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The Chronicle of Waqf and Inception of Mosques in Malabar: A Study Based on Qissat Manuscript

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Abstract: The first mosque of South and South East Asia was established in Malabar and it was built with generous Waqf property. This paper will discuss the history of early Waqf lands and nature of the Mosques, relying on the manuscript preserved in the British library titled Qissat Shakarwati Farmad, which provides a detailed note on the first ten mosques, established in various port towns of Malabar and the exact measurement of land assigned and contributed (waqf) to these mosques. The rulers had provided all the facilities to the religious group that came from Arabia to propagate Islam as requested by King Cheraman Perumal, who embraced Islam in Makkah. The exact days and dates along with the specialty of the land selected for building mosques in various towns were documented in the Qissat manuscript. The ten mosques described in Qissat were, Kodungallure, Kollam, Ezhimala, Shri Khandapuram, Dharmadam, Panthalayani, Chaliyam, Badkkal, Mangalapuram, Kasargode. These historic sites were personally visited for research purpose and the position of the land and structure of the existing mosques were rechecked. During this research, two different copies of Qissat Shakarwati Farmad were identified and critically analyzed; one from the personal library of Ahmed Koya Shaliyathi and the other from the library of Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar, two renowned Islamic scholars who lived in the last century and contributed much to the intellectual realm of Malabar Muslims. The history of early waqf and the first mosques are the history of advent of Islam in the region and its strategic social involvement, including building bridges with other communities. These aspects will be highlighted in the paper.

Keywords: Waqf, South and South East Asia, Malabar, Qissat Shakarwati Farmad, King Cheraman Perumal.

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Abstrak: Masjid pertama di Selatan Asia dan Asia Tenggara telah dibina di Malabar dan ia dibina diatas tanah waqf. Kajian ini akan membincangkan sejarah awal tanah waqf dan masjid yang dibina diatas tanah ini berdasarkan manuskrip yang dipelihara di perpustakaan *British* bertajuk *Qissat Shakarwati Farmad*. Manuskrip ini mempunyai nota secara terperinci tentang sepuluh masjid terawal yang dibina di beberapa bandar-bandar pelabuhan sekitar Malabar dan ukuran tepat tanah yang diperuntukkan serta sumbangan (waqf) kepada masjid-masjid ini. Pihak pemerintah telah memberi segala kemudahan yang diperlukan kepada sekumpulan pendakwah dari Arab untuk menyebarkan ajaran Islam seperti yang diminta oleh Raja Cheraman Perumal, raja yang menganut agama Islam di Mekah. Hari dan Tarikh yang tepat serta keistimewaan tanah yang dipilih untuk pembinaan masjid-masjid ini di beberapa bandar didokumenkan dalam manuskrip *Qissat*. Sepuluh masjid yang terdapat dalam manuskrip ini ialah Kodungallure, Kollam, Ezhimala, Shri Khandapuram, Dharmadam, Panthalayani, Chaliyam, Badkkal, Mangalapuram, dan Kasargode. Tempat-tempat bersejarah ini dilawati bagi tujuan penyelidikan dalam kajian ini. Disamping itu, posisi tanah, dan struktur masjid yang masih ada diperiksa. Semasa kajian ini dilakukan, dua salinan berbeza *Qissat Shakarwati Farmad* telah dikenalpasti dan dianalisis secara kritikal. Salinan manuskrip ini adalah daripada perpustakaan peribadi Ahmed Koya Shaliyathi dan Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar. Mereka adalah ulama Islam yang terkenal dan banyak memberi sumbangan kepada dunia intelek masyarakat Muslim Malabar. Sejarah awal waqf dan masjid-masjid pertama di Malabar adalah sebahagian sejarah kemunculan Islam di rantau tersebut. Daripada sejarah ini mendapati, masjid-masjid yang dibina merupakan penggerakkan penglibatan sosial strategik yang menghubungkan masyarakat Malabar. Aspek ini akan ditekankan di dalam kajian ini.

Kata Kunci: Waqf, Asia Selatan, Asia Tenggara, Malabar, *Qissat Shakarwati Farmad*, Raja Cheraman Perumal.

Introduction

Qisṣat Shakarwatī Farmed is a remarkable British Library Manuscript that illustrates the wonderful story of a king's conversion to Islam and his establishing mosques across the coastal region of Malabar (British Library MS, IO, Islamic 2807d). The text is a primary resource in the initial history of Waqf and construction of early mosques in the South and South East Asia. Indian Ocean traders widely connected many Afro- Eurasian societies since ancient times. Number of researches

on the geographic knowledge of Indian Ocean examined pre-modern geographic and cartographic advancements in different periods of time and showcased the Indian Ocean connections of traders and travellers (J.B Harley and David Woodward ,1987). Ancient Greeks and Romans were counted as the first to document geography of Indian Ocean as an unbroken aquatic unit (Graham Shioley, 2011). Classical resources of Strabo (c64 BCE- 24 CE) and Pliny (23 – 79 CE) had brought out activities of merchants and maritime performances in the region (Constantine E, Prichard, Edward R Bernard , 1896).

