

**THE AFTERLIFE OF TIPU SULTAN'S
'KHUDADADI SARKAR' IN MALABAR:
1792 TO THE PRESENT**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**THE AFTERLIFE OF TIPU SULTAN’S ‘KHUDADADI SARKAR’ IN MALABAR: 1792 TO THE PRESENT**” submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is the result of original research and has not been previously submitted for any other degree to this or any other University.



Shaheen K.

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



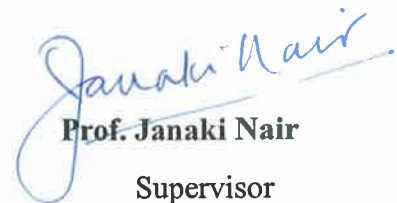
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Dedication

For Yoosuf and Shahanas

Nineteen years ago on a journey back from Srirangapatana, the man said: "You know! Tipu Sultan was an *awliya*." Hearing this, the woman immediately responded, "Oh, we could have spent more time at his shrine."

They were my parents. I dedicate this dissertation to them.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIMIM	-	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen
EIC	-	English East India Company
CMO	-	<i>Correspondence on Mappila Outrages</i>
IOR/H/MISC	-	India Office records, Home Miscellaneous Series
NMML	-	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
M.M.D.L.T	-	Maistre de la Tour
The JCRM	-	<i>The Joint Commissioners' report on Malabar, 1792-93</i>
TSM	-	<i>Travancore State Manual</i>

INTRODUCTION

Malabar remained a significant point of contention between Tipu Sultan and the English East India Company in the second half of the eighteenth century. In this dissertation, I focus on the Malabar region – as one of the “secondary centers” of Tipu’s sultan’s ‘Khudadadi Sarkar’, where Srirangapatana, the erstwhile capital of Tipu Sultan’s is taken as the “primary center.”¹ My study begins with the British conquest of Malabar but focuses on the rich afterlife of Tipu’s ‘Khudadadi Sarkar’ from 1792 to the present day.

The Malabar region, which had until the late eighteenth century, claimed to have remained independent of any territorial regimes from outside the modern geographical limits of Kerala, was annexed by Haidar Ali to the Mysore Kingdom in 1766. Haidar seemed to have had multiple reasons for the invasion of Malabar, key amongst them being better control of the spice trade, while simultaneously keeping the English East India Company at bay, for which the access to the sea was a strategic acquisition. Malabar remained under Mysore rule until the end of the Third Anglo-Mysore war (1792). When Tipu Sultan rechristened the kingdom he inherited as “Khudadadi Sarkar” or the “God-Given Government,” he was already becoming known as one of the “most interventionist” rulers in Indian history who implemented various reforms.² Malabar, therefore, witnessed various social experiments during Tipu’s brief reign. Some writers have given the period the title “early modern.”³

¹Other frontier regions such as Bednur, Coorg are also considered as the “secondary centers” of Mysore rule under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. Rather than terming the relationship between Srirangapatana and Malabar as that of center and periphery it would be fruitful to understand them as different centers of power within the Khudadadi Sarkar and the politics of the 18th century Deccan. Richard Eaton and Philip B. Wagoner in their account of the pre-colonial Deccan argues that “in a very real sense, the political history of the Deccan revolved around struggles by primary centres for control of secondary centres.” I therefore focus on a secondary center to unravel the centre of power and its meaning. See Richard Eaton and Philip B. Wagoner, *Power, memory, architecture: contested sites on India's deccan plateau, 1300-1600*. Oxford University Press, 2014, p.xxii.

² Such as the unprecedented reforms brought on the style of dressing and governance. See Partha Chatterjee, *The black hole of empire: History of a global practice of power*. Princeton University Press.2012, p.90.

³ Asok Sen “A Pre-British Economic Formation in India of the Late Eighteenth Century: Tipu Sultan's Mysore.” In *Perspectives in social sciences*. Vol. 2. Oxford University Press, 1977, pp.46-119. In *Perspectives in social sciences*. Also see Chatterjee, *The black hole of empire*, p.90.

While most of the existing scholarly endeavors have focused on the Mysore period of Malabar in the context of sub continental eighteenth-century transformations,⁴ I would like to pursue a different research question, one which begins with the defeat of Tipu and continues up to the present.⁵ In other words, my research attempts to study the ‘afterlife’ of the eighteenth century Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan in the memories and histories of the people of Malabar.

By taking up the long span of close to two centuries, I reconstruct the ways in which Tipu Sultan has been popularly remembered: - in evaluation of his policies by the various social groups associated with Mysore conquest of Malabar, such as the Sufi orders and Saints, temple priests, temple workers, *kalari* masters, the previous rajas and by early Malayalam novelists. The textual remains and musical performances that are directly or indirectly connected with the “Khudadadi Sarkar” are present in various colonial and vernacular registers. I shall ask the following questions in my research: First, how was the image of Tipu Sultan transformed in the colonial archives from a mere menace to the empire’s most formidable foe, whose historical memory came to threaten the very legitimacy of the colonial state? Second, I discuss the things, people, and ideas that are associated with the Mysorean conquest and continue to be remembered in popular traditions. For instance, I shall focus on how Tipu’s close companions and allies in Malabar are commemorated in the popular Sufi tradition. I demonstrate the ways in which their tombs are venerated to the present for their connection to Tipu Sultan and the Mysore rule of Malabar. Moving away from the usual

⁴The 18th century debate is divided between the fall of Mughal Empire on the one hand and the rise of regional states on the other hand. The discussion of the 18th century also centered on whether there is a continuity from the pre-colonial tradition to the colonial government. Most of the studies on Mysore such as Burton Stein and Asok Sen focused on these aspects. Burton Stein, “State formation and economy reconsidered.” *Modern Asian Studies*, 19(3), pp.387-413. Sen “A Pre-British Economic Formation in India of the Late Eighteenth Century: Tipu Sultan’s Mysore”, pp.46-119.

⁵ While the final defeat of Tipu was in 1799, his army and administrators faced a series of setbacks and withdrew from Malabar as early as 1792 with the treaty of Srirangapatana. However, the idea of afterlife is not an end in itself. For instance, I also engage with a manuscript text which claim to be as old as 1780; what makes it part of memory is the sudden discovery of the text in the post-colonial times in the family archive with a claim over “truth” and “History”, and its recent rebirth in print.

Hindu-Muslim encounter narratives that mark the Mysore invasion of Kerala, I would like to read the encounter as between a Persianate cultures of the Deccan and the Hadhramite Sufi cultures of Malabar which unsettled the sectarian status quo in Malabar, an argument I borrow and develop from a recent study of Richard Eaton and Philip Wagoner.⁶ Thus, my study would break up and question the homogenized Deccani Islam discourse, to examine the various kinds of political Islam that both took shape and shaped the Mysore-Malabar encounter, one that becomes more visible in the ‘literary -cultural’ lifeworlds, rather than in more conventional religious and political histories.

The nature of the archive produced during early colonial rule of Malabar -produced in the context of Anglo-Mysore wars, Anglo-French rivalries, and the reports commissioned by the English East Indian Company for revenue assessments –largely facilitated the writing of political and economic histories of eighteenth century Mysore. Early colonial writers such as Francis Buchanan, Mark Wilks, and William Logan set the trend by emphasizing the political and economic aspects, which is evident in the existing historiography of the region as well, much to the neglect of social and cultural histories of this period. They also overlooked the vibrant vernacular tradition of historical memory prevalent in Malabar on the Mysore rule. In the following section, I discuss how and why even post-colonial historians have not contested such colonial historical foundations to pose new questions.

⁶ Richard Eaton defines “Persianate” as “an adjectival construction analogues to Germanic, Latinate, Italianate, Hellenic, Indic, Hispanic, etc., all of which refer to the wide range of culture derived from, or based on, a particular language or literary tradition.” Richard Eaton, *India In the Persianate Age- 1000-1765*, Allen Lane, 2019, p.400. Also see Eaton and Wagoner *Power, memory, architecture: contested sites on India's deccan plateau, 1300-1600*. Similarly Ronit Ricci has defined Arabic Cosmopolis for Indian Ocean Islamicate communities based on literary networks. Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia*, University of Chicago Press, 2011, pp.2-4. One of the key aspects I focus is on the similarities and transformations from the Persianate histories and memories of Tipu Sultan into Arabi- Malayalam writing practices and Mappila Muslim memories, which were part of the Arabic Cosmopolis till the Mysorean conquest.

Literature review

"It vanished overnight and the 25 years of Mysorean interlude is remembered only with horror even today".⁷

"..That these great men have not received their share of grateful acclaim from posterity is an evidence on the lack of objectivity with which Indian History has been written.⁸ The sooner an attempt is made to shed all bias and to restore these great sons of India to their true stature, the better for our country as whole."⁹

The above quotes are from two major works on the Mysore invasion of Malabar. The first quote is what the prolific nationalist writer K.M. Panikkar wrote in his *A History of Kerala* (1498-1801). Panikkar's argument was a reiteration of the established view of Mysore rule in colonial accounts, a point I shall demonstrate later in this dissertation. The second quote is C.K. Kareem's conclusion in his *Kerala under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*. Despite his attempt to place his study in an 'objective nationalist' history, there was no general acceptance of Kareem's argument for de-villainising Tipu Sultan. However, Kareem's work was a valiant attempt, contesting scores of volumes written by colonialists and nationalists alike on Tipu, and against branding the latter as a tyrant in the Malabar. I see Kareem's work as a pioneering effort and a precedent for my dissertation.

My research also seeks to find a middle path between the "horrors of memory" and "objective history." It attempts to review the two trends, one of the negative memory of Tipu underlying Panikkar's argument, and Kareem's more positivist attempt to write the objective history of Mysore rule, and situate them in the larger context of colonial and nationalist historiography on Tipu Sultan and Mysore.

⁷K.M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala, (1498-1960)*, The Annamalai University Press, 1960, p. 397.

⁸ Refers Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan here.

⁹C.K Kareem, *Kerala under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, Paico, 1973*, p.259.

Early colonial Historiography

Mysore was one of the most powerful states of the eighteenth century, for its sheer geographical reach and political importance. There is abundant literature on the history of Mysore and Mysore rulers in English from the early colonial period. This literature, especially on Tipu Sultan, has been triumphalist in nature. The early colonial accounts were by Mark Wilks, Maistre de la Tour (M.M.D.L.T), and Col. W Miles who translated Persian works of Mir Husain Ali Kirmani. These two genres, colonial and Persian, were seemingly in contrast but served the same purpose of giving credence to Tipu's persecution of 'Hindu subjects', either by villainising or eulogizing him as an Islamic ruler.

Apart from Wilks, other writers have also left an account of the Mysore kingdom.¹⁰ Among these works, I engage with those that are crucial to the Malabar region. Here I attempt to critically look at what could be called the 'foundational colonial myths' on the religious intolerance and subsequent persecution of Hindus by the Mysore rulers in Malabar.¹¹ Francis Buchanan was one of the first to give an account of the Mysore rule in Malabar. Unlike other colonial accounts, which are dominated by war and political histories, Buchanan travels through Malabar and provides his account of the economic situation of the Malabar after the British acquisition. He also provides an account of the old customs, traditions, and myths of Malabar society. His travel narrates a few local accounts of the Mysore invasion. One of the significant aspects of these early colonial sources would be their difference in the treatment

¹⁰ See Francis Buchanan, *A journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*. Vol ii., Asia Educational Trust, 1807 (1999 reprint), Alexander Beatson, *A view of the Origin and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultaun Comprising a narrative of operations of the Army under the Command of Lieutenant General Harris and the Siege of Seringapatnam*, London, 1800. Alexander Dirom, *A narrative of Campaign in India which terminated with the War with Tippoo Sultan in 1792*, London, 1793. James Scurry, *The captivity, sufferings, and escape of James Scurry, who was detained a prisoner during ten years, in the dominions of Hyder Ali and Tippoo Saib*, London, 1831.

¹¹ This 'myth making' was similar to how Partha Chatterjee identifies 'The black hole Tragedy' of Bengal as 'a founding myth of Empire'. See Chatterjee *The black hole of empire: History of a global practice of power*, p.160.

of Haidar and Tipu. In these texts, Haidar is shown as just another Indian ruler who is often appreciated for his political and military skills. However, Tipu Sultan, on the contrary, is portrayed as an oriental despot whose religious bigotry and cruelty stood out. This depiction of Tipu Sultan's 'Islamic bigotry' had a clear parallel with the British and early nationalist writings on 'medieval Muslim rule.' In other words, Tipu Sultan was akin to a reincarnation of Aurangzeb in these writings.¹² While Aurangzeb was villainised only for his treatment of the 'Hindu subjects,' Tipu was critiqued for his treatment of the European and Native Christians. The accounts of Tipu's 'tyranny' included the destruction of temples, massacres of Brahmins, and conversion and castrations of different castes. He was also alleged to have forcibly extradited a large number of people to different parts of his domain.

In Wilks' analysis, one could see an angry sultan taking over his disobedient 'infidel' subjects 'in Malabar.'¹³ Wilks was one of the firsts to argue that Tipu forcibly converted Nairs and deported some of them. Before Wilks, M.M.D.L.T has argued likewise, but some of the figures he provides are prima facie exaggerated. For example, M.M.D.L.T says that not less than six thousand Mappilas were massacred in the Nair-Muslim rivalry before the Mysore invasion.¹⁴ Most of the impressions about the level of persecution, number of conversions and alleged atrocities by the Mysore over local Hindus are from M.M.D.L.T for later scholars. The difference in Wilks and M.M.D.L.T'S treatment also reflects an ideological certainty in the colonial approach that gradually emerges. Wilks, who is highly readable compared to M.M.D.L.T, appears as a classic orientalist. Wilks argues that smallpox was

¹² A non-colonial historian, perhaps the first, to compare Tipu with Aurangzeb was C. Hayavadana Rao. He found Tipu Sultan's "iconoclastic zeal" as the primary reason for his fall. For Rao, except Aurangzeb Mughal rulers were "tolerant." He added that Tipu "repeated the mistake of that other zealot Aurangzeb." For Rao, the shift from Haidar to Tipu was also in moving away from Shia belief to a "Sunni cult." C. Hyavadana Rao, *History of Mysore (1766-1799)* Vol iii, Bangalore, 1948, pp.1252-1253.

¹³ Colonel Mark Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South India in an attempt to trace the History of Mysoor from the Origin of the Hindoo government of that state to the extinction of the Mahommedan Dynasty in 1799*, Vol iii, pp.3-4.

¹⁴ M.M.D.L.T, *The History of Hyder Shah alias Hyder Khan Bahadur: and his son, Tippoo Suldaun, Revised and corrected by His highness Prince Gholam Mohammed*, W. Thacker & Co, 1855, p.65

spread along with Arab conquest to Europe and India.¹⁵ In Wilks' analysis Malabar appears as nothing less than a theater of holy war between "infidel" Hindus and the bigoted Sultan. When Wilks cites sources that are mostly from William Kirkpatrick, whose collection of *Tipu Sultan's Letters* which had many references to Malabar.

It is worth noting a recent argument in this context. It has been argued that the British perception of *Tipu as a tyrant* gradually evolved in the final decades of the eighteenth century.¹⁶ In 1806 when Wilks writes, one could already see a colonial consensus regarding Tipu as a tyrant. This gradually evolved perception became part of the colonial common sense by the early nineteenth century; when English East India Company had established its full dominance over Malabar.

Wilks remains an authoritative source in the first comprehensive colonial history of Malabar, written by William Logan. Logan also referred to *The Joint Commissioners' report of Malabar*, soon after its accession to the English East India Company and following Francis Buchanan's journey across the former Mysore regions that ended in 1800.

In the following section, I specifically look at Buchanan's account of Malabar, primarily because of its foundational role in shaping later colonial perceptions of the Mysore rule and the history of Malabar.¹⁷ Francis Buchanan, in his EEIC-commissioned journey, recounts his visit to Malabar with the tale of destruction by Tipu Sultan. Buchanan finds the ruins of a mud fort, which according to him, was constructed by the Zamorin and had been destroyed by Tipu Sultan.¹⁸ Further on, Buchanan encounters a fort constructed by Haidar Ali at Palakkad. Narrating the history of the Zamorins, Buchanan notes two crucial points in the

¹⁵ Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South India*, p.21.

¹⁶Michael Soracoe, "Tyrant! Tipu Sultan and the Reconceptation of British Imperial Identity, 1780-1800." PhD diss., Maryland College Park, 2013.

¹⁷ Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*. Vol ii, Asia Educational Trust, 1807(1999 reprint).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.346.

history of Malabar: first, the ancient rule of Cheraman Perumal and the second - the rule of Haidar Ali. For Buchanan, the period of Zamorin rule existed between these two rulers, summing up the entire medieval period. He attributes the easy success of the Mysorean invasion to the political divisions of Malabar under the authority of multiple chiefs. Buchanan argues that Cochin Raja was “compelled to pay tribute to Tipu.” In the next sentence, Buchanan also attributes “bigotry and intolerance” to Tipu Sultan which forced the Nairs of Malabar to either flee to Travancore or to retreat into the forests. Tipu’s “bigotry and intolerance “was contrasted by Buchanan’s observations of the “tolerance and humanity” of the Englishmen.¹⁹

The chiefs of Palakkad lost their caste status in the eyes of their fellow Hindu chiefs on account of the *Shekhury Raja’s* invitation to Haidar Ali of Mysore.²⁰ The first temple destruction noted by Buchanan falls in the domain of the Shekkury Raja.²¹ Buchanan narrates the fascinating history of this temple. The image or deity in the temple is of Bhagwati, who, Buchanan states, was the mother of Parasu Rama, the legendary figure who, according to largely Brahmanical myths, claimed the land of Keralam from the sea. To quote Buchanan’s account of Parasurama’s mother,

She followed her son to the mountains above Palighat, and sat down there on a three-peaked hill. At the intercession of the Brahmans, she consented to appear at a certain hour in the tank called Callay Collam. Ongoing thither at the appointed time, the Brahmans found the image projecting from the water of the tank, and there it remained for these eight thousand centuries.²²

¹⁹Ibid., p.350.

²⁰ Ibid.,p.347.

²¹ Buchanan notes that “The present Shekhury Raja is a poor looking, stupid old man, and his abode and attendance are the most wretched of any thing that I have seen, belonging to a person who claimed sovereignty.” Ibid.,p.351.

²² Ibid.,p.352.

Curiously, Buchanan says Tipu only “pulled down the temple or its structure” while leaving the Bhagwati image untouched.²³ In this part, it is important to point out that Buchanan was also uncritical of most of the myths and legends which privileged the Brahmin supremacy. This also says a lot about Buchanan’s views on the distinction between myth and history.

Buchanan also states that all the lands before Haidar Ali’s invasion belonged to Brahmins, except *devasthanam* and royal land. My fieldwork in parts of south Malabar showed evidence to the contrary. Nairs or Nambiars (and through their close relations some Muslims) also held lands, built mosques and temples in the early 1700s much before the Mysore invasion.²⁴ Buchanan notes that before the invasion, the land was cultivated by the “Cheruma slaves” of the Brahmin, and afterwards, the ownership was claimed by a number of groups and communities.²⁵ But from his account, it is unclear when the revenue divisions of Malabar actually occurred and when the category of *verumpattaakkar* and a hierarchy of tenants, cultivators, sharecroppers, and *Janmis* (landlords) emerged. It is also important to note his argument that only with the Mysore invasion did Malabar cultivators and landholders begin paying taxes. The revenue collection could also have given way to these revenue organizations. Moreover, Buchanan is silent about the origins of these divisions. While it is probable that Mysore must have facilitated such divisions, it is surprising to see terms such as *vermpattakkar*, *kanakkar* in the Mysore revenue vocabulary, which used Persian to no small extent.²⁶

²³ Buchanan said ,Tipu pulled down the temple, “ but that bigot did not venture to destroy the image which in the form of human hand.” Ibid.

²⁴ Shaheen Kelachan Thodika, “Ship Symbolism in the ‘Arabic Cosmopolis’: Reading Kunjayin Musliyar’s “Kappapattu” in 18th Century Malabar.”, pp. 17-25.

²⁵ Buchanan, *A journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*.p.366.

²⁶ On Tipu’s assessment and classification of land revenue Sen “A Pre-British Economic Formation in India of the Late Eighteenth Century: Tipu Sultan’s Mysore”, pp.69-83.

After the Mysorean conquest, many Mappilas and Pattar Brahmins mortgaged land from the Brahmins, which were hitherto used by Nairs alone.²⁷ 'Negadi' and the imposition of land taxes, which were unheard of before the Mysore rule, also came into focus for Buchanan, but he was unsure which "conqueror" initiated land taxes . Moving from Haidar to Tipu, Buchanan's writing changes tone. For example, he argues that "the violent outrages of Tipu" had compelled the Brahmins to migrate to Travancore for fear of persecution: "They sold their lands, took full *verumpattanam* money and left."²⁸ The Raja's land was called *Chericul*, and temple lands were called *devastanum*. Buchanan says Haidar exempted the latter from taxes, but Tipu discontinued this practice.²⁹ The growing revenue demands of Tipu, who was facing multiple threats in his frontiers, would have been a legitimate reason for this measure of taxing all the lands. One could read this move of taxing temple lands along with Tipu's measures of asking the army to contribute towards revenue.

Two nationalist interpretations

These allegations of Tipu's tyranny were naturalized within the colonial and even some of the nationalist account until the late colonial period in Malabar. An endorsement of the colonial constructions of Tipu's tyranny could be seen in the works of early nationalist historian K.M. Panikkar, especially in his *History of Kerala*.³⁰ Other writings of Panikkar have been critiqued by later historians, among which Panikkar's argument regarding the Portuguese epoch is primary.³¹ But in this context, it is important to point out that Panikkar's view on

²⁷ Buchanan, *A journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*.p.367.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.p.251.

³⁰ My characterization of K.M Panikkar as an early nationalist historian comes close to Partha Chatterjee's identification of certain Bengali writers of nineteenth century. Chatterjee looks at how the "English educated Hindu Middle class in late nineteenth century" used "History as a source of nationhood." These writers were significantly indebted to the colonial constructions of the Indian history which made their aggressive Hindu nationalist ideas "modern, rationalist and historicist." Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments- Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton, 1993, pp.109-110.

³¹ Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, Routledge, 2003,p.113.

Mysore rule in Malabar as one of cruelty and persecution of Hindus has not been substantially critiqued prior to the seminal work of C.K Kareem.

I try to read these two opposite takes on Tipu Sultan's rule in Malabar as two varieties of nationalist historiography. In the first case, one could see K.M. Panikkar's work continues with the "early nationalist historiography." The formation of the united Kerala state by including erstwhile Travancore and Cochin princely states and the Malabar province of the Madras presidency gave a new context to Panikkar's writing of *The History of Kerala*. Like other nationalist writings, this book generally served the purpose of nation-building, but it also gave much importance to the new political entity of 'Kerala State,' or united Kerala as it was called. Panikkar, who saw the erstwhile Travancore rulers as the true predecessors of the present Kerala state, also stated that Mysore rule had destroyed the last hope of a unified Kerala under the Travancore rajas in the eighteenth century.³² In other words, for Panikkar 'Aikya Kerala' would have been a reality in the eighteenth century if the Mysore invasion had not taken place.

In response to their rebellion, Haidar Ali inflicted merciless revenge on the Nair population, argues Panikkar.³³ According to him, Haidar hated Nairs as his "inveterate enemies."³⁴ It is further interesting to note that in Panikkar's view, "Tippu, unlike his father, who was a plain soldier, was a born reformer." This argument also influenced Panikkar's conclusion that Tipu was only a narrow-minded reformer who tried to reform the Nairs. However, Panikkar's narrative was biased against Tipu and towards Travancore, which he saw as a model state. The Mysore invasion in Panikkar's account had brought disaster to Kerala; the peasantry lived on the verge of famine due to the Mysore invasion. Large tracts of cultivable land were

³² Panikkar argued that "before Marthanda Varma's dream of a united Kerala could be realized, a new eruption, this time from the Mysore side, dashed it to pieces and cut up Kerala into three political divisions." Panikkar, *A History of Kerala*, p.308.

³³ Ibid., p.345.

³⁴ Ibid., p.341.

abandoned, and in “the famous temples, even the daily worship had not been carried on.” Panikkar also attributes the decline and near-desertion of the ports in Malabar to the Mysore invasion, which also resulted a decline in trade.³⁵

Kareem’s work was a product of his Ph.D. thesis under the supervision of Prof. Nurul Hasan at Aligarh Muslim University in the 1960s. Kareem’s thesis got the wide attention of Tipu scholars. Mohibbul Hasan, in his magisterial biography of Tipu Sultan, mentions Kareem’s work as a laudable attempt.³⁶ One could see the similarity in purposes of both these historians of Tipu- Hasan and Kareem- who were trying to defend Tipu against his communalized image by attempting to refute colonial allegations about Tipu, which formed the basis for later communal interpretations. Kareem’s debunking of Tipu’s attacks on temples and persecution of Hindus and Christians caused much controversy, in both the academic and the public or popular sphere.³⁷

Kareem, in his work, disagrees with K.M. Panikkar about the causes of the Mysore invasion. The most well-known explanations of the Mysore invasion included the economic greed of Haidar. Nevertheless, Kareem’s point is more convincing: the actual cause of the invasion probably lay in Haidar’s maritime ambitions. For Kareem, Haidar’s motive was to control “this resourceful country with many natural harbors that were centers of world conquest.”³⁸ He follows Mohibbul Hasan to argue Haidar wanted to “dry up the sea” against

³⁵ Ibid.,pp.414-417.

³⁶ Mohibbul Hasan, *History of Tipu Sultan*, Aakar Books, 1971(2013 reprint),p. vii.

³⁷ Ashish Nandy describes his meeting with Kareem at Cochin, when Kareem was the secretary of Kerala Historical Association. Two men who hailed from Cochin whom Nandy met at Kareem’s office claimed: their own research confirmed that their families were converted from Judaism to Christianity during Tipu’s attack. They further claimed that 10000 Jews ran away fearing a massacre by Tipu. Kareem dismissed this argument as wanting in evidence. Nandy adds that in a private conversation that followed the two men labelled Kareem as a “closet fundamentalist,” while to Nandy he appeared as a “polite leftist.” Ashish Nandy, *Time warps: Silent and evasive pasts in Indian politics and religion*. Rutgers University Press, 2002, p.169. One could also note that Dipesh Chakrabarty, has suggested paying attention to the “popular origin of the Academic history.” He demonstrates that the popular debates and even “quarrels” between contemporaries were crucial to the academic formulations of historians, Jadunath Sircar and G.S Desai. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *The Calling of History: Jadunath Sircar and his empire of Truth*, University of Chicago Press, 2015,p.15.

³⁸ Kareem, *Kerala under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, p.19.

the English East India Company, who were trying to make a strong foothold in Malabar. To critique Panikkar and his simplistic dismissal of Haidar's invasion as a move to support the fellow Muslims of Malabar, Kareem uses several sources like Kirmani and William Logan. From an analysis of these prior works, Kareem argues that the invasion was necessary for the Mysore kingdom to preserve its coastal independence and counter the English East India Company's territorial aggression. With this argument, Kareem is successful in disproving the hitherto prevailing notions of personal (such as 'greed') and religious causes (such as helping fellow Muslim brethren who were under the oppression of the 'Hindu' Rajas).³⁹

The invasion of Canara by the Mysore forces took place in 1763. Malabar was second in the order and was conquered in 1766. Kareem deals with the conquest in a separate chapter. Here Mysore army allied with the local Muslim ruler Ally Raja, to make almost unhindered progression. The only instance of opposition was at Kadathanadu of North Malabar, and Kareem argues that this was the "first and last opposition."⁴⁰ In the final part of the conquest, Haidar Ali confronted the Zamorin, and the Zamorin allegedly committed suicide at the end of his negotiations with Haidar.⁴¹

Kareem here critiques colonial historiography which posits the ancient social structure of Kerala as the context in which other Rajas of larger Malayalam-speaking region pressurized Zamorin. For Jonathan Duncan, Zamorin belonged to the caste of Samantha-Kshatriyas and surrender to the 'Muslim invader' was opposed heavily by the other Samantha Kshatriya Rajas.⁴² The question of honour and pressures from his relatives is alleged to have led the

³⁹ Ibid., pp.25-26.

⁴⁰ Ibid.,p.30.

⁴¹ Ibid.,p.32.

⁴² Jonathan Duncan's account of the events related to Zamorin's death was quoted from his interviews with the families of Zamorin in post-Mysore Malabar. I discuss his account in detail in the first chapter of this dissertation. See Jonathan Duncan, "Historical remarks of the Coast of Malabar- Some descriptions with the manners of its inhabitants", *Asiatic Researches or Transactions of the Society*, vol 5, Calcutta, 1799, pp.30-31.

Zamorin to kill himself when he failed to save his honour, claims Duncan. However, this argument was also critiqued by Kareem.⁴³

Kareem shows that the dependency of other Rajas, including the Travancore Raja, the Nawab of Arcot, and the Kochi Raja's negotiations with Mysore to become tributary invalidates the fear of ex-communication - as the first two colonial writers Duncan and M.M.D.L.T. had claimed.⁴⁴ At this point, Kareem's argument is one of the most powerful in his entire work, and one could argue that the colonial historiography is logically demolished here. In sum, Kareem finds Haidar's invasion of Malabar a great success.

The rebellion of 1766 is an important aspect of the Mysore rule in Malabar, and Kareem deals with the question in detail. In the case of the conquest, Kareem attempts to show that the victory of Mysore over these rebellions was largely peaceful and without much bloodshed. At this point, Kareem refutes Panikkar's argument that the Nair rebellion against Tipu was "patriotic and nationalist." Kareem shows how these rebellions were sponsored by the English East Company to weaken the Mysore state, i.e. when one reads these rebellions in the larger context of Anglo-Mysore wars, they are anything but not "patriotic" or "nationalist."⁴⁵ In the later part of Haidar's rule in Malabar, Kareem argues that the difference in Haidar's treatment of various Malabar rulers in the later part of his reign was not based on religion but on political grounds. As a sound example, Kareem shows how Mysore's antagonism with the Arakkal Muslim rulers deprived the latter of their privileged position in Malabar which they had enjoyed from the early years of invasion.⁴⁶ The tributary status and

⁴³Kareem, *Kerala under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, pp.33-34.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.35.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.44.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.56. In the final chapter of this dissertation I demonstrate how the Arakkal and Tipu Sultan shared a shared Sunni – Sufi memory to the present.

harmonious relations which the Raja of Cochin had with Mysore are further evidence to show that Mysore preferred allies based on political and not religious reasons.⁴⁷

Tipu seems to have continued many of these pragmatic policies of Haidar in Malabar. Kareem devotes a chapter each to Tipu's relation with Cochin and Travancore. He credits the progress that Cochin achieved during this time in the construction of roads, revenue collection, and trade monopoly to the influence of Mysore.⁴⁸ Kareem also alleges that Travancore had become a pawn in the hands of the English East Company without providing alliance to the Mysore state who were fighting against the colonial powers in multiple fronts.⁴⁹

Mysore is also credited by Kareem with having introduced "modern" and "progressive" ideas to Malabar.⁵⁰ The British administrative policies were in continuation with the foundations of the Mysore rule. While this argument of continuity has been argued by Asok Sen⁵¹ and later more elaborately by Burton Stein, it is important to note that Kareem had brought the specific example of Malabar into the debate in as early as 1973.⁵² It is worth noting that Kareem was arguably the first historian of Kerala to see the measures by Mysore as a profound rupture in terms of political and economic organization.

Kareem also discusses the agrarian reforms in Mysore-ruled Malabar in detail. Kareem agrees that the agrarian reforms shattered the existing social order in Malabar. However, again, he is rightly critical of the older historians who interpreted the land-giving to peasants

⁴⁷However, Kareem also points out the distrust existed between the Mysore-Cochin relations. Ibid,p.73&89.

⁴⁸Kareem argued, "In short all that were attributed to Sakthan Thampuran (of Cochin) as great administrative innovations were really inspired and sometimes instructed by the Mysore pioneers."Ibid., p.89.

⁴⁹ Ibid.,p.108.

⁵⁰Ibid., p.133.

⁵¹Asok Sen finds "uniqueness" in Tipu Sultan with the "elements of individualization and originality of a monarch, a characteristic phenomenon of the Renaissance era and of subsequent mercantilism in Europe and of its role in the building of pre-conditions for the modern age." Sen "A Pre-British Economic Formation in India of the Late Eighteenth Century: Tipu Sultan's Mysore", p.49.

⁵² Stein argued that the "military fiscalist" policies introduced by Tipu was followed by the English East India Company. Burton Stein, "State formation and economy reconsidered."p.404.

(who happened to be mostly Mappila Muslims) as religiously inspired. Instead, Kareem shows that this was not an exception to the general Mysore policies since even in other parts of its domain, the cultivators were directly taxed, and the intermediaries eliminated.⁵³ The construction of roads across Malabar and connecting of the most remote parts with the coast and the main trading centers are also highlighted in Kareem's narrative.⁵⁴ The rapid industrialization and construction of infrastructure, such as warehouses, are noted as examples of Mysore rule's long-lasting contributions following the construction of roads and administrative centralization.⁵⁵

Moving on to social reforms, Kareem is appreciative of Tipu's measures - including his edicts against polyandry, against intoxicants and asking the Nair women to cover the upper half of their body - as based on Tipu's strongly-rooted personal "moralism." This moralism cannot be read as religious, Kareem argues.⁵⁶ In order to defend Tipu Sultan's controversial measures, Kareem takes recourse to colonial anthropology and ethnography. He does not dispute any of the facts put forwarded by colonialists and later endorsed by anthropologists such as L.K. Anantha Krishna Aiyer on caste rigidities, social organizations, and customs.⁵⁷ I suggest that an uncritical acceptance of colonial accounts at this point and almost no discussion of the influences of Western/French modernity on Tipu's social reforms is a significant drawback of Kareem's study.

Kareem has also examined the complaints of religious persecution against the Tipu Sultan. For him, Mysore disturbed the existing feudal social order of Malabar. Kareem speculates that the Mappila peasants could have taken "revenge on Nairs" using their newly privileged

⁵³ Kareem, *Kerala under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, pp.154,-155.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.156-163.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.164-172.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.178.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.174-175.

position under the Mysore rule.⁵⁸ However, he argues that the supervision of Mysore officers must have thwarted such plans. In addition, Kareem points out that many of the Mysore officers were Hindus, which itself invalidates the theory of selective persecution of Hindus in Malabar. Kareem's argument on religious persecution is summed in the following sentence: "not a specific instance can be pointed out to show that any person was persecuted because he was not a Muslim."⁵⁹

The Debate in Malayalam

Apart from the few articles written by Panikkar and Kareem in Malayalam periodicals on the Mysore invasion, there were also attempts by historians in the vernacular to look at the history of Tipu Sultan. Journalist and writer P.K. Balakrishnan wrote his *Tipu Sultan* in 1959. Balakrishnan sailed through most of the secondary sources in English available to him. Doing justice to his work, Balakrishnan's *Tipu Sultan* remains one of the most authoritative texts on Tipu in Malayalam.

Balakrishnan argues that *pada* is a curse-word (*pirakkartham*) in present-day Malabar and might have emerged from the association with the Mysore conquest of Malabar.⁶⁰ While the first part of his book provides a general history of Tipu Sultan's rule, the second part moves into the controversial topic of the Mysore rule in Malabar. But unlike the colonial description of the "Mysore invasion" of expedition to Malabar, Balakrishnan titled the chapter "Mysore Malabar *samaparkkam*" or "Mysore-Malabar interactions."⁶¹ He saw the Mysore rule as one of the most influential periods in Kerala's history. Balakrishnan also adds that the Mysore rulers had no specific policy towards Malabar and they ruled Malabar like any other part of their domain, in order to refute the dominant historical notion that the Mysore rulers intended

⁵⁸ Ibid.,p.198.

⁵⁹ Ibid.,p.194.

⁶⁰P.K. Balakrishnan, *Tipu Sultan*,DC Books, 1959 (2015 Reprint),p.141.

⁶¹ Ibid.,p.151.

to create trouble in Malabar and among its people. Balakrishnan is quite appreciative of Mysore's attempts to end feudalism in Malabar. He gives the example of the abolition of *jenamam* rights (literally birthright) of the landlords over land and argues that the Mysore rule brought about total social transformation in Malabar, which historians have so far failed to acknowledge. In fact, he argues, the Mysore rulers tried to establish a centralised modern state in Malabar.⁶²

Similarly, another notable work on Tipu Sultan in Malayalam was written by Dr. K.K.N. Kuruppu.⁶³ Kuruppu, a trained historian, credits Tipu Sultan with the modernization of Malabar. Connecting the coast and hilly regions of Malabar with roads is a notable example for Kuruppu in this regard. This general history of Tipu Sultan by Kuruppu is more a life sketch than an examination of Tipu's policies on Malabar.

So far, I have looked at the Malabar-focused works on Tipu Sultan. It is also important to see how the most recent works on Tipu Sultan, in general, have discussed the invasion of Malabar.

Barun De, in his pioneering 1992 article "Some Socio-Political Implications of the Cognomen' Tipu Sultan" brought our attention to some hitherto unexplored themes within the history of Tipu Sultan.⁶⁴ De particularly wonders about what he calls "Sufi plebian militancy" in the family tradition of Tipu Sultan. His other main argument is to view Mysore in the eighteenth century as "national popular" against "collaborationist" tendencies of the other rulers of the eighteenth century, such as Nizam of Hyderabad. Explaining the Sufi influences on Tipu Sultan, De points out the "neo-Madari principles of Shaheed."⁶⁵ De is primarily

⁶² Ibid,p.169.

⁶³ K.K.N. Kuruppu, *Nawab Tipu Sultan*, Mathrubhumi, 2007.

⁶⁴ Barun De, "Some Socio-Political Implications of the Cognomen Tipu Sultan", Occasional Paper number 135. Center for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta, Kolkata.1992.

⁶⁵ Ibid,p.1.

interested in the forefathers of Tipu, who were the servitors of the Sufi shrines or *darghas* before turning into military officers. Tipu's father, Haidar Ali, following his own father Fatah Muhammad's late occupation, was a warrior who adhered to the pious tradition. Haidar's first wife was the daughter of the Pirzada Sayyid of Sira, Tipu Sultan attained his first name from the famous Arcot Sufi saint 'Tipu Mastan Awliya' and the second name from his grandfather Fatah Muhammad.⁶⁶ Barun De, Juxtaposes two aspects in Tipu's lineage – he was part “Sufi servitor” and part “military adventurer.”

However, curiously, De finds the position of Haidar and Tipu as low in the religious hierarchy he creates, below even the small-town Ulama. De comes to his more important point about - the “darvish streak.” De here, following Richard Eaton, more closely looks at Tipu Mastan Awliya after whom Tipu Sultan was named.⁶⁷ He finds Tipu Mastan as an initiator, and not a follower in the Sufi tradition. Similarly, De finds “Sultan” as a good alternative to emphasize worldly authority, a name intelligently chosen by Tipu's parents Fakhrunnisa and Haidar Ali. Following this, Tipu aspired to become a “padsha ghazi”⁶⁸ De further points out the increasing participation of Sufi saints in affairs related to state power to the immediate background of the rise of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan in the Deccan and Carnatic region. He mentions the participation of Pirzadas and Sajjde Nashins in Hindu-Muslim conflicts in this region. Moreover, the rising mercenaries in this region merged with this Madari Sufi tradition.⁶⁹ From De, one could infer that the Khudadadi Sirkar has a long Sufi tradition at its disposal, one of the rare instances in south Indian history where a Sufi tradition assumes state power without the usual royal lineage.

⁶⁶ Ibid.,pp.3-4.

⁶⁷ Ibid.,pp.5-6.

⁶⁸ Ibid.,p.8.

⁶⁹ Ibid.,pp.11-15.

However, this is not the end of the story - one could look at Susan Bayly's *Saints, goddesses, and Kings* to see the immediate impact of these Sufis on state power. Bayly argues that there was a strong process of state-building, which also resulted in the expansion of Muslim military culture.⁷⁰ Bayly, in more detail, elucidates Barun De's point that the wandering Sufi tradition was later "domesticated into the courtly culture."⁷¹ Her example for this case in the eighteenth century are the two Muslim kingdoms Arcot of Wallajahis and the Mysore of Haidar and Tipu, which inaugurated a warrior cult tradition of Muslims. She notes the *Shaheed* (martyr) companions of Tipu Sultan, namely Sayyid Mustahafa Shahid of Kulathur and Sayyid Faridudin Shahid of Trichy.⁷² She also mentions that some of the tomb shrines are believed to be of eighteenth-century Muslim soldiers of the Carnatic region. However, her argument that some of the shrines which predated the Mysore invasion suddenly started affiliating their history with the Mysore rule strikes resonance with Malabar region.⁷³ In Bayly's example, a 12th century Arab martyr of Ervadi, Tamil Nadu suddenly becomes an Afghan mercenary in the eighteenth century popular perception. But Bayly does not go beyond, into an analysis of shrines, and her promising finding ends with a call for viewing this as "syncretism" as opposed to the prevalent view that warrior saints are an embodiment of violent communal confrontation (Bayly sees the Arcot Nawab's attempt to find an Islamic identity as a move against the syncretic traditions).⁷⁴ Bayly, was more focused on the Tamil country, and her arguments are derived from contested colonial sources. For example, her depiction of Tipu Sultan as a killer of Brahmins in Malabar is based on Francis Buchanan's early colonial writing, which was- as I noted before- profoundly antagonistic towards Tipu.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Susan Bayly, *Saints, goddesses and kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian society, 1700-1900*. Vol. 43. Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 12.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.13.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.135.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 187-188.

⁷⁴ *Ibid* pp.229-235

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.165.

Other works on Malabar history and Mappila Muslims, such as Stephen Dale and K.N Panikkar, use the Mysorean conquest only to supplement their main argument. The Mysorean rule contributed to the establishment of a violent Islamic frontier for Dale, while the conquest was background to the agrarian crisis for Panikkar.⁷⁶ While a notable study by Kate Brittlebank focused on the question of the legitimacy of Tipu Sultan's rule amongst a "predominantly Hindu subject population" the author limited her study to colonial sources, and did not consult any primary sources in the regional languages, especially in Malayalam and her study did not focus on Malabar.⁷⁷ However, it was in Malabar where Tipu Sultan had his most contentious relation with his "Hindu subjects" where she could have enquired the question of legitimacy more primarily.

Methodology, Sources, and Chapters

I propose to take a longer period to develop my questions for this study. It is an attempt to tell the story beyond the actual event, its afterlife as it were. In analyzing both archival and oral histories, I look at the representation of Tipu Sultan in the colonial archives. I shall be looking at a collection of stories around Tipu Sultan that are present across oral and literary traditions. A large part of my study will focus on literary texts.

The Colonial records, such as commission reports, Gazetteers, and correspondences, will be important colonial sources informing the dissertation throughout. Apart from the standard histories of Haidar and Tipu Sultan translated from Persian, I shall also be looking at both

⁷⁶ Stephen Frederic Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier: The Māppilas of Malabar, 1498-1922*. Oxford University Press, 1980, pp.79-89. K.N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State, Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921*, Oxford, 1989, pp.55-56.

⁷⁷ Brittlebank does not move away from what Susan Bayly has already argued about Malabar. Apart from Bayly she also quotes Buchanan for Malabar. However, she did not find Malabar worth detailed treatment, and she says that Kareem's work is "flawed by the author's attempt to argue that the account by Maistre de la tour is a forgery." Brittlebank fails to note that even nineteenth century British writers such as William Logan had doubted the authenticity of M.M.D.L.T (Logan's account is discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation). See Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy- Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain*, Oxford, 1997, p.4 & pp.126-127.

published and unpublished manuscripts in Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam. The literary texts I consult include Malayalam novels written in the early twentieth century.

My attempt in this study departs from existing literature on Mysore rule in Malabar. On the one hand, I would like to address the lack of attention and primary research on the specific region of Malabar in scholarship of eighteenth-century Mysore. I also attempt to bridge the gap between 'History' and 'Memory' narratives of Malabar rule.⁷⁸ Two terms that are crucial for this dissertation are – “popular” and the “vernacular.” Partha Chatterjee has asked the historians to develop an “analytic of the popular” and a redefinition of the term “popular.”⁷⁹ He argues that “the domain of popular, had many narrative and performative strategies through which it could still tell the story of conquest and tell it to the satisfaction of both victor and vanquished.”⁸⁰ This approach helps one to include the popular practices of memory within the historical disciplinary practices with an “appropriate analytic of the popular.”⁸¹ Vernacular histories are further defined as histories outside the “authorized forms of modern academic history.” Chatterjee suggests that vernacular histories existed not only in the forms of essays and monographs, but also as literary genres, including novel, drama, and poetry.⁸²

⁷⁸ Prachi Deshpande and Shahid Amin have made two notable recent interventions on the History of memory in South Asia. Prachi Deshpande, throws light into how historical memory was crucial to the establishment of both “modern Maratha regional identity” and “Hindu and Indian nationalist imaginations.” Her understanding of the “construction of a shared historical memory” as a “form of modern historical consciousness” inspires this dissertation. Prachi Deshpande, *Creative Past- Historical Memory and identity in western India, 1700-1960*. Permanent Black, 2007, pp.2-3. When dealing with a hagiographical saint, whose historical existence is unproven, Shahid Amin moves away from the familiar questions of historical method. For instance, he is neither interested to find out why the hagiography was written at a particular point of time nor why Hindu castes venerate a Muslim warrior saint. Instead, Amin’s focus is on “the manner in which the hagiography of Salar Masud was written” and “the ways in which popular assent is generated across religious divides.” Amin’s significant contribution helps one to have a history of conflictual pasts of communities. In Malabar, along with the history of Malabar rebellion of 1921, Tipu Sultan’s memories are foremost example of a conflictual past. I demonstrate in this dissertation, Tipu Sultan’s memories were, to borrow Amin’s term, part of the “story of quotidian reshaping the historic.” Shahid Amin, *Conquest and Community- The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan*, Orient Blackswan, 2015, pp.xx-xxi.

⁷⁹ Partha Chatterjee, Anjan Ghosh, eds. *History and the Present*. Permanent Black, 2006, p.19.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.20.

⁸¹ Ibid., 19.

⁸² Partha Chatterjee and Raziuddin Aquil, *History in the Vernacular*, Permanent Black, 2010, p.19.

While even Kareem and Balakrishnan have mainly looked at the consultation of state manuals, I would like to broaden the domain of the vernacular, to include Arab-Malayalam manuscripts and Malayalam *granthavaris*. The local myths and stories will be corroborated with this literature and will constitute sources for my study. These vast vernacular sources which give complementary as well as conflicting accounts of Mysore form the core of my work.

In the first chapter, taking a cue from Balakrishnan's argument on the pervasive association of the *pada* with the Mysore rule of Malabar, I look at the published Malayalam *granthavaris* (manuscripts) for the narratives of *padayottam*. The *granthavaris* were originally inscribed on palm leaves, and have been recently published.⁸³ The materials consulted in this chapter were evidently outside the "disciplinary grid of colonial institutions" and a few were written prior to the advent of the colonial writings on Tipu, Mysore, and Malabar - which make them ideal candidates for the vernacular histories of Mysore. Thus, in this chapter, I ask how the vernacular writings and oral traditions on Mysorean conquest reshaped, agreed with or contradicted colonial narratives of the past.

The second chapter examines the views of *the Joint Commissioners report on Malabar*, William Kirkpatrick's annotated compilation of Tipu Sultan's *Select Letters*, William Logan's *Malabar Manual* on Mysore rule in Malabar. This chapter demonstrates that these were the master texts of the colonial archives, and were also the repositories of colonial memories and emotions about Tipu Sultan. The chapter probes how the attribution of Tipu's policy in Malabar as religious, hence bigoted, had a powerful historiographical impact on the construction of a linear colonial narrative of Tipu's rule in Malabar.

⁸³ The institute, Vallathol Vidyapeedam of Shukapuram in Malappuram, has done a commendable job in publishing many Malayalam manuscripts dealing with the pre-colonial histories of Malabar.

To what extent did the emotions of panic and fear in memory shape the historical narrative? The third chapter focuses on the panic caused by *pada* in Travancore and how it was remembered well into the early twentieth century. I look at the historical and literary representation of the fear of Tipu Sultan in the eighteenth century Travancore. The close resemblance of such fears to colonial master narratives of Mysore rule in Malabar will be the focus of this chapter.

The fourth chapter focuses on the rebirth of Tipu Sultan's memories in Malayalam popular in the early twentieth century Malabar. I look at the caste and reformist contexts of the early twentieth-century and the return of Mysore memory, while specifically paying attention to the newspaper debates and Malayalam novels in and around the new context of the Khilafat Movement and the Malabar rebellion of 1921. The chapter asks to what extent the colonial historical narratives reshaped the Malayalam memories of Tipu Sultan in Malabar.

The fifth chapter looks at how the Mappila Muslims remember Tipu Sultan. The chapter focuses on an early twentieth century Arabi-Malayalam biography of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan along with popular stories, and hagiographies of Sufis remembering the history of their association with Tipu within a strong Sunni sectarian framework up to the post-colonial present. I further focus on how these texts in Arabi- Malayalam, and memories of the Sufi traditions were a conversation with the scriptural pasts and presents of South Indian Muslims.

CHAPTER 1
CHRONICLES OF A CONQUEST:
THE MYSORE PADA IN TEXTS AND MEMORIES OF MALABAR

Many vernacular texts and manuscripts testify to the popular memories of Mysore rule in Malabar. A few of these accounts, originally written in the late eighteenth century, have had a recent rebirth in print. Apart from these published manuscripts, many stories were collected and printed from the late nineteenth century as myths, and there have been fascinating stories that account for the ‘miracles’ of that period. In this chapter, I look at ways of remembering ‘Mysore pasts’ of Malabar in Malayalam texts.¹ I examine four Malayalam sources in this chapter. For the most part, I focus in this chapter on *Vellayude Charithram* – a Namboodiri Brahmins’ autobiographical account originally written in c.1780.² The significant aspects that emerge from these vernacular narratives are the local political, cultural, and social conflicts of the eighteenth century, which formed the background to the new order by the Mysore rulers, though different sections of the Malabar population resisted it. Haidar Ali’s, and later Tipu Sultan’s advancement into the Malayalam region from Carnatic was seen as a *padayottam* (a running battle, also translated as conquest) in popular memory, as well as historical and literary traditions. I argue that the *Mysore Padayottam* or *pada*, its shortened usage in the vernacular, gradually evolved into a metaphor for a profound crisis and conflict, as well as the emergence of a new order in Malabar.³ The *Vellayude Charithram*, I demonstrate, was elaborate in providing the details of the crisis of *pada* in the eighteenth

¹ I use phrases ‘Mysore pasts’ and ‘Mysore time’ as translations of the Malayalam phrase *Mysore Kalam*.

² *Vellayude Charithram* was written in the year 956 (c.1780-1781) of the Malayalam calendar. The manuscript was copied into paper in 1965 by one of the family members of *Vella Manakkal* of Malappuram district of Kerala and was printed in 1998. See N.M Namboodiri, *Vellyaude Charithram*, Vallathol Vidyapeedam, Shukapuram, 1998, p.10.

³ *Pada* was associated with a wide range of meanings from troops to conquest. It was used both as noun and verb in Malayalam accounts I discuss. The German lexicographer Herman Gundert in his 1872 Malayalam and English dictionary gave an example to the usage of *pada* as follows “*Tipuvumayi Padavechu nedi*” (won after a battle against Tipu). Hermann Gundert, *A Malayalam and English Dictionary*, C Stolz, Mangalore, 1872, p.595.

century. The other texts I discuss in the chapter also come into conversation with the *pada* crisis that emerged in late eighteenth century Malabar, which the author of *Vellayude Charithram* was witnessing. The narratives of *pada* included panegyrics of local authorities such as temples, *kalaris* and little kingdoms. These narratives claimed an authentic remembering of the conquest. This chapter argues that *pada* as a crisis was perceived as both enabling and destructive of socio-political power by the existing authorities in Malabar.⁴ In the first section of this chapter, I sketch out the specificities of eighteenth century Malabar before moving to delineate the context of texts and stories of *pada*. The second section focuses on memories of *pada* associated with the *kalari* gymnasiums and temples in Malabar. The third section focuses on two early accounts of *Mysore pada* -*Tharoor Swarupam Granthavari* and *Vellayude Charithram* followed by a historiographical discussion of *fitna* and *fasad* in the time of *pada*.

Local conflicts and the establishment of order

It would not be an exaggeration to state that Haidar Ali, in 1766, stepped into the middle of a grave crisis with his visit to Malabar, which was rife with existing conflicts between little Kingdoms or *Swaroopams*.⁵ Ashin Das Gupta observes that the eighteenth century was a “restless century” for the Malabar region, while the Travancore Kingdom made aggressive expansion. He notes that there were fluctuations in trade on the coast, which finally ended with the Mysore army destroying the medieval city of Calicut, leading to medieval merchants disappearing from the coast.⁶ What were the reflections of Malayalam narratives on these

⁴ The local authorities include *swaroopams*, *kovilakam*, *kalaris*, and caste groups. These categories are discussed below.

⁵ Margret Frenz, in her important study on the concept of rule in pre-colonial Malabar, uses the category ‘little kings’ to describe the rajas of Malabar. For her, the little Kings such as Pazhassi Raja had autonomy and power over internal politics with control over military and financial resources, and was dependent of the “great king to legitimize his rule in his own territory.” Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest- Transition to British Rule in Malabar, 1790-1805*, Oxford, 2003, p.141. I adopt this category to describe the rajas of Malabar, while at the same time acknowledging multiple authorities in Malabar.

⁶ Ashin Das Gupta, *Malabar in Asian trade: 1740-1800*. Cambridge University Press, 1967, p.4.

questions, and what were the ways in which the Mysore rule was remembered even after the eighteenth century, are some of the questions that I attempt to answer in this chapter. The Khudadadi Sirkar in Malabar, as the narratives describe it, was immersed in eighteenth century local conflicts in its attempts toward establishing a new socio-political order. We would see further in the chapter, in the accounts of Vella Namboodiri there was also, a resentment against both the conflicts and the establishment of new order. The chapter also offers some comparisons with other regions and neighborhoods in the late eighteenth century, which are relevant to tease out distinctness of the crisis of Malabar in late eighteenth century.

P.J Marshall notes that when the Mughal Empire disintegrated, there was no overall decline, as had been argued by many historians, rather many regional states provided stability in their respective regions.⁷ Apart from conflicts with the Portuguese, the Malabar region was relatively peaceful until the early eighteenth century. In other parts of South Asia, conflicts of the eighteenth century were mainly understood within the framework of ‘Hindu -Muslim’ tensions.⁸ Scholars such as C.A Bayly looked at the differences in Hindu-Muslim identities of the eighteenth century and the constructions of communalism in the colonial period.⁹ However, Bayly only briefly mentions the case of the Malabar Coast in his larger map of the eighteenth century, focusing on Tipu Sultan’s conflicts with Nair feudatories and Malabar Christians, where he misses the long roots of petty local conflicts in Malabar as a prelude to the ‘Mysore time.’¹⁰ The conflicts occurred between different *swaroopams* (little kingdoms)

⁷ P.J Marshall, *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History*, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp.1-36.

⁸ Apart from the major battles between European powers and the Indian Kings.

⁹ Christopher A Bayly, "The Pre-history of Communalism? Religious Conflict in India, 1700–1860." *Modern Asian Studies* 19, no. 2, 1985, p.177-203.

¹⁰ On conflicts between Mysore and the communities of Malabar, Bayly disagrees with early colonial historians such as Mark Wilks, and asks to see the conflicts as “acts of policy rather than mindless fanaticism.” *Ibid.*, p.185.

– ¹¹, the Kolattiri of Northern Malabar, Zamorin of Calicut, Cochin and Venad or Travancore, between decentralised warrior cultures such as *kalaris* and the centralising or expanding tendencies of *swaroopams*, and more importantly a much less acknowledged conflict between *Shaivite* and *Vaishnavite* Brahmins in which little kings also played a part. ¹² As Tipu's *Padayottam* advanced from Palakkad to the present-day central Kerala of Aluva, all these conflicts were transformed by an 'alien' power, a fresh entrant to the complexities of Malayalam region. ¹³ Bayly agrees with Irfan Habib that in different parts of North India in the eighteenth century, people in the countryside protested the "intrusive elements" among revenue collectors. ¹⁴ Similarly, the dissatisfaction with revenue collection was the reason for conflict of the *rajas* ¹⁵ and *kovilakams* with Mysore. In his narrative, the Namboodiri Brahmin Vella resented the new revenue order created by the Mysore conquest of Malabar. In other words, one of the key aspects of the new tensions which emerged with the establishment of a new economic order in Malabar, was that of *draviyam* or revenue. While in other parts of the subcontinent, the strengthening of solidarities among communities was related to the decline of warrior states, in the case of Malabar Coast such transformations were more or less a consequence of the expansionist designs of the Mysore and the Travancore and the reordering

¹¹ In some cases a conglomeration of many *Kovilakams* (more local level authorities) constituted one *swaroopam*. For instance, the Nediyruppu *Swaroopam* of Zamorin's was constituted by 'Padijare Kovilakam' of Mangav, 'Puthiya Kovilakam' of Thiruvannur, 'Kizahakke Kovilakam' of Kottakkal. See Chemboli Sreenivasan, *Samoothiri Rajavinte Bhakthi Samrajyam [The Bhakthi Empire of Zamorin]*, Poorna Publications, Kozhikode, 2012, p.9.

¹² Many local authorities and minor *swaroopams* such as Tharoor *Swaroopam* of Palakkad, Chirakkal, Kadathand, Kottayam, Arakkal, Thekkan Ayirur, Thalapilli, Kollangod, Vettathunad, Parappanad, Vadakkan Kottayam, Kurungoth, Nedungad, Kavalappara, Randathara, Neeleshwaram, Karipath existed. See Velayudhan Panikkashery, *Keralathile Rajavamshangal*, DC books, 2015.

¹³ In *Vellayude Charithram*, one would see Mysore as a *paradesi* or a complete outsider to the Desam the 18th century Malayali author imagined, I explain further.

¹⁴ Bayly further shifts his analysis to commercialization and agrees with Muzaffar Alam that there was a Zamindari assertion against gentry in the 18th century. Bayly, "The Pre-history of 'Communalism'? Religious Conflict in India, 1700–1860.", p.200.

¹⁵ In pre-colonial Malabar, the head of the family or *Kovilakam* held the position of *Raja*, notes Margret Frenz. Frenz, *Contact to Conquest*, p.12.

that was attempted to achieve this.¹⁶ It also emerges from the Malayalam narratives that it was not just Mysore and Travancore but the Zamorin as well who turned increasingly expansionist in his ambitions during this period. Though unsuccessful, his attempts at expansion generated a series of conflicts in Malabar.

Muzaffar Alam argues that there was no general crisis in the eighteenth century north India, since Mughal imperial histories reflected only the ruling class sentiments, which cannot be generalised.¹⁷ The texts I consult also register a crisis, but a crisis that predated, and was transformed by the *Mysore Padayottam*. Historians have observed that Malabar was facing political turmoil and confusion in the eighteenth century. N Rajendran in his *Establishment of British Power in Malabar* observes that when the English East India Company and Mysore fought for supremacy, a new political and social organisation emerged in Malabar.¹⁸ Ashin Das Gupta traces the decline in fortunes of Calicut to the invasion of Haidar in 1766.¹⁹ More importantly, Gupta argues that there was no uniform response or impact of the Mysore invasion in Malabar. He suggests that while the coast in Malabar was indifferent to the Mysorean invasion, the merchants in the interior panicked and fled.²⁰ The texts I discuss in this chapter belong primarily to the interior. While they do not reflect the merchant class, they talk about those who were close to political power centers or *swaroopams* through temples or *kalaris*. These groups of people, also panicked and fled, some with a temple deity (idol) itself, while some others collaborated with the invaders. In other words, the crisis not only invited resentment in the interior, but also threw up various opportunities for different sections of the elite, even in the interior. The impact was not uniform and varied according to

¹⁶ While it would be erroneous to suggest that there were communalization during Mysore, one could assume with the texts we discuss in this chapter that there were transformations in the way communities perceived themselves in the late 18th century Malabar.

¹⁷ Muzaffar Alam , “Eastern India in the Early Eighteenth century ‘Crisis’; Some evidence from Bihar,” In P.J Marshall, *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History* ,The Oxford University Press ,2011, p.172.

¹⁸ N Rajendran, *Establishment of British Power In Malabar*, Chugh Publications, 1979, p.9.

¹⁹Das Gupta, *Malabar in the Asian Trade*, p.111.

²⁰ Ibid.

different caste groups and caste communities. The texts I study in this chapter were produced by local authorities or those who were close to local authorities. Vella Namboodiri, for instance, was introduced to Haidar Ali because he had an influential relationship with the Zamorin. The Panikkar of a *kalari* occupied a significant status in the eighteenth century politics. It appears from the texts that the *kalari* and the temple were two crucial institutions and were closely connected with the decentralised polity of *Swaroopamas* in eighteenth century Malabar.

The two villages mentioned in *Vellayude Charithram*, *Panniyur* and *Shukapauram* were among the earliest Brahmin settlements in Kerala with a mythical connection to Parasurama in the Keralolpatti tradition.²¹ It is worth recalling the *Panniyur- Shukapauram* sectarian rivalry. Kesavan Veluthat has demonstrated the importance of temples to these villages.²² It is evident in his analysis that temples, like *kalaris* were of socio-cultural importance. According to Veluthat, temples in the early medieval period were more or less synonymous with Brahmin settlements. In *Vellayude Charithram*, one could note that Brahmin villages were “temple-oriented groups,” where the narratives around the temple were also the histories of the two villages itself. These two settlements (*Panniyur- Shukapauram*) grew together from the 13th century. In the eighteenth century, they further benefited from the decline of neighboring Brahmin settlements.²³ As these two settlements grew, they were also divided as centers of *Shaivite* and *Vaishnavite* traditions, respectively. Citing a Dutch source from the early eighteenth century, Veluthat records the popular belief that these sectarian divisions

²¹ Kesavan Veluthat, one of the foremost scholars on pre-colonial Malayalam texts, argues that “The Keralolpatti is a narrative in somewhat Sanskritized Malayalam prose, giving an account Kerala’s history from the creation of the land by inevitable Parasurama, expressed in the style of Puranic exposition.” Kesavan Veluthat, *The Early Medieval in South India*, Oxford, 2009, p.133. For the colonial writers of 19th century such as William Logan Keralolpatti was useful to construct the early histories of Kerala, we see further. Also see *Keralopatti- The Origin of Malabar*, Basel Mission Press, Mangalore, 1868, p.15.

²² Keshavan Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements In Kerala, A.D 1100-1500*, M.Phil Dissertation, Center for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1978.

²³ *Ibid.* p.55.

were traced to the time of the Cheraman Perumal's migration to Mecca²⁴, when Perumal issued an instruction that in the future, powers should be equally distributed between these two factions.²⁵ The rulers of pre-colonial *swaroopams* were either Shaivite or Vaishnavite, and as *Vellayude Charithram* shows, they patronized one or the other of these temple villages. While dismissing these legends, Veluthat turns our attention to the rivalry between the two sects based on mutual jealousy regarding learning and prosperity. In one instance, one of the factions was accused of having *paradesi*²⁶ teachers, which became a point of contention between these two factions.²⁷ In the rivalries that followed, the *Panniyur* village was accused of polluting the deity and losing caste status.²⁸

Some legends about *kalari* also had a connection to the Parasurama myth and firmly placed it in the Brahmanical tradition.²⁹ Phillip B Zarrilli thus identifies *kalari* as an apt symbol of Malayali identity.³⁰ One could argue that the *kalari* gymnasium has to be linked to warrior cultures of the eighteenth century. While Dilip Menon has discussed the militarization of eighteenth century Malabar as beginning with the Mysore intervention which led to the emergence of a military labour market, he does not go into the details of *kalari*. *Kalari* gymnasiums were also places of elementary learning and just military schools. Menon blames the lack of attention to *kalari* as he did not find any sources on *kalari* apart from the

²⁴ See Yohanan Freidman, "Qissat Shakarwati Farmad: A Tradition Concerning the Introduction of Islam to Malabar", *Israel Oriental Studies*, 5, 233-58.

²⁵ Veluthat, *Brahmin Settlements in Kerala*, p.57.

²⁶ *Paradesi* was a term used for foreigner in Malabar as early as the early 16th century. See Mansel Longworth Dames, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa- An Account of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean and their inhabitants*, written by Duarte Barbosa and completed about the year 1518 A.D. vol 2, The Hakluyt Society, 1921, pp.71-72.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.59.

²⁸ Veluthat quotes multiple literary texts from the "medieval Kerala" to show rivalry as long standing one. *Ibid.*, p.60

²⁹ The 'Parasurama myth' which was prominent in Keralolpatti traditions, was not only confined to the origins of Brahmin villages but became a testimony to the Brahmanical claims over the wider cultural practices of Kerala.

³⁰ Phillip B Zarrilli, *When the body becomes all eyes: Paradigms, discourses and practices of power in kalarippayattu, a South Indian martial art*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.p.32.

northern ballads or *Vadakkanpattu*.³¹ The *kalari*'s importance, however, did not decline uniformly, and they did not disappear with the rise of a military labour market. Susan Bayly has looked at the cultures around the warrior kings, deities, and the sacredness attributed to *kalaris*. In her study of the eighteenth century conflicts in South India, *kalaris* are of prime importance. She suggests that the Panikkars, or the head of the *kalaris*, were venerated as spiritual masters or gurus, K.M Panikkar had earlier pointed out that in every locality or Desam there were *kalari* gymnasiums, of which Panikkar or the *Kurupu* was the head.³² He adds that Nair families were attached to *kalaris* for training and military mobilization.³³

Temples and *Kalaris* in popular stories

Temple desecration and conversion are the two dominant concerns of the texts on which this chapter focuses. The specific eighteenth century context of such themes needs to be supplemented with how popular memory negotiated the histories of temples and *kalaris* during the conflicts. Janaki Nair says that the temple in pre-British India was “a key institution in the formation of social communities, a site where both symbolic and material resources were redistributed rendering public, stable and culturally appropriate changes at the level of politics and economics.” She adds that the local dynasties were legitimised through grants to these temples.³⁴ In the case of *Mysore pada*, it was Mysore's unwillingness to protect the temple that troubled Vella, especially considering the fact that Vella's *Vaishnavite* temple at *Panniyur* was supported with grants from the Zamorin to Travancore kings, but was ransacked by people including Mappilas, during what he viewed as anarchy during the *Mysore pada*. However, there is a large body of data on the Inams bestowed upon the temples

³¹ Dilip M.Menon, "Houses by the Sea: State-Formation Experiments in Malabar, 1760-1800." *Economic and Political Weekly* 1999, pp.1995-2003.

³² Bayly, "Saints, Goddesses and Kings. Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700-1900.", p.68.

³³ Panikkar, *History of Kerala*, p.11. It is important to note that the *kalari* was not confined to the Nair communities since there were Syrian Christian communities who were part of the *kalari* culture in the 18th century.

³⁴ Janaki Nair, "The devadasi, dharma and the state." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1994,p. 3158.

of Malabar by Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, which occurs at a later stage, after inviting much resentment for not looking after the temple during the initial years of conquest.³⁵ However, nowhere do the Malayalam narratives suggest that temples were the primary targets of conquest. That difference in the narratives could be corroborated with stories from temples, many of which talk about attacks that were averted or never took place. Few of these stories of conquest which are remembered in present-day popular memory in temples which were under the Kingdom of Zamorin are discussed below.

Temples, in some cases, also had close relations with the *kalari* gymnasiums. For instance, a temple called Panamanna Shankara Narayana temple of Palakkad district retells the memory of Tipu Sultan's conquest.³⁶

During the time of Tipu Sultan's conquest (*Padayottam*), the warriors of Tipu came to attack the temple, but they suddenly slipped into a confused state (*sthala jala vibranthi*) as a result of a miracle. Nevertheless, it was not only the miracle which saved the temple but also Kizhakku Veetil Tiyyan who was a master of Kalari. He fought along with his friends against the army of Mysore which resulted in Tipu's cavalry running away in defeat. The Tiyyan was killed in deceit by Tipu's army men. The Zamorin, in turn, granted lands to the Tiyyan's family and exempted them from taxes as a reward.³⁷

³⁵ Inam register compiled by Inam commissioner J.W. Robinson lists at least 55 temples in Malabar and Cochin who were recipients of lands donated by Mysore which were also exempted from tax. J.W Robinson, *Inam register compiled (1885-1886)*, Kozhikode regional archives. C.K Kareem has used this evidence to refute that Tipu has attacked any temples during his conquest. Kareem, *Kerala Under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, pp.200-211.

³⁶ The legend has it that this Vishnu temple was constructed during the time of *Shiva-Vishnu Samayojana*. See P.G Rajendran, *Kshethra Vinjana Gosham* [The temple encyclopaedia], DC Books, 2000, p.747.

³⁷Chemboli Sreenivasan, *Samootheri Rajavinte Bhakthi Smarajyam*, p.182.

Other temples close to the Zamorin's *Swaroopam* are also embedded in the memory of *Mysore Padayottam*.³⁸ There are multiple versions of popular stories associated with these temples, which keep the memories of the *Mysore pada* alive. I narrate a few below in order to demonstrate the place of temples in preserving the history of the conquest and in particular the term *pada*.

One story related to the Alathiyur Sree Perum Thrikkovil Kshethram of Malappuram district is recounted here.³⁹

When *Tipu Sultan's pada* entered Pattanithara, a village near Alathiyur, it was feared that the Alathiyur Hanuman temple would be attacked any time. Only the sweeper woman of the temple was left since most others probably fled due to the fear of *pada*. The helpless sweeper woman cried out "Here comes the *pada* and *pattalam* (Army), can't you hear the hue and cry? And you sit here without any concern, you Monkey (Hanuman)." Then suddenly, Hanuman jumped in front of the *Mysore pada* with lots of *Hunakaram* (rumble), and a frightened *pada* never entered Alathiyur village or the temple.⁴⁰

In the legends of the Kanjilasheri Maha Shiva Kshethram⁴¹ of Kozhikode district, the *pada* is remembered differently:

During Tipu Sultan's *Padoyottakalam*, *Tipu's pada* entered the temple, destroyed the *sopanam*, and the pillars of the temple, and was finally preparing to enter the Sreekovil, when suddenly the commander of the *pada* fainted. The army soon took

³⁸ To name a few, 'Sree Azhakath Sreekrishna Kshethram', Alathiyur Shree Perum Thrikkovil Kshethram', Thrikkandiyur Mahadeva Kshethram', 'Panthallur Bhagavathi Kshethram', 'Kanjilasheri Mahashiva Kshethram', 'Korangad Shiva-Vishnu Kshethram', 'Thalikkunnu Maha Shiva Kshethram', 'Poothoor Sri Durga Kshethram', 'Govindapuram Parthasarathi Kshethram'. All these temples are in the Malabar region. See Ibid.

³⁹ At Alathiyur temple the main deity is Sri Raman. But Hanuman also is worshipped, and given more importance. See Rajendran, *Kshethra Vinjana Gosham*, p.135.

⁴⁰ Sreenivasan, *Samoothiri Rajavinte Bhakthi Samrajyam*, p.140.

⁴¹ The temple is located at Chemanjeri Panchayth in Kozhikode. Rajendran, *Kshethra Vinjana Gosham*, p.280.

the commander to the famous *Vaidyar* (physician) of the locality. The physician helped the commander regain consciousness. As a reward, the physician asked only one thing; that the *pada* should not enter the Kanjilasheri temple. In gratitude, the *pada* did not enter the temple and left the locality.⁴²

Another temple at Thiruvangad of North Malabar related to the Swaroopam of Kolathiri also relates an interesting story.⁴³

When Haidar Ali reached North Malabar, the families of the *Kolathiri* kingdom took refuge in the temple of Thiruvangad and got away from his army. Remembering this story of the deception of his father, Tipu Sultan was particularly angry against the Thiruvangad temple and made the temple a target of his attack. A famous tower (*gopuram*) of the temple was destroyed in the attack, and the place was later called *perum porkkalam*, or large battlefield in memory of the *pada*. However, during the attack, like a miracle, a bullet came out of the temple against Tipu's army, his canon melted away, and the petrified army withdrew from the attack. Much later the Malabar collector of the English East India Company, Thomas .H Baber (the sub-collector of Thalasseri in 1800s) heard the stories of this miracle and became a devotee and a regular visitor.⁴⁴

Annapurneshwari temple of North Malabar portrays another aspect of the temple's relation to Tipu's army.

