The present study is an attempt to discuss the political culture in the kingdom of Köljikkōṭu. The post-Cēra period witnessed the emergence of the small kingdoms like Kölattaunāṭu, Köljikkōṭu, Cochin and Vēṇāṭu. There were many locality chiefs within these kingdoms. European powers also played a major part in the history of Kerala during the latter part of this period. The role of the kingdom of Köljikkōṭu was crucial in the history of medieval Kerala. The Zamorin, its ruler, received wide attention from the world of historical scholarship at an international level after the beginning of the so-called Vasco da Gama epoch. In spite of this international interest, it is surprising that there have not been many studies regarding the polity that played host to Vasco da Gama. It was in AD 1938 that K.V. Krishna Ayyar wrote the first monograph on the history of the Zamorins, prior to which the manual of the Malabar district by William Logan was the only detailed study. Unfortunately, even after six and a half decades of its publication, Krishna Ayyar's work remains the only monograph on the Zamorins in English. A few other works were published in Malayalam on the history of the Zamorins; but they have not contributed qualitatively much to the received wisdom.

The present study covers a period of more than 500 years (AD c. 1200-1767), i.e., from the origin of the kingdom of Köljikkōṭu to the invasion of Haider Ali, the Mysore ruler, and the subsequent submission of Malabar to the Mysorean rulers. After a temporary rule of the Mysoreans, Malabar was placed under the control of the British. By AD 1792 the status of the Zamorins as independent rulers was changed to that of pensioners of the English and they continued in that position for many years. The period of the present study is limited to AD 1767 (to be more precise AD 1766), the final point when they were independent rulers.
The present study has made a heavy use of the unpublished manuscripts, *Kōlikkōt'an Granthavari* - part of the palace archives of the Zamorins. So far, K.V. Krishna Ayyar and N.M. Nampoothiry have used these documents in an accountable way but not comprehensively. One claim that the present study makes about originality is on account of the use of these documents. The present study uses the indigenous sources more, though the accounts of the foreign travellers are consulted as corroborative evidence. The ritualistic, symbolic and political aspects of the royalty, nature of kingship, lineage and kinsmen of the royalty and political structure of the kingdom of Kōlikkōtu are taken into account in the present study. It is undertaken with a view to give a clear picture of the political culture of the little kingdom of Kōlikkōtu. The present study is concerned with the royal patronage of high culture more than to culture itself. The role of precedents, rituals, festivals, symbolism, art forms, literature, scholarship, temples, etc. is also taken into account in the study.

A word or two by way of explanation about the documents given in the Appendices will be necessary here. These important documents, in Malayalam language and script, are from the unpublished *Kōlikkōt'an Granthavari* and are reproduced in the Appendices for their importance. These give samples of major court rituals, including ceremonies of investiture of different kinds, the royal procession, the great Māmākam and Taippūyam festivals and even the royal haircut. It is presumed that those who can read Malayalam language will be familiar with the script as well, and therefore, they are not transcribed into the Roman script with diacritical marks. So also, the documents are not translated, as a translation will spoil their flavour and defeat the purpose of the reproduction. Their substance is given in English wherever the documents are used in the text below and, therefore, even a summary is not attempted. The texts are reproduced solely for the use of those who can negotiate with the language and the script.
Others can safely ignore the documents, which will not, in any way, stand in the way of appreciating the arguments in the body of the dissertation.

The transliteration of Malayalam and Sanskrit words in the following pages is more or less in accordance with the standard transliteration scheme followed for South Asian languages. The exceptions are instead of ṛa and ḷa, ṛa and ḷa are used respectively and instead of vocalic ṛ, ri is used (for instance Kṛṣṇa instead of Kṛṣṇa). Non-English terms are italicised except for proper names. Diacritical marks are not used for familiar terms like Brahman. The original orthography is retained in quotations. I have used Swamikannu Pillai's _An Indian Ephemeris from AD 700 to AD 1799_ for the conversion of dates in Kollam Era to corresponding dates in the Christian Era. In the following pages _Granthavari_ denotes _Kōlīkkōtan Granthavari_, unless otherwise stated.

**Acknowledgements**

I am thankful to many individuals and institutions for their immense support which made the present study possible. It is not possible to acknowledge each of them individually here, but only express my deep felt gratitude. However, I would like to acknowledge at least a few of them here. I am grateful to my research supervisor Dr. Kesavan Veluthat for his guidance. I also thank members of his family, particularly, his wife Mrs. Parvathy for her cordial hospitality. I am greatly indebted to Dr. N.M. Nampoothiry for a generous permission to refer and copy the documents of _Kōlīkkōtan Granthavari_ which are preserved in the library of Vallathol Vidyapeetham at Edappal. It was with his wholehearted support that I completed the reference of the most important source for the present study with in a short period. Thanks are also due to the Staff of Vallathol Vidyapeetham for their help and courtesy. I am grateful to Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan who has shown considerable interest in my efforts to procure the sources and encouraged me by his critical suggestions on a small portion of an earlier draft of my dissertation.
I thank Prof. B. Surendra Rao, Chairman of our Department, for his support in various ways. He has ensured a conducive atmosphere in the Department to carry out free and frank research. I am thankful to my friend M.G. Shahin for his help to prepare the maps. Thanks are also due to Dr. Hanuma Nayak, Dr. B. Udaya and Dr. K.M. Lokesh – members of the faculty in the Department – for their cordiality. My friend P.S. Manojkumar has always been a source of inspiration and encouragement in the field of research and my debt to him is irredeemable. I thank K.C. Prashanth for his constant support to procure many rare works and for all other help in matters of research. Thanks are also due to my friends P.J. Vincent, E. Rekha, K. Vijayakumaran, Arun Kalliat, Umakanth, Subraya Pai, N.V. Sreekumar, S. Shyamaprasad and Rajesh Raghunath, who helped me in various ways at different stages of the study. Many more friends in Mangalore University and outside have supported me and in fact, I owe them a debt of obligation. I am grateful to my parents and family members for their constant emotional support.

I have utilised facilities available in many libraries and thankful to the concerned authorities and the Staff. The following are the libraries which facilitated my work: Mangalore University Library, Library of Vallathol Vidyapeetham at Edappal, Kerala Sahitya Academy Library and Appan Tampuran Memorial Library at Thrissur, the libraries of Calicut University, viz., C.H. Mohammad Koya Central Library, History Department Library and Sanskrit Department Library. I am grateful to University Grants Commission for a research fellowship which facilitated this study.