

Chapter III

Power at the Centre: Lineage, Kinship and the King

Many independent kingdoms emerged in Kerala in the period after the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom of Mahōdayapuram. We have discussed the rise of the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu under the Zamorins in the previous Chapter.¹ Vēṅāṭu, Cochin, Kōḷikkōṭu and Kōlattunāṭu became prominent among the *nāṭus* of the Cēra period. There were other *nāṭus*, which claimed independence or accepted the overlordship of one of the above four *nāṭus* at certain times like Valluvanāṭu, Vetṭattunāṭu, Kuṟumpoṟaināṭu, Vempalanāṭu (Tekkumkūr, Vaṭakkumkūr), etc. A brief account of the political structure of these *nāṭus* will provide the background to the study of the lineage, kinship and king in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu, which is essential for the understanding of the royalty and the culture that it patronised.

The family of chieftains that ruled the *nāṭu* was known as the *Svarūpam*, as for example, the ones like Trippāppūr *Svarūpam*, Perumpaṭappu *Svarūpam*, Neṭiyirippu *Svarūpam*, Āraññōṭṭu *Svarūpam* and Kōlattunāṭu *Svarūpam*. We translate *Svarūpam* as “the House”.² The term *Svarūpam* was used in the medieval Malayalam chronicles to mean any influential family, not necessarily a ‘royal’ family.³ In any case, families known as *Svarūpams* ruled the kingdoms of post-Cēra period.⁴

¹ See above, Chapter II.

² The *Svarūpam* is literally translated as “self form” in a recent study. Raju S., ‘Political Organisation of Medieval Self-Forms: *Swaroopam* and *Mūppu Vaazhcha*’, Working Paper, Lateral Studies Series No. 15, School of Social Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, 1998. This study, however, fails to inspire conviction.

³ *Kēraḷōṭpatti Granthavari*, *Kōḷikkōṭan Granthavari*, *Perumpaṭappu Granthavari*, etc. use the term *Svarūpam* to denote family.

A common character of the kinship structure in the ruling houses or *Svarūpams* in all the *nāṭus* in Kerala was that they followed the *Marumakkattāyam* (matriliny) system of inheritance. Descent was traced in the mother's line (i.e., younger brothers and nephews, not the sons, of the King constituted the royal line).⁵ This had a crucial bearing on the politics of the period. The eldest male member in the female line became the King. Thus the eldest male member in the royal family became *Vēṇāṭṭaṭi* in *Vēṇāṭu*, *Perumpaṭappu Mūṭta Kōvil* or *Perumpaṭappu Valiya Tampurān* in Cochin, *Vaḷḷuvakkōnātiri* in *Vaḷḷuvanāṭu*, *Vettam Uṭaya Mūṭta Kōvil* in *Vettattunāṭu*, and *Kōlattiri* in *Kōlattunāṭu* (Cannanore). The eldest male member of *Neṭiyirippu Svarūpam*, which that ruled *Kōḷikkōṭu*, became the Zamorin.

The *Svarūpam* or royal house consisted of various *tāvaḷis* or collateral branches (the term *tāvaḷi* may be derived from *tāy-vaḷi* or mother's line). Five *tāvaḷis* existed in Cochin. It was four in *Vaḷḷuvanāṭu* and three each in *Kōlattunāṭu* and *Kōḷikkōṭu*. The five *tāvaḷis* of Cochin were *Mūṭta tāvaḷi Kōvilakam*, *Iḷaya tāvaḷi Kōvilakam*, *Muriññūr Kōvilakam*, *Cāḷiyūr Kōvilakam* and *Palliviruttal Kōvilakam*. The senior-most in these *Kōvilakams* on rotation basis became *Perumpaṭappil Valiya Tampurān* i.e., the Rāja of Cochin.⁶ Four *tāvaḷis* existed in the senior lineage of *Vaḷḷuvanāṭu* (i.e., the House of *Āraññōṭṭu*). They were *Aripa*,

⁴ For details on *Svarūpam* see, M.R. Raghava Varier, 'State as *Svarūpam*: An Introductory Essay', in R. Champakalakshmi, et al., Eds., *State and Society in Pre-modern South India*, Thrissur, 2002, pp. 120-30; K.N. Ganesh, 'Land Rights and Political Structure in Medieval *Vēṇāṭu*', in *Ibid.*, pp. 158-63; *Idem*, 'Structure of Political Authority in Medieval Kerala', in P.J. Cherian, Ed., *Perspectives on Kerala History: The Second Millennium*, pp. 123-79.

⁵ M.L. Dames, Ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*. Vol. II, pp. 10-11. It is referred in *Pūrvabhārata Campu* by Mānavēda. K. Kunjunni Raja, *Contributions of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature* (hereafter *CKSL*), Madras, 1958, Note 1, p. 99.

⁶ V.K.R. Menon, Ed., *Perumpaṭappu Svarūpam Granthavari*, p. 1.

Mankāṭa, Kaṭannamaṇṇa and Āyiranāli. In Kōlikkōṭu the senior lineage consists of *Putiya Kōvilakam*, *Kilakke Kōvilakam* and *Paṭiññāre Kōvilakam*.

There was a set pattern of succession, indicated by positions in the royal lines in all these *nāṭus*. Generally five or six positions were defined in the royal lines. These positions were based on the chronological seniority of the incumbent in the different *tāvaḷis* of the *Svarūpam* and constituted what is called in the records as *Kūruvāḷca*. Thus, six positions existed in the royal house of Veṭṭam. These positions in the descending order are Veṭṭam Uṭaya Mūṭta Kōvil, Veṭṭam Iḷaya Kōvil, Veṭṭam Mūnnāmkūṭa Kōvil, Veṭṭam Nālāmkūṭa Kōvil, Veṭṭam Añcāmkūṭa Kōvil and Veṭṭam Ārāmkūṭa Kōvil.⁷ In Kōlikkōṭu five positions existed.⁸ Unlike in the case of Cochin, there was no rotation of position among the *tāvaḷis* in Kōlikkōṭu. Thus no particular *tāvaḷi* enjoyed any privilege or precedence in the matter of succession, as the only criterion for succession was seniority of age. Thus the succession to the position of the Zamorin by more than one incumbent from the same *tāvaḷi* in quick succession was not impossible.

In addition to the above-mentioned *tāvaḷis*, which can be considered as constituted the senior lineage, there were many junior lineages in a few *nāṭus*. The junior lineage was a lineage parallel to the ruling lineage. The junior lineages had no right for *Kūruvāḷca* i.e., the members of this lineage could not rise to the positions of the royal line. This was found in Vaḷḷuvanāṭu and Kōlikkōṭu. Members of the junior lineage in Vaḷḷuvanāṭu were designated as Vaḷḷōṭis and those in Kōlikkōṭu, as Ērāṭis.⁹

⁷ *KG*, Vols. 7 & 14.

⁸ A sixth position, i.e., Neṭuvirippil Iḷaya Ērāṭi, is also mentioned in the *Granthavarī* in a few cases. *Ibid.*, Vols. 7 & 14. Francis Buchanan also refers to this sixth position. Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, Vol. II, p. 394.

⁹ M.R. Raghava Varier, 'State as *Svarūpam*: An Introductory Essay', *Op.cit.*

The strict observance of *Kūruvāḷca* in the case of Kōḷikkōṭu preempted problems of succession in the ruling line. But in Cochin and Kōlattunāṭu, certain *tāvaḷis* became more powerful than others and began to deny the right of other *tāvaḷis* to succeed, which resulted in struggle among the *tāvaḷis* in both these kingdoms. As K.N. Ganesh has observed about the political structure of medieval Kerala in general, the practices of *Mūppu muṛa* and *Kūruvāḷca* involved gradations of authority within a matrilineal joint family showed elements of parcellisation of authority held together by norms of kinship ties and customary regulations.¹⁰ Thus, in the absence of any real ‘political’ character, without a permanent abode of the king and a capital, the system would work only so far as the forces of kinship and lineage prevailed.¹¹

The Zamorins emerged as the rulers of Kōḷikkōṭu from the House of Neṭiyirippu (Neṭiyirippu *Svarūpam*).¹² The House had a few *tāvaḷis* or branches.¹³ There was an order of descent (*sthānams*) which defined the position of individuals in the royal house, and this was as per the seniority (*Kūruvāḷca*). The eldest male member of the royal house became the Zamorin and the eldest female member, the Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil. The positions in the male line of the royal house were as follows: 1) *Sāmūtiri* (Zamorin), 2) Ēṛanāṭṭu Iḷamkūr Nampiyātiri (Ēṛālppāṭu for short), 3) Ēṛanāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri (Mūnnālppāṭu), 4) Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri (Eṭattrālppāṭu) and 5) Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Ēṛāṭi

¹⁰ K.N. Ganesh, ‘Structure of Political Authority in Medieval Kerala’, in P. J. Cherian, Ed., *Op. Cit.*, p. 226; see also, K.N. Ganesh, ‘Land Rights and Political Structure in Medieval Vēṇāṭu’, in R. Champakalakshmi, *et al, Op. Cit.*

¹¹ K.N. Ganesh, ‘Structure of Political Authority in Medieval Kerala’, in P. J. Cherian, Ed., *Op. Cit.*, p. 226.

