



CHRISTIAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF INDIA

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1) Joseph J. Palackal
2) Music U874
3) Prof. Leo Treitler
4) 30 May 1997

KĀRALSMĀN: THE DANCING CHARLEMAGNE IN KERALA, INDIA

The life and achievements of Charlemagne (c. 742-814), the Holy Roman Emperor, sparkled the imagination of jongleurs, poets and writers in many lands over several centuries. From the biography of Charlemagne (*Vita Caroli*) written by Einhard the Frank (d. 840) to the comic book in French, *Charlemagne* (Duchet-Suchaux 1990), the chain of literary works seems to be never ending. In the process, the historical Charlemagne turned into a fictional hero, assuming legendary proportions. By the time the epic poem *Chanson de Roland*, which narrates the historical defeat of the French at the battle at Rencesvals that ended in the death of Charlemagne's nephew, Roland, was put to writing towards the close of the eleventh century (Goldin 1978:4), the emperor had become a super-human hero, "past two hundred" years old!

(*Chanson*, line 524).¹ Cut loose from history, the early epics chose a path of their own and spread all over western Europe (Sholod 1966:29). Following the assonant version of the *Chanson de Roland* in manuscript "Digby 23 Oxford" (the oldest known

¹ The translation of the *Chanson* I use in this study is by Frederick Goldin (1978).



extant version), two families of manuscripts of rhyme versions were written in French after 1150 (Dufournet 1993:51-52). In Germany, the first *Roland* version, *Rolandes lied*, appeared in 1139 (Sholod 1966:22). The Norway version, *Karlamagnussaga* was written between 1230 and 1250. A fragmentary Spanish version, *Roncesvalles* (only a hundred lines, which contain the lamentation of Charlemagne for the death of three of his paladins, Roland, Oliver, and Turpin) appeared towards the end of the thirteenth century. Three Italian versions of the *Chanson de Roland* originated in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries: *Fatti di Spagna*, *Rotta di Roncisvalle*, and *Spagna in rima et in prosa* (Suard 1993:85). In the following centuries, the Charlemagne legend travelled from western Europe with missionaries and mendicants, travellers and traders, and reached other parts of the world including India.

The Carolingian legend first reached Kerala, on the south-west coast of India, probably in the sixteenth century through the missionaries and traders-turned colonizers from Portugal and Spain. It is probable that the story was supplemented during the following centuries by travellers and missionaries from other parts of Europe. The Charlemagne legend exists in Kerala in two forms: in poetry in Malayalam-tamil (a hybrid of Malayalam and Tamil)², and in prose in Malayalam, the language of the region

² Malayalam and Tamil belong to the Dravidian family of languages, spoken mainly in South India. Of the two, Tamil is more ancient than Malayalam. A dialect of Tamil, known as *centamil*, served as literary language of Kerala until the nineteenth century. It is probable that the poetic version of the



now known as Kerala. Based on internal evidence, i.e., the nature of the languages used in both versions, we may easily assume that the poetic version is earlier than the prose version.

A unique feature of the poetic version of the Charlemagne legend in Kerala is its adaptation into a theatrical performance genre called *caviṭṭunāṭakam* (foot-stamping drama), which combines vocal and instrumental music, dance, and drama.³ According to Sabeena Rafi, who spent several years in studying the history of this art form, *Kāraḷsmān caritṭam* (The History of Charlemagne) was the first story to be produced as a *caviṭṭunāṭakam* (Rafi 1980:80).⁴ The poetic version of the Charlemagne story, as we know it today, exists only in the manuscripts of the libretto of *caviṭṭunāṭakam*, known as *cuvaṭi* (literally, "foot," "foundation," or "base").

