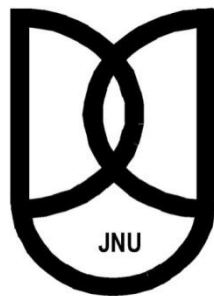


**Trade, Religion and Polity in Pre-Modern
Kerala c.1000A.D-1800 A.D**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the
award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

NAVANEETH KRISHNAN S



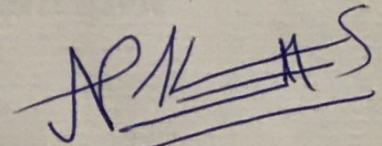
**CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI- 110067**

2017

Date 03/01/2018

Declaration

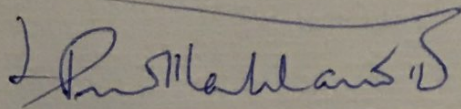
I Navaneeth Krishnan S hereby declare that the thesis entitled " **TRADE, RELIGION AND POLITY IN PRE-MODERN KERALA C.1000A.D-1800 A.D**" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this University is a bonafide work and has not been submitted previously for degree to this or any other University.



Navaneeth Krishnan S

Certificate

We recommend that the thesis may be placed before the examiner for evaluation.

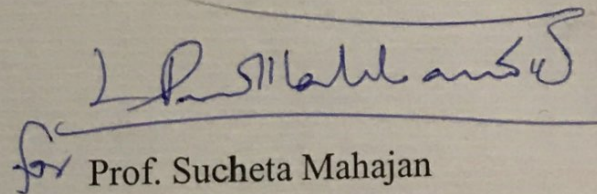


Prof. Pius Malekandathil

Supervisor

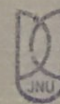


Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067, (India)



Prof. Sucheta Mahajan

Chairperson



CHAIRPERSON
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067, INDIA

DEDICATION

*This Dissertation Work is Dedicated
To My Grandparents*

N. Lakshmi and S. Karunakaran

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Prof. Pius Malekandathil for the continuous support and guidance for my research study. His patience, motivation, and immense knowledge helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

Forever I am indebted to my grandfather S. Karunakaran for his infinite love, encouragement and guidance during my field work trips. I am equally Indebted to my grandmother N. Lakshmi who was crucial in advising me to visit specific places of varying historical importance.

I am more than grateful to my father P.R Saji Kumar and my mother Bindhu. K who encouraged me to pursue history over Medicine and Engineering, besides that they helped me in every possible way to provide necessary primary and secondary readings. I am also thankful to my brother Akhil Krishnan S who brought to me the soft copies of several history books when I was bed ridden after an accident.

I owe much to my friend Ziyad Ali. B, who so generously helped me to get access to various historical sites, monuments and archives using his professional contacts as a research scholar in Archaeology Department of Deccan College Pune. I am thoroughly grateful to Amreen Khanam for editing the thesis. Her energy infused a new life into my thesis. I have endless obligations to my uncle Dr. Sree Kumar C., with whom I was staying during my initial days in Delhi, I felt the warmth of a home away from home.

I am thankful to Uthara K. who gave me company while attending Portuguese classes, course work and source collection and to being a friend in need. And Ghulam Ahmed Raza who used to be there in the reading room late night while preparing my synopsis, Shameem Pulikkal who used to share with me the nuances he discovered from Arabic sources. I am grateful to my seniors Jiji Vijayan, Lekshmi Padma, Chandrabhan Pratap Yadav and Shibina Sasi who helped me in deciding my topic of research.

I am obliged to my professors at Hyderabad Central University: Dr. M.N Rajesh, Prof. K.S Sheshan, Prof. Sanjay Subodh and Prof. Rekha Pande who always encouraged me to pursue research in an institution like Jawaharlal Nehru University.

My special thanks to Arun Krishnan, Sree Lakshmi R., Hinduja Remesh, Sooraj H. S, Adil Pallikadan, Bassit Abubakkar, Rizwan Ahmed, Sreekumar V, Ashwini B, Sreejitha Basak, Dahunshisha Rynjah, Sagar Krishna, Benrith S. Kappen, Edison Baby, Anoop P. M and Arun. V for bearing with me in hard times.

I would also like to acknowledge Sunil Kumar and Ajay Thakur of DSA Library for helping me find out various primary sources. My apologies to all whom I forgot to acknowledge.

Navaneeth Krishnan S

CONTENTS

Dedication	
Acknowledgements	i-ii
List of Maps	iv
List of Tables	v
List of Illustrations	vi
List of Charts	vii
Chapter I: Introduction	1-21
1.1: Historiography	
1.2: Chapterization	
1.3: Methodology and Sources	
Chapter II: Historical Background: Fragmented Polity and Economy c.1000A.D -1300A.D	22-62
2.1: Introduction	
2.2: Geographical features of Kerala	
2.3: <i>Bramhadeya</i> Agrarian Settlements and Perumals of Mahodayapuram	
2.4: Bhakti Movement, Land grants and Maritime Trade	
2.5: Emergence of new Principalities out of the Debris of the Kulasekharas	
2.6: Conclusion	
Chapter III: Changing Centres of Wealth and Power	63-128
3.1: Introduction	
3.2: Maritime Trade and Politico-cum-Religious Developments	
3.3: The Entry of the Europeans and the Changing Socio-Economic and Political Processes	
3.4: Conclusion	
Chapter IV: Trade and Religious Pluralism	129-164
4.1: Introduction	
4.2: <i>Velas, Utsava Chanda</i> and Reign of Kings	
4.3: The Brahmins, <i>Kathanaars</i> , Sufis, Folk deities and Inland Trade Routes	
4.4: <i>Nerchas, Palli Perunnal</i> and Trade Networks	
4.5: Conclusion	
Chapter V: Conclusion	165-177
Appendix	178-180
Glossary	181-182
Bibliography	183-196

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1:	Early Brahmin settlements of Kerala	28
Map 2:	Centres of Bhakti movement	35
Map 3:	Various <i>Nadus</i> of Chera Kingdom	52
Map 4:	Chera Kingdom and its Neighbours	54
Map 5:	Kerala after the decline of Kulashekara dynasty	59
Map 6:	Cochin and its Hinterlands (1500 -1663)	97
Map 6:	Zamorin's Kingdom in 1498	100
Map 7:	Travancore State	125

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	The 17 Principalities mentioned in <i>Keralolpatti</i> as per the prominence	57
-----------------	--	----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Image 1:	Shooting of fire arrows from war ships	75
Image 2:	Ships anchored at safe distance from the shores, small boats transporting the cargo; a Portuguese painting of Calicut port	82
Image 3:	Sword of Cheraman Perumal under the possession of Zamorin	87
Image 4:	A Portuguese ship off coast of Malabar	103
Image 5:	The replica of Portuguese Man O'War	105
Image 6:	Types of Portuguese sailing ships	106
Image 7:	Dutch painting on conquest of Cochin	118

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1:	Trade of Pepper in first half of Sixteenth Century	111
Chart 2:	Trade of Pepper in the end of Sixteenth Century	113

Chapter I

Introduction

The history of Kerala was studied by several scholars across disciplines and specialisations, but so far integrated study of trade history, social history and political history was least attempted by academicians. My humble beginning in research will study about the triangular relationship between polity, trade and religion in making of Pre-modern Kerala. My study will begin from the thirteenth century, which commercially denotes the time period of intensification of maritime trade in the ports of Kerala, and politically corresponds to the fragmentation of the central authority in Kerala following the collapse of the *Kulashekaras* (often known as the Cheras of Makotai). Both these developments ushered in a condition that stimulated production of pepper and other spices in the hinterlands, where eventually newer principalities got formulated/ recast /reinforced often with the strength of the freshly spreading religious ideology of bhakti. The terminal point of the study is 1800 A.D, when Kerala fell into the direct or indirect control of the English. The central purpose of my research is to look into the ways how the societal, economic and political processes of central upland parts of Kerala got changed over time with their incorporation into the trading network of Indian Ocean, particularly against the backdrop of intensified maritime trade.

The *Kulashekara* rulers of Makotai, whose reign was often referred to as a Brahmin oligarchy by scholars like M.G.S. Narayanan,¹ were sustained principally by the wealth coming from low-lying rice production centres controlled chiefly by the Brahmins and their temples. The Brahmins who got a large chunk of land grants from

¹ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 1996; Francis Day, *The Land of Perumals or Cochin It's Past and Present*, Adelphi Press, Vepery, 1863.

the rulers dominated the society, who in turn created a social order, in which they were kept at the apex with other social segments and occupational groups at different scales of hierarchy. The Mushika kingdom with power centre at Ezhimala co-existed in north Kerala as an autonomous principality independent of the *Kulasekharas*.² In this Brahmin-dominated social order, the various occupational groups were converted into castes and sub-castes and their superior-inferior relations were decided on the basis of their ritual closeness to the Brahmins and on the basis of their distancing from menial and pollution-related occupations. The Bhakti movements of the Alvars and the Nayanars eulogizing Brahmin concepts of God gave these differently stratified segments an ideological thread to get integrated and cemented with the Brahmin dominated notion of social order. The thirty-two Brahminical villages that appeared along the banks of various river systems of Kerala, particularly in the low-lying belt, happened to be the core area that sustained the pillars of Kulasekara power edifice. However by the beginning of the twelfth century, with the collapse of the central power of the Cheras, the 14 administrative divisions of the Kulasekharas started ascertaining autonomy and independence. Eventually the provinces, accruing substantial modules and constituents of power, but in varying scales and degrees came to be known in different nomenclatures like *swarupams*, *natuvalis*, *kaimals*, *desavalis*, *karthas* etc. The principality chieftains of these realms localized their power in politically and economically strategic centres, that would facilitate them to mobilize resources depending on the exigencies.

The low-lying paddy cultivating parts of the riverine belts of Kerala happened to be the core area where the 32 Brahmin villages were distributed, which also happened to be the principal geography that sustained the power-edifice of the Cheras. The land

² K.P.A Menon, *Mushikavamsham*, Nag Publishers, New Delhi, 1999.

grants to Brahmins and temples brought in a process whereby the Brahmins or their temples became instruments for mobilizing agrarian resources for the sustenance of the power-structure. Along with the increasing reliance on agrarian sector, the Cheras also tried to attract more foreign merchants like the Jews and Syrian Christians to their ports by bestowing on them with various commercial privileges as to increase the flow of wealth from trade. These foreign merchants operated in guilds and the most important ones among them were *Manigramam* comprising Syrian Christians as evident from *Kollam Chepped (Tarisapalli Copper plate)*³ and *Anjuvannam* consisting of Jews as is evident from the *Jewish Chepped*.⁴ However wealth from paddy cultivating zones was crucial at this stage. Even when the centralized rule of the Kulashekaras collapsed, by twelfth century the most powerful among the successor principalities also had to bank upon wealth from the low-lying paddy cultivating zones and consequently they focussed their power process around the regions that were conducive for rice cultivation. Thus the chief of the Nediyruppu swarupam, who later shifted to Calicut, had his initial seat in Eranadu, which was a land-locked agrarian enclave. Similar was the case of the Perumpadappu swarupam, which earlier had its base in the paddy cultivating pocket of Vanneri near Ponnani.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when Brahminical religious culture was fast spreading in the low-lying paddy cultivating zones with proliferation of Brahminical

³ Chepped means Copper plates, Kollam chepped is a copperplate grant issued by the King of Venadu (Quilon), Ayyanadikal Thiruvadikal, to the Saint Thomas Christians on the Malabar Coast in the 5th regnal year of the Chera ruler Sthanu Ravi Varma. The inscription describes the gift of a plot of land to the Syrian Church at Tarissapalli near Quilon (now known as Kollam), along with several rights and privileges to the Syrian Christians led by Mar Sapir Iso. For details see, see Kesavan Veluthatt & M R Raghava Warriar, *Tharisapalli Pattayam*, Sahithyaprabandha Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2013.

⁴ Today we have two copper plates which are engraved in the ancient Tamil language, written in the archaic and obsolete Vatteluttu script, contains certain privileges granted to Joseph Rabban many centuries ago by the Chera ruler of Malabar, Bhaskara Ravi Varma, whose title was Cheraman Perumal. For details see, Walter J. Fischel, "The Exploration of the Jewish Antiquities of Cochin on the Malabar Coast", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1967), pp.230-248.

temples and temple-centric activities, the inland parts of Kerala, which were distanced from Brahmin dominated world not only by geography alone but also by the type of mentality and culture, had been following various traditions of faith including the cults of *yakshis*, animistic deities and local perceptions of gods like Madan, Maruda, Chathan etc., as we see in *Aithiyamala*⁵ and various folk-literature like *Unnuneeli Sandesam*,⁶ *Koka sandesham*,⁷ *Chandrotsavam*,⁸ *Leelathilakam*,⁹ *Unniyachi Charitham*,¹⁰ *Unnichirutevi charitham*¹¹ etc.. In those days hinterlands had Jainism, Buddhism, folk religion and the religious centres of Sramanic religion and *Kavus* of folk religion dotted the wild paths, through which spices were traded, to Tamilakam. Even the banks of river Periyar were once abodes of Jains; similarly banks of Bharathapuzha had *Kavus* of several folk deities. There was a clear cut differentiation between the Brahmin dominated low-lying paddy cultivating zones and the upland regions, where the non-Brahminical segments including the Ezhavas, the Syrian Christians and other social groups who used to get involved in pepper cultivation. The non-Brahminical centres of worship (particularly of Ezhavas and Nairs) were called *Kavus*,¹² where rituals and oracle performances like *Theyyam* formed integral parts of harvest season and agrarian celebrations. Thus culturally there evolved two different distinct geographies, one on the low lying zones which was predominantly Brahminical and the other on the spice-producing upland regions, which were

⁵ Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithiyamala (Re print)*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1996.

⁶ Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Unnuneeli Sandesam*, Sahityaprabarthaka sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 1954.

⁷ Chatthanath Achuthanunni & M. R Raghava Warriar, *Koka Sandesham*, Vallathol Vidya Peedam, Shukapuram, 2007.

⁸ Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Chandrotsavam*, Sahityaprabarthaka sahakaranasangham Kottayam, 1962.

⁹ Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Leelathilakam*, Sahityaprabarthaka sahakaranasangham Kottayam, 1955.

¹⁰ Mukhthala Gopalakrishnan Nair, *Unniyachi Charitham*, Kerala Bhasha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990.

¹¹ Sundaram Dhanuvachapuram, *Unnichirutevi charitham*, Kerala Bhasha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 2005.

¹² Kavus generally means a sacred shrine often with sacred groves.

predominantly non-Brahminical. In this process there evolved intense local variations of religious traditions and worship forms, as is seen from folk traditions.¹³

From the fourteenth century onwards with the intensification of maritime trade following augmented demands from Mamluk Egypt, there was increasing need to connect the distant pepper producing hinterland with the ports along the coast. This started reducing, on the one hand, the amount of isolation of the societies and cultures located till then in scattered and much sparser way along the length and breadth of Kerala. On the other hand the intensified maritime trade prompted the major rulers of landlocked agrarian enclaves to shift their power base to principal centres of maritime exchange by fourteenth century. Thus the chief of Nediyruppu swarupam, who had his power base in Eranadu, an agrarian enclave near presentday Nilambur, shifted his capital to Calicut after having defeated the local chieftain called Polathiri. Similarly the chief of Perumpadappu swarupam shifted his power base from Vanneri, another agrarian enclave near Ponnani, and moved to Cochin, which then originally belonged to the local chieftain of Edappally.¹⁴ By the end of fourteenth century the ruling houses that wielded considerable power in Kerala had localized their power bases in major centre of trade. The Kolathiris of North Kerala, who earlier had their power base in Valarpattanam, localized their political headquarters in Cannanore,¹⁵ while the chiefs of Nediyruppu swarupam and Perumpadappu swarupams in the emerging ports of Calicut and Cochin respectively.¹⁶ The Venadu swarupam of South Kerala had their political base in Quilon.¹⁷ At the turn of the sixteenth century these chieftains

¹³ This led to the evolution of a variety of ritual traditions around of different god-concepts, which used to vary immensely from one place to another and from one eco-zone to another.

¹⁴ C Achyuta Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam, 1911, p.44.

¹⁵ Mansel Longworth Dames, *The Book Of Duarte Barbosa Vol. 2*, Hakluyt Society, London,1921,p.80.

¹⁶ C. Achyuta Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, p.46.

¹⁷ K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Writtten in the Form of Note's on Visscher's Letters From Malabar*, Volume 1 of 4 Volumes, Asian Educational Service, New Delhi, 2001, p.477.

were competing among themselves to ascertain supremacy in the region by formulating political alliances and ritual claims.

With the entry of the Portuguese in Kerala, the demand for spices got increased causing an equally increasing move to expand pepper production in the hinterland. This brought several tracts of upland parts of Kerala under spice cultivation and there was about 600 % increase in the pepper production in the hinterland.¹⁸ This in course of time ushered in a condition that favoured the emergence of secondary states and powerful kingdoms in core centres of upland Kerala where wealth from spice production and spice trade used to converge. Kizhumalainadu with base in Thodupuzha, Mangattu kingdom with capital in Alendadu, Thekkenkur with capitals in Kottayam and Kanjirappally, Pazhassi raja with capital in Kottayam near Tellichery, Chembakasserry kingdom with base in Kudamaloor, Palakkad raja with capital in Palakkadu were some of the new powerful kingdoms that arose in the upland parts of Kerala following these processes.¹⁹ Concomitantly there was a corresponding move from these upland rulers to attract Brahmins from the low-lying paddy cultivating zones of Kerala for the purpose of settling down near their palaces and for ensuring ritual legitimacy to their power process.²⁰ For example, in the case of *Sri Kurumba* temple in Kodungaloor, this was originally a Kannaki temple (Jain deity) which got transformed into Kali or Bhadra or Bhadrakali (Brahmanical deity).²¹ Along with them the waves of new Vaishnava bhakti tradition triggered off by

¹⁸ Pius Malekandathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017, p.7.

¹⁹ K.P.Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Writtten in the Form of Note's on Visscher's Letters From Malabar*, Volume 2 of 4 Volumes, p.166.

²⁰ This is evidenced by the presence of Brahminical temples in these places, whose antiquity is traceable to this period, for example Attukal Temple, Ambalapuzha, Chottanikkara, Tali, Thirunelli, Aranmula, Parassinikadavu, Nilakkal etc.

²¹ For details see, V.T. Induchudan, *The Secret Chamber*, The Cochin Devaswom Board, Thrissur, 1969, p.193.

Cherusserril, Ezhuthachan and Poonthanam were carried to the upland regions. Correspondingly the *Jnanapana* of Poonthanam and *Adhyatma Ramayanam* of Ezhuthachan written in Malayalam language were widely consumed and read in upland regions. In the new turn of developments there happened a mutation of identities of non-Brahminical deities and their icons, who were now begun to be increasingly perceived through the prism of Vaishnavite cosmos and the Jain deities like Yakshis and the local gods were increasingly demonized and depicted in oral tradition as epitome of negative forces haunting and disturbing normal life of people. The Brahmin conjurers like Vayaskara Chathurvedi Bhattathiri, Kunjaman Potti and the Syrian Christian priest like Kadamattathu Kathanar were perceived as being capable of exorcising and removing these evil forces out of the expanding space of spice cultivation and trade in upland regions. A complex set of networks around the Brahminical temples, the *kavus* of non-Brahmins, the churches of Syrian Christians and the *dargahs* of sufi sheikhs linked with *Ravuthar* Muslims evolved out of the multiple religious processes of different occupational groups in the hinterland activating market-mechanisms, reinforcing societal changes and providing necessary dynamics for power processes of these principality chieftains.

1.1 Historiography

The study I propose, intends to look into the aspects of economy, polity and religion in Kerala from the time of decline of Kulashekaras in 1124 AD upto 1800 A.D, when the English started establishing strong ties in Kerala. The major segments of historiographical discussions and historical writings on Medieval Kerala have been offering different answers to the questions how colonial powers got established in Kerala and how the local rulers responded to European colonial expansion. Since

most of the initial works on Kerala History, particularly on medieval Kerala History had been written against the background of anti-colonial struggles, it was quite natural that the thematic selection that these authors made happened to be topics revolving round issues, themes and problems connected with the acuteness of colonial experiences. *History of Kerala*²² of K.P.Padmanabha Menon, who first wrote a comprehensive history of Kerala and its people, is a four volume work on the major principalities of Kerala against the background of early colonial experiences as perceived through the eyes of Cantor Visscher. Simultaneously there were also the moves to write histories of the major principalities of Kerala, either on the initiatives of individual scholars or on the basis of royal directives; however in both cases the narratives obviously protected the interests and desires of the ruling class, and most of the writers were from bureaucratic background. However their efforts had struck a positive note. The available source materials were banked upon by them for writing descriptive histories of the then major princely states of Kerala. To this generic category one may include *Zamorins of Calicut* written by K.V.Krishna Ayyar,²³ *Cochin State Manual* written by C. Achyuta Menon²⁴ *Kochi Rajya Charitram* by K.P.Padmanabha Menon,²⁵ *The Travancore State Manual* written by T. K.Velu Pillai,²⁶ *Travncore State Manual* by Nagam Aiya²⁷ and *A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times* written by Shangoonny Menon.²⁸ These were rather dynastic histories of various kingdoms, even though they were analyzed against the general historical processes of Kerala. The participation in nationalist struggles made K.M.

²² K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Written in the Form of Note's on Visscher's Letters From Malabar. 4 vols.*, Asian Educational Service, New Delhi, 2001.

²³ K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1938.

²⁴ C. Achyuta Menon, *Cochin State Manual*, Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam, 1911.

²⁵ K.P.Padmanabha Menon, *Kochi Rajya Charitram*, Mathrubhumi Books, Calicut, 1989.

²⁶ T. K.Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, Travancore Government Press, Trivandrum, 1940.

²⁷ V. Nagam Aiya, *Travancore State Manual*, Travancore Government Press, Trivandrum, 1906.

²⁸ P. Shungoony Menon, *A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times*, Higginbotham and Co, Madras, 1878.

Panikkar to look into the processes whereby the early colonial powers of the Portuguese and the Dutch took root in Kerala and his works reflect basically issues and themes of Kerala history connected with early colonialism.²⁹

A new trend in history writing in Kerala was initiated by Elamkulam P.N.Kunjan Pillai,³⁰ who tried to study the history of Kerala not just in terms of political developments alone, but against the background of changing socio-economic, religious and linguistic contexts. Following the trend set by Pillai, there emerged a long line of historians who have contributed immensely to the history writing traditions of Kerala. Among them were M.G.S.Narayanan,³¹ Kesavan Veluthat,³² Rajan Gurukkal³³ and M.R Raghava Warriar³⁴ to name a few. However their works were confined mostly to ancient and early medieval Kerala. Their studies were primarily based on inscriptions obtained from Brahmin temples, which made them, argue about Chera rule as governance by Brahmin oligarchy and view temple-centric social formation as a development that ushered in feudalism in Kerala.³⁵

²⁹ K.M.Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese: Being a History of the Relations of the Portuguese with Malabar from 1500 to 1663*, VOI Publishers, New Delhi, 1929; K.M.Panikkar, *Malabar and the Dutch*, VOI Publishers, New Delhi, 1929.

³⁰ Elamkulam P.N.Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1970.

³¹ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 1996.

³² Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala: Historical Studies*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut, 1978; Kesavan Veluthat, *Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2012; Kesavan Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India*, Oxford University Press, London, 2008.

³³ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and The Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Thrissur, 1992.

³⁴ M.R. Raghava Warriar, *Jainamatham Keralathil*, Sahithyappravathka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2012; M.R. Raghava Warriar, *Keraleeyatha Charithramanangal*, Vallathol Vidyapeedam, Thrissur, 2009; M.R. Raghava Warriar, *Madhyakala Keralam*, Sahithyappravathka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2015.

³⁵ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and The Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Thrissur, 1992; M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala: Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 1996.

In the field of economic history, the works of Ashin Das Gupta,³⁶ Pius Malekandathil,³⁷ and K.S. Mathew³⁸ are a few names that have made significant contributions. Their works focus more on the aspects of maritime trade of Kerala during early modern period. While analyzing the value and volume of maritime trade, they also speak of the major sources of cargo in upland parts of Kerala and the various communities involved in the trade. The same trend is followed by Binu John Mailaparambil³⁹ and Hugo s' Jacob,⁴⁰ who studied the local histories of maritime trade of Cannanore and Cochin respectively. Banking heavily upon Dutch sources these scholars looked principally upon the political economy of early modern Kerala in the way it got manifested in these two kingdoms. The work of V.V.K Vaalath in Malayalam titled *Keralathile Sthala Charitrangal Ernakulam Jilla*,⁴¹ though in itself is not a historical study, resorts to ethno-historical and linguistic tools to look into oral traditions of different parts of central Kerala. He tries to look into its local history by analysing place names, which he tries to corroborate with the help of source materials that are available in the languages, particularly archaic Malayalam, familiar to him. One of the research works that throws light into the various aspects and interconnectedness of religion, trade, polity and cultural production is the research article of Pius Malekandathil entitled 'Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of

³⁶ Asin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967.

³⁷ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663* (A Volume in the South Asian Study Series of Heidelberg University, Germany), New Delhi, 2001; Ibidem, *Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2014.

³⁸ K.S.Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the sixteenth Century*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1983.

³⁹ Binu John Mailaparambil, *Lords of the Sea: Ali Rajas of Cannanore and the Political Economy of Malabar (1663-1723)*, BRILL, Leiden, 2012.

⁴⁰ Hugo s' Jacob. *The Rajas of Cochin 1663-1720, Kings, Chiefs and the Dutch East India Company*, Munshiram Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2000.

⁴¹ V.V.K .Vaalath, *Keralathile Sthala Charitrangal Ernakulam Jilla*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, 1991.

Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala.⁴² In this work he highlights the way how circuits of trade and faith reduced the isolation of various scattered agrarian enclaves of Kerala and shows how the *Vaishnava* bhakti ideology of the sixteenth century that penetrated into the upland regions of Kerala through the channels of trade happened to modify the god-concepts of folk-religion and its varied practices, besides providing legitimacy for the power claims of the upland rulers. The historiographical analysis shows that there is a lacuna in the domains of historical research on the relationship between the evolving economy and religion on the one side and religion and political economy on the other side. In order to fill in this vacuum I am doing my modest beginnings in research on the topic “Trade, Religion and Polity in Pre-Modern Kerala(1300-1800”.

1.2 Chapterization

The thesis is divided into three chapters besides an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter, being an introductory chapter, introduces the topic of research, situates it within the existing historiography, and highlights the issues and problems of study.

The second chapter entitled “Historical Background: Fragmented Polity and Economy” proposes to look into the time period between eleventh and thirteenth centuries , when the central authority of the Cheras started getting fragmented into different smaller principalities and chieftaincies. The economic activities of the core areas of Chera rule were stimulated by the agency of Brahmin temples, which became chief mechanisms of wealth re-distribution. The Brahmin settlements like Payyannur,

⁴² Pius Malekandhathil, “ Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala,”in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

Perunjallur, Alathur, Karanthol, Pokeeram, Panniyur, Karkkadu, Eeshanimangalam, Thirsshivaperur and Peruvanam were located principally in the low-lying terrains lying between the river systems of Perumpuzha and Karumampuzha.

Similarly in the low-lying rice cultivating region lying between between Karumanpuzha and Churnniyar (Periyar), there were twelve Brahmin settlements, the names of which were Chamunda, Eringattikudal (Irinjalakkuda), Aavatiputhur, Paravur, Ayiranikkulam, Muzhikkulam, Kalavur, Atavoor, Chenganad, Elibhyam, Uliyanoor and Kazhuthanad. In the vast region lying between Periyar and Kanyakumari the Brahmin settlements were sparsely distributed in places like Ettumannur, Kumaranallur, Kadamaruku, Aranmula, Tiruvalla, Kidangannur, Chengannur, Kaviyoor, Venmani and Neermannu. The low lying paddy cultivating fields owned either by the Brahmins or their temples happened to be the principal wealth-generating areas of the Cheras.

Maritime trade was the supplementary source of revenue for the Chera rulers. The markets that traded pepper appeared in and around the headquarters of the fourteen divisions (territories of various subsidiary rulers) of the Chera rulers, the major ports that traded pepper and other spices from the distant hinterlands to the overseas merchants also became the nerve centres of intense trade, out of which Koulam Mali (Quilon), Shingly (Cranganore), Pantalayani Kollam, Chaliyam and Mount Eli emerged as the prominent ones from eleventh century onwards. The power and wealth that each political house amassed upon during this period might have contributed to the decline of the centralized rule of the Cheras as the principalities became more powerful and assertive for reasons of increasing wealth accumulated through trade of pepper. However the drastic changes appeared with intensity in the 13th century,

following the collapse and fragmentation of the central authority of the Cheras (the Kulasekharas) of Mahodayapuram in 1206. *Keralolpatti* gives detailed account about area and military strength of each principality that transformed into successor states. Many of the small rulers and local chieftains competitively tried to keep the major maritime centres of exchange under their control with a view to bagging a share from trade for their political assertions. Some of these chieftains even started moving from inland agrarian regions to the core areas of sea-borne trade located along the coast and began to attract traders to their ports for strengthening their political structures with gains from trade.

Concomitantly Brahmins linked with the former power centres of the Cheras started moving in order to meet the various ritual and the power-related requirements of the newly emerging power hubs. Eventually in each principality, particularly at its base, different types of markets (*angadis*) of varying economic importance started appearing and the eventual formation of various types of temples and other Brahminical institutions in and around the newly emerging local power centres of these principalities, added new forms of demands to the markets, which in turn stimulated the flow of commodities of various nature both from the hinterland and the maritime centres of exchange. Some of these successor chiefs used to keep their seat of power in the core areas of maritime trade located along the coast for strengthening their kingdoms with gains from trade. In these processes Ernadu (the initial base of the Nediyruppu svarupam), Angadipuram (the capital of Valluvanadu rulers), Vanneri near Ponnani (the initial power base of the Perumpadappu svarupam), Koratty (the capital of the Koratty Kaimals), Alendgadu (the power base of Mangattu Achan), Edapally (the capital of Ilangaloor svarupam), Kothamangalam and later Muvattupuzha (the initial bases of the Kizhumalainadu rulers), Kaduthuruthy and

later Thodupuzha (the capital of the Vadakkenkur rulers), Kottayam and Kanjirappally (the bases of the Thekkenkur rulers), Poonjar (the capital of Poonjar rulers), Kudamaloor (the capital of Chempakasserry rulers) Pandalam , Karunagappally, etc., became nodal centres of wealth and power. The spice producing hinterland and the markets that evolved in the various principalities were connected by a network of rivers and the nature of the course of riverine flow often made the principality-chieftains on the coast to develop political alliances and economically – bound- partnerships with those inland principality chieftains through whose realm the river system used to pass. The success of various local principality chieftains in carving out territories and political alliances depended on their ability to use the various river systems passing through their kingdoms to the advantage of facilitating trade and resource mobilization.

The third chapter proposes to look into the changing centres of wealth and power during the period between 14th and 18th centuries. This chapter has two parts. In the first part attempts will be made to see the nature of maritime trade and its impact on the political process of Kerala, particularly on the chain of events leading to the establishment of maritime political units. In the second part of the chapter focus will be on the changing political and commercial equations that happened with the entry of the Europeans and its consequent impact on the expansion of spice cultivation into the upland regions of Kerala, leading ultimately to the establishment of secondary states in the upland regions. Following the intensification of maritime trade in the fourteenth century we find inland rulers shifting their bases from agrarian enclaves to maritime centres of exchange, like the chief of Nediyruppu swarupam shifting base from Ernadau to Calicut and the chief of Perumpadappu swarupam shifting base from Vanneri to Cochin. The trade with Al Karimi merchants resulted in flow of wealth for

Zamorin, who in turn consolidated his political and commercial position in Kerala with the money and mercenaries provided by the Al-Karimi merchants. Later Zamorin conquered the neighbouring small principalities of Nilambur, Manjeri, Malapuram and Kottakkal; thereby established a territorial state with Calicut as seat of power, the hinterlands of these annexed principalities provided increased supply of pepper to be traded. The connectivity between the coastal trade centres and the inland pepper producing enclaves was slowly evolving against the background of increasing maritime trade. Travels through the hitherto isolated terrains also started with the increasing need to take cargo from the hinterland to the coastal trade centres through the shortest cuts. Traversable routes emerged out of spaces of wilderness, which were till then skipped for fear of being haunted places, particularly of *yakshis*. Several psychological mechanisms were eventually developed by the mercantile communities that would bolster the confidence-level and sense of security of traders to traverse the spaces of wilderness without fear and carry cargo to the coastal trade centres from the interior.

In the second part of this chapter attempts are made to show how the central upland parts of Kerala got transformed into alternative centres of wealth and power. Powerful political houses started appearing in such upland places like Kanjirappally, Thodupuzha, Koratty and Palghat, which were important centres for diversion of pepper across the ghat to Coromandel. In course of time these places became the major centres of wealth convergence in the central upland parts of Kerala where evolved secondary state units. When the political houses in the low-lying paddy cultivating areas were divided into two fractions as Panniyurkuru under Zamorin and Chowaramkuru under the king of Cochin, the principalities in the upland were networked through matrimonial and commercially pragmatic webs of relations.

The high demand for pepper from Europe, China and West Asia augmented the demand for more pepper production in the hinterland, stimulating the economy of upland terrains. The principality chieftains of central upland terrains conveniently banked upon the fruits stemming from the activation of economy to buy pieces of artillery, guns and to forge political alliances of varying nature to institute perpetually mechanisms of power and claim superiority. In the seventeenth century, when the Dutch tried to make negotiations with smaller and petty rulers, like the various *desavalis* and *nadualis* of inland Kerala for obtaining pepper, there was immense flow of wealth to the interior, which in turn emboldened and strengthened small political players. The fragmented polity promoted by the commercial policies of the early colonial powers, particularly by the Portuguese and the Dutch began to give way to highly centralized political formations initiated in the eighteenth century by Marthanda Varma in Travancore and Saktan Thampuran in Cochin, who erased names of petty principalities and their power bases out of the map of Kerala in their efforts to establish centralized state structures. The newly conquered kingdoms happened to be the principal pepper supplying geography for the Dutch in the trading centre of Cochin. In order to prevent the continued flow of pepper from the newly conquered terrains to Cochin, trade in pepper was declared a state monopoly in Travancore in 1743 and later in 1763 a new port was established at Alleppey by Raja Kesava Das (Diwan of Travancore) to ensure regular flow of spices from the newly conquered terrains for Travancorean trade. The re-structuring of the polity of central and south Kerala followed by new twists to the commercial orientations of the emerging state entities deprived the Dutch of enough commodities and resources for their commerce. Finally the Dutch made a gradual and slow retreat from Cochin, which already had been experiencing shortage of enough spices and other cargo for

trade from its yesterly hinterland, and it was already lost to the Dutch long before its occupation by the English in 1795.

Chapter four entitled 'Trade and Religious Pluralism' dwells upon the way how the endeavours of trade influenced and modified the trajectories of religion in the region, causing a pluralistic cultural milieu to evolve. By the end of the 13th century, and through the 14th and 15th centuries, when upland principalities were carving significant political positions against the background of their ability to supply the required cargo for the trading centres along the coast, there started the movement of Brahmins from low lying paddy cultivated areas to the new power centres in central upland Kerala, providing the ritual back-up that these chieftains then needed. The temples that these Brahmins established near the new power centres, obviously with the patronage of local chieftains, became one of the focal centres for the dissemination of Vaishnavism in the upland regions promoted and facilitated by the increasing circulation of such bhakti literature as *Adhyatma Ramayanam* of Ezhuthachan and *Jnanapana* of Poonthanam.

Meanwhile the *Kavus* of various deities like Bhagavathis and Yakshis which being connected with the cult of Mother Goddess, were centres of worship of Non-Brahmanical folk religion. There were also Kavus of various communities like Ezhavas with Muthappan deity in mid-upland terrains of north Kerala and the Sasthavu kavus in mid upland sites of central Kerala. The Ezhava involvement in pepper production and trade is evident from the presence of Kavus along the remnants of old trade routes. The major part of pepper traded by Calicut came from the pepper producing enclaves on the banks of Bharatapuzha. There were about 130 kavus on the banks of Bharathapuzha, namely Pallikkal, Palakotu, Thiruvaly, Chengottoor,

Villoor, Puthoor, Panthaloar, Thrikkalangattoor, Thirumanikkara, Puthrukovil, Kalarikkal, Aliparambukalathil, Panankurussikavu, Thoothakkan kavu, Oothrali kavu, Vayillamkunnath Kavuvu, Panniamkurussi, Killikurussi, Akaloor, Murikkumpetta, Panamannakurathi, Chathamkandarkavu, Alangottu Cherukunnath, Perunthatta, Peruvalloor Kotta, Thirunavayi Ayyappan, Palppetty, Ariyambil, Kottamel Asura Mahakalan kavu, Vengasserry kavu, Pavannoor Kottalingan, Malamakkavu, Chundamakavu Vettathukavu, Ammancherry, Thrikkandiyoar, Nerunkaithakotta, Puthoor Tharackal Bhagawati, Thrikkandiyoar Vettakkorumakan, Kundukulangara, Cheruthura kavu, Anthimahakalan kavu, Ankali Amma, Pulikkottu Ayyappan, Pookulangara, Paruthipally Bhagavathi etc. Zamorin had symbolic relation with the folk priest of the *Kavus*, where rituals were performed and prayers were offered to the deity in the name of the devotees and the Zamorin to fetch good harvest for pepper. In the annual ritual performance, the Theyyam performer would go into trance to such a level that he and the devotees would perceive him to be totally possessed by deity. In the trance he would project himself to have got elevated to the level of being the very deity himself. The Theyyam performer used to give orders to the folk worshippers as how to behave and what to do with their harvest, which being perceived as divine commandments helped to promote those set of actions that ultimately served to safeguard the interests of the Zamorin. The Zamorin's patronage to Non-Brahminical kavus along with the Brahminical temples with their cyclical festal celebrations on monthly and annual basis by way of stellar-reckonings used to stimulate the processes of agrarian production and artisanal activities, besides accelerating the various endeavours of culture oriented towards the 'fairs' and "markets" of festal celebrations. The festal celebrations of these kavus and temples along Bharatapuzha and in core areas of Zamorin's kingdom helped to produce more

and ensured constant flow of commodities for trade, for feasts, and thereby the region was economically activated, and the culmination of festal celebrations finally happened with the pan Kerala feast of *Mamankam*, which in turn stimulated the trade in spices through the river Bharatapuzha towards Ponnani and finally to Calicut for Zamorin's maritime trade. The Zamorin also had effective control over sea and rivers which also ensured steady flow of cargo for the maritime trade of Calicut.

Folk deity shrines like Muthappan being identified as Krishna and Sasthavu connected with Bodhisatva cult being identified as Harihara Suthan (son of Sivan and Vishnu). As the concept of Sakti was intrinsically connected with the meanings of kingship in Kerala, giving the fighters the ability and confidence almost to the scale of intoxication to fight against the enemies, most of the rulers, fighting members of Nair militia used to worship Sakti in the form of Bhagawati in their family shrines. However many folk religious institutions and sacred structures in the interior continued to remain as non- brahmanical shrines because of their location of being on the periphery and margins and were sustained by trade through the ghat routes. Some of them were Jain shrines, as in the case of Kallil shrine, near Perumbavoor, which escaped the process of cultural mutation through the fast spread of Brahminical devotional ideology of Vaishnavism.

In the heydays of Bhakthi, the Jain concept of sacred space associated with Yakshi was redefined as haunted geographies. In the changed situation, along the rivers and the ghat-routes, through which the traders used to take cargo for trade either with the markets of Tamilnadu or with the sea-ports along the coast, there appeared several types of religious institutions and shrines of the major trading communities (like Sasthavu-kavus of the Ezhavas, the churches of the Syrian Christians and the sufi

dargahs of the Muslims) that used to bolster psychologically the sense and level of security and confidence among the traders while travelling through wilderness.

The final chapter is conclusion, which summarizes the major findings of the research.

1.3 Methodology and Sources

The methodology resorted to the study is descriptive and analytical, in which the data collected from the various primary sources, including unpublished manuscripts and published works, are corroborated with the help of field-study. . The archives and museums of Churches like Udayamperoor Sunahadose are consulted to understand the role played by Church in pre-modern times. An extensive field work was conducted at Sree Kurumba Temple, Kadamattom Church, Cheraman Masjid, Paliyam Palace, Crangannore, Chendamangalam synagogue, Jewish town of Cochin, Aluva, Bodi Naickannur, Kothamangalam, Neriamangalam, Munnar, Devikulam and Mangala Devi Temple. A sacred grove was discovered in jungle route from Palakkad to Kongu (Coimbatore) prior to my field work, this undisturbed shrine was lying in fact on a forgotten ghat route; from the idols and *balikallu* (stone table for sacrifice) I could study the kind of worship, ritual and offerings were made by traders who used the route and the people who lived in its vicinity ages ago. The wide-range of information from inscriptions, traveller's accounts and folk-literature and traditions are analyzed vis a vis the geographical specificities within which they took origin as to understand the region-wise differences in the historical processes. Documents in English, Portuguese, Sanskrit and Malayalam and pertaining to my subject are obtained from the archives and libraries of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Kerala State Archives-Ernakulam division, Departmental Library of Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, New Delhi, National Achieves of India, Delhi, Library of Kerala University,

Trivandrum, Teenmurti Library, Delhi etc.. The plurality of religion as is seen in Folk art form ‘*Theyyam*’ where along with *Theyyam* of Folk deities there are *Theyyams* of Mapillas which are studied through *Theyyam* stories. In order to understand the pre-modern society the folk lores like Jewish *Polipattukal*, *Rabban Pattukal*, *Pallipattukal*, *Muhyudheen Mala*, *Padapattu* and *Payyannur pattukal* are studied and analysed. The pre-modern pieces of literature like *Sandeshakavyams* written in language which is amalgamation of Archaic Malayalam and Sanskrit are studied to extract the picture of society and economy depicted in the literatures. Similarly *Vadakkan Pattukal* (Northern Ballads) of pre- modern Kerala will be studied to understand the social, economic and political structures depicted in those ballads. The published official and casual letters of correspondence done by Paliath Achan with Rajas of Cochin, Travancore and foreign rulers like Dutch and English are also consulted. The data collected from them are analysed and interpreted with the help of folk-literature and remnants of material culture obtained from different parts of Kerala for making the larger argument in the study.

Chapter II

Historical Background: Fragmented Polity and Economy c.1000A.D -1300A.D

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to look at the time period between eleventh and thirteenth centuries, when the central authority of the Second Cheras (*Kulashekaras*) started getting fragmented into different smaller principalities and chieftaincies. The core areas of the economic activities of the Chera rule was stimulated by the agency of Brahmin temples, which became the chief mechanism of wealth re-distribution. The low lying paddy cultivating fields owned either by the Brahmins or their temples happened to be the principal wealth-generating sources for the Cheras.¹ Temples amassed huge revenue from the land owned and controlled by it and the *attiperu land* grants to the temple conferred on them all income from that land.² But the tax to the treasury did not come from Brahmins nor from temples; but from the tenants. The temple centred Brahmin villages (*brahmadeyas*) were to remit the annual dues called *attikkol*,³ and in return for the security of temples, royal protection units like *nilal* and *kaval* were provided. Maritime trade was the supplementary source of revenue for the Chera rulers. Jewish traders who were linked with the *Anjuvannam* merchant guild and the Syrian Christians linked with *Manigramam* merchant guild in Kurakeni Kollam were the dominant mercantile collaborators of the Cheras, who conferred upon them several commercial privileges for the purpose of attracting more overseas trade to

¹ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 1996, pp.316-321; Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and The Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Thrissur, 1992, pp.69 –71.

² Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and The Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Thrissur, 1992, p.34.

³ *Ibid*,p.36.

their ports of Kurakeni Kollam and Pantalayani Kollam. The major markets that traded pepper appeared in and around the headquarters of the fourteen divisions (territories of various subsidiary rulers) of the Chera rulers. The major ports that traded pepper and other spices from the distant hinterlands to the overseas merchants also became the nerve centres of intense trade, out of which Koulam Mali (Quilon), Shingly, Pantalayani Kollam, Chaliyam and Mount Eli emerged as the prominent ones from eleventh century onwards.⁴ The power and wealth that each provincial administrator (*naduvazhi*) amassed upon during this period might have contributed to the decline of the centralized rule of the Cheras as the provincial principalities became more powerful and assertive for reasons of increasing wealth accumulated through trade of pepper.

2.2 Geographical features of Kerala

Kerala is located on the southern part of western coast of Indian peninsula. The peculiar geographical features comprise continuous mountain ranges of Western Ghats⁵ (*Sahyadri* ranges), valleys and low lying plains. The South West monsoon winds⁶ contribute to approximately 4 to 6 months of annual rainfall (~262 cm). Heavy rainfall and tropical⁷ location results in highly humid climatic conditions throughout

⁴ Muhammad Husayn Nainar,, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India*, Madras University Islamic Sereis – No. 6, Madras, 1942, pp.35- 37.

⁵ The Western Ghats (Sahyadri) is a mountain range that runs parallel to the western coast of the Indian peninsula, is one of the eight "hot-spots" of bio diversity in the world. The Western Ghats has over 7,402 species of flowering plants, 1,814 species of non-flowering plants, 139 mammal species, 508 bird species, 179 amphibian species, 6,000 insects species and 290 freshwater fish species; it is likely that many undiscovered species live in the Western Ghats. At least 325 globally threatened species occur in the Western Ghats.

⁶ The southwest monsoon, a four- six months period characterised by massive convective thunderstorms that dominate weather of Kerala, is also most productive wet season. The South West monsoon is a product of southeast trade winds originating from a high-pressure mass centered over the southern Indian Ocean. The monsoonal torrents supply over approximately 80% of annual rainfall of Kerala.

⁷ The tropical areas are a region of the Earth surrounding the Equator, Kerala is located on the Tropic of Cancer (of Northern Hemisphere) with coordinates 10.8505° N, 76.2711° E.

the year. The peninsular location of Kerala with moderating effect of sea,⁸ also contributes to persistence of similar temperature (comparatively variation-less weather conditions) throughout the year, which is characterised by lack of severe winters and summers. The hot weather season in Kerala is mild and not as intense as found in northern India. In peak summer the temperature of 48°C is not uncommon in northern parts of India, but due to moderating effect of sea, temperatures remain between 26°C and 32°C in Kerala even during peak summer. Similarly when temperature drops down to 1°C in severe winters of North India, the temperature remains 25°C to 32°C in Kerala due to moderating effect of ocean. The elevation of Western Ghats results in creation of a climate zone, resulting in geographical phenomenon called 'altitude mimicking latitude'.⁹ Thus due to altitude, the temperatures in the hills of Western Ghats remain below 25°C. The conditions are apt for supporting rich bio-diversity, as is evident from the presence of so many endemic species of plants and animals in rain forests of Kerala. Such climatic conditions are also ideal for cultivation of spices like pepper, cardamom, ginger, cinnamon etc. During the months of torrential rain, the rain water flows down from the mountain ranges to the valleys; this naturally irrigates the cultivable land and reduces the need for canal irrigation. The farmers usually make mud banks and drains to remove excess water from the fields.

