István Perczel:

Accommodationist Strategies on the Malabar Coast: Competition or Complementarity?

Accommodatio – an Unavoidable Practice

Jesuit *accommodatio* is at the heart of this volume, a strategy employed by the Society of Jesus in its Catholicising mission in Asia and the Americas, which triggered heated controversies, such as those over the Malabar and the Chinese Rites. By focussing on the complex situation on the Malabar Coast in the second half of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, I will try to prove that the Europeans were neither the sole Christian missionaries active in the early modern South Indian mission field, nor were they the only ones forced to accommodate, or enthusiastic about accommodation.¹ In addition to the Malabar and Chinese Rites controversies sparked in the Catholic world, I would also add “the Chaldean” rites quarrel, which kept both the Indian Catholic Christians and their European prelates busy from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

On the Malabar Coast (in Kerala) the Jesuit mission had to compete, in addition to other European religious orders, with the Syrian or West Asian churches that provided their own missionaries in the field. When the Jesuits elaborated their missionary strategies on the Malabar Coast, they entered a complex situation with various actors of elite standing who included: 1) the local Hindu kings; 2) the Portuguese authorities in Cochin and Cranganore; 3) the local non-Christian population, including Hindus of various castes, Jews and Muslims; 4) the local Christian community, of ancient Christian ancestry, but divided into two castes, or endogamous birth communities (*jātis*): the *Vadakkumbhagar*, or “Northists” and the

¹ Ines G. Županov addressed some of these points a decade ago. See, Ines G. Županov, “‘One Civility, but Multiple Religions’: Jesuit Mission among St. Thomas Christians in India (16th-17th Centuries),” *Journal of Early Modern History* 9/3-4 (2005): 284-325.

Thekkumbhagar or “Southists” (or *Knanaya* Christians);² 5) the Church of the East, which split in 1552 into two parts: one holding to its original, so-called “Nestorian”, confession of faith, while the other joining Rome and thus constituting a new entity renamed as the Chaldean Church. Both of the churches sent their own competing missionaries to India;³ 6) the Catholic missionaries who started their activity before the Jesuits arrived; 7) the Papacy (and the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide) which tried to promote its own interests against the Portuguese royal patronage of the mission (*padroado*).⁴

Initially, the accommodation was not a conscious Jesuit strategy elaborated according to well defined theoretical principles; nor was it a mere intermediary strategy of making concessions to be abolished later when the perfect Catholicisation became possible. It was, in fact, a *conditio sine qua non* for all religious actors working in Malankara.⁵ According to Županov, it was in this environment that the Jesuit idea and practice of *accommodatio* as a strategy of conversion had been first elaborated and tested before being adapted on a global scale. Once the European missionaries reached Malabar, they could not act otherwise than inserting themselves into the several thousand years-old fine structure of the local society, developed as a result of the trans-Arabian Sea trade, an openness of the region to the West and the presence of multiple religions in the texture of a complex and hierarchical society.

I intend to further develop Županov’s intuitions – based primarily on the reading of Jesuit sources written mostly in Portuguese – especially the one stating that the Syrian missionaries provided the role model for the Jesuits, whom they both imitated and tried to eliminate.⁶ Thus, I will examine these competing but also complementary strategies, which resulted in

² For specific details, see the Appendix: Glossary of Technical Terms (hereafter Appendix).

³ See, Appendix.

⁴ See, Appendix

⁵ Malankara as well as Malabar means a “mountainous region” in Malayalam. The Portuguese translated it as ‘a Serra’. I use Malabar, Malankara and Serra without distinction.

⁶ Županov, “One Civility, Multiple Religions,” 309-10.

the creation of a unique early modern culture in South India but also left a lasting impact, of which modern historical narratives emplotted as a “loss”, without considering also certain “gains”. Recent opening of hitherto closed manuscript archives of the local communities has shown how much of this culture survived during the centuries.⁷

The Role of the Syriac Language

According to Županov, the Jesuit missionaries in Malabar came gradually to the conclusion – as against the earlier Franciscan inflexibility – to abandon their original strategy of promoting Latin as a universal language of sacrality and culture complemented by, wherever appropriate, the vernacular. They, therefore, accepted Classical Syriac as the sacred and literary language of their mission in combination with the vernacular Malayalam.⁸ Classical Syriac, the language of several Asian churches, enjoyed and still does enjoy a very high esteem among the Christians of Malabar. In the Indian Christian society, it played a role analogous to Sanskrit. Being the language of a privileged and hereditary priestly caste, it gave them an extraordinary authority as that of the trustees of the community’s spirituality and cultural heritage. A *malpan* (Syro-Malayalam word meaning “teacher”, “professor”,

⁷ The SRITE project (initiated in the year 2000) is responsible for surveying, digitalizing and cataloguing of over 1,200 manuscripts in Syriac and Garshuni Malayalam. See, Appendix. The ongoing SRITE project has been sponsored by Central European University (CEU, from 2000 to date, intermittently), the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* via the University of Tübingen (2004-2009) and the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML, from 2007 to date). See www.srite.de. Its success is due to Mar Aprem, Syrian Chaldean Metropolitan of India, Dr. Ignatius Payyappilly, Chief Archivist of the Ernakulam-Angamaly Diocesan Archives of the Syro-Malabar Church, the late Yehuda Elkana, former Rector of CEU, Stephen Gerö, Emeritus Professor at the University of Tübingen and last, but not least, Father Columba Stewart O. B., Executive Director of HMML. In my chapter, I will refer to a number of these documents discovered and digitally preserved.

⁸ Županov, “One Civility, Multiple Religions”: 306-7, citing a programmatic letter of Francisco Dyonisio, the Rector of the Jesuit College in Cochin, to the Jesuit General Mercurian, 2 Jan., 1578, *Documenta Indica*, ed. J. Wicki, vol. 11 (Rome: IHSI, 1970) (hereafter *DI*), 69.

from the Syriac *malpānā*), or a priest and a teacher of Syriac language and literature, is very highly valued.⁹

When the education of a new generation of Catholic priests began at the Vaipicotta Jesuit College in Chennamangalam around 1584, they decided to focus on Syriac. Originally this was to constitute a hurdle, but the arrival of a young Jesuit linguistic genius, Francisco Roz (1559-1624) in 1584 had solved the problem.¹⁰ The colophon in two catechism manuscripts is an interesting testimony to this phenomenon.¹¹ The catechism bears the title: *A Succinct Explanation of the True Law that All Christians Should Know*. It is manifestly a translation of a standard Latin catechism in question-and-answer form, containing the teaching of the Catholic Church. The colophon says that the catechism was translated from Malayalam (literally: “from the Indian [*Hendwāyā*] language”), “for the instruction and learning of the simple-minded children”, the latter expression meaning the students.¹² Thus, the catechism was first written in Malayalam, probably by Francisco Roz and, then, translated into Syriac, because this was the proper way of instructing the young priests about the Catholic doctrine.¹³ (Picture 1).

⁹ The last great Malankara Malpan of the Indian Syrian Orthodox Church was Fr. Kurien Kaniamparampil (1911-2015). He translated the Syrian Orthodox liturgy from Syriac into Malayalam and wrote inspired poetry in Syriac.

¹⁰ He was a Catalan from Girona, and the original spelling of his name was (Francesc) Ros, which was changed to Roz according to the Portuguese spelling. He was born in 1559, entered the Company of Jesus in 1575 and arrived in India in November 1584. At that time, he had finished three years of training in liberal arts and three years of theology. *DI*, vol. 12, 704 and *DI*, vol. 12:10.

¹¹ The manuscripts contain the translation of a catechism found in four manuscripts in St Joseph's CMI Monastery in Mannanam (Kottayam District): *MS Mannanam Syr 44*, 68, 70, 72.

¹² The colophon is found on f. 75rv of *MSS Mannanam Syr 44* and on ff. 90v-91r of *Mannanam Syr 68*. See the translation of the full colophon in I. Perczel, “Classical Syriac as a modern *lingua franca* in South India between 1600 and 2006”, *Modern Syriac Literature, ARAM Periodical* 21 (2009): 289-321, here 309.

¹³ Manuel Marcillo S. J., *Crisi de Cataluña hecha por las naciones extranjeras* (Barcelona: Imprenta de Mathevat delante la Retoria del Pino, 1685; digital facsimile edition: Alacant : Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2003 – <http://www.luisvives.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=11348&portal=10> [last accessed 6 January 2017]), p. 320-21.

Syriac was also a language of communication between the West Asian missionaries, such as Mar Abraham (?-1597), and the Saint Thomas Christians, as the Portuguese called the Syrian Christians in Kerala. Malayalam and Portuguese were also used among the Jesuit missionaries and the local Christian elites. Most importantly, Syriac became the language of a *Kulturkampf* among the missionaries. Consequently, a more traditional Syriac culture, that of the Church of the East/Chaldean Church, was competing with a newly invented and ingeniously formulated modern missionary culture in Syriac. Thus, Syriac acquired, in addition to its traditional status of the Sanskrit of the Christian priests and the language of communication with the West Asian Churches, the role of the “Latin of the East”. Both the Western missionaries and the local learned elite were fully conscious of the fact that they were sharing the same Syriac culture and were competing with each other in speaking and writing an excellent Syriac, just as their European humanist counterparts were doing in Latin.¹⁴ These texts contain personal information unavailable from the sources written in European languages.

Another common cultural ground was artistic expression, especially those objects usually called the “sacred” art and artefacts. Dating them is very difficult, even based on the written testimonies. They include granite crosses, church complexes, reliefs, statues, murals. Very few of them, such as the famous Persian crosses, can be dated safely to pre -Portuguese period; a number of them, while reflecting traditional Indian craftsmanship, contain elements that can only be attributed to a European influence. Some of these latter artworks are datable to the sixteenth-century, but it may not be clear who commissioned them. These objects also

¹⁴ On Syriac as the language of a common humanist culture in India see Perczel, “Classical Syriac as a modern lingua franca in South India” and “Alexander of the Port/Kadavil Chandy Kattanar: A Syriac Poet and Disciple of the Jesuits in Seventeenth-century India,” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 14 (2014): 30-49.

point to the mutual accommodationist strategies responsible for creating a new visual culture.¹⁵

Toward a New Definition of Accommodation

The Jesuit *accommodatio*, therefore, had not been a simple Jesuit invention. It was jointly developed by the Indian Christians, their Syrian prelates and their European missionaries through debates, quarrels and competition. To see it as unilaterally imposed on the Saint Thomas Christians underestimates the agency of the other actors.¹⁶ A methodological problem of considering the accommodationist strategies of the diverse groups together is that it is absolutely impossible to disentangle them from each other. In order to retell the story from this entangled perspective, it is necessary to redefine accommodation. From the uniquely European (Jesuit) perspective, it consisted in separating the religious from the social and political. While being rigorous in defining the religious sphere, it is laxist in defining the social sphere, which is considered “indifferent,” or *adiaphoron*.¹⁷ From the perspective of other communities, accommodation consisted in separating what was considered as constituting the community’s identity, in which religion was only one factor, from what was less important, and to be rigorous in the first while being laxist in the latter. These Christian communities, be they West Asian or Indian, kept their Christian identity for many centuries in the midst of an overwhelming non-Christian majority. So, often, what was judged as socio-

[IP1] megjegyzést írt: So in the singular!

¹⁵ On Indo-Christian art, see István Perczel, “Monuments of Indian Christian Art: Problems of Genres, Dating and Context” in *Christianity in Asia: Sacred Art and Visual Splendour*, ed. Alan Chong et al (Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum, 2016), 38–49.

¹⁶ Županov, “One Civility, Multiple Religions,” 324–25.

¹⁷ On the concept of *adiaphora* or “indifferent” things and acts, see B. J. Verkamp, *The Indifferent Mean: Adiaphorism in the English Reformation to 1554* (Athens, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan: Ohio University Press and Wayne State University Press, 1977). See also Ines G. Županov, “Le repli du religieux: Les missionnaires jésuites du XVII^e siècle entre la théologie chrétienne et une éthique païenne”, *Annales HSS*, 6 (1996): 1201–1223 and *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

cultural by the Jesuit accommodationist practice and theory, was more important for them than dogmatic confession or theological distinction. For this reason, they were quick to adopt the Tridentine theological definitions and, occasionally, to abandon them, a fact that brought accusations of perfidy and dissimulation by the European missionaries. However, it was precisely this attitude that permitted a certain complementarity between the accommodationist strategies of the diverse groups.

