CHAPTER II

EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION OF POLITICAL POWER

Polity of a country directly or indirectly depends on its rulers and people. In the early Tamil society, a ruler was held on equal status with God and people.\(^1\) A king, who dispensed with justice justifiably, was held in highest esteem as a God. They were the protectors of the land and its people; and they were the guards of law and order in the country. They levied and collected taxes for executing welfare schemes. Moreover, the king was to protect all institutions and territories. According to Tiruvalluvar, the duty of a king is to resource-making, protect the resources and distribute the resources. To protect the people and institutions, the army had become indispensable. As the sacred extension of the chiefs of the tribal societies, they ruled by virtue of their military prowess.\(^2\) Their foremost function was to protect the natives from the enemies. The rulers had also patronized scholars, poets, musicians and other artists. Besides, they contributed their share to the development of culture. Religious institutions and organizations had also received their royal patronage.

The powerfulness or the powerlessness of the rulers had its impact on the development of the country. The ruler used to be a warrior hero, noted for his personal courage and was sustained by his personal victories. When a mighty ruler came to power, he would control the administrative machinery effectively and maintain law and order. Peaceful situation was essential for the growth of trade and

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\(^2\) Burton Stein, *All the Kins Mana: Papers on Medieval South Indian History*, Madras, 1984, p. 4.
commerce, the backbones of the economy of a country. When the power of the ruler declined, its consequence was felt by lawlessness, disintegration and destruction. Because of these, historians have given foremost attention to the study of polity. It also provides a chronological framework to historical background. All social and economic problems as well as religious and cultural achievements are laid bare only through political history.

Calicut was the major power in the Northern and Central parts of Kerala. The rulers of Calicut, known as Zamorins, were among the most accomplished sovereigns. The original seat of power was Nediyiruppu, a small village in the Ernad taluk of the present Malabar District. The Zamorins were the descendants of the Ernad Utaiyavar (Eranattu tayyavar), who appear as a signatory in the Jewish copper-plate granted by Baskara Ravivarman. According to M.G.S.Narayanan, the two brothers of Eralanadu, namely Maniccan and Vikraman, founded the city Kozhikode (Calicut) got from the last Chera king for their valour in the fight against the foreigners. Their descendants were called Zamorins. In the family of Zamorins, three male names such as Manavikrama, Manaveda and Viraraya have become very popular. Among the three names, the Zamorins were popularly known as Manavikrama. In course of time, the Ernad chief was called Swami Tirumulpad (‘the early swami’) and later it became Samoothiripad (Samoothiri – Samorin). For the administrative convenience, the Zamorins have transferred their capital from Ernad to Kozhicode.

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4 M.G.S. Narayanan, Perumals of Kerala, Calicut, 1996, p. 66.

5 George Vallatt, Discovery of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1977, p. 10.
The title *Samari* was used for the ruler of Calicut, when Ibn Battuta came to Calicut.\(^6\) *Samari*, in the European form is *Zamorin*, and in Sanskrit *Samutiri* means as the chief *Raja* of the house.\(^7\) The *Kerala Mahatmiyam* observes that, “from thence Parasurama proceeded to Gopakutapuri (Ernadu) and founded the *Zamorin* dynasty”.\(^8\) Generally, it is believed that after the rule of the *Perumals*, *Malabar* was divided into small provinces. The *Zamorins* gradually established their rule over these small *Rajas*\(^9\) and became mighty rulers, who later extended their boundaries to the neighbouring areas. From this time onwards, they encroached upon the territories of the neighbours, both on the north and on the south. “By the end of the 15th century the *Zamorin* had become directly or indirectly, by peace or war, the ruler of two-thirds of Kerala.”\(^10\)

**Boundary of the Zamorin Kingdom:**

The dominions of the *Zamorin* such as Pynaar with Warcumbra and Curumbra to the north and east of Calicut, and to the southward of that city and district, the countries of *Ernad*, *Shemaad*, *Venkilly*, *Cotta*, *Malappuram*, *Capool*, *Weenarcar*, *Curumpoora*, *Nerenganaad* and *Ponpany* besides which the *Zamorin* claimed with

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more or less influence. In addition to Pyoormulla and Poorwye, Beypoor, Perepnaad, Beetutnaad, Velatra and Paulghaut etc.  