The prose version is called *Kāraḷmān emḇradōruṭe caritṭam* (History of Charlemagne, the Emperor; now onwards, *KEC*). The copy I refer to in this study was printed in 1952. There is no mention of the author. This is, probably, a new edition of the book by the same title, written by Jacob de Cruz and published at Kochi (Cochin) in 1870 (see Thundyil 1974:396). *KEC* has 361 pages divided into five sections. Though the book is in prose, on two

Charlemagne story first existed in *centamiḷ* and later evolved into Malayalamtamil.

³ As a theatrical performance genre, *cvittunāṭakam* is similar to European opera. *Idea 4: a few sentences telling how,*

⁴ A summary of Rafi's findings can be found in Puthussery (1997).



occasions the author finds this medium insufficient to express the deepest feelings of sorrow and, therefore, switches over to poetry: the lamentation of Princess *Plōrippis* [Floripas] (248 lines; pp. 138-145), and the lamentation of Charlemagne (24 lines; p. 352).

Sources

Besides printed materials, I have made use of the following sources for this study:

Manuscripts

PL1 : Verses from the musical dance-drama version of the Charlemagne legend in Malayalamtamil, written in Malayalam script on paper (8 1/4 x 13 1/2") by Poulouse Asan (no date). The manuscript has 19 pages (paginated) and is now in possession of Maneek Manakil, at Gothuruth in Kerala, India. I shall refer to this manuscript as "PL1."

PL2 : Copy of PL1 by Maneek Manakil with minor variations, some omissions, and a few additions from other unidentified sources (no date). It is written on paper (8 1/4 x 13 1/2") and has 21 pages with autograph on pages 2, 5, and 21.

PL3 : Anonymous manuscript of verses from the musical dance-drama version of the Charlemagne legend in Malayalamtamil, written in Malayalam script (no date) on paper (8 1/4 x 13 1/2"). There are 4 pages (no pagination) that contain the introductory song of the Eastern Roman emperor Constantine, as well as excerpts from the dialogues between Constantine and Charlemagne,



and between Princess *Plōrippis* and *Guidavar Gōnja* (Gui de Bourgogne). The manuscript is now in possession of Maneeek Manakil.⁵

Interview

My interview (videographed) with Īsi Joseph Āsan, who received an award from the Government of Kerala for his service in composing, teaching and performing *caviṭṭuṇāṭakam*. The interview was conducted at his residence at Thuruthippuram, Kerala, India, on 19 January 1997.

Charlemagne's name appears in various forms in printed works and manuscripts:

Kāṛalmān (KEC).

Kāṛalsmān (PL2:9, 10, 13; Rafi 1980:127) or *Kāṛalsumān* (PL1:2, 7, 8; PL3:2).

Kāṛmmān (PL1:1) or *Kāṛmān* (Rafi 1980:141).

Kāṛmmān rāyan (PL1:8) or *Kāṛmmān rājan* (PL1:2), both meaning "Charlemagne, the King" ⁶

Kāṛmmān empiradōr (PL1:2) or *Kāṛmmān empiratōr* (PL2:3)

Among these forms, *Kāṛalmān* is the only one found in KEC. In poetry, *Kāṛalsmān* is used in the titles of the poetic version of the story, and *Kāṛmman* is the most frequently used form within

⁵ I am grateful to Rev. Thadeus Aravindath, director of Pilgrims Communications, Kochi, Kerala for securing a xerox copy of these manuscripts for this study.

⁶ *Rāyan* and *rājan* are Tamil and Malayalam words respectively, meaning "king."



verses.

