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SYMPOSIUM ON KNANITES



**CONDUCTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE PLATINUM
JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF THE
DIOCESE OF KOTTAYAM**

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**EDITED BY
DR. JACOB VELLIAN**

PART ONE.

Keynote Address

by

Dr. Jacob Kollapampil

HISTORICAL SOURCES ON KNANITES

HISTORICAL SOURCES ON THE KNANITES

Among the Knanites there is now a noticeable resurgence of interest in the history of their community. Any one trying to study the history of a people must know that history cannot be created, but it can only be reconstructed from existing sources of documents, monuments, and dependable traditions.

What are such sources for the history of the Knanaya Community? The copper-plate inscription of the royal grant of land and privileges to the Knanaya Community was its first written record. Having, however, lost its original, the historian has to depend on a translation of its contents made in the 16th century. No other report regarding the Knanaya Community written prior to the 16th century has come down to us. Like all the Malayalees, the Knanites too did not care to have their ancient histories written down. Instead, they used to transmit the memories of their past from generation to generation by word of mouth or through folk songs sung at weddings and other festivities.

The living traditions of the community and its social customs in practice, however, were rich sources, from which the officials and missionaries of the Portuguese India since the beginning of the sixteenth century carefully drew while writing their reports to the governmental and ecclesiastical authorities in Europe. Some of them actually wrote that their sources were mainly the traditions of the people and their songs. For example Fr. Francis Dionysio, S. J., wrote in 1578, "I knew the things written below on information received from old and trustworthy persons; and in these all are concordant, because they keep these as firm tradition, and as written in books and sung in their songs." Likewise Bishop Francis Rös wrote, "These Christians having no books of ancient histories, but only traditions of the ancients, to which they cling tenaciously we must help ourselves with the chronicles and chronology existing among the Malabar gentios and with reliable conjectures which we find in different 'places of these kingdoms."

Fortunately, many such reports are still preserved in various archives of Europe—in Lisbon, Paris, London, Rome, etc. These writings, in fact, are now the richest source of all for the history of the Church in Malabar, and for that matter also for the history of the Knanaya Community.

The traditions as incorporated in popular songs sung at weddings etc. also are very important sources. Likewise historical accounts written by the natives of Malabar, though not older than two or three centuries, are also very useful, since they give more details of the traditions, which they might have drawn from earlier written accounts on palm-leaves which have since then perished.

The contents of these documents can be conveniently divided into four themes:

- (a) The existence of the St. Thomas Christians in Malabar prior to the arrival of Thomas Cana;
- (b) The arrival of Thomas Cana, the copper-plates grant by Cheraman Perumal and their impact on the Malabar Church;
- (c) The formation of the endogamous community of Knanites and the basis for it;
- (d) The position taken by the Knanaya Community on critical issues pertaining to the Malabar Church in the course of history.

(a) Almost all the authors say that there were Christians in Malabar before the arrival of Thomas Cana, while some, confusing Thomas Cana with St. Thomas, the Apostle, make the question itself superfluous. Some of those who attribute apostolic origin to the Malabar Church say that sometime after the life-time of the Apostle, there was an exodus of Christians from Mailapur who joined the Christian community in this west coast. But others like Dionysio and Monserrate do not mention such emigration from Mailapur. Monserrate exposed two opinions attributing the origin only to St. Thomas the Apostle or only to Thomas Cana. From such traditions he himself concluded that the Church in Malabar had originated from both, i. e. St. Thomas the Apostle and Thomas Cana.

() According to some St. Thomas the Apostle had converted the King of Cranganore and ordained a prince deacon. Thus the Christianity in Malabar had already received royal privileges. According to Gouvea the Christians who came from Mailapur had received some privileges from the then ruler of Cranganor, which were upgraded when Thomas Cana received further privileges. All those who admit the existence of Christians in Malabar prior to the arrival of Thomas Cana, unanimously say that the Church in Malabar had been greatly weakened due to a break in the succession of ecclesial ministers. They were Christians only for name's sake.)

(b) It was in such context that Thomas Cana's arrival, and his influence with the ruler of the place became beneficial to the Church. The early writers present him as a rich and powerful merchant, who received a donation of land and royal privileges from Cheraman Perumal, built a town and Church at Cranganor, and thus gave a respectable position to the Christians in the Society. Dionysio, Monserrate, Gouvea, and Ros do not seem to know about the tradition that there were 72 families with Thomas Cana. Diogo do Couto does speak about the people who had accompanied Thomas Cana with their wives and children, Bishop Ros makes mention of the 72 houses built by Thomas Cana in Cranganor, but then he interprets that fact to corroborate his thesis that there had been Christians in Malabar before the arrival of Thomas Cana. The Malabar tradition as narrated in the ancient songs and in the short history of Fr. Mathew Veticutel and similar accounts hold that 72 families consisting of about 400 people, with a bishop, priests and deacons had accompanied Thomas Cana. The Malabar tradition attributes a pastoral and missionary

goal to the Knanaya immigration. The sad plight of the Malabar Church without ecclesial ministries due to the want of ordained ministers was made known to the Church of Mesopotamia through natural or preter-natural means. The Church authorities made a decision to send a Bishop, with priests, deacons and a group of lay people under the leadership of a resourceful man to help the Malabar Church out of its difficult situation. The European writers speak only of a commercial interest behind Thomas Cana's arrival, who being a good Christian, however, made use of his influence for the benefit of the Church here.

