The Zamorins, the rulers of the kingdom of Kōlīkkōṭu, were among the more important kings of medieval Kerala. They established their kingdom and became its independent rulers after the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom of Mahōdayapuram in AD 12th century. The kingdoms of Vēṇāṭu, Kōlīkkōṭu and Kōlattunāṭu were the major powers that came into prominence in the post-Cēra period. The power and authority which the rulers claimed and actually wielded as well as the way in which they sought to legitimise such power and authority are to be reconsidered in the light of the newly available material and the rich discussion that has taken place at a theoretical level. Creating an image of royalty was particularly problematic for the Zamorins to begin with, for it was well known that they were local chiefs under the Cēra Perumāls and that they later became independent rulers. They could not discard their past altogether, which was known to their contemporaries, and create a new image which went against it.

The Perumāḷ tradition of Kēralōṭpatti is perhaps an instance of such an understanding. Not only the Zamorins but the other chiefs of Kerala as well, who became independent and succeeded in establishing their power, shared this tradition. The prescription that the rulers must be of Kṣatriya varṇa may have been a problem for them. They were Sāmantas of the Perumāḷs, which had already crystallized itself as a distinctive social group, something of a sub-caste. So they began to style themselves as Sāmanta kṣatriyas. They started claiming a status higher than the rest of the military professionals or Nāyars through a series of rituals. To be recognised and legitimised as the king, they resorted to various methods like performing elaborate rituals, patronage of temples, scholarship and literature, celebration of grand festivals, propagation of art forms and culture and
the cultivation of an elite group in the kingdom, exhibition of royal pageantry etc., all of which eminently suited their needs.

The Zamorins used to spend huge amounts from the resources of the kingdom for rituals, festivals, war, meeting the expenditure of royal functionaries and patronage. We see that even when the Zamorins were in financial strains in a later period, the expenditure on these items remained the same. Following Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, we can say that the apparent waste is actually a means for converting economic capital into political, social, cultural or symbolic capital.¹ The royalty patronised a particular culture, which it liked to stabilize and make use of. The nature of kingship in the kingdom of Kōlīkkōṭu is an interesting aspect of the political culture in medieval Kerala.

In making such a study, the political structure, which was of a complex nature, has to be taken into account. The existence, interaction and interdependence among various nodes of power are important in understanding the political culture. These nodes of power include the royalty, royal functionaries, locality chiefs, local magnates and temple authorities. The problem of a court in Kōlīkkōṭu presents a moot question. Scholars have taken it for granted. We have reconsidered it on the basis of evidences available to us. The term court is used in the present study not in the sense of an imperial court but as the retinue of the king and the functionaries closely attached to him.

How the different nodes of power related themselves to such a court and among themselves through elaborate procedures involving customs, precedent, rituals, values and beliefs, symbolism, dress and diet, festivals, art forms, literature, institutions, war, scholarship, etc. is an interesting aspect of our study.

¹ Peter Burke, History and Social Theory, (1992), Cambridge, 1994, pp. 67-68.
By underlining the importance of high culture in the present context, we do not in any way suggest its superiority or prominence over the popular culture.

It is necessary in this context to qualify the term ‘culture’, which is generally used to denote a ‘proud heritage’. Culture is a concept with a bewildering variety of definitions. The term was generally used to refer to the visual arts, literature, philosophy, science and music. In the last few decades, however, the term has widened its meaning as historians, sociologists, literary critics and others have widened their interests. Increasing attention is given to popular culture, in the sense of the attitudes and values of ordinary people and their expression in folk art, folk songs, folk tales, festivals and so on. As the term has widened its meaning, there has been an increasing tendency to think of ‘culture’ as active than passive. What was earlier assumed to be objective, hard social facts like gender or community is now assumed to be culturally constructed or constituted.¹

The term culture literally means cultivation. It denotes all cultivated practices of people which in a broad sense refer to the aggregate of morals, normative values, conventions, customs, rituals, laws, beliefs, arts and knowledge probably all aspects of human life.² Cultural history came to the forefront in the past few decades. Georges Duby says that in any fairly advanced society there is not one culture but a number of cultures.³ The Gramscian idea that ‘the people is not a single homogeneous cultural collective, but presents numerous cultural stratifications in different combinations’ gave way to the concept of ‘level of

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¹ Ibid., pp. 118-19.
culture' propounded by the French historians. We have sought to study the high culture, particularly the political culture, in the kingdom of Kōlikkōtu since our concern is with the king and the court. However, we use "culture" as in the conventional historiography and not as in the recent studies pointed out above.

