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SYRIAC CHANT TRADITIONS IN SOUTH INDIA

by

JOSEPH J. PALACKAL

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York**

2005

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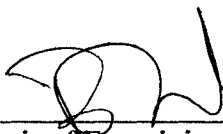
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in
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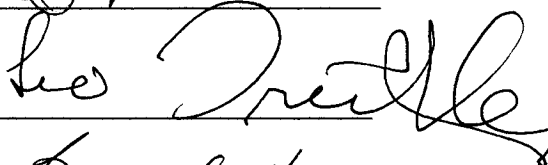
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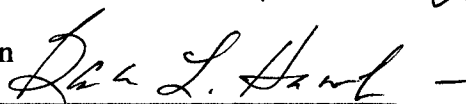
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Abstract

SYRIAC CHANT TRADITIONS IN SOUTH INDIA

by

Joseph J. Palackal

Advisor: Professor Stephen Blum

The Syriac chant traditions of the Chaldean and Antiochene rites reached South India at various stages in the history of the St. Thomas Christians. In spite of attempts by the Portuguese missionaries to suppress the Syriac tradition in the sixteenth century, and the voluntary efforts of the Syriac churches to vernacularize liturgies in the 1960s, the Syriac language and the musical styles associated with it have not only survived in oral transmission for centuries in South India, but also have retained their unique identity in a completely different cultural milieu. The dissertation focuses on the contemporary practice of the model melodies of the Chaldean rite in the Syro-Malabar Church and the *oktoēchos* ("eight voices") of the Antiochene rite in the Orthodox churches. The system of model melodies supports the practice of singing multiple texts in a specific poetic meter to a single melody, and the system of *oktoēchos* supports the practice of singing the same text in eight different ways.

A survey of the historical circumstances that led to the retention of Syriac chant traditions in India shows that one of the reasons for the resilience of the melodies is the

resoluteness of the practitioners to perceive music also as an imaginary boundary marker between communities. The analysis of model melodies shows the presence of consistent melodic and rhythmic gestures that are coordinated with the semantic and syntactic structures of the text. The system of *eṭṭuniṟam* ("eight colors"), the local term for *oktoēchos*, exemplifies the transformation of a musical concept as a tradition is transferred from one culture to another. The model melodies and the *oktoēchos* employ a systematic body of musical knowledge that is applied as normative standards in composition and performance and, therefore, deserve to be included in the larger discourse on music in India. Also, the Syriac chants present a case in point for the musical proximity of otherwise distant regions and diverse cultures.

To

Dr. Joseph Aquilina, M. D. P. C.

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Qǎō: Ślōmme dābo

Track 46. Example 4 C. Color 2

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Abbreviations

Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Ar.	Aramaic
b.	born
c.	century
<i>ca.</i>	<i>circa</i>
cfr.	confer
I Cor	the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians
CSB	the Catholic Study Bible
d.	died
Dn	the Book of Daniel
estd.	established
Ez	the Book of Ezra
Jn	Gospel of John
Jon	the Book of Jonah
Ger.	German
Gl	the letter of Paul to the Galatians
Gn	the book of Genesis
Gk.	Greek
Lk	Gospel of Luke
Mal.	Malayalam
Mk	Gospel of Mark
Mt	Gospel of Matthew

n. a.	not available
n. d.	no date
p.	page
pp.	pages
Rom	the letter of Paul to the Romans
Sk.	Sanskrit
SS.	Saints
Syr.	Syriac
vol.	volume

Guide to Syriac Transliteration

Vowels

ⲁ a = as u in *cup*

Ⲃ ā = as in *far*

Ⲅ e = as in *met*

ⲅ ē = as a in *mate*

Ⲇ o = as in *so*,

ⲇ ō = as in *long*

Ⲉ u = as in *put*,

ⲉ ū = as oo in *shoot*

Ⲋ i = as in *mint*; when preceded by 'a', y as in *yellow*,

ⲋ ī = as ee in *meet*

Consonants

Ⲁ ālap = a as in *at* (glottal stop)

Ⲃ bēṭ = b (hard form) as in *boy*; ḅ (soft form) as w in *way*

Ⲅ gāmal = g (hard form) as in *gum*; ḡ (soft form), aspirated g

Ⲇ dālaṭ = d (hard form) as th in *then*; ḏ soft d

Ⲉ hē = h as in *hey*

Ⲋ wāw = w as in *way*; when used as vowel, o, u

Ⲍ zain = z as in *zero*

Ⲏ hēṭ = h as in *hey*

- ܐ thēt = th (aspirated, dental t)
 ܝ yōd = y as in *yellow*; when used as vowel, i as in *ink*
 ܟ kāp = k (hard form) as in *skip*; ܟ̣ (soft form), aspirated k
 ܠ lāmā = l as in *lay*
 ܡ mīm = m as in *may*
 ܢ nūn = n as in *now*
 ܣ semakat = s as in *say*
 ܥ ē = e as in *mother* (glottal stop)
 ܦ pē = p (hard form) as in *pay*; ܦ̣ (soft form) as w in *way* or as v in *victor*
 ܨ sāde = s as in *say*
 ܩ qōp = q as in *que*
 ܪ rēs = r as in *ray*
 ܫ šīn = ś, between s as in *say* and sh in *she*
 ܬ tāw = t (hard form) unaspirated, dental t; ܬ̣ (soft form), as s in *say* or as th in *thin*

Note on transliteration. This is a modified version of the system of transliteration of Syriac sounds, suggested by Emmanuel Thelly in his *Introduction to Syriac Studies* (Thelly 2002: 4). Thelly, following his predecessor, Fr. Gabriel of St. Joseph T. O. C. D. (Gabriel [1922] 1961), has adapted the system to represent the sounds of Syriac in India. The finer distinction between the sibilants *semakat* and *sāde* have been lost in India and, therefore, both letters are represented here by s as in *say*. Similarly, *hē* and *hēt* often sound the same and, therefore, both are represented here as h in *hey* (see the "Sound of

Syriac" in Chapter Four). The soft forms of *bēṭ*, *gāmal*, *dālad*, *kāp*, *pē*, and *tāw* are marked by a macron below the letters as in *b̄ ḡ d̄ k̄ p̄ t̄*.

The diacritical marks were created with the program TransIndic Transliterator for Windows, by Philip Barton Payne (Linguist's Software, Inc., PO Box 580, Edmonds, WA 98020-0580, USA).

Guide to Malayalam Transliteration

Vowels

അ a = as u in *cup*

ആ ā = as a in *far*

ഇ i = as i in *ink*

ഈ ī = as ee in *meet*

ഉ u = as u in *put*; ū = stopped u at final positions in noun forms

ഊ ū = as oo in *shoot*

ഋ ṛ = similar to r in *rain*

എ e = as e in *met*

ഏ ē = long e

ഈ ai = as y in *dry*

ഒ o = as o in *low*

ഓ ō = as o in *long*

ഔ au = as ou in *loud*

അം aṁ = as um in *gum*

Consonants

ക ka = as k in *kind*

ഖ kha = aspirated ka

ഗ ga = as g in *gum*

- ᵑᵑ gha = aspirated ga
- ᵑᵑ ná = as ng in *sing*
- ᵑᵑ ça = similar to ch in *chin*
- ᵑᵑ cha = aspirated ç
- ᵑᵑ ja = as j in *jump*
- ᵑᵑ jha = aspirated ja
- ᵑᵑ ña = as ñ in *mañana* (Spanish)
- ᵑᵑ ʈa = retroflex t
- ᵑᵑ ʈha = aspirated ʈa
- ᵑᵑ ɖa = retroflex d
- ᵑᵑ ɖha = aspirated ɖa
- ᵑᵑ ŋa = nasal/retroflex
- ᵑᵑ ta = dental t
- ᵑᵑ tha = aspirated ta
- ᵑᵑ da = as th in *thus*
- ᵑᵑ dha = aspirated da
- ᵑᵑ na = as n in *nut* in medial and final positions; dental *na* in initial and final positions.
- ᵑᵑ pa = as p in *pulp*
- ᵑᵑ pha = aspirated pa (not f)
- ᵑᵑ ba = as b in *bucket*
- ᵑᵑ bha = aspirated ba
- ᵑᵑ ma = as m in *mother*

- ⦿ ya = as y in *yellow*
- ⦿ ra = alveolar r
- ⦿ la = as l in *love*
- ⦿ wa = similar to w in *water*
- ⦿ ś = between s in *sum* and sh in *shut*
- ⦿ sha = as sh in *shut*
- ⦿ sa = as s in *sum*
- ⦿ ha = as h in *hut*
- ⦿ ɭa = retroflex l
- ⦿ zha = retroflex
- ⦿ ɾa = similar to r in *rust*

Other characters

- ⦿ ŋ = similar to n in *done*
- ⦿ n = as n in *tin*
- ⦿ nfa = as nt in *enter*
- ⦿ tfa = as tt in *letter*
- ⦿ l = as l in *until*
- ⦿ ɭ = similar to l in *role*
- ⦿ ɾ = similar to r in *slur*

Note on transliteration. Proper names and place names are transliterated in the conventional form without diacritical marks, for example, Thomas instead of *tōmas*, Kottayam instead of *Kōṭṭayam*, etc. The pronunciation of place names is given in Appendix I. In order to avoid phonetic semblance to the velar plosive sound of *c* (as in *car*) in English, the palatal *ç* is represented by *c* with a dot below (*ç*) and is pronounced similar to *ch* in *chin*. For easy phonemic and phonetic recognition by English speakers, the retroflex sibilant *ṣ* is represented by *sh* instead of the conventional *ṣ*, as in *bhāsha* ("language"), instead of *bhāṣa*. Since *ṃ* is not a fricative consonant, *w* is preferred for that letter, instead of the conventional *v*; thus, *widya* ("knowledge"), instead of *vidya*. The half-closed vowel ending of certain noun forms is marked by a half circle (*˘*) above the letter, as in *pāṭṭū* (പാട്ടു, "song").

The diacritical marks were created with the program TransIndic Transliterator for Windows, by Philip Barton Payne (Linguist's Software, Inc., PO Box 580, Edmonds, WA 98020-0580, USA).

Notes on Musical Transcription

For better communicability with readers outside the Indian tradition, I have used Western staff notation in transcribing the melodies. The practitioners of the music in India do not use a notation system, Western or Indian, either for pedagogy or for performance. The transcription is not intended to be prescriptive, nor does it represent a definitive version of the melody; it provides only a general idea of the melodic and rhythmic contours.

Certain crucial elements such as the dynamic nuances, varying emphasis on syllables, and the particular vocal inflections that vary from performer to performer are among the unique features that are not indicated here. Therefore, the life of a melody in actual performance is far from what one might envision by looking at the transcription.

The metronome markings provide a general sense of the tempo. Sometimes, the tempo varies slightly within the course of the melody. The flat or sharp signs at the beginning of a staff are not intended as key signatures, but merely indicate the pitch of the respective notes.

All melodies transcribed in this study were recorded during my interviews with the informants. In most cases, the melody is transcribed at the original pitch of the recording. However, in certain examples, the pitch is raised or lowered in order to minimize the use of accidentals. The pitch register of the melody in an actual performance in the liturgical context might vary slightly. For example, during the liturgy, the choir leader places the melody in a pitch register that he or she thinks is comfortable for the community. In the transliterated text underlay, a verse is demarcated with the initial letter in upper case, although Malayalam script does not have lower-upper case distinction.

Introduction

The rich and colorful musical mosaic of South India includes the centuries-old Syriac Christian chants that originated in the Middle East. There are about thirty million Christians in India; about seven million of them are known as Syrian Christians or St. Thomas Christians. Kerala, on the south-west coast of India, is home for most of the St. Thomas Christians. They continue to follow the liturgical and musical traditions associated with the Syriac language, which is a form of Aramaic spoken by Jesus and his disciples.

Due to varying ecclesiastical allegiances and divisions starting from the sixteenth century, at present there are eight independent churches among the St. Thomas Christians: the Syro-Malabar Church, the Church of the East, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, the Malankara Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church, the Syro-Malankara Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, the Independent Church of Thozhiyoor, and the St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India. The first two churches use the East Syriac (Chaldean) liturgy, and the other churches use the West Syriac (Antiochene) liturgy. Although the Syro-Malabar Church and the Church of the East follow the same liturgical tradition, their melodic repertoires are different. Thus, there are two liturgical and three musical traditions among the St. Thomas Christians.

This study focuses on the contemporary practice of the model melodies of the Chaldean rite in the Syro-Malabar Church and the *oktoēchos* ("eight voices") of the

Antiochene rite in the Orthodox churches.¹ The system of model melodies supports the practice of singing multiple texts in a specific poetic meter to a single melody, and the system of *oktoēchos* supports the practice of singing the same text in eight different ways in an eight-week cycle and classifying melodies in eight categories.

Making sense of melodies may be considered one of the main tasks in musicology. Sometimes, seemingly simple melodies can be embedded in extremely complex historical processes, and an understanding of that process is essential in making sense of those melodies. This is true of the Syriac chants in India. The first three chapters in this dissertation situate the chants against the backdrop of the history of the language, the churches, and the liturgies. Chapter One is a short survey of the history of the two forms of Syriac language and the Chaldean and Antiochene liturgies in the Middle East. Explanation of some of the terms in this chapter is helpful to understand the various implications in the titles and ecclesiastical affiliations of the Syriac churches in India. In Chapter Two I attempt to elucidate the complicated history of the St. Thomas Christians and their Syriac churches. A general awareness of the history of these churches is required to understand the circumstances that led to the introduction of Syriac liturgies and the ecclesiastical structure that supports their continuity in India. Chapter Three is a concise history of the East Syriac and West Syriac liturgies in India. As sources for these chapters I have relied mostly on publications by scholars specializing in the respective areas. The training for my bachelor's degree in Theology at Dharmaram College, Bangalore, included courses on Church History and Syro-Malabar Liturgy. The

¹ The term "Orthodox churches" is used in this study to refer to those churches that follow the Antiochene liturgical tradition in India.

knowledge I gained there became useful later in writing the chapter on "The History of Christianity in India" in my master's thesis *Puthen Pāna: A Musical Study* (Hunter College, 1995). Both those experiences were helpful in writing the first three chapters of the dissertation.

The Syriac language has a continuing history in India. Although at present the Chaldean and the Antiochene liturgies are celebrated more in the vernacular (Malayalam), the Syriac language is still present in the life of Christians in various ways. The fourth chapter is an overview of the current status of Syriac in liturgy, academia, and many other avenues of day-to-day life in Kerala. The sources for this chapter are liturgical texts, my observations on the life of Syriac Christians in Kerala, and interviews with Syriac scholars in India. I was fortunate to have access in person and through email to Fr. Emmanuel Thelley C. M. I. who has written several books on the Syriac language, including the *Syriac-English-Malayalam Lexicon* (Kottayam, 1999).

The story of the preservation and transmission of Syriac chants in India is part of the larger story of the struggle for religious identity of Christians who live in a multi-religious environment. The encounters between the St. Thomas Christians and the Chaldean Church, the Antiochene Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church have left indelible marks on the music of the various Syriac churches. Chapter Five is my reading of the history of these encounters from a musical perspective.

Chapters Six and Seven consist of analytical studies of two aspects of the Syriac chant repertory: the model melodies of the Syro-Malabar Church and the *oktoēchos* of the Orthodox churches. The analysis is based mostly on the renditions of melodies by priests from the respective churches during my recorded interviews with them. By about the age

of eighteen, I had learned all the melodies that are currently in use in the Syro-Malabar liturgy, including the model melodies discussed in Chapter Six, and I have been using them in my private prayers and public worship (more about this later). However, I decided not to notate the melodies from memory, but instead to treat Fr. Abel Periyappuram C. M. I. (1920-2001) as an "informant" and transcribe his renditions of those melodies. I knew Fr. Abel personally and professionally, since 1974. I have sung his devotional lyrics for radio broadcasts and commercial releases. I also worked with him as Dean of Studies (1986-1989) at Kalabhavan, the music institution that he established in Kochi, Kerala.

There were several reasons for the decision to transcribe Fr. Abel's rendition. First of all, by distancing myself from my memory of the melodies I wanted to create an "otherness" and gain some level of objectivity in representing them; Fr. Abel, unlike me, first learned the Syriac version of the melodies, and he could sing both the Syriac and the Malayalam versions with equal ease; and, most important, he has a significant place in the history of the Syro-Malabar liturgical music. Fr. Abel played a crucial role in the transition of the Syriac liturgy into the vernacular. The history of the Malayalam version of these melodies is closely connected to his literary enterprises. In the 1960s, Fr. Abel, with the help of Fr. Ludovic Kuniathodath C. M. I. (1888-1979) who was a grammarian and scholar of the Syriac language, translated the Syriac chants of the Divine Office and services for the dead into Malayalam. In this process, Fr. Abel decided to retain the original Syriac melodies and adjusted the Malayalam text to fit the Syriac melodies as well as possible. In doing so, Fr. Abel contributed not only to the continuity of the Syriac music tradition in the Syro-Malabar Church, but also to the creation of a new poetic genre

in Malayalam. Fr. Abel sang his own work in the transcribed melodies in this chapter. I have also recorded his renditions of some of the same melodies with the original Syriac texts in order to keep a document of his voice in Syriac and for further research on the phonetics of East Syriac and West Syriac in India, discussed briefly in Chapter Four.

In spite of Fr. Abel's place in the history of the preservation and transmission of Syriac chants, the recording and the transcriptions included in this study are not intended as a means to standardize the model melodies according to his renditions. These melodies are seldom sung solo outside the context of liturgy either for pedagogy or for performance. The sound of the melody is different in the context of communal worship. For example, the grace notes and ornamentation of the ultimate syllables in verses that are clearly heard in the solo rendition may sound differently in renditions by groups or may not be heard at all. Usually, musically talented singers attend to those matters, whereas average singers may not. Again, a certain element of heterophony may be inevitable in group-renditions by worshippers with varying vocal range and musical talent. Over the years, I have noticed that the tempo and the pitch register of the melodies vary from community to community and from one rendition to another. Those factors are often influenced by the choir leaders, sometimes even without their awareness. Also, such factors as the number of people in the group and the acoustic conditions of the chapel or church can influence the time lag between the ending of one strophe and the beginning of the next. For these reasons, standardization of melodies based on one individual's rendition may not be effective. So far as I know, there has been no such attempt in the Syro-Malabar Church.

A significant part of my research experience for the dissertation is related to learning more about the system of *oktoēchos* of the Orthodox churches in Kerala, the topic of Chapter Seven. I wrote a paragraph about it in the chapter on "The History of Christian Music in India" in my master's thesis, but had to learn more to write about it at length. In the summer months of 1999, 2000, and 2001, I visited seminaries and formation houses associated with various Orthodox churches in Kerala and attended community prayers and talked to worshippers. Fr. M. P. George, professor of music and theology at the Syrian Orthodox Seminary at Kottayam, and Fr. James Chitteth, choir leader and professor at the Malankara Orthodox Seminary at Vettikkal, were kind enough to spare time for several sessions of formal and informal conversations on various aspects of *oktoēchos*. Fr. George and Fr. James are excellent singers, too. I recorded the renditions of melodies by both of them and learned a few of those melodies. I have transcribed some of their renditions in Chapter Seven. An earlier version of this chapter was published in *Ethnomusicology*, vol. 48, no. 2 (2004).

Early on, I had decided to limit the scope of my study to the Malayalam version of the melodies. But then I realized that the priests and the members of the Syriac church choirs, who witnessed the transition of liturgy from Syriac to Malayalam in the Syro-Malabar Church, were advancing in years and their art of singing Syriac texts was becoming obsolete. Therefore, I decided to spend some time and resources to make an audio recording of as many chants as possible. The recording was done in two sessions, on August 27, 1999, and August 22, 2000. Previous to each session I organized a conference on Syriac music with the help of Dr. Antony Vallavanthara C. M. I., the director of Research Institute of Studies in History and a specialist on the history of Syro-

Malabar liturgy. The first was held at St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, and the second at the Prior General's House of the congregation of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate at Ernakulam. Both locations are closely connected with the history of Syriac language and music.

Initially, the recording project seemed to be a distraction from the work on the dissertation, but there were ample rewards. I came to know something new: the presence of a set of Latin chants in Syriac translation that bears testimony to the encounter between the Portuguese missionaries and the St. Thomas Christians; I have discussed this in Chapter Five. I also used one item from the recording to compare the Syriac and Malayalam versions of a melody in Chapter Six. The recording was originally intended for documentation and research. I was not sure if anybody would be interested in a commercial release of Syriac chants from India. Contrary to my expectation, PAN Records in the Netherlands accepted the proposal and released a compact disc in 2002 with twenty-nine melodies along with a booklet that I wrote, under the title *Qambel Māran: Syriac Chants from South India* (PAN 2085).

Although I started singing for commercial releases of Christian devotional songs and *bhajans* in 1977, Syriac chants were not part of my repertoire.² The positive response that the Syriac CD received --it is listed on several internet sites, including Amazon.com in different languages-- prompted me to include Syriac chants in my performances and to start a group in New York that could sing also Syriac chants. With the help of George Thaila, who has been cherishing the memory of the Syriac melodies he learned from his

² My first 45 RPM Extended Play record *Kristīya gānañal!* (Christian Songs) in Malayalam (EDEC 1002) was released in 1977 by Deccan Records, Bangalore, and the first LP *Christian Bhajans* (LDEC 1002) was released by the same company in 1979.

father in Kerala, I started the Syriac Choir which made its debut on July 9, 2003, at the Fourth North American Syriac Symposium held at Princeton University. The choir, which consists of members from the Syro-Malabar Church in Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island, performs selections from the CD.

A review of literature on Syriac chants shows that the traditions in India have received only limited attention from scholars. A renewal of interest in Latin Christian chant toward the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century led music scholars to search for the original or older versions of the melodies in the chants of the Eastern churches. Dom Jean Parisot (1861-1923) was sent on an official "scientific mission" by the French Government in 1896 to study Syriac language and music of the Maronite, Syrian, and Chaldean rites in Turkey and Syria. His reports, published in *Rapport sur une mission scientifique en Turquie d'Asie* (Paris, 1899) and *Rapport sur une mission scientifique en Turquie et Syrie* (Paris, 1903), include notations of chants from these rites. At about the same time, three French priests --Dom Jules Jeannin, Dom Julien Puyade, and Dom Anselme Chibas-Lassalle-- engaged in the study of Syriac liturgical music. They published an extensive collection of Syriac chants sung at the monastery at Charfu in Lebanon along with a discussion on the melodies and their classification according to the system of the Syrian *oktoēchos* in *Mémoires liturgiques syriennes et chaldéennes* (Paris, 1925-1928). In his article "Die Melodietypen der westsyrischen liturgischen Gesänge" (*Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*, vol. 53, 1969), Josef Kuckertz analyzed the melody types of the West Syrian liturgical hymns to explain the principles of classification of melodies according to the eight "tones" of the Syrian *oktoēchos*.

Heinrich Husmann made valuable contributions to Syriac music scholarship through his transcriptions of a large number of melodies from the repertoires of the Jacobite and Chaldean Churches. The work he edited, *Die Melodien der jacobitischen Kirche, i: Die Melodien des Wochenbreviers (šimtā) gesungen von Qurillāos Jaqub Kas Gōrgōs, Metropolit von Damaskus* (Vienna, 1969), contains transcriptions of the melodies of the Office of the Jacobite Church. His transcriptions of the melodies of a particular genre known as *qāle* ("melodies," sing. *qālā*) were published in *Die Melodien der jacobitischen Kirche, ii: Die Qāle gaoāniāie des Beit gazā* (Vienna, 1971). Both publications are helpful to anyone who wishes to understand the system of the Syrian *oktoēchos*. Husmann's transcriptions of the melodies of the Chaldean breviary, as sung in the Near East and in Kerala, were published in *Die Melodien des Chaldäischen Breviers Commune nach den Traditionen Vorderasiens und der Malabarküste* (Rome, 1967).

A. Saldanha, a Jesuit priest, made the first attempt in India to notate the melodies of the solemn sung mass of the Syro-Malabar rite in Western staff notation. His notations appeared in the first part of *The Syriac-Malayalam Hymnal* (Calicut, 1937). In 1954, Fr. Mathew Vadakel edited *Kēraḷa kaldāya suriyāni ṛittile tirukkarmma gītaṅaḷ* (Liturgical Hymns of the Chaldeo-Syrian Rite of Kerala), which contains an extensive collection of chants in Western staff notation for the solemn celebration of the mass and other liturgical and paraliturgical occasions such as the solemn Vespers, Novena to saints, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. As in Saldanha's work, the Syriac texts in this book appear in Malayalam script. In "Ritual and Music in South India: Syrian Christian Liturgical Music in Kerala" (*Asian Music*, vol. 11, 1979), Israel Ross states that "Syrian Christian chant in Kerala is sung in two modes: *kadmoyo*, equivalent to Arabic *bayat* (Gr.

Phrygian; Ecc. *Dorian*) and *hamisoyo*, equivalent to Arabic *rast* (Gr. *Lydian*; Ecc. *Ionian*)" (p. 85). Ross refers to Syrian Christian chant as a single entity. In fact, there are three musical traditions among the Syriac Christians in Kerala, each having an independent history and melodic repertory. From personal experience of the tradition of the Syro-Malabar Church and research experience of the traditions of the Church of the East and the Orthodox churches, I may say that the members of these churches make no reference to mode or *maqām*. A large part of the musical repertories of the first two churches is based on the practice of model melodies, discussed in Chapter Five; the Orthodox churches use the system of *oktoēchos*, discussed in Chapter Seven. Therefore, reducing the entire repertory of Syriac chants in Kerala to two "modes" may not be accurate.

The entry on "Syrian Church Music," originally written by Husmann and revised by Peter Jeffery for the current edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, and Ulrike Nieten's article, "Syrische Kirchenmusik," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1998) provide short historical backgrounds of the various Syrian churches and their respective liturgies. The authors of these articles discuss the musical forms of the liturgies with special emphasis on the *oktoēchos* of the Syrian Orthodox Church. They make only a passing reference in their articles to the presence of Syriac liturgies in India.

The subject matter of this study is connected with my life in many ways. I was born and raised as a member of the Syro-Malabar Church. My baptismal name is, as was

my father's, Ousēpp, the Malayalam adaptation of the Aramaic *Yāwsep* (Joseph).³ At about the age of nine, I learned to serve mass at my local parish. In those days the priests used books printed in Syriac, and the servers and the people read from books printed in Malayalam script (I learned to read Syriac only recently in preparation for the dissertation). Around the same age, I made my debut by singing a Syriac chant during the parish feast of the Assumption.

In the 1960s, Syriac liturgical texts began to be translated into Malayalam, and Syriac language itself began to be less and less important in the liturgical celebrations. I started to learn the Malayalam version at about the age of twelve. There has not been any system of formal training for liturgical music in the Syro-Malabar Church. The learning took place mostly through participation in the liturgical celebrations. It took a few years to master all the melodies, because there are melodies that you could hear almost every week and others that could be heard only occasionally. For example, some melodies are specific to the services for the dead, and one has to be in that particular context to hear them. Similarly, a few melodies are sung exclusively in the Divine Office that you could hear only in the public celebration of the Office, mostly in monastery chapels. I cannot think of a particular priest or layperson who taught me the melodies, but I can recall the names of several priests and choir leaders whom I closely listened to and whose style I tried to imitate during my formative years.

³ There are two ways of writing the Aramaic form of "Joseph" in Malayalam, my native tongue. The names of ordinary people are rendered as "Ousēpp" (ഔസേപ്പ്) and those of biblical characters such as Joseph the husband of Mary and Joseph of the Hebrew Bible as "Yawsēpp" (യാസേപ്പ്). Thus, the former is *Yawsēppitāw* (യാസേപ്പിതാവ് "Joseph the father") and the latter, *Pūrwa yawsēpp* (പുർവ്വ യാസേപ്പ് "earlier Joseph").

In the early 1980s, during my stay in North India for my bachelor's degree in Hindustani classical music (vocal) and master's degree in Psychology at the Maharaja Sayaji Rao University of Baroda, I was removed from the liturgical context of the Syriac melodies, but became more aware of their uniqueness. I was also concerned at that time about the possibility of Syriac language and music going out of vogue in Kerala. In the first article that I wrote in Malayalam in 1982 on the role of music in liturgy, I mentioned the need for recording and preserving Syriac chants for the purpose of research. The CD *Qambel Māran* and this dissertation turned out to be the fulfillment of a long-standing desire. Here I must gratefully acknowledge that the academic environment and the training I received at the Graduate Center and at Hunter College helped me to gain intellectual distance from the intimacy of melodies I learned as a youngster.

The primary goal of this study is the appreciation of my own tradition through a better understanding of it. For that reason, this can be called a re-search in the literal sense of the term. The process is similar to that of an adult person studying a poem that he or she memorized as a child, or like analyzing the grammar of one's native language. Beyond the primary goal, I also assume the role of a contemporary witness to the ethnographic-present of both the language and the music as they are undergoing a process of change. Added to that is my mission to create a memory base for the practitioners of the music, a data base for future scholars for longitudinal studies, and a piece of writing for anyone who is curious about music in India.

In 2002, introducing the chants of the Syro-Malabar Church, I wrote in the booklet accompanying the CD: "... they [the melodies] are an integral part of the history of a people, linguistic soundscape of a region, and musical map of a country" (p. 4). That

perspective changed during the course of writing this dissertation. I began to realize that the music I grew up with, the tradition that I considered an essential part of my religious identity, and the story of the people I belong to, are deeply connected to geographical and cultural regions that I was neither emotionally nor intellectually involved with. The people experience music locally, but the locus of music extended beyond its current geographical setting to the Middle East and Europe. I started with the assumption that music is the story of a people set in sound and, therefore, every music, including "Western" classical music, is ethnic, but I ended up with the understanding that music is the story of peoples.

The scope of the research is limited to two aspects of the Syriac chant repertoire that exists in India: the model melodies of the Syro-Malabar Church and the *oktoēchos* of the Orthodox churches. The vast body of chants that do not belong to these categories remains to be explored. The focus of the study is on contemporary practice. Only in one instance have I used an earlier transcribed version of a melody for comparison. I have not traced the roads that led these chants to Kerala from the Middle East. There is no reason to believe that the nineteen melodies discussed in Chapter Six, for example, reached Kerala around the same time. It is also possible that some of these melodies were newly composed in Kerala. In other words, each melody may have an individual history that I have not looked into. A comparative study of the melodies as they exist in India with those in the Syriac churches in the Middle East and expatriate communities in North America, Australia, and England remains to be undertaken. With the experience gained from this study, I intend to continue research on these aspects of the Syriac chants in India.

Chapter One

Syriac Language and Liturgies

The Syriac (Aramaic) Language

Syriac is a form of Aramaic, a northwest Semitic language like Hebrew. Aramaic is the language of Aramaeans who inhabited the region on both sides of the Upper Euphrates, now comprising eastern Syria and northern Iraq. In biblical times this region was called *Ārām* or *Ārām Naharaim*, meaning "Aram of the Rivers" (the Greeks later called it Mesopotamia, meaning "between rivers"). According to biblical tradition, the name of the region as well as that of the people came from the name of Noah's grandson, *Ārām*, who was considered the progenitor of Aramaeans (Gn 10:22-23). By about the tenth century B. C., the Aramaeans extended their territories to southern Babylonia. The Chaldeans, the people of Chaldea, the region bordering the head of the Persian Gulf between the Arabian desert and the Euphrates delta, are the descendants of the Aramaean settlers in that region (Fitzmyer 2003: 623-625). Because of the intermingling of races and cultures in the region in the subsequent centuries, "Aramaean," "Babylonian," and "Chaldean" became synonymous terms.

The history of the Aramaic language is part of the history of the Assyrian, the Babylonian, and the Persian empires. The Assyrians conquered Aram in the eighth century B. C., and Aramaic became the second language of the Assyrian Empire. During the Babylonian empire in the seventh and the sixth centuries B. C., Aramaic was the common language of Western Asia. Aramaic gained trans-regional importance during the

Persian empire, from the sixth to the fourth century B. C.; it was the official language of the imperial administration of the vast Persian empire that extended from the river Indus to the Nile. Aramaic was in general use in Palestine until its conquest by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B. C., after which Greek became the language of commerce and literary culture. Even after Alexander's conquest, Aramaic continued in use, although to a much lesser extent, in most parts of Western and Central Asia.

There is evidence of the use of Aramaic in India in the third century B. C., during the reign of Emperor Asoka (273-232). It was one of the languages in which the Emperor promulgated his edicts (Mukherjee 1984).

Aramaic is one of the three languages, the others being Hebrew and Greek, in which books of the Bible or parts thereof were written. Nebuchadnezzar II, the King of Babylon (605-562 B. C.) destroyed Jerusalem and deported Jews to captivity in Babylon. During the exile that lasted over fifty years, the younger generation of the Jewish captives became an Aramaic-speaking people. After Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian empire, conquered Babylon, he freed the Jews and allowed them to return to Palestine in 538 B. C. Parts of the Books of Daniel and Ezra that deal with the exilic and post-exilic history of the Jewish people were written in Aramaic (Dn 2: 46 - 7: 28; Ez 4: 7- 6: 22). After the Jews returned to Palestine, they continued to speak Aramaic, although Hebrew remained the language of worship.

After 200 B. C., Aramaic began to branch out into several regional dialects and continued as the colloquial language of the Jews. Thus, Jesus and his disciples conversed and preached in Aramaic. From St. Matthew's account of the passion it may be presumed

that Jesus spoke a Galilean dialect of Aramaic.¹ Several sayings of Jesus in Aramaic are preserved in the New Testament. One example is Jesus's cry from the cross (Mk 15:34): *Eloi, Eloi lema sabachthani?* ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). This is an Aramaic rendering of the Hebrew text in the second verse in Psalm 22 (*Eli, Eli, lama azawtāni*).²

Syriac developed as an independent dialect of Aramaic in Edessa, presently known as Urfa in south-eastern Turkey, in the first century AD. Soon, Syriac became the literary language of the Aramaic-speaking Christians. Bardesanes, (Bar-Daisān, 154-222), a Christian astrologer and philosopher who lived and died in Edessa, composed a large number of hymns in Syriac that earned him the title of father of Syriac poetry.³ A Syriac version of the Old Testament, called the *pšitta* Bible, appeared in the third century. The golden age of Syriac dawned in the fourth century with the prolific writings of St. Jacob and St. Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306-373). The Syriac hymns of St. Ephrem are an integral part of Syriac liturgies.

After the conquest of Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia by the Arab Muslims in the seventh century AD, Arabic became the official language of the region and soon

¹ During the trial of Jesus by Pilate, the bystanders in the palace courtyard recognized Peter as a Galilean and a follower of Jesus from his "speech." Mt 26:73 reads: "A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, 'surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away.'" English translations of Bible passages are from *The Catholic Study Bible* (1990).

² For more examples of Aramaic expressions in the New Testament, see Mt 5: 22; Mk 5: 41, 7: 34, 14: 36; Jn 1: 41, 42; Rom 8: 15; I Cor 1: 12, 3: 22, 9: 5; Gal 2: 9, 4: 6.

³ Bardesanes wrote also about India and Armenia, but those works are lost (Mecrae 2003: 97-98). Because of his unorthodox speculations on Christianity, Bardesanes is considered a heretical figure in the history of early Christianity.

superseded Syriac as the colloquial language of the Syriac-speaking people in West Asia. Consequently, Syriac literary activities decreased considerably. However, Syriac remained as a liturgical language and continues to do so among the Syriac churches in West Asia and India, as well as among the expatriate communities in Australia and North America.

Hebrew and Syriac

Hebrew and Syriac have the same number of letters in their alphabets. Orthography is different, but the names of the letters are the same, except for minor variations in pronunciation. The Hebrew names of the letters can be seen as titles of the twenty-two strophes in psalm 119 (The Catholic Study Bible, 728-733); psalm 119 is an alphabetic psalm, i. e., each verse in the first strophe begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, each verse of the second strophe begins with the second letter of the alphabet, and so on for all twenty-two strophes.

East Syriac and West Syriac

By about the fifth century AD, two different practices began to develop that came to be known as East Syriac and West Syriac. East Syriac developed at the eastern school of Nisibis, West Syriac at the school of Edessa. The differences were based mostly on the script, vowel signs, and pronunciation. The scripts of both are variations of the same Aramaic script known as Estrangela which was in use in the early centuries. The books or parts thereof of the Bible written in Aramaic employed Estrangela script; even the Syriac translation of the Bible, known as the *ps̄itta* version (3rd century AD) was in Estrangela.

During the fourth century, the school of Nisibis started modifying the Estrangela, which lacked specifications of vowel sounds in its script, by adding dots as vowel signs. The number of dots and the manner of their placement above or below the consonant determine the vowel sound. At about the same time, the Edessan school began to use a set of Greek symbols for vowel sounds. Figure 1 shows the Our Father in Estrangela, East Syriac, and West Syriac scripts.

Beside differences in the script, the most distinguishing factor is the pronunciation of words and vowel sounds. The vowel *o* is often pronounced as *u* in West Syriac. For example, the name of Jesus is pronounced as *Īsō* in East Syriac and *Yēśu* in West Syriac. East Syriac retains the original Semitic pronunciation of the long *ā* (see introduction to Glossary). In West Syriac *ā* is often pronounced as *ō*. Thus, *alāhā* ("God") in East Syriac is pronounced as *alōhō* in West Syriac. A few other examples are given below.

East Syriac	West Syriac	English equivalent
bāwūtā	bōwūtō	petition
qālā	qōlō	sound, song, melody
peṭgāmā	peṭgōmō	word, verse
māran	mōrān	our master, lord
ramśā	ramśō	evening, evening prayer
slōtā	slūtō	prayer

Figure 1. The Our Father in Estrangela, East Syriac, and West Syriac scripts.

Estrangela.

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East Syriac.

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West Syriac.

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Despite the difference in the use of vowel signs, orthography is quite similar in West Syriac and East Syriac. Besides, both share the same vocabulary and syntax, and both have the same body of literature. Therefore, West Syriac and East Syriac may be considered two variants of the same language.

East Syriac and West Syriac Liturgies

In the context of liturgy the terms, "East Syriac" or "East Syrian" and "West Syriac" or "West Syrian" carry geographical, political, linguistic, ecclesiastical and, above all, theological connotations. Geographically, the West Syrian liturgy developed in Antioch, an important center of early Christianity. For that reason, it is also known as **Antiochene** liturgy. By 300 B. C., Antioch had become the capital city of the Greek Seleucid Kingdom which the Greeks called the Province of Syria. The East Syrian liturgy developed from the usage of the Christians at **Edessa**, which is located to the east of Antioch and east of the Euphrates.

