

## **Cross-Cultural Interactions and the Making of Early Modern Ponnani, South-West Malabar Coast**

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*Ponnani was a significant entrepôt of the Zamorin's kingdom and an active participant in the Indian Ocean religious network. The cultural diversity and interconnections of Ponnani reflected the socio-political structure of Ponnani between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. During the early modern, Ponnani encountered different cultures and became complementary and integrated through various social patterns and political-economic-religious discourses. Long-distance overland and foreign trade interactions influenced the social formation of Ponnani, and trade networks paved the way for intermingling different cultures in Ponnani. This paper aims to examine the long-term trends in the cross-cultural interactions that shaped early modern Ponnani, the nature of cultural interaction, and changes in cultural patterns over time.*

**Keywords:** Ponnani-Zamorins-Makhdums-Mysore Sultans-European mercantile Networks

### **Introduction**

The early modern era ushered in multi-layered interactions along the Malabar Coast. It had been a maritime outlet connecting different cultures, peoples, and religions for centuries. Ponnani lies on the confluence of the Arabian Sea and the Bharatapuzha at the Southern tip of Malabar. Ponnani was the capital<sup>1</sup> and military centre<sup>2</sup>

of the Zamorins, reflecting its Muslim population and various settlement patterns. Ponnani was historically an active participant in religious networks in the Indian Ocean. Hence it is known as the ‘Mecca of South India.’ Also, Ponnani forms a part of the boundary with Malabar and the Cochin state.<sup>3</sup> Writing about the early decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> c, Roelofs calls the region a town and fort on the border between the kingdom of Cochin and Calicut. Around the same time, the French navigator François Pyrard de Laval writes that the Zamorins used to stay both in Ponnani and Calicut and also that he preferred Ponnani when he fought against the king of Cochin.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, Mamankam<sup>5</sup> was a cultural event celebrated once every twelve years on the banks of the river Bharatapuzha. Traders from different parts of the world and places used to arrive by ship at Ponnani and then proceed to Tirunavaya to participate in the trade fair held in Navamukunda temple premises. The rituals and customs of Mamankam associated with some of the trade routes, trade groups, and Ponnani port. Ponnani was also geographically significant. It was a critical coastal area providing quick access to the interior of Malabar and the Deccan Plateau from the mountain pass in the Palghat Gap. Also, the Palghat Gap formed the central opening to the western parts of the Western Ghats, which promoted trade and various migrations.<sup>6</sup>

Ponnani was a port town on the Malabar Coast under the control of the Zamorins.<sup>7</sup> Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Ponnani resisted European incursions through the active involvement of religion, mercantile networks, and politics. This port town became crucial as it interacted with large socio-political, religious, and commercial networks of early modern Europeans, the Zamorins, and the Muslim population of Ponnani.

This paper discusses cross-cultural interactions as the reflection of contestation among the European mercantile networks and the Arab trade groups for the monopoly of the natural resources and products of Malabar. Cross-cultural interactions, in this paper, refer to the creation and sharing of meaning between people from different cultural backgrounds using various means. Cross-cultural interactions are not only the new output resulting from the interactions

of one culture with another culture, but also part of a cultural process that occurs within the existing culture.

### **Zamorins and Cultural Negotiations at Ponnani**

After the disintegration of the Cera<sup>8</sup>, the political structure of Malabar was reduced to four main Svarupam such as the Kolathiri family, Nediyruppu Svarupam, Perumpadappu Svarupam, and the Venad Svarupam. Two queries arise at this juncture. Why was Kerala's history confined to Kolathiri, Malabar, Cochin, and Venad divisions? Why was Ponnani and the region around this port almost absent in early modern Kerala history? This section suggests that Ponnani-centered socio-political history emerges as part of the strategic interaction and integration of the Zamorins with the culture of Ponnani.

