

**STUDIES IN  
MEDIEVAL  
KERALA HISTORY**

**KERALA HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

*Studies in Medieval Kerala History* concerns itself with the various factors that determined the political set-up of medieval Kerala. Chapter One, *Trade Contacts of Kerala*, deals with the trade relations of Kerala with the West and the East in ancient and medieval times. Chapter Two, *Kerala-Portuguese Relations*, studies the impact of Portuguese attempt to dominate the trade and politics of Kerala kingdoms in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter Three, *Rise and Fall of the Kuññālis*, describes the classic fight of the Māppiḷa seamen of the Zamorins against the Portuguese attempt to monopolise the foreign trade and control the politics of the country. The deteriorating political scene in Vēṇāḍ, on account of the rebellious activities of the local chieftains and hereditary officials, is the subject of study of the next chapter, *Vēṇāḍ Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. A feature of absorbing interest in Vēṇāḍ politics of the period, viz., united popular opposition to official oppression, is dealt with in detail with the help of relevant documents.

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of Mārtāṇḍa Varma.



# **STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL KERALA HISTORY**

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Kerala Historical Society, Trivandrum.

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# PREFACE

The present work is a study of the various factors that determined the political set-up of Medieval Kerala. *Trade Contacts of Kerala*, studies the importance of the spice trade, which Kerala had been carrying on with the countries both of West Asia and Eastern Asia, in the ancient and medieval periods. The impact of Portuguese contact on the politics of Kerala kingdoms and the resulting political disorganisation in the country, are studied in the next chapter, *Kerala-Portuguese Relations*. The interference of the Portuguese, on the one hand, thwarted the attempt of the Zamorins of Calicut to conquer and unite the Kerala kingdoms, and on the other, led to the rise of minor chieftains which effectively prevented the unification of the country. The classic fight which the Kuññāli Marakkārs of Kōṭṭakkal, the admirals of the Zamorins, waged for a century against the Portuguese interference in the affairs of Kerala kingdoms, is described in the chapter, *Rise and Fall of the Kuññālis*. The deteriorating political situation in Vēṇāḍ in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, on account of the rebellious activities of the hereditary officials of the state and the intransigence of the Tāvaḷi members, is studied in depth in *Vēṇāḍ Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Another aspect of social life that has been highlighted in this study is the popular opposition offered to official oppression, culminating in the emigration of the cultivators of Nāñcināḍ, leaving their homes and hearths and even their partly cultivated crops. The documents relating to this popular movement are given *in extenso*, as they “reveal the acute political consciousness and corporate spirit which had developed among the people.”

I take this opportunity to thank Dr. T. K. Ravindran and Dr. M. J. Koshy, Professor and Reader in the Department of History, University of Kerala, for the encouragement and the keen interest they had shown in the publication of this book. I also thank the Proprietor and staff of the M. M. S. B. P Printers for their co-operation in getting the book printed expeditiously and well.

Trivandrum,  
30-12-75.

A. P. IBRAHIM KUNJU

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# 1. TRADE CONTACTS OF KERALA

## TRADE WITH WESTERN ASIA

From very early times, extensive trade was carried on between Kēraḷa and the West Asian countries of Arabia, Syria and Egypt. Till the establishment of the Roman Empire, the carrying trade was in the hands of Arab merchants. These merchants supplied the Egyptians precious stones, muslin, spices and frankincense which they used in worship and mummification. It was the South Arabians that excelled in this carrying trade. As Agatharchides (113 B. C.) stated, “there was no nation upon earth so wealthy as the Gerrhaeans and Sabaeans because of their situation in the centre of all the commerce which passes between Asia and Europe. It is they who have made Ptolemaic Syria, rich in gold, and who have provided profitable trade and thousands of other things to Phoenician enterprise.”

Though this trade between India and Western Asia was carried on from time immemorial, we have no recorded evidence of it. The earliest reference comes from the Book of Kings.

1. Quoted by Hourani, G. F., *Arab Sea-faring in the Indian Ocean*, p. 21.

“And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Elath on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom; and Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon” (1 Kings 9/26–28). From this it is clear that Solomon (c. 974-932 B. C.), King of the Hebrews, traded with West Indian ports and the main imports came from Kēraḷa. “Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks” (1 Kings 10/22). All these goods, excepting silver, were the products of Kēraḷa; the Hebrew names for the last two items, *Kapim* and *Tukim* are obviously of Tamil origin. The celebrated Ophir, from where gold was obtained, was identified by several scholars with *Bēppūr*, on the mouth of the river of the same name. The *Bēppūr* river was reputed in ancient times to have brought down auriferous sands from the Wayanād Hills.

The Sumerians and the Babylonians also seem to have extensive trade relations with India. On the obelisks of Shal-manser III (c. 860 B. C.) apes, Indian elephants and Bactrian camels are portrayed. Logs of teak wood were found among the remains of the temple of the Moon at Ur and the place of Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 B. C.) at Birs Nimrud.

With the conquest of Western Asia by the Persians, there was great development in trade between India and Western Asia. Darius the Great (521-485 B. C.) organised many mercantile expeditions to link Persia with India and Egypt by sea as well as by land. His captains sailed down the



Indus and thence round Arabia to Egypt. As a result of these operations trade greatly developed and naturally Malabar trade with Western Asia must have increased considerably. Herodotus (484-413 B. C) mentions that the trade in Indian goods like, frankincense and myrrh, and cinnamon and cassia were clearly products of Kēraḷa. The loan words current in Greek, such as *Oryza* (Tamil, *Ariṣu*), *Aloes* (Tamil, *Akil*), Ginger (Tamil, *Jñicivēr*), *Pepper* (Tamil, *Pippali*), etc. show the great influence exercised by trade. It is believed that the Egyptians and Phoenicians did not proceed beyond the marts of Southern Arabia, where the Indian goods were available, brought by the Arabian and Indian merchants.

The anarchy in Syria and the expansion of the hostile Parthian empire, diverted the Indian trade from the Persian Gulf Route to the Red Sea Route. The dangerous nature of the navigation in the Red Sea ultimately led to the development of the Arabian coastal route, starting from Aden and leading to Sidon and Tyre in Syria, and Alexandria in Egypt. The Ptolemies of Egypt greatly encouraged the trade with India. But it was with the beginning of the Roman Empire that direct contact with India was established. The phenomenal increase in Roman trade with India, was occasioned by the establishment of the *Pax Romana* and Hippalus' discovery of the monsoons.

With the establishment of *Pax Romana* in the Mediterranean world in the time of Augustus (31 B. C.-14 A. D.), the general prosperity stimulated an ever-increasing demand for Oriental luxuries. Strabo (c. 23 A. D.) reports that no fewer than 120 ships sailed every year for India<sup>2</sup>. The

2. *Geography, Bk. XVII, Ch. I. Section 13.*

tradition that a temple of Augustus was built at Muziris (Koḍuññallūr) indicates that a considerable number of Romans resided there throughout the year. According to the *Peutingerian Tables* (c. 226 A. D.) two Roman cohorts were stationed at Koḍuññallūr to protect her trade.

The effect of the epoch-making discovery of the 'monsoons' by Hippalus was two-fold: (1) It shortened the duration of the journey. According to *Pliny's Natural History* (c. 77 A. D.), the duration of the India voyage from Berenice on the African coast of the Red Sea to Muziris on the Kēraḷa coast was reduced to 70 days. (ii) It also greatly diminished the danger from pirates, who infested the coastal waters. This discovery of about 45 A. D. to make use of the monsoon winds to reach the Kēraḷa ports directly from the Red Sea coast, was known to the Arab sailors for centuries, but they had kept this information a trade secret.

The trade of Kēraḷa consisted of her own products and products collected from other countries in the course of trade. Her own products included ivory, cinnamon, pepper and ginger, while the products collected from elsewhere consisted of silk and fine cotton fabrics, hides, cloves, jewels and pearls. The imports comprised wine, bronze, tin, gold and various manufactured articles. The spices of Kerala fetched high prices. According to Pliny, pepper was sold at as high a price as 15 denarii a pound. Pliny bitterly reproaches Romans for their extravagance, which caused a great drain on Roman finances. He remarks that "in no year does India absorb less than fifty million sesteres (about 500,00 pounds sterling)." According to Wheeler, this was presumably the value of articles imported into India, but the articles

India absorb less than fifty million sesteres (about 500,000 pounds sterling)." According to Wheeler, this was presumably the value of articles imported into India, but the articles purchased in India were paid in cash.<sup>3</sup> That even the barbarian hordes of Europe had fallen for Oriental luxuries is shown by the fact that one of the demands of Alaric, the Goth, on his conquest of Rome in 408 A. D., was a ransom of 3,000 pounds of pepper.<sup>4</sup>

During the third century A. D., with the decline of the Roman Empire and the depreciation of its currency, the trade with the East languished. This fact is sufficiently proved by the complete absence of Roman coins in India, after Caracalla (212-17 A. D.). In consequence Indian trade once again completely passed into the hands of the Arabs. That Arabs used to trade with Indian ports along with Roman merchants has been proved. Writing of 'Muza' (modern 'Mukha' in Al-Yaman) *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (c. 50 A. D.) records: "The whole place is crowded with Arab ship-owners and sea-faring men, and is busy with the affairs of commerce, for they carry on trade with the far-side coast (Eritrea and-Somalia) and with Barygaza (Broach) sending their own ships there." But there is no direct evidence to prove that the Arabs were conducting trade with Malabar ports; but there is proof to show that Sabaeans visited the court of the Chinese emperor early in the 1st century A. D.<sup>5</sup> The Chinese pilgrim, Fa-Hien, found "many Sabaean merchants" in Ceylon in 414 A. D.<sup>6</sup> The

3. Mortimer Wheeler, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers* (Pelican Books. 1955), p. 167.
4. Warmington, E. H., *The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India*, p. 140.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 370
6. J. Legg, *The Travels of Fa-Hien* (Oxford, 1886), p. 104

Arab geographer, Ibn Rustah (c. 903 A. D) says that before Islam, Indian ships used to sail up the Tigris as far as Al-Madā'in.<sup>7</sup>

#### TRADE WITH EASTERN ASIA

India's trade relations with China and Eastern Asia was long and fruitful to both countries. Pan Kou's account of India (125 A. D.) , while enumerating Indian products, mentions pepper and ginger, which are products of Kēraḷa. <sup>8</sup> None of the famous Chinese pilgrims, who visited India from 5th century, visited Kēraḷa; but nonetheless a brisk trade was carried on by China with Ceylon and the West Indian ports on the one hand, and Western Asia on the other. As Cosmas Indicopleustes (c. 550 A. D), Benjamin of Tudela (c. 1170 A. D) and Chau Ju-Kua (c. 1225 A. D.) , mention that the products of Kēraḷa like sandalwood, cloves, cardamoms and elephants were in great demand both in the East and West. Chau Ju-Kua specifically states that "every year ships come to this country (Ku-kin = Quilon) from San-fo-ts'i, Kien-Pi and Ki-t'o (all in Sumatra) and the articles they trade with are the same as in Nanpi (Country of Nairs.) Great members of Ta-Shi (Arabians) live in this country."<sup>9</sup>

Marco Polo, the 'Prince of medieval travellers,' on his return voyage from China (c. 1293 A. D.) touched at the Kēraḷa ports in the kingdoms of Comari, (Cape Comorin)

7. *Kitabul-A 'lag ul-Nafisah* p. 94.

8. Quoted by K. A. N. Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India*, (Madras. 1939) Introduction, p. Xi.

9. Hirth and Rock-hill, *Chau Ju-Kua* (St. Petersburg, 1911), Vol. I'PP, 87-89.

‘Coilum’ (Quilon) and ‘Eli’ (Ēlimala = Kingdom of the Kōlattiris) and ‘Melibar’ (possibly Kōlikkōḍ, the kingdom of the Zamorin). The products of Kēraḷa mentioned are pepper, cinnamon, ginger and indigo. Foreign merchants brought here copper, gold, silver, silk, cloves and spikenard, which they exchange for the products of the country. Regarding the trade of Quilon, Marco Polo says: “The merchants from Manzi (South China) and from Arabia and from the Levant come thither with their ships and their merchandise and make great profits both by what they import and what they export”<sup>10</sup>.

#### TRADE IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

The rise of Islam in the seventh century A. D. gave a great fillip to Arab trade with different countries. With in hundred years Islam had spread over major portions of the Mediterranean littoral and Persia. The consolidation of political authority and establishment of peace and order during the Abbasid period (750–1258 A. D.) stimulated travel and trade.

The foundation of Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Empire, greatly encouraged Indo-Arab trade, since the capital of the Arab empire was directly connected with Indian ports and markets by water. When Basra rose into prominence, it became the terminus of Arab trade, where the imports and exports were collected and distributed. According to Al-Mas‘ūdi (d. 956 A. D.) large numbers of Arab merchants had settled down in many of the coastal towns of India

10. Yule and Cordier (Eds), *The Book of Ser Marco Polo* (London, 1903), Vol II, p. 376.

for purposes of trade. These communities had their own 'Chiefs' appointed by the ruling princes and were given the privilege of administering their own communal affairs."

Merchant Sulaymān (c. 825 A. D.) the first Arab traveller, whose travel account has reached us thus described the sea-borne trade with India: The commodities of commerce are first brought from Basra and Uman to Sirāf and then are loaded on ships. A supply of drinking water is taken aboard. The ships sail and put into the port of Muscat. There an additional supply of fresh water is taken aboard. The ships sail from here bound for India. It takes them a full month to reach Kollam Malī (Ēḷimala). From here ships sail bound for China. Kollam Malī also possesses a dock where ships are built and repaired. Fresh water is also taken aboard at this port. The port duties for Chinese ships are a hundred drachmas and for other ships from one to ten dinars."<sup>12</sup> Abū Zayd of Sirāf, writing twenty years later than Sulaymān, mentioned that "the sailors of Sirāf are more at home in the Indian Ocean and the season the coast of China. Besides this, the trade with India and China is more lucrative than trade with the Redsea ports."<sup>13</sup> Idn Khurdadbih, writing at the beginning of the third century Hijrah, speaks very highly of the flourishing trade of Jiddah. "The products of Sind, India, Zanzibar, Abyssinia and Persia are on sale here."<sup>14</sup>

12. Sauvaget, M. Jean, (Ed.) *Akhbār us-sīn wal-Hind* (Paris, 1948), pp. 16-17.

13. *Ibid* p., 136.

14. De Goeje (Ed.), *Kitābul-Masālik wal-Mamālik* p. 16.

The exports from Kerala were pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, camphor, sandalwood and aloes-wood. Pepper and other spices, exported from Kerala, were in great demand in the markets of Western Asia and Europe and therefore they formed the chief articles for export. Among the animals and birds exported, elephants, civetcats and peacocks were the most important. Al - Mas'ūdī writing in 305 A. H., mentions of a perfume extracted from "the sweat of an animal," carried by the Arabs to even far off countries such as Morocco. He also speaks very highly of the Indian peacocks. "Although peacocks have been imported into 'Irāq from India and allowed to breed there, their progeny are much inferior in size and beauty.'"<sup>15</sup>

Al-Mas'ūdī gives a detailed description of 'pan' (betel leaf). He says pan is a kind of leaf and its plant grows in India. When the Indians chew it together with lime and betel-nut, their teeth turn red like the grains of the pomegranate, their mouths become fragrant and they feel refreshed. The white teeth of a man who does not chew pan are disliked in India. The leaf is so fine that it soon dries up and crumbles. It could not therefore be imported to Arabia in good condition. "In these days in Yaman and at Makkah in Hijāz, it is the fashion to chew betel-nut."<sup>16</sup>

Imports into India consisted of gold coins, pearls and dates. Wine was imported from Egypt. Leathern garments and swords were imported from Italy, rose-water from Persia, dates from Basra and horses from Arabia. The balance of payment in this extensive trade was favourable to Kerala, as

15 Maqdisi, *Ahsan ut - Taqāsim fi - Ma'rifat il-Aqālim*, p. 482

16 *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 438

the products of Kerala were in great demand and consequently fetched high prices.

The extent of the eastern trade is thus described by Abu Zayd, the joint-author of *Akhhbār us-Sīn wal-Hind*: "Sea traffic at that time (851 A. D.) was regular because of the great exchange of merchants between Al-'Iraq and those countries (China and India)." <sup>17</sup> Abul-Fidā (1273-1331 A. D.) mentions Ra's Hīlī (Ējī Mala) and Ra's Kumhari (Cape Comorin) as the extremities of Malabar. The important towns in Malabar are Shāliyāt (Cāliyām), Shinkili (Koḍuññallūr) and Kūlam (Kollam). "Kūlam", says Ibn Sa'īd, "is the last town in the pepper country towards the east." <sup>18</sup> Ibn Battūta, who travelled extensively on the West Coast (1342-44 A. D.), described Malabar as "the land of *fulful* (pepper)", extending over a length of two months' journey, from Sandābūr (Goa) to Kūlam (Quilon.) Of the several ports of Malabar, he says: Kālikūt (Calicut) "is one of the chief ports of Mulaybar, and one of the largest harbours in the world. It is visited by men from China, Sumatra, Ceylon, the Maldives, Yemen and Fārs and in it gather merchants from all quarters. [Kulam = Quilon] is the nearest of the Mulaybar towns to China, and most of the merchants (from China) come there."<sup>19</sup>.

Calicut had risen to great prominence by the beginning of the 14th century, chiefly on account of the preference shown to the port by the Muslim merchants. The phenomenal growth of Calicut by the time of Ibn Battūta's visit

17 Sauvaget, M. Jean, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

18 Reynaud & Guyard, *Geographie D' Aboulfeda*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 121.

19 H. A. R. Gibb, *Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa*, 1325-54. [Broadway Travellers Series, London, 1929 pp. 234, 238]



made it one of the most prosperous towns in the whole of the Malabar Coast. 'Abdur-Razzāq, the Persian ambassador to the court of the Zamorin, who visited Calicut in 1442 described the city thus: "Security and justice are so firmly established in this city that the most wealthy merchants bring thither from maritime countries considerable cargoes which they unload and unhesitatingly send into the markets and the bazaars, without thinking the meantime of any necessity of checking account or of keeping watch over the goods. The officers of the custom house take it upon themselves the charge of looking after the merchandise, over which they keep watch night and day. When a sale is effected, they levy a duty on the goods of one-fortieth part; if they are not sold, they make no charge whatsoever."<sup>20</sup>

#### TRADE IN THE EUROPEAN AGE.

By the time of the Portuguese arrival in India, the trade of Malabar had been entirely in the hands of Muslims, both Arab and native. The foreign trade of the country had reached the highest peak of development. Malabar trade was in "benjamin of fine quality, and pepper and numerous other commodities from many regions, with cinnamon, ginger, cloves, incense, sandalwood and all sorts of spices; stones of great value, pearls of great value and seed pearls."<sup>21</sup>

On their arrival, the Portuguese found that the competition for Kerala trade was very keen. The goods brought by

20 R. H. Major (Ed.), *India in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 14

21 Legend in the Caneiro map drawn in 1500-2 (Quoted by K. G. Jayne, *Vasco da Gama and His Successors*, p. 53)

Vasco da Gama were not in demand at Calicut. Further the Muslim merchants did everything in their power to prevent the Portuguese from obtaining any lading for their ships. Still Gama was able to procure sufficient goods which repaid sixty times the cost of the expedition. This huge profit earned by the expedition whetted the ambition of the Portuguese King, who decided upon monopolising the trade of the country.

The instructions given to the next Captain General, Pedro Alvares Cabral, make the Portuguese policy abundantly clear: "Besides settling the factories ..... if the Zamorin would not quietly consent or give sufficient lading to the ships, he should make cruel war upon him for his injurious conduct to Vasco da Gama. If the Zamorin consented to the establishment of a factory and trade, the General was secretly to request him not to allow any of the Moors to remain or trade in Calicut, or in any other harbour in his dominions, and to promise that the Portuguese should hereafter supply all such commodities as used to be brought by the Moors, of better quality and cheaper than theirs."<sup>22</sup> Cabral, acting upon these instructions, made cruel war upon the Zamorin and the established merchants. This war between the Portuguese and the Zamorin, supported by the Muslim merchants, lasted for a century and more. This long war resulted in the total destruction of the native merchants and the migration of the Arabian merchants; and trade in the articles of Malabar became the monopoly of the Portuguese, resulting in the ruin of the country's prosperity.

The huge profits reaped by the Portuguese naturally aroused the cupidity of other European nations, like the

22 Castenheda, Lopez de, *The History of the Conquest of India*, (Kerr's Collection of Voyages, Vol. II, p. 350)

Dutch, the English and the French and induced them to participate in the maritime trade of the East Indies. The Dutch, who were the most active in this field were able to oust the Portuguese from their major ports and settlements in the East Indies during the second half of the seventeenth century. The Dutch, the English and the French who followed tried to compel the native rulers\* at the point of the sword to sell the spices of Kerala at a fixed price, which led to constant friction between the foreign merchants and the native rulers. Even in the midst of their mutual rivalry, the European Companies often combined to keep down prices. In December, 1714, agreement was reached between the French at Mahe and the English at Tellicherry for consultation and joint action "to keep down the price of pepper, which rises daily."<sup>23</sup>

But the manipulations of the European Companies for securing the spices of Kerala did come to an end. The rulers of Kerala who came to recognise the commercial importance of the products of their country monopolised their trade. In 1743 Mārtāṇḍa Varma declared a monopoly of pepper trade in Travancore. The pepper so collected was sold at the discretion of the King either to the highest bidders or for securing arms and ammunition for the wars of the King. Similarly, Tipu in 1785 declared the trade in pepper, sandalwood and cardamom a state monopoly, which proved injurious to English trade in Malabar. It was this dwindling

23. *Tellicherry Consultations*, Vol. XIII, pp. 58-60

trade in Malabar that ultimately led to the Third Anglo-Mysore War.<sup>24</sup>

After the Third Anglo-Mysore War, Malabar came under the control of the English East India Company. Both Cochin and Travancore, allied to the English during the war also came under the influence of the Company, which secured the products of the Kerala Coast for their use, more or less under monopolistic conditions.



24. India Office Library, Home Miscellaneous, Vol. CDXXXIV, pp. 235-8. (Quoted by Pamela Nightingale, *Trade and Empire in Western India*, 1184-1806, p. 40)

## 2. KERALA - PORTUGUESE RELATIONS IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Kerala at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese presented a very complex political set-up. From Nīlēs̄varam to Kanyākumāri it was cut into a large number of petty principalities. The most powerful among them were the Zamorin (King of Kōḷikkōḍ), the Kōlattiri (King of Kōlattunāḍ) and the Vēṇāṭṭaḍi (King of Vēṇaḍ). Writing in 1518, Duarte Barbosa observed that the principal Kings of the Kēraḷa coast, “are only three, to wit, the Camidre (Sāmūtiri) whom they call Malyconadary (Kunnalakkōnatiri ?), and he of Coulam (Kollam) who they call Benetady (Vēṇāṭṭaḍi) and he of Cananor who they call Cobertorim (Kōlattiri). Besides these, there are many great Lords in the land, who wish to be called Kings; which they are not, for they neither coin money, nor roof their house with tiles.”<sup>1</sup> Interspersed among them were several minor principalities, both big and small, of which the more important were Cannanore, Tānūr, Cranganore, Cochin, Iḍappaḷḷi. Vaḍakkumkūr and Kāyamkuḷam.

There were constant struggles among these petty states for political supremacy. The Zamorins were the most

1. *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. II, p. 6

aggressive in this respect. They had encroached upon the territories of their neighbours both in the north and the south. By the 14th century, they had become masters of Pōlanād and Valluvanād and thus extended their sway over a vast region extending from the Kōrappuḷa to the borders of Cochin and Palghat. To satisfy their vanity and show off their power, it is related that every new incumbent to the 'sthānam' of the Zamorin, used to inaugurate his reign by marching into Cochin.

The confusion arising out of the existence of such a large number of petty states and their constant quarrels was increased by the peculiar political organisation of Kerala in the Middle Ages. The feudalistic political set-up of the Kērala kingdoms and principalities made them weak and dependent on the allegiance of the local chieftains. These chieftains not only frequently quarrelled among themselves, but sometimes even joined the enemy against their own liege-lords. The classic example was that of the Cochin chieftains, many of whom joined the side of the Zamorins in their wars with the Rajas of Cochin.

On 20th May, 1498 A. D. after a perilous voyage lasting ten months and two weeks, Vasco da Gama anchored off Kāppād, eight miles north of Calicut. Next day he reached Calicut. Calicut was at that time, indeed, a city well worth-seeking. "Its resources are truthfully set forth on a map which the Genoese Nicholas de Canerio drew in 1501-2. 'This is Caliquit', Canerio's legend runs. 'It is a most noble city discovered by the most renowned prince D. Manoel, King of Portugal. Here are much benjamin of fine quality, and pepper and numerous other commodities

from many regions, with cinnamon, ginger, cloves, incense, sandalwood and all sorts of spices; stones of great value, pearls of great value and seed-pearls.”<sup>1</sup>

Calicut had been carrying on an extensive maritime trade with West Asian countries in pepper and other spices. The foreign trade of the country was in the hands of the Muslims, called ‘Moors’ by the Portuguese, who were both Arabs and natives. The resulting prosperity had made its ruler the most powerful king on the Kerala coast in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Castanheda, writing about 1528, says: “So great was the trade and population of Calicut and the surrounding country, and the revenues of its sovereign .... that he was able to raise a force of 30,000 men in a single day and could even bring an hundred thousand men into the field completely equipt for war, in three days. This prince in the language of the country was styled the Zamorin, or Samoryn, which signifies Emperor.”<sup>2</sup> The Zamorin, who was at Ponnāni, was immediately notified of the arrival of the Portuguese. The King heartily welcomed the Portuguese to his dominions and requested the Captain - General to conduct his ships to Pantalāyini Kollam, which was safer than Calicut during the monsoon. From Pantalāyini Vasco da Gama was conducted by palanquin and boat to Calicut. The Zamorin received Gama and his twelve friends in a special darbar. The Portuguese were allowed freedom of trade within his dominions.

