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Works of Kotunnallur Kocunni Tampuran

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Abstract

The contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit literature includes Mahakavyas, Yamakakavyas, dramas, devotional poems, Mahatmyas, message poems, historical poems, etc. Kocunni Tampuran is the only author who has contributed to most of the above types of literature. He was one of the prominent princes of the Royal family of Mahodayapuram. Kocunni Tampuran has greatly contributed to literature, both Malayalam and Sanskrit. He was originally a Sanskrit poet. It was Venmani Acchan and Mahan Namputiris who encouraged Kocunni Tampuran to compose in Malayalam. The transition in the literature of Kerala from Maaipravalam to pure Malayalam was effected by the Venmanis. But it was completed in the works of Kocunni Tampuran.

Key Words : Kotunnallur, 'Kavitakkalari, Goddess Kurumba, Ramacarita, Ramavarmamahakavya, Viprasandesa, Campu, Bhana etc.

Introduction

Kerala Produced many great poets and scholars. Their contribution to science and literature stands first in quantity and quality as compared to the contribution of other Indian states.

A number of kingdoms that extended munificent patronage attracted scholars, artists and poets from inside and outside Kerala. They found warm welcome every where and kings even vied with one another to patronise them. It is interesting to note that not a single scholar or poet has gone outside Kerala, in search of patronage.

The Travancore Royal family in south Kerala was another centre of fervent literary activity in the land. In the lineage of Travancore kings, the name of Martandavarma, the maker of modern Travancore and a generous patron of literature, and Svati Tirunal, the Monarch musician, stand in the forefront. Ramapanivadan Kuncan Nampiyar, Ramapurattu Variyar and Unnayi Variyar were the prominent poets of the court of Martandavarma. Ramapanivada (18th century), who adorned the courts of many kings and chieftains of Kerala, is credited with the authorship of Candrikavithi, Lilavatithi and Sitaraghava, a drama. These plays were written at the instance of king Viraraya of Vettattunat, Devanarayana of Ampalappula and Martanda varma respectively. Visnuvilasa are his famous poems in Sanskrit. He is also credited with two poems written in Prakrt, Kamsavadha and Usaniruddha. Kuncan Nampiyar was the originator of Tullal, the famous dance drama in Malayalam. Nalacaritam, a masterpiece in Kathakali literature, was composed by Unnayi Variyar. Kartika Tirunal Dharmaraja (1724-1798) and Asvati Tirunal (1755-1795), kings of Travancore, were also great composers. Balaramabharata, a manual on historionics, was written by Kartika Tirunal, Rajasuyam, Bakavadham, Pancalisvayamvaram, Kalyanasaugandhikam and Gandharvavijayam are his contributions to Kathakali literature in Malayalam. Asvati Tirunal Ramavarma has contributed several works to Sanskrit and Malayalam literature. srngarasudhakarabhana, Rukminiparinaya (drama) Santanagopala Campu. Dasavataradandaka and Vancisastava are his contributions to Sanskrit literature. Rukminisvayamvara, Putanamoksa, Ambarisacarita and Pandradavadha are his gifts to Kathakali literature. Svati Tirunal (1813-1847) a great patron of art and literature, was a composer also. Bhaktimanjari, Padmanabhasataka, Syanandurapuravarnanaprabandha, Ajamilokhyana, etc. are his works which

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enriched classical music. He has also composed several stotras in praise of different deities. Kerala Varma Valiyakoyil Tampuran (1845-1915) and A.R. Rajaraja Varma (1863- 1918) were other scholar composers from Travancore. Really the writings of the patrons of Travancore overshadowed the compositions of their several proteges.

