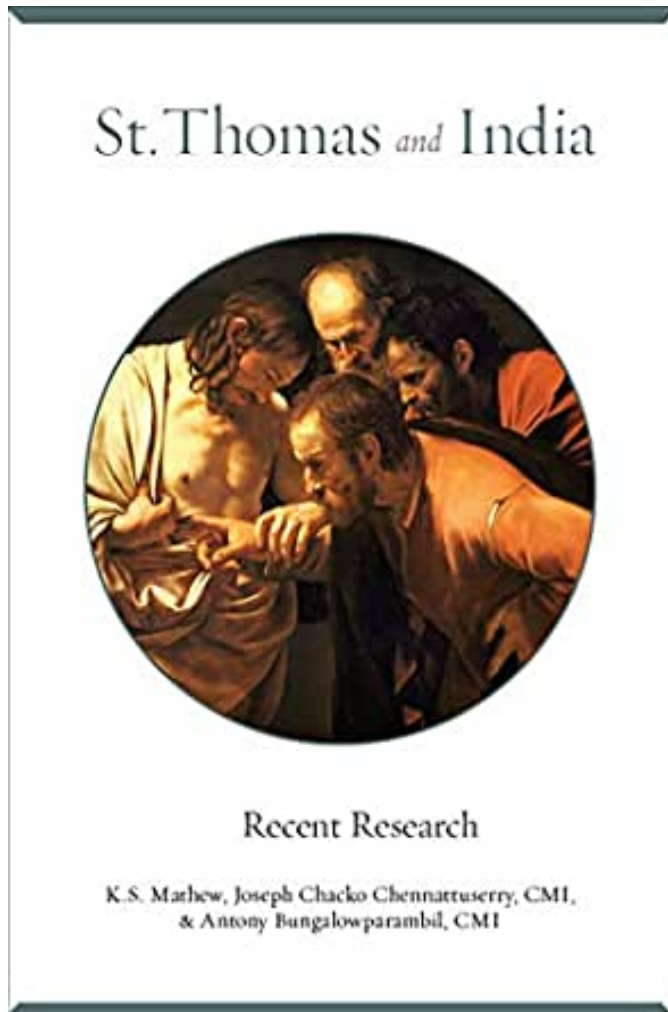


St.Thomas and India: Recent Researches



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Preface

Encroachment upon and unfounded statements on areas not falling within one's own field of expertise have become the order of the day, attracting the attention of gullible readers who are easily liable to be carried away by controversies and novelties. People backed by their own preconceived ideas, hidden agendas, and bias come out in print and electronic media with utterances of random and scathing attacks on certain historical facts supported by evidences of diverse nature and create confusion in the minds of the public. One such topic is the apostolic heritage of the St Thomas Christians of India. Therefore, the authorities of the recently established St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Archives and Research Centre at Mannanam, Kerala took the initiative to delve deeper into the details of the heritage of the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala by organizing an international seminar wherein the scholars from various educational institutions in India, France, Italy, and Portugal were invited to share the output of their researches with themselves and the public.

The Kuriakose Elias Chavara Research Centre, Christ (Deemed to be University), Bangalore, St Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, and the Association of the Catholic Historians of India (ACHI) joined hands in realizing the long cherished plan. The authorities of Chavara Kuriakose Elias Higher secondary School, Mannanam came out with open arms to provide the required wherewithal to make it a memorable event. Thirty-seven research papers related to various aspects of the heritage of the St Thomas Christians were presented by the scholars from far and wide.

Taking into account the ongoing wayward discussions on the apostolate of St Thomas in India and the urgency to apprise the readers of the source-based and well-documented studies conducted by the scholars all over the world, it was decided to make a selection of the papers dealing exclusively with the arrival and activities of St Thomas in India. The editorial committee referred the shortlisted papers to experts in the respective fields and obtained their comments for publications. This explains the background of the publication of the Eleven articles in the book in your hands. Attempts are afoot to bring out the entire proceedings of the seminar. Your valuable suggestions and comments shall be highly appreciated.

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(For the editorial committee)

INTRODUCTION

K.S.Mathew

Jesus Christ during His public ministry chose St Thomas, known also as Judas Thomas, to be one among the twelve apostles who were commissioned to preach his Good News, as mentioned by the evangelists St Mathew,¹ St Mark,² and St Luke³. St Mark, the evangelist, clearly mentions that they were given the title as apostles by Jesus. According to the narratives of St Mark and St Luke, this appointment took place on a mountain to which he called them. This means that this was an important matter, as many other serious events during the public ministry of Jesus took place on mountains.

When Jesus came down from the mountain, in training the newly appointed apostles in their mission, he gave them an example by preaching to the multitude of people hailing from Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon.⁴ Further, he took them along with him when he preached in public and worked miracles.

On sending the apostles charged with the mission, Jesus Christ restricted their activities first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel keeping them away from the gentiles (non-Jewish people) and Samaritans as mentioned by St Matthew, the evangelist.⁵ The mission entrusted to the twelve apostles consisted in proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven has come near. The work of curing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, and casting out demons without any remuneration was enjoined upon them.⁶ We learn from the Gospel of St Matthew that the mission given to them was the same for which Jesus was sent. For, when the messengers of St John the Baptist asked Jesus about his identity and mission, he told them very succinctly that the works done by him such as the restoring of sight to the blind, ability to walk given to the lame, cleansing of the lepers, giving the power of hearing to the deaf, raising of the dead, and proclamation of the good news bore testimony to his identity.⁷ The Apostles were asked to do their services *gratis* since they received the power to do these works free of charge.⁸ They were, however, allowed to accept hospitality from the people of the town or village where in they worked.⁹

The apostles themselves worked among the sick and the possessed as they were sent by Jesus. As and when they encountered difficulties in their activities, they turned to Jesus for solutions and necessary instructions. When St Peter started walking on the water as suggested by Jesus, he was about to sink. Then Jesus came to his help and rebuked him for the lack of faith in Jesus who asked him to do it.¹⁰ We see the apostles seeking clarification from Jesus when they failed in their attempt to exorcise a possessed person. Jesus told the apostles that only with deep faith and prayer demons could be driven away.¹¹

The works of Jesus witnessed by the apostles prompted them to continue the mission entrusted to them with great enthusiasm. St Thomas, being convinced of the divinity and other aspects of the life and activities of Jesus Christ, exhorted his colleagues to go and die with him.¹² This shows the intensity of the commitment of St Thomas to the mission of Jesus.

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his apostles and disciples several times with a view to confirming them in faith in him. St John, the evangelist gives a lively report about the apparition of Jesus to the disciples and adds that “Thomas (who was called the twin), one of the twelve was not with them when Jesus came.”¹³ St. Thomas stated that he would insist on a personal experience of the resurrected Jesus rather than believing the report of his colleagues. Jesus condescended to pay heed to his demand and appeared after a week to the group of disciples in which Thomas too was present. He asked Thomas

to have close experience of his resurrected person which St Thomas did and declared with full conviction of his belief in the risen Jesus.¹⁴

Again when St Thomas, the twin gathered with St Simon Peter, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two others from among the disciples of Jesus by the sea of Tiberias, he got another opportunity to meet the risen Lord and experience his divine power, which also enabled the apostles to have a miraculous catch of fish from Tiberias against all the odds of the time. He further witnessed Jesus handing over to St Peter the supreme authority of shepherding his flock.¹⁵

The mission entrusted to the Apostles, as we have seen above, initially was restricted to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This lasted only till his death and it was further extended to embrace the entire world, even to the ends of the earth, only after the resurrection of Jesus. At the time of his ascension to Heaven, Jesus directed his eleven Apostles including St Thomas to a mountain (Mount Olivet near Jerusalem) where they all gathered together. Having appeared to them, he instructed them to preach the Good News to all nations beginning with Jerusalem¹⁶ and further on to Judea and Samaria¹⁷ and even to the ends of the earth.¹⁸ But they were asked to stay in the city (Jerusalem) until they received the power from the Holy Spirit promised by the Eternal Father.¹⁹ After receiving the instruction from Jesus at the Mount Olivet, they returned to Jerusalem and all of them including St Thomas spent the time in prayer in the company of Blessed Virgin Mary and a few brothers and sisters.²⁰

The Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus as well as His Father descended upon them on the day of Pentecost.²¹ Having received the power, St Peter, who was given authority to shepherd the flock, addressed the crowd gathered on the day of Pentecost and converted a number of Israelites to faith in Jesus Christ and baptized 3000 of them.²² Peter took the lead in healing the sick too.²³ After making arrangements for dispensing charity and looking after affairs other than preaching the good news, the apostles concentrated on proclaiming the Good News.²⁴ It is reasonably assumed that St Thomas, one among the apostles, preached the Good News initially in Jerusalem. Gradually, the apostles extended their activities to non-Israelites (gentiles).²⁵ St Peter took the lead after having a vision in Joppa and baptized a large number of them to the great dissatisfaction of the Jews.²⁶

With the widening of the mission, the Apostles left for various places to preach the Good News beyond Jerusalem. Chosen by Jesus as one among the twelve apostles, trained by Jesus during the period of the public life of his Master, empowered through the apparition of the resurrected Jesus and finally inspired by the promised Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, St Thomas, known to the world of the Edessan tradition as Judas Thomas, commenced his mission entrusted by Jesus and preached the good news in India.

