

# **THE RISE AND GROWTH OF PONNANI**

**From 1498 A.D. to 1792 A.D.**

**Thesis submitted to the  
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for the Degree of  
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## CERTIFICATE

*I, Dr. V. KUNHALI, do hereby certify that this dissertation 'The Rise and Growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D. to 1792 A.D.' is a record of bonafide research done by Mr. AMMAD KUNNATH under my supervision and that no part of this has been submitted previously for the award of any degree.*



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## PREFACE

Malabar holds an important position on the trade map of the ancient world. The frequent references in ancient sources on trade with Malabar coast is impressive, and it was in the background of extensive contacts with outside world that the foundations of Malayali culture were laid. The Arabian sea has been the permanent and decisive factor in the history of Malabar. Ponnani was not an exception to this. Being the southern most part of Malabar and situated at the confluence of the Arabian sea and the Bharatha Puzha Ponnani played an important role in the maritime history of South India as one of the leading ports. She rose into prominence as the second capital and naval head quarters of the Zamorins. With the spread of Islam her significance grew still further. To quote Gleason 'Looking at a map there is no area so extensive with so concentrated a Muslim population in all of Peninsular India as in Malabar'. Ponnani soon became a centre of Islamic learning and culture. The Makhдум period is one of the brightest chapters in the entire history of Ponnani and proved to be the 'Golden Age' of Arabic literature. Undoubtedly Ponnani was the birth place of 'Mappila militancy' which was the need of the hour to fight against the Portuguese intruders. But it is quite unfortunate to see that authentic historical works to depict the glorious bygone days of Ponnani are rare and hence this humble attempt.

This dissertation entitled "The Rise and Growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D to 1792 A.D" ie from the advent of the Portuguese to the capture of Malabar by the British is an attempt to explore the social and cultural history of Ponnani and Malabar as a whole. The work is divided into 5 chapters. The first chapter is on the origin and growth of Ponnani. Here every effort has been made to disclose the ancient and medieval history of Ponnani with special reference to her trade contacts, spread of Islam and the political importance that she gained under the Zamorins.

The second chapter is entirely devoted to depict the literary and cultural efflorescence, thanks to the services of the world renowned Makhdums. It is worth mentioning that there had been no powerful and enlightened rulers like Akbar or Shahjahan to patronise the Makhdums of Ponnani. They lived of their own and did meritorious service to the future generations of Malabar and of India in general.

The third chapter is on the advent of the Portuguese and its impact on Ponnani and Malabar as a whole. To begin with, the Portuguese policy was one of concord but it soon gave place to rivalry and estrangement leading to a crisis. This was an 'interlude' in the history especially of Ponnani, an interlude of Portuguese barbarism. The fourth chapter deals with the role of Kunhalis in the Hundred

years war against the Portuguese. It also discusses the origin of militancy centred at Ponnani.

The fifth chapter is concentrating on the role of Ponnani during the Mysorean invasion, since after Farooquabad under Tipu Sultan, Ponnani had gained importance as a centre of trade and of Naval Warfare.

The work concludes referring to the highlights of the study.

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# INTRODUCTION

Ammad Kunnath “The rise and growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D. To 1792 A.D.” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut

## INTRODUCTION

In the absence of even a comprehensive history of Kerala it is rather absurd to complain over the non-availability of reliable sources to frame an authentic work on the splendour and glory of medieval Ponnani. Indian historical tradition is poor when compared to Graeco-Roman or the later traditions of European historiography. Except the 'Rajatharangini' of Kalhana there are numerous writings in the regional languages of India, which though useful to some extent as source of regional histories do not amount to history as such.<sup>1</sup> But to A.L. Basham it was not due to the fact that India had no sense of history what soever.<sup>2</sup> In the Muslim period the Indian historical tradition underwent a radical change and was characterised by a phenomenal increase in the quantity and improvement in the quality of historiography.

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1. Subrahmaniyam. N, *Historiography*, Madurai (1973) P- 421.

2. Basham A.L, *The wonder that was India*, Calcutta (1967) P-45.

The medieval history of India forms a significant phase in the continuing process of the development of civilization. During this period nature has been subjected to great controversy amongst historians. Almost all the historians of the medieval period were by and large indifferent to the geographic, social, cultural and demographic accounts of the land.<sup>3</sup> The Persian literary flavour can be felt in the narration of event of the past. And such works remain examples of typical history though not in typical characters. The European concept of history entered the Indian subcontinent with the arrival of the Europeans, particularly during the rule of the English East India Company. The English historians and more particularly those who translated Persian sources of medieval India, had tended increasingly to equate medieval Indian history virtually with the political life of India. Several changes took place in the economic, social and cultural spheres and recently several historians have turned to

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3. Abul Hais. S, *India During Muslim Rule*, Lucknow (1977)  
P-13.

the social and economic history of medieval India especially the study of the social and cultural aspects of Kerala. The social and economic change in medieval India is a vast and complex subject.<sup>4</sup> It is too difficult to trace Kerala history from it.

India has been subjected to prolonged British rule and 'When the historians of the conquering race attempt a history of the conquered country, principles of historiography are ignored and facts are subjected to a great deal of distortion, misrepresentation and misinterpretation'.<sup>5</sup> This has especially been true in the case of the historical works authored by the English historians on the Muslim period in India. The English historians were biased and were committed to the imperialist policy of 'Divide and Rule'. Adherence to

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4. Kulkarni. G.T, Socio Economic change in the Deccan (14th to 17th century). A critique (with special reference to Maharashtra) Presidential address, Medieval Indian section, "Indian History congress". Diamond Jubilee (60th) Session, Calicut University, Calicut, December (28-30) (1999) P-1.

5. Dr. C.K. Kareem, Kerala under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan - Preface, Ernakulam (1973) P-1.

truth, therefore, is not a salient feature of Indian history that the English historians have bequeathed to the world.<sup>6</sup> Which ever may be the topic for research on Indian history the researcher will have to explore the past patiently and find out the truth so that “all our ancient history” should be something more than “accepted fiction”.

This dissertation is an attempt to study the medieval history of Ponnani, a modest endeavour to trace its glorious past focussing on the literary and cultural efflorescence under the Makhdums, the world renowned literary men and religious scholars, advent of the Portuguese and its after math, struggle against the Portuguese under the ‘Kunhalis’ and impact of the Mysorean invasion. With help of the sources, primary and secondary and personal observations thanks to my acquaintance with Ponnani as a student and teacher extending for over 18 years, a probe has been made into the political, economic, social and cultural

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6. Dr. C.K. Kareem, *Kerala under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan - Preface, Ernakulam P-1.*

conditions of Malabar in general and the part played by Ponnani as one of the ancient ports, as the second capital and naval head quarters of the Zamorins of Calicut and as a Muslim centre of learning and culture, in particular.

Malabar with its fascinating natural beauty claims a venerable antiquity in the history of Indian culture. There is a view that Malabar had close commercial contacts with North India even during the days of the Indus Valley Culture. From time immemorial she also had trade relation with near by and far off countries including Arabia, Syria, Egypt, China, Greece and Rome. Merchants from all these countries were attracted by the spices especially 'pepper'. Malabar had trade relations with the Romans as early as the 2nd century B.C. Pepper had become one of the 'necessities to quite a large circles in Rome'.<sup>7</sup> After the establishment of the Eastern Roman Empire (362 AD) there was a revival of trade and

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7. Gordon Childe - *What happened in History, England (1942)*  
P-225.

commercial contact with Malabar. The coins of emperor constantine were found from many parts of the Cera empire. A large number of Roman coins dated upto 491 A.D have been excavated from Kottayam, Cannanore, Tellicherry and other parts of the ancient Kingdom of Ezhimalai. Trade was carried on a large scale with the Arabs. Calicut on the eve of the arrival of Vasco-da-Gama was a great city conducting a flourishing trade with many countries around the world. Nicolo conti described Calicut as a 'noble emporium for the whole of India'. The English East India Company established the district of British Malabar distinguishing it from the princely states of Cochin and Travancore. Today there is no administrative unit called Malabar. But it exists in the minds of the people, claiming an identity common to all religions and castes.

The first chapter of the thesis is on the origin and growth of Ponnani and it is here that the author is confronted with myths, legends, rumours, false statements and half truths as the history of ancient Ponnani is shrouded in obscurity. No serious and

detailed study of this period has so far been made by historians, native or foreign, inspite of the fact that there are references to Ponnani in the records of the Cera kingdom and in the Greek work 'Periplus of the Erythrean Sea' by an unknown author belonging to the first century A.D. Ponnani is the southern most region of Malabar proper and is situated at the confluence of the Arabian sea and the Bharathapuzha. This unique geographical configuration gave a seperate entity to Ponnani quite different from the other parts of South India. Dr. Irfan Habib mentions Ponnani in his 'Atlas of the Mughal Empire' as a centre of flourishing trade. In his 'World Atlas' Hammond Medallian also refers Ponnani.<sup>8</sup> Marakkadavu was a minor port of Ponnani.

The origin of the place name 'Ponnani' is 'golden' in essence because it is reasonable to conclude that it was from 'Pon' 'nanayam' (Gold coin) or 'ArabiKasu'

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8. Hammond Medallian 'World Atlas', New york (1996) P-68.

which was first circulated in Ponnani by the Arab and Persian merchants that the name originated. Many historians together with William Logan and Nilakanta Sastri agree with this view. 'What the historian with all his common sense can do is 'to assess' rather than 'to conclude'.<sup>9</sup> Bharatha Puzha or Ponnani river is also called 'Ponvani' as the river looks golden in colour at sunset. Thirumanasseri Raja was the ruler of Ponnani. When his dominions were attacked by Valluvakkonathiri and Perumpadappu Chief Thirumansseri Raja requested the helps of the Zamorian promising to cede Ponnani to the Zamorin. His enemies were defeated and Ponnani came under the control of the Zamorin. The Zamorin made Ponnani his second capital and naval head quarters. This had far reaching consequences on the future history of Ponnani. Ponnani also became famous as one of the early Brahmin settlements.

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9. Gardener P., *The Nature of historical explanation*, London (1978)

P - 95.

The advent of Islam into Malabar is discussed here in detail. As the precise date of the introduction of Islam is unknown different views have been put forward. The Ceraman Perumal tradition has been subjected to much heated discussion. And it is reliable to believe that Islam entered Malabar during the days of the prophet and that the Ceraman Perumal tradition is a fact rather than a fiction. The evils that prevailed in the Hindu Society like untouchability, and slavery facilitated the conversion of the weaker sections of the society into Islam. As in the Pre-Islamic Arabia women in Malabar of the Pre-Islamic period were treated as chattels and with contempt. They did not enjoy any social status and could not have any share of the property of their husbands or their fathers. In a word no religion before Islam did anything for the betterment of women.<sup>10</sup> The Muslims received the new converts and treated them with equal status irrespective of their

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10. Manzoor Ahammed Hanifi, *"A Survey of Muslim institutions and Culture"* New Delhi (1992) P - 230.

former religion or class. The untiring work of the Sufis or Muslim saints also helped the spread of Islam. The Zamorins also encouraged the conversion of fishermen into Islam in order to man his ships. With the development of Ponnani as the naval headquarters of the Zamorins its coastal belt became thickly populated with the Muslims. Ponnani became the Cradle of Islam in Malabar and a centre of Islamic learning and culture. Although not itself under Muslim rule as a centre of the medieval commercial activity Malabar was the point from which the message of Islam radiated peacefully to the Far East and other non-Muslim regions.<sup>11</sup>

In the second chapter entitled 'the Makhdam family and the cultural and literary efflorescence' I have tried to keep no stone unturned to disclose the former greatness of Ponnani, a forgotten chapter as the students of Kerala history are concerned. Though Ponnani was well known as a centre of maritime trade

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11. Basham A.L. *A Cultural History of India*. London (1975) P - 464.

it was not famous as a centre of Islamic learning and culture before the 15th century. There is no reference to Ponnani in the travelogue of Ibn Battuta. It was in the second half of the 15th century that the Makhdum family who were Yemenites in origin, came and settled down in Ponnani. The Makhdums were learned scholars. On one side they propagated Islam and on the other did meritorious service in imparting religious knowledge and helped the moral and cultural uplift of the people of Malabar. Shaik Zainud-Din Makhdum I built the Big Juma Masjid (1510 A.D.). The history of Ponnani is very much linked with this mosque. For more than four centuries it turned out to be the centre of Islamic learning. The Madrasa system of education had its origin in Ponnani. No wonder Ponnani came to be styled as the 'Mini' or 'Little Mecca' or the 'Mecca of Malabar.'<sup>12</sup>

Most of the Makhdums were renowned scholars, literary men and polyglots. Shaik Zainud-Din I, Abdul Azeez Makhdum and Shaik Zainud-Din II were the

greatest among them and they contributed many literary works on various subjects. Shaik Zainud-Din II the author of *Thuhfatul-Mujahideen* and 'Father of Kerala History' richly deserves the title of the 'Thucydides of Kerala' for his scientific approach to history. The early Makhdums also contributed their share in the compilation of '*Hortus Malabaricus*' (Kerala Aramam) the famous Dutch work on the Flora of Kerala. They also helped to the perfection of the Arabic script 'Katafunnani', one of the least complicated and most perfect Arabic scripts. It is proper to say that the Makhdum period was the 'Golden Age' of Arabic literature in Kerala as the Elizabethan period was the GoldenAge of English literature and the age of Louis

XIV the Golden Age of French literature. It is also worth mentioning that the early Makhdums tried to instill the spirit of nationalism and patriotism in the minds of the Mappila Muslims of Malabar encouraging

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12. *The importance and sanctity of 'Mecca' in Islam can never be over estimated. But it is ofcourse an exaggeration to call Ponnani as the 'Little Mecca' or 'Mecca of Malabar'.*

them to rally behind Kunhali Marakkars in the 'Hundred years war' against the Portuguese.

With the landing of Vasco da Gama at Kappad began the Da Gama epoch of Western domination. Initially the domination affected Malabar more than any other parts of India and as such "Ponnani during the Portuguese period" is included as the third chapter of the present work. The information regarding the landing of Vasco da Gama at Kappad was passed on to Zamorin while the latter was at Ponnani.<sup>13</sup> The Portuguese came to India 'in search of Christians and spices'. And during the sixteenth century they enjoyed a monopoly of trade to the east-monopoly formally granted to them by the Fiat of Popacy.<sup>14</sup>

Malabar was under a political crisis at the time of the arrival of Portuguese as there had been rivalry

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13. Namboodiri N.M, Samoothiri Charithranthile Kanappuranqal, Sukapuram (1987) Preface V.

14. Roberts. P.E., Historiography of India, Jaipur (1995) Vol-1, P-15.

among the provincial chieftains for political supremacy. Zamorin was the most potential ruler among them. After the coming of the Portuguese the trade scenario in Malabar had been disrupted as the Muslim merchants were determined to fight tooth and nail against the intruders and prevent them from sharing the trade monopoly enjoyed by the Muslims. To create terror in the minds of the Muslim merchants of the Malabar coast the Portuguese carried on their capture of Arab vessels attack on Muslim settlements and harassment of traders. Ponnani Port was subjected to severe attack on 26th February 1525 and the Portuguese captured Ponnani. Zamorin entered into a treaty with them and the Portuguese were permitted to build a Fort at Ponnani. But this could not be materialised because of the stubborn resistance of the Muslims. The war that lasted for more than hundred years between the Portuguese and the Muslim under Kunhali Marakkars had far reaching consequences. The appearance of the Dutch on the Indian waters

towards the end of the 16th century marked the sure decline of the Portuguese power in India.<sup>15</sup>

The rise of the Kunhalis comes as a corollary to the advent of the Portuguese. The Kunhali Marakkars, Mappila admirals of the Zamorins sacrificed their lives and resources in defence of their country. The Zamorins ability in the constant attempt at dissipating Portuguese naval power in the Indian waters during eight long decades is primarily attributed to the efforts of hereditary Admirals, the Marakkars. Mohammed Kunhali Marakkar, the admiral of Calicut, a moplak by birth, was himself an experienced and valiant navigator. Kunhali enlisted a band of brave sturdy sea men and constructed a formidable base at Ponnani, half way between Cochin and Calicut. He had able deputies in Kutti and Pachu Marakkar.<sup>16</sup> But for the

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15. Shastry B.S. *Studies in Indo-Portuguese history* - Bangalore (1981) P-57.

16. Commander Sasidharan K. *Indian Navy*, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi (1965) P-56.

services of the Kunhalis the history of Malabar would have been entirely different or similar to that of Goa, Diu or Daman and the fate of Malayalam language similar to that of the Konkani language. The hundred years war fought by the Portuguese for their political and commercial supremacy ended in a colossal failure. The valiant deeds of the Mappila Muslims of Malabar under the Kunhalis, the heroes of the hundred years war are still fresh in the minds of the keralites irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

The origin of the terms 'Kunhali' and 'Marakkar', life, career and achievements of the four Kunhalis and their role in preserving the Malayalam language and culture are also discussed in detail in the fourth chapter.

The Mysorean conquest of Malabar left a more lasting impression on the political economic, social and cultural fields. The fifth chapter "Ponnani during Mysorean interlude" begins with the invasion of Malabar by Hyder Ali (1766) who wanted to enlarge his

domain and to establish his sway over this resourceful country with many natural harbours that were centres of world contact. Hyder Ali gained control of north Malabar and then easily occupied Calicut.<sup>17</sup> During the second invasion (1773) Hyder Ali stayed at Ponnani. At the time of Hyder's death Tipu Sultan, his illustrious son and successor was at Ponnani. Tipu Sultan carried on the work started by his father and brought the whole of Malabar under his sway. A brief account of the career and conquests of both Hyder and Tipu, the Anglo-Mysore wars and the novel administrative measures of Tipu Sultan, is also given. No other period in Indian history has produced such an over whelming abundance of source materials as the period of Mysorean rule. But unfortunate to say this period is most misunderstood and misrepresented. Not only the western historians but also Indian writers have not given due importance to Tipu's heroic struggle against the foreign invaders, his enlightened administration

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17. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Malabar*, Madras (1976)

and concern for the welfare of his subjects. Among his important administrative and economic achievements were: steps to import European technology through French engineers, usage of water power for driving machinery, establishment of sericulture in Mysore, creation, of a large state trading company with its own ships and factories in the Persian Gulf to open trade with West Asia and construction of a large network of roads to promote trade and travel reminding the saying that "all roads lead to Rome". Tipu projected and in a greater part finished an extensive chain of roads that connected all principal places in Malabar and pervaded even the wildest part of the country. With in a period of six years (1784-90) thousand of miles of roads were constructed through out Malabar. Tipu sultan avoided the middle men who exploited the peasants. He started several ware houses to make them distributing centres so as to help the local traders to send goods in the villages and interior parts.<sup>18</sup>

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18. Gopal. M.J, *Tipu Sultan's Mysore - an economic study*, Bombay (1971) P.20.

Most of the English historians have branded Tipu Sultan as a monster of cruelty and a symbol of bigotry. The English taxed their ingenuity heavily in an attempt to create records that could ensure for their better enemy the kind of reputation they wanted him to have. But at the same time all the historians agree on one point about Tipu Sultan, that he was free from all prevailing vices of his time. Tipu Sultan had neither been a cruel ruler nor a religious bigot. He was generous made generous grants to different temples and had many Hindus as his employees. Makenzie manuscript contains an endowment created by Tipu Sultan for the purpose of giving financial help to get poor unmarried girls married.<sup>19</sup> It is proper to say that Tipu Sultan laid the foundation of a strong, stable and welfare government upon which the super structure was built by the later rulers. Impact of the Mysorean invasion is discussed elsewhere in detail. The treaty of Seringapatam (1792) which brought the 4th Anglo-

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19. Mohibbul Hassan Khan, *History of Tippu Sultan*, Bombay, (1951) P.373.

Mysore war to an end sounded the death Knell of Mysorean rule over Malabar. Tipu Sultan had to part with Malabar to the British. Ponnani became a part of British Malabar. It brought about the realisation of a long cherished desire of the English East India Company to master the ports on the western coast of South India and to establish the trade monopoly in the most lucrative business in spices.

Documents to compose an unbroken history of medieval Kerala are insufficient. No serious and detailed study of this period has been made so far. So the study of medieval Kerala is beset with problems. Narratives and travelogues dealing with the ancient and medieval Kerala are not much dependable. The works of Shaik Zainud-Din, William Logan or Charles Innes are neither purely historical nor comprehensive. In the absence of reliable original sources a researcher has to depend much upon secondary sources which often contradicts one another. The coastal towns of South India inclusive of Ponnani had been centres of attraction for European merchants. As an early Muslim

settlement, as a seat of Islamic learning and as the second capital and naval head quarters of the Zamorins Ponnani rose into prominence. But due importance has not been given to this blessed land by historians either indigenous or foreign. Every where facts and fiction go together and it is quite troublesome to separate facts from fiction. The inscriptions on the walls of the Big Juma Masjid were plastered with cement and could not be read properly. The authorities of the different mosques of Ponnani were reluctant to show the records kept in the respective mosques. Means are less and limitations more so that I can not claim this to be a capital work sufficient enough to fill up a corner of the medieval history of Malabar. What is intended is an unbiased and systematic study of medieval Ponnani with a careful appraisal.

The sources referred to the present work are, letters official and secret, diplomatic reports, collectorate files, records kept at the mosques and temples, inscriptions and original narratives. As supplementary to these secondary works of well known

authors are also used. Primary sources are classified into two viz. original unpublished and published documents and contemporary works.

From the National Archives of India, New Delhi we get some valuable information about Tipu Sultan.

Secret and Political proceedings 26th August 25th September 1789. SN. 96. P.1849.

The Records at Tamil Nadu Archives, Chennai throw light on Tellicherry consultation. 1725-51. Vol. IXX- (Chennai 1930-36).

The State Archives, Trivandrum provides some important informations about Kunhali Marakkars and Tipu Sultan. (1) List V. First series Dis No.90 special privileges given to Marakkars (2) List XV First series Expulsion of some criminals from Cochin who escaped from Tipu's territory, kept at the state Archives Trivandrum.

The Inam Registers in V Folio Volumes of Kozhikode Collectorate serve as a source of information

regarding the rent free lands donated to various temples and mosques in Malabar and Cochin by Tipu Sultan and helps an impartial writer to come to the conclusion that Tipu was not a religious bigot.

The Thrikkavu temple is the greatest and most ancient temple in Ponnani. This is considered to be one among the 108 temples built by Lord Parasurama. Records of Thrikkavu temple mention the coming of Brahmins to Ponnani and of the close interaction between the Brahmins of Sukapuram and Thrikkavu.

The Records kept at Thottunga Palli, the first Juma Masjid in Ponnani provide evidences to the fact that Farid Auliya the well known disciple of Shaik Mohiyuddin Abdul Khader Jelani coming from Khurasan built this mosque at Thottunga (Thottungal Palli). Farid Auliya came to Ponnani to pay homage to the renowned Sufi Shaik Uthan Moinuddin Auliya who lay buried at Ponnani. The Manam Kandathu Tharavadu one of the aristocratic families of Ponnani gave financial assistance for the construction of this

mosque. A few lines about the mosque written by renowned scholar Umar Khadi are given in the appendix.

We don't get the exact date of the construction of the Big Juma Masjid from the documents available with the mosque but help to understand something about the socio-religious and cultural history of Ponnani. William Logan states in his Malabar Manual that this mosque was built in 1510 A.D. ie, three years before the death of Shaik Zainud-Din under whose initiative the Big Juma Masjid was built and who did actually supervise the construction. Among the documents are the Facsimile of Prophet Mohammed and the list of Makhdums not in the Chronological order. Plastered inscriptions of the Ziyarath Mosque where Syed Mohammed ibnu Ibrahim, one of the early muslim missionaries was burried, give some clue with regard to the early Islamic missionaries. This mosque became a centre of pilgrimage where people perform Ziyarath and hence it became known as Ziyarath Mosque.

The Maunathul Islam Sabha founded in 1900 is bent up on helping the deserving converts, widows and orphans and have a number of educational institutions at its credit. The sabha work for the moral and cultural uplift of the Muslims in and around Ponnani. It is a treasure house of information mainly on the modern period. Some records deal with the history of medieval Ponnani.

A very ancient and hitherto unpublished manuscript found out from Madayi throws light on the conversion of Ceraman Perumal and the spread of Islam in Kerala. This manuscript (Arabic) was donated to the Juma Masjid, Madayi by Shifa Umma Beevi, Valapattanam. The Misan stones at various places in Malabar dated Hijra 38, 56, 61 and 87 serve to confirm the fact that Islam was introduced into Malabar during the time of Prophet Mohammed. Personal observations by the author visiting the important Muslim centres like Madayi, Peringadi and Kunhipalli (Near Mahe) Kozhikode and Kodungallur besides Ponnani, were also helpful for the preparation of this work.

Several contemporary works were also highly useful to the study of the period under review. Charles Stuart's A description catalogue of the oriental library of Tippoo Sultan published in 1809 deals with the life and career of Tipu Sultan but is not fully dependable. A description of South East Africa and Malabar of Duarate Barbosa gives an idea about the early trade contact of Malabar.

In his life of Hyder Ali Francis Robson narrates the history of Mysore under Haider. This work is also helpful to understand more about the life and career of Haider Ali.

A New Account of East Indies and The Land of Perumals by A. Hamilton and Francis Day respectively throws light on medieval history, a period on which authentic works are rare.

M.M.D.L.T's History of Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan translated by prince Gholam Mohammed and Kirmani and Meer Hussain AliKhan's History of the Reign of Tippu Sultan translated by W. Miles give

authentic accounts of Mysore under Haider and Tipu Sultan. The Fath hul Mubeen authored by Khadi Mohammed describes the atrocities of the Portuguese on the Coast of Malabar and the Chaliyam war.

Shaik Zainud-Din Makhdum I wrote his famous poem Tahreed Ahlil Eman Ala Jihadi Abdathi Sulban picturing the discription of the trade scenario of Malabar with the coming of the Portuguese and warning the Mappila Muslims against the brutality of the Portuguese. The author calls for a Jihad (holy war) against the foreigners. The book was translated into Malayalam by Prof. V. Mohammed but remains unpublished.

The Thuhfat-ul Mujahideen Fi Baazi akhbari al-Burthuqaliyyin (an offering to the holy warriors in respect of a brief account of the Portuguese) is the first known historical work on the history of Kerala. The Thuhfatul Mujahideen acclaimed as one of the best historical treatises has been authored by Shaik Zainud-Din the 'Father of Kerala History'. The work has been

translated into several languages and in to English by Major Rowlandon and S. Mohammed Hussayn Nainar. Though the book gives greater importance to the idea of Jihad and is fiery in that respect Shaik Zainud-Din provess himself to be a true historian with an objective out look and gives an illuminating account of medieval Kerala's polity, society and culture. The last part of the book deals with the advent of the Portuguese, their arrogance and brutality and the treaties between Zamorin and Portuguese. More than any other works Tuhfat-ul Mujahideen is much dependable and helpful as an authentic work on the history of medieval Kerala. There were also minor works contributed by Abdul Azeez Makhdum and his immediate successors which give valuable data on the history medieval Ponnani.

Secondary sources for a study on medieval Ponnani are rather sufficient. The Keralolpathi and Keralamahatmyam are mainly based on legends. The Keralapazhama of Dr. Herman Gundert is a critical analysis of the Kerala-Portuguese relations from 1498 to 1531.

The Malabar Manual of William Logan is an elaborate study based on the information available to him and his personal observations. He compiled the district manual called Malabar in accordance with the Imperial Gazetteer Scheme of the British empire in India. Abul Hais's India during the Muslim Rule deals with the advent of Islam and the history of Muslim rule in India. He finds fault with the medieval historians for their indifference to the geographical, social and cultural aspects when writing historical works.

While the Mappila Charithra Sakalangal of Prof. Abdu Rahiman K.V. gives a general account of Ponnani with an appendix on 'Kerala in Arabic literature', Abul Hasan Moulavi's Ponnani Makhdum Charithram concentrates on the history of Makhdums.

M. Abdul Samad's "Islam in Kerala, groups and Movements in the 20th century" describes certain aspects of Islamic learning in Ponnani and the development of Arabi-Malayalam literature. The Muslim Monuments in Kerala by V.A. Ahmed Kabeer

introduces the Muslim monuments throwing light on the spread of Islam in Kerala.

C.N. Ahamed Moulavi and K.K. Mohammed Abdul Kareem wrote the Glorious Mappila Heritage (Mahathaya Mappila Sahithya Parambaryam) in which they assess the literary heritage of Ponnani, the 'Little Mecca'.

Syed Amir Ali's 'Spirit of Islam' deals with Islam and its message while Sufism an account of the Mystics of Islam by A.J. Arberry explains Sufism and the services of Muslim saints.

Kerala Muslims written by Asgher Ali Engineer gives an account of the life and occupation of the Muslims in Kerala. He edited another work Sufism and Communal harmony glorifying Sufims or Muslim mysticism.

One of the latest works of Ashin Das Gupta The World of Indian Ocean Merchants 1500-1800 Published in 2001 traces the early Muslim trade centres and their

connections with the Zamorins where as Gordon Childe's famous work What happened in History gives a fascinating account of Western trade contacts with India.

Sankunny Menon wrote the History of Travancore. He represents the first generation of English educated Indian historian of Kerala. His language is English but by method he is a traditional historian. His son K.P. Padmanabha Menon contributed his work History of Kerala.

Malabar and Portuguese, India and Indian Ocean, Asia and Western Dominance, Freedom movement in Kerala and A History of Kerala, 1498-1801 are some of the famous works authored by K.M. Panikkar a well known historian. These books are much helpful as they deal with Kerala's trade relations with the Europeans and the advent of the Portuguese and consequent western dominance over Asia.

K.V. Krishna Iyer included indigenous source materials and palace records of the Zamorins, in his

Zamorins of Calicut and A History of Kerala. The Samoothiri Charithrathile Kanappurangal of Namboodiri N.M. throws light on the cultural activities of the Kingdom of Calicut in the medieval times. Vellayude Charithram is another work by the same author.

Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai makes a study of the inscriptions of Kerala in his studies in Kerala History. His chief achievement is the identification of the cera kingdom of the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries with the help of inscriptions and historical literature. It is proper to say that he achieved its reconstruction chronologically and politically.

A Survey of Kerala History by A. Sreedharan Menon is mainly based on the works of Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai and is perhaps the first book to state the historical events of Kerala Chronologically. A History of India by the same author in three volumes dealing with the ancient, medieval and modern periods is a comprehensive work on Indian history. His Kerala

History and its makers sketches the life and career of many important personalities who created history, inclusive of Shaik Zainud-Din, Vasco da Gama and Tipu Sultan and as such proved helpful to the preparation of this thesis. Dr. A.P. Ibrahim Kunju's Studies in Medieval Kerala History, Mappila Muslims of Kerala and Mysore Kerala relations in the 18th century are also authentic works worth to be referred. Dr. C.K. Kareem through his works what happened in Indian History, Kerala under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, Kerala and culture an introduction and Kerala Muslim Charithram Statistical Directory Vol I, II & III shows himself to be a reformist historian bent up on purifying the much distorted history of India and Kerala. As such his works are interesting to read and proved very helpful to the preparation of this work.

An Atlas of the Mughal Empire by Irfan Habib and World Atlas by Hammond Medallian give valuable information about Ponnani and Malabar.

O.K. Nambiar in his The Kunjalis Admirals of Calicut and Portuguese pirates and Indian sea men gives a vivid picture of the hundred years war, the cruel atrocities of the Portuguese and the valiant deeds of the Kunhalis, admirals of the Zamorins. Perhaps no other Indian historians have given so much credit to the Kunhalis and their deputies in the extinction of Portuguese power from Malabar. His inspiring works are worth to be referred for the study of the Portuguese period.

Dr. K.K.N. Kurup's Ali Rajas of Cannanore is on the Arakkal family the only Muslim ruling dynasty in Kerala and their relations with the southern rulers. William Logan is his another important work. K.K.N. Kurup and K.M. Mathew wrote a famous work, Native resistance against the Portuguese: The saga of Kunjali Marakkars which throws light on hundred years war.

The cultural symbiosis in Kerala of Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan is distinct from the other works on Kerala history. His important research papers have been

collected and published like the Reinterpretations in South Indian History, Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala, Foundations of South Indian Society and culture and Perumals of Kerala. These works were of great help to the preparation of the present work. Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan strongly supports the Ceraman tradition that Ceraman Perumal had been converted into Islam. He also co-authored certain research papers with Dr. Kesavan Veluthat and they jointly contributed four chapters in part I of Kerala through the Ages.

