

## THE URBANIZATION OF KOLLAM AND THE ROLE DIFFERENT TRADING COMMUNITIES

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Kollam was a major port of South India which appears in the international trade map by the ninth century. The geographical features of the region played a major role in its development as a major maritime trading centre. The presence of mud banks along the shores of Kollam rendered safe anchorage of ships. The port occupied a significant place in the long distance trade of India. Different trading communities such as Arabs, Jews and Christians etc. were participants of this long distance trade. Marco Polo testifies to the presence of trading communities of Jews and Christians at Kollam.<sup>lxiii</sup> Because of its geographical features trading communities from different parts of the world attracted to this region and settled here. Moreover the abundance of spices of Kollam attracted the foreigners to this port city. Chinese, Portuguese and Dutch came here for trade and became a part of the city. The Indian Ocean was an area of social and cultural diversity. The commercial expansion of Muslim merchants and traders across the Indian Ocean to South Asia and China is recorded by several scholars. Arab achievements made it possible to unite two arteries of long distance trade between Indian Ocean and Mediterranean.<sup>lxiii</sup>

Different religious communities and groups settled in Kerala and Kollam was not an exemption in this regard. The local people mainly Hindus accepted these trading communities and sailors of other nationalities. Thus the Arabs came and settled here and there was a reciprocal relationship between the local Hindus and Arabs, who were settled here and they followed a non-aggressive policy.<sup>lxiii</sup> It is significant that the Muslim merchants of Kerala formed an important group that operated within the orbit of a World System encompassing the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean. The commodities involved in the Indian

Ocean trade may be divided into various broad categories. They can be divided into the categories such as aromatics, medicines, dyes and spices; foodstuffs, wood and textiles; gems and ornaments; metals and plant and animal products.<sup>lxiii</sup>

The development of Islam in the seventh century, gave a great fillip to Arab trade with different countries. They in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries made several descents upon the coasts of Gujarat, the Gulf of Cambay and Malabar.<sup>lxiii</sup> The consolidation of political authority and establishment of peace and order during the Abbasid period stimulated travel and trade. The patronage given by Abbasid caliphate helped for the flourishing of art, industry and trade in Islamic cities.<sup>lxiii</sup> Baghdad was visited by traders from different countries of the world and this contacts helped for the exchange of ideas and technologies.

The Arab works mentioned about the port city of Kollam as an important port where the Arab merchants used to halt on their way Southeast Asia. Tharisappalli Copper Plates show the relationship of Kollam with Persia.<sup>lxiii</sup> The inscriptional record of the merchant group in Pahlavi by name is of great value. The signatures in Pahlavi are appended to the grant of the ruler of Kollam, Sthanu Ravi indicate the commercial relations of Kollam with Persia. Evidences mention of trading stations and commodities of trade with Kerala and Arabs during ninth century.<sup>lxiii</sup> The ports of Persian Gulf had maintained predominance in the commerce of the Arabian Sea. A number of ships had sailed from Bassora and Hormuz to Kollam and Colombo.<sup>lxiii</sup> The Arab geographer Al-Kazwini described Kollam, as one with magnificent markets and wealthy traders.<sup>lxiii</sup> From Sulyman's account it becomes clear that one month's sail from Muscat brought the ships to Kollam, and it was the major port of South India at that time. Sulyman started for India from the Persian Gulf, Sailing with the monsoon.<sup>lxiii</sup>

By ninth century, the maritime trade developed with al Basrah as the starting point, and Canton in China as the terminal point. This trade route helped the emergence of Kollam or Kulam Malay as the main halt in Kerala for the Arab sea men who had to break their

voyages for want of favorable monsoon and change of shipping.<sup>lxiii</sup> The merchants of this route used to spend an average of two weeks trading at Kollam, as they waited for a favorable monsoon for their journey to China. The dhows that started from Persian Gulf took 30 days to reach Kollam and another 30 days to reach Qeda in Malaya and another 30 days to reach Canton.<sup>lxiii</sup> These repeated commercial voyages of the Abbassid merchants, resulted in the settlement of a Muslim trading community in Kollam. The caste rigid society of Kerala left all the trading activities mainly to the Jews, Muslims and Christians.

