Calicut was known to geographers and travelers from the very early times as the chief emporium of India. Much of its richness today lies buried in the glory of a past grandeur, a past replete with the trading visits of Asian and the European voyagers calling on the medieval port of Calicut on their regular journeys of commerce, lured by timber, ivory, pepper, ginger, cinnamon and other spices. In its heyday, the glory of Calicut as a prosperous emporium on the coast of the Arabian Sea, spread far and wide to the east and west and attracted the attention of medieval kingdoms from within and outside India. Though the scholars had speculated that the port of Calicut existed in the early historic times, it is now clear that the region was an uninhabited marshy land until the disintegration of the Chera kingdom at the beginning of the twelfth century of the Christian era.

**Origin of the City**

We do not know exactly when Calicut was founded. According to a Sanskrit Chronogram, it took place in AD 1042\(^1\). After his shifting to the newly conquered territory, Zamorin established a town called ‘Vikramapuram’ (another name of Velapuram) with a Siva temple or Tali at its centre. But the town became popular under the name Kolikkotu, the European form of which is ‘Calicut’. The name ‘Kolikkotu’ is explained in various ways. According to Prof.N.M.Nambuthiri the different derivations given by the scholars to this name can be grouped into three (a) folk beliefs and etymology (b) historical and (c) geographical\(^2\). The explanation given in Keralolpathi as the land where the cock crows to be known as Kolikotta and area of the territory was so

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small that the sound of a cock crowing from its perch could be heard over can be treated as a part of folk beliefs and etymologies. The place where the cock crowed is supposed to be a small hill on the eastern part of the present city, which is known as ‘Kokkolikodu’ and the name mentioned in the Keralolpathi is also ‘Kokkolikottu’. In early times this hill actually served as a landmark for ships approaching the Kallayi River.

In the words of Prof. K.V. Krishna Ayyar, the town derives its name from ‘Koyil Kodu’ or ‘Koyil kotta’, the fortified palace of the Zamorin, which was its commanding feature. ‘Koyil Kotta’ may have corrupted into ‘Kolikottu’. Another name used to refer Calicut is Kallikkottai which is a Tamil word means ‘a fort built of stone’. Even today the buses of TamilNadu State Road Corporation plying between Calicut and Ooty use this name to represent Calicut. Even though there were descriptions of the early travelers about the forts and palaces of Calicut city, we have no clear evidence to prove that the name is originated from such peculiarities of the fort or palaces. There is a reference to a place named ‘Kozhi’ in ‘Purapporul Vembamalai’ of Sangam literature, which was considered as the western boundary of the Sangam Cheras. Here the word ‘Kozhi’ meant a ‘Saltern’. Since Calicut and its neighbouring coastal areas had lot of salt producing areas in those times, ‘Kozhi’ might have used as a prefix to this region where salt was produced.

Chinese scholar Prof. C.J. Su says that the name Ku-li-fo recorded in AD 1248 by the

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3 Hermon Gundert, op.cit., p.196.
4 There are numerous lands or paramba having names resembling to Kolikodu in Valayanad Desom of Calicut Taluk. See Settlement Register, Calicut Taluk, Valayanadu Desom, No.34, Survey No.110, Sub Division 1.2, 1905, pp.70-71. As per the records these lands belonged to the royal family of Kizhakke Kovilakam.
5 K.V. Krishna Ayyar, op.cit, p.83.
6 N.M. Nambuthiri, Samoothiri Nadu, (Mal.), (Trivandrum, 2008), p.100.
Chinese traveler Wang-Ta-Yuan is Calicut and the term has a meaning ‘banana’ in Sinhalese language. According to him Calicut was a great producer of banana and so the name can be derived after the term for banana. Prof. Hariprasad Ray also opines that Ku-li-fo is the transcription of ‘Koolikodu’ which means banana in Sinhalese, the language of Ceylon. These evidences and arguments certify the commercial contacts existed between Calicut and the other maritime worlds. For Arabs it was ‘Kalikoot’, and with the European penetration it became ‘Calecut’. The Italian explorer Niccolo Conti who came to India in 1444 called Calicut as ‘Colychachia’.

Indigenous inscriptions and the accounts of foreign travelers of the pre-thirteenth century are silent about the town of Calicut. Unniyachi Charitham, a “Manipravalam” work believed to be written in the first half of the thirteenth century mentions about the great towns of those times like Quilon, Kodungallur, and Dorasamudra but is silent about Calicut. At the same time Unnuneelisandesam written in the second half of the fourteenth century refers to Calicut. Kokasandesam belonging to the fifteenth century which discuss about the Mamamkam festival and eulogizes the valour of Zamorin, is an

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yet another source material which indirectly refers to the superiority exercised by Calicut in the political arena of the then Kerala\textsuperscript{13}. So it seems that Calicut as a seaport and urban centre rose to prominence comparatively later.

**Topography of the Port of Calicut**

Damiao de Goes, who wrote *Chronica d’El Rei Dom Manuel* (“Chronicle of King Dom Manuel”) in 1556-1557 AD, discusses the geographical position of the city of Calicut in chapter 42 of the second volume of his work\textsuperscript{14}. He bases his remarks almost entirely on Duarte Barbosa. Calicut is a ‘hilly terrain sea-front city’, in the latitude of 11 degree 30 min. north\textsuperscript{15}, surrounded by a chain of mountain ranges in a semi-circle, starting from Varakkal in the north of Calicut port and passing through West Hill, East Hill, Vengeri, Varadar, Nedungottur, Chevayur, Kottuli, Nellikode, Kommeri, Iringallur, Olavanna, Azhinjilam, Feroke and Kadallundi\textsuperscript{16}. The hill ranges can be described as natural fortress having a range of cliffs sharply rising from 16 feet to 400 feet and protected the port town from any direct intrusion from south-east or north-east territories. Situated at the very core area of pepper production, the port of Calicut had been frequented by many traders since the fourteenth century. The flooding of the *Periyar* in 1341 brought mud to ancient Cranganore, and the progression of the offshore bar closed the port of Eli. Consequently Cochin, Cannanore and Calicut gained in importance and

\textsuperscript{13} Elamkulam Kunjhan Pillai, *Kokasandesam*, (commentary), (Kottayam, 1997), verses 21, 22, pp.38-39.

\textsuperscript{14} Ethel M.Pope, *India in Portuguese Literature*, (New Delhi, 1989), p.120.


\textsuperscript{16} The field study in these areas were backed up by the revenue maps and data provided in the *Survey and Settlement Registers* of 1905 and 1906, Calicut Taluk, Index Nos.29, 30, 44, 47, 49, 50, 52, 51.
they turned out to be the major exchange centers on the maritime rim of Kerala. With the powerful political backing Calicut superseded the great port of Quilon which was in prominence since the ninth century.