Tipu's army was camping near a place called *Koothali* but changed plans when the head man of the *Koothali* village committed suicide before facing the army. At that

⁴² Sreenivasan, *Samoorthiri Rajavinte Bhakthi Samrajyam*, p .81-82.

⁴³ The Sri Rama temple of Thiruvangad is at Thalashery of Kannur district. It is said that the Kolathiri Raja took shelter in this temple during Tipu's *padayottam*. Rajendran, *Kshethra Vinjana Gosham*, p.555.

⁴⁴ Vanidas Ilayavur, *Vadakkan Aithiyamala* [Northern Myths] D C Books, 2016, p.522.

juncture the army decided to attack the Annapoorneshwari temple instead of the village. When the Mysore army reached the temple, it was very dark. Some of the soldiers went to procure food from the neighbourhood, but they returned empty-handed without finding anything at that late hour. The tired and hungry army was soon surprised to find that in front of the temple, there was a banyan tree on which there suddenly appeared a basket full of rice. The army men ate the food in surprise without knowing that the temple has a custom of keeping food on the branches of *banyan* tree to feed the hungry.⁴⁵

While there was nothing miraculous about this story, it demonstrates how an age-old custom averted an impending attack.

The Kollam Visharikkavu temple of North Malabar has a story, in which Tipu appeared as a benign devotee, and was himself favoured with special benefit, though the strength of the deity overpowered him.⁴⁶

Tipu Sultan was a devotee of Kollam Visharikkavu Bhagavati. He had much devotion for and belief in the power of Bhagvathi. During his time in Malabar, he often visited the temple and did the *darshan* (view) of Bhagavathi. Once when he went to the temple, he said: "I do not want the *prasadam* (offering) from the hands of the priest, I would like to collect it directly from the goddess." Tipu refused to take *prasadam* from the priest and kept on arguing and insisting that he wanted it from the Bhagavathi directly. Then suddenly the goddess appeared to give *prasadam* to Tipu. He accepted it and fainted. Tipu Sultan could gain his consciousness only after three days. Upon realizing that he had made a mistake by insisting on receiving the

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.636.

⁴⁶ Visharikkavu temple is located at Koyilandi of Kozhikode. This was originally a Shiva temple, later transformed into a Bhadrakali temple. Rajendran, *Kshethra Vinjana Gosham*, p .391.

prasadam from the Goddess, Tipu's belief in the deity grew further, and he granted 342 rupees per year to the temple.⁴⁷

In this recollection, Tipu's gifting of money to the temple, which would have strengthened his role as a patron, was narrativized in such a way so as to reduce him to a mere supplicant or devotee.

Popular stories in inscriptions and manuscripts

This story is from a *kalari* gymnasium at Guruvayur near the famed Krishna temple recorded in copper inscriptions.⁴⁸ The Guruvayur temple finds mention in the Inam register of 1885 along with other temples and masjids, as a recipient of acres of lands from Mysore.⁴⁹ Many historians have laboured to prove that Tipu Sultan was secular with this donation of land, but that did not settle the debate of what really happened between Tipu and the temple.⁵⁰ It would interest the historian to see the many stories that emerged around the neighborhood of the temple. There was a fear of Tipu attacking and destroying the temple, which led the authorities to transport the deity of Guruvayur to central Kerala and hide it while Mysore *pada* was present in Malabar.⁵¹ In this context, it would be essential to know what the *Mammiyur Cheppedu* said about the Mysore expedition.

⁴⁷ Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithiyamala* [A garland of myths], Mathrubhumi Books, 2012, p.611.

⁴⁸ I refer to S Rajendu's transcription of the *Mammiyur Cheppedu*. See S Rajendu *Mysore Padayottam: Irunootiyanpathu Varshangal- 1766 Muthal 1793 vare Ulla Mysore Akramana-Bharana kalathe Nervivarana Rekhakhal* [Mysore Conquest: Two Hundred and Eighty years-Original descriptive documents from the the Mysore attack / rule of 1766-1793], Vallathol Vidhyapeedam Shukapuram, 2017, pp.36-39.

⁴⁹ Guruvayur temple of Thrissur is considered as one of the most prominent Krishna (Vishnu) temples of Kerala.
⁵⁰ While there is no recorded evidence of the Mysore attack of the temple, it was asserted that the Dutch East Company attacked the temple in 1716. V.V Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, Orient Blackswan, 2018, p.219.

⁵¹ In the story mentioned in the *Granthavari*, only Mallishery Namboodiri was involved in transferring and hiding the idol before Tipu's *padayottam*. However, P.G Rajendran says a person named Kakkad Othikkan along with Mallishery Namboodiri smuggled the idol to Ambalappuzha. Rajendran, *Kshethra Vinjana Gosham*, p.413

In the year 963⁵² of Malayalam Calendar, Tipu Sultan's troops (*padakal*) destroyed (*thalli thakarthu*) the places of worship of both Hindus and Christians. The *padakal* looted those places and converted people to Islam, and those who refused to convert were hacked to death (*vetti konnu*), after which the *padakal* moved to Guruvayur. But Mallishery Valiya Namboodithiri, who was an honest and pious person, feared the plight of Guruvayur deity/idol. He transferred the *bhagaval chaithanya* (the spirit of the deity) to the *thidampu* (replica of the diety) and transported the idol without anyone's knowledge to Ambalappuzha. The Namboodiri kept the idol at Ambalappuzha. He passed away in Thiruvananthapuram, never to return to Guruvayur. Meanwhile, the Sultan and his people reached Guruvayur and were approaching another temple called *Manjalina temple*, but with the *divya prabhavam* (or holy radiance) of the Bhagavan, Tipu's army was inflicted with *vathappani* (a particular form of fever), and a frightened Tipu donated *draviyams* (money) to the temple. Later the troops moved into Pernuthatta temple nearby and made an attempt for the *balikallu* (oblation stone). The army stationed near the temple after setting up a powder magazine. Later they came near the Mammiyoor temple and engaged in destruction of the *balikkallu*. After that they came to know about the *Mammiyur Kalari*, which was established by Parasurama.⁵³ When Tipu's army was approaching the *Mammiyur Kalari*, some disciples of the *Mammiyur Kalari* Gurukkal were performing exercises.

When Tipu Sultan reached the *Kalari*, he asked for Mammiyur Panikkar, the headman of the *Kalari*. The disciples replied that the Panikkar was in meditation inside the *Kalari*. Tipu Sultan, with a sword in his hand, went inside the *Kalari* and pushed open

⁵² The date corresponds to circa 1747-1750 when Tipu's or Haidar's army was not present in this region.

⁵³ Since Parashu Rama in Brahmanical myths is the creator of Kerala, the attempt here would seem to give both ancientness and Brahmanical legitimacy, one could argue.

the door, and there he saw Mammiyoor Panikkar who was a “great astrologist, famous *kalari* expert, yoga practitioner and very knowledgeable of all sciences (*sarva shasthra parangathan*) Sreeman Unnipanikkar who was in *Pathmasana*.”

Tipu was stunned to see Panikkar levitating in the air, and he was more surprised to see the radiance on the face of Panikkar. Tipu had a change of heart and respect for Panikkar, Tipu came out of the *Kalari* and waited until Panikkar finished his meditation. Panikkar told Tipu that Tipu’s evil intentions will never be fulfilled at his *Kalari*. Tipu then requested the Panikkar to demonstrate some *kalari* exercises for him.⁵⁴

Another account that discusses Tipu’s curious relations with a temple is *Vadakkum Nathan Devaswam Granthavari*.⁵⁵ This text of the *Vadakkum Natha Temple* mentions the movement of Haidar to then Thrishivaperur (now Thrishur).⁵⁶ The *granthavari* claimed that it foresaw Haidar’s invasion and said that in “Malayalam month 940 (circa.1764), there is a chance that Nabaw’s (Nawab’s) army may enter Thrishivaperur.” It further mentioned someone who violated his caste customs –“*dosham undayittulla*”– joined with Mysore. It was said, “In 952 (circa.1778) of Malayalam calendar, in Kanni month “*naduvilemadathil nenemini thirimubinnu dosham undayittulla ale palayathil parthirinnu*” or a person called Naduvilemadathil Nenemini Thirumumb was in (Tipu’s) *palayam*(military camp).”⁵⁷ The text further mentioned that *laksham varahan* (a huge amount) was supposed to be given to ‘Nawab’s pattanam’ (that is Srirangapatana), from Nediyruppu Swaroopam or Zamorin’s kingdom. After the Mysore army retreated or moved away from Thrishivaperur where the

⁵⁴ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, pp.36-39.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.43-48.

⁵⁶ The Vadakkum Nathan temple of Thrissur was under the Raja of Cochin. In 1757 the Zamorin tried to capture the rights of temple from the Raja and there was a battle between them. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, p.204.

⁵⁷ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, .p.45.

temple Vadakkum Nathan was located, the people who were related to the temple, performed some purifying rituals at the temple. Yet they were surprised when they opened the temple gate, because they found that the utensils of the temple and other belongings kept outside were not lost (“*kshethrathinkale vahayayitulla pathrangalkum purame kadathivechitullathu onnum eduthu kondu poyittill*”), and the most important place of the temple where the deity is kept – the *sreekovil* – was not even opened. The account says that this non-destruction is in sharp contrast to what happened in the nearby Perumanam Temple⁵⁸ where the idol was attacked (“*bimba hani*”), a copper plate was taken away, and the deity ‘*perumaanatha irattayappans*’ was damaged (*thachu muriche ittirikunnu*).⁵⁹

To further understand the emotional and political meanings attached to the *pada*, I focus on the *Tharoor Swaroopam Granthavari*, as one of the first texts on Mysore conquest of Malabar, then move to discussions of *Vellayude Charithram*.

Little Kingdoms’ memory of the first *pada* and humiliation

The *Tharoor Swaroopam* was one of the ruling authorities of the Palakkad area in the eighteenth century.⁶⁰ The *Tharoor Swaroopam Granthavari* records, though vaguely, the first entry of the Mysore army into Malabar.⁶¹ While looking closely at the text, we may note a negative connotation attached to the term *pada* in this earliest account of the Mysore

⁵⁸ Perumana temple of Thrissur as well has a history of conflicts between Zamorin and Cochin much before Mysore conquest of Malabar. For Zamorin’s engagement with the temple see Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, p.204.

⁵⁹ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam* ,p. 46.

⁶⁰ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, pp.40-43. Mark Wilks says that the fort at Palakkad was “the key to South Malabar and the Raja of Palakkad belonged to Nair caste.” Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol 1,p. 399.

⁶¹ Wilks says that Haidar received a deputation from the Raja of Palakkad. The Raja ‘being hardpressed by his enemies, the object of his deputation was to desire succour from Haidar.’Wilks, *Historical Sketches* vol 1, p.400. The Joint Commissioners report on Malabar suggests that the conflict between the Zamorin and Palakkad Achans of *Tharoor Swaroopam* were part of Zamorin’s conflicts between Zamorin and the Cochin kingdom of *Perumpadampu* in 1759-1760. In 1760-61 Haidar sent his troops to assist the Palakkad Achans against the Zamorin. *The Joint Commissioners’ report on Malabar, 1792-93*(Hereafter *The JCRM*), Kerala State Archives, 2010, pp.29-30.

expedition.⁶² One could see how the text described the tragic event of the Zamorin's suicide after Haidar's conquest of Calicut in 1766, and how it is in dialogue with the existing historiography of the conquest.

In Kollam 931 (circa 1755-56) of the Malayalam calendar", *Ramankombi*, a Thampuran or a chief took over the position of the head of the *swaroopam* or *Thirumooppa*. There was soon the threat of an invasion by the neighboring kingdom *Nediyiruppu*, by the Zamorin of the Malayalam region. In 932(c.1756) of the Malayalam calendar, the *Nediyiruppu* attack, led by someone called 'Chenjeri Namboori', against *Tharoor Swaroopam* happened. Both sides prepared for battles, and a gunfight occurred.⁶³

The word *pada*, which later became associated, and almost synonymous with the Mysore expedition, was introduced into the text at this moment.⁶⁴ In this context, it is interesting to see the usage is *vediyum padayum* (firing and fight or battle). The *granathavari* notes the first instance where some people of the *Tharoor Swaroopam* moved to Coimbatore and then to Srirangapatna to meet the Dalawai of Mysore, to request assistance against the *Nediyirippu* attack.⁶⁵ The *Nediyirippu* invasion of Palakkad was shown as involving an army of "thirty thousand" which created enough fear among the small rulers of Palaghattuchery (as Modern Kerala's Palakkad region was called in most of pre-colonial historical records).⁶⁶ The fear

⁶² The date of this document is unknown. While M.P Mukundan was the first epigraphist who published *Tharoor swaroopam* manuscripts in Government Oriental Manuscript Library Bulletin in 1949s, S Rajendu's more recent intervention attempts to correct some of the factual errors in Mukundan's account. Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, p.31. M.P Mukundan, " *Tharoor Swaroopam Rajakkamarude Katha*" part 1, in *T Chandarashekarana ed, Bulletin of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library* vol vii, Government Press, Madras, 1949, pp.97-102 & part 2 in *T Chandarashekarana ed, Bulletin of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library* vol viii, Government Press, Madras, 1954, pp.89-96.

⁶³ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, p.11. Mukundan, *Tharoor Swaroopam part 1*, p.97.

⁶⁴ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, p.11. Mukundan, *Tharoor Swaroopam part 1*, p.97

⁶⁵ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, p.17. Mukundan, *Tharoor Swaroopam part 1*, p.98.

⁶⁶ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, p.13. Mukundan, *Tharoor Swaroopam part 1*, p.98.

(‘*bhayam*’) referred to in the *Tharoor Granthavari* was therefore not that of Mysore, but the *Nediyirippu* or the Kozhikode invasion.⁶⁷ After the invasion, some attempts at settlements between these kingdoms were made, but the *granthavari* soon shifted to a discussion of economy or *draviyam* (resources in cash and kind). The *draviyam* to be paid to the victorious kingdom of *Nediyirippu* becomes central to the narrative from here on. A repercussion of these battles between the two *swaroopams* was the coming of Haidar and his army in Malabar. The primary dispute between the Zamorin and Haidar revolved around the question of the tribute to be paid by the Zamorin after his defeat⁶⁸, but Mysore’s demand for *dhraviyam* was not a sudden move and had its genesis in the feud between various kingdoms before the conquest by Mysore. *Draviyam* is mentioned quite a few times in the text making the first *Padayottam* an economic conflict.⁶⁹ The final part of the narrative mentions the movement of Haidar and his army against the Zamorin. Following the failure of his invasion with the Mysore intervention, the Zamorin retreated to Kozhikode and was followed by the rival chiefs of Tharoor and their Mysore allies. The *Granthavari* suggests that the Zamorin was more concerned about humiliation by his rivals in Palaghat, and the movement of Palaghat Achans (the title of Palghattchery rulers) to Kozhikode, which he perceived as more threatening than Haidar’s demands.⁷⁰ This account conveys two points, the fear of invasion by rivaling kingdoms within Malabar, and the humiliation of the formerly feared Zamorin. These two emotions – a product of the first *pada* -need to be approached historically.

The Zamorin’s suicide is one of the most intriguing aspects of the *pada*. Historians have speculated on the reasons for the Zamorins’ suicide.⁷¹ William Logan cites Jonathan Duncan

⁶⁷ *Bhayam* about the Mysore *pada* is discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

⁶⁸ While there is so much effort in contemporary historiography, to attribute the motive of Mysore invasion as religious, *Tharoor Granthavari* reveals a more mercenary intent. At the same time I do not sideline the emotional effects of the account which is discussed in this section. See Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, p.12.

⁶⁹ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, pp.13-14. Mukundan, *Tharoor Swaroopam*, part 2, pp. 89-96.

⁷⁰ Rajendu, *Mysore Padayottam*, p.23. Mukundan, *Tharoor Swaroopam* part 2 , p.91.

⁷¹ The Joint Commissioners’ Report on Malabar details the incident as “the reigning Samoory burnt himself to death in the place of his confinement.” *The JCRM*, p.30.

to argue that after Haidar's army reached Calicut, the Zamorin was "strictly prohibited from performing the ceremonies of his religion: and as he thought Haidar might inflict some further disgrace upon him either by causing him to be hanged, or blown from a gun, the raja set fire to the house with his own hand, and was consumed in it."⁷² Following Logan, K.M Panikkar writes, "The pride of Zamorin was deeply hurt by his enforced confinement, which prevented him from fulfilling his daily religious duties. He was also afraid that Hyder might further humiliate him, or perhaps force him to accept Islam. In this plight, he took what he considered heroic measures in shutting himself up in the Palace and setting fire to it."⁷³ However, one could argue that the *Granthavari* reveals that the Zamorin's self-immolation was not necessarily linked with religion but with caste and power equations in relation to rival Palakkad Achans. The emotion of shame is also closely linked with "honour or sense of the self."⁷⁴ Historians of emotions have looked at "historiographical uses of both pride and shame" with an analysis of medieval French literary text *Le Roman d'Eneas*.⁷⁵ Noah D. Guynn argues that "shame troubles a totalizing, truth-telling historiography by exposing fissures within subjectivity (whether individual or collective) and within those retrospective narratives by which the subject represents itself to itself, by which consciousness understands itself as having continuity and coherence over time."⁷⁶ Similarly, the shame of the Zamorin, by resisting the truth claims, troubles the totalizing attempts of colonial historiography, which attempted to prove that Haidar abetted the suicide of the Zamorin in the early years of *pada*.

⁷² Logan, *Malabar*, p.408. Logan's quotes only partially from Duncan. Duncan using the interviews he made with Zamorin's family members after the English conquest of Malabar, notes that before meeting with Haidar, the Zamorin had one condition. The Zamorin said " he would place his reliance not so much on Hyder, as upon assurances from his two agents, who being both *Brahmans*, he would on their swearing by their *Brahmenical* threads, that he would return in safety.. confent (sic) to accompany them." In his meeting the Zamorin agreed to pay "a crore of gold mohurs" to Haidar but Haidar was not willing to trust and instead restricted Zamron to his palace. Jonathan Duncan, "Historical remarks on the Coast of Malabar with some descriptions of the manners of its inhabitants." *Asiatic Researches or Transactions of the Society*, Vol v, p.31.

⁷³ Panikkar, *A History of Kerala*, p.335.

⁷⁴ P.N, Stearns, "Shame, and a challenge for emotions history", *Emotion Review*, 8(3), 2016, p.2.

⁷⁵ Noah D Guynn, "Historicizing Shame, Shaming History: Origination and Negativity in the Eneas." *L'Esprit Créateur* 39, no. 4 p.119.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.112.

Honour and shame were also the most common emotions linked with battles, war, and notions of political power and legitimacy.⁷⁷

In the *Vellayude Charithram*, as we see below, the Zamorin's suicide was not part of humiliation or negativity but rather an act of honour. The emotion of pride dominates *Vellayude Charithram*, primarily in the years of the *pada*, while lamenting about the crises of present and lost powers of past.

The 'History' of Vella- Witnessing the collapse of order

Vellayude Charithram has received scant attention from historians.⁷⁸ The text has three sections. In the first, there is a useful micro-history of a village and a description of the feud between two villages,⁷⁹ one being Vella Namboodiri's village Panniyur. In the second section, the text includes a detailed treatment of the history of Zamorin's kingdom before moving on to the attack of *paradesi* or the foreigner.⁸⁰ The third section narrates Vella's exile to the Cochin-Travancore region and his views of Malabar following the *paradesi's* attack (*akramanam*). I shall first discuss the first two sections, on the local rivalries and the description of the village, and Vella's view on the historical role of little kingdoms of the eighteenth century Keralam, especially that of the Zamorins of Calicut.

⁷⁷ Ute Fervert, *Emotions in History Lost and Found*, Central European University Press, 2011, p.9. Also see how battlefield emotions are closely linked with shame and guilt in Erika Kuijpers, Cornelis Van Der Haven, "Battlefield Emotions 1500–1800: practices, experience, imagination.", In *Battlefield Emotions 1500-1800*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016, p.2.

⁷⁸ N.M Namboodiri estimates that Vella Namboodiri (d. circa 1800) was around 70 years old at the time of writing *Vellayude Charithram*, and therefore he was 50 at the time of Haidar's attack of Malabar. Vella's recollection is somehow focused on the period between 1755 and 1780 and we do not find any mention of Tipu Sultan. The original manuscript is believed to have been inscribed in the year 956 of the Malayalam calendar (circa 1781 or 1782) on about 44 palm leaves. Though many claimed have preserved the original, N.M Namboodiri presents us the paper copy made by 'Vellamanakkal Narayanan Namboodiri' a twentieth century ancestor of the author of the text in 1965. N.M. Namboodiri notes that Vella was born in 'Kollam 884' of Malayalam calendar (circa 1709) in present day Malappuram district. Namboodiri, *Vellayude Charithram*, pp.9-10. Narayanan Namboodiri named the document as *Vellayude Charithram* in 1965. Ibid., p.10.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.33-43.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp.54-56.

Vellayude Charithram begins with events related to the temple in Vella's village Panniyur. According to N.M Namboodiri, Panniyur was the site of one of the wealthiest temples of eighteenth century Keralam, a fact which Vella Namboodiri takes pride in.⁸¹ Vella also discusses the discovery of a copper inscription (*thakidu*) related to the temple around this time.⁸² The copper inscription discovered by a certain person called 'Appathadeeri' from his *illam* (Brahmin household). When the inscription was closely examined, it was found that the "past, future and present" ("*Bhoothavum, bavishathum, varthamanavum*") of the Panniyur village, and the deity or *bhagavan* had been inscribed on copper.⁸³ The copper plate was then showed to the Zamorin.⁸⁴ Vella says that he and Appathadeeri submitted their *grandham* or inscription to the king when he was at Thrishivaperur.⁸⁵ The Zamorin was excited, and asked for the *grandham* to be shown to the royal family as well. The Zamorin further said, "*Pardeshiyude varavunnendu kanathu ippol thanne arambichallo*" (It looks like the foreigner has already arrived). According to Vella that copper *granthavari* foretold the coming of the *paradesi* and the entry of *Mysore Pada*.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Vella narrates the history of the temple from the beginning of 18th century with importance being given to the restructuring of the *sreekovil* where the deities of *Subrahmanian* and *Varahamurthi* were together present. At the beginning of the text Panniyur appears as a village in decay. The reason, for the decay of the village was discovered to be the deity *Varahamurthi* being hidden behind the deity of *Subrahmanian*. After much deliberation it was decided to relocate *Subrahmanian* to his earlier location, on the top of the temple, while also building a new *Varahamurthi* temple. But due to lack of resources ('*dravyiam illaryam kondum*') the work came to a halt. The villagers sought funds for the renovation from the little kings around the temple. They even travelled to Venad (a *swaroopam* which along with a few others later merged into Travancore during Marthanda Varma's reign) for raising funds for the temple. A mason to build the idol was brought from Vaikkam outside the Malabar region. At this crucial juncture, when the scarcity of resources for the temple reconstruction became a big impediment, the villagers were helped by the Zamorin. *Ibid.*, pp.33-38. What is significant here is that the history of a village becomes as important in bringing the main actors of 18th century Keralam together, for example in this narrative Venad and the Zamorin are brought together in the construction of the temple. While it would be anachronistic to suggest that there was an imagination of *Malayala desam* it would be worth noting that in Vella's account, written immediately after the Mysore conquest of Malabar, made calls for the unity of Zamorin with Travancore against the *Paradesi*. *Ibid.*, p.57. Zamorin (*ilayarajavu* and *rajavu* as mentioned in Vella's narrative) was closely involved with the progress of the temple and its *pratishta*.

⁸² The discovery of Appam's books were mentioned as a result of some miracle. *Ibid.*, p.41.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.42.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.45

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Vella also describes a financial dispute began between the new Zamorin, and the villagers regarding the huge expenditures of the previous Zamorin on the temple.⁸⁷ The new Zamorin demanded money from Panniyur villagers, but they could not pay him and instead faced a social boycott or prohibition (*vilakku*) from the kingdom.⁸⁸ Vella’s text also conveys the importance of “temple villages” along the banks of the Nila River and the political changes that took place in the two or three decades after the Mysore invasion.⁸⁹ A local rivalry that ensued between the Panniyur village and the neighboring Sukapuram (*‘chovvurathukar’*) village was also mentioned in Vella’s narrative.⁹⁰ The dispute reached the court of the Zamorin where both the villages presented their versions of the events regarding the temple construction at Panniyur village.⁹¹ Vella also gives a brief description of the history of the *Kovilkams* and *swaroopamas* that helped him in the construction of *Varahamurthi* temple. He further said the *Perumbadpu swaroopam* or the rival Cochin kingdom of Zamorins’ was only emerging at this time. He also added that the coming of the *paradesi*, or the foreigner, had

⁸⁷ Ibid.,46.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ The banks of the river *Nila* carried an important association with battles between the little kingdoms in Malabar. K.V Krishna Ayyar , in his 1938 pioneering work *The Zamorins of Calicut* mentions of Mamankam festival where the Zamorin and the Valluvakkonathiri fought’ war to the knife’ until the attack of Haidar. K.V Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Printing Bureau, 1938, p.119. Vella also passingly refers to of the final Mamankam happened before Haidar’s entry. Namboodiri, *Vellayude Charithram*, p.58. Also see N.M Namboodiri, *Mamankam Rekhakal* [Mamankam documents], 2005(2018 reprint), Vallathol Vidhyapeedam.

⁹⁰ Finally the villagers began worshipping *Varahamurthi* in the village. Namboodiri, *Vellayude Charithram* p.53. Vella Namboodiri played a major role in establishing the *Varahamurthi* diety at the temple, somewhere at this point Vella also writes that he received appreciation from the king (Zamorin): “*ithokke Vellayude prayathnam thane alle?*” (Isn’t this all hard work of Vella?). As we will see in coming chapters on the loyalists of Travancore writing on Mysore invasion in 19th century, Vella may also be seen as a Zamorin loyalist. This fact is supported by the fact that Vella was keen to show his disputes with some of the rival Brahmin families - where he was supported by the Zamorin.Ibid., p.53.

⁹¹ As we noted, the Kingdom of Travancore was involved in the construction of Varahmaruthi temple. Vella praised the king of Travancore or Venad when he said “it would be doubtful to say whether anyone has done *dharmam* as much as the Raja of Venad.” Vella was referring to Rama Varma of Travancore, who was also called *Dharmaraja*. While it would be important to note that *Dharmam* did by this Raja, according to later historians, was related to sheltering of the Malabar princes against the Mysore Kingdom, in Vella’s narrative the status of *dharmaraja* was attributed in the context of Rama Varma’s help with the reconstruction of the temple in Vella’s village. Ibid.,pp.55-56.

begun in the east. While Haidar Ali as the invader, appears only later in Vella's account, he is represented as *paradesi* even before his actual entry.⁹²

Vella's narrative then progresses to a description of Haidar's coming to Malabar. For two decades, well before Haidar's actual entry, there had been talk of the *paradesi* moving from the north.⁹³ The anticipation and fear of Haidar's attack was a predominant theme in the royal courts' discussions.⁹⁴ In preparation for this impending attack, the Zamorin was in talks with local notables— chiefs and people such as Vella – for negotiation or settlement with Haidar, the chiefs expressed their willingness to fight and die (*'vettimarikkanum'*) if the settlement fail to materialize. Vella mentioned that the Zamorin sought his help in mobilizing people, though whether to resist the attack or negotiate with Haidar was not specified.⁹⁵

Haidar Ali was mentioned as a 'Telugu,' and named '*Aithula naykan*' in Vella's narrative.⁹⁶ He was also called as 'nabaw', the Malayalam corruption of the term 'Nawab.' He was described as powerful and a great conqueror. Vella devoted few lines to the *agnipravesham* (or the self-immolation) of the Zamorin, "since it was a challenging task to either defeat Haidar, or satisfy him with money or leave their flock,⁹⁷ Zamorin was left with no option but to kill himself." Vella described this as a sacred event that only the Zamorin was capable of performing. The Zamorin secretly arranged for self-immolation at his *kovilakam* at Kozhikode and thereby attained *moksha*, which was not possible for his successors to achieve, according to Vella.⁹⁸

⁹² Ibid.,p.45.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.,p.57.

⁹⁶ The Travancore state records of the 18th century also identified Haidar Ali as Aithula Naykan. See *Mathilakam Records*, 853, 945.

⁹⁷ Valla says it would be difficult to leave the flock or "*aa koottathil ninnu pirinju poranum vayshamaym thane!*". The flock here meant the new alliance formed between Mysore and the Palakkad rivals of the Zamorin. Ibid,p.58.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

After the suicide, the Zamorin's family migrated from Malabar to Travancore.⁹⁹ The reason cited for his suicide was not fear, but his inability or lack of enthusiasm for a battle. The further movement and displacement of the Zamorin's royal family from their forts was also not mentioned as being directly related to Haidar's coming. The fear (*bhayapadu*) the family faces could be politically explained as an example of what happened to the ruling elite when rapid power reconfigurations took place, and the emotional trauma the family faced after the Zamorin's extreme step, since he was not only the ruler of a substantial part of Malabar but also the head of the family.¹⁰⁰

The flight of 'Brahmins' who moved to Travancore was also described by Vella, as an escape from a war stricken region, their expenditure being looked after by the king of Travancore. Thereafter he claims that he witnessed, Haidar's movement from Calicut (*koyilkott*), the capital of the Zamorin to *Ponnani*, where Haidar had a huge army (*varum kuthiaryum yajamanamarum vendu volam undallo*). "In this country, the Nawab has not committed any atrocities (*upadravam*)", Vella remarked before describing his meeting with Haidar. When Haidar reached Ponnani, Vella saw Haidar standing, "with one foot placed on an elevated stone near a well on the east side." Vella noticed Haidar's 'headgear' which he thought was made with a special cloth. Vella's narration is further sensitive to the detail, where he finds *arakuppayam* or the shirt of Haidar, *kalkuppayam*, or the pants or pyjama and a *kallu vecha* or a precious stone ring on Haidar's finger. Vella approached Haidar with nothing more than a 'salam,' which was returned by Haidar. Then they had a long casual chat, or in Vella's

⁹⁹Namboodiri, *Vallyaude Charithram*, p.58. However, in the Tharoor Swaroopam Granthavari, the family of Zamorin did migrate to Travancore before his suicide. Mukundan, *Tharoor Swaroopam* part 2, p. 91.

¹⁰⁰Margret Frenz has suggested that the basic institution in the pre-colonial socio-political order in Malabar were family groups. Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, p.11. Fear (*Bhayappetu*) is the word used by Vella to describe the emotional state of Zamorin's family after his suicide. This is the first occurrence of fear in the text of Vella. Namboodiri, *Vellayude Charithram*, p.58. In Tharoor swaroopam Granthavari we did see that fear of the Palakkad Achans was against the Zamorin.

words “*pinne nalla vannam visheshangalum paranju.*” Haidar’s camp was described in further detail.¹⁰¹

Across the eastern side towards the south of the camp, a nice cloth has been laid. At the southern end near the *koothambalam* (*Temple Theater*), there was a *pura* (hut or a house). Moreover, there was a distinctive square pillow laid towards a pillar... Haidar slipped into his special chappal or *methiyadi* and walked towards that side, where I followed him. Then Haidar sat there by resting on the pillow and gestured with his hand towards me to come near him and sit, which I did.¹⁰²

Haidar asked Vella about his house, and Vella replied it was at Thirunvaya. However, Haidar was further curious and asked whether the house was near the river (“*nadi sameepam*”). When Vella replied in the affirmative, Haidar wanted to know whether Vella’s house was at the south or the north side of the river, to which Vella said it was on the southern side.

Haidar was curious about the gold and the vessels of the *Thirunavaya Rajavu* (the prince of Thirunavaya) and he further asked whether the ground beneath the *sreekovil* was elevated because of the gold kept under. Vella explained that what is called *upapeedam* in a Kerala temple would be the resting place of the ‘*padukam*’ (foot) and not a place where gold is kept.¹⁰³ Haidar complained that he lent 12 lakh rupees to the Zamorin Raja which was not returned. Haidar was finally promised his 26 lakh rupees if he came to Calicut. That promise was violated as well, and Haidar stayed back to get the money. Haidar was informed by someone called Thenjeeri that Vella was very close to the Zamorin (*valiya sevakan* or

¹⁰¹ Namboodiri, *Vellayude Charithram*, p.59-61.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.60.

¹⁰³ It was not only Haidar who was concerned with the *draviyam* (wealth) of temple, once exiled to Travancore when Vella met Mappilas from his place at Kochin, the important query Vella had was about the *draviyam* of the temple. *Ibid.*, p.62.

important servant).¹⁰⁴ Haidar then enquired about Vella's work at the Zamorin's place. 'Vyavaharam,(transactions) Thenjeri replied for Vella. Haidar commented that "Vella is an intelligent person." Haidar wished him prosperity and happiness in his *mana* (house) and also urged Vella to not just live comfortably at his *mana* but also work hard and make money (it could also be that Haidar suggested that Vella work for him get his money back). Haidar also told him to continue to do *puja* at temples or *devasthanams*.¹⁰⁵ Haidar had translators along with him, Vella noted. After that, Vella saw someone keeping betel leaves and two areca nuts in front of Haidar, and was asked by Haidar to hand that over to Vella. Vella added that a Brahmin gave a sheela or cloth from Haidar to Vella as a present. Haidar sent two of his men to accompany Vella to his house.¹⁰⁶

Happy and assured after meeting Haidar, a relieved Vella took a bath in the river, and after the evening ritual (*sandhya vannanam*), he reached his *illam* or *mana* to find that his own family had migrated from their house.¹⁰⁷ In this instance, one could note that, when Haidar earlier asked Vella to stay at his *mana* in peace, Haidar was advising the latter against fleeing to Travancore and guaranteeing his and family's safety.

Haidar returned to Coimbatore, which was the start of a series of troubles in Malabar.¹⁰⁸ Vella says that one of the kings of the new *Kovilakam* (in colonial narratives, we see them as the rebels related to the Zamorin's family)¹⁰⁹ thought they could take the kingdom if they could wage a war while Haidar was away from Malabar.¹¹⁰ When some of the other little

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.,p.60

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.,p.61.

¹⁰⁶ Here it is important to note that while accepting the gift from Haidar, Vella also noted that he was handed the gift by a Brahmin. One could note that Vella's caste concerns could have prompted him and Haidar to ask a Brahmin to hand over the present. One could argue that since, as we see in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, there was so much taboo associated with people who collaborated with Mysore in 18th century, Vella was careful to note that his caste status was not polluted. Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Vella noted that the rebels found shelter in temples and *kovilakams* while also fighting the battle. Ibid.

kings also joined the battle, Haidar turned his attention back to Malabar from Coimbatore.¹¹¹ On Haidar's return, all the people who took to battle with the kings of *Kovilakam* had deserted before his army reached Malabar. *Nabaw* or the Nawab and his men took 'whomever they saw' —which he claimed were only women and Brahmins.¹¹² Haidar's army burned temples, houses and hanged and hacked many to death. The Northern Malabar Mappilas ('*thekkekara kannukkar Mappilas,* ') and many others joined Haidar to burn *illams* (Brahmin houses), *bhavanams* and *othavanmarude madam* (Brahmin learning centers). In *Vettathu Nadu* the burning continued, and the idols were attacked (*bimba hani*) but also some people were converted to Islam (*thoppi ideechu*).¹¹³ Vella says that "*thoppi ideekkal*" was more widespread in *Vettathu Nadu*, and this situation was unprecedented.¹¹⁴ He says many had migrated to present-day central Kerala, or *Idappalli* where Vella visited them.¹¹⁵ .

A vital encounter took place at Cochin between Vella and the Mappilas of his region. When he went to the city of Cochin, Vella found that a lot of vessels and copper plates that had been brought for sale in the market by the Mappilas. Vella asked them about the condition of the temple at Thirunavaya, to which the Mappilas replied that the temple had been burned. Vella further asked what happened to the idols and the *draviyam* (of gold or metal) kept above the Sreekovil. The Mappilas answered that the *bhagavathi bimham* (idol of bhagvathi) has been sold to a *paradesi* of this land (of Cochin), but *Thevar's* idol was still at Ponnani since it was of stone and therefore, not very valuable, may be sent to the east (Mysore). Then the one of the Mappilas added that he was there when the *draviyam* of the temple's upper levels was taken, and gold was seized. Vella made a deal with the Mappilas to get the idol of *thevar*,

¹¹¹ Haidar returned to Malabar with huge army. Vella noted that Haidar's army was joined by *boudhar* and Mappila Muslims from North Malabar. Ibid.,pp.60-61.

¹¹² Vella does not say where the prisoners were taken, nor he clearly identify his location while these incidents were happening(he said he left his home in the beginning of these troubles), his recollections are reports he received from someone he sent to his village to know the news.Ibid.,p.61

¹¹³ Ibid.,p.62.

¹¹⁴ He says a trouble like this had never happened before.Ibid.,p.62.

¹¹⁵ This place was important in the history of Zamorin's Swaroopams. Reportedly some of the rituals associated with the Swaroopam was held here. Ibid.,p.62.

which the Mappilas found to be of no value, but Vella promised them a thousand *panas* for it. He then went to see the idol in the *Paradesi's* custody and made a deal to buy that back.¹¹⁶

Vella said that Haidar Ali consolidated his power in Malabar, especially by building forts. He found it surprising that forts were constructed with black stones (*karinkal*). He added that the minting of currency was started by Mysore rulers. While the battles carried on between both sides, some of the temples at Ponnani were reportedly burnt. But contrary to all the fears and reports, Vella found that his temple at Panniyur was left untouched. Even though the temple was polluted, and it seemed that people had entered the sanctum of the temple, nothing was robbed. The *puja* (act of worship) was not stopped except for one or two days.¹¹⁷

Upon his return, there was a gradual waning of turbulence in Malabar. One could see that every time Haidar departed to Srirangapatana or Coimbatore, the little kings of Malabar hoped for a return to power. On one such occasion, in 'Chavakkadu' of the Malabar region, some of them began getting together for an '*ariyittuvayacha*' or enthronement ceremony.¹¹⁸ A certain 'Unni Rarichan Eradi' tried to join forces with the Mysore administration. The Eradi was a Valiyakkaran, or the chief of servants to the King, whom Vella described as a very intelligent person, and who tried to become the Valiyakkaran of the Nawab or Haidar as well. Unable to become the Valiyakkaran of Haidar despite his efforts, Eradi also joined the '*ariyittuvaycha*' ceremony at Chavakkad.¹¹⁹ At this time, an internal dissension broke out in Palakkad, where few important people related to *Tharoor Swaroopam* were murdered. After

¹¹⁶ Vella records his meeting with the king, the King assisted Vella financially in getting the idol back. Vella came back to Malabar and heard on his way back he heard that the Zamorin bought other idols as well after paying money. Finally Vella says that he was instrumental in getting back these idols at their place in the temples. The total cost Vella had on this journey for bringing back the idols are 17 'panam', he notes. Ibid.,pp.62-64

¹¹⁷ Ibid.,p.65.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. The name Chavakkadu is itself derived from a battle with Mysore army- as shapa kad' cursed place', where a Mappila Muslim leader-Haidaros Kutty Moopan whose name mentioned later in this text by Vella- fought against the Mysore army. This is discussed in chapter five of this dissertation.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.,p.65.

narrating this incident as briefly he could, Vella expressed his feeling (“*thonnukayum cheythu*”) that *Paradesi* might come back.¹²⁰ As he expected, from the north side the Nawab and his men reached Kudagu, and many from the northern part came to the Zamorin to inform him of these developments. However, despite all these developments, Vella expressed his disappointment that the Raja or any opposition could not raise any solid effort (“*uracha oru prayathnam*”).¹²¹

However, the Nawab returned to Srirangapatana from Kudagu and did not enter Malabar, contrary to the rumors. However, in the next year upon the orders of Haidar, Srinivasa Rayar (Rao) reached Palakkad with around ten thousand men and a thousand horses, and then proceeded towards the Zamorin territory. The Mysore army while stationed at ‘Ramanthiri fort’ (a fort in ruins in present-day Pattambi of Palakkad) had converted (“*thoppiyum kuppayavum ideechu*”) many people – Mandayapurathu Krishna Menon being one of them. Two things may be observed here: firstly “*kuppayamideekuka*”, a practice or “making wearing a shirt” was prevalent in Haidar’s army; secondly, around the time it was believed that when the conversions took place, Sreenivasa Rayar was the head of Mysore army and Haidar was mostly absent or busied himself in other battlefields.¹²²

Krishna Menon was a collaborator of Mysore named by Vella. Krishna Menon had taken part in this conversion attempt, converting others while getting converted himself.¹²³ Vella expressed appreciation of Krishna Menon as a very knowledgeable person.¹²⁴ The influential people from Malabar including Vella tried to negotiate with Srinivasa Rayar through Krishna Menon and Haidros Kutty of Chavakkad.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.,p.66

¹²² Ibid.,p.66.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Haidros Kutti Mooppan has a sufi afterlife as his shrine is still venerated, which is separately treated in the final chapter of this dissertation.

When these negotiations failed, another set of migrations occurred. While the ‘Rajakkamarum Rajasthreekalum’ -the kings and royal women- went to the woods as Sreenivasa Rayar’s army advanced, many of the Brahmins migrated to Venad or Travancore again. Vella was again surprised to find that the Travancore king gave shelter to them and supported them (as he did during the migration after Haidar’s first movement to Malabar)-. Vella was impressed with the king’s noble conduct and “dharmam.”¹²⁶

Vella also discussed the new taxation measures brought by the Mysore rule whereby the field and land were measured and taxed (*Padavum parampum nokki variyittu panam eduppichu porunnu*). Even though displeased with the taxation measures, Vella mentioned “everyone knows that how it is done.”¹²⁷ While Vella had been dispassionate thus far, towards the end of his narrative he felt melancholic and sad about the disorder he witnessed. Vella decided against migrating at this point and opted to stay back and look after his family, take care of the temple (‘*kshethravum*’), and the private temple (‘*swakarya kshethravum*’). Vella expressed his helplessness at being trapped in this situation, where he was unable to share his predicament with anyone and sought refuge in God and saying ‘*eeshawara ennu vechu irikka akunnathu*’. The famed rebellion by the Nair rebels against Mysore is also noted by Vella.¹²⁸ Two of the kings of the Zamorin’s family refused to surrender their kingdom (“*rajyam*”) to Mysore. They came back from Travancore, camped in the hill near which the *Paradesi* sits (‘*Kozhikode*’) and decided to battle.¹²⁹ Vella also added that this decision helped these Rajas to increase their support and bring more people into their army.

Many battles ensued in the following years. Vella says that the *pada* happened in “various directions”, and “*draviyam*” (meaning money to resources) was taken from various parts of

¹²⁶ Ibid.,p.67.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

the country.¹³⁰ In other words, Vella's explanation for the plunders of the temples and other places during this time was the *pada*. Vella, therefore, did not blame Mysore alone for the plunder and said that "nattukarum" or various people in the neighbourhood were involved. In other words the *pada* precipitated all these events. With the plunder of "draviyam," temples were abandoned or destroyed, and Brahmins and common subjects (*prajas*) fled from Malabar.¹³¹ He added that certain, 'Kana Sayavu' (it is not clear which European Vella was referring to since *sayivu* was used for all Europeans, including the English, the Dutch and the French who were present at the time) also participated in the plunder and destruction of Thrishivaperur.¹³² The people who participated in destructions and plunder are described as "heenar" and "neechanmar palarum" meaning "many evildoers." However, it is important to note that Vella did not identify the offenders as the Mysore army or as allies of Mysore.

Meanwhile, Vella was relieved that nothing had happened to his temple Panniyur. According to him everything that happened was *Bhagavan* or God's will. He also mentioned that one of the copper plates of the temple was taken by "white men" and sold for 6,000 *panams*.¹³³ This was also the period of *pada* when various local actors and caste groups settled their scores with each other. Vella, for example, narrates the atrocities of 'Padinjare Kovilakam' or the Western Kovilakam, at his temple of Panniyur.¹³⁴ At least in two places Vella Namboodiri found other Brahmin castes like Pattars or Tamil Brahmins working against his interests in the temple.¹³⁵ This power struggle was visible at two places when he narrates an incident when the Zamorin intervened in a factional fight between a rival Brahmin *illam* in his favour, and later when the Padinjare Kovilakam Thamban created trouble at the temple of Panniyur. Vella listed around sixty Nairs and one Pattar named 'Parashuraman' and few of the Ezhavas

¹³⁰ Ibid.,p.67.

¹³¹ "Kalashal" is another term apart from *pada* that is used by Vella to explain the unprecedented situation. *Ibid.*

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.p.68.

¹³⁴ Ibid.,p.68-70.

¹³⁵ Ibid.p.69.

as creating trouble.¹³⁶ Vella's narrative shifted to the details of another factional fight between the neighbouring village of Shukapuram and Panniyur, where the Zamorin intervened as a mediator.¹³⁷

The inability of Haidar and Tipu Sultan to protect temples was a major feature attributed to *pada* in these stories. One could further look at the context of the dharma that was expected, and which Haidar and Tipu purportedly failed to fulfill. The protection of the social order (primarily denoting the protection of the caste order) was essential to the *Raja dharma* of the south Indian Kings.¹³⁸ It is essential to look at where exactly Tipu or Haidar violated the *Raja dharma*, which was seen as a social crisis by the prominent actors of the eighteenth century, such as the chroniclers of the *swaroopams*, the temple keepers like Vella, and the chroniclers of *kalari*. An important element in the narratives was the term *desam*. *Desam* in Vella's text is not deployed as a revenue unit. While different localities of Malabar were also called *desam*, Vellayude Charithram uses the concept of a larger *desam* (from Canara to Travancore with his discussion of the little Kings of Neeleswaram to Venad) against the *Telugu paradesis*. According to Donald R. Davis, the medieval documents on Kerala mention *Desamaryadh,a* or the law of the land.¹³⁹ Davis identifies the *desam* closely with the idea of region in "medieval Kerala", hence *desamaryada* in a larger sense would mean "law as practiced in the region."¹⁴⁰ One could argue that in the case of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, the category *paradesi* emerges with the violation of the *Maryada* of *desam*, which makes the *paradesi* someone who violates the laws of land. The *desam* Davis describes was a temple

¹³⁶ Ibid,p.69.

¹³⁷ Ibid.,p.71.

¹³⁸P.G. Price, "Raja-Dharma in 19th century south India: land, litigation and largess in Ramnad Zamindari." *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 13(2), 1979,pp. 207-239.

¹³⁹ Davis argues "The desamaryada of this temple-dominated region was comprised of legal ideas, advice, provisions, statutes, etc. which, though unwritten and uncodified, were well-known in the region." See Donald R Davis. "Recovering the indigenous legal traditions of India: classical Hindu law in practice in late medieval Kerala." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 27, no. 3, 1999, p.161.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

dominated region; in *Vellayude Charithram* we could see the *Rajadharm* lay in patronizing temples, including the construction and maintenance of temples.

Vellayude Charithram and claims of Truth in Vernacular histories

The *granthavaris* are voluminous manuscript records on the history of Malabar; most of the *granthavaris* were written to glorify the local authorities (*nattudayavar*).¹⁴¹ The biggest collection of *granthavari* is the *Kolikottu granthavari*, a collection of records from the Zamorin's *Swaroopams*. It compiles the accounts of the dynasty from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries.¹⁴² It has been pointed out that there are two categories of the *Kolikottu granthavari* – one dealing with the income and expenditure, and the other describing festivals and similar events such as *Mamankam* and royal ceremonies¹⁴³ The *granthavari* accounts were written with the twin purpose of *meykeerthi* (literally the fame of the body), *koyma keerthi* (the fame of the authorities).¹⁴⁴ The *Keralolpatti* traditions, which included the stories of Parasurama granting rights to Brahmin villages and Cheraman Perumal's migration to Mecca served to legitimise and glorify *Swaroopams*. The *granthavari* texts I have looked at reflect similar panegyric tendencies.

In South Asia, recent critiques of colonial historiography have foregrounded vernacular histories that emerged outside colonial knowledge production. In his seminal introduction to *History in the Vernacular*, Partha Chatterjee argues that vernacular histories exist in their

¹⁴¹ M.R Raghava Varier. *Keralolpatti Granthavari*, Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangam, 2016.

¹⁴² V.V Haridas who looked at the history of Zamorin's in pre-colonial Kerala has noted that there are seventy volumes of palm leaf books and two hundred volumes of paper records in *Kolikottu granthavari* record. Haridas, *Zamorins and the Political Culture of Medieval Kerala*, p.8.

¹⁴³ Apart from the *Kolikottu Granthavari*, some manuscripts belong to other *swaroopams*, and some are part of private family archives such as *Vanjeri Granthavari*. V.V. Haridas, K.V. Krishna Ayyar Endowment Lecture – II, Kozhikode, 3 rd November 2015.

¹⁴⁴ K.P Rajesh, *Vadakkan Malabar: Samoohavum Charithravum* [Northern Malabar: History and Society], Sahitya pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangam, National Book Stall, 2014, p. 86

difference from the authorised forms of modern academic History.¹⁴⁵ He adds that even while adopting a discursive prose form such as an essay or the monograph, vernacular histories have their difference from academic or colonial histories.¹⁴⁶ He further points out that vernacular historians use other forms of literary genres such as the novel, drama, autobiography, poetry.¹⁴⁷ In the case of Malayalam, there are distinct literary genres, such as *pattu* and *katha* traditions, poetry or song, and prose, respectively.¹⁴⁸ The Keralolpatti or the larger *granthavari* tradition, mostly belongs to the prose tradition, and maintained their distinctiveness from colonial histories in content/perspectives, narration, and form.

It would also be helpful to make comparisons with other vernacular histories of South India with the *granthavari* texts. The texts I have analysed so far in the chapter while giving importance to the temple and Brahmanical deities were mostly “this-worldly” or secular in character similar to the *niti* Telugu texts Velcheru Narayana Rao and Sanjay Subrahmanyam discuss.¹⁴⁹ Another similarity is that some of the authors of the *niti* texts were themselves kings or ministers, and many of them were associated with power in some manner or other.¹⁵⁰ Janaki Nair’s essay on the vernacular histories of Mysore throws light on some of the issues that are at stake in the material I discuss.¹⁵¹

The concern of Post Khudadadi Mysore historians – Mark Wilks writing in the nineteenth century, and Hayavadana Rao in the twentieth century – with the vernacular materials was to

¹⁴⁵ Partha Chatterjee “Introduction” to Partha Chatterjee, Raziuddin Aquil ed. *History in the Vernacular*. Permanent Black, 2008. p. 19.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.19.

¹⁴⁸ For a discussion of ‘pre-modern’ literary productions of Kerala, see Rich Freeman “Genre and Society”, in Sheldon Pollock Ed. *Literary cultures in history: reconstructions from South Asia*. University of California Press; 2003,pp.437-502.

¹⁴⁹ While the Malayalam texts often resorted to religious idioms, their focus was essentially on worldly matters. On Niti texts’ ‘practical wisdom’ see Velcheru Narayana Rao and Sanjay Subrahmanyam “History and Politics in the Vernacular: Reflections on Medieval and Early Modern South India,”in Aquil and Chatterjee eds. *History in the Vernacular*, 2008, p.33.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Janaki Nair in “Eighteenth-Century Passages to a History of Mysore,”in Aquil, Raziuddin, and Partha Chatterjee. *History in the Vernacular*,pp.25-65.

use them as sources for writing what could be called “proper history.”¹⁵² Janaki Nair argues against this ‘positivist’ tendency and asks for sensitivity to precolonial forms of historical writing instead of dismissing the mythic and poetic elements of these materials.¹⁵³ Following this argument, one could look at the form and language of the narrative expressions of the Mysore rule in the Malayalam region. Nair further observes that in late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century Mysore, it would be difficult to find a hegemonic narrative style and methodology in the vernacular.¹⁵⁴ The nineteenth century colonial triumphalist histories on Tipu Sultan considered the “the indigenous productions of the eighteenth century as sources”.¹⁵⁵ We do not see a similar figure like Mackenzie in the Malabar region, and Malayalam sources are largely overlooked in the subsequent colonial writings.¹⁵⁶ While these Malayalam sources remained free of colonial interventions, postcolonial engagements were constrained by the positivist methodology in their engagement with the archive. So for the epigraphists, who read the manuscripts, or tangential engagements by historians on Vella’s manuscript were centered on the question of whether it portrays Haidar in a better light than the colonial historians, which was similar to Hyavadana Rao’s engagements with the vernacular.

There are a few reasons why I suggest that there are remarkable parallels between the vernacular histories of Mysore and Malabar from the same historical period. While the conditions of production and intended audience of these texts cannot be entirely known, some can be deciphered from a close reading of the texts. The texts from Malabar make some indirect claims to historical truth as well. In Vellayude *Charithram*, one reads of the

¹⁵² Ibid.,p.66.

¹⁵³ Ibid.,p.67.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.,p.69.

¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁶ Mackenzie manuscripts have few important texts relevant for Malabar, however in comparison it is lesser than the vast collections of Tamil and Telugu region. Margret Frenz, without any critical engagement with the claims of Mackenzie and his local collaborators’ claims, attributes the destruction of materials in Malabar to Mysore conquest. Frenz, *Contact to Conquest*, p.147.

uncertainties of Vella's time and the political chaos. *Vellayude Charithram* bears some similarities to other eighteenth century chronicles of south Asia, which lament a lost past while laying claims to an authentic present. As in the case of *Haidar Nama*, *Vellayude Charithram* and other chronicles may also be considered unstable and uncertain as sources of history. Accounts of the discovery of these texts by epigraphists and archivists in the late 20th century are similar. For example the discovery of '*Haidar Nama Bakhairu*' was seen as nothing less than a 'triumph' by M.H Krishna.¹⁵⁷ A similar joy of discovery can be observed in N.M Namboodiri's introduction to *Vellayude Charithram*.¹⁵⁸ *Vellayude Charithram* and the *Haidar Nama* were both discovered in family archives. Most of the chronicles I discuss below appear to describe the emerging political and cultural order. While Vella's text cannot be officially identified as a court chronicle, the author's proximity to the courts of the Zamorin and his relations with the ruling authorities of Cochin and Travancore are evident in the text. Therefore one should read the texts as an exegesis on power, as Nair points out about the *Tarikh-I- khudadadi* which was more than a memoir.¹⁵⁹ However, unlike *Haidar Nama* and *Tarkih -I- Khudadadi*, *Vellayude Charithram* is wracked by a tone of melancholy but do not focus on a narrative of decline.

The *granthavari* texts are closer in style to *keralolpatti*, the pre-colonial vernacular tradition of recording, which was privileged as well as contested by the early medieval historians of Kerala.¹⁶⁰ In other words, *Vellayude Charithram* and other such texts belong to a distinct Malayalam vernacular tradition that has some parallels with the larger eighteenth century

¹⁵⁷ M.H Krishna saw *Haidar Nama Bakhairu* 'as the work of a 'true historian, and not in any sense, an apologist or eulogist', Nair "Eighteenth-Century Passages to a History of Mysore," p.72.

¹⁵⁸ Namboodiri, *Vellayude Charithram*, p. 7. The "Truth claims" of those who discovered *Vellayude Charithram* are similar to *Haidar Nama*, for instance, the relative authenticity is the most important aspect of this text according to N.M Namboodiri. *Ibid.*, p,10.

¹⁵⁹ The two translations of *Tarikh-I-Khudadadi* are discussed in the fifth chapter.

¹⁶⁰ See Kesavan Veluthat., "History and historiography in constituting a region: The case of Kerala." *Studies in People's History* 5.1 2018, pp. 13-31. Also see his 'Keralolpatti as History: A note on the pre-colonial traditions of historical writing in India' in *Culture and Modernity; Historical Explorations*, 2004, University of Calicut.

southern Indian texts in form and content. For example, Janaki Nair demonstrates that *Haidar Nama* could be located in the Bakhar tradition in its “resistance to the claims of truth.”¹⁶¹ The texts I discuss here often express subtle and indirect admiration for Haidar and Tipu, while also reporting their political expeditions and conquests. The claims to truth are mostly later attributions by epigraphists and archivists, For example, similar to the term ‘*charithram*’ (history) which Nallappa uses towards the end of his Kannada text *Haidar Nama*, was not present in Vella’s manuscript and the addition was done by a copywriter of the manuscript in the late twentieth century. This was later employed to make a claim over “truth” and “history.”¹⁶² A striking parallel between Nallapa’s account and *Vellyude Charithram* is that both the texts provide the pragmatic reasons that may have caused Haidar’s advance in their respective regions. Unlike the precolonial texts such as the *Maharashtra Purana* Vella’s account does not take the discussion to a mythic level, where divine intervention results in a catastrophe.¹⁶³ The complex negotiations and the equally complex ambitions of Haidar for control over economy and the local chiefs are demonstrated very well by Vella.

The texts I discussed could be taken as representative examples of Malayalam writing which introduced a tradition of recounting memories in the eighteenth century. Since most of the texts I discuss are from the eighteenth century, it would be important to adopt a comparative framework with other texts of South Asia in the same period. Kumkum Chatterjee has paid significant attention to the precolonial texts, especially that of eighteenth century Bengal.

¹⁶⁴Chatterjee problematizes the category “History in the vernacular.” She looks at the

¹⁶¹ Nair, Eighteenth-Century Passages to a History of Mysore.” p,69.

¹⁶² Namboodiri, *Vellayude Charithram*, p.10.

¹⁶³ The *Maharashtra Purana* by Gangaram was composed in 1751-1752. However, some scholars have identified the text as a “pure secular history.” For a discussion of *Maharashtra Purana* see, Kumkum Chatterjee, “The persianisation of Ithihasa: Performance narratives and Mughal Political Culture in Eighteenth-Century Bengal,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 67(02), 2008.

¹⁶⁴Kumkum Chatterjee, “History as self-representation: the recasting of a political tradition in late eighteenth-century Eastern India.” *Modern Asian Studies*, 32(4), 1998, pp. 913-948.

“conscious endeavors” of the Indian elite in the eighteenth century to represent “their political traditions and principles.”¹⁶⁵

The Malayalam writers of inscriptions and manuscripts of the late eighteenth centuries did not consider colonialism as the main reference point or colonial administrators as the audience, unlike the case of Tabatabai and his Persian contemporaries, yet they attempted to represent the traditions and witness the contemporary. Chatterjee argues that the Persianate elites try to represent the “values and ideology” of the “social and political orders that created them.”¹⁶⁶ The texts she analyses are that of Indo-Islamic textual tradition. To be precise, most of them came from the bureaucracy of the erstwhile rulers of Murshidabad, firmly rooted in a rich tradition of “narrative histories and political commentaries.”¹⁶⁷

However, my focus in analysing these texts is different. My object in studying these texts is not to answer whether India had a historical tradition before the advent of British colonialism; The texts I have studied are not directly related to statecraft (since Malayalam region had only “ephemeral state formations”) and political principles were not directly laid out, the way they were in Ghulam Ali Tabatabai’s text ‘Siyar-ul-Mutakhkherin’-which Chatterjee bases her arguments on.¹⁶⁸ Kumkum Chatterjee notes that the eighteenth century later Mughal texts were heavily dependent on earlier works for facts, figures, and dates.¹⁶⁹ In the case of Vella, for example, there could be a distant similarity with the *Keralolpatti* manuscripts, but the *Vellayude Charithram* retains a distinct character, and Vella’s text appears as more independent from earlier textual traditions and a slightly unprecedented occurrence in the 1780s. In comparison with long tradition of *pattu*, *katha*, or *keralolpatti* traditions, *Vellayude*

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.915.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.916.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.917.

¹⁶⁸ For an analysis of pre-colonial state formations of Malabar, see Dilip M. Menon, “Houses by the Sea: State-Formation Experiments in Malabar”, 1760-1800, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, No. 29 Jul. 17-23, 1999, pp. 1995-1997.

¹⁶⁹ Chatterjee, “History as self-representation: the recasting of a political tradition in late eighteenth-century Eastern India”, p.922.

Charithram is a standalone text in its form and content. *Vellyude Charithram*, to some extent, was one of the earliest expressions about “self” in Malayalam, which is closer to autobiographical accounts in the colonial period than the known precolonial poetic and prose tradition. A sixteenth century historical account in Arabic attributed to Zainuddin Maqdoom (d.1583), called *Thufathul Mujahideen*, and could be seen as a precedent in Malabar for *Vellayude Charithram* in terms of providing an account of trouble and war. I explore the thematic similarities with the pre-colonial narratives of disorders and the *Mysore pada* in the following section.

Pada as crisis and fitna

A significant feature that is present across the eighteenth century texts is the thematic presence of ‘trouble’ and “confusion” prevailing after the decline of the Mughal empire in north and eastern India.¹⁷⁰ In our example, there is a strong presence of political chaos and conflict. Kumkum Chatterjee interprets the chaos as a lack of order accompanied by “subversion” and/or “revolution” as explained in the eighteenth century texts.¹⁷¹ While subversion, according to her, hints at the political changes, revolution is a fundamentally irreversible change. She further notes that all of these terms denote ‘decline’ as a paradigm.¹⁷² In *Vellayude Charithram* and other texts, ‘the decline’ is not the central focus, since there was never an empire to formally decline in this region, even though significant changes occurred among the local ruling classes. Since they are not narratives of decline, *Vellayude Charithram* and other texts do not make grand claims about the eighteenth century, but remained focused on the local. They also comment on a newly acquired mobility, inter-village level migrations, travels, and communication with rulers beyond the region in a new situation enabled by the *pada*.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p.924.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.,p.923.

¹⁷² Ibid.

There are two terms in South Asian historiography to describe the disorder in the historiography; one is Andre Wink's much-known formulation *fitna* (*collapse of internal cohesion*)¹⁷³ and P.K Yasser Arafath's recent contribution to the Indian Ocean studies – *fasad* (social and political disorder).¹⁷⁴ To these, I add *pada*, with the support of the texts I have discussed above. It is imperative to discuss the historical discourses of *fitna* and *fasad* before outlining the broad conceptual historiographical similarities; as well as elaborate the specificity of *pada* as not only an eighteenth century term but also a term more specific to the Malabar Coast and its hinterland, with impact on other parts of then Kerala.

Arafath presents a more extended history of *fitna* from the Quranic times before placing it in the context of *fasad* of the Portuguese times in the Indian Ocean history. He finds the medieval chronicler Zainuddin Maqdoom explaining *fitna* as internal collapse, and *fasad* as the disorder directly denoting the Portuguese attack on the Malabar Coast. *Fitna* is explained as a continuous process and a result of *fasad*, which includes looting by the Portuguese and large-scale atrocities and destruction.¹⁷⁵ For Arafath, *fitna* was a product of *fasad*. The Arabic texts produced in the Indian Ocean region, namely *Tahreel ahl-al Iman ala-Jihadi bdat-assyulbaan*, *Tuhfat-al-Mujahideen*, *Fath-al-Mubeen* provide examples of Portuguese *fasad* as spectacles.¹⁷⁶

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, Malabar witnessed the massive impact of incessant war and the subsequent repercussion on the lives of people, which would not be the same as *fasad* or *fitna* but shares some broad characteristics with disorder and internal collapse. An important question to ask at this moment is the thematic relation of these

¹⁷³ Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics Under the Eighteenth-century Maratha Svarājya*. Cambridge University Press, 1986.

¹⁷⁴ PK Yasser Arafath, "Malabar Ulema in the Shafiite Cosmopolis: Fitna, Piety and Resistance in the Age of Fasad." *The Medieval History Journal* 21, no. 1, 2018, p. 25-68.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., pp.38-48.

¹⁷⁶ Before the *Mysore padas*' entry, the Portuguese invasion is the only instance where a 'war situation emerges' on Malabar coast. The precedent for an 'internal collapse' and *pada* like situation could be seen prior to 18th century only in the conflicts with Portuguese and in a limited sense with the Dutch.

Malayalam narrative texts with the Arabi-Malayalam texts or songs produced in later times. I have elsewhere looked at the text *Kappapattu* of Sufi poet Kunjayin Musliyar to demonstrate the importance of eighteenth century peculiarities of the Arabi Malayalam texts.¹⁷⁷ There is very little evidence to argue that the eighteenth century was inflected with a sense of *fasad* or *fitna* for the Mappilas, since, other than the Portuguese, no major conflicts took place between the Mappila Muslims and other European groups until the British conquest. Thus, *kappapattu* was free from the features which we would associate with narratives of internal collapse and history in a tragic tone. However, unlike *Kappapattu*, the final part of *Vellayude Charithram* expressed a tragic sensitivity to the disorder the author was witnessing.

One needs to focus on the concept of *fitna* to explain the tragic vulnerability that Vella felt during the *Mysore pada*, which cannot be merely explained with the narrative of decline. Andre Wink's original formation of *fitna* denotes "seditious struggles, leading to continuous reshuffling of power and resources."¹⁷⁸ For Wink, *fitna*, which is variously described as "sedition" or "rebellion" was integral to the eighteenth century Maratha polity in challenging and expanding the regional reconfigurations of the eighteenth-century Mughal state.¹⁷⁹ *Fitna*, he says, was "essentially a political disruption of the unitary umma", which he explains in the context of the political troubles during the time of classical Islam.¹⁸⁰ The twelfth century Arab writer Ibn Khaldun also used the term *fitna* in the context of the emergence of "political

¹⁷⁷ Kunjayin Musliyar died around the time when Tipu Sultan's major expedition to Malabar took place in 1786. His texts produced around the 1780s included *kappapattu* (ship song) and *nul madh* and *nul mala*. Kunjayin Musliyar was arguably one of the most popular Ulama before the 19th century, with his influence shown both in the world of texts and popular (probably after Syed Alavi Thangal who fought against the British in 19th century) I have looked in detail elsewhere into Indian Ocean textual tradition in which Musliyar's *kappapattu* has its origins. While placing the *kappapattu* firmly inside the *Mawliidi* tradition of prophet veneration in Arabic I have also hinted at the connections of the text with the social transformations taking place in relation to the Mappila Muslims of Malabar, a turn of the Shafi Muslims with establishing masjids and learning centers far away from the coastal Malabar in the hinterland. See Kelachan Thodika, "Ship Symbolism in the 'Arabic Cosmopolis': Reading Kunjayin Musliyar's 'Kappapattu' in 18th Century Malabar.", *World History Bulletin*, pp. 17-25.

¹⁷⁸ Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics Under the Eighteenth-century Maratha Svarājya*, p.33

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.32.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.23.

sovereignty.”¹⁸¹ Wink further notes that *fitna* continued to be used in Arab sources as “rebellion” or “disorder” or “socio-religious deviation.” He says the concept and the term *fitna* were further adopted into Persian, Turkish, and Indian languages.¹⁸² Wink notes that in these languages the meanings corresponded to “insurrection caused by factionalism,” “revolt, chaos, dissension,” and even “civil war.” In the Maratha documents, the term close to *fitna* is *fitvahe*, corresponding to the meanings of “rebellion”, “defection”, or “withdrawing from allegiance.”¹⁸³ Beyond the lexical or literary meanings of *fitna* or its corrupted usages in the Indian languages, an important feature was its integral relation with the military, which becomes important in the context of *pada*. Wink explains the common “lever associated with *fitna* mechanism” as a “political use with military power.”¹⁸⁴ More importantly, during a period of *fitna*, rarely did an actual war take place, which can be said of the *pada* situations of eighteenth century Malabar as well. In most cases which are mentioned in the Malayalam documents as well as in the stories, no real battle took place apart from the movement of troops. However, *pada*, like *fitna* enabled a lot of literature and memories to flourish around it, allowing later accounts to make a case for actual battle in the later historical period.¹⁸⁵ Winks' final finding of *fitna* as opposed to a military operation thus becomes supremely important to the Malabar during the Mysore rule as well. Wink explains *fitna* as “at least a mixture of coercion and conciliation and characteristically implied intervention in the making and use of existing conflicts.”¹⁸⁶ In other words *fitna* or *pada* in our context is much bigger than a palace intrigue, but it uses the local conflicts (like the conflict between Palakkad and

¹⁸¹ Ibid.,p.24.

¹⁸² Ibid.,p.25.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.,26.

¹⁸⁵ In *fitna*, Wink argues, “Actual physical battles involving entire armies, apart from skirmishes or strategic outmaneuvering, were rare and seemed to have occurred largely accidentally, while even they were of themselves of little political consequence. Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p.27.

Zamorin, as we saw in the *Tharoor Swaroopam*) for political use with military power while very little actual battle took place on the ground.

While the lexical meaning of *pada* is battle, it acquires new meanings in different situations. If we go with the existing historiography, one can argue that the Mappilas did have a *pada* literature in the form of *qissa* songs and *Padappattu*, which came out of the Mappila Muslims' violent conflicts with the British in the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁷ *Qissapattu* was wrongly translated by the early orientalist F.W. Fawcett as “war songs”, and many historians tend to follow the generic term to describe the songs that came out of battles.¹⁸⁸ Following this, one may tend to interpret *pada* against the violent political atmosphere of the nineteenth century, but I argue *Mysore pada* in the eighteenth century encompassed a more physical and emotional meaning than the nineteenth-century political disorders, which makes it closer to *fitna* and more of a metaphor for the contemporary socio-political situation.¹⁸⁹ According to Wink, the trope of *fitna* was mostly pitted against Mughal (Islamic) universalism, and was a challenge to the sovereignty of the larger states.¹⁹⁰ He also demonstrated the similarities between the conceptions of “Hindu Dharma and Islamic Universal sovereignties.”¹⁹¹ He argues that in South Asia, the *fitna* “set off not only against Islam but also against Hindu Dharma.”¹⁹² In the above discussions, we saw that *pada* did upset the existing hierarchies of power in Malabar. In Vella's account as well as in the *granthavaris*, *pada* disturbed the

¹⁸⁷ See Stephen Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier, The Mappilas of Malabar-1498-1922*. Oxford, 1989, p.55

¹⁸⁸ F.W. Fawcett “War Songs of the Mappilas of Malabar.” *The Indian Antiquary* 30, November, 1901, pp. 499-508.

¹⁸⁹ However, if one looks closely at the texts of 19th century we do not find any self-identification of *pada* in the Arab-Malayalam writing tradition. Instead, what appears are the *qissapattus* of Mappilas which deal with the battles from the classical Islamic past to the colonial times. F.W Fawcett who wrote in *Indian antiquary* – falsely identified these songs as “War Songs.” Later Malayalam writers further translated the colonial or orientalist term to *Padappattu*. I thank my friend Muhammad Niyas Ashraf for this finding- whose ongoing PhD research is on the Arabi-Malayalam texts of 19th and 20th centuries- that the identification of *Qissapattu* as *padappattu* is a misnomer.

¹⁹⁰ Wink *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics Under the Eighteenth-century Maratha Svarājya*, pp.32-33.

¹⁹¹ Andre Wink, “Sovereignty and universal dominion in South Asia.” *The Indian Economic & Social History Review*. 1984, p.276.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.282.

political, social, and cultural status quo of Malabar. K.M Panikkar has argued that the Mysore invasion did more harm to the social and political structure of Kerala or *Kerala Dharma* than the Travancore expansion.¹⁹³ The Mysore conquest and the administration of Malabar, transformed the meaning of *pada* to more than a battle; and in turn permanently suffixed the term *pada* into itself as *Mysore pada* – denoting historical points of crises and changes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that Malayalam ways of remembering have a distinct yet complex tradition of representing the Mysore conquest of Malabar. One could assume from the texts that little kingdoms, temples, and *kalari* gymnasiums kept records describing their history of relations with the Mysore troops. Apart from these textual memories, there were stories in the oral tradition (which were eventually recorded), where most of the old temples, along the route of Mysore troops' advancement in Malabar, remembered Tipu and his army in multiple ways. The memories – both textual and oral – resist a unified memory of Mysore aggression and lack coherence, unlike the colonial memory I discuss in the coming chapter. The Malayalam term *Mysore pada* carried a profound meaning of incorporating both crisis and transformation as a new order emerged along the Mysore administration of Malabar between 1766 and 1792.

