

BnF-INDIEN 765: *Miśihācaritaṃ* = J.E. Hanxleden's *Puttaṇ pāna*

[Indien 765](#) (ex-Indien 120) is a 94 ff. palm-leaf manuscript between wooden planks (250 x 50 mm) in Malayāḷam script and language containing the poem *Miśihācaritaṃ* or 'Story of the Messiah', without author's ascription = *Puttaṇ pāna* (the 'New Hymn') by J.E. Hanxleden s.j. (1681-1732) alias Arnos Padiri (Mal. *arṇṇōsū pātiri*, from the Portuguese *Ernesto Padre*, 'Father Arnos').

Puttaṇ pāna (the 'New Hymn'), a devotional epic on the life of Christ, is Hanxleden's most popular poem. It bears the alternative titles of *Kūtāśappāna* ('Hymn of the Sacraments', cf. *kūdāśa* from Syriac *qudsha* = Hebrew *qōdeš*), *Miśihācarit(r)aṃ* ('Story of the Christ'), *Miśihāte pāna* ('Hymn of the Christ'), or *Rakṣākara-vēda-/carita-kīrtanaṃ* ('Poem on the Evangel/Story of the Saviour'), in 13 or 14 cantos (*pādaṃ*).

The Malayalam 'pāna tradition, a *capella* singing of devotional songs' (Palackal 1995: 5), prevalent among the Hindus (the model being the *Jñānappāna* of Pūntānaṃ Nampūtiri, 16th-17th c.), is here adopted for a Christian topic. Like in this manuscript, the poem in its critical edition (based on 3 mss. and 2 previous editions) has only thirteen *pādaṃs* (in the 11 syllables *sarppiṇi* 'metre', *vṛttaṃ*, or *pāna* itself as this metre is popularly known; cf. Palackal 1995: 67, Veluthat 2009: 255), because the 12th *pādaṃ* (87 verses, on the lament of the Virgin Mary at the crucifixion of Jesus), which is differently composed in the *natōnnata* ('depressed and elevated') 16 syllables metre (Palackal 1995: 68, 85), despite it is found in all the previous editions (more than ten) has been considered by the last editors as a separate poem.

These *pādaṃs* were sung by St. Thomas Christians on various solemn occasions, such as Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and other days of Holy Week and Lent, and evenings preceding funerals (see Palackal 1995: 75-84; Veluthat 2009: 256). K. Veluthat (2009: 256) stresses the oral dimension of the text, which explains that the 'versions show significant variations, which are too serious to be dismissed as errors caused by individual copyists', as it is the case with the present manuscript. The latter, also through the absence of authorship, appears to bear testimony of this oral dimension of the poem, between about 1750-1850 (cf. also the two mss. used and quoted by Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo, Vielle 2020: 23 fn. 128), whereas the printing of the text (cf. the editio princeps by the Church Missionary Society in 1844) seems to have fixed, from the middle of the 19th century onwards, a 'vulgate version' (to which the text of the earliest manuscript appears closer; that is a ms. having the title *Kūtāśappāna*, from the Kuṛiccittānaṃ [Kurichithanam, Kottayam Distr.] Putumana brahmin house [*illaṃ*], dated *kollam* era 902 = 1726-27 AD, when Hanxleden was still alive).

The manuscript is in *scriptio continua* without any *daṇḍa* between the stanzas. Long *ē* and *ō* are not marked.

f°1r — ll. 1-2 initial colophon

eceśvarāya namaḥ miśihāśaritaṃ pāna sṛṣṭyādiyuṃ mānuṣajanmanāśavum
śaraṇānugrehavyāvasthayuṃ onnāṃ sarggaṃ + śrī +

After the invocation to the Lord Jesus (eceśvarāya = ēcu for ēśu + īśvarāya namaḥ) the title of the work is given: *miśihāśaritaṃ* (for °*carit(r)aṃ*) *pāna*, the "Hymn/song on the Story of the Messiah/Christ", which starts, for the first *sarga* (onnāṃ sarggaṃ), with the Creation (sṛṣṭy-ādi-), the Birth and destruction of the [first] man (mānuṣa-janma-nāśa-), and [God's] Refuge (śaraṇa-), blessing (anugreha- for anugraha-) and law (?, vyāvastha- for vyavastha-).