The general terrain of Calicut city consisted of a geographical feature with slopes from east to west. The satellite ports of the then Calicut port such as Kadalundi, Puthiyangadi, Elathur, Mulankadavu (Kallayi), Beypore etc are also surrounded by the aforesaid semi-circled hilly ranges. These ranges have, to a great extent influenced the climate, soil and thereby the making of the port city of Calicut. The western side is a coastal line broken by a number of rivers. The important rivers which facilitated the commodity flow to the port were Kuttiady (Murad) River, Korapuzha, Kallai River, Chaliyar, Kadalundi River, and Mahe River. The arteries of these rivers intersecting and bifurcating at various places also served as channels for movement of goods from interior parts of the hinterland to the port. The Kuttiady River which originates at the Narikkota ranges on the western slopes of the Waynad hills, flows through Badagara, Koyilandy and present Kozhikode Taluk through which commodities were floated down to the port of Calicut. Its tributaries like Onipuzha, Madappallipuzha and Vannathipuzha have great historical as these rivers mobilized the endeavours carried over by the Kunjhalis, the great admirals of the Zamorins. The Mahe River that flows through fifteen villages including Mahe was another channel for the procurement of cargo from the hinterland. Formed by the confluence of the two streams called Punnurpuzha and Agalapuzha (a backwater extending north to south over 25.6 Km flows parallel to the sea and joins the Korapuzha at Elathur), Korapuzha and its main tributaries are tidal in their lower reaches and the

estuary became a satellite port of Calicut. The Kadalundi River also known by the name *Karimpuzha* and *Oravanpurampuzha* was also used for commodity movement from the production centers to the port. The Kallayi River, though small in size, flow south-west from *Cherukulathur- Peringalam* and reaches the sea through *Valayanad*. It was the main riverine channel used for the transportation of timber for building ships as well as for carrying cargo to the port. Kallayi, which consequently emerged as the main centre of timber trade, is situated on its banks. *Chaliyar*, known in the lower reaches as Beypore River originates from the *Ilameri* Hills in the Gudalur taluk of the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu and flows through Nilambur, *Mambad, Edavanna, Areecode, Vazhakkad* and Feroke before it joins the Arabian Sea near Beypore. It was the main riverine route to carry spices and other commodities from Tamil land and *Ernadu* area to Calicut. In the *Nilambur* valley, it traverses the rich timber area and the river is used for floating down the logs to Kallayi. Its estuary at Beypore made this place an important satellite port of Calicut and also a famous traditional ship-building centre. Thus these rivers played a major role in promoting the inland navigation and trade of Calicut during the medieval period.

The sides of the rivers and the valleys of the hills were covered by natural forests, which also supplied lot of forest goods like lac, honey and fine timber for Calicut on a regular basis. With the mobilization of vast resources from such an extensive terrain (the traditional boundary of the Zamorin’s empire extended from *Puthupattanam* in the north to *Chettuva* in the south), Calicut managed to emerge as the central leading port of Kerala

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18 Earlier it was known as *Kallazhi*, See M.G.S. Narayanan, *Kozhikodinte Katha*, (Mal.), (Ottapalam, 2001), p.72.
fed by a chain of minor ports like Eli, Madayi, Valapattanam, Dharmadam, Puthupanam, Panthalayini Kollam, Ponnni and Kodungallur\textsuperscript{20} located in the vicinity and in the conquered territories. When the trading activities at the port of Calicut developed enormously, it demanded extensive cultivation and production of goods in the hinterland for the purpose of export. This paved the way for the growth of cultivable land and the agricultural production and for the emergence of a new economic system.

**Hinterland of Calicut**

The hinterland to a port is often described as an organized and developed land space which is connected with a port by means of transport lines and which receive or send goods through that port\textsuperscript{21}. It is considered as an economic space rather than a geographical space. The hinterland could also be conceived in terms of the area from which the city draws material for the construction of its buildings, factories, houses and streets\textsuperscript{22}. It is the area from which the port obtains its goods for export to overseas markets and to which it distributes the imported goods\textsuperscript{23}. Here we must also consider the ‘Foreland’ of a port. Foreland refers to major overseas markets to which hinterland products are carried and the places from which goods are imported for consumption and further distribution throughout the hinterland\textsuperscript{24}. In other words a ‘Foreland’ is also defined as those areas of the overseas world with which the port-city is immediately linked through

\textsuperscript{20} William Logan, op.cit., pp.63-73.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p.248.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., pp.250-251.
shipping, trade and passenger traffic. Thus port-cities can properly be understood in terms of their hinterland-foreland matrix. Taken together these concepts may give us a wider theoretical framework and help us to have a comprehensive approach to the urban phenomenon experienced in Calicut before the European colonialism.

The extensive territories that the Zamorin conquered in the 15th century which eventually attached to his emerging state structure was slowly converted into the hinterland for the port of Calicut. A considerable portion of the hinterland of Calicut was located on the banks of river systems or on the rim of rivulets and these scattered hinterlands was linked with the exchange system of Calicut by a long chain of riverine and land routes.

a) Riverine Routes

Calicut port is connected with its vast hinterland through a network of rivers of which Chaliyar and Kallayi River are the most important. The Kallayi river that washes the shores of Calicut originates from the Cherukkulathur elevation and flows towards south-west connecting the distribution centers or bazaars called ‘chanthas’ at Velliparamaba, Palazhi, Puthur, Iringallur, Kailamattom, Pantheerankavu, where it is joined by a tributary of Chaliyar bifurcated from Mukkathukadavu. In the Olvanna region, south-east of Calicut, this tributary of Chaliyar which joins Kallayi River is of vital importance for the trade of Calicut. It is through this passage that the extensive cultivable space, located on the banks of river Chaliyar such as Nilambur, Chungathara, Edavvanna,

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Edavannapara and Mavoor were linked with Calicut port\textsuperscript{26}. Varthema speaks of a river that flows through the city with a number of branches\textsuperscript{27}. Probably this would be the channels of Kallayi River. The place name of the area near to the present Central Market is found in the old records as Puzhavakku or the ‘River banks’.

b) Land-Routes

Apart from the riverine connection, the hinterland areas were well connected by a network of land-routes with the city of Calicut. The existence of ‘Satrams’ or inns, ‘Vantippura’ or cart stands, ‘Thanneerpanthal’ or water shed at various parts of Calicut and its suburbs is suggestive of the early high ways leading to the city and the hectic trade that was carried out through them. There were two major land routes which connected the south-eastern and north-eastern areas of the city with Kunnamangalam. These routes merged into the ghat routes, one originating from Mukkom and the other from Kootathai, an important spice producing area. These two routes used to meet at the centre of Kunnamangalam and proceeded directly to the port city. The route starting from Kootathai ran parallel to river Korappuzha, crossed Kunnamangalam and proceeded directly to the port city without crossing the river. The land-route systems mentioned here are of a comparatively later construction, yet the old names of these places suggest that the network of land-routes all over the territory of Zamorin was of early origin. It is said that when Vasco-da-Gama arrived at Pantalayini Kollam in 1498, he traveled to Kappad via

\textsuperscript{26} K.Balakrishna Kurup, Kozhikodinte Charithram, (Mal.), (Calicut, 2006), pp. 61-62. , N.M.Nambuthiri, Samathiri Charithrathile Kaanaapurangal, (mal.), (Sukapuram, 1987), p.70. The information is corroborated with an extensive field study by the researcher.

