

CHAPTER IV

TRACES OF HISTORICAL FACTS FROM SANDESAKAVYAS & SHORT POEMS

Sandesakavyas occupy an eminent place among the lyrics in Sanskrit literature. Though Valmiki paved the way in the initial stage it was Kalidasa who developed it into a perfect form of poetic literature. Meghasandesa, the unique work of Kalidasa, was received with such enthusiasam that attempts were made to emulate it all over India. As result there arose a significant branch of lyric literature in Sanskrit. Kerala it perhaps the only region which produced numerous works of real merit in this field. The literature of Kerala is full of poems of the Sandesa type.

Literature can be made use of to yield information about the social history of a land and is often one of the main sources for reconstructing the ancient social customs and manners of the respective periods. History as a separate study has not been seriously treated in Sanskrit literature. Apart form literary merits, the Sanskrit literature of Kerala contains several historical accounts of the country with the exception of a few historical Kavyas, it is the Sandesakavyas that give us some historical details. Among the Sanskrit works, the Sandesa Kavya branch stands in a better position in this field (matter) Since it contains a good deal of historical materials through the description of the routes to be followed by the messengers in the Sandesakavyas. The Sandesakavyas play an important role in depicting the social history of their ages. The keralate Sandesakavyas are noteworthy because of the geographical, historical, social and cultural information they supply about the land. Kerala is perhaps the only region which produced numerous works in this field from about the 14th century down to the present day. On the basis of this, in this chapter an attempt is made to deal with some important Sandesakavyas and their bearing on the history of Kerala.

The main Sandesakavyas Bearing on Kerala History

The Meghasandesa of Kalidasa has inspired several Sandesakavyas in Kerala as also in other parts of India. The earliest and the most important Sandesakavya of Kerala

is the Sukasandesa of Lakshmidasa (14th C. AD) Following Sukasandesa, a number of Sandesakavya were produced in Kerala. Some of them are very important from the historical stand point. They are the Hamsasandesa of Purnasarasvati (14thC) , the Kokilasandesa of Uddanda Sastri (15thC), the Mayura sandesa of Udayaraja (16thC), the Kamasandesa of Matrdatta(16thC), the Brngasandesa also called Bhramarasandesa by one Vasudeva, a contemporary poet of Melputtur Narayanan Bhatta (17thC) the Subhagasandesa of Narayana (17thC), the Catakasandesa by a Brahmin from Tirumandhamkunnu who lived under the patronage of Kartika Tirunal Ramavarma Maharaaja of Travancore in the 18thC,the Nilakanthasandesa by Punnasserri Sridharan Nambi(1774 - 1830 AD), Viprasandesa of Kocconni Tampuran of Kotunnallur, Sarikasandesa of Ramapanivada, another Cakorasandesa of anonymous authorship.

From a close study of those Sandesakavyas a lot of historical accounts, Kings, poets, other reputed persons, the places, temples, mountains, rivers etc. described in these different poems are briefly dealt with here in one by one.

Sukasandesa

Sukasandesa¹ is the first and foremost among the Sandesakavyas of Kerala in Sanskrit literature. Mahakavi Lakshmidasa is the author of this Kavya. He is supposed to have been a Namputiri Brahmin of Kerala. He lived in the house Karinnampatti at Kanayanur taluk in Cochin² during the 14th C. AD³. This is a unique poem in several respects. This kavya has 164 verses, 14 in Parvabhaga and 90 in Uttarabhaga.

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1. Ed. Dr. N.P. Unni 1985 with Malayalam translation by Madam Paramesvaran Nambutiri and commentary by Puliyanur S. Rama Iyer, Kottayam, 1968
JRAS 1884, Ananthanarayana Sastri - Mangalodaya 113 M.E.
 2. KSC I - P 142, KSSC I - P 271
V.V. Sarma - Lakshmidasa kavih, JKUOML - XXII, No. 4, P 85
 3. It is generally ascribed to the 13th C. AD. Vatakkumkur assigns the work to the 5th C . A.D. KSSC Vol. I - P 273

The theme is the message sent by the lover through a parrot to his counterpart. The messenger is to go from Ramesvaram in the South where the separated lover so journeys, upto Trkkanamatilakam referred to as Gunaka, which is situated near the modern crangannore in north Kerala.

Places, temples, mountains , rivers etc.

The route covers various places of cultural and historical interest like cape comorin, Sucindram, Trivandrum, Quilon, Tiruvalla, Kaduthuruthi etc. In this Kavya after the description of the city called Manalur in Tamilnadu and the mountain Sahya, the poet direct the messenger to enter into Kerala through a nirjhara or a waterfall which is identified with a cascade called 'Olakka Aruvi' in the 'Asambhu' Sub-range of the Sahya mountain. The great temples in these localities are mentioned along with their characteristic features. Rivers like Phulla and Curni are referred to on the way.

SK refers to Kollam as the capital city of the Kupaka kings, situated on the sea-shore endowed with all riches. This gem among the cities appears as it placed there by the sea, brought from its in most depths became of the fear of being churned on again. The description of the marchantile city of Kollam shows that it was very prosperous and a well developed city in those days⁴. The poem contains a vivid description of Trivandrum in as many as sixteen verses⁵, but no historical date are available from them.

Historical details

The SK refers to Sabaras or mountain races who are found all along the range of the Sahya ghats having a particular name at each place such as Todas, Vedas, Mannans, Kanis etc. The women of these mountain races were necklaces of seeds of Gunja as described in the present context in the SK.

4 ~~കൊല്ലം കിഴക്കു കരളിനാഥൻ
 കൊല്ലം കിഴക്കു കരളിനാഥൻ
 കൊല്ലം കിഴക്കു കരളിനാഥൻ
 കൊല്ലം കിഴക്കു കരളിനാഥൻ~~

5. SK I - 40 - 45

Kaimukku Ordeal

This kavya also refers to the famous 'Kaimukku' ordeal⁹ (ordeal of boiling ghee). It was introduced by the Nambutiri Brahmins who migrated to the country. A popular method employed for detecting criminals was by ordeal. In S.K. there is allusion to the Kaimukku ordeal at Sucindram temple. The most important historical mention found in the poem is that of the Sucindram pratyaya or the ordeal of boiled ghee that was in the Sucindram temple. This is perhaps the earliest mention, literary or otherwise, of the Sucindra pratyaya Kaimukku, literally means dipping the hand, was a peculiar method of testing the innocence of a suspected offender. The usage $\text{^{\circ}E\hat{I}^{\circ} "EzEtE\hat{E}\{E SE}$ in the verse indicates that the ordeal was extent at the time of composition of the poem¹⁰.

The statement in this poem¹¹ that the great Brahmins of Mahodayapuram, by whose blessings the king became the lord of a kingdom, is an allusion to the Ariyittuvazhcha ceremony. It is a ceremony connected with the coronation of a Kerala Cheiftain. Brahmins like Azhvancheri Tamprakal enjoyed the privilege of conducting this ceremony as a hereditary right.

