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How did Paraśurāma Come to Raise Kerala?

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THIS ESSAY AIMS to clarify, on the basis of the available textual evidence, how the figure of the Bhārgava Brahmin-and-warrior Rāma of the Axe became, in the course of time, intimately associated with the legendary origins of the historical kingdoms constituting Kerala, and when Kerala as the realm of the Brahmins began to be identified with the sacred territory that Paraśurāma once made rise from the sea.

Starting with the assumption of M.G.S. Narayanan and Kesavan Veluthat (1983: 257), the tradition of the creation of a new piece of land by the Bhārgava, after his repeated violent extermination of all the *kṣatriyas* and his gift of the whole earth to Kaśyapa and his descendants, ‘has nothing to do with Kerala’, at least according to the places and the geography originally referred to in the legend. The geographical exploit of Rāma Jāmadagnya was indeed located further north on the west coast of India, in the Śūrpāraka area, as is told in the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 12.49.56-59):

tataḥ śūrpārakaṃ deśaṃ sāgaras tasya nirmame |
saṃtrāsāj jāmadagnyasya so ‘parāntaṃ mahītaṃ || 12.49.59

Then due to fear of Jāmadagnya, the Ocean created for him the land of Śūrpāraka, a territory on the western shore.

*I wish to thank here Emmanuel Francis for kindly sharing with me his expertise of south Indian epigraphy, as well as Eva Wilden and Rich Freeman for providing me with, and allowing me to use, their unpublished materials on early Tamil (Francis and Wilden) or Malayāḷam (Freeman) texts. Thanks also to Dominic Goodall for his help in checking the *Raghuvamśa* commentaries, Brian Collins and Nicolas Dejenne for some bibliographical hints, Asko Parpola for a few emendations and Dylan Esler for correcting my English.

Compare MBh 3.83.4, where the *tīrtha* Śūrpāraka¹ is declared *jāmadagnya-niṣevita*; 3.86.9, and 118.8–10, for the sacrificial altars (*vedī*) of Jamadagni located there, and Bk 7, App. I no. 8 ll. 864–5 (= 7.70.22 Bombay edn.), where the ocean is forced to retire because of the arrow(s) of the *muni*:

sa kaśyapasya vacanāt protsārya sārītaṃ patim |
iṣupāte yudhāṃ śreṣṭhaḥ kurvan brāhmaṇasāsanam ||



Following Kaśyapa's words, he made the Ocean retire by throwing his arrow(s), he the best of the warriors so respecting the order of the Brahmin.

The same is alluded to in the *Harivaṃśa*, in the episode concerning the meeting of Kṛṣṇa with the Bhārgava (HV, App. I no. 18, placed after *adh.* 82 in all the N [except Ś₁] and S mss.):

tvayā sāyakavegena kṣipto bhārgava sāgaraḥ | 1.316
iṣupātena nagaraṃ kṛtaṃ śūrpārakaṃ tvayā || 1.317
[dhanuḥpañcaśatāyāmam iṣupañcaśatodyatam **33 ins. K Ñ V B D T₂₋₄ G₁ M₄]
sahyasya ca nikuñjeṣu sphīto janapado mahān | 1.318
atikramyodadher velām [vegām M₁₋₃] aparānte niveśitaḥ || 1.319

O Bhārgava, through the violence of your shafts you agitated the Ocean, and through the throwing of your arrow(s) you created Śūrpāraka. You have laid out a great country in the groves of the Sahya mountain, situated on the western shore (*aparānta*), after having stepped over the boundary of the Ocean.

Śūrpāraka (Suppāra in Pāli sources) is modern Sopārā in Thane District, Maharashtra (north of Mumbai), the coastal territory originally referred to, at the foot of the (northern) Sahya range, thus clearly points to the (North) Konkan region.² This is confirmed by the allusions in Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*, provided that the text as transmitted by its earliest commentator Vallabhadeva is used.³ For, in the *digvijaya* of Raghu described in Chapter 4, it is after his conquest of the south (*dakṣiṇa*, the country of Agastya), including the regions of Kerala⁴ and the Pāṇḍyas [vv. 46–54 crit. ed. = 44–5 + 54 + 46–51 (synthetic) ed. Scharpé], when crossing the Sahya range and conquering the country and kings of the western shore (*aparānta*) at the foot of the Sahya (vv. 55–60 = 52–8 ed. Scharpé), that the episode of Paraśurāma is mentioned: there, 'put back by the arrows of Rāma' (*rāmeṣūtsāritah*, v. 56), 'the Ocean gave space at the request of Rāma' (*avakāśaṃ kilodanvān rāmāyābhyarthito dadau*, v. 60; cf. also the Bhārgava alluding to his own deed in 11.86). These verses, at least in their original place, can no longer be invoked in relation to Kerala (*contra*, e.g. Kunjan Pillai 1970: 145 fn. 1; Kunjunni Raja 1983: 301; Unni 1987: 2–3, 2012: 158–9, 239, 393–4). Kālidāsa here follows the *itihāsa* tradition, and Vallabhadeva in commenting upon v. 56 rightly understands *aparānta* as the Konkan (*koṅkaṇānām abhibhavārtham*).⁵ Also, Rājaśekhara in his *Bālarāmāyaṇa* (II, v. 15: *ahrta vasataye koṅkaṇān abdhitaḥ*) explicitly says that it is the Konkan region that Rāma seized from the ocean for settlement, and Soḍḍhala's *Udayasundarikathā* (eleventh century) adds interesting testimony about the

temple-presence of Paraśurāma in the Konkan near Śūrpāraka (cf. Warder 1992: 205–6, 221).

However, as observed by Narayanan and Veluthat (1983: 257), Brahmins migrating and settling on the west coast further south ‘seem to have carried the Paraśurāma legend with them’. The site of Cellūr, also known as Peričcellūr (in modern Talipparamba, Kannur District, north Kerala), is already described in the Caṅkam anthology of *Akanāṇūru* as a place marked by the Vedic sacrificial pillar and undying fire (which cannot be approached by everyone) that commemorate the sacrifice of the Great One with the battle-axe.⁶ Here is the extract of *Akanāṇūru* 220, ll. 3–10 (metrical text ed. U. Vē. Rā. Irākavaiyaṅkār with, facing it, the split text, followed by a word-by-word translation established after consulting E. Wilden, who is preparing the critical edition of the collection, and E. Francis):