¹² For details see above, Chapter II.

¹³ The *tāvaḷis* known to us are *Kiḷakke Kōvilakam*, *Patiññāre Kōvilakam* and *Putiya Kōvilakam*.

(Neṭuttrāḷppāṭu).¹⁴ On the death of an incumbent at any level, those juniors to him got promoted in the order of succession.

(A-12754)

Among the women of the house, too, there were three such positions. Neṭuvirippil Mūṭta Kōvil, also known as Ampāṭi Kōvilakam Tampurāṭṭi, was the seniormost, Neṭuvirippil Iḷaya Kōvil and Neṭuvirippil Ceṛiya Kōvil following her in that order. Each *tāvaḷi* had its *Valiya Tampurān* (senior male member of a *tāvaḷi*) and *Valiya Tampurāṭṭi* (senior female member of a *tāvaḷi*) as its head. The members from the respective *tāvaḷis* who made it to the ruling positions (i.e., five positions in the male line and three positions in the female line) are not considered for the post of the male and female heads of each *tāvaḷi*. As stated earlier, no particular *tāvaḷi* enjoyed any privilege in the matter of succession, as the only criterion for succession was seniority of age. The proceedings in two suits in the British court in AD 19th century give us a clear picture on this matter.¹⁵

¹⁴ It is curious that the fifth one in the order of succession should enjoy this position, which literally means the "Seniormost Ēṛāṭi of the House of Neṭiyirippu". This may indicate some major changes that had taken place in the order of succession, some usurpation or other kind of dislocation, about which we have no evidence. It is also intriguing to note that the title of the seniormost lady in the House of Neṭiyirippu is Neṭuvirippil Mūṭta Kōvil, an exact counterpart by name to Neṭuvirippil Mūṭta Ēṛāṭi.

¹⁵ In A.S. 7 of AD 1843 the Sudder court had before them a suit in which it was sought to recover a debt due by a deceased prince during the time that he occupied the position of Mūnnāḷppāṭu, or third prince in the royal line, from the heads of the *Kōvilakam* to which he belonged as the legal heir. The following extract is taken from the judgement:

"It is fact well known to all, and therefore only requiring mention, that between the junior members or Tamburans residing in the different Kovilagams, or palaces, and their senior relations filling any of the Kurvalchas, or Rajahships, there is not, and cannot be from the nature of things, any reciprocity of interest or right to each other's property, their establishments, income and duties being distinct and under separate management.

The Kovilagam is the family residence in which all who have not succeeded to one of the Rajahships remain under the management of the eldest resident female, or Tamburatti, of each branch of the family.

The Kurvalcha, or Rajahship, is the dignity to which each male succeeds according to the priority of birth no matter to which of the Kovilagams or families he may belong.

Besides the above mentioned, there is a sixth Kurvalcha, or dignity, which is always filled by the eldest Tamburatti, or female, of the family, no matter with which of the Kovilagams she may be connected, whose proper residence is the Ambadi Kovilagam. Like the other Rajahships and Kovilagams, her own income, Malikhana allowance from Government, and establishment are distinct and under separate management.

It is obvious from these arrangements that, although all are originally of the same stock, an impassable line of distinction has been drawn between the interests of each branch of the family and the

This Chapter examines the Zamorin, his kinsmen and the lineage as a whole.

The Zamorin

The Zamorin, the ruler of the kingdom, held titles such as *Pūnturakkōn* (“the Lord of Pūntura”) and *Kunnalakkōn* (“the Lord of the Hill and the Sea” translated into Sanskrit as *Śailābdhīśvara*). The title *Pūnturakkōn* was usually found in the official records viz. inscription¹⁶ and *Granthavari*.¹⁷ *Pūnturakkōn* is found in very early records dating from AD 12th century onwards.¹⁸ The epithet

interests of such members of these families who may in after life respectively succeed to the Rajahships. The one can exercise no control over the acts of the other, and, where there can be no lawful responsibility.”

The final decision of the Court was that the defendants were liable only to the extent of the assets, real or personal, which could be proved to have been acquired from the estate of the deceased Mūnnāppātu. Lewis Moore, *Malabar Law and Custom*, (1882), Madras, Reprint 1905, pp. 354-55. The following is the judgement of Madras High Court in *Vīra Rāyan Versus Valiya Rāṇi of Putiya Kōvilakam*.

“The parties to this suit are members of the family of the Tamudri Rajahs of Zamorins of Calicut. The family comprises three Kovilagams or houses the Pudia, Padinjara and Keyake Kovilagams. Of these, each had its separate estate, and the senior lady of each Kovilagam, is entitled to the management of the property of the Kovilagam. There are five *Sthanams*, or places of dignity with separate properties attached to them, which are enjoyed in succession by the senior male members of the Kovilagams. These are in order of dignity 1) the Zamorin, 2) the Eralpad, 3) the Munarpad, 4) the Edatharapad, and 5) the Nedutharpad; and it would seem that, at the beginning of the century, there was also a sixth *Sthanam* known as the Ellearadi Tirumulpad but, as no mention is made of this *Sthanam* in the present proceedings, it may be that it has ceased to exist.

The senior lady of the whole family, who is known as the Valia Tamburatti, also enjoys a *Sthanam* with separate property; this *Sthanam* is termed the Ambadi Kovilagam.

In the management of the properties of the three Kovilagams, the senior ladies are often assisted by the males or Rajahs who in time may pass out of the Kovilagam and attain one of the separate *Sthanams*.

There are no family names, and the *Sthanam* holders are distinguished after their deaths by the name of the year in which they respectively died. All property acquired by the holder of a *Sthanam* which he has not disposed of in his life time or shown an intention to merge in the property attached to the *Sthanam*, becomes on his death the property of the Kovilagam in which he was born”. *Ibid*.

¹⁶ Kollam Rāmēśvaram inscription of Rāmavarma Kulaśēkhara (AD 1102) uses this title.

M.G.S. Narayanan, *PK*, Notes, p. XLV; *Idem*, ‘Mānavikrama alias *Pūnturakkōn* of Ēraṇād - A New Name in the Twilight of the Cēra Kingdom in Kerala’, Paper presented in the 18th Annual Congress of Epigraphical Society of India’, Pune, 1992. In Muccunti mosque inscription (AD c. 13th century) also the title *Pūnturakkōn* is used. *Idem*, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, App. V.A, p. 95, l. 1.

¹⁷ The writs of Zamorin are called *Pūnturakkōn tittu*. *KG*, Vols. 38 & 63.

*Kunnalakkōn*¹⁹ and its Sanskritised form *Śailābdhīśvara*²⁰ are found mostly in literary works dating from the fifteenth century. It is enigmatic, however, that the title *Pūnturakkōn* is used only once in the early documents; the next use found is in AD 1748,²¹ and profusely thereafter. We are not able to explain this.

The dynastic title of *Sāmūtiri*, with its variants as *Tāmūtiri*, *Tāmūri* etc., and spelt in European languages as Zamorin, is of obscure etymology with different scholars offering different derivations depending on their imagination. Varthema, the Italian traveller of early 16th century AD, writes that “*Samory*, which in the pagan language means “God on earth”.²² There is no convincing evidence available to speculate on the derivation of the term *Sāmūtiri*. Thus we do not put forward our own version in this regard. Instead we have attempted an analysis of the function of those epithets in the contemporary society.

The titles or epithets highlight a person’s position or his claims to a position. *Kunnalakkōn* with its Sanskrit variant *Śailābdhīśvara* appears to be significant. One of the earliest references to this title is in a *Maṇipravālam* text called *Kōkasandēśam*. A verse there follows:

¹⁸ See above, Note 16.

¹⁹ This epithet is used in the *Maṇipravālam* works like *Kōkasandēśam* and *Candrōtsavam*. Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, Ed., *Kōkasandēśam*, I:21, p. 38; *Idem*, Ed., *Candrōtsavam*, I: 50, p. 34.

²⁰ In the Sanskrit works such as *Mānamēyōdaya* and *Vasumatīmānavikrama* this epithet is found. V.R. Muralidharan, *Mānamēyōdaya – A Critical Study*, Ph.D. thesis, Calicut University, 1992, p. 73; K.T. Madhavan, *Vasumatīmānavikrama of Dāmōdarabhaṭṭa*, Ph.D. thesis, Calicut University, 1987, p. 188.

²¹ *KG*, Vol. 63.

²² R.C. Temple, Ed., *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, p. 54. John Nieuhoff, the Dutch traveller says that *Sāmūtiri* in Indian language means emperor and was also called as *Tambrana* (*Tampurān*) which means god. K. Sivasankaran Nair, Ed. & Trans., *Nieuhoff Kaṇṭha Kēraḷam*, p. 58.