The dancing girls attached to the temples were known as devadasis. As the name suggests, they were dedicated to the service of the duties. This system was as old as the ancient Dravidian civilization Delineation of the charms of Devadasis and their historic talents is obtained in the Sandesakavyas. Sanskrit is full of references and descriptions of the girls of the dancing community. The heroine herself was a well known dancer of Trkkanamatilakam. At Trkkanamatilakam dance performances were held in the theatre of

9. $\text{^{\circ}E\hat{I}^{\circ} "EzEtE\hat{E}\{E SE$

10. For details about the Sucindrapratyayam vide Dr. K.K. Pillai - The Sucindram temple , Madras, 1953, Pp 299 - 325 and K. Mahesvaran Nair - Kerala caritrattile cila maulika rekhakal, Tvm 1974 P.P. 50-52

11. SK I - 6

big temples. Devadasis retired from active service and instructed the newly recruited dancing girls in the science of sex¹².

While describing the Brahmin village at Trippunitura the author refers to a learned scholar by name Subrahmanya. He is identified with a member of the Puliyanur Brahmin family which was famous for Tantra. In the same context the poet refers to a scholar named Bana who was an opponent of Subrahmanya.¹³.

Hamsasandesa

Hamsasandesa¹⁴ is another message poem by a Kerala scholar and commentator Purnasarasvati, a disciple of Purnajyothis. The work is written in 14th A.D. The author belongs to the Kattumatam Illam in north Malabar. Traditionally it is believed that Parasurama, had blessed the Illam of Purnasarasvati. He is the greatest among the sanskrit commentators of Kerala. Purnasarasvati - it is believed is a title given to him considering his great scholarship in various branches of Sastras and this only a pen-name. The original name of the author is not known.

12. ~~കേരളത്തിലെ പഴയ സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ~~
~~പുരാതനകാവ്യങ്ങളുടെയും~~
~~സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെയും പരിചയം~~
~~പ്രദാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു ഗ്രന്ഥം (15)~~

~~പുരാതനകാവ്യങ്ങളുടെയും~~
~~സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെയും പരിചയം~~
~~പ്രദാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു ഗ്രന്ഥം~~
~~പ്രദാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു ഗ്രന്ഥം (133)~~

13. For more details see - (a) A survey on the system of messenger poems in Kerala
 - Dr. K. Chandrasekharan Nair - 1988 - Pp 15 - 25
 (b) Some Sandesakavyas and their bearing on Kerala History
 E. Esvaran Nambutiri JKS - Vol. V - 1978 - Pp 43 - 51
 (c) Historical and cultural gleanings from Sandesakavyas of Kerala -
 M.T. Muralidharan -Uty of Kerala - 1994 (PhD Thesis)
14. TSS No. 129, Tvm 1937

The poem is not divided into two sections called Purabhaga and Uttarabhaga and it altogether contains 102 stanzas. It seems the poem is incomplete as available now. The poem adopting a novel theme. A maiden of Kancipuram happens to be attracted by the charm of Krsna, the lord of Gopis, while she was witnessing a festival. After some time she sends a swan to Vrndavan, the abode of Krsna detailing the pangs for the union with him. The messenger has to pass through the countries of Chola, Pandya and Kerala. Rivers like Kaveri, Kalindi, Tamraparni are described on the way and temples at Trivandrum¹⁵, Ambalappuzha etc. are prominently referred to.

Kings

Some Travancore kings are mentioned in this poem. The king of Travancore Vancisa is described as a very munificent and famous king¹⁶. His proficiency in fine arts and literature is without comparison and his scholarship is unrivalled. He is referred to as Sarvakalavallabha¹⁷. The king mentioned here may be Swati Tirunal Ramavarma. The qualities described here are eminently applicable to Swati Tirunal. Further, Ullur and Vatakkumkur opine that this poem was composed after the coronation of Swati Tirunal (1829-46 AD) and before the accession of Utram Tirunal to the throne (1846-60)¹⁸

HS speaks of the famous Kaimukku ordeal at Sucindram temple.

Handwritten Malayalam text with a reference to HS-52.

Literally it means dipping the hand'. This pratyayam must have been instituted in Sucindram sometime between the 13th and the 15th C. AD, by some Nambutiri Brahmins

15. HS I - 64

16. HS I - 66 - 69

17. Handwritten Malayalam text with a reference to HS-70.

18. KSC IV - P 125 ; KSSC IV - P 251

migrated to the country¹⁹. It was particular method for testing the innocence of a suspected offender. The accused is asked to dip his hands in the boiling ghee and to pick up the silver image of a sacred bull , which is submerged in it. Soon his hand is wrapped with plantain leaves and he is lodged in a place for three days. If his hand is not burnt, his innocence is established. The ordeal is mainly intended to establish the chastity of Nambutiri women. The 'kaimukku ordeal' was stopped in the year 1845 during the reign of Swati Tirunal of Travancore²⁰.

The Devadasi system is found mentioned in this poem. In the morning the courtesans returning after their nocturnal affairs are described as feeling embarrassed seeing the travellers on the way. Old man adorning a turban decked with Jasmine garlands and anointed with sandal paste on the breast and forehead, are described as going the brothels of young harlots holding the ivory handle of the umbrella and a stick covered with silver²¹. The prostitutes of Kutamalur are also mentioned in the poem. There in the evening the paramours go to the predestined spots at the instance of the maids of the courtesans. The lovers are seen going to the residence of their beloveds, wearing shoes and golden turban and chewing betels. They are dressed in white clothes and are holding fans of Palmyra leaves. Their ear ornaments studded with gems shed brilliance in different direction. Similarly the ladies too go to the houses of their paramours after bathing in cold water. Their charming breasts can be seen through their upper garments²².

The Brahmin villages on the banks of the river Tamraparni are mentioned in this poem. There the Brahmins are proficient in the Ahitagni sacrifices. Several sacrificial posts are seen on the banks and they are compared to the girdle of the river Tamraparni. There the atmosphere is always covered by the white columns of pure smoke, bearing the fragrance of the sacrificial fuels. There the flow of water is often obstructed by the several bathing ghats with flights of steps for the convenience of the Brahmins residing there.

19 For details see Dr. K.K. Pillai - The Sucindram temple, 1953, Madras, Pp 299 - 325

20. SKH P 321

21. HS I - 62, 63

22. Ibid 8-10

Here also the Brahmins are referred to as Bhudevas²³. For more details²⁴

Kokilasandesa

Kokilasandesa²⁵ is one of the best sandesakavyas produced in Kerala. The author of the famous lyric is Uddanda. He is born in Tondamandalam in chingleput in the Madras presidency, he spent the larger part of his life in the soil of Kerala travelling the length and breadth of the land referred to by him in his works in glorious terms.

KL a beautiful lyric in 162 stanzas and divided into two parts is one of the best of the type. The poet assumed the role of the hero and sends a message to his consort living at Marakkara in Cennamangalam. The messenger Kokila is requested to go to Kerala from Tontamandalam, his native place at Madras. The work affords an occasion to the author to describe various places of interest like shrines and rivers and to refer to various celebrities of the time with whom he had been in good relations.

Places, Temples, Rivers etc.