Roland E. Miller's Mappila Muslims of Kerala - a study in Islamic trends provides more information than any other contemporary works on the history of Mappila Muslims. The book Islam and Muslim History in South East Asia of Francis Robinson throws light on the history of Ponnani of the Makhdum Period. Charles Innes' Malabar gives a description of the history of Malabar of the medieval times, its geographical conditions and flora and fauna. The Kerala Charithram published by the Kerala History Association, Kerala

Vijnana Kosam published by the Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangam and some Symposia papers published by the Indian History congress render much service to the students of Kerala history. Kerala Charithram by Dr. M.R. Raghava Warriar and Dr. P.M. Rajan Gurukkal concentrates on the social and cultural aspects of Kerala History.

Dr. S.M. Mohammed Koya's Mappilas of Malabar helps to have a peep into the cultural activities of the Muslims of Malabar.

Shamsulla Qadiri's Pracheena Malabar translated by V. Abdul Quayyum and Kerala Muslim Charithram of P.A. Syed Mohammed provide valuable information on the period under review. The Mappilas of Malabar 1498-1922 of Stephen Frederic Dale is mainly a discussion on the views of other historians on the same subject.

H. Dodwell's Cmbridge History of India and A. Das Gupta's Malabar in Asian trade deal with western trade contact with Malabar.

Mohammed Moinuddin, Chairman of Tipu Sultan Research Institute and Museum at Bangalore recently published a work with the title Sun set at Sriranga Patanam in which the author pictures Tipu Sultan in beautiful colours but with the accusation that Tipu gave his sovereignty a religious flavour. Casper Correa's the Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama is a work on the activities of the Portuguese in Malabar.

There are references to the early trade contact between Rome and Malabar in Gibbons much renowned Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Ibn Batuta's Travelogue translated from an abridged M.S.S. by S. Lee Murray and Karl Marx's Notes on Indian History are books worth mentioning to be referred.

The Population Geography of the Muslims of India written by Ahammed Siddiqui and the Arab Geographers knowledge of South India are also helpful to the topic under review. Nilakantasastri's A History of South India, I.H. Qureishis' The Muslim Community of the Indo - Pakistan sub continent and Tharachand's

Influence of Islam on Indian Culture are also consulted for reference. The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India by E.H. Warmington provides an account of the trade contact between Malabar and the Roman empire while the Rise of Portuguese Power in India by R.S. Whiteway deals with Indo-Portuguese relations after the coming of Vasco da Gama to Calicut. Several other works were also referred for the preparation of the present work.

**Method of Study:-** All the available books, primary and secondary were carefully read and assessed. Places of historical importance in and around Ponnani were visited and monuments and inscriptions were examined learned old men who comes in the tradition of old important families were interviewed and doubts were cleared. Discussions on historical records were made with men of preeminence like Late C.N. Ahammed Moulavi, Prof. K.V. Abdu Rahiman, Late. E.K. Imbichi Bava, Adv. Koladi Govindankutty, Imbidhikoya Thangal, Prof. A.V. Moideen Kutty, Kunhadukutty Musaliyar,

Krishnavarier, Krishankurup and others. The files, charts and maps available from the revenue department were studied.

On the basis of the above mentioned sources and methods the present study "The Rise and Growth of Ponnani from 1498 AD - 1792 AD" is prepared. Some important historical charts, manuscripts and photos are included in the appendix.

# ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF PONNANI

Ammad Kunnath “The rise and growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D. To 1792 A.D.” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut

Origin and growth of Ponnani

## CHAPTER 1

### ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF PONNANI

The western coast of South India known as Malabar, the homeland of the Mappilas, is bordered by the westernghat mountains on the east and the Arabian sea on the west. Her openness to the sea provided Malabar<sup>1</sup> with a maritime tradition. From ancient times her western coastal towns had trade contacts with the phoenicians, Greeks, Persians and the Arabs as well as with the Chinese in the east.<sup>2</sup> The Arabs came here 'years ahead of Alexander's military expedition'<sup>3</sup>. They called this land as 'Beladeful ful'<sup>4</sup> and carried on trade through the Persian Gulf and the Arabian sea.

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1. *The Arab geographer yaqut (1179-1229) was the first to call the region streteching from the northern landmark of mt. Deli to cape comorin as 'Malabar'.*
  2. *Hourani, G.F Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean, Princeton, 1951. P.21*
  3. *Syed Ameer Ali, the spirit of Islam, Delhi (1978) PP-9,10.*
  4. "Beladeful ful" means 'land of pepper'.

From the references in the 'Old Testament' it is understood that Malabar had trade contacts with ancient Egypt during the period of David and Solomon<sup>5</sup>. Hippocrates, the Greek physician and 'Father of modern medicine' called pepper as 'Indian drug'. Historians and archaeologists give evidence to the fact that merchant ships from the ports on the Red sea and Persian Gulf made frequent visits to the Malabar coast during the 10th and 9th century B.C. A large number of Roman coins from B.C 30 to A.D.547 have been found out from different parts of Kerala mainly from Kottayam, Thrissur and Kannur. This is an evidence to the extent of trade carried on between Kerala and the Roman empire.

The early foreign contact of Malabar is connected with spice trade. The hill products like pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, teakwood etc. attracted the

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5. *Shamsulla Qadiri, Pracheena Malabar, (trans) Abdul Qayyum V, Calicut (1954) PP.11,12.*

Europeans also. Pepper the 'black gold' was a favourite merchandise for foreign traders though a systematic cultivation of it was not undertaken by the people of Malabar. Qasveeni, the Arab traveller points out that pepper grew as a wild climber and was not planted by anybody.<sup>6</sup> With the growth of trade many seaports arose on the western coast. They are Naoura, Tyndis, Musiris, Nelkinda and Bakare.<sup>7</sup> Since the 16th century, Malabar the mysterious land of spices had been exploited by successive European Companies and this changed radically the pattern of trade here.

Situated at the confluence of the Arabian sea and the Bharathapuzha Ponnani is the southern most region of Malabar proper and at one time comprised of the three ancient <sup>~</sup>nadus of Vettanad, Kuttanad and Chavakkad and a portion of Cheranad. Ponnani has a

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6. Muhammed Hussain Nainar. S, Arab geographers knowledge of South India, Madras (1942) P.202.

7. Gopala Krishnan. P.K, Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram, Kerala Bhasha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram (1974) P.155.

peculiar geographical configuration. Upwards sixty miles in length and containing in its limits nearly two fifths of the whole seaboard of Malabar, at its widest part it does not extend in land for more than eighteen miles, and in the south tails of in to a narrow strip of land thirty miles long, but rarely more than five broad<sup>8</sup>. The Bharathapuzha or Ponnani river is the only river but an unbroken line of creeks backwaters and canals provide facilities for travel and transportation. Once Ponnani was the most closely cultivated and most thickly populated tract in Malabar. As many as 40 percent of the inhabitants were Mappilas. There were more Namboodiri 'Illams' than in any other parts of Malabar and the Christian Church was well established by the time Islam reached Ponnani.

In the absence of reliable historical accounts it is difficult to extract the history of Ponnani from

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8. Innes Charles Alexander, *Malabar (Gazeteer) Thiruvananthapuram (1977) P.476*. Here Innes gives a discription of the geographical conditions of Ponnani. The long coastal regions and the presence of river Bharathapuzha made her a flourishing centre of trade.

legends and myths. It is believed that the origin of this land is due to the receding of sea. Historians differ widely on the origin of the place name. Of the different views more authentic is that it was from 'Pon-nanayam'<sup>9</sup> called 'Arabikasu'<sup>10</sup> which was first circulated in Ponnani by the Arab and Persian merchant, that the name originated<sup>11</sup>. In his Malabar Manual William Logan agrees with this view. Some attribute the origin to 'Ponvani'<sup>12</sup> which is the name of the Ponnani river. As the river looks golden in colour at sunset it got the name 'Ponvani'. The word 'vani' in Tamil means river. So probably from Pon-vani originated the name Ponnani. Another version with regard to the derivation

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9. *'Pon-nanayam' means gold coin.*

10. *'Arabikasu = Gold coin circulated by the Arab merchants.*

11. *'Pon-nanayam' or 'Arabikasu' was first circulated in the ports of Ponnani by the Arab and Persian merchants who possessed the right to trade between India and the west before the discovery of the sea route to India by the Portuguese. William Logan, Malabar manual. Vol.II Madras (1957) Appendix-21.*

12. *'Ponvani' means golden river*

of the name is related to Azhavancherry Lord's 'Pon-ana'<sup>13</sup> which was used to be taken through this place and hence the name Ponnani.<sup>14</sup>

There is also a view that it was from 'Ponnu-Thamburan' one of the Bhrahmin Naduvazhis or local chiefs under Thirumanasseri Raja that Ponnani got its name. However, these views have little historical importance and it is very difficult to find out the truth.<sup>15</sup>

There are references to the port of Tyndis in the 'Periplus of the Erythrean sea'<sup>16</sup> the Greek work belonging to the first century A.D. Ponnani port was known as Tyndis.<sup>17</sup> There are also references to

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13. 'Pon-ana' means golden elephant.

14. Viswa vijnana Kosam. vol. VIII. Kottayam (1972) P.566.

15. AbduRahiman. K. V. Mappila Charithra Sakalanga, Choondal (1998) P.96. He is of the opinion that Ponnani might have got its name from, "Ponnan", Ponnayanam' or 'Ponnu Thamburan'.

16. The 'periplus of the Erythrean sea', a Greek work by an unknown author gives the earliest account of the flourishing ports and maritime activities of the people of peninsular India.

17. Nilakanta Shastri A. A History of South India, Madras (1966) P.137.

ponnani in the records of the cera kingdom which originated from the Tamil kingdom. The cera territory included the present Kerala State and Kanyakumari district and it extended sometimes into the kongu country. Trade with western countries stimulated economic development of the cera country. The cera kingdom comprised of five nadus, Poozhinadu extending from Agalappuzha to the north of Ponnani river, Kudam the western nadu extending from Ponnani to the southern mouth of the Periyar river, Kuttanadu, Karkanadu and venadu<sup>18</sup>. Calicut and Ponnani were the foremost trading centres of Zamorins.<sup>19</sup> Dr. Irfan Habib mentions Ponnani of the 15th and 16th centuries as a flourishing port in his work, 'An Atlas of the Mughal Empire'<sup>20</sup>. There was also a minor port in Ponnani at

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18. Vincent A Smith, The Early History of India, Oxford (1924) P.476.

19. Das Gupta. A, Malabar in Asian Trade 1740-1800, Cambridge University (1967), P.14.

20. Irfan Habib, An Atlas of the Mughal Empire, Delhi (1982) P.16 (A&B).

Marakkadavu. Timber export was the main business carried on here. The name Marakkadavu was attributed to this place because of the timber yard attached to the port. Marakkadavu still retains the name.

Trikkavu is a place in the eastern part of Ponnani in Pallappuram Amsom which had from very early times been dominated by the Bhrahmins.<sup>21</sup> After the settlement of a group of Bhrahmins on invitation by Chandrangan, son of Mayooravarma, Lord Parasurama brought sixty four Brahmin families to Kerala. One of these families settled at Sukapuram near Edapal. A sub division of this family lived at Trikkavu and Trikkavu grew up as a cultural centre of the Brahmins. The temple at Trikkavu dedicated to Durga Bhagvathi is considered to have been founded by Lord Parasurama.<sup>22</sup>

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21. William Logan, Malabar Manual Vol.II, (1951) Appendix-21.

22. *Ibid.* Appendi x-21.

There is another ancient temple at Sukapuram, a place 18Kms away from Trikkavu. This temple was also founded by Lord Parasurama who was specially attached to the Panniyur Namboodiri Brahmin family. The Brahmins of Sukapuram had close interaction with the Namboodiris of Trikkavu.<sup>23</sup> After the coming of the Brahmins, some times a regular balance was struck as in Malabar where the Nair caste originates from mother of the local matriarchal population by fathers of patriarchal Namboodiri Brahmin caste. Both group retain their seperate institution.<sup>24</sup> Gradually the matriarchal system was followed by the Mappila muslims also.

The coming of the Brahmins influenced the social set up of ancient Kerala. Namboodiris occupied a high status in the society. The position of women declined.

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23. *Records of Trikkavu temple.*

24. *Kosambi D.D. The culture and civilization of Ancient India Historical outline, New Delhi (1982) P.172.*

The ruler of Ponnani was Thirumanasseri Raja who was one of the leaders of the Panniyur faction. His dominions were attacked by Valluvakonathiri and Perumpadappu Chief belonging to the Chovaram faction. Thirumanasseri Raja approached the zamorin and the Chief of 'Vettal'<sup>25</sup> for assistance. He also promised to cede Ponnani to the zamorin as a reward for the help rendered to him in this hour of need.<sup>26</sup> Thus Ponnani came under the Zamorin which he soon made his second capital and naval centre. Gradually, the Zamorins territory extended from Cannanore to Quilon in 13th century A.D.<sup>27</sup>

The advent of Islam forms another phase in the history of Ponnani and is closely related to the socio-economic and cultural aspects. Before the coming of

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25. 'Vettal'- A man who does the act of cutting the limbs (Vettunna Al).

26. Sreedhara Menon A. A Survey of Kerala History, Kottayam (1976) PP.175-176.

27. Panikkar. K.M, Malabar and Portuguese, Bombay (1929) P.11.

Islam in Malabar the Arab merchants married Malabar women and stayed here waiting for the monsoon. The social custom during the pre-islamic period in Kerala was not against such marriages and polygamy was prevalent both in Arabia and Malabar.<sup>28</sup> The spice trade became the monopoly of the Arabs during the 6th century A.D and the Arabs succeeded in developing a strong commercial bond with Malabar.<sup>29</sup> Cranganore, Ponnani and Beypore were the important ports during this period.

Early history of the introduction and spread of Islam in Malabar is shrouded in obscurity. It is not easy to present a well connected and continuous account of the progress of the faith from the earliest times. The materials we have to deal with are occasional and they are frequently intriguing references

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28. Houstama M. Othed. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* Vol.III, Tramden Lachen (1913) P.P. 774-776.

29. Hourani. G.F. *Arab sea faring in Indian Ocean*, Princeton, 1951, P.61.

to the local mythological writings such as 'Keralolpathi', 'Kerala Pazhama' etc. The writings of foreign travellers and traders also throw some incidental light on the advent of the new faith in Kerala. The appearance and progress of Islam in this region do not appear to have been clear marked and steady.

The precise date of the advent of Islam in to Malabar is not known. It is more a matter of controversy than agreement among historians past or present.<sup>30</sup> During the mission of the prophet in Arabia in the first decade of the 7th century A.D. many pagan Arabs had settled on the coast of South India for purpose of trade. Some of the Arab traders might have accepted Islam and brought it to Kerala during the time of the prophet. Qureshi supports this view when he says that Islam therefore entered with in a few years of

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30. Prof. Syed Mohideen Shah, *Islam in Kerala*, Thrissur (1974) P-1. *By whom, when and how Islam was first introduced in to Kerala is still a matter of controversy.*

the proclamation by the prophet of his mission.<sup>31</sup> Circumstantial evidence lead one to believe that the faith of Islam spread in Kerala in the days of the prophet.

Another view regarding the introduction of Islam to Malabar is that the early muslim rulers of Arabia made efforts in a peaceful way to spread their faith especially during the period of the 'Pious caliphs'<sup>32</sup> of Madina and the umayyad caliphs of Damascus. As the Malabar coast had trade relations with the Arabian countries the early caliphs had their eyes fixed on India as the legitimate field for the propagation of 'faith'. The enthusiasm shown by the muslim merchants from Arabia together with the religious fervour of the caliphs helped to the spread of Islam in Malabar during the days of the pious caliphate.

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31. *Qurashi. I.H. The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan Sub continent, Newyork (1947) P.P. 11, 12.*

32. *Caliph Abu Bekr, Umer, Usman and Ali were the pious caliphs.*

There is also a view that Islam made its way to Kerala during the 8th century. In the District Gazatteers of Ernakulam, Quilon and Kozhikode Prof. Sreedhara Menon upholds this<sup>s</sup> view<sup>33</sup>. It is assumed that the first batch of Muslims reached Kerala as early as 712.A.D. They also built mosques and gradually made converts to Islam. The muslims respected the customs and usages of the country and maintained the most cordial relations with the native population. The coastal regions of Malabar turned out to be fertile ground for the new faith.

The popular view about the introduction and spread of Islam in the early period is related with the conversion of Ceraman Perumal, the last cera emperor, to Islam. No discussion on the advent of Islam in Kerala is complete with out reference to the Ceraman Perumal tradition which is a live tradition in Kerala history.

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33. Sreedhara Menon. A., *Ernakulam Gazatteer*. P.P.260,261.

Ceraman Perumal is the eponymous hero of nearly every Malabar tradition.<sup>34</sup>

The tradition related to the conversion of Ceraman Perumal to Islam is as follows. A party of Muslim Faqirs and Shaikhs arrived at Kondungallur intent on a pilgrimage to the foot print of Adam in Ceylon. Ceraman Perumal entertained them and made enquiries of them. The Shaik, leader of the party explained to the King about prophet Mohammed and Islam and the popularity that the prophet and the new religion gained in Arabia. The King believed them and consented that, he would go with them to Mecca, after their pilgrimage to the foot print of Adam. When they returned from Ceylon, Perumal accompanied them

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34. Innes Charles Alexander, Malabar, Trivandrum (1951) P.38.

*The tradition of Ceraman Perumal is so strong in Malabar that there must be some foundation of fact for the story. The last of the Perumals whose memory is still green in the minds of the common people, both Hindu and Muhammedan was Ceraman Perumal who ruled over Kerala for 36 years to the great content of the people and was a wise and liberal king. Finally he became a convert to Islam.*

secretly. He went to Jiddah, met the prophet, embraced Islam and accepted the name Thajudheen. He returned to Kerala with the ambition of Propagating Islam. On his way back at Sahr Muqalla he fell seriously ill. He asked his fellow men to proceed and propagate the new faith. Inorder to obtain help from the rulers he gave introductory letters to them. He passed away at Sahr.<sup>35</sup> A poem inscribed in Arabic script, on a wooden piece was found out from Arakkal palace which says that ceraman Perumal, on his return from Mecca died on the way and that he had accepted the name Thajudheen. A rare manuscript found from Arakkal palace also describes Ceraman Perumal's visit to Mecca and conversion to Islam.<sup>36</sup> The legend of Ceraman Perumal is explained in the 'Rihalathul Mulook' written by umar ibn Muhammed Suharvardi, that the

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35. *Syed Muhammed P.A, Kerala Muslim Charithram, Kozhikode, (1988) P.58.*

36. *Kerala Muslim Directory (1960) P-110.*

conversion of a King of Kerala was due to the influence of the Raja of Mahaldeep who had business relations with the muslim countries of the middle east and who was friendly with Ceraman Perumal.

Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan in his doctoral thesis holds the view that the last ruler of the second Cera Empire embraced Islam. There is no reason to reject the tradition that the last cera king (Rama Varma) embraced Islam and went to Mecca since it finds place not only in Muslim chronicles but also in Hindu Brahminical Chronicles like the Keralolpathi which need not be expected to concoct such a tale which in no way serves to enhance the prestige or interests of the Brahmin or Hindu population.<sup>37</sup> According to P.K. Gopala Krishnan, during a period in which Hinduism had not become so strong and Jainism and Budhism had begun to decline and when there had been hatred and rivalry among the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain population the possibility of Ceraman Perumal's

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37. Narayanan. M.G.S, *Perumals of Kerala*, Calicut (1996) P. 118.

conversion to Islam a religion of social equality and universal brotherhood can not be ignored as unlikely.<sup>38</sup>

But the historicity of the Ceraman Perumal legend is questioned for want of evidence. Many reject this legend on the ground that the Christian, Muslim and Chinese travellers who visited Kerala during the period from 9th to 15th century have not mentioned this legend in their writings. C.A. Innes quotes a story from the travelogue of Ibn Battuta, about the conversion of a King of Dadkanan (Baliapattam). When Ibn Battuta visited here the ruler was an infidel whose grand father, who had become Muhammedan, built the mosque and made the pond. The cause of grand father's receiving Islamism was a tree over which he had built the mosque"<sup>39</sup> However, one can not doubt the

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38. Gopalakrishnan. P.K, "Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram", Kerala Basha Institute, Thiruvananthapuram (1974) P.298.

39. Ibn Battuta 'Travels' translated from an abridged M.S.S by S. Lee Murray (1829), P.167 - Quoted in C.A. Innes, Op.cit., P.426. Battuta says that, the tree is a great wonder, its leaves are green and like those the fig, except only that they are soft. The tree is called "Darakht-i-Shahadat" the tree of testimony. The word "darakht' means tree and 'Sahadat' testimony.

reliability of an event simply because it is not mentioned by some writers. Ceraman Perumal, a wise and liberal king who reigned over Kerala for long thirty six years to the great content of the people, might have been fed up with the religious disharmony and prevalence of Social evils. It is reasonable than absurd to believe the conversion of Ceraman Perumal to a religion that proclaims the unity and oneness of god and upholds universal brotherhood and social equality. Rowlandson says that Muslim Arabs first settled on the Malabar coast at the end of the 7th century<sup>40</sup>. Dr. C.K. Kareem also agrees with this view when he says that during the 7th century A.D, the period of prophet Muhammed Islam came to Kerala.<sup>41</sup> Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan Nair also opines that Islam reached Kerala in Hijra first century itself.<sup>42</sup>

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40. Shaik Zainud-Din, *Thuhfatul-Mujahideen*, (trans) Rowlandson, London (1833) Preface ii.

41. Kareem. C.K, *What happened in Indian History*, Cochin (1971) P.11.

42. Gopalan Nair. C, *Diwan Bahadur, Keralathile Mappilamar*, Mangalore (1917) P.29.

The first Mohammedan missionary Malik Ibn Dinar, a resident of Basra reached Kerala with his team. He brought 13 marbles from Mecca which later became the foundation stones of thirteen mosques in Kerala. Malik Ibn Dinar and his fellowmen propagated Islam in Malabar coast.<sup>43</sup> Soon Islam got a firm hold in Ponnani. 'Measan' stones bearing the date Hijra 38,56,61 and 87 were obtained from various places in Malabar<sup>44</sup>. Dr. Tharachand states that the first Muslim fleet appeared in the Indian Ocean in 636 A.D.<sup>45</sup>.

Muslim missionary activities were at first confined to the coastal towns. Because of the missionary zeal of the preachers and the simplicity of the religion many inhabitants of these towns of Malabar

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43. Syed Mohammed. P.A, Kerala Muslim Charithram, Kozhikode, (1988) P.59.

44. Kareem. C.K., Impact of Islam on Kerala and her people, commemoration volume, the Cochin Synagogue century celebration, Kerala History Association (1971) P.128.

45. Tharachand, Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Allahabad (1976) P-25.

embraced the religion of Islam. In course of time Islam took root and its adherents increased in number. The towns in Malabar became populated with them, without being oppressed by the rulers who were unbelievers or their rights being encroached upon. Allah vouchsafed to the muslims large benefits and they passed many generations prosperously.<sup>46</sup> The muslims enjoyed a good status in the society and were treated by the Hindu rulers with great respect and consideration.

Many evil and inhuman practices like untouchability, unapproachability and slavery prevailed in the Hindu society facilitating the conversion of the weaker section of Hindus to Islam. The advent of Islam offered to the 'Avarnas' a means to escape from the oppression of their own caste. By embracing Islam they could at least enjoy the freedom of movement and the right to free labour and worship. The muslims

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46. Shaik Zainud-Din, *Thuhfat-ul-Mujahideen* (trans) S.M.H. Nainar, Madras (1942) P.13.

received and respected them as equals irrespective of their earlier religion or lower class.<sup>47</sup> It is an open fact that long before the Muslims settled in northern India, there were colonies of Muslims in southern India.<sup>48</sup>

Another reason for the increase of muslim population in Malabar, especially in Ponnani coastal belt was the development of the place as the naval head quarters of Zamorin. Zamorin ordered Hindu fishermen to convert one or two of the male members of the family to Islam to fortify the Royal Navy under Arab training. This helped in large scale conversion of fishermen community now known as 'Poosalan'<sup>49</sup> evidently a corruption of 'Pudu Islam (New Islam) and enabled an adequate supply of man power to man his navy and

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47. Shaikh Zainud-din, *Thuh fat-ul-Mujahideen*, (tran) M.J. Roulandson London (1833) PP 52, 57.

48. Nadvi, S.S, *The Muslim Colonies in India before the Muslim conquests - Islamic culture*.(1934) VIII.P.478.

49. 'Poosalan' or newly converted Muslim'

sea-trade as Hindus left such 'vulgar' professions<sup>50</sup> either to the lower caste or to the foreigners.<sup>51</sup> The practice continued and it was not uncommon to find Mukkuvan boys being trained in Quran and Muslims and Hindus living in the same house.<sup>52</sup> This type of large houses were seen in the coastal areas of Ponnani during that time.

Islam grew as it began, peacefully and it grew steadily. The first eight centuries of Mappila growth following the establishment of Islam in Kerala were marked by a calm forward movement.<sup>53</sup> Religious harmony prevailed in Malabar. Roland E. Miller Comments:

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50. 'Vulgar professions' - Hindus of higher castes considered sea-trade and naval offices as vulgar professions not suitable to their dignity.

51. Narayanan M.G.S. The Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala, Trivandrum (1972) P.33.

52. Nafis Ahamed Siddiqui, Population geography of Muslims of India, New Delhi (1971) P-174.

53. Roland E-Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Bangalore, 1976 (P-51).

'Kerala represents a unique religious picture. No where else do adherents of the three major world religions live side by side in such large numbers..... Inter religious communication and activity are positively affected by the fact that Hindus, Christians and Muslims live inter communally.<sup>54</sup>

The rise of Sufism also proved to be favourable to the rapid spread of Islam in Malabar. Sufism or 'Thasavvuf' is defined as the essence of Islamic morality by some eminent sufis. It does not mean deep meditation or denial of worldly pleasures. It was the sum total of the life and philosophy of pious, munificent and unselfish muslim saints who identified themselves with the suffering masses, shared their joys and sorrows and remained a ray of hope to them. They

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54. *Ibid - P.P. 20, 21. Miller affirms the truth that ordinary human contact at the most elemental levels is not only unavoidable, it is the norm. The living and working conditions, compel the members of the different communities to be associated together in regular and a normal patterns.*

never believed in conversion by force. On the contrary people were attracted to Islam by their love, honesty and kind heartedness.<sup>55</sup> Sufism has given deeper accent to the Islamic perception of god and man. It laid stress on spiritualism.<sup>56</sup> The Makhdums were Sufi saints who served to make Ponnani an Islamic centre. It is also to be noted that even the 'ulema' have often nourished a mystic stain either explicit or implicit.<sup>57</sup>

The Sufis and missionaries propagated the message of Islam in Malabar. Islamic missionary activities started with the tradition of Malik ibn Dinar and his associates. Malik ibn Dinar was a disciple of the famous Sufi, Hassan al-Basri. The tradition of Malik ibn Dinar is that Ceraman Perumal on his return from

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55. Hussain Randathani, Ariyappedatha India, Calicut, (1983) P-40. Sufism has its origin from the Hera cave where Prophet Muhammed used to sit for hours together in deep meditaiton. It shows the spiritual aspect of his life.

56. Asgher ali Engineer, Sufism and Communal harmony, Jaipur (1991) P-44.

57. Arberry A.J., Sufism and an account of the mystics of Islam. Aylesburg (1979) P-84

Arabia was accompanied by the family and friends of Malik ibn Dinar and when Ceraman Perumal fell ill on the way the responsibility of calling the people of Malabar to the new faith was entrusted to Malik ibn Dinar.

In Malabar Ponnani became one of the early settlements of the Muslims. It also became a centre of Islamic learning thanks to the services rendered by the Makhdums. There in the second half of the 15th century, the first Makhdum Shaikh Zain-ud-Din wrote a well known mystic poem *Hidayat-ul-Adhkiyah ila-Tariqatil Auliya* renowned as the manual of Sufism in the east. His son Abdul Azeez wrote a commentary on *Hidayat-ul-Adhkiyah*. These works influenced the Muslims of Malabar very much. As the community spread, mosques were built. The mosque where Syed Mohammed Ibnu Ibrahim, one among the early missionaries was buried, is a centre of pilgrimage where the devotees perform 'Siyyarath'<sup>58</sup> was later known as

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58. '*Siyyarath*' literally means 'visit'

'Siyarath mosque.'<sup>59</sup> It was Shaik Zain-ud-Din Makhdum who introduced this 'Jaram'.<sup>60</sup> The tomb of Beevi Ibrahimia is another centre where Muslim women perform siyyarath.

During the middle of the 12th century A.D. 'Thottungal Palli, the mosque situated in the north west of Ponnani near the confluence of Bharathapuzha and the Arabian sea, was built. Shaikh Fariduddin Ouliya founded this mosque in Hijra 666.<sup>61</sup> The 'Makbara'<sup>62</sup> of Sufi Shaik Uthan Muhiyuddin, the desciple of shaik Fariduddin Ouliya is in the portico of the mosque. The famous Ponnani 'Big Juma Masjid' was founded by Shaikh Zainud-Din 1. Registers and records of this

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59. *The details regarding Syed Mohammed Ibnu Ibrahim are not available in the Siyyarath Mosque. This mosque is situated in the South-West part of Ponnani. This was earlier built as a thatched shed. The premises of the mosque were considered to be the first Islamic settlements.*

60. 'Jaram' - *Tomb of an important Sayyid, Sufi or Alim.*

61. *Records seen in Thottungal Palli give evidence to this*

62. 'Makbara' - *Tomb of saint.*

mosque are well preserved. During the 15th century 'Ponnani Nagaram Misri Niskara Palli' was built. It was so called because it was built by the Muslim warriors from Egypt who came over to Ponnani at the request of Shaikh Zain ud-Din Makhdum to fight against the Portuguese. Mosque register is preserved here also.

Later many mosques had been built in Ponnani William Logan says that including the Big Juma Masjid there are 27 mosques in Ponnani. Each of these was closely connected with the cultural history of the muslims in the region.

Disputes among the families of the Mahallu (locality) were solved by the Qadis of the Mahallu by consultation. In brief, with the advent of Islam the western part of Ponnani became one of the prominent Islamic cultural centres and Ponnani even won the title as the 'little Mecca' or 'the Mecca of Malabar'.

After the coming of the 'Makhdums'<sup>63</sup> who were the heads of the Big Juma Masjid and spiritual heads of the Muslims of Ponnani, Ponnani became an educational and cultural centre of Kerala. Students from far and near came and studied under these scholars. There were students from Sri Lanka, Malaya and Indonesia. Ponnani still has an important institution for religious studies and is a training centre for new converts. The centre is known as 'Maunathul Islam Sabha'.<sup>64</sup>

The Zamorins had wide trade relations with Arabia and other west Asian countries. The greatness of the Zamorins was mainly due to the sea-borne commerce of his kingdom.<sup>65</sup> Ponnani being one of the ten important ports of Malabar, a considerable portion of the trade was carried through Ponnani. As a result

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63. 'Makhdum' means one who deserves service.

64. Maunathul Islam Sabha was founded in 1900.

65. Krishna Iyer K.V., *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut (1938) P-291.

of the coming of the Portuguese the trade between the Zamorins and the Arabs received a set back.

The Muslim merchants were greatly agitated at the arrival of the Portuguese in Malabar. They tried to prevent the Portuguese from getting sufficient cargo for their ships to discourage them. They also tried to influence the Zamorin through his minister and cautioned him that the new comers were arrogant and greedy. They would not be satisfied with anything, and if something was not given to them, they would grab it.<sup>66</sup>

The discovery of the cape of good hope.... was an evil day for the Moplahs.... In the keen struggle for supremacy on the Eastern seas the Moplahs came out vanquished.... and never since have they regained their wealth and their glory.<sup>67</sup> The coming of the Portuguese

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66. Ibrahim Kunhu A.P., *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Trivandrum (1989), P-30.

67. Hamid Ali, *The Moplahs*, Madras (1929) P-269.

adversely affected the Muslim traders who had held the monopoly of trade on the Malabar. The trade rivalry that developed between the Muslims and the Portuguese were marked by acts of inhuman cruelty. Vasco-da-Gama who came for the second time in 1502, inaugurated a policy of aggressive violence. Arrogant and cruel, they were typified by their first representative Vasco-da-Gama, who in many respects was a 'Nobler Savage' than many who followed his historic path.<sup>68</sup> On 24th, November 1507, Almeda, a Portuguese navigator attacked Ponnani Port.<sup>69</sup> In 1510, D'albuquerque on the request of Marshal Coutinho, attacked Calicut, when Zamorin was away at the southern part of his empire. The Portuguese burnt the Mithqal Mosque while many Portuguese soldiers were killed by the Nayars. After some years, by the

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68. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras, (1962) P-61.