<i>keṭāat tiyi nūrukēlu cellūr</i>	<i>keṭāa tiyiṇ uru kēlu cellūr</i>
<i>kaṭāa yāṇaik kuḷūuccaman tataiya</i>	<i>kaṭāa yāṇai kuḷūu camam tataiya</i>
<i>maṇmaruṇ karutta maḷuvā neṭiyōṇ</i>	<i>maṇ maruṅk’ arutta maḷu vāl neṭiyōṇ</i>
<i>muṇmuyāṇ raritaṇiṇ muṭitta vēḷvik</i>	<i>muṇ muyaṇr’ aritaṇiṇ muṭitta vēḷvi</i>
<i>kayirarai yāṭta kāntaku vaṇappi</i>	<i>kayir’ arai yāṭta kāṇ taku vaṇappiṇ</i>
<i>ṇaruṅkaṭi neṭuntūṇ pōla yāvaruṇ</i>	<i>aruṇ kaṭi neṭum tūṇ pōla yāvaruṇ</i>
<i>kāṇa lākā māṇēli lāka</i>	<i>kāṇal ākā māṇ el[i]l ākam</i>
<i>muḷḷutorum paṇikku neṇciṇai nīyē</i>	<i>uḷḷu-torum paṇikkum neṇciṇai nīyē</i>

O you, you with a heart which trembles whenever remembering
[her] beautiful and lovely bosom not to be seen
by everyone, like the heavily protected (litt. ‘of difficult protection’) tall pillar
(*tūṇ*),
of a beauty fit to be seen, to the middle part of which a rope is tied,
of the sacrifice (*vēḷvi*) that formerly completed with difficulty, having made efforts,
the Great One (*neṭiyōṇ*) [with] an axe as a weapon (*maḷu-vāl*), who rooted out the race
(*maruṅku*) of kings/warriors (*maṇ*),
when the battle was densely packed with crowds of rutting elephants,
in the beautiful (or ‘awful,’ *uru kēlu*) Cellūr with unextinguishable (*keṭāa*) fire (*tiyiṇ*).

The date of this old Tamil poem, viz., between the third and the sixth centuries AD, makes Cellūr the earliest attested Brahmin settlement in Kerala. Correspondingly, Peričcellūr is considered as one of the four main leading ones, among the 64 original *grāmaṃs* in the later Nambudiri legendary tradition exposed in the (seventeenth century?) Malayāḷam *Kēraḷōlpatti* (ch. 1; cf. Logan 1887: 222–3; Veluthat 1978: 12–20, 2009: 235; Nārāyaṇan Nambūdiri 1992: 243–5); the highest status of the Cellūr Brahmins is enhanced in a northern recension of the *uḷpatti* entitling itself *Jambudvīpōlpatti*,⁷ and in other local traditions (Govindan Namboodiri 2002: 98–9, 210–11); the place is also celebrated in the (fifteenth century or later) *Keraḷamāhātmya* (under the name Lakṣmīśapura) and as the *sampad-grāma* in Uddanḍa Śāstri’s *Kokilasamdeśa* (I, vv. 50–61; second half of the fifteenth century); within its prominent shrine dedicated to Rājarājeśvara

Śiva, a peculiar worship is still dedicated to Paraśurāma (Nārāyaṇan Nambūdiri 1992: 118), whereas, the temple-deity (Cellūr-*nātha* or -*īśa*; see Unni 1980: 96, 162, 174–6, for the literary references) is given a special place in the rituals of the Nambudiri household throughout Kerala (Narayanan 2003: 89). Alongside such medieval developments of temple-centred worship, Cellūr remained among the few purest Vaidika *grāmas* of Kerala, viz., the ones having the right to perform *śrautayāgas* (cf. Logan 1887: 120; Raghava Varier 1983: 289, 296, discussed by Nārāyaṇan Nambūdiri 1992: 147–8; Govindan Namboodiri 2002: 57–9, 157), and one of the chief-centres for Vedic learning (Unithiri 2004: 145).

If it is, therefore, correct to assume that in the *Akanāṇūru* poem there is still ‘nothing to suggest [such a precise] legend to the effect that the land of Kerala was itself created by Paraśurāma’ (Narayanan and Veluthat 1983: 257), it can nevertheless be argued that the growing influence of settled groups of Brahmins (including the early Cellūr settlement, here *contra* Id.: 258) with Bhārgava Brahmin-and-warrior as their mythical ancestor upon the local indigenous dynasties, must have had some effect on the latter’s origin myths. This is not the place to try to determine precise chronological landmarks in the complex process of ‘cultural symbiosis’ between northern Brahmins and indigenous rulers, especially in the rather symbolic matter that is mythology. The fact is that from the eleventh century onwards, the legendary traditions of the Mūṣika kings, who appear to continue the line (cf. Narayanan 1977: 63, 91) of the ancient rulers of Ēḷimalai (‘Ēḷil hill’), the hill chiefdom (cf. Rajan Gurukul 2010: 124, 226) of the *Caṅkam* age (with a Sanskritization of the name of the hill understood as related to *eli* ‘rat’) in the area of Cellūr, connect them intimately with the Bhārgava. Thus, the *Mūṣikavaṃśa*, a historical *kāvya* which can be dated from the beginning of the twelfth century (cf. Unni 1980: 229–37), presents the Mūṣika kings as belonging to the Hehaya line through a widowed queen from Māhiṣmatī who had escaped from the fury of Rāma Jāmadagnya and fled to the Eli mountain, where (after she had delivered the *adri-rāja* from the curse that had transformed him into a giant rat) she gave birth to a male child (*sarga* 1). Later on, the Bhārgava came to the same mountain where he started to perform sacrifices, among which one particular ritual required the help of a *kṣatriya* boy. The divine mountain took this opportunity to propose the queen’s son, who after his participation in the ritual, was consecrated by Rāma as the king of the country under the name Rāmaghaṭa Mūṣika (*sarga* 2, cf. esp. vv. 35–6). That this name was also the hereditary title of the Mūṣika kings (cf. MV 14.18) is proven by Cōḷa (*ŚII* 3.28, cf. Subrahmanya Aiyer 1922: 163; 167, Nilakanta Sastri 1955: 222) and local inscriptions from the eleventh century (cf. Narayanan 1977: 60–3; Unni 1980: 93–4, 156), in which the Tamil corresponding title is *irāmakūṭa mūvar*, to be read as ‘Rāmaghaṭa Senior (Prince of the Mūṣikas).’ There are various hypotheses regarding the original meaning of the hereditary title itself. It is enough to not dismiss (as did Unni 1980: 94, 156) the mythological eponymous explanation by the MV author, according to which the first Mūṣika king got his title Rāmaghaṭa as a result of the royal *abhiṣeka* he received through a potful (*ghaṭa*) of sanctified water from Paraśurāma, thereby

testifying to the complete Brahmanization of the dynastic traditions of this northern Kerala kingdom.

It is in the same eleventh century that one finds epigraphical mention of Paraśurāma giving his special protection to the kingdom of the Cēras or Kēraḷas of Mahodayapuram in central Kerala. In the context of a sort of ritual sovereignty created and maintained by a Brahmin oligarchy that was, according to Narayanan (2013), the Perumāḷ overlordship, it can be expected that the figure of the Bhārgava had also acquired there a significant role in the myth(s) of origin of the ruling dynasty (cf. Narayanan 2013: 116–21, 285 fn. 14).

