

# Les itinéraires commerciaux dans l’océan Indien : Une dynamique historique de la région malabar

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## **Les itinéraires commerciaux dans l'Océan Indien : Une dynamique historique de la région malabar**

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### **Introduction**

Fishing and sailing communities formed the foundation of maritime activity in the Indian Ocean and provided a continuum to seafaring throughout history, though no doubt their fortunes fluctuated over time. A common feature of the sewn boats of the Indian Ocean, for example was the use of coir-rope for stitching. Because coconut palm plantations were restricted to certain parts of the Indian Ocean littoral, coir-rope would have been one of the commodities in demand in the boatbuilding settlement of the coast<sup>147</sup>. Thus the building of dhows or traditional watercrafts, involved in trade and transportation of woods for planking and coconut coir for stitching from different regions of the Indian Ocean, thereby creating networks of interactions and sustaining vibrant exchange across the seas.

The Austronesian mariners are said to have sailed toward the West, they reached India, and settled on the East African island of Madagascar. To put it rightly in the words of Kenneth Mc Pherson who argues that "The Indonesians launched themselves across the wastes of the middle Ocean to settle at Madagascar"<sup>148</sup>. We also have local parlance and evidence from the Malagasy language, crops like banana, coconut, and yam, and construction of houses in Madagascar. The growth of dense populations in the moist and warm regions of the coast in Zambezi valleys, the perennially watered valleys around the great mountains becomes a great place for human beings, after the introduction of food plants like banana, rice, coconut, the coco-yam and the Asian Yam by Indonesia's people of the sea in the early centuries AD<sup>149</sup>.

Throughout history, the Indian Ocean has acted as a centre of historical attractions and understanding, providing access in terms of maritime trade and communication. Commodities like spices, gold, ivory,

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<sup>147</sup> Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean François Salles (eds.), *Tradition and Archaeology: Early maritime contacts in the Indian Ocean*. New Delhi: Manohar publishers, 1996.

<sup>148</sup> Kenneth Mc Pherson, "The History of the Indian Ocean Region: A Conceptual Framework" in *The Great Circle, Vol. 3, No. 1 (APRIL 1981)*, p. 10-19 (Australian Association for Maritime History).

<sup>149</sup> R. K. Kent, "The Possibilities of Indonesian Colonies in Africa with special Reference to Madagascar", *Movements de Populations dans l'Océan Indien*. Paris : 1979, p. 93-105. Cited in Andre Wink, *Al Hind, the making of the Indo-Islamic world: Early Medieval India and the Expansion of Islam, 7<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> Centuries*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996, vol. III, p. 19.

exotic timbers and rare luxury goods from the region and the far reaches of China were the major attractions for the Egyptian, Greek and Roman markets. Craft from the Indian sub-continent, the Arabian Peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago plied this trade, traversing the Ocean from China to Africa, from the northern coast of Australia to the Persian Gulf, precipitating the great intermingling of cultures and peoples which is a marked feature of the history of the region. The Arabs merchants were also said to have sailed to the southern limits of Indian Ocean across the Arabian Sea where their descendants live to this day. Indian traders and priests made contact with the Malay peoples and those of Indo-China, fusing the indigenous cultures of these areas with that of Buddhist and Hindu India<sup>150</sup>. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century Arab with the emergence of Islam as a dominant religion has become predominant, and by the fifteenth century their trading posts were stretched from Mozambique on the east coast of Africa to the eastern islands of the Indonesian archipelago<sup>151</sup>. But the Chinese made a significant forays into the Indian Ocean from the thirteenth and into the Malabar region from the fifteenth centuries which somehow alter the Arabian monopoly in the said areas, although evidence of Chinese wares in the Indian Ocean has been dated from the 8-9<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Excavations at Fustat (old Cairo) also testified the presence of Chinese ceramic from the 9-15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>152</sup>. Thus by the fifteenth century the region was not only a great internal market with Arabs, Persians, Indians, Malays and Chinese trading from Canton to South-East Africa, but it also served as a major source of goods for the rapidly expanding markets for Europe.

Another interesting facets of various trading communities in the Indian Ocean region is that, the annals of the Tang period (618-907) in China, do not refer to religious affiliations but rather make a distinction between Persian and Arab traders, the former termed Po-ssu and the latter Ta-chi or To-che.

