

## Textual Crossroads and Transregional Encounters Jewish Networks in Kerala, 900s-1600s

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### Abstract

*A Hebrew letter sent from Cochin to Alexandria sometime between 1520 and 1560 sought legal advice on intra-communal conflicts between a minority group of impoverished but “pure” Jews, who “out of jealousy and hatred” outcaste the majority of Cochin Jews on grounds of non-Jewish slave origins. Similar allegations are recorded much later in 1687 by a Dutch Jewish trader, Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva, in his “Notisias dos Judeos de Cochim”. This second time the allegations are embedded in a legend of a lost Jewish kingdom in Cranganore (Kodungallur). The lost kingdom is mentioned in several Hebrew texts composed in Europe since the 1500s, contrasting it with Calicut. Recorded exclusively by European Jews and missionaries, the legend emerges as a narrative countering Arab-Muslim dominance over the Indian Ocean trade networks and acting upon the realignment of Jewish networks with the growing influence of Christian Europe in maritime South Asia. Centuries-old business partnerships with Arab Muslims and local Māppila merchants are gradually suppressed in Cochin, giving way to new alliances with European—Jewish and Christian—traders. These new alliances are not merely reflected in narrations of an imagined Jewish history in Malabar; they are also shaped by the same narrations. The legends of a glorious Jewish past and unfortunate destruction are woven into interreligious textual networks across regions. By contextualizing these Hebrew texts in maritime Malabar, this paper presents a historical analysis of intra- and inter-communal conflicts and exchanges at the maritime crossroads of early modern Cochin.*

**Keywords:** Cochin, Calicut, Shingly, Jews, Hebrew Cosmopolis, textual networks

### Textual Networks and the “Hebrew Cosmopolis”

The notion of a language cosmopolis was first formulated by Sheldon Pollock (1995) in relation to Sanskrit in South Asia. Pollock’s notion of the Sanskrit cosmopolis was extended to Arabic (Ricci, 2011:1–23) and to Pāli (Frasch, 2017) in relation to literary production across vast regions in South and Southeast Asia, where Muslim and Buddhist communities sought social and political alliances with their co-religionists overseas. Mahmood Kooria (2016) extends Ronit Ricci’s notion of an Arabic cosmopolis based on the circulation of literary texts to the notion of a cosmopolis of legal texts connecting Muslim communities in South and Southeast Asia with West

Asia and the Western Mediterranean. The notion of textual networks and language cosmopolis deserves more attention than I am able to give it here. For the present discussion I suggest that textual networks emerge through various media, not necessarily written, and in different genres, not necessarily literary or narratival. Moreover, the notion of an Arabic or a Sanskrit Cosmopolis is closely related to the notion of vernacularization (Pollock, 1998), a phenomenon that from a linguistic, rather than literary, point of view underlies the emergence of religiolects (Hary and Wein 2013).

Networking strategies relying on the circulation of texts and the emergence of religiolects (or cosmopolitan vernaculars) can be attributed to the Jewish diaspora in Malabar and its connections with Jews in West Asia and, from the early modern period onwards, with Jews in Europe. Admittedly, to speak of a Hebrew cosmopolis in South Asia is somewhat inadequate, though it is reasonable to consider Malabar as the easternmost outpost of a Eurasian Hebrew cosmopolis connected with the Jewish Diaspora in Asia and Europe through the Hebrew script and Jewish texts. While Hebrew literary and textual production over two millennia and across the world is well known and well-studied, the concept of Hebrew textual networks, let alone a “Hebrew cosmopolis” is not acknowledged in Jewish studies, as far as I am aware of. However, applying these analytic categories—language cosmopolis and literary/textual networks—to Malabar Jewry is certainly in place. For the present discussion and for the sake of simplicity, I focus on Hebrew textual networks, as these are not only readily traceable in Jewish history in Malabar but are also telling of historical processes that contextualize Malabar Jews in Indian Ocean history and in the history of global trade.

Roughly speaking, the early modern period witnesses a shift in the Hebrew textual networks, at least as far as the evidence for the pre-modern period goes. Whereas the Hebrew sources produced in or in relation to Malabar before the sixteenth century are primarily of a documentary—rather than literary—nature, Hebrew and Jewish literature from or on Malabar emerge in growing quantity and volume from the sixteenth century onwards. This Jewish literary production is of two major types, poetry in Hebrew and in Jewish Malayalam, and origin myths dealing with the origins of Jews in Kerala. Curiously enough, the origin myths, or pseudo-historical accounts, emerge first in the Western Mediterranean during the first decades of the sixteenth century, before being documented in Cochin in the late seventeenth century. Contrarily, the earliest Hebrew poems emerge in Cochin towards the end of the sixteenth century, and Jewish Malayalam poetry possibly precedes it by a few decades at least.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Hebrew and Jewish literature dealing with or composed in Malabar during the early sixteenth century constitute textual crossroads between two types of transregional encounters of Malabar Jews with their coreligionists from overseas. The first type of transreg-

ional encounters is that between Malabar Jews and Arabic-speaking Jews and Muslims represented by legal and documentary texts. Contrarily, the second type is that between Malabar Jews and European Jews and Christians represented by pseudo-historical narratives. The emergence of Hebrew poetry is related to both types of transregional encounters, discussed in the conclusion, while Jewish Malayalam literature is, naturally, related to local, regional networking strategies. For demonstrating the shift from the Arabic Jewish textual networks to the European, I focus below on two texts composed in Malabar as anchors, so to speak, in the wider Jewish textual networks demonstrating, in my opinion, the intersecting transregional encounters in sixteenth century Cochin.

The first “anchoring” text is a legal correspondence, *the Cochin Responsum* (Qastro,1783:Responsum 99), composed in Hebrew by an anonymous Jew in Cochin and sent to Alexandria sometime during the first decades of the sixteenth century (Segal,1983: 230–32; cf. Fischel,1967:232).The financial and legal matters it deals with can be traced back to eleventh-century Jewish traders commuting between Aden and the Malabar Coast. The second anchoring text is in Portuguese dated 1687 and bearing the title *Notisias dos Judeos de Cochim* (henceforth *the Notisias*). The *Notisias* was written by a Jewish trader from Amsterdam, Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva, who visited Cochin in November 1686. Though not composed in Hebrew, the origin myth included in it can be traced back to Hebrew literary production in Florence in 1503, as demonstrated below. The *Notisias*, therefore, signifies the culmination of Judeo-Christian ideologies forged in the Western Mediterranean and in Europe. Contrarily, *the Cochin Responsum* as a legal document signifies a watershed moment in the social history of Malabar Jews in particular, and of Jewish networks in Indian Ocean history in general. Historical records in Hebrew predating *the Cochin Responsum* demonstrate the largely legal and documentary nature of the use of Hebrew in maritime Malabar surveyed in the following section dealing with the history of Hebrew in premodern Malabar.

### **Hebrew in Premodern Malabar**

The Hebrew script, even if not necessarily representing the Hebrew language, is attested in legal documents related to Malabar since the mid-ninth century. These documents, listed here in chronological order, are evidence for centuries-old transregional networks of Jews operating in maritime trade across the Arabian Sea.

#### 849: Kollam (Quilon): Tarisāppaḷḷi Inscription

The Tarisāppaḷḷi inscription is engraved in the *vatteluttu* script on copper plates, documenting a land grant (along with tenants) and regulating trade rights and land revenue benefits. The inscription concludes with signatures in Kufic (Arabic), Pahlavi (early middle Persian) and Hebrew (Judeo-Persian). It contains at least three terms in Early Middle Persian: the name of the main beneficiary, Maruvān Sapīr Íso, a Nestorian Chris-

tian; the name of the place granted, Tarisāppaḷḷi claimed unanimously by scholars to be the earliest church in India; and the name of a West Asian trade guild, Añcuvannam, known from other inscriptions found along the West Coast of South India.<sup>2</sup> Leaving aside the significance of this inscription to a broad set of historical issues, its significance to the history of Jewish networks in Malabar is in its attestation of contacts between West Asian traders—Persian Jews, Zoroastrians, and Christians, and Arabs (probably with a majority of Muslims)—on the one hand, and Malayali Hindus (possibly also Jains) that constitute land owners, village officials and royal authorities, on the other hand. This inscription contains the earliest evidence for the use of the Hebrew script in the region. Notably, the language attested is not Hebrew, but rather Persian, or as Judaists would have it, a religiolect called Judeo-Persian (Borjian, 2016:239–61). The following centuries see a rise in using the Hebrew script in and about Malabar. However, the religiolect mostly used later on is Judeo-Arabic, namely, Arabic written in the Hebrew script. The Tarisāppaḷḷi inscription is the only instance, to the best of my knowledge, of Judeo-Persian documented in Malabar.

#### 1100s-1200s: Aden, Mangalore, Jurfattan (Kannur)

Letters in Judeo-Arabic dealing with Indian Ocean trade mention several places along the Malabar Coast from Surat in the Bay of Cambay to Kollam near the southernmost tip of the subcontinent (Goitein and Friedman 2008). The letters include Indian names and terms, and quite a few Dravidian words, mainly names of products, people, coins and measurement terms (Lambourn, 2014; Gamliel, 2018c). These documents attest to growing contacts between Arabic-speaking Jews and Indian traders and to various types of local people, mainly Malayalam and Tulu speakers, from upper-class officials to lower-class laborers and slaves (Ghosh, 2002; Gamliel, 2018b). As the script is Hebrew and the language is Arabic, these documents are significant for defining and analyzing the nature of the Hebrew textual networks of Jews engaged in Indian Ocean trade. Generally speaking, in this period the texts utilized in the Jewish networking system were dealing with practical and legal issues related to finance, travel and, to a certain extent, legal and interpersonal issues as well.

