

**Political culture of Kōlikkōṭu:**  
**Exploring perspectives beyond *The Zamorins of Calicut***

I thank the office bearers of Calicut Heritage Forum, particularly its President Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan and Convener C.K. Ramachandran, for providing me this great opportunity. I am obliged to them for this gesture of magnanimity. The invitation to deliver the second K.V. Krishna Ayyar Endowment lecture surprised me, if not shocked, as the first Endowment lecture was delivered by a distinguished historian and my guru Prof. Kesavan Veluthat. Perhaps this invitation is directly connected to my area of research, which is akin to that of Prof. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, to commemorate whom we have gathered here. I have no personal memory of Prof. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, unlike many dignitaries present here. But I have a close academic rapport with him as I have followed the footprints of this pioneer in the historical research of Calicut. In 1998 when I initiated my discussion with Prof. Kesavan Veluthat on my research problem, prior to his committing of supervising, he instructed me to fulfil two criterions. Firstly, study the works of Prof. K.V. Krishna Ayyar and secondly, get approval from Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan. Thus began my relationship with three eminent historians of Kerala.

In the initial years of my research I used to wonder what improvement in fact, I could bring in to the writings of Prof. K.V. Krishna Ayyar. He has built such a beautiful and sturdy edifice way back in 1938 called *The Zamorins of Calicut*. This anxiety I could not surmount even when I completed my doctoral research. The secret of endurance of this monograph lies in the rigorous analysis of primary sources including palace archives, literary sources and foreign notices. I will illustrate this fact by the following examples. 1. A later scholar, in contrast to Krishna Ayyar, argues that *Taippūyam* was an annual festival celebrated at Tīrunāvāya. However, the documents in the palace chronicle of the Zamorin clarifies that it was celebrated once in twelve years immediately before *Māmākam* as suggested by Krishna Ayyar. 2. Krishna Ayyar says that Zamorin had used the service of Muslim musicians for procession, which is not substantiated or negated by later scholars. The present author has substantiated it using the documents in the palace archives of the Zamorin. His familiarity with the nuances of the customs

and traditions of Zamorin's family came very handy in interpreting and comprehending the entire context. His erudite scholarship surprised later scholars, which is indicated in acknowledging his work in all pieces of historical writing on Kerala even after 77 years. The present paper is an attempt to trace the historiography of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu under the Zamorins and an analysis of the nature of political power, which I believe is a fitting accolade to the memory of an eminent scholar on his 121<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations.

### **Historiography**

The Zamorins, the rulers of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu, were among the more important kings of medieval Kerala. They established their kingdom and became its independent rulers after the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom of Mahōdayapuram in AD 12<sup>th</sup> century. The kingdoms of Vēṇāṭu, Kōḷikkōṭu and Kōlattunāṭu were the major powers that came into prominence in the post-Cēra period. Among the modern scholars William Logan wrote an account of the history of the Zamorins. He collected information regarding many aspects of history and presented it in a modern, critical way. If many of his assumptions and interpretations are disputed at present it is not so much due to the lack of his historical understanding but because of the paucity of information to him.<sup>1</sup> He writes about the history of the Zamorin and gives details using both indigenous and foreign sources. The early history of the Zamorins lacks in details,<sup>2</sup> but accounts of what he called the Portuguese period,<sup>3</sup> that of conflict between the European Companies and the local rulers,<sup>4</sup> Mysorean invasions,<sup>5</sup> British supremacy,<sup>6</sup> etc. are more detailed where the emphasis is, of course, on political history. K.P. Padmanabha Menon makes a reference to the history of the Zamorins wherever it is relevant in his scheme of writing.<sup>7</sup>

### **K.V. Krishna Ayyar's *The Zamorins of Calicut***

It was K.V. Krishna Ayyar who wrote the first monograph on the history of the Zamorins.<sup>8</sup> The information provided by this pioneering work is still unsurpassed. He has produced a work of monumental stature using the palace archives, indigenous literary works and the foreign accounts. Many of the details provided in this work remains to be the most accurate and authentic. This work remained as the sole source of information on the kingdom of Zamorins for more than six decades proves its worth. Thus it can be rightly regarded as the most comprehensive study on the Zamorins of Calicut.