The same is not the case with liturgy, rites and customs, because any change affected the daily life of the community. An additional neuralgic point for the local Christians had been the question of jurisdiction, since it necessarily entailed a radical change in the daily life. It was essential for both the local Christians and the West Asian missionaries to draw a precise line between the elements indispensable for their identity and the *adiaphora*. The arrival of the Europeans was not only a threat but also an opportunity to take advantage of the new commercial and power relations, to know the world and to satisfy their curiosity.¹⁸

Analogously to the heated debates among the European missionaries and their commissioners, there were heated debates among the Indian Christians and their Syrian missionaries about the question of where to set the boundaries between the two realms and these debates referred primarily to liturgical and ritual questions. These debates and competition inevitably led to the redefinition of the group identities but also to the creation of a common South Indian Christian culture.

¹⁸ On this cosmopolitan complementarity, see I. Perczel, “Cosmopolitismes de la Mer d’Arabie : Les chrétiens de saint Thomas face à l’expansion Portugaise”, in *Cosmopolitismes en Asie du Sud : Sources, itinéraires, langues (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)*, ed. Corinne Lefèvre, Ines Županov and Jorge Flores, Collection Puruṣārtha 33 (Paris: Éditions de l’École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2015), 143-169.

*Entangled Accommodationist Strategies in late sixteenth-century Malankara: Syrian Christian Prelates, Archdeacons and the Jesuits*¹⁹

1) *Mar Abraham the Global Traveller (1556-1570)*

At the moment when the Portuguese arrived, the Christian communities on the Malabar Coast had longstanding traditional links with the East Syrian Church of the East. After a long intermezzo that had lasted for almost a century, these links were powerfully reanimated after 1490, due to the mission of a deacon, Joseph the Indian, and of a certain George from the aristocratic family of the Pakalomattam. They brought Syrian bishops back to India, and were consecrated as priests (George became Archdeacon). From this time on, Syrian bishops kept on coming to Malankara again.²⁰ The main spiritual power resided with the bishops, while the Archdeacon was the local head of the community wielding both spiritual and secular power. As the Christian community consisted of two castes (*jāti*'s), the Northists (*vadakkumbhagar*) and the Southists (*thekkumbhagar*), there are indications that in the early sixteenth century there were two Archdeacons in the community, one for each caste.²¹

In 1552, a split occurred within the Church of the East and the Chaldean Patriarchate, which united with the Roman church under the leadership of Patriarch Mar John Sulaqa (1553-55),

¹⁹ For earlier treatments of this period see J. P. M. Van der Ploeg, *The Christians of St. Thomas in South India and Their Syriac Manuscripts* (Rome/ Bangalore: Center for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies/Dharmaram Publications, 1983), 8-18; Mar Aprem, *The Chaldean Syrian Church in India* (Thrissur: Mar Narsai Press, 1977, reprint: Delhi: I.S.P.C.K., 1983); Joseph Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India, vol. 2: From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century (1542-1700)* (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 1988), 37-56; J. Kollaparambil, *The Archdeacon of All India* (Kottayam: The Catholic Bishop's House, 1972), 81-99. See also articles by Županov and Perczel in the bibliography.

²⁰ See Perczel, "Cosmopolitismes de la Mer d'Arabie", 151-58.

²¹ This is indicated by a Jacobite church history written between 1751 and 1764, which claims that Saint Thomas selected members of two families to be leaders of the community and that Thomas of Kana conferred upon these two families the Archdeaconate in 345. See, Perczel, "Language of Religion", 425-426. Also, later, Mar Joseph is said to have appointed two Archdeacons, "one for the Northern faction ... and one for the Southern faction": Narrative of F. Dionysio on the St Thomas Christians, Cochin 4 January 1578, *DI*, vol. 11, 142. See also J. Kollaparambil, *The Archdeacon of All India*, p. 85.

was formed. From that time onward, both churches sent bishops to India.²² The Nestorian Catholicos, Shim'on VII Denkha, sent Mar Abraham, who became an important historical actor in Malankara. The precise date of his arrival is not known.²³ He was first mentioned, anonymously, as “a heretic, pretending to be a bishop, from the Nestorian sect” in a letter by the Jesuit Luis Fróis (1557).²⁴ He came through Cochin from Cairo and had been disguised, according to Jesuit metaphorical language, “dressed in sheep’s skin”,²⁵ and set up his headquarters in the Kingdom of Angamaly, out of the reach of the Portuguese residing in Fort Cochin.²⁶ His Archdeacon must have been originally the uncle of the later Archdeacon George of Christ, another George, upon whose request Mar Abraham was originally sent to India in 1556, according to the *Narrative* of the Jesuit Francisco Dionysio (1578), which does not give the name of the uncle.²⁷ However, it is given in a letter, dated 1565, of the Chaldean Patriarch Mar Abdisho IV (1555-1567), the successor of John Sulaqa murdered by the Turks in 1555, in which he is nominating George of the Cross to be suffragan Bishop of Palur (today: Palayur), a consecration that, as we shall see, had never been performed.²⁸

At that time George the Elder must have been quite old, and he may have held the office of the Archdeacon of the Nestorian Bishop Mar Denkha in 1528, according to the Muttuchira granite inscription of which more will be said below. He must have died not long after Mar Abraham’s arrival and his place must have been taken by his nephew. Modern historiography

²² See, Mar Aprem, *The Chaldean Syrian Church in India*, 24.

²³ Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, vol. 2, 37-40. Earlier historians had claimed that Mar Abraham originally came to Malabar as a Chaldean. See, for example, Van der Ploeg, *The Christians of St. Thomas*, 11-12. Yet, all the local Church histories tell the story of Mar Abraham having come first as a Nestorian. See I. Perczel and George Kurukkoor: “A Malayalam Church History from the Eighteenth Century, based on Original Documents,” in *Bibel, Byzanz und Christlicher Orient: Festschrift für Stephen Gerö zur 65. Geburtstag*, ed. D. Bumazhnov, E. Grypeou, T. Sailors and A. Toepel (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 291-314, here 298-300.

²⁴ *DI*, vol. 3, 717.

²⁵ That is, a false pastor, “a wolf in sheep’s skin”; *DI*, vol. 3, 717.

²⁶ Letter of Melchior Carneiro S. J. to Luis Gonçalves da Camâra, 24 December 1557, *DI*, vol. 3, 800.

²⁷ *DI*, vol. 11, 138.

²⁸ Letter of Patriarch Abdisho IV, Gazarta, 25 August 1566, *DI*, vol. 7, 703-05, here 704.

A little later, Mar Abdisho sent the brother of John Sulaqa, Mar Joseph Sulaqa, to Malabar as a Chaldean bishop. Mar Joseph could not have reached Malabar before 1558, when the Portuguese allowed him to occupy his see to spite Mar Abraham. However, in 1562, Mar Joseph was deported by the Inquisition to Lisbon under accusation of being a Nestorian heretic. While Rome was inclined to allow the Chaldean jurisdiction in India, the Portuguese, confident of their *padroado* rights, resisted. In August, 1558 Mar Abraham was also captured and forced to profess the Catholic faith in Cochin.³¹ He, too, was deported from Malabar to Goa and, from there, to Portugal, but he escaped from custody in Mozambique. After finding out that the Nestorian Patriarch Shim'on VII Denkha who ordained him had died, he went to Gazarta, where the Chaldean Patriarch Abdisho IV was residing. Mar Abdisho sent him first too Rome with recommendation letters to Pope Pius IV, in order to be resent subsequently to India. Francisco Dionysio, the Jesuit Rector of Cochin, wrote that these details were told to him by Mar Abraham in person.³² In Rome, Mar Abraham was ordained again as a bishop.³³ He was therefore appointed Metropolitan a second time in 1565 by Pope Pius IV.³⁴ From Rome, Mar Abraham returned to Gazarta and in the letter that Pius IV addressed to Patriarch Abdisho, he informed him that Mar Abraham had chosen as his seat Angamaly,

³⁴ *DI*, vol. 11, 138.

which was “at the borders” (in fact, outside) of the Portuguese territory.³⁵ This was a strategic choice to be outside the reach of the Portuguese. Mar Abraham also persuaded Patriarch Abdisho to consecrate George of Christ, Archdeacon of Angamaly, as Bishop of Palur.³⁶ George the Elder probably died before Mar Abraham’s deportation, while George of Christ had already served under Mar Abraham and was called Archdeacon of Angamaly even in Mar Abraham’s absence.³⁷ Hence, he served under Mar Joseph and continued in service of Mar Abraham upon his return. In this volatile situation, the Archdeacons assured the continuity of the governance of the community.³⁸ George’s nomination to the episcopacy was an act of accommodation. However, eventually, this idea was to turn against Mar Abraham himself.

Mar Abraham reached the Malabar Coast for the second time in 1568. He was once again detained in Goa, since he had no authorisation from the Portuguese King to act as a bishop. To the Viceroy’s request, sent to Portugal concerning Mar Abraham’s status, no response arrived for two years. Somehow, Mar Abraham managed to escape from Goa in 1570 and settled in Angamaly.³⁹ He governed the majority of the Malankara Christians until his death in 1597.⁴⁰

2) *Mar Shim‘on and Archdeacon Jacob: Nestorian Resistance and the Contours of a Shared Culture (1577-1593)*

³⁵ Letter of Pope Pius IV to Patriarch Abdisho IV on Mar Abraham, 23 February 1565 in Giamil, *Genuinae relationes*, 70.

³⁶ A Portuguese translation of Mar Abdisho’s letter – originally in Syriac – is published in *DI*, vol. 7, 703-5.

³⁷ *DI*, vol. 11, 141-42.

³⁸ For George of the Cross, see Kollaparambil, *The Archdeacon of All India*, 82-94. On George governing the community after Mar Joseph’s deportation, see Kollaparambil, *The Archdeacon of All India*, 85-86.

³⁹ *DI*, vol. 11, 64-66.

⁴⁰ Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 37-49; Van der Ploeg, *The Christians of St. Thomas in South India*, 8-15.

In 1576, another bishop appeared in Malankara, claiming that he had lost his Letters of Recommendation.⁴¹ He was first mentioned in a letter by Francisco Dionysio to Melchior Dias in 1577. Thenceforth, a bitter strife began between the two prelates. Mar Abraham thought that the identity of the community could be maintained even if the Catholic theological, disciplinary and liturgical principles were accepted, if only the Chaldean jurisdiction, the use of the Syriac language and the liturgical prayers of the Assyrian Church were kept. Contrary to this, Mar Shim'on rejected most of the innovations and wanted a full adherence to the Assyrian (*vulgo* Nestorian) jurisdictional, liturgical and canonical practice. However, his party also accommodated to the new synthetic Indian Christian culture. Threatened by the presence of Mar Shim'on, Mar Abraham approached the Jesuits in Cochin and opened up his community to the Roman reform.⁴²

While Mar Shim'on faced staunch opposition from Mar Abraham and the Jesuit Fathers, he remained in Kadutthuruthy under the protection of the Queen of Vadakkumkur. He appointed Jacob Nadakkal from an aristocratic family of Muttuchira to the office of Archdeacon.⁴³ Two Franciscan monks took Mar Shim'on under their protection against the Jesuits and took him to Rome in 1584, where it was discovered that he was an impostor, having been neither consecrated as bishop, nor as a priest.⁴⁴ Confined to a Franciscan monastery in Lisbon, he

⁴¹ See the Appendix.

⁴² *DI* vol. 11:65.

⁴³ See H. Hosten, *Antiquities of San Thomé and Mylapore* (Madras: The Diocese of Mylapore, 1936), 352. He cites letters from the Rev. Peediyekal, a former vicar of the Muttuchira Church, to the scholar T. K. Joseph.

⁴⁴ See A. Gouvea *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes Primaz da India Oriental, Religioso da Orden de S. Agostino* (Coimbra: Oficina de Diogo Gomez, 1606), 9r-10r ; Earlier, I did not trust this narrative. My statement in "Language of Religion", 401, n. 44, is erroneous.

continued to correspond with his Archdeacon until the latter's death in 1593.⁴⁵ Mar Shim'on died in 1599, two years after Mar Abraham.⁴⁶

Mar Shim'on had not disappeared without a trace. An inscription in Malayalam, in *vattēzuttu* script,⁴⁷ commemorates that in 1528 the Nestorian bishop Mar Denkha, with the priest George (*Giwargit piradi* [for *padiri*]), consecrated an open-air cross, after which the priest George together with his nephew, the priest Matthew, went to Portugal.⁴⁸ While I am inclined to identify this priest George with George the Elder, uncle of George of Christ, for the time being this hypothesis cannot be proven. In 1580, on the 13th of September, on the Feast of the Holy Cross, Mar Shim'on and the priest Jacob (*Yaqōv padiri*), erected an open-air cross in Muttuchira, which, most probably had been made of wood.⁴⁹ (Picture 2). In the same year, on the 18th of December, they placed on the altar a bas-relief Persian cross and, finally, in 1581, on the 24th of March, on Holy Friday, they erected a granite cross.⁵⁰ The inscription must have been commissioned around the same time by Archdeacon Jacob.