Next you see the Ōtupaṛampū, where the cycle of feudatories pay obeisance to Vikrama, the King, who is renowned in all the seven worlds and takes the title of *Kunnalakkōn* at the opening of the *Māmākam* festival.²³

This suggests that the Zamorin claimed the overlordship over a number of lesser chieftains.²⁴ The statement that the title of *Kunnalakkōn* was taken at the festival may indicate the overlordship over Kerala, a name by which the land was known being *Malayāla*, meaning the same thing as *Kunnala* or *Śailābdhi*. *Kunnalakkōn* or *Śailābdhīśvara* will therefore mean overlord of Kerala. That was precisely what the Zamorin pretended to be. This title is believed to have been conferred on the Zamorin by none less than the Cēramān Perumāḷ, the last Cēra king, as is stated in the *Kēraḷōtpatti* tradition,²⁵ which claim was also an important point in the legitimisation of the ruler.²⁶

The implication regarding the title *Pūnturakkōn* is not clear. If it means the Lord of Pūntura, the latter being taken as a port, it is a humble, unpretentious, epithet. This was, as we already noted, the title that the Zamorin had from the beginning.²⁷ Mānavikraman, Mānavēdan and Vīrarāyan were the personal names of the Zamorins. Every male member born into the lineage had one of these three names. This has posed serious problems in the identification of individual rulers and fixing the chronology and details of political history. These names indicated qualities which are thought to be necessary for kings such as honour,

²³ Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, Ed., *Kōkasandēśam*, I:21, pp. 38-39.

²⁴ Pyrard of Laval writes, "All the Nair kings of this coast are his vassals, except the king of Cochin". Albert Gray, Ed., *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval*, Vol. I, p. 408.

²⁵ M.R. Raghava Varier, Ed., *Kēraḷōtpatti Granthavari (The Kōlattunāṅu Traditions)*, pp. 42, 44.

²⁶ Nicholas B. Dirks says that "all *vamcāvalis* make it clear that honours and emblems are only meaningful when given by a superior, a king or a deity". Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown*, p. 82.

²⁷ See above, Note 16.

aggressiveness and heroism. *Māna* means honour and *vikrama* means aggressiveness. Thus *Mānavikraman* means one who had both honour and aggressiveness. Honour is again part of the name *Mānavēdan*. *Mānavēdan* may be a contraction or overcorrection of *Mānaviyatan* or *Mānavīyan*, the forms found in documents of the Cēra kingdom as borne by the chiefs of Ēṛālanātu. What *vīyan*, *viyatan*, etc. meant is not clear to us. This term figures in a verse in *Kōkasandēśam* which describes the town of Koṭuṅṅallūr. That town, “where *vīyan* resides”, is said to hold the land of the Cēramāns on its eye brows.²⁸ The exact significance of this description is not clear although one is tempted to connect it with *Mānavīyan* or *Mānaviyatan*. This reminds us of the claim that the Zamorins made about being the overlord of the whole of Kerala and the statement that this position they got directly from the Perumāḷs themselves.²⁹ *Vīrarāyan* also denotes a personal quality. *Vīra* means hero or brave and *rāyan* a variant of *rājan*, means the king, thus it means a heroic king or brave king. It is exactly these personal qualities of the founders of the royal house of the Zamorin that are highlighted in the *Kēraḷōtpatti* tradition.³⁰

The emergence of the Zamorins as independent rulers from the position of petty chiefs will help us to understand the purpose of high sounding titles used by them. The Zamorin emerged as the King of Kōḷikkōṭu from a meagre position of Ēṛānātuṭayavar, a locality chief. Thus the Zamorin used various methods for the legitimisation of his power. The *Kēraḷōtpatti* tradition of the partition of Kerala by Cēramān Perumāḷ and his gift of a small tract of land, his sword, and a set of privileges with the injunction to “die or kill to annex”³¹ is an indication of both his

²⁸ Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, Ed., *Kōkasandēśam*, I:76, p. 76.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Hermann Gundert, Ed., *Kēraḷōtpatti*, in *Kēraḷōtpattiyum Maṅṅum*, pp. 179-82. Another personal quality highlighted in the *Kēraḷōtpatti* tradition is honesty. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-200.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

humble beginnings and also a means to seek legitimacy to the aggrandisements he undertook later. The deceased Zamorins were designated as “uncle” by the successor, irrespective of their relation.³²

***Kōvilakams* of the Zamorin and his kinsmen**

The residence of royal personages was called *Kōvilakam* in Malayalam. A number of *Kōvilakams* are mentioned in the *Granthavari* in relation to the Zamorin. The residence of the locality chiefs and Ērātis (who were a junior and parallel lineage to the royal house of the Zamorin) was also called as *Kōvilakam*. The *Granthavari* uses the term “*Kōvilakamākukā*” to refer to the overnight stay of the Zamorin and the princes. It implies that wherever they resided, their place of stay became the *Kōvilakam*. The symbolism of palace moving with the King is evident, which ascribes importance to the King than the palace.

Though the capital of Kōlīkkōṭu kingdom was at Calicut, Ponnāni was no less important. Since the boundaries of the kingdom extended to the south, the Zamorin began to reside frequently at Ponnāni.³³ The documents of *Kōlīkkōṭan Granthavari* available to us record more the incidents when the Zamorin was residing at Ponnāni or its neighbourhood than at Calicut.³⁴

³² Zamorin’s letter to the Governor General of the Dutch East India Company at Batavia on Mīnam 30, KE 894 refers to a former Zamorin as “uncle” (*ammāvan*). *KG*, Vol. 13. A similar case is found on Tulām 26, KE 1036 also. *Ibid.*, Vol. 9 (A).

³³ Pyrard of Laval writes, “The king [the Zamorin] resides most part of his time at these two towns, [Calicut and Ponnāni] and chiefly at Ponany, because of the perpetual war that he wages with the king of Cochin, as also because it is the pleasantest residence in his country”. Albert Gray, Ed., *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval*, Vol. I, p. 399.

³⁴ See above, Chapter I.

We have vivid accounts of the Zamorin's *Kōvilakam* at Calicut by foreign travellers. Castanheda's account on Vasco da Gama's visit in AD 1498 gives the following description of the palace of the Zamorin at Calicut.

Though only constructed of earth, the palace was very extensive and seemed a handsome structure, having great numbers of trees interspersed among the different buildings, with pleasant gardens full of fine flowers and odoriferous plants, and many fountains.... On coming to the gate of the house in which the king resided, they were met by the chief Brahmin or high priest of the household, who embraced him and his people into the palace.... On passing the last gate, the general and his attendants went along with the noblemen into a great hall, surrounded with seats of timber raised in rows above one another like our theatres, the floor being covered by a carpet of green velvet, and walls hung with silk of various colours.³⁵

Varthema gives the following description of the palace of the Zamorin.

The palace of the king is about a mile in circumference. The walls are low, as I have mentioned above, with very beautiful divisions of wood, with devils carved in relief. The floor of the house is all adorned with cow dung. The said house is worth two hundred ducats or thereabouts. I now saw the reason why they could not dig foundations, on account of the water, which is close to them.³⁶

He also writes,

In the house of the King of Calicut there are many chambers, in which as soon as evening comes they have ten or twelve vases made in the form of fountain which are composed of cast metal, and are as high as a man. Each of these vases made in the form of a fountain which are composed of cast metal, and are as high as a man. Each of these vases has three hollow places for holding oil, about two spans high from the ground. And, first, there is a vase in which is oil with cotton wicks lighted all round. And above this there is another vase more narrow, but with the same kind of lights, and on the top of the second vase there stands another yet smaller, but with oil and lights ignited. The foot of this vase is formed in a triangle, and on each of the faces of the foot there are three devils in relief, and they are very fearful to behold. These are the squires who hold the lights before the king.³⁷

³⁵ Quoted in K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, pp. 142-43.

³⁶ R.C. Temple, Ed., *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna from 1502 to 1508*, p. 63.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

The contemporary anonymous narrative on Cabral's voyage speaks that "The houses of the said king [the Zamorin] are very large, and in these houses there are many fountains of water in which the king bathes".³⁸ Pietro Della Valle, the Italian traveller of AD 17th century, writes on the palace of the Zamorin as follows.

The first and principal gate of the palace [at Calicut] opens upon a little Piazza, which is beset with certain very great Trees affording a delightful shade. I saw no Guard before it; it was great and open, but before it was a row of Balusters, about four or five palms from the ground, which serv'd to keep out not only Horses and other Animals but also Men upon occasion. In the middle was a little flight of Stairs, outside the Gate, leading into it, and another within on the other side. Yet, I believe, both the stars and the Balusters are movable, because 'tis likely that when the King comes forth the Gate is quite open; otherwise it would not be handsome, but this is only my conjecture. We enter'd this Gate, ascending the Stairs above Rails, where we were met by the Messenger whom the above said person had sent to the King and who again invited us into the Palace by the King's Order. Within the Gate we found a great Court, of a long form, without any just and proportionate figure of Architecture; on the sides were many lodgings in several places, and in the middle were planted divers great Trees for shade. The King's chief apartment, and (as I believe by what I shall mention hereafter) where his Women were, was at the end of the Court, opposite to the left side of the Entrance. The Edifice, in comparison of ours, was of little consideration; but according to their mode, both for greatness and appearance capable of a Royal family. It had a cover'd porch, as well their structures have, and within that was a door of no great largeness leading into the House.³⁹

Pietro Della Valle gives a rough and unmeasured ground plan of the Zamorin's palace and the place where the Zamorin gave them audience.⁴⁰

N.M. Nampoothiry has made an attempt to list the *Kōvilakams* of the Zamorin.⁴¹ Laudable as this attempt is, he has not taken into consideration the fact that the Zamorin resided temporarily at the houses of local magnates, locality chiefs, royal functionaries and Brahmans, and that even such overnight stays were

³⁸ William Brooks Greenlee, Ed., *The Voyage of Pedro Alvares Cabral to Brazil and India*, p. 80.