However, due to the emphasis on political history, which is obviously not a fault of him but the trend on those days, other aspects are not illuminated. Lack of knowledge regarding many details of the history of Kerala, particularly about the immediately preceding Perumāl period, and the consequent handicap in making use of evidences makes a case for fresh study. The limitation of the historical method of that period also is evident. However, the above points do not in any way detract the value of the work and it has to be appreciated as a pioneering study. The limitations are pointed out here not to belittle his contribution, but to imply the need for fresh studies. In fact, the academic tradition of appreciating and acknowledging the contribution of a scholar is evident in taking up the problems of enquiry he has initiated to further dimensions and perspectives. The fine quality of Krishna Ayyar's scholarship provides the present writers including myself a secure platform for further research. He has also written articles on the history of the Zamorin. His papers on *Māmākam* are of much importance in our study.<sup>9</sup> Articles also appeared occasionally on the history of the Zamorins or related matters.<sup>10</sup> K.M. Panikkar wrote on the medieval history of Kerala using mostly foreign records. He concentrated on the conflicts between the European companies and the local rulers of Kerala, in which the Zamorins also get a fair share.<sup>11</sup>

After the work of Krishna Ayyar, there was no exclusive study on the Zamorins for many years. P.K.S. Raja<sup>12</sup> and Sreedhara Menon<sup>13</sup> wrote on the Zamorins, but their writings made no qualitative improvement and were heavily dependent on Krishna Ayyar's work and other secondary sources. A work which is noticeable not by its merit but by the pride of the author, who was himself related to the Zamorin's family, is also published.<sup>14</sup> N.M. Nampoothiry has published a collection of essays on the Zamorins.<sup>15</sup> Information on certain incidents, which are found in the *Kōlikkōṭan Granthavari*, is presented in this work. He has made use of the *Granthavari* and partly quoted a few documents. But he is basically interested in Onomastics and Literature and lacks in historical methodology. His recent works do not contribute significantly to our present understanding of the history of the Zamorins.<sup>16</sup> Apart from these works there are a few articles<sup>17</sup> and other works<sup>18</sup> which generally deal with matters related to the history of the Zamorins.

The works of Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, a major name in the historiography of medieval Kerala, do not deal directly with the history of the Zamorins. But his works are useful

for understanding medieval Kerala prior to the times of the Zamorin.<sup>19</sup> They help us situate the Zamorins against the socio-economic and political history. M.G.S. Narayanan's works also help us to form a picture of medieval Kerala. His work *Perumāls of Kerala*,<sup>20</sup> provides us with many pieces of information regarding the Cēras and help us for a better understanding of medieval Kerala history. As the predecessors of the Zamorins were local chiefs under the Perumāls of Mahōdayapuram, the details of Cēra history help us to look for similarities and differences in various aspects of the history of the Zamorins. M.G.S. Narayanan's recent work examines the history of Kōḷikkōṭu under the Zamorins.<sup>21</sup> He has made a fresh analysis and helps us to understand the social and cultural life of the kingdom. But he has not consulted the palace archives of the Zamorin and depended heavily on secondary sources including the works of Krishna Ayyar and Nampoothiry. Kesavan Veluthat's work on the Brahman villages of Kerala gives information regarding the pattern and function of the settlements from Payyannūr in the north to Ceññannūr in the south.<sup>22</sup> The number of Brahman villages in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu is only four. But the two Brahman villages among these led the rival factions. Even the Zamorin was a party to this rivalry. A recent work of Kesavan Veluthat makes an elaborate study of the early medieval history of South India with emphasis to Kerala.<sup>23</sup> The work of Genevieve Bouchon on the history of the kingdom of Cannanore<sup>24</sup> and Mark de Lannoy's work on the kingdom of Travancore<sup>25</sup> are also useful to us as these works provide information on the history of the two contemporary powers. They use rich foreign sources but do not quite explore indigenous primary sources. The present author has tried to advance further the historiography with a few works on Kōḷikkōṭu under the Zamorins.<sup>26</sup>

## Sources

The main source for the study of Kōḷikkōṭu is the voluminous collection of unpublished palm leaf manuscripts called *Kōḷikkōṭan Granthavari*.<sup>27</sup> Evidence available is less on the early period of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu (AD 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century) compared with the later period (AD 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century). We have made use of the palm leaf records as the documents in paper relate to a later period. The documents are basically of two types: a) accounts of the details of the income and expenditure and b) accounts of the details of the rituals, festivals and similar events. William Logan consulted a few documents in the *Granthavari* for his study. K.V. Krishna Ayyar made use of these documents elaborately. But after that the documents were lost to the scholars

for many years until N.M. Nampoothiry found them in the *Kōvilakam* of the Zamorin's predecessors at Tiruvacciṛa. He made use of these documents for his work on Onomastics<sup>28</sup> and later also for a collection of articles on the history of the Zamorin.<sup>29</sup> He has quoted a few documents in the latter work. But the bulk of the documents remain unpublished and nobody after him was attracted to these valuable sources, nor were they easily available to the scholars. A few documents in the palace chronicle have been published recently.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the *Kōlikkōṭan Granthavari* is of much importance as a source. For us this is significant in another way also. We deal with the royalty and the political culture around it and it is the palace records that represent them best. Medieval literary works and foreign accounts are also remaining as the major sources.