Historiography

The foreign travellers, especially the Portuguese, were the earliest to write about the history of the Zamorin. Though Ibn Battuta speaks about the Zamorin, he does not give any details of their history. It is in the accounts of Duarte Barbosa, the Portuguese traveller, that we have an account of the origin of the kingdom of the Zamorin. We hear from him the Perumāl legend explaining it for the first time. Many other foreign travellers give an account of the Zamorin and the contemporary society, but they do not say much about the history of the Zamorins. Sheik Zainuddin in his *Tuḥfūṭ ul Mujahideen* writes about the Zamorin, his origin and deals with the Portuguese-Kōlikkōtu conflict. An indigenous version of the history of the Zamorins is found in *Kēralōṭpattī*. Being in the nature of a traditional account, we cannot fix the exact date of the text. The oral tradition may have gone round for many years before it was written down; so also, it may have been added to generation after generation or epoch after epoch. The wide circulation of the tradition in Kerala itself testifies to its importance. *Kēralōṭpattī Kilippāṭṭu*, a poem probably composed by a court poet of the Zamorin in the later

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part of the 17th century, also narrates the history of the Zamorin. It eulogises particularly the exploits of the Zamorin who began his reign in AD 1684. The Zamorins themselves prepared their family history as a reply to the queries of Col. Colin Mackenzie in AD 1810. This bases itself on tradition and attempts to enhance and/or ensure the prestige of the royal house in the eyes of the colonial masters.

Among the modern scholars William Logan wrote a fairly good account of the history of the Zamorins. He collected information regarding many aspects of history and presented it in a modern, critical way. Many of his assumptions and interpretations can be disputed at present; but it is not due to the lack of his historical understanding but because of the limited nature of information available at that time. He writes about the history of the Zamorin and gives details using both indigenous and foreign sources. The early history of the Zamorins lacks in details, but accounts of what he called the Portuguese period, that of conflict between the European Companies and the local rulers, Mysorean invasions, British supremacy, etc. are more detailed where the emphasis is, of course, on

13 Ibid., pp. 294-338.
14 Ibid., pp. 338-99.
15 Ibid., pp. 399-473.
16 Ibid., pp. 473-595.
political history. K.P. Padmanabha Menon makes a reference to the history of the Zamorins wherever it is relevant in his scheme of writing.\(^{17}\)

It was K.V. Krishna Ayyar who wrote the first monograph on the history of the Zamorins.\(^{18}\) He has made use of the palace records of the Zamorin as well as the foreign accounts in his writing. The information provided by this pioneering work is still unsurpassed. Due to the emphasis on political history, however, other aspects are sidelined. The limitations of his work can be summarised as follows:

1) Glorification of the past or lamenting its passage to such an extent that at times it borders on a history written by a court-historian.\(^{19}\)

2) An unwarranted tendency to draw parallels from European history\(^{20}\) and general statements of an anachronistic nature.\(^{21}\)

3) Lack of knowledge regarding many details of the history of Kerala, particularly about the immediately preceding Perumāl period, and the


\(^{19}\) For instance, he writes, "As the capital of a great kingdom and its chief mart, Calicut, of course, overshadowed every port and city in the west coast. It was the meeting-place of nations; its population was cosmopolitan, consisting of representatives of every race and nationality from the Pillars of Heracles to the Land of the Rising Sun. There were inns and public houses where foreigners could easily find accommodation." *Ibid.*, p. 292. Similarly, he writes on the adoption of princes to the royal house of Zamorin from the Nilēsvaram family in AD 1706 as follows: "In appearance it was only a family reunion; in reality it was a suicidal blunder. Had the Tekkankur adoption taken place, as Bharani Tirunal had intended, Cochin might have been overwhelmed, the Dutch beaten to their knees, Martanda Varma bridled and the fatal crisis of A.D. 1760-66 wholly averted." *Ibid.*, p. 5. For more similar expressions, see, *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 296, 298, 308.