Ibn Battuta writes that 'the Muslims are the people who are most respected in Malabar, but the natives do not eat with them and don't allow them to enter their houses'. On the one hand the Mappilas were a major group that enriched the trade relationship of Kerala with the Middle East. But on the other hand, the ritualized barrier of caste segregated the Muslims from the social life of the Hindus.<sup>lxiii</sup>

There was a wide variety of merchant groups in Kerala, which were engaged in different types of exchange activities ranging from the highly organized long distance commerce to simple peddling trade. Because of the upper caste aversion against the maritime trading activities the foreign communities which were settled here took the role of the 'merchants of the sea'. That role seems to have been taken over by the Anjuvannam and Manigramam guilds under the direction of Jews and Christians. Especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries the hostility against Buddhism and Jainism shows itself to have become marked and the role of the Jews appears to have become correspondingly more dominant.<sup>lxiii</sup>

The Jewish traders were began to develop as a major trading community of Kollam. They had developed their own navigational lines to take pepper, ginger, brazil-wood and cardamom from the ports of Malabar from as early as 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as testified by the Jewish letters of Cairo Genizza.<sup>lxiii</sup> The Genizza<sup>lxiii</sup> letters contain valuable information about the commercial methods and activities of the Jews and these trading community of Jews conducted business by linking the networks of Diaspora which helped for the development

of a wide commercial network of their own.<sup>lxiii</sup> The ports of Konakan and Goa had trade relations with Kollam as is testified by the Jewish letters of Cairo Genizza.<sup>lxiii</sup>

The earliest Jewish settlements in Kerala were in port cities like Kozhikode, Kodungallur and Kollam.<sup>lxiii</sup> Another important Jewish settlement was the port of Flandarina also known as Fandarayana, the present Panthalayani Kollam. It is evident from Tharisappalli Copper Plates that they had their guild of Anjuvannam at Kollam. The leader of Anjuvannam of Shingly, during the tenth century was Joseph Rabban. He was provided with certain privileges by Bhaskara Ravi Varma. This Royal Deed is the most precious historical document related to the history of the Jews of Kerala. Copper Plate grants of King Bhaskara Ravi Varman were in the hands of the White Jews of Cochin.<sup>lxiii</sup>

The Jewish sources reveal the import of Copper and allied metals and the export of iron from the ports of Malabar. They maintained proper record system, kept accounts and prices were fixed after taking into account freight charges.<sup>lxiii</sup> By ninth century more Jewish traders began to settle in the different port cities of Kerala. With the coming of Jewish traders from West Asia and the Mediterranean world, the society witnessed differentiation within this mercantile community. Gradually the community has been divided into Black Jews or the earliest Jewish settlers in Malabar and White Jews or the Paradesi Jews. The Paradesi Jews are those who reached Malabar following the Jewish and Arab commercial expansion of the ninth century. There are synagogues of the Black Jews and White Jews at Mattanchery in Cochin.<sup>lxiii</sup> Barbosa attested the presence of White Jews and Black Jews in Aden.<sup>lxiii</sup> Aden is one of the major ports in Indian Ocean.

There were considerable steps from the Chera rulers to encourage the trading activities of foreign and local merchants and most of the trading activities of Kerala were organized by the Ceras and their feudatories.<sup>lxiii</sup> At that time the Colas also tried to expand their commercial network and because of this the Ceras made several attempts for countering the commercial and political expansionist moves of the later Colas. Various inscriptional sources of Cola times suggest that there was serious trading activities in the South Indian

hinterland and that well organized commercial networks supplied the commodities demanded by the foreign traders.<sup>lxiii</sup> The Cola rulers tried to monopolize the trading activities of South East Asia by controlling exchange centres of Ceylon, Coromandal Coast and the Sailendras. At the same time the Cera rulers and their feudatories made increasing use of Anjuvannam and Manigramam merchant guilds of Kerala. These merchant guilds had wide commercial networks which connecting the ports of Persian Gulf and Red Sea. It is worth noting that the Cera rulers had mobilized the maritime trade of Kerala mainly through the port of Kollam.

