Islam in Tamilnadu: Varia

Torsten Tschacher

Halle (Saale) 2001

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Arwi (Arabic-Tamil) — An Introduction[1]

> "Possessed though I am of little knowledge,
> I desired to translate for them that which,
> by favour of Allah, was easy for me
> to gather from literary works
> and to explain it to them in plain language,
> so that they could benefit thereby."

Imām al-ʿArūs in the introduction to his *Fatḥu ʾd-dayyān*
(Imām al-ʿArūs 1963: xxxix)

1. Introduction

Within Tamil literature, the literature of the Muslims belongs to the most unknown (cf., e.g., Richman 1993: 74). Even more unknown is the literature in Arwi, that is, Tamil written in Arabic script, though works in Arwi have been noticed by Europeans quite early. Thurston in his *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* writes about the Labbai (1975: 205):

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[1] An earlier version of this article appeared in *KOLAM. A Mirror of Tamil and Dravidian Culture 5 & 6* (www.fas.nus.edu.sg/journal/kolam/index.htm). Some mistakes, especially in transliteration, have been corrected and a few additions made. Otherwise, the article remains largely unchanged, except for various changes made by the editor of the series. Muslims may forgive me for not indicating the *ṣalawāt* after the name of the Prophet Muḥammad.

> For the purpose of the education of Labbai and Marakkāyar children, the Korān and other books have been published in the Tamil language, but with Arabic characters.

Thurston goes on (ibid.):

> When a book thus written is read, it is hardly possible to say that it is Tamil – it sounds like Arabic, and the guttural sounds of certain words have softened down into Arabic sounds. Certain words, mostly of religious connection, have been introduced, and even words of familiar daily use. (…) Since the books are written in Arabic characters, they bear a religious aspect. The Labbai considers it a sacred and meritorious duty to publish them, and distribute them gratis among the school-going children. A book so written or printed is called a kitāb, rather than its Tamil equivalent pustagam, and is considered sacred. It commands almost the same respect as the Korān itself, in regard to which it has been commanded "Touch not with unclean hands." A book of a religious nature, written or printed in Tamil characters, may be left on the ground, but a kitāb of even secular character will always be placed on a rihal or seat, and, when it falls to the ground, it is kissed and raised to the forehead. The origin of this literature may be traced to Kāyalpatnam, Mēlapālayam, and other important Labbai towns in the Tinnevelly district.[2]

In spite of having been noticed so early, Tamil written in Arabic characters was rarely mentioned at all by writers other than Tamil speaking Muslims. It is mentioned in one sentence by C. and H. Jesudasan (1961: 235):

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[2] Ajmal Khan too mentions the reverence for books written in Arabic characters (1999: 42).

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The Muslims even went so far as to write Tamil in Arabic script, for the simple reason that Tamil does not accommodate all Arabic sounds, and Arabic technical terms and names read better in Arabic script.

Scholars engaged in the study of Islam and its literatures also comment on Arwi only rarely. Annemarie Schimmel mentioned Tamil being written in a modified Arabic script: "… they adjusted Arabic script also to that language to create a rich Islamic literature of mainly religious content" (1980: 63). But later she wrote that the Muslim literatures of Bengal and South India "… remained inaccessible to the Muslims of the north owing to the difficulties of different scripts, e.g. scripts that do not use the Arabic alphabet" (1993: 4). There is a short note on Arwi in the entry on Ceylon in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edition), written by A.M.A. Azeez, one of the important personalities among the Muslims of Sri Lanka (1995: 28).

In fact, Arabic is highly regarded throughout the Muslim World, as it is the language of the Qurʾān and the Prophet Muḥammad, and also taken to be spoken in Paradise. Thus, most languages spoken by Muslims have at one point or another been written in Arabic characters. Two reasons (apart from the general prestige of Arabic) may also be of paramount importance for the formation of Arwi.

First, Muslims are reluctant to translate words of religious importance, as by translating these words their meaning may be distorted. Many authors have stressed the impossibility of translating the Qurʾān. Thus, writing their mother-tongue in

the Arabic script enabled Muslims to impart religious education without having to translate religious terms or distorting their pronunciation by having to write them in a script other than the Arabic one.

Second, many Muslims learn to read the Qurʾān in Arabic. Thus, there are a number of Muslims able to read and often write Arabic while being unable to read the scripts normally used for their mother-tongues. For them, writing their mother-tongue in Arabic is often easier than learning another script. Both Shu'ayb and Ajmal Khan stress that Arwi promoted literacy, especially among women (Shu'ayb 1993: 87-9 and 115; Ajmal Khan 1999: 42).

The aim of this article is to give a glimpse of Arwi literature and its importance for the study of the Tamil speaking Muslims, but also as a possible factor in cultural contact and exchange in the Indian Ocean area.

2. The Name "Arwi"

Most modern authors use the term *araputtamiḻ* ("Arabic-Tamil") when writing about Tamil written in the Arabic script. I have instead followed Shu'ayb (and, according to him, the authors of Arwi books) in calling it *arwi*, or, fully, *lisān al-arwi* ("the Arwi tongue").[3] Some authors have linked

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[3] According to Uwise, the term "Arwi" is used to denote the "Tamil language" in Arabic and Arabic-Tamil, and only rarely in the meaning "Arabic-Tamil" (1990: 239). On the other hand, Shu'ayb writes that "… the Muslim savants called this language *Lisānul*

this name with the term *aravam*, used by the Muslims of the Deccan (including the Urdu speaking Muslims of Tamilnadu), in Telugu and Kannada to denote the Tamil language (Caldwell 1974: 14; cf. Uwise 1990: 239; Shu'ayb 1993: 100-1). The possible connection with Tamil *aravam*, "a confused noise" should be noted. This is also the etymology favoured by M. Syed Mohamed "Hasan", who considers the term *arwi* to be originally a derogatory term used by Urdu speaking Muslims.[4] On the other hand, Uwise suggests that "Arwi" may be linked in some way to "Arabic" (*ʿarabī*) (Uwise 1990:

Arwi and not Arabic Tamil or Arabu-Tamil as it came to be popularly known later" (1993: 99-100). I could not find either term in any of the texts in Arabic script I surveyed, except for a booklet called *ʿArabuttamil̲ pālar pāṭam*, designed to teach the Arabic script to children (Shāh al-Ḥamīd n.d.). The editions of *Fatḥu 'd-dayyān* and *Maghānī* that I used are in English and Tamil respectively, so I do not know whether the term "Arabic-Tamil" which is used there is also found in the original. I have followed Shu'ayb mainly out of convenience, as "Arwi" is shorter than "Arabic-Tamil", but it was certainly in use by 1937, when Sayyid Yāsīn Mawlānā al-Balqāmi released his Arabic-Arwi dictionary (see **4.5**).

Azeez uses the term "Arabic-Tamil" to denote Tamil spoken by Muslims, irrespective of the script it is written in: "The term Arabic-Tamil has therefore gained currency to indicate the Tamil of the Muslims. (…) Today Arabic-Tamil is being generally written in the Tamil alphabet with or without diacritical marks" (1995: 28).

[4] Personal communication on 27.2.2001 in Chennai.

239; cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 101).

3. Script
3.0. Preliminary Remarks

The following discussion of the Arwi script is based on my own work with Arwi texts. Many things are still not water-tight and need further study.

The basis of the characters used by Arwi is, naturally, the Arabic alphabet, consisting of 28 letters. But in Tamilnadu, Kerala and Sri Lanka, a 29th letter is inserted before the final letter *yā*, called, according to Shu'ayb, *lām alif hamza*.[5] In addition, the positions of the letters *hā* and *waw* (26 and 27) have been interchanged. These changes are apparently also in use among Muslims in more eastern countries like Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and southern China (Shu'ayb 1993: 96-7; S̲h̲āh al-Ḥamīd n.d.: 3).

The following list is made to show for each Tamil letter the Arabic character(s)[6] usually employed in writing it.[7] Of

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[5] *Lām alif hamza* is no independent letter, but simply the combination of *lām* with *alif*. Thurston's example (1975: 205) uses the letters of the Urdu alphabet instead of the Arwi letters. I am not able to say whether this was a common practice in Thurston's times.

[6] Since it proved impractical to give Arabic letters here, I have denoted these through their respective names.

[7] Transliteration in this article proved to be slightly difficult, as for both languages, Tamil as well as Arabic, there are established con-

course, there are no rigorous rules of orthography, so different authors might write words differently, and sometimes the same author will write the same word in the same poem in two different ways. For this list I thus relied mainly on the *Hadya mālai* by Sayyid Muḥammad of Kilakkarai (1816-98), also known as Imām al-ʿArūs or Māppiḷḷai Leppai ʿĀlim,[8] and

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ventions of transliteration which are not always compatible. Tamil words are transliterated according to the system of the *Tamil Lexicon* of the Madras University, Arabic ones according to the system used in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edition), with the change that *qāf* has been transliterated as *-q-*, and *jīm* as *-j-* instead of *-dj-*, and that I have indicated the assimilation of the article *al*: thus *ad-dīn* instead of *al-dīn*. In case of doubt I have kept to the way the authors transcribed the word or title. I wanted to transliterate the Arabic letters for emphatic sounds with two dots instead of the usual one (e.g. *-ṭ-*, *-ḍ-*) to distinguish them from the Indian letters for retroflex sounds, but the font utilised here did not allow this. I hope the use of one subscribed dot to denote both retroflex and emphatic sounds does not create too much confusion.

Titles too proved to be difficult, as they often contain Arabic and Tamil words. Usually, I have kept to the systems of transliteration in use for the two languages rather than devising a new one. I have not indicated the doubling of consonants between Tamil words in Arwi titles. Also, except for the first word of a title, I have not used capitals.

[8] I will call him Imām al-ʿArūs throughout the article, as he is usually referred to by that title. For the *Hadya mālai*, I will henceforth use the abbreviation HM, and then indicate stanza and line, e.g.

the examples Shu'ayb gives in appendices 33 a-c (1993: 776-8). I shall first deal with the consonants, then the vowels, and finally a list of the special characters employed in Arwi, which I shall henceforth call Arwi letters.

3.1. Consonants

-k-: Usually written *kāf* (*-k-*), but between vowels an Arwi letter is employed (see below **3.3**), though this is not always used. In the *Hadya mālai*, *ēkamāy* is written simply with *kāf* in the first stanza, but with the Arwi letter in the sixteenth (HM 1.1 and 16.3). Some editions do not use the Arwi letter at all (Sh̲ihāb ad-Dīn n.d.), while in others it appears also after the class nasal *-ṅ-* (Yūsuf Labbai n.d.).

-ṅ-: This is written with an Arwi letter.

-c-: This is one of the most difficult consonants, given the strong variations in pronunciation. There are four letters in use for it:

– 1. An Arwi letter is used primarily when the letter is doubled, but also at the beginning of words and after the class nasal.

– 2. The letter *sīn* (*-s-*) is used sporadically at the beginning of a word, e.g. in HM 2.2 and 17.2.

– 3. *Sh̲īn* (*-sh̲-*) is quite common at the beginning of words, as well as being the usual letter written between

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12.2 for stanza 12 line 2. The edition I used can be found in the bibliography under Imām al-ʿArūs 1996.

vowels.

– 4. After the class-nasal, it may be written *jīm* (*-j-*).

The same words may be written with different signs in the same poem, thus *col* in HM 1.3 with an Arwi letter, in HM 2.2 with s̲h̲īn.

-ñ-: This letter usually occurs in combination with *-c-*, and is then written simply *nūn* (*-n-*). I could not find an instance where it is written at the beginning of a word. But in the title of a collection of poems by Sayyid Āsiya Ummā called *Meññā̲na tīpa ratti̲nam*, the same Arwi letter for *-ṅ-* represents the *-ñ-* in the word *meññā̲na* (cf. Sayyid Āsiya Ummā 1976: 1).

-ṭ-: This is written with an Arwi letter.

-ṇ-: For this character too an Arwi letter is used.

-t-: At the beginning of words, doubled and in combination with other consonants, it is written *tā* (*-t-*). Between vowels, t̲h̲ā (*-t̲h̲-*) is usually used, but occasionally, d̲h̲āl (*-d̲h̲-*) may occur (e.g. HM 20.1 and 2).

-n-: This is written simply with the letter *nūn* (-n-).

-p-: In most situations, an Arwi letter is employed for *-p-*. In some cases, though, it may apparently be written *fā* (*-f-*) between vowels, e.g. *wallafam* in HM 4.3 for *vallapam*. This is the only case I was able to find, with another possible one in the first line after the heading of Shu'ayb's appendix 33(a) (1993: 776). Between vowels, *-p-* is very rare, and most of the words are of Sanskrit origin. The other examples of intervocalic *-p-* in the *Hadya mālai*,

upatēcam (HM 25.4 and 29.1), *upakāram* (HM 12.1), *kō-pam* (HM 14.1) and *cōpaṉam* (HM 33.2), are all written with the Arwi letter. One might speculate on whether the Sanskrit sound on which the intervocalic *-p-* is based being voiceless or voiced could have an influence on the spelling in Arwi. But then, *cōpaṉam* (Sanskrit *śobhana*) should be written with *fā*. Still, I do not want to dismiss the whole case simply as a spelling mistake. The use of *fā* for intervocalic *-p-* would be in line with a tendency to write stops between vowels with a sibilant, clearly visible in the case of *-t-* and a bit less so in that of *-c-*. It would also explain why the Arwi letter for *-p-* is based on *fā* rather than *bā*, as it is in Persian.

-m-: *Mīm* (*-m-*) is used to write this letter.

-y-: This character is written *yā* (*-y-*)

-r-: For this Tamil letter there is an Arwi one, though *rā* (*-r-*) too can occur for it.

-l-: *Lām* (*-l-*) is used for this letter.

-v-: This is written with the Arabic character *wāw* (*-w-*).

-ḻ-: There is an Arwi letter for this Tamil letter.

-ḷ-: It is usually written with the same Arwi letter used for *-ḻ-*, but Shu'ayb gives another Arwi letter for this (cf. 1993: LVI and 783), which I could not find anywhere in the *Hadya mālai*.

-ṟ-: This letter is generally written *rā* (*-r-*), but there are many instances when it is written with the Arwi letter for *-r-*. For example, the root *aṟi-* "to know, understand, compre-

hend, etc." is written with the Arwi letter in HM 2.2, and with *rā* in 2.4. There are a number of other instances where the two signs are interchangeable. This is also true when the letter appears in combination with -*n̲*- or when it is doubled. For example, *un̲r̲an̲* in HM 3.4 and *on̲r̲āvatu* and *mun̲r̲āvatām*[9] in HM 10.1 and 3, respectively, are written with the Arwi letter for Tamil -*r̲*-, while *en̲r̲u* is usually written with *rā*. To make things more complicated, variants of *en̲r̲u*, for example emphatic *en̲r̲ē* (HM 14.4) or at the occurrence of sandhi, like *en̲r̲arintu* (HM 23.2), can have -*ṇṭ*- instead of -*n̲r̲*-. This seems to be generally true of the finite forms of *en̲*-, like *en̲r̲ār*, usually written *eṇṭār* in the *Hadya mālai*.

At least in the *Hadya mālai*, -*r̲r̲*- seems not to be written with *rā*, perhaps because of its peculiar pronunciation. In some instances it appears with the doubled Arwi letter (*akar̲r̲iyē* in HM 33.3), but double *tā* (-*tt*-) seems to be more common (e.g. *car̲r̲um* in HM 8.3 being written *cattum*).[10]

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[9] This special case has the further variation of writing -*n̲*- with the Arwi letter used for retroflex -*ṇ*-.

[10] That Arabic *rā* is considered to be equivalent not to the letter -*r*-, but to -*r̲*-, might produce problems in devising a system for transliterating Arwi, as Arabic *rā* and Tamil -*r*- are both transliterated as -*r*-. The strong variation in writing the two Tamil r-letters (-*r*- and -*r̲*-) is even more problematic.

The peculiarities in the writing of the two r-sounds correspond closely to the "scientific" method of transcribing and transliterating Arabic with Tamil letters described by Das (1981-82). Tamil *-ṟ-* is much more often used to transliterate or transcribe Arabic *rā*, as *-r-* corresponds to the traditional pronunciation of *rā*. On the other hand, *-ṟ-* is not used if the transliteration/transcription would result in Tamil *-ṉṟ-* or *-ṟṟ-*, as this might lead to mispronunciation (1981-82: 344).

-ṉ- : This letter is usually represented by *nūn* (*-n-*).

3.2. Vowels

Those Arwi texts which I have come across were all conveniently written with vowels, and the same seems to be true of manuscripts. Probably, the authors of Arwi texts felt that these would turn out completely unreadable if vowels were not indicated.

For those vowels which also exist in Arabic, that is *-a-*, *-i-*, *-u-*, *-ā-*, *-ī-*, *-ū-*, and the diphthongs *-ai-* and *-au-*, the same signs are in use that are used in Arabic, i.e. *fatḥa*, *kasra* and *ḍamma* for the short vowels,[11] long vowels being indicated by additional *alif, yā* and *wāw*, respectively, and the diphthongs being written with *fatḥa* (*-a-*) plus *yā* or *wāw*.

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[11] According to Shu'ayb, the Persian names of these signs, *zabar*, *zer* and *peṣẖ*, are used among South Indian Muslims instead of the Arabic ones (1993: 98).

There are two new vowel signs for -*e*- and -*o*-, which will be described below. To write -*ē*- and -*ō*-, *yā* or *wāw* are added, in the same way as -*ī*- and -*ū*- are written.

Hamza does not seem to be used at the beginning of words. One interesting feature is that -*i*-, -*ī*-, -*e*- and -*ē*- at the beginning of a word usually have *yā* as their base instead of *alif*, thus indicating the omission of the glottal stop in words which start with these vowels. Not all, but the majority of words starting with -*i*- or -*ī*- in the HM exhibit this feature. Those starting with -*e*- or -*ē*- have *yā* as their base; the sole exception is the word *ematu*, "our", in appendix 33(a), in which -*e*- has *alif* as its base (Shu'ayb 1993: 776). That Arwi authors were aware of this peculiarity of pronunciation is made clear by a remark made by Imām al-ʿArūs in his *Fatḥu 'd-dayyān* on the pronunciation of the first sentence of the *Kalimā* (Imām al-ʿArūs 1963: 36):

> The "i" of *ilāha* has to be sounded from the throat, almost like a guttural. If we give the sound of *yi* we will be saying *yilāha* or *yilla*, and what we declare will not then become the *Kalimā*.

Both <u>shadda</u> (indicating doubling of consonants) and *sukūn* (indicating a consonant without a vowel) are also commonly used. *Madda* (long -*ā*- in combination with *alif*) is written usually as a small vertical line beside *alif*, not horizontally above it (cf. HM 11.3, 12.1).

3.3. Arwi Letters

In addition to the basic Arabic letters, several characters have been introduced to write Tamil sounds not found in Arabic. Kokan credits Imām al-ʿArūs with the introduction of "… alterations in Arabic script to suit the peculiar Tamil phonetics" (1974: 521; cf. also ibid.: 53), but he does not mention which alterations were introduced and whether there had been special characters before. As can be seen from what has been said in **3.1**, some Tamil letters can be written with more than one Arabic or Arwi letter, or one of these Arwi letters can stand for more than one Tamil letter.

The Arwi letters are:[12]

1. To the letter *jīm* (-*j*-) two dots are added above the dot already present to write Tamil -*c*-, in the same manner as -*c*- is written in Urdu and Persian.
2. A dot below the letter *dāl* (-*d*-) denotes Tamil -*ṭ*-.
3. Tamil -*r̲*- is written like the Arabic letter *rā* (-*r*-) with a dot below it.
4. By placing a dot beneath the right half of *ḍād* (-*ḍ*-), the Tamil letters -*ḻ*- and -*ḷ*- are written.[13]

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[12] Shuʻayb gives lists and descriptions of the Arwi letters at several points in his book (1993: LV-LVI, 95-9 and 782-4). Azeez gives only the signs nos. 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the following list plus the vowel signs (1995: 28).