In the Tiruvāḷaṅkāṭu copperplates (SII 3.205), the Cōḷa king Rājendra I (1012–44) declares that his father, Rājarāja, had conquered Kerala, which he presents as:

*sarvakṣatradhavadhavadhavanayinā rāmeṇa yan nirmitaṁ
rāṣṭraṁ śiṣṭajanābhīrāmam atulaṁ durgam mahāharāṇavaiḥ* | 83ab

the kingdom which had been established (or ‘created,’ *nirmita*) by Rāma, whose beloved vow was to annihilate the whole of the *kṣatra*, and which was adorned with pious people, matchless and inaccessible on account of the mountains and the ocean. (cf. transl. E. Hultzsch, and Veluthat 2009: 299)

In his own *praśasti* which follows, the King declares that he himself was ‘desirous of conquering the country connected with (or “given to”, or “established by”, *upahita*; not “called after”, *contra* Hultzsch) the Bhārgava’ (*tad-upahitāṁ jagatīm jigīṣuḥ*, v. 94), the ‘territory which is protected by the glory of the forehead ornament of the Bhṛgu-race, and which since then has not been injured by enemies’ (*bhṛgu-kula-tilaka-prabhāva-guptām anupahatām aribhis tadādi prthvīm*), and that only the Supreme Lord (i.e. the King as *paramēśvara*) is able to humiliate (as Śiva was the only one able to humiliate the Bhārgava, v. 95); and that after having crossed the Sahya (v. 96), he ‘conquered the Kerala king and destroyed the country protected by the austerities of the chief of the Bhṛgu’ (*jītvā keraḷa-bhūpatiṁ bhṛgu-pateś chitvā tapo-rakṣitām prthvīm*, v. 97).

In the *praśasti* of the same King preserved in the Karantai copperplates (MASI 79), it is similarly said that he conquered ‘the land protected by the austerities of the Bhārgava whose vow was to kill all the kings’ (*bhārgavasya tapasābhirakṣitām viśvarājavadha-dikṣitasya . . . kṣmām*, v. 63), and the Kanyākumārī inscription (EI 18.4, TAS 3.34, with a reading of the passage according to the parallel text of the Cārāḷa copperplate, EI 25.25) adds that ‘he violently seized the crown of the son of Jamadagni, the *kṣatriya*-killer’ (*aharata sa kirīṭam kṣatriyāṇām nihantuḥ/ prasabham . . . jāmādagnyasya*, v. 69). This mention of the seizing of the crown of Jāmādagnya has to be connected, in reference to the conquest of (the) Kerala(s), with ‘the crown of red gold worthy of Śrī (Tiru)’ once deposited by Paraśurāma on an island, which is alluded to in the *meykkīrtti* (‘true glory,’ eulogy in Tamil) of the same Rājendra Cōḷa I (many exemplars on stone and several copperplates, e.g. SII 2.20, 2.82, 3.18, 3.207; EC 3: Tn.34, Nj.134; EC 9: Cp. 82–3, Nl.7; EC 10: Kl.44, Kl.106a).

The King, in enumerating his conquests, declares to have conquered, after the western Cālukyas (ll. 4–7) and Laṅkā (ll. 8–12), and before the Cālukyas again (ll. 21–4), numerous treasuries, among which (ll. 13–20, ed. P. Cuppiramaṇiyam, transl. E. Francis; cf. transl. Hultzsich, *SII* 2, p. 120, and B.L. Rice, *EC* 3 trans. pp. 74, 109, *EC* 10 trans. pp. 11, 32):

eripaṭaik kēraḷar muṛaimaiyir cūṭum
kulataṇam ākiya palarpuḷaḷ muṭiyum
ceṅkatir mālaiyūṇ caṅkatir vēlait
tolperuṇ kāval palpaḷan tīvum
ceruvil ciṇavi irupattu orukāl
araicukaḷai kaṭṭa paracu rāmaṇ
mēvarum cāntimat tivarāṇ karuti
iruttiya cempon tiruttaku muṭiyum

. . . the crown praised by many that the Kēraḷa-kings, whose armies shoot [arrows] (or ‘are shining’), in succession wore as family-treasure, and the necklace of ruddy rays, and the many ancient islands, the natural great guard of which is the ocean resounding with its conches; and the crown of red gold worthy of Tiru, that Paraśurāma, having considered the fortifications of Cāntimat island difficult to access, had deposited (there), he who in anger extirpated the kings twenty-one times in battle.

The second crown (*muṭi*) referred to in the passage, deposited in the unidentified island of Śāntimat (Cāntimat-*tīvu*; *tadbhava*)⁸ and corresponding to the ‘crown (*kiriṭa*) of the son of Jamadagni’ referred to in the Sanskrit *praśasti*, appears to be connected with the Kēraḷa-kings (cf. Gopinatha Rao *TAS* 2, 1920: 32; Sewell 1932: 62; Janaki 1966: 72; Donaldson 1995: 172; Narayanan 2013: 121) and could thus allude to the special role of Paraśurāma as possible ‘protector of the crown’ in some lost royal legendary tradition of the Cēras of Mahodayapuram.

It is noteworthy that from the eleventh century onwards, the Bhārgava is said not only to be symbolically linked with the Cēra or the Mūṣika lineages, but, according to the Cōḷa inscriptions, the Kerala territory itself, as a single entity, would have been ‘given to’ or ‘established by’ (*upahita*) or even ‘created by’ (*nirmita*) the sage (Veluthat 2009: 194, 299). This appears at least consistent with other textual testimonies of about the same time declaring the whole western coast of India to be the land of (viz., created by) Paraśurāma. The expansion of the area of Rāma’s creation has been made theoretically possible by extending the meaning of the term ‘Seven Konkans’ (*sapta-koṅkaṇa*), which originally designated only the ‘Greater’ Konkans with its subdivisions, to include larger portion(s) of the west coast. At times, the more expanded geographical area covered by the term does not go beyond the south of present Karnataka (cf. Saletore 1936: 30–8). However, the whole west coast of India, from Cape Comorin (Kanyākumārī) in the south to Śūrpāraka (and even Broach/Bharuch, which can be understood as *bhṛgu-kaccha*) in the north, viewed as Paraśurāma’s creation, is found designated by the expression *sapta-koṅkaṇa* in several inscriptions and works from the

eleventh century onwards. A good example is the encyclopaedic work entitled *Prapañcahṛdaya* (*PH*). This anonymous Vaiṣṇava-oriented compendium of knowledge, which has been dated roughly to the eleventh century (cf. Parpola 1981: 153–5; Kanazawa 1986; Bronkhorst 2007: 292 fn. 30, 297 fn. 44), but which could be slightly later (twelfth or even thirteenth centuries, cf. below) begins with a cosmography which gives the following list of ‘Seven Konkans’ forming the west-coastal ‘land of Paraśurāma,’ ‘at the foot of the Sahya’ range:

sahyapāde paraśurāmabhūmiḥ / sā saptakoṅkaṇākhya kūpaka-kerala-mūṣika+aluva-paśu-koṅkaṇa-parakoṅkaṇa-bhedena dakṣiṇottarāyāmena ca vyavasthitā / tatra+anantapura-vilvādri-gokaṛṇa-saptakoṭīśvara-bhedena kṣetracatuṣṭayam api bhuktimuktiphalapradam ⁹