[IP2] megjegyzést írt: I restored the precise date. This is an important date, from which I am drawing conclusions in the following concerning the accommodation, as 13 September is the original East Syrian date, which already Mar Abraham changed to 14 September, the date used in the Catholic Church!

[IP3] megjegyzést írt: Here also, I had to restore the precise dates. This is important, as the 18th of December is a Catholic feast.

⁴⁵ The priest Jacob was buried in the Holy Spirit Church of Muttuchira and his inscribed tombstone with the date was found in 1886. See Hosten, *Antiquities of San Thomé*, 353.

⁴⁶ See G. Beltrami, *La Chiesa Caldea nel secolo dell'Unione* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1933), 107; Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 50.

⁴⁷ On the *vattēzuttu* script, see the Appendix.

⁴⁸ On the Muttuchira inscription and the Persian cross see the extensive study of Hosten, *Antiquities of San Thomé*, 341-363. The inscription was first treated by A. S. Ramanatha Ayar, who transcribed it in Tamil script in "Muttusira inscriptions", *Travancore Archeological Series VII/I* (Trivandrum 1930): 75-79. He did not give a translation, but only an interpretation. Hosten published T. K. Joseph's translation in *Antiquities of San Thomé*, 349-50. Later, T. K. Joseph revised the transcription and the translation in his "Notes" to H. Hosten, "The Saint Thomas Christians of Malabar (A.D. 1490-1504)", *Kerala Society Papers*, Series 5 (1930): 253-54. A new translation and a detailed interpretation will be published in István Perczel, "Some Early Documents about the Interactions of the Saint Thomas Christians and the European Missionaries", in *Malabar in the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism in an Indian Ocean Region*, ed. Mahmood Kooriadathodi and Michael Pearson (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

⁴⁹ In T. K. Joseph's transcription, the text speaks of a "holy cross (*Mar Silivā*)" covered with wood (*maretil potiñña*). T. K. Joseph thought that this phrase referred to the bas-relief Persian cross, which was found in a wooden frame. However, the text clearly distinguishes the cross called *Mar Silivā*, which "was erected" (*nirutti*), while it uses the verb "placed" (*veccu*) for the (Persian) *Bleeding cross*. My reading is that the original open-air cross standing in front of the Church of the Holy Spirit had been in wood before being replaced in 1581 with a granite cross.

⁵⁰ Here I correct the reading of Ramanatha Ayar and T. K. Joseph, who both read the date 29 Meenam (March according to the 'New Counting'). Yet, in the year 1581, Good Friday fell on the 24th of March. In fact, this is what I believe is written on T. K. Joseph's *estampage*, 24: ൨൪ instead of 29:

The inscription has great historical interest, which cannot be addressed in this chapter. For our present purpose it is important because it shows how far accommodation – that is, the acceptance of a common culture relating to ritual questions – had been adopted even by the rigorist group around Mar Shim'on. For example, the inscription used what was called the “New Counting” in the Malayalam inscriptions in Malabar.⁵¹ Instead of the Kollam era (Malayalam counting of the years), it used the *anno domini*.⁵² On the other hand, the Archdeacon Jacob Nadakkal opposed the introduction of the Gregorian calendar and stated that “he would accept the new calendar only if God were to prove with a miracle that it was more pleasing him than the old calendar”.⁵³ This was not yet an issue in 1581, when the inscription was made, as Pope Gregory XIII introduced his reforms in 1582.

The traditionalism of these prelates is shown by the fact that they were celebrating the Feast of *Mar Slibā*, the Holy Cross, on the 13th of September, according to the custom of the Church of the East, the Roman calendar placing it on the 14th of the same month. Yet, at the same time, the inscription also commemorates that the Persian Cross was placed in the altar “on the Feast of the 18th of the same year” – apparently, the Feast was so famous that the name of the month could be omitted. This feast is in fact a Catholic Feast of the Expectation of our Lady (18 December), which, in India, has also become the Feast of the Bleeding Cross, because it was reported that the bas-relief Persian Cross in Mylapore, Chennai, unearthed in 1547 at Saint Thomas Mount and placed on the altar of a newly built Portuguese church, started bleeding during the Feast of the Expectation in 1547 and this miracle was

ᲘᲚᲗ. According to an inscription on the pedestal of the granite cross, the cross erected by Mar Shim'on and Archdeacon Jacob was replaced in 1623/24 (Kollam era 799) with the one standing today. However, I wonder whether the pedestal itself is left from the original erected in 1581, as not only the style of the cross is markedly different but also it is manifestly from a different kind of granite.

⁵¹ See the Appendix.

⁵² On the Kollam era, see the Appendix.

⁵³ See Kollaparambil, *The Archdeacon of All India*, 96.

[IP4] megjegyzést írt: If we omit this, the meaning is lost..

[I5] megjegyzést írt: Here I made a very stupid error. I corrected it in the last version of the article sent to you.

repeated almost every year.⁵⁴ Although introduced by the Portuguese, apparently, the staunch Nestorian opposition enthusiastically celebrated this Catholic feast.

On the inscription, the priests, including the Archdeacons of the Nestorian bishops going back to 1528, are called *padiri* (from Portuguese *padre*), and two different words are used for a ‘cross’.⁵⁵ The open-air cross is called *Mār Siḷivā/Tiḷivā* (from the Syriac *Mar Slībā*: ‘Holy Cross’), while the Persian cross in bas-relief, is called the ‘Bleeding cross’

(*[r]udhirakkuriṣu*: *kuriṣu* comes from the Portuguese word *cruz*).⁵⁶ Apparently, by that time, the ancient Syro-Malayalam expression *Mār Siḷivā* was still generally used for a cross and especially for the open-air crosses (Pictures 3 and 3a). After Portuguese excavations in Chennai and the invention of the Bleeding cross, the ancient Persian crosses of Kerala also began to be called *rudhirakkuriṣu* using the Luso-Malayalam term (Picture 4).

This inscription is an example of the necessary accommodation that even the staunchest adherents to the Nestorian faith had to do quite organically in an atmosphere where the religious actors of different origins were competitively contributing to the creation of a common culture. Without being theorized, the distinction between the religious and the socio-cultural, complementary to that of the Jesuit distinction, had been pragmatically in practice. The question of where to draw the limits between the elements necessary for maintaining the religious identity and the social *adiaphora* (“indifferent” things and acts) was

⁵⁴ Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, vol. 1: *From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century (up to 1542)* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1984), 422-24.

⁵⁵ This had caused much confusion in the interpretation as it was thought that *padiri* could only mean a priest consecrated by European missionaries. Thus, T. K. Joseph proposed that *Giwargis padiri* could be a European Friar George (Hosten, *Antiquities of San Thomé*, 353-55). Yet, as the inscription calls the priest George - who, in 1528, co-consecrated the first open-air cross with the Nestorian bishop Mar Denkha - *Giwargis padiri*, and calls Archdeacon Jacob, *Yakōv padiri*, it seems to me that this George had been the Archdeacon of Mar Denkha, perhaps George the Elder, the uncle of George of the Cross.

⁵⁶ T. K. Joseph read in the inscription *utirakkuriṣu* and emended it to *[r]udhirakkuriṣu*. The *ta/dha* variation is normal: the *vaiṭṭēzuttu* script, just like other Dravidian scripts, does not distinguish between the voiced and unvoiced, aspirated and not aspirated consonants. *Ta* can also stand for *sa*, hence the *siḷivā/tiḷivā* variation. The *ra* from the beginning could have faded away.

of vital importance at that moment of Indian Church history. Mar Abraham, who intermittently opposed or sided with the Jesuits, was opting for a radically different pattern.

3) Complementary Accommodationist Strategies: Mar Abraham, Archdeacon George of Christ and the Jesuits (1570-1583)

Upon return to Malabar, Mar Abraham governed the diocese together with Archdeacon George of Christ who died either in 1585, or in 1591.⁵⁷ Mar Abraham, however, never consecrated his Archdeacon as bishop of Palur in spite of the authorisation obtained from Patriarch Abdisho.

Nor did Mar Abraham ever trust again the Roman prelates. He cooperated with the Jesuits only when he had to for his own professional survival. From where the first rifts between Mar Abraham and his Archdeacon came is difficult to judge, but the documents seem to suggest that nor did the Jesuits ever trust Mar Abraham and, as early as 1577, they planned to end the line of Chaldean bishops.⁵⁸ They did that by generating a rift between Mar Abraham and his Archdeacon, George of Christ (or were they using an existing rift?), attempting to convince the latter to accept the position of coadjutor bishop of Mar Abraham, based at the See of Palur. Francisco Dionysio, in the same letter where he reported about Mar Abraham's good will towards the Society of Jesus, reported also that, upon the order of the Father Visitor, Alessandro Valignano, he approached George of Christ to ask him to accept the Episcopal rank. George refused, but the Jesuits continued to see him as a perfect candidate

⁵⁷ See Kollaparambil, *The Archdeacon of All India*, 94-95.

⁵⁸ See the Annual Letter of the of the Indian Province sent to the Portuguese Jesuits from Goa in November 1577, *DI*, vol. 10, 938-59, here 949, also cited by Jacob Kollaparambil in *The Archdeacon of All India*, 86. The report, composed by Francisco Dionysio, the Rector of Cochin, proposed that George "could be counted on for greater responsibility", justifying this idea by the Archdeacon's great learning in the Scriptures and his knowledge of Classical Syriac "as if it were his mother-tongue", his "great virtue and prudence" as well as his devotion to and familiarity with the Jesuit Fathers.

whose appointment would “prevent the coming from Babylonia of the rapacious wolves that are destroying this Church.”⁵⁹

The jurisdiction over the Malankara was constantly contested. The presence of Mar Abraham, a Chaldean Metropolitan provided with Papal recommendation letters, was a fact to count with, although the Jesuits considered this an anomaly to be tolerated temporarily. As the appointment of a European bishop for the Saint Thomas Christians looked unrealisable at that time, the appropriate accommodation seemed to have been to find a native Christian with close ties to the Jesuits, trustworthy and with authority in his community, and fluent in Syriac. George of Christ satisfied all these criteria. This was in fact Mar Abraham’s initial, accommodationist idea, geared to resisting the Portuguese pressure. However, the Archdeacon was much friendlier with the Jesuit Fathers and ready to say the mass in Latin, a language he claimed he started to learn.⁶⁰ His appointment served the purpose of eliminating the combined influences of the Nestorian and the Chaldean Churches.

By 1579 the Jesuits must have convinced George to accept the consecration. They directly requested the Pope to confirm this and the Papal endorsement was given in 1580.⁶¹ In 1584, Mar Abraham reiterated his request for confirmation in a letter to Rome.⁶² It is possible that Mar Abraham continued to postpone the consecration and that his letter of 1584 had been dictated and written by the Jesuits. Mar Abraham kept postponing the consecration until the death of George of Christ.

According to Francisco Roz, writing in 1622, “Mar Abraham had never wanted to ordain him, saying that this nation was not apt for this dignity because they are too proud.”⁶³

⁵⁹ *DI*, vol. 11, 69.

⁶⁰ George of Christ to General C. Aquaviva, 30 December 1581, *DI*, vol. 12, 521-22.

⁶¹ Kollaparambil, *The Archdeacon of All-India*, 92-93.

⁶² Mar Abraham to Pope Gregory XIII, Angamaly, 13 January 1584, published in Giamil, *Genuinae relationes*, 97-100.

⁶³ Cited in Portuguese by Kollaparambil in *The Archdeacon of All-India*, 92, note 42. My translation.

The solution to stop the Chaldean jurisdiction in Malabar presented itself with the arrival of Francisco Roz, a Jesuit missionary with extraordinary linguistic capabilities, who first became a disciple of Mar Abraham under whom he studied Syriac, only to turn later into his main persecutor. He was the next person in line to administer the diocese because of his perfect command of the Malayalam and Syriac languages.