### **Genesis of trading networks and routes**

Geographical knowledge was still vague, what Italian travelers of the Fifteenth century denote as the “Indian Sea” (*mare Indicum*) still does not differ very much from the conception of the “Erythrean Sea” of Ptolemy and other Greek writers. Pires writes that this sea has three names – Red Sea, Arabian Sea and strait of Mecca – and that the name Red sea was given to it because of the red barriers which are found at the end near Suez, both the

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<sup>150</sup> Kenneth Mc Pherson, “The History of the Indian Ocean Region: A Conceptual Framework”, *op. cit.*

<sup>151</sup> For further details kindly go through Dionisius A. Agius, *Classics ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to Indian Ocean*. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

<sup>152</sup> Himanshu Prabha Ray, “Trading Partners across the Indian Ocean: the Making of Maritime Communities”, Chapter In *The Cambridge World History*, edited by Benjamin Z. Kedar and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, 5:287-308. *The Cambridge World History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511667480.012.,p.293.

proper name is Arabian Sea<sup>153</sup>. Like the Italians (and later the Portuguese) they would also consider it as an extension of the *Bahr al-Hind* or Indian Ocean<sup>154</sup>. The monsoon winds of the Indian Ocean, in effect, could take ship up to Jiddah, the port of Mecca, about halfway the two thousands of the length of the narrow strait, but not beyond. They are thus limiting themselves to the part that was frequented by sailors and ships that would sail on the wider Indian Ocean either for the pilgrimage or for trading purpose or for both. "All merchandise of India is unloaded at Jidda[h]", writes Pires<sup>155</sup>. Jiddah was a seaport whither every year ships from India were accustomed to go with spices and drugs... and then went back to Calicut, according to Barbosa<sup>156</sup>.

The Middle Eastern fictional tales of Sinbad the sailor incorporate the reality of increased Middle East contact with the Indian Ocean during the ninth century, consequent to the expansion of the "Maritime silk Road" to China after the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate at Baghdad in 762.<sup>157</sup> Hall argues that, this fictional Sinbad tales were based on popular word-of-mouth and the written portrayals of the Indian Ocean realm in a series of Arabic language geographical texts that provided 'first hand' accounts of their author's Indian Ocean travels, but which were often collections of 'fact' supplied by others who had made Indian Ocean voyages.<sup>158</sup> Chinese sources state that silk, porcelain, camphor, cloves, sandalwood, cardamoms and gharuwood were all imported by Malabar Coast ports from the East.<sup>159</sup>

China received Indian Ocean goods such as spices and cottons, and exported porcelain and silk. According to Tang sources, 4,000 ships per year visited the port of Guangzhou (Canton). In 1405, they began the great maritime adventure of the Ming Voyages under Admiral Zheng He. These seven voyages with hundreds of huge treasure ships visited ports from one end of the Indian Ocean to the other. The Ming planned to develop Cochin (Like Melaka) as one of its bases for voyages and linkages to other ports of the Indian Ocean. The Zamorin clearly took issue with the Ming court's decision to support a rival ruler on the Malabar Coast.

Diplomatic missions from Calicut to China declined after 1416, and it ceased to be one of the main destinations of Zheng He's remaining two expeditions. Only three embassies from Calicut, in 1421, 1423, and 1433, arrived at the Ming court after the seal was conferred upon the ruler of Cochin. Sources are ambiguous about Zheng He's trips to Calicut during his fifth and sixth expeditions. During his seventh, and last, expedition, Zheng

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<sup>153</sup> Pires, *Suma oriental*, I, p. 8.

<sup>154</sup> *Al Hind*, Vol III, p. 173.

<sup>155</sup> Pires, *Suma oriental*, I, p. 11.

<sup>156</sup> Duarte Barbosa, I, p. 46-47.

<sup>157</sup> Andre Wink, *Al Hind, The Making of the Indo-Islamic World: Early Medieval India and the Expansion of Islam, 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, op. cit. Cited in K. R. Hall, *Networks of Trade, Polity, and Societal integration in Chola-Era South India, c.875-1279*, Primus, p. 100.

<sup>158</sup> K. R. Hall, *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>159</sup> O. W. Wolters, "China Irredenta: The south", *The world today*, Vol. 9 no12, 1963, p. 540-52.

He's entourage seems to have stopped at Calicut for only four days on the way to Hormuz. On its way back to China, however, the entourage stayed at the Indian port for about nine days. Scholars speculate that Zheng He died in Calicut on his way back to China. On the diplomatic exchanges between Calicut and China.<sup>160</sup> Thus the Malabar Coast was the main destination for the Yuan officials and Zheng He expeditions visiting the Indian subcontinent.

