact has been strengthened by Alex Cruz Muthiah's findings when he says: **"In the middle of the first century Maanaveera Naadu (a part of the Southern Pandian Kingdom) was ruled by an heir of Pandian family and a valiant soldier called Gandhappar."**⁴

Another publication regarding the St. Mary's Church

at Thiruvithankodu (Kanyakumari District, Tamil nadu State, India) further asserts this fact by saying: “The Chera King Emayavaramban Neduncheralaathan (Cfr. ‘History of Tamil Sangams’ Page 121) who was ruling this province (of Chera Naadu) having Thiruvithankodu as his Capital from 7 A.D. to 65 A.D., brought St. Thomas, one of Jesus’ twelve Apostles who was residing with the petty king Gundhappar.” (Cfr. Dhina Malar article on ‘spirituality’ page with the picture of St. Thomas in the ‘Palsuvai Malar’ section dated 13-4-2003).

The following passage of the Rampan song also testifies that St. Thomas had something to do with the Pandian Kingdom. “The song tells that Prince Peter or Kepha of Muziris who was one of the Apostle’s first converts visited St. Thomas in the Pandian Kingdom and requested him to return to Malabar. The Apostle came back to Coromandal Coast. The request was granted and the Apostle accompanied Prince Kepha to Kerala.”⁵

Hence, when Dr. Herbert Thurston referred The Acts of Thomas by saying: “Jesus appeared in a supernatural way to Habban, the envoy of Gundafor (Gundhappar), an Indian King, and sold Thomas to him to be his slave and to serve Gundafor as a carpenter,”⁶ he meant that St. Thomas was sold to the Pandian King Gandhappar.



Then **Our Lord appeared to St. Thomas once again** and instructed him as follows: “Thou shalt go to India, Thomas, and shalt spread the light of eternal life to the people there. Do not be afraid, I will be there with thee. My name will be glorified by thee. Thou wilt preach about Me among different nations and tribes. Thou shalt fight a good fight; and after that I will call thee to enjoy eternal happiness with thy brethren. Show to the Indians that I am their Lord, and Redeemer thou wilt have to endure great sufferings, but fear not!”⁷

At these words St. Thomas fell at the feet of Our Lord and humbly declared: “My Lord and My God”, and whole heartedly accepted to go to India. Immediately he went to St. Peter wished him farewell and started to Caesarea and was waiting for the first ship to set sail for India. There he met Habban. This Habban is not actually an Indian as said above, but originally a Jew settled in Parthia, now a baptised Christian, converted when he had attended the first preaching of St. Peter, who baptised three thousand people at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (See page 28 of George M. Moraes). Habban was a very good friend of the Parthian King Gondophernes and now he had been well acquainted in trade relations with King Gandhappar of the Pandian Kingdom, and had become the King’s Chief Minister in political affairs. The Kingdom of King Gandhappar was known as “Naarankottai” (Maanaveera Naadu) situated in the south-east coast of Tamil Nadu, comprising portions of the present Thiruchendur and Radhapuram Taluks. King Gandhappar was the third Magi King called also as “Gaspar” who was ruling Ceylon and Naarankottai as well.

Now let us follow St. Thomas the Apostle in his voyage with Habban. Early next morning when Habban was walking along the sea shore of Caesarea he saw St. Thomas and venerably approaching him asked: "What wouldst thou wish me to do for thee?," Greeting him, "O Blessed servant of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth!" he continued: "The Lord showed thee to me in my dream and He sold thee to my king for twenty pieces of silver." With holy admiration and heavenly joy St. Thomas requested him: "would you please take me in your ship and help me reach India?" "Let it be done according to thy will" said Habban and both of them embarked the ship and started their journey.⁸

St. Thomas, before going to the Pandian Kingdom, wished to meet Gondophernes the King of Parthia who at that time had Anthropolis (Karachi) as his Capital City. Here there are some confusion among almost all the historians in mixing up the names of Gondophernes and Gundafor. Herbert Thurston relates that Habban and Thomas sailed away until they came to Anthropolis, where they landed and attended the marriage feast of the ruler's daughter And after attending the marriage feast, he says: "Coming to India, Thomas undertook to build a palace for Gundafor." George Moraes explains that Gondophernes, the successor of King Azes was reigning in the first half of the first century A.D.; and the designation of his Kingdom has been understood as Parthia.⁹ Hence it is clear that King Gondophernes being the King of Parthia was not the same as Gundafor who was the King in South India. And it is certain also that when Herbert Thurston mentions the name Gondophernes or Guduphara, he makes a clear mistake, because Gondo

phernes was the king of Parthia, whereas Guduphara (Gaspar) was the King in South India.¹⁰



Again through the findings from the discovery of coins, some of the inscriptions are of the Parthian type with Greek legends in Thakthibahi characters, **other inscriptions are of the Indian type with legends in an Indian dialect in kharoshthi characters.** This is another clear proof that in the first century A.D. Gondophernes whose name appears in the coins was the ruler of the Parthian Kingdom; and Guduphara whose name also appears in the coins was the ruler of the Pandian Kingdom in Tamil Nadu. (Cfr. Herbert Thurston and Alex C. Muthiah as referred above. Coin of Gondophares IV Sases (mid-1st century). Obv: King on horseback, corrupted Greek legend. Gondophares monogram Rev: Zeus, making a benediction sign (Buddhist mudra). **Kharoshthi inscription** MAHARAJASA MAHATASA TRATARASA DEVAVRADASA GUDAPHARASA SASASA "Great king of kings, divine and Saviour, GondopharesSases", Buddhist trisula symbol."

Here it is fitting to give a part of the original text of the First Act of Thomas taken from the Greek Version translated by M. R. James.

The First Act, when he went into India with Abbanes. (Nos. 1 to 3)

“At that season all we the apostles were at Jerusalem, Simon which is called Peter and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the publican, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas the brother of James: and we divided the regions of the world, that every one of us should go unto the region that fell to him and unto the nation whereunto the Lord sent him.

“According to the lot, therefore, India fell unto Judas Thomas, which is also the twin: but he would not go, saying that by reason of the weakness of the flesh he could not travel, and ‘I am a Hebrew man; how can I go amongst the Indians and preach the truth?’ And as he thus reasoned and spake, the Saviour appeared unto him by night and saith to him: Fear not, Thomas, go thou unto India and preach the word there, for my grace is with thee. But he would not obey, saying: Whither thou wouldest send me send me, but elsewhere, for unto the Indians I will not go.

“And while he thus spake and thought, it chanced that there was there a certain merchant come from India whose name was Abbanes, sent from the King Gundaphorus, [Gundaphorus is a historical personage who reigned over a part of India in the first century after Christ. His coins bear his name in Greek, as Hyndopheres] and having commandment from him to buy a carpenter and bring him unto him. Now the Lord seeing him walking in the market-

place at noon said unto him: I have a slave that is a carpenter and I desire to sell him. And so saying he showed him Thomas afar off, and agreed with him for three litrae of silver unstamped, and wrote a deed of sale, saying: I, Jesus, the son of Joseph the carpenter, acknowledge that I have sold my slave, Judas by name, unto thee Abbanes, a merchant of Gundaphorus, king of the Indians. And when the deed was finished, the Saviour took Judas Thomas and led him away to Abbanes the merchant, and when Abbanes saw him he said unto him: Is this thy master? And the apostle said: Yea, he is my Lord. And he said: I have bought thee of him. And the apostle held his peace.”

“And on the day following the Apostle arose early, and having prayed and besought the Lord he said: I will go whither thou wilt, Lord Jesus: thy will be done. And he departed unto Abbanes the Merchant, taking with him nothing at all save only his price. For the Lord had given it unto him, saying: Let thy price also be with thee, together with my grace, wheresoever thou goest.”

“And the apostle found Abbanes carrying his baggage on board the ship; so he also began to carry it aboard with him. And when they were embarked in the ship and were set down Abbanes questioned the apostle, saying: What craftsmanship knowest thou? And he said: In wood I can make ploughs and yokes and augers (ox-goads, Syr.), and boats and oars for boats and masts and pulleys; and in stone, pillars and temples and court-houses for kings. And Abbanes the merchant said to him: Yea, it is of such a workman that we have need. They began then to sail homeward; and they

had a favourable wind, and sailed prosperously till they reached Andrapolis, a royal city.”¹²

St. Thomas and Habban on their way to the Indian King **Gundaphorus**(Gandhappar = Gaspar), decided first to go to the court of the Parthian King **Gondophernes** (Melchior). When they disembarked at the port of Sandaruk (Anthropolis), situated in the neighbourhood of modern Karachi, the whole town was decked with flags and festoons, and echoing with drum beatings, music and fireworks. As Habban was a very good friend of Gondophernes, St. Thomas was also extended a royal welcome. When the King saw St. Thomas, he recognized divine grace in his face and was interiorly inspired to treat him as the messenger of Jesus Christ, whom he adored as an Infant at Bethlehem. So the King prostrated at the feet of St. Thomas entreating him to take the place of the chief guest and grace the function by imparting his blessing on the couple.¹³

The marriage hall was filled with people of honour, together with various kinds of artists and musicians of the royal court. Among them there was a Hebrew girl brought from Galilee who was playing her flute for a Hebrew song. St. Thomas in an ecstasy composed on the spot a canticle in Hebrew and sang in accord with the flute music, for all to understand in their own tongues, describing the eternal marriage between Jesus and His Church. When the young couple was about to contract the marriage the Apostle prayed over them as follows;

“May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with both of you; May He plant in

your hearts the seed of life everlasting; May He grant you everything that is good for you, that you may for ever fulfill His holy will; that you may, in the holy name of Jesus our Redeemer, be led by His grace, and be filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost". Then laying his hands on them he blessed and said: 'May my Lord and my God be with you.' ¹⁴

At this prayer and blessing of the Apostle, states Herbert Thurston, "Strange occurrences followed and Christ under the appearance of Thomas exhorted the bride and the bridegroom to remain virgins."¹⁵ One of the strange occurrences is narrated by Alex C. Muthiah, referring to Dr. Medlycott, that after the marriage festivities were over, a wild black bear rushed into the crowd and severely attacked a man in the Royal Court, killed him and threw his limbs. St. Thomas came to the spot and asked the people to keep calm, gathered all the scattered limbs of the man and prayed: "Lord, God of Israel, have mercy on this man and his family and give him back life so that these people may believe in your Son Jesus Christ." After praying thus, St. Thomas blessed the limbs of the man with the sign of the Cross. Immediately the man came to life in the presence of King Gondophernes and a great multitude of people.¹⁶ Ultimately St. Thomas converted the bride and the bridegroom.¹⁷ With this story ends the first part of the "Act of Judas Thomas the Apostle." The work is divided into nine parts, of which eight are called as "Acts," and the last as "The Consummation of Judas Thomas."

Let us continue here the original text of the first Act of Thomas and read the story of the above Chapter.

The First Act, when he went into India with Abbanes the merchant. (Nos 4 to 16).

“And they left the ship and entered into the city, and lo, there were noises of flutes and water-organs, and trumpets sounded about them; and the apostle inquired, saying: What is this festival that is in this city? And they that were there said to him: Thee also have the gods brought to make merry in this city. For the king hath an only daughter, and now he giveth her in marriage unto a husband: this rejoicing, therefore, and assembly of the wedding to-day is the festival which thou hast seen. And the King hath sent heralds to proclaim everywhere that all should come to the marriage, rich and poor, bond and free, strangers and citizens: and if any refuse and come not to the marriage he shall answer for it unto the king. And Abbanes hearing that, said to the apostle: Let us also go, lest we offend the King, especially seeing we are strangers. And he said: Let us go.”

“And after they had put up in the inn and rested a little space they went to the marriage; and the apostle seeing them all set down (reclining), laid himself, he also, in the midst, and all looked upon him, as upon a stranger and one come from a foreign land: but Abbanes the merchant, being his master, laid himself in another place.”

“And as they dined and drank, the apostle tasted nothing; so they that were about him said unto him: Wherefore art thou come here, neither eating nor drinking? but he answered them, saying: I am come here for somewhat greater than the food or the drink, and that I may fulfill the King’s will. For the heralds proclaim the king’s message, and

whoso hearkeneth not to the heralds shall be subject to the King's judgment."

"So when they had dined and drunken, and garlands and unguents were brought to them, every man took of the unguent, and one anointed his face and another his beard and another other parts of his body; but the apostle anointed the top of his head and smeared a little upon his nostrils, and dropped it into his ears and touched his teeth with it, and carefully anointed the parts about his heart: and the wreath that was brought to him, woven of myrtle and other flowers, he took, and set it on his head, and took a branch of calamus and held it in his hand."

"Now the flute-girl, holding her flute in her hand, went about to them all and played, but when she came to the place where the apostle was, she stood over him and played at his head for a long space: now this flute-girl was by race a Hebrew."

"And as the Apostle continued looking on the ground, one of the cup-bearers stretched forth his hand and gave him a buffet; and the apostle lifted up his eyes and looked upon him that smote him and said: My God will forgive thee in the life to come this iniquity, but in this world thou shalt show forth his wonders and even now shall I behold this hand that hath smitten me dragged by dogs. And having so said he began to sing and to say this song: (The canticle of Thomas on the Church as the bride)."

"The damsel is the daughter of light, in whom consisteth and dwelleth the proud brightness of kings, and

the sight of her is delightful, she shineth with beauty and cheer. Her garments are like the flowers of spring, and from them a waft of fragrance is borne; and in the crown of her head the king is established which with his immortal food (ambrosia) nourisheth them that are founded upon him; and in her head is set truth, and with her feet she showeth forth joy. And her mouth is opened, and it becometh her well: thirty and two are they that sing praises to her. Her tongue is like the curtain of the door, which waveth to and fro for them that enter in: her neck is set in the fashion of steps which the first maker hath wrought, and her two hands signify and show, proclaiming the dance of the happy ages, and her fingers point out the gates of the city. Her chamber is bright with light and breatheth forth the odour of balsam and all spices, and giveth out a sweet smell of myrrh and Indian leaf, and within are myrtles strewn on the floor, and of all manner of odorous flowers, and the door-posts(?) are adorned with freedst.”

“And surrounding her are the groomsmen keeping watch over her, the number of whom is seven, whom she herself hath chosen. And her bridesmaids are seven, and they dance before her. And twelve in number are they that serve before her and are subject unto her, which have their aim and their look toward the bridegroom, that by the sight of him they may be enlightened; and forever shall they be with her in that eternal joy, and shall be at that marriage whereto the princes are gathered together and shall attend at that banquet whereof the eternal ones are accounted worthy, and shall put on royal raiment and be clad in bright robes; and in joy and exultation shall they both be and shall

glorify the Father of all, whose proud light they have received, and are enlightened by the sight of their lord; whose immortal food they have received, that hath no failing (excrementum, Syr.), and have drunk of the wine that giveth then neither thirst nor desire. And they have glorified and praised with the living spirit, the Father of truth and the mother of wisdom.”

“And when he had sung and ended this song, all that were there present gazed upon him; and he kept silence, and they saw that his likeness was changed, but that which was spoken by him they understood not, for as much as he was a Hebrew and that which he spake was said in the Hebrew tongue. But the flute-girl alone heard all of it, for she was by race an Hebrew and she went away from him and played to the rest, but for the most part she gazed and looked upon him, for she loved him well, as a man of her own nation; moreover he was comely to look upon beyond all that were there. And when the flute-girl had played to them all and ended, she sat down over against him, gazing and looking earnestly upon him. But he looked upon no man at all, neither took heed of any but only kept his eyes looking toward the ground, waiting the time when he might depart thence.”

“But the cup-bearer that had buffeted him went down to the well to draw water; and there chanced to be a lion there, and it slew him and left him lying in that place, having torn his limbs in pieces, and forthwith dogs seized his members, and among them one black dog holding his right hand in his mouth bare it into the place of the banquet.”

“And all when they saw it were amazed and inquired which of them it was that was missing. And when it became manifest that it was the hand of the cup-bearer which had smitten the Apostle, the flute-girl brake her flute and cast it away and went and sat down at the Apostle’s feet, saying: This is either a god or an apostle of God, for I heard him say in the Hebrew tongue: ‘ I shall now see the hand that hath smitten me dragged by dogs,’ which thing ye also have now beheld; for as he said, so hath it come about. And some believed her, and some not.”

“But when the king heard of it, he came and said to the Apostle: Rise up and come with me, and pray for my daughter: for she is mine only-begotten, and to-day I give her in marriage. But the Apostle was not willing to go with him, for the Lord was not yet revealed unto him in that place. But the King led him away against his will unto the bride-chamber that he might pray for them.”

“And the Apostle stood, and began to pray and to speak thus: My Lord and my God, that travellest with thy servants, that guidest and correctest them that believe in thee, the refuge and rest of the oppressed, the hope of the poor and ransom of captives, the physician of the souls that lie sick and Saviour of all creation, that givest life unto the world and strengthenest souls; thou knowest things to come, and by our means accomplishest them: thou Lord art he that revealeth hidden mysteries and maketh manifest words that are secret: thou Lord art the planter of the good tree, and of thine hands are all good works engendered: thou Lord art he that art in all things and passest through all, and

art set in all thy works and manifested in the working of them all. Jesus Christ, Son of compassion and perfect Saviour, Christ, Son of the living God, the undaunted power that hast overthrown the enemy, and the voice that was heard of the rulers, and made all their powers to quake, the ambassador that wast sent from the height and camest down even unto hell, who didst open the doors and bring up thence them that for many ages were shut up in the treasury of darkness, and showedst them the way that leadeth up unto the height: I beseech thee, Lord Jesu, and offer unto thee supplication for these young persons, that thou wouldest do for them the things that shall help them and be expedient and profitable for them. And he laid his hands on them and said: The Lord shall be with you, and left them in that place and departed.”

“And the King desired the groomsmen to depart out of the bride-chamber; and when all were gone out and the doors were shut, the bridegroom lifted up the curtain of the bride-chamber to fetch the bride unto him. And he saw the Lord Jesus bearing the likeness of Judas Thomas and speaking with the bride; even of him that but now had blessed them and gone out from them, the apostle; and he saith unto him: Wentest thou not out in the sight of all? How then art thou found here? But the Lord said to him: I am not Judas which is also called Thomas but I am his brother. And the Lord sat down upon the bed and bade them also sit upon chairs, and began to say unto them; Remember, my children, what my brother spake unto you and what he delivered before you: and know this, that if ye abstain from this foul intercourse, ye become holy temples, pure, being quit of impulses and pains, seen and unseen, and ye will acquire no cares of life or

of children, whose end is destruction: and if indeed ye get many children, for their sakes ye become grasping and covetous, stripping orphans and overreaching widows, and by so doing subject yourselves to grievous punishments. For the more part of children become useless oppressed of devils, some openly and some invisibly, for they become either lunatic or half withered or blind or deaf or dumb or paralytic or foolish; and if they be sound, again they will be vain, doing useless or abominable acts, for they will be caught either in adultery or murder or theft or fornication, and by all these evil ye be afflicted.”

“But if ye be persuaded and keep your souls chaste before God, there will come unto you living children whom these blemishes touch not, and ye shall be without care, leading a tranquil life without grief or anxiety, looking to receive that incorruptible and true marriage, and ye shall be therein groomsmen entering into that bride-chamber which is full of immortality and light.”

“And when the young people heard these things, they believed the Lord and gave themselves up unto him, and abstained from foul desire and continued so, passing the night in that place. And the Lord departed from before them, saying thus: The grace of the Lord shall be with you.”

“And when the morning was come the king came to meet them and furnished a table and brought it in before the bridegroom and the bride. And he found them sitting over against each other and the face of the bride he found unveiled, and the bridegroom was right joyful.”

“And the mother came unto the bride and said: Why sittest thou so, child, and art not ashamed, but art as if thou hadst lived with thine husband a long season? And her father said: Because of thy great love toward thine husband dost thou not even veil thyself?”

“And the bride answered and said: Verily, father, I am in great love, and I pray my Lord that the love which I have perceived this night may abide with me, and I will ask for that husband of whom I have learned to-day: and therefore I will no more veil myself, because the mirror (veil) of shame is removed from me; and therefore am I no more ashamed or abashed, because the deed of shame and confusion is departed far from me; and that I am not confounded, it is because my astonishment hath not continued with me; and that I am in cheerfulness and joy, it is because the day of my joy hath not been troubled; and that I have set at nought this husband and this marriage that passeth away from before mine eyes, it is because I am joined in another marriage; and that I have had no intercourse with a husband that is temporal, whereof the end is with lasciviousness and bitterness of soul, it is because I am yoked unto a true husband.”

“And while the bride was saying yet more than this, the bridegroom answered and said: I give thee thanks, O Lord, that hast been proclaimed by the stranger, and found in us; who hast removed me far from corruption and sown life in me; who hast rid me of this disease that is hard to be healed and cured and abideth for ever, and hast implanted sober health in me; who hast shown me thyself and revealed

unto me all my state wherein I am; who hast redeemed me from falling and led me to that which is better, and set me free from temporal things and made me worthy of those that are immortal and everlasting; that hast made thyself lowly even down to me and my littleness, that thou mayest present me unto thy greatness and unite me unto thyself; who hast not withheld thine own bowels from me that was ready to perish, but hast shown me how to seek myself and know who I was, and who and in what manner I now am, that I may again become that which I was: whom I knew not, but thyself didst seek me out: of whom I was not aware, but thyself hast taken me to thee: whom I have perceived, and now am not able to be unmindful of him: whose love burneth within me, and I cannot speak it as is fit, but that which I am able to say of it is little and scanty, and not fitly proportioned unto his glory: yet he blameth me not that presume to say unto him even that which I know not: for it is because of his love that I say even this much.”

“Now when the king heard these things from the bridegroom and the bride, he rent his clothes and said unto them that stood by him: Go forth quickly and go about the whole city, and take and bring me that man that is a sorcerer who by ill fortune came unto this city; for with mine own hands I brought him into this house, and I told him to pray over this mine ill-starred daughter; and who so findeth and bringeth him to me, I will give him whatsoever he asketh of me. They went, therefore and went about seeking him, and found him not; for he had set sail. They went also unto the inn where he had lodged and found there the flute-girl weeping and afflicted because he had not taken her with

him. And when they told her the matter that had befallen with the young people she was exceeding glad at hearing it, and put away her grief and said: Now have I also found rest here. And she rose up and went unto them, and was with them a long time, until they had instructed the king also. And many of the brethren also gathered there until they heard the report of the Apostle, that he was come unto the cities of India and was teaching there: and hey departed and joined themselves unto him.”¹⁸

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 3. *Ibid*.
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 5. Ramban Thomas, Ramban Pattu - Acts of Thomas in South India. trans. Prof. M.M. Ninan, 2019, <https://www.talentshare.org/~mm9n/articles/Ramban%20Pattu/RambanEng.pdf>
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 7. Fr. Motha Vaz, The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India, Madras, Saint Thomas Mount, 1925, Chapter 3, p. 4.
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17. George Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552*, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 2; Dr. V. Lawrence, *History of The Catholic Church in Kanyakumari District*, p. 26.
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CHAPTER FOUR



THE VISIT OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE TO THE SOUTHERN PANDIAN KINGDOM OF NAARAANKOTTAI (MAANAVEERA NAADU)



Gaspar (Gandhappar)¹

Gaspar was the youngest of the three kings, (Is He, 109 years old?) when he journeyed to Bethlehem. He brought frankincense to the Christ Child.¹

The Second “Act” is beginning with the following

headlines: “Coming to India Thomas undertook to build a palace for Gundafor, but spent the money entrusted to him on the poor. Gundafor imprisoned him, but the Apostle escaped miraculously and Gundafor was converted.”²

Leaving the Parthian Empire, St. Thomas now came to India where he intended to meet the third Magi King. It was this Magi king who actually had sent his envoy Habban to bring an architect to build a palace for him. The arrival of St. Thomas one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ in India is a matter of honour for all the citizens of India. In fact, Rajendra Prasad, the former President of India, in his speech at the St. Thomas’ Day celebrations, in New Delhi on December 18, 1955, said: “....Remember St. Thomas came to India when many countries in Europe had not yet become Christian and so those Indians who trace their Christianity to him have a longer history and a higher ancestry than that of Christians of many of the European countries. And it is really a matter of pride to us that it so happened.....”³

The name of the Indian Magi King is a Tamil name pronounced as Gandhappar. This is known by the coins discovered in the 19th century (Hyndopheres in Greek). “Furthermore we have the evidence of the Thakht-I-Bhai inscription, which is dated, and which the best specialists accept as establishing that the King Guduphara probably began to reign about 20 A.D. and was still reigning in 46 A.D.”⁴ The same King Gundafor is here spelled as Guduphara, which shows that the Tamil King Gandhappar is the third Magi King Gadpar or Gaspar, as we pronounce Kidkintha as Kiskintha.

This King Gandhappar (Gaspar) was reigning the Southern Pandian Kingdom which at that time consisted of Ceylon as well. In Ceylon he was known as Peria Perumal, and his brother Gaatthiappar as Chinna Perumal. This was the King of Ceylon who heard the nativity of the messiah foretold by an Indian Sybil, and had joined with the other Magi Kings and had gone to Bethlehem to adore the child. This has been cited by George Moraes from a legend which the Portuguese heard from the lips of the Bishop of Quilon as follows: "A Perumal King of Ceylon having heard tell of it from the Sybil, embarked in a ship for Muscat. At this port he joined the other Magi and they went to Bethlehem to adore the child."⁵ This legend has been attested by K.T. Rajasingham in his essay 'Was one of the Magi a king from Lanka?'

Was One of the Magi, A King from Lanka?

"A page in history reveals that the Tamil King of Yalapanam (Jaffna), was one amongst those wise-men - Magi, who went to Bethlehem, to worship the new born baby Jesus. This happened, according to the prophecy in the Bible. "Kings along the Mediterranean coast- the Kings of Tarshish and the Islands- and those from Sheba and from Seba- all will bring their gifts." (Psalms 72: 10.)

Joao de Barros, the Portuguese historian, in his book, "Asia de Joao Barros, dos fechos que od Portuguese fizeram no descobrimento&conquista dos mares & teras do Oriente," published after 1563, relates, "a king of the island of Ceilam, called Primal, went in a ship to the coast of Muscat, to join

other kings, who were going to adore the Lord, at Bethlehem, and that he was the third.”

According to de Barros, the Tamil King Primal (Perumal) was one of the Magi, who went to Bethlehem, to worship the new born baby infant Jesus.

Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam, in his “Ancient Jaffna,” makes reference from “Cathay and the Way Thither,” written by Col. H. Yule, in 1348 or 1349 AD, John de Marignolli, the papal delegate to the Court of the Great Khan, on his return from China, landed at Columbam. He remained with the Christians there for one year and four months, after erecting a stone memorial, “in the corner of the world over against Paradise,” (supposed to be at Cape Comarin) he went to see the famous Queen of Saba, by whom he “was honorably treated” and then proceeded to Seyllan (Ceylon).

Father Fernao De Queyroz, who wrote “The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon,” strongly refutes the story put forward by Jao De Barros, but up to this date no historians has come forward to refute the historical facts put forward by John De Marignolli, that Yalapanam was the famous Saba and the “Magi”-pathi, the King of Yalapanam (Jaffna), was one of those men who went to adore the infant Jesus.

Christianity visited Sri Lanka, long before the arrival of Portuguese colonists in 1504. Cosmas Indicopleustes (Christian Topography, Book XI) tells of Ceylon and its trade in the 6th century AD, as follows: “This is the great island of the ocean, situated in the Indian sea, which is called by the Indians- Sielediba, by the Greeks - Taprobane, where the

haycinthus stone is found; and it is beyond the pepper country (mainland)."

Considering the frequent communications between the Mediterranean world and Mantai, the international emporium and the entrée port in Sri Lanka, pre-historic period, it is not beyond belief that, one of the disciples of Christ, came to India and Sri Lanka to preach Christianity.

"Anyhow, when we take into consideration the spread of Christianity in the coastal region of Kerala, and the existence of an ancient Syrian Church even today, it is very difficult to dismiss the fact that, an early King of Jaffna was one of those who paid his adoration to the infant Jesus, also Christianity was in existence in Lanka, since from the very beginning of the Christian era."⁶

Now there is a tradition that this Peria Perumal came to South India and was baptized by St. Thomas the Apostle as Gaspar. This fact is described by Fr. Motha Vaz as follows: "Peria Perumal, the King of Jaffna (Ceylon) journeyed to India to meet the Apostle. As soon as he saw St. Thomas, he requested him: 'O, Apostle of the Redeemer of the world! I am one of the Magi Kings who at the sight of the star in the East, followed it and visited the Holy Infant Messiah at Bethlehem. Therefore, please explain to me His life and teachings and baptize me. The Saint, accepting the request and after having instructed on the life and teachings of the Saviour, baptized him as Gaspar.'⁷ Herman D'Souza writes: "It is noteworthy that the ancient song, described in the foregoing pages, says that at a certain stage the Apostle 'started for the country of the Tamils'. The author (of the

song) doubtless means ‘the country which is now of the Tamils’. For, at the time of the Apostle, all the three kingdoms (of the Chera, Chola and Pandia) was the country of the Tamils.”⁸

Alex C. Muthiah states that at the middle of the first century the Southern Pandian Kingdom i.e. Maanaveera Naadu was ruled by a heir of Pandian family and a valiant soldier called **Gandhappar Raja**.⁹ Hence it is clear that this Gandhappar Raja was no one except King Gaspar, one of the three Magi Kings, and that, as Alex C. Muthaiah states, two of the Magi Kings travelled through the South Indian Port called Ovari.¹⁰ Therefore it is clear that when St. Thomas and Habban left the Court of Gondophernes, they began their journey to the Southern Pandian Kingdom by ship and reached Ovari, the south east Indian port of Naaraankottai.¹¹

Some of the historians think that the present day Ovari called Ophir in the Bible was a very famous port at the time of King Solomon.¹² George Moraes writes: “We are told in the Bible that Hiram, King of Tyre, sent his fleet of “ships of Tarshish” from Ezion Geber, at the head of the Gulf of Akaba in the Red Sea, to fetch ivory, apes and peacocks from the port of Ophir to decorate the palaces and the Temple of King Solomon.”¹³ It is said also that the three Magi Kings, in order to see the Son of God, travelled through this port of Ophir (Ovari). And that two of the three Magi Kings were the kings of Ceylon and Maanaveera Naadu.¹⁴ But they were not exactly two Magi Kings, but only one king ruling both the countries of Ceylon and Maanaveera Naadu. But as it is well established by Alex C. Muthiah that the small

Kingdom of Naaraankottai is the same as the Maanaveera Naadu, which was built on the banks of river Naattaaru, the present Nambiaaru, which starts from Nambikovil in the Western Ghats, runs through Erwadi, Thalapathisamuthiram, Chithoor, Kottaikarunkulam, Anaikkarai, Aathankarai Pallivaasal and reaches the sea at Koothenguli in Radhapuram Taluk, Thirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu. This river in those days ran through the middle of the Southern Pandian Kingdom called Naaraankottai. This Naaraankottai had its fortress and palace at its Capital **Jesupuram** (Rammadupuram) in the south east direction of Anaikkarai near Rammadupuram situated at the most fertile area then in between two branches of the Naattaaru. Since the fortress (Kottai) etc. were built on the bank of Naattaaru, this Kingdom was also called Naattaatin Kottai, which gradually became Naaraan Kottai. The name of the capital Jesupuram was later changed by the Mohomadens as **Isalapuram**. This capital city had been swallowed by sands, and the remnants of it can be seen now covered by sands.¹⁵

Gandhappar the King of Naaraankottai had his royal store house or godown, called in Tamil “Pandakasalai” at Kanakkankudiyiruppu, which was situated on the bank of a big lake called “Tharuvai” near the present Chettivilai and Sökkankudiyiruppu. This place was first called as Pandakasasalai; then since the royal accountants were settled in Pandakasalai, it was also called Kanakkankudiyiruppu, meaning the settlement of the kanakkargal (accountants). The lake and the surrounding area made a beautiful scenery of green fields, fruit groves and clean water rivulets running through. One of the branches of river Naattaaru was flowing

through this Kanakkankudiyiruppu and reached the sea at Periatthalai and made it a port. Another branch of the Naattaaru, and that was the main branch, reached the sea at Ovari and made Ovari an International Sea Port on the east coast of South India.

It is through this port that Habban took St. Thomas to Naaraankottai and brought him to the Court of Gandhappar Raja.¹⁶ The story goes as Fr. MothaVaz narrates,¹⁶ Habban approached the King and said that he had brought with him from Syria a Saintly Wiseman. As the King wanted to see the Saint, St. Thomas came and stood before the King. Gandhappar Raja asked the Saint: “Can you build a high palace for me?” The Saint thinking in his mind the spiritual edifice which he intended to raise in India, said: “Yes, I can”. Gandhappar Raja took the Saint to the spot and asked him for a plan of the palace. Immediately St. Thomas made a model plan of a beautiful palace on the ground. While he was making it, he was meditating in his mind as if God was laying the foundation of a palace for this King in heaven. At the sight of the plan Gandhappar Raja with joyful admiration said: “You are a qualified sculptor to serve the kings.”

It was true that St. Thomas was to serve the King of Kings (God Almighty) for the salvation of souls. Gandhappar Raja entrusted the work and money with St. Thomas to build the palace within six months i.e. from the month of Teshri (October-November, 33 A.D.) to the month of Nisan (April, 34 A.D.)¹⁷ In the meanwhile the King went abroad to look after his royal duties in Ceylon, where he had his capital at Jaffna.

Here let us read the original narration of the story given in The Second Act of Thomas.

The Second Act: concerning his coming unto the King Gundaphorus. (Nos.1 to 19)

“ Now when the apostle was come into the cities of India with Abbanes the merchant, Abbanes went to salute the king Gundaphorus, and reported to him of the carpenter whom he had brought with him. And the King was glad, and commanded him to come in to him. So when he was come in the king said unto him: What craft understandest thou? The apostle said unto him: The craft of carpentering and of building. The King saith unto him: What craftsmanship, then, knowest thou in wood, and what in stone? The apostle saith: In wood: ploughs, yokes, goads, pulleys, and boats and oars and masts; and in stone: pillars, temples, and court-houses for kings. And the King said: Canst thou build me a palace? And he answered: Yea, I can both build and furnish it; for to this end am I come, to build and to do the work of a carpenter.

And the king took him and went out of the city gates and began to speak with him on the way concerning the building of the court-house, and of the foundations, how they should be laid, until they came to the place wherein he desired that the building should be; and he said: Here will I that the building should be. And the apostle said: Yea, for this place is suitable for the building. But the place was woody and there was much water there. So the king said: Begin to build. But he said: I cannot begin to build now at this season.

And the King said: When canst thou begin? And he said: I will begin in the month Dios and finish in Xanthicus. But the King marveled and said: Every building is builded in summer, and canst thou in this very winter build and make ready a palace? And the apostle said: Thus it must be, and no otherwise is it possible.

And the King said: If, then, this seem good to thee, draw me a plan, how the work shall be, because I shall return hither after some long time. And the apostle took a reed and drew, measuring the place; and the doors he set toward the sun rising to look toward the light, and the windows toward the west to the breezes, and the bake house he appointed to be toward the south and the aqueduct for the service toward the north. And the King saw it and said to the apostle: Verily thou art a craftsman and it belitteth thee to be a servant of Kings. And he left much money with him and departed from him.

And from time to time he sent money and provision, and victual for him and the rest of the workmen. But Thomas receiving it all dispensed it, going about the cities and the villages round about, distributing and giving alms to the poor and afflicted, and relieving them, saying: The King knoweth how to obtain recompense fit for Kings, but at this time it is needful that the poor should have refreshment.

After these things the King sent an ambassador unto the apostle, and wrote thus: Signify unto me what thou hast done or what I shall send thee, or of what thou hast need. And the apostle sent unto him, saying: The palace

(praetorium) is builded and only the roof remaineth. And the king hearing it sent him again gold and silver (lit. unstamped), and wrote unto him: Let the palace be roofed, if it is done. And the apostle said unto the Lord: I thank thee O Lord in all things that thou didst die for a little space that I might live forever in thee, and that thou hast sold me that by me thou mightest set free many. And he ceased not to teach and to refresh the afflicted, saying: This hath the Lord dispensed unto you, and he giveth unto every man his food: for he is the nourisher of orphans and steward of the widows, and unto all that are afflicted he is relief and rest.”¹⁹

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 5. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 213.
 6. K.T. Rajasingham, Was one of the Magi a king from Lanka? www.bahamaswriter.com/magi.html.
 7. Fr. Motha Vaz, The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India, Madras, Saint Thomas Mount, 1925, pp. 32, 33.
 8. Herman D’Souza, In the Steps of St. Thomas, Mylapore, Diocese of Mylapore, 1983. p. 24.
 9. Alex Cruz Muthiah, Then Paandi Mandala Maanaveera Naadu, p. 132.
 10. *Ibid* at p. 111.
 11. Fr. Motha Vaz, The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India, Madras, Saint Thomas Mount, 1925, p. 8.
 12. Alex Cruz Muthiah, Then Paandi Mandala Maanaveera Naadu, p. 111.
 13. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, pp. 13, 14.
 14. Alex Cruz Muthiah, Then Paandi Mandala Maanaveera Naadu, p. 111.
 15. *Ibid* at p. 168.

16. Fr. Motha Vaz, The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India, Madras, SaintThomas Mount, 1925, p. 8.
17. *Ibid*, Chapter 4.
18. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 26.
19. The Acts of Thomas, in The Apocryphal New Testament, trans. M.R. James, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924.
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/textactsthomas.html>

CHAPTER FIVE



GONDOPHERNES THE PARTHINAN KING (MELCHIOR) COMES TO NAARAANKOTTAI TO BE BAPTISED BY ST. THOMAS

Gondophernes the Parthian King and Gandhappar Raja were great friends because of their trade relations even before they visited the Infant Jesus at Bethlehem Ovari (Ophir) the sea port of Naaraankottai (Maanaveera Naadu) was attracting merchants from India and abroad who travelled here to purchase precious pearls and ornaments made out of sea shells (Sangu). This trade brought in plenty of gold and silver from abroad and enriched the country. Therefore Maanaveeranaadu was recorded in the ancient inscriptions as “Velli Pon Veesum Veeramulla Naadu.” It means - a brave country glistening with silver and gold.¹ There were many industrial work establishments, sale depots and attractive shopping complexes along the river banks of Ovari exchanging wholesale trade of costly gems, pearls and ornaments.

Herman D'souza writes: "Indian ships plied between western and Indian ports with cargoes of gold, ivory, silver and precious stones."² It is also said that the pearls of this Fishery Coast were the finest ones, and that only in this coast crystal ornaments were manufactured, and therefore the finest pearls, gems and crystal ornaments of this coast were exported for the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra and also rice for her soldiers. Not only that, but many varieties of sweet crystal candy products (Karkandu) of the Palmyra trees also were exported to Rome and other European countries.³ Therefore, George Mark Moraes says that it is an established fact that even before the dawn of history there was considerable inter-course and trade relations between the Indian sub-continent and the western world. ⁴

In this context it is to be noted that the relationship between these two Kings, chiefly after their contact with Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary and their friendship with Habban after he was baptised, became very thick and cordial - to the extent that both of them had combined their stately affairs and even made financial commitments together. For instance, their Indo-Parthian commercial undertakings were expressed by minting common coins for both of their Kingdoms. This we know, says Herbert Thurston, both from the discovery of coins, some of them of Parthian type with Greek legends, others of the Indian type with legends in an Indian (Tamil) dialect, in Kharoshthi characters.⁵ And Dr. Fleet, one of the scholars concludes: "There is an actual basis for the tradition in historical reality, and St. Thomas did visit the courts of these two Kings, of whom one was Gunduphara (Gandhappar) of Kharoshthi inscription and

the other was Gondophares (Gondophernes) of the Takht-I-Bahi inscription.”⁶

This Inscription was discovered about the year 1857. In a Syriac edition of a book called ‘The Doctrines of the Apostles’ it is said: “India and all its own countries and those bordering on it (Ceylon), even to the farthest sea (Indian ocean), received the Apostles’ hand of Priesthood from Judas Thomas...”⁷ Thus it becomes certain that The un-clarified destination of his ‘coming to India’ in the second Act of Thomas in 34 A.D. is nothing but the Southern Pandian Kingdom called Maanaveera Naadu.

It is admitted that the Acts of Thomas have great many gaps and missing parts (lacuna) in the manuscripts, especially the details of the Apostle’s South Indian expedition of his first mission (A.D.33 to 46). This is confirmed by George Moraes when he says: “The Acts in fact seem to have a lacuna which is admirably filled in by this South Indian tradition. For, (he explains) while the Acts make St. Thomas leave Takshasila (the Parthian Kingdom of Gondophernes) for the court of King Masdai (of Mailapore) under whom he meets his end (death), we are told in the ‘De Transita Mariae’.....that from his mission at Takshasila the Apostle was summoned to be present at the bedside of the Blessed Virgin in her last moments.”⁸ Now the death of the Blessed Virgin occurred in 46 or 48 A.D. But the martyrdom of The Apostle at Mailapore took place only in 72 A.D at the end of his second mission which commenced from the port of Crangannore in 52 A.D. Thus the discovery of his first mission in the Southern Pandian Kingdom becomes so

evident, that he was called to the bedside of the Blessed Virgin from Takshasila only at the end of his first mission in the Southern Pandian Kingdom called Maanaveera Naadu.

Forty days after the departure of the Saint, King Gondophernes wanted, by the inspiration of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to get baptised together with his daughter and son-in-law by the Apostle St. Thomas, and dedicate himself to serve in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ for the rest of his life in the company of the Apostle St. Thomas. Immediately they boarded a ship from Anthropolis and reached Naaraankottai through the port of Ovari.

St. Thomas in the meanwhile had founded a community of Christians and settled them at Kanakkankudiyiruppu on the bank of lake “Tharuvai,” and there he had built a church. This was the first Church which the Saint had ever built. The location of this first church has been miraculously commemorated by the present Manal Maatha Kovil (at Chetty Vilai, near Peria Thaalai) belonging to the parish of Sokkankudiyiruppu, Tuticorin Diocese. On the altar of this church he had erected a Cross with two cross bars; on the one with the nail marks and on the other the death sentence INRI. This double Cross was the object of veneration in all the churches he built during his first mission i.e. before the Assumption of Our Lady. The saint was preaching the Gospel, offered Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and was administering the sacraments in this church. Thus Kanakkankudiyiruppu became the very first place where Christianity was born in India and where the first community of St. Thomas Christians was formed. Later, in

his second mission, the Apostle erected the statue of Our Lady (now kept in the Parish church of Chettivilai) and dedicated the church to Our Lady of the Assumption. "I am now satisfied that the Christian Church (Community of St. Thomas Christians) is extremely ancient." says the historian Vincent Smith.⁹

Sir Henry Yule quotes the words of Friar John of Monte Corvino, a Franciscan who visited India, worked amongst the St. Thomas' Christians and visited the Apostle's tomb, does not mention the place but simply says "I remained in the country of India wherein stands the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle."¹⁰

Thus St. Thomas the Apostle constructed on earth the foundation of the Heavenly Palace for King Gandhappar Raja at Kanakkankudiyruppu. It was at this church King Gondophernes, his daughter and his son-in-law met St. Thomas even before Gandhappar Raja returned from Ceylon. They prostrated at the feet of St. Thomas and said: "O blessed and most worthy servant of God! We have totally dedicated ourselves to God. Make us perpetually remain in truth, and help us consecrate ourselves to His service for ever. The Saint really admired at their faith in the true religion of Jesus Christ. He encouraged them in their resolution and instructed them on Christian doctrines. After having prepared them for forty days he administered them the Sacrament of Baptism on December 25, A.D. 33. King Gondophernes received his baptismal name as Xantiphus (Melchior), his daughter as Pelagia and his son-in-law as Denis."¹¹

Xantiphus took the words of Our Lord Jesus Christ

literally and decided to follow the way of Christian perfection: “Everyone that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall posses life everlasting” (Mt. 19: 29). And therefore he offered himself for the spread of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in the company of St. Thomas. He was ordained a Deacon and thence forward he was following St. Thomas very faithfully. Denis was consecrated Bishop of Anthropolis, and Pelagia lived a consecrated life. When a new King came to the throne of Parthia, Pelagia after being persecuted for being a Christian, died a martyr. Thus she became the first virgin martyr for Christ in Parthia.

St. Thomas preached the Gospel to multitudes of people and generously gave alms to the poor with the wealth and money entrusted to him by Gandhappar Raja. And thus he was building a Spiritual Palace for Gandhappar Raja in heaven.¹²

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1. Alex Cruz Muthiah, Then Paandi Mandala Maanaveera Naadu, p. 93.
 2. Herman D’Souza, In the Steps of St. Thomas, Mylapore, Diocese of Mylapore, 1983, p. 6.
 3. Alex Cruz Muthiah, Then Paandi Mandala Maanaveera Naadu, pp. 14, 15.
 4. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 13.
 5. The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. XIV, New York, The Encyclopedia Press Inc., 1907, p. 658.
 6. Herman D’Souza, In the Steps of St. Thomas, Mylapore, Diocese of Mylapore, 1983, p. 7.
 7. *Ibid* at p. 5.
 8. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 34.
 9. Herman D’Souza, In the Steps of St. Thomas, Mylapore, Diocese of Mylapore, 1983, p. 16.

10. *Ibid.* Page 25.
11. Fr. Motha Vaz, The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India, Madras, Saint Thomas Mount, 1925, pp. 8,9,10.
12. *Ibid* at p. 10.

CHAPTER SIX



THE BAPTISM OF GANDHAPPAR RAJA (GASPAR) THE THIRD MAGI KING

After six months of sojourn in Ceylon, Gandhappar Raja returned to Naaraankottai eagerly wishing to see the palace constructed by St. Thomas. Joyfully he invited his friends to come with him to have a look at the palace. “O Maharaj!” the King’s man said: “No such palace has been built here. That stranger does not seem to have started the work yet so far. On the contrary, travelling all over the Kingdom and preaching a new religion, he has gathered a great number of people to his side. What he preaches is very strange. He assures that those who embrace his religion will possess eternal life, and that those who believe in the God whom he preaches will after their death have life everlasting. Not only that; he drives away the devils, heals the sick, raises the dead. For all these good deeds he doesn’t accept anything in return. There is no doubt that he is a magician. He is going about all over your country deceiving the people. He has thus

wasted all your wealth and money in building churches, helping his followers and by abundantly giving alms to the poor and the sick. After wandering everywhere in the country and squandering all your money, we hear that he has now come to Kanakkankudiyiruppu. All these sayings made the King burn with anger and he ordered St. Thomas to be brought to him immediately.”

The Saint was brought to the King. And the King enraged by the report shouted at St. Thomas saying; “You are sure to die if you don’t build the palace instantly.” The saint replied with graceful calmness: “O Lord King! The palace has been already built! but not in this world, it’s in heaven! Only after going there you will see and admire it.” The King still in a higher pitch of anger cried with loud voice: “Aha...h! How cleverly you are deceiving us, do you think we are fools? Beware! I will not be enticed by your crafty words.” Thus saying the King ordered Habban and St. Thomas to be imprisoned.” The Apostle, rejoicing to suffer for the sake of Christ, happily went to the jail, and consoled Habban saying: “fear not, have confidence in God, we are sure to possess eternal life immediately after leaving this world.” But the King was thinking with what kind of death he could punish the culprits.¹

The Miraculous Escape From Prison

It is said in the Second Act of Thomas: “Gundafor imprisoned him, but the Apostle escaped miraculously and Gundafor was converted.” In fact the Apostle did not want to escape at all. But while he was eagerly expecting a death of

martyrdom, God wanted to work a miracle to extend the life of St. Thomas. Let us hear Fr. MothaVaz narrating this miraculous episode.²

“While St. Thomas and Habban were in jail, Gaatthiappar Raja (Gad, called Chinna Perumal) the younger brother of Gandhappar Raja happened to die a sudden death. The King loved his brother so much that he could not bear the grief. And in order to demonstrate his affection, the King had arranged for a solemn funeral procession. A great multitude of people attended the function. While the ceremonies were going on, a strange occurrence happened. The dead body rose from the bed; and was searching for someone in the crowd which was panic struck at the sight. The dead man opened his mouth and began to speak: “I want to see my brother, please call him.” Immediately a messenger rushed to the King and said; “your brother has risen, he is alive, he calls you.” Gandhappar Raja taken aback by the news came rushing to the spot. When he saw his dead brother face to face he was blushing with fear and awe, he could not speak a word and was trembling and perspiring. “Do not be afraid, brother! I have come back alive to request a favour from you. I am sure that in order that I may live, you will not refuse even if I ask half of your kingdom! Would you please allow me to possess a treasure which you have merited so far with a great price? That is the favour which I ask of you. The King wanted to know what exactly he was asking for. Gaatthiappar said: “Promise me first that you will sell it to me.” Gandhappar Raja promised and swore that he would give whatsoever which really belonged to him.

“After getting this assurance, Gaatthiappar said with all eagerness: “O, my brother, please sell me that palace which you have bought for you in heaven”. But the King exclaimed: “who bought a palace in heaven? I do not remember to have bought one!” Then Gaatthiappar said: “It is that man whom you have put in jail to be executed for having bought for you the palace in heaven! He is a holy man, a great friend of God. Immediately after my death the angels took me from this earth to heaven. There I saw a huge palace. No one can explain its beauty and grandeur. With shining marble walls, decorated with all kinds of gems and gold, it was ineffably beautiful. The angels told me, “This is the palace built by St. Thomas for your brother; but he has become unworthy of it. And therefore St. Thomas prayed for you, you will be sent to the world to merit it by sacrificing all your wealth and money for the poor and for spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Hearing this Gandhappar Raja received the inspiration to realize the instructions of Our Lady at Bethlehem how he should have accepted the Apostle, how he should have abandoned everything for the Kingdom of God and cooperated with St. Thomas to convert all in his Kingdom to embrace Christianity.

MothaVaz continues: “Immediately he knelt down on the ground and prayed; “O, God of St. Thomas! forgive my fault and have mercy on me” and he continued to pray as he used to pray ‘The Our Father’ taught by Our Lady, “Heavenly Father, Blessed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In the meanwhile King Gaatthiappar rushed to the prison, prostrated at the

feet of St. Thomas and greeted him with these words: “O, holy Apostle of the Lord, blessed be the God of your forefathers. Kindly forgive my brother and have pity on him.” St. Thomas gladly looked at his face, blessed him with the sign of the Cross on his forehead and said: “My son, may the peace of the Lord be with you.

“The prison doors were thrown open and king Gaatthiappar brought the inmates out in the presence of Gandhappar Raja who fell at the feet of St. Thomas and requested him to forgive and bless him, “O, Saint! Most pleasing to God,” he cried, “O, Holy Apostle of Jesus Christ! I really did not know your greatness. Only now I realize that you were planning to construct a heavenly kingdom for me. Please pray to the Eternal King Whom I adored at Bethlehem that I may become worthy of possessing that palace which you have built for me in heaven. Guide and help me to be a faithful servant of the God whom you worship.” St. Thomas gave them instructions on Christian doctrines for seven days together with a great number of people of the King’s court and prepared them for baptism”.

Then on May 1, 34 A.D. the Apostle baptized them all. He named Gandhappar as **Peter** and Gaatthiappar as **Paul**. This fact has been confirmed also by Dr. V. Lawrence: “King Gundnapar (Gandhappar) of India sent Habban to get an architect to build a palace. Habban took with him Thomas who was sold to him by Christ. Both went to Gundnapar. Thomas sought money to build the Palace, but spent it for the poor. Thomas was imprisoned. Gundnapar’s brother saw in heaven the palace built by Thomas. He was

released and the royal brothers were baptised.”³

Let us now read the same story in a different version found in the Second Act of Thomas.

The Second Act: concerning his coming unto the king Gundaphorus. (No. 20 to 27)

“Now when the King came to the city he inquired of his friends concerning the palace which Judas that is called Thomas was building for him. And they told him: Neither hath he built a palace nor done aught else of that he promised to perform, but he goeth about the cities and countries, and whatsoever he hath he giveth unto the poor, and teacheth of a new God, and healeth the sick, and driveth out devils, and doeth many other wonderful things; and we think him to be a sorcerer. Yet his compassions and his cures which are done of him freely, and moreover the simplicity and kindness of him and his faith, do declare that he is a righteous man or an apostle of the new God whom he preacheth; for he fasteth continually and prayeth, and eateth bread only, with salt, and his drink is water, and he weareth but one garment alike in fair weather and in winter, and receiveth nought of any man, and that he hath he giveth unto others. And when the king heard that, he rubbed his face with his hands, and shook his head for a long space.

And he sent for the merchant which had brought him, and for the Apostle, and said unto him: Hast thou built me the palace? And he said: Yea. And the King said: When, then, shall we go and see it? but he answered him and said: Thou canst not see it now, but when thou departest this life, then

thou shalt see it. And the King was exceeding wroth, and commanded both the merchant and Judas which is called Thomas to be put in bonds and cast into prison until he should inquire and learn unto whom the king's money had been given, and so destroy both him and the merchant.

And the Apostle went unto the prison rejoicing, and said to the Merchant: Fear thou nothing, only believe in the God that is preached by me, and thou shalt indeed be set free from this world, but from the world to come thou shalt receive life. And the King took thought with what death he should destroy them. And when he had determined to flay them alive and burn them with fire, in the same night Gad the King's brother fell sick, and by reason of his vexation and the deceit which the King had suffered he was greatly oppressed; and sent for the King and said unto him: O, king my brother, I commit unto thee mine house and my children; for I am vexed by reason of the provocation that hath befallen thee, and lo, I die; and if thou visit not with vengeance upon the head of that sorcerer, thou wilt give my soul no rest in hell. And the King said to his brother: All this night have I considered how I should put him to death and this hath seemed good to me, to flay him and burn him with fire, both him and the Merchant which brought him (Syr. Then the brother of the King said to him: And if there be anything else that is worse than this, do it to him; and I give thee charge of my house and my children).

And as they talked together, the soul of his brother Gad departed. And the King mourned sore for Gad, for he loved him much, and commanded that he should be buried

in royal and precious apparel (Syr. sepulcher). Now after this angels took the soul of Gad the King's brother and bore it up into heaven, showing unto him the places and dwellings that were there, and inquired of him: In which place wouldest thou dwell? And when they drew near unto the building of Thomas the apostle which he had built for the King, Gad saw it and said unto the angels: I beseech you, my Lords; suffer me to dwell in one of the lowest rooms of these. And they said to him: Thou canst not dwell in this building. And he said: Wherefore? And they say unto him: This is that palace which that Christian builded for thy brother. And he said: I beseech you, my Lords, suffer me to go to my brother, that I may buy this palace of him, for my brother knoweth not of what sort it is, and he will sell it unto me.

Then the angels let the soul of Gad go. And as they were putting his grave clothes upon him, his soul entered into him and he said to them that stood about him: Call my brother unto me, that I may ask one petition of him. Straightway therefore they told the King, saying: Thy brother is revived. And the King ran forth with a great company and came unto his brother and entered in and stood by his bed as one amazed, not being able to speak to him. And his brother said: I know and am persuaded, my brother, that if any man had asked of thee the half of thy Kingdom, thou wouldest have given it him for my sake; therefore I beg of thee to grant me one favour which I ask of thee, that thou wouldest sell me that which I ask of thee. And the king answered and said: And what is it which thou askest me to sell thee? And he said: Convince me by an oath that thou wilt grant it me. And the King sware unto him: One of my

possessions, whatsoever thou shalt ask, I will give thee. And he saith to him: Sell me that palace which thou hast in the heavens? And the King said: Whence should I have a palace in the heavens? And he said: Even that which that Christian built for thee which is now in the prison, whom the merchant brought unto thee, having purchased him of one Jesus: I mean that Hebrew slave whom thou desiredst to punish as having suffered deceit at his hand: whereat I was grieved and died, and am now revived.

Then the King considering the matter, understood it of those eternal benefits which should come to him and which concerned him, and said: That palace I cannot sell thee, but I pray to enter into it and dwell therein and to be accounted worthy of the inhabitants of it, but if thou indeed desirest to buy such a palace, lo, the man liveth and shall build thee one better than it. And forthwith he sent and brought out of prison the Apostle and the Merchant that was shut up with him, saying: I entreat thee, as a man that entreateth the minister of God, that thou wouldest pray for me and beseech him whose minister thou art to forgive me and overlook that which I have done unto thee or thought to do, and that I may become a worthy inhabiter of that dwelling for the which I took no pains, but thou hast builded it for me, labouring alone, the grace of thy God working with thee, and that I also may become a servant and serve this God whom thou preachest. And his brother also fell down before the apostle and said: I entreat and supplicate thee before thy God that I may become worthy of his ministry and service, and that it may fall to me to be worthy of the things that were shown unto me by his angels.

And the Apostle, filled with joy, said: I praise thee, O, Lord Jesu, that thou hast revealed thy truth in these men; for thou only art the God of truth, and none other, and thou art he that knoweth all things that are unknown to the most; thou, Lord, art he that in all things showest compassion and sparest men. For men by reason of the error that is in them having overlooked thee but thou hast not overlooked them. And now at my supplication and request do thou receive the King and his brother and join them unto thy fold, cleansing them with thy washing and anointing them with thine oil from the error that encompasseth them: and keep them also from the wolves, bearing them into thy meadows. And give them drink out of thine immortal fountain which is neither fouled nor drieth up; for they entreat and supplicate thee and desire to become thy servants and ministers, and for this they are content even to be persecuted of thine enemies, and for thy sake to be hated of them and to be mocked and to die, like as thou for our sake didst suffer all these things, that thou mightest preserve us, thou that art Lord and verily the good shepherd. And do thou grant them to have confidence in thee alone, and the succour that cometh of thee and the hope of their salvation which they look for from thee alone; and that they may be grounded in thy mysteries and receive the perfect good of thy graces and gifts, and flourish in thy ministry and come to perfection in thy Father.

Being therefore wholly set upon the Apostle, both the King Gundaphorus and Gad his brother followed him and departed not from him at all, and they also relieved them that had need giving unto all and refreshing all. And

they besought him that they also might henceforth receive the seal of the word, saying unto him: Seeing that our souls are at leisure and eager toward God, give thou us the seal; for we have heard thee say that the God whom thou preachest knoweth his own sheep by his seal. And the apostle said unto them: I also rejoice and entreat you to receive this seal, and to partake with me in this Eucharist and blessing of the Lord, and to be made perfect therein. For this is the Lord and God of all, even Jesus Christ whom I preach, and he is the father of truth, in whom I have taught you to believe. And he commanded them to bring oil that they might receive the seal by the oil. They brought the oil therefore, and lighted many lamps; for it was night (Syr. whom I preach: and the King gave orders that the bath should be closed for seven days, and that no man should bathe in it: and when the seven days were done, on the eighth day they three entered into the bath by night that Judas might baptise them. And many lamps were lighted in the bath).