Here it seems opportune to say a word about the nomenclature. The name “Thomas” pointing to one of the apostles is derived from the Aramaic term “toma” meaning twin. The Greek writers transcribed it as Thomas and translated as Didymos. The ancient Christian texts of the Church of Edessa called the twin apostle as Judas Thomas. The Gospel according to St John refers three times to the name “Thomas” followed by the Greek term Didymos.²⁷ Both Aramaic and Hebrew texts use the term “Thomas” as an epithet indicating “twin”, not a personal name.²⁸ It is further held that the Church of Edessa always considered Judas as the personal name of the Apostle while the term “Thomas” or Didymos was only an epithet. St John the evangelist, while reporting the conversation of Jesus with his apostles on the way to his Father makes mention of a query put forward by Thomas regarding the way to the place Jesus was going to. Here the evangelist uses the epithet “Thomas.”²⁹ Later when Jesus was giving the promise of sending the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, one of them by name Judas asked him why Jesus was revealing himself to them and not to the world. Here St John the evangelist distinguishes this apostle from Judas Iscariot.³⁰ This would mean that there were more persons than one among the apostles with the personal name Judas; one was Judas Thomas (twin or Didymos) and the other Judas Iscariot and the third was Judas the son of James.³¹

A few of the scholars raise doubt about the identity of India where St Thomas preached the Good News. This prompts us to add a few words about India and its inter-continental relations in the past. The subcontinent of India was known to the

West for centuries together before the birth of Jesus Christ. Homer (born c.750 BCE), the legendary author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, two epic poems, the central works of ancient Greek literature, makes mention of India in his works.³² Herodotus (484–424 BCE), a Greek writer, known as the father of History refers to the conquest of parts of India by Darius I (55–486 BCE), the fourth king of the Persian Achaemenid Empire.³³

Alexander III of Macedonia known as Alexander, the Great (356–323 BCE) founded the port town of Alexandria in 331 BCE and laid the foundation for maritime contacts between the port of Alexandria and India. Later in 326 BCE, he invaded India and defeated the former Achaemenid satrapy of Gandhara, including the city of Taxila. He advanced further into Punjab. The Battle of the Hydaspes river against a regional Indian King, Porus, is considered by many as the most costly battle fought by Alexander and his armies. Subsequently, his army refused to cross the Beas River, fearful of the powerful Nanda Empire which lay to the East along the banks of the Ganges. Therefore, Alexander turned to the South, advancing through southern Punjab and Sindh, along the way conquering more tribes on the lower Indus River, before returning to the West.³⁴ Alexander died in Babylonia in 323. In 321 BC, two years after Alexander's death, Chandragupta Maurya of Magadha founded the Maurya Empire in India.

Megasthenes (350–290 BCE), the Greek historian and ambassador of Seleukos I Nikator (358–281), the ruler of Seleukid Empire to the Mauryan Empire, collected a lot of details on India during his sojourn for several years at Pataliputra, the capital of the Mauryans and brought out his famous work *Indika*. This served as an authoritative and exhaustive source of knowledge about India for the Greeks especially during the period when contact with India was totally interrupted on account of the defeat of the Greek Seleukid king by the Parthians, nomadic tribes from North East Iran in 248 BCE. The Parthian rulers (248 BCE–226 A.D) obstructed the trans-Asiatic traffic via land route.

Later, Alexandria became the seat of the Ptolemaic Kingdom, and quickly grew to be one of the greatest cities of the Hellenistic world. Ptolemy I, Soter, one of the body guards of Alexander the Great founded the Ptolemaic dynasty in 305 BCE and it lasted till the death of Cleopatra VII and the Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE.³⁵ Commercial relations with India which remained rather weak during the Ptolemaic period of Egypt became stronger. The most remarkable and visible effect of *Pax Romana*³⁶ was the spurt in external trade especially with India.³⁷ Octavian, later known as Augustus (27 BCE–14 CE), the first Emperor of the Roman Empire promoted trade with India. It was reported by Strabo³⁸ that during the reign of Augustus as the Roman Emperor, up to 120 ships set sail every year from the Egyptian ports of the Red sea regions to India.³⁹ The constant contacts of the merchants from the Roman Empire with India, prompted the well-known Roman poet Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65 to 27 BCE), known to the English as Horace, to write that the “diligent merchant with a view to fleeing from poverty travels through sea to remote India.”⁴⁰ Pliny the Elder (c.23–79 CE) qualifies Muziris on the Malabar coast situated in the vicinity of Cranganore, the haven of the Roman merchants with the epithet “*primum emporium Indiae*”(premier emporium of India). He writes:

They sail with the wind Hippalus in forty days to the first emporium of India, Muziris. Besides, the station for ships is at a great distance from the shore and cargoes have to be landed and shipped to little boats. There reigned there, when I wrote this, Calobotras.⁴¹

The Greco-Roman merchants started their voyage to India from Alexandria in Egypt which was one of the four or five largest cities in the Roman Empire. It housed the body of Alexander the Great embalmed in honey inside a transparent glass sarcophagus. It was connected with Muziris on coastal Malabar through a long distance international trade route.

Small Egyptian boats known as *feluccas* hoisted with two lateen sails carried cargo, crew, and passengers from Alexandria through the Nile with the help of north winds to the Nile port of Koptos. The traffic from Koptos was arranged with the help of caravans moving through the desert to Berenike, on the Red Sea coast, about 380 kilometers to the southeast of Koptos. Often the caravan consisted of twenty-two or so camels and the distance from Koptos to Berenike was covered in twelve days.⁴²

This port town of Berenike was established in 275 BCE. Spices brought from the East to Berenike were carried to Coptos on Nile by caravans and from there to Alexandria. It turned out to be the principal point of communication between Europe and India. Among the unexpected discoveries at Berenike were a range of ancient Indian goods, including a large quantity of teak wood, black pepper, coconuts, beads made of precious and semi-precious stones, cameo blanks, a Tamil Brahmi graffito, etc. A holding of 7.55 kgs of black pepper corns was stored in one of the containers devoid of wooden lid, suggesting widespread use of pepper in the city throughout the early to late Roman periods as well as the shipment of pepper to the Roman Empire through Berenike.⁴³ There were several forts (*praesidia*) manned by soldiers along the route providing accommodation for a few dozens of people.⁴⁴ These forts were designed to control the desert routes and their precious water supplies. The passengers travelling with their goods through the desert with the help of camels after reaching Berenike, situated on the coast of the Red Sea, had to look for ships bound for Qana in southern Arabia, a peninsula jutting out into the Indian Ocean, since there was no non-stop sailing between Egypt and India during the period of the Romans.⁴⁵

Besides Berenike, Myos Hormos, north of Berenike, a Red Sea port constructed by the Ptolemies around the third century BCE also served as an important port from where ships left for India. This port according to the findings from the excavations conducted by David Peacock and Lucy Blue of the University of Southampton, was located on the present-day site of Quseir al-Quadim, eight kms north of the modern town of Al-Qusayr in Egypt. A large number of ships bound to India during the time of Emperor Augustus is reported to have left for India according to Strabo⁴⁶.

There were a few stops along the African coast in between Berenike and Qana. The first of the stops was at Ptolemaic Epitheron, the next Adulis, the major Red Sea port of the kingdom of Axum⁴⁷ and Ocelis.⁴⁸

There were two harbors at Qana. Ships plying the routes between India and Berenike, between Qana and the Persian Gulf and between Indian Ocean coast of Africa and southern India touched Qana from where valuable products like frankincense could be obtained. The consignments were unloaded from the vessels coming from Berenike and re-loaded on the vessel proceeding to Muziris or Broach (Barygaza), a great port town on coastal Gujarat described as a great center of trade by the anonymous author of *Periplus of Eritrean Sea* (written probably in 60 CE) or Muziris on the Malabar coast. The voyage from Qana to Muziris took forty days.⁴⁹ Vessels bound for Puduke (Pondicherry, precisely Areekamedu on the bank of Aryankuppam River on the Bay of Bengal) proceeded around Taprobane.⁵⁰

Evidently the propulsion of the ships to and from India in those days was done by harnessing the force of winds, especially seasonal and intercontinental ones known as monsoons, namely south west monsoon and north east monsoon. The writer of the *Periplus of the Eritrean Sea* credited Hippalus, a Greek navigator and merchant who probably lived in the first century BCE with discovering the direct route from the Red Sea to India over the Indian Ocean by plotting the scheme of the sea and the correct location of the trade ports along the Indian coast. Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE), the author of *Historia Naturalis*, claimed that Hippalus, discovered not the route but the monsoon wind also called *Hippalus* (the south-west monsoon) wind. This trade route allowed sailing vessels to run before the wind from the mouth of the Arabian Sea to the southern ports of India during the summer, and return with the winter monsoon during the first century. His stature as a skilful navigator is associated with the riches of this discovery brought to Rome and the western world at the time.

It was to this India, connected with the Mediterranean regions chiefly through water ways and known all over the world for years together before the birth of Jesus Christ, that St Thomas the Apostle planned to reach and preach the Good News as commanded by his Master. As mentioned elsewhere in this study, the Parthian rulers (284 BCE–226 AD) blocked the trans-Asiatic traffic via land route from Jerusalem and the Mediterranean world especially Alexandria to India and so the passage was chiefly and most probably through the searoute alone during this period. This helps us emphasize the maritime passage from the Mediterranean ports to India whether northwestern or south western coast. So, St Thomas at the command from Jesus Christ to preach the Good News even to the ends of the Earth had to opt for the sea route to India commencing from Alexandria which was frequented by merchants trading between Broach and Muziris on the western coast of India on one side and Alexandria on the other.

Alexandria had another attraction for St Thomas. Besides being a great center of knowledge, it was also home to the largest Jewish community in the ancient world. The *Septuagint*, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the *Torah* and other writings), was produced here. Jews occupied two of the city's five quarters and worshipped at synagogues. In view of the practice followed by the Apostles right from the beginning, he would get an opportunity to preach the Good News to the Jews first and then proceed to India through the sea-route traversed by the Greco-Roman merchants.

Reiterating and reconfirming the basic fact that history is reconstructed by making use of various sources or historical facts, a number of historians have proved indubitably that St Thomas preached the Good News to people of India and brought them to Christian faith in the first century CE, much before the developed countries of the West received it. They re-affirmed that Christianity is an Asian religion originated in Asia and spread to various parts of Europe and the wider world. Their arguments rest on a number of historical evidences.

We do not have any historical documents of the first century CE regarding the Indian apostolate of St Thomas. The absence of contemporary sources is compensated by a host of other evidences in the light of which historians can fill up the gap as they are reasonably entitled to. Right from the beginning of the twentieth century, a few historians based on archaeological and near-contemporary literary sources, numismatic as well as epigraphic evidences proved that St Thomas the apostle started his mission first in the north-western parts of India currently falling in the political region of Pakistan and secondly in south India.

I Apostolate of Saint Thomas in North West of ancient India

There are a few literary and archaeological sources that help us throw considerable light on the apostolate of St Thomas in the North Western India which now falls in Pakistan. Recent researches fix the period of the visit to and activities of St Thomas in the kingdom of Gondaphares, the Indo-Parthian king with his headquarters at Taxila between 44 and 45 CE before the invasion of Kushans.⁵¹ J.N. Farquhar is of the opinion that St Thomas reached Taxila probably around 48 or 49 CE⁵².