Politically, Antioch was within the boundaries of the Roman empire, and Edessa was in the Persian empire. This political and administrative division was one of the many factors that contributed to the independent development of the two liturgies. The political division also played a role in the development of different ecclesiastical status for churches in the two respective regions.

Linguistically, Syriac liturgies are differentiated on the basis of the two forms of the Syriac language. The West Syrian liturgy uses West Syriac and the East Syrian liturgy is in East Syriac. One of the special features of West Syrian liturgy is the presence of Greek words and expressions. The early Christian community in Antioch consisted of

both Gentile converts who probably knew only Greek (see Acts 11: 19-20) and Jewish converts who also spoke Greek. Therefore, Greek words and concepts were used to express the religious experience of the new converts to Christianity. One of the earliest examples may be the very name chosen for the followers of Jesus. It was at Antioch the followers of Jesus of Nazareth were called for the first time *Christianoi* (Acts 11: 26). The term "Christian" comes from *Christos*, which is the Greek equivalent of the Semitic word *mšihā*, meaning "the anointed one." Also, the communal gathering for worship and the breaking of bread that evolved into what came to be called the Mass, was referred to by a Greek term, *eucharistia*, meaning "giving thanks." There are several other Greek expressions that are part of the West Syrian liturgy, such as *Kyrie eleison* ("Lord, have mercy"), *Christe eleison* ("Christ, have mercy"), *stomen kalos* ("stay right"), etc.. In the East Syrian tradition the mass has always been referred to by the Semitic word *qurbān* or *qurbānā* ("offering").

A review of two major Christological controversies that eventually led to divisions in Christendom, starting from the fifth century, may be required to understand the theological differences between the East Syrian and West Syrian rites. The controversies were centered on different understandings of the existence or coexistence of the human and divine natures in the person of Jesus Christ on the one hand, and different interpretations of the language and terminology used to express those finer distinctions on the other. The first controversy is known as "Nestorianism," after Nestorius who was the Patriarch of Constantinople from 428 to 431. Nestorianism may be described as the belief that there are two natures and two distinct persons in Christ, the human and the divine; consequently, the Blessed Virgin Mary can be called only

Christotokos ("bearer of Christ") and not *Theotokos* ("bearer of God"). In 431 the Council of Ephesus under the leadership of Cyril of Alexandria condemned this teaching as a heresy.⁴ Nestorius was deposed and exiled first to a monastery in Antioch and then to the desert in Egypt, where he died around 451. The condemnation by the Council did not deter the followers of Nestorius, nor did they give up their Christological position, which became associated with the liturgy of the churches in the regions of Mesopotamia and Chaldea. For that reason, the East-Syriac form of the Aramaic language and the churches that used East Syriac in their liturgy and the liturgy itself came to be known also as **Nestorian**.⁵ After the condemnation of the Council of Ephesus, the East Syrian Church continued its mission further to the east up to China.

The second controversy is known as Monophysitism, the belief that there was only one nature in Christ, the divine nature. The **Monophysites** believe that the divine and human nature commingled in Christ at the time of incarnation in such a way that it became one nature. The Council of Chalcedon condemned Monophysitism as a heresy.⁶ The Council established the Catholic position that in the person of Christ there are two

⁴ For information on the Council of Ephesus and its decrees, see Tanner (1990: 40-74).

⁵ The followers of Nestorius consider him to be a saint and a martyr without shedding blood. The missal of the Church of the East includes the Order of Mass by Nestorius; the title page describes the mass in the following words: "The Order of Holy Sacrament by Mar (Syr., "saint") Nestorius, the Patriarch of Bosanthis, i. e., the city of Constantinople, who was persecuted for the truth of the true faith and became, by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, a martyr without shedding blood" (see *Slīhanmāruṭe kūdāśakṛamam* 2003: 138-139).

⁶ For information on the Council of Chalcedon and its decrees, see Tanner (1990: 75-103).

distinct natures, the divine and the human (**diphysitism**). The churches in Antioch and the neighboring regions held on to Monophysitism and broke away from the Roman Church. Bishop Jacob Baradai of Edessa (541-578) became a leader of the Monophysites and, therefore, Monophysites came to be known also as **Jacobites**.

Table 1. Syriac liturgies

Name	West Syrian	East Syrian
Region	Antioch (Antakya)	Edessa (Urfa or Urhai)
Language	West Syriac	East Syriac
Theology	Monophysite	Diphysite
Patriarchate	Antiochene	Chaldean
Associated names	Bishop Jacob Baradai	Patriarch Nestorius
Eucharistic prayer	Anaphora of St. James	Anaphora of SS. Addai and Mari

Ecclesiastically, West Syrian liturgy became the official liturgy of the Antiochene Patriarchate and East Syrian liturgy the official liturgy of the Chaldean (Persian) Patriarchate. The Chaldean Patriarchate established its independence from the Patriarchate of Antioch in 498. In that year, Babai, who was the Archbishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon from 497 to 503, assumed the title of Catholicos (Patriarch), and formed The National Nestorian Church of Persia.

Finally, the content of the Eucharistic prayer, known as *anaphora* (from Gk. *anaphero*, "I offer up"), which is the central part of the mass, is another feature distinguishing West Syriac and East Syriac liturgies. West Syriac liturgy uses texts from the oldest *anaphora*, attributed to St. James "the brother of our Lord" that is connected to the Jerusalem tradition (see further, in Fink 1990: 1260-1262). The East Syriac liturgy uses the anaphora of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, who were among the seventy-two disciples of Jesus. According to the Syrian Christian tradition, Addai and Mari were sent by Jesus to establish the Church in Syria and Persia (see Murphy 2003: 112-113 and Fink 1990: 1258-1259).

Syriac as Spoken Language

According to a report by Douglas Jehl in the *New York Times* (Jehl 1999), the Christians and Muslims in the mountainous region of Malula (population 5,000) and two nearby villages in Syria speak Aramaic. The determination of the people to preserve their ancient linguistic heritage along with the geographical isolation of this remote region has contributed to the survival of the language in this part of the world. The report states that altogether about eighteen thousand people speak Aramaic in Syria. In some parts of the

Middle East, the Chaldean Christians speak what is known as *surath*, a mixture of Aramaic and Arabic (in Iraq) or Persian (in Iran). Although in India there are a few priests who can hold a conversation in Syriac, it is not considered a spoken language.

Syriac as Liturgical Language

As a liturgical language, Syriac is in use in different parts of the world, where the so-called "Syrian Christians," or, more appropriately, "Syriac Christians" live. The Maronites, the Syrian Orthodox Churches, the Syro-Malabar Church, the Syro-Malankara Church, the Chaldean Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Church of the East (India) use one or the other form of Syriac in their liturgies. Moreover, the Syriac language as well as the particular theology and traditions associated with it are among the determining factors in the identity of the members of these churches. Both East Syriac and West Syriac and their respective liturgical traditions are represented in India. The following two chapters explore the historical circumstances that brought Syriac language and liturgy to South India.

Chapter Two

St. Thomas Christians and Syriac Churches

The St. Thomas Christians in India take their name from the Apostle Thomas who, they believe, arrived in Kerala in *ca.* AD 52, preached the faith in the surrounding regions, and died a martyr at Chennai (Madras), in Tamil Nadu, in AD 72.¹ They celebrate that belief in their liturgies and performing arts, one of which is a group dance called *mārggam kaḷi* (*mārggam* = "way," *kaḷi* = "play," "play of the way"). It is traditionally performed by men who sing and dance simultaneously. The song text contains more than four hundred lines in fourteen cantos. The text describes the missionary endeavors of St. Thomas in South India and his martyrdom at Chennai.²

More than the song text, the title of the dance bears greater significance in the discussion of early Christian history in India. The Hindus in southern India who converted to Christianity borrowed a Sanskrit term, *mārg*, to designate the new faith that came to their land. The act of conversion from Hinduism or other religious faiths to Christianity was called *mārggam kūṭal* ("joining the way"). The term *mārg* had already received special significance by the sixth century B. C., in the context of Buddhism. The

¹ For scholarly studies of the St. Thomas tradition, see Mundadan ([1984] 2001), Neill (1984), and Tisserant (1957). The feast of St. Thomas the Apostle is observed every year on the third of July; the feast is referred to in Kerala as *dukrāna* (Syr., "remembrance").

² See the text with a brief commentary in Velliyan and Vempeni (1995: 87-125); for more information on *mārggam kaḷi* and photos of performances, see Groesbeck and Palackal (2000: 945-46); Palackal (1995: 41-43; 1999:11; and 2001: 234).

Buddha presented his vision of a new way of life as *ashtāṅg mārg* ("eight-fold path"). The term was familiar to the South Indians in the first century AD, because of the presence of Buddhism in the region. The Buddhist missionaries preached their faith in Kerala in the third century B. C.

The striking similarity in the conceptualization of religion as "way" or "way of life," among the followers of the Buddha and Jesus Christ can not be ignored. Both Buddhism and Christianity emerged from already well-established religions, respectively, Hinduism and Judaism. St. Luke's narrative of the early Christian experience in the Acts of the Apostles presents the emerging new religion as *odos* (Gk., "Way") as in Acts 9: 2; 18: 26; 19: 9, 23; 22: 4; and 24: 14, 22. In Acts 9: 2, Luke refers to the followers of Jesus as "men or women who belonged to the Way." With reference to the Indian context, it is difficult to determine whether the similarity was a mere coincidence or whether it was mediated by St. Thomas the Apostle himself, during his evangelization in India.

The Syriac Churches

The connection between Christianity in India and the Syrian churches in the Middle East began very early with the sporadic migrations of small Christian communities. A group of East-Syrian Christians from Persia under the leadership of a merchant called Thomas Kinayi (Knāyithomman) is believed to have arrived in Kerala in AD 345 (Kollaparambil 1992: 21).³ Thomas Kinayi seems to have been the first direct historically identifiable link between the remnants of the Christian community established by St Thomas in India

³ According to Jacob Kollaparambil (1992: 21), Thomas Kinayi probably "hailed from Kynai in Bét Aramāyé, about 75 Kms to the South East of Baghdad, on the left bank of Tigris in the neighborhood of the present town, *Al-'Azẓīyah*."

and the Church in Persia. The Middle Eastern connection of South Indian Christians is indicated by the fact that Christians in Kerala are referred to, even today, as *nazrāṇi*, a term used for Christians in Persia (see Fiey 1993: 970-973; Yarshater 1983: 929-933).⁴

The term *Nazoreans* first appeared in the Acts of the Apostles as a derogatory appellation for the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. During the trial of St. Paul before M. Antonius Felix (the procurator of Judea from AD 52 - 60), Tertullus, representing Ananias the high priest and other elders of the Jewish community, accused Paul in the following words: "We found this man to be a pest; he creates dissension among Jews all over the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazoreans" (Acts 24: 5). The St. Thomas Christians in India seem to have adopted the term into their local language without its Jewish/Roman negative connotation and refer to themselves as *mār thōmmā nasrāṇikaḷ*.⁵

The earliest documentary evidence to the Persian connection of Christians in India is in *Topographia Christiana*, Book III, by Cosmas Indicopleustus (Indian navigator). Cosmas, an Egyptian merchant who later became a monk, has referred to the presence of Christians in the region in the sixth century. Cosmas wrote:

Even in Taprobane,⁶ an island in Hither India, where the Indian Sea is, there is a church of Christians with clergy and a body of believers, but I know not whether

⁴ For a philological, historical, and Christological discussion of the term *nazrāṇi* and its significance in understanding Christian history in India, see Nedungatt (1998).

⁵ For instance, the oldest existing daily newspaper in an Indian language, Deepika (estd. 1887), was originally called Nazrani Deepika; this daily in the Malayalam language is still published with the title, Deepika (see Cheriyan 2000:131).

⁶ Taprobane is the ancient name for Ceylon (McCrinkle 1979: 160); the country is now known as Sri Lanka.

there be any Christians in the parts beyond it. In the country called Male⁷, where pepper grows, there is also a church, and at another place, called Kalliana⁸, there is, moreover, a bishop who is appointed from Persia. In the Island again called Dioskorides⁹, which is situate [sic] in the same Indian Sea, and where the inhabitants speak Greek, having been originally colonists sent thither by the Ptolemies who succeeded Alexander the Macedonian, there are clergy who receive their ordination in Persia, and are sent on to the Island, and there is a multitude of Christians (McCrimdle 1979:165-166).¹⁰

The first material evidence in India of the Persian connection comes by way of several granite crosses, popularly known as "Persian crosses," found in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Goa with inscriptions in Sassanian-Pahlavi or Middle Persian on them (see Brown 1982: 79-80; Mundadan [1984] 2001: 103; Winckworth 1929). It is not established yet whether they were carved in India or whether they were brought from Persia.¹¹ Figure 1 shows a photo of the Persian cross near Mylapore, in Chennai, in Tamil Nadu;¹² figure 2 shows a photo of the Persian cross at the left altar of Valiyapalli, at Kottayam, in Kerala; figure 3 shows the postage stamp of the Persian cross in figure 1, issued by the Government of India in 1972 to commemorate the nineteenth centenary of

⁷ Male is Malabar, i. e., Kerala (McCrimdle 1979: 161, note 4).

⁸ Kalliana is Kalyan, near Bombay (McCrimdle 1979: 161, note 5).

⁹ Dioskorides is the island called Socotra. For an explanation of the name, see McCrimdle (1979: 161).

¹⁰ For more comments on this passage, see Mundadan ([1984] 2001: 60, note 60).

¹¹ For a discussion on the content of the Pahlavi inscriptions on these crosses, see Brown (1982: 80); Winckworth (1929).

¹² This cross is traditionally known in India as "St. Thomas Cross," probably because it was unearthed in Mylapore, where the Apostle is believed to have accepted martyrdom. See more about the St. Thomas Cross and its place in pre-sixteenth century church architecture in Kerala, in Malekandathil (2003: 244-245).

Figure 1. The "Persian cross," also known as "St. Thomas cross," at St. Thomas Cathedral, near Mylapore, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

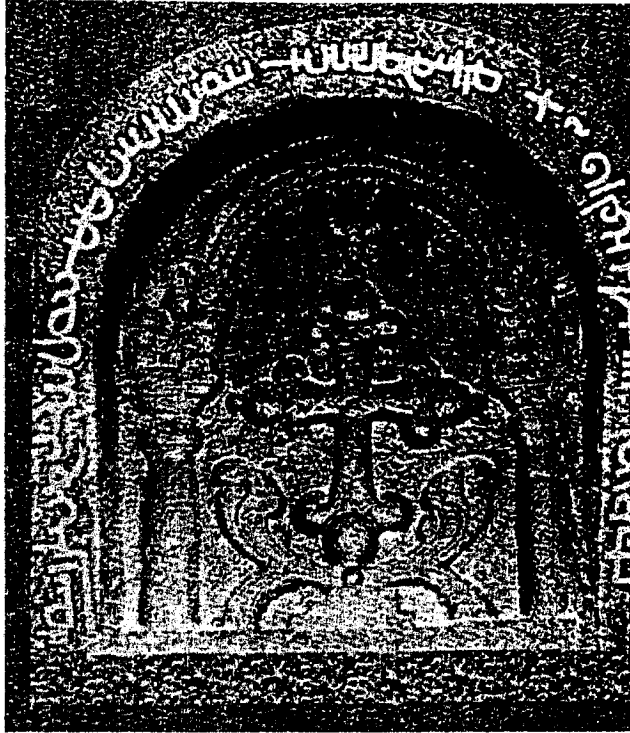


Figure 2. The Persian cross at Valiyapally, at Kottayam, Kerala.



Figure 3. Postage stamp of the Persian cross in figure 1, issued by the Government of India in 1972.



Figure 4. Postage stamp of St. Thomas the Apostle, issued by the government of India.



the martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle; and figure 4 shows the postage stamp of St. Thomas issued by the Government of India.

Cardinal Eugene Tisserant, who did extensive research on the history of the East-Syrian Church, affirms that the Indian Church was definitely connected jurisdictionally with the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, named after the twin capital cities of the Persians on both sides of the Tigris, by about AD 450. Tisserant (1957:10) writes: "Indian Christianity was definitely connected with the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon only about AD 450, at a time when the Mesopotamian, also called the Persian, Church was itself being strongly established and was a well-knit unit."

Another historically identifiable migration of Christians from Persia took place in the ninth century under the leadership of two saintly bishops, Mar Sapor and Mar Prot (Mundadan [1984] 2001: 103-105). From that time onwards, the Indian Church was under the succession of Chaldean bishops, often with long interruptions, until the end of the sixteenth century when Mar Abraham served as the last Chaldean bishop in Kerala (Mar Abraham died in 1597).¹³

At this point, the relationship between the Persian Church and the Indian Church appears to have been only on the liturgical level. The Indian Christians received bishops from Persia, acknowledged the Chaldean Patriarch as their spiritual leader, and followed the Chaldean liturgy in East Syriac. However, the visiting bishops did not have authority over temporal matters of the Indian Christians. A local clergy leader, elected from among their own community, administered the temporal and civil affairs of the community. He

¹³ For more information on Mar Abraham, see Thevarmannil (1965) and Mundadan (2003: 41-48).

held the title of Archdeacon of All-India, and was treated like a prince. The Archdeacon was the national leader of Christians in India (Kollaparambil 1972). The community had a unique administrative set up, known as *palliyōgam* (literally, "church assembly"), an assembly of priests and elected representatives of the lay people. It had at least two levels: a general assembly to deal with matters of concern for the whole community, and a local assembly that took care of the administration of local parish. The Archdeacon presided over the general assembly, and, very often, the seniormost priest of the parish presided over the local assembly.¹⁴

By way of reviewing the pre-sixteenth century history of Christianity in India, it may be said that the fusion of cultures of the immigrant Christians and their local counterparts (i. e., Hindu converts to Christianity) followed a smooth and peaceful process. Such a fusion led to the creation of a unique identity for the Indian Church, which is sometimes described as "Hindu in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship" (Podipara 1959: 99). Somewhere along the line, definitely before the sixteenth century, Christians in India coined a phrase to express their unique identity as a community within the multi-religious and cultural context of South India: *mār tōmmāṭe mārḡḡawum wazhipāṭum*, translated approximately as "the way and lineage of St. Thomas." Interestingly, the phrase consists of words from three completely different linguistic backgrounds: Aramaic (*mār* = "holy," "lord," "saint" and *tōmā* = "Thomas"), Sanskrit (*mārḡ* = "way"), and Tamil (*wazhipāṭū* = "lineage"). These words are conjoined by rules of syntax that are common to South Indian (i. e., Dravidian) languages. Scholars have yet to arrive at a proper translation of the phrase. Suffice to say that the combination

¹⁴ For more information, see Brown (1982: 169).

of languages in the phrase is but one testimony to the confluence of races, cultures, and thought processes that took several centuries to shape. The Portuguese missionaries, who encountered Christians in India at the dawn of the sixteenth century, understood the phrase as *Ley de são Thome* ("Law of Thomas") because they did not know either the nuances of the languages or the complexity of the social, cultural, and religious history of the people who spoke them. As we shall see below, such a lack of understanding led to several problems in the subsequent centuries.

Encounter with the Christian West

On his first voyage to India, Vasco de Gama (ca. 1469-1524) arrived at Kozhikkode (Calicut), in the northern part of Kerala in 1498. During his stay in Kerala, de Gama became aware of the presence of Christians in that part of the world. Missionaries joined him on his second trip to India; they arrived in Kochi (Cochin) in the central part of Kerala in 1502. The local Christians welcomed de Gama and his companions who were pleasantly surprised to see a prosperous community that lived in harmony with its mostly Hindu neighbors. De Gama made a third and final trip to India in 1524. He died during his stay in Kochi, on December 24, 1524, and was buried there.¹⁵

The initial exuberance faded slowly when the missionaries came to know the inner dynamics of the life of the St. Thomas Christians, who lived in a multi-religious context among Hindus, Muslims, and Jews. Politically, the St. Thomas Christians were subject to the local Hindu rulers, and ecclesiastically they professed allegiance to the Chaldean Patriarch in Babylon. There were several major areas of concern for the

¹⁵ The remains of de Gama were taken to Portugal in 1539.

missionaries. The local Christians received bishops from the East-Syrian Church. The Roman Church viewed the East-Syrian Church as Nestorian, i. e., followers of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople (428-431). The very name of Nestorius evoked strong negative reactions in the missionaries because Nestorianism had been condemned as a heresy. Consequently, they thought it was their mission to purge the local Christianity of Nestorian heresy as they understood it at that time and bring them to the "true" faith of the Catholic Church.

Adding more members to the Roman Catholic Church meant greater glory to the King of Portugal; the King enjoyed a special privilege from the pope, known as *padroado*. In 1455, Pope Nicholas V granted this privilege to the kings of Spain and Portugal to have ecclesiastical authority over the newly discovered lands. It meant that the King could directly administer religious matters, including the selection of candidates to the office of bishop for territories under their control. In 1514, Pope Leo X reiterated this privilege of the King of Portugal over the new territories in India. The *padroado* became a strong support for the Portuguese, especially in areas like Kerala where they did not enjoy political control over the people.

The missionaries came to India with the view that Christianity was the only true religion and Roman Catholicism was the authentic form of it. They had little respect for the life and traditions of the Hindus whom they referred to as "pagans," "infidels," and "heathens." Meanwhile, the social and cultural boundaries between local Christians and their Hindu neighbors were highly permeable. In the eyes of the missionaries there were too many "pagan" practices among the local Christians, such as giving Hindu names to their children, participating in the festivities of the Hindus, allowing Hindu musicians to

perform in the church during mass, etc.. There were also architectural similarities between the churches and Hindu temples. These were serious issues, according to the missionaries, that needed to be addressed .

The Portuguese held on to a conquest-and-expansion approach in their missionary endeavors that camouflaged their aggressive hegemonic intrusion into the life of the local Christians. In matters concerning theology, liturgy, and music, the Portuguese placed themselves on a pedestal; they went in for polemical discourse rather than for dialogue with the local Christians. On the other hand, coexistence was the ideal of the St. Thomas Christians, who found no problem in the Portuguese following a different liturgy and life style. They called the foreigners' religion "the way of Peter" (*paṭṛōsinṭe māṛggam*), different from, but not opposed to, their own form of Christianity, which they called "the way of Thomas" (*tōmmāṭe māṛggam*).

The Portuguese missionaries' weapon for submission was forced conformity to the post-Tridentine Roman rite.¹⁶ After many years of uneasy debates, the leader of the Portuguese mission in India, Alexis Menezes, Archbishop of Goa,¹⁷ decided to convene a Synod with priests and laymen representing every parish of the St. Thomas Christians. The Synod was a turning point in the history of Christianity in India. It was held at

¹⁶ The Council of Trent, held intermittently at Trent (Tridentum), in Italy, from 1545 to 1563, defined the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church and condemned the Reformation.

¹⁷ Alexis de Menezes was an Augustinian Friar; he became the Governor General of the *Indies* for three years and later the Governor of Portugal for two years; after that he became president of the Council of State of Portugal at Madrid, where he died (Geddes 1694: 112).

Udayamperoor ("Diamper" in Western records), in central Kerala, in June 1599.¹⁸ As the Archbishop explained in his opening speech, among the objectives of the Synod were "..... the destruction of the heresies and errors which were sown therein by several heretics and schismatics, and for the purging of books from the false doctrines contained in them, and for the perfect union of this church with the whole church catholic and universal, and for the yielding of obedience to the supreme Bishop of Rome" (Geddes 1694: 88). A total of 813 delegates, including 163 priests representing various parishes of the St. Thomas Christians, signed the decrees of the synod.¹⁹ According to Mundadan,

Archbishop Menezes "sought to destroy at one blow what he considered the root-cause of all the shortcomings that he found in the Church of Kerala. By means of threats, bribes and force he succeeded in severing the long-standing connection of the Kerala Church with the patriarchate of Persia, even though the patriarch in question (Simon Denha) was fully in communion with Rome" (Mundadan 2003: 50).

Archbishop Menezes ordained Francis Ros, a Jesuit priest from the Catalan region of Spain, as bishop. As recommended by the King of Portugal, the Pope appointed Ros as bishop of the St. Thomas Christians, who by that action became subjected to the Portuguese *padroado*. Bishop Ros was in charge of either "correcting" or burning the liturgical and other books in Syriac that had Nestorian "heresies" and references to the saints of the Chaldean Church. The missionaries could not tolerate the mention of the name of Nestorius in the liturgical texts, or calling the Blessed Virgin Mary the "Mother

¹⁸ For the immediate circumstances that prompted the Archbishop to convene the Synod, see Mundadan (2003: 44-48); for a discussion on the validity of the synod, see Thaliath (1958).

¹⁹ The Archbishop himself wrote down the decrees in Portuguese that were to be discussed at the Synod and had them translated into Malayalam, the language of Kerala, with the help of priests who were well versed in both languages.

of Christ" (*emme damiśiha*) rather than the "Mother of God" (*emme d'alāhā*). The mission of Bishop Ros and his successors was to make the St. Thomas Christians comply as much as possible with the rite and ecclesiastical rules of the Roman Church.

First Division among the St. Thomas Christians

Most of the St. Thomas Christians refused to support the high-handed measures of Archbishop Menezes and the synod that he convened. They were unhappy about the decisions made at the Synod and the Latinization process launched by Bishop Ros and his successors. The St. Thomas Christians vehemently opposed the reduction of the juridical status of their ancient church to that of a subsidiary church of the Metropolitan of Goa. In 1653, a group of St. Thomas Christians gathered at Mattanchery, near Kochi, around a granite cross, tied a rope around it, and holding the rope, took an oath saying they would not subject themselves to the authority of the Jesuit missionaries or the Archbishop of Goa. The event is known in oral and written histories as *kūnan kuriśu satyam*, i. e., "oath at the bent cross." The bent-cross oath was a watershed moment in the history of the St. Thomas Christians. Later, the community was divided into those who supported the Jesuit missionaries (who represented the Portuguese) and those who opposed them. The latter group eventually came to be known as *puttankūr* or *puttankuṭṭukār* (Mal., "New Allegiance," "people of the New Allegiance") and the former, *pazhēkūr* or *pazhēkuṭṭukār* (Mal., "Old Allegiance," "people of the Old Allegiance"). Further divisions took place among both groups and, as a result, at present there are eight different churches among the St. Thomas Christians. A short history of each church is given below.

Churches of the Old Allegiance

Syro-Malabar Church

The Syro-Malabar Church is the largest among the churches of the St. Thomas Christians, with 3.3 million members (statistics from 1999, see Karotemprel 1999: 10). The term "Syro" stands for the Syriac language, East-Syriac liturgical tradition, and their respective histories both in the Middle East and in India, and "Malabar" stands for the region now known as Kerala. The name Syro-Malabar Christians first appeared in the decree that Pope Leo XIII issued, on May 20, 1887 (Mundadan 2003: 88); this document eventually led to the ritual and juridical separation of the Catholic St. Thomas Christians from the Latin Church. As of 2004, there are twenty-six dioceses in the Syro-Malabar Church, of which thirteen are in Kerala and twelve are in other parts of India; the first diocese outside India was established in 2001 for Syro-Malabar Catholics in USA and Canada, with headquarters in Chicago.

The history of the Syro-Malabar Church is a record of interactions among Indian, Middle Eastern, and Western Christians, combining in the process the socio-religious customs of India, liturgy and spirituality of the Chaldean Church, and ecclesiastical laws and related practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Such a confluence of diverse elements is the result of centuries-long struggles for autonomy and an ongoing search for identity.

Those who continued to remain under the Portuguese *padroado* after the Synod of Udayamperoor (i. e., those who did not participate in the "bent-cross oath") were unhappy with the interference in their lives by Bishop Ros and his successors. Moreover, according to the new arrangement, the Archdeacon, the national leader of the St. Thomas

Christians, was stripped of his rights and privileges and was made subservient to the *padroado* bishops. They (the local Christians) wanted to have a bishop from their own community. The community's struggle for autonomy from the foreign bishops may best be described in the words of Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar, a leader of the St. Thomas Christians in the eighteenth century. As he observes, the Syriac Christians of Kerala wanted to liberate themselves "from the slavery and the contempt of the foreigners" (quoted by Mundadan 2003: 103).

The St. Thomas Christians appealed to Rome to appoint bishops from their own community to look after their spiritual needs. The rift between the Jesuit bishops appointed through the Portuguese *padroado* and the St. Thomas Christians became so deep that finally Rome superseded the *padroado* rights of Portugal and sent two batches of Italian Carmelite missionaries to Kerala in 1665, with full powers to deal with the situation. These missionaries were directly accountable to the Propaganda de Fide (Congregation for the Propagation of Faith) that Rome established to deal directly with Christians in the new territories. The Carmelite mission, too, was not successful. On the contrary, the situation only became worse in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The St. Thomas Christians were sometimes torn between two jurisdictions, one led by the Carmelite Vicar Apostolic who was directly under the Congregation of the Propagation of Faith (Rome), and the other led by the representative of the Portuguese *Padroado*.

In 1887, Pope Leo XIII decided to rectify the situation through the ritual separation of the Catholic St. Thomas Christians from the Latin Church. The pope created two vicariates for the St. Thomas Christians, but appointed Latin-rite bishops as heads. Complete autonomy was finally granted in 1886, when the Pope appointed three

indigenous vicars apostolic from among the St. Thomas Christians. In 1923, Pope Pius XI established the Syro-Malabar hierarchy. Thus, the Syro-Malabar Church became an autonomous Church within the universal Catholic Church under the supervision of the Pope. In 1992, Rome elevated the Syro-Malabar Church to a Major Archiepiscopal Church within the universal Catholic communion. The Major Archbishop governs the church with the help of the Synod of Bishops.²⁰

The Church of the East

The formation of the Church of the East as a separate entity was the result of a division that started in the second half of the nineteenth century among the members of the Syro-Malabar Church. Although Archbishop Menezes severed the ties of the St. Thomas Christians with the Chaldean Patriarch at the Synod of Udayamperoor, the Chaldean Patriarchs continued to hold their claim of spiritual leadership of the St. Thomas Christians. A new chapter began in the relationship of the Chaldean Catholic Church²¹ and the St. Thomas Christians in the middle of the nineteenth century when Joseph VI Audo became Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church in 1847.²² The Patriarch

²⁰ For more information on the history of the Syro-Malabar Church and its struggle for autonomy, see Mundadan (2003: 54-115).

²¹ In 1553, because of internal strife within the Assyrian Church of the East, some members decided to enter into union with the Roman Catholic Church, under the leadership of John Sulaqa. Pope Julius III consecrated John Sulaqa, a monk at the Rabban Hormizd Monastery in Mosul, as Patriarch. The consecration took place in Rome. Patriarch John Sulaqa and his followers formed the Chaldean Catholic Church with headquarters at Amida (Diyarbakir). Fifteen months after his consecration, the Patriarch was imprisoned and brutally murdered in 1555. For more information, see Aprem (2003: 32-33).

²² See more about Patriarch Joseph VI Audo, in Aprem (2003: 36-37).

decided to reclaim direct allegiance of the Syro-Malabar Catholics. In 1861, against the wishes of the Pope, the Patriarch sent Bishop Thomas Rokos to Kerala. A group of Syro-Malabar Catholics, who always wanted a bishop of the Eastern rite as their spiritual leader, welcomed Bishop Rokos with great enthusiasm. However, Rome asked its representatives in Kerala to work against Bishop Rokos, who finally had to return to Baghdad in 1862. Undaunted by the opposition of the Pope, the Patriarch sent Bishop Yohannan Elia Mellus to Kerala in 1874. He lived in Thrissur until 1882. Bishop Mellus created a good impression among the St. Thomas Christians in the Thrissur region and gained a considerable following. However, Rome vehemently opposed the actions of the Patriarch and excommunicated Bishop Mellus. Later, Mellus submitted to Rome in 1889.

The community that Bishop Mellus left behind in Thrissur contacted the "Nestorian" line of the Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East that was not in communion with Rome. In 1907, Patriarch Benyamin Shimun consecrated Mar Thimotheus Abimalek as Metropolitan of India. Mar Abimalek arrived in Thrissur in 1908 and held office until his death in 1945 (Mar Abimalek is buried in Thrissur).²³ It was during this period that the community gradually weaned itself from the Syro-Malabar Church and established its own identity as the Church of the East.²⁴ Since then, the

²³ For more information on Mar Abimalek, see Aprem (2003: 79, 114-168).

²⁴ Because of its highly complicated history (not explained in this chapter), the Church of the East is referred to by several names. The name given in the *Indian Christian Directory* is Assyrian Church of the East (Panthaplamthottiyil 2000: 1078). The popular name in the Thrissur region is Chaldean Syrian Church. Depending on the theological perspective of the writers, some documents refer to this Church as Nestorian Church. However, Nestorius was not the founder of this Church, nor of the Church to which it is currently affiliated, the Assyrian Church of the East. See more details in Aprem (2003: 22-23).

Church of the East considers the Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East as its supreme head.²⁵ The present Patriarch, H. H. Mar Dinha IV, resides in Morton Grove, Illinois, USA. The local Metropolitan, Dr. Mar Aprem, resides at Thrissur. As of 2004, there are 30,000 members in the Church of the East.

Churches of the New Allegiance

The Orthodox Churches

Those who took part in the "bent-cross oath" (1653) and severed their relationship with the Roman Catholic Church appealed to the Eastern patriarchs of Antioch, Babylon, and Alexandria to send bishops to India. The Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch responded by sending Mar Gregorios (Gregorius Abdul Jaleel), the Jacobite bishop of Jerusalem to Kerala.²⁶ Bishop Gregorios' visit in 1665 became the first step in the history of the relationship between Indian Christians and the Jacobite Church of Antioch. After the death of Mar Gregorios in 1671, the Antiochene connection continued, although the Patriarch did not have any juridical authority over the people of the New Allegiance. In 1751, the Patriarch of Antioch sent Mar Baselios, Mar Gregorios, Ramban John, and two other clerics to Kerala with a letter claiming juridical supremacy over the people of the New Allegiance. This mission was only partially successful. Because of their connection with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, the people of the New Allegiance came to be known also as **Jacobites**. In 1836, a Synod was held at Mavelikkara. In the official document signed at this Synod the Jacobites publicly acknowledged the validity of the

²⁵ For a well-documented study of the history of the Assyrian Church of the East, see Mar Aprem's doctoral dissertation (Aprem 2003).

²⁶ See more about Mar Gregorios in Aprem (2003: 48).

Antiochene rite and the supremacy of the Antiochene Patriarch in the following words: "We, the Syrian Jacobites, who are subject to the supreme power of the Antiochene Patriarch and who use the liturgy and rites instituted by the prelates sent by his authority, cannot deviate from such liturgies rites and adopt a discipline contrary to them" (quoted by Beselios 1997: 118).²⁷ In spite of the declaration at the Synod, the complete supremacy of the Antiochene Patriarch over the Jacobites in Kerala continued to be a matter of dispute. Finally, the Patriarch himself, Peter III, visited Kerala in 1876 and convened a synod at Mulanthuruthy, near Kochi. During the Synod he tried to establish his claim of juridical supremacy over the people of the New Allegiance.

Neither the personal presence of the Patriarch, nor the decisions taken at the Mulanthuruthy Synod could lead to a final solution to the ongoing debate on the nature and role of the Antiochene Patriarch in the life of the people of the New Allegiance. The internal conflicts among the Indian Christians in general, and the people of the New Allegiance in particular, based on the claims of spiritual and temporal powers and material resources of churches, only added to the confusion. The Antiochene Patriarchs were least hesitant to take advantage of the muddled situation in India. In 1909, Mar Ignatius Abdalla Satuff, the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, arrived in Kerala. The Patriarch insisted that the Jacobites should acknowledge his authority not only in spiritual matters, but also in temporal matters. In effect, the Patriarch demanded complete submission of the people of the New Allegiance to his authority. He asked for a written

²⁷ The declaration came as a response to the challenge of reformation of the Jacobites by the Church Missionary Society (C. M. S.), an Auxiliary society of the Church of England. The C. M. S. became active in Kerala in 1814. More about this later under the heading, "Mar Thoma Syrian Church."

document to this effect signed by all bishops. Several bishops submitted such a document to the patriarch. However, one bishop, Vattasseril Mar Dionysius VI (episcopal ordination 1909, d. 1934) objected to the moves of the Patriarch to gain complete control over the people of the New Allegiance. Mar Dionysius would allow only spiritual power, specifically, the consecration of bishops and holy oil (chrism). The Patriarch, who insisted on both temporal and spiritual powers over the Jacobites, excommunicated Mar Dionysius. This led to a division among the Jacobites between those who supported the Patriarch and those who sided with the indigenous bishop, Mar Dionysius. The former came to be known as *bāwā kakshi* (Patriarch's Party) and the latter, *metrān kakshi* (Bishop's Party).

At this time, there were two Patriarchs in the Jacobite Church of Antioch. Abdul Messih had been enthroned as Patriarch in July 1895, but the Sultan of Turkey deposed him in 1905. In his place, with the support of the Turkish government, Abdalla Satuff was enthroned as Patriarch in 1906.²⁸ However, Abdul Messih did not give up his claim to Patriarchal powers. The followers of Mar Dionysius (i. e., the Bishop's Party) appealed to Abdul Messih, who came to Kerala in 1912. He invalidated the excommunication of Mar Dionysius by the rival Patriarch Abdalla Satuff. Also, he created a new title, "Catholicos of Malabar " and consecrated a new bishop from Kerala, Paulose Mar Ivanios, for that title. Patriarch Abdul Messih signed a document that gave authority to the local bishops to consecrate a new catholicos when the presiding Catholicos passed away. In the same year, the Catholicos and his followers (i. e., Bishop's Party) created a new synod and a constitution. Thus, there came to be two autonomous churches among

²⁸ See Brown (1982: 151 note 1, 153)

the people of the New Allegiance. The official names of these Churches are: **Malankara Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church** (the Patriarch's Party) and **Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church** (Bishop's Party). The Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church recognizes the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (currently, Moran Mar Ignatius Zakka Ivas I, living in Damascus) as its supreme head. The Church has about 1.3 million members in twelve dioceses in Kerala and one diocese in Bombay. The headquarters of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church is at Kottayam. The Church has 2.5 million members in twenty-two dioceses, of which fifteen are in Kerala, four in other states, and three in North America and Europe (Mundadan 2003: 136).