And the Apostle arose and sealed them. And the Lord was revealed unto them by a voice, saying: Peace be unto you brethren. And they heard his voice only, but his likeness they saw not, for they had not yet received the added sealing of the seal (Syr. had not been baptised). And the Apostle took the oil and poured it upon their heads and anointed and chrismed them, and began to say (Syr. And Judas went up and stood upon the edge of the cistern and poured oil upon their heads and said):

Come, thou holy name of the Christ that is above every name. Come, thou power of the Most High,

and the compassion that is perfect. Come, gift (charism) of the Most High.

Come, compassionate mother. Come, communion of the male. Come, she that revealeth the hidden mysteries. Come, mother of the seven houses that thy rest may be in the eighth house.

Come, elder of the five members, mind, thought, reflection, consideration, reason; communicate with these young men.

Come, Holy Spirit, and cleanse their reins and their heart, and give them the added seal, in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost.

And when they were sealed, there appeared unto them a youth holding a lighted torch, so that their lamps became dim at the approach of the light thereof. And he went forth and was no more seen of them. And the Apostle said unto the Lord: Thy light, O Lord, is not to be contained by us, and we are not able to bear it, for it is too great for our sight.

And when the dawn came and it was morning, he brake bread and made them partakers of the Eucharist of the Christ. And they were glad and rejoiced. And many others also, believing, were added to them, and came into the refuge of the Saviour.”⁴

Thus the King and the people of Maanaveera Naadu became Christians in the first century itself. King Peter (Gandhappar Raja) named his capital city as “Jesupuram”

and wanted to teach Christian doctrines to all the people in his country. He appointed St. Thomas as the King's priest and Poet, and requested him to write down all the teachings of Jesus Christ in a super eminent style so that it might surpass all the works of the existing literatures and Vedas. Accepting this royal task of creating a literary master piece in Tamil language, St. Thomas became worthy of the inscriptions found on the copper plates of Chinnamanoor, Velvikkudy, which claim that the Pandian family had the honour of owning an Arian - Agasthia Priest.”⁵ St. Thomas now decked with the royal authority and unlimited capacity, travelled first throughout Maanaveera Naadu and then to the surrounding regions and preached the Gospel and converted 9,000 men excepting the women and children.⁶ Deacon Xantipus, the King of Parthia and King Paul (Gad), now ordained a Deacon were the constant companions of St. Thomas in his missionary works.

Journey to Thiruvithankodu

In those days the Pandians of Maanaveera Naadu had extensive business travels with their precious products of pearls, ornaments of sangu, dry fish, karkandu, jaggery, baskets and rice to the neighbouring Chera and Chola countries. For this business travels, the Kings had constructed road ways with trees, resting places and drinking water wells all along. One such road way was in use at the time of St. Thomas. It was between Maanaveera Naadu (east coast) and Venaadu (west coast). In fact, it was these two Naadus or States that were called the original “Malabar” of St. Thomas Christians. This traditional route, starting from

the ports of Ovari, Kooduthaalai and Periathaalai, ran through Kanakkankudiyiruppu, Rammadupuram, Changanaankulam, Vadakkankulam, Pazhavor, and crossing the Western Ghats through **Edamalai Thondu, (the Seventh Pass)** ran through Ramanaathichan Puthur, Marungoor, Kottar, Vettoornimadam, Kaarangadau and reached Thiruvithankodu. There are some traces found to prove this route in the forms of chatrams with rock pillars, naazhikinarugal (narrow wells) etc.⁷ St. Thomas with his disciples traveled along this route, preaching the gospel in all the villages and towns, and reached Thiruvithankodu.



This Thiruvithankodu is another important place which St. Thomas chose as a centre of his first mission. It was the capital city of Venadu situated in the South West coast of Tamil Nadu. Alex C. Muthiah describes the history of this mission centre as follows: “In those days, Parasuraman a valiant King of North East India brought from the province of the river Ganges sixty four families of Arians and settled them in this province of Chera Naadu. The descendants of these Arians were ruling as Kings of Venaadu, and they were called “Thiruvadigal”. Hence, the country which was ruled

by these Thiruvadigal was known as “Thiruvadi Desam”, and the city where these Thiruvadigal lived was called “Thiru Vaazhum Kodu.” Thus the capital of Venaadu took the name “Thiruvaankodu” and in course of time became “Thiruvithankodu.” ⁸

The Christians who were first converted in Venaadu were settled in this city of Thiruvithankodu and a church was built there for their worship. This was the first church built by St. Thomas in Chera Naadu, still existing after many renewals and modifications.⁹ This fact recorded by Alex C. Muthaiah, has been confirmed in a documentary video C.D. produced by the ICS Creations called “Ezharappallikal” where Professor George Menachery speaks as follows: “In the district of Kanyakumari, at Thiruvithankodu St. Thomas the Apostle erected a Cross and then built a small church, which still exists after undergoing some modifications and



renovations.” In the same documentary film Professor Rev. Dr. Xavier Koodappuzha, Vicar of St. Dominic’s Cathedral Church in Kanjirappalli says; “St. Thomas, the Apostle came not only to Kerala, but there is a tradition that before

coming here he went to many other places in the south country such as Thiruvithankodu.”

While staying at Thiruvithankodu, St. Thomas visited all over Kanyakumari district in between Marthandam and Kottar. In every place of his visit he went on baptising new Christians and appointing Catechists to look after them. As he trained the Catechists to teach catechism to the new converts, the Apostle was also composing the Christian doctrines in poetry form in order to present it to Gandhappar Raja.

For such works of extra ordinary wisdom he used to find places of recollection and meditation. In Venaadu St. Thomas found a hill top of tranquil and of cool breeze, exactly six kilo meters bird's eye view distant west of Thiruvithankodu.



On the top of this hill called 'Matha Malai', St. Thomas used to sit atop the hill on a stone for prayer and meditation for a long time; and therefore the rock on which he rested

his right foot, we can see now his foot print. In one of the caves of this hill Our Lady has appeared to him several times and inspired him to compose the Tamil literature of Christian doctrines. (Rev. Thirumeni Varghese of Kappiyara has written the history of this hill)

After six months of sojourn in Venaadu, St. Thomas

returned to meet his first Christians in Maanaveera Naadu by the same route through which he came first. But after Ramanaathichan Puthur he discovered another pass through the mountains called “Narithondu.” After crossing this pass he found a beautiful and fertile area on the hill side. There were two streams perennially flowing from the mountains, one having its source from Peria Malai called “Sambanchunai;” another from Nilapparai Malai called Kanjanchunai.

The place in between these two streams was a green grove and a beautiful garden where probably “Kanja” plants were growing, and therefore the stream was called Kanjanchunai and the mountain was also called “Kanjomalai.” St. Thomas found this place suitable for rest and also a platform to preach to the people gathered around him. There is a cave in which he used to pray and meditate. A demon came to disturb his prayers and meditation. St. Thomas told the demon to depart from him and wait for him in a distant place. And it is said that this demon is still waiting for him and calling: “Thomas when will you come?” This calling of the demon was reported to have been heard by some in that region until the recent past.¹⁰

While starting from Kanjomalai (Nilapparai) the Saint somehow missed his





way and landed at Pandarakulam, east of Valliyoor where, according to traditional belief, it is said that he founded a small community of new Christians by the side of a river which made the place very fertile and pleasant.

St. Thomas erected a Cross there with the inscriptions (INRI) on it, carved by his own hands in his own peculiar style, which can be seen there now on the northern side of St. Thomas' church (Now a beautiful shrine has been built in the same place with that miraculous cross as the object of veneration). He liked this small community so much that he made it a point to pass through Pandarakulam whenever he went to and from Thiruvithaankodu. Since this community of St. Thomas' Christians was later visited by various Missionaries like Sts. Francis Xavier, John De Britto, Veeramamunivar (Constantine Beschi) etc. who were known as "Pandara Swamigal", this place got the name Pandarakulam. This village is one of the sub-stations of the present Kilavaneri Parish in Tuticorin Diocese. From Pandarakulam St. Thomas took a different route along the river Nattaaru (Nambiaru) and reached Kanakkankuditiruppu in the month of December, 34 A.D.

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1. Fr. Motha Vaz, *The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India*, Madras, SaintThomas Mount, 1925, p. 11.
 2. *Ibid* at pp. 13, 14, 15.

3. "History of the Catholic Church in Kanyakumari District" Page, 26.
4. The Acts of Thomas, in The Apocryphal New Testament, trans. M.R. James, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924.
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/textactstthomas.html>
5. Fr. Motha Vaz, The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India, Madras, SaintThomas Mount, 1925, p. 16.
6. Cfr. Chidambaranar, The History of Tamil Sangams, p. 99.
7. Alex Cruz Muthiah, Then Paandi Mandala Maanaveera Naadu, p. 133.
8. *Ibid* at pp. 130,131.
9. *Ibid* at p. 131.
10. *Ibid* at p. 134.

CHAPTER SEVEN



“DIVINE BOOK”- THE DOCTRINE OF ST. THOMAS, THE APOSTLE

“The History of Tamil Sangams” states that between 50 B.C. and 30 A.D. the Pandian King presiding over the “Kadai Sangam” at Madurai was Karungai Volvaazh Perumpeyar Vazhuthi who was also called Vukkira Peruvazhthi I.¹ Edward Jennet Robinson states that St. Thomas at that time was carrying out missionary work at Mylapore (Tamil Nadu). N. Krishna Moorti in his Book “Saint Thiruvalluvar”² mentions that according to Marai Malai Adigal the author of the ‘Deiva Nool’ was born on Jan. 16, 31 B.C. “The History of Tamil Sangams” once again clearly states in Page 129 that the author of the ‘Deiva Nool’ lived between B. C. 75 and A.D. 36. All these writings show that the Deiva Nool would have been composed at the time when St. Thomas was carrying out his first missionary enterprise in Tamil Nadu.

Now, when King Vukkira Peruvazhuthi I was ruling at Madurai, it was not at Mylapore that St. Thomas was

carrying out missionary work as Edward Jennet Robinson states, but at the Southern Pandian kingdom (Maanaveera Naadu), which was one of the petit kingdoms of King Vukkira Peruvazhuthi, ruled by King Gandhappar. St. Thomas went to Mylapore only during his Second Mission in India, i.e: from 52 A.D. to 72 A.D.

It must also be noted as Dr. K. Appadurai states that until the time of Kambar Ramayana the name of the book was known only such as “Vedam (Book of Religion), Aram (Book of Virtues), Utthara Vedam (True Religion), Deiva Nool (Divine Scripture)” and so on. And the name of its author was known such as “Eraiyanaar (God), Poyyil Pulavar (True Poet), Deiva Pulavar (Divine Poet)” and so on. For example the Tamil Epics called ‘Pura Naanooru, Chilappathikaaram, and Manimekalai’ mention the book as ‘Aram’ and the author as Poyyil Pulavar only. Dr. Appadurai very boldly asserts that **the stories about the name and family of the author as ‘Thiru Valluvar’, and the name of the book as ‘Thirukkural’ are only modern stories without any traditional foundation.** “In truth”, he says,

“Until the time of Kambar we see that no author of Tamil literatures, while quoting the lines and ideas of the Deiva Nool, ever mention the book as Thirukkural, or the author as Thiru Valluvar.”³



It was in this historical set up that King Gandhappar, now as a

Christian, requested St. Thomas to create a Tamil literature containing all the teachings of Jesus Christ. And St. Thomas, after returning from Thiruvithankodu, devoted forty days and forty nights for prayer and meditation in the church of Kanakkankudiyiruppu.

For the subject of meditation, first he took the Old Testament of the Bible, wherein he found the construction of material he wanted to create, (i) **Aram** - Spiritual order: The Nature and Attributes of God, and Man's duty towards God (Aravial = Illaram and Thuravaram), which are contained in the first



five books of the Bible - the Pentateuch. (ii) **Porul**- Social order: The Powers and duties of the Kings (Arasial= Politics), which are found in the books of Kings and Judges in the Bible. (iii) **Inbam** - Moral order. The Love and Pleasures un-opposed to holiness (Karpial= Chastity), which are written in the Canticle of Canticles in the Bible.

Secondly St. Thomas meditated on the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament and applied these Christian principles to the above construction of material for his book.

Thirdly the Saint meditated on the instructions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the twelve Apostles, and especially Her instructions to him and to his fellow Magi Kings at

Bethlehem, how to govern the Kingdoms in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God.

King Gandhappar already knew well before he was baptised, that a King has to seek the company of wise and courageous men. But now, after listening to the instructions of Saint Thomas, he found out that the royal virtues he had already obtained were nothing before those of the Divine Saint Thomas. Therefore the King wanted to name the literature of St. Thomas as “Deiva Nool” (Divine Book) or “Doctrines of St. Thomas.”

King Gandhappar also knew well that even from very ancient times Tamil Nadu was a constant battle ground of many wars between different religions. In these kinds of wars many scholars and poets had wasted their life time.

Besides, the books written in favor of one religion were not read by those who belonged to other religions; and many times they spoke ill of each other. For example, the fierce battle between the Sivaites and the Jains was a historical fact.⁴ In order that the book of St. Thomas should be read by all who belonged to various kinds of religions, and in order that those who were fighting among themselves on religious differences should accept and admire the superiority of his Deiva Nool so much, that they may one and all praise him as the prince of the poets, Gandhappar Raja requested St. Thomas not to mention the name and author of his religion in this work; and he said that it would be known if and when God would please to reveal it.

Though a poet by birth, St. Thomas had for this

purpose received divine light and many preternatural and supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost, in his direct contact and education from Our Lord Jesus Christ, (like Sage Agasthiyar on the instruction of Lord Murugan originated the Tamil language – see Appendix II) to compose in Tamil the doctrines of Christianity in a most brilliant and unique style which surpassed all other existing Tamil literatures created by poets who were inside or outside the Tamil Sangam. In fact our Saint was not a poet belonging to the Sangam though he lived in the Sangam period.⁵

Some details of the Antediluvian Kings in the “Catholic commentary on Holy Scripture”, give us astonishing evidences of the connections between the Bible and Lord Murugan (**Alagar**) and his disciple Agasthiar. In the genealogy of the Sethites it is said:

“The Babylonians similarly listed ten Antediluvian Kings with immensely long reigns. The first Alulim (Adam) is credited with 67,200 years, and his successor Alagar (Seth) with 72,000.”⁶ “When we compare the **Sethite list** of genealogy with the Babylonian list of **Berossus**, we find a number of striking coincidences”.⁷

Berossus	Sumerian Equivalents	Sethite List
1. Aloros	Alulim	Adam
2. Alaparos	Alagar	Seth
3. Amelon	Enmenluanna; Amelu “Man”	Enosh “Man”
4. Ammenon(?);	Ummanu “Workman”	Kenan “Metal Worker”
5. Amegalaron	Enmengalanna	Mahalalel

6. Daonos	Dumuzi	Jared
7. Evedoranchus	Enmenduranki	Enoch
8. Amepsinos	Ensibzianna	Methuselah
9. Otiartes/Opartes	Uburtutu	Lamech
10. Xisouthros	Ziusudra	Noah

“The second King, **Alaparos**, is derived from **Alalgar**, the second king of the Weld-Blundell Sumerian King list, whose sage was U-an-dugga”.

The Lord Murugan who is known for the knowledge of Tamil Language and of the whole Universe according to Dr. Mandayam Kumar “**imparted spiritual knowledge to Agathiyar**”; and “**Sage Agathiyar on the instruction of Lord Murugan (Alagar) originated the Tamil language**”. (Appendix III “Sage Agasthiyar and his travels”)⁸ Now, if this Lord Murugan (Alagar) is none but the son of Adam and Eve, called **Seth** the first son after the murder of Abel by Cain, **his language would have been “Tamil”** according to the modern researchers like Ma. So. Victor (“Kumarikkandam” Pages 104, 105). And in “**The Catholic Encyclopedia**” Vol. 4, we find: “Tribes which certainly sprang from Noe were preceded in their earliest settlements by other tribes whose origin is unknown to us: **the Dravidic tribes preceded the Arians in India.**” (Page 705) “Again the languages of the races springing from Noe are said to be



in a state of development different from that in which we find the languages of the peoples of unknown origin.” (Page 705)

Moreover, the third antediluvian King **Enosh** is likely to be associated with **Melchizedek** who could represent **Agasthiyar** as well.

“Jesus, who went before us, has entered (the Holy of Holies) on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of **Melchizedek**.” (Heb. 6:20) The association with Jesus cannot be denied. Thus the question naturally arises; **just who was this mysterious figure (Melchizedek)? Was he an Old Testament manifestation of Jesus Christ Himself? Was he one of the Antediluvian Patriarchs (Enosh)**, allowed to live a very long life in order to help establish God’s chosen nation?” (Appendix V “**Who is Melchizedek**”)⁹

The antediluvian Kings having considerably longer life-spans than the postdiluvian ones, **Agasthiyar** who plays the part of the biblical **Melchizedek** had a long span of life (at least 12,000 years) living both before and after the flood, and had established and nurtured all the three Tamil Sangams from 9600 BC to 600 AD. (Appendix IV)¹⁰ Let us continue reading from Appendix IV “The Amazing Great Pyramid- Yogananda SRF Devotees” referred above:

“The research done by Fr. Heras and Sir John Marshall the Archaeologist and other scholars into the archaeological finds at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa point to the existence of an earlier highly developed Dravidian civilization in the

deep South, which had influenced the Indus Valley Aryan civilization of the North.”

“The available historical evidence referring to the Dravidian civilisation commences with the records that have come down to us of the Tamil literary writings during the past 12,000 years, which have been divided by historians into three periods, called the **First Sangam period** from 9600 BC to 5200 BC, spanning the Satya and Treta yugas, the **Second Sangam period** from 5200 BC to 1500 BC spanning the Treta and Dwapara yugas, and the **Third Sangam period** from 1500 BC to 600 AD spanning the Dwapara and Kali yugas”.

“The First Sangam, which was founded and nurtured by Siddha Sri Agasthiyar, lasted for 4,400 years and had its centre in the city of Dakshina Madura in the continent of Lemuria.”

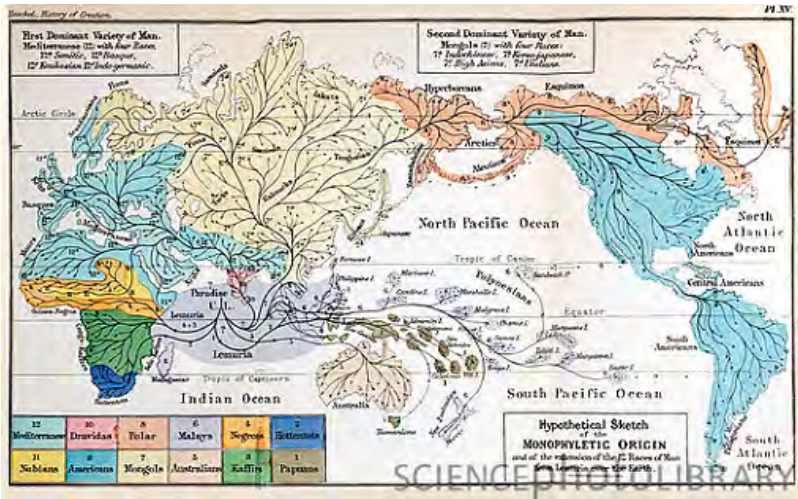
“The Second Sangam, which was also established under the patronage of Sri Agasthiyar, lasted for 3,700 years and had its centre in the city of Kavatapuram in the continent of Lemuria, after the records in the city of Dakshina Madura had gone under water.”

“The Third Sangam, also sponsored by Sri Agasthiyar, lasted for 1,800 years and had its centre at Uttara Madura, namely the modern city of Madurai, which lays north of the earlier centers, after the whole of the Lemurian continent had gone under water”.

Ma. So. Victor in the Author’s word of his book “Kumarikkandam”:

1. Quotes one striking principle of Dr. Ernst Haeckel:

“An immense landscape submerged in the Indian Ocean is the Lemuria Continent. Living beings and Humanity first appeared in this continent only. The Tamils had not come to India from any other nation to be settled here. **The Lemuria continent is the motherland of the Tamils.**”



Ernst Haeckel Map Lemuria Human Origins.¹¹

Frontis plate with illustration from Ernst Haeckel “The History of Creation” English translation by Prof. E. Ray Lankester 1876 provides, “A hypothetical sketch of the monophyletic origin and of the extension of the 12 races of man from Lemuria over the Earth”. While Darwin correctly suspected an African origin for mankind, Haeckel hypothesized a lost continent of Lemuria from which the various races of mankind had spread. Though there seemed

little basis in geology for this supposition, it suited his own racial ideologies and would help him explain the (then) rarity of human fossils (on account of them being lost on a drowned continent). It also helped explain the anomalous distribution of Lemurs (hence the name) in the seemingly disconnected realms of Africa, Madagascar, India and Asia. We now have many early hominid fossils from Africa and explain lemur distributions with continental drift.

2. Victor quotes what is said by V. R. Ramachandra Theethar in his book “**Origin and spread of the Tamils**”, Page 29:

“We therefore conclude that the so called Mediterranean race had its origin in peninsular India, which was a part of the original Dravidian home which was the submerged continent and connected south India with Africa, when the Indo Gangetic basin had not probably been formed. So the Dravidian element is not to be found in Indian culture alone, but is largely traceable in Grecian, Aegan, Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Phoenician and other cultures of the ancient world.”

3. Then he gives the **frontiers of Kumarikkandam** in the same Chapter (Page 22):

“Many have accepted that Kumarikkandam was in the same place where today Indian Ocean is. Indian Ocean has been comprised as its frontier nations: India in the north, South Pole in the south, Africa in the west and Indonesia and Australia in the east. In this vast spread water space was the Kumarikkandam.

4. In the same chapter (Page 24) he shows that **Ceylon was the place where Adam came and settled** after he had been chased out of the Paradise.

“It is discovered by scientists that Ceylon’s Vavunia forest and its mountain region is the land most ancient. Some say that the mountain called the summit of Adam at the height of seven thousand feet was the region where the first man Adam came and settled after being cast out of the Garden of Eden. The rock there with the foot prints is a very ancient rock..... For the last two thousand years it is said that the foot prints known as **Thiruppaadam (Sri Pada)**, are the feet of Adam.”



Temple in the sky Ratnapura is situated at the foot space of the 2243 meter high Adam’s Peak. Catholics say it is of St. Thomas’ the Christian Apostle who preached in South India. Ratnapura is also the starting point for the ‘Classic’ Hard route up Adam’s Peak, via Gilimale and Carney estate. The Pilgrimage season starts on Poya (full moon) day in December and runs until the start of the South-West

Monsoon in April. It has been a pilgrimage centre for over 1000 years.¹²

“Although there are no evidences available whether Adam truly lived there, evidences have now begun to appear that **Adam was the man of Kumarikkandam.**”

5. Dr. E. Thurston says (Page 82)

“According to Dr. Haeckel, where the Indian Ocean today is, there was a great landscape, extending from the Sunda Islands of Indonesia to Africa. Dr. Sclater is of opinion that this landscape is the Lemurian continent. This continent is the place where living beings, animals and man began to appear.”

6. Dr. Gream Williams says:

“The news worthy of admiration is that India was the nation where all living beings began to appear. It is in India where wild man began the civilized life.

7. According to Dr. H. G. Wells:

“Kumarikkandam was the nursery for the development of people of the ancient world.”

8. Dr. Ku. Mangaiyarkarasi in her Research Book called “Kumarikkandam Literary evidences and Modern Researches” Page 106 has said that the findings of Kumarikkandam are not mere imagination, but are attached to historical phenomenon: “From the assurance of Modern researchers regarding Lemuria, from the suggestions of it

as the place where living beings originated and from the saying that this place was in the sea attached to the land of south India, it could be strongly asserted that the confidence which the ancient Tamils possessed about the deluge and the civilisation which perished in it is not a mere imagination, but is of a historical phenomenon”.

Thus St. Thomas succeeded providentially to introduce in Tamil once again the one true religion of the one true God in three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and updated through the teachings and merits of Jesus Christ the Son of God, into a nation which was once the birth place of the one true religion and then turned in to the nursery for the development of all kinds of religions. It is true that even the best of Scholars who wrote commentaries on the “Deiva Nool”, **do not fully explain the thoughts of the author.**¹³

St. Thomas wrote this Deiva Nool in that Tamil Character which existed in first century on Palmira leaves, and presented it first in the royal assembly of Gandhappar Raja on January 15, 35 A.D. All those who read it or heard it read, chiefly the contemporary Tamil scholars and poets, unanimously praised its incomparable and supernatural quality, its beauty of rhythm and its depth of meaning. No one had so far ventured this style of literary composition.

When this master piece of the Tamil world was submitted to King Karungai Volvaazh Perumpeyar Vazhuthi (Vukkira Peruvazhuthi I) or his immediate successor on the throne, to be presented in the Tamil Sangam at Madurai, as

referred below in the “**History of Thiru Vallavathevar**”, a miracle was witnessed. The platform of the Sangam Poets discarded them all down and accepted only the Deiva Nool to be placed on it. The truth hidden in this story was known to all the Tamil scholars, so that this Nool was so regarded and established as an incomparable and unique one.¹⁴

In the book called “The Divine History of Thiru Valluva Naynaar” Pages 14 to 20, it is narrated:

“In the City of Madurai of the Pandian Kingdom the poets of Tamil Sangam including Nakkeerar who were very proud of their wisdom, were wont to humiliate all the new poets who came there. Hearing this, people like Azhagananthar who were grieving over it for a long time, requested Thiruvalluva Thevar to compose a volume easy to grasp, containing the means to attain happiness in heaven and on earth, and comprising every sphere of life in the world. “Having accepted this request, Thiru Valluva Thevar fulfilled the wish of Azhagananthar and others by composing a book containing the compendium of the Bible doctrines, in one thousand three hundred and thirty short strips (Kural Venpas), explaining the three aspects of life – Aram (spiritual order), Porul (social order) and Inbam (moral order), and comprising all that is in the world. Azhagananthar and others, feeling extremely happy over the elegance of this book, expressed their mind that by this literature they should bring down the pride of the Sangam poets.”

“Accepting their request together with Azhagananthar and others, he travelled through the region

of Edaikazhi, informing this matter to Owai Pirattiyar whom he met on the way, and inviting her to join him, reached the city of Madurai.”

“After arriving at Madurai, in the court of Pandian King Ukkirappervaluthi, surrounded by the ministers and other officials, Edaikkadar and Owai Pirattiyar seated by his side, the other religious superiors and missionaries attending the assembly, while those who respected it and experienced a holy joy at his miraculous composition, and that the Sangam Poets may apologies in their hearts, he inaugurated the book Thirukkural.”

“And then, followed by both Auwai Pirattiar and Edaikkadar, he went near the pool of golden lotus and stood in front of the forty nine Sangam Poets including Nakkeerar in order to humble their pride. Those Poets also, thinking of humiliating him in some way or other, and knowing not the consequence of it, asked of him numerous unwanted questions. And when they heard him answering their questions unhesitatingly and without offending them, they at length asked him: “which country do you belong?” To this question Thiruvalluva Thevar replied with an erudite poetry of four strips (Venpas);

“Which country said ye, the country where I was you
 didn’t ask
 Do you know the details of that country - that country
 Would be a threefold desolation and in the end
 nothingness
 And beyond it, will come forth a country without
 desolation (that country I belong).”

“Hearing such a supernatural answer, the Sangam Poets felt: “since there is a tremendous differences between his nature and our nature, we are not worthy of holding a conversation with him”, and said: “We have a custom; that is, to which of the book the platform we are seated gives place, that will be the Classical Tamil book. According to this custom, if this platform gives place to your book also, we will approve this book as a classical Tamil book.”

“We will do so,” said Thiruvalluva Thevar, and he placed his book on the Sangam platform. Instantly the platform became as small as not to access the forty nine Sangam Poets, but to accept only the book of Thirukkural. Therefore the forty nine who occupied the platform fell down in to the pool of golden lotus.

“At this occurrence, having understood that he was a man erudite in Classical Tamil, and that the book he composed was one of those most Classical books, the Sangam Poets came out of the pool and with wonderful praise they named that book as “Tamil Religion”, “Perfect Doctrine”, “Compendium of all doctrine” and so on. And all the forty nine Sangam Poets sang the praises of this book by each onecomposing a poetry of four strips (venba) according to their taste. And this is called the “Thiruvalluva Maalai”.

“Then the Sangam Poets, Ukkira Peruvazhuthi and others having paid their homage to Thiruvalluva Thevar, said: “It would be perfect if Agsthiya Munivar the master of Tamil language approves this most valuable book”. Thiruvalluva Thevar who used to acquiesce with the wishes of credited



personalities, accepted this proposal and went down to the Pothigai Ashram, and lovingly visited **Agasthiya Munivar** who was residing there, and expressed the intention of his arrival there. And the latter after making a critical study of that book, was most happy to grant his whole hearted approval”.

St. Thomas, who by Jesus Christ was imparted spiritual knowledge and instructed in a miraculous way to compose the couplets of the Deiva Nool, went to Agasthiya Munivar, who was none but Melchizedek as shown above, and obtained his whole hearted approval for his master piece of the Tamil literature. This is the reason why great men have attempted to find a mystical relationship between Lord Murugan (Alagar) and Our Lord Jesus Christ. Actually, as cited above, if Lord Murugan the second Antediluvian King is the son of Adam and Eve (Seth), Jesus Christ is the eternal son of God the Father.

There is another proof to state that the real author of the Deiva Nool was St. Thomas. One of the miracles done by St. Thomas in Mylapore is attributed to Thiruvalluvar. Namely, the miraculous removal of a huge log of wood by St. Thomas narrated in the “History of St. Thomas” by M. MothaVaz (Page 47), has also been recorded as done by Thiruvalluvar in the “History of Thiruvalluva Naayanar” (Page 13).

Parimelazhagar, one considered the best among the existing commentators of this Deiva Nool, as he was a



Vaishnavaites, depends very much upon his own religion and departs from the thoughts of the author.¹⁵ But even he, unconsciously admits the author's belief in the Holy Trinity in his commentary for the very first verse, and for this he is rebuked by another commentator.¹⁶ But when Parimelazhagar

says "Moovaraagia Mutharkkadavulodu," meaning - with the Prime God in three Persons, it signifies the Triune God whom a Christian alone worships; and he says that the author of this Deiva Nool greets here the God whom he worships. Therefore the first verse of this Deiva Nool speaks of the Holy Trinity and the author of it must definitely be a Christian.

Moreover, T.S. Kandasamy Muthaliar in his Research Introduction to Parimelazhagar-urai says that this Deiva Nool is incomparable in expounding the nature and fragrance of virtues. What is virtue, how to practice virtue and the purpose of it have all been perfectly explained in this Nool. And in no other book can we find apt answers to the questions about the divine virtues. And the highest form of practicing justice viz. of doing good even to the enemy is

a unique teaching of this author.¹⁷ Now Jesus Christ alone has taught and practiced this highest form of virtue and justice. For example, Jesus taught: “But I say to you: Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you” (Mt. 5: 44), and He practiced this teaching all His life, even while hanging on the Cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk.23: 34).

Nakkeerar in his encomiums to this Deiva Nool appraises its author as follows;

“What gratitude would the world render to the author who knowing everything himself, has composed in Tamil short strips (Kural Venpas), the four most important subject matters beginning with Virtue (Aram), in a way easily to be understood even by those who are ignorant of them.”¹⁸

Nakkeerar had his origin from the region of the Southern Pandian Kingdom Maanaveera Naadu where St. Thomas built his first church at Kanakkankudiyiruppu. This Kanakkankudiyiruppu is the place where King Gandhappar had settled his accountants called kanakkayars. These kanakkayars were in charge of the store house called “Pandaga Saalai” of the Kingdom. The father of Nakkeerar was one of these Kanakkayars belonging to the art craftsmen called “Sankaruppure”. Nakkeerar was called the son of Kanakkayar, and he proudly calls himself as from the heritage of “Sankaruppure” (Sankaruppurengal Kulam, Sankaranaarkaetukulam? = Our heritage is to be Sankaruppure, which heritage does Sankaranaar belong?)

In this connection Kakkeerar might have had some knowledge about St. Thomas as worthy of his highest encomium above.

Hence the author of this Deiva Nool, whatever name might be attributed to him, must be a great and holy man who knew Jesus Christ and His teachings perfectly well enough to practice them himself. If an Italian Constantine Beschi (Veera Maa Munivar) could become well versed in Tamil so much as to be the first one to create the Tamil Dictionary, and to compose the famous “Thembavani,” why not an Apostle of Jesus Christ be the best and most worthy author (Deiva Pulavar) of this Deiva Nool? But for his contact with the very Son of God (Jesus Christ), the author could not have acquired the qualities admired by Nakkeerar and others.

This tribute of God’s prerogative (Omniscience) cannot be applied to any man except to him who is inspired by and who has a specific mission from God Himself. And we know well that Jesus Christ (The True God and True Man) had sent one of His Apostles Thomas to the Pandian kingdom with a divine mission. And for this purpose He has conferred upon the Apostle His divine Power: “All Power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Mt. 28: 18, 19, 20).

Another commentator Thodithalai Vizhuthandinaar eulogizes our author saying: “This great Poet, who exposed the ineffable four subjects, seems to know even higher mysteries which are not contained in these subjects.”¹⁹ The disciples of Jesus Christ had a chance to live with the Son of God, and they heard Him teach all the doctrines. They saw him face to face, they heard Him speaking about hidden things and performing highest of miracles.

This fact is proved first by the writing of Matthias the Apostle who in his Acts “**The Book of Thomas the Contender**” has written as follows;

“The secret words that the Savior spoke to Judas Thomas which, I, even I, Matthias, wrote down, while I was walking, listening to them speak with one another. “The savior said, “Brother Thomas while you have time in the world, listen to me, and I will reveal to you the things you have pondered in your mind,” “Now since it has been said that you are my twin and true companion, examine yourself, and learn who you are, in what way you exist and how you will come to be. Since you will be called my brother, it is not fitting that you be ignorant of yourself. And I know that you have understood because you had already understood that **I am the knowledge of the truth**. So while you accompany me although you are uncomprehending, you have in fact already come to know, and you will be called “**the one who knows himself**,” (the supreme norm prescribed by Nakkeerar, i.e:- “**knowing everything himself**” -**Thaanae Anaithaiyum Arinthu**). For he who has not known himself has known nothing, but he who has known himself has at

the same time already achieved knowledge about the depth of the all. So then, you, my brother Thomas, have beheld what is obscure to men, that is, what they ignorantly stumble against.” Now Thomas said to the Lord, “Therefore I beg you to tell me what I ask you before your ascension, and when I hear from you about the hidden things, then I can speak about them.”²⁰

Over and above all these, St. Thomas and all the Apostles were promised the understanding of all things by the Holy Ghost: “But the Paraclete, The Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you” (Jn. 14: 26). Added to this, The Blessed Virgin Mary who was the seat of the Eternal Incarnate Wisdom, also instructed the Apostles on the divine mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, The Incarnation, Redemption and Hypostatic Union (the union of divinity and humanity in Jesus).²¹ Christianity is a supernatural religion and it contains truths which are unfathomable to human intellect. “Behold, God is great, exceeding our knowledge; the number of his years is inestimable” (Job. 36: 26). “The mind cannot rise to the contemplation of the Deity, whom nothing approaches in sublimity, unless it be entirely disengaged from the senses, and of this in the present life we are naturally incapable” (vide Summa Theologica XII-11). And therefore the author of this Deiva Nool must have had acquired supernatural knowledge about the divine mysteries. But for his actual contact with the Eternal Incarnate Wisdom itself in the way explained above, the author would not have acquired the astonishing qualifications attributed to him by Thodithalai Vizhuthandinaar.

Thus St. Thomas had Christianised the philosophies of the Indian Vedas by indianizing his Christian thoughts without sacrificing the Christian doctrines. This has been traditionally sung in a song printed in the history of St. Thomas Mount as follows: **“O our great sage! Who explained the meaning of ancient Vedas of India”**²²

(“இந்தியாவின் பழமையானவேதங்களின் பொருளினைவிளக்கியளங்கள் மாமுனிவரே”) And his contribution to the Tamil language, literature and comparative religious, moral and social ethics by his **true indianisation**, are meritorious services that Indian Christian scholars themselves have not done for ages before or after. The influence of the Deiva Nool on the Indian literary works such as Sangam literature, Kambar Ramayanam, Tamil epics, Tirumantiram, Shivite ethics, Jeevagachintamani etc. have been analysed for evidences of its impact on them.

And Parimelazhagar claims the Deiva Nool as belonging to his Vaishnava religion. His claim is confirmed by Krishna Moorti: “At places, he (Parimelazhagar) refuted the points made by Sanskrit texts and highlighted the variation put forth by the Kural (Deiva Nool). His analysis of textual emendations adds to his worth.”²³

And moreover, in his writing about the excellence of this Deiva Nool, R. P. Sethupillai rightly criticises Parimelazhagar saying that it is obvious that Parimelazhagar has interpreted it forcefully or leniently according to his own thought and Philosophy. ²⁴

The commentaries now available are only those written approximately one thousand years after the

composition of it. Therefore one cannot expect to see in these commentaries **the original intention of the author**. It is natural therefore for the commentators like Parimelazhagar to explain out those passages which are unknown to them according to their own cult and creed.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that this masterpiece of the early Christian literature (the Doctrines of St. Thomas in Tamil), is misunderstood even by Christian Theologians and has been misinterpreted by the Indian philosophers. Thus, it had been left to be handled according to their cult and belief. Hence it had to suffer the inevitable **emendations and interpolations**²⁵ in accordance with their personal thoughts and cults in its text and in its cultural context. This problem would have been solved if a true Christian commentary had been available prior to the existing emended non-Christian texts and commentaries.

It is true that U.G. Pope who translated the whole of the Deiva Nool into English mentions that it contains teachings of Christianity, but he is afraid of bringing in the Christian doctrines even when it is possible. For instance, the translation of the very first verse could have been:

The world came forth from the prime God composed of The Wisdom 'Agaram', its Word 'Muthalam' and Character 'Ezhuththu'

Agara Muthala Ezhuthellam

Aathi Bagavan Muthtraevulagu

'Am' = Wisdom (Agaram), Word (Muthalam),

Character (Ezhuththu). The first exterior revelation of God is Wisdom is Agaram ('Am' the principle of sound). The second exterior revelation is the first born Muthlam (Word, the first born of the sound). The third exterior revelation is Ezhuthu (Character of the Word).

Ellam = All These Three, (Father the prime Cause, Son the first born, and the Holy Ghost the Paraclete. Aathi Bagavan = From the Prime God. Muthatrae Ulagu = From Whom all the world came forth. (Is He Who created heaven and earth).

Even Parimelazhagar, in the beginning of his commentary on this book, when he explains the very first verse, points out the Triune God of the author of this book. According to him, "Moovaragia Mutharkkadavul" (the Prime God composed of three) would mean, The Prime God who is in three Persons.

In the book "Thiru Valluvar, Thirukkural Moolamumuraiyum" – Page, 3. Introduction to Chapter 1, Praise of God, he writes;

"That is to say, the author praises the most worthy God whom he worships in accordance with his doctrines. Of those (doctrines), see that this praise is fittingly worthy of God. Do you see? The three elements of an immovable being such as substance, being related to the Prime God Who has been composed of these three, it is quite fitting to praise the three persons, who are said to have possessed these three elements".

Besides, in the same page, the foot note gives an exciting explanation to the word Bagavan;

“The six prerogatives richness, braveness, praise, holiness, wisdom and steadiness are meant by the word Bagam. And therefore, Bagavan means the one who possesses all these six prerogatives.”

Thus, it is quite fitting to say that the Author who praises the Triune God possessing the six prerogatives enumerated by Parimelazhagar is truly no one but St. Thomas.

In Chennai, the State capital of Tamil Nadu, India, the Chief Minister Kalaigner M. Karunanithi has established the great memorial called “Valluvar Kottam” as a worthy remembrance of the immemorial “Deiva Nool” of St. Thomas. Few examples of this cultural edifice will suffice to prove that this Deiva Nool speaks of Jesus Christ who had sent the Apostle St. Thomas to India.

1. On the pedestal of the stone chariot one can see the carved image of Jesus carrying the cross, as a description of the 16th chapter of the Deiva Nool on patience: “Porai Udaimai”.



2. Around the assembly Hall of the Valluvar Kottam one of the paintings shows Jesus Christ as the one who has burned the five senses of one’s



body – “ainthavithaan”, a description of the 6th poem of Chapter 1, and the 5th poem of chapter 3.

3. Another painting describes the scourging of Jesus at the pillar as one under goes an act of penance, said in the 9th poem of chapter 2.



4. Still another painting around the same assembly hall of Valluvar Kottam in Chennai describes Jesus Christ as one who has conquered his bodily senses.



It is praise worthy that Tamil Scholars like M. Deiva Nayagam and Archbishop Arulappa have brought to light the truth that the Deiva Nool is nothing but the doctrines taught by Jesus Christ. (Confer: “Thirukkural Puthaivu” First edition 1987 by Archbishop Arulappa; and “Thiru Valluvar Christhavaara?” written by M. Deiva Naayagam and published on May 23 1969). But unfortunately there was no attempt made by Christian scholars to write a Christian commentary so far.

Even now it is not too late to publish a Christian commentary, without prejudice to the fact that St. Thomas the Apostle of Jesus Christ was the contemporary author who really lived and taught Christian doctrines in the Southern Pandian Kingdom for thirteen years and more. The Pandian King Gandhappar Raja and his successors might have written the authentic interpretations for the Original Deiva Nool of St. Thomas, and these interpretations together with

the Original Text of the Deiva Nool might have been surely preserved in the libraries and archives of the sand covered Kingdom of Naaraankottai.

An archaeological excavation of the sand hill of Maanaveera Naadu will certainly prove this fact. (This is the conviction of the author of this research work.) We will see in another chapter how the Kingdom of Gandhappar Raja had been slowly disappearing and suddenly swallowed by a sand storm occurred in the seventeenth century due to a curse, and was buried under a huge sand hill. It was due to this misfortune that for one thousand years the Deiva Nool was unknown to the Christian world. The original record and its original Christian commentaries of Gandhappar Raja and the scholars of his successors might have been buried under the sand hill. Actually this sand hill can be viewed now from the top of the sand hill north of Peria Thaazhai in the district of Thiruchendur Taluk, Tuticorin District, Tamil Nadu.

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1. Thudisai Kizhaar A. Chidambaranar, The History of Tamil Sangam, p. 101.
 2. N. Krishnamoorti, Saint Thiruvalluvar and his Message of Life as Dharma, p. 10.
 3. Archbishop Dr. R. Arulappa, Thirukkural Putthaivu, Page, x.
 4. Cfr. R. P. Sethupillai, Thiruvalluvar Noolnayam, p. 10.
 5. Cfr. Chidambaranar, The History of Tamil Sangams, p. 119.
 6. Dom Bernard Orchard (General Editor), A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1953, No. 949, p. 18, No. 146g.
 7. Cfr. Leolaia, Enoch's Sumerian Ancestors. <https://www.jehovahs-witness.com/topic/67655/enochs-sumerian-ancestors>
 8. Dr. Mandayam Kumar, Sage Agasthya - Foremost of the Siddhas, Bangalore, Siddha Medical Research Institute. For full text see Appendix III of this book., Sage Agasthiyar and his travels.
 9. Who was Melchizedek? <https://www.israel-a-history-of.com/melchizedek.html>.
 10. Cfr. Appendix IV The Amazing Great Pyramid - Yogananda SRF Devotees of this book.

- <http://forum.yogananda.net/index.php?/topic/17800-the-amazinggreat-pyramid/>
11. <http://www.sciencephoto.com/image/152193/530wm/C0089507->
 12. Randika De Silva, Beautiful Places in Srilanka. <http://silvarinetours.blogspot.com/>
 13. R.P. Sethupillai, pp. 10, 11.
 14. The Siva Siddhanta Printers' Association, in the Printers' word for "The Parimelazhagarurai", p. 1.
 15. N. Krishnamoorthy, Saint Thiruvalluvar and his Message of Life as Dharma, p.103: R.P. Sethupillai, pp. 112, 118, 120, 124.
 16. Cfr. T.S Kandasamy Muthaliar, Parimelazgagar Urai, 533.
 17. *Ibid.* See Research Introduction p. 3.
 18. *Ibid.* See Appendix 1 Nakkeerar.
 19. *Ibid.* Appendix 1, Thodithalai Vizhuthandinaar.
 20. Mathias The Apostle. The Book of Thomas the Contender. trans. J. D. Turner, The Nag Hammadi Library. Revised edn., San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1990.
 21. Ven. Mary of Agreda, 1670. The Mystical City of God Vol. IV, trans. F. Marison, Chicago, The Theopolitan, 1902, Nos. 47, 48.
 22. Fr. Motha Vaz, The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India, Madras, SaintThomas Mount, 1925, p. 15.
 23. N. Krishnamoorti, Saint Thiruvalluvar and his Message of Life as Dharma, p. 107.
 24. R. P. Sethupillai, p. 112.
 25. *Ibid* at pp. 131,134. Ref. Verse No. 501; Parimelazhagar, p. 193, Commenting on Verse No. 501.

CHAPTER EIGHT



THE MIRACLES OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE IN INDIA

Miracles of St. Thomas at Periathalai

This is the first of the miracles which St. Thomas performed immediately after baptising Gandhappar Raja and his brother Gaathiappar together with those in the King's court at Kanakkankudiyiruppu. On the very night Our Lord appeared to St. Thomas and told him to go along the eastern road towards Periathalai, that he may perform a miracle there, in order to show His glory and to bring to light the nature and power of devil, the enemy, to the newly converted Christians. We find this and the following miracles recorded in the Acts of St. Thomas.

The Third Act: Concerning the vision of Jesus. (No. 28, 29)

“And the Apostle ceased not to preach and to say unto them: Ye men and women, boys and girls, young men and maidens, strong men and aged, whether bond or free, abstain from fornication and covetousness and the service of the belly: for under these three heads all iniquity cometh about. For fornication blindeth the mind and darkeneth the eyes of the soul, and is an impediment to the life (conversation) of the body, turning the whole man unto weakness and casting the whole body into sickness. And greed putteth the soul into fear and shame; being within the body it seizeth upon the goods of others, and is under fear lest if it restores other men’s goods to their owner it be put to shame. And the service of the belly casteth the soul into thoughts and cares and vexations, taking thought lest it come to be in want, and have need of those things that are far from it. If, then, ye be rid of these ye become free of care and grief and fear, and that abideth with you which was said by the Saviour: Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Remember also that word of him of whom I spake: Look at the ravens and see the fowls of the heaven that they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and God dispenseth unto them; how much more unto you, O ye of little faith? But look ye for his coming and have your hope in him and believe on his name. For he is the judge of quick and dead, and he giveth to everyone according to their deeds, and at his coming and his latter appearing no man hath any word of excuse when he is to be judged by him, as though he had not heard. For his heralds do proclaim

in the four quarters (climates) of the world. Repent ye, therefore, and believe the promise and receive the yoke of meekness and the light burden, that ye may live and not die. These things get, these keep. Come forth of the darkness that the light may receive you! Come unto him that is indeed good, that ye may receive grace of him and implant his sign in your souls.”

“And when he had thus spoken, some of them that stood by said: It is time for the creditor to receive the debt. And he said unto them: He that is lord of the debt desireth always to receive more; but let us give him that which is due. And he blessed them, and took bread and oil and herbs and salt and blessed and gave unto them; but he himself continued his fast, for the Lord’s Day was coming on (Syr. And he himself ate, because the Sunday was dawning). When night fell and he slept, the Lord came and stood at his head, saying: Thomas, rise early, and having blessed them all, after the prayer and the ministry go by the eastern road two miles and there will I show thee my glory: for by thy going shall many take refuge with me, and thou shalt bring to light the nature and power of the enemy. And he rose up from sleep and said unto the brethren that were with him: Children, the Lord would accomplish somewhat by me to-day, but let us pray, and entreat of him that we may have no impediment toward him, but that as at all times, so now also it may be done according to his desire and will by us. And having so said, he laid his hands on them and blessed them, and brake the bread of the Eucharist and gave it them, saying: This Eucharist shall be unto you for compassion and mercy, and not unto judgment and retribution. And they said Amen.”

The Dragon and the Young Man

After saying Mass at Kanakkankudiyiruppu St. Thomas took with him Gandhappar Raja (Peter), Gaathiyappar Raja (Paul), King Gondophernes (Zantipus) and a great multitude of people, and proceeded towards Periathalai. On the way, after walking about two miles away, the Saint deviated from the road and took them into a forest. There he saw the dead body of a young man whose body was all blue in colour as if smitten by a poisonous serpent. While all were surprisingly gazing at the young man with pity and fear, there broke out a roaring noise and a great black dragon emerged out of a cave.

St. Thomas calmed the people who began to run away, and accosted the dragon seeking the cause of the young man's death. The dragon replied that the youth was found committing the sin of fornication, and therefore it smote and slew him. But the Apostle raising his voice said: "you shameless creature, I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ, that you suck out the poison which you have put into this young man and take it from him." And the dragon came near and sucked forth the poison out of him. And little by little the colour of the young man became white. And when the dragon had drawn up all the poison into itself, the young man got up and stood, and fell at the Apostle's feet: but the dragon swelled up, burst and died, and its venom and poison were shed forth; and in the place where its venom was shed there appeared a great gulf, and that dragon was swallowed up therein. And the Apostle said unto the King (Gandhappar Raja) and his brother (Gaathiappar Raja): "Take enough

workmen and fill up that gulf, and lay foundations and build houses upon them, that strangers may come and settle there.”

The young man entreated the Apostle to forgive him because he fell into the sin of fornication by the provocation of the same dragon, but he revealed in front of the multitude that he saw Jesus Christ by the side of the Apostle while he was raised to life. And therefore the young man requested the Saint to instruct him how to behold Jesus and be with him always. St. Thomas, as an answer to this question, gave out a beautiful sermon on Christian perfection while he was leading the multitude towards the port city of Periathalai.

Now let us read the full detail of this miracle from the third Act of Thomas.

The Third Act: Concerning the Serpent. (No. 30 to 38)

“And the apostle went forth to go where the Lord had bidden him; and when he was near to the second mile (stone) and had turned a little out of the way, he saw the body of a comely youth lying, and said: Lord, is it for this that thou hast brought me forth, to come hither that I might see this (trial) temptation? thy will therefore be done as thou desirest. And he began to pray and to say: O Lord, the judge of quick (living) and dead, of the quick that stand by and the dead that lie here, and master and father of all things; and father not only of the souls that are in bodies but of them that have gone forth of them, for of the souls also that are in pollutions (al. bodies) thou art lord and judge; come thou at this hour wherein I call upon thee and show forth thy glory upon him that lieth here. And he turned himself unto them that

followed him and said: This thing is not come to pass without cause, but the enemy hath effected it and brought it about that he may assault (?) us thereby; and see ye that he hath not made use of another sort, nor wrought through any other creature save that which is his subject.”

“And when he had so said, a great (Syr. black) serpent (dragon) came out of a hole, beating with his head and shaking his tail upon the ground, and with (using) a loud voice said unto the apostle: I will tell before thee the cause wherefore I slew this man, since thou art come hither for that end, to reprove my works. And the apostle said: Yea, say on. And the serpent: There is a certain beautiful woman in this village over against us; and as she passed by me (or my place) I saw her and was enamored of her, and I followed her and kept watch upon her; and I found this youth kissing her, and he had intercourse with her and did other shameful acts with her: and for me it was easy to declare them before thee, for I know that thou art the twin brother of the Christ and always abolishest our nature (Syr. easy for me to say, but to thee I do not dare to utter them because I know that the ocean-flood of the Messiah will destroy our nature): but because I would not affright her, I slew him not at that time, but waited for him till he passed by in the evening and smote and slew him, and especially because he adventured to do this upon the Lord’s day.”

“And the apostle inquired of him, saying: Tell me of what seed and of what race thou art. And he said unto him: I am a reptile of the reptile nature and noxious son of the noxious father: of him that hurt and smote the four brethren

which stood upright (om. Syr.: the elements or four cardinal points may be meant) I am son to him that sitteth on a throne over all the earth that receiveth back his own from them that borrow: I am son to him that girdeth about the sphere: and I am kin to him that is outside the ocean, whose tail is set in his own mouth: I am he that entered through the barrier (fence) into paradise and spake with Eve the things which my father bade me speak unto her: I am he that kindled and inflamed Cain to kill his own brother, and on mine account did thorns and thistles grow up in the earth: I am he that cast down the angels from above and bound them in lusts after women, that children born of earth might come of them and I might work my will in them: I am he that hardened Pharaoh's heart that he should slay the children of Israel and enslave them with the yoke of cruelty: I am he that caused the multitude to err in the wilderness when they made the calf: I am he that inflamed Herod and enkindled Caiaphas unto false accusation of a lie before Pilate; for this was fitting to me: I am he that stirred up Judas and bribed him to deliver up the Christ: I am he that inhabiteth and holdeth the deep of hell (Tartarus), but the Son of God hath wronged me, against my will, and taken (chosen) them that were his own from me: I am kin to him that is to come from the east, unto whom also power is given to do what he will upon the earth."

"And when that serpent had spoken these things in the hearing of all the people, the apostle lifted up his voice on high and said: Cease thou henceforth, O most shameless one, and be put to confusion and die wholly, for the end of thy destruction is come, and dare not to tell of what thou

hast done by them that have become subject unto thee. And I charge thee in the name of that Jesus who until now contendeth with you for the men that are his own, that thou suck out thy venom which thou hast put into this man, and draw it forth and take it from him. But the serpent said: Not yet is the end of our time come as thou hast said. Wherefore compellest thou me to take back that which I have put into this man, and to die before my time? for mine own father, when he shall draw forth and suck out that which he hath cast into the creation, then shall his end come. And the apostle said unto him: Show, then, now the nature of thy father. And the serpent came near and set his mouth upon the wound of the young man and sucked forth the gall out of it. And by little and little the colour of the young man which was as purple, became white, but the serpent swelled up. And when the serpent had drawn up all the gall into himself, the young man leapt up and stood, and ran and fell at the apostle's feet: but the serpent being swelled up, burst and died, and his venom and gall were shed forth; and in the place where his venom was shed there came a great gulf, and that serpent was swallowed up therein. And the Apostle said unto the King and his brother: Take workmen and fill up that place, and lay foundations and build houses upon them, that it may be a dwelling-place for strangers."

"But the youth said unto the apostle with many tears: Wherein have I sinned against thee? for thou art a man that hast two forms, and where so ever thou wilt, there thou art found, and art restrained of no man, as I behold. For I saw that man that stood by thee and said unto thee: I have many wonders to show forth by thy means and I have great works

to accomplish by thee, for which thou shalt receive a reward; and thou shalt make many to live, and they shall be in rest in light eternal as children of God. Do thou then, saith he, speaking unto thee of me, quicken this youth that hath been stricken of the enemy and be at all times his overseer. Well, therefore, art thou come hither, and well shalt thou depart again unto him, and yet he never shall leave thee at any time. But I am become without care or reproach: and he hath enlightened me from the care of the night and I am at rest from the toil of the day: and I am set free from him that provoked me to do thus, sinning against him that taught me to do contrary thereto: and I have lost him that is the kinsman of the night that compelled me to sin by his own deeds, and have found him that is of the light, and is my kinsman. I have lost him that darkeneth and blindeth his own subjects that they may not know what they do and, being ashamed at their own works, may depart from him, and their works come to an end; and have found him whose works are light and his deeds truth, which if a man doeth he repenteth not of them. And I have left him with whom lying abideth, and before whom darkness goeth as a veil, and behind him followeth shame, shameless in indolence; and I have found him that showeth me fair things that I may take hold on them, even the son of the truth that is akin unto concord, who scattereth away the mist and enlighteneth his own creation, and healeth the wounds thereof and overthroweth the enemies thereof. But I beseech thee, O man of God, cause me to behold him again, and to see him that is now become hidden from me, that I may also hear his voice whereof I am not able to express the wonder, for it belongeth not to the nature of this bodily organ.”

[Before this speech Syr. (Wright) inserts one of equal length, chiefly about man's free will and fall. But the fifth-century palimpsest edited by Mrs. Lewis agrees with the Greek.]

“And the Apostle answered him, saying: If thou depart from these things where of thou hast received knowledge, as thou hast said, and if thou know who it is that hath wrought this in thee, and learn and become a hearer of him whom now in thy fervent love thou seekest; thou shalt both see him and be with him forever, and in his rest shalt thou rest, and shalt be in his joy. But if thou be slackly disposed toward him and turn again unto thy former deeds, and leave that beauty and that bright countenance which now was showed thee, and forget the shining of his light which now thou desirest, not only wilt thou be bereaved of this life but also of that which is to come and thou wilt depart unto him whom thou saidst thou hadst lost, and will no more behold him whom thou saidst thou hadst found.”

“And when the Apostle had said this, he went into the city holding the hand of that youth, and saying unto him: These things which thou hast seen, my child, are but a few of the many which God hath, for he doth not give us good tidings concerning these things that are seen, but greater things than these doth he promise us; but so long as we are in the body we are not able to speak and show forth those which he shall give unto our souls. If we say that he giveth us light, it is this which is seen, and we have it: and if we say it of wealth, which is and appeareth in the world, we name it (we speak of something which is in the world, Syr.),

and we need it not, for it hath been said: Hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven: and if we speak of apparel of raiment wherewith they that are luxurious in this life are clad, it is named (we mention something that nobles wear, Syr.), and it hath been said: They that wear soft raiment are in the houses of kings. And if of costly banquets, concerning these we have received a commandment to beware of them, not to be weighed down With reveling and drunkenness and cares of this life -speaking of things that are- and it hath been said: Take no thought for your life (soul), what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither for your body, what ye shall put on, for the soul is more than the meat and the body than the raiment. And of rest, if we speak of this temporal rest, a judgment is appointed for this also. But we speak of the world which is above, of God and angels, of watchers and holy ones of the immortal (ambrosial) food and the drink of the true vine, of raiment that endureth and groweth not old, of things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of sinful men, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Of these things do we converse and of these do we bring good tidings. Do thou therefore also believe on him that thou mayest live, and put thy trust in him, and thou shalt not die. For he is not persuaded with gifts, that thou shouldest offer them to him, neither is he in need of sacrifices, that thou shouldest sacrifice unto him. But look thou unto him, and he will not overlook thee; and turn unto him, and he will not forsake thee. For his comeliness and his beauty will make thee wholly desirous to love him: and indeed he permitteth thee not to turn thyself away.”

“And when the Apostle had said these things unto that youth, a great multitude joined themselves unto them. And the apostle looked and saw them raising themselves on high that they might see him, and they were going up into high places; and the apostle said unto them: Ye men that are come unto the assembly of Christ, and would believe on Jesus, take example hereby, and see that if ye be not lifted up, ye cannot see me who am little, and are not able to spy me out who am like unto you. If, then, ye cannot see me who am like you unless ye lift yourselves up a little from the earth, how can ye see him that dwelleth in the height and now is found in the depth, unless ye first lift yourselves up out of your former conversation, and your unprofitable deeds, and your desires that abide not, and the wealth that is left here, and the possession of earth that groweth old, and the raiment that corrupteth, and the beauty that waxeth old and vanisheth away, and yet more out of the whole body wherein all these things are stored up, and which groweth old and becometh dust, returning unto its own nature? For it is the body which maintaineth all these things. But rather believe on our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we preach, that your hope may be in him and in him ye may have life world without end that he may become your fellow traveler in this land of error, and may be to you a harbour in this troublous sea. And he shall be to you a fountain springing up in this thirsty land and a chamber fill of food in this place of them that hunger, and a rest unto your souls, yea, and a physician for your bodies.”