The route preferred by the poet is a northern one as against the southern course described in Sukasandesa. The destination being almost very near to each other Trkkaramatilakam (Gunaka) and Cennamangalam (Jayantamangalam) both located in Cochin, these two together afford a complete geographical and cultural account of Kerala. References is made to rivers like Nila (Bharatappula), Vanmayi (Vavalippula), Curni (Periyar), Valli (Valliyar). The region through which the messenger is to pass by are North-

23. HS I - 32

24. See (a) Dr. K. Chandrasekharan Nair - Op.cit

(b) Some sandesakavyas and their bearing on Kerala history - E. Esvaran Nambutiri
- JKS -V - 1978 - P 43 - 51

(c) M.T. Muralidharan - Op.cit

(d) International Congress on Kerala studies - Vol. III - P 25 - 26 - Kerala society as
reflected in Skt Sandesakavyas.

(e) KSC III - P 181 ; KSSC III - Pp 445 - 53

25. Anantanarayana Sastri- Mangalodayam - Trissur - 1913

Ed. Dr. N.P. Unni- Kokilasandesa , College Book House, Tvm.

ers Kottayam (the capital of Purali kings) Kolam (Or Kolattunadu) Kukkutakoroda (Calicut) , Prakasa (Vettattunadu) Renakhala (Porkkalam) Kotunnallur, Anjanakhala (Thiruvanchikkulam) alias Mahodayapuram, Vanneri and Jayantamangalam (Cennamangalam). Temples like 'Siva temple at Vrsapuri (Trichur) and Anjanakhala (tiruvanchikulam) Visnu temple at Tirunelli, Durga temple at Samgamagrama (Irinjalakkuda) etc. The sahya mountain is also referred to in the poem.

The famous Mamankam (Mahamaghaseva) festival of Kerala is referred to in this poem. According to tradition Mamankam was originally presided over by the Cera emperors. This famous assembly or festival was held once in every twelve years at Tirunavaya on the banks of Nila or Bharatapula in the month of Phalguna. It was in this festival that the coronation of ancient perumal kings of Kerala was conducted by the representatives of the sixty four Brahmin village corporations which Parasurama created. It was of great political importance in ancient days since the rulers of Kerala were trying with one another the preside over the Mamankam festival.

KL refers to the legendary account of Kottayam royal family that one Harischandra who was an early member of the family was responsible for the introduction of the study of Bhattamimsa in Kerala²⁶. Harischandra built a fort at Purali hill in Kottayam Taluk and is traditionally known as the founder of the family²⁷. The kings of Kottayam were therefore called Puralas (കുറ്റിപ്പുഴയിലെ പാലാഴി) ²⁸

This poem also mentions that the Kottayam kings worshipped Sri. Porkali Bhagavati as their family deity who always blessed them in the battle field for their victory (^aÉÖräù ^aÉä¹ÉÉÄ +É½piÉ½piÉ^aÉä etc.) It may be noted here that in the seventeenth century, the Kottayam family produced two distinguished scholars namely Kerala Varma Tampuran, the author of the Valmikiramayanam Kilippattu and Vidvan Tampuran the great patron of Kathakali and composer of Attakkathas. The famous Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja who fought against

26. KL - I - 45

27. W. Logan, Malabar manual , Madras, 1951 - P 267

28. KL I - 44

the residence of the Cochin rulers. After crossing the Alwaye river and passing through Cennamangalam, Crangannore and Irinjalakkuda, the messenger is to reach Brahmakkala where the heroine Maracandrika alias Uma resides. The description of the towns temples rivers and kingdoms on the way through which the Sandesahara passes is of great historical value.

Kings, Poets and other reputed persons

This poem refers to a king Srikantha. Dr. C. Kunhan Raja identifies the hero of the poem with the author of the work³⁶. He also says that the real name of the author is Udaya who is also the author of the commentary called Kaumudi on the Dhvanyaloka and that Srikantha is the hereditary title of the eldest member of the royal family to which Udaya belonged. This is the Manakkulam royal family in central Kerala. The Malayalam equivalent of this title is Kantan tota and is seen in the famous Malayalam poem Chandrotsavam. Mayura refers to a rich scholar named Sankara. He is described as a great scholar on Sukranti and Brahaspatinithi. Dr. C. Kunhan Raja doubts whether he is the author of the Jayamangala commentaries on the Kamandakiya and Arthasastra. Uddanda Sastri, one of the court poets of Maravikrama and the author of the Mallikamaruta and Kokila sandesa is also mentioned in the Mayura of Udaya. Uddanda's scholarly elocution is remarked in this poem as similar to the flow of the river Ganges.

The royal family of Kocci came into political prominence only in the beginning of the 16th C, but it has its origin as an independent principality after the fall of the Kulasekhara empire³⁷. The traditional view is that it came into existence by the division of Kerala by Ceraman Perumal³⁸. The first king of Cochin was the son of the sister of the last perumal. The dynasty is called Perumpatappu svarupam or Balya country.

36. MR intro. P. 20

37. SKH - P 169

38. Vide PKS Raja - Medieval Kerala , 1953 P. 70

used to witness the great Mahamagha festival standing by the side of the banian tree near a hill⁵⁶. The ruler is often identified with Manavikrama, who occupied the Chaliyam fort in the second half of the 16th A.D.

Other reputed persons mentioned in K.S.

A Brahmin poet having name Mangala in the village Mangalam is mentioned in the K.S. Vatakkumkur identified this Mangalam Village with the famous Killikurissimangalam⁵⁷, near Lakkidi, but the Mangalam poet is unknown of course, he was a Nambutiri Brahmin since the Nambutiris often used to call each other by their family names. Even now there are families among them with the name Mangalam. So it can be believed that the another Vasudeva speaks of the poet with the family name Mangalam. His real name is not known from the reference.

At the end of this work the author refers to a Brahmin scholar called Nilakantha living somewhere in the north of the village Kodikkunnu. This scholar is described in the poem as an incarnation of Bodhayana for the reestablishment of Dharma⁵⁸. Ullur⁵⁹ conjectures that this Nilakantha might be the famous Thaikkattu Yogiyar, the author of the Praisabhasya and Smartaprayascitta.

Communities

The Brahmins living on the Southern banks of the river Kaveri which is under the rule of Acyutappa Nayak is mentioned in the K.S. There the study of vedas dwindled among the Brahmins and the chanting of it is seldom heard. The evening adoration also became rare among them⁶⁰. On the other hand, a Brahmin Agrahara at Kandamanikya is mentioned in the poem. We get reference to the great Brahmins living Tirumittekoda at that time from the K.S. It is said in the poem that the Brahmin there acquired honourable positions in their society by performing sacrifices. They are referred to here as “the Gods

56. KS II - 8 - 9

57. KSSC Vol. III - P 245

58. KS I - 64

59. KSC Vol. III - P 652

60. KS I - 36

of earth”⁶¹. The greatness of the Brahmins at ‘Sukapura is also extolled in the KS. It is stated that the fame of Kerala as ‘Brahmaksetra’ is not lost even a little by the invasion Ksatriyas became of the traditionally endowed duties of the Brahmin at Sukapura⁶². They are proficient in all branches of knowledge⁶³.

KS refers to a market near Palakkad⁶⁴. we get reference to the Svamiyarmathas in Trichur. The saints there are mentioned as experts in Vedanta⁶⁵.

The legendary history of Palakkad pass ascribes its origin to invincible Parasurama. He found it impossible to bring the inhabitants for his own land of Kerala, as the mountain to the east were impossible with his axe he cut the chasm in the Ghats to provide a route it is known as Palakkad pass of about 20 miles broad. This puranic legend is early depicted in the KS⁶⁶.