The "history" of Charlemagne enacted in the musical dance-drama is a compilation of several stories, some of which are far removed from the time and world of the historical Charlemagne. For example, in one part of the musical dance-drama that is known as *Plōrippis katha* (story of *Plōrippis*),⁷ the Charlemagne story is set in the context of the crusades:⁸ the glory of France and the greatness of its emperor is spreading fast all over the earth. But that does not make life any easier for the great emperor. Jerusalem, the holy city, is far from his reach. Moreover, to make matters worse, the ruler of Jerusalem, the Turkish emperor *Albirānt* and his *mallan* (giant) son, *Pērambrās* (*Fierabras*) are posing a menace to the Carolingian kingdom.⁹ *Kāralsmān* selects twelve *pārimar* (paladins) from among his renowned soldiers with *Rōldōn* (Roland) as their leader and dispatches them against *Albirānt*. The encounter between the two enemies, much to the dismay of *Kāralsmān*, ends in the capturing of some of the paladins by *Albirānt*. Let us listen to the rest of

⁷ The story of *Plōrippis* (*Floripas*) is an adaptation of the story from the French epic poem *Fierabras*, which was translated into Spanish by Nicolas Piamonte in 1528 under the title, *Historia de Carlomagno y de los doce pares de Francia* (See Thundyil 1974:394). A summary of the story of *Fierabras* can be found in Riquer (1968:211-213).

⁸ The historical Charlemagen did not participate in the crusades.

⁹ In the original story, *Fierabras* is the son of the Saracen, King Balan.



the story as it is presented to the audience by the child actors:¹⁰

Bālarkaḷ koluviḷ taru (children's introductory song)

1. *pērpēṭṭa prāmse naḡaril vaḷum kārmṃān*
sīrkoṅṭa pantiru pālarkaḷin caritai
cāttitān sapai tanniḷ vaṅtito bālarkaḷ
2. *jerucēlaikatipatiyāna*
albrāttu mannan tan maintan peraprāsai
piṭittati sūrarkaḷe tan piṭiyālavare
piṭittu taṭavil vaṅttān
3. *albrāttinnnarumaimakaḷ plōrippa tānum*
ārirupērkaḷil oruvanil āsavaiṭtu
ārirupērkaḷeyum paripālanam ceita
4. *arasanil kōpam muḷuttu ākṣaṇamāke*
vaṅtātiruṭarkaḷe kaḷumaramaṭil nāṭan
kaṭṭalaḷai ittarāsan piṭittān goitavar kōṅjai
5. *vānaparan kirupayil ārirupērum*
virote aṭaraṭi pukalpaṭṭa prāsaiyil
pāriḷ perumaikoṅṭu muṭi dhariccēnavar

1. *Kārmṃān*, who reigns in the famous French city
And his chivalrous twelve paladins
To narrate their history
[We] children have come to the stage
2. *Pēramprās*, son of King *Albirānt* who rules Jerusalem,
Captured the chivalrous [paladins]
And imprisoned them
3. *Plōrippis*, the beloved daughter of *Albirānt*,
Infatuated by one of the twelve [paladins]
Rescued the Twelve and provided for them

¹⁰ In *caviṭṭunāṭakam*, customarily it is children who make the first appearance on the stage. Their role is to sing and dance the summary of the segment of the story that is to be performed that particular night.



4. The infuriated King, soon
To hang the Twelve on the gallows
Prepared the wooden frame and captured *Guidavar Gōnja*
5. By the grace of the Heavenly One
The Twelve fought valiantly
And crowned themselves with fame
In France and the [whole] world

(PL1:1-2)

Once the child actors accomplished their mission, they *withdraw* retrieve to the back stage. The next and the most important event is the solemn entry of *Kāraḷsmān*, which is done step by step. First, the *āsān* (maestro)¹¹ and the chorus singers sing with instrumental accompaniment, ¹² what is called *varavu viruttam* (song announcing the arrival), arousing the expectation of the audience who have been eagerly waiting to get the first glimpse of the emperor:

*makimaiśer maṇimakuṭakreeṭam minnā
mantravāl koṭipāṭaikaḷani tulunkā
takamaiśer mannarikkum mannavanāyi
cankayōṭu nerivolintu tanaintu vaḷum
ukamaiśer prāmsu nagarkkiraiva nanpāl
uttaman sīr sēnai taḷankaḷontāy
cikamaiśer periya kārmān rājan
cirainta sapai tannile - varukintāre*

¹¹ *Āsān* is the director of the performance. He supervises all the different stages of the production from rehearsal to the final performance.