Thiruvangur by land-route and crossed the river Korappuzha and went to the temples at Puthur and Varakkal and then entered the city\textsuperscript{28}. This description refers to the existence of a highway from Pantalayini to Kappad and from there via Puthur to the city of Calicut. This highway is seen recorded in the Zamorin’s palace records dated 1596. Two other records of AD1731 speak about a road starts from Ponnani to Calicut city via Beypore, Tiruvachira (present Meenchantha) and Panniankara\textsuperscript{29}.

The mountainous track that surrounded the city in a semi-circle had two breaking points, one with the places of Valayanad, Iringallur, Palazhi, and Olavanna through which the Kallayi River flows and the other at Thamarasseri, Kootathai, Thalakulathur and Vengeri area through which the Korapuzha flows. Chaliyar makes a direct break to these cliffs at Feroke region separating Nallur and Kadalundi areas. These breaking points used to link Calicut with Mysore, Gudallur, and Coimbatore areas which were very rich hinterlands, producing different commodities of export from the port of Calicut. The hill products of Wayanad also used to find their way in Calicut. Along the way that stretched from Wayanad to Calicut little ‘Angadis’ or market towns came up as trading centers.

The production of coconut and pepper got increased in the hinterlands of Calicut with the intensification of maritime trade at Calicut during the same period. The powerful Muslim traders made use of every possible means to integrate the distant and remote spice hinterlands of Malabar Coast with the port of Calicut, as loading of cargo at the port of Calicut was much risk-free and carefully taken care of. The important spice producing hinterland of Calicut consisted of a long chain of rich fertile areas like Wayanad,

\textsuperscript{28} Sanjay Subramanian, The Career and Legend of Vasco-da-Gama, (New Delhi, 1997), pp.128-139.
\textsuperscript{29} N.M. Nambuthiri, A Study of Place Names in the Calicut District, pp.361-362.
Kootathai, Kottiady, Thamarassery, Kunnamangalam, Chathamangalam, Mukkom, Mavoor, Mankavu, Nilambur, Edavanna and Thanur. In the south the chiefdoms of Koratty, Cranganore, Parur, Chettuva, Alangad, Cochin and Vadakkunkur, were also brought within the economic orbit of Calicut and were made to be the principal hinterlands for this port through the chain of conquests that the Zamorin undertook prior to the advent of Europeans.

**Internal Trade and the Overseas Mercantile Networks of Calicut**

In the thirteenth century when the Zamorin of Calicut stole a march over the other rulers on the coast and had made himself the master of the port of Calicut, earning for himself the title “lord of the sea” 30, Calicut started superseding all the then ports of Malabar coast. Subsequently, numerous small ports like Elathur, Puthiyangadi, Mulamkadavu etc lying north and south of Calicut was turned into the satellite ports of the Calicut Port. In addition to this, ports lying in the Zamorin’s spheres of influence like Pantalayini Kollam, Tikkodi, Puthupattanam, Tanur and Chaliyam, also played an important role in fostering trade and commerce at the maritime city of Calicut.

**a) Intra- Local Trade**

Like any other pre-modern town, Calicut was also greatly influenced by ecological factors which have facilitated its intra-local trade. Rivers endowed the city with the cheap means of communication and transportation with different parts of the region and access to its hinterlands. Along the coastline of Calicut there were extensive areas below the sea level. Sea water could be trapped in these low-lying fields to make salt. This salt

manufacturing on the littoral area was facilitated by nature itself. The existence of place names like Padanna, Uppalam etc. in the vicinity of Calicut indicates the practice of salt manufacturing and salt was an important commodity of exchange in the local market\textsuperscript{31}. Francis Buchanan, who had visited Malabar in 1800 AD, refers to the excessive salt panning activities done along the coastal areas of Calicut\textsuperscript{32}.

The rural market was an important feature of the intra-local trade of the region. Weekly markets and small scale bazaars also promoted the intra-local trade\textsuperscript{33}. In the rural market that existed in every village units, the local residents brought or exchanged their goods such as Ragi, edible roots, vegetables, fruits, pepper, oil, cotton textiles and other items of day-to-day need. Varthema mentions about certain fruits he found in the market at Calicut which were of great demand. They were Ciccara (jack fruit), Amba (mango), Corcopal (he says it resembles a melon), Comolanga (melon), and Malapolanda (plantain, banana)\textsuperscript{34}. All these goods were brought to the open market mostly as head-loads or pack-animals. Small traditional boats locally known as toni was used to cross rivers. Besides this practice, the weekly markets where producers of specialized articles like textile, jaggery, pottery, iron tools, palm-leaf umbrellas, baskets, mats, mullers, saddle-querns etc. met together also became the centers of goods exchange. The bazaar at the port town of Calicut was always crowded with merchants of various cultures with variety of goods. The

\textsuperscript{31} Survey and settlement Registers, Calicut Taluk, Valayanad Desom, No.34, Survey No.146, Sub Division 3, 4, Survey No.147, Sub Division 1, 1905, pp.88-89, 124-127, R A, Calicut. Here the lands are mentioned by names like Uppukulam Nilam, Uppukulam Paramba, Padanna paramba etc.


\textsuperscript{33} Johnsy Mathews, Economy and Society in Medieval Malabar AD.1500-1600, (Changanacherry, 1996), pp.149-151.

\textsuperscript{34} Varthema, in H.K.Kaul (ed.), Traveller’s India, (New Delhi, 1998), p.310-311.
Portuguese on their arrival were amazed by the abundance of the textiles of all sorts sold at Calicut\textsuperscript{35}.

\textbf{b) Inter-Local Trade}

As the port-city of Calicut was growing, inter-local trade became a necessity. A great volume of commodities which the city required was to be imported from the villages and from outside. In the initial phase of the urban growth of Calicut, the native merchants played an active role in mobilizing commodities for the inter-local trade of Calicut. The \textit{Marakkars} and \textit{Chettis}, the two important merchant groups who actively participated in the commercial activities operated at Calicut, were the greatest suppliers of rice and textiles to the city as rice was scarce in the area. They, especially the \textit{Marakkars}, monopolized the import of Coromandal rice to Malabar, and pepper and other spice products were exchanged. Rice was also imported to Calicut from Canara to meet the local demand\textsuperscript{36}. Actually Calicut was in short of rice due to poor soil, which was not good enough to grow grain, as told by Wang-Ta-Yuan\textsuperscript{37}, once forced the Zamorin to yield before the Lusitanians when they captured a fifty rice-loaded ships belonging to Calicut coming from Canara coast in their wars of reprisal against Calicut.