\(^{20}\) He writes, "And the assumption of this title [Punturakkōn] on these occasions might have had the same significance as the revival of the title of King of France by the successors of Edward III of England whenever they decided upon an expedition across the English Channel." *Ibid.*, p. 16. For similar comparisons or contrasts, see, *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 97, 261, 279-80, 300, 309.

\(^{21}\) He writes, "The duty of the sovereign was to protect the *Dharma* and uphold the *Maryada* or *Acharam* of each caste and locality. These were expounded by the representatives of the people who were qualified by learning and experience. All disputes about land were settled by local *ad hoc* committees called *Panchayats*. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
consequent handicap in making use of evidences. A few factual errors are also found.22

4) The limitation of the historical method of that period.

However, the above points do not in anyway detract from the value of the work and it has to be appreciated as a pioneering study. The limitations are pointed out here and details are critically examined below not to belittle his contribution, but to justify a fresh study. He has also written articles on the history of the Zamorins. His papers on Māmākam are of much importance in our study.23

Articles appeared occasionally on the history of the Zamorins or related matters.24 K.M. Panikkar wrote on the medieval history of Kerala using mostly foreign records. He concentrated on the conflicts between the European companies and the local rulers of Kerala, in which the Zamorins too get fair share.25

After the work of Krishna Ayyar, there was no exclusive study on the Zamorins for many years. P.K.S. Raja26 and Sreedhara Menon27 wrote on the

22 For instance, he writes, oThe word Samuri or Tamuri, which is its older form, is not found in any record prior to A.D. 14426. Ibid., p. 12. For more such errors, see, Ibid., pp. 18, 106, 240, 262, 270.


24 Itticeeri Thavarān Bhattachari’s article on Panniyūr village, Koonezhattu Paramesvara Menon’s article on māmākam, articles on royal poets of the Zamorin and on pāṭtiṇī by anonymous authors are a few to name. Kunhi Krishna Menon’s journalistic report on the Ėṟañṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟṟ tamil


Zamorins, but their writings made no qualitative improvement and were heavily dependent on Krishna Ayyar’s work and other secondary sources. A work which is noticeable not by its merit but by the pride of the author, who was himself related to the Zamorin’s family, is also published. Recently N.M. Nampoothiry has published a collection of essays on the Zamorins. Information on certain incidents, which are found in the *Granthavari*, is presented in this work. He has made use of the *Granthavari* and quoted a few documents in part. But he was basically interested in Onomastics and Literature and lacks in historical methodology. Apart from these works there are a few articles and other works which generally deal with matters related to the history of the Zamorins. None of the works deals with the high culture of the kingdom of Kōlijkōtu.

The works of Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, a major name in the historiography of medieval Kerala, do not deal directly with the history of the Zamorins. But his works are useful for understanding medieval Kerala prior to the times of the Zamorin. They help us to get information on the socio-economic


and political background prior to the Zamorins. M.G.S. Narayanan’s works also help us to form a picture of medieval Kerala. His work *Perumāḷs of Kerala*,33 provides us with many pieces of information regarding the Cēras and help us for a better understanding of medieval Kerala history. As the predecessors of the Zamorins were local chiefs under the Perumāḷs of Mahōdayapuram, the details of Cēra history help us for looking for similarities and differences in various aspects of the history of the Zamorins. Kesavan Veluthat’s work on the Brahman villages of Kerala gives information regarding the pattern and function of the settlements from Payyannūr in the north to Ceñhannūr in the south.34 The role of Brahman villages in the kingdom of Köḷikkōṭu is nominal, if not absent. The work of Genevieve Bouchon on the history of the kingdom of Cannanore35 and Mark de Lannoy’s work on the kingdom of Travancore36 are also useful to us as these works provide information on the history of the two contemporary powers. The last two works are noted for the abundant use of foreign sources but suffer from a failure to use indigenous primary sources.