Early History of the Zamorins:

Though the Zamorins occupied a unique position in the history of Kerala, their origin and early history are shrouded in mystery. The inscriptive and monumental evidences available there make the problem more complicated. M.G.S. Narayanan mentions that the Zamorins have not left behind many impressive monuments of their splendour in Kerala. The temples like Tali at Kozhicode, Trikavu at Ponnani and Guruvayur themselves proclaim the majesty and grandeur of the merchant prince, who attracted all the wealth of the world into his market. The market was situated in the ancient port town of Calicut. As it is well known, the town had an everlasting place in the annals of world history by its regular contacts with the Chinese, Arabs and the South-east Asian countries and a host of others. In fact, it was one of the most outstanding markets and trading centers of Kerala for internal and international trade. This commercial contact is mentioned in some of the inscriptions, and works of both the classical geographers and Tamil language. These are the available sources of information for the early history of Malabar and these help us reconstruct its history. M.G.S.Narayanan again argues that the “name of Kottaparambu (the


compound of fortress) for the palace where the hospital for women and children and the buildings are found today helps to identify the site of palace”. The big palace tank of Manavikrama called Mananchira now supplies drinking water to the modern Municipal Corporation. There were other places with names in the old capital like Palayam (cantonment), Chalappuram (Vedic college compound), Manakavu (Manavikrama’s garden), Kutiravattam (stable to horses) and Kallayi (stone-paved harbour) but not many relics which are tangible or visible.\footnote{M.G.S. Narayanan, \textit{Op.cit.}, (1973), pp. 38-39.}

Hence scholars depend on the literary works to reconstruct the early history of the Zamorins. But the literary works give incredible stories regarding the origin and early history of this royal family. The \textit{Keralolpathi} mentions that the origin of the Zamorin is connected with the story of Cheraman Perumal.\footnote{K.P. Padmanabha Menon, \textit{Op.cit.}, Vol. I, (1982), pp. 41-45.} The Zamorins of Calicut are descendants from Ernad Utaiyavar are supposed to have received land and a broken sword (Otimaval) from the Cheraman Perumal. Under the patronage of the Zamorins, Calicut became an important sea-port and trade partner from the fourteenth century.\footnote{S.C Bhatt & Gopal K Bhargava (eds.), \textit{Land and People of Indian States \& Union Territories in 36 Volumes}, Vol. 14, Delhi, 2005, p.24.} The account of Duarte Barbosa, which is earlier to \textit{Keralolpathi}, gives almost the same story about their origin and administration with the Perumals.\footnote{Mansel Longworth Dames, \textit{The Book of Duarte Barbosa}, Vol. II, (Tr.), London, 1921, pp. 1-6.} The \textit{Keralolpathi} says that when Cheraman Perumal was in power for thirty six years under the sovereign of Krishna Rayar, he sent an expedition against the Perumal to subdue the country. The army of Krishnadeva Raya advanced...
to Tarur and built a fort. In this event, the Perumal sought the assistance of Eradi brothers, namely Manicchan and Vikraman who were in the course of their pilgrimage. The two brothers engaged themselves in war and tried to destroy the fort. In the battle for three days, these brothers drove out the Krishnadeva Raya and occupied the fortress. The Perumal decided to make the Eradi brothers his heirs but they left for Benaras, intending to come back and act according to the wishes of the Perumal. Sometime after these events, the Perumal resolved to embrace Islam and go to Mecca. Before his departure, he divided his kingdom, among his kinsmen and subordinate chieftains. When the Eradis came back from their pilgrimage, to their surprise, they heard of the partition of the whole of Kerala. At the time of partition, the two brothers presented themselves before Cheraman Perumal, who granted a small portion in favour of Vikraman the small portion where the “Cock crows” amidst the swampy Jungle. Besides, the Perumal also gave his sword with the injunction “to die, kill and annex” and rule as emperor like him over the whole of Malanad”. By obeying the advice, the Eradi brothers laid the foundation for the kingdom of Calicut.

Duarte Barbosa in the beginning of the 16th century, gives a similar account to that of Keralolpathi. The Moors occupied a pivotal place in Malabar by their trade contact and made the country prosperous. They gradually began to spread out therein, and made such discussions with the King. At the end, they converted him to Islam and he went to Mecca. Before he left for Mecca, this kingdom had been partitioned.

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Origin and Establishment of the Samoory Family in Malabar:

“The tradition that came to the people of Malabar was Shermanoo Permaloo, and was just after the completion of the distribution of the Malabar Country, applied for some provisionally Manavikrama, an Euree (or person of the Cowherd caste), Shermanoo Permaloo having little or nothing else left, made a grant to him of the very narrow limit of his own place of abode at Calicut, and, having further, between him, his own swords and other dignity authorized and instructed him to extend his own dominions by arms, as much of the country as he should find desirable, a discretion which this adventures immediately began to act upon, and to endeavour to carry its object into the execution by the forcible acquisition of the country in the vicinity of the present city of Calicut”.21 The Zamorins, once the most powerful rulers of Kerala gradually declined in power and Prestige. This weakness was taken as an advantage by the petty chiefs, who desired to declare their independence and make in roads into the once mighty kingdom. At their connivance the kingdom was divided into the northern parts and the southern parts.