Malabar Independent Syrian Church

In 1772, the Jacobite bishop Mar Gregorios (he was sent by the Patriarch of Antioch to Kerala in 1751) consecrated Ramban Kattumangatt Abraham, a Keralite, as bishop for the people of the New Allegiance. He took the name Koorilose (Cyril). Because of internal strife among the people of the New Allegiance, Bishop Koorilose had to flee the then State of Travancore and settle down at Kunnamkulam (see Baselios 1997: 45).

Being a saintly man, the bishop gained a following from among the Syriac Christians in the area, and the community that accepted his spiritual leadership formed a new Church, known as the Malabar Independent Syrian Church. The name connotes adherence to the Syriac (West Syriac) traditions, while maintaining ecclesiastical independence from the Jacobite Church of Antioch. Because the headquarters is located in Thozhiyoor (also known as Anjoor), near Kunnamkulam, the Malabar Independent Syrian Church is known also as Thozhiyoor Sabha (Church of Thozhiyoor). This is the smallest of the

Syriac churches in India with 21, 000 people in twelve parishes spread in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Panthaplamthottiyil 2000: 1078).

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church is described as the "Oriental Church born of the Protestant reformation" (Panthaplamthottiyil 2000: 1056). In 1814, The Church Missionary Society (C. M. S.), an auxiliary society of the Church of England, became active in Chennai. The Society sent its missionaries to Kerala, where they came in contact with the leaders of the people of the New Allegiance. Their intention was to reform the life and worship of the people of the New Allegiance, and thereby gain greater control over the community. The missionaries organized the translation of the Bible into Malayalam to make it available to everyone. They also translated Anglican hymns and prayers into Malayalam. A section of the people of the New Allegiance welcomed the idea of reforming their Church by incorporating the ideas of Anglican evangelism. However, a majority of them did not want to discard their age-old practices and, especially, their ancient liturgy in Syriac. In 1836, a Synod was held at Mavelikkara, in which the reform measures proposed by the Anglican missionaries were discussed at length. The Synod finally refused to accept those measures and decided to sever the relationship between the missionaries and the people of the New Allegiance. A small group, under the leadership of Palakkunnath Abraham Malpan (1796- 1845) decided to follow the council of the Anglican missionaries. They called themselves the "Reform Party." They had no intention to establish a separate church, but only to reform some of the age-old customs and certain elements in their liturgy.

Table 1. Official names of the eight Syriac Churches in India

Years	Official Names of the Syriac Churches in India
AD 52 (?) - 1599	St. Thomas Christians (<i>Mar Thoma kristyanikal</i>)
1599	St. Thomas Christians under <i>Padroado</i> rule
1653	Start of the first division:
-----	A. People of the New Allegiance (<i>Puttankuttukar</i>)
	or Jacobites
	B. People of the Old Allegiance (<i>Pazhekuttukar</i>)
	Further divisions:
1772	Malabar Independent Syrian Church
1665 - 1836	Malankara Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church
1876	Mar Thoma Syrian Church
1887 - 1896	Syro-Malabar Church
1908	Church of the East
1912	Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
1930	Syro-Malankara Church
1961	St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India

However, in the ensuing years the rift grew wider and wider between the Reform Party and the majority who wanted to maintain the status quo. In 1876, at the Synod that Patriarch Peter III convoked at Mulanthuruthy, the Reform Party refused to accept the supremacy of the Patriarch. They, under the leadership of the indigenous bishop Mathew Mar Athanasius, separated themselves and formed a new church that later came to be known as Mar Thoma Syrian Church. The Mar Thoma Syrian Church combined several St. Thomas Christian traditions with aspects of evangelical theology of the Anglican Church, and became a member of the world-wide Anglican communion. As of 2000, there are 900,000 members in this Church in eleven dioceses, seven of which are in Kerala, two in other parts of India, and two outside India (Mundadan 2003: 131).

The Syro-Malankara Church

In the 1920s, some members of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (i. e. the Bishop's Party under the Catholicos of the East at Kottayam), which severed its relation with the Jacobite Patriarch in 1912, decided to reunite with the Roman Catholic Church. Mar Ivanios (1882-1963) gave leadership to the reunion movement. He sent an official letter to the Pope in 1926 requesting permission to keep the West Syriac liturgy and other ancient traditions, and to retain the authority of the local bishops and the synod. The intention of Mar Ivanios was the reunion of the whole Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church with Rome. Rome allowed them to retain the Syriac liturgical tradition and accepted the validity of the ordination of bishops and their authority over the people. However, the Vatican refused to accept the authority of the synod of bishops of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and the authority of the Catholicos, and insisted on

discontinuing marriage of the clergy. After several discussions and compromises, the final union came into effect, on September 20, 1930. Rome gave a new name to the

Table 2. Allegiances/ affiliations of the Syriac Churches in India.

Syriac Churches	Affiliation/ Allegiance
Malabar Independent Syrian Church	Independent
Malankara Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church	Allegiance to the Antiochene Patriarch
Mar Thoma Syrian Church	In communion with the Anglican Church
Syro-Malabar Church	In union with the Roman Catholic Church
Church of the East	In allegiance to the Assyrian Church of the East
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church	Under the Catholicos of the East, at Kottayam, Kerala
Syro-Malankara Church	In union with the Roman Catholic Church
St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India	Independent

group, Syro-Malankara Church.²⁹ Since 1995, this Church has been a Metropolitan Church, *sui juris*, i. e., autonomous under the pope. On February 10, 2005, the Syro-Malankara Church, like the Syro-Malabar Church, became a Major Archiepiscopal Church by the decree of Pope John Paul II. It has about 400,000 members in four dioceses in Kerala and mission centers in other parts of India, Europe, and North America.³⁰

St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India

The establishment of the St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India was the result of a conflict within the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, between those who wanted renewal and those who wanted more of it. Some members of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church were unhappy with the pace of renewal based on the Anglican evangelical ideals. In 1961, Mr. K. N. Daniel (Kurunthottikkal Ninan Daniel, 1878-1965) led the group to form a separate church. They named the new church the St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India. There are about 30,000 members in this Church (Mundadan 2003: 132).

Syrian Christians or Syriac Christians?

Before concluding this chapter, I think it proper to add a comment on the terms "Syrian" and "Syriac." Several churches among the St. Thomas Christians have "Syrian" as part of their official names in English. As is evident in the Malayalam version of the respective names, "Syrian" stands for the Syriac language rather than a particular geographical region or ethnic origin. In order to avoid geographical and ethnic connotations, I have

²⁹ Malankara (Mal., "land of hills") is another name for Kerala.

³⁰ For a scholarly study of the history of the Syro-Malankara Church, see Baselios (1997).

preferred "Syriac churches" and "Syriac Christians" to "Syrian churches" and "Syrian Christians" while referring to the churches of the St. Thomas Christians in general. At present there are no Syrian Christians (from the Middle East) living in India (Aprem 2003: 221). There were migrations of Christians from Persia to Kerala in the fourth century, and later between the sixth and tenth centuries. However, except for a small group known as Knananites, the St. Thomas Christians today do not trace their ancestry to Persia or anywhere else in the Middle East.³¹ The situation in India is unlike that of the expatriate Christians from the Middle East who established communities and centers of worship of their own in Europe, Australia, and North America. The Syriac churches in India may not be seen merely as an expansion of the Syrian Churches in the Middle East. Before the sixteenth century, Christianity in India was not just an extension of the "Syriac Orient," as Sebastian Brock put it: "Before the arrival of the Portuguese, Christianity was represented here [Kerala] solely by Syriac Orient, the native Asian Christianity" (Brock 1988: 11). Such a reduction would go against both the social and cultural history of Christianity in India. At the same time, the liturgical traditions associated with the Syriac language are significant factors in the definition of the identity of St. Thomas Christians. However, they are not the only factors in the formation of that identity. Moreover, since the vernacularization of Syriac liturgies in the 1960s, the Syriac language has had a lesser role in the definition of that identity.

As the title of Gouvea's book, *Synodo Diocesano da Igreja e Bispado de Angamale dos antigos christãos de Sam Thome das Serras do Malavar das partes da*

24. The Knananite trace their ancestry to Thomas of Cana and those who came along with him to Kerala in the fourth century.

India Oriental (Gouvea 1606b) shows, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Portuguese missionaries used the local name, "Christians of St. Thomas" (*Mār Thōmmā Kṛistyānikal*), and rarely the name Syrian Christians. The name Syrian Christian was "invented by the Dutch and popularized by the British in India" (Zacharia 1994: 59).

The history of Syriac churches in South India may be assessed against the background of what Stephen Neill calls, "the gigantic drama of the confrontation between Western and Asian cultures" (1985: xiii). To that we may add the conflicts of individuals and particular ecclesiastical points of view. The primary cause of the divisions among the St. Thomas Christians was not so much the fundamental differences in matters of faith as the fights for power and domination. The history of Syriac liturgies and their respective musics in India bear witness to this ongoing drama of conflicts.

Chapter Three

The East Syriac and West Syriac Liturgies in India

The East Syriac and West Syriac liturgies, discussed in Chapter One, have their own histories in India. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two sections, on the history of East Syriac liturgy and on that of West Syriac liturgy. As is shown in Table 1, among the eight Syriac churches of the St. Thomas Christians, the Syro-Malabar Church and the Church of the East follow the East Syriac liturgy, and the other churches follow the West Syriac liturgy

Table 1. Syriac churches and their respective liturgies.

Liturgy in East Syriac	Liturgy in West Syriac
<p>Syro-Malabar Church</p> <p>Church of the East</p>	<p>Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church</p> <p>Malankara Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church</p> <p>Syro-Malankara Church</p> <p>Mar Thoma Syrian Church</p> <p>Independent Church of Thozhiyoor</p> <p>St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India</p>

East Syriac Liturgy

The pursuit of reconstructing the history of Christian liturgy and music in South India before the sixteenth century is extremely difficult due to the dearth of documentary evidence. We may never know what form of worship St. Thomas established, if he ever did, among the early converts. If it is true, as some scholars believe, that the Apostle preached the Christian faith primarily to the Jewish communities in South India (Puthiakunnel 1968:91-94; Podipara 1979:7), then the early liturgy might not have been much different, musically, from a Sabbath service.¹ Even in that case, we do not know to what extent the Jewish communities adapted their music to local styles. If, on the other hand, St. Thomas converted the Hindus, as is more commonly believed, then it is possible that an indigenous liturgy developed in the local language and local style of music. Vestiges of this liturgy, if there were any, do not remain. We may assume that the Persian Christians who migrated to India brought along with them a somewhat developed form of liturgy in Syriac. Hierarchical dependence of the Indian Church on the Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon also meant adherence to the Syriac liturgical tradition of the Church in Persia. Because, the Synod held at Seleucia in 410 insisted on homogeneity of liturgical practices in all churches under the Synod's jurisdiction (Velliyan 2000: 61-62).²

¹ The presence of Jews in South India in the first century of the Christian era is a matter of dispute. See more details in Mundadan ([1984] 2001: 19-20).

² Emperor Yazdegerd I of Persia convoked the Synod at Seleucia as a means "to control his Christian subjects by centralizing the ecclesiastical authority over them in the person of the bishop of his own capital city, Seleucia Cteziphon, rather than by persecuting them" (Velliyan 2000: 61).

Figure 1. The Persian cross at Valiyapally, Kottayam, with inscriptions in Syriac at the bottom and in Sassanian-Pahlavi at the top.



The earliest available witness to the use of Syriac language in a Christian context in South India are the inscriptions on the granite crosses, known as "Persian crosses" (described in Chapter Two). Some of the Persian crosses have inscriptions in Sassanian-Pahlavi or Middle Persian at the top and sides, and in Syriac at the bottom. Figure 1 shows the Persian cross at Valiyapalli, Kottayam. The text of the inscription in Syriac at the bottom of the cross (from St. Paul's letter to the Galatians 6: 14) reads: *Li dēn lā nehawe li deštawhar ellā en baqipeh d'māranīso m'sihā* ("But as for me, I have nothing on which to boast on, except the yoke/cross of our Lord Jesus Christ").³ The text in the inscription is similar, but not identical, to the standard Syriac version of the Bible, known as the *Pšitta* Bible.⁴ The inscription is an indication of the Indian Christians' familiarity with Syriac texts from the New Testament between sixth and tenth century AD, depending on the date of the Syriac inscription.

The first available manuscript that refers to Syriac liturgy in Kerala was written in 1301, at Kodungalloor, a port city in the central part of Kerala that was once an important center of trade and commerce. The document is currently known as Vat. Syr. Codex 22. It is a Lectionary of readings from the Letters of St. Paul for the entire liturgical year. The Lectionary was prepared after the model of the one used at that time at the Cathedral of

³ The initial word, "li" is not visible in the photo, because it is hidden behind the wooden frame.

⁴ There are several issues related to the inscription that need to be explored. The following observations are based on my email communications with Prof. Zacharias Thundy (November 22-27, 2004). The orthography of the inscription combines letters from East Syriac and from the older version of Aramaic alphabet known as Estrangela (for example, the letter *alap* is inscribed in the Estrangela script). In the *Pšitta* Bible the word for "yoke/cross" is written as *baqipeh*. However, the word does not have the letter *zain* ("z") in the inscription. The inscriber either inadvertently omitted the letter, or he probably relied on an older Syriac version of the word.

Seleucia –Ctesiphon. It was copied for use in the churches of Kerala. The colophon of this manuscript is significant for the history of the Church in India in the early fourteenth century. It reads:

This holy book was written in the royal, renowned and famous city of Chingala (Cranganore) in Malabar in the time of the great captain and director of the holy catholic church of the East ... our blessed and holy Father, Mar Yahb Alaha V ... and in the time of bishop Mar Jacob, Metropolitan and director of the Holy See of the Apostle Mar Thoma, that is to say, our captain and the director of the entire holy church of Christian[s] in India" (quoted in Velliyan 2000: 73-74).

The copyist was probably a member of the clergy or a layman who was well-versed in Syriac language and liturgy;⁵ he lived in the "royal, renowned and famous city of Chingala," i. e. , Kodungalloor."⁶ The copyist acknowledges Mar Yahb Alaha V, the Patriarch of the Chaldean Church, as the supreme head of his church in India.⁷ And the "entire holy church of Christians in India" is referred to as the Holy See of St. Thomas the Apostle, with Bishop Mar Jacob as its "director." Thus, the colophon, along with the Lectionary, indicate a well-established ecclesiastical and liturgical connection between the Churches in India and Babylon in the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Most of the available information on the status of Syriac liturgy in Kerala before the sixteenth century comes from the Portuguese period. The Portuguese visitors in

⁵ The copyist signed as "Zaharias bar Joseph bar Zacharias" (see Mundadan [1984] 2001: 103). The word *bar* in Syriac means "son."

⁶ The origin of the word Chingala (Shingala, Shengala) is unknown. The Jews in Kerala still use the word "Shingla" to refer to Kodungalloor ("Cranganore" in Western records from the sixteenth century). The phrase "Shingli tunes" refers to the songs of Jews who lived in Kondungalloor (see Palackal 1999: 5). The city is traditionally associated with the arrival of St. Thomas the Apostle.

⁷ According to Mundadan ([1984] 2001: 103), the reference here is to Patriarch Jaballaha III (AD 1281-1317).

Kerala were deeply impressed by the zeal with which the St. Thomas Christians, who lived among "heathens" and "infidels," practiced their faith. To cite one example, Melchi Nunes Barreto, after a visit to Kerala in 1563, wrote to his brethren in Europe about various aspects of the life of St. Thomas Christians. In the letter he wrote specifically about the enthusiastic participation of the laity in the recitation of the liturgy of the Hours:

And on all days before sunset they assemble in the church to recite the psalms and the lessons in Chaldean,⁸ and in the morning they do the same, the *casanrs*⁹ reciting their matins at the altar and the people answering their *allelyas* and other words with such impetus of the spirit, that although I do not understand the words they provoke in me devotion¹⁰ (quoted in Mundadan [1984] 2001: 194).

The Portuguese missionaries acknowledged the local tradition about the antiquity of the Syriac liturgy in Kerala. The Synod of Udayamperoor (1599) mentioned the continuity of the East Syriac liturgy in Kerala "for 1200 years," i. e. , from the fourth to the sixteenth century. Decree 1 of the second part of Session V, which condemns the "heretic" elements in the celebration of Syriac mass in Kerala, states:

[W]hereas this church has been for 1200 years from under the obedience of the Holy Roman Church,¹¹ mistress of all other churches, and from whence all good government and true doctrines do come, all bishops that came hither from Babylon having been schismatics and Nestorian heretics, who have added to, and taken from the mass at their pleasure without any order; from whence it has come to pass, that several things are foisted into the Syrian mass which is said in this

⁸ The term "Chaldean" here refers to East Syriac language.

⁹ The term "*casanars*" refers to local priests.

¹⁰ This statement implies that the lay people had some knowledge of Syriac language.

¹¹ In Velliyan (2000: 74) the passage reads: "Where as the Church has been for 1200 years separated from obedience of the Holy Roman Church." This seems to be the correct translation.

diocese, without any consideration, and such things too as may give occasion to many impious and heretical errors: for which, if due order were observed, all the missals of this bishopric could be burned... (Zacharia 1994b: 131).

The decree denounces the presence of "many impious and heretical errors" in the celebration of Syriac mass, caused by the arbitrary interventions of visiting bishops from Babylon who, according to the missionaries, were "schismatics and heretics." Therefore, the missionaries took upon themselves the responsibility of bringing the "true faith" back to the St. Thomas Christians. The decree proposed about forty changes in the texts and rituals to bring doctrinal and ritual parity with the practices of "the holy Roman Church from whence all good government and true doctrines do come."

The actions taken at the synod led to a reformation of the Syriac liturgy. The proposed changes included the deletion of the name of Nestorius from the liturgical texts, and changing the phrase "Mother of Christ" to "Mother of God" in reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The missionaries persuaded the Syriac Christians to keep images of several saints of the Roman rite, a practice, until then, was unknown among the St. Thomas Christians. The Synod also proposed to translate the Latin Mass into Syriac, but the proposal was met with vehement opposition from the native priests. So, the Syriac mass was retained with modifications and additions of prayers from the Latin mass. For example, the prayers *Agnus Dei* ("Lamb of God") and *Domine non sum dignus* (Lord, I am not worthy") from the communion rite of the Latin mass were translated into Syriac and added to the reformed mass (see more details in Velliyan 2000: 76). Several local customs related to the celebration of mass were suspended.¹² The most important change,

¹² One such custom was the presence and performance of Hindu musicians during mass, discussed at length in chapter Five.

however, was the introduction of the Latin liturgical calendar in the Syro-Malabar Church.

Changes made in the Syriac liturgy that were initiated and supported by the Portuguese missionaries, influenced different domains of the life of the St. Thomas Christians in the following centuries, from church architecture to music. To cite one example, the introduction of the devotion to saints of the Latin rite made necessary the translation of prayers and chants from Latin into Syriac. This led to the creation of a new genre of Syriac chants in Kerala that will be discussed in Chapter Five.

In 1908, The Church of the East established its separate identity among the Syriac churches in India. One of the means of expression of the new identity was to restore the East Syriac liturgy to its sixteenth century status, i. e. before the Latinization of the liturgy by the Portuguese missionaries. The process of restoring the liturgy began with the elimination of Latin prayers from the missal, the Latin liturgical calendar, and prayers related to saints of the Roman rite. It also included the removal of statues of saints from the churches. By doing so the Church of the East established a theological, doctrinal, and ritual parity with the Assyrian Church of the East. At present, the liturgy of the Church of the East and the Assyrian Church of the East are almost identical.

The establishment of an independent hierarchy in the Syro-Malabar Church took place in 1923. This provided the local bishops in Kerala with a forum for free thinking in matters concerning liturgy. The primary concern of the bishops was to make a Malayalam translation of the liturgy and to eliminate the Latin elements incorporated during the Portuguese period. The prayers for the rite of priestly ordination were translated into Malayalam in 1960. A partial translation of the missal was introduced on July 3, 1962,

the day of the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle. This text eliminated the Latin prayers and restored most of the prayers and rubrics according to the Chaldean rite. A translation of the services for the dead by Fr. Abel Periyappuram came into use in 1966. Fr. Abel's translation of the liturgy of the Hours for the seasons of Lent and Easter were published in 1967. A complete Malayalam translation of the missal was introduced in 1968. The current missals for the most solemn, solemn, and ordinary celebrations of mass were revised in 1989. Translation and revision activities are still continuing.

There are two versions of the liturgy of the Hours in Malayalam translation currently in use in the Syro-Malabar Church: *Kānōna namaskāram* (Canonical Prayers) vol. I, II, and III, translated and published by Fr. Abel (1999, 2000a, and 2000b), and *Yāma prārthanaka!* (Prayers of the Hours) vol. I, II, and III, published by the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference in 1986.¹³ The text of model melodies transcribed in Chapter Six are taken from Fr. Abel's publication.

Although Latin elements were eliminated from important sections of the liturgy such as mass, liturgy of the Hours, funeral services, etc., several paraliturgical services and devotional practices such as novena to saints, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, continue to be an integral part of the liturgical life of the Syro-Malabar Catholics. The presence of statues of saints of the Roman rite are conspicuous in many churches.

In 1962, the Syro-Malabar Church established the first mission diocese outside Kerala, with headquarters in Chanda, in Maharashtra State. The diocese of Chanda covered Hindi and Marathi speaking areas in Maharashtra and Telugu speaking areas in

¹³ This version does not indicate names of the translators.

the State of Andhra Pradesh. It became necessary to translate the Syriac liturgy into those languages. In the following years, twelve Syro-Malabar dioceses and several mission centers were established in different parts of India. The St. Thomas Diocese of Chicago (USA), the first diocese outside India, was established in 2001 to serve the expatriate Syro-Malabar Christians in USA and Canada. The liturgy was translated to several more languages to serve the needs of these mission dioceses and centers. As of 2004, the Syro-Malabar liturgy is celebrated in Malayalam, English, Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, several tribal languages, and less frequently in Syriac.

To conclude, the East Syriac liturgy in India went through several stages of formation, reformation, and restoration. The early stages in the introduction of Syriac liturgy in Kerala is shrouded in mystery due to the lack of documentary evidence. Most of the information on Syriac liturgical history has come down to us from the period of reformation, starting in 1599. The restoration of East Syriac liturgy took place in two different ways: one in the Syro-Malabar Church and the other in the Church of the East. The Church of the East got rid of the Latin elements almost completely, whereas the Syro-Malabar Church continues some of the Latin-rite practices, such as the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and novena to saints. The musical history of the respective churches discussed briefly in Chapter Five bears witness to the various transformations that the churches went through.

West Syriac Liturgy

The introduction of the West Syriac (Antiochene/Jacobite) liturgy among the people of the New Allegiance was a slow and gradual process that extended for over a century,

from the 1751 to the 1874.¹⁴ Bishop Gregorios of Jerusalem celebrated liturgy in the Antiochene rite during his stay in Kerala (1665-71), but the circumstances were not congenial enough for him to impose the rite and its doctrinal tenets on the St. Thomas Christians who, by then, were celebrating mass and the sacraments in a modified Chaldean rite under the supervision of the Portuguese missionaries. However, the Bishop sowed seeds of contempt among the local Christians against the "idolatrous Romans" and those among the St. Thomas Christians "who came under the influence of the wicked Kings and Queens of Portugal" (Baselios 1997:101). The St. Thomas Christians were not aware at that time of the difference between East Syriac and West Syriac or the finer distinctions between the Chaldean and Antiochene rites and their respective theologies. Mar Gregorios did not make any effort to educate them on those matters. Instead, the Bishop presented himself as a restorer of the "Syrian" customs that were discontinued by the Portuguese missionaries. The Bishop endeared himself to the discontented Syriac Christians who wanted to liberate themselves from the hegemony of the Portuguese missionaries.

In 1685, Mar Basilios and Mar John arrived in Kerala. They worked toward restoring the pre-sixteenth century practices among the people of New Allegiance. The Bishops "taught that the prayers should be said standing and not kneeling and added that people should abstain from eating the meat of strangled animals. They encouraged the marriage of priests, and deemed necessary for statues and crucifixes to be removed from

¹⁴ For this section I have relied on the research of Archbishop Mar Baselios (Baselios 1997: 99-130).

churches, keeping only pictures therein" (Baselios 1997: 103)¹⁵. These Bishops also stressed the difference between the Chaldean liturgy that the local Christians were following and the Antiochene liturgy. In spite of all the efforts of the visiting Jacobite Bishops, the period between 1665 to 1750 saw only a restoration of traditions that were lost during the Latinization process initiated by the Portuguese missionaries. The Bishops did not succeed in introducing elements from their own Jacobite (Antiochene) tradition.

A significant phase in the history of the Antiochene liturgy in Kerala started with the arrival of Bishop Baselios and his entourage in 1751. As a way of forging a separate identity and thereby gaining control over the people of the New Allegiance, the Bishop and his companions introduced different *anaphoras* (Eucharistic prayer) of the Antiochene rite. However, they do not seem to have attempted a complete replacement of the Chaldean liturgical tradition with that of the Antiochene tradition. For more than a century, the Chaldean and Antiochene liturgies co-existed side by side.

The first public proclamation of a preference for the Antiochene rite among the people of the New Allegiance came in 1836 as a reaction to the hegemony of the Protestant missionaries. The Church Missionary Society, with the support of the British East India Company, began to persuade the people of the New Allegiance to reform many local practices. The missionaries wanted to reform the Syriac liturgy following the model of the Anglican liturgy. In 1836, a Synod was held at Mavelikkara to discuss the

¹⁵ At the Synod of Udayamperoor (1599), the Portuguese missionaries discontinued the local tradition of married clergy (Zacharia 1994b: 164-165). The Synod encouraged St. Thomas Christians to venerate saints of the Roman church and to keep their images in their churches (Zacharia 1994b: 87). The passage quoted above shows that those who revolted against the Portuguese missionaries continued to keep statues of saints thirty-three years after their revolt in 1653.

relation between the people of the New Allegiance and the Anglican missionaries. The Synod decided to part ways with the Anglican missionaries, and to continue the Antiochene liturgy.

In 1847, Joachim Cyril, another Antiochene bishop, arrived in Kerala and stayed until 1874. He took upon himself the mission of a complete change from the Chaldean to the Antiochene liturgy. It was Bishop Cyril who introduced the West Syriac script for writing liturgical manuscripts in Kerala. In 1876, the Antiochene Patriarch Peter III arrived in Kerala and convoked a Synod at Mulanthuruty. The Patriarch completed the final stages in the transition from the Chaldean to the Antiochene liturgy and ecclesiastical discipline among the people of the New Allegiance. Among other things, the Patriarch abolished the veneration of statues in churches and made marriage compulsory for the clerics in charge of parishes.

Based on the research of Archbishop Mar Baselios on the history of the Malankara Church in general, and the history of Antiochene liturgy in particular, it is difficult to assume that the introduction of the Antiochene liturgy in Kerala resulted from a need expressed by the people of the New Allegiance. Rather, the visiting Jacobite bishops from the Middle East used liturgical stratification as one of several means of establishing a separate identity for the people of the New Allegiance from other St. Thomas Christians. Establishment of a separate identity also meant a greater control for the bishops over the people of the New Allegiance. There is no historical evidence to prove that the local Christians were dissatisfied with their liturgical practices or that they requested the replacement of the East Syriac liturgy with the liturgy of the visiting

bishops. At the same time, the introduction of the West Syriac liturgy was such a slow process that people accepted it without any resistance.

The first attempt toward vernacularization of the West Syriac liturgy was made by Palakkunnath Abraham Malapan and Kaithayil Geevarghese Malapan, two scholarly priests who sided with the Anglican missionaries and pioneered the reform movement among the people of the New Allegiance (the movement led to the formation of the Reform Party, which later became the Mar Thoma Syrian Church). These priests were prompted by the Anglican missionaries to translate the liturgy into Malayalam in 1836, making it more accessible to the worshippers. In doing so, they broke away from the conservative view that the liturgy should always be celebrated in Syriac, "the language of Jesus." Following the Anglican path, the translators made several changes in the vernacular version, the most important of which was the elimination of prayers for the dead, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to the Saints (Mathew 1999: 19-21). The Mar Thoma Syrian Church and the St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India follow this reformed liturgy.

Until the 1960s, the Orthodox churches and the Syro-Malankara Church celebrated liturgy in Syriac. The process of vernacularization started in the early 1960s with the translation of the mass into Malayalam. A Tamil translation was printed in 1965 for the use of the communities in Tamil Nadu. Also, a Kannada edition of the missal for use in the Karnataka area was published in 1980. Currently, the mass and liturgy of the Hours are celebrated both in Syriac and Malayalam in seminaries and religious formation houses in Kerala. The communities in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka use mostly the

vernacular version of these texts. The chants of the *oktoēchos* discussed in Chapter Seven are in Malayalam.

In review, East Syriac and West Syriac liturgies coexisted among the people of the New Allegiance during the transitional period (1751 - 1874). Therefore, it is possible that there is a musical connection between the churches that currently follow the East Syriac and West Syriac liturgies. I have come across one melody that is common to both Syriac traditions: the melody of the acrostic hymn of St. Ephrem the Syrian.¹⁶ A comparative study of the melodies of the East and West Syriac traditions in India may bring to light musical bridges between liturgical communities.

¹⁶ See more details in Palackal (2002: 7).

Chapter Four
Current Status of Syriac Language in Liturgy
and Related Areas

The Syriac language has a continuing history in its adopted land in India. Although not a language of conversation, Syriac is present in many and varied ways in the life of Christians. The last decade, which coincides with the period of this study, saw a revival of interest in Syriac language and traditions. Probably the most important development during this period was the commencement of master's and doctoral degree courses in Syriac language and literature at the Mahatma Gandhi University at Kottayam, Kerala. In most of the Syriac churches, men studying for the priesthood must acquire a basic knowledge of Syriac language. Even after vernacularization of liturgies in the 1960s, both East Syriac and West Syriac are still very much in use and, therefore, a rudimentary knowledge of Syriac is necessary for the laity as well for a meaningful celebration of liturgy in the Syriac churches. The following survey is intended to help situate the study of Syriac chants by providing an overview of the various ways in which Syriac is alive in everyday life.

East Syriac in Liturgy

The Church of the East seems to be more eager than its sister church, the Syro-Malabar Church, to preserve Syriac language in liturgy. At the Martha Mariyam Valiya Palli ([Our] Lady Mary Big Church), the Cathedral of the Church of the East, evening prayer

(*ram.sā*) is celebrated everyday in Syriac. Books for these services are printed in Syriac script.¹ Proficiency in Syriac is mandatory for aspirants to the priesthood. Besides the Office, there is another special service called *bāwūtha* (Syr., "supplication") that is conducted entirely in Syriac. This service is part of the annual observance known as *mūnnu nōyambū* (Mal., "three [days] lent"), three days of fasting and abstinence, with special prayers and chants for each day.² The current missal (printed in 2003) has Syriac and Malayalam texts on alternate pages.³ The Malayalam version of the text retains several Syriac terms and phrases such as titles of chants, prayers, sections of mass, names of sacred places and objects, etc. These words are printed in Malayalam script. There are a few priests who continue to celebrate mass in Syriac occasionally. After many years, a wedding ceremony along with holy mass was conducted entirely in Syriac at the Cathedral church, on May 2, 2004. Mar Aprem, the head of the Church of the East, officiated at the ceremony.

The celebrations of Office, mass, and other sacraments and paraliturgical services in the Syro-Malabar Church are entirely in Malayalam. For that reason, proficiency in Syriac is not mandatory for the clergy, although Syriac is taught at many seminaries.

¹ I attended evening prayer at the Lady Mary Big Church, on August 12, 2004. The participants were mostly priests. There were a few lay people sitting in the back of the church, but they did not seem to know Syriac to respond to the prayers.

² The three-days lent is observed in remembrance of the three days Prophet Jonah was in the belly of a whale, on his mission to Nineveh (Jon 2: 1). It starts sixteen days prior to the Lent, which culminates in Easter. As of 2004, *bāwūtha* is conducted in the following five churches: Martha Mariyam Big Church, Thrissur; Mar Yohanna Mamdana Church, East Fort, Thrissur; Mar Thoma Sleeha Church, Pattikkad; St. Thomas Church, Erankulam; and Mar Qardah Church, Chennai (Madras).

³ See *Slihanmāruṭe kūdāsakramam* (Mal., Order of the Sacrament of the Apostles), printed at Mar Narsai Press, Thrissur, in 2003.

There are a few priests who celebrate mass only in Syriac privately. There are a few others who occasionally celebrate mass in Syriac.

There are a few parishes where solemn high mass is celebrated in Syriac on special occasions such as the feast of the patron saint. The St. Thomas Cathedral Church at Palai celebrates *rāza*, the most solemn form of mass, in Syriac every year on the 3rd of July, the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle. St. George's Church at Aruvithura and St. George's Church at Edappally celebrate the feast of their patron saint, on April 24, with solemn sung mass in Syriac.

The laity's role in these celebrations of the Syro-Malabar churches is often that of spectators since they do not know Syriac, and celebrations are too infrequent for them to learn the text and melodies of chants by listening. The responses to these celebrations, too, are varied. The last solemn sung mass in Syriac in the Chaldean rite of the Syro-Malabar Church that I attended was at St. Mary's Forane Church (my native parish) at Pallippuram, on August 14, 2000.⁴ From my conversations with people of different age groups on that day, I realized that the older generation among laity and clergy relished nostalgic memories of their younger days when all liturgical celebrations were in Syriac. The younger people, however, found it difficult to connect with the celebration because the language and, to some extent, the musical style were not part of their daily experience. It seemed some of those young people who attended Syriac mass did so more out of curiosity than out of devotion.

The official missals of the Syro-Malabar Church that are currently in use have the

⁴ The parish continues to have a Syriac choir. See details and photo in Palackal (2003: 3, 16).

"words of institution" (narration of the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper) printed both in Malayalam translation and in the original Syriac, in Syriac characters.⁵ However, priests usually do not use the Syriac version in public celebrations. The general instructions given in the beginning of the missals do not obligate priests to use the Syriac version; the instructions do not mention any reason for including the Syriac text either. Yet it is obvious that the inclusion of the Syriac text in the current editions (1989) was deliberate, because the edition just previous to that (1986) does not have the Syriac text.⁶ It may be presumed that the purpose of including Syriac text in the current editions was to remind the priests of the history and the times when mass was celebrated entirely in Syriac and to reinforce the sacrality of the Syriac language itself.

The Malayalam version of the mass continues to retain a number of Syriac words and terms that are transliterated in Malayalam script. For example, the mass is referred to as *kuṛbāna* [qurbānā], and the missal is called *thaksā*. Some of the names of liturgical seasons are a combination of Syriac and Malayalam words, as in *slīhākkālam* (*slīhā* = Syr. "apostle," *kālam* = Mal. "season," "the season of the Apostles"), *slīwākkālam* (*slīwā* = Syr. "cross" "season of the Cross"), *denahākkālam* (*denhā* = Syr. "manifestation [of the Holy Trinity], "season of the manifestation"), etc.. Names of various sections of the mass such as *kārōtūsā* (prayers of supplication), titles of chants such as *ōnītā* (antiphonal

⁵ See *Sīrō malabār sabhayuṭe kuṛbāna: rāsakramam* [The Mass of the Syro-Malabar Church: The Order of Rāzā] (1989: 88) and *Sīrō malabār sabhayuṭe kuṛbāna: āghōshapūrwwakamāya kramawum sādharmaṇa kramawum* [The Mass of the Syro-Malabar Church: The Order of the Solemn and Ordinary Celebrations] (1989: 67).

⁶ See *Thaksā d'qudsā: sīrō malabār sabhayuṭe āghōshapūrwwamāya rāsakramam* [The Holy Missal: The Order of the Solemn Celebration of Rāzā of the Syro-Malabar Church] (1986).

hymn) and sections of prayers such as *hūttāmmā* (sealing, concluding prayer), etc. are also retained in their original Syriac form.

The Malayalam translation of the Divine Office --*Yāma prārthanaka!* (Prayers of the Hours) vol. I, II, and III-- published by the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference in 1986 has retained the original Syriac titles of chants, poetic genres, and sections of the Office, such as *saprā* ("morning prayer"), *leliyā* ("night prayer"), and *madrāsā* ("didactic chant"). These terms are printed in Malayalam script. A list of some of the Syriac terms and their Malayalam translation are given at the beginning of each volume.

West Syriac in Liturgy

At the Syrian Orthodox Seminary at Kottayam and at the Malankara Orthodox Seminary at Vettikkal the Office and mass are celebrated in Syriac two or three days a week. Generally, Syriac is used on alternate days, i. e., one day in Syriac, the next day in Malayalam.

The vernacular versions of the West Syriac liturgy retain several Syriac words and phrases in their original form, but printed in vernacular script. A few of the most frequently heard examples are: *bārek mōr* ("bless, O Lord"), *moriō rāhem alain w' ādārain* ("Lord, have mercy on us and help us"), and the Trinitarian doxology, i. e., *śubho labo w'labro wal ruho qadiśo* ("Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit"). The titles of chants, sections of the various liturgies, names of liturgical seasons, names of sacraments and church celebrations, sacred places, titles of ordained ministers, ecclesiastical officials, etc., are in their Syriac forms. Besides Syriac words, Greek words and phrases that are part of the West Syriac liturgy (see examples under East Syriac and

West Syriac Liturgies, in Chapter One) are also retained in their original form, but printed in the vernacular scripts.

The Sound of Syriac

The sound of the Syriac language has taken on a life of its own in Kerala due to the interference of sounds from Malayalam. For instance, the finer distinction between the velar fricative *hē* (as h in *hey*) and the voiced velar fricative *hēt* seems to have been lost among Syriac users in Kerala; the latter sound has given in to the former and, therefore, both letters are transliterated as h in English and ഹ in Malayalam (see the Guide to Syriac Transliteration). Similarly, it is hard to distinguish the sounds of *semakat* and *sāde*; the difference between these sounds have been lost somewhere along the line, and both letters are represented by a single character, സ (s) in Malayalam transliteration. The letter *zain* does not have a corresponding sound in Malayalam. Therefore, this letter is represented in Malayalam transliteration by സ (s), but is pronounced as z. Thus, the word for the most solemn form of mass (*rāzā*) is written as രാസ (*rāsa*) and pronounced as *rāza*.