The authors of the reports do not present the name of the hero quite the same way. Penteado spoke of him only as an Armenian merchant without mentioning his name. The Abuna called him Thomas from the land of "Canane". For Dionysio, Monserrate and Campori he was *Quinai Thome*; Bishop Ros and Do Couto named him *Thome Cananeo*; Gouvea and Trindade called him *Thome Cana* or *Mar Thome*. Fr. Mathew, O.C.D., speaks of him as *Chinai Thome, native of Candan*. Dr. Joseph Cariati called him *Knai-Thoma* as the Malabarians popularly call him.

Bishop Ros gives the full text of the copper plate grant, explaining also the context of its granting. Do Couto had shortened the text of the donation to avoid prolixity. Others merely mentioned it, listing some of the privileges and stating how it benefitted the church. From Damiao de Goes we know how the Thomas Cana copper plate grant ended up in the Portugues depot at Cochin, Bishop Ros reported that the Franciscan missionaries had taken the original copper plates to Portugal leaving a copy behind. Do Couto also deplored the disappearance of the copper plates.

As the date of Thomas Cana's arrival Bishop Ros, Fr. Campori, Fr. Mathew Veticutel and the ancient songs give the traditionally held year of A.D. 345. Fr. Dionysio alone puts Thomas Cana's arrival after that of Prodh and Sapot, but some others put it before the arrival of Sapor and Prodh in the eighth century or so.

Monserrate wrote that Thomas Cana procured for the Bishops to come from Babylon, whom the people held in great esteem and respect because they had come from the land of their ancestors via Jerusalem and spoke Syriac, the language spoken in Jerusalem.

All the writes agree on one point: the arrival of Thomas Cana was a turning point in the history of the Malabar Church, for it brought material and spiritual progress to the Christian Community, while Christians in places like Todamala and Travancore got lost in the non-Christian Society.

(c) With regard to the division of the St. Thomas Christians into Knanaya and non-Knanaya or Thekumbhagam and Vadakumbhagam, all the writers constantly trace it back to the arrival of Thomas Cana. In assigning a cause for the division, however, there is controversy, because questions of nobility and caste are involved in the matter.

Penteado seems to allude to this division when he speaks of a quarrel between two

sons of the Armenian merchant who had received privileges and honours for the Church of Cranganor. Monserrate is perhaps the first one among the Western missionaries who took cognizance of this division among the St. Thomas Christians and put it down in black and white on paper. He first gives an explanation of the division according to those who attribute the origin of the Church in Malabar to Quinai Thome only, i. e., Quinai Thome had children from two wives, one free and the other a slave, but both of noble birth. According to that theory the division must have been between the descendants of these two lineages. But Monserrate does not agree to that theory. According to him the division was not because the two groups had descended from the two wives of Quinai Thome. The Church in Malabar, he believes, descended from the disciples of St. Thomas the Apostle as well as the descendants of Quinai Thome. Quinai Thome had found Christians in Parur, Cranganor and Quilon who had descended from the disciples of St. Thomas the Apostle. These Christians had by then only the name of Christians. He assembled, and baptized a great number of them, and filled them with notions of caste. In this context we may understand better his assertion that *by the lie of the land*, the Malabar Christians numbering about 70,000 had been reduced to these two tribes, and that there had been among them petty quarrels about caste, not only from their being descended from the two wives of Quinai Thome but also for their having lived some on the South side, and others on the North side. Here he seems to say that the descendants of the St. Thomas' disciples lived on the North side, and the descendants of Quinai Thome (and of those who had come with him) lived on the South side in Cranganor and from them originated the two distinct groups known as Northists and Southists.

Later writers such as Gouvea, Campori, Trindade, Sebastiani and others, without considering the fact that there were descendants of those who had been converted by St. Thomas the Apostle, explained off the two groups as the descendants from the alleged two wives (or a wife and a concubine) of Thomas Cana. As questions of honour and nobility were involved between the legitimate and illegitimate lines such explanations and imputations were naturally odious.

