

Saint Brigid and Genevieve in the theatrical folklore of Malabar

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International Conference - **From Coast to Coast:**

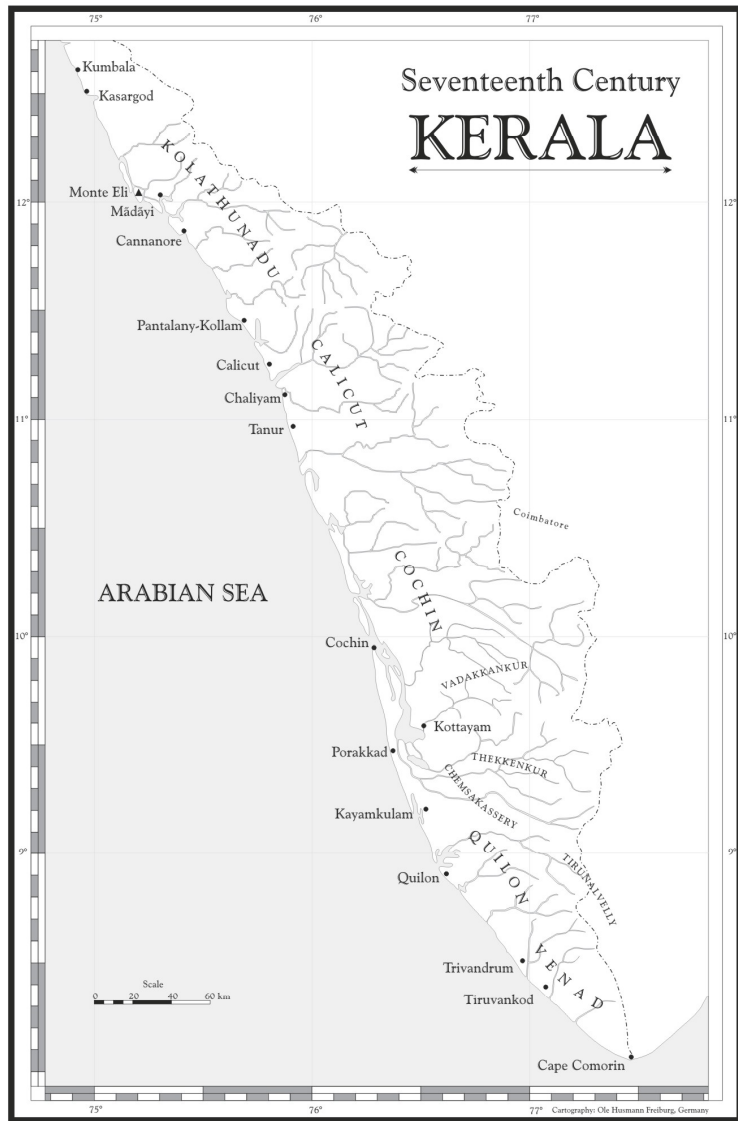
Folklore and the Cultural Lives of the Western Indian Ocean

“L’Orientale” University of Naples – 20-21 November 2025

By staging 'Charlemagne in Malabar', as it was introduced by the Dutch ethnomusicologist Arnold Adriaan Bakke (who attended it in 1932), or, more recently, by the French social anthropologist Gilles Tarabout (2017), the *cavittunatakam* dance drama represents a remarkable survivance of a hybrid form of performing art, blending South-Indian indigenous theatrical characteristics with Western Christian themes.



SIR OLIVER'S FIGHT WITH THE MOORISH PRINCE



This peculiar folk-art was created and developed, from the early 17th century onwards, by low- and out-castes coastal communities located around Cochín/Kochi (from Quilon/Kollam to Chavakkad, including Cranganore/Kodungallur and Trichur/Thrissur), converted by the Jesuit missionaries under the Portuguese *Padroado*.



The Jesuit-patronized printed propaganda program in Tamil language

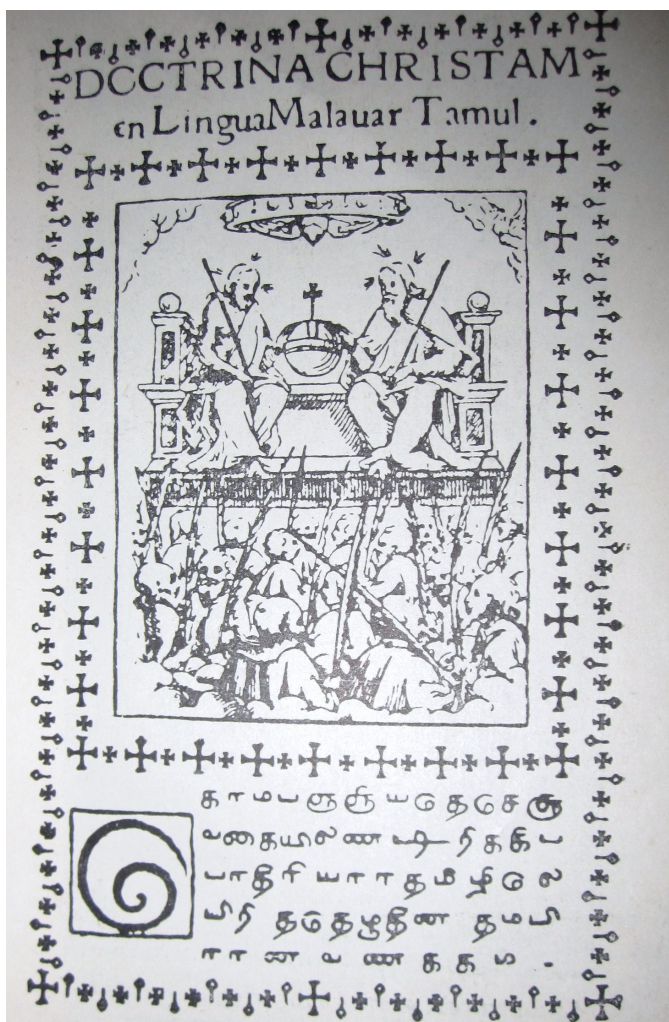
The first printing press in India was brought from Portugal to Goa, at the Jesuit College of St Paul, on 6 september 1556. The first printed books in Goa (and in India), were, in 1557, a version of the brief catechism in Portuguese composed in 1542 by Francis Xavier for teaching purposes (the same had also prepared in 1542-46 a brief and an extended catechisms in Tamil with the help of a local priest), and a *Confessionairo* (Confessionary), both lost.

The printing activity extended to works in Indian languages after the Jesuit Provincial Congregation of Goa declared in 1575 (under the impetus of the Visitor from Rome, Alessandro Valignano, who later became Provincial of Goa in 1583-87) that various instructional works should be prepared for the native Christians, including a **Catechism**, a **Confessionary**, a **Doctrina Christiana** and a **Saints Lives**.

Father Henrique Henriques (1520-1600, who came to Goa in 1546 and on the Fishery Coast already in 1547) was ordered to prepare such works for the Tamil area.

This ambitious Jesuit-patronized printed propaganda program was achieved under the direction of Henriques within the following 20 years.

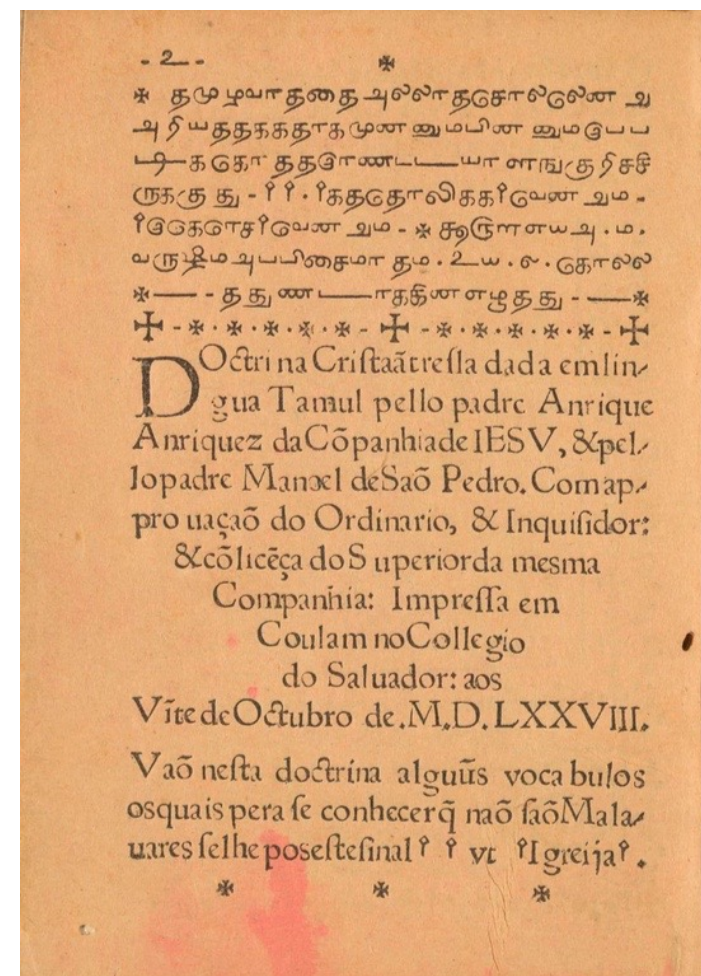
With the help of Pe(d)ro Luis, a Brahmin convert from Quilon/Kollam and the first Indian Jesuit, follower of Henriques since 1547, metal types in Tamil (the first movable types in an Indian language) were produced in Goa by the Spanish Jesuit Juan Gonsalvez (†1578). They were used to print, on the press of the College St Paul of Goa in **1577**, a first short Tamil catechism, being Henriques' (and Manoel de São Pedro's) revised version of Xavier's original brief (Portuguese and/or Tamil) catechism. Produced with the financial help of the (recently converted) Parava Christians of the Fishery Coast, it was intended to serve in this specific area (cf. Henriques' letter from Tuticorin in the same year). No exemplar survived of this very first imprint in Tamil.