Also, the distinction between the aspirated q of *qōp* and the unaspirated k of *kāp* is gradually disappearing; the former is often pronounced as the latter. The practice is so prevalent that in the transliteration of Syriac texts in Malayalam script both letters are represented by a single letter, ക (k). The most pronounced example is the transliteration of the Syriac word *qurbānā* ("offering," "mass"), which is written in Malayalam and pronounced as കുർബാന (kurbāna), instead of കൂർബാന. Similarly, *qūdāsā* ("sacrament") is written and pronounced as കൂദാസ (kūdāsa). The reason for the assimilation of aspirated

qōp into unaspirated *kāp* may not be attributed to the influence of Malayalam, because the Malayalam alphabet has two letters representing the two sounds (ക, ഖ), and both letters are clearly demarcated in speech.

There are perceptible differences in the pronunciation of certain letters of the alphabet among various Syriac communities. For example, the Syro-Malabar Christians pronounce the soft form of *tāw* as *s* in *say*, whereas the members of the Assyrian Church of the East pronounce it more like *th* in *think*. There is yet another peculiarity of pronunciation among the Syro-Malabar Christians that deserves special mention. One of the phonetic features of Syriac is called doubling, i. e., pronouncing a single consonant, under certain conditions, as if it were two. For example, the Syriac equivalent for the word "holy" is written as *qadīšā*, but pronounced as *qaddīšā*. Instead of doubling, the Syro-Malabar Christians tend to add the nasal sound of *mīm* (m) or *nūn* (n) to the letters *bēt* (b), *gāmal* (g), and *dālq̄* (d). Thus, *qaddīšā* is pronounced as *kandīšā*, *qabbel* ("accept") is pronounced as *qambel*, *šabbah* ("praise") as *šambah*, etc.. Similarly, the Syro-Malabar Christians sometimes treat the hard form of *bēt* as soft (i. e., as *w* instead of *b*). Thus, they pronounce the Syriac equivalent of the phrase "Our Father in Heaven" as *awūn d'wasmayyā*, instead of *awūn d'basmayyā*.

It is difficult to know at what stage in the history of the language such peculiarities became customary in Kerala. Syriac chant books written in Malayalam script and published in India, mostly for the use of the laity and choir members in the Syro-Malabar churches, have taken these practices into consideration (Bassilios 1902, Saldanha 1937, Vadakel 1954). In these books *qaddīšā* is transliterated in Malayalam script as കന്ദീശാ (*kandīšā*), *šabbah* as ശബ്ബഹ് (*šambah*), etc.. Sounds of these and similar

words can be heard in the CD, *Qambel Māran: Syriac Chants from South India* (Palackal 2002). The chants in this CD and the performers are from the Syro-Malabar Church. As the first word in the title of the CD shows (i. e., *qambel*, instead of *qabbel*), I have followed the prevalent pronunciation in the transliteration. What is interesting is that, in spite of being native Malayalam speakers, the members of the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox churches do not seem to have developed such peculiarities.

Those who follow the West Syriac liturgical tradition in Kerala have adopted, for no particular reason, some of the peculiarities of pronunciation of the Syrian Orthodox Christians in the Middle East. For example, the Orthodox Christians in Kerala treat the long a and o respectively as *ō* and *ū* (see examples under East Syriac and West Syriac, in Chapter One).

The sound of Syriac has been undergoing a transformation in India. During my consultations with priests during fieldwork, I noticed remarkable differences in the articulation of Syriac words between older and younger priests. The older priests sounded more Middle Eastern, whereas the younger priests showed a greater influence of Malayalam, the local language, both in the West Syriac and East Syriac traditions. Syriac language in general has undergone changes in the last few centuries and has assumed its own sound, or rather sounds, in Kerala. A general awareness of the particularities of those sounds can be helpful in distinguishing chants in different Syriac traditions.

Karšōn

Another development that took place in Kerala, although we do not know exactly when, was the addition of symbols to the Syriac alphabet to represent sounds that are specific to

Malayalam language. The system of writing Malayalam in Syriac script is known as *karšōn*. Symbols for the following Malayalam characters were created in Syriac: അ (ńa), ച (ç), ജ (ja) ണ (ńa), ട (ta), ണ (ńa), ന (na), ഭ (bha), ര (ra), ശ (śa), ഷ (sha), ള (la), ഴ (zha), റ (l), റ്റ (ńṭa), റ്റ (ńṭa), and റ്റ (ńṭa). The corresponding *karson* characters along with a short historical introduction to *karšōn* can be found in a scholarly article, *An Introduction to Malayalam Karshon*, by Koonammakkal Thoma Kathanar (Koonammakkal 2002). The practice of writing *karson* is no more in vogue. However, knowledge of *karšōn* may be required for researches in the history of Syriac language in India, and to study Syriac documents written in Kerala.

Semitic Names for Children

What is still in vogue is the practice of giving Aramaic forms of Christian names to children at the time of baptism. Many St. Thomas Christians have three versions to their names: baptismal name, pet name known only to immediate family members, and official name, which very often is the English version of the Aramaic name. The most common names are *Mattāi* (Matthew), *Yāwsep* (Joseph), *Tōma* (Thomas), *Mariyam* (Mary), *Anna* (Anne), etc.. In day-to-day usage, an endearing Malayalam suffix is often added to the Aramaic form. The most common suffixes are *amma* ("mother") or *kuṭṭi* ("child") for females and *achan* ("father," "maternal uncle," "aunt's husband"), *appan* ("father"), *kuññ* ("little one"), or *kuṭṭi* for males. The list below shows the three forms of a few names.

Baptismal name	Pet name	Official name
Anna	Annamma	Annie / Anne
Mariyam	Mariyakkutty Mariyamma Mariyamma	Mary
Mattāi	Māthukkutty Māthan Māthu Māthappan Mathāyikkuñū Māthachan Mathāyichan	Matthew
Yāwsep	Ousēppachan Appachan ⁷ Ousa/ Ouda	Joseph
Tōmā	Thōmāchan Thommachan Thommi Thommikkuñū Thomman	Thomas
Yōhannān	Yōhannān/ Yūhannōn	John

⁷ Appachan is a diminutive form of Ousēppachan.

	Jōnachan	
Yakōb	Chāikko	Jacob
	Chākkappan	
	Chākkōchan	

Aramaic Words in the Malayalam Lexicon

Over the centuries, many Aramaic words have made their way into common parlance in South India. These words have been either adopted directly or adapted with slight variations in pronunciation. Some of these words have even found their way into the lexicons of the local languages. The list below provides a few examples of Aramaic words found in the eighteenth edition of the Malayalam lexicon, *Śabda tārāwali* by Sreekanteswaram G. Padmanabha Pillai (Sreekanteswaram [1923]1997). The author is not always consistent in identifying the Aramaic source, probably because the information was not available to him. It may be noted that most of the Aramaic entries are in their East Syriac form. The left column shows words in their original Aramaic form, the middle column shows words as they are entered in the Malayalam lexicon, and the English translation is given in the right column.

Aramaic	Malayalam	English translation
annīda	annīda (അന്നിദ)	deceased ⁸
dukṛānā	dukṛāna (ദുകരാന)	commemoration
īśō	īśō (ഈശോ)	savior

⁸ A set of prayers for the deceased, translated into Syriac from Latin.

kennārā	kinnaram (കിന്നരം)	stringed instrument
māmmōdīsā	māmmōdīsā (മാമ്മോദീസാ)	baptism
mālāka	mālākha (മാലാഖ)	messenger (angel)
mśīhā	miśihā (മിശിഹാ)	the anointed one (Christ)
qūdāsā	kūdāsā (കുദാശ)	sacrament
qurbānā	kuṛbāna (കുർബാന)	offering (mass)
rabbān	ṛambān (റബ്ബാൻ)	monk, clergy of higher rank
rāzā	ṛāsa (റാസ)	holy mass (most solemn form)
rūhā	ṛūhā (റൂഹ)	spirit
rūhād'qudāsā	ṛūhādakkaddīsa (റൂഹാദക്കദ്ദീശ)	Holy Spirit
rūsūmā	ṛūsūma (റൂസൂമ)	sign
sahdā	sahadā (സഹദാ)	witness (martyr)
sāthānā	sāttān (സാത്താൻ)	satan (devil)
slīḥā	ślīwā (ശ്ലീവ), siluwa (സിലുവ)	cross
ummara	ummaṛam (ഉമ്മരം)	front

The list is incomplete; there are many words that are part of the daily usage of Christians in Kerala that have not caught the attention of lexicographers.

It is difficult to determine when or how these words were incorporated into the local languages. An inquiry into the history of Aramaic words in South Indian languages might have significance beyond the realm of languages; such a study might shed light on

various levels of cultural interactions between the peoples of India and the Middle East from ancient times. Such a project remains to be undertaken.

Beyond the history of borrowing Aramaic words into South Indian languages, there is another area that is worthy of discussion: the phonemic, phonetic, and semantic similarities between a number of words in Aramaic and Tamil, which is the oldest of the Dravidian family of languages. Fr. Placid Podipara CMI (1899-1985), a scholar of Indian church history, Syriac language, and liturgy, has brought to attention this issue in his article, "St. Thomas Christians and Their Syriac Treasures," published in 1974 (see a reprint of the article in *Pathikulangara* 1993:143-150). The list below provides a few examples mentioned by Fr. Podipara.

Aramaic	Tamil	English equivalent
abbā	appā	father
ema	amma	mother
ena	ēn / en	I / my
ur	ūr	place, town
raba	ṛampam	big / great

The first four words are part of literary and colloquial usages, sometimes with minor modification as in *appan* (the vocative case, *appā*, is closer to the original Aramaic word), *amma*, *ēn / en*, and *ūr*. Because of the commonality of these words in many languages, it is difficult to make a strong case that they are directly from Aramaic. However, it is important to note that *appan* is exclusively used in Syriac Christian

communities. The Hindu communities use *açhan*, and the Muslim communities use *bāppa* for "father." The fifth word is currently in use only among certain sections of the St. Thomas Christians; it is used as an honorary title, *ṛabbān/ṛambān*, for their clergy.

Fr. Podipara discusses these linguistic similarities in the wider context of interaction between the Dravidians and the Sumerians many centuries before the Christian era. According to Zacharias Thundy, this is a topic that continues to be discussed among linguists.⁹

Syriac Words in Christian and Secular Songs

Many Aramiac words that have been adapted with a slight change in pronunciation can be heard today in traditional Christian songs and songs associated with Christian performing arts in Kerala. The wedding songs (Lukas 1980: 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, etc.), songs of *mārggam kaḷi* (Dance of the Way, see Velliyan and Vempeni 1995: 88, 98, 99, 101, etc.), *çawittunātakam* (Foot-stamping Drama, see Rafi [1964] 1980), and *puthen pāna* (New Epic Poem, see Palackal 1995: 69-74) are a few examples. Though less frequently, Syriac words can be heard in film songs that deal with Christian themes.

Syriac in Academia

Several universities in Kerala provide facilities to learn Syriac language and literature. The Calicut University offers a Bachelor's degree in Syriac language and literature. Baseliōs College (Kottayam), St. Berchman's College (Changanachery), the Malankara Syrian Catholic College (Thiruvananthapuram), Catholicate College (Pathanamthitta), St.

⁹ Personal communication (March 25, 2005).

Gregorios College (Kottarakkara), St. Thomas College (Palai), St. John's College (Anchal), and St. Stephen's College (Pathanapuram) are some of the institutions where students can learn Syriac as a second language at the undergraduate level (B. A., B. Sc., and B. Com.).

Also, Syriac is taught as a second language in several Higher Secondary Schools in Kerala. St. Thomas Higher Secondary School (Palai), St. Mary's H. S. S. (Bharananganam), Holy Cross H. S. S. (Cherpunkal), St. Mary's H. S. S. (Thirunvanthapuram), and St. John's H. S. S. (Thiruvananthapuram) are among them.

Since 1995, the Mahatma Gandhi University has offered master's and doctoral programs in Syriac language and literature in collaboration with St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute at Kottayam. Bishop Mar Aprem, the head of the Church of the East, was the first person who received a doctoral degree from the University in 2002. His doctoral dissertation, "The Assyrian Church of the East in the Twentieth Century," was published in 2003 (Aprem 2003).

St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI)

SEERI is the most prominent institution in India that promotes Syriac language and literature. The institution is named after the great Syriac poet and theologian, St. Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373). Established in 1985, SEERI serves as a teaching, learning, and research center for scholars and students of Syriac literature, history, worship, and traditions. Although the Institute belongs to the Malankara Catholic Diocese of Thiruvalla, it has an ecumenical focus and is open to all churches in India. SEERI holds a sizeable collection of Syriac manuscripts. It also has the largest collection of books and

microfilm on Syriac language and literature in India. SEERI has two publications: *The Harp*, which serves as a review of Syriac and Oriental studies (sixteen volumes from 1987 to 2003), and *Moran Etho*, which is a monograph series.

SEERI serves as the regional and research center for the department of Syriac studies of the Mahatma Gandhi University. Students who register for master's and doctorates in Syriac studies at the University attend courses at SEERI and make use of the library and other academic resources there. According to a written communication (May 18, 2004) from Dr. Jacob Thekkeparampil, director of SEERI, there are thirteen students who are currently engaged in research for their doctoral degrees. The topics of some of their dissertations in progress are: "Dialogue Poems in Syriac," "A Study of St. Ephrem's Syriac Hymns of Paradise," "The Contributions of Moses Bar Kepha to the Syriac Literature with special reference to the Treatises on the Christian Sacraments," and "Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the possession of the Malankara Orthodox Church." Besides its alliance with the Mahatma Gandhi University, SEERI functions in collaborative agreement with the Oriental Institute of the Martin Luther University at Halle, in Germany. Periodically, SEERI organizes World Syriac Conferences open to scholars engaged in Syriac studies. Five such conferences have so far been held; the last conference was in 2002.¹⁰

Printing of Syriac Texts

¹⁰ Address: SEERI, Baker Hill, Kottayam 686001, Kerala, India.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the St. Thomas Christians relied on liturgical manuscripts and books printed in the Middle East and Rome.¹¹ In 1844, Blessed Cyriac Elias Chavara established the first press with facilities to print Syriac texts on the campus of St. Joseph's Monastery at Mannanam. Soon after that, several Syriac printing facilities came into existence to meet the growing needs of liturgical and chant books among the various Syriac churches. Many of those facilities were closed down in the 1960s after the vernacularization of Syriac liturgies. Currently, there are at least three institutions in Kerala that have facilities for printing and publishing Syriac texts: St. Joseph's Press, Mannanam; Mar Narsai Press (estd. 1926), Thrissur;¹² and Julius Press Pampakuda.¹³ At present, all these printing facilities make use of the recent advances in computer technology to print texts in both East and West Syriac.

Publications in Syriac

The *Syriac-English-Malayalam Lexicon* compiled by Fr. Emmanuel Thelly CMI (Thelly 1999) may be the most significant publication in East Syriac in the recent past. This lexicon is an improvement on earlier lexicographical endeavors in India as well as abroad. Fr. Abraham Palappillil compiled and published at his own expense the first

¹¹ The Syriac missal (*thaksā*) for the use of Syriac Christians in India was first printed in Rome, in 1774, with a Latin title: *Ordo Chaldaicus Missae Juxta Morem Ecclesiae Malabaricae Superiorum Permissu Editus* (see more details in Velliyan n. d.: 32)

¹² Mar Narsai Press belongs to the Church of the East. The biggest accomplishment of this press was the printing of the *Hudra*, the Chaldean breviary, in three volumes between 1960 and 1962 (Aprem 2003: 198-200)

¹³ The Julius Press belongs to the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

Syriac Malayalam dictionary in 1898 (Palappillil 1898). It was printed at St. Joseph's Press, Mannanam. The Syriac words are given in East Syriac form. From the preface to the dictionary, written in Malayalam, it may be surmised that the author intended his work for both East and West Syriac users. At about the same time, two priests in the Syro-Malabar Church, Paulose Kuttikatt and Devassy Pullan, also were working on a Syriac-Malayalam dictionary. Both died before they could see their work in print. Fr. Andreos Kalappurakkal, a professor and director of formation of students for priesthood at St. Joseph's Seminary at Mangalapuzha, completed the work and published it with the title, *Suriyāni malayāḷa nighaṇḍu* (Syriac Malayalam Lexicon) in 1907 (Kalappurakkal 1907). Fr. Kalappurakkal printed his work at the Mar Thomma Sreeha Press that he himself established at Puthenpally, near Aluva. Thirty-four years later, Fr. Mathew Vadakkal revised and enlarged this dictionary (Vadakkal 1940). Evaluating Thelley's work, Prof. Sebastian Brock, Reader in Syriac Studies at the University of Oxford, comments that " the user of Fr. Emmanuel Thelley's Lexicon will find here many words which are entirely absent from other standard dictionaries of Syriac" (Thelley 1999: v). SEERI published *A Concise Syriac-English Dictionary* in West Syriac, compiled by Fr. Curien Kaniamparampil in 2004 (Kaniamparampil 2004).

A musically significant event was the publication of the famous book of chants in West Syriac, *Ktōbō dbēt gāzō dāzmīrōtō idtōnoyōtō* ("Book of the Treasure House of the Ecclesiastical Songs"), also known among the Orthodox Christians in India as the "Book of *Ekara*." It contains chant texts (without music) for various occasions in the Antiochene (i. e., West Syriac) liturgy. The book was printed at the Julius Press at Pampakkuda and published by Malankara Orthodox Church Publications in 1998.

Aids to Learning Syriac

The introduction of Syriac as a second language in colleges and Higher Secondary Schools in Kerala has created a need for grammar books and other aids for learning the language. The most recent publication in this regard is a work in three parts by Cor Episcopa Curien Kaniampampil (Kaniampampil 2004): *I Suṛyāni-malayālam kawita ḍikshnari*, *II Malyālam-suṛiyāni ḍikshnari*, *III Laghu wyākaraṇam* (part I, Syriac-Malayalam Poetic Dictionary; part II, Malayalam-Syriac Dictionary; part III, A Short Grammar). The Syriac words are given in the West Syriac form and are printed in Malayalam script. The second part of this work (pp. 67-94) is probably the very first attempt to compile a Malayalam-Syriac dictionary, making it easy to search for Syriac equivalents of Malayalam words.

Guru Yohend's book in Malayalam, *Suṛiyāni bhāshā paṭhana sahāyi* (Aid to Learning Syriac, Yohend 1996), Mar Aprem's *Teach Yourself Aramaic* in English and Malayalam (Aprem 1981), Fr. Curien Kaniampampil's *Syriac in Six Months* (Kaniampampil 1999), and Fr. Gabriel's *Syro-Chaldaic Grammar* in English, (fifth edition, revised by Emmanuel Thelly, see Gabriel [1922] 1961) are among the other works in this field. Fr. Gabriel's book is probably the most comprehensive grammar that is currently available. It includes a rather lengthy (39 pages) and scholarly introduction to Syriac language and literature, written by Fr. Romeo Thomas CMI.

Signature in Syriac

There was a time (until the 1960s) when priests of the Syriac churches in India would quote verses in their Sunday sermons and even their daily conversations from the Syriac

Figure 1. Letter written in Malayalam with signature in Syriac by Fr. Mathai Payyappilly, secretary to Mar Augustine Kandathil (1874-1956), the first Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church from 1919 to 1956.

Archdiocese
of
Ernakulam, India.

എറണാകുളം
ആർക്കിഡിയോസെ

കേരളീയർക്കുവേണ്ടി, ഹിന്ദുക്കൾക്കുവേണ്ടി
 സഭയുടെ പേരിൽ, എ. വർക്കിപ്പള്ളിയിൽനിന്നും
 സി. എ. ഞാലൂർ, എ. വർക്കിപ്പള്ളിയിൽനിന്നും
 പത്രപ്രസിദ്ധീകരണത്തിന് സന്നദ്ധതയുണ്ടെന്നു
 അറിയിക്കുന്നു. വേദപഠനം, സഭാപ്രവർത്തനം
 വേഗത്തിൽ നടപ്പിലാക്കുന്നതിനായി സഹായം
 ചെയ്യാൻ കഴിയുന്നവർക്കുവേണ്ടി സഭയുടെ
 അഭ്യർത്ഥനയുണ്ടെന്നു സഭാസമിതിയുടെ
 ഭരണസമിതി അറിയിക്കുന്നു.

മാതൃ സഭയുടെ പേരിൽ
 11-3-1930

Bible, write official and personal letters in Syriac, or put their signatures in Syriac in a letter or document written in Malayalam. Even after the advent of English education during British rule, Syriac was considered the language of education and culture among the St. Thomas Christians.¹⁴ Figure 1 shows a letter written in Malayalam with signature in Syriac by Fr. Mathai Payyappilly who was secretary to Mar Augustine Kandathil (1874-1956), the first Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church from 1919 to 1956.¹⁵ The signature reads "q. mty pypll," i. e., *qasīšā* [priest] *Mattay Payyappilly* (the name is written without vowel signs).¹⁶ Such practices are not popular at present, but there are priests, few in number, who prefer to sign their names in Syriac in their personal letters and official documents written either in Malayalam or in English. Three priests among the informants for this study signed their names in Syriac in the Informed Consent Form. One of those priests, Fr. Emmanuel Thelly, said he has been signing in Syriac ever since he learned the language; he does it as a sign of his respect for the language and the traditions associated with it, and to affirm his identity as a St. Thomas Christian.

¹⁴ This is in contrast to the current practice among many educated Christians in India who prefer to use the English version of their names and English alphabet when signing their names in personal letters and official documents that are written in Malayalam or in English.

¹⁵ The letter was issued to Mr. Cyriac Kandathil (1907-1962), who became General Secretary of All Kerala Catholic Congress (1945-1947). The letter is used here with permission from Dr. Thomas Kandathil, son of Cyriac Kandathil.

¹⁶ The word *qasīšā* literally means "the oldest male," "an elder," "grandfather," "ancestor," etc. (see Thelly 1999: 344). In both Eastern and Western Syriac traditions, the word is used as a title for priests.

Archives and Libraries

After SEERI, the archive at St. Joseph's Monastery at Mannanam has the largest collection of Syriac manuscripts and books. Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805-1871), the first prior of the monastery, was a scholar and promoter of Syriac language and liturgy. The St. Joseph's Press that he established on campus (1844) became the first printing press in India with facilities for printing Syriac texts. Chavara's successors continued to promote Syriac traditions. The archive at the monastery has almost all the books printed at the St. Joseph's Press. There are more than one hundred and eight manuscripts at the archive, some of which are works of indigenous authors.¹⁷

According to Mar Aprem, the library at the Metropolitan's Palace, headquarters of the Church of the East, in Thrissur, has the largest collection of books in East Syriac (Aprem 2003: 21). The library also holds a valuable collection of over eighty manuscripts, written or copied in India and the Middle East, from 1585 AD until the end of the twentieth century. These manuscripts are crucial to the study of the history of the Syriac language in India and the Middle East, the theology of Eastern churches, and the history of the St. Thomas Christians in India and the Assyrian Church of the East. Mar Aprem has prepared a catalogue of these manuscripts with short descriptions, and they are now available on CD ROM.

One of the outcomes of the present study is the creation of a Syriac sound archive at the library and research center at Acharya Palackal Jeevass Kendram at Aluva. The archive has over a hundred recordings of Syriac chants of the West and East Syriac

¹⁷ Address: St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, Kottayam 686561, Kerala, India.

liturgical traditions.¹⁸

Among private collectors, Mr. Wilson Muriyadan, a member of the Assyrian Church of the East, holds probably the largest collection of Syriac books and manuscripts. As of 2004, there are over one thousand items in his collection that includes rare manuscripts. One such manuscript is an undated *karšōn* dictionary. Muriyadan claims that he has copies of almost every book printed in Kerala. The circumstances that led to the acquisition of a large part of his collection show contrasting attitudes toward Syriac traditions among Christians in Kerala. It is the story of somebody's trash becoming someone else's treasure. Although Muriyadan was interested in Syriac language and traditions from childhood and took his bachelor's degree in arts with Syriac as second language from the Calicut University, he had no intention to create an archive of Syriac books at his home in Thrissur. Some time in 1998, the priest-in-charge of the library at Devamatha Provincial House of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, at Patturiakkal, in Thrissur (established in 1953), decided to reorganize the library. He thought that the extensive collection of Syriac books was not useful for future generations and therefore decided to sell them to a street vendor as scrap paper. The street vendor, a Muslim, thought those books could be of some value to someone someday and decided to store them. He brought the matter to the attention of Muriyadan, who immediately purchased

¹⁸ Acharya Palackal Jeevass Kendram is a research center dedicated to the memory of my great-grand-uncle, Palackal Thoma Malpan (1760-1841), a priest of the Syro-Malabar Church. Thoma Malpan was the Rector of the Seminary at Pallippuram, Cherthala, hence the honorary title *malpān* (from the Syriac word *malpānā*, meaning "scholar," "teacher") added to his name. Thoma Malpan was also the senior among the founders of the congregation of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (founded in 1831).

all the books from the vendor. That was the beginning of a new chapter in Muriyadan's life.

In conclusion, the Syriac language has a history of its own in India that is yet to be explored in full. This short survey is far from exhaustive but may serve as a step toward constructing such a history. A large number of Syriac words have been adapted into the liturgical language of Christians, and several Syriac words have, over the centuries, become part of local languages, especially Malayalam and Tamil. The Syriac language may be said to have enriched the South Indian languages and culture.

Chapter Five

The Role of Music in the Struggle for Religious Identity

The story of the survival of the Syriac chant traditions in South India is part of the larger history of the struggle for maintaining the religious identity of the St. Thomas Christians over the centuries. What was a single church until the middle of the seventeenth century became eight Syriac churches by the end of the twentieth century. The divisions happened, in most cases, as a reaction to the hegemonic influences from churches outside India: the Roman Catholic Church, represented by the Portuguese, in the sixteenth century; the Jacobite Church of Antioch in the seventeenth century; the Church of England in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Chaldean Catholic Church in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the Assyrian Church of the East in early twentieth century.

Liturgy and music were significant areas of contention in the conflict between the St. Thomas Christians and the Portuguese missionaries, who tended to identify the one and only true Church of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church with the Pope as its supreme head. The missionaries had little respect for the Syriac liturgy and music. Most probably, they encountered Syriac liturgical music for the first time in Kerala, and it must have sounded weird and even heretical to their ears. Conformity to the Latin way of life would require the local Christians to change their age-old practices. What the missionaries failed to understand was the emotional attachment of the St. Thomas Christians to Syriac language, liturgy, and music. For the St. Thomas Christians, these

elements were integral to their Christian experience, to "the way and lineage of St. Thomas" and, therefore, to the very core of their unique identity.

"Portuguese Music" versus Syriac Music

An incident that happened on Palm Sunday in 1599 sheds light on the contrasting attitudes of the Portuguese missionaries and the local Christians toward Syriac and Latin chant traditions. A few days before the Synod of Udayamperoor, Archbishop Menezes decided to visit important churches of the St. Thomas Christians to win them over to his side. The Archbishop arrived at Kaduthuruthy, in Kottayam district, on Friday before Palm Sunday. He decided to spend Holy Week there. In order to impress the local Christians, the Archbishop decided to conduct the Palm Sunday services with a solemn sung mass in the Latin rite. He specially brought for this purpose the choir from the Latin church in Kochi. This is how Antonio Gouvea, the Archbishop's secretary, described the event:

The *Arch-Bishop* not knowing but that the *Portuguezes* Musick might charm the common People, and reconcile them to the *Latin Service*, to which they seemed to have a great aversion, sent for a full Quire from *Cochim*,¹ and on *Palm Sunday* had a high Mass performed with the same Ceremony and Majesty that he could have had it done at *Goa*: but the *Caçanares*² and People were so far from being satisfied with the Musick and pompous Ceremony of that Service, that if they

¹ The port-town of Kochi (Cochin) in Ernakulam district, Kerala.

² The honorary title of indigenous priests among the St. Thomas Christians was *kattanār* or *kassanār* (Gundert [1872] 1995), and was widely used until the mid-twentieth century. The title was placed as a suffix to the name in the following manner: last name, first name, and title, as in Pārēmmakkal Tōmmā Kattanār (Thomas Paremmakkal, priest). The custom has not died out yet; there are a small number of priests who use the title even today (see the bibliographical entry for Koonammakkal 2002). The designation helped to distinguish indigenous priests from the Portuguese and other foreign priests who were referred to as *pātiri* (Padre).

liked it ill before, they liked it a great deal worse after that, as in truth none but they that place all Religion in external Performances can do otherwise, there being no Passion which that Service will not excite in its Spectators (which is all the People were) sooner than Devotion (translated by Geddes 1694: 80-81).

Antonio Gouvea, the Archbishop's secretary was an Augustinian monk. He recorded the events and experiences related to the Archbishop's visit to Kerala. In 1606, he published his writings in Portuguese with the title *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Alexio de Menezes Primas de India Oriental Religioso da Ordem de S. Agostinho*, in Coimbra, Portugal (Gouvea 1606a). He also published the decrees of the Synod of Diamper in *Synodo Diocesano da Igreja e Bispado de Angamale dos antigos christaôs de Sam Thome das Serras do Malavar das partes da India Oriental* (Gouvea 1606b). Gouvea's books were translated into many European languages, and became the most accessible source for information in the western world on Christianity in India. In 1694, Michael Geddes, the Chancellor of the Cathedral Church of Sarum (Salisbury), made an English translation of some of Gouvea's writings and published it in England (Geddes 1694).³ In 1994, the Indian Institute of Christian Studies published parts of Geddes' book, with a lengthy introduction by Scaria Zacharia (Zacharia 1994b). In 2003, the Liturgical Research Center, Kochi, published an English translation of Gouvea's *Jornada* with copious notes and commentaries by Pius Malekandathil (Malekandathil 2003).

³ The complete title of Geddes' book is itself an indication of the conflict between the Portuguese missionaries and the St. Thomas Christians: *The History of the Church of Malabar, from The time of its being discover'd by the Portuguezes in the Year 1501. Giving an Account of The Persecutions and Violent Methods of the Roman Prelates, to Reduce them to the subjection of the Church of Rome. Together with the Synod of Diamper, Celebrated in the Year of our Lord 1599. With Some Remarks upon the Faith and Doctrine of the Christians of St. Thomas in the Indies, agreeing with the Church of England, in opposition to that of Rome. Done out of Portugueze into English.*

The passage quoted above is precious for music historians because it is one of the very few documents that has come down to us that can shed light on the Christian musical practices in South India at the close of the sixteenth century. It indicates that there were well-established musical practices in specific regions. It also refers to musical preferences of particular groups of people, attitudes toward certain musical styles, deliberate musical choices, and hegemonic attempts to use music as a means of persuasion. Therefore, a close examination of the passage may be relevant here.

The author refers to the presence of Latin choirs in Kochi and Goa. Kochi was the first and foremost center of the Portuguese before they gained political power in Goa. Latin rite churches were established in Kochi in the early sixteenth century to serve the religious needs of the Portuguese soldiers and merchants, and local converts to Christianity. As early as 1505, there is a reference to Dom Francisco de Almeida, who provided the church in Kochi "generously with silver-ware, organs, singers, etc." (Mundadan 1989: 370).⁴ Since the church in Kochi was meant mostly for the Portuguese (they had arrived in Kochi just three years before, in 1502), the liturgy celebrated there was in Latin and, therefore, the singers and organists might have performed Latin chant.

The choir in Kochi must have been a prestigious Portuguese institution and a symbol of religious power and presumed superiority. There is reason to believe that the choir was held in high esteem and social ranking, and belonged to the group of "Portuguezes of quality." The members of the choir were among the special dignitaries present at the Synod of Udayamperoor. Gouvea writes: "On the 20th of June 1599 the

⁴ This, probably, is the beginning of the history of Western music and musical instruments in India.

Synod was opened at which solemnity were present the *Dean* and *Chapter of Cochim*, with their whole *Quire*, as also the Governour, the commissioners of *Treasury*, and the Chamber of the same city, and several other *Portuguezes* of quality" (Geddes 1694: 108).

The choir that the Archbishop invited from Kochi for mass at Kaduthuruthy is referred to as a "full choir." It is not clear how many members were there in the choir or whether it was a polyphonic choir in the Western tradition. It is difficult to determine who were the members or what was the nature of the musical repertoire. The phrase "Portuguese music" in the passage may mean music sung by Portuguese singers, indicating that the choir consisted of only or mostly Portuguese people who settled in the Kochi region. Or, it may mean that the choir sang whatever liturgical music was prevalent at that time in Portugal. It is quite improbable that the choir sang Portuguese melodies or chants in Portuguese language during a Pontifical mass.

Gouvea noted that the local St. Thomas Christians were deeply rooted in their ancient customs and liturgical traditions, so much that they had "a great aversion" toward the Latin services. After a hundred years of Portuguese presence and the establishment of powerful institutions and churches in the region, the Latin liturgical practices failed to make a positive impression on the St. Thomas Christians. Over the years, there had developed emotional barriers between the two groups and their respective traditions. This made the mission of the Archbishop all the more difficult.

The Archbishop deliberately chose the location for the solemn mass, because Kaduthuruthy was ---as it is today--- "a considerable town of Christians" (Geddes 1694: 79). The Christians at Kaduthuruthy, and probably St. Thomas Christians in general, were content with their ancient Syriac music tradition. Therefore the Archbishop assigned

himself a difficult mission to make a positive impression on as many Christians as possible and win them over to his side. He thought he could "charm the common people" with Latin chant performed by a professional choir and thereby "reconcile them to the *Latin Service*."

Contrary to his expectation, and in spite of his high ecclesiastical, social, and political standing, the Archbishop utterly failed in his mission. After seeing the mass and listening to the performance of the choir, the local priests and people disliked the music all the more: "if they liked it ill before, they liked it a great deal worse after that." The events that followed the Palm Sunday celebrations indicate that there was an emotionally charged debate on the relative merits and demerits of Syriac and Latin liturgies and their respective musics. The negative impression on the local Christians was so deep that they went to the Queen, who was a Hindu, and made a complaint. They made such a furor that the Queen, "being importun'd to it by several Christians, and her own jealousies, sent an Order to the *Arch-Bishop* to leave her Kingdom in three days upon pain of Death, and not to trouble her Subjects with his *Novelties*, under which, she had reason to apprehend some ill design against her State was couched" (Geddes 1694: 80).

Later, we see a slightly different musical scenario at Udayamperoor at the conclusion of the Synod, on June 26, 1599. The Synod ended with a solemn procession, the highlight of which was an unusual multi-lingual music and dance event, hitherto unheard of, with simultaneous singing in Latin, Malayalam, and Syriac. According to Gouvea's report,

After the decrees were signed, up rose the Archbishop and, removing the mitre, fell on his knees and began the hymn *Te Deum Laudamus*. Thereupon to the

great joy of all a procession was formed, which with great solemnity wended its way roundabout the church by a convenient route. At the head came dancing parties, singing many religious songs in Malabar language.⁵ They were followed by the priests and other ecclesiastics singing hymns and psalms in Chaldean⁶ as was their wont. After them came the Latin priests⁷ whom the Archbishop had brought with him, and those who had come from Cochin to see the Synod, who sang the same psalms and hymns in Latin. Thus, they sang in three tongues, Latin, Chaldean, and Malabar without any confusion (quoted in Zacharia 1994b: 33).

What is interesting here is the juxtaposing of three languages and, probably, three musical styles. It is also significant to the current discussion on musical preferences that the representatives of the Syriac Christians and the Latin priests and their prelates agreed to sing together in the languages they were comfortable with. What is equally significant is that the multi-lingual singing --psalms and hymns in Latin and Syriac, and "religious songs" in Malayalam-- went "without any confusion." What is not clear from the document is whether the melodies were the same. But it is certain that some sort of discussion and deliberation must have preceded the procession regarding the selection of the chant texts and their performance. The document says that "the same psalms and hymns" that the local priests sang in Syriac, the Latin priests and those who came from Kochi sang in Latin.

The mention of the Latin chant *Te Deum Laudamus* (Praise to Thee God) in the passage deserves attention. This is a chant sung in the Latin rite at the end of morning prayer (Matins) on Sundays and feast days. It is also used as a processional chant and as a song of thanksgiving at the end of special ecclesiastical and liturgical events such as

⁵ The term Malabar language means Malayalam.

⁶ The term Chaldean here refers to East Syriac language.

⁷ The phrase "Latin priests" refers to Indian and foreign-born priests who belonged to the Latin (Roman) rite.

consecration of bishops or ordination of priests. Usually, the celebrant intones the first phrase of the chant and the choir sings the rest of the verses. The text, melody, and musical settings of this chant have a history of their own.⁸ What is not clear from the passage is the nature of the melody or the tone in which the chant was sung at Udayamperoor. At any rate, the reference to this popular chant is another indication of Western musical performances in South India at that time. The chant is still sung in India with the text translated into regional languages both in the Latin-rite churches and the Syro-Malabar churches.

The event described above portended a new development among a section of the St. Thomas Christians, a dramatic change in the attitude toward music and musical instruments associated with the missionaries. Before pursuing that story, let us look at one of the decrees of the Synod that sheds light on the musical practice in the Syriac churches in Kerala in the sixteenth century.

Hindu Musicians in Syriac Churches

Religious coexistence and religious tolerance were and are integral to the history of Kerala. There are many shared social and religious customs between Christians and Hindus in that region. Therefore, it is not surprising that Hindu musicians participate in church festivals. The Portuguese missionaries who came from a predominantly Catholic country, which was extremely hostile toward Muslims and Protestants, could not understand such permeable religious boundaries among the St. Thomas Christians.

⁸ For more information about the history and an analysis of the text, various melodies, and musical settings of this chant, see Steiner et al. (2001: 109-193).

Moreover, the missionaries believed in the indisputable superiority of the Catholic religion and referred derogatorily to the members of other religions as "heathens" and "infidels." The issue of shared social and religious customs was debated in the Synod, and several decrees were directed toward redrawing strict boundaries between the local Christians and their Hindu neighbors. One decree dealt specifically with a particular musical practice prevalent among the St. Thomas Christians and therefore deserves attention. In decree XIV of Session V, the Synod decried the local custom of inviting Hindu musicians to perform inside the church during the celebration of mass on festive occasions:

Whereas up on several Festivals of the Church there are Musicians called to the celebration thereof, according to the custom of the Country, who are all *Heathens*, small care being taken in what part of the Church they are placed, or to hinder them from playing during the time of the Holy Sacrifice, at which no Excommunicate Person or Infidel ought to be present, therefore the Synod doth command, that great care be taken not to suffer them to remain in the Church after the Creed is said, or the Sermon, if there be one, is ended, that so they may not behold the Holy Sacrament; the Vicar shall also be careful to drive all Heathens who may come upon such occasion, from the Doors and Windows of the Church (Geddes 1694: 256).