Bhrngasandesa

The Bhrngasandesa⁶⁷ attributed to the authorship of Vasudeva is also known as Bhramarasandesa. It contains 177 stanzas. The author was contemporary of Melpatur Narayana Bhatta and hence the work can be assigned to the 16th C. AD.

The hero in a full moon light was sleeping beside his love after enjoying conjugell bliss. Then a Yaksi took him and turned to Malaya Sikhara to enjoy with him. On the way in Trivandrum she left him seeing her husband coming. The hero spends some days in Trivandrum and at the end he meets with Bhrnga and beseeches him to carry a message for the heroine.

The route of messenger is lies between Trivandrum and Kottakkal. Description of places, temples, rivers etc. are important from historical and cultural points of view.

61. KS I - 60

62. Ibid 61

63. Ibid 62

64. Ibid 50

65. Ibid 58

66. Ibid 47

67. TSS No. 128

Places, Rivers, Temples

Among the places mentions are Tvm, Quilon, Tekkumkur ruled by Udayamartanda, the capital of Tekkumkur Vatakkumkur ruled by Godavarma, Kutamalur the capital of Cempakasseri rulers, Trippunitura, Cochin, Trkkanamatilakam and Irinjalakkuda.

Several temples on the way find mention in the poem like the Visnu temple at Tiruvalla, Krsna temple at Kumaranellur, Siva temple at Vaikkam, Siva temple at Tiruvanchikkulam, Bhadrakali temple at Kotunnallur, Visnu temple at Irinjalakkuda, Durga temple at Urakam, Siva temple at Trissur, Visnu temple at Guruvayur, Durga temple at Mukkola, Visnu temple at Tirunavay.

Back waters at Astamudi near Quilon and rivers like Murinnapula Bharatappula etc. are also referred to.

Kings - Ravivarma

While describing Trivandrum, Bhrnga refers to a king named Ravi Varma.

©UWQI CHGEE EEEHC EKQDIEE HA
HVAIVEXHP EEEHJHNDKESIOEA*
ESHICDHEM EEEHs EEECHH HAVS.
VEXHICAEHCERHAEHHAHAE*

This Ravivarma was the ruler of the Venad kingdom during (1611-1663 AD). According to historians , it was on this Ravivarma's reign that Tirumala Naik of Madurai had invaded the Nanjunad. The reference EEV^aExiEE[®]uIEE EE EJEEn DCEA may be suggestive of the kings wealth army.

In the time of Bhrnga Kolamba or Quilon was ruled by another Ravivarma who had newly ascended the throne. It is suggested by the stanza that the trade in silk cloth in Quilon was very prosperous at that time. ©EEV^aEAKC]GE(HA)E' EUEHC (HAE)UJHC EEUJA**

This Ravivarma on his reign that the Padmanabha Swami temple had been reconstructed with the Vatilmatham (gale house) Balikkalpura (the front house for oblation), Matappalli (or kitchen) etc. This is referred to in the second half of the relevant stanza of Bhrnga.

Udaya Martanda Varma

There is a reference to the king Udayamartanda of Tekkumkur

உடையமர்தாண்டா
உடையமர்தாண்டா
உடையமர்தாண்டா
உடையமர்தாண்டா*

In BR It is described that the messenger will reach Daksina Bimbali the abode of Udayamartanda, after crossing a forest region. From this one can assume that at that time Tekkumkur was ruled over by the king Udayamartanda. In another verse it is mentioned that the capital of the Tekkumkur kings was situated on the southern banks of the river Minaccil. That is no doubt, the present Kottayam town.

King Godavarma

BR mentions Vatakkumkur as ruled over by Godavarma. He is described as the glorious king and a valiant captain in the battlefield⁶⁸. It is likely that he is the hero of the Godavarma Yasobhusanam of Arunagirikavi and of the Godavarmaprasasti of Melpattur Narayana Bhattatiri.

Keralendra

A king of Kochi is mentioned in this poem by the terms 'Keralendra' Mataksmabhrt' and 'Rajaraja'. The poem describes Kochi as the capital of Rajaraja (king of kings) surrounded by the river Periyar.

കേരളേന്ദ്ര
കേരളേന്ദ്ര
കേരളേന്ദ്ര
കേരളേന്ദ്ര*(1-61)

68. BR 1-38

The ancestral palace of the rulers on the west-coast is also referred to⁶⁹. The poem describes Tiruvancikkulam as a battlefield where the fight between the king of Kochi and the Samutiri of Kozhikode had taken place⁷⁰. This historical fight is also referred to while describing the place Trkkanamatilakam near Kotunnallur. It is stated there that the messenger bee may be mistaken for a gun shot by the soldiers falling on the ground⁷¹. The poet says that the messenger can be see the king, Keralendra, when the later comes to the temple at Trkkanamatilakam for worship⁷².

Rajaraja, Keralendra etc. are the official designations of the rulers of Kochi Virakerala Varma was the patron of Melputtur Narayana Bhatta who wrote the Virakeralaprasasti and Gosrinagaravarnana praising the king and the capital city⁷³. The death of the poet Vasudeva is assigned to the former half of the 17th C. AD, which is the date of Melpattur also⁷⁴. The king is mentioned in the poem as residing at Matilakam with his military-camp ready for attack. Ullur opines that the king Vira Kerala Varma killed Ittikumara Menon, the soldier of the Samutiri, in 1615 AD, and brought Trkkanamatilakam under the central of Kochi. Therefore, this place is described in the poem as “Matadhatrindraguptan” (Protected by the Kochi king)⁷⁵. So the king mentioned in the poem might most probably be the king Virakeralavarma of Kochi(1601-1615 AD)

A palace is mentioned to be built by the Portuguese at Mattaneri by about 1555 AD and presented to the ruler⁷⁶. Since then, for about two centuries, it was the seat of the kings of Kochi. More than a hundred years later, at about 1663 AD, the palace underwent repair and renovation at the hands of the Dutch. Thereafter, the palace came to be known

69. BR 1-62

70. Ibid 64-65

71. Ibid 66-67

72. Ibid 68

73. SKH P-128

74. Sambasiva Sastri - Intro to BR

75. VD - VI - P 36

76. SKH - P 281

as the Dutch palace. The palace of the ancestors of Kochi kings referred to in the poem on the west coast may be the famous dutch palace.

Brngasandesha describes the fight between the Samutiri and the king of Kochi while describing Trkkanamatilakam and Kotunnallur. The poet advises the messenger reaching Tiruvancikkulam, to be careful that the arrows which come from the battlefield do not touch his body. At Kotunnallur, in the days of the war, the messenger can see the Goddess Kali of Kotunnallur performing Tandava dance with her galaxy of bhutas. The demon intoxicated with drinking the blood are said to be laughing loudly and clapping their hands in the battlefield. Trikkanamatilakam is also mentioned as the venue of the fight, where the messenger bee humming across the sky may be mistaken for a gun-shot by the soldiers, became Trkkanamatilam at that time resounded with so many gunshots of the battlefield⁷⁷.

