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The
Malabar Church
and Rome

DURING THE EARLY PORTUGUESE
PERIOD AND BEFORE

BY

REV. GEORGE SCHURHAMMER, S.J.

ROME



*With best compliments.
Please send me the paper in which
your review of this may appear.*

Placid T-o-c.A.

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ROME




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The Rev. Fr. Bernard of St. Thomas, T. O. C. D.,
The Historian of the Malabar Church.

In appreciation of his work he was honoured with the Medaglia Benemerenti by
H. H. POPE PIUS XI,
and with a gold medal by the St. Thomas Christians of the Syro-Malabar Rite.

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TO
The Rev. Fr. Bernard of St. Thomas, C.O.C.D.
OF THE SYRO-MALABAR RITE
THE MALABAR CHURCH HISTORIAN
THE GREAT PIONEER AND LEADER OF THE DEFENDERS OF
THE MALABAR CATHOLIC TRADITION
CONCERNING THE ORTHODOXY OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH
DURING THE EARLY PORTUGUESE PERIOD AND BEFORE
THIS BOOKLET
IN WHICH THE WORLD-FAMOUS SCHOLAR
THE REV. G. SCHURHAMMER, S.J.
AFTER A LONG AND INDEPENDENT RESEARCH WORK
ARRIVES AT CONCLUSIONS IN FULL CONSONANCE
WITH THOSE OF THE MALABAR CHURCH HISTORIAN
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED
In Remembrance of the Golden Jubilee
OF
His Religious Profession and Sacerdotal Ordination.

Editor

FOREWORD AND BLESSING

BISHOP'S HOUSE,
Changanacherry, 21-6-1933.

To

REV. FR. PLACID, T.O.C.D.

I am sincerely pleased with your undertaking to publish the articles of Fr. Schurhammer, S.J., the World-famed scholar of our days. I am sure that the publication will contribute very much to the dispelling of the erroneous conception of some European writers that our forefathers were Nestorian heretics before and during the Portuguese settlement in India.

With hearty blessings,
I am,
Yours ever in Christ,
✠ J. KALACHERRY,
Bishop of Changanacherry.

Imprimatur :

✠ J. KALACHERRY,
Bishop of Changanacherry.

CHANGANACHERRY,
21st June 1933,
Feast of St. Aloysius.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The contents of this booklet are two articles from the pen of the well-known scholar, the Rev. George Schurhammer, S.J., now of the Gregorian University, Rome. The first, "Three letters of Mar Jacob, Bishop of Malabar, 1503-1550," was published in the "Gregorianum" Vol. XIV, pp. 62-86. The second, "The Malabar Church and Rome before the coming of the Portuguese" was sent to the editor in manuscript form for publication in Malabar together with the first one. These two articles are a clear proof of the great interest scholars are evincing in the study of Malabar Church History.

Local tradition supported also by foreign evidences proclaims that the Apostle St. Thomas evangelised S. India. There exists on the Malabar Coast a body of Christians, exclusively known as "The St. Thomas Christians" who have always claimed the Apostolic Origin of their ancient Church.

It seems very probable that the St. Thomas Christians were having their liturgical services in the East Syriac language from the very beginning. In the 16th century the Portuguese found them under the Patriarch of Babylone following the Chaldaic or East Syriac Rite. In a synod held at Diampur in Malabar, 1599, the Portuguese, headed by Dom Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, succeeded in placing them under their *Padroado* jurisdiction. They also romanised the ancient East Syriac Rite on a Portuguese basis, thus giving rise to a new Rite which is neither Western nor Eastern and which later on came to be known as "The Syro-Malabar Rite." This policy met with strong opposition from the St. Thomas Christians, the result being a great revolt ending in schism in 1653.

Those that adhered to the Faith of their forefathers (*Pazhaya-kuttukar* or the old party) eventually came under Italian Carmelite rule, and are now constituted into the indigenous Syro-Malabar Province with Ernakulam as Metropolis and Changanacherry, Trichur and Kottayam as suffragan sees. They number 550,000 strong.

The schismatics (*Puthenkuttukar* or the new party) in course of time embraced the Jacobite heresy and the West Syriac Rite of the Jacobites. This Rite in their hands has entirely been malabarised. They are split up into numerous sects, some embracing even Protestantism in its sundry forms. In 1930 two Malabar Jacobite Prelates

made their submission to Rome and were allowed to retain their malabarised West Syriac Rite with the necessary changes. They and their converts now form the Malankara Syrian Province with Trivandrum as Metropolis and Thiruvalla as suffragan see. (Malankara is another name for Malabar). They number 9000 strong.

There is besides in Trichur a very small body of Nestorians who seceded from the Syro-Malabar Catholics in 1874.