Doctrina Christam 1578, p. 1

A new version of this short catechism, printed with improved Tamil types prepared by João de Faria (†1582), was made (on another press) at the Jesuit College of the Saviour (San Salvador), Quilon (Kollam), in **1578**, entitled *Doctrina Christam* or (in Tamil) *Tampirān vaṇakkam* (“Salutation of the Lord”). The only surviving exemplar of this 16 pp.-imprint is kept in the Houghton Library of Harvard University since 1951 (described by G. Schurhammer).

Why Quilon (from where was Pedro Luis)? Possibly because it was also intended to serve therefrom in the (Parava) Tamil areas of the Malabar coast (cf. Goa An. Let. 1600: “for the other coast he [Henriques] made a catechism in Malabar [language]”, where *malavar* must mean Tamil, not Malayalam, cf. below), and the Jesuit Rector at the College of Quilon was at that time still the regional Superior for the missions on the Fishery and Coromandel coasts.



Doctrina Christam 1578, p. 2

- கா -

புனனுடை யநாமிமெல்லா றகுருசுத்தமாத
புனனுடை யவிராச சீயமவா புனமுன தீன
படிவாண தத்வாண யாதாசெய்யுமாப
பொலெழுமியி லுமனல்லாருளுசெய்யவண்
றன ஁ளாபுவுதளபபமெங்களுக்கின் ஁
தாயெங்குபிழை துணைநா றுருகுநாங்
கனபொ ஁குமபபொலெநீ யுமெங்கு
பாவகத ஁னாநிபபொ ஁வெங்கு ததோ
஁த துக்கெ துவாதயொ ஁ ஁தெயெங்க
ளுக்குபபொலிங்குவாரா
மலில்கு - ஆமென -

Aue Maria

ஏன்கிருதைநீநை றதமரி யானே துமபிரானு
ன ஁மலி ஁கக்ககாததாபுன ஁ததி
லெபெண்சா திகரில்குததமான்வனாநீயெ
புனனுடை யவயி றில்கதனியா தியயிசெ
சூயகுசுத்தமான் துசுத்தமான்மரியாளத
மபிரானுடை யமாதாவுபிழையாளித
ளாயிருக்கி றவெங்களுக்குவெண்டி யிப
பொ துமெங்கு ஁திகா ஁ததி ஁மனோநது
கோன - ஆமென -

Salve Regina

ஏனாசகண ஁யிர்ககத துக்கு மாதாவு
துமபிரானு ஁மலி ஁கதயாயிததி ஁

- வ -

ஏநாலாய துபாதாளங்குளிலி றங்கியங்கு
தாணவா றதுபாததிருநதசுத்தயாளா றப
மங்குளியிடு ஁ றினுணை ஁விசுசுபதி
கி றது -

ஏ ஁ருசாய துமுனருடை ஁செத்தவாதளி
டை மலிந் ஁யிராததானை ஁விசுசு
பதிக்கி றது -

ஏ ஁ருய துவாணங்குளிலெ ற்ச்சு ஁பதது
குமலெபிதாவாதியதமபிரான்வெப்பாத
ததி றிருக்கிருணை ஁விசுசுபதிக்கி றது -

ஏ ஁ழாய துருததீ றகா ஁ததி ஁ருகதி
றவாகளுக்கு ஁செசுபாதருககுமவாயாசெ
யதந ஁மைதி ஁மைககுததக்க துருததீ ற
வருவானை ஁விசுசுபதிக்கி றது -

Os Sacramētos dalgreija

* சுத்தமான் ஁யிடுநாசையினை

சுக்கி றமெந துிகளாயதெழு -

ஏ முதலாய து ஁யுததீசும -

ஏ ஁ணை ஁ய துிகரி தமரி ததலி -

ஏ முனருய து ஁சாந துசுக்கி றமெந து -

ஏ நாலாய து ஁கோமபெசா ஁ரி ததல -

ஏ ஁ருசாய து ஁சுத்தி ஁மயுருசாயி -

ஏ ஁ருய து ஁டுடுணை -

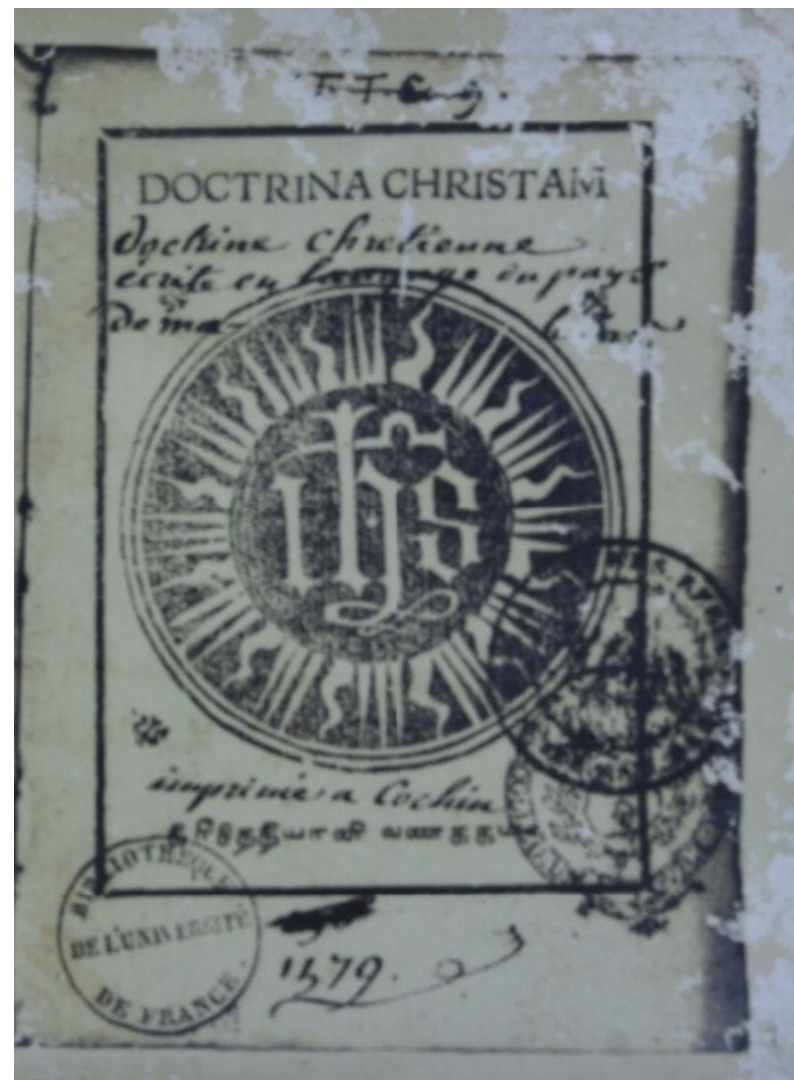
ஏ ஁ழாய து ஁மததி ஁மொனயி -

In October 1579, Pe(d)ro Luis, “por amor da empresa Malavar”, was at work at the major Jesuit College of the Mother of God (Madre de Deos), in Cochin (Kochi), where were printed then, with de Faria’s Quilon types, a longer Tamil *Doctrina Christam* or *Kiricittiyāni vaṇakkam* (“Christian Salutation”) and a Tamil *Confessionairo*, respectively in **1579** and **1580**.

The *Doctrina*, having 120 pp. ([viii] + 112), was Henriques’ translation of Marcos Jorge’s *Doctrina Christã ordenada a maneira de dialogo* (Lisboa, 1566).

One exemplar is preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Two other exemplars which were until about the middle of the 20th c. to be found respectively in the Jesuit seminary of Enghien (Belgium) and in the University of Paris Library, have now disappeared, but fortunately Schurhammer’s photography of the latter has recently surfaced... in Jaffna Bishop’s House, Sri Lanka (ought to EAP981 - see <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP981-1-15-54>)

The only surviving exemplar of the *Confessionairo* was rediscovered by G. Shaw in the Bodleian in 1982. On this 107 pp. “libretto for dialogue between a Jesuit confessor and a Parava penitent”, composed by Henriques following some Portuguese model, see Ines Zupanov 2012.



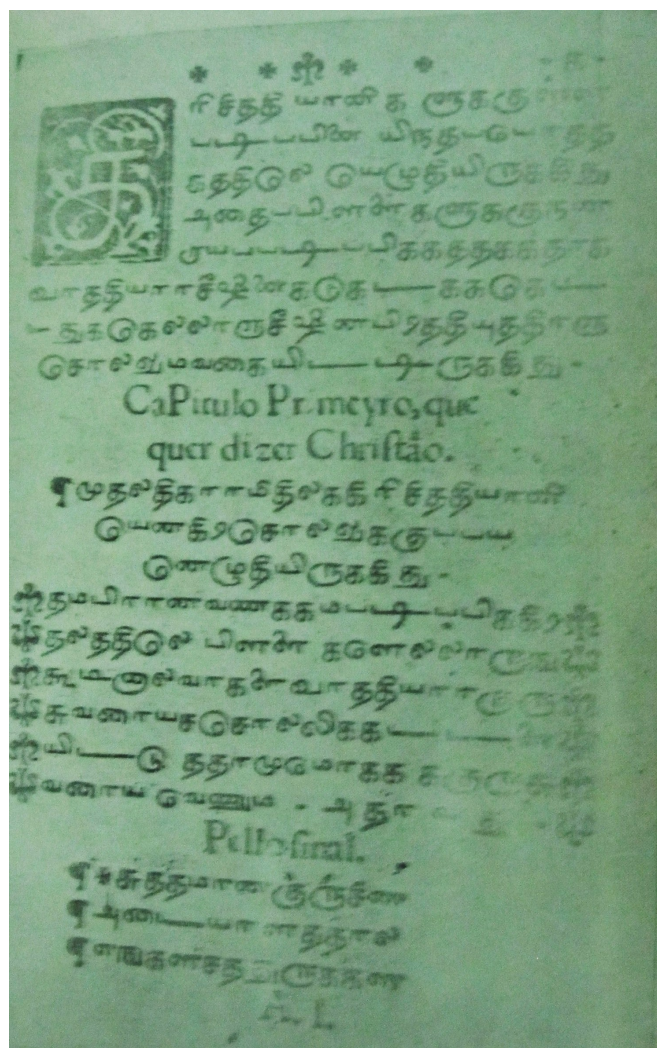
Doctrina Christam 1579 (Paris), title-page

Doctrina Christã, a maneyra de
 Dialogo: feyta em Portugal pello
 padre Marcos Jorge da Companhia de
 IESV: Tresladada em lingua Malauar
 Tamul, pello padre Henrique Anriquez
 da mesma Cõpanhia. Impressa cõ appro-
 uação do Ordinario, & Inquisidor,
 & cõ licença do superior. Em
 Cochim, no Collegio da
 Madre de Deos. aos
 quatorze de Nouẽ-
 bro, do Anno de
 M . D . L X X I X .