The decree poses several points for discussion. For example, it is not clear what were the "several festivals" for which Hindu musicians were invited to perform. The nature of the musical instruments that the "heathens" played in the church is not clear either. Probably, they were playing instrumental ensembles such as *pañçawādyam* or *çeṇṭamēḷam* that are considered auspicious in South India. *Pañçawādyam* is a drumming ensemble consisting of five kinds of instruments, *timila*, *maddaḷam*, *iṭaykka*, *ilattāḷam*, and *kompū*.

Çeṇṭamēḷam is an ensemble of three or four *çeṇṭa* (a two-headed cylindrical stick drum) and an *ilattāḷam* (a pair of hand cymbals). These mostly percussive instrument ensembles

were and still are the most popular in the region, and are essential to temple festivals and religious performing arts of the Hindus. The performers belong to a particular Hindu caste, called *mārār*.

It is difficult to determine whether the musicians provided instrumental accompaniment to the Syriac chants or whether they played their own music at certain points in the celebration of the mass. Probably, they played before the beginning of the mass, following the indigenous practice of *kēlikottū* (literally, "striking to hear") to announce the commencement of a solemn and auspicious event. It is also possible that they played an instrumental prelude or a coda to *lākumāra* and *trisagion*, two hymns that used to be sung three times consecutively with great solemnity in the first part of the mass.⁹

The decree alludes to the presence of the musicians inside the church during the Anaphora (Eucharistic prayer), the central part of the mass. In those days, after the mass of the catechumens, the deacon asked all those who had not received baptism and those who were not prepared to receive holy communion to leave the church, and the acolytes closed the main doors of the church for the rest of the mass.¹⁰ Therefore, there must have been a significant reason for the community to allow the presence of Hindu musicians inside the church during such solemn parts of the liturgy. It may be presumed that the musicians were asked to play at the end of the mass to announce the conclusion of the ceremonies. Until further evidence appears, these ideas will remain mere conjectures.

⁹ See text (printed in Malayalam script) and music of these hymns in Saldanha (1937: 9-12, 14-16).

¹⁰ Although rarely executed today for practical reasons, the instructions are still part of the printed text in the Malayalam translation of the Syriac missal.

Musical practices of a society often reflect the social structure of the time. The Christians' invitation to Hindu musicians to perform inside the church, especially during mass, and the willingness of the Hindus to accept the invitation tell volumes about the harmonious social interaction that existed between Christians and their Hindu neighbors in Kerala. Such permeability of socio-religious boundaries deeply offended the missionaries, who sincerely believed in the superiority of the Catholic religion over all other faiths. Therefore, the Synod pressured the St. Thomas Christians to redraw the Christian cultural and ritual boundaries within a predominantly Hindu society. To cite a few other examples, the Synod forbade Christians from giving Hindu names to their children (session IV, decree XVI), from participating in the local Hindu festival of *ōṇam* (session IX, decree IV), and from piercing their ears to wear ornaments like the Hindus (session IX, decree XVII).

Another aspect of the decree under discussion deserves attention. Two versions of the decrees of the Synod came into existence some time before 1603, one in Malayalam and the other in Portuguese (Zacharia 1994: 9). The original decrees that were read at the end of the Synod for approval of the participants were written in Malayalam. However, the Portuguese version contains thirty-five more canons that are not found in the original text; the decree on the presence of the Hindu musicians inside the church is one of them.¹¹ There are two possible reasons for omission of the decree in the original text: either the issue was so sensitive to the St. Thomas Christians that Archbishop Menezes

¹¹ The submission of the St. Thomas Christians to the inquisition of Goa (session III, decree XXII) is another example of the decrees added after the Synod.

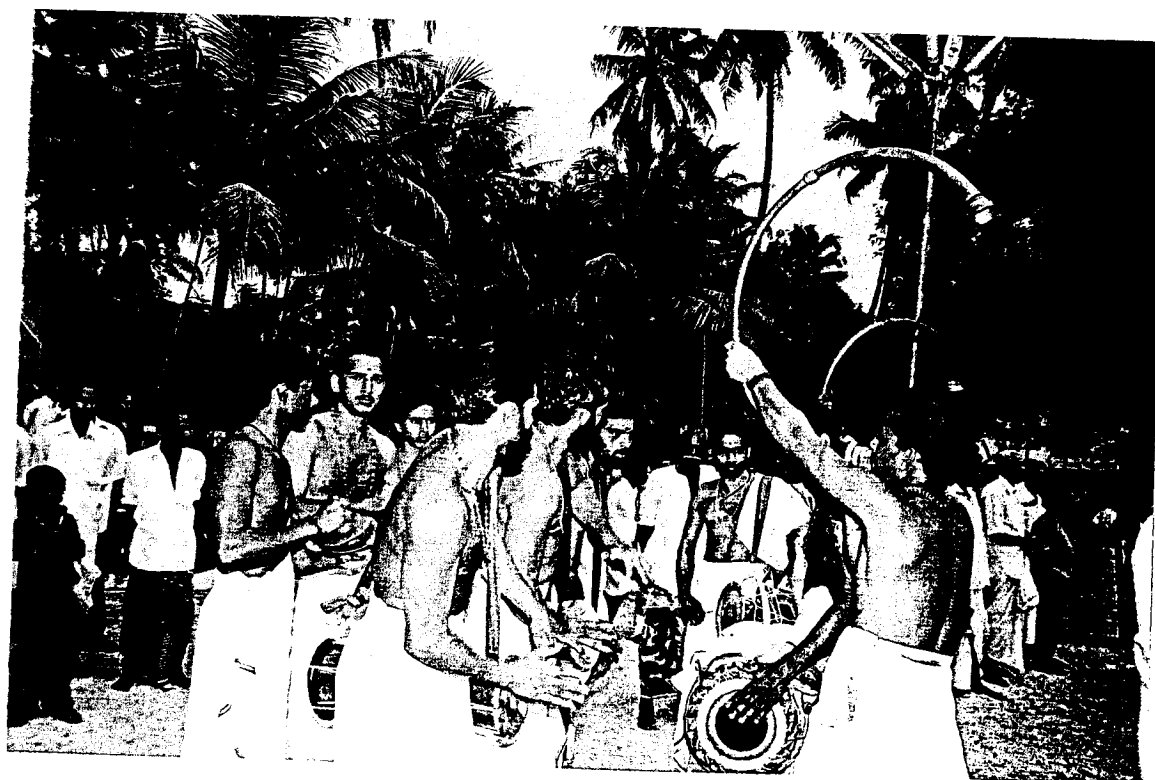
thought that an open discussion would have had a negative impact on the Synod, or the Archbishop and his colleagues became aware of the issue only after the Synod. In any case, the Archbishop considered the issue so important as to include it in the Portuguese version. Whatever the case may be, the decree seems to have succeeded in achieving its goal to some extent, because we do not hear about Hindu musicians playing instrumental ensembles inside the church in the subsequent period.

However, the decree did not prohibit the participation of Hindu musicians in church festivities entirely, but only their presence and performance inside the church during mass. Considering the current practice, it may reasonably be assumed that the Hindu music ensembles performed at other locations and on other occasions besides mass. Even today, performance of *pañçawādyam* or *çeṇṭamēlam* or both are integral parts of festivals in the Syro-Malabar churches. The ensembles place themselves outside the church and perform before and after mass, as a way of announcing the beginning and end of mass. They also perform at various hours of the days, when no mass or other service is going on in the church, adding to the festivity of the occasion. Again, the participation of these ensembles is an important part of festival processions through the streets surrounding the churches. The photos in Figures 1 & 2 were taken during the annual celebration of the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary at St. Mary's Forane Church at Pallippuram, Kerala, on August 15, 2000. As seen in Figure 1, it is the *çeṇṭa* ensemble that leads the procession, placing itself right in front of the processional cross.

Figure 1. *Çeṅṅa* ensemble leading the procession at St. Mary's Forane Church, Pallippuram, Kerala. August 15, 2000.



Figure 2. *Pançawādyam* ensemble performing in the middle of the procession

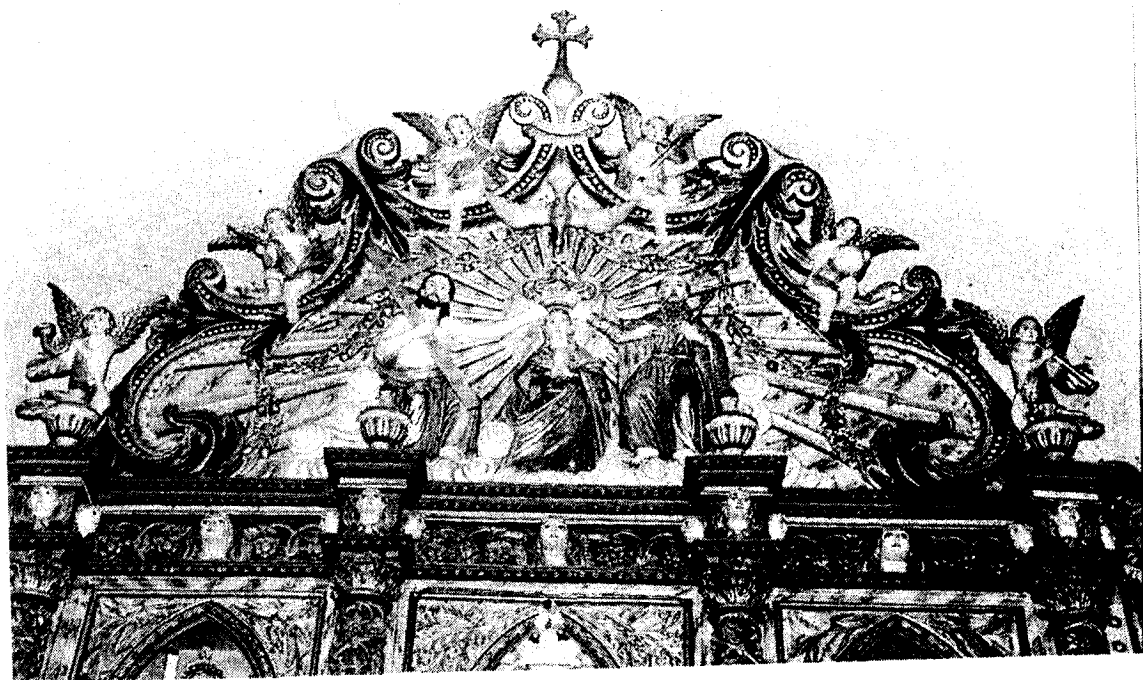


Angelic Musicians: New Images and New Sounds

The missionaries probably disliked not only the presence of Hindu musicians but also the use of indigenous musical instruments inside the church, because of their association with the "heathens" and their festivals. In the churches of Syriac Christians built or rebuilt under the supervision of the missionary bishops in the seventeenth century, we find a new phenomenon. In the wooden reredos of the main altars of some of these churches there are carved figures of angels playing musical instruments (see Figure 3). This was quite new at that time and, in fact, even strange, because the pre-sixteenth century churches in Kerala had no statues or any carved figures inside the church, not even a crucifix, but only a cross. The instruments represented are mostly violin, harp, bugle, triangle, bass drum, and tambourine. None of these instruments is indigenous, although the tambourine might have been familiar to the area because of the presence of Muslims in the region. The exclusion of instruments familiar to the region seems to be a matter of deliberate choice. The specific location of the images, too, seems to be a matter of deliberate choice. They appear invariably in the sanctuaries of churches, either on the reredos or inside the dome above the main altar, and not on the sides or outside the walls of the church. Those are crucial locations that represent heaven on earth, thus giving a heavenly status to the musical instruments. And, without exception, angels, and not human figures, are playing the instruments. This raises the prestige of the instruments and provides legitimacy to their use inside the church.

The missionaries probably used images of angelic musicians as an ingenious means to influence the minds of the worshipers. At the time of its representation in Kerala, the angelic music provided a semblance of the future rather than a reflection of

Figure 3. Six angels playing Western musical instruments at the reredos of the main altar at St. Mary's Forane Church, Pallippuram, Kerala.



the present. It also implied to some extent value judgments on the existing musical practices of the Syriac Christians, and an invitation to break away from the past and to redefine the future by adopting more "respectable" musical and religious practices of the West. Indeed, the strong suggestive power of the visual medium did have an effect on the church musicians. Three of the instruments, violin, triangle, and drum, soon became part of the Syriac choirs of the churches under the control of the missionaries. Those musical instruments can be heard even today in some of the Syro-Malabar churches in Kerala (see photo of a choir and description, in Palackal 2002: 16).

The presence of carved images of angels and saints in Syro-Malabar churches has to be analyzed in view of their absence in the churches of the other St. Thomas Christians, who established their separate identity after the revolt against the religious hegemony of the Portuguese missionaries in 1653.

Latin Chants in Syriac

The time of the introduction of images in the churches of Kerala coincides with the adaptation of paraliturgical services from the Latin rite, such as Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, novena to saints, and *ladīnj* (Malayalam adaptation of the Portuguese word, *ladainha*, meaning 'litany') by the Syro-Malabar Church. These services had their own repertoires of chants in the Latin rite. However, in the process of introducing these chants in the Syro-Malabar churches, language became a bone of contention. Since the Syriac Christians were not willing to give up their liturgical language, the missionaries had to arrange translations of the Latin texts into Syriac. This gave rise to an entirely new

and unique category of Syriac chants in Kerala. A few examples of Latin chants that were translated into Syriac for the use of the Syro-Malabar Catholics are given below.

1. *Veni Creator Spiritus* (Come O Spirit Creator)

- a. Latin text and melody: *Liber Usualis* 1946: 885-886.
- b. Syriac translation: *K'tāwā d'slōā qānōnāita* (Book of Canonical Prayers) 1931: 1-2.
- c. Western staff notation of a melody of the Syriac text, with text underlay in Malayalam script: Vadakkal 1954: 272-273.
- d. Audio recording of the Syriac text, and notes: Palackal 2002: 13; track 23.

2. *Te Deum Laudamus* (Praise to Thee God)

- a. Latin text and melody: *Liber Usualis* 1946: 1832-1834.
- b. Syriac translation, printed in Malayalam script: Bassilios 1902: 162-164.
- c. Western staff notation of a melody of the Syriac text, with text underlay in Malayalam script: Vadakkal 1954: 274-275.

3. *Salve Regina* (Hail Queen)

- a. Latin text and melody: *Liber Usualis* 1946: 279.
- b. Syriac translation: *Geliyōnā d'thaksā* (Book of Instructions) 1944: 110.
- c. Western staff notation of two melodies of the Syriac text, with text underlay in Malayalam script: Vadakkal 1954: 243-245¹²
- c. Audio recording of two strophes of the Syriac text, and notes: Palackal 2002: 13; track 24.

¹² See a slightly different transcription of one of those melodies in Saldanha (1937: 168).

4. *Pange Lingua* (Praise, my Tongue)

- a. Latin text and music: *Liber Usualis* 1946: 960-952.
- b. Syriac translation, printed in Malayalam script: Bassilios 1902: 60-62.
- c. Western staff notation of several melodies of the Syriac text, with text underlay in Malayalam script: Vadakkel 1954: 184-213.
- d. Audio recording and notes: Palackal 2002: 12-13; tracks 21 and 22.

5. *Ecce Lignum Crucis* (Behold the Wood of the Cross)

- a. Latin text and melody: *Liber Usualis* 1946: 704.
- b. Syriac translation, printed in Malayalam script: Bassilios 1902: 133.
- c. Audio recording and notes: Palackal 2002: 12, track 20.

6. Litanies of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and Sacred Heart of Jesus.

- a. Latin texts and melodies: *Liber Usualis* 1946: 1857-1858, 1876-1877, 1878-1879.
- b. Syriac translation, printed in Malayalam script: Bassilios 1902: 35-38.
- c. Western staff notation of twenty-four melodies of the Syriac text, with text underlay in Malayalam script: Vadakkel 1954: 228-240; twenty-two melodies for the concluding part of litanies, Vadakkel 1954: 150-165; several melodies in Saldanha 1937: 158-167 and Kulathinal 1948: 20-27.
- d. Audio recording of the litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, notes: Palackal 2002: 12, track 19.

The dates and the names of translators and composers of the Syriac version of the Latin chants are yet to be determined. The process of translation might have started some

time in the early seventeenth century and might have lasted until the end of the nineteenth century. Those Portuguese and Spanish priests who knew both Latin and Syriac, or indigenous priests who were well versed in these languages, might have made the translations. Or it might have been a collaborative effort on the part of the foreign and indigenous priests.

It is not clear if the Syriac texts were initially sung to existing Latin melodies. The transcriptions of melodies of the Syriac texts available from 1937 (Saldanha 1937, Kulathinal 1948, and Vadakkal 1954) show that there were heightened compositional activities in Kerala prior to 1937. The transcriptions show indigenous musical characteristics, for example, metric structures that are popular in India, such as the six-beat *tālam* with accents on the first and the third beats, and the seven-beat *tālam* with accents on the first, fourth, and the sixth beats.¹³ The transcriptions of melodies do not indicate a polyphonic setting. There is no written or other evidence of polyphonic performance in the Syro-Malabar churches. However, use of instrumental accompaniment, specifically melodic instrumental accompaniment, is indicated in a few transcriptions. Some of the transcriptions include instrumental introductions, interludes, and short links between phrases.¹⁴ The length of these introductions and interludes may vary from three notes to several measures. For example, a short chant in Saldanha (1937: 113-114) has eighteen measures of introduction and a 24-measure interlude. Melody

¹³ See notes on tracks 19 and 22 in Palackal (2002: 12-13).

¹⁴ See examples in Saldanha (1937: 26, 28, 41, 65, 67-83, 96-119, etc.).

instruments are used to double the melody, provide short introductions, interludes, and links between phrases.¹⁵

The Story of a Latin Chant

As a sample, we may pursue the story of one hymn, known as *Pange Lingua*. It is the story of one hymn, two languages, and three musical cultures. St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) composed the text of this hymn in Latin for the feast of Corpus Christi in the Roman rite. It was also sung in its entirety --- there are six stanzas--- on Holy Thursday, during Eucharistic procession.¹⁶ Somewhere along the line, the first, fifth, and the sixth stanzas from this hymn came to be treated as two independent hymns for the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The first stanza, *Pange Lingua*, was sung in the beginning of the service and stanzas five and six, referred to as *Tantum Ergo*, were sung toward the middle of the service.

The Portuguese missionaries introduced Benediction in the Syriac churches under their control (i. e., churches of the people of New Allegiance, later known as Syro-Malabar Church). Since the Syriac Christians were not willing to sing in any language other than Syriac, the missionaries had to arrange for a translation of the hymn into Syriac with the help of local priests who were proficient in both languages. The performance practice of the hymn remained the same as in the Latin rite, i. e., the first stanza as the first hymn in the beginning of the service and the fifth and the sixth stanzas as the second hymn toward the middle of the service. Given below is the original text in

¹⁵ See audio samples in tracks 1, 10, 19, 21, 22, 24-29, in Palackal (2002).

¹⁶ The text can be found in *Liber Usualis: Missae Et Officii* 1946: 950-52.

Latin, followed by the Syriac translation by an anonymous author and the English translation by Fr. Emmanuel Thelly CMI.

A. Pange Lingua (Latin)

- Stanza 1. Pange língua gloriósi
Córporis mystérium
Sanguínisque pretiósi
Quem in mún-di prétium
Frúctus ventris generósi
Rex effúdit géntium.
- Stanza 5. Tántum ergo sacraméntum
Venerémur cernui
Et antíquum documéntum
Nóvo cédat rítui
Praestet fides supplémentum
Sénsuum deféctui.
- Stanza 6. Genitóri Genitóque
Laus et jubilátio,
Sálus, hónor, vírtus quoque
Sit et benedíctio:
Procedénti ab utróque
Cómpar sit laudátio. Amen.

B. Šambah lešān (Syriac translation)

- Stanza 1. Šambah lešān hallāsā rāzā
D'pag'rā d'lā mummā.
Wadkās dem dukai nawšā
M'hadyānā d'kollē ālmā.
- Stanza 5. Kollan dašnē n'qarew lē
W'nesgōd māyōṭē l'rāzē.
Wad'yāṭēqē atīqtā
Tethallaq bad'nāh hadata.
Haymānuṭā m'sam'lyā
Hassīrūṭ regšay pag'rā.
D'wā rādēnan ak dawelpa

B'hān yammā sangīs 'gīšā

Stanza 6. Šuwḥā w'šulthān w'rūmrāmā
L'awā w'lawrē hanbīwā.
Walruhā pāraqlēthā
Sāwyā amhōn tešbohtā.

Lahmā d'min śmayyā yawt l'hōn halleluyā,
Dīṭ bē kōl hallyūṭ punāqē halleluyā.

C. Sing, my Tongue (English translation)

Stanza 1. Sing, O my weak tongue, the mystery
Of the spotless body and the chalice of blood;
For the purification of the soul,
Which gladdens the whole world.

Stanza 5. Let us all offer him gifts, O mortals,
And adore the mystery.
The old covenant will vanish
At the dawn of the new.
Faith fills up the deficiency
Of the organs of bodily sense.
*By it we sail as in a ship,
In this turbulent sea.*

Stanza 6. Praise, power, and exaltation
To the Father and his beloved Son,
And to the Holy Paraclete;
Glory is due to them.

Thou hast given them the bread from heaven, hallelujah,
In which there is every sweetness of taste, hallelujah.

It is interesting to note that the Syriac translator added two verses at the end of the fifth stanza (see the verses in Italics in B and C). These verses were added as a trope to the word *fides*: "By it [faith] we sail as in a ship/ In this turbulent sea." The source of the text is not clear. The author may have either borrowed it from a Syriac or Latin source that is not yet known, or composed it anew. We can only speculate on his intentions.

Maybe, the author wanted to indirectly advise the local Christians to stand firm in their faith in spite of their "turbulent" history, following the Synod of Udayamperoor (1599) at which the Portuguese missionaries took control of the ecclesiastical and social life of the St. Thomas Christians. In retrospect, adding verses to a well-known and ecclesiastically approved text could be seen as an extremely bold step from the part of the author. It is not certain whether the Latin missionaries were aware of the addition and, if they were aware, whether they approved it for singing in the church. At any rate, the Syriac text was sung in the Syro-Malabar churches until its vernacularization in 1967.

Although the Syriac version is no longer performed today, quite a few musicians continue to preserve the text and the melody in their memories. The following analysis is based on a recorded performance by the Syriac choir of St. John's Church at Konthuruthy, on August 27, 1999. The recording is included in the CD, *Qambel Māran: Syriac Chants from South India* (tracks 21 and 22). The singers accompanied themselves on harmonium, bass drum (known by its Portuguese name, *tambor*), and triangle (pronounced *tiryānkōl*, a Malayalam adaptation of the Portuguese, *triângulo*).¹⁷

Track 21, *sambah leśān* (Praise, my Tongue): this is the first stanza of *Pange Lingua*, and is used as the opening hymn of the Benediction. A distinctive feature of this melody is its range of a complete octave, in contrast to the older Syriac melodies which, in general, have a limited range of about four to five notes. The melody gradually ascends a full octave to its climactic point at the upper tonic and then descends slowly, forming something like a bell-shaped curve. A few other melodic gestures that may be considered

¹⁷ The act of playing melody instruments such as harmonium or violin is referred to in Malayalam as *wāyikkuka* ("to read"), and that of the percussion instruments as *koṭṭuka* ("to strike").

characteristic of Western musical style are also present in this chant. For example, the use of the raised fourth in an otherwise major scale and the leap of a perfect fourth in both ascending and descending manner are features seldom found in Syriac chants, especially those of the pre-Portuguese period. It is not yet clear if this was an adaptation of a Western chant melody. The manner in which the percussion instruments (bass drum and triangle) are played to accompany the melody, which is sung in a rhythmically free style without a steady pulse, deserves attention. These instruments are played in a fast tremolo-like pattern, adding solemnity and embellishment to the melody.

Track 22, *kollan dasnē* (Let us all Offer): This is the second chant for Benediction and consists of the last two stanzas of *Pange Lingua*. A unique feature of the melody is its metric structure, known in South Indian classical music theory as *miśra chāpu tālam*. It has a total of seven beats divided into two sections (3 + 4) with accents on the first and the fourth beats. The bass drum and triangle players strike only at the accented beats in this melody.

To conclude this story, the chants tell us stories of communication between distant peoples and diverse cultures. A good example is the course of the chant in track 22. St. Thomas Aquinas composed the text in Latin, in the thirteenth century; the Portuguese missionaries brought the chant to South India, some time in the sixteenth century; local scholars, with the help of missionaries, translated the Latin text into Syriac, a Semitic language, in Kerala; the translator interpolated two verses either composed by himself or borrowed from another unknown source into the original Latin text; an anonymous local cleric or musician disregarded the original Western melody and decided to compose a new melody; in so doing, the composer adopted a metric structure that was

popular in South India; the performers of the chant used musical instruments adopted or adapted from the West to accompany the melody; and the chant exists even today, at least in the treasured musical memory of a group of people in the Syro-Malabar Church.

This short survey of the history and music of the Syro-Malabar Christians of Kerala is a case in point for the significant role that musicological discourse may assume as a tool in historiography. Such an approach does not seem to have caught the attention of scholars who study Christianity in India.

Western Tunes and Malayalam text

One outcome of the acquaintance with Latin chant through Syriac translations was the emergence of a positive attitude toward Western melodies that entered Kerala through the missionaries. The Syriac Christians who were antagonistic to Latin language and liturgy adopted or adapted several Western melodies to suit Malayalam text and sang them in their churches and homes. This gave rise to yet another category of Christian hymns in Kerala. In 1937, the Jesuit priest Saldanha made transcriptions of some of those hymns in Western staff notation and included them in the second part of his book, *Syriac-Malayalam Hymnal*. In the Preface of the book Saldanha made some interesting comments on his project and an evaluation of the current status of "church music" in Malayalam:

Only sober and devotion-inspiring tunes have been selected, others, however pretty, being rigorously excluded either because of their theatrical associations or their unsuitability for church singing. It should be well remembered that there has been so far, in Malayalam, no such thing as "Church music" properly so called. What has passed muster as such is really Western hymn tunes with Malayalam wordings. What is worse, some times even tuneful snatches of waltzes and polkas have served as "sacred tunes" because they were used with sacred words. The

only genuine music in Malayalam is of the theatre.¹⁸ It is therefore by shearing many a "drama tune" ruthlessly of its flourishes and exaggerations that it has been trimmed down to the sober proportions of sacred music (p. 12).

Specifically about the Malayalam hymns Saldanha made the following comments: "In the Malayalam Part many tunes will be found to be purely Western, the words alone being Malayalam. Some others show a transitional stage, while by far the majority are entirely Malayalam both as regards words and music" (p. 11). Here, Saldanha refers to three categories of melodies: "purely Western," indigenous, and transitional melodies, i. e., melodies that combine western and indigenous characteristics. The term "Western" may be understood in a broad sense; the geographical source or sources of these melodies have not yet been explored. The source(s) could be the Latin chants that were part of the Roman rite, or melodies of religious and even popular songs from Portugal and Spain. Interestingly, certain melodies had enough resilience to retain their musical characteristics in an entirely different musical and cultural context, while other melodies underwent musical transformation. The singers probably adapted those melodies to suit their vocal inflection, voice range, particular treatment of grace notes,¹⁹ preferred metrical structures,²⁰ and in the process, even modified the melodic phrases.

¹⁸ Kerala has had a rich theatrical tradition known as *nāṭakam*. The actor/actress (*naṭan/naṭi*) used to sing and act, like the performers in a Broadway musical. Since the 1990s, most actors and actresses lip-synch to songs previously recorded in a studio.

¹⁹ Saldanha made the following observation on grace notes: "The grace notes (contrary to the western conception) are to be considered as 'inherent in the principal note and not as an appendage'" (p. 11).

²⁰ For example, the six-beat meter with accents on the first and the third beats, and the seven-beat meter with accents on the first, fourth, and sixth beats. About the latter, Saldanha wrote: "A measure that is of frequent occurrence and quite characteristic is 7/8 ..." (p. 11).

Some of the hymns in Saldanha's book are part of the Christian devotional music repertoire of the Syro-Malabar Christians today. Analytical and comparative studies of these chants, which is beyond the scope of the present study, might reveal close musical connections between the Syriac Christians in Kerala and the Christian West.

Two Musical Dialects in East Syriac

Music became a significant factor in the reformulation of the separate identity of the Church of the East, starting in 1909. The Syro-Malabar Church and the Church of the East use the same East-Syriac liturgy. The liturgical texts for most of the services, especially mass and Office, have only minor differences based on the particular theological perspectives.²¹ However, the musical repertoires of both Churches are not the same. Although there are a few similarities, most of the melodies of the Church of the East are different from those of the Syro-Malabar Church (melodies of the Syro-Malabar Church will be discussed in Chapter Six).²² The history of the music of the Church of the East coincides with the history of the Church itself.

The Church of the East established its separate identity from the Syro-Malabar Church and professed its allegiance to the Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East in 1909. Bishop Mar Thimotheus Abimalek (a native of Kirkuk, Iraq) from the Assyrian

²¹ For example, the liturgical texts of the Church of the East refer to the Blessed Virgin Mary as the "Mother of Christ" and not the "Mother of God."

²² This statement is based on my observation of the melodies of both churches. After listening to the recorded version of the melodies of the Syro-Malabar Church in the CD, *Qambel Maran: Syriac Chants from South India*, Mar Aprem, the Metropolitan of the Church of the East, made the same observation. A comparative study of the melodic repertoires of the Church of the East and the Syro-Malabar Church remains to be undertaken.

Church of the East was in Kerala at the time of the division. Mar Thimotheus became the first Metropolitan of the Church of the East from 1908 until his death in 1945 (he is buried in Thrissur). Liturgically and musically, the Syro-Malabar Church and the Church of the East were on the same ground in the years immediately following the division. Since the Metropolitan could not change the liturgy, he probably thought that music could be a means of reinforcing the newly established identity of the Church of the East from the Syro-Malabar Church.²³ The Metropolitan brought a priest well versed in Syriac liturgy and music from the Assyrian Church of the East in Iraq (probably from the Kirkuk region). He taught the melodies that he knew in Iraq to a local priest, Konikkara Paulose (1892-1949), who taught them to other members of his church. This was the beginning of musical change within the East-Syriac liturgical tradition in Kerala and of the presence of a different musical dialect associated with East Syriac language and liturgy. There is no evidence of any kind of resistance on the part of the members of the Church of the East to abandoning the age-old liturgical music tradition of the Syro-Malabar Church that they were used to until that time, or to making extra effort to learn new melodies for the existing chant texts. The musical change was reinforced by two other visiting priests of the Assyrian Church of the East from Iraq: Fr. Geevarghese and Deacon Kakku Lazar. Fr. Geevarghese was in Kerala 1930 to 1935. During that time, he introduced the melodies that he knew from Iraq to a group of singers in the Church of the East, led by Fr. Pullukkaran Francis (1908-1987), an indigenous priest who was also a good singer and a Syriac scholar. Deacon Kakku Lazar stayed in Thrissur from 1956 to 1958. He

²³ The following information was collected during interviews with Fr. Antony Elavathingal and Fr. Pauly D. Chirayth, who are members of the Church of the East, on August 12, 2004.

reinforced knowledge of the melodies that Fr. Geevarghese taught earlier and taught new ones. Therefore, according to Fr. Antony Elavathingal, the current melodies in the liturgy of the Church of the East are the same as or very similar to the melodies used in Baghdad and the surrounding regions of Iraq. Fr. Elavathingal was in Baghdad from December 2000 to April 2003. There he celebrated mass in Syriac and the congregation had no difficulty in responding to his singing, because the melodies were the same. Whether this is valid for all melodies (for example, melodies of the Office and other services) is yet to be verified. So far as I know, no transcription or analysis of melodies of the Church of the East in India has yet been made. A comparison of the musical traditions of the Assyrian Church of the East in Iraq and the Church of the East in India remains to be done. Therefore, at present it is difficult to assess the similarity or dissimilarity of melodies in India and Iraq.

East Syriac versus West Syriac

The Antiochene liturgy and its music were significant factors in the reformulation of the identity of a section of the St. Thomas Christians as Jacobite or Syrian Orthodox Christians. Such a reformulation, a process that lasted more than a century, was far from the initial intent of the dissident group. A close examination of events related to the introduction of the Antiochene rite in Kerala will show that it was the result of a tactful imposition.

After the profession of non-allegiance to the Jesuit prelates in 1653, the dissident Christians appealed to the Eastern patriarchs of Antioch, Babylon, and Alexandria to send a bishop who could ordain priests for the Syriac churches in Kerala. They did not want the bishop to have any involvement in the day-to-day administration of their churches for

which they already had a well-established system. They did not want to establish themselves as a separate community within the St. Thomas Christians either. What they wanted was to liberate themselves from the liturgical reforms and ecclesiastical hegemony of the Portuguese missionaries and go back to the pre-Udayamperoor liturgical and ecclesiastical traditions that they cherished. At that time, they were not aware of the existence of the Antiochene (Jacobite) rite nor of its unique liturgy and music, both of which are different from the Chaldean liturgy and music that they had used for centuries. They did not know about the Monophysite Christology of the Jacobites, nor about the difference between Eastern and Western forms of Syriac language that distinguished the two rites. Bishop Gregorios, the Jacobite bishop of Jerusalem, who arrived in Kerala in 1665, soon grasped the situation and tactfully refrained from enforcing the Antiochene rite on the dissident group. Instead, he tried to appeal to the people by preaching about the need to restore the Eastern practices of the local Christians and cast out the changes that the Portuguese bishops imposed on them. Bishop Gregorios had complete disdain for the Roman rite and its prelates in India. He also expressed his contempt for those among the St. Thomas Christians who sided with the Roman prelates. The bishop did not hide his feelings at all. This is what he wrote in a letter to three pastors in Kerala:

We are aware of the tribulations you suffer from those who, having left the true and orthodox canons of the Syrian Church, and joined [sic] the idolatrous Romans. They were once true Syrians who zealously kept our faith; now they were made heretics by the undue influence of the wicked Kings and Queens of Portugal. They convoked an illegitimate synod and changed our Apostolic faith; upset the canons of the Holy Synod of Nicea; mutilated the valuable and ancient traditions and rituals, while placing in their stead unworthy rubrics (Baselios 1997:101).²⁴

²⁴ For more details about this letter which was originally written in Syriac, see Baselios (1997:124, note 6).

The Jacobite bishops, who visited Kerala in the following years, gradually introduced Antiochene liturgy and theology. The transition, as described in Chapter Three, took a long time, from 1751 to 1874. What is not yet clear is the process of the introduction of Antiochene liturgical music in Kerala. From the information I received during research, the history of the current melodies may be traced back only to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As with the liturgy, the transition from West Syriac melodies to East Syriac melodies might have been a slow and gradual process. At any rate, at the beginning of the twentieth century the liturgical music repertoire of the Orthodox churches became completely different from that of the Syro-Malabar Church. These different musical communities will be discussed respectively in Chapters Six and Seven.

English, Syriac, and Indian Music

Encouraged by the Church Missionary Society, one group among the people of the New Allegiance wanted to create a new identity for the Syriac Christians by reforming their liturgy and ecclesiastical traditions in the light of evangelical ideals of the Anglican Church. There was no intention on the part of the Reform Party to disregard their ancient (Antiochene) liturgy, but only to revise it and make it accessible to the ordinary people by celebrating it in the local language. Neither did the C. M. S. missionaries attempt an assimilation of the Syriac Christians with the Church of England. The goal of the missionaries was to create "an Eastern Church reformed in the light of Evangelical principles and in some sort of 'union' with the Anglican Church" (Mundadan 2003: 129). The leaders of the Reform Party, which later became the Mar Thoma Syrian Church,

envisioned a church that was Eastern, Indian, and Evangelical at the same time. To attain that goal they retained the Antiochene liturgy and Lectionary (the order of scripture readings for various days of the week, feasts, and other special occasions in a liturgical year), translated the liturgy into indigenous languages, and modified the prayers that were not in tune with the Anglican theology.

This particular identity is best expressed in the music of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. The liturgical music repertoire of the Church consists of four kinds of hymns. The following description of those hymns is based on the information available in the official publication of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, *Malankara mār thōmmā suriyāni sabha parasyārāadhanakramam* (The Order of Public Worship of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syriac Church). This book is the forty-seventh edition, printed in 2001. The book has two parts bound together: the first part (pp. 1-108) contains the liturgy of the Hours for Sunday morning (pp. 1-67) and the order of mass (pp. 68-108), the second part (new pagination, pp. 3-250) consists of the twenty-eighth edition (2000) of the hymnal in Malayalam.²⁵ There are a total of 428 hymns in the hymnal that belong to the four categories described below.

i) Traditional Syriac chants (translated into Malayalam) from the Antiochene liturgy. The number of these chants is smaller than in the liturgy of the Orthodox churches, and the contexts of their use are limited, mostly to the Sunday morning prayers and holy mass.

²⁵ The hymnal was first published in 1946.

ii) Hymns composed in the South Indian classical music style. These hymns follow the tripartite structure of *pallavi*, *anupallavi*, and *çaranam*. The printed texts provide the name of the composer of each hymn. Out of the 428 hymns about 287 belong to this category. The *rāgam* and *tālam* are indicated in 125 hymns, and in the rest only *tālam* is indicated. Most compositions are in South Indian *rāgams*. A few compositions are in rare *rāgams* such as *punnāgawrāli* (no. 136), and *mañiranka* (nos. 200 and 258). Similarly, there are a few compositions in rare *tālams* such as *muṛiyatanta* (no. 136) and *çembaṭa* (no. 422).

iii) English hymns. This section consists of Malayalam translation of famous English hymns such as "Christians Awake" by John Byron, "How Sweet the Name of Jesus" by John Newton, and "Abide with me" by H. F. Lyte. The translated texts are sung to the original melodies. The hymnal provides the titles in English and the names of composers and translators.

iv) Malayalam hymns set to English tunes. The text of these hymns were composed by indigenous authors who arranged the verses of the hymns to fit the melodies of well known English hymns. The name of the original English tune is quoted at the top of the printed text, and the name of the author of the Malayalam text is also given.

A service may contain hymns from all four categories. Over the years, the members of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church have developed the capacity to easily shift from one style to the other during the same service on any given day.