1) Literary sources

a) *Acts of Thomas*

The most widely known literary source used by scholars writing on the apostolate of St Thomas in India and especially South India is *Acts of Thomas*⁵³, known also as the *Acts of Judas Thomas (AJT)*. The contents of this work can be compared with those in the other four ancient *Acts* viz, those of Paul, John, Peter, and Andrew. According to the opinion of most of the scholars, it was originally written in Syriac language in the third century CE and the complete version is found in Greek and Syriac. Recent researches place its origin in the period between 225/230 and 250 C.E written in Syriac in a Syriac milieu at Edessa, a city in Northern Mesopotamia well before the origin of Manichaeism.⁵⁴ The researchers on *AJT* have come to the conclusion that *AJT* in its original form was written as a manual of instructions for visitors to the shrine of St Thomas in Edessa. It is further held that the remains of the Apostle were taken to Edessa from India by a Jewish Christian of Edessa during the third century CE in a wooden case.⁵⁵ St Ephrem (347–420 CE) the famous historian and theologian writing from Edessa attests clearly that the body of the Apostle was taken from India to Edessa. The *Acts of Judas Thomas* in its present form consists of 12 acts related to the apostolic activities of St Thomas in Barukacha, Taxila, and South India starting with the assignment of different countries to different apostles and ending with his martyrdom in south India.

Apostolate of St Thomas in North India was brought to the notice of the public in 1905 by Adolf E. Medlycott, Anglo-Indian Catholic Bishop of Trichur (1887–1896) who derived his conclusion from the apocryphal work, *Acts of Judas Thomas* and the coins of Gudnaphar discovered from Kabul, Kandahar, Seistan, and Western and Southern Punjab since 1834.⁵⁶ This opinion was shared by Joseph Dahlmann.⁵⁷ The name of King Gondaphares appears in the Syriac text of *AJT* as *Gudnaphar* while in the Greek version as *Goundaforos*. Archaeological, numismatic, and epigraphic evidences have identified Gondophares as the king of North Western part of ancient India now in the political segment known as Pakistan. He was an Indo-Parthian ruler with an Iranian name having his capital at Taxila during the period from 21 to 51 CE. Taxila at that time

had an international fame being the seat of the Buddhist University and Jain centres of learning. Different international trade routes met at Taxila. Well travelled caravan routes connected Taxila with the central Asiatic markets from Kashagar to Kandahar. It was further linked to Mathura and Pataliputra by the grand route first noticed by Megasthenes. A network of roads connected Pataliputra with cities like Savvatthi, Kosambi, Champa, Tamralipti, Varanasi, Mathura, and Vidisha. Another important route connected Mathura with Ujjain. The great royal highway connecting Taxila and Pataliputra, two great centers of trade and civilization in India had a branch to Barygaza from Mathura via Ujjain. The anonymous author of *Periplus* makes mention of the searoute connecting these regions.⁵⁸

Alphonse Mingana (1878–1937), of the John Rylands Library argued that “the main Christian penetration of India seems to have been by sea towards the west and north-west, and it is that side of Indian Christianity that withstood in later generations the many vicissitudes which, from the tenth century downwards, have completely destroyed its less fortunate sister Church in the North.”⁵⁹

J.N. Farquhar,⁶⁰ in his lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester in October 1925, speaks of the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, qualified by him as a clear piece of fiction. But, in the light of other corroborative evidences he sifted the historical facts found in the *Acts of Judas Thomas* and affirmed the North Indian apostolate of St. Thomas. In other words, he rightly used the literary work as an auxiliary source for the reconstruction of history. He indicates the route from Alexandria to Taxila most probably taken by St Thomas. The passage from Alexandria through the Nile to Koptos took eleven days and from there by land route to Myos Hormos for seven days. The voyage by sea from Myos Hormos in early May ends at Okelis, the last part on the eastern side of the Red Sea early June. After a few days’ sailing, the vessel would come out of the Gulf of Aden exposing the passengers to the seasonal wind from south west (South West Monsoon) in those days. By the middle of July, the vessel would reach Pattala (Thatta) at the mouth of the Indus River in modern Pakistan. The passage from there continues by suitable boats through the Indus River for about 1300 miles to Attock, where the railway to Peshawar crosses the Indus. The next leg of the passage to the south east for some forty miles would end in Taxila about the middle of August.⁶¹

In other words, the names of the places found in *AJT* were corroborated by the archaeological evidences. In the recent past, scholarly investigation has been conducted in the history of the arrival of St. Thomas in Northwest India making use of the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, the coins bearing the legend of Gundaphares, and the lithic (stone) inscription discovered in Takht-i-Bahi against the backdrop of the history of ancient India. Historical importance of *Acts of Judas Thomas* is brought out by using archaeological, numismatic, and epigraphic evidences.

Archaeological evidence

Archaeological excavations were conducted by Hergrew from 1912 to 1930 in Sirkap, which is known in history as Taxila, situated 36 kms away from Rawalpindi in Pakistan under the supervision of Sir John Marshall. Mortimer Wheeler and his colleagues excavated further parts of Taxila in 1944 and 1945. The findings brought out a lot of information confirming the fact that it was the headquarters of the Indo-Parthian king Gundaphares during his reign from 21 to 51 CE. The name of the king is found in *AJT*⁶². Taxila was known to the wider world as the city of India. Internal evidences in the text of *AJT* also show that Taxila must have been the city meant by the author.⁶³ “There are many circumstantial internal and external evidences in the *AJT* itself to assume that the author had Taxila in his mind when he wrote about the kingdom of Gudnaphar. The apostle met the king in the royal palace, which according to the *AJT* was well inside the city walls.”⁶⁴ J.N. Farquhar who visited the archaeological site of Taxila gives a vivid narration of the place,⁶⁵

Numismatic evidences

It was reported by General Alexander Cunningham in 1854 that in the preceding twenty-five years no less than thirty thousand coins bearing Greek and Indian legends had been found in Afghanistan and Punjab.⁶⁶ A portion of the horde belonged to the reign of Scythian conquerors and of Parthian kings like those of Gondophares who had become masters of these territories.⁶⁷

The name of Gundaphares found in the *AJT* as a historical person who ruled from Taxila has been clearly and convincingly proved by the study of the coins discovered from Punjab, which further confirms the historical nature of *AJT*. Coins bearing the name of Gondophares from the Kabul Province in 1834 were discovered by Charles Masson alias James

Lewis (1800–1853). The inscription on one side of the coin was in Greek and in *Karoshti* on the other side. *Karoshti* was the form of writing in the North West India. This could be Prakrit, the ancient form of Sanskrit or something having its origin from Aramaic. The name of the king in Greek on the obverses of the coins appears as Gondophares, Gondaphares, and Undophares, The legend on the reverse side in *Karoshti* script gives the name as Gudaphara, Gadaphara, or Gudaphana.⁶⁸

More coins were found in successive years from Kabul, Kandahar, Seistan, and Western and Southern Punjab. The coins are preserved in different museums and libraries like the British Museum, Bibliotheque National de Paris, Berlin Museum, Lahore Museum, and National Museum, Kolkata. Some of these coins besides his name bear the names of his family members too. The scientific analysis revealed that these coins were minted in the first half of the first century CE at the behest of the then ruler Gondophares. They can be dated to the period between 10 and 40 CE. The discovery makes it clear that Gondophares was the ruler of the area and references to him in the *AJT* renders its historical value stronger.⁶⁹

M. Reinaud for the first time in 1848 drew the attention of the scholars to the connection between the coins of Gondophares and *AJT*.⁷⁰ This discovery proves the historicity of Gondophares and his family members. Medlycott supports the North Indian Apostolate of St Thomas. The king Gondophares of the *AJT* could be none other than the Gondophares of the Indian coins. So, there is nothing legendary and mythical in the story of the *AJT* as far as the name of the king is concerned, argues Kurikilamkatt.⁷¹

Epigraphic evidence.

a) Takht-i-Bahi inscription

A piece of stone with inscriptions was discovered at Takht-i-Bahi village a little north East of Peshawar in 1864/1872 by H.W.Bellow. It was kept in Lahore museum. Cunningham who studied the inscription gave the following reading. “In the 26th year of the great king Guduphara, in the *samvat* year three and one hundred (repeated in figures 100+3 =103) in the month of *Vaisakh*, on the 4th day for his own religious interest and the religious merit of his mother and father.”⁷² Those who made serious studies on the inscription agree that the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Gondophares and the 103rd year of the *Samvat* is one and the same and 103rd year of *Samvat* is 46 CE which was the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Gondophares. This calculation helps us conclude that Gondaphares became the king in 21 CE. After examining the comments of General Cunningham, Dowson, M. Senart, member of the Institut de France, Rapson and Vincent A. Smith on the inscription, Medlycott concludes that the Takht-i-Bahi inscription is of 46 CE and the beginning of the reign of Gondophares falls in 21 CE.⁷³ Medlycott concludes: “We maintain there is every reason to conclude that the Apostle Thomas had entered King Gondophares’ dominion in the course of his apostolic career.”⁷⁴ According to the recent studies on the North Indian Apostolate of St Thomas, the Apostle Thomas visited the kingdom of Gondophares sometime around 44–45 CE and the King died in 51 CE.⁷⁵ The Kushan dynasty, the famous ruler of which was Kanishka began to rule the area held under the sway of Gondaphares from 51 CE.⁷⁶

b) Udaipur temple inscription

There is an inscription in one of the Udaipur temples in the Madhya Pradesh now in the catholic diocese of Sagar. Scientific analysis of the inscription on the wall of the temple placed the date of original church in Udaipur as 78 CE which would prove the existence of a Christian community there by 78CE.⁷⁷ The origin of the community is traced back to the preaching of St Thomas in India.