The earlier writers presenting such fantastic stories identified the smaller group, i. e., the Knanites as the descendants of the legitimate children of Thomas Cana. After stating the same Sebastiani added, "although the Vadakumbhagam defends just the contrary, placing themselves as the true and legitimate children". Fr. Mathew, O. C. D.'s version in the *Sloane MS* is different from these explanations. According to him the Cheraman Perumal had given a woman of Mainatto caste to Chinai Thome as interpreter and cook; Chinai Thome instructed the sons of that woman in the Christian faith and they became the authors and founders of the Southist group!

Bishop Ros, who strongly defended the existence of Christians in Malabar before Thome Cananeo explained the two groups as, one descending from the converts of St. Thomas the Apostle, who were more numerous and, the other descending from Thome Cananeo. The quarrel between them started when the descendants of Thome Cananeo wanted to subject some of the other groups as slaves. Without forgetting their antiquities

and fables in this matter, Ros says, these groups were keeping aversion against each other, as well as having discord and disputes among them. Rev. Dr. Mathias Mundadan, C. M. I., after mentioning Northists' and Southists' versions of such stories concludes thus, "Other details of each version and the reciprocal imputations as legitimate and illegitimate children of Thomas Cana might have been invented to express the odium and hatred each community bore against the other". (Of. *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St. Thomas Christians*, Bangalore, 1970, p. 97 foot No. 35).

The endogamous character of the Knanites is made clear in many of the reports. Ros says, "The descendants of Thome Cananeo always remained above them without wishing to marry or mix with these other Christians, and so up to the present there are among them two lineages". That these two groups had no intermarriage, is testified to by Gouvea, Campori, Trindade, Sebastiani, Fr. Mathew O. C. D., and Cariati. About this Dr. Joseph Cariati's remark was, "Although both of them are of the same honour and esteem with the Kings and other people, between them, however, the nobles do not contract marriages; because each one claimed to be nobler than the other, this being an invention of the devil to greatly weaken this people."

The Knanites and the non-Knanites had separate Churches in one and the same villages. Each group had ecclesial services from priests belonging to ones own group. Gouvea says that Archbishop Meneses tried to integrate these two groups by bringing them under one parish where the total number of the faithful did not require two churches. However, that effort did not succeed as Sebastiani has specially noted in his report. The quarrel and blood-shed that happened in Diamper and Kandanad in 1603 must have been the aftermath of uniting the two parishes there, one belonging to the Southists and the other to the Northists.

The main Churches of the Knanites in the sixteenth century were Cranganor (till it was burned down in 1524), Diamper, Kaduthuruthy, Kottayam, Kaliissery and Chunkom (Thodupuzha). Uzhavoor was founded in the seventeenth century. There were other churches in which the Knanites had equal or better rights with the non-Knanites of the place and as such, Fr. Hyacinth de Magistris, S. J. mentions, the churches at Chembil, Piravam, Palai, Tripunithura, Cherpungal, Changanacherry and Kanjirappally.

(d) The historical sources show that there was a kind of steady stream-line for the Knanaya Community's outlook and action in the course of history. The Community has been always loyal and obedient to the rightful ecclesial heads. Upto the end of the sixteenth century they were governed by Metropolitans sent by the Chaldean Catholicos or Patriarch. The fact that the Metropolitans had come from Mesopotamia, the homeland of their ancestors was an added reason for the Knanites to hold those ecclesial heads in great esteem and reverence, as is testified to by Monserrate. The Chaldean Metropolitans used to reside in Cranganor, which was, so to say, the capital town of the Knanites. Even after they dispersed to other centres such as Diamper, Kaduthuruthy, Kottayam, etc., the Knanites have been supportive of the Chaldean Metropolitans. For example, when Mar Abraham arrived in Malabar for the first time in 1556, the Knanites of Diamper, Kaduthuruthy and Kottayam did even risk their lives and possessions to defend him against the local Kings, who influenced by the Portuguese, were trying to take Mar Abraham under custody. After the death of Mar Abraham, when Archbishop Aleixo de Meneses presented himself convincingly as the rightful Prelate over the Malabar Church with orders from the Supreme Pontiff, the first community that accepted him was the Knanites at Kaduthuruthy, Diamper etc. At that time Archdeacon George of the Cross was still refusing to recognize Donf Meneses,

although he too did accept him later. For good or bad, this was a pivotal change in the history of the Malabar Church.

Once the Padroado jurisdiction was imposed on the Malabar Church by the Holy See, the Knanites remained loyal to the rightful Archbishops, even when the Northist community, aggrieved by the high handed rule of the Archbishops, rebelled at times under the leadership of the Archdeacon. Archbishop Brito has spoken praisingly of the Knanites' loyalty on such occasion. During the *Coonan Cross Revolution* also the majority of the Knanites stood firm with the rightful ecclesial head, Archbishop Garcia, when practically the majority community of the Northists as a whole revolted against him. Such position taken by the Knanites in that critical period of history seems to have saved the Malabar Church from going totally into schism.

