

MEMORIALIZING HISTORY: PAZHASSI RAJA'S AFTERLIVES AS PUBLIC MEMORIALS

*Dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad in
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
Degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY***

SWATHI SURENDRAN



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
GACHIBOWLI- 500046

2022

DECLARATION

I, Swathi Surendran, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled, '**Memorializing History: Pazhassi Raja's Afterlives as Public Memorials**' submitted by me to the University of Hyderabad for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in History is an original work carried out under the supervision of Dr. V.J. Varghese, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Hyderabad. I also declare that this work has not been previously submitted to this university or any other university for the award of any degree or diploma.

Hyderabad

Date: 10 December 2022

Swathi Surendran

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, “Memorializing History: Pazhassi Raja’s Afterlives as Public Memorials” submitted by Swathi Surendran, Reg. No. 19SHHL07 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in History, is a bonafied work carried by her under my supervision and guidance. This dissertation is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously in part or full to this or any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Supervisor

Head of the Department

Dean of the School

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION 1-8

CHAPTER 1

Disagreeing Representations: Reading the Writings on Pazhassi Raja 9-39

1.1 History of the Pazhassi Revolt

1.2 Representation of a Rebel: Pazhassi in Literatures

1.2.1 Nationalist Reading

1.2.2 Marxist Reading

1.2.3 Popular Reading

1.2.4 Colonial Reading

CHAPTER 2

Locating the Memorialisation of Pazhassi Raja in the Material Space 40-90

CHAPTER 3

Remembering Pazhassi Raja: Changing Representations in Popular Domains 91-132

3.1 Print Media Before and After Independence

3.2 Representational Politics Before and After Independence

3.3 Cinematic Renditions and ‘Prosthetic Memories’

3.4 Virtual Spaces: Blogs

CONCLUSION 133-137

BIBLIOGRAPHY 138-144

ANNEXURE 145

SIMILARITY REPORT 146-149

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of many individuals. First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my research supervisor, Dr. V. J. Varghese for his guidance, patience and valuable insights. I am truly thankful to him for reading my drafts with great patience and helped me with numerous revisions. I am also indebted to Prof. Anindita Mukhopadhyay, the head of the department and member of the Research Advisory Committee for helping me with essential suggestions. I also thank Dr. M. N. Rajesh, Assistant Professor, Department of History for giving the report on plagiarism statistics of the dissertation.

I would like to express my thanks to a number of people and institutions who provided me with valuable assistance during the course of research. Thanks to the office staff and former Librarian, Ramesh Babu of Mattannur Municipality for providing me with essential documents and helping me with interviews. I owe thanks to the museum curators of Pazhassi Raja Archaeological Museum at Kozhikode, Pazhassi Raja Memorial and Tomb at Wayanad, Pazhassi Raja Landscape Museum at Wayanad, and Pazhassi Raja Smrithi Mandapam at Kannur for providing guidance during field visits.

I am thankful to the board members of Mridanga Saileswari Temple, Krishnakumar Kannothe, Secretary of Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi, Sailaja Thampuram, member of Kottayam family, Lt. Col. Haridasan. V, Hav. Harindran. K and other office staff of Defence Security Corps at Kannur and office staff of Pazhassi Irrigation Project at Kannur who happily rendered me with useful resources for the research.

I would like to express my gratitude to the University Grants Commission for providing financial assistance for the research period through fellowships and contingency grants. I

wish to extend my sincere thanks to the Department of History, University of Hyderabad and also the staff of Indira Gandhi Memorial Library, University of Hyderabad.

Lastly, I am grateful to my parents, sister and friends, Arun, Gayathri and Lakshmi who have been loving, kind and supportive during the course of my research.

Swathi Surendran

INTRODUCTION

Memory is a process of recollection of past experiences and it possesses meaning to individuals, communities and society as a whole. It is an important factor that has the ability to derive power in the functioning of culture. Michel Foucault in an interview about film and popular memory in French Cinema put forward a fundamental argument that by controlling people's memory, their dynamism, experience and knowledge is controlled.¹ In other words, memory holds the potential to shape and structure the thinking patterns of individuals, and thereby society at large. In the work, *The Collective Memory*, Maurice Halbwachs argues that memory is a reconstruction of the past which is influenced by the socio-cultural and political forces of the present rather than a simple recollection of the past.² Therefore, the study of memory is not simply a study of the past, but how the past is recognized and interpreted in the present.

The present study aims to locate the memorialization of Kerala Varma popularly known as Pazhassi Raja who was a member of the Kottayam royal family in Northern Malabar, Kerala. He is known for his resistance against the Mysore occupation (1774-1793) and also a decade-long resistance (1793-1805) against the rule of the East India Company in Malabar. The foremost reason behind the resistance was the revenue policy imposed by the Company. The forcible collection of taxes invited organized opposition from the people of many kingdoms in Malabar. Resistance took a violent turn in Kottayam as the Company assigned Kurumbranad Raja, uncle of Kerala Varma to collect the revenue from Kottayam. Although

¹ Michel Foucault, "Film and Popular Memory: An Interview with Michael Foucault", originally appeared in *Cahiers du Cinema* 251, no. 2 (1974), *Radical Philosophy* 11, no. 11, (Summer 1975): 25. <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/interview/michel-foucault-film-and-popular-memory>.

² Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr and Vida Yasdi Ditter, (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 69.

Kerala Varma was in the fourth line of succession, he was promised the command over Kottayam in return for his help in the campaign against Tipu Sultan by the Company.

The Company officials were unable to collect revenue in Kottayam as they faced severe opposition from the people of Kottayam under Kerala Varma. After the attack on Pazhassi palace by the Company army, he retired to the jungles of Wayanad and resorted to Guerilla warfare. The second phase of the revolt was resumed in Wayanad and inflicted heavy loss to the Company army. Nair army, Kurichya army, Mappilas, and peasants took part in the resistance and fought hand in hand with Kerala Varma. Numerous attacks carried out by the Company army have failed including the mission under Col. Arthur Wellesley (the later Duke of Wellington) in 1800. In 1804 the Company deployed Thomas Harvey Baber as Thalassery Sub Collector to handle the situation and the resistance was gradually crushed in Kottayam and Wayanad with the help of a special force. On 1805 November 30, Pazhassi Raja was killed in a skirmish in Wayanad that resulted in the complete suppression of this resistance.³

The existing literature largely explains the history of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja within the framework of early revolts against the British rule in India. The literature written on Pazhassi Raja and the revolt is largely based on colonial records including Company dispatches, correspondences, Foreign Political Consultations, Joint Commission Reports, State Manuals, etc. It is important to note that, there are not many research studies conducted on the history of Pazhassi Raja. The first systematic research was carried out by K.K.N Kurup in the 1970s and the work was published as *Pazhassi Samarangal* in 1980. The work can be considered a Marxist reading of the revolt. The author did not try to incorporate the Pazhassi struggle under the rubric of Freedom Movement as the period did not witness the emergence of the concept of Indian nationalism. Another Marxist reading of the revolt can be

³ The information about Pazhassi's death can be read in Baber's report to the Principal Collector. See William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, 1887, (Madras: reprinted at Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1951), 549. Also K. K. N. Kurup, *Pazhassi Samarangal*, (Thiruvananthapuram: State Institute of Languages, 1980), 118.

found in E.M.S. Namboodiripad's *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle* where Pazhassi is portrayed as a feudal lord and considered the restoration of traditional society, one of the foremost objectives of the struggle, as a liability for itself.⁴ Marxist anthropologist, Kathleen Gough in the article, "Indian Peasant Uprisings" has viewed the Pazhassi Revolt as a "Restorative Movement."⁵

In the nationalist writing of K. Rajayyan's *South Indian Rebellion: The First War of Independence, 1800-1801*, the Pazhassi Revolt along with other rebellions that took place in South India are discussed in the light of the freedom struggle. Another historical work that discusses Pazhassi Raja is Margret Frenz's *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar, 1700-1805*, where Pazhassi is depicted as a "little king" who put forward resistance against the Company's intrusion to preserve the traditional existing socio-cultural and political order.

The colonial readings like *Malabar Manual* by William Logan and *Madras District Gazetteer* edited by F. B. Evans and C. A. Innes portray Pazhassi Raja as a rebel whose activities created a ruckus in the civil order. Being part of an active discourse at regional and vernacular levels, Pazhassi Raja is remembered through popular historical writings as well. Other than the above mentioned literature on Pazhassi Raja, *Pazhassi Rekhakal* edited by Scaria Zacharia forms an important source that can help us to look closely and understand the Pazhassi struggle, as these are the only sources that involve natives in its production.⁶

The existing literature throws light on the history of Pazhassi Raja and the anti-imperial resistance he offered to the East India Company. On one hand, he is portrayed as a patriotic

⁴ E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, (Trivandrum: Social Scientist Press, 1986), 46.

⁵ Kathleen Gough, 'Indian Peasant Uprisings', in *Peasant Struggles in India*, A. R. Desai, ed., (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1979), 96- 98.

⁶ Prof. Scaria Zacharia is the general editor of *Thalassery Rekhakal* in Gundert Collection of Tellicherry Records under Malayalam Manuscript Series in Tübingen University Library. *Pazhassi Rekhakal* is a specific volume in *Thalassery Rekhakal* and is edited by Joseph Skariah.

hero or as an early freedom fighter but on the other hand, he was a rebel who constantly created a ruckus in the social order. He is characterized as a welfare-oriented ruler whose foremost priority was the subjects but on the contrary, he is also displayed as a power driven prince. Although he is remembered as a secular and humanitarian leader who united different sections of people for a single cause, he is also displayed as discriminatory against Muslims for their support of the Mysore Sultans.

As far as the literature available on Pazhassi Raja is concerned, it is largely dependent on colonial records. The remembrance of Pazhassi through the representations in the secondary literature is limited among the readers or enthusiasts of the subject. However, the influence of physical remembrance of Pazhassi among the public aids the active memorialization of the historical figure. The memories of Pazhassi in society are reproduced and enriched through his celebrations in the material space. The current study aims to explore the process of memorialization of Pazhassi Raja to see how he is perceived in the minds of people. This process of memorialization is carried out through the construction of public memorials, museums, educational institutions, commemorative observances, popular culture and through media. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to map and understand these endeavours that play a major role in the systematic remembrance of Pazhassi Raja.

In the context of the rising importance of local history in the contemporary period, the study of the representation of Pazhassi Raja is significant. The organized and ritualistic memorialization of a particular event or a person possesses the ability to influence popular thinking about the past. Nevertheless, the process of remembrance is determined by various motivations attached to it. Collective Memory, according to Halbwachs propounds that it is the reconstruction of the past devoid of objectivity as it entirely depends upon the present

situations of the society.⁷ However, objectivity is not completely denied for collective memory according to Barry Schwartz. He argues that the “past cannot be literally constructed; it can only be selectively exploited” and the exploitation require enough factual significance.⁸

While locating the process of memory making, the present research study intends to place the memories of Pazhassi Raja in the framework of “Collective Memory”.⁹ The idea is to look at how the process of remembrance in the socio-political and cultural realm relies on the selective interest of individuals, communities or the state. The collective identity requires ceremony as an everyday routine to recollect its history and reaffirm its image.¹⁰ The naming of institutions and organizations, and the installation of statues in public spaces promote a process of everyday remembering. The work also looks at the role of the state as a sponsor in upholding his memories for the promotion of the tourism industry.

Pierre Nora in his *Realms of Memory Rethinking the French Past* observes memory as the embodiment of the present which is subjected to permanent evolution that involves remembering and forgetting whereas history as the representation of the past in which the reconstruction is always incomplete and problematic.¹¹ Therefore, the need to understand the language of representation comes from the assumption that memory is not selected randomly and the need to remember specific events and people is largely rooted in the contemporary societal requirements. Nora rightly observes that “the need for memory is the need for

⁷ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis. A. Coser, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 25

⁸ Barry Schwartz, “The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory”, *Social Forces* 61, no. 2, (December 1982): 396, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2578232>.

⁹ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 80.

¹⁰ Jan Assman, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 38.

¹¹ Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, Vol 1, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 3.

history.”¹² He reminds the need to understand the memory in the present as a willful, subjective and deliberate attempt experienced as a duty rather than an unsolicited and controlled one.

The memorialization of Pazhassi Raja is not an arbitrary undertaking, but a conscious and deliberate attempt to represent Pazhassi in a way to legitimize the specific interests or agendas of the institutions and individuals. By building this as the argument, the study seeks to bring light to the commodification of the memories of Pazhassi Raja and his resistance. It is possible to see that the memories of Pazhassi Raja are operated outside the social and cultural realm. This process of commercialization is adopted with an intention of validating and inculcating general acceptance of the establishment among the public. In addition to this, the study discusses the representation of Pazhassi in popular culture and how it shapes the general understanding of the early anti-colonial struggle.

Concerning methodology, the current study has utilized ethnographical parameters to understand the social phenomena of memorialization. The research data has been collected by visiting physical sites of memorialization, museums, libraries, educational institutions, tourist sites, local administrative offices, temples, etc. The area of research was mainly limited to three districts of Kannur, Wayanad, and Kozhikode in Northern Malabar of Kerala. Apart from visiting the memorial sites, interviews were conducted with office bearers of memorial sites, Mattannur Municipality, temples, memorial trusts of Pazhassi Raja, members of associated families of Kottayam, etc. Pamphlets, Notices, and Supplements issued by the Municipal office and other organizations as part of the calendar remembrances and commemoration ceremonies throw light into the popular representations and thus form an integral source of this research.

¹² Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 8

Newspaper articles in Malayalam and English, two biographical films in Malayalam, travelogues, documentaries, fictional literature and historical drama form part of the study. Among secondary literature, works on Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja and Pazhassi Struggle in both Malayalam and English were referred to. It comprises academic works and popular writings which interpret and represent the history of Pazhassi Raja in various ways. Under published sources, *Madras District Gazetteer* written by C. A. Innes and F. B. Evans, *Malabar Manual* authored by William Logan proved to be essential works in the study. Apart from this, I have referred to *Pazhassi Rekhakal*, an edited collection of correspondences exchanged between the Company officials and Pazhassi Raja that provides a picture of the struggle different from the colonial point of view.

The dissertation comprises three chapters. The first chapter titled “Disagreeing Representations: Reading the writings on Pazhassi Raja” reviews the literature dealing with the history of Pazhassi Raja. The chapter gives a general understanding of the life and death of Pazhassi Raja and the anti-imperial resistance carried out against the Company in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Malabar. This is followed by a comparative and critical study of the selected readings on Pazhassi Raja.

The second chapter, “Locating the Memorialization of Pazhassi Raja in the Material Space” discusses the memorialization of Pazhassi Raja through public memorials and ceremonies of commemoration and remembrances. The process of everyday remembering is enacted through the installation of material sites, statues and institutions which are named after him. The role of individuals, communities and the government in the establishment of these memorials are critically engaged with the help of general readings on cultural history and studies on memory. The interests behind placing Pazhassi Raja in the diverse realms of society will be looked upon. The schools, colleges, libraries, and museums built in memory

of him, and the material sites of ritualized commemoration are discussed. The chapter also examines the popular memory of Pazhassi Raja.

The third chapter, “Remembering Pazhassi Raja: Changing Representations in Popular Domains” looks at the representations of Pazhassi Raja in documentaries, films, and popular media. This chapter examines newspaper articles, two Malayalam biographical films namely *Pazhassi Raja* (1964), *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* (2009), a few docudramas and travelogues on Pazhassi Raja, a drama and a fictional novel and also online blogs that deal with the history of Pazhassi Raja. Here, media is viewed as a powerful mediator in shaping the popular memory of Pazhassi as it covers a wider audience. The commemoration of Pazhassi through popular culture and media becomes important because of its profound impact in structuring people’s understanding of the past. The chapter consider the remembrance of Pazhassi as a dynamic process where the media acts as an agency to disseminate the memories.

The study thus aims to throw light on various representations of Pazhassi through public memorials, museums, popular literature and media. It could be argued that the creation of memories and histories is a result of conscious and unconscious selection, interpretation and distortion.¹³ The idea here is to present the remembrance of Pazhassi in different socio-political and cultural contexts as an intentional and dynamic process that involves careful selection and exclusion of memories. The study looks at the perception of Pazhassi Raja in public memory and the mediums through which they are operated.

¹³ Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 44.

CHAPTER ONE

DISAGREEING REPRESENTATIONS: READING THE WRITINGS ON PAZHASSI RAJA

“Two years later another course of dispute cropped up, and the Pychy, ‘the most untractable and unreasonable of the Rajas,’ as the Joint Commissioners had called him once more raised the standard of revolt.”¹⁴

The above excerpt from the District Gazetteer of Malabar reveals the British abhorrence towards Pazhassi Raja in the context of the second phase of the Pazhassi Revolt. The colonial texts portrayed him as someone who is difficult to be governed and as a rebel who created disturbances time and again in their civil and political order. On the other hand, the popular writings accord him with the recognition of a hero whose martyrdom has invested in the cause of freedom of the nation.¹⁵ The written histories of Pazhassi Raja throw light on his decade-long resistance against the English East India Company in Kottayam and Wayanad in Malabar in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. The current chapter provides a general understanding of the causes, political developments, course of events, and the suppression of the Pazhassi Revolt. In addition to this, a critical and comparative analysis of the literature on the Revolt is also attempted to understand the diverse and conflicting representations of Pazhassi Raja.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Malabar, in Kerala, witnessed a decade-long resistance against British supremacy in Malabar. Malabar annexed to British India in

¹⁴ C. A. Innes, F. B. Evans, ed., *Madras District Gazetteers: Malabar and Anjengo*, Volume 1, (Madras: Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1908), 79.

¹⁵ A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, (Kottayam: DC Books, 1967), 263.

1791 comprised several chiefdoms, having trade relations with the English East India Company.¹⁶ The beginning of the nineteenth century marked the slow and gradual increase in Company's power and political control over the region. Prior to this, Malabar was under the Mysore Sultans following the invasion of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan in the second half of the eighteenth century. As the British took over Malabar by defeating Tipu Sultan, it had to face opposition from the traditional chieftains of Malabar while establishing dominance over the region. Pazhassi Revolt was the most organized attempt among them. The revolt prolonged for more than a decade and was fought in two phases, the first phase from 1793- 97 and the second phase from 1800- 1805.

1.1. History of the Pazhassi Revolt

Pazhassi Revolt was a well-organized movement supported by Nair landlords, peasants, Mappilas, and Adivasi communities. The foremost reason behind the revolt was the revenue policies imposed by the Company in Malabar. Malabar being a strategic location and rich in pepper cultivation, there was a long conflict between Mysore and the British over the control of Malabar. It is important to note that the eighteenth century witnessed Malabar becoming a centre of constant political conflicts between European powers, Mysore and native rulers. Malabar was under the domination of Mysore Sultans from 1766 till the defeat of Tipu in 1792. The Treaty of Seringapatnam was signed between Tipu and the East India Company resulting in the transfer of many territories including Malabar to the British. The Pazhassi

¹⁶ Malabar was part of Bombay Presidency from 1792-1800. Under the advice of Lord Cornwallis, Bombay Governor, R. Aborcromby appointed several military officials as Commissioners in Malabar to establish a favourable system for a future government. They negotiated with the Rajas of Cannanore and Calicut and signed revenue settlements. The government was formed officially in March 1793 in the province of Malabar. The province was divided into two superintendencies (Northern and Southern) with a superior middle division under an officer (Supervisor) with sovereignty in political, judicial and revenue affairs and have control over the two superintendents. See Logan, *Malabar*, 475- 490. As the Governor General was dissatisfied with the Bombay Government under Jonathan Duncan, the military administration of Malabar was handed over to Madras Presidency and Lord Arthur Wellesley was appointed as the Commanding Officer. The civil administration of Malabar was also transferred to Madras Presidency upon the orders of Governor General, Lord Cornwallis in May 1800. See Logan, *Malabar*, 527- 528.

Revolt should be discussed in this context wherein the British began to exercise their power and dominance over Malabar.

The primary cause behind the revolt was the new revenue policy introduced by the British in Malabar where the collection of revenue from the cultivators was leased out to Rajas for lump sums.¹⁷ The collection of high revenue faced severe opposition throughout Malabar and the resistance to this in the state of Kottayam was led by Kerala Varma. In addition to the controversial revenue policy, Kottayam had other reasons to oppose the Company's intrusion in administrative affairs. It was Pazhassi Raja who assisted the Company as an ally against Hyder Ali in the Second Anglo Mysore war (1780- 84) and Tipu Sultan in the Third Anglo Mysore War (1790-92) with an understanding of gaining Kottayam's freedom after overthrowing the Mysore rule. He took the rule of Kottayam into his own hands once Ravi Varma, the senior Raja of Kottayam who took asylum in Travancore during the Mysore invasion died in 1790. It is observed that Pazhassi has supported the people of Kottayam to resettle by distributing them, land and seeds and lending money for cultivation following the displacement caused due to the Mysore invasion.¹⁸

Pazhassi had earlier signed an agreement in May 1790 with the Company that ensured the support of the latter in freeing Kottayam from Tipu, to give tributes to the Company in return for assistance, and also to include Pazhassi Raja in any of the future pacts with Tipu Sultan.¹⁹ The Third Anglo-Mysore War ended in the Seringapatnam Treaty which marked the beginning of British sovereignty in Malabar. As per the suggestions of Governor General, Lord Cornwallis, the Bombay government decided to engage in agreements with Rajas to

¹⁷ Menon, *Survey of Kerala History*, 262.

¹⁸ Joseph Skariah, ed., *Pazhassi Rekhakal* (PR 59 B), in *Tubingen University Library Malayalam Manuscript Series*, Scaria Zacharia, general ed., (Kottayam: DC Books, 1994), 40- 43. In a letter sent by the chiefs and people of Kottayam to the Northern Superintendent, Christopher Pelé in 1797, Pazhassi was held in high regards. It is said that, he stayed back and protected them when all the other Rajas fled to Travancore during the attack of Tipu. They have asked Pelé to hand over the control of revenue collection of Kottayam to Pazhassi.

¹⁹ K. K. N. Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2004), 30.

appoint them for a fixed period to collect the revenue from cultivators for lump sums. All chiefdoms were demanded to pay a certain amount based on their annual agricultural production. Although Pazhassi Raja was not ready to accept the temporary pact of lease over Kottayam and the high amount fixed by the Company to pay in the beginning, the agreement was carried out later.²⁰ However, Pazhassi Raja began to include Wayanad under his dominion along with Kottayam which led to cause dissatisfaction among the Company officials. Due to the uncertainties regarding the ownership of Wayanad, they restrained him from exercising power over the region.²¹

It was in this context, that Kurumbranad Raja (Vira Varma), a member of the Kottayam family and a distant uncle of Pazhassi entered the picture. He was regarded as an opportunist who was ready to gain ownership of Kottayam by accepting the high rates of revenue fixed by the Company through a tender system. The Company preferred Kurumbranad Raja and used him as an instrument for gaining more profits and political control over Kottayam. However, the estranged Pazhassi became unhappy over this and began to prevent the Company's interference in the administrative affairs. He forcefully stopped the construction of a mosque at the market of Kottayam as the Mappilas did not seek permission from him beforehand.²² The actions of Pazhassi caused challenges to the Company and they decided to cancel the lease agreement with the former. This Company thus leased Kottayam to Kurumbranad Raja in June 1793 for one year, which naturally invited resentment from Pazhassi. Pazhassi also tried to handle the law and order in Kottayam by himself which led to

²⁰ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 35. Here, Kurup assumes that Pazhassi was not ready to pay the huge sum and the Commissioners had to send four soldiers from Tellicherry to Kottayam for reconciliation. It is possible that Joint Commissioners called Pazhassi Raja as "untractable and unreasonable of all Rajas" in this context. From, C. A. Innes, F. B. Evans, ed., *Madras District Gazetteers: Malabar and Anjengo*, Volume 1, (Madras: Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1908), 79.

²¹ Kurup, 36.

²² Kurup, 39.

the murder of six Mappilas in an incident related to the construction of a mosque in Koodali in September 1793.²³

Pazhassi then began to create obstructions in the revenue collection and Company was forced to suspend the collection in Kottayam as Pazhassi enjoyed immense popularity among the people. The Company leased the chiefdoms to the Rajas who bided the highest sums in the auction. In the meantime, Company renewed the lease of Kurumbranad Raja for five years against the wishes of Pazhassi Raja in March 1795, taking the revolt to an intense phase. Pazhassi openly challenged the domination of the Company by giving asylum to Narangoli Nambiar, a wanted 'rebel' to the latter. At the same time, Kurumbranad Raja's men failed to collect the revenue due to the massive protest against the new system. Therefore, Company decided to take severe measures to keep Pazhassi's actions under check. On April 1st, 1796, a contingent of three hundred soldiers under Lt. James Gordon from Tellicherry attacked the Pazhassi fort and *Kovilakam*.²⁴ In the absence of Pazhassi Raja at the place, Kovilakam was looted by the Company soldiers.

With this incident, Pazhassi and his men retired to the forests of upland Wayanad and blocked the connections between Wayanad and the plains by conquering the Kuttiadi ghats. Meanwhile, Pazhayamvidan Chandu, one of the former trustees of Pazhassi Raja joined hands with Kurumbranad Raja and supervised the revenue collection. It can be noted that, although Pazhassi was withdrawn to Wayanad, Company failed to carry out the tax collection efficiently in Kottayam. This was followed by certain reconciliatory attempts on the part of Commandant, Col. Dow, a former friend of Pazhassi Raja during the war against Mysore Sultans. He sent letters to the Commissioners in Bombay explaining the situation followed by

²³ William Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. 1, 1887, (Madras: Reprinted at Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1951), 497.

²⁴ *Kovilakam* is generally an elaborate complex endowed with palace, estate, land and other properties of the royal lineages in Kerala.

his correspondence with Pazhassi. The Bombay Governor, Jonathan Duncan confirmed the pardon of Pazhassi Raja and informed the Malabar Commission to hand over the state and the plundered wealth to him. However, the Commission sent the letter to Kurumbranad Raja as the five-year lease was still prevalent and the latter did not inform Pazhassi Raja regarding the order from the Bombay Government due to his vested interests.²⁵

The Malabar Commission did not take any special interest in resolving the uncertainties regarding the ownership of Kottayam. In hope of avoiding war, a meeting was held between Pazhassi Raja and Northern Superintendent Wilkinson in the presence of Kurumbranad Raja. However, the meeting failed as Kurumbranad Raja was not ready to give up control over Kottayam. Pazhassi and his men retired again to Wayanad and resorted to armed resistance. In December 1796, British Commissioners issued a proclamation forbidding the people to cooperate with Pazhassi Raja. However, this proclamation did not affect the popularity Pazhassi enjoyed over the people of Kottayam. Meanwhile, Pazhassi established contacts with Tipu's commandant at Kankanakotta to seek help to drive the British out of Wayanad. In December 1796, Pazhassi met Tipu Sultan to discuss the measures to be taken in Wayanad.²⁶ This meeting was held a few months before the commencement of the fourth Anglo-Mysore war.

The first few months of 1797 saw a series of engagements between Pazhassi's men and the Company army in which the latter was inflicted with heavy losses. The contingent moving to Maanatheri post under Lt. Warden accompanied by Captain Bowmen was attacked by Kaitheri Ambu, (an important associate of Pazhassi) and his men. More Company troops were sent to Maanatheri for assistance but all of them faced a similar fate

²⁵ Logan, *Malabar*, 511- 512.

²⁶ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 54. Here, author assumes that, and Tipu was not in a position to provide extensive assistance for Pazhassi as he himself was preparing for a war with British. The meeting was mostly directed in developing a common ground regarding Wayanad.

at the hands of Pazhassi troops. In March, the supervision of military affairs in Kottayam was handed over to Lt. Col. Dow and he decided to move to Periya Pass through Thamarasseri. Another proclamation was released by Commissioners asking the associates and supporters of Pazhassi to surrender, but it was neglected by the people of Kottayam. This period was also marked by uprisings from Mappilas against the Company in the regions of Southern Malabar including Ernad.²⁷ The march of troops under Dow joined by another group under Lt. Mealey was attacked by thousands of Nair and Kurichya soldiers at Periya Pass and the battle continued for three consecutive days till Dow decided to relinquish.²⁸

On March 18, a contingent of more than a thousand men under Major Cameron was ambushed at Periya Pass by Pazhassi troops. This attack inflicted heavy losses to British troops including the lives of soldiers and ammunitions. The continuous defeats faced by Company troops forced the Bombay Government to take immediate measures to re-establish peace in Malabar. Bombay Governor, Jonathan Duncan, and Commander in Chief of Bombay Presidency, Lt. Gen Stuart reached Tellicherry to work out peace agreements with Pazhassi Raja. A committee was appointed to study the socio-political situations in Kottayam and in light of the report, the agreement with Kurumbranad Raja was withdrawn. Thus, Kottayam came under the direct control of the Company. An attempt of truce with Pazhassi Raja was pursued through the mediation of Chirakkal Raja. Thus, on July 13 Pazhassi along with his associates visited Duncan at Tellicherry fort. A peace agreement was signed that comprised four clauses; to make Vira Varma, the senior member of *Kizhakke Kovilakam* (Eastern branch) as the head of Kottayam, to allow an annual pension of eight thousand

²⁷ Kurup, 59.

²⁸ Mundakayam Gopi, *Ariyapedatha Wayanad*, (Kalpetta: Sahya Publications, 2002), 101.

rupees to Pazhassi Raja, to return the property and wealth plundered from Pazhassi Kovilakam and to allow Pazhassi Raja to stay in his *Kovilakam* at Pazhassi.²⁹

Although a new lease agreement was given to Vira Varma, Company was not ready for any sort of compromise in the amount of revenue. The Commissioners exercised more power over the administration of Kottayam and thus the period saw a dual rule. It can be observed that after a short period in Kottayam, Pazhassi Raja retired to Wayanad and tried to reach an agreement with Tipu regarding Wayanad. In August 1798, Company released an order which states that the territory of Wayanad is not included under the Treaty of Seringapatnam and thus belongs to Tipu. However, the fourth Anglo- Mysore war resulted in the death of Tipu Sultan on 4th May 1799. As far as the situation in Kottayam was considered, Vira Varma was not interested in the rule of Kottayam and he asked Company to let him go to Travancore due to his declining physical health.³⁰ At this stage, Pazhassi Raja demanded the rights of Kottayam and Wayanad as per the customary laws, but Company was planning to strengthen its political control over Malabar.

The negligence of Pazhassi's demands resulted in the beginning of new conflicts in Malabar. Governor General, Lord Mornington had already reminded the Commissioners that the defeat of Pazhassi is a necessity to consolidate the domination of the Company in Malabar.³¹ Thus, with the attempts of the Company to siege Wayanad, the second phase of the Pazhassi Revolt started in 1800. The supreme government handed over the supervision of the civil administration of Malabar from the Bombay Presidency to Madras.³² Col. Arthur Wellesley was appointed as the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Malabar,

²⁹ Logan, *Malabar*, 521.