The Periplus of Erythraean Sea, reportedly written in the 1st century CE by an anonymous author, provided more details on the regional port towns of south Indian shoreline. Limyrike was the name of Malabar in *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, which described famous ports like Muziris, Nelcynda, Naura, Tyndis. (Schoff, Wilfred H., trans., 2001). Malabar is located in a prominent central setting in the Indian Ocean and a natural crossing point for long range monsoon navigation. The Indian ocean itself was gifted with predictable pattern of monsoon winds, which was depicted as the world's most beneficial environment. Even for traditional far-off crossing Malabar ports were naturally formed anchorages, where people could travel, enjoying the monsoon wind that was introduced as the world's most non-threatening environment for long range voyages (F. Fernandez Armesto, 2006,36). This region, which enjoyed a monopoly in the production of widely-demanded goods like black pepper, ginger, teakwood etc, made Malabar traders' second home. The pompous popularity of the region for thousands of years can answer the question as to why the first mosque of South and South East Asia was constructed in Malabar.

The people and their rulers were ready to accept various religions and cultures, which were introduced by traders and adopted peacefully in the area. Malabar's popularity was clearly depicted in the early writings of world-renowned travelers, who visited the region. Merchant Sulaiman, known as Sulaiman al- Tajir, who wrote much about the sea-borne trade with India, visited Malabar during 851 CE. He explained the various merchandises exported from the region, and those brought even from Basra. In his work called *Akhbar al-Sin wa'l-Hind*, he mentioned the area as 'the land of 'pepper' (*bilad al- filfil*), which was a prominent product of the time (Sulaiman al Tajir, M Sauvaget (ed) 1948, 16 - 17). Another 10th century geographical sketch by Mis'ar

ibn Muhalhil also discusses the story of the pepper country (H Yule, ed and trans, 1918, Vol.1, 253). From this we can also understand that the name *Pepper Country* was a synonym for the name Malabar. Malabar was mentioned as ‘Malai’ in the book *Nuzhatul Mushtaq of Al-Idrisi* (c. 1100-1166 CE), and historian Abul Fida (1273-1331 CE) called this region ‘Malabar’ in his book *Taqwim al Buldan* (Abū al-Fidā’ 1990, 84). Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229 CE) is well known for his encyclopedic book, *Mu’jam al-Buldan, Dictionary of Countries*, which he started writing in 1224 and finished in 1228, one year before he died, Rashīd al-Dīn (1247–1318CE), a Persian statesman and historian, author of the famous book, *Jami’al-tawarikh, Compendium of Chronicles*, and the Italian merchant traveller from Venice, Marco Polo (1254-1324 CE), had all visited the region and introduced it as an important place for international trade (Marco Polo, 2004).

Ivory and teak wood, even thousands of years ago, were the main merchandise exported from Malabar. According to Cosmas Indicopleustes (c. 550 CE), Benjamin of Tudela (c1130-1173 CE) and Chau Ju-Kau (1170-1228 CE), the products of the region like sandalwood, cloves, cardamoms and elephants were in great demand both in the east and west (Cosmas, 1864, Benjamin of Tudela, 1993, Chau Ju-Kua, 1911). The Cairo Ganiza records brought out a number of evidences on sea transport freight charges for goods between Malabar coast and Aden in the mid-12th century, (S.D. Goitein and M.A. Friedman, 2008, 322). Ibn Battuta had named Calicut as one of the biggest ports of the world, for Malabar was such an important place at that time. “Thence we travelled to the city of Qaliqu (Calicut), which is one of the chief ports in Mulaybar (Malabar) and one of the largest harbours in the world. It is visited by men from China, Sumatra, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Yemen and Fars, and in it gather merchants from all quarters.”(Ibn Battuta,2000, 234). These travelogues prove that the prominence of the region continued for centuries and attracted the attention of famous traders and travellers around the world.

Advent of Islam in the Region

The *Qiṣṣat* document depicts stories of advent of Islam in the region and conversion of Hindu king to Islam during the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). *Qiṣṣat Shakarwatī Farmāḍ* -Story of Chakravarti Cheraman Perumal - illustrates the exact place as well as the area

devoted for the mosques. This will be the first Waqf document in India as well as South and south East Asia. The tradition also speaks about the conversion of the king of the whole of the Malabar region, Cheraman Perumal, who belonged to the Chera dynasty, an ancient dynasty ruling over the entire Malabar region, with Kodungallur as its capital. This king's legends and journey were popular and written in various languages: Malabari, Sanskrit Arabic etc. The great king of the land was acknowledged in Sanskrit by the term Chakravarti. Qissat is an Arabic version of the King's conversion to Islam. Chakravarti Cheraman Perumal was rendered in Arabic as Shakarwatī Farmāḍ. Sanskrit word Chakravarti was written in Arabic as Shakarwatī. The title Cheraman Perumal, was abbreviated to Perumal, and rendered in to Arabic as Farmāḍ.