69. Krishna Iyer K.V., *A History of Kerala*, Coimbatore (1960) P-190.

persuasion of D'albuquerque a new Zamorin (Ilamura - heir apparent) succeeded to the throne by poisoning the then reigning Zamorin. The new Zamorin permitted the Portuguese to erect a fortress at Calicut which was completed very soon. Peace was concluded between the Portuguese and the Zamorin on 24th, December 1513. One of the provisions of the treaty was that the Muslim merchants should take out passes from the Portuguese captain for navigating the high seas. Shaik Zain-ud-Din saw the coming of the Portuguese as a punishment of Allah on the Muslims of Malabar since they violated the injunctions of religion.<sup>70</sup>

Early sources together with those of Duarte Barbosa and Shaik Zain-ud-Din provide a fairly clear

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70. Dr. Kunhali. V, *Ideology and Peasant uprising - a case study of 19th century South Malabar, Agrarian India-Problems and perspectives, Calicut, (1999) P-41. Dr. Kunhali justifies the statement of Shaik Zainud-Din by saying that 'it was the Muslim belief that whenever the community violate the 'Shariat' and persist in wrong deeds Allah will send his curse and punishment.*

idea about the Muslims of Kerala at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese. In terms of population distribution, muslims were evidently settled in every port with the majority living in north Kerala, especially in Calicut and other coastal towns like Chaliyam, Parappanangadi, Tanur and Ponnani.<sup>71</sup> Gradually developed two cities, Calicut and Ponnani with majority of Muslim population under the influence of Zamorin. The flourishing condition of the muslim settlements was directly attributable to their economic role as merchants. They were dependent up on commerce for a major source of their income.

The Portuguese continued their capture of Arab vessels, attack on Muslim settlements and harassment of traders. Then the Zamorin appointed Kunhali Marakkar as the chief of navy in Ponnani. During the Portuguese period the true heroes of Mappila resistance

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71. *Stephen Frederic Dale, The Mappilas of Malabar (1498-1922). Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier, London (1980) P-28.*

were Kunhali Marakkars, a family of fighting admirals that served the Zamorins.<sup>72</sup> The Kunhalis were originally mappilas from Cochin. When the Cochin Raja became friendly with the Portuguese they moved to the mappila centre of Ponnani. Under their leadership the navy was strengthened.<sup>73</sup> Simultaneously the enthusiasm generated by the teachings of Shaik Zainud-Din Makhdum I inspired the Muslims to join the navy. In course of time the Zamorin himself promulgated an order demanding the conversion to Islam of one or two male members from each fisherman family in order to avail recruits for his navy. Soon under the leadership of Kunhalis Ponnani became the naval head quarters of Zamorin. Kottakkal in North Malabar was the seat of the Kunhalis who really saved the western coast of India from coming entirely under

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72. Kurup. K.K.N & Mathew. K.M. Native Resistance Against the Portuguese: The Saga of Kunjali Marakkars. Calicut University, (2000) P.11.

73. Nambiar. O.K., The Kunhalis, Admirals of Calicut, Bombay (1963) P-144.

Portuguese domination.<sup>74</sup> As a result of their meritorious service, the Malayalam language and literature and culture of Kerala could be protected. If otherwise the Malayalam language would have become one like the Konkani language of Goa, which does not have its own script and development. The Keralites are greatly indebted to the Kunhalis for the preservation of the Malayalam language.<sup>75</sup>

As the chief military and naval base of the Zamorin and also as the powerful centre of the Muslims, the bitter enemies of the Portuguese, Ponnani fell an easy prey to Portuguese attack on many occasions. On 24th, November 1507 the Portuguese attacked Ponnani.<sup>76</sup> Ponnani was captured by the Portuguese

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74. Abdurahiman K.V, *Mappila Charithra Sakalangal*, Choondal, (1998) P-112.

75. Kurup K.K.N. *Keralathile Portuguese Kalaghattam*, Samskara Keralam, April-June 1995, Lakkam 2, Pusthakam 9, Page-10.

76. *Kerala Charithram*, Vol 1. History Association Cochin (1973) P-467.

on 26th February 1525.<sup>77</sup> Tired of frequent wars Zamorin entered into a treaty with the Portuguese at Ponnani. It is proper to say that the Zamorin was forced “to roll up the carpet of destruction and pursue the path of friendship”. Apart from the trade memorandum the treaty forbade the Zamorin from attacking the Portuguese or giving permits to Arabian ships or giving protection to the enemies of the Portuguese.<sup>78</sup> The Portuguese were permitted to build up a fort at Ponnani in 1586.<sup>79</sup>

The Portuguese power visibly declined on the Malabar coast in the 17th century. The Dutch sought the support of the Muslims in over throwing

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77. Ibrahim Kunhu A.P., *Studies in Medieval Kerala History*, Thiruvananthapuram (1975) P-38.

78. Krishna Iyer K.V. *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut (1938) P-417.

79. *Though the Portuguese were permitted to build up a fort in Ponnani they could not materialise this because of the stubborn resistance of the Muslims.*

the Portuguese.<sup>80</sup> The Dutch did not discriminate against the Muslims on religious grounds as the Portuguese did. Their aim was to retain the monopoly of spice trade. While they were not averse to territorial acquisition and maintained a religious concern, these interests were largely qualified by a utilitarian concentration on business. Every where in the east the Dutch became the commercial monopolists of the seventeenth century. In India, however, they were compelled to share power with the fading Portuguese and the English, their chief rivals.<sup>81</sup>

The war that lasted for more than hundred years from the early 16th century to the second half of the 17th century between the Portuguese and the Malabar muslims had adverse effects on the muslims. It led to their economic retrogression, estrangement from

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80. Poonen. T.I, *A Survey of the Rise of the Dutch Power in Malabar (1603-1675)*. Trichinapally, (1948) P.62.

81. Roland E. miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras (1992) P-79.

Hindus, bitterness against Christians and a new militancy. They were compelled to turn inward from the profitable seaward commerce to agriculture and smaller crafts. It is here that we must find the starting point for the community's later poverty, ignorance and inwardness.<sup>82</sup> Large number of Muslims migrated from Ponnani town to the interior places like Thavanur, Edapal, Vattamkulam and Marancherry in search of new avenues of economic well being.

Slowly but surely the English East India Company entered the scene and the Company was permitted to found ports at Ponnani and Calicut. In due course the English obtained from the Zamorin the most favoured nation treatment.<sup>83</sup> The French also tried to have a trading station at Ponnani but failed. So they opted Mahe to be their capital centre of trade

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82. *Ibid* P-75.

83. Krishna Iyer. K.V, The Zamorins of Calicut, Calicut (1938) P-250.

and captured it in 1725. The triangular competition that developed in Malabar between the Portuguese, Dutch and the English was followed a little later by the English-French rivalry. In the long run the English became successful and by the end of the 18th century the English East India Company had shifted its chief interest from trade to “ruling for profit”.

During the second half of the 18th century Kerala was lacking a centralised administrative system. Rivalry for domination existed among the provincial chieftains and their misrule made people suffer. The Palghat Raja invited Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore to attack the Zamorin. The first Mysorean invasion was in 1766. Hyder Ali established his supremacy over several places in Malabar and erected a fort in Ponnani. After the second invasion (1773) by Hyder Ali Malabar became a part of the Mysorean Empire. The anarchy that prevailed in North Malabar and the assistance of Ali Raja of Cannanore enabled Hyder Ali to subdue Malabar. The Zamorin committed suicide and many

local chieftons fled to the south. At one time Hyder had attempted to ally himself with the English. When he failed he offered help to the French.<sup>84</sup> War broke out between the English and Haider Ali. In the midst of the war (December 2, 1782) the great adventurer died. Hyder Ali one of the ablest personalities in the history of India, was a brave commander and an able administrator. He set up an efficient and strong government in Malabar. He had never been a religious bigot. His coins contain the figures of Siva, Parvati and Vishnu. He rebuilt within a period of one month a portion of the Sri Ranganatha temple at Srirangapattanam which was gutted by fire.<sup>85</sup>

Tipu Sultan was at Ponnani at the time of the death of his father, Hyder Ali. He hastened to Mysore and inherited his fathers vast dominion.<sup>86</sup> Tipu Sultan

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84. Sreedhara Menon A., *Kerala History and its makers*, Madras (1990) P-170.

85. Sreedharamenon A, *A History of India Part-III*, Madras (1995) P-22.

86. Raja. P.K.S., *Medieval Kerala, Calicut* (1966) P-213.

was similar to his father in his courage and capacity for leadership. He bitterly hated the English and made preparations for a final conflict with them. He formed an efficient army and kept himself in close touch with the French, even sought a French alliance against the British by sending his envoys to the court of Louis XVI of France. His main objective was the destruction of British power in India and he concentrated all his energies in achieving this objective. He also seems to have sent emissaries to Arabia, Kabul, Constantinople and Mauritius with a view to securing allies in the impending conflict. He had a dynamic personality and played a leading role in the fight against the forces of British expansionism in India in the 18th century. He loved freedom more than anything else. He was not disheartened till the end and he died the heroic death of a martyr fighting for the cause of freedom.<sup>87</sup> Tipu Sultan's failure was a tragedy for him and a tragedy

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87. Sreedhara Menon. A, *A History of India, Part III, Madras (1995)*

P.P. 23, 24.

for the subcontinent for his defeat meant the end of the first round of the struggle for freedom. Tippu was well known for his patience and valour. He died fighting as a brave soldier.<sup>88</sup>

The brief Mysorean interlude was not without its significance in the history of Kerala. The invasions of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan and the subjugation of Malabar led to the decline of the old feudal order in Malabar and to the introduction of modern progressive ideas about state and government. The Mysorean conquests resulted in significant changes in the cultural history of Ponnani. Ofcourse some of the great wars between Tipu Sultan and the English were fought in Ponnani. Kerala enjoyed a spell of peace until the beginning of the war between Mysore and the British.<sup>89</sup> After the treaty of Sreerangapatanam, (1792) Tipu had

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88. Handerson J.R, The coins of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, Madras (1921) P-14.

89. Balakrishnan P.K, Tipu Sultan, Calicut (1989) P-187

to part with Malabar to the British. Ponnani became a part of British Malabar. The transfer of Malabar to the British marked the beginning of colonial rule in India.<sup>90</sup>

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90. *Kerala Vijnana Kosam*, Desbandhu Publications, Trivandrum (1987) P-126.

# MAKHDUM FAMILY AND THE CULTURAL AND LITERARY EFFLORESCENCE

Ammad Kunnath “The rise and growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D. To 1792 A.D.” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut

Makdhum family and the cultural  
and literacy efflorescence

## CHAPTER 2

### MAKHDUM FAMILY AND THE CULTURAL AND LITERARY EFFLORESCENCE

Situated at the confluence of the Arabian sea and the Bharathapuzha Ponnani played a unique role in the economic and cultural history of medieval Malabar. But the early history of Malabar as of Ponnani is shrouded in obscurity. From Cape comorin, the Malabar coast to the north west and the coromondal coast to the north east run as long as a thousnad miles. There are certain natural harbours on both sides of the penisula and Ponnani is one among them. Her western openness to the sea provided Malabar with a maritime tradition. Trade was peaceful and interaction with various people of different cultures, religions and languages laid the foundation of Malabar's basic culture. The statement of R.S. whiteway bears testimony to the truth that Malabar had reached a higher level of cultural progress than that of Portugal.

Civilization in the part of the western coast of India first touched by the Portuguese had reached a high level..... The Indians of that day were more civilized than the Portuguese.<sup>1</sup>

The name 'Malabar' is a combination of the word 'mala' from the Tamil and Malayalam languages meaning 'mountain' and the Persian word 'bar' meaning 'land'. It was not a political or administrative term but a mere geographical appellation and seems to have at one time included the entire west coast. The East India Company established the district of British Malabar distinguishing it from the princely states of Cochin and Travancore. There is a common saying that "cross followed trade." Judaism, Christianity and Islam made their way to Malabar following trade. There was communal peace and free competitive trade for thousands of years. But the social security and

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1. Whiteway. R.S., *The rise of Portuguese power in India*, London (1899) P.P. 267.

conditions of trade on the Malabar coast were shattered by the arrival of the Portuguese.

Though literary, epigraphic and commercial evidences point to the cultural heritage of Malabar they are insufficient to make a comprehensive study of the past. The history of Kerala prior to the coming of the Portuguese is a mass of legends and dreams.<sup>2</sup>

Legends have developed even with regard to the introduction of Islam into Malabar which is of course comparatively a later event. The history of the Pre-Islamic Arab traders and the birth of the mappila community are only a prelude to the history of the advent and growth of Islamic faith in Kerala. Whether the Arab traders were the first preachers of the new religion or they have only created an atmosphere conducive to its spread are questions of dispute among

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2. Syed Mohammed. P.A., *What is and what is not history*, M.E.S. Journal (November 26, 1969) P-4.

historians.<sup>3</sup> The precise date of the entry of Islam into Kerala is unknown because the history of Kerala until the first half of the 9th century A.D. is obscure.

Ponnani was not only a centre of maritime trade but also turned out to be the cradle of Islam in Malabar. Ponnani was a part of the dominions of Thirumanasseri Raja. But during the rivalry or "Koorumalsaram" (12th-13 century) between the Sukapuram and Panniyoor families the Zamorin of Calicut got Ponnani from the Thirumanasseri Raja as a reward to the help given by him. Ponnani became a part of the Zamorins dominions, his second capital and naval head- quarters. Of all native rulers of Malabar, the Zamorin of Calicut showed special regard to the welfare of the muslims with in his territories. He encouraged conversion in order to man his ships which he depended for his aggrandizements. The eleventh to the sixteenth century

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3. Ahmed Kabeer.V.A. *Muslim monuments in Kerala*, Trivandrum (1987) PP 14-15. K.M. Panikkar observes that it is impossible to give a precise date of the entry of Islam in to Kerala.

of Mappila history is intimately linked with the rise of the Zamorin's of Calicut, who gained ascendancy among the contending rajas of northern Kerala.<sup>4</sup> Islam in India, in all probability, began in Kerala, and the mappilas are the descendants of the first Indian Muslims.<sup>5</sup>

Ponnani became a centre of Islamic cultural activity with the settling of the Makhdums there in the second half of the 15th century.<sup>6</sup> The 'Makhdums'<sup>7</sup>

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4. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras, (1976) PP.53-54.

5. *Ibid.* P.39

6. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Trivandrum (1989) P-21

7. The word 'Makhdum' is derived from the Arabic word 'Khadima' meaning 'did service'. So by Makhdum we mean one who deserves service. The Makhdums of Ponnani were respected and to them services were done by the people. It is not proper to believe that the word is used to denote the Makhdums of Ponnani alone. The fore fathers of Zaynud-Din Makhdum I were also called as Makhdums. In Gujarat and Tamil Nadu this title seems to have been used along with names of many. Haider Ali sent an army against the Raja of Palghat under one Makhdum.

were Yemenites in origin. They came to Cholamandalakkara in South India from Ma'abar in Yemen. They settled at Keelakkara and Kayalapattanam and propagated the message of Islam in Madhura, Thiruchirappalli, Thanchavoor and Nagoor. A branch of the Makhdum families came over to Cochin and after a short period of stay there they came and settled down at Ponnani. The Makhdums did meritorious service to the propagation of Islam and most of them were renowned religious scholars well known through out India. As a muslim settlement Ponnani did not attain a position of significance before the 15th century A.D. It was in fact the advent of the Makhdum family and their activities centred round the Big Juma Masjid that made Ponnani a centre of Muslim learning so much so that it came to be called the 'little Mecca of Malabar.'<sup>8</sup>

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8. *Prof. Abdu Rahiman. K.V. 40th Anniversary Souvenir, Farook College, Feroke (1988) P-174.*

The first Makhdum Shaik Zain-Ud-Din also known as Zainuddin ibn Ali al-Ma'bari was born in 1467 A.D. at Cochin as the son of Ali ibn Ahammed. He got his preliminary education from his father's brother, Ibrahim Ahammed who became the Qadi of Ponnani. He was fortunate enough to be the student of Fakhrudheen Aboobacker ibn Quasira of Calicut from whom he received his religious education. After the studies he left for Egypt to join the institution run by Qadi Adamil Misri and on completion of five years study there he was recognised as 'Mohaddis'<sup>9</sup> He underwent further studies in 'Hadith'<sup>10</sup> under Sakaria Ansari Shamsuddin Jouhari and Shaik Kamaluddin Mohammed bin Abuserifa. Then he proceeded to Arabia. After performing the Haj he came back to Ponnani, married and settled there.

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9. *Mohaddis - Interpreter of the authoritative traditions.*

10. *"Hadith" or "traditions" are the sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammed which the muslims should accept and follow.*

It was Shaik Zain-Ud-Din Makhdum I who convened a meeting of the muslims of Ponnani and its neighbourhood in which he stressed the necessity of building up a Juma Masjid and a Madrasa. People contributed balls of silver to him for the construction of the mosque. During this period he lived in Pazhayakam where he had already built the 'Cheriyapalli' (smaller mosque) now known as 'Akathe Palli'. He supervised the construction of the Juma Masjid which became known as the 'Valiya (big) Juma Masjid.' The work was completed in 1510.A.D.<sup>11</sup> The Maqbara of Asari Thangal,<sup>12</sup> who was the chief architect of the

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11. *The documents available with the mosque at present, do not show any proof for this. William Logan states in his Malabar manual that the mosque was completed in 1510 A.D., three years before the death of Shaik Zainud-Din Makhdum.*

12. *The chief architect of the Big Juma Masjid was a friend of Shaik Zain ud-Din I. It is believed that after the completion of the mosque the architect (carpenter or Asari) when he looked to the west from the top saw the lustre of the Holy Ka'aba. There by he became a muslim. He was burried near the mosque. Those who come for Siyyarath at the Maqbara of the Makhdums also visit the Makham of Asari Thangal.*

mosque, exists close to the mosque. The mosque is a spacious four storeyed building 90 feet in length and 60 feet in width.

The history of Ponnani is very much linked with this mosque. Large number of students from far and near especially from Malaya, Ceylon, Lakkadives and all over Malabar coast used to come here and receive the title of 'Musaliar Pattom' after the completion of studies. The dress of the students were simple. They wore a single cloth, full sleeves shirts and a turban. Boarding facilities were provided to the students from distant places. "Pallikkalakam,"<sup>13</sup> the building near by the Big Juma Masjid was designed to accomodate many studetns. The beginners were taught by the senior students and senior students by the Makhdums. 'Vilakkathirikkal'<sup>14</sup> was the last phase of Musaliar

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13. "Pallikkalakam" near the masjid is still existing

14. "Vilakkathirikkal" or "sit by the lamp" is the last stage of the Musaliar pattom course.

pattom. The awardee had to wear a cap, shawl and an overcoat. The degree holders were given immediate appointment as Qadis in various mahallus in Malabar.<sup>15</sup> In Kerala till recently only those who completed the prescribed course of study or examination from the Madrasa of Ponnani were recognised as 'Alim'<sup>16</sup> and given the title of Musaliar and appointed "Qadis"<sup>17</sup> The Madrasa system of learning has its origin from the process of learning adopted in Ponnani. The Madrasa of Ponnani soon became a centre of muslim education well known in and outside India. Students from Indonesia, Malaya, Ceylon, Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Iraq came to study at this institution.<sup>18</sup> It reached the height of its glory under the leadership of Shaik Zain

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15. Syed Mohideen Shah - Islam in Kerala, Thrissur (1974) P-43.

16. 'Alim' means learned man or scholar

17. Abdul Samad. M., Islam in Kerala, Groups and movements in the 20th century, Kollam (1998) P-22.

18. Abdul Hassan V.M., Ponnani Makhdam Charithram, Ponnani (1996) P-9.

ud-Din ibn Shaik Ali known as the senior Makhdum.<sup>19</sup> The spiritual leader and the administrator of the Big Juma Masjid was called "Makhdum Thangal." Three writers of the Makhdum family Shaik Zainud Din Makhdum I, Abdul Azeez Makhdum and Shaik Zainud-Din II made significant contributions to the rich heritage of Kerala by their valuable services to Arabic language and literature. Shaik Zain ud-Din the first Makhdum was the author of many works on theology and related subjects. He was a well known scholar in Arabic and Persian. His mystic poem Hidayat ul-Adhkiyah ila Tariqat il-Auliya is renowned as the 'manual of sufism in Malabar.' His other works are

1. Murshid ut-Tullab, an important work on Tasawwuf.
2. Tuhfat ul-Ahibba, containing the prayers of the Prophet and his daily life.
3. Irshad ul-Quasideen, a resume of Imam Ghazzalis Minhaj ul-Abidin.

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19. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Madras (1992)* P-260.

4. Shu'b ul-Iman, Arabic translation of a Persian work of the same name by Sayyid Nuruddin Aiji.
5. Kifayat ul-Faraid, a resume of Imam Sebrufis Kitabul-kafi fil Faraid dealing with problems of inheritance.
6. Kitab us-Safa min as - Shifa, summary of Qadi Iyadi's celebrated work Kitab ub-shifa.
7. Tashilul Kafiyah, a commentary of the work on grammar entitled Kafiyah by Ibn Habib

He has written also commentaries on Ibn Maliks Alfiyah, Ibnu Wardis Tuhfah and Ibnul Maqarris Irshad. Kasasul Ambiya, the history of the prophets referred in the Holy Quran, written by him narrates the history of prophets from Adam to David. 'Arjoosa' is a philosophical work attributed to him. Later he undertook writing of Prophet Muhammed's biography. But he could not complete this work under the title 'Mavais Va-majalis'

Tahreed Ahlil Eman Ala jihadi Abdathi Sulban is the famous poem written by Shaik Zainud-Din I in Arabic inviting the Muslims to wage a holy war (Jihad). This poem inspired the Muslims to fight against the brutality of the Portuguese. For encouraging the 'Jihad'<sup>20</sup> he distributed many copies of this poem to all the 'mahallus' in Malabar. This was the first poem of its kind to arouse sense of patriotism of Malabar Muslims so as to enable them to fight for centuries together against the foreign rule. Its first part deals with the coming of the Portuguese, their trade relations with Zamorins and their cruelty against the Muslims. The second part of the book calls on the Muslims to fight against the Portuguese under the leadership of Zamorins.

Shaik Zainud-Din had four children. The eldest son Yahia died in young age. Abdul Azeez and

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20. 'Jihad' means holy war or fight for a noble cause.

Mohammed Gazzali were the other two sons. After the death of Shaik Zainud-Din Abdul Azeez became the Makhdum. Abdul Azeez Makhdum acquired vast knowledge in theology from his father, during his childhood. Then he studied under Qadi Ahammed in Calicut. Up on the death of his father he became Makhdum and the spiritual leader of the Muslims. He was a friend of Zamorin. Not only in speeches against the Portuguese but also in the Chaliyam war he virtually gave leadership against the Portuguese. He was also a polyglot. He wrote a commentary of his father's book Hidayat ul-Adhkiyah. In the preface of this book he gives a brief account of his father. This work was published in 1871 A.D. in Ponnani.<sup>21</sup> 'Kitab al-Eman' and Kitab al-Islam, the two other works of Abdul Azeez Makhdum were lost. Abdul Azeez had no children and so his brother Shaik Mohammed Gazzali became the Makhdum.<sup>22</sup> Some of the preachings of Shaik Gazzali

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21. Shamsulla Qadiri, *Pracheena Malabar*, (Trans) Abdul Qayyum (1954) P-69

22. A house in Ponnani bears the name 'Gazzali Musaliarakam'

Makhdum, called 'Fatwas'<sup>23</sup> are seen in a masjid near Arakkal palace. Mohammed Gazzali Makhdum married from Chombal<sup>24</sup> near Mahe.

Shaik Zainud-Din II, son of Muhammed Gazzali and the greatest of the Makhdum family was an Arabic scholar and historian of reputation. Born in Ponnani he had his primary education there and went over to Arabia for higher studies. There he became the disciple of Imam Ahammed Bin Nural Makki, the author of 'Thuhfa.' After completing the studies from Mecca he returned to Ponnani. He always had the quest for knowledge and was interested in travelling. He did not succeed to Makhdumship as matriarchy was adopted in the Makhdum family for succession. Later,

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23. 'Fatwas' - Legal decisions of a recognised muslim jurist.

24. Chombal was also known as 'Jauban'. Some of the Makhdums had this place name (Jauban) along with their names. Chombal was an early centre of Islam. At the time of the advent of the Portuguese there were 37 mosques in Chombal. Being afraid of the Portuguese the Muslims of Chombal left the coastal regions and settled permanently in the interior villages.

he left Ponnani and lived in Chombal near Mahe. His tomb is at Kunhipalli<sup>25</sup> in Chombal.

Shaik Zain ud-Din, the celebrated grand son of Shaik Zain ud-Din Makhdum I, has a large number of works dealing with various subjects to his credit. His contributions to literature, history and theology are unparalleled. It was Shaik Zain ud-Din who wrote letters in Arabic to the Muslim rulers requesting their help to the Zamorin against the Portuguese.<sup>26</sup>

His important works are

1. Qurrat Ul-Ayn, a work on the Shari'ah according to the Shafi'i sect.
2. Fath ul Mu'in, a commentary on his work the Qurrat ul-Ayn.

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25. Shaik Gazzali Makhdum, father of Shaik Zain ud-Din II married from the 'Karaketti Valiyakath,' an Aristocratic and noble family of Chombal. The Kunhipalli mosque was built by a member of this family. This mosque is one of the earliest in the history of Islam. The tomb of Shaik Zain ud-Din II is at Kunhipalli. Muslims throng his tomb for Siyyarath.

26. Syed Mohammed.P.A., Kerala Muslim Charithram, Kozhikode (1988) P-58.

3. Ahkam un-Nikah, a work on the rules of marriage.
4. Irshad al Ibad, a work on Tasawwuf.
5. Tuhfat-al-Mujahidin fi baazi Akhbari al-Burthuqaliyyin (An offering to the Holy warriors in respect of a brief account of the Portuguese)
6. Minhaj-al-Ajeeba
7. Ajvibath al-Ajeeba
8. Mukhthasar Sharahussudoor

These books were originally written in Arabic and were later translated in to various languages. The Fathul Mu'in was completed in 1574 and was first published from Malabar, Egypt and Singapore. It gained popularity in Kerala and Tamil Nadu and came to be taught in several colleges as a text book including the university of Azher. An Arabic-Malayalam translation of Fathul Mu'in was done by Moulana Ahammed Sheerasi, the Qadi of Nadapuram but was not published. Thuhfatul Mujahideen, the most famous work of Shaik Zainud-Din II was translated into English

by Major Rowlandson, the Persian translator at St. George fort in Madras and by S. Muhammed Hussayn Nainar and into Malayalam by Velayudhan Panikkasser, C. Hamsa, K. Moosankutty Moulavi and others. Prof. Delops translated the part of the book dealing with the history of the Portuguese. This book entitled "Historia des Portuguese Malabar" was published in Lisbon in 1898. But few books have fallen into oblivion as this one. (Tuhfat ul-Mujahideen). Not only Arabists have almost forgotten this work, but the geographical information provided by it, has not been really utilised in any scheme of study of the ancient seaports of southern India, though not infrequently, some passing reference to this work is made by scholars.<sup>27</sup>

The first part of Tuhfatul Mujahideen narrates the philosophy of war. "I have narrated in it the evil

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27. Muhammed Hussayn Nainar.S. \_'Tuhfatul-Mujahideen,' (trans),  
Preface, Madras (1942) P-4.

acts done by the Portuguese against the faith of Islam in the land of Malibar, a brief account of the laws relating to 'jihad' and the greatest reward for it and an exhortation to do the duty by quotations from the Quran and the 'Traditions' together with a brief account of the strange customs pertaining to the unbelievers of Malibar.<sup>28</sup> Shaik Zainud-Din quotes the Holy Quran and sacred sayings of Prophet Muhammed to prove that the fight for a noble cause always bear fruit. Muslims in and around Ponnani got inspired by his teachings and helped forming a powerful naval force for Zamorins. The call for martyrdom against the "worshippers of cross" by Shaik Zain ud-Din and the benefits of bliss of martyrdom, like "freedom from pain of death and promise of Paradise" propagated by the 'Ulema'<sup>29</sup> gave currency to the concept of 'shaheeds'<sup>30</sup> in Malabar.<sup>31</sup>

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28. Shaik Zainud-Din, *Tuhfatul-Mujahideen*, (trans) S. Muhammed Hussayn Nainar, Madras (1942) P-14.

29. "Ulema" Muslim Scholars well versed in Quran and "Hadith".

30. Shaheed - a martyr who dies fighting for religion or a noble cause.

31. Mohammed Mansoor Nomani, *Islamic faith and practice*, Lucknow (1962) P-126.

The second part of the book deals with the coming of Malik Ibn Dinar to Kodungallur, spread of Islam in Kerala and the conversion of Ceraman Perumal to Islam. The advent of Islam in to Malabar and the conversion of Ceraman Perumal have been explained in the previous chapter and various views of different historians together with that of Shaik Zain ud-Din.

The third part explains the customs and traditions followed by the people of Malabar. He gives an illuminating account of medieval Kerala's polity, society and culture. Kerala of that time had a weak feudal polity. There were innumerable lords, major and minor with their own private armies. The feudal concept that "War is the law of the feudal world" was proved to be true in the case of Malabar. But the lords were not brutal and Zainud-Din adores the ethics of warfare observed by them. The people of Malabar are never treacherous in their wars. They fix a particular day when they would fight with their enemies. They

do not go back on it and any deceit in this respect is considered as base.<sup>32</sup>

The matrilineal system (Marumakkathayam) of inheritance was prevalent among the Nairs and some allied castes as well as among the Muslims of Northern Malabar. The Nambudiri system permitted only the eldest son to marry with in the caste and the younger brothers had to take Nair women in marriage. Here reference is to the system of 'sambandham' and the off springs can not succeed their father as heirs. The Nair women practised polyandry (Pandavacharam) or having more than one husband. The carpenters, black smiths, gold smiths and such artisan classes practised fraternal polyandry so that differences may not happen in inheritance and disputes may be less on that account. Caste system prevailed and higher castes especially the Brahmins and Nairs wielded great power.

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32. Shaik Zainud-Din, *Tuhfat ul Mujahideen*, (trans) S. Muhammed Hussyn Nainar, Madras (1942) P-44.

Untouchability also prevailed. Zainud-Din also refers to the dress and manners of the people. What attracted the author most was the harmonious relationship that existed between the Hindus and Muslims of Malabar. The Muslims had perfect freedom to practise their faith unhampered by interference from the state or the non-muslim population.<sup>33</sup>

The last part of Tuhfatul-Mujahideen tells us about the advent of the Portuguese, about their brutality and the treaties between Zamorin and the Portuguese. The coming of the Portuguese adversely affected the Muslim traders who had held the monopoly of trade on the Malabar coast. And when the Portuguese became allies of Zamorins the Muslims had to join together against the Portuguese. The religious unity thus created was the historical background of the book Tuhfat ul Mujahideen.<sup>34</sup> This work has been

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33. Sreedhara Menon. A., Kerala History and its makers Madras (1990) P-121.