[13] The edition of the *Hadya mālai* which I used transliterates -*ḍ*- with Tamil -*ḷ*- (e.g. HM 7.2 *farḍ* ⟨accidentally {?} written *parḍ*⟩

5. To write Tamil *-ṅ-*, three dots (two up, one down) are inserted in the lower bow of the letter *'ain* (-ʿ-).
6. To the letter *fā* (-*f*-) a dot is added below, creating Tamil -*p*-. This is quite different from Persian or Urdu, in which -*p*- is written with a letter based on Arabic *bā* (-*b*-).
7. The Tamil letter -*k*- is produced by placing a dot below the Arabic *kāf* (-*k*-). This letter is mainly employed in intervocalic positions (see above **3.1**).
8. To write retroflex -*ṇ*-, a dot is added below *nūn* (-*n*-).

Shu'ayb mentions three more letters – that I will call "Shu'ayb's letters" – (cf. 1993: 783-4), which I could not find in any of the texts I surveyed, with one exception (see below). These letters are:

1. Tamil -*ṭṭ*- is said to be written by placing two dots below *dāl*.[14]

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transliterated *paṟḻu* on page 62). This deviates slightly from the pattern found by Das, in which Tamil -*l*- is used (1981-82: 344-5).

[14] I could find it only in a line from the *Rasūl mālai* quoted by Shu'ayb (1993: 693). It might also be employed in Thurston's example, which elsewhere uses mainly Urdu chraracters (1975: 205 in the first line of the example towards the end). The edition of the *Hadya mālai* which I consulted does not use it, instead writing -*ṭṭ*- with the usual Arwi letter for -*ṭ*- and *shadda*, the Arabic sign used to indicate the doubling of a consonant, the same way all the other double consonants are written. This is also used in the invitation to a wedding given by Shu'ayb in appendix 33(b) (1993.: 777), to write the name of the town Cīnaṅkōṭṭai (S̲h̲īnaṅkōṭṭai).

2. By placing a dot below the right part of the letter *ṣād* (*-ṣ-*), Tamil *-ḻ-* is supposed to be written, but, as mentioned earlier, the same Arwi letter which is used for *-ḻ-* is usually used for this letter.[15]

3. Finally, according to Shu'ayb, by adding two dots below *nūn* (*-n-*), the Tamil letter *-ñ-* is written. In those instances where I found words containing *-ñ-*, it was always written *nūn*, but, as mentioned above, none of these had *-ñ-* in initial position. Perhaps this letter is employed then.

Shu'ayb's letters nos. 2 and 3 appear in a booklet which teaches the Arabic script to children via Arwi, thus enabling them to concentrate on learning the letters without the additional burden of memorising foreign words (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 188-90 on employing Arwi to teach Arabic). The letters are probably used here to supply an Arwi letter for each Tamil letter not represented by the Arabic script, thus avoiding any confusion which might arise if one Arabic letter is used to denote two Tamil letters. As the main aim of the book is to enable children to read Arabic and not Arwi, it does not matter if two characters should have been used here which are

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[15] It is used once in the invitation given by Shu'ayb in appendix 33(a) (1993: 776, the last letter in the third line from the bottom), but this seems to be a spelling mistake, as *-ḻ-* here is part of the plural marker *kaḷ* (in this instance *ceyvārkaḷ*), which is written with the same Arwi letter which is used for *-ḻ-* throughout the rest of the document (cf. the words just above and below the word mentioned).

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not normally found in Arwi texts.

There is a slight difference with regard to the letters for -ḷ-
and -ḻ- between Shu'ayb and the booklet. According to Shu-
'ayb, Arwi letter no. 4 is used for -ḻ- and Shu'ayb's letter no.
2 for -ḷ-, whereas it is the other way round in the booklet
which has Arwi letter no. 4 for -ḷ- and Shu'ayb's letter no. 2
for -ḻ- (cf. ibid.: LVI; S̲h̲āh al-Ḥamīd n.d.: 16-7; but see also
the title of the book, where the -ḻ- of ʿarabuttamiḻ is written
with Arwi letter no. 4).

To write the Tamil vowels -e- and -o-, two new vowel
signs were introduced, whose form is like ʿ (the form of the
apostrophe, not the letter ʿain!) below and above the conso-
nant, respectively. Their names are given by Shu'ayb as ko
zer and ko pes̲h̲. Shu'ayb links the syllable ko in these words
with the prefix ku-, which according to Winslow is "a prefix
to words of Sanscrit origin implying bad, evil, ill, unfair, &c
…" (1989: 311). As mentioned in **3.2**, the long vowels -ē- and
-ō- are written by adding yā or wāw, respectively, after the
consonant which carries the vowel signs.

3.4. General Orthography and Colloquial Language

From what has been said above, it can be seen that Arwi,
though being written in the Arabic script, follows Tamil or-
thography to a certain degree. This holds true especially for
the stops. After nasals, for example, when stops in Tamil are
usually voiced, no effort was made to use existing letters for

voiced stops to write these. In Arwi, *inta* ("this") is written in exactly the same way as in Tamil, that is with voiceless *tā* (-*t*-) instead of voiced *dāl* (-*d*-), though it would have been no problem to write *inda*. With regard to the stops, there is some variation, of course, with retroflex -*ṭ*- following Tamil orthography most closely (one should say identically). On the other hand, the greatest variation is exhibited with regard to -*c*-.

Apart from the stops, the tendency to write words as they were spoken or heard by the authors cannot be overlooked. Obvious examples are -*n*- and -*ṉ*- both being written *nūn*, the variation and interchangeability of -*r*- and -*ṟ*-, -*ṟṟ*- being usually written -*tt*-, and the tendency to turn stops into sibilants between vowels.

At least the *Hadya mālai* also exhibits a certain number of colloquial forms. For example, the sentence *hadya nālutāṉ vēṇum eṇṭār* appears two times (HM 13.1 and 18.1) instead of the "classical" *hadya nāṉkutāṉ vēṇṭum eṉṟār*.[16] Should other Arwi poems also contain colloquial forms, then Arwi could be a source for colloquial Tamil of the last three centuries.

4. Arwi Literature
4.0. Preliminary Remarks

I have given some of the most important works in Arwi

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[16] The author of the commentary felt compelled to "correct" some of these forms, writing *nāṉku* for *nālu* and *eṉṟār* for *eṇṭār* in his transcription.

below. They are sorted into different categories, which are a bit arbitrary, as many works would fit into more than one, especially in the case of poetic anthologies. But I did not want to overburden the reader by mentioning too many works together whose topics are of course linked, but still separable.

Sometimes it was difficult to determine whether a work is Arwi, Tamil or Arabic. For example, Shu'ayb lists the *Maghānī* by Imām al-ʿArūs as an Arabic work in his bibliography (cf. 1993: 813). Though the *Maghānī* of course does contain quotations and other passages in Arabic, its main text is in Arwi. Also the fact that Shu'ayb calls all the Muslims of Sri Lanka and the South Indian coast from Quilon in Kerala to Nellore in Andhra Pradesh "Arwi Muslims" (ibid.: LII) sometimes makes it difficult to determine the real language of a work.[17] In some instances, doubts may remain.

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[17] For example, Shu'ayb gives an English translation of a poem by the "Arwi mystic-poetess" Rasūl Bīwī (Iṟacūlpīvi) on p. 413. The translation is, as Shu'ayb states, based on a translation by Sahabdeen (1995: 114). The original text and the sources given by Sahabdeen are both in Tamil (cf. ibid.: 297-8). Further, Shu'ayb does not mention Rasūl Bīwī under the heading "Poetesses" (1993: 504). By calling her an "Arwi poetess", he is probably referring not to the fact that she wrote in Arwi, which does not seem to have been the case, but that she was an "Arwi Muslim".

4.1. *Tafsīr and Ḥadīth*

A *tafsīr* is a commentary, especially on the Qurʾān. (I will discuss only commentaries on the Qurʾān here. Commentaries on other works can be found in **4.5**.) As already mentioned, the Qurʾān is considered to be untranslatable. That does not mean that the Qurʾān has not been translated, but that the translation was considered to be clearly inferior to the original Arabic text, which alone was the basis of all commentaries. The Arwi *tafsīr*s always give the Arabic text, followed by a translation of the verse in question and a commentary and explanatory notes. The reluctance to provide translations of the Qurʾān and to comment on it in Arwi can be seen from the fact that no *tafsīr* was written in Arwi before the late nineteenth century, and that most works are called a "translation of the *tafsīr* of the Qurʾān" instead of a "translation of the Qurʾān" (Shuʾayb 1993: 274-6).

The first Arwi *tafsīr* is *Fatḥu ʾr-raḥmān fī tarjamati tafsīri ʾl-qurʾān* by Shaykh Muṣṭafā (1836-87) of Beruwala in Sri Lanka. Only the last 5 *juzʾ* (parts), nos. 26-30, of this *tafsīr* have been printed in Bombay in 1874, covering 46 Sūras of the Qurʾān (ibid.: 110-1 and 275-6; Jalāltīn 1999: 111-3; Uwise 1990: 233). Apparently, 11 more *juzʾ* (the first and second *juzʾ* as well as nos. 17-25) are available in manuscript form (Jalāltīn 1999: 111 and 119-20).

Other *tafsīr*s in Arwi are: *Futūḥātu ʾr-raḥmāniyya fī tarjamati tafsīri kalāmi ʾr-rabbāniyya* by Pālayam Ḥabīb Muḥam-

mad ʿĀlim published in 1878, which gives the "esoteric" (*bā-ṭin*) interpretation in the marginal notes in addition to the external meaning (*ẓāhir*).

Fatḥu 'l-karīm by Nūḥ Labbai ʿĀlim ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir (1830-1905[18]) who is also known as Nūḥ the Junior, was published in 1881. It also contains discussions on creed and jurisprudence.

Another *tafsīr*, *Fatḥu 'r-raḥīm*, published in 1886, deals mainly with mystical points. While Shu'ayb says that it too was written by Nūḥ the Junior (1993: 277-8), Uwise gives Pālayam Ḥabīb Muḥammad ʿĀlim as its author (1990: 234). Both Shu'ayb and Uwise mention some more works (Shu'ayb 1993: 277-8; Uwise 1990: 234).

A *ḥadīth* (pl. *aḥādīth*) contains information on the conduct and traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad. Many of the most important Arwi authors have translated these or composed works giving the essential meaning of a certain *ḥadīth*. The

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[18] Shu'ayb (1993: 493) gives the year of death for Nūḥ the Junior as 1856, but this creates problems, as not only were most of his works published after that year, but it would also contradict the established opinion that the first *tafsīr* in Arwi was the one by Shaykh Muṣṭafā, published in 1874, since Nūḥ the Junior himself wrote two *tafsīr*s. Incidentally, should this be the correct year of death, then Nūḥ the Junior would have died at the age of 26, which is a bit too young, as he is credited with a number of works in Arabic and Arwi. Thus I suppose that the correct dates are those given by Shu'ayb 1993: 277.

first works available are *Periya ḥadīth māṇikka mālai* and *Cinna ḥadīth māṇikka mālai* by Sām S͟hihāb ad-Dīn (1634/1635-1709), a younger brother of the famous S͟haykh Ṣadaqatullāh (1632-1703). They contain translations of 1119 and 608 traditions respectively (Shu'ayb 1993: 282).

Shuʿabu 'l-īmān by Kamāl (ibid.; Uwise 1990: 221 has Jamāl) ad-Dīn ʿĀlim Pulavar, which according to Uwise was written in 1823 (1990: 235), is based on an Arabic work by Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 1066). It also is supposed to contain a lot of material on faith in general (Shu'ayb 1993: 282; Uwise 1990: 221-3)

Nūḥ the Junior has translated 1077 *aḥādīth* in *Fatḥu 'l-majīd fī ḥadīthi 'n-nabiyyi 'l-ḥamīd*. Several other translations of traditions have been prepared (Shu'ayb 1993: 282).

The anthology *Shuʿabu 'd-dīn* by Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, which will be discussed in more detail in **4.2**, contains a *Ḥadīth mālai* (Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib 1990: 105-8).

Two poems by Imām al-ʿArūs are based on *aḥādīth*. *Aḥsanu 'l-mawāʿiẓ wa azyanu 'l-malāfiẓ* contains 380 verses[19] in Arwi and Arabic, each of which contains "… the gist of a *ḥadīth*" (Shu'ayb 1993: 282). This holds true also for *Mawʿiẓatun muzayyana wa mulaffaẓatun muḥassana*, containing 53 verses (ibid.: 282 and 613).

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[19] 320 verses according to Muḥammad Nilām (1963: xxiii).

4.2. Jurisprudence, Creed and Religious Manuals

Especially during the nineteenth century, a number of religious handbooks, a kind of introduction to Islam, were written in Arwi. These manuals provide information on creed, law, ethics, rituals and mysticism, as far as was deemed necessary for the intended audience of the book. These topics are largely inseparable. Many of the explanations on points of creed contain mystical ideas, and all human actions, from extraordinary situations like warfare, through legal procedures, faith and rituals, down to the basics of everyday life such as greeting, eating, washing and marital relations, are governed by the same "legal" categories.[20] There are also a number of works dealing with a specific subject. I will first give an overview over the manuals and then proceed to these more specialised texts. For works on mysticism (*taṣawwuf*), see **4.3**.

  As I already stated, most of the religious manuals in Arwi were produced in the nineteenth century, mainly during the second half. But the roots of these manuals lie in Tamil and Arwi literature of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. In Arwi, poems were written on specific religious topics and sometimes brought together in anthologies. These poems are dealt with later. In Tamil, we have the catechism-like question-and-answer poems of the *macalā* genre (sometimes written *mas alā*, from Arabic *mas'ala*, "question"), one of

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[20] These are obligatory (*wājib*), supererogatory (*sunna*), permissible (*ḥalāl*), undesirable (*makrūh*) and forbidden (*ḥarām*).

which, the *Āyiramacalā* by Vaṇṇapparimaḷappulavar written in 1572, has the distinction of being the oldest complete Muslim work extant in Tamil (cf. Uwise 1990: 15-9 and 122-3; Ajmal Khan 1999: 44). During the seventeenth century, Pīr Muḥammad (late sixteenth to first half of the seventeenth century) wrote several works concerning mysticism, theology and ethics (cf. Uwise 1990: 220-1).

An important religious compendium compiled in Tamil is the *Vēta purāṇam* by Nūḥ the Senior (Nūḥ Walīyullāh al-Qāhirī, d. 1743). It is composed of 26 chapters dealing with various topics seemingly arranged at random. Among the topics included are the *kalimā*, prayer (*toḻukai*), fasting (*nōṉpu*) and *tawḥīd* (the unity and uniqueness of God) (cf. list of contents of Periya Nūku 1999: no page no. ⟨between 16 and 17⟩). Its language is rather difficult, and it was apparently not composed for the layman (personal communication by M. Syed Mohamed "Hasan" on 14.3.2000 in Chennai).[21]

Though several books on Islam in general have been written in the past 150 years, both in Tamil and Arwi, none have attained the fame of the religious manuals written by Imām al-ʿArūs. His later works are originally based on a work on

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[21] According to Shuʾayb, the book was written in Arwi (1993: 817), but neither in the secondary literature nor in the introduction to the latest edition could I find any hint of this (cf. Uwise 1990: 112-3 and 219-20; Periya Nūku 1999: 3-17; cf. also Ajmal Khan 1985: 56). M. Syed Mohamed "Hasan" also confirmed that it was written in Tamil script (personal communication on 14.3.2000 in Chennai).

fiqh (jurisprudence) called *Faṭḥu 'l-matīn*, which was superseded by *Faṭḥu 's-salām*, which added information on creed. But it was the revised and enlarged edition of *Faṭḥu 's-salām* called *Faṭḥu 'd-dayyān fī fiqhi khayri 'l-adyān*, printed for the first time in 1873-74, which became popular (Aniff-Doray 1963: ix; Shu'ayb 1993: 159, 611 and 636).

The *Faṭḥu 'd-dayyān* is a religious compendium based on the S̲h̲āfiʿī school of law, though contrasting its practices from time to time with the Ḥanafī school.[22] It deals in several chapters with *dīn* (religion) and its pillars, namely *īmān* (faith), *islām* (submission to God), *tawḥīd* (unity and uniqueness of God) and *maʿrifa* ("knowledge, cognition [of God]"), going on to discuss prayer, alms tax (*zakāt*), fasting and pilgrimage (four of the five pillars of *islām*; the confession is treated in the chapter on *islām*). Following these are chapters on food, inheritance, marriage and miscellaneous topics, ending with a discourse on *tawba* (repentance). Naturally, the stress is different in each chapter, with the one on *maʿrifa*, for example, containing more mystical points while the chapter on inheritance is concerned more with juridical matters. Imām al-ʿArūs used a number of Arabic, Persian and Arwi sources for compiling this manual. Apart from the Qurʾān,

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[22] These are the two schools Sunnites in South Asia usually belong to. The Ḥanafī school is followed by more Muslims in South Asia, while the S̲h̲āfiʿī school is present mainly among the Muslims of the coastal areas of Kerala and Tamilnadu, as well as those in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

the *ḥadīth*-collections by al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the writings of the founders of the four law-schools, he has drawn on material of scholars and Sufis like Ibn ʿArabī, al-Ghazzālī, ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī and the North Indian Sufi Muḥammad Ghawth of Gwalior (cf. Imām al-ʿArūs 1963: 515-18). Contrary to the *Vēta purāṇam*, the *Fatḥu ʾd-dayyān* was written as a handbook for ordinary Muslims, as Imām al-ʿArūs states in his introduction (cf. the quotation given at the beginning of this article).

As the *Fatḥu ʾd-dayyān* superseded *Fatḥu ʾs-salām*, it in turn was superseded by the commentary which Imām al-ʿArūs himself wrote on it. The *Maghānī mulaḥi ʾt-tibyān fī sharaḥi maʿānī fatḥi ʾd-dayyān*, or short *Maghānī*, is often considered the *magnum opus* of Imām al-ʿArūs. The second edition of the *Fatḥu ʾd-dayyān* contains cross-references to the *Maghānī*, which was printed in the same year, 1886 (Aniff-Doray 1963: ix; Shu'ayb 1993: 160 and 636). Being intended as a commentary, the *Maghānī* naturally follows the *Fatḥu ʾd-dayyān* in content, but giving more details and adding information on trading, finance and juridical procedures.[23]

Other handbooks were written by authors of renown, such as Shaykh Muṣṭafā, who in fact translated or adapted an Ar-

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[23] It should be noted that according to Imām al-ʿArūs' own statement, the *Maghānī* is not the last work in this chain of religious manuals. This credit goes to the *Ghanīmatu ʾs-sālikīn*, which will be mentioned in **4.3** (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 160-1).

abic work, (Jalāltīn 1999: 112; Uwise 1990: 237). Another handbook was written by his son Shaykh Muḥammad, and there are a number of similar books by other authors (cf. Uwise 1990: 217-8 and 237).

As already mentioned, Arwi authors wrote poems on different topics relating to creed, jurisprudence or other religious matters. Already Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn, one of the earliest (if not the earliest) Arwi authors wrote poems of this type. Among them we find works like *'Ulamā' mālai* (*'ulamā'*, sg. *'ālim* "religious scholar"), *Khuṭba mālai* (*khuṭba* "sermon") and a poem against smoking tobacco (see **5.1**; Sayabu Maraicar 1996: 82-6). Among his works on jurisprudence is *Ikhtilāf mālai*, based on the Arabic work *Al-mīzānu 'l-kubrā* by 'Abd al-Wahhāb ash-Sha'rāni (d. 1565). It is a poem dealing with 550 points on which the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī schools of jurisprudence differ (Shu'ayb 1993: 140-1). Kokan lists some other poems which seem to be of interest here, some of which have the same title like poems from Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib's *Shu'abu 'd-dīn* (e.g. *Toḻukai mālai*) (1974: 54-5). Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn also wrote poems on the position of women, with which I will deal later.