The Ceras and Colas are remained as the main political powers of Kerala and there were conflicts between them to ensure their political and commercial supremacy in Kerala. The Cera- Cola conflicts also were used by the foreign merchant communities, many foreign merchants wanted to keep themselves closer to Cera rulers by donating liberally for meeting the expenses incurred in war. They found this tactic as an easy way of keeping the merchant communities acceptable to the ruler. Such a linkage was thought to ensure enormous amount of commercial privileges to them in return. A development of this nature is inferred from the commercial privileges conferred by the king Rajasimhan on the local Christian traders like Chathan Vadukan and Iravi Chathan. It is worth noting that according to Thazhekkadu inscription they were members of the *Manigramam* merchant guild.<sup>lxiii</sup>

Against the background of political support, some of the Jewish traders operating from Fatimid Egypt Egypt, but in collaboration with the Jews of Kerala had developed extensive commercial networks linking the west coast of India with the eastern Mediterranean. There are references about the Jewish merchant Mahruz b.Jacob, who conducted trade with the ports of Konkan, Malabar and Egypt. Records say that he was a ship owning merchant with extensive trade relations. Ibn Battuta records about the Jews who had their own members as their governors.<sup>lxiii</sup> The Jewish traders who expanded their commerce along with the Arabs, either from Abbasid Persia or Fatimid Egypt. These Jewish

trading community ensured their economic positions by matrimonial alliances and well established family bonds.<sup>lxiii</sup>

The Jews who settled along the west coast of India must have been the intermediaries in the Jewish trade between Malabar and the west. The trading centres of Kerala such as Kodungallur, Kollam, Panthalayani-Kollam, Matayi, Mala, Angamali, Chennamangalam and Cochin had scattered Jewish settlements. The Hebrew signature in Tharisappally Copper Plate indicates their relation with Kollam. The merchant guild Anjuvannam is considered as the trading group of Jews. During the period of Bhaskara Ravi, the Jewish leader Joseph Rabban was the major among the traders of Kodungallur. Kodungallur was the hub of the trading activities of the Jews. Certain place names of Kerala reveal the importance of Jews in Kerala society. Mattancherry Jews Street, thus reveals the importance of Jewish community in Kerala society. Another interesting thing is that there is a pond at Methala in Kodungallur known as "Juthakkulam".<sup>lxiii</sup> The travel accounts of Benjamin of Tudela talks about the Jews who were dispersed throughout the different countries of the world. The travel accounts provide ample information about Genizza papers and the role of Jews in the conduct of commerce through their international trade network.

The Jewish traders expanded their commerce along with the Arabs, and they played a major role in the long distance trade of Kollam. They expanded their trade either from Abbasid Persia or Fatimid Egypt and played the role of intermediaries in the trade of Kollam. Malibarath (Kulam Mali) is referred in the letter of Jewish merchant Mahruz b. Jacob as one of the important centre of Jewish trade. Another Jewish merchant is Allam b. Hassan, he travelled from Aden to Chandrapura to sell storax and coral. He collected these items from Mediterranean ports and after having carried out trading transactions in the port of Chandrapura, he travelled to Malabar. The benefits of this trade relations were enjoyed by the ports of Bhatkal and Kollam and it is very important that the port of Kollam had trade relations with Abbasid traders. These trade relations resulted in the urbanization processes of Kollam and the port became one of the major medieval port city.

The celebrated travelers like Marco Polo record the trade relations of Kollam also touch the socio-cultural aspects of the port city. According to Marco Polo the people of Kollam were idolaters and there are some Christians and Jews.<sup>lxiii</sup> He referred about the brazil wood of Kollam and this was supported by Friar Odoric by the statement that they burned brazil-wood for fuel. Odoric, in his travel accounts, wrote about the pepper of Polumbum (Kollam).

The brazil-wood of Kollam appears in the commercial handbook of Pegolotti as *VerzinoColombino*, and under the same name in that of Giov. D'Uzzano. Pegolotti refers three kinds of brazil-wood as *Colomni*, *Ameri* and *Seni*. Among this *Colomni* was worth a sixth more than the *Ameri* and three times as much as *Seni*. It is said that *Ameri* may stand for *Lameri* referring to *Lambri* in Sumatra; *Seni* may indicate *Sini* or Chinese, indicating an article brought to India by the Chinese traders, probably from Siam.<sup>lxiii</sup>

Marco Polo describes the products exported from the town of Kollam and brazil-wood is one of the major items among them. Kollam was known for its fine indigo also, which attracted many traders to Kollam. Benjamin of Tudela gives an account of the nature of trade at Kollam and its inhabitants. He recorded the presence of Jews in the city of Kollam and shares the view that they were good men and observers of law.<sup>lxiii</sup>