The Muslim traders were greatly agitated by the arrival of the Portuguese, as it might betoken the end

1. Jayne, K. G, *Vasco da Gama and His Successors*, p. 53.

2. Castanheda, ‘The History of the Conquest of India’ (Kerr, *Collection of Voyages*, Vol. II, p. 350)

of their monopoly of Kerala trade. Therefore they decided to procure the expulsion of the Portuguese from Calicut at any cost. In this venture, they took into their confidence some of the principal officers and represented to the King that the Portuguese were not merchants but in reality pirates. In support of their contention, they detailed the barbaric activities of the Portuguese on the African coast. The representation, together with the poor presents which Gama offered, made the Zamorin ask, "whether he was sent in search of stones or of men; and if sent to discover men, how came it that the King his master had sent no present."<sup>3</sup> However the Portuguese were allowed to unload their goods and sell them. But the Portuguese goods were not in demand at Calicut, with the result that the Calicut merchants refused to buy them. The Portuguese attributed this to the intrigues of the Muslims. They complained to the Zamorin, who sent a broker to their help. When this also did not succeed, the Zamorin had the goods conveyed at his own expense to Calicut. But few of the things were sold there also.

When the force of the monsoon had begun to abate, Gama made preparations to return to Europe. As he failed to pay the warehouse charges and customs dues, the Portuguese factors and goods were distrained. Gama retaliated by capturing 18 fishermen who had come to visit the ships. Though the Zamorin later released the distrained persons and goods, Gama carried away 5 fishermen.

Shortly after leaving Calicut, Vasco da Gama, appeared before Cannanore. The Muslim merchants of Cannanore tried

3. *Ibid.*, p. 371.



in vain to dissuade the Kōlattiri from receiving the Portuguese in his dominions. The Kōlattiri, however, sent a boat to invite Gama to his dominions. Gama with his captains visited the King and entered into a treaty of friendship with him. Providing his ships with all necessaries, Gama set sail for Europe on 20th November, 1498.<sup>4</sup>

Two of Gama's original fleet of four ships reached Portugal in September, 1499, after an absence of two years and two months. The discovery of a sea route to the East was one of the greatest events in the history of maritime navigation. It brought the East and West together. The results that flowed from this event should not cloud our vision to the small part played by Vasco da Gama in this great event. His part was cut out for him. He had no part either in the design or planning of the project. Bartholomeo Diaz had discovered the Cape of Good Hope, which had made the voyage to India feasible. Gama's part in this project was only to lead the ships safely to India. As H.E.J. Stanley has pointed out in his Introduction to the *Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, to compare Gama with Columbus and Magellan "is an injustice to those two great navigators.....Both Magellan and Columbus originated the prospects of their respective voyages, and induced foreign sovereigns to promote them and to accept of their services, but Gama as Correa and Camoens tell us, was selected by Dom Manuel to carry out a design devised by Prince Henry."<sup>5</sup>

4. The account of Gama's visit to Cannanore is taken from Correa (*Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, pp. 224-33), Castanheda, Barros or Camoens do not mention Gama's visit to Cannanore.

5. Correa, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. xx-xxi.

The return of Vasco da Gama to Lisbon, with a freight which repaid sixty times the cost of the expedition, called forth an outburst of mercantile enthusiasm in Portugal. Dom Manoel immediately assumed the title of 'Lord of the Conquest, Navigation and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia and India'. He lost no time in trying to convert his claim to the 'Conquest of India' into a reality. In March, 1500, he despatched a fleet of 13 ships under the command of Pedro Alvares Cabral. Cabral went forth not as explorer or merchant but as a conqueror. The instructions to the Captain-General make this abundantly clear: "Besides settling the factories,.....if the Zamorin would not quietly consent or give sufficient lading to the ships, he should make cruel war upon him for his injurious conduct to Vasco de Gama. If the Zamorin consented to the establishment of a factory and trade, the General was secretly to request him not to allow any of the Moors of Mecca to remain or trade in Calicut, or in any other harbour in his dominions, and to promise that the Portuguese should hereafter supply all such commodities as used to be brought by the Moors, of better quality and cheaper than theirs." <sup>6</sup> The instructions were crystal clear. The Portuguese were to seek the monopoly of Malabar trade to the exclusion of the Moors, who had been carrying on the foreign trade of the country for centuries. It was but natural that a rupture was inevitable in the relations between the newcomers and the established merchants of the coast, if the instructions were put into effect.

Cabral arrived at Calicut on 13th September. He was graciously received by the Zamorin. A treaty of peace and

6. Castanheda (*Kerr, op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 396.)

friendship was at once concluded and a factory established. The Muslim traders, however, so successfully prevented the Portuguese from obtaining spices that at end of two months, they were able to procure lading only two ships. Cabral complained to the Zamorin to this effect, but he was embarrassed how to act. However he sent them a native merchant "of great credit at Calicut". Still the position did not improve. Despairing of sufficient lading for his ships, Cabral seized a Moorish ship loading in the harbour. When the news of this outrage spread in the town, the Nāyars, who were so far friendly with the Portuguese, joined the Muslims in seeking revenge. In the fight that ensued the Portuguese factor and fifty of his men were killed and the rest escaped by swimming to the boats. In retaliation, Cabral seized ten Moorish ships in the harbour, and after plundering them bare of everything of value, set them on fire. The town was heavily bombarded for the next two days after which, Cabral sailed for Pantalāyini. Several ships on the roads were burnt and a large number of people killed. From there he set sail for Cochin, which port he reached on 20th December.

The King of Cochin 'Uṇṇi Rāma Kōyil I.<sup>7</sup> warmly received Cabral. The King who had heard about the quarrel between the Portuguese and the Zamorin immediately granted the Portuguese permission to trade freely at Cochin. As the Editor of '*Astley's Collection of Voyages and Travels*' remarks, "we may easily conceive that one strong ground of favour to the

7. The name of the Cochin Rajah is correctly given by Diogo de Couto ('*Da Asia*, Bk. X, p. 529) as Unni Corma Coul' (Uṇṇi Rāma Kōyil I (died or abdicated in 1502 or 1503). vide, *Perumpadappu Svarāpam Granthavari*, Introduction, p. iii

Portuguese at Cochin was in hopes by their means to throw off the yoke of the Zamorin.”<sup>8</sup> A treaty of friendship and alliance was signed between the Portuguese and the Cochin Rāja. One secret clause promised to make the King of Cochin the sovereign of the Calicut kingdom at some future date.<sup>9</sup> The Portuguese were allowed to establish a factory at Cochin. Pepper and other articles were procured with such expedition that all the ships had full lading within a fortnight. As Cabral was preparing to depart from Cochin on 9th January, 1501, a large Calicut fleet was seen off the harbour. Portuguese historians assert that Cabral chased away the Calicut fleet, but independent evidence proves a different story. It seems that it was a violent north wind that prevented the Calicut ships from coming into grips with the Portuguese fleet.<sup>10</sup> Cabral “deemed it prudent to avoid fighting with so large a force”<sup>11</sup> and so hurriedly left that he carried away the Nāyar hostages provided by the King of Cochin and left behind the Portuguese factor and 30 of his men.

On 15th January, the fleet anchored off Cannanore. The Rāja offered to provide the ships with spices on credit, but the offer was declined, as the ships were fully laden. On 16th January, Cabral sailed away to Portugal.

While Cabral was about to leave Cochin, he received a message from the ruler of Quilon offering to supply pepper and other spices cheaper than at Cochin. But Cabral politely turned down the offer saying that he could not visit his port then.

8. Vol. I, p. 48.

9. Danvers, F. C, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, p. 71.

10. Letter of Venetian Envoy in Portugal to Home Government, Castanheda, (Kerr, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 510)

11. Castanheda (Kerr, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 425.)

The voyage of Pedro Alvares Cabral was important in several respects. On the Portuguese side, his experience confirmed that "Indian merchandise well repaid the cost of transportation by sea, despite the length and manifold hazards of the voyage."<sup>12</sup> Secondly, it was recognised beyond doubt that the monopoly of spice-trade, much less the sovereignty of the seas, which the Portuguese King claimed, could not be secured and sustained, at least on the Kerala coast, without a stiff fight with the Zamorin and his allies, the Muslims.

The Portuguese King was convinced that "it was requisite either to attempt making a great Fortune with a great Force, or else quit the attempt. Some were of the opinion to desist, but the credit of so great an action prevailed and though many were lost, the gain of those who returned was so great that it outweighed the consideration of the damage. The King was inspired with the hope of carrying on what the Apostle St. Thomas had begun, and planting the Christian religion in those countries and enlarging his Royal Titles by adding to them, as he did, those of Lord of Navigation, Conquests and Trade of Aethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India, which were confirmed by the Pope."<sup>13</sup>

On the Indian side, the breach between the Zamorin and the Portuguese had become complete through the short-sighted policy of Cabral. Secondly, the discovery of Cochin enabled the Portuguese to avoid Calicut for trade purposes. "Cochin harbour was far superior to the open roadstead of Calicut, and the magnificent inland communications it had with the pepper country were unlike anything obtaining at its rival."<sup>14</sup> The

12. Jayne, K. G., *op. cit.*, pp. 63-4.

13. Faria Y Souza, *Portuguese Asia*, Vol. I, p. 63.

14. Whiteway, R. S., *Rise of the Portuguese Power in India*, p. 8,

Cochin ruler, who wished to throw off the Zamorin's assumption of sovereign rights over his country, acted as a willing tool in the hands of the Portuguese to fight the Zamorin.

How the Portuguese government decided to meet the challenge to their trade with India, was made clear by the first act of Vasco da Gama on his second voyage to India. Near 'Marabia' (Māḍāyī), Gama took a vessel of Calicut, returning from Mecca. It contained 240 Muslim men with many women and children. All offers of ransom were spurned, and after plundering her bare, she was ordered to be set on fire- "But the Muhamedans extinguished the conflagration, collected the few arms that were left, prepared to sell their lives dearly, and beat off the boats sent to rekindle the flames. Vasco da Gama says Lopes, looked on through his port-hole and saw the women bringing up their gold and their jewels and holding up their babies to beg for mercy, but there was no mercy." The attack continued for eight days, but the Portuguese failed to board the Calicut ship or fire her; so determined and stiff was the resistance that they were on the point of giving up the attack in despair, when a traitor swam off and offered to fire her if they would spare his life. His offer was accepted and he became a slave. The ship was burnt with all in her, save a few children. It is difficult to exaggerate "the horror of that death agony, prolonged for eight days."<sup>15</sup>

Gama soon afterwards reached Cannanore. He was warmly received by the King. The terms of a commercial treaty were discussed but no agreement could be reached, as Gama insisted that spices should be supplied at a fixed price. The

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-2.

price of pepper and other spices had been increasing, consequent on the growing demand. In order to settle the dispute, the King proposed that the rates prevailing at Cochin would be acceptable at Cannanore also. But Gama was not satisfied and he threatened that "as the Moors of Cananor had so much power over his will as to be able to change it," he would treat Cannanore on the same level as Calicut and hurriedly left for Cochin. The King was frightened at this prospect and he sent word to Gama accepting all his conditions. Barros says that the King pacified the merchants by promising to refund to them the difference between the prices out of his dues.<sup>16</sup>

From Cannanore, Gama proceeded to Calicut. The Zamorin now sent a Brahmin envoy to treat with him. But Gama refused to listen to the proffers of peace and insisted on the expulsion of all Muslim merchants from the country. The Zamorin could not naturally agree to this condition. He replied that he could not drive out, without a just cause, more than four thousand families of them, from his country and that Calicut had been a free port for centuries. The Portuguese were welcome to trade there as anyone else. But this answer did not satisfy Gama. He captured 800 fishermen of the coast, cut off their hands and feet and loaded them in a vessel and allowed it to drift ashore.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, Gama bombarded the city for two days and nights, and left for Cochin.

Vasco da Gama reached Cochin on 7th November. During the interview, Gama acted as in Cannanore, and

16. Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 325 note.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 331-32. Correa's account of the incident is horrible in its harrowing details. It has been suggested that he exaggerated in order to enhance the glory of his hero!

walked out of the council chamber, when the merchants refused to supply spices at a fixed price. Afraid of losing the support of the Portuguese, Uṇṇi Rāma Kōyil II followed the Captain-Genereral on board his ship and conciliated him by promising to settle the price of spices to his satisfaction.

The Portuguese in their trade relations with the Kings of Kerala insisted that trade in spices should be their monopoly. They further claimed sovereignty over the high seas. Consequently they insisted that all native ships should obtain their *cartaz* (pass) to sail the seas. Ships without passes were intercepted and held to ransom. Barros, the Portuguese official historian, justifies the practice in the following words: "Although by common right the seas are common and open to all navigators,...yet this law has force only in Europe, among the Christian folk...But with respect to these Moors and Gentiles, who are outside the law of Christ Jesus ...(they) cannot be privileged with the benefits of our laws." <sup>18</sup>

The enforcement of such unreasonable claims were bound to lead to a prolonged war and that was what happened. The native Muslim and Arab traders whose age-old trade privileges were threatened with extinction now girded up their loins to meet the challenge. In this endeavour, the Zamorin gave them the leadership, as the Portugusse claim was as much against natural justice as against his trade interests.

Before the Portuguese ships at Cochin had completed their lading, news arrived of the great preparations the Zamorin was making to attack them. He had collected together a considerable naval force under Khōja Ambar and Khōja Qāsim.

18. Quoted in Correa, *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xxx



Gama, who did not wish to risk his richly laden ships, made a detour to Cannanore, while the fleet under Vicente Sodre met the enemy. In the fight off Pantalāyini, the Zamorin's ships were greatly damaged by the heavy fire of the Portuguese ships. Several caravels and sambuks of the Zamorin were sunk, and several others were captured. The ships that were captured were towed by the Portuguese as far as Calicut, tied together, set on fire and allowed to drift ashore.

While Gama was at Cochin, the Rāni of Quilon, "from where much of the pepper came to Cochin," sent him a message requesting him to send two ships to that port and promised to provide them with spices on the same terms as at Cochin. She also agreed to provide the Portuguese ships with a similar quantity of spices each year at the prevailing market-price. Gama welcomed the messenger warmly, but fearing the acceptance of the offer might jeopardise the recently established friendship with the King of Cochin, he sent a courteous reply, stating that he could not agree to Her Majesty's proposal without the concurrence of the King of Cochin. On receipt of this reply, the Rāni sent a message to the King of Cochin direct, requesting him to permit the Portuguese to call at her port. The King of Cochin did not at first agree to this proposal, as he feared that he would lose a considerable portion of the customs and the transit duties on spices, which would otherwise pass through his port. But he later acquiesced on Gama agreeing not to establish a factory at Quilon and to send ships to Quilon only when there should be a scarcity for spices at Cochin. Two

ships were accordingly sent to Quilon. In ten days the ships were loaded and they returned to Cochin.<sup>19</sup>

The departure of Gama was the signal for the Zamorin to commence hostilities against the Rājā of Cochin, who had entertained the Portuguese in his country, against his advice. He now demanded that the Portuguese factors left at Cochin by Vasco da Gama should be surrendered to him. On this demand being turned down by the Cochin Rājā, he mobilised his forces against Cochin. Affairs in Cochin had in the meantime worsened. A number of Cochin feudatories had opposed the Rājā's policy of friendship with the Portuguese against the country's interests. They suggested that the Portuguese should be surrendered to avoid a war with the Zamorin. But the Rājā of Cochin, with rare good faith, refused to abandon the Portuguese. On 31st March, 1503, the Zamorin marched through Idappalli into Cochin territory and was joined by many Cochin malcontents. The Zamorin's army now attempted to force the ford at Pallurutti, which was ably defended by Prince *Naramuhin* of Cochin. In spite of its numerical superiority, the Zamorin's army was repulsed with considerable loss. It was only during the third attempt that the Zamorin was able to force the ford. The whole country was laid waste by fire and sword. The Rājā of Cochin was forced to retire to the island of Vaipin with his family. He took with him the Portuguese factors. The Zamorin

19. *Ibid.*, p. 348. According to Correa, the ruler of Quilon at that time was a Queen. He curiously adds that "by their laws women govern the kingdom, and they are called Queens; and their husbands not". Danvers adds that at the time the heir to the throne was a minor and the Queen Dowager governing as Regent. She generally lived in the interior of the country, and appointed a council of leading men to manage the affairs of the country. (*op.cit.* Vol. I, p. 101.)

blockaded Vaipin and the blockade was raised only on the arrival of a Portuguese fleet under Francisco d' Albuquerque in September. The Rāja of Cochin was triumphantly brought back from Vaipin and reinstated. The territories of the Cochin feudatories, who had sided with the Zamorin, were devastated.

On his return from the victorious expedition, Albuquerque sought and obtained the permission of the Rāja of Cochin for erecting a fort at Cochin. The construction of the fort was immediately begun and finished by 1st October. The King took much interest in the construction of the fort and was present at the opening ceremony. "Thus was founded the first European fort in India, for the stockade already erected at Cannanore appears to have been little more than a fence to keep out incendiaries."<sup>20</sup>

No sooner had the Portuguese fleet left the Kerala shores than the Zamorin formed a combination of north Kerala princes and chieftains to drive out the Portuguese from the Kerala coast. The combined force consisted of about 50,000 soldiers, of which 4,000 formed the crew of 280 vessels, big and small. The Allies advanced through Idappalli to Kumbalam, from where they decided to cross over to Paḷlurutti, south-east of Cochin. The aim of the expedition was to capture the newly constructed Portuguese fort at Cochin, and thereby prevent the Portuguese from landing again at Cochin. The plan was to attack Cochin simultaneously from the sea and land. The defence of Cochin by Duarte Pacheco against the combined strength of the Confederates was one of the most brilliant feats of arms of the Portuguese in India. Supported by a handful of

20. Logan, W, *Manual of the Malabar District*, Vol. I, p. 308

Portuguese and Cochin soldiers, Pacheco organised effective resistance against the invaders. For nearly five months, he successfully prevented the Confederates from crossing over to Cochin. On the arrival of a fresh Portuguese fleet, the Confederates withdrew from Cochin.

The King of Portugal, who felt that the system of sending annual fleets could not properly safeguard Portuguese interests in the East, decided to appoint a Viceroy for three years, with full powers to wage war, conclude treaties and regulate commerce. Francisco de Almeida, who was appointed as the first Viceroy reached Cannanore on 24th October, 1505. He obtained permission from the King to build a fort. The construction of the fort was immediately begun but it was completed only by the beginning of 1507.

From Cannanore, Almeida proceeded to Cochin. At Cochin, he came to know that the King of Cochin, who was a great friend of the Portuguese had retired through the operation of an old family custom, by which the head of the royal family always retired as *Perumpaḍappu Mūppu*, while the '*Ṇāmura*' (First Prince) ruled the country. About this time the Perumpaḍappu Mūppu died, and Uṇṇi Rāma Kōyil II, "the generous patron of the Portuguese", was promoted to the sthānam. The '*Mūnnāmmura*' (Second Prince), was a partisan of the Zamorin. Therefore Almeida managed to secure the installation of the '*Nālamura*' (Third Prince), who was more favourable to the Portuguese. When the Perumpaḍappu Mūppu died in 1510, the Portuguese induced the Rāja to dispense with the custom altogether.

The Zamorin, who was greatly agitated at the great increase of Portuguese power on the Kerala coast, now thought of a grand alliance of powers that were adversely affected by the activities of the Portuguese in the East. In addition to his own extensive preparations, he had sought through the agency of his Muslim merchants the collaboration of the Sultans of Egypt, Gujarat and Bijāpūr, to drive out the Portuguese from the eastern waters. The news of these preparations was divulged to the Portuguese by Ludovico di Varthema, an Italian, who was visiting these parts disguised as a Muslim fakir.

The Zamorin had built up a large armada of small but faster vassels, fitted with small pieces of cannon. This fleet sailed from the several ports of Ponnāni, Calicut, Kāppāḍ, Pantalāyini and Dharmāḍam. According to Varthema's own account, "truly seeing so many ships together it appeared as though one saw a very large wood."<sup>21</sup> In a hotly contested battle off Cannanore on 16th March, 1506, the Portuguese ships were able to create much havoc among the native craft, on account of their superior fire power.

In the meantime trouble had erupted at Cannanore, owing to the perfidy and wanton cruelty of the Portuguese captains. The King of Cannanore, who had welcomed the Portuguese to his dominions, had died and the new Kōlattiri was a partisan of the Zamorin. One of the Cannanore ships belonging to the Mammāli Marakkār, the merchant prince of Cannanore, was captured by the Portu-

21. *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema*, p. 274.

guese. The ship carried a pass signed by Lourenco de Brito, the Portuguese captain of Cannanore. But Goncalo Vaz, the Portuguese commander, who captured the ship, declared the pass a forgery, and "killed the crew, sewed them up in a sail, and sent the ship and the crew to the bottom."<sup>22</sup> The sail split and the bodies were washed ashore. Muslims of Cannanore made a hue and cry and wanted to be avenged for the blood of the victims of this outrage. The King of Cannanore was forced to declare war against the Portuguese. The Zamorin sent a large army to his assistance. But a nephew of the King, who was anxious to gain the friendship of the Portuguese, had given advance information to the Portuguese captain. On that account, the Portuguese were able to entrench themselves within their fort.

The blockade of the Portuguese fort continued for a long time as a result of which the besieged began to feel the pinch of want. But the garrison held out against great privations. When finally succour arrived on 27th August, 1507, after four months of close siege, there was not a man fit for service within the fort. On the arrival of the Portuguese fleet, under Tristao da Cunha, the besiegers beat a hasty retreat. The King of Cannanore sued for peace and peace was concluded on the advice of the Viceroy.

To wreak vengeance on the Zamorin, the Portuguese attacked Ponnāni, where the Zamorin's fleet was collected. The garrison under Kuṭṭi Āli, the admiral of the Zamorin, had thrown up stockades and erected batteries to prevent the enemy from landing. The Portuguese attacked the port on the early

22. Whiteway, R. S., *op. cit.*, p. 111.

morning of 24th November. They effected a landing and succeeded in destroying the earth-work, but had to face stubborn resistance. The Portuguese were forced to withdraw but they set fire to the town.<sup>23</sup> The Zamorin finding his efforts to drive the Portuguese out of Kerala waters ineffective now proposed a confederacy of powers affected by Portuguese activities in eastern waters. Through his Muslim merchants, he succeeded in negotiating a confederacy with the maritime powers of Egypt and Gujarat. Qanz ul-Ghawri, the Sultan of Egypt, sent a well-equipped fleet to India to fight the Portuguese. The Admiral, Mīr Husayn, was instructed to co-operate with the fleets of the Sultan of Gujarat and the Zamorin. The Egyptian fleet reached off Diu on 20th September, 1507 and was soon joined by the Gujarat and the Calicut ships. In January, 1508, the combined fleet attacked a Portuguese fleet under the command of Lourenco d' Almeida, son of the Portuguese Viceroy, in the Chaul port. In a stiff fight, the Portuguese fleet was dispersed and its commander killed. More than the material loss, it was a severe blow to Portuguese naval prestige.

The Viceroy immediately took steps to reverse the severe blow to Portuguese naval supremacy. The re-organised Portuguese fleet reached Diu in February and soon won over Mālik 'Iyāz, the Governor. After an inconclusive fight, the Egyptians sailed away, disgusted at the perfidious conduct of Mālik 'Iyāz. Thus Portuguese naval supremacy over the Indian Ocean was re-established without a real contest.

Afonso d' Albuquerque assumed charge as Viceroy on 1st December, 1509. On the pressing request of Marshal

23. Varthema, *op. cit.* pp. 286-88.

Coutinho, an attack on Calicut was planned. As a preliminary to the attack, the King of Cochin was persuaded to create a diversion by attacking the southern parts of the Zamorin's dominions. Consequently when the Portuguese attacked Calicut on 3rd January, 1510, there were few soldiers to defend the place, the Zamorin having marched to the interior to defend his southern frontier. The Portuguese encountered only slight opposition. But soon large number of natives came to the assistance of the guards, and attacked the Portuguese so furiously that Marshal Coutinho and several prominent fidalgos were cut down. It was Alboquerque's timely interference which retrieved the situation, but he did not escape unhurt. "In this disastrous day the Portuguese lost 300 killed, of whom 70 were fidalgos; and 400 wounded, of whom many died or were maimed for life. The damage to the Samuri was of course great, but he retained the field of battle, the Marshal's banner, and nearly all the arms offensive as well as defensive of the Portuguese."<sup>24</sup>

The discomfiture at Calicut did not daunt Alboquerque from attempting to form a coalition against the Zamorin. He urged the Vijayanagar Emperor to attack Calicut from the landside, while the Portuguese would co-operate with him from the sea. In recompense Alboquerque promised to divert the entire trade in Persian horses to Binaḱkal port, in the Vijayanagar empire.<sup>25</sup> The coalition attempt does not seem to have succeeded.

Alboquerque had in the meantime succeeded in capturing Goa from the hands of the Bijāpūr Sultan. Hearing of the capture of Goa, the Zamorin is said to have sent ambassadors

24. Whiteway, *op. cit.*, p 131.

25. Afonso d' Alboquerque, *Commentariés*, Vol. II, p. 73.



to Albuquerque, soliciting his friendship and offering a site within his kingdom for the construction of a fortress. Albuquerque's insistence for a site at Calicut made the negotiations fail. Disgusted at the intransigence of the Zamorin, Albuquerque wrote secretly to the brother of the Zamorin, who was inclined to Portuguese interests, to poison the Zamorin. Albuquerque believed that the Prince acted upon his proposal and, on the death of the Zamorin, was raised to the throne.<sup>26</sup>

The new Zamorin immediately gave permission for the erection of a Portuguese fort at Calicut. A treaty of peace and friendship was also signed with the Portuguese on 24th December, 1513. It provided that the Portuguese were free to import all kinds of merchandise to Calicut and the Zamorin would supply the Portuguese with all the spices and drugs his country produced. It was provided that the Muslim merchants of his country should take out passes from the Portuguese captains for navigating the high seas.<sup>27</sup>

As soon as the Raja of Cochin became aware of the peace proposals, he wrote a letter of remonstrance to the King of Portugal on 11th December, 1513. After reminding him of his investiture with a golden crown by command of the King, whose governor swore to make him the greatest King of all India, the letter continued: "Now this year, Dom Garcia has granted passes to the Calicut ships for Mecca; has made a present to the King and obtained from him a site for a fortress

26. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 72.

27. Danvers, F. C., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 283-84.

which is now in course of erection. All the merchants this side of Calicut used to come to me for passes; now they obtain them from the King of Calicut. All India is now surprised at Your Majesty concluding a treaty with a King who has been guilty of such treachery towards Your Majesty and myself, and is, therefore distrustful of Your Majesty. Your Majesty has concluded a treaty with this King without in any way consulting me. I will have no peace with him, but always wage war with him.”<sup>28</sup> But Alboquerque assured his Master that peace with Calicut was precious, as Cochin and Calicut, he pointed out, were capable of supplying cargo to the Portuguese fleets “until the day of judgment.”

