Chapter 1:
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Trichur is the Head Quarters of the District Trichur, of the Kerala State. It lies in $10^\circ 32'$ north latitude and $76^\circ 15'$ east longitude.\(^1\) Trichur is the anglicised form of Trisur, a corrupted form of Trisivaperur, proclaiming the association of god Siva, the presiding deity of Vaṭakkunathan temple complex. Since the history of this temple complex is closely connected with the town of Trichur and the District, an attempt is made to outline the history of the district, highlighting only those incidents which are connected with the progress or otherwise of this temple. As the territories of modern Trichur district formed part of the ancient Chera empire, the history has to be traced from the ancient period. But since the temple has association only with the Second Cheras, it is proposed to begin with them. The ancient or the first Cheras ruled over the land of Kerala, then known as Cheranadu. Their rule came to an end by about 233 A.D.\(^2\) The next centuries have been characterised by trials and tribulations, consequent upon the invasion of the whole of South India by the Kalabhras\(^3\) and their sway was perhaps at its height

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3. A tribe from Karnataka.
during the fourth to the seventh centuries. Literature as well as epigraphical records of the later periods show that during the fifth and sixth centuries, the Kalabhras had ravaged the established order and, therefore, the history of Kerala upto 800 A.D., is not clear. The Pandyas were the first to recover from the squalor and stupor to which they were subjected by the Kalabhras. The Cholas and Cheras could recover only during the beginning of the ninth century A.D. The second Cheras, known as the Perumalas, ruled over Cheranadu for more than three centuries from the ninth to the twelfth.

**KULASEKHARA PERUMAL (800-820) A.D.**

**PARAŚURAMA LEGEND:**

According to tradition, Paraśurama caused to recede the Arabian Sea, from the foot of Sahyadri. The land thus cleared was distributed among the Brahmins in order to expiate his sins. The Brahmins organised themselves into 64 gramas of which 32 are in Tulunadu (modern South Canara) and the rest in Kerala. Vested with political powers, these Brahmins

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5. Menon, Sreedhar A. *op.cit.* 86.
enjoyed autonomy and, therefore, the villages were republics, which elected a Perumal (ruler) to rule over them for a period of twelve years. The last ruler was Cheraman Perumal who partitioned the empire among his comrades-in-arms converted himself to Islam and proceeded to Mecca. This traditional account cannot stand the test of historicity, as epigraphy has banished the eponymous hero, the 32 Aryan settlements and the elected Perumal for twelve years as can be seen from the facts to follow in these pages. However, the legend might be an allegoric representation of the advent of the Aryans into Kerala, similar to the view expressed about Agastya associated with Tamilnadu.

Unlike the first Chera rulers, the second Chera rulers have left for the posterity some of their cultural edifices and lithic records which help to reconstruct their history on solid grounds.

The founder of the Second Cheras was Kulasekhara Perumal who ascended to the Chera throne about 800 A.D. after the Kalabhra interregnum. He made Mahodayapuram as his capital, identified as modern Cranganore. As a devout Vaishnavite, he is often referred to as "Kulasekhara Alwar" in the Vaishnavite literature of South India. According

to the Vaishnavite tradition, he was born as the King Dradha-vrata, at Tiruvanchikkulam (part of modern Cranganore). The Vaishnava Saints Sadagopa alias Nammalwar, initiated him to Vaishnavism. Kulasekhara's greatest contribution to the Vaishnavite literature is his 105 songs which form a part of Nālāvira-prabandham in Tamil and Mukundamala in Sanskrit. The authorship of the dramatic works viz. Subhadradhananjayam, Tapati-samvaranam, Vicchinnabhisekam, and a prose Āscharyachudāmani is associated with him. Without entering into the controversy, it may be taken for granted that he was a royal composer in both Sanskrit and Tamil. In his old age, he entrusted his kingdom to his son and renounced all worldly pleasures. He proceeded towards Srirangam and Mannargudi (Tanjore district) where he died. A temple was built at Mannargudi in order to commemorate his death. According to the inscription found in this temple "it was built by Vasudevan Kesavan of Mullapally".

The epithets found in Tamil songs that he calls himself as the ruler of Kolli (namakkal, Attur, district Salem) the master of Kudal (Madurai), the ruler of Koli

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(Urayur, Dist.Trichy) the overlord of Kongu (Salem and Coimbatore Dist.) are sufficient proof that he had conquered those regions. The exact extent of his empire cannot be fixed, without further evidences. It is safer to assume that apart from the territories of Kerala, he held sway over Coimbatore, Salem, Trichy and Madurai regions. Those regions were never under the Cheras permanently and, therefore, the influx of the ideas on art and literature may be considered as permanent results. The plastic traditions of the Pandyas and the Cholas found their way into Kerala as can be testified in the cave temples of the State.

Kulasekhara Perumal built the Krishna temple, Tripukulasekharapuram, at his capital. While the cultural edifices of the first Chera dynasty remained to be seen only in the pages of Sangam literature, a number of the Second Cheras do survive. But that does not mean that the land has no tradition as the Pugalur inscriptions17 would vouchsafe. The artists of Kerala were invited by Narasimhavarman(700-728) the Pallava ruler, to Mahabalipuram, according to the Avantisudarikatha18 of Dandin. The cave temples of the districts of Palghat and Trichur do proclaim the influence of the Pallavas whereas those of the southern Kerala, of the Pandyas19. It

19.Sarkar, H,:Monuments of Kerala, op.cit. p.23. These cave temples were built before the Second Cheras.
means that the artists of Kerala were well-conversant with the schools of their eastern neighbours even before the regime of second Chera rulers. This cultural exchange continued during the time of Kulasekhara Perumal too. The fact that he had assumed 'Varma' as a title, suggests his affinity with the Pallava rulers. The ancient Cheras were patrons of Tamil literature, as the Sangam literature would testify. But Kulasekhara Perumal patronised not only Tamil but Sanskrit too. The Mattavilasaprahasana, a Sanskrit work of the Pallava King Mahendra Varman (600-630) is still enacted in the traditional theatres of Kerala by the Chakyars (the traditional community of actors).

"In the court of Kulasekhara, flourished Tolan who castigated the poets of his days for their fondness of obscure words and equally obscure grammatical construction, collaborated with the King in introducing certain reforms in the prevalent form of dance 'Kudiyattam'. He was a great critic who wanted to popularise literature and art and hence had no admiration for the erudite scholars of the time. The credit goes to the founder of this dynasty, in heralding a new era in the promotion of literary activities as well as building temples, combining the diverse influences with those of local genius, as is evidenced in the shrine of Trikulasekharapuram.

Kulasekhara Perumal's composition Mukundamala

21. Kudiyattam literally means a dance performed by many. Even to-day the hereditary Chakyars perform this dance form in the temple theatres.
22. Raja, K.K., Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit literature. op.cit., p.18.
continued to influence the artistes as late as the last century. The Vaṭakkunathan temples has some of the finest specimen in wood carving depicting the poetical imagery of the invocatory verse into a most thrilling visual object. To choose this imagery as a favourite theme in translating into plastic form shows that the artists for centuries together had elevated the verse into a sublime classical composition which is a perennial source of inspiration and artistic experience. The prolific production of literary works and the temples that adorn the land as the glorious visible creations of the Second Cheras are the result of a golden era which was certainly inaugurated by Kulasekhara himself.

RAJASEKHARA VARMA: (820-844 A.D.)