The political power of the Zamorins reverberated in Ponnani from the thirteenth century onwards. Ponnani remained an important seat of the Zamorins, or it was the original capital of the Zamorins.<sup>9</sup>The most important of the Brahmin villages Panniyur-Sukapuram was located near Ponnani, and the rivalry between them can be seen right from the beginning. The Azhvancheri Tamprakkal, the spiritual leader of Chovaram (Sukapuram) was supported by the Raja of Cochin, situated near Ponnani, but the Zamorin of Ponnani was the protector of the Kalpakacheri Tamprakkal of Panniyur faction.<sup>10</sup> One of the prime examples of the significance of the Zamorins of Ponnani, is that the oldest records of the Ariyittuvazhcha in Zamorins Palace (Kollam Era 733-34) indicated that the ceremony of the Virarayiranaya, the Zamorin, took place at Tirumanasseri Kotta in Ponnani.<sup>11</sup> It should also be noted that Tirumanasseri Kotta was not a palace of the Zamorins. Neither these records nor the Ariyittuvazhcha mentions the participation of the Azhvancheri Tamprakkal. An Ariyimmuvâ;ca account of the Kollam Era 986 mentions the Azhvancheri Tamprakkal.<sup>12</sup>It is not clear when the Azhvancheri Tamprakkal started to participate in the ritual of blessing the Zamorins. But here, we can see Zamorin's strategy of changing the existing system for his interests. It is clear that the Zamorins and the King of Cochin sided with each village to increase their influence in Ponnani. Yet we can see that Azhvancheri Tamprakkal, who were with the Cochin Raja, accepted

the suzerainty of the Zamorins and took part in the Ariyittuvazhcha when we examine the records of the later Ariyittuvazhcha. It implies a cross-cultural interaction of two cultural levels within Ponnani.

Most scholars argue that the Mamankam at Ponnani was one of the major ways in which the Zamorin portrayed his political superiority.<sup>13</sup> Muslims had remarkable importance in Mamankam ceremonies like *Kappalkalaham* and *Kampavedi*. Shahbandar Koya would organize *Kappalkalaham* (the mock fight between ships) promote maritime trade and *Kampavedi*(the firework) representing Chetti traders in the domestic market.<sup>14</sup> Due to his significant contributions Shahbandar Koya, who became a very close ally of the Zamorins, was given an important position in Mamankam. According to *Mamankam Rekhakal*, Koya was given the right to stand on the left side of the Zamorins at Nilapadutara and the responsibility of fireworks of Mamankam.

Evidence suggests the presence of the Zamorins in Ponnani from the thirteenth century onwards. The rivalry between the major two Brahmin villages of Panniyur and Sukapuram, contestation about the headquarters between the Cochin Raja and the Zamorins, and the vying for Mamankam position between Vellatiri and the Zamorins were all aimed at increasing the influence over this region. The Zamorins had a significant seat at Ponnani, centered on the Trikkavil Kovilakam. The Cochin royal family believed that *Chithrakoodam* of Ponnani was their capital. Even though there were many activities aimed at Ponnani, the Zamorins had greatly influenced Ponnani through many cultural activities. One of the examples of this is seen in the Zamorins honouring trade groups for their commercial interests in a festival like Mamankam. Here it is clear that the Zamorins brought under their control a group of people striving for different purposes through such cultural interactions.

### **Makhdums and Ponnani**

The advent of Islam was another milestone in the history of Ponnani and was closely related to its socio-economic, cultural, and spiritual life. Ponnani became very important in the late fifteenth century when an ulema family known as the Makhdums from Cochin,

migrated to Ponnani.<sup>15</sup> There were two centres of Mappila settlement in Malabar, one in the north - near Kannur - and the other in the south at ports like Ponnani. As mentioned earlier, Ponnani was located at the southern tip of the Zamorin's kingdom and actively participated in religious networks across the Indian Ocean. Therefore, it was known as the "Mecca of South India" (*Dekshinentiyude Makka*) and "Little Mecca" (*cherumakka*).

The Makhdums<sup>16</sup> of Ponnani had a significant and distinguished position in the school of Arabic jurisprudence. The ancestors of the Makhdums came to Tamil Nadu from South Yemen and settled in other areas of Tamil Nadu, such as Kayalpattanam, and later Malabar. Sheikh Zainuddin's grandfather, Ahmad al-Maabari, moved to Cochin after the birth of Zayn al-Din Ibn Ali from Kayalpattanam, and then to Ponnani. Ibrahim bin Zayn al-Din travelled with his nephew and reached Ponnani for the first time. This nephew, later Zayn al-Din Sr. (1468-1522), and his grandson Zayn al-Din Jr. (1583) went to the Middle East for higher education and returned with revivalist ambitions.<sup>17</sup> For several generations, this scholarly family attracted students from within and outside the subcontinent, from areas of Southeast Asia.<sup>18</sup>

Before the fifteenth century, Ponnani did not occupy much of a position as a Muslim settlement. In fact, the emergence of the Makhdum family and their activities centred on the Valiya Juma Masjid made Ponnani a centre of Muslim learning. The history of Ponnani is closely associated with Makhdum as many students from far and near regions like Malaya, Ceylon, and Lakshadweep came here mainly to study.