\textbf{c) Inter-Coastal Trade}

With the expansion of the city of Calicut and the increase in the number of the city dwellers, the needs and demands for more and more commodities increased

\textsuperscript{35} Johnsy Mathews, op.cit., p.151.
\textsuperscript{37} W.W.Rockhill, op.cit., pp. 454-455.
simultaneously. Merchants from different parts of the country began to set up shops and
warehouses to exploit the opportunities offered by coastal trade. Thus a number of
itinerant merchant groups like Guajaratis, Vaniyas (Baniyas), Chettis, Marakkars, and
Valanjiyars began to settle down at Calicut and got engaged in commercial activities. The
coastal trade connected Calicut with Cambay in Gujarat, Bhatkal in Karnataka, and
Kayalpattanam on the Coromandal coast. Chettis from the Coromandal coast sold precious
stones, pearl and coral and later they made permanent residences in the city. The Mappila
Muslims of Calicut used to trade with Cambay from where the chief commodities brought
to Calicut were rice, opium, textiles, indigo, and sealing wax and silver coins. It is
generally believed that opium entered Malabar through Al-Karimi merchants trading in
Calicut. The Cambay variety of opium was sold at Calicut for 200 to 250 *panams* per
*farcola*\(^{38}\). *Bahar* was the unit of weight employed at Calicut for weighing commodities
such as ginger and pepper. The price of pepper was about 210 *panams* per *bahar*, plus 9
*panams* of duty\(^{39}\).

The trading centers on the Canara coast at Honavar, Bhatkal, Barkur, Mangalore,
Barsur etc. were the ports of call in the coastal trade. The traders of Calicut purchased a
great store of “very coarse black rice at *Mirjan* near Honavar in Canara” as observed by
Barbosa\(^{40}\). But the Portuguese control of the Canara ports, especially Bhatkal and
Mangalore, on which Calicut depended for rice supplies, stood always as a threat since the


\(^{39}\) The value of *Bahar* varied from place to place but generally one *Bahar* was equal to 400 lbs. In
Cannanore one *bahar* was equal to 205.63 Kg., in Calicut 208.15 Kg. and in Cochin and Quilon it
was 166.3 Kg. For more details see, K.S.Mathew, *Portuguese Trade with India in the Sixteenth

\(^{40}\) Duarte Barbosa, op.cit., p.156.
demand for rice in the city was very high. The trade of Calicut did not confirm itself to the regional level; it extended to different parts of the Indian Ocean encompassing various regional economies.

**Overseas Trade**

Calicut’s role in the intra-Asian trade became so important because of its geographical junctional position, where the flow of different streams of commodities like textiles from Gujarat, Coromandel, Bengal and Canara, spices from Sumatra, Ceylon and Canara, finished products such as silk and porcelain etc., from China intersected making it an entrepot. The Al-Karimi merchants, who came to Calicut from Cairo in the fourteenth century, started settling down in the port area. They wielded extraordinary influence in the period between fourteenth and fifteenth centuries on the spice trade with Calicut and established some sort of a monopoly over the trade between Yemen and Cairo, where they had their headquarters. Ali Ibn Muhammed Kalubi who died in 1492 was one of the rich Karimi merchants who had trade relations with Calicut in the second part of the 15th century.

Jiddah was one of the most important ports on the coast of the Red Sea frequented by ships with merchandise from Malabar. On their way to Mecca, the Muslim merchants

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of Calicut visited the port of Jidda with their commodities. It was from this port that the spice products were transshipped to Suez in small ships called Zambuque, as big vessels could not sail in this part of Mecca and Jidda. Big caravans were used to carry the oriental commodities from Suez to Alexandria and Cairo and were shipped to Venice and from there to the other parts of Europe. Niccolo Conti, the Venetian traveller, gives the list of various products he found at the port of Calicut for embarkation. According to him the principle items of exports were pepper, lac, ginger, cinnamon, myrobalans, and zeedoary. To this list, Athanasius Nikitin, a Russian traveller, (1468-1474) who visited Calicut after Conti, adds colour-plants, muscat, cloves and aromatic roots.

Commercial Contacts, Merchant Communities and the Cosmopolitanism

By means of wise and equitable mercantile regulations and a religiously tolerant policy, the Zamorins encouraged foreign merchants to frequent his port. They held a privileged status in Calicut. On arrival, he had at his disposal a Nair to guard and serve him, a Chetty to look after his possessions, and a broker to get goods for him. He had to pay them a fixed monthly salary and this was supplemented by commissions paid to them by the suppliers. Consequently the foreign trading communities (Paradesi) could be observed at Calicut, with all their ethnic and linguistic diversity. They came not only from Arabia, Persia and China but also from Syria, Egypt, Maghreb, Sumatra and Pegu. Some stayed temporarily each year from mid-August to January while others settled here.

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44 Ibid., pp.14-22.
46 Athanasius Nikitin, The Travels of Athanasius Nikitin, Voyage to India, in R.H Major, p.20.
permanently\textsuperscript{48}. Merchants from Tunis, Italy etc. were also engaged in trade transactions along with the Arabs, but very often indirectly during this period. Indian traders including the Gujarathis, the Chetties from Coromandel Coast also played an important role in the commercial activities of Calicut. Travellers of the medieval period speak of the presence of Jews in Calicut, evidently suggesting their role in its trade. At present there is a street near to \textit{Kuttichira} named \textit{Jootha Bazaar} (Jew Street). The paucity of sources lies as a major obstacle in understanding the history of Jews in Calicut. Probably this street might have been used by the Jewish merchants for trade.

Though the West Asian merchants had an upper hand in spice trade in Calicut, Chinese traders also found their place at Calicut in the trans-oceanic trade during the pre-modern period. As per the Chinese records there were several exchanges of embassies between China and Calicut\textsuperscript{49}. Daoyi Zhiue, the Chinese text of 1349 AD describes Calicut as the most important of all the maritime centres of trade\textsuperscript{50}. The enormous Chinese \textit{Junks} began to frequent the Calicut port from its very inception. Ibn Batuta gives us a fine description of Chinese Ships that he saw in the port of Calicut. He classifies these ships \textit{Junks} into (large ships), \textit{Zaws} (medium size) and \textit{Kakams} (small types)\textsuperscript{51}.

Calicut was the terminal point of Cheng Ho’s early commercial voyages from Ming China, conducted in the beginning of the fifteenth century, evidently suggesting the

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p.11.
commercial importance this port had acquired by this time in the Indian Ocean trade. In
the repeated chain of voyages that Cheng Ho made (1405-1433), Calicut was the most
favoured commercial destination in the West coast of India. It is reported that Cheng Ho
led large treasure in Junks to Calicut and erected a tablet inside a pavilion at Calicut. The
inscription on the tablet is said to have contained the information...“this country is more
than a hundred thousands li from China. The people and things are similar to ours and
their prosperity and success evolve from customs like ours. This tablet carved and erected
here is intended to inform forever the future generation...” But at present the monument
is not seen anywhere in this port town. The Chinese merchants had a factory of their own
in the port town of Calicut known as Cheena Kotta, meant ‘Fort of China’.

Ma-Huan, the Chinese Muslim traveler who visited Calicut in the early fifteenth
century had left a description of Calicut which in his words “was a great emporium of
trade frequented by merchants from all quarters”. According to him, the people of the
city take the silk of the silk worm, soften it by boiling, dye it in all colours and weave it
into kerchiefs with decorative strips at intervals. Each length of such silk clothes
measuring 25 feet and 5.9 inches long and 4 feet 7 inches broad was sold for one hundred
gold coins. The works of Wang-Ta-Yuan (1349), Fei Hsin (1436) and Hung Shang
T’seng (1520) make mention of the Chinese trade conducted on the Malabar Coast.