Barros and De Couto, the official historians of the Portuguese, have also repeated the same version with minor changes in details. The Dutch Chaplain Visscher who wrote in the beginning of the 18th century, has also repeated the same traditional account.22

Apart from these, the Northern Ballads throw light on the condition of Malabar of the medieval and modern periods. The details found in the ballads

21 Report of A Joint Commissions from Bengal & Bombay appointed to inspect in to the state and condition of the province of Malabar in the years 1792 & 1793, Vol. I, Madras, 1862, pp.3-5.
present a picture of Malabar as a region divided into various independent and semi-independent kingdoms ruled by minor chieftains. The Zamorin and the Kolattiri exercised political control over a large area, and collected tributes from the minor chieftains. The Northern Ballads Tacholi Pattukal refers to the Zamorin and his country and it is believed that there were some connections between Tacholi Othenan and the Zamorin of Calicut. Besides, there were indigenous works like Mamamkam Kilipattu composed in the 17th century and the Calicut Granthavari edited probably in the beginning of the 19th century which also says the same story, of course, with considerable exaggeration.

The translation of Grandhvavari found among the old records of the state supported that “the Elaya Tavazhi of the Perumpadappu Swarupam became important or acquired prominence on the day of the Kaliyuga denoted by the cryptogram “Shodasangam Surajyam” the day on which Cheraman Perumal partitioned his Kingdom into 34 amsams or divisions, 17 to the north and 17 to the south of Neeleswarnam, and invested the grantees of the free gift thereof with the silk and sword. To the Nediyiruppu Swarupam (the Zamorin of Calicut), he gave a cloth and sword. He then ordained that the son born to the second of his five nieces should be the protector, or reign as suzerain over the 34 divisions extending from Gokarnam (the northernmost part of North Canara) to Kanaykumari, that the 34 chieftains should owe allegiance to him, that if the family ever be restored to, and adopted duly invested with the silk and sword; that on the Sivarathri day, the 34 chieftains should either personally or through their representatives, deposit on the

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threshold of the shrine at *Tiruvanchikulam*, as a sort of royalty or protection money”. Moreover, the *Granthavari* also informs us that the sons of *Cheraman Perumal* were the members of *Nediyiruppu Swarupam*. After the religious conversion of *Cheraman Perumal* and his departure to Mecca, he bestowed them the country of Calicut and formally invested them with the silk and the sword”.

Some of these important traditions regarding the origin and early history of the *Zamorins* would point to the fact that, following the disintegration of the *Chera* Kingdom, Calicut came into prominence. The exact date of the foundation of Calicut is not known. Kerala historians have different opinions on the date of origin of Calicut. The early writers were of the opinion that the rise of the Kingdom of Calicut could be attributed to the 9th century. William Logan, while discussing the origin of the *Kollam* era, tried to associate the origin of the era with the partition of the *Chera* Kingdom. Accordingly, *Chingam* which is the initial month of the era corresponds to the acquisition of the independence by the *Venad* kingdom and *Kanni* which is to initial month of the era in the north with the independence of the *Kolathiri’s*. Modern historians attribute the origin of the Kingdom of Calicut to the beginning of the 12th century. Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai is of the opinion that the *Perumals* had ruled over Kerala till the beginning of 12th century and that the last of them was Ramavarma Kulasekhara. Though the political prominence of *Kozhikode* (Calicut) has dwindled somewhat in modern times, it must not be forgotten that this port-city and its surrounding territories were of key importance until the fall of the Kulasekharas at the end of the eighteenth century. From the 13th century onwards,

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Kerala was, “constantly afflicted by centrifugal forces, which tore as under the political fabric of the country”.  

According to Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, the conversion and partition took place early in the 12th century. M.G.S. Narayanan has also suggested that the later Cheras ruled from the 9th to 12th century. Generally, during ancient and medieval periods the powerful Chera kings ruled a division of the Tamil Country known as Malabar with Mahodayapuram as its capital and kept it a unified state till the early twelfth century.

This tradition narrated in the Keralolpathi is not supported by any reliable historical evidence. The theme and characters of the story resemble and remind us of the traditional story of Harihara and Bukka of the Vijayanagar Empire. One can believe that the authors of Keralolpathi were trying to provide a traditional background to the rise of the Zamorins of Calicut. The date of the incident, given in the Keralolpathi is confusing and it contradicts the proven historical facts. The names like Cheraman Perumal and Krishnadeva Raya which figure in the story make the tradition more ambiguous. Kerala broke up only after the 12th century. During this period the Empire of Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram disintegrated and the state was partitioned into many sub-divisions. The emergence of many new states formed

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by chieftains and named after their own traditional names was the real story of the origin of the Kingdom of Calicut in the territory of Malabar.