“Then the multitude of them that were gathered together hearing these things wept, and said unto the

Apostle: O, man of God, the God whom thou preacheest, we dare not say that we are his, for the works which we have done are alien unto him and not pleasing to him; but if he will have compassion on us and pity us and save us, overlooking our former deeds, and will set us free from the evils which we committed being in error, and not impute them unto us nor make remembrance of our former sins, we will become his servants and will accomplish his will unto the end. And the Apostle answered them and said: He reckoneth not against you, neither taketh account of the sins which ye committed being in error, but overlooketh your transgressions which ye have done in ignorance.”

The Miracle of The Colt

As they were approaching the Port City of Periathalai, while St. Thomas speaking to the crowd, all of a sudden a colt came and stood in front of him. St. Thomas perceived the will of God and asked the colt to open his mouth and speak. And the colt spoke by the power of God and said: “O Apostle of the Most High! You have come here that the people in the land of the Indians may find the true light and life everlasting. Mount and sit upon me and rest yourself until you enter into the City.”

The Apostle mounted and sat upon the colt, and the multitude followed him before and after. When they reached the City gate, the Saint dismounted from the colt, and bade him go on his way. But the colt fell at the feet of the Apostle and died.

Thus it was God’s will that an animal came to declare

St. Thomas as the Apostle who brought Salvation to the land of the Indians, and to teach us a lesson how good it is to die at the service of the Apostle of the Most high.

A graphic description of this miracle is found in the Acts of Thomas as follows.

The Fourth Act: Concerning the Colt. (No. 39 to 41)

“And while the Apostle yet stood in the highway and spake with the multitude, A she ass’s colt came and stood before him (Syr. adds, And Judas said: It is not without the direction of God that this colt has come hither. But to thee I say, O, colt that by the grace of our Lord there shall be given to thee speech before these multitudes who are standing here; and do thou say whatsoever thou wilt, that they may believe in the God of truth whom we preach. And the mouth of the colt was opened, and it spake by the power of our Lord and said to him) and opened its mouth and said: Thou twin of Christ, Apostle of the Most High and initiate in the hidden word of Christ who receivest his secret oracles, fellow worker with the Son of God, who being free hast become a bondman, and being sold hast brought many into liberty. Thou kinsman of the great race that hath condemned the enemy and redeemed his own, that hast become an occasion of life unto man in the land of the Indians; for thou hast come (against thy will, Syr.) unto men that were in error, and by thy appearing and thy divine words they are now turning unto the God of truth which sent thee: mount and sit upon me and repose thyself until thou enter into the city. And the Apostle answered and said: O, Jesu Christ (Son) that understandest the perfect mercy! O, tranquility and

quiet that now art spoken of (speakest, Syr.) by (among) brute beasts! O, hidden rest, that art manifested by thy working, Saviour of us and nourisher, keeping us and resting in alien bodies! O, Saviour of our souls! spring that is sweet and unfailing; fountain secure and clear and never polluted; defender and helper in the fight of thine own servants, turning away and scaring the enemy from us, that fightest in many battles for us and makest us conquerors in all; our true and undefeated champion (athlete); our holy and victorious captain: glorious and giving unto thine own a joy that never passeth away, and a relief wherein is none affliction; good shepherd that givest thyself for thine own sheep, and hast vanquished the wolf and redeemed thine own lambs and led them into a good pasture: we glorify and praise thee and thine invisible Father and thine holy spirit [and] the mother of all creation.”

“And when the Apostle had said these things, all the multitude that were there looked upon him, expecting to hear what he would answer to the colt. And the Apostle stood a long time as it were astonished, and looked up into heaven and said to the colt: Of whom art thou and to whom belongest thou? for marvelous are the things that are shown forth by thy mouth, and amazing and such as are hidden from the many. And the colt answered and said: I am of that stock that served Balaam, and thy lord also and teacher sat upon one that appertained unto me by race. And I also have now been sent to give thee rest by thy sitting upon me: and (that) I may receive (Syr. these may be confirmed in) faith, and unto me may be added that portion which now I shall receive by thy service wherewith I serve thee; and when I

have ministered unto thee, it shall be taken from me. And the Apostle said unto him: He is able who granted thee this gift, to cause it to be fulfilled unto the end in thee and in them that belong unto thee by race: for as to this mystery I am weak and powerless. And he would not sit upon him. But the colt besought and entreated him that he might be blessed of him by ministering unto him. Then the apostle mounted him and sat upon him; and they followed him, some going before and some following after, and all of them ran, desiring to see the end, and how he would dismiss the colt.”

“But when he came near to the city gates he dismounted from him, saying: Depart, and be thou kept safe where thou wert. And straightway the colt fell to the ground at the Apostle’s feet and died. And all they that were present were sorry and said to the apostle: Bring him to life and raise him up. But he answered and said unto them: I indeed am able to raise him by the name of Jesus Christ: but this is by all means expedient (or, this is by any means expedient). For he that gave him speech that he might talk was able to cause that he should not die; and I raise him not, not as being unable, but because this is that which is expedient and profitable for him. And he bade them that were present to dig a trench and bury his body and they did as they were commanded.”

Miracle of Casting the Devil out of a Woman

The Saint came into the Port City of Periathalai and saw a woman possessed with many devils. She fell on the ground and was frightfully rolling all over, crying with a loud

voice she asked the Saint: “O, Apostle of Jesus Christ! Why do you torment us? Have you come to cast us out?” Without answering the question the Apostle asked: “How many of you who dwell in this woman?” The demon answered: “Five hundred!” Immediately he ordered: “In the Name of Jesus Christ, depart from this woman, you Satan!”, and blessed her with the sign of the Cross. Hearing this, the demon left her with a loud cry: “All right I go, but I will possess another woman higher in position who is far away from here, and I shall encounter you there.”

Immediately the woman rose up and stood peacefully, praising God and thanking St. Thomas, who blessed her and said as if foretelling her future: “May the Grace of the Blessed Virgin Mary remain with you and your generations for ever.” This woman followed the saint asking for more instruction and for baptism. When the Apostle and others came back to Kanakkankuditiruppu, there appeared miraculously a spring flowing with sweet water, and with this miraculous water St. Thomas baptized the woman and named her ‘Maria Kirubai’. This miracle has been recorded by Fr. Motha Vaz in his book ‘The History of St. Thomas’ Page 7.

The miracle narrated above has been recorded in the Acts of Thomas as follows.

The Fifth Act: Concerning the Devil that took up his Abode in the Woman. (No. 42 to 50)

“And the Apostle entered into the city and all the multitude followed him. And he thought to go unto the parents of the young man whom he had made alive when he

was slain by the serpent: for they earnestly besought him to come unto them and enter into their house. But a very beautiful woman on a sudden uttered an exceeding loud cry, saying: O, Apostle of the new God that art come into India, and servant of that holy and only good God; for by thee is he preached, the Saviour of the souls that come unto him, and by thee are healed the bodies of them that are tormented by the enemy, and thou art he that is become an occasion of life unto all that turn unto him: command me to be brought before thee that I may tell thee what hath befallen me, and peradventure of thee I may have hope, and these that stand by thee may be more confident in the God whom thou preachest. For I am not a little tormented by the adversary now this five years' space [one Greek MS. And the apostle bade her come unto him, and the woman stood before him and said: I, O, servant of him that is indeed God am a woman: the rest have, As a woman] I was sitting at the first in quiet, and peace encompassed me on every side and I had no care for anything, for I took no thought for any other. And it fell out one day that as I came out from the bath there met me a man troubled and disturbed, and his voice and speech seemed to me exceeding faint and dim; and he stood before me and said: I and thou will be in one love and we will have intercourse together as a man with his wife; And I answered and said to him: I never had to do with my betrothed, for I refused to marry, and how shall I yield myself to thee that wouldest have intercourse with me in adulterous wise? And having so said, I passed on, and I said to my handmaid that was with me: Sawest thou that youth and his shamelessness, how boldly he spake with me, and had no shame? but she

said to me: I saw an old man speaking to thee. And when I was in mine house and had dined my soul suggested unto me some suspicion and especially because he was seen of me in two forms; and having this in my mind I fell asleep. He came, therefore, in that night and was joined unto me in his foul intercourse. And when it was day I saw him and fled from him, and on the night following that he came and abused me; and now as thou seest me I have spent five years being troubled by him, and he hath not departed from me. But I know and am persuaded that both devils and spirits and destroyers are subject unto thee and are filled with trembling at thy prayers: pray thou therefore for me and drive away from me the devil that ever troubleth me, that I also may be set free and be gathered unto the nature that is mine from the beginning, and receive the grace that hath been given unto my kindred.”

“And the Apostle said: O, evil that cannot be restrained! O, shamelessness of the enemy! O, envious one that art never at rest! O, hideous one that subdueth the comely! O, thou of many forms! As he will he appeareth, but his essence cannot be changed. O, the crafty and faithless one! O, the bitter tree whose fruits are like unto him! O, the devil that overcometh them that are alien to him! O, the deceit that useth impudence! O, the wickedness that creepeth like a serpent, and that is of his kindred! (Syr. wrongly adds a clause bidding the devil show himself.) And when the Apostle said this, the malicious one came and stood before him, no man seeing him save the woman and the Apostle, and with an exceeding loud voice said in the hearing of all: What have we to do with thee, thou apostle of the

Most High! What have we to do with thee, thou servant of Jesus Christ? What have we to do with thee, thou counsellor of the holy Son of God? Wherefore wilt thou destroy us, whereas our time is not yet come? Wherefore wilt thou take away our power? for unto this hour we had hope and time remaining to us. What have we to do with thee? Thou hast power over thine own, and we over ours. Wherefore wilt thou act tyrannously against us, when thou thyself teachest others not to act tyrannously? Wherefore dost thou crave other men's goods and not suffice thyself with thine own? Wherefore art thou made like unto the Son of God which hath done us wrong? for thou resemblest him altogether as if thou wert born of him. For we thought to have brought him under the yoke like as we have the rest, but he turned and made us subject unto him: for we knew him not; but he deceived us with his form of all uncomliness and his poverty and his neediness: for seeing him to be such, we thought that he was a man wearing flesh, and knew not that it is he that giveth life unto men. And he gave us power over our own, and that we should not in this present time leave them but have our walk in them: but thou wouldest get more than thy due and that which was given thee, and afflict us altogether."

"And having said this the devil wept, saying: I leave thee, my fairest consort, whom long since I found and rested in thee; I forsake thee, my sure sister, my beloved in whom I was well pleased. What I shall do I know not, or on whom I shall call that he may hear me and help me. I know what I will do: I will depart unto some place where the report of this man hath not been heard, and peradventure I shall call

thee, my beloved by another name (Syr. for thee my beloved I shall find a substitute). And he lifted up his voice and said: Abide in peace for thou hast taken refuge with one greater than I, but I will depart and seek for one like thee, and if I find her not, I will return unto thee again: for I know that whilst thou art near unto this man thou hast a refuge in him, but when he departeth thou wilt be such as thou wast before he appeared, and him thou wilt forget, and I shall have opportunity and confidence: but now I fear the name of him that hath saved thee. And having so said the devil vanished out of sight: only when he departed fire and smoke were seen there: and all that stood there were astonished.”

“And the Apostle seeing it, said unto them: This devil hath shown nought that is alien or strange to him, but his own nature, wherein also he shall be consumed, for verily the fire shall destroy him utterly and the smoke of it shall be scattered abroad. And he began to say; Jesus, the hidden mystery that hath been revealed unto us, thou art he that hast shown unto us many mysteries; thou that didst call me apart from all my fellows and spakest unto me three (one, Syr.) words wherewith I am inflamed, and am not able to speak them unto others. Jesu, man that wast slain, dead buried! Jesu, God of God, Saviour that quickenest the dead, and healest the sick! Jesu that wert in need like and savest as one that hath no need, that didst catch the fish for the breakfast and the dinner and madest all satisfied with a little bread. Jesu that didst rest from the weariness of wayfaring like a man, and walkest on the waves like a God. Jesu most high, voice arising from perfect mercy, Saviour of all, the right hand of the light, overthrowing the evil one in his own

nature, and gathering all his nature into one place; thou of many forms, that art only begotten, first-born of many brethren God of the Most High God, man despised until now (Syr. and humble). Jesu Christ that neglectest us not when we call upon thee, that art become an occasion of life unto all mankind, that for us wast judged and shut up in prison, and loosest all that are in bonds, that wast called a deceiver and redeemest thine own from error: I beseech thee for these that stand here and believe on thee, for they entreat to obtain thy gifts, having good hope in thy help, and having their refuge in thy greatness; they hold their hearing ready to listen unto the words that are spoken by us. Let thy peace come and tabernacle in them and renew them from their former deeds, and let them put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new that now is proclaimed unto them by me.”

“And he laid his hands on them and blessed them, saying; The grace Eucharist and to call upon thine holy name: come thou and communicate unto us (Syr. adds more). And he began to say: Come, O, perfect compassion, Come O, communion of the male, Come, she that knoweth the mysteries of him that is chosen, Come, she that hath part in all the combats of the noble champion (athlete), Come, the silence that revealeth the great things of the whole greatness, Come, she that manifesteth the hidden things and maketh the unspeakable things plain, the holy dove that beareth the twin young, Come, the hidden mother, Come, she that is manifest in her deeds and giveth joy and rest unto them that are joined unto her: Come and communicate with us in this Eucharist which we celebrate in thy name and in the

love-feast wherein we are gathered together at thy calling. (Syr. has other clauses and not few variants.) And having so said he marked out the cross upon the bread, and brake it, and began to distribute it. And first he gave unto the woman, saying: This shall be unto thee for remission of sins and eternal transgressions (Syr. and for the everlasting resurrection). And after her he gave unto all the others also which had received the seal (Syr. and said to them: Let this Eucharist be unto you for life and rest, and not for judgment and vengeance. And they said, Amen". Cf. 29 fin.).

The Miracle of ST. Thomas at Manappadu Cave

During his stay at Manappadu St. Thomas built a church in the spot where the flagstaff of the Holy Ghost Church stands now. Here he ordained many priests and deacons, and from here he sent them to all the places which he had already evangelized. And it is in the cave of Manappadu that the great miracle narrated by Fr. Motha Vaz happened¹ although he does not locate this miracle as happened in Manappadu. One day the Saint was saying mass for a group of people at the cave. As the faithful were receiving Holy Communion, a young man came to receive Communion. But suddenly it became impossible for him to open his mouth. Then he stretched out his hands. Immediately both of his hands became crippled and white with leprosy.

Shocked at the sight, the Apostle was bewildered and said: "Young man! The Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ heal everybody. But why this evil has happened to

you? There must be some grave reason for this. Tell me what you have done.” The young man became extremely perplexed with fear and distress. He could not speak a word, but was weeping and shedding copious tears with shame and sorrow. The whole crowd was watching with fear and trembling. St. Thomas with his thumb moistened with saliva, blessed his mouth with the sign of the Cross and said: “Young man! In the name of my Lord and my God, Open your mouth and speak!” Now with trembling voice he spoke in front of the crowd: “Two days ago I made up my mind to kill my innocent wife, due to unreasonable suspicion on her fidelity. And fully drunk, I went home and mercilessly attacked her with an iron rod and ran away. This morning when I came home I found her still gasping, and out of fear I came to hide myself in the cave.”

Saying this, the young man confessed all his sins in front of the people, and with tears he begged of the Saint and the people to pray God to pardon him. The Apostle, after absolving him from his sins, took a bucket of water from the miraculous spring of the cave, blessed it with the sign of the Cross and asked him to wash his hands in it. The young man immersed his hands into the water, and immediately his hands were healed! Then the Saint led the crowd with him to his house. Hearing the news, the whole village gathered around the house. When they opened the house, the young woman was found dead! She was very young and beautiful.

The whole crowd was weeping and the Saint also was moved with pity and tender mercy. He asked the corpse to

be brought out in front of the crowd. They brought the body out and placed it on a bed. St. Thomas stretched out his hands towards heaven and prayed in a loud voice: "Hear our humble prayer O, my Lord and my God Jesus Christ! In order that those who are gathered here may praise Thy Holy Name, and that they may attain eternal life by having confidence in Thee, give life to this dead young woman!" Then he turned to the young man and taught him: "Turn your heart to God. Place your confidence in Him. Go to your wife and say that you have killed her, but the Lord and God Jesus raises her on behalf of your faith in Him, and ask her to rise!" The young man approached the corpse and said: "O, Lord Jesus Christ! Truly I have confidence in Thee" And turning towards the Apostle he said: "O, holy Apostle! Pray for me," and then he raised his wife by her hands.

O, what a marvelous miracle! The young woman rose and stood up as if she were awake from sleep! She looked around and was surprised to see the crowd. And when she saw the Apostle, rushed to him and prostrated at his feet together with her husband, thanking him and praising God Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Saint blessed them and said: "Dear Children, God has shown you great mercy. Be happy and sin no more." All those who witnessed this miracle, believed in Jesus, received baptism and gave the Apostle plenty of offerings to be distributed to the poor.

The original narrative of this miracle, as found in the Act of Thomas, is given below;

The Sixth Act: Of the youth that murdered the Woman. (Nos 51 to 61)

“Now there was a certain youth who had wrought an abominable deed, and he came near and received of the Eucharist with his mouth: but his two hands withered up, so that he could no more put them unto his own mouth. And they that were there saw him and told the apostle what had befallen; and the apostle called him and said unto him: Tell me, my child, and be not ashamed, what was it that thou didst and camest hither? for the Eucharist of the Lord hath convicted thee. For this gift which passeth among many doth rather heal them that with faith and love draw near thereto, but thee it hath withered away; and that which is come to pass hath not befallen without some effectual cause. And the Youth, being convicted by the Eucharist of the Lord, came and fell at the apostle’s feet and besought him, saying: I have done an evil deed, yet I thought to do somewhat good. I was enamored of a woman that dwelleth at an inn without the city, and she also loved me; and when I heard of thee and believed, that thou proclaimest a living God, I came and received of thee the seal with the rest; for thou saidst: Whosoever shall partake in the polluted union, and especially in adultery, he shall not have life with the God whom I preach. Whereas therefore I loved her much, I entreated her and would have persuaded her to become my consort in chastity and pure conversation, which thou also teachest: but she would not. When, therefore, she consented not, I took a sword and slew her: for I could not endure to see her commit adultery with another man.”

“When the apostle heard this he said: O insane union how ruinest thou unto shamelessness! O unrestrained lust, how hast thou stirred up this man to do this! O work of the serpent, how art thou enraged against thine own! And the apostle bade water to be brought to him in a basin; and when the water was brought, he said: Come, ye waters from the living waters, that were sent unto us, the true from the true, the rest that was sent unto us from the rest, the power of salvation that cometh from that power which conquereth all things and subdueth them unto its own will: come and dwell in these waters, that the gift of the Holy Ghost may be perfectly consummated in them. And he said unto the youth: Go wash thy hands in these waters. And when he had washed they were restored; and the apostle said unto him: Believest thou in our Lord Jesus Christ that he is able to do all things? And he said: Though I be the least, yet I believe. But I committed this deed thinking that I was doing somewhat good: for I besought her as I told thee, but she would not obey me, to keep herself chaste.”

“And the apostle said to him: Come; let us go unto the inn where thou didst commit this deed. And the youth went before the apostle in the way, and when they came to the inn they found her lying dead. And the apostle when he saw her was sorry, for she was a comely girl. And he commanded her to be brought into the midst of the inn: and they laid her on a bed and brought her forth and set her down in the midst of the court of the inn. And the apostle laid his hand upon her and began to say: Jesu, who always showest thyself unto us; for this is thy will, that we should at all times seek thee, and thyself hast given us this power, to

ask and to receive, and hast not only permitted this, but hast taught us to pray: who art not seen of our bodily eyes, but art never hidden from the eyes of our soul, and in thine aspect art concealed, but in thy works art manifested unto us: and in thy many acts we have known thee so far as we are able, and thyself hast given us thy gifts without measure, saying: Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you: we beseech thee, therefore, having the fear (suspicion) of our sins; and we ask of thee, not riches, not gold, not silver, not possessions, not aught else of the things which come of the earth and return again unto the earth; but this we ask of thee and entreat, that in thine holy name thou wouldest raise up the woman that lieth here, by thy power, to the glory and faith of them that stand by.”

“And he said unto the youth (Syr. ‘Stretch thy mind towards our Lord,’ and he signed him with the cross), having signed (sealed) him: Go and take hold on her hand and say unto her: I with my hands slew thee with iron, and with my hands in the faith of Jesus I raise thee up. So the youth went to her and stood by her, saying: I have believed in thee, Christ Jesu. And he looked unto Judas Thomas the apostle and said to him: Pray for me that my Lord may come to my help, whom I also call upon. And he laid his hand upon her hand and said: Come, Lord Jesu Christ: unto her grant thou life and unto me the earnest of faith in thee. And straightway as he drew her hand she sprang up and sat up, looking upon the great company that stood by. And she saw the apostle also standing over against her, and leaving the bed she leapt forth and fell at his feet and caught hold on his raiment,

saying: I beseech thee, my lord where is that other that was with thee, who left me not to remain in that fearful and cruel place, but delivered me unto thee, saying: Take thou this woman, that she may be made perfect, and hereafter be gathered into her place?”

“And the apostle said unto her: Relate unto us where thou hast been. And she answered: Dost thou who wast with me and unto whom I was delivered desire to hear? And she began to say: [This description of hell-torments is largely derived from the Apocalypse of Peter] A man took me who was hateful to look upon altogether black and his raiment exceedingly foul, and took me away to a place wherein were many pits (chasms), and a great stench and hateful odour issued thence. And he caused me to look into every pit, and I saw in the (first) pit flaming fire and wheels of fire ran round there, and souls were hanged upon those wheels, and were dashed (broken) against each other; and very great crying and howling was there, and there was none to deliver. And that man said to me: These souls are of thy tribe, and when the number of their days is accomplished (lit. in the days of the number) they are (were) delivered unto torment and affliction, and then are others brought in, in their stead, and likewise these into another place. These are they that have reversed the intercourse of male and female. And I looked and saw infants heaped one upon another and struggling with each other as they lay on them. And he answered and said to me: These are the children of those others, and therefore are they set here for a testimony against them. (Syr. omits this clause of the children, and lengthens and dilutes the preceding speech.)”

“And he took me unto another pit, and I stooped and looked and saw mire and worms welling up, and souls wallowing there, and a great gnashing of teeth was heard thence from them. And that man said unto me: These are the souls of women which forsook their husbands and committed adultery with others, and are brought into this torment. Another pit he showed me where into I stooped and looked and saw souls hanging, some by the tongue, some by the hair, some by the hands, and some head downward by the feet, and tormented (smoked) with smoke and brimstone; concerning whom that man that was with me answered me: The souls which are hanged by the tongue are slanderers, that uttered lying and shameful words, and were not ashamed, and they that are hanged by the hair are unblushing ones which had no modesty and went about in the world bareheaded; and they that are hanged by the hands, these are they that took away and stole other men’s goods, and never gave aught to the needy nor helped the afflicted, but did so, desiring to take all, and had no thought at all of justice or of the law; and they that hang upside down by the feet, these are they that lightly and readily ran in evil ways and disorderly paths, not visiting the sick nor escorting them that depart this life, and therefore each and every soul receiveth that which was done by it. (Syr. omits almost the whole section.)”

“Again he took me and showed me a cave exceeding dark, breathing out a great stench, and many souls were looking out desiring to get somewhat of the air, but their keepers suffered them not to look forth. And he that was with me said: This is the prison of those souls which thou

sawest: for when they have fulfilled their torments for that which each did, thereafter do others succeed them: and there be some that are wholly consumed and (some, Syr.) that are delivered over unto other torments. And they that kept the souls which were in the dark cave said unto the man that had taken me: Give her unto us that we may bring her in unto the rest until the time cometh for her to be delivered unto torment. But he answered them: I give her not unto you, for I fear him that delivered her to me: for I was not charged to leave her here, but I take her back with me until I shall receive order concerning her. And he took me and brought me unto another place wherein were men being sharply tormented (Syr. where men were). And he that was like unto thee took me and delivered me to thee, saying thus to thee: Take her, for she is one of the sheep that have gone astray. And I was taken by thee, and now am I before thee. I beseech thee, therefore, and supplicate that I may not depart unto those places of punishment which I have seen.”

“And the apostle said: Ye have heard what this woman hath related: and there are not these torments only, but others also, worse than these; and ye, if ye turn not unto this God whom I preach, and abstain from your former works and the deeds which ye committed without knowledge, shall have your end in those torments. Believe therefore on Christ Jesus, and he will forgive you the sins ye have committed hitherto, and will cleanse you from all your bodily lusts that abide on the earth, and will heal you of all your trespasses which follow you and depart with you and are found upon (before) you. Put off therefore every one of you the old man, and put on the new, and forsake your former walk and

conversation; and let them that stole steal no more, but live by labouring and working; and let the adulterous no more fornicate, lest they deliver themselves unto eternal torment; for adultery is before God exceeding evil beyond other sins. And put away from you covetousness and lying and drunkenness and slandering, and render not evil for evil: for all these things are strange and alien unto the God who is preached by me: but rather walk ye in faith and meekness and holiness and hope, wherein God delighteth, that ye may become his own, expecting of him the gifts which some few only do receive.”

“All the people therefore believed and gave their souls obediently unto the living God and Christ Jesus, rejoicing in the blessed works of the Most High and in his holy service. And they brought much money for the service of the widows: for the apostle had them gathered together in the cities, and unto all of them he sent provision by his own ministers (deacons), both clothes and nourishment. And he himself ceased not preaching and speaking to them and showing that this is Jesus Christ whom the scriptures proclaimed, who is come and was crucified, and raised the third day from the dead. And next he showed them plainly, beginning from the prophets, the things concerning the Christ, that it was necessary that he should come, and that in him should be accomplished all things that were foretold of him. And the fame of him went forth into all the cities and countries, and all that had sick or them that were oppressed by unclean spirits brought them, and some they laid in the way whereby he should pass, and he healed them all by the power of the Lord. Then all that were healed by him said with one accord:

Glory be to thee, Jesu, who hast granted us all alike healing through thy servant and Apostle Thomas. And now being whole and rejoicing, we beseech thee that we may be of thy flock, and be numbered among thy sheep; receive us therefore, Lord, and impute not unto us our transgressions and our former faults which we committed being in ignorance.”

“And the Apostle said: Glory be to the only-begotten of the Father! Glory be to the first-born of many brethren! Glory be to thee, the defender and helper of them that come unto thy refuge! that sleepest not, and awakest them that are asleep that livest and givest life to them that lie in death! O, God Jesu Christ, Son of the living God, redeemer and helper, refuge and rest of all that are weary (labour) in thy work, giver of healing to them that for thy name s sake bear the burden and heat of the day: we give thanks for (to) the gifts that are given us of thee and granted us by thy help and thy dispensation that cometh unto us from thee.”

“Perfect thou therefore these things in us unto the end that we may have the boldness that is in thee: look upon us for thy sake have we forsaken our homes and our parents, and for thy sake have we gladly and willingly become strangers: look upon us, Lord, for we have forsaken our own possessions for thy sake, that we might gain thee the possession that cannot be taken away: look upon us, Lord, for we have forsaken them that belong unto us by race, that we might be joined unto thy Kinship: look upon us, Lord, that have forsaken our fathers and mothers and fosters, that we might behold thy Father, and be satisfied with his divine

food: look upon us, Lord, for for thy sake have we forsaken our bodily consorts and our earthly fruits, that we might be partakers in that enduring and true fellowship, and bring forth true fruits, whose nature is from above, which no man can take from us, with whom we shall abide and who shall abide with us.”

Preaching at Nilapparai -Kurusumalai

After converting a great multitude of people in Naaraankottai, St. Thomas once again started his journey to Thiruvithankodu. Now the people began to follow him in great number to hear his preaching and witness his miracles. They carried with them all kinds of sick people to be cured by the Apostle. Thus, followed by a great multitude, he reached the foot of Kanjomali, now called **Kurusumalai at Nilapparai**. He wanted to stay there for a few days and preach the Gospel to the multitude which followed him there. This place, as mentioned earlier, was a very pleasant site in between two streams, with plenty of trees and fresh air. The Kurusumalai Cave of Nilapparai was the best platform for St. Thomas to preach to the multitude. A huge vertical rock on the western side of the cave served as an echoing device for his voice to be amplified and to reach even the last one in the crowd. Like Our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Thomas was delivering his **‘Sermon on the Mount’** at Nilapparai Kurusumalai on that day to more than ten thousand People.

This account and what follows has been recorded by Fr. MothaVaz in his book ‘The History of St. Thomas’ Pages

15 and 16, though he has made a geographical blunder in locating Kanjomalai somewhere near Kasi (Banares?).

At the end of the sermon He assembled all that were sick. Raising his eyes towards heaven and spreading his hands over them he prayed: “My Lord and My God Jesus Christ! Thou hast said that Thou wouldst grant us whatever we ask in Thy Name. Behold these miserable people and have mercy on them. I humbly pray that Thou, Jesus Christ the Son of God may grant sight for the blind, hearing for the deaf and healing for all those who are afflicted with various illnesses so that they may all believe in the Name of the Eternal and One God in Three Persons Father, Son and the Holy Ghost.” To this prayer the whole crowd answered: “Amen.”



Nilapparai -Kurisumalai

All of a sudden, the crowd witnessed a great thunder and lightning on the sky! All fell prostrate on the ground and became silent. The Apostle now raised his voice and said: "Rise up my children! God had mercy on you and has healed you all. Let us thank the Lord our God Jesus Christ for his kindness." All rose up; the sick found themselves cured and the unbelievers believed in Jesus Christ. St. Thomas instructed them for seven days and baptised them all. The number of those baptised, excepting the women and the children were nine thousand. (Fr. Mothavaz, Ibid Page 15, 16).

Actually the location of Nilapparai Kurusumalai (Kanjomalai) is in the Parish of Azhagappapuram (Tuticorin Diocese), Kanyakumari District, Tamilnadu. St. Thomas found this place with a natural rock cave as a resort or resting place, because of its natural beauty and convenience on his journey to and from Kanakkankudiyiruppu and Thiruvithaankodu. These two towns were the capital cities of the two Kingdoms namely of Maanaveera Naadu (from Thiruchendur to Cape Comerin) and Venaadu (from Quilon to Cape Comerin). Kanjomalai, now called 'Barvathaa Malai' is located in between Marunthuvaazh Malai (Pazhaiya Ettam Madam) and Kaattaadi Malai (Aralvaimozhy or Aaraam Puzhai) of the Western Ghats. From the place where St. Thomas was delivering his sermon on the mount, one could see clearly the rock on which he had erected a pillar at Cape Comerin.

The Miracle at Thiruvithankodu

After the Sermon on the Mount at Nilapparai, St.

Thomas went to Thiruvithankodu, where he met the King Elaya Raja and asked for a land to build a church. At the order of the King, a plot of twenty one cents was allotted for the construction of the church. According to Professor George Mathew in his Legends about the 'First Converts' of St. Thomas, this plot allotted for the church was a forest like place believed to be haunted by evil spirits. Some wood cutters were employed to remove the trees and clean the ground where the Saint wanted to build the church. The ancient people used to say that when sandalwood trees were cut, astonishingly blood was flowing out of them! At this strange phenomenon, the wood cutters were frightened, and one after another fell to the ground fainted. All those who attempted to cut the trees, met with the same fate. The relatives and friends of the woodcutters rushed to the spot and found them all dead.

St. Thomas came to the venue, placed his hands on them and prayed: "Omnipotent God, Father of my Lord and





my God Jesus Christ! Creator of all men and Giver of life, have mercy on these Thy servants and give them life and raise them alive, so that they may praise Thee by bearing living testimonies to Thy Son and Our Lord Jesus Christ in this Kingdom, so that the place of worship which we are going to build on this spot may be a monument of Thy Kingdom for time immemorial - Amen.” Immediately after this prayer, to the great surprise of all gathered there, the dead persons came back to life! Now the Saint himself took up the axe and cut down a tree. As the tree was falling, three evil spirits appeared in the form of women creating a big noise, and disappeared into three different directions. St. Thomas started the construction of the Church and finished it in the year 36 A.D. He offered Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and administered the Sacraments in this church.²

About one kilometer south of this church, St. Thomas built two cave tombs for him and for his priests, one of which can be seen even now in the present Parish church of “Peria Nayagi Matha Kovil.” The converts of St. Thomas, who were called “Tharisayakkanmar” were settled in two streets



situated in between the church and the tombs built by the Saint. This place is even today known by the name “Thariya Theru” From these Tharsayakkanmar, St. Thomas ordained two priests called Yakoob Kasseessa and Alexander Kasseessa, who after their death were buried in the tombs built by St. Thomas. The rock materials and fashion of these tombs resemble those of the cave cells of Thiruchendur and Manappadu, built by St. Thomas.³

On the spot where St. Thomas had built the church, four centuries later a certain King of Venaadu built the present church. This King wanted to build in Thiruvithancode three places of worship simultaneously i.e., the Palace temple (for Hindus), the ancient Mosque (for Muslims) and the church of St. Thomas (for Christians). This church was constructed with pillars and walls in granite



stones, and with a flat roof of stones. The walls are of 2.5 ft thick and have a dimension of 45 ft length and 16 ft width. The sculptural engravings are at par with the palace at Padmanabhapuram in quality and antiquity. In 1123 the church was

renovated, the altar was extended and the stone roof was replaced by a Kerala style tiled roof as it appears today.⁴

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1. Fr. Motha Vaz, *The History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India*, Madras, Saint Thomas Mount, 1925, pp. 17, 18, 19, 20.
 2. George Mathew and K.Chandy, *St. Mary's Syrian Church*, p. 19.
 3. *Ibid.*
 4. *Ibid* at pp. 13, 14, 15.

CHAPTER NINE



THE MONUMENTS OF ST. THOMAS DURING HIS FIRST MISSION IN SOUTH INDIA

After composing and presenting the Deiva Nool (Doctrines of St. Thomas), the Saint began his preaching tour in the towns and villages of the South East Coast. This time he went up to Tuticorin (Thoothukudi), and thence to Cape Comerin (Kanyakumari). In those days, Korkai was the biggest sea Port in the East Coast of the Pandian Kingdom. Korkai and Kayal (now Palayakayal) were the Ports situated where the River Thaamira Porunai (now called “Thamirabarani”) reached the sea. Since this part of the South Pandian Kingdom was more fertile than other parts of Maanaveera Naadu, this part of the Kingdom to which Korkai was the Capital city, was called Maanaveera Vazhanaadu. Thus in the South East Coast, the important towns and villages were: Korkai, Kayal, Kombuthurai and Thiruchendur

in the Maanaveera Vazhanaadu; Manapadu, Periathlai, Kooduthalai and Ovari in the Maanaveera Naadu; and Muttappathi (now Chinna Muttam) and Cape Comerin (Kanyakumari) in the Chera Naadu. Let us now see how St. Thomas preached Christianity in these places and established the Monuments of his First Mission.

Jesu Kovil and Thomaiyar Kovil

Alex C. Muthiah states: “Just as those converted by St. Thomas in the South West Coast, so those converted by him in the Maanaveera Naadu (which is in the South East Coast) have an equal right to be called St. Thomas’ Christians.”¹ This shows that St. Thomas has evangelised not only in the South West Coast, but also in the South East Coast. In this tour of evangelisation, St. Thomas visited first Korkai which was famous for Pearl and Sangu fishing, and also famous for manufacturing bracelets and garlands out of Sangu and precious ornaments of pearls. Groups of Westerners including Jews had their settlements in and around Korkai.² These settlements must have attracted the Apostle, and therefore he also stayed there and preached the gospel. There were two islands, one near the Port of Kayal and another near the Port of Korkai, both inhabited by fishermen of Pearl and Sangu. St. Thomas converted the whole population of these two islands. And as the marks of this evangelisation of the Apostle, we can see even now the church of “Jesu Kovil” near the present Palayakayal and the “Thomaiyarkovil” north side of the present Punnaikayal. Actually these two churches which attract crowds of pilgrims throughout the year even now are the Sacred Monuments of

St. Thomas Evangelisation erected in the Srivaikuntam Taluk during his First Mission.

The Cave cells of Thiruchendur and Manappadu

Secondly, The Apostle took Manappadu as his centre, and from there he was going to Kombuthurai and Thiruchendur in the north and to Periathalai, Kooduthalai and Ovari in the south. During this tour of evangelisation in Thiruchendur Taluk, St. Thomas had founded some cave like hermitages for his followers, namely the priests, deacons, lay brothers and catechists to make solitary or group meditations and retreats. For, these kinds of spiritual exercises were necessary for them and for him too to fight against the temptations of the world, of the devil and of the flesh. Some of these followers like Xantipus (King Gondophernes) and Paul (King Gaatthiappar) in their old age chose to remain in these cave cells as Sanyasis or religious monks.

Therefore St. Thomas founded for him and for his priests several cave cells in the sea shore villages of Thiruchendur and Manappadu, either as places for prayer and meditation or for their own tombs. It is to be noted that cremation was a scandal to the Jews who had their tombs cut on rocks (Ref. Lk. 23: 53 & Jn. 11: 38). So, for fear of being cremated, in accordance with the local custom, St. Thomas (a Jew) and his followers were making ready-made tombs built or cut on rocks. The Manappadu cave was mostly used by the Apostle as a place of prayer and as his dwelling place. And because he wanted to reside there, he had dug a

well with a miraculous spring of water inside the cave itself. Even now we can find this well and taste its sweet spring water.



H. Sarkar M.A.,
Superintending
Archeologist of the
Archeological Survey
of India in his
Research Article on “A
Pandia Rock-Cut Cave
at Manappadu on
Pearl Fishery Coast”

says that this cave was “...intended to be used as a residential cave unlike those excavated in the granite rock. ...it has a circular well (diam. 3ft.3in. internally) at the north-eastern corner of the hall or mandapa, a characteristic very much unusual in the rock-cut tradition of the Pallavas and the Pandias.”³

St. Thomas must have lived in this Cave for some years and from there he must have written letters to the various Churches to be read as his epistles. Herman D’Souza says: “It is interesting to note that St. Thomas, as did some of the other Apostles, wrote from India letters which were read in the various Churches where they were received.” He proves this statement by referring to the Syriac work entitled “The Doctrine of the Apostles” and quotes its passages: “After the death of the Apostles, there were Guides and Rulers in the Churches; and whatever the Apostles communicated to them, and (whatever) they had received from them, they

taught to the multitudes...also what James had written from Jerusalem and Simon from the City of Rome ...and Judas Thomas from India, that the epistle of an Apostle might be received and read in the Churches in every place.”⁴ Among his doctrines and letters St. Thomas must have certainly quoted his Deiva Nool also, if not passages translated to form part of his letters.

These cave cells, later in the seventh or ninth centuries, were occupied by some Saivite Sanysis, and then some of the caves were destroyed by sand and sea, and some others are now inside



the Murugan Temple at Thiruchendur. The Rock-Cut cave of Manappadu with the drinking water well in it was once again converted into a Catholic church at the time of St. Francis Xavier. H. Sarkar M.A. again says: “It is not unlikely that these caves were used by the Saiva saints (sanyasis). ...An inscribed stone tablet outside, records in English and Tamil that, ‘This cave (once the dwelling of a Saivite Sanyasi) has been sanctified by the prayers and penances of St. Francis Xavier.’ It is followed by the Tamil translation of the English text. The last line gives the date 1542-52, evidently the period of St. Xavier’s stay in that area.”⁵.

H. Sarkar M.A. describes as follows: “The Cave facing eastward is a modest excavation with its opening towards

the sea. Excavated to a depth of 32 ft., it is, in the main a pillared hall, measuring 16ft. 4 in x 17 ft. 6 in., having a constricted vestibule (5ft. 6in. x 8ft. 6in.), fronted by a porch (12ft. in breadth) all placed axially.....on the whole the cave appears to be a simple excavation without any shrine cell or embellishments, and in all probability, intended to be used as a residential cave unlike those excavated in the granite rock (Cave Temples)." And he continues, "In the absence of any foundation inscription it is difficult to date the rock-cut cave at Manappadu. Further, its transformation into a Roman Catholic Church has also made the dating on stylistic groups difficult. The excavation in the hardened sandstone and its use as a monk-cell are factors that may connect the Manappadu cave, chronologically and architecturally, with the Thiruchendur ones....although no details in respect of types and materials of structure of any period are available." Then he concludes, "It is evident from the foregoing that the sandstone caves at Thiruchendur along with the rock excavation at Manappadu constitute a distinct group that might have come into existence, around a sacred spot, as cave resorts of the Sanyasis by about the first half of the ninth century, if not earlier. Of these caves, the one at Manappadu appears to be the most impressive, notwithstanding the fact that it hardly bears any similarity with the granite cave temples of the Pandia Country." ⁶

In the above said official survey, it is clear that these cave cells are not temple caves, and that they possibly belong to a distinct group of caves founded by St. Thomas as cave resorts of Sanyasis, belonging to the first half, not of the seventh or ninth century, but of a much earlier period, i.e.

the first century, which was evidently the period of St. Thomas' stay in that area.

Nilapparai Kurisumalai Cave Memorial

Nilappaarai Kurusumalai is a place of importance. There is a cave in which a perennial stream of drinking water was flowing. St. Thomas found this place suitable for rest, contemplation and also a platform to preach to the people gathered around him. He made use of this cave for his contemplation on his knees, so much that the in prints of his knees can be seen there. George the Nestorian visited this place and planted a stone cross in front of the cave. People possessed of devils were healed and crowds of people made pilgrimage to this cave shrine throughout the year. Recently this shrine was developed in to a meditation center and an official shrine of regular devotion of St. Thomas.

Fr. Selva George, who gave shape to this Kurusu Malai in our times as a pilgrim center, testifies the above facts by the following document which is kept in the archives of the author;

Date: 28 July 2011

St. Thomas who guided me with Divine Inspiration

The word of God: "A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid" (Mt. 5:14) has been fulfilled in this Nilappaarai Kurusu Malai. I would like to narrate here an extra ordinary experience granted to me when I was the Parish Priest (from 1996 to 2001) at Azhagappapuram in Kanyakumari District.

Nilappaarai a small village of natural beauty, the substation of Azhagappapuram Parish was also called Thirumoola Nagar. In this village there was a church of St. George and a shrine of St. Thomas the Apostle. Every Friday

crowds of people come and stay here and obtain many graces. Even from Kerala people come and stay several days and go healed from incurable diseases. To this we testify as eye witnesses.



From the church of Thirumoola Nagar while walking for one kilo meter through a narrow path towards the foot of the mountain, there appears a cave in the Nilappaarai Kurusu Malai.



When I went to visit that place for the first time, I felt as if going through a wild forest. The whole area was covered with thick

bushes of thorns and thistles. To reach Kurusu Malai one should pass through three big elephant hauls created by heavy flow of water from the mountain.

Wonderful was that cave of Kurusu Malai. By the side of it was a clean water spring which was pointing out as it were the mountain at Lourdes. Inside the cave can be seen the knee prints caused by St. Thomas' stay for a long time in prayer and meditation. When I was contemplating on an inspiration in me to give a shape to this living mountain, a widow from the neighbouring village approached me with her children and asked me permission to erect a tiled shed near that cave for the pilgrims to come and stay. Even after my hesitation regarding the inconvenience of the pathway, the lady went away saying: "St. Thomas who appeared to me will help". Within a month's time she finished building that Shed. What a wonder! What a joy!

Usually, I go to this Cave only in the evening hours. But one Sunday at 2-30 pm, surprisingly enough I was urged by an inspiration to go to Kurusu Malai. Immediately I started and reached there. What was going on there infuriated me. Three young men who were grazing their cattle there had broken the shed built by the widow, and had applied human waste on the water pump which was supplying fresh and sweet drinking water; and had damaged the pipes too.

When I reported this to the village people they brought the three persons, and we took them and the cattle to the village. Immediately those who were related to the event asked pardon and in recompense paid Rs. 10,000.

In the homes of the culprits, animals began to die one after another. And they themselves testified that after offering some chicks and so on to St. Thomas as an act of reparation, the misfortune ended. From that time onwards the cattle stopped coming there and the place became as holy as to accommodate only the pilgrims.

One day a young man due to family problem, with an intention of committing suicide, took 20 pain killer tablets in a small bottle and poison, came to Kurusu Malai at 9 pm, swallowed 15 tablets, drank the poison and stretched himself down at the cave. At 3 am a man dressed in white saved him, left him at home and disappeared. The people at home took him to be treated in the hospital and saved his life. He is still bearing testimony of this fact.

Consequently, a lady called Theresammal as a thanksgiving for her election as Panchayat President obtained the three-phase electric connection without any expense. And Mr. Thalavoy Sundaram M.P. the very next year of making road arrangement to the cave became a minister.

People came in crowds to remove the thorns and thistles and without any expense planted thousands of useful trees.

Two overhead water tanks, meditation hall, house for the priest, flag staff, a grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, 14 shrines of the way of the cross and a cave of Our Lord's grave, an eight feet high statue of St. Thomas on the top of the mountain, all these were constructed within two and a half

years. This shows that God has stationed St. Thomas as a living Apostle in Nilappaarai Kurusu Malai. This is our profound faith.

From that day to this day I am witnessing, and the people are witnessing there what St. Paul has said with divine inspiration: In accordance with the increase of faith of the people, God's grace will abound. (Cfr. Rom. 5: 2, 20)

Fr. T. Selva George

Thiruvithankodu Cave

Professor Rev. Dr. Xavier Koodappuzha speaks in the documentary film “Ezharappallikal” that there was a tradition even before St. Thomas came to Kerala (in 52 A.D.), which claims that the Sanyasi St. Thomas went earlier to the other places in the south countries and had preached Christianity at Travancore in Kanyakumari district.⁷

Interestingly enough, George Moraes quotes T. K. Joseph who in his article “Kerala Studies” speaks of one such cave cell built by St. Thomas for him and for his priests also at Thiruvithankodu. It is said that “In about 1924 an old parishioner of the Jacobite Syrian Church at Thiruvancodu in south Travancore (the half-





church among the 7 ½ Churches of St. Thomas) said that there was a tradition that the **unusually broad tomb** in the southern yard of the church was built by St. Thomas for himself and a priest of his.”⁸ This tomb can be seen even now inside the Catholic

Church (Peria Nayagi Matha Kovil) in the southern yard of the St. Mary’s Syrian Orthodox Church at Thiruvithaankodu.

This cave of St. Thomas later (A.D.1550 to 1590) became the source of excavating the historical tunnel way between Thiruvithankodu and Padmanabhapuram palace. No one can deny the existence of this “three kilo meter long” cave tunnel which connects Thiruvithankodu “Peria Naayagi Matha Kovil” and Padmanabhapuram Palace. The inhabitants of the place are well aware of this fact. On 13th June 2004 when the author of this treatise had an interview with Mr. Paul a local historian, Mr. Paul admitted that when he was a child he used to enter into the cave and play together with other local children. And he said that when a man ventured to walk through the tunnel, he disappeared and never came back! And when a dog was sent, the same result occurred. Therefore the entrance of the tunnel was temporarily closed with stones and cement. And the cave still remains as you see in the Picture.

Actually the Kings of Travancore had divided the province of Venadu into several Taluks (Kodu) and each Taluk was entrusted to a petit king. This fact (The Raja's residence having the



cave inside converted into the church of Peria Nayagi Matha) is confirmed by A.M. Stanislaus when he says: "It is said that with Rama Varma (A. D. 1545 to 1556) certain Puthala Kerala Varma and Unni Kerala Varma were ruling at the same time in different places." ⁹ For these petit Rajas they had built residences in each Taluk with secret cells for arms and ammunitions. One such residence was built at Thiruvithankodu also with St. Thomas' cave cell in it. This residence has been converted into the present "Peria Nayagi Kovil."

Historical data reveal that this Tunnel way had been constructed during the period of Rama Varma (A.D. 1545 to 1556) and Unni Kerala Varma (1556 to 1595). The inscriptions at the Padmanabhpuram Palace say that it was constructed from A.D. 1550 to 1590. And the website page on the Historical Monuments of Travancore testifies that "the Padmanabhapuram Palace is a 16th century marvel"¹⁰ It is a wide spread understanding that during the reign of the above mentioned petit Rajas, while wars broke out due to the attack by the fleet of the Vijayanagar Kingdom in 1558,

and due to the internal strife caused by Apputhambi and Ramanthambi together with Ettuveettu Pillaimar during the reign of Marthanda Varma (A.D.1729 to 1758), it is this tunnel way that helped them to escape as being a war time strategy for their victory.

International Monument of St. Thomas at Thiruvithamcode

St. Thomas International Pilgrim Centre, Thiruvithamcode, Kanyakumari Tamil Nadu.¹¹ The Historic Thiruvithamcode Church was built by St. Thomas, the Apostle of India in 63AD (36 A.D?) in the name of the Holy Mother St. Mary. This is believed to be one of the oldest church structures in the world. (See Chapter 8)



Footprint of St. Thomas on Matha Malai at Kappiyara

In between Thiruvithankodu and Karungal six kilo meters west of Thiruvithankodu at Kappiyara there is a hill called Matha Malai. St. Thomas during his stay in and around Thiruvithankodu, chiefly when the construction of the Ezharaippalli was under way, The Apostle used to spend the night and the morning hours in a small hut on top of this hill. There on the top of a rock he would spend the morning hours meditating and reciting his divine office. On that spot



two stones served him as a throne. Sitting on the one and resting the right foot on the other, he folded his left leg over the knee of the right leg. Thus seated he used to read, write and meditate for a long time even under the sun. Cool breeze from the sea of the west coast made this spot very pleasant to sit and meditate.



As St. Thomas was accustomed to sit on this rock, the foot print of his right leg has been in printed on the rock. Rev. Thirumeni Varghese a priest of the Syro -Malabar Rite has traced out the details of this spot and a cave in which Our Lady appeared several times to St. Thomas. These details, he says, are found in the archives of the Latin Seminary in Thiruvananthapuram Archdiocese where he studied. People around the locality have a great veneration to this sacred place. On every Good Friday the devotees climb on the hill praying the way of the cross and kissing the foot print of St. Thomas the Apostle to this day.

The Pillar of St. Thomas at Kanyakumari

By now the name and fame of the Apostle began to spread like wild fire all over the neighbouring countries. A group of people came from Cape Comerin (Kanyakumari) to invite the Saint to their country. Cape Comerin at that time was called Muttapathy and was situated at the present Chinna Muttam or Kumari Muttam. The present Cape Comerin at that time was an uninhabited hill, from which the sea was then half a league (about one kilometer) distant.¹² Muttapathy was well inhabited by a fishermen population. St. Thomas came to Muttapathy, began to preach the gospel and baptized all of them in front of the Cross he erected there, which can be seen even today. Then the Apostle built a church there. Doctor V. Lawrence writes: "Kanyakumari was not only the confluence of seas but also the meeting ground.....of early Christianity that was associated with St. Thomas," and he admits that in Kottar also there were Christians who have remained as such from the time of St. Thomas. And he also speaks about the church of St. Thomas (Thoma Palli) at Kumari Muttam near Cape Comerin, quoting Diego Gonsalves who wrote the first 'History' of Malabar.¹³

Thus it was fulfilled in Muttapathy (Cape Comerin) in the first mission of St. Thomas what Herman D'Souza quotes as said in "The Doctrine of the Apostles": "India and all its own countries and those bordering on it (Ceylon), even to the farthest sea (Indian Ocean), received the Apostles' Hand of Priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was Guide and Ruler in the church which he built there and ministered there."¹⁴

This Church built by the Apostle was continually rebuilt and maintained by the subsequent missionaries. Duarte Barbosa who came to India around 1500 A.D. and remained there for sixteen years, wrote by the year 1517: "Near this Cape Comerin is an old church of Christians which was founded by Armenians, who still have it and celebrate Christian masses within it and have Cross on the altars." There are two stone inscriptions, of which one contains the edict (A.D. 1494) of the local ruler authorizing that from the income collected from the fishermen, lights have to be kept burning in this church; and the other inscription was of the local king Muttampiranar, after whose name this place got the name "Muttam" or "Muttapathi."¹⁵

There is a tradition backed by the historians that on the top most part of the hill of Cape Comerin St. Thomas had erected a stone Pillar with a Cross on the top in full view of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). George Moraes writes: "There stood upon the rocks near the sea-shore, a stone pillar, which according to popular belief, had been erected by St. Thomas himself."¹⁶ The historians are confused in the demarcation of the place of this Pillar of St. Thomas. Because there were three pillars, erected in different places, by different persons and in different periods. The first was erected in Cape Comerin by the Apostle St. Thomas about the year 35 A.D. The second one by John Marignoli at Covalam near Cape Comerin in the year 1348 A.D and the third one by the Portuguese missionaries at Quilon in the year 1502 A.D. The confusion was also due to the naming of the places where these pillars were erected. For example the names like Covalam, Caulam, Caulan or Quilon. In the first century

Cape Comerin and Covalam were one place with two hills and without any inhabitants.

Speaking of this pillar of St. Thomas, Fr. A. Monserrate in his letter to the General of the Society of Jesus, dated January 12, 1579 observes: "The Tradition is, and it is the common saying, that St. Thomas erected at Caulan (Covalam or Cape Comerin) a pillar (marco) on some stones, from which the sea was then about half a league distant, while saying (prophesying) that, when the sea should reach that pillar, white Christians would come, who would reduce them (instruct them) to following the law (religion) which he was preaching."¹⁷

John Gilmary Shea writes: "Before he died in Meliapour, St. Thomas erected a very large cross and predicted to the people that when the sea would advance to the very foot of that cross, God would send them, from a far-distant land, white men who would preach to them the same doctrine he had taught them. This prophecy was fulfilled when the Portuguese arrived in the region, and found that the ocean had advanced so far as to be truly at the foot of the cross."¹⁸

Herman D'souza, getting the mistaken idea from authors like that of the above quoted materials, tries to locate this pillar at the city of Mylapore, but by giving the king's name of the locality as Gandhappar Raja, he assures without his knowledge that the Pillar was erected within the territories of the Southern Pandian Kingdoms. He writes as follows: "There is a tradition that the sinking of Mylapore

was prophesied by St. Thomas. He had been allowed by the local king, probably Kandappa Rajah, to build a church in the locality. On a certain occasion, the Apostle is believed to have said that when the sea should come near his Beth (abode), a western nation would come preaching the same doctrines as he himself taught.”¹⁹ The locality of Gandhappar Raja definitely not being Mylapore but the province between Thiruchendur and Kanyakumari, it becomes certain that the Pillar of St. Thomas was erected not in Mylapore but in Kanyakumari.

Fr. Hosten says: “The same thing was said for St. Thomas at Mylapore though we have no allusion to the existence of such a pillar close to the church of the saint’s tomb.”²⁰ Fr. A. Monserrate thinks that this pillar was erected not in Mylapore but somewhere else, and that before the time of the arrival of the Portuguese. He says: “But I rather think that that Pillar is from before the time of the arrival of the Portuguese.”²¹

In the above accounts, the location of the Pillar of St. Thomas is indicated as “upon the rocks near the sea-shore,” and “on some stones, from which the sea was then about half a league distant.” The present Rocks-Memorial at Cape Comerin might have been the sacred foundations of the



hill, on which St. Thomas had erected his “Pillar-Memorial” of Christianity in the first century.

The hill, on the top of which the Pillar was erected, must have had, as its foundation, a solid mountain comprised of the three Sacred Rocks at the tri-sea spot of Cape Comerin: (1). The “Thiru Muzhukku Paarai” the rock of Divine Baptism or the present Sacred Snana Mandabam (Bathing spot) at the tip of Kumari Munai. (2). The “Thiru Thoon Paarai” the rock of the Sacred Pillar or the present Memorial of the Divine Poet. (3). The “Thiru Anai Paarai” the rock of the Sacred Shield or the present Memorial of the Sacred Philosopher (Saint Francis Xavier). These three rocks and stones around them were then under the hill when the sea was about half a league distant.

The names “Thiru Muzhukku Paarai,” “Thiru Thoon Paarai” and “Thiru Anai Paarai” were traditionally in use among the St. Thomas’ Christians in Cape Comerin. When the prophecy of St. Thomas was fulfilled at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the sea reached the vicinity of the pillar, and the rock first appeared was the Thiru Anai Parai, (the present Vivekananda Rock) which for a long time was shielding the pillar of St. Thomas from falling, and therefore was called the rock of the Sacred Shield. But finally, before the end of the thirteenth century, when the sea eroded the whole area as foretold by St. Thomas, the hill together with the Sacred Pillar disappeared into the sea.

In the fourteenth century White Christians came, in fact, and built a church of Our Lady of the Assumption in

Cape Comerin at the spot where the church of the Roman Catholics now stands. The Franciscan Bishop John Marignoli visited this church twice and preached the gospel in 1339 before his visit to China, and in 1347 after he returned from China. Now Bishop Marignoli also erected a pillar in Cape Comerin. At his time the top most spot was a hill situated south east of Covalam near Cape Comerin. He intended this pillar to last till the end of the world. But it was also destroyed by the sea in the later part of the nineteenth century.

George Moraes writes: “This Franciscan (Bishop Marignolli) was endowed with a lovely imagination. Ceylon was not very far. It was the ‘Paradise’ where the Muslims pointed to the lake formed by the tears of Adam and Eve mourning for their son Abel. Before leaving for India, Marignolli had a pillar set up at Cape Comerin, the extremity of the Indian peninsula in full view of Ceylon. “More glorious than Alexander the great,” says he, when he set up his column (in India), “for I erected a stone as my landmark and memorial in the corner of the world over against the Paradise. In sooth, it was a marble pillar with a stone cross upon it, intended to last till the world’s end. And it had the pope’s arms and my own engraved upon it with inscriptions both in Indian and Latin characters. I consecrated and blessed it in the presence of an infinite multitude of people, and I was carried on the shoulders of the chiefs in a litter or palanquin like Solomon’s.”²²

Details of the pillar of Bishop Marignoli are recorded by Fr. Hosten as different from that of the Quilon Pillar. “If this pillar had been a Padrao set up by the Portuguese, it

would have been discovered in various places; for instance the arms of Portugal, or date. Now, the Quilon pillar has never been described as having anything distinctive. It is said that it disappeared only in the nineteenth century. Surely, the pillar was not the one erected by Friar John of Marignolli about 1347; his pillar was somewhere at or near Cape Comerin.”²³

Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam also in his “Ancient Jaffna,” makes reference from “Cathay and the Way Thither,” written by Col. H. Yule, in 1348 or 1349 AD, that John de Marignolli, the papal delegate to the Court of the Great Khan, on his return from China, landed at Columbam. He remained with the Christians there for one year and four months, after erecting a stone memorial, “in the corner of the world over against Paradise,” (supposed to be at Cape Comarin) he went to see the famous Queen of Saba, by whom he “was honorably treated” and then “proceeded to Seyllan (Ceylon).”²⁴

Later this monument of Bishop Marignoli was attributed to St. Thomas by the local inhabitants. Baldaeus, a Dutch writer who reports this, has said that he saw this Pillar in 1662. As he says: “Upon the rocks near the sea shore of Caulam (Covalam), stands a stone pillar, erected there, as the inhabitants report, by St. Thomas. I saw the pillar in 1662. But It disappeared towards the close of the nineteenth century. And as Howard in his ‘Christians of St. Thomas and their liturgies’ says: “Mr. D’Albedhil told me that he has seen this pillar and that it was washed away only a few years ago” Quoted from Travancore Manual. ²⁵

In the sixteenth century the Portuguese and St. Francis

Xavier came and built a beautiful church of Our Lady of Joy which we can still find behind the sacristy of the church of Our Lady of Ransom with its golden cross on top of the tower now in Cape Comerin.