### **Historical significance of trade routes in the Indian Ocean**

The major significance of the Indian Ocean also lies in the fact that it does not experience the cold of the Ice Ages, so for this reason there are a lot of tropical plants and animals whose evolution was not disturbed by the Ice freeze, including human populations living in the region.

Secondly, the lengthy shorelines of the northern rim of the Indian Ocean, enabled early people to beach comb and find food, eventually facilitating the interactions of modern humans from East Africa to Australia easier and fruitful. This alludes to the fact that migration of humans into this region was very early and their interaction with the resources which might stretches over a long period of time and space. The shorelines have also been an invitation to coasting with the earliest kinds of the simplest boats, from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, from the Eastern to the Western coasts of India, and East Africa, and around the archipelagoes of South East Asia as indicated earlier.

Perhaps, the revolutionary epoch was marked by the discovery of the monsoon wind pattern, which enabled predictable seasonal sailing across the oceans. This facilitated human travel over a long distance and some historians group the sailors into stayers and movers, collectively called the Trading diaspora community<sup>161</sup>. During certain months each year, the winds blow approximately from north to south in a certain way, off the heated land mass of Asia; in other months the moisture-laden winds blow from south to north, bringing the famous monsoon rains to the coastlines there. Sailors learned that these winds would carry them from East Africa to Arabia, and to the West Coast of India, with similar patterns in the eastern Indian Ocean.

Scholars such as K. N. Chaudhuri, M. N. Pearson, Kenneth R. Hall et al. argues for the role of scarcity that necessitated for thriving trade routes towards Indian Ocean region. So, products like wood were lacking in Arabia but plentiful in East and Central Africa, prized spices and perfumes grew only in the islands of South East Asia, and textile products, tea, medicines, and ivory drove profitable trade across long distances of water<sup>162</sup>.

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<sup>160</sup> Roderich Ptak, "China and Calicut in the Early Ming Period: Envoys and Tribute Embassies", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1989, 81-111.

<sup>161</sup> Trading Diasporas is a term coined by Philip D. Curtin to mean: "communities of merchants living among aliens in associated networks"; for further detail please see Ph. D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

<sup>162</sup> Susan Douglass, *Indian Ocean in world history*.

### **Dynamics of port town in Malabar region**

The ports of Kollam, Calicut and Muziris were not only important emporia of cross-cultural trade on the Malabar Coast, they were also key transit points for Chinese traders and ships traveling to the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the coast was a major source for pepper destined for the Chinese and Arabs markets. The emergence of Cochin in the late fourteenth century provided the Ming court an opportunity to develop new links with the Malabar Coast. This was done through the conferment of titles to the ruler of Cochin and, it seems, by backing him in his conflict with the Zamorin in Calicut<sup>163</sup>.

Perusing from the accounts of 14<sup>th</sup> C medieval travelers, Ibn Battuta, mentions a wide variety of textiles, even a cloth of Jerusalem was given to him by the rulers of Mogadishu, so this speaks of a really active and far-flung trade. It also talks of a unique a culture of “gift giving”: he knew what to expect when he went from port to port from those people in ruling positions who hosted him. He also describes briefly about the Chinese ships entering the harbor on the western Malabar Coast of India. His journey is testimony that trade routes did facilitate the spread of Islam and the demand for trade in Muslim societies intensified those networks. Not only Islam but also that there are probably five different sets of travelers representing Hinduism and Buddhism and Islam and Judaism and Christianity traversing the various routes for various purposes.

The Malabar Region also shared historical experiences of the trading communities in the Indian Ocean region which is truly unique and fascinating story of triumph and tribulations across the spatial and temporal space bridging a variety of societies, cultures, religions, languages over several millennia. The writings of Pliny, Ptolemy, Strabo and the anonymous author of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, Sulayman Thajir, Alberuni, Marco Polo, Rabbi Benjamin are all a living testimony to the vitality of the trade routes in these regions.

These socio-economic processes of maritime India (sea-route connection) began to undergo decisive changes by the ninth century, when the Malabar terrain were considerably influenced by the economic forces emitted by the long distance trade between the ports of the Persian gulf regions and of the Canton in China<sup>164</sup>.

The merchant leader Mar Sapor and Mar Prodh, who reached Kurakenni Kollam (Quilon) called Tharisapally, which besides being a place of prayer eventually became the centre of economic life of the port town of Quilon. The migration of the two Christian merchants' leaders to Quilon was

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<sup>163</sup> Tansen Sen, “The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks to Southern Asia, 1200-1450”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 49, No. 4, “Maritime Diasporas in the Indian Ocean and East and Southeast Asia (960-1775)”, 2006, p. 447.