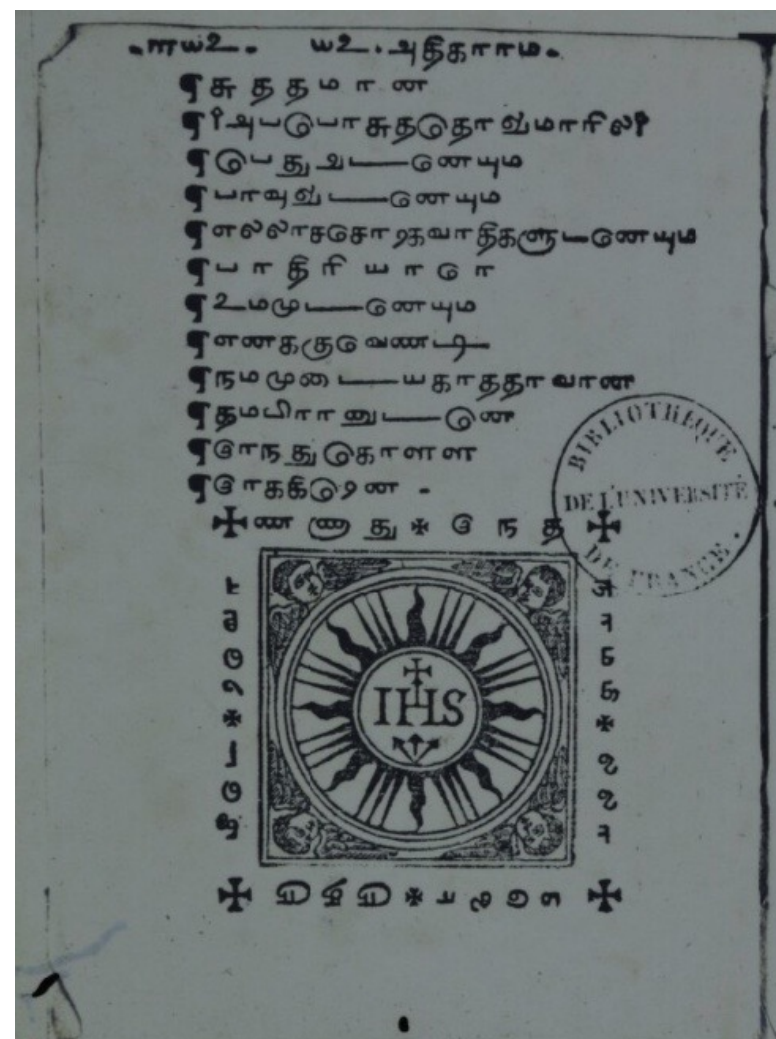
Vaõ nesta doctrina alguõs vocabulos,
 os quais, pera se conhecerq̃ naõ sãõ Mala-
 uares, se lhe pos este final, ? : a sic como,
 ? Graça : ? Gorrãja. &c.

- முதவுரை -

மமுடையநாயனிசெருத்திரிசீத
 துப்பிநத வருட்சம் - சூரு
 எயசு - கொம்பருஞயதெச்சு
 சுவதையிலுளபட்டபாதிர்மா
 பெசுகிரியையிலுள்ளதிர்சித்தி
 யானிதனாகுமஉநதமிடபாடிசையந
 ததிர்சித்தியானிதனாகுஞ்சுவநனை
 யமுண்டாகவேணுமெனஉலிசீர்தருக
 கிருமயாதாமாருதாதங்குளமக
 னாகஞ்சுசீபபததிவெயததுயாபு
 மங்குளபிழைக்கதக்கதாதநல்லெ
 லாமபபபபிகதிருநல்லதகபன
 மாககடுதநியாயமதெதெனிலப
 பெருகதவழநதாலச்சீபபபாடுபபத
 தபபபபினகனாபபபாநாபபப
 வேணுமெனஉசீபபபபாநாநாகுமநம
 முடையசுததமானதிர்சித்தியானிமா
 கம்பதிசாயபபபருநதவாகுநகருங்கி
 சீத்தியானிதனாகுமபபபபபபப
 பபபபபபபபபபபபபபபபபபபபப
 சுததமானமாதாவாயியிதினாசீத
 கெபபாதுமபெருகககவலிபபப
 பாயிருநதிதுபுதெதெனிலமெழு
 குத

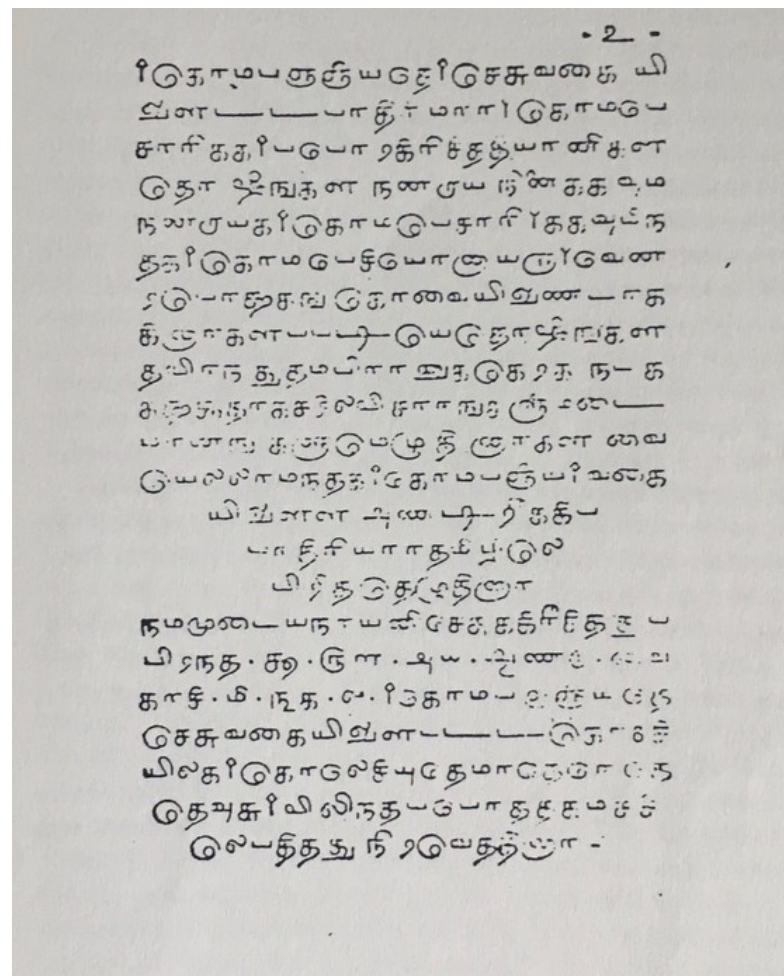


Doctrina Christam 1579 (Oxford), p. 1





Confessionnaire 1580, title-page



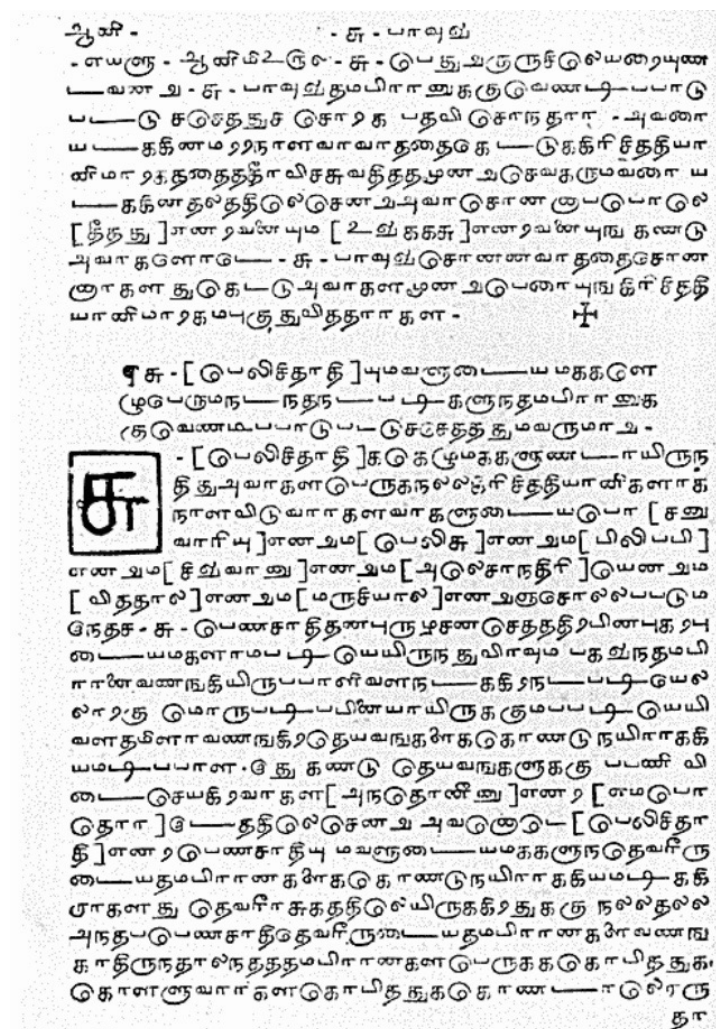
The initial project was achieved in **1586** with the printing of the monumental *Flos Sanctorum* ("Anthology of [Lives of] Saints" and description of the principal feasts of the liturgical year), on the composition of which Henriques had worked many years, following for his sources one Portuguese and two Latin similar works.