⁸ The Water at the Earth's surface and in the atmosphere exerts a strong moderating effect on climate. Generally speaking, the higher the water content in the air, the more moderate (less extreme) the climate.

⁹ The Altitude mimics latitude in climate zones. Climates and biomes typical of higher latitudes may be found in other areas of the world at high altitudes.

2.3 *Bramhadeya Agrarian Settlements and Perumals of Mahodayapuram*

The territory of Cheras (*Kulashekaras*) roughly comprised of what is present day Kerala. Paddy cultivated in the low lying plains of Kerala was the staple diet of people in all parts of the kingdom. The paddy cultivating plains were the spheres of influence of Brahmin temple corporations (*Brahmadeyas*), these agrarian settlements were the core revenue generating areas of Chera rulers. The revenue collected from paddy field was called as *paattam*. In Kerala there are two harvesting seasons of paddy called *Kannikoythu*¹⁰ and *Makarakoythu*;¹¹ owing to two monsoon winds bringing rain – South West Monsoon and North East (retreating monsoon). The earliest mention of Brahmin villages comes from *Vazhapalli chepped* as per Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal, which is dated to 830 C.E.¹² This *chepped* (copper plate) also gives information about Brahmin centred agrarian system; these Brahmin settlements are called *Ur* and *Gramam*.

The Brahmin chronicle called *Keralolpathi* (the origin of Kerala) mentions about 32 Brahmin villages in Tulu Nadu and 32 in Kerala. M.G.S Narayanan has classified those 32 villages into three categories based on their locations between following rivers.¹³ From the northern part of Kerala, between Perumpula and Karumanpuzha were distributed the Brahmins in Payyannur, Perumchellur, Ishanamangalam, Alathur, Karikkadu, Karantala, Trishivaperoor, Perumanam, Panniyur and Chokiram. From central part of Kerala, lying between Karumanpula and Periyar there were

¹⁰ The *Kanni* month of Malayalam calendar (*Kollavarsham*), as per Gregorian calendar falls in August-September.

¹¹ The *Makaram* month of Malayalam calendar as per Gregorian calendar falls in December-January.

¹² Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part I*, Vallathol Vidyapeedam, Edappal, 1991 p.121.

¹³ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, pp.262-263.

Brahmin villages in Chamunda, Paravoor, Iringatikkutal (Irinjalakkuda), Muzhikkalam, Avattiputhur (Avittathur), Adavoor, Kazhuthanadu, Chenganadu, Ayiranikulam, Kalavoor and Uliyannoor. In the southern part of Kerala, lying between Periyar and Kanyakumari Brahmin villages were in Ettumanoor, Kidangoor, Kadamuri (Kadaruku), Aaranmula, Kumaranalloor, Kaviyoor, Chenganoor, Nirmanpu, Venmani and Thiruvalla. While looking at this list one could observe that northern most limits is Payyannur and Thaliparambu then next is in Alathur in Malappuram district, the huge area in between has no mention in *Keralolpatti*. These areas were of mountainous terrain and not meant for paddy cultivation, this might have been the possible reason for absence of temple centric settlements in these areas.

There are several such areas which find no mention in *Keralolpatti*; but the archaeological sources and the presence of folk religion and their oral traditions provide idea about the society, economy and organization of polity in those areas. Many of these areas were also forests inhabited by various tribes which find least mentions in the primary and secondary sources. The wealth of the Brahmin temples was from the rice cultivated in their *Brahmadeya* land, thus the influence of Brahmin temple might have been limited only to the paddy cultivated plains.

As mentioned earlier, hilly areas are unsuitable for cultivation of paddy, similarly coastal plains are prone to impact of tides¹⁴ bringing salt water. This might have been the possible reason for absence of rice cultivation and Brahmin settlements in coastal areas. But there were exceptions like Kuttanad (in Alapuzha) where rice was cultivated in marshy tract, termed as *punja padams*.¹⁵ With few such exceptions of wetland (*punja*) paddy cultivations, majority of the paddy cultivation was in low lying

¹⁴ The impact of sea creates low tides and high tides, which mixes salt water with fresh water. Rice cultivation is difficult in such areas.

¹⁵ The major area of wetlands comes under '*punja*' lands, rice is cultivated there.

plains. The traditional rice breeds like *Bhadra* (MO 4), *Jyothy* (PTB 39), *Kanchana* (PTB 50), *Revathy* (MO 17) etc. were known for *punja* cultivation.¹⁶ So, one can derive that there were many areas which were not influenced by Brahmins and brahmanical networks of faith for long time, as evident from the absence of epigraphs and of very old (before 13th C) Brahmin temples. Areas which were not influenced by *Brahmins* included high ranges (areas where spices were cultivated) and coastal areas (areas where spices were traded). Even in coastal towns like Kodungallur (Crangannore) located near the seat of Kulashekaras at Mahodayapuram, the centres of worship like *Chiri Kurumba* had deity called *Kannaki*¹⁷ which is a non Brahmanical deity.

The centres of worship of goddess *Kottavai*¹⁸ (as per Sangam literatures *Kottavai* was deity of Early Cheras) and several *kavus* (centres of worship of folk religion) were seen in coastal towns and spice cultivated interior uplands. The absence of very old Brahmin temples in coastal trading towns and spice cultivated uplands strengthens the argument that Brahmin influence was not a part of maritime trade centres and spices cultivated high ranges. Many Scholars like Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal are of the view that geography was the reason (coastal areas and hilly areas are unsuitable for cultivation of paddy) for limiting the spread of Brahmanical influence.¹⁹

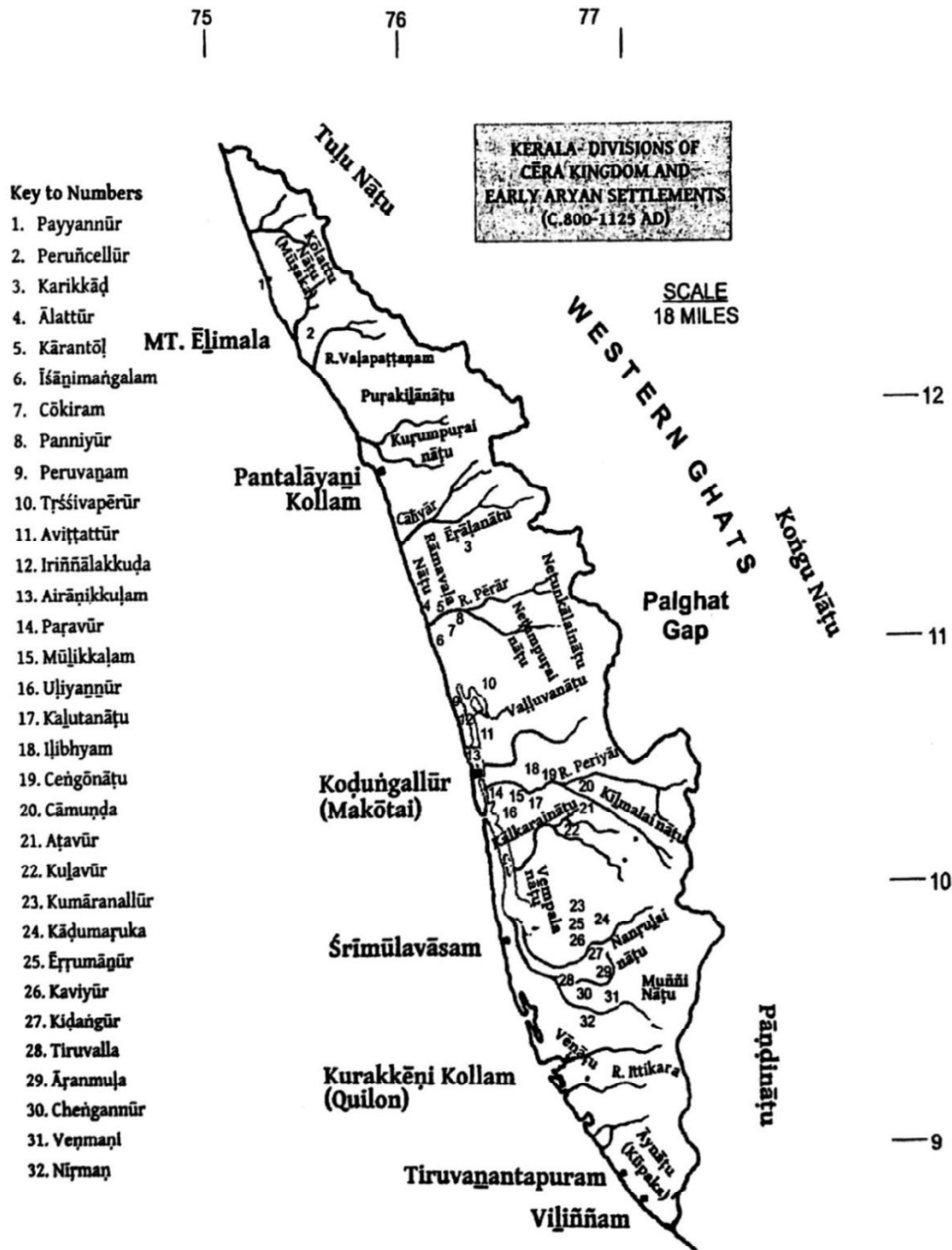
¹⁶ For details see, "http://agritech.tnau.ac.in/expert_system/paddy/KL.varieties.html".

¹⁷ V.T Induchudan, *The Secret Chamber: A Historical, Anthropological & Philosophical Study of the Kodungallur Temple*, Cochin Devaswom Board, Thrissur, 1969. p.183

¹⁸ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part 1*, p.159; A Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charithram*, DC Books, p.96.

¹⁹ M.R Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Chrithram part 1*, p.124.

Map1- Early Brahmin settlements of Kerala²⁰



For the entire stretch of Chera kingdom from Putupattanam in the north to Kannerri in the south,²¹ the harvest of paddy in low lying plains was insufficient to feed the entire

²⁰M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 1996, p.179.

²¹ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.131.

population,²² yet rice was important crop cultivated in low lying plains. Hence, requirement of paddy for rest of the kingdom was met by the rice brought from Tamilakam by the Jain trading guilds. These Jain traders in exchange of rice might have carried spices to Tamilakam through various ghat routes.

There are epigraphic evidences indicating the creation of Brahmin villages initiated by Cheras (*Kulashekaras*) and their subsidiary rulers, where Brahmin families were brought from distant *brahmadeyas* (*Brahmadeya* represented the grant of land either in a single plot or whole villages donated to Brahmins by making them land-owners or land-controllers)²³ and made to settle in the land granted to them as *attiperu*²⁴ land grant by rulers. One such example for *attiperu* is evident in *Kollurmatam chepped*, which is believed to be a grant given by mother of Sri Vallabhan Kotha in first quarter of 10th century²⁵. This *Kollurmatam chepped*, *Mampilli* and *Tiruvatur* inscription mentions about 23 Brahmin families settled to establish a *brahmadeya*. We come across frequent references to the Brahmin settlements, which were named as *mangalam*, *madam*, *illam* etc. As Vedic ritual performers, Brahmins contributed to the elevation of ritual status²⁶ of *Perumals* and *Naduvazhis* (the subsidiary rulers) and received land (paddy cultivated agrarian settlement) as grant or gift from the ruling chiefs.

Henceforth, we can understand that Brahmin networks were expanded with the interests (wide spread of their acceptance as Kshatriya rulers of entire Kerala) of

²² Even today with advancement in technology, paddy cultivated in Kerala is insufficient for entire population.

²³ Christopher V. Hill, *South Asia: an environmental history*. Santa Barbara, Calif *ABC-Clio*, 2008, p. 46.; D.C. Sircar, *Indian epigraphical glossary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1966. p. 61.

²⁴ The land granted to Brahmin temple by the King or *Samantha* is called *attiperu* and the process is called *attikodukkuka*.

²⁵ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Chrithram part*, p.123.

²⁶ Through ritual performances like *Hiranyagargha*, the Brahmins created mythical genealogy of rulers (often traced to *puranas*). These rituals enhanced the power and authority of ruling chiefs.

Perumals and subsidiaries, these activities might have increased spread of Brahmanical faith as well as agrarian expansion. The *vedic* rituals of Brahmins might have been crucial for Kulashekaras to gain status of *kshatriyas* with mythical origins traced to *puranas*; thereby their Dravidian origins are buried. Such practices by south Indian kings might have been crucial in the penetration of brahmanical religion and through it the genesis of several brahmanical myths and divine stories.

Even among the paddy cultivated lands not all the lands were under Brahmin temples, most of the lands were under the *Naduvazhis*²⁷ as their *cherikkal*²⁸ land. Just like *Naduvazhis*, *Perumal* had his *cherikkal* land which is evident from *Mulikkalam Kaccam*²⁹ mentioning land grant given out of *cherikkal* by Bhaskarara Ravi Perumal³⁰. The rural temple centred agrarian settlements had village assemblies and temple committees with partial autonomy.³¹ In the inscriptions, ‘*Ur*’ was the term denoting village and the joint proprietors for villages were called as ‘*Uraḷar*’. The *Uraḷar* were also described in various places as *Nattar*, *Sabhaiyar* or *sabha*, *Tali and Srivaiṣṇavar*; sometimes they are described by number as *Irupatteḷuvar* (the Twenty seven), *Patineṭṭu Nattar* (the eighteen *Natar*). There existed executive committee of *Uraḷar* called as *Paraṭai*³² who are also referred to as *Tali Adhikarikal*, *Adhikarikal*, *Tali Alvan* etc. The representatives of *Chera Perumals* called *Koyil Adhikaikal* or *Alkoyil*, governors of *Nadu* and their officers often presided over the meetings or *Ur* and *Paratai*, which formed the *Koyinmai*³³ (over lordship) in the political structure of a Brahmin settlement. The *Naduvazhi* (governor) or *Nāṭu Uṭaiyavar* collected revenue

²⁷ Naduvazhis were like governors of *Cheras*; there existed both hereditary governors and nominated transferable governors.

²⁸ The *Cherikkal* were the lands belonged to the King or his *Samanthas*.

²⁹ The *Mulikkalam Kaccam* is one of the several early temple inscriptions of Kerala which are phrased as *kaccams* or agreements.

³⁰ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram part I*, p.128.

³¹ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.208.

³² *Ibid.* p.210.

³³ *Ibid.* p.211.

(his share and share of king) in return for the protection offered by his *Nizhal*³⁴ (the hundreds). The numbers of *Nizhal* (hundreds) varied in various *Nadus* like *Ainnurruvar* (the five hundred) of *Purakilanadu*, *Arunnuruvar* (the six hundred) of *Valluvanadu*³⁵ etc. One of the Trikkadithanam records mentions about annual revenue called *attaikkol*, which is one sixth of the produce as mentioned by Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal³⁶ The rest of the harvest (after paying *attaikkol*) could be used by the temple authorities for feeding Brahmins called *akkiram*.³⁷ The rice would have been used for purchase of various essential commodities by exchanging (barter); this might have resulted in emergence of an *angadis*³⁸ in the vicinity of the temple.

The people associated with various jobs of temples like *Pothuval*, *Shanti*, *Tantri*, *Vadyakkar* (drummers) *Nattuvanmar*, *Kazhakam*, *kuthu*, *vadyam*, *Mahabharatha parayanam* are given *viruthi*³⁹ land grant for livelihood in return for their services. In *attiperu* land and *viruthi* land, the *Uralar* usually never engaged in cultivation; instead leased the land to *Karalar* (tenants). In the records we come across mentioning of various occupational groups like *Ashari*, *Mushari*, *Tattan*, *Perunkollan*, *Vannan*, *Veluthedan*, *Velan*, *Chakkalan*, *Vaniyan*, *Chaliyan*, *Ezhavan*, *Kanakkan*, *Parayan*, *Pulayan* etc., which constituted what is called *Karalar*. The coexistence of all *Karalar*s constituted subunit of Ur called *desham* or *Tara*⁴⁰. These various groups had their own deities like - *Yakshis*, animistic folk deities (like Serpent deities) and local perceptions of gods like *Madan*, *Maruda*, *Chathan*, *Muthappan* etc. The centres of worship of non-brahmanical native folk religion were called *kavu*, characterised with

³⁴ The *Nizhal* (the hundreds) were soldiers offered for protection of Brahmin temples.

³⁵ For details see, M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumlas of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*.

³⁶ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram part 1*, p.134.

³⁷ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumlas of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy* p.212.

³⁸ The *angadis* are markets or exchange centres of pre-modern Kerala.

³⁹ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram part 1*, p.129.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p.120.

unique sets of rituals, oracles, sacrifices and magico-religious functionaries.⁴¹ Every community might have had their own perceptions of gods and goddesses. Later as a result of Brahmanical influence these communities were transformed into various castes.⁴² There are records showing the evidence of *Pulayars*, *Cherumars* etc. who constituted *Karalars* of the land, were also moved along with land when the right over the land changes hands.⁴³ The division of land (administrative units) in the order of hierarchy is - Chera Rajadhani (capital) at Mahodayapuram (Makotai), *Nadu*, *Ur* and *Thara*. Similarly division of society based on hierarchical order is – *Perumal* (Chera sovereign), *Koyil Adhikarikal* (the authority over temples), *Naduvazhi*, *Uralar* and *Karalar*.

2.4 Bhakti Movement, Land grants and Maritime Trade

The pre 11th century period of Kerala witnessed the entry of waves of Tamil Bhakti movement into Chera Kingdom. The *Bhakti* movement which began in early half of 7th century AD in *Pallava* political centre (capital) Kachipuram, which spread to *Chola* and *Pandya* territories and when it entered *Chera* territories it was already two centuries old⁴⁴. In Chera kingdom 13 temples⁴⁵ are associated with centres of *Bhakti* movement, namely: - *Tiruvanparisaram*, *Tiruvattar*, *Tiruchengannur*, *Tiruvanathapuram*, *Tiruvanvandur*, *Tiruppuliyoor*, *Tiruvallavazhu*, *Thiruvaranvila*, *Trukkadithanam*, *Tirumuzhikkalam*, *Thirukkadukara*, *Thirunavaya*, and *Thirumittakkode*. The proof for the association of these temples with bhakti

⁴¹ Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Temple and Early Medieval Agrarian System, p.20.

⁴² Pius Malekandathil, “Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala”, in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017, p

⁴³ Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Temple, p.58.

⁴⁴ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram part 1*, p.205.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

movements lies in hymns of *Azhvars*.⁴⁶ These temples were praised through the hymns of Nammazhvar and Kulashekara Azhvar etc.; hence these temples are known as *Patalpatta Tiruppatikal* or *Srevaishnava divya deshngal*. These temples have inscriptions from 9th, 10th centuries⁴⁷ that indicate the period of earliest bhakti movement in Kerala. Therefore we can hypothesise that earliest Bhakti movements in Kerala was in 9th century. The *Azhvar* (Alvars) sang in praise of *Vaishnavite* temples and *Nayanars*⁴⁸ on *Shaivite* temples. Tiruvanjikulam is only temple praised in the hymns of Nayanars; the Nayanars who sang in praise of Tiruvanjikulam were Cheraman Perumal Nayanar and Sundara Murthi Nayanar.⁴⁹ The names of Nayanar saints like Cheraman Perumal Nayanar and Kulashekarana Sthanuravi might be indicating that they were Chera Kings themselves. The Cheraman Perumal Nayanar is believed to be Chera King Rajashekaradevan.⁵⁰

The *Alvars* and *Nayanars* singing hymns in praise of Bhramanical deities brought a concept of new religious consciousness in the Chera kingdom. They brought anthropogenic personification of deities as theme while praising the deities; thereby those temples were seen as deities of a particular *desham*.⁵¹ These Brahmanical assertions later emerged as space of cultural developments as well. These temples (Map 2) might have encouraged the performances of *Koothu*⁵² and *Mahabharatha parayanam* etc., as is evident from Trukkadithanam record of Bhaskara Ravi mentioning about arrangements to be made for 10 *Koothu* performances. These

⁴⁶ The *Azhvars* (Alvars) were Vaishnavite Bhakti saints.

⁴⁷ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram part 1*, p.205.

⁴⁸ The Nayanars are Shivite Bhakti saints.

⁴⁹ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram part 1*, p.205.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The '*koothu*' is a solo narrative performance interspersed with mime and comic interludes. The Chakkyar (the solo performer of *koothu*) does the role of *Vidushakan* (the wise jester) through his inimitable narration of stories from the epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*; For more details on *Kuthu* see, Prof. Ambalapuzha Ramavarma, *Keralathile Pracheena Kalakal*, Sahithyaprarvathaka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, p.22-34.

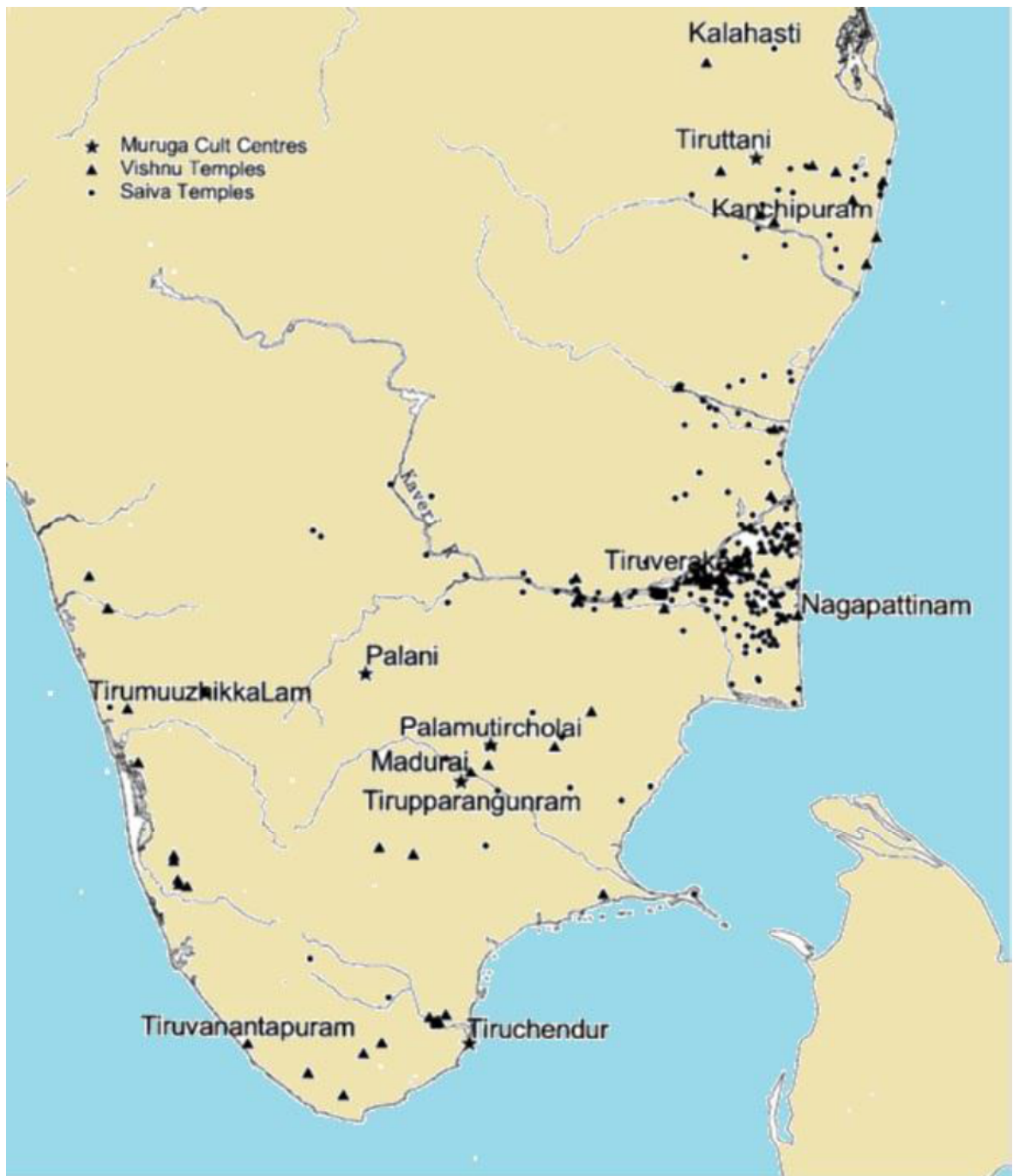
Koothu (in Sanskrit) like *Kali-ankam*, *Mattavilasam*, *Naganandam* were performed in Brahmin temples. These *koothu* performances might have been the measures to make followers familiar with concepts and legends of brahmanical religion. The origin of *koothu* goes back to ancient Dravidian folk performance of Tamilakam called *Therukoothu*⁵³. The themes in early *therukoothu* are not of brahmanical classics instead were on Tamil epics. Some of them such as, *therukoothu* are *Nattu Koothu*, *Pei Koothu*, *Thunangai Koothu* *Kuravai Koothu*, and *Valli Koothu*.

Hence *koothu* in temples was an incorporation of folk performance into brahmanical temple institution. The *koothu* might have been a mechanism of folk worshippers to gather masses during harvesting seasons. After incorporation into Brahmanism, it might have been instrumental in spreading of brahmanical epics (Mahabharatha and Ramayana) and *puranas*.

The ‘*Kali-ankam*’ might have propagated *Kali* worship etc. in society, thus through Bhakti waves many temples in cities of Chera kingdom belonging to deities like *Kannaki*, *Kottavai*, *Porkkali* and several Bhagavathis (*Shakthis*) got transformed into *Kali* or *Bhadra* or *Bhadrakali*. One such example is *Chiri Kurumba Kavu* (*Sree Kuruma Kavu*) at Kodungaloor, which was once housing the deity called *Kannaki*; this deity is related to the story of *Kannaki* and *Kovalan* of Sangam period. Thus the origin of this *Kavu* predates the period of Kulashekaras (Cheras of Makotai).

⁵³ For details on *therukoothu* see,
“<https://web.archive.org/web/20130619060246/http://tamilnadu.com/arts/therukoothu.html>”

Map 2- Centres of Bhakti movement⁵⁴



This *kavu* even exhibits elements of Jain tradition, as *Kannaki* was a deity in Jainism along with other goddesses like *Vella*, *Jwalamalini* etc. The deity of *Chiri Kurumba*

⁵⁴ Noboru Karashima (ed), *A Concise History of South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014, p.114.

(*Sree Kurumba*) was also called as *ottamulachi*⁵⁵ (one with a single breast) in local traditions of Kerala. This is a proof that *Chiri Kurumba* was *Kannaki*, later transformed into *Kali* because of brahmanical bhakti activism (activities of bhakti movement). In Sangam Era, early Cheras worshipped a deity called *Kottavai*.⁵⁶ Sreedhara Menon⁵⁷ has defined *Kottavai* as war goddess of Cheras as well as *Dravida Durga* as per his assumptions.

These evidences attest to the fact that even the Kings were followers of folk religion; this might also mean the spread of brahmanical domination in faith was a slow and gradual process. The Cheras used to present meat and *kallu* (native toddy or arrack) as *nivedyam* (offertory) to *Chiri Kurumba kavu*,⁵⁸ which was a characteristic feature of folk deity worship in Kerala. The festal celebration of Chiri Kurumba was called as *Bharani* or *Kodungaloor Bharani*. In Bharani festival⁵⁹ of this temple there used to be festival of cock sacrificing, toddy/ arrack drinking and singing *Bharanipattu*. Many of these traditions still continue attracting thousands even after this *kavu* was incorporated in Brahmanism and transformed into a Kali temple.

As mentioned earlier even *Perumals* were believed to have become *Nayanars*,⁶⁰ in contrast to Cheras mentioned in *pazham tamizh pattukal* who worshipped *Kottavai*, a non Brahmanical deity. During the Bhakti movement, one can notice that deities who were worshipped by Cheras and their *Naduvazhis* were undergoing transformations to become identified with brahmanical deities. The *Kannaki*, *Kottavai* and several

⁵⁵ In the story of Kannaki her husband was executed by Pandya king on false accusations. Then Kannaki takes revenge by cutting one of her breast in Pandya court at Madurai; from the place of breast came out flames of fire which burned entire Madurai. This might have been the reason Kannaki was called *ottamulachi* (one with single breast).

⁵⁶ A Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charithram*, p.96.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.232.

⁶⁰ The case of Cheraman Perumal Nayanar and Kulashekara Nayanar, are perceived to be Perumals of Makotai.

Shakthis (Bhavavathis) were transformed as brahmanical deities like *Parvathi, Kali* etc. This could be understood as patronage received by *Alvars* and *Nayanars* from *Perumals* and subsidiary rulers. These developments might have been done to achieve Kshatriya status offered by *vedic* rituals of Brahmins; the wealth accumulated from the trade in spices might also have given momentum for such transformative developments.

The maritime trade was intensified by *Perumals* might have led to development of Kodungalloor (mentioned as *Shingly* in old Chinese records) as an important maritime trade centre. As per M R Raghava Warriar, Kondungalloor was also the port of ancient Cheras⁶¹ known as *Muziris*⁶² (*Muchiri*) mentioned in *Patittupattu, Akananuru* and *Purannanuru* etc. The other known ports were Kurakeni Kollam, Pathlayani Kollam (Koyilandy), Tazhakkad and Bhaskarapuram as mentioned by M.G.S Narayanan⁶³ in *Perumals* of Kerala.

The Brahmin temple based paddy cultivated agrarian settlements in low lying planes were mentioned earlier; similarly in urban port cities there existed trade centres called *Nakarams*.⁶⁴ In these trade centres there existed various trading guilds like *Ancuvannam, Manigramam, Valanchiyar, Nanadeshikal, Valanchiyar, Ayyavole* and *Nalppathennayiravar*. As mentioned earlier *attiperu* land grant was given to Brahmin temples for agrarian expansion and thereby extract revenue called *attikkol*. Similar land grants might have been given to these trading organizations in urban centres, where there institutions might have existed. But unlike *Brahmadeyas*, these trading organizations were not followers of Brahmanical faith; instead they were followers of

⁶¹ The ancient Cheras (Early Cheras) of *Sangam* period are differentiated from Kulasekara Perumals or Later Cheras by Scholars from Kerala.

⁶² M.R Raghava Warriar, *Kodungalloor Nagara Kazhchakal*, KSICL, Trivandrum, p.8.

⁶³ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.314

⁶⁴ The *Nakaram* in Malayalam or Tamil means

Syrian Christianity, Judasim and Jainism etc. Other than these above mentioned trade guilds, there were foreign traders like Arabs and Chinese who had their bases in various port cities of Chera Empire. The trade of pepper, ginger, cardamom, coconut, ivory and timber etc. might have amassed lot of wealth for *Perumlas* and subsidiaries. This wealth from maritime trade was used by Perumals to finance their defences against the expansionary invasions from Cholas and Pandyas.

The land on the sea shores of Kollam given to *Manigramam* guild as *attiperu* land grant by Venattatikal, a *Naduvazhi* of Cheras of Makotai. The document (copper plate) of this land grant is known in the history of Kerala as *Tarisappalli Chepped*. This granted land was the centre of operation of *angadi* (market), *Tarisapalli* (church at Tarisa in Kollam) and dockyard for ships engaging in maritime trade. The *Tarisappalli Chepped* describes that this *agadi* had surrounding walls;⁶⁵ which might be a clue to understand that the *angadi* was fortified because of threats coming from sea. The founder of *Tarisapalli*, Mar Saphir Iso was a foreigner⁶⁶ Christian who got *attiperu* land grant from Venattatikal; the records also mentions that the land granted included communities attached to the land like *Vannar*, *Ezhavar* etc. The *Tarisapalli Chepped* also mentions about various taxes, the Church established at Tarisapalli by Mar Sapir Iso could collect from the *karalars* of the land. The taxes collected by church were *Talakkanam*, *Enikkanam*, *Era* for thatching roofs, *Meniponnu*, *Poliponnu*, *Eravuchoru*, *Kudanazhi* etc.

The Guild operated at Kollam called *Manigramam* comprised Syrian Christians and *Anjuvannam* consisted of Jews. These guilds (*Anjuvannam* and *Manigramam*) are mentioned as *karalar* of the *Tarisapalli* in its *chepped*. They had a protective force

⁶⁵ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram part 1*, p.140.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*,p.148.

called *Changatham* (instead of *nizhal*), who were also mentioned as *karalars*,⁶⁷ that may suggest that *Nizhals* of *Naduvazhis* did not offer protection to the institutions of guilds, and *changatham* might have been their self-made protection force. Similar to *attaikkol* tax paid by Brahmin temples, the *Tarisapalli* might have also paid *attaikkol* to Naduvazhi or Peumal. As discussed earlier the *attipperu* was given out of *Cherikkal* land of *Naduvazhi* or *Perumal* to Brahmin temples. Similarly *Tarisapalli* also might have got the land grant from *Cherikkal* land of *Venattatikal*. In *brahmadeyas* the law and order right was not with the Brahmin settlers, instead with *Naduvazhis*. But the law and order right of *Kollam nakaram* (the urban settlement of foreign merchants) was given to the Church⁶⁸ as mentioned in *Tarisapalli Chepped*. In *Tarisapalli chepped* we also come across terms like *talavila* (head price) and *mulavila* (breast price) which might have been associated with the selling of male and female slaves. The *Tarisapalli chepped* also describes about Missionary works of Mar Sapir Iso and Mar Prodh.⁶⁹ The purpose of the land grant to foreigner traders was to generate wealth so as to strengthen the influence and power of the ruler.

The wake of 11th century was important period in history of Kerala; the maritime trade centres witnessed the coming *Ancuvannam* trade guild. The land grant to *Anjuvannam* is recorded in Jewish copper plates dated 1000 AD.⁷⁰ The Chera King Bhaskararavi Perumal gave land grant to a Jewish Merchant Joseph Rabban (Isappu Irappan) in Kodungaloor (Cranganore). The location of Kodungaloor was very close to the *Chera Rajadhani* (seat of power of Chera Emperors) at Mahodayapuram (Makotai). The Jewish *chepped* is an important document because it was issued by Perumal himself, not by a *Naduvazhi* and this is the only *chepped* of Perumal

⁶⁷ Ibid,p.170.

⁶⁸ Ibid.p.171.

⁶⁹ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.344.

⁷⁰ M.R Raghava Warriar, *Kondungaloor Charithra Kazhchakal*, KSICL, Trivandrum,2013, p.26.

discovered so far. The witnesses signed in Jewish copper plate consisted of six *Naduvazhis* and the commander of army.⁷¹ Along with land grant Joseph Rabban also got several privileges like right to travel on Elephant, travel on Cart, use silk umbrella, construct buildings, collect revenue, exemption from royal taxation (*Ulku*) etc. Other than all these honours Rabban was bestowed 72 hereditary privileges, which might have been status symbol of aristocracy in Kerala.⁷² These inferences indicate that *Anjuvannam* established at *Crangannore (Shingly)* was similar to that of *Manigramam* at Kollam. The Jewish copper plates also indicated that ships of Jewish merchants should engage *Chola* naval force invading *Chera* kingdom. The *Chola* armies might not have invaded only through the jungle passes in Western Ghats and southern most parts of Chera Empire. The use of ships for landing on the shores and invade the territory would have been the tactic used by Cholas. The ships of Jewish and Christian merchants might have engaged *Chola* fleet on sea, thereby avoiding their landings on the shores of Kerala. The use of early thermal weapons for naval warfare might have been crucial in naval warfare before the invention of artillery and fire arms. The well-known naval warfare tactic used might have been showers of fire arrows and bolt firing of petroleum based projectiles. Hence the foreign merchants were not just traders of pepper, but also allies in situations of war with neighbouring kingdoms. The receivers of land grant helped the Chera Kings to amass wealth through trade as well as protected their domains from external threats. Therefore the land grants given to Brahmin Temples, Churches and Synagogues should be understood with its political and economic connotations along with the social aspects.

The most important trading guilds of subcontinent (non-foreign traders) mentioned in Epigraphic sources is *Nalpattennayiravar*, which is found mentioned in the

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.207.

inscriptions at Alathur in Palakkad and Tazhekavu at Wayanad. As *Manigramam* were followers of Christianity and *Ancuvannam* of Jews; *Nalpattennayiravar* were followers of Jainism. The *Tarisapalli* was religious cum economic institution (trade centre) of *Manigramam*, similarly *Tirukunavay* Jain temple was religious and economic institution of *Nalpattennayiravar*. The *Manigramam* and *Ancuvannam* had their *base* on the coastal cities, it is an indication that their focus was in maritime trade. On the contrary the institutions (Jain temples) of *Nalpattennayiravar* were in deep land locked areas often in forested high ranges. The presence of Jain temples along forested ghat routes is an indication that Jain trade guilds engaged in inland trade through jungle paths that connected Chera territories with Chola, Pandya and Canarese (Hoysalas). The *Nalpattannayiravar* and *Valanchiyar* traded spices from high ranges in exchange of rice, salt, oil, cloth etc. from plains of Tamilakam.

The Medieval *veerakallu* (hero stones) are seen in forest paths bordering with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, of which at least a few may be related to movement of traders through these routes. In those days the rulers might have lacked the capacity to ensure safety throughout all the routes of the kingdom, what they could possibly do was providing land grant and ensure privileges. The Jain temples and Shrines along the jungle trade routes might have offered protection and chalet⁷³ for traders. The Tazhekkavu inscription provides us evidences about the land grant to *Nalpattennayiravar* and the Jain temple.⁷⁴ The income from the granted land was used to light the lamp for *Yaksha*. In Jainism *yakshas* and *yakshis* were protective deities of Thirthankaras, for example the *yaksha* and *yakshi* of Thirthankara Chandraprabha are Shyama Yaksha and Jwalamalini Yakshi. Since these *yakshas* and *yakshis* were protective deities, the presence of shrines of *yakshis* along jungle trade routes may be

⁷³ The chalet were the accommodations for traders

⁷⁴ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part 1*, p.158.

indicating the protection felt by Jain traders along the trade routes. The shrines of *yakshis* might have been sacred spaces of Jain traders. The jungle trade routes in the high ranges of Kerala like Wayanad, Munnar, Kothamangalam, Perumbavoor and Palakkad, Thrissur etc. we could find evidences of temples of Jain deities and *kavus* of folk deities. Even during the period after decline of Kulashekaras Brahmanical influence was least in uplands, evident from the absence of very old temples. The *Brahmadeya* settlements were confined only to paddy cultivated low lying planes, this might have been the reason that uplands were least influenced by Brahmins.

The trade guilds like *Nalpattennayiravar*, *Valanchiyar*, *Nanadeshikal* and *Ayyavole* etc. might have propagated Jain religion along with trade activities in the spice cultivated hinterlands. These Jain traders moved their commodities through land routes as well as river routes understood from the remains of Jain temple seen on the banks of rivers like Periyar. In those days four most important land based trade routes to places outside Kerala were – Manglore⁷⁵ route which connected Canarese or Hoysala kingdom with Mushaka kingdom or Kolattunadu, Wayanad⁷⁶ route connected Purakilanadu with Srirangapattinam, Palakkad pass (Palakkad Churam) connected Valluvanatu to Kongu (Coimabatore and Salem) and Bodinayakkanur route connected Kizhmalainadu with Teni and Madurai.

All the four jungle routes are dotted with long continuous networks of Jain shrines, *satram* (shelters) built of stone and *veerakallu* (hero stones) resembling *Pallava* architecture.⁷⁷ The *Pallava* architecture may be a clue indicating the base⁷⁸ of Jain traders might have been in *pallava* territory of Tamilakam. In the Kongu route (via

⁷⁵ V.V.K Valhath, *Keralathile Sthala Charithrangal Palakkad Jilla*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, p.133.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ M.R Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part 1*, p.208.

⁷⁸ The *Pallava* architecture is a clue to understand which part of

Palakkad pass) remnants of Jain centres identified are – Alathur (Kunavayilkottam and Kavasshery), Anaganmala (Jain remains at a place called Ambalappara)⁷⁹, Kalpathi⁸⁰, Kallekulangara⁸¹, Veezhmala⁸² and Jainamedu. In these trade routes, along with Jain sacred places many unidentified shrines⁸³ (non brahmanical *kavus*?) are also found. Those shrines might also have been associated with ghat route trade. After Jainamedu⁸⁴ in the Kongu route there are several *kavus* present; one such *kavu* was discovered sometime before my field work at Aanakkal in Palakkad. This was an undisturbed (not incorporated to Brahmanism) site because of centuries of isolation in woods. I was fortunate to conduct my field work, before brahmanization and first *pooja* was performed at until then isolated *kavu*. In the Aanakkal shrine, the stone sculpture depicts deity seated on top of elephant and surrounding the deity there was stone and terracotta figures of various animals like elephants, deer, wild boars, tiger, dog/wolf etc. Upon analysing the shrine initially I thought that presence of Elephant may be indication that it could be shrine of Thirthankara Ajithanatha. But the absence of sculptures of Mahayaksha (protector *yaksha* of Ajithanatha) and Rohini (protector *yakshi*) prevents me to jump into such conclusions. But the shrine lies in the purlieu of a *Pala* (Frangipani) tree, which is associated with shrines of *yakshis*. The *Pala* trees were also known in Kerala as *Yakshi-pala* (the tree where *yakshi* resides) which indicates importance of Frangipani trees with *yakshi* worship.

⁷⁹ V.V.K Vallath, *Keralathile Sthala Charithrangal Palakkad Jilla*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, p.142.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.140-141

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.136.

⁸³ In forested areas of Palakkad district we come across many shrines which were isolated (abandoned) for centuries and the deities represented in such shrines are not yet identified. The Brahmanical fanatics are busy to incorporate them as incarnations of their deities, whereas archaeologists give a conclusion less dilemma like- It might be Jain or Early Dravidian deity.

⁸⁴ The Jainamedu Chandraprabha Jain temple was covered in field work.

In Alathur inscriptions there are mention of *Nalapattennayiravar* which attest without doubt that guilds instituted with Jainism and Buddhism held active trade through Palakkad pass (Kongu route) into the heart of Kongu territory (Coimbatore and Salem) and later to major centres of activity like Madurai, Tanjavur and Mahabalipuram. In this ancient trade route we can still find remnants of *Shramanism*⁸⁵ in the festivals like *Kalpathi ratholsavam*⁸⁶, *Kuthiravela* (Horse festival), *Kettukazhcha*, *Kalavela* (Ox festival) etc. The importance of Elephants in Buddhism is a well-known fact, in northern Kerala alone we see Elephants used for *Ezhunallath* (procession) in *kavus*, temples, *darghas*, Churches etc. These might be indicating the relation of the latter religion incorporating cultural elements of *Shramanic* and folk religion. The Jainism and Buddhism declined in Kerala during 9th to 10th century during the period of Perumals, it also coincided with the decline of Pallava dynasty in Tamilakam.

In pre-modern trade route through Wayanad (which connected Kerala with Canarese) the continuous long network of communication that once existed as Jain temples, identified by Raghava Warriar⁸⁷ are – Hennadubidi, Manikyapuri, Khsheerapuri, Kalpathi, Vennayodu, Palakunnu, Hosangadi, Tazhekkavu (which has inscription indicating it was Jain institution of *Nalppathennayiravar*) etc. Other than these temples two more temples in highly dilapidated condition was discovered in Puthanangadi near Panamaram in Wayanad. The proof of existence of these Jain temples suggests that this jungle route was used for trading by *Nalpathennayiravar* and other Jain trade organizations (guilds). In Bodi Nayakkanur route this continuous network can be traced from the banks of Periyar River till Madurai, the identified Jain

⁸⁵ The Buddhism, Ajivikas and Jainism are collectively called as *Shramana* or Shramanic traditions.

⁸⁶ Vaallath, Palakkad, p.140

⁸⁷ M.R Raghava Warriar, *Keraliyatha Charithra Manangal*, Vallathol Vidyapeetam, Edappal, p.86.

centres are – Kalady,⁸⁸ Malayatoor,⁸⁹ Vellarapalli, Manikkamangalam, Kallil (in Perumbavoor is an intact Jain cave temple), Chengamanad, Tiruvanniyoor, Kuthattukulam, Kothamangalam (Trikkariyur), Neriamangalam, Jainakkal Durgam⁹⁰ (near Aanamala), Mangala Devi (near to Theni) etc. This long wilderness trade route from one urban area to another urban area through jungles was used by guilds instituted by Jains. After decline of *Shramanic* religion in 9th to 10th century this same route was used by Tamil *Pattars* and *Ruvuthar* Muslims for spice trade with successor principalities of *Perumals* of Makotai.

2.5 Emergence of new Principalities out of the Debris of the Kulasekharas

The territory of Chera Perumals (Kulashekara dynasty) were divided into secondary units called ‘*Nadu*’, which could be compared to districts of the kingdom. The total number of *Nadu* is unknown because so far no *Chera* records of consolidated list of chieftains are discovered. The Governors of the districts are usually called *Nadu Utaiyavar* or *Nadu Valumavar* or *Naduvazhi* as per the mentioning seen in *Chera* Inscriptions. The *Chera* records (primary sources) discovered so far fails to find clear mentioning of even the boundaries of various *Nadu* (districts). But in primary sources we do have records (or clues?) to understand military strength of few *Nadus* from their *Nurruvar*⁹¹ (the fighting force in Hundreds) of the district. In primary sources we come across *Ainnurruvar* (the five hundred) of Purakilanadu, *Ezhunurruvar* of

⁸⁸ V.V.K Vaalath, *Keralathile Sthala Chrithrangal Eranakulam Jilla*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, p.80.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ V.V.K Vaalath, *Keralathile Sthala Chrithrangal Eranakulam Jilla*, p.132.

⁹¹ The *Nurruvar* are number based categorisation of *Nizhal* (the fighting force was called so in primary sources). The ‘*Nuru*’ means hundred in Malayalam, might have been same meaning in *Malanattuvazhakkangal* (the variant of Tamil spoken in pre-modern Kerala).

Kurumporainau⁹² etc. But it is contrasting when we corroborate the *Nurruvar* (the hundreds) with *Keralolpatti*. As per light shed by *Keralolpatti*, we have to infer that *Nurruvar* was in fact 10000 (in number)? Therefore *Ainnurruvar* must have been 50000. The Chera Kulashekara Perumal had a body called *Ayiram* (the thousand), the *ayiram* might have been five thousand or ten thousand or any number in thousands. It might have included sovereign as well, noticeable from 'Onnu Kure Ayiram'⁹³ mentioned in *Keralolpatti*. The *Onnu Kure Ayiram* might have meant 'Perumal or Naduvazhi + 999' indicating the personal entourage of *Chera* Emperor or his subsidiary.

Apart from the inscriptions and other epigraphic sources the writings of two Arab travellers Suleiman and Abu Zaid are also primary sources for this period. The accounts of Suleiman and Abu Zaid are the proof of Arab geographical knowledge till 9th century AD. Most part of Suleiman's account is lost but from the recovered parts we get the valuable information on practices of society like Marriage, Worship, Astronomy, Medicine, Army(fighting force) and Ascetics (perhaps *Digambar* Jains) etc. The account of Suleiman marks the period of strengthening of Arab contacts with Kerala. Suleiman's account⁹⁴ gives significant information about idol worship in Kerala at that point of time. He wrote that people claimed that idols in the temples spoke to them through their priests.⁹⁵ Those priests mentioned by Suleiman might have been priests of folk religion similar to that of *Theyyam*, *Velichappad* etc. that we understand in later sources like *Aithiyamala*.⁹⁶ Suleiman mentions that people did not engage in sexual intercourse during menstrual period and they made women go

⁹² M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.234.