#### 1132-1149: Abraham Ben Yijū's Documents

Among the Judeo-Arabic Geniza documents, those related to Abraham Ben Yijū are of particular interest to Jewish history in premodern Malabar. Ben Yijū's network in the region was based to a large extent on kinship alliance through his consort Aśu, whose brother, referred to by Ben Yijū as Nāyar, was his business associate (Gamliel, 2018b). Ben Yijū spent close to seventeen years in the region, with his business activities extending from Mangalore in the Tulu-speaking region to Dahfattan, near Mt. Hīli (Ezhimala) (Goitein and Friedman, 2008:57). Several names mentioned in his business correspondences and documents reveal the supra-regional extent of his Indian connections, while his own biography demonstrates the

extent of the transregional networking system he was involved in. Born in Tunisia, Ben Yijū migrated with his family to Egypt, and like many Jewish traders of his time, he based his Jewish and Muslim maritime trade partnerships in Aden, before establishing his Indian business network in Malabar.

Of particular interest to Ben Yijū's transregional networking strategies are the names of three merchants mentioned in passing in a letter addressed to him by his Yemenite Jewish business associate, Madmūn Ben Hasan. The names are Kinābti, Sūs (or, perhaps, Som) Sitti, and Yishaq al-Bānyān; the first name depicts a merchant from Cambay (Khambhāt), the second a Jain or a Hindu of the merchant caste Chetti (possibly a South Indian), and the third is combined of a Semitic name (Isaac) and a Hindu or Jain merchant caste name, later known as Bania (Habib, 1990; Findly, 1997:289). This latter name obviously refers to a person born to a family (or a couple) of mixed Indo-Arab origins.

Documents as rich and informative as the Geniza letters have not emerged so far to account for the Jewish networks in Malabar between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, important albeit scarce evidence for the continuity of the use of the Hebrew script in Malabar exists, attesting to an ongoing Jewish networking system in the region.

#### 1269: Chendamangalam Tombstone

This tombstone is the oldest surviving Hebrew inscription on the Malabar Coast. It states as follows:

Blessed be the Judge of Truth, the Granite of Perfect Deeds. This grave is of Sarah Bat Israel. May God's Spirit guide us! 1581 according to the Era of Contracts (*minyān šətarot*), 23<sup>rd</sup> day of the month of Kislev (20/12/1269).<sup>3</sup>

The name engraved on the tombstone is of a woman, Sarah Bat Israel. She must have been important enough for her Jewish descendants to preserve her tombstone, the oldest Hebrew inscription in Malabar.<sup>4</sup> The importance attached to the commemoration of a matriarch as well as the appellation "daughter (*bat*) of Israel" highlight the likelihood of Sarah Bat Israel being a convert of a matrilineal household, with whom a thirteenth century Jewish merchant aligned in intermarriage to establish or to expand a trade community in Malabar, like Abraham Ben Yijū 137 years earlier. In the context of legal networks, the Chendamangalam tombstone is complementary to the deed of manumission used in the conversion of Aśu, Abraham Ben Yijū's Nāyar consort (Gamliel 2018b), documented some 400 km up north along the coast. Both women are attested in legal documents in Hebrew, and both attest to matriarchs as instrumental in forging transregional alliances with Jewish merchants.

#### 1344: Katavumbhāgam-Cochin Synagogue Inscription

This inscription is currently attached to the compound wall of the Paradesi synagogue in Cochin, though it was initially found at the site of

the Katavumbhāgam-Cochin synagogue (Bar-Giora, 1958:223). According to Sassoon (1932:225), it belonged to a synagogue in Kochangady that was presumably destroyed by Tipu Sultan in 1789 (Bar-Giora 1958, 223). Bar-Giora, unlike Sassoon, assumes that the inscription must have belonged to the synagogue where it was found, namely, Kat avumbhāgam-Cochin (*ibid.*, 225 and fn. 61), an assumption that makes better sense in my opinion. Except for hearsay repeated by scholars, there is no concrete historical evidence for a synagogue by the name Kochangady ever constructed in Cochin, let alone destroyed by Tipu Sultan.<sup>5</sup> In any case, the inscription clearly attests the use of Hebrew in a legal document and, consequently, is evidence for Hebrew usage among Jews in premodern Malabar. The inscription reads as follows:

We did build a temple for Thee,  
 A place for Thee to dwell in for eternity<sup>6</sup>  
 In the year “let the honor of this abode be great” (1344),  
 The last from the first to creation today,  
 In the Third of Sabbath, Kislev Fill /11), with God’s help, Amen<sup>7</sup>

Notably, the calendar era used in this inscription adheres to the Jewish epoch at the year of creation (Anno Mundi), rather than the “Era of contracts” (Seleucid Era) as in the Chendamangalam inscription. The choice of calendric era implies legal affiliation, as discussed below.

#### 1489: Tekkumbhāgam-Cochin Synagogue Inscription

This inscription is lost, but a transcription of a somewhat corrupt text, is found in Ha-Cohen (1889:77) and in Sassoon (1932: 577). Since a coherent text cannot be reconstructed without consulting the original inscription, I offer here a tentative, rough translation:

The work was completed by Ya’aqov Qasti’ el Junior  
 On the second of the month of Iyar in the year  
 Indeed You will rebuild the wall [1489 CE] around the Holy of Holies,  
 And increase Your mercy upon us.  
 He whose reputation rose up to the Holy of Holies,  
 [...?] that low pitch is followed by high pitch,  
 And that the innocent shall not be despised by the mighty.  
 Open the gates, so that the righteous, trustworthy nation will enter! [Isiah : 26, 2]  
 The black on the white in memory of the destruction [of ancient Jerusalem],  
 Thus he left a blank spot in all new buildings  
 In commemoration of the destruction of [our] holy temple.<sup>8</sup>

Besides the poetic and somewhat incoherent content, the date of the inscription and the donor’s name are clear. The inscription states that the “work”—the construction of the synagogue or its renovation—was completed by a Castilian Jew named Ya’aqov in April 3 1489. <sup>9</sup>Notably, the Hebrew date is according to the Seleucid Era (Era of Contracts) as in the

Chendamangalam tombstone and contrary to the earlier synagogue inscription of 1344. It is also interesting to note that the Castilian Jew is settled in Cochin at least a few years prior to the final wave of expulsion of Jews from Spain (1492) and Portugal (1497) and, perhaps more importantly, prior to the arrival of the Portuguese to the Malabar Coast (1498). This is remarkable, for the conventional notion reiterated in studies of Kerala Jews is that the Paradeši (the so-called White) Jewish community in Cochin originated in Sephardic Jews fleeing Spain to India via the Portuguese newly-found maritime route to Malabar, even as (or among) New Christians.

Additionally, Yaʿaqov Qastiʿel’s descendants are mentioned in various documents and records from Cochin and Parur all through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Upon examination of the records listing the names of Jews in Cochin since the seventeenth century, there is in fact not even a single family in the Paradeši community that can be traced back to Spain, except for the Qastiʿel family. Since they are attested in Kerala prior to the expulsion from Spain, the theory of the Sephardic origin of the “White Jews” is significantly weakened (Daniel and Johnson, 1996: 10; Segal, 1993:21; cf. Tavim, 2010). That the end of the fifteenth century saw the arrival of the Qastiʿel’s to Cochin is further supported by the list of households of Paradeši Jews in Cochin in 1686 recorded by Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva in *the Notisias* (see below). Two men by the name Qastiʿel are mentioned, with an editor’s note that their great-great-great-grandfather migrated from Spain. This means that the lineage goes five generations back. With the average life expectancy in sixteenth-century Cochin estimated for mature males at forty years of age (cf. Griffin, 2008), the first Qastiʿel to settle in Malabar migrated sometime during the late fifteenth century. The date on the inscription is, therefore, reasonably plausible.

Besides these few Hebrew verses in inscriptions, premodern Malabar Jewry produced texts that were primarily of a documentary (administrative or legal) nature. One exception, though, is the often-quoted reference to Kerala Jews in the travelogue of Benjamin of Tudela (ca. twelfth century), who is unlikely to have actually been to the region. However, his reference to Jews in Kollam, even if originating in hearsay or some maritime traders’ stories, can be corroborated by Geniza documents, as Kollam is a port town visited by Jewish traders of his time. Besides Benjamin of Tudela, there are no literary references directly referring to Malabar in medieval Hebrew literature.<sup>10</sup>

These synagogue inscriptions of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries performed at least two administrative functions: 1) recording the date of construction, and 2) specifying the transregional affiliation by the choice of calendar era—Anno Mundi versus Seleucid Era. While Jewish communities in the Islamic world retained the Seleucid Era count until the sixteenth century, Anno mundi count was replacing it much earlier in

European Jewish communities. Particularly Yemenite Jews continued using Seleucid Era as late as the twentieth century (Goldberg, 2000:275–6; Tobi, 2002: 299 fn. 9). Interestingly, the earlier inscription represents a shift to Anno Mundi calendar, while the Qasti’el inscription shifts back to the Yemenite Seleucid Era. It is only in the early seventeenth century that the Anno Mundi count is again favoured, in a synagogue inscription in Parur ascribed to a descendant of the Qasti’el family (1616). This stands in contrast to legal affiliation with Egypt and Yemen, already attested as early as the twelfth century (cf. Goitein and Friedman, 2008: 633–4; Gamliel, 2018b: 220–1), and reiterated by *the Cochin Responsum* of the early sixteenth century in addressing the Rabbinate in Alexandria and relating to Yemen as one of the places of Kerala Jewish origins.

Notably, the 1344 inscription contains the earliest attempt at literary style in paraphrasing Biblical verses. This attempt to literalize is developed further, until its culmination in the Parur inscription with the acrostic signed by the poet Eliya Ha-‘Adani (“Elijah the Adenite”). Thus, in 1616, a full-fledged Hebrew culture – an amalgamation of Sephardic, Yemenite, and Egyptian administrative, legal, and literary traditions – was engraved in stone. But the documented history of the Yemenite/Egyptian Jewish networks in the Malabar Coast is soon to be forgotten, leaving only traces in legends. The prestige of Yemenite Jewry, probably resulting from medieval Jewish maritime trade in the region, fades out by the late seventeenth century, giving way to a somewhat blurred Sephardic “identity” of “white” Jews constructed against a local, “slave-descendant”, “black” Jewish identity (cf. Schorsch, 2008). The earliest document attesting this process is *the Cochin Responsum*.