The letters of Jewish traders give a clear picture of commerce between South India, Red Sea ports and Egypt in the eleventh century and first half of the twelfth century. During this period varieties of commodities were exchanged and iron and steel were the most important items of exchange. Indian cotton textiles and silk, pearls, beads, ambergris, brass and bronze vessels, Chinese porcelain, African ivory, coconuts, timber, spices, dyes, medicines, aromatics, and leather goods etc. were the commodities imported by Jewish merchants from India. During the medieval period the urbanization processes of Kerala began to develop along with the development of port cities. As a result of the rise of towns and cities and due to further increase in population, demand for commodities began to increase and cities of medieval Kerala also began to enlarge into international trading

centres. Among such cities, Kollam occupied a prominent position as it was the cradle of transmarine contacts. Kollam shares fame with Kodungallur as a sea port on the Malabar Coast of India from early centuries of the Common Era.

In the urbanization processes of Kollam, Christians and their trade network played a considerable role. The Christian merchants, particularly in the Persian Gulf region, began to move to the safe commercial zones. It is during this time, Mar Sapor and Mar Prodh seem to have reached Kerala. It was an important commercial destination for the Christian merchants from Sassanid Persia. When these two eminent merchants Mar Sapor and Mar Prodh came to Kollam, they carried along with them an extensive network of commerce that the Sassanid merchants developed over centuries and they made use of these trade relationships to develop their commercial network in the land of Kollam.

Mar Sapor and Mar Prodh came and settled at Kollam gradually became a part of the socio-economic life of the region. They had carried out trade for 26 years in Kollam and it was after this long gap, Mar Sapor managed to obtain a set of commercial privileges from the local ruler Ayyanadikal Thiruvadikal(849 A.D) legitimizing the claim of the Tharisappally over overseas trade as well as control over the weights and measures of the city, besides bagging several tax collecting rights over the diverse settlers coming under this church, by way of the grant.<sup>lxiii</sup> As a part of this historical grant important privileges were given to the church and the most important among them was the right to keep 'parakkol', 'pancakandy', 'kappan',<sup>lxiii</sup> different types of weights and measures, of the city of Kollam under its custody. It is very interesting that this privilege was held by them till 1503. And after that, these privileges were taken away from them following the malpractices were done with them by some of its trading members. This shows the importance of Tharisappally and its role played in the socio –economic history of medieval Kollam. Tharisappally was not mere a centre of worship, but represented a corporate body of traders that ensured standardization of the weights and measures of the city and maintained the integrity of trade. Save tax shall not be imposed on the slaves bought by the church.<sup>lxiii</sup>

It is very interesting that these gifts and privileges were given to the trading community and church after 26 years from the time of the arrival of Mar Sapor Iso. It shows that these privileges were granted by the ruling authority not at the first sight. But the observed and tested the utility of the recipients, of both the church and the immigrant Christian merchant community in the process of resource mobilization. These commercial privileges shows the reciprocity between the ruling authority and trading community, when the trading group was granted certain privileges, the trade surplus began to flow into the coffers of the ruler as Kopathavaram (share of the King Sthanu Ravi Varma) and Pathipathavaram (share of the local ruler –Ayyanadikal). Actually this reciprocal relationship ensured the position of the trading community in the land of Kollam and the trading activities of this merchant community around the Tharisappally fueled the urbanization process of maritime Kollam.

The Tharisappally Copper Plates of Kollam, refer to the transfer of families to the church of Tharisa. Four families of Ilavar, with four females and eight males making a total of twelve persons, and one family of Vannar, were made over to the church in the fifth regnal year of Sthanu Ravi.<sup>lxiii</sup> The church was handed over certain rights by the governor, the right to collect a wide variety of taxes from them, which Ayyanadikal used to levy earlier like *thalaikkanam* and *enikkanam* (professional taxes from toddy tapers and tree climbers). The other important taxes among them were *mania meypan kollum ira* (housing tax), *chantan mattu meni ponnu* (tax for using the title chantan or channan to show his high social status), *polipponnum* (tax given on special occasions). Certain taxes show the social practices, for example *iravuchorum* or balikaram is the tax collected to feed the Brahmins, refugees and destitutes. Another important tax is *kudanazhiyum*(collection of a nazhi- a type of liquid measurement) which meant collection of toddy as tax from each pot tapped.

