

CONTRIBUTIONS OF DE-LANNOY TO MODERN TRAVANCORE

¹ Dr. S.L. Omnakutten,
¹ Assistant Professor,
¹ Department of History,
¹ Rani Anna Government College for Women,
¹ Tirunelveli, India

Abstract : During the reign of Marthandavarma, the famous Battle of Colachel was took place in 1741 A.D, and the Dutch were completely defeated. The Travancore army took 24 prisoners, besides 389 muskets, a few pieces of canon and a large number of swords. Among the prisoners Eustachius De-Lannoy and Donadi were specially attracted the King's notice and whom he appointed to high military officers in the Travancore State. After the battle of Colachel, Marthandavarma took special steps to strengthen his defenses at Udayagiri fort. The fort was reconstructed and used as their strong defensive structure. The palace was protected by a granite fort and an arsenal was established at Udayagiri. Canon, mortar, weapons, and gunpowder were manufactured. Batteries were erected on the sea-coast at different places between Cape Comorin and Poracad. The state army consisted of cavalry, infantry, artillery and irregular troops. They were fifty thousand strong and were disciplined on European model. The army was also rearranged on European model by De-Lannoy. The army was divided into regiments and Battalions. An arsenal was established at Udayagiri Fort for the manufacture of heavy ammunitions. He not only trained the soldiers of Travancore in European method of warfare, not only produced western type of guns at Udayagiri fort, but also led the army northward upto Cochin annexing the kingdoms all along the way. The special interest evinced by Marthandavarma with the help of De-Lannoy in the improvement of the State forces has made military service particularly attractive. Marthandavarma and his successor won many battles with the help of De-Lannoy. During the time of De-Lannoy many forts were constructed and some of them repaired. In short, one wonders what the history of Travancore would have been if there had been no De-Lannoy.

IndexTerms - Travancore, Marthandavarma, Dutch, De-Lannoy, Battle of Colachel, modernization, Travancore army, fortification, Udayagiri, expedition and expansion.

I. INTRODUCTION

Eustachius Benedict De-Lannoy was born in a Catholic family of Belgium on 1714 A.D. After completed his education he joined as a soldier in the Dutch Army. Because of his absolute fearlessness he was promoted as Military Officer in the Dutch Army. During the reign of Marthandavarma, the Dutch conquered the state of Travancore. But the Dutch were completely defeated and a peace treaty was finally signed. Benedict De-Lannoy, one of the Navy officers of the Dutch Army was captured by the Travancore forces at the battle of Colachel. This Dutch army officer, a convinced Roman Catholic from Europe was a great boon to the state of Travancore and a rare gift to Christianity in India. Captain De-Lannoy was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Travancore forces and was raised to the rank of a General. The palace was protected by a granite fort and an arsenal was established at Udayagiri. Canon, mortar, weapons, and gunpowder were manufactured. Batteries were erected on the sea-coast at different places between Cape Comorin and Poracad. The state army consisted of cavalry, infantry, artillery and irregular troops. They were fifty thousand strong and were disciplined on European model.

The Dutch:

The Dutch East India Company was formed in 1602 A.D. But within a short period the company made very steady advance and formed numerous settlements all along the Malabar Coast ousting the

Portuguese from most of their possessions. In 1653 A.D. they laid a siege to Cochin and the Portuguese left Cochin. In 1661 A.D the Dutch again attacked the fort of Cochin which was bravely defended by the Portuguese garrison stationed there. The Raja of Poracad came to the assistance of Cochin with six thousand native troops. The Dutch Admiral Van Goens appeared with a fleet before Quilon, then the chief Portuguese possession in Travancore. This was opposed by a group of Nayars. The Dutch Army marched against the town which they soon occupied as the Portuguese garrison had fled to the neighbouring areas. The whole town was pillaged and all the churches were pulled down but except the church of St. Thomas. At this attack they marched against Cranganore. After fourteen days the fort was surrendered to the Dutch on 7th January 1663 A.D. and a treaty was signed at the head quarters of the Dutch army in Cochin. After this treaty the Dutch had assumed the government of Cochin, the Zamorin asked for the town of Cranganore in accordance with the promise made to him, and it was given to him. The ruler of Quilon died in 1734AD. So the Raja of Kayankulam usurped the throne basing his claim on the adoption of 906M.E, though that adoption had already been declared null and void by the peace of Quilon. Marthandavarma the ruler of Travancore remonstrated but to no purpose. But the Raja of Kayankulam was strongly supported by the ruler of Cochin and the Dutch. Finally the Dutch directly interfered in the war and took the field against Travancore.