The construction of the Valiya Juma Masjid was completed in 1510. The mosque is said to have been built by a Hindu artisan in the so-called style of the traditional architecture of Kerala. According to legend, the mosque was constructed by an Asari, a close friend of Makhdum. After finishing his work, he looked towards the west and, in the meantime, saw the divine effect of the Ka'bah in Makkah and immediately died upon seeing it. Since then, the Asari converted to Islam, and thus the Asari came to be known as Asari Thanghal.<sup>19</sup> So,

the traditional elements seen in the architecture of the mosques may be because local artisans built them. The myth suggests that the same local artisans-built other mosques and temples. Hence, there may also be architectural similarities between these temples and mosques.<sup>20</sup>

Another important factor related to this myth is that the cargo ships of Hindu and Muslim traders who were part of the maritime trade were caught in a storm. Many offerings were made for salvation, and as a result, the ship landed safely on the shores of Ponnani. After that, a temple and a mosque were built to fulfill their promise. It later came to be known as Trikkav Temple and Cheriya Palli.<sup>21</sup> Later, the Cheriya Palli was replaced by the Valiya Juma Masjid. In those days, the western side of the Trikkav temple complex could be seen from the lamp on the floor of the Valiya Juma Masjid.

The Makhдум of Ponnani played a significant role in the socio-political, economic, and religious history of Ponnani. Ponnani was an active participant in religious networks in the Indian Ocean world. Therefore, from the end of the fifteenth century onwards, Ponnani witnessed various spiritual interventions. The Makhдум family made remarkable contributions to transmitting ideas and texts and establishing a new educational centre in the early sixteenth century. Until the early seventeenth century, we have evidence of this family member and the graduates from 'Ponnani College' active in the Islamic networks through new intellectual contributions.<sup>22</sup> But interestingly, we do not hear much about this family or any scholarly work in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>23</sup>

The stories or myths indicated above show the coexistence of two communities. It shows the identities of the communities that made the colonial historiography critical based on the community history of the Middle Ages. From a communal perspective, colonial historiography says that the medieval history of India was a long story of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Hindus and Muslims were permanently divided into hostile camps whose mutual relations were bitter, distrustful, antagonistic, and hostile. These interactions show that colonial writings rendered Hindu-Muslim relations in a manner

different from the existing realities. The evidence from the pre-modern history of Ponnani disproves their colonial arguments.

### **Interaction with European Mercantile Networks**

The centuries between the coming of European mercantile networks into Malabar and the mid-eighteenth century are generally divided into the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British periods of various European powers. It is believed that the British period has consistently played a significant role in Malabar among different European powers. Connected histories other than the political aspects of Malabar are generally missing from extant historical writings. Therefore, this section traces how early modern European mercantile networks approached Ponnani. The early modern Ponnani witnessed intense European mercantile intrusions from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. After the sixteenth century, the socio-political structure in Ponnani indicated the involvement of European powers. Ponnani had become a platform for various socio-political, economic, and religious interactions and interconnections.

After the Portuguese conquered the Cape of Good Hope in the sixteenth century, European mercantile networks changed the conditions in the Indian Ocean.<sup>24</sup> Ibn Battuta, Abdul Razzaq, Duarte Barbosa, and others give a picture of the Indian Ocean trade since the arrival of the Portuguese.<sup>25</sup> Ponnani resisted the Portuguese invasion in the sixteenth century through the active involvement of the religious, commercial, and military elites. Zain-ud-Din mentions that the Portuguese attacked Ponnani; burnt fifty ships anchored in the harbour, and killed seventy Mappila Muslims.<sup>26</sup> By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Mappila defense had come under the control of Kunjali Marakkar. While the Portuguese built a fort in Cochin, Kunjali Marakkar eventually settled in Ponnani and continued maritime trade. Kunjali and his brother Ibrahim were persuaded to lend their help and ships to the Zamorins in their fight against the Portuguese. The Portuguese tried to build a fort at Ponnani, but it did not happen due to many problems. The main reason was that the Mappilas were against constructing the Portuguese fort at Ponnani. Their opposition to the construction of a fort in Ponnani, led to numerous conflicts. Ponnani

became a major battle ground between the Zamorins and the Portuguese.