Other material evidences for the north Indian Apostolate of St Thomas

a) Taxila Cross

A cross was discovered in 1935 from the ancient city of Sirkap where the palace of the King Gondaphares once stood. This provides evidence for the presence of Christianity at the archaeological site in ancient times. Farquhar using the data collected from the excavations conducted in ancient Taxila under the supervision of Sir John Marshall affirmed in 1926 that there is some reason to believe that the Apostle Thomas sailed from Alexandria with Habban, the merchant of King Gudnaphar, to the Indus and reached the king’s Indian capital, Taxila probably 48 or 49 AD.⁷⁸

b) Ancient Christian communities in Tatta and Islamabad

i) Christian communities in Tatta

Remnants of Christian communities are found in Tatta and its environs in Sind in Pakistan as proved by Kurikilamkatt. Some Fakirs both in northern and southern parts of Sind with their headquarters at Tatta claim to be the followers of St. Thomas, *Thum Bhagat i.e.*, of Thomas the Saint. They are reported to be practising Christian rites and claim to possess a book which they call Gospel of Matthew.⁷⁹ The investigations conducted by Rev. A. Trotter, suggest that they call themselves *Bar Thoma*.

ii) Descendants of the converts of St Thomas near Taxila

Attempting to establish the fact that there are descendants of the converts of St. Thomas, in North West India, Kurikilamkatt, refers to a village near Taxila in the district of Islamabad, which is called *Gar Thoma*. Some Christians and Muslims in this village are devotees of St. Thomas.⁸⁰

c) Christianity in Barygaza

The Syriac version of *AJT* makes mention of Sandruck Mahosa as the port of disembarkation of St Thomas who left Alexandria for India while the Greek version names it Andrapolis. Based on a serious study on *AJT* and the details provided in the anonymous work of *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, a scholar asserts that it was Barygaza on the Gujarat coast where the Apostle disembarked.⁸¹ He contends that the Andrapolis meant the city of Andhra, Barygaza being the royal city and port of the Andhra dynasty of the Satkarni kings. The term Satkarni, according to him, must have been the root from where the expression Sandruck or Sandruck Mahosa comes. *Periplus*, moreover, makes mention of only Barygaza where girls of Jewish origin were brought to the kings as gifts. *AJT* refers to the Jewish girl dancing at the banquet organized by the king. The Andhra dynasty came to an end in 225 CE around which the *AJT* was composed. Therefore the author of *AJT* must have this city of the Satkarni kings in mind while he wrote of Sandruck or Andrapolis.⁸² Barygaza is situated at the banks of Narbada from where there was accessibility by sea to the river Indus and then to Taxila. There was also a land route connecting Barygaza with the capital of Gondophares. The great royal highway connecting Taxila and Pataliputra (modern Patna) situated on the banks of the river Ganges had a branch stretching from Mathura via Ujjain to Barygaza located on the banks of the river Narbada.

St. Thomas on his arrival at Barygaza established contacts with the king as mentioned in Act I of the *AJT*. He met a Jewish flute-girl entertaining the guests at the residence of the local ruler who organized a grand party in connection with the wedding of his only daughter. The cupbearer of the king smote the apostle on his cheek probably since he did not take part in the banquet and remained unaffected by, and indifferent to, the celebrations. A lion rent the cupbearer and tore him limb from limb when he went out to fetch water. His right hand was dragged off by a black dog as pronounced by the Apostle while he was smitten. The news about the miraculous event spread to many people. Convinced of the divine power in the apostle, the flute-girl, the newlywed couple, the royal household, and a few people accepted the apostle as the envoy of Christ though the *AJT* does not give any indication about direct conversion to Christianity. However, it can be reasonably assumed that the apostle commissioned to preach the Good News took the first opportunity on entering into the Barygaza, the gateway to India, to bring a few people in Barygaza to Christ, his master. Therefore recent researchers identify the few Christians found in Barygaza by Jordanus of Severac in 1321 as the followers of those converted to Christianity by St Thomas, the apostle.⁸³

George Nedungatt, while dealing with the mission of St. Thomas in North West India, says that there are a number of coincidences which compel one to accept the mission of St. Thomas to Taxila or the kingdom of Gondophares. The reign of the King Gondophares corresponded precisely to the period of the post-Pentecostal mission of the apostles so that the visit of St. Thomas to the king clicks into place chronologically. Besides, according to the tradition in vogue in Kerala, St. Thomas landed in Kodungalloor (Muziris) in 52 CE, a year after the death of Gondophares in 51 CE. This chronological sequence could not have been invented by any fake tradition. Further, this period coincides with the invasion of Kushans causing wide-spread devastation which must have compelled St. Thomas to move out. Finally, the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:6, 22) took place about 50 CE in which all the apostles participated. According to the tradition, St. Thomas too was present at the council.⁸⁴ Thus Nedungatt is in full agreement with the opinion about the north Indian mission of St. Thomas.

Benedict Vadakkekkara furnishes a host of quotations supporting the north Indian mission of St. Thomas based on the *AJT*, coins bearing the names of Gondophares, Gad, his brother and successor, and the Takht-i-Bahi inscription.⁸⁵ He seems to endorse the opinion about the North Indian apostolate of St. Thomas and says that the *AJT* makes it clear that St. Thomas

moved from there to the South probably after the death of Gundaphares. He makes reference to the apocryphal work, *De Transitu Mariae*, a very ancient Christian writing, where it is mentioned that Apostle Thomas from his mission at Taxila was summoned to be present at the bedside of Blessed Virgin in her last moments.⁸⁶He concludes: “Hence the acceptance of a mission of Apostle Thomas to North West India, instead of undermining in any way the tradition of the Indian Christians, actually endorses it.”⁸⁷

Benedict Vadakkekara writes:

Until recent times, it was objected that the name of the King Gondaphares could not be Indian, and that it was urged that no historian had ever spoken of a king of that name. In fact, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the name was to be found no where outside the legend. Thus the discovery of coins minted in Gondopharnes’ name provides further credibility to at least some of the circumstances in the *Acta Thomae*.⁸⁸

St.Thomas is said to have directed his attention to Gondopharnes’ kingdom on account of the Jewish presence there.⁸⁹ Jewish influence was so great there that even a special script originated in those districts, denominated *Karoshti* script, which is derived from the Hebrew script. The script was officially used during the whole of the first century CE. The coins of the Greek, Scythian, and Parthian kings bear inscriptions in Greek and *Karoshti* scripts, the language of the later inscriptions being nevertheless in Sanskrit

George Mark Moraes based on *AJT*, epigraphic and numismatic evidences deals with the mission of St.Thomas in Punjab, the region under Gondophares. He goes to the extent of establishing the possibility of the conversion of the king to Christianity. But he says that the port of disembarkation namely, Sandaruk—Andranopolis cannot be identified.⁹⁰ Similarly, T.K.Joseph, who devoted fifty years of his life for the investigation of the history of the St. Thomas Christians while decrying his mission to Malabar and the South, supports strongly the north Indian apostolate of St.Thomas. A.M.Mundadan cursorily states: “In support of the early Christianization of North India, we do not have any actual vestiges as we do for South India.”⁹¹

Kurikilamkattt concludes: “All these elements enable us to establish the mission of the apostle Thomas in North India as an event that has tangible historical results in the country. So now the *AJT* can also be considered a book having a historical nucleus, a fact which really adds weight to our findings. The *AJT* is historical in the sense that it was composed during a certain period and in a historical place and had based its story on historical places, persons and events.”⁹²Finally it is concluded that the “North Indian tradition about the mission of Thomas in India is both valid and historical.”

The Kushans started attacking the king of Gondophares somewhere near 50 CE though the exact date is not available to the students of history. But it is clear from inscriptions that Gondaphares was reigning the kingdom in 45 CE and that the Kushan rulers were supreme in this region in 64.CE.⁹³ So, it is assumed that St Thomas left the kingdom of Gondophares circa 50 CE and took part in the synod of Jerusalem held in 50 CE.⁹⁴

II. Apostolate of St Thomas in South India

A short discussion on the relation between the Mediterranean world and the Malabar coast before the Christian or Common era is considered to be an appropriate step to set the backdrop for the study of the apostolate of St Thomas in south India.

Muziris on the Malabar coast was closely connected to the Mediterranean regions especially through Alexandria. This became all the more important after the annexation of Egypt to the Roman Empire in 30 BCE consequent upon the battle of Actium on 2 September, 31 BCE. The ongoing trade in spices available on the western coast of India was augmented by leaps and bounds. The fact that Roman merchants used to come to India for trade fleeing the poverty they experienced in their land even before the Christian era was acknowledged by a well-known Roman poet, Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65 BCE–27 BCE) as seen above. Barbaricum (Barbarikon, a port near Karachi) and Barygaza (Broach) on the north western coast of India and Naura, Tyndis, Muziris, Nelcynda, and Becare on the Malabar coast were some of the ports with which the merchants from the Roman Empire had vibrant commercial relations.

As Pliny the Elder (c.23–79 CE) qualifies, Muziris was the premier emporium of India (*Primum emporium Indiae*).⁹⁵ It was a haven of vessels from various parts of the world as reported by the anonymous author of *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*.⁹⁶ Some historians making use of the classical works of Strabo, Pliny, Tacitus, Ptolemy and sources like *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* and the Peutingerian table related to the Roman Empire in Greek and Latin brought to light the details of trade

between Imperial Rome and India. The study of the Vienna Papyrus or *Papyrus Vindobonensis* G.40822 brings to light the details of commercial contacts between Muziris and the Mediterranean regions. This papyrus contains a commercial contract regarding the transport of goods from Muziris to the Red Sea, then on to Coptos and across the Nile to Alexandria.⁹⁷ Warmington worked on the commerce between the Roman Empire and India from a western point of view covering the period from the victory of Augustus Octavian (ruling from 29 BCE to 14 CE) up to the death of Marcus Aurelius (16–80 CE).⁹⁸ Strabo, writing during the time of Augustus states that 120 ships left for the East every year from the Egyptian port of Myos Hormos.⁹⁹ Wheeler in his *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers* speaks of Indian merchants going to Egypt occasionally and Greek merchants from there coming to India now and then for carrying pepper and other spices, especially pepper to Egypt in the second century BCE and affirms that pepper from South India reached the Mediterranean in considerable volume in the early part of the first century BCE.¹⁰⁰ He used references in the *Sangam* literature to speak of the import of gold to Muziris and export of pepper in exchange.¹⁰¹ H.G. Rawlinson underlines the favorable milieu in the Roman Empire for development of international maritime trade after the annexation of Egypt to the Roman Empire in 30 CE. Piracy was put down and the trade routes were made safe as a result of *Pax Romana* on account of which demand for oriental luxuries increased in an hitherto unprecedented manner. Based on the writings of Pliny, he highlights the great demand in the Roman Empire for pepper which was sold at the astounding price of 15 *denarii* a pound even in the days of Pliny.¹⁰² He refers to Pliny again on the grievance of the Romans for the drain of gold to India, China and Arabia.¹⁰³ Muziris of the classical writers is located in the lower Periyar basin not far from the Arabian Sea, as indicated in the Latin, Greek, and Tamil sources. According to them Muziris is situated on the bank of River Periyar, slightly away from the seashore. It is further added that the cargoes for the import had to be unloaded from the Ocean-going ships onto smaller vessels that could carry the goods through the river to Muziris and commodities of export also had to be loaded into such vessels for transfer to the big vessel anchored in the sea. As in the case of Arikamedu, the well-known Roman settlement in ancient times, Muziris was not on the seashore, but on the banks of a river opening into the sea. The fourth-century Peutingerian table also points out the location of Muziris. Excavations conducted under the auspices of Kerala Council of Historical Research under the Muziris project have thrown open the working hypothesis that Pattanam, situated 2 km north of Parur in Vadakkekara village in the district of Ernakulam, Kerala, 8 kms south of Kodungalloor, could be the lost Muziris of international fame. These excavations were done on a regular basis during the period from 2007, to 2013 annually. Large amount of artifacts which support the contact with the Mediterranean regions were collected from the site. The fact that this site as well as Maliankara is located in the same land mass surrounded by the branches of River Periyar falling into the Arabian Sea could buttress the local tradition regarding the landing of St Thomas at Maliankara in 52 CE..