Non-Catholic and non-Malabar historians generally give credit to the Portuguese view that the St. Thomas Christians were Nestorians and were converted to the Catholic Faith by the Portuguese in or before the synod of Diampur, 1599. But this view is contradicted by the constant tradition of the *Pazhayakuttukar* or the Catholic St. Thomas Christians of the Syro-Malabar Rite, who, as a body, have never known a change in their ancient Roman Catholic Faith. From the time of the Synod of Diampur they continually resented the Portuguese policy and occasionally gave expression to their firm belief in the uninterrupted orthodoxy of their forefathers. Their historians, foremost among whom the Very Rev. Emmanuel Nidiry of happy memory and the Rev. Fr. Bernard of St. Thomas, T.O.C.D., have fully availed themselves of every occasion of defending their time-honoured tradition. To many it might seem surprising that there are found abroad scholars who fully agree with the Syro-Malabar tradition. The Rev. George Schurhammer, S.J., is one of such scholars; and, as the result of a long and patient research work, he has given to the public his two learned articles which now appear under the title "The Malabar Church and Rome during the Early Portuguese Period and Before."

The Syro-Malabar Catholics will ever be thankful to the Rev. Scholar for his critical and impartial views on the subject of their orthodoxy. The editor especially expresses his thanks to the learned Jesuit for his kindness in allowing the fruits of his labour to be published by him in Malabar. The editor's thanks are due to the Lord Bishop of Changanacherry, Mar James Kalacherry for his encouraging foreword and blessing, and to all those who have met the expenses of editing and publishing this booklet.

PLACID, T.O.C.D., (*Syro-Malab.*)

CARMELITE HOUSE OF STUDIES, }
Changanacherry, S. India, }
 1933, Nov. 21, the traditional }
 date of the landing of }
 St. Thomas in Malabar. }

THREE LETTERS
OF
MAR IACOB, BISHOP OF MALABAR
1503-1550

Summarium. Agitur de episcopo celeberrimo apud christianos Syro-Malabares Indiae, qui anno 1503 una cum tribus aliis a patriarcha Chaldaeorum ex urbe Gazarta in Mesopotamia in Indiam inissus, ibi in urbibus Cranganor et Cochin residens, ultimus omnium anno 1550 sancte defunctus est, amicus Lusitanorum, Dominicanorum, Franciscanorum et Jesuitarum, imprimis S. Francisci Xaverii, qui eum regi Lusitaniae summa cum laude recommandavit. Publicantur *3 epistulae, quarum prima* lingua syriaca a quatuor episcopis simul anno 1504 ad patriarcham Mar Eliam data ab Assemano cum versione latina anno 1759 edita fuit, *secunda* a Dominicano Fr. João Caro, *tertia* a Franciscano (Fr. Antonio de Padrão, commissario?) nomine episcopi Jacobi ejusrogatu lingua lusitana scriptae et ab episcopo syriace subscriptae in archivio nationali Ulyssiponensi in originali conservatae recenter a nobis inventae sunt. His epistulis *solvitur quaestio* historica inter Syro-Malabares Catholicos et Jacobitas diu agitata*, utrum dictus episcopus Jacobus Catholicus an Haereticus Nestorianus fuerit, nam probant eum a primo momento, quo in Indiam venit, usque ad mortem semper cum Catholicis in sacris communicasse, Dominicanos, Franciscanos et sacerdotes saeculares lusitanos apud christianos suos syro-malabarios introduxisse eosque tum ad sacramenta administranda, tum ad docendos christianos adhibuisse, christianorum filios eis educandos dedisse, immo multos Syro-Malabares ad acceptandum ritum latinum et mores Ecclesiae Romanae adduxisse hocque suo exemplo ipso in fine vitae ritui Romano sese adaptando alios docuisse, quae omnia etiam, testimonio S. Francisci Xaverii aliorumque testium ejus temporis confirmantur.

The Syro-Malabarian Christians of Malabar having been deprived of bishops for many years finally sent three of their people in 1490 to Mesopotamia to ask their patriarch for pastors for the Indian flock

* See J. C. Panjikaran, *The Syrian Church in Malabar, Trichinopoly, 1914*, 35-43 (Catholic), *Bernard of St. Thomas, T. O. C. D.*, A Brief Sketch of the St. Thomas Christians *ib.* 1924, 19-58 (Catholic); *T. K. Joseph* (Jacobite) in *Kerala Society Papers, Series 6, Trivandrum 1930*, 304: "The exact nature of Mar Jacob's religious persuasion at different times is one of the controversial topics among Malabar Christians"; cf. *ib.* 303.

and the Catholicos Mar Simeon sent with them two bishops Mar Thomas and Mar John. Mar Thomas returned after some time to Mesopotamia, where he saw the successor of Mar Simeon Mar Elias. The new Patriarch consecrated three new bishops for the Syro-Malabarian Christians; Mar Jaballaha, Mar Denha and Mar Jacob, and sent them together with Mar Thomas to Malabar. From there the four bishops sent an interesting letter to their Catholicos, dated India 1504, which together with an historical introduction written in 1533 has been preserved in a copy of the end of the 16th century in Codex Vatic. Fondo Siriaco 204 f. 154 v-160 (formerly Cod. Syr. 5) in the Vatican Library and was edited in Syriac with Latin translation by J. S. Assemani in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (Romae 1725) III, P. 1, 589-99¹. The text runs as follows:

Letter I. The four bishops to patriarch Mar Elias, India 1504:

Historical introduction.

