CHAPTER V
MARITIME TRADE AND THE FORTRESSES

The early Sangam literature contains reference to the voyage of the people of Kerala to foreign countries. In the sixth decade of *Patituupatu* the poet Kakkai Pattiniyar refers to the Chera ships plying in the ocean to procure wealth from foreign countries. Pliny refers to *Muzuris* as the most important port of India; the author of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy also speak of *Muzuris* as a great emporium. Another port referred to in classical works is Naura, situated north of *Muzuris*. This has been identified with Cannanore. Yet another ancient sea port which has since been forgotten and which figures prominently in ancient Tamil works is *Mantai*, next to *Vanchi* and *Tondi*. It was the most important town of ancient Kerala till the 8th century A.D. 87

International exchange has been constant in Kerala, land of the coconuts wedged as it is for its 360-mile length between the Arabian Sea and the mountains of the Western Ghats. In the later period i.e., from 9th to the 13th centuries there were trade organization like *Anchuvannam*, and *Manigramam*, which engaged themselves in foreign trade. The Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, British, French, and Chinese all came to trade. The mountain wall of the Western Ghats is broken only at the 20-mile wide Palghat Gap, an opening utilized by the Romans for trade in the 1st century A.D. and facilitating invasions of the Malabar Coast in the

18th century by Carnatic commanders like Hider Ali and Tipu Sultan. St. Thomas the Apostle of Jesus Christ arrived in the 1st century A.D. The Jews of Cochin, surviving only as a very small colony since the foundation of Israel drew most of their number away in 1947, trace their arrival to the coming of King Solomon’s merchant fleet in about 973 B.C.

The Portuguese succeeded in establishing commercial supremacy, on the Kerala Coast and beyond for 150 years.  

i. Trade Conduct of Kolathunadu on the Malabar Coast prior to the Portuguese.

The land of Kolathunadu was not suitable to extensive paddy cultivation, geo-climatic features combined to help it to produce high quality pepper and such other spices as cardamom, ginger, and wild cinnamon, which were in great demand throughout Indian Ocean. The emergence of a number of port towns along the coast of Malabar was one of the consequences of this great demand for Malabar spices throughout world markets. Kolathunadu covered coastal belt of North Malabar which was suited to the development of a number of maritime trade centres. Spices produced in the hinterland were mainly shipped across the seas from these coastal port towns of Kolathunadu. The possibilities to accumulate income from maritime trade, supplementing the land-based returns would have been the main attraction for the local political elites.

The coastal areas except at Ezhimala, a hill jutting into the Arabian Sea, are sandy and suitable mainly to coconut plantations. This long coastal belt gave rise to a number of small scale port towns in Kolathunadu which also functioned as the centres of socio-economic life of the local Mapila Muslims. The Western Ghats covered with thick forest served as the habitat for divergent flora and fauna as well as for such tribal people as vettuvans, and

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88 Ibid., p. 62.
mavilans. This area supplied the local markets with wood and other forest products. The inhabitants of this hill tract practised slash and burn cultivation on a large scale, which exhausted the forest resources of the region by the end of the 19th century. Pepper and other spices were cultivated mainly on the lower tracts of the high ranges. Therefore a significant part of the high quality pepper, ginger, and cardamom exported from the port of Cannanore was not produced in Kolathunadu territory but had been brought in from the inland regions of Kottayam and Waynadu. Along the narrow strip of sand near the coast, the green palm and jac trees contrast vividly with the brown roads that run beneath them. Below the shade of the trees nestle the houses of the natives, not huddled together as in an East coast village but each in its own compound surrounded by a stout fence and full of giant platains which their broad leaves and of the many colored flowers of the hibiscus.  

Ezhimala, which was the original seat of the Kolathiris, was an important hub of maritime trade from an earlier period. The ancient sea ports of the region, such as Ilangopatnam, Achalapatanam, and Kachilpatanam were located in and around the general area of Ezhimala. It would be logical to assume that the disappearance of these old trading centres and the silting up of the old royal port city of Maday contributed to the emergence of Cannanore as the main port of the kingdom. The loss of the status of Ezhimala as a maritime commercial hub has been the deciding factor in the shifting of the political centre from Ezhimala to Cannanore – an emerging port town in the kingdom.

The name of the port city of Cannanore emerged from obscurity to the limelight of history only by the end of the fifteenth century, when the Portuguese appeared on the scene. The rapid growth of this port city was probably linked with the developments in Vijayangara state during the fifteenth century.  