³⁰ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal* 77.

³¹ Kurup, 79-80. Before taking charge in India, in a letter sent to the Board of Control, Mornington says that although Pazhassi has engaged in a treaty with us, the former's surrender cannot be taken into confidence and Company's security is not assured in such circumstances. He also pointed out the inefficiency of the Bombay government led by Duncan.

³² Logan, *Malabar*, 528.

Mysore and South Canara. In the meantime, Pazhassi has raised a huge army of Nairs and Mappilas from South Malabar and also former soldiers in Tipu's army, Kurichyas, peasants and local landlords. The important associates of Pazhassi were Edachena Kungan, Thalakkal Chandu, Kaitheri Ambu, Aaralath Kuttappa Nambiar, Kannavath Sankaran Nambiar, Atthan Gurukkal, and so on. They become successful in blocking the routes of transport and checkpoints of the Company army. A contingent under Major Homes was attacked at the post of Manathana. Pazhassi troops mostly carried out the technique of guerrilla warfare.

In the background of severe resistance, Company failed to carry out revenue collection in Kottayam. They implemented rules similar to martial law in Kottayam to restrict the aid received by Pazhassi from his supporters. Wellesley was called back to Madras and the leadership was handed over to Col. Stevenson. Wellesley's program was to isolate Pazhassi troops from his associates in south Malabar by constructing more checkpoints in the borders. Stevenson reached Wayanad in January 1801 and he started to implement a centralized military movement. Company troops proved successful in conquering many regions including Periya. Lt. Col. Innes suppressed the revolt of Mappilas in south Malabar and cut off their support to Pazhassi. Kannavath Nambiar and his son were publicly hanged after being captured by a contingent under Lt. Edward in November. The period was also marked by the change in the administrative system of Malabar. The Malabar Commission was called off and the posts of Principal Collector and Subordinate Collectors were introduced.³³ In January 1802, the Principal Collector, William McLeod issued orders disarming the district.

Despite these developments, the revolt did not die out completely. In October 1802, the Company checkpoint at Panamaram was attacked by Pazhassi troops under Edachena Kungan

³³Logan, 533-534.

The government of Lord Clive stressed the inefficiency of Bombay Presidency to establish a permanent system of government in Malabar. Malabar Commission was dissolved and the revenue and civil administration was put under superintendence of a Principal Collector and three Subordinate Collectors.

and Thalakkal Chandu and inflicted heavy losses on the Company army.³⁴ This incident created a new vigour among the people and the revolt became more intense and widespread. Martial law was imposed in Wayanad in January 1803. In March, Calicut Sub Jail was attacked by a group of rebels and guards were killed. The escaping prisoners were killed by the Company army and the rest were recaptured. Due to the complete failure of the judicial system and the severe opposition against the new revenue measures and land assessments, McLeod resigned from power and was handed over to Rickards.³⁵ After the inconclusive war with Pazhassi Raja, Wellesley was called back to Europe in 1803. A new body of 1200 native soldiers was organized by the Company named *Kolkars* who were well acquainted with the local terrains.³⁶ The Company's spice plantation under Murdoch Brown in Anjarakandi was attacked by Pazhassi troops. In early 1804, Thomas Harvey Baber, a British civil servant was appointed as Malabar Sub collector. He became successful in suppressing the revolt led by Kalyaat Nambiar, an associate of Pazhassi in Chirakkal. After Rickards, Thomas Warden was appointed as the Malabar Collector in 1803 by the Madras government.

By the end of 1804, Company called off the service of the military force of Bombay from Malabar and brought the Madras force under Lt. Col. A. McLeod. The Company became successful in transforming most of the landlords and the chieftains in Malabar by then as a dependent class by providing them with a part of collected revenue as alimony.³⁷ A proclamation was issued offering rewards for those who help to capture Pazhassi Raja and his associates. In a retaliatory attack by the Company forces, Talakkal Chandu, the leader of the Kurichya army was captured and hanged near Panamaram fort on November 15, 1805. By

³⁴ O. K. Johny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2001), 87.

³⁵ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 106-107.

³⁶ Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History*, 262.

³⁷ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal* 115-116.

Malabar Joint Commission had earlier permitted one fifth of the total spent of revenue collected to chieftains from their respective lands. This was executed by the Madras government in November, 1804. Author observes that these chieftains in their economic interest became mere land lords under the sovereignty of Company.

enforcing strict blockades in the movements of Pazhassi troops in the Wayanad forests with the help of *Kolkars*, Baber became successful in tracking down the campsite of Pazhassi and his men. In the conflict that took place on the banks of Mavilamthode in Pulpally, Pazhassi Raja was shot dead on November 30, 1805.³⁸ Baber took Raja's corpse in his palanquin to Mananthavady and cremated with customary honours as he says in the report sent to the Principal Collector of Malabar, "although a rebel, he was one of the natural chieftains of the country and might be considered on that account rather than a fallen enemy."³⁹

After the execution of Pazhassi Raja, his lineage was dispossessed; the Kovilakam was destroyed and a road was constructed over it.⁴⁰ The remaining leaders were soon captured by the Company forces and were either executed or deported. Edachena Kungan committed suicide before falling under the hands of the Company and a few other rebel leaders were deported to Prince of Wales Island in 1806.⁴¹ The revolt suffered a natural death afterward. After the successful suppression of the revolt, an inquiry into the titles of land in Wayanad was commenced and four years later, the properties that belonged to Kerala Varma and his adherents were formally declared as belongings to the Government.⁴² After the confiscation of the property of Pazhassi and two other Rajas of the family as a penalty, the Kottayam family could never recover to its old status. After a century has passed since Pazhassi's death, the district gazetteer gave details of the Western branch of the Kottayam family. It is described as a "small tumble-down house" inhabited by a lady and a child, the only surviving

³⁸ Innes, Evans, *District Gazetteer*, 81.

³⁹ Logan, *Malabar*, 550.

⁴⁰ Kathleen Gough, 'Indian Peasant Uprisings', in *Peasant Struggles in India*, A. R. Desai, ed., (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1979), 97.

⁴¹ Logan, *Malabar*, 551.

⁴² C. Gopalan Nair, *Malabar Series, Wynad: It's People and Traditions*, (Madras: Higginbotham and Co, 1911), 5.

members of the “once powerful Pazhassi Raja” who had shaken the “foundation of British supremacy”.⁴³

1.2. Representations of a Rebel: Pazhassi in Literatures

Pazhassi Revolt has acquired different meanings in the historical narratives and literature produced by it. These representational heterogeneities of the revolt and Pazhassi Raja are symptomatic of the existence of different readings of the revolt. The representations of Pazhassi Raja can be found in colonial, nationalist, Marxist and popular writings. The following pages of this chapter make an attempt to read the available literature belonging to different schools of ideologies selectively to unravel the representations in them.

1.2.1. Nationalist Reading

The South Indian Rebellion: The First War of Independence, 1800-1801 by K. Rajayyan can be considered a nationalist reading of the Pazhassi Revolt in which Pazhassi Raja is represented as an early freedom fighter. The author places the Pazhassi revolt under the umbrella term of South Indian rebellions that are part of the ‘first war of Independence in the southern part of the subcontinent. He argues that a “Malabar Coimbatore League” was formed as a result of the alliance among the like-minded groups who were dissatisfied with the Company’s intrusion in the administrative affairs of the local chieftains.⁴⁴ The Malabar Coimbatore League asked for help from Tipu Sultan which further resulted in a much deeper and more complex alliance between the rulers. It also underlines the popular character of the revolt for the fact that peasants, tribal communities, landlords, chieftains, Mappilas, and local merchant communities actively supported the revolt.

⁴³ Innes, Evans, ed., *District Gazetteer*, 426.

⁴⁴ K Rajayyan, *South Indian Rebellion: The First War of Independence, 1800- 1801*, (Mysore: Rao and Raghavan Publishers, 1971), 90.

He emphasized the need to consider the South Indian revolt as the most widespread of all liberation wars in the pre Congress era and described it as the “first and last violent popular struggle of any formidable dimensions in the annals of British India”.⁴⁵ By considering the South Indian revolts as the most extensive and as the only recorded armed revolt against the British, the author completely ignores other popular armed rebellions that took place in the different regions of India over time. He reveals a usual method adopted by the Company right from the beginning to weaken the power of the resistance, which is to create animosities between communities. It was largely through the technique of dividing the inhabitants into two opposing camps by rewarding the ‘traitors’ with the land and other properties confiscated from the ‘patriots’.⁴⁶ Regarding the correspondence exchanged between the Company and Pazhassi Raja and others, the author argues that the promised loyalty was in fact a tactical approach on the part of the rebel chiefs intended to make the Company return the plundered wealth from the Pazhassi palace.⁴⁷

1.2.2. Marxist Reading

K. K. N. Kurup’s *Pazhassi Samarangal* published in 1980 can be considered as the first academic study on the Pazhassi Revolt. Prior to the above mentioned work, no systematic research was carried out to understand the history of this early resistance in the country against British supremacy. Kurup has tried to understand the revolt closely by employing numerous records from Madras State Archives, National Archives (Delhi) and India Office Library and Records (London). He has also travelled through the regions of Kottayam and Wayanad to understand the geographical background of the revolt. He observes that since there are no authentic records available from the part of the ‘rebels’ other than the translations of certain correspondences, *Pazhassi Samarangal* becomes the history of

⁴⁵ Rajayyan, *South Indian Rebellion*, 20.

⁴⁶ Rajayyan, 180.

⁴⁷ Rajayyan, 92.

establishing British supremacy over Malabar more than as a history of the Pazhassi revolt.⁴⁸ Apart from describing the course of political developments, the work discusses the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the revolt. Pazhassi Revolt is identified as a popular and the most important resistance movement against the domination of Imperial power in South India.⁴⁹ He places Pazhassi Raja as the most significant constituent of the revolt, though he does not overlook or diminish the effort of other participants in the revolt. Apart from considering the revolt as an anti-imperial struggle, it is also found as showing the fundamental characteristics of peasant uprisings or a non-tax payment campaign.⁵⁰

Regarding the cooperation of Pazhassi with the Company forces during the Mysore invasion, Kurup argues that Pazhassi followed the fundamental feudal law of considering the “enemy’s enemy as a friend”. In the given imperative of protecting Kottayam, it would be wrong to evaluate him for the decision’s political and ideological consequences and its long-term implications.⁵¹ The author observes that Pazhassi was a welfare-oriented ruler who had taken many measures for the agricultural and economic prosperity of Kottayam. It is argued that Pazhassi’s foremost priority was the welfare of the people rather than the accomplishment of power over Kottayam.⁵² The popularity of Pazhassi among the people of Kottayam and Wayanad is emphasized throughout the work. It is said that each farmer became a soldier under Pazhassi. The resentments of chieftains, landlords, small-scale traders, farmers, Kurichyas, Mappilas, and Nairs against the Company found their expression in the Pazhassi revolt.⁵³

⁴⁸ K. K. N. Kurup, preface to *Pazhassi Samarangal*, (Thiruvananthapuram: State Institute of Languages, 1980).

⁴⁹ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 17-18.

⁵⁰ Kurup, 132.

⁵¹ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samarangal*, 8.

⁵² Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 44.

⁵³ Kurup, 131.

The collaboration of Tipu and Pazhassi against the Company is also closely examined here. Regarding Pazhassi's refrainment from helping Tipu in the fourth Anglo- Mysore war despite the latter's military assistance to Pazhassi's troops in the warfare against the Company. Kurup points out that Pazhassi was not in a war with Company at that point of time as the former has signed a treaty with Duncan resulting in a temporary truce. The neutral stance opted by Pazhassi is stated as a respectful approach by the author as many other rulers like Nizam of Hyderabad helped the British by sending army troops in the war.⁵⁴ He also observes that Pazhassi was not in a situation to provide military assistance to Tipu at the time.

Kurup also points out Pazhassi's commitment to the traditional systems, customs and beliefs. One of Pazhassi's letters to influential leaders seeking support read like this: "If gods of this country, *Perumal* and *Bhagavathy* influence your mind, if you have regard for me, this is the time to show your friendship", "as Company's attack is against *Perumal* and *Bhagavathy*, I have decided to do my best in opposition".⁵⁵ Seemingly, his appeal to the religious sentiments of the people depicts the strong foundation of belief systems. The author observes that Pazhassi saw the traditional beliefs and the customs as the unifying elements in the resistance against the rule of the Company rather than the political factors.⁵⁶

Considering the strong opposition exhibited by Pazhassi Raja during Company's attempt to divide Wayanad into two and join with Mysore and Coimbatore, author suggests that Pazhassi is an efficient politician to see the importance of Wayanad's unity.⁵⁷ As far as the position of the Pazhassi revolt on the map of the Indian freedom struggle is concerned, the author does not associate it with nationalistic affiliations as he observes that the period did

⁵⁴ Kurup, 76.

⁵⁵ Kurup, 89.

⁵⁶ Kurup, 89.

⁵⁷ Kurup, 133.

not mark the development of any nationalistic feeling along modern political lines.⁵⁸ However, he sees it as an organized movement by building collaboration with other ‘rebels’ in South India against a common enemy. He draws parallels between the nineteenth-century Taiping Revolution in China and the Pazhassi revolt for acting as a motivation for the development of nationalism in the later period.⁵⁹

Kurup stresses the importance Pazhassi Raja gave to the field of agriculture. After the fourth Anglo-Mysore war, Pazhassi initiated settlements in Wayanad by bringing Nair families from Kottayam to upland Wayanad and offered a small division of land to each family.⁶⁰ It is observed that this was part of a comprehensive agricultural militaristic program of claiming power over Wayanad, in such a way to ensure the continuation of a partial feudal order which was prevalent in most parts of Malabar at that time.⁶¹ Each family was to supervise the administrative affairs of their respective area given to each of them and they were asked not to return to the mainland. These families, in turn, provided land, seeds and buffalo to the indigenous community and made them cultivate the land.⁶²

The work discusses certain dissimilarities regarding the reports sent by Baber to the Chief Secretary at Madras on November 30 and Principal Collector on December 31, 1805.⁶³ Regarding the delay in the report to the Principal Collector, Baber states that it was due to his physical illness. However, Kurup doubts whether it is for exaggerating the hardships faced by

⁵⁸ Kurup, 133.

⁵⁹ Kurup, 133.

⁶⁰ Kurup, 136.

⁶¹ Kurup, 136.

⁶² Kurup, 136.

⁶³ Kurup, 125.

Kurup observes that first report sent by Baber on November 30 says that Pazhassi was killed before noon on the same day. However, in the report sent to Principal Collector on December 31 shows as before noon on December 1st. The official proclamation of the Principal Collector, Warden on December 8 says the death happened on December 1st before noon.

Baber in Wayanad and also to acquire the whole rewards by himself.⁶⁴ He also points out the requests of other military and civil officials to the Madras government to explain their part in the successful defeat of Pazhassi.⁶⁵ As an achievement of the revolt, the author considers the efforts of Pazhassi and all other rebel- participants as a small step towards freedom. He also finds the end of the corrupted administration of the Bombay government in Malabar as a gain of the Pazhassi revolt.⁶⁶

The Marxist scholar, E.M.S. Namboodiripad in *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle* addresses Pazhassi Raja as a heroic patriot as he discusses the early anti-British struggles in South India against the British. Referring to several revolts in South India, the author argues that they are not isolated acts of heroism, but widespread movements across South India. He criticizes Rajayyan for belittling the importance of the 1857 struggle and not understanding the political situation of South India. He argues that princes in the regions of South India formed alliances or became hostile with the foreign powers depending upon what suited their purpose of retaining power and possibly expanding it.⁶⁷ He considers the leaders as “heroic patriots” and considers the revolt as a widespread movement covering different parts of South India which were successful in mobilizing diverse sections of the masses. At the same time, the author underlines the feudal character of these revolts as the rebels were “feudal lords”. Feudal lords acted as mediators between princes and the people by looking after public welfare, maintaining authority, engaging in religious and charitable services, enforcing justice, and thereby enjoying a greater hold on the masses.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Kurup, 125.

⁶⁵ Kurup, 125. Kurup points out that Captain Clapham has requested for the reward stating himself as the initiator in the execution of Pazhassi and Col. Hill too has stated his rights on the reward along with a few other military and civil officials.

⁶⁶ Kurup, 140.

⁶⁷ E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, (Trivandrum: Social Scientist Press, 1986), 41-42.

⁶⁸ Namboodiripad, 42.

The author acknowledges the act of princes seeking the help of other princes or a foreign power to reduce the power and influence of feudal lords and the latter mobilizing the masses against the foreign power by employing a cordial relationship with them.⁶⁹ Referring to the suppression of the revolt, the author writes that, the “cherished goal” of the “national independence” of the revolt remained as a “dream of the future”.⁷⁰ In addition to this, he characterizes the revolt as a conflict between an “outdated decadent indigenous” social system and a newly evolved foreign social system.⁷¹ He further stresses the need to absorb the essence of modern society that came to this country through foreigners and make use of the same to protect from the attack of foreigners rather than trying to restore the traditional social and political relations.

It can be observed that though, the author acknowledges the revolt, he doubts and questions the rationality of the objectives. This is also in contrast with his former statement where he noted the goal of the revolt as national independence. Kathleen Gough, a Marxist anthropologist put forward a similar argument in her article on peasant uprisings. She categorizes Pazhassi Revolt along with many other revolts that took place across India from 1765 to 1857 as a ‘Restorative movement’ which were aimed at overthrowing British power and restoring the traditional social and cultural systems.⁷² She observes many similarities between these revolts regarding participation, the course of events, developments and results.

Bonaventure Swai, a scholar in Indian and African history and a proponent of Structural Marxism takes Pazhassi Raja as a case study and examines the colonial interpretation of the natives’ interaction with the Company in his doctoral thesis. The Pazhassi Revolt is considered as a significant event as it influenced the nature of class alignment in Malabar

⁶⁹ Namboodiripad, 43.

⁷⁰ Namboodiripad, 45.

⁷¹ Namboodiripad, 46.

⁷² Kathleen Gough, “Peasant Uprisings”, 96- 98.

under the Company rule.⁷³ In an article about the nature of the colonial state, he discusses the colonial imposition in Malabar and the structure of the society thus formed where land became a property and Rajas were transformed as Zamindars. The control over surplus extraction from the land is considered to be the power determinant. According to the author, Pazhassi rose to revolt against the Company when he was denied the right to collect the revenue on behalf of the Company and thereby couldn't acquire a share of the surplus.⁷⁴

Swai points out the two categories of the natives, namely 'collaborators' and 'resisters' depending on the interaction with the Company from the colonial records. He identifies a group of collaborators mostly consisting of the elites (here, Nairs) who emerged during the attack of Tipu in Malabar.⁷⁵ The Company's power was assumed to be liberation from Tipu's 'terror' and the beginning of peace and prosperity. They viewed Company's rule with enthusiasm and collaborated with its officers strengthening the colonial administration.⁷⁶ On the other hand, resisters feared the annexation and viewed it as a threat to the established order.

For instance, Pazhassi Raja has been a friend to the company in pre- annexation time but became a notable opponent to the colonial establishment once Malabar was conquered from Mysore rule. The author observes that, with the rise of modern nationalism, resisters became more important than collaborators as the latter were seen as traitors. In addition to this, with the increasing authority of the British in Malabar, the collaboration between the local Rajas and the Company got transformed from allies to that of dependants.⁷⁷ Swai denounces the

⁷³ Bonaventure Swai, "Notes on the Colonial State with Reference to Malabar in the 18th and 19th centuries", *Social Scientist* 6, No. 12, (July, 1978): 58.

⁷⁴ Swai, "Notes on the Colonial State", 59.

⁷⁵ Bonaventure Swai, "The British in Malabar, 1792-1806", Unpublished DPhil Thesis, (University of Sussex, 1975), 6.

⁷⁶ Swai, "The British in Malabar", 6.

⁷⁷ Swai, 38.

idea of considering collaborators as opportunists and resisters as selfless creatures by saying that both Kerala Varma and Ravi Varma were sharp-witted and manipulators, at least in the short run.⁷⁸ Both of them were fighting for their own interests ultimately for the gaining of power, although they executed it through different methods of war and diplomacy.

1.2.3. Popular Reading

As discussed in the introduction, Pazhassi Raja is also a part of popular history writing in Malayalam. A few non- professional historians have written about Pazhassi Raja and this forms an important component in the remembrance of the same. Being the centre of the Pazhassi Revolt in its second phase, the popular history of Wayanad also forms a significant part of the history of Pazhassi Raja. *Wayanad Rekhakal* authored by O. K. Johny and *Ariyapedatha Wayanad* by Mundakayam Gopi are discussed here.

Wayanad Rekhakal is a journalistic work that throws light on the local history of Wayanad. Here, Pazhassi Raja is remembered for the anti-imperialist struggle employed in Wayanad and also for the influence he had on the tribal communities of Kurichyas. He is also represented as a traditionalist when the author points out that the revolt was in a way aimed to restore the feudal order in Wayanad which was on the verge of destruction with the advent of colonialism.⁷⁹ The author has thrown light on the circumstances created in Wayanad under the rule of Kottayam where Adivasis lost their authority over the land and were reduced to dependants of Nair landlords.⁸⁰ As the colonial officials followed the policy of placation with the landlords, the condition of Adivasis was no better under the control of the Company.

In addition to this, he has tried to highlight the life and struggle of Talakkal Chandu, the leader of the Kurichya troops. The guerrilla warfare led by Kurichyas of Kannavam and

⁷⁸ Swai, 293.

⁷⁹ O. K. Johny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2001), 83.

⁸⁰ Johny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, 82.

Wayanad forest and the martyrdom of Talakkal Chandu has not been duly acknowledged in the anti-imperial history of India. The work addresses the myths and legends prevalent among the Adivasis of Wayanad that are a part of their oral culture. The author observes that the absence of the heroic stories of Pazhassi in the oral and folk songs of Kurichyas proves that they were the benevolent warriors of Pazhassi.⁸¹ Though, he assumes that the fear of British authorities might be a reason that stopped Kurichyas from singing ballads about Pazhassi Raja.⁸²

Vadakan Pattukal or Northern ballads have reference to Pazhassi and it was created after his death.⁸³ It says that Pazhassi committed suicide by swallowing a diamond before getting caught by the Company army.⁸⁴ According to another story in *Vadakan Pattukal*, Pazhassi was caught as a result of Pazhayamvidan Chandu's betrayal and the Kurichyas were persuaded by Baber to surround the borders of the forest to resist the escape of Pazhassi.⁸⁵ Thus, Pazhassi was imprisoned along with his wife by the British, following which they attempted suicide by swallowing the ring.⁸⁶ Though the author does not attribute authenticity to these stories, he reminds us about the presence of such "disguised histories" among such oral traditions.

Ariyapedatha Wayanad by Mundakayam Gopi is another work that looks at the myths, legends and history of Wayanad. The second phase of the Pazhassi struggle in Wayanad is discussed in the work along with the author's interpretations of the struggle. Analysing the relationship between Tipu Sultan and Pazhassi Raja, Gopi observes that, although Tipu and

⁸¹ Johny, 119.

⁸² Johny, 119.

⁸³ *Vadakan Paatukal* are oral cultural forms originated around sixteenth century in Malabar, Kerala. They are a collection of heroic ballads in Malayalam mostly centre around two families known for traditional martial art of *Kalaripayattu*. It is believed that the ballads about Pazhassi Raja were created after his death.

⁸⁴ Johny, 119

⁸⁵ Johny, 120.

⁸⁶ Johny, 120.

Pazhassi shared respect for each other, the former showed the behaviour of a merchant in the transactions rather than allies.⁸⁷ Based on Company records, the author argues that Company respected as well as feared Pazhassi and they considered the death of Pazhassi as the end of all uprisings in Malabar.⁸⁸ The author doubts the authenticity of the report sent by Baber to the Principal Collector following the death of Pazhassi Raja. Gopi, though not a professional historian tries to present a different picture altogether regarding the death of Pazhassi Raja. He notices that, though Baber sent a small report announcing Pazhassi's death to Government Chief Secretary on 30 November 1805, he took almost one month to send the report to the Principal Collector, Warden, i.e. on 31 December. It is argued that Baber was so caught up with the credits he might receive for defeating Pazhassi Raja and he tried to cover some truths in describing the incident. Following certain deliberations and observations on the incident, Gopi concludes that Pazhassi killed himself by using his pistol.⁸⁹ It is further ascertained that Baber never wanted the truth to be revealed, so he gave Pazhassi's golden waist belt to Captain Clapham and arranged a palanquin for lifelong traveling for his loyal servant, Karunakara Menon.⁹⁰

Dheerasamarangalumayi Keralavarma Pazhassiraja by Purathur Sreedharan presents the Pazhassi revolt as the intense and the most popular revolt that took place in South India against British supremacy.⁹¹ He argues that the Pazhassi revolt in a way helped to strengthen the foundation of imperial power. The circumstances necessitated the creation of a class of landlords appointed at the lowest level of administration, i.e. to look after the villages and

⁸⁷ Gopi, *Ariyapedatha Wayanad*, (Kalpetta: Sahya Publications, 2002), 108.

This observation was made by the author based on the context where Tipu was adamant about keeping Pallur Eman Nair as the intermediary between developing military relations and also for the transactions of arms and ammunitions with Pazhassi Raja. This was when Eman Nair left Pazhassi and joined hands with Company.

⁸⁸ Gopi, *Ariyapedatha Wayanad*, 121.

⁸⁹ Gopi, 125-126.

⁹⁰ Gopi, 127.

⁹¹ Purathur Sreedharan, *Dheerasamarangalumayi Keralavarma Pazhassiraja*, (Thrissur: H & C Publishing House, 2019), 93.

these landlords later turned to be the pillars of British supremacy.⁹² He projects Pazhassi Raja as an asset to the revival of unity of Kerala, which was shattered under the Mysore invasion and Company rule, and the Pazhassi revolt is thus part of Kerala's freedom struggle and that of the country.⁹³

Kuttikalude Pazhassiraja by Raju Katupunam falling under the genre of children's literature is another work that can be looked upon under popular writings. Here, the author carries out an attempt to present the history of Pazhassi Raja and his resistance against the British for the consumption of children. Katupunam reminds the children about the existence of many heroic patriots fighting the British in India prior to the Revolt of 1857.⁹⁴ Here, Pazhassi Raja is projected as a patroniser of art and literature, a philanthropist, and a secular and welfare-oriented ruler whose actions and policies led to agricultural prosperity in the region.⁹⁵ The author throws light on the popularity of Pazhassi among the people of Kottayam and Wayanad as he writes that he was considered by people as their "saviour" from the perils of the Company rule. The book looks at two popular interpretations regarding the death of Pazhassi Raja. It is prevalent in folk songs of tribal communities that he died by stabbing himself with his own sword when there were no other ways to escape while another prevailing belief attributes Pazhassi's defeat to his inability to use weapons as it was customary on his mother's remembrance day.⁹⁶ In addition to this, he is further portrayed as an inspiration for the freedom struggle that was followed leading eventually to the independence of India.

Pazhassiraja by George Immaty is another popular writing that represents Pazhassi in the light of the freedom struggle. Pazhassi is represented as a brave patriot and martyr who

⁹² Sreedharan, *Dheerasamarangalumayi Keralavarma Pazhassiraja*, 92.

⁹³ Sreedharan, 94.

⁹⁴ Raju Katupunam, *Kuttikalude Pazhassiraja*, (Kottayam: SPCS, 2019), 12.

⁹⁵ Katupunam, *Kuttikalude Pazhassiraja*, 13.

⁹⁶ Katupunam, 49.

sacrificed his life for resisting the imperial rule over Kottayam. Here, Pazhassi's struggle is not marked as a no-tax payment campaign alone, but as a movement led with the support of people for the rights over their land. The history of the revolt is considered as a part of the history of popular movements that took place in South India against colonialism.⁹⁷ The author observes that, if India had more leaders like Pazhassi Raja in the eighteenth century, the country's experience with British and colonialism would have been different.⁹⁸ Here, too Pazhassi revolt is considered as a significant event in the history of modern Kerala, and a motivation for the organized movement for freedom in the later years.

1.2.4. Colonial Reading

The colonial records present Pazhassi Raja as a rebel who mobilized masses and created huge disruptions in the execution of Company rule in Malabar. The District gazetteer prepared by C.A Innes, ICS, then Settlement Officer in Malabar and edited by F.B Evans, ICS in 1908 provides a typical colonial perception of the Pazhassi revolt. The root cause behind the rebellions was identified as conflicting claims of various Rajas to be entrusted with the collection of revenue in the different divisions of the district. Kottayam, being a rich pepper district in Malabar, the political turmoil was seen as detrimental to the Company's economic interests in the district. It is said that "by stopping all the collection of revenue in the district and by taking the law into his own hands", Pazhassi more or less engaged in open rebellion for the next five years after the lease with Kurumbranad Raja is renewed in 1794.⁹⁹

It is also said that all efforts for conciliation had failed and this was partly due to the "intolerable insolence of the Pychy" and partly due to the deceitfulness of Kurumbranad

⁹⁷ George Immaty, Preface to *Pazhassiraja*, (Thrissur: H & C Books, 2007).

⁹⁸ Immaty, *Pazhassiraja*, 80.

⁹⁹ Innes, Evans, ed., *District Gazetteer*, 78.

Raja.¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to note how Company washed its hands and kept Pazhassi Raja and Kurumbranad Raja accountable for the entire disturbance caused in the kingdom of Kottayam. It is said that Commissioners had to involve in the family disputes of old royal houses and to address the task of conflicting claims of various Rajas to be entrusted with the collection of revenue. Pazhassi Raja is described as a “consistent supporter” of the Company during the Mysore attacks and as a “rebel king” after the commencement of rebellion due to what is referred to as “Malabar misunderstandings.”¹⁰¹

The Malabar Manual written by William Logan, the former Collector of Malabar is a useful guide for understanding the Pazhassi revolt. Logan observes that Pazhassi behaved in a way that justified the Joint Commissioner’s describing him as “the most untractable and unreasonable of all the rajas”.¹⁰² However, he also acknowledges the Raja’s “ancient friendship” with the Company during the time of Tipu’s attack and also Kurumbranad Raja’s attempts to turn Pazhassi against the Company for his personal advantages. It is important to note that Logan recognizes the action of entrusting the management of Kottayam to the Kurumbranad Raja and overlooking the claim of Pazhassi as a grave mistake of the Company.¹⁰³ He points out the indifferent attitude and inaction of the Malabar Commission upon the reception of the favourable orders for Pazhassi from the Bombay government.

The Cambridge historian, C. A. Bayly argues that the revolts during the period between 1800 and 1860 were led by rebel chieftains and factious *Zamindars* who asked for an increase in revenue and monopoly in political authority, while sovereignty was given to only the ‘native princes’.¹⁰⁴ It is stated that rebellions and revolts under the rule of the imperial power

¹⁰⁰ Innes, Evans, 79.