With the treaty with Calicut, the Portuguese were now practically at peace with all eastern powers. The Portuguese could now count on Cannanore, Calicut, Cochin and Quilon to provide all the pepper and other spices they wanted. The volume of trade, which the Portuguese were able to secure as a result of the peace with Calicut, was enormous. But the peace lasted only for a shortwhile on account of the short-sighted policy of Alboquerque’s successors.

The first notable event in the viceroyalty of Lopo Soares (1515-1518), who succeeded Alboquerque, was a treaty with Quilon on 25th September, 1516. The treaty provided for the rebuilding of the church of S. Thome, which had been destroyed during the late disturbances there. Portuguese losses were to be reimbursed. But soon quarrels arose on account of the high-handedness of the Portuguese factors.

28. *Ibid.*

The Portuguese factor had captured several bullock-loads of pepper, which were being transported to the Coromandel Coast by way of the Āryankāvu pass. The people objected to the seizure, and attacked the Portuguese fort. The attack was pressed with vigour and the Portuguese garrison was in sore straits, till reinforcements and provisions arrived from Cochin. At last peace was restored in November, 1520, the Queen agreeing to the same terms as those of 1516. But all arrears of pepper were to be immediately delivered.<sup>29</sup>

The activities of several Portuguese governors and of officers of the period were described as “the scandal of Portugal.” The general deterioration that had set in was thus described by a Portuguese historian: “Till this time the gentlemen had followed the dictates of true honour, esteeming their arms the greatest riches; from this time forward they so wholly gave up themselves to trading, that those who had been captains, became merchants, so that what had been command became a shame, honour was a scandal and reputation a reproach.” The Portuguese administration now relaxed the salutary rule of Albuquerque that no Portuguese should engage himself in trade. The result was that the Eastern Seas were now crowded with private traders, who were nothing but pirates. Native ships were not safe from these private traders. Both friend and foe were attacked and despoiled by them. This indiscriminate attacks on their ships estranged even the allies of the Portuguese.

Meanwhile the Malabar seamen had stepped up the attacks on Portuguese shipping and trade. They took little account of the coastal fleet of the Portuguese, for they employed

29. *Ibid.*, p. 346.

swift vessels, while the Portuguese ships were big and heavy. "For which reason they were so bold that they appeared before the Viceroy Vasco da Gama during his third viceroyalty during the whole voyage from Goa to Cochin in all directions, showing that they took no heed of him."<sup>30</sup> As soon as Gama reached Cochin, he sent out several expeditions against the Malabar seamen. Portuguese attempts to destroy their power by destroying their bases of operation did not fully succeed. Hierom de Sousa sent to intercept Kuṭṭi Āli, who had been harrying Portuguese shipping around Calicut, met him near Kāppāḍ and pursued him as far as Cannanore, but the Malabar seamen gave him the slip.<sup>31</sup> Another Portuguese captain, George Telo, fared no better. Lopo Vaz, another captain, hanged a Muslim merchant of distinction called 'Baliya Hassan of Cannanore' who was suspected of privateering. It occasioned many of his relations leaving the city and seeking revenge by turning pirates.<sup>32</sup>

Believing that the Zamorin was behind these attacks, the Viceroy decided to chastise him. On 26th February, 1525, the Portuguese attacked and under cover of a heavy fire landed at Ponnāni. The town and the vessels in the port were plundered and set on fire. Then they proceeded to Calicut, where they burnt all the ships in the roadstead. At Pantalāyini Kollam the Portuguese met with stiff opposition. It was only after prolonged fighting that they were able to land and destroy the town. The booty acquired was enormous: it contained 360 pieces of cannon, a vast number of muskets and 53 ships, most of them loaded with spices.<sup>33</sup>

30. Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 398 note.

31. Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 281.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

A new Zamorin had come to the sthānam, who, on account of the excesses the Portuguese committed against his country and people, resolved to punish them. He decided to reduce the Portuguese fortress of Calicut. The fort was besieged in June, 1526. Many attempts made to relieve the fort were foiled. Though the siege was later on raised, the Portuguese realised the impossibility of holding the fort in the face of the Zamorin's opposition. Consequently the Portuguese demolished the fort and retired to Cochin.

This policy of hit-and-run soon began to pay dividends. Portuguese captains found it unsafe to travel the high seas without being fully armed. The coastal trade was dislocated and even the despatch of the annual cargo to Europe was threatened. Malabar seamen had by this time realised their weakness in fighting the Portuguese. Their artillery was inferior to that of the Portuguese in fire-power, their gunpowder weak<sup>34</sup> and their ships unable to cope with the rigours of prolonged warfare. The result was that in pitched battles, Malabar ships had little chance of survival, much less of victory. That is why Portuguese accounts of their wars with Malabar fleets, though considerably exaggerated, read more like massacres than proper battles. But Malabar seamen soon effected vast changes in their equipment and tactics. Smaller but faster paroes (paḍavs) were built, fitted with more powerful artillery. Pitched battles were as far as possible avoided, and the Malabar seamen took

31. Correa describing the encounter between Gama's ships and the Calicut fleet in 1524 off Pantalayini, says that in spite of the considerable number of vessels and the artillery they carried, the Portuguese were able to cause much damage because "our shot was much more powerful than theirs." He describes the artillery fire from the Calicut ships as "shot like bowls", i. e. the shots travelled very slowly. (*op. cit.*, p. 369).

to a course of sea-guerilla. Further, the Malabar seamen carried the war into the enemy territory by attacking Portuguese possessions in Ceylon. They established themselves at 'Kotta' in Ceylon and supported 'Mayadunne' against his brother, the King, who was a partisan of the Portuguese. For several years Malabar seamen harassed Portuguese shipping and trade.

The Portuguese, who found that their superiority at sea was seriously threatened, now made a determined effort to destroy the Zamorin's naval power. The reverses which they suffered at the hands of the Malabar seamen made them redouble their efforts. In several engagements with the Portuguese, the Zamorin lost heavily. These losses induced the Zamorin in 1532 to propose an accommodation with the Portuguese. They were permitted to construct a fortress at Cāliyam, at the mouth of the Bēppūr river. As soon as the fort was in a posture of defence, the Portuguese broke with the Zamorin over the apportioning of the customs collection. They divided the Zamorin's share among the chieftains of Bēppūr and *Caranalij* (Karuvanturutty ?) on the plea that they were the real lords of the land. The Zamorin, who was greatly chagrined at the duplicity of the Portuguese, now decided to punish them for their breach of faith.

The Zamorin laid a vast net for destroying the power of the Portuguese and drive them off the coast. Nearer home, he decided to attack Cochin and keep the Portuguese engaged, while his naval captains operated in Ceylon and the Coromandel coast against them. The time selected was the autumn of 1537, when the annual fleet had returned to Portugal, leaving only a small force in India.

The Zamorin marched into Cochin by way of Cranganore. From Cranganore he attempted to cross over to the Vaipin

Island but was prevented. The Chief of Iḍappaḷli co-operated with the Zamorin in the attack, which made the position of the King of Cochin extremely perilous. But the timely arrival of a Portuguese squadron saved Cochin. The Zamorin and his allies withdrew to the interior to wait for a more favourable opportunity. Immediately after his arrival, Martim Afonso, the Portuguese captain, invaded Iḍappaḷli, plundered and reduced it to ashes, for joining the side of the Zamorin in the late war. But soon the Zamorin returned to the attack, by way of the Kumbaḷam ford. The Calicut forces mounted a furious attack and all but broke the defences. Only the timely arrival of a Cochin contingent saved the situation. According to Faria Y Souza, within the space of 20 days the Zamorin fought six battles but could not gain entry across the ford.<sup>35</sup> The Calicut fleet under Kuṭṭi Āli however had in the meanwhile worsted a Portuguese fleet in front of the Portuguese fort of Cāliyam and captured a Portuguese ship. Martim Afonso, who pursued the Calicut fleet as far as Tikkōḍi had to retreat without decisively engaging the enemy, on the pretext that the situation at Cochin required his urgent presence there.

On the request of Mayadunne of Ceylon, the Zamorin had furnished him with a fleet of 50 ships and 2,000 men, with which he invested Kōṭṭa and the siege continued for three months. But Mayadunne proved treacherous. On the arrival of a Portuguese contingent to assist his brother, he patched up a truce with him and left the Malabar seamen to their fate. Thereupon the Calicut fleet moved to Veḍalai, between Kiḷēkkarai and Rāmēśvaram and preyed upon Portuguese

35. Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 400.

shipping, Martim Afonso's first attempt to dislodge them from Veḍalai failed. In January, 1538, he made a second attack and drove them out.

In the meantime the Zamorin and the Sultan of Gujarāt had sought the help of the Ottoman Emperor to drive the Portuguese out of Indian seas. 'Sulaymān the Magnificent', the Ottoman Emperor, whose exchequer was considerably affected by the piratical and trading activities of the Portuguese in the East, now fitted out a naval expedition under Sulaymān Pāsha and sent it to the East. The news of this formidable armada reached India sufficiently early so that the Portuguese were enabled to take all defensive measures. The Turkish fleet reached Gujarāt in September, 1538. Instead of fighting the Portuguese in the high seas, Sulaymān tied himself down by blockading the Portuguese fort of Diu. "The power of the Turks lay in their formidable artillery... their gunners were exceptionally well trained; in an action at sea this superiority should have given them victory." The siege was prolonged and the admiral by his overbearing conduct alienated the sympathies of the local population and thus sealed the fate of the expedition. After a close siege lasting about two months, the Turks retired. When the siege terminated "there were only 40 men fit for duty (within the fort), but very few serviceable arms, and the only powder available for powder pots, the chief defensive weapon of the Portuguese, was that drawn from the charges of the big guns."<sup>36</sup>

His several schemes for expelling the Portuguese from the Kerala coast having failed, the Zamorin was forced

36. Whiteway, R. S., *o. p. cit.*, p. 265.



to sign a treaty with them. He sent Cinna Kutṭi Āli to Goa with a splendid retinue to negotiate the terms of the treaty. In arranging the treaty of peace, the Zamorin had to yield in all the points in dispute with the Portuguese. The treaty of 6th December, 1539 provided: (1) All the pepper in the Zamorin's dominions should be sold to the Portuguese "at the rates prevailing in Cochin"; (2) the Zamorin might send a quantity of pepper to Portugal on his own account; (3) a part of the Portuguese imports should be sold at Calicut so that the Zamorin might get the port dues; (4) the Muslim merchants of his kingdom should obtain 'cartaz' from the Portuguese captain of Caliyam for navigating the high seas; but they should not trade with Mecca or in pepper or in drugs without the special sanction of the Viceroy; and (5) the Zamorin should refrain from making war on the friends of the Portuguese (meaning the Rāja of Cochin), but if he did wage war, the conditions of the treaty were not to be disturbed.<sup>37</sup> The treaty was ceremoniously ratified at Ponnāni on 1st January, 1540 in the presence of Dom Alvaro de Noronha, son of the Viceroy and other high officials of the Company.

The treaty secured for the Portuguese a long-needed respite from the official war with the Zamorin. They utilised this respite in fighting the Cochin Rāja's enemies. Their combined armies attacked and devastated 'Pimienta' (Vaḍakkumkūr). But the unofficial war with the Malabar seamen continued. Malabar seamen attacked the Portuguese settlement of Punnaikāyal on the east coast in 1553, at

37. Danvers, F. C., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 443.

the invitation of Viśvanāth Nāyak, the Vijayanagar Governor of Madura. The Portuguese were driven out and the town was given to plunder. In home waters Malabar seamen under Kuññāli II made it unsafe for Portuguese ships to sail without convoy. For 15 years Kuññāli eluded the vigilance of the Portuguese and preyed upon Portuguese shipping and trade. In 1558 the Portuguese intercepted Kuññāli off Cannanore and in a hard-fought action captured three of his ships but the rest retired unmolested since the Portuguese were unable to pursue them.

The deprivations of the Portuguese however continued unabated. They attacked the temple of Tēvalakkara, in the dominions of the King of Kāyamkuḷam, "notwithstanding we were at peace with that King.". During the viceroyalty of George Cabral, the Portuguese plundered the temple at Paḷḷurutti, which was greatly venerated by the Rāja of Cochin. This wanton act was greatly resented by the Rāja and the people of the country.

According to Zaynuddīn, between 1555 and 1559, the Portuguese began a more rigorous inspection of passes. If these passes were not obtained or lost, the Portuguese cruisers seized the native ships and their cargo, and killed all the crew "in the most cruel manner, cutting their throats and throwing them into the sea: binding them with ropes and tying them up in nets or in some other ligatures of the kind and casting them overboard."<sup>38</sup>

Troubles started in Cannanore also. Martim Afonso attempted the capture of Abūbakr Āli, an influential Mappiḷa

38. Shaikh Zaynuddīn, *Tuhfat ul-Mujāhidīn* (S. M. H. Nainar's Translation) p. 156.

nobleman of Cannanore, who failed to meet a forced loan demanded by the Portuguese captain. In the scuffle that followed Abūbākr Āli and Kuññi Sūppi were killed. As a result of this dastardly act, war broke out between Cannanore and the Portuguese in 1564. The war continued intermittently for a long period. The Zamorin sent effective help to the Kōlattiri. On account of the war with Cannanore and the Malabar seamen, Portuguese trade with Northern Kerala had practically come to an end. Consequently they were forced to patch up a truce with Cannanore.

Meanwhile the Zamorin having broken with the Portuguese, had entered into a coalition with the Kings of Bijāpūr, Ahmadnagar and Achin for expelling the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean. Ādil Shāh, the Sultan of Bijāpūr invested Goa, while the Nizām Shāh, the Sultan Ahmadnagar, attacked Chaul. The Zamorin besieged Cāliyam, which was a thorn on his side. The Zamorin even sent one of his intrepid commanders, Kuṭṭi Pōkker to assist in the siege of Chaul. The attack on Cāliyam was completely successful. After a rigorous siege lasting for months, the fort surrendered in November, 1571 and was demolished "leaving not one stone upon another."

The loss of Caliyam was a great blow to Portuguese power in India. But worse still was the menace of the Malabar seamen, which practically stopped all Portuguese shipping and trade on the Kerala coast. The exasperated Portuguese captains let loose a reign of terror on the high seas and against coastal towns. Cāliyam, Parappanaññaḍi, Kappaḍ and Nilēśvaram were destroyed by fire and sword. The native vessels taken "supplied the (Portuguese) galleys with slaves and the fleet with provisions."

The high-handedness of the Portuguese caused troubles in Cochin also. In 1583 they refused to share the port dues with the King of Cochin. The people rose in revolt and the Portuguese garrison in Cochin was placed under imminent peril. Realising the gravity of the situation, the Portuguese promised to continue the sharing of the port dues with the Cochin Rāja.

As a result of the agitation in Cochin negotiations were opened with the Zamorin for the erection of a Portuguese fort at Ponnāni. The Zamorin put off the negotiations on one pretext or other, as he was well aware of the difficulties of the Portuguese. It was only in 1586 that the Zamorin agreed to the construction of a fort there. This permission was greatly resented by the Māppiḷa seamen of the Zamorin. They felt that the Zamorin had sacrificed their interests in permitting the erection of a Portuguese fort there, especially at a time when they were engaged in a life-and-death struggle with their enemies. Naturally this was the beginning of strained relations between the Zamorin and his Māppiḷa seamen.

However the Māppiḷa seamen did not give up their fight against the Portuguese. Their continuous attacks on Portuguese shipping and trade convinced them that without coming to terms with the Zamorin it would not be possible to destroy the power of the Marakkārs. Negotiations were therefore started through a Jesuit priest who was then a prisoner at Calicut. As a result, terms of peace were settled in 1591 "to the content of both parties and the Zamorin not only released all slaves in his kingdom, but encouraged the Jesuits to build a church, himself laying the first stone."<sup>39</sup>

39. Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 66.

As usual peace did not last long, because the Portuguese insisted that all Malabar vessels should take out 'cartaz' and treated ships without their cartaz as pirates. The Zamorin and his seamen retaliated by attacking Portuguese ships and disrupting their trade. Kuññāli IV, who had ascended the sthānam in 1595, was more successful in the fight against the Portuguese, than his predecessors. He preyed upon Portuguese ships so often that a powerful force was specially despatched to the Kerala coast against him. Andre Furtado who had been successful in his expedition against Khōja Mūsa was placed in command. Furtado was able to capture some ships belonging to the Zamorin, but Kuññāli's fleet though defeated escaped unhurt.

The overbearing conduct of Kuññāli had estranged him from his liege lord, the Zamorin. Many of his actions were represented by hostile interests as violations of the sovereignty of the Zamorin. The Portuguese did not let up this opportunity and represented to the Zamorin the desirability of a joint-expedition to extirpate the overmighty subjects. The Zamorin agreed. In March, 1599, the Confederates attacked Kōṭṭakkal both by land and sea, but as the attacks did not synchronise, Kuññāli had little difficulty in driving back the invaders with heavy losses. "So this proved the greatest disgrace the Portuguese received in Asia," wails Faria Y Souza.<sup>40</sup>

So pleased was Kuññāli with his success that he threw discretion to the winds and acted in such a manner that the Portuguese were once again able to persuade the

40. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Zamorin to undertake a fresh expedition jointly against him. Kuññāli did not even take the elementary precaution of strengthening his position and taking in provisions. In March, 1600, the second attack on Kōṭṭakkal was made. Andre Furtado, who had learnt his lesson from the mistakes of his predecessor, had taken all precautions. The attack was pressed with so much vigour that in a short while Kuññāli found his position untenable and surrendered to the Zamorin. who yielded him and 40 of his chief companions to the Portuguese. The prisoners were carried off to Goa and publicly executed, with scant regard for the promise of life granted to them. "So did the government and rabble go hand in hand in murder and breach of faith", is the comment of the Portuguese historian.<sup>41</sup>

The death of Kuññāli and the fall of Kōṭṭakkal did not avail the Portuguese any respite from the deprivations of the Malabar seamen. As Pyrard de Laval observed: "Yet did the Portuguese afterwards pay dearly for his head: for the Malabars, in revenge, put to death all the Portuguese they could lay hands on; and the King [of Calicut had great regret for having delivered so valiant a man (he had done so out of anger and revenge), for Cognialy and his brother were esteemed the bravest captains in all the East Indies."<sup>42</sup>

Malabar seamen began to harass Portuguese shipping and trade with a vengeance. So great was the fear of the Portuguese for the Malabar seamen that they ventured forth in large 'cafles' only. According to the testimony of Pyrard even these

41. Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 116.

42. *Voyage to the East Indies*. Vol. I, p. 356.

cafles did not save them, for seldom did “the Malabar corsairs fail to capture some of them.”<sup>43</sup> Monsieur Henry Defeynes de Montfort observed during his sojourn in Malabar (1608-9): “Meanwhile I was there they [Malabar seamen] took 160 cavavels from the Portugalls.”<sup>44</sup> William Finch, who was in Malabar during 1608-10, enumerates the many captures made from the Portuguese by Malabar seamen, who were “at this time masters of the seas.”<sup>45</sup>

Even while negotiations for a joint expedition against Kuññāli were in the offing, the King of Cochin had tried to break up the coalition. The King, being jealous of the new friendship, “gave out that Zamorin had agreed with Cunnale to cut off all our men at one stroke when they should be deepest engaged in the assault.”<sup>46</sup> To disrupt the alliance the Rāja of Cochin further invaded the territory of Korat̃i Kaymal, a feudatory of the Zamorin, and occupied a large portion of it. As soon as the Zamorin was free from the campaign against Kuññāli, he drove the Cochin forces from Korat̃i and in retaliation invaded Cochin itself. The campaign was protracted. He realised that the invasion would not succeed as long as the Rāja of Cranganore sided with the Portuguese. The Rāja, though technically a feudatory of the Zamorin, had assumed independence since the erection of a Portuguese fort at Cranganore. Now the Zamorin required him to send assistance in the invasion of Cochin. As the Rāja failed to meet the requisition, the Zamorin invaded the Kingdom of Cranganore and annexed

43. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 246.

44. Somers, *Collection of Tracts*, Vol. III, p. 337.

45. Foster, W, *Early Travels in India*, p. 128.

46. Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 102.

its northern parts. The Chief of Paṛavūr sided with the Zamorin against Cochin, which intensified the struggle. Early in 1615, the Zamorin besieged the fortress of Cranganore and soon reduced it to sore straits. However the Portuguese were able to coerce the Paṛavūr Rāja into signing a peace treaty. Consequently the Zamorin was forced to raise the siege of Cranganore.

But the Zamorin did not immediately abandon the struggle. The continuing state of war around Cochin had dried up even the dwindling source of supply of pepper and drugs to the Portuguese. Therefore they importuned the Zamorin to conclude a treaty. But the Zamorin who was aware of the critical situation of the Portuguese made no hurry. War continued intermittently, neither side gaining a decisive victory.

By this time the Dutch and English had entered the scene as rivals of the Portuguese. The Chiefs of Kēraḷa learnt to use their assistance to overthrow the galling yoke of the Portuguese. For the next 50 years the Portuguese were compelled to fight a losing contest with the Dutch and the English for the monopoly of Kēraḷa trade.

The decline of Portuguese power in India was not due to extraneous circumstances alone; it has as much to do with its inherent weaknesses. The system of Portuguese administration was vicious to the core. The officers were not only ill-paid but were not paid at all for long periods. They were allowed to trade on their own account. All manual work was done by slaves, while the idle population spent their time in gaming saloons and other haunts of vice. In this tolerance of vice, Fra Bartolomeo wrote in



1789, one could “discover the real cause why the Portuguese were driven from the city of Cochin, as well as from their other possessions in India.”<sup>47</sup> Another reprehensible feature of Portuguese administration was the sale of public offices. In 1614 it was expressly ordered that all appointments which would be likely to yield money, were to be put up for sale.

The first quarter of the 17th century witnessed the visible decline of Portuguese power on the Kēraḷa coast. In 1623, Dom Francisco da Gama, Viceroy of Goa, reported that “everything in India was in as bad a state as possible; the fortresses were ruined and without guns ...Cochin which used to be the most prosperous settlement, had then hardly any trade, and was almost in a state of ruin, and without any means of defence, whilst the enemies were in great force in the Indian seas. The only thing to be done was, in his opinion, to make peace with the Dutch on any terms, even allowing them to trade at Portuguese ports.”<sup>48</sup>

As time went on the position of the Portuguese in the East further deteriorated. The Batavia Diary of March 1627 speaks of intercepted Portuguese letters to the Viceroy testifying to their weak position at Cranganore, Cochin and Ceylon. The garrisons were rebelling and making extortions for arrears of pay. In a letter of 1st March, 1639, the Viceroy declared it to be impossible to carry on in India any longer without relief, and if no relief could be sent, it would only remain to wind up their affairs in the East and leave. As the power of the Portuguese steadily declined the Dutch power increased correspondingly. Van Goens,

47. *Voyage to the East Indies*, p. 133.

48. Danvers, F. C., *Report on Portuguese Records*, p. 27.

the Dutch admiral, after conquering Portuguese possessions in Ceylon, attacked and captured the fortress of Quilon on 29th December, 1658. The Queen of Quilon entered into a treaty with the Dutch in January, 1656, by which the former Portuguese possessions were surrendered to the Dutch. On the departure of Van Goens, the Portuguese recaptured Quilon (April, 1659). In December, 1661, Quilon was once again captured by the Dutch.

The next step in the systematic expulsion of the Portuguese from the Kēraḷa coast was the capture of Cochin. The dissensions in the Cochin royal family provided a convenient excuse for the intervention of the Dutch in Cochin affairs. In the absence of male heirs in the Iḷaya Tāvaḷi, the reigning branch, succession to the throne was assured to the Mūtta Tāvaḷi Prince. But under pressure of the Portuguese, the Queen Mother, Rāṇi Gaṅgādhara Lakṣmi, adopted five princes from Veṭṭam. The Mūtta Tāvaḷi Prince proceeded to Colombo and sought the help of the Dutch Governor against the Portuguese. Nearer home, the Zamorin and the Vaḍakkumkūr and Tekkumkūr princes supported the Mūtta Tāvaḷi Prince. In February, 1661, the combined armies of the Dutch and the Zamorin attacked the Portuguese fort at Pallipport and captured it (11th March.). The fort was handed over to the Zamorin.

Finding that the Portuguese fortresses of Cranganore and Cochin were strongly garrisoned, and as the rainy season was approaching, Van der Meyden, the Dutch Commander, decided to postpone their conquest to a later date and left. In January, 1662, the Dutch under their commander, Van Goens, attacked the Cranganore fort and after a stiff fight, the fort

capitulated on 15th January. Immediately afterwards, the Dutch occupied the island of Vaipin, and from its southern tip continuously bombarded the Portuguese fort of Cochin across the river. The Zamorin assisted the expedition by attacking Ernakulam. The Dutch landed at Maṭṭāñcēri and occupied the palace. In the fight at the palace, the Rāja, two adopted princes of Veṭṭam and several notables of Cochin were killed. Rāṇi Gaṅgādhara Lakṣmi, the Queen Mother, was taken prisoner and she pledged to recognise the Mūtta Tāvaḷi prince.

Soon the Dutch attacked the Portuguese fort at Cochin furiously. But the attack did not succeed. As the rainy season was fast approaching, the Dutch raised the siege and retired. As soon as the Dutch retired, the Portuguese came out of the fort and attacked Vaipin held by the Zamorin. In October, the Dutch returned to the attack. After a protracted siege, the fort of Cochin surrendered on January 7, 1663. With the capture of the Cannanore fort on February 13, Portuguese power on the Kēraḷa coast came to an end.

Portuguese contact with Kēraḷa lasted for over 150 years. This contact had left certain definite impressions on the politics, society and economy of Kēraḷa. Politically, the interference of the Portuguese in the affairs of Kēraḷa kingdoms kept them disunited. They carried on a continuous war against the Zamorin who opposed their monopolistic trade policy. Though the Zamorin was able to carry on the unequal struggle with the whole-hearted support of his Māppiḷa subjects, during the entire period of Portuguese hegemony over the Indian Ocean his power was visibly broken. Had it not been for the Portuguese intervention, the Zamorin would, in all probability, have over-

run a large number of principalities in Central Kēraḷa and established a strong and unified kingdom. The Portuguese intervention not only baffled this attempt, but by their patronage raised the Cochin Rāja from the position of a local chief to that of a rival to the Zamorin.