The Kulasekharas of Mahodayapuram (modern Kotunnallur) and their descendants who shifted their capital to cochin, represent a very important tradition of learning in central Kerala. The kings themselves were composers and generous patrons of arts and literature. Kulasekhara Alvar, a mystic poet and Vaisnava saint, and Kulasekhara Varman, the royal dramatist, stand in foremost among the Mahodayapuram- Cochin poets. Kulasekhara Alvar, the emperor- saint, is the author of Mukundamala, a short devotional lyric. Tapatisamvarnan and Subhadradhananjaya are two natakas of great stage effect written by Kulasekhara Varma. Both the plays were commented in the 'Vyangyavyakhyas' by Tolan, a great art critic and court gester of the king. Mahodayapuram was a famous centre where the Kutiyattam form dramatic presentation flourished. Kulasekhara Varma introduced several innovation on the Kutiyattam stage on the advice of Tolan. Vasudeva, the author of several Yamaka Kavyas, belonged to Mahodayapura. Yudhishthiravijaya, Tripuradahana and saurikathodaya are attributed to him. Godavarma Yuvaraja and Ramavarma Koccunni Tampuran were royal composers of Mahodayapuram. The famous 'Kavitakkalari, of Kotunnallur, a centre where poets met and exercised their poetic genius, itself proves the importance that poetry had during the period.

The contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit literature includes Mahakavyas, Yamakakavyas, dramas, devotional poems, Mahatmyas, message poems, historical poems, etc. Koccunni Tampuran is the only author who has contributed to most of the above types of literature. He was one of the prominent princes of the Royal family of Mahodayapuram.

RAMAVARMA (N) KOCCUNNI TAMPURAN, HIS LIFE DATE AND WORKS

Ramavarma Koccunni Tampuran, popularly known as ceriya Koccunni Tampuran, of the Royal family of Kotunnallur was profound scholar and poetic genius¹. He was born to Puratattu sankaran Namputiri and Ikkavu Tampuratti of Cranganore in A.D. 1858 (M.E. 1033, on the 17th of the month of Meenam). He had his early education under valapplil Unni Asan. He studied poetry from Godavaraman Yuvaraja, his own uncle, who was renowned as a scholar-poet of the day. Krsna satri of Kumbhakonam and Kunnunni Tampuran of Cranganore were his teachers in science like grammar and poetics.

Some relevant information regarding his biography is available in his own words in VVB. The poet says that he was born in the palace situated in front of the temple of Goddess Kurumba of Cranganore. He was brought up there by the royal ladies of the palace². He attained poetic genius with the blessings of Goddess Kurumba, by taking the remnants of the Trimadhura (a mixture of honey, sugar and plantain or ghee) offered to her. KrSna satri, his Guru, was a great Brahmin scholar from Kumbakonam, endowed with an ocean of virtues. He was pious and gentle and was a jewel among men of erudition. As a versatile scholar, the poet was conversant with many languages, srutis, Smrtis,

Puranas, Itihasas, sastras, Ayurveda, Jyotisa, Mantra., Alankaara, commentary writing, drawing, painting, music, jugglery and all the known arts and sciences. He took special interest in treating the diseases of elephants (hastyayurveda). His knowledge in the sciences gained him the title sastrajna.

There was another koccunni Thampuran, a contemporary of the poet, in the Royal family of Cranganore. He was a famous astrologer and was known as Valiya Koccunni Tampuran (Senior Koccunni Tampuran). Ramavarma, the poet, was called Ceriya Koccunni Tampuran (Junior Koccunni Tampuran) in order to distinguish him from the former³. At the age of twenty-eight, he married Janaki Amma, the sister of Kattullil Acyuta Menon. In 1890, Koccunni Tampuran moved to Irinnalakkuda to enjoy the friendship of the prince of that principality. But he left the place after ten years, when he found it difficult to contain the grief of the demise of this friend and patron and finally settled at Cranganore⁴.

The poet won several awards and citations in recognition of his poetic genius. He became famous as a scholar and poet at the age of twenty. An incident that illustrates his great poetic talent and sharp intellect is worth mentioning here. Once, His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin visited Tiruvancikkulam to pay homage to the poets at that time. Poets like Kunnikkuttam Tampuran. Orvankara Nilakanthan Namputiri, Venmani Mahan Namputiri. Natuvattacchan Namputiri and some others assembled before the king. Each poet was to recite twenty verses in the same metre, and using the figures of speech prescribed by the king. All the nine poets who participated in the competition recited their verses as per direction. But Koccunni Tampuran made a humble request to the king to direct them to recite their newverses once again. When all the participants failed to repeat their own verses, Koccunni Tampuran easily recited his own verses and all the verses of the other participants. Not satisfied with this, he recited, to the dismay of others, the Sanskrit translation of all of those verses in no time, employing the same metre and figures of speech. All the participants and the king applauded the poetic talent and memory of Koccunni Tampuran⁵.