“Trusting in the help of God, the Lord of the Universe, we are writing the history of the blessed Indians and about their arrival in the town of Gazarta Bêt Zabdai².

In the year of Alexander 1801 [1490 A.D.] there came three trustworthy Christian men from the remote regions of India to *Mar Simeon*, the Catholic Patriarch of the Orient, to ask for Fathers (ahabata) and take them there with them. One of them died on the way according to the will of the Creator. The two others came safely to the Mar Catholicos, who then was living in the town Gazarta Bêt Zabdai, and they were received by him with the greatest joy. One of them was called *George* and the other one *Joseph*³.

Both of them were ordained priests in the holy church of Saint George in Gazarta by the Mar Catholicos; for they were fairly well instructed.

Soon afterwards they were sent to the holy dwelling of the blessed Eugenius⁴. Whence they brought with them two monks of the same name,—for both were called Rabban Joseph,—whom the

¹ See G. Schurhammer, *Die zeitgenössischen Quellen zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens und seiner Nachbarländer (Ostafrika, Abessinien, Arabien, Persien, Vorder-u. Hinterindien, Malaischer Archipel, Philippinen, China u. Japan) zur Zeit d. hl. Franz Xaver 1538-1552*, 6680 Regesten u. 30 Tafeln. Leipzig 1932, No. 14. We quote shortly; *Quellen*. The Syriac text with the Latin version of Assemani is also published in: S. Giamil, *Genuinae Relationes* (Romae 1902) 588 and *Paiva Manso*, *Bullarium Patronatus Portugalliae Regum* (Olisipone 1870) II 287.

² Now: Djazirat-ibn- ‘Omar, between Mossul and Diarbekr.

³ About Joseph see below n. 22.

⁴ Nearare, Bethmadistrict Nisibis (Assemani).

Mar Catholicos ordained bishops in the church of Saint George. One of them he called *Thomas*, the other one *John*. And he gave them wonderful patent letters and others with his signature and sealed with his ring and dismissed them with prayers and blessings and told them to go with the Indians to the countries of India.

When these same Four came there with the help of Christ Our Lord, they were received by the faithful with great joy and they went to meet them with joy, carrying before them the book of the Gospel, the cross, censers and torches and they introduced them with great pomp and with the chanting of psalms and hymns. And they, the bishops, consecrated altars and ordained very many priests, for they had been without Fathers for a long time.

Mar John remained as bishop in India; but *Mar Thomas*, his companion, soon afterwards returned to the Catholicos and brought him first-fruits and offerings and a servant.

But it happened that before the return of bishop Mar Thomas to India the Catholicos *Mar Simeon* died and migrated from this temporary and transient life to that lasting and immortal dwelling in the year of the Greeks 1813 [1502 A. D.] and was buried in the monastery of the holy and blessed Eugenius. May the Lord give rest to his soul in the dwellings of the heavenly kingdom. Amen! Then followed him as Catholic *Patriarch Elias* who also brought with him three well-approved monks from the monastery of Eugenius.

The first of these was Raban David, surnamed 'the Long,' whom he ordained Metropolitan calling him *Mar Jaballaha*. The name of the second was Raban George, whom he ordained bishop calling him *Mar Denha*. The last was Raban Masud, whom he also ordained bishop calling him *Mar Jacob*. All these he ordained in the monastery of St. John the Egyptian⁵, the brother of St. Acha, in the territory of Gazarta Bêt Zabdai in the year of the Greeks 1814 [1503 A. D.]

Soon afterwards he told these four Fathers to go to the countries of India and the islands of the sea, that are between Dabag and Sin and Masin⁶. And with the help of Christ their Lord they came there and found Mar John, the bishop of India, still alive, and he together with the other blessed brethren living there were extremely glad at their arrival.

⁵ Later on called Zarnucha (Assemani).

⁶ Dabag=Zâbag (Java), cf. H. Yule, *Hobson-Jobson* (London 1903) 455, G. Ferrand, *Relations de Voyages et Toxtes Géographiques Arabes, Persans et Turcs* (Paris 1913) 13 526. Sin=China, Masin=Mahâ-Chîna, Great China, both names together=China; cf. Yule 530.

The year following they sent a letter to the Catholicos *Mar Elias*, who however did not get it, for he died before and was buried in the church of Meskinta in the town of Mossul. Then followed him as Catholic Patriarch *Mar Simeon*. And the letter written by the said Fathers from India was thus :

Letter sent by the Fathers of India, Sin and Masin.

“To the other Simeon, the Papas of our days, the Timothy of our century, and the Jesus the son of Nun of our time and the Jesujab of our epoch⁷, to whom has been given power in heaven and on earth to feed the flock of Christ with the staff of Peter, which was handed over to him in the course of time (blessed men, to whom was given the fortune of having such a superior and leader!), to Mar Elias, the Catholic Patriarch of the Orient, the mother of the world, whom may the Lord confirm, lift up, exalt, glorify and strengthen to the glory of the christian religion and the exaltation of the Church. Amen !