¹⁰¹ Innes, Evans, 423.

¹⁰² Logan, *Malabar*, 499.

¹⁰³ Logan, 502.

¹⁰⁴ C. A. Bayly, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 172.

were not hopeless cases as gazetteers tended to depict, but they persuaded the state to modify their system through a reassessment of policies.¹⁰⁵ Referring to the Pazhassi revolt and revolts in Maratha province, he argues that the revolts in such segmented polities were unavoidable as they had favourable conditions of climate and terrain. Another proponent of the Cambridge school of history, Anil Seal opines that the British autocracy in many parts of India was moderated by the consent of natives.¹⁰⁶ He further elaborates the term consent as the dependence of colonial power on the support of a few subjects and the passivity of the majority.¹⁰⁷ The gazetteer characterizes Raja in two different ways, initially as a ‘supporter’ and later as a ‘rebel’, which shares the colonial view that the British rule in India was a result of collaboration with the natives.

Although Seal notices the slippery of the term, ‘collaboration’ between consent and resignation, the widespread challenge posed by the ‘passive’ majority is not acknowledged. He points out the dynamic nature of the collaboration system where neither feud nor friendship with the Raj was static which resonated in the change of motives and benefits.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Bayly observes that the boundary between the ‘collaboration’ and ‘revolt’ cannot be demarcated clearly and it was mostly decided by the internal factional politics of Indian states rather than a tendency towards anti-imperialist struggle.¹⁰⁹ The colonial perception echoes in Seal’s characterization of Indian society as assimilation of uneven systems of rivalry and “submerged nations”, which engaged in constant struggles to gain status under colonial rule.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Bayly, *Cambridge History*, 169.

¹⁰⁶ Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 8.

¹⁰⁷ Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 9.

¹⁰⁸ Seal, 14.

¹⁰⁹ Bayly, *Cambridge History*, 170.

¹¹⁰ Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, 11.

Another academic study that falls outside the previously mentioned readings of the revolt is Margret Frenz's *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar, 1790-1805*. She critically assessed the dynamics of British expansion in Malabar and has followed a sympathetic reading of the revolt in the work. By taking Pazhassi Raja as a case study, Frenz has looked at British relations with the native state system. She opines that the British failed or did not concern themselves to understand the traditional Indian ruling structures that are based on the proportional exercise of power and not by holding a monopoly over power.¹¹¹ She had discussed the pre-colonial social order in Malabar in which the basic institutions were the family groups, which regulated affairs within the villages and districts of a principality.

According to Frenz, religious communities were considered to be of central importance in the social and political formation in the pre-colonial Malabar. She has looked into the concept of religious legitimization of the rulers and the network of temples that hold great importance in the history of Pazhassi Raja. It can be observed that temples could function as places of refuge and accommodation, both when a Raja was touring the country, and when external circumstances forced him to take flight.¹¹²

Frenz observed the association of Pazhassi to the established value systems as a customary way of expressing his legitimization of rule over Kottayam.¹¹³ She uses Nicholas Dirks's model of the 'little kingdom' that explains the colonial expansion of South India. In a 'little kingdom', legitimization of rule was profoundly ritualistic and the 'little king' was obliged to perform these rituals to place him in the hierarchy of power. She argues that, with the introduction of the western model of state relations, the 'little king' was denied his power and

¹¹¹ Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar, 1790- 1805*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 45.

¹¹² Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, 37.

¹¹³ Frenz, 170.

made to function as a puppet of the British.¹¹⁴ Pazhassi Raja was a ‘little king’ who struggled to restore the traditional model of power relations by performing rituals and integrating religious beliefs to legitimize his rule and also to demonstrate the rule.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, Vira Varma of Kurumbranad is regarded as the one who cooperated with the British and acted as a mere pawn in the hands of the Company.¹¹⁶

She analyses the changing alliances and the fluctuating relations between the ‘little kings’ of Malabar with respect to the shifting socio-economic, political and cultural process and resulting circumstances with the coming of the British into the political landscape of Malabar. She identifies Pazhassi’s main concern as the traditional duty of a king to exercise his power for the welfare of the people. But she distances herself from considering Pazhassi Raja as one of the freedom fighters of India and emphasizes the need to make a clear distinction between the ‘freedom fighters’ of the twentieth century who fought for independence and the ‘rebels’ of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, she places Pazhassi Raja as a symbol of freedom for the Indian people in their struggle for independence, though Pazhassi saw traditional beliefs and customs as the unifying factors in the resistance against the rule of the Company and preservation of these factors as tools of legitimizing his claim over Kottayam.

Conclusion:

Thus Pazhassi and his revolt generated multifaceted representations from the nationalist, Marxist, colonial, Cambridge and popular locations. In the nationalist reading by Rajayyan, Pazhassi Raja was one of the early freedom fighters of the country who formed alliances with other notable leaders from South India to fight against British supremacy. On the other hand,

¹¹⁴ Frenz, 41.

¹¹⁵ Frenz, 170.

¹¹⁶ Frenz, 174.

¹¹⁷ Frenz, 163.

the Marxist reading of the revolt does not attribute Pazhassi to the status of a freedom fighter or consider the revolt as a part of the independence movement. However, Kurup suggests that there was an attempt to set up an organized movement against the common enemy by forming relations with other 'rebels' in South India. The revolt is characterized as popular and Pazhassi is associated with patriotism in both nationalist and Marxist writings.

In the nationalist position, the indigenous social system and political order before the interference of the British were considered a balanced and stable one provided by the princely order, poligari system and village communities.¹¹⁸ This is contrary to the Marxist interpretation of E.M.S. Namboodiripad where Pazhassi is projected as a feudal lord and the revolt is described as a conflict between the traditional and outdated native systems and the western modern social system. Although Kurup in his Marxist-nationalist reading acknowledges the association of the revolt with the traditional society and the continuation of a feudal structure in the society, he does not represent Pazhassi as a feudal lord. He argues that Pazhassi's intervention in Wayanad resulted in agricultural development and upliftment of Kurichyas and other Adivasi communities.¹¹⁹

However, it can be said that, under the feudal administration, entire land became the property of Nair landlords, Raja and their custodians and the communities like Kurichya, and Paniyas, became tenants.¹²⁰ Although, the Pazhassi Revolt is not attributed the status of a widespread rebellion as argued in the nationalist reading, Kurup suggests that there was an attempt to set up an organized movement against the common enemy by forming relations with other 'rebels' in South India. Apart from this, the Marxist historians have associated

¹¹⁸ Rajayyan, *South Indian Rebellion*, 21.

¹¹⁹ Rajayyan, 136.

¹²⁰ Rachel Santhosh, "Mapping of an Ethnohistory of the Paniyan: Some Preliminary Reflections", *Indian Anthropologist* 38, no. 1, (January- June 2008): 66, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40089162>.

Pazhassi revolt with the peasant struggle considering the significant participation of peasants and other land and revenue implications.

In the colonial records, the Pazhassi revolt is described as an insurrection aimed to bring disturbance in the civil order under the Company rule and Pazhassi Raja along with other participants as rebels. He is portrayed both as a supporter and also as a rebel in the Company records. According to the Joint Commissioners, the root cause of the revolt in Kottayam is the family feuds and Company is represented as an arbitrator among the disputes. From the gazetteer, it is evident that Joint Commissioners covered the infringement of the Company behind the facade of ‘misunderstandings’ and how the political and social situation in Malabar was held accountable for the revolt. However, Logan in the *Malabar Manual* acknowledges the mistakes of the Company and the Malabar Commission in the matters regarding Pazhassi Raja.

Drawing from the colonial records, the Cambridge historian, Anil Seal argues that there were understandings between the Indian subjects and the colonial government regarding the latter’s activities in the country. He calls these allies of the government as collaborators and points out the dynamic nature of this relationship. Under the Neo-Cambridge school of history, C. A. Bayly opines that armed rebellions and uprisings in a way helped the British to reassess the policies and programs in the country. The revolts are said to be led by *Zamindars* who fought for more revenue rights and political authority. The gazetteer has projected family feuds as one of the reasons for the Pazhassi Revolt. This is in resonance with the Cambridge argument that associates unrest in India with internal politics which was characterized by factional rivalries rather than the fundamental contradictions with the foreign rule in India.

. The popular writings written by a few non-professional historians on Pazhassi Raja portray him in different shades. On the one hand, he is represented as a heroic patriot and a welfare-oriented ruler and the revolt is shown in the light of the freedom struggle. The popular reading of the revolt is similar to the nationalist reading in these lines. Meanwhile, the Pazhassi revolt is in its very nature a movement that was profoundly attached to traditional and cultural institutions. Hence, the popular readings on the history of Wayanad has characterised the Pazhassi Revolt from this point of view. The revolt is said to have brought a feudal order to Wayanad and thereby reducing the claim of Adivasis over the land. This is similar to the Marxist interpretation of the revolt been a “restorative movement”. Regardless, the popular reading has presented the revolt as an inspiration for the independence struggle in Kerala.

Recognition of Pazhassi Raja as the initiator and the sole leader of the Pazhassi revolt have heavily influenced the way he has been remembered and represented in the social and cultural realm in the contemporary period. Pazhassi Revolt cannot be simply defined as an anti-imperial struggle organized by Pazhassi Raja with the support of Nair landlords, peasants, Mappilas, and Kurichyas in Malabar. But, it involves the study of the socio-economic, political and cultural structure of the then society to disentangle all the factors associated with the revolt. Regardless, the representation of the Revolt and the characterization of Pazhassi Raja in the literature help to understand and analyse the contemporary remembrance of the same. The following chapters help to identify the memorialization process of Pazhassi Raja and his representations in various spheres of material remembrances.

CHAPTER TWO

LOCATING THE MEMORIALIZATION OF PAZHASSI RAJA IN THE MATERIAL SPACE

Memorialization is basically the preservation of memories of a particular event or a person. This process cannot be deemed as a singular method of action but can be carried out in varied representational modes like a physical artefact, art and literature, a ceremony of commemoration, museums, images, symbols, etc. These entities talk about the person or the event in the absence of them and help to keep alive the discourse associated with it. Maurice Halbwachs developed the concept, “Collective Memory” which is defined as a memory distinct from history, but is conditioned by the needs of the present social milieu. He denied the existence of individual memory in isolation and remarked that individual memory results from the intersection of collective influences.¹²¹ Drawing selectively from history, the memories of Pazhassi Raja too is a result of such collective influences conditioned by the needs of the present.

Halbwachs argues that “every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time.”¹²² The existence of Pazhassi Raja’s memories in people’s minds is the result of a collective effort of the society as a whole by locating him in the everyday memory making process. Pazhassi Raja is reconstituted thus as an icon in the public sphere. The institutionalization of Pazhassi Raja’s memories can be traced back to the second half of the twentieth century and is still continuing. Over the last few decades, both private institutions and the state have involved themselves in the memorialization process of Pazhassi Raja to a

¹²¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis. J. Ditter, Jr and Vida Yasdi Ditter, (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 51- 52.

¹²² Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, 84.

great extent. In this chapter, an attempt is made to identify his memories in physical space and how it is perceived in the public realm. The sites of memories are significant as it narrates an idea of the past to the viewer. Constant ritualization and everyday interaction with the public create a sense of temporality for the memories and thereby the materialized space compensates for the absence of the remembered figure.¹²³ The aim is to identify and analyze the afterlives of Pazhassi Raja through public memorials. It is possible to see that popular literature and material memorialization have influenced each other to keep the discourse about Pazhassi Raja active.

Soon after he was killed by the Company soldiers in 1805, it is believed that his ancestral home was destroyed and all other properties were confiscated by the Company. It can be assumed that the Company did not want to leave any scrap of memory related to Pazhassi that can either act as an inspiration for people or further develop as a source of protest against the Company in the future. Therefore, we are left with no noticeable physical evidence of his resistance against the Company army except the written records of the colonial government. His memories were transferred in the form of heroic ballads from one generation to the next among the people in Northern Malabar, especially among the Adivasi community in Wayanad.¹²⁴ During the independence struggle, the Pazhassi struggle might have been invoked as an inspiration in Malabar to fight against the British, although there is no strict evidence proving such a notion.

Regardless of this, the post-independence period was marked by collective efforts to revive the history of those people and struggle which was part of the early anti-imperialist resistance in every part of the country. Along with his contemporaries like Tipu Sultan and Velu Tambi Dalawa, Pazhassi Raja was also brought into the service of constructing a nationalistic history

¹²³ Rahul Ranjan, "The Politics of Symbolism: The Making of Birsa Munda's Statue in Post-Colonial Jharkhand, India", *Bandung Journal of Global South* 7, (March 2020): 132.

¹²⁴ O. K. Johny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2001), 118- 120.

of Kerala's freedom struggle. Over the years, he became a lively presence in popular history and literature. Apart from the written histories, memory needs to be institutionalized for its reproduction in any society. This ensures the process of everyday remembering of that person or an event in its absence. Consequently, memories of Pazhassi Raja were transformed into certain sites that embodied his life and struggle against the Company. This is further followed by material remembrance through the observation of commemorative events and programs celebrating his deeds.

The earliest trace of material installation of the service of his memory can be seen in the establishment of Pazhassi Raja NSS College, (see Fig. 1) an institution of higher education in Mattannur, Kannur in 1964. The college was established by the Nair Service Society (NSS) under the leadership of Mannathu Padmanabhan, a well-known social reformer and a participant in the freedom struggle. Mattannur was an integral part of the Kottayam kingdom and the place where the *Kizhakke Kovilakam* (Eastern Branch) lineage of the kingdom was located. "Named after the great patriot, Sri. Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, the martyr who stands unique among the rich array of freedom fighters..." reads the College Profile (see Fig. 2). The process of naming the college in Mattannur after him is in a way accepting his power and authority once he enjoyed over the space and he becomes the part of everyday remembering through this exercise. At the same time, naming an institution after a historically important person is also aimed at enhancing the institution's authenticity and finding local roots for its establishment.

It is interesting to note that Pazhassi Raja is addressed as a patriot and is included under the list of freedom fighters in the college profile. Jankhomang Guite in his article, "Memories, Memory and Forgetting in Postcolonial North Eastern India", argues that what is

‘vernacular’ in the colonial period becomes ‘official’ in the post-colonial period.¹²⁵ Pazhassi Raja was part of ‘vernacular’ memory in the colonial society and hence secondary but when it comes to the post-colonial period, his memory is no longer treated as ‘vernacular’ but becomes part of the ‘official’ memory of the nation. Guite correctly observes that what was ‘rebellion’ in colonial times would become ‘freedom movement’ and the ‘rebels’ would become ‘freedom fighters’ in the post-colonial period in the nationalist reconstruction and the memories.¹²⁶ Pazhassi’s transformation from a ‘rebel who created ruckus in the civil order’ to a freedom fighter and a patriot reflects such a change in the political context.

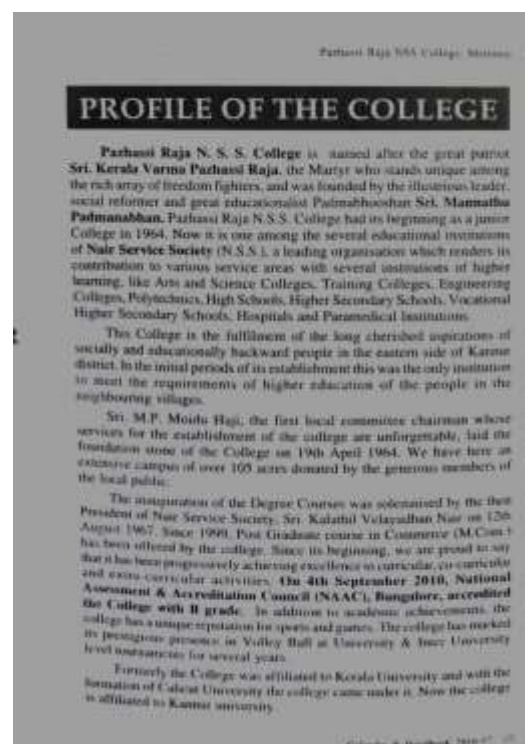


Fig 1. Pazhassi Raja NSS College, Mattannur. (Photograph by Sreejith Mattannur, Mattannur Yatra, <https://mattannurtour.blogspot.com/>, <https://images.app.goo.gl/R326EkQ1Ze6njLtG8>)

Fig 2. Photograph of the College Profile

¹²⁵ Jankhomang Guite, “Memories, Memory and Forgetting in the post- colonial North Eastern India”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 46, no. 8, (February 2011): 57.

¹²⁶ Guite, “Memories, Memory and Forgetting”, 58.

Another institution that employed Pazhassi Raja's name is Kozhikode Archaeological Museum which is also an art gallery situated in East Hill, Kozhikode (see Fig. 3). The building was constructed in 1812 by the British and it served as the Collector's Bungalow. In 1978, the building was taken over by the Archaeological Department of Kerala and converted into a museum and art gallery. Several renewal works were done and it was opened to the public after changing the name of the museum to Pazhassi Raja Archaeological Museum in 1998. It is interesting to note that the museum is not holding any artefacts related to Pazhassi Raja or anyone associated with the movement. It is also located in a place where Pazhassi Raja did not have any direct influence of any kind. Krishnaraj. K, the curator of the museum opines that it is an irony to name the building Pazhassi Raja Archaeological Museum which was once Collector's Bungalow during the British regime.¹²⁷



Fig 3. *Pazhassiraja Archaeological Museum, Kozhikode, (Image Source:*

<https://www.kozhikode.directory/pazhassiraja-archaeological-museum/i/268>)

Pazhassi Irrigation Project located in Kannur is another government project which is identified by Pazhassi Raja's name. It was commissioned in 1979 by Morarji Desai, the then Prime Minister (see Fig. 4). It was a massive irrigation project organized by the Government

¹²⁷ Interview with Krishnaraj. K at Pazhassi Raja Archaeological Museum, Kozhikode on March 6, 2020.

to increase the agricultural productivity of Thalassery and Taliparamba Taluk. The report submitted by the then Executive Engineer of Pazhassi Project in 1977 reads, “the project which was earlier addressed as Valapattanam Irrigation Project was later named after Pazhassi to honor Pazhassi Raja, the heroic son of Kerala who fought against the British government” (see Fig. 5).



Fig 4. Pazhassi Dam, Pazhassi



Fig 5. Report of the executive engineer of the Pazhassi Project

The naming of a Government Irrigation Project after Pazhassi Raja can be definitely seen as a big step forward in identifying and locating his space in society. Moreover, naming a governmental project in Kannur after a person hailing from the same region who is remembered for his contributions to the resistance against the British regime further validates the purpose of the project among the public. The place also includes an old park that houses a half-length statue of Pazhassi Raja (see Fig.6). There are no details available regarding its installation or the ceremony for the same.



Fig 6. Statue of Pazhassi Raja near the Pazhassi Irrigation Project

Along with the state, private individuals also associate their enterprise with the name of Pazhassi Raja to enhance and legitimize their intentions. Another educational institution that has been named after Pazhassi Raja is Pazhassi Raja College in Pulpally, Wayanad which was established in 1982 (see Fig.7). As described in the previous chapter, Pazhassi Raja was killed at Mavilamthode in Pulpally following the attack of Company army and Wayanad was the center of the second phase of Pazhassi struggle. Apparently, the naming of the college is deeply inspired by and involves direct motives. As well known, Wayanad district has the largest Adivasi population in the state and the majority comes from the Kurichya tribe. Kurichya army was one of the strongest forces that participated in the Pazhassi movement

alongside the Nair army and Pazhassi Raja. Ballads like *Vadakan Paatukal* and *Thacholi Paatukal* which have heroic praises of Pazhassi Raja are still prevalent among Kurichyas.¹²⁸ Kurup observes that the memories of him are very much alive among the Kurichyas and Kurumars, as they still get induced by hearing the word, *Thampuran*.¹²⁹ Accordingly, it can be assumed that an institution identified with the name of Pazhassi Raja would employ a strong hold among native people by finding a sense of belonging in the atmosphere. The college is actively participating in the observation of calendar remembrances of Pazhassi Raja. Recently, the department of history in the college has organised Pazhassi memorial lectures as part of Pazhassi Day Observation, in which the keynote speakers were Joseph Scaria and Margret Frenz (see Fig. 8).



Fig 7. Pazhassiraja College, Pulpally, Wayanad. (Image Source:

<http://studyhigher.in/College/1043/Pazhassi-Raja-College-Wayanad>)

¹²⁸ Johny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, 119.

Vadakan Paatukal about Pazhassi Raja was created after his death. Pazhassi is addressed as *Thampuran* or Lord and his heroic deeds are praised in them. According to ballads, Pazhassi was not killed but died after swallowing diamond. *Thacholi Paatukal* was also created similarly and it is a blend of history and myths. Another myth regarding the death of Pazhassi which was prevalent among Adivasis says that he stabbed himself to death before getting captured by the Company army. It reads as, “Enga Thampran Poyallo, Changu kuthichathalle.”

¹²⁹ K. K. N. Kurupp, Preface to *Pazhassi Samarangal*, (Trivandrum: Kerala Bhasha Institute, 1980), xi.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
Pazhassiraja College, Pulpally, Wayanad, Kerala, INDIA 673579

Pazhassi Day Observation & International Webinar
30th November 2021

INAUGURATION | Inauguration: H.E. Dr. Joseph Mar Thomas
(Manager and Patron, Pazhassiraja College)

Pazhassi Memorial Lectures

'Malabar and Pazhassiraja'
Speaker: Dr. Margret Frenz, FRHistS, FHEA
Institute of History, University of Stuttgart, Germany
(Author: From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar, (OUP, 2001))

'Multiple Significations of Pazhassi Struggles'
Speaker: Dr. Joseph Skariah
H.D, Dept. of Malayalam, SB College, Changanassery,
Kottayam, Kerala, India (Author: Pazhassi Rebhaskal)

Session I 9.30 AM
Offering of Prayers at the Pazhassi Shrine
Mandirathu, Kuppam

Session II 10.30 AM (Inaugural session)
Dr. Joseph Mar Thomas
(Manager & Patron)

Session III 11.30 AM
Academic Session
Pazhassi Memorial Lectures

Introducing the Speakers
Ling P. K., Faculty member, Department of History

Speaker 1
Dr. Joseph Skariah
H.D, Dept. of Malayalam
SB College, Changanassery,
Author: Pazhassi Rebhaskal
Topic: 'Multiple Significations of Pazhassi Struggles'

Speaker 2
Dr. Margret Frenz, FRHistS, FHEA
Institute of History,
University of Stuttgart, Germany
Author: From Contact to Conquest: Transition to
British Rule in Malabar, (OUP, 2001)
Topic: 'Malabar and Pazhassiraja'

Vice of Thanks
Dr. S. S. Pillai
Assistant Professor,
Department of History

For more details contact
Dr. Jolly Mathew (Organizing Secretary)
Phone: 9447223877, jollymathew@rediffmail.com

Fig 8. Notice issued on the Pazhassi Day Observation by Department of History, Pazhassi Raja College

Pazhassi Raja Tribal School located near Manathavady in Wayanad is another institution that took up its name from Pazhassi Raja (see Fig. 9). It was established in the year 1997 by Vanavasi Trust, a non-profit foundation aiming the upliftment of displaced Adivasi population in Wayanad.¹³⁰ This residential school was exclusively opened for Adivasi children providing them with free education, food and accommodation and for meeting medical needs. The students are also given training in agricultural activities and martial arts. The school was founded by Dr. Appanu Nambiar, a retired Professor of Education to provide a safe environment for the education of Adivasi children. Considering the influence Pazhassi Raja once exercised over the Kurichya population, he might have thought that the name 'Pazhassi Raja' can persuade the communities to feel safe and join the initiative.

¹³⁰ <https://vymaps.com/IN/Pazhassi-Raja-Tribal-School-Wayanad-642231735860557/>



Fig 9. Pazhassi Raja Tribal School, Wayanad, (Photograph by Akhilesh K,

<https://cumaps.net/en/IN/pazassi-raja-tribal-residential-school-p164924>, 10 March 2018)

Pazhassi Raja Universal Public School located at Balussery, Kozhikode is another educational institution that keeps Pazhassi's legacy in its identification (see Fig. 10). The school was founded by Pazhassi Raja Educational and Charitable Trust in the year 2013. The Trust is formed by the royal family of Kottayam and other visionaries to construct a better generation where moral values and patriotism are celebrated.¹³¹ They equate Pazhassi Raja with bravery and patriotism and consider him as an inspiration for society. The Trust aims to work in rural and tribal areas by establishing educational institutions and hospitals. The school profile portrays Pazhassi Raja as an "epitome of courage and bravery" and a "pioneering patriot and an early freedom fighter".¹³²

¹³¹ <https://www.pazhassirajaschool.com/>

¹³² <https://www.pazhassirajaschool.com/>



Fig 10. Pazhassi Raja Universal Public School, Kozhikode, (Photograph by Roshin Lal, January 2015, <https://images.app.goo.gl/PPzEcgezpUTCSPeP6>)

Apart from institutions named after Pazhassi Raja in Kannur, Wayanad and Kozhikode, a school in Kuthumpally, Thrissur takes after the name.¹³³ The Pazhassi Raja School was established in 2015 by a private Trust (see Fig. 11). It is interesting to note that Pazhassi did not have any influence over the region during his life period. Thus the school can be regarded as a material memory outside the social and cultural milieu of the rebel Raja. The school profile does not provide any justification for naming the school after Pazhassi Raja. More such instances of the deliberate use of naming the institution after Pazhassi could be seen. In Taliparamba, Kannur, a motor driving school is called Pazhassi Raja Driving School.¹³⁴ A Cooperative Society in Kannur takes its name after him and is called Pazhassi Raja Labour Welfare Cooperative Society (see Fig.12).

¹³³ <http://www.pazhassirajaschool.edu.in/aboutus.html>, accessed July 22 2021.

¹³⁴ https://www.justdial.com/Kannur/Pazhassiraja-Motor-Driving-School-Taliparamba/9999PX497-X497-131024114359-M5F7_BZDET, accessed June 13 2021.



Fig 11. Pazhassi Raja School, Thrissur, (<https://images.app.goo.gl/2VZNyEiuPxGMcPhH8>)



Fig 12. An advertisement for Pazhassiraja Cooperative Society

Another private enterprise that uses the name of Pazhassi Raja is a Kalari school (see Fig. 13). According to a *Kalari Gurukkal* in Kannur, Pazhassi Raja is the most appropriate name that can be given to a *Kalari* learning centre; hence he named his *Kalari* school after Pazhassi Raja. He remembers Pazhassi as a brave national hero who sacrificed his life fighting against the British regime. Moreover, he stresses the need to commemorate Pazhassi more efficiently

and considers his endeavour a small step towards it.¹³⁵ Although these trends of naming private firms after a historical figure can be considered as a deliberate attempt to authenticate their establishment, it is possible to assume that sufficient thought process has not happened before naming that could possibly complement their utility.



Fig 13. An advertisement board of Pazhassi Raja Kalari Sangham, Kannur

It has already been mentioned in the previous chapter that the available records on the life of Pazhassi Raja are mostly colonial records. The places mentioned in the records where important events of his life have happened are celebrated to compensate for his physical absence. One such place is Pazhassi Raja Memorial and Tomb near Mananthavady in Wayanad established in 1996 and declared as a protected monument by the State Archaeological Department (see Fig.14). Pazhassi Raja was cremated after being killed in the attack by the Company army under the leadership of Baber near Mavilamthode in Pulpally. The memorial was inaugurated by T.M. Jacob, then Irrigation and Cultural Minister of Kerala and the event was attended by many other dignitaries from the state government. The memorial was later renovated (see Fig.15 and Fig.16), turned into a museum and now it has four galleries, namely Pazhassi gallery, Tribal gallery, Heritage gallery and Numismatic

¹³⁵ Interview with Madhusoodhanan Kodanjeri, Kalari trainer of *Pazhassi Raja Kalari Sangham* at his residence in Kadirur on June 13, 2021.

gallery. The museum holds a collection of various artefacts including the sword during the times of Pazhassi, potteries and weapons from the megalithic period, stone sculptures, laminated copies of Harvey Baber's report on Pazhassi's death and other Company records of the same.



Fig 14. *Pazhassi Raja Memorial and Tomb, Mananthavady, 1996, (Photograph by Jeevan, Pazhassi*

Tomb Mananthavady <http://kallivalli.blogspot.com/2013/02/pazhassi-raja-tomb.html>



Fig 15. *Pazhassi Raja Memorial after renovation*



Fig 16. *Pazhassi Tomb*

The memorial has become a major tourist attraction in Wayanad and the state is directly taking part in promoting the commemoration of Pazhassi Raja. There is a small board

hanging near the tomb that says “*Veera Pazhassi*” meaning “heroic Pazhassi”. The profile of the State Tourism Department describes him as a “fierce king” who has won battles over the British and who is remembered for his “undying loyalty and love for his subjects till the end.”¹³⁶ The government is planning more programmes and funding for expanding activities in the site including the setting up of an open air theatre, lecture hall and children’s park.¹³⁷ Other than the Pazhassi Tomb, there are a few more memorial sites in Wayanad which are directly under District Tourism Promotional Council. One such memorial site is Pazhassi Raja Smrithi Mandapam established in 2012 at Mavilamthode which houses a statue of Pazhassi (see Fig.17) and a memorial stone (see Fig.18) installed to commemorate Pazhassi’s death. The foundation stone was laid by K. L. Poullose, then District Panchayath President and was finally inaugurated by P. K. Jayalakshmi, Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes and Youth Affairs of Kerala in 2014.¹³⁸

The statue of Pazhassi Raja at Smrithi Mandapam is built by Binu Thatthupara. As known, there are no portraits of Pazhassi Raja of any kind available except a physical description of him by the Bombay Governor, Jonathan Duncan found in colonial records. It is not possible to validate the authenticity of Pazhassi’s physical description in Company records. Nevertheless, the statue at the memorial is completely indebted to the sculptor’s imagination of Pazhassi Raja. It possesses a strong muscular physique, carrying a sword pointed down to the ground, hair made into a small bun on the side, face without a beard or moustache and wearing a sacred thread around the chest (see Fig.17). The statues of Pazhassi installed at different places vary from each other and most of them are represented by the conventional physical standards of a so called hero. Recently, the site which includes

¹³⁶ <https://www.keralatourism.org/destination/pazhassi-tomb-wayanad/212>, accessed on 12 February 2021.

¹³⁷ Interview with Binoj Harindran, Museum Curator at Pazhassi Tomb, Wayanad on February 25, 2020.

¹³⁸ Staff Reporter, “Statue of Pazhassi Raja to be unveiled at Pulpally”, *The Hindu*, February 28, 2014, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/statue-of-pazhassi-raja-to-be-unveiled-at-pulpally/article5735559.ece>.

Pazhassi Smrithi Mandapam and the memorial stone is named as Pazhassi Landscape Museum (see Fig.19) although the place does not hold any kind of material artefacts.