34. Raghava Warriar M.R. Rajan Gurukkal. P.M., Kerala Charithram, Sukapuram (1992) P-13.

acclaimed as a precious piece of historical literature or as one of the historical treatises which was written on modern lines. The fourth chapter of Tuhfat Ul Mujahideen is entirely historical giving an account of the Portuguese from the time of their first arrival in Malabar in 1498 A.D. right up to 1583 covering a period of about eighty five years giving a short account of the coming of the Portuguese, hostilities and the treaties between them and the Zamorin and the 'shameful deeds'<sup>35</sup> of the Portuguese. It may be said to the credit of Shaik Zainud-Din that though he wanted to inspire the Mappilas of Malabar against the 'worshippers of the cross' for their innumerable atrocities he has not exaggerated the evil deeds of the Portuguese. The criticism he makes of the Portuguese atrocities, is dignified and moderate. Even modern European writers who have been horrified at the harrowing details of Portuguese enormities had to put up the specious plea

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35. *Shaik Zainud-Din calls the atrocities of the Portuguese as 'shameful deeds.'*

that such descriptions were probably exaggerations.<sup>36</sup>

Dr. V. Kunhali sums up the brutality of the Portuguese when he says that it is a well known fact that the Portuguese to usurp sea trade resorted to all sorts of treacherous and heinous means by slaughtering the Muslims, capturing their vessels, destroying, sinking, looting and burning them and bombarding the Muslim settlements.<sup>37</sup>

The Tuhfat Ul Mujahideen has unique importance as a mine of information to the historians of Kerala.<sup>38</sup> Shaik Zain ud-Din follows the traditional historians of the time and explains the important events of the time giving importance to the dates of

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36. Ibrahim Kunju.A.P., *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Trivandrum (1989) P-216

37. Dr. Kunhali.V, *Ideology and peasant uprising-a case study of 19th century south malabar. Agrarian India - Problems and Perspectives*, Felicitation Volume in honour of Dr. K.K.N. Kurup, Calicut University (1999) P.P. 40-41

38. Sreedhara Menon. A., *Kerala History and its makers*, Madras (1990) P-118.

the events. He has succeeded in picturing the historical consciousness and tradition of the society and can be called as the 'Thucydides of Kerala.' Here the author gives stress to four features. Firstly, the muslims before the advent of the Portuguese have been in good condition and they were treated by the Hindu rulers with great respect and consideration; secondly, as a result of the Portuguese competition, the Muslims lost their trade supremacy and were no longer the monopolists of trade with the west; thirdly, the martial vigour of the Muslims began to decline along with their fervent faith; fourthly, the Portuguese influence became all powerful in due course.<sup>39</sup> It is no exaggeration to call Shaik Zainud-Din II as the 'father of Kerala History' and his Tuhfat ul-Mujahideen as the 'foundation stone of Kerala History.'<sup>40</sup> The name of Shaik Zainud-Din

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39. Muhammed Hussayn Nainar.S. *Tuhfat Ul-Mujahideen*, (trans), Preface, Madras (1942) P-5

40. Ibrahim Kunju.A.P., *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Trivandrum (1989) P-10

will be remembered as the anti imperialist historian in Asia in the 16th century.<sup>41</sup> He was a contemporary of Akbar the great Mughal and Ali Adilshah, the Sultan of Bijapur to whom and his renowned historical work was dedicated.

Starting from Shaik Zainud-Din I to Koya Kutty Koya Thangal there are altogether 38 Makhdums who served as the Qadis of Ponnani and it will be a Herculean task to go into the details of their life career and achievements. The services of the Makhdums were not confined to Ponnani. Many of them were renowned scholars and Polyglots. At one time the Makhdums served as Qadis of the different Mahallus from Kayalpattanam to Mangalore. Shaik Gazzali Makhdum

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41. Dr. Kurup K.K.N., *Cultural Association Souvenir, Kunhipalli* (1998) P.P.9-10.

had been the Qadi of Kunhipalli.<sup>42</sup> The Makhdums were the pioneers of the educational and cultural growth of medieval Ponnani in particular and Kerala in general. The religious and educational training centre associated with the 'Big Juma Masjid' made Ponnani a prominent Islamic centre and the 'Makkathu Malaibar' or the Mecca of Malabar. The foundation of this centre of learning was laid by a learned Saint called Ibn Abdul Qadir Khurani, a well known disciple of Shaik Muhiyuddin Abdul Khadir Jilani (1077-1166) the great sufi saint and the superstructure was built by

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42. 'Kunhipalli' is a place in Chombal one of the early Muslim centres of Malabar and is just 2 Kms south to Mahe. Here there is a mosque with the very same name 'Kunhipalli' meaning 'little mosque' which is more than 800 years old. The derivation of the place name Kunhipalli is attributed to this mosque. Mohammed Gazzali Makhdum son of Shaik Zainud-Din I was the Qadi of Kunhipalli. The mosque has been rebuilt several times and at present it is a gigantic building with many educational institutions, nursery school, madrasa, english medium schools, computer centre etc., in its premises Mohammed Gazzali Makhdum and his illustrious son Shaik Zainud-Din II are buried here. Situated at the national highway in between Badagara and Mahe Kunhipalli is a pilgrim centre.

the Makhdums beginning with Shaik Zain ud-Din I. The madrasa system of education had its beginning in Ponnani and soon the system became widespread. Many renowned scholars had their education from Ponnani and obtained their degrees. There is a saying popular among the Muslims of Kerala i.e. 'Nalla Elmu Ponnaniyil.'<sup>43</sup> The Madrasa of Ponnani has an array of eminent personalities distinguished as literary men and religious scholars well versed in Jurisprudence (Fiqh), poets and polyglots, historians and humourists, sufis and masters of Arabic language and patriots and freedom fighters. Shaik Zainud-Din II the father of Kerala History and some of the Makhdums of Ponnani, the well known scholar and humorists kunhayan musaliyar, scholars like Farid Auliya (Cochin) Shaik Abdul Rahiman of Tanur, Shujayi Moidoo Musaliyar,

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43. "Nalla Elmu Ponnaniyil" - It was the general belief of the muslims that they could get proper education or genuine knowledge from Ponnani alone. So much was the fame of the educational system perfected by the Makhdums in Ponnani.

Kunhammed Saheb Maliyakkal, Ali Hassan Moulavi Chalilakath, Sayyid Muhammed Kochu Koya Thangal, Kodambiyakath Kunhu Seethikoya Thangal, Nalakath Kunhi Moideen Saheb, Quadiyarakath Kunhava and Marakkarakath Avukkoya, veteran freedom fighter Veliyankode Umer Qadi and Ali Musaliyar the hero of Malabar rebellion are all intellectual giants of the products of Ponnani.

The early Makhdums of Ponnani also contributed their share in the compilation of the monumental treatise *Hortus Malabaricus*<sup>44</sup>, a Dutch work in the Latin language. It was compiled at the initiative of Van Rheede, the governor of the Dutch possessions in Kerala. It is a comprehensive work dealing with the medicinal properties of the flora of Kerala. Though the descriptive accounts of the plants are in Latin, other languages like Arabic, Sanskrit and Malayalam are used

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44. *Hortus Malabaricus (Kerala Aramam or Garden of Kerala)* is a comprehensive work having 12 volumes of about 500 pages each. It was published from Amsterdam during 1678-1703.

while mentioning the names of the plants. It was from Shaik Zain ud-Din I and other Muslim scholars that the Dutch got the names of the plants both in Arabic and Malayalam. Arabic is the most ancient language and no wonder the Arabic script underwent changes from time to time. The Arabic Calligraphy of Ponnani known as 'Khatafunnani'<sup>45</sup> is one of the most perfect scripts exhibiting the Artistic talents, simplicity, moderation and rigidity of the Keralites. For these various reasons Ponnani won the name of 'Ummul Khura'<sup>46</sup> or 'mother of countries'. During the medieval period there were a lot of changes in the social and cultural scenario in Malabar thanks to the literary genius and service of the Makhdums and the part

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45. *'Khatafunnani' - The Ponnani script (Lipi) less complicated and more useful was the out come of a long process of periodical modifications.*

46. *'Ummul Khura' the term used to denote the greatness that medieval Ponnani had in the religious (Islamic) cultural and economic field means 'mother of villages' or 'mother of countries.'*

played by the educational institutions of Ponnani. True to say the contribution of medieval Ponnani to the cultural heritage of Malabar is substantial in every sense.

# PONNANI DURING THE PORTUGUESE PERIOD

Ammad Kunnath “The rise and growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D. To 1792 A.D.” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut

Ponnani during the Portuguese  
period

## CHAPTER 3

### PONNANI DURING THE PORTUGUESE PERIOD

The coming of the Portuguese was less surprising but more traumatic in the history of Ponnani. The Portuguese were not the first Europeans to have visited Malabar. But they were the first of the westerners to reach Malabar by sea in the modern times. This historical event was a new advent, the spear head of an expansionist western advance that changed the history of Asia.<sup>1</sup> At the heart of the Portuguese entry in to India was the drive for economic power, the control of spice trade and the amassing of wealth associated with the orient.<sup>2</sup> There was also the religious motivation, the obligation to propagate catholic religion in all the newly discovered lands.

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1. K.K.N. Kurup & K.M. Mathew *Native Resistance Against The Portuguese: The Saga of Kunjali Marakkars*. Calicut University (2000), P.9

2. Roland E. Miller "*Mappila Muslims of Kerala*" orient Longman, Madras (1992) P-61.

The Arab rule in Spain during the middle ages established contact between the east and the west which stimulated the ambition of the Portuguese for commerce with the orient and voyages of exploration began in 1412. Two factors mainly influenced these voyages. They were Prester John and Pepper.<sup>3</sup> Prester John was a legendary Christian king of the east. According to one version his dominions were reported to be in India but no one knew exactly where India was. This legend which had such a strong hold on the imagination of the Portuguese was the immediate factor of influence in the discovery of India. It was one of the explorers sent in search of Prester John's dominions who arrived at Calicut. Another factor that influenced these explorers was their desire for pepper "the cheapest but by no means the least useful of spices" that the Europeans got from Malabar "the mother of Pepper".

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3. Raja. P.K.S, Mediaeval Kerala - Calicut 1966 - P. 74.

In July 1497, King Emmanuel of Portugal fitted out an expedition consisting of three vessels and 170 men and despatched it to discover an ocean route to India.<sup>4</sup> It was Prince Henry of Portugal known as “Henry the Navigator” who inspired and encouraged the Portuguese sailors to undertake voyages for the discovery of a sea route to India. The efforts of Henry bore fruit when a Portuguese navigator Vasco Da Gama reached India by sea in 1498.<sup>5</sup>

Vasco da Gama who earned immortality by his adventurous voyages set sail from Lisbon, the capital of Portugal at the head of four ships provisioned for three years. He sailed along the western coast of Africa following the route of Bartholomew Diaz, rounded the cape of good hope and went along the coast bending eastwards and then north wards and reached Malindi

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4. Achutha Menon. C. *“The Cochin State Manual - Ernakulam 1995- P.76.*

5. Sreenivasachari. C.S & Ramaswamy Iyengar. *A History of India, Part III, Madras (1954) P.8*

just north of modern Mombasa. From there with the help of an Arab Pilot he sailed straight across the Indian ocean and landed at Kappad<sup>6</sup> 8 miles away from Calicut. On the west coast of India the long sought for sea route to India was thus discovered.<sup>7</sup> A large crowd had gathered on the shore to witness the curious ships. Gama and his friends decided not to land without hostages. Accordingly communications were opened with the Zamorin's officers. The Zamorin who was then at Ponnani sent a pilot to take their ships inside the harbour at Pantalayani Kollam, where they could be safe from storms resulting from the out break of the monsoon. The Kotwal of Calicut was also instructed to receive the Portuguese and bring their captain with befitting honours to his palace at Calicut.<sup>8</sup>

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6. *Kappad has become a place of historical importance after the landing of Vasco-da-Gama there. It lies 13kms north of Kozhikode city and 45 kms south to Mahe. Now it is a tourist centre.*

7. Rao. P.R. 'History of modern Andhra', Hyderabad (1978) Page 304, 305.

8. Raja. P.K.S. "Mediaeval Kerala", Calicut (1966) P.76.

Political condition of Malabar at the end of the thirteenth century before the arrival of the Portuguese presented a complex feudal scene.<sup>9</sup> K.M. Panicker explains the social conditions of Malabar before the arrival of the Portuguese. In many ways Kerala's organisation was primitive but she had evolved a system in which trade flourished, different communities lived with out friction and absolute religious toleration existed.<sup>10</sup>

Vasco da Gama and his followers were well received by Zamorin of Calicut. Very soon they established settlements at Calicut, Cochin and Cannanore. The Portuguese had two aims - one to divert the Asian trade of Europe from land routes controlled by the Muslims to the newly discovered sea route which was controlled by the Portuguese, two - to

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9. Panicker. K.M. "Malabar and Portuguese", Bombay (1929)  
Page.18.

10. Ibid. Page.27

advance eastward from India to south east Asia and China.<sup>11</sup> Gama reported his objectivities in reply to Zamorin as "Christians and spices". The expected Christian establishment was a confusion with the Ethiopian legend of Prester John. The Spices were in the first place, the pepper and cardamom and other products of the Zamorin's small but important strip of the Malabar coast. Beyond that the prize was the monopoly of trade with the spice islands of the further east of which Calicut had for centuries been a thriving centre. It was the control of traffic which enriched not only the Zamorin and his overlord but the merchants of Arabia, Egypt and the Persian gulf and finally of Venice, was seen to Portugal for maritime progress and Christian zeal.<sup>12</sup>

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11. Rao. P.R *"History of Modern Andra"* - Hyderabad (1978)  
P.P. 4,5.

12. Francis Watson - *'A Concise History of India'*- London (1979).  
P.21.

At first the Portuguese used to send out fleets to India almost every year to destroy the Muslim shipping.<sup>13</sup> The customary feeling of the Portuguese must have been intensified on their arrival in Malabar when they discovered that they were facing a blockade of Muslims. The latter had complete control of trade. C.R. Boxer states, three aspects of Portuguese rule in India conquest, navigation and commerce.<sup>14</sup> The city of Calicut was all inhabited by foreign and native Moors (Muslims) the richest that there were in all India. The hostility of the Portuguese to the Muslims, was not only due to commercial rivalry but a hostility which the Iberian powers had inherited from their long drawn out fight with the Moors in Spain and Africa.<sup>15</sup> In the 15th century Portuguese attempt was to break the Muslim

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13. Verma. D.C. *'History of Bijapur'* - New Delhi - (1974) P.54.

14. Boxer. C.R. *Portuguese India in the mid seventeenth century*, Bombay (1980), P.11.

15. Krishna Ayyer. K.V. *"A History of Kerala"* Coimbatore (1965) P.159.

monopoly in trade. It was at the time of Pedro Alvarez cabral who was assigned to command the fleet after the return of vasco da gama on 29th, August 1499 that war between the Muslims and the Portuguese was carried in to the Indian ocean and to India itself as each sought to hold monopoly of the spice trade.<sup>16</sup>

The Christians whom vasco da gama did find in Malabar, so called syrian community, had been peacefully settled there for more than a thousand years. So had the Arabs, whose Presence surprised and dismayed him. Unconnected with the Muslim Sultanates to the north, they were favoured by the Hindu Zamorin, whose dependence up on Arab commercial activity made him friendly.<sup>17</sup>

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16. Mohammed Koya. S.M "Mappilas of Malabar" Calicut University (1983) 26.

17. Francis Watson 'A concise history of India' - london (1979) P.105.

During the year 1500-1509 AD the Portuguese succeeded in gaining control over the Indian ocean. The next year Francisco d' Almeida came to Cochin as viceroy of Portuguese possessions in India. He felt that the resources of Portugal should not be wasted in establishing a territorial empire in India and wanted that the Portuguese should maintain supremacy on sea and continue their activities purely to commercial transaction. His policy is known as the "Blue water Policy". The "blue water policy" was reversed by Alfonso de-Albuquerque the successor of De Almeida. This eminent navigator and founder of the Portuguese power in the East landed in India in 1503 on Malabar coast<sup>18</sup>. He conquered Goa in 1510 and Malaca in Malaysia in 1511. Krishna Deva Raya, the ruler of Vijaya Nagar maintained friendly relations with the Portuguese and allowed them to retain Goa.<sup>19</sup>

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18. William Jackson "History of India IX. Vol New Delhi (1987) P.227

19. Rao. P.R 'History of Modern Andra' Hyderabad, (1478) P.4

In 1530 the Portuguese captured the town of Surat and the strong fortress on the island of Diu was built in 1535. It sustained two memorable sieges in 1537 - 1538 and 1546, respectively but was captured by the Arabs in 1688 when the Portuguese power in India had already begun to decline.<sup>20</sup>

Favourable factors were many for the Portuguese success in Malabar. In 1493 Pope Alexander VI had issued a Bull, "the Bull of Demarcation"<sup>21</sup> sanctioning the right of trading with the eastern countries

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20. *"Political Legal and Military History India"* (Ed) H.S. Bhatia. Volume-7 New Delhi (1986) - P.18

21. *Spain and Portugal the two tiny nations of western Europe began to quarrel over the lands, discovered by their navigators. To avoid a future friction Pope Alexander VI issued a bull "the Bull of Demarcation" by which he drew an imaginary line through the Atlantic ocean and gave the western part to Spain and eastern part to Portugal to explore and colonise. Other European powers including England and France were not given representation in the "papal division". They did not respect the "papal line" and actively participated in the geographical discoveries. It was England which became successful in the field of colonisation.*

exclusively to the Portuguese. So Portugal was free from competition from other European countries in her colonies in the eastern part of the world. Secondly, the Portuguese sailors and soldiers were well disciplined and well equipped. They made a mark on the mind of the orientals. On the other hand, they were ready to defeat the native people. At the same time the native rulers of Malabar welcomed them. The Vijaya Nagara empire had helped them to defeat the Muslim power. Thirdly, the mutual rivalry of native rulers was favourable to the Portuguese. Rivalry between the rulers of Calicut and Cochin helped the Portuguese to gain power in Cochin. There was no prince powerful or resourceful enough to resist the Portuguese aggression.<sup>22</sup> Cochin became the naval base of the

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22. Raja. P.K.S - Mediaeval Kerala - Calicut (1966) P.83. *The bitter rivalry between the Zamorin on the one side and the Raja of Cochin, the Kolathiri and other minor powers on the other created favourable conditions for the partial realisation of the Portuguese dreams at least for a short period. No prince of Kerala was powerful enough to resist Portuguese aggression.*

Portuguese to attack neighbouring areas like Ponnani. The naval victory of De Almeida near Diu in 1509 against the combined opposition of the Muslim rulers of Egypt, Arabia and Gujarat, raised the Prestige of the Portuguese and gave stability to their Indian Possession. Albuquerque who was an able conqueror and capable administrator helped to stabilise the Portuguese India.

The political conditions of Kerala at the end of the 15th century, before the arrival of the Portuguese were also favourable. There were three important Rajas, Zamorins of Calicut, Raja of Venad and Raja of Kolathiri. The other local feudal lords or Naduvazhis were of Kannur, Thanur, Crangnore, Cochin, Edappalli, Vadakkumkur, Kayamkulam etc. Malabar also came to be divided into many city states or principalities under feudal chieftains. There were also local chiefs or Madambis.<sup>23</sup> Many little local lords or chiefs had no

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23. "Madambis" - small local chiefs

their own coins and their houses were thached sheds.<sup>24</sup> When Zamorin attacked Cochin the situation created confusion in Malabar. Law and order was maintained by Kaimals and Karthakals.<sup>25</sup> Even among them, some supported more than one king, for example, in Cochin some feudal lords or Madambis supported Zamorin also. This political disunity was favourable for Portuguese in Malabar area.

During the medieval times Ponnani was one of the major cities in the northern part of Zamorins'

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24. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P "Studies on Medieval History" Trivandrum (1975) P.19.

25. Panikker. K.M - 'Keralathile Swatantra Samaram' Trivandrum (1957) P.9.

*'Kaimal' and 'Karthakkal' were the two among the 116 sub divisions of the Nair caste in Kerala. Under the medieval rulers the Nair performed military duties. The term Nair itself is considered to have originated from the designation 'Nair' meaning commandant. Distinct functions were attributed to the different subdivisions of the Nair community. At the time of the war between the Zamorin and Cochin Raja there had been much lawlessness and confusion in Malabar. The maintenance of law and order was performed satisfactorily by the Kaimals and Karthakals.*

empire. In the history of Malabar the Zamorins were among the most cultured and accomplished sovereigns. According to K.V. Krishna Ayyar legends and traditions constitute the main if not the sole source of our information for the origin and early history of the Zamorins". The Zamorins originated from the Ernatudayavar. The Zamorins were the central figure in Kerala history in the middle ages as the Rakshapurusha or protector of Mamankam or the great national assembly which met at Tirunavaya once in twelve years. The rise and fall of the Zamorins Synchronise with the beginning and end of the middle ages respectively.<sup>26</sup>

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26. Raja P.K.S "Medieval Kerala" - Calicut (1966) - P.19.

*The Zamorins of Calicut had their origin from two 'Eradis' (People belonging to Ernad) of Nediyruppu in Ernad about whom there are references in the Jewish copper plates. They were called as Eranatudayavar or Nediyruppu swarupam. The 'Kerolpathi' assigns their origin to the time of the partition of the country by ceraman perumal the last of the perumals who left for Mecca to embrace the religion of Islam. It is said that they were given only a small slice of land and a broken sword*

*(P.T.O)*

Ponnani which grew up as a commercial centre and as an important port became the second capital city of Zamorins. The Zamorins gave equal status to Ponnani with that of Calicut. Malabar's chief exports like pepper, Cardamom and teakwood were taken from this port to the west Asian countries. The Zamorins granted special concessions to the Arab traders which

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Contd.foot note no.26

*(odinja val) by Ceraman Perumal with the injunction to "die, kill and annex" and to rule as the emperor of the whole of 'Malainadu'. Though this story has little historical basis the rulers of Nediyruppu (in Ernad) a tiny land-locked region having no access to the sea, embarked up on a career of wars and conquests and with in a century they be came the powerful rulers of Malabar. The Arab settlements in their territory contributed much to the rise as a major power in Kerala. After subduing the petty chieftains and becoming the 'Rakshapurusha' or 'Protector' of 'Mamanka' the zamorins assumed the title of 'Kunnala Konatiri' or 'King of the hills and waves'. It is from the sanskrit equivalent of this word 'Samuri', 'Samudri' or 'Tamutiri' that the Malayalam corruption of the same 'Samuthiri' and its english equivalent 'Zamorin' originated. The Zamorins were among the most cultured and accomplished sovereigns of Kerala and their rise and fall had been simultaneous with the beginning and end of the medieval period respectively.*

helped them to secure the monopoly of the export and import of trade of Ponnani and Calicut.

The political ambition of the Zamorins to expand his empire resulted in several military campaigns in which the Arabs helped him with ships, horses and soldiers. The Zamorin established his suzerainty over Beypore, Parappanad, Vettam, Kurumbranadu and Payyanadu. In south Malabar Valluvanadu was conquered by him. His aim was the conquest of Tirunavai on the banks of Bharatapuzha in the territory of the Valluvanadu ruler. It was near Ponnani. Tirunavai was a place of great political importance and it was here that 'the famous pan-Kerala assembly or festival known as Mamankam or Maha Makam was held once in every twelve years.<sup>27</sup> This Celebration had its origin during the reign of Perumal. It was first celebrated in 829 A.D. In 1300 A.D Zamorin conquered

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27. William Logan - "Malabar Manual" Vol.I Madras (1951)  
PP.168-169.

Thirunavai and he became the Rakshapurusha or the protector of the Mamankam. In 1695 when Zamorin participated in the Mamankam he stayed at Ponnani.

Before the domination of Zamorins empire Ponnani was under the Thirumanasseri Raja. An internal feud between the two Namboodiri factions of Panniyur and chovvaram resulted in an additional element of conflict in the relations between the Malabar rulers of this time. The feud was known as 'Kurumalsaram'.<sup>28</sup> It began as a local conflict between two villages but before long it lost its usual good qualities and gave place to a struggle for power in which all the ruling Rajas of Malabar were forced to take sides. The Zamorin sided and supported the cause of the Panniyur faction. But at the same time, the Valluva Konathiri and Perumpadappu stood with the

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28. 'Kurumalsaram' 'means faction fight or internal feud. Here it is a traditional conflict between two Namboodiri villages namely Sukapuram and Panniyur.

Chovvaram faction. The Kurumatsaram look an unexpectedly violent turn and both the parties appealed for help to their respective patrons.<sup>29</sup> The domain of Thirumanassery Raja who was the supreme leader of Panniyur faction was attacked by the Valluvakonathiri and the Perumpadappu ruler. Thirumanassery Raja appealed to Zamorin and the Chief of Vettal for assistance against his enemies. Ponnani was under the Thirumanasseri Raja and he promised to cede to the Zamorin this wealthy and beautiful territory place on the western coast of Panniyur as a reward for the help to be rendered to him in the hour of need. Zamorin took this as a great opportunity to expand his empire.<sup>30</sup> He had organised a large army from Kozhikode area known as the 'Nayar Pada'<sup>30</sup> led in person by himself and the 'Eralpad", the heir - 'apparent'. The Arab merchants and Muslims Chiefs offered all types of help

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29. Sreedhara Menon. *A - A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam (1976) P.175.

30. Pada - Array of Army

on the side of Zamorin. The battle fought on land and sea under the Zamorin and the heir apparent resulted in the defeat of Valluvakonathiri. Ponnani was now under Zamorin. He got the great port in Ponnani, one of the ancient ports of Kerala known as Tyndis. As a result of this trade and commerce flourished and gradually Ponnani became the second capital city of Zamorin and his naval headquarters.

From 1498 to 1663 Malabar had been under Portuguese menace and the Zamorins being the most powerful, cultured and accomplished sovereigns of Kerala were determined to drive them off the coast. The Zamorins were fortunate enough to have the services of the Kunhalis, Mappila Admirals in their classic fight against the Portuguese attempt to deminate the commerce and politics of Malabar.<sup>31</sup> The struggle continued for over a century as a result of which not

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31. Panikkar. K.M. *Malabar and the Portuguese*, Bombay (1931), P.134.

only the economy of the Zamorin and the Mappilas took a sudden fall from the dizzy heights of prosperity that earlier prevailed but Ormuz, Calicut, Cochin, Quilon and Malabar which had for centuries been noted as the principal seats of trade in the east were also effectively ruined. It was with the support of the Dutch that the Zamorin had been able to defeat the Portuguese. On February 13, 1663 the Portuguese dominance over Kerala came to an end, once for all.<sup>32</sup> A detailed account of the Hundred years' war against the Portuguese, the role of the Kunhalis and effects of the war on Malabar, is given in the chapter that follows.

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32. Gopalakrishnan. P.K. *Keralathinte Samskarika Charithram*, Thiruvananthapuram (1974) P.377.

# KUNHALIS AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE PORTUGUESE-CONSEQUENCES

Ammad Kunnath “The rise and growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D. To 1792 A.D.” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut

Kunhalis and the struggle against  
the Portuguese Consequence

## CHAPTER 4

### KUNHALIS AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE PORTUGUESE-CONSEQUENCES

The epoch of western domination over Asia began with the landing of Vasco da gama, the Portuguese navigator at Kappad, near Calicut in 1498. Opposition to “Western intrusion” is as old as this date. The European powers set out to subdue the world with holy reminiscence of the crusading spirit.<sup>1</sup> No wonder where ever they went they carried on a policy of persecution to wards the Muslims. The imperialist policy of the westerners had often been stained with this historical and hereditary enmity.<sup>2</sup> So it was not accidental that the Muslims played an important role in driving away the colonial powers from India. The Portuguese, first

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1. Boxer C.R, *The Portuguese Sea-borne Empire 1415.1825* London 1969. P.xxi

2. Marjay F.P, *Portuguese in India: A Historical Survey*, Lisbon (1959), P.1.

of the westerners to come to India had been cruel and arrogant towards the Mappila Muslims of Malabar.<sup>3</sup> The Mappila tradition of militancy began with the advent of the Portuguese. Moreover the tide of fortune changed course with the arrival of the Portuguese, who carried with them the spirit of the crusaders and the rivalry in the Iberian Peninsula, besides ofcourse greed for the valuable spices of Malabar which they wanted to monopolise.<sup>4</sup> These were period of long and bitter struggle for the Mappila muslims of Malabar. It marked the decline of the Muslims. From the very beginning

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3. According to K.M. Panikker the hostility of the Portuguese to the Muslims was not only due to commercial rivalry, but a hostility which the Iberian powers had inherited from their long drawn-out fight with the Moors in Spain and Africa. So deep was the animosity of the Portuguese towards the Muslims that Afonso D' albuquerque is reported to have expressed his jubilation at the massacre of 6000 Muslims on the occasion of the conquest of Goa in 1510 with the comment: "It was indeed a great deed and well carried out".

4. Prof. Jaleel. K.A. in the 'Forward of the book', *Islam in Kerala Groups and movements in 20th century* by Dr. M. Adul Sameed (1998) Kollam. P. VII.

the Portuguese tried to create a wedge between the Zamorin and the Muslims. Shaik Zain-ud-Din II states “they said to the amils (chieftains) of the zamorin, that it is fit that the Muslims be prevented from their trade and their voyages to Arabia. The advantages which would accrue to you from their trade would be far greater if you carry on trade with us”<sup>5</sup> The heroic deeds of the Mappila Muslims of Malabar especially of the Kunhalis in the hundred years war against the Portuguese are still fresh in the minds of the Keralites irrespective of caste, creed or religion. Praise worthy is the sacrifice Mappilas made for the salvation of their country.<sup>6</sup> The conflict that began with the attack of Calicut by Cabral continued till 1600 when Kunhali IV had been handed over to the Portuguese by the Zamorin. Even after 1600 guerilla warfare continued. So the duration of the hundred years war in Malabar

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5. Shaik Zain-ud-Din, *Tuhfatul Mujahidin* (trans) M.H. Nainar, Madras (942) P.54.

6. Mohammed.K.B.K, *Mappilamar* (Mal), Calicut, 1992, P.40.

was from 1500 to 1663 like that of the hundred years war in Europe<sup>7</sup> (1337-1453) which also was not confined to 100 years.

At the time of the arrival of Vasco da gama at Calicut (1498) the Zamorin was at Ponnani. But he gave instructions to his officials to welcome the newcomers and to extend them every help. The Arabs of the town who had a premonition of the real intentions of the Portuguese tried to put all kinds of obstacles in their way and even to prevent an audience between Vasco da gama and the Zamorin.<sup>8</sup> Though Gama was given a warm welcome he failed to settle the commercial deal. Zamorin insisted on payment of custom duty by

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7. *The hundred years war in Europe was a long struggle between England and France which lasted for more than a century from 1337 to 1453. It was not a continuous war but with intervals and with varying fortunes. The underlying cause was feudalistic. The hundred years war in Malabar was also not a continuous one. There were frequent intervals. It was mainly for trade monopoly.*

8. *Danvers. F.C, The History of Portuguese in India Vol.II, London 1894. P.85*

the Portuguese in accordance with the law of the land. Any how the resourceful Portuguese navigator succeeded in persuading the Zamorin to grant to the Portuguese permission to build a factory at Calicut. The fact that Gama carried off five natives with him as captives shows that there was some misunderstanding between the Zamorin and Vasco-da-gama. Kolathiri Raja invited him and offered to the Portuguese facilities for trade at Kannur. He got sufficient loading for his ships through the good office of its king who was a rival of the Zamorin. Gama returned to Lisbon on July 8, 1498 with a cargo that repaid sixty times the cost of his expedition.<sup>9</sup> Poets and historians have surmounted the comparatively simple facts of this voyage with fictions, but stripped off its romance the story does not suffer interest. It stands as one of the epoch - making land marks in the world's history. Apart from

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9. *Vasco da Gama was honoured with the title of "Lord of the conquest, Navigation and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia and India" by the King of Portugal. He lost no time in trying to convert the conquest of India in to a reality.*

its effects on the course of events, the first meeting since the days of Alexander, 1800 years before, of the civilization of the east and west must always retain its interest. Throughout the whole stay of the Portuguese, the Zamorin showed no signs of treachery on the other hand, da Gama's conduct in carrying off the five men he had entrapped on board his ships is indefensible.<sup>10</sup>

The next voyage led by Pedro Alvares Cabral with a fleet of thirteen ships openly precipitated the struggle that was to become the mark of the ensuing centuries. When Cabral found that the Muslim merchants had collected together all the pepper of the season he attacked the muslim ships in the port and confiscated their goods which resulted in a near riot in the Calicut town. The Muslims and Hindus united against the outrage and attacked the Portuguese factory. Several outrage and attacked the Portuguese factory. Several

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10. Whiteway R.S, *The Rise of Portuguese power in India*, West Minster (1899) P.82.

Portuguese were killed and the remaining escaped to their ships by swimming. Calbral took revenge and bombarded the town for the next two days. Later cabral reached Cochin, the traditional enemy of the Zamorin, where he received a warm welcome and loading for his ships. In this way a firm friendship was established between the Cochin Raja and the Portuguese, which added an additional factor in the already complicated situation in Kerala.<sup>11</sup>

At Cochin the Portuguese were permitted to establish a factory. The echoes of cabral's in politic bombardment of Calicut reverberated for over a hundred years along the coast and on the Indian ocean.<sup>12</sup> These developments went to strengthen the Zamorin's faith in his counsellors, the Muslim merchants and made him a pronounced enemy of the Portuguese.

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11. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala Trivandrum* (1989) P.31.