After the death of Archbishop Garcia, when Bishop Alexander Parambil, a Northist, was appointed Vicar Apostolic according to a special faculty Bishop Sebastiani had from the Holy See, the Knanaya Community rallied behind the new Bishop. His episcopal ordination was done at the Southist Church at Kaduthuruthy. On behalf of the Knanaya Community, their lay leader, Pachikara Tharakan from Chunkom, assured that the community would be kept obedient to the new Bishop., even if all the others might abandon him. When the Syro-Malabarians volunteered to support and promote a reunion of Mar Thomas VI, *alias* Mar Dionysius the Great, the Knanaya community also collaborated earnestly with the others to send the Cariati delegation to Rome and Lisbon.

Thus in all the main turning points in the history of the Malabar Church ever since the Knanaya immigration, the Knanaya community has acted decisively, strongly and responsibly for the good of the Church. Even in our own times the Community is serving the Church well, holding on to a middle course of conciliation in disputes and controversies.

With these introductory remarks may I now present to you a collection of some relevant documents concerning the Knanaya immigration to Cranganor and the Knanaya Community's continued history. These sources have been gathered while I was doing research for my two doctoral dissertations. Some of the documents have been published in collections of documents by various editors. Many others are drawn directly from the original manuscripts kept in archives or libraries. In short introductions to each document I shall be giving some information about its author, context of its writing, its contents, its archival location, earlier publication, if any, etc. The originals reproduced are in several languages, Portuguese, Spanish Italian, Syriac, and Malayalam (in Vatteluthu, Karson and modern script). Together with the originals and English translation also will be given. Put together in a hurry for this symposium, I was unable to indicate counter references. Even without such notes, I think, the documents will speak for themselves, and I hope, they will be of help to the historians for further research.

Rev. Dr. Jacob Kollaparambil.

Kottayam,
August 29, 1986.

SEBASTIANI (1657)

Informed of the rebellion in the Malabar Church, the Holy See sent two Carmelite Fathers, Fr. Joseph of St. Mary (Sebastian) and Fr. Hyacinth of St. Vincent to Malabar as Apostolic Commissaries. By a land route Sebastiani reached Malabar first in February 1657. In several meetings of priests and representatives of churches he found that only a small group, mainly four parishes of the Knanites, was willing to continue under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Garcia. The majority of the non-Knanites, however, would consider Mar Thomas as invalidly consecrated, but would not submit themselves again to Archbishop Garcia. They would have Thomas himself consecrated as bishop by the order of the Holy See, if possible, or else a non-Jesuit bishop to be appointed by the Holy See. Having assessed the situation, Fr. Sebastiani left for Rome in January 1658. He submitted to the Holy See a long but succinct report, substantiated with sworn statements of many persons. (Cf. APF. SOCG. 233, ff. 455-473 or 111-139). The *Prima Spedizione all' Indie Orientali* published from Rome in 1666, is in elaboration of this report. The text below on the Knanites is an extract from the *Prima Spedizione*, pp. 109-110. In giving explanation for the distinction between the Southists and Northists, Sebastiani follows the interpretation of Gouvea in his *Jornada*. He says specifically that in spite of Dom Menezes' efforts to integrate the two groups they continued with separate churches where priests of one's own community exercised ecclesial ministries. In his succinct report Sebastiani has stated that the Southists were a small community having not more than five thousand members.

(a) Prima Spedizone..... (Rome, 1666)

(108) Poco dopo, che i Christiani di S. Taomé della costa di Coromandel passarono ad unirsi con questi dei Regni Malavari, vi giunse un Armeno ricchissimo; quale vi si casò, and ottenne dal Ré di Cangranoro molti privileggi, come, di legare i capelli nelle nozze con ornamenti d'oro, di sedere sopra tappeti, e di cavalcare elefanti, cose lecite solo ai figli di Re, che tali pero, furono chiamati li christiani.

Questo Armeno, detto Thome Canà, teneva casa con maglie e figli dalla parte di mezo giorno; e ne haveva un'altra dalla parte di tramontana, con una concubina, di sangue Naire; ma Christiana, dalla quale pur tenne figli, alla sua morte divise l'here dità equalmente con tutt. Hebbero (109) gl'uni, e gl'altri gran seguito, e in processo di tempo si parentarono con tutta quella christianità. quale per causa loro si divise in due fattioni, l'una detta Baregumpagam, o Aquilonare, numerosissima per le parte degl' illegitimi, e l'altra Teckumpagam, o di mezo giorno, che solo si trova nel Diamper, Cottette, Turgoli, e Carturte; se bene i Baregumpagam affermano, e difendono tutto il contrario, ponendosi per la parte dei veri legittimi.