Fig 17. Statue of Pazhassi Raja at Pazhassi Smrithi Mandapam, (photograph by Ratheesh R, <https://www.keralatourism.org/thalassery/photo-gallery/pazhassiraja-landscape-museum-smrithi-mandapam/75>, <https://images.app.goo.gl/JZdrwWPu6BLTUgua7>



Fig 18. Pazhassi Raja Memorial Stone



Fig 19. The entry board of Pazhassi Raja Landscape Museum

A garden is well maintained with an open air gallery of sculptures depicting the incidents of Pazhassi's life (see Fig. 20) and the place resembles more of a park rather than a museum. There is a building called Pazhassi Memorial Library and Research Centre in the compound, but it is not functioning at the moment. Pazhassi Landscape Museum commemorates Pazhassi Raja's final moments, the attack from the Company army and his death. Vitebsky argues that the technique of remembering the dead in any community is focused on creating material substitutes for the absent person and the very materiality helps to overcome the forgetting by further solidifying the memories of the same.¹³⁹ The role of an on-site museum like this is pivotal in preventing forgetting and keeping the memories of the bygone historical figure alive.

Here, the statue and the memorial stone act as potential substitutes to cover the absence of Pazhassi Raja and to keep his memories alive in the social remembering. Remembrance of the defeat is as important as it is of the achievement. Mavilamthode commemorates the defeat of Pazhassi which in turn led to his death. Assman argues that 'collective national memory' irrespective of the victory or loss, is integrated into the 'martyriological narrative' of the

¹³⁹ Piers Vitebsky, "Loving and Forgetting: Moments of Inarticulacy in Tribal India", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 2, (May 2008): 245. <https://rai.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2008.00500.x>.

nation. Defeats are remembered with great passion accompanied by regal ceremonies and rituals that invoke the endured injustice in the consciousness of the public and thereby mobilize them.¹⁴⁰



Fig 20. *Open air gallery in Pazhassi Landscape Museum*

Apart from Pazhassi Raja, his companion and the influential leader of the Kurichya army, Thalakkal Chandu is also remembered in Panamaram, Wayanad. Under the Company's rule, Panamaram was a strategic centre and was fortified by the British. In 1802, the Panamaram fort was attacked by the tribal army under the leadership of Edachena Kungan and Thalakkal Chandu resulting in the massacre of the entire British battalion stationed over there. Later in 1805, Chandu was executed by the British and is believed that he was hanged under a tree near Panamaram fort. In 2011, the foundation stone for Thalakkal Chandu Archaeological Museum was laid by Oommen Chandy, the then Chief Minister of Kerala at Panamaram on the banks of Kabani River (see Fig. 21). The Museum was inaugurated in 2012 by K.C. Venugopal, the then Union Minister of State for Power in the presence of

¹⁴⁰ Aleida Assman, "Memory, Individual and Collective" in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, eds., Robert E Goodin and Charles Tilly, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 217- 218.

P.K.Jayalakshmi the then Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes and Youth Affairs.¹⁴¹ The museum displays weapons that are claimed to be used by Chandu and his companions along with some agricultural implements used by the Kurichya community.



Fig 21. *Thalakkal Chandu Archaeological Museum, Panamaram*

While Pazhassi Raja Landscape Museum is immensely funded by the state and properly maintained by the District Tourism Promotion Council, Thalakkal Chandu Museum is currently in a state of negligence. The museum remains closed for most of the days except for a remembrance ceremony once a year on November 15 to commemorate his death. The building is located behind the Panamaram Government School, and the school authority handles the key to the museum. Thalakkal Chandu Memorial Committee argues that even though the government has allotted specific funds for the developmental activities of the museum, it is not used properly.¹⁴² Even after two centuries, Thalakkal Chandu still exerts influence over the Kurichya community.

¹⁴¹Staff Reporter, “Monument to honour Chandu”, *The Hindu*, September 22, 2012, <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/monument-to-honour-chandu/article3925228.ece>.

¹⁴² Staff Reporter, “Fractured Memorial for a Warrior of Yore”, *The Hindu*, November 14, 2014, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/fractured-memorial-for-a-warrior-of-yore/article6598220.ece>

Material forms of memory can be considered as the most visible physical forms of memory as it instantly recalls the ‘past’ in the viewer as one passes by the site. Although Panamaram can be considered as an appropriate location to monumentalize the memory of Thalakkal Chanthu, the place still lacks proper visibility and hence is not routinely seen by the public. Though Chanthu had played an important role in the Pazhassi Revolt, it is ironic to see that his memorial is overlooked by the authorities even though its memorability is still very powerful in the socio-political and cultural consciousness of the people. The constant process of ritualization is important as it develops the materiality of the object of memory and helps further to give it a place of belonging.¹⁴³ These dichotomies of materiality between the two representations can be attributed to the lack of ritualization. The act of rituals and commemoration articulates the memory and imparts a better environment for active discourse.

Another establishment under the District Tourism Promotion Council is the Pazhassi Park located at Mananthavady, Wayanad (see Fig. 22). The memory is designed as such to link it with the tourism industry, where the state is a direct player. Apart from the park in Wayanad, another Pazhassi Park is situated near the Railway Station in Thalassery, Kannur (see Fig. 23). This park is under the Thalassery Heritage Project which was established in March 2020. This project of 187 crores was proposed by the Kerala Tourism Development Cooperation for the expansion of Tourism in North Malabar. Under the project, the places are divided into Four Circuits namely Harbour Circuit, Pazhassi Circuit, Folklore Circuit and Cultural Circuit.¹⁴⁴ The Pazhassi Circuit marks the celebration and remembrance of Pazhassi where the state acts as an agent in the dissemination of his memories.

¹⁴³ Ranjan, “The Politics of Symbolism”, 133.

¹⁴⁴ Staff Reporter, “Vipulam Ee Vinodhasancharam”, *Mathrubhumi, The National Daily in Malayalam*, February 18, 2020, 3.



Fig 22. Pazhassi Park, Mananthavady



Fig 23. Pazhassiraja Park, Thalassery

The motivation behind the Pazhassi Circuit is to attract tourists to explore the socio-cultural and political locations integral to the life and struggles of Pazhassi Raja. The Circuit includes a network of temples, palaces, memorials, museums and regions of forest spread in the district of Kannur and Wayanad which played a vital role in the Pazhassi struggle. The major temples included in the Pazhassi Circuit are Puralimala Muthappan Madapura, Thodeekalam Siva temple, Thrikaikunnu Temple, Mrindangasaileswari temple, etc. Other than the temples, the Circuit includes Kottayam *Kovilakam*, Pazhassi Smrithi Mandapam, Pazhassi Tomb at Mananthavady and Kannavam forest.¹⁴⁵ The memories of Pazhassi Raja are ‘disciplined’ in such a way as to ‘temporalize’ his past in a single site so that it could associate with the tourism industry.¹⁴⁶ By establishing the Pazhassi circuit, the government is trying to bring every socio-cultural and political space concerning the Pazhassi struggle under one roof. It is fascinating to see, how even a natural resource like a forest is materialized to bolster the memorialization process.

The memorial situated in Pazhassi near Mattannur in Kannur known as Pazhassi Smrithi Mandiram (see Fig. 24) was inaugurated and the statue of Pazhassi Raja was unveiled by the

¹⁴⁵ *Kovilakam* is generally an elaborate complex endowed with palace, estate, land and other properties of the royal lineages in Kerala.

¹⁴⁶ Ranjan, “The Politics of Symbolism”, 132.

State Chief Minister in 2016. Such memorials are powerful objects in effectively generating and sustaining ‘collective memory’ of history. As Halbwachs argued, memory is nothing but the result of collective influence to reconstruct the image of the past in accordance with overriding thoughts in society.¹⁴⁷ According to him, the past is a societal construction that is largely structured by the concerns of the present. The memories of Pazhassi Raja here are products of a collective influence of the society and with its own interests and motives, they maintain and reproduce symbols of the object of commemoration.

The said memorial for Pazhassi Raja in his own place was built by the Mattannur Municipality. The memorial is built in the traditional architectural style of *Koothambalam* above a step well which was once part of Pazhassi’s ancestral home.¹⁴⁸ As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Pazhassi palace was destroyed by the Company soon after his death in 1805 leaving no traces of his existence as they feared it may result in many revolts subsequently. Accordingly, the construction of a Pazhassi memorial on the very site of the Pazhassi palace is considered as a significant step in commemorating Pazhassi Raja. Pazhassi Smrithi Mandiram is built as a museum that houses a monolithic statue of Pazhassi Raja (see Fig. 25) and mural paintings depicting the incidents from his life. In addition to these, there is a painting of Pazhassi Raja and a description of Pazhassi struggle in laminated frames. Nearby the memorial, a school for differentially abled children is maintained by Mattannur Municipality and it is named as Pazhassi Raja Memorial Buds School.

¹⁴⁷ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40.

¹⁴⁸ *Koothambalam* is a part of Kerala temple architectural tradition. Generally, they are square shaped performance theatres in temples for conducting ritualistic art forms.



Fig 24. Pazhassi Smrithi Mandiram, Pazhassi (Image Source: <https://www.keralatourism.org/thalassery/tourist-circuits/pazhassi/smrithi-mandiram>, <https://images.app.goo.gl/194Nsu8mUgYeBNe79>)



Fig 25. Statue of Pazhassi Raja at Pazhassi Smrithi Mandiram

A peculiarity of the statue in the memorial is that, it is not built from the sculptor's imagination alone. Unlike the other statues commonly depicting Pazhassi Raja with a tall muscular physique, Prashanth Cheruthazham, a regional sculptor made the statue drawing from the only record available describing the physical appearance of Pazhassi Raja. Bombay Governor, Jonathan Duncan described Pazhassi as a short person with a beard and long hair wearing a red turban in a report submitted after a treaty meeting at Thalassery Fort.¹⁴⁹ The memorial also includes a painting of Pazhassi Raja which follows a similar pattern in the depiction (see Fig. 26). Evidently, pictorial representation is a powerful mode of communication. Till now, the most popular picture of Pazhassi Raja was drawn by Raja Ravi Varma (see Fig. 27). Therefore, the new representations in the memorial can be regarded as an important step in shaping the remembrance of Pazhassi among the public.



Fig 26. *Picture of Pazhassi Raja displayed in Pazhassi Smrithi Mandiram*

¹⁴⁹ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, xi.



Fig 27. *Kerala Varma Pazhassiraja, Painting by Raja Ravi Varma displayed in Pazhassi Raja Museum, Kozhikode*

The installation ceremony of Pazhassi Raja at the place of his ancestral palace is a symbolic process of reinstating his domain of power and this process has been implemented by the local administrative body and sponsored by the state government. A special supplement was issued in November 2016 by the Mattannur Municipality as a part of observing the 211th death anniversary of Pazhassi Raja under the name *Veeram* (see Fig. 28). This was released on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of Pazhassi Raja in the *Pazhassi Smrithi Mandiram* by the Chief Minister.

The supplement contained messages from the Governor of Kerala, the Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition Party and Ministers of various departments. The Chairman of Mattannur Municipality began his message by expressing his deep regret for taking a long period of two centuries and a decade to create a memorial for Pazhassi Raja where his ancestral palace once stood. The supplement comprises articles by K. K. N. Kurup, author of *Pazhassi Samarangal*, Scaria Zacharia, general editor of *Thalassery Rekhakal*, Alexander Jacob IPS,

former DGP, Krishnakumar Kannothe, a local historian and President of *Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi*, Dr. P.J Vincent, etc.



Fig 28. The front page of the supplement *Veeram*

Another important site included under the Pazhassi Circuit is the Sree Mridanga Saileswari Temple situated at Muzhakunnu, Kannur. It occupies an important place in the commemoration of Pazhassi Raja. Being the chief temple of the Kottayam dynasty, the three branches of the family have built palaces in places located in the three sides of the temple namely *Thekke Kovilakam* (Southern branch), *Kizhakke Kovilakam* (Eastern branch) and *Padinjare Kovilakam* (Western branch). Pazhassi Raja was a member of the *Padinjare Kovilakam* settled in Pazhassi. Being an important center, the Kottayam dynasty is believed to have an *Ettukettu* near the temple in Muzhakunnu.¹⁵⁰ Currently, there is nothing left of the *Ettukettu* except the remains of a small temple and a step well which is no longer in use (see Fig. 29) and (see Fig. 30). The chief deity of this temple is believed to be a war goddess named *Sree Porkali Bagavati* who

¹⁵⁰ *Ettukettu* is a traditional Kerala house with an elaborate architectural style consisting of eight blocks with two courtyards.

was held with high veneration.¹⁵¹ Here, the temple is associated with the memories of Pazhassi Raja with constant ritualization. The temple ruins are preserved and the priests of the Mridanga Saileswari Temple pay routine visits to carry out rituals of worshipping as per the customs. Devotees are allowed to pay offerings to the temple in the form of money, flowers, and oil for lighting the lamps. The veneration of *Sree Porkali Bagavati* is considered as a tribute to Pazhassi Raja and a continuation of his legacy.



Fig 29. Temple ruins in Muzhakunnu



Fig 30. A board placed claiming the past existence of Ettukettu, a stepwell in the region

¹⁵¹ *Sree Porkali Bagavati*, a war goddess was the family deity of the Kottayam royal dynasty. The members of the family would worship the goddess through sacrifices to seek blessings before going for the battles.

It was not until the early 2000s, that the authorities of Sree Mridanga Saileswari Temple decided to conduct a *Devaprashnam* regarding the status of the temple ruins.¹⁵² Consequently, it was settled that a symbolical reconstruction of the ancestral home of Pazhassi will have to be done along with the temple by installing the goddess and giving a sacred space for Pazhassi Raja.¹⁵³ It is fascinating to see how the objectification of the past is associated with the ‘will of the God’ resulting in keeping the memory of Pazhassi Raja alive in the public consciousness. There is a display board near the temple saying, “the past repeats in the selfless devotion of devotee and God.” Here, Pazhassi Raja is portrayed as an ardent devotee and the credits for his victories over the British are attributed to the sanctity of *Sree Porkali Bagavati* staying in his sword. It is believed that Pazhassi lost his final battle against the British due to the loss of the goddess’s sanctitude as the *Kovilakam* was destroyed by the Company army.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, rituals and traditions were held in high accord by Pazhassi Raja. It is possible to recognize the amount of attachment and commitment he wielded towards meeting his religious obligations from his letters to the Company officials. The observance of these customs and traditions allowed him to attain “religious legitimation” of his rule and thereby reinforcing support from a society functioning on traditional rituals and belief systems.¹⁵⁴ When looking at the current practices, it is kind of interesting to see how things turned over the period. Earlier, it was Pazhassi seeking legitimation for his authority from the Goddess, while now the office bearers of the temple are looking for the legitimation of the rituals and traditions by placing Pazhassi’s memories in the material space. A statue of Pazhassi was unveiled in the temple compound in 2006 (see Fig. 31). The ceremony was attended by

¹⁵² According to Sanskrit texts, *Devaprashnam* can be termed as an astrological ritual to find out and interpret the will of God.

¹⁵³ Interview with K.P.Namboodiripad at his residence in Muzhakunnu, Kannur on 22 February 2020 at 2pm. K.P.Namboodiripad is an elder member of Kaambrath Illam, located at Muzhakunnu. They enjoyed complete rights over Sree Mridanga Saileswari Temple until Malabar Devaswom Board took over the office. Under the reign of Kottayam family, the elder male members of the Kaambrath Illam were ordained to be the spiritual mentors of the rulers.

¹⁵⁴ Margret Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar, 1790- 1805*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 33.

representatives from the state and central legislative assemblies, Kerala Folklore Academy and other cultural organizations (see fig. 32).



Fig 31. “Sree Porkali Daasan” or the Servant of Sree Porkali, the statue of Pazhassi Raja in Mridanga Saileswari Temple



Fig 32. The notice was issued on the occasion of unveiling the statue of Pazhassi Raja

It is possible to see that Sree Mridanga Saileswari temple is always associated with the memories of Pazhassi Raja. The history of Pazhassi Raja has significantly intersected the regionally written legends of the temple. Balakrishnan Nambiar, the author of a written history of the temple emphasizes the futility of writing the history and mythology of the temple without touching the history of Pazhassi Raja as they are correlated in many ways. The author reminds the devotees to think about Pazhassi who sacrificed his life for the country every time they visit the temple and while praying to the goddess.¹⁵⁵ Here, Pazhassi is portrayed as a ruler who adhered to every tradition and custom, whose foremost priority was the welfare of the subjects and who fought against the British until the last breath. A person who visits the temple becomes the patron of these memories and thereby, Pazhassi Raja becomes part of a religious act and an everyday commemoration.

Apart from this, a Pazhassi Museum is recently constructed in the compound of Mridanaga Saileswari temple by Malabar Devaswam Board as part of the same tourism project.¹⁵⁶ The objective of the museum is to associate the history of the temple with that of the Kottayam family and Pazhassi Raja. Currently, the Museum is inviting people and families in the region to hand over the preserved documents, manuscripts, old books and other articles linked to the Kottayam family and the temple.

Another temple that is included under the Pazhassi Circuit is Thodeekalam Siva Temple near Kannavam in Kannur. The two-storeyed temple is said to be two thousand years old and is famous for its mural paintings. Considering the grand and spacious architectural style of the temple, it can be assumed that the temple has been favoured as a preferred place by Pazhassi

¹⁵⁵ A resident of Kannur, Balakrishnan Nambiar with pen name Venginissery wrote a book named *Muzhakunnu Sree Mridanga Saileswari Kshethram: Arinjathum Ariyendathum* in 2017. The book is dedicated by the Office of the temple. It includes the myths and description regarding the temple and the history of Kottayam Dynasty and Pazhassi Raja.

¹⁵⁶ Staff Reporter, "Mridanga Saileswari Kshethrathil Pazhassi Museum Orungunnu", *Mathrubhumi: The National Daily in Malayalam*, July 6, 2022, 2.

Raja to conduct meetings during his retreats.¹⁵⁷ In addition to that, there is information regarding his arrival in Thodeekalam in the letters written to the Thalassery Superintendent.¹⁵⁸ Upon the information of Pazhassi's arrival at Thodeekalam, a conflict took place near the temple between Pazhassi and the British destroying certain parts of the temple during the first phase of the Pazhassi struggle. After several renovations, the temple is currently protected under the State Archaeological Department. Unlike Sree Mridanga Saileswari Temple, Thodeekalam Temple does not possess any sort of material representation or communicative memory to display its association with Pazhassi.

Puralimala Muthappan Madappura is another temple associated with the history of Pazhassi Raja and hence included under Pazhassi Circuit as a means for the promotion of tourism. Being an elevated region, Puralimala was a strategic center for Pazhassi and it is said that Pazhassi has stayed there in the early phase of the resistance and there have been conflicts between him and the British near Puralimala.¹⁵⁹ Similar to Thodeekalam, there is no visible objectification of Pazhassi's memories in Puralimala. In addition to this, Thrikaikunnu Mahadeva Temple, located at Kottayam Malabar, a place in the Kannur district is also included under the Pazhassi Circuit. It is said that the Kottayam family enjoyed special rights in the temple. Apart from this, there is a reference to this temple in the *Thacholi Paatukal* which praised Pazhassi Raja.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, 34.

Margaret Frenz visited Thodeekalam temple in September 1998 and gathered oral information regarding Pazhassi Raja's association with the Temple from the priest and other locals.

¹⁵⁸ Scaria Zacharia, *Pazhassi Rekhakal* 21 B: Letter from Kurumbranad Raja to Christopher Pele informing the arrival of Pazhassi in Thodeekalam as said by Pazhayaveetil Chanthu; PR 61 A&B: Letter from Diwan Ballajirayen to Christopher Pele explaining the meeting with Pazhassi at Thodeekalam where he addressed the needs to reconsider the collection of revenue from Kottayam; PR 117 A&B: Letter from Pazhassi Raja to Christopher Pele written from Thodeekalam regarding the hardships faced by the people of Kottayam due to the forceful revenue collection.

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.keralatourism.org/thalassery/tourist-circuits/pazhassi/puralimala-muthappan-madappura>, accessed July 13 2022.

¹⁶⁰ Johny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, 118. The *Thacholi Paatukal* has the verse saying, "*Thrikkaikunnuvaana Thampuran*", meaning the lord who ruled Thrikaikunnu.

Besides the above mentioned temples, Mananthana is an important location linked to the history of Pazhassi Raja. The temple of *Perumal* in Manathana was held in high veneration by the Kottayam dynasty.¹⁶¹ Manathana was considered a strategically important location by the British as Pazhassi exercised high influence over the region. It is possible to see proclamations issued by the British from Manathana regarding the escape of Pazhassi from *Kovilakam*.¹⁶² They were stationed in Manathana as it was important to gain control over the place where Pazhassi enjoyed power and religious legitimation. Tirunelli Maha Vishnu Temple in Wayanad, Valliyookavu Bagavathi Temple in Wayanad, and Palliyara Bhadrakali Temple located on the outskirts of Mananthavady are some of the other significant temples associated with the memories of Pazhassi Raja.¹⁶³ As the temples were important in proving the legitimation of rule during the period, it can be perceived that Pazhassi was conscious of performing customary religious rituals. Additionally, temples were also viewed as a safe place for retreat during the conflicts.

Kannavam Forest located near Kuthuparamba in Kannur is another place included under the Pazhassi Circuit. It was owned by Kannavath Sankaran Nambiar, a landlord and a significant patron of Pazhassi Raja. In 1801, Nambiar along with his son was publicly executed at Kuttiadi by the British. Kannavam forest was an ideal place for guerrilla battles, henceforth; the place played a major role in the victories of Pazhassi Raja against the Company. Currently, it is protected as a Reserve Forest under the State Forest Department. Certain parts of Kannavam Forest are still home to Adivasi communities. It can be assumed that being located on the route between Thalassery and Mananthavady, the dense forest has been proved as an ideal hiding place for Pazhassi and other fighters and also a safe trail for retreating to Wayanad from

¹⁶¹ Here, *Perumal* is used to address the God of Kottiyoor situated near Manathana. According to the myths, Kottiyoor is the place where *Dakshayaga* was happened. Thus God Shiva is venerated as *Perumal* and he is considered as the guardian of the country of Kottayam.

¹⁶² Scaria Zacharia, *Pazhassi Rekhakal*, PR 5A, 3. Proclamation issued by British from Manathana addressing the people of Kottayam concerning the escape of Pazhassi with his patrons along with threatening to confiscate their properties to Company if they continue to support Pazhassi.

¹⁶³ Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, 36-37.

Kottayam. Similarly, Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary located on the slopes of Western Ghats in Kannur is a popular spot for Eco-tourism and wildlife trekkers. The place is protected under the Kerala Forest and Wildlife Department since 1971. It is said that Pazhassi Raja went to exile in this region during the conflict with the Company.¹⁶⁴

Periya Forest Range located in Wayanad is also associated with the warfare between Pazhassi and the Company army. Currently, the place is protected as Periya Reserve Forest. In the late eighteenth century, the Periya pass was considered to be an important trail for transportation and thus British has established a military post. The place is known for planned military attacks including successful guerrilla warfare from Pazhassi's troops against the Company army.¹⁶⁵ A water resource named Kunkichira is protected in the forest range which is said to be a camping place of Pazhassi and his troops while in exile.¹⁶⁶ Thus, the three forest regions which played a significant role in the early victories of Pazhassi and his troops are included under the Pazhassi Circuit along with the material representations and the memorials. In this way, State Tourism Department is exploring multifarious ways to expand the memorialization of Pazhassi Raja by linking the locations of eco-tourism to the memories of the Pazhassi struggle.

Another way of unfolding the memories of Pazhassi Raja is through spaces of martial arts or here, *Kalaripayattu*.¹⁶⁷ Pazhassi Circuit brings the *Pindali Kalari* house under the domain of Pazhassi's memories. The *Pindali* house is situated in Muzhakunnu and it was the center for learning of *Kalari* by the royal families in North Malabar. According to the customs of the

¹⁶⁴ <https://www.keralatourism.org/thalassery/tourist-circuits/pazhassi/aralam-wildlife-sanctuary>, accessed July 13 2022.

¹⁶⁵ Johnny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, 85.

The incident happened in January 14, 1797, when a group of soldiers under Lt. Inglis were moving to the Periya post. Thirteen sepoy of Company army were killed by a group of Pazhassi army in a guerrilla attack. The remaining Company soldiers escaped to Kuttiady.

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.keralatourism.org/thalassery/tourist-circuits/pazhassi/periya-forest>, accessed July 13 2022.

¹⁶⁷ *Kalaripayattu*, also known as *Kalari* is an Indian martial art originated in Kerala. It utilises different forms of weapons and combat techniques in the warfare. *Vadakan Paatukal* or the Northern Ballads prevalent in the North Malabar of Kerala mentions about *Kalari*.

Kottayam family, a new ruler could complete his coronation only after practicing certain ritual ceremonies and receiving a sword from the *Gurukkal* or the master of *Pindali Kalari*.¹⁶⁸ Currently, the state government has earmarked a fund of more than one crore for the development of *Pindali Kalari* house under the Thalassery Heritage Project.¹⁶⁹

The idolization of Pazhassi Raja through museums, heritage and tourist projects and naming is not limited to state and private initiatives. In Kannur, the memories of Pazhassi are celebrated at the headquarters of the Defence Security Corps which was also until recently the center of the 122nd Infantry Battalion of Territorial Army under the Ministry of Defence. A forty feet statue of Pazhassi Raja was inaugurated in January 2019 at the DSC Centre (see Fig. 33). The inauguration ceremony was attended by P. K. Srimathi (MP from Kannur), members of the Pazhassi family, army personnel, ex-servicemen, winners of various gallantry awards and so on. The statue is built by Havildar Harindran K of DSC in six months from June to December 2018 at a cost of 84000 Rupees on the shore of the Arabian Sea. It was Col. Ajay Sharma, Commandant of DSC Centre who proposed the installation of Pazhassi's statue.¹⁷⁰ The motivation behind the proposal was to make the soldiers aware of one of the early "freedom fighters" and to remind Pazhassi's "immense fighting capacities" that defeated Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington.¹⁷¹ Apart from being an inspiration to the soldiers, it is also meant to enhance the "aesthetic beauty" of the place. As installed on the shore of the Arabian Sea in such a way that it is possible to view the statue from St. Angelo Fort, Kannur. He followed the conventional portrayal of Pazhassi, i.e. with a tall muscular physique, carrying a sword wearing a traditional Kerala dhoti and shawl.

¹⁶⁸ Frenz, *From Contact to Conquest*, 34.

¹⁶⁹ <http://kiidc.kerala.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Pindali-kalari-Project-details.pdf>, accessed July 13, 2022.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Lt. Col. Haridasan V, Company Quarter Master at DSC Centre, Kannur on 13 March 2020.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Lt. Col. Haridasan.



Fig 33. *The statue of Pazhassi Raja, (Image Source: From the office of DSC Centre, Kannur)*



Fig 34. *“The Warrior”, Statue of Pazhassi Raja installed by the Infantry Battalion, Kannur in 2012*

Apart from the above mentioned statue installed by the DSC, another statue of Pazhassi Raja (see Fig. 34) was put up by the Infantry Battalion at Kannur on November 1, 2012, as a part of Rising Day. It was inaugurated by Col Bhupinder Singh Bali, former Commanding

Officer. Interestingly, this statue is also built by Havildar Harindran K but with visible differences. The physique of Pazhassi remains mostly the same but it is built as if he is riding on a horse. The statues of Pazhassi Raja are completely based on the sculptor's imagination which is influenced by the general representation of Pazhassi as a strong masculine figure. He was convinced by the history of the Pazhassi struggle and inspired by the heroic narratives on Pazhassi Raja.¹⁷²

The idea behind the establishment of a physical memorial in a public space is about the efficiency with which the object communicates with the spectators and thereby keeping the discourse alive. However, the statues of Pazhassi Raja installed in the DSC center are exclusive as it is built inside the cantonment compound which limits the visibility of the object only to the defence personnel residing on the campus. Thus, the memorial fails to become part of a collective performance of commemoration and as an everyday memory available to the larger social realm. On the other hand, it justifies the intentions of the authority to inspire the soldiers by making them familiar with the fighting spirits of Pazhassi Raja and also to enhance the aesthetic beauty of the place. At the same time, placing it in a Defence campus wherein people from different parts of the country live and work towards the defence of the country, enables memorialization beyond the immediate socio-political and cultural domains of Pazhassi Raja.

Nonetheless, the object of memory cannot exist in isolation but depends on the relationship with the society, i.e. the material object outside the socio-cultural fabric loses the capacity to communicate as it is the people who give meanings to the particular object.¹⁷³ Consequently, how efficiently the statue of Pazhassi in the Cantonment area is able to exert meaning is part of another debate. Additionally, another site that memorializes Pazhassi Raja is Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, a residential school located near Thalassery, in Kannur. Here, a statue of

¹⁷² Interview with Havildar Harindran K at DSC Centre, Kannur on 13 March 2020.

¹⁷³ Ranjan, *Politics of Symbolism*, 133.

Pazhassi is constructed inside the school compound as a donation by the class 12th students of the 2004-2005 batch and PTA. It was unveiled by K S Srinivas IAS, the then District Collector, Kannur in the presence of the School principal on 20th June 2005 (see Fig. 35).

In the engraved stone, Pazhassi is addressed as “The Lion of Kerala, who organized Guerrilla warfare against the British and sacrificed his life for the country.” As usual, the sculptor followed traditional norms while building the statue of Pazhassi. There is no notable difference in the physical structure except the posture that shows one leg stepping upon a stone which displays the exertion of authority. Although there is no authentic information regarding the physical appearance of Pazhassi Raja, these statues which are spread across the districts of Kannur and Wayanad play a major role in the promotion of everyday remembering of Pazhassi Raja as a fighter against the British. These material “sites” belonging to the “right and appropriate” socio-cultural atmosphere possess the ability to keep the discourse alive on memories of Pazhassi Raja.



Fig 35. “The Lion of Kerala”, Statue of Pazhassi Raja installed in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya,

Kannur, (Image Source: Image Source: Anjoe Paul, Statue of Pazhassi Raja JNV Kannur,

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Statue_of_Pazhassi_Raja_JNV_Kannur.jpg)

As mentioned earlier, Pazhassi Kovilakam and palaces are included under the Pazhassi Circuit by the Tourism Department. The ancestral home (*Padinjare Kovilakam*) of Pazhassi,

Raja located at Pazhassi near Mattannur, as pointed out already was destroyed by the British soon after Pazhassi's death in November 1805. It was William Logan in 1867 when appointed as Malabar Sub-collector took an initiative for buying the family a sufficient amount as remuneration for the loss of *Kovilakam* and other properties.¹⁷⁴ The amount was divided among three branches of the Kottayam dynasty and with that, the *Padinjare Kovilakam* or the Western Branch stationed at Kotakunnu, Pazhassi near Mattannur by building an *Ettukettu* in 1900. Gradually, the house was made into a *Nalukettu* due to dilapidation over years. Currently, this *Kovilakam* is identified as Pazhassi Kovilakam and is included under Pazhassi Circuit (see Fig. 36).