Just as the original idea of Mar Abraham backfired, the genie that the Jesuit Fathers let out of the bottle administered, some 75 years later, the most deadly blow to their mission in Malankara. In 1653, the then ruling Archdeacon, Thomas Pakalomattam, made himself consecrated uncanonically Metropolitan of All India by way of the imposition of the hands of twelve presbyters. He declared himself to be under the jurisdiction of the Babylonian Chaldean Patriarch, but received canonical ordination from the Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) bishop Mor Gregorios Abd al-Jalil in 1665. He thus initiated a long line of quasi-autocephalous Mar Thoma Metropolitans (in Syro-Malayalam: *Metrans*), bequeathing the office from uncle to nephew, which ended with the extinction of the Pakalomattam family in 1809.⁶⁴ Hereafter, the measure of consecrating a native bishop in times of emergency remained a possibility for the European missionaries, too, such as in 1663, when Alexander/Chandy Parampil, a relative of Mar Thoma I, was consecrated bishop of the Catholic Saint Thomas Christians, and in 1783, when Joseph Kariattil was consecrated Archbishop of Cranganore in Lisbon, in the hope that he would unite the Catholic and the Mar Thoma factions.⁶⁵ However, all this was unforeseeable future when the idea was invented in the late 1570s.

⁶⁴ See Joseph Thekkedatthu, S.D.B., *The Troubled Days of Francis Garcia S.J., Archbishop of Cranganore 1641-59*, Analecta Gregoriana 187 (Roma: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1972).

⁶⁵ On Mar Chandy Parampil's consecration see Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 100. On fol. 15v in the manuscript Paris BnF Syriac 25, Chandy Parampil deposited his official signature in Portuguese and Syriac. In Portuguese, he is called "Missionary bishop and Vicar Apostolic of Malankara" (*a Serra* in Portuguese), while in Syriac he is called "Bishop of all India". See I. Perczel, "Appendix: Contents of the MS BnF Syriac 25 (Cat 9.)" in *Christianity in Asia: Sacred Art and Visual Splendour* ed. Alan Chong et al. (Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum, 2016), 264-65. On Joseph

The following Syriac document, found recently, also testifies to the fact that the relationship between Mar Abraham and the Jesuits had never been close, unlike that between the Fathers and George of Christ. It also underlines the importance of expertise in the Syriac language. A manuscript, mostly a miscellany of Catholic sermons and commentaries, also contains a collection of letters from the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century on ff. 192r-195v.⁶⁶ In this collection, there are two Syriac letters mentioning Mar Abraham. The first is written in a very poor Syriac, while the second is a splendid example of high Syriac style.⁶⁷ The first can be translated in the following way:

[f. 192ra] “To the Head of the Deaconate that is lofty with spiritual gifts, greetings! The cause for us not coming to you⁶⁸ is that the Captain of Cochin [*arkōnā d-Kuksin*] wrote and sent us <about the fact> that [*aykān*]⁶⁹ Abraham, the adversary of the Padres [*b-‘eldīn padrī*] sent letters to him and to the Bishop⁷⁰ <proposing> that this schism should be solved [*d-tesht-rē ḥeryānā hānā*]⁷¹ before them. All this <happened> after the Christians came here and appointed intermediaries for this issue. Because of this, we wrote to the Captain that he should fulfil his wish. And it was because of this that we solicited this issue [*akkēp-n*]

Kariattil, see E. R. Hambye s. j., *History of Christianity in India*, vol. 3: *Eighteenth Century* (Bangalore: The Church History Society of India, 1997), 29-34.

⁶⁶ *MS Syr 46* (shelf mark: 090-252-S), 17th c., Saint Joseph’s CMI Monastery in Mannanam. The manuscript was first catalogued by Emmanuel Thelly, “Syriac Manuscripts in Mannanam Library,” *Symposium Syriacum VII: Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56/1-4 (2004): 257–270, here 268.

⁶⁷ The two letters are found on fol. 192rv.

⁶⁸ *l-wātkōn*: 2nd person plural in imitation of the Western rules of politeness. The normal Syriac address would be the 2nd person singular.

⁶⁹ Literally “how” (*aykān*). This is poor Syriac. It seems to be a calque on a Latin or Romanesque expression corresponding to *ut* or *quia*.

⁷⁰ The “bishop” is the bishop of Cochin, Dom Frei Henrique de Távora e Brito O.P. (? —1581)

⁷¹ This also is poor Syriac: dispute - *ḥeryānā* is masculine, while the author uses the female form of the verb. The correct form would be: *d-nesht-rē ḥeryānā hānā*.

su 'rānā]⁷² rather than [*mallōn dēn*]⁷³ that there be much pretext against the King⁷⁴

<pretending> that he has not fulfilled the promises concerning those things that earlier he had promised them. Also, the people of the locality of Parur abused some people from among the men belonging to the holy Roman Church and so it is not befitting that, after we received blows by their hands, we should go to them. So, let these be known, for there is absolutely no other explanation besides this.”⁷⁵

The letter was written in the time of Mar Abraham. The author apologises to the Archdeacon, George of Christ, for not visiting him. The schism mentioned is the one between Mar Abraham and Mar Shim'on. We know that Mar Abraham had turned to the King of Cochin for a solution of the schism. In 1577 Francisco Dionysio, the Rector of the Jesuit College in Cochin, the Captain and the Archdeacon approached the King on behalf of Mar Abraham, and the King promised to expel Mar Shim'on but delayed the execution of his promise asking the envoys to get Shim'on first expelled by the Queen of Vadakkumkur.⁷⁶ This must be the promise of the King to which the letter refers. Therefore, 1577 is the first *terminus post quem*. A closer dating becomes possible by a note in the letter about the inhabitants of Parur injuring a member of the Roman Church. This event, taking place between 1579 and 1580 - the beating of the Indian Jesuit Pedro Luís Bramane - is recorded in the Jesuit letters.⁷⁷

⁷² *akkēp-n su 'rānā* is my reconstruction. The version in the manuscript - *arpīn su 'rānā* - is meaningless. Most probably a copyist took the *kāp* for a *rīsh* and added the wrong vocalisation.

⁷³ This is the only possible meaning of the expression here, as there is no punctuation mark either after *su 'rānā*. Yet, this is not good Syriac. Normally *mallōn dēn* should stand at the beginning of a sentence and would mean “Or rather.”

⁷⁴ Most probably the Raja of Cochin.

⁷⁵ I have published a commented translation of this letter in “Documents about Mar Abraham and the European Missionaries”, in: *Mar Abraham and the Saint Hormis Church* [Malayalam and English: മാർ അബ്രാഹാം സെൻറ് ഹോർമിസ് ദേവാലയവും], ed. Ignatius Payyappilly (Angamaly: Saint George's Forane Church, 2016), 90-131, here 101-104. The translation and the commentary were re-published in Ignatius Payyappilly, *Dux ad historiam: Unfolding the Archdiocesan Archive of -Ernakulam- Angamaly* (Ernakulam: Archdiocesan Archives, 2016), 168-169. A revised version is forthcoming in Perczel, “Some Early Documents about the Interactions” (see above, n. 48).

⁷⁶ *DI*, vol. 10, 938-59, here 954.

⁷⁷ See Henry Hosten, “Peter Louis, S. J., or the First Indian Jesuit,” *Kerala Society Papers* I (1928): 45-47, here 47.

Therefore, the letter must have been written not much later than 1580, when the memory of this beating was still fresh and Mar Abraham and the Jesuits were on good terms.

The author of the letter used a simple Syriac style with many grammatical errors. If this was the level of the missionaries' knowledge of Syriac, this must have handicapped them in their dealings with the local elite.

A surprising element is that the author of the letter, while addressing the Archdeacon, terms Mar Abraham "the adversary of the Padres" (that is, of the Portuguese missionaries), although *b-ʿeldīn* is a legal adversary, not an enemy. This shows that even in the period when Mar Abraham, challenged by Mar Shim'on, asked the Jesuits for help, they did not trust him but they did trust the Archdeacon.

Very different is the second letter of the collection, datable to 1597!⁷⁸ It is addressed to George of the Cross (Archdeacon from 1593), the nephew of George of Christ. The letter mentions a recent "demise of the Metropolitan of Angamaly," that is, of Mar Abraham and, thus, can be dated sometime between January and September of 1597. The author calls himself the Archdeacon's "servant". The letter shows radical change from the 1580, the putative date of the first letter. The disposition of the Archdeacon toward the missionaries has changed. While the author of the first letter permitted himself to write in a rather dry and haughty style, not minding the errors, the author of the second letter feels necessary to flatter the powerful leader of the Saint Thomas Christians, whose defection he fears. Hence, he warns George of the Cross that he should keep the same disposition toward the "Rabbans", that is, the Jesuits, as his uncle, George of Christ. The most important feature of the second letter for our present purpose is its flourished high style and accomplished, complicated syntax, indicating a missionary in full possession of the Syriac language, a real *malpānā*. At that moment, the missionaries were already capable of entering the arena of Syriac learning. I

⁷⁸ See my translation in "Documents about Mar Abraham and the European Missionaries".

am inclined to attribute this second letter to Francisco Roz. Apparently, he was the first European missionary who was capable to face the challenge posed by the Syriac literary culture of the Saint Thomas Christians.

In the early 1580s, Mar Abraham collaborated in the introduction of Latin liturgical practices in the Malabar diocese, such as the extreme unction and the confirmation according to the Roman custom, and the communion under one species for the laity. On 26 October 1583, Alessandro Valignano - who had just returned from Japan - convoked a diocesan synod at Angamaly with Mar Abraham and George of Christ. This synod decreed a thorough Latinisation of the Church administration and the liturgical practice of the Malabar Diocese. Until recently the acts of this synod were believed to have been lost, but our SRITE team discovered the second part of the acts in a Garshuni Malayalam manuscript kept at Dharmaram College in Bangalore, together with the oldest extant copy of the Malayalam text – also in Garshuni – of the Acts of the Synod of Diamper.⁷⁹ While the Latinisation of the indigenous Indian Church is normally connected to the Synod of Diamper (or Udayamperur) in 1599, this little known synod had already introduced many of the changes, such as, the correction of the liturgical books according to the Latin customs; the removal of the names of the three Greek doctors, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius, from the commemorations; the prohibition of the priests' marriages after the consecration; obligatory confession and communion at least once a year for every woman above 12 and every man above 14 years of age; communion under one species; the restriction of the rank of confessor to those priests appointed by the bishop; the introduction of the Gregorian calendar and the

⁷⁹ According to Andrews Thazhath, *The Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church (A Historico-Juridical Study)* (Vadavathoor, Kottayam: Paurastya Vidyāpīṭham, Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1987), 130-31, the acts of the Synod of Angamaly have been lost. I have given the first description of this manuscript - MS Syr 32 [= Gar Mal 2], Dharmaram College, Bangalore -, in "Garshuni Malayalam: A Witness to an Early Stage of Indian Christian Literature", *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 17.2 (2014): 255-314, here 271. The manuscript was found and deposited at Dharmaram College by the great Indian scholar Mathias Mundadan, who had recognised its importance (oral communication by Dr. Ignatius Payyappilly).

feasts of the Roman Church in the Malabar diocese. As Mar Abraham convoked this synod and signed the acts, this first thorough legal act of Latinisation is connected to his name.⁸⁰ Apparently, whatever mental reservations Mar Abraham might have had, he was willing to adopt all the disciplinary changes required by his Jesuit sponsors. Already in January 1580, he pronounced himself in favour of these changes to fit the Roman usage of the sacraments, including the use of the extreme unction and the communion under one species, as well as the celebration of the Roman feast days.⁸¹ He also proposed to impose upon his flock the usage of the Roman missal and the Roman breviary under the strict condition that they be translated and printed in Syriac, possibly also in Malayalam transcription, so as to make them easier to use. He explained at length why Syriac had to be maintained: because Syriac was of great antiquity and because “the Church speaks in several languages, while the faith and the baptism are one and the same”.⁸²

Yet, this seemingly insignificant insistence on the liturgical language, which was apparently judged as *adiaphoron* by the Jesuit missionaries, meant much more to Mar Abraham. As can be judged on the basis of a good amount of Syriac manuscripts linked to him, his intention seems to have been to follow publicly the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar, but to continue to use the traditional prayers and liturgical books and to preserve the jurisdictional ties with the Chaldean Patriarchate of Mesopotamia. A witness to this tendency is a splendid manuscript of *Kashkol* – a Syriac service book in Syriac – now in the custody of the Chaldean Syrian Metropolitan of India, Mar Aprem in Thrissur. It was copied in 1585 in Kothamangalam by a certain Corepiscopa Mattai, son of the Priest Joseph Punnor, from the Beth Asmar family from Amid – apparently one of Mar Abraham’s West Asian assistants

⁸⁰ Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 52. The Acts of the Synod of Diamper were written in two copies, in *Mālayāśma* (see, Appendix) and in Garshuni.