L'antipatia di queste due fattione é si grande, che non si parentano gli uni con gl'altri, ne hanno Chies communi, né i cassanari possono essere, che dalla propria parte, il che hoggi pure si usa; benché il gran Meneses procurasse remediarsi: tanto sono tenaci nelle loro avversioni, e sissi nelle resolutioni, benché perverse, dalle quali sepure una volta resorgono, in processo di tempo vi cadono di nuovo, e piu volte,

Some time after the christians of St. Thomas on Coromandel Coast passed on to Malabar and united themselves with the Christians in the kingdoms of Malabar, there came a very rich Armenian, who married there, and obtained from the King of Cranganor many privileges, such as to tie up the hair with golden ornaments at weddings to sit on carpets, to travel on elephants, things granted only to sons of kings, and as such were called these christians.

This Arimenian, called Thomas Cana, had a house with wife and children on the South; and had another on the North, with a concubine of Nair blood, but Christian, from whom too he had children. And at his death he divided the inheritance equally among all. Both these had great following, and in the course of time they related themselves with the whole christianity, which for their sake was divided into two factions, one called Vadakumbagam *alias* the Northern, very numerous on the part illegitimate (children), and the other Thekumbagam, *alias* the Southern, which is found only in Diamper, Kottayam, Thodupuzha and Kaduthuruthy; although the Vadakumbagam defends just the contrary, placing themselves as the true legitimate (children).

The antipathy of these two factions is so great that they do not have intermarriage. Neither do they have common churches, nor can they have priests but those belonging to one's own side, which (rule) is kept even today, although Meneses the Great had tried to remedy it. They are so tenacious in their aversion, and divided in their resolution albeit perverse, from which even if they resurrect at times, they fall into it again and many times.

MS SLOANE 2748-A (1676)

Fr. Mathew of St. Joseph, O. C. D. first arrived in Malabar in February 1657 as one of the companions of Fr. Sebastiani and remained there till 1663, when he too had to leave Malabar by the order of the Dutch in Cochin. He was again in Malabar from 1668 to 1678 as adviser and close associate of Bishop Alexander Parambil.

Among his writings there is a report on the Malabar Church containing also a list of the kingdoms with their kings and Lords in Malabar as well as a list of all the Churches in those kingdoms. Dealing with the origin of the Church in Malabar he speaks about Thomas Cana and the division between the Southists and Northists. What he suggests as the basis of the distinction between the Southists and Northists is somewhat different from what was written of it till then by the other authors. The author himself says that such interpretation is not acceptable to some people, and that from Kaduthruthy to Beematte (Velianad) and from Palicara to Cochin people do not want to hear about it. The report was written in 1676 or after, because mention is made of a letter dated January 19, 1676 from the Dutch authorities in favour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church at Anjikaimal (f. 11^v) which the author qualifies as "my church" f. 3^v). It is for such internal evidences that the report is attributed to Fr. Mathew, O. C. D. The handwriting is not his. The MS is extant in British Muceum catalogue as *MS. Sloane 2748-A*.

(6^v) E como o glorioso Apostolo S. Thome peregrinado in diversas partes da India baptizando e convertendo muito povo, destes vierão aqui como novos obreiros

And after the glorious Apostle St. Thomas passed to other parts of India baptizing and converting many people, from them came new labourers (of the vinyard), but not

mas não com tanta força e spiritu que não ficassem também no cabo fracos e remissos na fee. Mas como Deos he supremo pastor, particularmente delles que confião na sua divina Providencia e pudade, proveo esta Serra com huma pessoa Apostolica, e da religião christão chamado Chinai Thome.

E dizem que foi natural de terra de Canaan, discípulo di S. Thome, não discipulo dos antigos, mas discipulo do discipulos e descendentes dellas. Este santo Varão achou esta Serra e Christian dade, não com o rittu verdadeiro e perfeito de nossa Santa fee, mas tão somente com algumas tradições Apostolicas, por exemplo

1. Guardar os dias Domingos
2. Bauprtizar os meninos novamente nascidos.
3. Adorar e venerar sumamente a Santa Cruz.

Este varão Apostolico foi que fabricou e fundou a primeira Igreja de S. Thome em Cranganor e herá tão grande autoridade e estima diste varão pera com os Reis Malabares que por amor delle os reis considerão os seguintes privilegios a esta christandade.

(7.) - Se podem coroar com coroas a modo de reis, assim molheres como homens.

- Podem tanger toda casta Instrumento(s) musicos.

- podem subir sobre elefantes nas festas delles.

- podem acender e levar nas mãos, candelas em todas as festas.

- podem servirse de avanos grandes e teaes ao modo de grandissimos senhores nas festas, e vestirse toda a sorte di galas e vestiduras.

- Nas festas e solemnidades se podem servir de panos brancos e assentarse sobre elles.

- podem caminhar pellas ruas sobre panos brancos, como gente nobre e privilegiados.

- podem nas festas dar gritos em sinal de alegria e jubillos, e também consider licença a outros gentios que fação o mesmo.