A first exemplar in the Vatican Library was rediscovered in 1954 by Father Xavier S. Thani Nayakam. A second, incomplete one, was found by Graham Shaw (1993) in the Royal Library of Copenhagen.

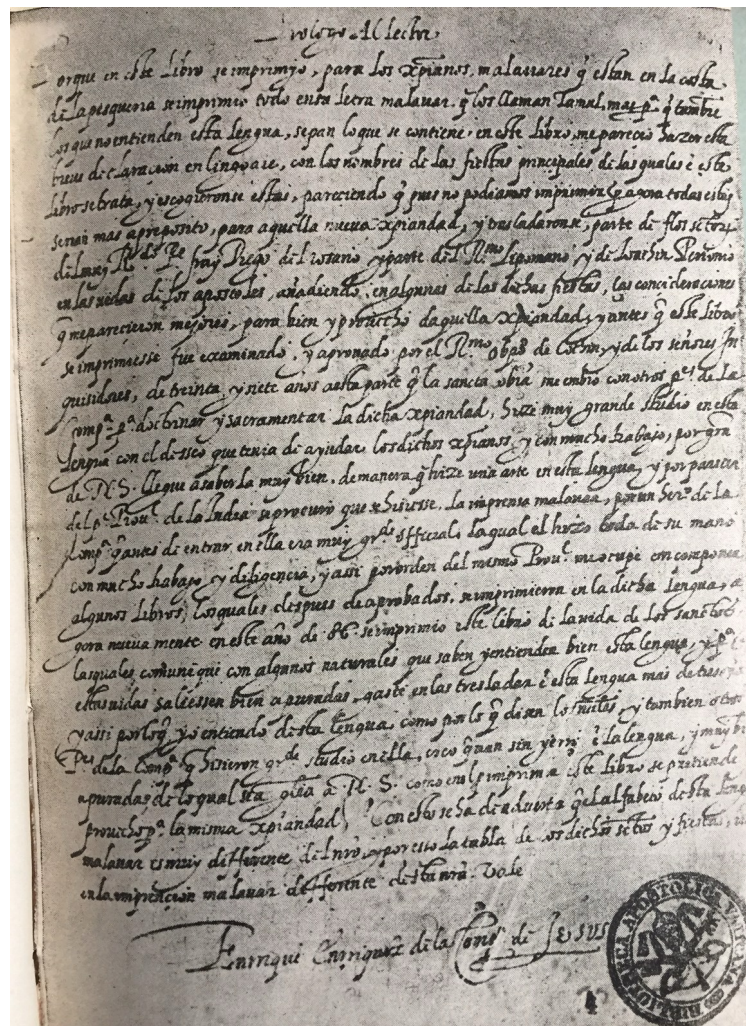
Having 334 ff° (both exemplars lacks of a printed title-leaf — Henriques' *Prologo al lector* and table of contents are provided on manuscript ff° in the Vatican exemplar only).

It is sometimes suggested that the printing was made at Punicale/Punnaikayal, a relatively minor missionary station on the India's south-east Fishery Coast (nearby Tuticorin/Thoothukudi), but it is much more likely that the work, still made with the same de Faria's Quilon types already used in Cochin, was produced on the press of the College of the Mother of God.

"After initial experiments at Goa and Quilon, Cochin clearly became the principal centre of vernacular printing in the 16th century and undoubtedly *Flos Sanctorum* represents its finest achievement" (Shaw 1993, p. 45).



Flos Sanctorum 1586 (Copenhagen), f° 102v (end of the account of St. Paul, beginning of the Life of St. Felicity).



Flos Sanctorum 1586 (Rome), manuscript f° [4r]
(Henrique Henriques' Prologue)

Con esto se ha de advertir que el alfabeto desta lengua malavar es muy diferente del nuestro y por esso la tabla de los dichos Sanctos y fiestas van en la imprención malavar diferente desta nuestra.

Vale

Enrique Enriquez de la Compañía de Jesús.

[5r] Libro de las vidas de algunos Sanctos trasladadas en lengua malavar por el P.^e Enrique Enriquez de la Compañía de Jesús en que van las vidas de los siguientes Sanctos.

A	Epiphanía Encarnación de N. Señor	N. ^a Señora Nuestra Señora de las Nieves Nicolás
Adviento de N. Señor		
André apóstol	F	
Augustino		
Adriano	Felippe apóstol	O
Antonio	Francisco	P
Apolonia	Felicitas con los siete hijos	Pedro apóstol
Alexo		Pablo apóstol
Angeles		Paulino
Agatha	G	
Acención de N. Señor		Purificación de N. ^a Señora
Assumpción de N. ^a Señora	Gerónimo	Pación de N. Señor
B	I	Q
Blas		
Benito	Juan apóstol y vangelista	Quaresma
Bernardo	Juan Baptista	
Bartholomé apóstol	Invencción de la cruz	R
	Juizio final	Resurrección de N. Señor
	Ignatio	
C	L	S
Cathalina		
Christina		Santo Sacramento
Christóval		Santiago mayor
Cecilia	Lusia	Santiago menor
Circunción de N. Señor	Lorenço	Simonis y Judas
Comemoración de los de- functos	[5v] M	Silvestre
Compación de N. ^a Señora en la pasión de Christo	Martín	Spíritu Sancto
	María Magdalena	Sebastián con sus hijas
	María egipsiaca	Siete Dormientes
	Margarita	
	Mathías apóstol	T
Domingo	Matheo apóstol	Todo los Sanctos
	Miguel Archángel	Trinidad
		Thomé apóstol
		Tays o Taide
E	N	V
Eustachio		
Estevan	Nascimento de N. Señor	
Eugenia	Nascimento de la Virgen	Vicente

Wicki's 1956 ed. of manuscript f° [5r]
(Table of contents)

However, except these four imprints of the years 1577-1586, produced in a very few exemplars each, no Catholic printing in Tamil language was made thereafter by the Jesuits until, nearly one century later, the Catechism of Roberto de Nobili printed in Ambalakad, in 1675-78. The use of such rare books seems indeed to have been restricted to the priestly milieu of the Jesuit colleges and seminaries, whereas the local people remained outside this new printed book-culture. The fact is that the use of printing disappears in the Malabar and Tamil areas from 1586 to about 1675, that is for nearly one century, except for a few, untraced, books of Catholic doctrine and ritual in Syriac language and script produced (with Chaldean types brought from Rome) during a short period, between 1587 and the early beginning of the 17th century, under Francisco Roz S.J. (1559–1624), in the Jesuit seminary of Vaipicotta, in Chennamangalam, where “the Jesuits started to create a new Tridentine Catholic literature in Syriac and Malayalam, which was destined to replace the local culture, deemed to be ‘Nestorian’” (István Perczel 2019).

In the same time, we learn from the obituary of Father Henri Henriques published in the *Annual Letter* of the Goa Province for the year 1600, that:

“[Henriques’] books are not only in the hands of the Christians but also in those of the Hindus in the interior, who are astonished about the good types and language and much more about the novelty of the things and hidden mysteries. From them, the poets take the opportunity to magnify our things in verses and the actors take from them the material for devout representations, which they write in prose and not in verse as we do. The reason is, that they cannot say a thing in verse except singing, and as the representations would not be well understood, if they were sung, they write the tragedies in prose so that every one may understand it better in that concise form.” (transl. Schurhammer 1967)

Such an early native Christian sung poetry in Tamil, possibly purely oral and even not recorded in manuscripts, has left no trace (the Jesuit works of the same type produced in manuscripts came only one century later).

As for the representations, we have here what is probably the earliest testimony about a popular form of Tamil prose theatrical art based on Christian themes, developed in the local Roman Catholic communities of Latin rite under the Jesuit patronage (the Jesuits did by themselves the same elsewhere, and there was even a 16th-18th c. Jesuit drama peculiar genre, but here it is stressed on the local origin).

This simple type of representation in prose can be seen as the origin of what will become in Malabar the *caviṭṭu-nāṭakam* theatrical genre (originally composed in Tamil, and the traditional origin of which is ascribed to a legendary figure coming from the Tamil country), which presents additional playback songs, musical and dance (Mal. *caviṭṭu* = ‘rhythmic stepping’) aspects, not alluded in 1600, maybe under the later influence of the Malayalam kathakali of the Hindu elite. A very similar tradition of Latin Christian *nāṭakam* survived until the end of the 20th c. in Tamil Nadu, especially prominent in the southern regions (around Tirunelveli), and in this case said to have been influenced by the local Hindu ritual *terukkūttu* folk poetry-cum-prose musical dance-drama.