The Stone cross of St. Thomas at Pandarakulam

One of the available monuments of St. Thomas, erected during his mission in the Southern Pandian Kingdom, is a famous stone cross with the inscription “I.N.R.I.” carved by his own hands in a style peculiar to St. Thomas himself.



The story of this cross as narrated by the inhabitants is that when St. Thomas founded a community of Christians at Pandarakulam near Vallioor, (See Ch. 6) the

Saint as usual erected a stone cross there as an object of worship. And for a long time the Christians of St Thomas gathered in front of this Cross for their morning and evening prayers, and even for Holy Mass whenever some missionaries visited them. Then the people had built a “Kurusadi” holding the Cross on its top, with a small chapel attached for worship.

And when the present church was built, the Kurusadi



was demolished, and the value of the Cross being unknown, it was discarded to a corner by the side of the church. But St. Thomas appeared to a pious man in dream and told that the Cross should be given a suitable place of veneration. It should be kept as a monument of his apostolic work in this place. Thus the Cross was recognized as a valuable treasure and a record for these people of having received the gospel of Christ in the very beginning of the Christian era. And therefore the Cross has been now kept, as you see in the picture, by the right side of the church, facing the main street of entrance into the village.

Many miracles are attached to this Cross of St. Thomas. (These details were narrated to the author in a personal interview with one of the inhabitants Mrs. Marianthony Ammal 80 yrs. on May 23, 2004). Recently the

local people have once again constructed a beautiful shrine in the same spot where the cross had been planted, namely by the right side of the church, facing the main street of entrance in to the village.

Ever since this shrine was built, the devotion of the Holy Cross is being celebrated on every First Friday of the month.

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1. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, pp. 139,140.
 2. *Ibid* at pp. 50, 15, 16.
 3. H. Sarkar, Research Article in Souvenir of the fourth Centenary Celebration of the Holy Cross Church at Manappadu. 1581 - 1981, Paragraph 3.
 4. Herman D'Souza, In the Steps of St. Thomas, Mylapore, Diocese of Mylapore, 1983, pp. 5, 6.
 5. H. Sarkar Research Article in Souvenir of the fourth Centenary Celebration of the Holy Cross Church at Manappadu. 1581 - 1981, Paragraphs 3, 14. 17.
 6. *Ibid* at Paragraph 14,
 7. Prof. George Menacherry Documentary Film, Ezharappallikal, ICS Creation.
 8. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 42.
 9. A. M. Stanislaus, Thamizhar Arasu 3 (Cherar Arasu), p. 135.
 10. Padmanabhapuram Palace is a 16th century Marvel.
<https://kerala.bizhat.com/monuments/>
 11. www.stthomasinternationalpilgrimcentre.com
 12. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 210.
 13. Dr. V. Lawrence, History of the Catholic Church in Kanyakumari District, pp. 44, 46.
 14. Herman D'Souza, In the Steps of St. Thomas, Mylapore, Diocese of Mylapore, 1983, p. 5.
 15. Dr. V. Lawrence, History of The Catholic Church in Kanyakumari District, pp.46,20.
 16. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 210,
 17. *Ibid*.
 18. John Gilmary Shea, Little Pictorial Lives of the Saints, New York, Benziger Brothers Inc., 1925.
 19. Herman D'Souza, In the Steps of St. Thomas, Mylapore, Diocese of Mylapore, 1983, p. 42.

20. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 210.
21. *Ibid* at p. 211.
22. *Ibid* at p. 105; Dr. V. Lawrence, History of The Catholic Church in Kanyakumari District, p. 49.; A.E. Medlycott, India and the Apostle Thomas: An Inquiry, with a Critical Analysis of the Acta Thomae , London, David Nutt, 1905.; The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. XIV, New York, The Encyclopedia Press Inc., 1907, p. 683.
23. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 211.
24. www.bahamaswriter.com
25. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 211.

CHAPTER TEN



THE VISIT OF ST. THOMAS TO CEYLON AND CHINA

The Visit of St. Thomas to Ceylon

Ceylon is a great island of the Indian Ocean. It is called by the Indians “Seeladiba” and by the Greeks “Taprobane.” The legends relating to the preaching of Christianity in Ceylon by the Apostle St. Thomas cannot be reduced to the fond imagination of the Early Fathers as wrongly concluded by modern historians.¹ But recent researches reveal that St. Thomas has preached the gospel in Ceylon as well as in India.

The Carmelite Friar Vincent Maria says that St. Thomas preached to the Parthians, Medes, Bactrians, Hyrcanians, and Taprobanians. (Taprobane was Ceylon, modern Sri Lanka). Read the quotation from Chapter 19 of “Wandering in the East”: “First on Vincenzo Maria’s list is Syria-Mesopotamia. The Carmelite friar specifically mentions “the neighborhood of Edessa,” but in the same

breath expands the initial mission field to almost all of the Persian Empire, or “Parthia,” where he preached “to Parthians, Medes, Bactrians, Hyrcanians, and Taprobanians.” (Ancient Bactria was, roughly, what is now northern Afghanistan; Hyrcania abutted the south eastern corner of the Caspian Sea; Taprobane was Ceylon, modern Sri Lanka.) Apparently he was depending on the Nestorian tradition for the emphasis on Parthia; he has Thomas visit it twice.”²

Already in the foregoing chapters it is explained that Gandhappar Raja (Gaspar), the Pandian King was ruling Celon and the Southern Pandian Kingdom in India. This Gandhappar Raja had Jaffna as his capital city in Ceylon in the beginning of the first century. And it is he who went from Cylon to adore the Infant Jesus at Bethlehem.

K. T. Rajanayagam says that an early King of Jaffna was one of those who adored the Infant Jesus. And he adds that Christianity was in existence in Sri Lanka, since from the very beginning of the Christian era. He writes: “Christianity visited Sri Lanka, long before the arrival of Portuguese colonists in 1504. Cosmas Indicopleustes (Christian Topography Book XI) tells of Ceylon and its trade in the 6th century AD, as follows: “This is the great island of the Ocean, situated in the Indian sea, which is called by the Indians- Seelediba, by the Greeks - Taprobane, where the hayacinthus stone is found; and it is beyond the pepper country (mainland). Considering the frequent communications between the Mediterranean world and Mantai, the international emporium and the entrée port in Sri Lanka, pre-historic period, it is not beyond belief that,

one of the disciples of Christ, came to India and Sri Lanka to preach Christianity.

Even though, due to lack of archeological development reports, except for the finding of the Nestor Cross, and the mention of the Babylonian name Seruma or Soruma in the Sussondi Jataka III, a corruption of Sumer, as a name of a country denoting it as an Island in North Ceylon, we are not in a position to make an informed judgment. Anyhow, when we take



into consideration the spread of Christianity in the coastal region of Kerala, and the existence of an ancient Syrian Church even today, it is very difficult to dismiss the fact that, an early king of Jaffna was one of those who paid his adoration to the infant Jesus, also Christianity was in existence in Lanka, since from the very beginning of the Christian era.³

In the Capital City of Jaffna (Nallur). Gandhappar Raja had built a palace, and much later when the city was inhabited by Hindus (say in 948 A.D.) a temple had been built by a certain Bhuvanegubagu in the name of Gandhappar Raja. This Temple was called Nallur Kandaswami Kovil or Nallai Kandan Temple.

V.N.Giritharan in his “Nallur Rajdhani” proves that there was a King’s palace in Nallur the capital city of Jaffna

2000 years ago. The stone inscription you see in this picture testifies the fact. “There is a pillar with the words ‘Pandaramaaligai’ in Tamil character (King’s Palace) engraved on it. Closely, there is a statue of Vairavar with a small porch. And in this porch the following words are sculpted; “Entrance of Pandara Maaligai, a place of two thousand years old and which the Tamil kings preserved and safeguarded and prayed; And where the Nallai ‘Theradip Padhi Urai Padhi’, the temple of Sri Bairava and Aadhimoolam, the god of gods - is inside”.⁴

This proves that the palace of Gandhappar Raja was well preserved and safeguarded by his successors, and then it was converted into the temple of Sri. Bairava and Aadhimoolam.

Mudaliar Rasanayakam says in his book *Yaazhpaana Vaibhava Maalai* that in 948 A. D. this temple was rebuilt and was given the name of Gandhappar Raja. Regarding this fact let me quote from V. N. Giritharan’s “Nallure Rajadhan” what follows:

“In the history of ‘Eelam’ (Ceylon) Nallur has had a role to play. It was a renowned city way back at the time of Chola rule itself. Afterwards, it was the glorious capital of Jaffna State, created in a well-planned and meticulous manner King, Brahmin and the Court bard’s Area: That the place situated north westward to the royal market place was a very important locality of the Nallur Rajdhani era is proclaimed by the names of lands and streets there and also by Pandarakulam.

The very names Sangili Thoppu, Sangiliyan Veedhi, Arasaveedhi, Arasaveli, Pandara Maaligai Valaivu, Pandara Kulam stand for the link that existed between the Tamil regime and themselves. In the names such as PandaraMaaligai, PandaraKulam, the term 'Pandara', according to many, refers to the Tamil King. Mudaliar Kula Sabanathan opines that the term refers to Pararasasekara Pandaram. There were many kings, having names that ended with the term 'Pandaram'. 'Puviraraja Pandaram' was one of them. One of the sons of Lakshmidevi, the legal queen of Pararasasekaran was also Pandaram. The coconut grove encompassing some six acre area is called Pandara Valavu.

Historical works offer us a lot of contradictory details about Nallur Kandaswami Temple which was one of the significant features of Nallur Rajdhani. The song given below which comes in Kailayamaalai has caused the controversy. "...ilakkiyasagaptha Yenntrezhubhadha....." (Tamil Cheyul) According to Swami Gnanaprakasara, Va. Kumaraswami and such others the term 'Yennootrezhubadhu' refers to the year 1248 A.D. And, the word Yenn in the above given verse refers to thousand (aayiram) and that which comes by adding one hundred and seventy (nootrezhubadhu) with thousand is the saga year 1170 and this points at 1248 A.D., they hold. As per one Dainel John, saga year 'Yennoothrezhubadhu' means 948 A.D. As per Mudaliar Rasanayaka's contention also saga year 870 means 948 A.D. Bhuvanegubagu who was spoken of in this song was referred to as the minister of Aryan King and the one who constructed the Nallai Kandan temple in such works as Kailaya Maalai, Yaazhpaana Vaibhava Maalai etc." ⁵

That this King Gandhappar (Gaspar) was reigning the Southern Pandian Kingdom which at that time consisted of Ceylon as well has been proved by various authors like George Moraes, Joao De Barros. John De Marignoli, MothaVaz, Herman D' Souza and so on.

In Ceylon Gandhappar was known as Peria Perumal, and his brother Gaatthiappar as Chinna Perumal. This was the King of Ceylon who heard the nativity of the messiah foretold by an Indian Sybil, and had joined with the other Magi Kings and had gone to Bethlehem to adore the child. This has been cited by George Moraes from a legend which the Portuguese heard from the lips of the Bishop of Quilon as follows: "A Perumal King of Ceylon having heard tell of it from the Sybil, embarked in a ship for Muscat. At this port he joined the other Magi and they went to Bethlehem to adore the child."⁶

Here let us repeat what K.T. Rajasingham has stated in his essay, "Was one of the Magi a king from Lanka" :

"A page in history reveals that the Tamil king of Yalapanam (Jaffna, was one amongst those wise-men - Magi, who went to Bethlehem, to worship the new born baby Jesus. This happened, according to the prophecy in the Bible. "Kings along the Mediterranean coast- the kings of Tarshish and the Islands- and those from Sheba and from Seba- all will bring their gifts." (Psalms 72: 10)

Joao de Barros, the Portuguese historian, in his book, "Asia de Joao Barros, dos factos que os Portugueses fizeram no descobrimento & conquista dos mares & terras do Oriente,"

published after 1563, relates, “a King of the island of Ceilam, called Primal, went in a ship to the coast of Muscat, to join other kings, who were going to adore the Lord, at Bethlehem, and that he was the third.”

“According to de Barros, the Tamil King Primal (Perumal) was one of the Magi, who went to Bethlehem, to worship the new born baby infant Jesus.”

Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam, in his “Ancient Jaffna,” makes reference from “Cathay and the Way Thither,” written by Col. H. Yule, in 1348 or 1349 AD, John de Marignolli, the papal delegate to the Court of the Great Khan, on his return from China, landed at Columbam. He remained with the Christians there for one year and four months, after erecting a stone memorial, “in the corner of the world over against Paradise,” (supposed to be at Cape Comarin) he went to see the famous Queen of Saba, by whom he “was honorably treated” and then “proceeded to Seyllan (Ceylon).

Father Fernao De Queyroz, who wrote “The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon,” strongly refutes the story put forward by Jao De Barros, but up to date, no historians has come forward to refute the historical facts, put forward by John De Marignolli, that Yalapanam was the famous Saba and the “Magi”-pathi, the King of Yalapanam (Jaffna), was one of those men who went to adore the infant Jesus.

Anyhow, when we take into consideration the spread of Christianity in the coastal region of Kerala, and the existence of an ancient Syrian Church even today, it is very difficult to dismiss the fact that, an early King of Jaffna was

one of those who paid his adoration to the infant Jesus, also Christianity was in existence in Lanka, since from the very beginning of the Christian era.”⁷

Now there is a tradition that this Peria Perumal came to South India and was baptized by St. Thomas the Apostle as Gaspar. This fact is described by Fr. MothaVaz as follows: “Peria Perumal, the King of Jaffna (Ceylon) journeyed to India to meet the Apostle. As soon as he saw St. Thomas, he requested him: ‘O, Apostle of the Redeemer of the world! I am one of the Magi Kings who at the sight of the star in the East, followed it and visited the Holy Infant Messiah at Bethlehem. Therefore, please explain to me His life and teachings and baptize me. The Saint, accepting the request and after having instructed on the life and teachings of the Saviour, baptized him as Gaspar.”⁸

Herman D’Souza writes: “.....an ancient song says that at a certain stage the Apostle ‘started for the country of the Tamils’. The author (of the song) doubtless means ‘the country which is now of the Tamils’. For, at the time of the Apostle, all the three kingdoms (of the Chera, Chola and Pandia) was the country of the Tamils.”⁹

From the above mentioned sources we can conclude that the visit of St. Thomas the Apostle to Ceylon is no more to the fond imagination of the Early Fathers, but a historical fact.

The Visit of St. Thomas to China

After establishing Christian communities in India and

Ceylon St. Thomas the Apostle made a missionary expedition to China sometime between A.D. 40 and 46. Let us make an attempt to prove this fact both from the Chinese official Roman Catholic authorities and from many other sources cited below.

Ignatius Cardinal Kung, Bishop of Shanghai, China, spent over thirty years in a Communist prison for his allegiance to Rome. Although Pope John Paul II named him a cardinal in 1979 while the Chinese bishop was imprisoned, his name became known only in 1991 when he was able to flee to the United States. Cardinal Kung died Sunday March 12, 2004 in Connecticut. He was 98. The Chinese National Conference of Roman Catholic (underground) Bishops, in union with Cardinal Kung declared in a Pastoral Letter dated Dec. 1994, the following statement:

“There has been a long history of evangelization in China. Since our Lord’s ascension and his command to the apostles to proclaim the good news of salvation to all nations, St. Thomas the apostle traveled at least as far as India; some further research has shown that he also reached China.”¹⁰

Bishop Tedi B. Weber, O.A. confirms the truth that St. Thomas had established a Christian community in India even before he went to the Malabar coast (Kerala) in A.D. 52; and says that the Apostle went as far as China and Korea. He writes:

“There are many evidences which indicate that Thomas taught as far away as China and Korea: pictures painted in long-ago China, temples (churches) that house

figures clothed in garments authentic to the peoples of the fertile crescent of the time. These I know of, others I doubt not exist. The Apostolic Succession within the St. Thomas Christians is continuous from Christ's anointing of Thomas as an Apostle through the time he was sent to India and established a Christian community there, sometime between 45 A.D. and 52 A.D., down through time until today" ¹¹

Thomas Coipuram in his article to Arlington Catholic HERALD 7/11/02, writes: "St. Thomas the Apostle was assigned to go to Greece, Armenia, India and China. The one who questioned the Resurrection of Christ, he traveled the farthest."¹²

Herbert Christian Merillat sites the following quotation: "Thomas", says Vincent Maria, "began his mission in Syria – Mesopotamia, from there the Apostle went East to China, 'the state of the great Mogul (Mongol)', and the Kingdom of Sian (The city of Sian in north west China was the ancient capital of the Han dynasty [200 B.C. to A.D. 9], the capital of Tang dynasty [A.D. 618 – 907] and the site of a Nestorian stele [monument])"; then to Ethiopia, and thence to the island of Socotra, and finally to South India. There he evangelized the Malabar Coast and finally the Coromandal Coast (Madras and Mylapore), where he was Martyred." ¹³

The above study of Herbert C. Merillat has been confirmed by Benjamin John Wilkinson who in his writings on "Adam and the Church in China"¹⁴ states that China in the days of Prophet Daniel was in contact with the Old Testament Religion:

“As the Jews had been dispersed throughout all nations, the stirring prophecies of Daniel were disseminated everywhere. These led all peoples to look with hope for the coming of the great Restorer. The Magi who journeyed from the East to worship at the Savior’s manger are but an example of those who were stirred by the promise of the Coming One. Suetonius and Tacitus, Roman historians of the first century A.D., bear witness to the universal expectation of a coming Messiah. “The prophecy of Buddha concerning the predicted Prophet is another example. Buddha said: “Five hundred years after my death, a Prophet will arise who will found His teaching upon the fountain of all the Buddhas. When that One comes, believe in Him, and you shall receive incalculable blessings!

“Also it is reported that Confucius, the famous founder of China’s national religion in the sixth century B.C., said that “a saint should be born in the West who would restore to China the lost knowledge of the sacred tripod. “Study touching the work of the Apostle Thomas in India cites the old tradition that after he had founded Christianity in the Hindu Peninsula, he then brought the Gospel to the country of the yellow river” (China).

It is evident therefore that after the first foundation of Christianity in the South Pandian Kingdom of Gandhappar Raja in the Indian Peninsula, including the island of Ceylon, St Thomas made a journey to the land of China.

T.V. Philip speaking about “Christianity in China”¹⁵ quotes the following writers mentioning the different traditions about St. Thomas’ visit to China:

“A.C. Moule in his book: *Christians in China before 1550* mentions a tradition that St. Thomas visited China. Both the Latin and Syriac writers in the medieval period (Francis Xavier, de Cruz and de Gouveia, de Burros among the Latin writers and Ebed Jesus among the Syrians) mention this tradition”.

“John Stewart refers to another tradition current among the Chinese of Chang-an, a tradition referred to also in the Chinese records. According to this tradition, in AD 64, the Chinese emperor Ming-ti, as a result of a dream, sent messengers along a road leading to the west to find out who was the greatest prophet who had arisen in the west. They met two Christian missionaries on the way to the court and returned with them. The missionaries remained there till they died six years later. (Most probably these two missionaries might have been sent by St. Thomas himself from India while he was engaged in his second mission in India between the years A.D. 52 to 72). The only relic of their stay is to be found in a scripture of forty-two sections and a logia of the New Testament. We are not sure of the reliability of this tradition.”

Furthermore, it is not without solid basis that commentators claim that China is contemplated in the well-known prophecy of Isaiah which foresees converts to the gospel as coming from the land of Sinim. There are scholars of research who conclude that the original Chinese colonists who settled on the western branch of the Yellow River came from the plains of the Euphrates. It must be true that the great facts of early Bible history were known in some form

in the Orient from early days, there being much travel back and forth from Persia to China. As Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, so the Separatists from the Tigris and Euphrates valleys are considered by some to have taken their long trek through Turkestan to the Wei River of northwestern China carrying many elements of Chaldean civilization to that region.

How early and how influential the Jews (being repeatedly carried as captives to the East) were in China before the Christian era, may be seen in the following quotations:

Many of those Israelites whom God dispersed among the nations, by means of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, found their way to China, and were employed (says the celebrated chronicler Pere Gaubil) in important military posts, some becoming provincial governors, ministers of state, and learned professors. Pere Gaubil states positively that there were Jews in China during the fighting states period, i.e., 481-221 B.C.

Thus we know that China in Daniel's day was in contact with the Old Testament religion.

According to "Spring and Autumn," a book compiled by Confucius himself in 481 B.C., notice is taken of the frequent arrival of "the white foreigners." Saeki thinks that these could be from the plains of Mesopotamia. The vigorous earlier Han dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D. 9) carded its conquests far to the west and to the Babylonian plains.

The Apostle Paul in his day said that the gospel had been carried “to the ends of the world.” How strong the gospel in China was is seen in the statement of the Ante-Nicene Father Amobius, written about A.D.300, which enumerated that nation as one of the Oriental peoples among whom the church was established. Also it is to be noticed that Isaac, the patriarch of the Assyrian Church, ordained a metropolitan for China in A.D.411. As metropolitans usually were directors of from six to eight supervisors of church provinces, each of which in turn was the presiding officer over many clergy, it can readily be understood that Christianity, in order to have had such a large growth, must early have been planted in the Middle Kingdom, or China.

And therefore, It must not be concluded that the Chinese emperor (of the Tang Dynasty), surrounded by the greatest scholars of his realm, took an astonishing decision to permit Adam (who was the director of the Assyrian Church in China) to build the celebrated stone monument (in A.D. 781) solely because he was influenced by the teachings which he heard from the Christian missionaries of that date. He and his scholars were well aware of the remarkable events which crowded the history touching the Church of the East. The Chinese were not ignorant of the expansion of Christianity among the nations of central Asia (even in the first century A.D.).¹⁶

The last statement of Benjamine George above quoted, has been proved by a recent study of Professor Wei-Fan.

“In 2001 Professor Wang Wei-Fan wrote an article entitled “Christian Spirit In Ancient China” which suggested that the Gospel has reached China during the Eastern Han Dynasty (A.D. 25 to 220). As one of the basis for his assumption he quotes the statement of Li Wenbin: “During the Eastern Han period, two Syrian missionaries came to China. Their purpose was to spread Christianity.” Another basis was the discovery of an Iron Cross in Luling, Jiangxi province during the reign of Emperor Hongwu in the Ming Dynasty (A.D.1368 to 1398) A couplet was found carved on the Iron Cross;

“Four seas rejoice o’er peace; iron rod splendors
across; Ten thousand folks for grace yearn;
a thousand autumns incited by golden urn”.

The date of this relic was “the ninth year of Chi-Wu.” Chi-Wu was the name of the fourth period of the reign of Sun Quan who became king of Eastern Wu in the year A.D.222. “The ninth year of Chi-Wu was actually the 25th year of Sun’s reign (A.D.222 to 246). The fact that such a large iron cross existed, and that a Christian intellectual could compose a couplet with this degree of sophistication lead to the speculation that Christianity must have been in China before Sun Quan’s reign. In other words, the Gospel could very well have been brought to China in the Eastern Han dynasty.” ¹⁷

Professor Wang Wei-Fan also made a valuable research on the Tomb Stone carvings of the first century, found in the art museum of Xuzhou in China. He gives the following details.¹⁸

1. The Gospel Carved on Stone during the Han Dynasty, especially Eastern Han, carved stone objects were often used for burial. Furthermore, elaborate tombs were constructed with limestone, with carvings on the doors and walls of underground chambers. In June, 2002 a colleague from Xuzhou (in northern Jiangsu Province) informed me that the museum in this city contained many excavated carvings with Middle East cultural characteristics. So, with the hope of finding evidence of Christianity in Eastern Han China, I visited the Art Museum in Xuzhou. Later the church in Xuzhou (formerly a Presbyterian church within the Synod of Jiang-Huai) gave me a newly published book “Xuzhou Han Stone Carvings” compiled by the director of the museum, Mr. Wu Liuhua (published in Beijing, November 2001). Most of the picture illustrations on these pages are taken from this volume.

The first startling piece of art I came upon was a carving with fish and phoenix as symbols. (A)(5) The phoenix, also known as “eternal” or “everlasting” bird, was a symbol for resurrection in Egyptian myths. The Fish (ICQUS), meaning “Jesus Christ God’s Son our Savior,” was used by early Christians on their doors and tombs. **The combination of these two symbols on the Han tomb may indicate the hope of Christians for salvation and resurrection by faith in Christ.** To the left of this carving was the date: “The seventh day of the third month in the year of Yuan-he” – 86 AD. Yuan-he was



the name of the reign of Emperor Zhangdi in Eastern Han. So the construction of this tomb was 550 years before the Nestorian monk Alopen reached Changan (today's Xi'an) in 635 AD, and about 50 years after the mass persecution in Jerusalem, resulting in Christians being dispersed to other parts of the world.(6)

2. “The Creation and the fall one of the carvings seems to describe the creation story. (B)(7) On the top are “two great lights” of sun and moon, a big fish and a bird. On the right are wild beasts. The left are domestic animals such as donkey, horse and ox. The images are typical of Western Han art – exaggerated, flowing and lively – except for the two beasts with intertwining necks, which are in the style of Middle East art.



(B)

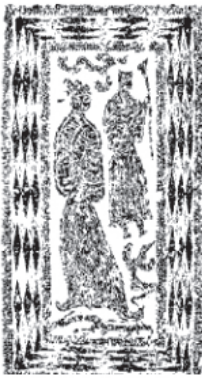
Another carving shows **the temptation of Eve. (C)** On this carving we read from right to left (in Chinese and Jewish order): the devil, serpent, Eve, the tree of discerning good and evil, the cherubim, then the sword (symbols of evil and deceit on the right; symbols of goodness and kindness on the left.) The seductive and crafty serpent is waving beautiful flowers to Eve while biting her left hand.



(C)

At the same time Eve's right hand is already picking the fruit from the tree. To the left of the tree we see the cherubim and the sword, flaming and turning, guarding the tree of life.

“Two other carvings have figures like **Adam and Eve leaving the Garden of Eden**. The first one (D) shows a



(D)

man and a woman wearing clothes made with animal skins. The woman's skirt seems to have a design of snakes, while the man is holding a tool resembling a hoe. “The second carving (E) depicts a man and a woman moving away from a locked gate. The woman looks sad and the man's face has two sides, one side looking forward and the other side turning back as if reluctant to

leave. Both of these carvings were excavated from the tomb of “Jiu nu dun” (which can mean “the mound of the ninth daughter”).

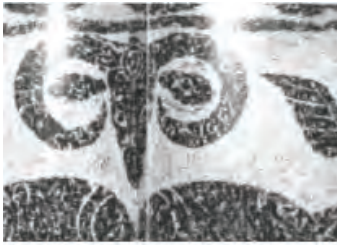
3. “The Passover Lamb over the Gate

A number of the limestone entrances to the Eastern Han burial chambers has carvings of fish and



(E)

lamb. (G) Which, for Christians, would mean “Christ Jesus the Savior” and the lamb of Passover save the Israelites from death.



(G)

Some of the beams from the tombs have just the lamb (H) while others have both the lamb and the eternal bird (phoenix), combining salvation and resurrection. The fish and the lamb were seldom seen in

traditional Chinese art. The phoenix in China was a symbol for prosperity and good luck, unrelated to resurrection.



(H)

An Eastern Han tomb discovered at Wang Shan had semicircular upper beams with two levels.(I)(6) The upper level describes “heaven” with the tree of life and the eternal bird; the lower level is “earth,” with the dragons bound by three chains. The tree of life and the eternal bird represent resurrection and everlasting life, while the dragons represents the ruler of demons.



(I)

4. “The Nativity: It is common for carvings on Han tombs to illustrate activities of everyday life, and some seem to tell the story of the life of Christ. One of them may be the Christmas story, with wise men worshipping the Christ child



(L)

(L). While the birds (and angels) are rejoicing above the shed, the human figures show reference and admiration. A wise man is offering a gift. On the ground is a vase, possibly containing myrrh? At the lower left of the shed is a little sheep.

“A larger likely “manger scene” clearly shows the baby held on the lap of his mother. (M) This, too, has celestial beings above the roof, and wise men coming to pay homage.



(M)

5. “**The Yi Vessel.** In the Xuzhou museum I saw a bronze container, also dating back to the Eastern Han period. (O)(14) The bottom is carved with two fishes and five loaves, plus the character “Yi.” In the Book of Records [one of the Five Classics which are considered part of the sacred scriptures of China], it was said that “the offering is to God; while the yi is used for offering by the emperor.” This container with the five loaves and two fishes could be a vessel for offering to God. The word Yi also means “sharing.” In the Book of Poetry [also part of the Chinese sacred scriptures] it says “To share with you.” It is not difficult to imagine that this was a vessel used by the early church in Eastern Han for sharing

food and to celebrate the “love feast,” Holy Communion.

“These speculations are the results of my initial research, made possible with the help of the Xuzhou Han Carving Arts Museum, and the assistance of the church in Xuzhou. It is important to note that Xuzhou is not the only place where Han stone carvings have been found. Several locations in Henan and Shandong provinces have sizable collections of these

excavated stone carvings. As if these very stones are “crying out” for our attention, they deserve our serious study and research. The task will take years, requiring rigor and discipline.



(O)

Eastern Han was the

first period in history when many religions were introduced to China. In the Western Han period, Zhang Qian had explored the west and went on the Silk Road to “Da Qin which is today’s Syria. It is not difficult to trace the footsteps of the Gospel by way of the Silk Road to Eastern Han, from Jerusalem, Samaria and Syria, through what is today Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Xinjiang, Dunhuang to reach Changan (Xi’an). The ancient Christians had braved the long and arduous journey to reach our land. Therefore with gratitude we say: How beautiful are the feet of those who brought good tidings.¹⁹

Tombstone Carvings from AD 86: “Did Christianity Reach China In the First Century?”²⁰ The details given above by Professor Wei-Fan Wang are clear proofs for the visit of St. Thomas the Apostle to China. An on-going research will furnish evidences of his activities in China more and more.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN



THE SECOND VISIT OF ST. THOMAS TO PARTHIA

The Second Visit of St. Thomas to Parthia

In the year 40 A.D. St. Thomas made his second visit to the northern regions, now to consolidate the labours of King Denis (Bishop of Takshasila) and Princess Pelagia who had started the first religious congregation in India. Deacon Xantipus (King Gondophernes - the Magi King Melchior) and Peter (Gandhappar Raja - the Magi King Gaspar) accompanied the Apostle to partake in his labours. This visit of the Apostle gives us sufficient reason, as Herman D'Souza says, that the north Indian region was one of the fields of the Apostle's labours.¹

There was a Jewish colony in Takshasila and where Aramaic had been a common language. In fact an Aramaic inscription has been found at Takshasila in honour of a high official called 'Priyadarsi' (gracious), virtually as his name -

Asoka. Aramaic was responsible for the development of the local Kharoshthi Character, which was current during the whole of the first century, being employed for official and non official purposes. Takshasila was celebrated as a university centre because of its geographical position as the meeting - place of the trade routes. As revealed by archaeological discoveries, Christianity flourished side by side with other religions in the Parthian Empire.²

T.K. Joseph, who was one of the ardent supporters of St. Thomas' apostolate in the Punjab thought that he had discovered the title 'Deva-vrata' which Gondophernes bore as his characteristic symbol to be a sufficient indication of his profession of Christianity. T.K. Joseph writes: "King Gondophernes of the Punjab, St. Thomas's convert, had preferred the title Deva-vrata (devoted to God) to the then usual titles Deva-putra (son of God) and Devanampriya (dear to the gods), and also adopted what historians call his "characteristic symbol" - viz., a small "v" surmounting a large "O" standing on an inverted "T" as its base. The three combined look like a big wine cup such as the **Chalice** used by Christ at His Last Supper with His twelve disciples, and ever after that by all Christians at the Eucharist in the Punjab as the Acts tell us. And the chalice, not the Cross, is the earliest known Christian symbol."³

Vincent Smith, the historian says: "Unless Christian mission connected by tradition with the life of St. Thomas had visited the Indo - Parthian borderland, it is difficult to imagine how the obscure name of Gondophares can have come into the story.....if anybody chooses to believe that St.

Thomas personally visited the Indo - Parthian Kingdom his belief cannot be considered unreasonable.”⁴ Thus the visit of St. Thomas to Parthia has been confirmed by various testimonies and the monuments available are the remnants of the religious communities established by the Apostle in this region. About these St John Damascene testifies as follows: “While the hermits St. Paul and St. Antony were leading the life of prayer and perfection in the desert of Tebeitha, a great number of Indian hermits were living in the desert near the Indus River.”⁵

When St. Thomas arrived at Takshasila, Bishop Denis the King of Parthia had already converted the people of his Kingdom and had started a religious congregation for men in the name of St. Thomas called “The Followers of Thomas”, and for which he was the Prior General. At the same time Princess Pelagia had started a religious congregation for young virgins in the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary called: “The Slaves of Mary.” The Apostle blessed the works of Bishop Denis and traveled all over the region preaching the gospel untiringly. People of every caste and creed thronged to hear his words. All those who touched his garments were relieved of their infirmities. He took them all to the river Sindh and baptized them in great numbers. Thus for six years the Apostle was working in the Parthian Empire. In the meanwhile King Denis handed over the Kingdom to Phraotes and spent the rest of his life in the monastery.

Pelagia - The First Martyr of India

The Church in Parthia had no time to strike root in

the land. Within a few years the Parthians were overthrown by the Kushanas. The infant Church met with persecutions by the cruel heathens who worshipped the demons. Bishop Denis



died. But Princess Pelagia was caught by the pagans and was brought before the king who ordered her to worship the evil spirits. She was promised all the riches of the king's palace if she abandoned Christianity and accepted to offer incense to the idols. The heroic Pelagia did not hesitate to refuse the orders of the king. So she was sentenced to capital punishment. Joyfully did she accept the Judgment, and willingly offered her life to Jesus Christ. Thus Princess Pelagia became the first martyr of India and is venerated as one amongst the innumerable un-canonized Virgin Martyrs.⁶

Naturally enough, the infant Church of Parthia perished with its patrons, its scattered remnants managing to preserve a few features of Christianity - some tenets and externals. A community of Fakirs in Sindh, who are reputed to be followers of Thuma Bhagat, "The Followers of St. Thomas", may possibly be one of these remnants. Rev. R. A. Trotter, who had some contact with this community, writes about them as follows:

"To support the contention that the Apostle St. Thomas came to Sindh, there is a Fakir Community living in Tatta Nagar, which has occasionally revealed itself. This

Fakir group, to all appearances Hindu, calls its small community by an Arameic name, something like 'Barthomai', the sons of Thomas, and claims that it is descended from Christians baptized by St. Thomas himself and that in their secret society they own books and relics to support their position. Unfortunately no outsider, either Indian or European, has had access to the archives of this society, and individual members as hard as the Indian lion."⁷

There are some evidences to show that other Apostles and Saints have visited this Fakir community immediately after St. Thomas left this region.

"According to Eusebius and other ancient writers, St. Bartholomew preached the Gospel in the most barbarous countries of the east, penetrating as far as India. Eusebius relates that when St. Panthaenus (Father of the Church), in the third century (200 to 210 A.D), went to India, he still found the knowledge of Christ in that country, and the copy of the Gospel of St. Mathew was shown to him, which they assured him, had been brought there by St. Bartholomew".⁸

John Gilmary Shea LL.D. states in the life of St. Panthaenus: "The Indians who traded at Alexandria entreated him to pay their country a visit, whereupon he forsook his school and went to preach the Gospel to the eastern nations. St. Panthaenus found some seeds of the faith already sworn in the Indies, and a book of the Gospel of St. Mathew in Hebrew, which St. Bartholomew had carried thither. He brought it back with him to Alexandria wither he returned after he had zealously employed some years in

instructing the Indians in the faith. St. Panthaenus continued to preach in private till about the year 216, when he closed a noble and excellent life by a happy death.”⁹

Now it is clear that the remnants of the Congregation established by Prince Denis were the Indian hermits (Fakir Community) who were visited by The Apostle Bartholomew (in about 75 A.D.). St. Bartholomew had left a copy of the Gospel of St. Mathew in Hebrew with these hermits. It is the same Indian hermits whom St. Panthaenus met when he came to India in 210 A.D. and found the Gospel of St. Mathew still there.

St. Thomas as he was summoned to the bed side of Our Lady, started to Jerusalem together with the two Magi Kings Gondophernes (Melchior) and Gandhappar Raja (Gaspar). This fact is narrated in the ‘Transita Mariae’, which is one of the most ancient Christian writings that from his mission at Takshasila the Apostle was summoned to be present at the bedside of the Blessed Virgin in her last moments. St. Thomas does not appear to have again returned to Takshasila. For in his farewell sermon which he preached when he took leave of his disciples, he seems to have had a presentiment that he was leaving them for good.

In one of the villages in Thakshasila while the Apostle was saying mass, he announced that the death of our lady was made known to him. This fact is testified by Thomas Coipuram as follows: “The Apostle came to know of the death of Christ’s mother in a dream and told of the death of the Blessed Mother to a village community. From their presence

the apostle disappeared and later returned to the curious group to tell them that he went up to the clouds to see the angels carrying the body to heaven. Even today, there is a village story in that part of the world, confirming the assumption of the Blessed Mother to heaven.”¹⁰

St Thomas during the celebration of Holy Mass in the above mentioned village, in his sermon instructed the congregation in the following words:

“Children and brethren that have believed in the Lord, abide in this faith, preaching Jesus Who was proclaimed unto you by me, to bring you hope in Him; and forsake not Him, and He will not forsake you. While you sleep in this slumber that weigheth down the sleepers, He sleeping not, keepeth watch over you; and when you sail, and are in peril and none can help, He walking upon the waters supporteth and abideth. For I am now departing from you, and it appears not if I shall again see you according to the flesh. Be ye not therefore like unto the people of Israel, who losing sight of their pastors for an hour, stumbled.”¹¹

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CHAPTER TWELVE



ST. THOMAS AND THE GLORIOUS ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

St. Thomas and the Glorious Assumption of Our Lady

The death of the Blessed Virgin Mary occurred about thirteen or fifteen years after the Ascension of Christ when She was sixty three or sixty five years old. Frederick G. Holweck in his treatise on “Fasti Mariani” (Freibourg 1892) writes: “Regarding the day, year and manner of Our Lady’s death, nothing certain is known. The dates assigned for it vary between three and fifteen years after Christ’s ascension.”¹ Baronius relying on the chronicles of Eusabius assumes that the Blessed Virgin Mary died A.D. 48.² Mary of Agreda in her “Mystical City of God” (1665) writes: “The glorious transition (death) of the great Queen took place in the hour in which her divine Son had died, at three o’ clock on a Friday, the thirteenth day of August, She being seventy years of age. The heavenly Mother had survived the death of Christ the Saviour twenty one years,..... we ascertain Her age as seventy Years.”³

Scripture scholars indicate that because of a miscalculation of Dionysius Exiguus, the Christian era does not start with the birth of Jesus Christ, and Jesus' birth should have taken place between 6 B.C. and 4 B.C. But recent studies have proved that Dionysius and St. Luke are correct in their accounts, and therefore the Christian Era starts with the birth of Jesus Christ (See Appendix I). Consequently this author comes to the conclusion that when Our Lord died at the age of 33, the year of the Christian era was 33, and he fixes 33 A.D. as the commencing year of St. Thomas' missionary work, and 46 A.D. as the end of his first mission in India, which coincided with the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin that took place when She was 63 years old.

The fact of Our Lady's Assumption was first testified by St. Juvenal the Bishop of Jerusalem in the fifteenth century. Frederick G. Holweck says: "St. John of Damascus thus formulates the tradition of the Church of Jerusalem: St. Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, at the Council of Chalcedon (451), made known to the Emperor Marcian and Pulcheria, who wished to possess the body of the Mother of God, that Mary died in the presence of all the Apostles, but that Her tomb, when opened, upon the request of St. Thomas, was found empty; wherefrom the Apostles concluded that the body was taken up to heaven." ⁴

"The falling asleep of the Mother of God" has two versions. The one in Greek form is ascribed to St. John the Theologian (the Apostle) and the other in Latin form to Melito of Sardis. (See the full translation in Appendix III.) "It tells of the death of Mary and how the Apostles were

summoned to mount upon the clouds and assemble from all parts of the earth round her death bed. Those who had died (Andrew, [Peter's brother], Philip, Luke, Simon the Cananaean, and Juda Thaddaeus) were raised to life in order to be present. For three days after Her death the 'voices of invisible angels were heard glorifying Christ our God which was born of Her, and when the third day was fulfilled the voices were no more heard, and therefore we all perceived that Her spotless and precious body was translated into paradise."⁵

The Latin form explicitly mentions the absence of St. Thomas in the arrival of the Apostles and says: "behold, all the disciples of the Lord, except Thomas who is called Didymus, were brought by a cloud to the door of the chamber of the blessed Mary." And it continues to narrate the burial of the Blessed Virgin and how St. Thomas witnesses the Glorious Assumption and obtains a special favour from the Mother of God.

First Latin Form: Concerning the Passing of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"Then the apostles, alarmed by so much brightness, arose, and with psalms carried the holy body down from Mount Zion to the valley of Jehoshaphat. And the apostles with great honour laid the body in the tomb, weeping and singing through exceeding love and sweetness. And suddenly there shone round them a light from heaven, and they fell to the ground, and the Holy Body was taken up by angels into heaven. (The Apostles saw only the light; they did not see the angels taking the body up into heaven)

“Then the most blessed Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most blessed body going up to heaven, and began to cry out and say: O, holy mother, blessed mother, spotless mother, if I have now found grace because I see thee, make thy servant joyful through thy compassion, because thou art going to heaven. Then the girdle with which the apostles had encircled the most holy body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and kissing it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat.”

“He found all the apostles and another great crowd there beating their breasts on account of the brightness which they had seen. And seeing and kissing each other, the blessed Peter said to him: Truly thou hast always been obdurate and unbelieving, because for thine unbelief it was not pleasing to God that thou shouldst be along with us at the burial of the mother of the Saviour. And he, beating his breast, said: I know and firmly believe that I have always been a bad and an unbelieving man; therefore I ask pardon of all of you for my obduracy and unbelief. And they all prayed for him.”

“Then the blessed Thomas said: Where have you laid her body? And they pointed out the sepulcher with their finger. And he said: The body which is called most holy is not there. Then the blessed Peter said to him: Already on another occasion thou wouldst not believe the resurrection of our Master and Lord at our word, unless thou went to touch Him with thy fingers, and see Him; how wilt thou believe us that the holy body is here? Still he persists saying:



It is not here. Then, as it were in a rage, they went to the sepulcher, which was a new one hollowed out in the rock, and took up the stone; but they did not find the body, not knowing what to say, because they had been convicted by the words of Thomas.

“Then the blessed Thomas told them how he was singing mass in India—he still had on his sacerdotal robes. He, not knowing the word of God, had been brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most holy body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing. She heard his prayer, and threw him her girdle which she had about her. And the apostles seeing the belt which they had put about her, glorifying God, all asked pardon of the blessed Thomas, on account of the benediction which the blessed Mary had given him, and because he had seen the most holy body going up into heaven. And the blessed Thomas gave them his benediction, and said: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

And the same cloud by which they had been brought carried them back each to his own place, just like Philip when he baptized the eunuch, as is read in the Acts of the Apostles; and as Habakkuk the prophet carried food to



Daniel, who was in the lions' den, and quickly returned to Judaea. And so also the apostles quickly returned to where they had at first been, to preach to the people of God.”

Most Blessed Virgin Mary's Girdle (Belt, Cincture)

Here we can see what happened to the girdle after the martyrdom of St Thomas the Apostle. It is kept as a precious relic of

the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Syrian Orthodox St. Mary's Soonoro Church in Holms, Syria.⁶

“This most ancient dress piece of Mother Mary has centuries-old tradition of veneration. According to the tradition, it is taken from the grave of Saint Thomas the Apostle who brought it from Jerusalem to India. Now it is preserved under the guard of Jacobite Syrian Church in Homs, Syria. Scientific studies prove that this girdle is two thousand years old (see picture below,) and was made in Palestine. P.S: This Cincture should not be confused with the Cincture Our Lady gave to Saints Augustine and Monica (Augustinian Cincture)

“By the 7th century a variation emerged, according to which one of the apostles, often identified as St Thomas, was not present at the death of Mary, but his late arrival precipitates a reopening of Mary’s tomb, which is found to be empty except for her grave clothes. In a later tradition, Mary drops her girdle down to the Apostle from heaven as testament to the event. This incident is depicted in many later paintings of the Assumption.



“Apocryphal writings from the early church mention that St. Mary died in the presence of all the Apostles except St. Thomas. St. Thomas was brought to Jerusalem by Holy Spirit through ‘Oyar’ (air) and saw St. Mary’s body was taken to heaven by the angels. He got the girdle from St. Mary as a token to show it to other apostles that he actually saw St. Mary in ‘Oyar’ and to confirm asked the apostles to open the tomb and then there was no body in it. The Apostles concluded that she had been taken up to Heaven, body and soul.

“Our Holy Syriac Orthodox Church has the rare privilege to have with her the Girdle of St. Mary. The Holy Girdle of Virgin Mary which was handed over to Apostle St. Thomas, during her assumption to heaven. St. Thomas carried this precious treasure of Virgin Mary with him to India where he died a martyr.⁷

“In 394 A.D. together with the coffin of St. Thomas, this valuable Girdle of Holy Virgin Mary was also moved from India to Raha and was established in a Church. (In the Syriac history of Raha, it is mentioned that in Aug 22, 705 Greek era they brought the coffin of St. Thomas the apostle to his large church in the days of Mar Kora, the bishop of Raha. Ref: The Orient Biblio of Assimaany, Volume I, page 399). This Church where the Holy Girdle of Virgin Mary was established came to be known as the “The Church of Girdle”.

Holy Girdle is now kept in the St. Mary’s Soonoro Church in Holms, Syria. Parts of the Holy Girdle was distributed all over the world, and now the remaining small part is rolled and covered with cotton and is kept in an “Arulikka”, in a



special place near to the Madbaho in this Church. The Holy Girdle was earlier kept in the 'Altar' and in 1953, when the Church was renovated it was taken out by L.L. Patriarch MorAphrem. It was then carbon tested by the archaeologists to determine its age



and after that they confirmed its authenticity. Photographs of these events are also kept near to the Holy Girdle's place. The two stone plates, one with a hole inside where the Holy Girdle was kept, and the other one which was covering the first stone plate with an inscription about it, is also kept in a nearby place of the Madbaho".⁸

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1. The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. II, New York, The Encyclopedia Press Inc., 1907, p. 7.
 2. The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. XV, New York, The Encyclopedia Press Inc., 1907, p. 471.
 3. Ven. Mary of Agreda, 1670. *The Mystical City of God*, trans. F. Marison, Chicago, The Theopolitan, 1902, No. 742. pp. 627, 628.
 4. The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. II, New York, The Encyclopedia Press Inc., 1907, p. 6.
 5. Dom Bernard Orchard (General Editor), *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, Edinburgh, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1953, No. 949, p. 125.
 6. Holy Relic of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary from her Girdle (belt, cincture), <http://www.flickr.com/photos/79438132@N00/4556379910/>

7. The Ante-Nicene Fathers : The Writings of the Fathers, Vol. VIII, Fathers of the Third and Fourth Century, edited by Rev. A. Roberts, Sir J. Donaldson and A. C. Coxe, New York, Cosimo Classics, 2007, pp 592 - 594.
8. Holy Relic of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary from her Girdle (belt, cincture), <http://www.flickr.com/photos/79438132@N00/4556379910/>

CHAPTER THIRTEEN



THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF ST. THOMAS TO EDESSA, CHIOS, ORTONA AND TO INDIA

The Translation of the Relics to Edessa

The “Acts of Judas Thomas” state that the bones of the Apostle were removed from his grave at Mylapore during the life time of the King who sentenced him to death. Let us first read this tradition which says that the translation took place in the very Apostolic age itself: “Now it came to pass after a long time that one of the children of Misdaeus (Mahadeva) the King was smitten by a devil, and no man could cure him, for the devil was exceeding fierce. And Misdaeus the king took thought and said: I will go and open the sepulcher, and take a bone of the Apostle of God and hang it upon my son and he shall be healed. But while Misdaeus thought upon this, the Apostle Thomas appeared to him and said unto him: Thou believedst not on a living

man, and wilt thou believe on the dead? Yet fear not, for my Lord Jesus Christ hath compassion on thee and pitieth thee of his goodness.

“And he went and opened the sepulcher, but found not the apostle there, for one of the brethren had stolen him away and taken him unto Mesopotamia; but from that place where the



bones of the apostle had lain Misdaeus took dust and put it about his son's neck, saying: I believe on thee, Jesu Christ, now that he hath left me which troubleth men and opposeth them lest they should see thee. And when he had hung it upon his son, the lad became whole.

“Misdaeus the king therefore was also gathered among the brethren, and bowed his head under the hands of Siphor the priest; and Siphor said unto the brethren: Pray ye for Misdaeus the king, that he may obtain mercy of Jesus Christ, and that he may no more remember evil against him. They all therefore, with one accord rejoicing, made prayer for him; and the Lord that loveth men, the King of Kings and Lord of lords, granted Misdaeus also to have hope in him; and he was gathered with the multitude of them that had believed in Christ,” (Thirteenth Act. No. 170)

The modern town of Urfa in Turkey represents the ancient Edessa (in Mesopotamia). There is another tradition which holds that the translation took place at a latter period in the third century. Concerning these two traditions Medlicott expressed the following view: "The Alexandrian date towards the middle of the third century (The Ortona record gives the exact date as July 3, 230 A.D.), does appear on general grounds the more probable of the two, because, it fits in better with surrounding data and with the reopening of the trade route to India Via the Euphrates; by the successful termination of the war, the way would be paved for such removal."¹



Fr. MothaVaz gives a graphic description of this second tradition of the translation in a style peculiar to him: "The testimony of St. Gregory of Tours states that after a long interval of time these remains had been removed thence to the city of Edessa is more reliable. However it is clear from the writings of St. Ephrem that the relics remained at Edessa in A.D. 373. Let me explain how they came there. King Abgar IX was ruling Edessa from A.D. 222 to 225. After his conversion to Christianity, Catholic religion had been declared as the state

religion. In those days Mylapore belonged to the diocese of Edessa. Besides, some of the monks from Edessa had established a monastery at Mylapore and were engaged in missionary activities there. It is they who were safeguarding the tomb of the Apostle. The king when he came to know about the Acts of Thomas and of his martyrdom, wishing to bring the bones and respectfully venerate them in his country, sent for that purpose Khabin a merchant to Mylapore. Since he was the envoy sent by the king, through him the monks sent the bones to Edessa. But at the request of the monks and the Christians at Mylapore, a small portion of the spear which pierced through the Apostle and a small piece of bone attached to the point of the spear were left in the tomb itself.”²

Relics of St. Thomas at Mylapore

The lance head with which the saint was killed is preserved in the Basilica museum. First time the tomb was opened to take some earth to cure the son of ruling King Mahadeva. The sand from the tomb is believed to have miraculous healing powers. Between A.D. 220 and 232 a merchant called Khabin removed greater portion of the relics to Edessa in Asia Minor. Later this was moved to Chios island and finally to Ortona on the east coast of Italy. A piece of bone and the lance head that used to kill the saint, excavated from the tomb, is kept in a monstrance in the museum.³

Marco polo visited the tomb in 1293 and recorded about the miraculous healing powers of the sand taken from the tomb. Pilgrims used to take sand from the tomb back to

their homes and keep it with devotion. For the benefit of pilgrims, Shrine is providing 'Relic Card' embedded with sand taken from the tomb.

Further proof may be adduced to justify this claim in the Catholic Encyclopedia:

"A Syrian ecclesiastical calendar of an early date confirms the above. In the quotation given below two points are to be noted which support its antiquity - the fact of the name given to Edessa and the fact the memory of the translation of the Apostle's relics was so fresh to the writer that the name of the individual who had brought them was yet remembered. The entry reads: "3 July, St. Thomas who was pierced with a lance in India. His body is at Urhai [the ancient name of Edessa] having been brought there by the merchant Khabin, a great festival." It is only natural to expect that we should receive from Edessa first-hand evidence of the removal of the relics to that city; and we are not disappointed, for St. Ephraem, the great doctor of the Syrian Church, has left us ample details in his writings. Ephraem came to Edessa on the surrender of Nisibis to the Persians, and he lived there from 363 to 373, when he died. This proof is found mostly in his rhythmical compositions. In the forty-second of his "Carmina Nisibina" he tells us the Apostle was put to death in India, and that his remains were subsequently buried in Edessa, brought there by a merchant."⁴

St. Ephrem, as an expression of the Devil, repeatedly refers to the translation of the relics of St. Thomas to Edessa in the following verses :

“Thus howled the Devil, in to what land
Shall I fly from the Just?

I stirred up Death the Apostles to slay,
That by their death I might escape their blows.
But harder still am I now stricken; the Apostle I slew
in India

Has overtaken me in Edessa; here and there he is all
himself.

There went I, and there was he;
Here and there to my grief I find him.
The merchant brought the bones;
Nay, rather they brought him. Lo, the mutual gain!
What profit were they to me,
While theirs was the mutual gain? Both brought me
loss.”

“Thomas, whence thy lineage,
that so illustrious thou should become!
A merchant thy bones conveys:
A Pontiff assigns thee a Feast:
A King a shrine erects.”

“The bones the merchant hath brought
Over them an outward watch he kept
They from within the guard over him keep,
Since on divers trades he embarked,
Nothing so priceless did he acquire.”

“In his several journeyings to India,

And thence on his return,
 All riches, which there he found,
 Dirt in his eyes he did repute
 When to thy sacred bones compared.”⁵

Abba Marcos in his “History of the relics of St. Thomas the Apostle” gives some reliable information about when how the relics were translated to Edessa. He writes:

“The merchant Kahbin, and the inhabitants of the entirely Christian town that possessed a splendid church, having matured the plan to enrich both of them with an invaluable treasure, seized the body of Saint Thomas in 230. The faithful soon started to venerate the body of the saint; and the chronicle of Edessa relates the translation of the Apostle’s relics to a big church dedicated to him on 22nd August 394 (in the time of Bishop Cyrus). The importance of Edessa diminished after 609 as a result of the different foreign occupations of the Persians, the Arabs and the Byzantines. The town was entirely destroyed in 1146”.

It is interesting to know that already when the relics were kept in Edessa, portions of the relics were venerated in Italy also. Professor George Menachery informs how this happened. He says that on the occasion of the removal of the relics from the old church at Edessa to the newly built Basilica of St. Thomas in A.D. 394, some portions of the relics were secured on behalf of three principal churches in Italy. These principal churches in Italy are known as the Cathedral of Nola, the Cathedral of Brescia, and the Cathedral of Milan, during the times of their respective bishops Paulinus,

Gaudentius and Ambrose.

After the destruction of Edessa by the Muslims, as the whole country was liable to be overrun by the rising power of Islam, the Edessan Christians took steps to have the relics removed for safety to Chios an island off the coast of Asia Minor. (The translation of the body of Saint Thomas to the island of Chios)

Abba Marcos states that in order to save the venerated body of the Apostle, the European crusaders and the natives carried the relics to the island of Chios. The Byzantine and Syrian Churches indicated 6th October (1146) as the date of this translation.

At Chios, the worship of the saint developed very quickly. The existence of a church dedicated to St. Thomas is proved historically, as well as the body of the saint being placed in a silver shrine (casket). The chronicles attest numerous miracles and healings around the relics of the apostle. The silver casket was presented by Anatoles Stratelates in 753 while at Edessa.⁶

Herman d' Souza relates that the island of Chios had a chequered history, and therefore it is difficult to know exactly what happened to the relics during the period of their repose over there. They remained in Chios till 1258. But the genuineness of the relics was testified by the slab of chalcedony with the name of the Apostle and his bust engraved on it, which covered the Apostle's relics while at Chios. This stone is now in the Cathedral of Ortona, Italy.⁷



The slab of chalcedony, showing figure bust and Greek inscription – “Agios Thomas,” meaning Saint Thomas.⁸

The Translation of The Body of Saint Thomas to Ortona (Italy)



Abba Marcos gives the following details:

“During the war between the republics of Venice and Genoa, wanting to settle up with

Genoa, Venice destroys several islands recently conquered by Genoa, one among which was the island of Chios. Three galleys (war ships) from Ortona took part in this expedition and put in sack the island of Chios, under the leadership of the Admiral Leo Accaciuoli. He discovered the tomb of Saint Thomas in the church, ordered to open it, and then got the body of the Apostle and carried it to one of the three galleys. The admiral took away with him the body of the saint and the guardian of the church Father Angi Falconiero, as a prisoner. On 6th September 1258, the body of Saint Thomas reached Ortona. Father Falconiero remained at Bari as a prisoner; the religious and civil authorities of Ortona sent a commission to Bari, which registered the event in front of

a notary so as to dissipate all doubt and confusion in the future. This act relating the translation of the body of Saint Thomas to Ortona, has been registered by the notary Pavone in Bari (Italy) on 22nd September 1259, signed by him, by other notaries and by eminent personalities.





“The body of the Saint was put in the main church dedicated to Saint Mary, which took later on the name of Saint Thomas. Illustrious pilgrims paid visits to the tomb of the apostle, among them St. Brigitte of Sweden. Numerous indulgences were granted to the pilgrims who visited the body of Saint Thomas: by Pope Sixtus IV on 7th July 1479, by Pope Gregory XIII on 13th September 1575, by Pope Clemens VIII on 4th March 1596, by Pope Benedict XIV on 14th September 1742, and by Pope Pius XII on 2nd September 1949.