The Keralolpathi and the Calicut Granthavari state that the descendants of the two Eradi brothers (Maniccan and Vikraman) were known as the Zamorins. The Zamorin is also known as Manavikraman. In the light of the traditions and inscriptions, we may conclude that the ancestors of the Zamorins were the Eradis of Nediyiruppu Governors of Eralnadu. The ancestors of the Zamorins were called Tampurans and Manavikraman or Manaviyadan and Virarayan. They also earned the hereditary titles like Manaveda. The Zamorins had also some high sounding titles like Punturakon, Kunnalakonodhiri, Sailabdhiswara and Nediyiruppu Muppil. In the inscription of Muccunti Mosque of the 13\textsuperscript{th} century, he was styled as Punturakon. According to William Logan, the title Punturakon indicates the Tamil origin of the Zamorins. He says that Puntura was a place situated somewhere in the valley of the river Cauvery and that the original family of the Zamorin came from that place. It is also argued that, Puntura, a place near Erode contains the community of Konars or the shepherd tribe Talikettu and other rites of the Nayars. Probably, the Zamorins originally belonged to this community which migrated to Ernad. These arguments are purely based on tradition and imagination. But M.G.S.Narayanan explains that Puntura was in the Kongu region where the ancestors of the Zamorin took on war and won the battle at Puntura either in the east

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\item[34] Edgar Thurston, \textit{Ethnographic Notes in South India}, Delhi, 1975, p. 126.
\end{itemize}
or south and earned the title Punturakon. This title Punturakon, says K.V. Krishnan Ayyar, made its appearance after Calicut became a Puntura or great port.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the mention of Eranatutayavar in the grant Bhaskara Ravivarman to the jew, Joseph Rabban and in the copper-plate of Vira Raghava Chakravarti were the ancestors of the Zamorins of Calicut. The fact that the Kingdom of Zamorin was known as Nediyirru Swarupam and all Zamorins were Nediyiruppu Muppils are interesting. P.K.S. Raja says that both traditions and inscriptions agree that the ancestors of the Zamorins were the Eratis of Nediyiruppu (Ernad). The Zamorin’s family is like that of the Cochin family named after Nediyiruppu, a village in the Ernad taluk in Malabar.

Before the arrival of Ibn Battuta to Calicut, there was no reference to this in any writing. Ibn Battuta of the 14th Century refers to the Zamorin as the ruler of Calicut. But what he witnessed was a busy town where merchants from different parts of the world met and exchanged their products. The city, therefore, might have been found much earlier than the 14th century. At the same time, the Zamorin was retaining his sway over Ernad regions for he was the Ernad Muppil. The Zamorin shifted his hinterland seat to Coastal Calicut area because of economic

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motives. The revival of the trade with Europe after dark ages was of immense advantage to the Coastal chiefs over their hinterland brothers. The former held in free export trade and the latter especially in pepper which brought gold without direct access to the sea. However, the inland chiefs could not hope for a share in this lucrative trade. The Eralatiri was cut off from the sea by the chiefs of Parappanad, Polanad and Purattiri or chief of Purakishanad by the Kolattiri or chief of Kolattunad.\(^{40}\) As the Parappanad chiefs were related to Sambhandham (marriage), the Eralatiri sought to extend his authority towards the sea through Polanad.

Thus the first victim of the Zamorin’s eagerness for an outlet to the sea Coast was Porlatiri, the chieftain of Polanad,\(^{41}\) the fertile hinterland around Calicut. He wanted only the Cherlliikkad or swampy region at the mouth of the river Kallai and the adjoining Kozhicode hills which served a landmark for the ships approaching it. He was also prepared to pay the price fixed by the Porlatiri. But the latter was too wise to have the ambitious Eralatiri as his neighbour. So war broke out. The Zamorin and his Ernad Nayars came down to Paniyankara which belonged to the friendly Parappanad Rajas. From there, as a base, they crossed the river Kallai and invaded Polanad. Porlatiri fled to the protection of the Kolattiri. Thus the Zamorin became the master of Polanad.\(^{42}\) The Zamorin transferred his residence from Ernad to the newly conquered area where he founded a town with a Siva temple at its centre


\(^{41}\) Innes & Evans, Madras District Gazetteers, Madras, 1951, pp. 40-41.

and named it Koilkota which was later corrupted as Kozhicode. The exact date of
the conquest of Polanad is not known. According to a Sanskrit work Chronogram
Devanarayanavyad the Zamorin conquered Polanad, the present Calicut in AD
1042. But the inscriptions of Kulasekharas made it clear that, at that time Calicut
was under the control of Kulasekhara. Therefore, the conquest of Polanad may be
assigned to sometime by the end of the 12th century. The formation of a new city and
the ascendancy of its rulers and their wars were the significant events in the history of
Malabar in general and that of the Zamorins of Calicut in particular. The arrival of
the Moors made remarkable changes in the economic status of the town of Calicut.
Later, the support of the Moors created quarrel among the European powers. At that
time, the Zamorin wanted to become the master of the entire province of Kerala and
followed a policy of expansion of the empire and conquered the neighbouring
territories.