Kotunnallur was the venue of the great war between Kozhikode and Kochi. It is pointed out by ullur, that during the reign of Virakerala Varma (1601-1615 AD) and Ravivarma (1615 - 1624 AD) there was always war between Kochi and Kozhikode. The poet conjectures that the king of Kochi might be camping at Matilakam, making proper preparation for war⁷⁸. The Samutiri attack on Kotunnallur in 1604 is famous in the history of Kerala. Continuous war between Kochi and Kozhikode are recorded in the history of Kerala during the 15th and 16th C. AD⁷⁹.

The celestial place of the Samutiri of Kozhikode near the temple at Tirunavaya is referred to in this poem⁸⁰. The place mentioned in the poem is the Manittara or Mamankam them. Poems refers to king Vikrama, Samutiri of Kozhikode. Who has reached Trkkantiyur to move the Tirunavaya for the Mamankam festival. Vikrama king⁸¹ who was a great warrior and who stood for the protection of the Mamanka festival at Tirunavay. The name vikrama relates to the Manavikrama which is hereditary title of the zamorin of Calicut. At

77. BR - I - 64 - 67

78. Ibid 68

79. SKH - Pp 483 - 508

80. BR - I - 88

81. Ibid 90

Ullur identifies this Rama Varma with the brother of Udaya Marthandavarma who fought

with Vijayanagar⁸⁵. If this is correct, as it seems to be, he has to be identified with Bhutalavira

Rama Varma of immortal fame.

While describing the Cempakasserri temple on the hill at Kuttalam poem mentions

a treasurer by name Yajnanarayana, appointed by king Rama Varma of Tiruvitamkur⁸⁶. Ullur identifies him with Yanjanarayana Iyer, appointed by Rama Varma to collect the tolls of Tiruvitamkur kings in the 16th C. AD at Tirunelveli District⁸⁷. Yajnanarayana mentioned in the poem was only a financial officer posted at Kuttalam by the king of Tiruvitamkur⁸⁸.

Catakasandesa

Catakasandesa⁸⁹ is a work of the Sandesakavya type in form though different in content⁹⁰, in that it is a prayer for financial assistance made by a Namputiri Brahmin of Tirumanthamkunnju in Malabar to Kartika Tirunal Ramavarma Maharaja of Travancore through a Cataka bird⁹¹.

85. KSC Vol. II - Pp 288 - 291

86. VD IV - P 11

87. Ibid

88. For more details - KSP Series X , 1932, P 235 - 245- an unpub. Sandesakavya and its bearing on the history of Kerala; KSSC II - 739 - 743

89. VD IV - Pp 74 - 117

90. Instead of Vipralambha srngara one finds the declination of the sentiment of Danavira here for the first time in a poem of this type.

91. KSC Vol. III - P 501. The importance and excellence in this work were highlighted for the first time by Ullur through a paper pub. in SPT, which was in due course included in the VD

When Tippu Sultan invaded Malabar in 1787 a poor Brahmin took refuge in Travancore ruled at that time by Kartika Tirunal. Later due to a sudden illness he returned to his home without formally taking leave of the king. There he worshipped goddess Kali at Tirumanthamkunnu. One day, he inform his hardship to his former protector and chose a Cataka sitting in a garden, as his messenger. The bird is asked to go to Trivandrum with his message of entreaty for financial help⁹².

Places , rivers, temples etc.

Several rivers places of cultural interest are mentioned in the course of the poem. Duties of the temples of Camravattam, Tirunava, Trichur, Peruvanam , Urakam, Irinjalakkuda, Kotunnallur, Trippunithura, Vaikkam⁹³, Kalarkotu, Ambalappula and Haripad are referred to in worshipful terms. Rivers like Bharatapula and Periyar are crossed by the messenger who also passes through places like Cennamangalam, Cempakasseri, Kayamkulam, Krsnapuram, Quilon, Karamana, Neyyatinkara, Parasala and Kulittura.

Although this poem has been brought to highlight as a good source of historical knowledge, in reality it does not make any substantial contribution for the history of Travancore. The poem describes extensively a large number of towns in Travancore ending with Padmanabhapuram. These descriptions are too general and their historical worth is meagre. (In addition to three places, the king has also been described, but that lacks specific references.) Still, a few interesting pieces of information could be gathered from them.

The city of Trivandrum was in those days rapidly rising to prominence, and the heir-apparent of the kingdom used to stay in 'Sripadam palace⁹⁴. The Padmanabhaswami temple in a flourishing state⁹⁵. The Maharaja had his residence at Padmanabhapuram which he relished much.

92. KSC Vol. III - P. 501

93. The well known Vaikkom feast has been mentioned, KSSC Vol. IV - P 214

94. VD IV - P 102

95. Ibid Pp 104 -105

തിരുവനന്തപുരം നാലികാ
 ഗൃഹത്തിൽ
 തിരുവനന്തപുരം നാലികാ
 ഗൃഹത്തിൽ

At Trivandrum, there was the system of ringing the bell at each Nalika as indicated by the Ghatikayantra⁹⁷. The karamana gramam was a centre of adapts in music and Samaguna. In short the poem gives some useful account of the Travancore state of the 18thC.

Kings and other reputed persons

Among the celebrities of the period Paliyattau Komi Accan and the reputed physician Cirattaman Mussatu are named by the poet. The great Divan Kamayana Dalawe (the minister) is also mentioned Kartika Tirunal the illustration ruler and patron is eulogised in several verses⁹⁸.

Catakasandesa of Manttitta Sastra Sarmanah

Catakasandesa⁹⁹ by Manttitta Sastra Sarmanah bearing some historical facts they are - the Minister of Cochi called Rajagopala is mentioned in this poem¹⁰⁰. He can be identified with P. Rajagopalachari, the devan of Cochi, during the period 1896 - 1901. It was during his time that a chief court with a chief justice and two judges was set up for Kochi and railway line from Shornur to Ernakulam was completed¹⁰¹.

The brahmin rulers of Edappalli are referred to in this poem as Dantalinayakas¹⁰².

96. VD IV - P 105

97. Ibid P 106 തിരുവനന്തപുരം നാലികാ

98. More details see- Historical and cultural gleanings from Sandesakavyas of Kerala (PhD Thesis , Uty of Kerala, M.T. Muralidharan 1994), Sandesacatustayam - A study - M Phill Thesis - M.T. Murallidharan

99. തിരുവനന്തപുരം നാലികാ ഗൃഹത്തിൽ
PhD Thesis - Uty of Calicut- P.C. Murali Madhavan 1980

100. CK(M) 1 - 46

101. SKH - P 332

102. CK(M) 1 - 32

Edappalli was a small kingdom situated in the vicinity of Kochi. Kodunnallur is described in this poem as the seat of the kings who were great patrons and scholars of art, literature and the various sastras. Their knowledge was world famous. There were many kings in that family who were scholars and poets. Special mention is made to the scholars like Kunhiramavarma , Kunhunni Raja, Kunhan Raja, Kavi Sarvabhauma Kocunni Tampuran, Godavarma, Kunhikkuttan Tampuran and Jyotsyan Kocunni Tampuran¹⁰³.