Fig 36. *Padinjare Kovilakam at Pazhassi*

There have been several debates and discussions among the natives, office bearers of regional cultural organizations, Mattannur Municipal authorities and the State Archaeological Department regarding the protection of *Padinjare Kovilakam* as it was not directly linked to Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja.¹⁷⁵ However, Krishna Kumar Kannothe, a history enthusiast and

¹⁷⁴ P.K. Shankara Varma Raja, "Hridayaksharangal" in *Sangeethanjanaya Raajaavu: Pazhassi Thampuran PK Shankara Varma Raja*, ed. Krishna Kumar Kannothe, (Mattannur: Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi, 2011), 16.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with K Baskaran Master (former Chairman of Mattannur Municipality and Chairman of the Organising Committee for the Inauguration of Pazhassi Raja Smrithi Mandiram) at his residence on 20 February 2020.

Secretary of *Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi*, a memorial organization established in the name of Pazhassi Raja opine that the Kovilakam situated at Pazhassi deserves to be renovated and protected under the State Archaeological Department.¹⁷⁶ He observes that it was in the current *Padinjare Kovilakam*, PK Sankara Varma Raja (the Pazhassi Raja after Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja) was born in the year 1920 (see Fig. 37).¹⁷⁷ Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja was the grand uncle of the grand uncle of Sankara Varma Raja's grandmother, which makes Sankara Varma as the rightful heir to *Padinjare Kovilakam*.¹⁷⁸ In this regard, it is important to note that the Kottayam family followed the matrilineal system of inheritance similar to all other contemporary royal families in Malabar.



Fig 37. Sankara Varma Raja, (Image source: From Kannothe, *Sangeethanjanaya Rajaavu*)

Although Sankara Varma Raja died in 2011, his efforts to keep the memories of his predecessor, Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja have proved fruitful. His method of commemoration

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Krishna Kumar Kannothe at Universal College, Mattannur on 24 February 2020.

¹⁷⁷ Kannothe, *Sangeethanjanaya Rajaavu*, 24.

¹⁷⁸ After the death of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja in 1805, *Padinjare Kovilakam* (western branch) lost its dominance in Kottayam family. Therefore, *Kizhakke Kovilakam* (eastern branch) enjoyed the highest position for more than one hundred years and no heirs from *Padinjare Kovilakam* received the customary sword from *Pindali Gurukkal* (the hereditary *Kalari* mentor). It was only in 1963, PK Shankara Varma Raja was positioned as Pazhassi Raja after following the rituals and receiving the customary sword from *Pindali Gurukkal* to complete his coronation.

of Pazhassi Raja was not limited to social and cultural spheres, but it was more ritualistic in nature that positioned Pazhassi in a sacred space. Sankara Varma had written a small note describing his experience of getting acquainted with Pazhassi Raja's memories during his childhood.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, Sankara Varma's memories become crucial as it throws light into the memorialization of Pazhassi Raja during the period of freedom struggle which is hitherto unknown or not focussed. He remembers offering prayers to the King of Britain, George the Fifth in school while being unaware of his ancestor's history.¹⁸⁰ It was during this period of freedom struggle, Kappana Krishna Menon wrote a historical drama named *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* and this became a turning point. Gradually Pazhassi Raja was beginning to be commemorated by leaders in the freedom movement, especially during Salt Satyagrahas, as remembered by Sankara Varma.¹⁸¹

It is fascinating to note that Sankara Varma Raja during his education at Victoria College, Palakkad played the drama of Pazhassi Raja written by Kappana Krishna Menon.¹⁸² He visited Mavilamthode in Pulpally where Pazhassi Raja was killed. Sankara Varma received the position of *Kottayam Valiya Raja* in 1963 by receiving the customary sword from *Pindali Gurukkal*.¹⁸³ In the Kottayam family, it was customary for a newly enthroned Raja to carry out the funeral rites of his predecessor. Although T H Baber has claimed to have followed all the funeral rites properly for Pazhassi Raja, it was called to attention that, the act was not carried out by nephews or other relatives. During a renovative ritual in Kottayam Trikkakkunnu Mahadeva Temple, which was followed by a *Devaprashnam*, it was interpreted that, Pazhassi

¹⁷⁹ Krishna Kumar Kannoth has included a note written by Shankara Varma Raja in his biography on Sankara Varma Raja published by Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi.

¹⁸⁰ Malayinkeezhu Gopalakrishnan, "Pazhassi Raja", *Kerala Koumudi* (Weekly), March 13, 2011.

Author is a historian and journalist and this article is written as a memorial note following the death of Shankara Varma Raja in 2011.

¹⁸¹ Gopalakrishnan, "Pazhassi Raja".

¹⁸² Interview with Shailaja Thampuran at her residence in Kotakunnu at Pazhassi on 28 February 2020. Shailaja Thampuran is the daughter of Sankara Varma Raja and the Chairperson of Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi.

¹⁸³ *Kottayam Valiya Raja* or the Big King is the term addressed to the head of Kottayam family which includes all branches.

Raja did not attain salvation. Therefore, Sankara Varma along with the assistance of priests invoked Pazhassi Raja's soul and installed in a small shrine near Sankara Varma's residence, 'Shyamavihar' in Kottakkunnu near Pazhassi (see Fig. 38), (see Fig. 39). An eternal lamp is maintained inside the shrine and routine worships are offered.



Fig 38. Image shows Sankara Varma along with priests performing rituals for the installation of the shrine, (Image Source: Kannothe, Sangeethanjanaya Rajaavu)



Fig 39. The shrine of Pazhassi Raja at Kotakunnu, Pazhassi

Shailaja Thampuran, daughter of Sankara Varma Raja remembers her father as someone who showed great interest in the life and struggle of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja. Sankara Varma was a renowned musician and a disciple of Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar. It is said that he always believed in protecting the remaining Pazhassi's legacy rather than renovating it. He was disappointed by varied interpretations of Pazhassi's history and mistaking the current *Kovilakam* at Pazhassi as the *Kovilakam* of Kerala Varma. Kannothe observes that Sankara Varma silently protested against the building of Pazhassi Smrithi Mandiram above the step well, which once was a part of the Pazhassi *Kovilakam*.¹⁸⁴ As a posthumous honour to him, *Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi* has been giving *Pazhassi Sankara Varma Raja Sangeetha Puraskaram* every year to musicians since 2013 (see Fig. 40). Elaborated award ceremonies are conducted by the committee which is usually attended by State Ministers and other dignitaries.



Fig 40. Notices were issued by Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi for the award ceremony

¹⁸⁴ Kannothe, *Sangeethanjanaya Rajaavu*, 46.

It is interesting to see how the family of Kottayam projects the memories of Sankara Varma Raja in the presence of rich materialized memory of Kerala Varma. It can be said that both memories do not overshadow each other as they are remembered in distinct spheres. While Kerala Varma is remembered for his resistance against the British, Sankara Varma is celebrated for his contributions to music. The study on the afterlife of Kerala Varma would be incomplete if the current situation of the Kottayam family is not looked into. At present, the Pazhassi Raja is P. K. Kerala Varma, the son of Gopalika Amma Raja who is the sister of Sankara Varma Raja. After the death of Kerala Varma, his brother Ravi Varma will become the Pazhassi Raja. However, there are no nephews after him which means the Kottayam dynasty would come to an end.

Meanwhile, the Mattannur Municipal authorities, the natives and the memorial organizations have given combined petitions to the government to protect the *Kovilakam*.¹⁸⁵ The *Kovilakam* including two step wells was in a state of negligence with no residents staying since the 1960s. The property was sold to private individuals and there were initiatives to demolish it and sell the materials. However, these attempts are now been restricted by collective efforts. After several meetings and clarifications with government officials, a decision of protecting the *Kovilakam* was finalized in November 2020 by the Tourism Department.¹⁸⁶ The decision of including Pazhassi *Kovilakam* under the Project may result in mistaking the same for the place of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja's residence. Here, the idea of spatiality becomes crucial because the space associated with Kerala Varma is different from that occupied by Sankara Varma, which though lie in close proximity. Therefore, the responsibility falls on the concerned authority (here, Tourism Department) to make the people aware of the historicity of each space.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with K Bhaskaran Master.

¹⁸⁶ Staff Reporter, "Pazhassi Kovilakam Charithasmarakamaakkum", *Mathrubhumi: The National Daily in Malayalam*, November 21, 2020, 3.

Another *Kovilakam* that is included under Pazhassi Circuit is Kottayam *Thekke Kovilakam* or the Southern branch of the Kottayam family (Fig. 41).¹⁸⁷ It is located near Thrikkaikunnu Mahadeva Temple, in Kottayam near Kuthuparamba. Under the tourism project, the government proposes to make a heritage gallery and accommodation facilities for tourists. The innovation is carried out by District Tourism Promotion Council and around three crore forty four lakhs rupees are earmarked for the project. In this regard, it has to be noted that the *Thekke Kovilakam* was not in any way linked to Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja except for the fact that, it belonged to the Kottayam dynasty. Though, the *Kovilakam* protected under the Pazhassi Circuit does not technically belong to the materialized space of Kerala Varma, they become part of a complex of memorialization enhancing the memory of Pazhassi Raja.



Fig 41. *Thekke Kovilakam of Kottayam family at Kottayam, Kuthuparamba*

Memorialization is characterized by selective and particular ways of use of the historical figure but also is subject to constant change. With time, new practices and festivities are invented in the materialized space of memory, depending on the changing times and needs of society. In the past few years, Mattannur Municipality has been actively participating in promoting the material remembrance of Pazhassi Raja. They are observing the death

¹⁸⁷ Staff Reporter, “Kottayam Thekke Kovilakam Paithrukasmaarakamaakkunnu”, *Mathrubhumi: The National Daily in Malayalam*, December 17, 2020, 3.

anniversaries of Pazhassi Raja by commemorating his resistance against the Company. Supplements which include articles written on him, brochures, notice, and posters are extensively published by the same authority (see Fig. 42) and (see Fig. 43). Programmes like workshops and seminars are being conducted in collaboration with institutions like Kerala Sahitya Academy and Kerala Folklore Academy. The commemoration ceremonies are conducted grandly which the Chief Minister, other Ministers, Members of State Assembly, District Collectors, and other notable people are often part of.

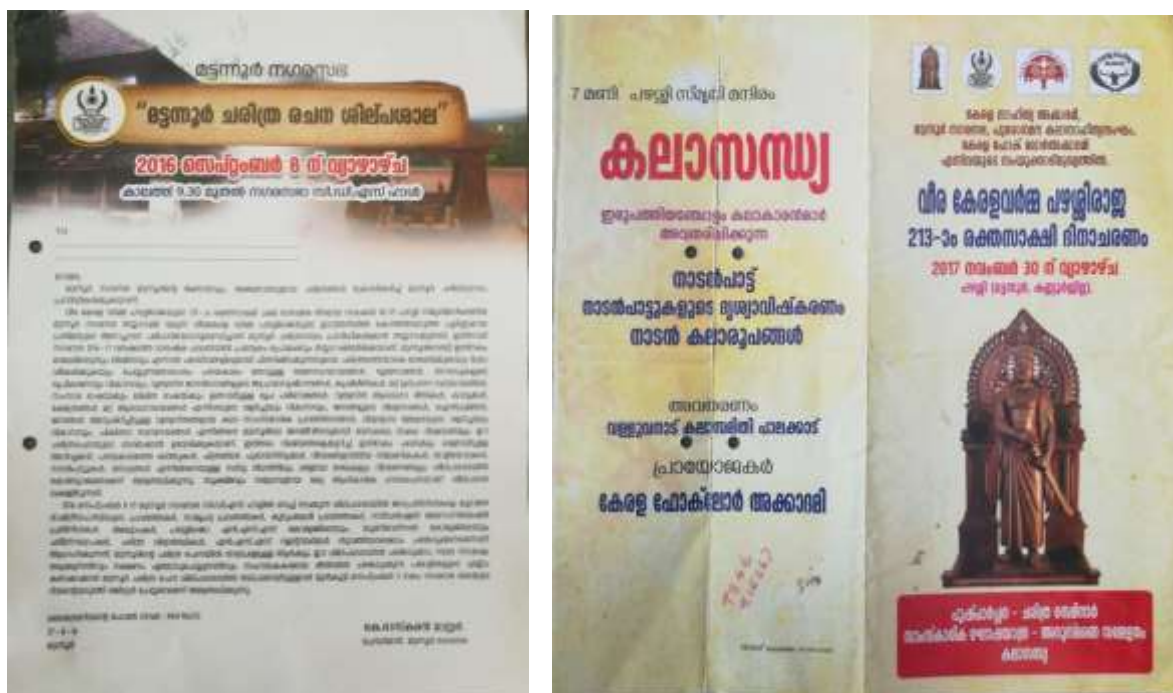


Fig 42. Notices were issued on the occasion of commemoration ceremonies of Pazhassi Raja

It can be observed that the Municipal Corporation considers the commemoration of Pazhassi Raja as a responsibility bestowed upon them. Here, the office bearers of the Corporation are taking part in an attempt to authorize the remembrance of Pazhassi Raja and making it a “collective memory”. Once a space is materialized with objects of remembrance, it requires the joint effort of that particular society to make the memories experienced and celebrated and thereby keep the communication active. The process of association of Pazhassi Raja to spaces

results in the formation of popular histories. Badri Narayan emphasizes how significant, historical memories are in the process of identity formation which is further connected to the creation of popular histories.¹⁸⁸ Here, Pazhassi Raja is identified and remembered in popular memory as a “martyr” who sacrificed his life for the country fighting against the British regime. This opens space for local bodies and the state government to materialize memory with objects of remembrance, which in turn bolsters the popular memory and reproduces it constantly. It also enables the state to reproduce the nationalist history and affiliate citizens to such collective memory.



Fig 43. Notices issued by Mattannur Municipality

Civil society initiatives like *Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi*, established in 2011 partake in this process of unending reproduction of memory through memorialization. It is done not only through the objectification of memory, but also considered efforts to bring the history of

¹⁸⁸ Badri Narayan, “Heroes, Histories and Booklets”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 36, no. 14, (October 2001): 3928.

Pazhassi Raja to the mainstream historical narrative of freedom struggles in the country and thereby incorporating the local into the national through written and materialized remembrances.¹⁸⁹

This process is also informed by the historical debates at the supra-local level. For instance, the debate on considering the Revolt of 1857 as the First War of Independence in recent times engendered a slew of claims from various locations in India. In 2017, Prakash Javadekar, the then Union Minister of Human Resource Development announced that the “Paika Bidroha” rebellion of 1817 would be considered as the “First War of independence” and thereby included in the history textbooks. A group of historians from Kerala has submitted a petition against this attempt stating that Kerala witnessed earlier anti-imperial struggles that include the Attingal Revolt of 1721 and Pazhassi Revolt (1795-1805).¹⁹⁰ Historians and academicians like M.G.S Narayanan, K.N Ganesh and Rajan Gurukkal opine that several regional struggles require much recognition and emphasized the need to reconsider the initiative of the Centre.¹⁹¹

Kannoth, the Secretary of *Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi* observes that the history of Pazhassi Raja is not receiving enough consideration and he stresses the need to spread the glorious history of Pazhassi Raja in every sphere of society. There have been efforts from the organization to persuade the government to insist the Railways to name a train, servicing in Kerala after Pazhassi Raja. However, this has not been fulfilled so far, as observed by Kannoth. Along with the commemoration of Kerala Varma, the organization also remembers Sankara Varma of *Padinjare Kovilakam*. The book, *Sangeethanjanaya Raajaavu: Pazhassi Thampuran*

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Krishna Kumar Kannoth at Universal College, Mattannur on 24 February 2020.

¹⁹⁰ Staff Reporter, “The first revolts against the British happened in Kerala”, October 31, 2017, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/the-first-revolts-against-the-british-happened-in-kerala/articleshow/6134>.

¹⁹¹ PTI, “Kerala historians question move to give ‘Paika Bidroha’ first war of Independence tag”, October 31, 2017, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/kerala-historians-question-move-to-give-paika-bidroha-first-war-of-independence-tag-4915411/>.

PK Sankara Varma Raja edited by Kannothe was published by *Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi* in 2011. This work was published after the death of Sankara Varma.

Another place in Mattannur where Pazhassi Raja is remembered is Kannur International Airport which was opened in 2018 (see Fig. 44). The departure terminal houses an extensive series of art that depicts the rich culture and heritage of North Malabar, especially Kannur.¹⁹² Along with enhancing the aesthetics of the space, it reveals a comprehensive cultural and historical landscape of Kannur to tourists and visitors. Firoz Assan, the artist hailing from Vadakara, Kozhikode included the history of Kannur since the Portuguese occupation to freedom struggles in these installations. Pazhassi Raja and the Kurichya troops are also displayed in the acrylic artwork. It is also important to note that, there were collective petitions from the natives and organizations to name the Kannur International Airport after Pazhassi Raja before its inauguration. There were polls on social media platforms on whether to name the airport as Veera Singham Pazhassi Raja International Airport.¹⁹³



Fig 44. Mural Painting of Pazhassi Raja in Kannur International Airport

¹⁹² Vishnu Varma, “Kannur’s vibrant cultural past finds meaning in this 38-years- Old’s massive artwork at airport terminal”, *The Indian Express*, December 10, 2018, [Kannur’s vibrant cultural past finds meaning in this 38-year-old’s massive artwork at airport terminal | Lifestyle News, The Indian Express](https://www.indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/kannur-vibrant-cultural-past-finds-meaning-in-this-38-year-old-s-massive-artwork-at-airport-terminal-6648481/).

¹⁹³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/567531940344394/>, accessed August 12 2021.

Apparently, efforts to create more spaces in the town of Mattannur and neighbouring places that materializes the memories of Pazhassi Raja are still going on. A society will be conscious to distinguish the spaces that are important to them culturally and ritualistically. Sigurd Bergmann discusses the process of integrating memories in architecture and urban spaces to create a built environment. He observes that “lived space is a remembered space” because the lived space is formed by the synthesis of “remembrance” from the past and “envisioning” for the future.¹⁹⁴ Thus, the atmosphere of the urban space is revealed through the way of handling the memories from the past. In the case of Mattannur, or other places spread across three districts in Kerala, memories of Pazhassi Raja and his resistance are selected and applied for the creation of an urban space.

Conclusion:

The chapter has attempted to map the memorialization of Pazhassi Raja in the material space. Memorials of Pazhassi Raja have assumed different forms and are remembered through memorials in spaces that are directly related to the life and activities of the Raja and in spaces that are not directly related to his life. For instance, other than the memorial at Pazhassi, the tomb at Mananthavady, the memorial stone at Mavilamthode, Pulpally in Wayanad and the network of temples spread across Kannur and Wayanad, every other space, institution and memorial that have taken after the legacy of Pazhassi Raja are not associated with him directly. The assimilation of Pazhassi’s history into these spaces can be considered as the formation of the “built environment”. Bergmann describes a city as an artefact where urban spaces are marked by the events of the past. He associates the concept of the built environment as “built

¹⁹⁴ Sigurd Bergmann, “Religion in the Built Environment: Aesth/Ethics, Ritual and Memory in Lives Urban Space”, in *The Sacred in the City*, eds. Liliana Gomez and Walter Van Herck, (London: Bloomsbury Collections, 2012), 86.

memories” where information from the past is stored and propagated.¹⁹⁵ Despite the dynamics of the present, the urban spaces are dependent on the past; here, it is the history of Pazhassi.

Political memory thrives on external symbols and representations which requires collective participation that mostly is accompanied by identity formation.¹⁹⁶ Commemoration of Pazhassi Raja by institutions, larger groups and the state falls under the category of political memory. He becomes a mediated memory selected intentionally to bolster and legitimize the entities and institutions. Memory is sustained through periodic commemoration, celebration, construction of memorial sites, monuments, museums, creation of images and symbols and so on. Educational institutions named after Pazhassi Raja, and local self-government institutions administer regular commemorative ceremonies while the state commercializes the memory by using Raja as the symbol of patriotism to enhance the tourism industry. Assmann equates political memory with national memory, where collective memory is constructed for the nation from a historic event that possibly gives a positive image of the nation’s identity. However, Pazhassi Raja is memorialized as part of the biography of the nation wherein his bravery and martyrdom are remembered as a significant episode in the early battle for national freedom.

Nevertheless, irrespective of the types of memory, ritualization is significant for the active existence of the memories. Bergmann argues that a ritual makes a space symbolic and it creates an atmosphere that lasts only till the ritual is continued. He points out the relationship between the place, ritual and atmosphere that influence each other and it possesses a significant effect on our “socio-cultural collective memory”¹⁹⁷. The sites of remembrance could be represented as political, aesthetic or sacred, as observed by Bergmann. The celebration of Pazhassi Raja near Mridanga Saileswari Temple and in the small shrine near Pazhassi *Kovilakam* can be viewed as

¹⁹⁵ Bergmann, “Religion in the Built Environment”, 86.

¹⁹⁶ Assman, “Memory, Individual and Collective”, 216.

¹⁹⁷ Bergmann, “Religion in the Built Environment”, 85.

remembering him in a sacred space that is accompanied by regular rituals.¹⁹⁸ Here, the existence of Pazhassi Raja is continued as a sacred entity and it ensures a participatory structure where people observe the customs which generates a range of values and emotions among them.¹⁹⁹

Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja is perceived by the public as the one who stood against the policies of the English East India Company and who led a collective resistance against the Imperial regime for around a decade. This is the most generalized portrayal of Pazhassi Raja because almost all of the material remembrances represent him along these lines. Memorialization is in accordance with the requirement of the present, which needless to say, is subject to change following the imperatives of changing times.

¹⁹⁸ Routine worships are conducted in the temple and as well as in the shrine near Pazhassi Kovilakam. Priests of the Mridanga Saileswari temple pay everyday visit to the temple ruins of *Sree Porkali Bagavathi* to light the lamps and to offer the flowers.

¹⁹⁹ As per the customs, devotees who visit the Mridanga Saileswari Temple come to the temple ruins nearby and are allowed to pay offerings to *Sree Porkali Bagavathi*. In this way, they gather information regarding the association of Pazhassi Raja with the particular place and thereby become participants in the process.

CHAPTER THREE

REMEMBERING PAZHASSI RAJA: CHANGING REPRESENTATIONS IN POPULAR DOMAINS

Social memory of a historical figure or an event is predicated on active discourses that sustain remembering. This is not achieved through the erection of memorials or with the maintenance of museums and observation of rituals alone. With the arrival of new technologies, new ways are found in the memory making. Media holds significant power in a society as they can communicate to a larger audience and in turn shape the popular memory in particular ways. Every form of media including print, broadcasting and internet plays a major role in installing ideas and beliefs among the public conditioning collective memory and forgetting. Apart from being actively remembered through memorials Pazhassi Raja finds circulation in print media, televisual media and also the virtual space of internet through myriad representations.

Media of all kinds has a profound role in influencing the thinking patterns of the public. In a way, media determines the significance of people or historic events and the way in which they should be remembered by the public. Gary. R. Edgerton in his introduction to *Television Histories* points out that the historical representations shown in the television exhibits much popularity and it is the principal way by most to learn about history these days.²⁰⁰ Although, his focus has been on the influence of television historical programmes on American audience, it is of no doubt that visual media exerts a telling impact over the public on various social affairs of public interest irrespective of national boundaries. Correspondingly, a society

²⁰⁰ Gary R Edgerton, Introduction to *Television Histories: Shaping the Collective Memory in the Media Age*, eds., Gary. R. Edgerton, Peter C Rollins, (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 1-3.

that considers the commemoration of its historical figures as a necessity often looks upon the media and gets very much influenced by the media representations they witness.

The previous chapters have discussed the varied representations of Pazhassi Raja in the literature and through public memorials and practices. The aim of the present chapter is to explore the ways in which Pazhassi Raja is remembered in the media, which includes both conventional and new technological spaces and also in popular culture. It is possible to see his remembrances in the national newspapers and weeklies and his commemoration has been a subject of discourse along the course. Visual media is another important space where he has been remembered actively, which includes two biographical films in Malayalam and a few documentaries. Apart from this, two Malayalam historical fictions based on Pazhassi Raja are briefly discussed in the present chapter. He is also remembered in the virtual space through considerable number of blogs written in English and Malayalam by history enthusiasts.

The chapter helps to reconstruct the representation history on Pazhassi Raja evolving over a period of time. For better understanding of the unfolding of the remembrance process, the chapter is divided into four sections. First section deals with the representations in print media before and after independence. Second section discusses two fictional works on Pazhassi Raja and the representational politics attached to them. Third section looks at the cinematic representations of Pazhassi and associating it with the idea of ‘prosthetic memories’. Last section analyses the remembrance of Pazhassi through the virtual spaces of internet or online blogs. In short, the chapter throws light towards the process of commemoration of Pazhassi Raja that has unfolded through the media and popular culture to see how these particular forms of memorial representations and interpretations are linked to different motivations.

The history represented in the mass media is usually been consumed by a large audience. Thus the memories linked to a particular historic event or a person is remembered or propagated through the media that results in shared memories among the public. Maurice Halbwachs put forward the *presentist* approach as he places the memory under the collective influence of aspirations, beliefs and interests of the present rather than the past alone.²⁰¹ Thus it can be said that media possess a tight grasp over Collective Memory. This is resonated in the book, *On Media Memory* where the term, Media Memory is considered as a phenomenon itself, wherein the media act as a “memory agent”, rather than as a channel to propagate the memory.²⁰² Here, the historical representations of Pazhassi Raja through media become important as it results in formation and sustenance of memories that are mediated and have the potential to shape the socio-political perception on him.

3.1. Print Media Before and After Independence

The representations of Pazhassi Raja have undergone major changes in the print media over a period of two centuries. The nineteenth century newspapers in Britain have attributed the root cause of the revolt in Kottayam to the rivalry between the Kurumbranad Raja and Pazhassi as the former took over the control of revenue collection.²⁰³ The account also mentions that Pazhassi was scrupulous to promote the “causes of dissatisfaction” and the “spirit of the revolt” through the right channels to create disturbances in the country. An account in another newspaper praises the victories that the Company troops enjoyed over the

²⁰¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis. A. Coser, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 25.

²⁰² Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers, Eyal Zandberg, eds., *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1-2.

²⁰³ *The Morning Herald* (London), September 9, 1801, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0002408/18010909/009/0002?browse=False>. The account can be found in the *Morning Herald*, an early newspaper in London, United Kingdom published from 1780 to 1869. The article is based on an account received from a correspondent from Bengal.

“enemy”, Pazhassi in 1802 during the temporary retreat of the latter.²⁰⁴ A newspaper named, *Morning Chronicle* has published an extract from a letter received from Surat that explained the difficulties faced by the Company along the Malabar Coast. It was said that Pazhassi Raja was “cutting off our troops by piece meal.”²⁰⁵ However, the writer also expressed hope for the victory of Arthur Wellesley over Pazhassi in Wayanad.

There were sympathetic British representations too dating back to the early nineteenth century *The Examiner*, a weekly newspaper of nineteenth century in England published an eye witness account in 1818 by a former English Officer, Lieutenant George Strachan who had engaged in the campaign against Kerala Varma in Malabar.²⁰⁶ Here the officer shared his admiration for Kerala Varma and his associates for relentlessly fighting for the achievement of their oppressed sovereignty even at the peril of death. He criticised the atrocities inflicted by the Company upon the Raja and his men who were earlier an ally of the Company in the battle against Mysore. Strachan has thrown light towards the “cruel and vindictive” approach adopted by the Bombay Government towards Pazhassi and the “cold blooded slaughter” of the Nair and other rebels by the Company army. He observes that the Company was ungrateful towards the people of Kottayam even after supplying the whole produce of their cultivation.

The reason behind the war between Pazhassi and the Company is observed to be the attempt by the latter to impose an additional tribute over already fixed amount. The writer

²⁰⁴“American Papers”, *The Star* (London), April 5, 1802, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0002646/18020405/019/0002?browse=False>, accessed November 18, 2021. The account was said to be based on the Georgiana packet arrived from India which includes news from South India. *The Star* was an evening newspaper published from London during 1788-1960.

²⁰⁵*The Morning Chronicle* (London), 10 August, 1801, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000082/18010810/005/0003?browse=False>, accessed November 18, 2021. The newspaper was based in London and published from 1769 till 1865.

²⁰⁶George Strachan, “Indian Atrocities”, *The Examiner* 9, no. 560, September 20, 1818, 594- 595, accessed November 18, 2021. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Examiner_1818-09-27-Iss_561_\(IA_sim_examiner-a-weekly-paper-on-politics-literature-music_1818-09-27_561\).pdf](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Examiner_1818-09-27-Iss_561_(IA_sim_examiner-a-weekly-paper-on-politics-literature-music_1818-09-27_561).pdf).

points out that the Company officials did not respect Pazhassi and instead hunted down him and each of his adherents.²⁰⁷ He discussed a specific atrocity committed by his Commanding Officer, Major Lloyd. The incident took place at a military station in Kottayam, when Major ordered a Havildar to fire upon the *Kolkars* as his sleep was disturbed by their frisking noise.²⁰⁸ The officer was later court marshalled for the crime. Strachan also observes that there were fellow officers who were humane enough to not punish the prisoners and instead helped them to escape from the British captivity.

In short, Strachan strongly condemned the approach taken by the Company to suppress the revolt led by Pazhassi and the people of Kottayam for the attainment of their “lawful sovereignty”. He has expressed his awareness regarding the severe consequences one would have faced if the atrocities of the Company were exposed by its own servants. It is interesting to note that, this article has been published in England during the time when the Company was a paramount power in the Indian sub-continent. It is true that *The Examiner* founded by Leigh Hunt and John Hunt was known for its liberal intellectual ideas and radical principles. The paper has experienced constant backlashes from the Government for independent reports based on radical and reformist ideologies.²⁰⁹ The representation of Pazhassi in the particular paper is significant as it reflects a sympathetic approach towards Pazhassi struggle in a space outside the usual socio-political realm of commemoration.

In India, the period after independence saw the representations of Pazhassi Raja in the lights of Freedom struggle. He was portrayed as a hero and a true patriot in the articles

²⁰⁷ George Strachan, “Indian Atrocities”, *The Examiner* 9, no. 561, September 27, 1818, 609, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Examiner_1818-09-27-_Iss_561_\(IA_sim_examiner-a-weekly-paper-on-politics-literature-music_1818-09-27_561\).pdf](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Examiner_1818-09-27-_Iss_561_(IA_sim_examiner-a-weekly-paper-on-politics-literature-music_1818-09-27_561).pdf), accessed on November 18, 2021.

²⁰⁸ Strachan, “Indian Atrocities”, 611.