Moreover the churchmen might collect eight *kasu* from each cart (vayinam) that used to take merchandise by land into the market of Kollam and four *kasu* from each boat that was used to carry cargo to the port (vediyilum).<sup>lxiii</sup> Ilavar also enjoyed certain rights, they were

permitted to bring their vehicles to the bazaar and to conduct their business.<sup>lxiii</sup> Another group which permitted to do their work in bazaar was Vannan. These gifts and privileges were given to strengthen and empower the mercantile Christian community that in turn would emerge as a sufficiently capable agent for mobilizing resources for trade and for bringing wealth to empower the state.

Mar Sapir Iso was described as the founder of the Nagaram, Kollam.<sup>lxiii</sup> The port city of Kollam was there even before and it was the possibilities of trade that attracted most of the foreign groups to that place. But the port city of Kollam began to develop 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards, it was the time of the arrival of Mar Sapir Iso. But the trading organizations of Sapir helped very much for the development of Kollam. It was the trading networks of Sassanid tradition that carried along with the immigrant Christian merchants helped for the urbanization process of Kollam. When the ruling authorities founded a new township the usual practice was to invite some traders and skilled workers, and by giving them attractive terms and special privileges, invite them to settle down in the new place. In the case of Kollam also, the ruler welcomed the foreigners and granted his petition permitting him to settle down at the new port city.<sup>lxiii</sup>

The Cera king tried for the commercial prosperity and gave patronage to the Syrian Christians. This policy of the ruler shows the practical wisdom of the ruler which helped for the socio-economic and cultural development of Kollam. The rulers had to depend on the foreign and domestic merchants to meet the diverse needs of the state and customs collection ensured the economic stability of the state. The commercial privileges and other facilities given to the Christian traders, is to be viewed as an attempt against the development of Buddhism and Jainism. The social background of Kollam shows that the Brahmins had certain problems with these two religions. Empowering Christian traders was an alternative device to weaken the trade of Buddhists and Jains as it was the surplus from their trade that held the ideology of both religions in a hegemonic position.<sup>lxiii</sup>

Buddhism had great influence in Venad, Al kazwini and Al Biruni record the presence of Buddhists in Kollam. Buddha images were discovered from Pallikkal, it was seated on the bank of a tank locally known by the name of Pallikkal-kulam. Marudukulangara in the Karunagappally taluk of Kollam was another centre of Buddhism. Srimulavasam Buddhist temple was granted landed property by Vikramaditya Varaguna of 9<sup>th</sup> century. There were also Jain centres like Chitalar. When Buddhism and Jainism began to develop as major religious sects in the land of Kollam Brahmins turned against them.

The immigrant Christian traders were involved mainly in the urbanization process of their settlements, and Kurakkeni Kollam experienced such an urbanization process as a result of their contact with this trading community. Sassanid Persia was famous for urban culture and its emigrants used to carry elements of urban culture wherever they went. According to Pius Malekandathil the culture of clustered living and trading activities, symbolized by 'angadis' started appearing in Kerala with the advent of immigrant Christian merchants from West Asia. It is important that most of these 'angadis' were located around churches and gradually these 'angadis' became the centre of urban development. When the maritime trading activities of Kollam became strong the market centres also began to develop, gradually it resulted in the development of town with the clustering of people.

The Ilavar settled on church land were toddy-tappers as *talaikkanam* and *enikkanam* (fetter fee and ladder fee) are mentioned in connection with them. Their right to bring the wagon to the bazaar and the fort is also mentioned. The Vannars were probably carrying on the traditional occupation of washerman. They also practiced tailors' art and their womenfolk were midwives in the rural society. The Thachar were carpenters and Vellalar were cultivators of the soil. The second charter of the Tharisappally Copper Plates contained the reference to Vaniyar (oil mongers) and these Vaniyars supplied oil for the use of the church, Tharisappally. The Vellalar must have cultivated paddy in the compound, and the Vaniyar, Vannar and Thachar must have supplied the skilled labour in the respective fields to the churchmen.

The church was provided certain privileges and judicial powers with respect of the settlers. Revenue and judicial authority, the essential attributes of government, were passed on to the church. It is very important to note that the church was to exercise judicial power over the settlers and also to collect birth tax and marriage tax from them. The merchant guilds like Anjuvannam and Manigramam had the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the church and church property.<sup>lxiii</sup> The Arunurruvar, the organization of 'the Six Hundred' - forming the standing army of the governor, also shared these responsibilities along with merchant guilds like Anjuvannam and Manigramam.