Studies in culture are comparatively at their infancy in Kerala. However, in recent years Kerala history also began to be constructed in these lines. Though it is a recent development, works like *Cultural History of Kerala*37 successfully marks this shift. The dearth of such works has to be compensated by taking up more such studies. The present study is an attempt in this line. A few studies on medieval


south Indian kingdoms are used for a comparative analysis of the aspects of the court culture.\textsuperscript{38} A large number of works on culture\textsuperscript{39} give us insight to identify the problems in the area of our study.

Sources

The problems of reconstructing the history of medieval Kerala are many and the foremost is the dearth of documentary evidences. The nature of sources influences the historical writing of a period in a big way. It is well said that,

Much that has been of greatest importance in the past lacks adequate archival evidence, and some of the most significant historical happenings have been over in the twinkling of an eye. It is often difficult to discern the underlying contours of an alien age; but that is no reason for refusing to look for them. It may not be easy to rekindle the glow of certain past events; but that is no justification for failing to try.\textsuperscript{40}

We are, however, not totally unfortunate regarding the sources on the history of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu. The main source of our study is the voluminous collection of unpublished palm leaf manuscripts called \textit{Kōḷikkōṭan Granthavari}. These constitute a major chunk of the records which formed part of the archives of the Zamorins. There are about 70 volumes of palm leaf books as well as 250


volumes of paper records in this collection of documents.\textsuperscript{41} We have made use of the palm leaf records as the documents in paper relate to a later period. They are mostly in Malayalam script except a few which are in Kölejuttu. The documents are basically of two categories: a) accounts of the details of the income and expenditure and b) accounts of the details of the rituals, festivals and similar events. Duarte Barbosa,\textsuperscript{42} the Portuguese traveller of AD 16\textsuperscript{th} century, and Pyrard of Laval,\textsuperscript{43} the French traveller of 17\textsuperscript{th} century, have given vivid pictures of the

\textsuperscript{41} Most of the volumes contain documents written neatly on both sides of the palm leaf. The volumes are numbered; but the numbers are arbitrary and not given by the palace scribes; perhaps given after the records were released by the Court to the present custodian of the records. Palm leaves in some volumes are found not in any order and there are documents which are numbered as well as unnumbered. Many of the volumes are bound with wooden boards on either end. Volumes vary in number and size of the palm leaves. Some have about 250 palm leaves while there are others with less than 10 palm leaves. More than a copy of the document is found in the Granthavari. About five copies of the same document is found, at least in one case. This indicates that documents were preserved through making many copies of the original document. Some of the palm leaves are much damaged and not likely to survive for long. We have utilised only the documents in Malayalam script for this study and could not utilise a few documents in Kölejuttu. I am extremely grateful to Dr. N.M. Nampoothiry for giving permission to refer and copy the documents and to the Staff of Vallathol Vidyapeetham for their courtesy.

\textsuperscript{42} Barbosa writes, "The King of Calicut continually keeps a multitude of writers in his palace who sit in a corner far from him; they write upon a raised platform, everything connected with the King’s Exchequer and with the justice and governance of the realm. They write on long and stiff palm leaves, with an iron style without ink; they make their letters in incised strokes, like ours, and the straight lines as we do. Each of these men carries with him whithersoever he goes a sheaf of these written leaves under his arm, and the iron style in his hand, and by this they may be recognised. And there are seven or eight more, the King’s private writers, men held in great esteem, who stand always before the King with their styles in their hands, and the bundle of leaves under their arms. Each one of them has a number of these leaves in blank, sealed by the King at the top. And when the King desires to give or to do anything as to which he has to provide he tells his wishes to each of these men and they write it down from the Royal seal to the bottom, and thus the order is given to whomsoever it concerns. These men are old and much respected and trusted. M.L. Dames, Ed., \textit{The Book of Duarte Barbosa}, Vol. II, pp. 18-19.