### **The Cochin Responsum**

*The Cochin Responsum* is undated, though it can be safely estimated to have been composed sometime between the 1520s and the 1560s.<sup>11</sup> This Hebrew text is of the documentary genres (of the legal type in this case); it marks the turn from Jewish alliances embedded in Arab-Muslim maritime trade networks to business enterprises and trans-regional partnerships embedded in the emerging Portuguese India and, later on, in the European East Indies companies. The document explicates a social and legal dispute between two parties of Jews in Cochin, a minority of self-proclaimed Jews of pedigree (*məyuhāsīm*) as opposed to a majority of Jews, labelled as descendants of slaves. The fact that it was sent to Alexandria shows that, at the time, Egyptian Jewry was still considered as a legal authority, which, alongside Yemenite Jewry, had been the traditional authoritative legal affiliation of Malabar Jews.

Though the author of *the Cochin Responsum* is anonymous, it is plausible that he was an Arabic speaker. This can be deduced from his reference to Persia by its Arabic name, al-‘Agām (*ʾl ʿgʾm*). Considering the affiliation of the author of the document with Egyptian Jewry and with Ar-



abic language, it is sensible to locate this document at the heart of the centuries-old Arab-Jewish networks in Malabar. For the purpose of the present discussion, a translation of an excerpt of the text is offered as follows:

A query from India from the Island Cochi (*qwggy*), where there are some nine-hundred householders; one hundred Jews of pedigree (*məyuhāsīm*) and roots and the rest are sons of slaves and slave-girls, wealthy, observant and givers of charity. Those of pedigree do not marry them calling them slaves, and they endlessly quarrel over the issue. Those wealthy ones called slaves are mixed; some of them came there as merchants from Turkey (*twgrmh*), from the Land of Aden and Yemen, and from Persia (al- ‘Agām) and they bought slave-girls and had sons and daughters born to them [...].<sup>12</sup> And all those partly idol worshippers intermarried, preserved the religion of Israel [Judaism] and became a large community, *scholars of Torah, wealthy and related to the royalty and the government. They are the main negotiators for the merchants.* The Jews of pedigree are, on the contrary, *few and poor, so they label the others offspring of slaves due to jealousy and hatred,* and there is no one who can inquire whether [the others] are indeed slaves.<sup>13</sup>

The author of *the Cochīn Responsum* voices his own dilemma; on the one hand, he acknowledges the doubts regarding the legality of ad-hoc conversions. On the other hand, he doubts the motives of the so-called Jews of pedigree, speculating that they resent the others due to an inferior position in the local social, economic, and political milieu of Cochin at the time. The author further adds that those labelled as slave descendants are the main negotiators for the merchants, suggestive of his own implicit socioeconomic interest, perhaps extending to his target audience in Egypt.

The bone of contention from the “legal” perspective is clear; the Jews of pedigree refuse to marry those whom they label as slave descendants. In other words, they deny the legitimacy of conversions of local women networking with West Asian Jewish traders, either as domestic workers or as free women belonging to local trading communities. Intermarriage with women converts has its antecedences in the cases of Abraham Ben Yijū’s consort Aśu, and possibly also Sarah Bat Israel, whose tombstone remains as a silent witness to the thirteenth-century matriarch’s social status. For sure, Jewish traders, as was customary all through the long-distance trade history, cohabitated low-class women (Friedman, 1986:292–6; Frenkel, 2011). However, the high social, economic, and political status of their descendants as described in *the Cochīn Responsum* cannot be but the result of kinship alliances, at least to some extent, with matrilineal upper-class families.

### **Hebrew Poetry**

Literature is an important tool in networking strategies within localities and across regions, languages, and religions, as demonstrated by Pollock (1995, 1998 ) Ricci (2010, 2011), and others. For the sake of brevity and clarity, I am obliged to leave out of the present discussion a detailed histor-

ical and literary survey of Malabar Jewish poetic production, and to focus on the implications of indigenous Hebrew poetry on the transregional crossroads between Jewish Malabar, Muslim West Asia, and Christian Europe.

The century and a half following *the Cochin Responsum* sees a growing production of Jewish literature in both Hebrew and Malayalam. In the context of networking strategies, the evolution of Jewish Malayalam literature can be compared to the evolution of Arabic Malayalam literature, though its emergence probably predates the latter.<sup>14</sup> Both Arabic Malayalam and Jewish Malayalam literatures emerge during the period of growing contacts with European traders and missionaries. The vernacularization of the Arabic and Hebrew textual traditions can be attributed to sociopolitical concerns for inclusiveness within the Malayalam-speaking regional identity. In the case of Malabar Jewry, the concern for transregional connectivity is evidenced by the increased production of Hebrew poetry during the sixteenth century following the emergence of Jewish Malayalam literature (and probably reshaping it as well). Hebrew poetry must have been produced in Cochin prior to the sixteenth century as is evident in the poetically stylized verses engraved on the stone inscriptions predating the sixteenth century. Though it is difficult to assess the extent of indigenous Hebrew poetry before the 1600s, I believe it was rather limited in scope at the time. To the best of my knowledge, no Hebrew poems other than those inscribed on the synagogue inscriptions survived from the period preceding the sixteenth century.

Two Hebrew poets are known to have been active in Cochin of the mid-sixteenth century. One is Nāmya Motta, or Nehemya the Elder, and the other is Eliya Ha-‘Adani, or Elijah the Adenite.<sup>15</sup> The poems of Nāmya Motta have become so popular, that they are still performed during Jewish holidays even in the synagogues and homes of Malayali Jews in Israel. Moreover, Nāmya Motta was elevated to the status of a saint, though it is unclear when exactly. Currently, his tomb is the only surviving remnant of a once extensive Jewish cemetery in Cochin. A stupa-like structure was built over it, including a stylized inscription praising him as a divine mystic who died in 1616 (Sassoon, 1932:547). The letters of the inscription are in the relief style, rather than incised in it as in all Kerala synagogue inscriptions. Remarkably, the famous synagogue inscription from Parur dated to the same year, 1616, has the letters incised in the stone. This difference in scribal style suggests that the Nāmya Motta tomb inscription postdates the actual date of burial, perhaps by more than a century. A material examination of sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth-century Hebrew inscriptions from Kerala might reveal the historical layers underlying the stylistic features of the grave-shrine and, consequently, shed light on the process that turned a poet’s grave into a saint shrine.

Nāmya Motta’s contemporary Eliya Ha-‘Adani too left a rich poetic legacy in the repertoire of Kerala Jews, including the poem consti-

tuting the Parur synagogue inscription of 1616, the year in which Nāmya Motta died. Though Ha-‘Adani was not elevated to the position of a saint, a collection of his poems is the earliest printed book belonging to the Cochin Jewish tradition. The book was printed in Amsterdam in 1688, and it thus signifies the advent of a new type of Jewish textual networks between Cochin and Amsterdam with printing books being at its core. The importance of the printed-text network can be substantiated by the correspondence between a Yemenite Rabbi Yihya Sālih (1713–1805) and David Rahabi, the leader (*mutaliyār*) of the Paradeši Jews in Cochin at the time. Rabbi Sālih corresponded for over five years (1779–1784) with Rahabi seeking his assistance in printing his essays in Amsterdam. The essays remained in a manuscript form, apparently because David Rahabi failed to keep his promise to send the manuscript to the publisher in Amsterdam (Ratzabi 1989), to the dismay of Rabbi Sālih. This incident poignantly points at the dramatic effects that the shift in transregional alliances had on the lives of individuals during the time. The Yemenite scholar expected the Cochini trader to help him in connecting with the center of print technology in Amsterdam and with the Jewish community there. The lack of interest on the part of the Cochini trader speaks volumes of the dwindling influence of Yemenite Jewry in the transregional networks between West Asia and Malabar during the seventeenth century.

It thus seems that contrarily to the accepted notion of anti-Jewish hostile Portuguese, Jewish cultural life in Cochin during the Portuguese period seems to have fared well, with new synagogues built or old ones being renovated, and with Hebrew poetry composed, as well as Jewish Malayalam literature. Yemenite Jewry had the most direct influence over the Jews of Kerala during that time, as is evidenced by the creative activity of the two Yemenite poets and by other historical visitors from Yemen to Cochin, such as the merchant-traveler Zacharia al-Dahari, who mentions Sephardic Jews in mid-sixteenth century Cochin (Schorsch, 2008:66). It is likely, though, that the mention of Sephardic Jews is for poetic reasons, as al-Dahari’s composition is metrical and rhyming, namely, of the poetic, rather than the documentary, genre.

It is during the Dutch period that evidence for a drastic change in the textual networks emerges, depictive of a new type of alliance based on origin myths and on contacts with European Jewish merchants and Christian missionaries. Though the earliest text of this sort is composed in Portuguese (rather than Hebrew), it is based on an account told by Cochin Jews. Therefore, I turn to it first for tracing the history of Jewish networks in Malabar.