The king of Cochin made him the poet laureate and gave him the title "Kavisarvabhanuma"- monarch among poets⁶. The Price of wales also paid honours to the poet by awarding him a Gold Bangle and precious silk. In 1922⁷. Kunnikkuttan Tampuran, another poetic genius of Kerala, conferred on him the title 'Divyanam Savyasaci' and lauded his poetic talent in both Malayalam and Sanskrit⁸.

Koccunni Tampuran was a regular member of the Kavitakkalari of Cranganore (assembly where poets tested their talent). The famous poets of the time assembled there and exhibited their talent in versification in Malayalam and Sanskrit. All the composition were read out in the assembly and the meritorious one was applauded and honoured with an award after serious discussion. Usually the composition of Koccunni Tampuran received the unanimous approval of the assembly⁹. Contemporary poets like the venmani (Acchan Mahan) Namputiris and Oravankara Nilakanthan Namputiri have lauded the poetic prowess of Koccunni Tampuran. The poet died in 1926 A.D., at the age of sixty-eight.

His Works

Koccunni Tampuran has greatly contributed to literature,

both Malayalam and Sanskrit¹⁰. He was originally a Sanskrit poet. It was Venmani Acchan and Mahan Namputiris who encouraged Kocunni Tampuran to compose in Malayalam. The transition in the literature of Kerala from Manipravalam to pure Malayalam was effected by the Venmanis. But it was completed in the works of Kocunni Tampuran.

Malayalam Works

Kocunni Tampuran has enriched pure Malayalam literature with thirty works of different genres, which include Mahakavyas, Rupakas, Khandakavyas, Stotras and works on poetics and grammar.

Mahakavyas in Malayalam

He has to his credit four Mahakavyas as valueable contributions to Malayalam literature. They are:

(1) Pandavodaya, (2) Savitrimahatmya, (3) Vancisa vamsa and (4) Gosrtsadityacarita.

(1) Pandavodaya deals with the story of the Pandavas, culled out from the Mahabharata¹¹. This Mahakavya of great merit depicts the story of the Pandavas from Ahjnatavasa to Uttarasvayamvara, in 22 sargas. The work was completed in A.D. 1912, according to the chronogram 'Sampanna Pandudayam' in the work.

(2) Savitrimahatmya, another Mahakavya in Malayalam, consists of 10 sargas dealing with the story of Savitri and her chastity. The work was serialised in the 'LakSmibhayi', and was completed in 1914¹².

(3) Vancisavamsa deals with the history of the royal family of Travancore in 21 sargas. It is a monumental Mahakavya composed in 1918 to celebrate the 60th birth anniversary (SaStyabdapurti) of King Sri Mulam Tirunal of Travancore. The work composed in the manner of Raghuvamsa of Kalidasa, contains true historical details¹³.

(4) Gosrisadityacarita is a similar work written in the year 1918 celebrating the 60th birth anniversary of King Ramavarma of Cochin. The work deals with the history of the royal family of Cochin in 8 sargas¹⁴.

Dramas in Malayalam

Kocunni Tampuran has contributed eight dramas to Malayalam literature. Among them Pancalisvyamvara, Ajnatavasa, sri RamapattabhiSeka and Phalgunavirya are based on Itihasas. These four plays are not extant now. The story of Umavivaha is taken from Purana. Kalyaninataka and Mathuramangala are dramas of comic appeal. Their plots are invented. Somatilaka is a Bhana type of drama.