An important prose work on creed is *'Iẓāmu 'l-fawā'id fī niẓāmi 'l-'aqā'id* by Maḥmūd Ṭībī of Porto Novo (Parangipettai) (d. approx. 1727), which Shu'ayb mentions as an Arwi book (1993: 425; cf. also ibid.: 453, 489 and 804-5; Kokan does not mention any Arwi books by Maḥmūd Ṭībī, cf. 1974: 60). Besides describing creed and dogma, it also contains

points on mysticism.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir of Kilakkarai (1778-1850), who is usually known as Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, wrote a collection of forty poems[24] usually called *Shuʿabu ʾd-dīn fī taḥqīqi ʿulūmi ʾd-dīn*. They deal with various topics, mostly with *taṣawwuf* ("mysticism"), but also with other religious matters. Among the poems which are of interest here are a *Tolukai mālai*, *Nōnpu mālai*, *Zakāt mālai*, *Ṣadaqa mālai* (on charity), *Taqwā mālai* (on piety) and *Bidʿā mālai* (on "innovations" in

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[24] Ajmal Khan writes that Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib wrote some forty books in Arabic, Arabic-Tamil and Tamil (1985: 62). He further mentions a work by him called *Panniraṇṭumālai* containing Tamil poems (ibid.). It seems to me that he mistook the *Shuʿabu ʾd-dīn* for the total work of Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, and that the *Panniraṇṭumālai* refers to an edition of twelve poems (*panniraṇṭu* "twelve") from the *Shuʿabu ʾd-dīn* published in Tamil script (cf. Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib 1990: 6). Zvelebil mentions an author named Aptul Kātir Leppai who wrote a *Panniraṇṭumālai*. Zvelebil probably refers to Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, though he mistakenly assigns him to the late nineteenth century (cf. Zvelebil 1995: 55). I am unsure whether the name *Shuʿabu ʾd-dīn* was already used by Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, but it is definitely better to use this name than *Panniraṇṭumālai*, as there are more than just twelve poems.

M. Syed Mohamed "Hasan" told me that only twenty poems were published in 1990 as the text of the other twenty poems was too damaged to be intelligible (personal communication on 27.2.2001 in Chennai).

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religion), to mention just a few.[25] The poems usually consist of 10-40 stanzas. If put together, they actually form something like a religious handbook having some resemblance with texts like the *Vēta purāṇam*, which is also in verse (Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib 1990: 5-6; Shu'ayb 1993: 165 and 524; some of the other poems from the _Shuʿabu ʾd-dīn_ are men-

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[25] Shu'ayb mentions a _Sharīʿa mālai_ by Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, which also seems to be part of this collection (1993: 433 and 454). In fact, Imām al-ʿArūs quotes several times from an Arwi poem called _Sharīʿa mālai_ in his *Fatḥu ʾd-dayyān* (cf. for example 1963: 22 and 32). As author, he gives just the name ʿAbd al-Qādir, which could mean both Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib and Kāyalpaṭṭinam Taikkā Ṣāḥib. The index does not help, as it just adds al-Qāhirī to the name, which in case of South Indian Muslims denotes that he was born in Kayalpattinam (not in Cairo, against the usual meaning of al-Qāhirī, cf. Shu'ayb 1993: LIII), which is true for both Taikkā Ṣāḥibs. But it is quite clear that Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib is meant, as Imām al-ʿArūs calls him in one instance "… our leader and teacher …" (1963: 501); Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib was the teacher and spiritual guide as well as the father-in-law of Imām al-ʿArūs. Further proof comes from the fact that Imām al-ʿArūs quotes part of a poem by the famous poet Kuṇaṅkuṭi Mastān Ṣāḥib where he identifies Kuṇaṅkuṭi Mastān Ṣāḥib as a disciple of the said ʿAbd al-Qādir. It is known that Kuṇaṅkuṭi Mastān Ṣāḥib was a disciple of Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib (ibid.: 74). Sadly, the _Sharīʿa mālai_ is not contained in the collection of 20 poems from the _Shuʿabu ʾd-dīn_ printed in Tamil script which is available to me (cf. Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib 1990).

tioned in **4.1**, **4.3** and **4.5**). _Shuʿabu ʾl-īmān_ by Kamāl ad-Dīn ʿĀlim Pulavar, which has been mentioned in **4.1**, also contains points on creed (Uwise 1990: 221-3).

The _Hadya mālai_ by Imām al-ʿArūs, a poem of 33 stanzas (Kokan states that there are 66 verses, but the printed edition has only 33, cf. Kokan 1974: 522), was written around 1869, thus before the bulk of his religious manuals. To a certain degree it is comparable to the poems of his teacher and father-in-law Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, but it does not deal with single aspects of religion. Rather, forty ways of behaviour are listed, ranging from reducing sleep and food, attending prayers regularly, or obeying one's parents, to loving the Prophet and his family and engaging in _dhikr_ ("… the glorifying of Allāh with certain fixed phrases, repeated in a ritual order, either aloud or in the mind, …", Macdonald 1995: 75). Four each of these modes of conduct should be offered as gifts (_hadya_) to a person or thing connected with the afterlife. These are (1) the Angel of Death, (2) the grave, (3) the angels Munkar and Nakīr, (4) Mālik, the overseer of hell, (5) his counterpart Riḍwān, the chief angel of paradise, (6) the bridge leading to paradise, (7) the scale on which one's good and bad deeds are weighed, (8) the Prophet Muḥammad, (9) the soul (_rūḥ_) and (10) God himself. Apart from these gifts, the qualities and characteristics of death are discussed in the poem. It is said that Imām al-ʿArūs wrote this poem for his wife, who had asked for a necklace made of forty gold coins (_kācumālai_). Instead, her husband wrote this poem to "… serve as an ornament for her soul" (Shuʿayb 1993: 614; cf. al-

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so ibid.: 153-5; Imām al-ʿArūs 1996: xx).

Uwise mentions an Arwi poem written by Ka<u>sh</u>āwatta Muḥammad Labbai ʿĀlim, a contemporary of Imām al-ʿArūs, called *Dīn mālai*, which is supposed to deal with various aspects of Islam (Uwise 1990: 234-5; Shu'ayb 1993: 112).

A book that deals with all schools of jurisprudence and the points on which they differ is *Fayḍu 'r-raḥmān fī i<u>kh</u>tilāfi 'l-aʾimmati 'l-aʿyān* by Ḥabīb Muḥammad ibn Ṣadaq Muḥammad Ibrāhīm printed in 1878 (Shu'ayb 1993: 141 and 185; Uwise 1990: 236-7).[26]

Among the texts concerned with jurisprudence we also have to mention the works listed by Shu'ayb under the heading "Sexology" (1993: 184-6).[27] Ibid.: 184: The authors

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[26] I am not able to say whether this Ḥabīb Muḥammad is identical with the author of *Futūḥātu'r-raḥmāniyya* mentioned in **4.1**.

The work "Fath hul Mueen", which Uwise mentions as a work on jurisprudence by Imām al-ʿArūs (1990: 236), cannot be found in the list of works by him supplied by Shu'ayb (1993: 610-26). But it is mentioned by Shu'ayb that a book named *Fatḥu 'l-muʿīn* by one Ma<u>kh</u>dūm Zayn ad-Dīn al-Maʿbarī has been translated into Arwi (1993: 284).

[27] Imām al-ʿArūs states in the *Fatḥu 'd-dayyān*: "Several books, that are not works on jurisprudence, describe many acts relating to sex in the lessons on ʿIlmun-Nisāʾ (knowledge of women). I have not included them in this work because authorities are not given there" (1963: 453). I was not able to find any information regarding these works. All the texts containing information on ʿilmu 'n-nisāʾ

… strictly confined themselves to the domain of legitimate marital acts. In fact, there is a warning in all these works that the instructions given in them are to be used wholly and solely for achieving the perfect *ḥalāl* [i.e. permissible, T.T.] act of attaining marital bliss and not for indulging in any *ḥarām* [i.e. forbidden, T.T.] acts.

Among these works is *Miftāḥu 'ṣ-ṣalāḥ fī īḍāḥi 'n-nikāḥ* by Yūsuf Labbai ʿĀlim of Ammapattinam (d. 1887), which contains juridical information on marriage and divorce beside "… subtle points on sexology wholly based on religion …" (ibid.) and which was proscribed by the British in the 1930s, and *ʿIlmu 'n-nisāʾ* by Sayyid Aḥmad Kabir of Kilakkarai, printed in 1949. Some of the books mentioned before, like *Fatḥu 'd-dayyān* (cf. Imām al-ʿArūs 1963: 449-56) or *Fayḍu 'r-raḥmān*, as well as the *Kitābu 'l-wisāda* (see **4.3**), deal at certain points with similar questions.

Mention should be made of the books written especially for women, which deal with the essentials of Islam and information of special interest for women, sometimes condemning things like giving dowry and advising parents to impart education to their daughters. Shu'ayb attributes three works to Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn, namely *Peṇ putti mālai*, *Kalyāṇa bidʿat mālai* and *Tōkai mālai* (1993: 162). Sayabu Maraicar lists *Tōkai mālai* as a work of Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn, but

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which I could find or which are mentioned in the books available to me (including the *Vēta purāṇam*, cf. Periya Nūku 1999: 53-6) seem to deal also with juridical questions (and to give authorities).

while referring to a *Kalyāṇa biḍʿat mālai* and two works with the title *Peṇ putti mālai*, he gives different authors for these poems. But it is of course possible that Sām S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn wrote poems with similar titles (cf. Sayabu Maraicar 1996: 82, 85 and 86-7).[28] Kokan also mentions the *Tōkai mā-lai*, and gives another work with the title *Kalyāṇa pitru* (?) *mālai* (1974: 54). Imām al-ʿArūs has also written works especially for women. Two of them, *Talai fātiḥa* and *Maʿrifatiṉ ārāṭṭu*, are dealt with below. *Tōḻi peṇ patikam* is another work by him on the subject. A number of other books for women have been published. There are also books imparting basic religious knowledge for children, like *Simṭu ʾṣ-ṣibyāṉ* by Yūsuf Labbai ʿĀlim of Ammapattinam which describes the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence. Two other important books for children are *Tuḥfatu ʾl-atfāl* and *Minḥatu ʾl-atfāl*, both by Sayyid Muḥammad known as Colombo ʿĀlim Ṣāḥib, which deal with the Ḥanafī and S̲h̲āfiʿī schools respectively (Shuʿayb 1993: 162-3 and 510).

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[28] Sayabu Maraicar mentions a *Putti mālai* as a poem by Sām S̲h̲i-hāb ad-Dīn, but this could as well be a work on *taṣawwuf* (1996: 153). A *Peṇ putti mālai* was recently republished. Though no author is given, he identifies himself in the second stanza as Muḥammad Ḥusayn, who wrote during the late eighteenth century. A poem from the *Talai fātiḥa* by Imām al-ʿArūs (see **4.4**) is also included in this edition (Anonymous n.d.: Title page, 1 and 44-8; Imām al-ʿArūs n.d.: 6-9; Zvelebil 1995: 443 and 542).

4.3. *Taṣawwuf* (Mysticism)

Often, Arwi texts on mysticism form part of an anthology or a religious handbook which is also concerned with creed and jurisprudence, and these fields are often inseparably intertwined. In coastal Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka, and particularly with respect to the Arwi authors, we find few traces of a distinction or even enmity between "juridical" and "mystical" Islam. Rather, most Arwi authors are both, *ʿālim* ("religious scholar") and *ṣūfī* ("mystic"), and combine the ideas of both in their writings. The *ṭarīqa*s (*ṣūfī*-orders) common in the area where Arwi is in use are usually quite "orthodox" and stress the importance of the Sharīʿa. By far the most common *ṭarīqa* in the Arwi area is the Qādiriyya, founded by ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī (1077 o. 1078-1166). Many important authors, like Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn, Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, and Imām al-ʿArūs, were its members. Another *ṭarīqa* of importance among Arwi writers is the Shādhiliyya, founded by Abu'l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī (1196-1258) (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 61-3; Eaton 1996: 54).[29]

The first mystic poet in Tamil Muslim literature is Pīr Muḥammad, who is buried in Takkalai in Kanniyakumari district. In Arwi, there are some poems by Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn which seem to deal with *taṣawwuf*. Among them are a *Maʿrifa mālai* and a *Neñcaṟivu mālai* (Sayabu Maraicar 1996: 153),

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[29] The Čishtiyya, the most important order of South Asia, is of little importance among Tamil speaking Muslims.

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and possibly also *Ñāya mālai* (Kokan 1974: 54). The *Niẓāmu ’l-ʿaqāʾid* by Maḥmūd Ṭībī (see **4.2**), as has already been mentioned, seems to contain information on mysticism too.

Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib’s anthology *Shuʿabu ’d-dīn* contains a number of poems on *taṣawwuf*, like *Ṭarīqa mālai*, *Ḥaqīqa mālai*, *Maʿrifa mālai*, *Dhikr mālai*, *Wujūd mālai* and *Shuhūd mālai* (cf. Shuʿayb 1993: 165; table of contents of Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib 1990: 120). This is in line with the importance of Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib as one of the leading teachers of the Qādiriyya in South India, among whose disciples were important *ṣūfī* authors in both Tamil and Arwi, like Imām al-ʿArūs (Arwi) or Kuṇaṅkuṭi Mastān Ṣāḥib (Tamil).[30] It was Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib who started the *Kitābu ’l-wisāda* (see below).

Imām al-ʿArūs continued the mystical traditions of his *shaykh* and father-in-law. In many of his earlier works we find references to mystical ideas, thus to the prophetic tradition “die before you die” (cf. Schimmel 1985: 197-8) in HM 2.1, and the religious handbooks deal with similar topics in

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[30] Kuṇaṅkuṭi Mastān (many publications have the Tamil name form “Mastāṉ”) Ṣāḥib is considered to be the most important *ṣūfī* poet in Tamil. His poems are usually printed in Tamil, but Shuʿayb calls him an Arwi poet, and Imām al-ʿArūs quotes a poem by him in the *Fatḥu ’d-dayyān* which is written in Arabic script. Thus I am unable to say whether Kuṇaṅkuṭi Mastān Ṣāḥib used both scripts or just one, and if just one, which one (Shuʿayb 1993: 488-9; Imām al-ʿArūs 1963: 74; Zvelebil 1974: 115; cf. Sahabdeen 1995: 297).

many instances (see for example the chapter about *ma'rifa* in the *Fatḥu 'd-dayyān* ⟨cf. Imām al-ʿArūs 1963: 53-76⟩).

A further Arwi work on *taṣawwuf* by Imām al-ʿArūs is *Ma-ʿrifatin ārāṭṭu*, a lullaby on mystical points written especially for women. Imām al-ʿArūs seems to have written several lullabies on mystical topics (Shu'ayb 1993: 162, 455 and 624).

But his most important contribution to *taṣawwuf* in Arwi is *Ghanīmatu 's-sālikīn*. It was first printed in 1894. It deals with "… all the essential aspects of mysticism" (ibid.: 160) as well as with jurisprudence (ibid.: 611, cf. also ibid.: 455 and Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib 1990: 6). According to Muḥammad Nilām it also contains biographical information on Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, the grandsons of the Prophet (cf. Muḥammad Nilām 1963: xxiii). In the introduction, Imām al-ʿArūs mentions that he collected information from the writings of earlier saints and compiled them in this book, as the laymen of his period did not seem to have much leisure to devote themselves to the study of Sufic ideas. "As a single book, it embodies the substance of all that is found in my earlier works *Fat-ḥul Matīn*, *Fat-ḥud Dayyān*, *Maghānī* and *Fat-ḥussalām*" (translation by Shu'ayb; 1993: 161). Thus, the *Ghanīmatu 's-sālikīn* forms the last of the religious manuals written by Imām al-ʿArūs. Especially as regards the last three volumes *Fatḥu 'd-dayyān*, *Maghānī* and *Ghanīmatu 's-sālikīn*, there seems to be a slight difference with regard to the intended audience: *Fatḥu 'd-dayyān* for the layman, *Maghānī* for the *ʿālim* and *Ghanīmatu 's-sālikīn* for the *ṣūfī*. But

still all of the works were intended for a general audience without sufficient knowledge of Arabic. Both *ʿālim* and *ṣūfī* were of course expected to collect information from the original sources.

Imām al-ʿArūs also wrote books on *taṣawwuf* in Arabic. In fact, he, like other Arwi authors, seems to have been careful not to reveal too many mystical points to the general reader without any mystical experiences, to avoid misinterpretations (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 631). This becomes especially clear in his discussion of the famous sentence *anā ʾl-ḥaqq* ("I am the absolute truth; I am God"), uttered by Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922). He writes (Imām al-ʿArūs 1963: 403-4):

> Living saints, at moments of ecstasy, have lost control of themselves and given vent to expressions like "I am Allah" and "I am the Truth". Their utterances are similar to the utterances made under duress, and ordinary people can never reach their stage of attainment to make such utterances. The expressions made by them were made at moments when they were forgetful of themselves, and in saner moments, when they were reminded of what they had uttered in their forgetfulness, they always repented and prayed for forgiveness …
> It is for this reason that the reading of books written by learned men of great wisdom, …, have been ruled to be *ḥarām* for ordinary people who are incompetent to read and understand them. Many of the ordinary people who read such books slip and fall off the right path, through lack of understanding.

Authors who passed on this kind of information were subject to criticism, as the example of Siddi Levvai shows. Siddi

Levvai (1838-98) started a controversy through his book *As-rāru 'l-'ālam*, because of "… revealing intricate mystical points to the common masses" (Shu'ayb 1993: 500-1).[31]

This attitude gave ammunition for groups who criticised Arwi and the use of the Arabic script as well as *taṣawwuf* in general. It may also have contributed to the image of the "Muslim Brahmins" which was brought up by the Self-respect Movement (cf. More 1993: 90-1).

A very famous book by S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Muṣṭafā of Beruwala is *Mīzān mālai*, first published in 1868, which deals with *taṣawwuf* (Shu'ayb 1993: 159; Jalāltīn 1999: 112). Uwise says that it deals with all aspects of Islam and its "… path of purity" (Uwise 1990: 234; cf. also ibid.: 221).

Another mystical work in Arwi is *Mawāhibu 'l-makkiyya* by Muḥammad G̲h̲awt̲h̲ of Melapalayam published in 1887, which seems to deal mainly with the theory of the *nūr muḥammadī*, the "Light of Muḥammad", "… the technical term for the pre-existence of the soul of the Prophet Muḥammad …" (Massignon 1995:452), from which the other souls emanated. Muḥammad G̲h̲awt̲h̲ used works by ar-Rāzī (d. 1209) and as-Suyūṭī (1445-1505), among others, as sources (Shu'ayb 1993: 286-7 and 418-9).

A work called *Jawāhir nafīsa* by Yūsuf Labbai ʿĀlim of

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[31] I am not sure whether the book is in Arwi. In his bibliography, Shu'ayb lists it as Tamil, but that refers to a reprint made in 1974. As many Arwi works are reprinted today in Tamil, I cannot say whether the original is Arwi or Tamil.

Ammapattinam is mentioned. Shu'ayb does not mention which language it is written in, though all other works of this author mentioned by Shu'ayb are in Arwi. *Jawāhir nafīsa* deals especially with the Qādiriyya "Sufi order" (ibid.: 455; cf. also ibid.: 820).

At the beginning of the twentieth century we have the works of Sayyid Āsiya Ummā (1868-1949), who wrote mainly mystical poems. A number of her poems have been published in 1976 (cf. Sayyid Āsiya Ummā 1976). Another poetess, Fāṭima Jawhariyya (b. 1900), wrote "poems of spiritual nature", that have been partly published in 1985 by her son (Shu'ayb 1993: 504).