The Parappanad royal family is referred to in this poem as Parappabhupalavamsa. It is also stated that, when Tippu invaded Malabar, several members of the family migrated to Tiruvitamkur. The Laksmipuram palace at Canganasseri, which gave birth to the great poet Keralavarma Valiya Koyi Tampuran, was set up by some such immigrant princess¹⁰⁴.

The king of Campakasseri, entitled Devanarayana, is mentioned in this poem¹⁰⁵. Catakasandesha refers to the palace as Kanakagiri¹⁰⁶, which is the famous hill palace at Trippunithura known as Kanakakkunnu kottaram in Malayalam.

While describing Cennamangalam poem refers to the Paliyam family¹⁰⁷, the member of which were the hereditary ministers of the Cochi kings. According to this poem Mahodayapuram was the capital of Cera emperors. The perumal kings are referred to as Cerabhumisvaras¹⁰⁸ in the poem. The king at Mahodayapuram is described as the emperor under who various feudel lords seems to have complete control over the administration, with only nominal allegiance to the emperor of Mahodayapuram¹⁰⁹.

103. CK(M) 19 - 24

104. Ibid II - 23

105. Ibid I - 73

106. Ibid 57

107. Ibid 28

108. Ibid 26

109 For more details See - P.C. Murali Madhavan - Op.cit - Pp 344 - 362

Nilakandasandesa

Sridharan Nampi of the famous punnasseri¹¹⁰ house in Pattambi has composed a poem called Nilakantasandesa¹¹¹ consisting of 126 verses in all. The author flourished between 1774 - 1830 AD. He was a student of Bharata Pissarati and he became a famous astrologer. He had also composed Vikramadityacarita and Bhagavtam Ekadasa skanda in Kilippattu style in Malayalam¹¹². The members of the poetic family used to adorn the ministership of the kings of Calicut and managed the affairs of the Eralippattu.

The subject matter of this poem is the message sent from Irinayur (Ihapura) to cerppulasseri through a peacock. Here the identity of the hero and the heroine and the circumstances in which the separation occurred are not mentioned.

The Sandesahara has to pass through the places reach the destination Viz Kasthali, Puspakrota, Marutapura, Vallapaga, Surakrotam and Maniyanatam. These are the Sanskritised forms of the names of certain local places between Pattambi and Cerppulasseri.

The Talasseri fight between the Zamorin and Hyder is stated in this kavya. Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore and the Samutiri of Kolikkot are mentioned in this poem as Ayitali and Acatambhodhibharata respectively. The fight between the Samutiri and Hyder Ali in the battle field of Calisseri near Kunnamkulam is referred to it in the poem. The place is described as very suitable for the camping of the army. In the battle the heads and hands of soldiers were cut down by sharp arrows, and blood splashed everywhere mixed with flesh and fat¹¹³.

110. Referred to as Punnakasreni in Skt

111. Ed. K. Raghavan Pillai, TSS No. 218, 1966

112. P. Govindapillai points out the following works also besides those stated above as written by Sridharan Nambi, 1 - Parivetana Sataka, 2 - Bhagavata sangraha 3 - Madhyaganitha and Astakavali
Govindapillai - Malayalabhasa charitram, P - 408

113. Nilakanthasandesa - Sl. 30 - 32

History records Hyder Ali's conquest of Malabar¹¹⁴. He became the Navab of Mysore in 1761. He wanted to annex Kerala. In 1766 Hyder marched his army into north Kerala and defeated the joint forces of Samuthiri and his allies at Perumkulam, and coming to Kolikote besieged the Samutiris fort. Hyder again appeared in Malabar in 1773. Hyder Alis authority was reestablished in Malabar without any resistance. Hyder then turned his attention to Kochi and captured Trissur in 1776¹¹⁵. The invasion of Hyder Ali mentioned in the poem must be most probably be the second one. The date of the poet, is between 1774-1830 AD¹¹⁶. The Mysore forces rallied at Ramagiri fort on the road from Cerppulasserri to Pattambi in Palakkad district only to be routed once more¹¹⁷. The route of this poem also runs from Pattambi to Cherpulasserri.

A few reonnants of a fort are seen at Calisseri. K.C. Manavikrama Raja says that the fort fell down due e to the invasion of Tippu¹¹⁸. This fort is known as too Kuttanattkotta. This place is located in Palakkat district about 10 km from Pattambi on the way to Guruvayur. It is believed to be constructed by one of the Hindu kings, forgotten by history. Some opinion that the fort belongs to Tippu Sultan. Local tradition also supports this view¹¹⁹.

In this poem, there is a reference to the journey of European couples by the vehicles drawn by horses etc. available in those days. The word Hunadhisa in this poem indicates the British power in Kerala.

The social references such as Brahmacarins stage, study of Mimamsa Sastra and gift of Brahmesva in temples are some of the other notable features in this poem¹²⁰.

114. K.P. Padmanabha Menon, History of Kerala, P 266

115. K.V. Krishna Iyer - A short history of Kerala -1966, Pp 140 - 141

116. CKSL P 236

117. Kerala District Gazetteers, Kozhikode, P 153

118. E.E. Nambuthiri - JKUOML XVI, 4, Pp 39 - 49

119. District census hand book, 3, Palakkad, 1965, P 73

120. More details see - KSSC Vol. III - Pp 494 - 495; KSC Vol. IV 365 - 367

Viprasandesha

Koccunni Tampuran Kotunnallur (1858 - 1926 AD) a prolific writer who was often called the Kavisarvabhauma has composed the poem called Viprasandesha¹²¹. The Kavya is a small lyrical piece written in the "ÉxñùÉGòÉxiÉÉ" metre and consists of 126 stanzas. It contains two parts known as Purvabhaga and Uttarabhaga respectively.

The hero is a Brahmin 30 years old. The Astrologers informed him his possible death at the age of 32 and to save himself from that he should bath in Gangas and worship Siva there. There by the Brahmin went to Kasi and worshipped Siva daily taking bath in Gangas. He was alone there. Thus suffering from the seperation of his beloved he happened to meet a Brahmin and through him he sends a message to his beloved.

Places, rivers, Temples etc.

Almost all the significant places in between Banaras (Kasi) and Tvm are narrated in this poem. The significant places of Prayaga, Jabalpur, Bhosapur, Itasi, Raiccur, Katappa, Irode, Arkonum, and Vellore are all mentioned here. Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada, Tapati, Godavari, Krsna, and Kaveri are some of the most important Rivers that come under the description. While reaching Kerala he is employed to visit some well known temples. On the way and glorify the deities there. They are the following Vatakkunnatha at Trissur, the Bhadrakali at Kodunnallur, Purnatrayisa at Tripunithura, Lord Siva at Vaikkom, Balagopala at Ambalappuzha, the Dharmasastra at Sastamkotta and the Jagannadha at Varkala. This poem ends with the description of the city of Tvm and the Sripadmanabha Swami ksetra there.

Kings

While describing Trippunitura, it is stated that the king of Kochi resides in the palace there in glory and fame. His brother, who is very fond of Brahmins is also with him¹²².

121. A portion pub. in Kairali 1904 with Mal trans. of Sri. Parameswara Iyer ; JRAS P 449, 1884 ; KSSC Vol. V - P 334 - 339; KSC IV - P 338 - 339

122. VR I - 52 - 54

Visakha. It is also described that precious things lost on the way will not even be touch by the passengers due to the fear of the king¹²⁷.