The King of Malabar was influenced by the miracle of moon-splitting, an authentic incident that occurred during the life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and mentioned in the Qur'an (Qur'an, 54:1-2) and Prophetic Traditions (Sahih al Bukhari, IV, 56). There are various versions popularly connected to the conversion of the Hindu King of Malabar. The first one is that the King directly witnessed the splitting of the moon, but his court astronomers could not explain the reason for this unusual incident. Then some years later a group from Makkah reached the capital of the Chera dynasty at Kodungallur, Malabar, on their way to a pilgrimage to Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka. It is believed that after his expulsion from Paradise, Prophet Adam directly descended in Sri Lanka. Thus, this area became a place of interest and Arabs used to visit the region. The researcher visited the area to produce a documentary film on history and civilization and found a number people from various religious backgrounds climbing the mount expecting benevolence. The Chera king met the Arab delegation and officially cleared all doubts on the splitting of the moon from these visitors and requested the group to visit him again on their way back to Arabia from Ceylon The king also expressed his intention to join them to meet the Prophet (ﷺ). When he decided to travel, he divided his kingdom and distributed it among his descendants. After reaching Arabia, the King embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet (ﷺ). Years later, on his return journey to his homeland, the king suffered a serious illness and died in Shihr, located in the South Arabian Coast and a main point of maritime trade in Hadramawt, Yemen, those days. Just before his demise, the King

requested the fellow-travellers to continue their journey to Malabar, propagate Islam and establish mosques throughout the coastal regions of Malabar. This is a popular story taught in traditional Islamic schools from centuries. As narrated by Robert Bellah, ‘community of memory’ could preserve the memory of the legendary past and the oral tradition could help to keep the heritage and culture alive. (Robert Bellah, 1985, 153).

Ronald Miller, Canadian researcher and Christian missionary, who had done his PhD from Harford seminary in 1976 on Malabar Muslims, also agreed with the fact that advent of Islam in South Asia was through Malabar. Miller narrated how Arab Muslim merchants settled in Malabar and married local ladies. Marriage was the matter for the Semitic religious groups, especially Jews, Christians and Muslims. Among the native Hindu Community, Nair women were available without wedlock and the eldest of the Brahmin only got officially married. In these circumstances, marriage was not much important in the local scenario of the coastal region. So it was not a big issue to find a partner from the region, (Ronald E. Miller, 1976, 49). This practice had existed even before Islam. As a trading community connected with monsoon voyage, Jews, Christian and Roman traders chose the coastal belt as their second home, (André Wink, 1990, 70).

This researcher could also find two different copies of *Qissat Shakarwati Farmad* from the personal library of Ahmed Koya Shaliyathi and Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar, renowned Islamic scholars who lived in the last century and contributed much to the intellectual realm of Malabar Muslims. The first part of the manuscript collected from Chaliyam library of Ahmed Koya Shaliyathi clearly says that the story of these documents was collected from the wooden slates on which was carved the full story of the King’s conversion to Islam at the Malik Ibn Dinar Mosque of Kasargode. Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar copied the document from the slates to paper. Both copies are identical and the copy examined at the library of Shaliyathi comprises notes of the scholar on the work.

Yohanán Friedmann’s study on the Qissat manuscript also brings out the prominence of the document as well as the reliability of latter writings on this manuscript. Friedmann spoke about similar stories in the other regions of Indian ocean. It was an attempt to neutralize

the historic importance of this manuscript. The conceptual comparison was not supported by any documentary evidence in the article of Y Freedmann. The statistical details of the waqf or the names of the Islamic judges appointed in various regions and the names of the Muslim Chief of the port appointed in that time was not seriously analyzed by Freedmann. Freedmann considers this as shoreline story, where local scholars took historically irrelevant myths to substantiate the history of the place just mentioning the terminology of the Indian Ocean littoral (Yohanan Friedmann, 1975, 233-45).

The Qissat manuscript also illustrates the unique story of the King's visit to Makkah and the detailed description connected to it. The story starts in Makkah before the historic event of the great Hijra, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) tried to convince people to believe in one God. When the Prophet (ﷺ) attempted to prove the validity of his prophet-hood, Abu Jahal interrupted him demanding that the Prophet should stop his speech. The Prophet however persisted in his claim and warned those who rejected with the dire punishment of the Almighty. This event caused anger among the infidels and they assembled to seriously discuss the matter. They reached a decision that they should bring the great scholar, Habib Ibn Malik, who had greater knowledge on all religions and books. He was also a wealthy man with enough treasures and numerous troops. They believed that he would be the fittest man to stop the activities against their beliefs. This manuscript clearly depicts the story that transpired in Makkah, where a group under the leadership of Abu Jahl went to see Habib Ibn Malik in Madina, while he was sitting on his throne along with ministers, dignitaries and men of cultures. Habib Ibn Malik greeted them and inquired their reason for the visit. Abu Jahal gave a description about the activities of the Prophet and asked him to solve this severe problem that they all faced. The next morning Habib Ibn Malik along with his huge army which comprised of 40,000 horsemen proceeded to Makkah. After reaching Makkah, Habib Ibn Malik sent an envoy to the Prophet. Hearing the news, the Prophet performed a special prayer to God Almighty and went to see Habib Ibn Malik. On his way the Angel descended with the greeting and assurance of God that the Prophet would be able to perform the miracle of splitting the moon, which was as expected, demanded by Habib Ibn Malik in the meeting with the Prophet. It was also mentioned in the Qissat manuscript that the Angel told the Prophet about the

Indian king who would see the incident and accept the religion (Qissat, 85a).