In addition to *Kōlikkōṭan Granthavari* we have a few more *Granthavaris* as our source. The family records of a Brahman house known as Vaññēri<sup>31</sup> give a lot of information regarding the temple system, functioning of the *sankētam*, the relation between the Zamorin, Veṭṭam Uṭaya Mūtta Kōvil, other locality chiefs and the local magnates, etc. The *Perumpaṭappu Svarūpam Granthavari* of Cochin royal family<sup>32</sup> is also an important source, which gives information on the contemporary kingdom of Cochin. Explicit historical accounts in Malayalam are very rare. Fortunately, we have such an account and an autobiography as our source.<sup>33</sup> The autobiography of an important Brahman who belonged to the Panniyūr village and was degraded from caste status is a unique source because it contains a harsh criticism of the Zamorin. The letters of the Cochin Rājas to the Dutch Company constitute another useful source material.<sup>34</sup> Inscriptions of the Zamorins or which refer to them are not many. Muccunti mosque inscription records a grant of Zamorin to the mosque of Muccunti at Kurriccīra.<sup>35</sup> A few Cēra inscriptions<sup>36</sup> refer to the chiefs of Ēranāṭu, who were the predecessors of the Zamorin. These are a few sources which were not available to Krishna Ayyar, when he writes his monograph.

### **Political structure**

The power and authority which the rulers claimed and actually wielded as well as the way in which they sought to legitimise such power and authority are to be reconsidered in the light of the newly available material and the rich discussion that has taken place at a theoretical level. Creating an image of royalty was particularly problematic for the Zamorins to begin with, for it was well known that they were local chiefs under the Cēra Perumāḷs and they later became

independent rulers. They could not discard their past altogether, which was known to their contemporaries, nor could they create a new image which went against it.

The Perumāḷ tradition of *Kēraḷōtpatti* is a case in point. Not only the Zamorins but also the other chiefs of Kerala who grabbed power and became independent shared this tradition. The prescription that the rulers must be of *Kṣatriya varṇa* may have been a problem for them. They were the *Sāmantas* of the Perumāḷs, an image which had already crystallized itself as a distinctive social group or as a kind of sub-caste. So they began to style themselves as *Sāmanta kṣatriyas*. They started claiming a social status higher than the rest of the military professionals or Nāyars through a series of rituals. In an attempt to be recognised and legitimised as the “king”, they resorted to various strategies like performing elaborate rituals, patronage to temples, scholarship and literature, celebration of grand festivals, propagation of art forms and culture and the cultivation of an elite group in the kingdom, exhibition of royal pageantry, etc., all of which eminently suited their needs.

The Zamorins used to draw huge amounts from the resources of the kingdom to spend on rituals, festivals, war, and for meeting the expenditure of royal functionaries and patronage. We see that even when the Zamorins were in straitened circumstances in a later period, they did not cut down on the expenditure on these items. We can say ala, Pierre Bourdieu that the apparent waste is actually a means for converting economic capital into political, social, cultural or symbolic capital.<sup>37</sup> The royalty patronised a particular culture, which it hoped to stabilize and make use of. That makes the kingship in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu as an interesting example of the political culture in medieval Kerala.

The different models of pre-modern state are used to explain the political structure of various Indian kingdoms. Feudalism to segmentary state and early state to theatrical state models are used for this purpose. In the case of south India also we have such attempts to explain the functioning of the state. There are only passing references or casual statements on the nature of the state in the post-Cēra period.<sup>38</sup> K.V. Krishna Ayyar had suggested the form of government under the Zamorin as an autocracy.<sup>39</sup> M.R. Raghava Varier considered *Svarūpam* as a state but not specified its nature.<sup>40</sup> K.N. Ganesh considers *Svarūpam*, particularly Vēṇāṭu, as a state with several segments of power.<sup>41</sup> Though there are a number of models proposed on state structure in India regional and peripheral kingdoms are not adequately recognized in such models. The

western concept of the state may not be applicable to medieval regional kingdoms in India. There is also a prevalent view that the western concept assumes state as a unit held together by bureaucratic administrative actions and legislation. Nicholas Dirks' ethno historic study on the little kingdom in south India initiated a significant paradigmatic change. It shifts the focus of historical research from the centre to the much neglected periphery of late medieval and early modern regional kingdoms.