### **Notisias Dos Judeos de Cochim**

In 1686, a Dutch Jewish merchant by the name Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva traveled to Surat on a business trip. His ancestors settled in Amsterdam after the expulsion of Jews from Portugal in 1497, and his family became rich and influential. One of them was deeply involved in the mes-

sianic movement of the mystic Shabbatai Zevi (Kaplan, 1995: 242–3), an involvement that is echoed in questions about Shabbatai Zevi that Pereyra de Paiva poses before his Jewish hosts in Cochin (Pereyra de Paiva, 1923 [1687]:9). Pereyra de Paiva traveled to Surat along with two other merchants for trading in gems (Schorsch, 2008:79–80). They proceeded to Cochin on the invitation of the Dutch governor Gelmer Vosburgh and stayed in his house for a few days in late November. They met with Paradesi Jews in Cochin and paid a visit to the Malabari Jews in Ernakulam, on the other side of the backwaters separating Cochin from the mainland. Pereyra de Paiva wrote an emotional narrative describing the visit and the Jews of Cochin, and reproducing the story he had heard from them about their origin in Kerala. He refers to his Jewish hosts in Cochin as “Our Brethren”, whom he lists in detail for their names and ancestry. Based on the list, it is clear that his hosts were the Paradesi Jews of Cochin. He contrasts them with the Jews of all other communities (nine synagogues), whom he refers to by the term “Malabaree”. The stories he recorded in *the Notisias* are telling in regard of the early modern alliances between Jews in Malabar and European Jews and Christian traders and missionaries.

*The Notisias* is often quoted for being the earliest reference to (and “translation” of) the famous Jewish Copper Plates and for containing a detailed list Jewish householders of the Paradesi community on the one hand, and a more general list of all other communities of the Malabar Jews on the other hand. Pereyra de Paiva lists twenty-three Paradesi households; he names the male family heads, the country of origin of their ancestors (often grandfather or great grandfather), and marks twelve families as *branco*, literally, “white”, leaving the remaining households unmarked. Strangely enough, the list of *brancos* is a mixture of families from West Asia, a family from Germany, and a family originating in Kerala. Those unmarked as *branco* are of a similar multi-ethnic mixture, including members of the Qasti’el family. Clearly, the label *branco* has nothing to do with ethnicity, and, consequently, it is unrelated to color or to Jewish pedigree (cf. Segal, 1983:237; Schorsch, 2008: 71–2). To complicate the matter even further, the communities of Malabaree Jews too are marked; there are *acomodada*, “wealthy”, communities as opposed to *pobre*, “poor”, and three communities unmarked as either (Pereyra de Paiva, 1923 [1687]:7). Apparently, the Portuguese Jewish merchants hosted by the Dutch governor were more interested in the socioeconomic status of the local Jews than in their ethnicity or “color”, an issue that was of Portuguese concerns (Tavim, 2010) and that later came to permeate reports on and studies of Kerala Jews to this day.<sup>16</sup> When precisely Jews begin to be self-differentiated on the basis of color in Kerala is unclear. It is however clear that the label “*branco*” does not denote race or ethnicity in *the Notisias*.

The interest of the Dutch Jewish merchants in the socioeconomic conditions of Malabar Jewry is closely intertwined with an eagerness to incor-

porate the history of the community in messianic Judeo-Christian history replete with traditions of the ten lost tribes and forgotten Jewish kingdoms. The story recorded by Pereyra de Paiva addresses such concerns. More importantly, it points at geopolitical alliances and rivalries while labelling the majority of Malabar Jewry as an estranged Other. That “othering” is presented under the same pretext given in *the Cochin Responsum*: Jewish pedigree contrasted with slave origins. Whereas in *the Cochin Responsum* the slave labelling is formulated as a legal query, in *the Notisias* it is presented as a pseudo-historical narrative. Below are narrational excerpts from *the Notisias* demonstrating the pseudo-historical dimension of the slave labelling.<sup>17</sup>

The origins of these Malabarees arose from the fact that the Jews of Cranganore had great wealth including a number of slaves. One among them who was learned in the law, powerful and respected, taught Judaism to twenty-five of his slaves and gave them liberty and one synagogue. After sometime, the masters of these slaves died and were reduced in numbers; the slaves united with their equals and were increased in the manner seen today. (Figueirido, 1968: 34)

This narration strikingly contrasts with *the Cochin Responsum*, where the so-called “slave descendants” are not only numerically superior, but also excel in their financial and political status. Whereas *the Cochin Responsum* attributes the allegations against the “slave descendants” to “jealousy and hatred”, *the Notisias* attributes the conflict to decline in offspring, hinting that the root cause for decline is the difficulty to find prestigious “equals” to “unite” with.

The narration then proceeds to tell a fantastic story regarding the origins of those “Jews of Cranganore”, beginning with exile and captivity, and culminating in claiming a golden era, when Jews had their own king, Joseph Rabban. On their way to glory and sovereignty, the Jews are patronized by a mighty king, the famous Ceramān Perumāl

In the year 4130 (370 ce) [...] there arrived on the Coast of Malabar 70–80,000 souls (Israelites) from Mayorca, whereto their forefathers were carried as captives [...] this multitude found favour in the eyes of the king Cheram Perumal (his kingdom extended from Goa to Colombo) [...] he gave to Joseph Rabban the city of Cranganore (this city is 4 leagues from Cochin). They settled down with 15,000 souls of royal descent with their king in Cranaganore; famous Rabbis, men with means and others settled down in Madayi, Peryapatnam,<sup>18</sup> and Cherigandaram,<sup>19</sup> and in the last named place, the tomb of Rabbi Samuel [read: Shmu’el] Ha-Levi is seen even today. (Fegquierdo, 1968: 38)

As is typical of Jewish origin myths, the history of Cochin Jews as narrated in *the Notisias* begins with exile and captivity. Less typically, though, the narration proceeds to praise a gentile king, who gave the Jewish refugees the city of Cranganore not only to settle in, but also to rule over it. That king is so mighty that he rules from Goa to Colombo, parallel the southeastern

coastlines of the Arabian Sea all dotted with port towns that were, at the time, hubs of international long-distance trade en route Southeast Asia.

The king-patron of the Jews, according to *the Notisias*, is a character well known from Islamic traditions as the Hindu king who converted to Islam and ordered to divide his country into twelve parts and to build a mosque in each region, including Madayi and Kodungallur. This tradition definitely predates *the Notisias*, and it is highly likely to have been appropriated by Cochin Jews, with some adjustments.<sup>20</sup> One such adjustment is important for the present discussion; the Jewish version drops out the motif of conversion in relation to the king. Conversion in the socioeconomic context of Cochin Jews is reserved for “slaves” for reasons partially due to Jewish inheritance laws (Gamliel, 2018b: 210–21). Therefore, in the context of the Cochin Jews’ origin myth and against the backdrop of *the Cochin Responsum*, conversion would be unbecoming of a king. Nevertheless, perhaps to complement for distancing royalty from Jewishness, the Cochin Jewish origin myth creates a Jewish king, whose kingdom is destined to be destroyed by internal dissent, resonating the Jewish account of the destruction of Jerusalem traditionally attributed to inter-communal conflicts.

Importantly, besides Cranganore (a.k.a. Kodungallur), other towns are mentioned, with Chendamangalam the only one to have a visible relic for a Jewish past (the 1269 tombstone of Sarah Bat Israel)<sup>21</sup>. According to *the Notisias*, it is in Chendamangalam that a tombstone stands as a witness to the Glorious Jewish past symbolized by the figure of the famous Sephardic poet, Rabbi Shmu’el Ha-Levi, who is allegedly buried there. Ironically, the only historical tombstone found in Chendamangalam is of a woman, most probably a convert woman, as stated above. It is this tombstone that *the Notisias* must be referring to, obviously without the author actually visiting the place and reading the inscription. As for Periyapattanam, to the best of my knowledge, *the Notisias* is the only Jewish text that even mentions it as a dwelling place of Jews. Periyapattanam is better known as a Muslim maritime trade town. It is located on the eastern coast of South India, in a region known to Arab-Muslim traders by the name Ma‘abar. While Ma‘abar, or Tamilnadu, is known to the Arab Jews of the Geniza period, it was considered a less appealing destination than the port towns of the Malabar Coast. Similarly, also Mallorca, *the Notisias*’ professed origin of Cranganore Jews, is unknown to have had any significance in Kerala Jewish history. Mallorca being in the Iberian Peninsula and Periyapattanam on the east coast of India rather signifies an aspiration to ascribe to Cochin Jews historical connections to an international, long-distance, maritime trade network.

Similarly, Kodungallur too seems to signify contemporaneous aspirations of the story tellers rather than suggest any actual historical significance for premodern Malabar Jews. Notably, it is not mentioned even once as a port of destination in the Geniza records published so far

(Goitein and Friedman, 2008, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2013). If indeed there was a Jewish settlement there in medieval times, it must have been insignificant as it is of no concern for medieval Jewish traders. Even the often-quoted travelogue by Benjamin of Tudela seems to be ignorant of Kudungallur, while mentioning Kollam and the cities around it as the seat of some hundred Jews (Gamliel, 2018a: 61). Moreover, no material or textual evidence exists to substantiate the claims for an important Jewish community ever settled there, besides a faint memory of a Jewish population implicit in a reference to a Jewish pond *jūtakkulam*<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, a faded memory of a Jewish pond, or *jūtakkulam*, exists also among the people currently residing in Madayi. The so-called Jewish pond is a large, rectangular reservoir carved into the laterite stone ground of the Madayi plateau (*mātāyippara*), some 12 km southeast of Ezhimala. This “Jewish pond” is quite remarkable, as it seems to be an abandoned quarry, possibly transformed over time to serve as a water tank for cattle. The size and shape of the pond rule out the possibility that it was used as a *miqveh*, a pool constructed to serve for the Jewish purification bath. Moreover, Malabar Jews had no need in an artificial *miqveh*, for the Halakhic regulations permit using an open water source such as the sea or rivers, so abundant in Malabar. Kesavan Veluthat suggested that the term might be derived from *jūtakkulam* “Jewish neighborhood”.<sup>23</sup> Unlike Kodungallur, Madayi is situated in a region amply mentioned in the Geniza records (e.g. Jurfatan, Dahfatan). Furthermore, the family name Madayi that is still in use by Kerala Jews in Israel also appears on a notebook of Jewish Malayalam songs dated to 1876, and starting with a series of biblical ballads in the Old Malayalam *pāttə* style, resembling the *Payyannūrpāttu* (Gamliel, 2018a: 56–8; cf. Zacharia and Antony, 1996). Taking all these bits and pieces of evidence into account, it seems plausible that indeed Jews settled in that area at some point in history and to some extent. Compared with and weighed against the evidence cited in reference to Kodungallur, the case of Madayi is better supported by textual evidence found in the Geniza, while Kodungallur is better supported by evidence from the Portuguese period onward (cf. Tavim, 2010).