Kūpaka, the southernmost one, is Tamil/Malayālam Vēṇāṭu, located south of (central) Kerala *stricto sensu*, itself southern with respect to the Mūṣika country. This threefold geopolitical division constituting Kerala (*lato sensu*, as a single cultural entity) is particularly relevant during the eleventh–thirteenth centuries (see Vielle 2011–12: 366 fn. 2).¹⁰ To the north of it, there is at first Aluva, which has to be identified with Tuḷuva, the Tuḷu country in south Kanara (Saletore 1936: 29; Narayanan and Veluthat 1983: 258; Narayanan 2003: 87); then Paśu, which I would propose to understand as the Go-rāṣṭra referred to above (fn. 9), viz., north Kanara and Goa, at the junction of the Malabar and Konkans coasts, and finally the south and north Konkans *stricto sensu*. It is noteworthy that the four great *kṣetras* mentioned by the *PH* on this sacred territory do not go beyond Goa: Anantapura is Śrī Anantapuram/Tiruvananthapuram in south Kerala (cf. below); Vilvādri is Tiruvilvamala on the river Nīlā/Bharatapuzha in north-central Kerala (Thrissur District);¹¹ Gokaṛṇa shrine (cf. below) is on the north Kanara coast, and Saptakoṭīśvara is in old Goa.¹²

That the author of the *PH* is from south India, and probably from Kerala (where the manuscripts of the text are preserved, cf. *NCC* s.v.), is obvious. In comparison with the early Purāṇic accounts of cosmography, in which the Bhārata-khaṇḍa or -varṣa = *karma-bhūmi*, corresponding to the ‘Greater India’ (9000 *yojanas* in breadth), is itself divided into nine parts, among which the Bhārata-dvīpa (1000 *yojanas* from the source of the Gaṅgā in the north to Kumārī in the south) as the (central) ninth surrounded by the ocean (*sāgara*) corresponds to the Indian peninsula,¹³ the *PH* author prefers to call the Indian peninsula the ‘Kumārī’-khaṇḍa or -dvīpa, given as the first of the nine portions of the greater Bhārata-khaṇḍa, with the same length of 1,000 *yojanas* (from north to south). He further describes it with a personal stress on south Indian places. For instance, after enumerating the seven mountain ranges and the seven *upadvīpas* belonging to Kumārī, among both of which the name *malaya* appears, he explains that the *prasiddhatarā* city of Laṅkā is located on a peak belonging to the Malaya range which is in the middle of the Malaya (*upa*)-*dvīpa*. After his listing of the Seven Konkans in the land of Paraśurāma at the foot of the Sahya range, with its four important *kṣetras*, including Anantapuram and Tiruvilvamala in Kerala, he adds that in (or on) the Sahya mountain there is the *āmalaka-kṣetra*, viz., the

shrine of Thirunelli (cf. *Kokilasamdeśa* I, v. 41, Muraleedharan 2012: 187–8) on the slopes of the Brahmagiri (Wayanad District, Kerala). There follows a list of additional *kṣetras* starting from the south: Śrīraṅga and Rāmeśvara (Tamil Nadu), Vṛṣabhādri-Śrīveṅkaṭagiri and Mallikāṛjunasvāmi (Andhra Pradesh), Harihara (Karnataka),¹⁴ and Mahālakṣmī (Kolhapur, Maharashtra), and only then the usual northern ones (Puruṣottama, Sālagrāma [sic], Gayā, Ayodhyā, Kāśī, Kurukṣetra). Similarly, the list of important rivers is concluded by the Ghṛtamālā, which in the *Syānandūrapurāṇasamuccaya* (*adh.* 1 and 6; on which, see below) is the name of the river forming the southern limit of the Anantapura-*kṣetra* and which corresponds to the Neyyar river (Mal. *neyyū* = ‘ghee,’ cf. Muraleedharan 2012: 41);¹⁵ and then the Nīlā, which is the Bharatapuzha river (on the border of which is Tiruvilvamala) in Kerala. Nothing more is said of the (greater) Bhārata-khaṇḍa, except the listing of the names of its remaining portions and a reminder of its general character as *karma-bhūmi*.

Another south Indian text, entitled *Bṛhaspati[-nīti]-sūtra*, which has been dated to the twelfth century, also has an interesting cosmographic account, with the Bhārata-khaṇḍa = *karma-bhūmi* (3.67–68, 72–5, 134) having 1,000 *yojanas* in length from Badarikā (at the source of the Gaṅgā) in the north, to Setu (= Rāmeśvara) in the south (3.79); nearly the same list of seven mountain ranges (3.81), great rivers (*kula-nadī*) concluded by the Ghṛtamālā (3.82), and eight Vaiṣṇava *kṣetras* including (besides Badarikā, Sālagrāma, Puruṣottama and Dvārakā) Vilvācala (= Vilvādri, i.e. Tiruvilvamala), Ananta(puram), Siṃhācala (in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh) and Śrīraṅga in the south (3.119–20). However, here, in the detailed list of countries (*viśaya*) the *saptakoṇkaṇas* are presented as a mere *upa-viśaya* of 104 *yojanas* (in length), without any reference to Paraśurāma (3.107). The name of the Keralas does not even appear among the *viśayas*, whereas, the ones of the Cōlas and the Pāṇḍyas are found together (3.104). But at the beginning of the passage listing the *viśayas*, what is called the ‘creation of Rāma’ (*rāmasṛṣṭi*, 3.86), presented as consisting of 140 *yojanas* (in length) from south to north (*dakṣiṇottare*) and 12 *yojanas* (in breadth) ‘as far as the Sahya’ (*āśahyam*), corresponds in fact to Kerala. This could fit with the twelfth–thirteenth centuries dating of the text (based on the mention of the *viśaya* of the Yādavas, 3.105, ‘perhaps those of Devagiri’, F.W. Thomas *ad loc.*), after the end of the kingdom of the Cēras of Mahodayapuram (but not of the Brahmin *kṣatra* ruling the country). As in the case of the *Prapañcahṛdaya*, most of the few available manuscripts of the *Bṛhaspati[-nīti]-sūtra* are from Kerala (cf. NCC s.v.), where the text seems to have been composed.