<sup>164</sup> Pius Malekandathil, *Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*. Primus Books, 2010, p. 38.

to be seen against the historical background of the expansion of traders from Abbasid Persia and the extension of their commercial network in to the Indian Ocean. It started with the shifting of the headquarters from Damascus of the Umayyad Khalifa to Baghdad by the Abassid (750-870) in AD 762, with a view to having access to the Indian Ocean via Tigris and to controlling its trade. Generally the long distance trade from the Abbasid Persia used to emanate from Oman or Sohar in the Persian Gulf and terminate in Canton controlled by the rulers of T'ang dynasty (618-907) of China<sup>165</sup>.

Kurakenni Kollam (Quilon) was known different as Koulam Male in Jewish Genizza papers, and in Arabic sources as well as Gu-Lin (in the Song Period)/Ju-Lan (in the Yuan Period) in the Chinese documents, does not appear in any sources prior to AD 823 which suggest that the formation of the town must have taken place only after the arrival of Sapor Iso. The Malayalam Calendar often known as Kollam Era, was started in AD 825 and was attributed to have begun to commemorate the founding of the Town of Quilon by Mar Sapor<sup>166</sup>. By the time Suleiman visited Quilon in 841, it was already a town as he writes in his *Salsalat –al-Taverika*.

Though these merchant leaders were said to have reached Quilon in 823, the different economic privileges to the Tharisapally were granted only in 849, almost 26 years after their arrival in the town. This suggest that Ayyannadikal Thiruvadikal (ruler of the Ay kingdom), the feudatory of the Chera ruler Sthanu Ravi Varma, conferred the various privileges upon this mercantile community and its church not at their very first sight, but having tested the worth and utility of the recipients, both the church immigrants Christian mercantile community, in the process of resource mobilization<sup>167</sup>.

For Instance, As Ayyandikal Thiruvadikal prescribed in the copper plate, the merchant guilds, viz., Anjuvannam, Manigraman and Arunnoottuvar were entrusted with the right to protect the church and its property, obviously because of the economic importance. Anjuvannam and Manigraman were also asked to enquire into contentious matters and find solutions, if somebody was to encroach upon privileges conferred upon the church. The fact that Anjuvannam which is generally considered as a Christian guild had by this time assumed power as karalars of the city would indicate that the merchants of the guild had already wielded considerable amount of authority and power, with the help of which they were able to implement the will of the ruler inscribed in the copper plate and protect the church from all types problems violation in the future. The plates are multilingual: the main text is in Tamil and the testimonials in Arabic, Pahlavi, Judaeo-Persian and an as yet unidentified north Indian Language, representatives of the major resident trade diaspora in the Malabar Coast market place at that time, who were variously networked with the Persian Gulf, Arabian Peninsula and Northern India. The grant texts concern

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<sup>165</sup> George Fadlo Hourani, *Arab seafaring in the Indian ocean in ancient and early medieval times*. Princeton, 1951, p. 61-74, Cited in *Ibid*.

<sup>166</sup> Pius Malekandathil, *Maritime India.... op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

intimately linked issues: the establishment of and terms of management appropriate to a new port-of-trade and its market place, the endowment of a Nestorian Christian church at the port of Kurrakeni-Kollam, near modern day Quilon/Kollam in southern Kerala, and the allocation of trade privileges to two long-distance trade associations<sup>168</sup>. Among those participants and witnesses of the grant certification rituals were three different Middle Eastern ethnic groups who were using the local marketplace and presumably held commonly residential stature, whether part time or permanent. Their validations were written in scripts representative of their place of origin. These networked regional “homelands” in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula regions were vital to the Kollam ports success. Contemporary Middle Eastern anonymous sojourner accounts collected in the *Akhbar al-sin wa al-hind*, c851, assert that Kollam was by then the chief South Asian port of call and taxation before entering the wider Indian Ocean. The Malabar coastline was the point of intersection of Arab, Persian and Chinese shipping and Kollam was the guard post attached to the country of Kollam-Malaya, which took taxes on China trade ships to the amount of 1000 *dirhams* and 10-20 *dinars* on the other ship cargos<sup>169</sup>.