¹⁹³ While the Rajas of Kerala have fought between them, for Panikkar their fights were nothing more than “family quarrels.” For the Cochin and Travancore, a Kerala without Zamorin was inconceivable, Panikkar argued. Thus the Mysore conquest of Malabar and subsequent dispossession of the Zamorin of his “sovereignty” were seen as “totally opposed to Kerala ideas.” For Panikkar, Marthanda Varma, the founder of Travancore kingdom was influenced by “non Kerala ideas.” However, Marthanda Varma’s successor, Ramaraja who fought against Tipu, “became the embodiment of Kerala Dharma and was naturally anxious to maintain the traditional state system of Kerala.” Panikkar, *A History of Kerala*, p.337.

CHAPTER 2:
“MUHAMMADAN CONQUEST”
IN COLONIAL MEMORY, circa 1788 TO 1887

“The archive, as a site of remembrance- doing the work of remembering- is also at the same time a project of forgetting. What are the implications of our constructions of the past?”

Gyanendra Pandey¹

In this chapter I look at several important colonial documents on the English War with Mysore in Malabar and ask if there was a perceptible shift in the language of colonial records over time? Did the assessment differ according to whether the discussion was about military strategy, economic administration, social and cultural, or religious ambition? This chapter asks these questions by examining the colonial empirical records produced on Malabar in the period between the war with Mysore (1766-1799) and the late nineteenth century.

David Ludden asks us to look at the creation of colonial empirical knowledge. He argues that the “instrumental knowledge” produced for the capitalist, military or administrative expansion of colonial state belongs to the category of orientalist knowledge.² According to him, there was an intrinsic connection between the political and empirical reorganisation of the newly acquired territories of the Company, which in turn was presented as truths for colonial knowledge to further build on.³

¹ Gyanendra Pandey, *Unarchived Histories: The ‘Mad’ and ‘trifling’ in the Colonial and Post-Colonial World*, Routledge, 2014, p.4.

²David Ludden, ‘Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge’ in Breckenridge, Carol A., and Peter Van Der Veer, eds. *Orientalism and the postcolonial predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.p.252.

³ Ibid.

The story of the English settlement in Malabar began with the appointment of Commissioners in Malabar by the Bombay government, as per Lord Cornwallis's suggestion. In this chapter, I chiefly focus on *The Joint commissioners' Report on Malabar, 1792-1793* (Hereafter *The JCRM*), as laying the empirical basis for nineteenth century colonial knowledge on the former territories ruled by Tipu Sultan, for Mark Wilks and William Logan . In this chapter, following Ranajit Guha, I identify *The JCRM* as a “primary archive” of the Mysore rule, and probe its subsequent transition into the “secondary discourse” in the *Malabar Manual*.⁴ *The JCRM* and William Logan's *Malabar Manual* (1887) are two standard references for historians of modern Malabar; the former exclusively details the revenue situation of Malabar in 1793 while the latter gives a comprehensive view of the history of Malabar in the late nineteenth century. Many subsequent commission reports and documents on Malabar in the early nineteenth century went on to repeat *The JCRM's* assessments and findings. Before entering into a discussion of *The JCRM*, I shall highlight different colonial perceptions of the Nairs, Mappilas, and Rajas or princely conflicts in Malabar, while the wars between the Mysore and the English East India Company (EIC) were in full swing.

In the colonial records, the Mysore conquest of Malabar was described as a “Mohammadan invasion.”⁵ *The JCRM* attempted to locate the EIC settlement in Malabar within a specific history to serve immediate colonial needs, while also providing narratives of conversion and exile of “Malabar Hindus.” The local power holders in Malabar were the rajas or the former ruling authorities, while the Mappila “plunderers”, and chieftains or *mooppans* were also important. The important question faced by the Company was how to negotiate power

⁴For a discussion of archive as a “discourse”, see Ranajit Guha, "The prose of counter-insurgency," In Nicholas Dirks, Eley Geoff, eds *Culture/power/history: A reader in contemporary social theory*, Princeton, 1994, pp. 336-371. Ann Laura Stoler as well has suggested to see archive as a subject and sites of knowledge production. Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance,” in *Archival Science*, 2002, p.87.

⁵ The preference of the term Muhammadanism over Islam in orientalist scholarship has been rightly critiqued by Edward Said. Said says such usages are results of “assertions made about Islam, not on the basis of evidence internal to Islam, but rather on the basis of a logic deliberately outside Islam.” Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin, 2003, p.280.

relations between these groups while establishing their own government. The overall view of the Tipu government as a “Muhammadan” government had immediate impact at the policy level, since they acknowledged the rights of Hindu rajas and the power structure associated with them, while simultaneously invalidating most of the claims of Mappila Muslims over the land as plunderers or usurpers. In contrast with the British view on communities such as the Mappilas and the Nairs, a decade prior to 1790, here we find routes of sectarian and religious divisions in Malabar. *The JCRM*’s view of Tipu Sultan’s government as a ‘Muhammadan encroachment’, and thereby illegitimate, supplemented the idea of Mappila Muslims as usurpers of land. This had far-reaching consequences on Malabar history and historiography alike and denoted a break from the non-colonial view. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the contemporary vernacular narratives did not identify Khudadadi Sirkar with a fixed religious meaning.

The beginnings

In his correspondence with General Abercomby after the Treaty of Srirangapatana in 1792, Lord Cornwallis wrote a report on Malabar, where he categorically stated that it would be a challenging task to increase the revenue collection in Malabar without disturbing or upsetting the people.⁶ The Company initially appeared ignorant of the agrarian structure, and Company was also ignorant of the rights that were bestowed on the people by Tipu. Thus, Cornwallis decided against a Permanent Settlement. His report mentioned Tipu’s miscalculation of revenue, which was further repeated in later commissioners’ reports; where Tipu’s revenue estimates seem to have grossly exceeded the actual revenue that the Company could generate from the lands of Malabar.⁷

⁶ India Office records, Home Miscellaneous Series (hereafter /H/MISC/585).

⁷ Ibid. Lord Cornwallis, even before an assessment, suspected that Tipu’s revenue estimates were exaggerated. See G.F Cherry’s letter to Golam Ali Khan and Ali Raza, dated 22nd October ,1792 in Nirod Bhushan Ray ed,

To get a detailed report of the situation, Cornwallis –whose distrust for native officers was well known, appointed two commissioners for Malabar.⁸ One of them was required to be a military officer of experience, who would know how to dispose of the troops. The Company promised the rajas of Malabar that it would free them from “all dependence of Tippoo Sultan.”⁹ The Company reminded them of the promise it had made to the princes in return for a share of the revenue. The Company further promised that it would extend the favour by restoring “internal peace” in the country which had been much “disturbed by the wars and animosities between Nairs and Mappilas.”¹⁰ This, however, did not satisfy the “high expectations” of the rajas who expected full autonomy or reinstatement of their power. They were invited by the Company to return to their different countries (from which they had fled fearing Mysore army and “assist them in expelling Tippoo from Malabar”). The rajas had hoped that they would stay in power in their former dominions in exchange for a little tribute, but the Company government was willing to grant them only limited sovereignty.¹¹

The outrages of the Mappila were mentioned for the first time in a colonial document in the context of discussions of this new settlement.¹² Reports of the Mappila outrages, as well as feuds, prevailed in the country and was seen by the rajas as a bargaining point to get more sovereign power from the Company government. The Company, however, was averse to the adoption of a rigorous military solution to the feuds between Mappilas and rajas, since it was more concerned with both revenue and law and order. Tipu’s system, according to the Company, was entirely new in Malabar. The reports from Malabar, prior to *The JCRM*,

Poona Residency Correspondence-The Allies War with Tipu Sultan, 1790-1793, Government Central press, Bombay, 1931, pp.615-616.

⁸ David Ludden believed that Cornwallis distrusted Madras civilians. See Ludden “Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge”, p.257.

⁹ India office records/H/MISC/585.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Apart from the Zamorin, the other rajas who were part of the negotiations for a resettlement included the Raja of Chirakkal, the Raja of Cotiote (Kottayam), the Raja of Neelewsharam, and the Raja of Kadathanad. Ibid.

¹² On May 17, 1792, the Company discussed the deployment of a military force under native princes against the feuds with the Mappilas. Ibid.

acknowledged that “Hyder and Tippoo destroyed the feudal and Bramanical (sic) system. The rajas, the Nairs and the Brahmins were chiefly driven from the country, in their place he encouraged the Moppilas, who from the seashore, spread themselves into the interior country, are an industrious and commercial people.”¹³

The assessment of the EIC on the “wars in Malabar” interestingly changed between the 1780s and 1840s. In 1786, it was observed in the English records that the Mappilas and the Nairs together sought the help of the Travancore King against Tipu Sultan.¹⁴ In the *Correspondence on Mappila Outrages, 1849-1853* (hereafter *CMO*), it was clear that Tipu had conflicts with the Mappila chieftains, but *The JCRM* was keen to prove that Tipu was biased towards his fellow religionists in Malabar.¹⁵ Historians have been divided in their opinion on the nature of conflicts and Mysore rule based on the colonial records they used. For example, drawing his evidence from the *CMO*, K N Panikkar is of the opinion that since there were major conflicts between the Mappilas and Mysore rulers, it would be incorrect to assume that Mysore sided with the Mappilas against the Nairs.¹⁶ Based on nineteenth and early twentieth century Malabar Gazetteers, Stephen F Dale argues that Tipu Sultan was favouring Mappila Muslims, which contributed towards the ‘Mappila militancy’ of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ His argument is not only that agrarian conflicts could be traced back to the Mysorean revenue policies of the late eighteenth century, but also that the Mysore state was inherently biased

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ It was noted that “About September 1788, after the return of Tipu to Srirangapatana, the inhabitants of the coast, both Nairs and Moppilas manifested a strong inclination to throw off the yoke, and applied to the Raja of Travancore for assistance.” India Office records H/Misc/570.

¹⁵ An incident from Manjeri of South Malabar was noted in *CMO*. It was stated that, in the Malayalam year 960(1784-1785) “After Haidar’s death Athan Moyen Kurikkal rose, laid siege to the temple at Manjeri with a large body of Moplas, encamping on the hill, west of pagoda.” Tipu’s army led by Kurmbata Kurup and assisted by ‘a Karnopad or raja’ fought against Kurikkal who resisted valiantly. But the final defeat of Kurikkal was possible only with the reinforcement troops arrived from Calicut. It was added that Kurikkal was captured and taken to Srirangapatana in 1780 where he died. *Correspondence on Moplah Outrages, 1849-53*, vol, 1, Madras, 1863, Appendix A, p.101.

¹⁶ K.N Panikkar, *Against Lord and the State- Religion and Peasant Uprising in Malabar*, pp.55-56.

¹⁷ Apart from *The JCRM*, Dale does not engage in detail with the eighteenth century sources on Mysore rule. Malabar Gazetteers published in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were his major sources. He also relied on M.M.D.L.T, Mark Wilks and W. Miles. Stephen F Dale, “The Mappilas during Mysorean rule: Agrarian conflict in eighteenth-century Malabar.” *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 6(1), 1976, pp.1-13.

towards the Muhammadans (Mappilas) in revenue policies. Dale suggests that it was not British rule which created the Hindu-Muslim tensions that plagued the Malabar over a century. According to him, the administration and revenue policies of Tipu also had an important role to play. *The JCRM* was the first colonial account to consistently suggest a religious bias in Tipu Sultan's Khudadadi government. In 1788, the Company had hoped that the Mappilas could be their possible allies against Tipu Sultan, but by 1792, the perception gradually changed with the assumption that the Khudadadi Sirkar in general favoured the Mappila Muslims. Attributing a religious motive to the Khudadadi Sirkar administration in Malabar thus became crucial turning point in historiography.

The allegations of Tipu Sultan's overestimation of revenue had a profound impact on historiography.¹⁸ For instance, based on the letters written by colonial officials, M.H. Gopal argued that Tipu Sultan submitted a fabricated account of the revenue to the EIC in 1792.¹⁹ Pamela Nightingale has looked at the Commissioners' role in the pepper trade in Malabar in detail. She argues that the Company's sole purpose till 1800 in Malabar was the monopoly of the spice trade.²⁰ Both Gopal and Nightingale, while using the revenue reports as sources, did not probe into the local contexts of the revenue documentations. Here, *The JCRM* provides an opportunity to see the gradual making of an economic fact, wherein not only economic, but also cultural factors, as well as local caste-power relations influenced the perspective of revenue documents. Thus, one could read *The JCRM*, as an "archive", as well as a "cultural agent of 'fact' production."²¹

¹⁸ Territorial revenue for the English East India Company meant, "Some of the qualities of rent and some of the qualities of a tax on land." See P.J Marshall, *Problems of Empire- Britain and India, 1757-181* vol 4, Routledge, 2018, p.18.

¹⁹ M.H. Gopal, *Tipu Sultan's Mysore- An Economic Study*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1971, pp.1-4.

²⁰ Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806*, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p.126.

²¹ The long discussions between rajas and the commissioners' and assessments of the Company officials, would enable us to see the *The JCRM* as a "cross section of contested knowledge." Laura Stoler has suggested to see the archive as "epistemological experiments rather than sources," and archiving as a process. She includes commission reports as "defining texts in colonialism's culture of documentation." See Stoler, "Colonial

General context and major themes

On 23rd March 1792, the Governor of Bombay appointed two commissioners to Malabar to “inquire into their present state and to establish a system for their future government.”²² The stated objective of the commission was to prevent internal dissensions among the chiefs of Malabar and secure regular administration of justice in order to ensure the stability of revenue and commerce of the Company. The Company wanted to reach an agreement with various local rulers on trade, and thwart any possible challenges to the central authority which could also disrupt the revenue collection and trade. Mister Farmer and Major Dow were subsequently appointed the commissioners.²³ The initial instruction to the commissioners by the General of Bombay, Abercromby, was that “although the power of Tipoo has been reduced it is not annihilated.”²⁴ The fear of Tipu persisted, and the commissioners were appointed to ensure safety of the local chiefs, without requesting further reinforcements for their protection from a possible assault by Tipu Sultan. The Company hoped to prevent further expenditure, though there was a fear of another war with Tipu. The commissioners were asked to maintain internal peace and not exacerbate the existing tensions between the Nairs and the Mappilas.²⁵

The first part of *The JCRM* attempted to show how the history and society of Malabar was different from the rest of India. The history from the earliest times until the advent of Mysore was narrated with specific attention paid to the popular beliefs about Brahmin supremacy and

Archives and the Arts of Governance,” in *Archival Science*, pp.87-88&p.100. Stoler has further suggested that “commissions could reactivate knowledge but also stops in its tracks.” According to her commissions were “primed to distract.” Laura Stoler, *Against the Archival Grain- Thinking through Colonial Ontologies*, Princeton, 2009, p.30.

²² *The JCRM*, p.99.

²³ Ibid. Pamela Nightingale has argued that Malabar turned out to be a lucrative opportunity for the Commissioners’ with their collaboration with the infamous private trader Murdock Brown. Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India, 1784-1806*, pp.101-105.

²⁴ *The JCRM*, p.100.

²⁵ *The JCRM*, p.100. For the Company to procure, what they thought as “due share of its revenue”, it was necessary to “control the opportunities for embezzlement and oppression”. These complexities also demanded more detailed and direct supervision. See Marshall, *Problems of Empire- Britain and India*, p.19.

Parasurama myths.²⁶ *The JCRM* argued that after the early histories, the major political reconfigurations in Malabar occurred after the Mysore invasion –some local *rajās* were dispossessed, and others were exiled to Travancore.²⁷ The unseating and restoration of various kingdoms by Haidar during his first (1766) and second invasions (1774) was described without any hint of religious bias from the Mysore rulers. It also appeared that Haidar was only interested in extracting revenue and getting paid in tribute from the local chieftains. Later historians, such as K.M Panikkar, have depicted Haidar as being greedy in his insistence in extracting money from the local rulers. The Company knew the importance of revenue contributions to demands for military expenditure and the revenue structure, but in the commissioner narrative such attributions were absent, markedly different from how the same text describes Tipu’s policies later.²⁸ The Treaty of Srirangapatana of 1792 assured the Company of sovereign rights over the territory of Malabar. The Company had no intention of supporting the independence of the Malabar *rajās*, who would not have been able to continue as independent rulers in any case. But the commissioners were advised to use “mild language” with the chiefs and to claim “tribute for protection as implied in treaties.”²⁹

The important *rajās* with whom the EIC dealt, in the beginning, included the *rajās* of Kadattanad, Kottayam, Chirakkal, and the Zamorin. The *rajās* of Malabar were initially not willing to accept the new dominance, but the Company was successful in gradually acquiring political superiority and co-opting the *rajās* only as subordinates and not allies.³⁰ In other

²⁶ Commissioners noted that “It will not be entirely superfluous to point out that Pures Ram, one of their deities, is by them believed to have many years ago caused the sea to retire from the Sukheen range of mountains.” *The JCRM*, p.18. As we see later, William Logan followed the similar structure of narrative in explaining Malabar history. His treatment was much detailed while following the same structure and chronology.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.29-32. It was noted that before proceeding to Travancore many of the *Rajās* found refuge in the English East Company Factory of Tellichery. *Ibid.*, p.32.

²⁸ *The JCRM* did say that with Malabar conquest, Haidar had ambitions of becoming “the master of country at large.” *Ibid.*, p.30.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.101.

³⁰ The Chirakkal Raja while surrendering revenue and political rights to the Company said that he would prefer and “English resident to a native Dewan” who would reside with him “to inquire into any complaints of

words, the Company was successful where Tipu Sultan had failed. The Company rewarded those who supported them in the wars against Tipu with pensions while denying it to those whom they considered the allies of Tipu. In one instance a raja (*Bungee Raja*- no further details were given) was denied the pension since the Company considered his participation in the fight against Tipu only in the final years of war, and his case was dismissed even though he was a prisoner of Tipu.³¹

The presumed dishonesty of their prospective allies, or the rajas and their officers, was a major preoccupation of the commission in its early days. *The JCRM* expressed its dissatisfaction with the treatment of the Mappilas by the Zamorin family after the defeat of Tipu, and suggested that the rajas should follow a more conciliatory approach towards them. The committee was at pains to portray itself as maintaining the peace between the Mappilas and the Nairs/other Hindu rajas, even in instances where conflict may have preceded Tipu's rule.³²

The Mappila bandits or 'jungle Mappilas'— among whom were Unni Mootta Moosa and Athan Gurukkal – with their followers were seen as another cause of panic after the defeat of Tipu.³³ For example, the Zamorin, while giving cold shoulder to the commissioners who had asked for a meeting at Calicut, said he was fearful of the Mappila bandits who could attack him on the way.³⁴ Apart from the obvious question of the anarchy which may have prevailed in Malabar between the end of Mysore rule and the establishment of Company rule, fear of Mappila bandits, contributed to the already existing fear of the Mysore forces and fear of Tipu's reentry with help from the Mappilas, among the rajas of Malabar.

oppression." The growing internal feuds and complaints against the rajas (mostly by Mappila peasants) gave a leverage to the Company in settlements with the rajas. *Ibid.*, pp.101-103.

³¹ *Ibid.*,p.105

³² *Ibid.*,pp.105-106.

³³ Santosh Abraham has argued that the jungle Mappilas were a category constructed within the new legal system in early British Malabar. See Santosh Abaraham, "Constructing the" Extraordinary Criminals": Mappila Muslims and Legal Encounters in Early British Colonial Malabar." *Journal of World History*, 2014, pp.373-395.

³⁴ *The JCRM.*, pp.108-109.

The presence of “hill Mappilas” as a menace to law and order was also mentioned while redrawing settlements with the local landlords in the report. *The JCRM* feared that the Mappila peasants would not welcome the restoration of the Zamorin, and the collection of revenue would not be smooth. In the negotiations that followed, the Zamorin was of the opinion that Tipu’s revenue estimation was too high for his country to bear, adding that “according to the ancient customs of Malabar, the Nayars (sic) held their lands free, paying no revenue to anyone.” The Zamorin and the rajas expected that they would enjoy freedom from taxation under the British rule.³⁵ The Zamorin explained the reasons for low revenue collection as the impoverished state of his country, which was the result of Tipu’s violence and Mappila oppression and plunder.³⁶ It was of great concern to the new masters that Tipu could not realize the actual revenue he estimated.

Apart from the rajas, another important discussion concerned the settlement with Cannanore Beeby (who was the ruler of Arakkal kingdom the only Muslim Kingdom in eighteenth century Malabar, who shared some blame for the Mysore (mis)rule in colonial records). She was a close ally of Tipu, strengthened by the marriage of her daughter with Tipu Sultan’s young son Abdul Khalikh. The Beeby complained to the Company that she could not meet the revenue demands of the Company as well, since the “Mohammaden government destroyed her of the three most productive islands of lacdives (sic) in the southern part.”³⁷ Tipu emerged as the reference point in later agreements between the rajas and the Company. His period of rule became a critical marker to distinguish whether a Talook was under a particular raja or the Zamorin’s custody.

The commissioners’ report was marked by several features. The return, largely of landlords from exile in Travancore, was a continuing preoccupation of the report. Those who were not

³⁵ Ibid, p.128.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., p.142&p.146.

exiled, went to the woods to organize a rebellion against Tipu. One of such rajas, the ' *raja of ruvee warma* ' or Ravi Varma – shown as an enemy of Tipu and Mysore in Malayalam documents noted in previous chapter – was part of the Zamorin family. The joint commission found a contingent with Ravi Varma that was formerly of Tipu's Malabar army which also included Mappilas. There were further surprises to the Company, which went against the general tone of the narrative of intense animosity between Nairs and Mappilas.³⁸

Tipu's assessment of revenue in the Cochin regions was also seriously doubted. The commissioners wrote to the Bengal government about the mismatch between Tipu's assessments, which they found as three times higher than the actual revenue. This assessment must have been crucial to the earlier treaty with Mysore, and in turn could have prompted *The JCRM* to look at a subsequent correspondence with Tipu on this matter.³⁹ Tipu assertively replied to the EIC government that the places where the revenue mismatch occurred belonged to the Cochin Raja, and were later forcibly acquired by the raja of Travancore. One could see in Tipu's statement his continuing displeasure with the Travancore state, while supporting his former ally, the Raja of Cochin. Tipu reiterated his assessment of revenue as accurate and said the English benefited from the treaty more than they admitted.⁴⁰

The JCRM suggested that Tipu was always ambitious about conquering Travancore.⁴¹ It also discussed the negotiation between the Raja of Cochin and the Travancore Diwan, which included the discussion of pleas by these two kingdoms concerning the Taluks in Cochin, which were formerly occupied by Mysore. Following the Mysore invasion, the agricultural

³⁸ Such as Nairs and Mappilas were found to be collaborating to build roads to Coimbatore from the southern parts of Malabar. See *Ibid.*, p. 265.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.157- 158. In this correspondence, as quoted in *The JCRM*, Tipu said the Cochin country was dependent on his Sirkar.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.159.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*,p.56.

output in Malabar also declined.⁴² It was supplemented with the argument that commerce or trade was declined since Haidar's conquest. "The Mysore administration imposed heavy inland duties," which, in the commissioners' view, discouraged trade. The Company also observed that the Malabar was dependent on Mysore for rice supply ("a large sum of money is sent to Tipoo's country for rice").⁴³

Further discussion of the Palghat region, on the contrary, mentioned that the Coimbatore part of Tipu's dominion was dependent on Palghat for rice and proposed for a commercial treaty with the Sultan. Tipu maintained a number of elephants which were used for the timber trade. *The JCRM* noted that in the existing deteriorated state of timber trade, the Company was unable to acquire any revenue from timber trade due to the lack of elephants. Tipu Sultan's monopoly over timber trade had a "discouraging effect," which resulted in a price rise. ⁴⁴Apart from timber, tobacco, black pepper and coconut, the Company's overall assumption was that Tipu's revenue and commercial policies were flawed. They substantiated the mismatch between estimation and actual revenue, by saying that Tipu's revenue records were "pretentious" of generating high revenue and created a "fallacy of funds."⁴⁵The landlord or *Janmis* were "long dispossessed by Moppilas"⁴⁶, however, it is important to note that *The JCRM* was not unequivocal in mentioning who dispossessed the landlords, Tipu, or the Mappilas. While being critical of Tipu's revenue policies, one can see that there were continuities in settlements made with the southern and northern parts of Malabar, by Mysore officers such as Arshad Beg Khan and Ananat Row respectively, and the policies of the EIC.⁴⁷

⁴² Ibid., p.313.

⁴³ Ibid.,p.337&p.343.

⁴⁴ Ibid.,p.358.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp.364-365.

⁴⁶ Ibi.,p.366.

⁴⁷ Ibid,pp.366-368.

‘Helpless Brahmins’ and early converted Nairs

While *The JCRM* acknowledged the assistance the commissioners received from the Brahmin officials of Tipu, its perception of Mappilas and the previous government reflected different assessments. Apart from the Nairs and the Mappilas, there were also brief discussions of Brahmins and Christians and how they were treated in general by the Khudadadi government. The Brahmins were depicted as helpless and poor. *The JCRM* requested Mr. Farmer (one of the commissioners) to divert funds to these Brahmins for their welfare.⁴⁸

The JCRM mentions Hyat Sahib –a ‘soubedhar or faujidar’, a “Nambyar or Nayar *chela*” who was enlisted to the Mysore army by Haidar.⁴⁹ Nambyar is a sub-caste of Nairs in North Kerala, while the term *chela* is often mentioned for circumcision or conversion to Islam.⁵⁰ At this point, it is possible to assume that the issue of conversion-*chela* had gained currency before Tipu Sultan. In other words, the Nair conversion to Islam may have been part of an ongoing process even before the alleged drum beats of conversions attributed to Tipu. One could assume that a change of religion was some form of enlisting into the Mysore army. However, it is important to add that the meaning of conversion was different from the

⁴⁸ Ibid,p.371. But one community who were seemingly protected in the narrative by Mysore were the Christians of Calicut. For example, the Padre of Roman Catholic church was granted protection. It was noted that they were given “privilege to govern and administer justice over those of his sect” but Haidar not only confirmed this but also “granted certain ready money and other allowances to the padre and church.” This was seen as a special privilege by *The JCRM*, which they recommended to be abolished. “The general rule established in the judicial regulation should also be extended in favor of Christians whether Catholic or Nestorians”, Mr. Farmer’s report was quoted in *The JCRM*. Ibid,pp.394-395.

⁴⁹ Hyat Saheb “risen from a Nambyar or Nayar Chela and servant of Haidar to be one of his foujedars (troop commander)”, noted in *The JCRM*. Ibid.,p.33.

⁵⁰ However, Logan mentions both Nambyar and Nair castes separately in his political history of North Malabar. William Logan, *Malabar* Vol 1. Government Press, Madras, 1951, p. 343. The fourth chapter deals with the memory of Hyath Sahib/Ayaz Khan’s in Malabar along with the changing meaning of *chela* in the Malayalam popular. A similar example could be Syed Muhammad Reza Khan (d.1791) from early Colonial Bengal. The disgraced colonial official was later acquitted of the corruption charges put against him. However, in the popular he continued to be vilified. Guha says the prejudice against him “was immortalized by Bakimchandra Chatterjee’s powerful and unfair indictment in Ananthmath, it was only the charge sheet which stuck in popular memory.” Guha “ Graft, Greed, and Perfidy,” in Partha Chatterjee ed, *Ranjit Guha- The Small Voice of History, Collected Essays*, Permanent Black,2012,p.118.Similarly, Ayaz Khan has received both negative and positive portrayals in popular memory based on colonial documents and narratives about him.

contemporary meaning in the eighteenth century, similar to the case of communitarian and religious identities.

Hyat Sahib figures prominently in the history of Khudadadi Sirkar. William Logan in his collection of treaties and engagements on Malabar, described Hyat Sahib in the following words “Hyat Sahib was originally a Nambiyar of Chirakkal who having embraced the Muslim faith, became a servant of Hyder Ali, and rose to be one of his Faouzadars and afterward governor of Bednur, but having in 1783 rebelled against Tippu he, as well as the Chirakkal Raja, took refuge in the Tellichery Settlement.”⁵¹ Logan added that the Joint commissioners found one of the documents produced by Hyat Sahib and Chirakkal Raja (both their names often occur in the discussion for a new settlement of Malabar) for claiming their reinstatement to be invalid. Later Hyatt Sahab became one of the most prominent converts of Mysore rule in Malabar, and the blue-eyed boy of Haidar in colonial narratives, but one needs to reflect on the nature of the conversion. There was a remarkable ease with which Hyat Sahab could ally with Chirakkal Raja after the Mysore withdrawal from Malabar, whereas other converted men reportedly lost caste status or were boycotted. Thus one can argue that while there is little evidence for mass conversion in specific cases, in the instance of figures such as Hayat Sahib and Krishna Menon (another converted official mentioned in *Vellayude Charithram*), there was a strong wave of individual and voluntary conversions during Haidar’s time, in the hope of acquiring more power by joining the Mysore army.⁵²

From Haidar to Tipu

According to *The JCRM*, there was a difference between Tipu’s and Haidar’s reign. For instance, the Mysore government in the Company records was continuously mentioned as

⁵¹ Logan, *A collection of Treaties, Engagements, and other papers of Importance*, pp. 81-82.

⁵² See the first chapter of this dissertation.

“Tipoo’s government” while Haidar’s expeditions and invasions were listed separately.⁵³ Haidar was invited and encouraged by ‘the Mappila chieftain of Cannanore’ Ali Raja.⁵⁴ The *JCRM* also provided details of Haidar’s relations with the French and the Dutch in Malabar and noted that Haidar’s relations with the *Arakkal* kingdom (then the only Muslim Kingdom on the southwest coast) were far from smooth and he transferred the revenue rights previously enjoyed by the *Arakkal*, to them.⁵⁵ The report suggested that Mysore’s initial hostility towards Muslim Kingdoms was akin to his attitude towards the other rulers of Malabar. *The JCRM* further mentioned the collaboration of the EIC factory, located at Tellichery, with local chieftains who were upset with the Mysore rule, which led to the frequent eruption of rebellions against Mysore.⁵⁶ The rebellion against the Mysore rule was never uniform, as evidenced by some Rajas of Chirakkal and Palakkad collaborating with the Mysore. *The JCRM* also mentioned that that the Company’s settlement at Tellichery provided asylum to the refugees of the second Mysore invasion against the “Mohammadan conquerors.”⁵⁷ Haidar responded by demanding that the rebels/refugees be handed over to him. The tussle between Mysore and the rebels (largely Nair chieftains) continued, and the policies of the Tellichery factory remained supporting the rebels.⁵⁸ One could argue that the EIC, in this instance, saw themselves as protectors of the Malabar kingdoms’ feudal order against the Mysorean aggression.

However, there was a change of tone when it came to distinguishing Tipu from Haidar. Tipu imposed more taxes upon the local chieftains, which had a huge impact on the relations between local states and the EIC. Tipu’s high revenue demands affected the acquisition of an

⁵³ Ibid., p.260.

⁵⁴ *The JCRM*, p.31.

⁵⁵ Haidar was upset with low revenue *Arakkal* could generate from its dominion, *The JCRM* notes. Ibid,p.35.

⁵⁶ Ibid.,pp.40-41.

⁵⁷ In 1779 the members of Kottayam Raja’s family took shelter at Tellichery factory, but the Raja of Chirakkal under the orders of Haidar attacked the Company settlement Ibid.,p.40.

⁵⁸ Ibid.,p.43.

English possession by the raja of Chirakkal, who justified the acquisition as an attempt to fulfill “the great sum he must pay to the Nawab.”⁵⁹ Apart from Haidar, another person who was described in contrast with Tipu Sultan was Haidar’s appointee to administer Malabar, Arshad Begh Khan.⁶⁰ In *The JCRM* one could see the beginnings of a positive portrayal of this significant Mysore official contrasted to the negative image of Tipu Sultan.

Arshad Begh Khan was given charge of the Mysore administration of Malabar in 1783, which signalled a conciliatory approach towards the “natives” of Malabar. *The JCRM* appreciated that the treaties and agreements signed by Khan with the local chieftains “were in equitable and easy terms.”⁶¹ At the same time, Khan also imposed levies on the local chieftains for fighting against Tipu.⁶² *The JCRM* notes, during Arshad Begh Khan’s time, the Mysore government was able to conquer the southern parts of Malabar as well. This part had not got much administrative attention after Haidar’s “last permanent conquest” (1774-5). The colonial observation about this hotbed of later agrarian conflict is worth noting, since the complaint of neglect could also have meant lower revenue turnout which later led the EIC to undertake more aggressive measures.⁶³ When recounting the state of southern side Malabar which was described as “unquiet”, the report mentioned that Arshad Beg Khan reduced the “jumma” or rental of these places, and there could be two possible reasons for this reduction – “a desolation” which occurred due to the 10 years of ‘Mohammadan’ misrule, or a “desire to conciliate the natives.” The statistics were provided by someone named “Jennia”, a

⁵⁹ Ibid.,p.57.

⁶⁰ *The JCRM* introduced Arshad Begh Khan as “a native of Carnatic, who had been, after the death of Hyder Ali in the latter and of the year 1782, dispatched by Tippoo Sultan, his son and successor, as General a Foujedar or Commandant and manager of all the civil and revenue concerns of the countries in Malabar, from Nelishur to Cochin, inclusive.”Ibid.,pp.45-46.

⁶¹ Ibid.,p.46.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.,pp.47-49.Ranajit Guha says the English East India Company had “a maniacal drive” for maximum revenue even at the time of distress. While in the eighteenth century Bengal the Zamindars asked for a reduction in revenue was rejected. While the Zamindars of Bengal cited distress caused by flood and famine for law revenue, in Malabar the distress the rajas and the Beebi of Arakkal pointed out were caused by the Mysore conquest. See Ranajit Guha, “ Introduction to the Burdwan District Records,1788-1800”,and Ranajit Guha , “ Report on an investigation of the Gauripur Raj Estate Archives,” in Partha Chatterjee ed, Ranajit Guha- *The Small Voice of History, Collected Essays*, ,p.41&p.93.

“Brahmin of respectable character”, who was previously an employee of Tipu’s government and now an employee of the EIC.⁶⁴ It is important to note the shift in allegiance of former Mysore officers like “Jennia Brahmin”, who became Company officials. Jennia’s account is considered reliable for *The JCRM*, and a point further corroborated by “Neange Pilla’ –a former clerk in Tipu’s government- and ‘now in service of samoory.”⁶⁵ The information in *JCRM* points towards the fact that many elites who formerly collaborated with Mysore, switched sides to support the English; and like Neanga Pilla, some of them become the principal informers for the Company. However, there remained some suspicion of these new collaborators. In Major Dows' report of 1792, which was not included in the final commission report, it was vaguely mentioned that an accountant of a former collector was a “circumcised Nair” with a Mappila name, who took bribes and helped his raja.⁶⁶

Tipu’s relation with local rulers marked by jealousy and greed

After his 1785 meeting with Tipu, the Raja of Chirakkal invaded Randettara, which was under the possession of the Tellichery factory. Therefore, Tipu was held responsible for “the raja’s attack against the English factory” since he had always shown “ill will and jealousy towards the Tellichery settlement.”⁶⁷ Tipu Sultan was, therefore, someone who regarded the treaties as untrustworthy. In short, every territorial aggression by the local chieftains and the Mappila Muslims against the EIC, was seen as the handiwork of Tipu.

Early colonial assessments not only noted that Mysorean agrarian regulations benefited the Mappila peasants, but also observed that Tipu’s policies favoured other classes of Muslims in Malabar. Tipu’s overtures to the Muslim elites of Malabar, the merchants of Tellichery and

⁶⁴ *The JCRM*, p.49.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p.53.

⁶⁶ India Office Records, H/Misc, 585. Ranajit Guha has argued that, for the colonial administrators, the distrust of its local officers were directly proportionate to its ignorance of the agrarian conditions. Guha, “An administrative Blue Print of 1785,” in Partha Chatterjee ed, *The Small Voice of History, Collected Essays*, p.27.

⁶⁷ *The JCRM*, p.36.

the Beeby of Cannanore led to him being charged with instigating the Beeby of Cannanore to persuade the wealthy Mappila merchants of Tellichery to abandon any trade with the Tellichery EIC factory.⁶⁸ This view that Tipu Sultan restricted trade was repeated by historians. Ashin Das Gupta has argued that Tipu destroyed the traditional commerce in Malabar. It is worth noting this view of restrictions over sale of goods to the English was to a large extent shaped by the complaints of the English private traders such as Murdoch Brown.⁶⁹

Tipu even allied with the princes of Zamorin's family against a prominent Mappila rebel ('goorkul mopilla'), and therefore, towards the end of 1786, the English expected a treaty between the enemies, Mysore and the rajas of Malabar.⁷⁰ Arshad Beg Khan's apparent conciliatory approach ostensibly gave hopes to the Rajas about reinstatement. However, what happened in the next two years was 'calamitous' since Tipu visited Malabar between 1788 and 1789.⁷¹ Tipu punished the Mappilas while making the most controversial declaration that he desired to convert the Hindus of Malabar to Islam. This was seen as Tipu's first attempt at a mass conversion of the Hindus of Malabar.

Interestingly, *The JCRM* suggests that Tipu's desire to convert might have been inspired by a hope of peace and quiet in Malabar.⁷² However, except for the heavy levies imposed on the landholding castes by Tipu, there was no direct impact of this call for conversion. At this point, there was no evidence of any violence or discrimination between the Hindu and the Muslim population, according to *The JCRM*.⁷³ Tipu removed Arshad Beg Khan from office and shifted his capital from the age-old Calicut to the riverside centre Farukhia "against the

⁶⁸ *The JCRM*, p.56.

⁶⁹ Das Gupta, *Malabar in the Asian Trade*, pp.113-114.

⁷⁰ "Goorkkul Mopilla" was Athen Moyen Kurikkal, I did mention in the beginning of this chapter with reference to *CMO*. One could see him again in Kirkpatrick's Select Letters in the coming section. *The JCRM*, pp.60-61.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.62.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *The JCRM* noted "It does not appear that his invitation to the Hindoos to embrace Islamism produced any immediate effect, either of conversion on their part, or of direct violence." *Ibid.*

wishes of the inhabitants of Calicut.”⁷⁴ The portrayal of Arshad Begh Khan as a ‘good Mohammadan’ was in contrast with the image of Tipu, who was described as being filled with religious zeal, ill-will, and jealousy throughout the report. The report delineated the troubles that erupted in Malabar after Begh Khan’s attempts at conciliation with the Rajas.

This sudden revolution in that conciliatory state of affairs which Ashed Beg’s(sic.) good intention and endeavors seem to have principally induced, began on a visit that Tippoo made in person into Malabar in April 1783(1786);.....and having summoned all the Rajahs and principal persons to his presence (although one of the former ventured to accept it) he proceeded to make known to the Hindoo part of his Malabar subjects his desire to procure and effect their conversion to his own (the Mohammedan) faith , to which step he appears to have been induced from the motives of Zeal in favour of his own religion, combined with an idea of policy, as conceiving that ,after all the Rajahas and Nayars should have become Mussulmans, the country might enjoy that quiet which he is said to have remarked and regretted, that not even all the lenity(sic.) of Ashed Begh’s administration had been able to ensure.⁷⁵

In other words, the fundamental difference between Tipu and Arshad Begh Khan was not only that Begh Khan was lenient in matters of revenue collection, but was also disinterested in converting the Malabar Hindus. This paved the way for an attribution of Mysore’s religious policies to Tipu’s individual decisions, and this mindset seemed to have influenced Mark Wilks and William Kirkpatrick’s accounts. Pamela Nightingale notes that there were two policies put forward by the Company administration for Malabar. One view was that of the “coercion for the establishment of Company’s authority and institutions”, and the second was the “policy of disinterested administrators and army officers opposed to the use of force

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.63.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

and content with old order and institutions.”⁷⁶ The Commissioners who represented the latter view found themselves and the Company administration as the inheritors of Arshad Begh Khan’s policy of leniency. Tipu’s policy on other hand found favour with the former view of forcefully establishing administration in Malabar. Thus, for the Commissioners’ it was imperative to tarnish the legacy of Tipu, and portray Begh Khan’s efficiency by contrast.

Tipu’s failures

In 1788, Tipu was camping at Coimbatore when he was visited by “Kishen Raja”, next in succession to the Zamorin’s throne.⁷⁷ Tipu offered the raja his kingdom in return for assistance in the conquest of Travancore and Kishen Raja accepted this offer. Nevertheless, things went wrong for Tipu since he ordered the mass conversion of the Hindus of Calicut. This order of mass conversion is described as an abrupt moment in the colonial records. *The JCRM* refers to the “untimely zeal or mistaken policy” of Tipu, in asking the Diwan of Calicut to begin the conversion of the Hindus. The Diwan was first asked to convert the Brahmins to serve as an example to the “inferior castes.” According to the *JCRM*, these Brahmins “were circumcised, and forcibly fed beef, “and they therefore either lost their ‘caste status’ or found refuge with the remaining princes of the Zamorin family. It was further stated that Tipu himself is purported to have conducted “constrained conversions “at the *Kovilakam* of the family of “Parepanad and Tichera Teroopar,” after which Tipu took these rajas to Coimbatore. ⁷⁸*The JCRM* narrated these incidents without supplementing or corroborating the story with any other sources.

(As per the orders of Tipu) Accordingly, many Brahmins were seized in, or about the month of July 1788, and were thus forcibly deprived of their castes, while others

⁷⁶ Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, p.122.

⁷⁷ *The JCRM*, p.71.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

sought for shelter with the Rajahs of the Samoori's family, two or three of whom were within Calicut districts...and the return of the above named victims to his (Tipu's) bigotry some short time thereafter spread considerable alarm.⁷⁹

The case of two individuals who are supposed to have converted is instructive of some elite Nair individual conversions – like in the case of Hyat Sahib – that occurred during the early years of Mysore rule. Yet, in the opinion of the commissioners, these orders of Tipu created widespread panic among the Hindus of Malabar and thirty thousand Brahmin men, along with their wives and families migrated to Travancore.⁸⁰ The *JCRM* cites a conversation that was reported to have taken place between Ravi Varma of the Zamorin Family and 'Terummul Row' ("a person who has experience of 18 years in his service"), where it was mentioned that around thirty thousand Brahmin families fled to Travancore with the former's help⁸¹. One could assume from these accounts that the commissioners were particular about every raja's role in the war against Tipu, which would help them determine the grant of further allowances or reduction of tax under the new administration. The more favourable the stories were, the more the chance of benefits like pension. – There were also some who the commissioners considered had not done enough against Tipu, and were therefore kept out of the new settlement.⁸²

In 1788, the rebellion in Malabar by the Zamorin family and other rajas, aided by some Mappilas, increased the scale of the conflicts. The participation of the Mappilas in the fight against Tipu was recorded with some surprise.⁸³ Tipu requested the famed French officer

⁷⁹ Ibid. ,pp.71-72.

⁸⁰ The number thirty or thirty two thousand is important since this was the first estimation of the exiles recorded in colonial documents, we see in subsequent chapter that similar number was repeated in the histories of Malabar and Travancore till early twentieth century.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² As noted before "Bungee Raja" was denied pension since, according to *The JCRM*, he participated in the war only at the end. Ibid. ,p.105.

⁸³ Ibid.,p,72.

Lally to quell the rebellion in Malabar, and as a result, the rajas retreated.⁸⁴ In January or February 1789, Tipu Sultan followed Lally to Malabar, and the fear of possible conversions increased. *The JCRM* observed that his designs were generally aimed at a complete conversion or extirpation of the whole race of Rajhas, Nairs and other Hindus.⁸⁵ The new Raja of Chiricul, Rama Varma killed himself (or was killed by his close associate under his command) for fear of forcible circumcision by Tipu and his army.⁸⁶ Unlike the discussion of revenue, which were reports after interviewing the native officers, few of the alleged instances of conversions by Tipu Sultan mentioned in the report were seemingly the Company's perception from Tellichery, since some of the reported conversions happened in the vicinity of the Tellichery settlement. For example, an incident from 1789 is described thus.

..when Tippoo passing through the Cartinad districts (where he seized and circumcised many persons) came and remained sometime close in the vicinity of Tellichery, which those within it supposed he meant to attack; it was during this period that many Nayars and other Hindoos were seized on and circumcised, or cut off; so that those who could escape, fled on all sides.⁸⁷

However, in these two long passages where Tipu's attempts of conversion was discussed in most detail, no individual instance of the forcible circumcision or actual conversion was mentioned.⁸⁸ Apart from the actual instance of two rajas, who were 'carried to Coimbatore' by Tipu, the claims of conversion were ambiguous.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp.72-73.

⁸⁵ Ibid.,p.74.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.75.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ The forcible conversion, as we see, was either the East India Company assumption of Tipu's intention or a blanket charge- mostly without specific instances- in colonial documents. The act of compelling the Brahmins to eat beef "forcibly deprived of their castes", noted *The JCRM*. Ibid., p.71.

⁸⁹ Ibid.,p.72.

Following the new panic, an agreement of mutual assistance was reached between the Tellichery English factory and the local chieftains, during Tipu's attack on the Travancore lines in December 1789.⁹⁰ The failure of the attack in 1790 was evident from the return of the Malabar Hindus from Travancore, which in turn created hostility in the northern part of the Malabar region where the Beeby of Cannanor "adhering to Tippoo", instigated the Mappilas who were part of one the Raja's armies, to abandon the armies and "ill-treat the Nairs "in the coast."⁹¹ *The JCRM* clearly attributes the causes of violence between Nairs and Mappilas to the indirect instigation of Tipu Sultan. It can be noted that the reasons for this violence were not agrarian, since Arakkal Beeby was not from southern Malabar where agrarian problems were rife. In April 1790, the Company army marched against Tipu's possessions in Malabar, with the fort of Beeby surrendering to the army without any opposition.⁹² Farukhabad (Tipu's new capital, also known as Farukhia) came under Company rule after Colonel Harvey defeated the Mysore army at the southern part of Malabar, and by 1791 the English domination of Malabar was complete.⁹³ In 1792, the Treaty of Srirangapatana (16th March 1792) brought the entire Malabar under the English East India Company rule.⁹⁴

A reading of *The JCRM* suggests that the establishment of the new British settlement coincided with the return of landlords (apparently from exile, or "from the woods" or hiding) and the beginning of fresh troubles in Malabar.⁹⁵ This tension was long in the making, and it became the basis of understanding of religious communities which in turn influenced the

⁹⁰ Ibid.,p.76.

⁹¹ Ibid.,p.78.

⁹² Ibid.,p.80.

⁹³ Ibid.,p.83.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ The troubles stated in *JCRM*- the revenue of mismatch and difficulty to settle with the rajas- continued to bother the English East India Company even in 1802. Major W. Macloed, principal collector of Malabar and Coimbatore, repeated the findings of *The JCRM*. Report on Malabar by Major Macleod, 18, June, 1802. EUR/MSS/Mackenzie collection (General), pp.147-164. In the report on Malabar in 1801 by John Spencer, John Smee and Major Alexandar Walker went on repeat the history of Malabar as told by *The JCRM*. For the 1801 revenue assessments, see EUR/MSS/Mackenzie General, Volume 49& 50.

policies the Company implemented. I would now briefly discuss William Kirkpatrick's *Select Letters of Tipu Sultan*, where he has provided detailed annotations of most of Tipu Sultan's correspondences. I attempt to analyse how Kirkpatrick interprets Tipu's rule in Malabar, and understand the continuities and shifts in the colonial perception a decade after the commissioners' report and the ultimate fall of Srirangapatana.

'Tyrant' Tipu in Kirkpatrick.

Ifthikar A. Khan considers *Select Letters* compiled by English official William Kirkpatrick as a document "translated, with much abridgment and error but some useful explanations."⁹⁶ Kirkpatrick was keenly interested in collecting and preserving state records of Mysore for public use. His *Select Letters*, Khan suggests, "is just a small fragment of the state papers of Mysore", yet it remains one of the major sources on Tipu Sultan for historians, and therefore, demands a closer examination. For example, Mohibbul Hasan argues that "Kirkpatrick and Wilks collaborated in their campaign of vilifying Sultan", and rightly suggests that subsequent historians blindly accepted the accounts of Kirkpatrick and Wilks.⁹⁷ In this section, I look closely at Kirkpatrick with a focus on his interpretations of Tipu's letter to Malabar and the origins of a "ferociously bigoted" Tipu Sultan.

In his compilation, Kirkpatrick tends to malign Tipu and argue that Haidar was far better than Tipu, producing a binary of a bad son versus a good father, which is repeated by W. Miles after almost half a century.⁹⁸ Kirkpatrick observes

⁹⁶ Ifthikar A. Khan "The Regulation of Tipu Sultan for his State Trading Enterprise." In Irfan Habib, ed , *Resistance and Modernization under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, New Delhi, Tulika,1999.p.148.

⁹⁷ Mohibbul Hasan, *History of Tipu Sultan*,p.368

⁹⁸ "It will be evident to anyone who reads this book, that although Tipu was an able man and a brave soldier, still, that he was much inferior to his father in the characteristic qualities of a great man. Unlike his father he was a bigoted Musalman(sic)," argues W Miles, in the preface to his 1864 translation of *History of Tipu Sultan-Being a continuation of the Neshane Hydari*. Syed Kirmani, *The History of the Reign of Tipu Sultan –Being a continuation of Neshane Hayduri*, Colonel Miles, trans. London-oriental Translation Fund, 1864, pp.xi-xii.

The example of the father (Haidar Ali) was not much calculated to restrain severity or cruelty of the son... That Tipu himself was bamboosed (caned) by order of Hyder, in whose good graces he never appears to have stood very high.⁹⁹

For such arguments, Kirkpatrick referred to Mark Wilks. To substantiate Wilks' argument, Kirkpatrick cited a document found in 1799 and argued that even Haidar considered Tipu as incompetent.¹⁰⁰ The trope of an inefficient and incompetent Tipu was closely followed by the descriptions of Tipu as cruel and bigoted. These are substantiated by further characterizing him as someone who ordered the flogging of people, threatened rebels or disobedient subjects with crucifixion, and sometime even undertook castration of entire village populations, while citing this instance he cites a reference from Colonel Munro.¹⁰¹ Kirkpatrick did not conceal his ideological debts to Mark Wilks and Colonel Munro. The following observation by Kirkpatrick on Tipu, in his preface where he categorically states that he attempted to counter the heroic image attributed to Tipu by some historians, are worth noting.

(Tipu) is here successively and repeatedly delineated , in colours from his own pencil, as the cruel and relentless enemy; the intolerant bigot or furious fanatic; the oppressive and unjust ruler; the harsh and rigid master; the sanguinary tyrant; the perfidious negotiator; the frivolous and capricious innovator; the mean and minute economist.¹⁰²

Kirkpatrick claimed to construct this image of Tipu as an incompetent ruler as well as a "tyrant" from the new archives he discovered, thereby denying any continuity with earlier colonial accounts. Tipu's tyrannical image had obvious continuities with the earliest colonial

⁹⁹ William Kirkpatrick, *Select letters of Tipu Sultan to Various Public Functionaries*, Black, Parry and Kingsbury Book sellers, London, 1811. p.2.

¹⁰⁰ The familiar colonial trope of an incompetent Tipu we do not see much in the colonial record before this interpretation of Kirkpatrick, *Ibid.*,p.xviii

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*p.3.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p, 10.

accounts such as *JCRM*. However, as Michael Soracoe has argued that in the context of English popular perceptions and accounts written by administrators, early archivists, and historians such as Wilks, the construction of Tipu as a tyrant arose from immediate political needs, and not from the archives as Kirkpatrick tried to prove.¹⁰³ Soracoe demonstrates that the emergence of Tipu as tyrant was closely linked to the rise of a new imperial identity. He argues

At its most basic level, the empire was justified to the British public through shifting the burden of culpability for any wrongdoings from unscrupulous British actors, such as the nabobs, onto immoral and savage Indian actors, such as Tipu Sultan. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, Enlightenment approval for the stability of Asian civilizations began to be replaced by a chorus of vilification of Indians for their supposed corruption. It was the immoral and tyrannical actions of Indian merchants and princes who were undermining the Company's rule overseas, not the servants of the Company themselves.¹⁰⁴

Following this, we can see that such value judgments became the staple of colonial writings about the Khudadadi Sirkar. Apart from attributing “sentiments against Christians”, and a religious or sectarian bias against those of another faith to Tipu Sultan, William Kirkpatrick also added that Tipu was jealous of the English and disliked them to the core. In Kirkpatrick’s characterization, Tipu Sultan was also crooked and unprincipled.¹⁰⁵ These are the characterizations that persist in the Malayalam novels and histories written till the late nineteenth century, unlike the precolonial sources which attribute such value judgments to Tipu. As I show in the next chapter, there was an assessment of character among the Travancore historians and novelists in the late nineteenth century in relation to Tipu, which

¹⁰³ Soracoe, *Tyrant! Tipu Sultan and the Reconceptation of British Imperial Identity*, 1780-1800.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p 9.

¹⁰⁵ Kirkpatrick, *Select Letters*, p.123.

traces its colonial origins to Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick's account was invested with a moral charge to dramatize the image of Tipu, which found currency among late nineteenth century historians.

Apart from his portrayal as a ruthless tyrant, Kirkpatrick wanted to prove that Tipu Sultan was a bigot. Kirkpatrick tried to prove with the *Select Letters* that Tipu Sultan had no love for justice or humanity. He identified Tipu Sultan's personal characteristics through terms such as "jealous," "unprincipled," "crooked" and "impetuous."¹⁰⁶ On one of the occasions where Tipu mentions the term 'enemies of faith' the context is misread.¹⁰⁷

Tipu sultan wrote a letter to Shah Alam, then the figurehead of the Mughal dynasty. Tipu used the contemporary Persian vocabulary instead of the ahistorical religious terms used by Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick argued that by 'the enemies of faith', Tipu meant the English and not Nairs, or local Christians.¹⁰⁸ Here Kirkpatrick hints that Tipu was wary of the English interception of the letter, and he would have used a diplomatic language to conceal his real intention. Certainly, Tipu Sultan's correspondence was mostly diplomatic in nature, but without paying attention to the specific context of each letter, it would be erroneous to portray Tipu as a "bigot."

Analyzing Tipu Sultan's letter to Arakkal Beeby, Tipu's ally, and the only Muslim ruler of the southwest coast apart from Mysore, Kirkpatrick observed that Tipu treated her with more distinction and respect in comparison to how Tipu had corresponded with the other Rajas of Malabar.¹⁰⁹ However, this argument of Kirkpatrick falls apart when, in subsequent pages, one finds Tipu very unhappy with the Beeby.¹¹⁰ Again one may see Tipu reprimanding the Beeby

¹⁰⁶ Ibid,p.94&p.29&p.91.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.,p.91.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.,p.93..

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.,p.160.

¹¹⁰Ibid.,pp.216-217.

of Arakkal, and directing her to join ‘Urshud begh Khan’ (Arshad Begh Khan) to inflict “punishment on the Nairs.”¹¹¹ Kirkpatrick's annotations suggest that Tipu’s act was religiously biased, especially when he was asking one of the Muslim kingdoms of Malabar to persecute the Nairs. It is worth noting that Nair rebellions against the Mysore revenue collections were common, therefore a religious to bias to Tipu’s language. It would be more important to note the changes in his language in varying diplomatic as well as political communication. For instance, Tipu Sultan’s letters to the officers of Malabar prompted Kirkpatrick to call him a tyrant. The letter mentioned a case that bears some distant similarity to the two cases of suicide by the Zamorin and the Chirakkal chieftain, mentioned in *The JCRM* that were discussed earlier; Noting the incident on 10th Jaffuri or 30th June of 1785, Tipu writes to the officer of Calicut that:

You write ‘that the villain Goorkul, being wounded had thrown ‘himself, together with his wife and children, into a fire (kindled for the purpose) which had consumed them (all) you add that ‘ Mappilas’ have all taken to flight.’ It is known. You must assemble and keep your men together, and exercising them regularly hold them always in readiness (for service).¹¹²

Towards the end of many such letters, Kirkpatrick added his observations. As an explanation to the above-quoted letter, Kirkpatrick not only found Tipu Sultan a tyrant, but also attributed a “studied indifference” to the “dreadful catastrophe” of suicide in this letter.¹¹³ In another instance from 1786, where Tipu was concerned with the growing instances of robbery in Malabar, and instructed that robbers should not be killed, instead, “let the dogs, both black and white to be regularly dispatched to Srirangapatna.”¹¹⁴ Kirkpatrick reads the term “white

¹¹¹ Ibid.,p.314.

¹¹² Ibid,p.316.

¹¹³ Ibid.,p.316.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.,pp.449- 450.

dogs” to mean Europeans.¹¹⁵ He also adds that it is possible that Tipu may have meant Nazarenes or native Christians as white dogs “though they were as black as any other people in India.”¹¹⁶ However, here Kirkpatrick's findings are obscure at most, since we do not come across any instances of such robbery by “Nazranes” in a “primary discourse” such as that of *JCRM*.

In another letter, we read about Arshad Begh Khan’s love affair. Begh Khan is said have fallen in love with someone who Kirkpatrick thinks was an “improper woman.” Kirkpatrick later explains that the woman was a courtesan. Tipu asked Begh Khan to return to Srirangapatana, to prevent him from losing focus due to his love affair.¹¹⁷ With this concern in mind, Tipu wrote to his officers in Calicut on 27th December 1786, to “abandon your idea of proceeding on a pilgrimage to the holy temple, and apply yourself, according to custom, to the affairs of Sirkar.”¹¹⁸ However, as in the case of most lovers, Arshad Begh Khan also rebelled, and proclaims that he is going for Mecca (for pilgrimage) instead of Srirangapatana. Tipu asked his other officers stationed in Malabar to dissuade Begh Khan from his decision to leave for Mecca, and ask him to stay. Finally the issue was resolved, and Begh Khan was allowed to stay in his post, while the woman was detained and later banished from Calicut.¹¹⁹

The Begh Khan -Tipu conflict was interpreted by Kirkpatrick in several ways –as a sign of Khan’s inefficiency, and Tipu’s lack of trust in Khan, Khan’s lenient approach towards the local rulers, and Khan’s lackadaisical way of collecting revenue. However, *the Select Letters* tell, there were instances beyond the revenue collection and Begh Khan’s closeness to local princes.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.,p.464.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

In a letter dated 31st January 1787, Tipu asked Meer Ibrahim not to have any “design of chastising Moplahs or Nairs” but to focus on revenue collection or other fiscal matters.¹²⁰

Here, Kirkpatrick is silent about Tipu Sultan’s order to his governor not to punish the Nairs or Mappilas, but focus on fiscal issues.

In another letter dated 2nd February 1787, Tipu asked the officers of Calicut to boycott an English merchant stationed there, to dissuade him from staying in Calicut and conducting commercial activities.¹²¹ These two letters show how Tipu actually implemented his commercial and revenue policies. It is evident from the letters that Tipu was less interested in coercion and had an approach of persuasion when it came to love, as well as revenue and commerce.

Some of the tropes added to the construction of “Tyrant Tipu” are “characteristic perfidy” and “barbarity”.¹²² In his letters to his officers of Deccan, one could see Tipu Sultan as asking “to turn his arms against the English.” While Tipu did not identify the English with their name in this letter, Kirkpatrick concludes that “those who forbid the practice of calling to prayers from the minarets” refers to the English.¹²³ Moreover, it is Kirkpatrick’s interpretation that the above term also referred to Christians in general. Kirkpatrick’s justification for this argument is that Muslims generally used this term for Christians.

Tipu’s description of his battle with the English uses some words that could be misinterpreted when decontextualized. For instance, his attack on the Mangalore fort and the battle with the “Nazarenes “ is described in Kirkpatrick’s appendix , where Tipu, while appreciating the valour of his army, said that the “Haidary army served the batteries in such a manner, that ten

¹²⁰ Ibid.,p 471.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.,p.390 & 475.

¹²³ Ibid., p 475.

guns of the fort were dismantled and shattered to pieces, and great number of Nazarenes were sent to hell .”¹²⁴

Kirkpatrick was a friend of Colin Mackenzie, and he adds materials from Mackenzie's collection with his permission.¹²⁵ While the Kirkpatrick project could be identified with that of finding a ‘Tyrant Tipu’, a specific interpretation of letters from Malabar, which served the interests of the Company, is evident in his compilation. Apart from Mark Wilks, to whom Kirkpatrick was very much indebted, his utmost thanks went to John Shakespear of the military institution at Croydon, Surrey as an “able orientalist” for his support in publishing the letters.¹²⁶ Kirkpatrick, with his closeness to these figures and his particular attempt to locate Tipu as a tyrant, reinterpreted Tipu’s letters within the new imperial identity and colonial needs of the Company in the early nineteenth century, for erasing their unacceptable past. For this imperial schema, Malabar became crucial, as evidenced by Kirkpatrick’s interpretations of Tipu’s correspondences with his officers of Malabar.

Kirkpatrick’s position in the imperial schema was similar to that of Robert Orme (d.1801), the official British Historian of Bengal conquest. Partha Chatterjee says that for Orme, most of the Indians were deeply morally deficient. In Orme’s account, like Kirkpatrick, the native political actors were “crafty, devious, and venal.”¹²⁷ However, William Logan, the nineteenth century official chronicler of Malabar, shared more parallels with Orme’s project in Bengal. Chatterjee shows how the narrative frame set by colonial military officers was central to how Orme later placed “the black hole incident” into Imperial history.¹²⁸ Similar to Orme, Logan

¹²⁴ Ibid.,Appendix,p.ix.

¹²⁵ Ibid.,p.xxiii.

¹²⁶ Ibid ,p xxiv.

¹²⁷ Chatterjee, *The Black hole of Empire*, p.45.

¹²⁸ Ibid,p.46.

reaffirmed the colonial histories (or “mythmaking”) of the defenseless natives against a warlike Tipu Sultan.¹²⁹

The conquest in “Secondary discourse”

In 1887, William Logan, then collector of Malabar attempted to write a first comprehensive imperial *History of Malabar*. Robert Travers has argued that in eighteenth century Bengal, the Company officials “were struggling to transform ideologies of conquest into languages of rule.”¹³⁰ For Travers, the idea of ancient Mughal administration was used as a justification for the new empire.¹³¹ One can see a similar ideological struggle in Logan’s work, written towards the end of the nineteenth century. There is also an attempt to justify the British rule which was threatened with the Mappila agrarian outbreaks, best evidenced in narrating the immediate past of English East India Company, that is, the Mysore rule of Malabar.

A gradual shift in discourse from the *JCRM* to the *Malabar Manual* was also a shift “from a history that focused on questions of land, rule and property” to an “anthropology of the peoples and cultures.”¹³² In the district manual prepared by William Logan for Malabar, the history prior to the British conquest is told along with his anthropological focus on people. Nicholas Dirks notes that there were occasions, where “some of the oral performances and traditions turned out their origins to the manuals and Gazetteers that had been prepared for the princely state.”¹³³ However William Logan’s manual was reference for the histories and

¹²⁹ Chatterjee identifies the Black Hole incident (the alleged death of 123 European prisoners under Siraj-u-Daula in 1756) as one of the “founding myths of the empire.” He also demonstrates how the imperial histories depicted Indians as “always under the sway of more warlike peoples.” Ibid,p.48&pp.161-167.

¹³⁰ Robert Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth- Century India- The British Bengal*, Cambridge, 2007, p.98.

¹³¹ Ibid,p.9.

¹³² Nicholas Dirks notes this shift in the case of Colonial archival knowledge in early nineteenth century South India. Nicholas B. Dirks, *Autobiography of an Archive- A Scholar’s Passage to India*, Columbia University Press, 2015,p.40.

¹³³ Ibid., p.58.

memories written subsequently in Malabar, on Mysore rule. In the following section, I will explore the influences that shaped Logan's work.

Logan devoted a substantial section of his *Malabar Manual* to the Mysorean conquest.¹³⁴ Logan began his narrative by citing "a religious conflict" as the cause of the Mysorean conquest.¹³⁵ The alleged "religious conflict" took place between the Kolathiri Raja and the Ali Raja of 'Kannoor.' The conflict between these two kingdoms is interwoven with the history of the mid- eighteenth century North Malabar and the spice trade. Meanwhile, Haidar's success in the neighborhood attracted Ali Raja, the Raja of Arakkal whom Logan, described as "a fellow Muhammadan"; Logan observed that "in the success of a Muhammadan like Hydar Ali, the Ali Raja Cannanore saw hopes of future aggrandizement and settling the long score he had to repay the Kolattiris.'" ¹³⁶ Haidar did not respond to such overtures by his co-religionist. Instead, Haidar entered Malabar to assist the Palaghat Raja against the Zamorin of Calicut, and in 1757, the Mysore army headed by Haidar's brother-in-law Makdhoom Sahib entered Malabar.¹³⁷

Logan goes on to say that there was something else brewing while the Mysorean conquest was imminent.¹³⁸ For whatever reason, the Mappilas in north Malabar were at loggerheads with their Nair rulers. There were tensions and instances of violence reported. Logan, as an

¹³⁴ William Logan, *Malabar* Vol 1. Government Press, Madras, 1951.

¹³⁵ Logan was the first to call the Mysore rule of Malabar as "Mysorean conquest." I use either Mysorean conquest or Mysore conquest of Malabar. While in the previous chapter we have seen that the Tharoor Swaroopam's and the Zamorin's relations with Haidar finally resulted in the Mysorean conquest in 1766, for Logan this was only a minor event. For Logan the primary context of Mysore invasion was North Malabar conflicts, for which he attributed a religious motive. The English East India Company intelligence received in Tellichery are Logan's source in this part. Logan, *Malabar*, p.400. M.T Ansari by focusing on Logan's account of the Mappila outbreaks of the nineteenth century has argued that Logan's was an "orientalist project" where his "description of events is structured around race/ religion/caste dominations of the actors." M.T. Ansari, "Refiguring the Fanatic: Malabar, 1836 to 1922." in Ajay Skaria, Shail Mayaram, M.S.S Pandian eds. *Muslims, Dalits and the Fabrications of History- Subaltern Studies*, Vol 12, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2005, pp.41-42.

¹³⁶ Logan, *Malabar*, p.400.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.402.

¹³⁸ The English East India Company at this point (by 1764) believed that Haidar's invasion of Malabar was only a 'question of time.' *Ibid.*, p.403.

official involved with the Mappila Outrages Act in the agrarian region or Southern Taluks of Malabar, particularly invested in portraying the eighteenth century Mappilas as “violent aggressors.” Outside the agrarian region, in North Malabar, Logan reported an eighteenth century incident from the Tellichery factory records he consulted, where two Mappilas entered a church at Dharmapattanam in 1764, and killed the priest.¹³⁹ Here, all instances of violence against Europeans were portrayed as rising out of an irreconcilable Hindu-Muslim tension. There was an instance of a Mappila who fought with a Nair (“picked a quarrel”) and was shot dead by the former’s Tiyya guard. Curiously, the Mappila’s dead body was thrown out into the sea to prevent it from being venerated (as Logan put it, to prevent the body from being “worshipped as saints for killing the Christians”).¹⁴⁰ Acts of violence against Europeans in the eighteenth century were taken as instances of “Mappila outrage.” These instances were geographically and chronologically removed from the kind of problems Logan faced in the late nineteenth century south Malabar, when an acute agrarian crisis began to be officially called the “Mappila outrages.” One could argue that Logan was more influenced by the concerns of the present which he attributed to the past. Besides, the fear of a “dead Mappila body” was often repeated in the context of the agrarian troubles throughout the nineteenth century south Malabar. Twentieth century ethnographers, like Edgar Thurston (1906) have argued these tendencies and fear of the Mappila dead body where he mentioned that the Mappila rebels who were killed by the British army were venerated as Sufi saints.¹⁴¹ However, here again in Logan one can see that a projection of such worries, fears, and colonial anxieties continued into the late nineteenth century. Following this, one could argue that *Malabar Manual* was very much a contemporary text more determined by present needs,

¹³⁹ Ibid.,p.403.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Edgar Thurston notes that “ a notorious Mappila dacoit, who was shot by the police a few years ago, and whom his co-religionists tried to make a saint, was at the time of his death wearing five copper and silver mantram cylinders round his waist.”, Edgar Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, Asia Educational Services, in 1906(1989 reprint),p.268.

best evidenced in attributing the terminologies of the contemporary agrarian conflicts to the past conflicts of non-agrarian origins.

The native rajas and historians who closely echoed their narratives have cited many, including the economic reasons as the cause of Mysore invasion, however, the English perspective on the reasons of Mysore attacked could be seen in Logan. It was through Anant Row that Haidar expressed his desire to invade Malabar after he settled scores with the Marathas. According to Logan, long before Haidar actually attacked Malabar, the rulers, English factors, and native rajas full anticipated the imminent attack. When Logan described the subsequent events associated with the ‘Mysore invasion,’ he insisted that the Mappilas supported the Mysore army. For example, in the battle between Haidar and Kottayam Raja in 1766, the Mappilas of Kottayam deserted the Raja and assisted the ‘invaders.’¹⁴²

Apart from the irony of a nineteenth-century British official describing the Mysore army’s movement from one region to another as invasion, and the army as ‘invaders,’ there are other concerns that the text reveals. The first significant battle between Malabar and Mysore took place at one of the heartlands of north Malabar, the Kadathanadu, where the resistance is often retold in popular stories.¹⁴³ Here Logan resorts to and quotes from M.M.D.L.T a work which he ascribes to a “Mogul officer”. William Logan, unlike Kirkpatrick, is preoccupied with a nineteenth-century positivist precision. He argues that M.M.D.L.T’s work may not be “very accurate” and calling its descriptions “picturesque.”¹⁴⁴ With this disclaimer, Logan quotes the battle scene verbatim from M.M.D.L.T and when M.M.D.L.T’s work does not suffice, Logan quotes from Wilks to follow up the movement of Mysore army after the battle

¹⁴² Logan, *Malabar*, p. 406.

¹⁴³ The fourth chapter of this dissertation discusses a twentieth century Malayalam novel which based on Logan’s account of the events at Kadathanadu.

¹⁴⁴ Logan, *Malabar*, p.407. I discuss M.M.D.L.T’s (M. de La Tour) *The History of Hyder Shah: Alias Hyder Ali Khan Bahadur, and of His Son, Tippoo Sultaun*, and Mark Wilks’ *Historical sketches of the South Indian history, from the earliest times to the last Muhammadan dynasty*. I use both the texts throughout this dissertation.

of Kadathanadu.¹⁴⁵ As we noted in the previous chapter, one of the contested parts of the Mysore invasion was an attack by the Mysore army on Kozhikode, the capital of the Zamorin, and the events that unfolded thereafter. Historians continue to debate the reasons for the Zamorin's suicide after the attack. Logan cites two accounts, one by Mark Wilks and the other by Jonathan Duncan. Logan agrees that there are many versions of this event.¹⁴⁶ While this event remained one of the most controversial aspects of the eighteenth century, historians debate over whether Zamorin committed suicide due to Haidar's compulsion.

Later, Logan moves to the account of the subsequent unrests that occurred in Malabar (reportedly the by the rulers who lost power due to the Mysore advance), led by the Kottayam and Kadathanad Nairs. However, the "revolt" was widespread in South Malabar, argues Logan. The enemies of Mysore were successful in preventing messengers from reaching Haidar's army in Coimbatore with the information of the unrest. The Mysore army remained unaware of enemy advances till they progressed significantly towards Calicut.¹⁴⁷ Here the account of M.M.D.L.T, the source Logan described as "picturesque" comes to his rescue.¹⁴⁸ The Mysore army's movement has been described as that of 'burn and pillage', and left in its wake were 'ruins where houses had formerly stood.'¹⁴⁹ In one such battle in Ponnani, Haidar lost many of his army men, and had to resort to a ruthless counter-attack by his French contingent. As a result, many fruit trees were cut down, cattle destroyed, and temples burned, notes Logan, citing M.M.D.L.T.¹⁵⁰ Logan's short-circuited attempt at merely compiling two early colonial documents on Haidar's attack is conspicuously different from his detailed treatment of agrarian troubles of the nineteenth century. Logan relies on a single source to buttress all violent instances, including that of conversion to 'Muhammadan religion' meted

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.,p.407.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.,p.408.