Further, the Portuguese, by their policy of directly dealing with the small princes and chieftains of the Kēraḷa coast disrupted the political control (Mēlkōyma rights) which the Zamorin, the Cochin Rāja and others exercised over these chieftains and perpetuated the disunion of the country, by encouraging the interminable feuds among the principalities. Princes of the coastal territories, confident of Portuguese support in the event of aggression by their overlords, used to flout their commands. The chiefs who took advantage of this situation were those of Quilon, Purakkāḍ, Maññāḍ, Paṛavūr and Tānūr. The Chief of Tānūr, especially, wishing to throw off the yoke of the Zamorin, had sided with the Portuguese; he went to Goa and was publicly converted to Christianity, but on his return, his passions cooled, he returned to the religion of his ancestors and to the loyalty to the Zamorin. The Quilon Prince, who belonged to Tṛppāppūr Svarūpam, tried to make use of the weakness in the Svarūpam and assert his independence. The increasing power of the smaller chiefs, consequently, led to the weakening of royal power in Calicut, Cochin and Veṇāḍ. The Portuguese welcomed this political disruption which increased their hold over the Kēraḷa Kingdoms. By money gifts and trade benefits, the Portuguese tried to win the minor chiefs over to their side. This state of political disunion was exploited by the Dutch also, and it paved the way for the easy conquest of Northern Kēraḷa by the Mysoreans.

The Portuguese contact had left some definite marks on the educational and cultural fields of Kēraḷa. The Portuguese had established seminaries at Cochin, Cranganore, Ankamāli and Vaipinkōṭṭa for the training of native Christian priests. These seminaries also propagated the knowledge of Latin and Portuguese. Till the establishment of British rule, Portuguese continued to be the diplomatic language of Kēraḷa rulers. Several letters and agreements of the Zamorin and other local rulers were written in Portuguese.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Portuguese factors were induced to learn Malayalam language for their commercial activities. Indological studies also received a stimulus during this period. Garcia da Orta's treatise on the medicinal plants of India is the first work of its kind. To Francis Xavier is ascribed a catechism in Malayalam. The profound studies on the history and life of the people of Kēraḷa left by Barbosa, Correa and other Portuguese writers are our main source of information for the history of Kēraḷa during the Portuguese period. Another contribution of the Portuguese was the introduction of printing in Kēraḷa. According to G. T. Mackenzie, in 1577, Joannese Gonsalvez, a Spanish priest, cut out Malayālam types and printed the Gospels.<sup>50</sup> But it has now been established that the script used was Malayāḷma. Printing presses were established at Vaippinkōṭṭa and Ampalakkāḍu towards the close of the 16th century.

It was in the economy of Kēraḷa that the Portuguese contact made the deepest impact. Though the Portuguese attempted to gain a monopoly of Kēraḷa trade by force of arms,

49. Vide, Logan W, *Treaties &c.*, Part I, Nos. I-XVI.

50. *History of Christianity in Travancore*, p. 21

the volume of Kēraḷa exports grew enormously, thereby increasing the prosperity of the country. Increasing contacts, with Europe led to the adoption of several features of European dress and fashion, architecture, military discipline, weapons and techniques. In architecture, the bangalow type of building was a Portuguese innovation. In church architecture, the Portuguese popularised the Gothic style in Kēraḷa. On account of Portuguese commercial activity, several new towns like Purakkāḍ Cochin, Cāliyam and Cannanore rose into prominence, while older towns like Quilon and Cranganore decayed for want of patronage. Cochin, which was only an insignificant village when Cabral arrived there in 1500, was described by Caesar Frederick in 1565 as “the Chiefest place that the Portuguals have in the Indies next unto Goa.”<sup>51</sup>

The great demand for pepper, ginger and other spices from Europe greatly encouraged their cultivation. People took to the cultivation of these spices with great enthusiasm. The Portuguese popularised in India the cultivation of several new agricultural products like cashew, tobacco, custard apple, guava, pine-apple and pappaya. Similarly, they encouraged the cultivation of coconuts on a commercial scale. An improved variety of coconut tree called ‘Kappatteñṇu’ (= Kappal + teñṇu), was popularised by them. Coir from Kēraḷa became a staple article of export, which was greatly used for caulking and as matting in ships.

In the matter of military discipline, weapons and techniques, local powers learnt much from the Portuguese. In battles with the Portuguese, they had realised the in-

51. *Hakluyt's Voyages*, Vol. V., p. 392.

ferior quality of their artillery and gun-powder. The Zamorin made use of the services of two Milanese deserters from the Portuguese side to cast cannons and fire-arms of better make. But the local rulers continued to depend upon the Dutch, the French and the English for their requirements of gun powder and fire-arms, as was evidenced by their constant requisitions for these items from the European Companies.

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### 3. RISE AND FALL OF THE KUNNALIS

The Kuññāli Marakkārs of Kōṭṭakkal were the Māppiḷa admirals of the Zamorins in their classic fight against the Portuguese attempt to dominate the foreign trade of Malabar. The history of the Portuguese connection with Malabar in the 16th century, is the history of the Kuññāli Marakkārs who sacrificed their lives and property in defence of their land and sovereign. "During the hundred years of war with the Portuguese, this family produced a succession of four remarkable sea captains, whose prowess makes the name of 'Malabar Pirates' resound still in history. In initiative, courage, navigational skill and persistence they bear comparison with the great figures of naval warfare. Undoubtedly in the manner of the period, they were ruthless, cared little for the rights of others, but compared to their Portuguese opponents, they were humane and civilised. They were never responsible for the kind of atrocities that Gama and his successors committed."<sup>1</sup>

1. Panikkar, K. M., *India and the Indian Ocean*, p. 45



The origin and early history of the Kuññāli 'Marakkārs'<sup>2</sup> are still obscure. The original seat of the family seems to be Ponnāni. The establishment of Portuguese power at so close a quarter at Cochin made the place too hot for the Marakkārs, the sworn enemies of the Portuguese. Moreover in 1507 and 1524, the Portuguese had attacked Ponnāni

2. In Logan's opinion, the term 'Kuññāli' is an honorific title conferred upon his naval captains by the Zamorin (*Malabar*, Vol. I, p. 330). Probably the name of the first distinguished captain of the sea was conferred as a title on his successors also, for it seems that 'Kuññāli Marakkār I' was the first of the Zamorin's naval captains to organize and develop the naval wing of the Zamorin's army on an efficient footing in order to fight the Portuguese on equal terms. This surmise receives additional support from the fact that Pāṭṭu Marakkār, who distinguished himself in the siege of Cāliyam, and who, in recognition of his services, was allowed to fortify his base of operations, Kōṭṭakkal, later became famous as Kuññāli III. In Portuguese records Kuññāli IV is referred to by his personal name 'Muhammad' along with the title.

According to Logan, the term 'Marakkār' is an abbreviation of 'Mārggakkāran' (follower of the law) and "is applied, as a title, to persons of a foreign religion like the Christians and Muhammadans" (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 330). Qadir Hussain Khan says that the word should be taken to mean 'boatmen' from the Arabic word 'Markab' or Tamil word "marakkalam" (*South Indian Mussulmans*, p. 22). S. C. Hill (*Notes on Piracy in Eastern Waters*, para 65) says that probably it is a Marāṭhi word 'Markar' (meaning 'demon'), used by the people of the Konkan coast colloquially for seamen. It is probable that the term 'Marakkār', is a honorific plural of the word 'Marakkān', a common surname found among the Hindu sea-going-folk (Mukkuvans) of the Malabar coast. (Vide, Thurston, E, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. V, p. 112). In several parts of Kerala, Mukkuvans are still called 'Marakkan.' Obviously the Muslims who came by sea, and whose profession was maritime commerce, came to be designated as 'Marakkār.' This probably is the origin of the term, but it seems to have remained a title only. Instances are on record, as late as the 18th century, where the title was conferred on distinguished Mappilas by the rulers (Vide, Diaries of the Malabar Second Commission, (1798), Vol. 1695, pp. 212-3; also Matilakan Records, Curuṇa No. 2111, 61a No. 41/3 dated 10. 9. 940)

and destroyed the shipping and fortifications there. Thus the proximity of Ponnāni to the Portuguese stronghold of Cochin induced the Kuññālis to move their headquarters to Putuppa(tṭa)ṇam, on the south bank of the Akalappuḷa. The change might have taken place soon after 1524, the year of the second sack of Ponnāni, by the Portuguese, and Kuññāli I is believed to have been responsible for the change.

The only reference (from local sources) to Kuññāli I comes from Zaynuddīn, who says: "In the same year (1524) some of the Faqīhs of Kōshi (Cochin), like Ahmad Marakkār, his brother Kunjāli Marakkār, their uncle Muhammad Ali Marakkar and other dependents felt their desire to wage war against the Portugueses. They left Koshi for Kālikūt."<sup>3</sup> The Zamorin must have welcomed most enthusiastically the offer of the Marakkars. Kuññāli Marakkar seems to have been employed to organise and develop the Zamorin's navy in order to fight the Portuguese on equal terms.

The alliance of the Marakkars with the Zamorin made the Portuguese captains uneasy. Consequently the Portuguese admirals organised a series of fierce attacks on the haunts of the Marakkars, and the coastal towns where the Muslim population dominated and which were the possible recruiting grounds for the Zamorin's naval force. These reverses naturally made the Zamorin and his naval captains to give up pitched battles and concentrate on a course of sea-guerilla. They built a large number of fast-moving *paraos*,

3. Shaykh Zaynuddīn, *Tuhfatul-Mujāhidīn* (S. M. H. Nainar's Translation), p. 66

which could manoeuvre easily in engagements, and, if necessary, save themselves by moving into shallow waters, where pursuit by the bigger Portuguese vessels was impossible. Manned by 30 or 40 rowers, these paraos were indeed very fast, and being small craft they presented a difficult target for the enemy's cannon. Hundreds of them streaked out of every river-mouth and creek at the appointed signal and closed with the enemy's ships. In hand-to-hand fight Indian seamen often proved better than their Portuguese counterparts.

The Portuguese who now found that their superiority at sea was seriously threatened made a determined effort to destroy the Zamorin's naval power. Vasco da Gama, Henrique de Menese and Lopo Vaz De Sampayo spent all their time and energy in meeting this threat. The Malabar captains adopted the new tactics so successfully that in spite of the few victories the Portuguese were able to gain, they were hard put to maintain their coastal communications and at the same time engage the elusive enemy. Moreover in these running fights the casualties were not as heavy as in pitched battles, so that men and resources could be conserved for future use.

These reverses made the Portuguese to exert themselves more vigorously against the Malabar seamen. In 1530 James Silveira defeated after a tough fight, off Mount Deli, a fleet commanded by Pāṭṭu Marakkār and captured six ships.<sup>4</sup> In 1531 the Portuguese seized some vessels belonging to the Zamorin on their way to Gujarāt. Among the prisoners were Ali Ibrāhim Marakkār and his nephew Kutṭi

4. Faria Y Souza, *Portuguese Asia*, Vol. I, pp. 342-43

Ibrāhim.<sup>5</sup> On account of these reverses, the Zamorin proposed an accommodation with the Portuguese. Nuno da Cunha, who was the Governor (1529-38), sent Diogo Pereira in October 1531 to negotiate with the Zamorin for the construction of a fortress at Cāliyam, on the mouth of the Bēppūr river. The idea of the Portuguese in selecting this site in preference to Calicut was that the river was navigable far inland, which circumstance, in case of a war with the Zamorin, could be used to divide his dominions. The Chieftains of Cāliyam and Tānūr were also favourably inclined to the Portuguese. Both hoped that with Portuguese help they could “deliver themselves from the Zamorin’s yoke” and that the fort would make them rich and powerful like the King of Cochin.<sup>6</sup>

The Zamorin consented to the proposal and the fortress was raised in such expedition that within twenty-six days it was in a posture of defence. The fortress was completed by the end of March 1532. The command of the fort was given to Diogo Pereira with 250 men. But as soon as the fortress was completed, quarrels started between the Zamorin and the Portuguese over the customs collection. The Portuguese refused to give the Zamorin his share in the customs collection, but divided this share among the chieftains of Bēppūr and *Caramalij* (Karuvanturutti ?) on the plea that they were the actual lords of the land and not the Zamorin.<sup>7</sup> The aim of the Portuguese in thus apportioning the customs was to weaken the Zamorin, and, at the same time, set against him these two rulers, who, in

5. Zaynuddīn, *op. cit.*, p. 68

6. Barros (Quoted in ‘*Portuguese and Dutch period in Cochin*, p. 10)

7. *Ibid.*

the hope of financial gain, would support the Portuguese. The Zamorin, who fell an easy prey to the duplicity of the Portuguese, turned to other ways to teach them a lesson.

The sea-guerilla was now put to greater use by Kuññāli I, who gave the Portuguese great headache by his running fights. The seizure of his vessels made him retaliate in the same fashion. About 1532, Kuññāli, whom Faria Y Souza describes as "a bold pyrat," with only eight ships under his command, harassed Portuguese shipping near Cape Comorin. On one occasion, having surprised 21 Portuguese asleep on board a ship, he ordered their heads to be cut off, "for daring to sleep knowing he was at sea."<sup>8</sup>

Kuññāli also decided to carry the war into the enemy's territory by attacking the Portuguese possessions in Ceylon and the East Coast. The Calicut fleet under Kuññāli established itself at Kōṭṭa in Ceylon, and supported Mayadunne against his brother, the King, who was a partisan of the Portuguese. The Malabar seamen continuously harassed Portuguese shipping from their base at Kōṭṭa for seven years. Kuññāli is reported to have captured not less than fifty ships in one year, and consequently, the Portuguese were hard put to maintain their coastal line of communication. In 1533 Kunnāli rounded Cape Comorin and attacked the Portuguese settlement of Nāga-paṭṭiṇam. But his plans were upset by the unexpected arrival of the Portuguese squadron under Antony de Silva. In the fight that ensued, the Calicut fleet was defeated and Kunnāli escaped overland in disguises.<sup>9</sup> But early next year, Kunnāli was able to fit out another fleet, which successfully preyed upon Portu-

8. Faria Y Souza, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 358

9. *Ibid*, p. 396

guese shipping. The Portuguese found it extremely difficult to put a stop to such activities, as it was Kuññāli's policy to avoid decisive engagements.

To destroy Portuguese hold on the entire Malabar coast, the Zamorin now laid a vast net. Nearer home, he decided to attack Cochin and keep the Portuguese engaged there, while his naval captains operated in Ceylon and the East Coast against them. The time selected was the autumn of 1537, when the annual fleet would have returned to Europe leaving only a small force in India. As the first step in this plan, the Zamorin marched to Cranganore, "upon pretence of visiting those parts, as their Emperor, but in reality to destroy the Portuguese."<sup>10</sup> From Cranganore, the Zamorin attempted to cross to the Vaipin Island but was prevented by Peter Vaz, the commander at Cochin. The King of Idappalli also co-operated with the Zamorin in the attack, which made the position of the King of Cochin extremely perilous. On the arrival of Martim Afonso in September, the Zamorin withdrew to the interior to await a more favourable opportunity. Strengthened by Martim Afonso's fleet, the Portuguese attacked the Kingdom of Idappalli. After a vigorous hand-to-hand fighting, the natives were defeated. The town was plundered and reduced to ashes. "The principal part of the booty that fell to the King of Cochin, on whose account this action was undertaken, was a piece of marble, by him highly valued, because on it were carved the names of the Kings of Malabar for three thousand years past, which was taken from him by the King of Repolim."<sup>11</sup> How much we regret that the record has not come down to us !

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 397-98

11. *Ibid.*, p. 399

The Zamorin now returned to the fight by way of the Kumbaḷam ford. Martim Afonso defended the ford against an overwhelming force ; at one point his own soldiers would have deserted him, had he not encouraged them by his presence at every spot. Now the Prince of Cochin joined them with 20,000 Nāyars. Thereupon Martim Afonso left Antony de Brito in command, and proceeded to check the activities of Malabar seamen. De Brito in the space of 20 days is said to have fought six battles with the King of Calicut and obliged him to withdraw "with a great loss and greater shame."

The Calicut fleet under Kuṭṭi Āli in the meanwhile had worsted a Portuguese fleet under James Reynoso, and captured a ship in front of the Portuguese fort of Cāliyam. Martim Afonso now went in pursuit of Kuṭṭi Āli, whom he pursued as far as Tikkōḍi. The fight continued far into the night, without either side conceding victory. During the night the Malabar seamen had entrenched themselves on the mainland, and fighting men had flocked from all the neighbourhood. Afonso retreated without engaging the enemy on the pretext that the situation at Cochin required his urgent presence there.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, Mayadunne had besieged Kōṭṭa, the headquarters of his brother. The Portuguese at Colombo coming to the King's help, Mayadunne beat a hasty retreat. But he now sought the aid of the Zamorin, the inveterate enemy of the Portuguese, against them. The Zamorin furnished him with a fleet of 50 ships and 2,000 men under such redoubtable champions as Pāṭṭu Marakkār, Āli Ibrāhim Marakkār, and Kuññāli I.<sup>13</sup> Pāṭṭu Marakkār on his way attacked a Portuguese

12. *Ibid.*, p. 401

13. Ferrol, *The Jesuits in Malabar*, Vol. I., p. 120

ship at Quilon port and killed its captain. Farther down, he took another ship belonging to the Portuguese and killed all the crew. He also raided the Portuguese settlement of Tuticorin and burnt it.

When the Zamorin's assistance reached him, Mayadunne again invested the city of Kōṭṭa. The siege continued for three months, when the news of Martim Afonso's arrival reached him, whereupon he immediately patched up a truce with his brother. Consequently, the Calicut fleet retired to the Coromandel Coast, where they entrenched themselves at Veḍalai, between Kīlēkkarai and Rāmēśwaram. Here they levied troops among Hindus and Muslims with the intent of prosecuting the war in Ceylon as well as against the Portuguese. Martim Afonso, who came to the assistance of the King of Kōṭṭa, hearing of the reconciliation between the brothers, went in search of the Malabar fleet. His attempt to get at the enemy failed because his heavy ships could not easily travel east of Cape Comorin. Still he reached Maṇappāra in rowing boats and entered into an agreement with the Prince of Vijayanagar in favour of the Christian converts of the Coast. Then he returned to Cochin for replenishment.

Towards the close of January 1538, Martim Afonso returned with a greater force. The Portuguese first attacked the enemy from the sea, and while the sea-fight was raging, Martim Afonso landed east of Veḍalai and attacked the Malabar army from the flank. A terrible fight ensued with varying fortunes to both sides. Most of the Portuguese were wounded. At this crucial moment, a Malabar captain is said to have set on fire all the Malabar vessels, with the idea of making fight impossible. But instead of instilling



in the minds of his followers a sense of desperate urgency, it foredoded the gravest dangers, and they broke and fled in wild panic. "Eight hundred dead Moslems covered the battlefield and the whole camp with its rich booty fell into Portuguese hands. Four hundred cannon. 2000 muskets and many other weapons, 22 war-proas and Pate Marakkar's gorgeous tent with the state parasol, a present of the Zamorin to Mayadunne."<sup>14</sup> The Paravas (fishermen) took the rest of the booty, and in retaliation for the capture of the pearl-fishery from their hands, they now burnt down Kāyalpaṭṭaṇam, which the Muslims of the coast had just built up.

Of the fleeing Malabar soldiers several were massacred by the Paravas. Among the leaders, Āli Ibrāhim Marakkār succumbed to his wounds, whereas Pāṭṭu Marakkār and Kuññāli I escaped to Ceylon.

In the meantime, the Zamorin and the Sultan of Gujarāt had sought the help of Sulayman, 'the Magnificent', the Ottoman Emperor, to drive out the Portuguese from the Indian seas. The Emperor, whose exchequer also was considerably affected by the piratical and commercial activities of the Portuguese in the East, now seriously thought of the expediency of fitting out a naval expedition to India. He appointed Sulaymān Pasha to the command with orders to provide ships and recruit soldiers. The formidable fleet of 72 vessels left Suez on 22nd June 1538. The news of the Turkish squadron travelled far in advance and enabled the Portuguese to take all defensive measures. The

14. *Ibid*, pp. 119-20

Turkish fleet tarried long on the way engaging in small wars and petty quarrels. When at last they reached the neighbourhood of Gujarāt in September, Sulaymān Pāsha decided to invest the Portuguese fort of Diu, instead of seeking out and fighting the Portuguese. "Had Sulaiman brought the Portuguese fleet to action, he could have destroyed in detail.... the power of the Turks lay in their formidable artillery; their metal was heavier than that of the Portuguese, and their gunners were exceptionally well trained; in an action at sea this superiority should have given them the victory."<sup>15</sup> Instead, Sulaymān Pāsha chose to besiege Diu, which was at that time the most strongly fortified place held by the Portuguese in India. The overbearing conduct of the Turkish Commander alienated the sympathies of the local people, who had been in a state of continuous opposition to the Portuguese domination in Diu, and thus decided the ultimate fate of the expedition. The siege was pressed with vigour, which soon compelled the Portuguese to abandon the outer works and to concentrate on the defence of the fort itself. Soon the Turks were able to make a breach on the fort walls, but this breach was heroically defended by the Portuguese. The final attack was made on 4th November, but it was successfully repulsed. In the meantime, the differences between the Turks and the native population had so widened that the Turks found it difficult even to obtain provisions. As a result, Sulaymān Pāsha abandoned the siege and retired. When the siege terminated, "there were only 40 men fit for duty, but very few serviceable arms, and the only powder available for powder pots,

15. Whiteway, R. S, *Rise of the Portuguese Power in India*, p. 257

the chief defensive weapon of the Portuguese, was that drawn from the charges of the big guns."<sup>16</sup>

Mayadunne, meanwhile, had again rebelled against his brother, the King, on whose application the Viceroy sent Miguel Ferreira with 12 vessels and 400 men to help him. On his arrival in Ceylon, Miguel Ferreira received the news that Pâttu Marakkâr and Kuññâli Marakkâr were at Puttalam, with their fleet. He immediately set out for Puttalam, surprised the enemy and gained a complete victory over them. The majority of the soldiers took shelter with Mayadunne. Miguel Ferreira immediately went in pursuit of the refugees, on whose approach the followers of Mayadunne deserted him. Mayadunne was, thereupon, compelled to sue for peace; but Ferreira refused to listen to the proposals until the Malabar captains were surrendered, dead or alive. When no other way found, Mayadunne sent Ferreira "nine Moorish heads struck on spears."

All the combinations in which the Zamorin had pinned his hopes to thwart the growing power of the Portuguese, having failed, he was compelled to sue for peace. He sent Cinna Kutti Ali to Goa, with a splendid retinue, to arrange terms of peace. The Viceroy received him with great courtesy and pomp. In arranging the terms of peace, the Zamorin had perforce to yield in all the points in dispute between him and the Portuguese. The principal terms were: Calicut vessels navigating the seas must first obtain a pass from the Captain of Câliyam; no Calicut vessel should trade with Mecca, or in pepper or drugs without the special sanction of the Viceroy; the Zamorin

was to supply all the pepper and drugs in his dominions to the Portuguese at the Cochin prices; and the Zamorin should assist the Portuguese, if necessity arose,<sup>17</sup> In order that the treaty might be more binding and lasting the Zamorin desired that the Viceroy should be present at the ceremonial ratification. On the plea of ill-health, the Viceroy excused himself but sent his son, Dom Alvaro, in his stead. The treaty was concluded and ratified on the 1st January, 1540, at Ponnāni. The treaty secured for the Portuguese a long respite from official war with the Zamorin.

In the meanwhile, the unofficial war between the Portuguese and the Malabar seamen had continued. At the invitation of Viśvanātha Nāyaka, the Vijayanagar Governor of the Pandyan country, a Malabar fleet under 'Irapali' a Turkish officer invaded the Coromandel coast in May 1533, and sacked the Portuguese settlement of Pnnaikāyal, after putting the garrison to flight. The refugees were made prisoners by the soldiers of Viśvanātha Nāyaka.<sup>18</sup> When this was known at Cochin, a fleet was immediately sent to Punnaikāyal, which defeated and dispersed the Malabar fleet and recovered the lost property.

The Malabar fleet, however, under Kuññāli II, the son of Kuṭṭi Āli, had made it unsafe for the Portuguese ships to sail the Malabar seas without convoy. For a number of years, Kuññāli had eluded the vigilance of the Portuguese, and preyed upon Portuguese shipping and trade. It was only in 1558 that Luis de Mello was able to force an action off Cannanore. In a hard-fought action, the flagship of Kuññāli was sunk and three others were captured, but the rest retired unmolested since the Portuguese were unable to pursue them.

17. Danvers, F. C., *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I. p. 443

18. Heras, H., *The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagara* Vol. I, pp. 159 60

According to Zaynuddīn, between 1555 and 1559, the Portuguese began a more rigorous inspection of the passes. If these were lost, the Portuguese cruizers seized the ships and their cargo, and killed all the crew “in the most cruel manner, cutting their throats and throwing them into the sea: binding them with ropes and tying them up in nets or in some other ligatures of the kind and then casting them overboard.”<sup>19</sup>

The piratical activities of Captain Mesquita, “a man of valour and no nice conscience as was requisite for such an action”, caused the war between the Zamorin and the Portuguese to flare up again. In retaliation for some attacks made on the Portuguese ships by Malabar seamen, Captain Mesquita took several Malabar ships. “The vessels he sunk, some of the men he beheaded, others he sewed up in sails and threw them into the sea.”<sup>20</sup> Above 2,000 were thus killed, which “filled the whole coast with mourning.” When the Zamorin protested, the Viceroy dismissed the complaint saying that it was the act of some pirates. The inhuman cruelties of Mesquita had estranged even the Kōlattiri, one of the staunch supporters of the Portuguese on the Malabar Coast, and compelled him to declare war on them. The circumstance that brought about the war in 1564 was that “a woman of bold spirit and of good repute among her people,” whose husband being one of those killed in Mesquita’s raids, went about the city of Cannanore, with her infant son in her arms, and stirred up the Māppiḷas to revenge. The whole country rose as one man, and the Āli Rāja of Cannanore, whose relative the woman was,

19. *op. cit.*, p. 156

20. Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.*, p. 220

headed the attack. They besieged the fortress of Cannanore, and set fire to some thirty ships in the harbour.