Finally, mention must be made of the *Kitābu 'l-wisāda*, also called *Talaiyaṇai kitāb* or "pillow book", maybe named thus on account of its size. It is a manuscript kept in the library of the Madrasatu'l-ʿArūsiyya in Kilakkarai. According to Shu'ayb it "… contains material written by more than a hundred Saints and which deals with various aspects of religious and worldly life" (1993: 95 note 28). It was started by Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib to preserve the writings of important saints and scholars for future generations (Ajmal Khan 1985: 62; cf. also Uwise 1990: 217; Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib 1990: 5-6 even states that more than 350 saints wrote in it). Beside mysticism, the wide range of topics covers not only creed and jurisprudence, but also science, like medicine (see 4.5) or zoology (personal communication from M. Syed Mohamed "Hasan" on 13.6.2000 in Chennai).

4.4. Biographies and Panegyrics

Biographies and panegyrics occupy an important place in Islamic culture. Praising the Prophet, his companions (*ṣaḥāba*) and the saints was and is considered to be a meritorious act by many Muslims, and though a number of reformist and revivalist groups condemn this praising as un-Islamic, the recital of panegyrics still forms part of celebrations in the Islamic world.[32] Similarly, the biographies of holy people are important for Islam, as the lives of the *ṣaḥāba*, saints and above all the Prophet himself set the precedents for a life led according to the rules of Islam, which is also the basis for the *ḥadīth*-literature. Of course, the biographies will not only give the dry facts of the life of this or that person, but also extol and praise their qualities.

The first biographical poems in Arwi were written by Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn. Most important among them is the *Rasūl mālai*, a biographical poem on the life of the Prophet (Shu'ayb 1993: 286; cf. also Uwise 1990: 152;[33] Sayabu Maraicar 1996:

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[32] I was able to visit several recitations of *mawlid*, panegyrics (literally "birthday" or "place of birth"), on the Prophet between August 1999 and June 2000 at the *dargah* of Ḥaḍrat ʿUkkāsha (Ukkāṣ in Tamil, cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 14) in Porto Novo; he is said to have been a companion of the Prophet and a participant of the battle of Badr.

[33] Uwise writes that the *Rasūl mālai* was written by Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn's son, whom he calls "Nayinā Lebbai". But all other authors attribute it to Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn himself. The edition of *Rasūl mā-*

89; Manavai Mustafa 1986: 200).[34] Kokan lists two more poems by Sām S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn which might deal with the life of the Prophet: *Sīra mālai* and *Nabī mālai* (1974: 54-5). But it is as well possible that these are just other names for the *Rasūl mālai*, which is, as Uwise mentions, also called *Napiyullā[35] mālai* (1990: 152).

According to Shu'ayb, Sām S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn also wrote a biography on ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī, the founder of the Qādiriyya *ṭarīqa*, called *Muḥyi 'd-dīn mālai* (1993: 288-9). But no other author mentions this work, though there are other works with the same name by other authors (cf. Uwise 1990: 153;

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lai that is available to me calls the author "S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn S̲h̲ām Naynā Labbai". That this person is identical with Sām S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn is corroborated by the fact that the edition includes a *Mīrān mālai* by the same S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn S̲h̲ām Naynā Labbai, besides a *Nākaimaṇi mālai* by another author (cf. S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn n.d.: 1 and 107). The *Mīrān mālai* is unanimously accepted as a work by Sām S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn, though it is not mentioned by Uwise (on the *Mīrān mālai* see below).

[34] As the *Rasūl mālai* was written almost at the same time as the *Cīr̲āppurāṇam*, the most important Tamil Muslim epic, it might be interesting to compare the two works, especially as there is a legend that Sām S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn's brother S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh supplied the necessary information to Umar̲uppulavar, author of the *Cīr̲āppurāṇam* (cf. Shulman and Subrahmanyam 1993: 524).

[35] Tamil name form, as given by Uwise.

Sayabu Maraicar 1996: 88).[36] But it is probable that Shu'ayb refers to a poem by Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn called *Mīrān mālai*, which deals with the life of ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī (cf. Sayabu Maraicar 1996: 88; Kokan 1974: 55; Shihāb ad-Dīn n.d.).

There are two other works which seem to be biographical poems by Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn: *Nālu yārkaḷ mālai* or *Nālvar mālai* (on the life of the four first caliphs), and *Āṟu imām mālai* (on six Imams; I am unable to say which Imams are meant) (Sayabu Maraicar 1996: 85; Kokan 1974: 54).

While I could not find any panegyrical or biographical poems by Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib (that is, none where these topics predominate), there are a number of them by Imām al-ʿArūs, both in Arwi and Arabic. Among the most important of the Arabic poems is *Mawāhibu 'z-zayn fī manāqibi 'l-hasanayn* on the life of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, the grandsons of the Prophet, which has been translated by the author himself into Arwi (Shu'ayb 1993: 288 and 616).

Among the Arwi panegyrics by Imām al-ʿArūs, *Talai fāti-ḥa* is the most important. Its content are prayers for the intercession and help of the prophets, their wives, and especially of Fāṭima, the daughter of Muḥammad. "It contains an Arabic *qaṣīdah* of 78 lines with its Arwi translation in between. It also contains 115 lines of Arwi and Arabic poems" (Shu-'ayb 1993: 613). But the editon of the *Talai fātiḥa* available to

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[36] Both Shu'ayb and Uwise mention a number of other biographies (often said to be translations) on ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī (Shu'ayb 1993: 289; Uwise 1990: 235-6).

me contains much more material. Of its seventeen texts (some, like the introduction, in prose), seven are in Arwi, six in Arabic, and four employ both languages. The Arabic poems are on the whole shorter than the Arwi ones, making up only about eight of the 68 pages (including the title page) of the edition, though the Arwi is sometimes heavily Arabicised. But the longest text, called *Laka 'l-ḥamdu*,[37] combines both languages and makes up nearly half of the total; this is probably the Arabic poem with Arwi translation Shu'ayb is referring to (cf. Imām al-ʿArūs n.d.: 13-44).

The *Talai fātiḥa* is recited particularly by women, mainly during the months of Ramaḍān and Muḥarram, as well as on special occasions like pregnancy. Though certain "revivalist" groups have attacked and condemned the work and its recital as un-Islamic, it seems to be still held in high esteem by many Muslims, especially in Sri Lanka (ibid.: 74-5).

Apparently, the *Ghanīmatu 's-sālikīn* also contains biographical information on Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (cf. Muḥammad Nilām 1963: xxiii).

Two biographies have been prepared on the founder of the Shādhiliyya order, ʿAbu'l-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī. One was written by Nūḥ the Junior. This work is called *Nafaḥātu 'l-ʿanbar fī manāqibi quṭbi 'l-akbar*. The other biography called *Hidāyatu 's-sālikīn* was written by a certain Muḥammad Ismāʿīl of Nagapattinam.

Nūḥ the Junior has apparently also translated a famous col-

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[37] In most cases the first words of a poem form its title.

lection of biographies of saints, Farīd ad-Dīn ʿAṭṭār's *Tadh-kiratu 'l-awliyāʾ*, into Arwi. These were published as *Ad-du-raru fī hikāyāti 'l-ghurar al-mulaqqabi bi qaṣaṣi 'l-awliyāʾ* in 1881.

A number of other biographies, for example on the Nagore saint Shāh al-Ḥamīd or Maryam (Mary), seem to exist (Shu-'ayb 1993: 286-90).

Shaykh Muṣṭafā of Beruwala eulogised ʿUmar of Kayal-pattinam in the poem *Meyññānattuti*. He discusses the mysti-cal significance of the three Arabic letters which constitute the name ʿUmar: ʿ*ain*, *mīm* and *rā*. While Shu'ayb says it is in Arwi, Jalāltīn explicitly states that it is written in Tamil lan-guage and script ("… tamil moliyil, tamil lipiyil iyarriya ka-vitai nūl, meyññānat tuti enpatākum", Jalāltīn 1999: 113; Shu-'ayb 1993: 110-1; Uwise 1990: 202).

Kashāwatta Muḥammad Labbai ʿĀlim is reported to have written panegyrics on his spiritual master, Kāyalpaṭṭinam Taikkā Ṣāḥib, in Arabic and Arwi (Shu'ayb 1993: 112).

Quite popular in Arwi are poems of the *munājāt* genre (the Arabic term denotes a secret dialogue or confidential conver-sation), which "… invoke blessings" and are "… also gene-rally used for the extempore prayer offered after the usual liturgical form has been recited" (Uwise 1990: 120-1; cf. also Ajmal Khan 1999: 44). Among the poems by Sayyid Āsiya Ummā published in 1976 is a large number of *munājāt*s (cf. Sayyid Āsiya Ummā 1976), and Uwise mentions a collection of twelve such poems in the Arabic script (1990: 121).

4.5. Miscellaneous

Apart from the above-mentioned works, there are a number of works on different topics which I could not sort into one of the sections.

First, there are some commentaries on works listed above. S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Muṣṭafā's son, S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Muḥammad Ḥājiyar, has written a commentary on the *Mīzān mālai* (see **4.3**) named *Iẓhāru 'l-ḥaqqi ʿani 'l-bāṭil fī bayāni murādi mīzāni 'l-ʿādil* (Shu'ayb 1993: 496; Uwise 1990: 237-8).

At least two commentaries have been prepared by Muftī Muḥammad Tamīm of Madras (1865-1944), one on Maḥmūd Ṭībī's work on creed, *Niẓāmu 'l-ʿaqāʾid* (see **4.2**), the other on *Jawāhir nafīsa* by Yūsuf Labbai ʿĀlim of Ammapattinam (see **4.3**), though, as I have already mentioned, I do not know whether that work is in Arwi or Arabic (Shu'ayb 1993: 425 and 455).

A special place in the Arabic literature of South India is occupied by S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh's *Qaṣīdatu 'l-witriyya fī madḥi k̲h̲ayri 'l-bariyya*, also known as *Tak̲h̲mīsun wa tadh-yīlun ʿalā qaṣīdati 'l-witriyya*. *Tak̲h̲mīs* means that to each couplet in an original text, three hemistiches are added before the couplet, thus producing a stanza of 5 lines. The original *Qaṣīdatu 'l-witriyya* was composed by K̲h̲aṭīb al-Bagh-dādī. The *tak̲h̲mīs* by S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh contains 4210 hemistiches, of which 1218 form the original of this panegyric poem. S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh's work was translated into Arwi by Nūḥ the Junior, as *Nafaḥātu 'l-ʿitriyya fī s̲h̲araḥi 'l-*

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witriyya, and printed in 1896. Apparently, it also contains a commentary (ibid.: 129-33 and 292-3; Uwise 1990: 238).

Of the works translated from Arabic into Arwi and Tamil, I want to mention a translation of *Bidāyatu 'l-hidāya* by al-Ghazzālī (1058-1111), which was first translated by Sayyid Muḥammad ʿĀlim Pulavar (1880-1959) into Arwi, then printed in Tamil script, and called *Nērvaḻiyin ārampam* (Shu'ayb 1993: 201 and 283-4; Ceyyit Hasan Maulānā 1999: 296). Apparently, also al-Ghazzālī's *Miʿrāju 'l-ʿārifīn* and ʿAbd al-Karīm Jīlī's (d. between 1408 and 1417) *Al-insān al-kāmil* have been translated into Arwi (Ceyyit Hasan Maulānā 1999: 296).

Perhaps the earliest translation is *Tarjamatu 'l-bahja* by Shaykh Ṣadaqatullāh, which is the translation of ash-Shaṭṭa-nawfī's *Bahjatu 'l-asrār*, an important work on the life of ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī. Shulman and Subrahmanyam call the translation Shaykh Ṣadaqatullāh's "best-known work" (1993: 524; Shu'ayb 1993: 288).

There are a number of translations of *khuṭba*s, sermons, into Arwi, especially those of ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Nabāta (d. 984), which have been translated by Imām al-ʿArūs and his students. Nūḥ the Junior and Shaykh Muṣṭafā are also reported to have translated *khuṭba*s by ibn Nabāta. Apart from that, there are a number of other translations of sermons (Shu'ayb 1993: 173-5; Jalāltīn 1999: 113).[38]

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[38] An interesting detail is that the *khuṭba* collection of the Lucknow scholar Mawlānā ʿAbd al-Ḥayy (1847-85), who thought that

A certain ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān of Nellikuppam (d. 1927), who according to Shuʻayb was a converted Brahmin, translated the *Fatāwā-i ʿālamgīrī* into Arwi (Shuʻayb 1993: 285). This collection of rulings was prepared by a panel of leading *ʿulamāʾ* of the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence. The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb aimed at a compilation of "authoritative and reliable rulings" which soon gained popularity in the empire (cf. Richards 1994: 173-4). Shuʻayb states that S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh was the chief advisor of the panel and his son one of the members (cf. 1993: 284-5). It should be noted that according to Shulman and Subrahmanyam, an oral legend recorded at the beginning of the twentieth century states that Aurangzeb repeatedly offered juridical positions to S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh, which the latter refused, sending other people like his son instead (1993: 525). Unfortunately, Shuʻayb does not give his source, thus I am unable to comment on the reliability of the tradition that S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh and his son were involved in the compilation of the *Fatāwā-i ʿālamgīri*.

Finally, the Bible has apparently been translated into Arwi (ibid.: 103-4).

Many books to help students in a number of matters have been published. Mention has been made in **4.2** of the books which provide children with basic information on the schools of jurisprudence. There are translations of Arabic grammars and works that help to pronounce the Qurʾān correctly. Text-

the translation of sermons is "undesirable" (*makrūh*), was translated into Arwi and published in 1942 (Shuʻayb 1993: 173-5).

books and primers in Arabic have also been published, most important among them being a book series called *Hidāyatu 'l-qāsimiyya* to teach Arabic to children, published by Siddi Levvai (Shu'ayb 1993: 111, 164-5, 293 and 500-1).

There are also a number of dictionaries. Between 1903-05, the first Arabic-Arwi dictionary was published in the form of a periodical by Ḥakīm Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh Ṣāḥib. Though running to 504 pages, it only covers the first three letters of the Arabic alphabet plus some items of the fourth letter. The first complete dictionary was compiled by a student of Imām al-ʿArūs, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, who was the principal of the Indian Arwi School in Singapore. The first edition was released, apparently in Singapore, in 1917 (Uwise gives 1913, 1990: 238). The title is *At-tuḥfatu 'ṣ-ṣamadiyya fī tarjumati alfāẓi 'l-ʿarabiyya*.

An Arwi encyclopaedia, *Najātu 'l-anām fī nayli 'l-marām*, was prepared by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm. A dictionary consisting of two parts was compiled and published in 1937 by Sayyid Yāsīn Mawlānā al-Balqāmi (1889-1966). Uwise gives its title as *Kaamoosul arabi va arvi* (ibid.: 239). Ṣūfī Kona Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir (b. 1938), known as Ṣūfī Ḥaḍrat, compiled a dictionary of legal terms with explanations. Unfortunately, Shu'ayb does not give any further information. Finally, there seems to be an Arwi-Arabic dictionary by Muḥammad Muḥyi'd-dīn of Kilakkarai (Shu'ayb 1993: 290-2).

There are poems on medicine, e.g. by Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, and translations of medical works, sometimes as part

of other books like the *Kitābu 'l-wisāda* (ibid.: 165-6). An interesting work has been reported to be in the Indonesian Manuscript Library in Jakarta. It is a book on medicine edited in 1807 and written in four different languages, namely Javanese, Persian, Arwi and Arabic (Shu'ayb 1993: 105-6).

Shu'ayb mistakenly calls *'Alāmat lankapuri*, published in Malay by a Malay, Tuan Baba Yunus, at Colombo in 1869, the first Arwi journal. But several Arwi periodicals, most of them weeklies, were published, like *'Ajā'ibu 'l-akhbār* at Madras in the 1870s and *Kashfu 'r-rān 'an qalbi 'l-jān* at Colombo from 1889 onwards. Other magazines appeared during the first half of the twentieth century (Shu'ayb 1993: 103).

Imām al-'Arūs has written a novel called *Madīnatu 'n-nuḥās* (Tamil authors usually translate it as "Copper Town", but this story from the Arabian Nights is more famous in the West as "City of Brass"). At one point, Shu'ayb states that it probably belongs to the writer's earlier period, while at other places he specifies the year 1858-59. Both he and Ajmal Khan state that the novel was written before *Piratāpa mutaliyār carittiram* by Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai and *Acanpē carittiram* by Siddi Levvai. If this should be true, then *Madīnatu'n-nuḥās* could be the first novel written in the Tamil language. It was printed in the Arabic script in 1900 at Colombo, and in the Tamil script in 1978-79 in Madras (ibid.: 104, 619-20, 632 and 785-6; Ajmal Khan 1985: 79).[39]

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[39] Shu'ayb convincingly argues that the writing of a novel by Imām

5. Important Arwi authors
5.1. Sām S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn

The fourth of the "five gems", the sons of S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Sulaymān (1591-1668)[40] (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 498-9), was according to Shu-'ayb born in 1634-35 in Kayalpattinam (ibid.: 140 and 281; Sa-yabu Maraicar 1996: 153). In contrast to his brothers S̲h̲ams ad-Dīn, Aḥmad, Ṣadaqatullāh and Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn, he concentrated on the writing and propagation of Arwi literature. Though he also wrote some Arabic works, most of his writings are in Arwi. Being one of the first (if not the first) known authors in Arwi, he produced a great number of works on different topics (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 140-2 and 483; Ajmal Khan 1985: 52).

Like his brothers, Sām S̲h̲ihāb ad-Dīn was engaged in the revival of Islam and Muslim educational institutions in South India and Sri Lanka after Portuguese colonialism. His translations of *aḥādīt̲h̲* as well as his poems on different aspects of Islam in Arwi (ibid.; see **4.1** and **4.2**) were part of this "mass education" campaign, as was the habit of reciting

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al-ʿArūs was facilitated by the greater importance of prose works in Arabic in comparison to classical Tamil literature. Imām al-ʿArūs himself wrote a number of prose works in Arabic and Arwi (personal communication from Dr. Shu'ayb on 28.11.1999 in Chennai). The title of the edition of the novel in the Tamil script has been translated into *Tāmirappaṭṭaṇam* (Ajmal Khan 1985: 79).

[40] Kokan mentions that S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Sulaymān himself wrote poems in Tamil, but he gives no details (1974: 54).

takhmīs (see **4.5**) at private houses on Thursdays (Ajmal Khan 1985: 53).

He travelled with his brothers S͟hayk͟h Ṣadaqatullāh and Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn to the holy places of Islam and during this time campaigned with them against the use of tobacco and tobacco products. They are even said to have appealed to the Ottoman emperor to ban the use of tobacco. (ibid.: 52-3; Shu'ayb 1993: 480-1).[41] Sām S͟hihāb ad-Dīn is said to have written a work in Arwi against tobacco called *Tampākkumālai* (Ajmal Khan 1985: 52; Sayabu Maraicar 1996: 86 calls it *Pukaiyilai vilakku mālai*). Similarly, he campaigned against a number of social evils, including the habit of taking dowry (Ajmal Khan 1985: 153; Shu'ayb 1993: 163).

He survived all his brothers and died in 1709 (ibid.: 53).

5.2. Kīl̲akkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib

S͟hayk͟h ʿAbd al-Qādir of Kilakkarai is popularly known as Kīl̲akkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib to differentiate him from his contemporary and brother-in-law, S͟hayk͟h ʿAbd al-Qādir of Ka-

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[41] Shu'ayb calls the emperor appealed to "Murād" (1993: 480), though this is hardly possible, as the reign of Sultan Murad IV ended in 1640, when most of the brothers were but children (and Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn was not even born yet), and the next Murad to ascend the throne was Murad V in 1876. Thus, if we do not want to dismiss the legend as pious fiction, the Sultan cannot have been called Murad. The most probable ruler would be Sultan Mehmed IV "the Hunter" (reigned 1648-87).

yalpattinam, called Kāyalpaṭṭiṉam Taikkā Ṣāḥib (1777-1855)
(Shu'ayb 1993: 487-8). In fact, Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib was
also born in Kayalpattinam in 1778, being a descendant of
one of Shaykh Ṣadaqatullāh's daughters. He studied in Ki-
lakkarai and married a granddaughter of Awwākkār Marai-
kāyar (1693-1766), who had supported Muslim scholars and
the construction of mosques and *madrasa*s (Islamic educa-
tional institutions). With her, he had five daughters, but no
son (Ajmal Khan 1985: 62; cf. also Shu'ayb 1993: 510; Itrīs
Maraikkāyar 1986: 62-3).

  Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib later (1805) was given charge of
one of the most important *madrasa*s in Tamilnadu at Kilak-
karai, which had been founded in 1671 by Shaykh Ṣadaqatul-
lāh and renamed Madrasatu'l-ʿArūsiyya after its reorgani-
sation in 1851 by Imām al-ʿArūs (see **5.3**; Shu'ayb 1993: 803-
4).[42] He introduced a scheme of free boarding and lodging
there (ibid.: 524). Many of his pupils became famous on their
own, like Kuṉaṅkuṭi Mastān Ṣāḥib, probably the best known
ṣūfī poet of South India (see **4.3**), the poet Shaykh ʿAbd al-
Qādir Naynā Labbai ʿĀlim called Pulavar Nāyakam, to whose
credit go four epics in Tamil, Imām al-ʿArūs, Kīḻakkarai
Taikkā Ṣāḥib's son-in-law and deputy (*khalīfa*) (see **5.3**),
Yūsuf Labbai ʿĀlim of Ammapattinam (cf. ibid.: 500) and the

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[42] The introduction to *Shuʿabu 'd-dīn* states that Kīḻakkarai Taikkā
Ṣāḥib started the *madrasa* himself (Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib 1990:
7). According to Kokan, it was started by Imām al-ʿArūs (1974:
518).

merchant Ḥabīb Muḥammad "Aracar" (1777-1816), who was a descendant of Awwākkār Maraikāyar like Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib's wife. Apart from supporting many institutions founded by Awwākkār Maraikāyar, Ḥabīb Muḥammad "Aracar" is credited with the establishment of a mosque and reportedly also an Arwi school on the Island Phulo or Pulau Brani three miles from Singapore, on which a naval base is situated nowadays (ibid.: 511-2; Ajmal Khan 1985: 61).

Among Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib's many literary contributions (see **4**, especially **4.3**) is also one of the most important Arabic *qaṣīda*s of South India, called *Al-qaṣīdatu 'sh-shaf-ʿiyya fī madḥi <u>sh</u>āfiʿi 'l-jamʿiyya* or short <u>Shaf</u>ʿiyya (Shuʿayb 1993: 136-9 and 358-61).

Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib died in 1850 and was buried in Kilakkarai (cf. ibid.: 488, 524 and 602-3).

5.3. Imām al-ʿArūs Sayyid Muḥammad ʿĀlim

Sayyid Muḥammad, known as Imām al-ʿArūs, was born in 1816 in Kayalpattinam.[43] His father <u>Sh</u>ay<u>kh</u> Aḥmad (1784-1845), also known as Veḷḷai Aḥmad, and his mother Amīna (1790-1880) stemmed from the family of <u>Sh</u>ay<u>kh</u> Ṣadaqatul-lāh. Most of the information on his family and childhood comes from an Arabic elegy on his parents. He had eight

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[43] The life sketch of Imām al-ʿArūs is based on Muḥammad Nilām (1963: xix-xxii & xxvii-xxix), supplemented by information from other books.

brothers and four sisters, but four of his brothers and one of his sisters died at a young age. His father got his income from scribing. At the age of two, Imām al-ʿArūs and his family migrated to Kilakkarai. He was trained in religious subjects from a very early age, and memorised the whole Qurʾān before reaching the age of ten.

In Kilakkarai, he got the opportunity to study under Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib. His teacher was so pleased with him that he married his fourth daughter, Sāra Ummā (d. 1859), to him in 1837. He was also accepted by Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib as his disciple (*murīd*) in the Qādiriyya order, and later was even appointed his deputy (*khalīfa*).

He earned his livelihood through a hardware business in Madurai. Later, a branch was opened in Kilakkarai, where goods were sold which had been brought in from other places in British India. He also used to transport scrap iron from Sri Lanka to Kilakkarai and import rice from Burma (Shu'ayb 1993: 588).

Imām al-ʿArūs was in charge of the Madrasatu'l-ʿArūsiyya, an office he had inherited from his teacher Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib. He expanded the scheme of free boarding and lodging at the *madrasa* which had been introduced by the latter. This earned him the attention of the Nawab of Arcot, Ghulām Ghawth Khān Bahādur Wālājāh V. As Imām al-ʿArūs refused, in accordance with the tradition of his forefathers, to meet the Nawab at his palace, the meeting took place in the Wālājāhi-mosque in Madras. Imām al-ʿArūs composed two Arabic poems on the Nawab, who himself intro-

duced the free boarding-and-lodging system at the Madrasa-i Azam in Madras (ibid.: 514-5; Ajmal Khan 1985: 66).

Funds for the Madrasatu'l-ʿArūsiyya came from different sources. Imām al-ʿArūs used some of his own earnings for the *madrasa*. Another source of income was the sale of the books by Imām al-ʿArūs, not only among his many pupils, but also to a wider public. This was in part facilitated by the establishment of lithographic printing presses in Bombay and Kilakkarai (in 1883). Donations were a third (though limited) way of funding. Finally, the *madrasa* is said to have received one rupee from each boat touching the port of Galle in Sri Lanka, where the Muslim community enjoyed an influential position. This money was remitted to Kilakkarai through the _khalīfa_ of Imām al-ʿArūs, Muḥammad ʿAlī (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 589-91).

Imām al-ʿArūs travelled widely in India, Sri Lanka and several Arab countries, of course including the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. He is credited with participating in the establishment of more than 350 mosques in Sri Lanka as well as some in India (ibid.: 640; Ajmal Khan 1985: 81).

Apart from building up a library for the *madrasa*, he is credited with 82 major works in Arabic and Arwi, as well as an unknown number of smaller poems, composed on mosques, donors of books etc., in the same languages as well as Malayalam written in Arabic script.[44] He is said to have

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[44] Shu'ayb gives a couplet in Arabic-Malayalam at the bottom of 1993: 377.

known Malayalam, Persian, Urdu and Sanskrit, besides Arabic and Arwi/Tamil.

A number of honorific titles were bestowed on him. The title "Imām al-ʿArūs" and the Tamil equivalent "Māppiḷḷai Leppai" are the best known. According to Shu'ayb, he was called thus as he combined religious knowledge with external cleanliness, being always dressed well like a bridegroom (Tamil *māppiḷḷai*, Arabic *ʿarūs*; Shu'ayb: 586). On the other hand, Muḥammad Nilām and some other authors link this name with the fact that he was the son-in-law (also *māppiḷ-ḷai*) of Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib, who himself called him this way (1963: xx-xxi; cf. also Itrīs Maraikkāyar 1986: 70; Ajmal Khan 1985: 65) There are a number of other titles (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 586-7).

Imām al-ʿArūs had three daughters and two sons with his first wife. Both of the sons, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir known as Ṣāḥib al-Khalwa (1848-1913) and Shāh al-Ḥamīd known as Ṣāḥib al-Jalwa (1854-1920), as well as at least one of the daughters, Sayyid Fāṭima (1845-1907), were scholars of renown.[45] In 1844 he married another woman, Fāṭima Bīwī, with whom he had a daughter, but the girl died young. After

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[45] The son and *khalīfa* of Ṣāḥib al-Jalwa, Shaykh Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Qādir (1891-1976), known as Shaykh Nāyakam, was the president of the South Indian *jamāʿatu 'l-ʿulamāʾ* (association of Muslim religious scholars). He tried to further the use of Arwi by supporting teaching institutions and encouraging the *ʿulamāʾ* to use Arwi. Dr. Shu'ayb in turn is his son (Shu'ayb 1993: 523, 794 and 804).

the death of his first wife Sāra Ummā he married her sister but had no children with her. Muḥammad Nilām mentions a last daughter with a slave-girl (*surrīya*) towards the end of his life (1963: xxi).

Imām al-ʿArūs died in 1898 in Kilakkarai and was buried beside his teacher and father-in-law, Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣā-ḥib.

5.4. Shaykh Muṣṭafā of Beruwala

Shaykh Muṣṭafā was born in Beruwala, Sri Lanka, as the son of Adam Bāwā in 1836. He studied in Kayalpattinam in South India under a number of scholars, but his most important teacher seems to have been Kāyalpaṭṭiṇam Taikkā Ṣā-ḥib, since he mentions Shaykh ʿUmar, the father and Shaykh of Kāyalpaṭṭiṇam Taikkā Ṣāḥib, as his Shaykh several times and has also written a panegyric poem about him (see **4.4**). But Shaykh ʿUmar died in 1801, about 35 years before the birth of Shaykh Muṣṭafā, so "… it is most probable that Kayalpattinam *Tayka Ṣāḥib*, son of ʿUmar *Wali*, might have been the spiritual master and a teacher to *Shaykh* Muṣṭafā *Wali*" (Shuʿayb 1993: 276 note 1; cf. also ibid.: 110-1, 501 and 525). That another important scholar of Sri Lanka, Kashā-watta Muḥammad Labbai ʿĀlim, was also a disciple of Kā-yalpaṭṭiṇam Taikkā Ṣāḥib, makes this even more probable (ibid.: 112 and 525).[46]

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[46] That Shuʿayb mentions him and Kashāwatta Muḥammad Labbai

Apart from Kāyalpaṭṭiṇam Taikkā Ṣāḥib, S̲h̲ay̲k̲h̲ Muṣṭafā also had other teachers (Kāyalpaṭṭiṇam Taikkā Ṣāḥib died in 1855 when S̲h̲ay̲k̲h̲ Muṣṭafā was just 19 years old), among them Pālayam Ḥabīb Muḥammad ʿĀlim, who wrote the second *tafsīr* in Arwi, *Futūḥātu'r-raḥmāniyya*, while S̲h̲ay̲k̲h̲ Muṣṭafā wrote the first (see **4.1**), and Aḥmad ibn Mubārak Mawlānā, a scholar from Yemen, whom S̲h̲ay̲k̲h̲ Muṣṭafā eulogised in an Arabic poem (ibid.: 276; Jalāltīn 1999: 112).

S̲h̲ay̲k̲h̲ Muṣṭafā apparently returned to Sri Lanka after his studies and is among the most important Muslim scholars of the country. He contributed several works in Arwi, among them the *Mīzān mālai* (see **4.3**) and the first Arwi *tafsīr* *Fatḥu 'r-raḥmān* (see **4.1**). He also wrote in Arabic and translated works from Arabic to Arwi, like the above-mentioned *k̲h̲uṭba*s of ibn Nabāta (see **4.5**). Jalāltīn also mentions the translation of a part of a work just called *Iḥyā* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūmi 'd-dīn* by al-G̲h̲azzālī?). He calls the translated part *Pavāyitul akāyit* (*Fawāʾidu'l-ʿaqāʾid*?) and states that it has been included in the *Mīzān mālai* (1999: 113). S̲h̲ay̲k̲h̲ Muṣṭafā died in 1887 or 1888 (cf. ibid.: 111; Shuʿayb 1993: 159, 275 and 496).

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ʿĀlim as disciples of Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib in one instance (1993: 454) is probably a mistake. Kokan credits S̲h̲ay̲k̲h̲ ʿUmar with composing Tamil poems, too, but as with S̲h̲ay̲k̲h̲ Sulaymān, he does not elaborate on this (1974: 454).

6. Conclusion

Several conclusions regarding the nature and character of Arwi literature and its authors can be drawn from what has been said above. Arwi started to develop from the end of the seventeenth century onwards, thus a bit later than Muslim literature in Tamil script. Apparently the Muslim community had recovered by that time from Portuguese persecution. It should also be kept in mind that the northern tracts of Tamil-nadu were incorporated into the Mughal empire during the first years of the eighteenth century. Shaykh Ṣadaqatullāh is claimed to have been in close contact with the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, who is credited with having ordered the erection of the tomb of the Shaykh in Kilakkarai (Shu'ayb 479-80; Shulman and Subrahmanyam 1993: 525).

The Arabic script continued to be used by the Tamil speaking Muslims beside the Tamil script. Arwi's "golden age" seems to have been the end of the nineteenth century, which saw a number of important authors, like Imām al-ʿArūs, Shaykh Muṣṭafā, Nūḥ the Junior and Yūsuf Labbai ʿĀlim. Lithographic printing in Bombay and the establishment of a lithographic printing-press by Imām al-ʿArūs in Kilakkarai may have furthered the publishing of Arwi books. The colonial situation and the notion that the Tamil speaking Muslims were not Muslims proper, which was current among the British and a number of Urdu speaking Muslims, may have been additional reasons for an increase in the production of literature written in the Arabic script, emphasising the close con-

nections to the heartlands of Islam.[47]

Regarding its relation to Muslim literature written in Tamil proper, there are differences as well as similarities. With regard to the content, Arwi poems are rather "didactic" than "narrative". While many of the Tamil poems dealing with the teachings of Islam still retain a narrative frame (like the *Āyiramacalā*), most of the poems in Arwi have no narrative part (except, of course, the biographies). The content-matter of an Arwi poem is often indicated in the title, thus producing a number of poems which share the same title but were written by different authors. The loosely defined genre of *mālai* probably served this kind of didactic poem best. Only rarely do we find poems written in another one of the genres

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[47] The British district gazetteers provide a good example of whom the British considered to be the "real" Muslims. In the gazetteer of South Arcot district written in 1906, Francis states that "the Musalmans of *pure descent* [that is, Urdu speaking Muslims with ties to northern India; T.T.] hold themselves to be socially superior to the Marakkáyars and the Marakkáyars consider themselves better than the Labbais" (1906: 87; my italics). These Muslims of "pure descent" were considered to be much more worthy of interest than the Tamil speaking Muslims. The statistical appendix for Madurai of 1905 collectively calls Tamil Muslims "Labbai", while the Urdu speaking Muslims are divided into different sub-groups like "Sheik" or "Pathán", even though the number of the Urdu speaking Muslims does not exceed 30000, which is only a small group compared with the 137119 "Labbais" mentioned (Statistical Appendix 1905: 7).

common in Tamil Muslim literature, except for the genres employed exclusively by Muslims, especially the *munājāt* genre. Thus, the anthology <u>Shu</u>ʿabu 'd-dīn by Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib contains a *Kummippāṭṭu* (cf. 1990: 101-4). The religious manuals written in the second half of the nineteenth century are to a certain degree the result of these developments, and form a very distinct part of Arwi literature by that time, especially as they are written in prose.

But, on the other hand, there is no real dividing line between Islamic literature in Tamil or Arwi when it comes to ideas and authors. Certainly, Arwi poems, whose authors were often members of the *ʿulamāʾ* and wrote works in Arabic as well, may have had a stronger tendency towards "orthodoxy", and some Tamil poems might hardly be considered "Islamic" by certain Muslims, but by and large they have a common outlook. Anything else would in fact be quite surprising, as the authors often had very close connections. As mentioned, the Arwi author Kīlakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib was the teacher of the Tamil poet <u>Shaykh</u> ʿAbd al-Qādir Naynā Labbai ʿĀlim as well as of Imām al-ʿArūs, the most important personality in Arwi literature.

A characteristic trait of many Arwi authors is the combination of religio-juridical scholar (*ʿālim*) and orthodox mystic (*ṣūfī*), similar to the type of "reformist Sufis" described by Eaton in his study on Bijapur (who were also mainly members of the Qādiriyya order).[48] But there is also a major diffe-

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[48] A clear division and opposition between *ʿālim* and *ṣūfī* is diffi-

rence. Contrary to the Muslims of northern India, the South Indian Muslims were used to living in states governed by non-Muslims. There was no use in urging the rulers to create an Islamic society or to criticise their "un-Islamic" habits. The best the Muslims could hope for was some kind of autonomy in juridical matters, as Duarte Barbosa reports from Kayalpattinam at the beginning of the sixteenth century (cf. Duarte Barbosa 1989: 124). The Arwi poems reveal their concern to pass religious information to the general population which was not able to read the Arabic originals, and to attack customs which the ʿulamāʾ considered to be un-Islamic. On the other hand, as there was no ruler to check the spread of "heretical" teachings, the fear of these very same scholars of revealing "too much" and causing misinterpretations becomes understandable. Thus, while the reformist Sufis of Bijapur tended to use Arabic and to address themselves to the court instead of the common population (cf. Eaton 1996: 133-4), their South Indian counterparts wrote for the general Muslim population as well. The use of the Arabic script did not hinder their efforts to reach the laymen, as many of the inhabitants (including women) of the Muslim towns in coastal Tamilnadu as well as in Sri Lanka were able to read

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cult to discern for the time before the nineteenth century anyway. The discussion on certain practices often linked with ṣūfīs, like tomb worship etc., is perhaps better seen in the light of "reformists" vs. "traditionalists" rather than of ʿulamāʾ vs. ṣūfīs (cf. van der Veer 2000: 58-64).

Arabic. In the town of Koothanallur in Tiruvarur district, for example, most people were able to read and write only Arabic, but not Tamil, during the first half of the twentieth century (personal communication from Capt. Nam Ameen on 18.6.2000 in Koothanallur).

There are a number of reasons for the decline of Arwi. First, the Sufic background of the authors and their defence of the *ṭarīqa*s, of beliefs and practices associated with the veneration of the Prophet (like belief in his intercession on the Judgement Day, or *mawlid* recitals) and other practices have been attacked and denounced by "purist" groups since the nineteenth century. The necessity to learn the Tamil script and the easy availability of modern printing presses for this script may also have had their share in the decline (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 120-2). Finally, the propagation of Urdu and ignorance of the special Arwi signs among Tamil speaking Muslims had their impact on Arwi. I have often heard people saying things like *araputtamiḻ rompa kaṣṭam*, "Arabic-Tamil is very difficult", while in fact for somebody who knows both the Tamil and the Arabic script (as many of the people I spoke to did), learning the few special letters would be a matter of hardly one or two hours. That Arwi texts are usually written with vowels makes them much more easy to read than, for example, Urdu texts. But it is exactly the ignorance about these special letters which causes the difficulties. Not so much their shape, but the fact that they are not recognised as special letters is to be blamed for this.

A discussion I had with two small boys in Parangipettai on

18.3.2000 may illustrate this: One of the two boys, who both learned Arabic, had a small booklet containing *sūra*s from the Qurʾān and prayers. In-between each text were some introductory lines, also written in the Arabic script. One of the boys pointed to these and said "Tamil". I spotted some of the special Arwi letters in the sentence and tried to decipher them. The boys apparently had no knowledge of these signs, and insisted on reading them like the Arabic letters on which they were based. This of course produced words which were in no way understandable to the boys, and had they not been told that the language of these sentences was Tamil, they would have probably believed it to be Arabic, too. I indicated to them that the word they read as *ḥullafadukiraṯhu* was Tamil *collappaṭukiṟatu*, "it is said", and they only started to believe me when I showed them that the word they had pronounced as *affā* was simply *appā*, "father". What startled me most was their unwillingness to accept the Arwi letters as special letters, even though they acknowledged that there were some dots too many in the texts. One of the things that had confused them was the knowledge of the Persian-based Urdu alphabet, especially the fact that -*p*- is written in an entirely different way in the two scripts. Of course, the two boys had expected the use of the very same signs which are used in Urdu, to write Tamil.