³⁹ Edward Grey, Ed., *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, Vol. II, pp. 363-64.

⁴⁰ For the sketch see, *Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁴¹ N.M. Nampoothiry, *SCK*, pp. 40-49; see also *Idem.*, *A Study of Place Names in the Calicut District*, p. 520.

described by the term *Kōvilakam*. Nampoothiry does not differentiate between these two categories of *Kōvilakams* and takes any mention of the term as indicating a residence of the Zamorin. We have constructed a list of the *Kōvilakams* of the Zamorin, other princes and princesses mentioned in the *Granthavari*, leaving out such overnight stays and taking into consideration only those places which belonged to the Zamorin or his family.

We have sifted information from the sources, mostly the *Granthavari*, the particular document in which the reference occurs is not mentioned every time, as a single *Kōvilakam* itself is mentioned in several times and in various documents. But we have restricted ourselves to the *Kōvilakams* referred in the documents of the period of our study. Thus the later *Kōvilakams* such as the Zamorin's *Kōvilakam* at Mānkāvu are not included in the list.

- 1) Kōlikkōṭṭu *Kōvilakam*, i.e., the Zamorin's *Kōvilakam* at Calicut
- 2) Putiya *Kōvilakam* at Calicut
- 3) Paṭiññāre *Kōvilakam* at Calicut
- 4) Ampāṭi *Kōvilakam*, i.e., *Kōvilakam* of Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil at Calicut
- 5) Cālappuṟattu *Kōvilakam*
- 6) Trikkāvil *Kōvilakam* at Ponnāni
- 7) Vairanellūr *Kōvilakam* at Ponnāni
- 8) Vākayūr *Kōvilakam* at Tirunāvāya i.e., the *Kōvilakam* where Zamorin resided during *Taiṭṭupūyam* and *Māmākam*
- 9) Veṅkōṭṭe Kōṭṭakkal
- 10) Tiruvañcikkulam Vaṭṭakkōṭṭa at Koṭuññallūr
- 11) Vaṭakkēcciṟa *Kōvilakam* at Triśśivapērūr (Triśśūr)⁴²
- 12) Cempalaññātu *Kōvilakam*
- 13) Ariyikkōṭṭu (Arikkōṭṭu) *Kōvilakam*
- 14) Karimpuḷa *Kōvilakam*, i.e., the *Kōvilakam* of Ēṟālppāṭu
- 15) Paṭiññāreppāṭṭu *Kōvilakam* at Tiruvacciṟa
- 16) Karikkāṭṭu *Kōvilakam*, i.e., *Kōvilakam* of Ēṟālppāṭu
- 17) Anantapuram *Kōvilakam* at Kollam (Pantalāyani)
- 18) Cāvakkāṭṭu *Kōvilakam*⁴³

⁴² The Zamorin possessed this *Kōvilakam* for a very short period. Vaṭṭakkōṭṭa at Koṭuññallūr also not always remained in the hands of the Zamorin.

Apart from the above *Kōvilakams* the Zamorin resided, as we have noted above, temporarily at the houses of various local magnates. We have reference to the *Kōvilakams* of the Ērāṭis, who were a parallel lineage of the Zamorin's royal family, such as Nallaṅṅappuṛa Naṭuvile *Kōvilakam*, Paḷḷikkunnattu *Kōvilakam*, Kuṛriccēri *Kōvilakam* and Veṭṭikkāṭṭu *Kōvilakam*.⁴⁴ The junior princes also had their own *Kōvilakams*. But the specific locations except that of the Ērālppāṭu are not known. The reference to the *Kōvilakams* of the locality chiefs is also found in the *Granthavari*. The Tālekkāṭṭu *Kōvilakam* of Veṭṭam Uṭaya Mūṭta Kōvil, Tirumanaccēri kōṭṭa of Tirumanaccēri Nampūṭiri, Karippa *Kōvilakam* of Paṛappūr Karippuva Kōvil, Kaṭaluṅṭi Valavil *Kōvilakam* of Paṛappūr Valavil Kōvil are examples. What is interesting regarding the *Kōvilakams* of the Zamorin and his kinsmen is that they are found scattered in the kingdom. It may not be accidental; several of them may have been built for specific reasons. It may have helped them to maintain relatively strong control over the area. *Kōvilakams* may have acted as functional centres.

Ēranāṭṭu ḷamkūr Nampiyāṭiri

Ēranāṭṭu ḷamkūr Nampiyāṭiri also called the Ērālppāṭu was the second in the royal line of the House of Neṭiyirippu. Krishna Ayyar says that Ērālppāṭu had a palace at Calicut, i.e., the Ērāmpiri *Kōvilakam* south of the Ampāṭi *Kōvilakam*. Ayyar also says that the important achievement of the Ērālppāṭu was the conquest of Neṭuṅṅāṭu, and that he was appointed as its governor with his headquarters at

⁴³ Kalpakaccēri *Kōvilakam* at Tirunāvāya is mentioned several times in the *Granthavari* as well as in the *Kēraḷōṭṭatti Kīḷippāṭṭu*. But it is not clear whether it was a *Kōvilakam* of the royalty or the royalty staying there as the guests of the Kalpakaccēri family.

⁴⁴ *KG*, Vol. unnumbered (A).

Karimpuḷa. His minister was Ceṟuḷi Accan and his secretary, Punnaśṣēri Nampi.⁴⁵ It may be noted here that the Ceṟuvaḷḷi Accan was dismissed by the Zamorin from the position of Veñninnanāṭṭu Nampaṭi⁴⁶ in Dhanu, KE 780 (AD 1604).⁴⁷

From the *Granthavari* evidence it is clear that Ēṟanāṭṭu Iḷamkūr Nampiyātiri had a residence called Ēṟāmpiri *Kōvilakam* located at Calicut. In a later period we have evidence of the *kōṭṭicceḷunnalḷattu* (royal procession with music ensemble) of Ēṟālppāṭu to Karimpuḷa after his investiture ceremony.⁴⁸ The document of *Taippūyam* in KE 845 (AD 1670) states that the *kōṭṭicceḷunnalḷattu* of Ēṟālppāṭu to Karimpuḷa was performed after his investiture ceremony.⁴⁹ It seems that Ēṟālppāṭu's *kōṭṭicceḷunnalḷattu* to Karimpuḷa was a regular feature after his investiture. The emblem on the flag of the Ēṟālppāṭu was Hanumān (*Hanumalkkoṭi*).⁵⁰ The deity of the royal temple at Karimpuḷa, where the Ēṟālppāṭu resided, was Śrīrāma and that may be the reason for the selection of this emblem by Ēṟālppāṭu.

The documents in the *Granthavari* inform that each of the junior princes had his own *Kōvilakam* and servants.⁵¹ Ēṟālppāṭu had his own sources of revenue.

⁴⁵ Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, pp. 10-11. But elsewhere Krishna Ayyar says that Ceṟuḷi Accan was Ēṟālppāṭu's secretary and chief minister, and that Punnaśṣēri Nampi was his treasurer. *Ibid.*, p. 269. P. Kunhikrishna Menon says that Ceṟuvaḷḷi Accan was the Prime Minister (*pradhāna mantri*) and *paṭṭōla Mēnōn* of Ēṟālppāṭu. P. Kunhikrishna Menon, *Ariyittuvāḷcayum Kōṭṭicceḷunnalḷattum*, Calicut, 1910, p. 78.

⁴⁶ The commonly used form of the title is Veññanāṭu Nampaṭi, but the *Granthavari* refers him as Veñninnanāṭṭu Nampaṭi and Veññannāṭṭil Nampaṭi. We have followed the title Veñninnanāṭṭu Nampaṭi uniformly in the thesis.

⁴⁷ *KG*, Vol. 13.

⁴⁸ P. Kunhikrishna Menon, *Ariyittuvāḷcayum Kōṭṭicceḷunnalḷattum*, *passim*.

⁴⁹ *KG*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol. 14; see also below, *App.* V.

⁵⁰ *KG*, Vols. 7 & unnumbered (B).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Vols. 7 & 13.