⁹³ Ibid, p.233.

⁹⁴ See account of Suleiman in Neelakanta Shastri, editor. *Foreign Notices of South India From Megasthenes to Ma Huan*. pp. 122-128.

⁹⁵ Ibid.,p.126.

⁹⁶ Kottarathi Shankunni, *Ithiyamala*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1996.

out of their houses to avoid being polluted by them⁹⁷. The Suleiman's account mentions that people ate rice as their staple diet. As mentioned earlier, the rice harvested in *Brahmadeya* agrarian settlements would have been insufficient for entire *Chera* territories. The Jain traders might have brought rice from Tamilakam in return they took pepper and other spices from Kerala. Suleiman mentions that people purify themselves each day by bathing before their breakfast.⁹⁸ Suleiman describes about people hunting and eating wild animals. The account mentions about long bearded people, which might have been popular guise during 9th century. The account also consists of earliest mention about celebration of marriages with cymbals (may be *Kombukuzhal*) and drums. He also mentions about the nude or semi-nude ascetics with panther skin, who wandered in wilderness, eating only fruits and wild herbs and presence of iron ring on their genitals to prevent sexual contact with women.⁹⁹ These men mentioned as ascetics by Suleiman might have been any independent cults existed in Kerala before 9th century or they might be Jain monks.

Suleiman has also written that “No *Musalman* is known who doesn't speak Arabic¹⁰⁰”. This could be inference that conversions to Islam and Arabs marrying native women might not have begun during the period of his travels. From that we can infer that all *Musalman*s were Arabic speakers and no native *Musalman* (one who don't speak Arabic) has come in contact with Suleiman. Hence Suleiman must have been the earliest Arab travellers in Malabar. He mentions that King (may be *Perumal*) had few horses and many Elephants in the army and the greater part of the country

⁹⁷ Neelakanta Shastri, *Foreign Notices of South India From Megasthenes to Ma Huan.*, p.127.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.125.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.127.

there were no towns¹⁰¹. He also wrote that Malabar has abundant rain and several rivers.

Account of Abu Zaid (9th century) gives the earliest idea about *Chaver*.¹⁰² Abu Zaid mentions about King (*Perumal?*) dining with his personal body guards (he has mentioned them as friends or *changatham*) 300-400 in number attached to him. The cooked rice was served to the King on a banana leaf, from which King eats a morsel of rice and all his body guards (*chaver* or *changaham*) were given small portion from his leaf one after the other. Through this ritual communion, they were intimately bounded.¹⁰³ The very day when the king dies, all those who have eaten rice with him burn themselves voluntarily on his funeral pyre to the last man. A similar instance of a later period is mentioned by M.G.S Narayanan,¹⁰⁴ that is when Cherman Perumal Nayanar disappeared (died?) following the disappearance of his friend Sundaramurti Nayanar in Tiruvancikkalam temple. It says that when Cheraman Perumal Nayanar disappeared (died?) some of the *Utan Ninra Pataivirar* (immediate body guards?) of his large army committed suicide one after the other by turning their daggers on themselves.¹⁰⁵ This tradition looks very similar to the Samurai tradition of *Zhogunates* in Medieval Japan, where Samurai's doing *Sepuku* (ritual suicide by piercing dagger into their belly). But a Samurai, who failed to do that can continue to live as *Ronin*, a concept similar to Ronin or excommunication is absent in primary sources so far discovered. There are still more difference because *Zhogun* can order Samurai to do *Sepuku*¹⁰⁶ as punishment, but in Chera Kingdom *Perumal* executes them. One such

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² *Chaver* are special class of Malabari Nair fighters. These warriors fight until death for the King.

¹⁰³ See Abu Zaid's Account in Nelakanta Shastri, *Foreign Notices of South India From Megasthenes to Ma Huan.*, p.126.

¹⁰⁴ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.234.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ The *Sepuku* is suicide done by piercing dagger into one's own stomach.

instance is Rama Kulashekara Perumal ordered the execution of *Patamel Nayar* (General of the Army?) by drowning.¹⁰⁷ The *Patamel Nayar* was paid his complete salary (in coins or kind?) before drowning (may be to compensate his life for the family member). The last words of *Patamel Nayar* were that all the soldiers should continue their *akampadi* service to the Perumal. As mentioned in *Keralolpatti*, Perumal executed *Patamel Nayar* on the words of a woman (may be his wife) who was lying. Since no punishment for such a sin was mentioned in Brahmanical scriptures, as a *prayaschitta* (penance) Perumal converted to Islam and went to Mecca and he died there. As per *Keralolpatti* the death of Perumal marks the end of *Kulashekaras* and fragmentation of the empire into various principalities.

As mentioned earlier Chera kingdom had subdivisions called *Nadu* (Map 3); through extensive study of epigraphs M.G.S¹⁰⁸ have divided them into 14 divisions. The *Nadus* known to us are Kolattunadu, Puraikizhanadu, Kurumporainadu, Ramavalnadu, Eralanadu, Valluvanadu, Netumpuraiyurnadu, Netunkalainadu, Vempalanadu, Kizhmalainadu, Munninadu, Nanulainadu, Kalkkarainadu and Venadu.

Kolattunadu was northern most part of Chera Kingdom. This *Nadu* was once ruled by *Musaka*¹⁰⁹ Kings like *Nannan* of *Ezhimalai* celebrated in *sangam* literature. M.G.S is of the argument that, Musakas accepted feudatory status under the Chera.¹¹⁰ So far no records of their *Nurruvar* were discovered. As per Chera inscriptions, Puraikizhanadu is identified with Puranad or Kottayam with the chieftans named Purakilar Tangal, Puraiyar, Pazhassiraja etc. There are Chera records of Sankaran Kota Varma alias

¹⁰⁷ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.232.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.178-194.

¹⁰⁹ For details see Athula. *Mushikavamsha Mahakavyam*. Edited by K.P.A Menon, Nag Publishers, New Delhi, 1999.

¹¹⁰ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.178.

Atikal Puraikilar went to southern Kerala in connection with Chola wars to support his Chera overlord. In the records, this governor (*Naduvazhi*) had an army of Anjuruvar (the five hundred).

Kurumporainadu must be later Kurumbranad, the Chera inscriptions mention about a Kurumporainatu *Naduvazhi* by the name Atikal Virakkumporaiyar. In records it is mentioned that this governor had *Nurruvar* called *Elunurruvar* (the seven hundred). The more the number of *Nurruvar* may be inference that Kurumporainadu had larger territory than Purakilanatu with *Anjurruvar* (the Five hundred). Ramavalanadu might not have survived after the decline of Cheras, because of unavailability of mentions in the records discovered so far. Some historians argue that this *Nadu* was part of Calicut, because an inscription of Rajaraja Chera¹¹¹ at Tirumannur in Calicut describes about the existence of this *Nadu*. We could see the name of Governors like Paliyattu Kannan Kantan of Ramavalnatu in Tirumannur inscription. The Tirumannur inscription of Rajaraja Chera also mentions about *Anjurruvar* (500) of Ramavalnadu, which indicates that this *Nadu* was a significantly a larger territory.

In Cochin Jewish copper plates¹¹² of Bhaskara Ravi Perumal one of the witnesses was *Naduvazhi* of Eralanatu Manavepala Mana Viyatan. Eralanadu is identified with Eranadu. Hence we can assume that they were the ancestors of Eradi or Eranad Utaiyar (later Zamorin of Calicut). The *Naduvashis* of Eralanatu lacked suffixes like ‘*Varma*’ or ‘*Varman*’ in their names. Which might be an indication that they belonged to *samantha Nairs*¹¹³ who followed matrilineal succession. In Cochin Jewish copper plates of Bhaskara Ravi Perumal, one of the witnesses was *Naduvazhi* of Valluvanatu

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.184.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.185.

named Rayiran Chattan. The undated 10th century inscription¹¹⁴ discovered at Irinjalakkuda mentions about *Arunurruvar* of Valluvanatu. The Valluvanadu too might have controlled significantly large territory as they had a larger fighting force.

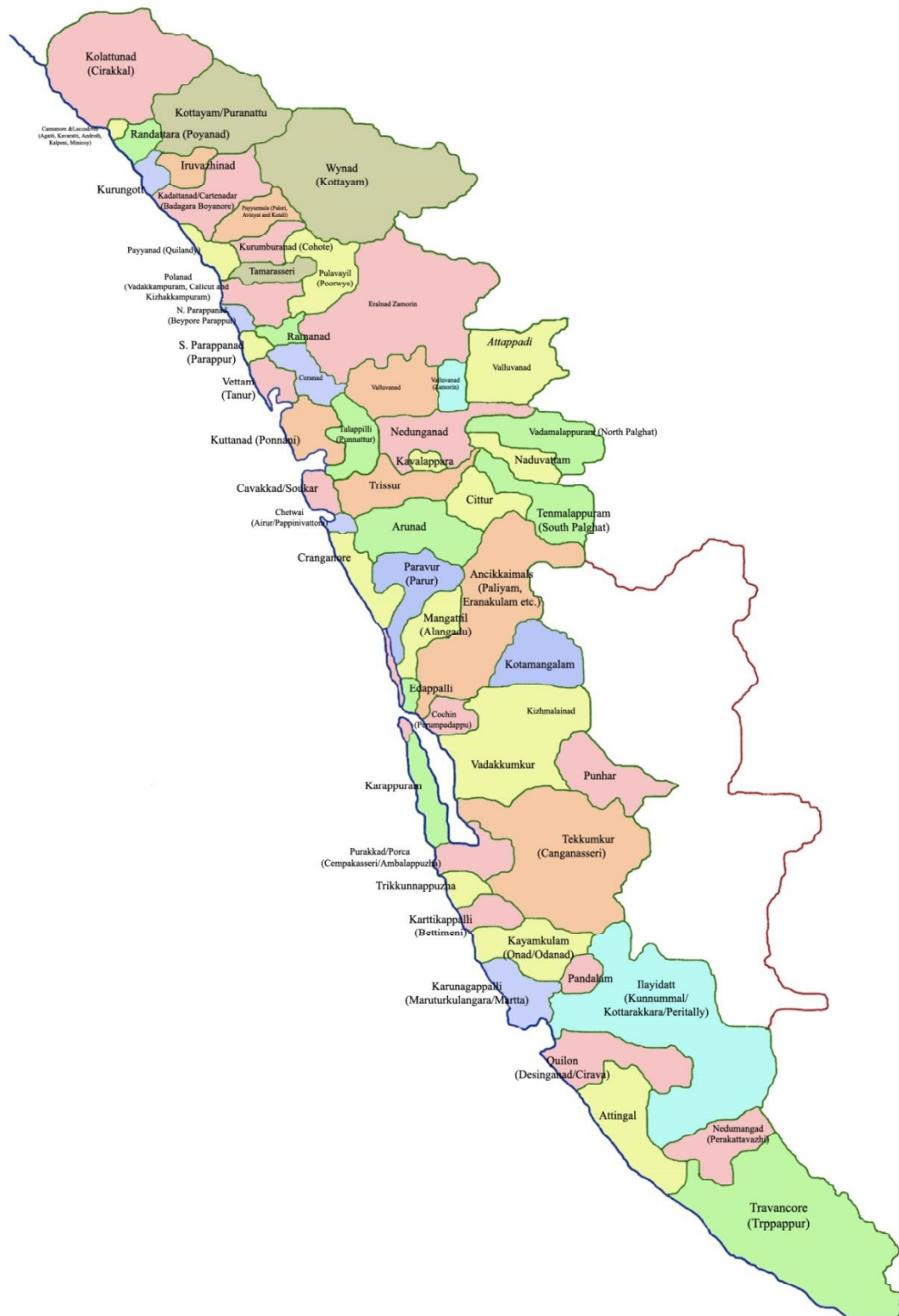
Professor M.G.S Narayanan¹¹⁵ is of the argument that Netumpuraiturnadu *Nadu* lacked hereditary *Naduvazhis* because the family names of *Naduvazhis* were different in different times like- Manalmanrattu Yakkan Kota in 17th year of Indu Kota, Kota Ravi in 38th year of Bhaskara Ravi, Mangattu Kumaran Ravi in the 11th year of Bhaskara Ravi, Panrutturtti Polan Kumaran in 31st year of Bhaskara Ravi. This might be an insight that Cheras had system of nominated governors too along with hereditary *Naduvazhis*. There is no mention about Netunkalainadu in any Chera inscriptions. But Chola inscription at Rajadityesvaram mentions the name of this *Nadu* with reference to Malaiyalan Netunkalainattu Isanamangalattu Manavallan Kannan.¹¹⁶ The *Malaiyalan* might have meant Malayali (person from Kerala) who was part of Chola Empire.

¹¹⁴ The month, day or reigning year of King was not dated in the inscription

¹¹⁵M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, pp186-187.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.187.

Map 3- Various *Nadus* of Chera Kingdom¹¹⁷



¹¹⁷ Source: <http://pazhayathu.blogspot.in/2011/10/maps-of-kerala-in-world-map-from-600-bc.html>, accessed on 22 Aug 2017.

Vempalanadu had two sub divisions Tekkinkuru (southern branch) and Vatakkinkuru as per 11th century Tiruvalla copper plates.¹¹⁸ In the records we come across names of Naduvazhis like Kota Cirikantan, Ravi Cirikantan, Kumaran Yakkan etc. Kizhmalainatu must have had same territories of the later independent principality of same name. This principality was in mountainous high ranges covering the areas of Devikulam, Todupuzha (believed to have been the head quarter of Kizhmalainatu) and Muvattupuzha. A Trikkadithanam temple record dated 1064 AD mentions that Kantan Kumaran was the ruler (*Naduvazhi*) of Kizhmalainatu.¹¹⁹ In certain records there is mentioning of *Arunurruvar* (the six hundred) of Kizhmalainatu.¹²⁰

Munninadu did not survive as an independent principality after the decline of Perumals of Makotai. Even the location of Munninatu is not identified so far. But the name of this Nadu is seen in *Perunna* Inscription mentioning Adityan Kota as *Naduvazhi* of Munninatu. Nanrulainadu also disappeared without a trace like Munninadu. But Tiruvanmandur temple inscription of Indu Kota dated 949 AD mentions about Nanrulainatu. Trikkadithanam record of Ravi Varma mentions about Manalmanrattu Yakkan Cirikantan¹²¹ as Natuvazhi of Nanrulainadu who confiscated the rights and property of a Brahmin called Tencheri Cennan Tayan,¹²² who looted from temple's treasury. Kalkkarainadu Nadu is identified with present day Trikkakkara. Professor M.G.S is of the opinion that this Nadu had hereditary Brahmin *Naduvazhis*.¹²³ The names of *Naduvazhis* mentioned in the inscriptions are Kannan Poraiyan, Kannan Polan etc. Venadu was the ancestor of modern kingdom of Travancore. The *Tarisapalli* copper plates also mentions about the *Naduvazhi* of

¹¹⁸ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.188.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.189.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.191.

¹²¹ Ibid., p.191.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., p.188.

Venad Ayyanatikal giving *attipperu* land grant to Mar Sapir Iso.¹²⁴ The trade guilds called *Manigramam* and *Ancuvannam* were active in trading with Venadu.¹²⁵

Map 4- Chera Kingdom and its Neighbours¹²⁶



While describing about *Naduvazhis*, M.G.S holds the view that, all of them were either *kshatriyas* or *samantha shudra Nairs*. But we have come across names like Manalmanrattu Yakkan, Kumaran Yakkan and Yakkan Cirikantan in names of Natuvazhis. The *Yakkan* could be *Malanattuvazhakkangal*¹²⁷ of ‘*Yakshan*’, in that way those Naduvazhis or their ancestors might have been followers of Jain or Buddhist or folk religion instead of Brahmanical religion. In other case it may be indicating just their native origins before following Brahmanism.

¹²⁴ Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part 1*, p.196.

¹²⁵ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.277.

¹²⁶ Noboru Karashima (ed), *A Concise History of South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014, p.132.

¹²⁷ The *Malanattuvazhakkangal* is the variant of Tamil, which later evolved into Malayalam language.

As mentioned earlier Cheras had to defend their territories from the invasions of neighbouring Cholas and Pandyas, and in the 8th and 9th centuries there were Pandyan invasions from two fronts – Kongu (Coimbatore) and Ay¹²⁸ (northern most part of Chera kingdom) countries. The records shows that Pandyas occupied *rajadhani*¹²⁹ of Cheras in Kongu and territory of Vizhinjam but Cheras continued their defence from forested Western Ghats.¹³⁰ The Chera forces might have led guerrilla warfare (since jungles) in those dense high ranges with the support of Pallavas. The Kongu region would have been vital for Pandyas to generate wealth because it comprised Palakkad gap, a major trade route that connected Chera kingdom with Pandya kngdom through a pass in Western Ghats. Hence controlling Palakkad gap route would have been vital for Pandyas to generate wealth.

In the 9th century, South India witnessed the growth of Cholas as a supreme power. The Cholas initially made good relations with Cheras through marriage alliances and combined armies in wars. The several instances of marriage alliances indicate that the Kings of South India might have practiced polygamy for marriage alliances. By the middle of 10th century Cholas subjugated Pandyas, Pallavas and confronted Rashtrakutas of Deccan. The dawn of 11th century witnessed the Chola expansion of Rajaraja, the Chola naval forces attacked Chera coastal cities of Kollam, Kondungaloor etc. This time period coincides with the period of Perumal Bhaskara Ravi who himself gave *attipperu* to Jewish Merchant Joseph Rabban (Isoppu Irapan in Jewish copper plates). This land grant free of taxes and privileges might have been for their naval support and support of trained personnel in order to strengthen their defensive against Chola invasions. Many of the *Naduvazhis* would have done the

¹²⁸ The *Ay* country was earlier kingdom of *Mushakas* conquered by Cheras.

¹²⁹ The oral sources suggest that earlier Rajadhani of Kulashekaras was Salem and later shifted to Mahodayapuram or Makotai,

¹³⁰ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy* p.93.

same like Ayyanatikal which enhanced spice production and trade fetching wealth for military campaigns as well as consolidation of their authority. The institutions that emerged on granted land (given as *attiperu*) like temple and Church, Mosque and Synagogues enhanced trade. The patronage of Perumal or Naduvazhi might have been crucial in organising festivals, condensing cultural developments like *Kuthu*, *Mahabharatha parayanam* etc. As per Gokul Vannan the Madurai Inscriptions of Cholas describe about their ambitions to conquer spice producing areas¹³¹. The Chola inscriptions at Mepara near Rajakumari in Idukki (part of Kizhmalainatu of Cheras), throws light on Chola King Rajendra I, who had conquered those hill ranges to gain hold of the spices production centres and the arterial trade route traversing through the region.¹³² But the uniqueness of this inscription was that it clearly establishes that Chola king invaded the Chera territory mainly to take control of the trade routes and spice trade via the hill ranges. The early historic antecedents of spice trade from hill ranges can also be inferred from the Roman coins (*pazhamkashu*) excavated at Nedumkandam, Idamakuduru and Poonjar. All these sites are located in erstwhile Kizhmalainadu and Poonjar (offshoot of Pandya kingdom) in present day Kottayam district of Kerala. The inscription also describes that the Chola Emperor Rajendra I conquered the parts of Idukki hill range from the chieftain *Theratteanakarai* (Cheras of Makotai or their subsidiary?) in 11th century. All these nuances in history corroborate the fact that Kizhmalainatu played an important role in stimulating spice trade of the 11th century. There were series of battles and subjugation of Chera territories under Cholas, those skirmishes gave slight occasional gains and losses. The Tanjavur inscription of Vikrama Chola (1124) suggest that *Celiyar* (Pandyas) took to the Ghats, it would have meant that Pandyas fleeing to Poonjar and establishing their

¹³¹ Gokul Vannan, "Madurai: Engraving reveals Chola's 'spice ambitions'", *Deccan Chronicle* N.p., Apr 2. 2017. Web. Apr 2. 2017.

¹³² *Ibid.*

base in the high ranges. This inscription also mentions that *Ceralar* (Cheras) took to sea. This fact can be corroborated with Brahmin Chronicle of *Keralolpatti*¹³³ and Muslim traditional work *Tuhfat ul Mujahideen* recorded by Sheikh Zeinuddin.¹³⁴

There is the high possibility that the last Chera Emperor Rama Kulasekara disappeared from the scene during 1122AD. As per both the sources Rama Kulasekara converted to Islam with the influence of Arab traders and went to Mecca and he died there. Sheikh Zeinuddin says that, while in Mecca Perumal sent some messengers from Arabia to preach Islam in Kerala and they established 10 mosques in various parts of Chera Kingdom, one of them was at Matayi of Kolattunaṭu.

Table 1.1: The 17 Principalities mentioned in Keralolpatti as per the prominence

Principality	Chieftain	Area	Other information
Eranadtu	Punturakkonattiri	Eranadu in Nilambur area	Imperial Sword of Perumal inscribed 'chattum konnum atakkikkolka' (die, kill and conquer)
Kolattunatu	Kolattiri Udayavarman	Area of Kasagode and Cannanore, that is the area of former Musaka kingdom	35000 Nayars, Talipparamba temple
Venatu	Venattatikal	Kollam area	35000 Nayars, Kalkkulam Kotta (Fort),
Kurumporanatu	Kurumpiyatiri	Wayand area	30000 Nayars
Purakilanatu	Porlatiri	Calicut area	10000 Nayars
Perumpatappunatu	Suryaksatriya	Kochi area	52 Katam land
Valluvanatu	Valluvakkonattiri	Tirunavay, Arangottu Swaroopam	10000 Nayas

¹³³ Pfileiderer & Riehm, *Keralolpatti The origin of Malabar*, Stolz and Reuther, Basel Mission Press, Manglore, 1868.

¹³⁴ S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar, *Tuhfat ul Mujahideen*, University of Madras, 1942.

But after the death of Perumal, as per *Keralolpatti* Chera kingdom of 160 *katam*¹³⁵ was fragmented into 17 principalities, between Putupattanam in the north and Kannerri in the south.¹³⁶ But this information is contrasting as we have evidences for divisions of Chera kingdom of 14 *Nadus* only. In addition to these seven important principalities other principalities mentioned in *Keralolpatti* are Kollam, Panthalam, Parappunadu Swaroppam, Vettam and Kayamkulthu Cerayi Swaroopam in one list:¹³⁷ in the other list there are names of Ravananadu, Tirumanasserinatu, Nedunganatu, Venganadu and Muringanadu.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ The *katam* is unit of measurement of distance.

¹³⁶ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, p.131.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p.80.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p.77.

Map 5- Kerala after the decline of Kulasekhara dynasty¹³⁹



¹³⁹ Source: http://www.wiki30.com/mediawiki/images/thumb/1/12/Kerala_in_12th_century.jpg/180px-Kerala_in_12th_century.jpg, accessed on Jan 3, 2017

2.6 Conclusion

Kerala has several Geographical advantages like location in the southernmost part of the peninsular India with long continuous *sahyadri* mountain ranges (Western ghats), far stretching coast (Malabar coast) line, two monsoon seasons (South West monsoon and North East Monsoon) and several navigable rivers and backwaters. The predominantly mountainous terrain with *karimanal* (black loam soil of granite origin) and laterite soil are not favourable for cultivation of rice, the staple diet of Kerala. The alluvial soil favourable for rice cultivation is found in few pockets like Chavakkad, Aluva and Kunnathunad etc. The plains in the low lying areas were paddy cultivated areas organized under brahmadeya (land grant to Brahmins) settlements. These rice cultivated areas comprised the core areas of Chera Kingdom whose economic activities were stimulated by the agency of Brahmin temples, which became chief mechanisms of wealth re-distribution. The low lying paddy cultivating fields owned either by the Brahmins or their temples happened to be the principal wealth-generating sources of the Cheras.¹⁴⁰ The Brahmin temples amassed vast amount of revenue from the land owned and controlled by it, the *attiperu* grants of lands to the temple conferred all income from land.¹⁴¹ But the tax to the treasury did not come from Brahmins nor from temples; but from the tenants (*karalar*). The temple centred brahmana villages (*brahmadeyas*) were to remit the annual dues called *attikkol*,¹⁴² and in return for the security of temples royal protection units like *nilal* and *kaval* were provided. The maritime trade was just the supplementary source of revenue for the Chera rulers. The trade of spices happened not just in the port cities but also through the ghat route trade to Tamilakam carried out by Jain traders, whose religious

¹⁴⁰ M.G.S Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, pp.316-321;
Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and The Early Medieval Agrarian System*, , pp.69 –71.

¹⁴¹ Rajan Gurukkal, *The Kerala Temple and The Early Medieval Agrarian System*, p.34.

¹⁴² *Ibid*,p.36.

institutions and shrines of their protective deities called *yakshis* and *yakshas* dotted the jungle *ghat* routes. Jainism is known to have appeared in Kerala around 4th century B.C¹⁴³ declined during rule of Kulashekaras in 9th to 10th century A.D.¹⁴⁴ The intensification of maritime trade by Kulashekara Perumals might have been to strengthen their defences against the expansionary invasions of Pandyas and Cholas. The Pandya invasions and loss of Kongu territory of Cheras (Kulashekaras) might have been to gain control over the important trade route of *Palakkad churam* (Palakkad pass) which fetched huge revenue. The Chola inscriptions at Mepara near Rajakumari in Idukki (part of Kizhmalainatu of Cheras), throws light on Chola King Rajendra I, who had conquered those hill ranges to gain hold of the spice- production centres and the arterial trade route traversing through the region¹⁴⁵.The inscription clearly establishes that Chola king invaded the Chera territory mainly to take control of the trade routes and spice-trade via the hill ranges. The 11th and 12th century witnessed Chola invasions on Chera territories from land as well as sea. The naval forces of Cholas were known for the expansion of the Chola Empire, including the conquest of the Ceylon and naval raids of mighty Sri Vijaya kingdom (present day Indonesia). The Chola fleet was also known for the mercantile role in foreign trade and maritime activity, covering their influence overseas to China and Southeast Asia.

The naval might of Cholas must have been too big a force to be reckoned by feudal armies of Cheras that might have been the reason for Cheras and subsidiaries making commercial and military alliance with foreign merchants like Joseph Rabban (Isappu

¹⁴³ Gopal Bhargava editor. *Encyclopaedia of Art and Culture in India*. Vol. 3, Isha Books, New Delhi, 2003.

p.31.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Gokul Vannan, "Madurai: Engraving reveals Chola's 'spice ambitions'", *Deccan Chronicle* N.p., Apr 2. 2017. Web. Apr 2. 2017.

Irappan). The ships of Jewish trade guild *Anjuvannam* might have been crucial in Chera defence against naval attack from Chola fleet. In this background of war for survival, the Cheras gave land grants and enormous privileges and titles to Jewish guild *Anjuvannam* and Syrian Christian guild *Manigramam*. These events were foundation stones for the making of highly plural culture in Kerala. The war torn period also witnessed the intensification of maritime trade in spices, as trade provided wealth for Cheras to strengthen the defences. The intensification of maritime trade coincides with the period of decline of Jainism (9thC -11thC) and the inland trade with Tamilakam. The intensification of maritime trade might have resulted in increased production of spices in uplands which in turn might have made the traders and the subsidiary rulers of Cheras wealthy. The wars also might have been keen in strengthening the might of the subsidiary Kings. Thus the war with Cholas and intensified maritime trade might have made the *Naduvazhis* wealthy and powerful which might have been the principal reason for decline of Kulashekara dynasty and the division of *Cheraman* kingdom of 160 *katam* between *Putupattanam* in the north and *Kannerri* in the south into 17 principalities.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ M.G.S.Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*,p.131.

Chapter III

Changing Centres of Wealth and Power

3.1 Introduction

This chapter tries to get an insight into the political, economic and social changes that took place in Kerala during the period between 14th and 18th centuries. This chapter is divided into two sub chapters. The first sub chapter will study about the nature of maritime trade and its impact on the socio-political processes of Kerala. It will deal predominantly on the chain of events leading to the establishment of maritime political units. The second part of the chapter focuses on changing political and commercial equations that happened with the entry of the Europeans and the consequent impact on expansion of spice cultivation into the upland regions of Kerala. This ultimately led to the establishment of secondary states in Kerala with their base being located in the upland regions.

The intensification of maritime trade in various ports of Malabar in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is testified by Marco Polo,¹ Friar Jordanus,² John Maringoli,³ Ibn Batuta,⁴ Ma Huan,⁵ Nicolo Conti,⁶ Athanasius Niketin⁷ and Abdur Razak.⁸ Intensification of maritime trade was a means to accumulate more wealth and the growing demand for cargo necessitated the expansion of territories for ensuring

¹ Thomas Wright, editor. *Travels of Marco Polo*, George Bell and Sons, London, 1880, p.416.

² "Travels of Frair Jordanus," in K.A Nilakantha Shastri (ed), *Foreign Notices of South India From Megasthenes to Ma Huan*, Madras University, Chennai, 1939, p.198.

³ "Travels of John Maringoli" in K.A Nilakantha Shastri (ed), *Foreign Notices of South India*, p.286.

⁴ Revered Samuel Lee, *Travels of Ibn Batuta*, Oriental Translation Committee, London, 1829, p.169.

⁵ "Travels of Ma Huan" in, K.A Nilakantha Shastri (ed), *Foreign Notices of South India From Megasthenes to Ma Huan*, Madras University, Chennai, 1939, pp.302-308.

⁶ "Travels of Nicolo Conti" in Richard Henry Major, *India in the Fifteenth century : being a collection of narratives of voyages to India, in the century preceeding the Portuguese discovery of the Cape of Good Hope ; from Latin, Persian, Russian, and Italian sources, now first translated into English*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1857, p.156.

⁷ "Travels of Athanasius Niketin" in Richard Henry Major, *India in the Fifteenth century*, p.194.

⁸ "Travels of Abdur Razak" in Richard Henry Major, *India in the Fifteenth century*, p.107.

regular supply of spices. The intensification of maritime trade from thirteenth century onwards led to the inland rulers (the successor chieftains of Kulashekaras) shift their bases from agrarian enclaves to maritime centres of exchange. We find the chief of Nediyruppu swaroopam shifting base from Eranadau, located in the agrarian enclave to Calicut, the emerging port controlled till then by the Polathiris⁹ and the chief of Perumpadappu swaroopam shifting base from the agrarian pocket of Vanneri to Cochin.¹⁰ The trade with Arab *Al Karimi* merchants resulted in flow of wealth for Zamorin, who in turn consolidated his political and commercial position in Kerala with the money and mercenaries provided by the *Al-Karimi* merchants. Later Zamorin conquered the neighbouring small principalities of Nilambur, Manjeri, Malapuram and Kottakkal, thereby established a territorial state with Calicut as seat of power. The hinterlands of these annexed principalities provided increased supply of pepper to be traded¹¹ at the ports of Calicut and Ponnani. Ibn Batuta mentions about his journey through backwaters from Calicut to Quilon (which is the last city of Malabar Coast) during early years of 14th century, the journey he completed in 10 days.¹² Though this is a short distance, it tentatively indicates the average speed with which commodities were taken from one leading port to another against the background of intensified trade. The *Manipravala Sandesha kavyas* particularly *Koka Sandesam*¹³ and *Unnu Neeli Sandesam*¹⁴ refers to the trade routes that pass through the interior parts of

⁹ Pius Malekandathil, "Winds of Change and Links of Continuity: A Study on the Merchant Groups of Kerala and the Channels of Their Trade, 1000-1800", in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 50, No. 2/3 (2007), pp. 259-286.; Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, p.3.

¹⁰ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001.

p.30.

¹¹ K.V.Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1938, p.121.

¹² Reverend Samuel Lee, *Travels of Ibn Batuta*, Oriental Translation Committee, London, 1829, p.174.

¹³ Chatthanath Achuthanunni and M. R Raghava Warriar, *Koka Sandesham*, Vallathol Vidya Peedam, Shukapuram, 2007.

¹⁴ Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Unnuneeli Sandesam*, Sahityaprarvathaka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 1954.

Kerala. The trade routes once used by Jain traders got isolated after their decline, followed by growth of Brahmanical religion through *Bhakti* movement.

The traversable routes re-emerged out of spaces of wilderness, which were till then skipped for fear of being haunted places, particularly of *yakshis*. Stories and hagiographical accounts of the miraculous saving power of religious personalities and institutions (like Sufi sheikhs/*dargahs* for the Muslim traders,¹⁵ of Kadamattathu Kathanar¹⁶ certain specific churches for Syrian Christian merchants and of *Sasthavu/Muthappan* and *Shakthi* for traders belonging to *Ezhava*¹⁷ and other folk religion) acted as psychological mechanisms that used to bolster the confidence-level and sense of security of traders to traverse the spaces of wilderness without fear and carried cargo to the coastal trade centres from the spice producing interior areas.¹⁸

The second part of this chapter shows how the central upland parts of Kerala got transformed into alternative centres of wealth and power against the background of intensified maritime trade with the entry of the Portuguese for trade. The Portuguese trade policy to give annual subsidy of 72,000 *reis* to the inland rulers of Thekkenkur, Vadakkenkur, Diamper (Udayamperoor), Parur, Alengadu, Aluva etc., for promoting pepper production in the hinterland resulted in an unprecedented move for expanding spice cultivation with an estimated 600 % increase in pepper production. But still most of the pepper produced did not reach Portuguese Cochin. The Ravuthar Muslims, Tamil Pattars and the Syrian Christian traders took considerable share of

¹⁵ The Sufi Dargahs of Thodupuzha, Allah Palli Dargah of Munnar and Peermedu Dargah; all lying on a common trade route going to Madurai indicates that this network was used by Ravuthar Muslim traders.

¹⁶ Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithiyamala (Re print)*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1996, pp.428-441.

¹⁷ These shrines were located along the ancient terrestrial routes of inland Kerala.

¹⁸ Pius Malekandhathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala" in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017, p.8.

pepper from the hinterland to Coromandel ports via ghat routes to escape from the control systems of the Portuguese on the west coast of India. Only 3.10 % of the total produce went to Europe for trade during the end of the 16th century, while 15.50 % was consumed domestically¹⁹. The remaining 81.40% pepper was either shipped to the markets of the Mughals, Ming China, Saffavid Persia and the Ottomans. Through terrestrial routes cargo went to Madurai, Srirangapattinam, Dindigal etc.²⁰ In this process, Erumeli, Kanjirappally, Erattupetta, Thodupuzha, Koratty, Palakkad became important centres for diversion of pepper across the ghat to Coromandel. In course of time these places became the major centres of wealth convergence in the central upland parts of Kerala where secondary state units eventually started evolving.

After the Dutch conquest of Portuguese Cochin in the seventeenth century, the Hollanders made negotiations with minor petty rulers of inland Kerala for obtaining pepper. This resulted in immense flow of wealth to the interior kingdoms that in turn emboldened and strengthened the petty rulers. Those rulers strengthened their position by mounting artillery and strengthening their fighting force of *Nayars* and *Syrian Christians*. The account of Jacob Cantor Visscher²¹ and the trade documents of VOC²² attest to the complex economic roles played by lesser political actors. The larger chiefs like Travancore, Cochin and Calicut could not conquer and devour them, as they were supported by the Dutch. Thus, some of the upland principalities like Chembakasserry emerged as significant and wealthier rulers in Kerala, who could

¹⁹ Ibid., p.7.

²⁰ Ibid., p.10.

²¹ Heber Drury (ed.), *Letters from Malabar by Jacob Canter Visscher, Now first translated from original Dutch*, Adelphi Press, Madras, 1862.

²² T.I. Poonen, *A Survey Of The Rise Of The Dutch Power in Malabar*, St. Joseph's Industrial School Press, Tiruchirappalli, 1948; K. M. Panikkar, *Malabar And The Dutch*, D.B Taraporevala Sons & Co, Bombay, 1936; K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Written in the Form of Note's on Visscher's Letters From Malabar*. Vol. 1 in 4 Vols. Asian Educational Service, New Delhi, 2001, pp.27-32.

extend patronage to a variety of artists, literary personalities and theatrical performers like Kunchan Nambiar²³ and Ramapurathu Warriar²⁴ etc. In tandem with the developments for state building and kingship in upland principalities, the Brahmins started moving from the low-lying paddy cultivating zones to the new centres of power in upland parts of Kerala. Along with the Brahmins their Brahmanical concepts of god also started entering in the upland parts of Kerala which consequently modified, mutated, incorporated and at times demonised the folk-perceptions of god that existed in *kavus* of uplands. The second wave of bhakti spread through the literary pieces of *Adhyatma Ramayanam*²⁵ of Ezhuthachan and *Jnanapana*²⁶ of Poonthanam helped to disseminate fast the Brahminical perceptions of god in the upland terrains. In this process, *Ayyappan*, the locally deified hero of the upland regions was reinterpreted as *Harihara Suthan* (son of Siva and Vishnu) against the background of fast spreading *Vaishnavism* and *Saivism* in the upland terrains. Meanwhile in the central part of Kerala, the Syrian Christians of Kothamangalam, Aruvithara (Erattupetta) and Kanjirappally were also actively involved in the pepper trade with Madurai and Dindigal and Tanjavur. It was the share of wealth that the traders used to offer to these churches and *dargahs* in return for the protection they got during the course of the ghat-route trade with Madurai made these religious institutions to emerge as rich and wealthy.²⁷

²³ Kunjan Nambiar, *Kunjan Namiyarude Thullal Krithikal*, D C Books, Kottayam, 2013.

²⁴ For details on *Vanjipattu* tradition begun by Ramapurathu Warriar See, Ronald Cohn & Jesse Russell, *Ramapurathu Warriar*, VSD, London, 2012; K Ramachandran Nair, *Selected Poems of Mahakavi Ulloor*, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1978.

²⁵ Vattaparambil Gopinathapilla, *Adhyatma Ramayanam*, D C Books, Kottayam, 2013.

²⁶ Sreedevi, K.B, *Poonthanam Njanappana*, Green Books, Thrissur, 2011.

²⁷ Pius Malekandhathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala" in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017, p.10.

The Tamil Brahmin Pattars and Ravuthar Muslims linked with Madurai and the other markets of Tamilakam travelled through the same ghat routes and took pepper on a large scale from hinterlands in return for clothes, rice and cereals brought from Tamilakam.²⁸ The fragmented polity promoted by the commercial policies of the early colonial powers, particularly by the Portuguese and the Dutch began to give way to highly centralized political formations initiated in the eighteenth century by Marthanda Varma in Travancore and Saktan Thampuran in Cochin, who erased names of petty principalities and their power bases out of the map of Kerala in their efforts to establish centralized state structures. In a series of battles, Marthanda Varma annexed the kingdoms of Quilon and Attingal from 1742 onwards after his defeat of the Dutch at Collachel.²⁹ Eventually the base of Travancorean kingdom was shifted from Kalkulam in Tamilnadu to Trivandrum (1763). Under Marthanda Varma the trade in pepper was declared a state monopoly in 1743³⁰ and later in 1763 a new port was established at Alleppey by Raja Kesava Das (Diwan of Travancore) to ensure regular flow of spices from the newly conquered terrains for Travancorean trade. In the changed situation Shaktan Thampuran, the king of Cochin, who also maintained an anti-Dutch policy, shifted his base from Cochin to Thrissur and started annexing smaller principalities in the neighborhood and carved out of the various conquered principalities the state of Cochin with base in Thrissur (Thrissivaperoor). Finally the Dutch made a gradual and slow retreat from Cochin, which already had been experiencing shortage of enough spices and other cargo for trade from the erstwhile kingdoms in hinterlands. The Dutch already had lost their superiority long before Cochin's occupation by the English in 1795.

²⁸ Pius Malekandathil, *Mughals, Portuguese and Indian Ocean*, Primus, New Delhi, 2013, p.88.

²⁹ K.M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Dutch*, Taraporevala, Bombay, 1931, p.69.

³⁰ Asin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967, p.34.

3.2 Maritime Trade and Politico-cum-Religious Developments

The thirteenth century in Kerala history marked the downfall and disintegration of the central authority of the Cheras (1206). The disintegration of the Cheras led to the emergence of different successor states with nomenclatures like- *Svarupams*, *Natuvazhis*, *Desavazhis*, *Karthas*, *Kaimals*, etc.³¹ The rulers and petty local chieftains of successor principalities competitively tried to keep the major maritime centers of exchange under their control to accumulate wealth from trade. The accumulation of wealth was crucial for state building and development of kingship. The major ports in 13th century Kerala was Calicut, Kollam, Cranganore (Kodungaloor) etc. These ports were frequented mainly by merchant ships from ports of Arabia, Egypt and China for the procurement of pepper which was very high demand in West Asia and Europe.

The movement of the ships (eastwards or westwards) was determined by monsoon winds, whose seasonal course also determined the locations of merchant settlements and the extent of their commercial networks. The monsoon wind system made the Indian Ocean navigable and shaped the very structure of communication (major ship routes), commerce and cultural changes along the coast it knocks. Arab navigators called journeys driven by the monsoon as *dirat al-matlaq*³² and crafted a trading network that extended all the way from the port cities of the African Coast to the great emporia of South China³³. In the background of maritime trade there emerged settlements of Arab traders adjacent to various maritime exchange centers of Kerala.

³¹ M.G.S. Narayanan, *Foundations of South Indian Society and Culture*, Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi, 1984 p.22.

³² Felipe Fernández Armesto, *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration*, Oxford University Press, London, pp.37-38.

³³ M.H. Ilias, "Mappila Muslims and the Cultural Content of Trading Arab Diaspora on the Malabar Coast", *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4/5, SPECIAL FOCUS: Arabs in Asia(2007), pp. 434-456

The earliest mosques in Kerala might have emerged as a result of the social organization of Muslim merchant groups. As mentioned in previous chapter the religious networks were also closely intertwined with commercial exchanges, evident from earliest Buddhist temples and Syrian Christian Churches lying along various inland trade routes. The emergence of Mosques, *Dargahs* and *Khanqahs* in various trade routes should also be understood as institutions in service of traders, owing to the economic and social negotiations they were getting engaged in. The religious authorities might have accumulated wealth from the offerings of traders, as Islamic institutions dotted the major exchange centers. The intermarriage between Arab traders and local women deepened the penetration of Islam into the society³⁴.

The ancient port city of Kodungaloor was located in vicinity Chera Rajadhani at Mahodayapuram (Makotai). Kodungaloor was also known as the epicenter for the introduction of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities and their respective faiths to Kerala coast. The Jewish community at Cochin traces its genesis to the arrival of Jews at Kodungaloor and the Jewish *Chepped* granted to Joseph Rabban by Perumal. In Muslim folk traditions of Kerala, Kodungaloor was the site of India's first mosque in the year 629 AD.³⁵ This mosque was called Cheraman Juma Masjid, in the name of Cheraman Perumal the last Chera King who converted to Islam and left for Mecca and died there.

The Kollam port in the province of erstwhile Venad kingdom had flourishing trade with China and South East Asia in 13th century.³⁶ This trade continued into 14th

³⁴ For details See Sebastian.R. Prange, "Scholars and the Sea: A Historiography of the Indian Ocean", *History Compass* 1382-1393, 6:5 (2008).

³⁵ Manohar Sajjani, *Encyclopaedia of Tourism Resources in India*, Vol. 2, Kalpaz Publications, New Delhi, 2013,p.199

³⁶S. D. Goitein and Mordechai Akiva Friedman, editors and translators. *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza*, Brill, Leiden, p.382.

century as evident from travelogue of Marco Polo³⁷ in 1290 and half a century later by Ibn Batuta in 1333-45.³⁸ Ibn Batuta in his travelogues mentions Kollam as one of the supreme ports in Malabar mostly visited by Chinese traders. It can be argued from the travelogue of Marco Polo that by coming of the thirteenth century to a close, the thriving sea trade of Malabar was divided between Muslim and Chinese merchants.

The intermarriage between Arab merchants and local women might have led to the origin of *Mappila* community in Malabar. *Mappilas* are thus, the first Indian Muslims. Marriage between Arab merchants and local women were often *Mut'a*³⁹ contract (temporary marriage) and the children (both boys and girls) born of these unions were mostly brought up as Muslims as explained by Duarte Barbosa.⁴⁰ Barbosa has classified Muslims of Malabar according to their origins into- Arabs (*arabios*), Persians (*persios*), Khorasanis (*coraçones*) Gujaratis (*guzarates*) and Deccanis (*decanis*)⁴¹. The *Mappila* community in Malabar might have expanded through both marriages and conversions. The *Mappilas* born out of union between Arab father and *Malabari* mother might have been polyglots and who would have become mediators in trade. The *Mukkuva* community (later caste) of Malabar was known for seafaring and fishing and had professional proximity to Arab navigators. These *Mukkuvas* might have been the first converts to Islam in Malabar. The trading diaspora of Malabar consisted mostly of Arabs from Hadramawt, Cairo, Hormuz, Abyssinia and

³⁷ Thomas Wright, *Travels of Marco Polo*, George Bell and Sons, London, 1880.

³⁸ Mahdhi Hussain, *The Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Oriental Translation Committee, London, 1829.

³⁹ The *Mut'a* describes the contracting of the marriage for a stipulated period of time, usually involving an agreed payment to the bride. *Mut'a*, which has its roots in pre-Islamic culture of Arabia. Some Scholars regard *Mut'a* as a legalized form of prostitution; others defend it as a legitimate and necessary custom.

⁴⁰ Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: an Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and Their Inhabitants*. Edited by Mansel Longworth Dames, Haklyut Society, London, 1918, p.74-75.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 76.

Tunis. They were influential foreign Muslim settlers all over the Malabar Coast; the most important settlements were at Calicut which was the centre of Arab spice trade.⁴²

The Arabs along with the other foreign Muslim trading populations like Persians, *Khorasanis* and *Kutchi Memons* of Gujarat were collectively called as *paradesi* (foreigner) Muslims. The main impetus of settlements on the Malabar Coast came from the activities of merchants of Oman and Hadramawt.⁴³ The dominance of *Shafi'i madhab* (a school of Islam) in Malabar could be traced back to *Hadrami Sufi Saiyyeds*.⁴⁴ The developments in trade increased wealth of rulers as well as Arab traders; this might have coincided with the emergence of Mosques in various parts of Malabar. The early mosques emerged in Kodungalloor, Kollam, Madayi, Manglore, Cannanore, Panthalayani Kollam, Chaliyam, Dharmadam etc.⁴⁵

The Mongol conquest of Baghdad and fall of Caliphate too had its impact on Malabar. The same Mongol invaders were defeated by the *Mamluks* of Egypt at Ain Jalut in 1260. Slowly the Mamluks began to take over the Indian Ocean trade. The Cairo based Arab/ Al-Karimi merchants started coming in large numbers to Kerala and particularly to the ports of Calicut, Cannanore and other minor exchange centres of North Kerala.⁴⁶ The *Al-Karimi* merchants filled the vacuum that might have been created with the fall of Caliphate and actively engaged in trade with Malabar. The *Al-Karimi* merchants developed international trade route with Cairo as the fulcrum port

⁴² M.H. Ilias, "Mappila Muslims and the Cultural Content of Trading Arab Diaspora on the Malabar Coast", *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4/5, SPECIAL FOCUS: Arabs in Asia(2007), pp. 434-456.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Abdulah Anjillath, *Malabarile Islaminte Adhunika Purvacharithram*, Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham, Kottayam, 2015, pp.113-129.