Ramavarma Vishakhham Tirunal of Tiruvithamkur (1880-85 AD) Succeeded by Ayilyam Tirunal is the king referred to here. He had a great reputation for learning and administration.

The description of an elephant belonging to the Vaikkam temple in Travancore is a glorious one.

The Anacaras or peculiar customs of the Namboodiri's of Kerala are a set of 64 social and religious observances. They are known as Keralacharas. The term Anacaras mentioned in V.S.¹²⁸ means the acharas not being observed in other places.

Sarikasandesa

Sarikasandesa¹²⁹ is a beautiful lyric composed by Ramapanivada a famous poet of Kerala. He belonged to the 18th C. AD. The colophon of the kavya gives the identity of the author. The poem contain 122 stanzas, it has not been divided into two parts. The messenger Sarika has to forward from Vrindavan to Ambalapuzha.

A cowherd damsel who was in love with Krishna sat hiddenly in a bower on the banks of Yamuna in Vrindavan due to some conquetish anger. After remaining some time there she came out to join with her lover. But she could not see him in Vrindavan even after her earnest search. No she heard an aerial voice that her Lord had gone to Kerala. He remains in a temple at Amaratateni, a place ruled by Devanarayana. The unearthly voice also suggested that she should send a messenger to her lord in Kerala. The message was sent and the lovers were united again.

127. VR 1 - 55

128. ~~കേരളചരങ്ങൾ~~
~~കേരളചരങ്ങൾ~~
~~കേരളചരങ്ങൾ~~
~~കേരളചരങ്ങൾ~~
~~കേരളചരങ്ങൾ~~

129. Ed. Dr. Nilakanthan, Delhi 1987

Devanarayana of Ambalappula

The Campekkasseri region otherwise known as Purakkat (comprised of the present Ampalappula and Kuttanad Taluks) was ruled by the Brahmin kings known by the title of Devanarayanan. They were great patrons of poets and artists¹³⁰. They ruled the kingdom of the city of Ambalappula, which was the capital.

The other king referred to in many works of the author is one Devanarayana of Ambalappula. In sanskrit Devanarayana of Campakasseri is referred to as the ruler of the country and sharing the responsibility of its protection with lord Krsna.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
कृष्णाय नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय (SS5)

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय (SS28)

The poet eulogises the king as the representative of Lord Krsna. He states that Krsna shouldering himself the responsibility of the protection of the kingdom, simply bestows the credit for the protection upon king Devanarayana and remains silent as an innocent cowboy. Under his protection, the Campakasseri kingdom enjoys the height of prosperity.

130. Sreedhara Menon, Kerala caritram, 1975, P 245

The description of the temple and its surroundings met with in the poem still holds good. Krsna is worshipped in the temple in the form of Parthasarathi (the charioteer of Arjuna) with the whip and the coch in his hands, in a pose having completed his mission of helping Arjuna. Krsna is portrayed as such in the work¹³⁵.

There are a few stone throughs, though the present removed to nearby places. Since they are out of use now, built for the use of cows to drink water. The reference to a big through near the well in the poem¹³⁶. Supports this, though it cannot be identified, as the present there is no through to be found near the particular well. Traditions say that there were arrangements for fethering herds of cows belonging to the temple. It is interesting to note that the temple is still called by the name gosala and the deity there, 'gosalakrisna' as seen in the work¹³⁷. Time has obliterated the marks of this stable and there are no arrangements for feeding cows of the temple now.

The other traits of the temple as visualised by the poet in this poem¹³⁸ are to be found almost as such, even now. The circular pond in front of the temple is found there with its pavements. The reference to the military parades in that pond is called 'Velakali', a performance by the warriors exhibiting their talents in using weapons, customary in some temples of South Kerala in connection with the annual festivals¹³⁹. In the Ambalapula temple it is the Nair community which organises this martial exercise during the annual festivals which fall in the month of Mina of Malabar Calender (March - April). These sports are conducted in the temple from the second upto the ninth day of the annual festivals even now. The drum 'Velathegil' is used for this as musical accompaniment. The soldiers display their skill in exercise often standing in knee-deep water.

To the west of the temple, there is a row of royal mansions and another pond near it. In the south is situated a dancing hall and a royal palace. On the northern side is to be seen

135. SS 6, 30

136. Ibid 21

137. Ibid 10

138. Ibid 19, 20, 21

139. A. Sreedhara Menon Kerala Caritram 1975, P 540

the dining halls, standing almost intact even now. The royal palaces are almost deserted now, though some portions are occupied by the employees of the temple. The flag-staff in front of the shrine, the pillar of lamps behind and the beautiful well nearby are also found there. The well is called 'Manikkinar' even now, which is referred to as 'Sudrsat' and 'nirmalapah'¹⁴⁰ and is still in good condition.

The description of the oblatinal ceremonies refers¹⁴¹ to the prevalent customs of the temple, that the idol of Krsna is usually carried on the head by the priest and on special occasions like festival, on the idol of 'Garuda' or a top on an elephant.

The big pipal tree described in this poem¹⁴² still stands there as a mute witness to the incidents of history for centuries. Thus the descriptions pertaining to the shrine and its surroundings have some historical bearing.

Cakorasandesha

The author of this Cakorasandesha¹⁴³ is not known¹⁴⁴. According to Vatakkumkur and Ullur the author of this kavya can never be a mahakavi. His descriptions of the neighboring places belonging to Cochin, and Malabar are done in details. Considering this aspect one can put the author to be a native of Cochin or North Malabar. The heroine suffering from the separation such a message to the hero. The message is sent from Nyaghrapura to Vedaranga. The Vedaranga is situated some miles away from Tirunavay.

Zamorin of Calicut

Cakorasandesam refers to a zamorin of Calicut (Sailapathodhinathah) as the builder of the famous Peruvana temple. Here it is described that the Zamorin became famous by

140. SS 21

141. Ibid 22

142. Ibid 35 - 36

143. JOR XV - P 14 KSC Vol. II - Pp 29 - 30 ; KSSC Vol.I Pp 44 - 46

144. According to Dr. Kunhan Raja the author of this kavya might be one Paramesvara. Some hold the author to be a Vasudeva of Payyur. Dr. P.K. Narayana Pillai states that there is no evidence to show that the work was written by a Payyur Bhattatiri

constructing this temple as known, the son of Tapati acquired fame by building Kuruksetra.

കുറുക്സെത്രം കർവ്വതപതി
കുറുക്സെത്രം കർവ്വതപതി
കുറുക്സെത്രം കർവ്വതപതി
കുറുക്സെത്രം കർവ്വതപതി (147)

We do not get any historical references regarding the construction of the temple by a Zamorin. But it is certain that the Zamorins had some power over that temple. Towards the close of the 15th C. Peruvanam, and Kodunnallur, lying between Kozhikode and Cochin, virtually belonged to the Zamorin¹⁴⁵.

This refers to a Setu touching both the Western Ghats and the Arabian sea, constructed by a Travancore king (Vancisa) to prevent Pancasirsa

പന്ചസീർസാ
പന്ചസീർസാ
പന്ചസീർസാ
പന്ചസീർസാ (135)

It may perhaps be the famous Nedumkotta or 'Travancore lines' built in the central Kerala by Kartika Tirunal Ramavarma to protect Travancore from the impending invasion of Mysore¹⁴⁶.