53 N.M.Nambuthiri, op.cit., p.341.
54 Garcia da Orata, Colloquies on the Simples and Drugs of India, Sir Clements Markham (trans. &
55 Ma-Huan, Ying Yai Sheng-Lan, The Overall Survey of Oceans’ Shores (1433), J.V.G.Mills,
56 Ibid.
57 K.S.Mathew, op.cit., p.11.
According to these accounts, Calicut was frequented by merchants from all over the world to purchase pepper, ginger, cardomom, myrobalans, canafistula, zerumba and zedoary and that way Calicut became the ‘most important of all the maritime centres of trade and the busiest principal port of the Western Ocean’\(^\text{58}\). The major items imported from China included gold, silver, coloured satin, blue and white porcelain, beads, musk, quick silver and camphor\(^\text{59}\). Both Wang-Ta-Yuan and Fei Hsin mentions about the fine horses they found at Calicut which worth more than thousand gold coins and were imported from the west. According to Fei-Hsin Calicut was the main port of call for the Chinese fleet. The main part of the Chinese fleet did not go beyond Calicut, which was an entrepot for the ships bound to Persian Gulf, Arabia and the East African coast\(^\text{60}\). The usages like *Cheenacheri, Cheenadathu palli* etc. are still in use in the outskirts of the city of Calicut\(^\text{61}\).

Josafat Barbaro, a member of the Venetian embassy sent to Persia for ensuing regular trade in oriental wares, speaks of “Calicut, of very great fame, being as it were, a staple of merchants of various places”\(^\text{62}\). In the words of Ibn Batuta, Calicut was visited by men from China, Sumatra, Ceylon, and Maldives, Yemen and Fars and thus the merchants from all quarters flocked together at the port town\(^\text{63}\). He writes: “the greatest part of the Muhammadan merchants of this place are so wealthy, that one of them can purchase the whole freightage of such vessels as put in here, and fit out others like them. The chief of the merchants in this town was Ibrahim, who also was chief of the port was a native of

\(^{58}\) W.W.Rockhill, *op.cit.* pp.419-447.  
\(^{60}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{61}\) At *Pantalayini Kollam* there is a settlement in similar name. A mosque at *Puthiyangadi* is locally called as “Cheenadathu palli”.  
\(^{63}\) Ibn Batuta, *op.cit.*, p.234.
Bahrain. The merchants met in his house and dine at his table. Batuta also refers to a big ship owner named Mithqal, who possessed many ships for his trade with India, China, Yemen and Fars. Another person mentioned by this Moroccan traveler was Fakruddin Usman, the religious Judge of Calicut.

The growth of Calicut began to take a decisive turn with its commercial relationship with the Mamluk Sultans, who were members of the slave dynasty of Muslim Egypt. The Mamluks carried out spice-trade with Calicut, the newly emerged port of Malabar through the Arab traders of Cairo, who came to be known as Al-Karimi merchants. This in turn led to the emergence of the Calicut - Cairo - Alexandria - Venice route, which ultimately got expanded into Malacca - Calicut - Cambay - Aden – Cairo-Alexandria-Venice route with the intensification of trade through east-west axis. Later, the Al-Karimi merchants had to abandon the Red Sea because of the troubles they had with the Mamluks of Egypt. But good many of them settled down in Calicut where they gained control over external commerce. Abdur Razzak, the Persian ambassador who visited the Zamorin in 1442 testifies to the preponderance of Calicut’s trade with Arab countries and the dominant role played by the Arab community at Calicut.

There are several accounts current in Kerala regarding the introduction of Islam into Malabar. Local historians, however, differ in their accounts as to how Arab families settled in Malabar and the exact year in which the first conversion was made. Here the discussion is confined only to the growth and spread of the Muslim community in Calicut and their role in bringing up the cosmopolitan outlook of this medieval port city. It is

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64 Ibid., p.235.
65 Ibid.
66 Pius Malekandathil, op.cit., pp.9-10.
because of the tolerant religious policy of the Zamorins and the friendly treatment experienced by the Arab traders and the Muslim population of Calicut, the colony of Arab traders increased greatly in the port town. In addition to this the royal sanction for the practice of temporary marriage which allowed Arab and Persian sea-men to have a home at the port town also triggered the Arab presence at Calicut. These Muslim merchants of West Asia married native woman of low castes especially those of the local fishing community, the Mukkuvas\textsuperscript{67} and the Mappilas of Malabar are said to be the off springs of such alliances\textsuperscript{68}. The Zamorin also encouraged the conversion of his Hindu subjects into Islam as the Muslims alone were involved in maritime activities. Probably it was his desire to build up his own navy that he must have had a good working relation with the Arabs. An Arabic Urjuza of sixteenth century ‘Fathul Mubiyn’ written by Mohammed Ibn –‘Abdul Aziz, contains a detailed description of the bravery and tolerance of the Zamorin and his services to defend Islam and its followers\textsuperscript{69}. The long chain of conversion process in the coast led to the growth of ‘Pudu Islam’ or New Islam in and around Calicut\textsuperscript{70}. They were brought up in the Sunni Islamic faith and trained from an early age as trades-men and sea-men. Many of them became brokers in the port city, for they were acquainted with many languages and habits of many countries. Gaspar Correa reports that “many of the heathen became moors” and to such an extent “that they were more people than the

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., The term ‘Mappila’is a combination of two Dravidian words, ‘Maha’ means ‘great’ and ‘Pilla’ means ‘child’. The Mappilas who were usually known as ‘Chonaka Mappilas’ were the followers of Islamic religion whereas there were Christian Mappilas who were better known by the name ‘Nazrani Mappilas’, F. Fawcett, \textit{Indian Antiquary}, Vol. XXX, (Madras, 1901), p.501.
natives”\textsuperscript{71}. Thus with the help of Muslims the Zamorin was able to extend his own spheres of influence. As a symbol of their mutual trust, a Muslim known as Kozhikottu Koya \textsuperscript{72} was given the position of Shah Bandar [ruler of the ports] by the Zamorin and as a reward for his help, he was given the right to stand on the right side of the Zamorin in the Mamamkam festival held at Tirunavai once in twelve years\textsuperscript{73}. Shah Bandar Koya also had the responsibility to supervise the customs on behalf of the Zamorin, fix the prices of the commodities and collect necessary share to the royal treasury.

In the Muslim settlements of Kuttichira on the north western banks of river Kallayi, several mosques, such as Pazhaya Palli, Muccunti mosque, Sheikinte Palli etc., were constructed with the support of rich Arab merchants. In Muccunti mosque, there is an inscription, which registers the permanent grand of property by the Zamorin to this mosque\textsuperscript{74}. Gradually, in terms of population distribution, Muslim trading community formed a significant majority in coastal Malabar, especially in Calicut and the other coastal trading towns coming under the spheres of influence of the Zamorin such as Chaliyam, Parappanangadi, Tanur and Ponnani. It is said that the concentration of Muslim traders in this area decided the basic settlement patterns, which also shaped the distribution pattern of the Mappila Muslim population in later centuries\textsuperscript{75}.