Although the Portuguese were expelled from the territory of the Zamorins with the help of the Dutch, some of the Portuguese continued to live on Ponnani. For example, it is seen that the British Collector of Malabar recommends a monthly pension to Mrs. Margaret in 1810, as her late husband, a Portuguese man Mr. Francis Moreira, was a Clerk of Certificates at Ponnani.<sup>27</sup> Although the Portuguese *Estado da India* had extensive influence on the Malabar Coast, most studies show that Ponnani was not particularly affected except when the city was invaded for several reasons.<sup>28</sup> Despite this, the Portuguese presence in Ponnani can be seen even after their departure.

During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ponnani was the only place where the Dutch East India Company (VOC) had commercial access within the kingdom of the Zamorins. The VOC first appeared in Ponnani in the first decade of the seventeenth century, when the Dutch first established their presence in the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese dominance did not last long because the Dutch had driven out the Portuguese. The Dutch maintained military posts at eleven other places, including Alleppey, Ayacotta, Cheramangalam, Paponetty, and Ponnani.<sup>29</sup> They also had two settlements, one at Purakkad and the other at Ponnani.<sup>30</sup>

In 1604 VOC made a treaty with the Zamorins, and in March 1662, a friendly treaty was signed between the Dutch and the Zamorins. Accordingly, the condition was that all the pepper from the Zamorin's land was to be handed over to the Dutch at Ponnani. The Zamorins and several members of his royal family formally attended the takeover of Cochin by the Dutch on 22 February 1663. At that time, the VOC requested the Zamorins to build a factory and appoint a resident in Ponnani.<sup>31</sup> The Zamorins agreed to build a factory at Ponnani to store the goods of the VOC.

According to the treaty, the Company was expected to help the Zamorins when the enemies attacked the latter.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, when enemies attack the Company, the Zamorins was to assist the Company,<sup>33</sup> and the Zamorins gave the Company complete

freedom.<sup>34</sup>This indicates the political negotiations based on Ponnani between the Dutch and the Zamorins. With the arrival of the French and the English East India Company on the Malabar Coast, the political position of the Dutch became unsafe. Although the French and English had their factories at Ponnani, these were removed in about 1670.<sup>35</sup>

The latter half of the eighteenth century was a crucial period in the history of Malabar. The Mysore Sultans invaded Ponnani in 1766 and in the 1780s, and political tensions in Ponnani intensified after that.<sup>36</sup>Hyder Ali wanted to establish power and expand his power along the Malabar Coast, which had many ports indispensable for contact with the world.<sup>37</sup>The commercial and political attention of the Mysore sultans turned to Ponnani. Hyder Ali built a fort at Palghat,<sup>38</sup> which lies in the center of the gap in the line of Ghats, to facilitate communication with the Malabar Coast and to repel other attacks. Hyder was not interested in rebellions or conflicts with Malabar. However, the suicide of Zamorin following the financial crisis defeated Hyder's goals. The only thing left was to bring money from Malabar. An officer had been appointed at Ponnani for this purpose.<sup>39</sup> However, the successors of the Zamorin provoked Hyder Ali and he returned to Malabar and destroyed the Tirunavaya and Trikkav temples at Ponnani.<sup>40</sup> Ponnani also witnessed the clash between the English East India Company and the Mysore Sultans.<sup>41</sup>This severely affected the socio-political structure of Ponnani. It led to many cultural changes in Ponnani.

From 1792 to 1858, Ponnani was directly ruled by the English East India Company and later by the British government. Under the English East India Company's control, many changes occurred here. The English played a significant role in the Malabar political structure. Innes observed that the English "living like ordinary merchants" at Ponnani and Calicut "with no other protection than that of the Zamorins" were responsible for laying "the foundation of their future influence."<sup>42</sup> Some of the English had already settled in Ponnani and Calicut.<sup>43</sup> This points to the position of the English East India Company in early modern Ponnani.

Francis Buchanan says that Ponnani is beautiful and thickly covered with groves of coconut trees, separated by rice fields that were then covered with the second crops. He also mentions that there are 500 houses of traders in Ponnani, more than forty mosques, and 1000 huts inhabited by the lower classes.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, such buildings were built irregularly. But he adds that many houses were two-storied and were very comfortable dwellings. Also, they were made of stone and thatched with coconut leaves.<sup>45</sup> Boatmen and fishermen lived in the huts. Formerly they were *Mucuas*, a low caste of Hindus, but now they had all converted to the Mahometan faith. All the mosques were thatched, and their main entrance was at the eastern end.<sup>46</sup> In spite of this, the mouth of the Ponnani River was closed so that only boats could pass through it. The trading boats were called *Patemars* and, on average, carried 50,000 coconuts, or 1000 *Mudies* of rice, equal to 500 Bengal bags.<sup>47</sup> Several large *Patemars* frequented this port.