Your humble servants and imperfect disciples, Mar Jaballaha and Mar Thomas and Mar Jacob and the stranger Denha, contemptible and weak, worship the footstool of your pure and sacred feet and ask for help in their tribulation through your acceptable and efficacious prayers and say with loud voice and obsecration: ‘Bless O Lord! Bless O Lord! Bless O Lord!’.

May also John, the tabernacle of God and treasurer of his service, the Saint and prince of the Saints, the Metropolitan bishop of Atel, and all the holy Fathers and approved monks and pure priests and immaculate deacons and select faithful and all the christians there living accept our salutation in the Lord !

Now we inform your worshipful charity, that through the help of God and your acceptable prayers we came safely and happily to the blessed country of India through the virtue of divine grace. We thank God, the Lord of the Universe, who does not put to shame those who are trusting in Him.

Here we were received by all the christians with the greatest rejoicing. And our Father, the holy Mar John, is still living and well and sends you many greetings. Here there are about *30,000 christian families* of the same faith with us, and they are praying to the Lord, that He may preserve you in safety.

And now they began to build other churches and they have abundance of all things and they are meek and peaceful. Blessed be the Lord !

⁷ Famous former Patriarchs.

But also the *House of the holy Apostle Thomas* has begun to be inhabited by some christians who are thinking of its restoration. But it lies at a distance of about 25 days' journey from the said christians, and it lies on the sea shore in a town called *Mailapur* in the province of Silan⁸, which is one of the provinces of India. For also the countries of India are many and powerful, comprising a territory of half a year's journey; and each country has its own name.

Our country, where our christians are living, is called *Malabar* and it has about 20 towns, of which 3 are famous and strong: *Crangol*, *Palor* and *Colam*⁹; to which come others in their neighbourhood. And in all there are christians living with churches built in them. And near them is the great and rich town of Calicut, where idolaters are living.

May you also know, Fathers, that from the Occident powerful ships have been sent to these countries of India by the king of the christians, who are our brethren the *Franks*. Their voyage took them a whole year, and they sailed first towards the South and circumnavigated Kush, which is called Habesh. From there they came to this country of India, purchased pepper and other merchandises and returned to their land¹⁰.

By this way thus explored the said king (whom may God preserve in safety!) sent 6 other huge ships, with which they crossed the sea in half a year and came to the town of *Calicut*, people extremely well versed in nautical science¹¹.

In Calicut there are living many Ismaelites¹², who, moved by their inveterate hatred against the christians, began to calumniate them to the pagan king saying: 'Those people came from the West and they were very well pleased with the town and the country. Therefore they will now return to their king as soon as possible and will come again bringing with their ships huge armies against you and they will press on you and take your country from you'.

The pagan king believed the words of the Ismaelites and followed their advice and went out like a madman and killed all the

⁸ The Church with the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore = S. Thome, in Coromandel (not in Silan = Ceylon).

⁹ Cranganor (Malayalam: Kodungalur), Palayur, Quilon.

¹⁰ First voyage of Vasco da Gama 1497-98: cf. Fort. de *Almeida*, *Historia de Portugal* (Coimbra 1924) II 209-223 (Literature 218-20), *Quellen* 10. Franks = Feringhees (Europeans).

¹¹ Voyage of Pedralvarez Cabral 1500; cf. *Almeida* II 224-34, Literature 229-234.

¹² Mahometans.

said Franks, whom they found in the town, 70 men and 5 worthy priests¹³, who accompanied them, for they are not wont to travel or to go to any place without priests.

The other ones who were in the ships weighed anchor and sailed away with great sadness and bitter tears and came to our neighbouring christians to the town of *Cochi*. This town too had a pagan king, who, when he saw them in heavy distress and grief, received them hospitably and consoled them and swore never to abandon them until death¹⁴.

That godless king however, who had killed their companions, when he heard of that became enraged, collected a huge army and attacked them. So the Franks together with the king, to whom they had fled, were forced to retire to a very strong fortification on the sea-shore, where they remained a few days. Then only did Christ have mercy on them and there came very many ships from the countries of those Franks and they began a very great war against the king of Calicut and from their war-engines (guns), which they brought with them, they threw huge stones on his troops and killed very many men of the army of the godless king and expelled him and his troops from the sea-shore¹⁵.

From there the Franks sailed to the town of Coshi and there they built a huge fortress and strengthened it with a garrison of 300 men, warlike men of their people, out of which some were to throw stones from the war-engines and others were to shoot arrows with iron bows. To this they added 50 huge war-engines and about 100 smaller ones and iron bows [cross-bows]¹⁶.