The Dutch Governor sent a message to Marthandavarma asking him to stop further aggressions on Kayankulam and Quilon. Marthandavarma replied that the Governor need not trouble himself about affairs, which did not concern him. In 1741 A.D, the Dutch Governor installed the princess of Elayadathu Swarupam on her throne in defiance of Marthandavarma. In return he got some lands and some privileges from her. When these proceedings came to be known by Marthandavarma, he collected his forces and attacked the Dutch and the Elayadathu princess. During this incident, the Dutch were completely defeated and not one soldier of the Dutch Army remained. The princess fled to Cochin. Then the Travancore forces attacked the Dutch forts in South. Travancore captured all of them. The Dutch retired to Cochin. Meanwhile the Danish were deprived of their factory at Colachel. After this victory, Marthandavarma turned his attention to Kayankulam. When the majority of the Travancore forces was concentrated on Kayankulam, a new Army arrived from Ceylon with which the Dutch invaded the Travancore territory. They landed at Thengapattinam, Kadiapattinam, Midalam, Colachel and other places in south Travancore and began harassing the inhabitants. As the whole Travancore forces was in the north as the Dutch Army attacked in the south was unexpected. But the Dutch conquered many places in South Travancore and they marched towards Eraniel committing atrocities all along the way. The Dutch decided upon attacking Travancore simultaneously from the north and the south. The Dutch forces soon fortified their base at Colachel and advanced northwards. In this state of despair, Marthandavarma turned to the French at Pondichery. Negotiations for an alliance were entered into with them. But before the new alliance could be of use the fortune of the war turned in the Raja's favour. Marthandavarma heard of this immediately marched to the south abandoning the northern expedition and ordered Ramayyan Dalawa to join him at Padmanabhapuram. But before the arrival of the Travancore forces the area between Colachel and Kottar surrendered to the Dutch. Marthandavarma, however, arrived at Padmanabhapuram just in time to avert the impending capture of his capital. He raised a new regiment of Nayars and incorporated them with the regular infantry stationed there. Soon after Ramayyan Dalawa arrived with his strong force from the north. The Maharaja conducted the war with courage and determination directing the movements of his forces in person.

Battle of Colachel:

The modern era in the political history of Travancore is said to have dawned with the epoch making reign of Marthandavarma, one of the famous Travancore rulers. During his reign, the Dutch captured the area from Kottar to Colachel. Then the Dutch army marched towards Padmanabhapuram, the capital of Travancore. But Marthandavarma and Ramayan, the Diwan of Travancore resisted the Dutch army. In 1741 A.D, the battle of Colachel fought between the Dutch army and the Travancore forces. The Travancore boats surrounded the Dutch ships and prevented the landing of men and arms. The division led by Ramayyan Dalawa charged the Dutch line breaking it completely, driving the officers and men from their positions and throwing the whole army into disorder. The advance of the Travancore horses retreated to the fort leaving behind several of their men dead or wounded. On 14th of August, 1741A.D. the Travancore army laid siege to the fort which was soon taken, the Dutch finding refuge in their ships with great difficulty. Finally, the Dutch was defeated by the Travancore forces. De-Lannoy, the Dutch commander

arrested by the Travancore forces as a war captive. A pillar commemorating the stirring event stands on the beach of Colachel. The enemy abandoned persons wounded and 24 Europeans as prisoners and it put an end to the Dutch dreams of conquest of Malabar. The Dutch prisoners were very kindly treated and they decided to stay and take service under Marthandavarma. Among the prisoners were two men of note, Eustachius De-Lannoy and Donadi who specially attracted Marthandavarma's notice and whom he appointed to high military offices in the state. These two Dutch men played a very conspicuous part in the subsequent history of Travancore and their military genius and fidelity to the king were of the utmost value to him in his subsequent expeditions and expansion of territory.

Modernization of Travancore Army:

De-Lannoy, popularly known in Travancore as the *ValiaKappithan* (Great Captain). The greater portion of the army was equipped with arms and ammunition, manufactured in Europe. All the forts were well garrisoned. He led the Travancore forces northward upto Cochin annexing the kingdoms all along the way. Under his gunfire fell Quilon, Kayankulam, Thekkankur (modern Kottarakara) and Vadakkankur (modern Kottayam district of Kerala) Paravur, Poracad and etc. He reorganised the whole army and disciplined it on European models gave it a smart appearance and raised its efficiency to a very high order. During this period Chanda Sahib and Baba Sahib, the two relatives of the Arcot Nawab Dost Alikhan invaded, Kottar, Nagercoil and Suchindrum in South Travancore. But the Dalawai tried to fight them out but failed and he gave them large presents and bought them off. So the two chiefs immediately returned back. The Dalawai with captain De-Lannoy, who was now made his chief assistant, directed his armies to Quilon, several battles were fought against the combined forces of the ruler of Kayankulam and the Dutch at Quilon. In 1742 A.D. nearly six thousand soldiers of the Travancore army attacked the Dutch fort at Quilon. But the Travancore force was defeated and was obliged to retreat. The Travancore army was soon strengthened by five thousand Noyars. Large quantity of arms and ammunition were purchased from the English and the French. The big guns mounted on the ramparts of Udayagiri. Padmanabhapuram and Trivandrum were removed for service in the north and everything was made complete for taking the fort at a given signal.