¹⁴⁷ Logan, *Malabar*, p.420.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.,p.407.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.,p.411.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.,p.413.

out to the Nairs. Logan says that Tipu separated the military and the civil authority of the province in 1784, which was an unwise step.¹⁵¹ The civil authority was entrusted with Arshad Begh Khan, who was “a Musalman of rare talents, humanity and integrity.”¹⁵² However, the civil governance and relations with Malabar chieftains broke down due to the looming threat of rebellions.¹⁵³ “Foreseeing the evil consequences”, Arshad Begh Khan resigned from his post in 1786, and sought Haidar’s permission to visit Mecca.¹⁵⁴ This account is markedly different from the love affair and Tipu’s reprimand in Kirkpatrick’s *Select Letters*. In other words, while in Kirkpatrick’s characterisation, Arshad Begh Khan was a fragile and failed lover; in Logan’s account, he was only a failed civil administrator. This fact underlines that the English of the contemporary period were unaware of the internal reasons for Tipu’s relations with his officers and local chiefs. One could see Logan’s finding of Arshad Begh Khan’s travel as only colonial speculation reflected in the English East India Company archive, which was not aware of the correspondence between Tipu and his officials.

Concerned with rebellions and reports on Arshad Begh Khan, Tipu set out to visit Calicut in 1788. This visit was associated with the most controversial measures, including his infamous threat of “conversion,” and shifting of the capital. Until 1788, official documents of the Company do not voice anxieties or cultural fears about Tipu or Mysore. The year 1788 marks a turning point since the Company was quite unaware of the actual purpose of Tipu’s visit. As Logan admits, there were many alarming rumors in circulation at this time.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Logan, Malabar, p.445.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Logan says that “various alarming rumours” were spread regarding Tipu’s real intentions in 1788. Ibid.,p.446. As we noted, Michael Soracoe asserts that it is only by 1788 that the image of Tipu as tyrant is established in relation to hues and cries over Tipu’s treatment of English prisoners. However in Logan one could see the nineteenth century continuities of such tropes of a tyrant. Soracoe based his arguments from English newspapers and his arguments were limited to the English public perception in the eighteenth century. He

Logan's account seems to affirm that reading since we find "fears" and "fresh alarms" in the Company records from Malabar.

By 1788, colonial anxieties about Tipu Sultan were out in the open.¹⁵⁶ It became clear that the English factory of Tellchery had played a role in spreading the fear that Tipu's real intention was to convert Nairs; their argument being based on the intelligence the factory received. One can assume that the panic, in turn, helped the English since it thwarted talks of collaborations between the rajas and Tipu. Tipu's attempts at shifting the capital from Calicut and building a new fort were described in great detail. Tipu's plan to build a new city on the banks of the river Chaliyar where it discharged into the Arabian Sea was described in the following words

The monsoon was on him before his journey was completed and he arrogantly said that he would order the clouds to cease discharging the waters till he should have passed, but the rains showed no respect to him, and his army suffered the greatest hardship on their march.¹⁵⁷

Tipu's arrogance did not spare even the monsoon clouds. Logan attributed land disputes in 18th century between the raja of Chirakkal and the English East India Company in North Malabar to Tipu's interference, by saying "Tipu was the real aggressor."¹⁵⁸

The fear of Tipu was manifest when the Company wished to send messages from their Anjengo settlement to Madras and Calcutta.¹⁵⁹ While such messages were traditionally "safely entrusted to Brahmins who from their sanctity of caste, had hitherto been permitted to go without hindrance," this Brahmin carrier refused to take the message leading the

quotes Chronicle and General Advertiser (Calcutta, India) 2 October 1788, Issue 141, to demonstrate how British newspapers called for punishing the 'Mysore Tyrant.' Soracoe, *Tyrant Tipu*, p.167.

¹⁵⁶ Logan, *Malabar*, p. 450.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p.446.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.448.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Tellichery factors to conclude that “Brahmin messengers are no longer safe.”¹⁶⁰ The factory records mentioned that Tipu had issued orders for all the coastal Brahmins to be seized and sent to Srirangapatana. Similarly, a correspondence from the Calicut quoted in Logan states that “200 Brahmins had been seized and confined, made Musalman and forced to eat beef and other things contrary to their caste.”¹⁶¹ Logan suggests that the native rajas of Kottayam and Kadathanad also grew suspicious of Tipu and demanded that the English “take the Brahmins, the poor and whole kingdom under their protection.”¹⁶² The trope of the helpless and poor Brahmin was reinforced with the observations of the commissioners. In these accounts, it was not only the Brahmins who faced alleged oppression, but other ‘Kshatriya’ chiefs or rajas were also converted, and some of them taken to Coimbatore and circumcised. The colonial consensus at this point was that all converts were previously high caste groups.

The ‘Kshatriya’ conversion could be seen in the context of a strong cultural taboo against travelling. Therefore, if anyone from the little royal families went to Coimbatore, on their return they would have lost their caste status anyway. Former allies such as Ravi Varma of the Zamorin’s family, who was given a *jagir* by Tipu, now fought against Tipu, Tipu’s French ally Lally and Mir Ali Khan both drove Ravi Varma and his associates out.¹⁶³ It is at this moment, just like in *The JCRM*, that there is a reference to thirty thousand Brahmins fleeing from Malabar to Travancore along with their families.¹⁶⁴ Earlier Arshad Begh Khan was in active communication with the English on Tipu’s possible visit to Malabar, but we find lesser communication, and more anxieties and worries after 1788. Tipu’s ambition in Malabar now changed to reconciliation with his rebel subjects, though Logan deduced that

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.449.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Logan,*Malabar*,p.449-450.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.,p.449.

this only meant reconciliation with the Mappillas and other “fellow religionists.”¹⁶⁵ Logan noted that by 1789, Lally had got orders to “surround and expatriate the whole race of Nayers from Cotiote (Kottayam) to Palakkatcherry (Palakkad).”¹⁶⁶ He also added that the Mappilas of south Malabar were in open rebellion against Tipu.¹⁶⁷ However, Logan as well as the English East India Company factors were certain that by 1789, the Nairs were Tipu’s main target, even though most of the castes were rebelling. Logan did not cite why the Nairs were the chosen targets of Tipu, and why the Nairs of Kuttipuram Kovilakam of North Malabar were punished with circumcision and change of religion ending with consuming beef.¹⁶⁸ In other words, while the English East India Company was puzzled over Tipu’s real intention in 1788, by 1789 there was a radical shift where they were certain that Tipu’s target was the Nairs. Logan also quoted one of the important declarations made by Tipu in Malabar from Wilks’ work, in which Tipu asked the rebelling Nairs to become good people and be like the “rest of the mankind” by giving up polygamy.¹⁶⁹ Here, the indigenous concepts of conversion, loss of caste, and resentment towards the reform in marital practices were appropriated by the colonial state for a new narrative of religious conflict. However, Logan’s narrative was only a culmination of the colonial perspective on Mysore rule in Malabar. To situate Logan’s “history of Mysore rule” in the series of archival documents produced by colonial administrators in early British Malabar, one needs to understand Ranajit Guha’s essay on the “prose of counter-insurgency”.¹⁷⁰

Ranajit Guha says that the colonial archive is composed of a primary, secondary, and tertiary discourses. While the primary archive “is almost without exception official in character” and

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.,p.450.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.,p.451.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.,p.,450.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.,p.451.

¹⁶⁹ The declaration noted polygamy as a “sinful” practice. Wilks, picked up this instance from the memoirs of *Tipu Sulthanu Tharikh*, whose authenticity was in doubt. I discuss the Persian memoirs of Tipu in the final chapter of this dissertation. See Wilks, *Historical Sketches* vol 2, pp.313-314. Logan, *Malabar*, p.452.

¹⁷⁰ Guha, “The prose of counter-insurgency.” pp.336-371.

has its origin not only in “bureaucrats, soldiers and sleuths” who are officially associated with the raj, but also those who constitute a “symbiotic” relation with the raj.¹⁷¹ Guha’s examples for the latter are “planters, missionaries, traders and technicians among the whites, and landlords and moneylenders among the natives.”¹⁷² The secondary discourse, on the other hand, bases itself on the primary but transforms it from the “embryo” to the “infant” in the archive.¹⁷³ Mark Wilks promises us what Guha says lies between the “intersections of colonialism and historiography.”¹⁷⁴ The fundamental difference between the primary and the secondary is that the secondary is intended for public consumption while the primary is for administrative purposes.

One could look at the category ‘native’ closely here. Apart from one instance in *The JCRM* where the ryots are unhappy with the increasing tax pressure from the post-Mysore rule, there is hardly any voice of the ryot since the landlord or *Janmies*, the rajas, and local chieftains are informants throughout the text. There are also instances of the former officials of the Mysore government testifying before the commissioners, nearly all of whom are from the upper echelons of society. If the peasant is figured at all in *The JCRM*, it is in mentions of the Mappilas but only in the case of south Malabar. It is acknowledged that the Mappila peasants were mistreated or oppressed by the Nair Janmis or rajas. The primary purpose of such documentation was administrative. Guha rightly argues that “its production and distribution were contingent on reasons of state.”¹⁷⁵ On the nature of immediacy, Guha says two conditions that are the “statements of these are written concurrently or soon after the event,” secondly “this was done by a participant concerned.”¹⁷⁶ A participant here is “a contemporary

¹⁷¹ Ibid.,p.47.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.,pp.50-51

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.,p.51.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.,p.48.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

involved in the event or an onlooker.”¹⁷⁷ In the case of *JCRM* both Dow and Farmer were contemporaries, Dow was militarily involved in Tipu’s siege of Malabar, and both were specially chosen by Cornwallis for their military experience.

The secondary discourse in my study is the account of M.M.D.L.T, Kirkpatrick’s writings, and to some extent, those of William Logan as well. In his conception of secondary discourses, Guha includes the works of administrators that were addressed “predominantly to a non-official readership but on themes and not directly related to their experience.”¹⁷⁸ Further, Guha also includes monographs on rebellions such as Chaur rebellion by J. C. Price or W. W. Hunter’s story of Santal rebellion. These are very similar to William Logan’s *Malabar Manual* which could be considered as relatively more authentic and also had an aura of its own.¹⁷⁹ Secondary discourses, and their presumed neutrality, seemed to have found a place in the “realm of history.”¹⁸⁰ Instead, Guha looks at the components of these discourses to describe a particular figure from the past, using the category “segments” to show how primary discourses are “indicative” and secondary ones, “interpretive.”¹⁸¹ Both sets of discourses differ in their role by “reporting “or “explaining” respectively.

While the account of the *JCRM* can be both “reporting” and “interpretative” along these lines, it also serves as an aggregative archive. This is similar to Guha’s argument that both discourses provide a linear narrative of contiguity and aggregation.¹⁸² In his interpretation, they were “contiguous and mutually implying each other of larger strings to produce an aggregative statement.”¹⁸³ He further explains that “in the latter case –a sum of micro sequences –and to each of which names are given with a metalinguistic operation that may or

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.,52.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid..

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.,53.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.p.,54.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

may not be given in the text.” For Guha, “that is how a hypothetical narrative of the insurrection of Tipu Mir is possible.”¹⁸⁴ *The JCRM*, including its correspondences and war notes on Malabar of the EEIC, was thus an attempt to produce a similar aggregative statement. Such an aggregative archive, in my study, resembles how Guha explains the role of fanaticism or insurgency in colonial discourse. The gradual replacement of Tipu’s political movements with attributions of emotions such as cruelty, perfidy, and bigotry was similar to the colonial portrayal of peasants as the insurgents in colonial discourse. The emergence of Tipu as a cruel bigot in Kirkpatrick, an eventual transformation from his special affection for fellow religionists like Mappilas in *The JCRM* shows the trajectory of Tipu’s loss of political subjecthood.

Finally, the construction of subalterns in the colonial discourse would not be complete without a discussion of the “tertiary discourse” by non-official writers whose narratives lapse into empathy for the peasant outside the bounds of colonialist formalities. In subsequent chapters, I look at how Tipu’s reign in Malabar has been portrayed in the nationalist official histories and narratives, autobiographies, and novels to conclude this analysis, which carried the “ideological birth marks” of primary and secondary colonial discourse we discussed in this chapter but differed from them in substance and significance.

However, there is another argument to be considered, using Gyan Pandey’s take on archives.¹⁸⁵ He discusses what he calls as the ‘limits of history,’ which we would see similarly manifested in the historiography of Mysore rule of Malabar. Following Michel Foucault’s engagement with history and archive, Pandey argues that there is a tendency in disciplinary history to “to textualize” and order a “usable “past.”¹⁸⁶ There is also a tendency to see into the past with an attempt to find “distinct identities with recognizable

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Pandey, *Unarchived Histories: The ‘Mad’ and ‘trifling’ in the Colonial and Post-Colonial World*.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p.5.

characteristics.” Following Pandey one could argue that the “bigotry” as already established in the historiography puts the historical subjects outside of reason and puts the people such as the subjects of Mysore rule and figures such as Tipu Sultan, Haidar, and their allies and enemies along with their historical time outside the realm of history itself. Pandey further argues that a “great deal of variety, creativity, and negotiation, and uncertainty” is lost with the intervention of the discipline of history (in its conventional sense).¹⁸⁷

Further developing Foucault, Pandey turns our attention to topics closer to the limits of disciplinary history like madness or insanity, “ever present, and present, in every day, yet trivialized.”¹⁸⁸ At this point one should probe what is exiled within the archived memory, what historian has found “trifling “or “unworthy” by outlining the minute details of the “archived memory” or colonial texts. Here, I would say the colonial process of archiving or recording their memories of a recent past had also created raw material for a linear narrative of History where uncertainties and creativity were absent and went on to neatly divided prototypes for later historians to rely on. Furthermore, Pandey says that archiving is at the same time is also a process of unarchiving. In my study, the voluminous records on the Mysore memory that had been created in Malabar construct a version of colonial memory, the study also unarchives the histories of Mysore which could be further unearthed from the Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam manuscripts in the coming chapters. Gyan Pandey, following Ranajit Guha, also noted with the colonial obsession about revenue and its enhancement, peasant rebellions against the colonial state are narrativised as criminalities and such stereotypes. A similar obsession about Tipu Sultan’s rule as one of high revenue extraction and a consequent messy revenue and administrative system were also an attempt to define Tipu Sultan’s actions in terms of stereotypes of religious bias.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

However, this process of archiving also misses out of the richness of Mysore rule in Malabar, like that of the deep and intimate emotions between Mysore rulers and the rulers, elites, and common people of Malabar, which we shall see in the vernacular archive and memories in coming chapters. Here, the colonial state's memory not only becomes obsessed with the twin questions of economy (revenue as in *The JCRM*) and politics (alleged bigotry of Tipu Sultan in instances of conversion) but also hides the questions of possible emotional richness and the possibilities of the cultural history of Mysore rule. Kirkpatrick, for example, fits into the category of archivists (belonging to 'reason, state, and order') who found it "difficult to comprehend or represent the relationships found in everyday, human activities."¹⁸⁹ Pandey importantly argues that even after the rise of social history and histories of mentalite, an archival hierarchy exists "privileging hard facts," and underplaying those which are difficult to grasp.¹⁹⁰ However, the "ephemeral" "insignificant" and "obscure elements" in what has been left in the margins while archiving and memorializing colonial documents on Mysore rule are worthy of attention.

Conclusion

In the linear progression of colonial narrative, built on revenue documents and the official history of the Empire in Malabar- elements seen as trifling included the stories conversion, religious bigotry. However, these elements were told as almost central to the narrative of Kirkpatrick but ultimately as a reflection of Sultan's irrational mind. Thus, it was the failure of the colonial archive -to go beyond and attend to the trifle- that was reflected in the historiography of Mysore rule. The trope of bigotry is considered outside history and unhistorical, therefore instead of charging the colonial writers that they portrayed Tipu as bigot and tyrant, it would be worthwhile to write a history of bigotry not as something of the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.,p.7.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

margins but within the limits of History.¹⁹¹ In the coming chapters, I would demonstrate that point with the “unarchived” Malayalam and Arabi- Malayalam materials, similar to “a non-sectarian history of the sectarianism” as historian Shahid Amin has asked for.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ The post-colonial historiography of Mysore rule has been discussed in the introduction of this dissertation.

¹⁹² Shahid Amin, “On retelling the Muslim conquest”, in Chatterjee and Ghosh eds., *History and Present*, p.31.

CHAPTER-3

‘THE GREAT PANIC’: POLITICS AND EMOTIONS IN MEMORIES OF THE BATTLE OF NEDUMKOTTA (1789-1790)

“...the document would be a cenotaph to the event.”

– Georges Duby¹

“The state of the country had become so desolate, that even the pen of Sir Walter Scott, the great novelist, would find it difficult to give an adequate description of it.”

- P Shankunni Menon²

This chapter focuses on the written memories of an actual event and a decisive chapter of Tipu Sultan’s Khudadadi Sirkar, the battle of *Nedumkotta* (Travancore Lines) in 1789-1790. The central actors of the battle were Tipu Sultan and the Diwan of Travancore Keshava Pillai (d.1799), but it was also a battle that involved a huge Mysore army and the Travancore troops, and a local population which was the alleged victim of Mysore army’s ‘cruelties’ during and after the wars.³ While many temples, churches, and synagogues reportedly came under attack in this battle, the two important European actors - the English East India Company and the Dutch East India Company - stood as bystanders for the most part. All this happened while the Governor-General of Bengal, Lord Cornwallis, was closely monitoring

¹ Georges Duby. *The Legend of Bouvines: War, Religion, and Culture in the Middle Ages*. Univ of California Press, 1990, p.3.

² Shankunni Menon, *A History of Travancore*, Higginbotham and Co., 1889, p.234.

³ Tipu’s attack on Travancore Lines began on 29th December 1789. The Raja of Travancore wrote to the resident of Travancore (in a report received at *Anjengo* on twentieth April 1790) that “On 13th of the month the troops of Tippoo Sultan commenced an assault on my lines which was returned. On the 14th likewise an engagement occurred. On the 15th in the morning they entered the Lines (Travancore), made a desperate attack and killed and wounded 4,000 of my people and as they were in great force, my Lines surrendered to the Sultan. It is my bad fortune that no opportunity presented for the company’s troops to come to my assistance.’ *Poona Residency Correspondence Vol.3 Allies War with Tipu Sultan*, p.113 &p. xxxv. Also see Alexander Dirom, *A narrative of Campaign in India which terminated with the War with Tippoo Sultan in 1792*, London, 1793, pp.287-293.

the battle from his seat in Calcutta.⁴ In this chapter, I look at a historical account of the late nineteenth century and two literary texts of the early twentieth century to trace the afterlives of Tipu Sultan's rule in Malabar, specially the increasing fear of a Mysore attack on Travancore which is expressed in these accounts. While analyzing the texts, I travel back and forth between the 'fictional' and the 'historical' and I enquire the feasibility of a sharp division between the two. This chapter looks at two early Malayalam novels - *Dharamaraja* of 1913 and *Rama Raja Bahadur* of 1918 by C.V. Raman Pillai (d.1922), which echoed the historical writing of P. Shankunni Menon. Both the novels and the works of history are among the first of their respective genres – fictional and historical — in the Malayalam region. Some of the novels of C.V. Raman Pillai were immediately translated to English, while Shankunni Menon's 'History of Travancore,' was written in English. The latter became an authoritative reference for fictional and historical writers for many decades to come. Positivist historians continued their dialogue with the text of Shankunni Menon even in the post-colonial period, as I demonstrate in the historiography section. This chapter aims to understand the "fate of memory" as Georges Duby calls it in his *The legend of Bouvines*. Duby demonstrates the ruptures in historical constructions of an event while emphasizing the differences in terms of representing an event in early historical and fictional genres.⁵ This chapter further demonstrates the influences of positivist historiography over the dramatized versions of fictional representation. In the first section of this chapter I look at the historiographical debate surrounding the Travancore Mysore relations and the battle of *Nedumkotta*. In the second section I discuss the two novels set in the late eighteenth century

⁴ Shankunni Menon in nineteenth century was critical of the role of the English in the battle with Tipu as we see in this chapter. However, the *Travancore State Manual* in 1906 noted that *Pallipport* was a "tract purchased by Travancore from the Dutch in the latter part of the last century and is historically important, as the transaction was objected to by Tippoo Sultan of Mysore, and led to the war which ensued between him and the Rajah of Travancore, and which drew upon that Moslem prince the stern vengeance of Cornwallis. ." V Nagam Aiya, *The Travancore State Manual*, (hereafter *TSM*) vol 1, Travancore Government Press, 1906, p.556. Also see Mohibbul Hasan. *History of Tipu Sultan*, pp.155-169.

⁵ Duby says "how the perception of a lived event spreads out in successive waves which in the unfolding of space and time gradually lost their fullness and became distorted." Duby, *The Legend of Bouvines: War, Religion, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, p.6.

Travancore, the threat of a Mysore invasion on Travancore, and the troubles between the ‘Hindus of Malabar’ where Tipu Sultan was central to the narrative. In the third section I connect the story of the novels to the history of the event that was told two decades before the novels were written. In the final section I bring out the central themes that emerge within the novel and discuss the continuities in representing the event with emotions and history.

The historical event

A possible Mysore conquest of Travancore was the preeminent threat and the single most important event Travancore faced during the latter part of the eighteenth century. It could be further added that the threat of Mysore was greater than the British threat or even other regional concerns of the Travancore state. A brief history of Travancore Mysore relations is worth mentioning here.

Both Shankunni Menon, a nineteenth century pro-Travancore historian, and C.K Kareem, a contemporary pro-Mysore historian, agree that Haidar Ali had a longstanding feud with his contemporary and king of Travancore Marthanda Varma.⁶ In 1750-1751, much before the Mysore conquest of Malabar when Haidar was the Faujdar of Dindigul, Marthanda Varma sought his help in quelling the Nair feudatories and their rebellion against the centralizing attempts of Travancore.⁷ Marthanda Varma was able to defeat the Nair feudatory powers himself and did not need Haidar’s help at the end. However, Haidar had prepared his army and expected Marthanda Varma to pay the costs incurred. Contemporary chroniclers say Haidar demanded a sum of 15 lakhs and 30 elephants as compensation.⁸ Travancore, being the feudatory of the Nawab Muhammad Ali of Arcot - the arch-rival of Haidar Ali and Tipu -

⁶ Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 159, C.K Kareem, *Kerala Under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, p.74.

⁷ Shankunni Menon says that “the rising Mussulman chief of Mysore received the Maha Rajah’s letter with due respect, and promised to send a portion of his army from Dindigul.” Menon, *A History of Travancore*, 1889, p. 159. For Kareem, Marthanda Varma’s request to Haidar was a “frantic cry for help.” Kareem, *Kerala Under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, p.74.

⁸ Kareem, *Kerala Under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, p.74.

refused to abide by Mysore's demands, and there began a feud which becomes central to the politics not only of Mysore and Travancore but Malabar as well.⁹ In 1778, almost a decade after the Mysore conquest of Malabar, Haidar prepared his army to invade Travancore through Malabar, but the conquests did not take place due to the interventions of the Dutch and the English.¹⁰

There are parallels between Haidar's conquest of Malabar and his attempted conquests of Travancore. Financial disputes, in Malabar with the Zamorin and in Travancore with Marthanda Varma, are cited as the reasons for attacks on both regions. Haidar claimed unpaid dues for his war preparations and treaties from both the kings as the motive for war.¹¹ While Haidar was asked to help quell the Nair feudatories of Travancore over the centralization of their power by Marthanda Varma in Malabar, the 'Nair rebellions' against Mysore in Malabar and Mysore's attempts at centralization of polity and revenue extraction became contentious between Travancore and Mysore. Mysore's treatment of the Malabar rajas and Nair feuds became a worrying element for Travancore, who claimed to have kinship relations with the rajas of Malabar and Mysore. On the other hand, Tipu saw Travancore as the root cause of the political troubles in Malabar.

A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, who has worked extensively on the Travancore-Mysore relations, argues that since the Mysore army invaded Malabar in 1766, the Travancore state was extraordinarily hostile to the policies of Mysore in Malabar.¹² Kunju finds that Travancore abetted and supported the Nair rebellion in Malabar.¹³ During the second Anglo-Mysore war the Travancore state combined its forces and assisted the English East India Company in

⁹ Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 159

¹⁰ *Ibid.* The *Mathilakam Records* of Pathmanabha Swami Temple of Travancore, notes the costs incurred for preparing army against Haidar in 1769. *Mathilakam Records*, 853, 945.

¹¹ Haidar's emphasis on 'draviyam' the Zamorin owed is discussed in first chapter of this dissertation.

¹² A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, "Relations between Travancore and Mysore in the Eighteenth Century" in Irfan Habib, ed. *Confronting colonialism: Resistance and modernization under Haidar Ali & Tipu Sultan*. Tulika, p.79.

¹³ *Ibid.*

opening a second front in the Malabar region.¹⁴ Travancore was also said to have aided an attack on Mahe, controlled by the French, who were allies of Mysore.¹⁵ Kunju finds these measures undertaken by the king of Travancore against Mysore highly provocative. Travancore rulers constructed the famous Travancore lines along its border with Cochin *swaroopam* (or Cochin State), to protect against attacks from Mysore.¹⁶ Analyzing the Mangalore treaty after the second Anglo-Mysore war, Kunju argues that Tipu saw Travancore as an ally and friend of English, and as per the treaty, Mysore decided not to attack the friend of his ally.¹⁷ However, Kunju adds that Travancore continued to aid the Nair rebellion in Malabar even after the treaty. The construction of Travancore lines was seen as an ultimate provocation by Tipu apart from paying for the maintenance of English troops. Travancore rejected Tipu's request to destroy the Travancore lines and this strengthened Mysore's belief that Travancore was a threat to the stability of the Malabar region.¹⁸

Moreover, a purchase of two Dutch forts by Travancore was also seen by Tipu as a provocative gesture, since Mysore considered them both belonging to their ally Cochin. The purchase of these forts, which strategically put the English East Company ahead of Mysore, immediately followed an attack on Travancore lines by Tipu's forces.¹⁹ Historians differ on the outcome of the battle between Tipu's army and Travancore. While the colonial historians and nineteenth century Travancore historians argue that Tipu lost the war miserably, pro-Mysore historians, from Mohibbul Hasan to Ibrahim Kunju, play down the importance of this incident. For pro-Mysore historians, based on more charitable reports of the Madras

¹⁴ *Ibid.*,p.80.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*,p.81.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*,80.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,p.81.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*,p.82.

government, this was only a minor ‘frontier incident’. Moreover, Tipu’s actual participation in this battle is disputed.²⁰

In his more general treatment of Mysore rule and relations with various kingdoms of eighteenth century Kerala, C.K. Kareem concurs with Kunju’s arguments. For Kareem, the Nair rebellion was a constant disturbance to the peace of Malabar.²¹ Apart from Travancore’s role in the rebellion, their proximity to the English and support for them in the attack on the French possession of Mahe made the submission of Travancore a necessary prerequisite for the ‘tranquility of Malabar’. However, the Travancore conquest of Mysore never took place. The attack on the Travancore lines put an end to these efforts. Tipu Sultan was confined to Mysore and had to cede Malabar to the British after the treaty of Srirangapatana in 1792.²²

Nevertheless, the fear of a Mysore attack persisted well into popular memory for years to come. In his analysis of the Battle of Bouvines, Georges Duby recovers the problem which historians face in dealing with historical events.²³ He argues that positivist historians have two compulsions. One is to establish what really happened at the exact spot of the event. For instance, in historical debates about Tipu Sultan’s army facing off Travancore army in 1789, the central question was who won and what were the causes of war and its outcome. The second compulsion is that they have to locate the “the exact position of true fact.”²⁴ Here the compulsion on our historians is more evident: to find out whether Tipu Sultan actually participated in the war and whether it was his personal defeat. Duby sees these aims of positivist historians as “unreachable,” to which we might agree in the context of Battle of *Nedumkotta* as well. As Duby might say the vision of the participants of the war from both

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.84.

²¹ Kareem, *Kerala Under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan*, pp.76-77.

²² In the Treaty of Srirangapatana dated 22nd February 1792, Tipu Sultan agreed to give up ‘one half of the dominions’ to the English East India Company. See Rodrick Mackenzie, *A Sketch of the War With Tipu Sultan*, vol 1, pp.13-14.

²³ Duby, *The Legend of Bouvines: War, Religion, and Culture in the Middle Ages*. 1990, p.5

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Mysore and Travancore was “limited,” which limits the historiography itself. To come out of this impasse, Duby suggests that we adopt an anthropologist’s perspective in order to understand the ‘cultural systems’ which were different from the present times.²⁵ What I draw from Duby is a sensitivity to aspects of culture rather than “pinpointing exactness,” which Duby argues is a result of heavily focusing on “political actions, on its motivations and consequences.”²⁶ The next section will focus on two novels that together constitute cultural traces of the event.

Texts and tales

C.V. Raman Pillai was one of the first novelists of Malayalam (along with Potheri Kunchambu, O Chandu Menon, and Appu Nedungadi), and he was also known as a staunch loyalist of the Travancore ruling dynasty. I discuss two of his novels — *Dharmaraja* written in 1913 and *Ramaraja Bahadur* which was completed in 1918.²⁷ Udaya Kumar has engaged with both the historical and literary aspects of these novels, focusing on the question of “sovereignty and mourning”.²⁸ He argues that C.V.’s novels “introduced new and complex ways of staging the past.”²⁹ Moreover, he highlights “an affective, talismanic invocation of history at the core of processes through which political subjectivities were fashioned and endorsed during his age.”³⁰ C.V cannot be read outside ‘distinctive imaginaries of modern nationalism’ since C.V.’s “political concerns” were specific to the princely state of Travancore.

²⁵ Ibid,p.9.

²⁶ Ibid,p.5.

²⁷ C.V. Raman Pillai, *Dharmaraja*(Mal), DC Books, 1913(2012 reprint), and C.V Raman Pillai,. *Ramaraja Bahadur*(Mal), Lodestar, 1918(2013 reprint).

²⁸ Udaya Kumar, *Writing the First Person: Literature, History and Autobiography in Modern Kerala*, Permanent Black, 2016.

²⁹ The influence of Walter Scott and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee on C.V. Raman Pillai was acknowledged in his preface to the first novel. Ibid.,p.168.

³⁰ Ibid.p.166.

Kumar adds that the eighteenth century marks a “paradigmatic formation that shaped Travancore’s history and memory.”³¹ C.V.’s political criticism was directed against the Diwans, who were mostly Tamil Brahmins. One aspect clarifies C.V.’s role in drafting the *Malayali Memorial*.³² C.V. wrote at a time when the Nair community in Travancore was threatened with decline, and the Travancore state was in an unequal relationship with the colonial state. Kumar sees C.V.’s work as an ‘aesthetic negotiation’ of an ‘ambivalent historical inheritance’.³³ The historiographical context of the novel needs to be expanded in order to explain the Mysore memory in twentieth century Kerala. Kumar, in identifying the novelist’s obsession with sovereignty, is concerned only with the writer’s own context. What is crucially missed here is the historical construction of a particular memory.

In *Dharamaraja*, the threat of a Mysore conquest is in the air, while the focus of the novel is seemingly different. I will narrate how and exactly where the Mysore threat dominates the novels. *Dharamaraja* starts with a verse from the Medieval Malayalam Ramayana text of Thunchathu Ezhuthachan. For metaphors and comparisons, C.V. easily resorts to the Malayalam reciting tradition or performative textual traditions. The eighteenth century performing poet and figure of wit Kunjan Nambiar helps the novelist to explain the Mysore conquest as a looming threat. ‘*Dusht Kidakke avrattapetta*’: the threat of Mysore is shown as a wound that was unhealed and could erupt at any time.³⁴ In the novel, the emergence of

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.171. These origins had a long lasting impact leading to the early nationalism in Kerala, and first occurred as a strong assertion of regional identity which was later amenable to the nationalist meta narrative. Udaya Kumar relates this foregrounding of manliness in history leading to ‘political history’ to focus on ‘individual persons.’ *Ibid.*, p.172.

³² The *Malayali Memorial* was a petition submitted to the Maha Raja of Travancore on 1891. The petition aimed at reducing the Tamil Brahmin dominance in Travancore bureaucracy. The collection of signatures for the memorial itself became a major movement, and C.V. played a crucial role in drafting the petition. See P.K Parameshwaran Nair, *C.V. Raman Pillai*, Kerala Sahitya Academy, 1948 (2014 reprint), p.120

³³ Udaya Kumar, *Writing the First Person: Literature, History and Autobiography in Modern Kerala*, p.173&175

³⁴ Kunjan Nambiar died in 1770, 4 years after Haidar’s Malabar conquest. He lived in Amblappuzha while Travancore kingdom was consolidated. Curiously a *Thullal* verse of Nambiar is evoked by the novelist to

Mysore power is like '*raktha varashikamaya kollimeen*,' a 'comet that showers or rains blood' and warns of great 'epidemic or panic' ('*maha vibranthi*').³⁵

Moreover, here it is not only Haidar's threat from Malabar but Mysore's takeover of Madurai as well, which poses a danger to Travancore, making it vulnerable from both sides. The novel compares the Travancore state with a human body that can be attacked and torn into pieces by the Mysore conquest. Hence, Mysore was the '*durmedassu*' (unhealthy fat accumulated in the body), and Haidar Ali was shown as a '*simhaparakrami*' or a lion-like attacker.³⁶ The beginning of the novel also talks about attempts made towards securing the alliance with the English East India Company and the Nawab of Arcot, both rivals of Mysore in the late eighteenth-century political landscape. From this historical context the novelist moves on to the personal narrative of the central character, a poor young boy who faces various hardships at his relative's house. However, before moving to this scene, the novelist also mentions the devotion of the people of Travancore towards *Shiva* and the observation of *Shivaratri*.³⁷ The militarization of society and processions related to the army are a frequent occurrence at the beginning of this novel. The eighteenth century militarized society, as shown by historian Stewart Gordon in Maratha region and Dilip Menon in the Malabar Mysore region, is reflected in the first section of the novel in the context of Travancore.³⁸ Balan, the young boy who fled the house of his uncles in anger, witnessed a military procession, and the novelist makes the militarized eighteenth-century clearer in the young boy's account.³⁹ A Muslim merchant who was passing by not only sheltered the boy but also honoured him by mounting

explain the threat of Mysore. For more on Kunjan Nambiar, see V.S Sharma.,*Kunjan Nambiyar :jeevithavum Krithikalum*[Kunjan Nambiar: Life and Works], DC Books, 2011.

³⁵ Pillai, *Dharmaraja*,p.143.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*,p.144.

³⁸ Dilip M. Menon, "Houses by the Sea: State-Formation Experiments in Malabar, 1760-1800." *Economic and Political Weekly* 1999,pp. 1995-2003.

³⁹ Pillai, *Dharmaraja*,.p.151.

him on a horse.⁴⁰ The boy proclaimed his intention was to join the army (*pullipattalam*).⁴¹ However, in this instance, the one who travels on horseback was a Muslim merchant called Moosa Muthalali (Moosa, the rich) in the novel.⁴² Moosa Muthaali's relative Pokku Moosa Marakkar Noohu Kannu was the one who honours the young boy with these words "Sabash, you bahadur; you are brother to me and pillai or child to the *thalaivar* or leader".⁴³

To introduce the main villain of the novel, Chandrakkaran, a *thullal* verse was used.⁴⁴ As the novel progresses, the young boy was employed by the Muslim merchant and grew up. By that time, Marthanda Varma had died, and Rama Varma was in power.⁴⁵ One could note that the chronology of the novel is inconsistent. Apart from *thullal* there were continued borrowings from the *Ramayana*, as told in Malayalam, such as a comparison with Lanka with a negative character's house. Hence it is mentioned that after Rama Varma assumed the throne, the house became a second Lanka, as prosperous as the first one was.⁴⁶

Further the novel builds on the growth of Chandrakkaran with all his evil. Ummini Pillai, another character who was a reporter and compared to *Narada* by a modern critic, entered the scene and has a public conversation with Chandrakkaran.⁴⁷ While dismissing the usual rumours as garbage, Chandrakkaran engaged in what he thought was serious talk: "How far has the Mysore flood (*'mysore peruvellam'*) reached?" he asked Ummini Pillai.⁴⁸ The metaphorical association of 'flood' with Mysore shows both the fear and inevitability of such a threat and the progress it was making. There is a considerable dearth of information about

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*,p.153.

⁴¹ Pillai, *Dharmaraja*,p.152.

⁴² *Ibid.*,p.153.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Kunjan Nambiar's *ottanthullal ,Karthya Veerya Arjunam* was quoted at the beginning of Dharmaraja's second chapter. *Ibid.*,p.159.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*,p.160

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*,p.166-167.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

the Mysore military (*pattalam*), Ummini Pillai replied. It was too difficult to gather information on Mysore since there was so much secrecy, he said.⁴⁹ Correspondences on the Mysore conquest was plentiful, but still difficult to get information from the Travancore court on these correspondence, he added.⁵⁰ The only thing that prevents the Mysore flood was the “dam constructed by the English East India Company,” added Ummini Pillai. Here Chandrakkaran replied that he would be able to break the English defense against Mysore.⁵¹ He expressed his intention to become the king of Travancore by replacing Rama Varma. As Kumar has argued, C.V.’s current concern about the sovereignty of the Travancore state may be read in this scene.⁵² The next metaphor used was that the Mysore tiger (*Mysore puli*) subdued ‘*perumbadappu swaroopam*’ or Cochin State.⁵³ Haripanchanan was another character who was close to Mysore but whose primary interest was in the weakening or destruction of the Travancore state for his personal reasons.⁵⁴ Marthandan Valiya Pada Veetiil was another spy who was employed by Haidar against Travancore.⁵⁵ He fled Travancore when he was young and came back to oversee Haripanchanan activities for Mysore. Upon realizing that Haripanchanan was led by selfish motives, Marthandan had a change of mind. Similarly Ramavarmmathu Anantha Padathalavan was a character who travels abroad in the Tamil region and wins over many local chiefs against Mysore.⁵⁶ Annavayyan was a Brahmin who was sent by Haidar in disguise as a banker to his spy chief Haripanchanan according to C.V.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*,p.166.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Kumar,

⁵³ Pillai,*Dharmaraja*,p.168.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*,p.182.

⁵⁵ See Pillai , *Ramaraja Bhadur*.,p.79

⁵⁶ Anantha Padathalavan has a heroic status in Dharma Raja. This character is a continuation from C.V.’s earlier novel Marthanda Varma..

⁵⁷ Pillai,*Dharmaraja*,p.181.

In the third part, Malabar is mentioned for the first time. It is not called Malabar but '*uthara malayalam*' or northern Malayalam. The imagination of a new Malayalam region in C.V.'s novel can be seen here.⁵⁸ Another term or metaphor used here for Haidar Ali is 'Rahu Bimbam,' or bad omen. Ummini Pillai, in a conversation with Haripanchanan assumed that Haripanchanan would save him during the war between Haidar's army and Travancore.⁵⁹ When Haripanchanan tried to poison the mind of Travancore prince against his opponent 'Keshava Pillai,' he used the word 'Muhammadiyah.'⁶⁰

The context was that in defense of Keshava Pillai, whose rise from plebeian origins became an issue of discussion, the prince argued Marthanda Varma and few other previous heroes of Travancore were also from humble origins.⁶¹ In reply to this, Haripanchanan argued that all old heroes were of 'our religion' (Followers of our religion or '*nammude mathanuyayikal*') while Keshava Pillai was very close to Muhammadiyah and new *yavanar*.⁶² Two things have to be pointed out here. The novel acknowledges a division between Hindu and Muslim or 'Muhammadan' in public discourse, a distinction prevalent in the first half of the twentieth century, which is pushed back into the eighteenth century. Here the literary representation goes against many historians' views of the Hindu-Muslim divisions of eighteenth century.⁶³

How did C.V. conclude that such a division existed between different religious communities, especially since until this point in the novel he does not identify Mysore as a Mohammedan

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*,p.185.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Haidar's army is called 'sainyam' and Travancore's is called '*pulli pattalam*'.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*,p.196.

⁶¹ In 1906, Nagam Aiya noted on Keshava Pillai that "Dewan Kesava Das is a name to conjure within the minds of true Travancorean and survives to this day as an inspiring example to the successive generations of his countrymen."Nagam Aiya, *TSM*,vol 1,p.407.

⁶² In this context Yavanar could be Europeans and the new Yavanar could be assumed as the English. Nagam Aiya says that "Governor General, Lord Mornington had a very high opinion of Dewan Kesava Pillai." *Ibid.*

⁶³ One could note that as Christopher A Bayly has shown that the meanings of "communalism" was different from the colonial times in the eighteenth century. Bayly, "The Pre-history of 'Communalism'? Religious Conflict in India, 1700–1860",.pp.177-203.

power? ⁶⁴ There is an acknowledgment of ‘our’ religion and ‘their’ religion. While the novelist allowed an evil character, an agent of Mysore, to articulate such a division, was it possible that the nineteenth-century historiography of Travancore written by court historians influenced C.V.’s understanding? Haripanchanan in a desperate attempt to convince the prince against Keshava Pillai argued that Pillai was an employee of the Muslim merchant Pokku Moosa, and he could be Haidar’s spy.⁶⁵ Pillai is identified as the young man we meet at the beginning of the novel who later turned out to be the Diwan of Travancore and who was also remembered as the person who defeated Tipu Sultan in the *Battle of Nedumkotta*. Here Haripanchanan recognized Keshava Pillai and his growing acceptance in the Travancore kingdom was against his ambitions, so Panchanan, while being a Mysore spy himself accused Keshava Pillai of being a spy. Furthermore, this aspect of a palace feud gains importance as we progress further in the novel. Moreover, Panchanan first compared Keshava Pillai with Pushyamitra Sungha of the Sungha dynasty, the man who overthrew the previous king. However, unable to convince the prince, Panchanan asserts more directly that “Keshava Pillai may unseat you from power just like Haidar unseated the Mysore rajas (Wodeyars).”⁶⁶

The inevitability of Mysore conquest of Travancore is something that is continuously evoked throughout the novel. In another instance, Haripanchanan also made sure that Thambi Vishwanathan, one of the Nair lords who was also his devotee, prepare an army against the possible onslaught of Mysore.⁶⁷ Thampi was convinced that he was protecting Travancore, which was his responsibility as a member of the noblest families in Travancore. However, this parallel mobilization of the army without any approval from the raja or king did create

⁶⁴ Pillai, *Dharmaraja*, p. 196.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 223.

discord which put Thampi in danger, but Yogi Haripanchanan managed to escape without attracting any blame.⁶⁸

Keshava Pillai, tried to convince the king that a few people, including Haripanchanan were plotting to oust the king from power.⁶⁹ Here just like Panchanan gave the comparison of Pushyamitra Sungha to Haidar Ali's example, Keshava Pillai also resorted to history. He argued that two upcoming festivals in Travancore may be used to undermine royal power. Pillai's comparisons were with the Maratha king Shivaji and how he used the Navratri festival against the Mughal authority and also Aurangabad's "*firmaholsava*" which were reminiscent of the bullock market ("*kala chantha*") in Travancore and another festival called "Vellamkudi in Venganoor temple." These two festivals could be used to trigger unrest against the king, Keshava Pillai warned.⁷⁰ In another instance, Haripanchanan consoled himself that if he was ever in danger Haidar would come to his rescue.⁷¹

Another significant transformation noted by C.V. is that the king and the people have become one body during Rama Varma's reign, whereas in Marthanda Varma's time, there was only one 'lion,' which was Marthanda Varma.⁷² This has to be read with the corporeal metaphors I mentioned earlier, where Mysore became the *durmedassu*, which affects the Travancore body. Mysore became the poison that harmed the healthy body that is both the Travancore state and its people. Gradually in the novel the Mysore threat takes the back seat but was not entirely abandoned. The novelist became more concerned about personal revenge and the unfolding of the palace feud that occurred subsequently. Now I shall turn to the second novel

⁶⁸ *Ibid*,pp.223-224.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*.,pp.276-277..

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.,p.277.

⁷¹ Haripanchanan, failed in all attempts to defeat the Travancore kingdom from inside, killed himself at the end of this novel. *Ibid*.,pp.524-525.

⁷² *Ibid*,p.287.

of *Ramaraja Bahadur* where we meet Tipu Sultan and his expeditions in Malabar more prominently, with a greater impact on the main story.

Ramaraja Bahadur had an apocalyptic beginning with prophesies of *Kaliyuga*.⁷³ Here one could see a clear rupture from how Mysore rule had been depicted in the previous novel. The second novel begins with the quote "*Loka ravana bheethi kondakulari Devakal*".⁷⁴ The fear of Tipu is made analogous to the fear that the Gods (*devas*) felt for Ravana. Upon ascending the throne after Haider Ali's death, Tipu goes on to continue '*Kerala gandanam*' *vidwasnam*' or the destruction of Kerala, which was flagged off by Haidar. Tipu assembled a large army (*van pada*).⁷⁵ It is worth noting that in the previous novel though C.V. mentioned the attack of Mysore and the fears associated with it, he does not use the word *pada* for the Mysore military expedition. In this sense the 'popular' has more to contribute here, or the particular targeting of Tipu by nineteenth century Travancore historians have influenced C.V.'s perception and choice of words. With the significant mobilization that Tipu undertook, he conducted '*ghora yathra*' or the strong military procession here (which literally translated is 'strong journey,' with the emphasis on the horror associated with it).⁷⁶ In this novel, set after the ceding of the northern part of Kerala, C.V. uses the word Kerala extensively, while in his earlier novel, '*Malayala desh*' was the word used to denote the geographical setting. One could argue that by the time of Tipu's conquest, the Malayalam (lingual) formation had consolidated with the strong assertion of '*Kerala desh*'. Tipu's 'fiery eyes' (*agneya nethrangal*) turned towards Vanchinadu (Travancore) to conduct his oppressions (*maradangal*). '*Matha shadyoshmav*' or the temperature of Tipu's religious zealotry

⁷³ Tipu Sultan's and Nizam's wars are mentioned as an example of events in *Kaliyuga*. The novel says with all the infighting between Tipu and Nizam "the earth could be destroyed and will allow Tipu Sultan to swallow the whole world." Pillai, *Ramaraja Bahadur*, p.105.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.110.

⁷⁵ In *Dharmaraja*, Keshava Pillai informed the Travancore prince about *pada* preparations by Chandarkkaran and Haripanchanan against the Kingdom. For C.V. the meaning of *pada* while literally meant assembling troops also carried the meaning of rebellion or *fitna*, Pillai, *Dharmaraja*, pp.276-277.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.110.

translated into the destruction of '*brahmopaveethangal*' which were Arya symbols for the novelist. C.V. identifies the Arya Symbols he mentioned soon with that of "Kerala Symbols."⁷⁷ C.V. describes Tipu's expedition as very violent and goes on to describe it as '*bhoonilamake chenthamara pokaykayi*': the earth has turned into a lotus pond with the spilling of blood. Houses of rajas, nobles, and commoners became pyres in this massacre, he adds.⁷⁸ The northern part (or Malabar) succumbed to these pressures and came under the rule of Mysore.⁷⁹ However, Travancore only realized the intensity of the Mysore attack and the threat it posed with the fleeing of people from Malabar.⁸⁰ Here C.V. adds this was due to the atrocities (*nishdoorathakal*) of the 'Muhammadiya' army. Local chiefs, nobles, and landlords – numbering thousands or *sahasrangal* fled Malabar.⁸¹ They took refuge (*sharanam*) at the feet of Travancore king and his generous people.⁸² Due to this influx to Travancore it was difficult to distinguish between friend and foe among the refugees. Spies, rebels, and troublemakers rapidly increased in Travancore. Thus, Tipu's economic might and shrewdness ended the peaceful life of Travancore.⁸³

In this novel Keshavan Unnithan, nephew of Chandrakkaran and one of the anti-heroes of *Dharmaraja* finds a '*panayolakurip*' (a note in palm leaf) stating that his uncle has become a Tipu loyalist.⁸⁴ After reading which, the future appeared bleak to the nephew. Ezhuthachan's *Mahabharatham* once again helps C.V. to explain the situation. He quotes the instance where Sanjayan, the brother of Pandu and Drithrashtra, informs Dhritarashtra, the latter of their impending defeat. The exact verse is '*varunnu santhapaminium melkummel varumathreyum*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*,pp.110-111.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*,p.111.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Nagam Aiya says the migration from Malabar happened during Haidar's conquest. He says "the Zamorin and other princes fled and took refuge in Malabar and they were treated with great hospitality and kindness."Nagam Aiya, *TSM* vol 1, p.382.

⁸³ *Dharmaraja*,p.111.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*,p.130..

sahichirikka nee’ or ‘Miseries are coming one after another, and you are suffering all of them’.⁸⁵ The analogy with the Mahabharata once again underlines ‘the inevitability’ and impending defeats of Travancore by Mysore. Haidar Ali was portrayed as a ‘*simha parakrami*’ and ‘*simhasana choran*’ (a stealer of the throne)⁸⁶ in the novel; and in a very significant instance, a character says that “Tipu’s army (*akshowhini*) consists of monsters (*rakshasas*) who are also beef eaters (*go mamaskar*).”⁸⁷ In this part of the novel Mysore becomes the complete cultural other of the Malayalam region in the imagination of the novelist of Kerala. Tipu’s army is again referred to as *pada*, which does *narmedha* (or the heinous killing of man), and an exclamation of ‘*bayankaram*’ or severe danger was added with that. Tipu is credited with flawed qualities such as arrogance, greed, and envy.⁸⁸ According to the novel, what made the Tipu angrier was that Rama Varma – the king of Travancore — claimed to be his equal.⁸⁹

In both novels, there is a continued reliance on a ‘pre-colonial Malayalam textual tradition.’ C.V. borrows significantly from literary genres such as ‘*kilippattu*,’ ‘*thullal pattu*,’ and ‘*attakatha*’ (or the stories for *Kathakali*). One could see this textual tradition as broadly similar to the ‘cultural matrix’ from which the novel emerged in colonial north India.⁹⁰ Following Dalmia’s argument on continuities with pre-colonial textual tradition, I call this a ‘Malayalam cultural matrix.’ However, the influence of this Malayalam cultural matrix was limited to narrative strategies only, and C.V.’s understanding of eighteenth-century history is still heavily indebted to nineteenth century Travancore historiography. How nineteenth-century historians were instrumental in the construction of the ‘popular,’ as evidenced in

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*,p.123.

⁸⁶ The novel questioned Haidar’s and Tipu’s right to the throne. *Ibid.*,p.101.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*,p.173.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*,p.176.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Vasudha Dalmia, “Merchant Tales and the Emergence of the Novel in Hindi.” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2008, 43-60.

these early twentieth century novels, is crucial. One such significant influence, especially in portraying Mysore threat as a threat of a ‘Muhammadan conquest,’ is the nineteenth-century historian Shankunni Menon.⁹¹ Shankunni Menon’s formulations in his *History of Travancore* resonates with the English historian Mark Wilks’ *Historical Sketches*, written soon after the East India Company’s victory over Srirangapatana in 1799 and in which Tipu Sultan and the Malabar invasion were portrayed in a religious light. The other major resemblance to Menon’s formulations is that of the Frenchman Maistre de la Tour or M.M.D.L.T, whose account of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan also uses the category of Muhammadiyan conquest.⁹² This is remarkable because contemporary colonial documents such as Joint Commissioners’ report hardly refer to ‘atrocities’ and ‘devastation’ that was associated with the Mysore conquest of Malabar in Menon, unlike M.M.D.L.T and Wilks.

I look at Shankunni Menon’s *History of Travancore* as a representative history text used by C.V. Shankunni Menon, the then Diwan Peshkar of Travancore princely state, wrote that “The Travancore state was originally part of the Chera Empire, and in the four ages of the *purana*, many transformations took place and in this ‘*Kali Yuga*’ it became the present Travancore.”⁹³ He further added that Travancore was the only state in India where religion, caste, ritual or custom, and faith were of the old times. He went on to cite ‘an unnamed archivist’ of Travancore and agreed with him that “Travancore is among the very few Indian states which are not contaminated by a Muhammadiya invasion.” Much in agreement with the ‘Keralolpathi’ (medieval texts of Brahmanical origins which were important for early colonial history)⁹⁴ and the Brahmanical traditions of Kerala history, Shankunni Menon seems

⁹¹ Mohammadanism and the tyranny of Tipu Sultan were major components of Shankunni Menon’s view of Mysore. Shankunni Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.242.

⁹² Wilks and M.M.D.L.T are dealt in the introduction. In Wilks, and M.M.D.L.T one could see this binary between Mohammadan and other religions as central to their narrative which could be seen as precedent to Menon’s History. For a discussion of Wilks and M.M.D.L.T see the introduction of this dissertation.

⁹³ Shankunni Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.vii

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

proud of the fact that “the Brahmin community reorganized by Parashurama does still exist without much change in custom and belief,” and that the four castes had multiplied into 72 by the time of Shankara Acharya (again Shankunni Menon quotes Keralolpathi). Shankunni Menon cites a census report as an evidence of the existence of 72 castes.⁹⁵ This pride in a Brahmanical past and the colonial present - the conceptions of caste and communities drew from the former that were well shaped by the knowledge of the latter- was further supplemented with past fears of a Muslim invasion. He was also appreciative of the valor of Travancore ‘people’ and their superiority of weapons.⁹⁶ Moreover, he further argued that this courage and talent of people of Travancore and their rulers predates the “spread of western culture.” Here one may detect a clear parallel with the Bengali intellectuals of the early colonial period like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, for whom an emphasis on a glorious pre-colonial past was essential.⁹⁷

In *History of Travancore*, there is an interesting discussion of a 1680 attack on Travancore by a “Muslim commander who belonged to the Mughals,” which, much like the early nationalist historians described the intention of the attack as “an act of plunder.”⁹⁸ After defeating the ill-prepared armies of the Travancore chiefs, the Mughal commander had the opportunity to destroy Travancore or conduct a large scale conversion. However, to the good fortune of the Rani of Travancore (Umayamma Rani), a few Pathan ‘Mohammadan’ soldiers pleaded and negotiated with the commander and averted this action. As a result, not even a single Hindu

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.viii.

⁹⁶ Here a selective appropriation of *keralolpathi* and Brahmanical myths. *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Partha Chatterjee, *The nation and its fragments*, p.109. Shankunni Menon’s views on the glorious histories of Travancore Kingdom was repeated by S Ramanath Aiyer in 1903. It is worth noting that it was Aiyer who called Travancore a model state before K.M Panikkar. Similar to Shankunni Menon, Aiyer also saw Tipu’s attack of Travancore as attempt to “overthrow the Hindu Rule.” S Ramanath Aiyer, *A Brief Sketch of Travancore the Model State of India*, Western Star Press, Trivandrum, 1903, p.147.

⁹⁸ Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.102.

temple was destroyed, and no one was converted.⁹⁹ While the commander did not undertake any conversion or destruction, he forced certain Muslim ('Mohammadan') customs upon the local 'shudra' population which Shankunni Menon claimed continued till the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁰ He listed six customs that the Shudra castes followed as an after-effect of the invasion. I shall list out those here to show a contrast with the cultural fears associated with the Mysore army almost a century later. The first cultural influence was that men covered their entire heads while going out and women covered the upper half of their bodies. Secondly, performing circumcision on boys before they reached the age of ten. Thirdly, on occasions such as marriage, people ate socially together from one plate and covered their head while having food like the Muslims do. Next, after the period of breastfeeding was over, children were required to wear a towel over their head. Finally, the prevalence of body tattooing among women.¹⁰¹ Amongst this, the first two cultural influences - fears of circumcision and a proclamation seeking to cover the upper half of women's body - are associated with Tipu's invasion of Malabar and noted as a violent religious gesture by some historians. While the Muhammadan invader of the late 17th century did not receive much antagonism to his culturally alien measures, the Travancore historian treated Tipu Sultan and his supposedly religious measures quite differently.¹⁰²

Haidar Ali was portrayed as the dreaded and tyrannical 'Muslaman chief' in the novels. Shankunni Menon also mentions that Haidar Ali was prevented from conquering Travancore

⁹⁹ "A petty Sardar under the Mogul Empire". Shankunni Menon describes the invader. Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.102. Nagam Aiya identified the name of the Sardar as Mukilan. He says the name Mukilan was a vernacular corruption of his "race Mogul." Nagam Aiya, *TSM*, vol 1, p.312.

¹⁰⁰ Shankunni Menon says the Nairs were forced to follow certain Muhammadan customs and some customs are still prevalent among lower order the Shudras while the higher order Shudras have stopped such practices. Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.103.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Nagam Aiya rather looks at Arab traveller Al Masudi's account to note the early Muslim accounts on Travancore. Nagam Aiya relies on William Logan and speaks about the presence of Islam in Malabar as well. Nagam Aiya, *TSM*, vol 1, pp.244-246.

by English intervention in 1769.¹⁰³ In Shankunni Menon's account one can see that there is a clear identification of Marthanda Varma and the Travancore kings as Hindu as opposed to the Musalman and Muahmmadiyan rulers of Mysore. Shankunni Menon argues that Marthanda Varma, after the consolidation of the state became a "religious devotee" , rather than a despotic king and that he connected the "state with religion, making the kingdom sacred to all religions."¹⁰⁴ Following this, it is not surprising to see C.V's distinction between 'our religion' and the Muahammadiya religion. One can also see the direct influence of the portrayal of Tipu sultan by Shankunni Menon on the novel discussed before. For instance, Shankunni Menon claims that Tipu had been watching the proceedings of Travancore court, with an eagle's eye and jealous mind, which are repeated in the novel as well.¹⁰⁵ As I have noted in the discussion of the novel, Shankunni Menon also uses the term 'Malayalam territory' to denote the region, including Malabar.¹⁰⁶

The "Hindu exodus" from Malabar after the Mysore invasion is not an issue colonial historians have discussed in much detail. Historian K.N Panikkar in 1989 thus dismisses the argument of Hindu exodus as wanting of evidence.¹⁰⁷ However, Shankunni Menon, who otherwise cites records and information found in Malayalam diaries kept in royal households or the correspondence from East India Company settlements, declares that Tipu Sultan forcibly converted the Hindus of Malabar and led all high castes of Malabar to flee, without any supporting evidence. Shankunni Menon claims that "the Hindu portion of Malabar, including the royal family of Zamorin and opulent Nambuduris, resorted to Travancore and

¹⁰³Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.201.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*,p.170

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*,p.211.

¹⁰⁶ While Buchanan was one of the first to use Malayalam as geographical region, and missionaries such as Herman Gundert followed this term to denote a political and geographical region. One could see that following colonial accounts, both Menon and Nagam Aiya, attempted to attribute an ancientness to the unity of Malayalam region and "Keralam," distinct from the Tamil region. Nagam Aiya, *TSM*, vol 1,pp.229-231.

¹⁰⁷ Panikkar says that "Except general statements in official reports about the flight of Hindu chieftains and their retainers who had opposed Tipu and therefore feared punishment and few of a substantial Namboodiri Janmis, there is no definite information about a mass Hindu movement out of Malabar during this period." Panikkar, *Against lord and state: religion and peasant uprisings in Malabar*,p.55.

begged for the protection of the Travancore Maharaja.”¹⁰⁸ This begging for protection was found in C.V’s novel as well, and it is pertinent to mention here that both Menon and Pillai were staunch supporters of the Travancore dynasty; Pillai dedicates his novel to the then Maharaja of Travancore. In other words, by mentioning that the higher castes or Hindus of Malabar sought refuge and begged for protection from the King of Travancore, both the historian and novelist are keen to emphasize the supremacy of the Travancore king and the state over Malabar Hindus. I suggest here that for both the historians and the novelist, the Mysore interlude provides enough opportunity to reassert the legitimacy of the Travancore as a benevolent royal household and protector of *Dharma*. Yet, Shankunni Menon’s text came into conflict with later historians such as C.K Kareem and K.N Panikkar.

The historical genealogy of fiction

Let’s have a closer look at how the Mysore threat has been specifically portrayed in Shankunni Menon’s writing. When Marthanda Varma (d.1758), the founder of the powerful centralized state of Travancore, was on his deathbed, he had some advice for his nephew Rama Varma (d.1798). Amongst the six pieces of advice Menon listed, the first and last are important in the context of the Mysore invasion, which soon became the major concern.¹⁰⁹ The first was to consider the kingdom as sacrificed to Sri Padmanabha Swami. The nineteenth century historians and twentieth century novelist C.V. identified the act of dedicating the kingdom to the deity of Padmanabha (and naming the capital of Travancore as ‘Ananthapuri’ or the city of Ananthanis) as the unabashed ‘Hindu character’ of the kingdom.¹¹⁰ Marthanda Varma’s final advice was to keep the relationship with the English East India Company strong.¹¹¹ These two ‘religious’ and ‘political’ pieces of advice

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.212.

¹⁰⁹ Menon, *History of Travancore*, pp.174-175.

¹¹⁰ See Nagam Aiya, *TSM* vol 1, p.362.

¹¹¹ Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.175.

respectively became foundational to what Rama varma established in the kingdom of Travancore in the latter part of the eighteenth century: Travancore was to be a ‘dharmarajyam’, ‘religious’ state, and contrary to the other eighteenth-century Indian rulers, was to strive for a cordial relationship with the British. A permanent alliance with the English East Company in the crucial decades of the English conquest of the subcontinent was formed.¹¹² Shankunni Menon was clearly appreciative of the mighty English power which could contain Haidar Ali’s territorial ambitions extending to Travancore. For example, he argues that the 1769 treaty between Haidar and the English East India Company was a result of the realization on Haidar’s part that the English were mightier than him.¹¹³

What could have prompted Shankunni Menon to provide a glorious history of English East India Company along with his primary agenda of promoting Travancore, one may ask. Moreover, possibly the conclusion leads us to assume that Menon’s contemporary concerns as a Diwan were important for him to claim a strong alliance with the British. Kumar’s argument that for C.V. the unequal position of Travancore against the British government was a reason for emphasizing ‘sovereignty’ in his writing, is useful in this regard.¹¹⁴ While as a novelist, C.V. was dealing with an uncertainty on the question of sovereignty, for Diwan Peshkar Shankunni Menon, the vital issue was to link colonialism and the Travancore state. C.V. was more concerned with mourning for the lost Nair power since the eighteenth century.¹¹⁵ Shankunni Menon, as a historian and administrator expressed loyalty to the Travancore kingdom of the late nineteenth century, by locating a common glorious past where the British and his state were close allies and had a common enemy, namely ‘the Mysore sultans.’ The binary created in Shankunni Menon between the moral character of

¹¹² Even Nizam or the Nawabs of Arcot had this smooth and consistent relation with the English East India Company during this period, one could argue.

¹¹³ Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.201. Nagam Aiya reproduced Menon’s account on the final interaction between Marthanada Varam and Rama Varma, Nagam Aiya, *TSM* vol 1, pp.366-367.

¹¹⁴ Kumar, *Writing the First Person: Literature, History and Autobiography in Modern Kerala*, p.173.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.175.

Travancore Rajas and Mysore Sultans is crucial. Haidar Ali was not only ‘arrogant, tyrannical’ but also ‘ambitious and faithless’, whereas the Travancore king was intelligent and farsighted.¹¹⁶

Haidar Ali’s second attack of Malabar in 1774 is mostly portrayed as destruction.¹¹⁷ Both Shankunni Menon and C. V. use similar terms to describe Tipu Sultan’s interests in Travancore. Tipu’s repeated invasions of Malabar were termed as ‘violent and cruel’ by Menon.¹¹⁸ He added that the most heinous act of Tipu Sultan was converting Hindus of Malabar without discriminating between *savarna* or *avarna* or men or women.¹¹⁹ He alleges that Tipu declared military rule (more of a contemporary term) between Ponnani to Kannur (the colonial divisions of south and North Malabar). Besides whoever refused to accept the ‘prophet’ was killed which led to a migration to Travancore from Malabar, Menon notes.¹²⁰ Menon cites no specific sources for this account. C.V’s fiction mentions the coming of refugees and their reception. Both these versions take into account the higher moral and political influence the Travancore king acquires over the Malabar Hindus when they seek refuge.¹²¹ Subsequently a dispute arose between Travancore and Mysore over the refugees. With their focus on the military disputes between these two kingdoms, Mohibbul Hasan and

¹¹⁶ Shankunni Menon explains how important it was to construct Travancore lines in the impending attack of Mysore. Shankunni Menon notes Haidar as “Tyrannical and arrogant.” Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.192 & p.200.

¹¹⁷ Ibid,203.

¹¹⁸ Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.,212 & p.184. Interestingly, Nagam Aiya blamed Haidar for a lot of atrocities including conversion to Islam. Nagam Aiya, *TSM* vol 1, p.281. Such a depiction of Haidar was a clear rupture from the colonial narratives. For instance, Wilks has noted, that Haidar has a tolerant spirit in comparison with Tipu. Wilks added that Haidar was “seldom wrong” while Tipu was “seldom right.” Wilks, *Historical Sketches of South India*, Vol iii ,London, 1817,p.464.

¹¹⁹ Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.,212. The “indiscriminate” conversion was portrayed as “worst of all tyrannical measures” by Tipu.

¹²⁰ Menon says that “all who objected to acknowledge the Prophet were menaced with death.” Ibid,p.212.

¹²¹ The “helpless refugees” and a “generous” Maharaja. *Ibid*. As we have seen in the previous chapter *The JCRM* used the similar terms such as helpless to describe the higher castes of Malabar. But the moral attributions Menon gives to Travancore Raja could find its origins in Mark Wilks. Mark Wilks noted, “the charitable aid and protection afforded to them (refugees from Malabar) by the raja of Travancore rather belonged to the class of moral duties than political rights.” Mark Wilks, *Historical Sketches of South India*,Vol iii,London,1817, p.46.

Kareem do not discuss the ‘refugee problem’ in detail, specially the cultural aspects.¹²² One has to rely on Menon’s account.

The composition of the refugees, who were first described as ‘high caste Hindus,’ is further unpacked in Menon’s description. The family of the Zamorin and a few wealthy Namboodiris (a sect of Malabar Brahmins) sought refuge with the Travancore king.¹²³ The ‘wealthy’ category may denote that the migrants were erstwhile landlords, but Menon is not interested in their economic status. The refugees were given shelter and were rehabilitated according to their status. In Menon’s account, some of these families created a close bond with the Travancore dynasty.¹²⁴ This gesture of Travancore Raja angered Tipu, Menon says. According to Menon, Tipu Sultan argued that the ‘refugees from Malabar did leave his domain illegally, and the Travancore king is obliged to send him back.’¹²⁵ Menon argues that the Travancore king replied with much politeness and friendliness: they (the refugees) are free to leave voluntarily, but he will not forcibly send them, which would be an injustice. This reply further enraged Tipu Sultan who approached the Travancore king under a pretense of friendship.¹²⁶ Tipu instigated the Raja of Cochin against Travancore in order to buy time to prepare for an attack on Travancore. Here Shankunni Menon shows the Raja of Cochin as a weak figure who could not stand up to Tipu, nor heed his demands of provoking Travancore.¹²⁷ Unable to convince the Raja of Cochin to provide the necessary provocation, Tipu instead forged a pretentious friendship with the King of Travancore. Tipu sent his

¹²² Unlike Travancore histories and fictions, Mohibbul Hasan and Kareem- following Tipu Sultan’s arguments against the Travancore- did not see the refugee problem as a case of ‘helpless Brahmins’ but more as an issue of rebellion against Mysore in Malabar. Hasan says the rebels took refuge in the forests adjoining the Travancore state which prompted Tipu towards an attack on Travancore Lines. Hasan, *History of Tipu Sultan*, p.164. In *Vellayude Charithram* we noted that the Zamorin, his family and prominent Brahmins of Malabar stayed at *Idappalli*, close to the Travancore Lines. See first chapter of this dissertation.

¹²³ Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.212.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* Tipu saw them as deserters from his domain.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.213.

¹²⁷ However in Wilks, as soon as the news of Tipu’s possible attack came the Raja of Travancore was “terrified.” Wilks, *Historical Sketches of South India*, Vol iii, p.41.

representatives for negotiations through as well as many presents to appease the king, including a horse. The friendship offer was rejected, but what particularly annoyed Tipu's representatives was the presence of an English East India Company officer in the court.¹²⁸ The relations between the English East India Company and Travancore were so strong that Travancore refused to read any correspondence sent by Mysore without the presence of an English officer. Tipu's letter and Travancore's reply was translated into English and sent to Madras. Menon depicts Travancore as an entirely honest ally of the English. Meanwhile, the representatives of Travancore returned from Tipu's court in Coimbatore to inform the king that Tipu Sultan was preparing for a big war with Travancore.¹²⁹

In 1788, Tipu entered Malabar again with a huge army and an intention to attack Travancore.¹³⁰ Tipu summoned his feudatory, the Raja of Cochin to his court. The 'weak' Raja was worried: since he could not broker peace between Travancore and Mysore, he was anxious that Tipu might either annex Cochin or imprison him, or in the worst case even convert him to Islam.¹³¹ He shared these fears with the King of Travancore and his friends in the Dutch East India Company; both told him that his fears were not unsubstantiated. The Raja of Cochin replied to Tipu that he was unwell and bedridden, so he could not meet Tipu at Palakkad as demanded. Tipu sent an emissary, one Khader Khan, pretending to enquire about the raja's health, but Shankunni Menon quickly adds that the actual purpose was to verify whether the raja is truly ill or not. Tipu threatened the Cochin raja with conquest of his kingdom and imprisonment, but the Travancore King, on the other hand, offered all help to Cochin in the event of a Mysore attack.¹³² Travancore began fortifying the *Nedumkotta* and purchased two Dutch forts along for this purpose, which as already noted, angered Tipu

¹²⁸Menon, *History of Travancore*, ,p..214

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*,p.216

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*,p.219.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

Sultan.¹³³ In Menon's view, this was a necessary precautionary step from the Travancore side.¹³⁴ In the following negotiations Mysore demanded extradition of the 'rebels of Malabar' and that Travancore should give up the claims over the Dutch. However, the negotiations failed, and none of these demands were met. Shankunni Menon adds that it was soon after this that Travancore lines (also known as Travancore lines) was attacked.¹³⁵

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, historians have seen this attack as the primary event among the conflicts between Travancore and Mysore in the eighteenth century. Shankunni Menon, who was one of the first to join the debate, argued that Tipu did participate in this attack and could not win against the Travancore army. Shankunni Menon said that the Travancore army captured Tipu's sword, ring, and ornaments and Tipu withdrew from the war with great shame and sadness.¹³⁶ The fruits of Travancore's victory was shared among Tipu's arch enemies - the English East India Company and the Nawab of Arcot. The Nawab of Arcot asked for Tipu's sword and military equipment acquired by Travancore and which were sent to Arcot.¹³⁷ However, at the same time Shankunni Menon quotes correspondence between the English East India Company and Mysore, where the Company's representative mentioned that Tipu's presence near the Travancore lines has created great panic for the Travancore King. Despite the strong relations that existed between Travancore and the Company, Menon notes that Travancore had to face an attack of Tipu on *Nedumkotta* in 1789 all alone. Menon blames the indifference on the part of their allies for Tipu's capture and destruction of *Nedumkotta*. After the destruction of *Nedumkotta*, Menon claims, in an instance which we do not find either in colonial sources or later histories written on Tipu, that an undisciplined army of Mysore conducted many cruelties in the nearby villages on the

¹³³ *Ibid.*,p.220.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*,p.219.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*,p.222.

¹³⁶ For the early British view of the battle, see Wilks, *Historical Sketches of South India*, Vol iii,pp.46-49.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*,p.228.

frontier of Travancore.¹³⁸ The followers of Muhammad destroyed Hindu temples and Christian churches alike, he says. Many of the villagers took refuge in the nearby forests, Menon adds, and several others were imprisoned. According to him, the Mysore army did not discriminate between poor or rich in their atrocities. Menon notes the small towns or villages, such as Paravaur and Aangad, where these instances took place.¹³⁹ Menon says that the remnants of this destruction could still be found. He also alleges that old documents kept in temples, churches, and houses were burned.¹⁴⁰ However, we do not have similar stories of the destruction of documents from the Malabar side, except in one instance: when the Zamorin immolated himself, some of the palace documents were also lost.¹⁴¹ Shankunni Menon argues that all these cruelties occurred with a clear order from Tipu Sultan.¹⁴² While there are random proclamations of Tipu's stories of forced conversion, the most concrete beliefs and stories of destruction associated with Mysore invasion revolve around this particular instance mentioned by Menon. While these stories are still available in the popular memory around the churches and temples in this region, Shankunni Menon is the only historian who notes them in the nineteenth century, and his sources were his first hand impressions from the frontiers of Travancore where he saw the material remnants of the war. Perhaps, Shankunni Menon's attribution of Muhammadan and prophet are nineteenth-century constructions where he wanted to prove a religious content to Tipu's attack.

Menon narrates how Tipu lost the war with Travancore. While Tipu was successful in destroying the Travancore lines, he was faced with an unfamiliar onslaught of monsoon rains and the subsequent flooding of the Aluva River. Tipu was stunned by this development, and

¹³⁸ Menon notes that Tipu 'took a pickaxe himself and set an example which was followed by everyone present and the demolition of wall was completed by his army without much delay.' *Ibid*, p.232.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p.233.