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90 Ibid; p13.  
91 Ibid., p.49.
The ports of Kolathunadu attract very diverse and complex merchant groups from different parts of the Indian ocean-world. During the pre-European period traders as Chettys, Jews, and Christians frequented these ports. The Geniza papers dating from the twelfth century mention the brass factory of the west Asian Jewish merchant Abraham Yuju at Dharmapatanam. The existence of a pond near Madayi known as the **Jewish pond** is another piece of evidence which supports their presence in the region in an early period.\(^92\)

The references to Anchuvanam and Manigramam merchant guilds in the Pattirupattu also indicate the strong presence of merchant communities from various parts of the Indian Ocean along the coastal tract of Kolathunadu in the pre-Portuguese period. In this cosmopolitan mercantile world, mapila Muslim traders gradually emerged as the predominant merchant group in Kolathunadu. The account of Ibn Battuta, who visited the Malabar Coast in the fourteenth century, speaks of the increasing influence of Muslim traders in Kolathunadu. Although it would be wrong to assume a complete disappearance of other trading groups from the commercial sphere of the region the mappila traders undoubtedly enjoyed supremacy in the coastal and the tran-oceanic trade of Kolathunadu by the beginning of the seventeenth century.\(^93\)

**Navigable Rivers**

Most of the land routes were more suitable to peddlers than for the transportation of bulk goods.

In this situation the riverine system of the Kolathunadu was of special importance in the movement of bulk commodities into the interior parts of the kingdom. Although Malabar is rich as far as the number of its river is concerned, the number of navigable river is limited. Only seasonal navigation was possible along many of them. Usually they dried up during the

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\(^{93}\) *Ibid.*, pp24-25
high summer. The hilly character of the land also limits the access of the river boats to the far interior. The most important riverine systems which were used for commercial purposes in north Malabar were the Nileswaram river, the Ezhimala River, the Taliparamba River, the Valapattanam River, the Anjarakandi River, and Tellicherry river which originate from different sources in the western ghat. Among them the most important were the Taliparamba, Valapattanam, and Anjarakandi rivers which provide access almost to the foot of the Western Ghats and played an important role in the cross-ghat route trade with the Mysore region.\textsuperscript{94} Through these rivers the hinterland transport system and communication and large scale movement of bulky commodities were dependent on the facilities of waterways. The linkages could be found in the location of various ports of trade to the waterways and market centres, such as Valapattanam and Cannanore, (Valapattanam river) Putuppanam (Kuttiadi river) Pantalayini (Korappuzha) Calicut and Beypore (Chaliyar) Ponnani (Bharatapuzha) Kollam (Kallada river and Ahtamudi lake)\textsuperscript{95}. Different groups of tradesmen came to Cannanore. The masons, gunpowder manufacturers, rope makers, saltpetre refiners, black smiths, carpenters, shipbuilders and other workers, originating mainly from local areas were employed in various production centres.\textsuperscript{96}

**Hinterland of Kerala.**

Quite clearly, the strong resource base of the mappila traders and their connection with the Indian Ocean Islamic trading networks put them ahead of other local traders in controlling the trade of Kolathunadu. There were hinterland mappila bazaars as Srikandapuram, Irukkur, Taliparamba, Kottayam and other places which had brisk trading centres even before the coming of the Portuguese. It is particularly important that the most sought-after commodities

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p.14
\textsuperscript{95} K.N. Ganesh, Trade Networks and the Process of Production in Medieval Kerala, ed, M.O.Koshy, Cannanore in the Maritime History of India, K.U., 2002, pp.30-35.
\textsuperscript{96} op.cit., pp.132-133.
for international trade such as pepper, ginger, and cardamom were acquired from the deep hinterlands of Cannanore ports. Different types of timber and important forest products which were in high demand for shipbuilding were brought from the Western Ghats via-the rivers of Kolathunadu. Moreover such commodities for local consumption as rice, cotton, salt, opium, which also had to be imported from outlying regions provided an impetus to the emergence of these inland trading centres. The sought-after spices produced in the hinterland coupled with the limited possibility for paddy cultivation gave rise to the emergence of a permanent maritime commercial sector which dominated a comparatively less flexible inland agrarian social order.