¹² The number of background musicians may vary according to the financial capacity of the sponsor (usually, the local parish church). Two instruments, however, are essential to the performance of *caviṭṭunātakam*: *ceṇṭa*, a two-sided cylindrical stick drum that is specific to the Kerala region, and *kaittālam*, a pair of hand cymbals made of bronze.

then this is a form of the Christian church only?
Yes, I see that from Puthussery's title



With a glorious jewelled crown on the head,
With a magical sword, standard, and armor,
Worthy as king of kings,
One who radiates the glory of truth and justice
The ruler of the famous French city,
In the company of his reputed soldiers
Benevolent and valiant *Kāralsmān*, the King
Now arrives in front of the august audience.

(PL2: 2)¹³

After this song, *Kāralsmān*, escorted by his soldiers, marches to the center-stage dressed in dazzling European costumes and with a glittering crown and scepter, disseminating an aura of majesty and splendor. During this time, the soldiers sing the following *pāṭrapravēśa dāru* (character-entrance song) with instrumental accompaniment:

enkum pukaḷcirai - ponkum prāmsai nakaril
tunkanay vaḷukinta - tankamuṭiyaracan
āṅṅonaruḷppaṭikku - maṅṅalamitilenkum
kunṅānivīrarkale - tunṅāytturattiṅuvēn

In the renowned French city,
The golden crowned king, who reigns in majesty
According to the will of God, from this earth
Shall remove evil leaders by cutting them into pieces

(Rafi 1980:141)

The emperor proudly walks up and down on the stage making high arching steps to inspect the guard, and the soldiers stamp their feet in rhythm, accompanied by *centa* and *kaittāḷam*.¹⁴ Now is the

¹³ This passage is not found in PL1. A literary analysis of the verses of *caviṅṅtunāṅṅakam* is beyond the scope of this study; however, the sound design of this passage, especially the euphony in the beginnings of lines 1, 3, 5, and 7 is worth noticing.

¹⁴ Usually, the *āsān* (maestro) plays the *kaittāḷam*, providing the accented beats of the metric cycle.



time for *Kāralsmān* to sing and dance his *koluviḷ taru*
(introductory song):

pāril pukaḷcirainta pr̥māsaikkatipatiyām
paṛvēntan pukaḷsatya makuṭēntran
nērāy pukaḷu satyanērimarāiku kaḷnta
nēceneyenun kārmmān rājan tōntināre

France, the fame of which is known all over;
Its ruler, who is reputed as a just king
Who truly stands for truth and justice
Kārmmān, the King is [appearing in front of you]

(PL1: 2)

The emperor sings each line of the song, and the *asan* and the chorus singers repeat it in call-response style. While singing, the emperor moves on the stage in harmony with the rhythm of the song. He ends the song with *kalāsām* (literally, "end" or "finale"), a rhythmic cadential formula, the stylistic features of which are unique to *cavittunatakam*. *Kalāsām* is executed by the actor with intricate foot-work that requires rigorous training and physical prowess. The *āsān* would have composed a special *kalāsām* for the role of the emperor that is different from the *kalāsām* for the other major male roles in the musical dance-drama.¹⁵ The actor would have carefully rehearsed it for several days under the supervision of the *asan*.¹⁶ It is in *kalāsām* that

¹⁵ One of the means of establishing the hierarchy and the relative status of male roles in *caviṭṭunāṭakam* is by assigning relatively longer and rhythmically more complex *kalāsām* to superior characters.