\textsuperscript{43} Pyrard of Laval writes, "Hard by there is a block of buildings allotted to the secretary and clerk to the king, for keeping all the registers. The order and system is most admirable herein, and I have oftentimes wondered to see the great number of men with no other duty or work all day but writing and registering. These posts are of much honour; the clerks all reside in the palace, but in different apartments, and they have different duties. Some make entry of all goods arriving for the king; others, the dues and taxes paid day by day; others, the expenditure of the king’s household; others, the most notable incidents of each day, both what happens at court and in the rest of the kingdom; in short, all news, for he has everything registered; and each clerk has his separate room. They keep also a register of all strangers who come there, taking their names and nationalities, the time of their arrival, and the business that has brought them, and so they did with us. It is a wondrous thing to observe their number and the perfect order that exists among them, and how fast they write on their palm-leaves, as described: these are of the length and breadth of the leaves of coco-trees, but thicker and stiffer. They make of them a kind of book, by means of holes in the thicker ends of the leaves, through which they pass a fillet, and thus bind together as many as are required."
record office of the Zamorin. But the surviving documents fall short of such expectation. The reasons for many documents not surviving are various including; a) the destruction of the palace of the Zamorin at Calicut by fire in AD 1510 and 1766, b) the practice of the Zamorin shifting the Kövilakams and the probable destruction of documents during the political chaos of Mysorean rule and c) the role of nature and white ants in the humid climate of Kerala. What is probable in the case of the documents that have survived is that they were the archival part of the palace establishment at Ponnāni and that they were transported to Calicut following the abandonment of Ponnāni in the eighteenth century.

William Logan consulted a few documents in the Granthavari for his study. K.V. Krishna Ayyar made use of these documents elaborately. But after that the documents were lost to the scholars for many years until N.M. Nampoothiry found them in the Kövilakam of the Zamorin’s predecessors at Tiruvacciṟa. He made use of these documents for his work on Onomastics44 and later also for a collection of articles on the history of the Zamorin.45 He has quoted a few documents in the latter work. But the bulk of the documents remain unpublished and nobody after him was attracted to these valuable sources, or else they were not easily available to the scholars for study. Thus, the Kölikkōtan Granthavari is of much importance as a source. For us this is significant in another way also i.e., we deal with the royalty and the high culture and it is the palace records that represent them best.

The king hath the like writers in all towns, ports, harbours, and frontier passages of his kingdom, who render account to those of the palace, all being well organised and in obedience one to another, each having his proper superiorō. Albert Gray, Ed., The Voyage of Francois Pyrard of Laval, Vol. I, (1887), New Delhi, Reprint 2000, pp. 413-14.

44 N.M. Nampoothiry, A Study of Place names in the Calicut District.
45 Idem, SCK.
The documents in the *Granthavari* have convinced us that there are many gaps in our knowledge on the Zamorins. We have no information on many aspects of the history of the Zamorin, as the documents that have come down to us are the results only of chance survival and hence in no way capable of giving a complete picture. In addition to this, the documents conceal more things than what they reveal. The nature of the documents never assures us information on various aspects, as they are the day to day accounts of income and expenditure and not a record of the day to day life. With such limitations, we have utilised the documents to reconstruct the high culture of the kingdom of Köllickóṭu. However, we keep in mind the words of Huizinga on medieval European history, where a fuller archival treasure is available, that

An atmosphere of passion and adventure enveloped the lives of princes. It was not popular fancy alone which lent it that colour.

A present day reader, studying the history of the Middle ages based on official documents, will never sufficiently realize the extreme excitability of the medieval soul. The picture drawn mainly from official records, though they may be the most reliable sources, will lack one element: that of the vehement passion possessing princes and peoples alike.\(^\text{46}\)

In addition to Köllickóṭan *Granthavari* we have a few more *Granthavaris* as our source. The family records of a Brahman house known as Vaññeri\(^\text{47}\) gives a lot of information regarding the temple system, functioning of the *sankētam*, the relation between the Zamorin, Veṭṭam Uṭaya Mūtta Kövil, other locality chiefs and the local magnates etc. The *Perumpaṭappu Svarūpam Granthavari* of Cochin royal family\(^\text{48}\) is also an important source, which gives information on the contemporary kingdom of Cochin. *Manipravāḷam* literature is another important source of