One of the practical solutions to avoid the reference to Konkan and to make Kerala the exclusive creation of Paraśurāma was to have another Śūrpāraka/Śūrpākara (cf. fn. 2 for the Malayāḷam-script variant of the name, derived in both cases from the word *śūrpa*, ‘a winnow, a winnowing basket’, Charpentier 1927: 112) somewhere in Kerala as the sacred place connected with the sage. Such a place can be found in south Kerala, and it is even precisely described in the *Syānandūrapurāṇasamuccaya*, the *sthala-purāṇa* of the *kṣetra* of Śrī Anantapuram

(Thiruvananthapuram, present famous temple of Śrī-Padmanābhasvāmi)¹⁶ composed in AD 1167–8 (*kali* era 4269) for the Kūpaka/Vēṇāṭu kings (*vela-viṣayeśa*) by an author being himself of Tuḷu origin (according to the long final colophon by the same). In the description of the various *tīrthas* of the *kṣetra*, SPS *adh.* 7 comes to a sacred place on the southern bank of the river Māleyā (flowing from the Malaya), where Bhārgava Rāma would have bathed (*snāna*) and done *tapas* after his killing of all the *kṣatriyas*. This *tīrtha* corresponds to the place of the present Paraśurāma temple in Tiruvallam (a few kilometres south of Trivandrum), along the Karamana river. It is said to lie just beside another *tīrtha* called Śūrpākara, located on the top of the adjacent hill:

nadyās tu dakṣiṇe tīre parvatasya tathottare |
asti śūrpākaraṃ nāma sthānaṃ mama sudurlabham ||

On the southern bank of the river, on the top of the hill, there is my abode difficult to reach, which has the name Śūrpākara.

The speaker is here is God Viṣṇu (addressing the Earth); he adds that from there, facing the north, he is able to contemplate his own sacred territory (*viz.*, the whole *kṣetra*). The existence of this ‘*dakṣiṇa Śūrpākara*’ (cf. Vielle 2010) within the Anantapura *kṣetra*, topographically connected with Paraśurāma, is an important step in the history of the Kerala appropriation of the Paraśurāma’s legend, as will be seen below, even if that work (composed by a Tuḷu Brahmin) does not allude to the creation of the territory from the sea.

This is unlike the *Tiruniḷalmāla* (‘Garland of the Sacred Shade/Grace’), an early Malayāḷam *pāṭṭū* concerned with tribal-tantric *bali*-rites in the Aranmula shrine (south-central Kerala, Pathanamthitta District). The poem, which can be dated to the thirteenth century, contains, as Rich Freeman has noticed, the earliest instance in a Kerala dialect ‘of the myth of Paraśurāma founding Malanāṭu’ (Freeman 2003: 459). Here is the passage (1.7.55–60, p. 35), with the translation (and word-splitting) of Freeman (who is currently preparing a translation of the whole work):

i-m-malanāṭṭiṇ celvama-p-paṭi-y-ennumēṭaṃ
y-en-manamarinta vaṇṇaṃ eḷupamāyurappanennu
mureṇḷuntavaṃ polinta muniver-kōṇ parecurāmeṇ
varuṇenōṭ-irannu-koṇṭu maṇi-muṛameṭutt-eṛintu
parave-y-a-t-taraṇi-y-ākki-p-paṭattaneṇ pinne-y-annē
aru-maṇeyaverkeḷkk-ākki-y-aḷittanaṇ puvenan-tanne

The matter of how bountiful this Malanāṭu is,
I will briefly relate, to the extent my wit provides.
That king of munis, Paraśurāma, had garnered fierce *tapas*,
And by beseeching Varuṇa, took up and hurled a lustrous winnowing basket.
After thereby fashioning land from the sea,
He made that very land over in grant to fine Brāhmaṇs.¹⁷

The passage alludes not only to the specific role of Varuṇa in the episode of Paraśurāma's appropriation of the land from the ocean, but also to the popular version of the throwing by the latter of a 'winnowing basket' (*muṇam*). The Malayāḷam word corresponds to the Sanskrit *śūrpa*, and therefore could refer to some folklore connecting Paraśurāma's 'launching of the *śūrpa*' with *dakṣiṇa Śūrpākara* (such a Malabar version involving a *śūrpa* was collected about AD 1600 by Jacobo Fenicio, S.J., cf. Charpentier 1927: 114–15).

We can now turn to the first really 'epic' consecration of the exploit of Paraśurāma. I dare indeed assert that the *Jaiminīyasamhitā* of the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, probably composed around AD 1300 at the court of the Kerala king Ravivarman Kulaśekhara (AD 1266/67–1317), is in fact the first work to describe in length the geographical feat of Paraśurāma, with the raising from the sea of a piece of land corresponding to Kerala (not named as such) and extending to Gokarṇa. The very first question introducing this well-structured narrative text is a cosmographical one: why the Bhārata-khaṇḍa has been reduced by 400 *yojanas* because of the sons of Sagara and how much land was recovered (*punaḥsr̥ṣṭa*, 1.12) from the ocean by Rāma Jāmadagnya. After several thousand verses detailing the respective stories (intermixed with numerous sub-stories) of Sagara, Kārtavīryārjuna, and Paraśurāma (see Vielle 2007, and 2011–12: 380–2, for a summary of the contents), the answer is given at the very end¹⁸ through the successive stories of Sagara's sons (who dig up 1,000 *yojanas* of the coast, falling into the ocean; JaiSa 90.14, 93.3, 95.39–40 ≈ BḍP 2,3,53.14, 56.3, 58.34–35), the descent of the Gaṅgā causing the submersion of the *tīrtha* Gokarṇa, the coming of Rāma (from his eastern hermitage on the Mahendra, at the request of the Gokarṇa sages) to the south-western shore of the ocean at the foot of the Sahya, his subduing of Varuṇa by way of an arrow shot from his Śaiva bow, and the resulting recovery of 600 *yojanas* (in length) of coastal territory (JaiSa 95.37, 40 ≈ BḍP 2,3,58.32, 35). However, in the JaiSa's last chapter entitled Gokarṇoddhārāṇa, the sacrificial ladle (*sruva*)¹⁹ then thrown by Rāma into the ocean in order to determine the limit of his territory proper (viz., the one bestowed on him personally by the Ocean), goes only 200 *yojanas* from south to north (*dakṣiṇottare*), and then falls down 'after having included' (*antarikṛtya*) Śūrpākara. One of the key-verses of the passage has to be read:

yatrābhūd rāmasr̥ṣṭāyā bhuvo 'nyasyāś ca pārthiva |
tīrthaṃ śūrpākaraṃ tat tu sīmā lokapariśrutaḥ || (JaiSa 95.20, cf. BḍP 2,3,58.19cd–20ab)

Where (the boundary) was between the territory created by Rāma and the other (territory), there was the *tīrtha* Śūrpāraka, very famous boundary in the worlds.