“But the relics knew also some tribulations at Ortona. A tentative robbery of the relics by the Venetians took place in 1475. An act of the notary Giuseppe Massari informs us that in 1566 the church was burnt by the Turks during the sacking of Ortona. The relics were thrown on the ground and the silver chest taken away as spoils of war. The next day, the clergy got back a large portion of the body from the ashes. In 1612, the relics were placed in a gilded bronze casket. A few years later, the cathedral was reconstructed and embellished. On 18th February 1799, soldiers of the French army under the general Couthard again profaned the

relics, breaking the casket and throwing the bones on the ground. The next day, the canons collected “all the bones of our protector Saint Thomas, which appeared black as they were after the conflagration of 1566”, as relates a document of that time, and put them in a casket. On 20th April 1800, the relics were again placed in a bronze casket, which was duly sealed; the restoration and the embellishment of the apostolic tomb and the cathedral were undertaken. New disaster in 1943: the cathedral was destroyed by the German army. The relics of Saint Thomas could be saved. On 6th September 1949, the altar tomb of the Apostle and the reconstructed cathedral were re-consecrated.”⁹

A Register of Relics, Compiled by David Sing master mentions the wrist bone of St. Thomas at Cranganore (now Koddungalloor) and the head of a lance, a pot with some blood stained earth and some bones in the tomb of the Apostle at Mylapore, Madras;

“He is said to have landed near Cranganore (now Kodungalloor), Kerala, in 52. The Marthoma Pontifical Shrine there has one of his wrist bones, from the hand that was poked into the side of Christ, supposedly the only relic of Thomas outside Italy. He is said to have been martyred at Mylapore, now a suburb of Madras and to be buried there in San Thome Basilica, Madras (now Chennai), Tamil Nadu – this is on the site of an earlier Syrian church which was discovered by the Portuguese in 1525 when the tomb was found to contain the head of a lance, a pot with some blood-stained earth and some bones”.¹⁰

The Marthoma Pontifical Shrine, Azhikode



Christians all over India celebrated the 19th centenary anniversary of the arrival of St. Thomas the Apostle in 1952. For this solemn occasion, a bone from his hand was entombed in the altar of St. Thomas Church in Cranganore.¹¹

St. Thomas had said that he would not believe in the Resurrection till he had felt the Risen Christ and his wounds with his own finger — “Except I put my hand into His side, I will not believe (John 20.25)”. In 1952, the Pope decided to gift to India, a portion of this finger from the relics kept at Ortona in Italy, in order to commemorate the 1900 years of arrival of St. Thomas in India and Cardinal Tisserant officiating for the Pope, presented this precious relic to Indian Christianity.¹²

The Marthoma Pontifical Shrine, a monument to St. Thomas is situated at Marthoma Nagar, Azhikode, Kodungallur, in Kerala. Built in the model of St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome, this shrine is a historic **pilgrim centre** of the Indian Christians, situated on the beautiful banks of the river Periyar. Its historical importance was rightly



acknowledged when on the occasion of the 19th centenary celebration of the coming of St. Thomas to India, Holy See, the official seat of the Vatican, thought to offer a befitting gift to St. Thomas Christians in Kerala.

Late Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, the then Prefect of

Oriental Congregation solemnly brought **the bone of the right arm of the apostle** from Ortona in Italy and enthroned it in the present Shrine on December 6th, 1953. From the great day onwards, the Shrine has been attracting pilgrims from all over the world irrespective of caste and creed who come to venerate that hand which belonged to the great Saint, a disciple of Lord Jesus Christ.

The Marthoma Pontifical Shrine carrying the holy relic of St. Thomas was entrusted by the Holy See to the C.M.I. fathers of Devamatha Province, Thrissur. The relic is enclosed in a glass case and exposed daily from 9 am - 6pm for veneration of the faithful with befitting briefing.¹³

The following Email correspondence gives us a

curious viewpoint where to look for the relics of St. Thomas: are they surely found in Ortona at present? Whom are they disposed to? Has our Apostle been offered a chance to come back home (to India)?

CINEast Archives

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Re: CE: body of St. Thomas

New Message

Date: Fri Mar 14 2003 - 15:57:43 CST

Subject: Re: CE: body of St. Thomas

Allen W Thrasher (athr@loc.gov)

Wrote:

“The body of St. Thomas the Apostle was not taken by Westerners from India, rather it was early taken from India to Edessa in Asia Minor, and from thence to Ortona. I don’t know the details of any stage, but the initial abstraction was done by Easterners”.

In reply to: Allen W Thrasher: “CE: body of St. Thomas”

Date: Fri, 14 Mar 2003 13:57:43 -0800 (PST)

From: “P.M.”(ahmadbenbhazir@yahoo.com)

Dear Allen,

“Thank you, I had forgotten this. But it doesn’t matter to me so much who did what first. Should Rome give back the relics to Edessa and then leave Edessa to give

them to India? Perhaps this would work, but who should Rome return them to? The Patriarch of Antioch? The Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrians? In this time when Rome is giving relics back to the Copts, the Greeks, and others, I find it troubling that our Apostle is not offered a chance to come back home (to India). Of course, I blame a lot of this on our hierarchs for not making a big stink about it, but surely one should offer to return property rather than wait to be asked?"

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Assuredly our Apostle, by Divine Providence, has been offered a chance to come back home (to India). Though our hierarchs did not intend to do so, the property has been returned to India through a back door quite reliable. After Vatican II the veneration of relics having been under estimated by the Catholic Hierarchies, S.E. Mgr. Pius Augustus M. Crivellari, O.F.M. succeeded in obtaining a considerable portion (or the whole) of St. Thomas' relics from Ortona. The tube containing the relics was sealed by himself at the upper part in 1965.

In 1967 these relics were donated by Father Bernardino M. Genzo, O.F.M to Dr. Pietro Zampieri, honorary Canon of the Cathedral of Valencia, Spain. In 1981 the relics were again donated to S.E. Mgr. Hieronymus B.

Bortington, Bishop of Padua. And in 1983 these relics of Saint Thomas the Apostle were donated by the honorary Canon Pietro Zampieri to Abba Marcos, Orthodox Coptic bishop for the territory of France.

Abba Marcos, the Orthodox Coptic Bishop really wanted to return the property to India. In the year 1988 when he received news that the Society of St. Pius X had started its mission in India, he as a sign of fraternal devotion wanted to donate the relics to the Superior General of the SSPX so that the relics may be sent to the Priory of SSPX in India. The author was privileged to be an eye witness when Abba Marcos handed over the treasure of India to Father Franz Schmidberger, Sacerdotal Fraternity of St. Pius X in Switzerland on 6th May 1988, together with the following authentic documents and act of donations dated 10th April 1988.

Document donated by Abba Marcos to the Superior General of St. Pius X Society

The Revost les Eaux

10.4.1988

As a sign of fraternal devotion, I Abba Marcos,
Orthodox Coptic bishop for the territory of France,
offer to

Father Franz Schmidberger
Sacerdotal Fraternity of St. Pius X.

A reliquary containing the relics of Saint Thomas the
Apostle, accompanied by the following documents:

1. Copy of the authentic document of S.E. Mgr. Pius Augustus M. Crivellari, O.F.M.

The tube containing the relics was sealed by himself at the upper part in 1965.

2. Act of donation of these relics from Father Bernardino M. Genzo, O.F.M. to Dr. Pietro Zampieri, honorary Canon of the Cathedral of Valencia, Spain, in 1967.

3. Authentic document of S.E. Mgr. Hieronymus B. Bortignon, Bishop of Padua, who sealed the tube again in 1981.

4. Document of donation of these relics of Saint Thomas the Apostle by the honorary Canon Pietro Zampieri to Abba Marcos, orthodox Coptic bishop in 1983.

These relics were placed in a reliquary of Renaissance style by myself.

Abba Marcos, Orthodox Coptic Bishop for the territory of France

The original copies of the above said documents and the reliquary containing the relics of Saint Thomas the Apostle which you see in these pictures are now preserved in the archives of the Superior of SSPX in India at:

The Priory of the Most Holy Trinity
8A/3 Seevalaperi Road
Annie Nagar, Palyamkottai
Tamil Nadu
Pin : 627 172, India.



Thus the great treasure of India, most probably the whole of the remaining relics of St. Thomas the Apostle in Ortona, through the benevolent hands of Abba Marcos Orthodox Coptic Bishop for the territory of France, has reached the land of India (the southern Pandian Kingdom) where St. Thomas commenced his First Mission in 33 A.D. to 46 A.D., without having asked for it.

Holy Relic of The Most Blessed Virgin Mary, From Her Girdle (Belt, Cincture)

“This most ancient dress piece of Mother Mary has centuries-old tradition of veneration. According to the tradition, it is taken from the grave of Saint Thomas, the Apostle who brought it from Jerusalem to India. Now it is preserved under the guard of Jacobite



Syrian Church in Homs, Syria. Scientific studies prove that this girdle is two thousand years old (see picture below, in the comment box) and was made in Palestine.

This Cincture should not be confused with the Cincture Our Lady gave to Saints Augustine and Monica (Augustinian Cincture)” “This holy and precious relic of the Blessed Virgin Mary can be found at the Syrian Orthodox Church of Homs, Syria.”

“By the 7th century a variation emerged, according to which one of the apostles, often identified as St Thomas, was not present at the death of Mary, but his late arrival precipitates a reopening of Mary’s tomb, which is found to be empty except for her grave clothes. In a later tradition, Mary drops her girdle down to the apostle from heaven as testament to the event. This incident is



depicted in many later paintings of the Assumption.

“Apocryphal writings from the early church mention that St. Mary died in the presence of all the Apostles except St. Thomas. St. Thomas was brought to Jerusalem by Holy Spirit through ‘Oyar’ (air) and saw St. Mary’s body was taken to heaven by the angels. He got the girdle from St. Mary as a token to show it to other apostles that he actually saw St. Mary in ‘Oyar’ and to confirm asked the apostles to open the tomb and then there was no body in it. The Apostles concluded that she had been taken up to Heaven, body and soul.

“Our Holy Syriac Orthodox Church has the rare privilege to have with her the Girdle of St. Mary. The Holy Girdle of



Virgin Mary which was handed over to Apostle St. Thomas, during her assumption to heaven. St. Thomas carried this precious treasure of Virgin Mary with him to India where he died a martyr. In 394 A.D. together with the coffin of St. Thomas, this valuable Girdle of Holy Virgin Mary was also moved from India to Raha and was established in a Church. (In the Syriac history of Raha, it is mentioned that in Aug 22, 705 Greek era they brought the coffin of St. Thomas the apostle to his large church in the days of Mar Kora, the Bishop

of Raha. Ref: The Orien Biblio of Assimaany, Volume I, page 399). This Church where the Holy Girdle of Virgin Mary was established came to be known as the “The Church of Girdle”.

Holy Girdle is now kept in the St. Mary’s Soonoro Church in Holms, Syria. “Parts of the Holy Girdle was distributed all over the world, and now the remaining small part is rolled and covered with cotton and is kept in an “Arulikka”, in a special place near to the Madbaho in this Church. The Holy Girdle was earlier kept in the ‘Altar’ and in 1953, when the Church was renovated; it was taken out by L.L. “The Patriarch Mor Aphrem. It was then carbon tested by the archaeologists to determine its age and after that they confirmed its authenticity. Photographs of these events are also kept near to the Holy Girdle’s place. The two stone plates, one with a hole inside where the Holy Girdle was kept, and



the other one which was covering the first stone plate with an inscription about it, is also kept in a nearby place of the Madbaho.

Two stone plates, one with a hole inside where the Holy Girdle was kept, and the other one which was covering the first stone plate with an inscription about it.

“The relic of the Cincture venerated for over 800 years in the Cathedral of Prato has no definite history before 1141. According to a story, a gentleman of Prato, named Michele received the relic as a dowry upon his marriage to Maria of Jerusalem, who claimed to be a direct descendant of St. Thomas the Apostle. Michele was told how the belt had come to his wife’s possession, but these details are now unknown.

“Until 16th Century, the relic was kept folded in a silver box and shown carefully by priests who wore silk gloves. During the 16th Century, the Medici family donated a special double frame reliquary which we now see in the photo above.

“It is a long strip of green ribbon, 1.27 meters in length, and is made from either goat or camel hair with thin gold threads stretched along its borders. It also has small olive-shaped buttons for hooking”. Source: “Relics” by Joan Caroll Cruz.

The Power of the Girdle

When St. Thomas came to India the first time (before the death of Our Lady), he brought with him, like the other apostles, a portion of the relics of Our Lord’s dress and few thorns from the crown of thorns given by the Blessed Virgin Mary. When he came the second time (after the death of Our Lady), he alone was privileged to come wearing in his waist the very girdle of Our Lady Herself. Here let us recall one of the miracles of this girdle against the iniquitous idols and paganism of India.¹⁴

F. A. D’Cruz K.S.G. in his “St. Thomas in India” quotes

the epic poem called the *Lusiads* of Louis Camoes, the most sublime figure in the history of Portuguese literature:

“Here rose the potent city, Meliapore
 Named, in olden time rich, vast and grand:
 Her sons their olden idols did adore
 As still adareth the iniquitous band:
 In those past ages stood she far from shore
 When to declare glad tidings over the land
 Thome came preaching after he had trod
 A thousand regions taught to know his God
 “Here came he preaching, and the while he gave
 Health to the sick, revival to the dead;
 When chance one day brought floating o’er the wave
 A forest tree of size unmeasured:
 The King a Palace building life would save
 The waif for timber, and determined
 The mighty bulk of trunk ashore to train
 By force of engines, elephants and men.
 “Now was that lumber of such vasty size,
 No jot it moves, however hard they bear;
 When lo! th’ Apostle of Christ’s verities
 Wastes in the business less of toil and care
 His trailing waist-cord to the tree he ties
 Raises and *sans* an effort haled so nice

A sumptuous Temple he would build the same
A fixt example for all future names”.¹

Fr. Em. Mo. MothaVaz graphically explains the meaning of the above verses of the epic poem in his book “History of St. Thomas the Apostle of India” as follows;

“One day a tree trunk of an immense size was found caught up on the sands on the sea shore. So the ships could not reach the port as they used to. The King knowing it ordered to bring it ashore at once. An elephant and many workers were brought for that purpose. The King also had come there. Though the men with the help of the elephant descended in to the water and tried their best, the tree did not seem to move an inch. Seeing this, the King thinking it possible to achieve by their gods, ordered to bring many priests and to offer sacrifice. They also prayed their gods by their rituals of light and incense. Nothing was achieved. Then he called for the magicians and asked them to show their powers and achieve the goal by their which crafts. Their coming and sacrificing plenty of fowls and sheep was not of any avail.

The King got furious and shouted: “You are all worthless junks, fools who could do nothing!, you are all great liars! And your prayers also are lies. He challenged them saying: See I am going achieve what are not able to achieve; and brought 300 elephants and thousands of soldiers. The king and the people gathered there thought that the log would now easily be taken ashore, when the elephants drag it from the front and the soldiers push it

from behind. But even when the elephants and men tried very hard, the log did not an inch. Seeing this, the king feeling deceived and ashamed did not know what to do.

“At that moment St. Thomas came there. By inquiring and seeing what happened, he approached King Mahadeva and said: “O, King! I am in need of building a church. Since I need some wood for it, would you please give me the tree which has reached the sea shore? I shall get it ashore and take it myself. ” The king said with a smile of derision; “do you think you are stronger than these elephants and men? I have no objection to grant your request if you can achieve what they could not.” Hearing this St. Thomas said: “I am old and feeble. But the God whom I worship is all powerful. You are going



to see His might here and now. Saying this, the saint untied the girdle from his waist, gave it to one of the workers there and asked him to tie one end of it to the tree and to pull by the other end. When the man tied the tree, the Apostle raising his eyes to heaven prayed, drew the sign of the cross on the log and said: “now you shall pull.” Obeying his words, he with confidence pulled the tree by the girdle. To the trembling and astonishment of all, the log came ashore without any little hurdle. Dragging it the man took it to the

spot where St. Thomas had designated to build the church.

“The King observing it in person became stunned with awe and surprise! Looking at the temple priests and magicians with fury saying: “Truly you are liars and worthless,” he approached the Apostle, humbly greeted him and promised: “O, gracious saint! You alone are powerful. You may build the church as you wish. I will give you all the necessary aid and support.”¹⁵

Here the power attributed to St. Thomas was really the power of Our Lady’s girdle worn by the Apostle. In fact when St. Thomas had been privileged to witness the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he like Eliseus from Elias, asked for a special power. (“I beseech thee that in me may be thy double spirit” - 4Kings 2: 9).

And Our Lady, like Elias to Eliseus, granted him his request. (“Since thou hast seen me when I am taken from thee, thou shalt have what thou hast asked” - 4Kings 2: 10). And St. Thomas took up the girdle of Our Lady that fell from her - (4Kings 2: 13). That is the secret why St. Thomas worked many and more powerful miracles in his second mission (52 A.D. to 72 A.D.) than in his first mission (33 A.D. to 46 A.D.) in India.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN



THE SPREADING OF ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS

The Kingdom of Gandhappar Raja continued to be a Christian kingdom and was ruled by his Christian successors until the kingdom had been slowly disappearing and suddenly swallowed by a sand storm occurred in the seventeenth century due to a curse.¹

Let us here narrate the interesting history how (1) the Kingdom of Gandhappar Raja preserved and spread Christianity, and (2) how this Kingdom was swallowed by the red sands.

St. Thomas Christians

The ancient Christian communities in the regions of south Indian East coast and West coast, claiming St. Thomas the Apostle as their spiritual father are called “The Saint Thomas Christians”.

The very first Christian community in India founded by St. Thomas in the Southern Pandian Kingdom (Maanaveera Naadu) and the church built by him there at Kanakkankudiyruppu were very carefully protected and maintained by the successors of Gandhappar Raja for several centuries. These early Christians in course of time moved and settled all over south India, chiefly along the East Coast up to Mailapore in the north; and along the West Coast all over Kerala.²

After the martyrdom of the Saint, his twin brother Addai Thomas came to India to continue the work of the Apostle.³ And after him, the disciples of Addai Thomas, namely Aggaeus and Maris, and other Christian missionaries came from the west Asian countries such as Armenia, Syria, Persia, Antiochea, and Edessa, and took care of the Christians of St. Thomas in Maanaveera Naadu and in Kerala.⁴ It is important to note that the early Christians of both Maanaveera Naadu and Kerala were known as “Malabar Christians” in the early centuries.

About the end of the third century A.D., Patriarchs from Persia came to India to consolidate the faith of the Malabar (Indian) Christians. George M. Moraes states: “...it was that during the Patriarchate of Shahlupha and Papa, say about 295 – 300, the old prelate David resigned his diocese of Parat d’ Maysan and left for India. ...” and again, “John of Persia who took part in the council of Nicaea, describes himself in signing the decrees of the council as (bishop) of the whole of Persia and of Greater India.”⁵

Apart from the fact that in 345 A.D. it was resolved

by the assembly of Bishops of the Catholicos in Seleucia – Ctesiphon to reinforce the Christians in India by settling among them well instructed Christians together with deacons and priests in Malabar under the leadership of a merchant named Thomas of Jerusalem.

And there was another settlement of the Parasikas (Persians) more or less in the same period in the province north of Cape Comerin. This event clearly shows the reference to a group of Christians settled between the Chola country and Ceylon, namely to the north of Cape Comrin (Maanaveera Naadu) in the fifth Century. ⁶

Further more, the navigator Cosmos Indicopleustes who had passed through India some time about 545 A.D. remarks that even in Toprobane (i.e., Ceylon), an island in Further India, where the Indian sea is, there was a church of Christians, with clergy and a body of believers.⁷ This church and community of Christians are nothing but the remnants of the early Christians of the Kingdom of Gandhappar Raja which had its extension also in Ceylon, and was preserved till the end of the sixth century A.D.

The Spread of St. Thomas Christians : (From 1st Century to 12th Century)

During the reign of the Pandian King Vettriverchezhiyan in Madurai from 144 A.D. to 174 A.D., the petit king who ruled the Southern Pandian Kingdom (Maanaveera Nadu) was a Christian king called **Nanmaaran** from the posterity of Gandhappa Raja.⁸

During the reign of Pandian Nedunchezhiyan in

Madurai from 174 A. D. to 204⁹, the light of Faith which St. Thomas kindled in the Southern Pandian Kingdom began to spread all over the Chera Kingdom and the Chozha Kingdom. The caravan of business people from Maanaveera Naadu settled Christian communities in the South up to Cape Comerin, in the West up to Thiruvithaankodu, and in the North up to Mylapore. Chiefly in Cauveripoompattinam where the river Cauvery joined the sea, there was a big community known as “St. Thomas Christians”.¹⁰

From 235 A.D. to 340 A.D. St. Thomas Christians of the East Coast were disturbed by the invasion of the Vaduga Karu Nadargal or the Kannadas called Kalapirars. The Christians were forced to leave their religion. For example in 293 A. D. the Christians of the East Coast, when forced, instead of leaving their religion they left their place Cauveripoompattinam, and travelled through the sea to Kerala and settled in Kollam together with the St. Thomas Christians there. 72 families thus migrated while disturbed by the invasion of the Kannadas. But from 340 A. D. to 520 A.D. when the Kalapirars were ruling the country, the Southern Pandian Kingdom was ruled only by Pandian Kings.”

But Alex C. Muthaia asserts that in MaanaveeraNaadu, Christianity and the rule of Christian Kings never ceased to exist: “Among the Christians of Maanaveera Naadu, in spite of some changes in their liturgical worship and the language of the liturgy, the Christian religion was continuously preserved”.¹² At the same time Maanaveera Naadu alone was ruled by Christian Kings:

“In India there was no trace of historical evidence to prove the existence of a Christian Kingdom or Christian Kings except in Maanaveera Naadu”.¹³

And again interestingly enough he emphatically asserts that until 1790 A. D. when this region was covered by the red sands, Christian kings had continuously ruled Maanaveera Naadu: “From the fact that while in the petit kingdoms around the territory of Maanaveera Nadu, the Chera and Chozha kings have built ever so many Hindu temples, no one could see Hindu temples built by any private person or a king inside the territory of Maanaveera Naadu, it is evident without doubt that from the beginning till late (1790), the Christian Kings of Maanaveera Nadu have ruled this Kingdom”.¹⁴

In 354 A. D. the Roman Emperor Constantius who was leaning towards the Arian heresy, sent an Arian bishop called Theophilus to look after the Indian Christians. George Moraes writes: “In 354 Malabar was visited by Theophilus ...who became a monk in Constantinople, was ordained a deacon by Eusabius of Nicomedia, and was consecrated an Arian bishop about 350 A.D. He was sent out by Emperor Constantius for the express purpose of spreading the Arian doctrines in India”.¹⁵ Hence the St. Thomas Christians, without their knowledge, happened to fall into Arian heresy. And slowly the churches which St. Thomas had built and the Christian spirit among the people began to disappear. And so was the church at Kanakankudiyiruppu also.¹⁶

By 530 A.D. the Indian Church was caught in the Nestorian net. A foreign language called Chaldee (meaning

Syiac) had been imposed upon them by the Persian Church. George Moraes writes: "But it is certain that by 530 A. D. it had been absorbed by the Persian Church. Actually, in the last quarter of the fifth century, Nestorian Missioners are seen making strenuous attempts to capture the Indian Church..... and the Indian Church soon came under Nestorian influence."¹⁷

The above fact has been confirmed by the studies of Alex C. Muthiaia saying: "In the ancient eras among the Christians of Maanaveera Naadu the liturgical ceremonies must have been conducted in the ways directed, preached and regulated by St. Thomas the Apostle. After his death, changes must have been introduced in the ceremonies and languages of the liturgy by the Missionaries who came from Armenia, Syria and Persia. Every linguistic person must have used his own language in a mixture of Greco, Syrian and Aramaic languages. And so, in 470 A.D. the Bible was translated from Greek into Syriac and was sent to India. From the fourth century till the sixteenth century, it seems that the Chaldean ecclesiastics were ruling the Malabar Christians."¹⁸

In 590 A.D. according to St. Gregory of Toulouse, an illustrious pilgrim Theodor has said: "At the place where the body of St. Thomas was buried there were a big Monastery and a beautiful church. That testifies that St. Thomas was doing his Apostleship and became a Martyr there."¹⁹ All these show that up to the sixth century St. Thomas Christians were living in the West and East costs of south India.

During this period(7th century) "Nestorians reached

not only Central Asia but also they went to China and India to help Christianity be spread and they became prominent representatives” (Dr. Murat Gökhan)²⁰

A Missionary called **George the Nestorian**, together with some Jews who were settled in south India, was engaged in spreading the Christian religion. He traced out the places where St. Thomas had established Christian communities and consolidated the Christian faith in his own heretical way. He renewed the church at Kanakkankudiyiruppu and it is during this time that the Churches of St. George at Edathuva in Kerala and at Nilapparaiin Naanchil Naadu (Kanyakumari district), of St. Agatha at Rammadupuram, of St. Lucia at Anaikkarai, of St. Eustace (Esthakiar) at Mittarkulam, of St. Barbarammal near Somanaathaperi, of St. Quitheriammal at Manakkarai, of St. Cecily at Kurumbur and of St. Helenammal at Mukkaani were built.²¹

In 920 A.D. the Pandian Kingdom was destroyed and in 1190 it was once again established by King Jadaa Varman Kulasekara Pandian. In all these political changes, the Maanaveera Naadu of the south Pandian Kingdom was always ruled by Christian petit kings of Pandians until 1790 A. D. as cited above.

In the mean while the Nestorian Church, persecuted at home and divided against it, was unable to recapture its glorious past. It neglected its distant missions, sending prelates to India at irregular intervals. During this period, Christianity completely disappeared from the East coast of India, the people lapsing into their former practices in the absence of a ministering clergy.²²

There is very little information on the Church in India in the subsequent four centuries till the arrival of the Latin monks at the close of the thirteenth century.²³ And therefore due to the absence of priests and bishops to look after the Christians of Maanaveera Naadu, the St. Thomas Christians in this area happened to be destroyed and disappear for four centuries, and the church at Kanakkankudiyiruppu also disappeared once again.²⁴

It is to be noted that all along these twelve centuries there developed a slow deposit of red sand blown by the west wind through the gaps of the Western Ghats, and the ground level of the Maanaveera Naadu was slowly raised up to twenty feet high from the sea level by the thirteenth century. Therefore the spot on which St. Thomas had built the first church had already gone twenty feet below the earth in the Thirteenth century. So whenever the people and Missionaries rebuilt the church of St. Thomas, each time the level of the ground was growing up continuously, and consequently there can be remnants of several churches in different levels below.

The Spread of St. Thomas Christians : (From 13th Century to 17th Century)

John of Monte Corvino (1247-1328)

It was Pope Gregory IX who first turned his attention to the East, caused by the incursion of the Mongols into Christian Europe. The Pope had, in 1241, charged the Cistercians, the Dominicans and the Franciscans to preach against the Mongols. But the Pope died that very year.



It is the relations of the Holy See with China that are of greater moments for us from the point of view of the history of Latin Christianity in India. For, lying as it is on the route of the missionaries who made their journeys to China, India drew the attention of these missionaries to its own religious needs. The first Catholic missionary to go to China was a Franciscan, John Monte Corvino, appointed by Pope Nicholas IV as Papal legate in 1291. He started for his destination accompanied by Nicholas of Pistoia, a Dominican.²⁵

This fact has been attested by Yan kejiain as following;²⁶

“John of Monte Corvino (1247-1328), a Franciscan was sent to China in 1291 by Pope Nicholas IV. As the 1st Roman Catholic missionary to China, John came to China in 1294.

Rome named him as the archbishop of Han Ba Li (Beijing) and also sent another seven missionaries to China as his assistants. Archbishop John managed the Diocese of Beijing for over 30 years and claimed to have baptized more

than 6,000 people. He died in 1328 at the age of 81.

“Upon hearing of his death ve years later, Pope John XXII (1316-1334) sent Nicholas to Beijing to be the bishop, but he unfortunately died on the journey.

“Ten years later, in 1338, Pope Pius XII sent Giovanni de Marignoli to China. Because of the unstable political situation of the Yuan Empire, however, he quickly returned to Rome”.²⁷

John Monte Corvino chose the route to China through India. Arriving in India, the two missionaries (Monte Corvino and Nicholas Pistoia) landed at Mylapore which was a midway station to China. For some reason, their departure to China was delayed by thirteen months. He went about the country, studying the character of the people. Monte Corvino must have visited during these thirteen months (of 1292) the Southern Pandian Kingdom where St. Thomas had built his first Church at Kanakkankudiyiruppu. There was no trace of the church built by St. Thomas or by his followers at that time except a small shed with Palmira leaves with a cross and the statue of Our Lady of Assumption left as the monuments of St. Thomas the Apostle.

“John of Monte Corvino was impressed by the simplicity and the friendly disposition of our people”, says George Moraes, He had also been impressed by the security and peace reigning in the country which is a necessary condition for the success of the apostolate at all times. In different places round about Mylapore, he himself had baptized a hundred persons. Encouraged by his success he

decided to leave behind at this place his Dominican companion-in-arms Friar Nicholas of Pistoia to continue his work.

“At the nick of time, however, when John of Monte Corvino was about to set sail, happy in the thought of bright prospects for the mission he had founded at Mylapore, Friar Nicholas fell ill and died. And it must have been with a heavy heart that Monte Corvino took leave of his neophytes (1292).”²⁸

Arriving in China, Monte Corvino worked single handed for seven years. The Holy See made him Archbishop at Peking with Patriarchal authority and sent more missionaries in order to work under him.

But in the midst of his labours in China, he did not forget his Christians in Mylapore. In 1306 he appealed to his fellow –monks in Persia to go and minister in the mission field he had opened in India. And thus it was left to Friar-Preacher (Dominican) Jordan of Severac who followed Monte Corvino, to establish the Catholic Church in India.²⁹

Jordan of Servac (1320-1328)

In 1318 Pope John XXII assigned India to the Dominicans. Jordan therefore decided to leave for India at the earliest opportunity. He offered to fill the place left vacant by the death of Nicholas of Pistoia at Mylapore. He asked and received permission from his superiors to depart to India with some Franciscan Friars, going to China by the sea-route.

Towards the end of 1320 the missionaries embarked

with a view to proceed to Quilon on the Malabar Coast. But the vessel wended its course to Thana near Bombay. Having arrived at Thana in April, they could resume their voyage to Malabar and Mylapore only in October at the end of the monsoon.

At that time Thana was in the hands of the Muslims belonging to the Delhi Sultanate. The Muslims caught hold of the companions of Jordan, persecuted and killed them. Jordan had the bodies of these Martyrs and buried them; and sometime later these relics were taken to China. The Missionary Journey to south India could be resumed only in 1324 with five more Dominican friars.

This time they were dispersed among various mission stations in **Karnataka, Mysore, Malabar and Travancore**. Within four years they baptized more than ten thousand people.³⁹

In the year 1328 Jordan left India for Europe to place before the Soverign Pontiff John XXII, the affairs of the Indian mission. He convinced Pope of the need of establishing in India regular ecclesiastical government, with a bishop at its head. The Pope hearing the zealous apostle responsible for the establishment of the Catholic Church in India, unhesitatingly offered the office to Friar Jordan himself, and appointed him bishop of Quilon.

The Pope's letter of appointment was to the Christians of Molephatam (Mylapore) that is of greater interest, reviving as it does the memory of the ancient Christianity of south India. Bishop Jordan enlisted a large

number of Friar Preachers for his mission and, accompanied by Brother Telaimonot, returned to India.

Bishop Jordan founded several houses of the Dominican order in this country, including the one in Mylapore with a monastery attached to the church of St. Thomas the Apostle. But the will of God was different in the growth of the Indian mission. The Muslims could not bear to see the conversions, and so they stoned the bishop of Quilon at Thana. After the martyrdom of Blessed Jordan, the Catholic missions languished in India.³¹

The Apparition of Our Lady

In the mean time, there was a land lord who was serving as an officer to the petit king of Maanaveera Naadu, living in Thopuvilai near Jesupuram the capital of that petit kingdom. He was a pious Christian, the follower of St. Thomas and a great devotee of Our Lady. His name was **Agathu Marian**.

On a Saturday in 1325 Our Lady of Assumption appeared to him and indicating the exact location where St. Thomas had first built his church in Her Honour, asked him to build a church on that spot. The original church built by St. Thomas was now twenty feet below the earth covered by the red sands. Agathu Marian gathered a group of Christians spread about that place and went to the spot Our Lady indicated, and they all were wonder struck by awe at the sight of a spring of clean water in front of a shed containing the cross and statues. When they dug the foundation they could find, a few feet below the earth, the debris of a church

built above the original church, most probably by **George the Nestorian** in the 7th century.³²



As a result, Agathu Marian, according to the size of his resources and by the contribution of the people around, finished building a small and beautiful church and enthroned the statues on the altar in the year 1326. Hearing about the apparition and the new church at Kanakkankudiyiruppu, the new generations of the St. Thomas Christians scattered here and there came and settled there, and began to worship in that church by practicing Christianity in their own way.

The above fact has been confirmed by Thambi Nayagam who was quoted by Chevalier V. C. George (of Kottayam, Kerala) in his research book as follows: “When St. Francis Xavier came to the region of south India in 1542, there lived in the sea shore of the bay of Bengal a population of twenty thousand Fishermen; and in the adjacent in land region St. Thomas Christians were living.”³³

Actually both these groups of the coastal fishermen and of the in land region were called St. Thomas Christians,



and were the subjects of the same Southern Pandian Kingdom. At the time of St. Francis Xavier, Kanakkankudiyiruppu was called Pandagasaalai meaning the royal store house of the Kingdom known as Maanaveera Naadu.

John De Marignolli (1338 – 1350)

The Christian missionaries opposed by the Muslims in Bombay, had now found a means of entering India from the south. During this dark period, India was visited by John De Marignolli, a Franciscan from Florence. He was chosen as legate to China by Pope Benedict XII. He was consecrated bishop in 1338, and departed in March 1339 and after a long and perilous journey reached China in 1342. After three years of mission in China, Bishop Marignolli decided to return to Europe. On his departure on 26 December 1345 he set out for Quilon where he arrived on 23 March 1346. And From 1346 to 1350 before going to Europe, Bishop John De Marignolli was working in south India and Ceylon.

During this period of four years, Bishop Marignolli

visited Mylapore and the South Pandian Kingdom several times and was building churches and erecting monuments in the places where St. Thomas Christians were found. The above said facts have been attested by the following source and by many other historians.³⁴

“John De Marignolli (Giovanni de’ Marignolli) of St. Lorenzo in Florence, joined the Franciscan order and was consecrated bishop in 1338 AD. He was chosen as legate to China by Pope Benedict XII (1334–1342). He preached in China and on his way back from China, he landed at Quilon and lived there for over a year, preaching in St. George’s Church, which was founded by Jordanus. “In 1338 during the Pontificate of Pope Benedict XII (1334–1342) the great Khan of Peking in China sent a great delegation of ambassadors to the Pope at Avignon and they were given a royal reception by the Pope. They requested the Pope to send a legate who would be wise, capable and virtuous to care for their souls. Responding to their request the Pope chose John De Marignolli as his legate to China and he accompanied the ambassadors of Great Khan on their homeward journey. Marignolli departed with a great number of friars and precious gifts for Khan, princes and sovereigns. They departed in March 1339 and after a long and perilous journey reached their destination, Khanbalique in 1342 and



were received by the Great Khan, who was the last of the Mongol dynasty in China.

“After three years of mission Marignolli decided to return to Europe. On his departure on 26 December 1345 he set out for Quilon where he arrived on 23 March 1346. The Christians of Quilon warmly welcomed him. He lived there for over a year, and preached in St. George’s Church, founded by Jordanus.

“He concentrated himself in the Latin Church of St. George founded by Bishop Jordanus. He preached in this Church and adorned the Church with paintings. He could not do much of missionary activity here since he became sick with dysentery during his stay at Quilon. When he recovered he visited Cape Comorin the extremity of Indian Peninsula where he erected a marble pillar mounted by a cross in full view of Ceylon. It seems that he was an ambitious man and was desirous that the good people of Quilon should never forget him and that was the intention of the erection of the marble pillar. The column, which was to endure till the world’s end soon crumbled under the corroding influence of the elements and the inscriptions, were destroyed. Later a wrong tradition developed, attributing this column to St. Thomas. Marignolli set for Sumatra and Ceylon in July 1347. In September 1348 he came back to India. He left India in 1350 AD.”³⁵

George Moraes gives the same account with still more details: “Marignolli must have left China some time in 1346 or 1347, and a few months later he arrived in Quilon, where he stayed for sixteen months. Quilon was the center of the

Catholic missions in India and a busy port, where the whole of the pepper trade was concentrated. It was moreover, the Episcopal See, of which the first incumbent was Jordan of Severac. There was a Latin church dedicated to St. George, but at the time of Marignolli's visit, it was apparently without a priest in charge.

“Marignolli relates a curious story of a Hindu priest, “a man of majestic stature and snowy white beard,” who one day came to him when he happened to be in front of the church. The old man prostrated himself, kissing the ground three times, and told the friar that he had come from a far-off island. He had never eaten meat all his life, and had habitually fasted four months in a year. He was the only priest in his island. The idol which he worshipped told him one day: “Thou art not on the path of salvation. God therefore enjoineeth thee to proceed to Columbum (Quilon) a distance of 2 years' voyage by sea, and there shalt thou find the messenger of god who shall teach thee the way to salvation.” The man, therefore, had straightaway come to Quilon, and had now recognized in the face of the Friar the face of the heavenly envoy which had been revealed to him in his dreams. Sometime before, the pirates had taken away his son. The latter, whom they sold to a Genoese merchant, had since been baptized; and it now so chanced that the boy was with the Friar on the occasion, and the father and son recognized each other. The son then acted as interpreter to his father in teaching him the articles of the Faith, and after three months' instruction he was baptized under the name of Michael. The old man then went away with his son, promising to teach the Faith he had received to his countrymen.

“During his stay at Quilon, Marignolli paid a visit to the tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore, eight to nine hundred kilometers from Quilon. He stayed there for four days, collecting all the legends then current at the place.

“The Franciscan was endowed with a lively imagination. Ceylon was not very far. It was the “Paradise” where the Muslims pointed to the lake formed by the tears of Adam and Eve mourning for their son Abel. Before leaving India, Marignolli set up a pillar at Cape Comerin, the extremity of the Indian peninsula in full view of Ceylon. “More glorious than Alexander the Great,” says he, “when he set up his column (in India), for I erected a stone as my landmark and memorial in the corner of the world over against Paradise *in titulumfundens oleum desuper*. In sooth, it was a marble pillar with a stone cross upon it, intended to last till the world’s end. And it had the Pope’s arms and my own engraved upon it with inscriptions both in Indian and Latin Characters. I consecrated and blessed it in the presence of an infinite multitude of people, and I was carried on the shoulders of the chiefs in a litter or palanquin like Solomon’s.”³⁶

Alex Muthaia is of strong opinion that all the missionaries who visited south India had the happiness of visiting and working in the midst of St. Thomas Christians living in the East Coast including Maanaveera Naadu; chiefly the Venetian missionary John De Marignolli.³⁷

John De Marignolli therefore when he reached Kanakkankudiyiruppu after erecting the marble column at

Kanyakumari (Kovalam), he saw the church built now by Agathu Marian at the spot where St. Thomas the Apostle had built the first church in India, and he wanted to extent it with most solid building materials available at that time in that region.

His coming to South Pandian Kingdom and his activities in Kanakkankudiyiruppu are graphically explained by the author in “The History of Manalmatha Koil” as follows:

“The Franciscan Friar John Marignolli was chosen legate of the Pope for China and was consecrated bishop in the year 1338. He preached in China and on his way back from China he landed in South India and stayed many years. During that period he visited the tomb of St. Thomas and preached Christianity among the St. Thomas Christians. Arriving Quilon, first he enriched with exquisite paintings the altar of St. George’s church at Edathuva. He visited the seven churches built by St. Thomas in Kerala. Then on his journey to Kanakkankudiyiruppu, traveling through the way by which St. Thomas travelled, he renewed the church of St. Mary (Ezharaippalli) at Thiruvithaankodu; planted a stone cross at Nilappaarai Kurusu Malai (Kanjomalai) where St. Thomas was preaching the Sermon on the Mount, and there he raised the church of St. George which had been disappeared.

“Above all other things the special task John Marignolli under took was that at Kanakkankudiyiruppu he stayed and preached the divine truths to Agathu Marian and the ST. Thomas Christians who extended a warm and

heartfelt welcome to their bishop. And in 1349 He extended the church of Our Lady of Assumption with a front façade and the wooden cross, strengthened the walls and roof with small baked bricks and a mixture lime stones, as we now see below the ground level. And as a memorial of his missionary activities in Kanakkankudiyiruppu, he enthroned on the right side of Our Lady's statue the Statue of St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of his Religious Order. Even today we can see this statue on the altar. It is to be noted that this statue is not, as many people think, the statue of St. Antony.

“Hence all praise and thanks are due to His Excellency Mngr. John De Marignolli for having constructed the church of Manalmatha, as we see now, miraculously excavated from under the red sands two hundred years ago.

“From the time of John De Marignolli, Kanakkan kudiyruppu and the church of Our Lady of Assumption became a great shrine, attracting all the missionaries who came to India, including St. Francis Xavier”.³⁸

Kanakkankudiyiruppu Mission Center

After Marignolli, Kanakkankudiyiruppu became a regular mission center for the Franciscan missionaries. The beauty of the place, the simplicity of the people and the piety shown to Our Lady's church by the missionaries and the Christians increased the population of the village every day. The grand panorama of green trees and perennial clean water lake by the side of the Church attracted different kinds of birds to come and settle there in all the seasons throughout the year. Merchants, tourists devotees of Our Lady made it a

point to visit Kankankudiyiruppu as a place of transaction, site seeing and of pilgrimage respectively.

The Portuguese Missionaries

When Vasco da Gama sailed for the Indies, he took with him as his confessor **the venerable Brother Peter of Covillan**, of the Order of Mercy, who was massacred by the savages on the 7th of July, 1497, forty years before the birth of the Society of Jesus. When at the point of death, he uttered these emphatic words: “There will soon arise in the Church of God a new Religious Order, which will bear the name of Jesus; whereof one of the first Fathers, conducted by the Holy Ghost, will penetrate to the remotest confines of the East Indies, which, through his preaching of the divine word, will embrace the faith of Jesus Christ.” (“The life of St. Francis Xavier, Apostle of the Indies and Japan” By D. Bartoli and J. P. Maffel Translated by The Very Rev. Dr. Faber. Page. 94)



In 1498 Vasco da Gama found the sea route to India and reached Calicut on May 20. This opened the way for the Portuguese missionaries. In the beginning there missionary activities developed in the localities where the Portuguese traders built their factories and forts.

Friar Henry of Coimbra

In 1500 a group of missionaries had accompanied the chief Trader Cabral on this expedition, consisting of eight Franciscans under the leadership of Friar Henry of Coimbra, and nine other priests. Immediately they employed themselves in the study of the native language. Friar Henry moved among the people, and in a short time converted a number of Hindus to the Faith. The group of missionaries was divided for the five principalities of the Malabar Coast – Cananore, Calicut, Cochin, Quilon and Travancore.

Travancore included Venaadu and Maanaveera Naadu. Most probably Friar Henry was in charge of Travancore, and therefore he began to visit Thiruvithankodu, Kumari Muttom and Kankankudiyiruppu. Kanakkan kudiyiruppu might have been the mission station for him, from where he would have visited Kaayal, Kombuthurai, Manappadu, Periathaalai, Koodothaalai, Overi, and Kumari Muttam in the sea shore where already St. Thomas Christians were settled. And also he had to attend from Kanakkan kudiyiruppu the Communités of St. Thomas Christians in Sokkankudiyiruppu, Thopu Vilai, Rammadupuram, Vadakkankulam, Nilappaarai, Marungur, Kottar, Kaarankaadu, and Thiruvthaankodu, as Jonh Marignlli did.

It was at that time that the Zamorin of Calicut in his enthusiasm sent one of his pages, a boy of fifteen, to Portugal to see for himself what the country was like. The Portuguese King was pleased with the lad, who learnt to read and write Portuguese, and asking for baptism, was baptised Joao Da Cruz.

In Venaadu, Mucuas were the fishermen, boatmen and sailors. The head of the Mucuas was called Arel, who was settled with all his family and kindred in Cochin. He was converted to Christianity by Friar Henry. The Arel had influential relatives in other Kingdoms (Venaadu and Southern Pandian Kingdom) holding similar positions and they were resolved to follow his example. Hence the Franciscan missionaries under Friar Henry were now able to speed up their conversions along the coastal side of Arabian Sea in the West, and the Coromandal coast in the East.³⁹

That is how when Duarte Barbosa visited Kanyakumari he could see a church built at Muttom by the Portuguese, before the coming of St. Francis Xavier. Alex Muthaia writes:

“Duarte Barbosa who came to India in the year 1516 stated that at Kumari Muttom there was a church built by the Armenians, in which the Armenians and then the Portuguese were conducting the liturgical ceremonies. Many crosses were seen there. And therefore When St. Francis Xavier came there in 1542, he was very glad to see a church there. Moreover this fact has been attested by the Mootha Nainar stone inscriptions that Christians were living in Kumari Muttom in 1496; and that Uthaya Maarthandan the King of Venaadu had rebuked and stopped the Hindu leaders persecuting the Christians there and collecting levy from them. In addition the king had by an edict (Travancore Archiologial Series Vol. VI Pages, 179, 180) granted a subsidy of oil for lamp to the church of Thoma.”⁴⁰

Jacob Mar Abuna (1505 to 1550)

An Armenian monk called Jacob Mar Abuna had been consecrated bishop for the Christians of St. Thomas by Patriarch Elias of Nisibis in 1503. When Mar Abuna came to India, he became a good friend of the Franciscan missionaries, converted himself to the Latin Rite and was working hand in hand with the Franciscan missionaries for 45 years in India. St. Francis Xavier speaks about Mar Abuna as being helped here solely by the priests of St. Francis, and that he has endured much in his work with the Christians of St. Thomas. Mar Abuna, after Prior Henry's period, at least ten years out of his 45 years sojourn among the St. Thomas Christians, must have remained in Kanakkankudiyiruppu to look after the new converts in Venaadu and in the South Pandian kingdom.

Teotonio R. De Souza in his book "Indian Christians of St. Thomas and the Portuguese Padroado" writes: "Francis Xavier wrote a letter from Cochin to King John III of Portugal on 26th January 1549, in which he declared: *A bishop of Armenia (Mesopotamia) by the name of Jacob Abuna has been serving God and Your Highness in these regions for forty-five years. He is a very old, virtuous, and saintly man, and, at the same time, one who has been neglected by Your Highness and by almost all of those who are in India. God is granting him his reward, since he desires to assist him by himself, without employing us as a means to console his servants. He is being helped here solely by the priests of St. Francis... He has endured much in his work with the Christians of St. Thomas".⁴¹

In the foot note of the above latter of St. Francis Xavier we find the following details: “In 1503 Jacob Mar Abuna, a monk from the monastery of St. Eugene near Nisibia was consecrated bishop for the Christians of St. Thomas by the patriarch Elias. He was sent to India with three other bishops, but outlived his companions and was a good friend of the Portuguese and their missionaries, in particular the Franciscans. Due to the isolation of Mosul and the Chaldean Patriarch by the Turkish occupation, Mar Abuna was increasingly forced to depend on the Latin Missionaries, and thus came slowly to adopt the Latin rite, including its confessional rite. Jacob Mar Abuna died around 1550.”⁴²

About the year 1535 Jacob Mar Abuna was converting the Hindus around Maanaveera Naadu. For instance: “from the family of Aathitthar in Kaayamozhi, Sokkan left his three brothers Aathitthan, Veerappan and Theetthappan due to discord, came and settled in the region north of Kanakkankudiyiruppu. He came to Kanakkankudiyiruppu, was baptized (most probably by Mar Abuna) as Sokkan Arulappan, and married Mariagiruthal (Margarita). His new settlement was thus called Sockkankudiyiruppu. This Sockkankudiyiruppu was at that time belonged to the parish of Kanakkankudiyiruppu. This fact was seen in a stone inscription kept on the wall of the old church in Sockkankudiyiruppu”.⁴³

The fact that the church of Sockkankudiyiruppu has been dedicated to St. Jacob the Apostle, can be one of the proofs to confirm the stay of Jacob Mar Abuna as the Parish priest of Sockkankudiyiruppu belonging to Kanakkan

kudiyiruppu around that period.

Coverision of the Paravas

By now the fishermen baptized by St. Thomas in the East Coast had forgotten Christian religion and had gone back to Hinduism. The story of how the Parava people once again embraced Christianity is briefly given below by referring the accounts given by George Moraes and V. Lawrence.⁴⁴

In 1532 the fishermen in the East coast were all Hindus, engaged in pearl fishing. In a struggle between a Muslim and a Parava in Tuticorin, the Muslim in a vehement fury tore out the ear-lobe of the Parava man. Since this attack was a great affront to the whole community of the Parava cast, there sparked off a civil war between the Paravas and the Muslims. And the Paravas would have been beaten in the struggle, without the intervention of Joao Da Cruz who was high in favour with the Portuguese.

Joao Da Cruz who was the Page boy of the Zamorin in Quilon, who had sent him to Portugal in 1512 and was baptized a Christian, could see no way of saving the Paravas other than conversion to Christianity, by which they would be entitled to the protection of the Portuguese. This is called the Potuguese Patronage (Padroado).

Accordingly the Vicar General of Quilon Miguel Vaz visited the Paravas accompanied by four priests, and administered baptism to about twenty thousand people. In a few years the number rose to eighty thousand, settled both

on Malabar and Coromandal Coast. The Paravas now had the protection of the Portuguese army and could follow their pearl fishing profession undisturbed.

St. Francis Xavier (1542 to 1552)

The second Apostle of India, St. Francis Xavier also, like St. Thomas the first Apostle of India, had his mission field in Venaadu and the South Pandian Kingdom.

“St. Francis Xavier who came to the province of south India, not only in the East coast and the West coast, but also he went and worked in the interior places where St. Thomas Christians were living.

“During the period between 1542 and 1552 St. Francis Xavier came and stayed in the province of Thiruvithaankodu and was engaged in mission works. He has guided the ancient Christians of St. Thomas in these areas in Christian life.

“As a proof of the above fact in these villages like Sankanaankulam and PattaraikattiVilai, churches are built in the name of St. Francis Xavier. And likewise in Rammadupuram also a second church has been built in the name of St. Xavier.”⁴⁵

“Fr. Venancius writes in the Golden Jubilee Manual of Tuticorin Diocese that there is a traditional message, saying that St. Francis Xavier who evangelized the southern parts of South India around 1542, came to Rammadupuram: “There is a tradition that St. Xavier on his way to Kovalam (from Naaraiyoor) stayed in Sankanaankulam and

Rammadupuram, (now) the substations of Anaikkarai Parish”.⁴⁶

In the sixteenth century, Kanakkankudiyiruppu was called also by the name Naaraiyoor, because of the innumerable varieties of pelicans coming from different countries and settled in the trees around the lake at Kanakkankudiyiruppu. Pelican is called Naarai in Tamil. When St. Francis Xavier came, he knew the place as Naaraiyoor (in abbreviation Nareor Nar). Kanakkan kudiyiruppu was also called Pandagasaalai (Pandacal), because the royal store house of the king was there. He used to call these names as Nare and Pandacal. On May 1, 1544 the saint writes a letter from Nar to Francisco Mansilhas.⁴⁷ Joseph Costello S.J. in his foot Note P. 82 mistakenly says that Nare means “Nare Kinher”. There was no Narai Kinaru south of Kulasekarapattanam as he remarks; Naarai Kinaru is in the north, some fifty km. away from Kulasekarapattanam. Moreover, Fr. F.W. Faber, D.D. in his book “The life of St. Francis Xavier” clearly states this place as “a hamlet situated between Tale (must be Koodu Thazhai) and Manapar”. All this prove that St. Francis Xavier had made use of Kanakkankudiyiruppu (Naaraiyoor) one of his residences, staying where he used to write letters.

The Miracle at Naaraiyoor (Kanakankudiyiruppu)

Fr. Albert J. Hebert, S. M. narrates: “There was a pair of youths who accompanied Francis as catechists. During the night one of them was bitten in the foot by a ‘cobra da capello’. In the morning the youth was found dead. Francis

took some saliva from his own mouth, touched the foot of the poisoned catechist, made the Sign of the Cross over him, took him by the hand and bade him arise in the Name of



Jesus Christ. The youth responded immediately and was able to continue the missionary journey at once. It was as simple as if he had just gotten up from sleep, instead of having been restored to life itself. This is probably the miracle of the “venomous” serpent given without details by Butler.”

Source: “Resurrection Miracles from the Biography of St. Francis Xavier”⁴⁸

The location of this miracle has been indicated as Peria Thaalai by Fr. Venancius in his “Muthukuzhithurai Visuvaasam”, published in the Centenary Directory of the Diocese of Tuticorin, Page 41: “In Peria Thaalai a cobra has bitten the servant of Antony Miranda. He instantly fell down exhuming foams and died. St. Xavier raised him to life by his devout prayer. To this Gerald Miranda of Mannar has testified”.

But the account given by Fr. F.W. Faber, D.D. seems to be more probable and correct: “He (St. Xavier) was travelling with two young Indians, named Anthony Miranda and Augustine Pina, who served as his acolytes and



catechists. Night over took them at a place called Pandacal (Pandagasaalai), a hamlet situated between Tale (must be Koodu Thazhai) and Manapar; the two youths retired into a hut to rest, and the saint into another, that he might pray at his ease. A venomous serpent had its nest in the very hut where our two unsuspecting children went to sleep, and bit Anthony in the foot, without even awakening him. It was late in the morning before Augustine awoke, who immediately called his companion. After shaking him and receiving no answer, he soon ascertained the cause; for, on raising the mat where they had both been reposing, the serpent sprang forth.

“With a cry of horror, the child ran off to the saint, and, with sighs and tears, related what had happened. Without the slightest agitation or appearance of surprise, Xavier smiled, and calmly answered, “let us go and look at him. Per chance he may not be dead.” On reaching the cabin, he knelt down by the side of the dead body, fixed his eyes on heaven, and, after a short prayer, toughed the swollen and livid foot with spittle, blessed him with the sign of the cross,

and, taking him by the hand, said: **“Anthony, in the name of Jesus Christ, arise!”** He said no more, nor was more needed to make the child arise; he immediately stood up, not only alive, but as healthy and strong as ever he was; whereupon they all three resumed their journey.”⁴⁹



The Saint would have travelled From Manapad to Kovalam. On route we have Peria Thaalai, Naaraiyoor (Kanakkankudiyiruppu), Rammadupuram, Sankanaankulam, Radhapuram, Vadakkankulam, Pazhavor, Kanyakumari and Kovalam. Fr. Venancius testifies this travel route of our Saint as cited above (foot note 41). Hence there is no doubt in concluding that the location of this miracle is no other than Naaraiyoor (Kanakkankudiyiruppu).

Monuments of St. Francis Xavier

Our saint wanted to renew the altar and the statue of Our Lady in the church of Kanakkankudiyiruppu according to the artistic style of Portuguese architecture. For this he had brought the masons he knew in Kottar. The high altar and the statue were modified exactly as we now see in the church built by St. Xavier inside the Cathedral of Kottar

Diocese. Now what we see in Manal Matha Koil is a modified style of the high altar. Besides the Statue of Our lady of Manal Matha, he placed the statue of his founder St. Ignatius. Thus we see now on the altar of Manal MathaKoil under the earth, the statues of O. L. of Manal Matha, St. Ignatius and St. Francis of Assisi.

The historical note published in “The Beginning of Faith in Tuticorin Diocese” furnishes the following details about the Catholic Mission activities after St. Francis Xavier.⁵⁰

“Xavier himself visited Kanakankudiyiruppu (Manal Matha Koil), Sankanankulam near Anaikarai, Rammathu puram and Pazhaiyakayal. Conversion took place in these places and later other Jesuit missionaries served them. St. Francis Xavier left the Fishery Coast in 1545 for Malacca. In March 1546 he ordered Fr. Antony Criminalli to go to the Fishery Coast.

Fr. Antony Criminalli

“Fr. Antony Criminalli was the first missionary who learned to read and write Tamil. One year later he was joined by Fr. Anrrique Anrriquez and others. In January - February 1548, Francis was back again on the Fishery Coast for a visit. He appointed Fr. Criminalli as superior of the mission. When Fr. Criminalli was killed towards the middle of 1549 in a military entanglement between the Badaga troops and the Portuguese at Vedalai, the missionaries elected Fr. Anrrique Anrriquez as their superior. Francis confirmed their choice by letter.

Fr. Henrique Henriques (also known as Anrique Anriquez) (1520–1600)

Henrique Henriques was Portuguese Jesuit priest and missionary who spent most of his life and missionary activities in South India. After initial years in Goa he moved to Tamil Nadu where he mastered Tamil and wrote several books including a dictionary. He is considered to be the first European Tamil scholar. “The Jesuit headquarters was set up in Punnaikayal. Henriquez as he describes in his letter to St. Ignatius Loyola, learned Tamil and even brought out a sort of Grammar which he called as “Arte”. He, with the help of native converts and “trained catechists” translated the important prayers into Tamil.⁵¹

“As was the case with Francis Xavier, Henriquez too laid special stress on the Christian training of the young. He taught the prayers to the girls in the mornings and to the boys in the evenings. It seems that till his arrival on the coast the girls were not attending the catechism classes. The boys used to go twice a day. But now that system was changed. The girls were asked to go in the mornings and the boys in the evenings. In every Christian village on the coast there was now a teacher of catechism and a person to gather the children every day.

“In 1550 a hospital and Catechetical Training Center were built for the first time in Punnaikayal. He converted a famous Hindu Sanyasin and baptized him as Peter Louis (Malayappan Gnanapragasam). He would shortly become the professor of the Tamil college at Punnaikayalin 1557.

After his conversion, Peter Louis began to convert many people in and around that area. By 1551, there are references to the existence of 30 churches made of clay and wood, and covered with palm leaves. In 1553, the churches were destroyed by the king of Travancore and eventually the rebuilding took place.

“In 1561 Fr. Henriquez with other Jesuits, baptized people of Azhagappapuram or Marichukkatti. The next year Holy Cross Church at Manapad was consecrated. By 1567, the first Tamil College was instituted in Punnaikayal. The convert Peter Louis began to teach in the college. In 1568 Fr. Henriquez wrote a letter to St. Ignatius of Loyola from Punnaikayal. He mentions about 7 Priests, 2 Deacons and one Tamil Brother in his team.

Goa Mission and French Mission:

“In 1557 when Cochin became a diocese, the pearl fishery coast came under its authority. Whenever Bishops other than the Jesuits took charge of the diocese, they used to send their own priests to the Pearl Fishery Coast.

“In 1603 the Madurai Nayak and Kayatar King imposed an unbearable tax on the people of the pearl fishery coast. The people could not pay the tax and hence they rebelled. The army destroyed the dwellings as well as the headquarters in Tuticorin. Seeking a safe haven, the people and the priests took shelter in Raja Theevu (Muyaltheevu). The Bishop of Cochin misunderstood the whole event and sent the Portuguese to violently force the 10,000 people out of the island. Broken hearted the Jesuits gave the parishes to

the Bishop and left Tuticorin. The Bishop sent the Cyrian priests to Tuticorin, Vembar, Vaipar, and Palaiyakayal. The rest of the parishes were left without any spiritual help”.⁵²

In Tuticorin

“In fact, even before St. Xavier came to India, in Tuticorin, there had been St. Peter’s Church built in 1538. This is the very first church of the whole of the pearl fishery coast. In 1558 the first Latin rite seminary was built in Tuticorin where seminarians were trained in morals, pastoral activities, Portuguese and music. In 1593 the first Catechumen Center was instituted in Tuticorin, managed by a Jesuit priest. Training was given to the catechumens for one full year.