Expansion of the Zamorin Kingdom:

The accounts of foreigners who visited Calicut in the 14th and 15th centuries,
give us the impression of a rich and prosperous kingdom ruled over by liberal and
enlightened sovereigns. The growing material prosperity of his kingdom infected the
Zamorin with political ambitions and impelled him to embark on a career of conquest
of Chaliyam, Beypore, Parappanad and Vettam, which acknowledged his
suzerainty. Their example was soon followed by the chieftains of Kurumbranad,
Payyormala and others in the vicinity of Calicut.


After the embarkation of the Zamorin with Chaliyam, Beypore, Parappanad and Vettam and after the acceptance of his suzerainty by the chieftains of Kurumbanad, Payyormala and others, he became the overlord of all the lands stretching from Calicut to Ponnani. According to the Keralolpathi, it was with the help of the Muslim settlers who came for trade, that the Zamorin made his next great act of aggression. Even anxious to expand the sphere of his influence, the Zamorin then turned his attention to Tirunavai the centre of the Mamankam situated on the banks of the river Bharathapuzha. Tirunavai was a place of great political importance, as it was here that the famous Mamankam festival was held once in every 12 years. The festival had originally been celebrated under the auspices of the Chera Emperors. After the partition of the Chera Empire under Cheraman Perumal, the privilege of conducting the Mamankam festival was given to the Raja of Valluvanad along with Tirunavai, the sand packed country and ten thousand Nayars. Valluvanad Mahasadanta Samuham. This, according to Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, refers to the attempts by the army of Velattiri to hold Valluvanad against the attack of the Zamorin. The Zamorin inflicted a crushing blow on Vellattiri at the end of the 13th century. The ruler of Valluvanad was known as Valluvakonathiri or Vellatiri. Very little is known about the origin of the Valluvakonathiri. The year of Mahamagha is thus defined by Lala, “when both the moon and Jupiter are in the asterism Magha on the day of full moon of the month of Magha, then the year is called Mahamagha”. The Maha-Magha year is one of the

twelve years of the Lesser Barhaspatya cycle. The, “Samvatsaras of the twelve year cycle.” says Robert Sewell.\(^{49}\) The grant of Bhaskara Ravi Varma of A.D.999-1000 attests to the Utaiyavar of Valluvanadu to Joseph Rabban and Valluvar Irayachekar (Ratchakar) of Chokiram inscriptions which are considered as the ancestors of Valluvakonathiri.\(^{50}\) The Zamorin wanted to secure for himself not only Tirunavai from the Valluvakonathiri but also the honour of presiding over the Mamankam.\(^{51}\)

**Zamorin’s claim to the superiority over Vetutnaad & Major Dows description on its state and Constitution:**

The claim preferred by the Zamorin was to the country of Vetutnaad the former travel sections of the Bombay Commissioners concerning.

“It appears that the ancestors of the Raja of Vetutnaad were put in possession of their country by Cheraman Perumal at the general partition of the ancient monarchy of Malleam, at least they claim so high an antiquity and some circumstances which occur in the general history of Malabar, seem to corroborate their claim, they are the Brahmin – Chetier caste (by which term is meant a Brahmin or Nambutiri father and Chatrienor Khtry mother) and on that account connected with the Zamorins family, which is inferior to them in point of caste”.

“The Rajas of Vetutnaad pretend to have preserved a state of perfect independence of the Zamorins government since the time of Cheraman Perumal, and,


even in the zenith of the Zamorins power, not to have been subject to any tribute or to any kind of vassalage, but by way of ceremony they used to wait on the Zamorin at his coronation day, and to throw some rice over his head immediately after the Nambutiris who first performed this rite.” In this independence they remained, till about 37 years ago, when the Zamorin carried on a successful warfare against the Mapillas of Tirurangady and, making himself master of the surrounding countries as far as Cochin to the southward and Paulghautherry to the eastward.52

The Kur-matsaram or feud between the two Nambutiri factions of the two villages of Panniyur and Chovvaram gave the Zamorin the pretext for his conquest of Tirunavai. Both claimed equal antiquity as belonging to Parasurama’s sixty four settlements. Vishnu, as the boar incarnation, was the tutelary deity of Panniyur, Siva of Chovvaram. War broke out when the Brahmins of Chovvaram rushed to their own village by stealth rather than by force for an idol of Siva which the Brahmins of Panniyur had consecrated. Really it had originally began as a local conflict between the two villages, but later it developed into a powerful struggle in which the ruling powers were forced to take sides. In fact, the Kur-matsaram which began as a friendly and healthy emulation in learning and scholarship between the two neighbours, gradually became an unscrupulous competition for power and influence.53 The war between Panniyur and Chovvaram–Panniyur and Chovvaram were closely associated with Aryan culture. The elaborate arrangements for the dissemination of Vedic knowledge were made and Visscher refers to them as Pandelakoers and

52 Report of A Joint Commissions from Bengal & Bombay appointed to inspect into the state and condition of the province of Malabar in the years 1792 & 1793, Madras, 1862, Vol. V, p. 358.