About fifty years ago, the Mappilas of Ponnani were rich and used to send ships to Surat, Mocha, Madras, and Bengal. But the oppression of Tipu reduced them to great poverty, and most were now forced to act as agents of the Musselman merchant Musa of Tellicherry. They had, however, a few small boats that went to Tellicherry and Calicut for supplies of European and Bengal goods.<sup>48</sup> Wheat, Meti, or Fenugreek, the pulses called Wulindu, Pyru, Avaray, Sugar-cane, Jagory, and salt were brought from Bombay to Ponnani, and from here, teakwood and coconut, etc., were carried back. A similar trade was carried on from Rajapura (a town on the Marattah part of the Kankana). Much jaggery was brought here from Geria in the same country, and coconuts were taken back. Much rice was exported from here to the northern parts of the province of Malabar. The Ponnani River was navigable by canoes till Palghat during monsoon.<sup>49</sup> This indicates that various trading groups and settlements were located in Ponnani. All these activities point to the social patterns of Ponnani.

According to Ward and Conner<sup>50</sup>, Ponnani is the only place to be honored as a town.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, this is a clue to the strategic location of Ponnani. A crucial commercial city between Cochin and Calicut,

this place exported many products, especially rice and coconuts. As such, the city enjoyed considerable domestic and foreign trade.<sup>52</sup>Trade was almost entirely in the hands of the ‘Jonagurs’, among whom were wealthy merchants. Most of Ponnani was inhabited by these castes, and it was also the seat of the chief district authorities (at Kudunad and Chaukkad).<sup>53</sup>There were buildings like the sea customs house, cutcherries, etc., here. But Buchanan says that apart from the mosques, there are no notable buildings now.

According to William Logan, 12,421 people lived in Ponnani, of which 86% were Muslims. Twenty-seven mosques were there, including the Ponnani *Valiya* Juma Masjid, an Islamic learning center.<sup>54</sup>The 40 mosques that Buchanan saw dwindled to 27 by Logan’s time.<sup>55</sup> The average tonnage frequented by the port was 39,203 per annum. Average imports (mainly grain and salt) were valued at Rs 1,01,260, and exports (primarily timber, pepper, and coconut products) at Rs 4,25,576. The coastal craft of small size could enter the river; however, its mouth was heavily obstructed by sandbanks.<sup>56</sup>

Since the 19th century, the inland navigation system has been a part of the imperial policy of the British. So, the British emphasis on making water navigational channels throughout the accessible regions, witnessed a spurt of irrigational works that occurred from 1836 to 1866 in British India.<sup>57</sup> In the case of inland navigation, the British thoroughly understood the geographical features of their equipped region and the possibilities of navigational channels, satellite ports interlinking with natural harbors, etc. The first connection of this system was the construction of a canal named Pyolee Canal to link Korapuzha in the north and Beypoor in the south, which was initiated by Malabar collector H.V.Conolly (1840-1848). The canal became popularly known as Conolly Canal in the history of Kerala. The final stretch of Conolly Canal connecting Ponnani and Chetuwai backwaters can be seen at Veliyankode with the Orumanayur Canal’s artificial channel finally meeting the Cochin Port. This has greatly affected the socio-economic status of Ponnani.

Early modern Ponnani passed through European mercantile networks such as the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English East

India Company. The cultural negotiation created by such commercial powers in Ponnani was immense. From the sixteenth to late eighteenth centuries, Ponnani witnessed a large influx of European mercantile network. They approached Ponnani for their commercial interests and to reside there. They also established friendly relations with the local chiefs in Ponnani and percolated and mingled with the culture of Ponnani through many channels. An example of this is the Portuguese presence in Ponnani despite their expulsion by the Dutch. Such commercial powers continued to strive to consolidate their influence in Ponnani. This created cultural diversity in Ponnani.