\textsuperscript{72} There is a myth in Keralolpathi related to Kozhikode Koya, See Hermon Gundert, Keralolpathiyum Mattum, p.199.
Mujahideen’, Sheik Zainudhin refers to the rise and prosperity of Calicut, achieved with the support of Muslim merchants. According to Varthema, the Muslims were rich and lived well, they held all the sea trade and navigation in such a sort that “if the king of Portugal had not discovered India, Malabar would already have been in the hands of the Moors, and would have had a Moorish King”. Evidently the Muslims established themselves as a very prosperous and influential section among the people of Calicut, a development which was made possible by the benevolent and helpful attitude of the Zamorin whose hands were strengthened by the wealth coming from the trade of the diverse Muslim communities.

The influx of various social groups to the city of Calicut resulted in diasporas where they carried their religion, beliefs, customs, languages and food habits into the social space of the city. According to Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan, though the Gujarathi community claims to have settled in Calicut about 800 years ago, they must have come in all probability after the city developed in to a big trade centre, some 200 years after the city foundation. The Jain temple or the ‘Jain Basti’ which situates to the south of Valiyangadi, dedicated to the twenty-third Thirthankara, Parswanatha, was built by the Gujarati community of the city. As per the available records this temple is nearly 850 years old. The locality where their quarters are situated is known as Trikkovil Lane. The Gujarathis of Calicut belongs to the Swethambara sect of Jainism. A Vaishnav temple also lies in this area known as Haveli.

The Konkani Brahmins came to Calicut from Goa, in order escape the religious persecution by the Portuguese and requested the Zamorin for permission to stay at Calicut and engage in business. But they became prominent in the business history of Calicut only by the nineteenth century. Chettis were another group of merchants who played a very dominant role in commercial activities centred at Calicut. There were Tamil speaking Chettis and Telugu speaking Chettis, of whom the bangle sellers were known as Valachetti, the oil extractors or oil millers were called as Ennachetti and the Chettis who lend money on interest were represented by the name Kasuchetti. Later some Chettis were even promoted as Zamorin’s officials at the port.

Various craftsmen groups were also settled in Calicut as the growing urbanism demanded highly skilled professionals inside the city. They were also incorporated to the changing spatial dynamics of the city. These groups included the Chakliyan or cobblers, Kusavas or the pot-makers, Moosaari or the bronze smith and Chaliyar or the weavers. The Telugu speaking Chakliyans came to this port city after the fall of Vijayanagara kingdom in 1565. They were the master craftsmen engaged in foot wear work and catered to the needs of the local Muslims and the Europeans. They have their own temple and lived in a colony in Moonalingal area. Kusavas came in search of fine clay to make pots which were in great demand in those times. A dialect akin to Tulu and Kannada was spoken by them. Thus we can see that different communities and social groups flocked together at the port city of Calicut for the purpose of commerce. With the European penetration, the littoral space of the city was accommodated by various European

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80 For more details about Konkanis, see Paul Manalil, Kerala Bhasha Neunapakshangal, (Mal.), (Calicut, 2006), pp.116-118.
commercial groups. They build their settlements with factories and warehouses. Altogether, the city developed a multi cultural urban society where the identity of all the communities could be observed in all its diversity.

**Urban Morphology of the City of Calicut in Pre Colonial Period**

The extent of the pre colonial city of Calicut covered the parts of present desoms named *Nagaram, Kasbah, Kariankunnu* and *Kalathinkunnu*. According to Nicolo Conti the maritime city of Calicut was eight miles in circumference\(^{82}\). From a purely physical standpoint, the pre colonial city inscribed an enduring pattern of paths, building sites, and the markets that subsequent generations used, altered, and built over without entirely erasing (for example, the *paandikasaalas*).

The pre colonial city of Calicut had two central zones, one being the administrative space accommodating the fort, palace, royal gardens, ponds etc and on the other the commercial space which included the port, toll houses, warehouses and the central market. These two central areas were connected by a long straight highway which cut across the *Valiyangadi* or the ‘Big bazaar’\(^{83}\) and terminated at the beach area. So the land use patterns of the city did not develop around a single centre but on the contrary it developed around these two central zones. It does not mean that both areas operated separately. As the commercial zone was divided into two parts, i.e. the port area and the site of European quarters, the port area or the *Pantarakadavu* belonged to the king. Hence it formed the part of administrative space, the commercial core of the city. The other component of the commercial space was situated a little north of the *Pantarakadavu*, the area settled by the

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\(^{83}\) Athanasius Nikitin refers to ‘Big bazaar’ in his travel accounts. See R.H.Major, op.cit., p.20.
Europeans. It extended from the port to north covering the *Paranginilam*, French loge and the *Valappil kadavu*. The Mappila settlement of *Kuttichira* is situated further south to the port. The activities in the units of the administrative central zone and the commercial zone were closely interwoven. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries AD, the administrative central zone had predominance in all activities. But in the colonial period, the foreign nucleus grew up larger and ultimately destroyed the indigenous administrative power zone.

There were a number of wharfs or landing places existed in the commercial zone. These were *Valappil kadavu*, *Marakkaan kadavu*, *Mulam kadavu* and *Nainam valappu*. The toll houses named the *Katal Chungam* and *Pazhaya Chungam* showed the state’s interference and authority on commerce and daily transactions in the market. The *Satrams*, *Kanjhipura*, *Thannerpantal* etc. were the resting places build in different localities for the convenience of travellers and the merchants, just like the lodging and restaurant facilities we have today. A palace with an inn named *Satramulla Kovilakam* is seen in the records, lying to the northern part of the fort.\(^\text{84}\)

The study of Prof. N.M. Nambuthiri opines that the fort-palace complex area of the administrative zone has been divided into four equal parts by the *Brahmasutra* and *Yamasutras* of the *Vastu silpa* texts.\(^\text{85}\) The *Kutumbhabavana* or the main palace stood in the *Isaanakon*. In *Agnikon*, there were residences of the members of the royal family. The

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\(^{84}\) In Settlement Registers, there is a compound addressed as *Satramulla Kovilakam paramba* which was under the ownership of Puthiya Kovilakathu Valiya Thamburatti. Perhaps this inn might have been used by the royal guests. *Settlement Records, Kalathinkunnu Desom*, No. 37, Survey No. 153, Sub Divs. 1 and 2.

\(^{85}\) N.M. Nambuthiri, *Samoothiri Nadu*, p.160.
Chalappuram Kovilakam, Kizhakke Kovilakam, Padinjhare Kovilakam and Ambadi Kovilakam belong to this area. The Siva temple at Tali is in this Kon. The south western division or the Nirurtikon was occupied by the fisher man community and the Mappilas. Finally, the Vayukon was represented by the foreigners. The site names like Kidangu Paramba or the compound of the moat, Kottaru Paramba or palace compound found in the settlement registers indicates the existence moats and walls around the fort. An Agrasala or the royal mint is also found inside the fort from where the coins like Veeraraya panam and Kozhikodu Puthupanam were minted.