The manuscript provides a detailed description of the event including the mannerism of Habib Ibn Malik and his people when the Prophet entered into their area. All of them stood up in respect of the Prophet and then Habib Ibn Malik asked the Prophet to prove his claim to Prophet-hood. Habib Ibn Malik also added that he had read in an ancient book that a Prophet named Muhammad would appear at the end of time, and all prophets had supported their claim by showing various miracles. Thus, the Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) was forced to show a miracle. The Prophet made the moon rise in its full form (though it was on the fifth night of the lunar calendar) from the mountain of Abu Qubais. Then, he pointed to the moon which made it split into two parts. The Prophet performed this miracle with the help of Almighty Allah; Awe-struck, Habib Ibn Malik and his followers, including his soldiers, became Muslim.

After recording the great miracle of the moon-splitting, in this anonymous manuscript of Qissat, the whole story shifts from Arabia to Malabar, where it now narrates how the King witnessed the splitting of the moon, his astonishment and his recording of the date of the incident. The King remained perplexed for a long period of time, until a group of Jews and Christians came to Malabar along with their families in a large ship. The King enquired about their whereabouts and the intention of their journey. They related that a person called Muhammad had claimed to be the Prophet of all mankind and through magic and deceit tried to convert people from their religion in Makkah (Qissat, 88a). When the King asked them the details of magic they mentioned the splitting of the moon. The Qissat manuscript says that then the King understood that they were enemies of Prophet Mohammad (ﷺ) and concealed everything from them (Qissat, 88b).

A few years later, a group of pilgrims under the leadership of the pious Muslim Sheikh Zahir al-Din bin Sheikh Zaki al-Din al Madani travelled with his group to Ceylon, the old name of Sri Lanka, reached Kodungallur and the King enquired of them about the moon-splitting event. The sheikh explained the entire story to the King, who then tested the religious knowledge of the Muslims against that of Christians and Jews (Qissat, 89a-89b). On their return journey from Adam's Peak

they attended the King's palace as requested by the king, who later asked the sheikh to arrange a ship for the King's journey to Arabia. The sheikh got permission from the owner of a ship to travel with his disciples (Qissat, 90a). The King went into seclusion for the next seven days, during which time the King divided his kingdom amongst his descendants and prepared detailed notes on the boundaries of the area under his control. The King carried with him precious stones, gold and silver in his journey to Arabia (Qissat, 90b).

The latter parts of the Qissat explain the experiences that the King shared with the Prophet in Jeddah, including his acceptance of Islam. In the marvelous moment that the Prophet and the King met each other, the king prostrated before the Prophet expressing his respect. The Qissat also reveals that in the unique moment, Abubacker who was present inquired of the King about the condition of his kingdom, administrative arrangements and the situation of the people (Qissat, 92b). The Prophet changed the name of the King from Chakravarthi Perumal to Taj al-Din al Hindi al Mulaybari (Qissat, 93a). This news spread all over Arabia and Habib Ibn Malik and other important members of his family, including Malik Ibn Dinar and Sharf al Din Ibn Malik came to visit the King and agreed to accompany him to Malabar. Then, the Qissat says, the King married the sister of Malik Ibn Dinar and stayed with the Prophet for five years (Qissat, 94b). When they took the decision to start their journey to India, according to the Qissat, the Prophet along with his companions and Habib Ibn Malik with a number of family members accompanied the King to Jeddah. The King with a group travelled to Adan, where Habib Ibn Malik was king and then they travelled to the Shihr, where they stayed aiming to build a ship to travel to India. Meanwhile, the King underwent a serious illness and was convinced he would be unable to return to his own country. The King advised his fellow travellers to continue the journey even in his absence. But they were worried whether they would be able to execute their religious mission in India in an effective manner in the absence of the King. To dispel this confusion the King wrote down notes, which comprised the essential information about Kings of Malabar, appointed by Perumal. The King asked the emissaries not to disclose his death to his people. The Qissat manuscript states that the King passed away on the first of Muharram. The researcher visited the tomb of the

King in Salalah, which is currently part of Oman. S. B Miles who wrote about the countries and their prominence in the Persian Gulf describes the tomb of the King and says he was astonished as to why the port of the area was not counted as one of the first ports in the world (S.B. Miles, 1919, 552-554).

The Qissat document reveals that the king's co-travellers remained in the area for a number of years and when the Prophet (ﷺ) died, they went to Madina to comfort the family of the Prophet and his close companions. The Prophet (ﷺ) appeared in the dream of Malik Ibn Habeeb and he also dreamed of the deceased Indian King. Then they returned to Al Shihr and built two large ships for their journey to Malabar. Sharf Ibn Malik, his brother Malik Ibn Dinar, Malik Ibn Habeeb with his wife Qmariyya along with children, soldiers, associates and other helpers set out on their voyage to Malabar. On arrival, as requested by the King they submitted a letter to the King of Kodungallur, who received them warmly by giving them houses, lands and all manner of support, even to build mosques in various parts of Malabar (Qissat 97b).

Renowned scholar Qazi Muhammed Abdul Aziz describes the same story at the end of his historic poem *Fat'hul Mubin* and Qazi agrees with the time span and incidents explained in the Qissat (Qazi Muhammed, 525-529). The famous book in Arabic, *Tuhfat al Mujahidhin*, explains the detailed story of the conversion of Cheraman Perumal to Islam in a separate chapter entitled '*History of the Advent and Spread of Islam in Malabar*', which simultaneously discusses the same story of Qissat, except for the time of the incident. While the two manuscripts agree on the date and timing of the great incident, the third one contradicts only in the case whether the King watched the moon split and travelled to Arabia at the time, when the Prophet was alive. The British library manuscript and the other two manuscripts collected and studied by the researcher are otherwise mostly similar.