Rajasekhara Varma succeeded to the throne after Kulasekhara. A staunch Saivite, he was unlike his predecessor, who was a devout Vaishnavite. The Periyapurānam a classical composition in Tamil, refers to him as Cheraman Nayanar. According to the Saivite tradition, "He was born to Nalla Forayan. The child was devoted to Siva from the boyhood days and was often seen in the temple of Tiruvanjikkulam. The deity became his titular deity hereafter. When his father retired to forest, he was crowned as the emperor. Having

23. see chapter VI on 'Wood Carving' (pp24-25) and the photograph (No.74).
25. Periyapurānam was composed by Sekkilar, a Chola minister, of the eleventh century A.D.
hearing about Sundaramurti, one of the triumvirates of the renowned Saiva Nayanars, he proceeded to Tiruvarur (Dist. Tanjore) and both became inseparable friends there and, thereafter. Together they visited all the Siva temples of Tamilnadu and returned to his capital where Sundaramurti breathed his last. The loss was irreparable to the ruler and there was a void in his life. He followed him literally! It is of interest to note the Saivite bard has not mentioned anything about the religion of Nayanar's father, who was Kulasekhara, a Vaishnavite. It betrays the sectarian prejudice of the scribe, rather than the patron who was undoubtedly eclectic.

So popular was Rajasekhara Varma that he was called Cheraman Perumal, and inextricable legends have been woven around the name. According to one of them which is also the most popular one, he was the last Perumal who was upset with the sense of indifference and immorality of his chieftains. Out of disgust and disappointment, he withdrew from all worldly affairs, and wanted to become a recluse. The empire was, therefore, partitioned among his sons and nephews. He embraced Islam and sailed towards Mecca where he met the Prophet. Another one was that he partitioned his empire among his sons.

26. There were 63 Saivite Saints, known as Nayanar, of which Appar, Sambandar and Sundaramurti form the Trio.

nephews (sister's sons) and embraced Buddhism. The third one was that he embraced Jainism. The latest was that he was converted to Christianity and proceeded to Mylapore, where he died. All these legends cannot stand the test of authenticity and have to be discarded as figments of imagination. But all these have a sotto voce, about his popularity (in the strict sense of the term). He might have had endeared himself to all sections of people, who had accepted him as one belonged to them exclusively.

"Nama Sivāya, Rājadhirāja, Paramēśwara bhāttākara, Rajasēkhara"²⁹ so begins his Valapalli inscription. It is an irrefutable evidence to show that he was a Saivite. He must be following the example of the Chalukyan rulers, in the inscription like Vijayāditya, Prithvīvallabha, Mahārāja-dhirāja, Paramēśvara bhāttāraka etc. He had composed the Mummani Kōvai, in praise of Valmikanathasvami of Tiruvarur. His most important contribution was the Tirukailayajñāna ula, also known as Ādi ula, about the presiding deity of Vatakkunathan temple. Ādi ula literally means the pioneer ula. It is significant that he gave a new form of literary masterpiece, ula, to the language of Tamil. It blazed a new trail in the whole of Tamil literature. This has been placed as the eleventh of the Tirumurai tradition of the Saivites.³⁰ Ula means


procession. It deals with the sentiments expressed by the devotees of different age, while seeing the lord taken in procession. The literary evidence, therefore, takes Vatakkanathan temple to the ninth century A.D., though archaeological evidence is of a later period i.e. of the eleventh century. Does it mean that the temple might not have been in existence before the eleventh century? It might be in some form of which we have no means to know. The presiding deity of the Vatakkanathan temple has been popularised by Cheraman Perumal through his Adi ula. But the ula does not mention anything of the structural aspect of it.

How the progeny of a Vaishnavite turned to be a Saivite is not far to seek. Sankaracharya was the contemporary of Rajasekhara as can be seen from the literary evidence. In the work Sivanandalahari of Sankara, he refers to the ruler "Aganita-phala-dayaka, prabhurme jagadadhahbhrdi Rajasekharoosti"31 (In my heart is Rajasekhara, the lord of the world). An ancient manuscript recounting the life history of Sankara's foremost desciple, Padmamcharya, has been found in the Tekke Matt of Trichur.32 It speaks, inter alia, about the king.33 Not only Rajasekhara but also the kings of this dynasty were Saivites and they built many a Siva temple, known as Tali.

31. Ibid. p.20 and Pillai, E.K,: Studies in Kerala history. op.cit. p.220
32. The chief of Tekke Matt was the chief executive of this temple for a long time.
33. Pillai, E.K,: Studies in Kerala history. op.cit. p.220
Needless to mention further about the impact of the forceful personality of Sankara.\textsuperscript{34}

Cheraman's constant pilgrimages with his comrade-in-faith, to many temples in Tamil Nadu made him fully acquainted with the traditions followed there. He assimilated the Tamil tradition and introduced in his titular shrine, Tiruvanchikkulam, where even to-day, one can see the services accompanied by music upto the last ritual viz.\textit{Palliyara} (bed-chamber). What one witnesses today, is, of course, the ritual, \textit{sans} music, but still all the formalities are the relics of a great tradition. It is a solitary example in Kerala where other temples do not follow this tradition at all!

The founding of the Kollam Era commencing from\textsuperscript{35} 825 A.D., is a historical event of his times. It remains a problem as to the circumstances of the establishment of a new era. Diverse, divergent, often conflicting are the arguments put forth by different scholars.\textsuperscript{36} However, the majority is of opinion that the era was started during his regime.

The reign of these two Perumals helped in establishing Vaishnavism and Saivism in the land of Kerala where the Brahmanical religion could take deep roots in the virgin soil. The alliance with the Cholas and Pandyas helped in understanding the technique and style which were employed

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Menon, Sreedhara A, \textit{op.cit.}, p.111
in many of the religious constructions. The influence of the Pallavas was partly responsible for the development of Sanskrit and thereby the people came to know the achievements of the whole of India. The later Cheras continued in the footsteps of these two builders. Tradition ascribes to Rajasekhara the construction of the temple Tiruvanjikkulam, like the association of his father Kulasekhara to the temple of Trikkulasekharpuram.

The role of the rest of the Cheras has no direct bearing on this temple and hence complete political history is not narrated. For the sake of continuity, the list of successors\(^\text{37}\) is given below:

- Sthanu Ravi Varma (844-885 A.D.)
- Rama Varma Kulasekhara (885-917 A.D.)
- Goda (Kota) Ravi Varma (917-944 A.D.)
- Indu Kota Varma (944-962 A.D.)
- Bhaskara Ravi Varma I (962-1019 A.D.)
- Bhaskara Ravi Varma II (1019-1021 A.D.)
- Vira Kerala (1021-1028 A.D.)
- Rajasimha (1028-1043 A.D.)
- Bhaskara Ravi III (1043-1082 A.D.)
- Ravi Rama Varma (1082-1090 A.D.)
- Rama Varma Kulasekhara (1090-1102 A.D.)

It will, therefore, be seen that the Second Chera dynasty which began with Kulasekhara (800-820) came to an end.

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with Rama Varma Kulasekhara (1090-1102 A.D.). The most significant political event which affected the society, economy and political set up of the land was the 'Hundred Years' War', to borrow a phraseology of E. Kunjan Pillai. The war was fought against the Cholas from 999 A.D. to 1100 A.D.