Besides the mixture of facts and fiction in *the Notisias*, the immediate association that comes to mind upon reading the list of localities is of a map of international trade connections beginning with the Iberian Peninsula, covering all the Malabar Coast and beyond reaching as far as the easternmost outpost, Periyapattanam, towards Southeast Asia. This region, we should recall, was taken over by the Dutch from the Portuguese merely two decades prior to the visit reported in *the Notisias*. And here lies the gist of the matter, as becomes evident toward the conclusion of the origin myth: there is a “good” king, favoring the Jews, there are good and “pure” Jewish refugee-migrants since the late biblical period (ca. 70 CE, after the destruction of the second Jewish temple), there is a Jewish king, and, finally,

there is a “bad” king responsible for the decline of the Jewish kingdom.

The “bad” king appears in *the Notisias* after an episode narrating family feuds within the royal house of the “Jewish” king, Joseph Rabban. The story culminates in royal fratricide and in rivalry over the Jewish throne, which is followed by the ultimate destruction of the town sacked by the “bad” king, the Zamorin (Fuguierdo, 1968:38–9):

Since this event [the murder of the last Jewish king], the throne became a bone of contention between two parties until both asked for help from the Zamorin, the King of Calicut. At this time, the Malabaree Jews became bold and demanded marital union with the daughters and granddaughters of their masters. The masters resented the impudence of their slaves and rejected their demand. This enraged the slaves and they also appealed to the Zamorin advising him to pretend to support one party against the other or cheat both. They also promised to show the weakest parts of the place. The Zamorin attacked the town on a Sabbath midnight when the innocent people were all asleep. The Zamorin sacked the town and caused great destruction. (ibid, 39)

This story can be corroborated by a reference in the late-sixteenth century Arabic treatise *Tuhfat al-Mujāhidīn* (1583) by Zainuddīn Makhdūm (Nainar 2006), relating violent riots in Kodungallur’s market town between Jews and Muslims in 1524. Moreover, the Zamorin and his Muslim allies were targeting the local ruler and his Christian allies who were collaborating with the Portuguese in their attempts to monopolize the pepper trade (Malekandathil, 2001: 242–43). It is unlikely though that the Zamorin had any involvement with Jews, whereas it is likely that Cochin Jews were involved in trade with the Portuguese at the time (Ibid.). Clearly, the conflation of historical facts and fanciful story-telling is at play in *the Notisias*; rather than attempting to prove or refute the narrative, the challenge is to evaluate the underlying agenda of the story-tellers and their audience, a Portuguese Jewish merchant networking with the Dutch governor.

The mention of the “bad” Zamorin as opposed to a “good” patron king suggests that the perspective of the story-tellers is historically aligned with that of the Portuguese. The motif of a lost Jewish kingdom against this backdrop shows that the story is rooted in Hebrew textual networks that began to circulate elsewhere, away from Malabar. A similar story of a “bad” Zamorin contrasted with a “good” gentile king and a long forgotten Jewish kingdom emerges some 170 years earlier in the town of Florence, Italy. Remarkably, in *the Notisias*, this Jewish kingdom is Cranganore, whereas in the Hebrew texts produced in Italy, the kingdom is called Shingly. This name becomes associated with Cranganore and embraced by Paradesi Jews only later, sometime after *the Notisias* and before it appears in print in mid-eighteenth century Amsterdam (Qasti’el, 1756:1). To understand the role of the Zamorin in the *Notisias*, a close reading of the earliest mentions of Shingly is in place.



### **The Messianic Yohanan Alemano, Florence 1498-1503**

The story of Shingly, a Jewish kingdom in Malabar, is first attested in notebooks written between 1498 and 1503 by an Italian Jewish scholar, Yohanan Alemano (Lelli, 2011). Alemano lived in an age saturated with messianic aspirations among both Jews and Christians. Like many Jewish and Christian intellectuals of his time, he was engaged in anticipating the arrival of the Messiah. Jews and Christians in Europe at the time shared common tropes regarding the Messianic era, among them the myths of the ten lost tribes, and of isolated and hidden Jewish or Christian kingdoms beyond the frontiers of the familiar world, somewhere in Ethiopia or India. Fabrizio Lelli (2011: 192–5) ties these tropes to the Age of Discoveries and to the growing knowledge of the world geography. He views Alemano’s messianic fervor as directly related to commercial interests bearing on his own social position under the patronage of Jewish businessmen in Florence and serving as a tutor for their children.

According to Lelli, Alemano’s knowledge of Jews in distant lands as well as of the geographical discoveries of those lands relied on a mixture of traditional accounts (such as Benjamin of Tudela’s travelogue) and contemporaneous oral or written accounts provided by his Italian contacts mainly from Palestine (*ibid.*, 197). What is striking about Alemano’s accounts of Malabar is the recurring motif of a “good” king in favor of the Jews as opposed to the “bad” king perceived as hostile. This motif seems to have been transposed to the story told in *the Notisias*, hence my assumption that *the Notisias* records a tradition that, rather than originating in Cochin it was transmitted to it via traders until finally adapted by the Jews hosting Pereyra de Paiva. Arguably, the origins of the pseudo-historical accounts of Cochin Jews, as well as their adaptation and circulation, constitute networking strategies of Jews and Christians interested in Indian Ocean maritime trade, which by the early 1600s was dominated by Arab Muslims.

Alemano’s account of Jews in Malabar attests the shift from Arab Jewish-Muslim trade networks to European Jewish-Christian alliances. This becomes apparent as one reads the two accounts, of which abstracts are given below. The first is presented as an eyewitness account, and the second is presented as a first-hand account by the Jews of Shingly, portrayed as descendants of the Biblical Israelite exiled by the Assyrian king (2 Kings 17:6), at long last discovered at the easternmost frontier of the newly-paved Portuguese trade routes. The narration, starting with the Portuguese discovery of the Indian Ocean maritime routes, is titled as “good news from a distant land that the seed of Israel has not perished”. What follows is a brief itinerary from Africa to the Persian Gulf, toward the Indian Ocean (*yam hodu*). The translation below is an excerpt of the text that follows (omitted phrases are marked by three dots in square brackets):

When they [the Portuguese] travelled across the Indian Ocean, they

found places full of Ishmaelites (Muslims). One is a big city called Calicut (*Qlygwty*) and its ruler is very great. Another nearby kingdom is called Cochin (*Qwgyn*). Near Cochin there's a country extending 15-days walk. It is all populated by Jews. The king is called Joseph and his capital is called Shingly. [...] They are black and white like the Indians [...] and they are free of all tax. They are of the tribes of Judea and Benjamin [...]. All the pepper comes from that country. The Jews gather and sell it mostly in Cochin and especially to four mighty Ishmaelite merchants, who are settled there and who pay taxes to the king so that no man could buy from the Jews except for them in Cochin. And they sell it to the Portuguese.

In this excerpt, the Indian Ocean routes are depicted as a discovery of the Portuguese, and yet, they abound in Muslim (Ishmaelite) populations. One of those Muslim places is Calicut, ruled by a mighty king whose name or religious affiliation remains unmentioned. Note the uncommon spelling of the name Calicut with a /g/ instead of /q/ or /k/. This spelling reflects the Yemenite pronunciation of /q/ (cf. Morag, 1963:18–19).<sup>24</sup> The neighboring kingdom is Cochin, whose name is spelled as in *the Cochin Responsum* discussed above, except for an additional /n/, probably reflecting the Portuguese pronunciation of the name with a nasal sound added to the final vowel. The narration proceeds to describe the Jewish kingdom, Shingly, populated by Jews (tribes of Judea and Benjamin) and ruled by a king, whose name, Joseph, strengthens the Messianic aspirations of Alemano.<sup>25</sup>

This narration is the earliest to categorize Jews into groups of color, black and white, though the narrator echoes an earlier account by Benjamin of Tudela in stating that the Jews are like the Indians, suggesting that the Indians too are differentiated by color. The account ends with the most important piece of news: The Jews of Shingly are pepper merchants, but no one can buy it directly from them; there are four Muslim traders, who buy all the pepper from the Jews and pay taxes to the king of Cochin. This information, above all, reflects the Portuguese frustration in monopolizing the pepper trade in Malabar (Frenz, 2003:68–70; cf. Malekandathil, 2001:241–3; Tavim, 2010:9–10). The Portuguese geopolitical interest becomes even more apparent in the section immediately following:

All this was told by the above-mentioned Portuguese [Jew], Hayim Franco, who talked with two rabbis who boarded the ship [...] with a venerable Jew, one of the servants of King Joseph, a messenger sent to the four Ishmaelite pepper merchants, to deposit 10,000 ducats with the shipmaster for ensuring that this Hayim will return to the ship after meeting King Joseph. But Hayim refused, for he feared for his life, and he did not talk to them being afraid of the ship master.