¹⁴⁰ As a historian, Shankunni Menon noted in the beginning that he was aware of the importance of documents. Menon's description of the war is dramatic and detailing. He notes the destruction of Churches, temples and archives by the 'followers of Mahomet' as 'heart rendering.' *Ibid*, p.,233.

¹⁴¹ This event is discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation.

¹⁴² *Ibid*.

his army could not proceed further. Here Menon sees it as divine wrath for destroying the temple and churches.¹⁴³ Menon imagines that Tipu must have regretted his acts. The situation worsened with the spread of cholera and smallpox, scarcity of food, and mass starvation, causing the army to loot and plunder in the nearby settlements. Significantly, Menon states that even the famous novelist Sir Walter Scott would not have been able to describe the cruelties committed by the Mysore army.¹⁴⁴ Shankunni Menon brings Walter Scott to proclaim the inability of scientific history to grasp the details of the war, rampage, and cruelties committed by the Mysore army. Does this inspire C.V. to attempt the fictionalization of history?

After the description of the battle, Menon cites a conversation between the then Keshava Pillai and the Raja of Travancore, which echoed the feeling later reflected in C.V.'s novels: that Tipu's invasion of Travancore was inevitable. The trust on the English seems to have broken at this stage, and the Raja lamented that the English allowed Mysore to invade Travancore. However, Keshava Pillai comforted the king saying that according to his sources, the government of Bengal has taken the issue seriously, and they would soon declare war against Tipu.¹⁴⁵ Shankunni Menon shows the difference between the attitude of the Bengal government and the Madras government in dealing with the issue. He cites Lord Cornwallis's letter to the Governor of Madras, Holland, in which Cornwallis was determined to 'reclaim' the lands conquered by Tipu. Soon Cornwallis replaced the Madras Governor

¹⁴³ Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.234. Nagam Aiya in 1906 repeated Menon's narrative in TSM. See Nagam Aiya, *TSM*, vol 1, p.398. However, similar to how we noted on the narratives of *pada* in the first chapter, the contemporary lore of one of the churches, along the Travancore lines, remember the destructions as never took place. For instance, The Manju Matha Basilica of Pallippuram, in the frontiers of Travancore, has a lore on Tipu Sultan's attack. The devotees of the church gathered during the attack praying to their *Matha* (mother deity) of the church to avert the attack. A miracle happened in which a heavy fog erupted to disrupt all the plans of Tipu Sultan's attack against the church. The fog resulted in heavy flood on Travancore lines and Tipu's loss. See <https://manjumatha.wordpress.com/history/>

¹⁴⁴ Menon, *History of Travancore*, p.234.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.235.

Holland with General Meadows.¹⁴⁶ Shankunni Menon follows the standard narratives of English East India company accounts of the early nineteenth century here. Soon after, the Madras regiment arrived in support of Travancore, and a military mobilization was undertaken at Trichinopoly against Tipu Sultan, who was busy fighting the war of *Nedumkotta* at the borders of Travancore.¹⁴⁷

Shankunni Menon argues that this English movement was seen as a danger by Tipu Sultan, and the overflowing rivers made Tipu's position worse. Sensing the growing anxiety among his troops, Tipu divided his army in two and retreated via separate paths to Palakkad.¹⁴⁸ However, the Mysore army suffered a lot due to this retreat, and Shankunni Menon compares this withdrawal to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow.¹⁴⁹ The combined forces of Travancore and English East Company subsequently fought against the Mysore Army at Dindigul, Palakkad, and Coimbatore. These battles finally led to the loss of Malabar for Tipu Sultan and the humiliating treaty of Srirangapatana in 1792.¹⁵⁰ In Shankunni Menon's account, result of the attack of Travancore was a significant blow to Tipu Sultan in his decades-long fight against the English East India Company.¹⁵¹ The Travancore king was overjoyed by the defeat of Tipu, but his joy did not last long; the English East India Company demanded war expenditure for helping Travancore against Tipu. In the rest of Menon's book, one no longer finds the fear of Tipu.

To what extent was the fear genuine? How do we adjudge the realm of 'supernatural' and mythical memories? 'Aithiyamala', a collection of orally circulated myths around the

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*,p.237.

¹⁴⁷ Menon says that on 28th December 1789, Tipu's army was defeated at the Travancore lines. *Ibid.*,227. Also see Nagam Aiya reaffirming Tipu's defeat in *TSM* vol 1,p.394.

¹⁴⁸ . Menon, *History of Travancore*,p.228.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*,p.238.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Much before Shankunni Menon, one could note in the *Travancore State Calendar* for the year 1841 lists the defeat of Tipu by Lord Cornwallis of 6th February 1792 as one of the "remarkable days." See *A Calendar for the year 1841 adapted for the meridian of Trevendrum,(sic) - Published by the Order of His highness the Rajah of Travancore*. Government Press, *Trevendrum*, 1840, p.4.

Malayalam region, mostly associated with temples, indigenous medicine and miraculous deeds of holy men, abound with stories of miracles and myths and *yakshis* who were defeated by learned Brahmins. It even features the tale of a *yakshi* who begins a long-term sexual relationship with one of the Namboodiri. Many of the historical figures mentioned in this collection are real, including vaidyars (medical practitioners), astrologers, and stories and families close to King Zamorin's court, *Kolathiri* and *Arakkal* of North Malabar, the Cochin court and the Travancore court in the others. One of the stories as Kottarathil Shankunni mentions, we may see the background to Menon's history. This is related to the anxiety around the summons issued to Raja of Cochin by Tipu Sultan. In Shankunni Menon's story, the Raja of Cochin immediately conveys his anxiety to the Travancore king, and the king confirms that Tipu would probably annex his kingdom and advises him against visiting Tipu Sultan. But the outcome of the Raja of Cochin's meeting with Shankunni Menon is worth mentioning as described in *Aithahyamala*. In *Aithahyamala* the Raja's immediate consultation was with the Kallor Nambudirippad, member of a learned Brahmin family, who had miraculous abilities according to the Brahmanical text of *Aithihyamala*. Kottarathil Shankunni says that Tipu's real intention was to invade Travancore after influencing the Raja of Cochin. In Shankunni Menon also one sees a terrified raja who was seized by panic after Tipu's summons. He conveyed his fear of the Kallor Nambudirippad. The Nambudirippad asked the raja not to worry and conducted a 'bhagavathi seva' (a ritual for *Bhagavathi* - the female goddess cult) and took some red powder from the residue of the *puja* and marked the forehead of the Cochin Raja with it. According to *Aithihyamala* the Raja of Cochin met Tipu Sultan with this red mark or *thilaka* on his forehead. In a miracle credited to *Bhagavathi seva* and the Nambudirippad, the Raja was warmly received by Tipu Sultan, after a cordial conversation, was sent back with many presents.¹⁵² Due to the miracle of *Bhagavathi seva*

¹⁵² Kottarathil Shankunni, *Aithihyamala*, p.963.

and the powers of the Namboodirippad, Tipu Sultan was reminded that he actually summoned the Raja for a political purpose, which was to make an agreement with him which would help Sultan to conquer Travancore. Yet what the *Aithiyamala* says, if we ignore the part about the miracle, is that the fear of the Raja of Cochin about conversion, annexation, and imprisonment was unfounded, and instead, he was greeted warmly by Tipu Sultan. Here one sees how the myth contradicts Menon's historical narrative.

Kottarathil Shankunni also notes the story of a Namboodiri poet of the eighteenth century. The poet once submitted two Sanskrit eulogies praising the Maharaja Rama Varma. One of the *shlokas*, which was especially appreciated in the Travancore court, described the Raja as the shelter-giver of the "twice born" or *dwija kula sharana*, which increases his *keerthi* (fame). Kottarathil Shankunni notes that this term was considered to be especially apt in the court since there were many Brahmins who took shelter under the Travancore King from the offensive (*upadravangal*) of Tipu Sultan. We have seen in Shankunni Menon that the caste of the refugees is mentioned as high castes, and the emphasis of caste identity is what stands out both in the writing of history and myth.¹⁵³

Fear in the making of politics and emotions

The tussle between Travancore and Mysore was more emotional than political in the history of Shankunni Menon: the anger, jealousy, greed, ego of the Mysore kings is pitted against the broad-minded, benevolent, pious Travancore kings. Rather than dismissing Menon's work as an emotional defense of the Travancore kingdom, one could probe these emotions to understand the larger questions of the eighteenth-century Malayalam region, to unravel the issues of conversion, persecution, migration and the emotions created around these questions. Fear of conversion is what dominates most of these narratives. Recent studies on the history

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.848-852.

of emotions around the conflicts of the world wars and Nazism similarly revisit the themes of migration and persecution.

What emerges from these narratives is that there is an undeniable aspect of fear and panic repeated both in the narratives of history and in fiction. Rather than verifying and finding out whether there was an actual fear existing among the people in the eighteenth century, I would try to explain the context of fear from historically similar examples.

There is not only a panic but also a sense of fear of conspiracy and political paranoia about Tipu Sultan. It is more clearly shown in the instance where Tipu is shown as clever and deceitful in his attempts to take over Travancore and Cochin. Chandra Mallapalli's recent work looks at the question of British fears around a 'Muslim conspiracy in Deccan.'¹⁵⁴ He argues that there was extensive fear of an organized conspiracy by former princes or people related to them disguised as holy men spreading disaffection against the Company rule in early nineteenth-century Deccan.¹⁵⁵ In our context, while there was a general fear of Tipu Sultan, one could read C.V.'s depiction of Mysore spies in Travancore as similar to the case of "suspicious foreigners" of Deccan, amongst them Yogeshwaran, the pseudo-holy man who is depicted in C.V.'s novel as the greatest internal threat to the stability of Travancore. Mallapalli, in the context of early nineteenth-century Deccan, argues that there were local factors such as "petty, profane and individual-centered" narratives of the local officials in creating an atmosphere of fear.¹⁵⁶ It is important to mention that the colonial and Travancore state officials may have had similar interests in exaggerating such a fear. Those interests would have closely matched the fears and anxieties of the displaced landed castes of Malabar. Further it corresponded with the imagination of Mysore as an outside kingdom and Tipu and

¹⁵⁴ Chandra Mallampalli, *A Muslim Conspiracy in British India?*, Cambridge University, 2017.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.6.

his soldiers as culturally alien, through attribution of ‘Mohammadan other,’ themes which emerged much later.

Further, to probe into the aspect of fear, it is worth discussing the pioneering work of Georges Lefebvre in the context of the Great Fear at the beginning of the French Revolution.¹⁵⁷ Lefebvre investigates the difference between the origin and the spread of fear. According to him there were ‘original panics’ before the ‘warning panics’ spread, and the ‘warning panics’ later became ‘relay panics.’¹⁵⁸ One could look at the panic in the Malayalam region, which might have started in some regions of Malabar under the rule of Zamorin who faced the Mysore army in surprise defeats, as *original panics*, and the *warning panics* could be seen with the migration of landlords and the reaction of the former rajas of Malabar, as evidenced with the fears of conversion and forced circumcision in colonial records.¹⁵⁹ I suggest that following these developments, a *relay panic* occurs in Travancore and Cochin as evidenced by the narrative in the novel and history I discussed above. There were smaller battles taking place at Malabar in the wake of ‘Nair rebellions’ against the Mysore rule. And it was finally only in 1789 that an attack on the frontiers of Travancore took place. Lefebvre also argues that fear and panic are greater in far-off villages than in the place where the actual instance of violence or conflict reported. This is also true in the case of fear of Tipu. As George Rude argues, Lefebvre’s contribution lies in the fact that rumor, panic, and fear could no longer be identified as only an “interesting psychological phenomenon” but as something having historical consequences and thus significant to a historical process.¹⁶⁰ Following Lefebvre one could argue that after a point it no longer mattered whether the fear was rooted in evidence or not, Tipu did indeed scare Malabar and Travancore aristocracy with a threat of

¹⁵⁷ Georges Lefebvre, *La Grande Peur de 1789 Paris: A. Colin, 1932, translated as The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in the French Revolution*, Vintage Books.1973.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p.156-169.

¹⁵⁹ *The JCRM* has detailed references. See second chapter of this dissertation.

¹⁶⁰ Georges Lefebvre *The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in the French Revolution*, xiii.

invasion. However, the important question is what consequences this fear had in the historical process. It is further observed by Lefebvre that new militias and nobility reorganized themselves to face this great fear, and the afterlife of fear in popular literature and history writing was linked to the interests of this new nobility.¹⁶¹ Here it would be worthwhile to recall how Kumar locates C.V.'s novel as an act of mourning within the history of the Nair aristocracy. One could see Shankunni Menon as having a similar subject position of C.V. Rather than arguing that the panic has been invented by the two writers in late nineteenth and early twentieth century, I argue that the historical and literary narratives have continuities with the anxieties of aristocracy of the eighteenth century. In other words the thematic preeminence of fear in both Shankunni Menon's and C.V's works cannot be isolated from their engagement with the past, which had employed concepts of 'sovereignty' and 'mourning' linking them to caste and identity formations.

To make sense of some of the quotes attributed and atrocities allegedly committed, it is useful to evoke Lefebvre. Lefebvre doubts the veracity of the infamous quote attributed to the queen during the French Revolution: "if they have no bread, let them eat cake."¹⁶² These rumours could be without substance and pure inventions or by products of possible exaggerations. One such exaggeration that Lefebvre cites is "all children should be thrown into the river because bread is too dear" while the original statement was that "if all the little children died, there would be plenty of bread."¹⁶³ These exaggerations, no doubt, largely came from riot victims. Similarly the rumors circulated about Tipu Sultan's ambitions of conversion would have come from people who had some stakes in the war, either victims or the defeated party. The parallel is more correct if we see the riots in Malabar as tax or revenue riots since the primary intervention of Khudadadi Sirkar in the agrarian fields of Malabar was revenue collection. It

¹⁶¹ See the discussion of "The aristocrat's plot." Ibid.,pp.59-122

¹⁶² Ibid,p.30.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

is beyond the scope of this chapter to evaluate the claim whether there were real instances of conversions. But in all probability one could speculate that with plenty of evidence from popular memory an already exaggerated Persian prose would have had a further exaggerated life in the “popular.”¹⁶⁴

Many have stressed the importance of historicizing emotions instead of privileging social facts such as thoughts, ideologies, and interests. In this case, one could say that a possible reading would seek to understand our novelist and historian through ideology-dynastic interests closely linked to the Travancore kingdom, through depictions of ‘Mohammadan’ and a colonial and proto-nationalistic understanding of the other, along with interests of caste and social class which I have briefly detailed so far. But an investigation of emotions would reveal that these emotions are not merely reflections of social and economic structures. Rather than being judgmental of historians and novelists, the emotions attributed to eighteenth-century characters and historical figures need to be treated separately and autonomously.

Margrit Pernau mentions that emotions in their case study of the nineteenth century were closely linked with moral values.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, it is precisely this link between emotions and moral values that is my point of enquiry. Her examples are from Persian and Urdu literature where “courage and friendship are kept close to justice.”¹⁶⁶ In the case of Malayalam literature, we discussed the valour of Tipu and the ferocity attached to him, along with the fact that the might attributed to his army is never linked to justice but to cruelty and greed. Following Pernau, one could argue that rather than representing emotions which already

¹⁶⁴ Many of Tipu’s such proclamations on “conversion” needs such a linguistic analysis, the transformation of the meanings of conversion I focus in subsequent chapters. I discuss the Persian writings on Tipu Sultan in the final chapter.

¹⁶⁵ Margrit Pernau, "From Morality to Psychology: Emotion Concepts in Urdu, 1870–1920." *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 11.1 2016, pp.38-57.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.41.

existed, the literary and historical texts of the nineteenth century were creating new emotions while expressing the linkages between cruelty, injustice, and greed.¹⁶⁷ She further argues that spaces, in general, bear certain feelings.¹⁶⁸ One could read what Shankunni Menon had ‘felt’ while recalling the alleged Mysore rampage after the battle of *Nedumkotta*, in the frontiers of the erstwhile Travancore state. For Pernau, there is a “historical and social variability to the feelings provoked” in a space.¹⁶⁹ It is necessary to look at the historical space around the battle of *Nedumkotta* where in late nineteenth century Shankunni Menon finds evidence of destruction and where one sees the emotional flourish of a historian against the crudities committed by the Mysore army. With her detailed analysis of the formations of emotions and spaces from the 1840s north India, Pernau argues that people whose emotions are already shaped by their specific social environment (which, in Shankunni Menon’s and C.V.’s case, was the close emotional proximity to the court of Travancore) could “experience specific emotions if they walk into a space.”¹⁷⁰

Similarly, one could argue that the affective ways of depicting Mysore in both Shankunni Menon and C.V., a point where the fiction and history stylistically merge, is also the product of specific experiences. There are two kinds of emotions suggested: emotional virtues and emotional vices. The emotional virtues are mostly associated with the Travancore and the latter with Mysore and Tipu. Vices are depicted as either a ‘deficiency’ or ‘excess’, while virtues constitute a ‘state of balance.’¹⁷¹ While in Urdu literature, emotional virtues and polity are interdependent, how exactly they configure in the context of Malayalam texts is worth probing. Pernau specifically looks at how emotional virtues become important for ascribing a division between barbarity and civility within the colonial context of the late nineteenth

¹⁶⁷ Margrit Pernau, "Mapping Emotions, Constructing Feelings." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 58.5 2015, p 635.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.636.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.662.

¹⁷¹ Pernau, . "From Morality to Psychology: Emotion Concepts in Urdu, 1870–1920," p.41.

century.¹⁷² She argues that cultivating the right emotions becomes a political project; it is more literally and obviously a political project in the texts we are analyzing.

Taking forward the relations between emotions and history, Harald Fischer-Tine and Christian Whyte have demonstrated that “colonial empires has been to a considerable extent shaped by negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, and embarrassments, as well as by the regular occurrence of panics.”¹⁷³ In both fictional and historical texts we could see that Tipu caused panic in Travancore with the looming threat of an invasion while simultaneously facing embarrassment - in the Travancore account of his shameful defeat - at the battle of *Nedumkotta*. The actual correspondences occurred between the Raja of Travancore and the English East India Company. We did see the Raja was concerned about the loss on his side. However, the historical and popular triumphalist representations of the battle which shaped the Travancore state in nineteenth and twentieth centuries centered their memories on negative emotions –from panic inside to the shame and jealousy attributed to the enemy.

Similarly, Indivar Kamtekar demonstrates how the great fear associated with a possible Japanese attack on British India triggered panics across the country in the 1940s.¹⁷⁴ In both cases, we notice that the triggering factor was an invasion that never happened; there was a massive influx of refugees; the war was perceived as a ‘lost cause,’ and false alarms spread far and wide. Kamtekar argues that ‘the currents of fear traveled through rumors.’¹⁷⁵ In the texts we have analyzed, there is ample evidence to suggest that rumors were the vehicles of the spreading fear.

¹⁷² Ibid,p.46.

¹⁷³ Harald Fischer- Tine, ed. *Anxieties, Fear and Panic in Colonial Settings: Empires on the verge of a nervous breakdown*. Springer, 2017, p.1.

¹⁷⁴, Indivar Kamtekar. "The Shiver of 1942." *Studies in History* 18.1, 2002, pp. 81-102.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid,p.86.

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to argue that the conflict between Travancore and Tipu Sultan in eighteenth century reverberated in memory until the early twentieth century. This chapter has further argued that there is very little difference in the representation of Mysore in historical and fictional narratives - while the historical presents only a less dramatized version of the event, it contains the deep underlying emotions closely resembling that of fiction. It was similar to how the Bouvines' anxieties over "foreign invasions" stemmed from an internal state of deep anarchy.¹⁷⁶ Having outlined the life of the panic associated with the Mysore threat to Travancore after the former's Malabar invasion, a related aspect is the memories of Mysore rule in the twentieth century social reformism of Malabar, which I explore in the following chapter.

¹⁷⁶ Duby, *The Legend of Bouvines: War, Religion, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, p.170.

CHAPTER 4

INVENTING CHELA KALAPAM: THE REFORMING ELITE AND TIPU SULTAN, circa 1798-1954

“During the time of Tipu there was of course wholesale conversion of all castes, but most of the Brahmans and Nayars who were forcibly converted subsequently disowned Muhammadanism, and their descendants now belong to their original castes, though they are looked upon to some extent as polluted, and are known as Chela Nambudiris, or Chela Nayars.”

- C.A Innes (Collector of Malabar), 1912.¹

The term *chela* - denoting the descendants of those families who converted to Islam during Tipu Sultan’s time - has been prevalent in the public debates over caste practices and community reforms among the Nairs and Namboodiris of the early twentieth century Malabar. This chapter focuses on the rebirth of *chela* converts in the early twentieth century Malayalam novels against the background of social reformism and caste politics. The first section of this chapter deals with the historiography of *chelas* or *asadi Ilahi* regiments of Tipu Sultan’s army. In the second section, I discuss the *chela* discourse in *mamuls* (caste practices) and caste claims in nineteenth century Malabar. In the third section, I discuss three Malayalam historical novels dealing with Tipu’s time in Malabar, *Sreedharan Adhava Chela Kalapa Kalathe oru Katha* (1921),² *Velluvakammaran* (1927),³ and *Tipuvinte Malayala Rani*

¹ C.A Innes, F. B. Evans, *Madras Districts Gazetteers: Malabar and Anjengo. Vol. I.* Superintendent Government Printing, Madras. 1915, p.190.

² K.P Kuttishankara Panikkar, *Sreedharan Adhava Chela Kalapa Kalathe oru Katha [Sreedharan ie a story from the time of Chela Kalapam]*, Velayudhan Nair, 1921. Mal D 363. India office Library, London.

³ C Kunjirama Menon, *Velluvakammaran*, Kerala Sahitya Akademi, 1927 (2000 reprint).

(1954).⁴

Further, this chapter focuses on the colonial writings on one of Haidar's most illustrious *chelas* from Malabar, Hyath Sahib or Ayaz Khan. This chapter argues that the colonial meaning and interpretation of the term *chela* had a "popular" afterlife in twentieth century Malabar in caste politics and Malayalam fiction. Further, this chapter argues that the resurrection of *chela* as *Chela Kalapam* in the popular in the context of the Malabar rebellion of 1921 was a response of the upper caste organizations to the agrarian troubles in Malabar. This chapter demonstrates that there was resistance to enquiring about the causes of the rebellion and denial of agrarian troubles among a section of twentieth-century Malayali 're-forming' elite.⁵ It further focuses on the debates in the twentieth century Malayalam weekly *Yogakshemam* on conversions and *Kalapam* (riot), which first pointed to the similarities between Tipu's time and the contemporary "anarchy." The chapter further demonstrates how the invention of *Chela Kalapam* aided a section of elites, and how the decline of the old order and dissensions in the joint-family system in the present demanded a reinvention of new patrilineal heroes from the eighteenth century past. Before focusing on the Malayalam reformist writings on *chela* the chapter delineates the origins of *chela* and transformations of its meaning since the late eighteenth century in the colonial discourse.

***Asad-i-ilahi* or Tipu's Janissaries**

The war with Marathas for Adoni in 1786 was one of the first battles Tipu Sultan conducted

⁴ Karupam Veetil Gopala Pilla, *Tipuvinte Malayala Rani* [The Malayala Queen of Tipu], National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1954.

⁵ My use of the category 'reforming elites' is indebted to J Devika's pioneering study on early twentieth Century Kerala social reformism. She focuses on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reformist individuals while paying attention to the process of "individualisation and gendering as aspects of the same phenomena". Devika, *En-Gendering individuals: The Language of Re-forming in Twentieth Century Keralam*, Orient Blackswan, 2007, p.9.

after annexing the throne of Mysore.⁶ He added Adoni to his kingdom, followed by Sanore, Koorke, and Anagoondy.⁷ On 7th July 1786, Charles Malet wrote a report to the Governor-General on Tipu Sultan's attack on Adoni.

There are 15 battalions of *chelyas* or slaves composed of captives, fugitives, and renegades, who have voluntarily embraced or by compulsion been forced into Mahommedanism. Among these are great many English who are furnished with wives by the Sircar so as to instruct them in the language and tenets of their new faith to which the most rigid observation is given. The *Chelyas* are regularly quartered in barracks and have their daily food from...which institution has a near resemblance to Janizaries.⁸

Malet's view of *chela* as slaves and a system closely resembling Ottoman Janissaries was one of the first available references to *chela* in colonial documents.⁹ Following this, Mark Wilks reaffirmed that *chelas* were captive converts, in imitation with Turkish Janissaries, and he added that *chela* in "Hindustani language meant disciple or slave."¹⁰ The colonial translators continued to employ this definition of *chela* throughout the nineteenth century. William Miles, in his translation of Mir Husain Ali Kirmani's *Tarikhe Tipu Sultan* 'noted: "Chelas are slaves brought up by the late nawab (Haidar Ali) and trained for service by the Sultan, and when formed into regiments called by him *Asad-i-ilahi*."¹¹ Ranga Nair - a prominent convert from Coorg- was the head of one such *Asadi Ilahi* regiment.

⁶ On Tipu's attack on Adoni, see Mir Hussain Ali Khan *History of Tipu Sultan being a continuation of Neshani Hyduri*, tr. from Persian by Col." W. Miles 1864 (1997 reprint), p.45.

⁷ Anonymous, *Authentic Memoirs of Tippu Sultan by an officer the East India Service*, Calcutta, 1819,p.21.

⁸ Sardesai, G.S, *Poona Residency Correspondence, Volume II, Poona Affairs 1786-87, Malet's Embassy*.1936,p.24.

⁹ Suraiya Faroqhi has shown that the Ottoman Janissaries were so dependent on the Ottoman Sultan which made their status "bore a resemblance to slavery." They were originally recruited from the "from the fifth of all war prisoners that the Sultan was entitled to after every military campaign." Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire – A Short History*, Markus Wiener, 2009,pp.47-48.

¹⁰ Mark Wilks, *Historical sketches of the South Indian history, from the earliest times to the last Muhammadan dynasty* vol 1, p.740.

¹¹ Kirmani, *History of Tipu Sultan being a continuation of Neshani Hyduri*, p.37.

Apart from Malet, a vital reference both to Wilks and Miles was in Kirkpatrick's compilation *select letters of Tipu Sultan*¹². The link Miles made between *chelas* and *Asad-i-ilahi* battalion had its origins in Kirkpatrick's interpretation of Tipu Sultan's letters, where Kirkpatrick discussed *Asad-i-ilahi* as a contingent or troop in Tipu Sultan's army.¹³ Kirkpatrick states that Tipu instructed his men to pay a monthly allowance to one of the 'European Chailahs' and ensure his employment.¹⁴ Further, "A *Chailah* is an adopted slave. He is treated in many respects with the same tenderness as the sons of the family, of which he is considered a member. The *Chailah* here mentioned, had, of course, become a Musulman."¹⁵ In one instance, Tipu asked that slave of a particular deceased, Kadir Agha was enrolled among the *Asad-i-ilahi* corps.¹⁶ Kirkpatrick suggested that Tipu commanded and consulted the *Asad-i-ilahi* regiment¹⁷ on several occasions.¹⁸ Attack on an enemy camp (of *nazrenes* or European Christians) is described in the following words "The *usud-ilhye* people, instantly attacking with them with sword and bayonet, sent several of them to hell, and made some of them prisoners."¹⁹ The *Select Letters* indicated that the enemies were often scared to meet the *Asad-i-ilahi* troops.²⁰ However, Kirkpatrick added that "several nazrenes" had served with the *Asad-i-ilahi* and quit after serving many years, making it akin to volunteer service.²¹ In an instance, a sum of 300 rupees was instructed to be given to three members *Asad-i-ilahi* troops

¹² Mark Wilks was able to consult the unpublished version of Kirkpatrick's *Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan*. Both Wilks and Kirkpatrick acknowledge each other's works and views. See Mark Wilks, *Historical sketches of the South Indian history, from the earliest times to the last Muhammadan dynasty*.vol.1, p.xxxviii.

¹³ William Kirkpatrick, *Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan to Various Public Functionaries*. p. iv.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.213.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.247.

¹⁷ *Usude Ilhye* was the corrupted usage in Kirkpatrick for *Asad-i- Ilahi* which he defined as a band or corps, *Ibid*, p.396.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp.387-388.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.10.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.389.

²¹ *Ibid*,p.375. The problem cited was that they quit without any prior notice, under the instigation of their ('worthless') commander. It is very similar to what Micheal Soracoe has observed "The supposedly forced conversions to Islam could equally have been a deliberate choice on the part of some captives, preferring to cross over into a self-fashioned Indian identity and take up service under Tipu rather than remain in a prison cell indefinitely." See Michael Soracoe *Tyrant! Tipu Sultan and the Reconceptation of British Imperial Identity, 1780-1800*, p.59.

“on occasion of their approaching marriages” and for the “celebration of their nuptials.”²²

In a letter which defines the composition of this contingent, Tipu wrote to Ehsanulla Khan “You will put into (or enroll in the corps of) *Usud-Ilhyes*, as many Hindoos, male and female, as their willing, of their own accord, to enter into the same and you will then transmit a return of them to us, it being our intention to augment their pay.”²³ Kirkpatrick observed that the *Asad-i-ilahi* were a distinct group from the *Ahmadis* (Christian converts who became a separate troop in Tipu’s army), but he was unsure of whether it could be a later term used for *Ahmadi* troops.²⁴ While in the text of the letter, as Kirkpatrick admitted, there was nothing to suggest that the *Asad-i-ilahi* were converted to join the troops, Kirkpatrick assumed that with the ‘context’ and ‘name given to them’ their conversion was a “necessary condition for their incorporation with the *Usude-ilhyes*.” However, Kirkpatrick added that *Usude Ilhye* was also one of the terms Tipu used for his government interchangeably with *Khodadad*, *Ahmadi* and *Haidary Sirkars*.²⁵ Kirkpatrick rightly anticipated that Tipu took special care of these battalions. In one such example, Tipu wrote to Badruzamman Khan “your two letters, with the enclosed memorandums of the *Naimar* (or Nair) captives have been received. You did right in causing a hundred and thirty five of them to be circumcised and in putting eleven of the youngest into the *Usud ilhye* band (or class), and the remaining ninety four into the *Ahmady* troop, consigning the whole, at the same time, to the charge of *Kiladar* of Nugr. You must give strict orders to the *Kiladar*, to take the utmost care of these people, so that they shall not perish”.²⁶

²² In Kirkpatrick, *Select Letters of Tippoo Sultan to Various Public Functionaries*, p.412.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.177.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Kirkpatrick observes that “This term signifies the Divine Lion, or the Lion of God, and was one of the appellations bestowed on Ali. It has been already seen, that Tippoo sometimes designated his own state, or country, by this name ; calling it, occasionally, the Sircar Unsud-Ilhye; as well as Ahmady, Hydery, and Khodddd”. *Ibid.* p.177. Also see *Ibid.* p. XXXIV.

²⁶ Letter CCXXIV in *Ibid.* p.297.

The charge of circumcision continued to define the term *chela* in colonial and vernacular usages of the term. In the Orientalist literature, the term *chela* was used similar to and connected with their portrayal of Tipu Sultan's purported 'voracious sexuality.'²⁷ Orientalists have traced back the usage of *chela* to the Mughal king Akbar's time.²⁸ It was added in one of the earliest European accounts of war with Tipu by William Drake, a former English prisoner of Tipu, that "several European boys were taught dancing in the country style and forced to dance in female dresses before Tippoo. It is said that of late as they grew up, they have been transferred to the Cheylah Battallions.'²⁹ This account stated that the European captives were forced to serve in *chela* battalions, and that they were circumcised.³⁰ Micheal Soracoe has argued that the European accounts of Tipu's captivity as "emasculating" was most evident in the narratives of war prisoners.³¹ Fra Bartlomeo a Carmel priest and an eighteenth-century traveller wrote:

In the years 1788 and 1789, when the cruel Tippoo Sultan Bahader, son of Hayder Aly (sic) Khan, persecuted the Brahmans, and caused them either to be unmercifully beat, or circumcised according to the Mahometan(sic) manner, Christian and Pagan women were compelled to marry Mahometans; and Mahometan women were compelled to marry Heathens and Christians. The Pagans were deprived of the token of their nobility, which is a lock of hair called Cudumi; and every Christian who appeared in the frreets (sic), multi (sic) either submit to be circumcised or be hanged

²⁷ Michael Soracoe argues that "Tipu Sultan was portrayed as possessing an insatiable sexual appetite, one that demanded a constant stream of young women for his harem. Tipu's supposed voracious sexuality represented another way in which India stood for the wild and untamed lure of the exotic East." Michael Soracoe *Tyrant! Tipu Sultan and the Reconception of British Imperial Identity, 1780-1800*, p.99.

²⁸ In *The Indian Antiquary* of 1786 there was a discussion of the term 'cheyla,' which said that while its origins were in the institution of slavery from Mughal Emperor Akbar's time, Akbar disliked the term *bandha* or slave, the word *chelah* which meant faithful disciples was the preferred alternative. Col. Temple, *Indian Antiquary*, July 1896, pp. 202-203..

²⁹. Col. Temple, *Indian Antiquary*, July 1896, p.203. Also see W. S. Seton-Karr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes of the Years*, Vol, 2, Calcutta, 1865, pp. 316-317.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Soracoe *Tyrant! Tipu Sultan and the Reconception of British Imperial Identity, 1780-1800*. p.59.

on the foot”.³²

Though primarily a European perception of Tipu, the act of circumcision mentioned in the above accounts and allegations of removal of hair lock (*kuduma*) of Brahmins played a significant part in the caste politics of Malabar in the twentieth century. *Chela* remained as an overarching term to refer to the alleged caste atrocities of Tipu Sultan against Namboodiris and Nairs in Malabar, as we see in the following section. Mohibbul Hasan has suggested that Tipu continued his father’s practice of forming the prisoners of war into separate battalions, while re naming *chelas* into *Asad-i-ilahi* or *Ahmadi* troops.³³ However, in colonial Malabar, these later administrative changes in the usage of the term had no impact and the term *chelas* continued to be used till early twentieth century.

Caste reform, local myths, and conflicts

The first mention of *chela* in Malayalam is found in the negotiations over caste customs or *mamul*. In the case of colonial Madras, Aparna Balachandran has suggested that the *mamul* was used in ‘negotiations between the state and its subjects over the delineation of practices that were understood as markers of social identity in conflicts between social groups in urban areas like Madras.’³⁴ In the case of princely Travancore, J Devika and V.J Varghese have argued that *mamul* was the framework in which the ‘temporal authority’ (or the Travancore Hindu ruler) intervened in the disputes between caste groups.³⁵ They further argued that in Pre -British Travancore and later, reforms - including regulating dowry payment and enacting reforms on dress code- were implemented without offending the *mamul* or existing caste

³² Fra Bartolomeo. *Voyage to the East Indies*. (Translated by W. Johnston.) London. 1800, p.123& 141.

³³ Khwaja Abdul Qadir, *Waqai Manzile Rum- Diary of a journey to Constantinople*, Mohibbul Hasan ed. Asia publishing House Newyork, 1963,p.81.

³⁴ Aparna Balachandran, "The many pasts of mamul: law and custom in early colonial Madras." *In Time, History and the Religious Imaginary in South Asia*, Routledge, 2012, p.85.

³⁵ J Devika, V.J Varghese, “To Survive or to Flourish? Minority Rights and Syrian-Christian Community Assertion in 20th century Travancore/Kerala.” Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala). *Centre for Development Studies (CDS) Working Paper*, 427, 2010, p.20.

hierarchical practices.³⁶ In the southernmost part of the Madras presidency, the *mamul* was an essential aspect of negotiations between the colonial state and the caste elites of Malabar. One such discussion on *mamul* in Tipu Sultan's *chela kalam* was mentioned as an index to the transformations of caste equations.

The Tellichery factory records also described Mysore rule as *chela kalam* in a correspondence dated 1798. Here, we see a petition submitted by *kachiryar* from Kozhikode, who identified himself as an arbitrator in the disputes between *idam kay* (left faction) castes as per the *mamul*. *Kachirayar* explained *idam kay* faction in the following words. He said:

There were two sects (*kootar* is the word used here, more appropriate to say group of people) among the *jathis* of Malayalam, those are *idam kay* and *valam kay*, left and right factions respectively,³⁷ in the time of Tipu sultan's *chela* all the people of households or *kudis* ran away, and some of them returned after the war with Tipu, and those who returned were divided into two, and among them the left faction(*idan kay*) is under the authority of *kachirayan* as per the *mamul*.³⁸

The *kachirayan* requested the English (*sayippu*) to permit him to continue with the authority of caste arbitration (*jathi niyayam*) among the *idam kay* faction he enjoys as per *mamul*, and his request was granted.³⁹ The *mamul* continued to thrive on the caste conflicts in the early twentieth century.

This division into *Idam* and *Valam* (left and right) factions following the response to Mysore rule by the upper caste families of Malabar were remembered in the nineteenth century. After

³⁶ Ibid., pp.12-13.

³⁷ In the final chapter of this dissertation, I discuss two Muslim factions of nineteenth century, where also the term *kai* was used to mean faction.

³⁸ *Tellicherry Records Vol. VIII/Talaśśēirekhakaḷ*; 21.01. - 16.06.1798, shelf number: Ma I 765-8, Digital library, Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen, p.9-10. The *Kachirayar* was the arbitrator among the latter faction. He requested them to keep the mamool as without change and his request was granted. This was a petition (*sankada haraji*) he makes to the Tellichery factory of the English East India Company.

³⁹ Ibid.

this division, there were disputes among the upper caste families who migrated to Travancore during Mysore rule and erstwhile royal families of Malabar. Revathy Thirunal Kerala Varma, who belonged to one such little kingdom which famously relocated to Travancore, wrote:⁴⁰

The kings and Royal women of the Paprappunadu Valu Kovilakam had been captured by Tipu Sultan, who took them to his camp and set them free by the Malayalam year 967(circa 1791 A.D). The *Valam kovilakam* (or *right kovilakam*) people, since Tipu Sultan converted them, had been living without any interaction with the outside world after their return. In 1015 Malayalam year (circa 1839 A.D), a *metha* (Muslim) woman of Valam Kovilakam named Ichamma and another *metha* woman from *Kuriyedam Kovilakam* were brought to Changanaschery, and *shudhi* karmas or purifying rituals were conducted on them, but it created some issues.⁴¹

The act of conversion had been resisted by some Brahmins. P.C.M Raja, a descendant of the Zamorins, later reflected that in the Malayalam year 1015 (circa 1855 A.D), some of the members of Parappunadu Kovilakam were made Hindus after conducting *Prayachitham* (adornment) rituals. It was previously believed that some royal women of their family were converted to Islam and raped, but when they were brought for the *Prayachitha Karma*, the Thampurattis (or royal women) testified that while they were imprisoned “they did neither eat Muslim food nor was their chastity violated,” the Raja added.⁴²

The Impact of *chela mamul* was not confined to the erstwhile royal families, but it formed the basis of inter-caste divisions and practices among Nambudiri Brahmins in the early twentieth

⁴⁰ R.H Hitchcock noted on Tipu Sultan’s conversion of Hindus of Eranad “Among many forcibly converted at that time, were members of the Prappanad Rajas family and of the Nilambur Tirumulpad’s family”. R.H Hitchcock, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar A History of the Malabar Rebellion*, Usha, 1925 (1983 Reprint), p.6. As we see further the erstwhile royal families played a significant role in the politics of *chela* memories.

⁴¹ Op cited in P.Bhaskaranunni, *Pathonpatham Noottandile Keralam*, 1998, p.190.

⁴² Ibid, p.191. The Parappanadu Kovilkam which traced their origins to Malabar had claimed close family relations with the Travancore dynasty, even prior to the Mysore conquest of Malabar. See Nagam Aiya, *TSM*, vol 1, p.320.

century. C.A Innes noted that “There are a few Nambudiris who are celebrated *mantravadis* (sorcerer), but they are looked upon as degraded and strictly outcaste. They are Chela Nambudiris, that is the offspring of Nambudiris who were forcibly converted to Islam by Tipu. They are supposed to have complete control over the demon Kuttichattan.”⁴³ In 1937, Malayali historian K.P Padmanabha Menon in his notes to the Dutch priest Jacobus Canter Visscher’s letters from Malabar mentioned that,

In South Malabar, there is a class of Nambudiris, known as chela Nambudiris, who are descendants of those who were forcibly converted to Mahomedanism during the turbulent period of Tipu’s invasion, but who returned to their religion almost once. Notwithstanding this, some stigma was still attached to them, and they are looked down as low caste and are tabooed from pure Nambudiri Society. Among this class of Nambudiris there are families in which the business of magician and sorcerer is hereditary.⁴⁴

In the 1920s, in the wake of the rebellion, there has been calls for the reconversion of *chela* Nairs and *chela* Namboodiris to the ‘Hindu community.’ One could note that public debates over the causes of Malabar rebellion, calls for tenancy reform and Arya Samaj activities in Malabar after the 1921 rebellion had fundamentally altered the caste equations of Malabar and had given rise to new tensions.

The agrarian Taluks of British Malabar, Eranad and Valluvanad, were the centers of a series of “Moplah outbreaks” in the nineteenth century and the 1921 rebellion against the colonial

⁴³Innes and Evans, *Malabar and Anjengo. Vol. I.* pp. 157-158.

⁴⁴ Pathmanabha Menon, *Letters from Malabar*, Volume iv, Asia Educational Service, New Delhi. 2001, p.208-209. Menon do not cite the source of his explanatory note though he has otherwise extensively referred to western anthropologists such as F.W Fawcett and contemporary writers in Malayalam.

state and the upper caste landlords of Malabar.⁴⁵ As we see further the moral responsibility of the troubles in Malabar during the Mysore times up to 1921 was fixed on Mappila Muslims in Malayalam literature. As scholars have noted, 1921 was a significant year in the history of Malabar for both Mappila Muslims, upper, middle and lower-caste Hindus.⁴⁶ There were stories of forcible conversion in colonial as well as vernacular accounts. The principle colonial document on the 1921 rebellion was R.H Hitchcock's *A History of the Malabar rebellion*.⁴⁷ In Hitchcock's account, Tipu Sultan deserved substantial blame for the plight of Malabar in 1921, when the agrarian aspects were marginalised. He pointed out that Tipu "captured 2000 Nayar families and forced them to" a volunteer profession of the "Muhammadan faith" which in turn resulted in widening the 'breach between the Mappila and the Hindu.'⁴⁸ Why did only the Mappilas of South Malabar indulge in the rebellion, against the peaceful conduct of North Malabar Muslims was a fundamental question for Hitchcock.⁴⁹ Hitchcock found that the North Malabar did not have Hindu-Muslim problems even after their supposed conversions by Tipu, though the Muslims of North "were Hindu in sentiment."⁵⁰ In other words, the colonial accounts argued that Tipu Sultan was historically responsible for the rebellion in South Malabar. Tipu's conversion attempts over the Nairs of North Malabar were incomplete or only partially successful. The allegations of new conversions by the rebels of 1921 brought Tipu back into the Malabar politics. Calls for 'reconversion' were made to right the supposed wrongs of the eighteenth century.

However, the Hindu communalists all over south Asia used the Malabar rebellion to show the

⁴⁵ See K.N Panikkar, *Against lord and state: religion and peasant uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921*, pp.139-190.

⁴⁶ Panikkar argues that "although the rebellion was not intrinsically communal, its consequences were decidedly so", *ibid*, p.190.

⁴⁷ Hitchcock, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar: A History of the Malabar Rebellion*.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*. p.6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*. p.7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*. p.7.

threat of a supposedly united aggressive Muslim population.⁵¹ A large number of tracts and pamphlets were printed and circulated in North India. Stories of “forcible conversion, rape, and abduction of Hindu women” had particularly spread in the popular Hindu discourse⁵². M. T Ansari has demonstrated the impact of this rebellion over the nationalist imagery in Malabar.⁵³ While the immediate context of these narratives and memoirs was the 1921 rebellion, it often referred to the Mysore rule of Malabar as a reference point in memory. The texts of Malayalam novels I discuss in this chapter were part of the nationalist imagery with social reformist undercurrent. In the next section I look at the background of *chela* in nineteenth century Malayalam prose and literature which had immense influence over the twentieth-century writers.

Chela, Tipu and Malayala Bhasha

The 1849 English –Malayalam dictionary of Benjamin Bayly listed *chela* under the entry circumcision.⁵⁴ While the same dictionary defined conversion as *mattam* (change) *manovyathyasam* (change of mind), *anyamatha pravesham* (entry to another religion).⁵⁵ The 1871 Malayalam dictionary of Herman Gundert defined the word *chela* as ‘one forced to become a Muhammedan’ and further defined the usage “avan chela” or “he is chela” as “he is of a family circumcised in Tipu’s time.”⁵⁶ The entry additionally gave an example for the usage of *chela* “*Sultan Vannu Janangale Okkeyum Chelavakki Kalppichu*” or “the Sultan

⁵¹ Charu Gupta, *Sexuality, obscenity, community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu public in colonial India*, Permanent Black, 2001, p. 225.

⁵² Gupta, *Sexuality, obscenity, community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu public in colonial India*, p.226. Gupta further argued that Mappila rebellion resulted in calls for a Hindu consolidation in North India and “when it came to questions of the Hindu woman’s chastity and honour, or constructions of Muslim lustfulness, a superficial unanimity was swiftly established.” Gupta, *Sexuality, obscenity, community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu public in colonial India*, p.229. Also see Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban poor In Early-Twentieth Century India*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.228. It was also at the same time an Arya Samaj center was established at Calicut. See Rishi Ram, *Dayananda Saraswati-A Critical Survey of his Career, Together with a Short Life Sketch*, Arya Samaj, Calicut 1924, p.ii.

⁵³ M.T Ansari "Refiguring the fanatic: Malabar 1836-1922.", p.36.

⁵⁴ Rev. B.Beyli, *A dictionary, English and Malayalim*, Church Missionary Society, Cottayam, 1849, p.65.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p.95

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.392.

arrived and ordered all people as *chelas*.⁵⁷ *Chelavukar* was further defined as “Muhammadans” and “chelavil koodi” or joined *chela* was defined as “he turned Muhammadan.”⁵⁸ The pioneers of modern Malayalam print culture, the missionaries, firmly established that *chela* denoted conversion during the Mysore rule.

The new Malayalam literati of the nineteenth century, curiously blamed Tipu Sultan for what they perceived as the reason for the stagnation of Malayalam literature during the early colonial times. The first history of Malayalam literature written in 1881 by P Govinda Pillai (d.1896) blamed Tipu Sultan⁵⁹, by not only repeating the argument that Tipu attacked temples, but also adding that Tipu’s attack was inimical to the growth of Malayalam literature and language, since he destroyed Malayalam manuscripts and converted Nambudiris and forced them to join into his religion which was more “horrible than death.”⁶⁰ Kerala Varma Valiya Koyi Thampuran (d.1914) patronized P Govinda Pillai.⁶¹ Koyi Thampuran was one of the ex-royals who belonged to the Parappanadu family who traced back memories of displacement back to Tipu’s time, since a few of his ancestors had reportedly converted into Islam.⁶² A.R Raja Raja Varma (d.1918), a poet and a pioneer of modern Malayalam literature, also belonged to the same royal family and it was through their memories that the incident of reconversion in 1839 and the Mysore rule in nineteenth century was largely

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Pillai said most of the scholars or experts (*vidhwanmar*) of Malayalam language were staying between Mangalore and Kollam and contributing to the growth of language. . With the attack of Tipu (Mysore *Shadulam*) “all their efforts became fruitless and Malayala *Bhasha* suffered many losses.” P Govinda Pilla, *Malayala Bhasha Charithram*, [History of Malayala Language], Publisher unknown, 1881.p.119.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ulloor S. Parameswara Aiyer, *Kerala Sahitya Charithram vol-II*, 1953(2015 reprint), University of Kerala, p.288.

⁶² We mentioned the ‘reconversion’ attempts of a section (*Valam kovilakkkar*) of the same family in nineteenth century in the previous section. Koyi Thampuran occupied a significant position in the history of modern Malayalam literature. He translated Sanskrit texts such as *Shakunthalam*. His translations were so popular and it was identified as the beginning of a new literary movement in Malayalam, called as ‘Kerala Varma Prasthanam’ [Kerala Varma Movement]. E.V.N. Namboodiri, *Kerala Bhasha Charithram* [History of Kerala Bhasha]. Current Books, 2002, p.172.

represented.⁶³ Raja Raja Varma wrote a poem titled *Malaya Vilasam* in 1895, which was considered as the beginning of modernity and romantic poetry in Malayalam literature.⁶⁴

Addressing and praising the ‘Sahya Mountain’ or the Western Ghats, the poet said,

“From the Bombay city to Kanayakumari, had you been not risen high, silently the Mysore tiger has gulped us (Kerala) for his stupendous breakfast.”⁶⁵

Raja Raja Varma, a pioneer of modern prose in Malayalam writing, was followed by writers in modern genres such as novels where the memory of Mysore was a central concern. These new forms of modernity shaped the concept of the region significantly.⁶⁶ The Mysore period figures as a prelude to the new colonial modern by the modernist writers of Malayalam literature.⁶⁷ Like the rest of South Asia, two aspects about the emergence of the novel in north India are significant. As Vasudha Dalmia has shown, there was a “north Indian Middle-class milieu which was self-consciously forming itself into a Hindu community,” and secondly imagining collectivities was central to the formation of the idea of the nation; and, especially in the novel genre the nation was a vital point of reference.⁶⁸ The idea of nation and collectivities emerged strongly in the early twentieth century Malabar with the Khilafat movement. As one sees in the accounts of reformist individual K Madhavan Nair (d.1933),⁶⁹ the concerns included both nationalism and Kerala as a region, as well as the anxieties of social reformism.⁷⁰ These writers attributed an utter novelty to the event of Mysore rule — fashioning a new language of reform around issues such as conversion and creation of

⁶³ P Bhaskaran Unni, *Pathonapatham Noottandile Keralam*, p.191.

⁶⁴ A.R Raja Raja Varma *Malayavilasam*, Poorna Publications, Kozhikode, 2009.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.30.

⁶⁶ Sathese Chandra Bose and Shiju Sam Varughese eds, *Kerala Modernity: Ideas, Spaces and Practices in Transition*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2015, pp. 1–24.

⁶⁷ Few Malayalam linguists hail Raja Raja Varma as the “architect of Malayalam language in the twentieth century.” See E.V.N. Namboodiri, *Kerala Bhasha Charithram*, p.175.

⁶⁸ Vasudha Dalmia, *Fiction as History- The Novel and the City in Modern North India*, Permanent Black, 2017, pp.35, 36.

⁶⁹ For a biography of K. Madhavan Nair see Prof . C.K Moossad ,*K Madhavan Nair*,,Mathrubhumi 1987.

⁷⁰ The term *Kerala Matha* was used along with nationalist categories in the literature we discuss below.

chela, attack on sacred hair lock and sacred thread of the Brahmins.

Background to caste reforms

There were two main strands to the community reform in the twentieth century Malayali society. The first trend, as demonstrated by J Devika, was the social reformist idea of transcending the “jati based mode of ordering human beings.”⁷¹ She argued further that the colonial sociology had a determining influence over caste movements where the caste groups aspired to transform to ‘modern communities.’⁷² She further argues that a liberal vision was central to Malayali reform where “individuals who would be valued not for what they possessed by way of inheritance, but for their ‘inherent, internal’ qualities. Self-development, focused on fostering and extending ‘internal, mental’ qualities and dispositions, was accorded a prime position in all early twentieth-century Malayalee reformisms.”⁷³ These aspects were central to how social reformists debated the causes of the Malabar rebellion in Malabar.⁷⁴ The second trend which often came into conflict with the idea of caste reformism was the idea of revival of Hindu community where it wanted to relinquish caste *mamuls*, upsetting the transformation of the reformist organisations into autonomous modern communities. The three novels I discuss in the next section carried the former idea of liberal social reform, while being unable to forget the *chela kalam* of Tipu. It would be useful to first analyse the way in which the newspapers and reformers of landholding communities discussed the question of *chela*.

⁷¹ J Devika "The aesthetic woman: Re-forming female bodies and minds in early twentieth-century Kerala." *Modern Asian Studies* 39, no. 2, 2005, p.461.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid ,p .462.

⁷⁴ Praveena Kodoth argues that by the late nineteenth century, the Nairs had “moved away from Tharavad” with “liberal aspirations.” Their response to the issues such as *Marumakkathayam* were shaped by their association to institutions of colonial state. Further, in this chapter one could note that Nair reformers who were involved in the resurrection of Tipu’s memory also participated in legislative assembly debates on *Marumakkathayam*. Kodoth has argued that the particular conception of family determined by a Victorian morality were central to new reformist men. We could see further in the chapter how the novels on *chela* and Tipu’s memories subscribed to the colonial idea of family and marriage. See Praveena Kodoth, “Courting legitimacy or delegitimizing custom? Sexuality, sambandham, and marriage reform in Nineteenth century Malabar,” *Modern Asian Studies*,35/2,2001,pp.353-354.

The Malayalam newspapers of landholding castes such as *Yogakshemam* (published by the Nambuddiri Brahmins from Thrissur) and *Mathrubhumi* (Kozhikode) debated the issue of caste and conversion in the wake of Malabar rebellion, and held Tipu as central to their understanding of the rebellion.⁷⁵ How did the liberal idea of reform negotiate the memory of Tipu Sultan? K. Madhavan Nair was a notable example, (as the first secretary of Kerala Pradesh Congress Party, he was unhappy with the turn of events with Khilafat Movement and Non-cooperation) of how the reformists recollected the memory of Tipu without betraying their ‘liberal ideas.’⁷⁶

The context of Madhavan Nair’s writing can be gathered from the debates in the *Yogakshemam* newspaper. In 1922, December 2nd, *Yogakshemam* discussed the ‘Malabar tenancy act’ by emphasizing that the rights of ‘Janmis’ should be protected. The context of the discussion was the appointment of a British official to file a report on the Malabar riots. *Yogakshemam* openly took a pro-Janmi position in Kudiyan –Janmi debates after 1921. It also batted for the social stability of the Janmi households. In 1922, December 9th, the newspaper expressed its happiness over the resolved conflict of a father-son Namboodiri duo of the ‘big Janmi household’ of Kanjiyoor. It added that the community would benefit if there were no such rivalries in big households (*tharavdukhal*).⁷⁷

The *Mathrubhumi* newspaper from Kozhikode established in 1923, continued the debates over the causes of the Mappila rebellion.⁷⁸ In 1923, March 26, K. Madhavan Nair wrote in *Mathrubhumi* that there could not be peace in Malabar without a system put into place for

⁷⁵ *Yogakshemam* was the newspaper published by the Namboodiri *Yogakshema Sabha*. J Devika observed that the *Yogakshema Sabha* (established in 1908) “aimed to protect the interests and privileges enjoyed by Malayala Brahmins which were perceived as being threatened by furiously paced social change.” Devika, *En-Gendering individuals: The Language of Re-forming in Twentieth Century Keralam*, p.124.

⁷⁶ On the specific connection between and Khilafat Movement and Non-cooperation see Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilisation in India* Delhi, 1982, pp. 145-149.

⁷⁷ *Yogakshemam*, December 9, 1922. NMML.

⁷⁸ *Mathrubhumi* identified itself as a Malayalam newspaper covering national issues. *Mathrubhumi*, 1923 April 5. NMML.

Janmi-Kudiyān (landlord-tenant) relationship.⁷⁹ Though it was important for the *Kudiyān* to get his rights, it should not be at the cost of blaming the Janmi community as a whole, Madhavan Nair argued.⁸⁰ Madhavan Nair engaged with the various causes of Malabar rebellion, where he argued that the *Janmi-Kudiyān* problems were just one among many causes of the Malabar rebellion. According to him, the *Janmi-Kudiyān* relationship was neither the central nor sole cause of the rebellion.⁸¹ Madhavan Nair had two burdens — as a representative of the nationalist movement in Malabar he argued against the colonial reports that blamed the Khilafat -Congress alliance for the rebellion, and as someone who did not wish for radical changes in land relations, he argued for a broader understanding of the causes for the rebellion.⁸² While the elites of Malabar petitioned against any possible inquiry on the causes of Malabar rebellion, either from the government or the Congress, the debates in newspapers intensified.⁸³ Madhavan Nair was accused of being pro-Janmi and his stand of Mappila fanatics as the instigators of rebellion faced a backlash.⁸⁴ However, Madhavan Nair stood by his position and wrote another essay in 1923, May 15, *Mathrubhumi*, where he found Tipu Sultan and *chela kalapam* as the primary causes of Mappila riot. He wrote:

The Hindus and Muslims of Malabar lived in peace till the attack of Tipu Sultan turned everything upside down. The two communities served as two eyes of *Kerala matha* till the attack and atrocities of Tipu Sultan. It was Tipu's *chela kalapam*, which planted the seeds of Mappila riot for the first time. There is no point in detailing what happened in those (Mysore) times. It is doubtful whether that Hindus Malabar since the time of Parashurama faced atrocities to such a big scale as during the times of 'Chela Kalapam.' Thousands of Hindus were forced to join the Muhammadiya

⁷⁹ *Mathrubhumi*, 1923, March 26.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ "Janmikalum Mappila Lahalyum", *Mathrubhumi*, 1923, April 3, p.4.

⁸² *Mathrubhumi* 1923, April, 28, p.7.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Mathrubhumi* 1923, April 10, p.7.

religion. While some of them broke the *chela* and returned to the fold of Hindu religion, most of them remained Muhammadiyans.⁸⁵

Madhavan Nair, as this statement reflects, was mainly concerned with Tipu Sultan's treatment of Hindus and Muslims. However, during his visit to Srirangapatana in early 1920s he could not find any evidence of Hindu Muslim riots. He described his experience in his Malayalam poetic best:

I had a chance to see Srirangapatana, which is hugged by the tributaries of pure and beautiful river Kaveri. As soon as I stepped out of the railway station, I saw a long wall which was decorated with very tall towers. The tower and wall were inside the ruins of the famous fort of Tipu Sultan. Though the structures appeared as of a Hindu temple, it took some time for me to believe that it is indeed a Hindu temple. Tipu, who demolished idols and temples, Tipu, who was known as the wrecker of Hindu religion, Tipu, who worked hard to annihilate Hindu race of Malabar, how could there be a Hindu temple in the vicinity of Tipu's palace? Could that be a mosque in the shape of a Hindu temple? Though I was aware that Tipu had not harmed the Hindus of Mysore I never imagined a temple beside the palace.⁸⁶

Madhavan Nair cleared his doubts from someone he refers to as a member of an ancient Hindu family of Mysore who confirmed that Tipu Sultan was indeed nice to the Hindus of Mysore, and that he ruled with love and justice. Moreover, he found that Tipu had not damaged any temples in Mysore as evidenced by the ancient Sri Ranganatha ancient temple that he had visited. Citing William Logan, Madhavan Nair argued that Tipu had to follow a

⁸⁵ Mathrubhumi, 1923, May 15, p.8. Also see K. Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapam* Mathrubhumi Books, 1971 (2018 reprint), p.28.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

policy of divide and rule in Malabar to quell the opposition to his rule.⁸⁷ However, as we saw in the last chapter, this political motive is absent in Logan's account.⁸⁸

While exonerating Tipu from the specific charge of temple destruction, Nair stated that Tipu Sultan had created a lot of troubles for the Hindus of Malabar during his time and he also became the 'master (guru)' of the Mappila riots for the later decades.⁸⁹ Tipu destroyed the Hindu-Muslim relations of Malabar irreparably, Nair argued.⁹⁰ However, Nair's more critical argument was that Muslims of Malabar forgot the real nature of their religion because of Tipu Sultan which resulted in a series of Mappila riots.⁹¹ Here, the attribution of ignorance and fanaticism to Mappilas is a colonial as well as reformist trope of early twentieth century. One could note that even the Muslim reformers of early twentieth century argued that Muslims had forgotten their 'original religion'.⁹² As M.T Ansari has argued, in the nationalist imageries "the Mappilas are firmly fixed in the frame of a religion which they are largely ignorant."⁹³ There are two aspects of Madhavan Nair's writing which are essential to note. One was his nationalist colonial self, reflected in the 'fanatic' accusation against Mappilas, and secondly closely linked but a separate social reformist identity where Mappilas had failed to identify the real purpose of religion and were misled by Tipu Sultan. It is also worth noting that Madhavan Nair participated in drafting the bills against matriliney⁹⁴ and he should be

⁸⁷William Logan largely reproduced Mark Wilk's and M.M.D.LT's account. See second chapter of this dissertation for a discussion of the nineteenth century colonial knowledge production on Mysore rule in Malabar.

⁸⁸ Mathrubhumi, 1923, May 15, p.8.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² There were number of advocates of reform and modernity amongst Muslims of colonial Malabar. For Muslim reformism in Malabar see, Muhammed Niyas Ashraf, *Reading Makti Tangal: Islamic Modernity and Reform in Colonial Kerala, 1884-1912*, unpublished M.Phil thesis, Department of History, University of Delhi, 2015. Jose Abraham, *Islamic Reform and Colonial Discourse on Modernity in India: Socio-political and Religious Thought of Vakkom Moulavi*. Springer, 2014.

⁹³ M.T Ansari "Refiguring the fanatic: Malabar 1836-1922." ,p.44

⁹⁴ As a member of Madras legislative assembly Madhavan Nair played a key role in drafting 'Malabar Marumakkathaya act' along the lines of Travancore-Cochin Nair regulation act. See Moossad, *K Madhavan Nair- Jeevacharithram*, p.185.

identified not only as a congress leader but also as a “reformist individual.”⁹⁵

There was, of course, a long precedent to Madhavan Nair’s writing of *chela atrocities* on caste in the Malayalam print. A series of discussions were taking place in Malayalam newspapers from Malabar after the 1921 rebellion on the origins of the unprecedented violence they witnessed in 1921. The immediate response of the *Janmi* class on the causes of the Malabar rebellion was to make a link with Tipu’s *Chela Kalapam*, which can be seen as a refusal to acknowledge the tensions in land relations of Malabar, as evidenced most in *Yogakshemam*’s response to the rebellion.

On September 2nd, 1921, merely 12 days after the Malabar rebellion of 1921 began, *Yogakshemam*, the newspaper of Yogakshema Sabha for the welfare of Namaboodiri Brahmins, wrote an editorial titled ‘Malabarile Chela Kalapam.’ *Yogaskhemam* provided a detailed account of the Namboodiris who fled from the ‘fanatic zone’ to Calicut,⁹⁶ where the erstwhile royal houses of Zamorin sheltered the families. *Yogakshemam* reported that around 700 of them took refuge at Zamorin’s place.⁹⁷ In their account it was noted that ‘lahalakkar’ or rioters robbed their houses, destroyed Brahmin households (*illams*), and Nair houses (*bhavanams*). An account from Eranad Taluk⁹⁸ added that “When we had assembled at the temple of Nimangad, and precisely when we were preparing to dine, armed Mappilas from four sides entered inside the temple, destroyed the idol (*bimbam*) and compelled Namboodiris and Antharjanam (Namboodiri women) to join in *margam*.”⁹⁹ However, they were saved from that fate and had reached Zamorin’s Kovilakam. It was further added that “few have forcefully joined to religion (*matham*), and those who refused were killed.” The

⁹⁵ Madhavan Nair was close to the idea of Hindu reform movements including temple entry movement and was influenced by revivalist articles in Malayalam published in 1897 such as “Hindukkalude adogathikkulla Karanam”(the reasons of the decline of Hindus) see., *Ibid.*,p.17.

⁹⁶ *Yogaskhemam* weekly, September 2, 1921.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p.2 .*Margam* was a term used in nineteenth century to denote conversion.

Yogaskehemam in its subsequent issues talked about the unreliability of the accounts coming from the “lahala affected” region due to communication failures. Moreover, the same report confirmed that only one Namboodiri was murdered while many others were injured. In this apparently first-hand account, the terms used for forceful conversion were “margathil cheruka” and “mathathil cherkuka.” In the same issue there was an appraisal of the situation,¹⁰⁰

If what we hear of the incidents from Taluks of Ernad, Valluvanad, Ponnani, and Kozhikode of the Malabar district for the last 10 to 12 days are correct, we could say that there had never been a *Kalapam* (riot) of this scale after Tipu Sultan’s attack. If we think of the Muhammadiyans of Malabar who are involved in the *lahala* (outbreak), it could be said that most of them are conducting a *Kalapam* similar to the *Chela Kalapam* at the time of Tipu. If we consider certain things, this *Kalapam* is worse than Tipu’s time. Since there were warnings and prior information about Tipu’s attack, so all of those who could afford had fled to a considerable distance and were saved. However, the character of the present *Kalapam* is different. It was as if the pillars, doors, and vessels of the house where we live in turned to be evil animals and attacked us. The situation of Non-Muhammadiyahs of the places where the *Kalapam* is happening is precisely the same. It would be pertinent for the *lahalakkar* for threatening to capture grains, rice, and money. However, we hear that the *Mappila Lahalakkar* are doing heists at the houses of Hindus, murdering them, and in certain places joining them into *chela*.¹⁰¹

On August 20, 1922 a group of Brahmin priests assembled at Calicut.¹⁰² The erstwhile Raja

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.4.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Diwan Bahadur C Gopalan Nair, *The Moplah Rebellion 1921*, Calicut. 1923, p.119.

of Calicut Zamorin and R.H Ellis, collector of Malabar, were present at the meeting.¹⁰³ The meeting was concerned with the reconversion of Hindus, who were allegedly forcibly converted to Islam in the 1921 Mappila rebellion. The meeting finally concluded with a decision of several *prayaschithams* (penances) for those who have converted or forced to violate the rules of 'Hindu society' to return to the 'Hindu fold.' Curiously enough the definition of those who had converted did not end with those who have converted during the Mappila rebellion, but extended to those who had done so more than a century back during the Mysore rule of Malabar. In the proceedings of the assembly, it was noted that,

The work of the Arya Samaj in Malabar was unique: forcible conversion commenced with the Mysore conquest, and during the past hundred years and more, it was found impossible to effect re-conversion. A few families still exist in Malabar whose ancestors were forcibly converted during the time of Tippu and who on his departure relapsed to Hinduism but still remain as a separate section known as 'Chela Nayars,' without being permitted to associate, with the ordinary Nayars. It was under these circumstances that Arya Samaj Society effected re-conversion: the converts had given up all hopes, and to their great relief, the Arya Samaj was prepared to put them back to the Hindu fold.¹⁰⁴

The Arya Samaj was active in 1920s Malabar. National newspapers reported that they conducted reconversion activities throughout the 1920s in Malabar. In October 1924, the Arya Samajists carried out the conversion of 50 Eazhavas.¹⁰⁵ On 9th March 1929, Arya Samajists reconverted 8 Christians at Calicut.¹⁰⁶ However, the activities of Arya Samaj was met with resistance from the local caste organizations. The conversion attempts were

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ The Times of India, Mumbai, 26 Oct 1925, p.15.

¹⁰⁶ The Times of India, Mumbai March 13 1929, p.15.

upsetting the caste status quo of Malabar. It was in this background that the new discussions of *chela* were taking place in Malabar.

The Arya Samaj operated through a scheme of proselytization and conversion.¹⁰⁷ In North India, the Arya Samaj began conducting the rituals of *Shudhi* only in 1889-1891.¹⁰⁸ The issue of reconversion in Malabar was older than that of the North Indian case, as we noted in the case of *Valam kovilakakkar* of the erstwhile royal family in the previous section. The Arya Samaj had always interacted and transformed local traditions as part of their activities. Nonica Datta has argued that “certain features of popular tradition were, after much conflict, integrated into the Arya Samaj system of beliefs, creating the social basis of its influence.”¹⁰⁹ In Malabar, the transformation they attempted was to bring the *chela* Namboodiris and *chela* Nairs to the Hindu community fold, unlike the *mamul* discourse of the nineteenth century where the converted were brought back into the caste fold.

Datta has further argued that with the entry of the Arya Samaj to Punjab the Jats acquire the "textual sophistication, uniformity, and internal mechanisms for marshalling intellectual resources" into forming a unified community.¹¹⁰ Similarly, one can see the continued memory of *Chela Kalapam* as an intellectual resource for the community identity formations in the early twentieth century.¹¹¹

As we noted earlier since the late nineteenth century, there have been several fictional and

¹⁰⁷ Kenneth Johns, *The New Cambridge History of India- Socio religious Reform movements in British India*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p.103.

¹⁰⁸ Kenneth Johns, *Communalism in the Punjab: The Arya Samaj Contribution*, *The journal of Asian studies*, Nov; 28(1):39-54,1968,p.50.

¹⁰⁹ Nonica Datta, "Arya Samaj and the making of Jat identity." *Studies in History* 13, no. 1, 1997,p.105.

¹¹⁰ Nonica Datta. *Forming an Identity: A Social History of the Jats*, Oxford University Press. 1999,p.48.

¹¹¹ Arya Samaj and *Yogakshema Sabha* were at loggerheads over the reforms suggested by Arya Samaj. *Yogakshemama Sabha* and a section of Namboodiri intellectuals did not take it kindly that they had been asked to abandon some of their local practices by Arya Samajists. The calls for a nominal caste egalitarianism for a proposed Hindu unity by Arya Samaj was resisted. However, the caste tensions among Hindu upper-caste were evident with the conversion controversies and the entry of Arya Samaj into Malabar. The intellectuals and writers from Namboodiri and Nair communities expressed their disagreements on the new caste reforms. See *Yogakshemam*, 1922, October 2, *Yogakshemam* 1922, October 26, *Yogakshemam*, 1922, November,11.

historical representations in Malayalam, which focused on the impact of Mysore rule over Nair communities and Hindus specifically. One such book was the 1869 text book '*Malayala Rajyam*' -*The Malayalam country, geography, and history* was published at Basel mission press, Mangalore.¹¹² This history and geography textbooks firmly placed memories of Tipu as fanatic and cruel. For example, it mentioned that “nallavannam orkkunnu” or we strongly remember those cataclysmic sorrows (“bayankara sangadanagal”) when “Tipu who returned to Mysore on 7th December 1782 upon Haidar’s death from Malabar, and returned in the next year through Thamarassery pass and burned an exact number of 8000 temples, and circumcised all the Nayars he met and did many other cruelties upon the people of Malabar.”¹¹³

Following this, the impact of the Mysore memory on the new caste and community formations in Malayalam twentieth century was remarkable. In 1913, Chirakkal Ramavarma Ilayaraja, a descendant of former a pre-colonial little kingdom, attempted to provide a community history in *Malayalathile Nainmar* and appeared as an apologist of matrilineal and other old customs.¹¹⁴ After outlining the cultural specificities of the Nair community in Kerala the author identified “Tipu’s attack” as a historical event that changed the history of Nairs as a community. “Bayankaaranya, the great Tiger, came with a sword on his hands and demolished idols with his foot, thus all castes migrated to Travancore.”¹¹⁵ The author blamed Mysore rule for the collapse of the matrilineal systems. Those who could not migrate were fed beef by the “stone-hearted man” (Tipu), leading to the creation of a new sect of Nairs — “chelavu Nairs” (perhaps refers to those who lost caste purity rather than those who were converted) — in Malabar. He also added that Mysore attack resulted in the loss of military

¹¹² Anonymous, *The Malayalam Country*, Basel Mission Press Mangalore, 1869.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 42-43.

¹¹⁴ Chirakkal Ramavarma Ilayaraja, *Malayalathile Nayanmar*, Published by K Rayan Nambiar, Mary Memorial press Koothuparamp, 1913.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. ,p.44.

occupation, and a decline of the “*Kshathirya* status” of Nairs.¹¹⁶

The demilitarisation of the Hindus and a supposed loss of masculinity was a concern of Hindu revivalists in the 1920s in other parts of British India as well, which led to an emphasis on Hindu martial past. In this case, the emphasis on Nair masculine, and militarized past stemmed from such revivalist concerns similar to the Hindu upper-caste social formations in North India.¹¹⁷ G Arunima has argued that the unified identification of Nairs as exclusively in military service in pre-British Malabar was unfounded.¹¹⁸ However, as we have seen, the textbooks and other fictional and historical representation of Nair past emphasized the militarised past which was allegedly lost with the Mysore invasion.¹¹⁹ Significantly, Kammaran/Ayaz Khan, Sreedharan, and Tipu, three male figures from the eighteenth century, were integral to the social reform in twentieth century Malabar.