### **Features of Little kingdom**

The model of little kingdom suggested by Bernard S. Cohn<sup>42</sup> and further elaborated and developed by Nicholas Dirks<sup>43</sup> and Margret Frenz<sup>44</sup> is relevant in the context of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu and other kingdoms of late medieval Kerala. The little kingdom model describes the political units before fundamental changes introduced by the colonial power to its overall administrative, political, ritual, social and economic structure. This model is useful as an analytical category to explain the nature of the state in late medieval Kerala. The main features of this model are listed below followed by a discussion of the situation in late medieval Kerala, particularly in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu.

### **Pyramidal state structure and great king**

The little kingdom model is not proposed as a general model applicable to entire regional kingdoms of late medieval period. Thus a deviation from the general pattern is not unusual when we apply it to the situation of medieval Kerala. The deviation in the case of great king with respect to the medieval little kingdoms of Kerala during the post-Cēra period is that unlike an existing great king, such as Vijayanagara king, there is no surviving great king in medieval Kerala. But the tradition links all the little kings with a great king called Perumāḷ. According to the tradition Perumāḷ had abdicated the throne and partitioned his kingdom among the little kings. Thus the great king survives only in the memory of the people and little kings. The little kings, however, sought their legitimacy through their allegiance to the last Perumāḷ. The structure may not be as different as it ought to be. The Vijayanagara king was only a pale shadow of what he was in an earlier period when the little kings or Pāḷayakkārar actually wielded authority. The story of the abdication of last Perumāḷ may be a polite way of suggesting the independent rule of the erstwhile Nāṭu Uṭayavars from the Cēra overlord. It is evident that as

their power depended on legitimation they made the chorus of receiving power and privileges from the last Perumāḷ. Thus the political and ritual might of the great king is tacitly recognized by the little kings of medieval Kerala.

Margret Frenz has already suggested this modification to the little kingdom model in the case of Kerala.<sup>45</sup> She suggested that the great king does not necessarily have to be a living ruler; rather he can exist in the minds of those Rājas considered to be little kings and carry out his function as a great king in a ‘virtual’ capacity. Thus the territorial/spatial distance between the great king and little kingdoms does not necessarily affect the power-relationship between the great and little kings. Whether Perumāḷ himself could be equated to the position of a great king is debatable. But since all the little kings including Zamorin and king of Vēṅāṭu hoping to become ‘big’ recognized him as the fountain of power and a source of legitimacy, the perception of him as a great king becomes significant.

### **Fortified villages and local rulers**

Krishna Ayyar says that the name of Kōḷikkōṭu is derived from kōyil kōṭṭa (palace fort).<sup>46</sup> The Nāṭu Uṭayavars of the Cēra period controlled their respective areas. The rise and growth of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu from Ēṅāṭu and the transformation of Ēṅāṭu Uṭayavar to Zamorin is evident.<sup>47</sup> The *Svarūpam* originally held a small territory which is considered as their original place from where they moved or expanded to a larger territory. In fact, in the case of *Svarūpams* in medieval Kerala they were known after their original village as in the case of Neṭiyirippu *Svarūpam* or Perumpaṭappu *Svarūpam*. Even after *Svarūpams* began to control areas beyond their original village they remained limited in terms of territory and resources. Various nodes of power such as locality chiefs, local magnates, royal functionaries and temple authorities existed in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu. The Zamorin was the ruler of a little kingdom, enjoying a position slightly better than that of a locality chief, but was projected in a larger-than-life image.

### **Politics equal to rituals**

The ritual and political domains appear inseparable in late medieval Kerala. The political culture of late medieval Kerala had revolved around the rituals. Everything in the life of the royalty from investiture to death and from bath to hair cut was heavily ritualised. The rituals helped the royalty to enhance its social status and prestige in the eyes of his subjects. The

investiture ceremony of the Zamorin and the junior princes called *tirumuṭippalavariccārttu* was an elaborate ceremony involving many rituals. *Uṭavālaṇakkal* or investing with the royal sword was a ritual related with the investiture ceremony. The funeral of the Zamorin and other princes was also heavily ritualised. After the death of a prince all members of the family observed fourteen days of ritual pollution. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day the purificatory rituals called *tiruvantaḷi* or *vākataḷi* were performed. Other royal rituals include birthday (*āṭṭattirunāl*), the first death anniversary of a Zamorin (*tirumāsam*), *attaccamayam*, *tulābhāram*, *trikkaṇi* (looking at auspicious things to mark the beginning of a day), *tēvāram* (worshipping Bhagavati) and *vayarāṭṭu* (a ritual waving with a creeper). Sometimes things went to such ridiculous extent that even the haircut (*tirumuṭi irakkal*) of the Zamorin was an elaborate ritual consuming considerable time and resources.