53 Ibid., p. 97.
Chodderkoers. Another tradition says that there were two families Pandel and Choddar. Owing to worship, one group i.e., the Zamorin belonged to the Vaishnavite sect and the MahaRaja of Cochin belongs to the Saivite sect. The chiefs of the Brahmin villages of Panniyur and Chovaram are mentioned in the copper-plate grant of Viraraghava Chakravarti as attestors. This grant was issued at Mahodayapuram and the donor Viraraghava Chakravarti was the chief of Perumpadappu. All records of the Kur-matsaram show that the Perumpadappu royal family was the supporters of Chavaram. But in the copper-plate mentioned above, Panniyur and Chovaram are treated as equals. Therefore, it can be assumed that the feud began only after A.D.1225, i.e., the date of the copper-plate. In this war, as the head of Nambutiri warriors of Kulattur and Palghat and his own three thousand Nayars, Tirumanasseri Nambutiri recovered the idol and burnt Chavaram (Cokiram). Chavaram appealed to the Perumpadappu Muppil and Vellattiri. So Panniyur sought the assistance of the chiefs of Vettam and the Zamorin.

Kur-matsaram was at its height, provoked the Zamorin to attack Tirunavai. The chief of Tirumanasserinadu appealed to the Zamorin for help against the aggression and offered Ponnani as a reward for its protection. Accepting the request from the Panniyur chief, he declared war against Valluvanad. The Arab merchants placed all their resources in money and transport at his disposal and offered

57 It was bounded by Uppathode on the east, Pookaithapuzha on the south, the sea on the west and Bharathapuzha on the north. Its Brahmin ruler was the head of Panniyurkur.
all encouragement and help in his projected campaigns. On account of the competition the Jews and Christians in the north and south Kerala wanted to establish themselves in mid-Kerala, and through the Bharatapuzha proceeded by land to Palghat, Chittur, Perur, Pollachi and Pazhani through the river Bharatapuzha. Tirunavai, controlled by the Vallatiri, commanded the entrance of Bharatapuzha and its valley.\(^{58}\) The Zamorin’s army was led in person by the Zamorin and Eralpad. Since the war dragged on, the Valluvan Konatiri, before long, was forced to evacuate Tirunavai. After a bitter and protracted campaign, the Zamorin occupied Tirunavai and assumed the proud position of Rakshapurusa or ‘the Protector of Mamankam’. It is well-known that the Calicut Koya\(^{59}\) gave invaluable assistance to the Zamorin in the war. So he was honoured by the Zamorin and was given the title of Sahabantra Koya with all the privileges and dignities of a Nayar chief.\(^{60}\)

Ever since the conquest of Tirunavai there had been a bitter and prolonged struggle between the Zamorin and the Valluvakonathiri. The accounts of native sources make clear, the continuing war between the Zamorin and the Valluvakonathiri. According to Malayalam literature, Unniccirutevi Caritam, written towards the close of the 13\(^{th}\) century, the war between the Zamorin and the Valluvakonathiri was still going on.\(^{61}\) This furnishes evidence to the fact that this war must have taken place in the course of 12\(^{th}\) and 13\(^{th}\) centuries. During their hostilities, the Zamorin extended his authority as far as Nilambur on the one side and Kettakal


\(^{59}\) Koya was a leader of Muslim merchant community in Kerala.


(Venkatakotta) on the other. By the beginning of the 15th century, the territories like Nedunanadu Talapalli, and other areas of Ponnani taluk had come under the control of the Zamorin. Before long, he brought Manceri and Malappuram within his sphere of influence. A notable conquest of the Zamorin during this period was that of Nedunganadu lying between Avannot and Tanur Swarupams. Its unpopular ruler was dethroned and the Eralpad was appointed its governor with its headquarters at Karimpuzha.

The Zamorins also got the allegiance of the Rajas of Talapalli. They were originally Nambutiris who lost caste for man slaughtering. In course of time, the royal family of Talapalli was divided into five which gave rise to quarrels till Pannattur, one division of the family sought the help of the Zamorins. The Pannattur chief, the most powerful of the Talapalli Rajas, thereafter became a staunch ally of the Zamorins and got the privileges of taking part in Ariyittu mela and dining with Zamorin on that day. This demonstrates how the Zamorin used not only force but also a policy of division and conciliation with presents and gifts.