The expansion of the Chera territories towards further South was the source of estrangement in relationship between these two neighbours, who for centuries together contributed to the peace and prosperity of their respective territories. It all began when Madura was conquered by the then Chola ruler, Parantaka, in the year 920 A.D. In 925 A.D., Parantaka attacked the Ay Kingdom where Varaguna was the ruler. Varaguna had tried to galvanise all the men and material in order to defend his kingdom. The Paliam Copper plate inscriptions are documents of his passionate, moving and rousing speech. "To whom, it was always a pleasure to be the object of begging, but who the friend of devotees, was not even in dreams the subject thereof...this meritorious dynasty should not be ruined...the God of Death, terrible with mouth wide open is roaming near." However heroical

40. Ibid. p.59.
might be the clarion call of the king, it turned out to be a "wild carol". The Ay kingdom was removed from the map after his death in 925. The Chola invader threatened to invade the Cheras because of more than one reason. Rajasimha, the defeated Pandya ruler, was given asylum by the Chera ruler, Goda Ravi Varma, as they were cousins. This gesture was misconstrued as inimical by the hitherto friendly Cholas. Secondly, Varaguna himself appealed to Goda Ravi for help. Thirdly, the Chera ruler fortified Kantalur and Vilinjam, which were important cultural centres of Ay kingdom even before the Cholas attacked the territory. The fortification of the Chera ruler was part of defence strategies to fore­stall the aggressor. The Chera monarch had his justification for it because it was Parantaka who committed the breach in 917 A.D. when he invaded the Kongudesa (modern Coimbatore and Salem) which was ruled by the Chera cousins. These territories were annexed to the Chola kingdom. The Cheras were, therefore, well-prepared to face the invaders.

Parantaka, however, did not proceed further as he was effectively checked. In 955 A.D. when Parantaka died, Veera Pandya, son of the Pandyan king Rajasimha, was able to kill the ruler Kantaratya and recover most of his territories from the Cholas. It was only a temporary relief, for


45. Ibid. p.79.
Raja Raja became the ruler of the Cholas in 985. Determined to destroy the Pandyas and their associates, Cheras, he made elaborate arrangements for another war. Within four years, he could swoop up to Vilinjam which was the first outpost of the Cheras. This was the first time that the armies of the Cholas and Cheras were engaged in a full-fledged war. The war was indecisive. It took another ten years for Raja Raja to renew the hostilities. In 999 another major thrust was launched deep into the territory of the Cheras. The Chola army besieged and plundered all the important towns like Vilinjam, Kantalur, Kalkulam, Tirunandikarai in South and Kollam in the North. The onward march was towards the Chera capital.

It was an unprecedented political situation which warranted an emergency meeting of the high dignitaries to devise ways and means to check the Chola invader. The Copper plate inscription of Bhaskara Ravi, dated 1000 A.D. records the conferences of various privileges to the Jewish merchant Joseph Rabban, in the presence of rulers of Venad, Venpolinad, Ernad, and Nedunpuranad, besides the lieutenant commander of the Chera army. Needless to mention, that the foreign merchants must have helped with their materials and men-power so as to merit to be the recipients of rare honours.

The capital city was attacked in 1004-1005 by a well

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planned strategy of both from the land and from the sea. The Cholas could defeat the Cheras decisively; the Chera capital lay prostrated before the Cholas. It seems when Raja Raja returned, the Cheras re-established themselves and it was for his son Rajendra (1012-1044) to attack afresh. The later hero of many a battle in north India, Rajendra trounced the Cheras whose casualties were too much including the ruler Bhaskara Ravi himself. This renewed war had established Chola supremacy for a period of half a century. The Cheras had the perseverance to resist continuously and struggle hard to throw the Chola yoke, slowly but gradually. In 1070, Kulottunga, the Chola ruler had, to again crush the Cheras, But a greater adversary ascended the throne of the Cheras, Rama Varma Kulasekhara (1090-1102) whose dare-devil fighters, popularly known as Chavers, turned the scale of balance in favour of their patron finally. Kulotunga was forced to abandon his further aggressive designs. Rama Varma Kulasekhara was able to liberate the land from a perpetual menace. Due to the perils of war, he shifted his capital from Mahodayapuram (Cranganore) to Kollam as can be seen from the inscription found at the temple of Rameswarth Koil, Kollam. According to the inscription, Ramar Tiruvati (identified as Ramavarma Kulasekhar, was staying in the palace of Panaukavu

49. Ibid, p.119.
in 1102 A.D.⁵⁰ The second Chera dynasty came to an end along with him as there are no evidences of any of the Chera emperors after 1102-A.D. The last Chera ruler seemed to have combined in him supreme political authority and the office of the 'Koil Adhikari' (Chief executive of the temple)⁵¹. The gymnacium, popularly known as Kalari system, and the conscription, had its significant role in emancipating the land from the Cholas. According to tradition, he founded the Venad (Travancore) dynasty and his son became the first ruler. The rulers of erstwhile Travancore State used 'Kulasekhara Perumal' as a title till 1949, when the King Sri Chittira Tirunal, was appointed as Raja Framukh of Travancore and Cochin.⁵² Rama Varma Kulasekhara's nephew (sister's son) became the ruler of Cochin and assumed the title 'Gangadhara Koiladhikarikal' inherited the royal insignia like the conch, sceptre, necklace etc.⁵³ To the Zamorin, he awarded his sword. There is an element of truth in the tradition current that the last Perumal abdicated his throne as the inscription of Rameswarath Koil also speaks of it. "Ārya rōtu vanna virōdhatinu prāvas chithatinu".⁵⁴ Since the king had to expiate his sin of ill-

⁵⁰ T.A.S. Vol.V, p.44 Ll.19-20
⁵¹ For full particulars of 'Koil Adhikari' see Chapter VII on administration and, Pillai, E.K.: Keralatile irulatania ētukal, op.cit. p.128.
⁵³ Menon, Sreedhara A.: Kozhikode Gazetteer (Trivandrum, 1962) p.96 (hereinafter be referred to as 'K.G. ')
treating the Arya Brahmins, he had to renounce his kingdom in favour of his successors. The inscription does not say as to what was the ill-treatment so as to warrant the ruler to abdicate his throne. However, the abdication is a fact and, therefore, it can be established that Rama Varma Kulasekhara was the last Perumal and this political event might have remained in memory for generations so as to be a tradition. The Second Chera, thus, broke and after the twelfth century, there were small kingdoms ruled by petty rulers out of which the most prominent were the Zamorins, the rulers of Cochin and the rulers of Travancore, who shaped the history of Kerala.

From the days of Kulasekhara Perumal to the time when the Chola army moved against the Cheras, the land enjoyed political stability for about two hundred years. Political stability is one of the essential conditions to register progress in a state. It was coupled with economic prosperity, due to trade, not only with the neighbouring countries, but mainly due to the sea-borne trade which filled Kerala with gold. The maritime activities had a hoary past. "Augustus Caesar established an outpost at Aden as early as 30 B.C. and sent an envoy to the ancient Chera ruler. In A.D. 21, Strabo counted 120 ships leaving Aden for the East". The author of the Periplus and Ptolemy speak of Muziris (ancient 55. Ayyar, K.V.Krishna; Op.cit. p.96
56. Menon, Sreedhara A,: A survey of Kerala history (Kottayam, 1967) p.61
Greek name for Cranganore) as a great emporium. The brisk trade with the Romans, though ceased, because of the disintegration, the city of Mahodayapuram continued to export pepper to the West through the Arab merchants. When Sulaiman visited Kerala in 851 A.D., Kollam also became a great commercial port, where the Chinese ships had to pay as heavy a toll as 1000 dinars per ship.  

The entire trade and commerce of the land was carried on by the guilds known as Anjuvannam, manigrāmam, pattaṇaśvāmy, nānādeśi, as referred to in various inscriptions. Tarisapally inscriptions of 849 A.D. register grant of landed property to the Tarisapally church (district Kottayam) erected by Maruvan Sapir Iso who founded the city of Kollam. It refers to the representatives of Anjuvannam, manigrāmam which were guilds. Sapir Iso, as Chief of them was empowered to collect, inter alia, the duty on important goods and exported articles. Similarly, in the Jewish grant of 1000 A.D. now preserved in the Jewish synagogue at Mattanchery, Joseph Rabban was granted 72 privileges and almost elevated to a potentate. From all these examples, we can infer that there was a flourishing business community due to the commercial prosperity. When

60. Ibid. pp.377-378.
there was political stability and economic prosperity, the
people had time for their pleasurable pursuits. The rulers
themselves were men of letters and extended their patronage
to promote learning and literature.