He received an amount from the different royal estates (*cērikkals*) and *pāṭṭam* (rent from land) from various lands. A reference to his revenue in paddy as *pāṭṭam* from Payyanāṭṭu[kara] *dēśam* is found in the *Granthavari*.⁵² We have several references to the separate treasury of the Ērālppāṭu, particularly in the documents related to his investiture known as *tirumuṭippaḷavariccārttu*.⁵³

During the *Taippūyam* festival⁵⁴ of KE 809 (AD 1634) on the day of *Taippūyam* the Zamorin stood in state at Maṇittara (platform on the northern bank of the river Pērār at Tirunāvāya). After that Ēranāṭṭu Iḷamkūr Nampiyātiri along with Tirumanaccēri Nampūtiri stood in state on the southern bank of the river. After the mortars and muskets were fired they crossed the river and proceeded to Maṇittara. On the way they prostrated on three spots. After getting consent from the Zamorin they mounted the Maṇittara and stood on the right side of the platform. Then the *lōkar* (militiamen) made joint obeisance.⁵⁵ The same details were gone through in the *Taippūyams* in KE 821,⁵⁶ KE 845,⁵⁷ KE 857⁵⁸ and KE 905.⁵⁹

⁵² *Ibid.*, Vol. unnumbered (A).

⁵³ For details, see below, Chapter VI.

⁵⁴ For details, see below, Chapter IX.

⁵⁵ *KG*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol. 13.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, copies of the same document in Vols. 13 & 14.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol. 14; see also below, *App. V*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol 14.

⁵⁹ K.C. Manavikraman Raja, Ed., *Kēraḷōtpatti Kilippāṭṭu, Glossary*, p. vi.

During the *Māmākam*,⁶⁰ the Zamorin stood in state at Mañittara and Ēranāṭṭu Iḷamkūr Nampiyātiri along with Tirumanaccēri Nampūtiri stood in state on the southern bank of the river at Tīrunāvāya. This procedure continued through the first 19 days of *Māmākam*.⁶¹

During the *Māmākam* after the elephant was adorned with gold trappings, the *akampaṭi* (escort) to the Zamorin for eight days was given by various personalities including the junior princes. Ēranāṭṭu Iḷamkūr Nampiyātiri gave *akampaṭi* on the sixth day after the elephant was adorned with gold trappings, i.e., the 25th day of the festival.⁶² On the last three days of the festival (i.e., 28th to 30th days) also Ēranāṭṭu Iḷamkūr Nampiyātiri along with Tirumanaccēri Nampūtiri stood in state on the southern bank of the river. On the last day they acted as on the day of *Taiṭṭūyam*, which we have discussed above. Tirumanaccēri Nampūtiri was a locality chief of the neighbouring region on the southern bank of the river and he is described as the *Sāmanta* of Ērālppāṭu in the Tamil version of the *Kēraḷōṭṭaṭṭi*.⁶³ The close association between the two in both *Taiṭṭūyam* and *Māmākam* is, in any case significant; perhaps this bears out the veracity of the tradition.

An interesting aspect related to the Ērālppāṭu is that he took care of the affairs of the kingdom when the Zamorin was busy with the war operations at Koṭunnallūr against the Dutch and Cochin in KE 845 (AD 1670).⁶⁴ The following details are found in the *Granthavari*. Since the Ērālppāṭu had to proceed to

⁶⁰ For details, see below, Chapter IX.

⁶¹ *KG*, Vol. 2; see also below, *App.* VI.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ T. Chandrasekharan, Ed., *Kēraḷa Dēśa Varalāru*, Madras, 1960, pp. 14-15.

⁶⁴ *KG*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol. 14; see also below, *App.* V.

Karimpuḷa after his investiture, he proceeded to Cempalaññāṭu *Kōvilakam*, entrusted Kunnattupallināṭu to Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri and sent his men to the land on the southern bank of Karuvanappuḷa. Then he proceeded to Karimpuḷa and returned to Cempalaññāṭu by Makaram 10 (January 7, AD 1670). Maññāṭṭaccan and Tinayañcēri Iḷayatu stayed put at Calicut. Hence it was the Ēṛāḷppāṭu who sent royal letters to them and the respective *lōkars* (militiamen) to the effect that the *lōkars* of Polanāṭu and Payyanāṭṭukara should be brought to Tirunāvāya for *Taippūyam*.

Before that Ēṛāḷppāṭu sent a royal letter to Taṛakkal Uññirāma Mēnōn, the royal functionary at Kālaṭi *cērikkal*, for the construction of a temporary palace on the northern bank of the river at Vākayūr. Ēṛāḷppāṭu sent people for the work on the southern bank of the river at Tirunāvāya. Since the Zamorin did not arrive for the *Taippūyam* after the consolidation of Koṭuññallūr, on Makaram 20 (January 17) the Ēṛāḷppāṭu proceeded to Guruvāyūr and sent Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri, [Neṭuvirippil] Iḷaya Ēṛāṭi, Maññāṭṭu Rāricca Mēnōn and a few militiamen from Punnattūr and Maṇakkuḷam to Koṭuññallūr. Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri proceeded to Pāppinivaṭṭam, ready to advance to the place, somewhat as a rearguard.

On Makaram 25 (January 22), the Zamorin reached Ponnāni Vālke at night. The Ēṛāḷppāṭu too reached there by that time. On Makaram 26 (January 23) the Zamorin and the Ēṛāḷppāṭu proceeded from Ponnāni Vālke. When they reached the west of Māttūr four mortars were fired from Vākayūr. They reached the southern bank of the river opposite to Vākayūr by noon. The Ēṛāḷppāṭu proceeded from there to the Maññil Trikkōvil (temple). For fear of being late, the Zamorin did not proceed to Vākayūr *Kōvilakam*. He was adorned with royal ornaments. Since there was no time, the coconut was not broken and he adorned the sacred ash consecrated by Cēnnamaññalattu Nampūtiri. Since the Ēṛāḷppāṭu did not send the money from the southern bank of the river for *dakṣiṇa* and payments to the

musicians, the Zamorin gave the royal ring (*tiruvāli*) as security to Pāra Nārāṇa Nampi to meet the expenditure.

Krishna Ayyar says on Kōlikkōṭu kingdom that “When the head of the state could not discharge his functions due to old age or sickness he did not retire into religious seclusion, as was the practice at Cochin; the Eralpad or the heir-apparent ruled the country in his name as in 1670”.⁶⁵ As we already noted the Ērālppāṭu looked after the affairs of the kingdom, not because the Zamorin was sick or too old but as he was preoccupied with war operations against the Dutch and Cochin at Koṭuṇṇallūr. In *Kōkasandēśam*, a *Maṇipravālam* work of early 15th century AD, a Ērālppāṭu is highly praised for his exploits.⁶⁶ K.P. Padmanabha Menon says that an inscription speaks about the renovation of Perumanam temple by Ērālppāṭu. Tirumulppāṭu is the honorific used by all the princes including Ērālppāṭu and princesses as found in the *Granthavari*.

Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri

Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri, called Mūnnālppāṭu for short, was the third in the royal line of the house of the Zamorin. Krishna Ayyar says that Mūnnālppāṭu’s chief duty was to guard the southern frontier. Ayyar also says that as he was always on active service, marching from one place to another according to the needs of the situation, an umbrella with a cloth tied to it became his emblem.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, pp. 261-62.

⁶⁶ Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, Ed., *Kōkasandēśam*, I:49-51, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁷ Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, p. 10; see also, P. Kunhikrishna Menon, *Ariyittuvālcayum Kōtticceḷunnallattum*, p. 60.

The investiture ceremony of Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri was usually held along with that of the Zamorin and the Ērāḷppāṭu. The information of the *tirumuṭippaḷavariccārttu* of Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri in KE 836 (AD 1661)⁶⁸ and KE 837 (AD 1662)⁶⁹ is available in the *Granthavari*. The *uṭavāḷaṇakkal* (investing with the sword)⁷⁰ ceremony was performed prior to the investiture ceremony. The detailed description of the *uṭavāḷaṇakkal* ceremony of Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri held at Ponnāni Trikkāvil *Kōvilakam* in KE 841 is available in the *Granthavari*.⁷¹

As we have already noted, in KE 845 immediately before the *Taipūyam* in the midst of political chaos Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri proceeded to Pāppinivaṭṭam and stood ready for advance to the place, where any help would require.⁷² On Tulām 16, KE 849 (October 17, AD 1673) Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri and *Sarvādhikāram* Vallattāvaḷi Kuñṇi Kurikkaḷ caused at Ponnāni Trikkāvil *Kōvilakam* to present before the Zamorin “the sword and the robe” to Pīṭikappuṟattu Kaṭiṇṇi Mēnōn as Matilakattu Koṇṇaccēri Mūtta Nāyar.⁷³ In KE 854 (AD 1679) and KE 858 (AD 1683) Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri acted as *Sarvādhikāram*.⁷⁴ In KE 854 Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri visited the Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil (senior princess of the royal family) at Calicut. Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil had insisted that she wanted to see the Zamorin. Thus

⁶⁸ *KG*, Vol. 13, copy of the same document in Vol. 7.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, copy of the same document in Vol. 13.