⁸¹ Letter of Mar Abraham to General Mercurian, dated 15 January 1580, *DI*, vol. 11, 826-29. See also Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 51-52.

⁸² *DI*, vol. 11, 828. It is written in Portuguese with combined citations of Act 2:4 and Eph 4:5.

who were serving with him.⁸³ The *Kashkol* follows the order of the “Monastery of Mar Gabriel, crowned the friend of the angels... at the shore of the Tigris river, above Mosul”⁸⁴ and contains the traditional Nestorian services. Apparently, Corepiscopa Mattai was a , who used an unchanged Nestorian service book without any interior conflict and with the agreement of Mar Abraham.

This great emphasis on Syriac culture, combined with receptivity to Western innovations, was characteristic of Mar Abraham’s activity, even before the appearance of Mar Shim’on and Mar Abraham’s subsequent rapprochement to the Jesuits. It was in this period that the first Syriac inscriptions appeared, using the European Christian era. The earliest example is on the porch of the Saint Thomas Church at Mulanthuruthy, dated 1575.⁸⁵ Before that time, Old Malayalam and Tamil inscriptions dated events according to the Malayalam era. A unique bronze bell at Kuravilangad, inscribed in Syriac and dated 1584, is another example representing the new synthesis⁸⁶ (Picture 5).

4) Mar Abraham and Francisco Roz, the New Apostle Saint Thomas of India (1583-1624)

Thus, as long as the use of the Syriac liturgical language were to be maintained, Mar Abraham accepted to conform formally to all Roman, post-Tridentine, liturgical and canonical usages. As long as he and his priests had a quasi-monopoly over the Syriac learning, this gave them the upper hand in their dealings with the European missionaries. The

⁸³ On *Kashkol* and the office of the Corepiscopa, see the Appendix. The manuscript in question is *Thrissur MS Syr 22*. See, Van der Ploeg, *The Christians of St. Thomas in South India*, 141; Mar Aprem, “Syriac Manuscripts in Trichur,” in *Advances in Arts and Ideas*, vol. 1 (Thrissur: Saint Thomas College, 2005): 22–36, here 25; I. Perczel, “Some New Documents on the Struggle of the Saint Thomas Christians to Maintain the Rite and Jurisdiction” in *Orientalia Christiana: Festschrift für Hubert Kaufhold zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Bruns and Heinz Otto Luthé, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2013), 415-436, here 418-421. The full text of the colophon was published in Perczel, “Documents about Mar Abraham and the European Missionaries”, 115-17.

⁸⁴ *Thrissur MS Syr 22*, fol. 1v.

⁸⁵ See F. Briquel Chatonnet, A. Desreumaux, J. Thekaparampil, *Recueil des Inscriptions Syriaques, Tome I : Kérala* (Paris: De Boccard, 2008), 141-45.

⁸⁶ See Briquel Chatonnet et. al., *Recueil des Inscriptions Syriaques*, 105-07.

research conducted in the Syriac manuscript archives of the Saint Thomas Christian community has shown that, in Mar Abraham's time, besides the prayer books, the learned elite was reading and copying high-level East Syriac literature, such as a very metaphysical version of the *Life of Joseph Busnaya*.⁸⁷ They also read the *Paradise of Eden* by Abdisho of Nisibis, the Gospel commentaries of Ish'oyahb of Merv, etc.⁸⁸. These works, deemed Nestorian, were consciously occulted by the local elite by erasing or not copying the titles and the names of the authors.⁸⁹ A person with only superficial knowledge of Syriac would be unable to identify the text. At this stage of the strife the only hope for the missionaries to

[IP7] megjegyzést írt: I restored the information in this footnote. It is important!

⁸⁷ Jean-Baptiste Chabot translated the *Life of Joseph Busnaya* on the basis of a copy made by Samuel Giamil, of a manuscript completed in the year 1055 in the monastery of Mar Elijah and kept in the Vatican Library (MS Vat. Syr. 467): J-B. Chabot, « 'Vie du moine Rabban Youssef Bousnaya écrite par son disciple Jean Bar-Kaldoun' traduite du syriaque et annotée' », *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 1, 2 (1897): 357-405; 1, 3 (1898): 77-121, 168-190, 292-327, 458-480; 1, 4 (1899): 380-415; 1, 5 (1900): 118-143, 182-200. Surviving parts of the original text circulating in India were found in three Indian manuscripts (see István Perczel with the contribution of A. Toepel in "What Can a Nineteenth-Century Syriac Manuscript Teach Us about Indian Church History?, On MS Ernakulam MAP Syr 7," *Parole de l'Orient* 33 (2008): 245-265. However, the text translated by Chabot does not contain the statements that Francisco Roz read and condemned in Bar Khaldon's book, on which he reported in his *On the errors of the Nestorians active in this East India*, published by Irénée Hausherr, "De erroribus Nestorianorum qui in hac India orientali versantur auctore P. Francisco Ros S. I. Inédit latin-syriaque de la fin de 1586 ou du début de 1587, retrouvé par le P. Castets S. I., missionnaire à Trichinopoly," *Orientalia Christiana* 11,1 (40) (1928): 1-35. Nor does Chabot's text contain much of what was found in the Indian manuscripts while it contains other parts of those texts. On this basis, in the aforementioned publication I still proposed that the text found in India was an independent work by Bar Khaldon. Recently, I have modified this view due to a correspondence with Ralph Barczok, who works on the *Life*. According to Mr Barczok, it is possible that the text translated by Chabot is one heavily revised. In fact, parts of the Vatican manuscript are missing and were replaced by parts of another manuscript, which is a Chaldean revision of the text (see also the brief notes on this in Chabot, *Vie du moine Rabban Youssef Bousnaya* 1, 5, 196-97), so that elements of the original metaphysical part are only preserved in the Indian fragments, from which, however, the Christological considerations mentioned and condemned by Francisco Roz had been already excised.

⁸⁸ *The Paradise of Eden by Abdisho of Nisibis*, ed. Joseph E. Y. de Kelaita (Piscataway N. J: Gorgias Press, 2009). A copy of a version that must have circulated in Mar Abraham's time was found in *MS Syriac Matthew 2*, copied in 1806. *The Commentaries on the New Testament of Isho'dad of Merv* ed. and transl. Margaret Dunlop Gibson (= *Horae Semiticae* 5-7, 10-11) (Cambridge, 1915-1916; reprint: Piscataway N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2005). We have found it in two manuscripts, *Piramadam Gethsemane Dayro Syr MS 14* and *Trivandrum, Major Archbishop's House MS Syr 8* anonymous excerpts from the commentaries, corresponding to the form in which they were condemned by Decree 24 of Session III of the Synod of Diamper.

⁸⁹ On these manuscripts and the practice of occultation see I. Perczel, "Have the Flames of Diamper Destroyed All the Old Manuscripts of the Saint Thomas Christians?" in *Festschrift Jacob Thekeparampil – The Harp: A Review of Syriac and Oriental Ecumenical Studies*. Vol. XX (Kottayam, 2006): 87-104 and also Perczel, "Some New Documents on the Struggle of the Saint Thomas Christians", 422-25.

break this strategy of concealment/accommodation was to find someone in the community having the required erudition who would side with them. George of Christ was perfect for this purpose but, as the attempts at his consecration to the Episcopal rank of Palur failed and as Mar Abraham survived his Archdeacon, these hopes evaporated.

Francisco Roz became Mar Abraham's fiercest competitor. He learnt both Syriac and Malayalam, and was appointed, in 1587, professor of Syriac at the Vaipicotta College, established around 1580 but not opened before 1587.⁹⁰

When in 1585 the third provincial council of Goa was held under the presidency of Dom Frey Vicente de Fonseca, the archbishop of Goa, Mar Abraham also participated.⁹¹ The third session of the council, dedicated to the affairs of the diocese of Angamaly, adopted ten decrees. The first obliged Mar Abraham to confess and profess the confession of faith, which he had already done in Rome before the Pope Pius IV, and which he repeated in 1576.⁹² However, he introduced an odd personal note in Syriac on the first page of his personal copy of the revised Chaldean canon law book of Abdisho of Nisibis, from which we may understand that, though he accepted to make the required confession of faith, he considered it a "Roman innovation" imposed upon his conscience.⁹³

The eighth decree appointed a so-called assistant to the Archbishop of Malabar, who should be a "religious and learned person with authority", whose help, according to the canon, Mar Abraham would need "because of his old age, illnesses and because he is less well versed in the affairs of the Latin than in those of the Chaldean Church, so that it is natural ... that he

⁹⁰ Á. S. Hernández, *Jesuitas y obispos*, vol. II, *Los Jesuitas Obispos Misioneros y los Obispos Jesuitas de la extinción* (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2000), 90.

⁹¹ The content of the canons is briefly described in Joseph Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 53, 117.

⁹² J. H. da Cunha Rivara (ed), *Arquivo Portuguez-Oriental, Fasciculo 4o que contem os Concilios de Goa e o Synodo de Diamper* (Nova-Goa: Imprensa Nacional, 1862, reprint: New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 143-144.

⁹³ This "note", Mar Abraham's "Curse on Nestorius", is in Ernakulam Major Archbishop's Palace, *MS Syr 10*, fol. 1v. See the English translation and a commentary on the "Curse" in Perczel, "Documents about Mar Abraham and the European Missionaries", 112-115.

should be assisted by this religious person” to execute all the decisions of the Council.⁹⁴

Obviously, this person was designated as a supervisor of Mar Abraham. The tenth decree prescribed that if the new bishops were to come from Chaldea, they had to present their Recommendation Letters to the Archbishop of Goa, just like Mar Abraham had done. At this stage, *faute de mieux*, the Chaldean jurisdiction over the Saint Thomas Christians was still accepted and the missionaries prepared for the successor to the aging Mar Abraham.

Mar Abraham first refused to sign these decrees but, under the threat of the Inquisition he recanted, signed and promised to act accordingly. Francisco Roz became his appointed “assistant” (or supervisor).⁹⁵ With the access to the Syriac books of the Saint Thomas Christians, Roz soon provided a list of heretical points in them in his text written between 1586 and 1587 *On the errors of the Nestorians active in this East India*. They served as the basis for all later condemnations.⁹⁶ From this time onwards, Roz regularly denounced Mar Abraham for failing to implement the decrees of the Third Council of Goa and also for his “secret Nestorianism”. The accusations have been reported to Rome and, on 27 January 1595, Pope Clement VIII issued a brief authorising the Archbishop of Goa, Aleixo de Menezes, to conduct an inquiry into Mar Abraham’s orthodoxy, to take him into custody if he were to be found guilty and to appoint a Vicar Apostolic to govern the diocese. As a result, a secret inquiry was conducted by the Goan Inquisition at Vaipicotta College in April of 1596, which found Mar Abraham guilty.⁹⁷ No action was taken against Mar Abraham, however, because he died in January 1597. The text of the inquiry is now kept at Torre do Tombo, together with the acts of the Inquisition of Lisbon.⁹⁸ In this inquiry the main witness to Mar Abraham’s and

⁹⁴ J. H. da Cunha Rivara, ed., *Arquivo Portuguez-Oriental, Fasciculo 4o*, 149-150

⁹⁵ Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 53-54.

⁹⁶ The text was published by Hausherr, “*De erroribus Nestorianorum*”.

⁹⁷ See Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 54-56.