The founder of the dynasty has been credited with the
works of Mukundamala, Subhadradhananjayam, Tapatisaamvaranam,
Viccinabhishekam, Ascharyachudamani in Sanskrit, and 105
verses in Tamil Divyaprabhandham. His court poet Toilan was
worthy of his patron when he composed the Mahodavapurasacaritam
Attrapakaram, Kramadipika and a number of humorous verses
in Sanskrit and Malayalam used in the Kerala theatre even
to-day. Even a sweeper woman could surprise the highbrows
of the day with her Pandavacharitram. Cheraman Nayanar was
not ambidexterous in bilingual scholarship as his predecessor
but his contributions were Tirukailayanatha ula; in praise
of Vatakunathan, the Ponvanna tandadi of Chidambaram and
Mumnani Kovai. His successor, Ravi Varman, has though no
personal contribution to his credit, was a scholar of high
reputation as testified in the Sankaranarayaniyam, a treatise
on astronomy and astrology. There was an observatory in
the city, where arrangements were made to let the people

61. vide page ante 4.
63. Ibid. p.21.
64. Ayyar, K.V.Krishna, op.cit. p.109.
know the exact time upto the minute. The observatory was named as Ravi Varma Yantralaya, in honour of his scholar patron. Continuing the tradition of patronising literateurs Rama Varma had Vasu Bhattatiri, the author of Yudhishthira-vijayam, Tripuradahana, Saurikathodaya, Nalodaya. Another scholarly work, Vasudevavijaya illustrating the rules of Panini is ascribed to this author.

While one can see the prolific production during this period, a unique trend can be seen in the choice of the language. The bilingual scholarship of the Kulasekhara Perumal, founded is not to be seen in others. Tamil was used only by his successor, Rajasekhara Varma, after whom it ceases to be an effective medium. Sanskrit became the lingua franca of the elite. Simultaneously, a new language, Malayalam, was evolving itself as can be seen through various inscriptions. This might have been due to the Chera-Chola war which acted as a barrier against the neighbours so as to preclude the study of the Tamil language.

During this period, Brahmanical religion became well established in the land. Kulasekhara Alwar established Vaishnavism, his successor Cheraman Nayanar, Saivism and the

66. Ibid. p.250.
68. K.K.Raja does not agree see Raja, K.K,:op.cit. p.21.
69. See Chapter VII on administration.
greatest son of the land, Sankaracharya redeemed Hinduism. 'He embraced Buddhism and destroyed it' if we may say so. The founding of four mathas in the four corners of India is like fortifying India with these organised establishments. Besides, he founded at Trichur a math where his own disciple Padmapanipada became the pontiff.

As the Brahmanical religion flourished, the construction of temples also received impetus, due to the patronage and religious sentiments of the rulers and the people. That Kulasekhara Alwar built the temple of Trikula sekharapuram has already been referred to. The association of his successor with Tiruvanjikulam and Vatakunathan has also been referred to. Similarly, there arose a number of temples, which could be ascribed to this period.

1. From south of Kerala, Mahadeva temple, Kazhakuttam (Trivandrum district) and Kandiyur temple (Aleppey dist.) which on stylistical grounds is ascribable to the 9th Century A.D.

2. From the north of Kerala, Ganapati temple, Indayanur Malappuram district) Lakshminarayan Temple, Pan niyur (Pall ghat district) also stylistically belong to the same period.

70.vide pages ante 5.
71.vide pages ante 9.
73.Ibid. p. 154
74.Ibid. p. 163.
period. Tali temple, (Palghat district) has an inscription of 934 A.D. of Kodaravi Varma i.e. of the tenth century.

3. Trippunithara, the erstwhile head quarters of the Cochin royal family has a temple Santanagopalakrishnan with an inscription of the same ruler in 947 A.D. In Cranganore itself, the Srikuramba temple, the Kitholi temple are of early ninth century. 75

The above mentioned temples are square on plan, whereas the following are circular on plan, which also belong to the same period.

1. From the South Kerala, Trikkotilhanam (Kottayam district) and Trikkakarai, (Ernakulam district) which has an inscription of Indukotai of this period. 76

2. In the north Kerala, Polpulli in (Palghat district) is of this period. 77

3. In the district of Trichur itself, Avittatur belongs to this period. 78

Besides these, some apsidal temples were also constructed during this period. They are Tiruvannur and Trikkandiyur in (Kozhikode district) and Karikkad in (Malappuram district) Kala Samharamurti in (Palghat district) all in northern Kerala. 79

75.Ibid p.156 and 160.
76.Ibid p.165.
77.Ibid p.164
78.Ibid p.163
From the above, it will be clear that the Kerala artists were masters of different forms of temples viz. square, circular and apsidal. The plastic art also attained great height as could be seen from the sculptural wealth of these temples. The Kerala craftsmen were perfectly at home with the Pallava, Chola, Hoysala idioms, as well as the Pandyas, as the sculptural study would testify. Curiously enough, no specimen on paintings of this period have been brought to light. But along with the temples, the performing arts, like Kootu, Koodiyattam by Chakyars and dance and music by the Devadasis, also flourished.

Great were the achievements and accomplishments of the society. In every field, it had registered progress, whether it be in overseas trade, organised administration, literary activity, astronomy, astrology or fine arts. "The architectural monument, far from being a mere mass of brick and mortar, becomes, therefore, a frame work for its ordered life, the sculptural embellishments take on the character of concrete embodiments of that society's hopes and fears; while the literary and musical forms are the stylized patterns of its traditions, activities and objectives." 

80. See Chapter on architecture for different forms of the temples.
81. See Chapter on sculpture.
82. See Chapter on wood carving and administration.
PERUMPATAPPU KINGS

After the second Chera empire came to an end in 1102, there emerged powerful rulers of Vanad (erstwhile Travancore) Eralnadu (subsequently became the Zamorins), Valluvanādu (erstwhile Valluvanad), Ernādu Talukas, Nedumpuranādu (modern Palghat district) and Perumpatappunādu (erstwhile Cochin State). Since Trichur formed part of the erstwhile Cochin State, the history of the Cochin State is only briefly sketched here.

The rulers of Cochin were known as Perumpatappu Swarūpam, because of their association with the place, Perumpatappu, in the Ponnani Taluk. According to tradition, one Nambutiri of Perumpatappu married the sister of the last Perumal, and the progenies became the rulers of the State of Cochin, with the titles of Perumpatappu Swarūpam along with Gangadhara Koiladhikari. The origin of this ruling house, however, is a bone of contention, but there is definite evidence of the existence of one ruler of Perumpatappu, as early as 1225 A.D. when the ruler was Veeraraghava. He had granted certain rights to Iravikorthanan, a great merchant of Makotai (Cranganore) the status of Manigrāmam and other privileges like 'canopy, Pankah, Muchol, Munnda, Panchavadyam, the conch, day lamp,'


palanguin, umbrella, kettledrum, outhouse...etc...signed in
the presence of ... the rulers of Venad, Ernad, Valluvanādu,
and the villages of Panniyūr and Sukapuram." The merchant was
given almost all the privileges of a chiftain. It is very
important to note that among the witnesses, names of two
villages are referred to, along with the ruler. Never there
was a feud, more detrimental to the whole of Kerala than that
of the one, which those villages had, resulting in the open
battle between the rulers of Zamoriṁ and Cohin.