Fortifications:

The stone fort with granite wall was constructed to protect the palace at Padmanabhapuram. A wall was thrown round the palace and the Udayagiri hill was also fortified. De-Lannoy's technical skill was utilised in improving the fortifications of Kalkulam and Udayagiri. Stone bastions were also erected. While another fort was constructed near Cape Comorin, which is popularly known as "Vattakottai". A Foundry was established at Udayagiri for the manufacture of guns, mortars and cannon-balls. The Batteries were all supplied with the necessary artillery. Batteries were erected on the sea-coast at different places between Cape Comorin and Poracad. De-Lannoy then proceeded to the north and repaired and strengthened the forts of Quilon, Mavelikara, Changanachery, Kottayam, Ettumanur, Muvattupuzha and Todupuzha and constructed new Batteries and forts with laterite stones.

Expeditions:

During this period the ruler of Kayankulam invaded Travancore with the help of the Dutch forces. The forces laid a siege to Kilimanur, twenty miles south of Quilon. But Marthandavarma who was at that time in Suchindrum in South Travancore hastened to Kilimanur and repulsed the Kayankulam forces conducting the operations in person with the help of Captain De-Lannoy. Finally the Kayankulam forces were surrendered and the fort was retaken. A treaty named, the Treaty of Mannar was concluded between the two forces in 1742 A.D. The remaining part of the forces retreated to Quilon with a heavy loss. After the defeat of Kayankulam forces, the ruler of Quilon allying himself with the Dutch again challenged Marthandavarma, but after several engagements in which the ruler sustained thorough defeat, Quilon was finally annexed to Travancore in 1742 A.D. The fallen ruler of Kayankulam again intrigued. He did not pay the tribute correctly. So in 1746 A.D. Rama Iyer, the Dalawa and De-Lannoy proceeded to Mavelikara and demanded the payment of arrears of tribute. But he refused to pay the tribute and disposed of his properties and fled abandoning his territories. The state was then annexed to Travancore after a war.

The Kayankulam ruler had anticipated the fate of his army. He knew about the strength of the Travancore forces which had the advantage of European discipline and Superior arms. Ampalapuzha or Chempakachery, as it was then known, was ruled by a Brahmin chief. At the time of the Travancore invasion, the Ampalapuzha army was commanded by Mathu Panikar, a Sudra Knight of great valour. The

soldiers used specially made arrows with poisoned tips invented by the ruler himself. The Travancore forces attacked the Ampalapuzha fort, but the poisoned arrows committed great havoc to the Travancore forces. So immediately Ramayan Dalawa called De-Lannoy for his assistance. De-Lannoy arrived with his artillery and Mussalman and Christian soldiers. Finally the ruler of Ampalapuzha surrendered. The annexation of Quilon had considerably upset the Dutch, who finding that any more hostilities with Travancore would seriously affect their trade which had already suffered during these wars. So they wanted to make peace with Travancore. After a long discussion a treaty was signed between the Dutch and the Travancore in 1743 A.D. with conditions. That Travancore and the Dutch should be mutual friends. The Travancore should not permit any other European power to acquire a footing in its territories. The Dutch should not help in any way to the enemies of Travancore. The petty principalities of Thekkumkur (Changanachery) and Vadakkumkur (Kottayam and Ettumanur) helped the enemies of Travancore during the battle of Kayankulam. So the Travancore forces next marched against them. The armies of the chieftains consisted of big landlords and Nayars.