To make the texts of Arwi authors again available to a greater public, there is a tendency to publish Arwi works in the Tamil script nowadays. Poems by Kīḻakkarai Taikkā Ṣāḥib as well as the *ḥadīth*-translations of Sām Shihāb ad-Dīn

are available in the Tamil script (cf. Shu'ayb 1993: 282), and I had no problems obtaining an edition of the *Maghānī* by Imām al-ʿArūs in the Tamil script in a bookshop in Chennai, while I could not get any in the Arabic script. Given the tendency of some editors to make changes in the text ("correcting" colloquial language, translating Arabic words), the original editions in the Arabic script are to be preferred to those in the Tamil script.

The research of Arwi can offer insights into a number of subjects. The texts are not only interesting for linguists and scholars involved in the study of Islam, but for example also for historians, as many of the poems refer to customs practised in certain periods (the case of paying dowry is one example) or the texts discuss the introduction of new ideas.[49] Arwi might also be important for research in the networks across the Indian Ocean, especially with regard to Islamic scholarship and mysticism. Many scholars of the Arwi regions were known for their works in Arabic in Arabia proper, they travelled to the holy places and engaged in discussions on religious topics. In chapter 11 of his book, Shu'ayb lists some examples where the scholars of South India held opinions differing from those traditionally accepted among

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[49] Imām al-ʿArūs refutes the ideas of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, the founder of the Wahhābiyya, and two of his disciples, in his *Fatḥu 'd-dayyān* (cf. 1963: 296-7). The ideas of the Wahhābiyya have been current in South India since the first half of the nineteenth century (cf. Kokan 1974: 381-3).

Arabic scholars. An instance would be the controversy, mentioned by Shu'ayb, between S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh and Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn with the scholar Muḥammad Ja'far al-Barzanjī, who lived in Mecca, on the correct pronunciation of "Allāh" (1993: 382-3).

On the other hand, Arabs and Arabic scholars seem to have visited the important religious places of South India and Sri Lanka fairly often. According to Ajmal Khan, scholars from Arabia came with S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Ṣadaqatullāh to teach in the *madrasa* founded by him (1985: 55-6). The presence of the Yemenite scholar Aḥmad ibn Mubārak Mawlānā, one of the teachers of S̲h̲ayk̲h̲ Muṣṭafā, in Kayalpattinam, is another point in case.

Examples of the possible importance of Arwi for cultural contacts with Southeast Asia are the medical book written partly in Javanese and partly in Arwi, among other languages, mentioned in **4.5**, and the first Arwi journal being published by a Malay (see also **4.5**). These few examples should be sufficient to indicate Arwi's role in the reception and transmission of Islamic teachings across the Indian Ocean area.

Arwi has passed almost unnoticed among Western scholarship for a long time. But it should not be overlooked that it forms an important part of Muslim culture in Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu.[50]

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Subgruppen tamilsprachiger Muslime
Südindiens[1]

1. Einleitung

Unter den Muslimen Indiens gehören die tamilsprachigen wohl zu den am wenigsten erforschten. Eine Erklärung hierfür mag ihre geringe Zahl sein. Laut dem Zensus von 1991 waren gerade 5,5 % der Bevölkerung Tamilnadus, die zu diesem Zeitpunkt bei knapp 56 Millionen lag, und 6,5 % der Bevölkerung Pondicherrys (1991: 808.000 Einwohner) Muslime. Diese machten nur 3 % bzw. < 0,1 % der muslimischen Bevölkerung Indiens aus (Zahlen nach: Assayag und Tarabout 1997: 22). Natürlich ist Tamil auch nicht die Muttersprache aller dieser Muslime, und so wird die tatsächliche Zahl der tamilsprachigen Muslime in Indien noch niedriger sein.

Ein zweiter Grund für die geringe Beachtung der tamilsprachigen Muslime mag ihre scheinbare Inaktivität im politischen Bereich sein. Im Gegensatz zu den Muslimen in Nordindien ist es auf dem Boden Tamilnadus nur zu wenigen muslimischen Staatsbildungen gekommen. Auch waren die Träger dieser Staaten Muslime aus Nordindien, wie im Falle des kurzlebigen Sultanats von Maʿbar in der Region von Ma-

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[1] Dieser Artikel ist die revidierte Fassung eines ursprünglich in *KOLAM. A Mirror of Tamil Culture 4* erschienenen Artikels (`www.fas.nus.edu.sg/journal/kolam/index.htm`).

durai (1333/1334 – 1377/1378) oder der Nawabs von Arcot im 18. Jahrhundert.

Dabei sind Muslime in dieser Region von großem Interesse für das Studium sowohl des indischen Islams wie der wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Netzwerke im Raum des Indischen Ozeans. Die Anwesenheit von muslimischen Arabern in der Region ist seit 875 n.Chr. belegt, an der Malabarküste seit 788 n.Chr. und in Sri Lanka sogar schon seit dem Beginn des 8. Jahrhunderts (Wink 1991: 71, 78 und 80f.). Die tamilischen Muslime spielten eine wichtige Rolle als Händler im Indischen Ozean, wobei vor allem ihre Kontakte mit der malaiischen Welt von Bedeutung sind (ebd.: 79; Bayly 1989: 74 und 1993: 459ff.; More 1997: 15-8). Daß ein Teil der tamilsprachigen Muslime der sh̲āfiʿītischen Rechtsschule angehört, hebt sie zusammen mit den Mappillas und Navayats an der Malabarküste von den übrigen indischen Muslimen ab, die ausschließlich der ḥanafītischen Rechtsschule angehören (falls es sich um Sunniten handelt) (Mines 1984: 431; Wink 1991: 70). Das zum größten Teil harmonische Zusammenleben mit nicht-muslimischen Tamilen, sowie ihre erst wenig erforschte Literatur in Tamil, Arabisch und "Arabisch-Tamil", Arwi/ Arvi genannt, sind weitere wichtige Elemente der Kultur der tamilsprachigen Muslime (Mines 1984: 433f.; Shuʿayb 1993: xxxviii und 84f.).

Unter den tamilsprachigen Muslimen werden eine Reihe von Subgruppen identifiziert, über deren Natur in der Wissenschaft nur geringer Konsens herrscht. Historische Entwicklungen, regionale Unterschiede sowie unterschiedliche Ver-

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wendung der Gruppennamen erschweren den Zugang. Das Ziel dieses Aufsatzes ist es, einen Überblick über die wichtigsten in der Literatur gebrauchten Termini zu geben, und vor allem deren unterschiedlichen Gebrauch zu dokumentieren und (wo möglich) zu erklären. Das Hauptziel des Aufsatzes ist es also nicht, Gruppen zu "definieren", was ohnehin verfehlt wäre, da Gruppenidentitäten selbst bei Individuen fließend und zuweilen überlappend sind. Der Aufsatz soll vielmehr bei einer kritischen Betrachtung der vorhandenen Quellen und Publikationen helfen, um so Fehler zu vermeiden, die entstehen können, wenn z.B. derselbe Terminus in verschiedenen Publikationen gebraucht wird, aber mit anderen Inhalten. Als Quellen dienen hierbei die wichtigsten neueren Veröffentlichungen zu Muslimen in Tamilnadu, vor allem von Bayly, Fanselow, Mines und More, sowie die britischen District Gazetteers und Manuals.

2. Allgemeine Merkmale muslimischer Subgruppen
2.1. Subgruppen und soziale Stratifizierung

Die Ausbreitung des Islam in Tamilnadu wurde durch zwei Prozesse geprägt: Zum einen die Ansiedlung arabischer Händler entlang der Küste seit dem 9. Jahrhundert und mehrere Invasionen und Eroberungen durch muslimische Herrscher des nördlichen Indien, zunächst im 14. und dann wieder seit der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Von diesen Ereignissen gingen dann weitere Konversionen aus den unterschiedlichsten Gründen aus. Die Ansiedlung arabischer Händler wird im allgemeinen mit der Ausbreitung der shāfiʿī-

tischen, die Eroberungen mit der der ḥanafītischen Rechts-schule identifiziert (Fanselow 1996: 202).

Die meisten Autoren stimmen darin überein, daß im Ge-gensatz zum nördlichen Indien, wo das System der verschie-denen muslimischen Subgruppen zumindest Parallelen zur hinduistischen Kastenhierarchie aufweist, die tamilischen Subgruppen nicht als Kasten bezeichnet werden können (vgl. Mines 1978: 166). Tamilsprachige Muslime betonen den ega-litären Charakter des Islam (Mines 1975: 406; Naidu 1994b: 264). Stratifizierung unter ihnen basiert nach Mines nicht auf dem Status der Subgruppe, sondern dem Alter, Reichtum, Charakter und der Religiösität eines Individuums (Mines 1978: 162). Allerdings beziehen sich diese Angaben auf den urbanen Kontext, in dem Mines seine Studie anfertigte. Die-selben Individuen, die im urbanen Kontext großen Wert auf Egalitarismus und andere "orthodoxe" Werte des Islam leg-ten, konnten im Kontext ihrer ländlichen Herkunftsorte stär-kere Betonung auf Unterschiede in Reichtum und Abstam-mung legen. Auch spielen hier Heiligenkulte eine größere Rolle als in der Stadt, und die klare Trennung von Muslimen und Hindus in Ritualen der Muslime ist im ländlichen Be-reich nicht vorhanden (Mines 1975: 411ff.). Orthodoxes Ver-halten und Religiösität spielen eine wichtige Rolle für den Status und das Prestige des Individuums in der Stadt unter ei-ner größeren Zahl anderer Muslime. Im ländlichen Kontext muß dagegen die Identität als Muslim laut Mines nicht erst etabliert werden, denn sie ist bereits durch die Geburt be-stimmt (ebd.: 414f.). Fanselow bezeichnet diese Form der Be-

tonung muslimischer Identität gegenüber anderen Muslimen als "competitive Islamisation" (1996: 217).

Die Betonung von "Orthodoxie" und des Gegensatzes Muslim-durch-Abstammung kontra Konvertit wird von einigen Autoren als wichtiges Element der Gesellschaftsstruktur und Stratifizierung südindischer Muslime genannt. Bayly schreibt, daß die Zugehörigkeit zur sh̲āfiʿītischen Rechtsschule von den an der Küste angesiedelten Muslimen als Beweis ihrer Beziehungen zu Arabien angesehen wird. Diese Muslime sähen sich als Nachfahren von Arabern, oder zumindest als sehr frühe Konvertiten, die den Islam auf wesentlich direkteren Wegen empfangen hätten, als die Mitglieder der ḥanafītischen Rechtsschule, welche stärker mit Zentralasien und dem iranischen Hochplateau verbunden wird als mit Arabien (1986: 39 und 1989: 80). Solche Unterscheidungen hätten aber nicht zu scharfen Trennungen zwischen den unterschiedlichen muslimischen Gruppen geführt (ebd.: 101).

Abstammung, insbesondere die Nähe zur Sippe des Propheten, spielt eine bedeutende Rolle unter indischen Muslimen, und die Subgruppen der urdusprachigen Muslime basieren zu einem nicht unbedeutenden Teil auf der behaupteten oder tatsächlichen Abstammung verschiedener Gruppen von Arabern, Pathanen und anderen nahöstlichen oder südasiatischen Ethnien (vgl. Mines 1972: 335 und 339). Abstammung dient oft dazu, die Über- oder Unterlegenheit einer Gruppe zu behaupten. Ein Beispiel findet sich im District Manual von North Arcot von 1895 (Cox 1895: 206f.):

Some of the Labbais … assert that … they are the descen-

dants of trading Arabs by Hindus. The Naváyats … believe that the Labbais are the offspring of the Abyssinian slaves whom their ancestors brought from Arabia about a thousand years ago.

Vgl. auch Mines 1972: 333.

Fanselow bemerkt jedoch, daß die Betonung von "Egalität" und "Orthodoxie" unter den tamilsprachigen Muslimen das Produkt eines historischen Prozesses in der Kolonialzeit ist. Das Konzept der "Kaste" sei in dem Maße von Muslimen abgelehnt worden, wie es mit dem Hinduismus verbunden wurde. Der "reine Islam" mußte folgerichtig ohne Kastenstruktur sein, Kaste wurde zu einem "… 'gate-keeping' concept of Hindu civilisation, …" (Fanselow 1996: 224). Bei der Frage nach sozialer Stratifikation unter indischen Muslimen muß diese historische Dimension von "Kaste" als *ethnic boundary marker* berücksichtigt werden (ebd.: 222-5).

Nach Fanselows Meinung war die Zugehörigkeit zu einer der Subgruppen früher bedeutender als heutzutage. Die Beziehungen zwischen den Gruppen liefen analog zur Hierarchisierung des Kastensystems (ebd.: 213). Fanselows Informanten aus den Subgruppen der Ravuttar und Tarakanar, die laut ihm zu den niedrigergestellten Gruppen gehören, stimmten dem zu (ebd.: 216). Bayly dagegen schreibt: "For all its distinctions of rank and ethnicity, however, the Muslim population of Tamilnad has never been truly fragmented", (Bayly 1989: 90) aber sie erwähnt auch (ebd.: 80), daß die

… Tamil maraikkayar have long stigmatised all these other Muslims as being "mere converts" to Islam, and therefore of

lower social standing … .

More betont, daß nichts in der frühen Literatur die Marak-
kayar, die Fanselow als eine der höhergestellte Gruppe nennt,
als überlegene Gruppe kennzeichnet. Er geht sogar soweit zu
sagen: "Among Tamil Muslims … notions of caste hierar-
chies are absent" (More 1997: 24). Es könnte sein, daß Fanse-
lows Ergebnisse zumindest zum Teil durch seine For-
schungsregion beeinflußt sind. Die Marakkayars von Kayal-
patnam gelten als (und halten sich für) besonders orthodoxe
Muslime. Laut Bayly existiert in Kayalpatnam keine egalitä-
re Gesellschaftsordnung. Pate schreibt, daß die "upper cir-
cles" der muslimischen Gesellschaft eine eigene Klasse dar-
stellen, die keine Ehen mit den anderen muslimischen Grup-
pen eingeht (Pate 1917: 98 und 500; Bayly 1986: 40; vgl. auch
Fanselow 204ff.). Von Seiten der Ravuttar und Tarakanar
wurden die Marakkayar als "would-be Muslim Brahmans"
bezeichnet. Diese Formulierung erinnert stark an die Vor-
würfe, die muslimischen Mullahs von Vertretern der "Self-
respect"-Bewegung gemacht wurden. Die muslimische "(tra-
ditionelle) Orthodoxie" wurde auch von "puristischen" Strö-
mungen aus den eigenen Reihen angegriffen, und zwischen
den Vertretern der "Self-respect"-Bewegung und diesen "pu-
ristischen" muslimischen Gruppen gab es enge Beziehungen
(More 1993: 90ff.). Laut Fanselow unterstützen viele der Ra-
vuttar und Tarakanar in dem von ihm untersuchten Ort Ka-
lakkadu die DMK oder AIADMK (Fanselow 1996: 210). Vor
allem von dieser Seite wird Kritik an den Marakkayar wahr-
scheinlich damit begründet, daß sie Vertreter eines Quasi-

Kastensystems (gewesen) seien. Denn wie Fanselow selber gezeigt hat, wird das Kastensystem seit der Kolonialzeit als hinduistisch empfunden. Ein Angriff auf die religiösen Überlegenheitsansprüche der Marakkayar von Kayalpatnam wäre natürlich dann am wirksamsten, wenn ihr Verhalten als unislamisch identifiziert würde.[2]

Die District Gazetteers machen ebenfalls keine klaren Angaben zur Frage der sozialen Stratifizierung. Zwar schreibt Francis: "The Musalmans of pure descent hold themselves to be socially superior to the Marakkáyars and the Marakkáyars consider themselves better than the Labbais" (1906b: 87). Wie sich dies in der Praxis niederschlug, kann aber aus dieser Äußerung nicht entnommen werden. Daß die unterschiedlichen Gruppen versuchten, sich z.B. durch die Manipulation von Abstammung Prestige zu sichern, wurde bereits erwähnt. Auch wird aus diesem Zitat klar, wen die Briten für die "reinen" Muslime hielten, nämlich die urdusprachigen (vgl. More 1997: 23). Aus dem Blickwinkel der Marakkayar oder Labbai hätte sich die Situation vielleicht anders dargestellt.

Eine interessante Aussage findet sich bei Venkasami Row:

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[2] Die Bezeichnung "muslimische Brahmanen" scheint in bestimmten Segmenten der muslimischen Gesellschaft in Tamilnadu weit verbreitet zu sein. Ein mit mir befreundeter Collegelehrer aus Tiruchirapalli (selbst Hindu und Brahmane) berichtete von einer muslimischen Schülerin, sie würde die Marakkayar als "muslimische Brahmanen" bezeichnen, wohingegen die Ravuttar ihrer Meinung nach gar keine richtigen Muslime seien. Das Mädchen identifizierte sich selbst als Labbai.

"Caste rules, in respect of intermarriage, are now observed more or less by all classes of Mahomedans (the Labbés not excepted); but the custom is recent" (1883: 155). Er erwähnt auch häufige Ehen und Konkubinatsverhältnisse zwischen Muslimen und "women of the lowest classes" (ebd.: 153f.). Ob das Befolgen von Kastenregeln zu dieser Zeit tatsächlich ein rezentes Phänomen darstellte oder ob es Venkasami Rows muslimische Informanten unter dem Einfluß puristischer Strömungen des 19. Jahrhunderts nur so darstellten, läßt sich nicht bestimmen.

Es mag durchaus sein, daß in früheren Zeiten mehr Wert auf die Unterschiede der einzelnen Gruppen gelegt wurde.[3] Wenn es auch sicherlich Unterschiede in Rang und Status zwischen den einzelnen Subgruppen gab (und gibt), kann nur eine detaillierte Untersuchung klären, ob muslimische soziale Stratifizierung in vorkolonialer Zeit tatsächlich eine dem Kastensystem analoge Struktur aufwies.

2.2. Ehen zwischen Subgruppen

Mines charakterisiert die einzelnen Subgruppen als "essentially endogamous" (1986: 582). Ehen zwischen den einzelnen Subgruppen sind laut Mines zwar nicht häufig, aber sie existieren. Die von ihm beobachteten Inter-Gruppen-Ehen

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[3] Beispielsweise tragen viele der von More erwähnten wichtigen Händler und "Philanthropen" des späten 19. Jahrhunderts die Bezeichnungen Marakkayar und Ravuttar in ihren Namen (1997: 37f. und 43).

waren mit keinerlei Statusverlust verbunden (1972: 340). Die Hauptmotivation, Ehen innerhalb einer Gruppe zu arrangieren, ist nach ihm der Wunsch nach einem Ehepartner mit demselben wirtschaftlichen, kulturellen und religiösen Hintergrund (Mines 1978: 161f.). Nach Fanselow ist die Zahl der Ehen zwischen Ravuttar und Tarakanar seit dem Beginn unseres Jahrhunderts stark gestiegen und hat zu der langsamen Auflösung der unterschiedlichen Identitäten beider Gruppen beigetragen (Fanselow 1996: 215). Auch Naidu erwähnt die verstärkten Tendenzen, Gruppenzugehörigkeit beiseite zu lassen. Trotzdem gibt es auch noch Gruppen, wie die Labbai, die er als endogam charakterisiert (1994a: 233; 1994b: 264).

Laut Fanselow waren in früheren Zeiten alle vorkommenden Inter-Gruppen-Ehen hypergam, d.h. die Braut kam immer aus einer sozial niedrigerstehenden Gruppe als der Bräutigam (1996: 213). Inwieweit es in vorkolonialer Zeit zu Ehen zwischen den Subgruppen kam, läßt sich nicht sagen (vgl. Bayly 1989: 101). Da es jedoch wahrscheinlich ist, daß es zu Ehen zwischen ("alteingesessenen") Muslimen und konvertierten Hindus kam (s.u.), darf man wohl annehmen, daß auch Ehen zwischen den Subgruppen vorkamen. Für South Arcot in kolonialer Zeit schreibt Francis (1906b: 87):

> There is of course no religious bar to intermarriages between these different sub-divisions, but such unions are rare and are usually only brought about by the offer of strong financial inducements to the socially superior party.