### **Changing Theological Attitude and Response**

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ponnani witnessed several religious changes that profoundly affected the social and spiritual life of people. An important issue arose during this period, called Kondotti-Ponnani *Kaitarkkam*. This led to religious discussions and reactions in Ponnani. This section focuses on the Kondotti-Ponnani *Kaitarkkam* which influenced Ponnani religiously and culturally.

The Mappilas of Malabar belonged to the Sunni group and followed the Shafi school of jurisprudence.<sup>58</sup> In Sufism, they followed mostly the Qadiri order founded by Shaikh Abdul Qadir of Baghdad, popularly known as Muhyiddin Shaikh.<sup>59</sup> In both spheres, they were guided by the Makhdums of Ponnani and religious training was imparted for students who would later become the ulema of the community.<sup>60</sup> Shaikh Zainuddin founded the center of religious activity at Ponnani.<sup>61</sup> In the eighteenth century, two Sufi preachers reached Malabar; among them, Sayyid Muhammad Shah settled at Kondotti in Ernad and Sayyid Shaikh Jifri at Calicut.<sup>62</sup> Muhammad Shah, popularly known as Kondotti Thanghal, was born at Kardan near Bombay on 18 Rabi I, 1120/6 June 1708, in a Sayyid family<sup>63</sup>. Among the Mappilas, Muhammad Shah was known as a *faqir*.<sup>64</sup> The Mappilas of Malabar are divided into two sects by theological disputes; the Sunnis are led by the Makhdum Thanghal and the Shias by the Thanghal of Kondotti. The pronouncement of heresy against Muhammad Shah and his successors by Shaikh Jifri sowed the seeds

of religious and social controversy called Kondotti-Ponnani *Kaitarkkam*.<sup>65</sup>

When the Tipu Sultan conquered Malabar, certain Muslim scholars complained to him about the heretic beliefs of the faqir.<sup>66</sup> However, the Shah convinced the Sultan that he was a true Sufi. When Tipu Sultan built his headquarters at Feroke,<sup>67</sup> he invited Sufis and ulemas there and requested them to pray for the success of his campaigns.<sup>68</sup> He made the faqir an *Inamdar* and granted him tax-free lands; the land revenue from these lands was Rs 2734 per annum.<sup>69</sup> The disciples also provided land to the faqir, and income from this land went towards the upkeep of the hospice at Kondotti.<sup>70</sup> It appeared that Tipu was supporting and encouraging a particular group.

Moreover, as a Tipu Sultan supporter, the faqir faced the hostility of Para Nambi, the chieftain of the Zamorin at Ponnani. Nambi sent a vast Nair force under his sons Gopalan and Krishnan against him. Faqir was said to have appealed to the Mappilas to help him in the name of Islam. In the fight that followed, the Nairs were beaten, and about fifty people were killed.<sup>71</sup>

The Kondotti-Ponnani *Kaitarkkam* changed the religious system of Ponnani, and it affected Ponnani a lot culturally. Through theological aspects, the Muslims of Malabar were divided into two sects, and later the effort to unite these two sects created a split in the Ponnani sect. Moreover, the Muslim-Nair conflict can be seen here as a departure from the existing social system. Ponnani witnessed the change in religious attitudes of a group of Muslims who became followers of Tipu and expressed their opposition to the Nair sect, like Para Nambi, the chieftain of the Zamorins. Ponnani faced many theological changes during this period.<sup>72,73</sup>

## Conclusion

Ponnani was a significant space in the history of Kerala, reflects many cultures. Situated between Calicut and Cochin, Ponnani had high potential as a port and for the gathering of commercial resources. Therefore, the dispute over headquarters between the Raja of Cochin and the Zamorins, as well as the rivalry between the Vellatiri and the Zamorins for the Mamankam position, aimed to conquer this

region. Long-distance trade and mercantile settlements flourished in Ponnani, with cultural festivals like Mamankam playing a significant role. During such festivals, the Zamorins gave special status and honours to Kozhikode Khadi, Shahbandar Koya, and other merchant groups. Later, many European mercantile networks tried to establish a foothold in Ponnani for their political and commercial purposes, attracted by its geopolitics. Even the arrival of Hyder Ali in Malabar and the making of the Palghat fort were aimed at Ponnani and its oceanic links. Early modern Ponnani emerged from cross-cultural interactions through oceanic and political links, mercantile networks, and various settlements, reflecting the multilateral nature of this space.