There are evidences from Hadith to prove that the Indian King visited Arabia at the time of the Prophet. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (839-923 CE) describes the medicinal values of ginger, speaks about the Indian King who visited the Prophet and presented a big pot of ginger. He also narrates that the gift from the Indian King was distributed among the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the King stayed with the Prophet (ﷺ) for a few days. This incident from the

life of the Prophet (ﷺ) was narrated by Abu Abd-Allah Muhammad ibn Abd-Allah al-Hakim (933 – 1012 CE), who was a great scholar of his age (Abd-Allah al-Hakim, 1002–1003 CE). This was reported by Abu Saeedul Khudri, who believed that this King was Cheraman Perumal. Cheraman Perumal's story is also very relevant because of its popularity and accuracy recorded in various writings. The time factor is still a matter of dispute, but not many arguments are given against descriptions of the Qissat on the group of travellers, who met Perumal on their way to Adam's Peak. With the advent of Islam in Malabar, its scholars and great business personalities were greatly responsible for making regional contacts cordial and fruitful for both Muslims and non-Muslims of the region. The Chera King also had given instructions to his governors to provide every possible support to the Muslims.

As mentioned above, the King divided the kingdom among his people, but Zamorin, who later became King of Calicut, did not get a share because he was absent at the time of the partition of the whole Malabar kingdom. This story is also narrated by Makhдум II who states that when Zamorin turned up late, the King gave his sword and ordered him to acquire power fighting with the sword. Thus Zamorin fought and took possession of Calicut (Makhдум II, 34). The story of the sword was very popular and William Logan used a picture of the sword in his book *Malabar Manual*. Sheik Makhдум II explains the power and respect enjoyed by King Zamorin, who treated Muslims especially foreign Muslims, with great respect and affection

Early Malabar Mosques AND WAQF

When the group from Arabia landed in the Chera capital at Malabar, they handed the letter to the current ruler, who in return arranged the carpenters and other important workers to start working on the first mosque at Kodungallur. The rulers had provided all the facilities to the team who came from Arabia to propagate Islam as requested by King Cheraman Perumal. Cheraman's successors even provided enough land for their accommodation. They, according to Qissat, had brought from Makkah three precious stones, which were part of the Ka'ba. The exact days and dates as well as the specialty of the land selected for building mosques in various towns are noted by the writers. In Kodungallur the waqf land area was described in the Qissat. The land which was located east of the river, measured 20 carpenter's rods to the east, 25 rods to the

north (18 m; 58 ft) and fifty rods from the west. This formed the *waqf* property. Mohammed Ibn Malik Dinar became the Qazi of this mosque. Malik Dinar remained in Kodungallur and entrusted his nephew Malik Ibn Habeeb to other important coastlines of Malabar to construct new mosques. The current Cheraman Juma Mosque located in Methala, Kodungalloor in Thrissur district of Kerala State is the first mosque mentioned in the Qissat document. But more archeological studies are needed to determine the current status of the building, the foundation and the waqf lands assigned for its building and maintenance. The mosque still keeps an ancient oil lamp, believed to be more than a thousand years old, which is a symbol of intercultural co-operation. People from various religious backgrounds bring oil for the lamp as offering in this mosque. This mosque is also a famous tourist attraction in India drawing people who wish to learn of the history of the advent of Islam in South and South East Asia. Various sates heads and historians have visited this remarkable site, but need more archaeological excavations to scientifically prove the Qissat documentation of this waqf land. In April 2016, the Indian Prime Minister gifted a gold-plated replica of the Cheraman Juma Masjid to the visiting Saudi King, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The second mosque of Malabar was established in Kollam by Malik Ibn Habeeb, who deposited in the mosque the holy stone which they had brought from Makkah. It was a Friday, the second day of Ramazan (21 Hijra), Land measuring 50 rods (36 m; 120 ft) from the east of that mosque, 60 rods from the west, 40 rods from the south, the land to the sea from the north became *waqf* under the mosque. This shows that the land area of this mosque was wider and larger than the first one. Hasan Ibn Malik was appointed the Qazi of that mosque. This mosque is now known as old Valiyapalli at Jonakappuram. This mosque was often destroyed by sea erosion and it was reconstructed on different occasions. It is believed that the existing structure was rebuilt in the same *waqf* land of the mosque. But, here, too, we need archaeological excavations to reconfirm the actual *waqf* property.

Those who took the initiative and supervised the establishment of the mosque never insisted on constructing a structure similar to the ones which they had in Arabia. This integrated architectural system and formulation of assimilated language for the Islamic obligatory practices were symbols of moderation of early Malabar Muslims. The

adaption, integration and assimilation approach exhibited by the early Muslims was the main reason for close relationship of Muslims with other local communities, who were never made to feel that Islam is an alien religion belonging only to the Arabs. Hence, the Islamic life-style and practices got wide acceptance in Malabar and soon Islam became very popular in the Kollam region, which the Qissat document called Kūlam, being an Arabic transliteration of Kollam. This specific name was also mentioned in the Cairo Geniza records (Goitein and Friedman, 2000, 382) and sources cited there. In late thirteenth century Rasūlid documents also narrated Kūlam as the southernmost centre on the coast. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa also gave good account of his visit to Kollam, where he stayed at the Kāzirūnī *zāwiya* -Sūfī cottage and confirmed the importance of the town in Muslim society and trading network (Gibb, 1929, 818).