⁴⁶ Pius Malekandathil, "Winds of Change and Links of Continuity: A Study on the Merchant Groups of Kerala and the Channels of Their Trade, 1000-1800", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 50, No. 2/3, Spatial and Temporal Continuities of Merchant Networks in South Asia and the Indian Ocean (2007), pp. 259-286.

of maritime pepper trade route. The predominant presence of Jewish and Christian traders in the southern ports of Quilon and Kodungalloor might have prompted the Arab/*Al-Karimi* traders of Cairo to move northwards and gradually settle down in the city of Calicut to undertake their trade. Many of the rulers and local chieftains competitively tried to keep the major maritime trade centres of exchange under their territory with a view to bag a share from trade for their political assertions.⁴⁷ Some of these chieftains started moving their seat of power from inland agrarian regions to the maritime exchange centres located along the coast.

The coastal metropolises established by few able chieftains attracted traders to their ports. The improvement of trade was for strengthening their political structures with gains from trade. The ruler of *Nediyirippu Svaroopam* known as *Eranad Utaiyar*⁴⁸ (later known as Zamorin, the lord of the Sea) had his original seat of power in the interior agrarian pocket of Nediyirappu⁴⁹ in Ernad and he moved his seat of power to Vikramapuram⁵⁰ in Calicut by conquering it from the local chieftain called *Polathiri*.⁵¹ The conquest was evidently with an eye on the profit from trade which had the fuel to realise his aspiration to become the ruler of entire Kerala. After the conquest of Calicut the chief of *Nediyiruppu swarupam* took the title of *Kunnalakon*, king of the Hills (*kunnu*) and waves (*ala*) and its Sanskrit equivalent is *Samoothiri* (which was corrupted as Zamorin by Portuguese).⁵²

The trade with *Al Karimi* merchants resulted in flow of wealth for Zamorin, who in turn consolidated his political and commercial position in Kerala with the money and

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ K.V.Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1938 p.1.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.2.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.121

⁵² Albert Gray (ed.), *The Voyage of Francois Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas and Brazil*, vol. I, New Delhi, 2000, p.369.

mercenaries provided by the Al-Karimi merchants. Later Zamorin conquered the neighbouring small principalities of Nilambur, Manjeri, Malapuram and Kottakkal thereby established a territorial state with Calicut as seat of power. The hinterlands of these annexed principalities provided increased supply of pepper to be traded.⁵³ Securing a permanent base at Calicut was to exercise power from a place that ensured a regular flow of wealth from trade. The coastal location might have helped the Zamorin to station the mercenaries provided by Al-Karimis who were remarkable in the conquests of Zamorin. Thus Zamorin could consolidate his political and commercial position in Malabar with the wealth, personnel and ships provided by the *Al-Karimi* merchants. The ships used for warfare during 13th, 14th and early 15th centuries lacked artillery which came much later. Only after the coming of Portuguese in late 15th century firearms were used in battles. The ships and boats of *Al-Karimi* merchants would have supported the Zamorin's siege of smaller principalities. The Arab galleys like *shīnī*⁵⁴, *jafn*⁵⁵, *bārija* (in Hindi *bē rā* and Urdu *pīrā*), *tarīda* and *dhow* etc. frequented the ports Zamorin's kingdom. The *Jafn* could carry troops, horses, food and water⁵⁶ and they could fire thermal weapons based of hot pitch, resin, animal fat, oil and other similar compounds (Image 1). Oil-soaked materials were ignited and thrown at the enemy, or attached to spears, arrow and as bolts and fired by archers or with catapult or *trébuchet*. Ibn Batuta mentions about seeing *jafn*-type galleys on his way from Calicut to Honavar.⁵⁷ He also adds that he was afraid of

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Dionisius Albertus Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*. Brill, Leiden, 2014, p.335.

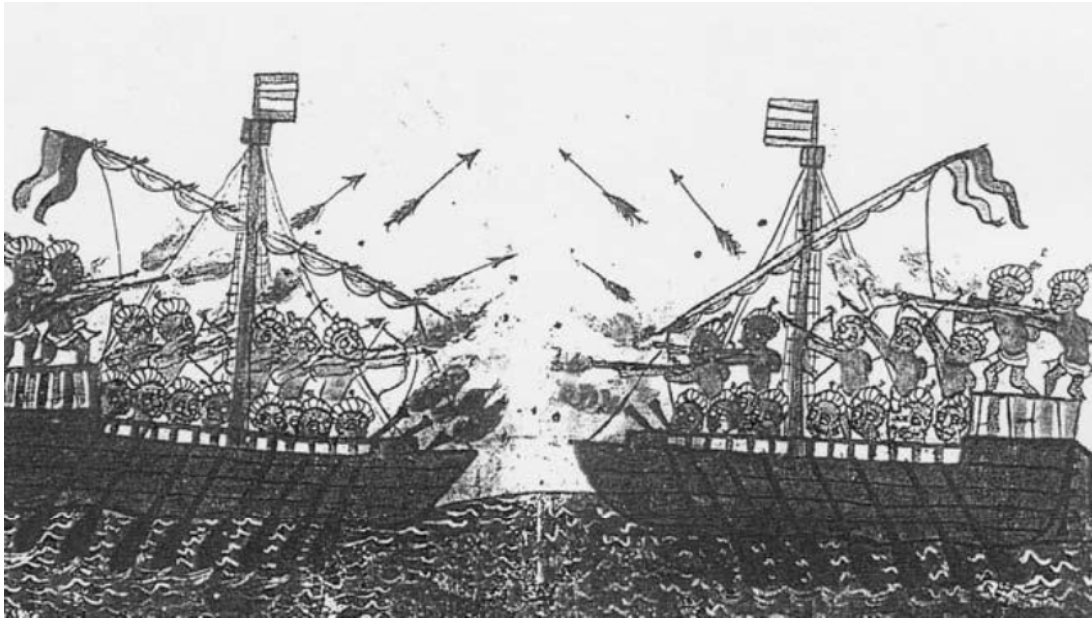
⁵⁵ Ibid.p.339.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.335.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.339.

them.⁵⁸ That would suggest that those *Jafn* seen by Ibn Batuta might have been fierce battle ships used by Arab traders.

Image 1- Shooting of fire arrows from war ships⁵⁹



The naval power of Arab merchants as well as the wealth from trade might have been the driving force of Zamorin in his expansionist endeavours. The Zamorin took the backing of Arab and Chinese merchants for naval support and used the wealth from trade to develop huge Nair army. As mentioned earlier Zamorin had goals to rule over the whole of former Chera Empire which resulted into battles with neighbouring kingdoms often with victory for Zamorin. The lesser principalities in the south of Calicut like Chaliyam, Parappanad and Thanur became feudatories of Zamorin one after the other. The chiefs of Kurumbranad, Payyormala and other Nair chiefs on the fringes of Calicut also recognized the supremacy of Calicut. Ibn Battuta further mentions about men at arms on board the *jafns* who are mentioned as the protectors of

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.340.

⁵⁹ Dionisius Albertus Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, p.355.

the sea⁶⁰ by him. So we can infer that Arab traders too moved to the areas conquered by Zamorin and this is evident from the mosques that emerged on the banks of riverine trade routes. The rivers of the conquered areas were arteries of trade and the fact that many mosques emerged on river banks may be indication of expansion of Muslim trade networks into the interior areas of Kerala.

The base of Arab traders might have been Mosques established by them in the kingdom of Calicut. The sighting of many old Mosques on the river banks indicated importance of rivers in trade and conquest. Ibn Battuta gives an account of numerous small Mosques dotted along seashores and harbours of Malabar dating back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁶¹ The structure of these Mosques indicates heavy reliance on indigenous architectural models that lack Domes and other peculiar features of Mosques in Northern India. The Geniza documents refer to numerous Indian Ocean cargo vessels as warships (*harbī*) may suggest that sailing vessels could function as both⁶² trading ships and war ships. A German-Jewish ethnographer, historian and Arabist⁶³ S.D Goitein based on a Geniza letter written by Madmun b. Japheth, describes that Arab *galley*s were armed with war weapons and cruised as convoy to protect larger ships.⁶⁴ The fighting ships were there in all Arab controlled trade routes to protect the cargo ships from pirates and other hostile navigators. These ships might have been occasionally used for wars by bombarding the shores from the ship with thermal weapons. After conquest and expansion, pepper from Zamorin's

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 340.

⁶¹ Mabdi Husain (ed. and trans) *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, Oriental Institute Baroda, Baroda, 1976, pp.176-197.

⁶² Dionisius Albertus Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, p.356.

⁶³ An Arabist is someone usually non-Arab who specialises in the study of the Arabic language and culture.

⁶⁴ Shlomo D. Goitein, "Two eyewitness reports on an expedition of the king of Kīsh (Qais) against Aden", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 16, 1954, pp.247-257.

kingdom was deviated to the port of Calicut for mercantile trade. In fact the port of Calicut was connected with its vast pepper hinterland through a network of rivers of which *Chaliyar* and *Kallayi* are the most important.⁶⁵ The river Kallayi which flows till the sea shores of Calicut originates from the Cherukkulathur ranges and flows towards south-west connecting the *angadis* or exchange centres also called as ‘*chanthas*’ at Velliparamaba, Iringallur, Palazhi, Kailamattom, Puthur and Pantheerakavu etc. The Kallayi river is joined by a tributary of Chaliyar river divided from Mukkathukadavu at the Olvanna (south-east of Calicut). This is the junction where the tributary of Chaliyar river which joins Kallayi river. This river was of vital importance for the trade of Calicut. This waterway connected the widespread pepper cultivated areas located on the banks of river Chaliyar such as Nilambur, Edavanna, Chungathara, Edavannappara and Mavur with the Calicut port.⁶⁶ Calicut in 14th century was developing into a cosmopolitan centre of exchange being modified as per the needs of time with the presence of Arab and Chinese merchants. The port of Calicut had a Muslim officer under the Zamorin with title of Shahbandar Koya⁶⁷ or Kozhikkottu Koya who was the authority for overall activities at the port of Calicut. The goods traded in Calicut port included pepper, cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, tamarind, canafistula, myrobalans, seed pearls, precious stones, *kasturi* (musk), rhubarb, porcelains, aloes-wood, timber (teak), large amount of cotton cloths and ambergris etc. Before the supremacy of *Al-Karimi* merchants in Calicut, ten or fifteen ships used to sail for the Red Sea, Aden and Mecca, where the Arab merchants sold their goods to some merchants of Jidda, and from there to Cairo and then to

⁶⁵ Pius Malekandhathil, “Rubrics of Power and Trade in Calicut,” in Archa G (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism in a City: The Past and the Present of Calicut*, (Issue 22), Café Dissensus, February 15, 2016.

⁶⁶ K Balakrishna Kurup, *Kozhikodinte Charithram* (11th edition.), Calicut, 2006, pp.61,62; N.M.Nambuthiri, *Samuthiri Charithrathile Kaanapurangal*, Sukapuram, 1987, p.54

⁶⁷ *Shah Bandar* is a Persian term used to denote the ‘harbour master’ throughout the medieval Islamic world; while the title *Koya* was a local addition given by the Zamorin of Calicut.

Alexandria. From Alexandria the merchandise was taken into Venice from there it went to the whole of Europe. After the fall of Caliphate of Baghdad and Mamluk victory over Mongols, Cairo became the nodal trading centre flourishing in European trade with Italian merchants.

An important step towards Zamorin's state building venture was the conquest of Thirunavaya (approximately between 1351- 1363) from the ruler of Valluvanad. It took almost a hundred years⁶⁸ for *Samoothiri* rulers to organize an attack on Valluvanad after the conquest of Calicut in 13th century. For the expedition Zamorin had combined armies of his subordinate kings like the kings of Chaliyam, Beypore, Thanur and Kodunagloor and that of Shah Bandar Koya's army. The feuds between two important Brahmin authorities (*Kurmatsaram*) of *Panniyur* and *Chovvaram* also resulted in many conflicts between rulers of Malabar as the rulers used to take sides with either of the *kuru*. In 14th century the rulers of Valluvanad and Cochin favoured *Panniyurkuru* and Zamorin the *Chovvaramkuru*.⁶⁹ By this time Zamorin had a huge army which could advance both by land as well as water (both sea and river) which annexed Thirunavaya from Valluvanad Chieftain. The Zamorin also acquired a principle trading centre called Ponnani from Tirumanasseri ruler for the timely military help provided by Zamorin. The spice cultivated areas of the territories conquered from Valluvanad were connected by a long river called Bharathapuzha on whose banks lies Thirunavaya. It was in Thirunavaya that the pan Kerala festival of *Mamankam* was held every 12 years under the authority of Zamorin. Earlier this *Mamankam* festival was organised by Valluvakonnathiri (ruler of Valluvanad).⁷⁰

⁶⁸ For details see, K.V.Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1938.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.97.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.95.

The foreign merchants were commercial and war time allies of Zamorin as mentioned above, but the pepper cultivated hinterland located deep inside the landscape (for example those on the banks of Bharathapuzha are located far away from seashore) were very less influenced by Muslim institutions or Brahmanical bhakti institutions. The major share of wealth for Zamorin was from the pepper produced from the enclaves located on the banks of river Bharatapuzha. There were about 130⁷¹ *kavus* (centres of worship of non-Brahminical folk religion) on either sides of Bharatapuzha. The Zamorin used to spend about Rs. 25947 and 52808 *para* rice⁷² annually for the maintenance of these *kavus*, which itself shows their importance in sustaining his activities for power-inscription in the hinterland and mobilizing resources for trading activities.⁷³ The important *kavus* in the erstwhile kingdom of Calicut were Pallikkal, Thiruvaly, Palakotu, Chengottoor, Puthoor, Villoor, Panthaloer, Thrikkalangattoor, Puthrukovil, Thirumanikkara, Kalarikkal, Aliparambukalathil, Panankurussikavu, Thoothakkan kavu, Uthrali kavu, Chathamkandarkavu, Vayillamkunnath Kavuvu, Killikurussi, Panniamkurussi, Akaloor, Murikkumpetta, Panamannakurathi, Alangottu Cherukunnath, Perunthatta, Peruvalloor Kotta, Thirunavayi Ayyappan, Palppetty, Ariyambil, Kottamel Asura Mahakalan kavu, Pavannoor Kottalingan, Malamakkavu, Vengasserry kavu, Chundamakavu Vettathukavu, Thrikkandiyoor, Nerunkaithakotta, Ammancherry, Puthoor Tharackal Bhagawati, Thrikkandiyoor Vettakkorumakan, Kundukulangara, Cheruthura kavu, Paruthipally Bhagavathi Anthimahakalan kavu, Ankali Amma, Pookulangara, Pulikkottu Ayyappan,⁷⁴ etc.

⁷¹ Malekandhathil, Pius, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ N.M.Namboothiri, *Mamankam Rekhakal*, Sukapuram, 2005, p.45

⁷⁴ Malekandhathil, Pius, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan.

The priest of the *kavu* might have had ceremonial, economic and magico-religious functionary duties for Zamorin and vice versa. In the *kavu* the priest of folk religion used to undergo trance and himself performs before the people as *Velichappad*⁷⁵ or *Theyyam*⁷⁶ etc. It is perceived by the worshippers that it is the deity who gives order to the people through the priest in trance. The cultivators of pepper in the banks of Bharthapuzha were mostly worshippers of folk religion and hence patronising their *kavus* and granting their deities with rice, oil and ghee etc. was necessary for Zamorin to ensure flow of pepper into the port of Ponnani, where Bharathapuzha meets Arabian Sea. Even some of the Muslims also performed *Theyyam* in some *Kavus* in the similar way the *Vannars* (*vannan* caste) and *Thiyyas* performed. The performer might have imbibed the attributed divinity of Muslim saints while enacting *Theyyam*. Evident cases were the *Theyyam* of Mappilas is performed in some *kavus*, for example *Theyyam* of Ali was performed annually in Arikady Parasthanam Bhagavathi Ali Chamundi *kavu* near Kumbla in Kasargod, North Kerala⁷⁷ and Mukri Pokar *Theyyam* in Malom in Kasargod. In some oral traditions these Mappilas in *Theyyam* were imbibing the spirit of Muslim traders killed by followers of Brahmanical religion in hinterlands for varying reasons, and they later became folk deities.⁷⁸ It can also be said that the soul of dead Mappilas were incorporated into folk religion by the people of hinterland where they performed *Mappila theyyam* in connection with local festivals. *Mappila Theyyam* in turn brought both the folk religion and Islam together

⁷⁵ *Velichappad* (plural *Velichappadukal*) are Folk priests and oracles of Malabar, for details see Edgar Thurston. "Omens and Superstitions of Southern India: Edgar Thurston: Free Download & Streaming." *Internet Archive*, VED from Victoria Institutions, 30 Oct. 2016, archive.org/details/OmensDIGITAL., p.234.

⁷⁶ *Theyyam* is a form of worship in folk religion of Kerala, in which the priest in the form of *theyyam* undergoes trance and gives orders and blessings to the believers.

⁷⁷ For details about Ali Chamundi see *The Dance of Ali Chamundi* in "<https://dhanrajblog.wordpress.com/>"

⁷⁸ See the story of *Aali Theyyam* in T. Ajeesh, *Theyyam Kadhakal*, Manorama Publications, Kottayam, 2013, pp.53-58.

to the fairs and markets that evolved around the *velas* (annual festal celebrations) of *kavu*.⁷⁹

The Zamorin established a political base in Ponnani like a secondary capital.⁸⁰ In Ponnani the Thrikkavil kovilakam (Zamorin's palace) was situated at the mouth of Bharatapuzha river. Zamorin used to reside there and the heir apparent *Eralpad* used to live in Vairanelloor kovilakom in Ponnani.⁸¹ The influence of Arab merchants in Ponnani is evident from the Friday mosque and shrine of Shaykh Zayn al-Din al-Malabari al-Funnani alias Makhdum Thangal⁸². The Ponnani had natural advantage with deep harbour allowing more ships to anchor in the harbour. Calicut port had the disadvantage of shallow waters where huge ships were anchored at a safe distance at sea in exposed anchorages⁸³ and the commodities were transported using coastal vessels of shallow draft designed to manoeuvre the land and sea breezes⁸⁴ (Image 2). Merchants after anchoring the *galley* used *falū* (lifeboat of ship) or *ṭarrāda* (coir stitched coastal rowing boat) to reach the shores.⁸⁵ Sometimes for too shallow waters they used *malabari kattumaram* an indigenous raft to transport people and commodities. Sailing near to the coast has its dangers and the difficulties, which consisted mainly of being driven on to a lee-shore, becoming immobile by hitting sand-bank and sinking after colliding with submerged rock, caught by strong tides or drawn into whirlpools.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ For details about Mappila Theyyam refer, T. Ajeesh, *Theyyam Kadhakal*, Manorama Publications, Kottayam, 2013, pp.53-58.

⁸⁰ Pius, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan.

⁸¹ T.V. Abdul Rahman Kutty, *Charithram Urangunna Ponnani*, Thiroorangadi, 2013, p.236.

⁸² He was popularly known as Makhdum Thangal.

⁸³ Gerald R. Tibbetts, translation with notes. *Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese being a translation of Kitāb al-fawā'id fī uṣūl al-baḥr wa-l-qawā'id of Aḥmad b. Mājīd al-Najdī*, Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1981, pp.145-152.

⁸⁴ Dionisius Albertus Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, p.187.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.306-308.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Image 2- Ships anchored at safe distance from the shores, small boats transporting the cargo; a Portuguese painting of Calicut port



However, the mariners possessed deep knowledge of natural rhythms of the lunar tides and the currents attributed to the principal winds- the *shamāl* (north), *jamūb* (south), *qabūl* (east) and *dabūr* (west)⁸⁷. As mentioned earlier there were various types of Arab galleys used for trade as well as battles in Indian Ocean as well as in rivers of Malabar. On the southwest shoreline of India lying south of Calicut, Beypore

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.187.

shipyard was exceptional as it was situated at a junction between the Western Indian Ocean and the Far East.

The significance of Beypore ship building might have been developed after various types of timber the area could supply and the appropriate coastal location near to the timber growing forest. The Southwest Indian coast might have been the right spot for sailing ships to stop over as a result of the monsoon winds and in addition to repair the ships for long voyages. The raw materials for ship building such as teak planks, coir (made from the husks of the coconut) and *nīra* (lime and fat substance) were in abundance in Calicut. Since all necessary raw materials were available perhaps it may be to reduce expenditure that the Arab merchants began building ships in Beypore. Thus the possibility is that, shipwrights⁸⁸ from other shipbuilding sites in the Persian Gulf commissioned their ships from Indian shipwrights for the same economic reasons.⁸⁹

The teak (*Tectona grandis*) from Nilambur (area conquered by Zamorin from Valluvanadu) natural forest was most preferred by shipbuilders for planking as it could be bent and joined to the frames following the curves of the sides of the *Uru* (Malabari sailing ship).⁹⁰ The other timbers used from Calicut comprised: *anjili* or *aini* (*Artocarpus hirsuta*), jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*), *Manjakadambu* (*Haldina cordifolia*), mango wood (*Mangifera indica*), *punnaga* or *poon* (*Calophyllum inophyllum*), coconut tree (*Cocus nucifera*) and *venteak* (*Lagerstroemia lanceolata*). For smaller ships, local wood was used for ribbing and joints and coconut timber (*Cocus nucifera*) was used exclusively for building the hulls.⁹¹ The coconut

⁸⁸ Shipwright is a carpenter skilled in ship construction and repair.

⁸⁹ Dionisius Albertus Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, p.142.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.147.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.148.

trunk was used by carpenters to make masts and yards as mentioned by the Jesuit missionary Jerónimo Lobo (dated 1678).⁹² The oars and wooden anchors were made out of coconut timber.⁹³

During the days of shipbuilding in Calicut, iron nails were not used; instead planks were stitched with coir which had its natural advantage as well. The date palm fibre (*Phoenix dactylifera*) used for rope in Arabia did not last in sea water for long but coconut husk fibre coir (*qinbār* in Arabic) was capable of lasting in seawater for much longer. The coir was used not only to stitch the planks of a ship but also as rope for rigging and cables.⁹⁴ Since coir was used to sew planks instead of iron nails the caulking of planks was done using tarred hemp mixed with fish oil or coconut oil or resin with fish oil in the joints of the planks of ship.⁹⁵ Then proof of ship building in Beypore during pre-modern period is attested to by the presence of traditional *dhow* (*Pattemari*) making in Beypore done by Malabar *Khalasis*⁹⁶ even today. The shipbuilding on the coasts also indicates towards the amount of trade in timber was done by Zamorin (Samoothiri raja).

Ibn Battuta mentions about his ship journey from Calicut to Zafar (located on the Southern Arabian coast) which he mentions to have covered in 28 days⁹⁷ with the help of north-easterly winds. By taking the distance between Kollam and Muscat as 1,562 miles (2,513 km) and if the time taken is 28 to 30 days then Arab *galleys* covered

⁹² Jerónimo Lobo, *The Itinerário of Jerónimo Lobo*. Edited by M. G Da Costa. Introduction and notes by C. F Beckingham. Translated by D. M Lockhart, Hakluyt Society, London, 1984.

⁹³ Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan (The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores)*. Edited and translated by F Ch'eng-Chün. Introductory Notes and Appendices J. V. G. Mills, The Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1970, p.143.

⁹⁴ Ibn Jubayr, *Rihla. The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*. Edited by Ḥawqal Ibn and L-Qāsim Abū. Translated by R. J. C Broadhurst, Jonatham Cape, London, 1952, p.65.

⁹⁵ Dionisius Albertus Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, p.150.

⁹⁶ For details about Khalasis, See, Alex George, "Malabar Khalasis' Traditional Technology to the Rescue in Perumon", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 24, No. 18 (May 6, 1989), pp. 965-967.

⁹⁷ Dionisius Albertus Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, p.189.

about 50 miles (80 km) a day. This indicated the efficiency of Arab galleys. The presence of ship building would also mean that Zamorin too had controlled a few ships for trade and war. The Zamorin continued conquests and expansion, and after conquering Thirunavaya he annexed Pantalur and Tenkalam. The Zamorin faced his first defeat at the hands of combined armies of Cochin and Valluvanad, but Zamorin continued annexation and later conquered Nedunganad and Palakkad.

As mentioned in the first chapter Palakkad pass was an important ghat route that connected Malabar with Tamilakkan, once Zamorin acquired Palakkad he began to control this important trade route. It was through this trade route the Jain Merchant guilds called *Nalpattennayiravar*, *Valanciyar*, *Nanadeshikal*, and *Ayyavole* traded spices in exchange of rice and cloth etc., from Tamilakam. These guilds had perished with the decline of Jainism in 9th century and their Jain temples and other institutions declined along with it. In Zamorin's period (till 1795) Tamil Pattars and Ravuthar Muslims were trading through Palakkad pass in place of Jain traders. The Tamil Pattars had their settlement in Kalpathi *agraharam* in Palakkad and *Ravuthar* Muslim settlement is around Manjakkulam Dargah Shareef in Palakkad. The erstwhile ruler of Palakkad with the title Komban Achan or Kombanathu Achan had given land grant to *Tamil Pattars* in Kalpathi for establishing their *Agraharam* ⁹⁸ and their festal celebration of *Kalpathi Theru* (Car festival) continues till date. This *Theru* festival is a common sight in Tamil Nadu but in Kerala it is seen only in Palakkad indicating the historical importance of Palakkad as an important trade and cultural centre in pre modern Kerala.

⁹⁸ K. Rajan, "Nagaravum Palakkatte Achanmarum" in Nagaram Pinnitta Naal Vazhikal History of Palakkad Town, Palakkad Municipality, Palakkad, 2015, pp.42-48.

In 15th century, Calicut conquered large parts of the kingdom of Cochin and reduced it to a vassal state of Calicut. The family feuds over succession were exploited by the Zamorin to subjugate Cochin.⁹⁹ Zamorin seated and unseated the King of Cochin at his will and the latter was deprived of the right to tile roof of his palace and to strike coins¹⁰⁰. The Zamorin was also successful in bringing the Kolathiris of Cannanore under his control by occupying Pantalayini Kollam. The state building venture of Zamorin was legitimised in several ways. Zamorin's divine right to conquer was depicted in his sword, which is said to have been obtained from Cheraman Perumal (believed to be the last Chera ruler) with the inscription of "To die, kill and annex (*ningal chathum konnum atakkikolka*)". The other methods followed to legitimise his rule were consolidating his power and exercising his authority through patronising Brahmanical religion. The Zamorin spent huge amount of revenue on religious ceremonies and feasts like *Hiranyagarbham*,¹⁰¹ *Tulabharam*¹⁰² and *Mrityunjayam*.¹⁰³ The annual festivals of Malabar like *Vishu*, *Attacchamayam*, *Onam*, *Revati Pattathanam* and *Tirunal* entailed very high expenditure for Zamorin.

The *Ariyittuvazhca*¹⁰⁴ (coronation ceremony) and *Tiruvantali*¹⁰⁵ (cremation ceremony) were performed by *Nampoodiri* Brahmins. K.V Krishna Ayyar mentions about 1000 *fanams*¹⁰⁶ being given to *Azhvancheri Namputiris* on 15th day of *Tiruvantali*.¹⁰⁷ The *Azhvancheri Tamprakkal* belonged to *Chovvaram-kur* which Zamorin supported. It

⁹⁹ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001. p.35

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ For details see, K.V.Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1938.pp.17-26.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ K.V.Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, pp.17-26.

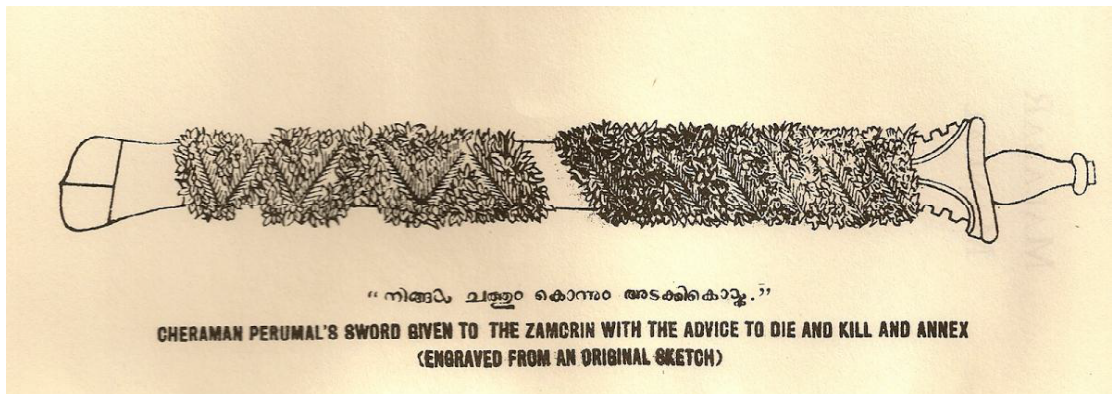
¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.17-35.

was crucial for Zamorin to patronise Brahmins because it was their *vedic* rituals that offered him Kshatriya status.

Image 3- Sword of Cheraman Perumal under the possession of Zamorin¹⁰⁸



The third political centre (third capital) of the Zamorin was located at Thirunavaya on the banks of river Bharatapuzha where ritual-political-commercial pan Kerala festival of *Mamankam* used to be held once in every twelve years. As mentioned earlier, the banks of Bharathapuzha were dotted by long chain of *kavus* (shrines of non-brahmanical folk religion) which are roughly 130 in number. The Zamorin patronised those *kavus* by granting them rice, oil and wealth from his royal treasury. The conquest of Palakkad might have helped Zamorin to have more rice producing areas under him as well as control over the flow of rice from *Kongu* (a principality of Tamilakam that bordered erstwhile *Palakkattu svaroopam*) through Palakkad pass. The Zamorin with power and wealth at his disposal in order to penetrate and exercise Zamorin's authority in the hinterlands he patronised the *kavus* along with the Brahminical temples by directing cyclical festal celebrations on annual basis by way of stellar-reckonings to stimulate the processes of agrarian production and artisanal

¹⁰⁸ William Logan, *Malabar Manual*, Frontispiece to Vol. 1

activities.¹⁰⁹ These festal celebrations called *velas* (for *kavu*) and *pooram* (for Brahmin temple) also consisted of *utsava chandas* (festival markets).¹¹⁰ The annual festal celebrations of these *kavus* and temples along Bharatapuzha and in rest of the Zamorin's kingdom increased the need for more production which created a need for constant flow of commodities for trade and feasts, thereby ensuring that the region remained economically activated. N.M Namboothiri is of the opinion that Zamorin who resided in the Vakayoor palace of Thirunavaya during *Mamankam* signified the political authority and the deity of *Navamukunda* temple of Thirunavaya symbolized the supremacy of Brahmanical faith. Therefore the merging of royalty with the godly at the *Mamankam* site was perceived to sanctify the market processes at festal celebration of *Mamankam* which was a devotional-cum-commercial dynamic force.¹¹¹

There were *velas* in all *kavus* but the pinnacle of festal celebrations finally ends only with the pan-Kerala feast of *Mamankam* held once in every 12 years. The festal celebrations were also economic motor that facilitated the flow of cargo in a concentrated way through river Bharatapuzha towards Ponnani and then for maritime trade.¹¹² The importance of Shah Bandar Koya in the wars as well as ritual – cum-political endeavours for Zamorin was evident in the most coveted honour being given to stand on his right side¹¹³ at the eve of *Mamakam* festival besides many other honours conferred on him.¹¹⁴ The Koya provided Muslim (*Paradesi* and *Mappila*)

¹⁰⁹ Pius Malekandathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

¹¹⁰ N.M.Namboothiri, *Mamankam Rekhakal*, Vallathol Vidya Peedam, Edappal, 2005, pp. 30-31

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.36

¹¹² Pius Malekandathil, "Rubrics of Power and Trade in Calicut," in Archa N.G(ed.), *Cosmopolitanism in a City: The Past and present of Calicut* (Issue 22) Café Dissensus, February 15,2016: <http://cafedissensus.com/2016/02/15/>

¹¹³ Khalid Ponnulathodi, Maritime and Trade Experiences of the Muslims under Zamorins of Calicut (14th – 16th Centuries A.D.), Kerala Muslim History conference online publication; For details see the link "<http://muslimheritage.in/innermore.php?arid=137>".

¹¹⁴ K.V.Krishna Iyer, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, pp. 112-115

rifleman and specialists in fire-works for *Mamankam*.¹¹⁵ This is an added proof for explaining the relation of *Mamankam* with trade. Hence to be precise the religious festivals were augmented by Zamorin to accelerate and enhance the ongoing trade.

In the other areas of Zamorin's kingdom he himself patronized the festal celebrations of almost 150 *kavus* in Calicut, Kottakkal, Koduvayur, Ponnani and Ottapalam areas which included the expenditure of the folk priests.¹¹⁶ The Zamorin's reliance of his Muslim commercial allies was evident in his appointment of a Mappila named Kochammed as *Menokki* or *Kanakkappilla* (accountant) of Varakkal (Puthiyangadi) temple.¹¹⁷ This clearly indicated Zamorin's vision in building an efficient state mechanism with the backing of commercial order demonstrated by Arab traders. The efficient state building made Zamorin the King of vast pepper producing areas acquired through military expansion and religious consolidation. In order to provide legitimacy for the state building of Zamorin there was a movement of Brahmins from their sanctuaries in paddy cultivated *Brahmadeya* lands to the newly emerging political centre of Zamorin based in Calicut. The movement of Brahmins is evident from their presence in Zamorin's court as 18 celebrated royal poetic scholars (known popularly as eighteen-and half poets) associated with the famous literary assembly known as the *Revathi Pattathanam*.¹¹⁸ Some famous poets of eighteen-and half were Maharshi Payyur Bhattatiri, Uddanda Sastrikal (author of the *Kokila Sandesa* and *Mallika Maruta*), Damodara Bhattatiri of Kakkasseri, Parameswara Payyur Bhattatiri,

¹¹⁵ N.M.Namboothiri, *Mamankam Rekhakal*, p.81; M.R.Raghava Varrier, editor. *Sthanarohana Chadangukal*, Vallathol Vidyapeedam, Edappal, 2004, p.26

¹¹⁶ Pius Malekandathil, "Rubrics of Power and Trade in Calicut," in Archa G (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism in a City: The Past and the Present of Calicut*, (Issue 22), Café Dissensus, February 15, 2016.

¹¹⁷ Khalid Ponnulathodi, "Maritime and Trade Experiences of the Muslims under Zamorins of Calicut (14th – 16th Centuries A.D.)", <http://muslimheritage.in/innermore.php?arid=137>, accessed on November 2, 2017.

¹¹⁸ Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, p.10.

Punam Namboothiri and Narayanan Namboothiri of Chennas etc.¹¹⁹ The literary works and rituals of Brahmins were crucial in assertion of Zamorin as Raja of conquered territories but these developments also paved way for Brahmanization of faith. The *kavus* of folk religion mentioned earlier began to get influenced by brahmanical waves of *Bhakthi* and many of these *kavus* were transformed into brahmanical temples by this process.¹²⁰ These processes might have helped Zamorin to ensure the flow of spices from cultivated areas transported to Calicut or Ponnani or Pantalayani Kollam ports for maritime trade.

In the Zamorin's kingdom even in 18th century the army was based on *Nair* vassals, and lacked a centralised army. Before sixteenth century, there was no centralization of militia and hence the dependence on *Nair* vassals continued. These *Nair* foot soldiers were slow movers compared to cavalry; yet Zamorin just had a nominal cavalry commanded by the Kutiravattattu *Nair*.¹²¹ The use of artillery (cannons, mortars etc.) came only after the coming of Portuguese; but Mappila force of marksmen (rifle men) existed along with the naval forces.¹²² The move towards state craft is evident from presence of *diwan* (Prime Minister) Mangattu (He himself was a principality chieftain of Alengadu) Achan and various *kalaris* for training soldiers in traditional martial art of *Kalaripayattu* under Dharmottu Panikkar (the instructor in arms) who commanded the army.¹²³ The *Panikkars* were instructors of *Kalaripayattu* by profession which later developed into a specific caste of same name owing to the Brahminical formulation of the caste group Panikkar out of such military instructors. The popular

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp.298-299.

¹²⁰ Ajay Sekar, "Garudan Paravai and Tookkam: Bird Masquerade and Claw Hanging in Kerala", <http://ajaysekher.net/2016/04/24/garudan-paravai-tookkam-bird-masquerade-claw-hanging-kerala/>, accessed on May 12, 2016.

¹²¹ K.V.Krishna Ayyar., *Zamorins of Calicut*, p.279.

¹²² Ibid.,

¹²³ Ibid., p.268.

deities of *kalari* and war known as *Porkkali*, *Kottavai*, *Skakthi* and *Kappalottabhadra* (the goddess of navigation)¹²⁴ remained independent of Brahmanical influence for long period. That means *Nairs* who comprised major fighting force and *Rajas* practiced both Brahmanical religion as well as their folk religion.

The efforts for state formation began by Zamorin in the northern part of Kerala in 12th century threatened the existence of many lesser principalities in the vicinity of Zamorin's Kingdom. Cochin was one such kingdom threatened by attacks from Zamorin which led the Chief of *Perumpadappu Swaroopam* to shift the base of power from Chitrakoodam in Vanneri to Cochin in early 15th century (approximately in 1405). Cochin was a maritime trading centre in fifteenth century and was situated away from the reach of Zamorin. The port city provided income in the form of customs duty¹²⁵ to the King of Cochin. Whenever Cochin was defeated by Zamorin he unseated and seated King as he liked and took away the right of the King to mint coins. As mentioned earlier King of Cochin was reduced to a vassal of Zamorin and was not allowed to tile the roof of his palace.¹²⁶ The hegemony of Zamorin was exercised by diversion of the pepper produced in the hinterlands of Cochin to Calicut port bypassing of Cochin port for maritime trade. The rivers Bharathapuzha and Chaliyar were arteries of movement of people and commodities in Zamorin's kingdom. Similarly the Periyar river was one of the most important channels for movement of people, commodities and ideas¹²⁷ in central Kerala. The kingdoms of central and southern Kerala such as Thekkenkur, Vadakkenkur, Poracad

¹²⁴ K.V.Krishna Ayyar., *Zamorins of Calicut*, p.15.

¹²⁵ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663*, p.30.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.35.

¹²⁷ Pius Malekandathil, "Perumbavoor and Civilizational belt of Periyar", *Academia.edu*, https://www.academia.edu/32287024/Perumbavoor_and_the_Civilizational_Belt_of_Periyar_5-4-17.docx

(Chembakassery), Kizhumalainadu, Parur, Vembolinad, Alengad and Kodungaloor etc. produced vast quantities of pepper, which was much more than the quantity produced in Kingdom of Calicut. These tiny kingdoms roughly constituted the hinterlands¹²⁸ of Cochin. The commodities from these interior kingdoms found their way to the port of Cochin through river or land routes. But during the days of Cochin as vassal of Zamorin a good portion of cargo was taken to Calicut¹²⁹ for maritime trade. Despite all the odds Cochin developed as a city of various merchant settlements that housed a heterogeneous population represented by sea faring communities of Indian Ocean. The land routes in Cochin and its hinterlands were rudimentary in the 15th century, which were often connected to waterways as most of the land routes were not suitable for wheeled transportation of cargo.¹³⁰ Therefore the transportation of bulk goods was done using donkeys, pack oxen and porters. In such situation the riverine system of the kingdom of Cochin and its hinterlands was of special importance in the movement of bulk commodities from the various other interior kingdoms to Cochin port. The seven rivers which flow into Vembanad lake constituted the primary waterways of Cochin and its hinterlands.¹³¹ The Periyar river originates on the southern flanks of Peeremedu hills had Muthirapuzhayaru, Deviyaru, Mullayaru and Deviyaru as tributaries. Most part of this river was navigable and connected Cochin with inland *angadis* (bazaar) of Thrikkariyoor and Kothamangalam. In first chapter these places were mentioned while discussing about the trade routes used by Jain merchant guilds like *Nalpathennayiravar*, *Ayyavole* and *Valanchiyar* etc. who traded spices with Tamilakam through ghat routes like

¹²⁸ Hinterland is defined as organized and developed land spaces connected with a port by various networks (land routes or waterways) of connectivity, through which they send commodities to Port and received goods imported in port.

¹²⁹ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663*, p.36.

¹³⁰ Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Written in the Form of Note's on Visscher's Letters From Malabar*. Vol I, p.77.

¹³¹ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663* p.50.

Bodinaickanoor pass. When Jain trading guilds perished, their religious institutions in Irunilakkodu, Tirunandikkara, Kallil, Chitharal, Trukkur and Kaviyoor etc., got deteriorated and dispersed in the jungles. In many of these places the Syrian Christians emerged as main cultivators of pepper. The settlements of Syrian Christians or St. Thomas Christians were dotted by Churches and *angadis* of varying commercial importance. The Periyar river connected major spice growing areas of Neriamangalam, Perumbavoor¹³², Malayattoor, Mekkattur and Kuruppampady with Vembanad Lake in Cochin.

Another very important area on the banks of Periyar was Aluva which was a very important religious centre of Brahmanical faith, inclined towards Shaivism. On the banks of Periyar, the annual religious-cum-commercial festal celebration of central Kerala called Aluva *Shivarathri* was held. This annual grand market at Aluva Manappuram also kept the agrarian activities in Cochin and its hinterland accelerated for increased production and trade. From Aluva, Periyar river gets bifurcates into two ways- one branch goes northward and empties at Arabian Sea in Kodungaloor; the other branch further splits into two branches of which one of the distributary joins Varapuzha river and the other passes through Rapolim (Edapally) and finally merges with backwaters of Thrippunithara. The roughly 230 km long Periyar was instrumental in transporting various spices, wild products and ivory using *hūrī* (dugouts made from the trunk of mango tree), coracles and *toni* (canoes)¹³³ to the port of Cochin. The dug-outs used in Malabar Coast made out of mango tree trunk were

¹³² Pius Malekandathil, "Perumbavoor and Civilizational belt of Periyar", *Academia.edu*, https://www.academia.edu/32287024/Perumbavoor_and_the_Civilizational_Belt_of_Periyar_5-4-17.docx

¹³³ Dionisius Albertus Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, p.123.

called *hūrī* and *balam* in Arabic, *belem* in Persian and *vallam* in Tamil.¹³⁴ These dug-outs helped movement of people and commodities through Periyar and in ports they were used for reaching harbour from anchored ships and vice versa.¹³⁵

The Muvattupuzha River was a major artery for trade and movement of people from hinterland kingdom of Vadakkenkur to the port of Cochin. The river ‘Thodupuzha’ a tributary of this river passes through Karikode (Caricotti), the capital of Vadakkenkur. The ruler of Vadakkenkur also began the process of state formation by accumulating the wealth from customs duty from the pepper traders. The spice cultivating areas in Vadakkenkur like Mailakompu,¹³⁶ Arakuzha (Aracore)¹³⁷ and Pazhur¹³⁸ were connected by Muvattupuzha. The other spice cultivated areas of Ramapuram, Koothattukulam, Elenji and Mulakkulam were connected to riverine market of Piravom by landroutes.¹³⁹

From Piravom through Muvattupuzha river commodities were carried to Cochin port. The river Muvattupuzha empties into Vaikom lake which is an extension of Vembanadu Lake. The major pepper markets like Vechur, Muttadathu, Pallippuram and Kulashekara Mangalam (name of this place is etymologically related to erstwhile Kulashekara Perumals of Makotai)¹⁴⁰ were in the vicinity of Vaikom lake.

Another most important connecting network was Meenachil river which connected northern parts of Thekkonkur kingdom and Poonjar kingdom. The Punjhati Perumal¹⁴¹ (King of Poojar) was descendant of Pandya rulers of Madurai (in Tamil

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp.123-124.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Fr. Bernard, *The History of St. Thomas Christians, Pala*, 1916, pp.296-297.

¹³⁷ Pius Malekandathil, *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes*, LRC Publications, Cochin, 2003, p.258

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663*, p.51.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.52.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Nadu). The establishment of their offshoot kingdom in Poonjar during the Chola-Chera-Pandya wars is mentioned in the first chapter. The Poonjar kingdom had important forest ghat routes to Tamilakam which connected inland markets of Poonjar, Thodupuzha and Kanjirappilly. As mentioned in first chapter these trade routes were once used by Jain trade guilds of Tamilakam like Nalpathennayiravar. The proof of the movement of Jain traders is attested to by the remnants of Jain institutions and shrines of *Yakshis* found all along the high ranges.¹⁴²

The Syrian Christians or St. Thomas Christians, who once operated as part of *Manigramam* trade guild, had become the main pepper cultivators in many parts of Kerala including Poonjar kingdom. The St. Thomas Christians had settlements in Aruvithara (Erattupetta), -Thodupuzha, Kanjirappally etc., where there also existed mercantile settlements of *Ravuthar* Muslims who were linked with the trade of Madurai. The important spice growing regions of Thekkenkur located near Meenachil were Anakallunkal (Bharananganam), Palai, Lalam (located in present day Palai), Punnathara and Cherpungal etc. The other spice growing areas like Puthuppalli and Manarkad of Thekkenkur, Kudamaloor of Chembakassery kingdom and Athirampuzha of Vadakkenkur were connected to *angadi* of Kottayam. This Kottayam *angadi* was on the banks of Meenachil river, with which the region was connected to Cochin port. The other pepper producing areas like Kadaplamattam, Ettumanur, Kuravilangadu, Muttuchira and Kathanallor were linked to Kadathuruthy *angadi* which in turn is connected to Vembanad Lake near Cochin port through Valiathodu river.

¹⁴² Some such *Yakshi* shrines are *Parumala yakshi*, *Kanjiracottu yakshi*, *Panchikkadu Brahmarakshass* etc.