Arthur Lesley (2002) presents this text as a first-hand witness account of the Jews of the kingdom of Shingly, and as external evidence supporting the various legends recorded (and even prompted) solely by European Jews and Christian missionaries from the late seventeenth cen-

tury onwards (Gamliel, 2018a). This is a somewhat naïve assumption; Alemano's text is anything but a first-hand account. The account must have been transmitted via a chain of transmissions by travelers along the routes extending from Portuguese ships to the Eastern Mediterranean until finally reaching Florence, where Alemano was relentlessly searching for signs heralding the Messiah. Whether a Hayim Franco did sail to Malabar aboard a Portuguese ship cannot be verified. However, this account probably relies on historical occurrences involving Portuguese Jews (besides New Christians) in the Portuguese international networking strategies (Tavim, 2009). Moreover, even according to this account, Franco did not come into direct contact with the Jews of Cochin (or Shingly, as it is called in the story). While the preceding account provides various details about the "Shingly" Jews (some of them are obviously fanciful), the "first-hand witness" avoided any contact with them fearing for his life. Why was Hayim Franco afraid of the shipmaster? The narration remains silent on the reason. It is clear, though, that there was no direct interaction between that Hayim Franco and the "Shingly" Jews. Under these circumstances, how can this be a first-hand witness of the kingdom of Shingly? It may very well be an appropriation of a hearsay account, elaborated with imaginative details to fit into the messianic ideology of the author, Yohanan Alemano.

Notwithstanding the shaky and less than reliable evidence that Alemano's account provides, it provides an important geopolitical perspective; the "Shingly" Jews operate in a negotiation zone demarcated by the Muslim merchants of Cochin on the one hand and by the seafaring Portuguese on the other hand. Rather than "proving" that any Jewish kingdom or a self-governed city ever existed in Malabar, let alone in the early modern period, the account reveals the networking strategies adapted by Mediterranean Jews to align with the emerging Portuguese maritime power seeking domination over Indian Ocean trade, and soon to be followed by other European trade companies.

Similarly, a supposedly first-hand account of the Jews of Shingly is found in a record attributed to one Rabbi Moshe Ben Aba Mori, possibly a Yemenite Jew (Mori is a common term used by Yemenite Jews to denote a Torah teacher of children). This time, the account is addressed in the first person, in the voice of the "Shingly Jews" themselves.

Before the destruction of the first temple during the time of king Yerov'am Ben Nabat, nine tribes had settled in Kush (Ethiopia). We who are settled in the land of Shingly are of the tribe of Judea and Benjamin. After the destruction of the second temple, Shmu'el Ha-Levi, Israelites, and kohens (priests) came like primordial water to the land of Malibar and the name of their city is Shingly.

The Messianic overtones of this excerpt are clear. It is also clear that the account underlines the "Shingly" Jews as part and parcel of the wider Jewish Diaspora, descendants of the tribes of Judea and Benjamin,

even though they migrated “before the destruction of the first temple”.

Notably, this last short excerpt also mentions a name that is reiterated 170 years later in *the Notisias*, Shmu’el Ha-Levi, who is supposed to be buried in Chendamangalam. This detail shows above all that the legends of a Jewish Kingdom and of ancient lost Jews circulated around the Mediterranean all through the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, until they finally reached “back home” to the Jews actually settled on the Malabar Coast. The Paradeśi Jews in Cochin simply echoed the legend, eager to provide the rich European Jewish merchant, well networked with the Dutch VOC, precisely what he was yearning to hear. Interestingly, they do not mention Shingly at all. The place they refer to is Cranganore, a place that stands not only at the center of origin myths of diverse communities (possibly since the time of the Cilappatikāram), but also one of the strongholds of Portuguese pepper trade (Frenz, 2003:68–70).

The Judeo-Christian Messianic networks engendered references to Malabar in several other Hebrew texts that deserve more consideration than I am able to give here. Before concluding, one last piece of textual evidence for the geopolitical alliance with the Portuguese is in place. This evidence for the European origins of the Shingly myth is found in the journal (*sippur*) of the messianic and self-appointed diplomat, David Ha-Re’uveni.

### **The Messianic David Ha-Re’uveni, Lisbon 1525**

David Ha-Re’uveni was a dubious character, who appeared in Italy in the early 1520s with a mission to align with the Portuguese against the Muslims in order to conquer Jeddah, a strategic node in the Indian Ocean port-town network. By this, he sought to have Jews and Christians collaborating on influencing the anticipated arrival of the Messiah. Ha-Re’uveni presented himself as the brother of a king called Joseph, ruling over a sovereign Jewish kingdom called Habor equipped with military forces and located three to ten days journey from Jeddah. Ha-Re’uveni presented himself and the Jews living in his imaginary Arabian-Jewish kingdom as descendants of the ten lost tribes, a key term in messianic textual traditions. Moreover, he sought to convince the king of Portugal to align with Habor as well as with the kingdom of Prester John, another key term connoting Judeo-Christian messianic aspirations. Ha-Re’uveni managed to convince the Pope in Rome to recommend him for an interview with King Manuel I, which indeed was granted in 1525 (Benmelech, 2011:35–6). It is during that interview that Ha-Re’uveni mentions Calicut and Shingly, of which he hears from the captain of a Portuguese ship:

Thereafter they served different kinds of sweets, various matters, and they removed the tablecloth and [cleared] the table. The king stood by the table, and the Christian priests were greeting him, and all the people bowed down [before him]. Then the king entered followed by the queen, and I followed him in with my servants and with an Arab speaker. As for the captain who was captured in India, they brought

him before the king that day. I was standing before the king. The captain was standing before the king. The king asked him: “The land of India and Calicut—are there Jews there?” The captain replied: “There are so many Jews that they cannot be numbered. They are in Shingoli, ten-day walking distance from Calicut. Then he told the king many awesome, important, and great things about the Jews who are in Shingoli. The king further asked, “Have you heard whether the Jews have kings?” And he replied to the king that the Jews have, and are ruled over by, kings. And the servants before me, and the Jews, as well as the Arabic speaker—they heard all these things and they told [i.e. translated for] me.<sup>26</sup>

Ha-Re’uveni was an Arabic speaker (Benmelech, 2011:35), therefore he mentions an Arabic-speaking companion, evidently his interpreter at the Portuguese court. Notably, there were also Jews at the court, who could also speak directly with the Arab-speaking Jew, possibly in Hebrew.

Recall that Ha-Re’uveni was negotiating an imaginary Jewish geopolitical power between the Arab-Muslim world and Christian Europe, which retained loose and, at the same time, continuous contacts with the “South Asian Frontier”, to use Stephen Dale’s expression in relation to the Muslim world (Dale, 1980). In many respects, the Malabar Coast was the easternmost frontier for Arabic speaking Jews, from Yemen, to Persia, to Turkey, and to Alexandria, as attested in *the Cochin Responsum*. But Ha-Re’uveni first hears of Shingly and the Jewish kingdom in India, from a captain captured in India,<sup>27</sup> which is contrasted here with Calicut, the trade emporium that the Portuguese at the time were striving to take over, either by diplomacy or by force (cf. Subrahmanyam, 2012:99). This is the same Calicut that Alemano’s accounts contrast with Cochin and describe as populated by Ishmaelites, hostile to a place that is not only populated by Jews but also governed by them, the mythical Shingly.

As with Alemano, Ha-Re’uveni’s journal is written at a time of geopolitical transformations and new models of Judeo-Christian interactions, such as the Hebraist Renaissance in Italy (Lelli, 2011), wherefrom Ha-Re’uveni sets forth on his mission. (Moti Benmelech (2011:47—8) explains the mission of Ha-Re’uveni as “historical messianism”:

The arena where the messianic drama is to take place according to this conception is in historical and geopolitical reality, and the approach or advancement of redemption will be accomplished by creating a historical and political situation to serve as background for the messianic event, and by shaping it according to the messianic scenario. [...] Martin Jacobs recently claimed that historical events such as rivalry between Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottoman Empire, and the struggle over the spice trade in particular, fed Jewish messianic hopes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and that Ha-Reuveni’s story is an expression of a Jewish perspective on this power struggle. I suggest that Ha-Reuveni’s activities reflect an attempt to affect and design the historical events, and not merely passively watch and interpret them.

Viewed from the Malabar Coast, I would argue, messianic hopes meant an alliance with the emerging dominance of Christian Europe over maritime trade in the Indian Ocean, and the growing interest of European Jews in the imaginary glorious Jewish kingdom meant much more than a Jewish interpretation of power struggles between super powers; it meant an active involvement in forming religion-based alliances, a new type of network, that the Arab Jew David Ha-Re'uvevi was striving to align with, albeit in an eccentric and haphazard manner that finally led to his incarceration and execution.

To conclude, *the Notisias*' account of a lost Jewish kingdom in Kodungallur a.k.a. Cranganore echoes a Judeo-Christian messianic ideology. The fact that its earliest record appears in a late-seventeenth century account of a Portuguese Jewish merchant hosted by the Dutch governor of Cochin speaks volumes. Following *the Notisias*, several accounts in Hebrew and in various European languages were circulating among missionaries and Jewish scholars, with sincere attempts to verify the historical facts supposedly expressed in the story in its various incarnations. It is not my intention here to refute the origin myth as a fanciful story and nothing more, but rather to relocate its historical origins in the early modern Western Mediterranean. Consequently, its emergence as the origin myth of Paradesi Jews in late-seventeenth century Cochin is evidence for an attempt, clearly a successful one, to align with the Judeo-Christian ideology as a networking strategy in the international trade arena. David Ha-Re'uvevi first hears of Shingly at the court of the Portuguese king, with whom he tries to forge an alliance against Muslims, who are perceived in the various versions of the origin myth, whether in Italy or in Cochin, as hostile rivals to Jews and to their patron king in Cochin. It should come as no surprise therefore, that soon after *the Notisias* begins to circulate in Europe the messianic ideology finds its expression among Cochin Jews as well. The next section deals with the Messianic Age and its expression in Cochin.