As there was only a very narrow stretch of agricultural land, Kolathunadu as a whole remained relatively detached from earlier processes of Brahmanization and agricultural expansion and instead became very responsive to maritime commercial influences. Maritime trade provided a fine opportunity for improving the economic status for the social groups in Kolathunadu where the agricultural surplus was limited. Naturally the port towns of Kolathunadu especially Cannanore became the centres of socio-political dynamics in the region.\(^{97}\) The geographical features of Kolathundu did not guarantee a large-scale agricultural surplus. The insufficiency in rice production may also have assisted the evolution of communities of subsistence, under the command of influential taravadus controlling the limited wet-land paddy fields during the pre-colonial period in the region.\(^{98}\) Owing to the limited access of the European powers to the hinterland of Kerala, only a few superficial accounts exist about the importance of the passes of the ghats to the economy of Kerala during the pre-colonial period. While the Portuguese were aware of the flow of pepper via the land routes, it seems that the Dutch company servants had more grasp of the existence of these outlets as well as of the important role played by these routes in the diversion of spices.

\(^{97}\) Ibid, pp. 24-27.

\(^{98}\) Ibid, pp. 39-40.
to the other side of the ghats. As early as 1677 comander Van Reede makes mention of about twenty four such routes across the ghats. Among these passages, the most impotant was the Palghat gap which connects Malabar Coast with the Coimbatore region. Kolathunadu possessed two important ghat routes which connect the port town of Cannanore with the Mysore and Srirangapatanam via Coorg and the Periah gaht road through North Wynad to Mysore. These roads constituted indispensable link between the Cannanore port town and the Mysore kingdoms even before the coming of the Portuguese.

The overland connection became very important as major supply routes for the new principalities which emerged in the Deccan and Carnatic after the first millinnieum AD. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was regular trade traffic between the state of Vijayanagara and the port town of Cannanore especially for the purpose of conducting trade in horse. The Vijayanagara cavalry was heavily dependent on the supply of horses from the west Asian ports passing through the Malabar ports, particularly Cannanore. When the Portuguese appeared on the scene Cannanore was already an important port of embarkation for the west Asian horses which were transported further to the Vijayanagara territory. Although this coastal horse trade with the interior declined after the eclipse of the Vijayanagara it continued into the time of the succeeding Wodeyar rulers of Mysore.99

**Arckal Ali Rajas of Cannanore.**

The most prominent maritime merchants in pre-Colonial Kerala and one of the very few early –modern Indian maritime merchant groups who succeeded in carving out a powerful political configuration of their own. The extensive maritime network of the Arackal house was based at the port-town of Cannanore. From this place the mappila Muslim family came to dominate the commercial networks of various other mappila families in Cannanore

as well as in its various satellite ports such as Maday, Baliapatanam, Dharmapatanam and Nileswaram.\(^{100}\)

**ii. Factory fortress system**

The first ruler with whom the Portuguese came into contact on the south western coast of India was the Zamorin, king of Calicut. They were welcomed in the kingdom of Cochin, Cannanore and Quilon unlike in Calicut. These were the kingdom where the Portuguese power and influence were the greatest and their commerce flourished throughout the sixteenth century.

When the Portuguese reached Cannanore, they negotiated with local king, the Kolathiri Raja, in order to obtain a piece of land where they could build a trading factory. The king granted a site on the western extremity of the bay of Cannanore called Moppila bay a small piece of land housing only a few fishermen’s huts, which were soon destroyed for the construction of Portuguese settlements. This was the earliest European bridgehead in Cannanore by the Portuguese. Simultaneously the factory soon developed into a fortified settlement of commercial and political significance. The port town of Cannanore was divided into two power zones; one was Fort St. Anjelo representing the European economic interest in the port. The other was Cannanore (now known as ‘Mappila Bay’) which provided anchorage for ships and boats. Van Linschoten gives an interesting picture of a Mappila –dominated market functioning near the Portuguese fortress. His comparison with the European weekly markets is especially noteworthy. Similarly Francois Pyrard of Laval, who visited the Malabar Coast in the beginning of the seventeenth century, also noticed the functioning of the