The Travancore forces headed by De-Lannoy and the Dalawa. The ruler of Changanachery fled to Calicut and the territories both princes were annexed to Travancore. The rulers of Thekkumkur and Vadakkumkur sought the help of the Cochin Chieftain for recovering their lost territories. Preparations were made on a large scale to promote the object in view. They collected a fleet of native boats and made ready to proceed by sea, carrying men, rifles, guns and ammunition. These forces supported by other enemies of Marthandavarma. But Marthandavarma got intelligence of these proceedings through the Dutch and he marched to Mavelikara with his Dalawai and De-Lannoy. But as Marthandavarma was slightly indisposed the prince in conjunction with the Dalawai and De-Lannoy proceeded to attack the enemy encamped at Poracad. The artillery, infantry and cavalry did fearful damage to the enemies and completely defeated at Poracad. In 1753 A.D., the inhabitants of North Travancore, especially those of Ampalapuzha, Changanachery, Kottayam and Ettumanur revolted against Marthandavarma so he made a tour along with De-Lannoy in the northern taluks and a few days halt there. On the arrival of Marthandavarma the rebellion subsided and peace was restored. The Zamorin of Calicut compelled the several petty Principalities of Malabar to recognise him as their sovereign. But the ruler of Cochin refused to acknowledge his suzerainty. So disputes arose between the Zamorin and the ruler of Cochin. In 1755 A.D. the Zamorin invaded Cochin with a large army of Nayars and Moors. A large part of Cochin including Parur and Alangad was conquered by the Zamorin, and Cranganore, Trichur, Parur and Verapoly were made military stations. The Zamorin winning all the petty rulers of Malabar to his side; who were only too glad to join him now that the Dutch were no longer able to protect them against Travancore. In the meantime the Zamorin had invaded Cochin and was about to pass down his troops by water from Parur to Poracad when his forces were severely defeated by the Travancore Army under De-Lannoy. The Cochin ruler came to Mavelikara to see Marthandavarma and apologized to him for his conduct at Poracad. A treaty was concluded in 1757 A.D. With the treaty of Mavelikara the Cochin ruler declared perpetual alliance with Travancore.

The defeat at the battle of Poracad added to the invasion by Hyder Ali greatly checked the haughty spirit and power of the Zamorin who thereafter ceased his hostilities against Travancore. Travancore and the Dutch became mutual friends by the Dutch treaty of 1753 A.D., and the Dutch were bound to supply Travancore with the ammunition of war annually to the value of Rs.12,000. The English merchants at Anjengo were ready to render assistance when required. He himself wrote in 1757 A.D. expressing his willingness to have the differences between himself and the Nawab settled amicably by the English. In January 1757 A.D. the Madras Governor wrote to Ysufkhan, the company's renter in Tirunelveli, advising him to preserve the friendship with the king of Travancore. Thus arose the friendship and unity with the great new European power results in the next century and a half of Travancore history. In 1774 A.D. during the reign of Ramavarma, Hyder again invaded Malabar and devastated the Country. The Zamorin and other princess of Malabar fled and took refuge in Travancore where they were treated with great hospitality and kindness. But Hyder was ambitious and he could not be expected to keep to the terms of the treaty. He made up his mind to conquer Travancore, so in 1776 A.D. he made an attack with a large army against Travancore. As the Dutch still held the fort at Cranganore which protected the Travancore lines, he demanded of them at Cochin a free passage through their territories into Travancore. The Dutch Governor Goens being unwilling to accede to his request declined to comply with it on the plea that the matter should be referred to the Supreme Government. Hyder remembering that the very same reply was given him ten

years previously, naturally regarded it as evasive and threatened the complete destruction of the Dutch power.

Conclusion:

In August 1776 A.D. the northern portion of Cochin was invaded and the fort of Trichur taken. The Cochin ruler promised to Hyder to pay an annual tribute. The Dutch Prepared for defense by repairing and strengthening the forts of Allikkotta and Cranganore. A contingent of soldiers weredispatched from Travancore to Allikotta to defend the place if attacked. General De-Lannoy had acquired a correct knowledge of the country and the comparative it was he, who, in conjunction with AyyappanMarthandapillai saved the possessions of the Raja of Cochin by driving away theZamorin. But the old general, withered and shattered by age and work, was unable to take the command. He fell ill and passed away in 1777 A.D in the fort of Udayagiri. His death was universally deplored. His remains were interred in his own church. There lie his bones with those of his wife and son. The Raja commanded an inscription to be historic memories; but there are few which command the affectionate respect of the Travancore people so much as the simple stone which identifies the spot where lie the bones of General De-Lannoy who gave himself so unsparingly to the service of this his adopted country. He was buried with military honors in his own Church at Udayagiri.The special interest evinced by Marthandavarma with the help of De-Lannoy in the improvement of the State forces has made military service particularly attractive.Marthandavarma and his successor won many battles with the help of De-Lannoy.His name is still cherished as the Valia-Kappithan, who fought for the making of Modern Travancore.

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