In the meantime the king their enemy (may his memory perish!) returned and began to fight with them. But soon he was defeated by the christians in battle by the help of Christ and lost 3000 of his men, torn to pieces by the war-engines, and he fled to his town Calicut. And the Franks pursued and followed him by sea (for his

¹³ About the murder of the Portuguese see J. de *Barros*, *Da Asia* (Lisboa 1778) I, 5, 4-7, *F. Lopes de Castanheda*, *Historia do descobrimento e conquista da India pelos Portugueses* I, 38, *G. Correa*, *Lendas da India* (Lisboa 1858) I, 202-03, *D. de Goes*, *Cronica do Rei D. Manuel* I, 59, *Navegacao* do capitão Pedro Alvares Cabral (Col. de Noticias, Lisboa 1867 III) 128-30; their dates are contradictory: there were 70 Portuguese in the factory, of whom 20 escaped (*Navegacao*), amongst them the 5 Franciscans (*Barros*).

¹⁴ The king of Cochin was Unni Goda Varma Koil Tirumulpad, on account of his title simply called Trimumpara by the Portuguese (*Barros* I, 7, 1, 82): cf. *C. Achyuta Menon*, *The Cochin State Manual* (Ernakulam 1911) 61.

¹⁵ The Portuguese, attacked by the Zamorin, king of Calicut, retired with the king of Cochin to the sacred island of Vaipim, till Francisco de Albuquerque came to their rescue in 1503; cf. *Barros* I, 7, 1-2, *Castanheda* I, 49-53 56-57, *Correa* I, 149-65 376-94 *Goes* I, 73 77.

¹⁶ The fortress of Cochin was begun Sept. 1503 (*Castanheda* I, 57).

town lies on the sea-shore) and overtook him¹⁷, and captured his ships and broke them to pieces and killed the Ismaelite sailors, whom they found in them, about 100, and devastated the town with their guns¹⁸.

The leader of the said Franks came to another town called *Cananor* in the same country of Malabar with another infidel king and besought him: 'Give us a place in your town, where we can buy and sell when we return for traffic year by year.' And he gave them a place and a spacious house and received them gladly and treated them very well. And the christian leader gave him vestments of gold ptutka [brocade?] that is scarlet garments¹⁹. Soon he bought 14000 tagar²⁰ pepper and sailed away to his country.

Of his people there are about 20 living in the town of Cananor. When we started from the town of Hormizda [Ormuz] and came to this town of the Indians, Cananor, we made them understand, that we were christians and indicated them our condition. We were received by them with the greatest joy and they gave us beautiful vestments and 20 gold drachmas and honoured our pilgrimage exceedingly for Christ's sake. We remained with them 2½ months and they told us, we also should on a certain day celebrate the holy mysteries, that is to say, offer the Holy Sacrifice. And they destined for it a beautiful place fit for prayer, wherein there was a kind of Oratory. Their priests offer daily the Holy Sacrifice, for this is their custom and rite.

Therefore, on Sunday Nosardel²¹, *after their priests had celebrated we also were admitted and celebrated the Holy Sacrifice, and it was pleasing in their eyes.*

Sailing from there we went to our christians, who are distant from there an 8 days' voyage. The number of the said Franks is estimated at about 400 men. And the fear and dread of them fell

¹⁷ The Latin version of Assemani has wrongly: "comprehenderunt eum". About the whole war, and especially the gallant deeds of Durate Pacheco, who defended the pass of Cambalão against the Zamorim 1503-04, see *Barros* I, 7, 5-8, *Castanheda* I, 67-88, *Correa* I, 404-12 480-89 ("Calicut lost over 20,000 men"), *Goes* I, 85-112.

¹⁸ The letter speaks of the victory over the Moorish fleet of Calicut at Pandarane, where over 300 enemies were killed, and of the bombardment of Calicut in 1502; cf., *Barros* I, 6, 5, *Castanheda* I, 48, *Correa* I, 328-35, *Goes* I, 69.

¹⁹ The Latin Version has wrongly; "Hoc bello defunctus Francorum dux". About the foundation of the factory at Cannanore s. *Barros* I, 5, 10, *Castanheda* I, 48. *Corroa* I, 295-300 (presents "6 peças de cetym e veludos de cores, e huma peça de brocado" etc.), *Goes* I, 69, ("V. da Gama entregou a el Rei de Cananor G. Gill Barbosa feitor e outros atté 20").

²⁰ 1 taghar = 200 kg. (*Giamil* 594.).

²¹ 7th. Sunday after Pentecost.

on all infidels and Ismaelites of these countries. The country of these Franks is called Portkal, one of the countries of the Franks, and their king is called Emmanuel. We beseech Emmanuel, that he may conserve him.

Brethren, do not complain, that we have extended this letter too much! We only wished and tried, to inform Your Highness about these things. And the Lord be with us all. Amen.

This letter was composed and sent from the country of India in the year of the Greeks 1815 [1504 A. D.]. But to God be the glory and the honour and the thanksgiving and the adoration, now and for ever and in all eternity. Amen!

Herewith finishes the letter, and to Our Lord be praise and upon us his mercies in eternity!"

The foregoing letter is interesting for many reasons. Here we point only to one fact: the four bishops and their Syro-Malabar Christians did not consider themselves schismatics, or separated brethren, or a church different from that of Rome, but they considered the *Portuguese their brethren in the faith*, their Latin church though of a different rite with different customs part of their own church, and the same was the attitude of the Portuguese and the Portuguese priests towards them. This mutual conviction found its clear expression, and public confirmation, when the four bishops invited by the Portuguese offered the Holy Sacrifice in their own rite in the Portuguese church of Cannanore after the Mass said by the Portuguese priests.