Malik Ibn Dinar called Malik Ibn Habeeb back to Kodungallur after some time and the latter was entrusted to build a new mosque and an Islamic society framework in Hīlī. Malik Ibn Habeeb could effectively facilitate another mosque in Hīlī, where the third stone brought from Makkah was placed. It, according to Qissat, was on a very auspicious day in Islam, the 10th day of Dulhijja, 21st year of Hijra. Waqf land in Hīlī was clearly mentioned in Qissat, 'to the west of the mosque up to the hill and to the east to the river and to the south for 50 cubits and to the north for the same distance'. His son Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Mālik was appointed as the Judge of the mosque and Afif al-Dīn, the son of Majd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī was appointed as chief of the port. Ezhimala one of the famous old port towns of Malabar, was mentioned in the early writings of great travellers as Hīlī. Now it is a beautiful village located in Kannur District of Kerala, just about 55 km from the district headquarters. Recognizing the strategic significance of the location, the Indian Navel force has established a naval academy here. The oldest mosque and its Waqf properties are located in this area. But there is no study developed on the basis of Qissat documents and the land acquired for the mosque during the inception years.

Mālik Ibn. Ḥabīb took the initiative to complete a number of mosques in other important port towns of Malabar and appointed a Qazi as well as a chief of the port in each region. After Hīlī he traveled to Fāknūr and here he built a congregational mosque on Thursday, 10th Rabī' al-Awwal. The Arabic Fāknūr is known as Barkur, located

north of Mangalore. Barkur, located in strategic point in the Indian Ocean shoreline, 16 km from Udupi, is an ancient city in the Udupi district of current Karnataka state. The mosque named after Malik Dinar and I also could personally examine an old stone carvings of old Arabic letters in the mosque, which is recently rebuilt and the stone was placed on the left side outer wall of the mosque. Qissat also mentioned the *waqf* land of the region in clear description as ‘to the east for 80 cubits and to the west to the same distance and to the south for 77 cubits as measured by infidel merchants’. I found that this early wider waqf land was confiscated by various private and government parties. Here, the Qazi was his son, Ibrahīm Ibn Mālik. The next mosque was constructed in Manjalūr, modern-day Mangalore, on Friday, 27 Jumādā al-Ūlā in the year 22 Hijra. The endowment *waqf* property of the mosque was to a distance of 60 cubits equally to all four sides. His other son Mūsā Ibn Mālik was the Qazi of the region and Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī Ibn Naṣīr al-Maṣrī was appointed as Chief of the port. This mosque is now known as The Zeenath Baksh Juma Masjid, named after the daughter of Tipu Sultan the ruler of Mysore, who renovated with wooden statuette and replaced the Malik Dinar Valya Juma-ath Masjid to Zeenath Baksh Jama Masjid. This mosque has gorgeous wooden structure and characteristics of traditional architectural structures of the region. The wooden inner sanctum of the mosque consists of 16 pillars made of teak and edifice is adorned with traditional patterns.

The next destination was Kānjarikūt, modern day Kasaragod the north port in Kerala. This mosque was constructed on Tuesday, 28 Rajab in the 22nd year of Hijra. In this mosque Mālik Ibn Muḥammad was Qazi. It is important to note that *waqf* land was specifically detailed in the Qissat manuscript. So this can be considered as a prominent text giving importance to the waqf properties assigned for the mosque. In this mosque waqf land was ‘to the east as far as the market and to the west as far as the river and to the south for 40 cubits and the same land to the north side of the mosque. Qissat depicted the detailed movements of the head of the mission. It was mentioned that from Kasargode, he went back to Hīlī and lived there for another three months. His next destination was Jurfatan, which is modern Shreekanapuram near Kannur. A Juma Mosque was constructed here on Thursday, 1st Sha‘ban in the Hijra year 22. Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn ‘Umar b. Muḥammad Ibn Mālik was appointed as the judge of this area. Waqf property of this

mosque is also mentioned clearly in the document: ‘to the east for 70 cubits and to the west as far as the river and to the south along the river for 100 cubits and to the north as far as the river. This mosque is also preserved and protected under the name of Malik Dinar mosque.

Then Mālik b. Ḥabīb arrived at Dharmpattanam. There he built a congregational mosque on Thursday, 27 Sha‘bān in the Hijra year 22. He appointed Ḥusain Ibn. Muḥammad Ibn Mālik al-Madanī as Qazi of the mosque and Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Simnānī as the chief of the port. The waqf land dedicated for the mosque were illustrated in Qissat as ‘to the east for 35 cubits and to the west as far as the river and to the south for 60 cubits and to the north for 70 cubits’. Interestingly, these records show how much care was given to the documentation of waqf property in of the Qissat, which is essentially a narration in the form of a story. It can be seen that the early group of settlers from Arabia was travelling back and forth and analyzing the necessity of mosques, judges and Muslim Chief of the port. The next assigned waqf land was in Fandarayna, where they constructed a congregational mosque along the shore on Thursday 21st Shawwāl in the 22nd Hijra year. Sa‘d al-Dīn b. Mālik al-Madanī was appointed as Qazi. The waqf property of this mosque is also clearly documented in Qissat: ‘to the east of the mosque for 70 cubits and to the west for the same distance and to the south for 25 cubits and to the north as far as the ocean.