The Viceroy sent Paulo de Lima with four ships to succour the Portuguese garrison at Cannanore. In the bay of Bhaṭkal, he was attacked by Kuññāli with seven paraos. "After the usual salutes with their cannon, Canatale (Kuññāli) with three of his ships lays D. Paul's galliot on board .....whereof two shamefully fled, the third stood by it till he was sunk. Now all the enemies force fell upon D. Paul.....D. Paul was so wounded, he was forced to sit down and gave order to make at the enemy....(He) returned to Goa, being in no condition to reach Cananor."<sup>21</sup>

By this time the condition of the Cannanore garrison become more critical. As soon as a small relief force arrived, the Portuguese sallied forth, killed a good number of the enemy in the trenches, and cut down hundreds of coconut palms. The people enraged thereat collected together and attacked the fort in great force. The neighbouring Princes joined the Kōlattiri in prosecuting the war. The Zamorin also sent assistance, with the result that the war became most rigorous. The outworks were soon taken, and the besiegers attempted to scale the walls of the fort. Had not timely succour arrived, the Portuguese would have surrendered at discretion. The besieged, thereupon, made a sally and drove the besiegers out of the town. The buildings and palm groves of Āli Rāja, who led the attack, were destroyed. The besiegers withdrew, but active hostility to the Portuguese continued for a considerable time. The long war had exh-

21. *Ibid.*, p. 241

austed both sides and on account of the war with Calicut and Cannanore, Portuguese trade with northern Malabar had come to a standstill. The trade with Cochin also had declined on account of the hostility of Vaḍakkumkūr. Further, the activities of the Malabar seamen threatened Portuguese shipping and trade with ruin. Consequently in 1565 the Portuguese were compelled to conclude peace with Cannanore.

After Paulo de Lima's discomfiture Goa sent a bigger fleet under Dom Mascarenhas against Kuññāli. As the fleet sailed down the coast, Kuññāli fell upon it with only three paraos and "succeeded in doing great damage". Another fleet under Luis de Mello also did not fare any better. As Caesar Frederick observed in 1565, in consequence of these disasters, Portuguese ships were afraid to sail "but with great ships and well armed, or else they must go in company with the army of the Portugals."<sup>22</sup> Linschoten (1583-89) says that "the Malabares have their havens at Chale, Calicut, Cunhale (i. e., Kōṭṭakkal, near Vaḍakara), Panane and others, from whence with boates they mak roads into the sea, and doe great mischief, making many a poor merchant....Because of the Malabares (invasions) the Portingall fleet is forced every yeare to put forth of Goa in the Summer time to keep the coaste and to preserve the merchants that travaill those countries from the Malabares....and yet there are continuall pyracies comitted on the sea."<sup>23</sup>

In 1566 the people of Ponnāni and Pantalāyini Kollam attacked a Portuguese carrack laden with rice and sugar off

22. *Hakluyt's Voyages*, Vol. V., p. 392

23. *Voyage to the East Indies*, Vol. I, pp. 73-4

Ponnāni. In 1568 a fleet of 17 grabs under the “noted pirate”, Kutṭi Pōkkar, attacked off Cāliyam a large carrack with 1,000 Portuguese on board, all of whom with their ship were blown up during the fight. In 1569 Kutṭi Pōkkār sailed into the river of Mangalore, took a galleot under the very guns of the fort, fired part of the fortifications and returned without suffering any loss.<sup>24</sup>

The peace with Cannanore now enabled the Portuguese to turn their full fury on the Zamorin and his naval captains. In 1569 the Viceroy despatched Martino Affonso Miranda with 36 ships to crush Kuññāli. But Kuññāli gave him the slip and harassed the fleet at every turn. The exasperated Portuguese captain gave battle at a disadvantage and was worsted. Miranda was severely wounded in the fight and he died on reaching Cochin. The Portuguese attempt to compel Kuññāli to fight a pitched battle failed next year also. Therefore, they gave up the idea for the time being, and began to plunder and destroy the coastal towns, which were suspected to have been the bases of operation of the Malabar captains. The Portuguese admiral who planned and carried out the operations was Dom Diogo de Menezes. With 42 sail at his disposal, he committed massacre and arson whichever place he touched at. He destroyed the Muslim settlements of Pantalāyini, Tikkōḍi, Kappaḍ, Calicut, Parappanaññāḍi and Ponnāni. Kuññāli retaliated by attacking the Portuguese possessions in the north. He carried his deprivations as far as Diu. He defeated a powerful fleet under Ruy Dias Cabral and Henrique de Menezes, sent to intercept him. “Falling in with fifty Mala-

24. Shaykh Zainuddīn, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-73



barese ships, the two commanders rashly attacked them, with disastrous consequences, as might have been expected. Ruy Diaz and seventy men were killed, and Dom Henrique de Menezes was carried into slavery and afterwards ransomed.”<sup>25</sup>

The desire of the Portuguese to wreak terrible vengeance on Kuññāli and his tribe for the humiliation heaped upon them, made them spurn the offers of peace made by the Zamorin in the meantime. The Portuguese had to repent of their action very soon. The Zamorin now entered into a coalition with Āli Ādil Shāh of Bijāpūr and Murtaza Nizām Shāh of Ahmadnagar for driving out the Portuguese from the west coast of India. The King of Achin was approached to attack Malacca at the same time. In conformity with this decision, early in 1570 Ādil Shāh besieged Goa and Nizām Shāh invested Chaul. The Zamorin sent one of his ablest captains, Kuṭṭi Pōkkar, with 21 paraos to assist in the siege of Chaul. A formidable Portuguese squadron was guarding the bar of the harbour. Kuṭṭi Pōkkar sailed into the harbour under cover of night and landed men and supplies. The Malabar fleet stayed for 20 days in the harbour, and fought a bitter though unsuccessful engagement and after doing great damage to Portuguese shipping and houses, stole away one night “with the same good fortune they came in.”<sup>26</sup> Off Cannanore, the fleet of Kuṭṭi Pōkkar fell in with the fleet De Menezes. In the engagement he fell fighting bravely, and his whole fleet except two ships was destroyed.

25. Danvers, F. C., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 548

26. Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 314

The Zamorin laid siege to the fortress of Cāliyam in July 1571. Large numbers of Muslims from the neighbourhood came to assist in the siege operations. The siege continued for four months. All attempts to relieve the fortress or send in provisions by sea were foiled by Pāṭṭu Marakkār and his fleet. Though the attack on Goa and Chaul had been given up in the meantime, the Zamorin went on with the siege of Cāliyam. Zaynuddin, a contemporary writer, wrote of the siege: "The besiegers watched all the time by the side of the fort, so that the besieged, who could not get fresh supplies, exhausted all provisions available in the fort and ate dogs and such loathsome animals. Everyday servants, and women, who became converts to Christianity, came out of the fort with their permission owing to the scarcity of food."<sup>27</sup> At last in November the fort capitulated. The fort was demolished "leaving not one stone upon another".

The loss of Cāliyam was a great blow to the prestige of Portuguese arms in the East. But worse than that, the activities of Malabar seamen had practically stopped shipping and trade in the Malabar seas. In 1570, Malabar seamen had plundered Thana and took away the great bell of the Cathedral, while the people were celebrating the 'Feast of Expectacao'. So much trouble was caused by these seamen that every year the Portuguese used to send out on cruise two fleets known as the Fleet of the North and the Fleet of the South.

The activities of the Malabar seamen so exasperated the Portuguese authorities that they organised a punitive expedition in 1575. Joao de Costa scoured the Malabar seas

27. *op.cit.*, pp. 87-8

with two galleys and 24 other vessels. Cāliyam was destroyed by fire and sword. A similar fate awaited Parappanāññādi and Kāppāḍ. The town of Nīlēśvaram was reduced to ashes. In the course of this expedition, several Malabar vessels were taken "which supplied the galleys with slaves and the fleet with provisions".

For the great services rendered by Pāṭṭu Marakkār in the reduction of the Portuguese fortress at Cāliyam, the Zamorin granted him permission to erect a fort and dockyards at Putuppa(ṭṭa)ṇam, at the mouth of the Akalappuḷa, the then headquarters of the Marakkārs.<sup>28</sup> Within a year or two (1572-73), a strong fort rose up at Putuppa(ṭṭa)-ṇam. The title of Kuññāli was conferred upon Pāṭṭu Marakkār; he became famous in history as Kuññāli III, and a terror to the Portuguese captains. The Zamorin conferred on him many privileges and powers equal to the best Nayar chieftains of the country.

Though the Portuguese had been driven out of the mainland,; they did not give up the fight on the sea so

28. The opinion of O. K. Nambiar (*Portuguese Pirates and Indian Seamen*, pp. 155-56), that Pāṭṭu Marakkār obtained the permission of the Zamorin to build a fort at Putuppa(ṭṭa)ṇam, on account of the permission granted to the Portuguese to build a fort at Ponnāni (1586) is not correct, because even in 1583 we find disaster attending the arms of Dom Mascarenhas who raided Kuññāli's fort (Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.* Vol. III, p. 13)

It was after the building of the fort at Putuppa (ṭṭa)ṇam that the place acquired the name of Kōṭṭakkal, and the river the name of Kōṭṭappuḷa. The fort was popularly known as *Marakkār Koṭṭa* (cf. Pyrard de Laval's reference to 'Marcaire Coste' (*Voyage to the East Indies*, Vol. 1, p. 347).

easily. They also began to plunder and set fire to the coastal towns in the Zamorin's territories regularly. Worst of all, the Portuguese intercepted the rice trade with Canara, thereby causing [famine conditions in Malabar. In the words of Zaynuddin, "(in the years 1582-83) the importation of rice was discontinued from Talnar (Canara). A terrible famine came upon them, the like of it was never seen by the people, because the Portuguese struck to the ports mentioned above, unflinchingly without caring for food."<sup>29</sup>

The high-handedness of the Portuguese brought them into trouble at Cochin also. They refused to give the Rāja his share of port dues. The customs collection being the mainstay of Cochin finances, there was considerable agitation there. One result of the agitation was that negotiations were now reopened with the Zamorin. Ruy Gonsalves de Camera was specially sent to negotiate with the Zamorin for the erection of a fort at Ponnāni. The Zamorin was in no hurry and he put off the proposals on one excuse or other, but at last agreed to the construction of a fort there (1586).

About 1586 Kuññāli's captains scoured the seas and captured many Portuguese vessels the crews of which were made prisoners. Some of these, who were kept in a dungeon "were kept several days from starving by a mouse, for that creature having made a hole through the wall into a place where there was much rice every night caused as much to fall through as kept them alive."<sup>30</sup> In 1589, a Portu-

29. *op. cit.*, p 93

30. Faria Y S u a *op cit.* Vol. III, p. 38

guese galley meeting with some Malabar vessels “pursued them with scoffs, scorning to take up arms against them and they turning upon the galley entered it and put all the men to the sword.”<sup>31</sup> In the same year, Kuṭṭi Mūsa, the nephew and admiral of Kuññāli, attacked a Portuguese fleet and caused it great damage. “After a tedious fight, the enemy left them in such a condition that only their departure could have saved our men, who may be said to have had the victory, because they kept the field.”<sup>32</sup>

Kuṭṭi Mūsa in command of squadron of 14 (some say, 22) sail, thus “became absolute on the coast” and took several Portuguese vessels. The greatest loss was a rich vessel returning from China. The crew was killed, but they could not plunder it as it caught fire. This disaster ruined many of the merchants of Goa. Kuṭṭi Mūsa’s fleet sailed down to Ceylon where they concluded an alliance with the King of Jaffnapatam, who allowed them a base of operations against the Portuguese at Mannār. In October, Andre Furtado surprised the Malabar fleet at the mouth of the river Cardiva. Kuṭṭi Mūsa and his followers fought bravely, but on being worsted they escaped by swimming, leaving the whole fleet to the Portuguese.<sup>33</sup>

On the Malabar Coast, between Goa and Ceylon, the Portuguese trade had almost come to a standstill. Ralph Fitch, who was in Cochin from March to November 1589) writing of the Malabar seamen, says: “The King (of Calicut) has always peace with them (i. e., the Portuguese), but his

31. *Ibid.*, p. 62

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*, p. 65

people go to the sea to robbe and steale. Their chief captain is Cogi Alli (Kuññāli); he hath three castles under him .....They range all the coast from Ceylon to Goa and go by foure or five parowes or boats together; and in them fifty or threescore men and boord presently. They do much harme on that coast, and take every yere many foists and boats of the Portugals. Many of these people be Moores.”<sup>34</sup>

The Portuguese now came to realise that without coming to terms with the Zamorin, it would be difficult to destroy Kuññāli’s power. Fr. Francisco da Costa, who was then a prisoner at Calicut, persuaded the King to make peace with the Portuguese. As a result terms of peace were settled “to the content of both parties, and the Zamorin not only released all the slaves in his kingdom but encouraged the Jesuits to build a church, himself laying the first stone.”<sup>35</sup>

As usual the peace did not last long, because the Portuguese did not respect its terms, which in return provoked the Malabar seamen to retaliate. In August, 1594, Andre Furtado met with three ships belonging to the Zamorin “full of riches and people of both sexes and all ages”. In the fight, above 2,000 of them were killed, the ships taken, and “the booty was such that a servant happened upon five bags of pagods.”<sup>36</sup> In April, 1594, Malabar seamen beset the annual ship from Java, with only 14 Portuguese

34. *Hakluyt’s Voyages* Vol. V, p. 502

35. Faria Y Souza, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 66

36. *Ibid.*, p. 73

among the crew, almost in sight of Goa. After a defence lasting three days and nights, all the Portuguese were killed, but one of the crew, a Javanese, fired the ship so that the enemy got little benefit from her.

In 1595 Muhammad Kuññāli Marakkār (popularly known as Kuññāli IV) succeeded his uncle as the chief of Kōṭṭakkal. Foreseeing that the Portuguese would seek his ruin, he fortified the town by land and sea. "On the landside he made a deep ditch with double trenches two yards and a half thick from sea to sea. At distances he raised towers that flanked the work, and on the towers (by them called Zarames) planted small cannon. Between the two creeks he built a strong wall which secured the town, with two towers, one at each end, and along the seashore stuck palisadoes where were also two bastions, one greater than the other, planted with gross cannon to secure the entrance of the harbour, which besides was made very difficult even to small vessels by masts strongly chained together."<sup>37</sup>

Being thus secure, he carried on his uncle's design of fighting the Portuguese with far greater success. He captured many Portuguese vessels and assisted the enemies of the Portuguese including the Queen of Ullāl, when she revolted, and the Sultan of Bijāpūr during the siege of Chaul. These successes seem to have turned the head of Kuññāli and he became proud and haughty. Pride and envy worked their silent way to estrange the vassal and his sovereign. The Portuguese utilised this opportunity to widen the gulf by insinuating that Kuññāli was out to declare

37. *Ibid.*, p. 76

his independence, and consequently was equally prejudicial to the Zamorin and to the Portuguese. Therefore, they suggested, it would be convenient if they should both join together to extirpate him. To add to these troubles, Kuññāli is said to have called himself 'King of the Malabar Moors', and Lord of the Indian sea'. "It was not these titles, or his pride, or the complaints of the Portuguese," says Faria Y Souza, "that provoked Zamorin, but that Cunnale had caused the tail of one of his elephants to be cut off as also fastened to his mouth."<sup>38</sup> Pyrard de Laval mentions that Kuññāli cut off the nose and breasts of lady, the wife of the Lord of 'Ariole', and set the commands of his sovereign at naught.

The Zamorin was now sufficiently incensed against Kuññāli that he entered into a treaty with the Portuguese. It was agreed between them that the Zamorin by land and the Portuguese by sea should jointly undertake the expulsion of Kuññāli and raze his fort. The proposed expedition could not be carried into effect immediately because of a change of Viceroys. Dom Francisco da Gama, who came out to India in 1597 as Viceroy, now resolved to put into effect the articles of agreement entered into with the Zamorin. Great preparations were made for the expedition. In March, 1599, the Zamorin and the Portuguese blockaded the fort at Kōṭṭakkal by land and sea. The Zamorin made the attack from the landside, assisted by a Portuguese contingent. A simultaneous attack from the sea and landsides, having not taken place as arranged, the whole

38. *Ibid.*, p. 99



assault ended in a fiasco and resulted in heavy losses. "So this proved the greatest disgrace the Portuguese received in 'Asia'", wails Faria Y Souza.<sup>39</sup>

So pleased was Kuññāli with his success that he threw discretion to the winds and assumed such high-sounding titles as 'Defender of Islam', and 'Expeller of the Portuguese'. Not expecting the Portuguese to renew the contest soon, he neglected to strengthen his position by possible alliances and to take in provisions. The Portuguese, who were touched to the quick by their recent disaster left a strong fleet to guard the entrance of the river, and prevent the entry of supplies to the fort. In December 1599, a new agreement was made between the Zamorin and the new Portuguese commander, Andre Furtado. Furtado who had leant from the mistakes of his predecessor, proceeded with caution. When preparations were completed, the assault was made in March, 1600. The river was cleared of obstacles, and shore batteries were erected to attack the fort effectively. The attack was pressed with vigour and soon Kuññāli, finding his position untenable opened negotiations with the Zamorin. He promised to surrender to the Zamorin on condition that his men be spared. The Zamorin wavered in his decision but Furtado, who was bent upon destroying Kuññāli's power, pressed on with the attack. Finding his position hopeless, Kuññāli surrendered on condition "but his life". He surrendered his sword to the Zamorin, who yielded him upto the Portuguese. Pyrard says, when the Portuguese tried to take Kuññāli away, a tumult arose among the Nāyar soldiers of the Zamorin, which was suppressed

with difficulty.<sup>40</sup> Kuññāli, Cinna Āli, Kuṭṭi Āli and forty prisoners of note were sent as prisoners aboard the ship and carried to Goa. As soon as some of the prisoners were set ashore at Goa, they were literally torn to pieces by the populace. Kuññāli and his nephew were publicly hanged, with scant regard for the promise of life granted to them. "So did that government and rabble go hand in hand in murder and breach of faith", is the final comment of Faria Y Souza.<sup>41</sup>

The action of the Zamorin in yielding up Kuññāli and his followers to the Portuguese is really indefensible. There is no explanation why the Zamorin betrayed his trust. In this connection, it is significant to note that no provision as to the disposal of the prisoners, especially Kuññāli, in the event of their surrender, is included in the treaty of December, 1599. Surely some private understanding in the matter must have been arrived at between the parties. The tumult of the Nāyar soldiers is a clear indication that the prisoners were handed over to the Portuguese against the general feeling among the soldiers. The whole transaction, therefore, smacks of treachery on the part of the Zamorin.

Thus ended the power of the Kuññāli Marakkars. The fall of Kōṭṭa and the death of Kuññāli did not avail the Portuguese any respite from fighting which they hoped for. "Yet did the Portuguese afterwards pay dearly for his head: for the Malabars, in revenge, put to death all the Portuguese they could lay hands on; and the King of Calicut had great regret for having delivered so valiant a man (he had done so out of

40. *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 523

41. *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 116

anger and revenge) for Coginally and his brother were esteemed the bravest captains in all the East Indies.”<sup>42</sup>

Malabar seamen began to harass Portuguese shipping and trade with a vengeance. So great was the fear the Portuguese had of the deprivations of the Malabar seamen that they ventured forth only in large ‘Cafiles’. According to the testimony of Pyrard, “at Goa, the whole city looks out for these Cafiles and fleets, as in Spain they await those of the Indies. And when they arrive not at their due season everyone is in apprehension of the Hollanders, or the Malabars, or the Cambayans themselves, who frequently stop them when ready to set out as happened the year I left Goa, and on many occasions.” He continues, “When this fleet does arrive the joy of the merchants and the whole people is marvellous; and in truth it is a pretty and pleasant sight to see so many sail together; but it is seldom; that the Malabar corsairs fail to capture some of them.”<sup>43</sup> Monsieur Henry Defeynes de Monfart, who was in Malabar about 1608-9, says about the Malabar seamen: “They are Mahometans and valiant, although they are somewhat of a savage inclination and would never come to composition with the Portugals but delight themselves to be at variance with all their neighbours .....Meanwhile I was there they took 160 caravels from the Portugals.”<sup>44</sup>

William Finch, writing in 1608-10, wrote of the activities of the Malabar seamen: “This moneth here was also newes of an Ormus ship taken by the Malabarres and three frigats; and shortly after of a fleet of sixteene were taken and burnt by the Malabarres, which the rest escaped, if

42. Pyrard de Laval: *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 356

43. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 245-46

44. Somers, *Collection of Tracts*, Vol. III, p. 337

miserable spoils be an escape; also of fiftie frigats and galiots of the Malabarres spoiling on their coast. In January came other news of thirtie frigats, which put for Diu richly laden, taken by the Malabarres being at this time masters of the seas.”<sup>45</sup>

The burning hatred which the Malabar seamen nurtured against the Portuguese did not die down so easily. The coming of the Dutch and the English, who were constantly quarrelling with the Portuguese, provided greater facilities for their work. “More than fifty years later a rock off the shore, that called in English times ‘Sacrifice Rock’, was still known as ‘Kunhali’s Rock’, and the Kotta river long continued to be the principal nest of corsairs, who, friendly to the Dutch and the English, continued to work havoc upon the waning commerce of Goa.”<sup>46</sup>

The fame of the Kuññālis still resounds in Malabar. The great sacrifices they had made in defence of their country and sovereign for over a century against the encroachments of the Portuguese, form a glorious chapter in the annals of Kerala. To quote the editor of Francois Pyrard de Laval’s *Voyages*: “In their (the Malabar pirates) long struggle with the Portuguese, it is impossible not to regard them as, to some extent, fighting the battle of free-trade against monopoly, the battle of the whole coast against the Portuguese marts, and from this point of view to deny a certain measure of consideration, and even of sympathy.”<sup>47</sup>

45. Foster, W, *Early Travels in India*, p. 128

46. P. Vicenzo (Quoted in Pyrard, *op. cit.*, Vol. II p. 527. note)

47. *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 527

## 4. VENAD POLITICS IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

The sixteenth century opened with the culmination of several developments that greatly affected the political set-up of Vēṇaḍ. The first event of international significance was the advent of the Portuguese in Kēraḷa. The Portuguese who arrived in Kēraḷa as merchants seeking the spices of the country, soon claimed a monopoly in the foreign trade of the country. To enforce their claim they insisted that no native or foreign merchant should be permitted to trade in the spices of the country. Even to sail the high seas the merchants were forced to take out *cartazes* from Portuguese captains. They compelled the rulers to contract for the spices at a fixed price. To intimidate the rulers to accept their terms they even interfered in the internal affairs of Kēraḷa kingdoms, creating instability in the political set-up of many of them. Though Vēṇaḍ was singularly fortunate in escaping from the political and commercial domination of the Portuguese, the threat to its sovereignty was ever present.

Another circumstance that presaged trouble to the Vēṇaḍ kingdom was the attempt of the Vijayanagar Empire to extend its frontiers to the extreme south of India. This expansion

move held a threat to the security of Vēṇāḍ as she held considerable territories across the Ghauts. Even after the overthrow of the Empire at the field of Taḷikkōṭṭa (1565), the succeeding Rāyās of Vijayanagar and their successors-in-interest did not give up ideas of extending their territories, which posed a continued threat to Vēṇāḍ.

To add to the threat of external aggression, internal dissensions broke out in the country. Acute differences of opinion arose between the rulers and the *Yōgakkār* (members of the *Eṭṭarayōgam*, the Managing Council of the Śrī Padmanābhavāmi Temple at Trivandrum) over the question of management of Temple affairs. Another source of trouble was the *Eṭṭuvīṭṭil Pillāmār* (Nāyar noblemen of eight prominent houses)\* who left no stone unturned in opposing royal power and creating disturbances in the country. Members of the *Tāvaḷis* (collateral branches of the royal family), who were dissatisfied with the conduct of affairs in the *Svarūpam* (royal family), also sided with the enemies of royal power.

The sixteenth century opened with the reign of the Vēṇāḍ King, Ravi Ravi Varma (659-87 M. E./1484-1512 A. D.). Family dissensions seem to have disturbed the reign of this King. Actual fighting broke out in 682 M. E. in Cirayinkil between his forces and the forces of Dēśinganāḍ (Quilon). The King also tried to check the pretensions of the Yōgakkār, which occasioned loss of life and property. In expiation of these occurrences the King made several gifts to the Śrī Padmanābhavāmi Temple. In 675 Mēḍam, he made a gift of 15,000

\* For a discussion of the constitution of the *Eṭṭarayōgam* and the activities of *Eṭṭuvīṭṭil Pillāmār*, see my book, *Rise of Travancore*, App. I

panams to the Temple as *garvakkettu* together with a silver pot, to expiate the sin of having destroyed several villages and killed people.<sup>1</sup>

It was during the reign of this King the Vijayanagar empire began to extend its southern frontier farther south. From the *Commentaries of Afonso Dalboquerque*, we learn that the dominion of Ravi Varma at this time extended from Quilon to Kāyal in the Tirunelvēli district and that the island of Ceylon paid tribute to him. When Alboquerque came to Quilon in December, 1503, the King was engaged in a war with the King of *Narsinga* (Vijayanagar) and was away from the capital. "The King of Coulao was a very honest man," observes Alboquerque, "and very gallant and in the war which he carried on with the King of Narsinga, who had many soldiers, both horse and foot, he attacked him with sixty thousand archers and overcame him."<sup>2</sup> The war seems to have been prolonged for we find Ludovico di Varthema, on his way from Calicut to the East Indies, visited Quilon towards the close of 1504 and noted that "the King of this city is a Pagan, and extremely powerful, and he has 20,000 horsemen and many archers and is constantly at war with other Kings .... At that time, the King of this city was the friend of the King of Portugal, but being at war with others, it did not appear to us well to remain here."<sup>3</sup>

1. Matilakam Grandhavari, *ślas* 290-95.
2. *Commentaries of Afonso Dalboquerque*, Vol. I, p. 11
3. G. P. Badger (Ed.) *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, pp. 182-4. It was not in 1505 that Varthema first visited Quilon. In August, 1505, he returned to Quilon from the East Indies (vide, R. C. Temple (Ed.), *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna*, Discourse, p. 1xxxiii.)

It was also during the reign of Ravi Varma that the Portuguese came to the Kēraḷa coast seeking the spices of the East Indies, without the interference of the Muslim Sultans of Egypt and Persia and the Ottoman Emperor, who were controlling the eastern trade. The great profits derived by Cochin from the trade with the Portuguese induced many Kēraḷa rulers to invite the Portuguese to their own kingdoms. Correa states that the Queen of Quilon invited the Portuguese to Quilon towards the close of 1502 A. D. He curiously adds that "by their laws women govern the kingdom, and they are called Queens, and their husbands not."<sup>4</sup> Danvers adds that at that time the heir to the throne was a minor and the Queen Dowager was governing as Regent. She generally lived in the interior of the country and appointed a council of leading men to manage the affairs of the country.<sup>5</sup> But when Albuquerque arrived in Quilon in December, 1503, a king was ruling over the country. We now know definitely that the ruler of Veṇāḍ on both these occasions was Ravi Varma of Tṛppāppūr. Therefore it is probable that the Queen who invited Vasco da Gama to Quilon was only a princess of the Dēśiṅganāḍ Tāvaḷi, who was not acting in her own right but acting on behalf of the King, who was evidently fighting against Vijayangar forces.