This general conviction of the Syro-Malabar Christians and the Portuguese of their unity of faith finds its expression in several facts mentioned in the *Contemporary Portuguese sources*. When Cabral arrived in India in 1501 one of the messengers who had in 1490 gone to Mesopotamia to get bishops for his people, *Joseph*, (together with his brother who died on the voyage) accompanied him to Lisbon on a pilgrimage to Rome, where he had an audience with Pope Alexander VI and gave an extremely interesting account of his people and its religious customs²².

The following year 1502, when Vasco da Gama arrived in India on his second voyage, the St. Thomas Christians of *Cranganore*

²² His report was published in the *Fosciculus temporum*, the *Paesinovamente ritrovati* (Vicenza 1507) and in *Grynaeus Novus orbis* (Basileae 1532); cf. *Navegação de Cabral* 131, *Barros* 1, 5, 8, 446, *Nagan Aiya*, The Travancore State Manual (Trivandrum 1906) II 149-50, *W. German*, Die Kirche der Thomaschristen (Gütersloh 1877) 315-17. Is he the parish priest of Cranganore, "who returned from Portugal", mentioned 1518 by *Penteado*? See n. 56.

“hearing that he was the captain of one of the most catholic and powerful kings of Christendom in Europe”, sent messengers to him to Cochin, putting themselves under the protection of the king of Portugal, and as a sign that they wanted to be governed by him in future they handed over to his captain their sceptre “a red staff with silver ends and three silver bells”, and Vasco da Gama accepted their offer “after having informed himself about their religion and life” as his king had recommended him “to get into communication with the christians of those parts”²³. In 1503 when Alfonso de Albuquerque came to *Quilon*, the St. Thomas Christians of the place, for whom he got their ancient privileges confirmed by their Hindu king, gave him as present for king Manuel one of their three crosses and asked him for church ornaments, a picture of St. James and a bell, which he gave them, leaving them at the same time the Dominican Father Frey Rodrigo to baptize and instruct them “in the rites of our Holy Faith”²⁴. In 1510 we hear, how Albuquerque gives the christian “*Abunas*” (bishops) in Cranganore 1000 Fanams for the restoration of their church²⁵. In 1516 the Portuguese Governor Lopo Soares concludes a treaty with *Quilon*, in which he obliges its queen to rebuild the church of the St. Thomas Christians and restore their ancient rights²⁶ to them, and since 1517 we see the Portuguese together with their friends the St. Thomas Christians going in pilgrimage to the tomb of the apostle St. Thomas in Mylapore and settling down there in the shadow of his church, which is restored by order of the king of Portugal²⁷.

In this whole time we hear little of the 5 Syro-Malabar *bishops* mentioned above. Mar John, whom the four others found “still” alive in 1503, seems to have died soon after that date²⁸; two of the newcomers, Mar Jaballaha and Mar Denha, died soon after their arrival in India²⁹. Mar Thoma, the third one, we find about 1518 giving testimony about the traditions of his church and in 1536 we hear, that he had helped little, had taught “heresies”, but that he

²³ *Barros* 1, 6, 6, 62-64.

²⁴ *Commentarios do Grande A. de Albuquerque* (Lisboa 1774) 1, 5.

²⁵ *Quellen* 26.

²⁶ *Tombo da India* (Lima Felner, Subsídios para a hist. da India Port., Lisboa 1868) 30-34.

²⁷ *Quellen* 69, 114, 150, 351.

²⁸ About Mar John or Johannan see F. de Souza, *Oriente Conquistado* (Bombaim 1881) 2, 1, 2, 16, who follows the very interesting “*Relação da Christandade da Serra*” written 1604 by F. Roz S. J. (British Museum, Add. Mss. 9853) 88 v.

²⁹ *Barros* 3, 7, 11, 236.

had now repented, had publicly gone to confession and communion and called the Franciscans³⁰.

The last of the four bishops was *Mar Jacob*. Of him we hear more. The two following letters written by him give us valuable information about him and his attitude towards the Catholic Church. We give their Portuguese text with English translation.

*Letter II. Mar Jacob to John III. of Portugal, Cochín ca. 1523*³¹.

(Portuguese Text)

(English Translation)

“Muy alto Rey e Senhor,

“Most High King and Lord,

Jacome abuna³² ssacerdote armenio,³³ que rege aos cristãos na Índia que dizem de Coulam³⁴, sabe por teu regno ser temor de Deus seguido y gracia dada de Deus que te alumye, e depois em pagamento em ffin de longos dias a gloria com crescido desejo te peço a Deus.

Jacome Abuna³², armenian³³ priest, who rules over the so called Quilon Christians³⁴ in India, knows that the fear of God is being kept in thy kingdom and grace given by God which may illumine thee, and I pray to God with earnest desire, that he may after a long life give thee in payment the eternal glory.