Next Waqf property was assigned in Shāliyāt, (Chaliyam) the oldest port town near Kozhikode, where a congregational mosque was constructed. This mosque is located near the shore of the river adjacent to the Arabian Sea. Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Mālik al-Madanī was appointed as Qazi of Chaliyam, which was more popular than Calicut. The headquarters of the Islamic Judge of the region continued to exist in this port city for centuries after the inception of the mosque. The city market of Chalyam synthesized the styles of Arabian and traditional Malabar markets in its structure. The houses also followed the matrilineal system for receiving the traders as husbands in various houses. A dilapidated house can be seen in Chaliyam which was officially used by various Qazis as their abode. The Waqf land, its length and breadth, is also recorded in the Qissat document as ‘to the east for to 50 cubits and to the west for 70 cubits’. The Qazi’s house became much popular because Mālik Ibn Ḥabīb had resided in Chaliyam along with his companions for another five months and appointed ‘Uthmān

Ibn Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī as chief of the port. After spending ample time in this wonderful setting of nature, Mālik Ibn Ḥabīb and his companions returned to Kodungallor and gave a detailed account of the mosques established in various port towns and Waqf properties assigned for the development and smooth running of the mosque.

The mosques described in various copies of *Qissat* and *Tuhfat al Mujahidin* were:

- 1, Kodungallure
- 2, Kollam
- 3, Ezhimala
- 4, Barkur
- 5, Mangalapuram
- 6, Kasargode
- 7, Shri Khandapuram
- 8, Dharmadam
- 9, Panthalayanikollam
- 10, Chaliyam

The port towns, where the early mosques were constructed, were famous even from the 1st Century CE. The records of *Periplus* narrated the story of important ports called Naura, Tyndis, Musris, Nelcynda, which were abound with ships that carried goods to Arabia and to Greece (Schoff, Wilfred H., trans., 2001, 44). All these became Waqf locations for the early mosques of Malabar and the dedicated Waqf properties were protected in these towns. Though there are different opinions on the modern destination of Tyndis, as Ponnani and Kadalundi, I rechecked the distance between two ports mentioned in Periplus and could arrive at a conclusion that Tyndis was Kadalundi -Chaliyam, the old port town mentioned in *Qissat* near Calicut. In the sea route, this distance matches with measurement from Chaliyam. Tyndis is a coastal village 500 stadia, which means 60 miles, north of Muzris. Ptolemy called this as city – ‘Polis’ (Lionel Casson, 2012. Syed Muhammed Husayn Nainar, 1942). Various scholars and travellers in latter centuries also stressed the importance of these early port towns where the mosques were constructed on Waqf property. Abul Fida (1273-1331 CE) mentions various towns of Malabar, which are: Shaliyat (Chaliyam), Shinkili (Kodungallur) and Kulam (Kollam). These towns were also important port towns where, according to *Qissat*, important

waqf endowments were made to establish the early mosques of the region. He identified Kulam as the last town in pepper country towards the east. (Joseph-Toussaint Reinaud and Stanislad Guyard, 1840, 121). Tenth century historic writing by Buzurg ibn Shariyar named *Kitab Ajaib al Hind* describes the pepper country and a famous port called Kollam. (G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, ed., 1981, 55).

WAQF PROPERTY IN THE LAND OF TEMPLES

It is interesting to note that the first waqf lands were contributions of non-Muslim kings of the region, which was known as the land of temples. Malabar mosques were the best model for integration of Muslims into local social structures. The Malabar mosques were built with the whole-hearted support of local rulers and regional skilled-workers. In the early period, craftsmanship was typically obtained locally and mosques were a reflection of the synergetic interaction between Muslims and indigenous social structures. Early mosques of Arabia did not have much architectural styles other than the four-walled structure. The style of Prophet's Mosque (Masjid al-Nabawī), a model of which is kept in the Madina Museum, was a simple square structure consisting of mud-brick walls, tree trunks and a wide open courtyard. From this point of view, the basic requirements for a mosque can be minimized to a walled area with facilities for Wudū and an indication of the direction of Qiblah. This was the basic structure followed in the early mosques of Arabia (R. Hillenbrand, 1989, 186). In Malabar, the places of ablution were abundant due to the rich water resources available in the area. It is clear that the structure of the mosque of Malabar had an individual identity. These structures followed indigenous architecture styles, using available local materials. Because of the six-month continuous monsoon season in the Malabar coast, the requisite for well-roofed buildings was a necessity in the case of Malabar mosques.