Śūrpākara here apparently designates the so-named southern *tīrtha*, whereas, Gokarṇa is supposed to constitute the upper (northern) boundary of Rāma's own territory which is then committed to the care of the sages.²⁰

Remarkable in the JaiSa account is what could be called the purāṇic regionalisation of the *itihāsa* tradition. The territory 're-created' (*punaḥsr̥ṣṭa*) by

Rāma (JaiSa 1.12, and 95.37, 40 ≈ BḍP 2,3,58.32, 35) on the west shore is stated to be 600 *yojanas* in length, from south to north, and therefore corresponds to the *saptakoṅkaṇas* (or the whole west coast of India), but the country consecrated by his sacrificial ladle and really belonging to him is limited to 200 *yojanas*, corresponding to the ‘Greater Kerala’, viz., the territory later usually said to extend from Gokarṇa²¹ to Cape Comorin.²² Following closely the JaiSa, the first local *kāvya* allusion to Paraśurāma’s feat as such, is found in the *Śukasamdeśa* of Lakṣmīdāsa (first part of the fourteenth century), which explicitly refers to the Keralaoddhāra (I, v. 34; cf. *Kokilasamdeśa* I, vv. 39, 41); in this case, the *śuka*-messenger coming from the south of the Pāṇḍya country, after crossing the Sahya (v. 30), enters Kerala through the shrine of [Kanyā-]Kumārī (v. 35), the place which will eclipse *dakṣiṇa* Śūrpākara as the traditional southernmost reference point. Among the later Sanskrit or vernacular accounts of the raising of Kerala by Paraśurāma, which also appear to be inspired by the JaiSa epic version, the most striking example is probably the *Nārāyaṇīya* of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri. In his *daśaka* 36, the famous poet chooses to closely follow the JaiSa (*Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*) telling of the *paraśurāmāvatāra* story rather than the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* narrative (see especially v. 11, on the creation of Kerala) as he is supposed to do (cf. Vielle 2010: 244). The Paraśurāma creation episode thus acquired the status of a ‘regional’ foundation myth, and was commonly alluded to in the literature of Kerala for illustrating or explaining the idea that the country is the Brahmanical land *par excellence*. Already in the second part of the fourteenth century, when the author of the *Līlātilakam*, commenting eruditely in *maṇipravāḷam* on his own Sanskrit grammatical *sūtras*, states from a historico-linguistic perspective that Karnataka country came into existence earlier than Kerala (cf. Freeman 1998: 56 fn. 24), he specifies that the latter arose later ‘due to (its) creation by Paraśurāma’ (*puraiva siddhaḥ karṇāṇāḍadēśaḥ, kēraḷadēśaḥ paraśurāmasādhitatvāt pāścātyaḥ*, com. ad 2.3), a privilege that the former does not enjoy.²³

To conclude this survey, we can go back to the *digvijaya* of Raghu in Chapter 4 of Kālidāsa’s *Raghuvamśa*, and see how Kerala’s exclusive claim for itself of the myth of Paraśurāma’s creation was, from the fourteenth century onwards, reinforced through commentarial literature. Commentators from Kerala have indeed tried to impose their own ‘patriotic’ interpretation of the two verses alluding to Paraśurāma’s feat. According to them, there could be no doubt that the passage mentioning Rāma’s deed on the western shore at the foot of the Sahya was referring to Kerala (though, as we have seen, it originally did not). The first to have commented in this way seems to be the imaginative scholar Dakṣiṇāvartanātha (fourteenth century), whose *dīpikā* (referred to by Aruṇagirinātha and Mallinātha in the early fifteenth century) still awaits an edition. The insistence in the commentary on the two verses on Paraśurāma’s feat that they obviously refer to *kēraḷadeśa* (cf. Aruṇagirinātha and Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita *ad loc.*) was strengthened through the adoption within the same passage of the variant reading *muracī* (cf. fn. 6 above) explicitly presented as the name

of a river also located in *keraḷadeśa* (cf. Aruṇagirinātha, Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita, Sarvajñavanamuni; Unni 1987: 35–6, Goodall and Isaacson 2003: 355). Moreover, the verse in which the ‘Kerala women’ are described was, logically, shifted from its original place and inserted within the Sahya passage, between the first allusion to Paraśurāma and the Muracī river, leading to the sequence Malaya (Durdura) and Sahya mounts, Rāma, Kerala women, Muracī river and Rāma again (cf. Sarvajñavanamuni).²⁴ The displacement of the verse with the Kerala women is probably what makes the whole passage ‘problematic’, ‘confusing’ (Goodall 2001: 104) and even ‘obscure’ (Veluthat 2009: 223), but it was adopted by reputed non-Keralite commentators like Mallinātha and Hemādri (even if they do not adopt the variant reading *muracī* and do not refer to Kerala in commenting on the allusions to Paraśurāma), and consequently such a version of Kālidāsa’s poem, widely diffused all over India, has contributed to the confirmation of the myth of Paraśurāma’s creation as Kerala’s own myth of creation.

NOTES

1. It can already be noted here that the Malayāḷam manuscripts usually present the variant reading *śūrpākara* instead of *śūrpāraka* (see the variant readings at MBh 2.28.43a, 3.83.40a, 86.9a, 118.8d/14d, 12.49.59a, 13.26.47b; cf. also BhgP 10.76.20b).
2. See Charpentier 1927; Gail 1977: 26–8; Parpola 1984: 25, 36; Warder 1992: 28; Donaldson 1995: 172; Fitzgerald 2002: 102–3.
3. See Goodall and Isaacson (2003: 349 for the useful table); cf. already Ravi Varma 1998: 20, who had rightly read the concerned passage in the light of Nandargikar’s critical notes, and below for the intentional changes in the order of the verses which were made by later south Indian commentators.
4. What corresponds to Kerala (the description of which comes just after the mention of the ‘Kerala women’, v. 48 crit. ed. = 54 ed. Scharpé, including vv. 49–51 = 46–8) is interestingly referred to by Kālidāsa not as a coastal area, but, from the point of view of a north-eastern invader coming through the Palghat gap, as an inner hilly upland, with spicy (pepper, v. 49, and cardamom, v. 50) and sandal-snaky (v. 51) slopes at the foot of the Malaya mountains, that appears after the crossing of the (Middle) Kāverī river (and Kongu region; rather than the Upper Kāverī and Coorg region, *contra* Goodall 2001: 104–5, Goodall and Isaacson 2003: xxxv–xxxvi); the Anaimalai Hills, with the Anamudi Peak, and the Nilgiri Mountains, with the Mukurthi Peak, could correspond to the Malaya and the Durdura mountains respectively, viewed by Kālidāsa, on the way from south to (north-)west, as a pair of prominent breasts (v. 54 crit. ed. = 51 ed. Scharpé). Rajan Gurukkal (2010: 126, 227) reminds us that in the Caṅkam poems, the Cēra kings are mainly referred to as ‘chief of the forested land’ or ‘chief of the hill(s)’ (*malai*), even if they are also said to have coastal tracts.
5. Vallabhadeva misinterprets the second Rāma (in v. 60) as Dāśarathi. It is already to be noted (see below) that in v. 57 of the text provided by Vallabhadeva (= v. 55 ed. Scharpé) there is no mention of a river named Muralā or Muracī (cf. Goodall and Isaacson 2003: 355), which, anyway, would have to be searched for in the Konkan region and not in Kerala (*contra* Unni 2012: 244–7; these variant readings could themselves be based on similar rare place or river names occurring in Rm 4.41.10, cf. Levefer’s note *ad loc.*, for the first one, or in Bhavabhūti’s *Uttararāmacarita* for the second; a version with the name Murulā appears to have been known to Sōḍḍhala according to *Udayasundarikathā* v. 171).