### **The Messianic Age in Cochin**

In 1692, six years after Pereyra de Paiva visited Cochin, an anonymous poet composed a Jewish Malayalam song referring to the Hebrew year, 5452 (Anno Mundi), spelled in Malayalam words in the first two lines of the song (Gamliel, 2009:437–8). Contrarily to the information provided in *the Notisias*, (Fegueiredo, 1968:38) stating that Cochin Jews have not heard of Shabbatai Zevi, the song contains a typical messianic message in what later becomes a recurring “redemption motif” in Jewish Malayalam literature (*ibid.*, 213–22). It is difficult to tell whether this is the earliest occurrence of the “redemption motif” in Jewish Malayalam literature, but it is clear that around the time of the composition of *the Notisias*, messianism was already introduced in Cochin. The song was probably intended to be performed in a life-cycle event, for the third verse describes a ceremonious drinking of wine by two named individuals, “Give the wine

of the well-preserved fruit to David. When he drinks it, join in Meir son of Abraham”.<sup>28</sup> The verb “join in” (*kütt-*) suggests that the event in question is a Bar Mitzva, for in Jewish Malayalam it is called “joining in the quorum” (*miniyānkūttalā*) (Gamliel, 2013: 143). The third line mentions a “man born on the day the temple was destroyed”,<sup>29</sup> namely, the ninth day of month of Ab. With the Hebrew year mentioned in the previous verse, the date would be 22 July 1692, probably referring to the person “joining in [the quorum]”, Meir son of Abraham, mentioned in the third verse.

Leaving aside the speculations regarding the circumstances implied by the song, the redemption motif is evident albeit scattered between lines and only loosely resembling what later becomes a constantly repeated verse of redemption in more or less fixed formulaic expressions. Thus, the first line of the second verse is a condensed prayer for redemption, “scatter the unholy nation, and redeem the holy nation”,<sup>30</sup> alluding to the anticipated gathering of the scattered Jews, including the “ten lost tribes”. The third line of the second verse mentions Gog and Magog, a term closely linked to the notion of apocalypse and, as a consequence, the messianic era: “surrender Gog and Magog in to the hands of King David”.<sup>31</sup> The fact that this song is dated to the end of the seventeenth century, and that it mentions names of, most probably, community members present on the occasion of composition, makes it historically significant to the evolution of messianic ideology among Malabar Jewry. Interestingly, a milestone in the formation of textual networks connected to European Jews is reached four years earlier—the printing of Eliya Ha-‘Adani’s collection of Hebrew poems in Amsterdam (1688).<sup>32</sup> The last page of this publication bears an image of a ship sailing towards a bulky cloud, with the sails fully blown as if to push the ship eastwards. The image is possibly a printer’s mark (typographorum emblemata), stamped at the end of the book, though it is unclear whether it contains letters as would be expected of a printer’s mark. In any case, the image highlights the close affinities between the circulation of Hebrew texts and the aspirations to board the VOC ships sailing eastward.

Similarly, another song, *the Ten Songs of Solomon*, states the year 1761, and contains the redemption motif. The song has ten verses, each of which, except for the last one, refers to a biblical poem or poetic verse and to the biblical character that composed it, from Adam to King Solomon (Gamliel, 2009: 464–67). The tenth verse explicitly anticipates the arrival of the Messiah:

The tenth is the song that the Jewish nation is ordained to sing.  
 Five thousand and five hundred and twenty one [years] have elapsed.  
 Bring the Messiah! Gather the people from the scattered directions!  
 Order and bring the Messiah for hearing the songs!<sup>33</sup>

This year too is the fourth year after printing in Amsterdam a collection of Hebrew poems compiled by David Qasti’el (1757).<sup>34</sup> The printed text is the earliest source from Cochin where the name Shingly

is mentioned, possibly reflecting the adaptation to the Hebrew repertoire of Cochin Jews of a poem composed by a Turkish poet called Nissim Ben Sanji (Gamliel, 2018a: 63–4). With this, a process of diffusion of ideas and trends originating in Christian Europe of the early modern period reaches its culmination: Jewish Malayalam messianism and the adaptation of the term Shingly by the community in Cochin.

### Conclusion

This paper surveyed documents and texts of a small-scale “Hebrew cosmopolis” embedded in Indian Ocean maritime trade networks since the ninth century and up to the eighteenth century. This rather brief survey, though far from being exhaustive in relation to the sixteenth century onwards, treated sources in Hebrew and Jewish languages affiliated with Jewish history in the Indian Ocean as strategic tools for networking across regions and communities. Whereas in the premodern period networking texts had a legal or documentary character, the early modern period introduced a new model of networking strategy relying on the circulation of messianic texts and Judeo-Christian tropes.

A close reading of selected sources from both periods reveals evolving and changing strategies of networking across regions and, at the same time, locally as well. Thus, the legal and documentary character of Jewish sources since the premodern period begins to change during the early modern period as messianic traditions related to Malabar and its Jews emerge in the Eastern Mediterranean. These messianic aspirations are intertwined with a shifting orientation from Arab Jewish-Muslim trade networks to European Jewish-Christian alliances. By the late seventeenth century, the Judeo-Christian messianic alliances find their full-fledged expression in Cochin, voiced by the Paradeśi informants of Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva. At the same time, the contacts with Jews in the Arab world, especially in Yemen, that were established in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, continue to evolve into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as evidenced by *the Cochin Responsum* and by the literary creativity of Nāmya Motta and Eliya Ha-‘Adani. But these older legalistic and administrative alliances with Jews of the Islamic world shift and reorient first towards Sephardic Jewry, relying, on the one hand, on actual historical contacts formed *before* the arrival of the Portuguese, while, on the other hand, forging imaginary connections with the Iberian Peninsula by claiming-Mallorcan origins and contacts with famous Sephardic poets and scholars.

By the late eighteenth century, the Paradeśi community is well connected with Jews in Western Europe, and its leaders continue to interact with Judeo-Christian messianic networks through the production and circulation of texts such as the apocalyptic text *The Words of Gad the Prophet* (cf. Bar-Ilan, 2007). The textual networks of that later period remain to be examined in future studies. It is, however, reasonable to conclude at this stage that textual networks were connecting Jews



in Malabar with Jews in the West since the ninth century CE, and that an older system of legal and administrative connection embodied in the Hebrew language and script was gradually overlapped, if not completely replaced, by a network based on intra-religious and inter-religious exchange. Whereas the older system was typical of Jewish networks connected with Jews in the Islamic world, the early modern and modern systems were oriented towards European Jews and aligned with Judeo-Christian messianic ideology as well as shared financial and geopolitical interests.

### Notes

1. The periodization of Hebrew texts and manuscripts is relatively straightforward and will be justified in the following sections. The periodization of Jewish Malayalam literature is based on linguistic and textual analysis evaluated against the history of Malayalam literature in general (Gamliel, 2016 :505–7).
2. M. G. S. Narayanan (1972) was the first to introduce a text-based study of the inscription. Recently, a new study of the inscription with fresh insights and analysis was published by Raghava Varier and Kesavan Veluthat (2013). For studies on the trade guilds mentioned in the inscription, see Abraham 1988; Subbarayalu 2009. For a study of the inscription in comparison with Geniza documents, see Gamliel 2018c.
3. All translations are mine unless otherwise mentioned. / ברוך דיין/ אמת הצור/ תמים פעלו [.] / זה הקבר שרה/ בת ישראל/ רי'ת בשנת [.] / אתקפ'א לש' / כ[ג] יומ[י] [י] כסליו ביר[ה] / For a high resolution image, see: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chendamangalam\\_Synagogue\\_05.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chendamangalam_Synagogue_05.jpg) (last accessed on 23/08/2018).
4. Several scholars assume that the tombstone was brought from Kodungallur to Chendamangalam, though none provides any evidence for this assumption (Segal, 1983:229; Katz, 2000: 37).
5. According to Elieen W. Erlanson Macfarlane (1937:7), the Kochangady synagogue was simply “dismantled”.
6. This is a slightly revised quote from I Kings, 8:13.
7. בנה בנינו בית זבול לך מכון לשבתך/ עולמים שנת ג'ד'ו'ל' י'ה'י'ה' כ'ב'ו'ד' הבית/ הזה האחרון מן הראשון ליצירה היום/ בשלישי בשבת חמשה לכסלו בה"א
8. This is the copy of the inscription as appears in Ha-Cohen (1889: 77) and in Sassoon (1932: 577): ותשלם המלאכה על יד הצעיר יעקב קשטיאל/ ביום ב: לירח אייר בשנת: א'ם ת'שוב ת'בנה גדר/ לדביר: והמון רחמיך עלינו תגביר: אשר עלה/ בשם בגבול בדביר: והיה בשכר ושח כי אחרי/ דרגא תביר: ולא ימאס תם אל כביר: פתחו שערים/ ויבוא גוי צדיק שומר אמונים שחור על הלבן/ וזכר לחרבן עשה לו בהרת בכל בנין חדשות היא להנכרת (!) חרבן בית המקדש
9. Bar-Giora (1958: 228 and fn. 91), apparently erroneously, dates this inscription to 1687, in reference to Sassoon (see previous footnote), who explicitly gives the date 1489 (let alone that the date 1800 Seleucid Era can only be matched with 1489). He is also wrong in stating that Ya'aqov Qasti'el who is mentioned in the inscription was lived in 1687, for the three Qasti'els that lived in Cochin at the time are known by their names: Elia, David, and Shemtob (the latter moved to Parur). Therefore, it is

highly likely that the mentioned Ya‘aqov Qasti’el belonged to a much earlier generation.