Royal procession with music ensemble (*koṭṭicceḷunnalḷattu*) was an important feature of the political culture of Kōḷikkōṭu. The Zamorin or the Ērāḷppāṭu with other princes, royal functionaries (*Kāryakkār*), local magnates and their retinue with all the royal insignia and paraphernalia proceeded from one palace (*Kōvilakam*) to another or to the houses of the local magnates and royal functionaries or to temples. But it was in the celebration of two festivals viz. *Māmākam* and *Taippūyam* that the climax of the ceremonial expression of the political hegemony of the Zamorin is found.<sup>48</sup> Both festivals were celebrated once in twelve years on the banks of Pērār at Tirunāvāya. *Māmākam* was a grand festival of thirty days while *Taippūyam* was a one-day festival. The rituals involved in the festival are centred on the deity of the temple of Tirunāvāya and the King. Thus it implies divinity to the king or at least a claim for larger than life size image. The little king manifested his rule in public representations as the donor and protector of the religion of his kingdom and the maintenance of *rājadharmā*. Thus we can assume that the political and religious domains were neither subordinate nor super-ordinate to one another.

### **Exchange of gifts**

The various persons placed at the various nodes of power in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu received gifts or honours. The king received gift (*tirumulkāḷca*) from his subjects. Such gifts were obligatory during his royal procession and on occasions of festivals such as *Ōṇam* and *Viṣu*. The kinship system was the basis and expression of social and political relations which found

their symbolic representation in the redistributive system of the little kingdom. The local magnates were big landlords. Unlike the locality chiefs, they were not independent of the authority of the Zamorin. They were invested with different symbols of political authority in relation to the Zamorin which included “the sword and the robe”, “the shawl and the dagger”, “turban”, etc.<sup>49</sup> The Zamorin performed their investiture. They acted as royal functionaries. Ties of dependence and super-ordination were created through the conferment of honours and privileges.

### **Traditional form of government**

It is evident that the *Svarūpam* is a traditional form of government in medieval Kerala. It was based on matrilineal joint family and kinship lineage. The primogeniture is not specifically stated in the case of the little kingdom model. But it can be presumed as patriarchy. However, matriliney was practised in medieval Kerala. Thus the senior member of the matrilineal joint family became the king. Margret Frenz has suggested that the matrilineal structure of the society in Malabar had to be incorporated into the little kingdom model.<sup>50</sup> The ruling houses of Kerala in the post-Cēra period including the family of the Zamorin followed the *Marumakkattāyam* (matriliny). The royal house consisted of various *tāvaḷis* or collateral branches in the matrilineal descent group. In Kōḷikkōṭu three *tāvaḷis* constituted the ruling lineage viz. *Putiya Kōvilakam*, *Kiḷakke Kōvilakam* and *Paṭiññāre Kōvilakam*.

### **Military**

The constant struggles among the little kings of Kerala made it imperative that they maintain their own soldiers to meet any contingency. The presence of a militia in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu is evident from various references to it in the *Granthavari* and foreign accounts.<sup>51</sup> The little kings of medieval Kerala exerted internal independence, were able to assert themselves using military means if necessary, and were able to legitimize their rule within their own territory through political and ritual actions, as well as through policies towards the local people which conform to the traditional concept of a ruler. Thus the rulers of medieval Kerala including Zamorin, Kōlattiri, Rāja of Cochin, Veṭṭam Uṭaya Mūtta Kōvil, Vaḷḷuvakkōnātiri and Rāja of Vēṇāṭu and so on acted as little kings.

## **Restructuring of power relations**

The disputes between little kings in late medieval Kerala and the role of European powers in this tussle are well known. The relationship between Zamorin and Vaḷḷuvakkōnātiri is of particular interest. The *Kēraḷōtpatti* tradition records that the last Perumāḷ gave sanction to the Zamorin for his actions against the neighbouring powers.<sup>52</sup> The policy of aggrandizement followed by the Zamorin might have been legitimized by such a tradition. He had even captured Tirunāvāya from Vaḷḷuvakkōnātiri, another little king, and acquired the right to preside over a festival called *Māmākam*. The protectorship of that festival was originally granted to Vaḷḷuvakkōnātiri by the last Perumāḷ. Thus Vaḷḷuvakkōnātiri began to send suicide squads to challenge the authority of the Zamorin. The constant fight between Zamorin and ruler of Cochin is also an example of contest for supremacy with regard to the great king. In fact, the range of a ruler's power was determined by the shifting alliances with other rulers.