The rulers of Valluvanad, though ruled over a small
area of the erstwhile Valluvanadu Taluk had rights to preside
over 'Māmānkan' festival which was a pan-Kerala affair. It
was held at Tirunavayi (district Palghat) where all the rulers
of Kerala used to participate by paying their homages to the
ruler of Valluvanād. The Zamorins were expanding their terri­
tories from south Canara in the north, to the areas of modern
Palghat, and, therefore, having this right to preside over the
most covetous privilege would enhance his authority and status,
both politically and morally. It was, therefore, natural that
the Zamorin tried his best to usurp the right from Valluvanādu.

93. Māmānkan was a colourful festival in which many a cultural
pageant marked the glamour of it. It used to be held in
the month of Kumbha (Aquarius). The last Māmānkan was held
94. It does not mean that the ruler enjoyed political rights
as overlord.
THE RISE OF THE ZAMORINS

The rulers of Ernad or Erāṅnādu (referred to above) were feudatory chiefs as already seen from the Jewish grant of 1000 A.D. and Veeraraghava's grant in 1225 A.D. Since the rulers were ambitious, they set upon a career of expansion of their territories. It was ordained upon them by the last Perumal who gave the chief his sword with the injunction to "die, kill and seize" and to "rule like him as the emperor of Kerala". Ernādu being a land-locked one, the rulers wanted to push the frontiers up to the Arabian sea, at the cost of the western neighbouring states viz. Parappanādu and Polanādu. Bribery was the modus operandi of the rulers in annexing these territories. Thus they acquired the city of Kozhikode (Calicut) which was flourishing in trade and commerce. The northern neighbour was the kingdom of Kolatiri, consisting of territories up to the borders of Mangalore. The Kolatiris were intimidated and forced to acknowledge the Zamorin as their overlords. In the conflict that ensued to force the Kolatiris, the Zamorin had to, per force, kill some of the Brahmins, who were friendly with the Kolatiris. In order to expiate the sin of 'Brahma-hatya'

95. vide pp.25 and 26 ante
96. K.G. op.cit. p.78 and Ayyar, K.V.Krishna: op.cit. p.157 Samutiri is a truncated form of Swamy and Tirumalpad (honori­fic). Zamorin is the European form of Samutiri.
97. Modern Parappanangadi in Malappuram district and modern Kozhikode taluk in the Kozhikode (Calicut district).
98. K.G. p.78
he instituted the 'Bhattadāna' locally known as pattatana in 1309 A.D. It was celebrated in the Tali temple, Kozhikode, for several days. The celebration, inter alia, included feeding of all the Brahmins, who used to assemble for seven days from the Revati asterism of the month of Tulam (libra zodiac) and distribution of purses of gold coins to one hundred and one learned scholars.

Having thus held the political supremacy from south Canara in the north, to Malappuram in the south, he cast his eyes on the southern neighbours viz. Valluvanād and Pornādu. Politically the ruler of Valluvanād was, not a force to be reckoned with, as he was a ruler of a small area; but morally he was a greater ruler, if not the greatest, by virtue of his right to preside over 'Māmāṅkam'. Zamorin's aggressive designs could not be executed immediately, since it would invite the wrath of the whole of Kerala; nonetheless he did not give it up. In other words, the southern zone became 'sensitive areas' to the Zamorin.

A spark of a feud between the two villages viz. Panniyūr and Sukapuram, conflagrated into a bloody war. The Nambutiris of these villages were accomplished scholars, whose competition for the mastery of priesthood turned to be an unhealthy rivalry.

99. Ayyar, K.V. Krishna; op.cit. p.166
101. Modern district of Palghat.
While Panniyur worshipped Vishnu, Sukapuram, Siva. When Panniyur wanted to install a Sivalinga in a newly constructed temple, Sukapuram stole it. Panniyur invited the Zamorins to intercede on their behalf, whereas Sukapuram turned to the rulers of Valluvanad and Cochin. The Zamorins did not spare wit, bribe and armed intervention to such a god-sent opportunity.

Vallavanadu was besieged and subsequently annexed by the Zamorins in 1350 A.D. The Mopilas, local muslims, helped their patron in this effort to a very great extent. "To the Zamorin no sacrifice was too great for the Māmānkanam, over which he could preside, with authority. He gave up the fruits of victory elsewhere or delayed operations in order to be present at Tirunavay for the lord's feast conducted with great pomp and eclat for thirty days. The twelve yearly festival served like the Pythian and olympian festivals of ancient Greece, as a stimulus to art, literature, science and a feeling of unity among the people in spite of perpetual fighting among the chieftains. In 1365 A.D. a contingent of his army reached as far as Trichur, chasing the Cochin army. Another division reached as far as Crangamore. Decidedly beaten, the ruler of Cochin, had to surrender before the Nayar ruler viz. Zamorin. According

102.K.G, p.87.


104.The ruler of Cochin was respected as a born Kshatriya King as the legal descendant of the Perumals, whereas the Zamorin was considered as a "Nayar chieftain". Many of the Nambutiris were prejudiced against the Zamorins due to his alliance with the Muslims. See K.G, p.96.
to the treaty concluded, the Cochin rulers had to recognize
the Zamorins as their overlords; had to provide men and material
in war; had to pay customary taxes and obligations in period
of peace. Above all, the Cochin rulers were deprived of their
rights to mint their coin. More disgraceful was that the
Cochin rulers had to seek prior permission for tiling their
roof. Such were the humiliating conditions, forced by the
victorious Zamorins, upon the vanquished Cochin rulers.

Beyond Cochin were the kingdoms of Kayankulam and
Venad (Travancore). Their relations were not so cordial due
to the fluid nature of the boundaries. The rulers of Kayan­
kulam welcomed the presence of the powerful Zamorins. It had
salutary effects on the political developments because the
ruler of Travancore discretely avoided open conflicts with his
neighbour, lest the Zamorins might intervene. He even went to
the extent of appeasing Zamorins, by conferring upon the latter,
certain special rights of overlordships of the temples of
Trivandrum and Kollam. Thus, on the eve of the advent of the
Portuguese, the Zamorin was the de facto soveriegn who held
political sway from south Canara to the Cape of Kanyakumari
and patronised the sea-borne trade through various ports.105

The political supremacy over the land coupled with the
commercial prosperity resulted in cultural progress specially
during the regime of Manavikrama the Great106 (1466-1471). There

105.Ibid.
106.Ibid.
was remarkable efflorescence of literature, art and philosophy. Himself a scholar, he had written 'Vikrameeya', a commentary on Murari's 'Anargha-Raghavam'. The celebrated 'Nineteen Royal Poets' adorned his court. They were as follows: nine were from Payyur Bhatta family, five from Tiruvegapuras, Uddanda Sastri, Chennos Narayanan Nambutiri, Mullappally Nambutiri Dāmodara-bhatta of Kakkasseri and Punam Nambutiri. The last one was a poet in Malayalam language, while others were in Sanskrit.

Payyur Bhatta family hailing from Porkkolam, sixteen miles away from Trichur, can be treated as sons of Trichur, nurtured and nourished in the soil of Trichur, but had to go to the Court of the overlord instead of the Vassal. The family produced scholars for six generations. Vasudevabhatta composed Cakorasandesa. Paramesvarabhatta's contributions were Sumanoramam a commentary on Meghaduta, Jusadhma-karni Svadit-ankarni and Haricharita. His successor Paramesvara II wrote commentaries on Purva Mimamsa, in which he invokes the grace of Ganapati, Krishna and Siva of Vatakunathan temple complex. It establishes the fact that the minor deities like Ganapati and Krishna were in existence during his time. He had his education at Natuvil matta attached to this temple and, therefore, he can be considered as a product of this temple complex.