While Albuquerque was in Quilon, he sought the permission of the King to seize the ships of the Moors and the Zamorin that were at the port. "If the permission was refused," he threatened to enter the port, "burn them all and go way without taking in any cargo there or making

4. *Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, p. 348

5. F. C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, p. 101.



any treaty of peace with them". But at the intercession of the King, Albuquerque desisted from capturing the ship, saying that "as the King had reason for not chastising them, he would not do anything except what he ordered."<sup>6</sup>

Ravi Varma was succeeded by Kēraḷa Varma, on whose death on 14th Ciñnam, 689 M. E Vira Kēraḷa Varma of Dēśi-ṅganāḍ ascended the throne. He seems to have been 'co-king' from the early part of Ravi Varma's reign as is evidenced by the edict granting privileges to the depressed classes at *Paraśurāma Perumteruvu* in Kōṭṭār Iḍarāyakkūḍi on the 1st Cittira, 661 M. E. While Kēraḷa Varma was at Vaḍaśśēri, the inhabitants of Paraśurāma Pūnteruvu, who belonged to the *left-hand caste* complained to him that the upper classes oppressed them by preventing them from worshipping the village gods and compelling them to pay many taxes. If any one objected, he was subjected to corporal punishment and forbidden to live in his own village and use the village wells. Kēraḷa Varma ordered that the upper classes should not interfere in the religious worship of the lower classes, that no tax other than the *Kappaivari* (tax for the maintenance of the navy) and *Paḍaippanam* (tax for the maintenance of the army) need be given, and that any interference in their affairs by upper classes would meet with royal displeasure <sup>7</sup>

Kēraḷa Varma was succeeded by *Bhūtalavira Śrī Vira Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma* (691-710 M. E./ 1516-35 A. D.). In the Matilakam Documents his name is given as *Śrī Vira Rāma Mārtāṇḍa Varma, Senior Tiruvaḍi of Tṛppāppūr and of*

6. *Commentaries*, Vol. I, p. 14.

7. *TR. State Manual*, Vol. II, App. pp. 13-14.

*Ciravāy*. He married a Cōḷa princess, named *Cōḷarājavalli* and was known as *Puli Mārtāṇḍa Varma* from the royal insignia of her house, the leopard. *Kaḷakkāḍ* or *Cōḷakulavallipuram* was acquired as dowry.

Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma was one of the most successful rulers of Vēṇāḍ. A daring warrior and an ambitious ruler, he fought with the Pāṇḍyas and extended the boundaries of his kingdom as far as R. Tāmrapaṇi. His inscriptions found in *Brahmadēśam*, *Sērmadēvi*, *Ambāsamudram* and *Kaḷakkāḍ* indicate the eastern possessions of his kingdom. A contemporary Portuguese writer, Duarte Barbosa writing about 1518 A. D. observed, "As for the said kingdom of Coulam [Quilon], it extends another ninety miles as far as a city named Cael [Kayalpaṭṭiṇam]."<sup>8</sup> In token of these extensive conquests he assumed the title, *Venṇumaṅkoṇḍa Bhūṭala Vira*. Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma built a palace at *Kaḷakkāḍ* and made it his headquarters. He built a dam across of the Palayrr in South Travancore, known even to this day as 'Virappuli Aṇa'. His patronage was extended to several temples in *Nañcinaḍ*, *Ambasamudram*, *Mannarkōyil* and *Kaḷakkad*. He settled a gift of lands in *Taḷakkuḍi* on the *Šucīndram Temple*.<sup>9</sup> Probably he built the shrine of Udaya Mārtāṇḍa vinayakar near the entrance of the *Šucīndram Temple*. He patronised the *Jayantiśvara temple* at *Taḷakkuḍi* and *Kṛṣṇasvami temple* at *Tōvalai*.<sup>10</sup>

His patronage was, however, not confined to his own religion. He granted gifts of lands to the Jain temple at *Nagercoil*. The Christian Paravas of *Kumarimuttam*, near *Cape*

8. *Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol. II, p. 97

9. *Travancore Archaeological Series (= TAS)*, Vol VI, p. 126

10. *Ibid.*, p. 131 and Vol. IV, p. 101

Comorin, also received great favours from the King. When they represented to the King that the Hindus harassed them, he issued an edict in 701 M. E. granting them protection and exemption from certain oppressive taxes such as *idāṅkai* and *valāṅkai paṇam*, which they were compelled to pay to the village community.<sup>11</sup>

One of the most important events in the reign of Udaya Martanḍa Varma was the serious conflict between Vēṅḍ and Vijayanagar. Vēṅḍ, which had several bits of territories east of the Ghauts, was looked upon with hostile eyes by the rulers of Vijayanagar. It is said that the immediate cause of war was the support given to Cellappa, a rebel against the emperor. Kṛṣṇadēvarāya decided upon immediate action, but before the expedition could start he died. The project however was not abandoned by his successor, Acyuta Rāya. An army was sent under Sālaka Timma to conquer the south and punish the Tiruvaḍi. In 707 M. E. the Vijayanagar forces met the Travancore forces on the banks of the Tamraparṇi and defeated them after a stiff encounter. A pillar of victory was erected by the victor at the site of the battle. The Vēṅḍ ruler appeased the victor by surrendering the rebel and making large presents. The victorious general, after reinstating the Pāṇḍya ruler, proceeded on a pilgrimage to the famous shrine of *Anantaśayanam* at Trivandrum, accompanied by the Vēṅḍ ruler. Thence he returned to Śrīraṅgam where 'the Cēra king and other prisoners were produced before the Emperor. Acyuta Raya commanded the Tiruvaḍi to be punished for encroaching upon the Pāṇḍya territories and the Pāṇḍya king to be reinstated. This is the

11. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 180-1

account of the expedition which we get from the *Acyutarāyābhuyodayam*.<sup>12</sup>

Vēlu Piḷḷai, the editor of the Travancore State Manual rejects the whole story saying that the literary and epigraphic data produced are one-sided. He contends that the *Acyutarāyābhuyodayam* is a panegyric and hence unreliable. He dismisses the epigraphic evidence by pointing out that the *praśasti* was found inscribed at Kāñci and not on the Tāmraparṇi as mentioned in the poem. The question that arises is why the Tiruvaḍi accompanied Salaka Timma to Trivandrum, if he had been the victor. Velu Pillai denies the journey altogether on the ground that if the journey had actually been undertaken, Kalkuḷam, the capital of Vēṇṇāḍ, on the way would not have been omitted to be mentioned. "The impression left on the mind by a careful study of the poem," concludes Velu Pillai, "is that the panegyrist of Acyuta created a victory which the king and his generals were not able to gain by force of arms."<sup>13</sup> In support of his contention, Velu Pillai points out that the Vēṇṇāḍ king granted in 707 M. E. (1532 A. D.) itself large endowments to the temple of Kanyākumari. Further in the year 716 M. E. (1541 A. D.) he also instituted a śanti in the Paḷḷakkal Temple in the Tirunelvēli district. The temple itself was renamed *Udayamartāṇḍa Viṇṇavar Emperumān*

On the other hand, in the Elavanasūr inscription of 1532 A. D., among the *birudas* of Acyutarāya, that of *Tiruvaḍisaptāṅgaharaṇa* (captor of the seven emblems of Tiruvaḍi's royalty) is also found. Further a copper-plate grant of 1537

12. S. K. Aiyangar, *Sources of Vijayanagar History* (Madras, 1919), pp. 158-60.

13. *TR. State Manual*, Vol. II, p. 163.

A. D. records the gift of a village in Puliyūrkuricci in Tiruvaḍi dēśam by an officer of the Vijayanagar empire.<sup>14</sup>

Most of the arguments of Velu Pillai are not on all fours with the available evidence. It is uncontestable that the Tiruvaḍi was defeated by the forces of Acyutarāya. Probably as he agreed to recognise the supremacy of Vijayanagar by agreeing to pay tribute, the Vēṇāḍ King was forced to give up only those territories which belonged to the Pāṇḍyan ruler. Soon after the encounter, the King of Vēṇāḍ might in all probability have begun his encroachments again on the Tirunelvēli district. Hence the institution of the śānti in the Paḷḷakkal Temple in Tirunelvēli.

Udaya Martaṇḍa Varma died at Kaḷakad on the 26th Karkaḍakam, 710 M. E.<sup>15</sup> He was succeeded by *Bhūtala Vīra Ravi Varma*. How long he ruled is not known. He made a grant to the Śucīndram Temple in 712 M. E. while residing at Paṇakkuḍi in Tirunelvēli. The grant was made to meet the expenses of the śānti service instituted in the name of his predecessor, Udaya Mārtaṇḍa Varma. The inscription incidentally shows that Tirunelvēli was still in the possession of Vēṇāḍ.

Ravi Varma was succeeded by *Rāma Kēraḷa Varma* and *Āditya Varma*. Āditya Varma seems to have ascended the throne in 717 M. E. (1542 A. D.). There was fighting in the country and clashes between the King's officers and tenants of temple lands.<sup>16</sup> Āditya Varma died on 9th Tai, 719 M. E.

14. K. K. Pillai, *The Śucīndram Temple*, p. 41.

15. Matilakam Records, C. 1673, Ō 32 A

16. Matilakam Records, C. 1719, Ō 31, C. 1656, Ō 226.

(1544 A. D.)<sup>17</sup> and was succeeded by *Vīra Kēraḷa Varma*.<sup>18</sup> The rule of *Vīra Kēraḷa Varma* seems to have lasted only for a few months, for he was succeeded by *Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma*, otherwise known as *Venṇumankōṅṭa Bhūtala Vīra Śri Vīra Kēraḷa* towards the close of 719 M. E. itself.

The most important event in the reign of *Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma* was the second invasion of *Vēṇāḍ* by the forces of Vijayanagar. The cause of the invasion, according to Fr. Heras, was the withholding of the tribute.<sup>19</sup> The increasing hold of the Portuguese over the Paravas of the Fishery Coast was the immediate cause for the despatch of the expedition. The expedition was led by *Rāmarāya Viṭṭhala*, the Vijayanagar Viceroy at Madura. The invading forces entered *Vēṇāḍ*, pursuing the fleeing Paravas, and encountered the *Vēṇāḍ* forces at *Kōṭṭār* in 1544. About the outcome of this encounter, we have the oft-repeated story of Francis Xavier appearing in front of the enemy with crucifix in hand and commanding them to stop. The invading host thereupon retreated in utter confusion.<sup>20</sup> But as no battle is mentioned, it is probable that Xavier had interceded on behalf of the Paravas and brought about an understanding.

Velu Pillai however claims that "the invaders were driven away by the bravery of the Travancore troops and

17. M. Rajaraja Varma, 'Some Travancore Dynastic Records,' *Kerala Society Papers* (= K. S. P.), First series, Doc. XVI.
18. *TAS*, Vol. IV, p. 104.
19. Fr. Heras, *The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagara*, Vol. I, p. 140.
20. Fr. Heras marshalls the testimony of several Jesuit writers to prove the veracity of the incident. But as Ferrolli observes, 'since Valignano is silent about this great event, we shall not lay stress on it.' *The Jesuits in Malabar*, Vol. I, p. 124.

their resolution of the King”<sup>21</sup> But he does not produce any evidence to prove his claim. On the other hand all the available evidence points the other way. A Śucīndram inscription dated Āvaṇi, 720 M. E. records that Viṭṭhala built the Gōpura of the Tiruveṅkaṭanātha Temple and erected the *dhvajastambha* in front of the Perumāḷ shrine. Another Śucīndram inscription dated 2bth Alpaśi, 722 M. E. records a gift of land by Bhūtala Vīra Rāma Varma for offerings to Venkaṭa Emperumān on the birthdays Viṭṭhala. The King also granted Śinkarayya, who was the envoy of Cinna Timmayya, brother of Viṭṭhala, a village in Kulaśēkhara Maṅgalam, near Karicūḷnta Maṅgalam.<sup>21</sup> Velu Pillai tries to explain away this evidence by saying that the Vēṇāḍ King instituted the endowment “pleased with Viṭṭhala for constructing the gopuram.”<sup>22</sup> The explanation is more ingenious than convincing. As K. K. Pillai observes, “an endowment of the triumphant monarch in honour of the vanquished foe would reverse the natural order of expectation.”<sup>23</sup> It is evident that Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma concluded peace with the invader through the mediation of Xavier, recognising at the same time the supremacy of Vijayanagar. But the treaty embodying the peace proposals was ratified only in 722 M. E., Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma having died while the negotiations were in progress.

Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma was succeeded by Rama Varma (720-31 M. E.). It was Rama Varma who concluded the treaty with Vijayanagar. There seems to have been constant quarrels

21. ‘Subhagasandēsam’ by Ulloor Parameswara Iyer, (*Parishad Traimāsikam*, Vol. I., No. i, p.5).
22. *TR. State Manual*, Vol. II, p. 178.
23. *The Śucīndram Temple*, p. 43.

among different svarūpams of the royal family during his time. It appears that several portions of Tirunelvēli were still in the possession of the Venāḍ ruler inspite of the recent conflict with Vijayanagar. For we find from an inscription at Kurṛālam that the Vēṇāḍ ruler had appointed tax-collectors in this region headed by an officer called Yajñanārāyaṇayyar.<sup>24</sup>

Śrī Vīra Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma of Deśiṅganāḍ was the successor of Rāma Varma (731-43 M. E.). Āditya Varma of Ciravāy was also associated with him in the government.<sup>25</sup> Āditya Varma bestowed a gift of land at Darśanamkōppu in Tōvāla to the Ramēśvaram Udayanayinar Temple in 734 M. E. He died on 28th Painkuni, 750 A. D. at Kēraḷapuram. About Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma nothing more is known.

According to Jesuit sources, Viṭṭhala made a second attack on Vēṇāḍ in the year 1558. The Travancore army very easily repulsed the attack and during the panicky retreat a large number of the invaders was killed. In the opinion of Fr. Heras, Viṭṭhala himself was killed in this encounter for his name is no longer mentioned in inscriptions or contemporary European writings.<sup>26</sup>

The successor of Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma was Śrī Vīra Udaya Martaṇḍa Varma (743-770 M. E.). During his time amicable relations were restored among the members of different tavaḷis. We find in a Matilakam Record of 763 M. E. that members of

24. S. Parameswara Iyer, 'Subhagasandēśam' (*Sahitya Parishad Traimāsikam*, Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 11)

25. *TAS*, Vol. VI, p. 47.

26. Fr. Heras, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-3.



different svarūpams took part in the ceremonies connected with the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmi Temple.<sup>27</sup>

Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma died on 17th Dhanu, 770 M. E. and was succeeded by *Śrī Vīra Ravi Ravi Varma* (770-84 M. E). The two Tiruvaṭṭār inscriptions of 778-79 M. E. give many personal details of the King. The King had two brothers named Āditya Varma and Rāma Varma, the three princes being the sons of Rōhiṇi Tirunāl Umayamma Rāṇi. Ravi Varma married two ladies called Irayumakkuṭṭiyamma and Iḷaya Irayumakkuṭṭiyamma. He was a votary of Śrī Padmanābha and he performed the sixteen mahadanas beginning with Tulapurūṣadana.<sup>28</sup>

From the several inscriptions and edicts, it appears that “he was a just and wise ruler, easily accessible to his subjects, ever ready to redress their grievances.” He promulgated certain rules for the equitable distribution of water to the paddy fields in Nañcinaḍ during seasons of drought. He also issued several regulations for the constitution and conduct of village pañcayats. He was a pious ruler, taking delight in the renovation and extension of temples in the different parts of the kingdom.<sup>29</sup>

In 776 M. E. the forts of Kalkulam and Udayagiri were built. A niṭṭu found among the *Mudaliyār Manuscripts* specifically relates to the contribution given by the people of Nañcinaḍ for the construction of these forts.<sup>30</sup> The niṭṭu is important in another respect also. It affords one more proof

27 Matilakam Grandhavarī (Quoted in *TR. State Manual*, Vol. II, App. pp. 63-68.)

28 *TAS*, Vol. I, pp. 175-8.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 178-79.

30 S. Desivināyagam Pillai, Ancient Forts of Kalkulam and Udayagiri *Kerala Society Papers* (= *K.S.P*) (Sixth Series, pp. 313-15). For full text of the Niṭṭu, see App. I.

of the spirit of independence of the people of Nañcināḍ, who, in this instance, objected to forced labour and promised to pay a *nazar* at the rate of one paṇam per *ma* (=2½ paras of land) of *Perumparuru* and *sankētam* (Sarkar and Temple) lands, to get themselves, their servants and slaves exempted from personal service.

During the latter part of Ravi Varma's reign, dissensions broke out between the Tṛppāppūr and the Koṭṭārakkara (Eḷēḍattu Svarūpam) branches of the royal family. But the King was able to maintain his position.

Fr. Heras, on the authority of the Veḷḷānguḍi plates (1698 A. D.) and the Padmanēri grant (1598), observes that Veṅkaṭa I conquered the *Tiruvaḍidēśa* and made a gift of land to Brāhmaṇas. Whether the claim is true or not, that Vēṇāḍ was in a state of war from 1598 to 1599 is proved by Jesuit writings. Fr. Pimenta passing through Vēṇāḍ in the early part of 1598 related that the King had "certified us that the King of Madura was coming against him with seventie thousand armed men and many elephants."<sup>31</sup> When the Archbishop of Goa, Menezes, visited Malabar in 1599, he could not meet the King of Travancore, who "was at the frontier of his kingdom defending it against the attacks of the Nayque of Madura."<sup>32</sup> The outcome of the war is not known, but Fr. Heras believes that the Nāyak of Madura was victorious on the ground that Fr. Barradas wrote from Cochin on December 12, 1616 that the King of Travancore is under the Nayak of Madura.<sup>33</sup>

31. *Purchas, His Pilgrimes*, Vol. X, p. 206.

32. Fr. Heras, *op. cit.* (quoting Gouvea), p. 347

33. Sewell R., *The Forgotten Empire*, p. 230

Ravi Varma died in 784 M. E. and was succeeded by *Rāma Varma* (784-85 M. E.). He continued the renovation work of the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmi Temple at Trivandrum begun by his predecessor in 781 M. E. He constructed also the Kulaśekhara Vināyaka Temple at Śucindram. He died on 13th Paikuni, 785 M. E. at Karuppu Kōyil at Trivandrum. He was succeeded by *Āditya Varma*, who died in 785 itself and was succeeded by *Maṇalikkara Rāma Varma*, who died on 6th Purattāsi, 786 M. E. His successor was Ravi Varma.

*Ravi Varma* (786-838 M. E. /1610-62 A. D.) ruled for 52 years and it is the longest reign in the annals of Vēṇaḍ except perhaps that of Ceriya Udaya Mārtāṇḍa Varma, who is said to have ruled for 62 years from 1382 A. D. He completed the renovation work of the Śrī Padmanābhasvami Temple begun by his namesake in 781 M. E. and had the Kalaśam ceremony performed on the 9th Āni, 795 M. E.<sup>34</sup> After completing the renovation work, Ravi Varma went on a pilgrimage to Ramēśvaram. After his return, he instituted certain regulations for the administration of the Śrī Padmanābhasvami Temple. About this time he also effected considerable reduction in the taxes collected by the state. This is mentioned in one of the poems composed at that time, entitled '*Bhramara Sandēśam*'<sup>35</sup>

At this time the Nayak incursions into Nañcināḍ become a regular feature of Vēṇaḍ politics. The exact cause of these incursions is not clear. In all probability, it was

34. M. Rajaraja Varma Raja, 'Some Travancore Dynastic Records', (K. S. P., First Series, p. 5).

35. Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, 'Bhramara Sandēśam' (*Sahitya Parishad Traimasikam*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 134)

either love of plunder or wanton aggression that prompted the Madura Nāyaks to undertake a series of raids. In 810 M. E. the forces of Tirumala Nāyak overran Nāñcināḍ and caused much destruction to property and cultivation. A niṭṭu dated 22nd Kumbham, 810 M. E. (1635 A. D.) records the remission of certain taxes on land in consequence of the invasion of Tirumala Nāyak's forces. The record reads as follows: "Whereas it has been represented to us at our residence at Kalkuḷam by the nāttar (ryots) between Maṅgalam and Maṅakuḍi, including those of Perumpaṅṅu, tali and sankētam that the country is smitten by calamities, having had no cultivation for the kar (kanni) crop of 810, and that, as Piśanam (kumbham) cultivation was not begun owing to the advent of the Tirumala Nāyakkar's forces, and as the crops raised.... suffered by blight, the ryots have not the wherewithal to begin fresh cultivation, we are pleased to command.... that the levying of (taxes) be given up and that this fact.... be duly notified to the ryots of the said places in the southern portion of Nanijanad North."<sup>36</sup>

Prior to Makaram, 810 M. E., Tirumala Nāyak is said to have sent an army under Vēlaypan against Vēṅṅaḍ. The invaders were repulsed with heavy losses. To avenge the defeat, Tirumala Nāyak immediately collected a bigger army and sent it under his redoubtable commander, Ramappayan, towards the close of 810 M. E. The task of defending the country fell on the gallant shoulders of Iravikkuṭṭi Piḷḷai, when the other ministers shirked the task. He opposed the advance of the invaders at Kaṇiyamkuḷam on the 18th Āni, 810 M. E. The ministers who were jealous of the

36. Nugam Aiya, *Travancore State Manual*, Vol. I, pp. 302-3.

popularity of Iravikkutti Pillai, plotted and withdrew from the thick of the battle, with the result that the commander was killed. The invaders cut off the head of Iravikkutti Pillai and carried it to Tirumala Nāyak, who is said to have reprimanded the act of treachery.

Velu Pillai, the editor of the Travancore State Manual, takes great pains to prove that it was Tirumala Nāyak's forces who were defeated in the battle of Kaṇiyāmkulam. The main argument of Velu Pillai, based on the war-song, *Iravikkutti-ppillaiappōru* does not mention that the day was carried by the invaders. Neither does the war-song mention the triumph of Vēṇāḍ forces. It is only commonsense, therefore, to presume that, as in the case of several Oriental battles, the fall of the general was the signal for his followers to abandon the fight and fly from the field. Velu Pillai however admits that "although the Madura forces repeated their incursions into Nanjanad and committed deprecations, they were not able to win any victory over Travancore."<sup>37</sup> A government which was not able to prevent the repeated incursions of the Madura forces could, by no stretch of the imagination, be described as having successfully opposed the invaders. The evidence of John Nieuhoff, quoted by Velu Pillai, only proves the opposite. "The King (of Travancore)", wrote Nieuhoff in 1664, "constantly keeps a garrison of ten thousand Negros [Nāyars] here [Kalkulam] to secure it against the Nayak of Madura whose power is much dreaded here."<sup>38</sup>

37. *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 192. See also Śūranād Kunjan Pillai, 'Nayak Invasions of Travancore' (*Bhāshā Traimāsikam*, Vol. III, No. 3, p. 5)

38. *Churchill's Collection of Voyages and Travels*, Vol. II, p. 228.

Ravi Varma had, in the earlier part of his reign, been assisted by Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma of Dēśiṅganāḍ in the administration. After the death of Uṇṇi Kēraḷa Varma in 826 M. E., Ravi Varma became the sole ruler. In 834 M. E. the King, while residing at Bhūtappāṇḍi, issued orders for the relief of the distress of the cultivators of temple lands.

A momentous event that took place during the reign of Ravi Varma was the overthrow of the Portuguese power on the Kēraḷa coast. From the moment the Portuguese arrived in Kēraḷa waters, their one aim was to monopolise the foreign trade of the country. To achieve this end, they were prepared to use any means, fair or foul, and throughout the period of their contact with Kēraḷa they had attempted to intimidate the rulers into selling the spices of the country at a fixed price, much below the market prices of the commodities. Therefore the overthrow of the Portuguese power from the Kēraḷa coast by the Dutch was universally welcomed.

The Dutch had established trade relations with Quilon quite early. In January, 1647, Van der Broeck, the Dutch under-merchant at Kāyamkuḷam, had met the King of Travancore and had been permitted to establish a warehouse at Quilon. But the Dutch factors in Quilon always remained in perpetual fear of the Portuguese, as they put all sorts of impediments on Dutch trade. During the Dutch expedition against the Portuguese possessions in Kēraḷa, Quilon was captured on 29th December, 1658. The English factors at Surat wrote of the Dutch capture of Quilon: "The Dutch with their bribing of the Governors of the Country get footing upon this coast of India more and more, having lately, with the assistance of the Rajah

of the place, taken the castle of Quilone from the Portugalls and with their small shipping commdaund already these vessailes that were bound for Cochin to goe to Quilone and trade there.”<sup>39</sup>

But immediately after the withdrawal of the Dutch forces from Quilon, the Portuguese occupied the place again. The Dutch, however, returned to the attack of Quilon in December, 1661. They had to face stout resistance this time from the Portuguese garrison supported by local levies. By 12th December, the Dutch were able to occupy the fort again. The Dutch factor, John Nieuhoff, who was left behind “to settle matters for the re-establishment of traffic,” was soon able to negotiate a treaty with the Queen of Quilon (31st March, 1662.)

## II

King Ravi Varma died after a long and prosperous reign of 52 years, on 11th Āvaṇi, 838 M. E. (August 1662 A. D.) at the Śrīpādattu Kōyil at Trivandrum,<sup>40</sup> and was succeeded by Rāma Varma (838-47 M. E./ 1652-71 A. D.) He was one of the princes adopted from Vellārappall Kōvilakam of the Cochin royal family in 805 M. E.<sup>41</sup> He died on 12th Purttāsi, 847 M. E. at Kalkuḷam.<sup>42</sup> and was succeeded

39. *The English Factories in India, 1655-1660*, p. 199.

40. M. Rajaraja Varma Raja, ‘Some Travancore Dynastic Records’, (*K. S. P.*, First Series, Doc. XVI.)

41. *Ibid.*, Third Series, Doc. F.