Khandakavyas in Malayalam

Madanaketanacarita, Malayamkolla, Ambopadesa, Rukminisvayamvara and âaStipurti Darbar are his Khandakavyas. Malayamkolla depicts the seasonal variations found in nature round the year. The poem of great beauty and novelty consists of 12 sargas. Each sarga deals with the changes that occur in a particular month and ends with an invocation to the deity presiding over the month. The work exhibits the deep knowledge of the poet in Ayurveda, Astrology, Puranas and Smrtis. It is also a testimony to his power of minute observation, high imagination and descriptive skill.

Rukminisvayamvara is a khandakavya in three parts. The first part of this book was written by Kattullil Acyuta Menon, a contemporary of the poet. The work was completed by Kocunni Tampura by adding the last two parts.

Tullalpattus

Sundarakandam Tullal and Sastipurti Sitankan Tullal

are the narrative poems composed by him for the performance of Tullal, a type of dance drama of Kerala¹⁵. Kilippattus

Bhadrotpatti Killppattu, LakSmisvayamvaram Kilippattu are RamaSvamedham Kilippattu are his works belonging to the branch of Kilppattu are his works belonging to the branch of Kilippattu literature.

Malayalam translations

Kocunni Tampuran has translated several Sanskrit works into Malayalam. His srimadbhagavata is the Malayalam translation of Visnubhagavara. Sukasandesam Bhasa'.

Kantavrta is a small work on metrics, dealing with the rules of 61 Sanskrit metres with illustrations. Alankaramala the rules of 61 Sanskrit metres with illustrations. Alankaramala is a work on the rules of figures of speech. The rules are written in Kakli metre with a detailed commentary by the author. Brhatsamhita of Varamihira was translated into Malayalam under the title Bhasa brhatsamhita.

Prose works in Malayalam

Vikramorvasiyasara¹⁶ is a prose version of the Vikramorvasiya of Kalidasa. sankaracaryacarita is a biography of sankaracarya, the great Advaita philosopher, written on the basis of historical and legendary evidences.

Minor poems in Malayalam

Anyapadesa, Suryodaya, Madanaketanacarita, YakSiyum Vipranum, AtivatavarSa, etc., are some of the known minor poems of Kocunni Tampuran in Malayalam. Stotras

He has several stotras to his credit, written on several occasions. Most of them are not extant now. srikurumbastava and srutigita are two of his devotional poems available now.

Sanskrit Works

The contribution of Kocunni Tampuran to Sanskrit literature deserves no small praise. His Sanskrit works can be classified into Mahakavyas, Stotras, Sandesakavyas, Campus and dramas. sriramacarita, Uttararamacarita and Ramavarmakavya belong to the Mahakavya genre. In the class of his stotras, Devimahatmya is the most famous. sivakhya and Dsavatara prayojana stotra are his other stotras. Banayuddha is a Campu written by the author. Viprasandesa is the only message poem ascribed to Kocunni Tampuran. He is the only author having written three Bhana Vitarajavijaya Bhana (VVB) and somatilakabhana (STB), the last one in Malayalam. Anangajivana is his first Bhana and Vitarajavijaya is the last one.

From the foregoing chapters it is evident that Ramavarma Kocunni Tampuran was a profound scholar and prolific writer. He was popularly known as Ceriya Kocunni Tampuran. He was born in the royal family of Kotunnallur as the son of Ikkavu Tampuratti and Puratattu sankaran Namputiri. After his early education, he studied poetry from Godavarma Yuvaraja, his own uncle and a renowned Schola-poet of the time. He stayed at Cochin palace and learned all the lore of classical literature and poetry from ikku Amma Tampuratti, a learned queen. Krsna satri of Kumbhakonam was one of his great teachers. Kocunni Tampuran proved himself a versatile scholar, conversant with many languages, srutis, Smrtis, Puranas, Itihasas, sastras, Ayurveda, Jyotinam Mantra, Alamkara, commentary writing, painting, music, jugglery

and all the known arts and sciences. His scholarship in the science earned him the title. sastrajna'. He married Janaki Amma, the sister of Kattullil Acyuta Menon, Malayalam and Sanskrit was lauded by Kunnikkuttan Tampuran, a contemporary poetic genius of Kerala, by conferring the title "Divyanam Savyasaci' on him.