107. Raja, K.K., op.cit. p.90.
108. Ibid, p.91.
109. Ibid, p.94.
Uddanda Sastri was a scholar poet from Tamilnadu, sought recognition in the court of the Zamorin, and established himself as the doyen of the court. His contributions were Mallikāmrita\textsuperscript{110} and Kökilasandēśa, of which the latter has reference to the deity of Vatakkanathan himself.\textsuperscript{111} Chennos Narayanan Nambutiri wrote Tantrasamucchaya, a treatise on architecture, sculpture and astrological calculations. Kakkassey wrote 'Vasumatimāṇāvikrama' for his patron.

ZAMORINS AND THE PORTUGUESE

Vasco-da-Gama, the Portuguese navigator, landed at Calicut on Sunday the 20th May, 1498. He was given a royal reception by the Zamorin and offered facilities to carry on business much to the discomfort of his muslim generals. To all the fine gestures of civility, Vasco-da-Gama replied by capturing 19 men who were working in his ships and set his sail towards Lisbon.\textsuperscript{112} King Emanuel of Portugal sent one by one, his navigators, Cabral, Gama, Fransico Almeida and his Cousin Albuquerque, with instructions to destroy or plunder the muslim ships, and to threaten the Kerala king, if necessary to win over his side. The internal rivalry between the Zamorin and the rulers of Cochin was exploited by the Portuguese and they were able to secure from the Cochin rulers, permission

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid. p.65
\textsuperscript{111} Vide chapter on iconography.
to build a fort at Cranganore in the year 1503 and later in Cochin, where a palace was also built in 1557.\footnote{Ibid.p.294}

Consequent to the building of a fort at Cranganore by the Portuguese, the rivalry between Calicut and Cochin, assumed greater proportions resulting in many a naval engagement between the Portuguese and the Zamorins. The Mopilas outsmarted the Portuguese in piracy, harassed them with small pliable boats which played havoc in high seas.\footnote{The Kunjali Admirals were loyal to the Zamorins. The Kunjalis have become legendary heroes in the pages of naval history of Malabar.} The adversaries proverbial for their act of vandalism, committed a series of inhuman orgies. Only with the help of the Dutch, in 1662, the Zamorins could defeat the Portuguese, off Cranganore. The Portuguese left the Malabar coast on the 7th of June, 1663,\footnote{Velayudhan, P.S.: \textit{K.C. Vol.I}, p.300} leaving a legacy in cultural field, not so insignificant to relate.

**THE DUTCH IN KERALA**

When the Dutch were looking forward for a foothold in Malabar, the Zamorin invited them and a treaty was concluded for the specific purpose of, driving the Portuguese out of Malabar coast.\footnote{Ibid.p.490} The Portuguese tried their best to forestall the Dutch to be their competitors in commerce. It was a double
34.

blow to the Portuguese, in 1619, when the Englishmen and the Dutch came to an understanding to drive their common enemy i.e. the Portuguese. They captured Cochin on the 9th of January, 1663. Henrik Van Rheede, the Dutch Governor followed the policy of intervention and thereby consolidated his powers and influence. By 1678, the Dutch had the towns like Tengapatanam, Quilon, Kayamkulam, Cochin, Cranganore, Ponnani and Cannanore. Simultaneously the Cochin ruler was reduced to a mere puppet Paliyat Achan, the Chief Minister of the Cochin ruler was a Dutch protege, subsequently became the de facto ruler in the State. Too much of interference in the family feuds of Cochin and patronage to their party, caused suspicion in the mind of Zamorin who was bent upon driving the Dutch out of the Malabar coast. The Dutch themselves were responsible for their final fall. The rulers of Travancore did not take it lightly when they interfered in the former's territory. The Dutch was defeated, off Kolachil, by the rulers of Travancore in 1741. However, the Dutch lingered on till 1795, when Tippu Sultan surrendered all his political rights in Kerala to the East

117. Ibid. p.491.
119. Ibid. p.560
121. Ibid. pp.250-252
India Company, the Dutch had to exit finally from the coast of Kerala.\textsuperscript{123}

**THE IMPACT OF THE PORTUGUESE**

Contributions of the Portuguese to enrich Kerala are eclipsed by their wanton destruction and atrocities. That is why the statement "the relations between Portuguese and India were barren of cultural and political results and there is in that history, nothing which any civilized nation can be proud of."\textsuperscript{124} This may be an understatement as can be seen below: They introduced a number of new agricultural products such as cashew nut, tobacco, the custard apple, guava, pineapple and pappaya. The credit of having introduced salutary changes in the cultivation of coconut goes to the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{125} The traditional items such as pepper, cardamom, cinamon and ginger became more popular among the housewives of the west through them.

Father Henrique Henriques was the first to write grammar book in Malayalam in 1569, after a successful attempt in Tamil.\textsuperscript{126} The National Library, Lisbon, has a copy of it. It was in 1548-49 that the Portuguese started colleges for boys, for externs in

\begin{itemize}
 \item \textsuperscript{123}Ibid, p.511
 \item \textsuperscript{124}Panikkar, K.M., \textit{A history of Kerala.} (Annamalai Nagar, 1960) p.184.
 \item \textsuperscript{125}Menon, Sreedhar A., \textit{A survey of Kerala history,} \textit{op.cit.} pp.226-227.
\end{itemize}
Cochin and in Kollam a boarding school for 30 boys. It was the Portuguese who set up printing presses at Cochin. The Chavittu Nataka, a dance form, originated and grew into a popular form of entertainment under the patronage of Portuguese missionaries. The Kerala kings adopted the western method of warfare, making the best use of artillery.

**IMPACT OF THE DUTCH**

The contributions of the Dutch are certainly greater than that of the Portuguese. Apart from modifying the traditional items like coconut and rice, the Dutch introduced salt farming as one of the major industries. Dying was another industry which flourished under their patronage. The export of coir, cotton goods, jaggery and tamarind, was increased. The Dutch contacts with Kerala became memorable with the publication of a monumental work "Hortus Malabaricus". It is a compilation consisting of twelve volumes on the medicinal plants and systems, exclusively followed in Kerala. The administrative system of the Dutch was followed by the Cochin rulers, till the East India Company changed it.

127. Ibid. p. 541
128. Menon, Sreedhara A.; A survey of Kerala history, op. cit. p. 227
131. Ibid. p. 164.
The most important and everlasting impact is on the field of painting. Mattancheri palace at Cochin was rebuilt by the Dutch, after conquering the port in 1663. The mural paintings of the palace reveal the influence of the western palette and brush for the first time. Not only the technique but the art forms also bear testimony to the Dutch influence. In fact, the earliest paintings of the land are lost and, therefore, the earliest available paintings begin with these paintings in the Cochin area. Vatakunathan complex has copied many a work from Mattanchery murals and, therefore, the Dutch influence can be traced in this temple, though indirectly. The Dutch did not commit atrocities in Kerala like the Portuguese and, therefore, the Dutch history is far from rancor or bitterness.