⁷⁰ For details, see below, Chapter VI.

⁷¹ *KG*, Vol. 7, copies of the same document in Vols. 13 & 14. For the details of this ceremony see Chapter V.

⁷² *KG*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol. 14; see also below, *App.* V.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7. For the ceremony of “the sword and the robe”, see below, Chapter IV.

⁷⁴ *KG*, Vol. 2.

Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri sent Tarakkal Iremma Mēnōn, the Talaccennavar of Cunahñāṭu, along with Vaitti Paṭṭar, functionary of Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri's *Kōvilakam*, with money and royal letter to Iṭṭikkaruṇākara Mēnōn and Tāmaraccēri Nīlakaṇṭa Nampi to bring the royal insignia to Calicut, for the *eḷunnallattu* of the Zamorin by a boat. They were sent to Cempalaññāṭu Ciṟankara Vēṭṭakkarumakan *Kōṭṭam* (temple), where the Zamorin was then residing. During the royal procession of the Zamorin in KE 854 (AD 1679) Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri and Eṭattūrñāṭṭu Nampiyātiri proceeded from Calicut to Tiruvacciṟa and paid obeisance to the Zamorin. Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri, Eṭattūrñāṭṭu Nampiyātiri and Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Ēṟāṭi gave *akampaṭi* to the Zamorin for his royal procession from Tiruvacciṟa to Calicut.⁷⁵

In KE 854 during the *Paṭṭattānam* (an annual assembly of learned Brahmans at Tali temple, Calicut),⁷⁶ the Brahmans did not suggest the names of those who were qualified for *tānam* (position of Bhaṭṭa) due to the rivalry between the members of the *sabha*. Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri, who was the *Sarvādhikāram*, negotiated with a few members of the *sabha*, but could not resolve the stalemate.⁷⁷ For the construction of the *Kōvilakams* of the Zamorin and Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri and the bars and pillars for the platform of the latter at Vākayūr for the *Māmākam* in KE 858 (AD 1683) 8382 ½ *paṇams* were given from the treasury of Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri.⁷⁸ During these days Māññāṭṭūr Kōru (the blacksmith) repaired the damaged sword of Ēranāṭṭu

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ For details, see below, Chapter VIII.

⁷⁷ *KG*, Vol. 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri. Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri (*Sarvādhikāram*) gave the amount of money from the treasury to Pāra Cankara Nampi to present the *dakṣiṇas* to the musicians for the ritual at Vākayūr Pālakkal during the *Māmākam* (Makaram 8, KE 858 i.e., January 6, AD 1683). Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri gave *akampati* (escort) to the Zamorin on the 24th day of the *Māmākam* festival. On 29th day of the festival, in the evening when the Zamorin and Ērālppātu stood in state on both banks of the river Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri stood on the platform of Kūriyāl (pipal tree)⁷⁹ facing west in the northern bank, which was cleaned by his men.

According to *Kēraḷōtpatti* tradition one of the men of Vēṇātu ruler obstructed the daily ritual of a Brahman at Kannēṙri Kaṭavu. The Mūnnālppātu proceeded there, stabbed the man of Vēṇātu ruler to death. Thus the Brahman resumed his daily rituals.⁸⁰

Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri and Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Ērāti

Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri and Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Ērāti were the fourth and fifth dignities in the hierarchy of the royal house. Information of the *tirumutiṭṭipalavariccārttu* of Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri and Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Ērāti in KE 836⁸¹ and KE 837⁸² is available in the *Granthavari*. The information on the *uṭavāḷaṇakkal* (investing with the sword) ceremony of these princes in KE 841 is

⁷⁹ *Āl* in Malayalam means banyan tree (*Ficus indica*), but here it is *arayāl*, a pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*). Now also a pipal tree namely Kūriyāl survives at Tirunāvāya, probably a new tree planted instead of the old one. Krishna Ayyar translated Kūriyāl as stunted banyan.

⁸⁰ Hermann Gundert, Ed., *Op.cit.*, p. 207.

⁸¹ *KG*, Vol. 13, copy of the same document in Vol. 7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Vol. 14, copy of the same document in Vol. 13.

also available in the *Granthavari*.⁸³ Thus it is evident that they too had their own investiture ceremonies similar to those of the Zamorin and other princes.

In KE 845 Ērālppātu, who had charge of the affairs of the kingdom on behalf of the Zamorin, entrusted Kunnattupallinātu to Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri.⁸⁴ Since the Zamorin did not arrive for the *Taippūyam* in KE 845 as he was preoccupied with the war operations against the Dutch at Koṭuññallūr, Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri, along with *Kāryakkār*, militiamen, *et al.* proceeded to Koṭuññallūr.⁸⁵ During *Māmākam* on the 22nd day of the festival Neṭuvirippil Mūṭta Ērāṭi gave *akampāṭi* (escort) to the Zamorin, whereas Eṭattūrnāṭṭu Nampiyātiri gave *akampāṭi* on 23rd day of the festival.⁸⁶ As we have already noted, they gave *akampāṭi* to the Zamorin during his royal procession from Tiruvaccira to Calicut in KE 854.⁸⁷

Neṭuvirippil Mūṭta Kōvil

Neṭuvirippil Mūṭta Kōvil was the seniormost female member of the House of Neṭiyirippu. She was also called *Ampāṭi Kōvilakam Tampurāṭṭi*,⁸⁸ after the *Kōvilakam* where she resided. She was addressed as the “Mother” by the Zamorin,⁸⁹ irrespective of the actual relationship between them and even if she was younger in age.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, copies of the same document in Vols. 13 & 14.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol. 14; see also below, *App.* V.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; also see above, p. 71.

⁸⁸ *KG*, Vol. 44.

As already noted, Ēranāṭṭu Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri visited the Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil at Ampāṭi *Kōvilakam* in Calicut in KE 854 (AD 1679). Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil had told the Mūnnāmkūr Nampiyātiri that she wanted to see the Zamorin. Thus the Zamorin proceeded to Calicut. The Zamorin met Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil at Ampāṭi *Kōvilakam*. He bowed and prostrated Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil. All paraphernalia was kept at the *Paṭiññāre taḷam* (western hall). The Zamorin sat in front of the lamps facing east and keeping the sword on his lap. Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil sprinkled the rice and the flower (*tumpappūvu*, flower of *Leuca indica*) on the head of the Zamorin, standing behind him.⁹⁰

Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil had her own separate private estates (*cērikkals*). She received an amount of money for *caññātam* (*caññātappaṇam*).⁹¹ Putiya Kōvilakattu Kōvil, was another dignity among the women. This was the senior lady of *Putiya Kōvilakam*, who too had her own royal estates (*cērikkals*).⁹² The princesses such as Neṭuvirippil Iḷaya Kōvil, Neṭuvirippil Ceṛiya Kōvil, Paṭiññāre Kōvilakattu Kōvil and Kiḷakke Kōvilakattu Kōvil had separate revenue sources. This is supported further by the writings of the Portuguese traveller, Duarte Barbosa. He writes,

their [Malabar Kings'] nieces and sisters from whom the heir to throne is to proceed are well watched and served, and have their own revenues on which they live.⁹³

Barbosa continues on the princesses of Malabar,

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1; see also, Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, p. 8.

⁹⁰ *KG*, Vol. 2.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 41.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ M.L. Dames, Ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. II, p. 11.

and when any of them attains the age of twelve or fourteen, and is fit for intercourse with men, they send to summon some youth of noble lineage from outside the kingdom, appointed there for that purpose, sending him money and gifts in order that he may come and take the maidenhood of that girl.

When he has come, they do him great honour, with feasts and ceremonies as if it were a wedding; then he ties round her neck a small golden jewel which she wears for the rest of her life as a token that they have performed that ceremony for her, and thereafter she may dispose of herself according to her own desires, which until then she may not do. The young man remains with her some days, being very well served, and then goes back to his own land. Thenceforward she can choose any Bramene that pleases her and as many as she likes, and bears them children.⁹⁴

A letter of Cochin Rāja to the Dutch states that the members of the Paṭiññārreṭattu Kōvil (Koṭuññallūr Rāja) family were the persons marrying the princesses of the Zamorin's family.⁹⁵

A document in the *Granthavari* records the *piṇḍam* (offering cooked rice ball to the dead as a part of the obsequies) of Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil performed by the Zamorin on Mēṭam 22, KE 812 (April 18, AD 1637).⁹⁶ The Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil, Neṭuvirippil Iḷaya Kōvil and Neṭuvirippil Ceṛiya Kōvil (the three senior most ladies of the royal house in the descending order) received a share of *tārams* (silver coins) from the royal mint (*kammaṭṭam*) in KE 822 (AD 1647).⁹⁷ This share may be theirs by right. This happened immediately before the *Māmākam*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁵ The royal letter of Rāmavarma to the Dutch at Batavia on Mēṭam 20, KE 885 (April 17, AD 1710). V.K.R. Menon, Ed., *Letters from Cochin Raja to Batavia*, p. 9.

⁹⁶ *KG*, Vol. 44.