Kocconni Tampuran is one of the most prominent poets of Kerala. His contribution to Sanskrit literature includes Bhanas, Mahakavyas, Sandesakavya, Campu, srotras, etc. Kocconni Tampuran is the only author credited with the authorship of three Bhanas, Among his Bhanas AJB is his first drama in Sanskrit. It deals with the love affair of Anandavalli and king Bhadrasesa. The king flirts with her and manages to gain her company with the help of srngarasara, a Vita.

The play ends with the love-in-union of the lovers. The drama, being his first work, is simple and deals with a silly theme. But it satisfies the requirements of Bhana. Characters like courtesans, bawds, pleasure seekers etc., are presented here as in other Bhanas. The main sentiment is love-in union (sambhoga srngara).

VVB, his second Bhana is a continuation of AJB. Anandavalli and bhrasesa, the heroine and hero of AJB, their lover affair after a period of separation and the final union through aSvayamvara marriage, form the well-developed plot of VVB. Vasumitra, the villainous lover of Anandavalli, plays all crooked means to win her love, failing which he plans to abduct her with the help of Vancanastla, a prostitute, and Candasesa, a powerful king of the Pandya country. The Vita and the minister of Bhadrasesa spoil the enemy in time, as a result of which the bride chooses her lover in a selfselection marriage. The poet introduces a line of characters like king, minister, feudal lords, Vita, juggler, courtesans, bawds and young lovers. The main sentiment of the play is love-in-union.

Kocconni Tampuran is the only poet to be credited with the authorship of seven Mahakavyas. Of them, three are in Sanskrit and the rest in Malayalam. Ramacarita, Uttaramamacarita, and Ramavarmamahakavya are his Mahakavyas in Sanskrit.

Ramacarita depicts the story of the Ramayana in thirty-two sargas. The thirty-second verse of the 13th sarga of the Kavya was written by Godavarma Yuvaraja, the uncle of Kocconni Tampuran. The rest of kavya Ramacaritapurana, was completed by Kocconni Tampuran. He began the completion of Ramacarita by writing the biography of Gadavarman Yuvaraja in fifty-eight verses, called Vidvatyuvarajacaritam. Though an independent work, it is included as preface to Ramacaritapurana. Ramacarita is the only Mahakavya interspersed with a message to Sita by Rama through Hanuman. The poet designates this message as Harisandesha, and treats it as an independent poem. The inclusion of this message increases the novelty and beauty of the poem. Kocconni Tampuran is the first poet to create such a model poem for posterity. The poet has effectively described all the important incidents of the Ramayana. He has also won great success in the interpretation of sentiment. The characters of the poem appear life-like. Of indescribable merits. Ramacarita is the masterpiece of Kocconni Tampuran. It is a prestigious possession of the Keralites.

His Uttaramamacarita in eight sargas narrates the story of the Uttarakanda of the Ramayana. In fact, the story of Uttaramamacarita is a continuation of Ramacarita. But, still, the poet treats it as a separate kavya. The poetic genius of

the writer is lavished in this poem. Uttaramamacarita is considered as the crown of Ramacarita, as it belongs to the class of Mahakavyas of the high order.

Ramavarmamahakavya narrates the biography of Ramavarma, a king of Cochin who abandoned his throne on a prestigious issue. The poet's intention was to write a Mahakavya called Matamahisavamsacarita, narrating the history of the kings of Cochin. But the restricted his theme to describe the biography of Ramavarma, probably because the poet was attracted most by the virtues of the king. Important historical events in the life of the hero and his virtues are narrated in a delightful manner. New coinages of suggestive sense are an additional charm of the composition.

Banayuddamcampu, one of the most beautiful composition in Sanskrit, is the contribution of Kocconni Tampuran to campu literature. The main theme of the work is the love affair between USA and Aniruddha, and their marriage. The plot of the work is taken from the Xth Skandha of the Bhagavata. Love-in-union, suitable to the theme, is the main sentiment of the work. Verbal embellishments, picturesque descriptions, suggestion of emotions and sentiments, stanzas in a variety of metres, and pre sequences of varying Samasas, make the campu a classic work.