⁹⁸ See, Ricardo Ventura, “Rome as *Ur Caldeorum*: an inquiry on the diocese of Angamale (1596), on the Brink of the Synod of Diamper”, unpublished paper presented at a workshop, *Apostles and Heresiarchs: Representations of Early Christianity in 16th-17th Century India*, held at the Warburg Institute in London, 25-26 April, 2012. The document is entitled “Interrogatorios de Certas herezias, &

the Saint Thomas Christians' 'heresy' is Roz. It is from the aforementioned treatise of Roz as well as from the text of the inquiry that we can establish that the manuscripts containing the occulted texts mentioned above, found in the local Christian archives, or their models as these are mostly later copies, were made in Mar Abraham's time. The condemnatory notes and canons often cite, and refer to, the texts condemned in the specific form in which we find them even today. Naturally, much of what Roz had read is not available any more as these texts were later condemned to be burnt. However, astonishingly many of them were preserved in the archives that have been jealously kept by the communities but also in manuscripts that had been confiscated by the Europeans but were not burnt.⁹⁹

For the modern reader, there is something odd in this witch-hunting. What Mar Abraham wanted to preserve and what Roz had read and condemned had been standard literature in the Church of the East, composed through many centuries of its survival under the rule of the Sassanian kings, under the Muslim rulers, and in India. Mar Abraham and his elite circle could be conceding in matters relative to religion as the Europeans understood them, that is, in dogmas, the liturgical cycle, Church canons, the administration of the sacraments and the clothing of the priests, but not the rich centuries-old Syriac literature that was the basis of their common culture.

Roz was perfectly aware of this situation. While persecuting what he considered Nestorian and heretical culture, he also initiated a translating activity into Syriac, as well as the composition of new texts. Once the Syriac liturgical and literary practice was allowed, the Jesuits had to compete with the existing culture by creating a new Catholic Syriac literature

erros Nestorianos Contra Marabrahão Arcebispo de Angamale da Christandade da Cerra de S. Thome de Cochim, & Contra seus Casanares, pellos quais o *padre* subdelegado, ha de perguntar, as *testemunhas* que das herezias, & erros Conteudos nelles souberem, Com todo, o segredo, & resguardo deuido", *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Tribunal do Santo Oficio, Inquisição de Lisboa*, 28, 4941 (PT/TT/TSO-IL/028/04941), ff. 28r-37r. I warmly thank Dr. Ventura for allowing me to use his transcript.

⁹⁹ See, Perczel, "Have the Flames of Diamper Destroyed All the Old Manuscripts of the Saint Thomas Christians" and Perczel, "Some New Documents on the Struggle of the Saint Thomas Christians".

corresponding to Tridentine orthodoxy. Roz was not only up to this task, but, as a philologist/humanist, probably also enjoyed the challenge.

Thus, during the forty years between Roz's arrival in India and his death as Archbishop of Cranganore, (1584 -1624), a huge amount of literature was translated from the Latin into Syriac. The most important were the liturgical and scriptural texts. First, the Roman Mass and the Sacramentary were translated into Syriac, with rubrics in Garshuni Malayalam for the actions of the priests, given that they would understand these better than in Syriac, while they could recite the Syriac prayers even without understanding them.¹⁰⁰ Gradually, the entire Roman Breviary was translated, together with a number of litanies to the Virgin and the saints, much appreciated by the local clergy since we also find locally created new litanies closely following the Latin pattern.¹⁰¹ There were also new translations made of scriptural texts that were missing from the East Syriac canon, such as the Book of Revelations, translated from the Latin of the Vulgate. Besides this, one finds scriptural commentaries on the Books of Genesis, the Psalms, the Song of Songs, by Dionysius the Carthusian, who is called "Mar Dionysius the Interpreter". The translator (most probably Roz himself and his associates) preferred these very spiritual and high-level interpretative texts to the other medieval and early modern texts.¹⁰² In fact, the original works and translations that I attribute

¹⁰⁰ There are many manuscripts containing Roz's liturgical translations, some of them mentioning his name explicitly in the Garshuni Malayalam text, such as *Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 28*, containing the first half of a Sacramentary, which begins with a note saying that the Roman Sacramentary was translated into Syriac for the use of the Saint Thomas Christians by the Metropolitan of Malankara, Mar Francisco Roz (fol. 2r).

¹⁰¹ The original text of Francisco Roz's *Breviary* is preserved in *Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 33*, copied in 1782. The first litanies were translated by Roz. See *Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 28*, 28r-31r containing a litany as part of the liturgy of the last unction. In a newly discovered volume, *Mannanam MS Syr 63*, containing the Syriac poetry of the celebrated Indian Syrian poet, Kadavil Chandy Kattanar/Alexander of the Port – after the *memrē* (seven+one acrostic poems) there comes a long litany recapitulating salvation history (fol. 126r-130r), which I am inclined to attribute to the same author.

¹⁰² See, *Mannanam MS Syr 9*, which contains the Syriac version of Dionysius' *Scholia* (that is *Glossae*) on the Gospel of Matthew (title: "Scholion on the readings [...] of the holy Gospel of Matthew [...] by the] blessed Dionysius the Car[thusian]"), *Mannanam MS Syr 46*, fol. 148r-158r has Dionysius' *Scholia on the Psalms*, followed, on fol. 158v-166r, by his commentary on the Song of Songs (title: "Scholia on the Song of Songs of Solomon by Mar Dionysius the Interpreter").

to Roz bear the mark of the spirituality of Dionysius the Carthusian, inspired by the Pseudo-Dionysian Corpus and the tradition of its medieval Latin interpretations. So it is no wonder that one even finds an Indian Syriac version of the *Mystical Theology* of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, translated from the Latin translation of Ambrogio Traversari,¹⁰³ Latin apocrypha, such as the *Letter of the Holy Virgin to the Citizens of Messina*, which was a fake made by Constantine Laskaris in 1490, whose pretended original was kept in the altar of the cathedral in Messina, and the *Letter of the Holy Virgin to Ignatius of Antioch*.¹⁰⁴ There are astonishingly many copies of the Syriac translation of the treatise of Pedro Gomez, *On the Seven Sacraments*, being a part of his *Compendium Catholicae Veritatis*, composed in Japan and used for teaching in Japan from 1595 to 1614.¹⁰⁵ Yet, while there is only one copy of the original Latin text of the *Compendium*, kept in the Vatican Library, and one of its Japanese translation, found recently at Magdalene College in Oxford, there are a great number of the Syriac translation of the treatise on the Sacraments in India because it was a teaching manual in the Vaipicotta College and elsewhere.¹⁰⁶ The translation is in fact an adaptation with typical Rozean signature: he often freely rewrites the original, in which he handles in a masterly way the scriptural citations and uses Patristic authorities. He had a predilection for certain authors, such as Pseudo-Dionysius and Dionysius the Carthusian. Thus, it was probably Roz who transformed Gomez's scholastic and legalistic text into one with Patristic background, full of spiritual speculation.

¹⁰³ This translation was found in *Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 7*, fol. 508r-512r.

¹⁰⁴ *Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 7*, 507rv. On the texts of Pseudo-Dionysius and the apocrypha see Perczel, "What Can a Nineteenth-Century Syriac Manuscript Teach Us".

¹⁰⁵ See, Frédéric Girard, "Adaptation et accueil de la mission jésuite au Japon : la traduction japonaise récemment découverte du *Compendium* de philosophie et de théologie (1595)", in *Mondes et Cultures : Compte rendu annuel des travaux de l'Académie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer* 71/1 (2011) : 177-201.

¹⁰⁶ Here is an incomplete list: *Mannanam Syr MSS 11*; 62, fol. 45-101; *Thrissur MSS Syr 31*; 46; 47. The edition and study of this text is the subject of Radu Mustăță's Ph.D. thesis (Central European University, Budapest).

Besides these, there are a good number of original creations, treatises and sermons on various subjects, many of which display similar stylistic characteristics and are related to the translations, which indicates identical authorship.¹⁰⁷

As to the Malayalam texts, their study is even more underdeveloped than that of the Syriac texts. I found an entire series of apocryphal and hagiographic texts, including the Acts of Thomas, translated from Latin into Malayalam, extant both in Garshuni Malayalam and Modern Grandha scripts, a manuscript of the statutes of Roz, written in Garshuni Malayalam and many other texts that still await identification.¹⁰⁸

There is still much work to be done on these materials, and they may hide surprises. One thing is sure: they witness an extraordinary attempt, by the creative spirit of a real genius, to create a new, Post-Tridentine, Catholic culture on Indian soil, written in Syriac and in Malayalam, using the cultural givens of the environment.

Finally, in Roz, the missionaries had found the person able to break through Mar Abraham's concealing/accommodating strategies and reach out to the elite of the Saint Thomas Christians. Although he disagreed with the way the Synod of Diamper was conducted in 1599, it was his activity and knowledge of Syriac and Malayalam that prepared the Synod, which, in turn, prepared the ground for his nomination as the first European bishop of the Saint Thomas Christians on 19 December 1599 and consecration in Goa on 28 January 1601. Roz was chosen among several candidates, while his nomination was strongly resisted by the Jesuit Order. Jesuits professed fathers are not supposed to accept ecclesiastical dignities.

¹⁰⁷ A pioneering study on these texts is the MA thesis of Radu Mustăță, defended at Central European University in May 2014: *Codex Mannanam Syriacus 46 and a Jesuit Homily in Praise of Saint Thomas the Apostle*, containing the edition, translation and literary and historical analysis of a homily, which, on stylistic grounds, we are inclined to attribute to Roz.

¹⁰⁸ The Garshuni Malayalam text is written on paper MS: *Kurukkoor MS Gar Mal 1* and the Modern Grandha text on palm leaves, MS: *Ernakulam MAP Ms PL 1*. About Modern Grandha, see the Appendix. The Statutes of Francisco Roz, written in Garshuni Malayalam and dated 1607, were found in a unique MS at the Ernakulam State Archives.

However, Roz was the only viable candidate and, as such, was supported by the Archbishop of Goa, Aleixo de Menezes.¹⁰⁹ Pope Clement VIII nominated Roz a bishop of Angamaly and thus downgraded the See of Angamaly to a simple suffragan bishopric subordinated to Goa, which caused much anger in the local Christian community.¹¹⁰

In 1608 (or already in 1605?), Roz's See was restored to that of archbishopric and was made independent of Goa. Also, it was transferred from Angamaly to Cranganore, which, before Mar Abraham, was the traditional See of the Metropolitans of India and, moreover, had a Portuguese fort, where the Captain of Cranganore was residing.¹¹¹ Apparently, Roz considered his See as the Apostolic See of Saint Thomas and aimed at becoming a second evangeliser of India. Certainly, he was considered as such by his pupils. One of them, Kadavil Chandy Kattanar (Alexander of the Port) wrote a panegyric poem upon Roz's death, in which he celebrates his teacher as a saintly and apostolic figure.¹¹² Here are some relevant excerpts from the poem:

(110v) "*Resh*. Being the glorious *Archbishop of All India*

He gave the venerable priesthood

To those whom he called

In great magnificence and order.

Shin. He got the greeting of *the Great One*¹¹³

And came to Cochin in love;

¹⁰⁹ See, Hernández, *Jesuitas y obispos*, 88-89.

¹¹⁰ See, Marcillo, *Crisi de Cataluña*, 320, Hernández, *Jesuitas y obispos*, 93. Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 75.

¹¹¹ See Marcillo, *Crisi de Cataluña*, 320 and Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 75.

¹¹² The poem was found in a unique copy in *Mannanam MS Syr 63*, f. 106v-116r. On the recently discovered poetic oeuvre of Kadavil Chandy Kattanar see Perczel, "Alexander of the Port/Kadavil Chandy Kattanar".

¹¹³ "The Great One" is Saint Thomas.

And became the beloved teacher
Of all the sons of the good Thomas.

(111r) *Taw*: In the mercifulness of the Church
He sat on the glorious See
Of the wonderful Apostle Thomas,
Of this admirable diocese.”

[...]

(112v) ‘*E*. In abundant love and kindness
He translated to the sons of Christianity

Semkhat. Many from among the Latin books,
Translating them to an exquisite Syriac,
(113r) And also from the volumes of the Syrians to Latin,
Without any mistake and, so, any hazard.

Nun. This chaste patron,
Who was called by all the Christians
A blond Thomas¹¹⁴
And a wonderful Apostle,

Mem. Humiliated himself in martyrdom
Which he witnessed writing sermons,
He was a son of humility
Rejecting all pride,

¹¹⁴ Literally, a “yellow Thomas” (ܬܫܡܬܐ ܬܫܡܬܐ from the Greek κίτρινος)..

(113v) *Lamad*. A divine tongue,
Which made them know the mysteries
Of the Hebrews, the Syrians,
The Greeks and the Latins,

Kap. This venerable one was knowledgeable,
He was as if he had been born among them,
He was among them as admired by everybody,
He was like a deep stupor.¹¹⁵

Yod. Also, he knew many
(114r) Languages of the world,
Those of the Chinese and of the striving (contentious?) Portuguese (?),¹¹⁶
Also, that of the Indians and many others.
[...]