Por quanto com tua ajuda espero acrecentar a fee em este pouo dos Indios, que em as cousas de Deus rego, mandado a ysso e'nviado por ho patriarca de Babilonia, te quero ffazer ssaber as cousas, em que ategora te he seruido, pera que com elas e per elas te obrigue e moua a me ajudares hacrecentar ha fee em este pouo por seruico de teu Redentor e meu.

Whereas I hope with thy help to increase the faith in this people of the Indians, which I rule in the things of God, for which I have been deputed and sent by the patriarch of Babylon, I want to let thee know the things, wherein I have served thee so far, in order to oblige and move thee with and by them, that thou mayest help me to increase the faith in this people for the service of thy Redeemer and mine.

Averrá quatro annos que hum Padre Mestre Joam Caro³⁵ vejo a

It may be 4 years since a Father Master *Joam Caro*³⁵ came to this

³⁰ *Quelien* 191.

³¹ *Quellen* 99.

³² Abuna, the Abessinian title for bishop.

³³ The Portuguese write constantly “Armenio” for “Aramaeo” (Chaldean) misunderstanding the name the Syro-Malabars give to Mesopotamia for Armenia.

³⁴ “Quilon christians” here = St. Thomas Christians.

³⁵ a About him s. *Quellen* 99.

esta terra, do quall recebi mujtas doctrinas pera mjnha ssalução e deste meu pouo e asy de coussas de teu serviço. Hua das que de teu serviço me avissou ffoy, que hos cristãos que eu rejo aviam toda a pimenta das mãos dos lauradores que ha colhem e que não ha oussarão eles trazer á tua ffeitoria com medo, que hos mouros lhe punhão dizemdo-lhe com ffalssedades e emgano, que lh'a pessauão demassiadamente no pesso e que lh'a pagauão muito mall e que hos espancauão e tratauão como escrauos, e que os teus Portugeses quando viam a sua os roubauão e catiuauão e mandauão pera Portugall, e esto prouauão os mouros por alguns mão cristãos, que com eles no tracto tinhão precario. E por asy a deixar de trazer erra neçessario que a vendessem aos mouros, que então neste tracto soos tractauão, e asy tinhão poder e caussa de a vender hos mouros çuja e cheja d'agua, por quanto tuas naos tinhão necessidade de cargar tomauão a que lhe dauão por hi no aver maneira de este inconveniente se poder remediar, e que habi avia alguns cristãos queffazião ho mesmo mall aprendendo dos mouros, e que este erra tão grande mall, que não ssoo denjficaua a ti, pero era dano a toda cristandade, á que tu ffazes de lá muitas esmolas e poes country. From him I received many instructions for my salvation^{35 b} and that of this my people and also about the things of thy service. One of the things of thy service, which he taught me, was, that the Christians whom I am ruling, got all the pepper from the hands of the farmers who collect it and that they dared not bring it to thy factory for fear, which the Moors instilled into them telling them falsehoods and deceit, that they were giving underweight in the scales and were paying for it very badly and wero beating and treating them like slaves, and that thy Portuguese, when they saw their pepper, would rob them and make them prisoners and send them to Portugal, and this the Moors proved by some bad Christians, who enjoyed favour with them in the trade. And as they so omitted to bring it, they necessarily had to sell it to the Moors, who then were alone dealing in this traffic, and so the Moors, had power and reason to sell it dirty and full of water. For as thy ships had necessarily to take their cargo, they took, what they gave them, as there was here no way to remedy this inconvenience. Also that there were some Christians here, who did the same wrong learning from the Moors, and that this was a

^{35 b} The words of Mar Jacob, that he received many instructions from Fr. John Caro "for his salvation" do not prove a change of religion, for if he had been a heretic before, he would not have said mass in the Portuguese Church, would not have got money for building the church of Cranganore from Albuquerque, would not have got a rent from King Manuel and John III for his missionary work etc.—*Schurhammer, S. J. (Post Scriptum.)*

teu regno por todo ho mundo en crecida honra.

E pois este dano vinha por os meus cristãos sserem dos mouros asy enganados e asy por eles ha uenderem aos mesmos mouros e por alguns já ha trazer çuja e cheia d'aguoa como vião fazer aos mesmos mouros, e pois todos erramos cristãos e de hua lej, que me rogauão muyto, que eu pus- sesse á jsto remedio ffazendo vir os cristãos á tua ffortaleza a tomar concrussão com os Portuguesees pera eles verem, como erão enganados dos mouros, e que lhe mandasse, que dahi por avante não vendessem aos mouros jamais al- gua pimenta, porque o que gan- hauão os mouros melhor ho gan- harião os mesmos cristãos, passey em que não consintessem, que hos cristãos a trouxessem á tua ffeitorja cuja e com aguoa, como antes soião alguns de ffazer, pois erra tanto dano e pouquo seruiço de Deus.