### **Endnotes:**

- 1 C, Vijisha. (2021). “*Structural Remains of Early Modernity: Mapping the Built Environment at Ponnāni, South-West Malabar Coast*,” (Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation), Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Pp. 58-62.
- 2 Ayyar, K. V. Krishna. (1938). *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut: The Norman Printing Bureau, p.389.
- 3 Thurston, Edger. (2005). *The Madras Presidency with Mysore, Coorg and the Associated States*, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, p.24.
- 4 Gray, Albert. (1886). *The Voyage of Francois Pyrard of Laval*, Vol:1, London: The Hakluyt Society, p.409.
- 5 As the festival was held once in twelve years at Tirunāvāya on the Riverbank of Bhâratapu;a, called *Mahamagham*. It came to be known as *Mahamagham*, which became *Mamankam* in Malayalam. And also see Alexander Hamilton’s *A New Account of the East-Indies* in volume II (1995), which describes Mamankam in 1695.
- 6 Namboothiri, N. M. (2001). *Cultural Geography and Habitat and Bharatapuzha River Valley*. Oriental Research Centre, Govt. Sanskrit College Pattambi. p.22.
- 7 C, Vijisha. Op.cit., Pp.57-60.
- 8 Cheras of Mahodayapuram ( 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> AD)
- 9 Ibid. Pp.57-60.
- 10 Ayyar, K. V. Krishna (1960), Op.cit., P.23.
- 11 Namboothiri, N. M. (Ed.). (1987). *Samoothericaritrattilekanappurungal*, Sukapuram: Vallathol vidhyapeedam. p.5.
- 12 Ibid. p.6.
- 13 Ibid. p.226.
- 14 Ayyar, K. V. Krishna. (1938). Op.cit., p.114.
- 15 Kooria (2019).Op.cit., p.21.
- 16 According to AmmadKunnath in his thesis entitled ‘The Rise and Growth of Ponnani from 1498 AD to 1792AD’, the word “Makhdum” is derived from the Arabic word “*khadima*” meaning “did service.” So, by makhdum, we mean one who deserves services. It is not proper to believe that the word is used to denote the makhdums of Ponnani alone. The forefather of zaynud-din-Makhum I was also called Makhdums. In Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, this title seems to have been

- used along with the names of many. AmmadKunnath, “*The Rise and Growth of Ponnani from 1498 A.D to 1792 A.D.*,” (Thesis), Department of History, University of Calicut, 2009.
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  - 18 Ibid.,p.21.
  - 19 Abdurahimankutty,T. V. (2016). *MalabarileMakka* (Mal.), Ponnani: Nafeesa Publications, Pp. 36-38.
  - 20 C, Vijisha.(2020). ‘*Shared Architectural Traditions at Sacred Sites: The Pre-Modern Mosque and Temple of Ponnani* (Unpublished MA Dissertation), Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady, Pp. 31-42.
  - 21 Abdurahimankutty (2016)., Op.cit, p. 36.
  - 22 Kooria(2019),Op.cit. p.21.
  - 23 Ibid., p.21.
  - 24 Sanjay Subrahmanyam (2012)., Op. cit.p.61.
  - 25 See Ibn Battuta *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354* (Trsl) by H.A.R. Gibb (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD, 1929), R.H. Major (ed.,) *Indian in the fifteenth century being a collection of narration of voyages to India, The Book of Duarte Barbosa: An Account of the Countries Bordering on the Indian Ocean and Their Inhabitants.* And Arabic sources like *al-Malaybârî, Zayn al-Dîn. Tohfutul-mujahideen: An Historical Work in the Arabic Language*, translated by M. J. Rowlandson. London: Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland, 1833, and *al-Malaybârî, Zayn al-Dîn. Tu%fat al-Mujâhidîn: A Historical work in the Arabic language*, translated by S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar, University of Madras, 1942.
  - 26 S. Muhammad Husayn Nainar, Op. cit. p.63.
  - 27 Madras Correspondence file Vol: 4902.
  - 28 Vasco-da-Gama, who came for the second time in 1502, initiated a policy of aggressive violence. On 24<sup>th</sup>, November 1507, Francisco de Almeida, a Portuguese navigator, attacked Ponnâni port.
  - 29 Galletti, *Dutch in Malabar*, Madras Government Press, 1911, P.31.
  - 30 Ibid., p.31.
  - 31 Kooria(2019), Op.cit.p. 9.
  - 32 S. NO: 13,Collection of Old Records Manuscript in Malayalam 1710 A.D., Regional Archives Kozhikode, Kerala.
  - 33 S.NO: 13, Collection of Old Records Manuscript in Malayalam 1710 A.D., Regional Archives Kozhikode, Kerala.
  - 34 S.NO: 86, Copy of the Treaty of 1691 between Zamorine Maharaja of Kozhikode and the Dutch Company. , Regional Archives Kozhikode, Kerala.
  - 35 Alexander Hamilton. (1995). *A New Account of the East-Indies*, Vol. 1, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, p.320.
  - 36 We can see that in 1756-7 the Zamorins invaded the dominions of the Palghat raja and seized part of his territory. On this occasion, the raja appealed to Hyder Ali, the Faujdar of Dindigul, for assistance, and in response the latter sent a large army under his brother-in-law Makhdûm Ali. But the Zamorins bought him off by undertaking to restore his conquests in Palghat and to pay an indemnity of twelve lakhs of rupees. At the time of the invasion, Ali asked the Zamorin to pay a small annual tribute to his rule. The Zamorin refused to pay the amount and submit it to Ali. As the army of Ali advanced towards Calicut, the Zamorin blew up his palace and he committed suicide after sending his family members to Ponnâni. See William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol 1, New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1995 (reprint), Pp.402-408., C.K. Kareem, *Kerala Under Haider Ali*