ROYAL PATRONAGE

Tenkailanāthōdayam, a champu work on the Vatakkanathan temple refers to Veera Kerala Varma (1601-1615) under whose request his court poet Neelakantan composed this work. There is also a reference to note, that different champus were composed on different deities. They are Nārayaneeyam on Vishnu of Trippunithara temple, Cochin, and Chellūranāthōdayam on

132.Vide chapter on Painting.
134.Tenkailanāthōdayam (in Malayalam) text and commentary, (Kottayam, 1968) pp.VII-IX.
Siva of Perinchellur, Taliparamba (District Cannanore). The Cochin ruler himself was scholar of high reputation and a benevolent patron of men of letters. Another protege of this ruler was Mepattur Narayana Bhattatiri who presented his patron with his 'Veerakeralaprasasti'. His Prakriyasarvasva in Sanskrit alone can elevate him to the rank of one of the greatest scholars poets that Kerala ever produced. But he has made himself immortal by another Narayaneeyam, a condensed form of the Bhagavatapuranam. He sang the glory of Krishna, of Guruvayur temple about 20 k.m. west of Trichur. An inscription reported to have been found in Sanskrit and Malayalam, on the eastern face of the Sri Mulasthanam of the Vatakunathan temple says, "Ravi Varma, Venattutayan, built this Sri Mulasthanam in 774" (Malayalam era) equivalent to 1599 A.D. Since there is no king by name Ravi Varma in 1599, it is a problem for identification. A Ravi Varma ruled from 1615-1624, over the State. Since he was the successor of Veera Kerala Varma, it might be possible that he would have completed, certain works undertaken by his predecessor. Tenkailanathodayam says that the king Veera Kerala  

135.Ibid. pp.x, xi.  
137.Raja, K.K., op.cit, p.164  
138.Ibid. p.119  
Varma built the temple, Gōpuras, walls, Pradakshina patha and gardens. He invited sculptors and Brahmins priests, and gave them all facilities to stay near the temple". The assumption that Ravi Varma might be the ruler referred to in the inscription cannot be proved further because of the term 'Venāttutavān' (i.e.: one who belongs to Venādu, (Travancore)). The inscription is missing and, therefore, verification of the date is not possible. It was stated in the report itself "A portion of this inscription is now covered up by the newly built steps". It is on record that some of the Cochin rulers used the title 'Venāttutavān' has some clues. One Ravi Varma ruled over Travancore from 1595-1609. From the Cochin royal family, two members viz. Rama Varma and Aditya Varma were adopted by the Travancore House. The close relationship between these two houses can be established by this adoption. But identification is a problem.

After 1599, the temple complex does not show any proof of royal patronage till the beginning of the nineteenth century. The mural paintings of the shrine of Sankaranarayana were executed in 1731 by Kannan the Nayar desciple of Netra Nambutiri. Either the executor, or the preceptor do not, in

144. vide chapter on painting.
any way, suggest any connection with the ruling family. In fact the rulers of this period were Ravi Varma (1721-31) and Rama Varma (1731-46) of mediocre ability, and were anything, but patrons of fine art. Another inscription below the mural paintings on the eastern wall, facing Parvati, is dated 1811 indicates it as a donation of Avanaparambu Vasu, desciple of Kilakke patt Achuta Varyar. Since it was a philanthropic gesture by a devotee on his own sweet volition, there is no question of anybody's patronage.

In 1754, Cochin rulers were involved in a war against the rulers of Travancore and were defeated by the latter. Martanda Varma, the ruler of Travancore, had effectively brought the State under his strong control by carrying fire and sword. He usurped the management of the Tiruvalla temple which was under the jurisdiction of the Cochin though the temple was in the territory of the Travancore State. It was on this issue the war broke out, between the Travancore and Cochin States. To the Cochin rulers, it was an added catastrophe, apart from the permanent menace of the Zamorins. At last, it paved way for a treaty between the rulers of Cochin and Travancore in 1757 to fight against their common enemies.

145.Ibid.
147.Ibid.p.387.
ZAMORIN'S OCCUPATION OF TRICHUR AND HIS TULABHARA

Quite ominous were the years 1753 to 1757, when the Zamorins embarked on fresh conquest on Cochin. The town of Trichur once again was brought under the control of the Zamorin, along with others in the State. It was the worst defeat for the Cochin ruler, inasmuch as, the extent of Cochin State was reduced to two talukas viz. parts of Trichur and Kanayanur. The Zamorin was fully justified in celebrating his victory. He seemed to have been worshipped Vatakkanathan in 1758 and in order to perpetuate his visit, he performed Tulabhara. He distributed the gold among the Brahmins. It is probable that the Zamorin might have installed Vettakkaran in this temple complex. Vettakkaran (hunter god) was never a family deity of the Cochin kings who worshipped the goddess of Palayannur as can be seen in Mattanchery palace. The Zamorins worshipped this god as their 'beloved deity' who showered His blessings on them. Chennos Narayanan Nambutiri was responsible for initiating the Zamorins to worship this 'hunter' as he himself was an upasaka of Him and with whose blessings he became a scholar. It has been reported that one of the old palaces

148.Ibid. p.388
149.'Tulabhara' is an offering, in which the devotee is weighed in balance with gold. Even to-day it can be seen in Guru-vayur temple (Trichur district). On 13.1.80, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, offered the tulabhara.
151.vide p.34 ante and for Vettakkaran see chapter on sculpture.
in Alwaye there is a shrine of Vettakkaran. According to tradition, the house once belonged to Chennos Narayananam Nambuttiri himself and one of the princes took shelter when harassed by enemies and the Divine Grace protected him. However, it can be assumed that the Cochin rulers started worshipping Vettakkaran only later i.e. after the installation of this deity in this complex. The Zamorins were finally driven out from the Cochin territories with the help of Rama Varma (1758-98) who was the ruler of Travancore. Kerala Varma (1760-75) the Cochin Ruler took a wise decision in forging an alliance with Travancore so as to redeem his status. The relation between the ruling houses of Cochin and Travancore became cordial and cemented even fortified in the form of a defence wall known as the Travancore lines, executed by the Dutch engineer D'Lannoy, to prevent further invasion from Zamorins. Since the Zamorins were capitulated to a treaty in 1761 by the combined forces of Cochin and Travancore, the perpetual feud which started from 1365 came to an end. The Zamorin would not have submitted so easily but for a political development which was quite unexpected. In 1757, the intimidated Palghat Rajah, Komi Achan, appealed to Haider Ali, to help him against the Zamorins. Haider was the foujdar of Dindigal. He readily accepted the invitation

153. Menon, Sreedhara A.:Trichur gazetter. op.cit. p.60
routed the Calicut army from Palghat chased upto Calicut. The Zamorin was forced to sue for peace.

HAIDER AND TIPPÚ IN THE TEMPLE

Different personnages had played different roles in this spiritual theatre of Vatakkanathan temple complex. Cheraman Perumal's poetic sensibilities found expression in an entirely new form of ula, about the presiding deity. He was a savant. Virakerala Varma was a scholar, considered as a mission to add and elaborate edifices, to this temple and in course of his building activity, he contributed a literal edifice to perpetuate his memory. He was a patron. Haider wanted to expand his kingdom, and encamped here without polluting the sanctum. He was an adventurer. But his son converted the temple into a garrison and caused wanton destruction. He was an iconoclast.

As stated above, the Zamorin had to surrender and according to the terms of treaty, he had to pay an amount of twelve lakh of Rupees to Haider Ali. But the Zamorin forgot all about money when Haider left Malabar and, therefore, Haider declared war against him. In 1776, his military campaign started from south Canara to Cochin. All the territories lay prostrate to the invader. Almost all the Hindu rulers and the Nambutiris took refuge in Travancore. Haider encamped in Trichur in September, 1776. The entire retinue of the temple

fled for their life, locking the temple. The Cochin ruler recognised Haider as his overlord and agreed to pay tributes. The army was withdrawn on 8th of October, 1776. When the temple staff returned from Chennamangalam, they found to their surprise everything was in tact. Not even the locks were meddled with. On the 8th of April, 1782, a decisive battle took place near Tirurangadi when the army under the leadership of Col. Humber-tone defeated the Mysore army. By the treaty of Mangalore, in the year 1788 Tippu Sultan, who succeeded Haider Ali gained a diplomatic victory, since the East India Company had tacitly recognised his suzerainty over Malabar which was given to him.