In Kerala, the *caviṭṭu-nāṭakam* was developed and performed, from the early 17th century onwards, by low- and out-castes coastal communities located around Cochin/Kochi (from Quilon/Kollam to Chavakkad, including Cranganore/Kodungallur and Trichur/Thrissur), originally converted by the Jesuit missionaries under the Portuguese *Padroado*. However, the Jesuits were forced to leave Cochin with the arrival of the Dutch in 1663, and their (modest) main place became then the College and seminary of Ambalakad (Ambazhakad, or Sampaloor “St. Paul-place”) in the safer inner part of central Kerala (south of Thrissur) until their disappearance at the end of the 18th century.

But the *caviṭṭu-nāṭakam* theatrical genre remains alive in the area of the two ‘Latin’ (Roman Catholic of Latin rite) communities of their performers, viz. the Aññūṭṭukkār (‘the 500’) and the Eḷunūṭṭukkār (‘the 700’), which constitute two distinct, endogamous, castes, one composed mainly of fishermen, the other of former agricultural slaves, and this until the middle of the 20th century (the revival of the genre started at the end of the same century).

An early testimony of performance was given by Francis Day, *The Land of the Permauls or Cochin, its past and its present*, 1863, pp. 396-397:

Dramas in celebration of the Pagan gods have been copied by the Syrians in former times, and for many years have been inveighed against by Romish Priests unsuccessfully. Roman Catholic theatricals are enacted during the last few weeks before lent, when they become the rage, and a species of carnival is held, and old and young of both sexes, meet every night at about nine o'clock in the evening, to witness these performances, which generally continue until nearly daybreak. The theatre is on some open piece of ground, and in front of it are some temporary booths for the accommodation of the better classes, the poorer being in the open air. The stage is about six feet from the ground, and thatched with matting. The overture, and close of every scene, is enlivened by the most discordant music. The plays are generally selections from the sacred writings of the Portuguese, and are said to portray passages in the lives of some of their saints. The costumes are varied, and grotesque. Emperors and Princes hop about like mountebanks, whilst Queens and Princesses look like so many attempted representations of monkeys. The parts are sung with numerous choruses, in which there is no [/] pretence of keeping time. As literary productions, they are below farces, and as representations they may be taken as caricatures, whilst the language is bad, and the acting worse. When all are wearied, the finale represents the punishment of vice, and the reward of virtue.



The earliest *caviṭṭu-nāṭakaṃ* plays are

- *Kāṛal(s)mān-caritraṃ* (The story of Charlemagne), ascribed to the founder of the genre, Cinnattampi Aṇṇavi (said to have originated from Tamil Nadu);
- *Bṛśīna/Brijna-caritraṃ* (The story of St. Brigid [of Ireland]), also ascribed to Cinnattampi Aṇṇavi (both of his works are in in Tamil-Malayalam language)
- *Janōva-nāṭakaṃ* (The drama of St. Genevieve [of Brabant])

Performance texts in manuscripts remain unpublished.

Kāṛal(s)mān-caritraṃ is not only the alleged oldest, but also by far the most famous specimen of the genre. The *Life of Charlemagne* - Charles the Great, like that of (king) Alexander, was usually found in Medieval collections of Saints' *Lives* (Latin *Vitae sanctorum*, e.g. in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, that is *Legenda aurea* or *Legenda sanctorum*). Following Spanish stage adaptations of late Medieval expanded versions, it became a popular theme in the vernacular theatre patronized by the Jesuits everywhere within both the Portuguese and the Spanish colonial empires.



Bṛśīna/Brijīna-caritraṃ

A brief presentation of the drama by Father V. P. Joseph Valiyaveetil *

“This was the first drama which made a tremendous change in the subject matter of *Caviṭṭunātakam* plays. The earliest drama like *Kāṛalmān* only dealt with the heroic combats, valorous deeds and gave prior importance to war in an atmosphere similar to that of European crusades. But *Brijīna* dealt with the story of a beautiful maiden and her struggle to be in the moral way of life against the trickery of Alvān the antagonist. At last, the truth and the moral chastity win against all the bad elements. The text with this theme upholds a Christian way of life with its spiritual and moral chastity gave birth to the production of such type of texts in this genre.”



കുപാസനം അവതരിപ്പിച്ച ബ്രിജീന ചവിട്ടുനാടകം



(*) See Dr. Fr. V.P Joseph Valiyaveetil [VALIYAVĪṬṬIL, Vi. Pi. Jōsaphū] , *Caviṭṭunāta-vijñānakōśam*, Chirakkal - Kalavoor (Alappuzha): Kerala Folklore Academy - Kreupasanam Chavitunadakam Publications, 2014 (*Caviṭṭunātakam* Encyclopaedia, in Malayalam), pp. 134-135, 448

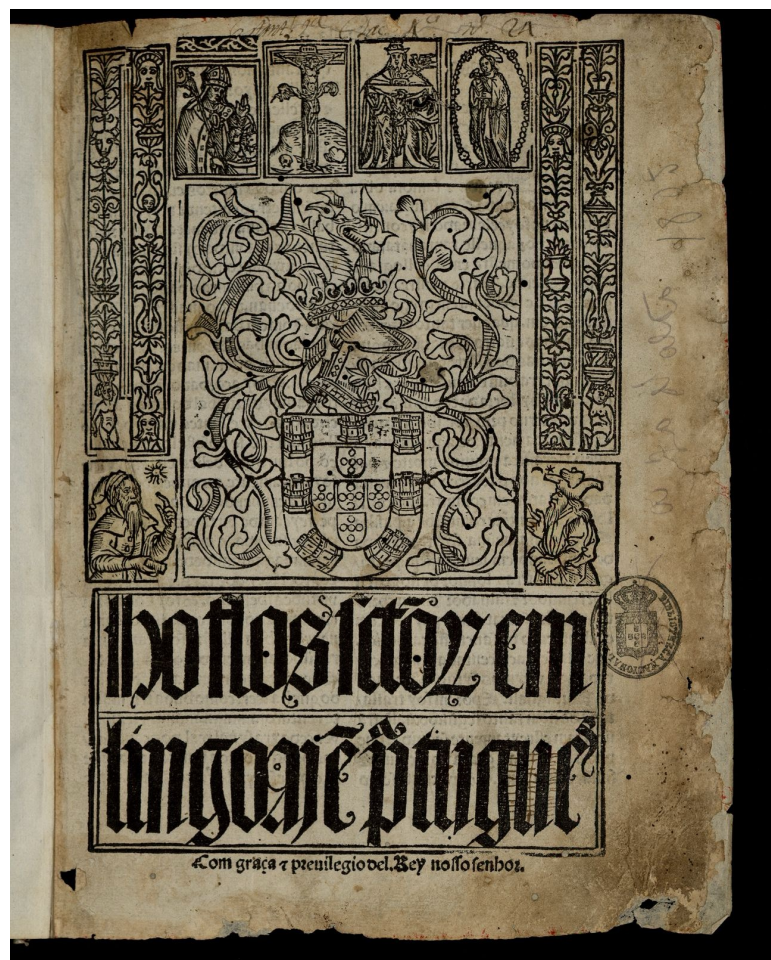


☞ Brigid protects a flock of sheep from a wild boar

The miraculous deeds of **Brigid of Kildare** have been marvelously depicted in frescoes by Lorenzo Lotto, in the Suardi Chapel (near Bergamo), dated 1524, showing her (first square) taking the veil (on which occasion she revived a tree) and handing out bread to the poor; (second square) giving out food to the needy, turning water into beer, healing a blind man, calming a hurricane and taming a boar; (third square) dividing a vase between three lepers and saving a man condemned to death by replacing him with his shadow.



Brigid diverts a storm threatening the harvest

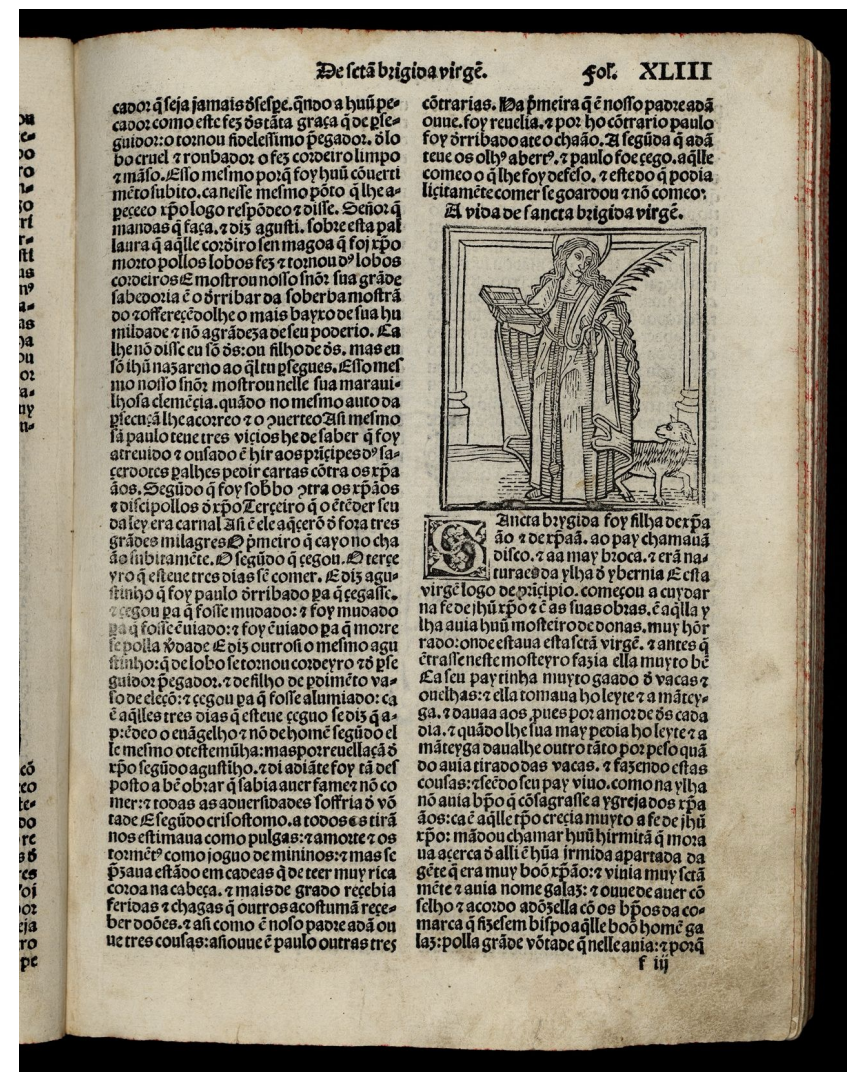


FLOS SANCTORUM (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal)
 Ho flos sanctō[rum] em lingoaje[m] p[or]tugue[s]. – Lixboa :
 per Herman de campis bombardero del rey & Roberte
 rabelo, 15 Março 1513. - [10], CCLXV, [2] ff : front-page

Why such a choice of
 the figure of St. Brigid
 [of Ireland], for the
 vernacular drama?