Basically a mosque in Malabar comprised a large prayer hall with a *Mihrab* on the western wall and covered verandah all around. Generally, it had a high basement similar to the *adhistanā* of the Brahmanical temple; and often the columns are as in *mandapa* pillars. The arch form is seen only in one exceptional case in the mosque at Ponnani among the early mosques in the land. Wood was used extensively for the construction of ceiling and roof. The roof in many cases was covered with sheets of copper, completing the form of the temple *sikhara*. At

Tanur, the Jama Masjid even has a gate built in the manner of a temple *gopuram*, covered with copper sheeting. This mosque itself is a three-storied building with tiled roof crowned by five finials. Arabs had better relations with India then and this was evidently clear from the narrations at the time of Caliph Umer (Arshad Islam, 2010, 14).

Though Arabia and India had better early relations, it was not reflected in the architectural structures of early Malabar mosques. Malabar mosques had no features or styles commonly found in the Arabian or the Indo-Islamic architectures of the imperial or provincial varieties. It is the special architecture derived from the temple structures without large domes and minarets. The interior of that traditional structure was a newly formed integrated mosque with a special hall comprising a number of supporting pillars, a *mimber* and *mihrab*. The exterior elevation of the mosque seldom differed from the structure of regional temples of Malabar with its entry point or its vast outside corridors or beautiful traditional courtyards.

CONCLUSION

The King of Calicut also supported the building and maintenance of the mosques in the city. It is remarkable that the King gave land and other property to the mosque as Waqf. Muchundi Mosque of Calicut carries an inscription stating the status of endowment. The Jama Masjid at Beypore and Mithqal Mosque at Kozhikode are symbols of the incorporation of regional architecture in the latter period when construction works were done by the same local craftsmen who built temples as well as residences. The typical Malabar mosques can be seen at Kollampalli, near Kollam, Panthalayani near Koilandy, Kozhikode, Thanur, Ponnani and Kasargode in other old Muslim settlement areas of Malabar. In these mosque structures the influence of traditional artisans and local architectural mode of construction are reflected as a new derivation of a subtle style of architecture of Malabar Muslims. Vastu, the traditional architectural methodology of Malabar, was seldom an obstacle in the way of building mosques following its norms and conditions in selection of land and position of buildings, etc. According to traditional beliefs of Malabar, the entrance of the building should be positioned to the east side of the land. This was much appropriate for the mosques and moreover it was more contingent because the Qiblah direction, in this region, is towards the northwest from the Malabar coast. In old mosques

the position of the well or the pond for ablution was also built following the traditional *Vastu*, which did not create any inconveniences to the basic need of a mosque. This assimilation brought wider contact with the regional community, architects and regional builders of the time.

The above scenarios are evidently clear from the narrations of Ibn Battutah, who mentioned some prominent scholars whom he met in Malabar. He illustrated stories of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Naqawri, Quran teacher Isma'il, Nur al-Din 'Ali Qazi of the region from Honavar. In Barkur area he also described the judge and a prestigious preacher without specifying names. Another person was Badr al-Din al-Ma'bari the judge teacher from Mangalore and Madayi Ḥusain who supervised the mosque. In Madayi, Battutah revealed the presence of Sa'id from Mogadishu, a scholar educated in Makkah and Madina. Another mention was of Valapattanam Al-Sarsari who was from Sarsar near Baghdad. In Dharmadam there was another scholar Ḥusain and Pantalayini-Kollam judge and preacher from Oman but his exact name was not mentioned. In the famous port of Calicut, the scholar Fakhr al-Din 'Uthman was judge and Shihab al-Din al-Kazaruni was a Sufi Shaykh. There were two others mentioned from Kollam; one was from Qazwin in Persia, but his name was not written in the travelogue and Sufi Sheikh Fakhr al-Din, son of Shihab al-Din of Calicut. Ibn Battutah also mentioned in his travelogue the leadership of a man from Iraq and other parts of the world. (Gibb 2000, IV, 66-103). These scholars were ready to incorporate the regional diversity to avoid estrangement with the mainstream community.

There are arguments and counter-arguments on the historicity of the *Qissat* document, because it was considered as an oral tradition later transcribed in to text. Persuasive analysis of Jan Vansina's oral convention is relevant for the original document was considered transmitted through the oral traditions than the direct dissemination from the texts. The original form of this manuscript was preserved in the Malik Ibn Dinar mosque of Kasargode and Pangil Mohammed Musliyar just wrote it down exactly on to paper. It is another reality that the narrative of the conversion of the king was orally circulated before the endeavors of writings had commenced. In the oral traditions the story of *Waqf* was not mentioned in detail. The various versions and some kinds of differences in different stores were found, because of the popularity of retold versions of the oral tradition (Jan Vansina, 1985, 17).

The *Qisṣat* stories were prominently transmitted from one generation to the other. There are different reasons to find it historically relevant. This story was mentioned in the early stories of Brahmins, so the Qissat version cannot be counted as a religiously biased story (Barbara D. Metcalf, 2009). It is important to identify the place name, the location, the Waqf property listed in the Qissat. These Waqf properties are still available for researchers. There is a lot to learn about the precision of the documentation process of Waqf properties and the significance given to the measure of the property purposefully narrating with the date and time of the construction of mosques as well as the appointment of Qazi and chief of the ports in various regions categorized under different mosques. In this case Qissat can be considered as a relevant primary resource to evaluate the nature of early Waqf and what the important leaders and society donated as Waqf property in the early centuries.

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