12. Mohammed Koya. S.M. *Mappilas of Malabar, Calicut* (1983) Page. 27.

The Portuguese had struggled against the Muslims for trade domination.<sup>13</sup> This hostility of the Portuguese was not only due to commercial rivalry but a hostility which the Iberian powers had inherited from their long drawn out fight with the Moors in Spain and Africa.<sup>14</sup> Vasco da gama who came a second time to India in 1502 inaugurated a policy of violence, which plunged Portuguese -Muslim relations in to antagonism. Gama demanded from the Zamorin nothing less than the banishment of every Musalman in Calicut to which the Zamorin was not prepared to agree. Calicut was repeatedly bombarded and the Arab merchant fleet totally destroyed. The high handedness of the Portuguese and their unreasonable claims brought the Muslims and the Zamorin closer together.

It is about this time we begin to hear of the famous Kunhali Marakkars. Among the rulers of

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13. Fariya Y. Souza, *Portuguese Asia*, London (1965) I, P.314.

14. Panikkar. K.M. *A History of Kerala*, Annamalai Nagar (1960) - P.159.

medieval Kerala the credit for maintaining a navy and there by keeping up Kerala's ancient maritime tradition goes to the Zamorins of Calicut. They maintained one of the best equipped fleets of the day and its command was entrusted to the Kunhali Marakkars who were famous for their superb skill in navigation and proficiency in sea warfare.<sup>15</sup>

The origin of Kunhali Marakkars is a theme of controversy. William Logan is of the opinion that they hailed from Panthalayani Kollam. When Henrique de menezes destroyed the Muslim settlement at Pantalayani, the family moved to Tikkodi and from there again to Kottakkal at the mouth of the Kotta river.<sup>16</sup> O.K. Nambiar is of the view that they descended from a mappila named Mohammed, originally a marine merchant of Cochin who was forced by the high

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15. Sreedhara Menon. *A Kerala History and its makers*, Madras (1990). P.104

16. William Logan, *Manual of Malabar*. Vol.1 Madras (1951) P.330.

handedness of the Portuguese to migrate to Ponnani where he settled with his family, carried on his trade and sought to repair his broken fortune.<sup>17</sup> Some ascribe to the Kunhalis a foreign origin. It is suggested that they were the descendants of the Arab merchants who came to trade with Kerala in the 7th century A.D.

The name Kunhali Marakkar<sup>18</sup> itself requires explanation. The term 'Kunhali' was an honorific title conferred on the admiral of his fleet by the Zamorin along with the special right to wear a silk turban. It was assumed by four successive persons who held this post. The term Marakkar means, according to one view, "the doer or follower of the law margam" - an appellation given to natives who professed foreign religions like Christianity or Islam. The term Marakkar may also

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17. Nambiar. O.K, *"Portuguese Pirates and Indian Seamen"*, London (1996) P.45.

18. Kunhali Marakkar accepted titles like "King of the Malabar Muslims", "Lord of the Indian Seas", "Defenders of Islam" and "Expellers of the Portuguese".

mean a "Sailor". "Marakkalam" in Tamil means a ship made of wood. There is also the probability that it is an honorific plural of the term Marakkan, a common surname applied to the Hindu sea-going folk (Mukkuvans) of the Kerala coast.<sup>19</sup> The term should have been used to describe the Muslims like the Kunhali Marakkars who followed the profession of maritime commerce.<sup>20</sup> Their lives reflect glory and honour on all Malabar people for their achievements against the navel domination of Portuguese and form a great chapter in the history of this region.<sup>21</sup>

A brave warrior and an experienced sea man Mohammed about whom we have already mentioned, watched with growing alarm the rapacity of the

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19. Thurston. E, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol.5, Madras (1909), P.112.

20. Sreedhara Menon. A, *Kerala history and its makers*, Madras (1990) P.105.

21. Panikker. K.M, *India and Indian Ocean*, Bombay, 1971. PP.11-45.

Portuguese, their violation of agreements and their contempt of Islam and the many foul deeds they committed on sea and land. Mohammed and his brother Ibrahim went to Calicut and offered their swords, ships and services to the Zamorin in his war against the Portuguese. The Zamorin accepted their services and conferred on Mohammed the title of 'Kunju Ali', 'the beloved'. He took to the sea and attacked Portuguese vessels whenever he met them.<sup>22</sup> The word "Kunjali" is an honorific title which means "dear Ali" when, added to "Marakkar" it means "dear Ali", the navigator of ship.<sup>23</sup> He built a fort at Ponnani Azhimukham. This was known as Marakkar Kotta. Gradually it became the naval head quarters of Zamorin. Often Portuguese forces attacked Ponnani.

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22. Nambiar. O.K. *Portuguese Pirates and Indian Seamen*. London (1946) P.45.

23. Kunhali. V, *Origin of Kunhali Marakkars and organisation of their fighters, in Indias naval traditions (ed), K.K.N. Kurup, Delhi (1997), PP.3-4.*

They plundered and fired the town and mosques. Portuguese soldiers captured beautiful muslim young ladies and raped them. When their children grew up they turned against the Muslims. It is proper to say that open fights became an every-day affair between the Portuguese and muslims in Ponnani and some other parts of Malabar.

The Kunhali Marakkars were thus Mappila admirals of the Zamorins in their classic fight against the Portuguese attempt to dominate the commerce and politics of Malabar. The history of Portuguese contact with Malabar in the 16th century is the history of the Marakkars who sacrificed their lives and resources in defence of their country and sovereign.<sup>24</sup> During the

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24. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P Mappila Muslims of Kerala Trivandrum, (1989) P.48.

*Dr. Ibrahim Kunju pays tribute to the Kunhalis by remarking that: "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.*

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 were comparisons 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 civilized. They were never responsible for the kind of atrocities that Gama and his successors committed.<sup>25</sup> There are four persons with the title 'Kunhali Marakkar'. They are Kunhali I, II, III & IV. Kunhali I who was appointed as Admiral in 1507 by the Zamorin is referred to by the contemporary historian Shaik Zain-un-Din as Kunhali Marakkar itself. Kunhali II was the son of Kutti Ali one of the

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25. Panikkar. K.M. *India and the Indian Ocean*, Bombay (1971), P.45.

enterprising naval captains who served under Kunhali I. Kunhali III was the famous pattu Marakkar who helped the Zamorin in capturing the Portuguese fortress of Chaliyam. The most famous of the Kunhali Marakkars was Kunhali IV, nephew of Kunhali III who fought heroically against the Portuguese and the Zamorin himself and met with a tragic end in 1660.<sup>26</sup>

During the years 1500 - 1509 the Portuguese succeeded in gaining control over Indian ocean. They had established a base at Cochin in 1503. The next year Francisco de - Almeida came to Cochin as viceroy of Portuguese possessions in India. He felt that the resources of Portuguese should not be wasted in establishing a territorial empire in India and wanted that Portuguese should maintain supremacy on sea and confine their activities to purely commercial transactions. Alfonso-de-Albuquerque never followed

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26. Panikker. K.M, Malabar and the Portuguese, Bombay, 1923, P.26.

this policy. He was the successor of De Almeida who conquered Goa in 1510 and Malaca in 1511. Krishna Deva Raya, the ruler of Vijayanagar maintained friendly relations with the Portuguese and allowed them retain Goa.<sup>27</sup> By 1505 the Portuguese under Almeida were able to build forts at Cochin and Cannanore. With the establishment of her domination in Cochin it was easy for the Portuguese to attack and plunder Ponnani. In 1507 and 1524 they looted Ponnani and destroyed the mosques and business centres of the Muslims.<sup>28</sup>

When his repeated attempts to Chastise the Cochin Raja and the Portuguese failed the Zamorin 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

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27. Rao. P.K., *History of Modern Andra, Hyderabad (1978) Page.4.*

28. Kareem. C.K. *Kerala Muslim Charithram Statistical Directory Vol.III, Cochin (1991) P.19.*

Muslim merchants, the collaboration of the Sultans of Egypt, Gujarat and Bijapur to drive out the Portuguese from the eastern waters.<sup>29</sup> The Sultan of Egypt supported him with men and material. The Muslim powers of the South including Bijapur were fully aware of the danger and formed a confederacy and defeated the Portuguese fleet off Chaul.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile the Zamorin had built up a large armada. He was fortunate to have as the Admiral Kunhali Marakkar I, first of the four Kunhalis whose chronology has not been worked out accurately. Kunhali I was a brilliant and brave commander who succeeded in organising the naval defence of Calicut on a sound basis. The statement that "he had been to the Zamorin in his fight with the Portuguese what Drake had been to Elizabeth of England in her fight with the spaniards",

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29. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P *'Mappila Muslims of Kerala'* Trivandrum (1989) P.33.

30. Shaik Zainud-Din - *Thuhfat-ul-Mujahideen* (trans) Rowlandson P.91-92.

is a testimony to his service to the Zamorin. When the Portuguese raids on the coastal areas increased in frequency and severity, Kunhali avoided pitched battles and resorted to guerilla tactics of warfare.<sup>31</sup> This was possible because the Zamorins armada now consisted of a large number of small but faster moving vessels. This fleet sailed from several ports of Ponnani, Calicut, Kappad, Pantalayini and Dharmadam using such vessels kutty Ali one of the ablest and bravest subordinates of Kunhali could strike terror in the minds of the Portuguese by his "hit and run" tactics. These vessels were more than a match for the bigger vessels of the Portuguese. Manned by 30 or 40 rowers the vessels or Paraos could move out in to the sea at the shortest notice, inflict heavy damage on the enemey's fleet and save themselves by sailing back quickly.

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31. Sreedhara Menon A. *Kerala History and its makers* Madras (1987) P.106.

*Kunhali Marakkar* Iwas the naval captain of the Zamorin who organised and developed the naval wing of the zamorins army on an efficient basis in order to fight the Portuguese on equal terms.

The Portuguese who now found that their superiority at sea was seriously threatened made a determined effort to destroy the Zamorin's naval power.<sup>32</sup> Vasco da Gama, Henrique de Menezes and Lope Vazde sampaya spent all their time and energy in meeting this threat. In 1517 the Portuguese tried to kill the Zamorin by treachery. But he escaped and the new Zamorin who succeeded him in 1522 (1522-31) was less friendly with the Portuguese and this made the Kunhali and the naval captains more powerful. During 1523-24 there were several battles in the sea on the western coast. The Portuguese began to violate the terms of the treaty with Zamorin in the very same year that it was signed. There was scarcity of rice because the transportation of rice through the sea from Canara to Malabar was blocked by the Portuguese.<sup>33</sup>

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32. Panikker. K.M. *Asia and Western Dominance*, London, (1974), P.21.

33. Prof. Bahavuddin. K.M. *Kerala Muslingal Porattathinte Charithram*, Kozhikode (1995)-P.64.

On February 25, 1525, the Portuguese again attacked Ponnani under cover of heavy fire and vessels were set on fire. Many Muslim soldiers were killed. Coconut trees on either banks of the river were cut and houses, shops and mosques were all destroyed. The naval head quarters and second capital city of Zamorin's and the most important Muslim settlement, the town of Ponnani and vessels in the port were set on fire.<sup>34</sup> In 1531 the Portuguese plundered some of the vessels of the Zamorin on their way to Gujarat and caught some of Kunhalis' men like Ali Ibrahim and Kutty Ali as prisoners. Zamorin who was alarmed at this incident permitted the Portuguese to build a fort at Chaliyam inspite of Kunhali's opposition. The construction of the fortress of Chaliyam was completed within a short period of 26 days. The acquisition of Chaliyam was of great strategic importance to the Portuguese. It was like a dagger that was to divide the

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34. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala Trivandrum* (1989) P.36.

Zamorins territory in to two.<sup>35</sup> Hostility arose between the Zamorin and the Portuguese as the latter was unwilling to share with the Zamorin the customs revenue derived from the trade at Chaliyam port. The Zamorin's fleet under Kunhali attacked the Portuguese possessions in ceylon and the coromandel coast. For about seven years Kunhali demonstrated his superiority at sea and the Portuguese had to suffer a lot. In 1533 Kunhali rounded the Cape Comorin and raided the Portuguese settlement at Nagappatanam. But his plans were upset by the unexpected arrival of a Portuguese squadron. In the fight that ensued the Calicut fleet was defeated and Kunhali escaped over land disguised. But early next year Kunhali was able to organise another fleet with the help of which he could create

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35. Bahavuddin. K.M. Kerala Muslimgal - Porattathinte Charithram, Kozhikode (1995) P.68.

*He says that the Portuguese demolished the mosque built by Malik-Ibn-Dinar and its stones were used for the construction of the Chaliyam fort.*

terror in the minds of the Portuguese. As usual he continued to avoid decisive pitched battles.

While the Zamorin was fighting against the Portuguese to destroy their hold on the Kerala coast Kuttipocker or Kunhali II was busy with his operations against the Portuguese in ceylon (1538) and Kayalpattanam. The Calicut fleet under Kutti Ali was also making much head way. He was able to capture one Portuguese ship in front of the Chaliyam fort. After the fight that continued far in to the night Martin Afonso retreated in the night on the pretext that the situation at Cochin required his urgent presence there.<sup>36</sup> Kunhali's fleet now appeared in Cochin waters to divert Portuguese attention and compel their forces to withdraw. But with the help of the newly arrived reinforcements the Portuguese could defeat the Zamorin's forces both at sea and land. The much publicised arrival of an Egyptian fleet (1538)

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36. Fariya Y. Souza, *Portuguese Asia*, Vol. 1, London (1965), P. 401.

under Sulaiman Pasha to help the Zamorin turned out only to be a demonstration. The fleet could do nothing worth while and it sailed back. The Zamorin was forced to sue for peace and treaty of Ponnani was signed on January 1, 1540 according to which he granted to the Portuguese the virtual monopoly of trade in pepper and ginger at Calicut. The treaty also bound them to neutrality even if he attacked their allies. In return he agreed to accept their passports for the Moorish vessels.<sup>37</sup>

The treaty of Ponnani was only a temporary truce. Even after the conclusion of the treaty unofficial war between the Portuguese and the Malabar seamen continued. The Malabar fleet under Kunhali II had in

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37. Krishna Ayyar. K.V. *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut (1999) P.192. Krishna Ayyar is of the opinion that the Zamorin lost nothing by the treaty of 1540. The Zamorin not only got the commercial advantages which he had obtained by the treaty of 1513 but also their neutrality in his war against the Cochin Raja.

the mean time made it unsafe for the Portuguese ships number of years Kunhali eluded the vigilance of the Portuguese and preyed up on Portuguese shipping and trade. It was only in 1558 that Louis de mello was able to force an action off Cannanore. In a hard fought action, the flag ship of Kunhali was sunk and three more captured, but the rest retired unmolested since the Portuguese were unable to pursue them.<sup>38</sup>

War between the Portuguese and the Zamorin was renewed in 1550. There were no decisive battles but both parties exhausted their resources. The Portuguese resorted to the worst atrocities during this period. They destroyed temples, mosques and houses and massacred the civilian population and continued the christianising policy by converting the peasantry both Hindu and Muslim.

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38. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala - Trivandrum* (1989) P.53.

Mean while Pattu Marakkar<sup>39</sup> had taken over the command of the Zamorins fleet with the title Kunhali Marakkar III. He was the greatest of the Kunhalis. A brilliant strategist and a born leader of men, he turned out to be an ill - omen to the Portuguese. He strengthened the Zamorins navy by securing the services of foreign experts to design new ships after the European model and to give training to his men in advanced methods of naval warfare. The ships, ammunitions and weapons of war needed by his navy were made at Calicut itself. Kunhali also set up observation posts in elevated spots all over the coast to watch and report on the movements of the Portuguese fleet. The entire coast was now free from the threat of Portuguese deprecation. The Chief legacy of Kunhali III was that he made the Zamorin accept

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39. *Pattu Marakkar who distinguished himself in the seige of Chaliyam and who in recognition of his services, was allowed to fortify his base of operations, Kottakkal, later became famous as Kunhali III.*

the principle of self - reliance in the matter of organising naval defence. This policy of self - reliance was to yield rich dividends as future events would show.<sup>40</sup>

It was in 1569 that envoys came to the Zamorin from Adilshah of Bijapur seeking his assistance in a joint enterprise against the Portuguese on the western coast. It was agreed that Adilshah should attack Goa, Nizamshah should march on Chaul and Zamorin should proceed against Chaliyam. In pursuance of this treaty the Zamorin laid seige to Chaliyam. Large number of muslims from Ponnani and the neighbouring areas came to assist in the siege operation. The seige continued for four months and the Portuguese were compelled to surrender the fortress in November 1571. Kunhali Marakkar III and his navy played an important role in the seige. In recognition of the services rendered by Kunhali III the the Zamorin conferred on him several privileges and honours. He was permitted to erect a

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40. Sreedhara Menon. A. *Kerala History and its makers* - Madras (1990) P.108.

fort and dockyards at Putuppattanam, the head quarters of the Marakkar at the mouth of Agalapuzha. A strong fort was erected at Kottakkal (1572-3).

The Chaliyam fortress had been a thorn in the Zamorin's side ever since its erection in 1531. Though he failed at first to see its strategic importance the Zamorin soon realised that it would be a constant source of trouble to him and its destruction would be indispensable to the peace and commercial prosperity of Calicut. That was why he razed the whole edifice to the ground leaving not one stone up on another. The hopes of the Portuguese for conquering the whole of Malabar were frustrated once for all by their expulsion from Chaliyam. The war with the Zamorin which began with the invasion of Calicut by Coutinho ended only in 1571.<sup>41</sup> During the Chaliyam war, Zamorin

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41. Raja P.K.S *Medieval Kerala, Calicut* (1966) P.132 Raja quotes K.M. Panicker to prove the importance of the fall of Chaliyam which was a decisive victory of the Ruler of Calicut.

was welcomed to Chaliyam by leaders of muslims. When Zamorin reached from Ponnani to Chaliyam the soldiers became enthralled and his appearance on scene of war was a great Fillip to soldiers. He observed the war from the hill-top near Chaliyam.<sup>42</sup> After the capturing and demolishing of the Chaliyam fortress by the Zamorin some of the ships from Goa that had come to help the Portuguese had to return desperalety. That was the will of god.<sup>43</sup>

Shaik Zainud-Din's Comment that "the accursed Portuguese were in a fit of violent anger after the subjugation of their fort at Shaliyat" (Chaliyam) and that "they were waiting for an opportunity to destroy the towns of the Samuri and erect fortification either at Fannan or at Shaliyat..." pinpoints at the exasperation to which the Portuguese were subjected

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42. Khadi Mohammed "Fathahul Mubeen" (trans) K.K. Mohammad Abdul Kareem, Trichur (1982) P.56.

43. Velayudhan Panikkasseri Kerala in the 15th and 16th centuries, (Malayalam), Kollam (1963) P.165.

to. The loss of Chaliyam was a great blow to the power and prestige of the Portuguese in India. They now decided to follow a policy of conciliation towards the Zamorin and to crush the power of the Kunhali with his support. The high handedness of the Portuguese brought them in to trouble at Cochin also. This together with the opposition of the Malabar seamen had completely dislocated Portuguese trade. They requested permission for the erection of a fort at Ponnani. Considering the strategic importance of Ponnani the Portuguese had for long been desirous of building a fort at Ponnani.<sup>44</sup> The Zamorin protracted the issue but at last in 1585 he agreed to the erection of a Portuguese fort at Ponnani. A weak Zamorin had estranged the Mappilas by allowing the construction of a Portuguese fort at Ponnani.<sup>45</sup>

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44. Abdu Rahiman. K.V. *Mappila Charithra Sakalangal*, Choondal (1998) P.104.

45. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras (1992) P.69.

In 1595 Muhammed Kunhali, nephew of Pattu Marakkar, succeeded his uncle as Kunhali Marakkar IV. The permission given by the Zamorin to build a fort at Ponnani was resented by Kunhali and by the Muslim traders as well. His relations with the Zamorin became strained. Fore seeing that the Portuguese would seek his ruin he strengthened the fortifications at Kottakkal by building trenches and towers heavily armed with cannon. He began to show discourtesy to the Zamorin. He called himself "King of the Moors" and "Lord of the Indian seas". He virtually threw of his allegiance to the ruler of Calicut.

Having made his position strong and secure Kunhali carried on his uncle's design of fighting the Portuguese with far greater success. He captured many vessels and assisted the enemies of the Portuguese, including the Queen of Ullal, when she revolted.

These successes seem to have brought about misunderstanding between the Zamorin and his

lieutenant. The zamorin believed that Kunhali had become an over mighty subject and Kunjali felt that the Zamorin was not much interested in the welfare of his subjects.<sup>46</sup> As the relations between the Zamorin and Kunhali got estranged the Portuguese found it easy to win the Zamorin to their side and isolate Kunhali.

In 1597 an agreement was reached between the Zamorin and the Portuguese according to which they were to proceed simultaneously against Kunhali's fortress, the Zamorin by land and the Portuguese by sea. The Kottakkal fort was blockaded from land by the Zamorins forces. But as the Portuguese failed to fulfil their mission of blockading the fort by sea the assault ended in a failure and resulted in heavy loss. This proved the greatest disgrace, the Portuguese received in Asia. Kunhali was elated by this success and he even assumed the pompous titles, "Defender of

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46. Dr. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P. Mappila Muslims of Kerala Trivandrum (1989) P.58

Islam” and “Expeller of the Portuguese”. Kunhali was so complacent that he did neither make a reconciliation with his sovereign nor try to strengthen his position against a possible attack from the Portuguese. The Portuguese on the other hand mobilised their forces and entered in to a fresh agreement with the Zamorin according to which they would again launch simultaneous attacks on the Kottakkal fort and divide the spoils of war equally. The Zamorin was to retain the possession of the town and fortress of Kottakkal and if Kunhali Marakkar were to be captured alive, he was to be kept under honourable custody by the Portuguese.<sup>47</sup> The assault was made in March 1600. It proved to be a swift and short affair. Finding his position untenable Kunhali “the hero of a hundred fighting”, “resouceful and skilled organiser” surrendered to the Zamorin. He surrendered his sword to his old lord and sovereign on promise of pardon.

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47. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Trivandrum*, 1989, P.60.

Kunhali was handed over to the Portuguese for custody as per the secret agreement between the Zamorin and the Portuguese.<sup>48</sup> The Zamorin took over the fort of Kottakkal. He should never have trusted the Portuguese who were notorious for their brutish and barbarous atrocities towards the Muslims of Malabar, to keep Kunhali under their honourable custody. So the culmination of the Hundred years war gives the picture of a heinous deception that has rare parallels in the entire history of mankind. The Portuguese who were thirsting for Kunhali's blood were not in a mood to forgive him. They took him to Goa along with his close lieutenants and after a mock trial executed all of

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48. Nambiar. O.K, *'The Kunhalis-Admiral of Calicut'* Bombay (1963). P.133

*What the Zamorin had done was a heinous deception consequent on which the zamorin lost not only one of his ablest trust worthy admirals under whom his naval force had been defending Malabar against the on slaughts of the Portuguese but also banished the loyalty and friendship of the Muslims that date back to more than five centuries. Such incidents only helped to spoil the communal harmony that prevailed in Malabar.*

them. Kunhali's body was cut in to four pieces and exhibited in four prominent places as a warning to the Muslims.<sup>49</sup> When the Portuguese tried to take away Kunhali a tumult arose among the Nayar soldiers of the Zamorin which was suppressed with difficulty.

The tragic end of Muhammed Kunhali Marakkar invested his name with the halo of martyrdom.<sup>50</sup> To quote K.M. Panikkar, there can be no doubt that the lives of these chiefs reflect glory and honour on all Malabar, for their achievements against the naval tyranny of the Portuguese form indeed a great chapter in the history of Malabar". The heroic defence of the country by the Kunhalis, the Marakkars or Navigators of Zamorins against the Portuguese for more than a century and a half is a thrilling episode in the freedom

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49. Danvers F.C, *Portuguese in India*, Vol.1, London, (1894), P.188.  
Nambiar O.K, *The Kunhalis Admirals of Calicut*, Bombay (1963),  
PP.178,193.

50. Sreedhara Menon A., *Kerala History and its makers*, Madras  
(1990) P.111.

struggle of Kerala.<sup>51</sup> As a whole the Muslims of Malabar played a great role in the hundred years naval war fought between India and Portuguese in the 16th century.<sup>52</sup> It was an irony of history that the Zamorin who had been the Kingpin of resistance against the Portuguese, became an ally of the foreigners and turned against his own vassal Kunhali Marakkar IV.<sup>53</sup>

The death of Kunhali Marakkar IV and the fall of Kottakkal did not avail the Portuguese any respite from the constant struggle with the Malabar seamen. Malabar seamen began to harass Portuguese shipping and trade with vengeance. So great was the fear the Portuguese entertained of the Malabar seamen that they ventured out only in 'cafilas'<sup>54</sup>. The burning hatred

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51. *Ibid*, P.111.

52. Dr. Kareem. C.K., Kerala and her culture, an introduction, Trivandrum (1971) P.13-14.

53. Kurup. K.K.N, & Mathew K.M, Native Resistance Against The Portuguese: The Saga of Kunjali Marakkars, Calicut University (2000), P.15.

54. *Cafilas - Groups of ships with all preparations (convoy)*.

which the Malabar seamen nurtured against the Portuguese did not die down so easily. The coming of the Dutch and English who were constantly at war with the Portuguese provided greater facilities for their work.<sup>55</sup> The Portuguese remained the official rulers of north Kerala until the coming of the Dutch. Even before that their power had begun to decline. Out of Goa they never held sovereign rights over a large amount of territory where they could establish a firm base. Their revenues were absorbed by the costs of European wars, by the corruption of government officials and by the exorbitant expenditure for religious activities. The alienation of the native population, especially produced by religious intolerance weakened their hold.<sup>56</sup>

During their so called supremacy in India the Portuguese failed to build a durable empire in this

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55. Dr. Ibrahim Kunju A.P. "Mappila Muslim of Kerala" Trivandrum (1989) P.45.

56. Roland E. Miller, Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Madras (1992) P.77.

country. Except Goa, however, they held no other territorial possession of any considerable extent for any considerable time, and they were able to hold Goa because it was easily defensible.<sup>57</sup> Even in the monopoly of trade the Portuguese could not be said to have established their supremacy in India. Except in two or three towns like Cochin, Purakkad and Quilon they were not able to establish their authority anywhere in Malabar. The bold stand of the Kerala Muslims against the Portuguese aggression is to be recorded in golden letters. This has resemblance to the role of salahudheen Ayyubi in the eighth crusade (1187). If the unarmed and peace loving Kerala muslims had not presented a united front, Malabar would have become the Portuguese province instead of Goa<sup>58</sup>. The hundred years war fought by the Portuguese for their

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57. Raja P.K.S. *Medieval Kerala, Calicut* (1966) P.141

58. Shaik Ali. B. in the 'Forward' of "*Kerala Muslimgal Poratathinte Charithram* (Malayalam) Prof. K.M. Bahavudheen Kozhikode (1994) P.22.

political and commercial supremacy ended in a colossal failure with the capture of Chaliyam by the ruler of Calicut. It is proper to say that the Portuguese who came to Malabar with the “roar of a tiger” disappeared like the ‘tail of a snake’. The hundred years war and advent of the Dutch and the English gave momentum to the gradual decline of the Portuguese power.

Kerala was lacking a centralised government under one ruler. Dynastic wars, rivalry among the provincial chieftains and shifting hegemonies of external powers turned out to be the characteristics of Kerala. This political disunity was confirmed by the century and half of Portuguese contact and the hundred years war. The Portuguese followed a policy of supporting minor rulers keeping aloof the Zamorins of Calicut. The tradition of the existence of a united state under one ruler, who regularly controlled the area presently called Kerala is probably a myth.<sup>59</sup>

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59. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras (1992)

P.12.

The coming of the Portuguese brought about some radical changes in the economic field. It stopped the age long trade connection between Kerala and Arabia and Egypt on the one hand and on the other increasing trade contact had been established with Europe. Calicut, Ponnani and Cochin became centres of flourishing trade. ornamental architecture from Portugal, European luxuries, foods and drinks became fashionable here. Roland. E. Miller opines that the day of the discovery of the cape of good was an evil day for the Moplah Muslims who came out vanquished in the struggle for supremacy on the seas. The economic position of the Muslims began to deteriorate. The modest income from inland trade and small industry did not enable them to lead a comfortable life. So they began to migrate to the interior parts and sought employment in agriculture and smaller crafts. Large number of Muslims migrated from Ponnani town to the interior places like Thavanur, Edappal, Kuttippuram, vattamkulam, Marancherry etc. Even after the hundred

years war and the decline of the Portuguese power the muslims could not get economic salvation. The Portuguese yielded their power to another group of foreigners with similar aspirations and strength. "If the king of Portugal had not discovered India Malabar would already have been in the hands of the Moors.<sup>60</sup> The Muslims merchants and soldiers became farmers who had to struggle hard against the feudal lords, their masters for better life. Majority of the Jenmis of Kerala<sup>61</sup> were Hindu lords. The struggle between these lords and muslim serfs soon developed in to a rebellion the so called "Mappila outbreaks" of 19th century.

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60. *Judgement of Duarte Barbosa* quoted by Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Madras, (1992) P.74.*

61. *Janmi, The verbal meaning of 'Janmi' is 'hereditary proprietor of land' or 'Land lord'. They enjoyed special rights of privilages as the land lords under the medieval feudalistic set up. The Janmis and the upper classes enjoyed all facilities to lead a life of ease and indolence and the law of the land gave them all protection that they needed. In Kerala the Janmi system continued till 1970 when it was abolished as per the Kerala Land Reform Act.*

Before, during and after the hundred years war the arrogant and cruel Portuguese carried on a policy of persecution towards the muslims of Malabar who were their bitter enemies. An important reason for the rapid growth of muslim militancy was the forcible conversion of both the Hindus and Muslims in to Christianity. It was against this that Shaik Zainud-Din Called for a holy war (Jehad) against the Portuguese. The 'Tuhfatul - Mujahidin' is replete with references to the large scale conversion of muslims to christianity and destruction of mosques by the Portuguese.<sup>62</sup> Francis Xavier, a friend of Ignatius Loyola founder of the Jesuit order in Spain, came over to India as a Jesuit missionary and made a rich harvest of converts to Christianity. When Kunhali Marakkar and his 40 lieutenants were taken over to Goa as prisoners they were promised pardon if they were prepared to

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62. Sreedhara Menon A, 'A Survey of Kerala History', Kottayam (1976) P.222.

embrace Christianity. But they opted death to conversion. So Marakkar and his subordinates were tortured to death mercilessly. The death of Kunhali was also the end of the naval greatness of India. It sounded the death knell of the fame and prestige of Kottakkal nay of Calicut. For a hundred years Calicut navy made successful onslaughts up on the enemy. There were reverses. To save the land they took up in to action again and again. Their blood added brilliance to the salty water of the sea. They kept away the Portuguese pirates ('Sea Dogs').

# PONNANI DURING MYSOREAN INTERLUDE

Ammad Kunnath “The rise and growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D. To 1792 A.D.” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut

Ponnani during Mysorean interlude

## CHAPTER 5

### PONNANI DURING MYSOREAN INTERLUDE

In the history of south India the latter half of the 18th century was a critical period. The two large kingdoms in this part of the country, the Carnatic and Mysore were both in the throes of political confusion and economic decay. This confusing political situation in the south provided the opportunity for any ambitious chieftain to fight for the crown. The position of Mohammed Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic was not secure. The Carnatic wars fought between the English and the French with the veiled objective of getting control over the destiny of south India put the Nawab in to perpetual dependence up on the English. Mysore was also in a miserable condition. Mysore was one of those principalities which had been founded on the break up of the Vijayanagar empire. It was founded by Raja Odayar (1578-1617) who claimed Yadava descent. He was a puppet in the hands of his ministers. Hyder

a soldier of fortune distinguished himself in the several campaigns which Mysore fought.<sup>1</sup> Haider's military skill as well as his financial acumen swept him in to supreme power in Mysore in 1761.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately after his accession to the throne of Mysore Hyder Ali embarked on his expansionist career.<sup>3</sup> His conquest of the Bednore Kingdom in 1763 brought him to the very borders of Kerala. It was the absence of a central authority in Kerala that enabled the rulers of Mysore to interfere in Kerala politics resulting in a deep impact on Kerala polity and society. Kerala of this time consisted of four important territorial divisions, Kozhikode, Kolathunadu, Cochi, and Travancore and there had been wide spread dissensions among the rulers which brought about Mysorean

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1. Lewin B. Bowring, *Haider Ali and Tippu Sulthan*, Oxford (1899), P.41.

2. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala Trivandrum* (1989). P.74

3. Sheik Ali. B, *British Relation with Haider Ali*, Bangalore, 1967, P.31.

invasions. Rivalry among the local chiefs and support of some petty muslim rulers also proved to be favourable. It was quite natural that the wealth of Malabar and Malabar's proximity to the sea attracted the attention of Hyder Ali to attack Malabar.

In 1766 Hyder Ali invaded Malabar with 12000 men. This was at the request of the Aliraja of Cannanore and the prince regent of Kolathunadu. Hyder marched his army in to north Kerala and conquered the Kingdoms of Kolathu Nadu, Kottayam, Kadathanad and Kurumbranad one after the other and reached the gates of Calicut the capital of the Zamorin. The Zamorin sent all members of his family to Ponnani and committed suicide after blowing up his palace.<sup>4</sup> Hyder now became master of the Zamorin's dominion, but he preferred to retire to Coimbatore with the onset of the monsoon. Hyder Ali appointed his Brahmin

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4. Panikkar. K.M. *A History of Kerala (1498-1801)* Coimbatore (1960) P.64

officer Madanna as the governor of the newly acquired territories and garrisoned Calicut. He assumed the monopoly of exports from Malabar, setting up his Chief factory at Badagara. The rates of tribute to be received from the defeated Rajas were also fixed. The Ali Raja of Cannanore<sup>5</sup> who had become the ally of the Mysore

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5. *Cannanore city was under the control of Muslim family known as Arakkal. This only Muslim royal family of Kerala followed the 'Marumakkathayam' system of inheritance. The senior most member of the family, whether male or female, is its head. The male Chief is called the Ali Raja and the female chief the Arakkal Beebi. This dynasty is known as Arakkal swarupam of the Ali Rajas. It is believed that the first ruler of this dynasty was Mohamed Ali and that the dynasty was named after him. Another version about the origin of this designation is that this only Muslim ruler of Kerala might have accepted the title 'Ali' after the name of one of the four 'Pious Caliphs'. As they enjoyed suzerainty over the high seas and remained masters of the Laccadives and Maldives islands of the Arabiansea-they were called the 'Azhi' (sea) rajas or the 'Lords of the sea', from which the designation the 'Ali Raja' might have been derived. The Ali Rajas of Cannanore enjoyed full support of the Muslims of Malabar. A number of naval battles were fought by them against the Portuguese and they played an important role in expelling the Portuguese from the coast of Kerala.*

ruler replaced the Kolathiri Raja as the Chief power of north Kerala.<sup>6</sup> Hyder's departure was the signal for a mass rebellion in the occupied areas. The Nairs of Kottayam and Kadathanad were in the fore front of the rebellion.

Hyder Ali reinvaded Malabar and took stern measures to suppress the rebellion. He defeated the Nayers<sup>7</sup> at Puthiyangadi and made Manjeri his

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6. Roland E. Miller - *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Madras (1992) P.87.

7. Namboodiri N.M, *Vellayude Charithram* (Mal), Sukapuram (1999), P.23.

*The term 'Nair' was originally a designation meaning literally 'commandant', a term that is supposed to have derived from the word 'Nayakar' meaning 'leaders'. At one time there was the domination of the Nair in the society of Malabar. There are 116 sub divisions in the Nair caste. Megasthenes in his 'Indica' refers to a caste called 'Nare'. K.P. Padmanabha Menon opines that Nares were Nairs and so they were the original inhabitants living in south India even before the fourth century B.C. Francis Buchanan argues that the Nairs were descendants of the 'Nevars' of Nepal who might have migrated to south India and settled there. He enumerates 12 sub divisions of Nair castes and attributes distinct function enjoined on each. At present the Nair caste constitutes 15% of the total population of Kerala.*

headquarters. But he could not remain here for long and returned to Mysore in order to engage himself in military operations against the Mahrattas.

The difficulties of Hyder Ali emboldened the Kerala chiefs to rise again in rebellion. Kottayam was in the Vanguard of rebellion in the north and a Mysorean force of 4000 troops was beaten back. In Calicut where the Mysorean garrison was closely besieged by the rebels, the situation was saved for Hyder by the diplomacy of Madanna. Hyders army which was on the verge of defeat withdraw after receiving of monetary compensation from the Nair chiefs. The Zamorin also agreed to pay an annual tribute to Haider. Negotiations were opened with the chiefs in North Kerala also and Hyder agreed to withdraw his troops on the following terms 1) A war indemnity was to be paid to him 2) The Ali Raja was not to be disturbed 3) Palghat with its fort was to remain in his possession. The Mysore troops were withdrawn

from Kerala in 1768<sup>8</sup>. The Zamorin and the Kadathanad and Kottayam Rajas returned to their possessions. For more than six years nothing more was heard of Hyder. The Malabar Rajas were happy at the thought that they had seen the last of him. Instead of strengthening their defensive preparations to present a united front against Hyder they again started quarrelling among themselves and Malabar was once again in the grip of division and disunion. The Zamorin began to quarrel with the Cochin Raja<sup>9</sup> over a minor issue ie the appointment of a priest to the Triprayar Temple by the Cochin Raja.

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8. Sreedhara Menon A. A survey of Kerala History, Kottayam (1967) P.290.

9. *The State of Cochin was originally known as Perumpadappu and the ruling family was known as Perumpadappu swarupam. The Rajas of Cochin claims their descent from Ceraman Perumal. They were Kshatria rulers. The relation of the Raja of Cochin with the other rulers of Kerala was conditioned by the fear that he might lose his Kingdom by the aggression of others. He had recognised the Zamorin of Kozhikkode as the Suzerain in the 15th century but took the earliest opportunity to throw away the paramountancy of the zamorin and allied himself with the Portuguese and later with the Dutch.*

More over the chieftains of Malabar withheld the annual tribute to Hyder taking advantage of haider's wars with the English and the Marathas.

By November 1773, Hyder had conquered Coorg which gave him an easy access to Malabar through Coorg and Wayanad. This was exactly what he did when he embarked on his second invasion of Malabar in December 1773. Hyder despatched a force under Sayyid Sahib by way of the Thamarasseri pass and another under Srinivas Rao by way of Coimbatore and Palghat. The Kerala chieftains failed to offer any worth while resistance and Mysorean authority was restored all over north Kerala. During this great military expedition Hyder Ali stayed at Ponnani. At this time, the fort of Palakkad was reconstructed with the help of French engineers. Hyder Ali and Tipu Sulthan introduced new war weapons and relied on French technology for war.<sup>10</sup> Hyder now decided on

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10. Mohammed Moyinudheen "Sun set at Seringapatam after the death of Tipu Sulthan". Orient Longman (1997) P.36.

the conquest of Cochin. An army was despatched under Sirdar Khan which succeeded in capturing all the territories up to Trichur. The Cochin ruler sent emissaries to Seringapatam and secured the withdrawal of the Mysore troops by agreeing to pay tribute to Mysore. Hyder next planned an invasion of Travancore and sought the permission of the Dutch for his troops to march through the territories under their control. The Dutch refused to oblige where upon Hyders military chief Sirdar Khan captured the Dutch forts of Chettuvai and Pappnivattam and the principality of the Kodungallur Raja. Sirdar Khan could not continue his campaigns further south as he had been blocked by the Travancore lines or 'Nedumkotta' built on the initiative of Raja Kesava Das.

When war broke out in Europe between the English and the French (1778) it found its echoes in Kerala. At one stage Hyder Ali had attempted to ally himself with the English, but he had failed as the

latter regarded him as a rival of their own interests. Hyder offered help to the French at Mahe and this resulted in retaliatory measures on the part of the English. English forces penetrated Malabar in 1779, capturing Mahe and cutting off the French aid on which Hyder Ali had depended.<sup>11</sup> But the English at Tellicherry were in great trouble as Hyder Ali besieged Tellicherry in July 1780. The English had to evacuate Mahe and concentrate on the defence of Tellicherry. The struggle continued for one and a half years. At last the English succeeded in saving Tellicherry and recapturing Mahe. The military set backs of Hyder Ali in the war encouraged many Malabar chieftains to rebel against him. The Rajas and chiefs of southern malabar helped the English forces to drive out Mysore forces from the area. Towards the close of November, 1781 Tipu arrived by way of Palakkad to save the Mysorean

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11. Rolland E. Miller. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Madras (1992)*  
P.88)

possessions in Malabar. But before Tipu could achieve any positive result, Hyder Ali passed away (December 7, 1782) and Tipu left Kerala in haste to occupy the throne of Mysore.<sup>12</sup> By the time of his death Mysore had become the greatest Kingdom in south India not only in size but in every respect. Born poor and destitute and an illiterate Hyder Ali stands unique among the unique personalities of India. He was a self made man and achieved greatness as his talents for warfare, politics and governance were more than substantial. The life of Hyder Ali adds an adventurous chapter in the history of India.<sup>13</sup>

When Hyder Ali died Tipu Sultan was in Ponnani. Suddenly he left Ponnani for Mysore.<sup>14</sup> The boyhood of Tipu Sultan is shrouded in obscurity. He was born on

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12. Sreedhara Menon. A - Kerala History and its makers Madras (1990) P.170-171.

13. Balakrishnan. P.K. Tipu Sultan, Calicut (1989) P.36

14. Krishna Ayyar. K.V. A History of Kerala, Coimbatore (1965) P.258

November 10, 1750. 'Sultan' was not the title added to his name by Tipu when he ascended the throne. His original name itself was Tipu Sultan. His life proves that he had received proper education and training in life to be a disciplined soldier and an efficient ruler. He began his military career at the young age of fifteen. The Mysore army that attacked Malabar in 1766 had the presence of Tipu Sultan as an ordinary soldier. From that date onwards Tipu had been serving his father as a worthy son.<sup>15</sup> Hyder Ali sent him to Malabar when the Mysore army had been defeated by the English and when the Rajas and chieftains of Malabar turned against the Mysorean authority. But before Tipu could do anything worth while he had to return to Seringapatam to occupy the throne of Mysore.<sup>16</sup> It is probable that Tipu Sultan reached Seringapatam about

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15. Lewin B. Bowring *Haider Ali and Tipu Sulthan*, Oxford (1899), P.217.

16. Charles Stuart, *A Descriptive catalogue of the oriental library of the late Tipoo Sultan*, Cambridge (1809), P.265.

the 20th of December 1782 and without much display of pomp of ceremony ascended the throne.<sup>17</sup> When he became the ruler he followed his father and continued the struggle against the British. He wished to form the unity of south India against Britian. Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sahib swore on the Koran ever lasting hate for English and crush them.<sup>18</sup>

The news of the death of Hyder was received with wild acclamations of joy both by the Madras and Bombay governments. They hoped that a war of succession inevitable in oriental annals, would keep Tipu busy for a considerable time. This interval of peace, they hoped to utilise for fresh conquests and consolidating their conquests and increasing their bargaining power with him. There was, however, no war of succession, and on that score, the English hopes

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17. Gholam Mohammed *"The History of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan"*  
- New Delhi (1976) P.P 264-265.

18. Karl Marx, *Notes an Indian History, Moscow (1965) P. 95.*

were dashed to pieces. But it did not prevent them from attempting to complete the conquest of Malabar<sup>19</sup>. The Bombay government in order to create a diversion on the west and there by force the Mysoreans to withdraw from the carnatic had sent a contingent to attack Bidnur one of the richest and most strategic provinces of Mysore. Bidnur and Mangalore fell before the English. But the fruits of the victory could not be enjoyed forlong as Tipu Sultan himself controlled the military operations and recaptured Bidnur and Mangalore. An armistice was concluded on 2nd August 1783. While negotiations for concluding a more lasting peace had been going on between the English and Tipu Sultan Col. Fullarton attacked Mysorean territory from the south and captured the Palghat fort from the Mysorean garrison and left it in the Zamorins charge. This provoked Tipu to embark on another

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19. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P, Mysore - Kerala relations in the eighteenth century, Trivandrum (1975) P.24.

military adventure in Kerala and conquer the whole of south malabar up to Kotta river. The English however succeeded in checking his further advance. The English also managed to win the Arakkal Beevi to their side. The treaty of Mangalore which brought about the second Mysore war to a close was a gain as far as Tipu had been concerned. The English gave up their claims on Malabar and declared the rulers of Kerala to be the friends and allies of Tipu. This was tantamount to a recognition of Mysorean suzerainty over Malabar.<sup>20</sup>

The second Anglo-Mysore war had impressed up on Tipu Sultan the strategic importance of Malabar to the security of Mysore. During the war Malabar had become the battle ground for the Mysorean and English armies in turn, and Malabar offered an easy approach to the Mysore Kingdom. Realising the

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20. Sreedhara Menon. A. *Kerala History and its makers*, Madras, (1990) P.171.

strategic importance of Malabar Tipu was anxious to strengthen his hold over the territory. So he confirmed the appointment of Arshadbegkhan an officer of rare talents, humanity and integrity, made by Hyder before his death and sent him to Malabar. But Arshadbegkhan the new governor of Malabar was helpless as Tipu's officers oppressed the civilian population by their unjust exactions. Even the Mappilas of Ernad rose in open rebellion against this. To tackle this situation Tipu Sultan himself arrived in Kerala at the head of a large army in January 1788 and conquered the territories up to Calicut without any serious fighting.

After effecting these conquests Tipu turned his attention to a thorough reorganisation of the administrative set up of Kerala. Arshad Beg Khan had made considerable reduction in the revenue demand in southern Malabar in order to relieve the distress of the people caused by the rebellions headed by the princes of the Zamorin's family. Tipu gave priority to

the transfer of the capital<sup>21</sup> of the province of Malabar from Calicut to Feroke on the south bank of the Beypore river. He built a strong fort at the place and connected it with the other parts through a regular net work of roads. All the inhabitants of Calicut were also to move to the new capital Farukhabad. But the beginning of the monsoon upset his plans. Tipu was forced to withdraw to Coimbatore. Availing of this opportunity the people returned to their homes. Thus the Sultan's "Transfer of Capital" ended in a failure. Had it not been for the war of 1790-92 and ultimate overthrow of Tipu's power in Malabar, Farukhabad would have prospered.<sup>22</sup> The peculiar social customs like

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21. *The transfer of capital of the province of Malabar from Calicut to Feroke on the southern banks of the Beypore river in the outskirts of Calicut city, was a failure. A. Sreedhara Menon calls it as a grandiose or pompous project of Tipu Sulthan. All the inhabitants of Calicut were also to move to the new capital Farukhabad. But the beginning of monsoon upset his plans and the transfer of capital ended in apparent failure.*

22. Ibrahim Kunju A.P. *Mappila Muslims of Kerala, Trivandrum* (1989) P.77

polyandry and matrilineal law of inheritance that prevailed in Kerala seemed to be primitive and obsolete to Tipu Sultan. And so he was determined to bring about a radical re-organisation of social structure. He issued the famous Kuttippuram proclamation which read: (“.....I hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices and to be like the rest of mankind....”). He wanted the people to forsake polyandry, matrilineal system etc. The Kuttippuram proclamation created widespread resentment and the people rose in rebellion. A large number of Brahmins fled to Tranvancore.

The Rajas of Kadathanad and Kottayam sought English protection. The nairs of Calicut and south Malabar headed by Ravi Varma and other princes of the ‘Padinjare Kovilakam’ turned against their oppressors and laid seige to Calicut. Tipu sent a large army of 6000 men to raise the seige but failed. Early in 1789 Tipu himself marched to Malabar. After leaving a force at Calicut to deal with the Nairs he proceded north words. Alarmed at the advance of Tipu the local

chiefs took refuge in the British settlement at Tellicherry and later fled to Travancore.<sup>23</sup> After giving a warning to the chief of the Tellicherry factory against the protection given to the local chiefs Tipu went to Cannanore and then to Coimbatore.

The Raja of Travancore<sup>24</sup> had given shelter to Zamorin and other local chieftains. So Tipu Sultan was angry towards the Travancore Raja. At first he tried to win over the Travancore Raja by diplomacy but

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23. Sreedhara Menon. A, *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam (1967), P.294.

24. *Travancore the southern kingdom of Kerala was a small state lying between the south of Quilon and north of the cape comorin. It rose in to prominence with the accession of Marthanta Varma as its ruler in the year 1728. He aimed at the unification of Kerala and the establishment of centralised form of government. After conquering and annexing a number of small principalities he turned against Cochin. Much of the territories of Cochin was annexed with his Kingdom. But he came to the rescue of Cochin when the Zamorin conquered Cochin. A treaty was signed between the Raja of Cochin and the Zamorin of Calicut according to which they agreed to abide by the arbitration of Marthanta Varma the ruler of Travancore in case of a future dispute.*

failed. Tipu Sultan now decided to invade Travancore and subdue that state. Tipu could not fulfil his mission as the Travancore lines put up stubborn resistance and as he received information that the British had declared war on Mysore.<sup>25</sup>

The provisions of the Treaty of Mangalore that brought the second Anglo-Mysore war to a close, were not favourable to the English. The sentiments of both English officers and merchants of Bengal and Madras were that they considered the treaty merely a truce which would not last long. Lord Cornwallis the governor general himself was determined to break the power of Tipu, the inveterate enemy of the English in south India. He had by this time succeeded in concluding alliance with the Nizam and the Marathas to fight Tipu. When the preparations were completed Cornwallis declared war on Tipu on the pretext of Tipus war with Travancore

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25. Velupillai T.K, *Travancore State Manual*, Vol.2, Trivandrum (1940), P.431.

(1790-92), a cause, the legality of which is yet to be scrutinised. Tipu was defeated. The treaty of Seringapatam brought the third Anglo-Mysore war to an end and Malabar was one of the provinces ceded to the English by Tipu Sultan on the conclusion of peace.<sup>26</sup> British supremacy was established over Malabar. The establishment of British power in Malabar in 1792 had brought considerable changes in the existing traditional system of land control and agrarian relations in this region. However such changes did not affect on native institutions which had functioned as a unit of land control.<sup>27</sup>

Tipu Sultan lost half of his Kingdom. The remaining half was under post-war miseries. The third Anglo-Mysore war put Tipu Sultan in to a debt of 3 crores and 30 lakhs of rupees to be paid as war

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26. Muhibbul Hassan Khan, *History of Tipu Sulthan Bombay*, (1951), P.255.

27. Kurup. K.K.N, *William Logan, Calicut* (1991), P.1

indemnity. The war also gave a severe blow to the pride and self confidence of the Sultan. But he could never be disheartened. He got an interval of seven years, a period in which there had been no wars. But we may not be misled to think that Tipu had no history during these seven years. It was the history of a unique ruler.<sup>28</sup> He was bent up on the reconstruction of the war-torn economy. He was to concentrate on public welfare. He had been equally great as a ruler and warrior. In the entire history of India there is one and only one warrior who could boast of having fought against the English and that was none but Tipu Sultan.

Tipu Sultan paid within two years the war indemnity imposed upon him in 1792 and got back his hostages. He could not forget his heavy territorial and other losses and made haste to strengthen his military and financial resources. He negotiated with

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28. Kirmani, Meer Hussain Alikhan *"History the Reign of Tipoo Sultan"* (trans) W. Miles (London) 1842 PP.124-125.

many important Indian states to join hands with him for the formation of an anti-British league and sent letters to Persia, Arabia etc. But the charge for the declaration of war on Tipu by the English was the allegation that he had made a conspiracy with the French to drive away the English from India. In February 1799 Mysore was invaded from the east and west. The fourth Anglo-Mysore war was a short and swift affair. Early in May Seringapatam was stormed by the English. Noble Tipu Sultan is the brave man who died in the battle field as a soldier.<sup>29</sup> Tipu Sultan was pure, orthodox and abstemious. He was a man of irrepressible energy who transacted much business systematically. His physical and intellectual vigour was extra ordinary. He was learned and showed an avidity of western knowledge. He was active with his pen and spoke Hindustan, Kannada and Persian fluently. He

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29. Henderson. J.R. *The coins of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan Madras* (1921) P.14.

could express opinions on religion, science, medicine, engineering and all branches of administration, civil and military. He wrote innumerable letters and possessed a good library of more than 2000 books on a variety of subjects. Coupled with his energy and talents were his extra ordinary bravery and moral courage. He refused to save himself in his last moments by surrendering his French soldiers. He was a strategist and tactician. He was saturated with reforming zeal which affected the army, commerce, banking weights and measures, the calendar and coinage.

But it is quite unfortunate to note that both the English and the so called national historians compete in ignoring the services of this great statesman, shrewd diplomat, benevolent ruler and brave warrior. Tipu Sultan a great patriot, the tiger of Mysore who roared before the bullets from the guns of the English, is kept away from the list of patriotic freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives to the cause of freedom. Tipu had

been crucified by history itself. And this was the tragedy not only of Tipu Sultan but also of history.<sup>30</sup>

“Muslims have played a very significant role in the national struggle for freedom. They have been in the fore front of it. It was, after all from their hands that the British had versted power in India. When British imperialism was spreading its tentacles over the country and devouring one province after the other the first man to realise the gravity of the danger was the lion hearted Tipu Sultan of Mysore. He saw clearly that unless determined efforts were made in time to thwart the nefarious designs of greedy aliens, the whole of India would ultimately be swallowed by them. With this resolve, he unsheathed the sword and jumped in to a fierce life and death struggle against the British exploiters.

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30. Sreedharan. *M.P Tipu, Tragedy of History Malayala Manorama daily* - dated 03.05.1998.

Tipu Sultan made a valiant bid to unite the Indian princes against the British usurpers. He even wrote to Sultan Salim III of Turkey, to join hands with him for the expulsion of the British. His whole life was spent in the struggle. He came on the verge of success, the British were about to be swept out of the land. But they managed to achieve through diplomacy what they could not gain by arms. They clearly obtained the support of some rulers of the south and by the use of other methods of treachery and deceit brought to nought the patriotic ambitions of that gallant son of Mysore.

He preferred death to life of servitude under the British. His famous, historic words spoken a little before he met his death were, "to live for a day like a tiger is far more precious than to live for a hundred years like a Jackal".

The historians of India does not tell of a brave patriot and a more uncompromising enemey of foreign

rule. In his life time he was the most hated man among the English to give bent to their spite. Englishmen in India even went to the extent of giving to their dogs the name of Tipu Sultan. Paying tribute to the Sultan, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in "Young India", that he had no peer among those who attained martyrdom in the cause of the country and nation".<sup>31</sup> Few Indian rulers have been so much maligned and misrepresented as Haider and Tipu Sultan have been. The latter in particular, has been portrayed as "a monster, pure and simple". The policies and activities of these two rulers, especially their rule of Malabar, have been made targets of bitter attack. 'A careful study of their policies and activities will, however, clear many of these charges.'<sup>32</sup>

The Mysorean conquest of Kerala left a lasting impression on the political, economic, social and

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31. Abdul Hasan Ali Nadvi "Muslims in India" Lucknow (1980) P.P.105-106.

32. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P Mysore - Kerala relations in the 18th century. Trivandrum (1975) P.56.

cultural fields. Though the Mysorean rule lasted only for less than two and a half decades (1766-1790) it was decisive in the entire history of Kerala. The invasions of Hyder and Tipu Sultan led to the decline of the old feudal order in Malabar and to the introduction of modern progressive ideas about state and government. The Mysore Sultans organised a centralised system of administration in the territories which came under their control. The only system of government known to the Indian sub continent at that time was despotism and Tipu's system could not be different. The Sultan was the embodiment of all civil, political and military authority in the state. He was his own foreign minister, his own commander-in-chief and acted as the highest court of appeal in his kingdom. He invigorated the whole system by principles of good government and by economic management of material resources to which the neighbouring powers bore no comparison. In spite of the absence of any constitutional checks on his authority, Tipu Sultan did

not behave like an irresponsible despot. He displayed a high sense of duty to his office and believed that his subjects “constitute a unique trust held for God the Real Master”. He took great care to work for the welfare and happiness of the people”.

Tipu Sultan’s zeal for innovation and improvement prompted him to introduce a number of changes in the system of government he inherited from his father. H.H. Dodwell gives Tipu the credit of being the first Indian sovereign who sought to apply the western methods to his administration.<sup>33</sup> Each department was put under the charge of a chief assisted by a number of subordinate officers who constituted a Board. The decisions in the department were taken after full discussion where members enjoyed the right to dissent. The decisions were taken by a majority of voters and the minutes of the meetings were recorded.

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33. Dodwell H.H, *Cambridge History of British India*, Vol.6, Delhi (1963), P.10.

However, the final decision in all important matters rested with the Sultan. Under Tipu there had been an efficient system of provincial and local government. Even the critics of Hyder Ali and Sultan agree to the truth that they were among the great rulers of India.<sup>34</sup> The Nairs who played a prominent part in the resistance to Haider and Tipu lost their position of pre-eminence in the body politic of the state and their disappearance from the scene enabled the Mysore rulers to set up a centralised system of administration in the territories which came under their sway.<sup>35</sup>

During the Mysorean rule the land revenue system was re-organised on modern lines. The tenants lost their position of impotence and became important in the society when they were freed from their lords. By and large Tipu continued the revenue system of

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34. Samuel Strandberg *"Tipu Sultan the tiger of Mysore or to fight against odds"* New Delhi (1980) P.76.

35. Kirmani, Meer Hussain Alikhan, *History The Rain of Tipu Sulthan*, (trans) W. Milles London 1842, P.133.

Hyder Ali but introduced greater efficiency in to it.<sup>36</sup> He tried to establish direct relationship between the government and the cultivator by discouraging the Jemmi system, resumption of unauthorised 'inam' (rent free) lands and confiscation of the hereditary land rights of the Zamindars. The government employed the method of inducement-cum-compulsion to bring more land under cultivation. The Amil, in charge of the district, toured his district and sanctioned advances of money (taqavi loans) to the needy peasants. The actual produce from the land determined the quantum of Tax.<sup>37</sup> Money rates were also fixed for payment of taxes. In Malabar land tax was unknown until the Mysorean rule. When Haider conquered the country the necessity for organising an efficient land revenue administration was felt. The tax was collected directly

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36. *Namboodiripad. E.M.S, Kerala Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, Trivandrum (1967), P.100.*

37. *Buchanan F, A Journey from Madrass through the countries of Mysore Canara and Malabar, Vol.2, London, 1807. P.P.189-190.*

from the tenant through officials. The tenant thus got an added dignity in the new set up and the interests of the Janmi or land lord were adversely affected.<sup>38</sup> Mysorean occupation created several difficulties for the Brahmin and Nayar communities in particular. The native Brahmins were known as Nambudiris in Malabar. They were the largest Janmi class who received royalty from the temples. It was a share of the Pattam<sup>39</sup> which "the Kanakkar"<sup>40</sup> used to pay the landlords and which the Mysorean government now claimed as rent. During the pre-colonial period ie under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan Ponnani underwent changes especially in the social field. Though the Nayars lost their feudal status they enjoyed many privileges and continued to exploit the Ezhava community and other lower classes. A group of the jobless Nayar soldiers

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38. Sreedhara Menon. A. *A survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam (1967) P.296.

39. *Pattam = rent*

40. *Kanakkar = cultivating tenant*

settled near Kollanpadi in Ponnani. Their settlement is known as 'Menonthara'.<sup>41</sup> There is also a large area with Ezhava domination known as 'Ezhavathuruthi'<sup>42</sup>. Majority of Ezhavas here were agricultural labourers who lived on bare subsistence. In the time of Haider, temple lands were exempted from assessment; but "Cerikkal lands"<sup>43</sup> were considered as private property and assessed. Tipu considered that temple lands were mostly managed for the benefit of a select few higher caste people and there fore he had them assessed to land tax.<sup>44</sup>

There was tremendous progress in trade and commerce, both foreign and inland during the Mysorean

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41. 'Menonthara' = A place in Pallappuram Amsom in Ponnani.

42. 'Ezhavanthuruth' = A large area inhabited by the Ezhava community. This place in Ponnani is now known as Ezhava thuruth village.

43. Cerikkal lands = crown lands

44. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P 'Mysore Kerala relations in the Eighteenth century' - Trivandrum (1975) P.64.

rule. Tipu Sultan especially realised that a country could be great only by developing its trade and commerce and in this field he stood equal to his European contemporaries. Tipu's trade policy was aimed at making the government the chief merchant of his dominion and the trader was to enrich the treasury. So he established tight control over inland and foreign trade. He realised the importance of trade with the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea regions. Tipu Sultan arranged for the opening of trade centres in foreign countries such as Cutch, Muscat, Jiddah, Ormuz, and other places.<sup>45</sup> He even planned to establish commercial relations with Pegu and China. A commercial board was established and the Regulation of 1783-94 set forth the general duties of the officers in the department. He declared government monopoly of trade in sandal wood, pepper, cardamom, betelnut, gold and silver bullion, and export of elephants etc.

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45. Gopal. M.H. *Tipu Sultan's Mysore, an economic study*, Bombay (1971) P.19.

He purchased pepper from the producers at 100 rupees a candy<sup>46</sup> and this shows that there was direct dealing between the producers and the government. A number of factories were established in the Mysore state which manufactured wide range of articles ranging from war ammunition, sugar, paper, silk fabrics, small tools and fancy goods.

The most important contribution of Mysorean administration was the improvement of inland communication. As the country was split up in to several petty kingdoms, the need for good roads was never felt. For military and administrative purpose, a series of good roads connecting the principal towns of the province were quite essential, and from the beginning of his reign, Tipu paid close attention to the subject. Tipu constructed a net work of roads in Malabar. The coastal road from Beypore to cranganore

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46. Candy = 4.54Kg

which still retains the name of Tipu Sultan road runs through Tanur, Ponnani, Veliyancode and Chetuva. There was another gun road from Tanur to Palakkad by way of Puthiyangadi, Tritala and Lakkidi.<sup>47</sup> The most important of Tipus roads were (1) From Calicut to Pulavayi, via Perunilam, Chekkur and Tamarasseri (2) From Malappuram to Putuppanam, connecting it to the ghats (3) From Malappuram to Tamarasseri (4) From Feroke Tamarasseri via, Calicut, Elamaruti, Cattamangalam, Perunilam (5) From Feroke to Coimbatore via, Tirurangadi, Venkatakkotta, Pattambi, Kavalappara, Mankara river, Valayar (6) From Palakkat to Dintukal (7) From venkatakkotta to Coimbatore via Angadipuram (8) From Chaliyam to Cherruvay via,

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47. Kareem. C.K. Kerala under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. Cochin (1973) P.161.

*Dr. Kareem goes on and reveal the rapid and intensive nature of the construction of roads. 'The intensive nature of the work undertaken and the fast pace at which it was executed can be known when we see that this grand work was completed with in six years immediately after the second Anglo-Mysore war'.*

Tanur, Ponnani, Veliyankod, Chavakkad and along the island of Cherruvay to Kondungallur. These roads are even now called Tipu Sultan Road (9) From Feroke to Mysore (via) Kondotti, Nilambur, Karkur pass and Gajjalhattipass (10) From Cannanore to Mysore, via Tellicherry and Periyacuram (11) From Tanur to Palakkad and Coimbatore via, Puthiyangadi, Tirunavay, trittala, Kavalappara and Lakkidi and (12) From Palakkad to Kollamkod via Chittur and Thathamangalam. These roads were helpful not only for administrative efficiency and military operations but also for the promotion of trade and commerce. Many of them were connected with Feroke his capital and Ponnani his exporting centre in Malabar. Tipu Sultan established ware houses in the different parts of the country to store the goods.<sup>48</sup> The principal ware house was at Vadakara. Ware houses were established at Mahe, Koilandi, Calicut and other places. The

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48. Gopal. M.H, *Tipu Sultan's Mysore-an economic Study*, Bombay (1971) P.20.

English East India Company lost its lucrative business in Malabar because of the nationalisation of trade by Tipu Sultan. In the council proceeding of the Bombay government it was recorded as follows: "Tipu seemed determined to persevere in prohibiting the exportation of the coastal production and while the Malabar Rajas continue under his yoke the company can derive little or no benefit from the trade at Tellicherry.<sup>49</sup> Tipu had a good coinage. His coins were discovered at many places in Ponnani. The coins of Tipu Sultan exist in far greater variety and number than those of his father.