Identity of "Syriac" Christians since the 1960s

The vernacularization of liturgies on a large scale started in the Syriac churches in the early 1960s. Since then liturgical texts became available in the local languages. Music was an important topic of debate during the early stages of the translation of the Syriac liturgies into the vernacular. The question was whether to adapt the vernacular translations to the original melodies of the Syriac texts or to adopt local and regional musical styles to sing the translated text. All the Syriac churches fully or partially followed the first path, i. e., translated the Syriac texts adapting their original meters and adopting the melodies. Because the transition from Syriac to Malayalam was smooth and appealing to the worshipping communities, Syriac language itself gradually became less and less significant in the definition of such terms as "Syriac chants" and "Syriac music." Until the 1960s, "Syriac chant" meant texts in Syriac language along with their respective melodies, and "Syriac music" meant melodies of chant texts in Syriac language. At present, however, "Syriac chant" means chants that are in Syriac language or those chants in Malayalam (or other vernacular languages) that had their origin in one of the two Syriac liturgical traditions.

The shift, partial or complete, from Syriac to vernacular languages in the liturgy has influenced the understanding of such terms as "Syriac churches" and "Syriac Christians." In earlier times, Syriac language was an important factor in the perception of the identity of the St. Thomas Christians. They identified themselves with the language and considered themselves, with great pride, to be the preservers of the language that Jesus spoke. At present, the Syriac language is becoming less and less significant in the definition of Syriac Christians and Syriac churches.

A Church Festival in Kerala

It may be worthwhile to conclude this chapter with the description of an annual event in a local parish in Kerala that bears testimony to the religious and cultural encounters of the Syriac Christians. The scene is the feast in my native parish, St. Mary's Forane Church, at Pallippuram. In the absence of much historical evidence, the parishioners hold on to the local legend that the church was established in the early Christian era. The art works in the church indicate that the present altar was built or rebuilt in the seventeenth century, during the Portuguese era (see angels playing Western musical instruments in figure 3). The church is dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. The feast falls on the 15th of August; the festivities start every year on August 6 with a nine-day Novena. Musically, August 14 and 15 are the most important days. What follows is my eye-ear-witness account from August 15, 2004.

The day began with the morning church bell (real, not pre-recorded) at 5. 30 a. m. Immediately after, selections from the latest commercial releases of Christian devotional songs in Malayalam, composed in the film-music style, were played on the public address system installed for the occasion in the church vicinity. The songs were played loud enough to be heard by everyone within about a mile radius (that included Hindus and Muslims in the neighborhood). About two hundred people gathered in the church for the morning prayer, at 7 a. m; the prayers included Syriac melodies sung with Malayalam text. Thereafter, the percussion ensemble known as *çenṭa mēlam* gathered under the mango tree on the churchyard and started performing. Sometime later, the instrumental ensemble known as "band-set," which consists of clarinets, trumpets, saxophone, kettle drums, bass drum, and cymbal, started playing on another side of the courtyard; the band-

set played the latest film tunes from Hindi and Malayalam movies. At 10. 30 a. m., the solemn festival mass started. The text of the mass is a translation of the Chaldean mass in Syriac. The choir, specially hired for the festival, included a male and a female solo singer, accompanied by an electronic synthesizer that had the latest gadgets for using pre-recorded tracks, an electronic rhythm box, an electric guitar, a bass guitar, tabla, a maraca and a small hand-held cymbal. Those who did not know the text and the performance context would think that the choir was singing Malayalam film songs. The mass was broadcast through the public address system. Afterwards, less solemn celebrations of mass continued one after the other, accompanied by the choir using fewer instruments.

The grand procession, the highlight of the day, started at 2. 30 p. m. with the singing of the litany of the Blessed Virgin (translated from Latin to Syriac and later from Syriac to Malayalam). More than a thousand people participated in the procession that moved slowly through a predetermined path, about a quarter of a mile. Both sides of the procession route were crowded with people (including Hindus and Muslims) and vendors selling anything from toys to house appliances. The *çența* ensemble led the procession, placing themselves right in front of the processional cross (see photo taken on an earlier occasion in figure 1). A *pañawādyam* ensemble (see figure 2) and two band-sets performed in different places in the procession. They walked in front of the portable wooden shrines with statues of the Blessed Virgin, Infant Jesus, St. Joseph, St. Sebastian, and St. Thomas. It should be noticed that the members of the *çența* and the *pañawādyam* ensembles are mostly Hindus. They have their own repertoires that are played during Hindu and Christians festivals alike. The band ensembles performed popular Christian devotional songs and a few film tunes. Sometimes, the sound of one ensemble overlapped

with that of the other. In the tail-end of the procession walked the priest carrying a small statue of the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by acolytes and two altar boys who kept on ringing brass hand bells. Other altar boys took turns to ring the church bell until the procession returned to the church at about 4. 30 p. m. The important parts of the festivities of the day ended with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament (translated from Latin to Syriac and then from Syriac to Malayalam). Whenever there was no service going on in the church, the operator of the sound system played the commercial releases of Christian devotional songs through the public address system. All the while, the instrumental ensembles continued to play until most of the crowd dispersed.

Thus, the feast also turns out to be an occasion for a festival of sounds, presented sequentially or simultaneously like a symphony, within a relatively small physical space. The confluence of sounds is not a coincidence, but a consequence of centuries-long religious and cultural interactions among peoples. Reading this narrative one may conclude that Syriac melodies form only a tiny little part of the musical scene in the celebration. That may be true of this specific occasion, but is not the case in other churches and other occasions, as will be seen in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

Model Melodies of the Syro-Malabar Church

The musical repertory of the Syro-Malabar Church consists of a plethora of styles, ranging from the local to the regional and pan-regional, not to mention the ubiquitous film style of music. This chapter focuses on one part of the repertory: the model melodies used in the liturgy.

Rēs Qālā (model melody)

One of the significant features of the East Syriac (Chaldean) liturgy is the use of what is known as *rēs qālā*, which literally means "head melody" or "head song" (from two Syriac words, *rēs*, meaning "head" and *qālā*, meaning "song," "melody," "tune," etc.). The term connotes both a particular chant text written in a specific meter as well as the melody associated with that chant. The word *rēs* might have been used to mean the first strophe of a chant, because the chants that belong to this category are strophic, and all stanzas are sung to the melody of the "head" strophe. A *rēs qālā* is a compositional design that serves as a metric and melodic model for creating new chant texts to an existing melody.

Therefore, I have translated the term as "model melody." A model melody may be defined as a complete and fixed tune, which is associated with a text that is composed in a specific poetic meter. Thus, there can be several chants composed in the same poetic meter for different occasions in liturgy that are sung to a single model melody.

The concept of *rēs qālā* may be better understood in comparison with the other category of chants that have a single text and a single melody, and are sung only on a specific occasion. For example, the text and melody of the chant *qambel mārān* is sung

only during the Office for the dead.¹ Similarly, the text and melody of the chant *ētā pūs lēk* ("farewell, O church") is sung only on a particular occasion, namely, the funeral of priests.² Although a major part of the liturgical music repertoire belongs to this category, it lies outside the scope of the present study.

Because of the vernacularization of the liturgy, the term *rēs qālā* is gradually losing currency even among the clergy of the Syro-Malabar Church, but the concept is very much in use. The Malayalam breviaries indicate in parenthesis the initial words of the Syriac text of the *rēs qālā* at the top of each chant.³ The Syriac text, printed in Malayalam script, reminds the singer of the Syriac melody in which the Malayalam text is to be sung. The term is still in vogue among the clergy and the laity of the Church of the East. As in the practice in the Syro-Malabar Church, the Malayalam liturgical texts of this Church indicate the *rēs qālā* (written in either Syriac or Malayalam script) at the top of each chant. Although the concept is the same, the model melodies of the Church of the East are different from those of the Syro-Malabar Church. A comparative study of the model melodies of the two churches remains to be undertaken.

Similar practices of using model strophes as compositional and pedagogical tools can also be found in other chant traditions. In the Byzantine tradition a model strophe of an ode is called *heirmos* (Gk., "stanza"). All stanzas of each ode in a *kanōn* (Gk., "rule") are metrically similar to the first and are sung to the same melody. Each *kanōn* has nine

¹ See transcriptions of renditions of this chant by two priests in Palackal (1995: 106; 2001: 233); for an audio recording and comments on the melody, see Palackal (2002: 10).

² For the text, melody, and comments on this chant, see Palackal (2002: 11).

³ See examples in Abel (1996: 22, 23, etc.) and in *Sīrō malabār sabhayuṭe ārādhanakramam: Yāma prārthanakaḷ*, vol. I, pp. 34, 35, etc.

odes corresponding to the nine biblical canticles, each having a different melody. The handbook that contains the collection of model strophes, with or without melodies, is called *Heirmologion*. The chanters learn the melodies of the *heirmoi* so that they can sing, taking their cue from the incipit, texts that are metrically similar to a *heirmos* by adapting its melody (see Velimirović 2001: 332-332; Wellesz [1961] 1998: 141-142).

The use of textual and melodic incipits as an aid to memory for performers is known in the Latin chant tradition. While discussing the process of transmission of what came to be known as Gregorian chant, Leo Treitler, in his book *With Voice and Pen* (Treitler 2003), cites examples of collections of Sequences and Antiphons that have incipits. For instance, a German sequence collection meant for local distribution has in the margin neumes and textual incipits of other popular sequences. The scribe who wrote the entries in the margin clearly intended them as "an instruction to the singer to sing this text to the well-known tune of such-and-such" (p. 140). Similarly, a collection of antiphons for the Easter season found in the Old Roman Antiphoner London Add. 29987 has incipits of antiphons assigned to another feast. Here, too, "the incipit was an indication to the singer to follow the model of its melody" (p. 141, note 13). The use of incipits in both instances is functionally similar to the practice in the Syriac chant traditions. The use of model strophes and incipits in Syriac, Byzantine, and Latin chant may be understood as techniques of transmission in oral traditions.

The Liturgical Context for Model Melodies

The three most common occasions for the use of model melodies are the Divine

Office, services for the dead, and *qurbānā* (Syr., "offering," "mass"). The *qurbānā* has three forms in the East Syriac rite: the most solemn form, known as *rāzā* (Syr., "mystery"), the solemn form, and the ordinary form. The degree of solemnity depends on the number of celebrants (priests, deacons, acolytes, et al.), the number of readings and chants, the use of incense, and other rubrics. The use of musical instruments is another distinguishing factor. The singing in the most solemn and the solemn forms is accompanied on musical instruments. The model melodies are used only in the most solemn (*rāzā*) and the ordinary forms of *qurbānā*. Before the 1990s, *rāzā* used to be celebrated on more occasions such as Christmas, Easter, the feast of Epiphany, commemoration of the dead, etc..⁴ Currently, *rāzā* is celebrated only occasionally in the Syro-Malabar Church; the most common occasion is the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, on July 3rd.

In spite of the absence of model melodies, the solemn form of mass is a musical phenomenon that deserves attention. This form of mass is referred to in Malayalam as *pāṭṭu kuṛbāna* ("sung mass"). It is often celebrated in the Syro-Malabar churches on major feast days and wedding celebrations. Its music is entirely different from the rest of the chant repertory. Until the 1970s, *pāṭṭu kuṛbāna* used to be celebrated in Syriac with instrumental accompaniment, such as pedal organ or harmonium, violin (played in the Western style), bass drum, and triangle.⁵ A remarkable change took place in the musical style of *pāṭṭu kuṛbāna* after the vernacularization of liturgy. Since the 1970s, the musical

⁴ The celebration of *rāzā* for the commemoration of the dead precluded the use of musical instruments.

⁵ Two different sets of transcriptions of the music of *pāṭṭu kuṛbāna* in Syriac can be found in Saldanha (1937: 1-124) and Vadakkal (1954: 1-169).

structure of *pāṭṭu kuṛbāna* is not very different from the film style of music that is popular in India. The song texts are composed in the style of film lyrics with three stanzas, each containing four lines. The order of performance of each song is as follows: (a) an instrumental introduction, (b) the first stanza of the lyric, (c) an instrumental interlude, (d) the second stanza of the lyric followed by section (b), (e) instrumental interlude, which may or may not be a repetition of (c), (f) the third stanza of the lyric followed by section (b). The melodies of most of the lyrics have an A B A B A form, where A sections have one melody and B sections have another melody. The overall structure of the melody is more conducive to solo singing than to congregational singing. A choir may consist of two singers and ten to fifteen instrumentalists. The instrumental ensemble consists of electronic synthesizer, electric or acoustic guitars, bass guitar, violin, congo drum, tabla, electronic rhythm boxes, etc.. Church choirs seem to have found an ingenious musical format that serves both as a means of worship and as a means of entertainment at the same time.⁶

Documentation of Model Melodies

To my knowledge, the earliest available documentation of the model melodies in Kerala is a manuscript now in possession of Fr. Aiden Kulathinal C. M. I. (Kulathinal 1948). The first section (pp. 1 - 14) of the manuscript contains transcriptions of fifty-

⁶ Elsewhere, I have referred to this form of mass in Malayalam as *gānamēḷakkūṛbāna* (Palackal 2003: 7). The word *gānamēḷa* literally means "celebration of songs" (i. e., film songs). It is a secular concert format very popular in Kerala in which a musical troupe presents famous songs from the movies as a form of entertainment (for more information, see [Popular Music of] "Kerala" in Palackal: forthcoming).

one Syriac chants from the Divine Office in Western staff notation.⁷ Fr. Kulathinal copied the melodies from another manuscript (now lost) prepared by his teacher, Fr. Cassianos Chavarananickal C. M. I., at St. Theresa's Monastery, in Ampazhakkad, in 1948. The staves were made with the help of a foot-rule on plain paper in a notebook commonly used by students. The Syriac text of the chants is written in Malayalam script. This manuscript probably contains the earliest transcriptions of the Syriac melodies for Divine Office, sung in the Syro-Malabar Church.⁸

The second and probably the most significant documentation of the model melodies is a book by Heinrich Husmann, *Die Melodien des Chaldaischen Breviers Communenach den Traditionen Vorderasiens und der Malabarkuste* (Husmann 1967). Part II of the book, "Die Melodien des Commune des Malabarischen Breviers," contains transcriptions of melodies of the Divine Office in the Syro-Malabar rite in Kerala. The transcriptions are in Western staff notation with the Syriac text transliterated in Latin script. The transcriptions are based on the renditions by Fr. Amos Mechery (1904-1988), who was a member of the indigenous religious congregation of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (C. M. I).

⁷ The manuscript has three sections. The second section (pp. 15-19) consists of notation of what look like Western melodies (to be verified) without text underlay; the third section (pp. 20-27) contains Marian litanies in Latin and in Syriac translation. The text underlay of the Latin part is given in Latin script, and Syriac texts are written in Malayalam script. The last three staves in this section have text underlay in Syriac script.

⁸ Fr. Kulathinal brought this manuscript to the Syriac Music Symposium organized by the Christian Musicological Society of India and the Research Institute of Studies in History, on August 27, 1999, at St. Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam. Fr. Kulathinal allowed me to make a photocopy of the manuscript and keep another copy at the library at Acharya Palackal Jeevass Kendram, Aluva.

It is difficult to determine how many model melodies were in vogue prior to 1948 in Kerala. At present, only nineteen model melodies are in use in the Syro-Malabar Church. Since 1962, these melodies have been sung with Malayalam translations of the Syriac text. The Malayalam version of the model melodies has not received scholarly attention, hence the significance of this chapter. Following is a list of those melodies. The titles of the Malayalam texts, as they are sung today, are given in the left column. The Malayalam texts of melodies 1 to 18 are from *Kānōna namskāram, ranṭām pustakam: nōmbu kālam, uyirppu kālam* (Canonical Prayers, Book II: Season of Lent, Season of Resurrection; see Abel 1996)⁹ and the text of melody 19 is taken from *Kānōna namaskāram, Onnām pustakam: āgamanam, piṛawi, denaha* (Canonical Prayers, Book I: Advent, Birth [Christmas], and Manifestation; see Abel 1999: 180). The titles of the original model melodies in Syriac are given in the middle column.¹⁰ Transcriptions of the melodies are given at the end of the chapter. An audio recording of seven model melodies with Syriac texts can be found on the CD *Qambel Māran: Syriac Chants from South India*. The corresponding track numbers in the CD are given in the right column.

⁹ The page numbers for the text of chants are: melody no. 1 - page 14; 2 - p. 19; 3 - p. 30; 4 - p. 45; 5 - p. 50; 6 - p. 63; 7 - p. 64; 8 - p. 65; 9 - p. 68; 10 - p. 84; 11 - p. 97; 12 - p. 132; 13 - p. 153; 14 - p. 160; 15 - p. 181; 16 - p. 195; 17 - p. 196; 18 - p. 203.

¹⁰ The Syriac texts of the chants from which the titles in the middle column were taken can be found in the following books: *Breviarium juxta Ritum Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*, Part II: *A Quadragesima ad Pentecostem* ([1886] 1935): melody 1 - p. 35, 3 - p. 360, 6 - p. 354, 11 - p. 349, 12 - 347, 13 - p. 364, 14 - p. 351, 19 - p. 93; *K'tāwā d'slōtā qānōnāita* (1931): 2 - pp. 369-370, 4 - pp. 489-490, 14 - pp. 508-509, 17 - 599-600; *Thaksā d'qūrāw rāze* (1948): 15 - p. 31; *K'tāwā d'teśmešta dahlāp annīdē* (1921): 8 - pp. 12-15, 9 - p. 111, 10 - p. 17.

The model melodies have no number or a particular order; the number and the order in the list are my arbitrary assignment. In the Syriac tradition chants are often designated by the initial word (or words) of the first verse of the text. The title connotes three things: the text of the specific chant from which the title is taken, the particular melody associated with that chant, and the chants that are composed in the same poetic meter and melody. Occasionally, the first phrase of the incipit (see below), if the chant has one, may serve as the title. For example, the title of melody 8 is taken from the incipit, *Laikā ēzal min ruhāk ?* ("where shall I go from your Spirit?"); so is the title of melody 9, *Ēramrammāk mār malkā* ("I will praise you, my Lord King").

Title of Malayalam text	Syriac title	CD track number
1. Pulariyil nidra	Tūyay	
2. Ulakin nādhā	Bṛīk hannānā	track 7
3. Kannīrāru tarum	Sahdē bṛīkē	
4. Narakula rakshakanām	Eṭpan al slōtā	track 8
5. Santatamuyarunnen	Yādā hūsāwē	
6. Wiṭarum pularikaḷ	Sahdē waitōn	
7. Ellāmaṛiyunnu daiwam	Īsyā daw remśē	
8. Ewiṭeyoḷikkum	Laikā ēzal	track 16
9. Kālwarimalayil	Ēramrammāk	
10. Winayānwitanāy	Pūs baślāmmā	
11. Gadsēmaniyil	B'endān saprā	track 5

12. Unnata wāniṭamē	Sahdē qandīšē ¹¹	
13. Paramonnatamām	M'sīhā pārōqē	
14. Amalōlbhawayām	Esthappānōs	track 6
15. Sāyam kālamaṭukkunnu	K'tāwā rambā	track 12
16. Paralōkattin	Mānāy hādē	
17. Nin kalpanakaḷ	Māryā kolhōn hāwbay ¹²	track 4
18. Karuṇā nilyanamē	Šāmā w'lāmahmē	
19. Swātanṭryattin	Māran āsē	

Transcriptions

The transcriptions of melodies in this chapter are based on the rendition by Fr. Abel Periyappuram C. M. I (1920 - 2001) that took place on two occasions and at two different locations. Fr. Abel sang the first set of melodies (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 14, 18, and 19) during a visit to New York, on July 22, 1998. The recording took place in a moderately equipped single-room studio in New Rochelle, New York. I recorded the other melodies (7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, and 17) at Fr. Abel's office at Kalabhavan, on August 23, 2001, using a Sony Walkman Professional WM-D3 cassette recorder. This second set of recordings has a much lower sound quality. Extraneous noises and sounds of musical instruments from the adjacent rooms, where students practiced on various instruments, have filtered into the recording (e. g., melodies 9, 10, and 13). Because the windows of

¹¹ Another title for this chant in Syriac is "Al madbahqudsā."

¹² Another title for this chant in Syriac is "Prōkkumariyā."

the office were open, the sound of birds in the neighborhood, especially crows, can also be heard in the background of certain melodies (e. g., melodies 16 and 17).

All chants are strophic, and all the strophes of a chant are sung to the same melody. Therefore, only the first strophe of each chant is included in the transcription.

Incipits

The model melodies can be divided into two groups: those that have an incipit and those that do not. Melodies nos. 1, 2, 4, and 16 belong to the latter group, and all the other melodies belong to the former. The incipit is called in Syriac *śurāyā*, meaning "indication," "predication," etc.. It consists of a short verse taken from any of the books in the Bible, the Book of Psalms being the favorite. The primary function of an incipit is to indicate or introduce the theme of a strophe. Therefore, each strophe has an incipit of its own.¹³ More often than not, incipits are in prose form and, therefore, do not follow the syllabic structure of the strophes.

The incipit also serves as an intonation to the main melody. In some of the chants, the incipit flows right into the first verse of the strophe without a break (see melodies no. 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, and 18). In other instances, there is a short pause between the incipit and the strophe. Such instances are marked by a double bar at the end of the measure in the transcription. In all instances, the pitch register of the first incipit determines the pitch

¹³ There are chants that have only an opening incipit that functions as a thematic introduction to the entire chant. An example for this kind of chant is the acrostic hymn, *īśō māran m'śihā* (Lord Jesus Christ) by St. Ephrem the Syrian (for more information, see Palackal 2002: 7). The transcriptions of the Syriac version of model melody no. 1, *Tūyay*, in Kulathinal (1948:6) and Husmann (1967: 130) show that this chant had an opening incipit. However, the Malayalam version of this melody does not retain the incipit.

register of the whole chant. The choir leader selects a pitch that is comfortable for the community.

The incipit is sung in a recitative style. The choir leader intones the incipit, and the community sings the strophes, creating a solo-group format. The performance practice is as follows: the community divides into two groups, each with a choir leader. The leader of group A intones the incipit, and the group sings the first strophe; then the leader of group B intones the incipit of the second strophe and the group sings that strophe, and so on.

Syriac and Malayalam Prosody

Since the model melodies discussed in this chapter originated in the context of Syriac language and poetry and later were transferred into Malayalam, basic information on the prosody of the two languages may be helpful in understanding the rhythmic aspects of the model melodies.

Syriac poetry is syllabic. The number of syllables, irrespective of their length (long or short), determine the length of a verse. The length of verses varies from four to twelve syllables. Pentasyllabic and heptasyllabic verses are the most common. A pentasyllabic verse usually consists of two words, the first having two syllables, and the second having three. A heptasyllabic verse usually consists of three words, the first two with two syllables each, and the last with three syllables.

Pentasyllabic verse:

1	2	1	2	3
Slī -	wā	dah -	wā -	lan

Heptasyllabic verse:

1	2	1	2	1	2	3
Tū -	yay	bad -	mūt	he -	śō -	kā

There are simple strophes and mixed strophes. In a simple strophe all the verses have the same number of syllables, whereas a mixed strophe has verses of varying number of syllables.

In spite of being very simple, Syriac prosody allows poetic licenses such as *synaeresis*, the contraction of two syllables into one, and *diaeresis*, the division of one syllable into two.¹⁴

Malayalam prosody is more complex. The poetic meter, known as *wṛttam* (literally, "circle"), is determined by the number of syllables in each verse, the length of each syllable (long or short), the pattern of the distribution of long and short syllables, and in some instances, pause (*yati*) and silence (*niśśabdam*). The length of the syllable is designated as *māṭra*, which literally means "measure," "a moment," etc.. The *māṭra* is a quantitative concept expressed in terms of light or short (*laghu*) and grave or long (*guru*). The time required to pronounce a short vowel is considered a short *māṭra*, a *laghu*. One or more of the following factors make a syllable long (*guru*): a long vowel, a diphthong, a short vowel followed by a double consonant, or a short vowel followed by a liquid. A short syllable is counted as one *māṭra*, and a long syllable as two *māṭra*-s.

There are three kinds of poetic meters in Malayalam: classical Sanskrit meters,

¹⁴ For more information on Syriac prosody, see Gabriel (1961: 92-103).

classical Dravidian meters,¹⁵ and what are generally known as "folk meters" (Paniker 1990: 69), i. e., rhythmic patterns found in the regional "folk" songs.¹⁶ The classical Sanskrit meters are relatively more rigid with regard to the number of syllables in each line, the number of verses in a stanza (mostly quatrains), and the pattern of distribution of long and short syllables.¹⁷ In the matter of flexibility, the regional folk rhythms represent the other extreme; singers are free to add or delete words or verses in existing songs, depending on the performance context. Classical Dravidian meters, on the other hand, are controlled by set rules, but allow a certain degree of freedom. A stanza could consist of two, three or four verses, although the more common pattern is two verses. Dravidian prosody allows a long syllable to be replaced by two short syllables and vice versa. Again, a short vowel can be lengthened or a long vowel can be shortened in recitation or singing.¹⁸ The basic assumption here is that poetry is meant to be recited or sung aloud, and that the reciter or singer can adjust the poetic rhythm to fit the melodic rhythm.

¹⁵ The term "Dravidian" refers to the pre-Aryan languages and cultures of India. The literary languages of the Dravidian family are: Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, and Kannada. See more in Krishnamurthy and Grimes (2003: 461-469).

¹⁶ The term in Malayalam for what is referred to as "folk" songs is *nāṭōṭippāṭṭukaḷ*, which literally means "songs that run through the region." Singers of folk songs often employ a technique called *wāyittāri* (literally, "what passes through the mouth"), consisting of vocables that provide a rhythmic and, sometimes, a melodic model to compose song texts (see more about this technique in Groesbeck and Palackal 2000: 949-950).

¹⁷ See more details on Sanskrit prosody in Basham ([1954] 1999: 508-512).

¹⁸ For a comparison of the three types of poetic meter, see "Metrical Innovations in Malayalam Poetry," in *A Perspective of Malayalam Literature* by Ayyappa Paniker (1990: 69-93).

Fr. Abel and other anonymous translators¹⁹ of Syriac chants into Malayalam found the classical Dravidian meters most suitable for their purpose because they were less rigid than the classical Sanskrit meters on the one hand, and less open-ended than the folk meters on the other. Singability of the translated text while maintaining the original Syriac melody was the main goal. The Dravidian meters allowed enough freedom to achieve this goal, because the translators could increase or decrease the number of syllables in a verse, and the singers could adjust the poetic meter (i. e., extend a short syllable or shorten a long syllable) to the melodic meter. The translators have used one Malayalam meter for their translations of all Syriac texts in a given meter. Shown below is an example of the heptasyllabic meter of the Syriac chant *Tūyay* (model melody 1) and the quantitative meter of its Malayalam counter part (*Pulariyil*); the musical realization of these meters can be seen in music example 1 (see p. 145).

Syriac text:²⁰

	No. of syllables
Tū - yāy bad - mūt he - sō - kā	7
Pri - sā wās - al ber - yā - tā	7
Wad - nah nuh - reh dam - sí - ha	7
Waq - nā al - mā bu - yā - nā	7

¹⁹ Liturgical books in Malayalam published by the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference do not indicate names of the translators.

²⁰ The full text of the chant can be found in Bedjan (1938: 35). Translation by Fr. Emmanuel Thelly: Error, like darkness/ Hovered over the creatures/ And the light of Christ dawned/ And the world gained discernment.

Malayalam text:²¹

The long and short syllables are marked respectively by a dash (–) and a "v" above.

										No. of syllables	No. of <i>māṭra</i> -s
v	v	v	–	–	v	v	–	–	–		
Pu	la	ri	yil	ni	dra	yu	ṇar	nna	ñē	10	15
–	v	v	–	v	v	v	v	–	v		
Pā	wa	na	sa	nni	dhi	ya	ṇa	yu	nnu	10	13
–	–	–	–	v	v	–	–				
Kaṛ	ttā	wē	nin	ka	ru	ṇa	kkāy			8	14
–	v	v	–	v	v	–	–	v			
Na	ndi	pa	ṛa	ññu	na	mi	kku	nnu		9	13

Both the Syriac and the Malayalam texts have four lines in the strophes. However, there are differences in other aspects. The Syriac text has a uniform syllabic structure. Each verse has seven syllables which are distributed in exactly the same way in all the verses: there are three words in each verse; the first and the second words have two syllables each, and the third has three syllables. Such clear pattern is lacking in the Malayalam text. Each verse has varying number of syllables; the first two verses have ten syllables each, whereas the third and the fourth verses have respectively eight and nine syllables. Also, the total number of *māṭra*-s and their distribution vary from verse to verse.

²¹ Translation: Waking up at the dawn, to thy/ Holy presence [I] come/ O Lord, for your mercy/ In gratitude [I] bow.

Music example 1. The distribution of syllables in the Syriac (A) and Malayalam (B) versions of model melody no. 1.

Verse 1 A (Syriac)

Tū yay bad muṭ he só kā - -

B (Malayalam)

Pu la ri yil ni dra yu ṇar nna nē - - -

2 A

Pri sā wāṭ al ber - ya tā -

B

Pā wa na sa nni dhi ya ṇa yu nnu - -

3 A

Wad nah nuh re dam sī ha -

B

Kar - ttā we nin ka ru ṇa kkā - y

4 A

Waq na al ma bu - ya - nā

B

Na ndi pa ṛa ṇṇu na mi kku - nnu

The disparity in the poetic meters of the Syriac and Malayalam versions of the text is easily resolved in their musical realization. Music example 1 shows the distribution of syllables in the Syriac and Malayalam versions of model melody no. 1. The Syriac version is taken from the transcriptions by Heinrich Husmann (1967: 130). Excluding the ultimate syllable (this will be discussed later), the total durational values in the two versions is the same. There are six rhythmic units in each, with the duration of an eighth-note. This rhythmic parity is achieved by singing faster the extra syllables in the Malayalam version.

Rhythmic Aspects

In the transcription of model melodies each verse of the strophe is transcribed in one measure, and each stave is treated as a measure. The number of measures in a strophe varies from two (see melody 2) to thirteen (see melody 17). Although a strong rhythmic component is evident in the melodies, Kulathinal (1948) and Husmann (1964) did not include time signatures in their transcriptions of Syriac melodies. The conventional time signatures would imply degrees of accentuation (greater to lesser accents) of beats that would go against the nature of the melody and text of these chants. I have followed their lead in my transcriptions of the model melodies, but have included metronome markings to give a general sense of the tempo.

Rhythm may be understood less as an attribute of the melody than as an effect of the poetic text and its prosody. For that reason, rhythm may be described as referential, i. e., rhythm exists only in reference to the text. The rhythmic movement of the melody follows the movement of the syllabic setting of the text. In the musical realization of the

text, sometimes a steady flow of rhythm is broken in order to stress the semantic units. This is particularly evident in the treatment of the final syllables of verses and strophes. The duration of these syllables is extended to demarcate the textual and semantic boundaries. For example, model melody 1 has four verses in the strophe with two semantic units. The first two verses form the first semantic and syntactic unit, and the next two form the second unit as shown below.

First unit:	Pulariyil nidrayuṇarnnañē/ Pāwana sannidhiyaṇayunnu/	Waking up at the dawn, to thy/ Holy presence [I] come.
Second unit:	Karṭtāwē nin karuṇakkāy/ Nandi parañṇu namikkunnu /	O Lord, for your mercy In gratitude [I] bow.








The semantic closures at the end of both units are expressed through a longer duration of notes for the final syllables. In this case, the length of syllables is not a reason for the prolongation of the notes, because the final syllables in both units are the same ("nnu") and are short (they have a short vowel, "u").²² Yet, as is seen in the transcription, these syllables are sustained longer than the final syllables in the first and the third verses. The final syllable in the first unit gets the duration of a quarter-note followed by a quarter-note rest, and the syllable at the end of the strophe gets the duration of a half-note.

All measures in a melody may not have the same rhythmic structure. There are melodies with simple, straightforward rhythmic patterns in all measures and others with

²² This is not to be taken as part of a rhyme scheme. Malayalam poetry, like Tamil, has initial rhyme, either on the first or the second syllable. See examples of Malayalam verses in transliteration, in Palackal (1995: 65, 77-79). Translators of Syriac chants have not adhered to the rhyme scheme in Malayalam.

varying rhythmic structures. Two examples are given below. Melody 3 (see example 1 below) has seven verses. The rhythmic flow is uneven, with a fluctuating number of beats (from four to seven) in each verse.

Example 1 (melody 3)

	number of beats
verse 1 	6
verse 2 	4
verse 3 	4
verse 4 	5 1/2
verse 5 	4
verse 6 	7
verse 7 	5

Melody 5 (see example 2 below) has three verses. The first two verses have a symmetrical distribution of beats: the first half with three beats, followed by the second half with four beats. However, the symmetry is broken in the third verse in which both halves have four beats.

Example 2 (melody 5)

	firs half	second half
verse 1	♪ ♪ ♪	♪ ♪ ♪
verse 2	♪ ♪ ♪	♪ ♪ ♪
verse 3	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

Melodies 7, 8, 13, 15, and 17 are other examples with an uneven distribution of beats in the verses.

Indigenous concepts from Indian classical music may be employed as a frame of reference to understand the rhythmic aspects of model melodies. There is a type of rhythm in Indian classical music that is not part of the theoretical discussion on *tālam*, and yet is an integral part of the performance practice. This type of rhythm, which is non-metric, non-cyclic, non-accentual, and open ended, has no name but is known more through its application in the performance of *tānam*, which forms the middle section of the tripartite *rāgam-tānam-pallavi* in South Indian classical music performance, vocal or

instrumental. *Tānam* is not a rhythmic term *per se*, but rhythm is implied in it. The term is a combination of two vocables, *tā* and *nam*. The performer uses these vocables to further expand the sonic image of a *rāgam*, in a medium tempo. The performer can combine the two vocables in any way he or she pleases (*tānam nam tanam tananam*, etc.). There is a steady pulse, but there is no prescribed durational value to those pulses, nor are they organized in metric cycles. For that reason *tānam* is performed without percussion accompaniment. In other words, the rhythm in *tānam* is linear. This underlying linearity in the syllable-based application of rhythm in medium tempo in *tānam* bears a resemblance to the application of rhythm in model melodies.

Although *tānam* and model melodies share the linear application of rhythm, they differ in that the rhythm in model melodies is not open ended. On the contrary, rhythm in model melodies is directional and teleological, meaning that it is directed from the first syllable of the opening verse toward the semantic closure in the last syllable of the final verse of the strophe. Therefore, each model melody may be said to have a rhythm of its own.

The term *mātra*, which is associated with the concept of *tālam*, may have a limited application in the understanding of the rhythmic aspects of the model melodies. The term *mātra* is used in the theory of *tālam* to designate the basic unit, i. e., the "beat." Thus, one *mātra* is understood, in rhythmic terms, as one beat. The number of *mātra* and their distribution are significant criteria of a *tālam*. The theory of *tālam* employs the terminology of prosody, namely, *laghu* (short) and *guru* (long). The concept of *mātra* is the closest to the durational concept of rhythm, because *mātra* is identified in terms of its length (long or short). Rhythm in model melodies is durational.

The other concept related to rhythm in India is *layam* (*laya*, *lay*, "tempo"). The term *layam* is used to qualify the speed, a continuum of slow to fast, of the composition. Again, tempo is not a distinguishing feature of model melodies. The performance of model melodies follows what generally may be considered a "middle" or "medium" tempo. Variations in tempo, if and when they occur, are circumstantial and inconsequential.

Finally, the concept of *tālam* itself may not be useful here because *tālam* is not employed as a compositional tool. The rhythmic units in model melodies are not grouped into sections with specific distribution of accents. Moreover, *tālam* is understood as a cyclic concept in Indian classical music theory.²³ But the rhythmic patterns do not occur in a cyclic manner in the model melodies; there is no idea of a metric cycle, or of a return to the point of origin. The rhythm in model melodies is linear, not cyclical.

Melodic Aspects

The model melodies are text bound; these melodies are not imagined or sung independently of text. Melody is a means to better articulate the text. This is exemplified in the syllabic structure of the melody. In most cases, a single syllable is sung to a single note. Exceptions, with two or more notes to a syllable, occur mainly as boundary markers of verses or phrases within a verse, as can be seen at the end of the first verse in melody no. 1.

²³ For example, in Malayalam one unit of *tālam* with any number of *mātra*-s is referred to as a *tālawattam* ("circle of *tālam*").

Table 1. Number and nature of notes in incipits and strophes.

Melody Number	Incipit	Strophe
1	no incipit	c D E F G
2	no incipit	b D E F G
3	F G A	d e F G A
4	no incipit	c D E F
5.	D E F	c D E F G
6	C F	c D E F G A
7	D E F G	c D E F G A
8	D E F	b D E F G
9	E F G	e F G A Bb
10	D E F G	D E F G
11	D E F	D E F G
12	D F G	F G A Bb
13	D E F G	b c D E F G
14	F G A Bb	e F G A
15	D E F G	c D E F G A Bb
16	no incipit	c D E F
17	F G A Bb	e F G A Bb
18	D E F G	D E F G A
19	D E F	D E F G

Table 1 shows the number of pitches and the nature of notes used in the melodies of the incipits and the strophes. The letters in bold type in the table indicate the final note of the melody. The final is also the principal pitch around which most of the melodic activity takes place. The letters in lower case indicate notes that play a comparatively lesser role in the melody. For example, the note C in the opening of melody 1 is used only once, and that too, as an approach note to the principal pitch F. The opening note is also the most tentative one in the melody, because another singer or the same singer on another occasion may start the melody from D, E, or even F.²⁴ The other three pitches, D, E, and G, have more significant roles in the melody. D and E are used for medial cadences: verse 2 ends on E and verse 3 ends on D. The note G is used in three instances, always descending to the principal pitch F.

Within a possible general scale, D-E-F-G-A-B-C-D, the melodies seem to use a major or minor trichord (D-E-F or F-G-A) or a major or minor tetrachord (D-E-F-G or F-G-A-Bb). There are two kinds of melodies (the reference here is to the melodies of the strophes, not the incipits) that use the minor tetrachord: those that end on D and others that have F as final (melodies 1 and 19). The five pitches, D, E, F, G, A, in melodies 6, 7, and 18 may be seen as a combination of two trichords, D-E-F and F-G-A, both employing F as the final. Similarly, melody 15 may be seen as a combination of a minor trichord (D-E-F) and a major tetrachord (F-G-A-Bb), both using F as the final.