Later, the emergence of the temple to the pivotal position by organizing contemporary economic activities of the hinterland affected the exchange pattern. Reciprocity of goods and services, the temple centred redistribution and the characteristic localization brought into existence a new exchange set up in the hinterland.<sup>lxiii</sup> These changes brought about developments in contemporary commerce too.

Merchants were generally organized in powerful guilds and corporations which often transcended political divisions and were therefore not much affected by the wars and revolutions going on about them.<sup>lxiii</sup> Moreover the most celebrated guilds from fairly early times were the Manigramam and the Nanadesis or Ainnurruvar. It is true that the Ainnurruvar or the five hundred figures prominently in most of the records, about 46 different groups are noticed in association with them at various centres in different contexts.<sup>lxiii</sup>

There were merchants of the home country who were known as swadesabeharulu, merchants of another country or paradesabeharulu, and the merchants from different countries who were known as nanadesis.<sup>lxiii</sup> The Svadesabeharulus were the local merchants organized in local guilds-nagarams and paradesabeharulus were almost like this, but they were from another country. The third group nanadesis were powerful guilds, it included merchants from different countries, with established branches in all of them, and perhaps playing a prominent part in the foreign trade of the country.

Dr. Gundert and Burnell understood Anjuvannam referred to the colony of the Jews and Manigramam to that of Christians. There are references about the merchant guild, Manigramam in Tharisappally Copper Plates. The contents of this inscription indicate that the Manigramam association was undoubtedly a merchant guild. Tharisappally Copper Plates reveals the emergence of manigramam as an administratively autonomous guild and its regional base of operation was Kollam.

The evidence that this corporation of merchants was functioning at this port had a larger pattern of overland and maritime commercial activities. They had trade relations with the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, Sri Lanka, Burma, South East Asia and China. Tharisappally Copper Plates frequently mentioned about Anjuvannam and manigramam. They were to preserve the proceeds of the customs duty as they were collected day by day and to receive the landlord's portion of the rent on the land. If the church has any complaint, the Anjuvannam and Manigramam shall even suspend the payment of tolls, customs duties and sales taxes, and settle the complaint. If the Anjuvannam and Manigramam which are entrusted with the protection of the guild commit any crime, they had the right to settle the issue by themselves.<sup>lxiii</sup>

Moreover Tharisappally Copper Plates have append a list of signatures of witnesses in three languages, in Arabic, using the Kufi flueri script of the ninth to tenth century and in the Pahlavi and Hebrew scripts. In fact the use of the Syriac titles for Maruvan Sapir Iso and the use of Arabic, Pahlavi and Hebrew scripts are confirming the wide commercial connections of Kerala with the Persia. The port of Kollam is frequently mentioned in Arab works as the main halt for Arab seamen. The content of Tharisappally Copper Plates say that the port witnessed a long tradition of maritime trade. The Kollam record is therefore not merely evidence of emigration led by Christians, but is to be seen also the movement of a Christian group with trading interests to a port and this is the trading community which shaped the maritime future of the port.

Tharisappally Copper Plates provide a lot of information on the land grant made to the Tharisappally. The copper plates say that the church had as its boundaries cultivated land on the one side, the sea to the west and north east the land belonging to two local families. Another important thing is that the copper plates indicate a close connection between the Manigramam and the Christian community. During the later period also Manigramakkar were found at places in Kerala such as Kollam, Kayamkulam and Katamattom. It is clear that the fixing of the prices of commodities and every other business of the king should be done only with the help of the people of the church.

The privilege of weighing and the right to the "weighment charges" given to Maruvan Sapir Iso apparently continued to be held by the Syrian Christians for many centuries, but by the time the Portuguese came they no longer held the "seal and standard weight of the city."<sup>lxiii</sup> A well defined infrastructure to deal with overseas trade was existed in Kollam. Warehousing, protection, and the regulation of levies and taxes were prescribed in an agreement made between the foreign merchants and the Manigramam gulid and the king. The Manigramam had developed during this time and it had branches all over South India. According to Thazhekkad inscription two members of the manigramam were exempted from certain specific taxes and they also had the right to set up their ships in the port city. There were separate taxes for the goods coming in by sea.

The contributions made by different trade guilds had been acting as a powerful element in the process of such a development. It was the different trading groups that settled in Kollam made possible the socio-economic development of the port city. Consequently, Arabs, Jews and Christians from different parts of the world became an essential part of the society, economy and culture of Kollam.

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