The words of his disciple and panegyrist summarises Roz's aims: he saw India as a field of a new apostolic service, following in the footsteps of Saint Thomas.¹¹⁷ Moreover, he expected to restore this Apostolic See, abandoned and fallen into heresy, into its previous glory. He ignored the presence of the Archbishopric of Goa and considered himself the Archbishop of all India. The panegyric also celebrates Roz's extraordinary linguistic abilities. We learn from it that, at Vaipicotta, he was teaching not only Syriac but also Greek and Hebrew. It is astonishing to read that he knew not only Portuguese and Malayalam but also some Chinese

¹¹⁵ "Deep stupor" (ܬܠܡܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܬܐ) is a typical expression of East Syriac mystical doctrine.

¹¹⁶ The manuscript reads ܦܬܝܚܐ, which is difficult to interpret. I am reading ܦܬܝܚܐ, "Franks", denoting in Malayalam the Portuguese, but also all Europeans. Portuguese was not Roz's mother tongue.

¹¹⁷ See, Županov, "'One Civility, but Multiple Religions'", 287.

and other languages. Also, what Kadavil Chandy says about Roz's translating activity is amply justified by the great amount of newly discovered translations from Latin into Syriac that can be attributed to him.

Perhaps the greatest praise in Chandy's panegyric is that Roz lived among his faithful "as if he had been born among them". Most interesting in this context is that Roz was called "a pale-skinned Thomas". This expression shows that the Indian Christians imagined the Apostle Thomas as one of them, having dark skin, but accepted Roz as a second Thomas, his white skin notwithstanding. Thus, this panegyric, but also Roz's work discovered in the Indian archives, shows us a picture radically different from that of the great Inquisitor, widespread about him in standard literature. Although it could be argued that the praises of a panegyric constitute simply the essence of its generic requirements and have purely performative value, I think that the grain of sincere admiration transpires through the formulaic expressions.

All this newly discovered material shows that Roz was one of the inventors and the first practitioners of the Jesuit *accommodatio* and this makes us understand the reasons behind his persistent support for Roberto Nobili's Madurai mission, considered the model for accommodation in India. Most certainly, this material that will be gradually edited, translated and published, will help to assign Roz's due place in the missionary endeavour shared with Alessandro Valignano, Matteo Ricci, Roberto Nobili and others.

If, ultimately, Roz's endeavour had a result radically different from what he had intended to achieve, this was not only because under his successors – people much less talented than he was – the Christians of the *Serra* turned away from their Jesuit teachers. This happened mostly because the new elite culture created by the Jesuits did not replace the existing one but, in the hands of a creative local elite, became combined with it, thus producing a unique early modern culture, blending Indian, Middle Eastern and European elements, and using

Classical Syriac as its linguistic vehicle. If I had to illustrate visually the outcome of this new blending, I would use the statue of a Child Jesus from the Catholic Art Museum of Ernakulam. Commissioned by the missionaries, perhaps in the second half of the 16th century, or in the beginning of the 17th, this statue of Jesus clothes him in the imagination of the local artists, who were themselves Hindus and chose Buddha as a model for a foreign deity (Picture 6). However, the Child Jesus/Buddha is clothed in the traditional cloth of the Saint Thomas Christians (perhaps of their priests?), binding their belt in the form of the *ankh* symbol, perhaps a distant indication of the early Indian Church's Egyptian roots.

As everywhere else in the early modern world, cultural encounters and a new type of proximity (social, cultural, colonial, etc.) created a field of both contestation and adaptation. The “quarrels” among the early modern intellectual elites, were part of an ongoing process in South India where different religious formations took place for more than a millennium. My claim is that the Jesuits were inspired by the strategies of the Syrian missionaries all the while working on imposing a single vision of Catholicism. This paradoxical situation made them retool their missionary instruments and got them “in trouble” in the long run in other parts of India – “the Malabar rites quarrel” – and in the world.

Summary:

The present essay, based on material found during recent field work in Kerala, revisits Ines G. Županov's idea that the Jesuit theory of *accommodatio* was elaborated on the Malabar Coast in interaction with the Syrian missionaries and the local Christians. It rereads the missionary sources together with Syriac and Malayalam sources and artworks, creates a new historical synthesis and shows that accommodation was an interactive process and relationship, in which the Jesuits, for many decades, were on the learning side, the Syrian missionaries and the local elite having practiced it for ages. It also shows the importance of

early modern Classical Syriac culture in India and that the great practitioner of *accommodatio* was the Syrian Metropolitan Mar Abraham, who used his superior knowledge of Syriac to maintain the traditional culture and customs of the community. Thus, the Jesuits were losing the *Kulturkampf* until the arrival of a linguistic and literary genius, Francisco Roz who, through his great knowledge of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, but also Malayalam and perhaps Chinese, his missionary zeal and commendable life, turned over the table by creating a new literature in Syriac. Yet the new elite culture created by Roz and his pupils did not replace the existing one but, in the hands of a creative local elite, became combined with it, thus producing a unique early modern culture, blending Indian, Middle Eastern and European elements and using Classical Syriac as its linguistic vehicle.

Bibliography

Published Primary Sources

Briquel Chatonnet, Françoise, Alain Desreumaux, and Jacob Thekaparampil, *Recueil des Inscriptions Syriaques, Tome I : Kérala* (Paris: De Boccard, 2008).

Chabot, Jean-Baptiste, “Vie du moine Rabban Youssef Bousnaya écrite par son disciple Jean Bar-Kaldoun traduite du syriaque et annotée”, *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* I, 2 (1897): 357-405; I, 3 (1898): 77-121, 168-190, 292-327, 458-480; I, 4 (1899): 380-415; I, 5 (1900): 118-143, 182-200

da Cunha Rivara, J. H. (ed), *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental, Fasciculo 4o que contem os Concilios de Goa e o Synodo de Diamper* (Nova-Goa: Imprensa Nacional, 1862, reprint: New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 143-144

Giamil, Samuel, *Genuinae relationes inter sedem apostolicam et Assyriorum orientalium seu Chaldaeorum ecclesiam* [ܩܘܢܝܢܐ ܪܥܝܢܐ ܒܝܢ ܫܕܪܐ ܐܡܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ] (Rome: Loescher, 1902)

Gibson, Margaret Dunlop (ed. and transl.), *The Commentaries on the New Testament of Ishoʿdad of Merv* (= *Horae Semiticae* 5–7, 10–11) (Cambridge, 1915–1916; reprint: Piscataway N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2005).

Gouvea, Antonio, *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes Primaz da India Oriental, Religioso da Orden de S. Agostino* (Coimbra : Officina de Diogo Gomez, 1606). English translation: Malekandathil, Pius (tr), *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes: A Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar* (Kochi : LRC Publications, 2003)

Hosten, Henry, *Antiquities of San Thomé and Mylapore* (Madras: The Diocese of Mylapore, 1936).

Joseph, T. K., “Notes on Henry Hosten, The Saint Thomas Christians of Malabar (A.D. 1490-1504)”, in *Kerala Society Papers*, Series 5 (1930): 253-59.

Kelaita, Joseph E. Y. de (ed.), “*The Paradise of Eden*” by Mar Abhdiso Bar-Brikha, *Metropolitan of Nissibin & Armenia, 1291–1316, A. D. Compared in details with six ancient*

mss.,.... Printed and Published by the Revd. Joseph E. Y. de Kelaita, Founder and Principal of The Assyrian School & Press, Mosul, 1921–1928 (First Edition, Urmia, 1916; Second Edition, Mosul, 1928). New edition: *The Paradise of Eden by Abdisho of Nisibis*; edited by Joseph E. Y. de Kelaita (Piscataway N. J: Gorgias Press, 2009).

Mustață, Radu, *Codex Mannanam Syriacus 46 and a Jesuit Homily in Praise of Saint Thomas the Apostle*, MA thesis defended at Central European University in May 2014.

Perczel, István, “Documents about Mar Abraham and the European Missionaries”, in: Ignatius Payyappilly (ed), *Mar Abraham and the Saint Hormis Church* [Malayalam and English: മാർ അബ്രാഹവും സെൻറ് ഹൊർമിസ് ദേവാലയവും] (Angamaly: Saint George’s Forane Church, 2016), 90-131.

Perczel, István, “Some Early Documents about the Interactions of the Saint Thomas Christians and the European Missionaries”, in Mahmood Kooriadathodi and Michael Pearson (eds.), *Malabar in the Indian Ocean: Cosmopolitanism in an Indian Ocean Region*, ed. (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, forthcoming)

Ramanatha Ayar, A. S., “Muttusira inscriptions”, in *Travancore Archeological Series VII/I* (Trivandrum 1930), 75-79.

Hausherr, Irénée (ed.), “Roz, Francisco, *De erroribus Nestorianorum qui in hac India orientali versantur auctore P. Francisco Ros S. I.* Inédit latin-syriaque de la fin de 1586 ou du début de 1587, retrouvé par le P. Castets S. I., missionnaire à Trichinopoly”, *Orientalia Christiana* 11,1 (40) (1928): 1-35

Wicki, Joseph, (ed.), *Documenta Indica*, vols. 1-18, (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1948-1988).

Unpublished manuscripts

1) St Joseph's CMI Monastery, Mannanam, Kottayam District:

Mannanam MS Syr 9.

Mannanam MS Syr 11.

Mannanam MS Syr 44, fol. 1v-75v.

Mannanam MS Syr 46, fol. 2r-107v; 148r-158r; fol. 158v-166r; 192r-195v.

Mannanam MS Syr 62, fol. 45-101.

Mannanam MS Syr 63, fol. 27v-126r; 126r-130r; 153v-174v.

Mannanam MS Syr 68, fol. 1v-95r.

Mannanam MS Syr 70, fol. 1-70;

Mannanam MS Syr 72, fol. 1-54v.

2) Dharmaram College in Bangalore:

Dharmaram College MS Syr 32 (= Gar Mal 2)

3) Collection of the House of the Metropolitan of the Church of the East, Thrissur:

Thrissur MS Syr 7, fol. 76r-102v.

Thrissur MS Syr 22.

Thrissur MS Syr 31.

Thrissur MS Syr 46.

Thrissur MS Syr 47.

4) Syro-Malabar Major Archbishop's House in Ernakulam:

Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 7, fol. 415r-490v; 491r-504v; 507rv; 508r-512r;

Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 8, fol. 4v-107v.

Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 10, fol. 1v.

Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 28.

Ernakulam MAP MS Syr 33

Ernakulam MAP MS PL 1.

5) Former collection of Metropolitan Saint Giwargis Mor Grigorios, also called *Perumala*

Kocchu Thirumeni ("Little Bishop of Perumala"), inherited by his brother, the Syriac

Matthew, now in the possession of Revd. Sreeba George Panackal, Ernakulam:

Syriac Matthew MS 2.

6) Collection of the Jacobite monastery, Piramadam, Gethsemane Dayro, near Pampakuda:

Piramadam MS Syr 14.

7) Personal collection of Fr George Kurukkoor, Ernakulam:

Kurukkoor MS Gar Mal 1

8) Ernakulam State Archives:

Ernakulam State Archives MS Gar Mal 1

9) Cambridge University Library, Buchanan Collection:

Cambridge MS Oo. I. 29, p. 168-189.

10) Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon:

Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Inquisição de Lisboa, 28, 4941 (PT/TT/TSO-IL/028/04941), ff.28r-37r.

Secondary Sources

Beltrami, Giuseppe, *La Chiesa Caldea nel secolo dell'Unione* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1933)

Chong, Alan, Pedro Moura Carvalho, Clement Onn, István Perczel, Ken Parry, Lauren Arnold, Maria da Conceição Borges de Sousa, William R. Sargent (eds), *Christianity in Asia: Sacred Art and Visual Splendour* (Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum, 2016)

Girard, Frédéric, “Adaptation et accueil de la mission jésuite au Japon : la traduction japonaise récemment découverte du *Compendium* de philosophie et de théologie (1595)”, in *Mondes et Cultures : Compte rendu annuel des travaux de l'Académie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer* 71/1 (2011) : 177-201

Hambye, E. R. , *History of Christianity in India*, vol. 3: *Eighteenth Century* (Bangalore: The Church History Society of India, 1997)

Hernández, Á. S., *Jesuitas y obispados*, vol. II: *Los Jesuitas Obispos Misioneros y los Obispos Jesuitas de la extinción* (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2000)

Hosten, Henry., “Peter Louis, S. J., or the First Indian Jesuit,” *Kerala Society Papers I* (1928): 45-47

Hosten, H., *Antiquities of San Thomé and Mylapore* (Madras: The Diocese of Mylapore, 1936)

Hosten, H., “The Saint Thomas Christians of Malabar (A.D. 1490-1504)”, in *Kerala Society Papers*, Series 5 (1930): 225-53.