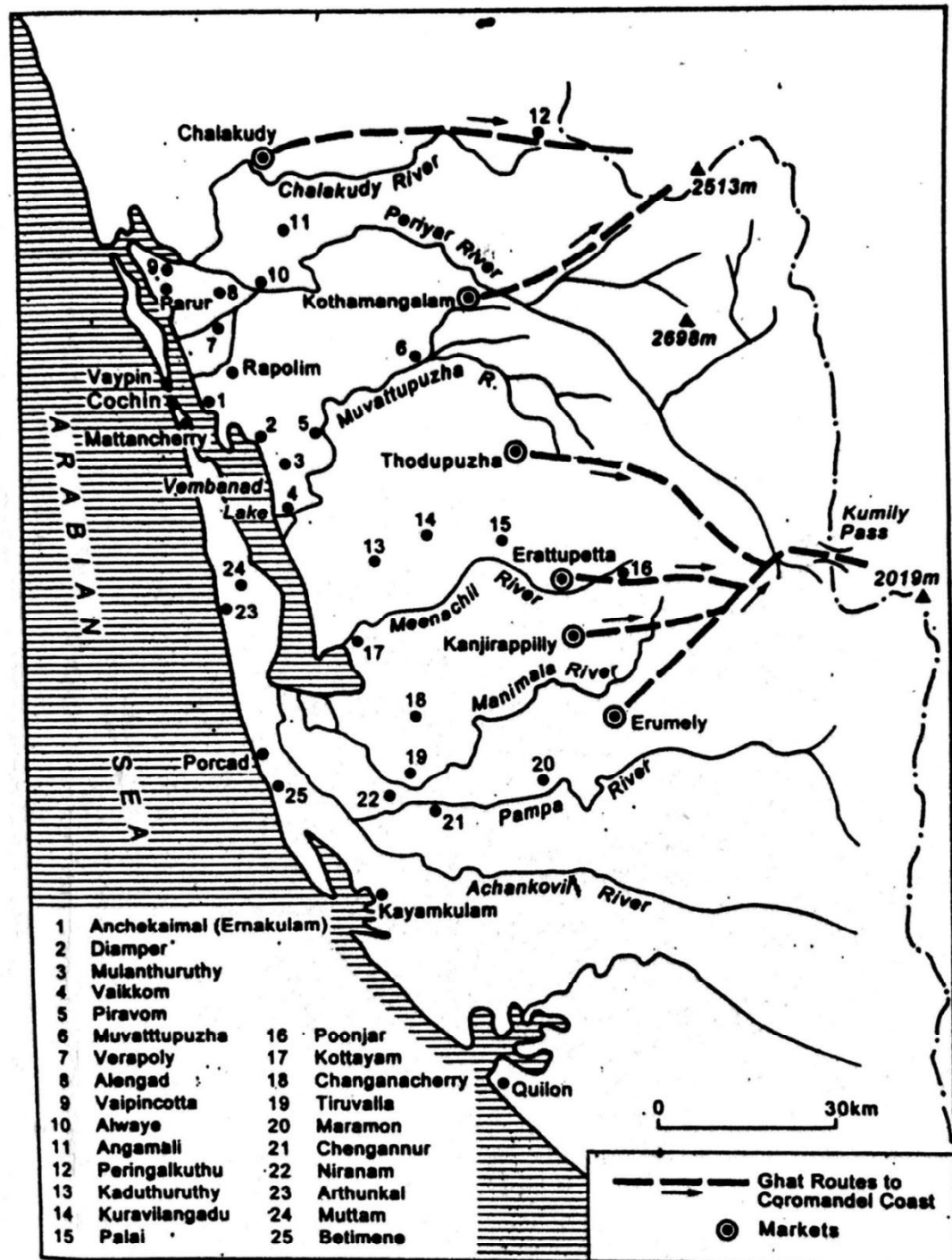
The important ghat route from Thekkenkur to Tamilakam was Kumily pass.¹⁴³ After the exodus of Jain merchant guilds the Tamil Pattars,¹⁴⁴ Ravuthar Muslims and few Syrian Christians traded through Kumily pass. The movement of Ravuthar merchants were evident from various *dargahs* located along the ghat routes to Tamil Nadu.

The pepper producing areas of Perumpadappu Swaroopam (kingdom of Cochin) like Rakad, Kadamattom (also famous for legendary conjurer priest Kadamattathu Kathanar), and Kolanchery were connected to Thripunithara area of Vembanad lake through land routes. The Pampa river connected pepper growing areas of Chenganoor, Niranam and Maramon of Thekkenkur kingdom with Vembanad Lake. This same Pampa river also connected Pulinkunnu of Vadakkenkur with Vembanad Lake.

¹⁴³ Ibid.,p.52.

¹⁴⁴ Raghava Warriar, and Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part I*, p.233

Map 6 – Cochin and its Hinterlands (1500 -1663)¹⁴⁵



¹⁴⁵ Pius Malekandathil, Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime trade of India, p.41.

The Achankovil river joins Pampa river near Niranam, which again connected pepper growing areas like Mavelikkara, Champakulam, Thumpamon, Venmani, Karthikapilly etc. with Vembanad lake and port of Cochin. This flourishing trade generated wealth for the process of state formation in the tiny principalities emerged after the decline of Cheras of Makotai. In order to establish themselves as monarchs in their emerging kingdoms, the chieftains required ritual legitimacy from Brahmins for performing *vedic* rituals like *Hiranyagarbham*, *Tulabharam*, *Mrityunjayam*, coronation (like *Ariyittuvazhcha* in case of Zamorin) and cremation (like *Tiruvantali* of deceased Zamorin). So Brahmins were necessary to create a mythical origin and lineage for emerging king and thereby acquire Kshatriya status. Hence the 13th to 16th century period witnessed a movement of Brahmins from paddy cultivated pockets in lowlands to the capitals of various kingdoms in the hinterlands of Cochin. This argument can be proved by emergence of new (after 13th century) Brahmanical temples in the hinterlands. In the hinterland kingdoms many of the Brahmanical temples emerged on top of declining Jain institutions¹⁴⁶ and *kavus* of folk religion which is evident from the archaeological remains. The aspects of assertion of Brahmanism, demise of Jainism, mutation and incorporation of folk religion into Brahmanical faith is discussed in the third chapter in detail.

¹⁴⁶ V.V.K Vaalath, *Keralathile Sthala Charitrangal Ernakulam Jilla*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1991, pp.125-140.

3.3 The Entry of the Europeans and the Changing Socio-Economic and Political Processes

The landing of Vasco da Gama in Capocate or Kappad near Calicut in 21st May 1498¹⁴⁷ marked the beginning of European participation in trade, cultural and political process in history of Kerala. The anonymous author of travels of Vasco da Gama mentions about the treatment received by Portuguese from the Zamorin. This anonymous author mentions that Vasco da Gama's expedition was in search of spices and the Christians.¹⁴⁸ This narrative constituted perhaps the first Portuguese source for History of Kerala. The narrative mentions that Gama was given a palanquin¹⁴⁹ after landing in Calicut and they were served a welcoming feast of rice and fish.¹⁵⁰ This narrative also describes about Gama and his men taken into a temple but did not allow them to enter into the inner part of the structure.¹⁵¹ This can be regarded as an indicator of social position given to the Europeans by the existing brahmanical social hierarchy of Malabar. Many of the historians have written that they were taken to a Kali temple but the bird's figure on the *stambha* mentioned suggests that it was a Vaishnavite temple with *Garuda*.¹⁵² The anonymous narrative about voyage of Gama mentions about the letter given by Zamorin to the King of Portugal which states-

Vasco da Gama, a gentleman of your household, came to my country, whereat I was pleased. My country is rich in pepper, cinnamon, cloves ginger and precious stones. That which I ask you in exchange of gold, silver, corals and scarlet cloth.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Sanjay Subramaniam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco Da Gama*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.128.

¹⁴⁸ For details see Sanjay Subramaniam *The Career and Legend of Vasco Da Gama*, pp.128-163

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.131.

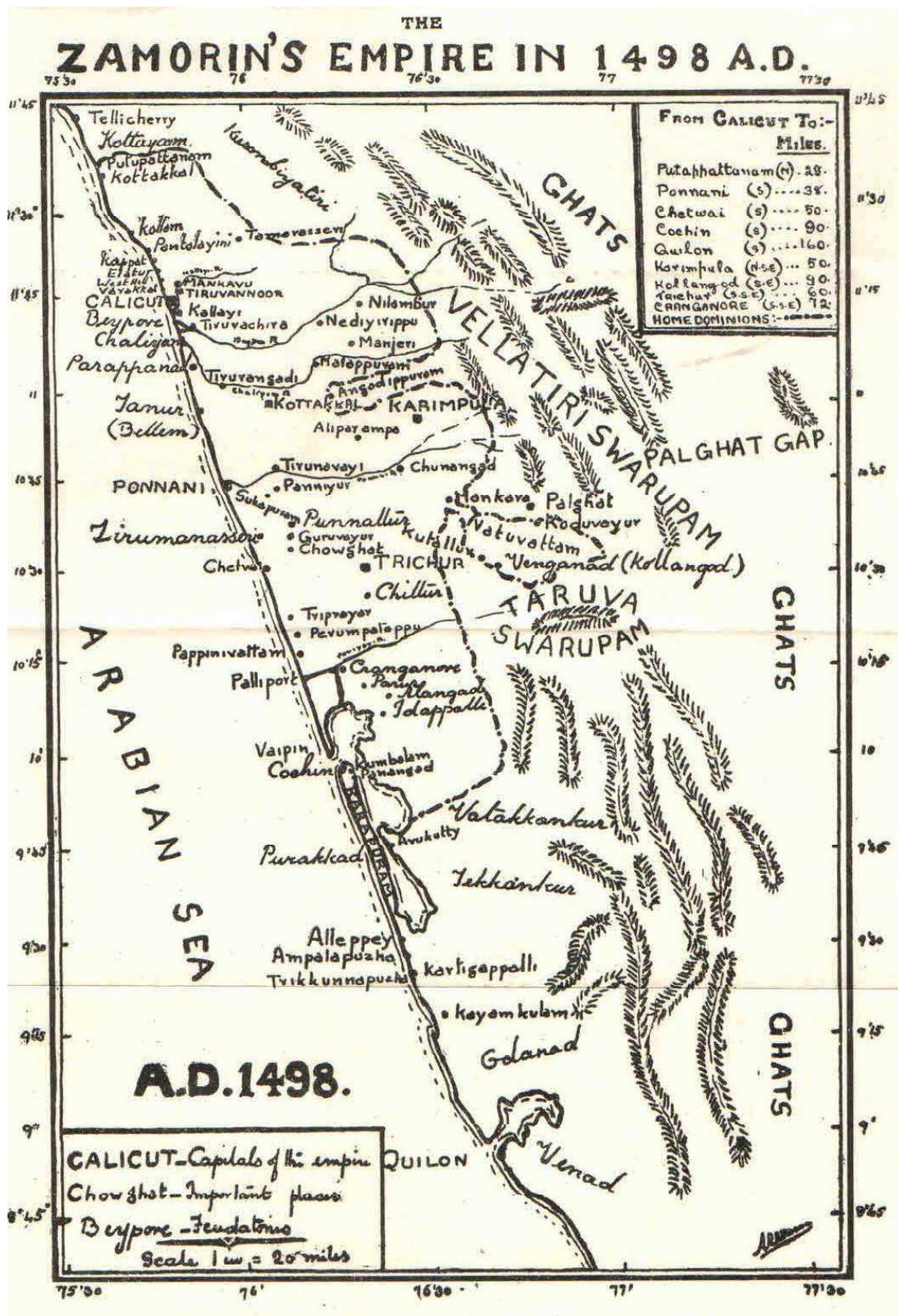
¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p.132

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.144

Map 7- Zamorin's Kingdom in 1498¹⁵⁴



¹⁵⁴ <http://harivihar.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/ZAMORIN.jpg>

Vasco Da Gama was ill-treated by Arab merchants who had hegemony in the affairs of Calicut.¹⁵⁵ But Vasco da Gama could buy good amount of pepper from Cannanore which was worth sixty times the cost of the expedition.¹⁵⁶ After the return of Vasco da Gama to Portugal the second expedition was led by Pedro Alvares Cabral in 1500 to establish commercial alliance and monopoly in the pepper trade. The Cabral carried explicit orders from King Manuel to seize Muslim shipping and demanded the Zamorin to expel all Muslims.¹⁵⁷ But the Zamorin did not accept the orders of Cabral and after negotiations Cabral was given permission to establish a factory in Calicut.

The hostilities with Muslim merchants prevailed and Portuguese were not able to fill even 2 ships with necessary cargo because of the hoarding done by Muslim merchants. When Cabral complained to Zamorin, the latter immediately gave orders that the Moors should end their villainous conduct towards Portuguese.

In order to ensure fair trade Zamorin even removed the *Guzerate* (Gujarati) merchant (broker of Zamorin) from the factory and appointed a *Cosebequin*¹⁵⁸ (Mappila) in his place. This was followed by Portuguese captain Pacheco¹⁵⁹ seized an Arab ship with seven elephants on board, which was worth 30,000 crowns in Calicut. The Muslim merchants informed Zamorin about the threat posed by Portuguese on his Kingdom.

“Portugal is almost 5000 leagues from Calicut and their voyage out and back home was shown up by many dangers through strange and stormy

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.139-145.

¹⁵⁶ E. G. Ravenstein (ed.), *A Journal of the first Voyage of Vasco da Gama 1479-1499*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1898, p.113

¹⁵⁷ Robert S. Wolff, “Da Gama's Blundering: Trade Encounters in Africa and Asia during the European 'Age of Discovery,' 1450-1520”, *The History Teacher*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (May, 1998), pp. 297-318.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Hernan Lopez de Castaneda. “History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese, between the Years 1497 and 1505, from the Original Portuguese.” Edited by Frances Pritchett, *vol02chap06sect01*, [Http://www.columbia.edu](http://www.columbia.edu), www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/kerr/vol02chap06sect01.html.

seas. Besides the great cost of their large ships with so many men and guns, at whatsoever prices they may dispose of the spices in Portugal it is obvious that such a trade must be carried on with great loss. That is an obvious proof that they are pirates and not merchants who came to rob and to conquer Calicut.”¹⁶⁰

The hostilities between Portuguese and Muslims continued in Calicut which resulted in the killing of few Portuguese factors by Arab merchants and they burned Portuguese factory. In retaliation Cabral shelled Calicut for two days before proceeding south towards Cochin.¹⁶¹ Neither the forces of Zamorin nor Arab armada had any possible weapon to counter attack Portuguese naval artillery. As mentioned earlier the neighbouring Kingdoms were threatened by the military might of Zamorin. When the lesser rulers heard of Portuguese superiority over Arabs because of artillery, they showed interest in trading with Portuguese.

After bombarding Calicut with naval artillery, Cabral’s fleet landed at Cochin on 24th December 1500. The King of Cochin saw in Portuguese the might necessary for him to overthrow hegemony of Zamorin. The ruler of Perumpadappu Swaroopam was aware that patronising Brahmins alone could not help him in asserting himself as a sovereign of Cochin. The Zamorin’s army and naval force was supreme in 14th century because of the alliance with Arab/Al-Karimi merchants and raja of Cochin saw in the Portuguese the potency and strength to regain his lost power and assert himself as independent King. It was evident when, King of Cochin helped to load seven ships with pepper, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg within nine days.¹⁶² The king

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001, p.38.

from his side also sent fourteen *vallam* (small dugouts) of spices as a gift without any exchange.¹⁶³

Image 4- A Portuguese ship off coast of Malabar ¹⁶⁴



Vasco da Gama returned to Malabar in 1502 with a fleet of 20 vessels of which some were gigantic Portuguese Man O’war ¹⁶⁵ (Image 5) which bombarded the city of Calicut and annihilated the Arab fleet. These events were a great blow to *Al-Karimi* merchants, who vacated the port city of Calicut because of naval superiority of the Portuguese. Henceforth a vacuum for merchant communities might have been created

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ The caption in Dutch says: *Fusta* (ship in illustration) was used by Corsairs and Portuguese in Malabar for warfare and trading. These smaller ships might have been used for shallow waters, “<https://beyond-the-shore.obsidianportal.com/wikis/ship-types>”.

¹⁶⁵ The Man O’War or Man of War was huge sailing ships equipped with nearly 50 or more cannons these ships were known as terror of the seas. The man-of-war was developed in Portugal in the early 15th century.

in Calicut port. The Cochin factory was set up by Vasco da Gama in 1502 with Diogo Fernandes Correia as its first factor.¹⁶⁶ The early years of the factory were difficult on account of problems in financing trade and land based attacks from Zamorin. The Namboothiri rulers of Edapally (which was bordering with Cochin) supported the campaigns of Zamorin. After one such attack from Zamorin in retaliation Albuquerque severely bombarded Edapally with artillery and mortar shells and reinstated the King to the throne (who might have been dethroned by Zamorin). The Portuguese were very keen in the affairs of Cochin in order to have a pro-Portuguese ruler always on the throne. This is evident from the first Portuguese Viceroy Francisco Almeida suppressing the age old Brahmical Ariyituvazhcha ritual for succession and he solemnly crowned Rama Varma¹⁶⁷ a pro-Portuguese ruler. Initially the Portuguese had good relations with native Muslims of Cochin who supplied Portuguese the spices from hinterlands to their factory in Cochin. There existed wealthy Tamil merchants like *Chetties* and *Marakkars* in Cochin who traded rice in exchange for spices.¹⁶⁸ Chetties were originally from Chettinadu near Dindigal¹⁶⁹ and Marakkars were from rice trading ports of Kunimedu, Kayalpattanam and Kilkarai in Tamilakam.¹⁷⁰ The spices taken by Chettis and Marakkars to the coromandel ports were shipped to the markets of the Ming China, Saffavid Persia, Ottomans and Mughals.¹⁷¹ The Mappila merchants and *Marakkars* initially supported Portuguese who supplied commodities

¹⁶⁶ Sanjay Subramaniam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History*, Wiley-Blackwell, New Jersey, 2012, p.64.

¹⁶⁷ Richard Henry Major, *The discoveries of Prince Henry the Navigator, and their results*; Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, London, p.265.

¹⁶⁸ Pius Malekandathil, “Trading Networks and Region Formation: Making of South India, 1500-1750” in *Mughals Portuguese and Indian Ocean*, Primus, Delhi, 2013.

¹⁶⁹ J.Talboys Wheeler, *Madras in Olden Times*, Asia Educational Services, New Delhi, 1993,p.398.

¹⁷⁰ Pius Malekandathil, *The Mughals, the Portuguese and the Indian Ocean*, Primus, New Delhi, 2013, p.86.

¹⁷¹ Trade with ports in Mughal territories were primarily only after 1570 and not in early part of sixteenth century.

regularly to the Portuguese factories.¹⁷² The Portuguese preferred trading with *Marakkar* merchants who had widespread contacts in the hinterland spice markets of Kerala through Mappila merchants involved in local peddling trade.¹⁷³ Mitos Marakkar was the principal supplier of cinnamon from Ceylon.¹⁷⁴

The Mappila traders like Ali Apule, Coje Mappila and Abraham Mappila, supplied pepper regularly from the inland markets of Edappally to the Portuguese.¹⁷⁵ The relations between the *Marakkar* traders and the Portuguese began changing with the mass exodus of *Al-Karimi* and other *Paradesi* merchants from Calicut in 1513 after the peace treaty that the Portuguese had established with the new Zamorin after murdering the reigning Zamorin.¹⁷⁶

Image 5 - The replica of Portuguese Man O'War



¹⁷² Pius Malekandathil, "From Merchant Capitalists to Corsairs: The Role of Muslim Merchants in Portuguese Maritime Trade of the Portuguese" in *Portuguese Studies Review*(Canada), 12(1), 2004..pp.76-80.

¹⁷³ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India*, pp.111-113.

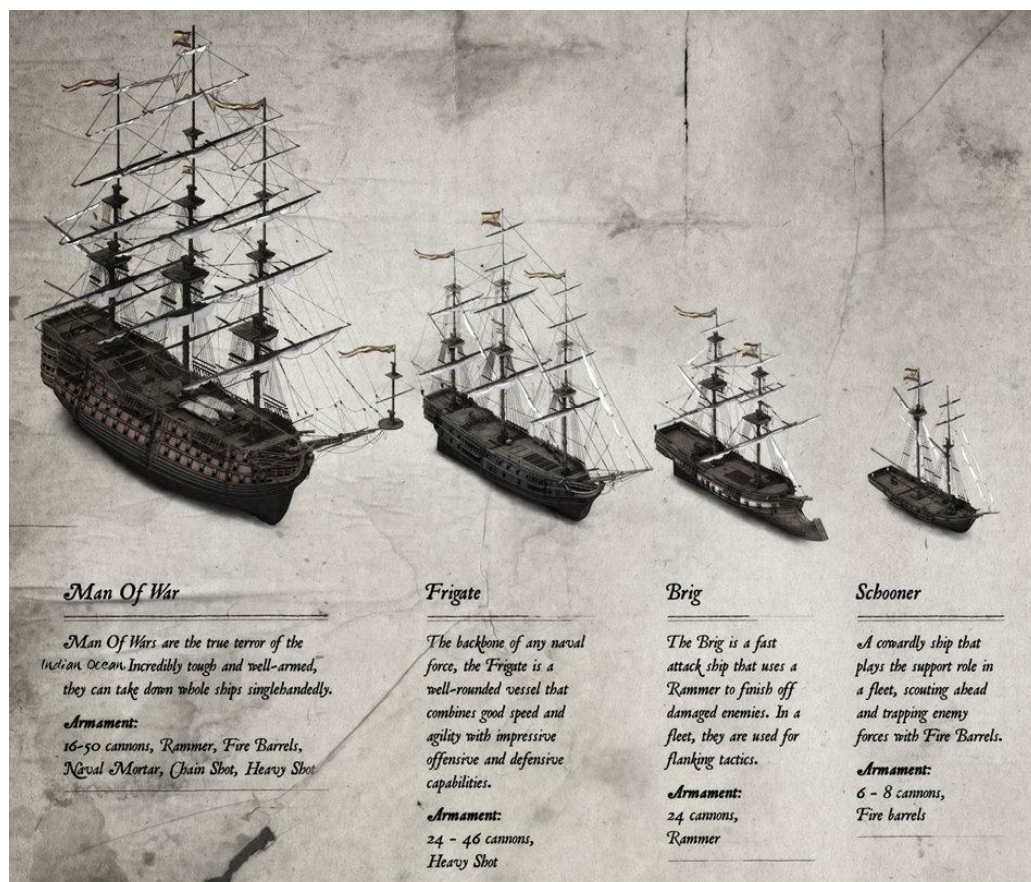
¹⁷⁴ K.S Mathew, "Indian merchants and the Portuguese Trade on the Malabar Coast during the Sixteenth Century", in Teotonio de Souza(ed.), *Indo-Portuguese History: Old Issues- New Questions*, New Delhi, 1985,pp.6-7

¹⁷⁵ K.S.Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth Century*, New Delhi, 1983,p.102.

¹⁷⁶ Genevieve Bouchon, "Calicut at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century", *Revista de cultura*. - N. 13/14 (Janeiro/Junho 1991), pp. 39-47.

This was also the period in which Egypt the homeland of *Al-Karimi* merchants was conquered by Ottomans. So it is not appropriate to say that Portuguese hegemony alone was the reason for evacuation of *Al-Karimi* merchants. The Marakkar traders began trading with the ports of Red Sea by entering into the commercial vacuum created by the mass departure of the *paradesi* Al-Karimi merchants from Calicut. Meanwhile the Portuguese began to monopolize the Indian Ocean trade by introducing *cartez* system (passes for vessels). The Ottomans developed a commercial camaraderie with the Marakkar traders for the purpose of reviving Mediterranean trade in spices.¹⁷⁷

Image 6- Types of Portuguese sailing ships



¹⁷⁷ Pius Malekandathil, "The Ottoman Expansion and the Portuguese Response in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1560" in M.N.Pearson and Charles Borges (ed.), *Metahistory, History Questioning History : Festschrift in Honour of Teotonio R de Souza*, Lisboa, 2007, pp. 500-502.

The vessel of Kuti Ali Marakkar transporting pepper to the ports of Red Sea was confiscated by Portuguese Governor Diogo Lopes de Sequeira.¹⁷⁸ Later on there was frequent Portuguese attacks and confiscation of their ships dispatched to Red Sea ports. The *Marakkar* traders and their fleet got alienated from the Portuguese controlled networks and shifted their base of operations from Cochin to Calicut by 1524. From then onwards the *Marakkars* organized guerrilla warfare and corsair activities against the Portuguese monopoly.¹⁷⁹ They patrolled the west coast of India with the unambiguous consent of the Zamorin and blockaded and raided Portuguese ships. As mentioned earlier there were pirates engaged by *Al-Karimi* merchants in Indian Ocean during 13th century whose descendants might have become the enemies of Portuguese by 16th century. It is evident from the union of most of the anti-Portuguese segments of Kerala society for corsair (pirate) endeavors enhanced by Kunjali Marakkar. The flotilla of Kunjali Marakkar turned out to be an alternative arrangement of trade, where confiscation and plundering of enemy vessels went hand in hand with parallel shipment of commodities to the Ottoman controlled ports.¹⁸⁰ We can also hypothesize that Ottoman support in the form of gunpowder, artillery, swivel, mortars, long range cannons and ship design might have been the reason for Kanjali's success as corsair- cum -trader.

The earliest evidence for existence of piracy in Malabar takes us back to the period of Roman trade with ancient Kerala. Pliny the Elder defines how Roman ships bound for

¹⁷⁸ R.S.Whiteaway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India: 1498-1550*, New Delhi, 1989, p.196; Pius Malekandathil, "Portuguese Casados and the Intra-Asian Trade: 1500-1663." in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Millennium (61st) Session, Aligarh, 2001, p.387.

¹⁷⁹ Faria Y Souza, *Asia Portuguesa: The History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese*, tran.by John Stevens, vol.I, London, 1695, p.284; Shaykh Zaynuddin, *Tuhfat-ul-Mujahidin*, tran.by S.Muhammad Husain Nainar, Madras, 1942, pp.66; 89-91., p.66; A.P.Ibrahim Kunju, *Studies in Medieval Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1975, p.60.

¹⁸⁰ Pius Malekandathil, "From Merchant Capitalists to Corsairs: The Role of Muslim Merchants in Portuguese Maritime Trade of the Portuguese" in *Portuguese Studies Review*(Canada), 12(1), 2004, pp.89-90

the Malabar Coast in the first century carried companies of trained archers on board because its waters were infested with pirates.¹⁸¹ As mentioned earlier *Mukkuvars* (*Mukkuva* caste) were native sea faring communities of Malabar and many of them were converted to Islam during the period of Arab trade.

In the mid fifteenth century, the Russian traveller Athanasius Nikitin mentions about the Malabar pirates as:

“all of whom are *Kofars* (*Kaffir?*), neither Christians nor *Mussulmans*; they pray to stone idols and know not Christ.”¹⁸²

The stone idols that the pirates prayed might have been *Kappalotta Bhagavathi*¹⁸³ the goddess of navigation and *kadalamma*.¹⁸⁴ Professor Sebastian R. Prange¹⁸⁵ after his exclusive study on “Piracy in Pre-modern Malabar”, have concluded that these *Malabari* pirates belonged to the *Mukkuvar* caste. The idol (*Kappalotta Bhagavathi* or *Kadalamma?*) they prayed might have been a goddess of folk religion just like *Kottavai*, *Porkkali* etc., worshipped by martial classes in mainland. From the above arguments it is clear that there existed plurality of faith among the pirates. That can also mean that even after many of them were converted to Islam they maintained their old practices and traditions and might have even made adaptations as well with time. This is evident from the account of Pyrard de Laval who mentions:

¹⁸¹ Pliny the Elder. “The Natural History” Edited by John Bostock and H.T Riley, [Http://www.perseus.tufts.edu](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu), Perseus Digital Library, www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Plin.+Nat.+toc., Accessed on June, 24, 2017.

¹⁸² “The Travels of Athanasius Nikitin of Twer”, in R.H. Majaor, *India in the Fifteenth Century: Being a Collection of Narratives of Voyages to India London*, 1858, p.11.

¹⁸³ See, K.V Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, p.15.

¹⁸⁴ Mathur, P.R.G. "Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts." [Http://ignca.gov.in](http://ignca.gov.in). Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, n.d. Web. 14 Oct. 2017. <http://ignca.nic.in/ps_01021.htm>.

¹⁸⁵ Sebastian R. Prange, “A Trade of No Dishonor: Piracy, Commerce, and Community in the Western Indian Ocean, Twelfth to Sixteenth Century”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 116, No. 5 (December 2011), pp. 1269-1293.

“The *Corsairs* wear their hair long like women, and never cut it; they tie it in a bunch, like all other Indians, and cover it with one of these pretty kerchiefs; they go quite naked, except that they are covered with a silk cloth as far as the knees, and have another handkerchief round the waist... carry knives with hafts and sheaths of silver... covered with thick hair over the stomach and elsewhere ; they wear no slippers... The corsairs wear the beard shaved, but never shaved their moustache: those were like the Turks, some have moustaches so long that they tie them behind the head... Their women are dressed like the other natives, and wear nothing upon their hair; they carry a quantity of gold earrings and rings and trinkets on their fingers and toes... They have plenty of cannon and other arms ; but of money and other valuables they carry with them not so much as five sols’ worth: all that they leave on shore. As soon as they have taken a prize they come in to discharge, and return to sea at once, if there seems a likelihood of other booty; if not, they remain at home for that year and consume the produce of their theft and rapine for the next six months.”¹⁸⁶

The enmity of Portuguese with Zamorin continued till the decline of Portuguese power in Malabar. Kunjali Marakkar (four generation with same name) was allowed to establish forts in kingdom of Calicut. Kunjali’s initial base was Ponnani and later with Zamorin’s permission built a fort at Putupattanam and later Kottakkal to engage Portuguese attacks.¹⁸⁷ Kunjalis were for four generations the hereditary leaders of the naval forces of Zamorin and thereby known as Admirals of Calicut. After the

¹⁸⁶ Harry Charles Purvis Bell and Albert Gray (ed.), *Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas, and Brazil*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Farnham, 2010. pp. 448-449.

¹⁸⁷ Sebastian R. Prange, “A Trade of No Dishonor: Piracy, Commerce, and Community in the Western Indian Ocean, Twelfth to Sixteenth Century”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 116, No. 5 (December 2011), pp. 1269-1293.

execution of fourth and last Kunjali Marakkar in 1600, the Zamorin began exercising a more direct, albeit clandestine, form of control over the Mappila pirates through his own officers rather than through an admiral.¹⁸⁸ Thus Zamorin engaged in land with his feudal Nair army -and in sea with the help of his Muslim allies.

Piracy was not the only challenge that the Portuguese faced in Indian Ocean trade. The Portuguese had hegemony over the sea waters through the *cartaz* system, armada of ships and *cafila* (*escorting convoys*)¹⁸⁹ but the Portuguese had least hegemony over pepper cultivating hinterlands. The central upland parts of Kerala got slowly transformed into alternative centres of wealth and power against the background of intensified maritime trade following the entry of the Portuguese for trade and their policy to give annual subsidy of 72, 000 *reis*¹⁹⁰ to the inland rulers of Vadakkenkur, Thekkenkur, Parur, Diamper (Udayamperur), Alengadu, Aluva for encouraging pepper production. The system of fixed rate for the commodities established by Vasco da Gama in 1502 (at 1502 it was twenty four *reais* per quintal)¹⁹¹ continued in the rest of the century. Portuguese used to procure from Cochin about 1, 04, 920 kgs. of pepper in 1501¹⁹² which increased to 30, 000 quintals by 1506.¹⁹³ The value of pepper was around 79,800 *cruzados* in Malabar but on the other hand in Portugal it fetched for them 6,60,000 *cruzados*.¹⁹⁴ The Portuguese forceful intrusions made Cochin evolve as key pepper port and the rest of the Portuguese controlled pepper ports as feeding ports for their trade. Despite all the attempts to monopolize the trade

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ The Portuguese escorted the merchant ships in troubled waters; this service was called *cafila*.

¹⁹⁰ Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663*, pp.40-47.

¹⁹¹ Sanjay Subramaniam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco Da Gama*, pp.216-217.

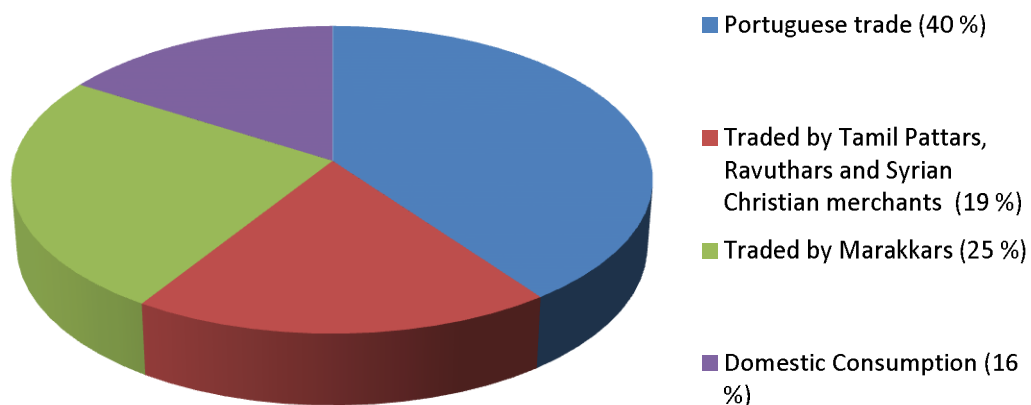
¹⁹² For details see "The Anonymous Narrative" in William Brooks Greenlee(ed.), *The Voyage of Pedro Alvarez Cabral to Brazil and India*, London, 1938, p. 86;

¹⁹³ Vincenzo Quirini, 'Relazione delle Indie Orientali di Vincenzo Quirini nel 1506', in E Alberi, *Le Relazione degli Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, vol.XV, Firenze, 1863, p.12

¹⁹⁴ For details see Pius Malekandathil, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India*, p. 285

Portuguese managed to take only 18, 000 to 20, 000 quintals of pepper annually to Lisbon which was 40% out of the total 16,000 *bhars* (i.e., 41, 280 quintals or 26, 69, 280 kilograms) produced in 1520s.¹⁹⁵ Regarding the rest of the pepper produced, the Tamil Pattars, Ravuthars and Syrian Christian merchants took 5,00,490 kilograms (19%) from the production centers to Coromandel ports through the ghat-routes and around 25 %¹⁹⁶ were traded by *Marakkars* and other intra-Asian traders in Red Sea ports of the Ottomans and seaports of Saffavid Persia.¹⁹⁷ The rest 16 % (4,17,075 kgs.) of the total production was used for domestic consumption.¹⁹⁸

Chart 1- Trade of Pepper in first half of Sixteenth Century



¹⁹⁵ Pius Malekandathil, “Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala”, in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹⁷ Pius Malekandathil, *Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 112-6

¹⁹⁸ Pius Malekandathil, “Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala”, in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

In the 16th century, there was an increasing demand for pepper traded by *Ravuthars* and *Tamil Pattars* in the *Nayak* (Poligar or *Palayakkarar*) kingdoms of Madurai and Gingee.¹⁹⁹ The Portuguese tried to reduce the consumption of pepper by introducing green chilly which was cheaper than pepper in Coromandel and Malabar. But the rich people of Tamilakam continued using pepper known as *mulaku* in Tamil in their food and curries instead of cheap green chilly. The Portuguese also introduced various commodities like tapioca, cashew, pineapple, sweet potato, papaya and maize²⁰⁰ from Brazil and other places of South America. By the end of 16th century there was 600 %²⁰¹ increase in pepper production but the Ravuthar Mulims, Tamil Pattars and the Syrian Christina traders used to take a considerable share of pepper from the hinterland to Coromandel ports via ghat routes to escape from the control systems of the Portuguese on the west coast of India. Only 3.10 % of the total produce went to Europe for trade during the end of the 16th century, while 15.50 % was consumed domestically.²⁰² The remaining 81.40% pepper was either shipped to the markets of the Mughals, Ming China, Saffavid Persia and the Ottomans. Through terrestrial routes cargo went to Madurai, Srirangapattinam, Dindigal etc.²⁰³ In this process, Erumeli, Kanjirappally, Erattupetta, Thodupuzha, Koratty, Palakkad became important centres for diversion of pepper across the ghat to Coromandel ports. In course of time these places became the major centres of convergence of wealth in the central upland parts of Kerala and evolved into secondary state units. When the

¹⁹⁹ Pius Malekandathil, "Trading Networks and Region Formation: The Making of South India, 1500-1750", *The Mughals, the Portuguese and the Indian Ocean : Changing Imageries of Maritime India*, Primus Books, New Delhi, p.88.

²⁰⁰ K.S.Manilal, "The Portuguese and Dutch Plant Explorations in 16th and 17th Century Malabar and their Socio-Cultural and Economic Impact" in *Journal of South Indian History*, Vol.2, Issue, March-2005, p.48.

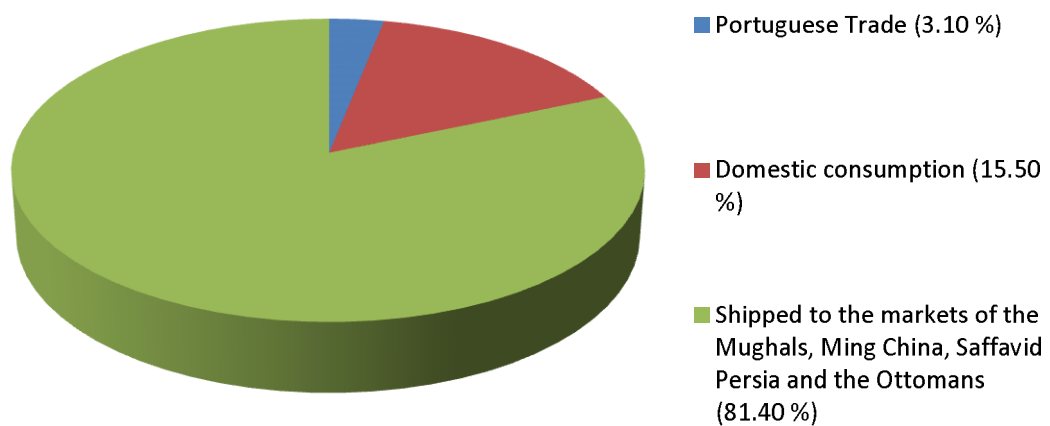
²⁰¹ Dynamics of trade; Pius Malekandathil, "The Mercantile Networks and the International Trade of Cochin", in *Rivalry and Conflict: European Traders and Asian Trading Networks*, edited by Ernst van Veen and L.Blusse, Leiden University, Leiden, 2006, pp.154-5

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p.7.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.10.

political houses in the low-lying paddy cultivating areas were divided into two fractions as *Panniyurkuru* supported by Zamorin and *Chowaramkuru* supported by the king of Cochin²⁰⁴ the principalities in the upland were networked through matrimonial alliances and commercially pragmatic webs of relations.

Chart 2- Trade of Pepper in the end of Sixteenth Century



The principality chieftains of central upland terrains conveniently banked upon the fruits stemming from the activation of economy to buy pieces of artillery, guns and to forge political alliances of varying nature to institute perpetual mechanisms of power and claim superiority.²⁰⁵ The ruler of Thodupuzha controlled the major trade routes from Kizhmalainadu to Tamilakam and was also adopted as the successor of Vadakkenkur kingdom by the end of the sixteenth century. In the kingdom of Palakkad the chieftain with the title Komban Achan controlled the trade routes from Kerala to Kongu territory. The domains of these petty rulers emerged as important

²⁰⁴ K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1938, pp.129; p.274.

²⁰⁵ Pius Malekandathil, *Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*, Primus, New Delhi, 2010, p.92.

and significant alternative centres of power and wealth in upland parts of Kerala parallel to the hectic sea-borne trade centres of Calicut, Cannanore, Cochin and Quilon.

On par with the developments for building sovereign kingdoms in the hinterlands by their respective rulers there was movement of Brahmins from the low lying paddy cultivated enclaves to those upland parts of Kerala, where relatively powerful kingdoms were emerging. This movement was for providing ritual legitimacy for the establishment of kingship in the successor states, in some cases even giving Kshatriya status to them. The movement of Brahmins into the hinterlands resulted in various social changes and also led to the development of syncretic culture in the hinterlands. The developments in religion and society owing to the movement of Brahmins will be studied in detail in the last chapter.

The Portuguese also tried to penetrate into the hinterlands by trying to latinise and Europeanise the faith of Syrian Christians and also by trying to establish new institutions like fortified churches in the hinterlands. The attempts of the Portuguese were met with enormous resistance. Under the leadership of Archbishop Dom Alexis de Menezes, a Synod was held in Diamper (Udayamperoor) in 1599 to incorporate Syrian Christians within Lusitanian ecclesiastical frame. For the process of smooth incorporation Archbishop visited many churches in the hinterlands like Pala, Athirampuzha, Kayamkulam, Kottayam, Changanacherry, Kothamangalam, Manjapra, Nagapuzha, Pazhuvil, Mavelikara, Nediaasala, Arakuzha, Kadamattom, Kottakad, Kanjur, Kaduthuruthy, Thripunithara, Kunnamkulam, Pala, Cherpunkal, Muttam, Bharananganam, Cheppadu, Chengannoor, Kudamaloor, Ernakulam, Kothanalloor, Mulanthuruthy, Karthikapally, Kuruppumpady, Alengad,

Muthalakodam, Njarackal, Koratty, Alleppey, Kanjirappilly, Kudavechur, Poonjar, Parumala etc.²⁰⁶ Many of these churches were located near the ghat routes to Tamilakam, which were once controlled by Jain and Buddhist traders. The Archbishop also played a key role in conversion of local people. He sent *Kattanars*²⁰⁷ to the tribal community called *Mala Arayans* who lived in fringes in order to convert them to Christianity. During the journey of Archbishop Alexis de Menezes tried to build a church in the important hinterland market of Periate (Vandiperiyar).²⁰⁸ The building of a church in such a vantage point should be seen as an attempt of the Portuguese to gradually monopolize the trade in the inland markets. The Portuguese attempt to build this church was stopped by Ravuthar merchants of Kanjrapally who instigated the king of Thekkenkur to destroy the church, which they viewed as a fort equipped with artillery. The Portuguese Captain Diogo Rodrigues once killed five Tamil Pattars of a convoy and captured five thousand pack oxen with load.²⁰⁹ Such terrorizing activities might have been to instill fear and thereby bring the commercial equation in the region favourable to the Portuguese. Despite all attempts to maintain hegemony, the Portuguese could not last long. The final blow to Portuguese in Cochin began with Dutch invasions. The *Diwan* of Cochin Paliyath Achan allied himself with Dutch in conspiracy to overthrow Portuguese.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ For details see Fr. Bernard, *The History of the St. Thomas Christians*, pp.296-327; Corinne Dempsey, "Nailing Heads and Splitting Hairs: Conflict, Conversion, and the Bloodthirsty Yakshi in South India", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 111-132.

²⁰⁷ Pius Malekandathil editor and translator. *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes*, LRC Publications, Cochin, 2003. pp. 302-320.

²⁰⁸ Pius Malekandathil, *Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*, p.137.

²⁰⁹ Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal, *Kerala Charithram Part I*, p.233

²¹⁰ T.I.Poonen, *A Survey Of The Rise Of The Dutch Power in Malabar*, St. Joseph's Industrial School Press, Tiruchirappalli, 1948. p.78.

Dutch conquered Quilon on December 1658²¹¹ but the Portuguese re-conquered it on 14th April 1659. In 1661, the Dutch resumed expeditions against the Portuguese settlements in Malabar. They captured the Pallipuram fort,²¹² further the Dutch expeditions under Ryckloff van Goens conquered Quilon on 24th December 1661²¹³ and on 15th January 1662 Kodungalloor²¹⁴ was also taken. In November 1662 they surrounded Cochin on all sides,²¹⁵ after three months of battles, the Portuguese surrendered on 7th January 1663 (Image 5).²¹⁶ In the 17th century, when the Dutch tried to make negotiations with smaller and petty rulers, like the various *desavalis* and *naduvalis* of inland Kerala for obtaining pepper, there was immense flow of wealth to the interior, which in turn emboldened and strengthened small political players. The account of Jacob Cantor Visscher²¹⁷ and the trade documents of VOC²¹⁸ attest to the complex economic roles played by these smaller political actors. With the increase in the wealth accumulation from spice trade, the petty rulers of hinterlands continued rigorous process of building and strengthening their state structures. In this process some of the upland principalities like Chembakasserril emerged as significant and wealthy rulers in Kerala who could extend patronage to a variety of artists, literary personalities and theatrical performers like Kunchan Nambiar,²¹⁹ Ramapurathu

²¹¹ Ibid., p.68.

²¹² Ibid., p.73.

²¹³ Ibid., p.79.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p.86.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p.105

²¹⁶ Ibid., p.107.

²¹⁷ Heber Drury (ed.), *Letters from Malabar by Jacob Canter Visscher, Now first translated from original Dutch*, Adelphi Press, Madras, 1862.

²¹⁸ T.I. Poonen, *A Survey Of The Rise Of The Dutch Power in Malabar*, St. Joseph's Industrial School Press, Tiruchirappalli,1948; K. M. Panikkar, *Malabar And The Dutch*, D.B Taraporevala Sons & Co, Bombay,1936; K.P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala Written in the Form of Note's on Visscher's Letters From Malabar*. Volume 1 in 4 Vols. Asian Educational Service, New Delhi, 2001, pp.27-32.

²¹⁹ Kunjan Nambiar, *Kunjan Namiyarude Thullal Krithikal*, D C Books, Kottayam, 2013.

Warrier²²⁰ etc. As mentioned earlier there was a movement of Brahmins from rice cultivating lowlands (where their *brahmadeyas* were initially located) to the upland regions where the new power houses were emerging and getting deep-rooted, and as a part of the movement of Brahmins the smaller rulers were gaining ritual legitimacy for their claim as the *Kshatriya* King of the land.

These hinterlands in the 17th century had *kavus* of several folk deities like *Madan*,²²¹ *Mardan*,²²² *Mallan*,²²³ *Chathan*,²²⁴ *Bhadra*,²²⁵ *Bhadran*²²⁶ (male counterpart of *Bhadra*), *Ammen*,²²⁷ *Yakshi*,²²⁸ *Yakshan*, *Rakshass*, *Gandharvan*, *Sastha*, *Muthappan*, *Putham* and *Maya* (later *Vishnumaya*)²²⁹ etc. Just like the Zamorin who extended his patronage to the *kavus* and shrines of folk religion, initially the lesser rulers in the interior parts of Kerala also seems to have extended patronage to the *kavus* of folk deities.

²²⁰ For details on *Vanjipattu* tradition begun by RamapurathuWarrier See, Ronald Cohn & Jesse Russell, *Ramapurathu Warrier*, VSD, London, 2012; K Ramachandran Nair, *Selected Poems of Mahakavi Ulloor*, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1978.

²²¹ Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity A Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1991, p.194.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid., p.195

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid., p.199.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid., p.219.

²²⁸ Ibid.,201

²²⁹ Kottarathil Shankunni, *Ithiyamala (Re print)*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1996, p.554.

Image 7- Dutch painting on conquest of Cochin²³⁰



The political and economic conditions in the tiny upland kingdoms led way to the dissemination and developments of Brahmanical faith in upland terrains. In pre-modern Malabar this triangular relationship between kingship-trade-Brahmanization (polity-economy-religion) was instrumental in building of state. The Brahmanization of faith was important in the continued exercise of authority for the asserting chieftains. As a result of this the rulers in the hinterlands began naming themselves in connection with the brahmanical deities. Earlier their names were the names of non-brahmanical deities or Chera titles. These rulers needed *vedic* rituals of Brahmins like *hiranyagarbha* to enhance their power asserting ventures and henceforth they patronised Brahmanization. As a result there was emergence of new temples in upland regions in the neighbourhood of important political houses. With the movement of Brahmins to uplands also started the second wave of *Bhakti* (first wave was associated

230

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Overwinningh_van_de_Stadde_Cochin_op_de_Kust_van_Mallabaer_-_Victory_over_Kochi_on_the_coast_of_Malabar.jpg

with Alvars and Nayanars which continued till 13th century), which got launched with the devotional literature of Tunjath Ezhuthachan²³¹ and Poonthanam Namboodiri²³² etc. In the 17th century the rulers of the uplands encouraged the festal celebrations of Brahmanical temples, as those festivals were also annual fairs that accelerated the production of spices in the kingdoms. These Brahmin temples also emerged as cultural centres, which developed several ritual art forms like *Ottam thullal*²³³ begun by Kunchan Nambiar, *chakyar kuthu* and *kutiyattam* etc. The role played by these art forms such as attracting the masses is discussed in the third chapter in detail. The spread of hand-written copies of *Adhyatma Ramayanam*²³⁴ of Ezhuthachan and *Jnanapana*²³⁵ of Poonthanam, helped to disseminate fast the Brahminical perceptions of god in the upland terrains. In this process, *Sri Ayyappan*, the locally deified hero of the upland regions was reinterpreted as *Harihara Suthan* (son of Siva and Vishnu) against the background of fast spreading Vaishnavism and Saivism in the upland terrains.²³⁶ With the modified meanings the shrine of Sri Ayyappan in the highland of Shabarimala became the focal point of the new religiosity in the upland relegating the Brahminical temples in the low lying paddy cultivating regions to peripheral positions. Meanwhile in central part of Kerala the Syrian Christians of Kothamangalam, Aruvithara (Erattupetta) and Kanjirappally, were also actively involved in the pepper trade with Madurai and Dindigal and it was the share of wealth that the traders used to offer to the churches in return for the ‘protection’ that they got during the course of the ghat-route trade with Madurai that

²³¹ Tunjath Ezhuthachan made brahmanical epic Ramayana familiar to the people of Kerala through his invention in poetry called ‘*kilipattu*’; his *Ramayanam* was known as *Adhyatma Ramayanam*.