²⁰⁹ For instance, it is said that *The Examiner* was a combination of “liberal politics and cultural appreciation”. Leigh Hunt insisted for the Parliamentary reforms and religious tolerance, criticised the extravagances of the royalty. The barbaric punishments of the military were brought to light through the editorials. Renowned poets like John Milton and John Keats patronised the paper. See Andrew Motion, *Keats*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2011).

appeared in a weekly, *The Bombay Chronicles* in the 1950s. The article titled “Freedom Battle from Wynad Hills” published in March 1951 in the Weekly, has conferred unfettered patriotism upon Pazhassi Raja and called him as a “revolutionary patriot.”²¹⁰ Apart from the narration of the two Pazhassi struggles, author argues that, in a way it was Pazhassi Raja who had already raised the war cry against the British years ago, although Mahatma Gandhi has raised the slogan, “Quit India” during the last phase of the Freedom movement. He gives an account of the battle between Pazhassi and Arthur Wellesley and observes that it was due to treachery, the former was able to be defeated. In addition to Pazhassi Raja been considered as a warrior, the essayist has observed qualities of proficiency in arts and literature in him and attributes a “unique personality” to the valiant historical figure.

Pazhassi Raja has been considered to be a skilled writer of *Aattakatha* for Kathakali and a great patron of the Kathakali performers who could “transform a battlefield into a place of enjoyment”²¹¹. Author pointed out that the intention of Pazhassi was to expel the imperialists and the struggle can be viewed as a battle for independence which could instil the spirit of patriotism at all times. Here, the author has understood the Pazhassi struggle as one of the early moment in the freedom movement and has tried to draw comparisons between Pazhassi Raja and Mahatma Gandhi. He has not put any demarcation between the efforts and intentions of the two figures except the fact that the former preferred an armed revolt while

²¹⁰ Prabhakaran Palissery, “Freedom Battle from Wynad Hills”, *The Bombay Chronicle* (Sunday/ Weekly Edition), March 4 1951, 4, accessed October 12, 2021, <https://archive.org/details/dli.granth.14274/14274?q=pazhassi+raja>.

²¹¹ *Aattakatha* are literary genre based on which Kathakali, a classical dance- drama performance is structured. The literal meaning of *Aattakatha* is stories enacted in to a play or dance. It is written in Malayalam language with influence from Sanskrit. See V. Aravindakshan, “The Literary Tradition of Kerala”, in *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala: Literature, Art, Architecture, Music, Theatre, Cinema*, ed. P. J. Cherian, (Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Gazetteers Department, 1999), accessed December 22, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100801012522/http://www.keralahistory.ac.in/literaryadition.htm>.

the latter advocated nonviolence. There is an attempt to bring Pazhassi struggle under the rubric of the freedom movement, though disagreed by historians.²¹²

Besides, considering Pazhassi Raja as the writer of Kathakali *Aattakatha* could be regarded as a common misunderstanding. As already discussed in the previous chapter, Kottayam Kerala Varma (1650-1725) was an accomplished writer of Kathakali *Aattakathas* and he is also called as Kathakali *Thampuran*. Here, author mistook a predecessor in Kottayam dynasty for the historic Pazhassi Raja (1753-1805). The article endeavours to bring Pazhassi Raja and his resistance against the English East India Company to the history of Indian Freedom Movement. These attempts can be read as part of the efforts that is carried out in the post-independence period to enrich the history of Independence struggle of the nation by giving it a rich and longer history and also to throw more light into the regional movements which received scant attention in the main-nationalist history.

Likewise, in another issue of *Bombay Chronicle* in 1958, Pazhassi Raja is remembered along with Diwan Velu Thambi and Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai, who are known for their resistance against the English East India Company.²¹³ The article was titled as “Big Three of Kerala Heroes.” Pazhassi Raja has been referred to as a hero and a patriot who led an armed revolt against the foreign domination much before the Revolt of 1857. The battle fought in Wayanad hills against Wellesley was praised and a valorous death has been ascribed to Pazhassi Raja. The writer argues that, instead of surrendering to the Company

²¹² K. K. N. Kurup addresses the problem of associating Pazhassi struggle with the Independence movement. He argues that period did not mark the development of the concept of Indian nation based on the logics of modern political theories. See Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2004), 133.

²¹³ P. K. Devan, “Big Three of Kerala Heroes”, *The Bombay Chronicle* (Sunday/Weekly Edition), January 26 1958, p. 8, accessed October 12, 2021, <https://archive.org/details/dli.granth.13497/page/2/mode/2up?q=pazhassi+raja>.

army, he sacrificed his life by swallowing the diamond on his ring. This narration is similar to the local ballads shared by the communities of Kurichyas.²¹⁴

It is important to point out that the above said remembrance of Pazhassi Raja in the above said print media appeared after a few years of gaining independence. Therefore it can be assumed that, there were considered efforts for placing Pazhassi Raja in the mainstream history of Indian Freedom movement before his celebration through public memorials. Moreover, these articles were aimed at larger audience outside the usual socio- political and cultural domain where the collective discourse on Pazhassi Raja was not active; in and around the city of Bombay in the cited example. It can be noted that the second article discussed above was published on the Republic Day. Thus, representation of Pazhassi Raja as a hero who sacrificed his life for the freedom of the country can be read as part of an effort of enhancing the history of Indian Freedom struggle by qualifying the spirit of resistance as more diverse, *longue durée* and widespread across the nation.

3.2. Representational Politics Before and After Independence

Apart from the print media, the popular memories of Pazhassi Raja are celebrated through historical fiction and theatre. The representation of Pazhassi Raja here is more romanticized where he is attributed with qualities of an efficient ruler. The resistance is depicted round the character of Pazhassi Raja and the writers are found to give him a heroic persona who whole heartedly sacrifices his life for the country. A Malayalam historical novel, *Kerala Simham* (1941) authored by K.M. Panikkar and a historical drama, *Pazhassi Raja* (2010) authored by Pirappankode Murali, a well- known playwright is taken up here for discussion.²¹⁵ In the above mentioned fictional literatures, depiction of certain events falls far from the generally

²¹⁴ O. K. Johny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2001), 119.

²¹⁵ See Pirappankode Murali, *Pazhassi Raja*, (Kozhikode, Mathrubhumi Books, 2010) and K. M. Panikkar, *Sardar K.M.Panikkarude Rand Novelukal: Parangi Padayali, Kerala Simham*, (Thrissur, Kerala Sahitya Academy, 2015).

accepted historical understanding of the resistance. Pazhassi is associated with national consciousness and patriotism and portrayed as an embodiment of versatile personality.

Kerala Simham (The Lion of Kerala), a historic novel written by Sardar K. M. Panikkar is another important work in the studies of representation of Pazhassi Raja which was published in 1941. K. M. Panikkar was a well-known Indian Statesman and Diplomat. He was also a historian, novelist, and worked as the Editor of Hindustan Times and as a Professor at Aligarh Muslim University and Calcutta University. Panikkar neither claims the novel as the biography of Pazhassi nor as the history of Kerala at that point of time. However, it is said to instigate a spirit of freedom and national consciousness among the readers.²¹⁶ As per the author, the novel is based on a particular part of Pazhassi's life specifically, the conflict between Pazhassi and Col. Arthur Wellesley (Duke of Wellington). Pazhassi is provided with a versatile disposition such as the militaristic ability, great scholarship in literature, generosity and above all, an uncompromising patriotism.²¹⁷

It is apparent from the title of the novel that, Pazhassi is characterised with great veneration and considered as a valorous hero by the author. Apart from the story of war, author has tried to discuss the personal life of Pazhassi to a great extent. The conflict discussed in the novel is mainly centered on Wellesley who was appointed as the Commandant of the army unit in Mysore, Malabar and Karnataka by Madras Presidency in 1800. Irrespective of many military operations and carrying out tactical methods, he failed to get hold of Pazhassi Raja and to suppress his revolt. Thus he returned to Europe and later became The Duke of Wellington and defeats Napoleon in the Battle of Waterloo. Panikkar exalts the military competence of Pazhassi by asserting that, the experience of fighting

²¹⁶ R. Gopalakrishnan, Publisher's Note in *Sardar K.M.Panikkarude Rand Novelukal: Parangi Padayali, Kerala Simham*, K. M. Panikkar, (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy, 2015)

²¹⁷ K. M. Panikkar, *Sardar K.M.Panikkarude Rand Novelukal: Parangi Padayali, Kerala Simham*, (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy, 2015), 145-147.

guerrilla warfare against Pazhassi has enabled Wellesley in defeating Napoleon in the Battle of Waterloo.²¹⁸

Along with ascribing qualities to Raja, author also cares about describing the physical appearance of him. He is described as a tall man with highly masculine physique, wide forehead, broader shoulders and chest, and determined eyes.²¹⁹ It should be noted that, there are no portraits available of Pazhassi Raja. However, Jonathan Duncan writes about one of his meetings with Pazhassi Raja and described his appearance in limited words. To quote, “Pazhassi Raja was a short person having long hair with short but thick beard; sometimes, he is seen wearing a red hat. Expression on his face appeared lively, but lacked wisdom...”²²⁰ This is the only information available whatsoever on the physical appearance of Pazhassi Raja, albeit cannot be proven evidently. If this is assumed true to an extent, it makes the description in the novel appear highly contrasting. It can be argued that author has used his creative imagination to portray Pazhassi Raja as a conventional ‘masculine’ figurine who appears to be a symbol of power and authority.

As mentioned earlier, Pazhassi is represented as a patroniser of art and literature by the author. He writes that the heredity of scholarship and musical skills of Kottayam family perfectly found its zenith in Pazhassi Raja who wrote number of *Aattakatha* for Kathakali during the times of revolt.²²¹ It can be argued that author intended to manifest a ruler who excels in every sphere of human skills through Pazhassi. Nevertheless, as pointed out already it is incorrect to associate Pazhassi Raja and to credit him for the works created by another ruler of Kottayam family, Kerala Varma (1650-1725). Kottayam Kerala Varma who is

²¹⁸ Panikkar, *Kerala Simham*, 145.

²¹⁹ Panikkar, 172.

²²⁰ K. K. N. Kurupp in *Pazhassi Samarangal* describes the appearance of Pazhassi Raja from the description written by Jonathan Duncan, then Bombay Governor after his meeting with Pazhassi Raja in Tellicherry Fort. This is the only information available on the physical appearance of Pazhassi Raja. See Kurup, *Pazhassi Samarangal*, xi.

²²¹ Panikkar, *Kerala Simham*, 173.

popularly known as ‘Kathakali Thampuran’ wrote the four *Aattakathas* for Kathakali, namely *Kalyanasaugandhikam*, *Bakavadam*, *Kalakeyavadam*, *Kirmeeravadam*.²²²

It should be noted that there are mainly four names given to the males in the Kottayam family, namely Keralavarma, Sankaravarma, Viravarma and Ravivarma. Kottayam Keralavarma is known for his contribution in *Aattakatha* for Kathakali, and Keralavarma Pazhassi Raja for his resistance against the English East India Company. It can be assumed that, author is using the art and literature to romanticize every sphere of Pazhassi’s life. As earlier said, author has discussed the personal life of Pazhassi extensively. The novel mentions two wives of Pazhassi, namely Avinjikat Kunjani and Kaitheri Maakam. Panikkar has portrayed both of them as extremely devoted wives whose life revolves around Pazhassi. Alike Pazhassi, they are also attributed with qualities of good taste in literature and music.

At many instances, author is found associating the struggle of Pazhassi against the Company with the movement for Kerala’s freedom to an extent that Pazhassi’s palace is said to be capital of independent Kerala.²²³ This would be problematic considering the fact that the concept of Kerala as an integrated state has not developed at that point of time but was divided in to three separate regions namely, Malabar under the Madras Presidency, Cochin and Travancore princely states. Throughout the novel, the factor behind the conflict is mainly limited around the ownership of Kottayam and other issues like the hardships of peasants due to the revenue adjustments are not examined. Henceforth, it can be said that author has ignored the socio-economic and cultural factors and limited the grounds of the revolt to political factors alone.

²²² Krishna Kumar Kannothe, *Sangeethanjanaya Rajaavu: Pazhassi Thampuran* P.K.Shankara Varma Raja, (Mattannur: Pazhassi Raja Anusmaranavedi, 2011), 23.

²²³ Panikkar, *Kerala Simham*, 168.

Panikkar has placed Tipu and his associates as the enemies of Pazhassi. He observes that mishandling of administration by Tipu has caused a number of menaces in the state of Kottayam. He adds on to it that, if it hadn't been for Pazhassi, the resistance of Nair army would have been in a state of anarchy with no able leadership.²²⁴ Author is also careful to establish the integrity of Pazhassi by making Wellesley to accept the greatness and efficiency of the former and also to regret for fighting against Pazhassi.²²⁵ Panikkar accomplishes a romanticized representation of Pazhassi through the novel and views it as an inspiration to instil nationalism among the readers. He is characterised as a saviour of Kerala and its people from the British and Mysore Sultans. Author contends that Pazhassi fought valorously for around ten years by holding up the flag of freedom of Kerala.²²⁶ He is pictured as an epitome of strength, courage and generosity.

The historical drama, *Pazhassi Raja* is authored by Pirappankodu Murali in 1990 and is created on behalf of Sangachethana Kala Samskarika Vedi, a theatre academy inspired by communist and socialist ideologies stationed in Kannur.²²⁷ Here, Pazhassi is portrayed with all the quintessential qualities of an 'appropriate' ruler like patriotism, spirit of freedom, diplomacy, secularism, patronage for art, generosity and so on. It can be observed that, in order to establish the marked qualities of Pazhassi, certain events are added or dropped in the play. For instance, Pazhassi's interest in arts is not discussed in any of the mainstream academic literature. In fact Pazhassi Raja's wife, Avinjatt Kunjaani is portrayed as a talented Mohiniyattam artist by the author. In addition to this, the play also draws more about the personal life of Pazhassi and is successful in depicting him as an ideal husband to Avinjattu

²²⁴ Panikkar, 168.

²²⁵ Panikkar, 364.

²²⁶ Panikkar, 169.

²²⁷ Pirappankodu Murali is a noted poet, lyricist, academician, playwright, librarian, politician from Kerala. He served as a member in Kerala Legislative Assembly from 1996 to 2006. He worked with Sangachethana Academy which was founded in 1987 in Kannur. Pazhassi Raja was the fourth drama under Sangachethana.

Kunjaani.²²⁸ However, there is no reference about his second wife, Kaitheri Makam in the play. He is praised for choosing to fight against Mysore army under Hyder Ali while his counterparts opted for retreating to Travancore.

The play demonstrates that Kurumbranad Raja gets hold of power over Kottayam after his wife, Unnichirutha pleased a Company official.²²⁹ It should be noted that, in accordance with the records, Kurumbranad Raja has cooperated with the Company by accepting the increased revenue collection from Kottayam.²³⁰ In another scene, Chovvakaran Moosa, a merchant acquaints Pazhassi with Unni Mootha, a militaristic Mappila chieftain who is determined to fight with Pazhassi against the Company. Moosa appreciates Pazhassi for not taking part in the war against Tipu in the third Anglo Mysore War despite a call from the Company.²³¹ It is however important to note that Pazhassi has taken part in the war from 1790-92 by providing a large part of his Nair army aiming to end the Mysore domination in Malabar.²³² Therefore, it is historically incorrect to unsee Pazhassi's participation in the war against Tipu. Apparently, author is trying to grant a secular character to Pazhassi.

While Panikkar has presented Tipu and Pazhassi as rivals, Murali romanticises the friendship between Tipu and Pazhassi by portraying them as great admirers of each other. The play presents a scene where Tipu and Pazhassi meets and shares their common aversion towards the Company rule. Tipu reminds him about Hyder Ali's appreciation about Pazhassi by saying that, "my father has proudly talked about you that Pazhassi is the only hero in Malabar."²³³ Considering that Pazhassi fought against Hyder Ali in the Second Anglo Mysore

²²⁸ Here, Avinjattu Kunjaani is the wife of Pazhassi Raja. She is the nephew Payyoor Malanair, a Nair landlord and an advocate of Pazhassi. Kunjaani is portrayed as a talented Mohiniyattam dancer and it is shown that Pazhassi greatly admired her talents. See Murali, *Pazhassi Raja*, 23-24.

²²⁹ Pirappankodu Murali, *Pazhassi Raja*, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2010), 36-39.

²³⁰ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 37-39.

²³¹ Kurup, 43.

²³² Kurup, *Pazhassi Samarangal*, 30-31.

²³³ Murali, *Pazhassiraja*, 61.

War makes such comments further unlikely. Tipu praises Pazhassi for not cooperating with the Company in the war against him.²³⁴ This is also not historically true, considering that Pazhassi stood with British against Tipu Sultan and resisted Mysore occupation till 1793.²³⁵ It should be noted that, it was only in the fourth Anglo Mysore War (1798-99), Pazhassi did not fight against Mysore and has chosen a neutral stand.²³⁶ Therefore, it can be assumed that here, author is trying to make Pazhassi and Tipu close allies working towards a single mission unlike Panikkar who has presented Pazhassi as a national hero who tried to protect his land from the British and the Muslim invader alike.

In another sequence, Murali acquaints the audience to another character, Kaitheri Ammu, a courageous warrior and the leader of women's army under Pazhassi. It can be noted that there is no reference about Kaitheri Ammu or women army of Pazhassi in the available historical records. Pazhassi is given a heroic end at the hands of Company army. His death is praised as a sacrifice in the course of attaining freedom for the country. In the foreword written by Karivellur Murali, the drama is claimed to have marked Pazhassi Raja and his times truthfully without the blindfold of glorification or hero adoration.²³⁷ He argues that the earlier dramas created on Pazhassi like Kappana Krishna Menon's *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* (1935), Swamy Brahmavathan's *Virashree Pazhassi Raja* (1957), Thikkodian's *Pazhassi Raja* presents the history of Pazhassi as a heroic tale. Unlike the above works, the

²³⁴ Murali, 61.

²³⁵ Pazhassi's rift with Tipu Sultan can be read along with the former's relationship with the Company. Pazhassi has joined hands with British against Tipu Sultan in the Third Anglo Mysore War (1790- 1792). In October 1792, Pazhassi engaged in a treaty with the Malabar Commission regarding the pepper trade in a few villages. Pazhassi's discomfort started when the Kurumbranad Raja signed a treaty with Jonathan Duncan in March 1793. Thus the year, 1793 marked Pazhassi's open defiance of Company's rule in Kottayam. See Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 38- 40.

²³⁶ Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 76.

²³⁷ Karivellur Murali is a known poet and playwright in Malayalam. His father, A.V. Kunhambu was the leader of the famous Karivellur agrarian uprising in 1946. Murali founded the theatre group, Sangachethana in 1987 and he is the author of *Karivellur: History, Struggle, Life*, a book on Karivellur uprising.

drama written by Pirapankkode Murali is claimed to be successful in expressing the minute political undercurrents in the history of Pazhassi struggle.²³⁸

Karivellur Murali carries out an attempt to place the resistance along the lines of an agrarian struggle. He argues that the central theme of the drama is the anti- imperial struggle fought by a king with the support of farmers. Additionally, he claims the drama to be a creative reading of Pazhassi struggle which portrays the deep friendship of two kings (Pazhassi Raja and Tipu Sultan) who patronises art and literature to great extent. He further marks the success of the author to place Pazhassi as an idol of secularism throughout the drama and asserts it as a necessity in the current world where secularism is facing its own challenges. However, it can be observed from the objectivist history point of view that writer has not succeeded in presenting an objective history of Pazhassi Raja and his times; his attempt instead was to present Pazhassi Raja innovatively and selectively. Moreover, there is an attempt to place Pazhassi Raja and the struggle under the framework of communist and socialist movements by placing it in the larger history of peasant movements.²³⁹

Other than the drama and historical novel on Pazhassi Raja, a popular children's magazine, *Chandamama* also carried Pazhassi story. *Chandamama* was a classical monthly magazine famous particularly for its mythological and magical stories. It was first started in Telugu language in 1947 and later made in English and other Indian languages. Founders observe that the inspiration behind the creation of *Chandamama* was to “unite the children in

²³⁸ Murali, *Pazhassiraja*, vii.

²³⁹ The agrarian relations and peasant movements in Kerala are associated with communist movements. The peasant movements are understood within the framework of class society and socialist ideologies. Congress Socialist Party and later the Communist Party have appropriated the agrarian movements with anti- feudal and anti- imperialist ideologies. See Prakash Karat, “The Peasant Movement in Malabar, 1934- 40”, *Social Scientist* 5, no. 2 (September 1976), https://www.jstor.org/stable/3516568#metadata_info_tab_contents; E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *A Short History of Peasant Movement in Kerala*, (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1943).

the knowledge of India's heritage" despite the differences in languages.²⁴⁰ On the occasion of silver jubilee celebrations of Indian Independence, the magazine featured a series of illustrated stories about the battles fought against the British under the title, "They stood up to the British." The Pazhassi Struggle found a place in the series along with Mir Qasim (Bengal), The Sanyasi Fakir Rebellion (Bengal), Veer Pandya Katta Bomman (Tamil Nadu) etc.²⁴¹

The editor of the magazine emphasized the significance of sporadic rebellions that took place before the Revolt of 1857. Each rebellion possessed its own idealism and was considered to be an important phase of India's struggle for Freedom.²⁴² The four pages of illustrated story cover the advent of Colonel Wellesley, the attack on Panamaram Fort, the execution of Pazhassi's close associates and lastly the death of Kerala Varma.²⁴³ The inclusion of Pazhassi struggle in the series is an attempt to place it under the Freedom Movement of the country. Kerala Varma is represented as a courageous and patriotic king who organizes a resistance against the British. He is ascribed as meeting a heroic death by swallowing a diamond ring before getting caught by the British. The representation of Kerala Varma through the *Chandamama* magazine results in an extensive commemoration beyond the borders of Malayalam.

3.3. Cinematic Renditions and 'Prosthetic Memories'

Today the medium of memorialization is diversified and is more technologically aided, enabling access to a much wider audience. The representation of history through

²⁴⁰ B. Vishwanatha Reddy, *Chandamama* (English), Volume 8, Chandamama Publications, 1997, p. 8, <https://archive.org/details/Chandamama-English-1997-08>, accessed 12 January 2022.

²⁴¹ Reddy, *Chandamama*, 8.

²⁴² Reddy, 7.

²⁴³ Meera Ugra, Goutham Sen, "They Stood up to the British: Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja", in *Chandamama* (English), Volume 12, Chandamama Publications, 1997, pp. 45-48, <https://archive.org/details/Chandamama-English-1997-12>, accessed 12 January 2022.

televisual experience has gained massive popularity over the years. Edgerton finds that the rising popularity of television history is also because of its accordance with the present and how it approaches the concerns of the present and clarifies it while narrating the past.²⁴⁴ Nowadays, the visual media acts as an agency to perpetuate the memories of a particular person or an event and thereby keeping the dialogue associated with the same, operational. Neiger, Meyers and Zandberg highlight the interconnectivity runs between the processes of mediation and social construction. They argue that both are concerned with representations, socio-cultural power relations and the role of narrativity regarding the creation of a socially constructed meaning, or here the collective memory.²⁴⁵

Many documentaries and films are created in recent decades on Pazhassi Raja which made his memory more “collective.” Among the mass media, cinema acts as a powerful mediator of memories. Paul Grainge in *Memory and Popular Film* observes that irrespective of the changes in the representational terms of the past over the period of time, cinema has achieved a central position among the rituals of remembrance.²⁴⁶ Accordingly, film identifying as a retrospective possess a stronger influence in shaping the cultural imagination of the society. In the political and cultural context of Kerala, Pazhassi Raja becomes an integral character in history that needs to be remembered and cherished. There are two biographical films made on Pazhassi Raja in Malayalam language within span of around five decades. The first film, *Pazhassi Raja* (Fig 1) was directed by Kunchako based on the screenplay written by well-known playwright, Thikkodiyan and released in 1964.²⁴⁷ Secondly, Kerala Varma Pazhassi

²⁴⁴ Edgerton, *Television Histories*, 3-4.

²⁴⁵ Neiger, Meyers, Zandberg, *On Media Memory*, 4.

²⁴⁶ Paul Grainge, ed., *Introduction to Memory and Popular film*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 1.

²⁴⁷ Kunchako (1912-1976) was an Indian film producer from Kerala and the founder of Udaya Studios in 1947. It was the oldest film institute in the state.

Express News Service, “Kerala’s famed Udaya Studio to be a memory soon”, *The New Indian Express*, May 6, 2019, accessed 19 October 2021 <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2019/may/06/keralas-famed-udaya-studio-to-be-a-memory-soon-1973404.html>.

Raja directed by Hariharan was released in 2009. The script was written by renowned author and screenplay writer, M. T. Vasudevan Nair.²⁴⁸



Fig. 1: A theatrical film poster of *Pazhassi Raja* (1964)²⁴⁹

Pazhassi Raja (1964) was produced and directed by M. Kunchako under the banner of Udaya Studios and it was the second historical film created by Udaya Studios after

P. Kunjanandhan Nair aka Thikkodiyan (1916- 2001) was a renowned Indian playwright, lyricist, novelist in Malayalam. He is one of the early authors of radio plays in Malayalam literature in Aakashvani. He received of many literature and film awards.

Staff Reporter, “Thikkodiyan: A Multifaceted Personality”, *The Hindu*, January 28, 2001. <https://web.archive.org/web/20060721082033/http://www.hinduonnet.com/2001/01/29/stories/0429211u.htm>.

²⁴⁸ Hariharan is a veteran Indian film director and *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* is considered as one of his best directorial works. He has received various state and national awards.

M. T. Vasudevan Nair is a prominent Indian novelist, celebrated screenplay writer, film director, short story writer. He is a Jnanpith awardee in 1995 and has won almost every significant literary awards and recognitions at state and national levels.

Staff Reporter, “Ageless M. T. Vasudevan Nair walks his own path”, *The New Indian Express*, July 16, 2022, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2022/jul/16/ageless-mt-vasudevan-nair-walks-his-own-path-2477074.html>.

²⁴⁹ Image Source: <https://m3db.com/film/pazhassiraja>, accessed September 20, 2021.

Veluthambi Dalava (1962).²⁵⁰ The film starred Kottarakkara Sreedharan Nair as Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, Prem Nazir as Kannavath Nambiar, Sathyan as Harvey Baber, Sathyapal as Arthur Wellesley etc. It is set in the background of the English East India Company's growing interference in the kingdoms of Kerala. As far as the story is concerned, the film differs from the academic history on Pazhassi Raja as there are a few differences in portrayal of the resistance. It is shown that, before the advent of Mysore Sultan, Pazhassi fought against the British while all other Rajas including his uncle Kurumbranad Raja surrendered before the Company. It is to be noted that, before the Mysore invasion, there was no militaristic conflict by the Malabar Rajas against the Company other than the disturbances in the revenue affairs.²⁵¹ However, the film gives the struggle of Pazhassi Raja a longer history by tracing his anti- British struggle to the pre-Mysore times.

Based on the available records, Kurup in his *Pazhassi Samararekhakal* observes that Pazhassi Raja enter in the Malabar's political history during the invasion of Mysore Sultan.²⁵² He stayed back in Kottayam and joined hands with the Company army against Mysorean attack while all other Rajas in Malabar fled to Travancore. Another deviation from the historical accounts that occurred in the film is regarding the name of Kurumbranad Raja. The Raja of Kurumbranad in the film is addressed as Sankara Varma, whereas his real name is

²⁵⁰B. Vijayakumar, "Pazhassi Raja 1964", *The Hindu*, December 14 2009. <http://www.hindu.com/mp/2009/12/14/stories/2009121450430400.htm>.

Unfortunately, apart from a few posters, there is no print available of the film *Pazhassi Raja* (1964). Thus, I have referred the film review written by B. Vijayakumar that was published in *The Hindu* for understanding the story of the film. Since I could not watch the film, I am only able to examine the portrayal of incidents from the above review.

²⁵¹ The political conditions in Malabar in the seventeenth and eighteenth century should be noted in this scenario. The region comprised a number of princely states and there were constant territorial conflicts and feudal rivalries among the states. The advent of European powers as partners in trade was favoured by the Rajas and further used these connections in strengthening their positions against the neighbouring states. See K. K. N. Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, (Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2004); Arun Thomas M, Dr. Asokan Mundon, "Robert Adams: The Real Founder of English East India Company's Supremacy in Malabar", *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 20, No. 5, (May 2015), <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol20-issue5/Version-1/C020511926.pdf>.

²⁵² Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 25.

Vira Varma.²⁵³ There are two characters in the film namely Ammu Thampurati and Unni (niece and nephew of Kurumbranad Raja) who supports Kerala Varma and helps him to escape from a trap laid by Wellesley. It can be noted that the general readings on Pazhassi Raja do not provide any references about Ammu Thampurati and Unni. In addition to this, the film shows that Col. Wellesley invites Pazhassi Raja to his bungalow for a meeting which was intended to arrest the latter. However, there is no historical record mentioning such an invitation other than their encounters in the Wayanad forests. All these are additions made to accounted history to suit the cinematic rendition of Pazhassi.

There are omissions as well. Although, there are characters representing the close associates of Pazhassi Raja in the film, the noteworthy absence is that of Edachena Kungan, the leader of the Nair army in the Pazhassi struggle who inflicted heavy losses to Panamaram fort along with Talakkal Chandu in 1802.²⁵⁴ The exclusion of Edachena Kungan from the film can be considered as an ahistorical approach going by the standard of historical accounts. In another instance from the film, Pazhassi Raja is portrayed as trying to recapture his palace from the British and Baber as taking custody of Kaitheri Maakam (Pazhassi Raja's wife) and his infant son. There is no historical evidence proving the above mentioned incident in the standard historical accounts. It is true that Baber had taken the custody of Pazhassi Raja's wife; however, it was only following the death of Pazhassi Raja in 1805.²⁵⁵ In addition to this, the film shows that Pazhassi Raja died by swallowing a diamond ring before getting captured by the Company army. With reference to the available colonial records, he was killed in an encounter against the Company army under the leadership of Baber.²⁵⁶ These deviations and omissions in the film can be considered as attempts to portray

²⁵³ Kurup, 37.

²⁵⁴ Logan, *Malabar*, 536.

²⁵⁵ Logan, 549-550.