“In 1600 there were churches in Palayam (Tirunelveli), Kaliavoor, Srivaikundam and Thirukalur. St. Matthew’s church in Thirukalur with 500 members was made into a parish in 1644. The substations were Alvarthirunagari, Saravamangalam, Marichukkatti, Srivaigundam, Manakarai (Seevalaperi), Vayapuram (Kaliavoor), Palayam (Palayam kottai), Kayatharu, Pattamadaai, Veeravanallur, Sattuppatur (Kartharpillayur), Mannarkoil, Ayanarpatti (Aranapatti), Singanallur, Alari, Chrisvanallur (Krishnapuram), Meen kulam, Maravanakurichi (Maravakurichi), Kalakadu, Athur, Kurumbur, and Perur.

“In 1601 Holy Cross church was built in Vember followed by Bartholomew’s church in Manakadu near Srivaikundam in 1602. In 1603 kings of the areas destroyed most of these churches including the church of Our Lady of

Mercy in Tuticorin. **There is indication about a Jesuit professor from Goa**, who worked in about 20 villages in and around Thirukalur in 1621. He converted a lot of people to the faith.⁵³

The above mentioned Jesuit Lay professor (Catechist) must have been the follower of the Hindu Sanyasin, baptized as Peter Louis (Malayappan Gnanapragasam) by Fr. Henriques. There were many other male and female Lay Catechists produced in the Catechetical Training Center built by Fr. Henriques. These Catechists and their followers like Gnana Muthu, Santhayee, Arulayee, Vedha Manickam Thesigar, Thomman Muthu, Arulayee Punyavathy, and Sathia Naathan etc., mentioned by Alex Muthaiah were doing marvelous missionary activities in the absence of priests, and kept the faith of St. Thomas Christians without being extinguished both in Venaadu and in South Pandian Kingdom.⁵⁴ The name of the Professor from Goa who converted a lot of people to the faith, must be the famous “Mathavadian Punyavaalan” (Slave of Our Lady) buried on the high ways between Panagudi and KaavalkinaruVelakku. All these male and female mission catechists were called Punayavaalans (virtuous men) or Punyavathees (virtuous women) respectively. The famous Arulaayee Punyavathees has been buried in Thakkalai. Even today many miracles are witnessed in these two grave churches.

1. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 168.

2. *Ibid* at pp. 139, 144.

3. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 - 1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 46.

4. Alex Cruz Muthaiah, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 145.

5. Cfr. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, pp. 61, 62, 63, 64.
6. *Ibid* at p. 61.
7. *Ibid* at p. 73.
8. A. Chidambaranar, The History of Tamil Sangams, p. 101
9. *Ibid*.
10. Athisaya Manalmaatha Varalaaru, p. 19.
11. A. Chidambaranar, The History of Tamil Sangams, p. 131.
12. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 146
13. *Ibid* at p. 147
14. *Ibid* at p. 148
15. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 70.
16. Athisaya Manalmaatha Varalaaru, p. 20.
17. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, pp. 72, 73, 74.
18. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 145.
19. *Ibid* at p. 20.
20. Murat Gokhan Dalyan, Cuisine Culture and Table Manners in XIX Century Nestorian Society, International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol.2(6), April 2011. http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol._2_No._6;_April_2011/31.pdf
21. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 143; Cfr. Athisaya Manalmaatha Varalaaru, p. 20.
22. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 76.
23. *Ibid* at p. 77.
24. Athisaya Manalmaatha Varalaaru, p. 21.
25. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, pp. 81 to 85.
26. Yan kejia, Catholic Church in China, trans. Chen shujie, Beijing, China International Press, 2004.
27. *Ibid* at pp. 1-15.
28. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, p. 88.
29. *Ibid* at p. 89.
30. *Ibid* at pp. 89 to 98.
31. *Ibid* pp. 99 - 102.
32. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 146.; Fr. John Bosco Manam Tharum Manal Maatha, p.4; Athisaya Manalmaatha Varalaaru, p.21.
33. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 156.
34. Diocese of Quilon, Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC), <https://kcbc.co.in/KCBC/DioceseDetails/20>.

35. *Ibid.*
37. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, pp. 104, 105.
38. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 146.
39. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964.
40. *Ibid*, pp. 125 - 136.
41. Teotonio R. de Souza, The Indian Christians of St. Thomas and the Portuguese Padroado: Rape After Century-long Courtship (1498-1599), in Christen Und Gewürze, 1998, pp. 31-42.
42. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 401.
43. Francis Xavier, The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe S.J., The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992, pp. 237, 238, 239, n. 77. Even though Schurhammer claims that the Jacob Abuna was not an Armenian, R. Gulbenkian maintains that the opposite is true and demonstrates close links between the Armenians and the Syro-Malabar Church. Cf. Jacome Abuna, An Armenian Bishop in Malabar (1503-1550). (Estudos Historicos, I: Rlacoes entre Portugal, Armenia e Medio Oriente, Lisboa 1995, 103 -131). Here it is asserted that the later bishops in Malabar were not Armenians, even though they were called thus.
44. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 165.
45. George Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier AD 52 -1552, Bombay, Manaktalas, 1964, pp. 144, 145; Dr. V. Lawrence, History of the Catholic Church in K.K. District Pages 53 to 60.
46. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, pp.375,325,421.
47. S. Venantius Fernando, Directory of the Diocese of Thoothukudi Golden Jubilee Souvenir (1923-1973), Thoothukudi, The Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 1973, p. 210.
48. Fr. Albert J. Herbert, Saints Who raised The Dead True Stories of 400 Resurrection Miracles, Charlotte, TAN Books, 2012.
49. Francis Xavier, The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe S.J., The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992, pp. 81; Fr. John Bosco, Manam Tharum Manal Maatha. P. 3.
50. <http://tuticorindiocese.org/history-of-tuticorin-diocese.htm>.
51. Leonard Fernando, Jesuits and India, Oxford Handbooks Online, <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935420.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935420-e-59>.
52. Bartoli, D., Faber, F. William. The life of St. Francis Xavier: apostle of the Indies and Japan, Baltimore, John Murphy & Co, 1859.
53. How the Diocese Emerged... The Beginning of Faith around Tuticorin, <http://tuticorindiocese.org/history-of-tuticorin-diocese.htm>.
54. *Ibid.*
55. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, pp. 169, 202, 222, 223, 322, 327, 328, 409.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



THE DESTRUCTION OF MAANAVEERA NAADU UNDER A HUGE SAND HILL AND THE MIRACULOUS FINDING OF MANAL MATHA KOVIL

Historical Background

According to the accounts given by A. Chidabaranaar, during the fight in the North Pandian Kingdom between the Muslims kings and the kings of Vijayanagar (from 1352 to 1700), the South Pandian Kingdom was reined by fourteen Pandian Kings. When St. Francis Xavier came (1552), the South Pandian Kingdom was reined by Chadaya Varman Baraackirama Kulasekara Pandian. And when the Jesuits gave up the parishes to the Bishop of Cochin (1603), the South Pandian Kingdom was reined by Chadaya Varman Athiveera Rama Pandian (1564 to 1604). The Kings of the South Pandian Kingdom were ruling either from Kayathar or from Thirunelveli.¹

Eventually during the reign of Varathunga Rama Pandian (1604 to 1613), Maana Veera Naadu was left without any spiritual help, and the St. Thomas Christians of Kanakkankudiyiruppu began to migrate and settle in different villages where some spiritual help was available. The elect of the Catholics were thus led by the Jesuit Lay Brother “Mathavadian Punyavaalan” (Slave of Our Lady) and Arulaayee Punyavatheeto better places, and was taken care of in their Christian Faith and Morals. Thus the Kanakkappillai family from Kanakkankudiyirupu moved first to Ooralvaimozhy and then to Azhagappapuram (Kanyakumari Dt.); The Catechist family moved first to Tharuvaikulam and then to Kamanaayakkanpatti; and the King’s family from Jesupuram (later Isalapuram) also moved to Azhagappapuram.²

The rest of the St. Thomas Christians in Kanakkan kudiyiruppu, due to the absence of virtuous leaders slowly became slaves to the power of darkness and to selfishness. In spite of the warnings and inspirations of Our Lady of Assumption through dreams and visions, the people did not heed to the voice of Our Lady. Sin abounded in the society, Injustice and disorder became prevalent and the poor and God fearing were oppressed.³

Agathukuthavi Pandian (1639 to 1669)

Maanaveera Naadu was always ruled by a petit king who was Christian. In the year 1639 Maanaveera Naadu was ruled by the petit king called Agathukuthavi Pandian. He must have come from the generations of Agathu Marian of



Thoppuvilai, who had the vision of Our Lady and had built the church at Kanakkankudiyiruppu. Alex Muthaiah elaborately discusses the details of this king with plenty of testimonies and stone inscriptions. One such stone inscription is said to be found in the southern limit of the reserve forest of Muthukrishnapuram, Kuthiraimozhi Village, Thiruchendur Taluk, and Thirunelveli District. This inscription gives the names of the ten petit kings of the Maanaveera Vala Naadu; and in particular, the name of the king who was ruling the southern limit (of MaanaveeraNaadu) as “**Agathukuthavi Naadan**”.⁴

The King had renewed the Church of St. Agatha at Rammadupuram with small baked bricks and mortar of lime stones, because St. Agatha was the patron saint of his Kingdom and he had been named after the saint.

Many of the citizens of this region had added the saint's name with their's like: Agathu Marian, Agathu Michael, Agathu Savarimuthu, Agathu Soosai Marian and so on. If anyone holds this name in South India, it is the sure sign that he or she is from the ancient generation of this Kingdom of Maanaveera Naadu.⁵

The statue of St. Agatha kept in the church at Rammadupuram is very ancient, for it has the features of the statues of the saint sculpted before the volcano eruption of Mount Etna in Sicily, Italy.

Empedocles, a major Pre-Socratic philosopher and Greek statesman of the 5th century BC, was said to have met his death in the volcano's crater. Etna supposedly erupted in sympathy with the martyrdom of Saint Agatha in 251 AD, prompting Christians thereafter to invoke her name against fire and lightning.⁶ Statues of St. Agatha sculpted after the eruption to invoke her name against fire and lightning, were holding candles or a house on fire. But it is to be noted that this statue holds the original martyr's palm and the Bible.

Thuravi Pandian (1648)

In 1648 the son of Agathukuthavi Pandian called Thuravi Pandian must have become the king of MaanaveeraNaadu. Fr. John Bosco speaks of him as agreeable to everybody in the kingdom; and in a way passing orders prompted by the upper handed in the society. In reality the King was a devoted Christian, selfless and unattached. Hence he got the name "Thuravi Pandian". And so he was caught in between the maxims of religious life and the glories of an earthly King.⁷

Thuravi Pandian was really attached to the Church of Our Lady in Kanakkankudiyiruppu, and was trying his level best to take care of its maintenance. In modern times this church has become a great shrine of Our Lady in Tuticorin Diocese. It has been recognized as one of the Catholic Shrines of South India. This Shrine of Manal Matha (Our Lady in the Sand) had been “Prompted by St Thomas, Appreciated by Marco Polo, Renovated by Giovanni de’ Marignolli, Visited by St Francis Xavier, Buried under the sand for 150 years, Not documented; but well venerated is the Shrine of Manal Matha (Our Lady in the Sand) of Kanakkankudiyiruppu (near Puthantharuvai and Chettivillai at the Thisayanvillai-Periyathazhai Road)) is still a mystery for many”.⁸

Jesu Mariayee

During the reign of King Thuravi Pandian there lived in Kanakkankudiyiruppu a poor young widow by name Jesu Mariayee. It is a traditional story narrated and handed down by the generations of St. Thomas Christians at Kanakkankudiyiruppu that Jesu Mariayee was the only child of a holy and poor family in Kanakkankudiyiruppu. She had lost her father in her childhood. And her mother, by her good confidence in the Mother of God and by hard work, took care of the child as the pupil of her eye and in love of Jesus and Mary. Jesu Mariayee was spending her time in the church, teaching the children to love and please Our Lady, practicing tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin and cleaning and decorating the church. She was very careful to keep her soul clean as well as the altar of Our Lady. Thus she was growing

in age and sanctity in the loving service of Jesus and Mary. In time Jesu Mariayee was engaged to a pious young man called Soosai Muthu.

The author has taken some liberty to continue the story with his imagination, not deviating from the original story.

The King had a wicked land lord as his minister, who was planning to capture the kingdom by over throwing Thuravi Pandian through subversive plots. This land lord had a son by name Veera Pandian. The “Manal Matha Shrine – a historical Tour” states this land lord as also an employee in the Portuguese Fort at Punnaikayal.⁹

This Veera Pandian, weak in morals and impious in his conduct, had developed an unbridled craving for the hands of Jesu Mariayee in spite of her being already engaged to Soosai Muthu. Veera Pandian was planning to execute his desire through the tricks of his father, influencing the king and by manipulating the royal authority. But his schemes could not stand before the influence of Jesu Mariayee with the Blessed Virgin Mary. The marriage between Soosai Muthu and Jesu Mariayee took place as arranged by her mother.

Being possessed by an unrestrained fury at his disappointment, Veera Pandian murdered Soosai Muthu by subterfuge, and by creating a fictitious story, made the public believe that Soosai Muthu died by an accident. At the shock of this grief, the mother of Jesu Mariayee died of heart attack.



Being forsaken by every earthly asylum as an orphaned widow, Jesu Mariayee took Our Lady as her sole refuge. She thought that before the dolorous passion of the Blessed Virgin Mary, her own sufferings are nothing. On the contrary, Jesu Mariayee entrusted herself totally to Mary, and prayed to Her that She might henceforth uphold the radiance of her chastity until the coming of Jesus the eternal bridegroom, and to meet Him together with the faithful virgins and thus to praise His Blessed Mother. She prayed also that Our Lady may well grant her enough strength to bear whatever misfortune might transpire in future.

Now the venomous wits of the minister's brain began to work. He knew that Jesu Mariayee will not be trapped in the mesh of Veera Pandian. But the minister worked out a perfidy by making use of her to hurl down King Thuravi Pandian and seize the kingdom to him. Thuravi Pandian had never been failed in justice. But the minister's plan was to demonstrate the king to the citizens as one who has openly conducted himself unjust.

The Vision of Our Lady

In the mean while Jesu Mariayee was offering her devout prayers to Our Lady to guide her according to the designs Jesus and Mary would wish to have accomplished in her. One day Our Lady of Assumption appeared to Jesu Mariayee and said: "Be confident my daughter! The Lord is with you. He who nourishes even the one cell beings will sustain you. Now Our Lord Jesus Christ wants to make use of you in order to make me known and loved in this place. He wants to establish devotion to my Immaculate Heart in this Sanctuary. You must sacrifice yourself for this intention. Your name will be remembered here till the end of the world."

After this apparition, Jesu Mariayee became comforted and consoled, and cheerfully engaged herself in cleaning and maintaining the church of Our Lady. The variety of birds which had their nests and hatched their bird lings on the trees around the church became her favorite friends. She would cherish to talk to them intimately. The birds in turn were playing with her in an amazing manner. One day she said to the birds: "O, my friends, how eagerly do I every day remove your dung and clean up the Sanctuary of Our Blessed Mother! Could you not compassionately help me carry out this work? Immediately when one of the Pelicans raised its tone of voice, all the birds of that sanctuary with their call of blissful cry took to the air like a huge cloud and fluttered around the church. After a spectacular display of delightful parade in the sky, all the birds descended with an accent of greetings and took their pose around Jesu Mariayee. All those who witnessed this marvel felt awe inspired! But



some others became aggravated in their spirit with an intolerable resentment.

The next morning when Jesu Mariayee came out as usual to sweep up the birds' droppings in front of her hut, to her dismay she saw plenty of fishes as a replacement for the dung! Joyfully collecting the fishes, she praised the Heavenly Mother in gratitude for this divine providence granted through her favorite friends. She took some for herself, the rest she distributed to the poor and some fishes she soled and put the money in the dumb box of the church. Of course she thought and with her all others that it was a miracle of one day. But it had become a habitual inclination for the birds to drop the fishes every morning in that particular spot.

Fire of jealousy began to blaze in the attitude of the people. In the radiance of this fire the minister and his son maneuvered their treason. They tactfully prepared witnesses for their accusations representing the citizens and the government as well. They spread the defamations against Jesu Mariayee so much among the people that the whole

village came forward to hold up the false accusations, without being afraid of the sins of envy, selfishness, detraction and injustice. On an appropriate day Veera Pandian brought before the king the accusations against Jesu Mariayee and petitioned for judicial process.

The affidavit petition contained the following: “It is a disgrace to the kingdom of Maanaveera Naadu to see Jesu Mariayee openly living with a prostitute. Prostrating before the king I request to make inquiries and pass judgment, and thus to guard the honor and reputation (Maanam) of the Kingdom of Maanaveera Naadu”.

Prostitution according to the custom of that time should be punished with “Nadai Vilakku”, which means drilling a hole on top of the head, fitting a wick in the hole, pouring oil on it, lighting the wick and leave her burn to death.

There was only one way for Jesu Mariayee to escape this punishment. It was accepting to become the wife of Veera Pandian. As a last chance, Veera Pandian himself goes to her and asks for her consent. And the consent is resolutely refused. She said: “I am prepared to sacrifice myself together with Our Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificed himself for the sins of men.” With these words of fortitude Jesu Mariayee ascended the pulpit of the culprit.

That was Good Friday 1649. King Thuravi Pandian on the Judgment seat knew the truth! He was certain that Jesu Mariayee was innocent! But she has no witness except God. If he had judged on her favour, he would have to incur

the hatred of the citizen. If he judged against her, he would become a subject of derision as an unjust king! Thuravi Pandian was in great distress knowing not what to do. Thus the Plan of the wicked minister has been successfully carried out to over throw the kingdom.

Finally the inquiry commenced. The King asked Jesu Mariayee: "Is it true that you are living with an illegal husband, who visits you every night, and that he daily brings you the fishes?"

"It is not true, O my King, all know that the birds are dropping the fishes!" was her honest reply.

"No, No, not the birds", shouted the crowd, "every night we hear her speaking with a man for a long time! It is that man who brings her the fishes."

When the king asked, "Is it true?" Jesu Mariayee answered: "Yes it is true that I am conversing daily with my sweet heart!"

Immediately the whole crowd stood up and shouted saying: "Ah! She has admitted the truth! Pass the capital punishment! Punish her with 'Nadai Vilakku' and kill her! Kill her! Kill her!"

"Tell the name of that your sweet heart", commanded the King. Jesu Mariayee replied in a clear voice: "His name is Jesus Christ Our Lord!"

But they shouted more vehemently and bore false witnesses against her saying: "No, No! She is hiding the name

of her illegal husband. We saw her committing adultery with some one!”

And since there was no one to bear witness in favour of Jesu Mariayee, King Thuravi Pandian was constrained to write the judgment as follows and read it in front of the crowd: “I here by Judge that the capital punishment of ‘NadaiVilakku’ be executed on Jesu Mariayee, because she has defamed the honor and reputation (Maanam) of the kingdom of MaanaveeraNaadu”.

Like the demons the whole crowd was yelling and jumped upon the innocent victim and cried: “Kill her! Kill her! Burn the adulteress with fire!” If they had been told; “any one of them who has not sinned, let him set fire on her”, no one would have stayed there.

But those sinners in company with the devils dragged the sinless widow Jesu Mariayee out on the street, shaved her head, garlanded her with slippers and flowers of blue madar (Erukku) and rallied her all through the streets of



Kanakkankudiyiruppu. At the end when the procession reached in front of the church, the final punishment of Nadai Vilakku was performed. That was the Good Friday of A.D. 1649.

Instantly the heavens opened with a roaring of thunder! Trumpet sounded from above! The clear words of an angel was heard and echoed throughout the world: “Behold my beloved daughter Jesu Mariayee, suffering persecution for justice’s sake! She is blessed! For hers is the kingdom of heaven!”

Trembling with the pain of fire Jesu Mariayee addressed to Our Lady these last words: “Behold my Mother, I come! Forgive them” and expired.

“No! No forgiveness!” King Thuravi Pandian cried from the pulpit, “no forgiveness for me! Let the curse of God come upon me and my kingdom! Punishment! Punishment for my unjust killing of the innocent Jesu Mariayee! I and my Kingdom which were the cause of this great crime shall perish! And be buried under the earth! Let the heavens open and shower the rain of sand! Let the Maanaveera Naadu be wiped out from the face of the earth! And be devastated into a sand hill! Let all the inhabitants die and perish!” Thus the king of Maanaveera Naadu called upon himself and his people the curse of God’s wrath and chastisement.

The curse of the King made the people shudder! Without more ado God willed the curse to be fulfilled. The greatest of the storms ever before fiercely arose from the Western Ghats, and a heavy load of red sand roofed the

Kingdom of Maanaveera Naadu. It was so heavy and quick that except a very few, all the inhabitants were caught under the sands and perished!

As by one sin of Lucifer eternal hell was created, as the first sin of Adam and Eve made the whole world a sea of tears, as the sin of human race destroyed the world by flood, and as the ugly sin of the flesh blazed Sodom and Gomorrah, so by the wickedness of the King and people of Maanaveera Naadu, that Kingdom was cursed and became one big sand hill. The rivers dried, fields and groves disappeared, the attractive pelicans flew away, and the habitations of men moved away. The beautiful church of Our Lady of Assumption was buried and the Palace of the King was plundered and destroyed.

The only historical proof available for all that is said above is the miraculous finding of the church of Manal Matha Kovil 150 years after in 1799. Now let us go to Manal Matha Kovil and see how this church still buried under the earth was miraculously found out for the fulfillment of the great plan of Our Lady.

The Mystery of The Red Sand Hill

What is the mystery of this gigantic curtain of the red sand hill which hides a wonderful world filled with the fertility of the land, the ancient ark of the Tamil literatures, and the Christian Philosophical foot prints of St. Thomas the Apostle in the Southern Pandian kingdom of Maanaveera Naadu?



Today, if we travel by helicopter, starting from the sea shore of Koothenguli in Radhapuram Taluk, and go through Aathankarai, Pallivaasal, Anaikkarai, Mannaar puram, Satankulam, Nazareth, Kurumbur, and Arumuganeri and reach the sea shore at Kombuthrai, we can see all the villages within this limit are built on a big sand hill. One can view this sand hill also at a spot north of Periathaalai where the height of the sand hill reaches 148 feet from the sea level.

No one can deny that a kingdom, whose history was not recognized until 1799, had been ruled up to 1649 and was buried under the sand hill. Archeological excavations will bring to light many realities hidden if this mysterious red sand hill.

Athisaya Manal Mary Matha

Let us here explain the history, how Our Lady of Assumption who reigned from the time of St. Thomas up to 1649 that wonderful world, which was then covered with sand for 150 years, is now shining after the miraculous revelation and excavation of the church in the year 1799, as the bright queen of this red sand hill under the title “**Athisaya**

Manal Mary Matha”.

A Heavenly Device

God has chosen this mysterious red sand hill of the southern Pandian kingdom as a heavenly device to inspire once again the mankind His great plan in these latter times. His eternal plan is nothing but establishing the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother as the “Eternal Virgin” to give the redeemer to mankind that souls may be saved and attain eternal happiness. Hence through the Blessed Lady of this sand hill the curse of Maanaveera Naadu should be removed so that the people might see the glory of the kingdom of Jesus and the triumph of the Eternal Virgin over Satan. As a condition for this Our Lady comes out with her plan of mercy (prayer), her plan of might (penance) and her plan of grace (reparation for sins), and invites us to join her to establish in this place the devotion of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. “God then wishes to reveal and make known Mary, the masterpiece of his hands in these latter times” says St. Louis De Montfort, “.....for the greater knowledge and glory of the Most Holy Trinity. Mary must shine forth more than ever in mercy, in might and in grace, in these latter times.”¹⁰ This great plan of heaven is the mystery hidden in this gigantic curtain of the red sand hill.

The History of The Finding

In and around 1650 A.D., villages appeared above the great red sand hills. According to Alex Muthaiah, Christians built a church in Thopuvilai with thatched roof for Maria Matha. Thopuvilai and Puliyankaadu were the first villages

with Christian inhabitants and visited by the missionaries from Europe. Jesupuram, Rammadupuram and many villages re- appeared. Thopuvilai became for some time the center of the missions in that region.¹¹

About 1670 A. D., one Gnanamuthu, his wife Santhayee, his sister Arulayee and some other Christians moved from Thopuvilai across the Hanuman River on the west, and settled there. This region is now known as Vadakkankulam.¹²

St. John De Britto

In 1680 A.D., one day when Santhayee was collecting cotton with some of her kindred in the cotton field, she saw St. John De Britto with white costume crossing the field on horseback from west to the east. The saint must have travelled in search of Christians in Thopuvilai, but was stopped by Santhayee and was astonished to hear that these people are Christians from Thopuvilai. He visited their huts, blessed them and went on his way.¹³

In the year 1685 about the month of July or August, Gnanamuthu and



some people from Vadakkankulam went to Madurai to meet St. John De Britto and to invite him to baptize not less than 200 people who were prepared to become Christians. Immediately the saint bringing to a halt his journey to Thanjavoor rushed with some more Catechists to Vadakkankulam. And since there was not a church so far, he gathered the people in a Palmira grove, stayed there several days, and after appropriate instructions, baptized them all in the Catholic Church.¹⁴

The above details are testified by the following historical note that at that period of time St. John Britto, also known as Arulanandar, traveled on foot, on horseback and bullock cart all over Tamil Nadu: "In 1673 St. John de Britto, a young energetic man from a royal family in Portugal, set foot on the shores of Goa in India. God filled his soul with a great dream project that of working for Christ by evangelizing the people in Tamil Nadu in South India. Desiring to spend his life with the simple and poor people, John Britto, also known as Arulanandar Swami in the Tamil language, traveled on foot, on horseback and bullock cart all over Tamil Nadu and elsewhere. Next to St. Thomas the Apostle, Britto is the only martyr-Saint in India to date."¹⁵

In 1691 about the month of January or February St. Arulanandar, the Martyr of Marava Naadu is said to have visited PeriaThaazhai (Tuticorin Diocesan directory Page, 158).¹⁶

In 1701 the mission at Nemam (near Thiruvananthapuram) was started by an Italian priest Xaverio Borghese,

and in 1713 another priest Fr. Antony Tavares was assigned. According to Rt. Rev. M. Arattukulam, Nemam then counted five churches, three in Travancore (Nemam, Thiruvithan kodu and Marugoor), and two in Madura Province (vadakkankulam and Isalapuram). Thus the Christian villages of the South Pandian kingdom were attached to the Nemam Mission.¹⁷

Isalapuram (Jesupuram)

In 1713 Isalapuram (Jesupuram) became the mission center (parish) under Nemam Mission. In the history of Anaikkarai Parish, it is said that Isalapuram had been recorded in the year 1713 as one of the mission centers belonging to Nemam Mission.¹⁸

“Jesupuram”, had been the principal city of Maanaveera Naadu, where the king and his administrative persons were residing from the first century onwards. It was situated half a kilo meter south of Anaikkarai. Until recent times (about 15 years) remnants of buildings were seen there as signs of highly cultured settlements of a big population. When this city was captured by the Pattanies (the ancestors of MisrikanPanisahib), the name of Jesupuram was changed in to Isalapuram, and thus remained until the city was left



to ruin without inhabitants.¹⁹ Now (in September 2011) when the author undertook a personal survey around the spot, he could see no sign of any habitation except small pieces of potsherds spread everywhere; and the area being an unoccupied reserved land.

The last ruler of MaanaveeraNaadu, a Christian known as Anbudaiyaan has been buried in the ancient cemetery of the kings' families. The ruins of this cemetery is seen west of Rammadupuram and on the eastern bank of the river. The author has seen the grave of Anbudaiyaan together with Alex Muthaiah (in the year 2004) and assured that the year of Anbudaiyaan's death was 1790.²⁰

After 1790 when Misrikan Panisahib occupied Isalapuram, the King's family and relatives, and some of the citizens had to flee from the "inaam land" of Isalapuram. At the death and burial of Anbudaiyaan, his wife took her two sons Thommaiappan, and Eustace, and went to Azhagappapuram (Kanyakumari Dist.) where already in 1613 their fore fathers had gone and settled.²¹ After the occupation of Isalapuram by the rulers of Islam (1790), Anaikkarai became the mission center.²²

Priests who visited Isalapuram and Anaikkarai Missions

After St. John De Britto, there were several Christian villages such as Sokkankuditiruppu, Chettivilai, Thopuvilai, Rammadupuram, and Changanankulam belonging to the mission centers of Isalapuram and Anaikkarai. According to the accounts given in the Directory of Tuticorin Diocese

and by Alex Muthaiah, these villages of Maanaveera Naadu were visited by the following missionary priests until the miraculous discovery of the Manal Matha Kovil in 1799:²³

- 1685 – 1695 Rev. Fr. Ignatius S.J.
- 1699 - 1745 Rev. Fr. Xaverio Borghese S. J.
(The founder of Nemam Mission) and Fr. Desouza S.J.
- 1704 – 1751 Rev. Fr. Antony Tavares S. J.;
Rev. Fr. John Baptist Buttari S.J. (Paranjothi Nathar).
- 1773 - 1838 (During the suppression of the Society of Jesus) Priests from Pondicherri were visiting these villages.

The Miraculous Discovery of Manal Matha Kovil

After the destruction of the church at Kanakkankudiyiruppu and the human residences around, 150 years passed (1649 to 1799). People forgot everything about the church, and no record of any kind was maintained by any one. But God willed to reveal this miraculous church in order to prove to the world that there are many undocumented historical facts hidden under this gigantic sand hill of Maanaveera Naadu.

Vadakkankulam and Anaikkarai were the mission stations looked after by the above mentioned priests until the year 1773 when the Society of Jesus was suppressed.



According to the Tuticorin Diocesan Directory (Page, 167), Vadakkankulam in 1773 came under the supervision of the Archbishop Salvadore Thoraïse of Cranganore (Cochin). Missionaries from Pondicherry came and settled in Vadakkankulam to assist the Cochin mission. At that time Sokkankudiyiruppu situated north of PuthanTharuvai was one of the substations of vadakkankulam. The southern side of the Lake (Tharuvai), where once Kanakkankudiyiruppu was situated, now looked like a desert full of thorny bushes and meadows of sand hills. By the side of the lake on the south there was a grove of Palmira, Banyan and Fig trees. Shepherds used to take rest under the shades of these trees.

Vision of Our Lady

The author has taken liberty here to add up his own imagination to give graphic description to the historic event. The names and dates are his own suppositions.

It was September 8, the birth day of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1799. A shepherd boy, Savariappan by name, hailing from Sokkankudiyiruppu left the sheep for grazing, and was



lying down under the Banyan tree. Suddenly a bright light was shone among the branches of the tree. Hurriedly the boy gathered the sheep and sped towards the lake. Something struck heavily on his toes and he fell. After rubbing the toes for a while, he rushed again towards the lake.

Once again the bright light appeared! A gentle breeze of heavenly music of innumerable angels was approaching! It was exactly twelve noon. A stupendous lightning appeared! Savariappan had closed his eyes. Hearing a sweet voice “my son”, he opened his eyes. Oh! What a wonder! Surrounded by angels Our Lady of Assumption stood before him above the ground. The Mother of God kindly gazing on the

shivering boy said: “My son, do not be afraid! Go and search digging the spot where you fell!” saying this she disappeared!

Savariappan hurried back to the spot and saw a stick protruding a little above the sand. With eagerness he dug the sand with his fingers. It was a beautiful cross! Firmly fixed on a solid structure! With all speed he ran to Sokkankudiyiruppu and narrated to the people all that happened. People of Sokkankudiyiruppu came to the spot in a great crowd. They dug the ground still deeper and found out that it was a cross on the font façade of a church!

This marvel of the red sand hill was immediately reported to the Parish Priest (name not known) residing at Vadakkankulam. He was one of those missionaries from Pondicherry who had come and settled in Vadakkankulam to assist the Cochin mission, during the suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773 to 1838). The priest came immediately to the



spot. With trembling hands he embraced the cross and venerated the sign of redemption with tears of joy! It was he who inaugurated the great project of excavating the sand hill of Kanakkankudiyiruppu.

No permission or aid was sought from the government. The faith and devotion of the People of Sokkankudiyiruppu alone was his investment. He was struck with awe at the fervor and eagerness of the people. It is true even today that the faith and devotion of the people of Sokkankudiyiruppu astounds the Missionary Priests.

Taking the people into confidence, the Parish Priest came and settled in a shed erected on the sand hill and launched on the excavation with suitable equipments and plenty of people to work without salary.

If this project was not of the Blessed Virgin Mary, millions of rupees would have been required to launch on this venture. But expecting no kind of remuneration, but influenced only by genuine devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary all the children and adults, learned and unlearned, Christians and non Christians of all castes and creed engaged themselves day and night, praying and singing the praises of Our Lady, to remove the sand hill. Hearing of this holy venture, people from the surrounding regions even Hindus and Muslims came forward to work with the people and encourage the Parish Priest. Some rich people came forward to feed the workers with plenty of rice, nuts, grams and pulses of various kinds produced in their farms.

Within three or four weeks the whole church was brought to sight. It was 1799, October 7, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, the day assigned by the Parish Priest. All people had gathered in front of the church. They came in procession around the church praying the Rosary and singing hymns and the litany of Our Lady. As they approached the

front door of the church, with a roar of slogan, the whole crowd began to sing the greeting song “Ave Maria, Ave Maria!” The Parish Priest opened the door, saying “Gate of Heaven, Pray for us!”

The Marvel Witnessed in The Church

This is a traditional belief (not the imagination of the author). The priest followed by the people with tears of all prayerful ecstasy entered the church. Ah! At the awesome sight of the miraculous phenomenon inside, all prostrating on the ground, blubbered with tears: Ah! Amma! Amma<Mathave! Mathave< For **two candles were burning by the side of the statue of Our Lady of Assumption**. All these hundred and fifty years these candles might have had generated miraculous light to the sanctuary of Our Lady.

Not only that, but the church was also filled with a sweet-smelling perfume. All were wondering: “Ah! What a fragrance! There is nothing to wonder, because it is nothing unbelievable. When Our Lady had been taken from the sepulcher body and soul, were not the candles burning for three days? Were not flowers blossoming and giving sweet fragrance?



On the main altar the beautiful statue of the

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary enthroned in 1542 by St. Francis Xavier appeared as if inviting the people with a smile: “Come, my children”. Holding a scepter on her right hand and the child Jesus on the left, she was adorned with a crown of twelve stars and there were angels under her feet as if carrying her in a chariot made of angels and clouds. Oh! The crowd was bewildered with an ecstasy of delight!

On the right side of Our Lady was the statue of St. Francis of Assisi the founder of the Franciscan order, enthroned by Arch Bishop John Marignolli in the year 1339. And on the left was the statue of St. Ignatius of Loyola the founder of the Society of Jesus, enthroned by St. Francis Xavier in the year 1542.

It is good to note here that until the time of St. Francis Xavier the statue of Our Lady on the main altar had been the original one, enthroned by St. Thomas the Apostle during the period of his sojourn in south India A.D. 33 to 72. He must have made this statue during his second visit to India after the assumption of our Lady. This ancient wooden statue was seen on the side altar when the church was opened after its excavation in the year 1779. Since the people of Sakkankudiyiruppu were not very much bothered about the importance of this original one, the leaders of the village called Chettivilai, with the permission of the then Parish Priest and the people of Sakkankudiyiruppu, took the original Statue of Our Lady (the date unknown) to Chettivilai and enthroned it in the church of Chettivilai, and it is venerated by the people there with all veneration due to its Apostolic origin.

To testify this fact the Parish priest of Chettivilai Fr. Selva George has given to the author a written testimony of his parishioners dated (Dec.2, 2011) saying: “In the excavation work of Manalmatha church, the contribution of Chettivilai was equally great. And therefore after the excavation was over when the Pariah Priest of Sokkan kudiyruppu wanted to take this statue to Sokkankudiyruppu, they requested it for Chettivilai church and obtained it”. Thus the original statue of Our Lady has been preserved as a precious property of Chettivilai to this day.

From the day of excavation onwards continuously people gathered there to pray and work, removing the land-slides around the church. And until the priests of the Society of Jesus were once again sent in the year 1838, the missionaries of Pondicherry came regularly to maintain the Manalmatha miraculous church.



Development of Manal Matha Church as a Great Shrine of Pilgrimage

In the year 1838 the priests of the Society of Jesus were once again sent to their mission centers. In 1843 Fr. Casthanier S.J. and in 1851 Fr, Verdier S.J., sent to Vadkkaankulam as Parish Priests were taking care of the Manalmatha church. In 1861 Fr. Danish Cushen S.J. appointed as Parish Priest of Sathankulam was maintaining the Manalmatha church until 1880.

Fr. John Mangella S.J.

In 1880 Anaikkarai was made a separate Parish and Fr. John Mangella (Arulappa Nathar) took charge as Parish Priest of both Anaikkarai and Sokkankudiyiruppu. Fr. Mangella had a special affection towards Manalmatha church. He had an unquenchable desire to protect the church from being once again exposed to land sliding or sand storm.

So far it was a hard task for the people every day to remove sliding sands out from the main door of the church. Seeing this Fr. Mangella with an expensive project in cooperation of the people's labour, built a portico in front of the main door and saved the entrance of the church from land sliding. Thus it was Fr. John Mangella who started for the first time to develop Manalmatha church as a shrine of pilgrimage.

From that time onwards devotees of Manalmatha began to come in great number to honour our Lady and to obtain her favors in times of crisis both in body and in soul.

It had become a holy practice chiefly among those afflicted with fatal illness, infected with diseases like cholera and hopelessly abandoned by the doctors to seek the intercession of Athisaya Manalmatha. Those who received her favors came with offerings and money as an act of thanksgiving to Our Lady of the sands. Thus the practice of families and individuals coming and staying there for a week or ten days as an act of penance began, and many miracles were commenced to be recorded.

Lepers, paralytics and men and women possessed by evil spirits whom Fr. Mangella touched and prayed over, were cured through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From that time onwards people from around a radius of 80 kilometers began to come at least once a year in pilgrimage to Manalmatha church.

The above details are recorded in the book “50 years in Madura Mission” by Fr Danish Cushen S.J. in the year 1886: “In the formation of this shrine of pilgrimage, the contribution of Fr. Mangella is immensely great. He loved and cherished this church worth more than his own life”.

Then in 1890 Fr. Baupal S. J. and in 1900 Fr. Couthurier S.J. had been the care takers of Manalmatha church. In 1902 Sokkankudiyiruppu was again attached to the Parish of Sathankulam. And Manalmatha church was entrusted to the care of Fr. Soosai Manickam, a diocesan priest, who must have been one of the native priests belonging to the diocese of Tiruchirapalli.

Between A.D. 1912 and 1923 when Fr. Sabatier S.J.

was the Parish priest at Sathankulam, Fr. Y. Ignatius, as the assistant Parish Priest with an amazing devotion to Manalmatha was inclined to complete the excavation project and spread the prominence of the shrine of Manalmatha. Therefore people began to call him “ManalmathaBakthan”.

In the year 1923 the Diocese of Tuticorin became a separate Diocese. In the same year Sokkankudiyiruppu also became a separate Parish. Fr. Dominic (Swami Nathar) became the first Parish Priest. Manalmatha church was maintained by him till 1928, and till 1935 by Fr. Bankaar, and again by Fr. Dominic (Swami Nathar) till 1937.

The Dawn of The Golden Age of Manal Matha Shrine

Fr. Y. Ignatius ManalmathaBakthan

Fr. Y. Ignatius, who from his childhood onwards had obtained the love and grace of Our Lady, regularly visited the Manalmatha shrine offering prayers and sacrifices, and received the gift of vocation to the priesthood. In the year 1937 he came as the Parish Priest to Sokkankudiyiruppu. It is no exaggeration to state that this coming of Fr. Y. Ignatius was the dawn of the golden age for the shrine of Manalmatha church.

If missionary work was to him like an eye, devotion to Our Lady was the apple of the eye. He loved the people of Sokkankudiyiruppu as his beloved children. But above all that he cherished and loved the Manalmatha shrine as his own heart. He prayed to Our Lady and asked her guidance

to develop the dignity and decorum of her shrine.

Manalmatha in her turn, rendered her presence and inspiration to him as the “Apostle of Our Lady” to protect and develop this church, built on the same place where St. Thomas as the “Apostle of Jesus Christ” had built the church to Our Lady. In this perpetual project of protecting the church, Our Lady worked many miracles to give confidence to Fr. Ignatius in his arduous labours. For example:

1. The Finding of the Miraculous Drinking Water Well

The first miracle took place in the year 1938. There had been no drinking water available in that sandy hill for the pilgrims who came in great number to visit the shrine. In order to quench the thirst of Our Lady’s children, Fr. Ignatius with a filial right and affection prayed to the Mother of God. Manalmatha worked a miracle by sending an angel to help discover the same location of the miraculous spring, which St Thomas the Apostle found on this spot to baptize and cure his primitive Christians at the time of Gandapparasa. That spring was flowing during the time of St. Thomas (A.D. 36), at the level of about 50 feet lower than the level of the present sand hill.

Now let us hear the story how Fr. Ignatius was shown the location of the original spring by an angel, and how he managed to dig a well in that sand hill, as he himself narrated in person to Mr. Maria Pankiras from Sökkankudiyiruppu, when he was an altar boy to Fr. Ignatius in 1946. The following record written by Mr. K. Pankiras (in 1999) has been kept in the archives of the author. He writes:

“I believe it was 1946, when Fr. Ignatius had been the Parish Priest of Sokkankudiyiruppu. Even at that time, as it is today, every Saturday Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered at Manalmatha church. But it would start in the early morning at 05 - 30. And therefore many of the school boys would go and stay at Manalmatha church Friday night itself. Fr. Ignatius would be there seated on a chair on the sand hill by the southern side of the church shaping his beard with his fingers. I used to sit by his side with filial affection and hear him narrating his past experiences.

“One day on such an occasion Fr. Ignatius began saying: “Do you know how drinking water was obtained on this hill?” I became eager to hear the story, and he continued: “Seeing the people suffering from lack of drinking water, I resolved to dig a drinking water well by all means. So in front of the church at about 20 yards away, we excavated the earth. At the depth of about 25 feet, we found the roof of a house. Knowing that it was the roof level of the city of Kannkkankudiyiruppu, the workers felt that to get water they have to reach the ground level of that city, and thence they did not know how deeper they would have to dig out. We became discouraged and gave up the venture.

“I was filled with grief and engaged in deep deliberation. One fine morning a young lad approached me from the west direction, and asked me: “I suppose you are in quest for the proper location of a drinking water well, right? Come with me, I know the location where water is available. With an unknown impulsion I followed the lad without asking any question. He went and stood in a place, sketched

a circle with his foot and showed me the spot. When I moved closer he disappeared! With an ecstasy of delight, I called the people and said:

“Our Lady has sent one of her angels to show me the place where drinking water is available. Let us dig here deep until we reach the spring”. With renewed impetus the people broke up the earth to the depth of 50 feet, and water gushed forth.” Father Ignatius ended his story by saying that this water had been called ‘miraculous spring’ to this day.”

“I said: yes Father, I too remember that a few days after the finding of the miraculous water, my father carried me on his shoulders to the bottom of the well through the sandy steps down, and gave me to drink from the spring, saying: ‘miraculous water! Drink!’ I said it was very tasty. It is to be noted that I wrote this story at the time of our Parish Priest Fr. Cruz Antony (1964) and it had been published in the daily news paper “Dinamalar.”

Prof. K. Maria Pankiras M. A., M. Ed.

2. Construction of Stronghold around the underground Church

The second miracle was a gigantic scheme of ten years from 1939 to 1949. This scheme also Our Lady had inspired to Fr. Ignatius and had it completed.

This massive plan was to farther remove the sand hill around the underground church and to put up a deep and strong foundation, so as to construct an outer church from the bottom. And to construct a concrete roof over it when

the level of the outer church reaches the top level of the underground church! And also it was necessary to construct tunnel ways from the ground level to reach the underground church. Only in this way the Manalmatha church had to be protected permanently from being covered once again by the sands.

If only Fr. Ignatius had been anxious how to raise money for this immense task, it would not have been achieved at all. Father had confidence only on Our Blessed Mother.

The work was started under the supervision of the architect Anthony Muthu from Vadakkankulam. Without any kind of aid from the Diocese or from any foreign agency, the wall of fortification was growing up. And that was possible, besides the devout prayers of Fr. Ignatius and the children of Our Lady with him, only by the continued labours, compulsory taxations, ceaseless encouragements and support of the local people as the only promising investment for this project.

The most difficult task was to build up a temporary preventive partition by means of Palmyra trees, bamboos, wooden planks and other materials to the height of about



30 feet, to hold back the landslides, chiefly on the southern side of the church.

3. Miraculous Escape of The Devoties

One day a newly married couple from Kerala while coming out of the church after their prayers and devotions, a beautiful lady appeared at the front door of the church, asked them to stay behind the doors and disappeared! The very next moment the preventive partition broke, and a heavy load of the sand hill fell in front of the church. If they had come out at that time, they would have surely died on the spot.

The report of this event was narrated to the author in front of Fr. Martin Manuel Parish Priest of Sokkankudiyiruppu on April 30, 2003, by an eye witness Mr. Rajaiah, who had been working there as a mason at that time.

Thus the construction work was progressing without any loss of life or misfortune, mainly due to the continuous prayers and watchfulness of Fr. Ignatius. Staying there day and night in a hut thatched with Palmyra leaves, Fr. Ignatius patiently suffered the sun and rain, the insufficiency of proper nourishment, and undertook the administration and direction of the work all under his personal supervision. And since this project was designed by the Blessed Virgin Mary, the offering of the pilgrims were abundantly augmenting and the building rose up 10 feet above the level of the sand hill. Then the concrete roof and an upper church at the west end and a resting place for the pilgrims, all were built within

the date fixed the Father.

In the meanwhile Fr. Ignatius became unwell due to lack of rest and medical care. But in spite of his bodily weakness, reinforced with a strange vitality of spirit, he continued to make every effort to achieve a very important mission charged by the Blessed Virgin Mary in that place as shown below.

Fatima Pilgrim Virgin

It was at that time (in 1950) the Fatima Pilgrim Virgin statue was brought to the Diocese of Tuticorin. Knowing the importance of the message of Our Lady of Fatima, Fr. Ignatius wanted to introduce the devotion of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in this miraculous shrine of Manalmatha church. And therefore he made arrangements to bring a **statue of Our Lady of Fatima from Portugal**, and enshrined it at the upper church of Manalmatha shrine.

It was the intention of Fr. Ignatius that Our Lady's "Peace Plan from Heaven" should be fulfilled at this shrine of Manalmatha church, and that every First Saturday the devotion of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary should be celebrated there.

For this purpose he enthroned the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in the upper chapel, and had it blessed dedicated the upper chapel to Our Lady of Fatima by the auxiliary Bishop Thomas Fernando on the feast of Our Lady of Fatima in the year 1951.

It is noteworthy to recall here the words of bishop Roach about Fr. Ignatius in 1951: “Manalmatha Church is an ancient shrine. It is Fr. Ignatius that enriched the sand covered church with singular splendor, and made known the glory of Our Lady of Assumption far and wide” These words are recorded in the Souvenir published as the commemoration of the 200th year of unearthing the church.

Again not knowing the importance of this statue and the above said intention of Fr. Ignatius, the people of Sakkankudiyiruppu discarded this Fatima statue and finally put it on the market away in 1999. Now it is under the custody of the author as an object of First Saturday devotion elsewhere.



When all that was destined for him to be accomplished, Fr. Ignatius fell ill, and went to the Rosarian Monastery to take rest for two months. Again he came back to celebrate the feast of Manalmatha church by hoisting the flag on Friday October 3, 1952. On the seventh day of the feast (Thursday, Oct. 10, 1952) at 07-00 am Fr. Ignatius fainted.



Having received the last sacraments through Fr. Amaladas Victoria who was there to assist him, he fell asleep on the lap of his beloved Manalmatha. Fr. Stephandas was there to witness the last hours of Fr. Y. Ignatius.

The Parish Priests who came after Fr. Ignatius

1952 – 1954 Fr. Xavier Mel

1954 – 1961 Fr. Cruz Maria Nathar

1961 – 1964 Fr. Augustine Fernando

1964 – 1972 Fr. Cruz Antony

- Electricity connection on Oct. 10, 1967.
- A large inn for the pilgrims in 1967
- Electric motor and pump set for the drinking water well
- Road construction from Periathazhai, from Thopuvilai, and from PuthanTharuvai.
- House for the priests.
- Marble floor for the church.

1972 – 1978 - Fr. Mariadas S.

- Construction of the upper church and A large stair case in front of the upper church.

1978 – 1983 Fr. Hermes Moduthagam

- The limits of the church properties were appropriately defined.

1983 – 1988 Fr. Xavier C.

- Convent building for Sisters.
- Road construction to Valivilai.

1988 – 1992 Fr. Xavier Alwin

Fr. Oswald Fernando

Fr. Thilagaraj

1992 – 1997 Fr. John Bosco

- The first edition of Manalmatha history
- The new flag staff

1997 – 1999 Fr. Antony Robert

- Construction of the pilgrims Hall

1999- 2004 Fr. Martin Manuel

- **The celebration of the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the Athisaya Manalmatha church.**
- Construction of the front façade of the upper church
- The paintings of the history of Manalmatha church

- New altar and statue of the upper church
- Staircase to venerate the cross of the lower church
- Renovation of the lower church altar
- The entrance arch to Manalmatha church.
- MGM house (higher class) for the pilgrims
- Open air stadium
- Dining hall (Asana madam)
- Light and sound arrangements with a generator
- Calvary grotto
- Publication of the “History of Manalmatha Shrine”.

The present structure of the upper church of the Manalmatha shrine is the external monument of the historical mission of evangelization started at this spot by St. Thomas the Apostle and continually carried on up to the present time.

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1. A. Chidambaranar, *The History of Tamil Sangams*, pp. 173, 174.
 2. Alex Cruz Muthaia, *Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu*, pp. 96, 97.
 3. Fr. John Bosco, *ManamTharum Manal Matha*, p. 5.
 4. Alex Cruz Muthaia, *Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu*, pp. 88, 89.
 5. *Ibid* at pp. 93, 94.
 6. Mount Etna, <http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/LX/MountEtna.html>.
 7. Fr. John Bosco *ManamTharum Manal Matha*, pp. 7, 8.
 8. Catholic Churches in South, <http://southindiancatholicchurches.blogspot.com/India>

- <http://southindiancatholicchurches.blogspot.com/2009/08/malaimadha.html>.
9. Manal Matha Shrine A Historical Shrine, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ9uvlO6WOW>.
 10. St. Louis Marie de Montfort, True Devotion to Mary, TAN Books, 1999. No. 50.
 11. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, pp., 151, 152.
 12. *Ibid* at p. 169.
 13. *Ibid*
 14. *Ibid* at pp. 169, 170.
 15. Albert Nevett, John de Britto and His Times, Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1980.
 16. Handbook of Tuticorin Diocese, Tuticorin, Tuticorin Diocese, p. 158.
 17. M. Arattukulam and E.P. Antony, Latin Catholics of Kerala: Communalism versus Christian Charity, Kottayam, Pellissery Publications, 1993 pp. 370 - 372; Alex Cruz Muthaiah, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 152.
 18. Directory of Tuticorin Diocese, Tuticorin, Tuticorin Diocese, p. 211.
 19. Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 158.
 20. *Ibid* at pp. 154, 155.
 21. *Ibid* at p. 96, 97.
 22. *Ibid* at p. 157.
 23. Cfr. Directory of Tuticorin Diocese, Tuticorin, Tuticorin Diocese, pp. 166, 167; Alex Cruz Muthaia, Then Paandi Mandalam Maana Veera Naadu, p. 171.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

Extract of “Year of Birth” and “Year of Death” from Wikipedia Page “Jesus”

(Version dt 03-06-2012, [https://web.archive.org/web 20120603225616/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus](https://web.archive.org/web/20120603225616/http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus))

Year of birth

Further information: Anno Domini, Common Era, and Year zero.

Two independent approaches have been used to estimate the year of the birth of Jesus, one by analyzing the Nativity accounts in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew along with other historical data, the other by working backwards from the estimation of the start of the ministry of Jesus, as also discussed in the next section.

In its Nativity account, the Gospel of Matthew associates the birth of Jesus with the reign of Herod the Great, who is generally believed to have died around 4 BC/BCE.

Matthew 2:1 states that: “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king” and Luke 1:5 mentions the reign of Herod shortly before the birth of Jesus.^[22] Matthew also suggests that Jesus may have been as much as two years old at the time of the visit of the Magi and hence even older at the time of Herod’s death. But the author of Luke also describes the birth as taking place during the first census of the Roman provinces of Syria and Iudaea, which is generally believed to have occurred in 6 AD/CE. Most scholars generally assume a date of birth between 6 and 4 BC/BCE. Other scholars assume that Jesus was born sometime between 7–2 BC/BCE.

The year of birth of Jesus has also been estimated in a manner that is independent of the Nativity accounts, by using information in the Gospel of John to work backwards from the statement in Luke 3:23 that Jesus was “about 30 years of age” at the start of his ministry. As discussed in the section below, by combining information from John 2:13 and John 2:20 with the writings of Flavius Josephus, it has been estimated that around 27-29 AD/CE, Jesus was “about thirty years of age”. Some scholars thus estimate the year 28 AD/CE to be roughly the 32nd birthday of Jesus and the birth year of Jesus to be around 6-4 BC/BCE.

However, the common Gregorian calendar method for numbering years, in which the current year is 2012, is based on the decision of a monk Dionysius in the sixth century, to count the years from a point of reference (namely, Jesus’ birth) which he placed sometime between 2 BC and 1

AD. Although Christian feasts related to the Nativity have had specific dates (e.g. December 25 for Christmas) there is no historical evidence for the exact day or month of the birth of Jesus.

Year of death

A number of approaches have been used to estimate the year of the death of Jesus, including information from the canonical gospels, the chronology of the life of Paul the Apostle in the New Testament correlated with historical events, as well as different astronomical models, as discussed below.

All four canonical gospels report that Jesus was crucified at Calvary during the prefecture of Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect who governed Judaea from 26 to 36 AD/CE. The late 1st century Jewish historian Josephus, writing in *Antiquities of the Jews* (c. 93 AD/CE), and the early 2nd century Roman historian Tacitus, writing in *The Annals* (c. 116 AD/CE), also state that Pilate ordered the execution of Jesus, though both writers use the title “procurator” instead of “prefect”.

The estimation of the date of the conversion of Paul places the death of Jesus before this conversion, which is estimated at around 33-36 AD/CE. (Also see the estimation



A 1466 copy of
Antiquities of the Jews

of the start of Jesus' ministry as a few years before this date above). The estimation of the year of Paul's conversion relies on a series of calculations working backwards from the well established date of his trial before Gallio in Achaia Greece (Acts 18:12-17) around 51-52 AD/CE, the meeting of Priscilla and Aquila which were expelled from Rome about 49 AD/CE and the 14-year period before returning to Jerusalem in Galatians 2:1. The remaining period is generally accounted for by Paul's missions (at times with Barnabas) such as those in Acts 11:25-26 and 2 Corinthians 11:23-33, resulting in the 33-36 AD/CE estimate.

For centuries, astronomers and scientists have used diverse computational methods to estimate the date of crucifixion, Isaac Newton being one of the first cases. Newton's method relied on the relative visibility of the crescent of the new moon and he suggested the date as Friday, April 23, 34 AD/CE. In 1990 astronomer Bradley E. Schaefer computed the date as Friday, April 3, 33 AD/CE. In 1991, John Pratt stated that Newton's method was sound, but included a minor error at the end. Pratt suggested the year 33 AD/CE as the answer. Using the completely different approach of a lunar eclipse model, Humphreys and Waddington arrived at the conclusion that Friday, April 3, 33 AD/CE was the date of the crucifixion.

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APPENDIX II

The Passing of Mary - First Latin Form.¹

This Book is one of the missing Books that was part the original Bible. Concerning the Passing of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In that time before the Lord came to His passion, and among many words which the mother asked of the Son, she began to ask Him about her own departure, addressing Him as follows:— O, most dear Son, I pray Thy holiness, that when my soul goes out of my body, Thou let me know on the third day before; and do Thou, beloved Son, with Thy angels, receive it. Then He received the prayer of His beloved mother, and said to her: O, palace and temple of the living God, O, blessed mother, O, queen of all saints, and blessed above all women, before thou carriedst me in thy womb, I always guarded thee, and caused thee to be fed daily with my angelic food, as thou knowest: how can I desert thee, after thou hast carried me, and nourished me, and brought me down in flight into Egypt, and endured many hardships

for me? Know, then, that my angels have always guarded thee, and will guard thee even until thy departure.

But after I undergo suffering for men, as it is written, and rise again on the third day, and after forty days ascend into heaven, when thou shalt see me coming to thee with angels and archangels, with saints and with virgins, and with my disciples, know for certain that thy soul will be separated from the body, and I shall carry it into heaven, where it shall never at all have tribulation or anguish. Then she joyed and gloried, and kissed the knees of her Son, and blessed the Creator of heaven and earth, who gave her such a gift through Jesus Christ her Son.

In the second year, therefore, after the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, the most blessed Virgin Mary continued always in prayer day and night. And on the third day before she passed away, an angel of the Lord came to her, and saluted her, saying: Hail, Mary, full of grace! the Lord be with thee. And she answered, saying: Thanks to God. Again he said to her: Receive this palm which the Lord promised to thee. And she, giving thanks to God, with great joy received from the hand of the angel the palm sent to her. The angel of the Lord said to her: Thy assumption will be after three days. And she answered: Thanks to God.

Then she called Joseph of the city of Arimathæa, and the other disciples of the Lord; and when they, both relations and acquaintances, were assembled, she announced her departure to all standing there. Then the blessed Mary

washed herself, and dressed herself like a queen, and waited the advent of her Son, as He had promised to her. And she asked all her relations to keep beside her, and give her comfort. And she had along with her three virgins, Sepphora, Abigea, and Zaël; but the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ had been already dispersed throughout the whole world to preach to the people of God.

Then at the third hour there were great thunders, and rains, and lightnings, and tribulation, and an earthquake, while queen Mary was standing in her chamber. John the evangelist and apostle was suddenly brought from Ephesus, and entered the chamber of the blessed Mary, and saluted her, and said to her: Hail, Mary, full of grace! the Lord be with thee. And she answered: Thanks to God. And raising herself up, she kissed Saint John. And the blessed Mary said to him: O my dearest son, why hast thou left me at such a time, and hast not paid heed to the commands of thy Master, to take care of me, as He commanded thee while He was hanging on the cross? And he asked pardon with bended knee.

Then the blessed Mary gave him her benediction, and again kissed him. And when she meant to ask him whence he came, and for what reason he had come to Jerusalem, behold, all the disciples of the Lord, except Thomas who is called Didymus, were brought by a cloud to the door of the chamber of the blessed Mary. They stood and went in, and saluted the queen with the following words, and adored her: Hail, Mary, full of grace! the Lord be with

thee. And she eagerly rose quickly, and bowed herself, and kissed them, and gave thanks to God.