A host of references to the apostolate of St Thomas in South India are available to the inquisitive and unbiased minds such as archaeological evidence, near contemporary literary sources, ballads in circulation in Kerala, and long standing tradition

1) Archaeological evidence

Archaeological evidences are profusely employed by historians for the reconstruction of history and so the scholars like George Nedungatt lay great emphasis on the existence of the tomb of St Thomas in Mylapore, Madras to prove his apostolate in South India.

i) It is remarkable that the tomb in Mylapore is the only one the world over which is claimed and venerated as the tomb of St Thomas. Another important point to be underlined is that the St Thomas Christians of Malabar (Kerala) have never ventured to claim the tomb in their own land. This adds strength to the argument based on the existence of the tomb.

ii) St. Ephrem (306–373), born in Nisibis in Turkey and died in Edessa, very clearly mentions that St. Thomas worked, died, and was buried in India from where his relics were shifted by a merchant in a casket to Edessa, known in modern times as Urfa, located in Sanliurfa Province in the Southeast Anatolia Region of Turkey.¹⁰⁴ St. Jerome (ca 345–419/420) makes mention of his death in Calaminain, India¹⁰⁶

A number of the Fathers of Eastern and Western or Latin Churches make mention of the burial of the body of St. Thomas in India and the subsequent transfer of the relics from here to Edessa. Gregory of Tours (538–594) makes it very clear that St Thomas was buried in India and later the relics were shifted to Edessa.¹⁰⁷

iii) Several pilgrims from various parts of the world flocked to Mylapore to obtain blessings from the Saint interred there. Bishop Ambrose of Milan (337–397) makes mention of the pilgrimage of Museum, Bishop of Dolni while St. Gregory of Tours refers to a certain Theodore who went on pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas in India.¹⁰⁸ Anglo-Saxon Chronicles recorded in 883 CE that King Alfred the Great of England sent Swithhelm, the future bishop of Sherbone and Aethelstan with votive offerings to St. Thomas at his tomb in India.¹⁰⁹ The pilgrimage of the foreigners to Mylapore continued through the centuries and we have the names of widely known visitors like Marco Polo (1293), Franciscan Friar John of Monte Corvini (1292–1293), Bishop John de Marignoli (1349), and Nicolo di Conti (1430).

The Portuguese who established their headquarters of the Asiatic possessions in Cochin in 1505 and heard about the importance of Malacca as far as the international sea-borne trade was concerned extended their interest to the South East Asian regions and also the Coromandel coast. In the course of their activities in this region, they came to know about the existence of the tomb of St. Thomas and the house in his name in Mylapore. On the way back from Malacca, Diogo Fernandes, Bastião Fernandes, and other Portuguese officers got the information in 1517 about the tomb of St. Thomas from the Armenians residing in Pulicatt, near Mylapore namely Coje Escander and his companions. These Portuguese persons at the invitation extended by the Armenians visited the tomb.¹¹⁰ Portuguese king Dom Manuel I (1495–1521) after obtaining the details about the tomb in Mylapore instructed his officials in India to make detailed inquiries about the tomb. A few of the Portuguese after detailed information regarding the place visited the tomb in 1521, knelt before the tomb, made confessions, prayed and participated in the holy mass celebrated in the chapel containing the tomb of St. Thomas on the feast of the Corpus Christi. Gaspar Correa who was in the service of the Portuguese in India for over half a century or so and authored the *Lendas da India*, was one among those who made a pilgrimage to the tomb along with Pero Lopes de Sampayo.¹¹¹

King John III (1521–1557), the son of Dom Manuel I followed up the instruction of his father. He collected more details from Dom Duarte de Meneses who later became the governor in India (1522–1524). St. Thomas was adopted as the patron of the Portuguese possessions in India. The Portuguese Governor Dom Duarte de Meneses (1522–1524) at the instruction of the king, appointed in 1522 Manuel de Frias as the captain and factor of the Coromandel coast along with Father Alvaro Penteado and asked them to repair the house of St. Thomas in Mylapore with a view to celebrating holy mass there. But Penteado returned to Portugal without accomplishing the work entrusted to him. So a certain cleric Pero Fernandes was appointed by the captain as the chaplain of the house. Later a priest by name Antonio Gil was appointed to take up the work of renovation of the house. While doing the excavation, they came across the relics of the saint along with an iron lance. At the request of Antonio Gil, Manuel de Frias made a casket available to keep the relics which were with great care placed in it. It was kept under the altar. A solemn procession with great devotion was organized. Further enquires were made by the Portuguese governor Nuno da Cunha (1529–1538) and few more attempts were made to confirm their findings. The Portuguese authorities being convinced of the genuineness of the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore, and his apostolate in India, besides declaring him as the patron of the Portuguese possessions in India, named fortresses after his name¹¹², christened a vessel *Santhome* and issued a gold coin *Santhome*.

In course of time further excavations were conducted in Mylapore like those in 1523, 1524, 1729, 1893–1896, 1903 and 1970. While Nedungatt after resolving the Calamina riddle¹¹³ and at the same time, being aware of the absence of modern and technical sophistications of archaeological excavations in the sixteenth century, attaches great emphasis to the unrivaled tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore as strong evidence for proving the apostolate of St. Thomas in India¹¹⁴ Benedict Vadakkekara, a historian from Kerala itself sets aside its importance and discredits the efforts of the Portuguese.¹¹⁵

Another strong archaeological evidence for the genuineness of the tomb is the use of bricks baked in the first century CE for the lowest strata of the tomb at Mylapore. They are of the same quality and size (15.5 inches of length, 8 inches of breadth, and 3 inches of height) as those used in the construction of the Roman establishments in Arikamedu during the second half of the first century CE owing their origin to Italian manufacture as revealed through the archaeological excavation scientifically conducted by Mortimer Wheeler and his associates. The merchant vessels from the Roman Empire used to carry bricks as ballast. So, it is assumed by the scholars that the tomb at Mylapore was constructed almost during the same period, i.e., first century CE and this is confirmed by the tradition regarding the martyrdom of St. Thomas in 72 CE.

Nedungatt, basing his arguments also on the validity of positive, uniform, and constant tradition for the reconstruction of history as held by Benedict Vadakkekara, strongly affirms that the existence of the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore is a proof

for the apostolate of St Thomas in south India. The conclusion regarding the tomb put forward by Nedungatt seems to be convincing.¹¹⁶ Nedungatt adds:

The relics of the Apostle Thomas were venerated at Edessa in the fourth century. This is historically certain. And Edessa itself proclaimed through its mouthpiece, Ephrem, the Harp of the Spirit “that those relics were brought there from India. If so, the quest for the historical Thomas, the Apostle of India, can be terminated here, giving the true value to the Indian tradition that the Apostle died a martyr’s death at Mylapore and was buried there in a tomb that has not ceased to attract pilgrims from antiquity down the centuries.”¹¹⁷

He suggests that Calamina could be a variant of *Cholamannu*, a Tamil-Malayalam word indicating the land of the Cholas where the tomb of the Apostle was known to be located.¹¹⁸

In the West, from the time of the *Acts of Judas Thomas* there has been a tradition locating the Apostle’s tomb in India. But it was Mar Solomon (Metropolitan of Perath-Maishan Ca.1222 CE) who first cited this tradition pinpointing Mylapore in India as the place of the tomb.

Habban, the merchant, brought his body, and laid it in Edessa, the blessed city of Our Lord. If ever the tomb’s genuineness had been suspected or if the community’s unanimous consensus had been wanting, there would have cropped up “rival tombs” or rival traditions. It does not otherwise make sense why a people who have always been natives of Malabar should consider a spot in a remote and alien land as their hallowed place.¹¹⁹

A.C. Perumalil refers to the removal of the relics of the Apostle from Mylapore by the ruler of Vijayanagar in 1559 and the return of the same to Mylapore after some time. He writes that half of the relics and the spear-head were taken away by Fr. Lopo d’Almeida who gave them to Dom Jorge Temudo, bishop of Cochin. Later on Bishop Dom Frei Andre de Santa Maria gave the relics to the church of St.Thomas in Goa¹²⁰.

Georg Schurhammer SJ summarizes the findings conveniently. “The main building in Arikamedu was built in the second half of the first century A.D. . . . but it was abandoned before the end of that century because of flooding. A close study of the measurements of the bricks of this building has shown that they are identical with those of the apostle’s tomb at Mylapore. . . . According to the tradition of the Thomas Christians the martyrdom of the Apostle Thomas took place in the year 72. This coincides with the dating of the bricks of the tomb and of the Roman warehouse at Arikamedu in the second half of the first century.”¹²¹

Against the opinion that the tomb in Mylapore was forged, Adolph Medlycott writes: “If the claim of Mylapore to be the place of the martyrdom and of the burial of the apostle was not based on undeniable fact, the Christians of Malabar would never have acknowledged their neighbour’s claim to hold the tomb of the apostle, neither would they ever be induced to frequent it by way of pilgrimage. Had this been a case of a fictitious claim put forth to secure public notoriety and importance, they would as probably have, any way, set up one for themselves, and would have certainly ignored the claim of the former”

The cross with Pahlavi inscription in the tomb of St Thomas also points to the antiquity of the site as a Christian shrine. Pahlavi was the official language of Persia during the Sassanian dynasty (227–651 A.D) and, thereafter it went out of use. Hence, this cross with its inscription could have been made only when Pahlavi was still a current language, i.e., before the middle of the seventh century. It is noteworthy that when the *Acta Thomae* situates St.Thomas’ mission field in the kingdom of Gondopharnes in North-west India, it does not attempt to locate his tomb there.

Bishop Gregory of Tours(A.D.538- 594)in his work, *Gloria Martyrum* writes : Thomas the Apostle, according to the narrative of his martyrdom, is stated to have suffered in India. His holy Remains (corpus), after a long interval of time, were removed to the city of Edessa in Syria and there interred. In that part of India where they first rested, stand a monastery and a church of striking dimensions, elaborately adorned and designed. . . . This, Theodore, who had been to that place, narrated to us.¹²² According to

Medlycott, Theodore was a travelled Syrian Christian who visited the Indian shrine and venerated the Relics at Edessa as well.