Die Ravuttar des Madurai-Distrikts sollen hingegen in weitere Subgruppen aufgeteilt gewesen sein, die endogam waren (Francis 1906a: 80). Für Kayalpatnam erwähnt Pate, daß kei-

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ne Ehen zwischen den Muslimen, die für sich arabische Abstammung beanspruchten, und "Konvertiten", d.h. den Mitgliedern anderer Subgruppen, erlaubt waren (Pate 1917: 500). Auch bei Thurston findet sich der Hinweis, daß die Marakkayar zwar Konvertiten akzeptierten, mit diesen jedoch keine Ehen eingingen, bevor nicht mehrere Generationen vergangen waren oder "… they have become prosperous" (1909: vol. V 4).

Sowohl die District Gazetteers wie auch die neuere Literatur konstatieren für die Frühzeit Ehen zwischen muslimischen Händlern und Einwanderern, vorwiegend Arabern, und tamilischen Frauen (vgl. Venkasami Row 1883: 153f.; Francis 1906b: 86; Pate 1917: 98; Bayly 1989: 74; Fanselow 1996: 205). More erwähnt den Fall der im 19. Jahrhundert in Karaikal zum Islam konvertierten Mukkuwa, die seitdem vollkommen in den Marakkayar aufgegangen seien (More 1997: 24f.). Und auch unter den dreizehn von Mines genannten Inter-Gruppen-Ehen, die ihm bei seiner Feldforschung von 1967-69 in Pallavaram bekannt wurden, findet sich eine zwischen einem Muslim und einer konvertierten Hindu-Frau (Mines 1972: 340, Tabelle 1).

3. Die Subgruppen

Im Folgenden sollen die in der benutzten Literatur erwähnten tamilsprachigen Subgruppen dargestellt werden. Leider gibt es bei den meisten Gruppen eine Reihe von Varianten in der Orthographie. Bei den Gruppen, die von More erwähnt werden, habe ich seine Schreibweise gewählt, bei den anderen

handelt es sich zumeist um Gruppen, die nur von einem oder zwei Autoren erwähnt werden. In diesem Fall habe ich dann deren Schreibweise verwendet. Die alternierenden Schreibweisen sowie die Tamil-Transkription[4] und deren Übersetzung werden danach gegeben. Für die verschiedenen Sprachen habe ich folgende Wörterbücher verwendet: Für Tamil das *Tamil Lexicon* der University of Madras, für Urdu Platts' Urdu-Englisch-Wörterbuch, für Sanskrit das Sanskrit-Englisch-Wörterbuch von M. Monier-Williams und für Arabisch das Arabisch-Deutsch-Wörterbuch von H. Wehr (siehe Literaturverzeichnis 1).

3.1. Kayalar (*kāyalār*):

Diese Subgruppe wird von Thurston, Mines und McPherson genannt. Die Angaben der Autoren entsprechen sich zum größten Teil (Thurston 1909: vol. III, 267; Mines 1984: 431; McPherson 1995: 469). Ihr Name leitet sich von der Stadt Kayalpatnam her. Nach Thurston werden die Kayalar teilweise auch als Ārumāsaththukadankārar *(ārumācattukkaṭankārar)*, "six months' debt people" bezeichnet. Mines und Thurston erwähnen enge Beziehungen zu den Marakkayar. Die Gruppe soll der <u>sh</u>āfiʿītischen Rechtsschule angehören. Die meisten von Mines' Informanten bezeichneten die Kayalar sogar als Subgruppe der Marakkayar (Mines 1978: 161). Gleichzei-

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[4] Ich habe durchgängig die Pluralendungen *-ar, -ār* statt *-a<u>n</u>, -ā<u>n</u>* verwendet. Einzige Ausnahme sind die nur von Naidu erwähnten Vethalaikaran, da sie von Naidu in dieser Form erwähnt werden.

tig werten sowohl Mines als auch McPherson (der darin allerdings Mines zu folgen scheint) sie als eigene Subgruppe auf derselben Ebene wie Labbai, Marakkayar und Ravuttar (ebd. 1986: 582; McPherson 1995: 469). Ob mit diesem Begriff alle <u>sh</u>āfiʿītischen Muslims aus Kayalpatnam bezeichnet werden, ist fraglich. Weder Pate noch Fanselow, dessen Angaben sich direkt auf Kayalpatnam beziehen, erwähnen die Kayalar (vgl. Pate 1917: 98; Fanselow 1996: 204-7). Die Angaben von Mines, daß den Kayalar wegen ihrer Spezialisierung auf den Handel mit Häuten und Alteisen ein niedrigerer Status eingeräumt wird als den anderen Subgruppen (1978: 162), kontrastiert mit dem Bild, das normalerweise von den Marakkayar Kayalpatnams gezeichnet wird (s.o. **2.1**). Es wäre auch seltsam, wenn die Bezeichnung Kayalar innerhalb Kayalpatnams nur für eine Subgruppe der Marakkayar gebraucht würde, denn schließlich könnten sich alle Einwohner Kayalpatnams als Kayalar bezeichnen. Interessant ist Thurstons Bemerkung, daß viele Kayalars in der Gegend von Madras siedeln würden. Da auch Mines' Angaben sich auf diese Region beziehen, ist es möglich, daß die Kayalar auf die Region von Madras beschränkt sind und hier auf Grund ihrer Herkunft als Kayalar bezeichnet werden, diese Gruppe in Kayalpatnam selbst hingegen unbekannt ist oder anders bezeichnet wird. Allerdings erwähnt Thurston, daß die Kayalar auch in Kayalpatnam leben, und Mines lokalisiert sie an der südlichen Küste (Mines 1986: 582).

Laut Thurston wird vom Ehemann erwartet, daß er nach der Hochzeit in das Haus seines Schwiegervaters zieht (Uxo-

rilokalität).

3.2. Labbai (Labbé, Lebbai; *lappai, leppai, ilappai, ileppai*):
Dieser Terminus gehört zu den mißverständlichsten unter den hier erörterten Bezeichnungen, denn er wird mit zwei (eigentlich drei) Grundbedeutungen verwendet. Zum einen ist Labbai eine Bezeichnung für tamilsprachige Muslime im allgemeinen (Mines 1984: 431; Fanselow 1996: 215). So wurde die Bezeichnung Labbai in den Volkszählungen während der Kolonialzeit für tamilsprachige Muslime verwendet und in die Liste der "Backward Classes" eingereiht (Fanselow 1996: 215). Venkasami Row schreibt dementsprechend (1883: 154):

> The Labbés who inhabit the coast have the honorific title "Marakkayar", and those who have settled in the interior that of "Ravuttar".

In derselben Weise verwendet Bayly den Begriff (1986: 37-40). Laut einiger Autoren sind die Begriffe Labbai und Sonagar identisch (Venkasami Row 1883: 153; Thurston 1909: vol. IV 199f.). Neben diesem Gebrauch von Labbai als generelle Bezeichnung tamilsprachiger Muslime gibt es aber auch Labbai als Subgruppe. So sind die Labbai laut Francis in South Arcot vor allem im Betelanbau und dem Handel mit Häuten tätig, die Marakkayar dagegen seien "big traders", die als den Labbai sozial überlegen gelten würden (1906b: 86f.). In der Beschreibung des Madurai-Distrikts erwähnt Francis den Begriff dagegen nicht einmal (vgl. 1906a: 79f.). Auch Thurston bestätigt, daß die Labbai sich von den Marakkayar zu unterscheiden scheinen, auch wenn er die Angaben Venkasa-

mi Rows wiederholt (1909: vol. IV 198). An anderer Stelle erwähnt er die Zugehörigkeit zur ḥanafītischen Rechtsschule als zentrales Merkmal (1909: vol. V 4).

In den meisten neueren Texten sind die Labbai eindeutig eine eigene Subgruppe (vgl. Mines 1972: 340 und 1984: 432; Bayly 1989: 80; Naidu 1994a: 232-5). Ihre Charakteristika sind Zugehörigkeit zur ḥanafītischen Rechtsschule[5] und der stärkere Bezug zum inneren Tamilnadu, im Gegensatz zu den Marakkayars der Küste. Nach Naidu sind sie endogam und vererben patrilinear. Des weiteren sollen sie einen eigenen Friedhof ("separate graveyard") benutzen, wohingegen Marakkayar und Ravuttar den "Muslim-" bzw. "communal graveyard" verwenden (Bayly 1989: 80; Mines 1978: 161; Naidu 1994a: 232ff., 1994b: 263 und 1994c: 373). Laut Mines beanspruchen sie keine arabische Abstammung (ebd.), was im Gegensatz zu den Angaben Naidus steht, welche allerdings wahrscheinlich von Thurston übernommen sind (1994a: 232). Interessant ist die Bemerkung von Mines, daß die Labbai als Subgruppe im allgemeinen mit den nördlichen Distrikten, die Ravuttar dagegen mit den südlichen Distrikten in Verbindung gebracht werden (1978: 161). Diese Angaben decken sich mit denen der District Gazetteers. Die Labbai als Gruppe werden nur in nördlichen Distrikten erwähnt (z.B. Cox 1895: 206f.; Francis 1906b: 86f.), während sie in den südlichen Di-

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[5] McPherson beschreibt sie und die Ravuttar als S̲h̲āfiʿīs (1995: 469), was offensichtlich falsch, aber wohl eher ein Flüchtigkeitsfehler ist. Trotzdem sind solche Fehler dazu angetan, Verwirrung zu stiften.

strikten nicht vorkommen bzw. der Terminus eine andere Be-
deutung hat (Francis 1906a: 79f.; Pate 1917: 97).

Ursprünglich scheint der Begriff Labbai einen Ehrentitel
oder ein religiöses Amt, speziell das des Imams, bezeichnet
zu haben (vgl. Pate 1917: 97; Shu'ayb 1993: 76f.; Fanselow
1996: 214; More 1997: 23).[6] Erst in der Kolonialzeit ist er als
generelle Bezeichnung für tamilsprachige Muslime einge-
führt worden. Dies entspricht auch der Angabe Thurstons,
wonach der Begriff in den frühen Tamil-Lexika nicht in die-
ser Bedeutung vorkommt (Thurston 1909: vol IV 199f.).[7]

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[6] Dies steht in Einklang mit der Etymologie, die im allgemeinen für
Labbai gegeben wird (vgl. z.B. Francis 1906b: 86; Mines 1986:
582). Danach stünde Labbai in Beziehung mit arabisch *labbaika*
"hier bin ich! zu deinen Diensten!". Dies wurde von einigen frühe-
ren Autoren als Beleg für die untergeordnete Stellung der Labbai
gesehen (z.B. Cox 1895: 207). Dabei wurde jedoch die Beziehung
dieses Ausrufs mit der *talbiya* ("Folgeleistung, Befolgung, Will-
fahrung") übersehen. Diese Formel, in der der Ruf *labbaika* eine
wichtige Rolle spielt, wird zu verschiedenen Anlässen gesprochen,
insbesondere während des Ḥajj, der Pilgerfahrt nach Mekka (Wen-
sinck 1995: 571). More verweist auch auf mögliche Ählichkeiten
mit dem hebräischen Begriff "Levi" (1997: 23).

[7] Bayly benutzt den Begriff Labbai allerdings bereits für die ḥana-
fītischen Gruppen des tamilischen Hinterlands in vorkolonialer Zeit
(1989: 80 und 1993: 455). More erwähnt jedoch zu Recht, daß im 18.
Jahrhundert Marakkayar den Terminus Labbai in ihren Namen be-
nutzten (1997: 23). Ein Beispiel wäre Labbai Nayna Maraikayar
(1693-1772), den er als Autor des Epos *Ciṉṉa cīṟā* nennt (ebd.: 25),

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Mines schreibt sogar, daß die Labbai (hier offensichtlich in der Bedeutung als Subgruppe, nicht als genereller Terminus) "… are said to be the descendents of Kur'ānic scholars" (1986: 582). Leider gibt Mines nicht an, wer diese Behauptung aufstellt. Als "Ursprungsmythos" der Labbai wäre sie denkbar, kann aber kaum in dieser Absolutheit der historischen Wirklichkeit entsprechen. Denn zum einen benutzen andere Subgruppen bis heute "Labbai" als Begriff für "Imam" (vgl. Anmerkung 7), zum anderen muß man die oben erwähnte geographische Verteilung der Labbai in Betracht ziehen. Es ist wohl kaum denkbar, daß so viele Muslime im nördlichen Inland Tamilnadus alle von religiösen Gelehrten abstammen sollen.

Aus allen diesen Angaben läßt sich vielleicht die Entwicklung der unterschiedlichen Bedeutungen des Begriffs Labbai rekonstruieren (eine solche Rekonstruktion bleibt natürlich ohne genaue Untersuchungen weitgehend spekulativ). Labbai wurde demnach zunächst als religiöser Titel, vor allem zur Bezeichnung des Imams, gebraucht. Dieser Begriff wurde von den anderen Muslimen in der Weise mit den tamil-

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der aber wohl nur der Sponsor dieses Werks war (vgl. Uwise 1990: 59; Shu'ayb 1993: 484f. und 516ff.). Auch im 19. Jahrhundert findet sich der Terminus noch häufig in dieser Bedeutung. So trägt einer der bedeutendsten muslimischen Gelehrten des 19. Jahrhunderts, Sayyid Muḥammad, den arabischen Titel "Imām al-'Arūs" oder dessen tamilische Entsprechung "Māppiḷḷai Leppai" (vgl. Shu'ayb 1993: 586f.). Aber auch im 20. Jahrhundert wird der Terminus noch in diesem Sinn gebraucht (vgl. ebd.: 76f.; Mines 1986: 582).

sprachigen Muslimen in Verbindung gebracht, daß er bald synonym mit diesen wurde. So ging er in die britischen Zensusberichte ein. Die tamilsprachigen Muslime in den nördlichen Distrikten, die unter den Nawabs von Arcot und Tipu Sultan zum Islam konvertiert waren und keine einheitliche Gruppenbezeichnung besaßen (anders als die ebenfalls ḥanafītischen Ravuttar im Süden), übernahmen ihn und wurden im Laufe der Zeit ebenfalls mit ihm identifiziert, so daß der Begriff Bedeutungen auf zwei Ebenen der Gruppenbezeichnung erhielt. Daß der Begriff zunächst auf alle tamilsprachigen Muslime und dann erst auf eine spezielle Gruppe angewendet wurde, scheint mir logischer. Es existierte kein Grund, nur eine bestimmte Subgruppe als Labbai zu bezeichnen, da der Begriff ja auch von anderen Subgruppen wie den Marakkayar verwendet wurde. Auch ist nicht klar, warum der Begriff dann auf andere Gruppen übertragen worden sein sollte.

3.3. Marakkayar (Marakayar, Maraikayar, Maraikkayar, Maraicar; *marakkāyar*, *maraikkāyar*):

Die Marakkayar sind wahrscheinlich die bekannteste Subgruppe. Alle neueren Autoren erwähnen sie. Auch in Hinblick auf die Merkmale, die diese Subgruppe von anderen unterscheidet, gibt es weitgehende Übereinstimmungen. Sie gehören der shāfiʿītischen Rechtsschule an, siedeln primär in den Küstengebieten[8] und beanspruchen arabische Abstam-

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[8] Bayly führt die wichtigsten Orte an (1993: 454 und 457).

mung (Thurston 1909: vol. V 4; Mines 1978: 161; Bayly 1989: 80; Fanselow 1996: 202 und 204f.; More 1997: 23). Lediglich Naidu schreibt, daß die Marakkayar in Pondicherry keine Geschichten über ihre Abstammung hätten und sich im allgemeinen für Nachfahren konvertierter Hindus hielten (1994b: 261). Dies mutet besonders seltsam an im Kontrast zu den ausführlichen Legenden der Marakkayar in Kayalpatnam, die Bezüge zur Muʿtazila und der Stadt Kairo behaupten (vgl. Fanselow 1996: 204f.). Auch sonst wird die Beanspruchung einer arabischen Abstammung so oft erwähnt, daß sie ohne Zweifel für die meisten Marakkayar eine zentrale Rolle spielt.

Die Marakkayar werden oft mit internationalem Handel in Verbindung gebracht, vor allem mit Ceylon und Indonesien (Francis 1906b: 86; Thurston 1909: vol. V 4; Pate 1917: 97; Bayly 1989: 79-83 und 1993: 454 und 461 Anm. 16; Fanselow 1996: 204). Die besondere Architektur der von Marakkayar bewohnten Viertel in ihren Hauptsiedlungsgebieten sowie ihre Förderung islamischer Einrichtungen werden ebenfalls erwähnt (Mines 1984: 432; Bayly 1989: 84f.; Fanselow 1996: 205f.).

Sowohl Pate als auch Bayly geben an, daß die Marakkayar endogam waren und sind. Bayly erwähnt weiterhin, daß Ehen mit S̲h̲āfiʿīs von der Malabarküste oder aus Südostasien solchen mit Angehörigen der ḥanafītischen Rechtsschule vorgezogen würden, was in gewisser Hinsicht ihre Aussagen über Endogamie relativiert. Naidu zufolge bevorzugen die Marakkayar Pondicherrys heute Inter-Gruppen-Ehen (Pate

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1917: 500; Bayly 1989: 79f.; Naidu 1994b: 264). Diese Angaben über Endogamie kontrastieren mit den Ausführungen Mores, der von der Vermischung konvertierter Gruppen mit den Marakkayar während des 19. Jahrhunderts berichtet (More 1997: 24f.). Diesen Widerspruch kann man vielleicht durch eine Angabe Thurstons aufheben. Er berichtet, daß Konvertiten unter den Marakkayar eine eigene Subgruppe, Pulukkai genannt, bilden. Diese dürften erst nach mehreren Generationen oder nach der Erlangung eines gewissen Wohlstandes mit "echten" Marakkayar Ehen eingehen (Thurston 1909: vol. V 4; über das Ideal von harter Arbeit und Erfolg siehe Mines 1972: 343f.). Die Angaben über weitere Unterteilungen der Marakkayar sind spärlich. Neben den eben erwähnten Pulukkais (wobei nicht klar ist, ob der Terminus Pulukkai heute noch in Gebrauch ist) und eventuell den Kayalar (siehe **3.1**) gibt Naidu noch die Namen zweier Subgruppen unter den Marakkayar Pondicherrys, Malaimar und Nahuda, an (Naidu 1994b: 261).[9]

Ein weiteres oft erwähntes Merkmal der Marakkayar sind uxorilokale Residenzmuster, die vielleicht mit der langen Abwesenheit der Männer auf Handelsreisen zusammenhängen

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[9] Aufgrund der ungenügenden Transkription kann über die Bedeutung der Namen der von Thurston und Naidu genannten Marakkayar-Subgruppen nur spekuliert werden. Für Pulukkai könnte man an eine Ableitung von der Verbwurzel *pullu-* "to embrace; to cling to, to join" denken (vgl. aber auch *puḻukkai* "slave, menial servant"). Nahuda könnte *nakutā* "captain of a ship" sein.

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(vgl. Bayly 1989: 81 Anm. 15; Introduction 1994: 20; Fanselow 1996: 204). Fanselow hebt in diesem Zusammenhang die Vererbung von Wohnhäusern in der Matrilinie in Kayalpatnam hervor.

