

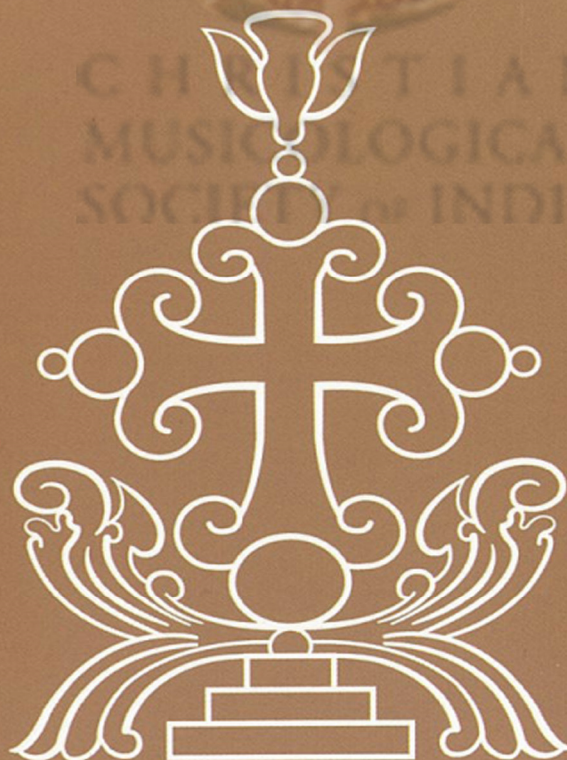


CHRISTIAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF INDIA

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The Eucharistic Liturgy of the

St Thomas Christians
& the Synod of Diamper



PAUL PALLATH



CHRISTIAN
MUSICOLOGICAL
SOCIETY OF INDIA

**THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY
OF THE ST THOMAS CHRISTIANS
AND THE SYNOD OF DIAMPER**



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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

All the St Thomas Christians of India, who are now divided among seven Churches and other minor ecclesial communities, had celebrated the same East Syrian liturgy in its original and authentic form until the Synod of Diamper, convoked by Dom Aleixo de Menezes, Archbishop of Goa (1595-1610) from 20 to 26 June 1599. After the Synod and even after the *Coonan Cross Oath* in 1653 all of them celebrated East Syrian *Qurbana* as modified and corrected by Archbishop Menezes. The implantation of Antiochene liturgy in India was a long and ongoing process which began only in 1665 with the arrival of the first Antiochene prelate Mar Gregorios (1665-1670) and was completed during the period of the Antiochene bishop Mar Kurillos (1846-1866). Hence the theme under our consideration is the common *Qurbana* of all the St Thomas Christians, before the adoption of the Antiochene liturgy by those who happened to abandon the Catholic communion.

Several questions can be raised regarding the common Eucharistic liturgy of the St Christians. How was the *Qurbana* celebrated before the arrival of the Western missionaries at the dawn of the sixteenth century? What was the shape of the *Qurbana* at the epoch of the Synod of Diamper? Which were the heretical doctrines and expressions of schism found in the pre-Diamper Eucharistic liturgy? What were the interpolations, modifications and corrections made by the Western missionaries, especially by Archbishop Menezes in the Synod of Diamper? What was the structure of the *Qurbana* after the Synod? This book is an attempt to answer such pertinent questions, from historical, liturgical and theological perspectives.

The fifth session of the Synod of Diamper was completely devoted to the doctrinal, liturgical and disciplinary aspects of the Holy *Qurbana*. In this section there are altogether 24 decrees, 9 on the doctrine of the holy sacrament of the Eucharist and 15 on the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass according to the traditional scheme. These 24 decrees provide us with a clear picture of what Menezes did in the Synod of Diamper with regard to the Eucharistic liturgy of the St Thomas Christians as a whole. In order to avoid confusion these decrees will be cited as session V, part 1 and session V, part 2, respectively.