Kollaparambil, Jacob, *The Archdeacon of All India* (Kottayam: The Catholic Bishop’s House, 1972)

Mar Aprem Mookken, *The Chaldean Syrian Church in India* (Thrissur: Mar Narsai Press, 1977, reprint: Delhi: I.S.P.C.K., 1983).

Mar Aprem Mookken, “Syriac Manuscripts in Trichur,” in *Advances in Arts and Ideas*, vol. 1 (Thrissur: Saint Thomas College, 2005), 22–36.

Marcillo, Manuel, *Crisi de Cataluña hecha por las naciones estrangeras* (Barcelona:

Imprenta de Mathevat delante la Retoria del Pino, 1685; digital facsimile edition:

Alacant : Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2003 –

<http://www.lluisvives.com/FichaObra.html?Ref=11348&portal=10> [last accessed on 6 January 2017])

Pandey, Anshuman, “Preliminary Proposal to Encode Syriac Letters for Garshuni Malayalam” at: <http://www.unicode.org/L2/L2015/15088-syriac-malayalam.pdf>. (last accessed on 6 January 2017).

Payyappilly, Ignatius, *Dux ad historiam: Unfolding the Arcdiocesan Archive of -Ernakulam-Angamaly* (Ernakulam: Archdiocesan Archives, Major Archbishop’s House, 2016).

Perczel, István, “Language of Religion, Language of the People, Languages of the Documents: The Legendary History of the Saint Thomas Christians of Kerala,” in Ernst Bremer, Jörg Jarnut, Michael Richter and David Wasserstein (eds), *Language of Religion - Language of the People: Judaism, Medieval Christianity and Islam*, /Mittelalter Studien; 11/ (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006), 387-428.

Perczel, István, “Have the Flames of Diamper Destroyed All the Old Manuscripts of the Saint Thomas Christians?” in *Festschrift Jacob Thekeparampil – The Harp: A Review of Syriac and Oriental Ecumenical Studies*. Vol. XX (Kottayam, 2006): 87-104.

Perczel, István, “Classical Syriac as a modern *lingua franca* in South India between 1600 and 2006”, *Modern Syriac Literature, ARAM Periodical* 21 (2009): 289-321.

Perczel, István, “Some New Documents on the Struggle of the Saint Thomas Christians to Maintain the Rite and Jurisdiction” in *Orientalia Christiana: Festschrift für Hubert Kaufhold zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Bruns and Heinz Otto Luthe, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2013), 415-436.

Perczel, István, “Garshuni Malayalam: A Witness to an Early Stage of Indian Christian Literature”, *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 17, 2 (2014): 263-323.

Perczel, István, “Alexander of the Port/Kadavil Chandy Kattanar: A Syriac Poet and Disciple of the Jesuits in Seventeenth-century India,” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 14 (2014): 30-49.

Perczel, István, “Cosmopolitismes de la Mer d’Arabie : Les chrétiens de saint Thomas face à l’expansion Portugaise”, in Corinne Lefèvre, Ines Županov and Jorge Flores (eds), *Cosmopolitismes en Asie du Sud : Sources, itinéraires, langues (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)*, ed., Collection Puruṣārtha 33 (Paris: Éditions de l’École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2015), 143-169.

Perczel, István, “Monuments of Indian Christian Art: Problems of Genres, Dating and Context” in *Christianity in Asia: Sacred Art and Visual Splendour*, 38-49.

Perczel, István, “Appendix: Contents of the MS BnF Syriac 25 (Cat 9.)”, in: Alan Chong et al, *Christianity in Asia: Sacred Art and Visual Splendour*, 264-65.

Perczel, I., with the contribution of A. Toepel, “What Can a Nineteenth-Century Syriac Manuscript Teach Us about Indian Church History?, *On MS Ernakulam MAP Syr 7,*” *Parole de l’Orient* 33 (2008): 245-265.

Perczel, István and George Kurukkoor: “A Malayalam Church History from the Eighteenth Century, based on Original Documents,” in D. Bumazhnov, E. Grypeou, T. Sailors and A.

Toepel (eds), *Bibel, Byzanz und Christlicher Orient: Festschrift für Stephen Gerö zur 65. Geburtstag* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 291-314.

Thazhath, Andrews, *The Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church (A Historico-Juridical Study)* (Vadavathoor, Kottayam: Paurastya Vidyāpīṭham, Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, 1987).

Thekkedath, Joseph, *History of Christianity in India, vol. 2: From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century (1542-1700)* (Bangalore: Church History Association of India, 1988).

Thekkedath, Joseph, *The Troubled Days of Francis Garcia S.J., Archbishop of Cranganore 1641-59*, *Analecta Gregoriana* 187 (Roma: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1972)

Thelly, Emmanuel, CMI, "Syriac Manuscripts in Mannanam Library," *Symposium Syriacum VII: Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56/1-4 (2004): 257–270

Thomas, Antony: "Muttuchira Sliva and Lithic Inscriptions – Landmark Monuments of Saint Thomas Christians of India" at <http://www.nasrani.net/muttuchira+church+sliva+lithic+inscriptions> (last accessed on 6 January 2017).

Van der Ploeg, J. P. M., *The Christians of St. Thomas in South India and Their Syriac Manuscripts* (Rome/ Bangalore: Center for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies/Dharmaram Publications, 1983).

Verkamp, B. J., *The Indifferent Mean: Adiaphorism in the English Reformation to 1554* (Ohio University Press/Wayne State University Press, 1977)
 Županov, Ines G., “Le repli du religieux : Les missionnaires jésuites du XVIIe siècle entre la théologie chrétienne et une éthique païenne”, *Annales HSS*, 6 (1996), 1201-1223

Županov, Ines G., *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Županov, Ines G., “‘One Civility, but Multiple Religions’: Jesuit Mission among St. Thomas Christians in India (16th-17th Centuries),” *Journal of Early Modern History* 9/3-4 (2005): 284-325

Key words:

Classical Syriac, accommodation, Saint Thomas Christians, Jesuit, Malabar/Malankara/Serra, Indian humanist culture, manuscripts, archives, Roz Francesco, Mar Abraham, Mar Simon, Archdeacon, Kerala, Jesuit, Vaipicotta,

Appendix -Glossary of Technical termsechnical Terms

Archdeacon:

Originally an ecclesiastic position in the Church of the East, meaning a priest who serves as the coadjutor of a bishop. From 1490 onwards, when George Pakalomattam from Kuravilangad was consecrated Archdeacon of the Indian community by Mar Shim'on IV, Catholicos Patriarch of the East, the term denoted the local leader of the Indian Christian

community, in a priestly rank but acting as a prince. This rank seems to be identical to that of the *jātikukkartavyan*, “the head of the [Christian] caste[s]”, a local term. It is unclear whether originally the two Christian castes, the Northists and the Southists (see below) had their separate Archdeacons. By the end of the 16th century, only one Archdeacon, from the aristocratic Pakalomattam family from Kuravilangad, was heading the entire community.

Chaldean Church:

That part of the Church of the East, which, in 1552 AD, split from the Church of the East and united with Rome.

Church of the East – Persian Church – Assyrian Church – Nestorian Church:

Originally a Church situated in the Sasanian Empire, with headquarters in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sasanian King. In the fifth century AD, it adopted the theology of the three “Greek Teachers” - Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius, condemned by the Roman Church in 431 and 553. This Church is also called the Assyrian Church since its members are tracing back their origins to the Assyrians of antiquity.

Corepiscopa (chorepiscopus, χορεπίσκοπος):

A priest and a head of village churches, who administers these with the rights of a bishop, with the exception of the right to ordain clerics.

Garshuni Malayalam:

Malayalam written in Syriac characters with the inclusion of a changing number of Old Malayalam and, later, New Malayalam characters and some secondary signs. The oldest extant Christian Malayalam texts are written either in the common Old Malayalam (*Vaṭṭēzuttu*, *Kolēzuttu*, *Mālayāśma*) scripts, or in Garshuni Malayalam.

Kashkol (Syriac liturgical technical term: its meaning and etymology is unclear):

Concise East Syriac prayer book, namely a collection of prayers sung during the evening services of the whole year. It is an abbreviation of the *Hudra* (meaning the “Circle” of the year), which contains all the prayers for Sundays, the fasts and feast days.

Kollam era (*kollavaršam*):

The local Malayalam era, beginning in Chingam (August-September) 825 AD. The Kollam era is counted from the re-founding of the city of Kollam by Maruwan Sapīr Īšō, a Persian Christian merchant who had led a West Asian colonist community.

Letter of Recommendation (in Syriac: *statikon*, from the Greek συστατικόν):

An official letter signed by the Patriarch who has consecrated a bishop for a diocese. It is the *statikon* that proves that the bishop was lawfully ordained and appointed for the given See.

Mālayāśma: An old Dravidian script used to write Tamil and Malayalam, mostly used in present-day South Kerala, while another version, *Vaṭṭēḻuttu*, was used in Central and North Kerala.

Modern Grandha script (or: *Ārya ḻuttu* “the Aryan script”):

The predecessor of the Modern Malayalam script. Grandha or *Ārya ḻuttu* was originally the southern script used to write Sanskrit. It was adopted to write Malayalam, for which earlier only the *Vaṭṭēḻuttu*, *Kolēḻuttu*, *Mālayāśma*, Garshuni Malayalam and Arabic scripts were used, in the second half of the 17th century, by Kunjuttu Ezhutthachan, who wrote poems in a heavily Sanskritised Malayalam language.

New Counting:

The European counting of the months and the days in the months, introduced by the Portuguese. According to the New Counting, the twelve Malayalam lunar months were identified with the European solar months, thus Makaram = January, Kumbham = February, Minam = March, Mēdam = April, Edavam = May, Mithunam = June, Karkkidakam = July, Chingam = August, Kanni = September, Thulam = October, Vrichikam = November, Dhanu = December. Originally, according to the “Old Counting”, these months only roughly corresponded to the European months.

Northists (*vadakkumbhagar*) and Southists (*thekkumbhagar*):

Names of the two endogamous castes (*jātis*) of the Christians. According to legend, the two castes once lived in the northern and southern part of the Christian city of Cranganore. The Southists, also called Knanaya Christians, claim pure Western (Semitic) blood and trace back their origins to the merchant colony that came with the Persian merchant Thomas of Kana, allegedly in the fourth century AD. The Northists claim that they are issued from an intermarriage of those colonisers with the local Christians converted by Saint Thomas.

Padroado (real):

The “royal patronage” right of the Portuguese king to handle independently the Church affairs of the overseas territories under its domination by nominating bishops of the Catholic Church. According to the Treaty of Tordesillas, concluded in 1494 between the kings of Portugal and Spain and the Pope, in principle all the overseas territories discovered or to be discovered east of the Tordesillas Meridian belonged to Portugal.

Vaṭṭeṣuttu script (Malayalam: “round script”):

A Dravidian alphabet, used in the Middle Ages and until the twentieth century to write Tamil and Malayalam. It got its name from the rounded-up form of the letters.

Picture 1: The colophon of *MS Mannanam Syr 68*, on fol. 90v-91r.

Picture 2: The Muttuchira granite inscription. Photo Fabian da Costa

Pictures 3 and 3a: The Muttuchira granite cross (*Mār Siḷivā*) and decoration from its pedestal.

Photos Fabian da Costa

Picture 4: The Persian Cross (or the “Bleeding Cross” [*r]udhirakkuriṣu*) at Muttuchira.

Photo Fabian da Costa

Picture 5: Syriac inscription on the bronze bell at Kuravilangad. The inscription says:

+ In the year thousand five hundred eighty four after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Ḥzīran (June) + was cast this bell for the church “Saint Mary the Mother of God” in the blessed village that is in Kurulgad [Kuravilangad] and fountainhead of all succour. Amen.

Picture 6: Child Jesus Teaching, represented in the form of the Buddha. Catholic Art Museum, Ernakulam, courtesy of Dr. Ignatius Payyappilly