There were separate streets and areas of settlements for certain groups and traders. The suffix ‘theruvu’, meant street while the prefix to theruvu signified the artisan groups to whom the street belonged to. For instance, Chaliyatheruvu was inhabited by the weaving class who produced the textile goods. Similarly there were Mittayitheruvu where sweet-meat producers lived, Chakkaravaanibhatheruvu where jaggery manufacturers settled down and sold their products and Kusavatheruvu where the potters exhibited their commodities made of mud and clay for sale. There were two streets by name Kalavaanibhatheruvu. One was in the north-west part of the fort area and the other was on the south-west of the fort area, on the coast. Probably these streets were occupied by the merchants who sold foreign goods, as the word “kalam” means ocean vessel. There existed street for opium sale or the Kanchavinte theruvu, which was mentioned by Dr. John

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86 According to the Vastu Silpa texts, The Isaanakon or the north eastern division should be the site of the family house. The Agnikon or the south eastern portion is assigned to the residences of the members of the royal family with a Siva temple. The Nirurtikon or the south western part belongs to the non vegetarian communities and to the fish mongers. The foreigners and the outcastes were accommodated in the north western region called Vayukon. For more details, see D.N. Shukla, Vastusastra: Hindu Science of Architecture, Vol. I, (Lucknow, 1998).

87 Agrasala Bhagavati Parambu, Field study.
Fryer in 1672\textsuperscript{88}. The settlement registers records a plot in \textit{Nagaram desom} as \textit{Pukala paandikasaala parambu} where the warehouses of tobacco was accommodated\textsuperscript{89}. The flower market, locally known as \textit{Poovanibhatheruvu}, extended from the \textit{valiyangadi} to further south\textsuperscript{90}. There are field names indicative of larger flower gardens in and around the fort area. On the eastern side of the fort, close to a flower garden or \textit{Poovalappu}\textsuperscript{91}, there were settlements of Chettis by name \textit{Pookkarachetti}. A large settlement of \textit{Chaliyas} or the weaving class is found at \textit{Kannancheri} near \textit{Panniyankara}. At the same time \textit{Chaliya} streets on the northern side of \textit{Manachira} and in the premises of \textit{Varakkal} temple are found mentioned in the Zamorins Palace records\textsuperscript{92}. Two separate streets which lie to the north of \textit{Valiyangadi} are indicative of the city’s connections with the merchants from China. They are \textit{Pattutheru} and \textit{Pattusaalatheru}\textsuperscript{93}. These streets attracted customers to the articles set for sale and in course of time these \textit{theruvus} were amalgamated into the growing urban ring and gradually incorporated into the part of the big market.

The natives used to call the European quarters as \textit{Paranginilam paramba} (Portuguese settlement), \textit{Lanthan paramba} (Dutch quarters), \textit{Paranthreesu paramba} (French loge) etc, of which the prefix was the colloquial usage which represented the alien class\textsuperscript{94}. A cluster of field names near to the present St. Joseph’s Anglo Indian Girls School, recorded as \textit{Parangipalli paramba}, \textit{Parangikotta}, \textit{Parangikalkku kodutha nilam}, and the \textit{Parangi smasanam} indicating to a church, fort, field and burial ground is helpful

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{88} John Fryer, op.cit., p.219.
  \item \textsuperscript{89} \textit{Settlement Registers}, op.cit., Survey No.41, Sub Div. 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} Ibid., Survey No.147, Sub Div. 9.
  \item \textsuperscript{91} Ibid., Survey Nos. 60 A, 60 C, 77 A, Sub Divs. 2, 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{92} N.M.Nambuthiri, \textit{A Study of Place Names in the Calicut District}, p. 497.
  \item \textsuperscript{93} \textit{Settlement Registers}, op.cit., Survey No.110, Sub Div. 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid., Survey Nos. 3, 18, Sub Divs. 1, 7, 10.
\end{itemize}
in locating the Old Portuguese settlements. Near to this held numerous ware houses and also the settlements of some non European mercantile communities. Local enquiry proves that the Dutch quarter was on the northern side of the present Beach Hospital. The English traders had their warehouses near Valappil kadavu known as the Englishkarante parambu. All the European groups had erected their flag staffs in the territories defined to them.

The spatial utilization took place in the south of the Big bazaar, where the prominent old Mappila quarters of the city, called Kuttichira and Idiyangara, jointly known as Tekkum tala or the southern edge determined the basic structure of a settlement pattern inside the city. This trade based settlement is built around a ‘chira’ or tank- a huge bathing pond, with its population primarily belonging to the Muslim community. The basic settlement structure involves narrow lanes with huge residences abutting it. The residences are comparatively very large in size with one or more courtyards. The old mosques of Calicut named Muccunti Palli, Jamat Palli, Miscal Palli and Sheikkinte Palli reveals the old heritage of this Mappila settlement. The architectural style prevalent in this region is a blend of traditional Kerala architecture and a few elements from the Persian-Islamic architecture. Both Ekasalas and Nalukettu of the traditional Kerala architecture are usually seen in the Muslim settlements here indicating the influence of the traditional style on Muslim domestic architecture of the region. But unlike in the Nalukettu where the courtyard in the Mappila houses is more of symbolic or functional nature, it is a simple solution to solve the issue of large span sloping roofs. The plan was more or less

95 Ibid. Survey No. 18, Sub Div. 1, 7.
96 Ibid., Kalathinkunu Desom, Survey Nos.4, 11.7, 11.12, 13.3, and 13.2.
97 Ibid., Survey Nos. 4, 6, 7, 8, 18, and 20.
98 Ibid., Survey Nos. 41.1, 41.2.
symmetrical. The main entrance to the house is an elongated semi-open verandah which leads to the inner lobby- an enclosed verandah. The roof of the verandah, which serves as a sunshade with wide overhang to prevent the entry of rain inside and use of level differences to demarcate specific areas are other common features. The multicultural elements which shaped the city’s architecture could be seen in a subtle manner in the plans and the lay outs of these houses. The wooden screens used to provide privacy and shade in the verandahs was one of the few features superposed on the traditional construction. These features may have been modeled in the pattern of the houses in Arab countries having contact with this region. However, the mosques in Kuttichira are distinguishable from the contemporary Hindu temples of Kerala- with the use of inner courtyards and upper stories getting narrower and narrower as they rise higher and higher. The Miscal Palli is a four- storied building with tiled roofs. Its outer walls are built on a basement similar to that of a Kerala temple. It has a central hall meant for prayers with corridors on all four sides. Wood has been used profusely in the construction.

The Kuttichira settlement, with its aristocratic dwellings and Mosques, where the Shah Bandar, the chief Quadi and many noble Muslim merchants stayed is a true representation of the cultural milieu to which it belonged.

The Tali settlement complex also forms an integral part of the settlement pattern of the city in pre colonial era. The Tali temple is not just a singular building; it does not exist as a single entity. Rather the temple and the surrounding areas talks about a way living. This settlement is distributed around the four sides of a tank called Talikkulam. The focal point is the Siva temple which contains sculptures of a high order as well as paintings intended to perpetuate Hindu religious legends. The Tamil Brahmin houses are found in a
cluster around this temple. In Calicut, they came as dependants of the chieftains, working as cooks, messengers, cloth merchants and money lenders\textsuperscript{99}.