Viprasandesha, the message poem of Kocconni Tampuran, has several peculiarities. A separated lover from Kasi sends his message to his beloved staying at Trivandrum through a Brahmin (Vipra). The messenger has to travel by train. The hero of the work is identical with the poet and so the poem is autobiographical in nature. places of historical and cultural importance that lie between Kasi and Trivandrum are picturesquely described. The poet evinces a thorough knowledge of the geography of India. One of the notable peculiarities of this poem is that it concludes with the mention that the separated lovers are united when the fixed period of separation is over. Love-in-separation leads to love-in union, the main sentiment of the work, striking figures of speech, lucid style, the use of the Mandakranta metre, etc., make the work a fine piece of literary composition.

His Minor Works

Many of his minor works written on palm leaf are irrecoverably lost. Many of his compositions at the "Kavitakkalari' of Kotunnallur have not been preserved. Here a few of his minor but significant works deserve to be mentioned. They can be classified into commentaries, translations, muktakas versification for Kathakali, correspondence in verse and devotional songs.

The poet has written a simple and extensive commentary on his own Vidvatyuvarajacarita. Without the commentary, Vidvatyuvarajacarita is unintelligible. The poet has also made some variations in reading in his own Ramacaritapurana, with the purpose of making the poem more interesting. A 'tippani' is also added to the Ramacarita to bring out the ideas more clearly. Arogyasatram with a Sanskrit commentary shows his extensive knowledge in the field of Ayurveda.

Kocconni Tampuran has translated several works from Sanskrit into Malayalam. They include literary and scientific works. Among his translations, Brhatsamhita bhaSa is an authoritative work on astrology in Malayalam. It is a verse-by-verse translation of Varahamihira's Brhatsamhita, the magnum opus in astrology. The encyclopedic character of the original work with its poetic

style is maintained in the translation. As in the case of the original text, the style of the translation attains a remarkable sublimity by virtue of its poetic diction. Some portions of the translation were published in mangalodayam, a monthly.

Sukasandesambhasa is a Malayalam version of sukasandesa, the famous message poem by LakSmidasa. This work is another important translation of the poet, done in a lofty kavya style. Srimadbhagavata is a translation of Visnubhagavata into Malayalam from Sanskrit. This is a popular work of Koccunni Tampuran. The poet shows great skill in translating books from Sanskrit into Malayalam and vice versa. Both Sanskrit and Malayalam were at his command.

He wrote several devotional songs praising his favourite deities. sivakhya and Dasavataraprayojana stotra are his stotras in Sanskrit in addition to those mentioned earlier. srikurumbastava or Devimahatmya is a beautiful poem of devotional fervour written on the model of Narayanabhata's Narayaniya. The story of Devimahatmya, contained in the Markandeyapurana, is presented in 29 dasakas in his srikurumbastava. Ullur S Paramesvara Iyer, the author of Keralasahityacaritram, has not even mentioned the name of Devimahatmya. The other three works, Anyapadesa, Suryodaya and srirampattabhiseka, have not yet been discovered.

His contribution to prose literature is also noteworthy. Besides Vikramorvasiyasara and Sankaracaryacarita. Koccunni Tampuran has written prefaces to several books, like his famous preface to Jaiminiyasvamedha, a famous kilippattu by Acyuta Menon of Kattullil. The poet has included several verses in this book to enhance its beauty and appeal.

Among the 'Kilippattus' of Koccunni Tampuran, Ramasvamedha is the most impressive. The story of the work is drawn from the Patalakhanda of Padmapurana. It consists of five parts divided into sixty-five Adhyayas. It is noted for its lucid style, rich descriptive power and suggestive sense. The poet has proved his skill of composition in Dravidian metres like 'keka', kakali etc.

Some of Koccunni Tampuran's important works in Malayalam are mentioned above. He has made a rich contribution to the different branches of Malayalam literature. His Malayalam works alone from subject matter for a special study. Judged by his literary output, Koccunni Tampuran towers high as a rare poetic genius in Sanskrit and Malayalam.