6. See Hart 1975: 59 (who notes another reference to 'Cellūr of the god of hard strength' in *Akanāṇūru* 90; Ātaṇ Eḷiṇi is given as the name of the ruler of the Cellūr area in *Akanāṇūru* 216, cf. Kunjan Pillai 1970: 47); Veluthat 1978: 12–20; Narayanan and Veluthat 1983: 256–7; Raghava Varier 1983: 279, 296 fn. 5; Kunjunni Raja 1983: 301; Parpola 1984: 35, 2011: 344; Narayanan 2003: 89.
7. For this local version of the *Kēraḷōḷpatti*, I rely on the works of Veluthat (2009: 306, referring himself to the edition by Raghava Varier 1984) and Govindan Namboodiri (2002: 98, 103, with a reference to an article in Malayāḷam by N.V.P. Unithiri published in 1984).
8. Śāntimat island could be a fortified and sacred island located somewhere in central Kerala, e.g. on the Periyar river near the old Cēra capital of Tiruvañcikkulam/Mahodayapuram, as I am inclined to think (cf. also *ML s.v. cānti-p-puraṇ* 'land assigned to priests in lieu of their temple services' (from *TAS* inscription) following Narayanan (2013: 139 fn. 49), rather than an island of the Arabian Sea (Nilakanta Sastri 1955: 201–2, *Tamil Lexicon s.v.*) in the contemporary Maldives ('garland-islands'? *mālā-dvīpa*) or Indian Laccadives/Lakshadweep (*lakṣa-dvīpa*, a generic name formerly including the Maldives too, which seems to be already referred to in the *meṃkkīrti* at line 16: *palpaḷan tīvu*, the 'many ancient islands'). On the other hand, Saletore (1936: 16–17) proposes to identify it 'with the island Santi mentioned in the Tuḷu *Grāmapaddhati* as having formed one of the 77 islands which belonged to the Ghorāṣṭra' (viz., the Go-rāṣṭra-deśa, the region of Goa, skt Go-paka[-purī], and Go-karṇa, which means the region just north of the Tuḷu country): there are several little islands there along the coast, and a few others in the mouths of the rivers, but this list of 77 islands including 'Santi' appears secondary and is not found in the available versions of the *Grāmapaddhati* (cf. Rao 2005, and Saletore 1936: 17 fn.). Rice (1909: 87–8, cf. *EC* 3, 1894: 10–11, *EC* 10, 1905: xxv–xxvi), Janaki (1966: 72) and Nārāyaṇan Nambūdiri (1992: 116) do not try to locate the island.
9. *TSS*, pp. 3–4 (pp. 2–3 in the retyped edn, but the text is corrupted); cf. Janaki 1966: 62 fn. 14 with the misreading: -mūṣikakāluva-, and Saletore (1936: 29) who wrongly understands *aluva-paśukoṇkaṇa-parakoṇkaṇa*, for a final number of six only.
10. On the other hand, the *Sayādrīkhāṇḍa* of the *Skandapurāṇa* and the various versions of the *Grāmapaddhati*, both much later, count Kerala as a single whole forming the southernmost portion of the Seven Konkans created by Paraśurāma (cf. Saletore 1936: 26–9; Janaki 1966: 69; Gail 1977: 201–3; Rao 2005: 53, 153, 175), as is also found in an unpublished manuscript compilation entitled *Māyuravarmacarita*, possibly from Vijayanagara, in which Kerala as the seventh portion is given under the name Mala(ya) (Warder 1992: 31). Concerning inscriptions from Karnataka from the middle of the eleventh century onwards that refer to the Seven Konkans or to the creation of these by Paraśurāma, see Saletore 1936: 31–8 (e.g. *EC* 7: Sk 99, trans. p. 165).
11. There is a still unpublished Sanskrit *Bilvādrīmāhātmya* (see *NCC s.v.* for the mss. of Kerala origin), and a Malayāḷam *kiḷippāṭṭū* version of the same. For *saṃdeśa-kāvya* referring to this shrine, see Muraleedharan 2012: 57, 190.
12. The Saptakoteshwar temple is said to have been constructed around AD 1155 by the wife of one of the Kings of the Kadamba dynasty of Goa for their family deity.
13. See for example BḍP 1,2,16.10–11 and ViP 2,3.7 (cf. Kirfel 1954: 110_{7–8}, 17₅).
14. The present temple of Harihareshwara dates from AD 1223–4.
15. One Kṛtamālā is already mentioned in the list of rivers originating from the Malaya mountain in the early Purāṇic accounts (cf. Kirfel 1954: 18₁₂, 114₂₉, cf. BḍP 1,2,16.36). It is noteworthy that for this word in the ViP (2,3.13) and MkP (52.26) critical texts, the Malayāḷam manuscripts present the variant reading *ghṛtamālā*.
16. The name Syānandūra is secondary, being a re-Sanskritization of the Malayāḷam name Tīrendra (cf. Kunhan Raja *apud* Vielle 2011–12: 366 fn. 4), here explained as coming from ānanda (SPS *adh.* 1).