Der Begriff Marakkayar wird im allgemeinen mit *marakkalam* "ship, vessel, boat" in Verbindung gebracht (Bayly 1989: 79; More 1997: 22f.). Mores Informanten vermuteten eine Ableitung von *marakkalarāyar* (ungefähr "Schiffskönig"). Die von Francis gegebene Etymologie von arabisch *markab* "Schiff" ist äußerst unwahrscheinlich (1906b: 86f.).[10]

3.4. Ravuttar (Rowthar, Rowther, Rawther, Rauther, Ravutar; *rāvuttar* "horseman", *irāvuttar* "cavalier, horseman,

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[10] Im 17. Jahrhundert wurde dem Oberhaupt Kayalpatnams von den Nayaka-Herrschern der Titel Mudali(yar) Pillai Marakkayar (*mutali⟨yār⟩ piḷḷai marakkāyar*) verliehen (Pate 1917: 499f.; Bayly 1989: 80; More 1997: 22). More bezweifelt, daß die Bezeichnung schon wesentlich früher verwendet wurde. Im Bericht Duarte Barbosas aus dem 16. Jahrhundert wird die Macht des führenden Mitglieds der muslimischen Gemeinde in Cael (Palayakayal oder "Alt-Kayal") erwähnt. Die Muslime hatten ihre eigene Gerichtsbarkeit und auch andere Vorrechte. Besonders erwähnenswert ist, daß die Perlenfischer jeden Freitag ausschließlich für die Bootsbesitzer nach Perlen fischen mußten. Laut More waren die Bootsbesitzer zumeist Muslime. Eine Beziehung zum Terminus Marakkayar lehnt More aber ab, da diese Bezeichnung seiner Meinung nach zu dieser Zeit noch nicht verwendet wurde (Duarte Barbosa 1989: 123f.; Bayly 1989: 78; More 1997: 15).

trooper" < urdu *rāūt, rāut* "a land-bailiff, a person employed to collect rent from a village, an agent; a trooper cavalier" < sanskrit *rājadūta* "royal messenger"):

Die Ravuttar sind Ḥanafīten, die primär in den südlichen Distrikten leben. Sie beanspruchen weder arabische noch iranische oder türkische Abstammung (Mines 1978: 161; Fanselow 1996: 209ff.). Eine Reihe von Autoren betont, daß standardisierte Legenden über ihre Herkunft fehlen und die Ravuttar im allgemeinen dazu tendieren, der Vergangenheit nicht allzuviel Bedeutung beizumessen (ebd.; Francis 1906a: 79; Naidu 1994c: 371). Die Ravuttar hätten, so Fanselow, früher in Abhängigkeitsverhältnissen zu sozial höhergestellten Muslimen (in diesem Fall zumeist urdusprachigen) gestanden. Mit der Kolonialzeit seien diese Beziehungen schwächer geworden, und so diene die "historische Amnesie" der Ravuttar dem Zweck, eine im Sinne der in derselben Zeit erstarkten puristischen Tendenzen islamische Identität zu schaffen, ähnlich wie dies bei den anderen Gruppen durch Beanspruchung arabischer oder türkischer Abstammung geschieht. In diesem Zusammenhang steht eine Betonung des islamischen Egalitätsanspruchs. Ansprüche anderer Gruppen auf eine fremde Abstammung werden als Verstoß gegen den Gleichheitsgrundsatz und somit als unislamisches Verhalten gewertet, um so die eigene islamische Identität zu erhöhen. Seit dem 19. Jahrhundert ist die Wahhābiyya unter den Ravuttar aktiv (Fanselow 1996: 212-7; McPherson 1995: 469).

Die Ravuttar werden im allgemeinen in bezug zu den Soldaten muslimischer Herrscher gesehen. Zumeist werden hier

die Nawabs von Arcot genannt. More behauptet allerdings, daß der Begriff Ravuttar seit dem 8. Jahrhundert in der Tamilliteratur erwähnt würde und daß manche Ravuttar behaupten, sie seien von frühen Sufis zum Islam bekehrt worden (1997: 21f.). Was die frühe Literatur angeht, so ist es äußerst unwahrscheinlich, daß der Begriff Ravuttar hier im Sinne von Muslim, oder noch genauer ḥanafītischer Muslim, gebraucht wurde. Neben der hier behandelten muslimischen Subgruppe führen auch verschiedene kannada- und telugusprachige Gruppen den Titel Ravuttar (vgl. Thurston 1909: vol. VI 247; Richards 1918: 178). Auf jeden Fall muß, wenn sich der Gebrauch des Begriffes seit dem 8. Jahrhundert bestätigen sollte (More gibt leider keine Angaben, in welchen Werken Ravuttar erwähnt werden), die Etymologie aus dem Urdu überprüft werden.

Im allgemeinen werden die Ravuttar vor allem mit den Nawabs von Arcot und den Poligars des 18. Jahrhunderts genannt. Bayly betont, daß eine Reihe der muslimischen Soldaten in den Diensten von Hinduherrschern, wie dem Raja von Travancore, standen. Solche Truppen galten nach ihren Aussagen als prestigesteigernd, außerdem wurden die Fähigkeiten der muslimischen Ärzte geschätzt. Der relativ hohe Status der Soldaten, so behauptet Bayly, hätte dazu geführt, daß mit der Zeit auch andere Gruppen für sich Ravuttar-Status reklamierten (1989: 98f.; vgl. auch More 1997: 23; McPherson 1995: 469). Ihre Aussagen stehen damit in einem gewissen Gegensatz zu den Aussagen Fanselows, der im allgemeinen von einem Klientelverhältnis von Ravuttar zu muslimischen

Herrschern ausgeht, bei denen erstere eine sozial untergeordnete Stellung einnahmen. Was der genaue Grund für diesen Widerspruch ist, bleibt noch zu klären. Zum einen erwähnt Bayly, daß urdusprachige Muslime anscheinend besonders bevorzugt wurden. Es könnte sein, daß man als tamilsprachiger Ravuttar zwar eine Reihe von Vorteilen gegenüber anderen Tamilen hatte, aber immer noch den urdusprachigen Muslimen unterlegen blieb. Man sollte aber auch nicht außer acht lassen, daß die Informationen Fanselows durch den Filter der "competitive Islamisation" gelaufen sein könnten, denn für die Ravuttar wäre es sicher von Vorteil, wenn das inegalitäre und somit ihrer Meinung nach unislamische Verhalten der anderen Subgruppen nicht nur eine gegenwärtige, sondern auch historische Ebene hätte.

Die unsichere Situation in den nur kurzfristig von Arcot eroberten Gebieten im südlichen Tamilnadu wie auch die von Bayly angeführte Rekrutierung von muslimischen Truppen durch Poligars mögen zwei Gründe sein, warum die Ravuttar vornehmlich im Süden Tamilnadus anzutreffen sind. Fanselow erwähnt auch Beziehungen zu den Marava (1996: 216). Es sollte aber nicht außer acht gelassen werden, daß der Ursprung der Bezeichnung Ravuttar wohl älter ist. Neben den bereits erwähnten Angaben Mores darf man nicht übersehen, daß einige Kultheilige mit den Feldzügen des Sultanats von Delhi im 14. Jahrhundert und vor allem dem Sultanat von Maʿbar in Verbindung gebracht werden. Es ist äußerst unwahrscheinlich, daß die fast 50 Jahre währende Herrschaft der Sultane in Madurai nur archäologische Spuren hinterlas-

sen haben soll, es aber nicht auch zu Konversionen kam. Es existieren noch Mausoleen, Moscheen und Schreine aus dieser Zeit in Madurai und Umgebung (vgl. Bayly 1993: 486; Shokoohy 1993: 307-19).

Ehen zwischen Ravuttar und als sozial höherstehend angesehenen Gruppen waren während der Kolonialzeit wohl selten, in Kayalpatnam sollen sie überhaupt nicht stattgefunden haben. Die Ravuttar lebten in eigenen Straßen und sollen nach den Angaben von Francis in weitere endogame Subgruppen aufgeteilt gewesen sein, deren Bezeichnungen sich auf Wohnort oder Beruf bezogen (1906a: 79f.; Pate 1917: 500; McPherson 1995; 469).

Wie bereits erwähnt, betonen die Ravuttar nach den Angaben Fanselows ihre islamische Identität, indem sie Feste und Rituale von "unislamischen" Elementen "reinigen" und die Gleichheit aller Muslime hervorheben. Die Identität als Ravuttar tritt mehr und mehr in den Hintergrund, unter anderem auch durch zunehmende Ehen mit den Tarakanar (siehe **3.6**; Fanselow 1996: 211-6). Im Siedlungsgebiet der Ravuttar kommt es wohl häufiger zu Konversionen von "Unberührbaren" zum Islam, weil, wie ein Konvertit es ausdrückte, "it [d.h. der Islam, T.T.] has guaranteed us dignity and we are proud of being a human being" (zitiert nach Ilangovan 2001).

3.5. Sonagar (Sonakar, Jonagar; *cōṉakar* "foreigner, especially Greek, Arab or Moor", *jōṉakar* "Muhammadan"; vgl. sanskrit *yavana* "an Ionian, Greek … also a Muhammadan or European", mittelindisch *yona* und *joṇa*, urdu *jawan* "an

Ionian, a Greek; a Mohammadan”):

Ursprünglich auf das Ethnonym "Ionier" zurückgehend, wurde dieser Begriff später in ganz Indien auf (vor allem aus dem Westen) kommende Fremde übertragen. Laut More ist Sonagar die älteste Bezeichnung für Muslims im Tamil, die später zu Gunsten anderer Bezeichnungen an Bedeutung verloren hat (More 1997: 21f.). Der Begriff scheint keine spezielle Subgruppe zu bezeichnen, sondern ganz allgemein von Hindus in Tamilnadu für (wie es scheint vor allem) tamilsprachige Muslime verwendet worden zu sein. Auch die Mappilla in Kerala sollen mit diesem Begriff bezeichnet worden sein (Thurston 1909: vol. II 501). Francis notiert (1906b: 87):

> The term Jónagan or Sónagan, meaning a native of Sónagam or Arabia, is applied by Hindus to both Labbai and Marakkáyars, but it is usually held to have a contemptuous flavour about it.

Lediglich Thurston will in dem Begriff eine spezielle Bezeichnung für Fischer und kleine Bootsbesitzer sehen (1909: vol. II 501). Ob es regionale oder inhaltliche Unterschiede zwischen Sonagar und Tulukar (siehe 3.7) gab oder gibt, bliebe genauer zu untersuchen.[11]

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[11] Interessant ist in diesem Zusammenhang ein Vermerk in Winslows Wörterbuch. Unter dem Eintrag *tulukkar* (sub voce *tulukku*) findet sich neben der allgemeinen Bedeutung Muslims oder Türken folgende Bedeutung: "2. A class of Moors, the other being *cō-nakar*" (1989: 608).

3.6. Tarakanar (Taragan; *tarakan̲(ār)* "broker"):

Die Angaben zu dieser anscheinend ausschließlich im Tiru-
nelveli-Distrikt siedelnden Subgruppe sind spärlich. Pate er-
wähnt sie zusammen mit den Ravuttar als Personen, die sich
nicht durch Gelehrsamkeit oder Frömmigkeit auszeichnen
und wohl die Nachkommen von tamilischen Konvertiten dar-
stellen (1917: 97f.). Lediglich Fanselow geht näher auf sie
ein. Sie gehören der s̲h̲āfiʿītischen Rechtsschule an (1996:
202) und waren in früheren Zeiten primär als Mittelsmänner
für Großkaufleute im Textilgeschäft tätig. Fanselow betont
wie bei den Ravuttar ein fehlendes Interesse an ihrer Ab-
stammung und Geschichte und das Abstreiten von Unter-
schieden zu Muslimen in anderen Ländern. Fanselow hält es
wie Pate für sicher, daß die Tarakanar Nachkommen konver-
tierter Hindus sind, wenn auch die Gründe für die Konver-
sion nicht mehr nachzuvollziehen sind (und sicher auch nicht
einheitlich waren) (ebd.: 209-12). In bezug auf die Konver-
sion schreibt Fanselow (ebd.: 216):

> … there is some circumstantial evidence in historical sources
> that the Rowther are in part related to Maravar converts, the
> Tarakanar to Iluvan converts, … .

Die Zugehörigkeit zur s̲h̲āfiʿītischen Rechtsschule wie ihre
Position als Mittelsmänner im Handel machen es wahrschein-
lich, daß ihre Konversion eng mit der Ausbreitung der Akti-
vitäten muslimischer Händler, insbesondere der Marakkayar,
zusammenhing. Laut Fanselow waren die Tarakanar zu-
nächst eine "client community" der Marakkayar (ebd.: 212).
Heutzutage betonen die Tarakanar ihre Zugehörigkeit zum

Islam durch die "Reinigung" "synkretistischer" Feste und Rituale, Betonung der Gleichheit aller Muslime und damit verbunden des Mißtrauens gegenüber den Abstammungslegenden der Marakkayar, sowie häufigen Ehebeziehungen mit den Ravuttar, durch die die Grenzen zwischen diesen Gruppen zunehmend verwischen (ebd.: 210f. und 215; siehe 3.4).

3.7. Tulukar (*tulukkar* "Mussalman, Turk"):

Ähnlich wie bei dem Begriff Sonagar wurde hier ein Ethnonym zu einer Bezeichnung für "Muslim". Dieser Begriff scheint mit der Ausbreitung des türkisch geprägten Sultanats von Delhi und der Gründung des Sultanats von Madurai in Gebrauch gekommen zu sein (More 1997: 22). Bayly nennt einen Dorfzensus, in dem Pathanen den Beinamen Tulukar tragen (Bayly 1989: 88 Anm. 28).

3.8. Vethalaikaran (*ve<u>rr</u>ilaikkāra<u>n</u>* < *ve<u>rr</u>ilai* "Betel pepper; Betel leaf"):

Diese Subgruppe wird nur von Naidu erwähnt. Nach seinen Angaben sollen sie eine Subgruppe der Labbai darstellen, die vom Anbau und Verkauf von Betel lebt, ohne daß er aber angibt, ob es sich lediglich um eine Berufsbezeichnung handelt oder ob es stärkere Abgrenzungen zu anderen Labbai gibt. So erwähnt Naidu für beide Gruppen, daß sie endogam seien und ihre Toten auf separaten Friedhöfen beerdigen würden. Es geht aus den Angaben aber nicht hervor, ob es sich dabei um Gebräuche der Labbai handelt, die die Vetha-

laikaran als Labbai-Subgruppe mit diesen gemein haben, oder ob sich die Vethalaikaran mit diesen von den Labbai abgrenzen (1994a: 232ff. und 1994d: 436 und 438). Bereits Francis erwähnt, daß viele Labbai im Betelanbau tätig sind (1906b: 86).

4. Zusammenfassung und Ausblick

Die verschiedenen Bezeichnungen lassen sich ihrer Bedeutung nach in drei Gruppen unterteilen:

  1) <u>Generelle Termini</u>: Hierzu gehören die Begriffe Sonagar und Tulukar sowie Labbai in der Bedeutung "tamilsprachiger Muslim". Hierbei handelt es sich nicht um Subgruppen, sondern um Bezeichnungen für Muslime im allgemeinen. Die Begriffe Sonagar und Tulukar hängen sicherlich mit den zwei Ausbreitungsprozessen des Islam in Tamilnadu zusammen. Inwiefern die Begriffe aber nur für bestimmte Gruppen (Sonagar z.B. für <u>Shāfi'īs</u>, Tulukar für aus dem Norden eingewanderte Muslime) benutzt wurden, ist fraglich (siehe jedoch Anmerkung 11). Lediglich der Begriff Labbai, wie er von den Briten als Zensuskategorie eingeführt wurde, ist etwas klarer definiert. In allen Fällen handelt es sich wohl um Außenbezeichnungen: Sonagar und Tulukar wurden wohl primär von Hindus, Labbai primär von den Briten und vielleicht urdusprachigen Muslimen verwendet.

  2) <u>Subgruppen</u>: Dies sind die Labbai im engeren Sinne, die Marakkayar und die Ravuttar (vielleicht auch die Kayalar, vgl. Mines 1986: 582). Sie bilden die oberste Ebene der Subgruppen. Diese Gruppen werden zwar mit bestimmten Großregionen in Verbindung gebracht (die Marakkayar mit der

Küste, die Labbai und Ravuttar mit dem nördlichen bzw. südlichen Inland), sind aber nicht durch ihre Bezeichnung mit einem bestimmten Ort verbunden (mit Ausnahme der Kayalar). Auch umfassen diese Gruppen Individuen verschiedener Berufe. Ihre Identität wird vornehmlich durch Zugehörigkeit zur Rechtsschule und geteilte Vorstellungen über die eigene Geschichte bestimmt. Auch die Gruppen, die keine Abstammungslegenden formulieren, nutzen dies als Merkmal zur Identitätsbildung, denn es kontrastiert mit der starken Betonung von Abstammung anderer Gruppen auf dieser Ebene, und Identität basiert zu einem großen Teil auf solchen Abgrenzungen; keine Geschichte zu haben ist auch eine Vorstellung der eigenen Geschichte.

3) <u>Lokale oder berufliche Sub-subgruppen</u>: Hierzu zählen (mit Einschränkung, s.o.) Kayalar, Tarakanar und Vethalaikaran. Sie bilden innerhalb oder im engen Verbund mit Gruppen aus 2) weitere Unterteilungen auf der Basis von Beruf oder Herkunftsort. Dazu gehören auch die von Francis erwähnten Subgruppen der Ravuttar (siehe **3.4**). Solche Gruppen brauchen nicht einfach nur Teilmengen der Gruppen aus 2) zu sein. Gerade bei den Tarakanar scheint es starke Tendenzen zu einem kompletten Bruch mit den Marakkayar zu geben, und früher oder später mögen sie in den Ravuttar aufgehen.

Es ist gerade aus diesem Grund wichtig, noch einmal den Charakter solcher Gruppen zu betonen. Es handelt sich nicht um statische Gebilde, sondern um Menschen, die in einem bestimmten Kontext zu einem bestimmten Zweck eine eige-

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ne Identität formulieren. Wenn sich der Kontext ändert, ändert sich auch die Formulierung der Identität, auch wenn der Name bestehen bleibt. Zwar berücksichtigen die meisten Autoren die Kontextgebundenheit der Gruppen, die sie selbst erforscht haben, beziehen dann aber ihre Ergebnisse auf andere Regionen oder Perioden mit anderem Kontext. Hierzu gehört Baylys Kontrastierung von Labbai und Marakkayar in der vorkolonialen Zeit, obwohl zu diesem Zeitpunkt Labbai wohl mehr ein religiöses Amt denn eine Subgruppe bezeichnete (vgl. 1989: 80; siehe 3.2). Auch die Behauptung Fanselows, Labbai sei eine durch den Zensus geschaffene Kategorie, die tamil- von urdusprachigen Muslimen trennt, berücksichtigt nicht, daß die Labbai in Pallavaram, wo Mines forschte, eindeutig eine eigene Subgruppe bildeten (vgl. 1996: 215). Eine der wichtigen Aufgaben der Erforschung des Islams in Tamilnadu bleibt, den semantischen Inhalt von Termini wie Labbai oder Ravuttar in ihrem jeweiligen historischen und/oder regionalem Kontext zu erarbeiten, soweit dies bei der Fluktuation der Bedeutung solcher Identitätstermini möglich ist.

Dabei darf aber auf keinen Fall der Fehler gemacht werden, etwa Ravuttar im 18. Jahrhundert als vollkommen getrennt von Ravuttar im 20. Jahrhundert zu sehen, denn die Identitätsbildung geschieht ja nicht aus dem leeren Raum heraus, sondern auf der Basis des vorher Geschehenen. Auch die Legenden, mit denen einige Gruppen ihre Identität betonen, sollten nicht ausschließlich als Instrumentalisierungen zur Identitätsbildung betrachtet werden. Wenn auch im Lau-

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fe der Geschichte viele Gruppen von Konvertiten in der als Marakkayar bezeichneten Gruppe aufgegangen sind, wird wohl niemand die Historizität der Vermischung arabischer Einwanderer mit den Einheimischen bestreiten. Eine diese Faktoren berücksichtigende Erforschung der einzelnen Gruppen kann im Zusammenspiel mit der Forschung auf anderen Gebieten wie der Archäologie oder Literaturwissenschaft neue Erkenntnisse zu Geschichte wie Gegenwart der Muslime in Tamilnadu und damit zu Tamilnadu selbst liefern.

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