Her story was not told
 in Henriques' Tamil
Flos Sanctorum of
 1586.

However, her legend,
 very popular in the
 Medieval and
 Renaissance periods, is
 found in some earlier
 Portuguese *Flos
 Sanctorum*, where
 'Brigida Virgem', viz.
 'Brigid the Virgin' is
 celebrated.



f° 43r: Beginning of the life of 'Brigida Virgem'



Igreja de São
João Batista
(Lumiar)



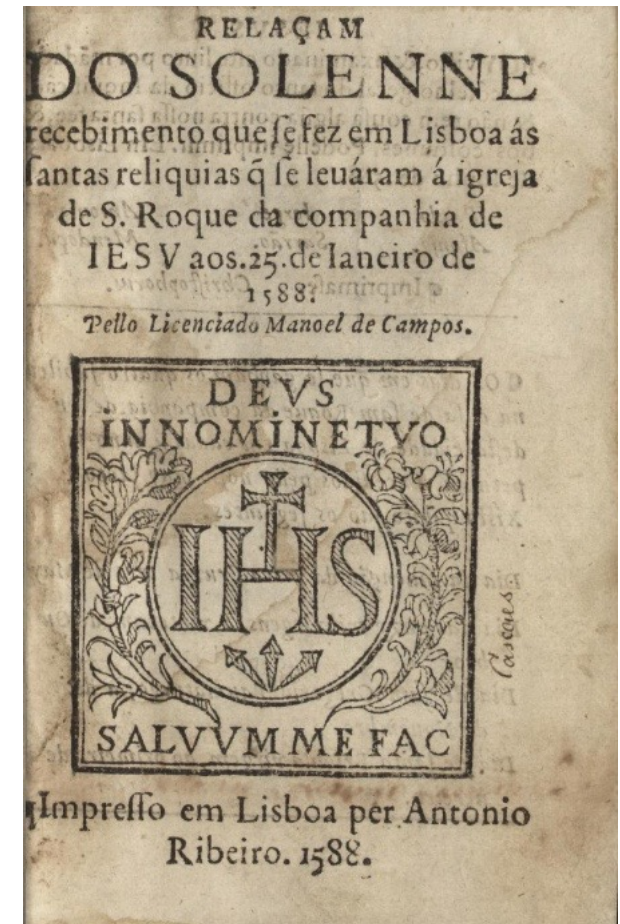
Igreja de
São Roque
(Lisbon)

Portuguese churches associated with the cult and the relics of St. Brigid, the [Irish] Virgin (*Brigida Virgem*)

A part of the saint's skull is preserved in the Igreja São João Batista (Church of St. John the Baptist), on the Lumiar near Lisbon, which church assumed the invocation of 'Santa Brígida' from the mid-16th century, when a new side chapel was built and dedicated to her and a commemorative inscription was put on the northern facade of the church stating (legendarily) that her head here kept was once carried to King Denis of Portugal in 1283 by three Irish knights travelling to the Aragonese Crusade.

Moreover, in 1587-88 (as described in Manoel de Campos' *Relation* of 1588), (another part of) St. Brigid's skull was solemnly presented to the church of the Society of Jesus in Lisbon by the Austrian Emperor Rudolph II, that is the Igreja de São Roque (Church of St. Roch), where her head is still venerated today.

It means that the popularity of St. Brigid increased especially much in the Portuguese Jesuit milieu at the end of the 16th century: the Jesuit-patronized *caviṭṭu-nātakam* drama dealing with her figure can therefore be dated tentatively to the first part of the 17th century.



Manoel de Campos, *Relaçam do solenne recebimento que se fez em Lisboa ás santas reliquias q̃ se leuáram á igreja de S. Roque da Companhia de Iesv aos .25. de janeiro de 1588*, Lisbon: Antonio de Ribeiro, 1588.



Janōva-nātakam

When the joy was surging everywhere (Janōva is then pregnant but Sipriyōs does not know it yet), Jēmaluddhyan [cf. *Jalāluddin* Muhammad Akbar?], the Muslim ruler of the kingdom of Almēnya [= Armenia?], enters. He calls his minister for enquiring the well-being of his country, then his minister tells him that Prabhandhan, the king of Pīrmōṭṭ, is not paying him the yearly tax. Jēmaluddhyan, angry, sends him with a letter to Prabhandhan, but the latter mocks Jēmaluddhyan and sends the minister back. King Jēmaluddhyan, furious, declares war against the king of Pīrmōṭṭ. In turn, Sipriyōs (as a firm ally of the father of his wife) goes to war against the king of Almēnya. Jēmaluddhyan is killed in fight by Sipriyōs. In the meanwhile, Gōlō attempts to violate Janōva. Sipriyōs (still abroad and misinformed by Gōlō on the fact that she is pregnant) blames Janōva and makes send her off to the forest to be killed (fortunately, the executioners leave her alive). Thereafter, Sipriyōs comes to know the truth, and is filled with remorse. A few years later, during a hunting expedition in the same forest, he stumbles upon Janōva and her young son. He condemns Gōlō to be hanged, and he himself retreats to monastic life.”

Synopsis of the drama (cf. Valiyaveetil 2014, pp. 127-128):

“The emperor Charles was the ruler of the kingdom of Gērṣya [= Germania?]. In his old age, he has decided to hand over his power to his nephew Sipriyōs [*marumakkattāyaṃ* custom?], and he starts his journey for leading a monastic life. The new king Sipriyōs sends his minister Gōlō to ask the hand of Janōva, who is a Marian devotee and the daughter of the king of Pīrmōṭṭ [= Piedmont?], called Prabhandhan [cf. Brabant?]. The marriage happens. Janōva sincerely loves her husband and leads a happy life.

Compare the synopsis of the original hagiographic novel (illustrated, on the right, with a 19th century Flemish engraving):

Genevieve, daughter of the Duke of Brabant, was the wife of the Palatine Sifroi. Married for some time, but having no children yet, the palatine had to leave her to join Charles Martel and his army for fighting the Saracens. Genevieve, who was pregnant on the day of her husband's departure without knowing it yet, was entrusted to the king's steward named Golo. When the lubricious Golo repeatedly failed to seduce Genevieve, later on, at the birth of her child, he denounced her and told Sifroi, still abroad, that his wife had just given birth to the fruit of an adultery. By return letter, Sifroi ordered Golo to have the mother and child drowned. The steward delivered the two victims to servants who, having arrived in a nearby forest, were moved and touched by both the mother and her baby. They resolved to leave them alive, abandoning them in that wild place. For several years, Genevieve and her child survived in the forest under the protection of the Virgin Mary, thanks to the milk of a doe that became attached to them. One day, during a hunt, Sifroi reached the cave where Genevieve was living. Seeing the miraculous nature of this encounter, he understood the truth, recognized her innocence, and condemned to death his steward Golo. In gratitude for her protection, Genevieve of Brabant had a chapel built in honour of the Virgin at the place where she was found.

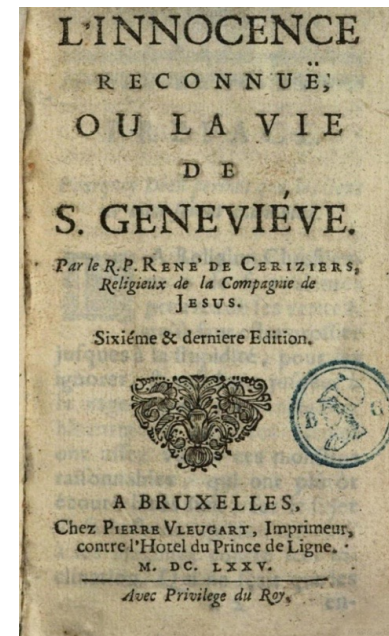


This story combines several folkloric themes common in the Medieval romances, such as the falsely accused woman, the condemned man who is saved by merciful executioners, and the motif of the providential animal. It appears to be a 14th c. founding legend for the chapel in Frauenkirchen, in the Rhineland-Palatinate region of Mayen, west of Koblenz, in Germany.

The legend, attested as early as the 14th-15th centuries by three late-Latin redactions (based on a lost archetype), remained locally and socially confined until 1634, when a French novel, *L'Innocence reconnue ou Vie de Sainte Geneviève de Brabant*, was published, which turned the Rhenish hagiographic legend into a long pious and gallant tale. Its author was the Nantes-based Jesuit René de Cériziers (1603-1662), whose work was often reprinted (Mons, 1638, Paris, 1640, 1645, 1646, etc., Tournai, 1640, Lyon, 1649, 1669, Brussels, 1656, 1675, etc.) and translated or adapted into German (1685), Italian (1652), Spanish and English.