Historians have suggested that in the 1920s, in North India there have been attempts to construct a “full bodied masculine Hindu Male.. The man who could at once strengthen communal identity and undertake a militant nationalist struggle” by the Hindu revivalist movements.¹²⁰ As we have noted in Malabar, the Mappila rebellion of 1921 allowed the Nair reformists to make their argument within the existing discourse of Hindu reformism and recount the historical memory of Tipu Sultan in a new context with a stated intention of remembering a persecuted past. However, this narrative soon revealed the complexities and contradictions within the reformist discourse where Tipu Sultan emerged as a possible ally,

¹¹⁶ Ibid.,p.46

¹¹⁷ Gupta, *Sexuality, obscenity, community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu public in colonial India*, p.230

¹¹⁸ It was anthropologist Kathleen Gough’s argument that the absence of Nair men from households were a result of their presence in medieval militia or ‘standing army of Malabar.’ Critiquing Gough, Arunima argues that Nairs in pre-colonial Malabar were primarily involved in agriculture and administrative functions. G Arunima, *There Comes Papa, Colonialism and the Transformation of Matriliney in Kerala*. Orient Longman, 2003. pp.5-6.

¹¹⁹ In 1917 Basel Mission published *Malyalathile Mappilamar* written by C Gopalan Nair has information on Mysore rule. It mentioned that it was Ali Rajas army who were conquering Malabar as representatives of Mysore. This narrative acknowledges the resistance they faced at Kadathanad, but it does not mention much battles in Malabar during Tipu’s time. C Gopalan Nair, *Malyalathile Mappilamar*, Basel Mission press, 1917.

¹²⁰ Gupta, *Sexuality, obscenity, community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu public in colonial India*, p.222.

due to his equal and harsh critique of the matrilineal and Brahmanical practices. Further, we see that the reformists' patrilineal sensibilities demanded a masculine ruler whose conduct was noble and warrior-like. Hence, Tipu was a perfect fit as the ideal male body Nair reformists aspired to in mid-twentieth century. The recurrent theme in the texts I discuss below uses the Mysore times (*kalam*) as synonymous with "the age of *chela kalapam*" which – which broadly denoted conversion as well as enlistment into the Mysore army, though literally it translated as the circumcision of the male organ. Tipu Sultan or his army appeared in multiple occasions as more fierce and manly than the local rulers, conducting the act of circumcision whenever they caught a Nair Male, which expressed an obsession of reformist discourse with a crisis of masculinity and male anxieties within the twentieth-century social reform in Kerala.

Masculinity as a historical category has been relatively neglected in the history of gender which has been women-centric, argues Mrinalini Sinha.¹²¹ Masculinities, as a category, can be used to explain not only just female-male relations but also broader social issues from race, class, caste, sexuality, and religion. I draw attention to the evocation of masculinities concerning historical memory of caste, communities and the changing the social structure of Malayali institutions in early twentieth century. For example, a significant aspect we would find in one of the texts was the importance given to the colonial idea of family. It is worth noting that the idea, in the novel *Sreedaranan Athava* I discuss, inserted into the eighteenth century was the notion of a modern /colonial family. In colonial Bengal, the emergence of a new idea of family with the idea of a new child emphasized more intense emotional ties between parents and child and a gradual diminishing of affection with other extended family

¹²¹ Her argument was made in 1999. She argues that the relationship between masculinity and history of gender has been paradoxical in scholarships. While a focus on women has been central to these scholarships it gave a certain visibility to the question of masculinity. See Mrinalini Sinha, 'Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India' *Gender & History*, Vol.11 No.3 November 1999, p.446.

members.¹²² Such an idea was useful in the patrilineal reorganization of the family in Malabar, since the male child acquired more importance than the nephew, uncle, or sister in this narrative. In this context, the life and development of young child warrior before he developed to hero, was the focus of the text, which served as a prelude to the colonial/reformist masculinity, which was central to developing the plot. Formation of a family rooted in affection was the motive of such an idea, and in the novel, which sometimes alter the main currents of the historical narrative.¹²³ The breakdown of a larger order and the assertion of individual independence were essential for the new narrative. These issues were early twentieth century attributions to eighteenth-century pasts, and it revealed more contemporary concerns and anxieties than it did the past. The more substantial breakdown, in this narrative, as associated with the memory of Mysore invasion, was be seen as a metaphor for the breakdown of matrilineal order in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The emergence of Tipu Sultan as a ‘good Muslim’ -unlike how he appeared in the colonial narrative-against the Mappila ‘bad Muslim’ in these writings can be seen as an identification of Tipu with the colonial state for its reformist zeal and later with the post-colonial state for its secularist leanings - with whom the reformist elites aspired to ally at different points of time.

Fiction as memory: Stories of Kammaran and Sreedharan

The two novels I discuss in this section were inspired by the Malayali *chela* of Haidar Ali, Ayaz Khan. I first discuss the novel *Velluvakammaran*, which directly deals with the memory of Ayaz Khan and Mysore rule, before moving to the next novel *Sreedharan Athava*, which while retaining the protagonist makes making substantial changes in the story.

¹²² The child became the source that could be used to satisfy the grandest of national aspirations. See, Pradip Kumar Bose “Sons of the Nations: Child rearing in the new family” in *Texts of Power - Emerging disciplines in Colonial Bengal* Partha Chatterjee ed. University of Minnesota Press ,1995, p.119.

¹²³ It is argued, with the changing family structure, a new value was given to intimate relations with the breakdown of a larger order and an assertion of individual independence in colonial period, Ibid, p.122.

Velluvakammaran, is a 1927 novel written by C Kunjirama Menon. The central character of the novel was Ayaz Khan who was a crucial figure in the colonial and vernacular histories of Tipu Sultan. Mohibbul Hasan says that Ayaz was a Nair from Chirakkal who became a prisoner of Haidar Ali during the latter's 1766 campaign of Malabar.¹²⁴ He was part of the *Asad-i-ilahi* army of Khudadad. Hasan plays down the aspect of Ayaz Khan's conversion and argues that he reached a high position due to the confidence Haidar had in his abilities. By 1779 he was appointed as the governor of Bedanur. Ayaz Khan later joined with the English against Tipu. What prompted Hasan to describe Ayaz Khan's role in history so indifferently? Mark Wilk's portrayal of Khan as the bete noire of Tipu Sultan could have compelled Hasan to further enquire the curious case of Ayaz Khan's conversion and rise in power of Khudadad hierarchy.¹²⁵ Wilks noted that "amongst the prisoners carried off from the inhuman emigration from Malabar was a young Nair, from Chericul¹²⁶, who had been received as a slave of the palace and to whom after his forced conversion to Islam, they had given the name of Sheikh Ayaz."¹²⁷ Haidar appointed him as the governor of Chitradurga and entrusted him with both military and civil responsibilities. Wilks traces the conflict between Ayaz and Tipu to early jealousies. However, a real face-off between Ayaz Khan and Tipu Sultan, according to Wilks, occurred in 1782 after the death of Haidar.¹²⁸ The problems began with the English dispatch from Bombay to General Matthews to capture Bedanur exploiting the situation after Haidar's death, and Ayaz Khan, who was the governor of Bedanur became the central focus of attention in this whole affair. In a battle that followed, Ayaz Khan was confined with a

¹²⁴ Mohibbul Hasan, *History of Tipu*, p.28.

¹²⁵ Hasan who was very critical of Wilks argues that Wilk's account of Tipu as jealous of Ayaz Khan is unreliable. Ibid. Hasan in the preface to the first edition of his *History of Tipu Sultan* began by saying Wilks' treatment of Tipu Sultan's life was unfair. He quoted James Mill to argue that Wilks was invested in "imputing all the bad qualities which belong to the most despicable, as well as the most odious, of the human race". Ibid. p.X.

¹²⁶ Chericul or Chirakkal is an important little kingdom of 18th century Malabar, Wilks noted that the Raja of Chirakkal belonged to the Kolathiri family, he added that it was with the Kolathiri family 'Portuguese adventures first entered into relations', Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol 2 p.330-331.

¹²⁷ Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol 1, p.741.

¹²⁸ Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol 2, p.205.

small number of men inside the fort, which led him to negotiate with General Matthews. The impending mistrust between Ayaz and Tipu had resulted in a letter that Tipu sent to Bedanur to secretly assassinate Ayaz. One of his officers read the letter to Ayaz. Ayaz defected to the English side and later fled to Bombay, allegedly with the treasures of Bedanur.¹²⁹

In 1796 Donald Campbell, an English traveller gave a very favourable account of 'Hyat Sahib' (a corruption of Ayaz Khan's name) in his private correspondence. Campbell was shipwrecked in Haidar's dominion (and reached Bednur) where he feared that he would be imprisoned, persecuted, or executed.¹³⁰ The traveller claimed that Hyat Sahib, upon questioning Campbell came to know that he is the son of a Colonel and treated him with respect. Hyat Sahib gifted him "some tea, two-three fruits, an old coat, and two pairs of breeches."¹³¹ Campbell stated that some respectable historians before him had wrongly suggested that Hyat Sahib was the illegitimate child of Haidar. Hyat Sahib, through his officer, made an offer to Campbell to join Haidar's service commanding a troop of 5000 men, which Campbell declined since he could not "betray his country." However, Campbell characterises Haidar's rule as tyrannical¹³², and his servant Hyat Sahib was "the powerful, the wealthy, and the governor of a great opulent province." Campbell finally escaped captivity while Hyat Sahib was away.

William Logan, while reproducing Mark Wilks' account of Ayaz Khan, also calls him Shaikh Ayaz "a remarkable chela."¹³³ Logan also suggested that Ayaz Khan was "originally a Nambiar by caste belonging to the Valiya putiya house in Chirkkal."¹³⁴ In his *A Collection of Treaties: Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in*

¹²⁹ Donald Campbell, *A Journey Over Land to India, Partly by a Route Never Gone Before by Any European: In a Series of Letters to His Son. Comprehending His Shipwreck and Imprisonment with Hyder Alli, and His Subsequent Negotiations and Transactions in the East.* Bartram and Reynolds, 1807, p.206.

¹³⁰ Ibid.p.280.

¹³¹ Ibid. p.305.

¹³² Ibid.,p .323.

¹³³ Logan, *Malabar*, p.431.

¹³⁴ Ibid.p.432.

Malabar, Logan discussed a grant made by Ravi Varma Raja of Chirakkal to Ayaz Khan's Valiya Puthiya house.¹³⁵ The grant was found to be a forgery by the English revenue officers after their annexation of Malabar in 1792, and Ayaz Khan silently retired as an English pensioner in Bombay.¹³⁶ Ayaz Khan was denied any land rights in British Malabar and was exiled. However, he was resurrected in historical memory with the coming of the historical novel as a new genre in early twentieth century Malabar.

Dilip Menon has demonstrated that when Appu Nedungadi wrote Malayalam's first novel, he was aware of the novelty of the form for which he had no precedent to rely on. However, the same awareness made him anxious about the pioneering act of writing in a new genre.¹³⁷ Nedungadi was careful to categorically state that the novel was not about Kerala. The crisis felt by early novelists in Malayalam involved moving away from traditional methods of representation as well as from the religious corpus.¹³⁸ The crisis was more successfully negotiated by Chandu Menon, the second Novelist in Malayalam. Dilip Menon argues on Chandu Menon's strategies, "in one sense, an older aesthetic criterion, that of the excitement of the senses (*rasas*), is adapted to the new rhetoric of reality and its representation. Chandu Menon countered the question of reality and truth and the grandeur of tradition by locating pleasure in the immediacy of the experience of reading." By the 1920s, the initial hiccups of Malayalam novelists were far from over. Like Chandu Menon the new novelists could have faced questions such as "What is the point of writing a story about events that did not really happen?"¹³⁹ One way of Chandu Menon's answer to this question was to historicize the question of representation, Dilip Menon argues. G Arunima has suggested that similar to

¹³⁵ I have mentioned this case in the second chapter in the context of settlements in Malabar after the Mysore exit in 1792. Logan, *A Collection of Treaties: Engagements and Other Papers of Importance Relating to British Affairs in Malabar*, pp. 81-82.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.82.

¹³⁷ Dilip Menon "Caste and colonial modernity: Reading Saraswativijayam." *Studies in History*, 13, no. 2 1997, p.293.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* p.294.

¹³⁹ Dilip Menon notes this important question Chandu Menon faced from his friends while attempting to write the novel. *Ibid.*, p.294.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya's works, which focused on Bengali *bhadraloks*, early Malayalam realist novels had a narrow focus on upper-class Nairs.¹⁴⁰ Devika has observed that "Early Malayalam novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century like *Indulekha*, for instance, were involved not only in the affirmation of the new Woman but also of the new Man."¹⁴¹ In the following section I look at the construction of these new men in relation to the *chela* memories in Malabar.

I discuss the historical novels which focused on collapsing Nair households, *Velluvakammaran* on Ayaz Khan (written in 1927), and *Sreedharan athava Chela Kalapathinte Katha* (1921). However, unlike the early novelists, by the 1920s, the novelists were dealing with events that really happened in history, relying on popular tradition as well as colonial accounts before fictionalizing it. For instance, *Velluvakammaran* follows Wilk's version for Ayaz Khan's history, but the conversations and early part of the novel often reassert his Nair identity, and both the novels as we shall see below portrayed the tensions in Nair families which led to Ayaz Khan's forcible exile from Kerala caused by family (household or *tharavadu*) dissensions and conversion to *chela*.

Ayaz Khan: The making and breaking of *chela*

The novelist Chenkulath Kunjirama Menon (d.1939) was a major literary figure in Malayalam in the early twentieth century.¹⁴² In the preface to *Velluvakammaran*, his only novel, Menon noted that "in *Logan Sayippu's* account (William Logan's) and the Historian Wilks' work, we read that Haidar took Ayaz Khan from Malabar, and he reached high

¹⁴⁰ Arunima focuses on two novels, *Indulekha* (1889), and *Padmavati* (1920). G Arunima, "Writing Culture: Of Modernity and Malayalam novels." *Studies in History*, 13, 2, NS, 1997.p.272.

¹⁴¹ J Devika, *En-Gendering individuals: The Language of Re-forming in Twentieth Century Keralam.*, Orient Blackswan, 2007, pp.27-28.

¹⁴² He wrote a collection of essays titled "Malayalathile Jenmimar" or 'The Landlords of Malabar.' He also wrote a book praising the coronation of King George in 1911 upon the request of then Malabar collector C.A Innes titled 'George Pattabhisheskam.' He was also known for writing short stories. Ulloor S Parameswara Aiyar, *Kerala Sahitya Charithram*,p.873.

positions with the support of Haidar. However, they did not inquire into the early history of Kammu. They only knew that he was Nair, who was converted by Haidar.’’¹⁴³

In the novel, Kammaran was born into a landlord family of north Malabar. His uncle was a local notable whose fortunes went down suddenly, dying a pauper and a mad man. Due to a murder committed by his uncle, Kammaran and his uncle were ordered to be imprisoned and their properties to be confiscated. What awaited Kammaran, then at his young age, was a series of conflicts with local authorities, during which he also fell in love with a beautiful young lady who was also facing a collapse of family and property similar to his fate.¹⁴⁴ After a string of events in which he faced severe setbacks he ended up as one of the commanders of the most powerful little kings of his region, ‘Kolathiri.’¹⁴⁵ Kammaran was made in charge of a contingent of the army whom he trained in the English style. While his contingent was stationed in Tellichery where the English settlement of Malabar was located,¹⁴⁶; he tried to learn tricks of war and discipline from the English while also acting as Kolathiri’s representative to the English factory.¹⁴⁷ While he rose through the ranks of the army, he also earned the enmity of other commanders who were envious of his rise. When a factional war erupted between the families of Kolathiri kingdom, those jealous officers sent Kammaran and his contingent to fight a massive army, hoping that he will not survive the war.¹⁴⁸ However, Kammaran was able to defeat the army which was more than five times in number. While Kammaran emerged strongly out of the war as a rising young commander, Raja’s enemies within the family sought the help of the Ikkeri kingdom of Bedanur. The Ikkeri Raja did not hesitate to offer help but on conditions heavily favouring him against the rebel princes of Kolathiri family. The Kolathiri kingdom was in decline, especially since the Raja began

¹⁴³ C Kunjirama Menon, *Velluvakammaran*, p.12.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p.1-39.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.p.65.

¹⁴⁶On Tellichery factory, see K.K.N Kurup, *History of the Tellichery Factory* (1683-1794), Sandhya,1985.

¹⁴⁷ Menon, *Velluvakammaran* ,p.69

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.,p.70-71

privileging his sons over his nephews. However, Kammaran, with his valour saved Kolathiri from the conspiracies of the princes, and he imprisoned one of the leaders of the princes.¹⁴⁹

While these victories gave Kammaran a firm standing in Kolathiri's palace, more tests awaited him. The Ikkeri King and the rebels of the Kolathiri kingdom were convinced that it was Kammaran who was the sole stumbling block to conquering the Kolathiri kingdom, decided to assassinate him. Two men sent by enemies secretly managed to put Kammaran into a bag and went to execute their plan of throwing him into a river, but before they could kill or drown Kammaran, those two men were shot and killed by an unknown hunter. The hunter opened the bag and was surprised to find a young man with excellent features smiling and emerging from the bag. He exclaimed

“Are you from this world or Allah's? Those who tried to kill you, were they the devils from hell? You were about to be killed, and you are smiling, it is certainly not the character of a human!” To This Kammaran responded “It is foolishness to worry about something impossible. My death was near, and would it change if I cry? You were sent by the all-powerful God (*sarvashakathan*) to save me. My life was over sometime back, now what I have is a life which for which I owe you. I respect you as my father for giving me the new birth.”¹⁵⁰

The hunter was impressed with his response; he further asked the details of Kammaran and also told him that he assumed by his style of talk that he was a Nair.¹⁵¹

The hunter, Haider Ali was accompanied by his brother-in-law Maqdoom Sahib. After knowing Kammaran more, Haidar asked him ‘Kammu, could you join me (could you be my help) after leaving your religion and caste?’ To this, Kammaran

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.,p.72-77

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.,p.95

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

replied: “Human is my caste, my religion is acting according to my conscience. To this all religions and castes of the world are included.”¹⁵²

Haidar Ali was happy, and he sent Kammaran to Srirangapatana, he also arranged medical help for him and asked Maqdoom Sahib to bring him to his court in ten days. Kammaran reached Srirangapatana upon Haidar’s instructions. Haidar was still at Bednur, and his son Tipu Sultan was ruling the capital in his absence. Upon his arrival at Srirangapatana, he witnessed a brutal bullfight by Tipu. Tipu and twelve of his men were attacking a bull with a spear. Tipu was hurting the bull with his spear, and Kammaran could not stand this cruel sight. He intervened and jumped between Tipu and bull with his sword. He did not know the person with the spear was Tipu, and Tipu was unaware of the identity of young Kammaran. A fight was about to commence between them, but Maqdoom Sahib’s timely intervention averted the fight. Maqdoom Sahib introduced Kammaran as a Nair youth who know nothing about Mysore and added that Haidar Ali would punish anyone who harms the young man. Tipu pulled back from the fight but remarked, “I am leaving you unharmed now, but the Mysore tiger does not forget any humiliation. He takes revenge when he gets a chance.” Kammaran replied to this statement, “You will not have the burden of ruling Mysore after that moment.”¹⁵³ Haidar laughed off the confrontation and felt that Tipu’s arrogance needed a check, “Tipu thinks of expelling English from the land, but he annoys the Hindus hence cannot get their corporation.” The novel depicted Tipu as arrogant in comparison with his father. Haidar had another conversation with Kammaran, and the conversion of Kammaran to Islam was narrated as,

“Salam Alikum, I heard about the rift between my son and you with happiness. Brave men are reliable. I am appointing you as my bodyguard with the title ‘major.’

¹⁵² Ibid, p.97.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p.100.

However, as long as you stay here, you should eat from the same plate as mine and the food provided by me. Considering that, it would be best if you could join my religion and stay here.”

Kammaran replied “As you wish, since the moment I met you at the riverside, the same has been my thinking too.” After consulting his Qazi, Haidar changed Kammaran’s name to ‘Shiekh Ayaz Sahib.’¹⁵⁴ As days passed Kammaran grew to become Haidar’s favourite and Tipu’s enemy, the novelist adds. Ayaz Khan went on to rise in Haidar’s army but got into trouble with Tipu on many occasions. In one instance, Tipu failed to deliver Ayaz Khan the money for making a treaty with the Marathas, though Haidar instructed Tipu to do so. When Haidar came to know of this, he publicly reprimanded Tipu. Haidar, in official documents bestowed the title of Sardar to Ayaz Khan as a marker of his trust.

When Ayaz Khan went to bring his wife to Mysore, he cautioned her that he is now a Muhammadiyan. His wife Madhavi said she had no problem with his new religion. On their way back from Malayalam, at Irikkur masjid, Madhavi also changed her religion and accepted the name ‘Amina Beegum.’ Haidar Ali appointed Ayaz Khan as the governor of Bednur and in charge of Bednur fort. After Haidar's death, when Tipu took charge, his first fear was the possible challenge from Ayaz Khan. Tipu saw Ayaz Khan as a contender to the throne and sent secret message to his deputy at Bednur to assassinate Ayaz Khan. However, Ayaz Khan was able to read the letter before his deputy. He told his deputy that his deputy was his enemy after Tipu’s orders and since he did not want to be known as a murderer (he emphasized it by saying “I was born in a big Nair *tharavadu* in Kerala hence I don’t want to be known as a murderer”), he asked the deputy to fight a duel with him. Ayaz Khan instantly killed his deputy in the battle.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p.102.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p.119.

After this incident, Ayaz Khan was asked by his men to fight against Tipu for the throne. Ayaz Khan said he was not interested in power, but he instead thought of handing over the Kingdom to the English. He soon went for a secret meeting with the English commander Mathews. Mathews, while negotiating offered him a drink (alcohol) but asked would Muhammadiyans drink anything intoxicating? Ayaz Khan said, “I was born and brought up in a big Nair household (*tharavadu*). Haidar Ali rescued me from death. He loved me more than his son, and I became a Muhammadiyan for him. Now that relationship is over. You know, Nairs do not have religious restrictions against drinking.”¹⁵⁶ Ayaz Khan gained the English trust after handing over Bednur to the English he was sheltered by the English Malabar till his wife’s death. He shifted to Bombay and died as a pensioner of the English East India Company, despite several requests by Tipu Sultan in the 1780s for Ayaz Khan to be handed over to him. So ended the eventful life of extraordinary historical figure and Nair lord of eighteenth century Velluvakammaran, aka Sardar Ayaz Khan Bahadoor, the novel concludes.¹⁵⁷

The encounter of Haidar and Kammaran is similar to the encounter and conversations between Sreedharan and Tipu in the novel *Seedharan adhava*. Both discussed religion while the willingness of Kammaran to change religion made Haidar happy, Tipu was for a moment displeased with Sreedharan’s response to his invitation to Islam. However, both of the young men were given medical assistance and later inducted into the army of Mysore and became close associates of their captors or saviours.

Sreedharan – revival, and reform

K.P Kuttishankara Panikkar wrote the novel ‘Sreedharan or a story from the time of Chela

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p.125.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.,p.131.

Kalapam' in 1921 with a foreword by A.R Loftus Tottenham. ¹⁵⁸Kuttishankara Panikkar introduced his novel in the following words. ¹⁵⁹

Everyone knows that *chela kalapam*, which occurred during Tipu Sultan's attack of Malabar 130 years ago, was a real incident. The sorrows Hindus faced then are only fading from memory. The families of those who fled from Malabar during the attack are still there in Travancore. Lots of treasures are found now, which were hidden under ground during the attack. Many Mappila families of Malayalam are the children of those who were added into the *chela*. The Mappila Hindu animosity, which began at that time continues, and the animosity still burns between them which is a threat to the unity of this country(*rajyam*).The novel is set in this historical context(*charithra sangathi*).¹⁶⁰

After the introduction, the novel gives a sketch of the Mysore rule of Malabar since the time of Haidar in 1766 to the final fall of Srirangapatana of 1799. The opening paragraph of the novel indicates the following aspects. First, a reaffirmation of forcible conversion during Tipu's time as a 'fact' (*vasthutha*). Second, it notes the strong presence of 'horrors' of memory of Mysore rule as still existent in 1920s. Third, it supplements the memory with

¹⁵⁸ In the India office library London , a short note attached to the novel says ' Sreedharan- An Historical novel relating to the period of Tippu Sultan's invasion of Malabar'. The book was published by K Velayudhan Nair on 15th September 1921 from Calicut. This Malayalam novel was dedicated to Tottenham. Tottenham was a known scholar of the local language, and his knowledge of castes of Malabar was especially noted. Moreover, Kuttishankara Panikkar spares no words in dedicating the book to Tottenham "in his appreciation of sincere love for Malabar and her people". In return, Tottenham in his forward says Sreedharan as a book is simple and elegant style which enabled him to finish the book in two train journeys. While Tottenham was unaware of C.V Raman Pillai's earlier novels, he wrongly attributed Sreedharan as the first historical novel in Malayalam. Panikkar, *Sreedharan Athava Chela Kalapa Kalathe oru Katha*, pp.i-iv.

¹⁵⁹The novelist outlines whom he expects to benefit from the novel. According to him, those are for the masses who do not know English, and he hopes the novel would serve as both knowledge and pleasure. He says he relied on the *Malabar Manual* of William Logan and the *Malabar Gazetteer* as sources for his information. Importantly he identifies his purpose as historical, as very few historical novels were there in Malayalam by the time. Panikkar, Sreedharan, p. ii. The novel begins with a quote from *Adhyathma Ramayana* similar to the craft of C.V Raman Pillai and K.M Panikkar later. The *purana, ramayanas*, local performative traditions like *thullal* were meant to embellish the literary texts.

¹⁶⁰Ibid..p.i. The page numbers for the forward and author's on preface are repeated and confusing in the text itself.

material pieces of evidence such as the traces of fleeing and artefacts such as treasures that are discovered. Fourth, it acknowledges that the novel was written in the context of Hindu-Muslim relations of Malabar in early twentieth century. Fifth, it traces back the histories of the Hindu- Muslim conflict to the Mysore attack finding a causal link between the two.¹⁶¹ Moreover, above all the novel was intended to serve as a stark reminder of a fading memory which the novelist implicitly suggests should not be forgotten, especially considering the turbulent Hindu Muslim relations of the 1920s.¹⁶² The importance of this novel was also that it discussed a fictionalised account of Tipu's attack for Kuttipuram Kovilakam, which in the colonial sources we have analyzed has been mentioned as the single biggest instance for Tipu's atrocities with a religious angle. The novel instead brings more complexities into the picture.

Before moving to the novel, it would be useful to note Mark Wilks' depiction of the Kuttippuram incident of 1789.

His (Tipu's) own (army division) took the direction of a place named *Gootipoor*, where about two thousand Nairs with their families, occupied an old fortified position, which they defended for some days, but finding it untenable against the superior numbers and means which they were invested(sic) , they were ultimately compelled to surrender at discretion. The alternative was signified to them a voluntary profession of the Mahomedan faith, or a forcible conversion, with deportation from their land. The unhappy captives gave a forced accent (sic), and on the next day, the rite of circumcision was performed on all males, every individual of both sexes being compelled to close the ceremony by eating beef.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, Vol ii, p.323.

When Wilks' above account reached William Logan's *Malabar Manual*, from where the novelist took the idea of the *chela kalapam*, we can see a few more details. Logan traced the event to 12th March 1789. He estimates Tipu's army at around 19000, which included 2000 men of the *chela* regiment.¹⁶⁴ Logan says that the Tellichery factory received the intelligence that Tipu's army had reached Kuttipuram in Kadathanad. However, for what happened in Kadathanad, Logan entirely relied on Wilks and quoted the above incident.¹⁶⁵

In the following section, I discuss the Mysore invasion as it is represented in the novel. I also discuss other characters and plots of the novel as they help us to understand the context of the Mysore invasion into the Malabar hinterland - beyond towns of Calicut or Tellicherry. Three major themes from historical memory that are discussed include, conversion by enlisting men into *chela* regiment (*chelayil cherkuka*); conversion by forcible beef-eating; and, the infamous siege of Kuttipuram fort.

Kuttishankara Panikkar outlines the geographical location of the story, which he says happened in a place called 'Katteri'- a remote hilly place which according to him was situated in the "northeast part of central Kerala, 25 yards inland from the Arabian sea."¹⁶⁶ The novel focused on the customs of Nair communities, and one can see there was a self-identification of the novelist with temple-centric life of Nair landed families in the novel. Some distance from the houses where people stayed, there was a Durga temple of much stature and space with an *almaram* (banyan tree) *thara*. He says that the temple was bit

¹⁶⁴ Logan admits here that Tipu's army had a large *chela* contingent before the alleged mass conversion took place in Malabar, one could note. Logan, *Malabar*, p.451.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ The village name and account of his could be assumed as fictitious or entirely imagined while the novelist also brought a lot of actual instances and facts from memory and history to the place. After this description he says the story happens sometime around 1780 in English calendar which he calculates as that of Kollavarsham 956 or Malayalam year. Katteri, he describes as a place with much natural richness, with small rivers, hills, animals, and cattle. This description locates the original site of the novel to the 18th-century interior while most of the accounts we have in official historical writing focused on coastal cities such as Tellichery or Calicut. In other words, I argue that the memories described in this novel brought forth the Mysore interaction with the interiors of Malabar more into the fore. *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

isolated from the nearby village or settlement where around 500 Nairs lived with their families. During those times Nair (probably meaning only Nair men) were brave, strong, and trained in warfare.¹⁶⁷ Arunima has observed that early Malayalam novels, “draw on the resources provided by their cultural environment for their literary landscapes,” which made them “surprisingly close to ethnographies.”¹⁶⁸ Similarly the novel *Sreedharan* draws from a familiar cultural landscape, where, for instance Onam festival was described in detail in the background of Mysore attack.¹⁶⁹

At the time of Mysore conquest of Malabar, Nairs were disenchantmented with the royal authority of Zamorin and Nair notables are characterised as ‘rising individuals,’ as in the description of the main male characters’ father himself. The leader of Katteri Desham, ‘Ramanunni Kartha,’ lived in Katteri fort. Kartha was born into the Nair caste (‘Nair Jati’) and in ‘earlier times’ was the commander of the Zamorin’s army. However, Kartha had a conflict with the Zamorin over a few things and left the Zamorin’s place for Katteri.¹⁷⁰ The novelist also noted the growing English mercantile power and their competition with the little kings. The Zamorin was the most significant among the little kings given his strength and lineage. The growing ambitions of Zamorin led to various internal crises in Malabar, which included battles which in turn, gave way to the entry of ‘outsiders’(‘anyanmar’).¹⁷¹ The novel says that in 1757 the Zamorin attacked Palakkad and Haidar sent his army to help Palakkad Rajas against Zamorin. Since then the outsider Haidar Ali nurtured ambitions of conquering Malayalam (Malayalam was used as a geographical region).¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p.3.

¹⁶⁸ Arunima, “Writing Culture: Of Modernity and Malayalam novels,” p.272.

¹⁶⁹ Panikkar, *Sreedharan*, p.47.

¹⁷⁰ The reason for this rift was that the Kartha was against corruption (“durnadapadi”) among his caste men in the Zamorin’s court, whom the Zamorin wanted to protect. He took the title Katteri Kartha an “idaparabhu” (a middle lord) after his rift with the Zamorin and built a fort at Katteri (indicating further decentralisation of power).Ibid. p.4.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p.5.

¹⁷². Panikkar, *Sreedharan*, p.5. As I noted earlier, Dilip Menon has argued that the first novelist Appu Nedungadi was careful to state his novel was not about Kerala. Menon "Caste and colonial modernity: Reading

Kuttishankara Panikkar says the conquest by Haidar's army took place 14 years before the story began.¹⁷³ The first conquest in which Haidar entered Malayalam with a considerable army was easy for him with the size of his army and the condition of Malabar. However, Haidar went back to Mysore immediately due to other concerns and gave the responsibility of Malabar to some of his officers. Soon after Haidar's return to Mysore, 'troubles' ('*kalakkam*') erupted in Malabar.¹⁷⁴ People were neither willing to obey Haidar's officers nor pay the taxes ('*rajabogam*'). Then began Haidar's second conquest of Malabar, and the novel recounts the devastations that followed. The land which was hitherto happy and prosperous turned into a desert as a result of the second conquest, Panikkar says.¹⁷⁵ Haidar's army committed various atrocities, and Panikkar lists a few; the army entered the hinterlands ('*ulnadukal*'), burned houses, killed people, destroyed gardens, moreover enslaved women and children.¹⁷⁶ *Sreedharan adhava* further states that the Nairs were the particular target of the Mysore armies' cruelty and anger who were hunted down and killed by the Muhammadiya soldiers. In addition to this, Haidar Ali created laws that reduced the status of Nairs to less than Parayars (subordinated castes) in the hierarchy. Because of these cruelties throughout Malayalam, there was fear inside although everything appeared peaceful to outside. Haidar left for Coimbatore after constructing a fort in Palakkad, which he imagined as his capital. After Haidar's return from Malabar the troubles again came to the fore. The situation turned anarchic, and it was difficult to tell who the de facto rulers of Malabar were. In this situation of disorder there emerged many 'idaprabhu' or a middle lord such as the first character of the novel 'Ramanunni Kartha'.¹⁷⁷

Saraswativijayam,"p.294. By the 1920s the Malayalam novelists overcame the hesitation and asserted Malayalam as a geographical region in their writing.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 5-6.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p.6.

¹⁷⁷ Zamorin tried to check Katteri Kartha's power, but in vain, the novelist observes. However, Zamorin awaited an opportunity to subdue Kartha under his power. Then the novelist described the personal life and the physical

An important aspect worth noting is that Kartha's house and fort in Katteri has been depicted throughout this narrative as a place which trained men for battle, it was shown associated with a *kalari* or martial center (something which would have functioned as a center to supply mercenaries for battle in eighteenth century)¹⁷⁸ the importance Katteri acquires this time is with presence of martial exercises. One could see further features of a social reformist novel with Zamorin portrayed as against an ideal *Hindu purush*, further with charges of lack of masculinity and failure to save Hindus.

Once Raghavanunni – the Kartha's nephew and father of the hero's future lover- visited the Kartha. After enjoying the grand feast and excellent hospitality, the Kartha asked the former about the visits he made to the Zamorin's court - a visit which appeared intriguing raising concerns over a possible conspiracy against the Kartha.¹⁷⁹ Raghavanunni was taken aback by this surprise question and wondered how Kartha received information about his secret visit. However, Raghavanunni said his conversation with the Zamorin was only concerned with giving him an opportunity to head a section of the Zamorin's army. To this answer, the Kartha gave a strong rebuttal expressing all his anger against the Zamorin, who was incapable and inefficient. Kartha said he has no respect left for the Zamorin. Kartha gave examples of the Zamorin's inefficiency,

features of Ramanunni Kartha, Kartha was 45 years old, and his wife was Dakshyani Amma a 32-year-old beautiful, and well-respected lady and their only son were Sreedharan who is the main character of this novel. Although Sreedharan was only 14 years old then but his intelligence and other talents exceeded his age. Apart from his distinguished father Sreedharan was also trained under a Namboodiri Brahmin who was married to Kartha's late sister. Ramanunni Kartha against the matrilineal system prevailed amongst the Nairs', declared his son as his political heir which antagonized the families of Kartha and especially an individual named 'Raghavanunni Nair.' While some family relations strained after this announcement on succession, a Namboodiri Brahmin relative was in favour of Sreedharan's succession. Moreover, one would suspect at this point that one of the novelist primary intentions, on the sides of his stated objective- on retelling the story of Muslim conquest in time of a troubled Hindu Muslim relations- was finding a patrilineal hero, which then Nair reformists may so desperately want. Zamorin, in turn, has represented as a force which supported the matrilineal factions of Kartha's family and hence conspiring against Kartha. Moreover, here the novelist also added the necessary flavour of a love affair to the novel, and we soon find Sreedharan as pained lover awaiting his father's foe and uncle 'Raghavanunni's daughter Bhanumathi to join him since she was the only childhood friend he ever had. Ibid,p. 20. The two female characters of the novel- Bhanumathi and

¹⁷⁸ See the first chapter for a discussion of stories of Kalaris during the Mysore times.

¹⁷⁹ Panikkar, *Sreedharan*,p. 21.

How difficult it has been for the Hindus during Haidar's attack, how much they suffered! How many Hindus have that evil person (Haidar) converted to Mappilas! How many Hindu women and children were murdered by that stone-hearted man's ('*kadorahridayan*') men! How many Hindu temples have been made equal to deserts! Moreover, how did the Zamorin fail to solve these issues, it shows nothing but his weak masculinity! Also, how did so many Hindus become Mappilas? And how they who have joined the *chela* (or converted and became Mappilas)? They eagerly await another attack of Haidar with happiness!¹⁸⁰

There are two points to be discussed here. Firstly, this depiction of the Zamorin was in sharp contrast with the hero of the novel; the Zamorin was less masculine, cowardly, and lazy. It was similar to the critique by the revivalist movement of the weak Hindu body which called for a Hindu Masculinity in North India.¹⁸¹ Secondly, the Mappilas were blamed for all the atrocities. Rather than looking at whether the Mappilas committed the atrocities, it would be worth noting that it was the contemporary image of Mappilas that was attributed to the past. M.T Ansari, in his significant intervention on the historiography of Mappila outbreaks, has problematized the category of Mappila fanatic both in colonial as well as nationalist discourse. According to him that metaphors of "non-modern other" gained a specific Islamic content in these discourse, which he says was "pointing to a metonymic displacement within the metaphoric."¹⁸²

Further, we see that Ramanunni Kartha blamed the Zamorin's weakness for the conversion of *Hindus to Chela* (he does not say conversion to Islam directly; instead, it is who became Mappilas by joining the *chela*). Kartha then added 'Kerala Bhoomi' could not face another

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p.22.

¹⁸¹ For the martial self-image in the Hindu devotional songs and folk culture in the early 20th century North India, see Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban poor In Early-Twentieth Century India*, p.215.

¹⁸² Ansari "Refiguring the fanatic: Malabar 1836-1922." p 38.

couple of attacks by Haidar as it had faced then. Kartha added that the Zamorin should remember the fate of his predecessor uncle, since he was unable to put up with Mohammadan ‘atrocities’ (*dusthtathakal*).¹⁸³ One can note that the Zamorin’s’ suicide travelled from the obscure mention in the *Vellyude Charithram* to 1921 and transformed itself into an effect of Muhammadan atrocities. This brought *Sreedharan Adhava* close to the ‘*dushta* and *kroora*’ (the ‘cruel and evil’) Muhammadiyan emerged more strongly after 1921 rebellion in Malayalam literature.¹⁸⁴

The Zamorin intended to sign a truce with Haidar Ali. For Kartha, a truce was utter stupidity, which would make all of them subservient to Haider Ali’s wishes. He added that:

Firstly, all of us may have to become *Musalman*s , and is there a more fanatic religion than the *Muhammadiyahans*? Moreover, I hear all the time that even here (in Malabar) that poor *cherumans* and *pulayans* (lower castes) were being intimidated in order to be converted to *Muhammadiyah* religion, and that is the case what would happen if Zamorin makes a truce with Haidar Ali.

To this, Ramanunni explained a truce did not mean surrender, but for Kartha a truce with a powerful enemy did not mean anything less than surrender. Moreover, Muhammadan attacks on *Bharatha Bhoomi* have never been this unopposed, Kartha added.¹⁸⁵ Here, one could note that there was an increasing connection between the issue of nation and conversion in the

¹⁸³ Panikkar, *Sreedharan*. p.22.

¹⁸⁴ Kumaranasan(d.1924) an important Malayalam poet and an Ezhava social reformer ,wrote ‘Duravastha’ or ‘The Tragic plight’ poem in 1922 as a response to 1921 Mappila rebellion .In the poem while asking for caste reform he infamously called Mappilas as not only “cruel Muhamamdiyar” but also as *Rakshasas* or monsters from whom Upper caste women were not safe. N.Kumaranasan, *Asante Padyakruthikal*, DC Books, 1975(2009 reprint), pp.481-482.

¹⁸⁵ Then the conversation shifted and focused more on Zamorin’s inability to rule and protect his kingdom, and the solution Kartha offered to this situation was that handing over Malabar to the English and rule as their subsidiary as they did in other parts of India. Kartha appointed Raghavan as his deputy till his son Sreedharan attains maturity to look after things. Raghavan secretly desired Kartha’s position with the support of Zamorin and was happy to receive this favour to stay, train and look after Kartha’s army and son Sreedharan. However, Raghavan while staying at Kartha’s village created dissatisfaction among the army and the villagers against Kartha and worked to gather support for him and Zamorin. While Kartha was aloof from the military affairs, all of his men gradually turned loyal to Raghavan.Panikkar, *Sreedharan Adahava*,p.23.

revivalist literature of 1920s. Charu Gupta, argues that a “political advancement of the Hindu body politic” was central to the revivalist currents of early twentieth century North India. According to her, the conversion to Hinduism soon began to be read as an act for nation.¹⁸⁶ In Malabar as well, the idea was to connect religious dogma with a politicized idea of the nation. Kartha fled through a secret tunnel with his all family. However, the principal ‘other’ in the novel soon became the Mappila Muslims. On their secret escape from Katteri on the way, four of them encountered a band of Mappila robbers who not only let them go after taking Kartha’s wife Dakshayani’s ornaments but travelled with them to the north and dropped them to the neighbouring Kingdom. To the north of Zamorin’s territory, lay another little dynasty called the ‘Kadathanad’ kingdom. The Raja of Kadathanad was a rival of the Zamorin, and he accepted Kartha and family wholeheartedly, and they lived in Kadathanad kingdom, while except a few, most in the Raja’s court were unaware of Kartha’s past. Ramanakunni Kartha was treated well and soon appointed as the minister of the Kadathanad Raja.¹⁸⁷

Within the Kadathanad Kingdom there were internal dissensions as one of the prominent members of the royal family had joined the Mysore army and had unseated the Kadathanad Raja from the throne briefly. From then on the Kadathanad kingdom was divided between a pro-English faction led by the Raja and a pro-Mysore faction led by the disaffected member of the family. The Kartha joined the former and gradually helped the pro-English Raja to retrieve his throne. However, the Kartha was haunted by the memories of the betrayal of his

¹⁸⁶Gupta, *Sexuality, obscenity, community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu public in colonial India*, p. 230.

¹⁸⁷Meanwhile, Sreedharan rose in the military hierarchy of Kadathanad; he became the commander of a thousand men, and for his valour and smartness, he received much affection from people. Soon the sadness of those exiled from Katteri waned away in Kartha’s mind, but Haidar’s army’s atrocities in the hinterland of Malabar were the cause of misery for the Kartha and the rulers of Kadathanad. The atrocities were by *karyasthas* (officers) and *badanmar* (cavalry) of Mysore; although some of the Mysore men were Hindus they did not show any kindness to Malayali Hindus. They forcibly converted Hindu women and men to the *chela*, the novelist added. ‘The atrocities included killing (‘himsikkal), intimidating or intimidating (‘bhayapeduthal), which led many Hindus to flee from the hinterlands of Malabar to cities such as Kozhikode and Tellicherry. Only Mappilas were spared from Mysore atrocities, but they also were at the receiving end of contempt and ridicule from the Mysore army. Ibid.,p.38.

close relative Raghavanunni, which had led to his state of exile.

Kartha's mind, the novelist says, became a 'cremation ground' (*'chudala kadu'*), but that diminished neither his political nor his military abilities. Notably, Kartha was instrumental in modernizing the army of Kadathanad, impending an attack by Sardar Khan, commander of Mysore army, who was taking part in a siege against the Tellichery settlement of the English in 1780-81. In 1782, Haidar Ali died, and his son Tipu Sultan took over the reins. Ramanunni Kartha was selflessly working of the betterment of Kadathanad kingdom, but he was aware of his old age and was concerned about his son Sreedharan.¹⁸⁸

Sreedharan had turned 22 by then, and he grew up to be an attractive and intelligent young man, whom the novelist says had no equal in Malayalam.¹⁸⁹ He commanded a contingent of thousand men and received respect and love from his army. Amongst them, someone called Othenan was particularly close to Sreedharan, the novelist added. Here, as noted in the beginning, the novelist was explicitly concerned with the development of Sreedharan into adulthood. One could note that the importance Sreedharan received as a child and a young adult above the nephews of both Zamorin and Sreedharan's father reveals the new patrilineal family form. Perhaps, the focus and depiction of Sreedharan as a child prodigy helped the novelist to argue against the matrilineal joint family successfully. Similar to how Pradip Kumar Bose has argued that the child was used for attaining the "grandest national ambitions."¹⁹⁰ In the care and development of the young Sreedharan, the nation was intimately connected to a modernized Hindu body politic (which was more reformed in contrast with Mappilas who are depicted as fanatic and ruffians), as well as to the *Bharatha*

¹⁸⁸ Ibid,p.42.

¹⁸⁹ Instead of Kerala, Malayalam was used by the novelist as a geographical category denoting Malayalam speaking region .One could see similar usage in the Arabi-Malayalam writing of the early 20th century in the final chapter of this dissertation.

¹⁹⁰ Bose "Sons of the Nations", p.120. Praveena Kodoth has argued that for the social reformist project of early twentieth century Kerala, "conjugal bond was the principal property/ material relations between men, women and parents (fathers) and children." Praveena Kodoth, "Shifting the Ground of Fatherhood: Matriliney, Men, and Marriage in Early Twentieth Century Malabar." Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, 2004,p.4.

Bhoomi he mentioned.

Though the focus was on Bharatha Bhoomi, there were specific Kerala regional elements in the novel. When the Kartha was sure of his impending death, he asked Sreedharan to meet him privately and confided his burning desire to take revenge against Raghavan, his nephew, who usurped his Katteri fort from him. Sreedharan took an oath to avenge his father.¹⁹¹ One day Sreedharan approached the court asking the Raja's permission for a leave of absence to satisfy his father's final wish. The Raja permitted him, reminding him that

We cannot assume that Tipu Sultan has gone forever. He might come back to Malabar once the monsoon is over. There are talks that he might invade Malayalam soon. We should be prepared with all our commanders and forts expecting the attack." Hearing this even while Raja has permitted him to take as many army men as he wants, he decided to take only his close associate Othenan along.¹⁹²

While Raghavanunni was aware that Sreedharan could have been looking for revenge and take back his country, Raghavan was more invested in fortifying his province and reforming (modernizing) his army against an impending Mysorean attack (against 'Mohammadiya Virodhangal'). A contrast to the reformist body of Sreedharan was set up in the novel with the image of Manavedan –a prince of the Zamorin's family who intended to marry Sreedharan's love interest and Bhanumati. Manavedan reached Katteri with his people to meet Bhanumathi; he was a young man, but either due to indulging in too much pleasure or lack of physical activities, he had the features of old age. The novelist added that most of the princes in Zamorin's court were out of shape and amongst them Manavedan was better looking. At Katteri Raghavan engaged conversation with Manavedan on the impending attack of Tipu Sultan to which he replied:

¹⁹¹Panikkar, *Sreedharan*, pp.47-48.

¹⁹² Ibid, pp.52- 54.

It does not matter whether he (Tipu) comes to Malabar, this is not the time to be worried about Tipu Sultan, I am here on a noble purpose and not to discuss Tipu Sultan.” Manavedan said in a little offended tone to Raghavan. However, while waiting to meet Bhanumathi, Manavedan was worried about Tipu Sultan’s attack so much that he could not sleep at night. “The (Zamorin’s) Kovilakam he left had heard the echoes of a coming earthquake, Tipu Sultan and thousands of his army were preparing to capture Kozhikode fort once again, and there has been a firm rumour spread across the country that this time Tipu had given order to capture all Hindus into *chela*.¹⁹³

Concerned with an impending attack Manavedan was in two minds about his visit to meet Bhanumathi, but secretly hoped that his absence would save him from an attack on the Zamorin’s Kovilakam by the Mysore army, he decided to leave. In the morning, when Manavedan woke up, he tried to wake up his associate Raman Namboodiri who was traveling with him. Raman Namboodiri woke up suddenly and suddenly looked for *poonool* (Brahmanical thread) on his body and held it firmly and said

“I had a horrible dream, which is, there were Tipu and few Mappilas present who took me and broke my *poonool* and told me “hey man, you should become a Mappila”, after abusing me they kept the (religious / Muhammadiya) cap over my head (‘thoppi ideechu)”.¹⁹⁴

Here, the novelist used the term ‘Thoppi ideekuka ‘or forcefully putting the cap on the skull as an act of conversion. *Thoppi ideekuka* was the only euphemism one finds for conversion apart from *chelayil cherkkuka* (enlislit in *chela*) for conversions during the Mysore times in this novel. Here it is worth mentioning that as the historian Shahid Amin has pointed out that

¹⁹³ Ibid,p. 68.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid,p. 70.

thopi has emerged as an ‘essential marker of the otherness of Muslim’ in the early twentieth century, particularly with the rise of national movement.¹⁹⁵ While we did see the mention of *thoppiydeekuka* in *Vellayude Charithram*, one can say that the continuity of that memory in the twentieth century adds new meaning in the new nationalist context, creating new forms of ‘otherness.’

A messenger from the Zamorin’s court reached Katteri and requested the presence of the Prince at Calicut since by then, an unprecedented situation has emerged.

“The Pattani and one lakh army have reached Kozhikode,” the messenger said, “Who is Pattani, Tipu Sultan?” the prince wondered . “ Yes, before I left Kozhikode they have put cap on (*thoppi ideechu*) more than 100 men already, and Manavendran prince should reach Kozhikode as soon as possible as per Zamorin’s order”, The messenger said. With much worry, fear, and anxiety but unable to disobey the King Zamorin, the prince left for Calicut that night.

The prince, the Namboodiri, and few people from Katteri army were approaching Calicut while they heard some voices deep inside a forest. They overheard men talking and laughing, with the style of talk they assumed the men are Mappilas. There were around 28 of them; among them, only 20 were Mappilas, the rest spoke Hindustani, and ‘Karnatic’ (*Kannada*). Those people were consuming Hookah, and when they met the prince and his men, the two groups went on to fight each other. During the battle, the Mappila group captured the prince and Namboodiri, who were unarmed. The Namboodiri thought that his early morning dream of being captured by Tipu Sultan and Mappilas had come true, and his sacred thread would be soon broken. To his horror one of the Mappilas said’ we should cut the throats of both of

¹⁹⁵ Shahid Amin, “Representing the Musalman Then and Now, Now and Then” Shail, M. S. S. Pandian, and Ajay Skaria, eds. *Muslims, Dalits, and the fabrications of history. Subaltern Studies . Vol. 12*. Orient Blackswan, 2005.p 7-8.

these swine.’ Then another Mappila disagreed and said’ we should not kill them instead we should enlist them in *chela* and let leave.’ Raman Namboodiri tried to bribe them by offering money in return for letting them go without any of these troubles. One of the Mappila got agitated with this, and he said’ see he (who offered money) is a Namboodiri boy and see the way he talks, grab his thread (‘*naru*’). Namboodiri’s sacred thread (‘*brahmasutra*’) was cut, then the Mappilas prepared to cut the ‘*Kuduma*’ (‘sacred hair lock’) of the prince and the Namboodiri. Suddenly, while Raman Namboodiri was pleading, a man of significant physical stature appeared from nowhere and fought with Mappilas. The Mappilas who were around Namboodiri and prince fled in fear of this man. The prince and Namboodiri were asked to be with one of the associates of the mystery man while he was fighting with other Mappilas who were in battle with the Katteri army near.¹⁹⁶ “The *deergakayan* (the man with a large-sized body) flew like a bird and cut four to five Mappilas like banana trees, scaring the Mappilas, and ending the battle.” After the battle, the Katteri army and their chief Ittunni Nair were so impressed with the intervention of the mystery man, who refused to reveal his identity but told them that he was on his way to Katteri to meet the ruler. A surprised Ittuni Nair and his team agreed to accompany the mystery man to Katteri, who finally revealed himself as Sreedharan.¹⁹⁷

Seedharan Athava states that the figure of a lakh Mysore army in Kozhikode was an exaggeration. The number was much smaller: according to him Tipu Sultan’s commander

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., pp.86-87.

¹⁹⁷ On his way, the mystery man heard good things about Bhanumathi when Ittunni Nair waxed eloquent about her intelligence and beauty. They reached Katteri and Raghavan heard in detail what happened from his commander Ittunni Nair. Raghavan rightly assumed that the new man is none other than Sreedharan and he was surprised that Ittunni Nair did not recognize him. Raghavan conveyed his condolences for the demise of his father Ramanunni Kartha, and asked what brought Sreedharan to Katteri. Sreedharan asked for a duel with Raghavan to avenge his father. Raghavan very well knew that he would not be able to win the duel and tried to convince Sreedharan. Sreedharan did not abide, but Raghavan asked him time until the next morning since he had heard Tipu Sultan’s army was somewhere in the vicinity of the fort, so he had to prepare his army against them before the duel. However, in deceit again, he succeeded in locking Sreedharan in one of the rooms of Katteri fort. The next day Sreedharan woke up to the sounds of battle outside the Katteri fort. The Mappilas and Mysore army were attacking the Katteri fort but Sreedharan was trapped inside a locked room and helpless. Ibid.,pp,93-102.

Mir Hassan Ali Khan, with six thousand Indian soldiers and 600 white soldiers under Lally had come to conquer Kozhikode. After disbursing a few of his army to various quarters of Malabar, Hassan Ali Khan came with his units to Kozhikode. Others in the Mysore army allied with Mappilas created havoc in the hinterland of Malabar, and this battalion reached Katteri.¹⁹⁸

The contemporary caste concerns and conflicts further played out in the narrative of the novel. The blame for the atrocities was equally shifted to lower castes as well as the Mappila Muslims. According to the novel, the majority of Mappilas who helped Mysore army were people who had been taken into *chela* from lower castes - *heena* castes - and they did not hesitate in committing, robbery, sexually harassing women (“sthreekalude maryada langanam”) in comparison with Mysore men.¹⁹⁹ *Seedharan Athava* explained that: “These Mappilas were, in fact, looking for an opportunity to harness other Hindus into *chela*. Whenever they got an opportunity they took their small knife, armoury and usurped Hindu houses and robbed temples and killed people. They were generally called *chelas*.” Furthermore, it appeared as if Seedharan, was an ideal masculine adult, someone who rescues upper-caste families, of his own, his patron of Kadathanad, and as well his enemies.²⁰⁰

Chela Kalapam explained

Kutti Shankara Panikkar says all Malayalis who lived 50 years ago were aware of *Chela Kalapam*.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p.102.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, pp.102-103.

²⁰⁰ Bhanumathi met Sreedharan inside the fort, but she was not able to open the door for him despite recognizing him. When the Katteri was gradually losing the war Raghavan sought Sreedharan’s help whereas Sreedharan’s associate Othenan was already helping the Katteri army. Sreedharan led Raghavan, his family and few men who survived the battle et all through the secret tunnel his father and family once escaped. Moreover, when the Mappilas entered the fort they could find nothing except some dead bodies, and they remarked “ this could be perhaps the miracle of some powerful Hindu God”. Ibid, p.116.

Even now, people have heard of the term, but they are unaware of the horrific deeds and cruel atrocities that happened in history. It is only because peace was lost in our country that we should remember the past. The ‘Katterimardana’ (the attack of katteri) was the beginning of the *Chela Kalapam*. Just before the ‘Katterimardna’ (or the attack of Katteri) Tipu sent the order to Mir Hussain Khan that he should ‘encircle all the Nair class (‘vargam) between Kottayam and Palakkad and eliminate all of them. ‘Tipu asked to enlist all the inhabitants of Kerala to *chela* (or ‘convert them’).

The reformist language of the novelist was apparent where the novelist explained why Tipu could not be blamed for the atrocities. The novel said:

Amongst the inhabitants of Kerala except for the Brahmins, Princes, and Nairs, who held the highest position in royal courts, others were ignorant of Hindu religion. They worshipped *Kuttichathan, Parakkutti, Karinkali, Muthappan, Muthashiyar* and other inferior idols in place of God. They became arrogant after drinking liquor and flesh, which were given as ‘*prasadas*.’

The novelist observed that there was no reason to suspect that Tipu Sultan had something against the ‘real Hinduism.’ Similar to K Madhavan Nair’s finding two years later, the novelist added that there was no evidence of Tipu enlisting Hindus of other regions into *chela*. In that sense, Tipu’s real wrath was against superstition or a degenerated Hinduism and not really against Hinduism, the novelist said. However noble Tipu Sultan’s intentions were, the Mysore robbers and recently converted Mappilas implemented it poorly and it is on them that the blame of *Chela Kalapam* lies, he substantiated.²⁰¹

Chela Kalapam, began with a declaration by Tipu Sultan. The original declaration though it mentioned conversion to Islam, and a critique of existing customs amongst Hindus of

²⁰¹ Ibid,pp.118-120.

Malabar, such as polyandry came in the context of Tipu's inability to subjugate Malabar even after 24 years of rule, the novelist said.²⁰² Kuttishankara Panikkar's position of the marriage custom or matriliney and *Sambandham* was more evident when he quotes the declaration as "amongst you one woman sleeps with 10 men, and you bring up your maternal sisters in this way some of you are born in an illegal way which is worse than wild animals."²⁰³ Here the novelist was appreciative of the reformist zeal of Tipu Sultan, while dismissive of his religious aspect. As noted in the beginning, the novelists' idea was to connect with a reformist Tipu while he was invested in twentieth-century reformism. He instead blamed the Mappilas and Mysore army for misreading the declaration and in turn responsible for the horrors of *Chela Kalapam*.²⁰⁴ Moreover, in the novel *Kafir* was curiously translated as superstitious believers (*andhavishwasi*) rather than infidels or unbelievers. Here, Kuttishankara Panikkar shared some epistemological ground with early twentieth century Muslim reformists who critiqued the customary practices of Mappila Muslims as similar to *Kafirs*.²⁰⁵

Meanwhile, Sreedharan and Bhanumati escaped to Kadathanad through a secret passage, and Sreedharan was appointed as the supreme commander of the Kadathanad army. While other lands continued to be the victims of Mysore atrocities, Tipu Sultan did not attack Kadathanad; people believed that it was for Sreedharan's valour and fame that Tipu dared not to attack Kadathanad. However, Sreedharan and the people of Kadathanad were prepared for an impending attack by Tipu. Suddenly, when the news spread that Tipu Sultan, along with an army of 20 thousand men had reached Malabar, and their target was Kadathanad, the fear

²⁰² Ibid, p.120.

²⁰³ This quote is a modified version of Tipu's declaration against Nair customs. See Logan, *Malabar*, p.451.

²⁰⁴ Panikkar, *Sreedharan Athava*, p.120-121.

²⁰⁵ Mappila Muslim reformer Makthi Thangal (d.1912) uses the category of *kafir* and *kafiriyyth* (relating to infidelity) while critiquing certain practices of Mappila Muslims including matrilineal customs. K.K Muhammad Abdul Kareem ed., *Makthi Thangalude Sampoorana Krithikal*, [the complete works of Makthi Thangal], Vachanam Books, 1981 (2012 Reprint), pp.512-523.

was heightened. The Hindus were fear-stricken that they will be asked to enlist as *chela*; the Mappilas, on the other hand awaited in enthusiasm. Women started crying, and men hid their valuables such as gold and vessel. They strengthened the walls of forts, prepared army, and those who assumed they were not able to fight found some secret ways to flee when the attack took place. However, Tipu did not enter Kadathanad, and he instead diverted to the neighbouring territory of Kannur and made a peace treaty there with Kannur Beeby, and a much apprehended attack of Kadathanad did not take place.²⁰⁶

The relief was short-lived as suddenly a messenger arrived at the court and shouted that Tipu's army had reached the nearby town, and it is only a matter of hours that they enter Kadathanad.²⁰⁷ While people fell into a panic, Sreedharan quite rhetorically assured all of them it would be after he and his men fall Tipu's army would attack them. Tipu's army encircled the Kadathand fort or Kuttipuram fort. Most of the ordinary people and royal men of the Kovilakam fled the before Tipu's army reach there, and only Sreedharan and his men were left. Even the Mappilas felt sad about the misery of people, the novelist says. Some of the people took refuge at Kuttipuram fort while others hid in their homes. While Tipu's army encircled the Kuttipuram Kovilakam, the novel presents Sreedharan as good military strategist who conducted a surprise attack Tipu's army at midnight. The Raja, Brahmins, women, and royal family and Bhanumathi left the fort in secret destined to reach Travancore while Sreedharan decided to stay back with few of his men. The Nair soldiers of Kadathanad killed many of the Mysore soldiers, and the strong resistance the Nair soldiers under Sreedharan kept the Muhammadiya Army Mysore at bay.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 129.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p.141.

²⁰⁸ Ibid,p. 150.

‘So the Sultan was not that cruel as we heard?’

Finally, on the next day, Tipu Sultan himself arrived at the fort with a vast army and around 50 small canons to break the fort. When Tipu heard that it was due to the leadership of Sreedharan that they were unable to breach the fort, Tipu asked sarcastically, “Are there such courageous men among Nairs?” However, seeing the fight himself he felt that there were indeed courageous men among Nairs. Soon with Tipu’s presence the battle intensified, and the ‘Muhammadiya army’ was able to break the gates of the fort. The Mappilas who were part of the Mysore attack were shouting ‘*la ilaha illallah*’ while fighting.²⁰⁹ The novel further confines the religious zeal to Mappilas while the rest of the Mysore Army behaved somewhat more professionally. Tipu watched all the battles from a distance while sitting on his Arab horse. However, Tipu grew impatient with the lack of success in his army. He was told by someone that they cannot attain victory until they kill the young *kafir* commander (Sreedharan) of the Nair Army. He was told that Sreedharan was a good soldier with a talent in martial arts. A stunned Tipu called for his best soldier Dilwar Khan and with him a band of five soldiers. Amongst the five soldiers who volunteered to assist, there was Kunji Marakkar, who was a renowned Mappila warrior from Kadathanad who had shifted allegiance to Mysore years before.²¹⁰

In the battle that ensued there was a duel between Dilwar Khan and Sreedharan, and in the spectacular battle, Dilwar Khan was killed by Sreedharan who was stabbed in the back by Kunji Marakkar. Tipu Sultan, who observed the duel from a distance came closer when two of the men fell. He carefully inspected the bodies of Dilwar Khan and exclaimed “Allah’s will” (“*padachavante Kalpana*”).²¹¹ Then he looked at Sreedharan’s body and found that Sreedharan was alive. He asked his servant to get his doctor (*hakim*) soon. Tipu asked for the

²⁰⁹ Ibid,p. 153.

²¹⁰ Ibid, p.154.

²¹¹ Ibid,p.156.

Mappila who had stabbed Sreedharan from behind in deceit. Tipu's men told him that if it were not for the Mappila the battle would not have ended. To which Tipu replied with anger, "even if that would be true, I cannot include someone who is prone to deceit like this in my army even if he is a follower of Holy Prophet's path; bring him before me".²¹² Kunji Marakkar was brought in front of Tipu Sultan; Tipu beat him up four times and told him to run away and also asked him never to repeat such betrayals in battles. Though chastised by Tipu, Kunji Marakkar was appreciated by other commanders of Mysore army. When the Hakim arrived to look after Sreedharan Tipu told the Hakim "I think this man is alive, you should take him and look after, and you should not give him less attention for the reason that he is a *kafir*."²¹³

After listening to this, the Hakim took Sreedharan to Tipu's tent. Tipu asked the rest of the Nair army to yield to him, and all of them surrendered to Tipu. This way, Tipu Sultan captured the Kadathanad fort. When Tipu returned to his tent, Sreedharan was slowly gaining consciousness, all he could see was a tent and two men. One of the men was "with a decorated crown with pearls and tiger emblem, short in stature but with a mightiness on his face, his round face had a smile and was gazing at Sreedharan."

While Sreedharan could not stop staring at the two men, Tipu Sultan broke the silence; he said: "Do not worry, young man, I am Tipu Sultan and along with me is my doctor." Tipu complimented the Hakim and promised him great rewards for helping Sreedharan. When Sreedharan introduced himself, Tipu said "I like your name, which is unique, I am impressed with your physical beauty, but you were not supposed to be born into superstitious believing people who have no proper knowledge of the religion of God, you should become a Muslim, then I will make you a commander under me."

²¹² Ibid, p. 157.

²¹³ Ibid p. 161.

To this, Sreedharan replied “O Lord, please do not ask me to change my religion”. Sreedharan also declined Tipu’s offer to make him a commander. When Tipu, portrayed here as a reasonable person, pressed on for the reason for his refusal, Sreedharan stated two reasons. He said that he did not see Tipu’s religion superior to his own religion, nor did he view his own religion as inferior. Secondly he said, he was still the commander of Kadathanad army and even if he survived his battle wounds, he would not be fit to fight for Tipu. The conversation that followed focused on the comparison between their respective religions.

Tipu responded to Sreedharan’s outright refusal of his offers as the ingratitude of a *kafir*. Sreedharan, in turn, asked Tipu whether Tipu’s religion gets any superiority while denigrating his religion, by saying all *kafirs* are ungrateful. An angry Tipu replied that his religion was already very superior. Sreedharan was eloquent in his response here. He replied “The Hindu religion helps one comprehend the high power of *Jagadeeswaran* through many religious thoughts without bias and the Muahammadiya religion says Muhammad Nabi who was once our leader should be followed without mistake and believe that his orders and customs are the only right things while every other belief is false, which among this is a great religion?”. An angry Tipu Sultan picked up his sword and asked ‘hey believer of superstitions! How dare you denigrate Prophet Muhammad and speak, and I can destroy your little life just now with this sword. ‘To which Sreedharan replied that Tipu might be able to destroy his little life but not his great religion. For a moment, Sreedharan thought Tipu Sultan killed him, but Tipu instead exclaimed that he does not intend to kill Sreedharan; instead he had the most respect for Sreedharan’s courage and belief

which amazed the Sultan.²¹⁴ Tipu also stated that he had no hatred for other religions. He assured Sreedharan that he saw him as a brother, and he should worry only about his wounds and take care of healing the wounds.²¹⁵

Sreedharan revised his view of Tipu Sultan as a cruel ruler. An officer of Tipu Sultan entered the tent then and updated him about his army's movements from other parts. To him, Sultan enquired how many people they had managed to convert in Kadathnad (to enlist in *chela*). The officer said, except a few they managed to enlist around two thousands of them, but the local king, his family and Brahmins had escaped the enlisting. The Raja and Bhanumathi were among those who had escaped. Tipu assured Sreedharan that no harm would be done to them if he agreed to become a commander of Tipu and Sreedharan reluctantly accepted the proposal.

Tipu Sultan was busy for a couple of months in collecting war booty and converting people to *Muhammadinism* while Sreedharan was recovering under Sultan's men's care. Sreedharan was looked after well while a Hindu cooked his food as he wished. When he finally recovered he was asked to join Tipu Sultan at Srirangapatana. There he was appointed as one of the commanders of Tipu Sultan's army.²¹⁶

The Raja of Kadathanad, Bhanumathi, and family were sheltered at the Tellichery factory until the treaty of Srirangapatana in 1792. Bhanumathi returned to Katteri when the English took over Malabar. The novel says that the Brahmins and the Rajas sought English protection as they feared another Muhammadiya invasion. Sreedharan had grown close to Tipu Sultan and returned to Katteri only after the fall of Srirangapatana. Upon his return, he was glad to see Bhanumathi waiting for him even though he could not send any communication from

²¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 161-162.

²¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 167-168.

²¹⁶ Ibid, p. 181.

Srirangapatana to English Malabar.²¹⁷ Towards the end of novel, after Sreedharan and Bhanumathi got married, Sreedharan told her that he was alone with Tipu Sultan at the final battle of Srirangapatana. Betrayed by everyone Tipu Sultan fell into the bullets of the English and there was only Sreedharan to help him. Tipu Sultan urged Sreedharan to go back to his lover Bhanumathi while saying he was going to the God's place (that his death was inevitable). Tipu also conveyed his apologies to Bhanumathi for making Sreedharan stay so many years with him.

At the end of the novel Sreedharan turned an English loyalist and believed that the English rule was better for the country. He also told Bhanumathi that people might forget the time of *Chela Kalapam* which may lead to repetitions of such occurrences.²¹⁸ We see the avowed support to English rule at various places in the novel; the conclusion also show Kuttishankara Panikkar's agenda of placing his narrative of memory at the yoke of colonial state. Alessandro Portelli has recently argued that it is oblivion and not memory that may lead to repetition of the past; similarly the novelist believed that it was his responsibility to remind people of their memories in order to prevent a repetition of painful events.²¹⁹

The Nehruvian afterlife of a fictional Tipu

The memory of *Chela Kalapam* continued till the end of the Nehruvian era even after independence. Another historical novel published in 1954 titled 'Tipuvinte Malayala Rani,' may be discussed in this context.²²⁰ *Malayala Rani* shows the critique of the Nair reform movement was against marital practices. *Malayala Rani* is about a young unmarried queen on the borders of Travancore and Cochin kingdoms of eighteenth century. During Marthanda

²¹⁷ Ibid, p.180.

²¹⁸ Ibid. , p. 193.

²¹⁹ See Alessandro Portelli "On the Uses of Memory- As Monument, As reflex, As Disturbance", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 49, Issue No. 30, 26 Jul, 2014, pp, 43-47.

²²⁰ Gopala Pillai, *Tipuvinte Malayala Rani*.

Varma's time, this small principality helped Marthanda Varma in his succession battle for the throne. After the succession war when Mysore and Travancore were locking horns with each other, the small principality came under the threat of an advancing Travancore state. *Malayala Rani* focused on the young queen named 'Anasuya' of the principality, the marriage proposals that she received, and her admirable qualities in the context of the contemporary political events. At the beginning, the queen had two unusual visitors in disguise.²²¹ The two men later revealed to be Marthanda Varma and his close associate Ramayyan. The men were there seeking monetary help from the queen in the ongoing succession battle. In the novel, the gap between Marthanda Varma's reign and his successor Rama Varma's reign is shortened, for example Rama Varma appears soon after Martha Varma's succession battle, and it appears to the reader that time had not moved at all in the small principality where the Queen was still 21 years old, and a rich Namboodiri was making attempts to marry her (novel uses the term 'kootirippu'-the custom of being the husband of royal women,²²² where the Namboodiri was privileged by his status of being a wealthy Brahmin). After some lobbying with the minister of the queen, the Namboodiri got close to the queen but it was also at the same time that two representatives of Haidar Ali's Mysore visited Queen at her court. One of the representatives turned out to be Haidar Ali's son Tipu Sultan himself. Before knowing the true identity of the representative the Queen asked the representative about the rumours of Mysore atrocities to the Sultan himself. Subsequently there was an assassination attempt and talks of the queen falling in love with Tipu Sultan. In the novel, while Tipu and his companion were royal guests at the palace of the queen two attempts were made to assassinate Tipu.

Moreover, the assassin turned out to be a local who was secretly supported by the English

²²¹ Ibid.,pp.40-42

²²² This is the definition in Srikanteshwaram Padmanabha Pillai, *Shabda Tharavali*, P Chandra Shekharan Nair, 1930, p.671.

East India Company. In a conversation with Tipu, the queen asked him about the rumours of his persecution of Hindus. Tipu dismissed all of it as English East Company propaganda and delivered a long nationalist lecture in response.²²³ He compared Haidar with Mughal King Akbar:

Though both of them (Haidar and Akbar) were born to Musلمان sect ('vargam'), they treat every religion equally. He knows clearly that all religions are different paths to God. He desires to unite all Kings of South India ('Dakshina patham'), but the European merchants have the ambition of subjugating our land. They also have thoughts of enslaving our people ('bharatheeynas') and sell them to the plantation owners of Africa and America. They exploit our economy; they destroy our culture and push us to poverty. Haidar Ali is the only force that resists these attempts and thus invites all false propaganda against him.²²⁴

Tipu identified himself as the son of Haidar Ali Khan. However, he added

Though my father is a Muslim, my mother was a Maharashtrian Brahmin. I am also observing strong chastity ('ugra brahmachariyam') like you. I am also a strict vegetarian, and I do not consume alcohol and my father Haidar Ali is also a teetotaler like me. I am learned in all *Shasthras* and *Puranas* of Hindus though my father is not as educated as I am. We do not have enmity with anyone. The Europeans have their land, they should return to their place and we Indians are enough here.²²⁵

The queen was impressed by Tipu's knowledge and patriotism.²²⁶ However, the Namboodiri found the presence of Tipu Sultan threatened his interests. The jealousy that the Brahmin

²²³ Pillai, *Tipuvinte Malayala Rani*, pp.59-60.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid,p.63.