Compulsion of circumstances required Tipu Sultan to give his maximum care to the raising and maintenance of an efficient military force. His infantry was disciplined after the European model with Persian words of command. French officers were employed to train his troops and he raised a French Corps though

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49. *National Archives of India, Foreign Department, Secret and Political proceeding 26th August, 25 September 1789, SN. 96. P.1849.*

small in size. The strength of Tipu's army varied in accordance with the military requirements and resources available. On the eve of the third Anglo-Mysore war Tipu's military forces comprised 45000 regular infantry and 20000 horse besides some irregular force. Both Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan realised the importance of a naval force but could not rise to the level of their main adversary, the East India company. English occupation of Tipu's Malabar possessions in the third Anglo-Mysore war drew the Sultan's attention to the need for an effective naval task force. In 1796 Tipu set up a Board of Admiralty and planned for a fleet of 22 battleships and 20 large frigates. Dockyards were established at Mangalore, Wajidabad and Molidabad. Realising the fact that his resources were unequal to the potential and resources of the English Tipu Sultan is said to have remarked; "I can ruin their resources by land but I can not dry up the sea". This statement of Tipu has resemblance to that of Napoleon Bonaparte who after his defeat at the

naval Battle of Trafalgar against the English remarked that "I am impotent at Sea".

The conquest of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan resulted in far reaching social changes. It shook the very foundation of the traditional Malabar. The Mysore invasion administered a 'shock treatment' to the traditional Kerala society.<sup>50</sup> The Mysorean rulers curtailed the privileges of high caste Hindus like Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and Nairs who exploited the lower castes. The Menons and Nayars were land lords in Ponnani and at Trikkavu area the Brahmins had landed property with Devaswam<sup>51</sup> and enjoyed privileges by tradition. All Hindus were equal before the Mysorean rulers. Several measures of the Mysorean rulers, especially of Tipu Sultan served to shatter the myth of social superiority of the higher castes and

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50. Sreedhara Menon. A 'A Survey of Kerala History', Kottayam (1967) P.296.

51. Devaswam - property belonging to temple.

instilled among the members of the lower classes a consciousness of their own dignity and status.<sup>52</sup> It is proper to say that the Mysore invasion sounded the death knell of the old social order and inaugurated a new era of social change in the history of Kerala. The Muslims have been given several privileges and their dignity also increased during the time of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan.<sup>53</sup> Ofcourse the Muslims enjoyed a feeling of security and were not generally disturbed as they were not hostile to the rulers, though there had been hostilities against Mysorean rulers by some Muslim chieftains.

A large number of Edicts attributed to Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan became the subject matter of criticism. All allegations of cruelty and bigotry of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan were built up on the basis of these

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52. Panikker. K.M, *A History of Kerala 1498-1801 Annamala Nager* ((1960) P.345.

53. "*Christava Vijnana Kosam*" - Alapuzha (1975) P.163.

proclamations. But a careful, serious and dispassionate study of those alleged proclamations or edicts proves that they were the creations of the so called historians or were misinterpreted. Tipu was aware of the crude practices of Polyandry and half-nakedness prevailing in Malabar, which he tried to reform. He might have issued the Kuttippuram proclamation assuming the role of a social reformer. But the opinion current among our historians that the implementation of the proclamation by his officers was tantamount to forcible conversions is baseless. History does not bear testimony to such wholesale and forcible conversion. None of the contemporary sources make any mention of such conversion. Even the hostile historian of Tipu Sultan Sri. K. M. Panicker evaluated the edict thus: "It was not religious bigotry that made Tipu to issue this amazing proclamation. He was firmly convinced that in asking the Nairs to give up what he called their obscene habits he was undertaking a mission of civilization. It is the narrow reformer's mind anxious

for the moral and material welfare of the people and not the fanaticism of a bigot desirous of converting the 'Kafir' that speaks in this proclamation". K.M. Panicker continues to say that after this proclamation he began to honour Hindus with Islam. This is the universal appraisal of the effect of the proclamation. The English constantly carried on the propagation of sensational news of mass circumcisions and forcible conversion to mislead the Hindu rulers of India. If we look in to the original sources dispassionately with a view to searching out historical truth all the prevalent stories of atrocities of Mysorean rule in Kerala will disappear.<sup>54</sup>

One surprising fact about this story of religious persecution is that all writers agree that both Hyder and Tipu were exemplarily tolerant rulers as far as other parts of the Mysore kingdom were concerned; but in Malabar they practised inhuman persecution on their

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54. Kareem. C.K 'A probe in to the veracity of the Malabar edicts of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan' *Al. Harmony* (July September 1999) P.23.

Hindu and Christian subjects. There is some apparent contradiction in this story of persecution. The fact was that Hyder and Tipu persecuted their Malabar subjects, not on account of their religion but on account of their continued rebellion and sabotage. Both the rulers were as ruthless to Hindus as to Muslims, when it was a matter of security of state. Hyder and Tipu ordered forcible conversion of some prisoners of war as a measure of punishment for rebellion and continued opposition to Mysorean authority. But they do not appear to have adopted it as a state policy and gone about converting people.<sup>55</sup> The 1787 proclamation of Tipu Sultan made social or religious discrimination in Mysore unlawful. "Religious harmony is of prime importance in Islam. Islam warns against forcible conversion. There should be a spirited contest among people to perform good deeds. I take this rule equal to my heart ....., I have learnt with all respect the

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55. Ibrahim Kunju. A.P., Mysore - Kerala Relations in the Eighteenth century, Trivandrum (1973) P.68.

Hindu vedas..... From this day onwards, take it from me, it will be unlawful on the part of my subjects in Mysore or the Mysoreans living out side to show religious or racial discrimination".<sup>56</sup> Then, is there any relevance in the statement of Buchanan given below? "The Hindus were everywhere persecuted, plundered of their riches, of their women and of their children. All such as could flee to other countries did so; those who could not escape took refuge in the forests, from whence they waged a constant predatory war against their oppressors."<sup>57</sup>

Another serious allegation made against Tipu Sultan is the destruction of temples. A few temples might have been destroyed during war operations. But there is no evidence to show that destruction of temples was adopted as a state policy. But we have defenite evidence of scrupulous care being taken to preserve

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56. *Gidwani. B.S The Sword of Tipu Sultan. P.229.*

57. *Buchanan. F. "A journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar" Vol.I, London (1807) P.190.*

temples and other houses of worship. For example when Sardar Khan and his army occupied Trichur in 1786 they camped in the Vadakkunnatha Temple premises. Quoting the Temple Grandhavari, Padmanabha Menon says that the priests fearing desecration of the temple, had closed the doors and escaped. When they returned, after the retreat of the army they found the doors intact and nothing was missing ! We have also instances of munificent endowments being conferred up on, or continued to Hindu temples and Satrams. Tipu had been so tolerant that there had been three temples, (Sree Ranganathan, Narasimham and Gangatareswaram) just 100 metres away from his palace. The Trikkavu temple in Ponnani was damaged during the military operations of Tipu Sultan and he gave financial assistance to modify the temple. The statement of Lieutenant Moore, “when a person travelling through a strange country finds it well cultivated, populous with industrious inhabitants, cities newly founded, commerce extending, towns

increasing and everything flourishing so as to indicate happiness he will naturally conclude it to be under a form of government congenial to the minds of the people. This is a picture of Tipu's country", is a clear evidence to the law and order and peace and prosperity that prevailed in Tipu's dominions. The feudalistic social and political structure of Malabar was completely swept away and the most welcome changes in the socio-political institutions and in the economic structure of the country were brought about thanks to the Mysorean regime.

# CONCLUSION

Ammad Kunnath “The rise and growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D. To 1792 A.D.” Thesis. Department of History , University of Calicut

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## Conclusion

## CONCLUSION

From ancient times Malabar had trade contacts with foreign communities like the phoenicians, the Jews and the Arabs as well as countries like Greece and Rome in the west and China in the East. Ponnani was the southern most trade centre of Malabar. Merchants from all these countries were attracted by spices, and spice trade became a monopoly of the Arabs after the exit of Greeks. Pepper was exported from the four harbours of Tyndis, Musiris, Nelkande and Bekara in large ships.<sup>1</sup> The maritime activities were devoted to peaceful commercial and cultural pursuits. Situated at the confluence of the Arabian sea and the Bharatha Puzha Ponnani was one of the medieval port - towns of Malabar, and as an international trade emporium in spices played a unique role in the economic prosperity of Malabar and in carrying her name and fame abroad.

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1. McCrindle R.C, Ancient India, London, 1877, P.12

Her peculiar geographical position containing in its limits more than two-fifths of the whole sea board of Malabar and the presence of the Bharath Puzha with its creecks, back waters and canals created the environment congenial to flourishing trade.

In this work to delve in to the history of Medieval Ponnani an attempt has been made to trace the ancient as well as modern times. The absence of reliable historical records makes very problematic any definite conclusion especially on the political history of Malabar prior to the advent of the Europeans. Sources are scanty and travelogues insufficient for the history of ancient times. Neither the few epigraphic references from with in Kerala nor the notices in the inscriptions of other South Indian dynasties are very helpful. The former reveal little but names, while the latter are chiefly boasts of conquests.<sup>2</sup> In the absence of reliable

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2. Innes Charles.A, Malabar, Trivandrum (1997) P.241.

historical evidences traditions have developed even with regard to the origin of the place name Ponnani.<sup>3</sup>

From time immemorial there had been trade relations between Ponnani and West-Asia. From the reference in the old testament it is understood that Malabar had trade contacts with ancient Egypt during the period of David and Solomon. The Greek work 'Periplus of the Erythrean sea' by an unknown author belonging to the first century A.D. mentions Tyndis as a flourishing centre of maritime trade. Nilakanta Sastri and R.C. Majumdar argue that 'Tyndis' referred to in the 'Periplus' is Ponnani. Several other historians are also of the same view. The presence of a place with the name 'Tyndis' near the present Ponnani port bears testimony to this. So it is proper to conclude that port Tyndis north to Musiris and South to Bekara is Ponnani. There are references to Ponnani in the records

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*3. Different views on the origin of the place name have been discussed in the first-chapter.*

of the Cera Kingdom. Ponnani formed a part of the Cera Kingdom as it included the whole of present Kerala state. In his work 'An Atlas of the Mughal Empire' Dr. Irfan Habib mentions Ponnani of the 15th and 16th centuries as a flourishing port. Travelogues of foreigners also give an authentic account of the maritime traditions of Malabar.

There was a minor port in Ponnani called Marakkadavu<sup>4</sup>. The name was attributed to this place because of the timber yard attached to the port. Timber export was the main business carried on here. Marakkadavu still retains the name.

Besides being an international emporium Ponnani was one of the earliest Brahmin settlements. Kerala was a Dravidian country exposed to Aryan influence from the north. This resulted in the origin of caste system in Malabar and Ponnani was not an

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4. *The Malayalam words 'Maram' means timber and 'Kadavu' means a small port or landing place in a river.*

exception to this. Herman Gundert the German scholar and author of 'Keralolpathi' and Dr. Kesavam Veluthat give a detailed account of the Brahmin settlements in Kerala. Trikkavu in the Pallappuram Amsom in the eastern part of Ponnani became a Brahmin settlement area and one of the well known cultural centres of the Brahmins. Cokiram better known as Sukapuram is a place near Edappal 16kms away from Ponnani. One of the sixty four families that Parasuram brought to Kerala at the invitation of Chandramagan son of Mayoora Varma lived at Sukapuram. A sub division of this family lived at Trikkavu. It is considered that the temple of Trikkavu dedicated to Durga Bhagawathi, was founded by Lord Parasurama. The temple is a high two storied building with a Gopuram. In brief Ponnani became one of the early Brahmin settlements. The caste system and the supremacy of the Brahmins brought about many evil and in human practices in Malabar like untouchability, unapproachability and slavery and this finally gave a number of converts to Islam especially from among the 'Avarnas'.

The history of the rise and growth of Ponnani has several important stages, each successive stage being more significant than the preceding one. The advent of Islam in Ponnani marks an important phase in her history. It is believed that Islam reached Malabar during seventh century A.D. ie during the days of prophet Mohammed. Arab Muslims who came here for trade became instrumental in the propagation of Islam in the ports of Musiris, Tyndis, Bekara and Nelkanda. Malik Ibn Dinar and his friends reached Kodungallur in 643 A.D. 'Measan' stones showing the inscription Hijra 38, 56, 61 and 87 obtained from various places in Malabar justify this view. Dr. Tharachand states that the first Muslim fleet appeared in the Indian ocean in 636 A.D.<sup>5</sup> I.H. Quraishi also agrees with this view when he says that Islam reached Kerala with in a few years of the proclamation by the

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5. *From the sources available it is reasonable to conclude that Islam was introduced into Malabar during the time of prophet Muhammed.*

prophet of his mission. The Ceraman Perumal tradition also supports the view that Islam was introduced in to Kerala during the time of the prophet. Ceraman embraced Islam went to Mecca met the prophet and thereby became a blessed one.<sup>6</sup> There is also a view that Islam was introduced in Kerala during the 8th century A.D. The work of the Muslim missionaries and Sufis resulted in the spread of Islam and Ponnani became one of the earliest Muslim settlements. The Facsimile kept at the Maunathul Islam Sabha at Ponnani serves as a proof to this. Besides its doctrinal aspects Islam brought a concept of human equality, a pride in one's religion, a legal system which in many ways was an advance on the codes of the time.

Ponnani rose in to prominence when she became the second capital of Zamorin, the first being Calicut. The facilities such as port, water ways etc. made this a

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6. Nair, Diwan Bahadur C. Gopalan, 'Malayalathile Mappilamar' Mangalore (1917) P.65.

trade centre. The competition between Panniyur and Sukapuram the two nearly Brahmin villages and the interest shown by the Zamorins and Cochin Raja to help either of those two villages is due to the geographical and commercial potentials of the region. The Zamorins conducted many of their administrative activities at Trikkavu Kovilakam though Calicut was the administrative capital. The Cochin Raja had his capital at Chithrakootam in perumpadappu near Ponnani. Perumpadappu otherwise called Vanneri is situated near Veliyamkode in Chavakkad Taluk. The royal family of Cochin once took the vow that they will wear crown only after capturing Chithrakootam which shows the importance of the place.<sup>8</sup> Thirumanasseri Raja was a leader of the Panniyur faction. When his dominions were attacked by Valluvakkonathiri and Perumpadappu Chief belonging to the Chovvaram

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7. *Facsimile - Appendix No.3*

8. *Namboodiri. N.M, 'Samoothiri Charithrathile Kanapurangal', Sukapuram (1987) preface V.*

faction Thirumanasseri Raja sought the help of the Zamorin who readily responded. Zamorin got Ponnani in return to the help given by him. Ponnani became the second capital of Zamorin and his naval headquarters. The greatness of Zamorin was in a very large measure due to the sea-borne trade of his Kingdom.

The coming of the Makhdums and the consequent cultural and literary efflorescence adds a new chapter in the history of Ponnani. The Makhdums were yemenites in origin. Propagating the message of Islam in Madura, Thirichirappally Thanjavoor and Nagoor a branch of the Makhdum family came over to Cochin and after a period of short stay there they settled down in Ponnani. Remarkably great both as literary men and religious scholars they strove hard to bring about a 'renaissance' in the literary and metaphysical fields and gave a boost to the spread of Islam in Malabar that had already begun centuries earlier.

The Makhdums came to be appointed as Qadies of the different mosques from Kayalpattam to Mangalore and as the spiritual heads they played a unique role in the history of Kerala Muslims. The first known Makhdum Shaik Zainud-Din I built the Big Juma Masjid which became the cultural and religious centre of Ponnani. Students from far and near, foreign and indigenous studied at the Madrasa here and received the degree of 'Musaliyar pattam'. They got immediate appointment as Qadis in various Mahallus. Till recently only those who completed the prescribed course of study and passed the examination from Ponnani Madrasa were recognised as 'Alim' or learned man. It is proper to say that the Madrasa system of education evolved from the process of learning adopted in Ponnani. Soon Ponnani came to be styled as the 'Little Mecca' or 'Mecca of Malabar'.

The Makhdums contributed a large number of literary works on theology and related subjects. These works were originally written in Arabic and later

translated in to various languages. Most famous among them is the Thuhfatul Mujahideen “A precious piece of historical literature written on modern lines” by Shaik Zain-Ud-Din II. Zain-Ud-Din richly deserves the title “father of Kerala History”. Ferishta says “All the materials of history of the Mahomedans of the Malabar coast that I have been able to collect are derived from the Thuhfat-ul-Mujahideen.<sup>9</sup> The pioneering works of the Makhdums in the educational field made Ponnani a centre of attraction. Many renowned muslim scholars had their education from Ponnani justifying the popular saying ‘Nalla Ilmu Ponnaniyil’ (or genuine knowledge is available in Ponnani). Arabic is one of the many foreign languages that have enriched the vocabulary of Malayalam. A new form of Mappila literature representing a mixed style of Arabic and Malayalam evolved earlier in Kerala reached the Zenith of its

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9. *Muhammed Qasim Ferishta, 'History of the rise of Mahomedan Power' (tran). John Briggs (4 volms) Longman, London (1829) Vol.IV. P.531.*

development under the Makhdums. A large number of literary compositions (Mala)<sup>10</sup> extolling the sacrifices and miracles of Sufis and Saints came to be written in the Arabi - Malayalam language. The Makhdums gave full credit to the saying of prophet Mohammed that the ink in the pen of a scholar is more sacred than the blood of a martyr. Though the ideal of 'Jihad' (Holy war for the faith) is not new to the Muslims there was a revival of it in Ponnani under the Makhdums. Shaik Zainud-Din Makhdum I wrote his famous poem 'Thahreed Ahlil Eman Ala jihadi Abdathi Sulban' inviting the Muslims for a holy war against the Portuguese. This poem was the first of its kind to fan the flame of patriotism of the Mappila Muslims of Malabar. This gave birth to the much needed militancy enabling the muslims to fight against the brutality of the Portuguese and for centuries against foreign rule. Thuhfat-ul-Mujahideen written by Zainud-Din II also

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10. 'Mala' literally means 'Garland' or 'Necklace'.

inspired the Muslims for a holy war. Inspired by the call for Jihad Kunhali Marakkars, the valiant admirals of Zamorins kept the Portuguese at bay for almost a century. Soon a powerful naval force was organised and Ponnani became the naval centre of Zamorin. The Makhdums of Ponnani had cordial relations with Bijapur sultans. Shaik Zainud-Din was a contemporary of Akber the great, the Mughal emperor. Ali Adil Shah was a friend of Zainud-Din and it was to this ruler that Thuhfat-Ul-Mujahideen was dedicated. Shaik Zainud-Din also wrote letters to the Muslim Kings in India and abroad requesting their helps to the Zamorin to fight against the Portuguese. It goes with out saying that the Makhdums had world wide relations and reputation which they utilised to drive away the Portuguese.

The contribution of the early Makhdums in the compilation of the monumental and comprehensive work 'Hortus Malabaricus' (Garden of Kerala or Kerala Aramam) is worth mentioning. This book dealing with the medicinal properties of the flora of Kerala is in Latin

language. Other languages like Arabic, Malayalam and Sanskrit are used while mentioning the names of the plants. Here the editors utilised the services of Shaik Zainud-Din I and other muslim scholars for the corresponding names of the plants in Arabic and Malayalam.

The advent of the Portuguese marked a turning point in the history of Ponnani. The news of the landing of Vasco da Gama at Kappad was passed on to Zamorin while the latter was at Ponnani. The Muslims merchants were greatly agitated at the arrival of the Portuguese who were reckless greedy and arrogant and 'rested satisfied with nothing and giving them one thing they wanted another and if that was not given them they would take it by force'<sup>11</sup>. The portuguese attempt to break the Muslim monopoly in trade resulted in the hundred years war between the Mappila Muslims of

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11. Correa Gaspar, *'The three voyages of Vasco-da-Gama'* (trans.) Henry E. J. Stanley, London (1849) P.170.

Malabar led by the Kunhali Marakkars and the Portuguese. Kunhali Marakkar I built a fort at Ponnani known as 'Marakkar Kotta'. Gradually it became the naval head quarters of Zamorin. Ponnani fell a prey to Portuguese attacks. They plundered and fired the town and burned the mosques. Open fights became an every day affair. The coming of the Portuguese and the hundred years war brought in its wake sufferings to the people. Economic retrogression resulted in large scale migration of the people of Ponnani to the interior places like Thavanur, Edappal, Kuttippuram, Vattamkulam, Marancherry etc. But even after the hundred years war they could not regain the lost prosperity.

The Kunhali Marakkars were the Mappila admirals of the Zamorins and they served with courage and devotion. Their captains all Muslims, were brave sea men whose gallant exploits are the theme of many a ballad sung by the sea faring folks of Malabar even to this day. Unique was the part played by the

Zamorin's navy under Kunhali Marakkars in keeping away the Portuguese from devouring the whole of Malabar. From 1498 to 1630, a period of over a hundred years, Malabar sea men struck and struck again, some times vanquished, soon revived, incessantly fighting, mingling their blood with the brine to keep the pirates away and defend the land. While people admire Portuguese tenacity and enterprise, let them remember too the heroism and patriotic daring of the seamen but for whose sacrifice and service, Goa might have extended along the littoral right up to Cape Kanyakumari.<sup>12</sup> The people of Kerala are indebted to Kunhali Marakkars for the preservation of Malayalam language. The Kunhalis saved Malabar from Portuguese domination. As a result of this the Malayalam language and literature and the culture of Kerala could be protected. If otherwise the Malayalam language would have become one like the Konkani

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12. Nambiar. O.K, *The Kunhalis, Admirals of Calicut*, Asia publishing House, Bombay (1963) P.146.

language of Goa which does not have its own script and development because Goa had been for long a Portuguese colony.

The hundred years war (1498-1630) helped only to the decline of the Portuguese power. The alienation of the native population especially produced by religious intolerance weakened their hold. The Portuguese remained the official rulers of north Kerala until the coming of the Dutch in 1673. The Dutch were more tolerant and while they were not averse to territorial acquisition and maintained a religious concern, these interests were largely qualified by a utilitarian concentration on business. They were more sophisticated and friendly which helped them to become the commercial monopolists of the East in the 17th century. The Portuguese failed to build a durable empire in India. For long Goa remained a Portuguese colony as it was easily defensible. Soon the Dutch, French and the English who had watched the Portuguese success in the orient with considerable envy

joined the rush for the wealth of India. In Malabar the triangular competition that developed between these three powers was followed a little later by the Anglo-French rivalry. There was little of nobility in the relationship of the Europeans with the people of Malabar and the effect they produced on the native was largely a negative one. The period is at best an unpleasant record of shifting alliances, sordid accommodations and intermittent battles. Dominated by greed it was, in a sense, a time of national prostitution.<sup>13</sup>

The brief Mysorean interlude also had its repercussions up on the political economic, social and cultural history of Ponnani. The absence of a centralised government under a strong ruler, rivalry among the provincial chieftains and the 'Pepper politics' of the European powers made Malabar an easy prey to

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13. Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*, Bangalore (1976)

P. 79.

Mysorean invasion. Under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan (1766-1792) the old feudalistic social and political structure was completely swept off and Malabar enjoyed a short spell of strong government, law and order and peace and prosperity. After the treaty of Seringapattam which brought the third Anglo-Mysore war to an end Tipu Sultan had to part with Malabar to the British. Malabar was made a district with head quarters at Calicut and Ponnani was its southern most Taluk.

Ponnani, one of the most ancient and flourishing ports of peninsular India, the second capital and naval head quarters of the Zamorins of Calicut, the land blessed with the spiritual and literary services of the world renowned Makhdums, the seat of Islamic learning and exhortation, the famous 'Little Mecca' or Mecca of Malabar, the contributor of the most perfect Arabic script 'Khatafunnani', the coastal region where the echoes of the gallant and heroic deeds of the Kunhali Marakkars and the sea men in their classic fight against the Portuguese are still resounding, played a unique

role in the creative destiny of pre-British Malabar. But Ponnani of the present day is only a ghost of her former fame and glory. The modern generation of Ponnani is inert, incapable of responding to the challenges of the time and may be quoted as a perfect example of the despisal for the past and lack of historical consciousness. There we witness a stagnation, something of a cultural eclipse. Life and things are in flux and nothing stands still. There should be an attempt to harmonise modernity with tradition and change with continuity. Change should be for the better. Ofcourse, life must be understood backwards and lived forwards.

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    - (a) Madayi
    - (b) Peringadi (Mahe)

(c) Kunji Palli (Near Badagara)

(d) Kozhikode

(e) Ponnani

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## GLOSSARY

- Alim - Learned man or scholar
- Ameen - Trust worthy
- Amsam - Smallest administrative unit in Malabar,  
part of a village
- Amir - Leader
- Ana - Elephant
- Aramam - Garden
- Averna - A backward or depressed caste
- Auliya - Saint
- Cafila - Convoy
- Cerikkal lands - Crown land
- Cheruman - A caste having distance pollution
- Danam - Gift
- Desam - A small sub division of an amsam

Dars	- Mosque - based centre for Islamic higher learning
Dharma	- Virtue moral and religious
Dinar	- Gold coin
Ezhava	- Tiyya in Malabar
Fatwa	- Decision on a question of Islamic law
Fiqh	- Islamic law and jurisprudence
Gopuram	- Tower at the entrance of a temple
Guru	- Religious preceptor
Hadith	- The authoritative tradition of the words and deeds of prophet Mohammad.
Haji	- A muslim who has performed pilgrimage to Mecca
Haram	- That which is forbidden by Islam.
Hijra	- Emigration of prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Madina (AD. 622)

Illam	- The house of Namboodiri.
Imam	- Leader of congregational prayer, a rightly guided leader.
Iman	- Faith in Islam
Inam	- Gift - Land given Tax free
Jama'at	- Organisation - a unit of Muslim families centred on a local mosque
Jamiyyat	- Organisation
Jenmam	- Hereditary proprietorship of land
Janmi	- One who holds Janmam land
Jaram	- Burial site of a martyr or a saint
Jihad	- Holy war
Jum'a	- Friday prayer
Khata Funnani	- Ponnani script

Khatib	- Iman in mosque
Kitab	- Book
Kovil	- Temple
Kudiyam	- A Kanam tenant
Kurumalsaram	- A traditional conflict between two groups
Madambis	- Small local chiefs
Madrasa	- Muslim primary school
Makkathayam	- System of inheritance and descent through male line
Makbara	- Tomb of saint
Mala	- Garland or necklace - Poems composed in memory of holymen and saints
Mamul	- Custom
Maram	- Timber
Marumakkatayam-	Matrilineal system of inheritance
Melkoyma	- Over lord ship

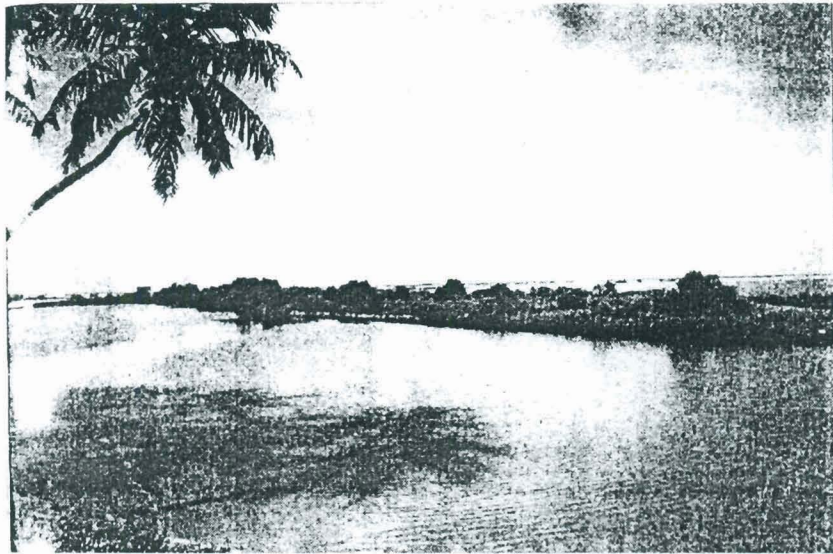
Mudarris	- Teacher in mosque
Muhaddis	- Interpreter of the authoritative traditions
Murid	- Disciple
Moulavi	- Religious Scholar
Muharam	- The first month of Hijrah year
Mujahid	- One who exerts himself in the interpretation of the Quran
Musliyar	- Islamic religious scholar
Nadu	- A large political unit, state, country
Nabi	- Prophet
Nalla Elmu	- Good knowledge
Nanayam	- Coin
Pada	- An array of Army
Pon	- Gold

Pattam	- Yearly rent payable from agriculture land
Poosalan	- Newly converted Muslim
Puja	- Worship
Qazi	- Religious head of Muslims in a locality, Judge
Sabha	- Association
Sahabi	- Companion of the prophet
Saverna	- Caste Hindu
Sayyid	- Descendant of prophet Mohamed
Sura	- A chapter of the Quran
Shafi	- One of the four Sunni Schools of Islamic law
Shariat	- Islamic law
Sufi	- A man who follows Ascetic life
Shahid	- Martyr
Sunni	- one who follows the tradition of the prophet

- Thangal - An honorific applied to descendants of prophet Mohammed
- Thattam - Head covering of Muslim women
- Tarawad - Joint family formerly used to refer to the Matriarchal family.
- Ulama - Islamic Scholar
- Ummayyad - The Caliphate founded by Muawiya (666 A.D) / A branch of Quraish tribe of Mecca
- Vettal - A man who does the act of cutting the limbs
- Vilakkathirikkal - Sit by the lamp - is the last stage of the Musliyar pattom
- Zamorin - The word derived from 'Samuthiri', which is taken to mean 'Lord of the sea'
- Ziyyara - Visitation of holy place

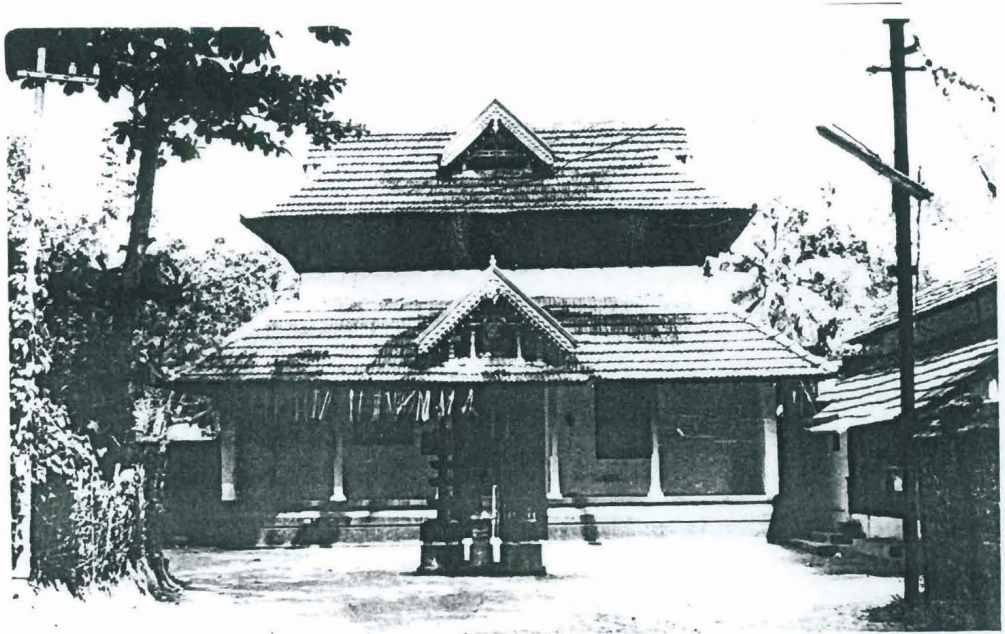
## APPENDIX 1

### Ponnani the confluence of Arabian Sea and the Bharathapuzha



**APPENDIX 2**

**Trikkavu Temple**





## APPENDIX 4

**A very ancient and hitherto unpublished manuscript in Arabic donated to the Juma Masjid at Madayi by Shifa Umma Beevi, Valapattanam, describes the conversion of Ceraman Perumal as follows:**

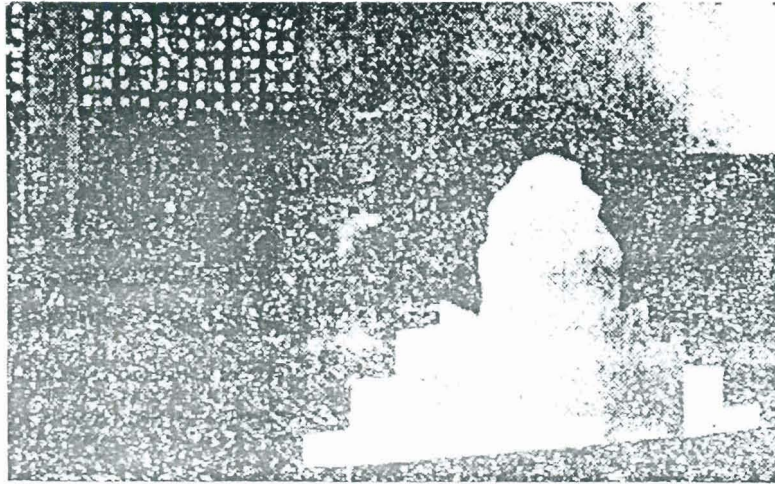
Ceraman (Shakruti) Perumal an emperor of India met prophet Muhammed in person. The prophet received him with honour and respect. The emperor took the oath of conversion in front of the prophet. 'I bear witness that there is no God but God Allah. He is one and there is no partner to him. I bear witness that you are God's prophet'.