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\(^{46}\) J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, p. 19.


medieval Kerala history. It includes poems such as *Candrotsavam*, *Kökasandesam*, *Unnumlisandesam*, *Unniccirut TTLicaritam*, and *Unniyaccicaritam*. The *sandēsakāvyas* are of much importance as a source of history. *Kōkilasandesā* and *Bhramarasandesā* are two Sanskrit *sandēsakāvyas*. Literary compositions in Sanskrit like *Vasumatimānāvīkrama*, *Lakšmīmānāvēda* and *Kriṣṇagītī* the first two by the poets patronised by the Zamorin and the latter by a Zamorin himself are also valuable sources for the reconstruction of the cultural history of the Zamorin. *Kēralōtpattī Kilippāṭṭu*, a poem narrating the history of the Zamorin, is another literary source. The cāvēr songs are an important source of folk tradition. *Kēralōtpattī* tradition, the oral tradition on the history of Kerala, was circulated throughout Kerala in different versions. *Tuḥfat*
ul Mujahideen, a contemporary Arabic work on the Portuguese-Kólîkkōṭu conflict\textsuperscript{61} is also our source material.

Explicit historical accounts in Malayalam are very rare. Fortunately, we have such an account and an autobiography as our source.\textsuperscript{62} The autobiography of an important Brahman who belonged to the Panniyûr village and was degraded from caste status is a unique source for it contains a harsh criticism of the Zamorin. The letters of the Cochin Râjas to the Dutch Company constitute another useful source material.\textsuperscript{63} The accounts of foreign travellers like Ibn Battuta,\textsuperscript{64} Abd er Razzak,\textsuperscript{65} Duarte Barbosa,\textsuperscript{66} Ludovico de Varthema,\textsuperscript{67} John Huyghen Van Linschoten,\textsuperscript{68} contemporary documents and narratives of the voyage of Pedro Alvares Cabral,\textsuperscript{69} Pietro Della Valle,\textsuperscript{70} Pyrard of Laval,\textsuperscript{71} Alexander Hamilton,\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{61} Velayudhan Panikkassery, Ed. & Trans., \textit{Kēralam Patinaıcicum Patinauçum Nāṟṟṟiñukalīl}.
\textsuperscript{64} H.A.R. Gibb, Ed., \textit{Ibn Battuta - Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354}.
\textsuperscript{65} R.H. Major, Ed., \textit{India in the Fifteenth Century}, (1858), New Delhi, Reprint 1992.
\textsuperscript{66} M.L. Dames, Ed., \textit{The Book of Duarte Barbosa}, Vol. II.
\textsuperscript{67} R.C. Temple, Ed., \textit{The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508}, (1863), New Delhi, Reprint 1997.
\textsuperscript{69} William Brooks Greenlee, Ed., \textit{The Voyage of Pedro Alvares Cabral to Brazil and India}, (1938), New Delhi, Reprint, 1995.
\textsuperscript{71} Albert Gray, Ed., \textit{The Voyage of Francois Pyrard of Laval}, Vol. I.
John Nieuhoff,\textsuperscript{73} \textit{et al.} provide us alien perspectives of the contemporary society and culture of medieval Kerala.

Inscriptions, of the Zamorins or which refer to them, are very limited. Muccunti mosque inscription is an inscription of the Zamorin, a grant of \textit{Punturakkōn} to the mosque of Muccunti at Kuṟricciṟa.\textsuperscript{74} A few Čēra inscriptions\textsuperscript{75} refer to the chiefs of Ėṟanātu, who were the predecessors of the Zamorin.