Since the ruler of Travancore gave shelter to all the Hindu kings, Tippu Sultan wanted to punish him, who had the support of East India Company. Tippu marched towards Travancore in the year 1789 through the territories of the Cochin State. Vatakkanathan temple became his temporary head quarters from 14th December, 1789, for about a month. Vandalism, that he had perpetuated in this temple, and the temple of Tiruvanjikkulan, betrays his true colour, as that of a blood thirsty iconoclast. The Sanctum Sanctorum bears testimony even to-day for those who have eyes to see. If further proof is required, there is a

156. Ibid.

157. K.G. pp.153 and 157. The East India Company thought it was prudent to interfere in Malabar in containing Haider.

rectangular structure with the marks of desolation adjacent to the shrine of Ganapati. All the idols of this structure were either thrown out of it or mutilated. They are now accommodated under the banyan tree. "Tippu converted the temple into his office and the Brahmin Mutt into quarters for his staff. The memories of the havoc wrought by Tippu and his men remained fresh in the minds of people for several years. Hundreds of people were killed and thousands died from hunger and starvation. After his departure, survivors were hit hard by a severe famine which broke out in the wake of cultivation and wanton destruction of crops. The spread of cholera and smallpox carried off a number of them. Thus, Tippu's invasion became a horrible night dream for the people of Trichur".

About the sacrilege committed by Tippu K.M. Panikkar remarks "The places which had resounded with the chanting of Vedas echoed the cries of kine which were slaughtered". Tippu Sultan had to leave Trichur, as all his attempts to blast the Travancore Line became futile and his capital was threatened by the Tripple alliance formed by the East India Company, the Maharathas and the Nizam. Once again at Tirurangadi the Mysore army was defeated by Col. Hartley on the 10th of

159. vide chapter on sculpture.

160. Menon, Sreedhar A.: Trichur gazetteer, op.cit. p.172. An inscription found at Tiruvanjikkulam, records that Rama Varma renovated the temple and installed a Vilakkumam in 1831. The temple was destroyed by Tippu Sultan. See T.G. p.73.

December, 1790. The whole of Malabar was ceded to the East India Company according to the treaty of Seringapatam signed on the 18th March, 1792. The Zamorin lost all his privileges when he was pensioned off in 15th November, 1806 by the East India Company. But the kingdom of Cochin was restored as it continued to exist though precariously even during Tippu's interlude.

**MODERN PHASE**

Rama Varma (1790-1805) was the most powerful ruler of Cochin who ruled during the most perilous days of the history of the Vatakkanathan temple. Since he was the *de facto* ruler even while he was the Yuva Raja, he had to deal with the Mysore forces. He had the material help from the ruler of Travancore, Rama Varma (1758-1798). These two Rama Varmas saved their territories from the Mysore tiger. After the departure of Tippu and subsequent normalisation, the Cochin ruler followed a policy of destroying feudal barons and earned himself the title of "Saktan Tampuran". Not only did he destroy the feudal barons but the immunity of the temple 'Samketam' too. For the sake of administrative unification, he brought all the temples under his

162.K.G. p.157
164.Ibid. p.394
165.Ibid. p.252
166.See Chapter on administration.
Imperial Control.\textsuperscript{167} His administrative reforms on the temple are discussed in the chapter on 'administration'. The temple of Trichur and Perumanam were taken over by the government immediately.\textsuperscript{168} Saktan Tampuran was a non-conformist Hindu ruler who brought in revolutionary changes when he gave opportunity to Ezhavas (backward community) to serve in the army.\textsuperscript{169} Even to-day, they are classified as backward community and, therefore, to consider them eligible for the army, speaks of a mind, modern and progressive. To Syrian Christians, he donated lands and helped them to build their Churches in Trichur,\textsuperscript{170} Trippunitara, Iringalakuda and Kunnankalam. But the Latin Christians who were associated with the Dutch had to relate a sad story. Many of them were banished. One Vicar was confined in a cage at Trichur and later executed. Incredible still is the treatment, meted out to the Gouda Saraswat Brahmin community. The property of their temple, Venkataramana, at Mattanchery, was confiscated. He drove the Mādhva pontiff from Trippunitara.\textsuperscript{172} His mental frame has, thus, become a riddle. Otherwise, he was an extremely rational and benevolent ruler. His brother, Rama Varma (1805-1809)\textsuperscript{173} was a weak ruler, unlike his redoubtable

\textsuperscript{168}Menon, Sreedhar A.:Trichur gazetteer, o.cit.p.176.
\textsuperscript{169}Menon, P.R.: Saktan Tampuran (Malayalam)(Ernakulam,1941)p.371
\textsuperscript{170}Velayudhan, P.S.: K.C. Vol.I, p.400
\textsuperscript{171}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{172}Ibid.p.402
\textsuperscript{173}Ibid.
predecessor. He was a follower of Madhva sect and, therefore, he tried to spread it as much as possible. During his elder brother's regime, his predilection towards this sect was noticed by the ruler and drove the pontiff of Sodaya Mutha of Udippi who had settled down in Trippunitara. Hence, the new ruler had to wait till Saktan Tampuran's death to declare himself as a follower of Madhva sect. Strangely all the successors up to 1864 were faithful to it. The effect of this change in religious outlook can be seen in the embellishments of the temples, irrespective of the deities. An inscription of Tiruvanjikkulam states that in 1801 renovated the temple which was destroyed by Tippu. The same temple inscription records further that Rama Varma erected Vilakkumatam in 1831. It seems probable that renovation might have been undertaken by Saktan Tampuran himself, in the temple of Tiruvanjikkulam and continued for years till one of his successors, viz. Rama Varma (1823-1837) had completed it with the Vilakkumātām. The wood-carvings of the temple might have been the contribution of these Madhva rulers. There is every reason to believe that the wood-carvings in the Nameskara-Handana of the Vaṭṭakkunathan complex might have been executed during their life time. The themes of these wood-

174. Menon, Sreedhara A.: Trichur gazetteer, op.cit.p.73
175. Ibid. p.161.
177. See chapter on 'Wood Carving'.
178. Ibid.
carvings are predominantly **Vaishnavite** like the *Dasavatara*, *Ramayana*, *Bhagavata*. A specimen of *Hayagriva*\(^{178}\) found on the Namaskara-Mandapa of Vatakunathan shrine, confirms the assumption. At Venganallur, 20 miles away from Trichur, the Namaskara mandapa of the Siva temple gives another clue of this sectarian outlook of the rulers. In the prolific wood carvings of this temple not a single piece can be seen on Siva. Similarly Triprayar and Urakam temples do have the wealth of the wood-carvings, which portray predominantly Vaishnavite gods. This trend came to an end when the last Madhva ruler Ravi Varma (1853-64)\(^{179}\) died. His successor Rama Varma (1865-1888)\(^{180}\) was not a pronounced sectarian. He was fortunate in having Sankunni Menon as his Diwan who brought in a number of reforms in the State. An inscription\(^{181}\) found on the Kootambalam (dance theatre) of the Vatakunathan temple complex states that the dance theatre was renovated under the auspices of Sankunni Menon in 1880, as ordered by his patron Rama Varma. When A.R. Banerjee (1907-1914) became the Diwan of Cochin,\(^{182}\) he segregated the Devasvam fund from the general fund and that was the nucleus for the formation of the Cochin Devasvam Board. Vatakunathan temple is under its administrative control since then.

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178.Ibid.
180.Ibid.
181.Ibid.p.412.
182.Ibid.p.414