Being a gifted composer, Koccunni Tampuran did correspondence with his friends in Sanskrit verse. Kerala Varma Valiya Koyil Tampuran of Travancore and Manavikrama Ettan Tampuran of Calicut were his intimate friends with whom he had letter correspondence. A large number of such letters written by Koccunni Tampuran are missing now. A few of them are preserved in journals like Rasikaranjini, BhaSapoSini, Vidyavinodini, Kavanakaumudi etc. Several other minor works of the poet were also published in these journals.

The Abhinaya Slokas composed to be enacted on the Kathakali stage are his contribution to Kathakali literature. They were written at the request of Ramunni Menon. Twenty eight such verses describe heaven in the Kalakeyavadha) two verses depict the forest in Bakavadha and eight verses describe Gandhamadana mountain. Koccunni Tampuran sang profusely like a nightingale.

Innumerable muktakas and strary verses were composed by him. Unfortunately they have not been preserved for posterity.

Conclusion

Koccunni Tampuran has contributed several minor works to all the known types of literature in Sanskrit and Malayalam. Many of them are not extant now Only a few works were published in journals like Rasikaranjini, Vidhyavinodini, Keralavyasan, Sahrdaya, Laksmi can be classified into stotras, translations from Malayalam into Sanskrit, commentaries, muktakas, verses for Kathakali, letter correspondence in verse with his friends. His translations include both literary and scientific works. The commentaries are simple and detailed. His letter correspondence in verse with famous poets of the period is informative and interesting. A few of those letters were published in journals.

The poet was a great devotee of Kali, Visnu and Sri Rama. His Devimahatmya, Dasavataraprayojana and Ramacarita testify to his ardent devotion to the chief Hindu deities. He was a great master of the Vaidarbhi style, Simple diction, faultless metre, imaginative qualities, figures of speech, suggested sense, etc., make each one of his work a masterpiece in that genre of composition. In the selection of plot and suggestion of sentiment he stands inimitable.

Ramavarma Koccunni Tampuran is the only poet of Kerala who has enriched a variety of forms in both Malayalam and Sanskrit literatures. His imbibed heritage, innate virtues and above all his scholarship, poetic genius and novelty of imagination mark him as a great poet. He was a voracious reader, a very good teacher, a discerning critic, a proficient actor and a prolific composer with great speed. His scholarship and poetic genius were respected by everybody in Kerala, especially by the great rulers. He ranks with scholar-poets of Kerala like Melputtur Narayana Bhatta, Ramapanivada and Keralavarma Valiyakoyil Tampuran. But in richness and variety of composition he stands foremost, thus making the citations 'Divyanam Savyasaci' and 'Kavisarvabhauma' meaningful. Koccunni Tampuran soared to fame as a master of unpremeditated art.

Abbreviations

- 1.KSC - Kerala Sahithya Charithram
- 2.CKSL - Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature
- 3.KSSC - Keraleeya Samskruta Sahithya Charithram
- 4.VVB - Vitaraja Vijaya Bhanam
- 5.AJB - Ananga Jeevana Bhanam

Foot notes

- 1.KSC-IV, PP-356-82, KSSC-V, PP-248-352, CKSL, PP-249-50
- 2.VVB-P-23
- 3.KSC-IV, P-358, AJB Introduction Page
- 4.KSC-IV, P-359
- 5.Ibid PP-359-60
- 6.Ibid, KSSC-V, P-249
- 7.KSSC-V, P-257
- 8.Kunjikuttan Thampuran-Kavibharatha
- 9.KSC-IV, PP-330-31
- 10.KSC-IV, PP-361
- 11.Pbd. Kerala Book House (2nd Edition) 1964, KSC-IV, P-374, KSSC V, P-251
- 12.Pbd, Kerala Book House (2nd Edition) 1969, KSC-IV, P-375
- 13.KSC-IV, PP-375-76
- 14.Ibid-PP-376-77
- 15.KSC-IV, P-378
- 16.KSSC-V, PP-345-46