The present study covers a period of more than five centuries (AD c. 1200-1767),\textsuperscript{76} i.e., from the origin of the kingdom of Kōḷiṭṭukōṭu to the days when it passed under Mysorean overlordship. The Zamorins were independent rulers during this period. We have not attempted the nearly impossible reconstruction of the dynastic chronology. The reasons are twofold: firstly, the available evidences are not enough for such a construction, secondly, the regnal years of each Zamorins are not so important in the present study. However, alterations are suggested to the received knowledge of a broad chronology of the kingdom of Kōḷiṭṭukōṭu, as the period suggested by Krishna Ayyar is too early while N.M. Nampoothiry puts it too late.\textsuperscript{77} It was a period of political chaos and war,\textsuperscript{78} but the present study makes a reference to this aspect only when it is essential.

\textsuperscript{73} Sankaran Nair K., Ed. & Trans., \textit{Nieuhoff Kanta Kēṟaḷam}, Thiruvananthapuram, 1996.

\textsuperscript{74} M.G.S. Narayanan, \textit{Cultural Symbiosis in Kēṟaḷa}, Trivandrum, 1972, \textit{App. V.A}, pp. 95-96.

\textsuperscript{75} The Jewish copper plate of Bhāskara Ravi, an unpublished inscription noticed by M.G.S. Narayanan from Triccambaram, Kollam Rāmēśvaram inscription of Rāmavarma Kulaśēkhara, etc. are examples. For Jewish copper plate see, \textit{Epigraphia Indica}, (hereafter \textit{El}), Vol. III, (1894-95), New Delhi, Reprint 1979, No.11, edited by E. Hultzch, pp. 66-69; see also, M.G.S. Narayanan, \textit{Cultural Symbiosis in Kēṟaḷa}, \textit{App. III.A}, pp. 79-82; Triccambaram inscription partly quoted in M.G.S. Narayanan, \textit{PK} \textit{Notes}, p. LXII. The text of Kollam Rāmēśvaram inscription is found in \textit{Travancore Archaeological Series}, (hereafter \textit{TAS}), Vol. V, No. 13, pp. 40-46; a re-reading of the text from the original stone was made by M.G.S. Narayanan, \textit{PK} \textit{Notes}, p. LXV.

\textsuperscript{76} The year is actually, 1766. This is an error in the title; but we have retained it for very technical reasons.

\textsuperscript{77} See below, Chapter II.

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Evidences available are less on the early period of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu (AD 13th to 15th century) compared with the later period (AD 16th to 18th century). We have looked for common features in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu and other contemporary South Indian kingdoms rather than trying to establish its uniqueness. Continuity as well as change from the earlier period is observed. Though a large number of sources have been utilised for the present study, we are heavily rewarded from the palace records of the Zamorin. However, the perspectives evolved from the palace accounts are more or less one sided. The close scrutiny of these accounts makes it clear that though matters embarrassing to the royalty are omitted from the records, tampering with the facts are not resorted to. The reason lies mainly in the nature of documents, as they were the accounts of the income and expenditure, details of rituals, etc.

The Zamorin resided mainly at Calicut, his capital, or at Ponnāni. He used to travel throughout his kingdom and visit local magnates and temples. The palace documents that have come down to us mainly record the rituals and events when the Zamorin resided at Ponnāni and its neighbourhood. The reasons are; 1) the documents preserved at the Kōvilakam of Calicut should have perished during its destruction by fire in AD 1510 and 1766 and 2) with the expansion of the kingdom to the south and the constant threat from Cochin the presence of the Zamorin at Ponnāni in the southern part of the kingdom became strategically important. Both Ponnāni and Calicut were trade centres and ports in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu, with a network of tollhouses and warehouses, which were administratively also important. Trade was a major source of revenue of the Zamorin. Sanjay

Subrahmanyam calls the Zamorin as a "protector monarch" who sees his interests and those of the merchants intimately associated. A large network of residences of the king, his kinsmen and the royal functionaries were seen at Ponnāni and Calicut. Important temples also developed at these places. Thus a sacred geography also made them important. A complex mixture of trade, administration and *bhakti* is found in the growth of both Ponnāni and Calicut.