Abu Bakr, the close companion of the prophet who witnessed the memorable event, enquired who the convert was. He was told that the new convert was the Perumal, an emperor of India, the country which produced pepper, ginger etc, The prophet conferred upon the Perumal the name Thajudheen.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا  
ما كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله  
والصلاة والسلام على  
سيدنا محمد وآله الطيبين  
الطاهرين أجمعين  
أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله  
وأن محمداً عبده ورسوله  
والصلاة والسلام على  
سيدنا محمد وآله الطيبين  
الطاهرين أجمعين  
أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله  
وأن محمداً عبده ورسوله  
والصلاة والسلام على  
سيدنا محمد وآله الطيبين  
الطاهرين أجمعين  
أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله  
وأن محمداً عبده ورسوله  
والصلاة والسلام على  
سيدنا محمد وآله الطيبين  
الطاهرين أجمعين

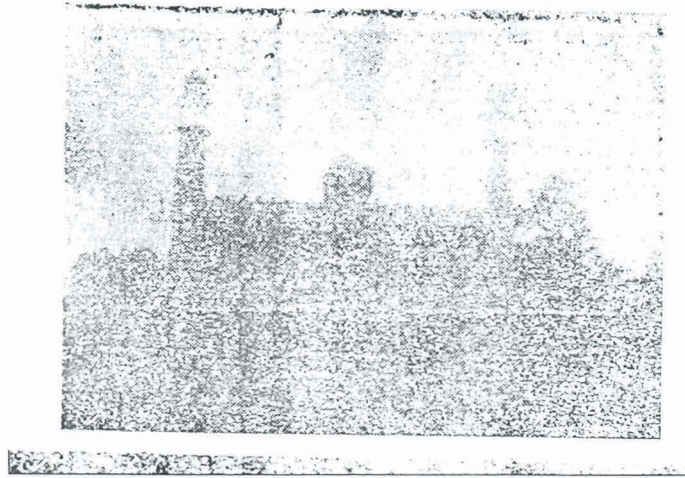
**APPENDIX 5**

**The tomb of the last Ceraman Perumal  
at Shahr Mukallah in Oman**



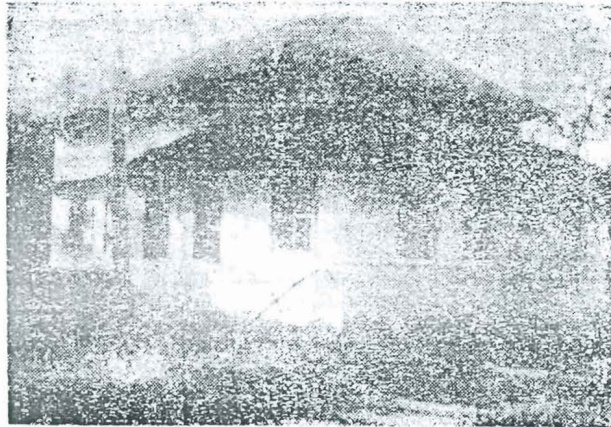
## APPENDIX 6

**The mosque built by Malik bin Dinar at Kodungalloor**



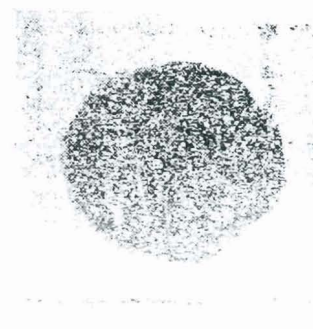
**APPENDIX 7**

**The Malik bin Dinar mosque at Peringadi near Mahe**



**APPENDIX 8**

**Coin released in honour of Mohammed Ibn Malik Dinar  
with the inscription of the word Allah in Arabic**



## APPENDIX 9

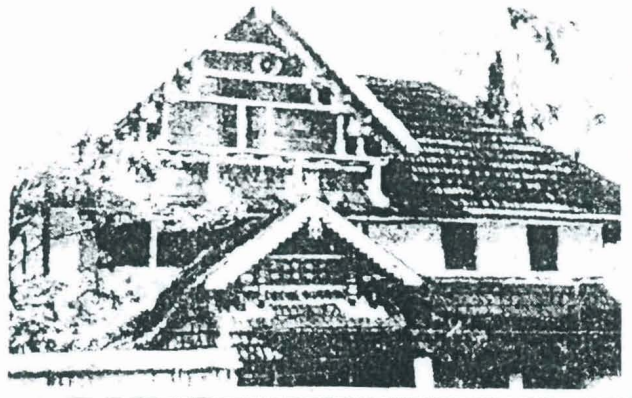
### Thottungappalli

The first Juma Masjid in Ponnani founded by Shaik Faridud-Din Auliya.

Praising the mosque the famous muslim scholar and veteran freedom fighter Umer Qadi wrote this:

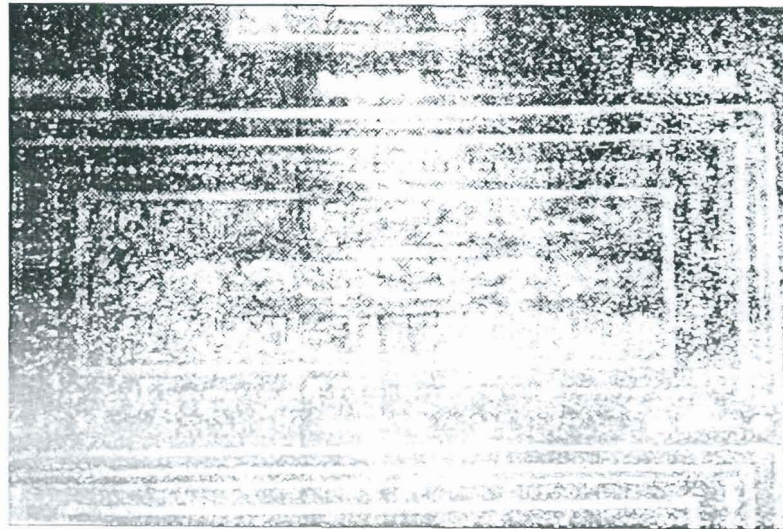
يا مسجد الميرات فملاك ظاهر  
كم من يصلي فيك كان وراك  
تودت في نفسي سماك انت يمين من  
صلى بفتنان وانت الآخرة

در لسانك الولي قطب السما  
قطب الانام و غوثهم متباهر  
سيفي فريد الدين رحمة  
لوزاره بقصي المراد الساهر



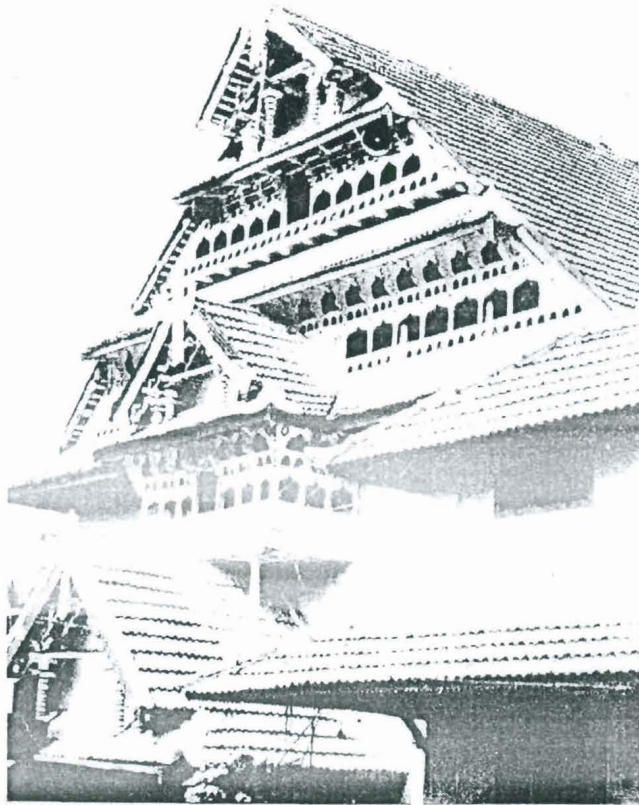
## APPENDIX 10

**The incription showing the renovation of the Masjid at  
Thottunga at Ponnani by Sheikh Farid, about 700 years ago**



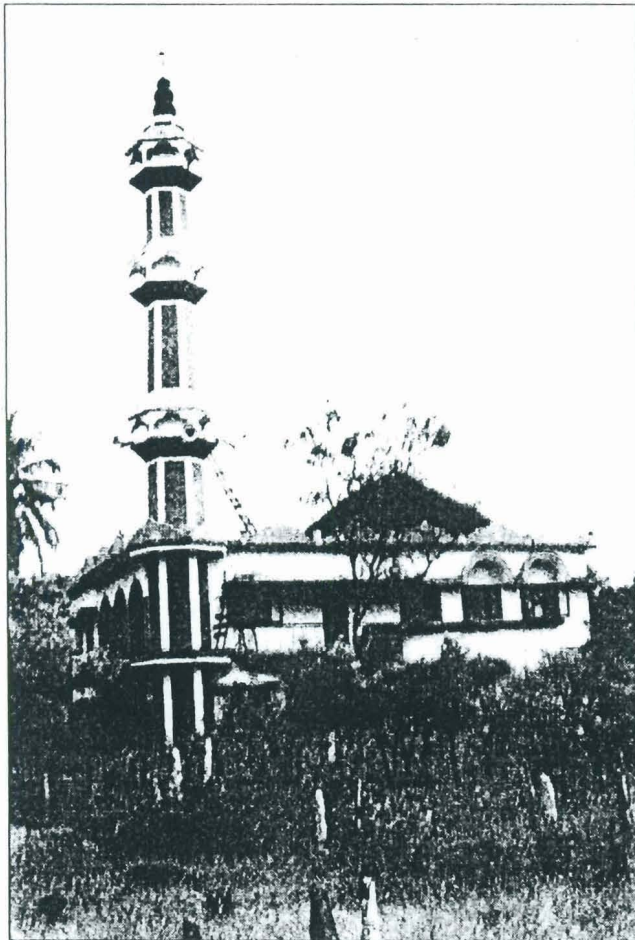
**APPENDIX 11**

**Ponnani Big Juma Masjid**



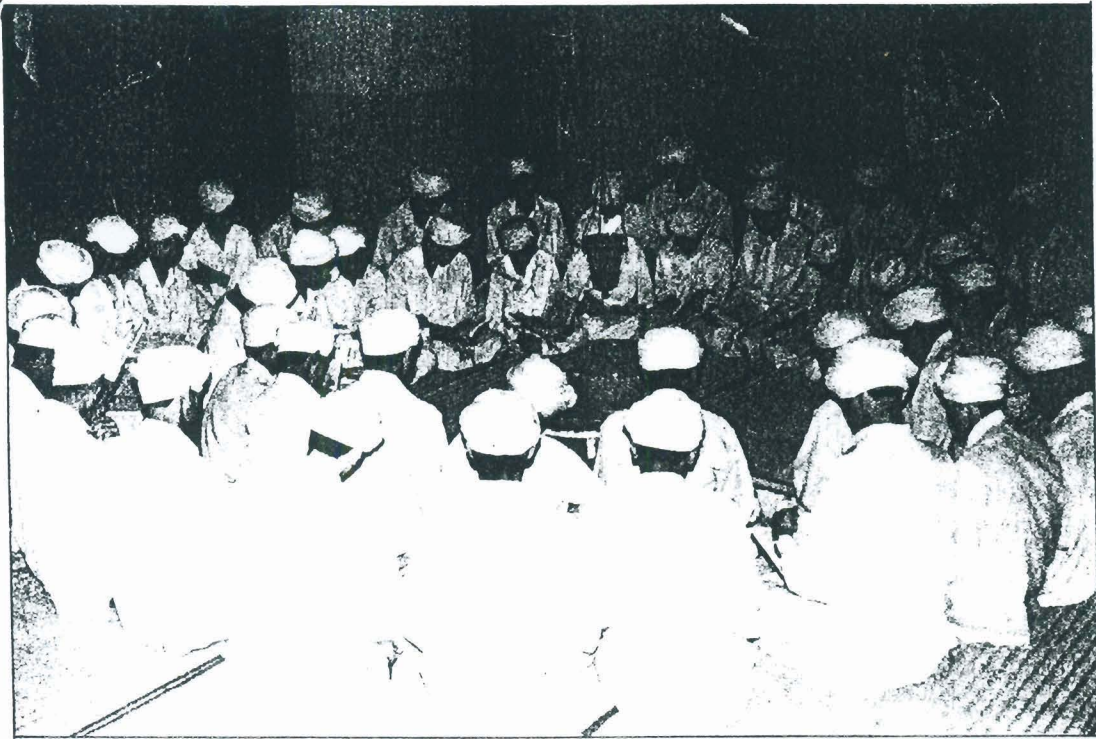
**APPENDIX 12**

**Ziyyarath Mosque**



**APPENDIX 13**

**Sit by lamp-custom**



APPENDIX 14

The lamp and the Oil-Jar - "Sit by lamp"



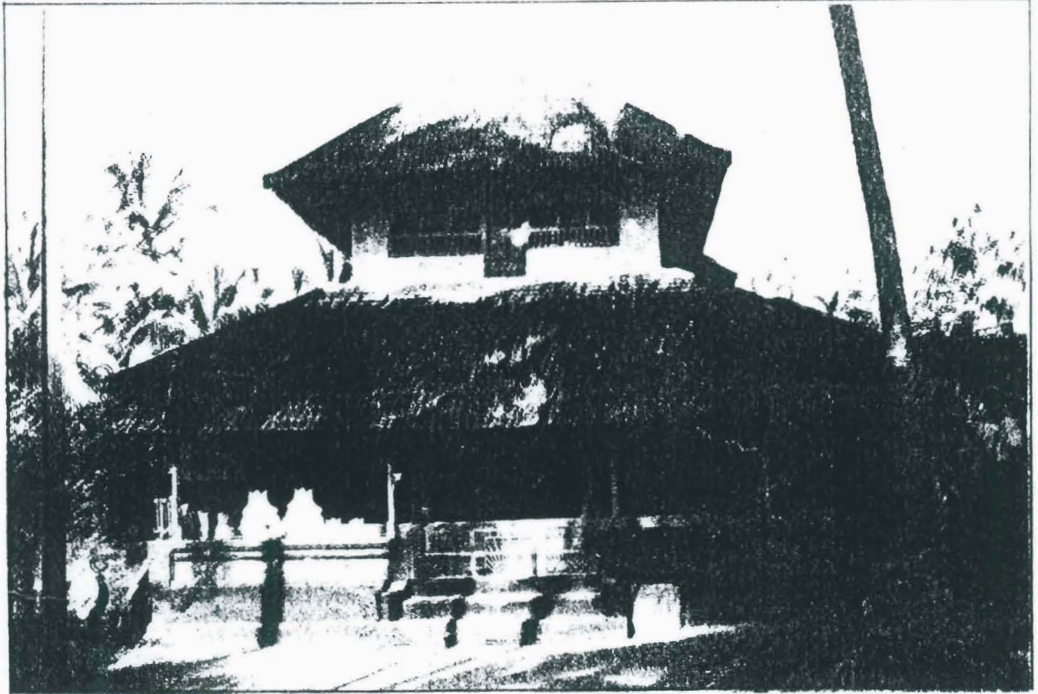
**APPENDIX 15**

**The oil lamp used by Sheik Zainuddin II.  
The lamp is still lit at night**



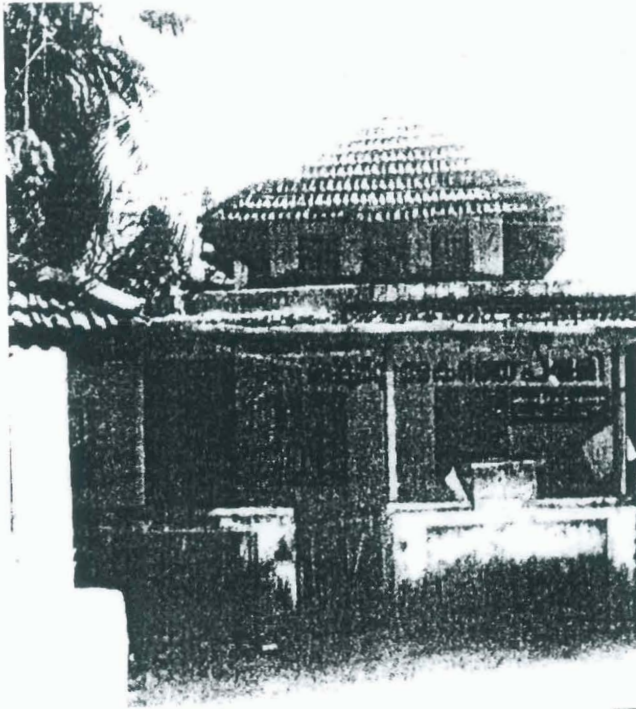
**APPENDIX 16**

**Ponnani Misri Palli**



**APPENDIX 17**

**Ponnani Akathe Palli**



APPENDIX 18

Ponnani Script

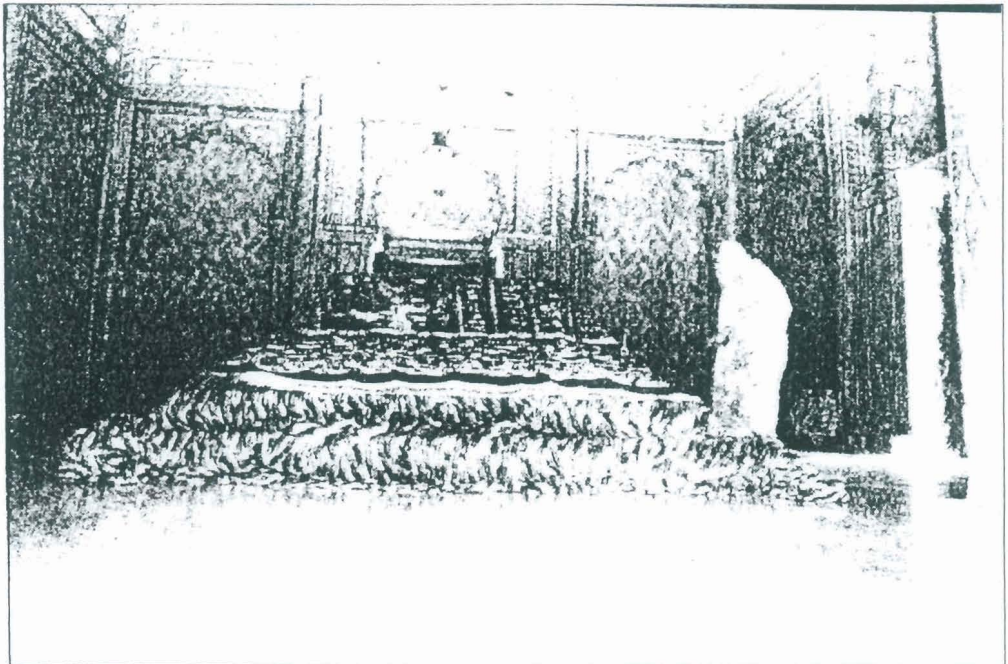
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

شَهَادَةُ الْفِعَالِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ شَهَادَةِ الرِّجَالِ	[ شَلْتِي ]
شهادة الفعالم خير من شهادة الرجال	[ فَارِسِي ]
شَهَادَةُ الْفِعَالِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ شَهَادَةِ الرِّجَالِ	[ فَتَانِي ]
شهادة الفعالم خير من شهادة الرجال	[ نَسْخِي ]
شهادة الفعالم خير من شهادة الرجال	[ دِيَوَانِي ]
شهادة الفعالم خير من شهادة الرجال	[ كُوْفِي ]
شهادة الفعالم خير من شهادة الرجال	[ رُقْعِي ]
شَهَادَةُ الْفِعَالِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ شَهَادَةِ الرِّجَالِ	[ دِيَوَانِي جَلِي ]
شهادة الفعالم خير من شهادة الرجال	[ اِجَانَةِ ]

كتبها عبد الله الككاري في الرابع عشر ربيع الاول سنة ١٣١١  
الموافق ٩/١٠/١٤ عيسوية

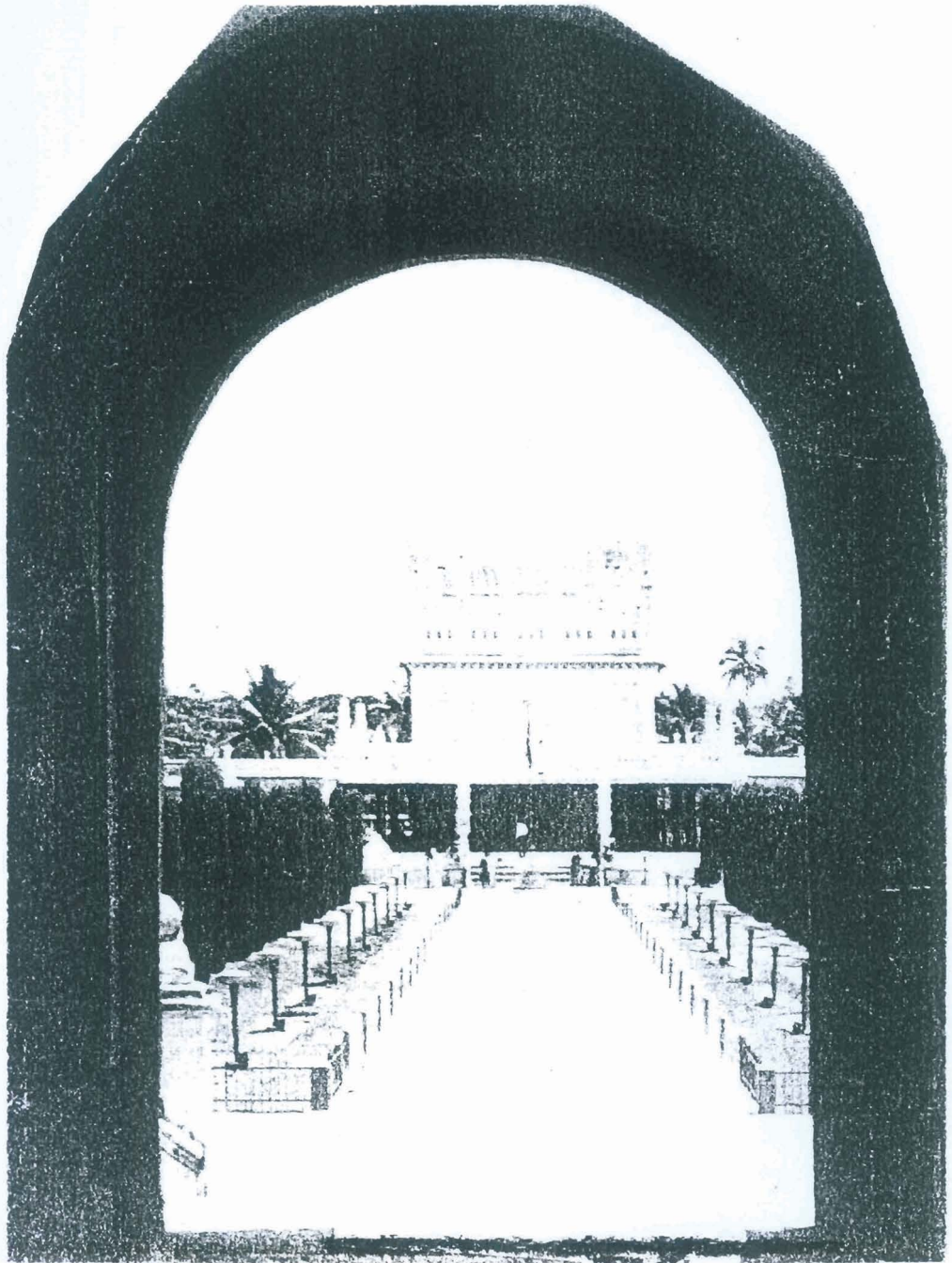
**APPENDIX 19**

**The grave of Tipu Sultan**



APPENDIX 20

The tomb of Tipu Sultan



**APPENDIX - 21**

**Table containing the statistics (Inam Records, Kozhikode Collectorate V Folio Volumes) of Tax Free Land donated by Tipu Sultan to the different temples in Ponnani Taluk**

No.	Place	Beneficiary	Area of Land	
1.	Thrikkandiyoor Amsom Ponnani Taluk	Samooham Temple Thrikkandiyoor	Plantation	20.63 Acres
			"	0.41 Acres
2.	Kadikkad Amsom Ponnani Taluk	Srikumaran Namboodirippad Kallumadham	Plantation	27.97 Acres
			"	6.91 Acres
3.	Karula Amsom Kozhikode Taluk	Vellakkorumakan Temple Thrikkandiyoor	Plantation	122.70 Acres
			"	73.36 Acres
4.	Guruvayoor Amsom Ponnani Taluk	Guruvayur Temple	Plantation	46.02 Acres
				458.32 Acres
5.	Vailathur Amsom Ponnani Taluk	Siva Temple Thiruvanchikkulam	Plantation	208.82 Acres
			"	3.29 Acres
6.	Chilambram Amsom Ernad Taluk	Mannar Temple	Bog	70.42 Acres
			Plantation	3.29 Acres

**APPENDIX 22**  
**JARAMS IN PONNANI**

1. Ziyarath Palli Jaram
2. Thottunga (Kadavathu) Palli Jarams
3. Kottambiyakkarude Jaram
4. Kilkotta jaram
5. Esmurkka Palli jaram
6. Valiya jaram
7. Manath Parambu Jaram
8. Usmbiyakkarude Jaram
9. Shadulikoyade Jaram
10. Thekke Palli Jaram
11. Puthiya Jaram
12. Kadappurath Ouliyude Jaram
13. Puthuponnani Jaram

## APPENDIX 23

### Names of Ports of Malabar - recorded in "Voyages and Travels of Gian Battista Ramusio" in First chapter Somnario

	Place	Portuguese Name
1.	Cape Conorin	Camorin
2.	Vilingam	Belingam
3.	Quilon	Colam
4.	Kogamkulam	Cascolam
5.	Cochin	Cochin
6.	Cranganor-Kodummallur	Cranganor
7.	Chetuva	Chettivag
8.	Veliyancode	Meliyencor
9.	<b>Ponnani</b>	<b>Panane</b>
10.	Tanur	Tanor
11.	Parappanagadi	Parapancori
12.	Chaliyam	Chalia
13.	Calicut	Calicut
14.	Kappitta	Capolar

Place	Portuguese Name
15. Tikkodi	Tericori
17. Puthinpattanam	Pudipotana
18. Chombal	Camboa
19. Mayyali (Mahe)	Mulariam
20. Dharmadam	Turmopatam
21. Cananur	Cananor
22. Balapattanam	Baleepatana
23. Eli (mala)	Heri
24. Nileswaram	Nilaxoram
25. Kottikulam	Colecoulam
26. Kumbala	Cumballa
27. Mangalapad	Maipoalam
28. Manjeswaram	Maiceram

## APPENDIX 24

Umar Ibn Mohammed Suhrawardi in his "Rihalathul Mulook" mentions the following mosques and places and Qadis appointed by the Islamic missionary.

1. Mangalore -- Hamid-bin Malik
2. Kasargode and Ullal -- Jabir-Bin-Malik
3. Ezhimala and Puthiyangadi -- Abdullah-bin Malik
4. Dharmadam -- Hassan bin Malik
5. Mahe (at the seashore) and Chombal -- Jafar-bin Malik
6. Peringadi and Thalassery -- Habeeb bin-Malik
7. Kollam (near Quilandi) -- Abdullah-bin-Dinar
8. Chaliyam -- Jabir bin Sulaiman
9. Parappanangadi  
    Thanur  
    Tirur
- } Ali bin-Jabir
10. Ponnani and Puthu Ponnani -- Abdul-bin-Malik
11. Chawghat -- Jabir bin-al-Haris
12. Cochin, Palluruthi and Chittur -- Ahammed
13. Alleppey -- Misiab
14. Quilon -- Asim
15. Kavilpattanam -- Kasim

16. Thengapattanam and Kolachal -- Ubaidath

17. Puvarpattanam -- Zubair

18. Thiruvananthapuram -- Buraidath

Shaik Zain-Ud-din's Tuhfatul Mujahidin explains ten mosques by adding three and seven from above.

1. Sreekandapuram - Ummer

2. Bakanur - Ibrahim

3. Crangannore - Malik-bin Dinar

## APPENDIX 25

### MAKHDUMS OF PONNANI

1. Zain-Ud-Din Makhdum
2. Abdul Aziz Makhdum
3. Zain-Ud-Din-Sageer
4. Abdurahiman Makhdum
5. Usman Makhdum
6. Abdul Aziz II
7. Abdurahiman
8. Abdul Aziz III
9. Muhyudheen kutty Makhdum
10. Noorudheen Makhdum
11. Khaja Ahamdu-koya Makhdum
12. Mohammed Makhdum
13. Kunhammed Makhdum
14. Ahammadu I
15. Kuttihassan Makhdum
16. Ali Hassan Makhdum
17. Muhammed Makhdum II
18. Shaikh Ahammed kutty Pazhayaveetil
19. Zain-Ud-Din Labha
20. Shaikh Avaran kutty kabeer
21. Kutty Hassan Makhdum
22. Puthiya Veetil Ali Hassan II

23. Sayyidu Ali Koya Makhdum
24. Ahammadul Makhdum II
25. Agheet Zain-Ud-Din Makhdum
26. Muhammed Bava Musaliyar
27. Pazhaya Veetil Ahammed Musaliyar
28. Al haj Mammikutty Makhdum
29. Koya Kutty Thangal Bin Sayyid
30. Pazhayakath Bava Musaliyar or Zain-Ud-Din Makhdum
31. Attakoyathangal (Al haidrusi)
32. Shaikh Meeran kutty or Bava Musaliyar
33. Abdurahiman or Bava Musaliyar
34. Avaran kutty Ibn Koya Ali Makhdum
35. Pazhaya Veetil Pookoya Thangal
36. Sayyid Ali Koya Thangal (Pzhaya Veetil)
37. Kunhadu kutty Musaliyar
38. Koyakutti Koya Thangal

## APPENDIX 26

### The Works of Shaik Zainudin Din Makhdam

١. مرشد الصلوات لى كريم الوهاب
٢. سراج نقوب
٣. سراج النير
٤. المسعد فى ذكر الوت
٥. شمس الهدى
٦. تحفة الاحياء وعرفة الالباء
٧. ارشاد القاصدين
٨. شعب الايمان
٩. كفاية الفرائض فى اختصار الكافى
١٠. كتاب الصفى من الشفى
١١. تسهيل الكافية شرح على الكافية
١٢. حاشية على الكافية
- (كفاية الطالب فى حل كافية ابن حاجب)
١٣. شرح على الالفية لابن مالك
١٤. حاشية على الارشاد
١٥. قصص الانبياء
١٦. شرح على تحفة الوردية (مختصرة)
١٧. شرح على تحفة الوردية (مقتصدة)
١٨. سيرة النبوى
١٩. هداية الانكباء الى طريق الاولياء
٢٠. قصيدة الجهادية تحريض اهل الايمان
٢١. القصيدة فيما يورث البركة
٢٢. منقوص مولد

## APPENDIX 27

### The Works of Shaik Abdul Aziz Makhdum

١. مسك الاتقياء
٢. ارشاد الالباء / تحفة الالباء
٣. فصيدة الاسقام فى شفاء الاسقام
٤. شرح الالفية ابن مالك
٥. شرح على باب معرفة الكبرى
٦. باب معرفة الكبرى
٧. باب معرفة الصغرى
٨. مفرد
٩. اركان الصلاة
١٠. اركان الايمان
١١. مرفات القنوب

## APPENDIX 28

### Works of Shaik Zainud-Din II

١. الأجوبة المعجبية عن المسئلة الغريبة
٢. قررة العين
٣. فتح المعين
٤. ارشاد العباد الى سبيل الرشاد
٥. احكام احكام النكاح
٦. المنهج الواضح
٧. شرح الصدور فى احوال الموتى والقبور
٨. الفتلوى الهندية
٩. تحفة المجاهدين
١٠. الجواهر فى عقوبة اهل اللكباثر