⁹⁷ The Neṭuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil, Neṭuvirippil Iḷaya Kōvil and Neṭuvirippil Ceṛiya Kōvil received 800 *tārams* (50 *paṇams*), 512 *tārams* (32 *paṇams*) and 256 *tārams* (16 *paṇams*) respectively. *Ibid.*, Vol. 21.

Nēyttiyār

The consort of the Zamorin was called Nēyttiyār, which may be a corruption of *Nāyattiyār* (a Nāyar woman). Krishna Ayyar says that “the Zamorin’s consort was dignified by the title of Neyttiyar. She could not assume it, however, before it had been formally conferred upon her. This honour entitled her to the privilege of having long-handled lamps carried before her whenever she went out”.⁹⁸ Paḷaṅcēri Iṭṭiccirutēvi is conferred with the *kuttuviḷakku* (long-handled lamp) on Makaram 5, KE 853 (January 2, AD 1678).⁹⁹ But she was referred to as Nēyttiyār prior to it. The document of the Dutch attack on Koṭuññallūr in KE 845 (AD 1670) refers Paḷaṅcēri Iṭṭiccirutēvi as Nēyttiyār,¹⁰⁰ and also the document of *vāḷum puṭavayum* (the sword and the robe) of Pīṭikappurattu Kaṭiññi Mēnōn as Matilakattu Koñnaccēri Mūtta Nāyar in KE 849.¹⁰¹ Thus Krishna Ayyar’s opinion that the title Nēyttiyār can be used only after it is formally conferred upon seems to be inaccurate. In any case, Paḷaṅcēri Iṭṭiccirutēvi was not conferred with *Kuttuviḷakku* immediately after becoming the consort of the Zamorin. Thus it is possible that the privilege of *kuttuviḷakku* was not necessarily conferred on all Nēyttiyārs.

Another interesting piece of information related to Paḷaṅcēri Iṭṭiccirutēvi Nēyttiyār is regarding her husband, the Zamorin. From the above details it is clear that Paḷaṅcēri Iṭṭiccirutēvi was the Nēyttiyār at least from KE 845 to KE 853 (AD 1670 to 1678). According to the chronology constructed by Krishna Ayyar a

⁹⁸ Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, p. 262.

⁹⁹ *KG*, Vol. 12.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol. 14; see also below, *App.* V.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, copies of the same document in Vols. 13 & 14.

Zamorin died in AD 1671¹⁰² and as per N.M. Nampoothiry a Zamorin died in AD 1674.¹⁰³ We gather from the documents that a Mānavikrama Zamorin died in AD 1666 and a Vīrarāyan took over in that year.¹⁰⁴ Paḷaṅcēri It̥ticcirutēvi was the consort of the reigning Zamorin in AD 1670.¹⁰⁵ There is another document which speaks of a certain Mānavikrama as the Zamorin in AD 1679¹⁰⁶ and yet another which speaks of Mānavikrama having completed 13 years in AD 1683.¹⁰⁷ These facts suggest that this Mānavikrama, who had his consort in Paḷaṅcēri It̥ticcirutēvi, comes to office in AD 1670 and continues at least up to AD 1683. The death of the Zamorins in AD 1671 and 1674, which Ayyar and Nampoothiry speak of, are not borne out by documentary evidence.

Kaitamana It̥ticcirutēvi Nēyttiṅyār was conferred with *kuttuvīlakku* (long-handled lamp) in KE 760 (AD1585).¹⁰⁸ On both the occasions of the conferment of *kuttuvīlakku*, i.e., KE 760 and KE 853, the Nēyttiṅyārs presented to the royal functionaries an amount of money.

The account of the Portuguese traveller Duarte Barbosa on the consorts of Malabar kings is relevant in this context. He writes,

These kings do not marry, nor have they any marriage law. They keep as a concubine a woman of good family, of Nayre descent, and beautiful for their delight. These they keep in an inn near the palace, quite independently and very

¹⁰² Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, pp. 222, 337.

¹⁰³ N.M. Nampoothiry says that no evidence on the death of the Zamorin in AD 1671 is found in the *Granthavari*, and that a Zamorin died in 1674. N.M. Nampoothiry, *SCK*, p. 40. We have not come across any evidence of the death of a Zamorin either in AD 1671 or 1674 from the *Granthavari*.

¹⁰⁴ *KG*, Vol. 13, copy of the same document in Vol. 7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol. 14.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 12.

well supplied. They receive a certain sum by the month or year; and when they are dissatisfied with one, they let her go and take another. Nevertheless many of them out of regard for the royal honour will not change or send away these women, and among them it is held a great honour for a maiden to become one of the King's women. The sons which the King has by them are not held to be his sons, nor do they inherit the Kingdom, nor anything that is the King's, they take only what comes to them from their mothers. As long as they are young the King treats them with great favour, like children of another whom he is bringing up, but not as his sons; for when they are men they receive no more honour than comes to them from their mother's rank, yet the Kings oftentimes make them presents of money, so that they can live better than the other Nayres.¹⁰⁹

Pyrard of Laval also writes about the consort of the Zamorin,

As for the queen, she lives in a separate palace, yet with in the same enclosure as the great palace. She never eats with the king, and is seen but rarely, and then only at the windows and galleries of her palace or of the king's, whither she frequently proceeds by a gallery which communicates between the two, and there they see each other in private. She bathes in the same manner and with the same ceremony as the king, and in the same pond; but they cannot see each other, for they each have their own end of the pond with a space covered in. She has ordinarily her ladies about her, who pass the time for her. The pond where they bathe is well enclosed and locked, and none but the king and queen do bathe there; there is a gallery whereby the queen descends on her side, and another for the king on his side. The ladies who are present to wash the queen do not enter the water, but remain in the closets and pavilions that are upon the pond, where the oiling, drying, and perfuming is done; and these ladies use all the same artifice and ceremony towards her as the lords use toward the king. The queen is of the Brameny race as well as he.¹¹⁰ She has her own Pagode, where she betakes herself with her ladies, then to her own apartments to take her food, and so on, as with the king. Only great ladies are about her person, and she has the pavements or boards, and the walls and passages where she goes, cleaned with this cow-dung of which I have spoken....

But to return to the queen: in her dress and attire she differs in no respect from the other Nair wives and ladies, or even from the princesses and great ladies, except that their ornaments are a little more charged with pearls and jewels. The mark of the greatest honour and grandeur with them is to have their ears large, as already described, and this queen had them so large that they reached the nipples.

¹⁰⁹ M.L. Dames, Ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. II, pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁰ It seems to be a misunderstanding of the author due to his unfamiliarity to the life style of the Zamorin and his family.

She is nude from the waist upwards, like all the other women, but covered all over with divers trinkets, pearls, and jewels, as are all other women of every rank.¹¹¹

Paḷaṅcēri Itṭiccirutēvi Nēyṭṭiyār moved along with her husband, the Zamorin, even during the political chaos. It was during the conflict against the Dutch in AD 1670 Paḷaṅcēri Itṭiccirutēvi Nēyṭṭiyār and her daughter along with the Zamorin went to Koṭuṅṅallūr. When the Dutch attacked the house of Veḷutta Nampiyār, where the Zamorin was residing, Nēyṭṭiyār and daughter were rescued along with the Zamorin.¹¹² A few ladies were killed or injured and were captured by the Dutch. It is not very safe to generalise from this that the Nēyṭṭiyārs always accompanied her husband. Nor need it be assumed that all Nēyṭṭiyārs were consorts of the Zamorins. Certain prominent families with military and landed privileges were conferred with the title Nāyar (from Sanskrit *Nāyaka* = “leader”) and women of those houses were invariably Nēyṭṭiyārs (*Nāyatti* being the feminine gender of Nāyar). What is likely is that the Zamorins generally took their women from these houses. Thus, all Nēyṭṭiyārs were not the consorts of the Zamorin; but in all known cases of the Zamorins, the title Nēyṭṭiyār is unmistakable for a consort of the Zamorin. How the consorts of the junior princes in the royal house are called is not known.

Nature of Kingship

This Chapter discussed various aspects related to the king and his kinsfolk. A study of the nature of kingship in the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu is relevant in this context. Krishna Ayyar says that the government of the Zamorin was in form an autocracy. He qualifies it by saying that usage and precedent strictly defined the Zamorin’s privileges and responsibilities, no less than the obligations and rights of

¹¹¹ Albert Gray, Ed., *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval*, Vol. I, pp. 418-19.

¹¹² *KG*, Vol. 7, copy of the same document in Vol 14.

his subjects.¹¹³ We have elsewhere noted that most of the Zamorins were too old and physically disabled.¹¹⁴ They depended on the princes, royal functionaries, local magnates and locality chiefs much for the conduct of the affairs of the kingdom.¹¹⁵ In fact, this was not just a result of the physical state of individual rulers; the structure of power was like that. There is no autocracy at all in evidence whether in form or in content; the Zamorin was the head of the structure while the other nodes of power exercised real power under various shades of authority.