These are the names of the disciples of the Lord who were brought thither in the cloud: John the evangelist and James his brother, Peter and Paul, Andrew, Philip, Luke, Barnabas, Bartholomew and Matthew, Matthias who is called Justus, Simon the Chananæan, Judas and his brother, Nicodemus and Maximianus, and many others who cannot be numbered. Then the blessed Mary said to her brethren: What is this, that you have all come to Jerusalem? Peter, answering, said to her: We had need to ask this of thee, and dost thou question us? Certainly, as I think, none of us knows why we have come here to-day with such rapidity. I was at Antioch, and now I am here.

All declared plainly the place where they had been that day. And they all wondered that they were there when they heard these things. The blessed Mary said to them: I asked my Son, before He endured the passion, that He and you should be at my death; and He granted me this gift. Whence you may know that my departure will be to-morrow. Watch and pray with me, that when the Lord comes to receive my soul, He may find you watching. Then all promised that they would watch. And they watched and prayed the whole night, with psalms and chants, with great illuminations.

And when the Lord's day came, at the third hour, just as the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in a cloud,

so Christ descended with a multitude of angels, and received the soul of His beloved mother. For there was such splendour and perfume of sweetness, and angels singing the songs of songs, where the Lord says, As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters, that all who were there present fell on their faces, as the apostles fell when Christ transfigured Himself before them on Mount Thabor, and for a whole hour and a half no one was able to rise. But when the light went away, and at the same time with the light itself, the soul of the blessed virgin Mary was taken up into heaven with psalms, and hymns, and songs of songs. And as the cloud went up the whole earth shook, and in one moment all the inhabitants of Jerusalem openly saw the departure of St. Mary.

And that same hour Satan entered into them, and they began to consider what they were to do with her body. And they took up weapons, that they might burn her body and kill the apostles, because from her had gone forth the dispersions of Israel, on account of their sins and the gathering together of the Gentiles. But they were struck with blindness, striking their heads against the walls, and striking each other. Then the apostles, alarmed by so much brightness, arose, and with psalms carried the holy body down from Mount Zion to the valley of Jehoshaphat. But as they were going in the middle of the road, behold, a certain Jew, Reuben by name, wishing to throw to the ground the holy bier with the body of the blessed Mary. But his hands dried up, even to the elbow; whether he would or not, he went down even to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, weeping and

lamenting because his hands were raised to the bier, and he was not able to draw back his hands to himself.

And he began to ask the apostles that by their prayer he might be saved and made a Christian. Then the apostles, bending their knees, asked the Lord to let him loose. And he, being healed that same hour, giving thanks to God and kissing the feet of the queen of all the saints and apostles, was baptized in that same place, and began to preach the name of our God Jesus Christ. Then the apostles with great honour laid the body in the tomb, weeping and singing through exceeding love and sweetness. And suddenly there shone round them a light from heaven, and they fell to the ground, and the holy body was taken up by angels into heaven.

Then the most blessed Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most blessed body going up to heaven, and began to cry out and say: O, holy mother, blessed mother, spotless mother, if I have now found grace because I see thee, make thy servant joyful through thy compassion, because thou art going to heaven. Then the girdle with which the apostles had encircled the most holy body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and kissing it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

He found all the apostles and another great crowd there beating their breasts on account of the brightness which they had seen. And seeing and kissing each other, the

blessed Peter said to him: Truly thou hast always been obdurate and unbelieving, because for thine unbelief it was not pleasing to God that thou shouldst be along with us at the burial of the mother of the Saviour. And he, beating his breast, said: I know and firmly believe that I have always been a bad and an unbelieving man; therefore I ask pardon of all of you for my obduracy and unbelief. And they all prayed for him. Then the blessed Thomas said: Where have you laid her body? And they pointed out the sepulchre with their finger. And he said: The body which is called most holy is not there.

Then the blessed Peter said to him: Already on another occasion thou wouldst not believe the resurrection of our Master and Lord at our word, unless thou went to touch Him with thy fingers, and see Him; how wilt thou believe us that the holy body is here? Still he persists saying: It is not here. Then, as it were in a rage, they went to the sepulchre, which was a new one hollowed out in the rock, and took up the stone; but they did not find the body, not knowing what to say, because they had been convicted by the words of Thomas. Then the blessed Thomas told them how he was singing mass in India—he still had on his sacerdotal robes. He, not knowing the word of God, had been brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most holy body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing.

She heard his prayer, and threw him her girdle which she had about her. And the apostles seeing the belt which

they had put about her, glorifying God, all asked pardon of the blessed Thomas, on account of the benediction which the blessed Mary had given him, and because he had seen the most holy body going up into heaven. And the blessed Thomas gave them his benediction, and said: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

And the same cloud by which they had been brought carried them back each to his own place, just like Philip when he baptized the eunuch, as is read in the Acts of the Apostles; and as Habakkuk the prophet carried food to Daniel, who was in the lions' den, and quickly returned to Judæa. And so also the apostles quickly returned to where they had at first been, to preach to the people of God. Nor is it to be wondered at that He should do such things, who went into the virgin and came out of her though her womb was closed; who, though the gates were shut, went in to His disciples; who made the deaf to hear, raised the dead, cleansed the lepers, gave sight to the blind, and did many other wonderful things.

To believe this is no doubtful matter. I am Joseph who laid the Lord's body in my sepulchre, and saw Him rising again; and who, before the ascension and after the ascension of the Lord, always kept his most sacred temple the blessed ever-virgin Mary, and who have kept in writing and in my breast the things which came forth from the mouth of God, and how the things mentioned above were done by the judgment of God. And I have made known to all, Jews and

Gentiles, those things which I saw with my eyes, and heard with my ears; and as long as I live I shall not cease to declare them. And her, whose assumption is at this day venerated and worshipped throughout the whole world, let us assiduously entreat that she be mindful of us in the presence of her most pious Son in heaven, to whom is praise and glory through endless ages of ages. Amen.

We claim no expertise concerning the authenticity of any of the lost books and leave this judgment to the reader. We do, however, strongly reject the self-proclaimed authority of any dogmatically motivated and church-controlled mortals who think themselves qualified to make such decisions. One of the most logical and realistic concepts in the Bible is the caution that one should prove all things. We believe that proving the veracity of a given thing is an individual responsibility, which must not, and should not be the duty of those who think themselves better judges.

God Bless you all

Rev. JR Seabolt

1. http://rapture-soon.net/Book_Passing_of_Mary1.html

APPENDIX III

Sage Agathiyar and His Travels'

The following is based on an article on Sage Agathiyar –SAGE AGASTHYA – FOREMOST OF THE SIDDHAS by Dr. Mandayam Kumar of the Siddha Medical Research Institute, Bangalore:

Dr. Mandayam Kumar says it was possible to find out details about sage Agathiyar during the course of literary research on the Siddha medical sciences in a Tamil manuscript written on palm leaves about 3,000 years ago. The text is titled 'PrapanchaKaandam' and runs into several volumes mentions the Dr.

It is attributed to Lord Muruga (Alagar). It was narrated by Sage Agathiyar while recorded by Sage Pulasthiya. The original Tamil manuscript is in the care of Pandit S. Jayanari of Vellore says the Dr. He provides information extracted from this work.

'Agathiyar Muni is considered to be the embodiment

of one of the nine celestial intellectuals (the anti diluvian kings) who came to this earth for enlightening human beings.' Dr. Mandayam Kumar reveals for the first time the parental heritage of the sage.

Sage Agathiyar was said to have been born about 4573 years prior to the commencement of Kali Yuga at a place in Gujarat, in the early hours of Tuesday, 14th of February 7673 BC.

Belonging to the early Aryan race, his father Bhargava was well learned while his mother Indumathi was from Punjab. They were both devotees of the Pasupatha order of the sage Rishabha Muni.

Agathiyar then had his early education in Gujarat. As his thirst for knowledge in particular on philosophy, yoga, medicine, and astronomy was immense he traveled all over Kashmir, Tibet, China, Nepal and Kailas in Manchuria. Mount Kailas was deemed to be in Manchuria those days.

He became a disciple of Sage Nandi and Sage Dhanvantri. He then traveled towards the south to Cambodia and Malaya. In Cambodia he established the very first of his many educational institutions for the propagation of philosophy and science.

After establishing a similar institution and hospital in Malaya he crossed the sea to the continent of Kumari Kandam. During Agathiyar's time Kumari Kandam occupied a vast area extending from the present-day Sri Lanka to the

Antarctic. This continent was ruled by Ravana, a great devotee of Lord Siva. King Ravana gave away a portion of his kingdom to Agathiyar to establish more institutions. The foremost of these institutions in this region was known as ArunodayaGiri or Meozone. Here Agathiyar practiced yoga and taught it to his large following of disciples. He then went back north to Malaya where he was betrothed to the king's daughter. He then ruled the kingdom of Vijayapuri.

He returned to Kumari Kandan where he met Lord Murugan in the form of Sage Kandan or Supramaniam at TrikonaMalai, present day Trincomali. At the hill station called Kadari Kama or Kadhigama, Lord Murugan imparted spiritual knowledge to Agathiyar.

In his meditation he could see into the future; see impending calamities. As a result he moved to the North Pole considering it to be a safe place. This period of his move to the Arctic was said to coincide with the end of the Dwapara Yuga placed at about 6580 BC. Just as he had seen of an impending calamity and had decided to move north, a tremendous explosion in the planet Mars sends a piece of debris towards earth. This impact caused a great deluge on the earth. Significant portions of Kumari Kandan submerged into the Indian Ocean. Continental drift resulted in the present-day arrangement of this region.

After the great flood Kailas was no more but instead the Himalayan mountain range had emerged in North India.

Amidst all these geographical changes says the Dr,

sage Agathiyar went seeking for a place that would not be affected by future calamities.

He located a mountain range in South India. This is the present day Courtalam. This spot is said to be the safest place and free from any future catastrophes. Here Agathiyar met Lord Siva and Uma in the form of DhashinaMurthi and Shenbaga Devi. This spot where the meeting took place between DhashinaMurthi, Shenbaga Devi, Lord Murugan and Agathiyar was Mahadeva Giri. This meeting also signified the commencement of Kali Yuga.

Other sages then stated coming to Mahadeva Giri. Lord DhashinaMurthi revived the knowledge of the Vedas and instructed these sages to propagate this knowledge at the appropriate manner and time for the benefit of humanity. This imparting of this knowledge was said to have taken place on the 21st day of the Tamil month of Kartigai, during the eleventh year, EswaraSamvatsara, of Kali Yuga. Agathiyar gave much importance to this day. All his dating was reckoned from this day.

The sages recorded their knowledge on palm leaves after extensive discussions held in AlaganKulam and presented them to Lord DhashinaMurthi for his perusal. This included the 64 kinds of learning, 18 Puranas, 96 Tatvas, and 48 branches of scientific knowledge. The entire literature in Tamil came to be called Sidha Veda. It was then translated into the four existing languages of that period viz Sanskrit, Greek, Hebrew and Chinese.

Sage Agathiyar on the instruction of Lord Murugan (Alagar) originated the Tamil language. Sage Bhogar from China, Sage Thaeraiyar from Malaya, Sage Yugimuni from Kerala, Sage Pulipani from Kantha Malai, Sage Pulathiyar and Sage Kapiyan all served Agathiyar. A conference of sidhas called SidharSabai was held during the 53rd year, SidhartiSamvatsara, of Kali Yuga at Courtalam.

An institution known as Sidhar Gnana Koodam was inaugurated by Lord Murugan and was headed by Agathiyar. Sage Pulathiyar and Sage Kapiyan headed the literary section while Sage Pulipani in research. Sage Thaeraiyar who was into surgery headed a medical research centre established at ThoranaMalai. Sage Yugimuni who was into herbal medicines headed an Ayurvedic hospital at ParadesiKundai. Sage Bhogar who was in charge of all scientific researches established an alchemy research centre at Thiruparan kundram. Sage PambattiSidhar was heading a team researching venom at Marudamalai.

After having established these institutions Agathiyar again started on an extensive mission of propagating the wealth of knowledge gained by these sidhars in Tibet, Manchuria, Egypt, Palestine, Rome, America, Africa, Malaya and Arab world.

After satisfactorily completing their mission of propagating the said teachings the sages went into 'Samadhi' merging themselves into the cosmos.

1. <http://indianheartbeat.fws1.com/agathiyar.html>

APPENDIX IV

The Amazing Great Pyramid - Yogananda SRF Devotees¹

The research done by Fr. Heras and Sir John Marshall the Archaeologist and other scholars into the archaeological finds at Mohenjodaro and Harappa point to the existence of an earlier highly developed Dravidian civilization in the deep South, which had influenced the Indus Valley Aryan civilization of the North.

The available historical evidence referring to the Dravidian civilization commences with the records that have come down to us of the Tamil literary writings during the past 12,000 years, which have been divided by historians into three periods, called the First Sangam period from 9600 BC to 5200 BC, spanning the Satya and Treta yugas, the Second Sangam period from 5200 BC to 1500 BC spanning the Treta and Dwapara yugas, and the Third Sangam period from 1500 BC to 600 AD spanning the Dwapara and Kali yugas.

According to the present cycle of four yugas, namely Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali yugas, in their descending

arc of 12,000 years and ascending arc of another 12,000 years, as stated by Sri Yukteswar in his famous treatise called “Holy Science”™, we are now in the ascending arc of Dwapara yuga completed the Kaliyuga period lasting from 600 BC to 1800 AD.

The Mahabharata war, where Lord Krishna propagated the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, is reckoned to have taken place during the Second Sangam period about the year 3100 BC.

The First Sangam, which was founded and nurtured by Siddha Sri Agastiyar, lasted for 4,400 years and had its centre in the city of Dakshina Madura in the continent of Lemuria. The Second Sangam, which was also established under the patronage of Sri Agastiyar, lasted for 3,700 years and had its centre in the city of Kavatapuram in the continent of Lemuria, after the records in the city of Dakshina Madura had gone under water.

The Third Sangam, also sponsored by Sri Agastiyar, lasted for 1,800 years and had its centre at Uttara Madura, namely the modern city of Madurai, which lays north of the earlier centres, after the whole of the Lemurian continent had gone under water.

After the commencement of the gradual inundation of the Lemurian continent, it is reported that Sri Agastiyar led a migration of Dravidians to Java and Cambodia and Central and South America.

The legends of the Incas, Mayans and Aztecs of South America regarding the founding of their cultures by tall bearded white-robed teachers confirm the traditional view that the Lemurians, under the guidance of their siddhas, colonized North and South America, as well as the Nile Valley, when they founded the Egyptian civilization.

It is significant to note that Edgar Cayce the well-known “sleeping prophet” of America, had in the course of his recent voluminous psychic messages given out by him while in a state of trance mentioned a similar sinking of the continent of Atlantis in stages into the Atlantic Ocean over a period of several centuries between 12,000 BC and 10,000 BC, before the sinking of the Lemurian continent.

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1. <http://forum.yogananda.net/index.php?/topic/17800-the-amazing-great-pyramid/>

APPENDIX V

Who is Melchizedek¹

Genesis 14:18-20 depicts an interesting encounter between a mysterious, unknown figure and Abram.

Jesus is said to “have been called out by God as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb. 5:10).

Jesus, the Son of God, is said to be a High Priest, not unto an order of Himself, but unto the order of this mysterious Priest/King!

The verse in full is as follows:”and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb. 5:9-10)

A chapter later the same information is deemed so important as to be reiterated once again. This time, the name Jesus is specifically mentioned.

Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” (Heb. 6:20)

The association with Jesus cannot be denied. Thus the question naturally arises; Just who was this mysterious figure? Was he an Old Testament manifestation of Jesus Christ Himself? Was he one of the Antediluvian Patriarchs, allowed to live a very long life in order to help establish God's chosen nation? Was he simply a righteous king, misinterpreted through the ages, a victim of translation? As is the usual case, many theories abound, some creative and fantastic, some remarkably persuasive. Even Abraham, one of the mightiest men in the Bible, subjected himself to the Priest of the Most High God. The priestly tribe was descended from Levi, through Aaron, the brother of Moses. Melchizedek, however, predated this priestly tribe, as stated in Hebrews 7:10. "because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor." The following verses continue to focus on the comparison between the two separate orders of priests.

"11. If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood, for on the basis of it the law was given to the people, why was there still a need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? 12. For when there is a change of priesthood, there is also a change of the law. 13. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar."

When read in context with the passage, the "one in the order of" from verse 11, appears to be Jesus. He has come not in the order of Aaron, but to change the law found within

the order of Aaron. Thus, Jesus comes in the order of Melchizedek. The “He of whom these things are said” in verse 13, appears to refer to the Priest/King. He certainly belonged to another tribe, yet a tribe where he served as priest of the Most High God, and blessed Abraham, the father of the fledgling nation. Yet, neither the King of Salem, nor any of his descendants, ever served at the altar, as indeed, that became the duties of the Levites. There can be no doubt, however, that he served in an order of priests of God had in operation centuries before Moses and Aaron.

Verses 15 and 16 talk of the qualifications necessary to be a priest of this order. ”And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared, ‘You are priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek’. “ (Heb. 7:15-17)

This priesthood was not based on lineage, handed down from one generation to the next. In fact, this priesthood was not handed down at all, but, rather, appointed by the Most High God, in reward for an “indestructible life”.²

Do you have a theory as to the Priest/King’s identity? Give your insights, thoughts, questions and comments by clicking on the link above.

1. <http://www/israel-a-history-of.com/melchizedel.html>

2. <http://www.israel-a-history-of.com/melchizedek.html>

<http://www.israel-a-history-of.com/melchizedek.html> Questions on Melchizedek.

APPENDIX VI

The Acts of Thomas: Acts No. 7 to 13

As the Acts 1 to 6 are in their entirety given inside the Chapters above, Acts 7 to 13 are given here.

The Seventh Act: Of the Captain.

62 Now while the apostle Thomas was proclaiming throughout all India the word of God, a certain captain of the king Misdaeus (Mazdai, Syr.) came to him and said unto him: I have heard of thee that thou takest no reward of any man, but even that thou hast thou givest to them that need. For if thou didst receive rewards, I would have sent thee a great sum, and would not have come myself, for the king doeth nought without me: for I have much substance and am rich, even one of the rich men of India. And I have never done wrong to any; but the contrary hath befallen me. I have a wife, and of her I had a daughter and I am well affectioned toward her, as also nature requireth and have never made trial of another wife. Now it chanced that there was a wedding in our city, and they that made the marriage

feast were well beloved of me: they came in therefore and bade me to it, bidding also my wife and her daughter. Forasmuch then as they were my good friends I could not refuse: I sent her therefore, though she desired not to go, and with them I sent also many servants: so they departed, both she and her daughter, decked with many ornaments.

63 And when it was evening and the time was come to depart from the wedding I sent lamps and torches to meet them: and I stood in the street to espy when she should come and I should see her with my daughter. And as I stood I heard a sound of lamentation. Woe for her! was heard out of every mouth. And my servants with their clothes rent came to me and told me what was done. We saw, said they, a man and a boy with him. And the man laid his hand upon thy wife, and the boy upon thy daughter: and they fled from them: and we smote (wounded) them with our swords, but our swords fell to the ground. And the same hour the women fell down, gnashing their teeth and beating their heads upon the earth and seeing this we came to tell it thee. And when I heard this of my servants I rent my clothes and smote my face with my hands, and becoming like one mad I ran along the street, and came and found them cast in the market-place; and I took them and brought them to my house, and after a long space they awaked and stood up, and sat down.

64 I began therefore to inquire of my wife: What is it that hath befallen thee? And she said to me: Knowest thou not what thou hast done unto me? for I prayed thee that I might not go to the wedding, because I was not of even health in

my body; and as I went on the way and came near to the aqueduct wherein the water floweth, I saw a black man standing over against me nodding at me with his head, and a boy like unto him standing by him; and I said to my daughter: Look at those two hideous men, whose teeth are like milk and their lips like soot. And we left them and went towards the aqueduct; and when it was sunset and we departed from the wedding, as we passed by with the young men and drew near the aqueduct, my daughter saw them first, and was affrighted and fled towards me; and after her I also beheld them coming against us: and the servants that were with us fled from them (Syr.) and they struck us, and cast down both me and my daughter. And when she had told me these things, the devils came upon them again and threw them down: and from that hour they are not able to come forth, but are shut up in one room or a second (Syr. in a room within another): and on their account I suffer much, and am distressed: for the devils throw them down wheresoever they find them, and strip them naked. I beseech and supplicate thee before God, help me and have pity on me, for it is now three years that a table hath not been set in my house, and my wife and my daughter have not sat at a table: and especially for mine unhappy daughter, which hath not seen any good at all in this world.

65 And the apostle, hearing these things from the captain, was greatly grieved for him, and said unto him: Believest thou that Jesus will heal them? And the captain said: Yea. And the apostle said: Commit thyself then unto Jesus, and he will heal them and procure them succour. And the captain

said: Show me him, that I may entreat him and believe in him. And the apostle said: He appeareth not unto these bodily eyes, but is found by the eyes of the mind. The captain therefore lifted up his voice and said: I believe thee, Jesu, and entreat and supplicate thee, help my little faith which I have in thee. And the apostle commanded Xenophon (Syr. Xanthippus) the deacon to assemble all the brethren; and when the whole multitude was gathered, the apostle stood in the midst and said:

66 Children and brethren that have believed on the Lord, abide in this faith, preaching Jesus who was proclaimed unto you by me, to bring you hope in him; and forsake not (be not forsaken of) him, and he will not forsake you. While ye sleep in this slumber that weigheth down the sleepers, he, sleeping not, keepeth watch over you; and when ye sail and are in peril and none can help, he walking upon the waters supporteth and aideth. For I am now departing from you, and it appeareth not if I shall again see you according to the flesh. Be ye not therefore like unto the people of Israel, who losing sight of their pastors for an hour, stumbled. But I leave unto you Xenophon the deacon in my stead; for he also like myself proclaimeth Jesus: for neither am I aught, nor he, but Jesus only; for I also am a man clothed with a body, a son of man like one of you; for neither have I riches as it is found with some, which also convict them that possess them, being wholly useless, and left behind upon the earth, whence also they came, and they bear away with them the transgressions and blemishes of sins which befall men by their means. And scanty are rich men found in almsgivillg: but the merciful

and lowly in heart, these shall inherit the kingdom of God: for it is not beauty that endureth with men, for they that trust in it, when age cometh upon them, shall suddenly be put to shame: all things therefore have their time; in their season are they loved and hated. Let your hope then be in Jesus Christ the Son of God, which is always loved, and always desired: and be mindful of us, as we of you: for we too, if we fulfil not the burden of the commandments are not worthy to be preachers of this name, and hereafter shall we pay the price (punishment) of our own head.

67 And he prayed with them and continued with them a long time in prayer and supplication, and committing them unto the Lord, he said: O Lord that rulest over every soul that is in the body; Lord, Father of the souls that have their hope in thee and expect thy mercies: that redeemest from error the men that are thine own and settest free from bondage and corruption thy subjects that come unto thy refuge: be thou in the flock of Xenophon and anoint it with holy oil, and heal it of sores, and preserve it from the ravening wolves. And he laid his hand on them and said: The peace of the Lord shall be upon you and shall journey with us.

The Eighth Act: Of the wild asses.

68 The apostle therefore went forth to depart on the way: and they all escorted him, weeping and adjuring him to make remembrance of them in his prayers and not to forget them. He went up then and sat upon the chariot, leaving all the brethren, and the captain came and awaked the driver, saying: I entreat and pray that I may become worthy to sit

beneath his feet, and I will be his driver upon this way, that he also may become my guide in that way whereby few go.

69 And when they had journeyed about two miles, the apostle begged of the captain and made him arise and caused him to sit by him, suffering the driver to sit in his own place. And as they went along the road, it came to pass that the beasts were wearied with the great heat and could not be stirred at all. And the captain was greatly vexed and wholly cast down, and thought to run on his own feet and bring other beasts for the use of the chariot; but the apostle said: Let not thine heart be troubled nor affrighted, but believe on Jesus Christ whom I have proclaimed unto thee, and thou shalt see great wonders. And he looked and saw a herd of wild asses feeding by the wayside, and said to the captain: If thou hast believed on Christ Jesus, go unto that herd of wild asses and say: Judas Thomas the apostle of Christ the new God saith unto you: Let four of you come, of whom we have need (or, of whom we may have use).

70 And the captain went in fear, for they were many; and as he went, they came to meet him; and when they were near, he said unto them: Judas Thomas the apostle of the new God commandeth you: Let four of you come, of whom I have need. And when the wild asses heard it, they ran with one accord and came to him, and when they came they did him reverence. [Syr. has a long prayer: And Judas Thomas the apostle of our Lord lifted up his voice in praise and said: Glorious art thou, God of truth and Lord of all natures, for thou didst will with thy will, and make all thy works and

finish all thy creatures, and bring them to the rule of their nature, and lay upon them all thy fear that they might be subject to thy command. And thy will trod the path from thy secrecy to manifestation, and was caring for every soul that thou didst make, and was spoken of by the mouth of all the prophets, in all visions and sounds and voices; but Israel did not obey because of their evil inclination. And thou, because thou art Lord of all, hast a care for the creatures, so that thou spreadest over us thy mercy in him who came by thy will and put on the body, thy creature, which thou didst will and form according to thy glorious wisdom. He whom thou didst appoint in thy secrecy and establish in thy manifestation, to him thou hast given the name of Son, he who was thy will, the power of thy thought; so that ye are by various names, the Father and the Son and the Spirit, for the sake of the government of thy creatures, for the nourishing of all natures, and ye are one in glory and power and will; and ye are divided without being separated, and are one though divided, and all subsists in thee and is subject to thee, because all is thine. And I rely upon thee, Lord, and by thy command have subjected these dumb beasts, that thou mightest show thy ministering power upon us and upon them because it is needful, and that thy name might be glorified in us and in the beasts that cannot speak.] And the apostle said unto them: Peace be unto you. Yoke ye four of you in the stead of these beasts that have come to a stand. And every one of them came and pressed to be yoked: there were then four stronger than the rest, which also were yoked. And the rest, some went before and some followed. And when they had journeyed a little way he dismissed the colts, saying:

I say unto you the inhabitants of the desert, depart unto your pastures, for if I had had need of all, ye would all have gone with me; but now go unto your place wherein ye dwell. And they departed quietly until they were no more seen.

71 Now as the apostle and the captain and the driver went on, the wild asses drew the chariot quietly and evenly, lest they should disturb the apostle of God. And when they came near to the city gate they turned aside and stood still before the doors of the captain's house. And the captain said: It is not possible for me to relate what hath happened, but when I see the end I will tell it. The whole city therefore came to see the wild asses under the yoke; and they had heard also the report of the apostle that he was to come and visit them. And the apostle asked the captain: Where is thy dwelling, and whither dost thou bring us? And he said to him: Thou thyself knowest that we stand before the doors, and these which by thy commandment are come with thee know it better than I.

72 And having so said he came down from the chariot. The apostle therefore began to say: Jesu Christ, that art blasphemed by the ignorance of thee in this country; Jesu, the report of whom is strange in this city; Jesu, that receivest all (Syr. sendest on before the apostles in every country and in every city, and all thine that are worthy are glorified in thee; Jesu, that didst take a form and become as a man, and wert seen of all us that thou mightest not separate us from thine own love: thou, Lord, art he that gavest thyself for us, and with thy blood hast purchased us and gained us as a

possession of great price: and what have we to give thee, Lord, in exchange for thy life which thou gavest for us? for that which we would give, thou gavest us: and this is, that we should entreat of thee and live.

73 And when he had so said, many assembled from every quarter to see the apostle of the new God. And again the apostle said: Why stand we idle? Jesu, Lord, the hour is come: what wilt thou have done? command therefore that that be fulfilled which needeth to be done. Now the captain's wife and her daughter were sore borne down by the devils, so that they of the house thought they would rise up no more: for they suffered them not to partake of aught, but cast them down upon their beds recognizing no man until that day when the apostle came thither. And the apostle said unto one of the wild asses that were yoked on the right hand: Enter thou within the gate, and stand there and call the devils and say to them: Judas Thomas the apostle and disciple of Jesus Christ saith unto you: Come forth hither: for on your account am I sent and unto them that pertain to you by race, to destroy you and chase you unto your place, until the time of the end come and ye go down into your own deep of darkness.

74 And that wild ass went in, a great multitude being with him, and said: Unto you I speak, the enemies of Jesus that is called Christ: unto you I speak that shut your eyes lest ye see the light: unto you I speak, children of Gehenna and of destruction, of him that ceaseth not from evil until now, that always reneweth his workings and the things that befit

his being: unto you I speak, most shameless, that shall perish by your own hands. And what I shall say of your destruction and end, and what I shall tell, I know not. For there are many things and innumerable to the hearing: and greater are your doings than the torment that is reserved for you (Syr. however great your bodies, they are too small for your retributions). But unto thee I speak, devil, and to thy son that followeth with thee: for now am I sent against you. And wherefore should I make many words concerning your nature and root, which yourselves know and are not ashamed? but Judas Thomas the apostle of Christ Jesus saith unto you, he that by much love and affection is sent hither: Before all this multitude that standeth here, come forth and tell me of what race ye are.

75 And straightway the woman came forth with her daughter, both like dead persons and dishonoured in aspect: and the apostle beholding them was grieved. especially for the girl, and saith unto the devils: God forbid that for you there should be sparing or propitiation, for ye know not to spare nor to have pity: but in the name of Jesus, depart from them and stand by their side. And when the apostle had so said, the women fell down and became as dead; for they neither had breath nor uttered speech: but the devil answered with a loud voice and said: Art thou come hither again, thou that deridest our nature and race? art thou come again, that blottest out our devices? and as I take it, thou wouldest not suffer us to be upon the earth at all: but this at this time thou canst not accomplish. And the apostle guessed that this devil was he that had been driven out from that other woman.

76 And the devil said: I beseech thee, give me leave to depart even whither thou wilt, and dwell there and take commandment from thee, and I will not fear the ruler that hath authority over me. For like as thou art come to preach good tidings, so I also am come to destroy; and like as, if thou fulfil not the will of him that sent thee, he will bring punishment upon thy head, so I also if I do not the will of him that sent me, before the season and time appointed, shall be sent unto mine own nature; and like as thy Christ helpeth thee in that thou doest, so also my father helpeth me in that I do; and like as for thee he prepareth vessels worthy of thine inhabiting, so also for me he seeketh out vessels whereby I may accomplish his deeds; and like as he nourisheth and provideth for his subjects, so also for me he prepareth chastisements and torments, with them that become my dwellingplaces (Syr. those in whom I dwell); and like as for a recompense of thy working he giveth thee eternal life, so also unto me he giveth for a reward of my works eternal destruction; and like as thou art refreshed by thy prayer and thy good works and spiritual thanksgivings, so I also am refreshed by murders and adulteries and sacrifices made with wine upon altars (Syr. sacrifices and libations of wine), and like as thou convertest men unto eternal life, so I also pervert them that obey me unto eternal destruction and torment: and thou receivest thine own and I mine.

77 And when the devil had said these things and yet more the apostle said: Jesus commandeth thee and thy son by me to enter no more into the habitation of man: but go ye forth and depart and dwell wholly apart from the habitation of

men. And the devils said unto him: Thou hast laid on us a harsh commandment: but what wilt thou do unto them that now are concealed from thee? for they that have wrought all the images rejoice in them more than thee: and many of them do the more part worship, and perform their will, sacrificing to them and bringing them food, by libations and by wine and water and offering with oblations. And the apostle said: They also shall now be abolished, with their works. And suddenly the devils vanished away: but the women lay cast upon the earth as if were dead, and without speech.

78 And the wild asses stood together and parted not one from another; but he to whom speech was given by the power of the Lord -while all men kept silence, and looked to see what they would do- the wild ass said unto the apostle: Why standest thou idle, O, apostle of Christ the Most High, who looketh that thou shouldest ask of him the best of learning? Wherefore then tarriest thou? (Syr. that thou shouldest ask him, and he would give thee? Why delayest thou, good disciple?) for lo, thy teacher desireth to show by thy hands his mighty works. Why standest thou still, O, herald of the hidden one? for thy (Lord) willeth to manifest through thee his unspeakable things, which he reserveth for them that are worthy of him, to hear them. Why retest thou, O, doer of mighty works in the name of the Lord? for thy Lord encourageth thee and engendereth boldness in thee. Fear not, therefore; for he will not forsake the soul that belongeth unto thee by birth. Begin therefore to call upon him and he will readily hearken to thee. Why standest thou marvelling

at all his acts and his workings? for these are small things which he hath shown by thy means. And what wilt thou tell concerning his great gifts? for thou wilt not be sufficient to declare them. And why marvellest thou at his cures of the body which he worketh? (Syr. which come to an end) especially when thou knowest that healing of his which is secure and lasting, which he bringeth forth by his own nature? And why lookest thou unto this temporal life, and hast no thought of that which is eternal (Syr. when thou canst every day think on that which is eternal)?

79 But unto you the multitudes that stand by and look to see these that are cast down raised up, I say, believe in the apostle of Jesus Christ: believe the teacher of truth, believe him that showeth you the truth, believe Jesus, believe on the Christ that was born, that the born may live by his life: who also was raised up through infancy, that perfection might appear by his manhood (man). He did teach his own disciples: for he is the teacher of the truth and maketh wise men wise (Syr. who went to school that through him perfect wisdom might be known: he taught his teacher because he was the teacher of verity and the master of the wise). Who also offered the gift in the temple that he might show that all the (every) offering was sanctified. This is his apostle, the shewer-forth of truth: this is he that performeth the will of him that sent him. But there shall come false apostles and prophets of lawlessness, whose end shall be according to their deeds; preaching indeed and ordaining to flee from ungodliness, but themselves at all times detected in sins, clad indeed with sheep's clothing, but within, ravening

wolves. Who suffice not themselves with one wife but corrupt many women; who, saying that they despise children, destroy many children (boys), for whom they will pay the penalty; that content not themselves with their own possessions, but desire that all useless things should minister unto them only; professing to be his disciples; and with their mouth they utter one thing, but in their heart they think another; charging other men to beware of evil, but they themselves perform nought that is good; who are accounted temperate, and charge other men to abstain from fornication theft, and covetousness, but in all these things do they themselves walk secretly, teaching other men not to do them.

80 And when the wild ass had declared all these things, all men gazed upon him. And when he ceased the apostle said: What I shall think concerning thy beauty, O Jesu, and what I shall tell of thee, I know not, or rather I am not able, for I have no power to declare it, O Christ that art in rest, and only wise that only knowest the inward of the heart and understandest the thought. Glory be to thee, merciful and tranquil. Glory to thee, wise word. Glory to thy compassion that was born unto us. Glory to thy mercy that was spread out over us. Glory to thy greatness that was made small for us. Glory to thy most high kingship that was humbled for us. Glory to thy might which was enfeebled for us. Glory to thy Godhead that for us was seen in likeness of men. Glory to thy manhood that died for us that it might make us live. Glory to thy resurrection from the dead; for thereby rising and rest cometh unto our souls. Glory and praise (good report) to thine ascending into the heavens; for thereby thou

hast shewed us the path of the height, and promised that we shall sit with thee on thy right hand and with thee judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Thou art the heavenly word of the Father: thou art the hidden light of the understanding, shewer of the way of truth, driver away of darkness, and blotter-out of error.

81 Having thus spoken, the apostle stood over the women, saying: My Lord and my God, I am not divided from thee (or doubt not concerning thee), nor as one unbelieving do I call upon thee, who art always our helper and succourer and raiser-up; who breathest thine own power into us and encouragest us and givest confidence in love unto thine own servants. I beseech thee, let these souls be healed and rise up and become such as they were before they were smitten of the devils. And when he thus spake the women turned and sat up. And the apostle bade the captain that his servants should take them and bring them within (Syr. and give them food, for they had not eaten for many days). And when they were gone in, the apostle said unto the wild asses, Follow me. And they went after him until he had brought them without the gate. And when they had gone out, he said to them: Depart in peace unto your pastures. The wild asses therefore went away willingly; and the apostle stood and took heed to them lest they should be hurt of any, until they had gone afar off and were no more seen. And the apostle returned with the multitude into the house of the captain.

The Ninth Act: Of the Wife of Charisius.

82 Now it chanced that a certain woman, the wife of Charisius, that was next unto the king, whose name was

Mygdonia, came to see and behold the new name and the new God who was being proclaimed, and the new apostle who had come to visit their country: and she was carried by her own servants; and because of the great crowd and the narrow way they were not able to bring her near unto him. And she sent unto her husband to send her more to minister to her; and they came and approached her, pressing upon the people and beating them. And the apostle saw it and said to them: Wherefore overthrow ye them that come to hear the word, and are eager for it? and ye desire to be near me but are far off, as it was said of the multitude that came unto the Lord: Having eyes ye see not, and having ears ye hear not; and he said to the multitudes: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear; and: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

83 And looking upon them that carried her, he said unto them: This blessing and this admonition [Here and elsewhere there is a marked divergence between the texts of U and P, the Roman and Paris MSS.: Bonnet prints them separately. P is on the whole much shorter. Syr. differs from both. I follow U, but it is very corrupt.] which was promised unto them is for you that are heavily burdened now. Ye are they that carry burdens grievous to be borne, and are borne about by her command. And though ye are men, they lay on you loads as on brute beasts, for they that have authority over you think that ye are not men such as themselves, whether bond or free. For neither shall possessions profit the rich, nor poverty save the poor from judgement; nor have we received a commandment which we are not able to

perform, nor hath he laid on us burdens grievous to be borne which we are not able to carry; nor building which men build; nor to hew stones and prepare houses, as your craftsmen do by their own knowledge. But this commandment have we received of the Lord, that that which pleaseth not us when it is done by another this we should not do to any other man.

84 Abstain therefore first from adultery, for this is the beginning of all evils, and next from theft, which enticed Judas Iscariot, and brought him unto hanging; (and from covetousness,) for as many as yield unto covetousness see not that which they do; and from vainglory and from all foul deeds, especially them of the body, whereby cometh eternal condemnation. For this is the chief city of all evils; and likewise it bringeth them that hold their heads (necks) high unto tyranny, and draweth them down unto the deep, and subdueth them under its hands that they see not what they do; wherefore the things done of them are hidden from them.

85 But do ye become well-pleasing unto God in all good things, in meekness and quietness: for these doth God spare, and granteth eternal life and setteth death at nought. And in gentleness which followeth on all good things, and overcometh all enemies and alone receiveth the crown of victory: with gentleness (Syr.), and stretching out of the hand to the poor, and supplying the want of the needy, and distributing to them that are in necessity, especially them that walk in holiness. For this is chosen before God and leadeth unto eternal life: for this is before God the chief city of all good: for they that strive not in the course (stadium) of

Christ shall not obtain holiness. And holiness did appear from God, doing away fornication, overthrowing the enemy, well-pleasing unto God: for she is an invincible champion (athlete), having honour from God, glorified of many: she is an ambassador of peace, announcing peace: if any gain her he abideth without care, pleasing the Lord, expecting the time of redemption: for she doeth nothing amiss, but giveth life and rest and joy unto all that gain her. [P has nothing of this, and Syr. makes better sense, but is not very interesting.]

86 But meekness hath overcome death and brought him under authority, meekness hath enslaved the enemy (U and P and Syr. now present the same text), meekness is the good yoke: meekness feareth not and opposeth not the many: meekness is peace and joy and exaltation of rest. Abide ye therefore in holiness and receive freedom from me, and be near unto meekness for in these three heads is portrayed the Christ whom I proclaim unto you. Holiness is the temple of Christ, and he that dwelleth in her getteth her for an habitation [SYR. is the of God rest temperance and], because for forty days and forty nights he fasted, tasting nothing: and he that keepeth her shall dwell in her as on a mountain. And meekness is his boast: for he said unto Peter our fellow apostle: Turn back thy sword and put it again into the sheath thereof: for if I had willed so to do, could I not have brought more than twelve legions of angels from my Father?

87 And when the apostle had said these things in the hearing of all the multitude, they trode and pressed upon one

another: and the wife of Charisius the king's kinsman leapt out of her chair and cast herself on the earth before the apostle, and caught his feet and besought and said: O disciple of the living God, thou art come into a desert country, for we live in the desert; being like to brute beasts in our conversation, but now shall we be saved by thy hands; I beseech thee, therefore, take thought of me, and pray for me, that the compassion of the God whom thou preachest may come upon me, and I may become his dwelling place and be joined in prayer and hope and faith in him, and I also may receive the seal and become an holy temple and he may dwell in me.

88 And the apostle said: I do pray and entreat for you all, brethren, that believe on the Lord, and for you, sisters, that hope in Christ, that in all of you the word of God may tabernacle and have his tabernacle therein: for we have no power over them (Syr. because ye are given power over your own souls). And he began to say unto the woman Mygdonia: Rise up from the earth and compose thyself (take off thine ornaments, P; be mindful of thyself, Syr.). For this attire that is put on shall not profit thee nor the beauty of thy body, nor thine apparel, neither yet the fame of thy rank, nor the authority of this world, nor the polluted intercourse with thine husband shall avail thee if thou be bereaved of the true fellowship: for the appearance (fantasy) of ornamenting cometh to nought, and the body waxeth old and changeth, and raiment weareth out, and authority and lordship pass away (U corrupt; P abridges; Syr. has: passeth away accompanied with punishment, according as each person

hath conducted himself in it), and the fellowship of procreation also passeth away, and is as it were condemnation. Jesus only abideth ever, and they that hope in him. Thus he spake, and said unto the woman: Depart in peace, and the Lord shall make thee worthy of his own mysteries. But she said: I fear to go away, lest thou forsake me and depart unto another nation. But the apostle said to her: Even if I go, I shall not leave thee alone, but Jesus of his compassion will be with thee. And she fell down and did him reverence and departed unto her house.

89 Now Charisius, the kinsman of Misdaeus the king, bathed himself and returned and laid him down to dine. And he inquired concerning his wife, where she was; for she had not come out of her own chamber to meet him as she was wont. And her handmaids said to him: She is not well. And he entered quickly into the chamber and found her Lying on the bed and veiled: and he unveiled her and kissed her, saying: Wherefore art thou sorrowful to-day? And she said: I am not well. And he said unto her: Wherefore then didst thou not keep the guise of thy freedom (Syr. pay proper respect to thy position as a free woman) and remain in thy house, but didst go and listen unto vain speeches and look upon works of sorcery? but rise up and dine with me, for I cannot dine without thee. But she said to him: To-day I decline it, for I am greatly afeared.

90 And when Charisius heard this of Mygdonia, he would not go forth to dinner, but bade his servants bring her to dine with him (Syr. bring food to him that he might sup in

her presence): when then they brought it in, he desired her to dine with him, but she excused herself; since then she would not, he dined alone, saying unto her: On thine account I refused to dine with Misdaeus the king, and thou, wast thou not willing to dine with me? but she said: It is because I am not well. Charisius therefore rose up as he was wont and would sleep with her, but she said: Did I not tell thee that for today I refused it?

91 When he heard that he went to another bed and slept; and awaking out of sleep he said: My lady Mygdonia, hearken to the dream which I have seen. I saw myself lie at meat near to Misdaeus the king, and a dish of all sorts was set before us: and I saw an eagle come down from heaven and carry off from before me and the king two partridges, which he set against his heart; and again he came over us and flew about above us, and the king bade a bow to be brought to him; and the eagle again caught away from before us a pigeon and a dove, and the king shot an arrow at him, and it passed through him from one side to the other and hurt him not; and he being unscathed rose up into his own nest. And I awoke, and I am full of fear and sore vexed, because I had tasted of the partridge, and he suffered me not to put it to my mouth again. And Mygdonia said unto him: Thy dream is good: for thou every day eatest partridges, but this eagle had not tasted of a partridge until now.

92 And when it was morning Charisius went and dressed himself and shod his right foot with his left shoe; and he stopped, and said to Mygdonia: What then is this matter?

for look, the dream and this action of mine! But Mygdonia said to him: And this also is not evil, but seemeth to me very good; for from an unlucky act there will be a change unto the better. And he washed his hands and went to salute Misdaeus the king.

93 And likewise Mygdonia rose up early and went to salute Judas Thomas the apostle, and she found him discoursing with the captain and all the multitude, and he was advising them and speaking of the woman which had received the Lord in her soul, whose wife she was; and the captain said: She is the wife of Charisius the kinsman of Misdaeus the king. And: Her husband is a hard man, and in every thing that he saith to the king he obeyeth him: and he will not suffer her to continue in this mind which she hath promised; for often-times hath he praised her before the king, saying that there is none other like her in love: all things therefore that thou speakest unto her are strange unto her. And the apostle said: If verily and surely the Lord hath risen upon her soul and she hath received the seed that was cast on her, she will have no care of this temporal life, nor fear death, neither will Charisius be able to harm her at all: for greater is he whom she hath received into her soul, if she have received him indeed.

94 And Mygdonia hearing this said unto the apostle: In truth, my lord, I have received the seed of thy words, and I will bear fruit like unto such seed. The apostle saith: Our souls give praise and thanks unto thee, O Lord, for they are thine: our bodies give thanks unto thee, which thou hast accounted

worthy to become the dwelling-place of thy heavenly gift. And he said also to them that stood by: Blessed are the holy, whose souls have never condemned them, for they have gained them and are not divided against themselves: blessed are the spirits of the pure, and they that have received the heavenly crown whole from the world (age) which hath been appointed them: blessed are the bodies of the holy, for they have been made worthy to become temples of God, that Christ may dwell in them: blessed are ye, for ye have power to forgive sins: blessed are ye if ye lose not that which is committed unto you, but rejoicing and departing bear it away with you: blessed are ye the holy, for unto you it is given to ask and receive: blessed are ye meek for you hath God counted worthy to become heirs of the heavenly kingdom. Blessed are ye meek, for ye are they that have overcome the enemy: blessed are ye meek, for ye shall see the face of the Lord. Blessed are ye that hunger for the Lord's sake for for you is rest laid up, and your souls rejoice from henceforth. Blessed are ye that are quiet, (for ye have been counted worthy) to be set free from sin [and from the exchange of clean and unclean beasts]. And when the apostle had said these things in the hearing of all the multitude, Mygdonia was the more confirmed in the faith and glory and greatness of Christ.

95 But Charisius the kinsman and friend of Misdaeus the king came to his breakfast and found not his wife in the house; and he inquired of all that were in his house: Whither is your mistress gone? And one of them answered and said: She is gone unto that stranger. And when he heard this of

his servant, he was wroth with the other servants because they had not straightway told him what was done: and he sat down and waited for her. And when it was evening and she was come into the house he said to her: Where wast thou? And she answered and said: With the physician. And he said: Is that stranger a physician? And she said: Yea, he is a physician of souls: for most physicians do heal bodies that are dissolved, but he souls that are not destroyed. Charisius, hearing this, was very angry in his mind with Mygdonia because of the apostle, but he answered her nothing, for he was afraid; for she was above him both in wealth and birth: but he departed to dinner, and she went into her chamber. And he said to the servants: Call her to dinner. But she would not come.

96 And when he heard that she would not come out of her chamber, he went in and said unto her: Wherefore wilt thou not dine with me and perchance not sleep with me as the wont is? yea, concerning this I have the greater suspicion, for I have heard that that sorcerer and deceiver teacheth that a man should not live with his wife, and that which nature requireth and the godhead hath ordained he overthroweth. When Charisius said these things, Mygdonia kept silence. He saith to her again: My lady and consort Mygdonia, be not led astray by deceitful and vain words, nor by the works of sorcery which I have heard that this man performeth in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for it was never yet heard in the world that any raised the dead, and, as I hear, it is reported of this man that he raiseth dead men. And for that he neither eateth nor drinketh, think

not that for righteousness sake he neither eateth nor drinketh but this he doth because he possesseth nought, for what should he do which hath not even his daily bread? And he hath one garment because he is poor, and as for his not receiving aught of any (he doth so, to be sure, because he knoweth in himself that he doth not verily heal any man, Syr.).

97 And when Charisius so said, Mygdonia was silent as any stone, but she prayed, asking when it should be day, that she might go to the apostle of Christ. And he withdrew from her and went to dinner heavy in mind, for he thought to sleep with her according to the wont. And when he was gone out, she bowed her knees and prayed, saying: Lord God and Master, merciful Father, Saviour Christ, do thou give me strength to overcome the shamelessness of Charisius, and grant me to keep the holiness wherein thou delightest, that I also may by it find eternal life. And when she had so prayed she laid herself on her bed and veiled herself.

98 But Charisius having dined came upon her, and she cried out, saying: Thou hast no more any room by me: for my Lord Jesus is greater than thou, who is with me and resteth in me. And he laughed and said: Well dost thou mock, saying this of that sorcerer, and well dost thou deride him, who saith: Ye have no life with God unless ye purify yourselves. And when he had so said he essayed to sleep with her, but she endured it not and cried out bitterly and said: I call upon thee, Lord Jesu, forsake me not! for with thee have I made my refuge; for when I learned that thou art he that seekest

out them that are veiled in ignorance and savest them that are held in error And now I entreat thee whose report I have heard and believed, come thou to my help and save me from the shamelessness of Charisius, that his foulness may not get the upper hand of me. And she smote her hands together (tied his hands, Syr.) and fled from him naked, and as she went forth she pulled down the curtain of the bed-chamber and wrapped it about her; and went to her nurse, and slept there with her.

99 But Charisius was in heaviness all night, and smote his face with his hands, and he was minded to go that very hour and tell the king concerning the violence that was done him, but he considered with himself, saying: If the great heaviness which is upon me compelleth me to go now unto the king, who will bring me in to him? for I know that my abuse hath overthrown me from my high looks and my vainglory and majesty, and hath cast me down into this vileness and separated my sister Mygonia from me. Yea, if the king himself stood before the doors at this hour, I could not have gone out and answered him. But I will wait until dawn, and I know that whatsoever I ask of the king, he granteth it me: and I will tell him of the madness of this stranger, how that it tyrannously casteth down the great and illustrious into the depth. For it is not this that grieveth me, that I am deprived of her companying, but for her am I grieved, because her greatness of soul is humbled: being an honourable lady in whom none of her house ever found fault (condemned), she hath fled away naked, running out of her own bedchamber, and I know not whither she is gone; and it

may be that she is gone mad by the means of that sorcerer, and in her madness hath gone forth into the market-place to seek him; for there is nothing that appealeth unto her lovable except him and the things that are spoken by him.

100 And so saying he began to lament and say: Woe to me, O, my consort, and to thee besides! for I am too quickly bereaved of thee. Woe is me, my most dear one, for thou excellest all my race: neither son nor daughter have I had of thee that I might find rest in them; neither hast thou yet dwelt with me a full year, and an evil eye hath caught thee from me. Would that the violence of death had taken thee, and I should yet have reckoned myself among kings and nobles: but that I should suffer this at the hands of a stranger, and belike he is a slave that hath run away, to mine ill fortune and the sorrow of mine unhappy soul! Let there be no impediment for me until I destroy him and avenge this night, and may I not be well-pleasing before Misdæus the king if he avenge me not with the head of this stranger; (and I will also tell him) of Siphor the captain who hath been the occasion of this. For by his means did the stranger appear here, and lodgeth at his house: and many there be that go in and come out whom he teacheth a new doctrine; saying that none can live if he quit not all his substance and become a renouncer like himself: and he striveth to make many partakers with him.

101 And as Charisius thought on these things, the day dawned: and after the night (?) he put on a mean habit, and shod himself, and went downcast and in heaviness to salute

the king. And when the king saw him he said: Wherefore art thou sorrowful, and comest in such garb? and I see that thy countenance is changed. And Charisius said unto the king: I have a new thing to tell thee and a new desolation which Siphor hath brought into India, even a certain Hebrew, a sorcerer, whom he hath sitting in his house and who departeth not from him: and many are there that go in to him: whom also he teacheth of a new God, and layeth on them new laws such as never yet were heard, saving: It is impossible for you to enter into that eternal life which I proclaim unto you, unless ye rid you of your wives, and likewise the wives of their husbands. And it chanced that mine unlucky wife also went to him and became a hearer of his words, and she believed them, and in the night she forsook me and ran unto the stranger. But send thou for both Siphor and that sorcerer that is hid with (in) him, and visit it (?) on their head, lest all that are of our nation perish.

102 And when Misdaeus his friend heard this he saith to him: Be not grieved nor heavy, for I will send for him and avenge thee, and thou shalt have thy wife again, and the others that cannot I will avenge. And the king went forth and sat on the judgement seat, and when he was set he commanded Siphor the captain to be called. They went therefore unto his house and found him sitting on the right hand of the apostle and Mygdonia at his feet, hearkening to him with all the multitude. And they that were sent from the king said unto Siphor: Sittest thou here listening to vain words, and Misdaeus the king in his wrath thinketh to destroy thee because of this sorcerer and deceiver whom thou

hast brought into thine house? And Siphor hearing it was cast down, not because of the king's threat against him, but for the apostle, because the king was disposed contrary to him. And he said to the apostle: I am grieved concerning thee: for I told thee at the first that that woman is the wife of Charisius the king's friend and kinsman, and he will not suffer her to perform that she hath promised, and all that he asketh of the king he granteth him. But the apostle said unto Siphor: Fear nothing, but believe in Jesus that pleadeth for us all, for unto his refuge are we gathered together. And Siphor, hearing that, put his garment about him and went unto Misdaeus the king,

103 And the apostle inquired of Mygdonia: What was the cause that thy husband was wroth with thee and devised this against us? And she said: Because I gave not myself up unto his corruption (destruction): for he desired last night to subdue me and subject me unto that passion which he serveth: and he to whom I have committed my soul delivered me out of his hands; and I fled away from him naked, and slept with my nurse: but that which befell him I know not, wherefore he hath contrived this. The apostle saith: These things will not hurt us; but believe thou on Jesus, and he shall overthrow the wrath of Charisius and his madness and his impulse; and he shall be a companion unto thee in the fearful way, and he shall guide thee into his kingdom, and shall bring thee unto eternal life giving thee that confidence which passeth not away nor changeth.

104 Now Siphor stood before the king, and he inquired of him: Who is that sorcerer and whence, and what teacheth

he whom thou hast lurking in thine house? And Siphor answered the king: Thou art not ignorant, O, king, what trouble and grief I, with my friends had concerning my wife, whom thou knowest and many others remember, and concerning my daughter, whom I value more than all my possessions, what a time and trial I suffered; for I became a laughing-stock and a curse in all our country. And I heard the report of this man and went to him and entreated him, and took him and brought him hither. And as I came by the way I saw wonderful and amazing things: and here also many did hear the wild ass and concerning that devil whom he drove out, and healed my wife and daughter, and now are they whole; and he asked no reward but requireth faith and holiness, that men should become partakers with him in that which he doeth: and this he teacheth to worship and fear one God, the ruler of all things, and Jesus Christ his Son, that they may have eternal life. And that which he eateth is bread and salt, and his drink is water from evening unto evening, and he maketh many prayers; and whatsoever he asketh of his God, he giveth him. And he teacheth that this God is holy and mighty, and that Christ is living and maketh alive, wherefore also he chargeth them that are there present to come unto him in holiness and purity and love and faith.

105 And when Misdaeus the king heard these things of Siphor he sent many soldiers unto the house of Siphor the captain, to bring Thomas the apostle and all that were found there. And they that were sent entered in and found him teaching much people; and Mygdonia sat at his feet. And when they beheld the great multitude that were about him,

they feared, and departed to their king and said: We durst not say aught unto him, for there was a great multitude about him, and Mygdonia sitting at his feet was listening to the things that were spoken by him. And when Misdaeus the king and Charisius heard these things, Charisius leaped out from before the king and drew much people with him and said: I will bring him, O, king, and Mygdonia whose understanding he hath taken away. And he came to the house of Siphor the captain, greatly disturbed, and found him (Thomas) teaching: but Mygdonia he found not, for she had withdrawn herself unto her house, having learnt that it had been told her husband that she was there.

106 And Charisius said unto the apostle: Up, thou wicked one and destroyer and enemy of mine house: for me thy sorcery harmeth not, for I will visit thy sorcery on thine head. And when he so said, the apostle looked upon him and said unto him: Thy threatenings shall return upon thee, for me thou wilt not harm any whit: for greater than thee and thy king and all your army is the Lord Jesus Christ in whom I have my trust. And Chalisius took a kerchief (turban, Syr.) of one of his slaves and cast it about the neck of the apostle, saying: Hale him and bring him away; let me see if his God is able to deliver him out of my hands. And they haled him and led him away to Misdaeus the king. And the apostle stood before the king, and the king said to him: Tell me who thou art and by what power thou doest these things. But the apostle kept silence. And the king commanded his officers (subjects) that he should be scourged with an hundred and twenty-eight (hundred and fifty, Syr.) blows, and bound, and

be cast into the prison; and they bound him and led him away. And the king and Charisius considered how they should put him to death, for the multitude worshipped him as God. And they had it in mind to say: The stranger hath reviled the king and is a deceiver.

107 But the apostle went unto the prison rejoicing and exulting, and said: I praise thee, Jesu, for that thou hast not only made me worthy of faith in thee, but also to endure much for thy sake. I give thee thanks therefore, Lord, that thou hast taken thought for me and given me patience: I thank thee Lord, that for thy sake I am called a sorcerer and a wizard. Receive thou me therefore with the blessing (Syr. let me receive of the blessing) of the poor, and of the rest of the weary, and of the blessings of them whom men hate and persecute and revile, and speak evil words of them. For lo, for thy sake I am hated: lo for thy sake I am cut off from the many, and for thy sake they call me such an one as I am not.

108 And as he prayed, all the prisoners looked on him, and besought him to pray for them: and when he had prayed and was set down, he began to utter a psalm in this wise:

[Here follows the Hymn of the Soul: a most remarkable composition, originally Syriac, and certainly older than the Acts, with which it has no real connection. We have it in Greek in one manuscript, the Vallicellian, and in a paraphrase by Nicetas of Thessalonica, found and edited by Bonnet.]

When I was an infant child in the palace of my Father and resting in the wealth and luxury of my nurturers, out of the East, our native country, my parents provisioned me and sent me.

And of the wealth of those their treasures they put together a load both great and light, that I might carry it alone.

Gold is the load, of them that are above (or of the land of the Ellaeans or Gilaeans), and silver of the great treasures (or of Gazzak the great) and stones, chalcedonies from the Indians and pearls from [THE of land] the Kosani (Kushan).

And they armed me with adamant [WHICH iron breaketh] and they took off from me (Gr. put on me) the garment set with gems, spangled with gold, which they had made for me because they loved me and the robe that was yellow in hue, made for my stature.

And they made a covenant with me, and inscribed it on mine understanding, that I should [NOT] forget it, and said:

If thou go down into Egypt, and bring back thence the one pearl which is there [IN the of sea midst] girt about by the devouring serpent thou shalt put on [AGAIN] the garment set with gems, and that robe whereupon it resteth (or which is thereon) and become with thy brother that is next unto us (Gr. of

the well-remembered) an heir (Gr. herald) in our kingdom.

109. And I came out of the East by a road difficult and fearful, with two guides and I was untried in travelling by it.

And I passed by the borders of the Mosani (Maishan) where is the resort of the merchants of the East, and reached the land of the Babylonians [AND the of Sarbug walls unto came].