\(^{100}\)Ibid., pp.10-11.
daily market of the moors, in Cannanore and its great trade\textsuperscript{101}. The fortified factory cum fortress compound itself was actually a yard where cinnamon, a much bulkier commodity than ginger, nut mug, cloves could be left to dry under the Sun before being shipped off in October- November each year. The Portuguese fortresses are noticed at Diu, Daman, Bassein, Bombay, Asherim, Manora, Chaul, Dabhol, Surat, Goa, Anjediva, Honavar, Barcelor, Mangalore, Cannanore, Calicut, Chaliyam, Cranganore, Cochin, Kayankulam, and Quilon where they had factory establishments also where the local goods were purchased and stored for shipment to various destinations. In contrast to the nature of the peddling trade, the Portuguese established fortified centers in the key positions on the Malabar Coast. The peddlers went from market to market, from producer to producer. The Portuguese developed centralized export centers to which commodities were brought and stored. The factories were established to store the imported commodities as well as the exports. Similarly the use of arms and ammunitions in trade was not usual (though not unknown) in the peddling trade.\textsuperscript{102}

When the trade developed in full swing and the protection forces of the factory also increased. Captain and other defence officers and soldiers automatically needed place of residence. The factory was enlarged with protection wall and other necessary residential sectors for people working inside the factory, hence the factory gradually developed into a well built fortress.

\textbf{Factor}

In 1501 AD Goncalo Gomes Ferreira has been appointed as the factor at Cannanore factory and it was his duty to study the local market conditions and store the items like pepper, ginger, rope, cloves, medicinal plants, coconut oil, and other items. Normally ships destined for India left Lisbon every year by the end of March or the beginning of April and

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p.68.

\textsuperscript{102} K.S.Mathew, Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century. N.Delhi, 1983, pp.224-225.
arrived at the Indian coast by the end of September. The ships were loaded with the commodities in the Indian ports during the months of October and November and the return voyage to Portugal was either in the second half of the month of December or latest by the beginning of January. Each fortress had a factory with a Factor, two scribes, two treasurers, one for spies, and the other for money matters, one Linguist or interpreter, informants, commercial and political intermediaries and various guards and porters. The number of the officials in Cannanore fortress went on increasing. A surgeon, interpreter, a couple of Nairs\textsuperscript{103} to look after the security of the factory, captain of the fortress, a few Portuguese attendants for the Captain, and a writer of the factory were some of those who figured among those paid by the Portuguese Government in 1664. At the time of loading and unloading of the ships the factory employed more personnel for these works. All the officials of a factory were under the authority of Factor. The factor was responsible to the Captain of the fort or directly to the Viceroy and provided to him reports of the factory’s purchase and sale. Before the loading of ships he was to prepare a logbook of the commodities to be sent to Lisbon and obtain a receipt of the same from the Captain or the factor of the ships. The Captain of the fort was subject to the authority of Viceroy or governor of the state responsible for the entire area under his jurisdiction. Thus all the factories were enchained to each other from top to bottom. The factors of the respective factories visited several local intermediaries and paid cash in advance to get merchandises at the time loading of the homeward bound ships of the carreira da India.\textsuperscript{104} It was the factor’s duty as purveyor, to record the movement of all ships.

**Factory**


\textsuperscript{104} Afzal Ahmad, *Indo-Portuguese Trade in Seventeenth Century (1600-1663)*, NewDehi, 1991, pp.8-10
In addition to being the office of the factor, the factory served as warehouse for the merchandise brought from Portugal as well as spices and other commodities collected from various parts around Cannanore. Similarly as the ships depended on the monsoon they had to depart before the harvest seasons of the pepper and other spices. Therefore these goods had to be purchased in advance and as indicated were stored in the factories so that there would be enough cargo at the time of the arrival of the ships in September or October every year. Since the above said commodities are harvested mostly in the month of January-February and the arrival of the Portuguese ships were in the month of October- November until all the commodities have to be stored in a secured area within the factory. During this process sufficient workers are engaged in preparation of packing process. Elephants and small country boats were used for carrying heavy loads towards Jetty.

According to Duarte Barbosa, who was the writer at the Cannanore fortress, Cannanore was a great city inhabited by moors and gentiles. Barbosa also mentioned that there were merchants, having many big and small vessels and that they shipped all kinds of merchandises to Cambay, Hormuz, Coromandel, Dabul, Chaul, Banda, Ceylon and the Maldives islands.

iii. **Maritime trade and Fortress**

Fortress encompassing the network of factories regular patrolling fleet and introduction of licenses for trade formed the most important components. With the erection of a fortress around the factory the weight of Portuguese power started entering Cannanore on a permanent basis. Fortress had three fold functions:

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1) They ensured safety and security to the factory structures as well as the commercial arrangements of the Portuguese.