Since the real intention of Menezes was to provide missals printed in Chaldean or Syriac language from Rome, he modified only what he considered Nestorian doctrines and errors, without making any structural change in the text of the *Qurbana*. According to the project of Menezes, such corrected texts had only a provisional character, until the Pope sent the



new missals from Rome. Explaining the scope, reason and purpose of the corrections in the order of *Qurbana*, the Synod of Diamper affirmed that, since for 1200 years the Church of St Thomas Christians was not “under the obedience of the Holy Roman Church, the mistress of all the other Churches, and from whence all good government and true doctrine do come”, all the bishops who came from Babylon, having been schismatics and Nestorian heretics, had added to and taken from the Mass whatever they wanted without any order. Consequently several things were foisted into the Mass, without any consideration, giving rise to many impious and heretical errors.¹ The Synod judged:

[...] If due order was observed, all the missals of this bishopric ought to be burned, as also for their having been of Nestorian use, and compiled by Nestorian heretics, but being there are no other at present, they are tolerated, until such time as our lord the Pope shall take some order therein, and there shall be missals sent by him printed in the Chaldean tongue, which is what this Synod humbly and earnestly desires may be done. In the meantime it does command that the missals now in use be purged and reformed as to all the following matters, and that till such time as they are so purged, which the most illustrious Metropolitan, with the assistance of some persons well-versed in the Chaldean tongue will see done during the next visitation, no priest shall presume to make use of them any more.²

The following part of this first decree dealing with the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass clearly indicates the changes made by Menezes in the liturgical text itself and the reasons for these. Seven years after the Synod of Diamper, in 1606 Antonio de Gouvea published in Portuguese the book: *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes*, at the end of which *Synodo diocesano da Igreja e bispado de Angamale dos antigos christãos de Sam Thome* can be found. These are, in fact, two distinct books with separate page numbers but published as a single volume. The *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes* in folios 1-152 describes the visitation and activities of Menezes before and after the Synod of Diamper, together with some background stories and the traditions of the St Thomas Christians.³ The second book *Synodo diocesano da Igreja e bispado de Angamale dos antigos christãos de Sam Thome* contains the convocation

¹ Synod of Diamper, session V, part 2, decree 1.

² Synod of Diamper, session V, part 2, decree 1.

³ A. De Gouvea, *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes Primaz da India Oriental, Religioso da Ordem de S. Agostinho. Quando foy as Serras do Malavar, & lugares em que morão os antigos Christãos de S. Thome, & os tirou de muytos erros & heregias em que estavam & reduzio à nossa Sancta Fè Catholica, & obediencia da Santa Igreja Romana, da qual passava de mil annos que estavam apartados*, Coimbra 1606.

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THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY OF THE ST THOMAS CHRISTIANS AND THE SYNOD OF DIAMPER

“It is well-known that the Synod of Diamper (1599) brought about several radical changes in the life and mores of the Christians of the Serra or Malabar. It also introduced several changes in their liturgy. Here is a book that studies them methodically and in detail in the light of documents [...]. The present work is a rich storehouse of information for the student and a ready handbook for the scholar [...]. With the present work Msgr. Paul Pallath has supplied a very useful tool for the study of the Synod of Diamper in its enactments regarding the Syro-Malabar liturgy”.

- *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, no. 1 (2009) 235-236.

“The profound study by Pallath on the basis of Western and Eastern ecclesiastical traditions urges us to reconsider the use of such elements which are foreign to the liturgical spirit of the St. Thomas Christians. The careful observations made by the author are indeed of immense help to the students of liturgy, history and theology of the Church of St. Thomas Christians”.

- *Christian Orient*, vol. 29, no. 4 (2008) 184.

“Pallath's work is useful not only as a study of the Syro-Malabar liturgy, as the title would suggest, but also as a review of the whole theology of the Syro-Malabar Church, which finds its best expression in the liturgy [...]. Given our dearth of information on the pre-Diamper period, any significant facts that shed light on the period are welcome. As it stands, Pallath's study affords an unusual glimpse into the Syro-Malabar Church from one of the best angles from which to study an Eastern Church, its liturgy”.

-*Gregorianum*, vol. 92/3 (2011) 621.

Msgr. Prof. Paul Pallath, at present a Relator of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, an associate professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, a consultor at the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and a commissioner at the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, formerly rendered his service as an official of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for 16 years. He has published 22 books (without counting different editions and translations in other languages) and many articles, which deal with the history, liturgy and spiritual heritage of the St Thomas Christians in India (for more information visit: bookspallath.blogspot.com).



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