The first section of Chapter II examines the evidence relating to the rise of the kingdom of Kōlikkōtu and explains how it became a powerful kingdom among the principalities in the post-Cēra period. The growth of a new harbour at Calicut and Arab interests in the region, the political ambition of the newly emergent rulers i.e., the Zamorins, the decline of Koṭūṇallūr harbour due to natural calamities, the new Chinese enterprise in Malabar in the 13th century, etc. all combined to boost the prosperity of the kingdom of Kōlikkōtu in the post-Cēra period. The socio-economic background of the kingdom is discussed in the second section of this Chapter. A study of the agricultural products, trade, coinage, weights and measures and the composition of the society, particularly the elite section of it, is undertaken. It helps in a better understanding of the high culture, as it was people who, after all, were responsible for cultural production.

Chapter III examines the nature of kingship in the kingdom. The *nātu* in the post-Cēra period was ruled by a lineage of chiefs called *Svarūpam* (royal house). Neṭiyirippu *Svarūpam* (the House of Neṭiyirippu) ruled the kingdom of Kōlikkōtu. The *Svarūpam* consisted of a few *tāvalis* or branches. Three *tāvalis* existed in Kōlikkōtu. No *tāvali* enjoyed precedence over the other. There was an order of descent (*sthānams*), which defined the top positions in the royal house, based on

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seniority (kūruvālca). Five sthānams existed in Kōlīkkōṭu as the Zamorin at the apex. The Chapter discusses these dignitaries individually at some length.

Chapter IV studies the nodes of power like locality chiefs and local magnates. The nature of relationship between the king, locality chiefs and local magnates is important in understanding the political structure. The position of locality chiefs and local magnates were mostly hereditary in nature. The locality chiefs, more or less independent in their region, acknowledged the overlordship of the Zamorin, whereas the local magnates were dependent on him. Though the respective locality chief or local magnate was the head of the family, the junior members also worked in various capacities. There was a general pattern of the appointment and conferment of privileges on the local magnates etc. based on heredity and custom. Conferment of honours and privileges on local magnates is analysed in this Chapter, as that constituted an important aspect of the political life of the kingdom. The interplay of privileges and obligations and the complexity of relationship between different nodes of power are studied.

In Chapter V the problem of court and the role of royal functionaries in the political culture are discussed. There was no hard and fast division of the work as civil and military or as ritual and political among the royal functionaries. The function of the person changed in accordance with the need of the hour. The cases of a few important royal functionaries or their families are studied individually.

In the next Chapter the rituals performed by and on behalf of the royalty are analysed. In Kōlīkkōṭu everything in the life of the king, from investiture to death and from bath to haircut, was elaborately ritualised. The social, i.e., "caste", status of the Zamorin is also studied in this Chapter. The origin of the Zamorin from a lower social status made it imperative for him to seek legitimacy to his power.
using various methods including elaborate rituals. A picture of the daily life of the Zamorin is constructed.

Chapter VII discusses the interrelationship between various temples and the royalty. The Zamorin utilised the temples to legitimise his power. The main concern of the study is the king and the patronage of culture. It also studies the prominent temples in the kingdom of Kōlīkkōṭu and their relation to various nodes of power. In the process it helps to the proper understanding of the high culture.

In Chapter VIII the patronage of scholarship, art and literature by the royalty is examined. Particularly taken up for discussion is *Krīṣṇanāṭṭam*, a theatrical performance of the story of Krīṣṇa, and the annual assembly of scholars called *Paṭṭattānam*. The problem of court poets and court literature gives us a picture of the high culture of the period. How the family history of the Zamorins was developed and made use of is examined in the Chapter by analysing three different genres of contemporary and/or later historical writing.

Chapter IX studies the festivals namely *Māmākam* and *Taippūyam* in which the Zamorin had a central role to play. Both were festivals celebrated once in twelve years on the banks of Pērār at Tirunāvāya. *Māmākam*, celebrated under the auspices of the "state" was a ceremonials, symbolic expression of the political hegemony of the Zamorin. Elaborate arrangements were made for its celebration. The festivals were used to enhance the prestige and splendour of the royalty. *Māmākam* is noted for the show of military power, royal prowess and pageantry and the observance of rituals. The last Chapter makes a general conclusion on the political culture of the Zamorins.