f°1r — ll. 2 etc. *incipit*

ādacetorupileyāl vandatūṃ [/] khedanāśavūṃ rakṣeyuṇṭāyatūṃ...

to compare with the text in the crit. ed.:

ādaṃ ceyta piḷayāle vannatūṃ (var. vann'oru)

khēda(m) nāśavūṃ rakṣay-ṇṭāyatūṃ

(“That which occurred through Adam’s sin / Sorrow and destruction, but left hope”)

f°93v— 2 last lines *excipit*

itu keṭṭa]nnu teṛi mūvāyiraṃ [/] satyavedavūṃ bodhiccu satvaram [/] ślīhanmārumīvedaṃ

(var. recorded crit. ed.) naṭattuvāṇ [/] mahideśaṇṇaḷ (deśaṇṇaḷ not in ed.) torūṃ naṭakoṇḍār

(naṭannu palavaḷi ed. crit.) [/]

Colophon of the last chapter: patimmūnnār āśvāsaṃ ivi-

[f°94r]

te kūṭi ennarikaḥ(?) itil miśihā ākāśanteḷunneḷḷi bhūhata kudaśā

tanpurāne yātrayākiyata [—]

Final colophon

miśihāperanniṭṭ 1⁰⁰⁰7⁰⁰7⁰4 kālaṃ ka-

nni māsaṃ 8nu miśihāte pāna patimmūnnapātavūṃ ṇān

koṭiyen ceriyān utupp’ elutikoṭuttu anna kollaṃ 9⁰⁰5⁰

mata kanni māsaṃ 8nu [] miśihāte pāna patimmūnnapātavu ṇān koṭiye-

n ceriyān utupp’ gurukārūnyattā likhitam + + +

The colophon of the last chapter tells that it is the 13th one (‘13th Consolation’) and summarizes its content (the meaning of the sentence is not clear, despite the words *miśihā*, *ākāśa*-, *bhūhata*, *kudaśā*, *tanpurān*)

The final colophon, says:

‘I Koṭiyen Ceriyān Utupp have written the *Pāna of the Christ* – the thirteen *pādas* (*pāda* is written as *pāta*) when 1774 years, 8th of Kanni month elapsed since the Messiah was born and this is the 950th Kollam year of Kanni 8. I Koṭiyen Ceriyān Utupp have written the *Pāna of the Christ* – the thirteen *pādas* by the grace of [my] teacher (= *gurukārūnyattā*[I]).

The scribe puts the date of finishing the copy as Kanni the 8th in the year 1774 after the birth of the Messiah and also as Kanni the 8th in the year 950 the of Kollam era, which corresponds to 8 September 1774. This double method of dating, both in the Christian and in the Kollam era, is interesting; the months of the Christian calendar are here equated with names of corresponding months in the solar Malayalam calendar.

The scribe, Koṭiyen Ceriyān Utupp (Utupp being the local form of the name Joseph), is found being the same as the scribe of a copy of another of Hanxleden’s works, the *Caturantyaṃ* or the poem on the ‘Four Ends’ of man (to each of which corresponds a different *parvaṃ*:

Maraṇa- ‘Death’, *Vidhi*- ‘[Universal] Judgement’, *Naraka*- ‘Perdition’, and *Mōkṣa*-

‘Paradise’, -*parvaṃ*; the whole work being thus sometime called *Nālu-parvvaṃ* or -

parvaṇṇaḷ, the ‘Four *parvaṃs*’), a palm-leaf manuscript preserved in the Bibliotheca

Nazionale in Rome, according to the draft-list made by Raghava Varier (2012: 81) : [no.] 10.

Arnos Padre’s Chodyaparvaṃ [Mal. *cōdyaṃ* is a ‘question’, including juridical question, and

also ‘punishment’] (...) Copied by Kodiyan Cheryan Uthuppu [= Joseph] dated, 955 [Kollam

era] Dhanu [= December] 23 (1779 A.D.)”. This palm-leaf would correspond to the ms. of

the (complete) ‘Nāla parvaṃ’ owned by Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo, who described it as

a ‘codex corticeus descriptus a Iosepho mapulla, ex oppido Cenòtta’ (1792: 77 fn. no. 17).