The following observations are based on the transcription of melodies and the information provided in the table.

²⁴ This observation is based on my personal experience and my familiarity with the performance practice of this music.

- i) In general, the incipits use fewer pitches than the strophes. There are two exceptions, melodies 10 and 14, which employ four pitches in both the incipit and the strophe.
- ii) The pitches used in the incipit and strophe are the same in most melodies, with two exceptions. In melody 12, the D in the incipit is absent in the strophe; this is the only case where the pitch of the incipit descends below that of the strophe, in this case, a minor third below (D - F). In melody 14, the B \flat in the incipit is absent in the strophe; and this is the only case where the melody of the incipit goes a pitch higher than that of the strophe.
- iii) The melodic range of incipits varies from a minor third to a perfect fourth.
- iv) Most incipits have a descending cadence from a tone or a half tone above the final note (e. g., melodies 8 and 19). However, incipits of melodies 6, 9, 14, 15, and 17 have an ascending cadence from a tone or even a perfect fourth below the final (see melody 6).
- v) In most melodies the terminal pitch of the incipit is the same as the starting pitch of the strophe, as in melodies 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, and 19. In melodies 12 and 18 there is a difference of a tone (F - G, D - E) between the last note of the incipit and the first note of the strophe, and in melodies 13 and 17 a difference of a minor third (B - D, E - G). In melodies 12 and 18 the final note of the incipit functions as a leading tone from below to the starting pitch of the melody.
- vi) In fourteen out of nineteen melodies there is an inverse relation between the melodic motions in the incipit and the opening phrase of the strophe. In these melodies the incipit

has a descending cadence and the opening phrase of the strophe has an ascending melodic motion, creating a melodic contrast.

vii) Without exception, the melodies of strophes start with an ascent. With two exceptions, the melodies have a descending cadence at the end; the final note is approached from above. The exceptions are melodies 7 and 18, in which the final note is arrived at from a half tone below (E - F).

viii) There are no melodies that cover the range of a full octave. The largest range is that of a minor seventh, used only in one melody (no. 15). Most melodies have the range of a perfect fourth or a perfect fifth, and less frequently, a minor or major sixth.

ix) Generally, the melodic motion is conjunct.

x) In the nineteen melodies there are eighteen instances of skips of a third, most of them ascending. There are three instances of a skip of a descending minor third (no. 5, verse 3; no. 10, verse 4; and no. 13, verse 7), and one instance of a descending major third (no. 17, verse 5).

xi) There are fourteen instances of a leap of a perfect fourth, all but one ascending (a descending leap of a perfect fourth occurs in no. 11, verse 5).

xii) All the intervals of thirds and perfect fourths shown in the transcription do not sound the same. For example, the interval D - G in the beginning of the fourth verse in melody no. 7, and the interval C - F in the beginning of the fourth verse in melody 15 are less pronounced as a structural unit of a perfect fourth because they sound too close. Another transcriber may not treat the two pitches as an interval of a perfect fourth, instead may consider the lower pitch as an ornamental grace note of the upper pitch.

xiii) The location of skips and leaps within the melody shows a consistent pattern that indicates an unwritten rule of using them as a means of demarcating boundaries of verses or phrases. For example, in the eighteen instances of skips of a third, fifteen are in the opening of either incipits or verses. The other three instances occur in the middle of a verse (no. 10, verse 4; no. 13, verse 7; and no. 17, verse 5). There appears to be a direct correlation between the location of the skips and their melodic motion. The skips at the opening of an incipit or verse always ascend, whereas the skips in the middle of verses descend. Similarly, out of the fourteen instances of leaps of a perfect fourth, twelve occur at the opening of either incipits or verses. There is only one instance of a leap appearing in the middle of a verse; this happens in the second verse in melody 18. Here, too, the leap (D - G, with a quarter-note rest in between) is used as a boundary marker; it separates the two semantic and syntactic units in the verse: *kuriśin taṇalil nān* ("in the shade of the Cross, I") *abhayam tēṭunnu* ("seek refuge").

The analysis of model melodies shows the presence of consistent melodic and rhythmic gestures that are coordinated with the semantic and syntactic structures of the text. Generally, the melodies have a conjunct motion, but occasionally skips of thirds and leaps of fourths and fifths are used as a means of demarcating phrase and verse boundaries. Rhythm is implied less as an attribute of the melody than as an effect of the poetic text and its prosody. There is a rather consistent use of notes of longer duration at points of semantic closure. Sometimes, a steady flow of rhythm is broken in the musical realization of the text in order to stress the semantic units.

One Melody, Two Texts

One question that requires attention is what happens to model melodies when they are transferred from one language and poetic context to another. As a case in point we may examine one sample melody with two texts. For convenience, I have selected model melody 4, because it has only two verses, and an audio recording of the original chant is available on the CD *Qambel Māran* (track 8). Each verse in the Syriac text of this chant has two sections of two words each (see below, words separated by asterisks).²⁵ The first word has two syllables and the second, three syllables. Thus, there are ten syllables in a verse in the following order: (2 + 3) + (2 + 3).

1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3						
Eṭ	-	pan *	al	-	slō	-	tā/	d'aw	-	dayk *	pā	-	rō	-	qan
W'qam	-	bel *	bā	-	wū	-	tan/	w'pa	-	nnā *	śē	-	lā	-	tan

²⁵ Translation by Fr. Emmanuel Thelly: O Redeemer, turn to thy servants' supplications/ And receive our petition and answer our prayers.

Music example 2. Syriac and Malayalam versions of model melody no. 4. The Syriac version is from the CD, *Qambel Māran*, track 8.

1 A (Syriac). Pitch lowered by a perfect fourth

Ēṭ pan al slō ta - daw dayk pā rō qan

1 B (Malayalam). Pitch lowered by a minor third

Na ra ku la ra ksha ka nam - mi śi hā kaṛ ttā we

2 A

W' qam bel bā wū - ṭan - w' pa nna sé lā ṭan

2 B

Ña ná la ṇa çci tu mi - pṛaṛ tha na kēḷ kka ṇa me

As in the Syriac version, each verse in the Malayalam translation has two sections of two words each.²⁶

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
Na	-	ra	-	ku	-	la	*	ra	-	ksha	-	ka	-	nām/					
								mi	-	śi	-	hā	*	kar	-	ttā	-	wē	-
Ña - řař * a - řa - řçi - řu - mī - /								prā - řtha- na * kēř - kka - řa - me											

However, the Malayalam text has more syllables in each verse, and the distribution of syllables is not as symmetrical as in the Syriac text. The first section in the first verse has eight syllables, and the second has six syllables; the two sections in the second verse have seven syllables each. Music example 2 shows transcriptions of model melody 4 with Syriac and Malayalam texts.

What is noteworthy is that in spite of the considerable difference in the syllabic structure of the two texts, the music is almost identical. The total duration values of the melodies are almost the same in both versions. The Syriac melody has the duration of fourteen eighth-notes in the first verse and fourteen eighth-notes and a sixteenth-note in the second. In the Malayalam version, both verses have the duration of fourteen eighth-notes. Both melodies use the same number and nature of pitches (C-D- E- F) and have the same final D. Overall, the original melody of the Syriac text has been kept intact in the Malayalam version of the chant.

²⁶ Translation: O Christ the Lord, the redeemer of humankind/ Please listen to these prayers we offer.

Melodic Transformation

There is yet another issue that needs to be addressed in the study of model melodies that is related to melodic transformation, i. e., the changes, if any, that take place in the melodies in the process of transmission over an extended period of time. To get a general idea, we may review music example 1, discussed earlier in connection with Syriac and Malayalam prosody. The Syriac and Malayalam versions of the melodies in this example were recorded more than three decades apart. Heinrich Husmann recorded the Syriac version in the early 1960s (he published his transcriptions in 1967), and Fr. Abel sang the Malayalam version in 1998. There are more similarities than differences in the melody in the two renditions. Both melodies begin on C and end on F.²⁷ The melodic range, too, is the same (C-D-E-F-G). Both renditions use the interval of a perfect fourth in the opening phrase. The similarity in rhythmic organization was already mentioned in the section on prosody. Beyond these similarities, there are a few minor differences. In the Syriac version, the second word (*badmut*) in the first verse begins on E, whereas the second word (*nadir*) in the Malayalam version begins on F. The third verse in the Syriac version ends on E, whereas the Malayalam version ends on D. The final syllables in the Malayalam version are comparatively more ornamented than their counterparts in the Syriac version. Finally, the last note in the Syriac version is approached from below (E to F), whereas in the Malayalam version the final note is approached from above (G to F). In spite of these differences, the overall shape of the melody has remained the same. It is difficult to make any general comments about melodic transformation based on the

²⁷ It is interesting to note that Husmann's informant, Fr. Amos Mechery, and my informant, Fr. Abel Periyappuram, sang this melody at the same pitch.

analysis of a single melody. I hope the transcriptions made for this study and the audio recording of melodies in the CD *Qambel Māran* will become points of reference for future scholars for analysis of melodic transformation.

In this chapter I have looked at the rhythmic and melodic aspects of the Malayalam version of the model melodies as they are sung today in the Syro-Malabar Church. The music of the Syriac version and the melodic transformation that may have happened over the period of time and across cultural and geographical regions remain to be explored. The analysis of melodies shows that syntactic considerations play as significant a role as syllabic structure of the text in the organization of pitch and rhythm. A rather consistent use of notes of longer duration at points of semantic closure may prompt one to expand a definition of rhythm, for example, as "The pattern of movement in time" (Powers 2003: 723) to "a meaningful pattern of movement in time." Such an approach might help to differentiate the involuntarily patterned movements such as heart beat, movement of trees in the wind, change of seasons,²⁸ and the like from the application of patterned movement in musical time.

²⁸ The term "rhythm" may have an Indo-European origin in the Sanskrit word *r'tu*, which means "season." Derivatively, *r'tu* also means "an epoch," "a fixed time," "menstruation," etc. (see Gode and Karve 1959, vol. I, p. 490).

Model melody 1
Pulariyil / Tūyay

Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 82

Pu la ri yil ni dra yu ṅar nna rē - - -

2 Pā wa na sa nni dhi ya ṅa yu nnu - -

3 Kaṛ - ttā wē nin ka ru ṅa kkā - y

4 Na ndi pa ṛa ṅṅu na mi kku - nnu

Model melody 2
Ulakin nādhā / brīk hannānā

Pitch lowered by a minor third

Verse 1. Quarter note = 72

U la kin nā dhā sa wi na ya ma nē

2 Ykku da yā - rā dha na yaṛ ppi kku nnu - -

Model melody 3
Kannīrāutarum / Sahdē brīkē

Incipit (recitative)

Kā - ṭta ru wi tē ṭu nna mān pē ṭa ye ppō le

Strophe. Verse 1.

Quarter note = ca. 84

Ka nnī rā ru ta rum - - pa sçā - ttā - pa ttil

Pā pam - ka zhu ki ṭu wān

Nin ti ru kal pa na wi ṭtu la kin - - -

Ma ṛi mā ya rā ḷil mu zhu ki ṛnān

Pā zhāy ppō yo ru di na me llā -

Mōṛ ttōṛ ttu ru ki kka ra yā - nāy ttā pa ttin

Ka - nnī - - - rā ru ta rum

Model melody 4
Nara kula rakshakanām / Eṭpan al slōtā

Pitch lowered by a minor third

Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 80

Na ra ku la ra ksha ka nā m mi śi hā kaṛ ttā wē

Ña nā la na çci tu mī - pṛar tha na kēḷ kka na me

Model melody 5
Santatamuyarunnen / Yādā hūsāwē

Pitch lowered by a half tone

Incipit (recitative)

A riē ppa kka lē ykku nān ka ṇṇu ka lu yaṛ ttu nnu

Strophe. Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 80.

Sa nta ta mu ya ru nnen - ka ṇṇu ka la khi lē - sā

Nin ti ru sa nni dhi yil - wa nna wa pa ti yu - nnu

Nī tā - na - llo wi la yē ṛum - - ja nma me ni kkē - ki

Model melody 6
Witarum pularikal / Sahdē waitōn

Incipit (recitative)

Kar ttā wē ttam da yā lu wā ku nnu

Strophe. Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 80

Wi řa rum pu la ri ka řo nno nnāy

2

Wi ra wo řu wā ři kko zhi yu nnu

3

Wi dhi yu ře di wa sa ma řu kku nnu -

4

Kā ha řa wi ři kař mu zha řu nnu

Model melody 8
Ewiteyolikkum / Laikā ēzal

Pitch lowered by a tone

Incipit (recitative)

Ni nnil ni nnu ñā ne wi ʔe ppō kum

Strophe. Verse 1.

Quarter note = ca. 84

E wi ʔe yo li kkum - kaʔ ttā wē nin

Sa - nni dhi wi ʔe ñō ʔum ña - ñal

Ā ka sám nin pāʔ ppi ʔa ma - llo

Ka ra yum ka ʔa lum ni ʔa yu nnō - ne

Pā tā ʔa tti lu ma wi ʔu nna llo

Wā - zhu - nne wi ʔe yo li kkum ña ñal -

Model melody 9
Kālvari malayil / Ēramrammāk

Incipit (recitative)

E tra wi śi shta wum ma nō ha ra wu mā ku nnu

Strophe. Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 88

Kāl wa ri ma la yil ku ri śin mēl

2

Jī wan pi ri yum su ta nē - nī

3

Dai wa pi tā wi nu ba li yē ki - -

4

Sa ha ra ksha ka yām mā ta we -

Model melody 10
Winayānwitanāy / Pūs baślāmmā

Pitch lowered by a tone

Incipit (recitative)

A wi ṭu nna wa re a wa sā nam wa re snē hi ṣṣu

Strophe. Verse 1.

Quarter note = ca. 84

2
Wi na yā nwi ta nā - - - y dai wa ku mā ran - - -

3
Śi shya ga ṇa - ttin - kā - lu kaḷ ka zhu ki

4
Pa ra mō nna ta mā - - - mu pa dē sā ttā ḷ

4
A nti ma yā - trā - wan - da na ma ru ḷi -

Model melody 11
Gadsēmaniyil / B'endān saprā

Pitch lowered by a half tone
Incipit (recitative)

Dai - wa me e nté hru da yam o ru ní yi ri kku nnu

Strophe. Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 80

Ga d sē ma ni yil - dai wa su tan

Prār thi ppa ti nā ya ṇa yu nnu

Ni tya pi tā wi ne wā zh ttu - nnu

Ti ru ma na sse nkil - sa ka le sā

Kay pu ni ṛa ññe zhu mi kkā sa

Ka ni wo tu dū re ya ka tta ṇa me

Model melody 12
Unnata wāniṭame / Al madbahquṣā

Pitch raised by a half tone

Incipit (recitative)

Ni - tya ka wā ṭa rāḷ sī ra ssu yaṛ tta ṭṭe

Strophe. Verse 1.

Quarter note = 84

U nna ta wā ni ṭa me wā til tu ṛa kku ka nī

Ma nga ḷa dī pa wu mā y ma nna wa na ṛa yu nnu - - -

Model melody 13
Paramōnṭamām / M'sihā pārōqē

Pitch lowered by a tone

Incipit (recitative)

Kar ttā wu ma ha twa ttō te bha ri kku nnu

Strophe. Verse 1.

Quarter note = ca. 88

Pa ra mō nna ta mām pa ri wē - sham

Pa ri çi la ṇi ṅṅu wi rā çi ta nāy

La ḷi ta ma nō ha ra ma hi ma yō te

Mi śi hā nā dha nu yir tta - llo

Ra ksha yu mu nna ta jī wi ta wum

Maṛ tya nu sā nti yu mā sra ya wum

Nal ki ya ni tya we ḷi cça ttil

Ti - rī wi taṛ nnu hṛu da ya - rīaḷ -

Model melody 14
Amalōlbhawayām / Esthappānōs

Pitch raised by a tone
Incipit (recitative)

Dai wa me ña rā le sa hā yi kka ṇa me -

Strophe. Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 88

A ma lōl bha wa yām nā dhē nin

Ka ru ṇa yi la bha yam tē ṭu nnu

Wal sa la su ta ru te du ri ta nā! - -

Nī kki ya nu gra ḥa mē ka ṇa me -

Model melody 15
Sāyam kālamaṭukkunnu / K'tāwā rambā

Pitch lowered by a half tone
Incipit (recitative)

Kar ttā we e né prāṭha na kēḷ kka na me - -

Strophe. Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 88

Sā yam - kā la ma ṭu kku nnu -

Ka ri ni zha le rīṭum - pa ṭa ru - nnu

Kar ttā wē nī pō ka ru te

Wā zhi yil mu zha rī ya wā ṇi ka ḷil

Mu zhu ki ma ya rī ya śi shyan māṛ

Gu ru wi nu mun pi lo raṭha na yāy

Model melody 15 (contd.)

7
Ni - nnu - ni śca la ni mi sha - rāḥ

8
Nā - dhā ṇa - ṇa la mā na sa rām

9
Śi shya ri lā śa pa kaṛ nna wa ne

10
Bhī ti ya ka nno ru wi śwā sam - -

11
Sa da ya me ni kkum nal ka ṇa me -

Model melody 16
Paralōkattin / Mānāy hādē

Pitch lowered by a half tone

Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 84

1
Pa ra lō ka ttin - wā til tu ṛa nnu

2
Pā - pi yi lā śā - dī pa mu yaṛ nnu -

Model melody 17 (contd.)

7
Nā tha sa ra la ma na ssāy nī

8
Cu nka kkā ra nu mā ppē ki

9
Pā pi ni yō tu po ru tta llo

10
Po ru ti ye ni kkum nal ka na me

11
A pa rā dha rīaḥ po ru kka na me

12
A nu tā pi ka lu ṭe yā lam bam

13
Nī tān sa ka lē śā

The image shows seven staves of musical notation in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are primarily quarter notes and eighth notes, with some half notes and rests. The lyrics are written below each staff, with some characters having diacritics (bars over vowels) and some having a 'ṛ' symbol. The system ends with a double bar line on the seventh staff.

Model melody 18
Karunā nilayanamē / Śāmā w'lāmahmē

Pitch lowered by a half tone
 Incipit (recitative)

Kar ttā we ñā na rīa ye pra kiṛ tti kku - nnu

Strophe. Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 76

Ka ru ṇā - ni la ya na mē, ka ra ḷi nu śā nti pa kaṛ nna ru lum
 Ku ri sin - ta ṇa lil - ñān, a bha yam tē tu nnu - -

Model melody 19
Swātantryattin / Māran āsē

Pitch lowered by a half tone
 Incipit (recitative)

Kar ttā wu swa nta m ja na rīa lu ṭe pa kka lē ykku wa nnu -

Strophe. Verse 1. Quarter note = ca. 88

Swā - ta ntrya ttin - pā ta wi ri ṣi tu wān -
 Dai wa ku mā ran - dha ra yi li ṛa rīu nnu

Chapter Seven

Oktoēchos of the Orthodox Churches

This chapter explores the South Indian adaptation of the system of classifying melodies in an eight-weekly cycle in the liturgy of the Syrian Orthodox churches, known by the Greek name *oktoēchos* ("eight voices"). The system is historically and conceptually related to the church modes of the Latin rite and the *oktoēchos* of the Byzantine rite, and shares some features with the Near Eastern *maqām* tradition. The *oktoēchos* as it is preserved in South India is a case in point for the process of transformation of melodies and musical concepts, resulting from the transference of traditions from one culture to another. It may also help us to take a fresh look at the imaging of geographical boundaries in musical cultures.

The *Oktoēchos* in Syria

A distinguishing feature of the music repertory of the Antiochene rite is the system of classifying melodies into eight categories, the *oktoēchos*. According to Aelred Cody, the system originated in the Greco-Syriac linguistic frontier in Syria and Palestine as part of "a musical culture shared largely by both Hellenistic and Aramean Christians" (Cody 1982:106). After extensive research on the early history of the *oktoēchos* in Syria, Cody concluded that "[t]here is really no evidence for the existence of an octoechos in any sense before the eighth century, or perhaps the seventh" (p. 102). In doing so, Cody disqualified the widely held belief that Severus of Antioch (ca. 465-538) was the progenitor of *oktoēchos*, and that "the musical system of eight modes or the Byzantine

liturgical arrangements of texts by mode or both were already in use in Antioch in the early sixth century" (p. 91).

The *Oktoēchos* in South India

The historiography of the Antiochene liturgical music tradition in South India is made difficult by the paucity of documentary evidence. The process of introducing the music might have been slower than that of introducing the liturgical texts and theological tenets. In all probability, people continued to sing the Antiochene chants using the Chaldean melodies that were familiar to them. Both West Syriac and East Syriac liturgical chants followed the same Syriac prosody.

The vast liturgical music repertory of the Antiochene rite may be divided into two main categories: chants that fall under the system of eight classes of melodies (*oktoēchos*), and those chants that have only a single melody. The chants of the Office and mass belong to the first category, and the chants of the Holy Week and other special occasions belong to the second. The focus of this study will be on the chants in the first category.

The system of singing the same text in eight different ways in an eight-week cycle is referred to variously as *eṭṭuniṟam* (Mal., "eight colors"), *eṭṭurāgam* ("eight *ragam*-s"), *oktoēchos* (Gk., "eight voices"), and *eqārā* (Syr., "root," "origin"). The first two are indigenous terms in Malayalam and are the most common. The term *eṭṭuniṟam* is a combination of two words, *eṭṭū* "eight" and *niṟam* "color." Semantically similar to the first, the second term combines the Malayalam word *eṭṭū* with the Sanskrit word *rāg*,

which also means "color." When referring to a particular color, both terms take the number as an adjectival prefix, as in *onnām niṛam* ("first color") and *onnām rāgam*, etc..

The clergy and the educated among the laity of the Orthodox churches are familiar with the borrowed terms, *oktoēchos* and *eqārā*. Nonetheless, these terms are not part of the common parlance. Between the two, *eqārā* seems to be preferred, probably because of the Syriac origin of the word. However, my informants could not say how or when these terms came to be used in Kerala.

The transference of a musical tradition from one culture to another may entail transformation of the underlying musical concepts. In retrospect, the wisdom of the local Christians in avoiding a direct translation of the foreign terms into the local language is commendable. The Malayalam translation of *oktoēchos* and *eqārā*, respectively as *eṭṭuśabdaṅga!* ("eight sounds" or "eight voices") and *eṭṭuwēruka!* ("eight roots") would not have satisfactorily conveyed the musical connotations.¹ Instead of adopting those terms into the language, they adapted the indigenous terms, *niṛam* and *rāgam*.

The equivalence of the two words, *niṛam* and *rāgam*, deserves discussion. In common parlance in Malayalam, both words are polysemic. The word *niṛam* is used primarily to denote the perceptual phenomenon of color. Figuratively, it is used to mean the nature or character of an individual. For example, the phrase *tani niṛam* (literally, "one's own color") refers not to the color of the skin, but to a person's true character. In a different context, *niṛam* may connote a particular character in a drama. For instance, in

¹ The word *śabdham* in Malayalam denotes both sounds of inanimate objects (e. g., sound of a moving vehicle) as well as human voice.

kathakali (the dance drama of Kerala) the faces of noble, virtuous, and heroic characters are painted green, and those of the demoniac and mean-spirited characters are painted black. Therefore, *paçça niṛam* ("green color") and *kari niṛam* ("black color") are used as technical terms to refer to the respective characters in the drama. What is significant here is that in the normal usage *niṛam* does not have musical connotations.

The word *rāgam* comes from the Sanskrit root *ranj*, which primarily means "color." Among the other meanings of *ranj* are "to appease," "to conciliate," etc.. The word is used in literary Malayalam with its primary and secondary meanings. The Sanskrit-English Dictionary of P. K. Gode and C. G. Karve lists twenty meanings for the word *rāg*; the first three are related to color, the fourth is related to different forms of love and affection, and the musical connotations are ninth and tenth in the list (Gode and Karve 1959:1333). In Malayalam, *rāgam* is used for all three levels of meaning as color, passionate love,² and music.

In the context of the Orthodox liturgy both the laity and the clergy use *niṛam* and *rāgam* interchangeably to refer to a comprehensive and multidimensional psycho-acoustical experience of music (i. e., text, melody, and human voice) along with the affective elements associated with that experience.³ However, since *rāgam* has a different set of connotations in the Sanskrit theory and practice of Indian classical music, I shall avoid using *rāgam* interchangeably with *niṛam* in this study. I shall use Color (with an

² For example, a woman in love is referred to as *rāgini*, and the romantic attraction between a man and a woman is *anurāgam*.

³ The history of the use of *niṛam* and *rāgam* in the context of *eṭṭuniṛam* remains to be explored.

upper case C) and *nīram* interchangeably. While referring to the system of classification of Colors in general, I shall use the term *eṭṭuniṛam*.

Eight Colors and the Eight-Week Cycle

As a system, *eṭṭuniṛam* may be considered a cyclic genre, because it is performed in a cycle of eight weeks. The same verbal text is sung in eight different ways within the span of eight-week cycles within the liturgical year. The prescription of Colors for the days of the week as well as for the eight-week cycle is called the "*eqārā canon*." The eight Colors are organized into two sets of four pairs each in the following manner: 1 - 5, 2 - 6, 3 - 7, 4 - 8 and 5 - 1, 6 - 2, 7 - 3, 8 - 4. One Color is prescribed for each day, and one pair of Colors for each week in serial order. A twenty-four hour liturgical day begins with the evening prayer (*ramśó*) and ends with the afternoon prayer on the following day. Thus, the week of Color 1 begins with *ramśó* on Saturday evening (i. e., *ramśó* of Sunday). Color 1 will continue in all the Offices until Sunday afternoon. Color 5 will start with evening prayer on Sunday (i. e., *ramśó* of Monday), and so on. The table below shows the distribution of Colors in the eight-week cycle.

Table 1. The order of Colors in eight weeks

Week 1.

Sunday	Color 1	Monday	Color 5
Tuesday	Color 1	Wednesday	Color 5
Thursday	Color 1	Friday	Color 5
Saturday	Color 1		

Week 2.

Sunday	Color 2	Monday	Color 6
Tuesday	Color 2	Wednesday	Color 6
Thursday	Color 2	Friday	Color 6
Saturday	Color 2		

Week 3.

Sunday	Color 3	Monday	Color 7
Tuesday	Color 3	Wednesday	Color 7
Thursday	Color 3	Friday	Color 7
Saturday	Color 3		

Week 4.

Sunday	Color 4	Monday	Color 8
Tuesday	Color 4	Wednesday	Color 8
Thursday	Color 4	Friday	Color 8
Saturday	Color 4		

Week 5.

Sunday	Color 5	Monday	Color 1
Tuesday	Color 5	Wednesday	Color 1
Thursday	Color 5	Friday	Color 1
Saturday	Color 5		

Week 6.

Sunday	Color 6	Monday	Color 2
Tuesday	Color 6	Wednesday	Color 2
Thursday	Color 6	Friday	Color 2
Saturday	Color 6		

Week 7.

Sunday	Color 7	Monday	Color 3
Tuesday	Color 7	Wednesday	Color 3
Thursday	Color 7	Friday	Color 3
Saturday	Color 7		

Week 8.

Sunday	Color 8	Monday	Color 4
Tuesday	Color 8	Wednesday	Color 4
Thursday	Color 8	Friday	Color 4
Saturday	Color 8		

Quqlyōn, a Cyclic Genre

The practice of *eṭṭuniṣram* is associated with another cyclic genre known as *quqlyōn* (from Gk. for "cycle"). *Quqlyōn* consists of four categories of chants in the following order (see Table 2): *peṭgōmō* (Syr., "word," "verse"), *ekbo* (Syr., "foot," "base"), *qālō* (Syr., "song"), and *bōwutō* (Syr., "petition"). All four sections of a *quqlyōn* are bound by a single theme and are sung in the same Color, i. e., the Color of the day. The theme of the

cycle varies according to the feast or the occasion. Most common themes are praise and supplication to the Blessed Virgin, Saints, or commemoration of the dead. The first section, *petgōmō*, is also known as *quqlyōn*. The text, which alludes to the theme of the cycle, consists of one or two verses from the sacred scripture. The phrase "hallelujah" is interpolated in the middle of the text. *Petgōmō* is concluded with the Trinitarian doxology, *śubhō l'abo w'l'abrō w'alrūhō qadisō* (Syr., "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit"). The phrase, *bārekmōr* (Syr., "bless, O Lord"), often occurs as a prefix to the doxology. The second section, *ekbo*, is a short chant of a single strophe, which introduces the theme of the cycle. *Ekbo* is concluded with the phrase, *stauman kalōs quriyelaisōn* (Gk., "[let us] stand properly; Lord have mercy"). The *qōlō* forms the fourth and the most important part of the cycle. A *qōlō* is a relatively long chant, consisting of many stanzas, all in the same poetic meter. The final stanza is concluded with the phrase *moriō rāhēm alain w' ādārayn* (Syr., "Lord have mercy on us and help us"). This is followed by a prayer in prose; it is intoned in a recitative style, using two or three pitches.

Table 2. The structure of a *quqlyōn*

I	II	III	IV
Petgōmō	Ekbo	Qōlō	Bōwutō
(Doxology)		(Prayer)	

The concluding section of the cycle is a *bōwutō*, a relatively long chant of supplication. After the completion of a cycle, as time permits, another cycle in a different theme may begin with a new *petgōmō*.

The Concept of *Nīram*

In order to facilitate the discussion on the concept of *nīram*, I have transcribed a few chants in music examples 1- 4. These chants were sung by two of my principal informants, Fr. M. P. George from the Syrian Orthodox Church and Fr. James Chitteth from the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church. Fr. M. P. George is professor of music and theology at the Syrian Orthodox Seminary at Kottayam. Fr. James Chitteth is the choir leader and professor of theology at the Malankara Orthodox Seminary at Vettikal, in Ernakulam district. The singing took place during our recorded interviews. The interview with M. P. George was conducted at his residence on 16 August 2000. The interview with James Chitteth was conducted at his office in the seminary on 20 August 2000.

M. P. George grouped the chants in Malayalam in the format that is seen in example 1 as an aid to teach the Colors to his students at the seminary, and published them in a book, *Suṛiyāni sangeetham* (George 1993:40-41). He recommended that I learn these chants to get a basic understanding of various Colors. Example 1 consists of a *petgōmō* (*quqlyōn*), doxology (*bārekmōr*), and an *ekbo* in each Color.

The eight melodies of the Trinitarian doxology deserve special mention. This doxology appears often as a concluding formula for various chants. It has one fixed melody for each of the eight Colors. The Color of the doxology takes the Color of the day; i. e., if the Color of the day is no. 1, then the doxology for various chants on that day

will be sung in the melody of the doxology ascribed to Color 1. Example 2 shows the eight melodies of the doxology in eight Colors taken from example 1. The doxology is sung in the original Syriac text.

Example 3 shows the same text of a *peḡōmō* sung in each of the eight Colors. This *peḡōmō* is from the *quḡlyōn* in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The text can be found in *Suriyani kristyānikaluṭe namaskāraḡramam & qurbānaḡramam* (The Order of the Office and Mass of the Syriac Christians, p. 29). Example 4 consists of transcriptions of a few melodic phrases from the poetic genre called *qālō*. The texts of 4A and 4B are from the *qālō*, “lōk moriyō qōrōnān,” and those of 4C and 4D are from the *qālō*, “šlōmme dābo.” The complete text of the *qālō*-s can be found in *Suriyani sangeetham* (George 1993:55-56, 65-66).

It may be easier to understand Color as a musical concept by stating first what it is not. A Color is not a fixed melody; a single Color can manifest itself in many melodies. The ontology of Color is a matter of coexistence of text and melody in vocal performance by an individual or a congregation. Color does not exist separately in a particular text or exhaust itself in a specific melody, but rather expresses itself in the melodious execution of a text. Color is a musical tool to enhance the text. Different Colors embellish the same text differently. Color, therefore, is strictly a vocal music phenomenon.

Although a Color is not a fixed melody, there are melodic features that are associated with certain Colors. Students encode those features as characteristic elements of those Colors. For instance, the chants in Colors 2 and 6 often have an ascending cadence. Example 4 shows the last lines from four strophes, two in Color 2 and two in

Color 6. The melodies in Color 2 (4A and 4C) end in E-F-G, and the melodies in Color 6 (4B and 4D) end in Eb-F-G.

A Color is not a specific scale either. In the understanding of Color the primary focus is not on the configurations of pitches or the ordering of intervals, but on the aggregate effect that melody and text generate. Different Colors may employ the same notes. In a scale-melody continuum, Color leans more toward melody than scale. This is evident in the learning process of Colors. The pedagogy emphasizes the memorizing of several melodies in the same Color, rather than learning pitch configurations or characteristic phrases as in the pedagogy of Indian art music.

Although scalar characteristics are not considered decisive factors in discerning the Color, the analysis of melodies shows that scalar features are consistent enough in most Colors to merit discussion. Table 3 below provides a general idea about the number of pitches, nature of the intervals, and relative importance of notes in a few melodies. The letters in bold type in the table represent the note on which the melody ends. In most cases, the final is also the most emphasized note in the melody, and in many cases the note on which the medial cadences end. Letters in lower case represent notes that are used only once or twice in the melody often as a point of departure to arrive at the principal pitch. For instance, the note A in example 2, Color 1, is used only once in the melody; it appears at the opening of the second phrase of the text (*śubho l'abo*) and directly leads to the principal pitch D.

Melodies seem to employ one of three tetrachords within a general scale: D-E-F-G-A-B-C-D. The tetrachords are: D-E-F-G, E-F-G-A, and F-G-A-Bb.

Table 3. The pitches used in each of the eight Colors in examples 1, 2, and 3.

	Example 1 (<i>quqlyōn</i>)	Example 2 (<i>bārekmōr</i>)	Example 3 (<i>quqlyōn</i>)
Color 1	c D E F G	a D E F G	c D E F G
Color 2	c D E F G	D E F f# G a	a c D E F G
Color 3	c d E F G	d E F G a	c d E F G
Color 4	e F G A Bb	F G A Bb	e F G A Bb
Color 5	c d E F G	c d E F G	c D E F
Color 6	D E F	D E F G	D E F G
Color 7	D E F G	E F G	D E F G
Color 8	D E F G	D E F G a	D E F G

It may be noted that the table is not intended to represent the Colors as scales or configurations of pitches. Because, various Colors may share the same pitches, yet differ from each other in many other aspects. For example, Colors 1, 2, 3, and 5 in column 1 (example 1) employ the same number and nature of notes, C-D-E-F-G, but differ in other aspects such as the relative importance of notes. Colors 1 and 2 have D as final, whereas the final in Colors 3 and 5 is E. The pitches D-E-F f#-G-A in Color 2 in example 2 are

specific to this particular rendition and therefore may be an exception to the general trend. A rendition of *bārekmōr* in Color 2 by Fr. James Chitteth did not have the major third. Colors 3 and 5 are unique because of the use of the minor second in the trichord E-F-G. Color 4 stands out among others because of the use of the major tetrachord F-G-A-Bb. Although Colors 6 and 8 use the minor tetrachord D-E-F-G, the final in these Colors is F. The notes F and G play a more significant role than D and E, giving the melody an overall feeling of a major trichord (see one instance of a major trichord, F-G-A, in example 2, Color 8) or tetrachord. In Color 7 the *bārekmōr* ends on F, whereas the *quqlyōn*-s in examples 1 and 3 have D as final.

Beyond scale, melody, and rhythm, there is yet another aspect that is closely associated with the concept of Color; it is the emotive effect that each Color generates, designated in Malayalam as *bhāwam*. The word *bhāwam* comes from the Sanskrit root *bhu*, meaning "to be," "state of being," "feeling," "emotion," etc.. Different Colors generate different emotional states. The attribution of emotional states to individual Colors may often be arbitrary, but all the informants agreed that Colors have this functional aspect. What is significant here is that the emotive elements are considered not extraneous or extra-musical, but as integral to the concept of Color. Fr. Prince Kolady, a member of the Independent Church of Thozhiyoor, put it succinctly using the analogy of flowers in the following words: *ōrō pūwinum atinfētāya maṇamullatupōle, ōrō niṟattinum atinfētāya bhāwamuṇṭū* (as each [kind] of flower has its own scent, so does each Color have its own *bhāwam*. Interview, 20 July 1999).

The following description of Colors and their respective emotive states is based on the interview with M. P. George and James Chitteth. Although Colors 1 and 2 have

minor scales, the mood of the melodies in these Colors is generally one of happiness. Color 3 creates a sense of pathos. The mood of Color 7 is similar to that of Color 3. Colors 4 and 8 are joyful. M. P. George equated the mood of Color 5 to repulsion (*bībhalsam*) but James Chitteth thought the mood of Color 5 was one of a contrite soul. Color 6 best expresses the state of compunction (*anutāpam*), the feelings of a repentant sinner seeking the mercy (*karuṇa*) of God. Colors 5 and 6 are used for the funeral services.

To summarize this part of the discussion, *niṛam* is a dynamic concept in the sense that it exists not in a particular scale or exclusively in a specific melody, but in the shared memory of many melodies and their actual performances. From sharing the experiences of informants and students at the seminaries and from analyzing my own experience of learning *niṛam*, I realize that the first response a *niṛam* evokes in a practitioner is the memory of favorite chants in that *niṛam*. These melodies vary slightly from individual to individual and from group to group. The melodies are deemed not as definitive versions of a Color, but as examples of various possibilities, thereby giving the opportunity for each Color and its melodies to have a history of their own.

Taken together, the Colors belong to both a classificatory and generative model, and are a closed and open-ended system at the same time. Colors function similarly to *rāgam*-s as a basis for composition and performance. The idea of a particular Color is used as a guide for realizing old and new chant texts in singing. As a classificatory model, the number of Colors is restricted to eight, but as a generative model, the number of melodies in each Color is unlimited.

The Pairing of Colors

The pedagogy of Colors does not emphasize the pairing of Colors as 1-5, 2-6, etc.. Each Color is treated as an individual entity and not in relation to its complement. During the interviews, I was curious to know if the informants were aware of any specific reasons, musical or otherwise, for the practice of pairing the Colors. They did not seem to be aware of any such reason. Nobody seemed to have challenged the conventional practice either. The oft-repeated answer was that it is part of the tradition of the Orthodox churches in the Middle East or “this is the way it has always been.” The idea of an authentic-plagal relationship that scholars refer to in their writings on the *oktoēchos* of the Syrian Orthodox churches outside India (see Cody 1982:108, note no.32; Husmann and Jeffery 2001:860; Kuckertz 1969:63) did not come up during my discussions on *eṭṭuniṛam*. Analysis of the melodies transcribed in the music examples in this chapter as well as those that were not transcribed does not show any indication of a relationship between the pairs based on higher-lower ambitus of melodies. Informants do recognize the presence of major-minor tetrachords in Colors, but they do not give a reason for the pairing.