²⁵⁶ The report sent by Thomas Hervey Baber to the Principal Collector gives all the details regarding the execution of Pazhassi Raja. The report says that based on the secret information, Baber and his troops with

Pazhassi Raja with a heroic persona. The death of Pazhassi by swallowing a diamond was a part of presenting him as an unconquerable warrior. Additionally, as per the available records, there were no militaristic efforts from the part of Pazhassi Raja to recapture his palace from the British other than correspondences sent to the Company officials.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

From the few posters available, it can be seen that Kottarakara Sreedharan Nair, who played the title role of Pazhassi Raja was given a really distinguishable costume in the film. He was presented in a flamboyant silk attire ornamented with lots of jewellery and an

Kolkarans under the guidance of Subedar Cheran moved towards the banks of Kankara River near the Mysore border. They found a group of ten people resting peacefully on the bank of Mavilamthode. The army of Kolkarans under Cheran attacked the group and the latter could not stand for much longer. This was followed by another ambush on a group that included Edachena Kungan. Baber later realized that Pazhassi was one among the first group who was fallen. Baber wrote that, Pazhassi was seriously injured and it was Kanara Menon, a trusted employee of Company who resisted Pazhassi from escaping the scene. See Kurup, *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, 121- 123.

elaborate crown (Fig. 2),²⁵⁷ (Fig. 3).²⁵⁸ The selection of such an elaborate costume can be regarded as an effort to highlight the distinction of the character and demonstrate the prosperity and power of the Raja. It should also be noted that an ornamented costume was a usual attempt to make the king stand out from the other characters in historical films at that point of time. The film was not a huge success in theatres irrespective of Sreedharan Nair's excellent execution of the lead role. The film could not meet technicalities in many sequences, especially in war scenes as it was completely shot at Udaya Studios.²⁵⁹ As far as the historicity is concerned, the film cannot be perceived as a true representation of the life of Pazhassi Raja and the resistance against the Company as plots to make it cinematic has been included. The film can be perceived as the Udaya Studios' effort to produce films based on historical events followed after the success of *Veluthambi Dalawa* (1962).

Memory undergoes constant changes and is conditioned by changing socio-political and cultural context. Representation of memories through the media too is dynamic in nature. The memories of Pazhassi Raja have experienced massive changes over the period of five decades, when the film, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* was released in 2009 (Fig. 4).²⁶⁰ The historical film based on the life of Pazhassi Raja was produced by Gokulam Gopalan under the banner of Sree Gokulam Films. The film stars a series of celebrated actors namely Mammooty in the lead role of Kerala Varma, Sarath Kumar as Edachena Kungan, Manoj.K.Jayan as Thalakkal Chandu, Kaniha as Kaitheri Maakam and so on. The three hour long film starts with a meeting between the Company officials and Nair chieftains regarding

²⁵⁷ Image Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/6/6f/Pazhassi_Raja_1964.jpg , accessed 22 August 2021.

²⁵⁸ Image Source: <https://malayalasangeetham.info/ppusthakam/Pazhassiraja/pazhassi%20raja%20-%20001.jpg> , accessed 22 August 2021.

²⁵⁹ Vijayakumar, "Pazhassi Raja 1964".

²⁶⁰ Image Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/6/6d/Pazhassi_raja_2009.jpg, accessed 22 August 2021.

the revenue collection from the Thalassery Fort. Unlike *Pazhassi Raja* released in 1964, this film portrays two phases of the resistance vividly.

It is true that, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* consists of certain omissions and add ons. However, according to the script writer, M.T. Vasudevan Nair, it is important to do justice to the history and also to the characters.²⁶¹ He observes that, a writer has to take some freedom of one's own in writing the story because it should not only be a history, but also a film.²⁶² Although M.T. had read a number of literary works on Pazhassi, he largely relied on Logan's *Malabar Manual* for the writing of screenplay.²⁶³ But there are many incidents in the film that do not possess any historical endorsement, but rather focus on character development by bringing out more emotional expressions. Through many instances, the film has tried to portray Kerala Varma as a common man with deep seated emotional burdens and exhaustions. He shares his sorrow and paternal sentiments when he gets to know that his wife, Maakam had a miscarriage while escaping from Pazhassi Kovilakam prior to James Gordon's attack.

²⁶¹ M. T. Vasudevan Nair is a versatile writer and has extensively contributed to different genres of Malayalam prose. He is known for his penchant for exploring the mythical and historical figures in different ways. The notable novel, *Randomoozham* or *The Second Turn* (1984) can be considered as an example of such a craft. Here, author has rewritten the epic of Mahabharata from the perspective of Bhima. Here M.T. has overcome general notions of Bhima that are mostly associated with physical strength and has tried to depict him with fatherly emotions and helplessness of a human. See M. T. Vasudevan Nair, "M. T. Vasudevan Nair in Conversation with Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan: A Lifetime of Writing", Interview by Sudha Gopalakrishnan, <https://www.sahapedia.org/>, July 19, 2019, <https://www.sahapedia.org/mt-vasudevan-nair-conversation-dr-sudha-gopalakrishnan-lifetime-writing>; *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha*, a Malayalam classical film (1989) is another historical drama written by M. T. based on *Vadakan Paatukal* or Northern Ballads. In this film, author has rewritten the character of Chandu Chekavar as an honourable warrior who was depicted as a betrayer in the folklore. See Neelima Menon, "30 Years of Mammotty's *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* : Understanding the Conflicted Chandu", *The News Minute*, November 16, 2019, <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/30-years-mammootys-oru-vadakkan-veeragatha-understanding-conflicted-chandu-112417>; In *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* (2009), author has not only highlighted the anti- imperial resistance of Pazhassi but has also put great efforts into the characterisation of the same.

²⁶² M. T. Vasudevan Nair, Preface to *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* (Screenplay), (Thrissur: Current Books, 2010).

²⁶³ Nair, Preface to *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*.



Fig. 4: A theatrical poster of *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* (2009)

In another occasion, Kerala Varma expresses his regrets for helping the East India Company in the battle against Mysore Sultans. Apparently, M.T. has referred the *Pazhassi Rekhakal* since the script includes a number of phrases taken from the letters written by Kerala Varma to the Company Superintendent.²⁶⁴ As written by Logan in the Manual and also explicit from the correspondence, the film pictures Kerala Varma as someone who values the practice of customs and rituals to a great extent and saw the interference of the Company in the internal affairs as a great threat to the traditional system of power and sovereignty. The film has also tried to show Kerala Varma as little helpless and confused when he decided to sign the treaty with Governor Duncan. However, the writer did not want to make Kerala Varma come as weak while he was about to be bound by the treaty.

²⁶⁴ Nair, 80. Author has portrayed Pazhassi Raja as a person who is not interested in acquiring the title of ruler. In the scene depicting Duncan and Pazhassi's agreement at Tellicherry Fort, Pazhassi says that, "Even if the administration of Kottayam is handed over to me, I don't want to accept because my elder brother deserves it." Similar words can be found in the letter sent by Pazhassi Raja to Kurumbranad Raja. It reads as follows, "... I never want to be the ruler of the country. Even if you ordered me to have the country, I do not think, I am eligible for such a position at this moment." See Joseph Skariah, ed., *Pazhassi Rekhakal* (PR 45 A & B), in *Tubingen University Library Malayalam Manuscript Series*, Scaria Zacharia, general ed., (Kottayam: DC Books, 1994), 33.

Therefore, he says, “the Company’s military is very strong, we know. But we are not afraid. We will resist to the last to uphold our rights, dignity and freedom.”... “The people should live in peace.”²⁶⁵

The film portrays Pazhassi Raja as a welfare oriented prince who would not do anything that could affect the subjects adversely. In a sequence when Unni Mootha (Mappila chieftain in South Malabar) blames Pazhassi for the murder of Mappilas and for denying permission to construct a mosque, Edachena Kungan denies Pazhassi’s hand in the murder and says that it was part of Pazhayanvedu Chandu’s, (one of the former trustees of Pazhassi Raja) treacherous deeds. Kungan assured Unni Mootha that Pazhassi would not do any such thing and it is all the Company’s plan to destroy Pazhassi. Likewise, the film has represented Pazhassi with patriotism and strong commitment towards the land’s freedom. At the end of the film, when Pazhassi is asked to surrender, he says that he values his country’s freedom more than his life. One cannot decipher whether he meant to place his resistance at a much broader level. In another occasion, while discussing about the anti-imperial rebellions in Tamil Nadu, Pazhassi anticipate for a united front that could be successful in throwing out the British from South India.²⁶⁶ It can be assumed that the writer did not want to limit the possibilities of the resistance put up in the state of Kottayam under the leadership of Pazhassi.

As earlier said, there are a few instances from the film that are created through the filmmaker’s imagination. A character named Dora, a British woman is introduced in the story as Baber’s fiancée who comes with him to Malabar. While going to the Company’s checkpost near Wayanad, both of them gets caught by Kurichya bowmen and brought to Pazhassi Raja. Chandu asks Pazhassi to kill them, but Pazhassi chooses to welcome them warmly. Dora is so pleased by his hospitality and even praises him at the Company

²⁶⁵ Nair, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*, 81.

²⁶⁶ Nair, 85.

headquarters. She tries to stop the officers from executing Kannavath Nambiar and his son but fails. She got disappointed in the actions of the Company and went back to London. Here, the writer presents Dora as an impartial character who is kind, sympathetic and can differentiate right and wrong. By placing such a character in the side of Pazhassi, writer tries to concretise the goodness in Pazhassi and point out the popularity he enjoyed among people and appreciated by even some of the British.

The film depicts another female character named as Neeli, a Kurichya woman who is a courageous warrior and also the fiancée of Thalakkal Chandu. She gives training to other women from Kurichya community in archery and organise them in the guerrilla warfare in the forests of Wayanad. M.G.S. Narayanan argues that depiction of Kurichya women in the film is clearly fabricated as Kurichya women never left their homes and therefore fighting in a war was out of reality.²⁶⁷ It is true that under the matrilineal system where the maternal uncle becomes the head of the family, Kurichya women were prohibited from attending the religious ceremonies, denied from the land rights and were forced to engage in heavy household activities from the young age itself.²⁶⁸ However, apart from the household chores she also works in the field with men.²⁶⁹

Thus historians' opinion regarding the confinement of Kurichya women inside their homes can be an ambiguous argument as far as the situation of Kurichya women is considered. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, there is no reference of women participating in the Pazhassi struggle in the available literature. The representation of Kurichya women in the battles can be viewed as an attempt to make the struggle look more inclusive and diverse. Another instance which is different from the available records is the sequence of Edachena

²⁶⁷ Staff Reporter, "Many stories on pazhassi are fabricated, says historian", *The Hindu*, December 1 2016, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/Many-stories-on-Pazhassi-are-fabricated-says-historian/article16734916.ece>.

²⁶⁸ Johny, *Wayanad Rekhakal*, 153.

²⁶⁹ Johny, 153.

Kungan's death. In accordance with Baber's letter to the Principal Collector, Kungan had committed suicide before getting caught alive by the Company army shortly after Pazhassi's death.²⁷⁰ However, the film shows the scene of Kungan committing suicide before Pazhassi was killed. After Thalakkal Chandu was killed, Kungan puts up a fight with Pazhayamveedu Chandu and kills the latter. There is no mention of the above incident as well in the colonial records. Following the death of Pazhayamveedu Chandu, the film depicts Kungan being surrounded by the Company army and he stabs himself before being captured.

The depiction of Kungan's death before Pazhassi's in the film can be read as an attempt to show that Pazhassi was the last person to fall in the battle against the Company. The film also covers a scene of Pazhassi singlehandedly attacking a Company checkpoint in Wayanad and killing Lieutenant James Gordon and many Company sepoys. The above scene in the film portrays an extremely valorous Pazhassi who was both determined to inflict heavy loss upon the Company and heartbroken after learning about the deaths of Thalakkal Chandu and Edachena Kungan. After this incident, Baber, Captain Clapham along with the group of *Kolkars* set out to look for Pazhassi. Pazhassi's death showed in the film is also different from the letter written by Baber to the Principal collector of Malabar Province. It says that Pazhassi Raja was shot and killed along with a few of his associates in an ambush attack led

²⁷⁰ A detailed letter on the suppression of Pazhassi Revolt was sent by Baber to the Principal Secretary on December 31st, 1805. The capture of Thalakkal Chandu was described as an important turning point in the revolt. The immense popularity enjoyed by Pazhassi Raja and the other rebel leaders were discussed in the letter. Baber has carried out various effective means to cut short the rebel networks in the forest of Wayanad and also created a group of informants among the Kurichyas and Chettis. The special group of policemen named Kolkarans proved to be massive assistance in the rough terrains of Wayanad forest. The ambush attacks on the banks of Mavilamthode have resulted in the death of Pazhassi Raja and a few other rebels. Baber writes that, the funeral of Pazhassi Raja was carried out with customary honours. He observes that, "Although a rebel, Pazhassi Raja was one of the natural chieftains of the country." See William Logan, *Malabar*, Volume I, 1887, (Madras: Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1951), 543- 551.

by Baber with the help of *Kolkars* under the guidance of Subedar Cheran in Mavilamthode near Pulpally in Wayanad.²⁷¹

However, the writer attributes a much more heroic death to Pazhassi. He bid farewell to his wife, Maakam and goes in search of the Company army unaccompanied. A bitter conflict takes place which results in the killing of many soldiers and Pazhassi himself getting wounded. He refuses Baber's request to surrender and to which he responded that he values country's freedom more than his life. As a result, Pazhassi gets gradually killed by bullet shots fired from the Company policemen. Maakam enters the scene completely shocked and broken. After confirming the death, Baber salutes the corpse and says, "...he was our enemy. But he was a great man, a great warrior."²⁷² The film ends with the corpse of Pazhassi being carried away in palanquin by the Company soldiers. Although certain events are different from the description given in the history records, the film *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* has played a major role in keeping the popular memory of Pazhassi actively alive with its heroic attributes.

As far as the film is concerned, absolute historicity is not claimed by the director either. He rather argues that he has tried to adopt a method of romanticized representation of Pazhassi's life by respecting history and also utilizing various emotional levels at its fullest.²⁷³ The film is considered to be one of the best historical dramas in the Malayalam film industry. The production house, Sree Gokulam Movies spent a total of twenty five crore rupees for its production, which was considered as the highest budget for a Malayalam movie till then. It also received immense response from the audience and global recognition. The film was

²⁷¹ Logan, Malabar, 549.

Kolkars were a regional group of policemen organised by Captain Watson. They were familiar with the tough terrains in Wayanad and specially trained to engage in guerrilla warfare.

²⁷² Nair, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*, 143.

²⁷³ Hariharan, "Oru Padayorukam Pole", in M. T. Vasudevan Nair, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* (Screenplay), (Thrissur: Current Books, 2010).

dubbed in various Indian languages and it emerged as one of all time grossers in the history of Malayalam box office.²⁷⁴ The film received many awards and recognitions in various fields. It bagged the award for Best Audiography in Malayalam (Resool Pookutty), Best Malayalam Film, Special Mention to Padmapriya for playing the role of Neeli and Special Jury Award in the 57th National Film Awards.²⁷⁵

The film also received State awards in 2010 from the Kerala State Chalachithra Academy for categories of Best Director, Best Screenplay, Second Best Actor and Actress, Best Film editor and so on. Apart from this, it received Film Fare Awards, various private TV Channel awards etc. With such an overwhelming recognition to the film, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* thus marked a turning point in the process of memorialisation of Pazhassi Raja or it can be said that the film itself becomes the memory of Pazhassi Raja. In the process of distribution of memories through mass media, visuals are a significant aspect that can shape the memories to a large extent. Thus, the visual representation of Pazhassi in the film becomes a powerful tool to install and inscribe a particular image in the public memory, keeping in mind that there are no actual portraits available of Pazhassi Raja.

Unlike the earlier film, *Pazhassi Raja* (1964), *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* utilises minimal outfit for the actors. Here, for the role of Pazhassi, Mammooty is shown wearing *Mundu* and a shawl occasionally wore on the shoulders.²⁷⁶ (Fig. 5) ²⁷⁷ He also wears a *Poonool* or the Sacred Thread and always carries sword or a dagger. Nominal jewellerys are used and it includes a chain with the locket that has picture of *Bagavathi* carved on it which

²⁷⁴ Staff Reporter, “Pazhassi Raja”, *The New Indian Express*, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/>, November 22 2009, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/entertainment/review/2009/nov/22/pazhassi-raja-106135.html>.

²⁷⁵ The Gazette of India, Union Government, Extraordinary, 2010-10-22, Part I-Section 1, Ref. No. 303/47/2010- F(F), <https://archive.org/details/in.gazette.central.e.2010-10-22.016/page/n16/mode/2up?q=pazhassi+raja>, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Published on October 22 2010, Accessed from <https://archive.org/> on 24 February 2022.

²⁷⁶ *Mundu* is a garment usually made of cotton that is worn around the waist in mostly South Indian states.

²⁷⁷ Image Source: <https://alchetron.com/cdn/kerala-varma-pazhassi-raja-film-b6a6c0a5-29d8-4ed4-8d0a-6176cff89f4-resize-750.jpg>, accessed 28 August 2021.

he handles with great veneration.²⁷⁸ During the second phase of the struggle in Wayanad, he is mostly shown wearing *Mundu* in the form of *Dhoti* and a black upper garment (Fig. 6).²⁷⁹ As mass media is widely accessible, the above representation can largely influence a person with a lack of historical knowledge, as he or she does not acquire information through any other medium. In this way, the process of commemoration of Pazhassi embraces a new trajectory of visual experience.

Apparently, the film does not aim to limit Pazhassi as the prince of a small kingdom in Malabar who engaged in continuous conflicts against the East India Company. The aim is rather to place the Pazhassi struggle in the front pages of Indian Independence Movement. M.T. says that the Freedom movement of the country has not been recorded correctly and this became the inspiration behind writing the screen play of *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*.²⁸⁰ Hariharan opines that it is important for people to know about Pazhassi who fought against the British long before the Revolt of 1857.²⁸¹ He is presented as an “unsung hero” of the Freedom struggle whose memories needs to be celebrated. Thus, film is used as an instrument to correct the academic history and its omissions. As Michel Foucault in a discussion on French Cinemas in 1970s argued that, “cinema and television are a way of reprogramming

²⁷⁸ Bagavati or *Sree Porkali Bagavati*, a war goddess was the family deity of the Kottayam royal dynasty. The members of the family would worship the goddess through sacrifices to seek blessings before going for battles.

²⁷⁹ Image Source:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.mallurelease.com%2F2018%2F10%2Fkerala-varma-pazhassiraja-2009.html&psig=AOvVaw3KAzUZC5p9FJMHs4sEYCzX&ust=1650354874192000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAwQjRxqFwoTCJDd55uRnfcCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAC>, accessed 28 August 2021.

²⁸⁰ Staff Reporter, “History in Making: Pazhassi Raja film”, *The Times of India*, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>, September 4 2009, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/History-in-the-making-Pazhassi-Raja-film/articleshow/4972348.cms>.

²⁸¹ Staff Reporter, “History in Making”.

popular memory”.... “So people are not shown what they were but what they should remember having been.”²⁸²



Fig. 5



Fig.6



Fig.7: A still from *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* (2009)²⁸³

²⁸² Michel Foucault, “Film and Popular Memory: An Interview with Michael Foucault”, originally appeared in *Cahiers du Cinema* 251, no. 2 (1974), *Radical Philosophy* 11, no. 11, (Summer 1975): 25, <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/interview/michel-foucault-film-and-popular-memory>.

Prior to release of the film, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*, the memories of Pazhassi Raja was dormant or known to a small section of society through history textbooks. It is true that there have been efforts from the state and other organisations to commemorate him through memorials and observations, but it did not contribute towards a significant recognition. However, it was only after the release of the film in 2009, the memories of Pazhassi was powerfully revived in the world of Malayalees and beyond. Alison Landsberg in *Memory and Popular Film* argues that a considerable way in creating empathy among the public is through the production and dissemination of memories by mass media.²⁸⁴ She points out that the development of intimate relations with the memories of certain events among individuals which they did not experience in real life. She calls such memories as “Prosthetic Memories” as they are not real, but derived from the encounters with mass media.

As far as the popularity of the film is concerned, it was earlier said that the film, itself becomes the reinvigorated memories of Pazhassi. These memories can be considered as what Landsberg calls as “Prosthetic Memories” in certain ways. The representations of Pazhassi shown in the film become the memories of him among the consuming individuals. Landsberg calls memories transmitted through media “prosthetic” as they are not ‘authentic’ but created from mediated representations.²⁸⁵ Secondly, due to the replaceability acquired through wide reception of memories from the commodification of mass cultural representations. And lastly due to the usefulness of the memories as they help for a “sensuous engagement with the past” and also “mediated collective identification”.²⁸⁶ Here, by means of the film on Pazhassi, a new kind of public cultural memory is created among the people. It is achieved through the

²⁸³Image Source: <https://www.kollywoodzone.com/data/media/455/Pazhassi-Raja-Movie-Still-10.jpg>, accessed on 28 August 2021.

²⁸⁴ Alison Landsberg, “Prosthetic Memory: The Ethics and Politics of Memory in an Age of Mass Culture” in *Memory and Popular Film*, Paul Grainge, ed., (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 148.

²⁸⁵ Landsberg, “Prosthetic Memory”, 149.

²⁸⁶ Landsberg, 149.

memories of images and representations of Pazhassi selectively and innovatively as displayed in the film.

The accessibility of Pazhassi's memories by larger audience is done through the commodification of these cultural representations. The reception of the memories by a majority of people belonging in different socio-cultural realm is possible by means of mass media. The film was originally filmed in Malayalam, but it was dubbed in Hindi and Tamil as well.²⁸⁷ Additionally, it can be said that there is an active participation taking place from the part of viewers while engaging with the memories of Pazhassi which creates a kind of affinity towards the past representations. In the film, Pazhassi is portrayed as a compassionate, courageous, patriotic person whose foremost agenda is welfare and freedom of his people. These constructed memories of Pazhassi helps in creating a connection with the past by the public that can led to the collective identification and also possess political potential, as argued by Landsberg. Thus, even without having a personal experience of the particular event of Pazhassi struggle, people acquire 'memories' from the representations and images from the mass media and the representations itself becomes the memories of the struggle.

Asianet News, a leading Malayalam News Channel has made two documentaries on Pazhassi Raja for their travelogue programme *Yaathra* in 2013. The travelogue presents a narration about the life of Pazhassi Raja's struggle against the Company and mainly covers the places of Pazhassi, Muzhakunnu and Puralimala. The first documentary began with the poem about Pazhassi Raja wrote by P.Kunhiraman Nair, a renowned poet in Malayalam. The poem is a tribute to Pazhassi Raja where the poet laments about people forgetting a great king.²⁸⁸ The documentary covers the Pazhassi Smrithi Mandapam which was then under

²⁸⁷ "Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja(film)", Wikimedia Foundation, last modified 1 November 2022, 10:13, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerala_Varma_Pazhassi_Raja_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerala_Varma_Pazhassi_Raja_(film))

²⁸⁸ P. Kunjiraman Nair (1905-1978) popularly known as Mahakavi. P was a renowned poet in Malayalam language. He has written poems about Pazhassi Raja namely *Pazhassiyude Padaval* and *Puralimalayile*

construction. It also includes interviews given by Shailaja Thampuran and Krishnakumar Kannothe, the office bearers of Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi.²⁸⁹

Shailaja Thampuran shared the memories of her father Sankara Varma Raja, the former Pazhassi Raja in the interview.²⁹⁰ Krishnakumar Kannothe, as the secretary of Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi talked about his meetings with Sankara Varma Raja and how it inspired him to create a documentary by himself about Pazhassi Raja. Therefore the first part of the travelogue documentary was not about Pazhassi Raja alone, but also his successor, Sankara Varma.²⁹¹ The second part of the travelogue has filmed the experience of two brothers, Cini Ramdas and Cini Lakshmanan from Mattannur who displays great interest in the history of Pazhassi Raja.²⁹² They have travelled around Kannur and Wayanad and have been taking photographs related to the life of Pazhassi Raja since 1995. Their collection of around two hundred photographs includes temples, forts, *Kovilakam*, *Kalari* and collection of coins during the period of Pazhassi. They also shared their memories of Sankara Varma Raja when he had guided them in their exploration.²⁹³

Poomaram. The poems were written in the form of eulogy. The poet described Pazhassi as the hero of Kerala who possessed blessings of *Sree Porkali*, the war deity.

²⁸⁹ Pazhassi Anusmarana Vedi is a memorial organization of Pazhassi Raja which was founded in 2011. The founding members are Krishnakumar Kannothe (Secretary) and Shailaja Thampuran. The major objective behind the organisation is to promote the commemoration of Pazhassi Raja. The activities of the organisation are mostly carried out in Kannur, Kozhikode and Wayanad.

²⁹⁰ Sankara Varma Raja (1920- 2011) was ascended as Pazhassi Raja in 1963. More details on Sankara Varma Raja are given in the second chapter.

²⁹¹ *Pazhassi Yatra: Yatra 22nd March 2013 Part I*, directed by Mangad Ratnakaran, (Thiruvananthapuram: Asianet News, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRpCNlV73t0>, accessed 13 February 2021.

²⁹² *Pazhassi Yatra: Yatra 22nd March 2013 Part II*, directed by Mangad Ratnakaran, (Thiruvananthapuram: Asianet News, 2013), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTQdpivmN-g>, accessed 13 February 2021.

²⁹³ Cini Lakshmanan and Cini Ramdas opine that Pazhassi Raja is not given sufficient importance in the history of freedom movement. The interest in exploring the histories of their native region has also acted as a motivation. Sankara Varma Raja, being the member of Kottayam Royal family and the resident of Pazhassi Kovilakam has inspired them to continue their endeavour of exploring the history of Pazhassi Raja by traveling through the places of historical importance in Kannur and Wayanad.

Apart from this, Cini Ramdas has done a role in the *Pazhassi Raja* (2009) film and also in *Kerala Simham* documentary directed by Kannothe.²⁹⁴ Accompanied by Ramdas, the documentary then covers the Shivapuram Mahadeva Temple which was used as a hideout by Pazhassi Raja during his retreats. Ramdas says that the Sappthamata idols in the temple were destroyed by the British as a revenge for not finding Pazhassi Raja. They also went to Mridangasailesvari Temple at Muzhakunnu, Pindali Kalari and Puralimala in search for Pazhassi Raja. According to legends, it is believed that, Raja Harishchandra built a fort and laid the foundation of Kottayam dynasty in Puralimala although there is no historical evidence proving the same. The travelogue unpacks more detailed form of commemoration of Pazhassi Raja where his memories can be seen well-grounded in the region. It can be said that, at many points, memories of Pazhassi Raja is seen overlapping with that of Sankara Varma Raja.

Another short documentary film on Pazhassi Raja was created by the National Television, Doordarshan in Malayalam in 2010.²⁹⁵ The narrative structure adopted in the documentary follows the familiar pattern of the socio-cultural memory. The narrator describes that, the resistance put offered by Pazhassi Raja was a golden feather in the history of Indian Freedom Struggle although the resistance started off as personal affair, when the Company interfered in the revenue affairs of Kottayam. It is said that he organised the anti- imperialist front in Malabar and the struggle became an inspiration for the Independence movement that followed in Kerala. The narration presented in the documentary resonates with the popular memory and shares optimism that the memories of Pazhassi Raja will be an everlasting inspiration for the Keralites. DD Malayalam being a state owned channel, this documentary

²⁹⁴ Cini Ramdas has done the role of a Kurichya soldier in the film, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*. in the documentary, *Kerala Simham*, he played the role of Company trustee, Kanara Menon who helped to kill Pazhassi in the ambush attack.

²⁹⁵ *Pazhassi Raja- Real Story*, directed by A. Anwar, (Thiruvananthapuram: Doordarshan Production, 2010), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZA1b5gnmHU>, accessed 13 February 2021.

could be regarded as an initiation of state to participate in the commemoration of Pazhassi Raja in the televisual domain.

Accordingly, television acts as a source of collective memory. Andrew Hoskins in “New Memory: Mediating History” points out the fluidity of televisual environment where the collective memory is undergoing through the “diverse and intangible forging and re-forging” in terms of news broadcasts, fiction, films and documentaries.²⁹⁶ It can be observed that, the popular memories of Pazhassi Raja dispersed through media exhibits fluidity of similar kind. On the one hand, new memories are constructed while in others, they are simply recorded. For instance, the memories created through the representation of certain images were constructed in the films, while the travelogue recorded the already prevalent popular memories of him.

3.4. Virtual Spaces: Blogs

In addition to the above mediums of commemoration, the memories of Kerala Varma are active in the virtual space of internet. Internet blogging provides an online platform to share one’s content about any topic. These virtual spaces being constituent of mass media, reaches a wide range of readers across the world. A few historical blogs are considered here which provides information about the history of Kerala Varma. The blog named, *Pazhassi Raja: A Short Biography* tries to cover the life of Kerala Varma from his early days to death in 1805 along with blogger’s interpretation regarding certain associated events.²⁹⁷ Here, the writer criticises Pazhassi being denied to be considered as a freedom fighter by many scholars

²⁹⁶ Andrew Hoskins, “New Memory: Mediating History”, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 21, no. 4, August, 2010: 241.

²⁹⁷ Sagar, “Pazhassi Raja: A Short Biography”, August 1, 2012, [Pazhassi Raja - A Short Biography: 2012 \(pazhassirajashortbiography.blogspot.com\)](http://pazhassirajashortbiography.blogspot.com), accessed 23 March 2022.

for simply rendering the terminology of “modern nation”.²⁹⁸ He adds on to it that, if each ruler of India fought against the British as Pazhassi did, India could not have been conquered by the British in the first place.

Apart from this, the author also sees appropriation of Pazhassi by different sections of political ideologies in the contemporary society. The Communist left see Pazhassi as a fore runner as the latter protected the interest of the peasantry and Adivasis and organised them against the Capitalist Imperialism of the English East India Company.²⁹⁹ On the other hand, the Hindu right wing praises him for the persistent struggle against the Mysore Sultans, for the endorsement of traditional belief systems and religious obligations and also for uniting the Hindus cutting across the caste division.³⁰⁰ He is considered as a military genius of his time for leading a decade long war against the British with efficient tactics. The writer believes that if it had not been for the betrayal of trustees like Pazhayamveedu Chandu, Kurumbranadu Raja and so on, Pazhassi could not have been defeated in the war.

Another active travel blog, namely ‘Malabar Days’ maintained since 2006 by Nick Balmer, an Indian history enthusiast from the United Kingdom also deserves attention here.³⁰¹ The motivation behind the blog cannot be limited to the enthusiasm alone, as Nick Balmer is also the great grandnephew of Thomas Harvey Baber, Sub Collector of Malabar whose expedition has resulted in the death of Pazhassi. Along with the history of Pazhassi Raja and the resistance, writer has also dealt with the history of Baber. Balmer has extensively travelled across the regions of Kannur, Thalassery and Wayanad and employed Company records and

²⁹⁸ Historians like Kurup has argued that, Pazhassi Raja cannot be called as a freedom fighter as the period did not mark the development of a nation state based on the logics of modern political theories. Here, the blogger criticises this interpretation as it denies Pazhassi Raja the title of freedom fighter.

²⁹⁹ Sagar, “Pazhassi Raja: A Short Biography”.

³⁰⁰ Sagar, “Pazhassi Raja”.