The Parasurama legend regarding the creation of Kerala from the sea is mentioned in this poem¹⁴⁷. Parasurama supposedly threw his battle are across the sea from Gokarna to Kanyakumari and water cleared the way to form a land. This region so thrown up is said to have constituted the land of Kerala. Then he distributed the land to Brahmins after building institutions and shrines.

145. K.V. Krishna Iyer - A short history of Kerala, Ekm, 1966, P 74

146. SKH - P 278

147. CS II - 4

Poem refers some well known temples like Kutalmanikyam¹⁴⁸, Peruvana¹⁴⁹, Vatukkumnatha¹⁵⁰, Uraka temple¹⁵¹, Guhapura temple¹⁵² etc.

Other Sandesa Kavyas

*Sampatisandesa*¹⁵³ of a Namputiri Brahmin of Puliyanur Tekkeppattu house in Ilavalli near Guruvayur incidently placed like Trippunitura Trichur and Ilavalli are mentioned. *Syenasandesa*¹⁵⁴ of Aryan Narayana Musatu of Vayaskara. The places on the route from Vayaskara in Kottayam to Ernakulam are described in the available portions.

Cakorasandesa(1)¹⁵⁵ of Vasudeva contains 190 stanzas. The poem contain much geographical informations, though its historical value is limited. The places referred to include many important regions of Kerala like Tvm, Quilon, Thiruvalla, Vaikkam etc.

Bhrngasandesa published in Sahridaya¹⁵⁶ speaks of a minister of Kochi, while describing Natavarambu the place about for miles to the north of Irinjalakkuda thus

ഈവനാൻകുളിപ്പാർപ്പി
നാൻകുളിപ്പാർപ്പി
നാൻകുളിപ്പാർപ്പി
നാൻകുളിപ്പാർപ്പി

148. CS - I - 39 - 44

149. Ibid 47 - 48

150. Ibid 1 - 5

151. Ibid 46

152. Ibid 34

153. KSSC - III- P 253 - 256; CKSL - P 237

154. KSC -IV - P 572; KSSC IV - 610 -11

155. KSC II - P 29 - 30; KSSC- I - 444 - 446

156. CKSL - P 236, Sahridaya, Madras, Vol. XXIV, anonymous

He may be Kunhikrishna Menon of Natavarambu. Who was appointed as the chief Minister of Kochi state in 1809¹⁵⁷.

The foregoing survey will go long way in creating an awareness among historians about the hither to unrecognized magnitude of contribution of Sandesakavyas to the field of Kerala history.

Short Poems

Short poems gives us much information on some of the important historical figures of ancient Kerala. Some of the short poems bearing on Kerala history are given below.

Agnivamsarajakatha

Agnivamsarajakatha is a work in verse giving the legendary history of the Zamorin dynasty of Calicut. Vatakkumkur¹⁵⁸ says that this is a very late work and probably written by a member of the Calicut royal family. The work is anonymous and little historical importance.

Citrodayamani

Citrodayamani¹⁵⁹ of Sambasiva Sastri contains 2 cantos euloging Sri Citra Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore and giving the dynastic history of that royal house.

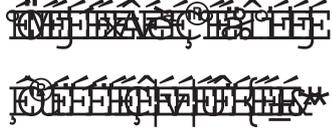
The poem refers the Sri Citra Tirunal Maharajavarma as follows -

ശ്രീചിത്രതിരുനാൾ
മാരാജാവർമ്മ
കേരളീയൻ
പ്രസിദ്ധൻ

157. AKSH - P 328

158. KSC II - 204 - 211, According to K.V. Krishna Iyer it is by Vidvan Ettan Tampuran
K.V. Krishna Iyer - Zamorins of Calicut, P 333

159. Tvm. 1938



The description of the prince as the embodiment of Dharma is very significant. In later times he became more famous as the Dharmaraja than Rama Varma Sankunni statement suggests that the cognomen Dharmaraja was derived not from the king's grating protection to the refugees from Malabar, and the provision made for their maintenance for about twenty five years, but on account of his regular practice of Dharma. Here, Dharma does not merely mean charity, it initially refers to the doctrine of ideal kingship propagated by the Dharmasastras.

Other Short Poems

*Keralavilasa*¹⁸⁰ of Manavikrama Ettan Tampuran of Calicut contains 105 verses based on Keralolpatti. *Kasiyatra varnana*¹⁸¹ of Ramaswami Sastri of Elattur contains 120 verses on the pilgrimage of Visakhama Tirunal Maharaja to Banaras in 1882. *Apaddipah*¹⁸² of Subbarama pattar P.S. is a poem in 33 verses on how a destitute family fleeing the kingdom of Zamurin was helped by an unknown person bearing a divine light to settle in the kingdom of the Maharaja of Cochin.

*Srimulacarita*¹⁸³ is short poem written by Ganapati Sastri deals the history of Travancore royal dynasty. *Gurudigvijaya*¹⁸⁴ of Anantagiri is a biography of Sankaracharya. *Brahmanapratishtha*¹⁸⁵ is another work dealing with the settlement of Brahmins from Tulu Nadu into his country by king Udayavarma of Kolattunadu. *Desyastaka*¹⁸⁶ contains 8 slokas

180. Kerala grandhamala Vol. I, Calicut 1908, Vijnanachintamani press Patambi, 1893, Mangalur 1894

Vide KSC IV - P 476, KSSC V - P 164

181. SPT III - 313 - 314 Vide KSC IV - P 192, KSSC IV - P 414

182. Samskrita pratibha Vol. VII, 2 - 1968, P 140 - 144

183. HCSL - P 302

184. KSC - I - P 91

185. KSC - II - P 83

186. Anonymus authorship, KSC II - P 84

dealing with the life of Udayavarma of Kolattunadu. *Mala*¹⁸⁷ is a historical short poem of Krishnavariar A.V. on Parikshit Tampuran of Cochin. *Visakhavilasa*¹⁸⁸ of Kesavan Vydyan in praise of Visakam Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore.

*Gaunasamagamah*¹⁸⁹ is a small kavya on the visit to Trivandrum of Lord Napier, Governor of Madras, the governor is the Gauna in the kavya, composed in 1863 by Ramaswami Sastri of Elattur. *Mahamrityunjayacarita*¹⁹⁰ of Sankara Variyar of Meethale Madom on a Mahamrtyunjaya conducted by the Raja of Kadamattanam.

*Matamahisha Sastipurthidasaka*¹⁹¹ of Krishnan Namputhiri of Nellurkandi describes the penegric on the Maharaja of Cochin. *Setuyatravarnana*¹⁹² of T. Ganapati Sastri on the setu yatra of Visakham Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore. Above mentioned these works shed light on the ancient Kerala history.

187. Triccur 1948

188. ~~കേരളം~~
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Vide KSC IV - P 232; KSSC IV - P 624

189. VD - III - Pp 311 - 313 ; KSC IV - P 192 ; KSSC IV - P 413

190. KSC IV - P 730 ; KSSC V - P 211

191. KSSC - V - P 422

192. CKSL - P 224 - HCSL P 522 - KSC - V - P 948