¹⁶ The *cuvaṭi* (libretto) does not contain *kalāsām*. The *āsān* teaches it, first orally by using mnemonics such as "ta ki ṭa ti tai," and then allows the actor to improvise the foot-work according to his imagination.



the actor shows his command over *tālam* (metric cycle). The stamping of the feet on the wooden platform of the stage, which serves also as a sound board, with different degrees of pressure at accented and unaccented beats of the metric cycle, along with complementary patterns played by the percussionist(s) and the shrill sound of *kaittālam* played by the *āsān* can create a splendid sound spectrum.¹⁷ Added to that is the visual impact of a handsome male figure in spectacular costumes accomplishing such demanding physical feats. It is, therefore, no wonder that a well executed *kalāsam* arouses spontaneous applause from the audience and turns out to be among the most memorable moments in the entire performance.

As the story evolves, enmity and war between opposing kingdoms and religions give way to love and marriage. The beautiful princess *Plōrippis*, the only daughter of *Albirānt*, falls in love with *Guidavar Gōnja* (Gui de Bourgogne), one of the twelve paladins of *Kāraismān*.¹⁸ This happens in unusual circumstances, owing to quite unexpected turn of events. *Plōrippis* comes to know that her only brother, *Pērambrās* is making preparations to go to France for a duel with the paladins of *Kāraismān*. She is disturbed by the news. Even though her

¹⁷ I think the uniqueness of *kalāsam* may be the main reason for the name "foot-stamping drama."

¹⁸ This is very much in tune with the tendency of the Italian Renaissance poets such as Matteo Maria Boiardo (1440-1494) and Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) who, while recreating the Carolingian legends, make the beautiful Saracen girls fall in love with the valiant Christian heroes (see Hauvette 1927:61).



brother is famous for his formidable, fifteen-feet tall figure and unusual physical prowess, she senses some bad omen in this undertaking. She approaches *Pērambrās* and tries to dissuade him saying:

muttālar tēsantil mutalvane nī
ēkāny pōkaventai, tanka kallinai pōlirikkum
entan manam kalankutintēnnaśaivōm

Into that land of brigands, my brother
You shall not go alone; darling, my stone-like
mind is perturbed, what shall I do!

strange?
Is it like "heavy heart?"

(PL1:10)

The following response by *Pērambrās* turns out to be a watershed moment in the life of his sister:

vēnta menavē uraitta - vekupiriya enatu tankai
vantān kārmmān - vālar taḷankaḷattanayum
enkantipattinālaruttu - karum paṅcavarṇṇanana-
tandan verukōnjaikkondu - tankē unnai vātuvai ceivēn

Do not speak like this to dissuade me, my sister,
Pompous *Kārmmān*, his soldiers and paladins
I shall cut into pieces by my sword, and the most handsome,
Valiant *Guidavar Gōnja*, my sister, I shall marry you to him

(PL1:10)

From that day onwards, *Plōrippis* starts day-dreaming about *Guidavar Gōnja*, who is renowned to be the most handsome man alive. In the fierce battle between the armies of *Albirānt* and *Kāḷasmān*, seven out of the twelve paladins are captured and put in jail in Jerusalem by *Albirānt*. Knowing that *Guidavar Gōnja* is among the captives imprisoned by her father, *Plōrippis* rescues



all the seven paladins in a secret mission and houses them in her own quarters. As soon as she recognizes *Guidavar Gōnja*, *Plōrippis* professes her love that she has been cherishing for so long. The infuriated *Albirānt* recaptures the paladins and ^{gives an order} orders to hang *Guidavar Gōnja* in front of *Plōrippis*. She is in deep distress and prays to God so that her brother may return from France to save her and her lover. Unexpectedly, at that moment *Rōldōn* (Roland) appears in front of *Plōrippis* and raising his sword "Durindana," promises *Plōrippis* to save *Guidavar Gōnja* at any cost, even if it means his own life.

Meanwhile, gauging the seriousness of the situation, Charlemagne decides to meet with the Eastern Roman Emperor Constantine to seek guidance in fighting against *Albirānt*. The two emperors also make plans to rescue the sacred relics that are now in the custody of *Albirānt* (PL3:1). With the help of Constantine, *Rōldōn* and the other paladins defeat the army of *Albirānt* and rescue *Guidavar Gōnja* from the gallows.