The story gave rise to an Italian opera as early as 1641: *La Genoinda overo L'innocenza difesa*, by Giulio Rospigliosi, the future Pope Clement IX. René de Cériziers himself adapted it for the stage: *Geneviève de Brabant, ou l'innocence reconnue*, tragedy in 5 acts, Paris, 1669 (publ. posthumously).

It was from this time onwards that the legend became extremely popular in Europe, retold in books or depicted in engravings, and it remains so until the middle of the 20th century, adapted in several operas, films and comics.



It was therefore through the Jesuits, and in connexion with the Marian devotion, that the legend arrived in South India, not before the second half of the 17th century.

The German Jesuit Johann Ernst Hanxleden (1681-1732), active in Malabar in the first third of the 18th century where he became known under the name Arnos Padiri (Arṇṇōsū Pātiri, from the Portuguese *Ernesto Padre*, ‘Father Arnos’), author of a Sanskrit grammar and several poetic works in Malayalam, possibly inspired by a German version of the story himself composed a *Janō(vē)va-parv(v)aṃ* or “Epic Song on Genevieve” in about 1500 stanzas in Sanskritised Malayalam. Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo (1748-1806), known in Kerala as Paulinos Padiri, a Discalced Carmelite who followed in his footsteps, refers to it as *Jenovēva-puṇyacaritaṃ* (‘Genoveva punya tscharidam’; ‘[poema seu Parvam] de S. Genoveva’, ‘Vita S. Genovefae’, ‘Cantus de S. Genoveva Germaniae comite’, ‘Excellens carmen de B. Genoveva, comite Brabantina’). The work (in a form possibly revised and improved by indigenous scholars) has been published in Kerala several times (1892, 1929-1930, 1982, 2002). In this version, Siffoi/ Sigfridus is called Siprasō (Siprarājaṇ), Golo - Gölō, Brabant - Prabēndha, The Great King - Empradōr, and the Enemy King - Dūrka/u (= the [great] Turk).

It remains difficult to determine whether the popular *Janōva*-[caviṭṭu-]*nātakam* is later, contemporary or earlier than this refined epic poem.

ജനോവപർവ്വം.

ഏകതരീശായ നമഃ :

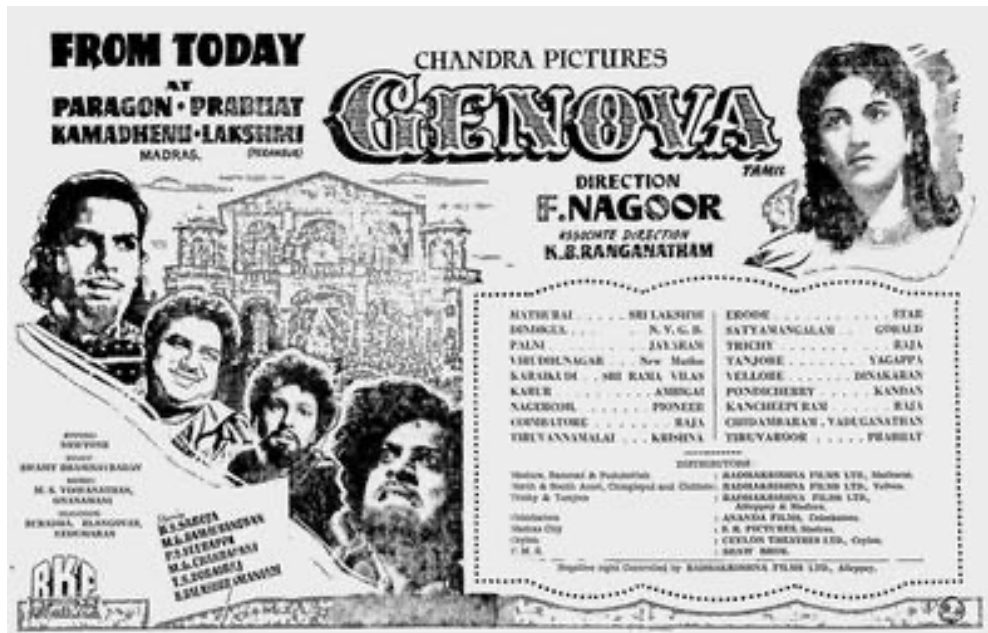
സത്യശാസനവൃന്ദാമാപരവര സത്യശസ്തൃഗുണാംബുഭാശേ
സത്യസ്തുതിശംഭീകാരണമാകയാൽ സത്യശനിന്നസ്തുതിച്ചിഴുന്നേൻ
കീർത്തിയെക്കീർത്തിപ്പാനാളല്ലയെങ്കിലും ആർന്നിഴുങ്ങുളിവിനിക്കന്തേനും
കീർത്തിയെവാഴ്ത്തിസ്തുതിപ്പാനും മറ്റുള്ള ആർന്നിടരതീർത്തുകുടിക്കണമേ
കന്നിമറിയമേകന്യകാർമണേ അന്നന്തരജയധനുരീഭേ
ലോകരക്ഷയ്ക്കു നീകാരണമാകയാൽ ലോകപ്രസാദംകേൾക്കുവേ
സത്യംതവസ്വയമെഴുതിയാലമേ സത്യാസ്വകാരണരനീക്കണമേ
സത്യശക്തരെ സർവ്വകാലത്തിലും സന്ദൈവകാലാർത്ഥംസ്തുതിച്ചാരില്ല
എന്നുള്ളസത്യംഗ്രഹിപ്പാനൊരു കഥ ഇന്നന്താൻ ചൊൽവാൻ തുടങ്ങിപ്പോന്നേൻ
സല്യമായിട്ടുസത്യശക്തരെ ഉരഞ്ഞാറിൻ ചെട്ടുരങ്ങിപ്പോന്നോ
ഭോജനാകന്നന്താൻഭാജനത്തിൽപൊൽവെച്ചു പാഴിലാക്കിപ്പല്ലെക്കൈവേകന്യേ
ധനുരേനാഗ്രഹണകാരുണ്യംതാഴെ കന്നിമറിയമേപാഹിപാഹി
കൈയിൽകേട്ടുഗ്രഹിപ്പിനെല്ലാവരും മുക്തിപരിഗണിക്കാമൊറ്റും

പൂർവ്വപരിചാരിൽ ശക്തൻമഹാധീരൻ ഉഗ്രനാമെന്താമോരെന്നഭൂപൻ
തന്നെക്കരാജ്യമശേഷവുംതങ്ങളാൽ മറന്നുമാന്ത്രിച്ചാൻസാധിയാഞ്ഞു
ദൂരദേശത്തുജ്ജരാജ്യങ്ങളൊക്കെയൊടുക്കിപ്പോന്നു പാലിപ്പാനായ്
രാജ്യപ്രഭുക്കളെയെല്ലിച്ചെന്നാട രാജ്യത്തിലധിപനുംഭൂമിപാലൻ
പ്രാപരവാഴിച്ചുപ്രാപരപാലൻ ഭൂമിപരാജാനങ്ങളിലെയ്യ
൭. സൂക്ഷ്മായനിത്തലാഭാജനമെന്തെ ബന്ധംപിരിയാതെഭൂമിപര
ശത്രുവെന്നാളിലൊരാജ്യപ്പാലായ് മിത്രരാജ്ഞിത്തലാഭാജനം
ലാമരജാധിപതിനാലും സന്ധാരണമെന്തൊരുപക്ഷേ
സ്വന്ധനായതഥവും രാജ്യവരേക്ഷിച്ചുപത്തനോണിത്തലാഭാജൻ
ഇങ്ങിനെയുള്ളൊരുമന്നാലാരിൽവെച്ചുനന്ദകീർത്തിമാൻ സിപ്രിസോസിൻ
കീർത്തിയുംബുദ്ധിയും വിശുദ്ധശക്തിയും പാർത്ഥിവധർമ്മമിത്രമെല്ലാം
മച്ചുവിപ്പാനായ്ക്കുഞ്ഞുണന്നിത്തലാ വാഴ്ചമോരേങ്ങൊക്കെക്കൊടുവിൻ

വിശുദ്ധകീർത്തിവിളങ്ങും മലമെന്തോടാത്രീശ്രദ്ധതിശോഭനത്തിൽ
ശക്തനാംയുക്തിമാൻജന്മത്തിൽസിപ്രിസോ ധാത്രിപതിവീരനങ്ങവിച്ചു
നേതൃകൂട്ടംചലനാകിയപൂർവ്വശക്തൻ കീർത്തിബഹുഗുണമെന്തവിത്രം
ബാലകാലത്തിൽവീലയുപേക്ഷിച്ചു മാലവെച്ചിട്ടുകൾ പാഠമെഴു
ശാസ്ത്രപുരാണവും വേദാന്തയുക്തിയും സിദ്ധാന്തംമോയുള്ളതെല്ലാം

As a testimony of the legend's enduring popularity in South India, one can mention an unpublished Tamil dramatic version (*Ceṇuvappammāḷ carittira-nāṭakam*, Paris Ms. BnF Indien 492), and two more Malayalam dramatic versions composed in the late 19th - early 20th c.: a *Janōva-nāṭakam* by Kōmattu Kuññupaṇikkaṇ, and the musical (in Tamil style; *saṃgīta-nāṭakam*) *Janōva-parvvaṃ* by T. C. Achyuta Menon (Acyutamēnōṇ).

In 1953, the Tamil-Malayalam film *Genova* (*Janōva*) by F. Nagoor was an adaptation of Achyuta Menon's drama.