- pera a viagents e prossiões das festas podem de sparar espiz guardas em sinal de alegria.

- Toda a casta de jojas e ornamento de ouro e prata e seda se possão servir delles.

- Podem gozer de qualquer privilegio real.

- Podem entrar em quaesquer casas de gente nobre de Nair, conversar com elles, e viajar, o que não he comhedido a outras hentruas castas.

- Tem todos os privilegios licenças, liberdades de festejar e solemnizar em publico.

with such force and spirit that in the end they became very weak and remiss in faith. However, as God is the Supreme Pastor, particularly to those who confide in the Divine Providence and Mercy, He provided this Serra with an appostolic person of Christian religion by name Chinai Thome.

They say that he was a native of Canaan, disciple of St. Thomas, i.e. not a direct disciple, but disciple of the disciples and their descendants. This holy distinguished person found that this Serra and christianity did not have the true Rite and perfect faith, but only some apostolic tradition, for example,

1. the observance of Sundays
2. baptism of the new-born children,
3. adoration and veneration of the Holy Cross.

This apostolic hero was the one who built and founded the first Church of St. Thomas in Cranganor. The authority and esteem this hero had with the kings of Malabar was such that the kings for love of him granted the following privileges to this christianity.

They can be crowned like the kings, both men and women.

They can play all kinds of musical instruments.

They can travel on elephants in their festivals.

They can carry lighted lamps in all their festivals.

They can use great and royal fans like the grand lords in festivals and be dressed with all sorts of gala dress and vestments.

In festivals and solemnities they can spread white cloths and sit on them.

They can walk on white cloths on the streets as noble and privileged people.

In festivals they can shout as sign of joy and jubilation, and allow non-christians to do the same.

On the journeys and processions of festivals they can fire guns as sign of joy.

They can wear all kinds of ornaments of gold, silver, and silk.

They can enjoy any royal privileges.

They can enter the houses of any Nair gentry, converse and travel with them, which is not granted to any other caste.

They hold all privileges, licences, and freedom to celebrate and solemnize in public.

(a) Prima Spedizone. (Rome, 1666)

(108) Poco dopo, che i Christiani di S. Taomé della costa di Coromandel passarono ad unirsi con questi dei Regni Malavari, vi giunse un Armeno ricchissimo, quale vi si casò, and ottenne dal Ré di Cangranoro molti privilegi, come, di legare i capelli nelle nozze con ornamenti d'oro, di sedere sopra tappeti, e di cavalcare elefanti, cose lecite solo ai figli di Re, che tali però, furono chiamati li christiani.

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L'antipatia di queste due fattione é si grande, che non si parentano gli uni con gl'altri, ne hanno Chies comuni, né i cassanari possono essere, che dalla propria parte, il che hoggi pure si usa; benché il gran Meneses procurasse remediarsi: tanto sono tenaci nelle loro avversioni, e sissi nelle resolutioni, benché perverse, dalle quali seppure una volta resorgono, in processo di tempo vi cadono di nuovo, e piu volte,

Some time after the christians of St. Thomas on Coromandel Coast passed on to Malabar and united themselves with the Christians in the kingdoms of Malabar, there came a very rich Armenian, who married there, and obtained from the King of Cranganor many privileges, such as to tie up the hair with golden ornaments at weddings to sit on carpets, to travel on elephants, things granted only to sons of kings, and as such were called these christians.

Ⓒ This Arimenian, called Thomas Cana, had a house with wife and children on the South; and had another on the North, with a concubine of Nair blood, but Christian, from whom too he had children. And at his death he divided the inheritance equally among all. Both these had great following, and in the course of time they related themselves with the whole christianity, which for their sake was divided into two factions, one called Vadakumbagam *alias* the Northern, very numerous on the part illegitimate (children), and the other Thekumbagam, *alias* the Southern, which is found only in Diamper, Kottayam, Thodupuzha and Kaduthuruthy; although the Vadakumbagam defends just the contrary, placing themselves as the true legitimate (children).

The antipathy of these two factions is so great that they do not have intermarriage. Neither do they have common churches, nor can they have priests but those belonging to one's own side, which (rule) is kept even today, although Meneses the Great had tried to remedy it. They are so tenacious in their aversion, and divided in their resolution albeit perverse, from which even if they resurrect at times, they fall into it again and many times.

MS SLOANE 2748-A (1676)

Fr. Mathew of St. Joseph, O. C. D. first arrived in Malabar in February 1657 as one of the companions of Fr. Sebastiani and remained there till 1663, when he too had to leave Malabar by the order of the Dutch in Cochin. He was again in Malabar from 1668 to 1678 as adviser and close associate of Bishop Alexander Parambil.