There existed a network of relations between the little kings in medieval Kerala. The relation with the great king or Perumāḷ is based on the perceived gift of position and honours to the little kings, even this tradition underwent changes. This actually accounts to the relationship between the little kings such as Zamorin, Veṭṭam Uṭaya Mūṭta Kōvil, Vaḷḷuvakkōnātiri, Veṅṅinnanāṭṭu Nampāṭi and Rāja of Cochin underwent significant changes over the period. It is also important to note that there are other levels of power below the little king, such as the local magnates.

## **Ecological and economic marginality of little king**

The Zamorin constantly tried to enlarge his kingdom and step into the shoes of the Cēra king. But he never achieved the ambition of political hegemony over other little kings, though he partially succeeded in establishing his authority for a particular period. The celebration of *Māmākam* festival at Tirunāvāya can be considered as the ceremonial statement of political hegemony over entire Kerala. It is also evident that even though one achieves political hegemony over entire Kerala the resource base will not have improved much to claim the position of a great king. The ecological and economic marginality of the little kings of medieval Kerala is one of the most visible features.

## **Legitimation of rule through rituals**

The investiture ceremony of the little king was called *tirumuṭippaḷavariccārttu* or *ariyittuvāḷca* in medieval Kerala. It was an elaborate ceremony with strong Brahmanical

overtone. Not only the Zamorin but also the junior princes underwent this ritual. It represented the king's level of authority and defined his relation to other kings, which gave expression to the hierarchical grading or equality amongst them. Rituals not only served to legitimize rule in the little kingdom but also to manifest this rule. The interdependence of the temples on the one side and the king, locality chiefs and local magnates on the other is an interesting aspect of the political culture of Kōlikkōṭu.

### **Lowest level of state structure**

The political structure of the little kingdom in medieval Kerala presents the lowest level of a state formation. The little kingdoms represent the nominal character of a state. The revenue collection, functionaries, various forms of coercive forces, administrative divisions and the authority of the king in the kingdom of Kōlikkōṭu and other kingdoms in medieval Kerala make them to the category of a state. But to search certain specific features of an imperial state in those kingdoms is futile. However, the features of political structure in medieval Kerala clearly negate the possibility of a stateless situation.

Thus the model of the little kingdom should help us to explain the character and dynamics of the political structure in late medieval Kerala. These are a few minor additions to the perspectives brought out by K.V. Krishna Ayyar. We see in it interesting and intricate use of strategies, rituals and symbols to secure such power as was possible within the larger structure of politics and economy. The combination of strategies and symbols helped the little kingdom look much larger than it actually was and secured for it a power and influence which it did not otherwise possess. Symbols did not just take the place of substance; they made up for it. It is as if the gap between illusion and reality occasionally gets obliterated in the making of royalty.