II. Ethnic Evidence

Groups of people claiming their descent from those who were originally brought to the Christian faith by the Apostle St Thomas and preserving their endogamous identity are found in seven important localities all of which are accessible through water ways, either backwaters or rivers opening themselves into lakes and eventually connected to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. They are, from the north to south, Palayur, Maliankara (Kodungalloor), Kottakkavu, Kokkamangalam, Niranam, Nilackal, and Quilon. The existence of these basic Christian communities strongly affirms the apostolate of St Thomas in South India.

It is a strange coincidence that the seven churches founded by St. Thomas in South India are situated in or near these Jewish colonies. In the close proximity of the ancient Church of Palayur, there is a spot still marked off as “Jewish Hill.” It was normative for the St. Thomas Christians to have biblical names. Names of ancestors are automatically handed down with the result that one and the same name is perpetuated from one generation to another.¹²³

Vadakkekkara adds:

The Apostles addressed the Good News first to their own kith and kin. It had been for preaching to the Jews that Apostle Thomas reached the Malabar Coast. Some socio-cultural elements and practices common to the Jews and the St. Thomas Christians are highlighted to show that the Jewish settlements drew Apostle Thomas to India and that the Christian community he established was made up of Jewish converts also.¹²⁴

III. Literary evidences

1) Acts of Judas Thomas (AJT)

As it has been discussed above, the *Acts of Judas Thomas* composed in Edessa sometime between 230 and 250 CE in Syriac language deals with the apostolate of St. Thomas in India in general and the section from Act seven to the end is devoted to his work and martyrdom in South India. The historical value has been convincingly proved by recent researches especially by those who use literary works as a source for the reconstruction of history.¹²⁵

2) Folk songs in circulation among the Christians of Kerala.

Some of the scholars working on the apostolate St. Thomas in South India have made use of a couple of folk songs in circulation among the Christians of Kerala especially the members of the Knanaya community. Among them, *Margamkappattu*, *Rampanpattu*, and *Thomaparvam* have St. Thomas apostolate in south India as the main content. There are a few others which have reference to the apostolate of St Thomas such as *Pananpattu*, or *Veeradiyan pattu*, *Marthommanpattu* and so on. Bernard Thoma in his work *Marthoma Christianikal* speaks of the importance of *Rampanpattu* in the study of the apostolate St Thomas in South India by reproducing the entire song in 448 lines.¹²⁶ Both *Margamkappattu* and *Rampanpattu* refer to the landing of St Thomas in Maliankara. But *Rampanpattu* gives the date of landing of St Thomas as 50 CE.¹²⁷

3) Numismatic evidence and the Palayur tradition.

On 29 October 1945, a hoard of gold and silver coins bearing the images of Augustus, the first Roman Emperor (27 BCE–14 CE), Tiberius (14–37CE), Claudius (41–54 CE) and Nero (37–68 CE) was discovered from Eyyal, in the vicinity of Palayur, which was linked with Cranganore through a canal. This shows that Palayur had commercial contacts with the Roman Empire during the first century CE which facilitates the visit of St Thomas to Palayur.

According to Palayur tradition, St. Thomas worked miracle in Palayur and baptized thirty-four Brahmin families out of forty and others except one left the place after cursing it (*sapakad- Chowgatt*). Today it is a flourishing town of which Palayur is in the periphery. One *Nambudiri* family by name Orumana remained there without being converted to Christianity. Some of the *Nambudiri* families like Kalathur Mana are said to have guarded a document *Nagaragranthavari* which contains the following notice. “Kali year 3153 [=52 AD] a foreign *Sanyasi* called Thomas came to our village, preached there causing pollution. Therefore, we came away from that village.”¹²⁸ Though the Palayur tradition is damaging to the self-esteem of the

Hindus, they do not disown it, thus arguing for its credibility. According to *Rampanpattu*, the Apostle Thomas preached the gospel at Palayur for an entire year and baptized 1,050 persons.¹²⁹The number need not be exact.

The Brahmins who became Christians continued to use the temple at Palayur for their worship. Thus the temple became Church. Close by is the water tank. On the ruins of that temple-church, the present church was constructed in 1600–1607 by the Jesuit priest James Fenicio. In the following century, it was set on fire by the invading Muslim army of Tippu Sultan of Mysore who burned many churches and forced people into Islam. After Tippu's retreat, the roof of the church was renovated and more recently new structures were added. Brahmin families of Kalli, Kalikavu, and Pakalomattam were originally situated near the Palayur temple. Palayur tradition is shared both by Hindus and Christians.

The four Chaldean bishops who arrived in Malabar in 1504 wrote to their Patriarch Elias that Palayur ranked second among the three most important Christians centers along with Kodungalloor and Quilon¹³⁰.

Palayur affords singular support for the Thomas Christian tradition regarding the apostle Thomas. Since it is a tradition shared by Christians and Hindus alike, it can be regarded as above suspicion. It explodes the Western theory that the apostolic origin of Indian Christianity was a fraud of the Indian Christians or one hoisted upon them by the Syrians. Since the Palayur tradition is attested by a written Hindu document, it is of singular historical value for Thomasology in its search for historical Thomas. Those writers, who regard the Indian tradition regarding the Apostle Thomas as merely oral, legendary, based essentially on the *Acts of Thomas* or devoid of historical value for the lack of contemporary documents, have here something to unsettle their certainties and make them pause and reflect.¹³¹

This tradition is particularly significant because it is both Christian and Hindu at the same time. It involves Brahmins who recognize that their ancestors were converted to Christianity by the Apostle Thomas, while several dispersed families trace their first Christian origins to the ministry of this Apostle at Palayur. This confluence of complementary traditions cannot be attributed to any collusion of the two communities of Christians and Hindus since the former stands to gain and the latter to lose. After an on-the-spot study of the Palayur story, the Belgian Jesuit Albert Gille expressed himself fully convinced of the genuineness.¹³²

4) Consistent tradition among the St.Thomas Christians of Kerala

On the one hand, there is the fact of Apostle Thomas being sent out to preach, and on the other, there is a community of Christians which avers with persistence that it had been to its own ancestors that Thomas had preached. No other Christian community anywhere in the world has made a rival claim that would invalidate the tradition of the Indian Christians. Under these circumstances, the existence of an ancient Christian community in India professing that it was established by Apostle Thomas is itself indicative of the genuineness of the tradition.¹³³

Vadakkekkara has this to say:

This uniqueness of the tradition finds tacit consonance with the other churches of antiquity, as no other Christian community in the world has a rival tradition e.g. of possessing the tomb of Apostle Thomas. . . . Given the fact that the apostle was a person known to all the Churches, the absence of rival traditions is in itself a clear vindication of the authenticity of the tradition of Indian Christians.¹³⁴

Benedict Vadakkekkara, being fully aware of the disdain the western scholars maintained towards the *AJT*, proposes to highlight the Indian tradition independent of *AJT* and to affirm the South Indian apostolate of St.Thomas. He attempts to make tradition yield history.¹³⁵ He writes: The tradition of the Indian Christians is inseparably bound to precise dates, existing families and places. All through the documented period of the history of Christianity in India, the contents of the tradition have remained constant and fixed. The unanimous and express consensus within the community regarding the particulars of the tradition has all the requisites of a contemporary historical document. All these specifics have been irremovably wedded to definite fixed points. These moorings have not undergone translocations or replacements. It is this constancy in the concreteness of the tradition that has made it function as history for the community.¹³⁶

He holds the view that the traditions of the Indian Christians, the *AJT* and the ecclesiastical writings converge at the Apostle's empty tomb in Mylapore.¹³⁷

Down through the centuries, the new entrants into the community have accepted the communal tradition with the result that all the members have come to identify themselves personally with the descendants of those whom Apostle Thomas had won for Christ. The Suthists alone have a different tradition according to which they are not members of the community founded by Apostle Thomas but are the progeny of the settlers from West Asia who had come to offer logistic support to the Indian Church.¹⁴⁰ It may be noted that Nedungatt, another scholar from Kerala, has his own reservations about the validity of tradition as a source for history.¹⁴¹

Patristic testimonies about the Apostolate of St Thomas in India

Pantaenus, a stoic philosopher hailing from Sicily and a convert to Christianity as well as a teacher in Alexandria is believed to have been to India as missionary in 189–190. He was the teacher of famous Clement of Alexandria. Eusebius of Caesarea, the father of Church history makes mention of the missionary visit of Pantaenus to India¹⁴² where, according to Eusebius, he found Christian communities using the Gospel of Matthew written in “Hebrew letters.”

St. Jerome (c.347–420)¹⁴³ apparently relying entirely on Eusebius’ evidence from *Historia Ecclesiastica*, wrote that Pantaenus visited India, “to preach Christ to the Brahmins and philosophers there. According to Origen (184–253)¹⁴⁴ non-Aryan India was already evangelized”.¹⁴⁵

The Edessene author of *Doctrine of the Apostles (Didascalia Apostolorum)* composed circa 230 A.D.) who flourished not later than 250 AD was aware of the existence of a Christian community in India ministered by St Thomas the Apostle.¹⁴⁶ Historians, poets, liturgical texts, and writers of all sorts in the Eastern Church firmly hold that the Apostle Thomas evangelized India.¹⁴⁷

Other patristic texts like those of Clement of Rome (third century), *Doctrine of the Apostles* (third century), Gregory Nazianzen(329–390) Cyrillona (d 396), Ambrose(333–397), Ephrem (+373) John Chrysostom(347–407) Gregory of Tours (538–594), Gregory the Great (590–604), Isadora of Seville (560–636), Codex of Fulda (eighth century) and so on testify that St Thomas preached the Good News in India and brought many Indians to Christ.