10. There are general and stereotypical references to India in Medieval Hebrew literature, but nothing that can prove Jewish presence in or direct contacts with Malabar (see Melamed, 2006; cf. Weinstein, 2000).
11. B. J. Segal (1983: 231–2) roughly dates it to the 1520s, while Walter J. Fischel (1967: 232) estimates the 1540s as the probable time of composition. The Cochin Responsum was published in Ohale Ya‘aqov (Qastro, 1783), a collection of responsa addressed to and answered by Rabbi Ya‘aqov Qastro (1525–1610). His reply appears along with the text, stating that the same responsum was already sent to and answered in the past by his predecessor Rabbi David Salomon Ibn Zimra (ca. 1479–1573), who was the chief rabbi of Alexandria between the 1520s and the 1560s. Hence, The Cochin Responsum must have been sent from Cochin sometime between the 1520s and the 1560s.
12. At this point, the author describes various circumstances of ad-hoc conversions and mixed origins, which are left out for the sake of brevity.
13. Qastro 1783, responsum 99; my emphasis.
14. For Jewish Malayalam literature in Malayalam texts and Hebrew translations, see Zacharia and Gamliel, 2005. The reason for evaluating the emergence of Jewish Malayalam literature as predating Arabic Malayalam literature is based on the style and language of a relatively large collection of songs composed in the Old Malayalam *pāttā* style (Gamliel, 2018a: 56–8). A comparative analysis of both Jewish and Arabic Malayalam literature in view of Syriac Malayalam literature is currently underway in collaboration with István Perczel and Radu Mustață. We might derive a better evaluation of the periods of composition once dated compositions of the literatures in the Semitic regiolects are compared to each other and to contemporaneous *manipravālam* and Malayalam compositions.
15. Motta is derived from Malayalam *muttan*, ‘an old man’ (മുത്തൻ). Nāmya is the Malayalam pronunciation of the Hebrew name Nehemya.
16. Examples for studies focusing on the black-white Jewish distinction are Mandelbaum, 1975; Segal, 1983; Schorsch, 2008. Contrarily, Kerala Jews define their communal identities based on their synagogue community affiliation, except for the Paradeśi, a term reserved in early modern Kerala to foreign, itinerant merchants, mostly from West Asia, similar to the distinction between Paradeśi and Māppiḷa among Muslims of Malabar (Dale, 1980: 23–4).
17. All the excerpts from *the Notisias* are translated by Fegueirdo, 1968.
18. Periyapattanam
19. Chendamangalam
20. The origin myth of Malabar Muslims attributing the advent of Islam to the region under the patronage of Ceramān Perumāl is attested for its popularity in Zainuddin Makhdum’s *Tuhfat al-Mujāhidīn* (Nainar, 2006) and it is believed to have been composed no later than 1583 (Friedman, 1975), close to a century earlier than *the Notisias*. The *Tuhfa*, as well

as the Muslim origin myth, both claim that Jews and Christians were settled in Malabar before the Muslims. Christians too attribute the advent of Christianity to the region to the same Ceramān Perumāl in their origin myths. The treatment of the intertextual affinities between the three traditions of origin and the variations and versions within each is a matter for a future study.

21. Contrarily, while Jews are known to inhabit Kodungallur and Madayi in the past, no evidence of a Jewish synagogue ever being built in those towns is available. The attributives Tekkumbhāgam and Katavumbhāgam of two synagogues in Cochin and two in Ernakulam are often cited as proof of the historical location of two Kodungallur synagogues before the “exile” from the place (Bar-Giora, 1958: 214; Johnson, 1975: 146–47; Segal, 1993:20). As far as I can see, this might simply be an anachronism based on the origin myth told in *the Notisias*. Other explanations should, and could, be suggested (Daniel and Johnson, 1995: 129; Gamliel, 2018a:68–9).
22. One might argue that the famous Jewish copper plates are evidence that there were Jews living in Kodungallur. However, the copper plates as transcribed and translated by M. G. S. Narayanan (1972) contain no evidence for the beneficiary being a Jew (e.g. by a Hebrew signature as in the Kollam copper plates). Neither does the inscription grant land to the West Asian merchant to settle in. Moreover, the town mentioned in the inscription is Muiyirikkōṭṭa (Muziris), which albeit being associated with Kodungallur its identification has not been firmly established so far (Selvakumar, 2006:426–30).
23. In a personal communication, 20/04/2017; compare with *jūtakkambōlam*, “Jewish Bazaar”, a term still used by Jewish Malayalam speakers in Israel to denote their old residence quarters in Ernakulam, Parur, and Chendamangalam.
24. The spelling *qlygwty*’ might reflect an actual pronunciation Qaligutin. A thorough examination of the various spellings of Calicut (and other place names in Malabar) in Arabic and Hebrew might provide linguistic evidence for the routes of geographical knowledge exchange from the medieval to the early modern.
25. According to Jewish traditions, the messiah is a son of David, whose arrival is to be introduced by a son of Joseph (*see* Lelli, 2011:195 fn. 13).
26. The Hebrew text is in Cahana, 1922: 73–4: עניינים, מיני מתוקים, ואחרי כן נתנו מיני מתוקים, ועמד המלך על רגליו בשלחן, והגלחים מברכים אותו, ומשתחווים כל העם. ואח”כ נכנס המלך לפני המלכה אשתו ונכנסתי אני אחריו עם המשרתים שלי ועם בעל לשון ערב. והשרים הגדולים נכנסו גם כן אחרי לפני המלכה. ואת הקאפיטאניא שהיה תפוס מאינדיאה הביאו אותו לפני המלך ביום ההוא. ואני עומד לפני המלך. ועמד הקאפיטאניא בפני המלך. ושאל אותו המלך בפני ואמר לו: ארץ אינדיא וקאליקוט אם יש יהודים שם?” והשיב הקאפיטאניא אל המלך: “יש יהודים רבים אשר לא יספרו מרוב בשינגולי רחוק מקאליקוט מהלך עשרה ימים”. ודבר למלך דברים נוראים נכבדים וגדולים מאת היהודים אשר הם בשינגולי. ושאל לו המלך גם כן: “אם שמעת שיש ליהודים מלכים?” והשיב למלך כי יש עליהם ולהם מלכים. והמשרתים אשר היו בפני, היהודים וגם בעל לשון ערב, שמעו כל אלה הדברים, והם דברו לי הכל

27. In which language did he speak? Clearly it was not Arabic, as the interpreter translated the conversation for Ha-Re'uvani. Being a captive from India, the captain is labelled as foreign to the Portuguese, so he was probably not a Portuguese either. He might have been an Indian or a Turk, therefore.
28. കാത്തുവെച്ച പഴത്തിന്റെ യായിൻ (wine, Hebrew) /ദാവീദിന്റെ കൈവിൽ കൊടുക്കവെണം//അപ്പോൾ അതു കുടിക്കുന്ന നെരത്തു/അബ്രാഹാമിന്റെ മകൻ മെയിർൻ കുട്ടണം//
29. അഴിഞ്ഞ മീകദാശിന്റെ (temple, Hebrew) നാളിൽ പെറുന്ന പുരുശന പെരയവെണം
30. അശുധമായ ഗൊലത്തിന ചെതറെയും വെണം/ശുദ്ധമായ ഗുലത്തിന മീതുവെണം// (The verb *מִשָּׁ*, and its Jewish Malayalam variant *മീത്*— is the Malayalam verb used for translating the Hebrew word *ge'ulah*, namely, redemption of Israel.)
31. ഗൊഗുമാകൊഗിന വഴങ്ങണം/അരശൻ ദാവീദിന്റെ കൈമേലും//
32. The first page reads: “Anthology of ’ *azharot* (Hebrew sacred poems) according to the custom of the people of the land of India of the holy congregation in Cochin [performed] at the second day of the ’ *atzeret* festival (the last day of the High Holidays) sent to us by the scholar Rabbi Levi Belilya from whose hand the excellent young man Mosseh Pereyra, may God protect him and keep him alive, took [them] for print. Here, the Holy Congregation of Amsterdam, [they] were printed by the legislator, the excellent gentleman, the scholar and rabbi, the honorable teacher our master rabbi, Aharon Ha-Levi, at his house, Tuesday, first of the month of Adar II, [5]448 Anno Mundi.” סדר אזהרות לרבי אליהו העדני גמנה אנשי ארץ יהודה בק"ק גוגין ביום שני הג צרת אשר שלח אלנו חכם רבי לוי בליליא וזל ידו חזקו הבחור הנעלה משם פריה יצ"ו להדפיסם. פה ק"ק אמשטרלדאם נדפס על ידי המחוקק הגביר הנעלה חכם ר' אורי כמהר"ר אהרן הלוי זלצ"ה הנביתו יום ג' א' דר"ה אדר שני ת"פ.
33. പത്താമത പാടുവാൻ കല്പന ആയാരി ജൂതർ ഗൊലവും ഇതൊന്നും/കാലമെ കഴിഞ്ഞട്ടു അയ്യായിരത്തുമെ അഞ്ഞൂറിരുപതും ഒന്നും//മാശ്യ വരത്തെണം ഗൊലത്തിന കൂട്ടണം ചിതറിയ ദിക്കുകളിന്നു/കല്പിച്ച മാശ്യന വരത്തെണം പാട്ടുകൾ കെൾപ്പാൻ തന്നെ//
34. The first page reads: “Prayers, praises, and poems for the days of Simhat Torah, weddings, circumcision of male boys, and slaves and converts, and purificatory bath [for slaves and converts], for Purim festival days, for the High Holidays, and the Day of Atonement—all are collected and gathered according to the custom of the people of Shingly, may God protect and redeem them, and the holy congregation in Cochin, may God protect and redeem them, printed in Amsterdam at the home of the brothers: the venerable Rabbi Yosef, the venerable Rabbi Ya’aqov, and the venerable Rabbi Avraham, may God protect and redeem them, sons of the late venerable Rabbi Shlomo Props, a Cohen, blessed be his memory, sellers and printers of books [1757].” תפלות שבחות ושירים לימי שמחת תורה וחתופת חתנים ולזמן מילת זכרים וסדר מילה וטבילת עבדים וגרים ולשמחת ימי הפורים תקיעה ושבירים ולסליחת עון ביום הכפורים המה יחד מצומדים ומחוברים ויום תרועה כפי מנהגי אנשי שינגילי יצ"ו וקהל קדוש בקוגין השם ישמרם ויצילם נדפס באמשטרדם

בבית האחים כהר"ר יוסף, כהר"ר יעקב וכהר"ר אברהם יצ"ו בני המנוח כהר"ר שלמה פרופס כ"ץ זצ"ל מוכרי ומדפיסי ספרים.

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