²³² Poonthanam Namboothiri is known for his bhakti poetry on brahmanical god Krishna of Guruvayoor; his master piece is *Jnanapana* (the song of divine wisdom).

²³³ *Ottam Thullal* is a solo theatrical performance form of Kerala. It was introduced by Kunjan Nambiar.

²³⁴ Vattaparambil Gopinathapilla, *Adhyatma Ramayanam*, D C Books, Kottayam, 2013.

²³⁵ Sreedevi, K.B, *Poonthanam Njanappana*, Green Books, Thrissur, 2011.

²³⁶ Pius Malekandathil, *Indian ocean in the making of Early Modern India*, Primus, New Delhi, p.III. (in introduction)

made the churches rich and wealthy.²³⁷ During those days these Syrian Christian churches provided shelter for traders and also safe storage for their cargo. The churches and their premises provided space for *angadis* (markets) in the hinterlands where spices, ivory and wild products were traded in return for rice, cereals and cotton cloth coming from Tamilakkam. The Tamil Brahmin Pattars and Ravuthar Muslims linked with Madurai and the other markets of Tamilakam like Gingee, Tanjavur and Ramanathapuram travelled through the same *ghat* routes and took pepper on a large scale from hinterlands in return for clothes, rice and cereals brought from Tamilakam.²³⁸ The *angadis* were, the centres where St. Thomas Christians sold their spices to Ravuthar muslims and Tamil Pattars in return for rice and cloth from Tamilakam. The tax collected by the rulers in various check posts were important source of income, which such rulers translated for political ventures along with the returns coming from the Dutch maritime trade. Unlike Zamorin in 13th century who expanded the kingdom with the wealth acquired from maritime trade, none of those upland kingdoms expanded their territory. Instead they tried to consolidate authority in their spheres of influence by attempting brahmanization of faith and even while resorting to Brahmanisation no King until 18th century replaced their *kula daivam* (family deity) with a brahmanical deity.²³⁹ Until 18th century no Kerala king including Zamorin had a centralised army and state monopoly in trade, which was partially caused by the Europeans who had established trade monopoly and who manoeuvred the local political conditions in such a way that centralization would not happen in any state with standing army. The hegemony of the Dutch East India Company (V.O.C) prevented the larger chiefs like Venad, Cochin and Calicut from

²³⁷Pius Malekandathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala" in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017, p.10.

²³⁸ Pius Malekandathil, *Mughals, Portuguese and Indian Ocean*, Primus, New Delhi, 2013, p.88.

²³⁹ Marthanda Varma took the title '*Sree Padmanabha swamy Dasan*'.

conquering and devouring the smaller kings of mid upland regions as they were supported by the Dutch.

Fearing the Dutch intervention the larger political players allowed the state of affairs that favoured the assertion of smaller principality chieftains. The fragmented polity promoted by the commercial policies of the early colonial powers particularly the Portuguese and the Dutch began to perish by 18th century with the highly centralized political formations initiated by Marthanda Varma in Venad (later known as Kingdom of Travancore) and Shaktan Thampuran in Cochin. The hegemony and protection ensured by the Dutch in coastal Kerala were first challenged by Marthanda Varma. Meanwhile the Dutch policy was influencing the Nair *samanthas* (subsidiaries) which weakened the power of King and many a times kings were assassinated like the Kings of Venad, who were killed before Marthanda Varma. In the close of first quarter of 18th century Marthanda Varma raised his own *Marava* mercenary army²⁴⁰ and in 1731 he annexed Desinganad kingdom²⁴¹ but the pro-Dutch *samanthas* created difficult situation for MarthandaVarma. In 1733 *Marava* army of Marthanda Varma executed 42 *samanthas* and confiscated their property.²⁴² Thus attempts for internal centralization were begun by Marthanda Varma and thereafter army was no more under feudal Nair houses but directly under King's command. This was something that was not previously done by Zamorin, Raja of Cochin or any lesser Raja of Kerala.

In a series of battles Marthanda Varma annexed the kingdom of Attingal which housed Anjengo English factory and later annexed Quilon. In 1741 the Dutch

²⁴⁰ T.K Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, Travancore Government Press, Trivandrum,1940, p.270.

²⁴¹ Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967, p,20.

²⁴² Ibid.

installed a princess of the *Elayadathu Swaroopam* as the ruler of Kottarakara in defiance of the demands of Marthanda Varma.²⁴³ The Travancore army inflicted a crushing defeat upon the combined Kottarakara-Dutch armies and assimilated Kottarakara into Travancore forcing the Dutch to retreat to Cochin. Following this, Marthanda Varma captured all of the Dutch forts in the area. Following the losses that the Dutch and their allies had suffered in the war, a force of Dutch marines from Ceylon under the leadership of a Flemish commander Captain Eustachius De Lannoy (also spelt D'Lennoy) landed with artillery in Kulachal, then a small but important coastal town to capture the capital of Travancore. On 10th August 1741 both the armies met in battle and the army of Marthanda Varma won a decisive victory over the Dutch. Travancore took a large number of Dutch soldiers of varying rank and file, 24 officers including Eustachius De Lannoy and his second in command Donadi as prisoners. The victory of Travancore over Dutch was an ultimate blow to Dutch power in the sub-continent. Later the trade in pepper was declared a state monopoly in Travancore in 1743.²⁴⁴ Captain Eustachius De Lannoy and his second in command Donadi were very beneficial to the kingdom of Travancore. When De Lannoy and Donadi were paroled they took up service with Travancore and were crucial in the modernization of the Travancore Army which, till then, had been armed mainly with melee weapons into an effective fighting force. De Lennoy modernized the existing firearms and introduced better artillery and more importantly trained the Travancore army in the European style of military drill and war tactics. The kingdoms of Quilon, Thekkenkur, Vadakkenkur, Kizhumalainadu, Kunnathunadu were annexed one after another during the period between 1742 and 1752 with the help of a standing army

²⁴³ T.K Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, p.267

²⁴⁴ Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, p.33.

trained by captain Eustachius De Lannoy.²⁴⁵ Later the regions up to Alengadu and Anagamli were incorporated into Travancore and the capital of Travancore kingdom was shifted from Kalkulam (in Tamil Nadu) to Trivandrum in 1763. The kingdoms newly conquered by Travancore happened to be the principal pepper supplying geography for the Dutch at their trading center of Cochin. In order to prevent the continued flow of pepper from the newly conquered terrains to Dutch-Cochin the trade in pepper was declared a state monopoly in Travancore by Marthanda Varma in 1743.²⁴⁶ Alongside all the developments for a strong centralized state Marthanda Varma in order to legitimize his rule over a large territory named as Vanjinad or Thiruvithankur he extended patronage to the temple of Padmanabha Swamy (the Brahmanical Vishnu deity of Sree Padmanabha Swamy temple, in Trivandrum), who was declared as the tutelary deity of Travancore. Thereby Marthanda Varma managed to move towards a process of centralization using the dynamics and forces of religion, military and trade. In 1763 a new port was established at Aleppey by Raja Kesava Das (*Diwan* of Travancore) to ensure regular flow of spices from the newly conquered terrains for trade in a Travancorean port instead of Cochin. The establishment of Aleppey port drastically affected the commercial prospects of the Dutch in Cochin.²⁴⁷

After series of setbacks in Travancore the Dutch power was losing in Calicut as well. The Zamorin began his military conquests against Dutch in 1755²⁴⁸ and one after the other Zamorin and his vassals conquered the Dutch forts in Chettuva, Pappanivattam and Enamakal. Later Zamorin's army occupied Thrissur, Mullukkara, Paravoor, Kodungalloor and Cochin within nine months.²⁴⁹ It was during this time that the invasion of Hyder Ali happened. The French trained army of Hyder Ali conquered

²⁴⁵ T.K Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, p.341.

²⁴⁶ Asin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967, p.34.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.33-34.

²⁴⁸ A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala Charitram*, p.252

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.253.

Zamorin's Calicut and later the parts of Cochin occupied by Zamorin. Under these circumstances the Dutch tried to re-conquer Chettuva in 1788²⁵⁰ but failed miserably. Later in the same year the Dutch sold their possessions of Kodungaloor fort and Pallipuram fort to Travancore instead of selling to Mysore even after pressures from Tipu Sultan. In the changed situation Saktan Thampuran, the king of Cochin, also maintained an anti-Dutch policy shifted his base from Cochin to Thrissur and started annexing smaller principalities in the neighborhood and carved out of the various conquered principalities the state of Cochin with base in Thrissur. He even started dispatching cargo from Thrissur to overseas markets skipping Cochin where the Dutch still maintained some vague form of influence.²⁵¹ The Dutch were nowhere a power to fight and repel Tipu Sultan from Malabar. But Travancore's modernized army defeated army of Tipu Sultan at Aluva.²⁵² Meanwhile the British East India Company along with several smaller Rajas like Pazhassi Raja (King of Kottayam) defeated Mysore armies in Malabar. The British also annexed the territories of allies of Tipu like Ali Rajas (Arakkal Kingdom) of Cannanore, parts of Calicut and even occupied Kottayam.²⁵³ The movements for State formation and declaration of independence from British East India Company became stronger in Travancore and Cochin, as a result of which revolts were organized by the diwan of Cochin, Paliyath Achan and *Dalawa (Diwan)* of Travancore Veluthampi against British. But both the *diwans* had a reduced military after Mysore invasions and were defeated and later executed by the British.²⁵⁴ Later on both Cochin and Travancore became puppet princely states under East India Company.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

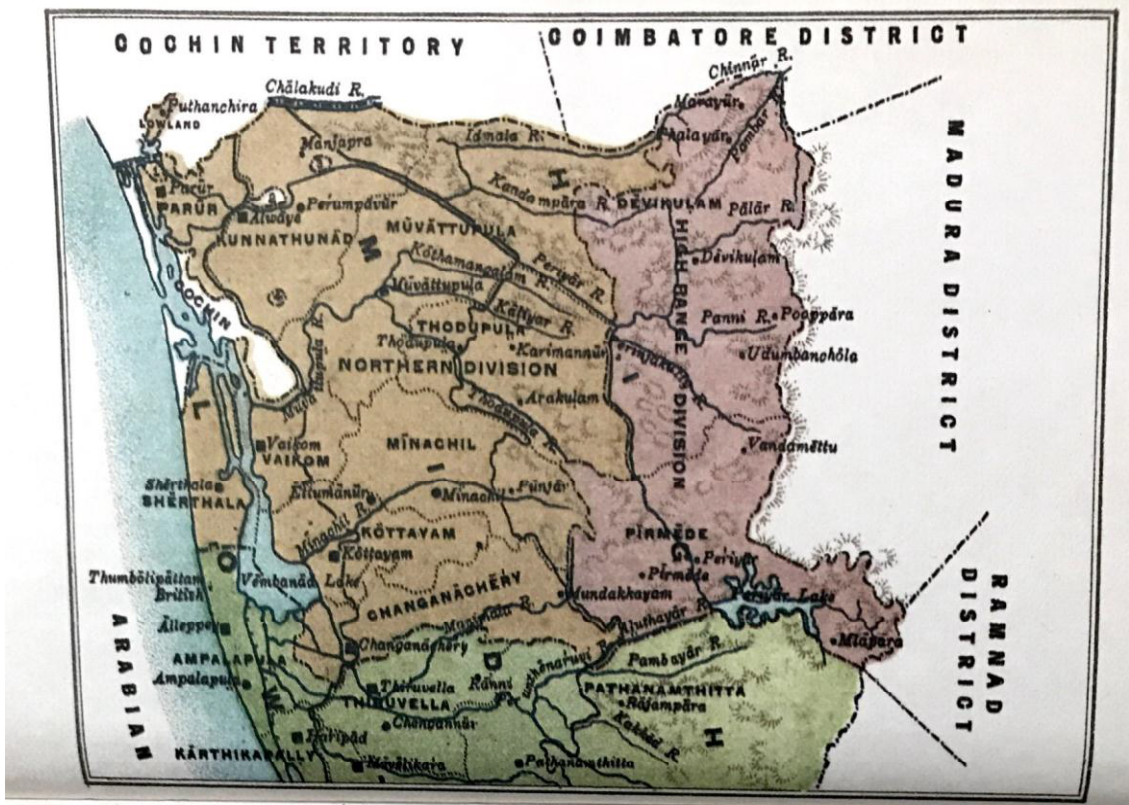
²⁵¹ K.M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Dutch*, 1929, p.82.

²⁵² Footnotes???

²⁵³ Footnotes???

²⁵⁴ Nagam Aiyya, *Travancore State Manual*, Victoria Institutions, <https://archive.org/details/TRAVANCORESTATEMANUAL>, 2013, p.34-35.

Map 8- Travancore State²⁵⁵



²⁵⁵ T.K. Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*. Vol. 1, Kerala Gazetteers Department, Trivandrum, 1996.

3.4 Conclusion

The thirteenth century in Kerala history is understood as a period of fragmented polity with the absence of a central authority. Many of the rulers and local chieftains competitively tried to keep the major maritime trade centres of exchange under their territory with a view to bag a share from trade for their political assertions. With the increase in their wealth some of these chieftains started moving their seat of power from inland agrarian regions to the maritime exchange centres located along the coast and the shifting of political base of Nediyruppu swarupam from Eranadu to Calicut and the seat of Perumpadappu swarupam from Vanneri to Cochin are only two among such cases. The trade with *Al Karimi* merchants resulted in flow of wealth for Zamorin, who in turn consolidated his political and commercial position in Kerala with the money and mercenaries provided by the *Al-Karimi* merchants. Zamorin consolidated his position with the help of wealth that he managed to accrue from pepper cultivation and trade and also with the support of cultural processes that were made to revolve around Calicut. The earliest challenge to might of the Zamorin was the naval artillery of the Portuguese, whose intervention thwarted the Zamorin from carrying out a pan-Kerala political and commercial domination. The might of the Portuguese armada made the adversaries of Zamorin maintain good trade relations with Portuguese traders. The principality chieftains who appeared at the junctional point of the trade routes and pepper production centres began to wield considerable power and clout. The centres of wealth convergence eventually became centres of power concentration. With the increasing integration of the hinterland with the maritime trading centres, commodity flow to the trading centres increased unprecedentedly and the inland rulers and the chieftains at the junctional points were beneficiaries of such a move, who started strengthening their instruments and

mechanisms of power. The upland kingdoms like Vadakkenkur, Thekkenkur, Kizhmalainadu that used to trade with the Portuguese became principalities with considerable wealth and power. Concomitantly we find the movement of Brahmins from the *brahmadeyas* in the low lands to the spice producing upland regions and enclaves controlled by these chieftains. The Brahmins moved to the capitals of the uplands principalities to cater to the ritual needs of the chieftains. They performed the *vedic* rituals like *hiranyagarbha* and *ariyittuvazhcha* etc., to fulfil the needs of the chieftains to become kings. The emergence of Brahmin settlements in the uplands also facilitated the fast spread of of Bhakthi literature and dissemination of Brahmanical faith among the non-Brahminical social groups. These events led to the mutation of the existing folk deities, religion and its culture and traditions, resulting in the development of syncretic culture and brahmanical social order in the uplands.

After the fall of the Portuguese came the Dutch East India Company who in their efforts to trade with the upland kingdoms started supporting them, and they eventually protected them from the expansionary attempts of Cochin, Travancore and Calicut. The Dutch strategy to prevent strong state formations in Kerala was by influencing and supporting the Nair feudatories of the King and thereby they weakened the larger kingdoms from inside. Thus Travancore witnessed a series of assassinations of their rulers until the succession of Marthanda Varma to the throne. Marthanda Varma eliminated the threats one after the other and even defeated the Dutch army at Collachel thereby paved his way for a centralized state. Travancore under Marthanda Varma tried to have centralized administration with standing army of its own and with monopolization of trade. The King of Cochin Shakthan Thampuran also maintained tried to assert his autonomous position by defying the Dutch and shifting his base to Thrissur. The Mysorean invasions gave heavy blow to Calicut and northern and

central kingdoms in 1766; later the British East India Company became overlord of entire Kerala after defeating Tipu Sultan in 1792. In the changed situation only the kingdoms of Cochin and Travancore alone continued to exist, leaving the rest to fall into the hands of the English.

Chapter IV

Trade and Religious Pluralism

4.1 Introduction

This chapter dwells upon the way how the endeavours of trade influenced and modified the trajectories of religion in Kerala, causing a pluralistic cultural milieu to evolve. By the end of the 13th century, and through the 14th and 15th centuries, when upland principalities were carving out significant political positions against the background of their ability to supply the required cargo for the trading centers along the coast, there started the movement of Brahmins from low lying paddy cultivated areas to the new power centers in central upland Kerala, providing the ritual back-up that these chieftains then needed. The Brahmin temples established near the new power centers with the patronage of local chieftains became the focal centers for the dissemination of *Vaishnavism* in the upland regions. The Brahmin temples promoted and facilitated the increase in circulation of bhakti literature such as *Adhyatma Ramayanam* of Thunjath Ezhuthachan and *Jnanapana* of Poonthanam Namboothiri in upland areas. It was through these literary works that the elites of Kerala understood, accepted and practiced brahmanical faith. Meanwhile the *kavus* of various deities like *shakthis* (*bhagavathis*) and *yakshis* connected with the cult of Mother Goddess and Non-Brahmanical folk religion was undergoing mutation as a consequence of the spread of Brahmanical faith. The *yakshis* were protective deities of Jain traders who traded till 9th century, whose shrines dotted important inland trade routes to Tamilakam. The temples, churches and *dargahs* in the uplands were also playing the role of facilitating the ghat route trade. In order to expand their spiritual networks and amass the wealth from trade, the folk-shrines incorporated the rituals of *kavus* such as

velas, *ezunnallath* etc., and also instigated the *utsava chandas* (festival markets) of *kavus* in the annual celebrations of *pooram* (of temples), *nerchas* (of mosques) and *palli perunnal* (of churches). Simultaneously there also existed geographies which were believed to have been haunted by evil spirits or ghosts or *yakshis*, which were in fact remnants of wilderness, through which people feared to travel. Very often they were linked also with the sacred space of Jains and Budhists, who as traders used to earmark certain geographies on the trade-routes as sacred for them. The priests of the invasive religions represented *yakshis* and other folk deities as malevolent divinities who haunted the travellers. The churches, temples and the *dargahs* were viewed by the travelers on the move as mechanisms that would offer them protection from wild animals, evil spirits and *yakshis*. In the early modern period travel was facilitated by such a complex mechanism and the circuits of faith and trade used to move hand in hand.

4.2 *Velas, Utsava Chanda and Polity*

Calicut was the most important pepper port in pre-modern Malabar before the rise of Cochin, and the coming of the Portuguese. The commercial importance of Calicut continued until the Mysorean conquest of Calicut in 1766 –1790. During the rule of Zamorin, the major part of pepper traded by Calicut came from the pepper producing enclaves on the banks of *Bharatapuzha (Nila)*. There were about 130 *kavus* on the banks of Bharathapuzha, namely *Pallikkal, Palakotu, Thiruvaly, Chengottoor, Villoor, Puthoor, Panthaloor, Thrikkalangattoor, Thirumanikkara, Puthrukovil, Kalarikkal, Aliparambukalathil, Panankurussikavu, Thoothakkan kavu, Oothrali kavu, Vayillamkunnath Kavuvu, Panniamkurussi, Killikurussi, Akaloor, Murikkumpetta, Panamannakurathi, Chathamkandarkavu, Alangottu Cherukunnath, Perunthatta,*

Peruvalloor Kotta, Thirunavayi Ayyappan, Palppetty, Ariyambil, Kottamel Asura Mahakalan kavu, Vengasserry kavu, Pavannoor Kottalingan, Malamakkavu, Chundamakavu Vettathukavu, Ammancherry, Thrikkandiyoor, Nerunkaithakotta, Puthoor Tharackal Bhagawati, Thrikkandiyoor Vettakkorumakan, Kundukulangara, Cheruthura kavu, Anthimahakalan kavu, Ankali Amma, Pulikkottu Ayyappan, Pookulangara, Paruthipally Bhagavathi etc.¹ Zamorin used to spend about Rs. 25947 and 52808 *para* rice annually for the maintenance of these *Kavus*,² which evidently is indicative of the roles that the Zamorin wanted to assign to *Kavus* for asserting his authority in the pepper producing enclaves along the river Bharatapuzha, particularly through the complex ritual performances in these *Kavus*. The Zamorin had symbolic relations with the folk priests of the *Kavus*, where rituals were performed and prayers were offered to the deity in the name of the devotees and the Zamorin to fetch a good harvest of pepper. The form of priest that existed in the *Kavu* can be compared to that of shamanistic tradition. The priest in the form of *theyyam* undergoes trance and speaks to the worshippers as the deity is speaking to them. The people would approach *Theyyam* regularly, used to take blessing and obeyed his commands as god's own words. The requirement of Zamorin, might have been addressed to the worshippers through *Theyyam*.³ The Zamorin regularly performed *paimkutty*⁴ in massive quantities of rice, oil and money etc., for the *kavus* patronized by him.⁵ He used to maintain symbolic relationship with the priests of the *Kavu*. The *Kavus* were sacred shrines of non-brahminical deities and some of them had sacred groves (with a

¹ Pius Malekandathil, "Rubrics of Power and Trade in Calicut," in Archa G (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism in a City: The Past and the Present of Calicut*, (Issue 22), Café Dissensus, February 15, 2016, p.8.

² Ibid.

³ Rustom Bharucha, *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*, Manohar Publications, Delhi, 1990, p.171.

⁴ The offering for *Kavu* is called *Paimkutty* in Malayalam. This is distinct from the offerings in Brahmanical and Saramanic temples.

⁵ Pius Malekandathil, "Rubrics of Power and Trade in Calicut," in Archa G (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism in a City: The Past and the Present of Calicut*, (Issue 22), Café Dissensus, February 15, 2016.

protected sacred forest area). It is a sacred geography where the deity is supposed to be roaming. In many *Kavus* no worshipper goes at night especially on full moon night. The *Theyyam* in trance roams on the sacred grove at night and in the day he lives like a normal person.⁶ The annual festal celebrations of the *Kavu* called *vela*,⁷ were also characterized by *utsava chanda* (annual fair markets). The annual fair markets played significant role in boosting the economy which in turn increased the need for expansion of cultivation and harvest. Since the *velas* of *Kavus* were under the patronage of Zamorin in north Malabar, they strengthened the power, influence and authority of Samoothiri Raja.

As mentioned earlier, there were many deities in the interior parts of Kerala. One such deity was *Muthappan*, whose shrines are found across various trade routes. This deity is considered as the protector of those, whose sets of relations are constantly in flux or who were dependent on movement, such as itinerant workers, migrants, and traders.⁸ So the people who travelled (mostly for trade) might have erected *kavu* of *Muthappan* across major land routes of trade in northern Kerala. People from the interior parts of Kerala traded in pepper and other spices through the jungle paths and then switched over to the riverine markets or into the markets linked with merchants of Tamilakam, as required by exigencies. The major offerings in *paimkutty* (offering to Muthappan) from traders generally consisted of toddy or *kallu* (liquor made from coconut or palm trees),⁹ arrack or *charayam* (liquor made from jaggery or sugarcane), meat (mainly rooster meat) and *ganja* (marijuana leaves). The popular devotion to *Muthappan* as a

⁶ Thulasi Kakkat, Man by day, goddess by night: Theyyam in pictures, *The Hindu*, August 26, 2017.

⁷ Narasimhiah Seshagiri, *Encyclopaedia of Cities and Towns in India: Kerala*, Gyan Publishing House, Delhi, 2009, pp. 410-420.

⁸ Dinesan Vadakkiniyil, Images of Transgression: Teyyam in Malabar, *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, Vol. 54, No. 2, Images of power and the power of images (Summer 2010), pp. 130-150.

⁹ The *velas* are annual festal celebrations of *kavu*.

protective deity is evident from the construction of *Muthappan* shrines in railway stations during direct British rule¹⁰ in northern Malabar. The anthropogenic personification of Muthappan is evident from the idol of *Muthappan* as an old man with long moustache having hunting weapons and dogs. The *Theyyam* of *Muthappan* is living image of the idol who in trance communicates the message of Muthappan to masses. Professor Pius Malekandathil, is of the view that *Muthappan* shrines on the jungle trade routes indicated the involvement of *Tiyyas*, *Ezhavas* community (though later they became castes after Brahmanization) in commodity movements.¹¹ But the factuality of this argument needs to be probed into. There are *Kavus* of several deities in forested parts of Kerala, amongst which many are unidentified. These areas became isolated from human habitations because of several reasons, of which the most important may be decline of trade. One such *Kavu* was recently discovered in a forest area near Aanakkal in Malampuzha, Palakkad. This *Kavu* was an undisturbed site, not impacted by the influence of Brahminical mutation process. In the Aanakkal *kavu*, the deity was seated on top of an elephant, as represented in the stone idol. Alongside the central idols are idols of elephants, wild boars, deer and tiger etc. There were several such *kavus* discovered in many parts of Palakkad, which had the deity seated on top of an elephant. One could derive that existence of all these *kavus* indicates the existence of several long chain of networks of connectivity across dense jungles. The pathways of jungle used by early men for connectivity were the *Aanachal* or the trails made by wild elephants.¹² Hence, deity on top of the elephant can be related to movement of

¹⁰ The Northern Malabar (ie mostly the territories of erstwhile Zamorin, Kolathiry, Ali Rajas etc.) were under British presidency of Madras, whereas Cochin and Travancore were princely states in British India.

¹¹ Pius Malekandathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

¹² P.R.G Mathur, "Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts." [Http://ignca.gov.in](http://ignca.gov.in). Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, n.d. Web. 14 Oct. 2017. <http://ignca.nic.in/ps_01021.htm>.

people. The presence of *Theyyam* is not just a part of folk religion of Kerala; this tradition is also associated with Mappila Muslims of Kerala. These Mappila *theyyams* indicates the spread of earliest Islam in Kerala amongst the people far away from Brahmanical networks of social system. The most popular Mappila *theyyams* are *Aali Theyyam* or *Aali Chamundi Theyyam*, *Mukri Pokkar Theyyam*, *Ummachi Theyyam*, *Bappiriyam Theyyam* and *Koyikkal Mammad Theyyam* etc. As mentioned earlier association of Mappila community with folk religion does not require detailed mentioning. Therefore, the coming of their *Kavu* as a result of syncretisation of folk religion with early Islam could be associated with their ancestral deities protecting them while travelling. Later with the coming of Brahminical domination of faith, these *Mappila Theyyams* were demonised as wandering souls (those souls who could not achieve *moksha* or salvation) of dead Mappilas. Same was the case with other folk gods like *Marutha*,¹³ *Kotha*,¹⁴ *Kuttichathan*,¹⁵ *Chathan*,¹⁶ *Karumkutty*,¹⁷ *Pookutty*,¹⁸ *Kalladimuthan* and *Kadutha*.¹⁹ These folk deities had oracles like *Theyyam* or *Velichappad* (there are different names for different performances) and it was through these folk priest performers, that the Rajas like Zamorin, Kolattiri (Raja of Kolothunadu or Chirakkal) maintained symbolic relations.²⁰ These symbolic relations ensured trade, annual celebrations, market (*utsava chanda*) and acceptance of authority of Rajas. The *theyyam* performance during *velas* is seen only in northern parts of Kerala, which corresponds to (the areas of erstwhile kingdoms of Calicut, Cannanore, Valluvanad, Palakkad, Chirakkal and Kottayam). This indicates the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ M.G.S Narayanan, Calicut: The City of Truth Revisited, University of Calicut, Calicut, 2006, p.105.

existence of a certain cultural area inhabited by folk deity worshippers, Muslims, few Christians and followers of Brahmanical faith. The folk culture of that area was incorporated into the belief systems of Mappilas (as *nerchas* of *Jaram*) and Brahmins (as *poorams* of Temple) and Christians (as *palli perunnal* of Church), evident in the similar pattern of annual festal celebrations of their respective religious institutions which has close resemblance to *velas* or *cherppu*.²¹

The association of Mappilas with *Shakthi (Chamundi)* in *Aali Chamundi Theyyam* and *Gandharvas* (as in the case of Mappilas) of Thanur and their belief about *Akasha Gandharva*²²) might also indicate their past origins which they have not completely left. The *velas* of the *kavus* were patronised by Zamorin, which are seasonal festivals (annual) held in *Kavus*, the forest sanctuaries dedicated to non-Brahmanical folk deities.²³ The *velas* were also harvest festivals held at the time of harvesting of spices in uplands and rice in lowlands, and it is marked by the coming of offerings from traders, aristocracies (*naduvazhis*, kings and Brahmin houses) and folk worshippers in series of *varavu* (arrivals). In most of the *velas* along the civilizational belt of river *Nila* or *Bharathapuzha*, the *ezhunnallath*²⁴ of *Bhagavathi (shakthi)* on top of elephants wearing *nettippattam* (traditional caparisons) is an important part of the celebration. In *vela* there would be *velichappad thullal*, *theyyam* performance, *thottampattu* and *panchavarnakalam* held in the vicinity of the *kavu*. These *velas* had several social-economic-political functions in pre-modern Malabar. The festal celebrations of *velas* enhanced the need for increasing the production of spices, which indirectly enriched

²¹ The annual festal celebrations in various *Kavus* were known as *velas* or *cherppu* or *pongala* in different parts of Kerala.

²² P.R.G Mathur, "Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts." [Http://ignca.gov.in](http://ignca.gov.in). Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, n.d. Web. 14 Oct. 2017. <http://ignca.nic.in/ps_01021.htm>.

²³ Stephen F. Dale and M. Gangadhara Menon, "'Nerccas': Saint-Martyr Worship among the Muslims of Kerala", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol.41, No. 3 (1978), pp. 523-538.

²⁴ The *ezhunallath* is the ceremonial procession of deity on top of an elephant.

the wealth of Zamorin from trade. The Zamorin's patronage and symbolic relationship with the folk priests might have ensured the acceptance of authority and influence of Zamorin. In some *velas* like *Machad Kuthira Vela* or *Thiruvanikkavu Kuthira vela* in Wadakkancherry, Thrissur, the procession was made using huge wooden mannequins of horses with caparisons. The horses may be suggestive of the past relation of the *Kavus* with the Buddhist or the Jain²⁵ trade guilds like *Nalppathennayiravar*, *Valanchiyar* etc.

As mentioned earlier, Zamorin also patronised the institutions of Brahmins, and they in turn contributed to the establishment of Zamorin as the King of the conquered territories. The Brahmins of *Chovvaram kuru* were the allies of Zamorin. These *Namboothiri* Brahmins performed *hiranyagarbaha*²⁶ (the ritual preparation of mythical origin and genealogy tracing to brahmanical gods or legendary heroes of brahmanical myths), *ariyittuvazhcha*²⁷ (the ritual ceremony to assert as successor of the dead Zamorin and cremation and mourning ritual). Hence, *Namboothiri* Brahmins were crucial in achieving *kshatriya* status for Zamorin, which in turn helped to confer superior political standing for the Zamorin. As mentioned earlier, *paradesi* muslim traders and their flotillas (multipurpose ships) were crucial in the expansion of Zamorin's kingdom. The army of Zamorin itself was plural in nature which had Nair militia supplied by his subsidiaries (*naduvazhis*), *paradesi* archers on flotillas and Mappila mercenaries of Shah Bandar Koya. Trade was enhanced in territories conquered by Zamorin using diverse mechanisms, Zamorin himself patronised 150 *kavus* on the belt of river *Nilu*, and those areas produced and transported pepper to Calicut or Ponnani port for the maritime trade. The areas conquered by Zamorin also

²⁵ Horse is the symbol of Tirthankara Sambhavanatha.

²⁶ K.V Krishna Ayyar, *Zamorins of Calicut*, p.17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*,

witnessed the coming of new Brahmin temples and mosques, these institutions were also the centres of trade, markets (*angadi*) and *godowns* (warehouses). The annual festal celebrations of the Brahmin temples called *pooram*²⁸ ensured the spread of authority, power and influence of Zamorin along with spreading the need for more production. These *poorams* are annual festivals of Brahmin temples which have incorporated the elements of *velas* of *kavus*. The *poorams* also have elaborate rituals like *ezhunallath*²⁹ of *thidambu* on top of elephants, theatrical performances, *chakyar koothu*,³⁰ *daffmuttu*³¹ and *kolkali*³² etc. (which substituted folk performances like *theyyam*, *thirayattam*,³³ *velichappad thullal*³⁴ etc. The orchestrated performance (which substituted *kalampattu* of *kavus*) of *chenda*, *kombu kuzhal* and *elathalam* collectively called as *melam*³⁵. The bringing of offerings to temples by wealthy traders and landlords in a series of *varavu* (arrivals) was incorporated from *velas* of *kavus*. The annual harvesting *vela* festivals of *kavu* were incorporated by – Brahmin temples as *pooram*, Sufi *dargahs* as *nerchas*³⁶ and churches as *palli perunnal*³⁷. All

²⁸ Generally more Brahmanical variant of the *velas* are called *poorams*.

²⁹ The *ezhunallath* ritual is seen only in Kerala. These rituals were part of folk religion of Kerala, which was later incorporated into annual festal celebrations of temples, mosques, *jarams*, churches etc.

³⁰ The *Chakyar Koothu* is a brahmanical performance art from of Kerala. It is primarily a highly refined monologue where the performer narrates episodes from Brahmanical epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and stories from the Puranas.

³¹ The *duff muttu* is an art form prevalent in the Malabar region of the state of Kerala in south India. It derives its name from the duff, a percussion instrument made of wood and ox skin.

³² The *kolkali* is a folk art performed in North Malabar. In *kolkali* the dance performers move in a circle, striking small sticks and keeping rhythm with special steps. The circle expands and contracts as the dance progress. The accompanying music gradually rises in pitch and the dance reaches its climax.

³³ The *thira* is a ritualistic performance held in folk deity *kavus*, which is similar to *theyyam*.

³⁴ The *Velichappad thullal* is also a folk ritual like *theyyam*, where the *velichappad* gets into trance and executes vigorous movements called *idumkoorum chavittal* and communicates to believers as the shakthi is ordering them.

³⁵ The *melam* is an assembly of percussion performers, held at the courtyard of Brahmin temples during the annual *poorams*.

³⁶ The *nerchas* are annual festal celebrations of Muslim community of Kerala, celebrated on *Uroos* or *Urs* day of the Sufi Sheikhs at their *Jaram* (*dargah*).

³⁷ The *palli perunnal* is annual festal celebration of Syrian Christian churches of Kerala, the pepper cultivator and trader community of St. Thomas Christians celebrate this festival in a manner similar to the *pooram* of brahmanical temple, with rituals such as *ezhunallath*, *melam* and *bale* etc.

these annual harvesting celebrations in the light of spice trade led to the plurality of religious, cultural and societal traditions of Kerala. In the pre-modern Kerala, the greatest celebration in the kingdoms was the one imperiously organised by Kings themselves, which used to be the grandest and the last celebration of the year. In Zamorin's kingdom the grandest celebration was *mamankam* held at Tirunavaya once in every twelve years. Similarly, in the kingdom of Cochin it was *Thrissur pooram* (It was instituted only by 1790s by Shakthan Thampuran). Earlier it was *Arattupuzha pooram*, but since the rule of King Shakthan Thampuran, Thrissur pooram was considered the grandest festival. In Travancore Kingdom, the *painkuni*³⁸ celebration of Sree Padmanabha swamy (tutelary deity of Travancore) was the grandest festal celebration. These festal celebrations boosted the economy, increased the demand for ever growing production of spices for trade (which in turn served the process of procuring resources to relish the celebrations) and strengthened the power, authority and influence of the King.

4.3 Folk Deities and Identity Mutations

The accumulation of wealth from trade by rulers of various inland principalities was concomitantly followed by the movement of Brahmins from paddy cultivated low lying areas to the proximate centres of upland power houses. These Brahmins moved to the interior upland regions for bestowing ritual legitimacy to the chieftains of principalities as established kings with mythical genealogy. This movement led to the emergence of many Brahmin temple centred settlements in the uplands. These Brahmins, started incorporating several folk goddesses into their theological fold as *avatharas* (incarnations) of Bhramanical deity *Parvathi*. They also incorporated

³⁸ The ritual *painkuni* of Sri Padmanabha Swami, sounds similar to the Painkuti of Muthappan. But since Vishnu is a Brahmanical deity, the hypothesis needs more research findings to substantiate.

several male deities like *Muthappan* and *Sasthavu* (Ayyappan) as sons of Shiva and Vishnu (*Hari-Hara-Suthan*). Nonetheless, while pursuing the process of incorporation they included the rituals of folk deities as well. Unlike vegetarian offerings in Brahmin temples, many of the *kavus* of folk deities had meat, alcohol and *ganja* as offerings. The Brahmanical influence led to the development of syncretic culture in kingdoms of upland areas. Brahmins either tried to associate various *Shakthis* (*Gramadevathas* and *Bhagavathis*) either as *avatharas* (incarnations) of Parvathi, Lakshmi etc., or demonized deities like *Yakshis*, *Marutha*, *Chathan* as evil deities over time. But this process was not uniform throughout Kerala which is evident from some Brahmins who incorporated certain folk deities as their deity. In other parts, even if different Brahmins demonised them as evil, they mastered in folk rituals as an attempt to subdue the folk deity- worshippers into their fold and thereby ensured control over faith. One such folk deity worshipping Brahmin *illam* (house) is *Pambumekkatu Namboothiris*³⁹ of Vadamana in Thrissur (part of erstwhile Kingdom of Cochin). *Pambumekkat illam* housed shrines of serpent folk deities like *Vasuki* and *Nagayakshi* and several other serpent deities. Many of the serpent idols are made of stone and sometimes very rich worshippers used to offer deities coated with a thin layer of gold and silver.⁴⁰ People and traders who moved through less inhabited areas feared snake bites due to which they worshipped and paid offerings to snake deities. The folk priests made amulets containing *yanthras*⁴¹ for the worshipper to wear. These amulets provided a spiritual confidence to people, especially to the ones who travelled through dense forests. After the incorporation, Namboothiris began

³⁹ Edgar Thurston, "Omens and Superstitions of Southern India: Edgar Thurston: Free Download & Streaming." *Internet Archive*, VED from Victoria Institutions, 30 Oct. 2016, archive.org/details/OmensDIGITAL, p.99.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 148

performing *pooja* and they issued amulets for worshippers. They began to accumulate a share for themselves as offerings from the traders who were travelling through the trade routes located near to the abodes of Namboothiris. The serpent worship is a folk tradition consisting rituals common to all folk traditions like *tottampattu* (devotional ballads in praise of serpent deities), *panchavarnakalam* (drawing cabbalistic figure using five natural colours) and *pambuthullal*⁴² (here the performer is a woman who gets possessed by *Nagayakshi*; who gives blessings and orders the deeds to be followed). Even after incorporation of serpent worship by *Pambumekkattu* and *Manarasala* Brahmins, the ritualist in the annual ceremony of *Nagapanchami* were *Palluva mantravadis*⁴³ (folk priests of *Palluva* caste) who performed *Pambuthullal* (performed by *Palluva* women ritualists), sang *tottam* and prepared *Panchavarnakalam*.⁴⁴

In some erstwhile kingdoms of Kerala, every town or village had its images of cobras roughly carved on stone. These cobra stones were placed either on platform of stone especially erected for them, usually at the base of some banyan tree. On the fifth day of the lunar month *Shravana*, known as the *Nagarapanchami* (that is, the fifth day of the *nagas* or serpents) these stones were first washed, after which, milk, curd, ghee, and coconut water, was poured over them as an offering. Later they were ornamented with flowers, and offerings were made to them. The cobra stone is also worshipped by those who had no male progeny. These *mantravadis* also cured people bitten by snakes. As mentioned earlier, the folk serpent worship was practiced by Brahmins,

⁴² T.K Gopal Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk*, G.A Natesan & Co, Madras, 1900, p.146.

⁴³ Edgar Thurston, "Omens and Superstitions of Southern India: Edgar Thurston: Free Download & Streaming." *Internet Archive*, VED from Victoria Institutions, 30 Oct. 2016, archive.org/details/OmensDIGITAL., p.102.

⁴⁴ Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal, *Mythum Samohavum*, Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham, Kottayam, 2012.

and a similar serpent deity related to the Mappila Muslims was the shrine of Kunji Rayan⁴⁵ (who was a Muslim Saint). Mappila devotees of Kunji Rayan exhibited snakes in a box and collected alms for a snake mosque near Manarghat at the foot of the Nilgiri hills.⁴⁶ Similarly, Palluvas used to go with their pot-drum (*pulluva kudam*) to the houses where they were asked to play and sing songs which are acceptable to the snake gods, in return for which they received money as present (*dakshina*).⁴⁷ The serpent worship seen among folk worshippers, Brahmins and Mappilas is an example of pluralism which extended through trade. Another one such example is Puliambilli Namboothiri⁴⁸ of North Malabar⁴⁹ who was a worshipper of *Shakthi* (*Bhagavathi* or goddesses of folk tradition). The shrines of these *Shakthis* required meat, alcohol etc. as ritual offering, but the Brahmanical worship prohibited the use of alcohol, meat, ganja etc. for rituals and consumption. But Puliambilli Namboothiri performed the *Shakthi* worship with utmost precision, hence he drank alcohol and ate meat.⁵⁰ Since, Brahmins began to control worship of *Shakthis* they performed rituals which boosted the mental confidence and feeling of safety for traders. They created the *yanthras* and made amulets and gave them to the traders which gave them confidence. Thus, the share of wealth from the traders which went to the *kavu* of folk worshippers was diverted to the household of Namboothiris, as well.

Another prominent folk cult of Malabar was *Chathan Seva*. There are oral traditions that describes, *Chathan* seems to have originated from Sasthavu or Satvan denoting

⁴⁵ Edgar Thurston "Omens and Superstitions of Southern India: Edgar Thurston: Free Download & Streaming." *Internet Archive*, VED from Victoria Institutions, 30 Oct. 2016, archive.org/details/OmensDIGITAL., p.101.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.102.

⁴⁸ Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithiyamala*, pp.86-96.

⁴⁹ Abraham Eraly, *Tales once told: Legends of Kerala Adapted from Kottarathil Sankunni's Aithiyamala*, Penguin India, New Delhi, 2006, p.118

⁵⁰ Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithiyamala*, pp.89-90.

Bodhisatvan. A folk deity called *Kuttichathan* (later incorporated into Brahmanism as *Vishnumaya*,⁵¹ the son of Shiva and Kulivaka) was worshipped by natives of Malabar, whose worship is characterised by rituals of *Velichappadu* (the folk priest holding heavy hooked sword, *chilambu*,⁵² and *aramani*⁵³) who gets possessed by *Chathan* or any of the *Shakthis* (*Bhagavathis* or folk goddesses). This deity also has *Theyyam* ritual, where possessed *Theyyam* of *Kuttichathan* gives orders and blessings to the worshippers. People did *Chathan Seva* (worship of *Kuttichathan* and other *Chathans*) for safety, to teach betrayers a lesson⁵⁴ etc. As per *Aithiyamala*⁵⁵ a Bhattatiri (a Brahmin) of Panchanallur was known for *Chathan Seva* in Thrissur which was a pre-modern trade centre and later Capital of Cochin). The wealthy people and traders used to approach Panchanallur Bhattathiri (follow uniform spelling) for *Chathan Seva* thus enabling him to accumulate a share of wealth from the trade. But later, Panchanllur Bhattathiri decided to change his deity to *Ganapathi* (Ganesh) from *Chathans*. Consequently, he exchanged his *Chathans* with *Avanagad Panikkars* and received *Avanagad Ganapathi* in return.⁵⁶ Thus *Panchanallur Chathans* became *Avanangad Chathans*; and *Avanangad Ganapathi* became *Panchanallur Ganapathi*.⁵⁷ Hence, one can understand that in pre-modern Kerala there was not just the exchange of spices for foreign commodities alone, but there was also an exchange of deities, incorporation and formation of syncretic culture in pre-modern Kerala. The accumulation of wealth from trade by aspiring Kings of hinterlands, invited Brahmins from their sanctuaries in paddy cultivated lowlands to their capitals. The coming of Brahmins and

⁵¹ For details see, "<http://avanangattikalari.com/>".

⁵² *Clilambu* is a peculiar type of anklet which has bells on it.

⁵³ *Aramani* of *Velichappadu* are huge and heavy waist belt studded with bells

⁵⁴ For details see "Avanangattu Panikkaram Chathanmarum" in Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithiyamala*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1991, pp.552-564.

⁵⁵ Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithiyamala*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1991, pp.552-564.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.553.

⁵⁷ Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithiyamala*, p.553.

emergence of their abodes in hinterlands resulted in formation of syncretic culture. As mentioned earlier *Yakshis* and *Yakshas* (male counterpart of *Yakshis*) were a part of deities of mother goddess, fertility worship and protectors in ancient times. They were incorporated into Jainism as protective deities of the *Tirthankaras*. Therefore Jainism has 24 *Yakshas* and *Yakshis* for 24 Tirthankaras. For example the *Tirthankara Chandraprabha* had Shyama (for Digambaras) alias Vijaya (for Svethambaras) as *Yaksha* and Jvalamalini (for *Digambaras*) alias Bhrikuti (for *Svethambaras*) as *Yakshis*. When Kerala was ruled by *Kulashekaras* of Mahodayapuram (*Makotai*), the important trade guilds like *Nalpathennayiravar*, *Nanadeshikal*, *Ayyavole* and *Valanchiyar* traded clothes and rice in exchange of spices, through ghat routes. The *Nalpathennayiravar*, *Nanadeshikal*, *Ayyavole* and *Valanchiyar* were Jain merchant associations.⁵⁸

The institutions and shrines of *Tirthankaras* and shrines of *Yakshis* of Jain merchants dotted the important trade routes which connected spice producing areas of Kerala with Tamilakam. The four important inland trade routes identified after continuous researches are - Manglore⁵⁹ route then route connecting Canarese with Kolattunadu, Wayanad⁶⁰ route which connected Purakilanatu with Srirangapattinam, Kongu route which connected Valluvanatu to Kongu or Coimabatore and Salem and Bodinayakkanur route which connected Kilmalainatu with Teni and Madurai.⁶¹ These four important trade routes are dotted with long continuous connection of network of shrines associated with Jain traders. The shrines were usually of *Yakshas* and *Yakshis* because they were protective deities in Jainism which implies that they might have

⁵⁸ Raghava Warriar and Rajan Gurukkal, Kerala Chartithram Part 1, pp.154-159.