There are a few instances where a pair of Colors shows common characteristics. Melodies in Colors 2 and 6 generally have an ascending melodic cadence at the end of strophes (see example 4); Colors 4 and 8 share characteristics of major tetrachord (F-G-A-Bb in Color 4) or major trichord (F-G-A in example 2, Color 8); and Colors 3 and 7 share a similar mood of pathos.

Learning and transmission

The knowledge of *eṭṭuniṟam* is transmitted orally in the controlled setting of the teacher-student relationship. Seminaries and religious formation houses are the most important centers of learning. The learning of *eṭṭuniṟam* is part of the priestly training in the Orthodox churches; even the musically unskilled students are expected to know the basic ideas of the system.

The music professors at the seminaries are the most important agents of transmission of the tradition. Although the professors are musically educated, the use of Indian or Western notation as an aid to teaching is not in vogue. The pedagogy employs mostly a method of learning by rote through trial and error. The students learn sample melodies in each Color to get a general idea of that particular Color. The celebration of the Office and mass also provides occasions to practice the melodies that the students learn from their teachers.

***Niṟam* and *rāgam*: a Comparison**

The practitioners of *eṭṭuniṟam* are well aware of the use of the term *rāgam* in the context of Indian art music. A few of them have even received training in South Indian classical music. Yet, they use *niṟam* and *rāgam* interchangeably. Therefore, a comparison of *niṟam* with the concept of *rāgam* (*rāg*, *rāga*) in Indian art music may be relevant at this point.

i) Etymologically, both terms refer primarily to the perceptual phenomena of color.

Musical connotations belong only to a secondary level of meaning.

ii) In the context of music, both terms refer to melodic and musical structures along with the aesthetic experience generated by the performance of the music.

iii) Both terms share another common characteristic, namely, ineffability, i. e., they mean more than what can be described in words, and yet the meaning is easily understood by the practitioners based on a general consensus arrived after years of exposure and experience.⁴

iv) The association with particular emotional states is another common feature of *niṛam* and *rāg*. The word *bhāwam* (*bhāw*) is used in the theory of both to describe their emotive effects. In both cases, the feelings associated with each are described in broad categories, and are often arbitrary.

v) Both *niṛam* and *rāg* have associations with time and seasons of the year. The *eqārā* canon, for example, prescribes specific Colors for the days of the week, seasons in the liturgical year, and special occasions such as marriage and funeral services. Likewise,

⁴ The ineffability of music is as an experience shared by musicians in other cultures, too. The revised edition of the *Source Readings in Music History* (Strunk [1950] 1998) includes an exchange of letters between Felix Mendelssohn and Marc André Souchay, Jr., (in October 1842) regarding the role of words in experiencing music. In response to Souchay's attempt to appreciate Mendelssohn's piano pieces *Lieder ohne Worte* (Ger., "Songs without Words") through explanations, the composer wrote: "I believe that words are not all up to it, and if I should find that they were adequate I would stop making music altogether..... The words remain ambiguous, but we both understand the music properly" (p. 1198).

certain *rāg*-s in Indian music are associated with specific times of the day or night, and seasons of the year.

vi) Both *niṛam* and *rāg* follow a similar process of transmission in the controlled setting of the teacher-student relationship.

vii) The exclusion of rhythmic aspects in their conceptualization is yet another similarity. Rhythm or meter is not a factor in the determination of either *niṛam* or *rāg*. In Indian classical music theory, the metric cycle, known as *tāl* (*tāla*, *tālam*), is an independent system that has a theoretical framework of its own. Metrical aspects are not determining factors in the description of *rāg*. Similarly, the chant texts of *eṭṭuniṛam* are composed in accordance with the elaborate rules of Syriac prosody. However, the rhythmic aspects are not significant in the understanding of *niṛam* as a concept.

viii) Albeit for different reasons, both terms have found a place in the theatrical language. In *kathakali* of Kerala, *niṛam* is associated with different kinds of characters in the drama. Similar usage is found in the early literature on *rāg*. *Brhaddeśi*, the Sanskrit treatise on music from the late first millennium composed by Matanga, "associates each *rāga* with a particular stage character or situation: the 'munificent hero,' 'the hero who enters hunting,' 'one in violent grief,' and there is even a *rāga* for the stage manager (*sūtradhāra*), who often appears on stage in his own person in Sanskrit drama" (Widdess 1989:74).

Beyond these similarities, there are marked differences in the theory and practice of *niṛam* and *rāg*.

i) The attribution of musical connotations to the Malayalam word *niṛam* was an arbitrary choice of the Orthodox Christians in South India, sometime after the 1750s. Outside those communities, the term has no musical meaning. *Rāg*, on the other hand, enjoys much broader appeal as a musical term.

ii) *Niṛam* is text bound, i. e., we cannot think of *niṛam* as existing outside the chant texts. For that reason, one cannot imagine an instrumental version of a *niṛam*. This is not so with *rāg*. A *rāg* can be performed with or without text, using a musical instrument or using the human voice as an instrument singing solfege or even vocables.

iii) The theory of *rāg* prescribes a minimum of five pitches within an octave. Such prescriptions are absent and irrelevant in the case of *niṛam*, because many melodies employ only three or four pitches, and that too without reference to an octave.

iv) In the classification of *rāg*-s the pitch material is sometimes used to differentiate one *rāg* or family of *rāg*-s from the other. In the case of *niṛam*, pitch material is not used for classificatory purposes.

v) The performance context is another differentiating factor. A *niṛam* is performed only within the context of communal worship. Other than for pedagogical purposes, *niṛam* is

not practiced outside the context of liturgy. There are no such restrictions in the performance of a *rāg*. Anybody can perform a *rāg* anywhere, at any time. Music historians often trace the development of Indian art music to the chanting of *vēdas*, especially the *Samaveda*. However, over the course of time, the performance contexts of *rāg*-s evolved from worship to theater, and to other venues of daily life.

vi) The purpose of *niṛam* is the enhancement of chant text and the avoidance of boredom of singing the same text and melody every day of the week. Entertainment or enjoyment of music is not among the purposes of *niṛam*. A *rāg*, on the other hand, is multipurpose. It can be performed for meditation, for ritual worship, or for pure entertainment.

vii) Although both *niṛam* and *rāg* have associations to time and seasons, the strictness with which performers adhere to those conventional rules vary. In the case of *niṛam*, the prescription of different Colors for different days is strictly followed, whereas in the case of *rāg*, individual performers may or may not follow the convention of *rāg* time theory. Thus, a musician may choose to perform a morning *rāg* in the afternoon and vice versa. Generally, performers in the North Indian tradition are relatively more inclined toward the *rāg*-time convention than their counterparts in the South Indian tradition (see Powers 1970:14).

viii) The pedagogy is another area where *niṛam* and *rāg* differ. Usually, the learning of a *rāg* begins with acquainting oneself with the pitches in the scale, ascending and descending patterns (*ārōh* and *avarōh*), relative importance of pitches within the scale

(*vādi*, *samvādi*, *anuvādi*, etc.), and characteristic melodic phrases. All that is deemed as a preparation to the learning of compositions in that particular *rāg*. The pedagogy of *niṛam* is much simpler. The student learns a few sample chants in a *niṛam* in order to get a feel for that particular *niṛam*.

This comparison shows that there are almost as many similarities as differences between the two concepts. What is significant here is the multi-dimensional approach to *niṛam*, as opposed to associating a specific scale with a particular Color. This non-scalar approach to *niṛam* as a concept and as a classificatory model makes it closer to the pre-sixteenth century understanding of *rāg*. Reviewing the literature on *rāg* Harold Powers writes, "[a]s a rubric for melodic classification in Indian music, scale-type can be traced with certainty only back to the sixteenth century, when the ancestors of the present systems for classification made their appearance." (Powers 1970:3). Powers further clarifies that his "essay is based on the premise that scale-type is not always a basic analytical constituent of Indian ragas, and that emphasis on classification by scale-type has interfered with the study of Northern and Southern Indian melodic types" (*ibid*: 15). The comparison also shows *eṭṭuniṛam* as an example of a non-classical tradition that has explicit theory (as opposed to implicit theory in many folk music traditions).

Oktoēchos and Eṭṭuniṛam.

Within the Antiochene liturgy there are two different musical traditions, named after two cities: Mosul in Iraq and Tur-abdin in Turkey. Both traditions are represented in Kerala (George 1993:28). Considering Kottayam, in central Kerala, as the dividing line, the

churches in the regions north of Kottayam follow the Tur-abdin tradition, and those in the south follow the Mosul tradition. The source of the difference in the styles depends on the origin of the visiting bishops and priests from the Middle East --Jerusalem, Iraq, Turkey, and other areas in the Middle East-- and the duration of their stay in Kerala. The range of differences varies from subtle changes in the pattern of vocalization and ornamentation of melodies to using a completely different melody for a chant text. It would require an analysis of several renditions from each region to arrive at any definite conclusions about the two different styles. Such a project is yet to be undertaken.

The extent to which the melodies of the *oktoēchos* have undergone transformation in the South Indian context is another area that requires further exploration. Fr. Mathew Chempothinal, a member of the Syro-Malankara Church, observed that, within the Syrian Orthodox churches in Kerala, the melodies of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church show greater fidelity to the Syrian tradition, and the melodies of the Syrian Orthodox and Syro-Malankara churches show greater influence from the local musical styles of Kerala (Chempothinal 1980:86). It is difficult to make general comments about style at this point. I have noticed, however, that there is a marked difference in the vocal inflection between the older priests and the younger seminarians. The melodic style of the older priests sounds very Middle Eastern, while the influence of the vernacular (Malayalam) is predominant in the vocal inflection of young seminarians. Further research is needed on this subject.

As a system of music *eṭṭuniṛam* consists of a body of knowledge that is closely tied to ritual and worship, using Syriac language and prosody as its medium. It was transported from the Middle East to South India, transformed into local idioms and

languages, transmitted mostly orally in the controlled setting of teacher-student relationship in the seminaries and religious formation houses, thereby forming an unbroken tradition for over a century and a half. As it exists today, *eṭṭuniṟam* is restricted to particular communities of Orthodox Christians in specific regions of South India. Yet, it is the result of musical mobility between cultures within Asia without en masse migrations; music traveled with a handful of religious leaders who visited South India. From what is known, this musical mobility was a one-way traffic that took place in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries from the Middle East to South India, and not the other way around. It remains to be explored if these agents of transmission who brought the Antiochene liturgy and its music to South India took anything musical or otherwise back to their mother churches in the Middle East.

Example 1, Color 1

Quqlyōn Half note = 88

Ni nne p̄ra ti wa dha mē t̄t̄u ni tyam ña r̄aḷ
 Hā - le - lu ya - u ha le lu - ya
 Ña r̄a le ye n̄i ya ru kkān n̄i t̄t̄i yo r̄a t̄t̄in ku t̄t̄i kaḷ p̄ḷ

Bārekmōr

Bā re k mōr s̄u b̄ hō l'a bo w'la b rō w'al -
 r̄u hō qa di s̄o

¹ Ekbo

Mā na waḷ wā - nō ḡ mu n mu n nin
 Ma hi ma ye wa ndi - ḡci tu nnu
 Ka ru ṅa ni dhi yām - ña - r̄a lu te
 Kaḷ - ttā wē - stu - tyan - n̄i - yē

Example 1, Color 2

Quqlyōn Half note = 69 (variable)

Ni nnu - ma hi ma yo ṭā rā ja ku mā - ri - -
 Ha - lle lu - ya, wa la tu wa śa ttāy rā jē - swa ri yum.

Bārekmōr

Bā - re k mōr sū b hō - l'a bo - w'l'a b rō - w'al -
 rū hō - qa - di - sō

1 Ekbo $\text{♩} = 48$

Ī - sna na - tte mun - nir tti - -
 Mun ço nnañ - ska ri yā - - ta na yan.
 Nal - ku nnēn - snā nam - ni - ril -
 Wa nni ṭu - nnō nā - - tmā - wil

Example 1, Color 3

Quçlyōn Half note = 69

Nal ku ka nan mo zhi mā na sa me ha lle lu - - ya

Sē - wi - kkum ñā na ra ça ne ye nnu ra çe yyum

Bārekmōr

Bā - re k mōr sū b hō l'a bo - w'l'a b rō - w'al -

rū - hō - qa di - sō

1 Ekbo

En - nā dha nin - kru pa ni nne

2

I ppā pi ka līl - ça yi ççu

3

Nin sli bā - çi ra kil tū nūm

4

Nin - sa bha mēl kru pa tō - nnē - ñam

Example 1, Color 4

Quqlyōn. Pitch raised by a half tone. Half note = 69

Wā zh ttu ka kar tta ne yē řu sa lē - mē ha lle - lu - ya

Wā zh ttu ka sí yō nē nin dai - wa - tte

Bārekmōr

Bā re k mōr sú b hō l'a bo w'l'a b rō

w'al - rù hō qa - di - só

1 Ekbo $\text{♩} = 50$

Kar ttā - wē křu pa çe yye - řa me

Ni - nna ři yā - ř tan prāř tha na yāl

Tal - prāř - tha na yāl yā řa - na yāl

An - pā tmā - - kka ři lu nřa - ka

Example 1, Color 5

Quqlyōn Pitch lowered by a half tone. Half note = 72

En prā̄ tha na nā tha kē̄ kka ṇa me ha lle - lu - - ya

En te wi lā pam pū ka ṇa me nin - - sa - nni dhi yil

Bārekmōr

Bā re k mōr sú b hō l'a bō w'la b rō w'al - rū hō - - qa di - só

1 Ekbo

Mi sí hā - jī wi - ççe zhu nnē - - ttu

Kā - wal - - kkā - ṛ la jja ppe - - ttu

Tan pṛi ya yām - sa bha san - tō - - sha ttāl

Ā - tma - - - pṛi ya ne - wā - zh ttum

Example 1, Color 6

Quqlyōn Pitch lowered by a half tone. Half note = 76

Wā zh ttu ka nā tha ne ye - nnā tmā - wē ha - lle lu ya

Ōr - kku ka tal - - pra ti dā na - ríal

Bārekmōr

Bā re k mōr sú b hō l'a bo w'l'a b rō - w'al -

rū hō - qa - di sō

1 Ekbo

Prār thi ppān nī nil kkum bōl

Sa nthā - - pa - ttō ɽe - gā - gram

Çi nthā ka le ka ɽi ññā ni ttu

Çi tta - - tte - nir tti - tē - ñam

Example 1, Color 7

Quḡlyōn Half note = 63



Mō di - kka ṭte pa ram nā - dhā - - ha - - lle lu - -
ya u ha lle lu - - ya nin - sa kti yi lum ra ksha - yi lum - nṛu pa ti

Bārekmōr



Bā - re ke mōr sū b hō l'a bo w'l'a b rō w'al rū - hō qa - di - sō

1 Ekbo



Su çī yo ṭu sū dhyā be s qu di sā -
2 Spar sī ççu ḷḷa - pā da - - rīaḷ
3 Pu kku dyā na dwa - ra - rīaḷ
4 Wā - na wa ro ttu wa si - kkē - nam

Example 1, Color 8

Quçlyōn Half note = 76

We - llum śa t̄ru kka ɽe ni nnāl - ña - ñaɽ - ha lle - lu - ya

Dwē shi ka ɽe me ti ççi t̄um nin nā ma ttil

Bārekmōr

Bā re k mōr śu b hō l'a bo w'l'a b rō w'al rū hō - - qa di - sō

1 Ekbo

Sli bā - - - we nnu we llu nnu

2

Sli - bā wi dwē shi ye we nnu

3

Sli bā yē sā kshi - ççōr kkā - - y

4

Sli bā yā ka t̄te - kō t̄ta

Example 3

Quqlyōn of the Blessed Virgin in Eight Colors

Color 1. Half note = ca. 69




Ni nnāl stu ti yo tu rā- ja ma kaḷ ha - lle - lu ya -




u ha lle lu - ya nin - wa la māy - rā ja bhā mi ni yum

Color 2. Half note = ca. 66




Ni nnāl - stu ti yo tu rā - ja ma kaḷ - - - ha - lle lu - ya




Nin wa la māy rā ja bhā - mi ni yum

Color 3. Half note = ca. 69



Ni nnāl stu ti yo tu rā ja ma kaḷ ha lle lu - - - ya



Nin - wa la māy rā ja bhā - mi ni yum

Color 4. Half note = 66



Ni nnāl stu ti yo tu rā - ja ma kaḷ ha lle lu - ya



Nin - wa la māy rā ja bhā - mi ni yum

Color 5. Pitch lowered by a half tone. Half note=76 (variable)

Ni nnāl stu ti yo tu rā ja ma kaḷ ha lle - lu - ya

Nin wa la māy rā ja bhā - mi ni yum

Color 6. Pitch lowered by a tone. Half note = ca. 60

Ni nnāl stu ti yo tu rā - ja ma - kaḷ ha - lle lu ya

Nin wa la māy - rā ja bhā mi ni yum

Color 7. Pitch raised by a half tone. Half note = 72

Ni nnāl - stu ti yo tu rā ja ma kaḷ - ha - - lle lu - ya u

ha lle lu - - ya nin wa la māy - rā ja bhā - mi ni yum

Color 8. Half note = 88

Ni nnāl stu ti yo tu rā - ja ma kaḷ - ha lle - lu - ya

Nin wa la māy rā ja bhā mi ni yum

Example 4

From the qōlō, "lōk moriyō qōrōnān."

A. Color 2. Pitch raised by a half tone.

Du sh ʔa ne ñā - rā l̄il ni nnō ʔi kku ka nin sli bā - yāl

B. Color 6. Pitch raised by a half tone.

Dha nyan slī bā kō ʔta ye ñā rā! kkāy - niṛ tti ya wan

From the qōlō, "slōmme dābo."

C. Color 2.

Slō - mmo ʔo - nnār - nādhannin kū ʔe - - ta nnu da yam - ni - - - nnil

D. Color 6. Pitch raised by a half tone.

Nā dhā sā dhwika lo ttenne kā - tti ʔē nam wa zh ttum - ñān ni - nne

Conclusion

The Syriac chants that originated in the musical culture of the Middle East reached South India at various stages in the history of the St. Thomas Christians. It is a matter of historical and musicological interest that these chants have not only survived for centuries in South India, but have also retained their unique identity in a completely different cultural milieu. And there is every reason to believe that they will continue to be sung in the foreseeable future because of the value the practitioners attach to the music and its history in the continuous formation, preservation, and assertion of their individual and communal identities within a religiously pluralistic society.

A survey of the current status of Syriac in Kerala shows that this ancient language has a continuing history in its adopted land. Over the centuries, several Syriac words have become part of the local languages, especially Malayalam and Tamil. In spite of the vernacularization of liturgies, both East Syriac and West Syriac are in use in the Indian version of the Chaldean and Antiochene liturgies; and the two forms of the language have retained their distinctive sounds in the respective liturgies, thereby adding to the already rich linguistic and musical soundscapes of South India.

An examination of the process of retention of the chants demonstrates that, in this instance, melodies have had more resilience than language and text. Until the 1960s, these chants were sung only in Syriac; since then, the melodies have been sung mostly in the vernacular. While adopting secular musical styles in various parts of the liturgy, the Syriac Christians made a deliberate decision to retain the Syriac melodies. The translators

of the Syriac texts adjusted the vernacular version as much as possible to the original Syriac melodies. Thus, in contrast to the large-scale disuse of the "Gregorian" melodies following the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) in the Latin rite churches, the Syriac melodies survived the vernacularization process. The practitioners combined the contemporaneity of the vernacular text with a sense of continuity of the Syriac melodies. In that process, melodies, more than language and text, have become the bridge that connects the Christian experience of different peoples who are temporally and geographically removed from each other.

The resilience of melodies often resides in the resoluteness of the practitioners in perceiving music also as an imaginary, but effective boundary marker, expressed in such terms as "our music" as different from "their music." The goal of the practitioners is to transcend the realm of music to that of social codes of identity, reiterating "us" and "them." For example, the various Syriac Christian communities do not live in isolation. They share the same geography, the same language, and the same social and political life as other residents of South India. Yet they are divided into three mutually exclusive communities with respect to liturgical music. And so far as one can see, these traditions will remain independent of each other as identity markers, thereby preserving the variety of the chant repertory.

The musical behavior associated with Syriac chants is not random. It occurs in the controlled setting of communal worship in predetermined spaces with prescriptive norms and performance practices. Assignment of roles, organization of ritual, time, and poetic genres are all part of it. This organized behavior in controlled settings contributes to the process of learning, preservation, and transmission of the melodies.

The system of using model strophes as a compositional tool to create new chant texts and as a memory aid for the performer adds color to the musical mosaic in South India. The model melodies originated in the poetic context of Syriac language and were later transferred to Malayalam. A comparison of the renditions of the Syriac and Malayalam versions of chant *Eṭpan al slōtā* shows that, in spite of the considerable difference in the structure of the two texts, the melodies are almost identical. Similarly, a comparison of a contemporary version of the melody of *Tūyay* with one transcribed three decades ago shows that the overall shape of the melody has remained the same through oral transmission.

The analysis of model melodies shows the presence of consistent melodic and rhythmic gestures that are coordinated with the semantic and syntactic structures of the text. Generally, the melodies have a conjunct motion, but occasionally skips of thirds and leaps of fourths and fifths are used as a means of demarcating phrase and verse boundaries. Rhythm is implied less as an attribute of the melody than as an effect of the poetic text and its prosody. There is a rather consistent use of notes of longer duration at points of semantic closure. Sometimes, a steady flow of rhythm is broken in the musical realization of the text in order to stress the semantic units.

As a cyclic genre, *eṭtuniṛam* ("eight colors"), the local term for the West Syriac tradition of the *oktoēchos*, adds another dimension to the rich devotional music repertoire in South India. In its present form *eṭtuniṛam* showcases the transformation of musical concepts resulting from the transference of a tradition from one culture to another. Instead of adopting the foreign words (*oktoēchos* and *eqārā*) into their vocabulary, or adapting them by way of translation, the Orthodox Christians used a local word that did

not have a musical connotation before that time and does not have one even today outside their communities. The indigenous wisdom becomes clearer when one realizes that the primary meaning of the Malayalam word *niṛam* and the Sanskrit word *rāgam* is the same ("color"), and that they are used interchangeably in reference to the melodies of the *oktoēchos*. Further, a comparison of *niṛam* and *rāgam* as musical terms shows that the non-scalar and multidimensional approach to *niṛam* as a concept and as a classificatory model makes it closer to the pre-sixteenth century understanding of *rāgam* in Indian classical music.

Classical music traditions in India are referred to as *śāstrīya sangū*. The Sanskrit word *śāstra* may be understood in musical terms as a systematic body of shared knowledge transmitted through written treatises that form the basis for composition, performance, and appreciation. The study of model melodies of the Syro-Malabar Church and the *oktoēchos* of the Orthodox churches shows that there is a systematic body of musical knowledge underlying those traditions that is applied as normative standards in composition and performance. Whereas in Indian classical music sharing of knowledge is supported by written theoretical treatises, in the case of Syriac chants knowledge is shared more through experience and exposure. The use of written texts in the pedagogy of Syriac chants of the Syro-Malabar Church is limited to the model strophes. Each model strophe combines a poetic meter with an independent melody. In actual performance, each melody is represented through a textual incipit from the respective model strophe. The singer reads the incipit as a cue to remember and remake the melody. In the case of *eṭṭuniṛam*, there is, beside the use of model strophes for pedagogy, a set of articulated norms and terms. In Indian classical music, theory is expansive; in Syriac

chants, theory is less extensive. Nonetheless, Syriac chants deserve to be included in the larger discourse on music in India.

The Syriac chants present a case in point for the musical proximity of otherwise distant regions and diverse cultures. The music that is part of the daily experience of a particular group of people in a specific location may have far reaching geographical and cultural connections, even when those connections are not part of the daily discourse. Such proximity may prompt us to take a much broader approach to the locus of music, and to the imagination and imaging of boundaries in local, regional, and even national musics.

Appendix

Pronunciation of Place Names

Spelled	Pronounced
Aluva	Āluwā
Anchal	Ançal
Anjoor	Aññūr
Bharananganam	Bharaṇaṇānam
Changanachery	Çaṇanāssēri
Chennai (Madras)	Çennay
Cherthala	Çērttala
Cherppunkal	Çēppunkal
Eranakulam	Eṇākuḷam
Kaduthuruthy	Kaṭutturutti
Karnataka	Kaṇṇāṭakam
Kerala	Kēraḷam
Kizhakkekkotta	Kizhakkēkkōṭṭa
Kochi (Cochin)	Koççi
Kodungalloor (Cranganloor)	Koṭuṇāllūr
Koonammavu	Kūnammāvū

Kottarakkara	Koṭṭārakkara
Kottayam	Kōṭṭayam
Kozhikkode (Calicut)	Kōzhikkōṭṭu
Kunnamkulam	Kunnamkuḷam
Mangalappuzha	Mangalappuzha
Mangalore	Mangalāpuram
Mannanam	Mānnānam
Mattanchery	Maṭṭāncēri
Mavelikkara	Māwēlikkara
Mulanthuruthy	Muḷanturutti
Palai	Pālā
Pallipuram	Paḷḷippuṛam
Pampakkuda	Pāmpākkūṭa
Pathanamthitta	Pattanamtiṭṭa
Pathanapuram	Pattanāpuram
Puthanpalli	Puttampalḷi
Pattikkad	Paṭṭikkāṭṭu
Patturiakkal	Pāṭṭuriākkal
Tamil Nadu	Tamizh nāṭṭu

Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum) Tiruwanantapuram

Thozhiyoor	Tozhiyūr
Thrissur (Trichur)	Tṛissūr
Udayamperoor (Diamper)	Udayampērūr
Vettikkal	Weṭṭikkal

Glossary

Wherever possible, the literal meaning of the word is given first, followed by derivative meanings. Italics indicate words in the glossary. Syriac words are given in their East Syriac form. For words with two different pronunciations in East and West Syriac, such as *qālā* and *qālō*, an entry of the West Syriac form is cross referenced to the former.

(Gk. = Greek, H. = Hebrew, M. = Malayalam, P. = Portuguese, S. = Syriac, Sk. = Sanskrit, WS. = West Syriac).

acrostic	a poetic form in which the first letter of each new line or stanza follows the order of letters in the alphabet.
akārādi	M. <i>acrostic</i> .
anaphora	from Gk., "anaphero" (I offer up); the standard name for Eucharistic prayer, which forms the central part of the mass.
Antioch	city of ancient Syria on the Orontes river, site at modern Antakya, Turkey.
Antiochene	pertaining to Antioch in Syria, one of the early centers of Christianity.
Antiochene liturgy	<i>liturgy</i> of the Syrian Orthodox churches in <i>West Syriac</i> .
Ārām	biblical name for ancient Syria.
armāyā	gentile, pagan.
ārāmāyā	pertaining to <i>Ārām</i> ; the language and culture of ancient Syria; <i>Aramaic</i> language.
Aramaic	a Northwest Semitic language.

- Assyrian Church of the East the ancient church of Persia (present-day Iran and Iraq), also known as the *East Syrian Church* or *Chaldean Church*.
- barekmār S. (barek + mār) bless, O Lord; a prefix to the Doxology, “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.”
- barekmōr WS. see *barekmār*.
- bāwūtā S. petition; intercessory prayer; a category of chant.
- bēt g'zā S. (bēt + g'zā) house of treasure, sanctuary; title of the chant book containing model strophes for each melody of the chants of the Divine Office for Sundays and feast days in the Syrian Orthodox churches.
- bhāwam Sk. state of being, feeling, emotion.
- bōwūtō WS. See *bāwūtā*.
- breviary the book containing daily hymns, prayers, and scripture readings for the liturgy of the Hours.
- Chaldea an ancient region in southern Babylonia along the Euphrates River and the Persian Gulf.
- Chaldean pertaining to *Chaldea*; the Semitic language of the Chaldeans; biblical Aramaic, *East Syriac*.
- Chaldean Church the ancient church of Persia (present-day Iran and Iraq), also known as *Assyrian Church of the East* or *East Syrian Church*.
- Chaldean Catholic Church a section of the *Assyrian Church of the East* that came into union with the Roman Catholic Church under the leadership of John Sulāqā, a religious priest and superior of the Monastery of Rabban-

Hormizd, near Mosul, in Iraq. Pope Julius III made the official proclamation of union on February 20, 1553 and appointed Sulāqā as Patriarch of Mosul.

- Chaldean rite the Eastern *rite* which uses *East Syriac* in liturgy, different from the *Jacobite* or Syrian Orthodox rite which uses *West Syriac*.
- Church of the East one of the Churches among the St. Thomas Christians in India that has allegiance to the Assyrian Church of the East.
- Diamper name in Portuguese and English records (from the 16th c. onwards) for Udayamperoor, a town in the district of Ernakulam, in *Kerala*.
- Diphysitism the belief that in the person of Christ there were two distinct natures, the divine and the human.
- Divine Office *liturgy of Hours* that consists of prayers, chants, and readings for particular times of day, specific days of the week, feasts, or other religious occasions.
- East Syriac one of the two forms of the *Syriac* language, also known as *Chaldean*; the Syriac script that uses dots to mark vowel sounds; the liturgical language of the *Chaldean Church*; see *West Syriac*.
- East Syrian Church another name for the *Chaldean Church*.
- ekbo S. a relatively short prayer or chant of one strophe that indicates the theme of the day or the occasion; appears often as an introduction to *qālā*.
- enyānā S. from "enāytā" (answer, response); a category of chant sung as a response after the recitation of psalm.

eqārā	S. root, origin; the system of singing the same chant text in eight different ways in Syrian Orthodox liturgy.
eqārā canon	the order of melodies prescribed for the specific day of the week as well as for the eight-week cycle in the celebration of the Office and mass in the Syrian Orthodox liturgy.
eṭṭuniṛam	M. (eṭṭū + niṛam) eight colors; a technical term used in the Syrian Orthodox churches in South India for the practice of singing the same chant text in eight different ways.
eṭṭurāgam	M. (eṭṭū+ rāgam) eight colors; a technical term used in the Syrian Orthodox churches in South India for the practice of singing the same chant text in eight different ways.
gānam	M. song, chant.
gītam	M. chant, religious poem.
huthāmma	S. conclusion; end; prayers chanted at the end of different sections in <i>liturgy</i> .
īṇam	M. melody, tune.
īśō	S. redeemer; Jesus.
Jacobite	followers of Bishop Jacob Baradeus (Yaqūb al Baradai, <i>ca</i> 500-78), the leader of the group which believed that Christ had only one nature, a combination of the human and divine. The group later came to be known as Monophysites; see <i>Monophysitism</i> .
kaḷi	M. play, game.
kapyār	M. sacristan.

kaldāyā	S. see <i>Chaldean</i> .
karṣōn	the system of writing Arabic or <i>Malayalam</i> in Syriac script.
Kerala	one of the states in the Indian Republic. Reorganized on November 1, 1956, Kerala comprises the Malayalam-speaking regions of the former states of Travancore and Cochin, on the west coast.
kṛistyāni	M. Christian.
kuṛbāna	see <i>qurbānā</i> .
ladainha	P. litany.
ladīnj	M. see <i>ladainha</i> .
Latin Christians	designation for those Catholics in India who follow the Latin (Roman) rite.
Latin Church	Roman Catholic Church in which the liturgy used to be celebrated in Latin language, until 1964.
Lectionary	the book containing a selection of scripture readings for various occasions in <i>liturgy</i> .
leliyā	S. night; night prayer.
liturgy	communal worship by way of celebrations of mass, Divine Office, sacraments, etc.
liturgy of the Hours	a set of prayers, chants, and readings for particular time of day, specific day of the week, feast, or other religious occasions.
madrāsā	S. instruction, exhortation; didactic chant; a category of Syrian church hymns, believed to be the creation of St. Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373). It consists of two to five metrically similar strophes, the

most popular meter being heptasyllabic. It is sung in a solo-refrain format.

Malabar	(mala + bār) place of hills; former name, coined probably by Arab traders, for the region now known as <i>Kerala</i> ; a region in the northern part of <i>Kerala</i> .
Malankara	M. (mala + kara) land of hills; another name for <i>Kerala</i> .
Malayalam	(mala + ālam) hill and dale; language of the state of <i>Kerala</i> ; synonym for <i>Kerala</i> in folk songs and proverbs.
malpān	from "malpānā" (S); doctor, master, teacher.
mār	S. lord, master.
mārggam	M. way, path.
mār thōma	S. St. Thomas.
marmīzā	S. a set of two or more psalms.
mazmōra	S. psalm.
mēmṛā	S. discourse; poetic homily.
missal	the book containing prayers and the order of celebration of mass
Monophysitism	the belief that there was only one nature in the person of Christ, the divine nature. The Council of Chalcedon condemned the belief as a heresy in 451; see <i>Diphysitism</i> .
mōr	WS. see <i>mār</i> .
m'śihā	S. the anointed one, the Messiah.
Nazrāni	one of the appellations for the followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

Nestorius	Patriarch of Constantinople from 428 to 431. Nestorius was condemned by the council of Ephesus (431) for what later came to be called as <i>Nestorianism</i> . He was deposed and exiled first to a monastery in Antioch and then to the desert in Egypt in 435, where he died in circa 451. A century later, the <i>Chaldean Church</i> honored Nestorius as a saint.
Nestorian	a follower of <i>Nestorius</i> .
Nestorianism	a heresy attributed to <i>Nestorius</i> that there were two natures and two distinct persons in Christ, the human and divine and, therefore, the Blessed Virgin Mary can be called only "Christotokos" (bearer of Christ) and not "Theotokos" (bearer of God). The council of Ephesus (431) under the leadership of Cyril of Alexandria condemned the heresy.
niṛam	M. color; a musical term in reference to the aesthetic experience of text, melody, and human voice in the liturgy of the Syrian Orthodox churches in South India.
Office	see <i>Divine Office</i>
oktoēchos	Gk. eight voices; the system of classifying melodies in an eight-weekly cycle in the liturgy of the Syrian Orthodox Churches.
padroado	P. patronage; a special privilege granted by Pope Nicholas V in 1455 to the kings of Spain and Portugal to have ecclesiastical authority over the newly discovered lands. Pope Leo X reiterated

	the privilege of the King of Portugal over the new territories of India in 1514.
paḷḷi	M. church; place of worship of Christians, Muslims, and Jews.
pāṭṭū	M. song.
pazhekuffukār	M. people of the Old Allegiance; a group of St. Thomas Christians who decided to follow the reform movement initiated by the Portuguese missionaries at the Synod of <i>Udayamperoor</i> in 1599; see also <i>puttankuffukār</i> .
pāṭṭukār	M. singers; Syriac church choir that consists of both singers and players of musical instruments.
peṭgāmā	S. word, verse; a short chant comprising a verse from the sacred scripture; the first part of a cyclic genre of chants known as <i>quḷyōn</i> .
peṭgōmō	see <i>peṭgāmā</i> .
promion	from "prooimion" (Gk.), introduction, preface.
puttankuffukār	M. people of the New Allegiance; a group of St. Thomas Christians who took an oath in 1653 not to follow the reform movement initiated by the Portuguese missionaries and later accepted the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch as their spiritual leader; see also <i>pazhekuffukār</i> .
qālā	S. noise, voice, sound; song, melody.
qāltā	S. short anthem sung during night prayer.

qōlō	WS. see <i>qālā</i> .
quqlyōn	from 'qōqlōs' (Gk., circle); in the Syrian Orthodox Church, the cycle of hymns in the following order: <i>petgōmō</i> , <i>ekbo</i> , <i>qālō</i> , and <i>bōwūtō</i> .
qurbānā	S. offering; Eucharist, mass.
rabbi	H. a teacher of the Jewish laws and traditions.
ṛabbān	from <i>rabbi</i> , teacher; title of higher ranks among the clergy in some of the Eastern churches.
ṛambān	see <i>ṛabbān</i> .
ramśā	S. evening; evening prayer.
rāzā	S. the most solemn form of mass in the <i>Chaldean</i> rite.
rēs qālā	S. head-song; a strophe whose meter and melody are used as a model for composing new chants and for memorizing melodies.
rite	liturgy, language, ecclesiastical laws, customs, and cultural traditions that are characteristic of a particular group of churches that share a common geographical origin.
saprā	S. morning; morning prayer.
seblāṭā	S. pl. of "seb'ita" (ladder); a collection of model strophes from <i>madrāsā</i> that forms the second part of the chant book, <i>bēṭ g'zā</i> .
slōṭā	S. prayer.
sōgītā	S. song, canticle; singable prose.
stōṭṛagītām	M. chants of praise.

surath	a mixture of Aramaic and Arabic or Persian spoken by the Chaldean Christians in Iraq and Iran.
śūrāyā	S. sign, indication; textual and melodic incipit in Syriac chants which, in most cases, consists of short verses taken from one of the psalms.
suriyāni	S. Syriac language; Syrian; a person or group that follows the Syriac liturgical tradition.
swaram	M. sound, voice, musical sound, note, pitch.
Syriac	<i>Aramaic</i> ; the language of <i>Ārām</i> (Syria).
Syrian	a person who follows the Syriac liturgical tradition, as in "Syrian Christian."
Syro-Malabar	Syriac language and <i>Malabar</i> region; official designation, since 1896, for one of the Syriac Christian communities among the St. Thomas Christians in South India that is in communion with Rome.
tāḷam	M. rhythm, metric cycle.
thaksā	S. <i>missal</i> .
tambor	P. drum.
teśbohtā	S. praise; chants of praise.
tiriyānkōl	M. from "triângulo" (P.), triangle.
tōmmā	from 't'āmā' (S. twin), Thomas.
turgāmma	from "targum," (S. to interpret) interpretation, translation, exhortation; chants sung before readings from Epistle and Gospel.

- Udayamperoor a town in the district of Eranakulam, in *Kerala*. See also *Diamper*.
- wazhikkālā combination of the Malayalam word, "wazhi" (way) and the Syriac word, *qālā* (song); chant sung during funeral procession from the home of the deceased to the church or the cemetery.
- West Syriac one of the two forms of the *Syriac* language that uses Greek symbols to mark vowel sounds; the liturgical language of the Syrian Orthodox churches; see also *East Syriac*.

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