It becomes clear from the discussions above that the apostolate of St Thomas in India, is a historical fact supported by host of evidences. The tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore and the transfer of the mortal remains from there to Edessa as testified by the witnesses of the second, third and fourth centuries confirm the tradition. The writings of St. Ephrem constitute a very important testimony to the existence of a tomb in India and necessarily the mission of St. Thomas in India. It is therefore historically correct to state that St Thomas is the Apostle of India and Pakistan. There are a host of historians who told this view though a few on account of their bias find it difficult accept the Indian apostolate St. Thomas. One has to examine their expertise in the field and their intentions

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Matt 10:1–4; Lk12:16
- ² Mark 3:13–19
- ³ Luke 6:12–16
- ⁴ Luke 6: 17–20
- ⁵ Matt 10:5
- ⁶ Matt 10:7–8
- ⁷ Matt11:2–6; Luke 7:18–23
- ⁸ Matt 10 8.
- ⁹ Matt 10:10
- ¹⁰ Matt 14:28–31
- ¹¹ Matt 17: 19–20 Mark9:18–20, 28–29;
- ¹² John 11:16
- ¹³ John20:24
- ¹⁴ John 20:26–29
- ¹⁵ John 21: 1–17
- ¹⁶ Matt 28:16–20
- ¹⁷ Acts
- ¹⁸ Acts 1: 8
- ¹⁹ Luke 24:49
- ²⁰ Acts 1:12–14
- ²¹ Acts2:1–4
- ²² Acts 2:14–41
- ²³ Acts 3:1–10
- ²⁴ Acts 6:1–8
- ²⁵ Acts 10:34–48
- ²⁶ Acts. 11:1–18
- ²⁷ John 11:16 ;20:24;21:2
- ²⁸ James Kuruikilamkattt, *First Voyage of the Apostle Thomas to India*, Bangalore, Asian Trading Company, 2005, p.21
- ²⁹ John 14:5
- ³⁰ John 14.22
- ³¹ Luke 6:12–16
- ³² Ref. K. Mazumdar, *Early Hindu India*, New Delhi, 1981, p.30
- ³³ Herodotus, *Histories*, 4,44
- ³⁴ V.A Smith, *Early History of India*, OUP, 3rd edition, 1914,pp.88–113
- ³⁵ Roman Empire came into existence as an autocratic form of government on the ruins of Roman Republic. The appointment of Julius Caesar as the perpetual dictator in 44 BCE marked the transition from being a Republic to Empire besides the battle of Actium in 31 BCE. Shortly after wards ,the the Roman province of Egypt was established in 30 BCE after Octavian(the future Emperor Augustus) defeated his rival Mark Antony, deposed his lover Cleopatra VII and annexed the Ptolemaic kingdom to the Roman Empire. The Roman province of Egypt encompassed most of modern day Egypt except

for Sinai Peninsular which was later conquered by the Roman Emperor Trajan. Ref. K.S.Mathew, *Kerala and the Spice Routes*, Trivandrum, Stark World Publishing PvtLtd,2014,pp. 29–30

³⁶ The Roman Empire encompassed large territorial holdings around the Mediterranean in Europe, Africa, and Asia enjoying unprecedented prosperity for the first two centuries. The dissensions of the civil war ended at Actium, This period was known as the *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace).

³⁷ H.G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World from the Earliest Time to the Fall of Rome*, New Delhi, AES reprints,2001, p.101.

³⁸ Strabo (64/63 BCE–24 CE) was a Greek Geographer, philosopher and Historian who lived in Asia Minor during the transition period of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire. His famous work having reference to India is *Geographica* (*Geography*) It first appeared in Western Europe in Rome as a Latin translation issued around 1469. The first Greek edition was published in 1516 in Venice. Isaac Casaubon, classical scholar and editor of Greek texts, provided the first critical edition in 1587. For more details ref. James Puliurumpil, *Classic India: Western Account before Christ*, Kottayam, OIRSI No. 407, 2016,pp. 289–365

³⁹ Strabo, *Geography*, II.5.12

⁴⁰ “Impiger extremos currit mercator ad Indos per mare pauperiem fugiens” Horace, Ep.1.1.45

⁴¹ Pliny, ref. W.H.S. Jones (tr & ed) *Pliny’s Natural History*, London, 1969,p.101.Pliny the elder was a Roman writer and was the author of the famous work *Historia Naturalis*

⁴² Steven E.Sidebotham, “From the Mediterranean to South Asia: The Odyssey of an Indian Merchant in Roman Times” in K.S.Mathew, ed., *Imperial Rome, Indian Ocean and Muziris ; New Perspectives on Maritime Trade*, Delhi, Manohar, 2015, p.77

⁴³ Sidebotham and Wendrich , “Roman Emporium at Berenike:Archaeological Evidence of a Subsistence Trade in the Eastern Desert of Egypt,” Los Angeles,Cotsen Institute of Archaeology :114–119,

⁴⁴ Steven E. Sidebotham , “From the Mediterranean to South Asia: The Odyssey of an Indian Merchant in Roman Times” in K.S.Mathew, ed., *Imperial Rome , Indian Ocean Regions and Muziris: New Perspectives on Maritime Trade*, Delhi, Manohar, 2015, pp.75–81

⁴⁵ For a graphic description of the voyage from Alexandria to Taxila ref. J.N.Farquhar, *The Apostle Thomas North India*, Manchester, 1926,pp.97–98

⁴⁶ Strabo, *Geography*

⁴⁷ Ref. K.S.Mathew, *Kerala and the Spice Routes*, Trivandrum, 2014, pp.30–33

⁴⁸ Ocelis (Greek: Okêlis) is an ancient port on the Red Sea, on the Arabian side near or at Bab al-Mandeb, the strait separating the Red Sea from the Gulf of Aden. Ocelis belonged to the South Arabian kingdom of Saba-Himyar and is known as a stop on the maritime route from Egypt to India in the 1st centuries CE. In the first century, *Periplus Maris Erythraei* describes it as “not so much a port of trade as harbour, watering station, and the first place to put in for those sailing on.” Pliny the Elder reports their destination and describes Ocelis as the first stop on the sea journey from Egypt to India.Ocelis was visited by traders coming over from the African side on rafts with aromatics, myrrh, ivory, and tortoise shell, this being the only report of African navigation in this work.

⁴⁹ Recent researches on Roman trade with India proved that a voyage from Ocelis to Muziris with the help of South-west monsoon could be completed in twenty days instead of forty days of Pliny. In this case the ships start from Ocelis by late August, when the fury of monsoon subsides and it could then reach Muziris by mid-September. The return voyage should be scheduled from Muziris to the Red sea with the help of the north-east monsoon winds which starts blowing from October to February. Ref. K.S.Mathew, *Kerala and the Spice Routes*, pp.39–40.

⁵⁰ Steven E.Sidebotham, *op.cit.* p.81.

⁵¹ Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit.* p. 88

⁵² J.N. Farquhar, “The Apostle Thomas in North India” *l.cit.*, p.97

⁵³ A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thoma : Introduction, Text and Commentary*, Leiden, Brill, 2003

⁵⁴ James Kurikilamkatt, *First Voyage of the Apostle Thomas to India. Ancient Christianity in Bharuch and Taxila*, Bangalore, 2005, pp.10–11

- ⁵⁵ St Gregory of Tours, *Libri Miraculorum*, I, 32 (PL .LXXI) Col.733 ref. also Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit.* p.14
- ⁵⁶ Adolf E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, London, David Nutt, 1905. Medlycott supports the North Indian Apostolate of St.Thomas. Inscriptions were found in Greek on one side and in *Karoshti* on the other side of the coins. *Karoshti* was the form of writing in the North West India. The coins are preserved in different museums and libraries like British Museum, Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris, Berlin Museum, Lahore Museum and National Museum, Kolkata. Some of these coins bear the names of his family members too. The scientific analysis made reveals that these coins were minted in the first half of the first century A.D. Those who oppose the conclusions of Medlycott say that he has not done a critical study of his sources of information.
- ⁵⁷ Joseph Dahlmann, *Die Thomaslegende und die ältesten historischen Beziehungen des Christentums zum fernen Osten im Lichte der indischen Altertumskunde*, Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1912. Richard Garbe of Tübingen rejected the thesis of Dahlmann in his work relegating it to mythology, Richard Garbe, *Indien und das Christentum, Eine Untersuchung der Religionsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhänge*, Tübingen, Mohr, 1914.
- ⁵⁸ Kurikilamkatt, *op.citp.*, pp. 47–56
- ⁵⁹ A. Mingana, “The Early Spread of Christianity in India” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, University of Manchester, 10/2, pp.438–439
- ⁶⁰ John Nicole Farquhar was born at Aberdeen in 1861. He was educated at Aberdeen Grammar School and Aberdeen University and finished his studies at Oxford University. With no prior ordination, he was recruited by London Missionary Society as a lay educational missionary and sent to India in 1891. He worked in India till 1923. He died in Manchester in 1929
- ⁶¹ J.N. Farquhar, *op.cit.* pp.97–98.
- ⁶² George Nedungatt is of the opinion that Gundaphares, the governor of Arachosia conquered the neighbouring regions and ruled from 19 to 45/46 AD as the founder of Indo-Parthian kingdom. ref. Nedungatt, *op.cit* p. 115. Sirkap was built by Greco-Bactrian king Demetrius after he invaded ancient India around 180 BCE. He founded the Indo-Greek kingdom in the Northern and Northwestern parts of modern Pakistan. It lasted till 10 BCE.
- ⁶³ Taxila was the city of India’s first grammarian Panini. Aramaic was the *lingua franca* of the region from the time Darius I conquered in the fifth century B.C. It was a great centre of Buddhist learning and a meeting place of three great trade routes, i.e. one from Eastern India described by the Greek writer, Megasthenes, as the royal High way. The second from Western Asia, and the third from Kashmir and Central Asia. At the time of Macedonian invasion under Alexander, the Great, in 326 B.C. it was a very rich and flourishing city ruled by Ambi who is generally called by his Dynastic title Taxiles. He surrendered himself and his kingdom to Alexander. About eighty years after the break up of Alexander’s empire Taxila was taken over by Great Asoka(273–232 B.C.) who made it his residence in the capacity of the viceroy of the Punjab in the Mauryan empire. Indo Greeks succeeded the Mauryas in the second century B.C and later the area with Taxila was wrested by the Indo-Scythians of whom Gondaphares was the greatest.
- ⁶⁴ Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit* pp.84–85. He makes references to the reports of excavations conducted by ASI. Sir John Marshall, *Excavations at Taxila, Annual Report*, 1912–13 & A. Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, 111.
- ⁶⁵ J.N. Farquhar, *The Apostle Thomas in North India, Manchester*, 1925, pp. 98–102
- ⁶⁶ Alexander Cunningham, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. xxiii, pp.679–712
- ⁶⁷ A.E.Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas : An Inquiry with Critical Analysis of the Acta Thomae*, Trissur, 2017, ç.3
- ⁶⁸ Medlycott, *op.cit.*, pp. 9–10
- ⁶⁹ For more details, ref. Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit.* pp.69–74
- ⁷⁰ Reinaud, “Mémoire géographique, historique et scientifique sur l’Inde“, *Mémoires de l’Institute National de France*, Vol xviii, II, 1849
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 90
- ⁷² Quoted by Kurukilamkatt, *op.cit.*, p. 75
- ⁷³ Medlycott, *op.cit.*, p.15
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16