- and Tipu Sultan, Cochin: Kerala History Association,1973, p.20, 35., K.M.Panikkar, *A History of Kerala 1498-1801*, Annamalainagar: The Annamalai University, 1960,p.335.
- 37 A.P. Ibrahim Kunju, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: Their History and Culture*, Trivandrum: Sandhya Publications,1989, p.74. and also see C.K. Kareem (1973), Op.cit., p.19.
- 38 C.K. Kareem (1973), Op.cit., Pp.47-48.
- 39 Namboothir, N. M. (ed.). (1998). *Vellayude Carithram*, Mal., Sukapuram: Vallathol Vidhyapeetham, p.18
- 40 Ibid., p.18.
- 41 A.P. Ibrahim Kunju (1989),Op.cit., p.76.
- 42 Innes. (1997). *Malabar Gazetteer* vol I and II, Thiruvananthapuram: The State Editor Kerala Gazetteers, p.52.
- 43 Ibid., p.8.
- 44 Buchanan, Francis. (1988). *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar* Vol.II, New Delhi: Asian educational services, p.420.
- 45 Ibid., p.420.
- 46 Ibid., p.420.
- 47 Ibid., p.420.
- 48 Ibid., p.420.
- 49 Ibid., Pp.421-423.
- 50 Two British officials who gave details of the geographical and statistical survey of Malabar region undertaken during 1824-1830.
- 51 Ward and Conner. (1995). *A Descriptive memoir of Malabar*, Thiruvananthapuram: Government of Kerala,p.236.
- 52 Ibid., p.237.
- 53 Ibid., p.237.
- 54 Logan (1995),Op.cit., p. 383.
- 55 See the note 40.
- 56 Ibid.,p.77.
- 57 As a part of the political and economic strategic policies British tried to enact the Treaty of Seringapatanam in 1792 and the Treaty of Powney in 1790with Malabar and Cochin as a part of political ascendancy, and it tried to merge the individual principalities with the Bombay presidency. See Brighty Robert, ‘ Impact of Conolly Canal in Market Reorientation and Configuring Regional Networks of Malabar, in *IJRAR*, Vol.5, 2018, p. 1099.
- 58 Randathani, Hussain. (2018). *Muslims of Malabar: Society and Politics(1800-1921)*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, p.141.
- 59 Ibid., p.142.
- 60 Ibid., p.142.
- 61 Mentioned above
- 62 Randathani. (2018).Op.cit., p.142.
- 63 Ibid., p.142.
- 64 Ibid., p.143.
- 65 Ibid., p.146.
- 66 Ibid., p.143.
- 67 Ibrahim Kunju (1989), Op.cit. p.77.
- 68 Ibid., p.144.
- 69 Ibid., p.144.
- 70 Ibid., p.144.

- 71 Ibid., p.144.
- 72 Generally in the history of Malabar, historians say that Tipu, who had led the army to Ponnani, suddenly retreated from Ponnani after the news of his father Hyder Ali's death. However I understand that the religious changes of the 19th and early 20th centuries in Ponnani had a very strong influence on Tipu's movements. A group of Muslims are seen supporting Tipu while others are opposing it.

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