²²⁶ Ibid,p.64.

Namboodiri felt over Tipu Sultan's intimacy with the queen, was resolved towards the end after he realized Tipu's respect for Hindu temples and festivals. Namboodiri decided to throw a feast for Tipu Sultan and his friend at his house. In a conversation that ensued between them, Tipu invited the Namboodiri and others to attend Mysore Dasara while being eloquent about Mysore Dasara Tipu told them that he would make sure that he will ask Haidar Ali Khan to send an official letter of invitation for Dasara once he reaches back. Tipu also reminded them that Shankaracharya's Sringeri Matha is at Mysore. To this, the Namboodiri replied that Shankaran was born near his place at Kaladi of Kerala. Tipu seemed aware of about temple's idols much to the delight of Namboodiri and others.²²⁷ While the *Sreedharan Adhava* focused on the reformist aspects of Tipu Sultan, the short 1954 *Malayala Rani* reached, rather unsurprisingly, a secularist conclusion. Tipu Sultan, much like the Nehruvian state appeared as a protector of all religions.

Conclusion

Shahid Amin has argued that "a true History of communalism" should be attentive to the "how communities remember, understand, explain and recount pasts and presents to themselves."²²⁸ In this chapter, I have attempted to show how the social reformers of Nair communities remembered their past in order to make sense of their colonial as well as the post-colonial present. There was a conscious effort to recollect and remind people of Tipu Sultan's rule in Malabar. While remembering was a conscious activity, the selections and erasures involved in the process of remembering also become apparent. Driven by the contemporary concerns such as the Mappila agrarian outbreaks which culminated in the 1921 rebellion, Tipu's faults were attributed to the Mappila Muslims of Malabar, marking a profound shift in memory. The role of literature in fabricating the community pasts have been

²²⁷ Ibid, pp.94-95.

²²⁸ Amin, "Representing the Musalman Then and Now, Now and Then", p.2.

noted by historians in writings on other parts of South Asia. In such literature, we that “a persistent, specific, oppressive, tyrannical and bigoted memory of Mussalman through historical time c.1000-1900, alongside accredited ‘facts’ of History were smuggled nicely.” This aspect, according to Amin, sets out two results, one he says “an ‘authentic Hindu experience’ of Muslim rule could be located simultaneously in an “unhistoricized past even as it could be buttressed by a singular Hindu memory of defeat and subjugation.” Secondly, “historical fact of Muslim conquest could enable these Hindi writers to fill in the space of this Hindu past with historical statements which had no verifiable anchorage other than their placement within the time of a tyrannized Hindu India’s “Muslim pasts.”²²⁹

The narrative strategies of the *Seedharan Adhava* we discussed above were similar to this case of fabricating community pasts; the image of Mappila Muslim ruffians enabled them to construct an ‘authentic’ experience of persecution. For example, the novel emphasized the quotidian differences between a reformed Nair masculine body of Sreedharan and violent masculinity of ruffian Mappilas such as Kunji Marakkar. It is noteworthy that we do not find many positive Mappila character in the novel. While the novel of 1921 exonerates Tipu of his supposed crimes, the 1927 *Velluvakammaran* vilified Tipu as cruel and fanatic. However, *Malayala Rani* of 1954 reaches a secularist compromise, and Tipu became a Half Hindu born into a Brahmin mother and someone who has sufficient knowledge of Brahmanical texts and rituals. While in *Sreedharan Adhava*, the violent Mappila masculinity was always threatening to the anxieties of Nair men who were on a campaign based on patrilineal principles, in *Velluvakammaran* Tipu’s body and conduct was markedly different from Kammaran’s, and in the *Malayala Rani* Tipu’s body was reformed and Hinduized, which was desired by a Hindu (Nair) queen of the Malayalam region.

²²⁹ Ibid, p.12.

CHAPTER-5

TIPU SULTAN IN MUSLIM POLITICS AND MEMORIES: 1792 TO THE PRESENT

...that whoever is in the land of the heathen, may have comfort and relief by coming to this part and leaving the country of unbelievers, which is incumbent upon *Mussulmen*. By the blessings of the Almighty, whatever be your support where ye (sic.) are, shall be increased to double upon your arrival here, and your life, and your fortune, and whatever is dear to you, shall be in the hands of the Lord and his Prophet.

- Tipu Sultan's address to "Mussulmen in general", December 1786.¹

How did the Muslims of Malabar remember Tipu Sultan's time? Was there diversity within the contemporary representations of Tipu Sultan's time? How did the existing songs and writings respond to Tipu Sultan's idea of "Mussulmen in general"? How were these distinct from the colonial and Persian ideas of Khudadadi histories? In order to answer these questions, this chapter focuses on an unpublished early twentieth-century Arabi-Malayalam biography (c.1900) of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan.² Through a detailed discussion of this biography, this chapter demonstrates that Arabi-Malayalam memories of Haidar and Tipu - while agreeing with the general facts - were distinct in their view of events, from the colonial and Persian histories of Khudadadi Sarkar. The chapter further argues that the biography in Arabi-Malayalam was as much anti-Shia as it was anti-colonial. There were five Sufis of Malabar, Abdulla Musliyar (d.1824), Sheikh Jifri Thangal (d.1808), Muhammad Sha Thangal of Kondotty (d.1804), Khwaja Hussain of Manjakkulam (c.1788), Muhammad Moula

¹Dirom, *A narrative of Campaign in India which terminated with the War with Tippoo Sultan in 1792*, p.285.

² Arabi-Malayalam is a literary language used by Mappila Muslims; where Malayalam is written in a modified Arabic script. See O Abu, *Arabee Malayala Sahitya Charithram*, Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangam, Kottayam, 1970. Abu's attempt was one of the first succinct studies on Arabi- Malayalam literature and literary language.

(d.1792) and Manathala Haidros Kutty Mooppan (c.1793) who were contemporaries of Tipu Sultan and are venerated as saints in the popular tradition. I look at hagiographies and prayer songs of these saints in written and oral traditions, which carry the memory of their connections with Tipu Sultan. These stories, as well as the biography, attempt to situate Tipu Sultan in a Sunni tradition. The sectarian memories of Tipu Sultan, with the stories of his interactions in Malabar, survived and shaped the post-colonial Muslim politics in India.

The AM Biography- Heretics, and Infidels

In this section, I focus on an Arabi-Malayalam document on Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan of contested authorship. C.N Ahamad Moulavi and K.K Muhammad Abdul Kareem, in their magisterial catalogue of Arabi-Malayalam literature *Mahathaya Mappila Sahitya Parampryam*, have attributed the authorship of this document to Vallanchira Kunjahammad (d.1912).³ They named this text *Akbarul Hind* and suggested that it was based on the biographies of Mysore Sultans- Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. Kunjahammad wrote the work under the pen name of *Uhaymid*.⁴ A copy of this book could never be printed due to the fear of British persecution.⁵ However, there is nothing in the untitled document to suggest the authors' name. The copy I obtained could be traced to the family of Vallanchira Kunjahammad,⁶ which I call the Arabi-Malayalam biography (hereafter AM biography).⁷

The AM biography can be divided into two sections, i.e., Haidar's and Tipu's histories. The first part focuses on three significant aspects of Haidar's life — his early expeditions and rise in ranks; the treachery of Khande Rao and Haidar's subsequent attempt at gaining for full power after Krishna Raja II's death; and, Haidar's attack of Malabar. The second part of the

³ C.N Ahamad Moulavi and K.K Muhammad Abdul Kareem, *Mahathaya Mappila Sahitya Parampryam* [The Great Mappila Literary Tradition], C.N Ahamad Moulavi, 1978, p.434.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.435.

⁵ There has been an attempt by the British government to stop Arabi Malayalam print and writing. Moulavi and Kareem mention that the colonial government confiscated five Arabi-Malayalam texts. See *Ibid.*, pp. 71-74.

⁶ The unpublished copy of the text, do not carry page numbers, references or title.

⁷ I thank Dr. K.K Abdul Sathar for sharing this rare document from his private collection.

AM biography deals with the events from Tipu's accession to power to his martyrdom. It can be further divided into his first conflicts with the English and subsequent decision to punish *Kafirs*, the difference in his relationship with different groups of Muslims—from the Nizam to the Mappilas, and finally, the view of the AM biography on Tipu's failures and defeats. The final part was especially dominated with the treachery of the heretics and importance of Tipu's martyrdom, which elevated him from a noble Islamic king to a Sufi Saint.

There were substantial differences in the structure, style, and content of the AM biography compared to the early histories of Haidar and Tipu in other languages. One of the first Persian histories of Tipu Sultan, on which Mark Wilks relied for his account, was *Sultan-ut-Tawarikh* by Zainul Abideen Shustari,⁸ of which Wilks was vehemently critical since it was written under the instruction of Tipu Sultan. However, *Sultan-ut-Tawarikh* covers the time only till 1789.⁹ Another Persian history was *Tarikh-i-Khudadadi*, which begins from Tipu's accession and ends abruptly at 1784.¹⁰ Though translated only in 1866, *Nishan-i-Haidari* and *Tarikhe-Tipu Sultan* by Mir Syed Hussain Ali Kirmani, have been more useful for later historians of Tipu for its coherence of narrative as well as its depiction of an entire period from the time of Haidar's rise to Tipu Sultan's final defeat in 1799.¹¹ The AM biography was similarly exceptional for both the qualities it shares with Kirmani's narrative, that is, comprehensive temporal coverage of both Haidar's and Tipu's reign and coherence.

⁸ Mark Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, Vol 1, p. xxx.

⁹ Mohibbul Hasan contests the authorship of *Sultan-ut-Tawarikh* to Shustari. The work in itself do not suggest the authorship, says Hasan. See Hasan, *History of Tipu*, p.402. Shustari also compiled Tipu Sultan's instructions to his military titled *Fath-ul-Mujahidin*. See Zein-ull- Abedeen, *The military Maxims and observations of Tippoo Sultan; containing general rules for a commander, with requisite information for disposition of war, & also a salutary admonition to Kings in General with a panegyric in honour of Tippoo and some account of Hyder*, W. Clarke, London, 1791. This account compared Tipu Sultan with the King Alexander and the biblical Prophet-King Solomon. Further Tipu's wisdom was compared with Aristotle. Zein-ull- Abedeen, *The military Maxims and observations of Tippoo Sultan*, p.9.

¹⁰ Irfan Habib, *State and Diplomacy Under Tipu Sultan- Documents and Essays*, Tulika, pp.4-5.

¹¹ *Neshane Hayduri* was translated by W Miles as 'The History of Hydur Naik' in 1842. Meer Hussain Ali Kirmani, *The History of Hydur Naik- otherwise styled Shamsul Moolk, Ameer Ud Dowla, Nawab Hydur Ali Khan Bahadoor, Hydur Jung; Nawab of the Karnatic Balaguat*, col, W miles, Trans., London-oriental Translation Fund, 1842. Miles translated *Tareekh-i-Tipu Sultan* as *The History of the Reign of Tipu Sultan – Being a continuation of Neshane Hayduri* in 1864. Syed Kirmani, *The History of the Reign of Tipu Sultan – Being a continuation of Neshane Hayduri*, Colonel Miles, trans. London-oriental Translation Fund, 1864.

The Persian biographies had a preface that reflected Islamic attributes — like seeking help from God and submission of the author to the authority of God and the kings before beginning the narration. In the Mappila writings, there was a long tradition of beginning poetry in the name of God and attributing praises to the Prophet and his family.¹² The AM biography diverged from these traditions. Unlike the Persian and English biographies, the AM biography did not go into the details of Haidar’s early life or family. However, it did say that Haidar had a noble Arab ancestry and added that Haidar reached Srirangapatana once he grew up. The beginning of the biography is straight forward where it lays down the subject as the affairs “from the time Haidar Ali has reached Srirangapatana till his son Tipu Sultan became a martyr.” W. Miles rightly pointed out that the Persian language had “inflated description, pompous imagery, sounding epithets.”¹³ On the other hand, the AM biography was devoid of such attributes and was written in a most direct language. Persian biographies gave much importance to Tipu’s genealogy and ancestry, which Wilks found unreliable.¹⁴ Both Shattari and Syed Hussain Kirmani (d.1802) invested many pages in describing the early life of Haidar, his father, and his grandfather.¹⁵ For the Arabi-Malayalam biography histories of Haidar’s ancestors were not as crucial as the Persian writers of Khudadad. Hence, it is only mentioned that his ancestors were nobles who migrated from Arabia. Kirmani on other hand was particularly concerned to connect Haidar’s ancestry to Arabia, emphasising

¹² The Mappila hagiographical poetry were divided into *malapattus* in Arabi-Malayalam and *mawliids* in Arabic. I discuss three such texts in the coming section. I have elsewhere discussed the history and narrative strategies of the *mala* and *mawlid*. See Shaheen Kelachan Thodika, *Three Sufi Texts and two languages: Mala and Mawlid in the Mappila Multilingual world* in M.T Ansari ed . *Multilingualism and Literary Cultures of India*. Sahitya Akademi, 2019, pp.267-285.

¹³ Colonel W.Miles in Kirmani, *The History of Hydur*,p.xi.

¹⁴ Wilks, *Historical Sketches*,p.vol 1, p, xxxi

¹⁵ Kirmani’s work was written after the fall of Srirangapatana of 1799. The orientalist including Wilks and Kirkpatrick did not only instruct to translate Khudadadi Persian writings to English but also tasked former officers of Khudadadi Sirkar to compile documents of Khudadadi Sirkar into a narrative form. For instance, Wilks instructed Abbas Ali ‘the field secretary of late Hyder Ali khan’ to write two military memoirs from “written memoirs or oral statements” of “two military officers of late dynasty.” Wilks, *Historical Sketches* ,vol1, p.xxix

that he was from the Qureshi tribe.¹⁶ On Haidar's rise, the AM biography differed from that of Kirmani — Kirmani narrated Haidar's early life with a focus on his personal life, his relations with his cousins, his marriages, while the AM biography focused entirely on the military expeditions of Haidar. There was another significant difference in the way early military expeditions were shown between Kirmani and the AM.

Kirmani explained Haidar's first expedition along with Nanja Raja.¹⁷ Kirmani stated that, "Payan Ghuat¹⁸, which is south of Mysore and consists of Calicut, Coimbatore, Dindigul, and Palighat &c, and some of the Naimars of which had rebelled, and deserted their villages, after laying waste the country."¹⁹ Notably, the Malabar part of this expedition and the rebellion of Nairs were absent in the AM biography and instead it focussed on the expeditions in the Carnatic regions where Haidar came in conflict with Nasar Jung.²⁰ After Haidar's consolidation of power in Mysore, the biographer provides a narrative of Haidar's annexation of Malabar to Mysore.²¹

AM biography noted that, "when Haidar's power grew and consolidated, people from all directions (*dikkukal*), and hinterlands (*ulnadukal*) were afraid of Haidar's military might." In the Persian histories, as we noted, Haidar's relation with Malabar began with his early expedition in his early career as a commander. However, in AM biography, we have a different description.²²

¹⁶ Kirmani, *The History of Hydur*, p.1. Kirmani's account goes into the details of both Tipu's and Haidar's birth and praises it as astrologically auspicious and special but we do not see as the Arabi-Malayalam biography focusing on such aspects. pp.10-11& p.28.

¹⁷ Nunde Raj or Nanja Raj was the Commander in Chief and the younger brother of Devraj, the Dalavai of the Raja of Mysore. See Hasan the *History of Tipu*, p 3-4.

¹⁸ Coromandel Coast.

¹⁹ Kirmani, *The History of Hydur*, p.24.

²⁰ Nasar Jung was the son of Asif Jah Nizamul Mulk. Haidar Ali seized a portion of Nasar Jung's wealth in battle. See Kirmani, *The History of Hydur*, p.30.

²¹ On Haidar's quite emergence as the de facto authority of Mysore see Kirmani, *The History of Hydur*, pp. 102-124.

²² In Kirmani, Haidar has gone to Malabar a number of times before his accession to power to quell the rebellion of Nairs and Mappilas See *Ibid.*,p.102. But that history of Haidar's early engagement with Malabar is a notable

On the subject (*bishayam*) of how Nawab Came to Malabar, there was a notable person called ‘Koya Hassan Tharavadiri’ in Kozhikode. He and Zamorin (the ruler of Calicut) fell out, and a *pada* occurred between them. Koya Hassan’s house was confiscated, and he fled to Srirangapatana. He met Haidar Ali at Srirangapatana and told him. “I am from Kozhikode of Malayalam, I came to bring certain things to your attention, there is Malayalam which is 160 miles (*katham*) big and there many Islam (or many Muslims) and masjids (*pallikal*) but there is only one Islam King, and all others are *Kafir* Kings, but they are not interested in battles, and they have large treasury of money so you should start immediately to Malayalam.”²³

Haidar Ali was delighted to hear about the riches of Malabar. He set out on an expedition to Malabar with his most trusted men and began by invading Coorg and Mangalore on the way. When he entered Malabar, he defeated Kolathiri and later allied with the Arakkal Raja.²⁴ He destroyed and plundered the kingdoms of Malabar, and for Ali Raja of Arakkal, the victories of Haidar and his army were a matter of great pride.²⁵ While Haidar was preparing to attack *Perumpadamp Swaroopam* of Cochin, he received news of another war between the Nizam

absence in AM biography. According to Wilks a full scale conquest of Malabar took place in 1765. See Wilks, *Historical Sketches* vol 1 ,p. 543.

²³ In the AM biography Haidar’s interaction with Malabar comes rather late, as I noted- in Persian accounts-, Haidar was not unfamiliar to the territory of Malabar since he made his first incursion to Palakkad in 1756. But this conversation noted by the AM biography could not be found either in Persian, Urdu or Colonial accounts of the Khudadad. One could also note that Malayalam was used as a geographical category for Malabar and modern Kerala in the colonial period. Francis Buchanan noted that “that Malayala forms a part of Kerala. Some consider the words as synonymous, and say, that Malayala is the vulgar word, for what is called Kerala in the Sanskrit.” Buchanan, *A journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*. Vol ii, p.347.

²⁴ The depiction of Ali Raja in both Kirmani and AM biography are closely similar. Similar to the AM, Kirmani says that Ali Raja rejoiced at the success and conquests of Haidar. Alliance with Haidar further increased the honour of Ali Raja, Kirmani suggests. Kirmani, *The History of Hydur* , p. 184.

²⁵ This is the first time the Persian chronicler mentions Ayaz Khan who Haidar adopted from Malabar. *Ibid.*, p. 185. For a detailed discussion of Ayaz Khan see the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

and Arcot for which he rushed back with his army.²⁶ Once the fight was resolved between Muhammad Ali and Nizam, Haidar's Army retired to Srirangapatana.²⁷

During this time, a letter reached from Malayalam that the Nairs and the English were together planning to capture Malayalam, and they requested to send a good army contingent to assist them. Haidar sent Tipu and his army to Malabar to quell the troubles. While Tipu fulfilled his task of defeating Nairs and the English and making peace in Malabar, Haidar was fighting against English on various other fronts of their border. However, soon, the news of Haidar's death reached Tipu.

While fighting in Arcot, there was swelling on Haidar's back, which got aggravated²⁸, and Haidar was sent back to Allah on date Hijra 1196 Muharram 1.²⁹ May Allah make his afterlife better! Haidar's close associate Subedar Abu Muhammad decided not to inform the army of Haidar's death since he feared that the Army could get dismantled, and they might lose the battle. So without informing anyone, they kept Haidar's body and informed Tipu, who was in Malayalam (Malabar) that his *Bappa (father)* has gone to Allah's place-and he should be rushed back immediately. While this letter reached, Tipu Sultan was fighting against the English and had encircled their final camp and was only a moment away from victory. When he read the letter, he felt immense sadness (*ettavum sankadapettu*) and tears came out of his eyes, he rushed back to Arcot while asking his commanders to continue fighting.³⁰

²⁶ Kirmani says, after subduing Malabar Haidar marched to Dindigul to fight against the Poligars of Dindigul. Kirmani, *The History of Hydur*, p.187. But in the AM biography wars with the Maratha and the Nizam compelled Haidar to withdraw from Malabar.

²⁷ By the years 1768 and 1769 Haidar was busy fighting against the Maratha commander Madhava Rao and his uncle Narayana Rao. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-230.

²⁸ Kirmani's account is also similar and says a deadly boil or abscess developed on Haidar's shoulder. *Ibid.*, p.469.

²⁹ The Hijri date given for Haidar's death in Kirmani and AM biography are same, which corresponded to 1781 C.E. *Ibid.*

³⁰ In Kirmani these personal aspects of Tipu's tearful response to Haidar's death were absent. Kirmani says Tipu Sultan was briefly concerned with the accession of his younger brother to the throne. Kirmani, *The History of*

Strengthened with an alliance with the French, Tipu focused on building Masjids, settlements, and gardens. The AM biography says that Tipu constructed the famous Lal Bagh and *Masjid a'la* in Srirangapatana during this time.³¹ There was no other state (*rajyam*) which could match the glory of this, the biographer extolls.³²

Mohibbul Hasan argued that the *Tarikh-i-Khudadadi* gives a picture of Tipu as “a religious maniac perpetually engaged in killing non-Muslims, or forcibly converting them to Islam.”³³

While Hasan was critical of such a view of Tipu converting and killing non-Muslims, the AM biography which resembled *Tarikh-i-Khudadadi* was curiously not apologetic about the conversion or killings in the war, though unmarked by bragging of the Persian accounts.³⁴ In

the reign of Tipu,p.4. In the AM biography, when Tipu reached Arcot, he made all arrangements to take Haidar's *Janasa* (dead body) to the Lal Bagh of Srirangapatana and be buried. He sent messages to all Kingdoms on Haidar's death and informed them that Tipu Sultan is the new king. He was engaged the battles began by Haidar when he heard the news that Hayath Khan (Ayas Khan) allied with the English Captain Mathews betrayed him. Sultan was very angry when he heard this news at Arcot. Tipu Sultan's knowledge about Hayat Khan's collaboration with the English was a significant turning point in this narrative. This great anger of the Sultan against the collaboration was cited as the reason for subsequent events in Tipu Sultan's reign. After assigning the charge of Srirangapatana to his most trusted associates, Tipu set on an expedition to punish the deserters and the English: Sultan and some of his men set out on an expedition to 'Nagara Rajya' and encircled the fort; guns were fired, English men were captured circumcised (converted), and enlisted in the army on a monthly allowance. After that, they captured all the *Kafirs* of 'Nagara Rajya' circumcised all of them. He also ordered the demolition of all temples. In that way, people of many castes, feudal lords (*thamprakanmarum yajamanamarum*) were forcibly circumcised. Some of them fled the land and stayed in foreign countries (*pura deshath*). Some of the Rajas even took a dhow and fled to Goa. Then he advanced to Kodagu of King Kottu Arasan. There he converted Kottu Arasan and named him Yaseen Khan, and he as well converted Koduvans and enlisted them in the army for a monthly salary. He took some of these newly converted men to *Patana* and gave them positions. However, again, Sultan converted thousands (*randu noorayiram or two lakhs*) Hindus of different castes, and he demolished all the temples he encountered. Subsequently, Tipu conducted his rule according to *deen* (religion) and *sharia*(Islamic law).

³¹ The completion of the works of Masjid Ala in Srirangapatana was completed in the year 1787 and its expense was estimated around three lakhs of rupees. See *Ibid*.p.140-141.

³² AM biography says, Tipu named himself *Padsha* and asked all the Masjids in his territory to do Friday sermon" (Khuthba) on his name as ' Abu Fathul Padhsahi Sultan' and praise his name. Further, in every land, he declared his *doulath* (*state*), *shurath*, and *Shujhath* (*bravery*). He established a masjid called *Masjid a'la* mosque and constructed two *minaras* and five golden *thazhikas* to the masjid and made it so beautiful. Furthermore, near the gates of his fort he constructed a garden with every variety of plants and fruits and called it 'Dariya Doulath Bagh.'. There was never any Sultan who matched Tipu in qualities such as *ilm* (knowledge), *fahm* (*intellect*), *deen* (*piety or religion*), and *sharaf* (*honour*).

³³ Hasan, *History of Tipu Sultan* .p. 403.

³⁴ *Tarikh-i-Khudadadi* was found at the palace of Srirangapatana after the final war in 1799 by Colonel Samuel William Ogg of the Madras Army. William Kirkpatrick did a partial translation of the *Tarikh* in his *Select Letters*. Kirkpatrick's translation was reproduced in Irfan Habib,*State and Diplomacy*,pp.3-19. A recent translation of the document was made by Salim Al-Din Quraishi with a facsimile of the original manuscript. The *Tarikh* ends in 1787 with details of a treaty signed by Tipu with the English, Nizam and the Marathas. The *Tarikh* elaborately speak about the war with the English and Marathas, and “troubles” by rebels in the Coorg. While the document is largely a description of the movement of troops and battle, in one instance it says Tipu

the AM biography, an interesting exchange between Tipu and the Nizam Ali Khan took place on a proposal for Tipu's sons' marriage, which unravels some aspects of Tipu Sultan's views of *deen* (religion) and *sharia* (law).³⁵

One can note that Tipu Sultan's autobiographical account, *Tareekh-i-Khudadadi*, turns back the question of lineage to Nizam. Reflecting on Haidar's treaty with Marathas and the Nizam, Tipu wrote "these two impure ones (namely Maratha chief Madho Rao and Nizam Ali) were both of spurious origin, and neither their words nor actions entitled to the least credit or faith."³⁶

However, his experience with Muslim rulers of Malabar was markedly different. The AM biography says, when he reached Malabar, he was impressed with the Kannur Ali Raja of Arakkal and felt great affection (*peruth mohabbath*) for them. When the Sultan and his people visited the Arakkal fort of Kannur, they were further impressed by the hospitality of the royal family of Arakkal. After a feast at Arakkal palace, they fixed the marriage between

observed Muharram 10-an important day for Sunni and Shia Muslims alike in Arabic Calendar- during the war. It was noted that they (Tipu and his army) offered "Fatiha and prayers" on Muharram 10th. Salim-Al- Din Qureshi suspects that the remaining pages of Tarikh may have been destroyed by Kirkpatrick which may have contained information detrimental to British interests. Salim Al-Din Quraishi, *Autobiographical Memories of Tipu Sultan*, Imprint Publishing, Islamabad, 2010, p.xiii&p.21.

³⁵ On the humiliating experience of Tipu's ambassadors to the Nizam's court where the Nizam styled himself as the only prince with a noble lineage in Deccan see Kirmani, *The History of the regin of Tipu*,p.148-151. In the AM biography, When Tipu's letter with a proposal for his son from the Nizam's family reached Nizam Ali Khan, the Nizam questioned Tipu's lineage in the following words: Nizam has the *purana* (lineage) of Kings and Nawabs while Tipu has none of such lineage. The Nizam wrote an angry reply to Tipu Sultan. Receiving the letter, Tipu was upset; he quoted Qur'an and Hadith to substantiate his claim that for Allah, the lineage does not matter at all. Tipu, in reply, said: Nizam is ignorant (*jahil*), and he should change his name to "Ajam Ali Khan" from "Nizam Ali Khan." These exchanges created enmity between these two powers, the Nizam in alliance with Marthas went to fight with Tipu, and in the battle that ensued, Tipu was able to conquer parts of the Nizam's territories. While Tipu made significant advances against the Nizam, he refrained from attacking Hyderabad since it was, according to the AM biography, too far to conquer.

³⁶ Habib , *State and Diplomacy*, p.14. However, one could add that the original usage in *Tareekh-i- Khudadadi* for the Nizam was Hujjam Nully Khan. Irfan Habib observes that 'Hajjam' meant 'barber' while 'Nully' meant tube – "used by barbers to perform bloodletting through a sucking tube." It is worth noting that the Barber communities among Muslims of South India were treated as inferior by other Muslims in status, and one could argue that here, Tipu was questioning Nizam's status within the community. For a brief historical account of Ossan (Barber) communities among Muslims of Malabar see V Kunhali, *Muslim communities in Kerala to 1798*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Aligarh Muslim University,1986, pp..201-204. Although there are ethnographical studies of the different groups among Mappila Muslims, a historical study of hierarchical division among Mappilas is still largely wanting. A recent article by Safwan Amir addresses some of these aspects. See Safwan Amir, "Contempt and Labour: An exploration through Muslim Barbers of South Asia", *Religions*, 10,no.11,616, 2019.

a daughter from Arakkal family and the Sultan's son 'Abdul Khalikh.'³⁷ Here it would seem that Nizam's rejection and the question of lineage did anger the Sultan, but he did not receive such questions in Malabar and instead was warmly welcomed.

Like Nizam Ali Khan, other Muslim rulers of South Asia were also contemptuous of Tipu Sultan's rise. Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizvi notes that Shah Alam referred to Tipu as *Maqhu'r* or destined to be vanquished.³⁸ Rizvi adds that Shah Alam was happy that all overtures of Tipu to ally with the Nizam were turned away. In the late Mughal perspective, Tipu's ancestors were 'upstarts, and self-made men,' unlike those of Nizam Ali and Shah Alam.³⁹ In other words the Mappilas - as we see further, agrarian chiefs like Moopans, Royal family of Arakkal, Hadhrami Syeds, and native spiritual guides, Muftis, and *Qadis*- shared memories of associations with Tipu Sultan different from those of the Muslims of the rest of South Asia in the early colonial period.⁴⁰

Tipu moved towards an expedition against *Perumpadampu* or the Cochin Kingdom. The Raja of *Perumpadapu* said they were willing to accept the authority of the Sultan. Nevertheless, Sultan was not happy and he instead said, "I do not seek your land or money but desire you all should become Islam."⁴¹ The only option given to the Kingdom of Cochin was to embrace Islam and on his refusal a war broke out. The Rajas then sought help from the English of

³⁷ Mohibbul Hasan argues that with the marriage between Tipu's son and Arakkal Bibi's daughter, Tipu intended to pacify the Moplahs of South Malabar. Hasan, *History of Tipu*, pp-142-143. However, Hasan do not explain how a marriage alliance with a north Malabar kingdom-whose authority was limited to few parts of Malabar and the coast could pacify the southern agrarian hinterlands of Malabar.

³⁸ Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz: *Puritanism, Sectarian Polemics and Jihad*, Marifat Publications, Canberra, 1982, p.43.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ It is another story that Tipu Sultan was appropriated by late Colonial Muslim movements such as Pakistan in Iqbal's poetry especially. I discuss the transformation of that memory into the post-colonial Muslim politics in the final section.

⁴¹ W. Miles based on Kirmani's account traces the attack to December 28, 1789. But there is no mention the conversations between Sultan and the Cochin kingdom over religion, instead Kirmani says that the people of Cochin were 'aware of Sultan's approach and intention, raised three or four batteries'. Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu*, p.155.

Madras. The battle of Nedumkotta in the Travancore lines was retold by the AM biography as follows.⁴²

An army of English stood by to assist the Rajas, of which Tipu Sultan was seemingly unaware. Tipu discussed the preparations for war with his officers - many of whom were *either Kafirs or Rafizi* (Shia *heretic* sect) believers.⁴³ Krishna Rao and Mir Sadiq⁴⁴ were examples of this trend, biographer further added. They kept *fasad*⁴⁵ against the Sultan inside their mind because for one reason- once Sultan ordered all his *Kafir* officers to become Muslims and the Shia officers to become Sunnis and forbade symbols such as sacred thread, hair lock and also forbade all innovations in Islam- thereby targeting the Shia rituals. These measures though openly followed by the *Kafir* and Shia officers, produced deep hatred towards Sultan, which was successfully concealed. These officers were also waiting for an opportunity to kill the Sultan. However, the Sultan was unaware, and the officers convinced Sultan to participate in the battle of Nedumkotta by saying that the enemy Nair army was weak, and they might flee if Sultan attacks. However, Sultan attacked the enemy by crossing the fort, but the Nair army and the English surrounded his men. He lost many of his belongings in this battle. While the battle was going on, heavy rains (*barisham*) impeded the Sultan and his army who were not accustomed to fighting in the rain; besides, he heard that Nizam Ali Khan English and Maratha were planning to attack Srirangapatana he withdrew his army from this battle.

⁴²See *Ibid.*, p. 186. Also see chapter 3 of this dissertation.

⁴³ This is the first mention of *Rafizi* in AM biography which became a crucial category towards the end of the biography. Kirmani do not go into the category of *Rafizi* as much as AM biography do. As we see further a corrupt governor was branded as *Rafizi*, where the category is interchangeably used with Shia, by Kirmani. Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu*, p.87. I explore the category further in this chapter.

⁴⁴ Mir Sadiq was the president of the revenue and finance Department and Tipu's chief Diwan, Mohibbul Hasan says. Hasan, *History of Tipu*, p.333.

⁴⁵ As I noted in the first chapter, *Fasad* was major theme in the Malabar Muslim writing since the 16th century. See chapter 1 of this dissertation.

The biography poignantly details the betrayals Tipu Sultan faced from his close circle.⁴⁶ It states that a treacherous alliance was formed against Tipu Sultan which included the English, Marathas, Nizam, and the Arcot Nawab.⁴⁷ The alliance also attempted to win over officers of the Sultan. Thus, the *Kafirs* and *Rafizis* among the higher echelons of Tipu's officers received a letter from Nizam Ali Khan seeking their help against Tipu. It was noted that with these officers, they could defeat Tipu Sultan, capture Bangalore and Srirangapatana. The officers were also promised rewards of wealth and rights over land upon victory. The treacherous officers were happy to receive the offer, and, in response, they gave away crucial information about Sultan's Army and also instructed the enemies on the strategies of war against the Sultan.

When the war finally began, the Sultan was able to identify some of these officers who had betrayed him, and he captured one of such officer 'Killedar Sayyid Pir' from Bangalore fort and sent him to Srirangapatana (for persecution). However, some of the officers, such as Mir Sadiq, remained among Sultan's most trusted men, and the Sultan gave them crucial tasks during the war. During the war, when Tipu sent his family to Chitradurga, Krishna Rao - one of the officers who was in touch with English informed the enemy of the movement and advised them to capture his family.⁴⁸ However, another officer, Sayyid Muhammad Khan, came to know of this treachery. Thus Krishna Rao was apprehended and sent to prison.⁴⁹ Tipu took a break from the war and returned to Srirangapatana to persecute enemies such as Krishna Rao and Sayyid Pir. The biographer says that severe punishment was given to these

⁴⁶ Brittlebank suggests that even for modern historians' treachery and betrayals were prime factors for Tipu's final defeat. See Kate Brittlebank, "Islamic responses to the fall of Srirangapatana and the death of Tipu Sultan (1799)", *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 1999, pp.85.

⁴⁷ The reference here is to the Third Anglo-Mysore war where Lord Cornwallis allied with Marathas and the Nizam to invade Srirangapatana. See Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol ii, pp.421-439.

⁴⁸ Kirmani says Krishna Rao 'followed the path of rejected Khande Rao'. Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu*, p.190.

⁴⁹ Kirmani suggests that it was Krishna Rao's wife who informed Tipu of his treachery. Kirmani says Krishna Rao was killed once he was apprehended. *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

officers - some of them were hanged, while others were crushed by elephants as punishment.⁵⁰

However, the early success of Tipu Sultan did not last, and the biographer moves to the reasons of failures. In the bloody battles that ensued, Tipu Sultan sent his son Fatah Ali Khan against the army of Nizam.⁵¹ Fatah Ali Khan killed the Nizami army leaders Fariduddin Khan and captured a tremendous war booty, the biography adds.⁵² On the other hand, undeterred, the English and allies advanced to Srirangapatana, as they had already bribed *Kafir* and *Rafizi* officers of Tipu Sultan. The enemy camped near Srirangapatana and made an attack in which Tipu lost many of his men. When he was alone, he was summoned by his mother. The biographer narrates the conversation between Tipu and his mother.

The mother told her son: My son, I am telling you something which you should promise me that you will obey. Sultan said that he would do what his mother instructs. His mother then replied it would be better if he stops the war and reaches an agreement with the English since their army is more prominent and your officers and *faoujudars* (commanders) are influenced by your enemies, and they are waiting to betray you, and for this reason, you should join with the English. Since it would be wrong to disobey his mother and also since he considered his mother as an intelligent woman Tipu was in trouble. The dilemma was greater since Tipu had always listened to his mother so far in his life. Finally, after much contemplation, he felt his mother was right, and he thought he would withdraw from the war with the English.

⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the sultan lost the Bangalore fort to the English. However, he tried to strengthen his army with French mercenaries, and he also made several forays in military front, which deterred the enemy camp, one of his successful measures was to block food supply the enemies.

⁵¹ Fatah Haidar was Tipu Sultan's eldest son, the AM biography calls him Fatah Ali Khan. Mark Wilks says the prince was only eighteen at the time of this war against Nizam's army. Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol ii, p.515.

⁵² Mark Wilks says that Fariduddin Khan was killed in deceit. Wilks, *Historical Sketches*, vol ii, p.516. Mohibbul Hasan says Wilk's account of this event is unreliable. Hasan, *History of Tipu*, p.230.

Hence, on 18th March 1792, the third Anglo Mysore war ended with the treaty of Srirangapatana between Tipu Sultan and the English.⁵³ With this treaty, Tipu had decided to throw out the English from the ‘land of Hind’ (*Hind kettil ninnu kalayanam ennum*) and conquer the lands of Nizam and the Marathas.⁵⁴ During the treaty period, Tipu was preparing for another war. He fortified Srirangapatana and corresponded with the kings of other places to get military help.⁵⁵ All this while, the mole in Tipu’s camp, Mir Sadiq, was diligently passing on these movements to Muhammad Ali Nawab of Arcot and the English.⁵⁶ The biography says that Mir Sadiq informed them that Tipu would be unstoppable, and before he received help from the French or others, they should attack Tipu.⁵⁷ This information was passed to Bombay (to the higher authorities in English East India Company), and they were asked to prepare for war. When Tipu Sultan heard of the enemy movement he exclaimed, “I am surprised that seven years of the treaty is violated, which is *puthuma* for me (surprise or new). It is so good that when I thought of making war against them, they are coming here, Insha Allah.” According to the biographer Tipu was delighted and happy about the war, and he asked his son Fateh Haidar to prepare the army.⁵⁸ However, Tipu’s counter-attack took the

⁵³ Kirmani says it was the prudence and clear sightedness of the Sultan “seeing the villainy and neglect of his ungrateful and traitorous Amirs and chiefs” which led him to agree to the treaty. While Kirmani do not cite Tipu’s mother’s intervention, the reason cited for the end of war and treaty is similar. Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu*, p.219.

⁵⁴ The Sultan focused on internal regulations of the Kingdom and punishing the Poligars on the frontiers of his kingdom during this period of peace. *Ibid.*, p.222.

⁵⁵ The AM biography says that Tipu sent letters to the neighbouring Kings and do not name the kingdoms or kings. Kirmani says Tipu commissioned envoys to Zaman Shah, Turkish Sultan and the French between 1798-1799 (1213 Hijri). *Ibid.*, pp-251-252.

⁵⁶ Kirmani calls Mir Sadiq ‘the false and faithless’, we could see that in Kirmani, a dichotomy was constructed between a pious Sultan- who never missed his prayers, and faithless Amir Mir Sadiq who neglected prayers. Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu* ,p.223& p.232. One of the Controversial religious move of Tipu was exiling the Mehdavi sect from Srirangapatana. Kirmani says it was on the instigation of Mir Sadiq that they were exiled from Srirangapatana. Kirmani says it was under the instigation of Mir Sadiq that Tipu took the decision to expel these ‘true men and faithful servants’. Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu*, p,244. On Mahdavi sect practices see Syed Athar Abbas Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India*, Vol ii, Munshiram Manoharlal, 2009,p.323.

⁵⁷ Kirmani says that Mir Sadiq “opened the wide doors of deceit” and ‘fraud’, but he does not mention Sadiq’s correspondence with the English at this point .Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu*,p.233.

⁵⁸This events concerns with the final Anglo-Mysore war of 1799. In Kirmani we read that the defeat of Tipu’s army was pre-destined. The enthusiasm AM biography has about the war is not shared in the Persian. *Ibid.*,p.257.

enemy's camp by further surprise, Colonel Harris of the English East company wrote to Tipu that they had no intention of war and Tipu should not attack his army.⁵⁹

However, surprisingly, the Sultan, who was not convinced by the English peace offer, was easily convinced by Mir Sadiq to stop the war respecting the treaty. How did this come about? An interesting explanation was provided: "The Sultan immediately agreed to whatever Mir Sadiq had asked. This was because Mir Sadiq secretly arranged sorcerers (people who do *sihr*), and they sat day and night at his house doing sorcery against sultan".⁶⁰ If Tipu Sultan had indeed proceeded with his plans of war, the English would have been eliminated, the biographer laments. When the plans of war were aborted, the English army was low on food supplies; there again, Mir Sadiq managed to convince Tipu to sell them rice for supposedly a lucrative deal but which secretly ended the English starvation, the biographer adds. While Mir Sadiq kept Sultan in his pockets by way of *sihr* (sorcery) there were other officers who were his enemies. According to the biographer, Tipu's true supporters included his son Fatah Haidar and his relatives such as Riza Ali Khan. Riza Ali Khan was locked in a battle with the English in Malabar, and he was killed. The biography was appreciative of his martyrdom and attributed the motive of his passion for battle as his quest for *Shahadat or* martyrdom. Tipu Sultan was heartbroken to hear about the martyrdom of Riza Ali Khan. When he heard of enemy movements against him he was suspicious of Mir Sadiq, Mir Qamaraddin Khan, and

⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Tipu did not agree with the peace proposal, and he replied that it was the enemy who began the war so he would not refrain from attacking him. Colonel Harris wrote to Mir Sadiq that Sadiq betrayed them by misinforming that Tipu was not prepared to face their attack the colonel threatened Mir Sadiq in his letter that if Sadiq does not avert Tipu's impending attack at any cost, he will hand over the letter which Mir Sadiq wrote to them, and his treachery will be exposed. The Colonel further threatened Sadiq that they would subsequently make peace with Tipu and endanger Sadiq's fate. Reading this letter, Sadiq was shivering with fear, the biographer adds. He immediately met the Sultan and convinced him that as a ruler, it would affect his reputation if he goes to war violating the treaty. In Kirmani, one of Sultan's high officers (one of the Mir Mirans) seemed to have betrayed Sultan early in the war, by delaying the attack on English Army or doing it in most haphazard manner. The way Kirmani describes him suggests that he was Mir Sadiq. But a correspondence between general Harris and Sadiq as mentioned in the AM biography could not be found in Kirmani. *Ibid.*p.256. Another officer Kamarudhin Khan was also found helping the English by creating disorder within Tipu's army. *Ibid.*p.,258.

⁶⁰ Kirmani also gives attention to this aspect, he says, Mir Sadiq "subjugated the minds of Sultan by reading charms, incantations, and by prayers for domination (for his necromancers burned half a mound of black pepper every day)." *Ibid.*p.234.

Purnaiya. However, purportedly with the power of *sihr* again, Mir Sadiq was able to convince Tipu Sultan that they were loyal to him.⁶¹

While enemy camp, including -English, Maratha, and Nizam surrounded the Srirangapatna fort they could breach one side easily due to the absence of Riza Ali Khan. However, Tipu was able to break the siege easily as he was able to block the supply to the army from madras. When the allies faced defeat they again wrote to Mir Sadiq. He secretly sheltered four English officers at his house. Sadiq and enemies understood that Saayid Gaffar - Tipu Sultan's most trusted commander - who was guarding the fort was the major impediment for them to breach the fort from outside. Sadiq convinced the Sultan to honour Sayyid Gaffar with an *inam* at the top of the fort and informed the enemies that it was the best opportunity to assassinate Gaffar and breach the fort. The biography describes what follows: "As Allah decided (as his *qaza*) a bullet fell on Sayyid Gaffar, and he became a martyr (*Shaheed*), since he is from the best of prophet Muhammad's decedents and part of Sunni people (*Ahlu Sunnah*), and who lived in the halal ways, he martyred as a perfect *Shaheed*." The identification of Sayyid Gaffar as part of Ahlu Sunnah or part of the prophetic tradition of piety was how the biography differentiated the Sunni Muslim tradition and piety from the impious and treacherous *Rafizis* such as Mir Sadiq. Here, for the Sunni Muslims, as we see in Sultan and his loyal officers, it was piety and tradition that were markers of the Sunni Islam.

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With substantial help from Mir Sadiq, the English and their allies made a surprise attack and breached the fort while Tipu and his army were busy with the burial of Sayyid Gaffar. The

⁶¹ In Islamic political discourse *Sihr* has historically played an important role. Whenever there was a puzzle about sudden rise and fall of political dynasts or kingdoms, knowledge of 'occult', magic and sorcery were suspected as causes. A Afzar Moin argues that 'specific social institutions and cultural forms -belonged to historically specific style of Sufism', shaped this idea of 'sacred' aura of the King Timur. A Afzar Moin, *The millennial sovereign: sacred kingship and sainthood in Islam*, Columbia University Press, 2012 ,p.47.

⁶² In Kirmani Sayyid Gaffar was identified only with attributes such as loyalty and bravery. Kirmani, *History of Tipu*,p.238, p.259.

enemies killed many soldiers of Tipu Sultan, and Mir Sadiq, expecting the movement of his friends, was waving a white towel above his house so that the English soldiers could identify his house and spare it from being attacked. Mir Sadiq, while waving the flags, also ordered one of the guards of the fort to open a gate of the fort, and the military officers (*jamaidar*) got suspicious and called out that Mir Sadiq was an enemy agent.⁶³

The *Jamaidar* said: Sultan made you a *Vazeer* with respect and issued royal orders as you desired, and he trusted you for long, but now you have done the haram of betraying him as you invited the Nazaras to fort and now you are trying to open the gates of the fort as well so that you can join with the *Kafirs* and live like a king, you *Kafir*, son of a dog!’’ The *Jamaidar* then stabbed Mir Sadiq’s on the right shoulder with his sword. Mir Sadiq’s body was split into two, and he died a *kafir*.⁶⁴ Tipu Sultan was too late to know that the English had breached the fort. Tipu exclaimed ‘*la Houla Vala quvvatha Illa Billah*’ meaning “There is no might nor power except in Allah.” He asked to bring his horse and took it to battle. After seeing the complete breach of his fort Tipu supplicated to the God, the biography described with ‘*Hamd and sthuthiyum* for Allah’ (both denoting gratitude to Allah)’ he mounted the horse and looked at the sky and said ,“udaya Thampurane (Oh God) I have the intention to be martyr by fighting against *Nasara* (Christians) and *parnakis*(originally denoting Portuguese but here meaning the foreigner) in the path of Allah, this is the right opportune moment for me to become shaheed and oh God you should bless me to become a martyr at this time.’’ Many of Sultan’s men were sad to hear this prayer, the instead pleaded with him to make strategic withdrawal and attack the enemy at a later

⁶³ This is similar to Kirmani’s account but the soldier who called out Mir Sadiq before killing him did call an ‘accursed wretch’ while in AM biography he was called an infidel or *Kafir*. *Ibid*,p.264.

⁶⁴ Kirmani stops by calling Mir Sadiq’s dead body ‘impure’ but AM biography reiterates his status as *Kafir*. It is also noteworthy that he was called only *Rafizi* till the final fight and after his death he was declared a *Kafir* in AM. See Kirmani, *History of Tipu*,p.259

point, to which Tipu angrily replied “My Amal (my good deeds) are in abundance now, and you people love to be in this wretched Dunya (this world)while I have been longing to become a martyr by fighting with this Christians(*nasaras*),and those who want to be a martyr in the path of Allah can join me in this fight.” Sultan and his men charged to the enemies on their horses by praising Prophet Muhammad. Sultan’s horse was shot first, then the Sultan as well, and he was immediately martyred with his strong belief or *eeman*. Sultan was martyred on the day of Dulhajj 13 Monday, Hijrah 1213.⁶⁵ Furthermore, after his martyrdom they buried his *janaza* (body) with all honours.

Describing Sultan’s death (*mouth*), the AM biography adds a prayer: “May Allah bless him, *ameen* , and praise for the Prophet Muhammad ... The Maqam of Tipu Sultan is kept with the tradition of lighting lamp inside, and 40 Hafizes who byhearted the Qur’an recited it day and night, and a *nercha*(or *urus*) happens without interruption till this date.” The AM Biography further describes the burial of Sultan’s and his men’s *janaza* in the following words “Masters who were staunch *Sunnis* (*eriyā nalla sunniyayitum*) and nobles (*ashrafayitum*) took the *janazas* of all shaheeds and buried.”⁶⁶ The enemies and betrayers of Tipu Sultan also faced death as some curse. While a colonel of the English Army died with intense fever, Mir Qamaruddin Khan has also inflicted disease and died soon, Nizam Ali Khan of Hyderabad and Muhammad Ali of Arcot, the allies of English also died soon. Tipu Sultan’s afterlife in this world accords him the status of *awliya* (saint) with *barakat* or spiritual powers in the biography.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ The AM biography mentions date only at two instances, while one was on Haidar’s death, another was the date of Tipu’s ‘martyrdom’.

⁶⁶ However, it is worth noting that the Persian writers of Khudadad do not take such a strong Sunni stance against Shi’ism as much as AM biography does. Their approach was largely conciliatory. For Instance, Kirmani notes two incidents from Haidar’s courts, Haidar remarked about the Sunni –Shia dispute as a ‘foolish dispute’ and a ‘waste of time’. Kirmani, *The History of Hydur*,pp.483-484.

⁶⁷ Kirmani focuses on the political arrangements in Srirangapatana after Tipu’s fall but the AM biography’s focus was on, although briefly, Tipu Sultan’s afterlife as a saint with power to bless and punish, which he shares with few Sufi Ulama in Malabar we discuss further in this chapter.

Kate Brittlebank argues that more research is needed into the varying Muslim responses to Tipu Sultan's defeat; to find whether the Muslim writers see Tipu's defeat as a manifestation of God's displeasure.⁶⁸ Brittlebank importantly notes that while the attribution of *Shaheed* or martyr was absent in Kirmani's account, Ghulam Muhammad's narrative asserted Tipu's loyal officers attained martyrdom in the path of Jihad.⁶⁹ While both of them agreed that Tipu's defeat was pre-destined, Kirmani attributed Tipu's failure to the lack of judgment and ability to listen to his loyal officers.⁷⁰ Unlike Kirmani's history, the AM biography sees Tipu's martyrdom as a crucial change in the course of history; it observes that the consequence of Tipu Sultan's martyrdom was inimical to the Islam religion in *Hind kottayil* (India) as a whole. The religion declined, and so the *barkat* (spiritual potency or power) in trade.⁷¹ The biography immediately lifts the status of Tipu Sultan to an *awliya* and his tomb to a venerated site. It narrates a story of two English officers encroached the *dargha* or shrine, disregarding the guard's objection who said it is manner less to enter the *dargha* like that. One of the

⁶⁸ In most of the early writings on the Khudadadi Sirkar, Mir Sadiq's betrayal of Tipu is of prime importance, and Arabi-Malayalam writings were no exception. Mohibbul Hasan notes that "Even now people, who revere Tipu's memory, while visiting Seringapatam, throw stones towards the spot where Mir Sadiq was killed." Kate Brittlebank argues Tipu's defeat in 1799 and his ultimate fall was retold by Islamic writers- Ghulam Muhammad, someone who was close to Tipu's enemy Nizam of Hyderabad and Mir Hussain Ali Kirmani, a Persian chronicler of Khudadadi Sirkar who was later a pensioner of English East India Company, was preoccupied with themes of 'destiny' and 'betrayal'. Brittlebank further says that, while Muslim writers of nineteenth century Tipu's defeat as inevitable, they also saw Tipu's death as a tragic event. Yet, most Muslim writers found it difficult to on how to respond to the death of Tipu Sultan, hence for colonial Muslim writers such as Ghulam Muhammad, Mujeeb, Muhammad Iqbal and post-colonial writers such as Mohibbul Hasan and Sheikh Abdul Rashid -while a betrayal was otherwise common in South Asian palace intrigues- Mir Sadiq's betrayal of Tipu as unusually problematic. See Brittlebank, "Islamic responses to the fall of Srirangapatana and the death of Tipu Sultan (1799),"p.81.

⁶⁹ In this context, it meant war against the British and enemies of Tipu. However, it is worth noting that the concept of Jihad most often used by colonial writers was with terms lifted from Muslim juridical literature, which played no role in the actual instance of holy war. Faisal Devji argued this in the context of W.W Hunter who used the term Jihad in a protestant sense as moral obligation, where the political and economic interests took a backseat. Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the jihad: militancy, morality, modernity*, Hurst and co,2005,p.37.

⁷⁰ Brittlebank, "Islamic responses to the fall of Srirangapatana and the death of Tipu Sultan (1799),"p.82.

⁷¹ Bryan Turner has rejected the usual translation of charisma for *Baraka*. Turner says the origin of many of these Sufi Arabic words are unchristian hence, according to him, such translations would be wrong. Bryan S Turner, *Webber and Islam*, Max Webber Classic Monographs, vol iii, 1998 ,p. 67. In a more recent work, Vincent Cornell defines Baraka as 'spiritual potency or power associated with holy individuals, places and or subjects.'. Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint, Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism*, University of Texas Press, 1998,p.355.

officers, when he saw Tipu's tomb, raised his foot towards the tomb and asked, is this Tipu's tomb, and he fell upside, and the other man got scared and ran away.

Two main aspects that are not found in colonial and Persian memories emerge from the narrative of Tipu's defeat in the biography — the *Rafizis* were the primary internal enemies of Tipu Sultan and that the martyrdom of Tipu Sultan made him an *awliya*. These two aspects had a specific nineteenth-century context in Malabar. In the following section, I discuss the Sufis of Malabar, where one can see the specific Malabar context of Tipu Sultan's memory and further why and how those memories were situated in a Sunni Ulama tradition.

Stories of Sufis

A dichotomy between Sufis and Ulama, or, more simplistically, a binary between mystical and juridical traditions of Islam has been historically untenable in most Islamic societies, and especially in the case of Malabar.⁷² Vincent Cornell, in his path breaking work on the Sufi traditions of Morocco, has demonstrated the case of *Usuli* Sufis or juridical Sufis.⁷³ While Cornell argues that the “Juridical Sufis” had a non-sectarian attitude towards the four schools of Sunni Islamic law, at the same time, they attempted to incorporate Sufism into a normative Sunni Islam.⁷⁴ Cornell suggested that for “juridical Sufism” to be accepted by the Ulama “even miracles had to conform to juridical ideals” of normative Sunni Islam and in turn the hagiographies of the saints “typologized their subjects as Sunni Muslims and typified their actions according to the norms of Sunni conduct.”⁷⁵ In this section we may note that a similar situation was present in Malabar but with a local context of Sunni-Shia sectarianism

⁷² I have elsewhere looked at the “authorities” and “powers” in the textual engagements of the Ulama-Sufis of Colonial Malabar. See Shaheen K, *The Domain of Orthodoxy- Sufi and Shari Traditions in Colonial Malabar*, unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Center for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, 2014, pp.59-98.

⁷³ Cornell argues that the tradition of “juridical Sufism owed a considerable debt to the integrative works ‘’ of Sunni theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali(d.1111 C.E). See Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, p.17. One could note that Al- Ghazali was a vital influence for Shafi scholars in Malabar. See Shaheen, *The Domain of Orthodoxy*, p.76.

⁷⁴ Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, pp.17-18.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.275-276.

and politics of martyrdom for Mappila Muslims in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This section primarily focuses on the memories of Tipu that circulated in hagiographies of Sufi saints of Malabar, who were said to have associated with Tipu Sultan at some point in their illustrious sacred career.

Mappila Qadi and Mufti of Tipu Sultan⁷⁶

Mir Hussain Ali Kirmani notes that Tipu Sultan “built a Masjid in every town and appointed a Muezzin, a Mulla, and Kazi to each, and promoted the education and learning of the *Muslimans* to the utmost of his power.”⁷⁷ However, in Malabar, there is no substantial evidence to suggest that Tipu built any Masjids.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that Tipu intervened in the internal affairs of Masjids of Malabar, which left an impact on the memory of a prominent Masjid in Malabar.

A document in Arabi-Malayalam, preserved at Puthanangadi Juma Masjid of Malappuram district Kerala, dated 1824 C.E (Hijri 1239), is similar to a testimonial, where the then *Qadi* of Masjid noted the following.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Since the Mughal times, the Ulama can be described as a religious bureaucracy which included mosque functionaries, teachers, juriconsults, and judges. See Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900*, Princeton University Press., 2004, p.23. Most of these categories were important to Mappila Muslims, yet it is pertinent to lay out the common definitions of these categories in South Asian Islam before engaging with Tipu and Ulama in this section. *Qadi*, literally denoted judge and the Mufti denoted juriconsult while the sheikh is category to describe the masters of Sufi order, along with the category of Awliya or friend of God. In their seminal study of Islamic legal histories, Khaled Masud and Brinkley Messick and David Powers demonstrates that “the domain of legal procedure, including adversarial cases, binding judgments, and state enforcement belongs to the judge or *Qadi*.” They further argue that the Mufti has authority over “the issuance of non-binding advisory opinions (fatawa or Fatwas) to an individual questioner (muftati), whether in connection with litigation or not.” Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, David Powers, *Islamic Legal Interpretation-Muftis and their Fatwas*, Harvard University Press,1996.,p.3.

⁷⁷ Kirmani, *The History of the reign of Tipu* ,p.232.

⁷⁸ In 1792, after his defeat in the third Anglo-Mysore wars, Tipu attempted many ‘internal regulatory’ measures such as building Masjids and asking for allegiance based on religion. With the Treaty of Srirangapatana in 1792 he ceded the Malabar to English. It explains why Tipu did not build Masjids in Malabar. See *Ibid.*,p.222.

⁷⁹ K.K Moiduppa Faizy, *Nootandukalude Proudiyil Puthanangad Palli* [Puthanangadi Palli with a legacy of centuries] Juma Masjid Committee,2009, p.59.

Abdullah's son Muhammad Abdullah, who belonged to Islam tribe (*gothrakaranum*)⁸⁰ hereby testify that Tipu Sultan who was blessed by God, had forcibly (*balamayum*) and heinously (*kodumkuttamayum*) captured this humble person and took him to Srirangapatana's (*cheerankapattana*) Masjidul Aa'la as teacher,⁸¹ caretaker, and *Qadi* of the Masjid. For the above-stated reasons (I) spent ten years in the place as mentioned earlier (*rajyam*) ,and those who are witness to this (statement).’’⁸²

This statement was followed by a few illegible names and Hijri date 1239. *Qadi* Abdulla Musliyar, also known as Kalillaltha Uppuppa (born circa 1734 CE circa and died circa 1824 CE), was much revered in the local memory of Malabar. He was close to many prominent religious leaders of Arab origin, such as Syed Alawi Thangal (d.1792) - who was considered to be a disciple of the Kallillatha Uppupa.⁸³ K.K Moiduppa Faizy – a recent chronicler of the Masjid - says that “even after 200 years people have not forgotten the *Qadi* and hundreds of people visit his *maqbara*. He was born into the family of Makhdoom⁸⁴, even now, his tomb is specially marked in the compound of Masjid.’’⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Important to note that he uses Islam tribe instead of Muslim or Mappila, that is a clear distinction from colonial terminologies.

⁸¹ As we noted in the part of AM biography, *The Masjidul A'la* of Tipu was an important institution in Khudadadi memories – in both Persian and Arabi-Malayalam. Kirmani, *The History of the reign of Tipu* , pp.140-141. By the year 1786, as I noted in the beginning, Tipu appealed to his Muslim subjects, by using verses from the Qur'an and the Hadith tradition, and argued it was incumbent on Muslims to support him. Tipu compelled the Mappila Qadito join him as his palace Mufti in this context. See Dirom, *A narrative of Campaign in India which terminated with the War with Tippoo Sultan in 1792*, pp.283-286.

⁸² Faizy, *Nootandukalude* ,p.59.

⁸³ Syed Alawi Thangal was also born in Tarim of Hadhramouth, he migrated to Malabar and became one of the most important leaders of Mappila Muslims in eighteenth century. Moulavi and Kareem says that Alawi Thangal played a key role in establishing at least 9 Masjids in eighteenth century Malabar. See Moulavi and Kareem, *Mahathaya Mappila* ,pp.175-177.

⁸⁴ The Ponnani Makhooms were the prominent Sunni ulama family of Malabar. Stephen Dale says that Mappila Ulama were constituted by Thangals, Musliars and Mullas. While the Thangals traced back their ancestry to Arabia and Hadramawt, the Musliyar were indigenous Muslims who acted as ‘teachers and mosque officials.’ The Mullas according to Dale says were those who were literate in Arabic and participated in household ceremonies. The Makhdooms of Ponnani were revered among Ulama as they headed the religious education center at Ponnani which trained Musliyars. See Stephen Frederic Dale, *Islamic Society On the The South Asian Frontier- The Mappilas of Malabar*. Oxford.1980.,p.111.

⁸⁵ Faizy, *Nootandukalude* , p. 57.

The chronicle adds that Tipu Sultan came to know that there was a great scholar at Puthanangadi. The Sultan wanted to appoint the *Qadi* as the Mufti of his palace and the *Qadi* of A'la Masjid. However, the *Qadi*, who was busy with the propagation of *deen* (religion), and education refused the offer politely. The *Qadi* did not like leaving the leadership of religion in Malabar to stay in a palace.⁸⁶ However, Tipu Sultan was not willing to accept these reasons and asked his men to bring the *Qadi* to his palace. The chronicle published by the Puthanangadi Masjid committee has the following narrative of the events.

The great scholar of Malabar was brought near Tipu Sultan. Seeing the pleasant face of *Qadi*, which was shining with *eeman* or faith, the Sultan compelled him to stay at Srirangapatana. The *Qadi* against his will accepted the position as the palace Mufti of Tipu Sultan. He was also asked to be the *Qadi* of the big masjid of Srirangapatana, a *Mudarris* (teacher), as well as a *Mufti* for ten years. Gradually the *Qadi* realized that Tipu Sultan was pious, a great scholar and a ruler who was interested in the welfare of his people.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, the *Qadi* always wanted to go and visit Puthanangadi, which was “orphaned without his leadership.” Even after ten years of service, Tipu was not in favour of *Qadi* returning home. Finally, the *Qadi* lost his patience and left for Puthanangadi secretly and without seeking permission from the Sultan. Sultan came to know that the *Qadi* has left Srirangapatana for Malabar, which he heard with anger. The return of the *Qadi* overjoyed the people of Puthanangadi, but their joy was short lived as soldiers sent by Tipu forcibly took back the *Qadi* to Srirangapatana.⁸⁸ After reaching Srirangapatana Tipu Sultan asked the *Qadi*, “You have served here as a *Qadi* for ten years, you have judged many cases according to the law. Now the time has

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*,p.58.

⁸⁷ Tipu's piety is an important aspect also noted in Kirmani. Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu*,p.232.

⁸⁸ Faizy, *Nootandukalude*,p.58.

come for you to judge on a case of your own. What would be the punishment for abandoning a serious responsibility? You give the judgment on your own action.” The *Qadi* replied: I do not want to be lenient on myself. It was an injustice to you that I left without your permission. Nevertheless, it happened, so my right foot can be cut off. The *Qadi* moved and presented his leg towards those officials who were in charge of punishment.⁸⁹

After instructing his officers to execute the punishment, Sultan went to his mother - Fakhrunnisa- to share meal with. He told his mother about the punishment that was being given to the *Qadi*. Sultan’s mother, who was also an erudite scholar, said, “No son, you should never do that, there is poison in the blood and flesh of scholars. If you spill the blood of a *Qadi*, it can cause your downfall. Go fast and change your decision to freeing the *Qadi*.” The Sultan soon announced the declaration that he had pardoned the *Qadi*. However, it was too late, since the punishment had been executed. A distressed Sultan plead for forgiveness from *Qadi*, who was writhing in pain. Sultan offered the *Qadi* to replace him with a foot made of gold as compensation. *Qadi* declined the offer politely. He said that the natural foot was a blessing of Allah and he did not want to replace it with ‘the *haram* (forbidden) foot’ that was given by the creatures of Allah.’⁹⁰

The *Qadi* left Srirangapatana after the punishment to settle back at Puthanangadi Masjid. Tipu sent him off with a horse cart and an artificial wooden foot. While *Qadi* peacefully settled in Malabar, Tipu’s downfall, as his mother rightly warned, had began after this

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Tipu Sultan’s mother’s intervention on the matters of punishment on another instance was noted by Kirmani as well. Kirmani notes that in 1782 after Tipu retook Bednur from the English East India Company, his commander Muhammad Ali took the sanctions of Sultan’s mother to gun down few of the rebels. Kirmani, *History of the reign of Tipu*, p.11.

incident, notes the chronicler.⁹¹ The *Qadi* lived for a few years after the death of Tipu sultan. He was known as ‘Kalillatha Uppuppa’ or the limbless Uppuppa. He got the status of a saint posthumously, and his tomb is visited and venerated by devotees seeking *Barakat* of the saint.⁹²

In this narrative, Tipu Sultan is neither a cruel nor a benevolent ruler. Instead the question that was central to this version of Mappila Muslim memory was a question of authority. The crises was evidence of the refusal of the *Qadi* to accompany Sultan to Srirangapatana, and the blind refusal of the *Qadi* to the offer of artificial gold foot – citing that the authority of Allah was above the Sultan.

But was it always the case? As Abdullah Musliyar perceived, were Mappila Muslims only bound to God’s authority where Tipu Sultan had no business? Or was there internal schisms and subcultures the Shafi’I Ulama bound to - which also defined the memories of the saints’ closeness to God and the Sultan?⁹³ Sheikh Jifri and Muhamamd Shah, two contrasting figures I discuss below, both have their hagiographies claiming them as spiritually intimate to the Sultan. Their memories demonstrate how Tipu Sultan was deeply involved in the sectarian differences of Malabar.

⁹¹ Faizy, *Nootandukalude*, p.58.

⁹² See Image 2.

⁹³ Malabar was an exception to the predominantly Hanafi jurisprudence followed South Asia. The Urdu biography, I discuss below, made a claim that Tipu Sultan was a Shafi’ Muslim.



Image 2: The Tomb of Qadi Abdullah notes that he was also known as Kalillatha Uppuppa and was the Usthad of *Mampuram Thangal*.



Image 3: A board above Qadi Abdulla’s tomb, notes that he was the “Mufti of Tipu Sultan’s palace and Qadi of A’la Masjid. He was known for many miracles (*karamats*) when he was alive, his tomb (*makhbara*) is still a refuge to people.”

Tipu Sultan as a Naqshabandhiya Sufi

A prominent scholar and Sufi of Calicut, Sheikh Jifri (d.1808), was part of the historical stories of Tipu Sultan.⁹⁴ When the news arrived that Tipu Sultan was visiting the ancient Muslim settlement of Calicut, there was much anticipation among the people of the town.⁹⁵ They waited from the morning, and by noon they heard the marching sounds of Sultan's army. Much to their surprise, there were only ordinary soldiers marching, and they could not see the royal contingent that usually accompanies a king. An ordinary soldier in standard military attire walked out of the contingent and greeted Sheikh Jifri with 'Salam.' Sheikh Jifri closed the *kitab* he was reading and looked at the face of the soldier and suddenly hugged and greeted him. The soldier was the Sultan himself who was in disguise; the sultan explained to the Sheikh that he was not confident of appearing in front of the Sheikh in his royal clothes. Tipu was surprised that the Sheikh could recognize him even in disguise, though they had not previously met. The Sheikh, sitting next to the king, talked to him about the matters of state (*rajyakaryangal*) and his general wellbeing. Tipu requested the Sheikh to accept him as his *mureed* (the disciple or aspirant in his Sufi order). The crowd which had gathered to get a sight of Tipu Sultan was unaware that the common man who was in conversation with Sheikh was Tipu Sultan. As soon as they came to know a large number of people entered Sheikh's place to get a glance of Tipu Sultan.⁹⁶

The feast that was thrown to Tipu and his men by the Sheikh became part of the lore of the city, Parappil Muhammad Koya noted.⁹⁷ After the meeting, the Sheikh invited Tipu for the feast, and the Sultan accepted it. However, the cooks and followers of Sheikh were anxious

⁹⁴ Sayyid Sheikh Jifri was born in Tarim of southern Yemen. In circa 1746 he reached Calicut via sea with a group of merchants. P.P Muhammad Koya Parappil, *Kozhikotte Muslingalude Charithram* [History of the Muslims of Kozhikode]Focus Publications, Calicut, 2012(second edition), p.104. Also see Moulavi and Kareem, *Mahathaya Mappila*,pp.172-174.

⁹⁵ Parappil, *Kozhikotte Muslingalude* ,p.104.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*p.105.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

about how could they cook for such a large number of people. Their usual copper vessel was small, and they did not have time to look for a bigger one. They informed the Sheikh of their concern, and he silently walked to the kitchen. He lifted a grain of rice kept for cooking from another vessel, and dropped it into the copper vessel and said: “*Ee chembu mathi, ithil thanne vecholu*” (“this vessel would be enough and please cook in the same vessel”) and went back to his guest Tipu Sultan. Miraculously, after feeding the Sultan, his men, and the public who came to meet Sultan, there was rice still left in the copper vessel. The memory of this story was so strong among the local population that even after many years it was said when there was food left after marriage functions of Kozhikode, “Oh! Like the vessel of the Sheikh’s house.”⁹⁸

A recent hagiographical account of Sheikh Jifri has another telling of the same story. In colonial accounts, there was a perpetual enmity between Zamorin and Mysore Sultan.⁹⁹ In this story, the ruler of Kozhikode Zamorin and Tipu Sultan were close friends.¹⁰⁰ While the first parts of the story were similar, there were three significant differences and additions in this version. One, it was the Zamorin who told about Jifri Thangal the leader of Muslims of Calicut, to Tipu Sultan, and Zamorin did not mince his words to describe Thangal’s greatness.¹⁰¹ Upon hearing such praises of Thangal’s scholarship, Tipu decided to meet him to verify whether the Thangal was genuinely exceptional. Secondly, in this story Tipu sent his commander of the army in royal clothes before he arrived himself in ordinary clothes to confuse Thangal. However, while everyone else thought the commander was Tipu Sultan the Thangal did not pay any attention to him, and people were surprised about Thangal’s disregard for Tipu Sultan. Finally, Tipu arrived in disguise, and the Thangal greeted him with

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p.105

⁹⁹ See second chapter of this dissertation.

¹⁰⁰ Abdussamad Faizy Karuvarakund, *Quthubussaman Mamburam Thangal: Charithravum Karamathukalum* [Quthubussaman Mampuram Thangal- History and Miracles], Mampuram Book Stall, 2016, p .36.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.37

all courtesy.¹⁰² Thirdly, it was also added that Tipu was initiated in *Naqshbandiyya*¹⁰³ order-a significant Sufi order of Sunni Islam- by Thangal.¹⁰⁴ After the meeting, Tipu wanted to return gift his new spiritual guide but since the Thangal refused to accept any gifts, but when Tipu insisted further, The Thangal asked him to gift freshwater pond for the people of Kozhikode. Thangal showed Tipu a place filled with forest in Kozhikode where the pond could be constructed. Tipu assigned his friend Zamorin to construct a pond, and so the *Mananchira* pond was constructed in Kozhikode.¹⁰⁵

An important aspect to note here is Tipu Sultan's initiation into the *Naqshbandiyya* Sufi order. Itzhak Weismann notes that *Naqshbandiyya* Sufi order since its origins, was rooted in a robust Sunni orthodoxy with a rejection of Shi'ism. The rise of Safavids in Iran especially had made the *Naqshbandiyya* hostile to Shi'ism, he argues.¹⁰⁶ Sheikh Jifri was also known for his polemical writings and Fatwas against the Shia practices in Malabar. He commented on the Muharram celebrations in Malabar "tears are flowing out of my eyes when seeing what people are doing to 10th Muharram. What is this clamour about? They claim to be mourning for Hussain's defeat, but why they are killing Hussain on every Muharram 10th .",¹⁰⁷

This tradition of memory firmly places Tipu in the Sunni Sufi tradition. In these stories, the status of Malabar Ulema was undoubtedly higher than the Sultan. The stories of *Qadi's* connections with the Thangal was shown to demonstrate how there was an intimate

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Naqshabandhiya is one of the major Sufi orders in Sunni Islam. For a succinct account of Naqshabandhiya Sufi order see Itzhak Weismann *The Naqshbandiyya: orthodoxy and activism in a worldwide Sufi tradition*. Routledge, 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Karuvarakund, *Quthubussaman*, p.37.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Itzhak Weismann *The Naqshbandiyya*, p.24. However, Dina Le Gall has complicated our understandings of Naqshabandhiya involvement in the battles for Sunni orthodoxy and intra-Sufi diatribe in the 17th-century Ottoman world. See Dina Le Gall, *A culture of Sufism- Naqshabandis in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700*, New York, 2005., pp.137-156.