2) With a Caption at the top, a fortress symbolised micro military unit and represented the most visible form of Portuguese power in an area.

3) The fortress being erected along the strategic borders of the Indian Ocean, where riverine and land routes intersected also had the responsibility to safeguard the royal monopoly on spice trade and to act as the symbol of vigilance and watch over trade traffic\textsuperscript{106}. Thus the fortress that was erected on strategic centres and functional points or riverine and land routes served as power exerting agency\textsuperscript{107}.

**Hinter Land Links with Cannanore Fortress**

Cannanore was a port town that established a link between hinterland and overseas countries. St.Angelo fortress was to guard the port and commercial activities. Kolathiri and the Portuguese wanted to maintain Cannanore as the centre of the trade. The oldest port of international trade in north Malabar was the port of Eli or Ezhimala. Madayi, (also known as Pazahayangadi) and Valapattanam became major ports of international stature in the region in the subsequent period. Cannanore, Dharmadam, Valapattanam, Puttuppanam, Pantalayini, Kumbala, Kallakulam, and Nileswaram emerged as new ports on the coastal area of the kingdom of Kolathunad. Among these ports it was only Cannanore fortress that remained as the main port accessible to big vessels. Although Portugal was the main destination of export trade with Persian Gulf and Red sea regions of West Asia, Egypt, Lakahadweep, Maldives,


\textsuperscript{107} *Ibid*, p.6.
Ceylon, South East Asian Countries and different parts of India illustrated the vibrant exchanges with the port of Cannanore.

Since 1501, the Portuguese began to export commodities from the port of Cannanore to which various sorts of merchandise were brought by the local merchants. Probably the spice producing areas of the principalities of Kottayam, Kadathanad and so on to the north of the kingdom of Calicut supplied the necessary commodities to the Portuguese factory at Cannanore either directly or through the intermediaries. Moreover the local merchants covered the entire area of the kingdom of Cannanore to collect spices and other commodities and finally sold them to the Portuguese.\(^{108}\)

**Cartaz System**

*Cartaz* can be defined as a safe conduct issued for the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea to the merchant ships so that they could navigate and enter the ports for loading and unloading without any trouble. (A licence or passport issued for the ships to ply in the Indian Ocean). There were free *Cartazes* also issued to the local rulers for political reasons.\(^ {109}\) The Portuguese continued their efforts to control the overseas and coastal trade viz., western coast of India keeping with their notion that they were the Lords of the seas and therefore one could carry on sea trade only with their permission. They tried to impose their power on the Arabs and on others by pursuing the system of *cartazes*.\(^ {110}\)

On 22\(^ {\text{nd}}\) Oct 1505 AD they declared their right of seizing any ship, which did not carry a licence granted by them. Thus the Portuguese wanted an exclusive and vigorous maritime policy supported by a few coastal fortresses at key positions, which could be used as naval bases. The commandant of Cochin, Cannanore, or any fort along the coast of India


usually issued *Cartaz*. Usually a *cartaz* was valid for one year; fees were charged depending upon the tonnage of the vessel. Some times *cartazes* were issued either free or on reciprocal concession. Lawrence de Britto, the Factor of Cannanore issued a pass to a Calicut vessel in 1507 but captain Goncalves believed it to be a forgery and captured the ship. The well-equipped Portuguese vessels with artillery and ammunitions enabled them to establish their control over the sea trade. The Portuguese maintained several fleets of warships to check on *Cartazes* and to impress local rulers of the coastal areas of India as well as to combat pirates. Later these merchant ships sailed in convoys accompanied by a small fleet of warships to deal with the pirates. The king of Cannanore presumably acknowledging the supremacy of the Portuguese over the Indian Ocean regions collected *Cartazes* from the Portuguese to send his vessels laden with cargo to Cambay and Ormuz.