Among his writings there is a report on the Malabar Church containing also a list of the kingdoms with their kings and Lords in Malabar as well as a list of all the Churches in those kingdoms. Dealing with the origin of the Church in Malabar he speaks about Thomas Cana and the division between the Southists and Northists. What he suggests as the basis of the distinction between the Southists and Northists is somewhat different from what was written of it till then by the other authors. The author himself says that such interpretation is not acceptable to some people, and that from Kaduthruthy to Beenatte (Velianad) and from Palicara to Cochin people do not want to hear about it. The report was written in 1676 or after, because mention is made of a letter dated January 19, 1676 from the Dutch authorities in favour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church at Anjikaimal (f. 11^v) which the author qualifies as "my church" f. 3^v). It is for such internal evidences that the report is attributed to Fr. Mathew, O. C. D. The handwriting is not his. The MS is extant in British Museum catalogue as *MS. Sloane 2748-A*.

(6^v) E como o glorioso Apostolo S. Thome peregrinado in diversas partes da India baptizando e convertendo muito povo, destes vierão aqui como novos obreiros

And after the glorious Apostle St. Thomas passed to other parts of India baptizing and converting many people, from them came new labourers (of the vinyard), but not

mas não com tanta força e spiritu que não ficassem também no cabo fracos e remissos na fee. Mas como Deos he supremo pastor, particularmente delles que confião na sua divina Providencia e pudade, proveo esta Serra com huma pessoa Apostolica, e da religião christão chamado Chinai Thome.

E dizem que foi natural de terra de Canaan, discipulo di S. Thome, não discipulo dos antigos, mas discipulo do discipulos e descendentes dellas. Este santo Varão achou esta Serra e Christian dade, não com o rittu verdadeiro e prefeito de nossa Santa fee, mas tão somente com algumas tradições Apostolicas, por exemplo

1. Guardar os dias Domingos
2. Baupizar os meninos novamente nascidos.
3. Adorar e venerar sumamente a Santa Cruz.

Este varão Apostolico foi que fabricou e fundou a primeira Igreja de S. Thome em Cranganor e hera tão grande autoridade e estima diste varão pera com os Reis Mallavares que por amor delle os reis considerão os seguintes privilegios a esta christandade.

(7.) - Se podem coroar com coroas a modo de reis, assim molheres como homens.

- Podem tanger toda casta instrumento(s) musicos.

- podem subir sobre elefantes nas festas delles.

- podem acender e levar nas mãos candeeas em todas as festas.

- podem servir-se de avanos grandes e reaes ao modo de grandissimos senhores nas festas, e vestir-se toda a sorte di galas e vestiduras.

- Nas festas e solemnidades se podem servir de panos brancos e assentarse sobre elles.

- podem caminhar pellas ruas sobre panos brancos, como gente nobre e privilegiados.

- podem nas festas dar gritos em sinal de alegria e jubillos, e também consider licença a outros gentios que fação o mesmo.

- pera a viagents e prossiões das festas podem de sparar espiz guardas em sinal de alegria.

- Toda a casta de jojas e ornamento de ouro e prata e seda se possão servir delles.

- Podem gozer de qualquer privilegio real.

- Podem entrar em quaesquer casas de gente nobre de Nair, conversar com elles, e viajar, o que não he comhedido a outras hentruas castas.

- Tem todos os privilegios, licenças, liberdades de festejar e solemnizar em publico,

with such force and spirit that in the end they became very weak and remiss in faith. However, as God is the Supreme Pastor, particularly to those who confide in the Divine Providence and Mercy, He provided this Serra with an apostolic person of Christian religion by name Chinai Thome.

They say that he was a native of Canaan, disciple of St. Thomas, i.e. not a direct disciple, but disciple of the disciples and their descendants. This holy distinguished person found that this Serra and christianity did not have the true Rite and perfect faith, but only some apostolic tradition, for example,

1. the observance of Sundays
2. baptism of the new-born children,
3. adoration and veneration of the Holy Cross.

This apostolic hero was the one who built and founded the first Church of St. Thomas in Cranganor. The authority and esteem this hero had with the kings of Malabar was such that the kings for love of him granted the following privileges to this christianity.

They can be crowned like the kings, both men and women.

They can play all kinds of musical instruments.

They can travel on elephants in their festivals.

They can carry lighted lamps in all their festivals.

They can use great and royal fans like the grand lords in festivals and be dressed with all sorts of gala dress and vestments.

In festivals and solemnities, they can spread white cloths and sit on them.

They can walk on white cloths on the streets as noble and privileged people.

In festivals they can shout as sign of joy and jubilation, and allow non-christians to do the same.

On the journeys and processions of festivals they can fire guns as sign of joy.

They can wear all kinds of ornaments of gold, silver, and silk.

They can enjoy any royal privileges.

They can enter the houses of any Nair gentry, converse and travel with them, which is not granted to any other caste.