But when I entered into Egypt, the guides left me which had journeyed with me.

And I set forth by the quickest way to the serpent, and by his hole I abode watching for him to slumber and sleep, that I might take my pearl from him.

And forasmuch as I was alone I made mine aspect strange, and appeared as an alien to my people.

And there I saw my kinsman from the East, the free-born a lad of grace and beauty, a son of princes (or an anointed one).

He came unto me and dwelt with me, and I had him for a companion, and made him my friend and partaker in my journey (or merchandise).

And I charged him to beware of the Egyptians, and of partaking of those unclean things (or consorting with those unclean men).

And I put on their raiment, lest I should seem strange, as one that had come from without to recover the pearl; and lest the Egyptians should awake the serpent against me.

But, I know not by what occasion, they learned that I was not of their country.

And with guile they mingled for me a deceit, and I tasted of their food.

And I knew no more that I was a king's son, and I became a servant unto their king.

And I forgot also the pearl for which my fathers had sent me, and by means of the heaviness of their food I fell into a deep sleep.

110. But when this befell me, my fathers also were ware of it, and grieved for me and a proclamation was published in our kingdom, that all should meet at our doors.

And then the kings of Parthia and they that bare office and the great ones of the East made a resolve concerning me, that I should not be left in Egypt, and the princes wrote unto me signifying thus (and every noble signed his name to it, Syr.):

From the (thy) Father the King of kings, and thy mother that ruleth the East, and thy brother that is second unto us; unto our son that is in Egypt, peace.

Rise up and awake out of sleep, and hearken unto the words of the letter and remember that thou art a son of kings; lo, thou hast come under the yoke of bondage.

Remember the pearl for the which thou wast sent into Egypt (Gr. puts this after 46).

Remember thy garment spangled with gold, [AND the and thyself deck shouldest thou wherewith wear which mantle glorious] Thy name is named in the book of life, and with thy brother whom thou hast received [THOU be shalt] in our kingdom.

111. [AND letter a was my] and the King [as ambassador] sealed it [WITH hand right his] because of the evil ones, even the children of the Babylonians and the tyrannous demons of Labyrinthus (Sarbug, Syr.).

It flew and lighted down by me, and became all speech.

And I at the voice of it and the feeling of it started up out of sleep and I took it up and kissed it [AND the seal brake] and read it.

And it was written concerning that which was recorded in mine heart.

And I remembered forthwith that I was a son of kings, and my freedom yearned (sought) after its kind.

I remembered also the pearl for the which I was sent down into Egypt and I began (or came) with charms against the terrible serpent, and I overcame him (or put him to sleep) by naming the name of my Father upon him, And I caught away the pearl and turned back to bear it unto my fathers.

And I stripped off the filthy garment and left it in their land, and directed my way forthwith to the light of my fatherland in the East.

And on the way I found my letter that had awakened me, and it, like as it had taken a voice and raised me when I slept, so also guided me with the light that came from it.

For at times the royal garment of silk [SHONE] before mine eyes, and with love leading me and drawing me onward, I passed by Labyrinthus (Sarbug), and I left Babylon upon my left hand and I came unto Meson (Mesene; Maishan) the great, that lieth on the shore of the sea, from the heights of Warkan (Hyrcania?) had my parents sent thither by the hand of their treasurers, unto whom they committed it because of their faithfulness>.

112. But I remembered not the brightness of it; for I was yet a child and very young when I had left it in the palace of my Father, but suddenly, [when] I saw the garment made like unto me as it had been in a mirror.

And I beheld upon it all myself (or saw it wholly in myself) and I knew and saw myself through it, that we were divided asunder, being of one; and again were one in one shape.

Yea, the treasurers also which brought me the garment I beheld, that they were two, yet one shape was upon both, one royal sign was set upon both of them.

The money and the wealth had they in their hands, and paid me the due price, and the lovely garment, which was variegated with bright colours with gold and precious stones and pearls of comely hue they were fastened above (or in the height).

And the likeness of the King of kings was all in all of it. Sapphire stones were fitly set in it above (or, like the sapphire stone also were its manifold hues).

113. And again I saw that throughout it motions of knowledge were being sent forth, and it was ready to utter speech.

And I heard it speak:

I am of him that is more valiant than all men, for whose sake I was reared up with the Father himself.

And I also perceived his stature (so Gr.- Syr. I perceived in myself that my stature grew in accordance with his working).

And all its royal motions rested upon me as it grew toward the impulse of it (And with its kingly motions it was spreading itself toward me).

And it hastened, reaching out from the hand of [HIM it brought that] unto him that would receive it and me also did yearning arouse to start forth and meet it and receive it.

And I stretched forth and received it, and adorned myself with the beauty of the colours thereof (mostly Syr.; Gr. corrupt) and in my royal robe excelling in beauty I arrayed myself wholly.

And when I had put it on, I was lifted up unto the place of peace (sahl-tation) and homage and I bowed my head and worshipped the brightness of the Father which had sent it unto me. for I had performed his commandments, and he likewise that which he had promised, and at the doors of his palace which was from the beginning I mingled among, and he rejoiced over me and received me with him into his palace, and all his servants do praise him with sweet voices.

And he promised me that with him I shall be sent unto the gates of the king, that with my gifts and my pearl we may appear together before the king.

[Immediately on this, in the Syriac, follows a Song of Praise of Thomas the apostle consisting of forty-two ascriptions of praise and four final clauses (Wright, pp. 245-51). It has no bearing on the Acts, and is not in itself so remarkable as to need to be inserted here.]

114 And Charisius went home glad, thinking that his wife would be with him, and that she had become such as she was before, even before she heard the divine word and

believed on Jesus. And he went, and found her with her hair dishevelled and her clothes rent, and when he saw it he said unto her: My lady Mygdonia, why doth this cruel disease keep hold on thee? and wherefore hast thou done this? I am thine husband from thy virginity, and both the gods and the law grant me to have rule over thee, what is this great madness of thine, that thou art become a derision in all our nation? but put thou away the care that cometh of that sorcerer; and I will remove his face from among us, that thou mayest see him no more.

115 But Mygdonia when she heard that gave herself up unto grief, groaning and lamenting and Charisius said again; Have I then so much wronged the gods that they have afflicted me with such a disease? what is my great offence that they have cast me into such humiliation? I beseech thee. Mygdonia trouble my soul no more with the pitiful sight of thee and thy mean appearance and afflict not mine heart with care for thee I am Charisius thine husband, whom all the nation honoureth and feareth. What must I do? I know not whither to turn. What am I to think? shall I keep silence and endure? yet who can be patient when men take his treasure? and who can endure to lose thy sweet ways? and what is there for me? (Syr. thy beauties which are ever before me) the fragrance of thee is in my nostrils, and thy bright face is fixed in mine eyes. They are taking away my soul, and the fair body which I rejoiced to see they are destroying, and that sharpest of eyes they are blinding and cutting off my right hand: my joy is turning to grief and my life to death, and the light of it is being dyed (?) with darkness. Let no

man of you my kindred henceforth look on me; from you no help hath come to me, nor will I hereafter worship the gods of the east that have enwrapped me in such calamities, nor pray to them any more nor sacrifice to them, for I am bereaved of my spouse. And what else should I ask of them? for all my glory is taken away, yet am I a prince and next unto the king in power; but Mygdonia hath set me at nought, and taken away all these things. (Would that some one would blind one of my eyes, and that thine eyes would look upon me as they were wont, Syr. which has more clauses, to the same effect.)

116 And while Charisius spake thus with tears, Mygdonia sat silent and looking upon the ground; and again he came unto her and said: My lady Mygdonia, most desired of me, remember that out of all the women that are in India I chose and took thee as the most beautiful, though I might have joined to myself in marriage many more beautiful: but yet I lie, Mygdonia, for by the gods it would not have been possible to find another like thee in the land of India; but woe is me always, for thou wilt not even answer me a word: but if thou wilt, revile me, so that I may only be vouchsafed a word from thee. Look at me, for I am more comely than that sorcerer: but thou art my wealth and honour: and all men know that there is none like me: and thou art my race and kindred; and lo, he taketh thee away from me.

117 And when Charisius had so said, Mygdonia saith unto him: He whom I love is better than thee and thy substance: for thy substance is of earth and returneth unto the earth;

but he whom I love is of heaven and will take me with him unto heaven. Thy wealth shall pass away, and thy beauty shall vanish, and thy robes, and thy many works: and thou shalt be alone, naked, with thy transgressions. Call not to my remembrance thy deeds (unto me), for I pray the Lord that I may forget thee, so as to remember no more those former pleasures and the custom of the body; which shall pass away as a shadow, but Jesus only endureth for ever, and the souls which hope in him. Jesus himself shall quit me of the shameful deeds which I did with thee. And when Charisius heard this, he turned him to sleep, vexed (dissolved) in soul, saying to her: Consider it by thyself all this night: and if thou wilt be with me such as thou wast before, and not see that sorcerer, I will do all according to thy mind, and if thou wilt remove thine affection from him I will take him out of the prison and let him go and remove into another country, and I will not vex thee, for I know that thou makest much of the stranger. And not with thee first did this matter come about, for many other women also hath he deceived with thee; and they have awaked sober and returned to themselves: do not thou then make nought of my words and cause me to be a reproach among the Indians.

118 And Charisius having thus spoken went to sleep: but she took ten denarii (20 zuze, Syr.), and went secretly to give them to the gaolers that she might enter in to the apostle. But on the way Judus Thomas came and met her, and she saw him and was afraid, for she thought that he was one of the rulers: for a great light went before him. And she said to herself as she fled: have lost thee, O my unhappy soul! for

thou wilt not again see Judas the apostle of [JESUS] the living [GOD], and not yet hast thou received the holy seal. And she fled and ran into a narrow place and there hid herself, saying: I would rather choose to be killed (taken) by the poorer, whom it is possible to persuade, than to fall into the hand of this mighty ruler, who will despise gifts.

The Tenth Act: Wherein Mygdonia receiveth baptism.

119 And while Mygdonia thought thus with herself, Judas came and stood over her, and she saw him and was afraid, and fell down and became lifeless with terror. But he stood by her and took her by the hand and said unto her: Fear not, Mygdonia: Jesus will not leave thee, neither will the Lord unto whom thou hast committed thy soul overlook thee. His compassionate rest will not forsake thee: he that is kind will not forsake thee, for his kindness' sake, nor he that is good for his goodness' sake. Rise up then from the earth, thou that art become wholly above it: look on the light, for the Lord leaveth not them that love him to walk in darkness: behold him that travelleth with his servants, that he is unto them a defender in perils. And Mygdonia arose and looked on him and said: Whither wentest thou, my lord? and who is he that brought thee out of prison to behold the sun? Judas Thomas saith unto her: My Lord Jesus is mightier than all powers and all kings and rulers.

120 And Mygdonia said: Give me the seal of Jesus Christ and I shall (Let me) receive the gift at thy hands before thou departest out of life. And she took him with her and entered into the court and awaked her nurse, saying unto her: Narcia

(Gr. Marcia), my mother and nurse, all thy service and refreshment thou hast done for me from my childhood until my present age are vain, and for them I owe thee thanks which are temporal; do for me now also a favor, that thou mayest for ever receive a recompense from him that giveth great gifts. And Narcia in answer saith: What wilt thou, my daughter Mygdonia, and what is to be done for thy pleasure? for the honours which thou didst promise me before, the stranger hath not suffered thee to accomplish, and thou hast made me a reproach among all the nation. And now what is this new thing that thou commandest me? And Mygdonia saith: Become thou partaker with me in eternal life, that I may receive of thee perfect nurture: take bread and bring it me, and wine mingled with water, and spare my freedom (take pity on me a free-born woman, Syr.). And the nurse said: I will bring thee many loaves, and for water flagons of wine, and fulfil thy desire. But she saith to the nurse: Flagons I desire not, nor the many loaves: but this only, bring wine mingled with water and one loaf, and oil [EVEN be a it Syr. lamp, in if].

121 And when Narcia had brought these things, Mygdonia stood before the apostle with her head bare; and he took the oil and poured it on her head, saying: Thou holy oil given unto us for sanctification, secret mystery whereby the cross was shown unto us, thou art the straightener of the crooked limbs, thou art the humbler (softener) of hard things (works), thou art it that showeth the hidden treasures, thou art the sprout of goodness; let thy power come, let it be established upon thy servant Mygdonia, and heal thou her

by this freedom. And when the oil was poured upon her he bade her nurse unclothe her and gird a linen cloth about her; and there was there a fountain of water upon which the apostle went up, and baptized Mygdonia in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. And when she was baptized and clad, he brake bread and took a cup of water and made her a partaker in the body of Christ and the cup of the Son of God, and said: Thou hast received thy seal, get for thyself eternal life. And immediately there was heard from above a voice saying: Yea, amen. And when Narcia heard that voice, she was amazed, and besought the apostle that she also might receive the seal; and the apostle gave it her and said: Let the care of the Lord be about thee as about the rest.

122 And having done these things the apostle returned unto the prison, and found the doors open and the guards still sleeping. And Thomas said: Who is like thee, O God? who withholdest not thy loving affection and care from any who is like thee, the merciful, who hast delivered thy creatures out of evil. Life that hath subdued death, rest that hath ended toil. Glory be to the only-begotten of the Father. Glory to the compassionate that was sent forth of his heart. And when he had said thus, the guards waked and beheld all the doors open, and the prisoners <+ asleep, Syr.>, and said in themselves: Did not we fasten the doors? and how are they now open, and the prisoners within?

123 But at the dawn Charisius went unto Mygdonia [AND Syr. nurse, her], and found them praying and saying: O new

God that by the stranger hast come hither unto us, hidden God of the dwellers in India (Syr. who art hidden from); God that hast shown thy glory by thine apostle Thomas, God whose report we have heard and believed on thee; God, unto whom we are come to be saved; God, who for love of man and for pity didst come down unto our littleness; God who didst seek us out when we knew him (thee) not; God that dwellest in the heights and from whom the depths are not hid: turn thou away from us the madness of Charisius. And Charisius hearing that said to Mygdonia: Rightly callest thou me evil and mad and foul I for if I had not borne with thy disobedience, and given thee liberty, thou wouldest not have called on God against me and made mention of my name before God. But believe me, Mygdonia that in that sorcerer there is no profit, and what he promiseth to perform he cannot: but I will perform before thy sight all that I promise, that thou mayest believe, and bear with my words and be to me as thou wast beforetime.

124 And he came near and besought her again, saying: If thou wilt be persuaded of me, I shall henceforth have no grief; remember that day when thou didst meet me first; tell the truth: was I more beautiful unto thee at that time, or Jesus at this? And Mygdonia said: That time required its own, and this time also; that was the time of the beginning, but this of the end; that was the time of temporal life, this of eternal; that of pleasure that passeth away, but this of pleasure that abideth for ever; that, of day and night, this of day without night. Thou sawest that marriage that was passing, and here, and single but this marriage continueth

for ever; that was a partnership of corruption, but this of eternal life; those groomsmen (and maids) were men and women of time, but these abide unto the end. That marriage upon earth setteth up dropping dew of the love of men (Syr. That union was founded upon the earth where there is an unceasing press: this is founded upon the bridge of fire upon which is sprinkled grace: both corrupt); that bride-chamber is taken down again, but this remaineth always; that bed was strown with coverlets (that grow old), but this with love and faith. Thou art a bridegroom that passest away and art dissolved (changed), but Jesus is a true bridegroom, enduring for ever immortal, that dowry was of money and robes that grow old, but this is of living words which never pass away.

125 And when Charisius heard these things he went unto the king and told him all: and the king commanded Judas to be brought, that he might judge him and destroy him. But Charisius said: Have patience a little, O king, and first persuade the man making him afraid, that he may persuade Mygdonia to be unto me as formerly. And Misdaeus sent and fetched the apostle of Christ, and all the prisoners were grieved because the apostle departed from them, for they yearned after him, saying: Even the comfort which we had have they taken away from us.

126 And Misdaeus said unto Judas: Wherefore teachest thou this new doctrine, which both gods and men hate, and which hath nought of profit? And Judas said: What evil do I teach? And Misdaeus said: Thou teachest, saying that men [CANNOT chastely live they except well] with the God whom

thou preachest. Judas saith: Thou sayest true, O king: thus do I teach. For tell me, art thou not wroth with thy soldiers if they wait on thee in filthy garments? if then thou, being a king of earth and returning unto earth, request thy subjects to be reverend in their doings, are ye wroth and said ye that I teach ill when I say that they who serve my king must be reverend and pure and free from all grief and care of children and unprofitable riches and vain trouble? For indeed thou wouldest have thy subjects follow thy conversation and thy manners, and thou punishest them if they despise thy commandments: how much more must they that believe on him serve my God with much reverence and cleanness and security, and be quit of all pleasures of the body, adultery and prodigality and theft and drunkenness and belly-service and foul deeds?

127 And Misdaeus hearing these things said: Lo, I let thee go: go then and persuade Mygdonia, the wife of Charisius, not to desire to depart from him. Judas saith unto him: Delay not if thou hast aught to do: for her, if she hath rightly received what she hath learned, neither iron nor fire nor aught else stronger than these will avail to hurt or to root out him that is held in her soul. Misdaeus saith unto Judas: Some poisons do dissolve other poisons, and a theriac cureth the bites of the viper; and thou if thou wilt canst give a solvent of those diseases, and make peace and concord betwixt this couple: for by so doing thou wilt spare thyself, for not yet art thou sated with life; and know thou that if thou do not persuade her, I will catch thee away out of this life which is desirable unto all men. And Judas said: This life hath been

given as a loan, and this time is one that changeth, but that life whereof I teach is incorruptible; and beauty and youth that are seen shall in a little cease to be. The king saith to him: I have counselled thee for the best, but thou knowest thine own affairs.

128 And as the apostle went forth from before the king, Charisius came to him and entreated him and said: I beseech thee, O, man: I have not sinned against thee or any other at any time, nor against the gods; wherefore hast thou stirred up this great calamity against me? and for what cause hast thou brought such disturbance upon mine house? and what profit hast thou of it? but if thou thinkest to gain somewhat, tell me the gain, what it is, and I will procure it for thee without labour. To what end dost thou make me mad, and cast thyself into destruction? for if thou persuade her not, I will both dispatch thee and finally take myself out of life. But if, as thou sayest, after our departing hence there is there life and death, and also condemnation and victory and a place of judgement, then will I also go in thither to be judged with thee: and if that God whom thou preachest is just and awardeth punishment justly, I know that I shall gain my cause against thee; for thou hast injured me, having suffered no wrong at my hands: for indeed even here I am able to avenge myself on thee and bring upon thee all that thou hast done unto me. Therefore be thou persuaded, and come home with me and persuade Mygdonia to be with me as she was at first, before she beheld thee. And Judas saith to him: Believe me, my child that if men loved God as much as they love one another, they would ask of him all things and receive them,

and none would do them violence (there would be nothing which would not obey them, Syr.).

129 And as Thomas said this, they came unto the house of Charisius and found Mygdonia sitting and Narcia standing by her, and her hand supporting her cheek; and she was saying: Let the remainder of the days of my life, O mother, be cut off from me, and all the hours become as one hour, and let me depart out of life that I may go the sooner and behold that beautiful one, whose report I have heard, even that living one and giver of life unto them that believe on him, where is not day and night, nor light and darkness, nor good and evil, nor poor and rich, nor male and female, nor free and bond, nor proud that subjecteth the humble. And as she spake the apostle stood by her, and forthwith she rose up and did him reverence. Then Charisius said unto him: Seest thou how she feareth and honoureth thee and all that thou shalt bid her she will do willingly?

130 And as he so spake, Judas saith unto Mygdonia: My daughter Mygdonia, obey that which thy brother Charisius saith. And Mygdonia saith: If thou wast not able [TO name] the deed in word wilt thou compel me to endure the act? for I have heard of thee that this life is of no profit, and this relief is for a time, and these possessions are transitory. And again thou saidst that whoso renounceth this life shall receive the life eternal, and whoso hateth the light of day and night shall behold a light that is not overtaken, that whoso despiseth this money shall find other and eternal money. But now [THOU things these sayest] because thou art in

fear. Who that hath done somewhat and is praised for the work changeth it? [WHO and a tower buildeth] straightway overthroweth it from the foundation? who diggeth a spring water in a thirsty land and straightway filleth it in? who findeth a treasure and useth it not? And Charisius heard it. and said: I will not imitate you, neither will I hasten to destroy you; nor though I may so do, will I put bonds about thee (but thee I will bind, Syr.); and I will not suffer thee to speak with this sorcerer; and if thou obey me, well, but if not, I know what I must do.

131 And Judas went out of Charisius' house and departed unto the house of Siphor and lodged there with him. And Siphor said: I will prepare for Judas a hall (triclinium) wherein he may teach (Syr. Siphor said to Judas: Prepare thyself an apartment, &c.). And he did so; and Siphor said : I and my wife and daughter will dwell henceforth in holiness, and in chastity, and in one affection. I beseech thee that we may receive of thee the seal, and become worshippers of the true God and numbered among his sheep and lambs. And Judas said: I am afraid to speak that which I think: yet I know somewhat, and what I know it is not possible for me to utter.

132 And he began to say concerning baptism: This baptism is remission of sins (the Greek MSS. U and P have divergent texts, both obscure): this bringeth forth again light that is shed about us: this bringeth to new birth the new man (this is the restorer of understandings Syr.): this minglenth the spirit (with the body), raiseth up in threefoldwise a new man and [MAKETH him] partaker of the remission of sins. Glory be

to thee, hidden one, that art communicated in baptism. Glory to thee the unseen power that is in baptism. Glory to thee, renewal, whereby are renewed they that are baptized and with affection take hold upon thee.

And having thus said, he poured oil over their heads and said: Glory be to thee the love of compassion (bowels). Glory to thee name of Christ. Glory to thee, power established in Christ. And he commanded a vessel to be brought, and baptized them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

133 And when they were baptized and clad, he set bread on the table and blessed it, and said: Bread of life, the which who eat abide incorruptible: Bread that filleth the hungry souls with the blessing thereof: thou art he that vouchsafest to receive a gift, that thou mayest become unto us remission of sins, and that they who eat thee may become immortal: we invoke upon thee the name of the mother, of the unspeakable mystery of the hidden powers and authorities (? we name the name of the unspeakable mystery, that is hidden from all &c.): we invoke upon thee the name of [thy?] Jesus. And he said: Let the powers of blessing come, and be established in this bread, that all the souls which partake of it may be washed from their sins. And he brake and gave unto Siphor and his wife and daughter.

The Eleventh Act: Concerning the wife of Misdaeus.

134 Now Misdaeus the king, when he had let Judas go, dined and went home, and told his wife what had befallen

Charisius their kinsman, saying: See what hath come to pass to that unhappy man, and thou thyself knowest, my sister Tertia, that a man hath nought better than his own wife on whom he resteth; but it chanced that his wife went unto that sorcerer of whom thou hast heard that he is come to the land of the Indians, and fell into his charms and is parted from her own husband; and he knoweth not what he should do. And when I would have destroyed the malefactor, he would not have it. But do thou go and counsel her to incline unto her husband, and forsake the vain words of the sorcerer.

135 And as soon as she arose Tertia went to the house of Charisius her husband's [KINSMAN], and found Mygdonia Lying upon the earth in humiliation, and ashes and sackcloth were spread under her, and she was praying that the Lord would forgive her her former sins and she might soon depart out of life. And Tertia said unto her: Mygdonia, my dear sister and companion what is this hand (Syr. this folly)? what is the disease that hath overtaken thee? and why doest thou the deeds of madmen? Know thyself and come back unto thine own way, come near unto thy many kinsfolk, and spare thy true husband Charisius, and do not things unbefitting a free-woman. Mygdonia saith unto her: O Tertia, thou hast not yet heard the preacher of life: not yet hath he touched thine ears, not yet hast thou tasted the medicine of life nor art freed from corruptible mourning. Thou standest in the life of time, and the everlasting life and salvation thou knowest not, and perceivest not the incorruptible fellowship. Thou standest clad in robes that grow old and desirest not those that are eternal, and art proud of this beauty which

vanisheth and hast no thought of the holiness of thy soul; and art rich in a multitude of servants, (and hast not freed thine own soul from servitude, Syr.) and pridest thyself in the glory that cometh of many, but redeemest not thyself from the condemnation of death.

136 And when Tertia heard this of Mygdonia she said: I pray thee, sister, bring me unto that stranger that teacheth these great things, that I also may go and hear him, and be taught to worship the God whom he preacheth, and become partaker of his prayers, and a sharer in all that thou hast told me of. And Mygdonia saith to her: He is in the house of Siphor the captain; for he is become the occasion of life unto all them that are being saved in India. And hearing that, Tertia went quickly to Siphor's house, that she might see the new apostle that was come thither. And when she entered in, Judas said unto her: What art thou come to see? a man that is a stranger and poor and contemptible and needy, having neither riches nor substance; yet one thing I possess which neither kings nor rulers can take away, that neither perisheth nor ceaseth, which is Jesus the Saviour of all mankind, the Son of the living God, who hath given life unto all that believe on him and take refuge with him and are known to be of the number of his servants (sheep, Syr.). Unto whom saith Tertia: May I become a partaker of this life which thou promisest that all they shall receive who come together unto the assembly of God. And the apostle said: The treasury of the holy king is opened wide, and they which worthily partake of the good things that are therein do rest, and resting do reign: but first, no man cometh unto him

that is unclean and vile: for he knoweth our inmost hearts and the depths of our thought, and it is not possible for any to escape him. Thou, then, if verily thou believest in him, shalt be made worthy of his mysteries; and he will magnify thee and enrich thee, and make thee to be an heir of his hingdom.

137 And Tertia having heard this returned home rejoicing, and found her husband awaiting her, not having dined, and when Misdaeus saw her he said: Whence is it that thine entering in to-day is more beautiful? and wherefore art thou come walking, which beseemeth not free-born women like thee? And Tertia saith unto him: I owe thee the greatest of thanks for that thou didst send me unto Mygdonia, for I went and heard of a new life, and I saw the new apostle of the God that giveth life unto them that believe on him and fulfil his commandments; I ought therefore myself to recompense thee for this favour and admonition with good advice; for thou shalt be a great king in heaven if thou obey me and fear the God that is preached by the stranger, and keep thyself holy unto the living God. For this kingdom passeth away, and thy comfort will be turned into affliction: but go thou to that man, and believe him, and thou shalt live unto the end. And when Misdaeus heard these things of his wife, he smote his face with his hands and rent his clothes and said: May the soul of Charisius find no rest, for he hath hurt me to the soul; and may he have no hope, for he hath taken away my hope. And he went out greatly vexed.

138 And he found Charisius his friend in the market-place, and said unto him: Why hast thou cast me into hell to be

another companion to thyself? why hast thou emptied and defrauded me to gain nought? why hast thou hurt me and profited thyself not at all? why hast thou slain me and thyself not lived? Why hast thou wronged me and thyself not got justice? why didst thou not suffer me to destroy that sorcerer before he corrupted my house with his wickedness? And he kept hold upon (was upbraiding, Syr.) Charisius. And Charisius saith: Why, what hath befallen thee? Misdaeus said: He hath bewitched Tertia. And they went both of them unto the house of Siphor the captain, and found Judas sitting and teaching. And all they that were there rose up before the king, but he arose not. And Misdaeus perceived that it was he, and took hold of the seat and overset it, and took up the seat with both his hands and smote his head so that he wounded it, and delivered him to his soldiers, saying: Take him away, and hale him with violence and not gently, that his shame may be manifest unto all men. And they haled him and took him to the place where Misdaeus judged, and he stood there, held of the soldiers of Misdaeus.

The Twelfth Act: Concerning Ouazanes (Iuzanes) the son of Misdaeus.

139 And Ouazanes (Iuzanes, P; Vizan, Syr.) the son of Misdaeus came unto the soldiers and said: Give me him that I may speak with him until the king cometh. And they gave him up, and he brought him in where the king gave judgement. And Iuzanes saith: Knowest thou not that I am the son of Misdaeus the king, and I have power to say unto the king what I will, and he will suffer thee to live? tell me

then, who is thy God, and what power dost thou claim and glory in it? for if it be some power or art of magic, tell it me and teach me, and I will let thee go. Judas saith unto him: Thou art the son of Misdacus the king who is king for a time, but I am the servant of Jesus Christ the eternal king, and thou hast power to say to thy father to save whom thou wilt in the temporal life wherein men continue not, which thou and thy father grant, but I beseech my Lord and intercede for men, and he giveth them a new life which is altogether enduring. And thou boastest thyself of possessions and servants and robes and luxury and unclean chamberings, but I boast myself of poverty and philosophy and humility and lasting and prayer and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost and of my brethren that are worthy of God: and I boast myself of eternal life. And thou reliest on (hast taken refuge with) a man like unto thyself and not able to save his own soul from judgement and death, but I rely upon the living God, upon the saviour of kings and princes, who is the judge of all men. And ye indeed to-day perchance are, and to-morrow are no more, but I have taken refuge with him that abideth for ever and knoweth all our seasons and times. And if thou wilt become the servant of this God thou shalt soon do so; but show that thou wilt be a servant worthy of him hereby: first by holiness (purity), which is the head of all good things, and then by fellowship with this God whom I preach, and philosophy and simplicity and love and faith and [GOOD hope] in him, and unity of pure food (simplicity of pure i e, Syr.).

140 And the young man was persuaded by the Lord and sought occasion how he might let Judas escape: but while

he thought thereon, the king came, and the soldiers took Judas and led him forth. And Iuzanes went forth with him and stood beside him. And when the king was set he bade Judas be brought in, with his hands bound behind him; and he was brought into the midst and stood there. And the king saith: Tell me who thou art and by what power thou doest these things. And Judas saith to him: I am a man like thee, and by the power of Jesus Christ I do these things. And Misdaeus saith: Tell me the truth before I destroy thee. And Judas saith: Thou hast no power against me, as thou supposest, and thou wilt not hurt me at all. And the king was wroth at his words, and commanded to heat iron plates and set him upon them barefoot; and as the soldiers took off his shoes he said: The wisdom of God is better than the wisdom of men. Thou Lord and King (do thou take counsel against them, Syr.) and let thy goodness resist his wrath. And they brought the plates which were like fire, and set the apostle upon them, and straightway water sprang up abundantly from the earth, so that the plates were swallowed up in it, and they that held him let him go and withdrew themselves.

141 And the king seeing the abundance of water said to Judas: Ask thy God that he deliver me from this death, that I perish not in the flood. And the apostle prayed and said: Thou that didst bind this element (nature) and gather it into one place and send it forth into divers lands; that didst bring disorder into order, that grantest mighty works and great wonders by the hands of Judas thy servant; that hast mercy on my soul, that I may always receive thy brightness; that givest wages

unto them that have laboured; thou saviour of my soul, restoring it unto its own nature that it may have no fellowship with hurtful things; that hast always been the occasion of life: do thou restrain this element that it lift not up itself to destroy; for there are some of them that stand here who shall believe on thee and live. And when he had prayed, the water was swallowed up by little and little, and the place became dry. And when Misdaeus saw it he commanded him to be taken to the prison: Until I shall consider how he must be used.

142 And as Judas was led away to the prison they all followed him, and Iuzanes the king's son walked at his right hand, and Siphor at the left. And he entered into the prison and sat down, and Iuzanes and Siphor, and he persuaded his wife and his daughter to sit down, for they also were come in to hear the word of life. For they knew that Misdaeus would slay him because of the excess of his anger. And Judas began to say: O liberator of my soul from the bondage of the many, because I gave myself to be sold [UNTO Syr. one,]; behold, I rejoice and exult, knowing that the times are fulfilled for me to enter in and receive [THEE of my Syr. rest, giver]. Lo, I am to be set free from the cares that are on the earth; lo, I fulfil mine hope and receive truth; lo, I am set free from sorrow and put on joy alone; lo, I become careless and griefless and dwell in rest; lo, I am set free from bondage and am called unto liberty; lo, I have served times and seasons, and I am lifted up above times and seasons; lo, I receive my wages from my recompenser, who giveth without reckoning (number) because his wealth sufficeth for the gift;

[LO, and my raiment, on off put I] and I shall not put it on again; lo, I sleep and awake, and I shall no more go to sleep; lo, I die and live again, and I shall no more taste of death; lo, they rejoice and expect me, that I may come and be with their kindred and be set as a flower in their crown; lo, I reign in the kingdom whereon I set my hope, even from hence; lo, the rebellious fall before me, for I have escaped them; lo, (unto me) the peace hath come, whereunto all are gathered.

143 And as the apostle spake thus, all that were there hearkened, supposing that in that hour he would depart out of life. And again he said: Believe on the physician of all [DISEASES], both seen and unseen, and on the saviour of the souls that need help from him. This is the free-born [SON] of kings, this the physician of his creatures; this is he that was reproached of his own slaves; this is the Father of the height and the Lord of nature and the Judge (? Father of nature and Lord of the height and supreme Judge, Syr.): he came of the greatest, the only-begotten son of the deep; and he was called the son of (became visible through, Syr.) Mary the virgin, and was termed the son of Joseph the carpenter: he whose littleness (we beheld) with the eyes of our body, but his greatness we received by faith, and saw it in his works whose human body we felt also with our hands, and his aspect we saw transfigured (changed) with our eyes, but his heavenly semblance on the mount we were not able to see: he that made the rulers stumble and did violence unto death: he, the truth that lieth not, that at the last paid the tribute for himself and his disciples: whom the prince beholding feared and the powers that were with him were troubled;

and the prince bare witness (asked him, Syr.) who he was and from whence, and knew not the truth, because he is alien from truth: he that having authority over the world, and the pleasures therein, and the possessions and the comfort, [REJECTED] all these things and turneth away his subjects, that they should not use them.

144 And having fulfilled these sayings, he arose and prayed thus: our Father, which art in heaven: hallowed be thy name: Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done, as in heaven so upon earth: [GIVE the of Syr. day, bread constant us] and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

My Lord and God, hope and confidence and teacher, thou hast taught me to pray thus, behold, I pray this prayer and fulfil thy commandment: be thou with me unto the end; thou art he that from childhood hast sown life in me and kept me from corruption; thou art he that hast brought me unto the poverty of this world, and exhorted me unto the true riches; thou art he that hast made me known unto myself and showed me that I am thine; and I have kept myself pure from woman, that that which thou requirest be not found in defilement.

[At the words 'My Lord and God' begins the double text, represented on the one hand by the MS. U and on the other by the Paris MS. P, and three (partly four) others. These insert the prayer after ch. 167. Their text, I believe, may be the original Greek. I follow it here, repeating the first paragraph.]

(144) My Lord and God, my hope and my confidence and my teacher, that hast implanted courage in me, thou didst teach me to pray thus; behold, I pray thy prayer and bring thy will to fulfilment: be thou with me unto the end. Thou art he that from my youth up didst give me patience in temptation and [SOW in] me life and preserve me from corruption; thou art he that didst bring me into the poverty of this world and fill me with the true riches; thou art he that didst show me that I was thine: wherefore I was never joined unto a wife, that the temple worthy of thee might not be found in pollution.

145 My mouth sufficeth not to praise thee, neither am I able to conceive the care and providence (carefulness) which hath been about me from thee which thou hast had for me). For I desired to gain riches, but thou by a vision didst show me that they are full of loss and injury to them that gain them and I believed thy showing, and continued in the poverty of the world until thou, the true riches wert revealed unto me, who didst fill both me and the rest that were worthy of thee with thine own riches and set free thine own from care and anxiety. I have therefore fulfilled thy commandments, O Lord, and accomplished thy will, and become poor and needy and a stranger and a bondman and set at nought and a prisoner and hungry and thirsty and naked and unshod, and I have toiled for thy sake, that my confidence might not perish and my hope that is in thee might not be confounded and my much labour might not be in vain and my weariness not be counted for nought: let not my prayers and my continual fastings perish, and my

great zeal toward thee; let not my seed of wheat be changed for tares out of thy land, Let not the enemy carry it away and mingle his own tares therewith; for thy land verily receiveth not his tares, neither indeed can they be laid up in thine houses.

146 I have planted thy vine in the earth, it hath sent down its roots into the depth and its growth is spread out in the height, and the fruits of it are stretched forth upon the earth, and they that are worthy of thee are made glad by them, whom also thou hast gained. The money which thou hast from me I laid down upon the table (bank); this, when thou requirest it, restore unto me with usury, as thou hast promised. With thy one mind have I traded and have made ten, thou hast added more to me beside that I had, as thou didst covenant. I have forgiven my debtor the mine, require thou it not at my hands. I was bidden to the supper and I came: and I refused the land and the yoke of oxen and the wife, that I might not for their sake be rejected; I was bidden to the wedding, and I put on white raiment, that I might be worthy of it and not be bound hand and foot and cast into the outer darkness. My lamp with its bright light expecteth the master coming from the marriage, that it may receive him, and I may not (? he may not) see it dimmed because the oil is spent. Mine eyes, O, Christ, look upon thee, and mine heart exulteth with joy because I have fulfilled thy will and perfected thy commandments; that I may be likened unto that watchful and careful servant who in his eagerness neglecteth not to keep vigil (other MSS.: I have not slumbered idly in keeping thy commandments: in the first sleep and at

midnight and at cockcrow, that mine eyes may behold thee, &c.). All the night have I laboured to keep mine house from robbers, lest it be broken through.

147 My loins have I girt close with truth and bound my shoes on my feet, that I may never see them gaping: mine hands have I put unto the yoked plough and have not turned away backward, lest my furrows go crooked. The plough-land is become white and the harvest is come, that I may receive my wages. My garment that groweth old I have worn out, and the labour that hath brought me unto rest have I accomplished. I have kept the first watch and the second and the third, that I may behold thy face and adore thine holy brightness. I have rooted out the worst (pulled down my barns, Syr.) and left them desolate upon earth, that I may be filled full from thy treasures (Gr. MSS. add: all my substance have I sold, that I may gain thee the pearl). The moist spring that was in me have I dried up, that I may live and rest beside thine inexhaustible spring (al. and Syr.: rest beside thy living spring). The captive whom thou didst commit to me I have slain, that he which is set free in me may not fall from his confidence. Him that was inward have I made outward and the outward [INWARD], and all thy fullness hath been fulfilled in me. I have not returned unto the things that are behind, but have gone forward unto the things that are before, that I become not a reproach. The dead man have I quickened, and the living one have I overcome, and that which was lacking have I filled up (Syr. Wright, not the older one, inserts negatives, ‘not quickened ; &c.), that I may receive the crown of victory, and the power

of Christ may be accomplished in me. I have received reproach upon earth, but give thou me the return and the recompense in the heavens. (U omits practically all this chapter.)

148 Let not the powers and the officers perceive me, and let them not have any thought concerning me; let not the publicans and exactors ply their calling upon me; let not the weak and the evil cry out against me that am valiant and humble, and when I am borne upward let them not rise up to stand before me, by thy power, O Jesu, which surroundeth me as a crown: for they do flee and hide themselves, they cannot look on thee: but (for) suddenly do they fall upon them that are subject to them, and the portion of the sons of the evil one doth itself cry out and convict them; and it is not hid from them, nor their nature is made known: the children of the evil one are separated off. Do thou then grant me, Lord, that I may pass by in quietness and joy and peace, and pass over and stand before the judge, and let not the devil (or slanderer) look upon me; let his eyes be blinded by thy light which thou hast made to dwell in me, close thou up (muzzle) his mouth: for he hath found nought against me.

[We revert to U.]

149 And he said again unto them that were about him: [BELIEVE, the of God and my his Syr. in giver I servants, helper life believe preach; whom Christ Jesus proclaim, children.] believe in the Saviour of them that have laboured

in his service: for my soul already flourisheth because my time is near to receive him; for he being beautiful draweth me on always to speak concerning his beauty, what it is though I be not able and suffice not to speak it worthily: thou that art the light (feeder, Syr.) of my poverty and the supplier of my defects and nurturer of my need: be thou with me until I come and receive thee for evermore.

The Thirteenth Act: Wherein Iuzanes receiveth baptism with the rest.

150 And Iuzanes the youth besought the apostle, saying: I pray thee, O man, apostle of God, suffer me to go, and I will persuade the gaoler to permit thee to come home with me, that by thee I may receive the seal, and become thy minister and a keeper of the commandments of the God whom thou preachest. For indeed, formerly I walked in those things which thou teachest, until my father compelled me and joined me unto a wife by name Mnesara; for I am in my one-and-twentieth year, and have now been seven years married, and before I was joined in marriage I knew no other woman, wherefore also I was accounted useless of my father, nor have I ever had son or daughter of this wife and also my wife herself hath lived with me in chastity all this time, and to-day, if she had been in health, and had listened to thee, I know well that both I should have been at rest and she would have received eternal life; but she is in peril and afflicted with much illness; I will therefore persuade the keeper that he promise to come with me, for I live by myself: and thou shalt also heal that unhappy one. And Judas the apostle of the

Most High, hearing this, said to Iuzanes: If thou believest, thou shalt see the marvels of God, and how he sayeth his servants.

151 And as they spake thus together, Tertia and Mvghonia and Narcia stood at the door of the prison, and they gave the gaoler 363 staters of silver and entered in to Judas; and found Iuzanes and Siphor and his wife and daughter, and all the prisoners sitting and hearing the word. And when they stood by him he said to them: Who hath suffered you to come unto us? and who opened unto you the sealed door that ye came forth? Tertia saith unto him: Didst not thou open the door for us and tell us to come into the prison that we might take our brethren that were there, and then should the Lord show forth his glory in us? And when we came near the door, I know not how, thou wast parted from us and hid thyself and camest hither before us where also we heard the noise of the door, when thou didst shut us out. We gave money therefore to the keepers and came in and lo, we are here praying thee that we may persuade thee and let thee escape until the king's wrath against thee shall cease. Unto whom Judas said: Tell us first of all how ye were shut up.

152 And she saith to him: Thou wast with us, and didst never leave us for one hour, and askest thou how we were shut up? but if thou desirest to hear, hear. The king Misdaeus sent for me and said unto me: Not yet hath that sorcerer prevailed over thee, for, as I hear, he bewitcheth men with oil and water and bread, and hath not yet bewitched thee; but obey thou me, for if not, I will imprison thee and wear thee out,

and him I will destroy; for I know that if he hath not yet given thee oil and water and bread, he hath not prevailed to get power over thee. And I said unto him: Over my body thou hast authority, and do thou all that thou wilt; but my soul I will not let perish with thee. And hearing that he shut me up in a chamber (beneath his dining-hall, Syr.): and Charisius brought Mygdonia and shut her up with me: and thou broughtest us out and didst bring us even hither; but give thou us the seal quickly, that the hope of Misdacus who counselleth thus may be cut off.

153 And when the apostle heard this, he said: Glory be to thee, O Jesu of many forms, glory to thee that appearest in the guise of our poor manhood: glory to thee that encourageth us and makest us strong and givest grace and consolest and standest by us in all perils, and strengthenest our weakness. And as he thus spake, the gaoler came and said: Put out the lamps, lest any accuse you unto the king. And then they extinguished the lamps, and turned to sleep; but the apostle spake unto the Lord: It is the time now, O Jesu, for thee to make haste; for, lo the children of darkness sit (make us to sit, Syr.) in their own darkness, do thou therefore enlighten us with the light of thy nature. And on a sudden the whole prison was light as the day: and while all they that were in the prison slept a deep sleep, they only that had believed in the Lord continued waking.

154 Judas therefore saith to Iuzanes: Go thou before and make ready the things for our need. Iuzanes therefore saith: And who will open me the doors of the prison? for the gaolers

shut them and are gone to sleep. And Judas saith: Believe in Jesus, and thou shalt find the doors open. And when he went forth and departed from them, all the rest followed after him. And as Iuzanes was gone on before, Mnesara his wife met him coming unto the prison. And she knew him and said: My brother Iuzanes, is it thou? and he saith, Yea, and art thou Mnesara? and she saith Yea. Iuzanes said unto her; Whither walkest thou, especially at so untimely an hour? and how wast thou able to rise up? And she said: This youth laid his hand on me and raised me up, and in a dream I say that I should go where the stranger sitteth, and become perfectly whole. Iuzanes saith to her: What youth is with thee? And she said: Seest thou not him that is on my right hand, leading me by the hand?

155 And while they spake together thus, Judas, with Siphor and his wife and daughter and Tertia and Mygdonia and Narcia came unto Iuzanes' house. And Mnesara the wife of Iuzanes seeing him did reverence and said: Art thou come that sayedst us from the sore disease? thou art he whom I saw in the night delivering unto me this youth to bring me to the prison. But thy goodness suffered me not to grow weary, but thou thyself art come unto me. And so saying she turned about and saw the youth no more; and finding him not, she saith to the apostle: I am not able to walk alone: for the youth whom thou gavest me is not here. And Judas said: Jesus will henceforth lead thee. And thereafter she came running unto him. And when they entered into the house of Iuzanes the son of Misdaeus the king though it was yet night, a great light shined and was shed about them.

156 And then Judas began to pray and to speak thus: O companion and defender (ally) and hope of the weak and confidence of the poor: refuge and lodging of the weary: voice that came forth of the height (sleep, Gr.): comforter dwelling in the midst: port and harbour of them that pass through the regions of the rulers: physician that healest without payment: who among men wast crucified for many: who didst go down into hell with great might: the sight of whom the princes of death endured not; and thou camest up with great glory, and gathering all them that fled unto thee didst prepare a way, and in thy footsteps all they journeyed whom thou didst redeem; and thou broughtest them into thine own fold and didst join them with thy sheep: son of mercy, the son that for love of man wast sent unto us from the perfect country (fatherland) that is above, the Lord of all possessions (undefiled possessions, Syr.): that servest thy servants that they may live: that fillest creation with thine own riches: the poor, that wast in need and didst hunger forty days: that satisfiest thirsty souls with thine own good things; be thou with Iuzanes the son of Misdaeus and with Tertia and Mnesara, and gather them into thy fold and mingle them with thy number; Be unto them a guide in the land of error: be unto them a physician in the land of sickness: be unto them a rest in the land of the weary: sanctify them in a polluted land: be their physician both of bodies and souls: make them holy temples of thee, and let thine holy spirit dwell in them.

157 Having thus prayed over them, the apostle said unto Mygdonia: Unclothe thy sisters. And she took off their

clothes and girded them with girdles and brought them: but Iuzanes had first gone before, and they came after him; and the apostle took oil in a cup of silver and spake thus over it: Fruit more beautiful than all other fruits, unto which none other whatsoever may be compared: altogether merciful: fervent with the force of the word: power of the tree which men putting upon them overcome their adversaries: crowner of the conquerors: help (symbol) and joy of the sick: that didst announce unto men their salvation that showest light to them that are in darkness; whose leaf is bitter, but in thy most sweet fruit thou art fair, that art rough to the sight but soft to the taste; seeming to be weak, but in the greatness of thy strength able to bear the power that beholdeth all things. Having thus said [a corrupt word follows]: Jesu: let his victorious might come and be established in this oil, like as it was established in the tree (wood) that was its kin, even his might at that time, whereof they that crucified thee could not endure the word: let the gift also come whereby breathing upon his (thine) enemies thou didst cause them to go backward and fall headlong and let it rest on this oil, whereupon we invoke thine holy name. And having thus said, he poured it first upon the head of Iuzanes and then upon the women's heads, saying: In thy name, O Jesu Christ, let it be unto these souls for remission of sins and for turning back of the adversary and for salvation of their souls. And he commanded Mygdonia to anoint them but he himself anointed Iuzanes. And having anointed them he led them down into the water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

158 And when they were come up, he took bread and a cup, and blessed it and said: Thine holy body which was crucified for us do we eat, and thy blood that was shed for us unto salvation do we drink; let therefore thy body be unto us salvation and thy blood for remission of sins. And for the gall which thou didst drink for our sakes let the gall of the devil be removed from us: and for the vinegar which thou hast drunk for us, let our weakness be made strong: and for the spitting which thou didst receive for us, let us receive the dew of thy goodness: and by (or for) the reed wherewith they smote thee for us, let us receive the perfect house: and whereas thou receivedst a crown of thorns for our sake, let us that have loved thee put on a crown that fadeth not away; and for the linen cloth wherein thou wast Wrapped, let us also be girt about with thy power that is not vanquished and for the new tomb and the burial let us receive renewing of soul and body: and for that thou didst rise up and revive, let us revive and live and stand before thee in righteous judgement. And he brake and gave the eucharist unto Iuzanes and Tertia and Mnesara and the wife and daughter of Siphor and said: Let this eucharist be unto you for salvation and joy and health of your souls. And they said: Amen. And a voice was heard, saying: Amen: fear ye not, but only believe.

[THE MARTYRDOM Here we revert to the text of P and its companions.]

159 And after these things Judas departed to be imprisoned.

And Tertia with Mygdonia and Narcia also went to be imprisoned. And the apostle Thomas said unto them -the

multitude of them that had believed being present: Daughters and sisters and fellow-servants which have believed in my Lord and God, ministers of my Jesus, hearken to me this day: for I do deliver my word unto you, and I shall no more speak with you in this flesh nor in this world; for I go up unto my Lord and God Jesus Christ, unto him that sold me, unto that Lord that humbled himself even unto me the little, and brought me up unto eternal greatness, that vouchsafed to me to become his servant in truth and steadfastness: unto him do I depart, knowing that the time is fulfilled, and the day appointed hath drawn near for me to go and receive my recompense from my Lord and God: for my recompenser is righteous, who knoweth me, how I ought to receive my reward; for he is not grudging nor envious, but is rich in his gifts, he is not a lover of craft (OT sparing) in that he giveth, for he hath confidence in his possessions which cannot fail.

160 I am not Jesus, but I am his servant: I am not Christ, but I am his minister; I am not the Son of God, but I pray to become worthy of God. Continue ye in the faith of Christ: continue in the hope of the Son of God: faint not at affliction, neither be divided in mind if ye see me mocked or that I am shut up in prison [OR Syr. die,]; for I do accomplish his will. For if I had willed not to die, I know in Christ that I am able thereto: but this which is called death, is not death, but a setting free from the body; wherefore I receive gladly this setting free from the body, that I may depart and see him that is beautiful and full of mercy, him that is to be loved: for I have endured much toil in his service, and have laboured

for his grace that is come upon me, which departeth not from me. Let not Satan, then, enter you by stealth and catch away your thoughts: let there be in you no place for him: for he is mighty whom ye have received. Look for the coming of Christ, for he shall come and receive you, and this is he whom ye shall see when he cometh.

161 When the apostle had ended these sayings, they went into the house, and the apostle Thomas said: Saviour that didst suffer many things for us, let these doors be as they were and let seals be set on them. And he left them and went to be imprisoned: and they wept and were in heaviness, for they knew that Misdaeus would slay him (not knowing that, M. would release him, P.).

162 And the apostle found the keepers wrangling and saying: Wherein have we sinned against this wizard? for by his art magic he hath opened the doors and would have had all the prisoners escape: but let us go and report it unto the king, and tell him concerning his wife and his son. And as they disputed thus, Thomas held his peace. They rose up early, therefore, and went unto the king and said unto him: Our lord and king, do thou take away that sorcerer and cause him to be shut up elsewhere, for we are not able to keep him; for except thy good fortune had kept the prison, all the condemned persons would have escaped for now this second time have we found the doors open: and also thy wife, O king, and thy son and the rest depart not from him. And the king, hearing that, went, and found the seals that were set on the doors whole; and he took note of the doors also, and

said to the keepers: Wherefore lie ye? for the seals are whole. How said ye that Tertia and Mygdonia come unto him into the prison? And the keepers said: We have told thee the truth.

163 And Misdaeus went to the prison and took his seat, and sent for the apostle Thomas and stripped him (and girded him with a girdle) and set him before him and saith unto him: Art thou bond or free? Thomas said: I am the bondsman of one only, over whom thou hast no authority. And Misdaeus saith to him: How didst thou run away and come into this country? And Thomas said: I was sold hither by my master, that I might save many, and by thy hands depart out of this world. And Misdaeus said: Who is thy lord? and what is his name? and of what country is he? And Thomas said: My Lord is thy master and he is Lord of heaven and earth. And Misdaeus saith: What is his name? Thomas saith: Thou canst not hear his true name at this time: but the name that was given unto him is Jesus Christ. And Misdaeus saith unto him: I have not made haste to destroy thee, but have had long patience with thee: but thou hast added unto thine evil deeds, and thy sorceries are dispersed abroad and heard of throughout all the country: but this I do that thy sorceries may depart with thee, and our land be cleansed from them. Thomas saith unto him; These sorceries depart [NOT, Syr.] with me when I set forth hence, and know thou this that I [THEY, Syr.] shall never forsake them that are here.

164 When the apostle had said these things, Misdaeus considered how he should put him to death; for he was afraid

because of the much people that were subject unto him, for many also of the nobles and of them that were in authority believed on him. He took him therefore and went forth out of the city; and armed soldiers also went with him. And the people supposed that the king desired to learn somewhat of him, and they stood still and gave heed. And when they had walked one mile, he delivered him unto four soldiers and an officer, and commanded them to take him into the mountain and there pierce him with spears and put an end to him, and return again to the city. And saying thus unto the soldiers, he himself also returned unto the city.

165 But the men ran after Thomas, desiring to deliver him from death. And two soldiers went at the right hand of the apostle and two on his left, holding spears, and the officer held his hand and supported him. And the apostle Thomas said: O the hidden mysteries which even until our departure are accomplished in us! O riches of his glory, who will not suffer us to be swallowed up in this passion of the body! Four are they that cast me down, for of four am I made; and one is he that draweth me, for of one I am, and unto him I go. And this I now understand, that my Lord and God Jesus Christ being of one was pierced by one, but I, which am of four, am pierced by four.

166 And being come up into the mountain unto the place where he was to be slain, he said unto them that held him, and to the rest: Brethren, hearken unto me now at the last; for I am come to my departure out of the body. Let not then the eyes of your heart be blinded, nor your ears be made

deaf. Believe on the God whom I preach, and be not guides unto yourselves in the hardness of your heart, but walk in all your liberty, and in the glory that is toward men, and the life that is toward God.

167 And he said unto Iuzanes: Thou son (to the son, P) of the (earthly) king Misdaeus and minister (to the minister) of our Lord Jesus Christ: give unto the servants of Misdaeus their price that they may suffer me to go and pray. And Iuzanes persuaded the soldiers to let him pray. And the blessed Thomas went to pray, and kneeled down, and rose up and stretched forth his hands unto heaven, and spake thus:

[Here P and the rest give - rightly - the prayer of cc. 144-8. U and its companions give the following: He turned to his prayer; and it was this: My Lord and my God, and hope and redeemer and leader and guide in all countries, be thou with all them that serve thee, and guide me this day as I come unto thee. Let not any take my soul which I have committed unto thee: let not the publicans see me, and let not the exactors accuse me falsely (play the sycophant with me). Let not the serpent see me, and let not the children of the dragon hiss at me. Behold, Lord, I have accomplished thy work and perfected thy commandment. I have become a bondman; therefore to-day do I receive freedom. Do thou therefore give me this and perfect me: and this I say, not for that I doubt, but that they may hear for whom it is needful to hear.]

168 And when he had thus prayed he said unto the soldiers: Come hither and accomplish the commandments of him that sent you. And the four came and pierced him with their spears, and he fell down and died.

And all the brethren wept; and they brought beautiful robes and much and fair linen, and buried him in a royal sepulchre wherein the former (first) kings were laid.

169 But Siphor and Iuzanes would not go down to the city, but continued sitting by him all the day. And the apostle Thomas appeared unto them and said: Why sit ye here and keep watch over me? I am not here, but I have gone up and received all that I was promised. But rise up and go down hence; for after a little time ye also shall be gathered unto me.

But Misdaeus and Charisius took away Mygdonia and Tertia and afflicted them sorely: howbeit they consented not unto their will. And the apostle appeared unto them and said: Be not deceived: Jesus the holy, the living one, shall quickly send help unto you. And Misdaeus and Charisius, when they perceived that Mygdonia and Tertia obeyed them not, suffered them to live according to their own desire.

And the brethren gathered together and rejoiced in the grace of the Holy Ghost: now the apostle Thomas when he departed out of the world made Siphor a presbyter and Iuzanes a deacon, when he went up into the mountain to die. And the Lord wrought with them, and many were added unto the faith.

170 Now it came to pass after a long time that one of the children of Misdaeus the king was smitten by a devil, and no man could cure him, for the devil was exceeding fierce. And Misdaeus the king took thought and sad: I will go and open the sepulchre, and take a bone of the apostle of God and hang it upon my son and he shall be healed. But while Misdaeus thought upon this, the apostle Thomas appeared to him and said unto him: Thou believedst not on a living man, and wilt thou believe on the dead? yet fear not, for my Lord Jesus Christ hath compassion on thee and pitieth thee of his goodness.

And he went and opened the sepulchre, but found not the apostle there, for one of the brethren had stolen him away and taken him unto Mesopotamia; but from that place where the bones of the apostle had lain Misdaeus took dust and put it about his son's neck, saying: I believe on thee, Jesu Christ, now that he hath left me which troubleth men and opposeth them lest they should see thee. And when he had hung it upon his son, the lad became whole.

Misdaeus the king therefore was also gathered among the brethren, and bowed his head under the hands of Siphor the priest; and Siphor said unto the brethren: Pray ye for Misdaeus the king, that he may obtain mercy of Jesus Christ, and that he may no more remember evil against him. They all therefore, with one accord rejoicing, made prayer for him; and the Lord that loveth men, the King of Kings and Lord of lords, granted Misdaeus also to have hope in him; and he was gathered with the multitude of them that had believed

in Christ, glorifying the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, whose is power and adoration, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

[U (and Syr.) ends: The acts of Judas Thomas the apostle are completed, which he did in India, fulfilling the commandment of him that sent him. Unto whom be glory, world without end. Amen.]

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THE END



REV. FR. PANCRAS M. RAJA

**NEW DISCOVERY:
THE FIRST MISSION OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE
IN INDIA FROM A.D. 33 TO 46**

The author Rev. Fr. Pancras M. Raja is a Catholic priest of Tuticorin Diocese, India and Director of “The Society of Reparation” promoting the Fatima Message, Devotion of Reparation and Total Consecration to The Immaculate Heart of Mary. Presently Rev. Fr. Pancras M. Raja is Spiritual Director in a traditional Catholic Seminary of Our Lady of Mount Carmel at Boston, Kentucky, USA. The book reveals the unknown history of the apostolic activities of Saint Thomas the Apostle in his first mission from 33 A.D. to 46 A.D. by tracing out the regions and people who first embraced Christianity in India and beyond, owing to the preaching and miracles of St. Thomas the Apostle proclaiming “My Lord and My God”.

CONTACT PERSON

Fr. Pancras M. Raja,
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Seminary,
1730 North Stillwell Road,
Boston,
Kentucky - 40107
United States of America,

CONTACT PLACE

Room No. 4, Hermitage of Reparation,
43. St. Francis Xavier Home for Priests,
Innaciarpuram,
Tuticorin,
Tamilnadu - 628 002,
India.

Mobile Phone/Whats App : +I 502 630 9446
Email : pancrasraja@gmail.com

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Rev. Fr. Pancras M. Raja



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