Genova (Malayalam)	Genova (Tamil)
King Cipresso (M. G. Ramachandran)	King Cipresso (M. G. Ramachandran)
Princess Genova (B. S. Saroja)	Princess Genova (B. S. Saroja)
Minister Golo (Alleppey Vincent)	Minister Golo (P. S. Veerappa)
General Annas (M. G. Chakrapani)	General Annas (M. G. Chakrapani)
S. P. Pillai	
T. S. Durairaj	Arcokiyam (T. S. Durairaj)

European parallel developments

In the 19th century, there have been several musical adaptations of the drama, among which Robert Schumann's opera *Genoveva* (1848), Jacques Offenbach's opéra-bouffe *Geneviève de Brabant* (1859, 1867 and 1875), and Erik Satie's opera for puppets *Geneviève de Brabant* (1899).

In the 20th century, no less than 6 films were made:

- *Geneviève de Brabant*, anonymous film produced by Pathé Frères (France, 1907).



From a children book (1857)

- *Genoveffa - Il figlio della foresta*, by Giulio Amauli (Italia, 1933). [no picture]
- *Genoveffa di Brabante*, by Primo Zeglio (Italia, 1947).





- *La leggenda di Genoveffa (Le Chevalier des croisades)*, by Arthur Maria Rabenalt (Italia - France - Germany, 1952)



- See also Hedy Lamarr featuring Genevieve in the anthology film *L'amante di Paride (Loves of three Queens)* by Marc Allégret and Edgar G. Ulmer (Italia, 1954) [no picture]

- *Genoveffa di Brabante* (*Genoveva de Brabante*), by José Luis Monter & Riccardo Freda (Italia - Spain, 1964)



The legend is also found in 20th-century Illustrated books



- *Geneviève de Brabant*, by Gaston Niezab, *Les merveilleuses histoires racontées par l'image* n° 28, Paris: Les Editions modernes, 1938, 16 pl.



- *Geneviève de Brabant*, by Tonet Timmermans, in *Le Journal de Tintin* (Belgian edition), from n° 44, 30 October 1947, to n° 12, 18 March, 1948, 21 pl.



In comics:

- *Genoveva de Brabante*, by Jaume Juez i Castellà, Bruguera: Ediciones Toray, 1952, 66 pl.; French version: *Geneviève de Brabant*, in *Mireille*, from n° 149, 6 December 1956, to n° 165, 28 March 1957.

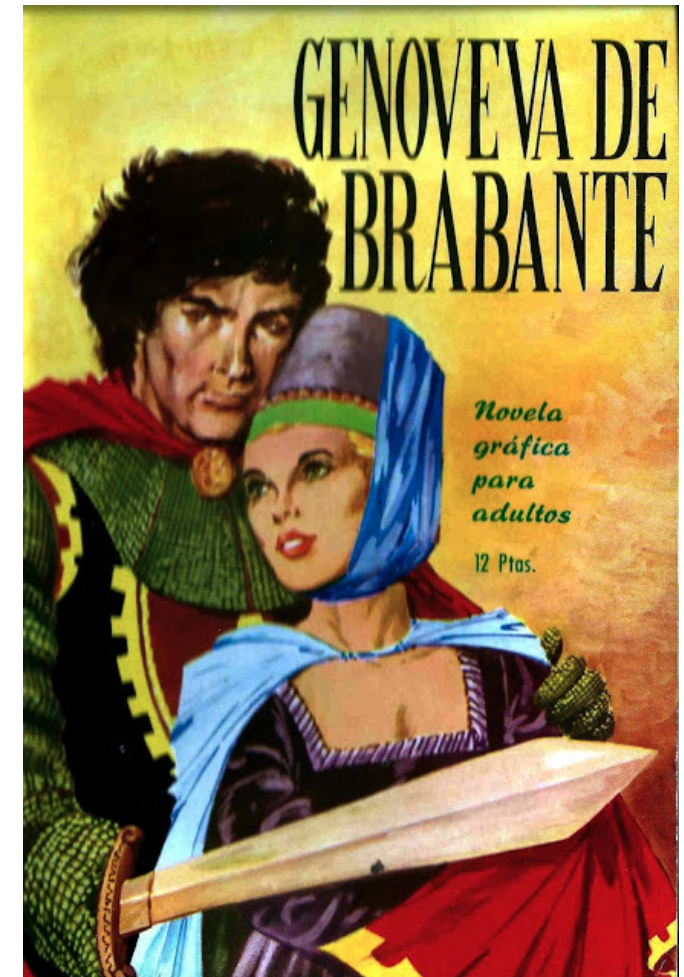


- *Genoveffa*, by Devi, in *Gaie Fantasia* (Edizioni Alpe) n° 23, 5 December 1952, 11 pl.; French version: *Geneviève de Brabant*, in *Le Petit Sheriff* n° 87 9 January 1954.



- *Geneviève de Brabant*, and *Échec à l'Islam*, suite et fin de *Geneviève de Brabant* (*Belle histoire de l'Oncle Paul* series), by Mitacq (drawing) & Octave Joly (scenario), in *Spirou* n° 813, 12 November, 4 pl., and n° 814, 19 November 1953, 4 pl. [no picture]

- *Genoveva de Brabante*, by E. M. Fariñas & Armando Borrell, Barcelona: Editorial Toray, 1964, colección *Novelas Gráficas Clásicas* n° 16, 84 pl.



GENOVEVA de BRABANTE.

adaptación: E. M. FARINAS -
dibujos: A. BORRELL -

ERA LA PRIMAVERA DEL AÑO 734 CUANDO LA HIJA DE LOS DUQUES DE BRABANTE, GENOVEVA, CONTRA MATRIMONIO CON EL NOBLE Y APUESTO CONDE PALATINO DE TRAVERIS.

EN NOMBRE DE LA SANTA MADRE IGLESIA CATOLICA YO OS DECLARO MARIDO Y MUJER.



PERO AQUEL ERA UN TIEMPO DIFÍCIL.

PROCEDENTE DEL NORTE DE AFRICA UN HURACÁN DE VIOLENCIA SE HABÍA DESGACENADO SOBRE LA VIEJA EUROPA.

LAS VICTORIAS DE LOS BELICOSOS HITOS DEL ISLAM SE HABÍAN ido SUCEDIENDO UNA TRAS OTRA.

EL CAUDILLO MORO TARIK DERROTABA A LOS VISIGODOS EN EL RÍO GUADALETE, EN CUYAS AGUAS PERECIÓ EL REY DON RODRIGO.

¡VICTORIA POR ALA!



EN MEDIO DE GRUPOS ENTUSIASTAS Y DEL RESGOCIO DE SUS AMIGOS Y SUBDITOS, GENOVEVA DE BRABANTE HIZO SU ENTRADA TRIUNFAL EN EL CASTILLO DEL QUE UN DÍA SALIERA PARA EL ENCUENTRO DE LA MUERTE.



Y REPUESTA EL GOZANDO DE LA DORA QUE HABÍA AGRADO AL SOPORTAR CON TANTA RESIGNACIÓN LAS PRUEBAS A QUE FUE SUJETADA, TRANSCURRIÓ EL RESTO DE LA VIDA DE GENOVEVA DE BRABANTE A LA QUE TODOS DABAN YA EL DICTADO DE SANTA.

Fin

Like *Kāṛal(s)mān-caritraṃ*, *Bṛśīna/Brijīna-caritraṃ* and *Janōva-nātakam* can be considered living archives of the two ‘Latin’ (Roman Catholic of Latin rite) communities of the (originally rival) *caviṭṭunātakam* performers, viz. the Aññūṭṭukkār (‘the 500’) and the Eḷunūṭṭukkār (‘the 700’), which constitute two distinct, endogamous, castes, one composed mainly of fishermen (Mukkuvans etc.), the other of former agricultural slaves (Ilavas/Ezhavas, Pulayas and Parayas).

Francis Day, *The Land of the Permauls or Cochin, its past and its present*, 1863, p. 231 fn. describes four groups of Latin communities (as opposed to the indigenous St. Thomas Christians of Syrian rite):

« The four Roman Catholic castes, are at the present time, divided in the following manner. The first, the *Arawutnarleecar* [Aṛupattunālikkār], (or the community of sixty-four,) is said to have consisted originally of converted Brahmans and Nairs. The second, the *Moonootecar*, (or three hundred,) are the Latins, or Topasses, so named from wearing hats, and believed to have mostly sprung from domestic slaves. The third, the *Unutecar* [Aññūṭṭukkār], (the five hundred,) are considered to have originally sprung from Mucuas [Mukkuvans], or converted fishermen, and other low cast(‘e people, they generally call themselves Moplahs. The fourth, the *Erunoortecar* [Eḷunūṭṭukkār] (seven hundred,) are the descendants of the soil slaves. The Catanars or Priests are generally taken from the second, or fourth of these communities or castes. » (see L. K. Anantakrishna Iyer, “Anthropology of the Roman Catholics of the Latin Rites in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore”, in: *Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes*, vol. III (*Orientalia*, Part 1), Calcutta: Calcutta UP, 1922, pp. 295- 325).

The (very few) converted brahmins and Nairs were apparently not involved in the *caviṭṭunātakam* art, like (more naturally) the Topasses, who were of Portuguese or, more generally, European half-origin (by Indian mothers, often serving as soldiers; some were also Europeanized former slaves from Africa).

The respective names of these four castes are indicative of the approximative original number (and average) of people in each one, attached to (and serving) the Christian Paṛāṅkis (viz. the Franks, cf. the Persian *farang*) — far from the fantastical numbers of converts on the Fishery Coast ascribed to Francis Xavier (1536-1535; cf. the testimony of a missionary in 1575 talking of about 500 practising converts only, Schurhammer 1963). Samely, the different *nāṭus* (‘regions’ or ‘kingdoms’) of Kerala were known according to human resources constituted by the number of Nayar warriors the local chiefs were able to mobilise (so ‘the 3000’, ‘the 10 000’ etc. according to the list established by the Dutch governor Hendrik Van Rheede in 1677).

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