⁵⁹ V.V.K Vallath, *Keralathile Sthala Charithrangal Palakkad Jilla*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, p.133.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Nagam Aiyya, *Travancore State Manual*, Victoria Institutions, <https://archive.org/details/TRAVANCORESTATEMANUAL>, 2013, p.120.

been for the safety of Jain traders who used those trade routes which passed through dense forests. After the decline of Cheras of Mahodayapuram, the kingdom was ruled by independent principalities, but the trade through these inland trade routes continued. The Jain guilds were long gone and in their place Tamil Pattars, Ravuthar Muslims, Syrian Christians and folk deity worshippers traded with Tamilakam. The involvement of these communities in ghat route trade is evident from the presence of shrines and settlements of these communities in the ghat routes. The Jain institutions were replaced by Brahmin institutions, St. Thomas Christian churches and Sufi *dargahs* and *khanqahs* in the hinterlands. These institutions accumulated wealth from the traders who frequented those trade routes which contributed immensely to the spread of their influence. The way in which the influence of Brahmin institutions and St. Thomas Christian churches impacted the folk deity worship was not uniform. It was different in different places as the circumstances were different from place to place. These interactions took place in different time periods at different places and the circumstances might have been varying. In many places *Yakshis* were demonified by both Brahmin conjurers and exorcist Kathanars. The *Yakshis*, *Chathans*, *Marutha* and other folk deities of trade routes were depicted as negative forces or diabolic entities and their mutation and transformation from being gods into being personification of malice, vengeance and wickedness (as evil-gods and evil-goddesses).⁶² The fast spreading of Brahminical notions of God through the bhakti movement of Saivism and Vaishnavism, coincided with the increased attempt to demonize many of the previous folk-deities. Hence, *Yakshi* tradition lives on as a shape-shifting, vampiric maiden, memorialized in folklore as a focus for

⁶² Pius Malekandathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

propitiation.⁶³ The Brahmin and St.Thomas Christian influenced folk stories like *Aithiyamala* roughly defines *Yakshi* as a young shape-shifting woman who is bewitching, fanged, voracious, vampiric fiend.⁶⁴ The *Yakshis* waits on lonesome moonlit jungle paths for ill-fated male victims to wander into her snare. Once she bewitches him with her charm and beauty, she leads him to her abode (i.e. *pala* or *karimbana* or *banyan* tree) and ends up eating his flesh and drinking his blood. What was left of the *Yakshi's* victim in the morning were nails, hair, and bones that lie scattered below her night-blooming *pala* (Frangipani) or *karimpana* (Palm) tree. By analysing the demonized representation of *Yakshis* by *Brahmins* and *Kathanars* (the Christian priests were respectfully called as *Kathanars* by natives) it is understood that *Yakshi* was viewed as a dangerous rival against whom representatives of religious groups tested their determination. The *Yakshi* stories of Kerala's Hindu and Christian traditions exposes shared religious frameworks and philosophies. The Jain concept of sacred space associated with *Yakshi* was redefined and re-presented as a space of negativity and tempting blood-sucking seductress⁶⁵ was most likely to keep traders and travellers away from the sacred places of Jains, located along many of the trade routes. As mentioned earlier, *Yakshis* were protective deities of Jain *Tirthankaras*, so their shrines might have been erected along the trade routes as protectors of the Jain traders. The shrines of *Yakshis* were visible as sacred groves (sacred to Jains) or as a part of secluded path of forest, as depicted in folklores. In the folklores, such sacred

⁶³ Corinne Dempsey, "Nailing Heads and Splitting Hairs: Conflict, Conversion, and the Bloodthirsty Yakshi in South India", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 111-132.

⁶⁴ For details see, Kottarathil Sankunni, *Aithiyamala*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1991; Elamkulam Kunjan Pilla, *Unnuneeli Sandesham*, Sahithya pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham, Kottayam, 2016..

⁶⁵ Pius Malekandathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

groves are depicted as haunted by *Yakshis*, for example - *Yakshiparambu* (on the way from Thrissur to Irinjalakuda) in the story of Kaladiyil Bhattathiri,⁶⁶ in *Aithiyamala*. The Kadamattathu Kathanar⁶⁷ was a conjurer-exorcist-priest-saint from the Kerala's Christian tradition. The Kadamattath Kathanar's folklore associated with conjuring of *Yakshi*⁶⁸ is said to have taken place in a trade route connecting Thiruvananthapuram and Padmanabhapuram in Travancore.⁶⁹ There were mentions of constant disappearances of travellers in this part of the forest route. So people began to spread the fear among the others that the route is home to a fierce *Yakshi*. Eventually, the land route got abandoned and overgrown with vegetation. As per the folk lore, most powerful Brahmin conjurers could not capture or subdue the *Yakshi*, hearing which Kadamattath Kathanar travelled to the haunted area and encountered the temptingly beautiful *Yakshi*. As the story narrates-

“The *Yakshi* shyly approached him to ask for some lime to mix with her *vettilla* (betel leaf chew). Kadamattath Kathanar offered her a wedge of lime, with an iron nail hidden inside that. As per Biblical means Vampires (here *Yakshis*) are typically scared of iron, the nail's powerful magic prevents her from escaping. Achan drove a nail on top of her head thereby stripped her of all the powers and gained control over her. The story concludes as, Kadamattath achan (alias Kadamattath Kathanar) bound *Yakshi* at the Panayannarkavu temple (dedicated to Bhagavati) compound, where she is bound to this day.”

⁶⁶ See the story of ‘Kaladiyil Bhattathiri’ mentioned in Kottarathil Shankunny, *Ithiyamaala*, Kottayam, 1998, p.106

⁶⁷ Kottarathil Shankunny, *Aithiyamala*, pp.428-441.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Corinne Dempsey, Nailing Heads and Splitting Hairs: Conflict, Conversion, and the Bloodthirsty *Yakshi* in South India, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 111-132.

In *Aithiyamala*, there is also the mention of a duel between Kadamattath Kathanar and Kunjaman Potty⁷⁰ over superiority of their magic, like *Indrajalam* and *Mahendrajalam*⁷¹ and *Chathan Seva*⁷² of Kunjaman Potty. In the end, Kadamattath Kathanar won over Potty. The *Aithiyamala* also mentions about the books of magic and conjuring compiled by Kadamattath Kathanar which is similar to *Mantrasaram*, *Yantrasaram*, *Prayogasaram* and *Prapanjasaram* of the Brahmanical traditions⁷³. But the books were not in the language familiar to the Brahmins.⁷⁴

The one who established conquest over *Yakshis* through mystic tales seems to have been considered as the one who offered safety and protection in a locality. It should also be said that there were also places where shrines of *Yakshis* were not demonized. The *Yakshi* worship continues till date in certain places of Kerala and one such place is *Durgambika temple* near Madayi where annual *pooja* (ritual and festal celebrations) for *Yakshiamma* (mother goddess *Yakshi*) is performed. The rituals in annual *pooja* for *Yakshis* consisted of rituals like making *panchavarnakalam* of *karalaroopam*⁷⁵ of *Yakshi* and performing *kalampattu*..⁷⁶ Similar *Yakshi* worship continues to exist in temples of *Muppathadam* and *Chengamanad* too⁷⁷. These temples somehow bypassed the attempts of Brahmin authorities to demonise *Yakshis*. A Ceylonese Tamil philosopher and Metaphysicist, as well as a pioneering historian and philosopher of Indian art Ananda Kentish Muthu Coomaraswamy in his book *Yaksas*⁷⁸ has

⁷⁰ Kottarathil Shankunny, *Aithiyamala*, p.438.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., p.439.

⁷³ Ibid., p.441.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The figure of *Yakshi* like that of a traditional mural drawn using five natural colours on the floor of *pooja sthanam* (place where ritual will be held).

⁷⁶ The *kalampattu* is a singing ritual similar to the *tottampattu* of all folk deities.

⁷⁷ Raghava Warriar, “Yakshikal, Ammadaivangal” in Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Mythum Samoohavum*, Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham, Kottayam, 2013, p.91.

⁷⁸ Ananda Kentish Muthu Coomaraswamy, *Yaksas*, Smithsonian Institution of Freer Gallery of Art, Wasington D.C, 1931.

mentioned the ways to identify the sculpture of *Yakshas* and *Yakshis* from all other sculptures. One such paradigm is presence of bells⁷⁹ in the sculptures of most of the *Yakshas* and *Yakshis*. He further defines that there is a belief that *Yakshas* and *Yakshis* have voice like that of bells.⁸⁰ Applying the view of Coomaraswamy, I could identify the goddess in *Paruvassery Palli Bhagavathi* temple as a *Yakshi*, because it has a bell in the right hand. In the same temple the deity worshipped as *Ayyappan* was identified as *Thirthankara Chandraprabha* by Raghava Warriar.⁸¹ If the male deity is Chandraprabha then the *Yakshi* worshipped as Bhagavathi is in fact *Jwalamalini*.⁸² Similarly, the goddess worshipped as Brahmanical deity Parvathi in *Neelamperoor Palli Bhagavathi* temple has snake hood on top of its *daruvigraham* (idol made of neem tree wood), in addition to that the '*palli*' word remaining in the name of the temple might be suggestive of its Jain past.(*Palli* ususually denotes Budhist shrine) Hence, the goddess could be *Padmavathi Yakshi*, the protective deity of *Thirthankara Parsvanatha*.

So, from what we have seen in can be inferred that quite dispersed are the icons and shrines connected with Jainism and Budhism, but their meanings were mutated and modified over years under the influence of Bhakti disseminated in upland regions through the devotional literature of Ezhuthachan and Poonthanam. The waves of Bhakti movements have transformed several *kavus* of Kerala into Brahmanical temples. In many of the temples like *Paruvassery* and *Nelamperoor* the transformation did not even replace the original idols, yet they were portrayed as Brahmanical deities. Further, contrasting is the case in *Thiruvalla* temple in

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.56.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Raghava Warriar & Rajan Gurukkal, *Mythum Samoohavum*, Sahityaprarvathaka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2012, p.91.

⁸² Jwalamalini is the protective deity of Thirthankara Chandraprabha.

Travancore where the *Yakshi* is a protective deity⁸³ to Vallabha (presently defined as Vishnu). Thiruvalla was an important inland market on the mouth of Manimala River. The *Yakshi* shrine may be the clue to understand the past of Thiruvalla as a centre of Jain traders. Thus, one can say that wealth from trade made ruling class, traders and religious institutions rich. These wealthy institutions began spreading their influence in the new areas, which created cultural mutation resulting in decline of folk religion as well as plurality and syncretisation of Brahmanical religion. As mentioned earlier, the annual festal celebrations which are common to all religious institutions in Kerala had patronage of Kings of respective kingdoms as well as enormous offerings from the rich traders. These festivals not only just firmed the influence of Brahmanical faith and Christianity in the uplands, but also of cultural production⁸⁴ and festival markets that enhanced trade. The immigration of Brahmins from lowland paddy cultivating enclaves to uplands resulted in the emergence of many Brahmin temples in upland regions. As mentioned above many Brahmin temples emerged on top of Jain shrines and folk *kavus* which might have been the reasons for retaining many of the folk rituals. One such most important ritual is *ezhunnallath*⁸⁵ of elephants wearing *nettippattam* (gold plated caparisons), *muthukuda* (highly decorated huge umbrella), *alavattam*, *venchamaram*, and *mala* (long necklaces worn on the neck of elephants). In the *Neelamperoor Palli bhagavati* temple mentioned earlier the *daru vighram* of Paravathi (in reality *Padmavathi Yakshi*) is used. The *kavus* in central and northern Kerala have the tradition of *ezhunnallath* along with common rituals like *theyyam*, *velichappad*, *thullal* and *thottam* etc. It might have been from the folk ritual of *ezhunallath*, that the Brahmanical temples (annual *poorams*) and Dargahs (annual

⁸³ Raghava Varrier & Rajan Gurukkal, *Mythum Samoohavum* p.92.

⁸⁴ Pius Malekandhathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala," in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

⁸⁵ The ritual procession of Elephant regalia is called as *ezhunnallath* in Kerala.

*nerchas*⁸⁶) incorporated *ezhunnallath* of elephants. Thus there was a sharing of this cultural tradition among the Christians and the Muslims as well. As mentioned earlier, both, the Brahmins and *Kathanars*⁸⁷ were part of the move to demonize folk deities as evil goddesses. Brahmins and *Kattanars* might have demonized the deities of Jains their competitors, as an attempt to become dominant faith of high ranges.

An attack on folk deities like demonization are absent in folk traditions of Mappilas, but we come across Mappilas in folk rituals like *Theyyam*. The existence of *theyyam* indeed indicated the association of Mappilas with folk religion, as few Mappilas were worshipped as folk deities with theyyam. The *Aali theyyam* is the *theyyam* of Mappila *mantravadi* character Aali,⁸⁸ the performer in trance speaks to the believers as Aali is ordering to the believers. The rituals of *thottampattu* and *panchavarnakalam* also exist for Mappila *theyyam* deities, just like every other folk deity of Kerala. The Mappila *theyyam* may also be indicating the importance of Mappilas as a part of folk deity believers who cultivated pepper and other spices of Kerala.

4.4 *Nerchas, Palli Perunnal* and Trade Networks

The St. Thomas Christianity and Brahmanism alone were not the only invasive⁸⁹ religions in uplands. Islam religion existed in hinterlands was undergoing mutations owing to the influences from regional folk traditions. The Sufi *dargahs* that emerged in the hinterlands of Cochin and Travancore were different from the *dargahs* and

⁸⁶ The etymology of *Nercha* is from the Dravidian root word 'ner'. The word has several meanings which includes 'truth' and 'agreement'. Hence *Nercha* express the concept of a commitment to worship and make offerings, at a Mosque, *dargah*, *Khanqah* or to a Non-Muslim deity, if prayers are granted.

⁸⁷ The case of Kadamattathu Kathanar and capturing *Yakshi* at Parumala in Pre-Modern times and the case of Orthodox Christian saint-bishop, St. Gregorios of Parumala alias Parumala Tirumeni capturing the same *Yakshi* in nineteenth century.

⁸⁸ T. Ajeesh, *Theyyam kadhakal*, Manorama Books, Kottayam, 2013. p53.

⁸⁹ Invasive because Brahmanical religion was tending to spread very quickly and was harming native folk religion.

khanqahs of Zamorin's *Calicut* and northern Kerala. The Muslim traders believed that the Sufi sheikhs, whether they were alive (as in *khanqahs*) or dead (as in *dargahs*), could provide protection to the travelers and traders using trade routes that passes through forested and wild spaces, confronting strange and dangerous circumstances.⁹⁰ The authorities of Sufi institutions might have propagated to traders that they are always safe in the territory of spiritual *wilayat* (jurisdiction) of the respective Sufi Sheikh. Such beliefs and customs must have made traders (irrespective of their faith) halt in Sufi *khanqahs* and *dargahs* for seeking the blessings of the Sufi saint during the course of their journey through wilderness and risky spaces.⁹¹ These traders gave offering to the *dargah* or *khanqah* where they visited; it was these offering which made the institutions wealthy and thereby expanded their power and influence in the neighbouring areas.

The scholarly works produced so far, have traced the origin of *Mappila* (community to the settlement of Arab traders and the spread of Islam in the eighth and the ninth centuries. As mentioned earlier, their religious festivals were also markets (*utsava chanda*) and these festivals ensured the need for increased production of spices. These markets also attracted merchants from faraway places who found good market for their commodities. The largest festivals of Mappilas were *nerchas*,⁹² which were

⁹⁰ Pius Malekandhathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala," in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

⁹¹ The belief that Sufi Sheikhs would provide protection and ensured safety for those traveling within their spiritual *wilayat* (spiritual jurisdiction) existed in all parts of India, such confidence building mental constructs made traders often visit *khanqahs* and *dargahs* to seek the blessings of the Sheikh and gave offering to the *dargah*. For details on the notions of spiritual *wilayat* see Simon Digby, "The Sufi Sheikh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India", *Iran*, vol.28, 1990, pp.71-81; Simon Digby, "The Sufi Sheikh as a Source of Authority in Medieval India", *Purushartha*, vol. 9, 1986, pp. 57-77.

⁹² Stephen F. Dale and M. Gangadhara Menon, "'Nerccas': Saint-Martyr Worship among the Muslims of Kerala", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol.41, No. 3 (1978), pp. 523-538.

annual festivals or *Urs*⁹³ day of the Sufi Sheikhs at their *Jaram*⁹⁴ (*dargah*). These *nerchas* were expensive and rich pageantries which combines nominally Islamic elements with certain features of indigenous folk festivals.⁹⁵ Thus, the focal point of all *nerchas* is the reverence shown to their *beevi*, *peer*, *sheikh*, or *shahid*. These festivals are conducted within a ritual framework almost parallel to the traditional way of worship of folk deities in Kerala.⁹⁶ These *nerchas* might offer important means to study the history and religious culture of the important Muslim community called *Mappilas*. The ritual of each *nercha*, the presentation of offerings at the *jaram* of a *beevi*, *peer*, *sheikh*, or *shahid* was organized by the *Thangals*. The *Thangals* were leaders of the *Mappila ulema*, who as the leaders of the *Mappila* community usually took the decisions whether to organise a particular *nercha* or not. There existed two separate *Thangal ulemas* in Malabar- Mambram *Thangals*⁹⁷ and Kondotty *Thangals*⁹⁸. Amongst the both, the former had more influence among *Mappilas* and was inclined to Sunni orthodoxy of the *Shafei madhab* (school of thought). The Kondotty *Thangals* were representative of *Shi'ite* orientation, which was popular among *paradesi* Muslim traders. The *nercha* was characterised by festal celebrations, fair market and the

⁹³ The *Urs* is the death anniversary of a Sufi saint in South Asia, usually held at the saint's *dargah*. In most of the Sufi orders like *Naqshbandiyyah*, *Suhrawardiyya*, *Chishtiyya*, *Qadiriyya*, etc. the *Urs* is celebrated with passion.

⁹⁴ The *dargah* of Sufi saint is popularly called as *Jaram* in Malabar. For example *Munambath Beevi Jaram* in pre-modern maritime trade centre of Ponnani (part of erstwhile kingdom of Calicut) and *Veliancode Jaram* in Ponnani.

⁹⁵ Stephen F. Dale and M. Gangadhara Menon, "'Nerccas': Saint-Martyr Worship among the Muslims of Kerala", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol.41, No. 3 (1978), pp. 523-538.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ The Mambram *Thangals* are also known as *Ba'alawis* in Malabar, arrived in Calicut from Hadramawt in 1748 A.D. The first *Ba'alawi* Sufi saint who established Mambram *Thangal* family was Saiyid Jifri *Thangal*. His *Jaram* at Mambram became a sacred shrine to a large number of devotees in Malabar.

⁹⁸ The founder of Kondotty *Thangal* family is Shaykh Muhammed Shah, who was popular among the *Paradesi* Muslim *Ulema* of Northern Kerala. 115). The Kondotty *Thangals* represented *Shi'ite* orientation, evident from practices like, that of celebration of Muharram festival and the insistence for the prostration of *murids* (disciples) before him.

performances of *daffmuttu*,⁹⁹ *arabana muttu*¹⁰⁰ and *kolkali*¹⁰¹ and performances of folk worshippers. The most important part of *nercha* was the bringing of gifts as offerings to *Jaram* by wealthy traders, folk deity believers, *khalasis*, craft guilds etc. in a series of *varavus* (arrivals).¹⁰² Some of the *varavu* were on top of elephants wearing *nettippattam* (traditional caprison), as it was in the case of Chettuva *chandanakudam nercha*. In *Chandanakudam nercha*, the pilgrims on foot or on top of the elephant carried pots covered with sandalwood paste which was dedicated to the *jaram*. The ceremony of offering was often conducted before a *nilavilakku*, a tiered metal lamp found in houses, *kavus*, temples, old Mosques (as in Cheraman Juma Masjid) and old Churches of Kerala. These *nerchas* do not appear in Islamic calendars probably because they represented incorporation of folk religious traditions into Islam. Thus *nerchas* are examples of syncretic culture and part of accommodative Islam. Music (like *thottam* of *kavus- mappila pattu* in *daff muttu*), art performances (*kolkali*, *daffmutt* and other folk performances) and procession of elephants (in *Chandanakudam nercha* elephant procession is similar to *ezhunnallath* in *kavus*). Hence, *nerchas* are similar to annual celebrations in *kavus* such as *velas* and *palli perunnal* of the churches. The role of *thangals* in the festal celebrations might have enhanced their power and influence as *ulema* (leader) of all Mappilas. As mentioned

⁹⁹ The *duffmuttu* is an art form prevalent in the Malabar region of the state of Kerala in south India. It derives its name from the duff, a percussion instrument made of wood and ox skin. *Duffmuttu* is performed to commemorate festivals, *uroos* and marriages. The *daffmuttu* songs are tribute to Islamic heroes and martyrs. While performing, the dancers (only males) drum the duff with their fingers or palms while moving rhythmically and often toss them over their heads.

¹⁰⁰ The *arabana Muttu* or *aravana Muttu* is a closely related art form which uses a drum called *arabana* that is similar to the *duff* used in *daffmutt*.

¹⁰¹ The *kolkali* is a folk art performed in North Malabar. In *kolkali* the dance performers move in a circle, striking small sticks and keeping rhythm with special steps. The circle expands and contracts as the dance progress. The accompanying music gradually rises in pitch and the dance reaches its climax. As per researchers many of the traditional performing art forms of Kerala like *Kathakali*, *Velakali*, *Poorakkali* and *Thacholikali* have drawn elements from *Kalarippayatt* (the traditional martial art of Kerala; mostly used to train soldiers during pre-modern times) during their various stages of evolution.

¹⁰² Stephen F. Dale and M. Gangadhara Menon, ““Nerccas”: Saint-Martyr Worship among the Muslims of Kerala”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol.41, No. 3 (1978), pp. 523-538.

earlier, these festal celebrations were also harvest festivals which enhanced eventually the need for increasing production. Thus, *nerchas* might also have strengthened the relations of *thangals* (both *Mambram thangal* and *Kondotty thangal*) with their respective kings (Zamorin, Kolattiri or Ali Raja) through symbiosis of trade and syncretic culture. The other important *muslim* trading community which engaged mainly in inland trade network was *Ravuthar Muslims* of Tamilakam, who traded with inland spice markets of the kingdoms like Thekkenkur, Vadakkenkur, Kizhmalainadu, Poonjar, Travancore and Cochin. As mentioned in the second chapter, these *Ravuthars* and Tamil *Pattars* traded pepper with the markets in *Nayak* kingdoms of *Madurai*, *Gingee*, and *Tanjavur*. The same traders also traded pepper with the markets of *Dindugal*, *Srirangapattinam*¹⁰³ and Corommandel ports, from where pepper was shipped to the markets of the Mughals, Ming China, Saffavid Persia and the Ottoman Empire. The *Tamil Pattars*, *Ravuthars* and *Syrian Christians* traded pepper with Tamilakam through the wilderness *ghat* routes passing through *Peermedu*,¹⁰⁴ *Thodupuzha*, *Erattupetta*, *Bodinaickannur* pass etc. The *Ravuthars* and *Tamil Pattars* also traded through Padmanabhapuram, Thiruvanathapuram and Nagercoil route as well as through Palakkad gap passing through *Palakkad*, *Kongu*, *Palani*, *Salem* and *Madurai*. These forested trade routes were once the routes used by Jain traders before 11th century, which is indicated by the remnants of the shrines of *Yakshis*, *Yakshas* along these routes. These sacred shrines of *yakshis* were mentioned in Brahmin and St. Thomas Christian folklores as spaces haunted by *yakshis*;¹⁰⁵ These folklores of *yakshi* attacks and conjuring created mental block of fear even in the

¹⁰³ Pius Malekandathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala" in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017, p.8.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ The *Namboothiri* Brahmins and the stories of Kadamattathu Kattanar depicted *Yakshis* as evil, blood thirsty and haunting horrors of uninhabited wilderness.

actual wilderness.¹⁰⁶ The century long isolation of these routes because of spread of Brahmin ritual practices and power struggles of chieftains made the sacred geographies in the wilderness to get transformed into ‘haunted geographies’. The intensification of demand for pepper from hinterlands increased the need for overcoming the obstacles of wilderness and the multiple dimensions of fears associated with *yakshi* tales. The *parumala* which is part of *Erattupetta* finds mentioning in the folklore of *Kadamattathu Kathanar*, in which he pierces a nail on the head of the *yakshi* and tranquilized her and later a shrine of a *Yakshi* was made by him in *Parumala*¹⁰⁷. Such places and trade routes perceived as haunted geographies were dotted by *dargahs*¹⁰⁸ and *khanqahs*¹⁰⁹ of *Peers* (Sufi *sheikhs*) whose *wilayat*¹¹⁰ spread the belief that, their spiritual powers could give protection to the travelers and traders passing through forest and wild spaces. That might have been the reason why we find mercantile networks run into *dargahs*, *khanqahs* (later *khanqahs* transform into *dargahs* with *Urs* celebrations) and mosques with legendary tales; as in the case of *Peerumedu*,¹¹¹ *dargah* of *Thodupuzha*, *Nainar Mosque*,¹¹² *Jama - Ali* mosque at *Pathanamthitta*,¹¹³ *dargah* of *Mudikkal*¹¹⁴, *dargah* of *Thottakkadu*,¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ Pius Malekandhathil, “Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala” in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan.

¹⁰⁷ Corinne Dempsey, Nailing Heads and Splitting Hairs: Conflict, Conversion, and the Bloodthirsty *Yakshi* in South India, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 111-132.

¹⁰⁸ The *dargah* is tomb of a Sufi Sheikh.

¹⁰⁹ The *khanqahs* are abode of Sufi saints alive.

¹¹⁰ The *wilayat* here is the territory under the jurisdiction of a *dargah*.

¹¹¹ The etymology of *Peerumedu* deriving from *Pir* (Sufi Sheikh) and *medu* (hill), thus meant ‘hill of the Sufi sheikh. *Peerumedu* is located on the ghat routes from Thodupuzha, Erattupetta and Kanjirappaly going to Madurai.

¹¹² The *Nainar* Mosque dedicated to *Vavar* (a character in the folklore of Ayyappa or Shastavu) located in Thodupuzha.

¹¹³ *Jama - Al Mosque* at Pathanamthitta has annual celebration of *Chandanakkudam* festival.

¹¹⁴ The *Mudikkal dargah* shareef of Muhammed Muhiyidheen Bukhari, is located on near the *Perumbavoor* on the civilizational belt of River Periyar. *Mudikkal* might have been an important trade centre in pre-modern times.

¹¹⁵ The Mazar of Hazrath Kaduvayil, in Thottakkadu, Trivandrum

Changanassery pazhayapalli,¹¹⁶ *Kanjiramattom*¹¹⁷ and *Beemapalli*¹¹⁸ etc. The offerings made to the *dargahs* by traders made them wealthy; the *Urs*¹¹⁹ day festal celebrations brought the masses together and also enhanced the trade in fair market. The *Urs* celebrations might have enhanced the need for increasing the production of pepper and in turn benefited the commercial and political interests of the lesser rajas of Kingdoms like *Thekkenkur*, *Vadakkencur*, *Kizhmalainadu* etc. The *Ravuthars* and Tamil *Pattars* traded not just through high ranges of Idukki, that is parts of erstwhile Kizhmalainadu, Poonjar and Thiruvananthapuram alone, but they also carried out significant amount of trade through Palakkad pass. The *agrahara* settlement of Tamil *Pattars* in Kalpathy village, Palakkad¹²⁰ and *Ravuthar* Muslim settlement around *Manjakkulam Dargah Shareef* in Palakkad attest to the history of pepper trade through Palakkad pass with the help of these mercantile intermediaries. The Tamil *Pattars* and *Ravuthars* mainly brought rice and textiles from *Tamilakam* in exchange of pepper produced in Kerala. The settlement of Tamil *Pattars* in Kalpathy developed their distinctive culture and traditions.

The Tamil Brahmin *Ayyar*¹²¹ and *Iyengar*¹²² culture which came to Palakkad through trade, was an addition to existing socio-cultural-religious plurality of Kerala. Since *Pattars* were also great scholars in Tamil literatures and were carriers of great cultures and traditions, their settlements also exhibited their inner selves. Till date *Kalpathy*

¹¹⁶ As per oral traditions is *Changanassery Pazhayapalli* is constructed on the land donated by the king of Thekkumkur. The main offerings during *Chandanakkudam* festival is rice and meat for preparing *biriyani* for the worshippers.

¹¹⁷ The *Kanjiramattom* mosque (*dargah* of Sheikh Fariduddin) has annual festal celebration rituals of *Kodikuthu* and *Chandanakudam*.

¹¹⁸ The *mazar* of Hazratha Sayeedunissa Beevi, in Beemapalli, Trivandrum; lies on the pre-modern route to Nagercoil.

¹¹⁹ The *Urs* day is also locally known as *Uroos* day in Kerala.

¹²⁰ V.V.K Vaalath, *Keralathile Sthala Charitrangal Palakkad Jilla*, Kerala Sahithya Academy, Thrissur, 1986, p.140.

¹²¹ *Ayyars* are *Shivate* Tamil Brahmins.

¹²² *Iyengars* are *Vaishnavite* Tamil Brahmins.

agraharam celebrates annual *ratholsavam*¹²³ (Cart festival) which is not seen anywhere else in Kerala. It must have been through these *Pattars* that the tradition of Carnatic music came to Kerala. The *Kalpathy* till date celebrates the annual *Kalpathy Sangeetholsavam*.¹²⁴ While studying deeply about the various compositions in *Carnatic music* one can see the plurality of ways how Carnatic music got diversified after the spread of Carnatic ragas in Kerala. The King of Travancore, Swathi Tirunal was an excellent example for making Carnatic music plural, as he made compositions in several languages.

The ghat route trade through jungle paths of *Kizhmalainadu*, *Poonjar* mentioned earlier was also used by St. Thomas Christians, who were trading partners with *Ravuthar* Muslims and *Tamil Pattars*.¹²⁵ The presence of very old churches throughout the upland terrains indicated the settlements and trade routes used by St. Thomas Christians. The most important churches were Kothamangalam, Muthalakodam, Aruvithara, Kanjirappally.¹²⁶ The movement of St. Thomas Christians can also be traced to the churches like Athirampuzha , Kayamkulam, Kottayam, Changanacherry, Kothamangalam Cheriapally, Manjapra, Nagapuzha, Pazhuvil, Mavelikara, Nediasala, Arakuzha, Kadamattom, Kottekad, Kanjur, Cheriapally, Kaduthuruthy, Thripunithara, Kunnamkulam, Pala, Cherpunkal, Muttam,

¹²³ Theresa Varghese, *Stark World Kerala*, Stark World Publishing, Bangalore, 2006, p.227.

¹²⁴ The nine day long Carnatic music festival is held every year in Kalpathy. The festival was brought to Palakkad by Tamil Pattars.

¹²⁵ Pius Malekandathil, "Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala", in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

¹²⁶ For details see, Antonio Gouvea, *Jornada do Arcebispo*, Coimbra, 1603 translated and edited by Pius Malekandathil (ed.), *Jornada of D. Alexis Menezes: A Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*. LRC Publications, Cochin, 2003(henceforth referred to as Antonio Gouvea, *Jornada do Arcebispo*), pp.176-9, 267, 330, 432-3; 334, 440-1; Pius Malekandathil, *The Mughals, the Portuguese and the Indian Ocean: Changing Imageries of Maritime India*, New Delhi, 2012, pp.85-99.

Bharananganam, Cheppadu, Chengannoor, Kudamaloor, Ernakulam, Kothanalloor, Mulanthuruthy, Kothamangalam Valiapally, Karthikapally, Kuruppumpady, Alengad, Muthalakodam, Njarackal, Koratty, Alleppey, Kanjirappilly, Kudavechur Poonjar, Parumala etc¹²⁷. These churches might have enjoyed the support of local rulers because we find St.Thomas Christians closely associated with local rulers as their fighting force¹²⁸ just like how Mappilas served as soldiers in Zamorin's fighting force. The traditional martial art of Kerala *Kalaripayattu*¹²⁹ was taught by Christian *panikkars*, *Nair Panikkars* and *Mappila panikkars*, whose disciples fought for the kings of their respective lands. One of the most famous Christian Panikkars of this period was Vallikkada Panikkar who had his *kalari* at Peringuzha on the banks of river Muvattupuzha.¹³⁰ The spice cultivating St.Thomas Christians and descendants of the foreign Christian merchants had incorporated several social stigmas into their culture from the neighbouring cultural space in the evolution of social processes which is evident from the practice of untouchability and native ceremonies related to birth, marriage and death. The oldest Churches and Mosques in Kerala are architecturally similar to Brahmanical temples that emerged during 8th to 13th centuries. There is a high possibility that, same carpenters and masons who used to build temples were hired for constructing churches in Christian settlements and Mosques and *Jarams* in Arab settlements. The saint worship amongst Mappilas was discussed earlier in the chapter, similar saint worship was practiced by Syrian Christians as well. The St.Thomas Christians used to construct Churches on

¹²⁷ For details see Fr.Bernard, *The History of the St.Thomas Christians*,Pala,1916, pp.296-327; Corinne Dempsey, Nailing Heads and Splitting Hairs: Conflict, Conversion, and the Bloodthirsty Yakṣi in South India, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 111-132.

¹²⁸ Pius Malekandathil, *Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*, New Delhi: Primus Books, 2010, pp. 38-62.

¹²⁹ The *Kalaripayattu* is a traditional martial art of Kerala, the soldiers of erstwhile Rajas where trained through *Kalaripayattu*.

¹³⁰ Pius Malekandathil, *Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*, pp. 38-62.

veneration of chiefly four saints- St.Mary, St.George, St. Prodh and Saphor (Saphir Iso) and St.Thomas, till the Portuguese intervention by the end of the sixteenth century. The church as an institution of faith (direct role) and also as mobilize of trade (indirect role) in upland regions also incorporated traditions similar to those of *Kavus* and Brahmin temples. The most important ritual which is common in annual festal celebrations like *vela*, *pooram*, *palli perunnal* and nercha is *ezhunnallath* of elephants wearing *nettippattom* (caparisons). The other ritual performances like *melam* (native bands) can also be seen in common. The annual festal celebrations of church called *palli perunnal* were also an exhibition of the centuries long evolution of syncretic-plural culture of *Nasranis*.¹³¹

The entry of the Portuguese has made tremendous impact on the growth of trade, but they levelled accusations of “Nestorian heresy”¹³² against the spice-producing indigenous Christians and their age-old customs, practices as well as rituals. There were several Lusitanian ecclesiastical institutions active in Portuguese Cochin, namely – The Order of St.Francis, Dominicans, Jesuits and Augustinians.¹³³ The Jesuits were keen on the transplantation of European culture, rites and practices in place of their centuries old heritage. In reality the entire exercise of “Europeanization”¹³⁴ was meant for commercial penetration into the hinterlands whereby they attempted to transform St.Thomas Christians as to remain permanently subservient to the interests of the Portuguese trading community. As a part of

¹³¹ The St. Thomas Christians were also known as *Nasranis* or Syrian Christians

¹³² Pius Malekandathil, Religious Rhetoric, Mercantile Strategies and a Revolting Community: A Study on the Conflicts between the St.Thomas Christians and the Portuguese *Padroado*, in Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, Ranjeeta Dutta and farhat Nasreen (ed.), *Negotiating Religion: Perspectives from Indian History*, New Delhi: Manohar, 2012, pp.353-381.

¹³³ For details see, Pius Malekandathil, Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India 1500-1663.

¹³⁴ Pius Malekandathil, Religious Rhetoric, Mercantile Strategies and a Revolting Community: A Study on the Conflicts between the St.Thomas Christians and the Portuguese *Padroado*, in Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, Ranjeeta Dutta and farhat Nasreen (ed.), *Negotiating Religion: Perspectives from Indian History*, pp.353-381.

commercial resistance against Europeanization, spice-producing St. Thomas Christians obstructed to the flow of pepper and other spices from the inland cultivated areas to the Portuguese factories at Cochin and other coastal areas. They diverted the cargo to the ports of Coromandel through several ghat-routes, with the partnership of Ravuthar Muslims and Tamil Pattars. The main settlements and spice production centers of the St. Thomas Christians were Kaduthuruthy,¹³⁵ Alengad,¹³⁶ Parur,¹³⁷ Kottayam,¹³⁸ Diamper,¹³⁹ Angamali (seat of Archbishop), Kayamkulam,¹⁴⁰ Cranganore, Quilon, Changanacherry, Palai, Kuravilangadu etc.¹⁴¹ Despite the commonality of religion of Christianity, there emerged a feeling that the spice-producing St. Thomas Christians and the trading group of the Portuguese were not actually brothers of the “same faith” because of their differences in customs and practices.¹⁴² Since 1550s the Portuguese resorted to the strategy of deporting the East Syrian bishops¹⁴³ coming to Kerala from West Asia for ensuring their speedy integration with the *Padroado* system. The Portuguese thought that the West Asian bishops were being a hindrance to their penetration into the spice-producing areas of central Kerala. They viewed West Asian bishop’s exercise of spiritual jurisdiction over the St. Thomas Christians as a threat to their commercial and religious ambitions which is evident from the Portuguese efforts preventing the bishops from *Chaldean* church to serve in Kerala. It

¹³⁵ Pius Malekandathil (ed.), *Jornada of D. Alexis Menezes: A Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*. LRC Publications, Cochin, 2003, pp.192-205.

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp.136-146; pp.355-361.

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp.339-355.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp.302-320.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp.410-419.

¹⁴¹ For details see, Sebastian Velassery, “Faith, Ethnicity and Nationalism”, *St. Thomas Christians in India, India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 3/4 (Winter 2013-Spring 2014), pp. 15-34.

¹⁴² Pius Malekandathil, *Religious Rhetoric, Mercantile Strategies and a Revolting Community: A Study on the Conflicts between the St. Thomas Christians and the Portuguese Padroado*, in Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, Ranjeeta Dutta and Farhat Nasreen (ed.), *Negotiating Religion: Perspectives from Indian History*, pp.353-381.

¹⁴³ The East Syrian Bishops were the Bishops from Persian gulf who came to Kerala in service of St. Thomas Christians.

was their strategy to break the ties of St.Thomas Christian community with the Persian Gulf regions.¹⁴⁴ This was followed by a series of ceremonies for the introduction of Latin liturgical rite and Lusitanian practices which were legitimized by the provocative Synod of Diamper¹⁴⁵ held in 1599 under the leadership of Dom Alexis de Menezes, the Archbishop of Goa.¹⁴⁶ It was the pepper cultivated by St.Thomas Christians in the hinterlands that made rulers of Thodupuzha,¹⁴⁷ Vadakkenkur,¹⁴⁸ Thekkenkur,¹⁴⁹ Alengadu,¹⁵⁰ Parur,¹⁵¹ Porca¹⁵² and Cochin¹⁵³ emerge as wealthy kingdoms. This might have been the reason why rulers provided *Nasranis* great amount of support and protection for their resistance against the Portuguese. The resistance of St.Thomas Christians led to drastic reduction in supply of pepper in Cochin for the trade of the Portuguese with Europe.¹⁵⁴ The resistance movements of St.Thomas Christians, finally burst out into an open revolt in 1653. The agitated masses assembled around a granite-cross (the famous *Coonan Kurishu*) planted in the city of Mattancherry and took an oath that they would not any longer remain under the *Sampalur pathiris*¹⁵⁵ (Portuguese priests) belonging to the Jesuit Order.¹⁵⁶ This oath ceremony took place in 1653, was usually addressed as the “Oath of Coonan Cross”. It is being mentioned, that since everyone could not touch the granite cross, the agitated mob had tied ropes onto the cross and by touching these ropes they took

¹⁴⁴ Pius Malekandathil(ed.), *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes*, pp.46 -64.

¹⁴⁵ The Kingdom of Diamper (Udayamperoor) was the location of Synod of Diamper.

¹⁴⁶ Jonas Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, Rome, 1958, p.24.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.176; 179

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 177-8

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.426-8

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.229

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 128ff; 231-4;341-58

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp.148-151

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp.200-204.

¹⁵⁴ Pius Malekandathil, Religious Rhetoric, Mercantile Strategies and a Revolting Community: A Study on the Conflicts between the St.Thomas Christians and the Portuguese *Padroado*, in Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, Ranjeeta Dutta and farhat Nasreen (ed.), *Negotiating Religion: Perspectives from Indian History*, pp.353-381.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ The Jesuit ecclesiastical authorities and priests, were called as *Sampalur pathiris* by Nasranis; a term that denoted priests from the Jesuit college of São Paulo of Goa.

the oath of break.¹⁵⁷ That marked the end of half a century long Portuguese *Padroado* administration.

In annual celebrations (*palli perunnal*) of Latin Christian church, the Latin Christians staged theatrical performances like *chavittu natakam*¹⁵⁸ (plays based on Biblical themes or European Christian history for example Karlaman natakam based on Emperor Charlemagne), which would have helped to enhance the production of spices (as that was their main source of income). It is true that Portuguese interventions created theological differences and divisions among St.Thomas Christians. But their role in spice trade continued even during the time of Dutch commerce and later under the Kingdom of Travancore. The harvest festivals of churches called *palli perunnals* continues till date; which ensures the survival of centuries old culture, traditions and rituals.

4.5 Conclusion

The spice trade through ghat routes of Kerala is given lesser importance by leading trade historians. Study of inland trade deserves more attention owing to the crucial role of trade in social and political processes. The earliest religious institutions which were linked with ghat route trade were Jain temples that functioned as trade-mobilizing mechanisms before 9th century AD. The Jain trade guilds like *Ayyavole*, *Nalpattennayiravar*, *Valanchiyar* etc. moved their cargo of spices through the forested ghat routes of Kumali pass, Palakkad pass and Wayanad pass. These three earliest

¹⁵⁷ Pius Malekandathil, Religious Rhetoric, Mercantile Strategies and a Revolting Community: A Study on the Conflicts between the St.Thomas Christians and the Portuguese *Padroado*, in Rameshwar Prasad Bahuguna, Ranjeeta Dutta and Farhat Nasreen (ed.), *Negotiating Religion: Perspectives from Indian History*, pp.353-381.

¹⁵⁸ The *Chavittu natakam* is a performing art form of Christians of Kerala, believed to be originated during the 16th century, this art form has traces of influences from both folk theatre *bale* and Magi plays of Eastern Syrian Christianity.

ghat routes are dotted by continuous network of *Palli* (Buddhist shrines) and shrines of protective deities of Jains called as *yakshas* and *yakshis*. Jainism declined during 9th-11th centuries in Kerala which led to the isolation and peripheralization of the religious institution of Jains. Other than Jain Institutions there existed *Kavus* of various folk deities in the upland regions of Kerala. The earliest cultivators of spices might have been folk deity worshippers who obeyed to the commands of their *shaminstic* folk priest. The intoxicated folk priest passed orders to the masses as if the deity itself is speaking to them. The *velas* (festal celebrations) of the *Kavu* were also harvesting celebrations in the upland regions, characterised by *utsava chandas* (festival markets) that might have acted as a mechanism that stimulated the production of spices. After the decline of Kulashekaras, the various rulers of upland principalities were keen on increasing the production of spices so that the accumulated wealth could be used for state building and legitimising their claim as Kings of the land. The vacuum of inland trade with Tamilakam left by Jain traders were filled by St.Thomas Christians, Tamil *Pattars* and *Ravuthar* Muslims. The religious institutions and settlements of *Pattars*, *Ravuthars* and *Nasranis* also dotted the trade routes through which the merchants floated cargo to different markets. The chieftains who accumulated wealth through trade in order to establish themselves as Kshatriya kings of the land attracted Brahmins from low lying paddy cultivated plains to the upland enclaves. The *vedic* rituals of Brahmins such as *Hiranyagarbha*, *Ariyittuvazhcha* etc. alone were the only known means for the chieftains to establish themselves as Kshatriyas with long mythical genealogy tracing back to *puranas*. The emergence of Brahmanical temples in the uplands also resulted in spread of *Bhakti* wave of *Vaishnavism* in the uplands, the spread of cultural and theatrical forms like *koothu*, *thullal Mahabharatha parayanam* etc., and transmission of devotional

literature including *Jnanapana* of Poonthanam and *Adhyatmaramayanam* of Thunjath Ezhuthachan. The brahmanical temples, churches and *dargahs* were depended on trade through the ghat routes as their source of income was offerings from the traders. The temples, churches and *dargahs* organised their annual celebrations by incorporating the traditions of *velas* of *kavus*. Thus, harvesting festivals, *utsava chandas* (festival markets) and *ezhunnallath* of elephants and folk performances became part of *poorams* and festal celebrations in Brahmin temples, and occasionally in *palli perunnals* as well as *nerchas* and annual *Urs* celebration of *dargahs*. The coastal areas of Kerala were known for a mosaic society and settlements since ancient times, but uplands were isolated areas till 13th century. With the strengthening of inland trade the society in uplands also became pluralistic and inclusive.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The foregoing chapters highlighted the way how the evolving trade influenced the trajectories of religion and polity in Kerala during the period between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. With the collapse of the central authority of the Cheras of Mahodayapuram in the beginning of the thirteenth century and the eventual parcellization of Kerala polity into smaller principalities and chieftaincies, Kerala stood at the cross-roads of transition. With less land-space available for rice cultivation because of the topographical conditions of Kerala, the principality chieftains were bound to participate in the expanding maritime trade for mobilizing supplementary sources of income. The rich availability of spices, particularly pepper, made Kerala ports the haven for foreign merchants, who also brought a variety of cargo and wealth for procuring them. The principality chieftains and evolving local rulers of Kerala started expanding their political borders in such a way as to get into the outlets of the trading world wherever it would be possible. The chieftains who exhibited greater ability to manoeuvre and influence the course of trade, by expanding the pepper hinterland through conquests or by facilitating smooth linkage between the pepper production centres in the interior and the trading centres on the coast, often could assert their superiority politically in the region.

The 32 Brahmin villages in Kerala and the initial brahmadeya agrarian settlements were limited to paddy cultivated lowlands. The low-lying paddy cultivating area happened to be the primary geography that sustained the Kulashekaras of Mahodayapuram in their political processes. The port cities in Chera kingdom like Kurakeni Kollam, Muziris, Ezhimala etc. were centres of flourishing trade, even

though in coastal areas Brahmin settlements are absent. The Brahminical perceptions of purity, pollution, and stigma related to the sea-crossing might have prevented Brahmin engagements from spice trade and the eco-zones of *marutam* and *mullai tinai* happened to be the core area of Brahminical habitation in Kerala. They could open up the lower riverine valleys of Kerala for their settlement and their agrarian engagements. When the Cheras got fragmented the chieftains of fourteen administrative divisions of the Cheras started asserting power and clout of varying degrees in different parts of Kerala. Only a few of the chieftains of the erstwhile administrative divisions could bank upon the returns from wet land rice cultivation for sustaining their political activities. Because of the topography, the rest had to depend upon resources linked with trade. Many of the evolving chieftains had to take a policy favouring spice trade and expansion of spice-cultivation as that ensured for them enough wealth for instituting various devices and mechanisms of power.