In the prolonged feud between the Brahmin villages of Panniyur and Chovaram, the Perumpadappu family sided with the latter. This resulted in the enmity between Perumpadappu royal family and the Zamorin. The argument that the Rajas of Cochin claimed a superior social status for he being a Kshatriya while the

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Zamorin belonged to the Nayar caste\textsuperscript{66} is also to be noted. The original seat of Perumpadappu Swarupan was Vanneri. But the victory of Zamorin in the war against Valluvanadu forced the Perumpadappu Muppi to abandon its headquarters at Vanneri and move to set up permanent residence at Tiruvanchikulam in Mahodhayapuram. Mahodhayapuram was the capital of the second Chera Empire. Mahodhayapuram otherwise called Makotai or Mahodayapattanam which was Thiruvanchikkulam, near Kotungalloor.\textsuperscript{67} In course of time, in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, the Zamorin further extended his conquest and acquired a sort of suzerainty over Central Kerala. The Kokasandesam composed by about A.D. 1400, bears witness to the fact that the Zamorin had by this time extended his authority up to Trikanamatilakam near Tiruvanchikkulam.\textsuperscript{68} Tiruvanchikkulam, the city ruled by Matamannan is described in Kokasandesam. Owing to dissension the Perumpadappu Swarupam was divided into five branches (Tavazhis) known as Mutha Tavazhi, Ilaya Tavazhi, Palluriti, Madathunkizh and Chazhiyur which being a boon to the rulers of Calicut as they could now skillfully play one member of the family against another and secure allies even in the enemies camps. Ramavarma became the king of Perumpadappu a few years after his marriage with Unniyati and he was forced to shift the capital from Mahodayapuram (Tiruvanchikkulam) to Cochin in A.D.1405. Cochin is described for the first time as the capital of Perumpadappu royal family by the Chinese traveller, Mahuan in A.D.1409. Before that, during the time of the composition of Sivavilasam, their capital was at


Mahodayapuram. *Unniyaticaritam* gives in detail the capital city of Mahodayapuram.\(^6^9\)

The tract of the land which comprises the modern town of Cochin and Mattancheri were under the control of Edappalli Rajas. Edappalli, was the city of never-ending prosperity on the banks of river Periyar. One of the Edapalli chiefs had Sambandham with a Tampuratti of the Ilaya Thavazhi of Perumpadappu. Just before he died, he had bequeathed Cochin as an absolute gift to her and her descendants. Shortly afterwards, a change in succession brought Ilaya Tavazhi Tampuran to the Perumpadappu gadi. Thus Cochin became associated with the Perumpadappu chief and from this time onwards they had also begun to be referred to as Cochin Rajas.\(^7^0\) The successors of the Edappalli chief who ceded the territory to the Tampuratti, never reconciled themselves to this cession. They made repeated, though futile, attempts to regain the territory. At last, they appealed to the Zamorin for help to recover their ancestral possession. In all his subsequent wars with Cochin, the Zamorin could get in the ruler of Edappalli a loyal and faithful ally whose territory was of great strategic importance.\(^7^1\) In his attempt against Cochin, the Zamorin got the assistance of the ruler of Cranganore. This support was invaluable to the Zamorin because the Cranganore ruler commanded the shortest route to Cochin.

As the allies of rival parties in the kur-matsaram, the Zamorin and the Cochin Raja had already waged a war with each other. The quarrels among the different branches of the Cochin family led to direct hostilities between them. The


\(^{71}\) *Kerala District Gazetteer*, Trichur, pp. 140-141.
immediate causes of the Zamorins decision on Cochin were the oppression of the Mutta Tavazhi by the princess of Ilaya Tavazhi to which branch the reigning Raja belonged. The details of the Zamorins campaign against the Cochin Raja are not known. In course of time, in the 15th century, the internal dimensions in the Perumpadappu Swarupam gave an opportunity to the Zamorin to interfere in its affairs. The ostensible object of the Zamorin was to help the Mutta Tavazhi branch of Cochin against the ruling Ilaya Tavazhi. The Raja of Cochin was defeated at Trichur and his palace was occupied by the Zamorin. The Zamorin installed there his man on the throne of Cochin and thus the Mutta Tavazhi became the ruler of Cochin. The new ruler acknowledged the Zamorins overlordship and undertook to pay him an annual tribute. He also undertook to supply regular contingents to the Zamorin’s army and to sell his pepper and other merchandise only through the port of Calicut. This Treaty helped the progress of Calicut very much. The submission of Cochin Raja raised the prestige and power of the Zamorins. Duarte Barbosa in 1515 remarked that Cochin was a petty principality and its ruler was not even a king in the real sense of the term before the coming of the Portuguese.