As in the Medieval and Renaissance literary traditions of the Charlemagne legends in Europe, it is Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, who gets greater attention in the theatrical and literary versions of the Charlemagne story in India. *Rōldōn*'s is the most coveted role for any accomplished actor of *caviṭṭunāṭakam*. Aspiring young actors can prove their mettle by taking the role of *cinna rōldōn* (young *Rōldōn*). The unusual circumstances of *Rōldōn*'s birth and childhood, and the reason for his baptismal name "Rodānt" is explained in great detail in the fourth part of



KEC (pp. 291-330). Charlemagne's sister Berta falls in love with one of his vassal lords, the Lord of Milan and becomes pregnant. The emperor disapproves the love affair and expels them from the palace (the Lord of Milan had entered Berta's quarters in the palace dressed as a woman). They go and live in a forest in isolation. Berta gives birth to her son in a cave, while her husband is away in search ^{of} ~~for~~ food. When the father returns to the cave, he finds the new-born baby on a plain ground, rolled away from his mother's side. Since he rolled down soon after his birth, his father decides to name him "Rodānt." When the child was four years old, his father dies. The emperor, during one of his journeys, happens to meet with the young "Rodānt," takes him to the palace and trains him as an excellent warrior. In the musical dance drama, this part of the story is known as *cinna rōḷdōṇ katha* (story of young *Rōḷdōṇ*).

The young *Rōḷdōṇ* grows fast from the militant world of the Middle Ages to the more amorous world of the Italian Renaissance, to fall in love with the beautiful Saracen princess Angelica, the only daughter of the "Turkish emperor, Abdul Rahman" (Rafi 1980:135). The story of the beautiful Angelica was made popular in Europe through Boiardo's epic poem *Orlando Innammorato* (first published in 1495, an year after Boiardo's death) and its sequel, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (first published in 1516). Stories from these poems found their way into Kerala through channels that are not yet explicated enough. In the process of transmission, considerable changes were made in the details of the story. It is



interesting to see how story tellers endeavor to satisfy the need of their audience for exotic settings. For example, in *Orlando Innammorato*, Angelica is the daughter of Galafrone, the King of Cathay in India:

In India, Galafrone rules
A mighty country called Cathay
And he has got a daughter who
Is fresher than a rose in May

(I.x.14)¹⁹

Orlando (Roland) travels to the distant land of India to see Angelica, and most of his chivalrous exploits take place there. In the Indian version of the story, on the contrary, Angelica is the daughter of the Turkish emperor *Albirānt*, and *Rōldōn* travels all the way to that "foreign land" to meet Angelica. The *Angelikākkatha* (story of Angelica) goes like this: perturbed by an astrological forecast at the time of her birth, which said that she would marry a valiant Christian soldier when she grew up, her father builds a subterranean palace and hides her. The radiance of Angelica's beauty, however, reaches far beyond the Turkish kingdom. *Rōldōn* hides in a golden lion and enters the palace of Angelica with the help of a merchant and rescues her. *Roldon* goes through innumerable hardships and many dangerous encounters before he can marry her (Rafi 1980:135-136).

After all his amorous pursuits, towards the end of his life *Rōldōn* grows into the stature of almost a saint and dies a

¹⁹ English translation by C.S. Ross (1989:159).



"martyr's death" (KEC:339) at the battlefield in Rencesvals. The death scene is described in great detail in KEC (pp. 338-348). Mortally wounded, Rōldōn lies in the battle field face to face with death. He prepares for his impending death with a rather long act of contrition, asking Jesus for forgiveness for all his sins. He kisses with great devotion the image of the holy cross engraved on the handle of his dear sword "Durindana" saying, "Oh! Durindana, my beloved, constant co-traveller, and a strong tool, I do not doubt for a moment that you are the strongest weapon." Looking towards heaven, he kisses again the image of the cross and repeats the words of Job in the Old Testament, "Et in carne mea videbo Deum salvatorem meum"²⁰ He embraces the sword for the last time. The final words that Rōldōn utters before he dies are the last words of Jesus on the cross: "In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritus meum"²¹