42. *Ibid.*, First Series, Doc. XVI.

by Āditya Varma (847-52 M. E./ 1671-77 A. D.) Āditya Varma was also an adoptee from Cochin. Both Rāma Varma and Āditya Varma were weak rulers. The cause of their weakness was the increase in the power of the local chieftains, who set at naught royal power. Van Rhee, the Dutch Commandeur at Cochin wrote in 1677 that the "Prince.... has been a stranger and has not the good fortune to please the great landlords and Principally the princess of Attinga ; this domestic quarrel makes him weak and incapable of using his great power."<sup>43</sup> The members of the *Eṭṭarayōgam* quarrelled among themselves and the quarrel culminated in Kanni, 848 M. E. in the closing of the Śrī Padmanābhavāmi Temple, resulting in the daily services being discontinued. The attempt of the King to continue the services in spite of the abstention of certain members only served to widen the gulf between the opposing factions in the Yōgam. One of them, the Neytaśēri Pōrri, openly questioned the right of other members to conduct the services without his concurrence. He took the law into his own hands, belaboured one of the temple servants and expelled him from the premises. Thereupon the King and Āyilyam Tirunāḷ, the Senior Rāṇi of Ārriṅṅal, interceded and set matters right in the temple. But the arrangements soon broke down. Āditya Varma died at Kalkuḷam in Māsi, 852 M. E.

"King Adithya Varmah succeeded in 836 M. E. (1561 A. D.) and died in the sixteenth year of his reign," wrote Shungoony Menon, "under shocking circumstances, occasioned by the inhuman conduct of the feudatories and the combined artifices of Ettoo Veetil Pillamar and the Devaswam

43. *Memoir*, p. 17.



Association.... (He) was of a very quiet and mild disposition and from his younger days, he had led a retired and religious life, and became more like a spiritual minister than a King.”<sup>44</sup>

The Yōgakkār and their associates, the Eṭṭuvīṭṭil Piḷḷamār, took advantage of the mild disposition of the King and created troubles in the country. On a certain night, the King’s palace at Trivandrum caught fire, but not a single person among the villagers or the Dēvasvam people, who resided round the palace, ventured to extinguish the fire, with the result that the whole palace and its out-houses were reduced to ashes. In Shungoony Menon’s opinion, the Yōgakkār and the Eṭṭuvīṭṭil Piḷḷamār were responsible for the incendiarism, while Nāgam Aiya exculpates the Yōgakkār from complicity in the plot.<sup>45</sup> Velu Pillai, on the other hand, completely refutes the allegation of conspiracy.<sup>46</sup> He bases his conclusion on the inherent contradictions in the story and the paucity of materials to corroborate it. But it is doubtful whether the story can be discredited on such negative testimony alone.

Shungoony Menon adds, “the Yogakkar began to forward to the King every day Nivedyams, i. e. sweetmeat offered to the image of Padmanabha Swamy for pooja, and one day this being mixed with poison, the King partook of it, became ill and died suddenly.”<sup>47</sup> A serious error in this account is that Āditya Varma died not at Trivandrum but at Kalkuḷam.<sup>48</sup>

44. *A History of Travancore*, pp. 96-98.

45. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 98; Nāgam Aiya, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 304

46. *TR. State Manual*, Vol. II. T, pp. 215-17.

47. *op. cit.*, p. 99.

48. Matilakam Records, Kṣētrakāryam Curuṇa, Ō. 8.

Besides, the services of the temple being under suspension, there could have been no pūja, and hence no nivēdyam. On these scores, the account of poisoning of the King can well be discounted.

On the death of Āditya Varma in Māsi, 852 M. E. (1677 A. D.), Ravi Varma ascended the throne. But Ravi Varma being a minor, *Aśvati Tirunāl Umayamma Rāṇi*, the Second Princess of Āṅṅiṅṅal, acted as the Regent.

“The whole royal family at the time of the King’s death,” writes Shungoonny Menon, “consisted of one female the King’s niece, named Umayamma Ranee and her six male children, all under age.”<sup>49</sup>

But information available at present tends to disprove this conclusion. For, the Matilakam Records mention that at the time of Āditya Varma’s demise, the royal family consisted of two Rāṇis, Makayiram Tirunāl and Aśvati Tirunāl and two Princes, Rāma Kōyil Paṅḍārattil and Koccu Rāma Paṅḍārattil.<sup>50</sup> The Princes had been adopted on 20th Āni, 847 M. E.<sup>51</sup> If

49. *op. cit.*, p. 99

50. Matilakam Grandhavarī, C. I, Ōs. 8-9.

According to Velu Pillai, editor of the Travancore State Manual, there was a third Prince also in the royal family, by name Ravi Varma (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 220). But Document G. extracted in ‘Some Travancore Dynastic Records’ by M. Rajaraja Varma Raja, refers to the adoptions of 847 M. E. as being made “on account of Āditya Varma (the heir-apparent) being ill and there being no junior prince to perform the “annual ceremony of the late King (*Kerala Society Papers*, Series II). Thus it is clear that there was no prince by name Ravi Varma in the royal family in 847 M. E. Rāmakōyil Paṅḍārattil, the senior-most adoptee was from Vellārappalli palace of the Cochin royal family. It was this prince who succeeded Āditya, Varma with the title ‘Ravi Varma.’

51. M. Rajaraja Varma Raja, *loc. cit.*

Umayamma Rāṇi had six male children, there would have been no necessity for this and subsequent adoptions into the royal family.

This question naturally leads us to one of the most controversial incidents of the reign of Umayamma Rāṇi, viz., the ‘Kaḷippānkuḷam incident’. According to Shungoony Menon’s version, “on a certain moonlight night, a few boys of the confederate party, who were of the same ages as the five Princes, were playing with them at the Puthencotta palace. One of them proposed to the Princes (doubtless at the instigation of the confederates), to go to a tank or reservoir, situated a few furlongs distant from the western side of the palace, and to play on a white sandy plain and bathe in the crystal water. The young Princes proceeded with the boys, without the knowledge of their unfortunate mother, and while they were bathing, shocking to relate, some men from the confederate party appeared there under the pretext of bathing, and seized the Princes and suffocated them under water.”<sup>52</sup> This incident is known in Vēṇaḍ history as the *Kaḷippānkuḷam Incident*. Apart from the inherent improbabilities of the story, there are records (though of a later date) which prove that Umayamma Rāṇi had no male children. Adverting to the former adoptions to the royal family, the Yōgakkār, after verifying temple records, deposed before Col. Munro in 986 M. E. that an adoption to the Vēṇaḍ royal family, at the time of Umayamma Rāṇi, was made “on account of the Rāṇi having no male children.”<sup>53</sup> The deposition and the adoptions of male members in 847 and 853 M. E. clearly indicate the absence of male children in the royal family. This really knocks the bottom of the whole story.

52. *op. cit*, p. 100.

53. Matilakam Records, C 35/83, Ās. 40 45

Shorn of such legends, the history of the reign of Umayamma Rāṇi could now be reconstructed with a fair degree of accuracy. On the death of Āditya Varma, she assumed the reins of government as the Regent of Ravi Varma. She was a woman of great determination and courage. About her, Van Rhee, the Dutch Commandeur at Cochin, wrote in 1677: "The Princess of *Atingen* [Āṅṅāṅ] is not only the mother of the Trevancoor ruler and the eldest branch of the powerful dominion of *Tipaposoṛivan* (Tṛppāppūr Svarūpam)... With the present old queen is a young princess but of a manly conduct who makes herself so much feared and respected that no one dares oppose her, partly out of respect for her womanhood and otherwise through the love for the old Princess, her mother; which circumstance she so well perceives that she makes herself the entire master of not only over Atingen that is governed by the Princess but also over Trevancoor, within whose bounds according to their laws, no princess can set her foot or pass over the river Caremance [*sic.*] under threat of loss of race, kinship and privileges, but this heroine or Amazon has infringed that prohibition and made the person of the King flee before her."<sup>54</sup>

On receipt of the news of the death of Āditya Varma, Umayamma Rāṇi along with the First Prince Ravi Varma and Second Prince Rāma Varma proceeded to Kalkuḷam to attend the obsequies. The Rāṇi then sent for the members of the *Eṭṭarayōgam* to consider the resumption of the suspended services in the Temple. Arrangements for the proper performance of the Temple services were made. After providing for the safe custody of the valuables at Kalkuḷam palace, she

arranged for the installation of Prince Ravi Varma as 'Dēśiṅganāḍ Mūppu'. Before the assumption of the 'Ṭṛppāppūr Mūppu,' revolts broke out in the country. Many of the stringent measures taken by Umayamma Rāṇi in auditing the accounts of the 'Karuvukarattil Piḷlas' and compelling them to make good the deficit in their accounts alienated a considerable number of prominent officers and chiefs. The Rāṇi also ordered the punishment of several officers who had defied her orders while she was a Junior princess. The disaffected gentry approached the Princes of Pērakattāvaḷi and Eḷēḍattu Svarūpam for help to oust the Rāṇi from power.

Vīra Kēraḷa Varma of Pērakattāvaḷi and the Eḷēḍattu Svarūpam Prince, who were dissatisfied with the recent adoptions to the royal family, now sided with the disaffected group in Vēṅāḍ<sup>55</sup> and marched on Trivandrum. On 9th Āṇi, 852 M. E., the insurgents defeated the Royalists at Karamana and pitched their camp there. A contemporary record speaks of the rebels breaking open the strong-room of the Temple and taking away the regalia.<sup>56</sup> Vīra Kēraḷa Varma arrogated to himself the prerogatives of a King and celebrated his birthday with festivities at Kēraḷapuram in Ciṅṅam, 853 M. E. <sup>57</sup>

The insurgents also enlisted on their side a body of mercenaries from Kaḷakkaḍ. Along with Ravi Varma, the Rāṇi withdrew to Varkala. Thereupon the insurgents took up their position at Kūntaḷḷūr and Iḍakkōḍ, on the way to

55. Matilakam Grandhavari, C. I, Ō. 10

56. M. Rajaraja Varma Raja, *loc. cit.*, (*Kerala Society Papers*, Series VI.)

57. S. Parameswara Iyer, *Important Matilakam Records*, p. 318

Ārriññāḷ. The Eḷēdattu Svarūpam Prince met the Senior Raṇi, Makayiram Tirunāḷ, on behalf of the insurgents, probably to persuade her to accept Vīra Kēraḷa Varma as the Regent in the place of Umayamma Rāṇi, who was alleged as tyrannising over the subjects. The negotiations failing, Vīra Kēraḷa Varma and his supporters retraced their steps to Neyyārrinkara. In the midst of these difficulties, Makayiram Tirunāḷ died in Makaram, 853 M. E. With a view to strengthen the Tāvaḷi, Umayamma Rāṇi adopted a male and two females from Kōlattunāḍ.<sup>58</sup> By that time a considerable force was collected by the Raṇi, which attacked the insurgents on the 5th Kumbham, 853 M. E. at Nēmam. The insurgents retired to Kuḷittura and Eḍakkāḍ, whereupon the Raṇi's forces attacked them at the latter place and dispersed them. When the Raṇi and her forces entered the Kalkuḷam fort, the insurgents collected at Maṇalikkara and besieged the fort. Peace pourparlers were now started and Vīra Kēraḷa Varma agreed to abandon the siege and retire from the contest.<sup>59</sup> Sometime later a conference of Svarūpis was held at Trivandrum, which came to the conclusion that Vīra Kēraḷa Varma had no claim to the throne of Vēṇaḍ. A pension was settled on him in Markaḷi, 856 M.E.<sup>60</sup>

In the meantime, Kēraḷa Varma, a Prince of Puravaḷiyanaḍ, a branch of the Kōlattunāḍ Svarūpam, visited Trivandrum in the course of a pilgrimage. He was adopted into the Vēṇaḍ royal family and the title of 'Prince of Hiraṇyasimhanallūr (Iraṇiyal)' was conferred on him. The Prince was a poet and a

58. Matilakam Grandhavarī, C. I. Ō. 11.,

59. According to Velu Pillai, the reason for the retirement of Vīra Kēraḷa Varma from the contest was "the danger of an attack on Nedumangad, which the Rani was contemplating" (Vol. II, p. 229).

60. M. Rajaraja Varma Raja, *loc. cit.*

man of great courage. highly accomplished in the use of arms. He became the chief counsellor of the Rāṇi and the commander of her militia.

“Taking advantage of this state of affairs,” writes Shungoony Menon, “in 855 M. E. (1680 A. D.) a petty sirdar under the Mogul Emperor, wandering in the southern parts of the Peninsula, with a number of horsemen and plundering the unprotected territories, invaded the Southern part of Travancore and carried depredations among the populace. None of the nobles and chiefs being able to oppose the sirdar or arrest his progress, he advanced to Trivandrum and made his headquarters there.”<sup>60</sup> ‘Mukilan’ as the invader was popularly called, fixed his headquarters at Maṇakkāḍ and carried depredations into the surrounding country.

The Yōgakkār, fearing the spoliation of the Temple at the hands of the invader, closed it and escaped. But, it is said, a party of Muslims in the employ of the royal family, interceded on behalf of the Rāṇi, and prevented the spoliation of the Temple.<sup>63</sup> Finding his position untenable, the Mughal Sardār

61. M- Rajaraja Varma Raja states that the invasion took place in 852 M. E. (*Ibid*). However, he gives no references.

It is not definitely known who this Mughal Sardar was who penetrated into the extreme south of India and attacked South Travancore. It was in September, 1687 that the fort of Golkonda surrendered and the Sultan was imprisoned by the Mughals. Only after the capture of Golkonda could the Mughals have undertaken a southern expedition. It is therefore clear that the expedition mentioned here is that of an unknown captain or the expedition has been ante-dated.

62. *op. cit.*, p. 102.

63. But curiously enough, it was not the invaders who despoiled the Temple but the pūjāris themselves! A Matilakam Record says that when the pūjāris escaped, they pilfered the temple of the golden image. (vide, M. Rajaraja Varma Raja, *loc cit*).

soon retired southwards. By this time Kēraḷa Varma had collected together an army and gave battle to the invaders at Tiruvaṭṭār. The invaders were routed and the Sardār himself killed in the battle. According to popular accounts, the ranks of the invaders were thrown into confusion as a result of the attack of a nest of wasps, which were disturbed by the fighting.<sup>64</sup>

According to Shungoony Menon, "though the Sirdar did not attempt to convert the Hindus, still he insisted upon the Nairs adopting many of the Mahomedan customs, and they were compelled to do so. Some of these customs the Sudras still retain as useful and convenient."<sup>65</sup> The customs said to have been enforced upon the Sūdras were : males should cover their heads and females their bodies while they go out of doors; males to have the circumcision performed before they attain ten years of age; Sudra females to have their forehead, chin and hands tattooed, etc. Shungoony Menon observes that "all these are of common observance even now among the lower order of Sudras between Quilon and Kalculam." Whether these were the customs enforced by Mukilan or how strictly they were enforced, cannot be ascertained at present, as the account is based on tradition alone.

Kēraḷa Varma took great interest in promoting the interests of the royal family. He made use of the horses and equipment captured from the Mughal Sardār to create a cavalry-wing of the army, with which he was able to quell the disturbances caused by the feudal chieftains of the country. "The Yogakkar and the Ettu Veetil Pillamar were cowed, and became

64. Shungoony Menon, *P., op. cit.*, pp. 104-5.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 103.



obedient to Her Highness the Ranee.”<sup>66</sup> Kēraja Varma had the Puttankōṭṭa palace pulled down and the Valiyakōyikkal and the Tēvārattukōyikkal palaces built. The prince occupied the former, while the Raṇi resided at the latter.

The *Travancore State Manual*, states that it was Umayamma Rāṇi who granted the English East India Company in 1684 A. D., permission to establish a factory at Anjengo.<sup>67</sup> The State Manual seems to depend on Logan’s *Malabar Manual* for this information. Logan has stated that, “in this same year (1684 A. D.), the English East India Company obtained from the Attingal Rani (of the Travancore family) of a sandy spit of land at Anjengo.”<sup>68</sup> We have no contemporary source of information to confirm the statement, the early records of the Anjengo Factory having been destroyed by fire. The English Factory Records so far published (1618-84) do not give any clue to the date of establishment of the Factory. A footnote to Vol. III of the *English Factories in India* (New Series) mentions that the Anjengo Factory was established in 1694.<sup>69</sup> John Bruce, who, as the official historian of the English East India Company, must have access to official documents of the period, also, gives the same date <sup>70</sup>

### III

*Ravi Varma*, 860-893 M. E/1684-1718.

“In 859 M. E. (1684 A. D.), Umayamma Ranee’s son, Prince Revi Varmah, attained his sixteenth year, and in

66. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

67. Velu Pillai, T. K., *Travancore State Manual*, Vol. II, p. 231.

68. *Malabar Manual*, Vol. I, p. 341.

69. Fawcett, C, (Ed.), *English Factories in India* (New series), Vol. III, p. 365 footnote.

70. *Annals of the East India Company*, Vol. III, p. 165.

accordance with the custom of the country, the sovereignty was transferred by Her Highness Umayamma Ranee, to the Prince who was duly installed on the musnud.”<sup>71</sup> In 863 M. E. Ravi Varma adopted two princes, and two princesses from Kōlattunād.

One of the most significant events of the period was the prohibition of the barbarous custom known as ‘*Pulappēḍi* and *Maṇṇāppēḍi*’. This peculiar custom was prevalent in the different parts of Kēraḷa till the close of the seventeenth century. According to this custom, if a Pulaya or Maṇṇān happened to touch a high-caste woman alone after dusk during Kumbham-Mīnam-Mēḍam period, she would lose her caste and would have to accompany him. It was enough if the Pulaya or Maṇṇān threw a stone or a stick at her or called out that he had seen her.

This inhuman custom was abolished Veṇāḍ. in 1696 A. D. through the bold efforts of Prince Kēraḷa Varma. The proclamation of 1696 abolished this custom once for all, and provided for relief to women of higher castes from an ever-present threat of loss of caste and humiliation. The punishment provided was that if a Maṇṇān or Pulayan practised the above custom, all the members of his family including the children in the wombs of women, were to be cut to pieces. It was also ordered that if a woman was polluted by pulappēḍi, the pollution should be considered as removed if the woman bathed in a tank.<sup>72</sup>

The bold policies of Kēraḷa Varma alienated local interests and he was assassinated in his own place in 871 M. E. (1696

71. Shungoony Menon P, *op. cit.*, p. 106. The date of accession of Ravi Varma is wrong. ‘Some Travancore Dynastic Records’ gives the date as 3rd Tai, 860 M. E. (KSP, Sixth series.)

72. *TAS.*, Vol. VII, pp. 28-29. For the text of the proclamation, vide App. II.

A. D.). The perpetrators of the crime were never discovered. Kēraḷa Varma was also a poet of no mean distinction, for he translated the whole of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* standing at the feet of Śrī Padmanābha.

From the early days of Ravi Varma's reign, there was a recrudescence of trouble from across the border. Father Peter Martin, a Jesuit missionary, writing in 1700, gives a detailed account of one of these incursions. Ravi Varma "who was grieved to see his kingdom possessed by eight ministers, who, from time immemorial, leaving the prince the bare title of sovereign, usurped the whole authority and divided among themselves all the revenues of the crown," entered into a secret treaty with the Bādaga invaders against the turbulent feudal barons. Accordingly the latter were killed or crushed by the ruthless Badaga horde. But all on a sudden, Ravi Varma collected his troops, attacked the unsuspecting Badagas and killed them to a man.<sup>73</sup>

According to Taylor's *Oriental Historical Mss.*, to punish Ravi Varma for his treacherous conduct, Maṅgammāḷ, the Queen Regent of Madura, sent an expedition under Daḷavāy Narasappayya to Travancore about, 1697.<sup>74</sup> After a hard struggle, Narasappayya is said to have come out victorious and dictated his own terms. The arrears of tribute were collected and valuable presents received. The most remarkable trophies of war were some pieces of ordnance, which were preserved in the bastions of the Madura and Trichinopoly forts.

Velu Pillai, editor of the State Manual, denies the very fact of the invasion by Narasappayya. He bases his argument

73. R. Sathianathier, *History of the Nāyaks of Madura*, pp. 298-99.

74. Vol. II, p. 224

on the fact that the trophies of war mentioned by Taylor's Chronicle were not traceable even in the time Nelson, the author of Madura Manual. As K. K. Pillai observes, "Nelson visited these places about 1868 A. D., more than 190 years after Narasappayya's expedition; and, we have no authentic or detailed record as to all that had happened in these forts during this long period."<sup>75</sup>

Whether the factum of Narasappayya's invasion can be proved or not, it is undeniably true that Nāñināḍ suffered heavily from incessant raids from across the border during this period. Inscriptions as well as *Mudaliyar Manuscripts* furnish a vivid account of the sufferings of the people. The Vaḍaśśēri inscription of 4th Kārtikai, 873 M. E. testifies to the raids having been frequent during the period extending from 852 to 871 M. E.<sup>76</sup> and the heavy losses to the people. It reads: "Owing to considerable losses on a account of the frequent invasions into Nāñjināḍ of the Nāyaka's army from (kollam) 852 onwards, we had remitted the arrears of anjali tax on two Kar-crops and thirteen Piśanam-crops, or fifteen crops in all...."<sup>77</sup>

The oppressive measures of the royal officers only added to the difficulties of the people. The exasperated Nāṭṭār from Maṅgalam to Maṅakkuḍi met at the Vaḍaśśēri Temple and decided to the following effect: "As royal cavalry and troops have repeatedly and in large numbers invaded (our country) and caused great damage (to us), and as we have been obliged to pay *Kōṭṭaiṅṅam* and other intolerable taxes....we shall therefore continue to pay only the añcali and the mēlvaram

75. *The Śucindram Temple*, p. 48.

76. *TAS.*, Vol. V, pp. 210-12.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 214.

taxes according to the royal order of King Kulaśekhara Perumāl Tambirān....If however royal officers coerce us into paying Kōṭṭaiippaṇam and other taxes," the Nāṭṭār decided to act in unison, and, if necessity arose, to leave the country. "While acting in this manner," they further decided, "if by the action of the Government any piḍāgai or village, or any single individual is subjected to any loss, we shall jointly contribute towards the expenses and stop the injustice. When the affairs are being conducted in this manner, if anyone should connive with the government at impairing the privileges or rights of the country, we shall subject him to a public enquiry in the nāḍu (assembly),"<sup>78</sup> These resolutions, K. K. Pillai observes, "reveal the acute political consciousness and corporate spirit which had developed among the people....The threats of non-co-operation and of emigration were not common weapons in other parts of India then ; they seem to savour of quite modern ideas. Nor did these resolutions remain verbal declarations only. They were carried out at times, and the government was consequently compelled to redress their grievances."<sup>79</sup>

Ravi Varma introduced many reforms in the revenue administration of the country. Under the existing system, assessment was made on a rough calculation of the probable yield of the land. The collections were remitted into the treasury, after deducting expenses of collection, temple ceremonies and for the maintenance of the militia. To ensure necessary control, the country was divided into uniform revenue districts, and proper revenue collectors were appointed.

78. *TAS*, Vol. V, p. 216-17. For full text of the Vaḍaśṣeri Declaration, see App. III

79. *op. cit.*, p. 49

Estimates of revenue collection were ordered to be submitted in advance. Thus revenue administration was placed on a secure footing.

Ravi Varma died in 893 M. E. and was succeeded by *Aditya Varma*, the elder of the two princes adopted from Kōlattunāḍ. His reign appears to have been short. A document published in the Kerala Society Papers states, that his successor, *Rāma Varma* assumed control of the administratin at Tiruvaṭṭār Tōṇimaṅ Palace on 1st Painkuni, 896 M. E. (28th Feb., 1720 A. D.)<sup>80</sup>

Straitened finances seem to have forced Rāma Varma to disband a large portion of the army. The remaining soldiers were put on garrison duty in the different parts of the Kingdom. Disputes between the King and the Yōgakkār assumed greater seriousness. Towards the close of 896 M. E., the officers of the King attempted to attach the revenues of certain temple lands. This being resisted by the tenants, the officers prevented the cultivation of the lands. Thereupon scuffles ensued, and many persons were injured. The King seems to have done nothing to end the disputes or redress the grievances.

The continuance of the *Baḍaga* incursions from the east had increased the general insecurity prevailing in South Travancore. The Īsāntimaṅgalam Olai document of 894 M. E. describes how the marauders seized standing crops, and ornaments of women, and lifted cattle. A royal *ninavu* declared that the King had no hand in Anantōji Nāykar's raid (892-94 M. E.) on Nāñcināḍ and exhorted the people to repulse the attacks as he is not able to do so.<sup>80</sup> Seeing no prospect of deliverance from the

80. M. Rajaraja Varma Raja, K. S. P., Third Series, Doc. J.

repeated incursions, the people left their homes and lands and migrated to the hills. The King, realising the gravity of the situation, issued an order on 26th Māsi, 896 M. E. The King, claimed to have expelled the invaders from the East and promised to conduct matters, "as they were in the time of the Ammāvan." Hence he besought the people to return home and resume cultivation.<sup>81</sup>

But soon 'confusion again spread in Nāñcināḍ owing to the oppression of the King's officers. The houses of the piḍāgai chiefs were burnt, and illegal cesses were collected, against the assurance given by the King. When these complaints were placed before the authorities, no action was taken. But one Muttu Piḷḷai with his troops besieged Darśan-ankōppu, prevented all egress and ingress, so that even the cattle and other helpless creatures were suffered to starve for three days and committed other enormities that the inhabitants left their homes and hearths and emigrated East.<sup>82</sup> The people of Nāñcināḍ assembled at Cempakaraman Putuvūr, east of Aḷakiyapaṇḍiyapuram, on 16th Kartikai, 898 M. E. (16th Dec., 1721 A. D.) and resolved that if the illegal imposts are insisted upon, "we shall be prepared to meet in a body and resist the imposition by a united stand and migrate to another place, even leaving the (partly) cultivated piśanam crop (behind)."<sup>83</sup> The King as usual issued orders to redress their grievances but he was not in a position to protect his subjects from the marauders from the East.

81. *TAS.*, Vol. V, p. 221,

82. *K. S. P.*, Seventh Series, p. 40.

83. *TAS.*, Vol. V., p. 226. For details of the Cempakarāman Putuvūr Resolution, see, App. IV.