In the meantime, the relation between the Zamorin and the Kolattiri Raja was strained. The Kolattiri ruled in the north. It is not known when this dynasty came into existence. His dominions stretched from Korapuzha to Nileswaram. Though we do not have details regarding the relation between the two powers, there is much to believe that it was the superstitious belief on his part that prevented the Zamorins

from annexing the northern part of Kerala. According to that belief, high caste people of Zamorin’s Kingdom were not permitted to cross the river Korapuzha. The chief political power of north Kerala was the Kolattiri Rajas of Cherikkal. It is said that the Kolattitri supported Polattiri in his fight against the Zamorin. Another important cause for the estranged relationship between the two powers was the story of a love affair between a Kolattiri prince and a princess of the Zamorins family. Kolattiri prince was stationed at Pantalayini Kollam as a viceroy. During one of his visits to Calicut the young viceroy fell in love with a Tampuratti of the Zamorins family. The Tampuratti reciprocated his love. Then the lovers eloped to Pantalayani Kollam which then belonged to Kolattiri. The Zamorin resolved to wipe off his insult to his family and waged a war against him and brought all the territory upto Pantalayani Kollam under his control. The princess and her descendants were deprived of the right to Zamorin’s ancestral property. The Kolattiri, however, sent ambassadors offering to submit to whatever terms the Zamorins might dictate. In the hour of his triumph, he was as usual generous to his foe. The Kolattiri conferred on the Zamorin certain melkoyma rights over the famous Taliparamba temple and also transferred whatever territory he had conquered from him by force. To maintain the dignity of the Tampuratti the Kolattiri Raja insisted upon the creation of separate appendage for her at Nileswaram in the northern part of his dominion with three thousand Nayars under her. The Nileswaram Tavazhi of the Kolattunad Swarupam is said to have originated from this princess. Thus the Zamorin had succeeded in bringing Kolattunad also under his sphere of influence.\(^{75}\) This was the first and last action of the Zamorin against any of north Kerala.

The Kurumbiyatiri or the Raja of Kurumbarnadu also contributed to the extension of the Zamroin’s authority. He was closely related to the Raja of Kottayam and was one of the most powerful Kshatriya Swarupams. At first the relation between the two were friendly and the members of his family had Sambhandam with the Tampurattis of Calicut. One of them, assuming power gave Payyanadu consisting six katams land, four kuttoms, three akampatis and eight thousand Nayars and the lands between Korapuzha and Turasseri to the Zamorin. His successors tried to recover them by force, but they were defeated by the Zamorin and had to sue for peace by surrendering Valisseri.

When the Portuguese landed on the Kerala Coast, the Zamorin was the most powerful sovereign, who had under him almost all the chieftains of North Kerala including the Raja of Cochin as his vassal. The conquests raised his prestige and position to such an extent that he adopted the high sounding title of Kunnale Konatiri, the ruler of hills and waves, and exercised a sort of overlordship over the greater part of Kerala. The Zamorin’s attitude towards the conquered was generally marked by the traditional Hindu policy of generosity towards the foe. The Zamorin’s aspirations to conquer more territory itself being the driving force behind the conquest, the practical advantages in military man oeuvres must have gone a long way in assisting this process of consolidation. The former chief of the conquered territory was allowed to hold a part of his territory as his vassal.

Cochin’s position had become precarious in to the extreme. Encroached upon by the Zamorin from the north and Marthandavarma from the south, the state was in

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imminent danger of annihilation. Travancore had not only annexed the territories under the southern feudatories of Cochin, but occupied Karappuram, overrun Kurunadu, Aikkaranadu and Kunnathunadu and marched up to Tannippuzha. The peace conferences held first at Mavelikkara and then at Tripunnittura had proved abortive. The Zamorin in the north had occupied Kodungallur, Parur, Alangadu, Trichur, Kattur and other places. Many of the chiefs had openly gone over to his side. Formerly, when the Zamorin had made similar encroachments, the Hon’ble Company had sent a mighty army which had driven him back. In the meantime, they concluded a treaty of alliance with Travancore and the Travancore’s help drove the Zamorin across the Periyar river. Finally, with the help of Travancore, the Zamorin had been driven out of Cochin’s, territory except for a small bit lying between Cherruvai and Ponnani.  

Sheikh Zain-ud-din states “…whenever he commenced hostilities against any of the chiefs of Malabar, provoked to do so by an aggression on their part, after subduing them, it was his practice to return some portion of their possessions provided he had not been irritated beyond measure and his restitution, although delayed for a long time, he always made in the end, evincing a public record for the prejudices and feeling of the people of Malabar”.  

By the end of the fifteenth century, the Zamroins had became the ‘Masters of Polanadu and Valluvanadu and thus extended their sway over a vast region extending from Korapuzha to the borders of Cochin and Palghat. Further, there is

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78 V.K.R. Menon, (Trans by) Records in Oriental Languages – Cochin’s State – Book II, Letters from Cochin Raja to Batavia, Ernakulam, 1946, p. V.

every reason to believe that but for the arrival of the foreigners like the Portuguese and the Dutch, the Zamorins might have been able to unite the whole of Kerala under their rule. The fortunes of consolidating the entire Kerala under the supremacy of the Zamorins became a nightmare. The succeeding pages may reveal the impact of the Portugese.

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