17. The text very interestingly continues with the origin of the first 'Kēraḷa' king ('To protect it [i.e. the land] at the outset, from splendid Ayodhyā, / From a kingly lineage descendent on the earth, / Five maidens who had garnered rare *tapas* / Came, were entered into unions, and growing in felicity, produced progeny. / First-born in that lineage was the excellent King Kēraḷa, / And given that great land, he protected it. / Thus the name fixed for it was simply 'Kēraḷa's Land, / Which became the very resort of Lakṣmī'. Transl. Freeman, cf. 2003: 444 fn. 13). Provided one accepts (as I do) the genealogical continuity between the (last) Perumāḷ and the Perumpaṭappu *svaṛūpam*, this account would confirm both the alleged solar origin of the Cēras of Mahodayapuram (with the mythical first King Kēraḷa as eponymous ancestor, as it is found in an inscription of AD 1225, *EI* 4.41) and (with the five royal maidens from Ayodhyā as mythical 'genetic' ancestors, corresponding to the five branches of the *svaṛūpam* alluded in the Malayāḷam [*maṇipravāḷam*] *Uṇṇiyāṭicaritam*, Kunjunni Raja 1980: 153) their suspected matrilineal system of succession (cf. Vielle 2011–12: 369 fn. 10, 374 fn. 24, 377 fn. 27).
18. I cannot go here into the details of the JaiSa text. On the slight corruptions, or intentional changes, which occurred when this final portion of the JaiSa was included in what became the standard edition of the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇam* (JaiSa *adh.* 59 to 68.55 and the end of 81 to 95 = BḍP 2.3, *adh.* 21 to 30.55 and 44.32 to 58), see Vielle 2010: 238 fn. 3, 241–3, and 2011–12: 381: fn. 32. They could in part explain some of the misunderstandings found in Donaldson 1995: 172–3 (who bases himself on the corrupt BḍP text).
19. The *śruva* is also used in the early fifteenth century Malayāḷam prose (*gadyam*) version of the JaiSa (*Brahmāṇḍapurāṇam*). The less Brahmanical tool *śūrpa* occurs back in the sixteenth century *kiḷippāṭṭū* version, enabling its author to give the origin of the Śūrpākara place-name.
20. This is one way of reading the JaiSa text (cf. Vielle 2010: 241–3), viz., the 'Kerala' one, confirmed by later indigenous readings (cf. both the vernacular renderings of the JaiSa; Lakṣmīdāsa and Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's allusions below, as well as the 'Karnataka' reading given below fn. 23). It does not exclude the possibility to read the text differently and to understand, more conventionally, that the sacred territory of 200 *yojanas* goes from Gokarṇa (in the south) up to Śūrpākara in the north, viz., up to the 'Konkan' (original) Śūrpāraka (cf. Tagare transl. of BḍP, Donaldson 1995: 170–1, and my previous reading referred to by Parpola 2011: 345), for it is cleverly not specified in the text from which place of the south-western shore Rāma throws his ladle, allowing a double meaning which could have been intentional.
21. The historical reasons for the rather late symbolic importance of the Śaiva *kṣetra* of Gokarṇa as the northernmost (sacred) boundary of an ideal Kerala, which thereby includes the Tulu country, remain to be investigated. Gokarṇa does not seem to be attested in this function before the JaiSa (a more political reason for its mention could be found in the fact that it was physically reached by Ravivarman Kulaśekhara, who declares in his *praśasti* v. 4 to have pushed his enemy up to the *koṅkaṇa*, Vielle 2011–12: 367). Thereafter, as far as I know, except in the early prose vernacular rendering of the JaiSa (cf. above fn. 20) dated around AD 1400, it no longer appears as the 'Kerala' northern limit in the regional literary sources (the place is ignored by travelogues such as Lakṣmīdāsa's *Śukasamdeśa* or Uddaṇḍa's *Kokilasamdeśa*) until the sixteenth century at the earliest (with the *kiḷippāṭṭū* version of the JaiSa, the *Keraḷamāhātmya*, the *Kēraḷōlpatti*, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's *Nārāyaṇīya* 36.11, the lost *Udayavarmacarita*, cf. Unni 1980: 18–20, the *Keraḷakṣitiratnamālā*, cf. Unni 2012: 394, or the eighteenth century Rāmapāṇivāda's *Viṣṇuvilāsa* 4.2 and 6.60, cf. TSS 165).
22. The 200 *yojanas* as the standard distance between these two boundaries, or as the length of Greater Kerala, is also explicitly given by later works, such as the ones found among the (Madras and London) Mackenzie manuscripts and obviously based on the JaiSa version of the episode: a short *Sagarakathā* from Kerala (cf. Janaki 1966: 68), in which the extent of

the reclaimed land is 200 *yojanas* from Gokarṇa to the south; and the *Māyuravarmacarita* from Karnataka (Warder 1992: 31, cf. fn. 19 and 21 above), a passage of which declares that Rāma first travelled 200 *yojanas* south from Gokarṇa up to Kanyākumārī, and then created (here the Seven Konkans) from the latter place to the north (whereas in another textual portion of the same compilation, Rāma is said, differently, to have created the Seven Konkans ‘from Gokarṇa’, in this case in both directions).

23. To be compared with the text from the *Māyuravarmacarita* compilation stating that ‘Vānavāsī (capital of the legendary Kadamba king Māyuravarman) itself, being East of the Sahya, was not created by Rāma of the Axe (here given as creator of the Seven Konkans, cf. above fn. 11 and 23) but was in the old Karṇāṭaka created by the gods’ (Warder 1992: 31, emphasis ours). Two poetic references from neighbouring regions of Kerala in the middle of the fourteenth century, viz., the *Daśavatārstotra* of the Tamil author Venkaṭanātha/Vedāntadeśika (v. 7, cf. Vielle 2010: 245) and a Vijayanagara *kāvya*-inscription of AD 1368 (EC 7: Sk.281, v. 5, trans. p. 146, cf. Saletore 1936: 19), show that the Kerala version or location of the legend was not so authoritative outside Kerala, and that the story of Rāma’s pushing out of the ocean and his subsequent gift of the earth to the Brahmins could be understood in a broader sense, without precise geographical specification.
24. Yet Aruṇagirinātha (and, following him, Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita) did not change the place of this verse, preferring to transform the ‘Kerala’ women into ‘Coḷaka’ ones (a variant which in itself, just after the mention of the Kāverī river, could be justified; cf. Goodall 2001: 105, Goodall and Isaacson 2003: xxxv–xxxvi), and the shift he made then was to put just after this verse the two verses mentioning the Pāṇḍya and the Tāmraparṇī river, for a result even better in terms of logical sequence: after the Kāverī with the Coḷa women (two verses), and the Tāmraparṇī with the Pāṇḍyas (two verses), Kerala is there referred to both by the Malaya mounts, described in four verses (cf. fn. 5 above), and by the Sahya-Paraśurāma passage in five verses. It is to be observed that Sarvajñāvanamuni (like Hemādri), in addition to changing the place of the Kerala women, makes the same shift as Aruṇagirinātha concerning the Pāṇḍyas and the Tāmraparṇī, and hence obtains approximately the same result.

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