³⁰¹ Nick Balmer, “Malabar Days”, December 30, 2006, <http://malabardays.blogspot.com/2006/>, accessed 23 March 2022.

correspondences to write the blog. During his travel in Wayanad, he has tried to choose the routes that his ancestor has gone through and in a way recollected Baber's experiences.

Balmer observes that Baber has considered Pazhassi in high regards as reflected in his letter sent to the Principal Collector following Pazhassi's death. However, he argues that Pazhassi was so impatient for power even when he was subsidiary in the line of succession and most of the senior Rajas felt threatened by the former's actions.³⁰² Regarding the conflict between Wellesley and Pazhassi, Balmer opines that by 1800, Wellesley has accepted his defeat in the Guerrilla warfare and as a last resort, he was hoping for Pazhassi and his men to come out of the forest to attack the English forts and thus engage in an open battle.

Balmer mentions the eye witness account of former Lieutenant George Strachan published in *The Examiner* in 1818. The account that criticised the approach of the English East India Company has been discussed earlier in this chapter. Balmer observes that Strachan was in severe distress and poverty as he did not receive much financial assistance from the Company. Writer assumes that the intention behind the account could be to embarrass the Company by revealing its atrocities. With reference to the Military Department Special Collections, he points out that Strachan was later restored in the service for the Company.

A blog is maintained by Indian People's Congress (IPC), identified as a political party in India by the Election Commission in 1993. According to their mission, they are guided by the ideologies of Sri Aurobindo and claim as a "guide for humanity" and to serve "human evolutionary cause."³⁰³ The organisation has posted a content about Pazhassi under the title, "Pazhassi Raja Kerala Varma; A Forgotten Hero of Bharat."³⁰⁴ He is considered as one of the

³⁰² Balmer, "Malabar Days", December 28 2009.

³⁰³ Indian People's Congress, <https://indianpeoplescongress.wordpress.com/>.

³⁰⁴ Indian People's Congress, "Pazhassi Raja Kerala Varma: A Forgotten Hero of Bharat", June 15 2018, <https://indianpeoplescongress.wordpress.com/2018/06/15/pazhassi-raja-kerala-varma-a-forgotten-hero-of-bharat/>, accessed 23 March 2022.

early freedom fighters of the country. The content does not discuss the history of Pazhassi struggle as a whole, but it is rather a eulogy of the militaristic capabilities demonstrated in the struggle. The socio-political and cultural factors of the resistance is not approached, but dealt mostly with the losses inflicted upon various regiments of the Company army by Pazhassi and his men. Pazhassi is praised for recruiting the peasantry into the force by imparting them with military training and the process is addressed as the first attempt of “wholesale militarisation” in the history of pre-modern Kerala.³⁰⁵

The Pazhassi Revolt is labelled as the longest warfare against the British. This representation of Pazhassi in the particular blog can be considered as an attempt of appropriating him in the framework of Hindu right wing ideologies. While Pazhassi is represented as a “forgotten hero” of the nation, the blog describes Tipu Sultan as the “destroyer of Hindu temples” in another post and gives a list of temples in Malabar said to be damaged by Tipu.³⁰⁶ The post presents Tipu as a fanatic who depicted extreme religious intolerance and destroyed the peaceful social and cultural lives of people in Malabar. It further blames the Islamists and leftists for elevating him as a “secular social reformer.”³⁰⁷ The posts shared in the blog regarding the political developments all over the world further confirm the party’s commitment towards its political ideology. The blog has carried out a conscious selection of memories of Pazhassi. The process of remembering Pazhassi as a military hero of the nation and Tipu as a religious fanatic is guided by political motivation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to look at the commemoration of Kerala Varma aka Pazhassi Raja in the spaces of media, literature, films and documentaries and blogs. Media of all kinds

³⁰⁵ Indian People’s Congress, “Pazhassi Raja Kerala Varma”.

³⁰⁶ Indian People’s Congress, “Tipu Sultan: The Destroyer of Hindu Temples”, October 25 2017, <https://indianpeoplescongress.wordpress.com/2017/10/25/tippu-sultan-the-destroyer-of-hindu-temples/>, accessed 23 March 2022.

³⁰⁷ Indian People’s Congress, “Tipu Sultan”.

play a major role in shaping the thoughts and memories of the public. The representational regimes changes over time and it serves different ideologies. The print media published in England before independence resonated the British interpretation that represented Pazhassi Raja as a rebel who fought against the government. However, the media reports published after the independence in India described Pazhassi as one of the early freedom fighters. The post-independence media in the country associated Pazhassi Revolt with the freedom struggle of the nation. The period has also marked the identification and appropriation of Pazhassi Raja within certain political discourses. On one hand, he was celebrated as a hero who protected his land from Muslim invaders and British alike. While on the other hand, his popular struggle was identified with peasant struggle and thus associated with the communist and socialist ideologies.

With the course of time, media has evolved with the technological advancements and socio-political and economic conditions. In the contemporary world where mass media promotes the popular culture, the memories of the people are structured in accordance with the representations propagated through the media. The systematic selection of memories for the process of remembrance is driven by socio-political and cultural forces. The representation of Pazhassi through the film results in the commodification of the popular memories. The memories disseminated through the films and documentaries possess a wider reach and the ability to influence the historical perspective of the viewers. In the commemoration of Pazhassi Raja, travelogues and documentaries displays shared memories of the people at a more grassroots level. The story of Pazhassi is romanticized and he is represented as a patriotic hero.

Lastly in the new media of virtual world, Pazhassi is variedly represented depending upon the ideologies of the writer. He is either portrayed as a Freedom Fighter or a normal chieftain of Malabar who fought against the British. It can be observed that every

representation of Pazhassi is constructed with respect to the socio-political and cultural contexts which are dynamic in nature. The new virtual platforms such as blogs maintained by amateur historians or history enthusiasts create new spaces of remembrance. The representations of Pazhassi Raja in the blogs depend upon the blogger's personal interest, purpose and ideological moorings. Hoskins points out that the electronic media have altered "the 'space' of time for memory." He observes that the media does not depend on the past as historians, but they "recast it instantaneously."³⁰⁸ The editors of *On Media Memory* observe that in the modern society, mass media acts as an important site for selection and construction of different versions of the past.³⁰⁹ Thus, irrespective of the degree of authenticity, the historical representations in the popular domain and mass media have a profound impact in the people's understanding of the past.

Steve Anderson observes the inherited skepticism of the televised historical representations. On one hand, it creates a sense of "liveliness" and on the other hand it evades a space for further critical interpretation and debate and thereby act as "closed systems".³¹⁰ Nonetheless, it cannot be ignored that the digital mediation of the memories through mass media is a powerful site for articulation of identity and popular memory. Here, the memories of Pazhassi Raja is disseminated through various forms of media and popular culture and thereby remain as an active discourse. It is important to note that the memories rely on representation and the latter changes in response with the ability to serve the political cause in the contemporary society. These representations exert heavy influence on the people and shape their perceptions regarding the past. Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst call these people as the "diffused audience" where they are in constant consumption of mass

³⁰⁸ Hoskins, "New Memory", 342.

³⁰⁹ Neiger, Meyers, Zandberg, *On Media Memory*, 6.

³¹⁰ Steve Anderson, "Loafing in the Garden of Knowledge: History TV and Popular Memory", *Film and History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 30, no. 1, 2000: 17.

media in this “media-drenched society.”³¹¹ Unlike the physical sites of memorialisation, the remembrance through media is subjected to constant alterations. Thus, with the evolving media, new spaces are created and Pazhassi Raja attains newer after-lives.

³¹¹ Nicholas Abercrombie, Brian Longhurst, *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*, (London: Sage Publications, 1988), 68- 69.

CONCLUSION

The process of remembering is not marked by the monuments, commemorative dates, institutions or events alone, but it is established through the maintenance of ritualistic spaces and symbols which in turn creates a relationship with the past. Pierre Nora in his *Realms of Memory* differentiates history and memory. He defines history as the representation of past and memory as a phenomenon of the present. While history demands analysis and critical discourse, Nora argues that “memory is rooted in concrete: in space, gesture, image and object” and it places remembrance in a “sacred context”.³¹² The present research made an attempt to look at diverse “contexts” of remembrance of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja through public memorials, popular culture and media.

Pazhassi Raja is known for his early resistance against the interference of the English East India Company in the rule of Kottayam and Wayanad in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The history of Pazhassi Raja and his revolt becomes the early colonial history of Malabar, as the British records form the only available source on the subject.³¹³ Since Pazhassi is represented as a rebel in the colonial records whose actions caused constant challenges to the maintenance of peace in the countries of Malabar, the study on the heterogeneity in the representations of Pazhassi Raja throws light towards the politics of his memorialisation. The memories undergo significant transformation with the course of time and the memories of Pazhassi Raja are not an exception. The vernacular memory in the colonial period becomes the official memory during the post-colonial times and the ‘rebels’ and ‘rebellion’ of the colonialism are now attributed the status of ‘freedom fighters’ and ‘wars of independence’ respectively.³¹⁴

³¹² Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 3

³¹³ Kurup, Preface to *Pazhassi Samarangal*.

³¹⁴ Guite, “Monuments, Memory and Forgetting”, 57.

The written histories of Pazhassi Raja and the resistance throw light towards the diverse representations of Pazhassi. The nationalist writings on Pazhassi Revolt is included it under the category of freedom struggle and Pazhassi is deemed as one of the early freedom fighters of Kerala. The Marxist historians associate the resistance with communist and socialist ideologies and consider the resistance as a peasant movement. Popular writings on Pazhassi Raja accord him with the status of a patriotic, secular and a welfare oriented ruler. Although academic readings do not associate the resistance with freedom struggle, it is seen as an inspiration for the movements that followed. These diverse representations have inspired the material remembrance of Pazhassi Raja through establishment of public memorials, museums, libraries, educational institutions, observation of commemorative events, rituals, cultural practices etc.

The installations of public memorials results in the everyday remembering of Pazhassi Raja and the strengthening of the popular memory of him as an icon of patriotism, braveness and resistance against the British domination. Elisabetta Viggiani in her work on Northern Ireland opines that memory making is a method of dealing with the losses of the past and the war memorials comes under the collective memory of a nation's shared past.³¹⁵ Here, the 'collective memory' of Pazhassi Raja is disseminated through the material remembrances which further inculcate national beliefs and a sense of colonial past of the country among the public. The spaces of physical memories represent the past in certain ways and it holds the power to shape the way in which the past is perceived by the receptors.

The selection of historical events or a person for the memory making is a deliberate process which involves conscious remembering and forgetting. Maurice Halbwachs views "collective memory" or remembrance as a socially constructed notion rather than the

³¹⁵ Elisabetta Viggiani, *Talking Stones: The Politics of Memorialization in Post Conflict Northern Ireland*, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 3.

‘truthful’ representation of past. He argues that, “a remembrance is in very large measure a reconstruction of the past achieved with data borrowed from the present, a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstruction of earlier periods where in past images had already been altered.”³¹⁶ The process of appropriation of Pazhassi Raja as a symbol by the state, individuals and other private and public organisations serves the purpose of legitimizing their intentions. The state is an active participant or an agent in the memorialisation of Pazhassi. With regard to state organized commemorations, Viggiani opines that, they are not merely a history maker, but ideology conveyor.³¹⁷ Here, the state plays a major role in the commodification of the memories of Pazhassi Raja through the installation of public memorials and as a conduit to nourish the tourism industry. Projects are introduced after his name with large amount of funds allotted to aestheticize certain regions and turning them into a tourist destination.

Educational institutions including schools and colleges in Kerala are named after Pazhassi Raja in the aim of legitimization and inviting a general acceptance from the public. Apart from the state, regional administrative offices and private organisations observe the calendar remembrances and conduct commemorative ceremonies. The military regiment remembers Pazhassi for his warfare tactics and considers him as a symbol of bravery and patriotism and an inspiration for the soldiers. The spaces of material remembrances are constantly ritualised and it keeps the memories of Pazhassi Raja alive. To this degree, the historical figure acquires an afterlife as a social and cultural embodiment in the selected spaces and his memories achieves a sense of temporality. Histories, tradition and culture are reconstituted in the light of the present in which events are selectively remembered, conveniently forgotten or

³¹⁶ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 69.

³¹⁷ Viggiani, *Talking Stones*, 13.

even invented to keep up with the purpose.³¹⁸ Along these lines, new traditions, customs, festivities, rituals and symbols are developed in the material remembrance of Pazhassi Raja in the aim of keeping with the interests and perceptions of the state, communities and individuals.

Apart from the material sites and commemorative events, media and popular culture plays an important role in the memory making of Pazhassi Raja. New and more engaging spaces of remembrance are formed through films, documentaries, virtual spaces like blogs etc. Robert Toplin claims that, “depictions on screen influence the public view on historical subjects much more than books do.”³¹⁹ The interference of popular media has given new trajectory to the memorialization of Pazhassi Raja. In the films and documentaries, he is characterised as an epitome of an efficient ruler who excelled in every fields and whose foremost priority was the welfare of his subjects. The memories disseminated through the media have a wider reach outside the socio-cultural and political realm and possess a greater influence in shaping the historical perceptions of public.

Memory is a ‘past-present dialectic’ as it is not the study of the past, but how the past exists in the present.³²⁰ The process of memorialization is dynamic in nature. The representations of Pazhassi have undergone notable changes over the period of time. While, the colonial records of pre independence period portrayed him as a rebel, the popular and nationalist writings gave him the status of a freedom fighter. New material sites or in other words, ‘sites of memory’ as observed by Pierre Nora were created as the embodiments of Pazhassi Raja’s memories since 1970s and the process is continued even today. New

³¹⁸ Badri Narayan, “Heroes, Histories and Booklets”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 36, no. 41, (October 2001): 3928.

³¹⁹ Robert Brent Toplin, *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of American Past*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), vii.

³²⁰ John Storey, “The Articulation of Memory and Desire: From Vietnam to the War in the Persian Gulf” in *Memory and Popular Film*, ed. Paul Grainge, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 103.

celebrations, rituals, meanings and traditions are attached to the process of memory making buttressing diverse interests and purposes of the agents of memory. Such memorialization at the same time gives enduring after-lives to Pazhassi Raja.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Gazetteers and Manuals

Innes, C. A., F. B. Evans, ed., *Madras District Gazetteers: Malabar and Anjengo*, Volume 1, Madras: Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1908.

Logan, William, *Malabar*, Vol. 1, 1887, Madras: Reprinted at Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1951.

Nair, C. Gopalan, *Malabar Series, Wynad: It's People and Traditions*, Madras: Higginbotham and Co, 1911.

Skariah, Joseph, ed. *Pazhassi Rekhakal in Tellicherry Records Vol 4 & 12, Tubingen University Library Malayalam Manuscript Series Vol 2 (TULMMS)*, Scaria Zacharia, general ed., Kottayam: DC Books, 1994.

Newspapers

“American Papers”, *The Star* (London), April 5, 1802, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0002646/18020405/019/0002?browse=False>, Accessed November 18, 2021.

Devan, P. K., “Big Three of Kerala Heroes”, *The Bombay Chronicle* (Sunday/Weekly Edition), January 26, 1958, <https://archive.org/details/dli.granth.13497/page/2/mode/2up?q=pazhassi+raja>, Accessed October 12, 2021.

Express News Service, “Kerala’s famed Udaya Studio to be a memory soon”, *The New Indian Express*, May 6, 2019, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2019/may/06/keralas-famed-udaya-studio-to-be-a-memory-soon-1973404.html>

Menon, Neelima, “30 Years of Mammotty’s *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* : Understanding the Conflicted Chandu”, *The News Minute*, November 16, 2019, <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/30-years-mammootys-oru-vadakkan-veeragatha-understanding-conflicted-chandu-112417>

Palissery, Prabhakaran, “Freedom Battle from Wynad Hills”, *The Bombay Chronicle* (Sunday/Weekly Edition), March 4, 1951, <https://archive.org/details/dli.granth.14274/14274?q=pazhassi+raja>, Accessed October 12, 2021.

PTI, “Kerala historians question move to give ‘Paika Bidroha’ first war of Independence tag”, October 31, 2017, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/kerala-historians-question-move-to-give-paika-bidroha-first-war-of-independence-tag-4915411/>

Staff Reporter, “Ageless M. T. Vasudevan Nair walks his own path”, *The New Indian Express*, July 16, 2022, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2022/jul/16/ageless-mt-vasudevan-nair-walks-his-own-path-2477074.html>

Staff Reporter, “Fractured Memorial for a Warrior of Yore”, *The Hindu*, November 14, 2014, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/fractured-memorial-for-a-warrior-of-yore/article6598220.ece>

Staff Reporter, “History in Making: Pazhassi Raja film”, *The Times of India*, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>, September 4, 2009.

Staff Reporter, “Kottayam Thekke Kovilakam Paithrukasmaarakamaakkunnu”, *Mathrubhumi: The National Daily in Malayalam*, December 17, 2020.

Staff Reporter, “Many stories on Pazhassi are fabricated, says historian”, *The Hindu*, December 1, 2016, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/Many-stories-on-Pazhassi-are-fabricated-says-historian/article16734916.ece>

Staff Reporter, “Monument to honour Chandu”, *The Hindu*, September 22, 2012, <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/monument-to-honour-chandu/article3925228.ece>

Staff Reporter, “Mridanga Saileswari Kshethrathil Pazhassi Museum Orungunnu”, *Mathrubhumi: The National Daily in Malayalam*, July 6 2022.

Staff Reporter, “Pazhassi Raja”, *The New Indian Express*, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/>, November 22, 2009, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/entertainment/review/2009/nov/22/pazhassi-raja-106135.html>

Staff Reporter, “Pazhassi Kovilakam Charithasmarakamaakkum”, *Mathrubhumi: The National Daily in Malayalam*, November 21, 2020

Staff Reporter, “Statue of Pazhassi Raja to be unveiled at Pulpally”, *The Hindu*, February 28, 2014, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kozhikode/statue-of-pazhassi-raja-to-be-unveiled-at-pulpally/article5735559.ece>

Staff Reporter, “The first revolts against the British happened in Kerala”, October 31, 2017, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/the-first-revolts-against-the-british-happened-in-kerala/articleshow/6134>

Staff Reporter, “Thikkodiyar: A Multifaceted Personality”, *The Hindu*, January 28, 2001, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060721082033/http://www.hinduonnet.com/2001/01/29/stories/0429211u.htm>

Staff Reporter, “Vipulam Ee Vinodhasancharam”, *Mathrubhumi: The National Daily in Malayalam*, February 18, 2020.

Strachan, George, “Indian Atrocities”, *The Examiner* 9, no. 560, September 20, 1818, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Examiner_1818-09-27-Iss_561_\(IA_sim_examiner-a-weekly-paper-on-politics-literature-music_1818-09-27_561\).pdf](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Examiner_1818-09-27-Iss_561_(IA_sim_examiner-a-weekly-paper-on-politics-literature-music_1818-09-27_561).pdf), Accessed November 18, 2021.

Strachan, George, “Indian Atrocities”, *The Examiner* 9, no. 561, September 27, 1818, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Examiner_1818-09-27-Iss_561_\(IA_sim_examiner-a-weekly-paper-on-politics-literature-music_1818-09-27_561\).pdf](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Examiner_1818-09-27-Iss_561_(IA_sim_examiner-a-weekly-paper-on-politics-literature-music_1818-09-27_561).pdf), Accessed November 18, 2021.

The Morning Chronicle (London), August 10, 1801, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0000082/18010810/005/0003?browse=False>, Accessed November 18, 2021.

The Morning Herald (London), September 9, 1801, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/BL/0002408/18010909/009/0002?browse=False>, Accessed November 18, 2021.

Varma, Vishnu, “Kannur’s vibrant cultural past finds meaning in this 38-years- Old’s massive artwork at airport terminal”, *The Indian Express*, December 10, 2018, [Kannur’s vibrant cultural past finds meaning in this 38-year-old’s massive artwork at airport terminal | Lifestyle News, The Indian Express](#).

Vijayakumar, B., “Pazhassi Raja 1964”, *The Hindu*, December 14, 2009, <http://www.hindu.com/mp/2009/12/14/stories/2009121450430400.htm>

Films and Documentaries

Anwar, A., *Pazhassi Raja- Real Story*, Thiruvananthapuram: Doordarshan Production, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZA1b5gnmHU>

Hariharan, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*, Sree Gokulam Films, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHY-6PjbhsU>.

Kunchako, *Pazhassi Raja*, Udaya Studios, 1964.

Mangad, Ratnakaran, *Pazhassi Yatra: Yatra 22nd March 2013 Part I*, *Pazhassi Yatra: Yatra 22nd March 2013 Part I*, Asianet News, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRpCNlV73t0>.

Mangad, Ratnakaran, *Pazhassi Yatra: Yatra 22nd March 2013 Part II*, Asianet News, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTQdpivmN-g>

Novel and Historical Play

Panikkar, K. M., *Sardar K.M.Panikkarude Rand Novelukal: Parangi Padayali, Kerala Simham*, Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy, 2015.

Murali, Pirappankode, *Pazhassi Raja*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2010.

Interviews

Foucault, Michel, “Film and Popular Memory: An Interview with Michael Foucault”, originally appeared in *Cahiers du Cinema* 251, no. 2 (1974), *Radical Philosophy* 11, no. 11, (Summer 1975). <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/interview/michel-foucault-film-and-popular-memory>

Nair, M. T. Vasudevan, “M. T. Vasudevan Nair in Conversation with Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan: A Lifetime of Writing”, Interview by Sudha Gopalakrishnan, <https://www.sahapedia.org/>, July 19, 2019, <https://www.sahapedia.org/mt-vasudevan-nair-conversation-dr-sudha-gopalakrishnan-lifetime-writing>;

Blogs

Sagar, *Pazhassi Raja: A Short Biography*, August 1, 2012, [Pazhassi Raja - A Short Biography: 2012 \(pazhassirajashortbiography.blogspot.com\)](http://pazhassirajashortbiography.blogspot.com), Accessed March 23 2022.

Balmer, Nick, *Malabar Days*, December 30, 2006, <http://malabardays.blogspot.com/2006/>, Accessed March 23 2022.

Indian People’s Congress, *Pazhassi Raja Kerala Varma: A Forgotten Hero of Bharat*, June 15 2018, <https://indianpeoplescongress.wordpress.com/2018/06/15/pazhassi-raja-kerala-varma-a-forgotten-hero-of-bharat/>, Accessed March 23 2022.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Published works

Abercrombie, Nicholas, Brian Longhurst, *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*, London: Sage Publications, 1988.

Assman, Jan, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Bayly, C. A., *The New Cambridge History of India: The Indian Society and the Making of British Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

- Burke, Peter, *Varieties of Cultural History*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Edgerton, Gary. R., Peter C Rollins, eds., *Television Histories: Shaping the Collective Memory in the Media Age*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001.
- Frenz, Margret, *From Contact to Conquest: Transition to British Rule in Malabar, 1700-1805*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Gopi, Mundakayam, *Ariyapedatha Wayanad*, Kalpetta: Sahya Publications, 2002.
- Grainge, Paul, ed., *Memory and Popular film*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003.
- Halbwachs, Maurice, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis. A. Coser, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Halbwachs, Maurice, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis. J. Ditter, Jr and Vida Yasdi Ditter, New York: Harper and Row, 1980.
- Immaty, George, *Pazhassiraja*, Thrissur: H & C Books, 2007.
- Johny, O. K., *Wayanad Rekhakal*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2001.
- Kannoth, Krishna Kumar, *Sangeethanjanaya Rajaavu: Pazhassi Thampuran P.K.Shankara Varma Raja*, Mattannur: Pazhassi Raja Anusmaranavedi, 2011.
- Katupunam, Raju, *Kuttikalude Pazhassiraja*, Kottayam: SPCS, 2009.
- Kurup, K. K. N., *Pazhassi Samarangal*, Thiruvananthapuram: State Institute of Languages, 1980.
- Kurup, K. K. N., *Pazhassi Samararekhakal*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books, 2004.
- Nair, M. T. Vasudevan, *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja* (Screenplay), Thrissur: Current Books, 2010.
- Namboodiripad, E. M. S., *A History of Indian Freedom Struggle*, Trivandrum: Social Scientist Press, 1986.
- Namboodiripad, E. M. S., *A Short History of Peasant Movement in Kerala*, Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1943.
- Neiger, Motti, Oren Meyers, and Eyal Zandberg, eds., *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Nora, Pierre, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, Vol 1, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Rajayyan, K., *South Indian Rebellion: The First War of Independence, 1800- 1801*, Mysore: Rao and Raghavan Publishers, 1971.

Seal, Anil, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Sreedhara Menon, A., *A Survey of Kerala History*, Kottayam: DC Books, 1967.

Sreedharan, Purathur, *Dheerasamarangalumayi Keralavarma Pazhassiraja*, Thrissur: H & C Publishing House, 2019.

Toplin, Robert Brent, *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of American Past*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Viggiani, Elisabetta, *Talking Stones: The Politics of Memorialization in Post Conflict Northern Ireland*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2014.

Book chapters

Gough, Kathleen, “Indian Peasant Uprisings”, in *Peasant Struggles in India*, edited by A. R. Desai, 85-126, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1979,

Aleida Assman, “Memory, Individual and Collective” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, edited by Robert E Goodin and Charles Tilly, 210-224, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Sigurd Bergmann, “Religion in the Built Environment: Aesth/Ethics, Ritual and Memory in Lives Urban Space”, in *The Sacred in the City*, edited by Liliana Gomez and Walter Van Herck, 73-95, London: Bloomsbury Collections, 2012.

Alison Landsberg, “Prosthetic Memory: The Ethics and Politics of Memory in an Age of Mass Culture” in *Memory and Popular Film*, edited by Paul Grainge, 144-161, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003.

Unpublished work

Swai, Bonaventure, “The British in Malabar, 1792-1806”, Unpublished D Phil Thesis, University of Sussex, 1975.

Journals and Periodicals

Anderson, Steve, “Loafing in the Garden of Knowledge: History TV and Popular Memory”, *Film and History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 30, no. 1, (January 2000): 14-23. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/400196?ref=rc>

Guite, Jankhomang, “Monuments, Memory and Forgetting in the Post-Colonial North Eastern India”, *Economic and Political Weekly* 46, no. 8, (February 2011): 56-64. url: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41151794>

Hoskins, Andrew, "New Memory: Mediating History", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 21, no. 4, (August 2010): 333-346. doi: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01439680120075473>

Karat, Prakash, "The Peasant Movement in Malabar, 1934-40", *Social Scientist* 5, no. 2 (September 1976): 30-44. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3516568>

Narayan, Badri, "Heroes, Histories and Booklets", *Economic and Political Weekly* 36, no. 14, (October 2001): 3923-3934. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/4411234>

Ranjan, Rahul, "The Politics of Symbolism: The Making of Birsa Munda's Statue in Post-Colonial Jharkhand, India", *Bandung Journal of Global South* 7, (March 2020): 130-161. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/21983534-00701007>

Reddy, B. Vishwanatha, *Chandamama* (English), Volume 8, Chandamama Publications, (August 1997), <https://archive.org/details/Chandamama-English-1997-08>

Santhosh, Rachel, "Mapping of an Ethnohistory of the Paniyan: Some Preliminary Reflections", *Indian Anthropologist* 38, no. 1, (January- June 2008): 61-76. doi: [10.2307/41920057](https://doi.org/10.2307/41920057)

Schwartz, Barry, "The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory", *Social Forces* 61, no. 2, (December 1982): 374-402. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2578232>

Ugra, Meera, Goutham Sen, "They Stood up to the British: Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja", in *Chandamama* (English), Volume 12, Chandamama Publications, (December 1997): 45-48, <https://archive.org/details/Chandamama-English-1997-12>

Vitebsky, Piers, "Loving and Forgetting: Moments of Inarticulacy in Tribal India", *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 2, (May 2008): 243-261. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2008.00500.x>

INDIAN HISTORY CONGRESS

80th Session

Kannur University, Kerala
28th-30th December, 2019

Certificate of Presentation of Paper

This is to certify that **Swathi Surendran, AM-30800**, attended the Eightieth Session of the Indian History Congress at Kannur University, Kerala, 28th-30th December 2019, and presented a paper entitled '**An Enquiry into the Gender Segregation of the Missionary Education in Malabar**' in Section III: Modern India.

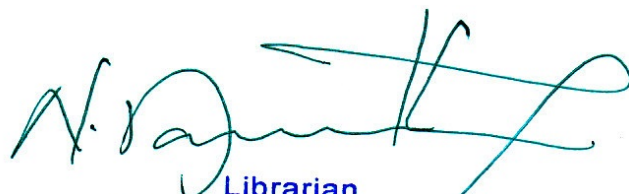
Professor M.D. David
Sectional President
Indian History Congress

28th December 2019


Professor Mahalakshmi Ramakrishnan
Secretary
Indian History Congress

Memorialising History: Pazhassi Raja's Afterlives as Public Memorials

by Swathi Surendran



Librarian
Indira Gandhi Memorial Library
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
Central University P.O.
HYDERABAD-500 046

Submission date: 08-Dec-2022 10:15AM (UTC+0530)

Submission ID: 1974994136

File name: Swathi_Surendran.pdf (1.99M)

Word count: 33458

Character count: 176073

Memorialising History: Pazhassi Raja's Afterlives as Public Memorials

ORIGINALITY REPORT

2%

SIMILARITY INDEX

1%

INTERNET SOURCES

1%

PUBLICATIONS

1%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

en.wikipedia.org

Internet Source

<1%

2

"A Great War in South India", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2019

Publication

<1%

3

en.unionpedia.org

Internet Source

<1%

4

Submitted to NALSAR University of Law Hyderabad

Student Paper

<1%

5

edoc.ub.uni-muenchen.de

Internet Source

<1%

6

pure.aber.ac.uk

Internet Source

<1%

7

www.niyamasabha.org

Internet Source

<1%

8

John Storey. "CHAPTER 7 The Articulation of Memory and Desire: From Vietnam to the

<1%

First Gulf War", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2010

Publication

9	kannuruniversity.ac.in	<1 %
Internet Source		
10	Submitted to National University of Singapore	<1 %
Student Paper		
11	"Book Reviews", Indian Economic & Social History Review, 12/01/2005	<1 %
Publication		
12	notablebrahmins.wordpress.com	<1 %
Internet Source		
13	cpim.org	<1 %
Internet Source		
14	"A344 Book 3 Empire and Art British India isbn9781526122940", Open University	<1 %
Publication		
15	navrangindia.blogspot.com	<1 %
Internet Source		
16	Anjana Singh. "Fort Cochin in Kerala, 1750-1830", Brill, 2010	<1 %
Publication		
17	Astrid Erll. "Memory in Culture", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2011	<1 %
Publication		

Submitted to Universiteit van Amsterdam

18

Student Paper

<1 %

19

www.google.com

Internet Source

<1 %

20

Submitted to University of Warwick

Student Paper

<1 %

Exclude quotes On

Exclude matches < 14 words

Exclude bibliography On