- 75 Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit* .p.88
- 76 The exact date of the foundation of Kushan dynasty in India cannot be fixed though some of the writers place it in 50 CE by Kadphises I.
- 77 Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit*, pp. 143–144
- 78 J.N. Farquhar, “The Apostle Thomas in North India”, *Bulletin of John Ryland’s Library* 10(1926), 80–111 & J.N. Farquhar & G.Garitte, *The Apostle Thomas in India according to the Acts of Thomas*, edited by Jacob Vellian, Kottayam, 1972, 40
- 79 Kurikilamkatt, *op.c-t*, p. 114, quoting J. Rooney,
- 80 Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit*, p. 116. The author has established the historical importance of AJT and therefore his opinion regarding the spread of Christianity in Barygaza presupposes the consideration of AJT as a source for the reconstruction of history. Ref. *ibid*. p.158
- 81 Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit*, pp. 44–46
- 82 *Ibid*. p.55.
- 83 Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit*. pp.108–113. Jordanus of Severac was a Dominican preacher appointed as the first Latin Bishop of India., sent by the Pope then residing in Avignon in 1321. He was nominated as the Bishop of Quilon
- 84 Nedungatt, *ibid*.p. 275
- 85 Benedict Vadakkekara, *Origin of Christianity in India: A Historical Critique*, Delhi, 2007, pp.137–146.
- 86 *Ibid*, p.146; In fact Moraes underlining the exit of St.Thomas from the kingdom of Gundaphar, refers to this apocryphal document. Ref.George Moraes, *History of Christianity in India*, p.34. It is interesting here to make a reference to a mural painting in a Church in Kalkar, Germany where the picture of Blessed Virgin Mary , in her sickbed is presented. Near by St. Thomas was being brought in by an Angel. The Apocryphal work is reported to be of the fifth century AD. Therefore, it is possible that the tradition of St.Thomas Apostolate in India was widespread in Europe in a very early period.
- 87 *Ibid*, p.146.
- 88 Vadakkekara, *op.cit*, p.138
- 89 Henry Heras, *Two Apostles of India*, Trichinopoly, 1944. p.8
- 90 George Mark Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India from Early times to St.Francis Xavier:A.D 52-1542*, Bombay, 1964,pp.25–33
- 91 A.M.Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India Vol. I, From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century*, Bangalore, 1989, p.61
- 92 *Ibid*. p.218
- 93 J.N. Farquhar, “The Apostle Thomas in South India” *John Rylands Library Bulletin*, Manchester, 1926 (?) p. 21
- 94 Acts of the Apostles, Chap.15: 6 and 22
- 95 Quoted in K.S.Mathew, ed., *Imperial Rome, Indian Ocean Regions and Muziris: New Perspectives on Maritime Trade*, New Delhi, Manohar,2015, pp.9–10
- 96 Wilfred H. Schoff, *The Periplus of Erythraean Sea*, Delhi, 1974, p.44
- 97 L.Casson, “P.Vindob,G 40822 and the Shipping of Goods from India” *BASP*, 23(1986),pp. 73–79; Federico de Romanis, A Muziris Export: Schidai or Ivory Trimmings” in K.S.Mathew, ed.,*Imperial Rome, Indian Ocean and Muziris*, New Delhi, Manohar, 2015,pp. 369–380
- 98 E.H.Warmington, *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal,1995
- 99 Sir Mortimer Wheeler, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers*, Pelican Books, 1955, pp. 156–157. Based on the statement of Strabo, Wheeler concludes that the monsoon winds known as Hippalus was in use certainly before 14 CE and declines to accept 40/1 CE as the date to which the discovery of Hippalus is ascribed by Warmington.
- 100 Wheeler, *op.cit*, p. 157
- 101 “Thus agitating the white foams of the Periyaru, the beautifully built ships of the Yavanas came with gold and returned with pepper and Muziris resounded with the noise.” Wheeler, *op.cit*, p. 160

- ¹⁰² Pliny, *Natural History*, xii.14; H.G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World from the Earliest Times to the Fall of Rome*, Delhi, AES Reprints, 2001.,p.106
- ¹⁰³ H.G.Rawlinson, *op.cit*, p. 103
- ¹⁰⁴ Ephrem, Carmina Nizibena ,42 quoted by George Nedungatt, *Quest for Historical Thomas*, p.189.
- ¹⁰⁶ Jerome, *De Viris Illutribus*, Appendix. *De Vitis Apostolorum*, 5 (PL 23, 721 B); Nedungatt, *op.cit*, p.196.
- ¹⁰⁷ Gregory of Tours, *Miraculorum Libri .I, De Gloria martyrum in Monumenta Germaniae Historica...* Hanover, 1885, tom 1, pp. 507–508; Nedungatt, *op.cit*, p. 200.
- ¹⁰⁸ Gregory of Tours, *Miraculorum Libri I*, p. 32: Nedungatt, *op.cit*. p. 307
- ¹⁰⁹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, tr. And ed.,G.N.Garmonsway, Londo1953,p. 79.Nedungatt, *op.ict*, pp.307–308
- ¹¹⁰ João de Barros, *Da Asia, Decada II, Parte 2*, Lisboa, 1777, pp.222–238
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.* pp.725–726
- ¹¹² Governor Nuno da Cunha laid the foundation stone of the fortress of Diu on 21 December, 1535the feast day of St Thomas and on completion of the work it was named St Thomas Fortress ref. João de Barros, *Da Asia, op.cit*, Decada iv, parte 2, Lisboa, 1778, p.85
- ¹¹³ Nedungatt, *op.cit*, pp.157–173
- ¹¹⁴ George Nedungatt, *Quest for the Historical Thomas Apostle of India, Bangalore*, TPI, 2008, pp. 308–313
- ¹¹⁵ Benedict Vadakkekara, *Origin of Christianity in India : A Historiographical Critique*, Delhi, Media House, 2007,pp.176–186
- ¹¹⁶ Nedungatt, *op.cit*, pp. 317–318: The Tradition, Western as well as Indian, is positive, uniform and constant that the tomb of the Apostle Thomas is in India. The Mylapore tomb is the only tomb of the Apostle Thomas ever known to history, a tomb without a rival, like that of Peter in Rome. The archaeological evidence that this tomb was built with the first century Roman bricks may not by itself be a clinching argument; but within the whole setting of the Mylapore tradition, it poses a question to those who demand contemporary documentary evidence about the mission of the Apostle Thomas to India. The fact that this tomb is situated on the Coromandel Coast, and not in Malabar, has effectively the value of a *lectio difficilior* which adds up to the probability of its genuineness. The Mylapore tomb is free of the usual marks of a forged tomb. The foreign voice about “Calamina” constitutes no real alibi nor is there a riddle without solution. The nearly bimillennial tradition of pilgrimage, both foreign and Indian enhances the credibility of the tomb traditionally venerated at Mylapore as that of the Apostle Thomas.
- ¹¹⁷ Nedungatt, *op.cit*, p.410.
- ¹¹⁸ Nedungatt, *op.cit*, p. 172.
- ¹¹⁹ Vadakkekara, *op.cit*, pp.131–132.
- ¹²⁰ A.C. Perumalil, *op.cit*, p.87.
- ¹²¹ GeorgeSchurhammer, “gesammelte Studien, III, ed. Laslo szilas, Rome-Lisbon, 1964,p. 260, se also idem, “New Light about the Tomb of Mylaur”, Festschrift Placid J. Podipara, ed. Jacob Vellian, Rome, Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1970, pp.99–101, at p.101.
- ¹²² Adolph Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas, op.cit*, p. 134.
- ¹²³ Medlycott, *op.cit*, p. 72
- ¹²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁵ Vadakkekara, *op.cit*, p. 117
- ¹²⁶ Kurikilamkatt, *op.cit*,p.158
- ¹²⁷ Bernard Thoma, *Mar Thoma Christianikal*, Kottayam, Pellissery Publications,1992,pp.98–109
- ¹²⁸ Lines 22–24 Ref. Bernard Thoma, *op.cit*, p. 99
- ¹²⁹ (ref. E .R. Hambye, “Saint Thomas and India”, the *Clergy Monthly*, 16(1952), 363–375 , at 370)
- ¹²⁹ Bernard Thoma, *op.cit*. p. 101
- ¹³⁰ ref. Simon Assemanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, III. Pars I, *De Scriptoribus Syris Nestorianis*, Rome , 1725, p. 594

- ¹³¹ Nedungatt, *op.cit*, p.342
- ¹³² Nedungatt, *op.cit*, p.335
- ¹³³ Vadakkekara, *op. cit*, p. 113
- ¹³⁴ Vadakkekara, *op.cit*, p.121
- ¹³⁵ “And it is the task of today’s historian to make their tradition yield a history which can be both historically coherent and scientifically verifiable,” Vadakkekara, *op.cit*, p. 28.
- ¹³⁶ Vadakkekara, *op.cit*, pp.339–340
- ¹³⁷ Vadakkekara, *op.cit.* p. 343.
- ¹³⁸ Vadakkekara, *op.cit*, p. 113
- ¹³⁹ Vadakkekara, *op.cit*, pp. 347–48
- ¹⁴⁰ Vadakkekara, *op.cit* , pp.123–24
- ¹⁴¹ “Truth is consistent, but not all that is consistent and constant is truth. Error also can be consistent with itself from the beginning till the end”
- ¹⁴² Eccl. Hist., lib .v., cap.x
- ¹⁴³ Pat.Lat. , xxiii, 651 “ut in Indiam quoque rogatus ab illius gentis, a Demetrio Alexandriae episcopo , mitteretur”
- ¹⁴⁴ Origen of Alexandria (c. 184– c. 253), also known as Origen Adamantius, was an early Christian scholar, ascetic, and theologian who was born and spent the first half of his career in Alexandria
- ¹⁴⁵ Nedungatt, *op.cit*, p. 410
- ¹⁴⁶ “ India and all its own countries, and those bordering on it, even to the farthest sea, received the Apostle’s hand of priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was guide and ruler in the Church which he built there, and ministered there” Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents*, p. 33 (From a Manuscript of about the fifth century).⁴ "It is the constant tradition of the Eastern Church that the Apostle Thomas evangelized India, and there is no historian, no poet, no breviary, no liturgy , and no writer of any kind who, having the opportunity of speaking of Thomas , does not associate his name with India"
- ¹⁴⁸ F.Ferrão Vaz, *op.cit*, pp. 82–85
- ¹⁴⁹ Gaspar Correa, *op.cit*, tomo VI, part I, pp. 432–34
- ¹⁵⁰ Francisco da Costa, “Relatorio sobre o trato da Pimenta”, in *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa*, vol, III, Lisboa, 1963, p.323