With the intensification of maritime trade in the Indian Ocean from twelfth and thirteenth century onwards, we find the spice-exporting potential of Kerala ports getting increased. This happened mainly because of the increasing efforts of various chieftains of evolving principalities to bring more geographies under spice cultivation. The inland principality chieftains of Kerala promoted the efforts of migratory trends of the spice-cultivating groups of the St. Thomas Christians and the Ezhavas to move to more and more virgin areas for expanding pepper cultivation. In this process, the inland parts of Kerala, which till remained within the eco-zones of *Palai* and *Kurinci tinai*s were brought under pepper cultivation by these groups specialized in pepper cultivation in differing degrees and the local rulers seeing it as a significant wealth-yielding activity, began to encourage policies favouring the expansion of pepper cultivation. As their topography was not conducive for rice cultivation, they realized

that the profit from spices would help to compensate the price they had to pay for rice elsewhere and that the wealth they accrued from spice trade would help them to assert their position well in the region.

The intensification of maritime trade along the coast by thirteenth century was initially perceived by two ambitious land-locked rulers, the chieftains of Nediyruppu swarupam and Perumpadappu swarupam, who found shifting of political base from agrarian enclave to maritime trading centre to be something that would enable them to bank on returns from maritime trade for building a relatively strong power house. The chief of Nediyruppu swarupam from Eranadu conquered Calicut held by Polathiri and after having defeated the latter established himself as a maritime ruler with Calicut as his primary capital and Ponnani as his secondary capital. The chief of Perumpadappu swarupam shifted his base from Vanneri near Ponnani and moved to Cochin where he localized his power. With the support of Muslim merchants and local trading groups both the rulers managed to develop their ports as major trading centres and regular flow of cargo to these ports was ensured by political conquests of major pepper-producing geographies which were made to remain linked with these ports as principal supplying sources.

The distant pepper production centres were connected with the major pepper exporting ports rather slowly and that too with the help of a variety of mechanisms. During the time of the rule of the Cheras of Mahodayapuram, the Brahmin oligarchs who sustained the Chera power edifice despised Buddhism and Jainism as well as their trading endeavours. As trading activities would sabotage the socio-economic Brahminical order based on the holding of land, trade was attacked by them and people were dissuaded from making trade-related travels giving the impression that

many of the paths that they took for commodity movements were infested with blood-sucking vampires and *Yakshis*. A sense of haunted geography was created by them about many of the routes of trade, causing a fear among people and prompting them less to travel. Many of the shrines of *Yakshi* and former Jain and Buddhist deities along such trade routes were specially earmarked by them as fear-evoking factors that thwarted trade-related travels. This hurdle was eventually overcome by either giving new interpretations to the icons of Buddhism and Jainism and giving new meanings getting well with the fast expanding Vaishnava theology or Shaivite interpretations.

In this process, many of the shrines of yesterly heterodox religions got mutated and the meanings of new religiosity linked with Vaishnavism and Shaivism got inscribed on to them. The shrines with new interpretations started attracting the traders giving them a reason to get affiliated to the new deities enshrined with Vaishnava theology. These shrines, along with the *dargahs* and Syrian Christian churches, gave the traders a certain sense of security while they travelled for trade. The amulets with the marking of these deities, the intercession of Syrian Christian saints and the spiritual *wilayat* of Sufi sheikhs were perceived by the traders on move as something that would ensure protection to them even if they were confronted by wild animals or bandits. They themselves might have been religious perceptions in the respective cultural worlds, but for the traders they were viewed as something that would ensure the company of divine person with the trader and in that sense they were confidence-bolstering mechanisms for the merchants. Such a type of confidence –building among the traders was a need of the times to enable them to go beyond the mental blocks created over years along the various routes of trade.

A large number of shrines and religious institutions of various faith groups started appearing along the trade routes and interestingly the annual festivals of these shrines evolved as market stimulating mechanisms during this period. Though the shrines belonged to certain specific religious groups, merchants from all religious groups found festive celebrations as occasions to conduct business at times exclusively, but very often in partnerships. The annual festivals were market mobilizing occasions, where traders from all types of background came together supplying a variety of cargo in exchange for locally produced spices.

With the intense connectivity between the pepper producing upland regions and the maritime trading centres along the coast, commodity flow for maritime trade started happening unprecedentedly. This was followed by flow of considerable wealth into upland geographies as profit from trade. Concomitantly the rulers of upland principalities like Thekkenkur, Vadakkenkur, Edapally, Kizhumalainadu etc., began to institute devices of power and equip themselves with artilleries and gunnery on par with the flow of wealth. The militarily enhancing move is followed by status enhancing exercises, for which Brahmins from low-lying regions were invited to come and settle down near the house of the chieftains. These Brahmins conferred upon the chieftains ritual status at times on par with the Kshatriyas as a prelude to give such emerging chieftains superior political standing.

The Brahminical moves towards the seats of upland principalities were followed by dissemination of Brahminical concepts of god and the eventual transformation of local deities into Vaishnavite and Shaivite theological frames created conditions for the dissemination of new ritual traditions in and around the power centres of upland regions. The local perceptions about Muthappan and Sasthavu got modified from the

perspectives of Vaishnavism and Shaivism and Sasthavu as well as Ayyappan became Harihara Suthan in the evolving processes.

The balance of power in Kerala was highly altered when Zamorin developed the trading port at Calicut allied with Al-Karimi and Chinese merchants. Zamorin allied with the Al-Karimi merchants started expanding his kingdom by conquering the neighbouring principalities of Nilambur, Manjeri, Malapuram and Kottakkal etc. and established a territorial state with Calicut as his seat of power. The important pepper producing areas in the kingdom of Zamorin were located in the upland regions on the shores of river Bharathapuzha. These regions were not the part of brahmadeya settlement instead were inhabited by people who believed in folk religion; the Zamorin in order to intensify the trade patronised 130 *kavus* (the centres of worship of folk religion) on the banks of Bharathapuzha. The festal celebrations of the *kavus* called *velas* had peculiar *utsava chanda* (festival markets) which enhanced the need for increasing production, the celebration by itself strengthened the authority of Zamorin through celebratory rituals and other folk performances like *theyyam*, *ezhunnallathu* etc. The commercial network of Al-Karimi merchants also expanded with the conquests of Zamorin, evident from the emergence of mosques and *jarams* (*dargahs*) in the important trading centres of the kingdom of Calicut. The *uroos* (*urs*) celebration of the Jarams also incorporated the folk rituals of *ezhunnallath*, *theyyam* (called as *Mappila Theyyam*) etc. which may be indicating the commercial and religious insinuation of *Paradesi* and *Mappila* merchants with the pepper cultivating folk worshippers. The *Ulema* of Muslims in Malabar, the Mambram Thangal and Kondotty Thangal, both were of *paradesi* (foreigner) origin. The Mappilas were followers of either the *Shafei madhab* of Mambram Thangal or *Shi'ite* orientation of Kondotty Thangal. The *Nerchas* (*Urs festival*) of *Jaram* celebrated along with

incorporated folk traditions might have been the portrayal of power and authority of the alliance of Zamorin and Muslim merchants.

The Zamorin along with patronising *kavus* and *dargahs* allied himself with prominent *Namboodiri* Brahmin house of Chovvaram (Vaishnavites), and favoured them in their contestations with Panniyur house (Shaivates). In order to build a strong territorial state and establish himself as a powerful king of land, there was a movement of Brahmins from their sanctuaries in paddy cultivated *Brahmadeya* lands to the political centre of Zamorin based in Calicut. The movement of Brahmins is evident from their presence in Zamorin's court as 18 celebrated royal poetic scholars (known popularly as eighteen-and-half poets) associated with the famous literary assembly known as the *Revathi Pattathanam*. The *vedic* rituals of Brahmins like *Hiranyagarbha*, *Tulabharam* and *Mrityunjayam* offered ritual legitimacy to their claim as Kshatriyas kings of the land with a mythical origin traced to *puranas*. The Brahmins also performed the folk rituals of Zamorin like *Ariyittuvazhcha* (the accession to the throne) and *Tiruvantali* (death ritual), indicating the Brahmin incorporation of the role of folk priests. The Zamorin employed Muslims in several key positions like Shah Bandar Koya as Port Master with an army under his command, Kochammed as *Menokki* or *Kanakkappilla* (accountant) of Varakkal (Puthiyangadi) temple; indicated the Zamorin's reliance on his commercial allies. Thus, with superior state building and martial strength, Zamorin dominated all other Kings in the vicinity of his Kingdom.

In the central part of Kerala, the interior kingdoms like Vadakkenkur, Chembakasseril, Thekkenkur, Kizhmalainadu etc. were important spice producing areas. These tiny kingdoms accumulated wealth from both maritime trade (as a

hinterland of Cochin port) and inland trade through ghat routes. The wilderness trade routes once used by Jain traders were revived by Ravuthar Muslims traders and Tamil Pattars who traded rice and cloth in exchange of pepper which was in great demand in Tamilakam. The ghat route trade might have been a source of revenue for the inland rulers to strengthen their defences against Zamorin's expansionary invasions. The Syrian Christians along with Ravuthar Muslims and Tamil Pattars were the dominant movers of pepper cargo through the ghat routes to Tamilakam from where a share of it was traded from ports of Coromandel. The movement of the traders through the ghat routes were evident in the existences of *dargahs* and churches that facilitated the traders who moved their cargo through the ghat routes. The revenue from trade made the rulers of upland principalities wealthy, who in order to establish themselves as Kshatriya kings of mythical origins through *vedic* rituals began patronising Brahmanical religion. Thus, there was movement of Brahmins from low lying paddy cultivated plains to the upland kingdoms. The movement of Brahmins resulted in emergence of Brahmin temples in uplands; these temples prospered as cultural centres with the waves of second bhakti movement inducted through the literary works of Tunjath Ezhuthachan, Poonthanam Namboothiri, Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, Cherusseri Namboothiri (*Krishnagadha*), Unnayi Varrier (*Attakadha* for Kathakali, for example *Nalacharitham attakadha*) etc. A trade rich inland kingdom called Chembakasseril extended patronage to great poets' like- Kalakkathu Kunjan Nambiar who introduced *Ottamthullal* tradition and Ramapurathu varrier who introduced *Vanjipattu* (boat song) tradition. The annual festal celebrations of temples called *poorams* incorporated several folk rituals of *velas* such as *ezhunnallathu vadyam*, *thottam*, *pachavarnakala*, etc.; these incorporations might have been for enhancing the role of temples in spice harvest and trade. The kingdoms in central Kerala like

Cochin, Valluvanadu etc. were constantly threatened by the martial might of Zamorin, whose pinnacle was conquest of Thirunavaya from Valluva Konnaithiri (ruler of Valluvanadu) where the pan Kerala celebration of *mamankam* was held every 12 years. The *velas*, *pooram*, *nerchas*, *palli perunnals* and the grandest celebration of *mamankam* strengthened the religion, market and authority of the king and his mercantile allies. In *mamankam* festival the privilege to stand on the side of Zamorin was given to Shah Bandar Koya, which indicated the importance of trade allies even in the apex of power process.

The entry of the Portuguese for trade augmented the need for more pepper cultivation. The various principality chieftains to whom annual monetary rewards were given for ensuring regular supply of pepper in Portuguese factory in Cochin were beneficiaries of Portuguese trade in the long run. The chieftains of Thekkenkur, Vadakkenkur, Alengadu, Diamper, Chembakasserril were the principal rulers who used to get 72,000 reis per year as annuities from the Portuguese for facilitating the flow of pepper from their kingdoms to the Portuguese factory of Cochin. With more wealth at their disposal many of these rulers, particularly the ruler of Chembakasserril could patronise huge projects of cultural production.

Meanwhile the Portuguese tried to penetrate into the spice producing hinterland using religion as a pliable mechanism. In order to penetrate Portuguese influence into the interior areas of Kerala and thereby realise monopolistic hold over spice trade, the Portuguese authorities tried to Latinise or Europeanise the pepper producing Syrian Christians. They started accusing the St. Thomas Christians of Nestorian heresy, an allegation which legitimized their efforts to intervene in the affairs of this pepper producing community. The Portuguese attempt to bring St. Thomas Christians into

their fold was an attempt to deepen the power, authority and influence of Portuguese into the inland areas of Kerala. But the Portuguese attempts were met with huge resistance which precipitated as Coonan Cross mass oath ceremony where the St. Thomas Christians denounced Europeanization and decided never to leave their age old Syrian Christian traditions. Thus, Portuguese attempt to strengthen the influence in fact, resulted in weakening of their own strength and trade of spices. The hostility of St. Thomas Christians with Portuguese resulted in reduction in flow of pepper to the Cochin port and intensification of ghat route trade by Tamil Pattars, Ravuthar Muslims and Syrian Christians.

The ghat routes which were earlier used by Jain traders and whose shrines and temples were lying wild in the wilderness paths, became alternative channel of trade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With the intensification of ghat-route trade, shrines of Sasthavu, churches and *dargahs* (*Jaram*) came up along the channels of such trade. The tales of haunting geography because of *Yakshis*, *Madan*, *Maruta* etc., and bewitching horror on the paths instilled fear in the minds of the people, which made travellers always dependent on churches, temples and *dargahs* for carrying out trade. The process of demonization of folk deities along with the waves of *bhakti* was crucial in the decline of folk religion. The process of demonization was not a uniform process in entire Kerala; there were few Brahmins who practiced the rituals, *Mantravadam* (magic) and traditions of folk religion instead of *vedic* rituals. Such Brahmins mentioned in *Aithiyamala* are - Namboothiris of Pambumekkat illam who practiced serpent worship, Puliambili Namboothiri who worshipped *shakthis* and performed *mantravadam*, Panchanalloor Bhattathiri who practiced *Chathan seva* etc. Even Brahminism got redefined from within. There was the need for addressing the pre-Brahminical deities somewhere in the Vaishnavite theology and eventually rituals

were developed to cater to the specific ritual demands for such deities. They were incorporated as *Durdevatakal* within the modified Brahminical religion and certain Brahminical families began to get specialized in handling the rituals of *Durdevatakal*. In the process of brahmanisation of faith, not all folk deities were demonised; many of the deities were incorporated as incarnations of Vishnu, Shiva, Parvathi, Kali etc. The protective deity called *Muthappan* was incorporated as Shiva, *Thiruvappan* as Vishnu and the *Ayyappan* or *Shastavu* related to Bodhisattva cult was redefined by Brahmins as *Hari Hara Suthan* (the son of Shiva and Vishnu). *Muthappan* was worshipped by traders for protection on the journey; the Brahmin attempt to incorporate must be having economic connotation as well as the spread of brahmanical faith.

The Portuguese attempts to monopolise trade was met with resistances resulting in the decline of their maritime trade, despite all attempts to maintain their hegemony the Portuguese could not last long. The final blow to Portuguese in Cochin began with Dutch invasions. The Dutch managed to conduct trade with the help of smaller principality chieftains. The Dutch made negotiations with smaller and petty rulers like the various *desavalis* and *naduvallis* of inland Kerala for obtaining pepper. The Dutch trade resulted in immense flow of wealth to the interior kingdoms; the lesser rulers in turn strengthened their defenses by obtaining artillery and other weapons from Dutch. The hegemony of Dutch East India Company prevented the larger kingdoms like Venad (later Travancore), Kochi and Calicut from annexing and devouring the smaller kingdoms of mid upland regions as they were supported by the Dutch military might. Fearing the Dutch intervention the larger political players allowed the state of affairs that favoured the assertion of smaller principality chieftains. Even in larger kingdoms like Venad, the Dutch spies maintained relations with feudatory Nair chieftains which even resulted in assassinations of reigning kings. But the fragmented

polity promoted by the commercial policies of the Dutch began to perish by 18th century with the highly centralized political formations initiated by Marthanda Varma in Venad. During the period between 1742 and 1752 Marthanda Varma made a series of conquests, whereby he occupied territories upto Angamali. The vast terrains of Travancore was brought under one umbrella and the newly conquered terrains of north were dedicated to Sree Padmanabha Swamy, the tutelary deity, as divine property and Marthanda Varma began to rule as the servant of Sree Padmanabha Swamy. After realizing centralization of army and trade, Marthanda Varma patronized Sree Padmanabha Swamy as the tutelary deity of his kingdom called Vajinadu. He declared for himself and his successors to be known as Sree Padmanabha Swamy *dasan*, thereby ensured a brahmanical deity as his family deity in place of a *shakthi*. Thus, the triangular relation of trade, state and religion was crucial in the state craft of Marthanda Varma. This mechanism of surrendering the newly conquered territory to the deity helped to legitimize the conquest and justify the continued hold of Travancore over the territories of vanquished princes. The vanquished principalities and their chieftains lost a logic to counter the rhetoric as in the fast expanding theology of Vaishnavism, Sree Padmanabha Swamy held a position far superior to the human perception of kingship attached to the human ruler Marthanda Varma and whatever was surrendered to Vishnu or Padmanabha Swamy should not be challenged even if it was one's own kingdom.

In order to facilitate the trade from the newly conquered territories of Travancore, Raja Kesavadas established a port in Alleppey in 1763 and the inland pepper production centres were networked with the help of riverine and land routes. Pandikasalas were established at major centres of pepper production, where pepper was stored at the time of harvest and eventually it was floated down to Alleppey

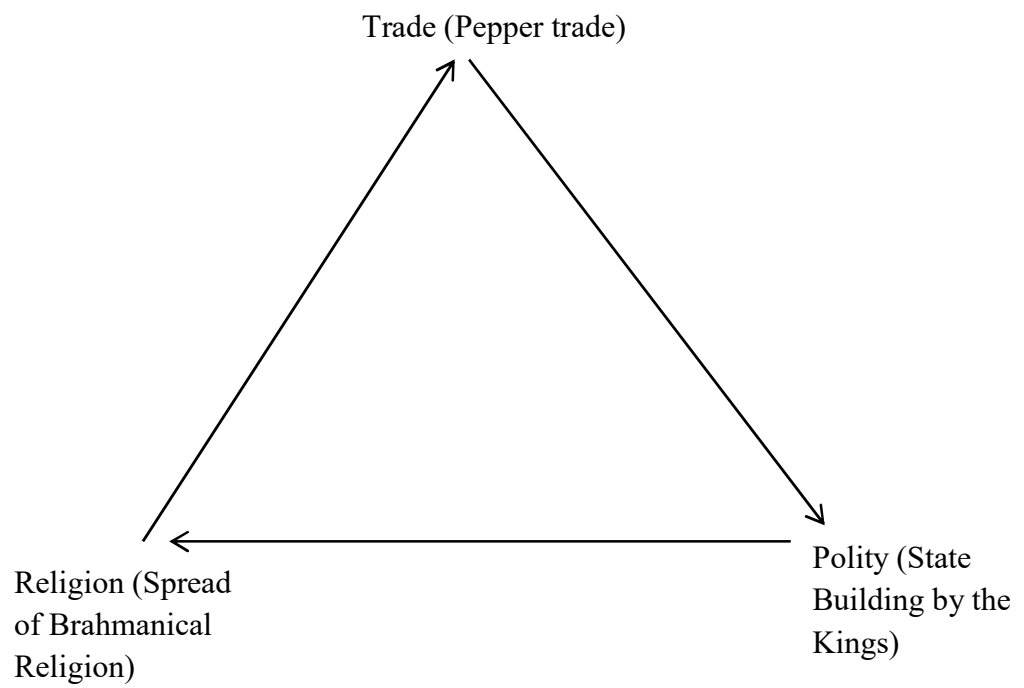
through riverine channels. With the diversion of pepper to Alleppey, Cochin which used to obtain pepper from these terrains till then started entering a dwindling phase. With the vicissitudes in trade, even the ruler of Cochin, Saktan Thampuran shifted his capital to Thrissur, where he started mobilizing trade with the help of Syrian Christian merchants. In order to mobilize the markets, he also instituted *pooram* in Trichur. By defeating the chieftains of smaller principalities, Saktan Thampuran also tried to centralize his administration in the way Marthanda Varma did in Travancore.

The scenario changed with the entry of Mysorean rulers in Calicut. The French trained army of Hyder Ali conquered Zamorin's Calicut and later the parts of Cochin occupied by Zamorin. Though Travancore's modernized army defeated the forces of Tipu Sultan at Aluva, things changed quickly. The British who managed to defeat the forces of Tipu finally became the masters of northern part of Malabar, erasing the kingdom of Calicut from the political landscape of Kerala. The British occupation of the kingdom of Calicut and the territories of allies of Tipu like Ali Rajas (Arakkal Kingdom) of Cannanore gave a new meaning to the northern parts of Kerala, which eventually became a part of the colonial administration of the British Presidency rule from Madras.

Thus the trajectories of Kerala's polity and religion during the period between thirteenth and eighteenth centuries got formulated through the dynamics of trade and the institutions and forces connected with trade. Cultural mutations and modifications of political institutions and power houses of different nature happened at varying levels and scales, but they were instrumental in making a mosaic Kerala, with cultural accommodativeness and social inclusiveness.

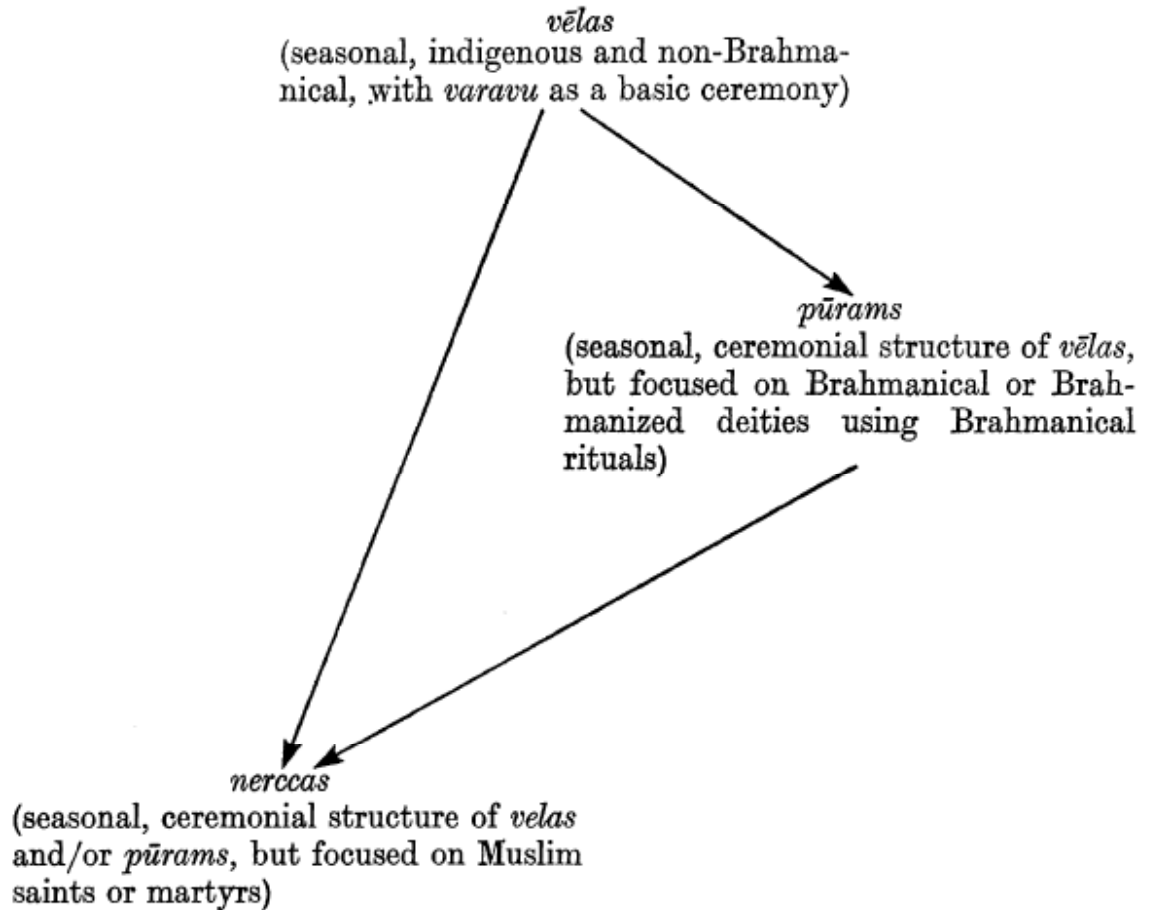
APPENDIX I

Triangular Relation of Trade, Religion and Polity



APPENDIX II

HYPOTHETICAL RELATION OF KERALA FESTIVALS

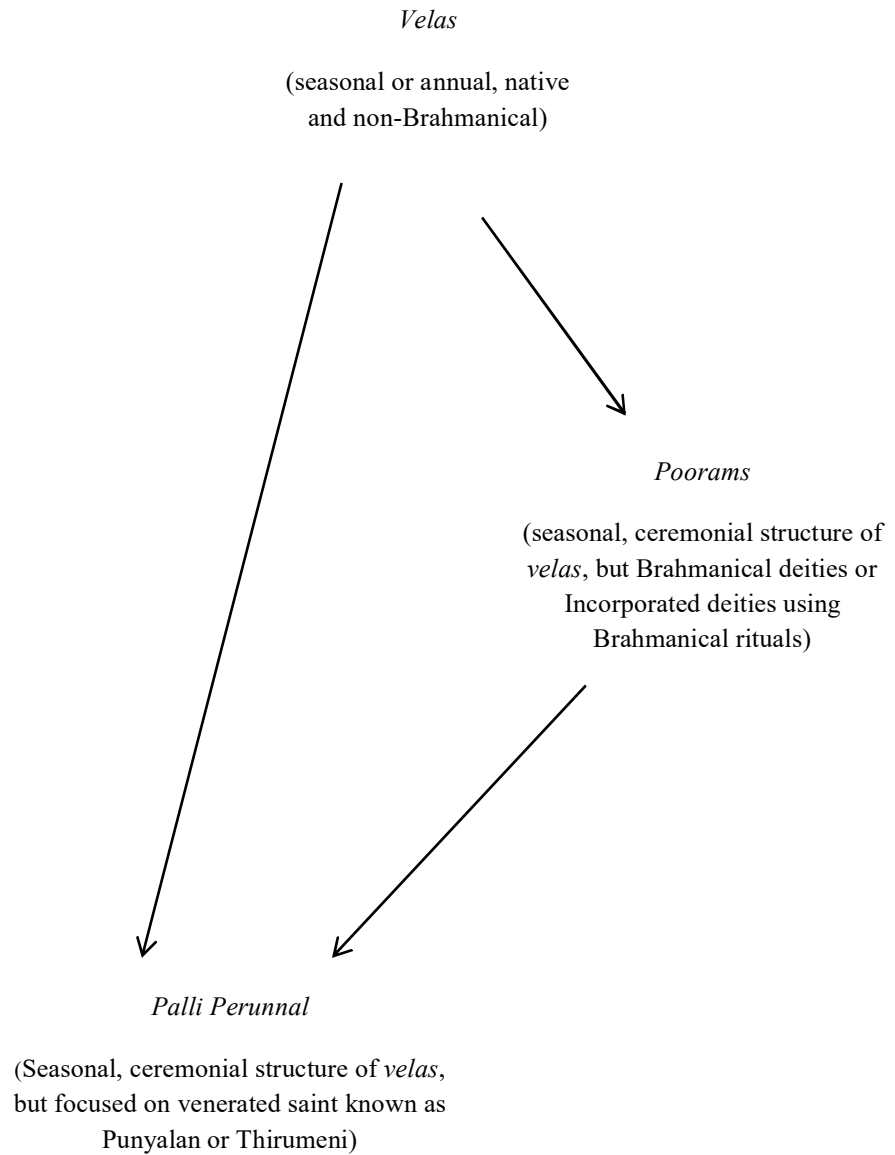


1

¹ Stephen F. Dale and M. Gangadhara Menon, "Nerccas": Saint-Martyr Worship among the Muslims of Kerala", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol.41, No. 3 (1978), pp. 523-538.

APPENDIX III

Hypothetical relation of Palli Perunnal with festivals of Kerala



Glossary

Angadi	A permanent market
Ariyittuvazhcha	Coronation ritual
Attikkol	Annual dues remitted by Brahmadeyas
Attiperu	Land grant to a religious institution
Ayyappan	A non-Brahmanical folk deity incorporated into Brahmanism as Harihar Sutan (Son of Shiva and Vishnu)
Azhvar	Vaishnavite Bhakti saint
Bhramadeya	Brahmin village
Cafila	Escorting convoy of ships
Chanda	Temporary markets
Chathan	A non Brahmanical folk deity
Chaver	Suicide squad
Chepped	Copper plate document
Corsairs	Pirates
Ezunnallath	Ceremonial procession of elephants decorated with Caparisons
Gandharvas	A folk deity
Garuda	Eagle
Jaram	Dargah of a Sufi saint
Kappalottabhagavathi	A folk deity of navigation
Karimpana	Palm tree
Kavu	Centre of worship of non-Brahmanical folk religion
Kottavai	A Folk deity of Kerala
Kula Daivam	Family deity
Kurru	Faction
Mamankam	A pan Kerala festal celebration; which was held every 12 years

Mantravadam	Magic
Melam	Traditional Band
Mut'a	Temporary marriage contract in Muslims
Muthappan	A non-Brahmanical folk deity
Nadu	Secondary units of Chera Kingdom
Naduvazhi	Governor of secondary units of Chera Kingdom
Nurruvar	Fighting force of Chera Kingdom
Paimkutty	Ritual offering in a Kavu
Pala	Frangipani tree
Palli Perunal	Annual festal celebration of Church
Pambu	Snake
Panchavarnakalam	cabbalistic figure drawn with five natural colours
Para	A unit for measuring weigh; one para is roughly 8 kg.
Pattar	Tamil Brahmins
Perumal	Titles of Chera Kings belonging to Kulashekara dynasty
Pooram	Annual festal celebration of Brahmin temple
Revathi Pattathanam	An assembly of poets at the court of Zamorin
Samanthas	Subsidiaries
Shakthi	Godesses of Folk Religion of Kerala
Swaroopam	Successor principalities of Cheras
Theyyam	Oracle priest of Kavu
Tiruvantali	Cremation ceremony
Utsava chanda	Festival market
Veerakallu	Hero stone
Vela	Annual festal celebration of Kavu
Yakshan	Male counterpart of Yakshi

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Achuthanunni, Chatthanath & Warriar, M.R Raghava, *Koka sandesham*, Vallathol Vidya Peedam, Edappal, 2007.

Appunni Nambiar, *Vadakkan Pattukal*, Sahityaprabarthaka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 1983.

Athula. *Mushikavamsha Mahakavyam*. Edited by K.P.A Menon, Nag Publishers, New Delhi, 1999.

Berjeau, J PH., editor. *Calcoen: A Dutch Narrative of the Second Voyage of Vasco Da Gama to Calicut*. Basil Montagu Pickering, London, 1874.

Pires, Tome. *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*. Edited by Armando Cortesao, Hakluyt Society, London, 1944.

Barbosa, Duarte. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa: an Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and Their Inhabitants*. Edited by Mansel Longworth Dames, Haklyut Society, London, 1918.

Dhanuvachapuram, Sundaram, *Unnichirutevi charitham*, Kerala Bhasha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 2005.

Fryer, John, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, R.R, London, 1698.

Gopinathapilla, Vattaparambil, *Adhyatma Ramayanam*, D C Books, Kottayam, 2013.

Gray, Albert, *Voyage of Pyrard De Laval*, Haklyut Society, London, 1889.

Hussain, Mahdhi, *The Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Oriental Translation Committee, London, 1829.

Jubayr, Ibn. *Rihla. The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*. Edited by Ḥawqal Ibn and L-Qāsim Abū. Translated by R. J. C Broadhurst, Jonatham Cape, London, 1952, p.65.

Komroff, Manuel, *Contemporaries of Marco Polo*, Liveright Publishing Corp, New York, 1928.

Lee, Samuel, *Travels of Ibn Batuta*, Oriental Translation Committee, London, 1829.

Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan (The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores)*. Edited and translated by F Ch'eng-Chün. Introductory Notes and Appendices J. V. G. Mills, The Hakluyt Society, Cambridge, 1970.

Major, Richard Henry, *India in the fifteenth century: being a collection of narratives of voyages to India, in the century preceding the Portuguese discovery of the Cape of Good Hope; from Latin, Persian, Russian, and Italian sources, now first translated into English*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1857.

Malekandathil, Pius, *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes*, LRC Publications, Kochi, 2003.

Nair, Mukhthala Gopalakrishnan, *Unniyachi Charitham*, Kerala Bhasha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 1990.

Namboothiri, N.M, editor. *Mamankam Rekhakal*, Vallathol Vidya Peedam, Edappal, 2005.

- Nieuhof, Johannes. *Voyages & Travels to the East Indies, 1653-1670*. Edited by Anthony Reid, Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Pfileiderer & Riehm, *Keralolpatti The origin of Malabar*, Stolz and Reuther, Basel Mission Press, Manglore, 1868.
- Philips, George, *Ma Huan's account of Cochin, Calicut and Aden*, JRAS, London, 1896.
- Pillai, Elamkulam Kunjan, *Chandrotsavam*, Sahityaprabarthaka sahakaranasangham Kottayam, 1962.
- _____, *Leelathilakam*, Sahityaprabarthaka sahakaranasangham Kottayam, 1955.
- _____, *Unnuneeli Sandesam*, Sahityaprabarthaka sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 1954.
- Rajendu, S, *Chazhur Chepped*, Sahityaprabarthaka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2015.
- Rockhill, William Woodville, and Friedrich Hirth, editors. *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, Entitled Chu-Fan-Chi*. Imperial Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 1911.
- Shankunni, Kottarathil, *Ithiyamala (Re print)*, Current Books, Kottayam, 1996.
- Sastri, K. A. Nilakanta, editor. *Foreign Notices of South India: from Megasthenes to Ma Huan*. University of Madras, 1939.
- Sreedevi, K.B, *Poonthanam Njanappana*, Green Books, Thrissur, 2011.

Thevenot, Jean de, and Gemelli Careri Giovanni Francesco. *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri; Being the Third Part of the Travels of M. De Thevenot into the Levant and the Third Part of a Voyage Round the World by Dr. John Francis Gemelli Careri*. Edited by Surendra Nath Sen, National Archives of India, Delhi, 1949.

Valle, Della, *The Travels Pietro Della Valle to India*, Haklyut Society, London, 1889.

Varthema, Lodovico De. *Travels of Ludovico Di Varthema*. Edited by George Percy Badger, Haklyut Society, London, 1863.

Visscher, Jacobus Canter. *Letters from Malabar*. Edited by Heber Drury *Letters from Malabar by Jacob Canter Visscher, Now first translated from original Dutch*, Adelphi Press, Madras, 1862.

Wright, Thomas, *Travels of Marco Polo*, Gerorge Bell and Sons, London, 1880.

Yule, Henry, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Haklyut Society, London, 1866.

Zacaria, Sacaria, *Payyannur Paattu: Padavum Padanangalum*, D C Books, Kottayam, 2000.

Secondary sources

Agius, Dionisius Albertus. *Classic Ships of Islam: from Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*. Brill, Leiden, 2014.

Aiyya, Nagam, *Travancore State Manual*, Travancore Government Press, Trivandrum, 1906

_____, *Travancore State Manual*, Victoria Institutions,
<https://archive.org/details/TRAVANCORESTATEMANUAL>, 2013

Ajeesh, T, *Theyyam Kadhakal*, Manorama Publications, Kottayam, 2013.

Ayyar, K.V.Krishna, *Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, Calicut, 1938.

Bharucha, Rustom, *Theatre and the World: Performance and the Politics of Culture*,
Manohar Publications, Delhi, 1990.

Bell, Harry Charles Purvis and Gray, Albert (ed.), *Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas, and Brazil*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Farnham, 2010.

Bhargava, Gopal, editor. *Encyclopaedia of Art and Culture in India*. Vol. 3, Isha Books, New Delhi, 2003.

Bouchon, Genevieve, *Regent of the Sea*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1988.

Bouchon, Genevieve, "Calicut at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century", *Revista de cultura*. - N. 13/14 (Janeiro/Junho 1991), pp. 39-47.

Buchanan, Francis, *A journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, T. Cadell and W. Davies, London, 1807.

Dale, Stephen F and Menon, M. Gangadhara, "'Nerccas": Saint-Martyr Worship among the Muslims of Kerala", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol.41, No. 3 (1978), pp. 523-538.

Daugherty, Diane, "The Nangyār: Female Ritual Specialist of Kerala", *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring, 1996), pp. 54-67.

- Dempsey, Corinne, "Nailing Heads and Splitting Hairs: Conflict, Conversion, and the Bloodthirsty Yakṣi in South India" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 111-132.
- Eraly, Abraham, *Tales once told: Legends of Kerala Adapted from Kottarathil Sankunni's Aithiiyamala*, Penguin India, New Delhi, 2006.
- Fischel, Walter .J, "The Exploration of the Jewish Antiquities of Cochin on the Malabar Coast", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep. 1967), pp.230-248.
- Freeman, J.R, "Gods, Groves and the Culture of Nature in Kerala", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (May, 1999), pp. 257-302.
- Goitein, S. D. and Friedman, Mordechai Akiva, editors and translators. *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza*, Brill, Leiden.
- Goitein, S.D, "Portrait of a Medieval India Trader: Three Letters from the Cairo Geniza," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol.50, No. 3 (1987), pp. 449-464.
- Gough, E. Kathleen, "Changing Kinship Usages in the Setting of Political and Economic Change Among the Nayars of Malabar", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Jan. - Jun., 1952), pp. 71-88.
- Gupta, Ashin Das, *Malabar in Asian Trade*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967.

- Gurukkal, Rajan and Raghava Warier, M.R, *Keralacharithram Part I*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Edappal, 1991.
- Gurukkal, Rajan, *The Kerala Temple and The Early Medieval Agrarian System*, Vallathol Vidyapeetham, Edappal, 1992.
- Hill, Christopher V, *South Asia: an environmental history*. Santa Barbara, Calif *ABC-Clio*, 2008.
- Ilias, M.H, “Mappila Muslims and the Cultural Content of Trading Arab Diaspora on the Malabar Coast”, *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4/5, SPECIAL FOCUS: Arabs in Asia (2007), pp. 434-456.
- Induchudan, V.T, *The Secret Chamber: A Historical, Anthropological & Philosophical Study of the Kodungallur Temple*, Cochin Devaswom Board, Thrissur, 1969.
- Jacob, Hugo s'. *The Rajas of Cochin 1663-1720, Kings, Chiefs and the Dutch East India Company*, Munshiram Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 2000.
- James, E.J, *Water Atlas of Kerala*, Centre for Water Resources Development and Management, Calicut, 1995.
- Jenett, Dianne, “A Million "Shaktis" Rising: Pongala, a Women's Festival in Kerala, India”, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Spring, 2005), pp. 35-55.
- Kakkat, Thulasi, “Man by day, goddess by night: Theyyam in pictures”, *The Hindu*, August 26, 2017.

Karashima, Noboru, edited, *A Concise History of South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014.

Kurup, K Balakrishna, *Kozhikodinte Charithram*, Mathrubhumi Publishing House, Kozhikode, 2013.

Logan, William, *Malabar Manual*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 2010.

Mailaparambil, Binu John, *Lords of the Sea: Ali Rajas of Cannanore and the Political Economy of Malabar (1663-1723)*, BRILL, Leiden, 2012.

Malekandathil, Pius & T, Jamal Mohammed (ed), *The Portuguese, Indian Ocean and European Bridgeheads, 1500-1800: Festschrift in Honour of Prof. K.S. Mathew*, IRISH, Kannur, 2001.

Malekandathil, Pius, *The Mughals, the Portuguese and the Indian Ocean*, Primus, New Delhi, 2013.

_____, *Maritime India: Trade, Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2014.

_____, *Portuguese Cochin and the Maritime Trade of India: 1500-1663*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001.

_____, "Rubrics of Power and Trade in Calicut," in Archa G (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism in a City: The Past and the Present of Calicut*, (Issue 22), Café Dissensus, February 15, 2016.

_____, “Dynamics of Trade, Faith and the Politics of Cultural Enterprise in Early Modern Kerala”, in *Clio and Her Descendants: Essays for Kesavan Veluthat*, ed. Manu V. Devadenan, Primus Books, New Delhi, 2017.

_____, “The Portuguese and the Ghat-Route Trade: 1500-1663”, in *Pondicherry University Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, Pondicherry, vol. I, No.1 & 2, 2000, pp.137-148.

_____, “Winds of Change and Links of Continuity: A Study on the Merchant Groups of Kerala and the Channels of Their Trade, 1000-1800”, in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 50, No. 2/3 (2007), pp. 259-286.

Mateer, Samuel, *The Land of Charity A Descriptive Account of Travancore and its People*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1991.

Mathew, K.S, *Portuguese Trade with India in the sixteenth Century*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1983.

Mathur, P.R.G. "Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts." *Http://ignca.gov.in*. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, n.d. Web. 14 Oct. 2017. <http://ignca.nic.in/ps_01021.htm>.

Menon, A.Sreedhara, *Kerala Charitram*, DC Books, Kottayam, 1973.

Menon, C. Achyuta, *Cochin State Manual*, Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam, 1911.

- Menon, K.P. Padmanabha, *History of Kerala Writtten in the Form of Note's on Visscher's Letters From Malabar. 4 vols.*, Asian Educational Service, New Delhi, 2001
- Menon, K.P.Padmanabha, *Kochi Rajya Charitram*, Mathrubhumi Books, Calicut, 1989.
- Menon, P Shangoonny, *A History of Travancore from the Earliest Times*, Higginbotham and Co, Madras, 1878.
- Miller, Eric. J, "Caste and Territory in Malabar", *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Jun., 1954), pp. 410-420.
- Moorchilot, Radhadevi, *Paliyam History*, Link Offset P.Ltd, Thrissur, 2013.
- Nainar, Muhammad Husayn, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India*, Madras University Islamic Sereis – No. 6, Madras, 1942.
- Narayanan, Aju K, *Keralathile Joothar Verukal, Vazhikal*, Ksiel, Trivandrum, 2015.
- Narayanan, M.G.S, *Perumals of Kerala Brahmin Oligarchy and Ritual Monarchy*, Cosmo Books, Thrissur, 1996.
- _____, *Calicut: The City of Truth Revisited*, Calicut University, Calicut, 2006.
- Panikkar, K.M, *Malabar and the Dutch*, VOI Publishers, New Delhi, 1929.
- _____, *Malabar and the Portuguese: Being a History of the Relations of the Portuguese with Malabar from 1500 to 1663*, VOI Publishers, New Delhi, 1929.

- Pillai, Elamkulam P.N.Kunjan, *Studies in Kerala History*, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1970.
- Pillai, T. K.Velu, *Travancore State Manual Volume 1*, Travancore Government Press, Trivandrum, 1940.
- Poonen, T.I, *A Survey Of The Rise Of The Dutch Power in Malabar*, St. Joseph's Industrial School Press, Tiruchirappalli, 1948.
- Puthussery, Joly, "Chavittunātakam: Music-Drama in Kerala", *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 37, No. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2003-04), pp. 321-341.
- Raja, K. Ramavarma, "The Brahmins of Malabar", *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (Jul., 1910), pp. 625-639.
- Rajan, K., "Nagaravum Palakkatte Achanmarum" in *Nagaram Pinnitta Naal Vazhikal History of Palakkad Town*, Palakkad Municipality, Palakkad, 2015, pp.42-48
- Ramaswamy, Vijaya (ed), *Migrations in Medieval and Early Colonial India*, Routledge, London, 2016.
- Ross, Israel J, "Ritual and Music in South India: Syrian Christian Liturgical Music in Kerala" *Asian Music*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (1979), pp. 80-98.
- Seshagiri, Narasimhiah, *Encyclopaedia of Cities and Towns in India: Kerala*, Gyan Publishing House, Delhi, 2009, pp. 410-420.

- Singleton, Brian, "K.N. Panikkar's "Teyyateyyam": Resisting Interculturalism Through Ritual Practice, *Indian Literature*, Vol. 45, No. 5 (205) (September-October, 2001), pp. 133-140.
- Spector, Johanna, "Shingli Tunes of the Cochin Jews", *Asian Music*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Indian Music Issue (1972), pp. 23-28.
- Sircar, D.C, *Indian epigraphical glossary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Dehli, 1966.
- Subramaniam, Sanjay, *The Career and Legend of Vasco Da Gama*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997.
- _____, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History*, Wiley-Blackwell, New Jersey, 2012.
- Tibbetts, Gerald R., translation with notes. *Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese being a translation of Kitāb al-fawā'id fī uṣūl al- baḥr wa-l-qawā'id of Aḥmad b. Mājjid al-Najdī*, Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1981.
- Thurston, Edgar. "Omens and Superstitions of Southern India: Edgar Thurston: Free Download & Streaming." *Internet Archive*, VED from Victoria Institutions, 30 Oct. 2016, archive.org/details/OmensDIGITAL.
- Unni, K. Raman, "Polyandry in Malabar", *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (September 1958), pp. 123-133.
- Vaalath, V.V.K, *Keralathile Sthala Charitrangal Ernakulam Jilla*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1991.

_____, *Keralathile Sthala Charitrangal Palakkad Jilla*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, Thrissur, 1986.

Vadakkiniyil, Dinesan, “Images of Transgression: Teyyam in Malabar”, *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, Vol. 54, No. 2, Images of Power and the Power of Images (Summer 2010), pp. 130-150.

Vannan, Gokul, “Madurai: Engraving reveals Chola’s ‘spice ambitions’”, *Deccan Chronicle* N.p., Apr 2. 2017. Web. Apr 2. 2017.

Varghese, Theresa, *Stark World Kerala*, Stark World Publishing, Bangalore, 2006.

Veluthat, Kesavan, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala: Historical Studies*, Sandhya Publications, Calicut, 1978.

_____, *Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2012.

_____, *The Early Medieval in South India*, Oxford University Press, London, 2008.

Warrier, Raghava M.R and Gurukkal, Rajan, *Kerala Charithram Part 1*, Vallathol Vidyapeedam, Edappal, 1991.

Warrier, Raghava M.R and Gurukkal, Rajan, *Mythum Samoohavum*, Sahityaprabarthaka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2012.

Warrier, M.R Raghava & Veluthat, Keshavan, *Tarisapallipattayam*, Sahityaprabarthaka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2013.

Warrier, M.R Raghava, *Jainamatham Keralathil*, Sahithyapravathka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2012.

_____, *Keraleeyatha Charithramanangal*, Vallathol Vidyapeedam, Edappal, 2009.

_____, *Kondungaloor Charithra Kazhchakal*, KSICL, Trivandrum, 2013.

_____, *Madhyakala Keralam*, Sahithyapravathka Sahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 2015.

_____, *Sthanarohana Chadangukal*, Vallathol Vidyapeedam, Edappal, 2004.

_____, *Varapuzha Rekhakal*, Vallathol Educational Trust, Edappal, 2014.

Wheeler, J. Talboys, *Madras in Olden Times*, Asia Educational Services, New Delhi, 1993,p.398.