Main editions of the work:

Miśihācaritram. Kōṭṭayam: C.M.S. [Church Missionary Society] Press, 1844. [editio princeps]
Puttaṇ pāna: miśihācaritram. Kocci: Ignāśū [Ignatius S.J.] Accukūṭam, 1862, reprinted 1870, 1883.

Puttaṇ pāna, athavā rakṣākaravēdakīrttanam, [edition by] Ṭi. Je. Paili. Mānnānam: Senṭū Jōsaphū Prassū [St. Joseph's Press], 1896, reprinted 1937, 1957 [*reimprimatur* Mathew Kavukatt]; [with a new introduction by] Jēkkabū Vēllyān [Jacob Vellian], 1965, etc.

Arṇōsupātiriyuṭe kāvyannal: pāṭhavuṁ paṭhanavuṁ, [critical edition by] En. Sām [N. Sam], Kuryāsū Kumpaḷakkulī, Dī. Bañcamin [D. Benjamin]. Kōṭṭayam: Current Books, 2002. Studies:

PALACKAL, Joseph J. *Puthen pāna: A musical study*. New York: Hunter College, 1995 [MA thesis, City of New York University].

Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo. *Examen historico-criticum codicum Indicorum Bibliothecae Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*. Romae: Ex Typographia Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1792.

PULIURUMPIL, James [Jeyimsū Puliyurumpil]. *Arnose Pathiri: A Pioneer Indologist*. Vadavathoor [Kottayam]: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India, Publications no. 398, 2015 [on *Puttaṇ pāna*, see pp. 164-183].

RAGHAVA VARIER, M. R. *Kolezhuthu and Malayalam Records in the Oriental Section of Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris*. Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Council for Historical Research, 2012.

VELUTHAT, Kesavan. "Use of 'Hindu' Idioms in Christian Worship and Propaganda in Kerala." *Studies in History* 25/2 (2009), pp. 253-266 [revised version in Id. *Notes of Dissent: Essays on Indian History*, Delhi: Primus Books, 2018, pp. 136-153].

VIELLE, Christophe. "Devotional Christianity and Pre-Indology in Early Eighteenth-century Kerala: Johann Ernst Hanxleden SJ., alias Arnos Padiri, Scholar and Poet." In *Transposition and Transformation, Controversy and Discovery: On the Christian Encounter with the Religions of Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century India*, edited by Karin Preisendanz & Johanna Buss, p. 3-47. Vienna: De Nobili Research Library, Publications of the De Nobili Research Library no. 38, 2020.

Christophe Vielle (with thanks to Dr. Sooraj Sanskrit for improving my manuscript reading)

Abstract :

The report dealt with a palm-leaf manuscript in Malayāḷam script and language containing the Christian poem *Miśihācaritam* or 'Story of the Messiah', without author's ascription, that is the *Puttaṇ pāna* (the 'New Hymn') composed by the German Jesuit J.E. Hanxleden (1681-1732) alias Arnos Padiri. The Malayalam *pāna* tradition, an *a capella* singing of devotional songs, prevalent among the Hindus, was here adopted for a Christian topic. The text provided by this manuscript presents significant variation comparing to the critically edited text of the *Puttaṇ pāna*. With the absence of ascribed authorship, it bears testimony of some oral dimension (linked to a liturgical usage) acquired by the poem between about 1750-1850 (and the printing of the first edition, at the origin of a kind of "vulgate" version). At the end of the manuscript, the scribe (also known from a manuscript of another Malayalam poem of Hanxleden preserved in Rome) puts the date of finishing the copy as Kanni the 8th in the year 1774 after the birth of the Messiah and also as Kanni the 8th in the year 950 of Kollam era, which corresponds to 8 September 1774. This double method of dating, both in the Christian and in the Kollam era, is interesting; the months of the Christian calendar are here equated with names of corresponding months in the solar Malayalam calendar.