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## References

- <sup>1</sup> For an analysis see, Kesavan Veluthat, 'Logan's Malabar: Text and Context' in William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, (1887), Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, pp. xxxvii-lxvii.
- <sup>2</sup> William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, (1887), Madras, Reprint 1951, pp. 275-94.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 294-338.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 338-99.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 399-473.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 473-595.
- <sup>7</sup> K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, 4 Vols., (1914-21), New Delhi, Reprint 1982-86, *passim*.
- <sup>8</sup> K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, (hereafter ZC), Calicut, 1938.
- <sup>9</sup> K.V. Krishna Ayyar, 'The Kerala Māmānkam', in T.K. Joseph, ed., *Kerala Society Papers*, Vol. I, pp. 324-30; *Idem*, 'Tirunavay Māmākam', in *JIH*, Vol. XLI, Part III, 1963.
- <sup>10</sup> Itticceri Thavaran Bhattatiri's article on Panniyūr village, Koonezhattu Paramesvara Menon's article on *māmākam*, articles on royal poets of the Zamorin and on *paṭṭiṇi* by anonymous authors are a few to name. Kunhikrishna Menon's journalistic report on the Ēṅāḷppāṭu's investiture ceremony and procession from Calicut to Karimpuḷa of a later period (AD 1909) is brought out in a book form. Itticceri Thavaran Bhattatiri, '*Panniyūr Grāmam*', in *Rasikaraṅṅini*, Vol. I, No. 12, 1903, pp. 580-85; Koonezhattu Paramesvara Menon, '*Māmānkam*', in *Rasikaraṅṅini*, Vol. 2, No. 2 & 3, 1904, pp. 82-89, 158-61; Author anonymous, '*Paṭṭiṇi*', in *Rasikaraṅṅini*, Vol. I, No. 6, 1903, pp. 269-72; Author anonymous, '*Sāmūtirippāṭum Patineṭṭarakkavikaḷum*', in *Rasikaraṅṅini*, Vol. 4, No. 7, 1907, pp. 355-66; Kunhi Krishna Menon P. , *Ariyittuvālcayum Koṭṭicceḷunnaḷḷattum*, Calicut, 1910.
- <sup>11</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala (1498-1801)*, Annamalaiagar, 1960.
- <sup>12</sup> P.K.S. Raja, *Mediaeval Kerala*, (1953), Calicut, 1966.
- <sup>13</sup> A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, (1967), Madras, 1991, pp. 150-59.
- <sup>14</sup> P.C.M. Raja, *Sāmūtiriyum Kōḷikkōṭum*, Calicut, 1982; see also, *Idem*, *Māmānkavum Sāmūtiriyum*, Calicut, 1982.
- <sup>15</sup> N.M. Nampoothiry, *Sāmūtiri Caritrattile Kāṅāppurāṅṅal*, (hereafter SCK), Sukapuram, 1987.
- <sup>16</sup> *Idem*, *Kerala Samskāram: Akavum Puṅṅavum*, Calicut University, no date; *Idem*, *Malabar Paṭhanāṅṅal: Sāmūtirināṅṅu*, Thiruvananthapuram, 2008.
- <sup>17</sup> For instance, M.R. Raghava Varier, 'Documents of Investiture ceremonies under the Zamorins with special reference to Kunhali Marakkar and Kozhikkottu Koya', in K.K.N. Kurup, ed., *India's Naval Traditions*, New Delhi, 1997; Jayarani Pallath, '*Caver - the Suicide Squad of Valluvanad*', in *Proceedings of IHC*, Calicut, 1976, pp. 233-39.
- <sup>18</sup> S.F. Dale, *The Māppīlas of Malabar 1498-1922: Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier*, Oxford, 1980; K.N. Ganesh, *Kēraḷattinre Innalekaḷ*, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990; Raghava Varier and Rajan Gurukkal, *Kēraḷacaritram*, Sukapuram, 1991; E.H. Devi, *Medieval Society as Reflected in the Ballads of North Malabar*, M.A. Dissertation, Calicut University, 1975; Sankara Warriar, *Guruwayur Temple*, M.Phil. Dissertation, Calicut University, 1979; N.M. Nampoothiry, *A Study of Place names in the Calicut District*, Ph.D. Thesis, Calicut University, 1988.
- <sup>19</sup> Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, *Cērasāmṛāṅṅyam Ompatum Pattum Nūrrāṅṅukaḷil*, Kottayam, 1961; *Idem*, *Cila Kēraḷacaritra Praśnāṅṅal*, Kottayam, 1963; *Idem*, *Caritrattinre Paścāttalattil*, Kottayam, 1961; *Idem*, *Samskāratinre Nāḷikakkallukaḷ*, Kottayam, 1966; *Idem*, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1970.
- <sup>20</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumāḷs of Kerala*, (hereafter PK), Calicut, 1996.
- <sup>21</sup> *Idem*, *Calicut: The City of Truth Revisited*, Calicut University, 2006.
- <sup>22</sup> Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala: Historical Studies*, Calicut, 1978.
- <sup>23</sup> *Idem*, *The early medieval in South India*, New Delhi, 2009.
- <sup>24</sup> Genevieve Bouchon, *Regent of the Sea: Cannanore's Response to Portuguese Expansion, 1507-1528*, Delhi, 1988.
- <sup>25</sup> Mark de Lannoy, *The Kulaśekhara Perumāḷs of Travancore: History and State formation in Travancore from 1671 to 1758*, Leiden, 1997.
- <sup>26</sup> V.V. Haridas, *King, Court and Culture in Medieval Kerala: The Zamorins of Calicut (c. AD 1200-1767)*, Ph.D. thesis, Mangalore University, 2003; *Idem*, *Sāmūtirikalatte Kōḷikkōṭu: Kathayum Caritravum*, (2009), Kottayam, 2015; *Idem*, *Sāmūtiripperuma*, Thrissur, 2012.
- <sup>27</sup> These constitute a major chunk of the records which formed part of the archives of the Zamorins. There are about 70 volumes of palm leaf books as well as 200 volumes of paper records in this collection of documents. I am

extremely grateful to Dr. N.M. Nampoothiry for giving permission to refer and copy the documents and to the Staff of Vallathol Vidyapeetham for their courtesy.