These Guilds eventually evolved into a powerful commercial institutions operating among the Christian merchants for the long distance movement of commodities in the Indian Ocean, particularly between Malabar and the Economic zones of the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Levant<sup>170</sup>. Thus K. R. Hall argues that the Sthanu Ravi plates (c.850) are the single most important documents of the ninth century CE for the study of West Asian trading diaspora in the South Asia and consequently for the understanding of south India's place in the early international trade of the Indian Ocean<sup>171</sup>. “... By the end of the fifteenth century this part of the Indian coast was relatively well known in commercial circle in Florence, Venice and Genoa<sup>172</sup>. Pedro Alvares Cabral was the first European to fully acknowledge that the vast majority of Indians were “idolaters” rather than Christian. In his own words: “The king [of Calicut] is an idolater, although others have believed that they are Christians... Almost all his nobles and the people who serve him are men dark as Moors”<sup>173</sup>.

It did not take long for these early Portuguese navigators to

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<sup>168</sup> K. R. Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 100-101.

<sup>169</sup> J. Sauvaget, tr., *Akhbar al-sin wa al-hind*. Paris : Les Belles Lettres, 1948, p. 8, cited in K. R. Hall, p. 101.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>171</sup> Gopinath Rao, “The Inscription of Sthanu Ravi”, in *Tamil and Vetteluttu Inscriptions, Gopinath Rao and S. V. Subramaniya Aiyer*. Trivandrum: Travacore Archaeological Series, Part II, 1920, p. 60-68, cited in K. R. Hall.

<sup>172</sup> G. Bouchon, “Le sud-ouest de l'Inde dans l'imaginaire européen au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle : du mythe à la réalité”, in D. Lombard and R. Ptak (eds) *Asia Maritima: images et réalité, Bilder und Wirklichkeit, 1200-1800*. Wiesbaden, 1994, p. 3-13, cited by Andre Wink *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>173</sup> Brooks Greenlee, *Voyages of Pedro Alvares Cabral*, p. 79, cited by Andre Wink *op. cit.*, p. 203.



understand that there had in fact been important Christian communities in Malabar since ancient times but that their importance had been steadily diminishing<sup>174</sup>. Pires estimated the total number of Christian in Malabar to be 15,000, and he was aware that these dated back to the time of St. Thomas the apostle<sup>175</sup>. Barbosa says there were possibly as many as 12,000 Christian households between Cochin and Kollam/Quilon alone<sup>176</sup>. But in Malabar too, commercial life, especially that of the coasts and sea routes, from the thirteenth century onwards had become more and more dominated by foreign or “Paradeshi” Muslim and by the indigenous groups of Muslims known as “Mappillas”<sup>177</sup>. Kenneth Mc Pherson was much more vocal when he argues that, “Within the region the Arabs had established an informal trade empire covering the major routes and trade centres of the Ocean. Along with trade the Arabs brought Islam and its cultural values to intermingle with the cultures of other parts of the region. In East Africa this intermingling produced the distinctive Swahili language and culture. In India it reinforced the land-based expansion of Islam through Hindu South Asia; whilst in the Malay world it intertwined with Buddhist and Hindu values, to produce the distinctive Malay culture of Malaysia”<sup>178</sup>.

Initially, in the thirteenth century, the rise of the “Samudri Raja” or the “Ocean King” –the later Zamorin – of Calicut had been made possible by the commercial victory of the Karimis of Cairo over their Chinese rivals in Kollam<sup>179</sup>. The Zamorin’s dominion remained the wealthiest of a string of city-states along the coast which served both as maritime *entrepôt* and as export harbours for the finest pepper in the world. Malabar in fact consisted of an extremely fractious congeries of small harbor monarchies which facilitated and safeguard maritime trade and the export of pepper but were politically inconsequential<sup>180</sup>.

Therefore, retrospective analysis of the above manuscript clearly exhibits that, the maritime commercial traffic in Indian Ocean in general and the Malabar region in particular reveals an interesting facets in understanding Global history. This region was gradually integrated and dominated by the western world, first by way of interactions between indigenous commercial system and the larger European trading networks (perhaps it was the routes of the oceans that truly connected the whole world)<sup>181</sup>, and eventually integrated it in to the world of the capitalist economy.

The advent of the European colonial master in the Indian Ocean and the subsequent takeover of governments by European powers also happened gradually to be precise after the industrial revolutions which according to

<sup>174</sup> Andre Wink *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>175</sup> Pires, *Suma Oriental*, I, p. 60.

<sup>176</sup> Duarte Barbosa, II, p. 95-101, cited by Andre Wink.