The tender, human side of the personality of Charlemagne is shown nowhere else as in the description of his lament at the death of his nephew. At the time of Rōldōn's death, Bishop Turpin was offering mass at Charlemagne's camp. During the commemorative prayer for the deceased, a voice from heaven reveals to him the death of Rōldōn in the battlefield. While he is recounting the revelation to the emperor, Vāldu, one of the twelve paladins,

²⁰ The author quotes this passage from the Book of Job (19:26) in Latin, followed by its translation into Malayalam.

²¹ This is from the Responsory to the reading in the complin which is adapted from the gospel according to Luke (23:46).



The similarities and differences in the narrations of Charlemagne's lament in *KEC* (pp. 349-352) and the *Chanson de Roland* (stanzas 205-210) call for a comparison of the two accounts. In both the accounts, Charlemagne faints twice, once at the first sight of the body of his nephew, and then in the middle of the lament; in both, Charlemagne pulls the hair on his head during the lament; and in both, Charlemagne prays for his nephew, even though the content and relative length of the prayer vary. The prayer in *KEC* is much longer than that in the *Chanson*, which is one of the reasons for the comparatively greater length of the lament in *KEC*. Again, In *KEC*, Charlemagne compares *Rōldōn* to Judas Maccabees for his valor and to Samson for his strength, both heroes of the Old Testament, and praises him as a true pillar of the Church. These details are not found in the *Chanson*. Another distinctive element of the lament in *KEC* is that it starts in prose and ends in metered verse of high poetic quality. The frequent patriotic references to France (as well as references to Spain) found in the *Chanson* are conspicuous by their absence in *KEC*.

In this study, I have dealt only with a small fragment of the Charlemagne legend as it exists in Kerala, India. Between the prose form in Malayalam and the verse form in Malayalamtamil, I have given relatively more attention to the verse form because of its unique application in *caviṭṭunāṭakm* and because of my access to three unpublished manuscripts. However, several issues remain to be addressed. The multiple European sources of the Kerala



version of the legend have not been explored enough. I have made only passing references to a few sources. Sabeena Rafi's (1980:50-51) attribution of a single source --Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*-- as the basis for the Kerala version of the Charlemagne legend is not tenable. In an article published in the proceedings of the sixth international conference of the Societe Rencesvals, Zacharias P. Thundyil (1974:397) has indicated a few other sources. Much work is yet to be done by way of searching for other possible sources and by comparing the known ones with the versions in Kerala. A comparison of the prose version in Malayalam and the poetic version in Malayalamtamil, along with a longitudinal study of the various stages of transmission of the legend within Kerala over the last five centuries could be rewarding. A musical study of the Charlemagne story enacted in the musical dance-drama is yet to be undertaken.

What kinds of sources do you have for its musical enactment?

I can only comment that this is rather fascinating, and you have presented it in a fine way. It is a study certainly worth pursuing in the ways that you indicate,

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GLOSSARY

āsān: maestro, teacher, director

bālarkaḷ koluvil taru: children's introductory song

caviṭṭunāṭakam: foot-stamping drama

cuvaṭi: manuscript copy of the libretto of *cavittunatakam*

iṭakkalāsām: see *kalāsām*; middle cadential formula executed in the middle of a song, at the end of a verse or stanza, shorter in duration than *kalāsām*

kalāsām: literally, "end," or "finale;" rhythmic cadential formula executed with high arching foot movements at the end of a song

koluvil taru: introductory song

malyālamtamil: a dialect of Tamil with a mix of Malayalam words and expressions, usually written in Malayalam script

pāṭrapravēśa dāru: character-entrance song

tālam: metric cycle in Indian classical music; rhythm in the non-classical traditions