Some times the number of vessels with *Cartazes* swelled to ten per year. The king sometimes was permitted to import horses to his port. Similarly the merchants of Cannanore too obtained *Cartazes* from the Portuguese. Abu Baker Ali, the uncle of Adiraja (Ali Raja) of Cannanore got *Cartazes* from the Portuguese to send his ships with commodities to various parts of India and abroad and he himself instructed his people to continue this practice. So the merchants of Cannanore followed it religiously and in 1546 the Muslim merchants sending their ships to Mocha were found carrying *Cartazes* from the Portuguese. Around 1554 the king of Cannanore figures among the recipients of an amount of 300 *pardaos* as annuity from the Portuguese king for permitting the export of pepper and ginger.

iv. Cannanore fortress and Vijayanagara Empire

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Portuguese were fond of exporting animals, especially elephants. The most strategic item of import was warhorses. With the emergence of Vijayanagaram Rayar, local ruler also demanded unceasing supplies of these precious animals, which fetched even higher prices than elephants. Fire arms, cannons, and gun powder seem to have been other strategic imports, which the Portuguese used to bargain with for favoured terms of trade. The Portuguese in Goa also had political economic and cultural relations with their neighboring rulers like the Marathas, Adilshahis, Vijayanagara, Keladi Nayakas, Mysore, and a host of minor chieftains. The port of Cannanore had a special trade relationship with the kingdom of Vijayanagar. Illustrating this fact Ludovico di Varthema wrote, “Cannanore is the port where the horses which came from Persia disembark. These animals were either taken directly to Vijayanagara or to the Kottayam market, where merchants from Vijayanagara paid gold *pardaos* for the horses. Cannanore was the only seaport that facilitated the Vijayanagara rulers to import horses from west Asia. This was the principal source of profit. Cannanore guaranteed the supply of the Vijayanagar cavalry.

Cannanore was also a center of trade in diamonds and precious stones brought from the kingdom of Vijayanagara for export. Vijayanagara kingdom enabled Cannanore to develop as an important center of trade for precious stones. The traders in precious stone on their way back from Vijayanagara mines used to visit Cannanore to make the final purchase. The Lazarus Nurnberger, who came to Vijayanagara kingdom in 1517 as the commercial agent of the Hirschvogels of Germany, visited Cannanore in January 1518. Similarly Jorge Pock, who also came as an agent of the Hirschvogels to India in 1520 to trade in diamonds and precious stone, spent some time in Cannanore on his way to the Vijayanagara

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114 Ibid, IRISH, 2006, p.133
kingdom. The import of horses from Hormuz to Aden and finally to Cannanore that was an important source of income in the form of tax to the local government was a unique feature of maritime trade of Cannanore. The establishment of Portuguese factory cum fortress made, Cannanore an international port town and the fortress became a strategic center of Portuguese sea-borne empire. Albuquerque found that some of the fortresses were badly situated in terms of strategy and that fleets had not been used always wisely. He wanted his fort to guard the port from where the Portuguese vessels could sail out and meet their enemies. Albuquerque reported to king Manuel in a letter written at Cannanore dated 30th Nov 1513 AD that the whole coast of India was under the Portuguese control and that peace and friendship prevailed with all the rulers from Ormuz to Coromandal.

The king of Cambay had granted a factory at Diu. It is necessary to seize the control of the Red sea. Chaul is in peace and pays 2000 pardaus. Dabul is in obedience, Goa is Portuguese, Onor (Honovar) pays tribute, Bhaticola (Bhatkala) is under control, and Cannanore and Cochin are friendly with Portugal. The Zamorin willingly granted a fort, Quilon wanted peace, Coromandal is obedient. The Portuguese are safe in the whole of India in land and sea. Their navigation and trade are free and none dares to attack them. Up to 1565 the chief trade of the Portuguese was with the kingdom of Vijayanagar. They took horses, velvets, and satins and brought back linens and muslins, which were sent to Europe by way of Ormuz as well as round the Cape.

**Horse Trade in Cannanore Port**

The geographical features of the port of Cannanore made it suitable to the disembarkation of horses. In contrast to the earlier ports of Kolathunadu, the location of this