They hold all privileges, licences, and freedom to celebrate and solemnize in public.

todas as festas e solemnidades do dia e de noite com sinos grandes e pequenos, com as tambores e cheremillas, e possessões, Pregações, com mais liberdade, que en Europa, sem medo nonhum, mas com grandissimo resp-eito e estima.

Todas estas e mais privilegios forão concedidos dos Reis em aquelles tempos.

(7v) Se duvida entre nossa gente, se naquele tempo hera hum Rei Mallavar ou muitos, não se sabe a serteza; mas dos privilegios notados não tem duvida alguma, escrittos en ollas de cobre, e forão testamunhas o sol e a luna conforme dizem elles, quero dizer, faltando o sol e a lua faltarão estes privilegios.

(8v) O Principal destes Reis Mallavares aos quaes Cherigon Perimale, convertido de S. Thome, dividio o seu reino, se Chamava Sakara Vittia e foi aquele que consedeo tantos privilegios a instancia de Canai Thome dito asima. O qual Rei Sakara Vittia consedeo a huma pessoa natural deste Reino por lingoa e interprete, e cozinheira do deto Chinai Thome: e dizem que esta pessoa era hua molher, qual tinha por officio de mainatto e lavar panos e por conseguinte de casta servil e baixa.

E os filhos desta molher instruidos do deto Canai Thome na fee de nosso senhor Jesus Christo, forão os autores e fundadores dos christãos de S. Thome os quaes se chamão do Sul, que quer dizer gente, de habitação, lugar e moradas de baixo. Este modo de falar Mallavar.

As persões graves, e nobres, dizem, que habitão e morão em lugares altos e avantejados, os quaes elles chamão do Norte ou Oriente, como se dissemos a mão direita, e mão esquerda. E de presente atualmente ha esta differença entre esta nação Malavar, de maneira que são algumas igrejas bem officiadas e de boñs e vertuosos cassanars Clerigos; e se chamão estas Igrejas, Igreja do Sul, e São as seguintes:

- S. Paulo em Carturte
- SS. Gervasio e Protasio em Diamper
- N. S. em Cottete
- A. Igreja de Calluchere
- A. Igreja de Xumquete
- A. Igreja de Protil - a metade

- (9r) A. Igreja de Nelaur - a metade
- A. Igreja de Compil - a metade

Todas estas são Igrejas do sual, quero dizer Christãos de S. Thome de Sangue baixo, e de tal feição que os de Sul não se

all the festivals and solemnities during day time and at night singing big and small bells, with drums and bands, with processions and sermons with more freedom than in Europe, without any fear, but with great respect and esteem.

All these and other privileges were granted by the Kings in those times.

There is doubt among our people, whether there was only one king or many at that time, it is not certain; but there is no doubt about the said privileges written copper sheets, and the witnesses were the sun and the moon, as they say, which means that failing the sun and the moon these privileges will fail.

The chief of these kings of Malabar to whom Cherigon Perimale, (who was converted by St. Thomas) divided his kingdom was called Sakara Vittia. And he was the one who granted so many privileges at the request of the above-said Canai Thoma.

This King Sakara Vittia granted to the said Canai Thoma a person native of this country as interpreter and cook; and they say that this person was a woman, who did the trade of Mainatto and washing of clothes, and consequently was of servile and low caste.

And the sons of this woman instructed by the said Canai Thoma in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ were the authors and founders of the Christians of St. Thomas who are called of the South, which means people of low dwelling place and abode. This is the Malabarian way of saying.

Important and noble persons, they say, live in upper and excellent places which they call North or East, as we say on the right hand and on the left hand, And to the present actually there is this difference among this people of Malabar, in such a way that some of the Churches are well attended and are of good and virtuous Cassanars or Clerics; and these Churches are called Church of the South. They are the following:

- St. Paul's in Kaduthuruthy
- SS. Garvasis and Protasis in Diamper
- Our Lady's in Kottayam
- The Church of Kallicherry
- The Church of Chunkom
- The Church of Piravam—one half
- The Church of Nilaur—one half
- The Church of Compil—one half

All these are churches of the South, which means Christians of St. Thomas of inferior blood; and of such faction that

casão com gente de Norte, e nem os de Norte com os de Sul aindaque boñs e obedidos.....

(9v) Esta narração não he ao gosto de todos nem aggradavel a algumas pessoas, como tão bem não folgão de ouvir, que de Carturte athe Belenatte, e de Palicara athe Cochim. E tão bem de Carturte at he Cou-lão se achão outros costumes e outra mes-turação de Sangue, que não convem expli-car mais claro.

those of the South do not marry with the people of the North, nor do those of the North with those of the South though good and obedient.

This narration is not to every one's taste, nor is pleasing to some people. Likewise people from Kaduthuruthy to Veliyanad?, and from Palicara to Cochin do not like to hear it. From Kaduthuruthy to Quiion also there are other customs and other mixtures of blood, which is not proper to explain more clearly.