<sup>177</sup> Pires, *Suma Oriental*, I, p. 73; *Al Hind*, I, p. 67-104.

<sup>178</sup> Kenneth Mc Pherson, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>179</sup> *Al Hind*, Vol. II, p. 276.

<sup>180</sup> *Al Hind*, Vol III, p. 204.

<sup>181</sup> Ruby Maloni, “A profitable and advantageous Commerce. European private trade in the western Indian Ocean” in Rila Mukherjee ed., *Oceans connect*. Primus Books, 2013, p. 259.

some historians the year 1800 marked a turning point<sup>182</sup>. The powers of the East India Companies of the British and Dutch were replaced the Crowns rule. This was followed by the scramble for Africa. Though all the colonial master competed for overseas colonies but Britain became the largest colonial power by far in the nineteenth century primarily because of its economic policy, *Laissez-faire*<sup>183</sup>.

The struggle for hegemony between colonial masters such as the French, the British, the Dutch and the Portuguese in Europe, the Caribbean and North America, they extended their rivalry to the Indian Ocean during the eighteenth century quickened the pace of European expansion in the region. The Dutch halfway house at Kaapstad (Capetown) was open to them. Thus by the middle of the eighteenth century the French had joined the British and the Indian Ocean had been turned into a major centre of international power rivalry<sup>184</sup>. With the final defeat of Napoleon, the British were the dominant European power in the Indian Ocean. From being a minor, private trading presence in the sixteenth century the British by the opening years of the nineteenth century were masters of vast areas of the Indian Ocean littoral.

This rivalry also surface in south East Asia, when captain Francis Light<sup>185</sup> arrived at Calcutta with the Sultan of Kedah's offer of Penang, he also brought news of French involvement in the domestic affairs of Siam and Cochin China. Clearly, the Fort William Government was alarmed by the reports of Light and Scott, and, at least to some extent, such alarms were warranted by French designs to thwart the Company's vital China trade. The embassy of Bishop Pigneau and the conclusion of a treaty with the French Crown seemed to confirm these fears. Thus, the activities and presence of the French in Southeast Asia acted as both an immediate pretext and a vindication for the acquisition of Penang<sup>186</sup>.

To conclude, the importance of Malabar region in understanding the maritime commerce of Global world which was a centre of focus by all merchants communities of the world such as Arabs, Jews, Christian and Chinese is well documented that stretches over a long period of time. This importance continues to attract the attention of several world and Global historians alike and more importantly of late as rightly put forth by Dominic

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<sup>182</sup> J. B. Owens, "Narrating Little Stories about the Portuguese in the Making of World History" in Rila Mukherjee ed. *Oceans connect, op. cit.*, p. 101, termed this period as the end of the first Global age (He narrated that 1400-1800 was the first Global age where the Portuguese contributed in enormous way).

<sup>183</sup> Although the term seems to have taken its birth from France.

<sup>184</sup> Kenneth Mc Pherson, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>185</sup> Francis Light (Captain Francis Light, 1740-25 October 1794) was the founder of the British colony of Penang (in modern-day Malaysia) and its capital city of George Town in 1786.

<sup>186</sup> B. E. Kennedy, "Anglo-French Rivalry in Southeast Asia 1763-93: Some Repercussions" in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Sep. 1973), p. 199-215.

Sachsenmaier<sup>187</sup>. A more recent understanding of the timeframes of Global history/*histoire Globale*, argues that after the Second World War, and most notably from the beginning of the 1970s, technological developments and corporate globalization brought about a “global epoch”<sup>188</sup>. This view is by no means averse to more long-term perspectives, but it emphasizes that the global historical analyses must take elements of recent decades as a point of departure<sup>189</sup>. In its great attention to the post-war period it comes very close to some economic and sociological theories of globalization, which argue that the degree and intensity of international exchanges and the role of global organizations has grown steadily more important during the past decades.

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<sup>187</sup>Dominic Sachsenmaier, “Global History and Critiques of Western Perspectives”, *Comparative Education* 42, no. 3 (2006): 451-70. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29727795>, p. 451-470.

<sup>188</sup>W. Schaffer, “The new global history: toward a narrative of Pangaea two”, *Erwagen-Wissen Ethik*, 14(1), 2003, 75-88.

<sup>189</sup> B. Mazlish, “Introduction”, in B. Mazlish & R. Buultjens (Eds) *Conceptualizing global history*. Boulder, San Francisco & Oxford: Westview Press, 1993, 1-24.