There are certain other arguments, which is not particular to the Zamorins but a generalised view on the South Indian Kings, such as that of Burton Stein. Stein says,

South Indian kings were essentially ritual figures except in the often circumscribed core territories of their capitals where they commanded and managed resources and men by virtue of their compelling coercive power (*kṣatra*). They are the most important symbols of the sacred, moral order to which all men must belong and, as such theirs is a sacred and moral authority (dharma) beyond the limited territory of their *kṣatra*.¹¹⁶

Stein also gives a passing reference to the Zamorin that the great chiefs like the Zamorin of Calicut recognised the overlordship of Vijayanagara. He says that the Zamorin responded promptly to a command from Dēvarāya II for the presence at the royal court of the Persian ambassador Abd er Razzak, who has himself recorded the event.¹¹⁷ It seems that the overlordship of Vijayanagara over the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu is very much doubtful.

¹¹³ Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, p. 261.

¹¹⁴ See below, Note 121. However, we are not denying the possibility of comparatively young Zamorins taking charge on some occasions as at times the family was on the verge of extinction and adopted from other royal families.

¹¹⁵ See below, Chapters IV & V.

¹¹⁶ Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, p. 24.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 382. Stein has either misunderstood, or chooses to misrepresent, the statement of Abd er Razzak whom he cites in support of this statement. Razzak, however, says just the opposite! He writes: "On a sudden a man arrived, who brought me the intelligence that the king of Bidjanagar, who holds a powerful

Though there are a large number of recent attempts to study the kingship and political structure of medieval South India,¹¹⁸ kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu, and any other medieval kingdoms of Kerala for that matter, has received scanty attention from the scholars. It is important to clarify that the Zamorin was not the king of a large territory with vast resources. He was slightly better than a locality chief and the ruler of a little kingdom. The predominant feature of the kingship of Kōḷikkōṭu is that a hierarchy of the royal line based on seniority was strictly followed. An incumbent hardly surpassed the hierarchy and usurped the power.¹¹⁹ The seniority of the male member of the royal family in the mother's line was always followed. This was pointed out by the Persian traveller Abd er Razzak, who visited Calicut in AD 1442.¹²⁰ This type of *Kūruvāḷca* helped the kingdom of Kōḷikkōṭu since it preempted problems of succession which had affected the contemporary kingdoms of Cochin, Vēṅāṭu and Kōlattunāṭu.

As noted earlier, there were several *tāvaḷis* in the royal house of Netiyirippu. No *tāvaḷi* enjoyed precedence and it was the seniority, which decided

empire and a mighty dominion under his sway, had sent to the Sameri a delegate charged with a letter, in which he desired that he would send on to him the ambassador of his majesty, the happy Khakan. Although the Sameri is not subject to the laws of the king of Bidjanagar, he nevertheless pays him respect, and stands extremely in fear of him." R.H. Major, Ed., *India in the Fifteenth Century*, p. I:19.

¹¹⁸ For instance, Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown*, Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, *Idem*, 'All the Kings' *Mana: Perspectives on Kingship in Medieval South India*, Madras, 1984; *Idem*, *Vijayanagara*, (1993), Cambridge, 1999; Kesavan Veluthat, *The Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, Delhi, 1993; V. Narayana Rao, *et al.*, *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nayaka Period Tamilnadu*, Delhi, 1992.

¹¹⁹ Afonso de Albuquerque, the Portuguese Viceroy of early 16th century, later revealed that he had suggested to Nampiyāṭiri (i.e., Ēṛāḷppāṭu) that he get rid of the Zamorin and rule in his place. And Albuquerque believed that the Ēṛāḷppāṭu poisoned the Zamorin. Genevieve Bouchon, *Regent of the Sea: Cannanore's Response to Portuguese Expansion, 1507-1528*, p. 132.

¹²⁰ Abd er Razzak writes that "The sovereign of this city bears the title of *Sameri*. When he dies it is his sister's son who succeeds him, and his inheritance does not belong to his son, or his brother, or any other of his relations. No one reaches the throne by means of the strong hand". R.H. Major, Ed., *India in the Fifteenth Century*, p. I:17. Did Abd er Razzak err when he says that the brother of the Zamorin does not

the hierarchy in the royal line. That is, no rotation of position among the *tāvalis* and so, two consecutive Zamorins from the same *tāvali* was plausible. There was a parallel, if junior, lineage to the house of Neṭiyirippu. They were called as Ēṛāṭis. Though they had their own *Kōvilakams* and source of revenue they were not eligible for *Kūruvāḷca*. As a result of there being several *tāvalis* and each *tāvali* having several members in it, by the time an incumbent became the Zamorin, he would be too old. Thus many of the Zamorins were not in good physical conditions and suffered from many disabilities as is evident from the documents in the *Granthavari*.¹²¹ It is evident in the writings of Duarte Barbosa also. He writes,

The heirs of these Kings are their brothers, or their nephews, sons of their sisters. They consider that these are their true sons, for they know who is their mother, and in this country for that the women are very free of their bodies, the true stock of the Royal descent is through the women, and the first son born to the King's eldest sister is heir to the throne, and thus call the brothers inherit one after the other, and when there are no brothers, the nephews, sons of the eldest sister succeed. If the sisters do not happen to have borne sons there is no heir to the crown, and the King dies without one; then they meet in council and elect a relative as King, and if there is none, then any person who may be suitable. For this reason the Kings of Malabar are always old.¹²²

Many a time the junior princes died without making into the kingship. The junior princes, as we noted, acted in various capacities in the affairs of the kingdom. Though the royal family had several *tāvalis*, at times adoption was made for the continuance of the ruling line, as in the case of KE 880 (AD 1705) from Nīlēśvaram royal family.¹²³

succeed him? According to Duarte Barbosa brother of the Zamorin also succeeded him. M.L. Dames, Ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. II, pp. 10-11.

¹²¹ The documents in the *Granthavari* speaks about Zamorins who were hard of hearing (*Triccevi kēḷāṭta*), not able to walk (*Trikkāl vāyāṭta*) etc. We can have also the following inferences from the documents about the physical disability of the Zamorins. A Zamorin could not mount the elephant due to his physical weakness, another Zamorin could not take bath twice a day on account of his health, another Zamorin was supported to walk by two persons and yet another Zamorin lamented (*trikkaṇṇīr vārkkuka*) when he was asked to move to Koṭuṇṇallūr to face the Dutch attack. *KG*, Vols. 7, 8, 13 & 14.

¹²² M.L. Dames, Ed., *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. II, pp. 10-11.

¹²³ N.M. Nampoothiry, Ed., *Vellayute Caritram*, p. 54. Krishna Ayyar says that this adoption was in the year of KE 881 (AD 1706). Krishna Ayyar, *ZC*, pp. 4-5.

The Zamorin used high-sounding titles. He emerged as the King of Kōḷikkōṭu from a meagre position of Ērānāṭuṭayavar, a locality chief. Thus the Zamorin used various methods for the legitimisation of his power. The Zamorin considered the protection of Brahmans and cows as his duty, which is highlighted in the *Kēraḷōṭpatti*¹²⁴ and family traditions.¹²⁵

We can sum up the above discussion of the nature of kingship in Kōḷikkōṭu in the following way:

1. The Zamorin was the king of a little kingdom and was projected in an image larger than life.
2. Kingship was hereditary in nature and *marumakkattāyam* (matriliny) was followed for succession.
3. Hierarchy of dignity (*Kūruvāḷca*) in the royal line, based on seniority of age existed.
4. The House of Neṭiyirippu was divided into *tāvaḷis* (branches in the mother's line). Each *tāvaḷi* had its own head in the male and female lines.
5. After entering into one of the five dignities (*Kūruvāḷca*) one ceased to be the head of the *tāvaḷi*.
6. A parallel, junior, lineage not eligible for kingship existed.
7. There is a conspicuous absence of problems related to succession.
8. When an incumbent became the Zamorin, he was generally old since there were several *tāvaḷis* and a number of members, a feature of joint family system. Even with a number of *tāvaḷis* and a large number of persons in the royal lineage adoptions were made to the royal family when threatened of extinction.

¹²⁴ Hermann Gundert, Ed., *Op.cit.*, pp. 191, 207.

¹²⁵ *KG*, Vol. 53.

9. The seniormost lady of the royal house was designated as Netuvirippil Mūtta Kōvil and the Zamorin addressed her as the “mother” irrespective of their personal relationship. So also, the deceased Zamorins were designated as “maternal uncle” by the successor, irrespective of their relation. Both these indicate that members of the house paid respect to these positions – seniormost male and female.
10. Though Calicut was the capital of the kingdom, the Zamorin resided at different places depending on the situation.
11. The king conferred various honours on different persons on different occasions and for different purposes.
12. Though the Zamorin was the head of the family and so the chief of the kingdom, the junior princes also shared responsibilities. Ērāḷppāṭu, the heir apparent, looked after the affairs of the kingdom on behalf of the Zamorin in times of emergency.
13. Importance was given to the position, not to the person (i.e., importance to Zamorin, Ērāḷppāṭu, etc. and not to the person who became the Zamorin). Though the persons died, the offices continued.