**Power, Urban Forms and the Socio-Economic Space: An Analysis**

When Hamilton wrote that the city was very large and populous\textsuperscript{100}, Dr. Fryer opined that the citizens were urbane and being trained up to commerce\textsuperscript{101}. To Barbosa, Calicut was a very large commercial city\textsuperscript{102}. Pedro de Covilham, a Portuguese diplomat, linguist and scholar, describes Calicut as a strange gorgeous city of thatched houses. From the above pages, we have seen that the economic prosperity of Calicut was mainly due to its sea-borne commerce and it contributed a great deal in its urban growth. As a consequence of official patronage it developed faster than the other towns during the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries as the premier entrepot of oceanic trade on the coastal western India. Though little is known of the internal economy of Calicut from the available sources, it is true that the trans-oceanic trade from Calicut brought more cash in to the market and this has accelerated the monetization of Malabar economy. Its resources were sketched in a map drawn by Nicholas de Canerio in 1501-02 AD. He describes Calicut as most notable city discovered by Dom Manual, the King of Portugal, where much Benjamin of fine quality, pepper and other commodities from many regions, with cinnamon, ginger, cloves, incense, sandalwood, and all sorts of spices; stones of great value, pearls, rubies, emerald etc were available\textsuperscript{103}.

\textsuperscript{99} M.G.S.Narayanan, op.cit., p.110.
\textsuperscript{100} Alexander Hamilton, op.cit., p.289.
\textsuperscript{101} John Fryer, op.cit., p.219.
\textsuperscript{102} Duarte Barbosa, op.cit., P. 103.
Many theories have been developed to explain the dynamics of city growth. However, there is no all inclusive theory of an ideal pattern of urban dynamics as growth of particular cities depends upon many factors, the basic one being natural location of a city site. Site is the actual space occupied by the town including its immediate environment. It embraces the precise features of the terrain on which the settlements are made. It is usually taken to mean the physical conditions over a much wider area around the settlement. The erstwhile chiefs of the Nediyiruppu Swaroopam clearly monitored the movements that were taking place in the littoral space previously occupied by several nadus. Their subsequent conquest of the areas lying under the Porlathiri and the shifting of their political seat to the coastal area can be viewed as a part of their stratagem which was backed up by a thorough knowledge of the geographical advantages of the conquered territory. It is true that the peculiar geographical features of Calicut and its neighbouring areas have contributed much in bringing the urban spatial articulation centred on Calicut. The identity of a particular space which emerges as a political capital of any ruling house is determined by a continuous discourse taking place between the state, religion, institutions, and language, caste and belief systems in changing historical episodes. And the naming of a territory or a place forms a part this continuous discourse. Calicut comes under the purview of a well established power structure only with the rule of the Zamorins. Then the territorial space named “Kokkozhikodu” or later appearing in various nomenclatures, became a symbol of both power and wealth. According to Foucault the exercise of power is embedded in various specific spaces. The Fort- Palace complex, the royal mint, temples, port, toll houses, markets etc became the material spaces of power

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exertion in the city under the Zamorins. Though the city was created by the exercise of power by one group over the other, Calicut then became the spatial manifestation of deeper societal processes that emerged from multiple levels of activities connected with production, exchange and power exercise.

The functioning of this port city shows that it was a core area fed by its hinterlands which were like peripheries. Through the centuries, there were steady developments in maritime technology, skills and trade at the Calicut port. Along with the trade and the growth of a money economy, industries began to spring up in the city. Among these the timber industry was the most prominent one. Timber for the construction of ships as available at a cheaper rate at Chaliyam and Beypore. There were ship building yards of both indigenous craftsmen and the Portuguese. Another important industry was the salt production. Many small industries like metal works, pottery, textiles, oil-mills etc also became the integral part of the urban space at Calicut. The emergence of the urban market economy appears to have coincided with a recognizable increase in the circulation of metallic money. The money in circulation in its initial stages at Calicut was a gold coin called Panam and a silver coin called, Taram. They were used for petty transactions in the market. Foreign money was very much encouraged as the Venetian gold coins, Ducat, and other silver coins were very much valued by the people of the city. Widespread use of money in buying and selling at Calicut is attested to by the Portuguese sources of the early sixteenth century. The expansion of commercial credit and the low value coins in relation of exchange compelled the Zamorin to establish a central mint or Kammattam and

106 Ma Huan in J.V.G.Mills, op.cit., pp.130-146.
introduced the *Veerarayan Panam* or the *Kozhikkodu Puthupanam*. There were money lenders and market brokers at Calicut. The business with the foreign merchants was carried over by the services of a group of Muslim translators.

According to the narrations of Pyrard de Laval, the city had many stately mansions, wide avenues or *Nadakkavu*, large warehouses, temples, mosques, churches and the palace of the Zamorin. The fort of Calicut that Laval saw occupied an area of about one mile square. It consisted of several small thatched buildings of more than one storey, all of them seen within coconut groves, palaces with beautifully carved gateways, drawbridges, gardens, tanks, armament stores and danger alarms\(^{108}\). Pietro Della Valle presents a ground plan of the Zamorin’s palace in his accounts\(^{109}\).

Hieroinimo Di Santa Stefano, a Genovese traveler, visited Calicut towards the close of the fifteenth century describes Calicut as a great city and gives an account of the peculiar customs and manners of the people\(^{110}\). All the writings of the foreign travellers mentions about the peculiar customs, manners and institutions of the *Nambuthiris* and the *Nayars* as they enjoyed the higher positions in the social hierarchy. It was as same as those in practice in other parts of Kerala. Their settlement areas also showed that homogenous character but inside the city, in the commercial space, where the natives and foreigners mingled each other, the settlement patterns held a heterogeneous character even though these were divided functionally.


In addition to the Nayars, there were also other Hindu castes and communities like the Thiyyas, the Pulayas, Parayas etc. But Barbosa has recorded that some of the Thiyyas received military training. However, most of them were slaves of Nayars\textsuperscript{111}. The administration of justice was based on certain well established principles. As Laval observed, the King was the ultimate Judge, however it was local *ad hoc* committees called Panchayats that settled disputes about land in rural areas\textsuperscript{112}.

Though an urban centre, the people in the fringes of the city produced many agricultural products like banana, coconut and other vegetables. The coconut-oil was a major item of trade and the city itself had so many coconut gardens. The outskirts of the city showed considerable progress in farming which was a feature of a medieval urban centre of South India. This rural-urban fringe, especially along the coast line was accommodated by the out castes and the fisherman communities.

Examining the pre-colonial urban mosaic of Calicut, the factors which promoted the city during this period covers, its dual functionality as a port and a political entity; the international orientation of the region; the urban adaptation as a mechanism of survival (the patronage given to various merchants, religious tolerance, policing and security and cosmopolitanism); and the notable balance of centrifugal politics and centripetal economics. Extending in nodes along the great trade routes, the city welcomed foreign influences, and in fact survived on them. Whole frame works and institutions were

\textsuperscript{111} Duarte Barbosa, op.cit., P. 60.
developed to promote trade, and sagacious rulers were constantly on the lookout for ways to advance their commerce, and thus their own political importance further into the international nexus.