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port was not on a river estuary. This saved it from the dangers of sailing up and it also favoured the close anchorage of ships which were hauled ashore by elephants, of course the trade in these war horses was lucrative one. Each stallion, Barbosa reported, cost from four to six hundred cruzados, and some specially chosen for his own (kings) use, he buys for nine hundred or a thousand cruzados. Prior to the Portuguese success in transferring this money-spinning trade to Goa by the second decade of the sixteenth century, Cannanore had been reaping the profit from the horse trade for some considerable time and had served as the main port where the Persian horses were disembarked for the Vijayanagara monarchs. The importance of the horse trade in the prosperity of this port town is also conspicuous from another point of view. On the eve of the arrival of the Portuguese, pepper, the most important commodity of maritime trade-produced in the hinterland of Cannanore—was usually transported to the port of Calicut for export. The success of the Zamorins in attracting the pepper supply from the hinterland of Cannanore with the help of the wealthy west Asian Muslim traders settled in Calicut deprived Cannanore probably because of its strategic importance as the supplier of horses to the Vijayanagara monarchs. This is a cogent explanation of why the Vijayanagara ruler responded sharply to the problems between the Mappilas and the Portuguese at Cannanore in 1505. This could have affected the ongoing horse trade at the port.119

Beyond this imperial interest the horse trade constituted one of the main sources of the income of the Kolathiris before the Portuguese takeover of the trade in the sixteenth century. It earned them the nickname of ‘Lords of the horses’. Each horse provided an income of 25 ducats in port tax to the Kolathiris. These horses were taken via the inland trading routes across the ghats to Vijayanagara. Considering the weak resource base of the Kolathiris who depended on the rather meager income from their subjects, this additional income must have

certainly strengthened their political legitimacy. It is not surprising that the attempts of the Portuguese Estado to divert the horse trade from Cannanore to Goa elicited a vigorous protest from the Kolathiris.120

The expansionist thrust of the Vijayanagara rulers all over south India and their concomitant continuous conflicts with the Bahamini Sultanate compelled the former to search for an easy access to the horse trade of the Arabian Sea. Cavalry played a vital role in the military successes of the Vijayanagara rulers. Saleatore, commented, that the foreign policy of the Vijayanagara rulers was to a large extent governed by the necessity of securing for themselves a continuous supply of horses from Ormuz. Firishta claims that the Vijayanagara army in 1443 constituted no less than 80,600 horsemen. Because these horses which were imported from west Asia had a short span of life, a continuous supply of horses to the Empire had to be maintained in order to keep the cavalry force up to strength.121

v. The Economic relations between the Keladi and Malabar

The Portuguese seized control during 1568-69 of the three coastal towns of Onor (Honawar) Barcelore, and Mangalore and established fortresses and factories at each of these places. Even before this the Portuguese had concluded a treaty with the ruler of Gersopa for supply of pepper in 1540 AD.122

Despite the political differences between the Keladi and the Malabar rulers, the economic relations between these kingdoms were carried on smoothly. In Mangalore, Della Valle noticed the coming of a fleet from Goa and proceeding to Cochin. Similarly Malabar Moors mainly inhabited Ullala, which was within the kingdom of the Keladi. The brisk trade that was going on between Keladi and Malabar adversely affected Portuguese interests. This

120 Ibid., pp49-50.
121 Ibid., pp50-51.
is clearly mentioned in a treaty between Virappa Nayaka and the Portuguese in 1631. The above treaty states that the Ikkeri rulers should not allow the Malabar sailors into their ports or sell them food grains from their ports and lands. But the effect of the treaty was lost after the death of Virappa. Again the Portuguese, with the intention of securing their trade interests in Kanara, concluded a fresh treaty with the Virabhadra Nayaka in 1633. In the treaty the Portuguese induced Virabhadra to promise that he would not admit pirates into his ports. Despite this, the Malabar traders carried on trade with the Kanara coast, for which we have the evidence of Peter Mundy in 1637, Mandelslo in 1639 and the English records of 1645. Portuguese settlements at Onor, Barcelore, and Mangalore proved to be a major stumbling block in the initial stages of the expansion of Venkatappa Nayaka in the early seventeenth century.

The Portuguese authorities keeping in view their position and the growing power of the Nayaka of Ikkeri arranged the contracts as advantageously as possible to get their terms fulfilled and their consignment ready for the annual fleet and thus avoided the enmity from the Nayaka. The ruler of Ikkeri became the major concern of the Portuguese to keep peace especially when the threat from the Dutch and the English was on the increase. In 1629 the Portuguese viceroy, the count of Lingares in order to strengthen his position at Barcelore, established a new fortress at Cambolim. Virabhadra Nayaka considered this fortress a barrier to the harmonious relations between him and the Portuguese. It was indeed one of the most strategically located forts in the region and had many advantages over Barcelore and possessed a better water supply. It was favorably situated for controlling both the adjacent paddy lands and the sea.

124 *op.cit.*, pp.33-34.