<sup>28</sup> N.M. Nampoothiry, *A Study of Place names in the Calicut District*.

<sup>29</sup> *Idem*, *SCK*.

<sup>30</sup> Raghava Varier, M.R., ed., *Sthānārōhaṇam: Caṭaṇṇukaḷ*, Sukapuram, 2004; Nampoothiry, N.M., ed., *Māmānkam Rēkhakaḷ*, Sukapuram, 2005.

<sup>31</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, ed., *Vaiññēri Granthavari*, Calicut University, 1987.

<sup>32</sup> V.K.R. Menon, ed., *Perumpaṭappu Svarūpam Granthavari*, Eranakulam, 1943.

<sup>33</sup> N.M. Nampoothiry, ed., *Vellayūṭe Caritram*, Sukapuram, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> V.K.R. Menon, ed., *Letters from Cochin Rajas to Batavia*, Eranakulam, 1946.

<sup>35</sup> M.G.S. Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1972, *App. V.A*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>36</sup> The Jewish copper plate of Bhāskara Ravi, an unpublished inscription noticed by M.G.S. Narayanan from Triccambaram, Kollam Rāmēśvaram inscription of Rāmavarma Kulaśēkhara, etc. are examples. For Jewish copper plate see, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. III, (1894-95), New Delhi, Reprint 1979, No.11, edited by E. Hultzch, pp. 66-69; see also, M.G.S. Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, *App. III.A*, pp. 79-82; Triccambaram inscription partly quoted in M.G.S. Narayanan, *PK*, Notes, p. LXII. The text of Kollam Rāmēśvaram inscription is found in *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. V, No. 13, pp. 40-46; a re-reading of the text from the original stone was made by M.G.S. Narayanan, *PK*, Notes, p. LXV.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory*, (1992), Cambridge, 1994, pp. 67-68.

<sup>38</sup> The imbalance between the study of early and late medieval Kerala is noticeable. There are a few suggestions on the nature of the Cēra state by the scholars. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai perceived it as a centralized monarchy. M.G.S. Narayanan also supported it in his doctoral thesis. However, in his later articles he has revised this view and perceived it as a weak state characterizing it as Brahman oligarchy and Ritual monarchy. Kesavan Veluthat has suggested it as an early state. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Caritrattinre Paścāttalattil*, pp.9-25; M.G.S. Narayanan, 'The State in the Era of Cēramān Perumāḷ of Kerala', in R. Champakalakshmi, et.al., eds., *State and Society in pre-modern South India*, pp.111-19; Kesavan Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India*, pp.183-228.

<sup>39</sup> K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, p.261.

<sup>40</sup> M.R. Raghava Varier, 'State as *Svarūpam*: An Introductory Essay', in R. Champakalakshmi, et.al., eds., *Op. cit.*, pp. 120-30.

<sup>41</sup> K.N. Ganesh, 'Land Rights and Political Structure in Medieval Vēñāṭu', in R. Champakalakshmi, et.al., eds., *Op. cit.*, p.162.

<sup>42</sup> Bernard Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and other Essays*, New Delhi, 1990, pp.483-99.

<sup>43</sup> Nicholas Dirks, *The Hollow Crown*, Bombay, 1989.

<sup>44</sup> Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British rule in Malabar 1790-1805*, New Delhi, 2003.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.149-50.

<sup>46</sup> Kōyil means palace and kōṭṭa means fort. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, p.2.

<sup>47</sup> V.V. Haridas, 'The rise and growth of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu', *Indica*, 2000, Vol.37, No. 2, pp.123-36.

<sup>48</sup> K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, pp.91-120; V.V. Haridas, *Kṣetram Ulsavam Rāshṭrīyam*, Kozhikode, 2008, pp.76-108.

<sup>49</sup> V.V. Haridas, 'Symbols and Status of local magnates in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu: A study of the sword and the robe ceremony', *Indica*, 2002, Vol.39, No.2, pp.129-44.

<sup>50</sup> Margret Frenz, *Op. cit.*, pp.145-47.

<sup>51</sup> *Kōḷikkōṭan Granthavari*, Vols. 1,2, 7, 10, 13 and 14, Palm leaf manuscripts, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Edappal; M.L. Dames, ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. II, (1812), New Delhi, Reprint 1989, pp. 26-27.

<sup>52</sup> Hermann Gundert, 'Kēraḷōlpatti', in Scaria Zachariah, ed., *Kēraḷōlpattiyum Maṟṟum*, Kottayam, 1992, pp. 190-91.