¹⁰⁷ Parappil, Kozhikotte, p .106.

connection with Ulama and the fate of political authorities. Thus, the Sufi scholar's example is similar to Simon Digby's demonstration of the connections between the claims of authority over material realms and in turn, the political destinies of the Kings. He says that, for example, the prosperity of Alauddin Khilji's reign was attributed to the blessings of Nizamuddin Awliya and the decline of the Sultanate to the removal of such spiritual protection.¹⁰⁸ This direct influence of Sufi Ulama over the political events, and material destinies were evident in the Mappila memory. Sheikh Jifri Thangal and Syed Alawi Thangal belonged to the Ba'alavi Syed family, which traced back its origin to Southern Arabia.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Tipu Sultan requested (as per the tradition) wanted to become a *Mureed* of Jifri Thangal.

Tipu's intercession on Sunni-Shia conflicts

The above mentioned *Qadis*, Thangals, and Sheikhs belonged to the Sunni faction of Mappila Muslims of Malabar, where an alleged¹¹⁰ Shia faction was in existence with the time of Tipu Sultan's entry to Malabar.¹¹¹ Justin Jones argues that there were two forms of sectarian conflict in colonial North India between the Sunni and Shia sects of Muslims. One, he says, was manifested as sporadic violence during the Muharram festival; the other one was 'violence of the word' or polemical conflicts.¹¹² Similarly, throughout the nineteenth century and till the Mappila rebellion of 1921, there were a series of Fatwas, debates, and sometimes attempts at physical violence and social boycott in Malabar. Moulavi and Kareem argue that the origin of these conflicts could be traced to one of the fatwas of Sheikh Jifri (d.1808)

¹⁰⁸ Simon Digby, "The Sufi Shaykh and the Sultan: A Conflict of Claims to Authority in Medieval India." *Iran* 28, no. 1, 1990, p.71.

¹⁰⁹For the Syed families of Tarim see Eng Se Ho *The graves of Tarim: genealogy and mobility across the Indian Ocean*. University of California Press, 2006.

¹¹⁰ The Shia faction denied that their practices were outside Sunni Islam, as we see in the story of Muhammad Shah below while the Ponnani Sunni Ulama continued to accuse them of being Shia.

¹¹¹ Moulavi and Karim, *Mahathaya Mappila*, p.195, pp.318-323.

¹¹² Justin Jones, *Shia Islam in Colonial India-Religion, Community and sectarianism*. Cambridge University Press, 2011, p.21.

against the Muhammad Shah Thangal (d.1804)¹¹³ of Kondotty, accusing the latter of Shia leanings.¹¹⁴

Some of the accounts¹¹⁵ — which had been transmitted orally till the Mappila Muslim writers began to chronicle their literary past in post-colonial India – argue Sheikh Muhammad Shah was brought by Tipu Sultan to Malabar to pacify the Mappilas, who had risen in protest against him.¹¹⁶ In oral traditions on Kondotty Thangal, we hear that when Tipu received complaints from Mappila Muslims that Muhammad Shah, the Thangal of Kondotty was a heretic, and he should be punished, Tipu was not willing to order any punishment until he could ascertain the truth about the Sheikh. He asked the Sheikh to meet him at his new fort in the riverside capital of Farukhia. Tipu invited the scholars of opposing factions to examine the knowledge and practices of Muhammad Shah, and there was a heated debate between these factions. In the long debate the Sheikh answered questions on *Tariqa* (Sufi path), *ma'rifa* (gnosis), *Madhab* (school of law) in detail. It is worth noting that these aspects such as Sufi orders and Islamic law schools were the theological variables for *Ahlu-Sunnah wa'l-*

¹¹³ Umar Madhuvai, *Kondotty Thangal- Khwaja Sheikh Muhammad (qaddasa Allah)Thangaludyedum Pinagmigaludeyum Jeeva Charithram*[Kondotty Thangal- the Biography of Khwaja Sheikh Muhammad Thangal(may Allah Guard him) and his successors], Kondotty Qubba-Thakiya Charitable Trust Publications, 2018,p.57.

¹¹⁴ Moulavi and Kareem, *Mahathaya Mappila* p.173.

¹¹⁵ Moulavi and Karim notes that the local people had the story when Muhammad Shah first came to Malabar he was accompanied by a wild fox which was brought up in Mysore palace. Moulavi and Kareem do not attempt to verify the facts but they have done superb job in collecting and chronicling the life stories (which were mostly present in oral form) around Mappila writers. The *Mahathaya Mappila Sahitya Paramaryam* served as a guide to the unarchived Arabi-Malayalam documents for last three decades. For instance, K.N Panikkar for his crucial formulation of the four ‘traditional intellectuals’ who inspired the agrarian outbreaks in nineteenth century Malabar uses the stories in *Mahathaya Mappila Paramaryam* to argue for the cultural importance of these figures to the agrarian Mappilas. Panikkar, *Against Lord*, p.61-65.

¹¹⁶ Moulavi and Karim argues that Muhammad Shah Thangal were supported by Tipu Sultan to check the growing disturbance from jungle Mappila Moopans and Gurikkals, Moulavi and Kareem, pp. 191-194. He was very famously bestowed *Inam* and rights over a vast land by Tipu Sultan, which was continued by the English. It is recorded that Kondotti Thangal was given 135.9 wet land, 297.09 garden land,146.03 dry land. See J.W Robinson, *Inam register(1885-1886)*, Kozhikode Regional Archives. The Inam records, however state only the title ‘Kondotty Thangal’ of ‘Kulathoor Amsam’ and do not specifically mention Muhammad Shah’s name. It is worth noting that the title Kondotty Thangal was used by his sons after him.

Jama'ah (the people of the Sunna and community or the 'mainstream of the Sunni')¹¹⁷ and the vital elements in the Sunni Islamic history of Sunnis; which placed the Sufi Sheiks and traditions in the Sunni mainstream doctrine. In the end, Muhammad Shah he recited a poem in Arabic which explained and affirmed his position as a Sunni, who follows *Qadiri* and *Chishthi* Sufi orders. He said "I am Muhammad Shah, and I belong to Kardan, Islam is my deen (religion), and the Qur'an is my guide. My Sheikh is Karam Ali Shah Wali. I follow the Sufi orders of Sheikh Abdul *Qadiri* Gilani and Sheikh Muyinuddin of Ajmeer." Tipu Sultan was highly impressed with the knowledge and skills of the Sheikh and bid farewell to him with much respect.¹¹⁸

In the hagiographies of Muhammad Shah, we read that once Tipu Sultan heard that English East India Company army was moving to attack his fort of Palakkad with the help of his enemy Travancore, he reached Malabar with an army of 5000 men. On his way to Palakkad, he asked the Sheikh Muhammad Shah to meet him. The Sheikh had a conversation with Sultan and prayed for his victory. Sultan was much relieved with this gesture and presented a 'pallaku' (palaquin) to him. Umar Madhuvai - a contemporary chronicler, notes that he has seen that till the 1960s this 'pallaku' was kept at the Sheikh's family house of Muhammad Shah in memory of his relation with Tipu Sultan.¹¹⁹

Tipu was particularly interested in seeking the help of Sufis and Ulama of Malabar to pray for his victory. A similar memory was that Tipu once called for a meeting of all Ulama of Malabar at his fort of Farukhia and told them about the treacherous movements of his enemies, including Travancore and Cochin. He also added that he was concerned about the growing power of the English East India Company. A later day chronicler notes,

¹¹⁷ For this definition of Ahlu Sunnah as mainstream of the Sunni see Azyumardi Azra *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. University of Hawai Press; 2004,p.90

¹¹⁸ Madhuvai, *Kondotty Thangal* ,p.28.

¹¹⁹ Ibid,p.31.

The Sultan asked the scholars (*ulama*) and great souls (*awliya*) to pray that the Sultan's conquests and efforts to succeed and also for the security of the great Mysore kingdom. Tipu made arrangements for the prayer in the fort. When Tipu came back in the middle of the night to see how the special prayers for him were progressing, he was surprised to see that everyone except Muhammad Shah was asleep. Tipu Sultan realized that Muhammad Shah was more responsible and sincere than other Ulama. Before Sultan set out on his battle to Cochin, he conveyed his delight at what he saw to the Sheikh, and their friendship grew, and they met more frequently at the fort.¹²⁰

The nineteenth century Sunni religious leaders of the Jifri faction, who shared a very cordial memory of Tipu Sultan, were in the forefront of a polemical diatribe against other faction. Central to these polemics were allegations of the Kondotty Sufi practices as *Rafizi*.¹²¹ In colonial Malabar, these fights had a far-reaching impact where one of the factions ended up supporting the British against their conflicts with Mappilas.¹²²

On 12th September 1855, the Mappilas supposedly as their action against exiling their leader Fazal Pookoya Thangal murdered the Collector of Malabar, Henry Valentine Connolly.¹²³ The three-member group who assassinated Connolly then set out to hide in the interiors of Malabar, but these Mappilas were identifiable since they had paid a visit to the shrine of Mamburam before the assassination and were known for their adherence to Sunni Jifri faction. Moreover, the rival Shia faction provided information on them. In *correspondence on Mopla outrages*, we see that a reward of 5000 rupees was announced for information on the

¹²⁰ Ibid,p.30.

¹²¹ Dr. Hussain Randathani on his study on Hadhrami Syeds of Malabar quotes a statement attributed to Syed Alawi in 1840 , "Among the Pathāns there are four groups belonging to Sunnis; Shaikhs, Sayyids, Mughals and Pathans. The Kondotti *faqir* belonged to none of these groups but to the Bohra sect which come under an extreme heretic Shia group called Rawafiz". Op.cit in Hussain Randathani, *Mappila Muslims: A Study on Society and anti-colonial struggles*, pp.55-56.

¹²² As I noted previously, the Sunni Ulama vociferously opposed the practices of Muharram celebration and alleged prostration in front of the Kodnotty Thangal by his *Mureeds*. Finally the kondotty faction abandoned both the practices due to 'popular opposition'. See Moulavi and Kareem, *Mahathaya Mappila* p,323.

¹²³ Logan, *Malabar Manual*, p.573.

assassins.¹²⁴ William Logan notes on the capture of the assassins that “they had not gone far from this place when they were seen, and, being followed up by people of Kondotty (another sect of Mappilas) were driven at length to take refuge in the house where they were shot in the same evening by a detachment of Major Haly’s Police corps and a part of number 5 company of H.M.’s 74th highlanders under captain Davics (sic).” While Logan finds them as a distinct sect, C Collet, the Joint Magistrate of Malabar, in his letter to T. Pycrofft was eloquent about the help they got from the Kondotty faction, whom the colonial government considered as an antithesis to fanatic Mappilas. On 25th September 1855 few months after Connolly’s murder, Collet wrote¹²⁵

I consider the assistance afforded by Koondetty (sic.) Tangul to have been very great. had he not responded to my call and had in readiness his large band of men, I feel convinced that these offenders could not have been secured for a long time and probably till after they had committed many other atrocities. This, Tangul (sic.), has always been on the side of order, the sect of the Moolah's(sic.) of which he is the head being bitterly opposed to the fanatically disposed, and who hold the doctrines of Teruwangady(sic.) School. The Tangul holds Servamanyum lands to the amount of Rupees 2, 741. These were granted by Tippoo and continued by the English to the former Tangul in consideration to his loyalty. I have known the present Tangul well for the last six years, and he has been a strong opponent of fanaticism and disorder. His sect prevails in Ennad about the town of Koondetty, but it is also numerous in some parts of Wolowanad(sic). As the Tangul is accustomed occasionally to make tours, a palanquin would be an acceptable gift.

¹²⁴ *Correspondence on Mappila Outrages*, volume 2. p.91.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p.110.

The Shia-Sunni conflicts and allegations of *Rafizi* are essential to understand the sectarian contestations over Tipu Sultan's memory in Malabar. The term *Rafizi* was particularly prevalent in the Sunni polemics against Shia in pre-colonial North India. Mushirul Hasan notes that Ziauddin Barni and Mulla Abdul *Qadir* of Budaun 'designated and vilified' Shia's as *Rafizis*.¹²⁶ S.A.A. Rizvi has looked at the Sectarian polemics of the latter of nineteenth century colonial India in detail. He says, Qadi Muhammad Sanullah Naqshabandhi - a nineteenth century Sunni Alim - was concerned about the growth of *Ithna Ashari* Shia faith and discussed writing a book refuting "rafawid (*rafizi shia*) in easy Persian for the common benefit."¹²⁷ One could say that in Malabar, in the case of the AM biography and the stories in hagiographies, the practical refutation they attempted over *Rafizi*, was against the growing influence of Kondotty Sufi tradition of Muhammad Shah.

In the wider Islamic world, there has been a long history of Shia Sunni sectarian conflicts and debates. Reyhan Eradogu Basran has enquired into the Ottoman -Safavid conflicts of the 16th century in which is generally perceived in conflicts as the "beginning of a constant struggle of Sunnism with Shi'ism."¹²⁸ He mainly looks at the group of Kizilbas, who were Safavid allies and hence, were perceived as Shia. How far the Sunni perception of this group, as evidenced from Ottoman documents, as a separate sect from Sunni's, would be necessary to see the historical emergence of the Sunni accusations of Shi'a as Rafizi. In Sunni Islamic theology, the Rafizi coincides with Shi'ism and is loosely interpreted as 'rejectionists,' in the Sunni polemics Rafizi and Shi'i were terms used interchangeably. However, in Ottoman documents the Kizilbas were described as Rafizi and not Shia, this can also be seen in the Shia Sunni polemics of Malabar in the nineteenth century, which have resonated in Arabi-

¹²⁶ Mushirul, Hasan. "Sectarianism in Indian Islam: The Shia-Sunni divide in the United Provinces." *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 27, no. 2 1990,p.216-217.

¹²⁷ Sayyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Shah Abdal Aziz- Puritanism, Sectarian Polemics and Jihad*. Marifat ,Canberra,1982.,p.256.

¹²⁸ Reyhan Erdogu Basran,"Does Being Rafidi Mean Shi'ite? The Representation of the Kalzabs Belief in the Sixteenth Century Ottoman Records," *Trabazon theology Journal*, Spring 2019.pp.315-339.

Malayalam memories on Tipu Sultan's time. Basran's main point of inquiry is in understanding how far the categorization of *Rafizi* in Ottoman documents implied Shi'ism, which would answer the predominance *Rafizi* conspiracy as the reason for Tipu Sultan's downfall in Arabi Malayalam memory. He argues that "the Kızılbaş's political alliance with Iran was actually the foremost reason behind the persecution. The Kızılbaş religiosity became the secondary cause. Hence the Ottoman fight with the Kızılbaş (actually with the Safavids) cannot simply be discussed as a struggle between Sunni and Shi'ite."¹²⁹

In similar ways, the *Rafizi/Rafidi* accusations were used by Sunni Ulama and more broadly nineteenth-century Sunni literati of Malabar against rival factions who allied with the British or the enemies they were fighting against. At this point, the enemies of the Mappila Sunni Muslims and the enemies of Tipu Sultan, who were killed years earlier, were the *Rafizi* Shia-who did not adhere to the Sunni concept of Shari'a. Justin Jones, following Ussama Makdisi, has argued for seeing sectarianism as a practice and a discourse. He says that it is a practice in the sense that developed as something manifested "around particular acts and events," and a "discourse," by which "the identifying features separating Shi'a and Sunni were increasingly emphasized in religious, cultural, and political language and transactions."¹³⁰ Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the term sectarianism also comes with its problems, as Jones has pointed out in some sense we are attributing a meta-narrative to localized conflicts.¹³¹ However, many scholars have pointed out how colonialism, especially in the high colonial phase, was instrumental in solidifying a sectarian identity in intra-Islamic conflicts.¹³² Shahid Amin in his influential critique of the historiography of syncretism has argued that the "the narratives of Muslim warrior saints retailed by balladeers, which bear a complicated relationship with the more standard biographies, are evidence of the refashioning

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.17.

¹³⁰ Justin Jones, *Shi'a Islam in Colonial India*, p.22.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Hasan, *Sectarianism in Indian Islam.* , p.22-223.

of sagas of religious conflict, in order to create communities in the past and the present.”¹³³

The sites of memory of warrior saints not only provides the history of religious conflicts, but there were as well sectarian undercurrents within the way martyrdom was conceptualised.¹³⁴

In the following section, I discuss the Sufi companions of Tipu Sultan in Malabar, whose memories were related to martyrdom, battles and the propagation of religion among non-Muslims of Malabar.

2.4. Sultan and the shaheed Sufis (martyr saints) of Malabar¹³⁵

A late nineteenth-century hagiographical poem *Manjakulam Mala* in Arabi Malayalam began with the following opening lines.¹³⁶

Please hear out the wonderful stories on the way of Awliya (a friend of God) whose kashf (spiritual knowledge) is in abundance.¹³⁷ He was born in the land of Mecca and was named Khawaja Hussain. He migrated from his place and settled at Manjakulam in Palakkad in the time of Tipu Sultan. The Khawaja, the Awliya, had two alternative options when he reached Malabar: either fight against Tipu Sultan and be an infidel or

¹³³ Amin, Shahid, “On retelling the Muslim Conquest of North India”, in Chatterjee and Ghosh, *History and the Present*, pp.30-31.

¹³⁴ The hagiographical texts on warrior saints, while projected as the conflict with an outside enemy, in fact were “to project a particular version of Islam.” See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Before the Leviathan: Sectarian Violence and the State in pre-colonial India,” in Kaushik Basu and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds, *Unravelling the Nation- Sectarian Conflict and India’s Secular Identity*, Penguin, 1996,p.71. In the following section, I do not discuss the sects of the saints, I demonstrate only how Tipu’s memory evolved among Mappila Muslims, whose Ulama predominantly followed Shafi Sunni Islam. It is worth noting that F.W. Fawcett was one of the first colonial ethnographer to note Mappilas as Sunnis. In his 1901 article in *The Indian Antiquary* Fawcett noted “The Mappilas are Sunnis, and claim to have had their religion from the fountain head.” He added that the prominent contemporary Sunni Ulama “Valiya Thangal of Ponnani” and the “Mahadoom(sic) of Ponnani” as the priests of Mappilas. F.W. Fawcett, “War Songs of the Mappilas of Malabar”,p.502.

¹³⁵ I use the category martyr saints, in this context, interchangeably with warrior saints. Richard Eaton was one of the first scholars to use the category of warrior Sufis against an accepted South Asian concept of “pious” quietist Sufis. Richard Maxwell Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur, 1300- 1700, Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India*, Princeton University Press, p.19.

¹³⁶ The first printed copy of *Manjakulam Mala* is dated 1898 without an author attributed, Mahlarul Uloom Press Thalassery.

¹³⁷ Anonymous, *Ith Manjakkulam Malayakunnu* (“This is the Manjakkulam Mala”), CH Muhammad and Sons, Amirul Islam Thirurangadi, date unknown.

fight with the Tipu against the infidels. But the Khawaja Hussain opted for the latter and became a martyr.¹³⁸

The *mala* further said Khwaja Hussain Awliya's physical body rests at Manjakulam, and everyone calls him Manjakulam Awliya. If anyone seeks the help of this Awliya, he will answer before the tongue goes inside the mouth once the seeker has sought his help. His extraordinary powers are explained further. He was the one who gifted madness (*piranth* or mental illness) to someone who had sworn falsely.¹³⁹ The Awliya provides "salamath" or protection from various diseases, and the stories of such warding off diseases are a recurring theme across the *mala* text. The diseases he cured include breathing trouble (*ekkam vilakku*), cough (*kura*), fever (*fani*). He also protected from robbers or thieves.¹⁴⁰ While these are stories of Awliya's benevolence to those who seek his help, he is also dreadful to his enemies. The Awliya once encountered a lion and kicked it afar, injuring it badly.¹⁴¹ Moreover, one of the persons who saw the lamp inside his *jaram* (tomb) lost his sight. Also, another person challenged the Sheikh and tied his horse near the dargah of Awliya (it is used *guruvar* which can also be the Sufi Sheikh), but the Awliya killed the horse. He also threw fire at one of the enemies who disrupted the 'nercha 'or Sufi commemoration ritual' at his tomb.¹⁴²

The poem went on to reveal that the Awliya had the abilities to both heal and be malevolent. What made his status exceptional was that he was a martyr and an associate of Tipu Sultan. Another recent Mappilapattu found in a hagiographical shrine chronicle, titled *Manjakulam Pattu*, also conveys a similar story.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.1.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 2

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Ubaidullah Edakkal, *Manjakkulam Jaram- Khwaja Hussainte Charithram* [Manjakkulam Jaram- The History of Khwaja Hussain. Manjakkulam Book Stall. 2007.

Tipu Sulthante Sainiyathil Chernnovar, Dheerathayode Nayichu Mahanavar, Britishin Pattalathodett Muttiye, Beeritharann Shaheedayi poyallo Punyare Manjakulathinte Arikath, Annu Mara Cheythu Tipuvin Deshathn, annu muthalinnolam Ziyarathinayi Sahrangal, ennum parathikal theerthu muhibbukal (He who has joined Tipu Sultan’s army, He fought and led valiantly. He fought against the British Army and became a martyr. The venerated person was buried at Tipu’s land (*desham*) Near Manjakulam. Since then, thousands have flocked for samara (visit for veneration) and solve their complaints, dear people.)¹⁴⁴

A hagiographical poem in Arabic (part of Arabic *mawlid* literature) explains the following about the relation between Tipu Sultan and Khawaja Hussain.¹⁴⁵ This Arabic verse suggests that Khawaja Hussain fought a spiritual battle against the polytheists. “Allah ordered Khawaja Hussain to reach India (*hind*), it was a time when the polytheists (*mushrikoon*) were wasting time in shameful blabber, and Tipu Sultan who was the star of justice had just risen. He joined with Tipu and fought against all the excesses or *zulm*. He was martyred with utmost satisfaction in the battle.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*,p.21-22

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*,p.24.



Image 4. Khawaja Hussain's tomb at Manjakkulam.

The Manjakkulam Maqam, where the martyred Khawaja Hussain was buried, is near Palakkad fort of Tipu Sultan; nonetheless, with martyrdom, they shared more than a historical association in the past which was part of the Sufi landscape of martyrdom. In other words, with their *shahadath*, Manjakulam Awliya Tipu acquired a special *Baraka* or powers of blessing. As we saw in the biography, one of the aspects here is a martyrdom (the Arabic words *Shahadath*) oriented *jihad*, and Tipu and the *awliya* had options to withdraw from the battle - and both *mala* of *Manjakkulam* and AM biography say they chose martyrdom over life. Such a concept of *jihad* was predominant in Mappila politics of nineteenth century. It would appear as, Mappilas had a choice not to fight, and their defeat was somehow inevitable, but just like Tipu Sultan it can be seen that they exercised their choice to fight and look forward to martyrdom. Following Stephen Dale and Conrad Wood, Sumit Sarkar argues that, “it took the form of attacks on *jenmi* property and desecration of temples by small bands of Moplahs who then committed what was practically a kind of collective suicide in the face of police bullets, courting death in the firm belief that as shaheeds they would go straight to heaven.”¹⁴⁷ However, such a definition of *jihad* and *Shahadath* as forms of ‘rural terrorism’ in Sarkar, Conrad Wood¹⁴⁸, and Stephen Dale¹⁴⁹ - who emphasized either agrarian or ideological aspects - lack the necessary theoretical engagement with the historical category of *jihad*. The *jihad* in the context of this text, and in other traditions of memory- where warrior saints such as Manjakulam Awaliya had participated- in the ‘path of Allah’ (fi’ sabilliah) need further elaboration.

Faisal Devji observes “the landscape of Jihad as a site of sociability”¹⁵⁰ where he points out the distinct character of martyrdom in Islamic tradition. “Unlike Christian martyrdom, which

¹⁴⁷ Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, Palgrave, 1989,p.49.

¹⁴⁸ Conrad Wood, “Historical Background of the Moplah rebellion”, *Social Scientist*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Aug., 1974), p.20.

¹⁴⁹ Stephen Frederic Dale, *Islamic Society*, pp 50-56.

¹⁵⁰ Devji, *Landscapes of Jihad*,p.95

also invokes the idea of witnessing, *Shahadath* involves not only the person whose life is voluntarily sacrificed for the cause of God, but everyone annihilated in this cause whether willingly or not. Not only people, but animals, buildings, and other inanimate objects as well may participate in the rites of martyrdom, including even those who witness the martyrdom of others without themselves being killed.’’¹⁵¹ He adds that martyrdom is a social and inclusive act. Here, we can focus on two martyrdoms in the traditions of Tipu Sultan’s memory - one that of the Sultan himself and the other that of Manjakulam Awliya Khawaja Hussain who as we discussed was one of the most important companions of Tipu in Malabar.

The recent shrine chronicle has the following story to tell about Manjakulam Awliya’s *martyrdom*.¹⁵²

It is since the martyrdom of Syed Khwaja Hussain, who gave spiritual leadership to Tipu Sultan’s army, that this place came to be known as Manjakulam (yellow pond). This was the biggest pond of Palakkad, where a battle took place between the English and Tipu Sultan’s army, in the battle Khwaja Hussain became *Shaheed*. The body of Shaheed was buried on the top side of the pond. The Pond always had clear water until the incident. However, during the battle, few drops of blood fell into the pond, and it is believed that it was after the blood drops fell into a pond and Khawaja Hussain’s *Shahadath* the colour of the pond turned yellow. With the pond turned yellow, it became unusable, but the pond and neighbourhood since came to be known as Manjakkulam. The pond was there for two centuries, but later it was sold and filled with mud by private owners.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² Edakkal, *Manjakkulam Jaram*, p.6-7.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

Here, it is important to note as Devji has shown, inanimate objects (in the case of Manjakulam *awaliya*, the pond), buildings (the tombs and Mausoleums) participate in the rites of martyrdom. Devji adds perpetrators, victims, and even bystanders to what he calls the “landscapes of martyrdom.”¹⁵⁴ To this, one could add those who remember the martyrdom also as constitutive of the landscapes. One could argue, in the case of Tipu Sultan and the *Awliya* not only the English East India company but the nineteenth and twentieth century Mappila writers who compose songs and poetry in respect of Tipu Sultan and his battles, and devotees who visit the shrines centuries later are constitutive of the Khudadadi landscape of martyrdom.

It is remembered by the shrine chroniclers that Tipu Sultan instructed the Arakkal family to preserve and look after the tomb of Khawaja Hussain. Arakkal Sayyid Haji constructed a masjid in this place in the model of old (Malayali) houses, and thus the tomb was venerated as Manjakkulam *jaram*.¹⁵⁵ The *Mutawalli* (the caretaker) of the Manjakkulam *Maqam* was mostly an Arakkal family member. However, before that, it is essential to note the relationship between Tipu Sultan and Arakkal family of the eighteenth century- the only Muslim kingdom and significant maritime power in Malabar. While many of the accounts attribute an Arakkal invitation to Malabar to Haidar Ali as the cause of Mysore conquest, the intimacy Tipu Sultan developed with the royal family is essential. Ruchira Banerjee has looked in detail at the formation of an alliance between Arakkal dynasty and Haidar Ali. She showed that even though Tipu Sultan made a decisive victory over the English East India Company in the 1780s in Malabar, Arakkal fortunes were in decline.¹⁵⁶ New Mappila traders who were not part of the Arakkal family benefited from the commercial prosperity of the late

¹⁵⁴ Devji, *Landscapes of Jihad*, p.95

¹⁵⁵ Edakkal, *Manjakkulam Jaram*, p.7-8. The tomb is still inside the masjid and venerated. See image 3.

¹⁵⁶ Ruchira Banerjee “A Wedding Feast or Political arena?: Commercial Rivalry between the Alia Rajas and the English Factory in Northern Malabar in the eighteenth Century” in eds Rudrangshu Mukherjee & Lakshmi Subramanian, *Politics and Trade in the Indian Ocean World: Essays in Honour of Ashin Das Gupta*. Oxford University Press, 1998, pp.85-112.

eighteenth century, but by the end of the 1780s, Arakkal family commerce and sea trade did not show much growth.¹⁵⁷ However, at the same time, with a focus on later Mappila memories we see the Arakkal family involved in what could be called a ‘new Islamization’ of the hinterland and the coast. Their investment in the *Awliya* could be seen in the context of this declining maritime and trade prospectus. While the commercial and military relationship between Arakkal and Khudadadi Sarkar has found space in scholarship, the inner-Islamic aspects of their relations are less discussed. There is a Sunni Muslim aspect, which was evident in the intermixed memory of Tipu Sultan and Arakkal kept with the two *Awliya* I discuss. A related aspect of this solidarity was evident in the marriage proposal between Tipu’s son and the daughter of Arakkal family as the biography noted fondly.

It is also important to note that there have been ups and downs in the relation between Tipu and this family. For example, we did see above that Tipu instructed his Arakkal allies to construct a shrine for Manjakulam Awliya, similarly, in a Firman dated circa 1788 C.E (1217 *mawliidi* era) Tipu addressed Ali Raja and few others charging them of violating “some prescriptions of Islam.”¹⁵⁸ Apart from these instances, one can note the attention Arakkal family paid to Manjakulam Maqam as a marker of their relation with the Mysore war even centuries later to the present day. Muhammad *Moula*’s tomb - another Sufi associate of Tipu - was very close to Arakkal's palace, and his closeness with Arakkal family was further underlined in the hagiographical poem in Arabi-Malayalam titled *Madadul Bari*.¹⁵⁹ Arguably, the eighteenth-century allies Mysore and Arakkal have some shared practices of memory

¹⁵⁷ Banerjee says the breakdown of traditional hierarchies and power along with the rise of English East india company gave space to Muslim merchants whom Arakkal had seen as traditionally inferior to them. See Banerjee, A wedding Feast, p.85.

¹⁵⁸ In 1924 Vladimar Ivanov noted as this manuscript on Arakkal Tipu relations as illegible and “hopelessly bad” in the *Concise Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts In The Collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, The Asiatic Society, 1985, p.767.

¹⁵⁹ Muhammad Qasim Jazriyya Andhrothee, *Hada Madadul Bari Madhi Sayyid Muhammad Moula AlBukhari* [This is Madadul Bari ,A Madh(praise song and prayer) of Sayyid Muhamamd Moula Al -Bukhari]. Published by author, date unknown.

even to the present day, through the saints who were once their warrior saints and trusted spiritual guides.



Image 5: Sayyid Muhammad Maula Bhukari tomb, Kannur City, who was believed to be a spiritual guide of Tipu Sultan.

In one of the earlier stories, we saw how an encounter between Tipu and Jifri Thangal makes him a *mureed* of the Thangal, in the oral tradition of Muhammad Moula of Kannur as well we see Tipu was Moula's Mureed. It is said that Tipu consulted Muhammad Moula before every battle. In an oral account, the Sultan became a *Mureed* of the Moula, and Moula gifted him with a flag to use in the battle. When Tipu won the battle, the enemy king realised that his victory was due to the new flag he used.¹⁶⁰ Moulavi and Karim had argued that Moula did his Islamic missionary work when Nair rebels were making trouble for Khudadadi Sirkar. They argued that Moula's sermons helped to create 'community solidarity' in such an atmosphere.¹⁶¹ The commanders of Tipu supported the Moula, and they even built houses for him, and he travelled to southern Kerala from Malabar along coast with his 'Islamizing' activities.¹⁶² The commander of Tipu, who helped Moula, *Shaheed* Hydros Kutty Mappila, who, according to different versions of memories I shall discuss below had fought with and against Tipu, and is venerated up to the present day and his martyrdom is commemorated at his tomb.

Haidros Kutty Mappila was a significant menace to the English East India Company after they took over Malabar from Tipu Sultan, as the joint Commissioners to Malabar noted in 1792. The robberies reported from the jungle was attributed to him. "A man called Hydroos, whose people are represented to have committed several inhuman murders, and daring robberies, besides alarming that part of the country in general sending threatening letters to extort money and provisions from the peaceable inhabitants, on pain of having their houses burnt and themselves put to death."¹⁶³ While in Mappila memory, Hydros Kutty Moopan was someone who built houses for Moula and saints, in the Colonial account, he was someone

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Sayyid Musthafa Thangal, who is the 7th descendent of Muhammad Mawala, at Muhammad Mawla Maqam Kannur City, on July 24, 2019.

¹⁶¹ Moulavi and Kareem, *Mahthaya Mappila*.pp,208-209.

¹⁶² Most of his followers were fishermen in the coastal belt. This is an understudied impact of Mysore conquest over the sea coast of Malabar, since hitherto the focus has been on the agrarian region and revenue policies.

¹⁶³ JCRM,p.214

who burnt houses and engaged in violence. In contemporary accounts as well there are conflicting recollections of Hydros Moopan's relations with Tipu. While Moulavi and Kareem noted Hydros as an associate of Tipu, Raveendran, who traveled through Chavakkad –where Hydros' shrine is located- in the 1990s, noted.

“The Old Chavakkad town was where Hydros Moopan was killed fighting against Tipu. Pushed by enemies, Hydros sought refuge from the local town folk, but they turned him down, closed the doors. An angry Hydros cursed the town. Even now, the front doors of the houses are closed before evening. Good families do not build houses in this part of town.”¹⁶⁴

While the Colonial account argues that Hydros was alive and creating troubles for the English East Indian Company in 1792, in popular memory, he was killed fighting Tipu before the English conquest.

¹⁶⁴ Raveendran, *Ente Keralam*, Mathrubhumi, 2008(2012 edition), pp 75-76.



Image7: Board outside *Shaheed* martyr) Hydros Kutty Moopan’s Jaram, an enemy turned associate of Tipu who had helped Muhammad Maula to build a house.¹⁶⁵

From Mappila Local to Muslim National: On Tipu Sultan as a Contemporary Muslim Icon

Kate Brittlebank tangentially mentions how Tipu Sultan, who for the Muslims initially was only a martyr or *Shaheed*, became a hero of nationalism, especially in Pakistan.¹⁶⁶ I attempt

¹⁶⁵ Muhammad Swalih Irfani in his guide book for devotees to visit most venerated Sufi shrines of Kerala describes “At Manathala on the Chavakkad- Ponnani route, lies Sufi Scholar Haidros Kutty Moopan’s Makham ,who gave leadership to fight(‘samaram nayicha’) along with Tipu Sultan.” Muhammad Swalih Irfani, Kerala Siyarath Directory, Poonkavanam Books, 2015, p.167.

¹⁶⁶ Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's search for legitimacy: Islam and kingship in a Hindu domain*,p,3. For instance, a monograph on Tipu Sultan was published from Pakistan in 1969. The monograph was part of a series of biographies of “great Muslims” which included the prophet Muhammad, the prophet’s wife Hazrath Khadeeja, Imam Hussain, Khalid Ibn Walid- a well-known commander from formative period of Islam, Imam Hussain- the Prophet’s grandson and whose martyrdom was central to Shia- Sunni political divisions, Muhammad Ibn Qazim- the eighth century conqueror of Sindh and the poet Ghalib. The author presented Tipu Sultan as a hero and a modern *Shaheed* (martyr). Ahmad Saeed, *Tipu Sultan*, A Hameed Khan, Lahore, 1969.

to look at the contemporary appropriations of the eighteenth-century monarch Tipu Sultan as a ‘Muslim figure or icon’ in the emerging field of Muslim politics in South India.¹⁶⁷ The unprecedented importance of Tipu Sultan for a Hyderabad-based Muslim political organization, AIMIM (All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen), in their political mobilization outside of their traditional domain is relatively recent. The organization traced its legacy to the Nizam of Hyderabad, who historically was an ally of the British and played a significant role in the defeat of Tipu. These contemporary invocations of Tipu within the field of Muslim politics is buttressed by a recent Urdu biography of Tipu Sultan which demonstrates the need felt in the Sunni Islamic political field for a champion in the eighteenth-century monarch.

When Tipu replaces Nizam

Muslim politics in post-colonial India has had to counter the Hindutva right-wing projections of medieval and ancient ‘Hindu Rulers’ as equivalent to masculine ‘Islamic figures’. Portrayal of Prophet Muhammad as a commander of war has been matched by Hindutva’s portrayal of Ram as an aggressively anti-Muslim masculine ‘Hindu.’¹⁶⁸ The portrayal of Tipu as a historical champion of Muslims in South India in 2015 emerged from the context of Hindutva politics. In Karnataka Indian National Congress (I) led government commemorated Tipu Sultan’s birthday. The Hindu right-wing camps in the state protested. In one part of Tipu’s old Mysore kingdom, Coorg, the birthday celebration turned ugly, and in the violence that followed, two people, including a member of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), were killed.¹⁶⁹ The uproar associated with the government decisions resulted in a polarization where Tipu is either seen as secular or tyrant. Some historians, on the other hand, argued for a

¹⁶⁷ While Mappilas have Indian Union Muslim league as a major community political formation along with other smaller organization, their politics since the 1990s has merged with the ‘national’ its anxieties and aspirations were not different from those of the AIMIM.

¹⁶⁸ Irfan Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India: the transformation of Jamaat-e-Islami*. Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2010, p.185.

¹⁶⁹ See the news at: <https://www.firstpost.com/india/protest-against-tipu-sultan-jayanti-in-karnataka-turns-ugly-one-vhp-activist-killed-in-clash-2502468.html>

more nuanced understanding of this complex eighteenth-century figure who does not exclusively fit into either of these categories.¹⁷⁰ In the following section, I would like to throw some light on other public controversies about Tipu before the recent one in order to understand what is markedly different in the new context.

A brief history of controversies on Tipu Sultan in postcolonial India began with “The Sword of Tipu Sultan” serialized on national television (Doordarshan) in 1989. The serial was inspired by Bhagvan S Gidwani’s novel by the same name and immediately became controversial.¹⁷¹ One of the first voices against the serial was from the Sangh Parivar affiliated institution *Bhartheeya Vichara Kendra* of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, protested against the alleged ‘glorification’ of the Sultan who in their view was a tyrant and ‘persecuted Hindus in Malabar’ during his reign.¹⁷² However, one could view this as one of the many claimants to nationalism. For example, Irfan Habib, while introducing a new volume on the collection of essays titled *Resistance and Modernization under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* and referring to the first controversy on television, argues that there is a “strong contrary trend” against the accepted version of Tipu as a nationalist hero.¹⁷³ Here Habib attempts to reclaim the space of Tipu Sultan in nationalist historiography. While these debates indicate the contestations over Tipu in academic history and the “popular,” the latest controversy once again brought out the fissure between these spheres into the fore.¹⁷⁴

Some of the birthday celebrations of Tipu Sultan carried very contemporary political slogans. For example, a meeting in Gulbarga by a pro-Tipu Jayanthi Muslim organization had the

¹⁷⁰ Janaki Nair, “India must end history wars over Tipu and other controversial Sultans” in <http://www.dailyo.in/politics/tipu-sultan-jayanti-secularism-girish-karnad-tiger-of-mysore-indian-history-democracy/story/1/7339.html>

¹⁷¹ Bhagwan S Gidwani, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*, Penguin, 2004.

¹⁷² For a recent view of RSS on Tipu Sultan. See Kesari Malayalam Weekly. ‘Tipu Arayirunnu?’. (Who was Tipu?) <http://www.kesariweekly.com/e-weekly/2015/2015Nov27/index.html>

¹⁷³ Irfan Habib, “Introduction: an essay on Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. *Confronting colonialism: resistance and modernisation under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* (ed. Irfan Habib), Tulika Books, 2002, pp. xvii–xlvi

¹⁷⁴ On the inability of the ‘scientific history’ to address the ‘popular’ see Partha Chatterjee in eds. Partha Chatterjee, and Anjan Ghosh. *History and the Present*], pp. 19-23.

slogan argued for Dalit Muslim unity, "Dalit-Muslim Ittehaad ka Elaan."¹⁷⁵ In another notable instance the AIMIM has asked nothing less than 'Vote for Tipu Jayanthi.'¹⁷⁶ AIMIM welcomed the Karnataka government's decision to celebrate the birthday as a victory of their long struggle.¹⁷⁷ AIMIM's romance/fascination with Tipu predates the Karnataka government's decision. For example, in February 2014, a delegation from Mysore had reportedly visited AIMIM's popular leader Akbaruddin Owaisi in Hyderabad and presented him with 'Tipu Sultan's pagad,' and more interestingly, they urged him to launch AIMIM in Mysore.¹⁷⁸ In May, the deputy leader of AIMIM was spotted receiving a 'Tipu Sultan cap' at a ceremony in Srirangapatana.¹⁷⁹ In November of the same year, an organization named 'Tipu Sultan Secular Sena' presented a photo frame portraying Tipu to the Member of Parliament and AIMIM's English-speaking face Asaduddin Owaisi as a mark of their support.¹⁸⁰ On July 10, 2015, three months before the birthday controversy, the leader of AIMIM, Akbaruddin Owaisi, visited and was facilitated at Srirangapatana with nothing less than a tiger gown and 'traditional Tipu sultan crown' and a sword.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵“Hazrat Tipu Sultan Saheed (R.H) Ki jayanti Wadi Jn. Gulbarga”
source ‘Hazrat Tipu Sultan Shaheed’ face book page, November 25,2015

¹⁷⁶And source for this is a post in a Facebook group called I’ support Owaisi brothers’.I Support Owaisi Brothers

November 11 ,2015 Also see‘Please vote in favour of Tipu Jayanti,’

<https://www.facebook.com/nawazhussainhyd/posts/455883621266489:0>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=455883621266489&set=a.145227618998759.1073741825.100005345640288&type=3&theater>

¹⁷⁷“Breaking News posted the following From Karnataka.....KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT announce TIPU SULTAN JAYANTHI & GOVERNMENT HOLIDAY on10th Nov....After long struggle we got a big big success in karnataka.....hanks To Government Of Karnataka Specially Chief Minister of Karnataka...”

I Support Owaisi Brothers October 12 · ,2015

¹⁷⁸<https://www.facebook.com/1545660982358475/photos/a.1545668172357756.1073741828.1545660982358475/1590253017899271/?type=3>

¹⁷⁹ See in Facebook , **Akbar Uddin Owaisi.Official Page.** July 11 ,2015

“Akbar Uddin Owaisi honoured Tipu sultan cap by Mysore youth leader Athesham mohammed...”<https://www.facebook.com/265712290298655/photos/pcb.384301108439772/384300958439787/?type=3>

¹⁸⁰ “Tipu sultan Secular Sena presented a Photo Frame to Asaduddin owaisi sahab And Promised The Support To #AIAIMIM’

<https://www.facebook.com/AsaduddinOwaisii/photos/a.293900977437433.1073741829.280112212149643/360775594083304/?type=3&theater>

¹⁸¹ “Habib-e-millat Akbaruddin Owaisi Saheb rousing welcome to the land of Tipu Sultan Shaheed (RA) & felicitated with tiger gown and traditional Tipu sultan crown and sword by Athesham Mohammed in Srirangapatana”.In the page Akbaruddin Owaisi Youth Icon July 11,2015. Also see the official page of AIMIM

It is worth noting that this was also a time when AIMIM was trying to expand into other parts of India. One of their successful experiments was in Maharashtra, and one could see that Tipu was an icon in AIMIM's political discourse. On November 9, 2014, the Pune Unit of AIMIM posted on their Facebook page a picture of Akbaruddin Owaisi facilitated with symbols attributed to Tipu at Srirangapatana. In another instance of making Tipu an all-India rallying point for AIMIM could be seen in a meeting organized at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh on the birth anniversary of Tipu. In that meeting, Akbarududdin Owaisi was one of the speakers, and the program hailed Tipu as the 'First Freedom Fighter of India.'¹⁸²

An analysis of these posters and speeches would indicate that there is a selective appropriation of Tipu as a Muslim figure fitting into the new 'Sunni politics,' which I demonstrate later in this chapter, and as a patriot fitting into the nationalist frame. One of the quotes attributed to Tipu in another social network page associated with Tipu is as follows

Ho agar Mulk ko zarurat to main Pehli Qurbani hoon
Main Musalman hun isi liye to saccha Hindustani hoon
Wo Aur honge jo darte honge Talwaaron aur bandookho se
Main agar Jung mein utron to Balaa-e-Aasmaani hoon
Keh do Dushman-e-Watan se humse Mukabla karlein
Main Talwar hoon Alah ki aur Khoon-e-Hydari hoon".¹⁸³

(If the nation [mulk] demands I shall be the Sacrifice,

I am a Muslim, so I am a true Hindustani

I am not the one who fears Sword or gun

Pune Maharashtra . Here Tipu Sultan is used as an icon to mobilize Muslims across south India. November 9,2015

¹⁸² See AIMIM-All India Majlis E Ittehadul Muslimeen Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh November 20 .

¹⁸³ <https://www.facebook.com/AIMIM.Official/posts/816413665054560>

If I step into war virtue is celestial

... I am the sword of Allah and the blood of Haidar).

Here my point is not to verify the authenticity of this quote but rather to suggest the two themes that emerge in AIMIM slogan, first) a love for 'Mulk or nation', and second the identification of Tipu as a the 'sword of Allah' or a commander of war similar to the depiction we have seen of Prophet Muhammad by Islamist organisations in the 1980s.¹⁸⁴ The historical context of this discovery of Tipu as a nationalist Muslim warrior has much to do with the eighteenth-century colonial context.

In Javed Alam's opinion, the AIMIM, especially with the engagements of the 1980s, was trying to fill the gap which had resulted from the secular state's retreat. Here Alam disagrees with Mushirul Hasan's earlier formulation that the Muslim masses were merely playing into the rhetoric presented by AIMIM leaders. For Alam, the appeal the AIMIM has generated needs to be analyzed in its historical context rather than as an 'empty rhetoric' which wooed the passive masses.¹⁸⁵ Following Alam's argument, one can also try to locate the rhetoric of the Tipu Sultan in its historical context. One could observe that the AIMIM had an aggressive political language reminiscent of Hindutva after Independence. For example, the leader of AIMIM in 1980s Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi was called 'Sallar-e-Millat' or 'the commander of the community.' This almost literal comparison of modern democracy with the battlefield lends AIMIM the temptation to appropriate Tipu Sultan whose valour in his numerous battles against the British is still alive in public memory. It is also worth noting that, as Alam suggests, the post-Independence "reincarnation of Majlis" had "revived old memories." Alam looks at the themes of speeches of AIMIM's first president in order to show the presence of a

¹⁸⁴ Ahmad, Islamism, p.185

¹⁸⁵ Javed Alam "Composite culture and communal consciousness: The Ittehadul Muslimeen in Hyderabad." In Vasudha Dalmia, Vasudha Heinrich von Stietencron, *Representing Hinduism: The Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*, New Delhi, 1995. pp.348-349

glorious past from the time of Prophet Muhammad till the decline of the Ottoman Caliphate. However, by 1975, Alam argues, there is a rupture in AIMIM's politics. By then the AIMIM concentrated on the theme of 'cultural identity' in which invoking a glorious past 'occasionally came up for rhetorical purposes.' However, in Tipu's case, in analyzing the new rhetoric in the speeches of Akbaruddin and Asaduddin, one could see a return of the politics of memory to the center. Here it is essential to look at how the memory of Tipu Sultan was deployed.

Tipu because of his conflicts with the English East India Company, could fit into the new post-colonial Muslim politics which Aurangzeb or even Prophet Muhammad could not fit into, a Muslim icon who was ardently religious and nationalist at the same time. Moreover, that a party such as AIMIM, who historically looks at Nizam's Hyderabad as part of their political legacy, had to find an icon in Tipu indicates the hegemonic influence of nationalism over this brand of Muslim politics in post-colonial India. In arguing so, I am not insensitive to the internal dissension of Muslim politics and theological debates that also pushes to contestations over Tipu, in a new Muslim nationalist 'inner domain'. To elaborate further, I shall discuss a relatively recent Urdu biography of Tipu Sultan.

An account of Tipu Sultan in Urdu from South India.

Muhammad Ilyas Nadwi, a native of Bhatkal, Karnataka, wrote the biography of Tipu Sultan in 1996. This work gives information on Tipu's commissioned books and brings together the arguments found in already written Urdu works.¹⁸⁶ The book has been used by mainstream scholars on Tipu in English and has helped them to cite the materials needed.¹⁸⁷ However, one aspect overlooked is the specific context and ideological position of this text. The

¹⁸⁶ Muhammad Ilyas Nadwi, *Tipu Sultan* (Malayalam), Mufakkirul Islam Foundation, Calicut, 2010.

¹⁸⁷ For example Partha Chatterjee uses the English translation of Muhammad Ilyas Nadwi's book. Chatterjee, *The black hole of empire: History of a global practice of power*.p.407.

geographical, lingual, and religious locations of this text are essential for my analysis. In the following section, I primarily rely on a 2010 translation of the book into Malayalam. It is worth noting that the book was published from Kozhikode where various political assertions and contestations were taking place within Muslim organizations over historical pasts. The publishers of the translation who belong to one of the many streams of Sunni Islamic organizations in Malabar noted “the white men were not satisfied by merely killing Tipu, their apartheid writing factories produced many false stories to malign Tipu for ever ... this book looks at one aspect Malayalam writers on Tipu ignored - the piety in Tipu’s life’”.¹⁸⁸

Muhammad Ilyas Nadwi clearly states that his project was inspired by Abul Hasan Nadwi’s speeches (his importance among the Sunni Ulama is discussed later).¹⁸⁹ Abul Hasan Nadwi, in his speeches used to emphasize on Tipu Sultan's piety, given an urge to look at the ‘hitherto undermined religiosity’ (here ‘Muslimness’) of Tipu Sultan. In 1992 Ilyas Nadwi was commissioned to write a biography of Tipu in Arabic by an institute in Bangalore.¹⁹⁰ Ilyas Nadwi replied that he could do this project only under the guidance of Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, and he wanted to write a book in Urdu instead of Arabic.¹⁹¹ Ilyas Nadwi was trained in *Nadwathul Uloom* headed by Abul Hasan Nadwi who provided the framework for the biography and encouraged Ilyas Nadwi.¹⁹²

Some of the conceptual suggestions given by Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi on the writing of this biography are also worth mentioning. He was asked to model his work on the biography of

¹⁸⁸ Muhammad Ilyas Nadwi , *Tipu* ,p.2. A number of ‘History conferences’ happened in kozhikode in past 4 years, focusing on the pasts of Mappila community. Many religious and community organizations of Malabar increasingly take part in documenting their own versions of the past , they publish the papers subsequently in Malayalam. I called it as new contest over Mappila Muslim pasts in a paper presented at South Asian European association ,see Shaheen Kelachan Thodika, *Writing ‘Muslim histories’ in post-colonial South India: understanding the Muslim history conference of Kozhikode, Kerala, 2013 . 2016, 24th European Conference of South Asian Studies, Warsaw Poland.*<https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/ecsas2016/paper/27055>

¹⁸⁹ Nadwi, *Tipu*,p.8.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*p.9.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

Sayyid Ahmad Sha Shaheed (d.1831), the founder of the Barelwi movement. Ilyas Nadwi was explicitly asked to look at the impact of the decline of Khudadadi Sarkar on the 'Islamic world.' Another suggestion was to study the manuscripts, letters, and 'authentic sources' related to the topic. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi only provided the 'authentic sources' that were useful for the research. Ilyas Nadwi finished writing the book in 1996 after years of research. Soon after completing the biography, the manuscript was sent to Professor Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, former vice-chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University - who was also a staunch supporter of Sufi "composite culture based on piety" - for review.¹⁹³ Nizami hailed the book as "very authentic" and "on par with modern historical methodology."¹⁹⁴

The book was introduced by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, who was one of the most influential post 1980s Sunni Ulama of the subcontinent and was also remarkable for his attempts to reaffirm a new identity for Indian Muslims.¹⁹⁵ Muhammad Qasim Zaman argues that Nadwi's attempt was to identify Indian Muslim's contributions to the freedom struggle and to demonstrate that Muslims were "Loyal to India, as are the Hindus."¹⁹⁶ Muhammad Ilyas Nadwi's work also drew from 'Nadwathul Uloom', a school of thought that incorporated Tipu Sultan into this 'reaffirmation of Islamic Identity'. One could explore and critically look at the absorption of Tipu Sultan into the new Islamic fold, which is global and emphasizes the Middle East routes of Indian Muslims, similar to what Qasim Zaman does.

As Zaman has argued, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, in his writings, was reacting to Hindu nationalist constructions of Indian history and laid heavy emphasis on Tipu Sultan as the

¹⁹³ Raziuddin Aquil argues that 'Nizami's approach was *mutaqidana* (devotional) in relation to the career of Sufis.' Raziuddin Aquil "The Study of Islam and Indian History at the Darul Musannefin, Azamgarh" in Raziuddin Aquil and Partha Chatterjee eds. *History In the Vernacular*, p.326.

¹⁹⁴ Nadwi, *Tipu*, p.10.

¹⁹⁵ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change: Custodians of Change*. Princeton University Press, 2010. p.164.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

“first leader who realized the evil designs of the British Imperialism.”¹⁹⁷ Apart from Tipu Sultan’s anti-colonial histories, what is vital for Nadwi is Sultan’s Islamic identity.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, in Nadwi’s view the biography was going to be different from the existing literature In Urdu and English. He adds that very little has been written on the Tipu Sultan’s personality, his family, his spirituality, his role in Jihad, and his respect for Islamic law or Shari’a, which Nadwi hoped this work would serve.¹⁹⁹ He hoped that the book “will provide guidance to the youth of Islamic society and also will help them to serve the nation in its real sense.”²⁰⁰ Here one can observe that Nadwi’s attempt was “to preserve Muslim identity in the framework of the secular nation-state as well as into the often conflicting bases of Ulama’s leadership of the community.”²⁰¹ In the following part I shall attempt to look at these contradicting aspects of fitting Tipu Sultan’s alleged Muslim identity into the framework of a ‘secular nation-state’ and ‘conflicting bases of Ulama.’

Ilyas Nadwi locates Tipu Sultan in the context of the eighteenth century ‘Islamic world.’ The first half of the century was filled with stories of the decline of Muslim rule around the world. The Persian writings of the eighteenth century, such as ‘Sairul-Muta’akhirin’ has lamented the decline of ‘Muslim rule’ and saw ‘Khudadadi Sarkar’ (god-given government) as a ray of hope. However, more importantly, as Partha Chatterjee has rightly pointed out, what attracted the author of *Sairul-Muta’akhirin* to Tipu Sultan was his ‘decisionist’ ability.²⁰² Here one could point out the difference in Nadwi’s treatment. For Nadwi, there was also a decline of ‘religious life’ in which he says Muslims were influenced by ‘un-Islamic beliefs,’ where they prayed to saints. He identifies these trends as a sign of ignorance that prevailed in society. In Nadwi’s view, ‘people were not even capable of imagining a pure Islamic society.’ He is also

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*,p.166.

¹⁹⁸ *Nadwi,Tipu*,p.25.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*,p.26

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*,p.27

²⁰¹ Zaman,. *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*,p.61.

²⁰² Chatterjee,*The Black Hole of Empire –History of a Global Practice of Power* pp.89-90.

appreciative of the establishment and decline of a Madrasa under Nawab Muhammad Ali in Arcot, who were later the arch enemies of Tipu Sultan's Mysore. In short, Nadwi demonstrates how society had turned away from the 'pure Islamic beliefs' while implicitly saying that it was awaiting a 'savior.'²⁰³ This aspect of Tipu as a savior of 'pure Sunni Islamic beliefs' must be elaborated further.

After outlining the British expansion and the surrender of the neighboring states of Mysore, Nadwi looks at the condition of Mysore before the emergence of 'Khudadadi Sarkar.' He argues that under Raja Krishna Raja Wodeyar II, Mysore was going through a significant period of decline.²⁰⁴ The decline, he argues, was reflected in various 'social evils' including 'Polyandry.'²⁰⁵ Muslims, at the same time, had moved away from monotheism (*tawhid*) and followed these lifestyles. He also claims that it was difficult to differentiate between Hindus and Muslims during this period. Here the author is referring to is the fluidity of religious identities in the eighteenth century, which is also identified as 'syncretic practices' by the nationalist writers. It is worth noting here that the author agrees with the nationalist writers on the existence of 'Sufi, syncretic practices' which are against 'pure Islam.'²⁰⁶ After creating that dichotomy, the author situates Tipu Sultan as an anti-Sufi who practiced pure Islam.

A conversation between Ranga Nair, a Nair rebel of Coorg, and Tipu is quoted as an instance here of Tipu Sultan's Islamic belief. Nadwi argues that Tipu tried to convince Ranga Nair that "there is no point in worshipping many Gods which are not even capable of protecting themselves."²⁰⁷ Tipu's preaching of monotheism and equality won over the Nair, and he and thousands of his followers converted to Islam without force, the author argues. In this

²⁰³ Nadwi, *Tipu*, p.36-37.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p.56.

²⁰⁵ Women were forced to practice polyandry, Nadwi says. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ He adds that Muslims who were distanced from the *tawhid* (monotheism) were influenced by the practices of polytheists. *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p.133. On Ranga Nair also see Kirmani, *The History of the reign of Tipu*, p.82.

context, it is worth mentioning that the author's emphasis on Tipu's monotheism or *tawhid*, as it is called in the text, is importantly implicated in the contemporary intra-Islamic debates. One could look at the tussles between *Nadwathul Uloom* and *Barelwis*, who are criticized for their 'un-Islamic practices.' In other words locating Tipu as a proponent of 'Monotheism' against deviations that were part of the north Indian Urdu-speaking Muslims' internal conflicts, both contemporary and historical.

Qasim Zaman shows how the arguments for 'true Islam' was predominant in the Muslim 'reformist discourse' of colonial India.²⁰⁸ Irfan Ahmad, while specifically looking at Islamist politics, argues that most of what one perceives as pugnacious trends of Islamism are also a product of clash within.²⁰⁹ The 'clash within' argument one could see in an analysis of medieval Sufi texts. For instance, following Muzaffar Alam, Shahid Amin shows how the Chisthi Sufi order needed to appropriate Ghazi Miyan against the influence of other Sufi orders like Naqshabandiyya.²¹⁰ In the case of Ilyas Nadwi, the bold emphasis on *tawhid* or monotheism as the central feature of Islam and antagonism to Sufi way of life could be seen in the politics of institution that was sponsored by the Saudi state in the international level.²¹¹ The Saudi Wahabi state importantly operates on a brand of Salafi for which a puritan version for *tawhid* is central.²¹²

Further, one has to look more closely into the politics of Muslim institutions in colonial north India. In this case, *Nadwathul Uloom*, where the author of the text was associated, had differences with other Muslim organizations from its inception. In a preface to the new edition of her book Usha Sanyal agrees with Qasim Zaman and argues that Deobandi and

²⁰⁸ Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*. p.81

²⁰⁹ Ahmad, *Islamism*. ,p.138

²¹⁰ Amin, *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan*,p.20.

²¹¹ Zaman,2010,pp.163,175.

²¹² On the evolution Salafism from 'modernist' to 'puritan' which could be identified with Saudi Wahabism see M.A LauzièreHenri, 'The Evolution of the Salafiyya in The Twentieth Century: Through the Life and Thought of Taqi Al-Din Al Hilali', Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, GeorgeTown University.

other Ulama groups have engaged in ‘fierce anti-Shia polemics’ which further developed into ‘anti-Barelwi struggle.’ The Barelwis, for whom “shrine centered devotion” was central, stand apart from the other schools we mentioned, including Nadwathul Uloom.²¹³ Sanyal argues that the *Ahle Sunnath* or the Barelwis and Nadwathul Uloom were sharply divided over the inclusion of Ahle Hadeeth, an evident Salafi trend. While Nadwathul Uloom’s agenda was the purported ‘unity of Ulama’, it was weakened by the differences with Barelwis, Sanyal argues.²¹⁴ The Ulama’s position that was against Shia and Barelwi practices are crucial to the identification of Tipu as someone who salvaged ‘Islam’ from the ‘shrine-centered’ ‘Un-Islamic beliefs.’

Ironically, Tipu did identify the shrine as central to his thinking, as demonstrated by his dreams and letters as well as with his interaction with Mappila Sufis.²¹⁵ There were also allegations that he was Shia in the post-colonial context. For example, in a 2008 exhibition of a neo-Salafi organization in Kozhikode Kerala, a narrative of Islam’s history in Kerala showed Tipu as the evil invader who brought ‘Shia-ism’ into Malabar.²¹⁶ While such cases represent an extreme Sunni position, the Nadwathul Uloom School was on trying to appropriate Tipu Sultan into a Sunni Islamic fold. In analyzing *Mirati Masudi* - the most popular text on the life of Ghazi Miyan – Shahid Amin argues that there was a ‘bleaching of the popular culture’ to impart a specific ‘Islamic colour to the career of Salar Masud.’²¹⁷ The ‘textual practice’ that undertaken by Muhammad Ilyas Nadwi in his history of Tipu Sultan also straddles these worlds.

²¹³Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmed Raza Khan Barelwi and His Movement, 1870-1920*. Delhi: Yoda Press, 2010, p.4

²¹⁴ Sanyal, *Devotional Islam*. ,p.226

²¹⁵ See Mahmud Husain, *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, Pakistan Historical Society, 1957.

²¹⁶ The exhibition was conducted at Calicut under the name ‘salvation.’ I thank Mubashir Hameed for bringing this to my attention. For an analysis of neo-Salafi groups in Kerala see P.K Yasser Arafath, “Kerala: Cultural Sanitation and the Making of a Hate Sphere” in *Mainstream Weekly*, VOL LIII No 50 New Delhi ,2015.

²¹⁷ Amin, *Conquest and Community*, p. 186.

The appropriation of Tipu Sultan as a Muslim icon is part of the postcolonial predicaments of the Muslim politics. The predicaments are reflected in both the ‘inner Muslim conflicts’ and the articulations of Muslim politics. An interesting example is of the speeches during the Karnataka elections of November 2015, when Asaduddin Owaisi recalled ‘Tipu’s jihad’ against the English, and referred to Tipu as his political ideal.²¹⁸ He challenged Karnataka Chief Minister Sidharamaiah to fight against the enemies of ‘Hindustan’ as Tipu did. It is worth mentioning here that the Muslim politics in postcolonial India was centered in the politics of a secular nation-state or, as Irfan Ahmad argued: “the ideology of the secular, democratic state became the master framework for almost all the mobilizations they undertook.”²¹⁹ Ahmad includes “the issue of Urdu, Aligarh Muslim University, the Babari mosque, the Muslim personal law.”²²⁰ One can add the Tipu Sultan to this long list.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the afterlife of Tipu Sultan’s Khudadadi Sirkar in Malabar through the memories of Sufis and Ulama associated with him. The memories of Tipu Sultan, was firmly rooted in the sectarian politics of Muslims from colonial period to the present. The case of warrior saints, Sufis and the narrative in AM biography demonstrated how the Sufi concepts within Sunni Islam were instrumental in claiming Tipu Sultan as one of their own and a ‘staunch Sunni.’ A few among the Sufis close to him were at the same time propagating their faith in Malabar coastal lands and involved in polemics in Colonial Malabar. The chapter further argued that the post-colonial afterlife of Tipu Sultan had continuities with the sectarian undercurrents while it was further entrapped in the post-colonial politics of ‘secular nation-state.’

²¹⁸ In a 2015 election campaign speech Asadadudin makes this point. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAAn0kMS2RRw>

²¹⁹ On a different note, it is important to mention that the historian C.M Naim argued that the Indian poets in Urdu particularly after the Indo-Pak War of 1971 had turned it into a nationalist language. For example, the Indian Urdu poets “invoked a spirit of patriotism and asked for sacrifice in the name of the motherland.” C. M. Naim, *Urdu texts and contexts: the selected essays of CM Naim*. Orient Blackswan, 2004.p.,181.

²²⁰ Ahmad, *Islamism and democracy in India: the transformation of Jamaat-e-Islami*. Princeton, 2009,p.12.

CONCLUSION

How Malayalis remembered Tipu Sultan's time – which for a few was also Haidar's time- was the central question this dissertation attempted to answer. My attempt was not to verify or find which one is the correct memory. As Natalie Zimon Davis has argued looking for “fictive elements” in the archive was not “inevitably a quest for fraud.”²²¹ Thus, I was not interested in the question of the truth of memory. Instead, this dissertation argued that the historical memory of Tipu Sultan was discursively constructed in Malabar and modern Kerala, where it varied from historically produced situations. The stories in memories were diverse according to time, space, narrator and audience.

A profound example from the contemporary can be cited. A 2010 movie in Malayalam, ‘Anwar’, loosely inspired by the Hollywood spy thriller ‘Traitor’ (2008), has a seemingly foreign ship with explosives approaching somewhere in the unremarked parts of the Cochin Coast. The ship was named Tipu Sultan. The Malayali Muslim terrorists who collected explosives from the ship entered a small restaurant nearby to dine, yet again named “Hotel Tippu Sulthan,” the name board of the restaurant added “The greatest reformist and patriotic Indian during 18th century.”²²² The movie ‘Anwar’ was amongst the Malayalam film industry’s many such attempts inspired by *Global War on Terror* after 2001.

A critically acclaimed fantasy movie titled ‘Amen’ (2013) in Malayalam is centered on an island in backwaters of central Kerala, where a mythical and miraculous presence of the saint of the local church was the central theme. The biggest of the saint’s miracles was averting an attack of Tipu during his *padayottam*. In the movie, we can see, sitting on a white horse Tipu overseeing his men trying to open the gates of the church. However, a sudden fire was

²²¹ Natalie Zimon Davis, *Fiction in the Archive: Pardon tales and their tellers in Sixteenth-Century France*, Stanford, 1987, p.4.

²²² This part is shown in “Vijanatheeram” song in the movie.

unleashed on them by the saint which drove them off. Thus, the movie began with the quote “angane punyalan prathyakshapettu Tipuvine parappicha palliya nammade” (“Thus saint appeared in our parish to drive away Tipu”).

These were two contemporary contrasting images of Tipu Sultan in Malayalam. While the former attempted to connect the local Muslim through the image of Tipu with the terror politics of South Asia, the latter beautifully retold within the framework of *pada* memories in the cinematic space without referring to Muslim or terror. Since the 18th century the memories that transmitted from Tipu’s time to present were also similar. A few of them carried contemporary political references, while others were told within a mythical landscape. I have looked at these, often inseparable afterlives of memory in different registers. There were five different, historically distant yet related ways and situations I focused on.

The *Mysore pada* was one way of remembering the conquest. Before the Mysore conquest, *pada* occurred as another name for the battle, which in pre-colonial Malabar primarily used in place of *Yudha*. However, I argued that the Mysore *pada* carried different structures of meanings and had an impact over popular memory with the political turmoil and collapse of an old order in the late eighteenth century. The difference of Mysore *pada* from the previous political events was in its impact over the interiors of Malabar; till then, the significant battles and political events were centered on the coast. In the interiors of Malabar the Mysore *pada* was remembered as new forms of *fitna*. The stories from *kalaris*, temples, and written memories of Brahmins and former royal families demonstrated that the emotional meanings of Mysore conquest of Malabar were remembered as between the collapse of an old order and establishment of a new order. This *pada* memory was notable with stories of collaboration, humiliation, shame, pride, and resistance. However, the stories that were part of the vernacular forms of historical memory, while used religious idioms, did not have a religious

division or binaries between religious groups; rather they were more concerned with powers of deities, claims for legitimacies of the rulers, the sectarian rivalries between *shaiva*, *vaishnava* traditions, new revenue order, taxes.

The second way of remembering was colonial, which succeeded and was parallel to the vernacular forms of memories. The commissioners' report on Malabar in 1792-93 was a significant point in the construction of a hegemonic colonial memory. This trend had a considerable influence over how the colonially educated class remembered Mysore conquest for further decades well into the early twentieth century. The foundational texts of colonial memory which were,- Apart from *The JCRM*, Kirkpatrick's *Select letters*, and William Logan's *Malabar*, while also Mark Wilks' hugely influential *Historical Sketches* were drawn from the first two. William Logan, inspired by Wilks, Commission reports and the perspective of eighteenth century English East India company anxieties, transplanted the colonial memories to the new agrarian context in the late nineteenth century with an orientalist flavour. He attempted to consolidate and confirm the previous colonial opinions. The colonial archive did not end at the level of a mere idea of Tipu being a cruel and wicked Muhammadan; instead the notion permeated into the administrative policy level. We did see how the firm fixation of religiosity to Tipu's revenue policies had an impact on the colonial agrarian policies. While *The JCRM* laid the foundation for a historiographical argument of Tipu's failures in revenue assessment and religious bias -which in its view was the reason for of Mappila outrages, in turn, placed the Mysore rule of Malabar outside history in the colonial knowledge production.

The colonial idea of cruel and greedy Tipu Sultan and a subsequent panic was expressed in the vernacular idioms in the 19th century Travancore. The colonial perspective of Tipu was developed into a panic of *Kaliyuga* in the 19th-century in the historical representations of

Mysore Travancore battles. Inspired from the events in Malabar, the Mysore conquest was remembered in the popular as an emotion which was predicated in the 19th-century politics of Travancore. The fear and panic were spread into the popular from the colonial and became crucial for historians, fiction writers, and collectors of myths in the 19th century.

The question of conversion by Tipu/during the Mysore rule had an afterlife in the twentieth century. The long trajectory of *chela* culture, from the colonial documents to twentieth century Malayalam novels could be seen. The ex-royals of the nineteenth century, the literati of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the social reformist individuals, newspapers, and novelists of the early twentieth century looked at their present and past with the recollection and claims or some familial experience from the Mysore time. The stories of Ayas Khan - Haidar's *chela*, Tipu's enemy, as Valkuvakkamaran, was reinvented as someone who reacted to his Malayali social class and communities differently over time. The colonial histories told by Mark Wilks and William Logan were translated into vernacular through fiction, here the binaries between the early colonial claims over history and Malayali claims over memory was lessened. This also showed how the contemporary quest for “a new man” was also a pursuit for a new patrilineal hero who has impeccable pride in his religion and community. These new heroes, while having claims over preferring humanity over caste, were represented as *Velluvakkammaran* in one instance, and a fictional Sreedharan in another. However, the 1954 novel made Tipu Sultan replaced them as the ideal Hindu secular *purushan*.

The memories of Mappila Muslims included written histories, recorded oral stories, and political narratives. There was a restructuring of Tipu's and Haidar's pasts for the contemporary sectarian and political needs. Sectarian rivalries were attributed as causes to Tipu Sultan's final tragic fate in the Arabi- Malayalam biography. The Persian histories of Khudadad which are available to us can be categorized broadly into two. One set was

contemporary to Tipu Sultan's time, such as Zain-ul- Abideen Shusthari's writings and Tipu Sultan's memoir *Tarikh Khudadadi*; both refrained from having explicit sectarian overtones. The second trend, post-Khudadadi histories, such as Mir Hussan Ali Kirmani, also was not keen to establish a sectarian explanation to the downfall of Tipu Sultan, and here the Arabi-Malayalam biography significantly parted ways. The hagiographies- though some of them called themselves as biographies – were published by the shrine trusts of saints or devotees of the shrine, and they crucially invested in emphasising a shared memory the saint or martyr had with Tipu Sultan. Thus, Tipu Sultan is part of Muslim every day; from restaurants to *nagars* of protest meetings are named after him.

Overall, this dissertation attempted to demonstrate the heterogeneities, continuities and ruptures in collective memories of Khudadadi Sirkar in Malabar. The event of the conquest could never be reduced to a single version of memory, where religion or material histories dominated. The memories that are present in different registers point to the fact that they were shaped and reshaped with the historical events from the Mysore conquest to the present day. Thus, any attempt to argue that there was one fixed memory of Mysore rule in Malabar would be ahistorical. The cultures of memory, which were expressed in written and oral traditions, as I have demonstrated, emerged from different historical settings and community reconfigurations and were constructed for the needs of the time. However, the attempt was not to probe whether the memories were historical, rather it is argued that our relationships with Tipu Sultan's memories were historical.

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