It was in the reign of Ravi Varma that the Anjengo Chief, William Gyfford and ten of his companions were attacked and slain and Anjengo besieged by the country people, instigated by the Piḷlamār. The activities of the English factors were viewed with hostility by the local people. The incident that triggered the unfortunate events seemed to be the annual Easter Dinner which the English Company's Linguist gave. Men of different communities attended the dinner, during which the Linguist's mistress bedaubed a Muslim merchant's by throwing coloured water or powder at him. The Muslim merchant had to be restrained from running her through with his sword. When the matter was reported to the Chief Factor Gyfford, he tactlessly ordered the Muslim merchant swords to be broken over their heads. The merchants took it as an insult and was waiting for an opportunity to wreak vengeance on the Chief and the Linguist. Though Governor Boone from Bombay tried to compose matters, the insult was not forgotten.

It was at this time that the annual gifts for the Rāṇi of Āṙṙiṇṇal arrived. Gyfford rashly decided to deliver the presents in person. On 14th April, 1721, he, along with 14 companions, travelled six miles to Āṙṙiṇṇal and presented the gifts, after which a volley of shots was fired, which was mistaken for a hostile act. On their way back, the party was attacked, and Gyfford and ten of his companions, murdered. The Linguist's body was hacked to pieces. Only three Topasses escaped to reach the fort to tell the tale. The hostile mob turned against the English fort at Anjengo. The small garrison under the inspiring leadership of Gunner Ince, withstood the furious attacks of the mob and the later blockade, until reinforcements arrived. Conditions in Anjengo did not improve and a large force had to be stationed at the settlement. The pepper supply from Anjengo



fell from 3000 candies to 1000 candies and it was only by 1728 that conditions began to improve.

The accounts of the circumstances leading to the incident are highly confusing. Biddulph would make it the result of the insult to the Muslim merchants,<sup>84</sup> while in Visscher's opinion the cause of the catastrophe was the treachery of the Queen.<sup>85</sup> One of the earliest reports on the incident, however, makes it not only the outcome of Gyfford's rashness, but of the sins of his predecessor who is spoken of as "having stuck at nothing to enrich himself and thought of little else than driving a private trade in pepper, even to quarrel with the heads of the country on the least interruption of it."<sup>86</sup>

The complicity of the Queen in the incident cannot be proved, because Biddulph says that soon after the incident, she wrote to Madras and sent a deputation to Tellicherry, "to express her horror at the barbarities committed by her people." Velu Pillai, the editor of the Travancore State Manual, tries to exculpate the Piḷḷamār also,<sup>87</sup> but their complicity in the affair is definitely proved. Two identical ōlas issued by the King of Travancore and Queen of Ārriññal on 10th January, 1731, confirming the grant of two gardens in Cirayinkil, in compensation for the loss sustained by the Company in the late disturbances, stated "when on the 15th April, 1721, he [the commander of Anjengo] and ten other persons went to Atenga to

84. Biddulph, John., *The Pirates of Malabar* (London, 1907), pp. 282-83.
85. Visscher, Canter, *Letters from Malabar* (Tr. Major Heber Drury, Madras, 1862) pp. 45-46.
86. Fact. Rec. Misc. 22. Treatise on Attinga by John Wallis (Dec. 7, 1727) (Quoted by Holden Furber, *Bombay Presidency in the Mid-Eighteenth Century*,) Bombay, 1965, p. 21.
87. *op., cit.*, Vol. II, p. 248

make Presents to the Queen, they were killed by the treachery of the Pullays and Karikars, who seized the money of the Company.”<sup>88</sup>

Prior to September, 1722, Alexander Orme, the Chief of Anjengo entered into a treaty with the Rāṇi of Āṛṛiṇṇal. The following were its chief provisions: (1) The ring-leaders in the attack on Gyfford were to be punished and their estates to be confiscated; (2) the Rāṇi was to reimburse the Company for all the losses caused by the attack on Anjengo; (3) The Company was to have exclusive right to the pepper trade and empowered to build factories in the Rāṇi’s dominions wherever they pleased; and (4) the Rāṇi was to return all arms taken in the outbreak and to furnish timber to rebuild the church that had been burnt. One other important provision of the treaty was the Company must supply soldiers to carry on the war against the Rāṇi’s rebellious subjects, for which she was to pay the charges. The Court of Directors however felt that the provision to supply soldiers would “certainly involve us in trouble if we succeed and more if we don’t.”<sup>89</sup>

The last years of the reign of Rāma Varma seem to have been full of troubles. Wars and tumults were occasioned by the rebellious conduct of the Eṭṭuvīṭṭil Piḷlamār and other maḍampimar. A letter which the Anjengo Factors wrote to Tellicherry dated 31st January, 1727 reads: “The difficulties we have to contend with are scanty crop of pepper, Wars and Tumults in the Country & these are likely to encre-

88. Logan. W., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and other Papers of Importance* (Madras, 1951) Part I, No. xx

89. Quoted by Biddulph, John, *op. cit.*, p. 289

ase every day.”<sup>90</sup> The troubles were further increased by the hostility of the Princes of the different Tāvālis of the royal family, who fished in troubled waters. A similar letter from the Anjengo Factors reveals: “The Kings of Chinganna & Perital have joined Vanjamuttan & are resolved to crush the Growing Power of the King of Travencore, the whole Country is now Involved in war which is like to continue till one or other Party is Master, for there is no thought of Accommodation.”<sup>91</sup> The troubles that started in Southern Travancore soon spread to the North.

Rāma Varma was very anxious to end the chaotic state of affairs in the country and strengthen his hands. With this end in view, he entered into an agreement with the English at Anjengo, and sought the help of the Nāyak ruler of Madura. In April, 1723, an agreement was entered into between Mr. Alexander Orme, the Chief of Anjengo, and the *Prince of Neyyāṅṅinkara*, by order of the King of Travancore. According to the provisions of the agreement, the English were allowed to establish a mint at Kuḷaccal to coin paṇams. The King promised to be in league with the Company.<sup>92</sup>

In August, 1723, another agreement was made by which the King promised to punish the culprits of the attack on the Company’s people at Āṅṅiññal. In return, “the Honourable Company have resolved, in spite of money expenses, to put down the the enemies and subject the country to the King.”<sup>93</sup>

90. *Letters to Tellicherry* (1726-28), p. 13

91. *Ibid.*, p. 15

92. Logan, W., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, etc.* pt. I, No. xi

93. *Ibid.*, No. xii.

In March, 1726, the Rāṇi of Āṛṛiṇṇal granted the English trading facilities at Iḍava, near Anjengo. The instrument of ratification by the Rāṇi clearly stated that “the place which is now granted in Eddawa for a factory, is not for any other interest of Government but that of obtaining the favour and help of the Honourable Company during all the time, which this Government and the Honourable Company should last, as well as that of augmenting the custom duties of this Government.”<sup>94</sup> The Company was convinced that only if the hands of the King were strengthened that the Company “will Enjoy a free & Full Trade, provided they duly pay the customs & Annual presents.”<sup>95</sup> It was under these circumstances that the Company decided to help the King against his rebellious subjects.

To strengthen his hands further against the rebellious ‘Poolas and Cariakar:’, Rāma Varma is said to have sought external aid. The event which probably hastened his decision to seek aid was that when Prince Rāma Varma “was being taken to Attingal from Trivandrum, a party of men under the Ettuvettill Pillamar met at a place called Calakootam [Kaḷakkūṭam, 10 miles north of Trivandrum] headed by Ramanamadattill Pillay for the purpose of assassination of the Ranee and the Prince but providentially both escaped unhurt by the vigilant measures adopted by Kilimanoor Koil Tampuran, who was escorting the party. Koil Tampuran after sending away the Ranee and Prince, got into the Ranee’s palanquin and moved forward with all the attendants, and thus drew the attention of the party towards the palanquin. When the turbulent crowd

94. *Ibid.*, No. xiv.

95. *Letters to Tellicherry* (1726-28), p. 25.

neared the palanquin, and commenced the attack, the Koil Tampuran jumped out, sword in hand and cut to pieces many of the assailants. Unfortunately, however, the Tampuran perished in the conflict.”<sup>96</sup>

Pachu Muthathu in his *History of Travancore*, on the other hand, places the incident at Budhanūr, in the district of Ceññannūr and makes the culprits a band of ruffians from Kāyamkuḷam.<sup>97</sup> Velu Pillai finds fault with Shungoony Menon for not following the version of Pachu Muthathu, and adds that “the learned author has not a word to say to prove that the account of the dastardly act as given by Muthathu was incorrect. He has not mentioned his grounds of justification in shifting of the scene of occurrence from Chengannur to Kalakkuttam, more than 50 miles to the south.”<sup>98</sup> But Velu Pillai conveniently forgets the fact that the Anjengo Factory Records corroborate Shungoony Menon’s rather than Pachu Muthathu’s version. The Factors wrote to Tellicherry on 18th November, 1727, that “the Poolas have brought in two princes adopted in spite to the present family of Colastree by the princes of Oloor and Chittra Raja..... On the 14th instant the two princes were brought into Attinga to be invested in the Government; the Poolas alledging that the King of Travancore and Queen of Attinga had forfeited the government by their Tyrannical and Arbitrary Proceeding, but however few of the country people join’d the Poolas or acknowledg’d the young princes. The Queen of Attinga having notice of these proceedings set out the 17.....from Trivendurone for Attinga in company with no more than one hundred and fifty Men and

96. *A History of Travancore*, p. 110

97. p. 19.

98. *TR. State Manual*, Vol II, p. 260

some women giving out that she wo'd die Queen of Attinga: The Poolas having notice of her intent, sent Forces to stop her, but these mised of her she having taken a round about way and she arrived nigh Attinga about Twelve O' clock at night, where the Poolas met her and came to an engagement with her people in which they killed the Quoya Pandale to the Queen of Marta, who at present is second here, several were Wounded and among the rest a Woman, one of the Younger Poolas of Vanjanmuttan is dangerously wounded, but, after all, their Respects for the Queen and her resolute Behaviour (for she Quitted her Pallankeen and advanc'd at the Head of her people with a Sword and Targett) obliged the Poolas to give way, having done mischief enough and the Queen came to Attinga."<sup>99</sup> Further, the Factors indicated the cause of the 'Poolas' rising against the King: "As the Freeholders in Travancore are disgusted by the King's insisting on having one half of the produce of all the Lands, they will in all probability join tha Eight Madombees and Elambi Pandali, all which the King of Travencore has drove out of his Dominions"<sup>100</sup>

The seditious activities of the feudal nobles and the wars and tumults they occasioned, made it doubly necessary to secure help from outside to chastise them. For this purpose Rāma Varma, "in consultation with his intelligent nephew" is said to have proceeded in 901 M. E. (1725-26 A. D.)<sup>101</sup> to Trichinopoly. There he entered into a treaty with the Madurai Government and secured its support by offering to renew the

99. *Letters to Tellicherry*, Vol. I, p. 27

100. *Ibid.*

101 This event must have taken place towards the close of 1727 (See, *Infra*, pp. 129-30)

lapsed attachment to that crown and to bind himself to pay a certain sum of money annually, At the same time a suitable force was applied for to punish and to bring to their senses the Madampimar and other refractory chiefs.”<sup>102</sup> The version of Nagam Aiya is substantially the same, the only difference in his version being that he does not mention any renewal of the lapsed attachment to the Madurai crown.<sup>103</sup> Velu Pillai, on the other hand, totally denies the fact of a treaty with the Madurai Government. He states that the Kings of Vēṇāḍ never paid tribute to the Nāyaks of Madura and the armies that came to demand the tribute were “invariably defeated” His contention is that the Nāyakship of Madura was in the last throes of disintegration and therefore it could not have come to the assistance of Vēṇāḍ. “The only fact which may be gleaned from the different accounts,” concludes Vēlu Pillai, “appears to be that a large number of free lances made an irruption into Nanjanad at that time. There is an alternative possibility that Rama Varma enlisted into his service a certain number of professional fighters from the frontier tracts with the assistance of certain Nayaks.”<sup>104</sup>

Even without going into the merits of the dispute, it is certain that Rāma Varma secured the services of a large number of soldiers from across the border to strengthen his hands against the disruptive elements in the state. This fact is corroborated by the Anjengo Records. The Factors wrote to Tellicherry on 11th January, 1728, that “it is to be doubted (*sic*) that the kings having been at the expense of raising a very large force, may, after they have subdued the

102 Shungoony Menon P., *op. cit.*, p. 109

103 *State Manual*, Vol. I, p. 327

104 *TR. State Manual*, Vol. II, p. 259.

Poolas and Cawacars (Kāryakkār?) bend it against this fort".<sup>105</sup>

On the arrival of the mercenary forces, the refractory chieftains either fled the country or kept quiet for the time-being. Consequently there was little work for them, but they were retained for some time for the purpose of over-awing the rebels.

Rāma Varma is said to have become enamoured of a Bengali lady, whom he met at the Śucīndram Temple and married her. The three children born of this wedlock were Pappu Tampi, Rāman Tampi and Tanka.<sup>105</sup> The first two children were intimately connected with the disturbances caused during the early years of the reign of Mārtāṇḍa Varma, when Rāma Varma died on 29th Makaram, 904 M. E./ 27th January 1729 A. D., at Kalkuḷam <sup>106</sup>

105. *Letters to Tellicherry*, Vol. I, p. 31

106. In the Matilakam Records, the sons of Rāma Varma are referred to as Tampi Rāman Rāman and Tampi Rāman Āticcan

107. Matilakam Records, C. 83, Ō. 25.



## APPENDIX I

NĪTTU RELATING TO SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION OF  
NĀTTĀR

*26th Kartikai, 776 M. E. (26th Nov., 1601 A. D.)*

“Whereas the Nāttār and inhabitants of the Dēśams between Maṅgalam and Maṇakkuḍi which embrace the perumparru and sankētam lands in the northern and southern divisions of Nañcinaḍ have met together and, for meeting the expenses connected with the erection of the Kalkuḷam and Udayagiri forts, the digging of moats (around them), the felling of poles and posts and the buying of palm-leaves for thatching the walls, agreed to pay every harvest season beginning with the Kār (Kanni) crop of 776 M. E., a Nazar at the rate of one Paṇam per mā of perumparru and sankētam lands, it is commanded that on the 26th day of Kārtikai of the said year that from this day forward the personal service of the Nāttār or of their servants or slaves shall not be impressed in the country comprising the state and temple lands, either from the fields or from the inhabited quarters or by paying wages, for work in connection with the construction of the Kalkuḷam and Udayagiri forts or of any others that may be raised hereafter. And this is the royal writ graciously issued to the Nāttār and Kaṇiyaḷar of the perumparru and sankētam lands in both the northern and southern divisions of Nañcinaḍ in pursuance of the above command given on 21st Kartikai of the said year.”

*Nāttār.* Literally the word means people of a Nḍḍ or country. But in the early records of Nañcinaḍ, it is found used in the very restricted sense of Vellāḷas who form the land-owning class.

Perumpattu - Sarkar lands

Sankētam - Temple lands.

Natir (Nazar) - Present or offering made to a King  
or superior officer.

Mā - 2½ paraahs of land.

Kaṇiyālar - Proprietor of land

(*Vide, Kerala Society Papers, Sixth Series, pp, 314-316.*)

## APPENDIX II

TIRUVITĀMKĪDU INSCRIPTION OF VĪRA KĒRAḶA  
VARMA ABOLISHING PULAPPĒḶI AND MAṆṆĀPPĒḶI  
KOLLAM, 871 (1696 A. D.)

In the Kollam year 871, when Jupiter stood in Kanni, on the 25th day of the month of Tai, which was a Saturday with Catayam nakṣatraz, first tithi (pratipada) of the first fortnight, Simha Karāṇa and Parigam yōga – on this day, the following regulation was passed by the two *Mahājanas*, who had assembled under royal command, when King Vira Kēraḷa Varma Ciravāy Mūtta Tampuran was pleased to stay at Kalkuḷam.

The King having been pleased to order that *PulappēḶi* and *MaṇṇāppēḶi* shall not be in practice in the territory lying to the west of Tōvāḷa, to the east of Kaṇṇēṛri and between the mountain range and the sea, the two popular assemblages of *Mahājanas* met in deliberation and had this order (kalpana) engraved on stone.

If, in transgression of this order, *PulappēḶi* and *MaṇṇāppēḶi* should again become prevalent, the very embryo in the womb among the Pulayar and Maṇṇār shall be extracted and slain. It was also ordered that if (the pollution consequent on) *PulappēḶi* and *MaṇṇāppēḶi* should happen to a woman, the pollution shall be considered as removed if the woman bathe (in a tank) and come out.

In this manner, this was ordered to be in force till so long as grass, the earth, the stones and the Kāvēri exist.

It was also ordered that this order be engraved (on stone) and (the stone) set up.

This was (accordingly) written on a stone and it was set up at the northern entrance of the Keṇḍappaḍaiṇḍu in Tiruvitāmkōḍu.

If any one should cause any damage to this stone, he shall incur the sin of having killed a tawny cow on the banks of the Ganges.

-*TAS.*, Vol. VII, pp. 28-29,. (slightly adapted)

## APPENDIX III

VAḌAŚŚĒRI RESOLUTION OF ARPASI 878 M. E  
(OCT., 1701 A. D.)

On the 1st day of Arpaṣi of the (Kollam) year 878, the district (*nāḍu*) from Maṅgalam to Maṅakkuḍi met in the sacred temple at Vaḍaśśēri and passed the following resolution :-

As troops and trouble came from the east; as there has been trouble from the state for some time; as we have not been united in exercising our right of protesting against coercion, etc.; as others have misappropriated our properties, holdings and other hereditary rights; as the agents of the respective villages have been oppressing us with unusual innovations; as some individuals of this division have carried false reports against us to the royal authorities; as royal officers are harassing us on account of the forged *Paḍukalam* deeds which several persons have produced in the place of old *Paḍukalam* documents and discharged bonds; as they have forced open some boxes and are harassing us with the documents (extracted therefrom); as the Government have taken hold of the documents executed by the *pōttis* and the *pillamār* of the eleven *madhams* belonging to Śrī Padmanābha Perumāḷ and Ādikēśava Perumāḷ and are preventing us from cultivating or harvesting our fields; as we have had to redeem the perpetual mortgages (*śōrā-orri*); as the whole amounts have to be realised on sub-mortgages (*śirrorri*); as our holdings are being arbitrarily determined by boundary-stones; as our houses are being distrained unjustly and their inmates evicted; as the government officials force our *paraya*

(slave-) labourers to work for them as they please; and as many other calamities have befallen us:-

We resolve to act in unison and to make a bold stand even by emigration, and thus protect our affairs.

If any untoward things should happen to any individual, village, *piḍāgai* or *nāḍu* in this district (*Nāñji-nāḍu*), we shall meet from our common funds an expense even upto ten or sixteen *paṇams* and shall unswervingly stand upon our rights. If anything occurs in a village or in the sub-division the aggrieved party shall meet in a public place and report the matter to the *piḍāgaikkār*, and we shall all then assemble together and resolve on what has to be done under the circumstances. If anyone fail to attend such meetings as required by the regulations, and thus weaken the party, he shall be subject to enquiry by the assembly of the *nāṭṭār*.

According to these regulations, this document has been drafted and sworn on the sacred feet of *Tāṇumālaiya-Perumāḷ*.

This is the writing of *Ārumuga-Perumāḷ* of the southern portion of the *Nāñji-nāḍu* north.

-TAS., Vol. V, pp. 216-27.

APPENDIX IV  
CEMPAKARĀMAN PUTUVŪR OLAI DOCUMENT,  
16th Kārtikai, 898 M. E. (1721 A. D.)

On the 16th day of Kārtikai in the (Kollam) year, 898, the residents of the two divisions (south and north) between Maṅgalam and Maṅakkuḍi, having met at Kaḍuk-karaiyūr, the following resolution of union was written:-

As on account of the heavy taxes and the cruel treatment to which we were subjected till the *piśanam*-harvest of 895 M. E. (1720 A. D.), we, of both the divisions, were forced to leave our fields uncultivated during both the Kār and Piśanam seasons in 896 M. E. (1721 A. D.) and retreat to the east of the mountains, the King (tamburan) together with the Poṛṛimar, Paṅḍālas and the members of the svarūpam, was pleased to camp at Bhūtappāṅḍi, and summoning the people of both the divisions before him, redressed all their grievances till the *piśanam* crop of 96 (Kollam 896 / 1721 A. D.), gave a royal writ to all of us (to that effect) and as a mark of special favour presented us with a brass drum, a horn, and a poṅḍi (sword or club inlaid with silver). Another writ was also issued cancelling all coercive taxes such as *kōṭṭaippaṇam* and *māttālpāṇam* and acts of petty tyranny in the land, and authorising the levy of only the original imposts of aṅjāli and mēlvāram, and permitting the assembly of the nāṭṭar of Naṅjinaḍu to continue to exercise the original prerogatives that had been in their enjoyment from a long time.

Accordingly when the assembly held an enquiry against those who had infringed its laws, as the sovereign ordered the destruction of two residents in each sub-division (*pidāgai*) as a punishment on us;

as the members of the svarūpam and Śivaśaila-Mudaliar came with their cavalry and troops and pressed us hard for the payment of *añjāli*, *mēlvāram*, *kaaṇuḷavu pāṭṭam* on the *kār* and *piśanam* crops of 97 (Kollam 897);

as the sovereign himself levied (a tax of) thirty *paṇam* per *mā* on all lands including *dēvadānam*, *brahmadānam*, *kaṇḍuḷavu* and even on waste lands;

as another tax of 125 *paṇam* per *kōṭṭai* was also collected in opposition to the decisions of the assemblies from the poor ryots on even the half and quarter yields of the *kār* crop of Kollam 898, though it was a complete failure in both the northern and southern divisions;

as they realised double the amount of *vāram* on lands, which according to yield, could have been assessed at only half;

as a similar exaction in paddy was levied on the uncultivated lands in the Nallūr and Villiparru;

as the officials of the King unjustly demanded *pāṭṭam* on all the small *kaṇḍuḷavu* lands in the villages of Anuma-kētanallūr and Vīravanallūr, even though the sums had already been remitted and receipts obtained;

as the Daḷavāy sent his men to dun the immediate payment of *māttalpaṇam*, *Kōṭṭaipāṇam* and other imposts on the deeds which the king had already declared by entries in the account to be void;

as the government appropriated to itself those lands which had been entered (in the registers) as having been cultivated by the ryots;



as *pāṭṭam*-rent was demanded on *kāḍu karai* and dry, lands, on which the usual taxes had already been paid;

as one-fourth share was demanded on the *kār*-crop of 98 (Kollam 898);

as *kōṭṭaiṭṭaiṭṭam* was demanded unjustly on even the seed-bed lands, and as paddy-grain stored in houses, boiled rice, raw rice, gold, silver, bronze vessels, clothes, etc. (of these ryots) were all confiscated (for non-payment of this tax);

as no measures were taken to redress these insufferable grievances in any way, even though seven *maḷavarāyamār* had been deputed to represent these facts to the King at Kalkulam, and the Pōṛṛimār Paṇḍālas and the members of the *svarūṭṭam* had also been informed of these troubles;

as Muttupillai had attacked Darśanamkōppu with his horses and troops, blockading all the fourteen entrances (into it), making the cows and cattle to starve there for three days without drinking water, breaking the pots of the poor women who came to draw water, and looting the paddy and other grain stored in the houses;

and lastly, when the inhabitants in a body had migrated to Kaḍukkara, Muttu Pillai and Chirrambalam-Paṇḍāram at the head of a hundred soldiers had surrounded us there demanding the payment of our dues on the spot, as we had to flee up the hills in terror when the four entrances of Kaḍukkara were closed and the whole village was plundered :-

all of us (*nāttars*) having assembled in the stone-maṇḍapa at Chempakarāmanputuvūr to the west of Aḷaiya-pāṇḍiyapuram have passed these resolutions- namely,

that the tax called *kōṭṭaippanam* shall not be paid on the seed-bed lands;

that we shall bind ourselves to pay only the *añjāli* and *mēlvāram* taxes, which had been existing previously on all our lands;

and that if *Koṭṭaippanam* and *māttālpanam* be ordered to be paid on *dēvadānam* and *brahmadānam* lands over and above the usual *añjāli* and *mēlvāram* taxes, we (of both the *nāḍus*) will be prepared to meet in a body and resist the imposition by a united stand, and migrate to another place, even leaving the (partly) cultivated *piśanam* crop (behind.)

While (matters are) thus, if any one be he a *piḍagaik-karan* *ūrkkaran* were to betray the proceedings of this assembly, by receiving some bribes (say, ten *paṇam* or submit to the payment of the unjust taxes, he shall be answerable to both in person and with his property.

When we have migrated elsewhere insisting on our rights and privileges, we shall demand fit retribution for the high handed death of the *ambalakkaran* (village chiefs).

When we are thus in power, no *ambalakkaran* from our division shall be allowed to be employed as revenue-farmers ;

and if the government should cause any loss by confiscation from any *piḍagai*, village, or the house of any individual, this shall be made good from our common funds.

If in the period of our succession, anyone happens to be found in the village and is caught by the officials, we will not compensate for his losses; but he shall be answerable to us along with his effects and relations.

We will demand reparation for the damages of the two houses in each of the three sub-divisions, which was unjustly sanctioned by the King, when formerly we (the assembly) had exercised our legitimate powers, and that, if the government does not make good the loss in this matter, we shall meet it from our common funds.

When we have sworn in the assembly not to make certain payments, if any person from the two divisions (of Nāñji-naḍu) serve as an accountant under the government, write up accounts, or compromise our affairs, he shall be made to suffer by forfeiting his property.

Thus while according to these happenings, the government have granted (us) an order (respecting our prerogatives), and we have also decided among ourselves in full council, if any body take up arms and serve on the other side, he shall pay a similar penalty and he who transgresses the laws and customs of his respective class, shall be also similarly punished.

If the king's army be encamped in our territory, we shall represent the matter before the King, and will by joint effort by preparing to emigrate elsewhere, see that the military camps are removed.

Thus shall we conduct ourselves according to the standing rules of our assembly.

If any person attempt to dissolve our union, he shall incur the accursed sin of having butcherd a cow on the banks of the Ganges; on the other hand, the person who tries to consolidate our union shall reap the supreme benefit of having

given a cow to a brahman on the banks of the same river  
[Ganges.]

Promising to act thus unswervingly so as to preserve the rights of our assembly. we swear in (the names of) our gods, Tāṇumālaiya-Perumāḷ and Bhūtaliṅgam.

Thus for having written this unshakeable bond of union, on behalf of the inhabitants of the north and the south divisions (of Nāñji-nāḍu), this is the signature of Ārumuga-Perumāḷ.

-TAS., Vol. 5, pp.225-227

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