O quall eu oulhando que o dito Padre me dizia a verdade, loguo ffuy por todas aas pouoações dos cristãos e asy como me ele re- queria loguo ho pus por obrra. E pruuue á Deus que tudo remediasse, porquanto trrouxe meus cristãos á tua ffortaleza de Cochim á to- mar conversação com os Portu- gueses, e forão tão agassalhados

great evil, which not only did harm to thee, but to Christianity in general, to which thou from there givest many alms and put- test thy kingdom throughout the whole world in great honour.

And whereas this harm came, because my Christians were so de- ceived by the Moors and because they were selling it to these very Moors and because some were al- ready bringing it dirty and full of water as they saw the Moors do- ing, and as we were all Christians and of the same law, so they beg- ged me much, that I might put a remedy to this by getting the Christians to come to thy fortress to treat with the Portuguese in order that they might see, how they were deceived by the Moors, and I might order them, in future never more to sell any pepper to the Moors, for it was better, if the Christians themselves gained what the Moors were gaining. So I ordered, that they should not suffer the Christians to bring it to thy factory dirty and with water, as some were wont to do before, as that was such a loss and little service to God.

On seeing, that the said Father was telling me the truth, I went at once through all the villages of the Christians, and as they bade me, so I put it at once into practice. And it pleased God to remedy all, for I took my Chris- tians to thy fortress of Cochim to speak with the Portuguese and they were so well received by thy

de teu Veador da Ffazemda Pero Nunez³⁶ e de Manuell Botelho³⁷ teu Ffeito e de Diogo Pereira fidalguo³⁸ e asy de outros que nestas partes te siruem, que quando tornarão pera ssuas cassas, hião assaz de contentes praticando entre ssy, como os mouros o tempo passado hos avião tão ffeamente enganado.

E este ffiz eu por mujtas vezes até que os tiue trazidos em teu amor, e emtam me conçederão e jurarão de nunca jamais dahi por avante vender ha pimenta aos mouros e de ha trazer limpa e ssequa á tua feitória, como de ffeito asy ha trazem segundo tu podes uer por a quebra della, que deste anno e dos dous passados em ela uerás³⁹. E asy tenho todos estes cristãos desta terra atrazido á teu *seruiço*, que quando os ouueres mester, acharás em ela passante de vintecinquo mjll homens de guerra.

Este he, Senhor, ho *seruiço*, que nestas partes te tenho ffeito com entençam de te mouer a me ajudares a estender este pouo por esta India em a ffe de Jhesu Cristo Nosso Redentor. E aguora he mais mester que nunca, porquanto por me asy te servir como tenho dito, hos *mouros* me hão roubado e morto muyta gente, e asy queimado nossas cassas

Vedor da Fazenda Pero Nunez³⁶ and the Factor Manuel Botelho³⁷ and the nobleman Diogo Pereira³⁸ and others also, who serve thee in these parts, that when they returned to their houses, they went very satisfied talking amongst themselves, how the Moors in passed times had been deceiving them so shamefully.

And this I did many times until I had brought them to love thee, and them they agreed and swore to me, never more to sell the pepper to the Moors and to bring it clean and dry to thy factory, as they indeed are doing, as thou canst see by the shrinkage, which thou shalt see in that of this and the last two years³⁹. And further I have won all these Christians of this country for thy *service*, so that when thou shalt be in need of them, thou shalt find in it over 25,000 warriors.

This, Lord, is the *service*, which I have done thee in these parts with the intention to move thee to help me to increase this people through this India in the faith of Jesus Christ Our Redeemer. And now it is necessary more than ever, for, because I served thee as I have said, the *Moors* have robbed and killed me many people and also burnt our houses

³⁶ He came 1519 as Vedor (*Correa* 2, 574).

³⁷ He was still factor in 1525 (*Correa* 2, 925).

³⁸ Lord of Bendurte, cf. *Quellen* 358.

³⁹ Since 1522 the St. Thomas Christians sold their pepper directly to the Portuguese; cf. *Quellen* 121.

e igrejas⁴⁰, do que somos assaz arranquados e desonrados. E pera tua Alteza nos mjlhor ajudar com justa caussa te ffaço saber, que ja a mujto tempo, que estes cristãos de Couião comprarão com seu dinheiro hua grande terra em *Cranganor* com sua jurdição pera matar como pera ho mais del Rey que então erra segundo que ele nela tinha, do que temos hua *lamyna de cobre* asselada de sseu sselo⁴¹. Esta terra hora he usurpada de mujtos Senhores, por o quall te peço man e-a ao Vissorey por tua letrra nos ha mande entregar, pera que os cristãos nela sse cheguem mais ao teu seruiço. E asy vedará, que ha pimenta que vay pera Calequu não saya pera ffóra. E asy nela poderás ter pesso adonde a mais da pimenta hirá, e asy escussarás de direitos que pagas a el Rey de Cochim mais de sete mill cruzados por anno. E para isto mjlhor se poder ffazer e estar tua fazenda ssegura, poderás nela mandar ffazer hua *tore ou ffortaleza*⁴² como mais vires ser teu seruiço. E neste casso aconselhai bem, porque eu te aconselho ho proueito e mais sseguro pera te. Soo te peço nos mandes uingar esta terra e a teu Vissorey que nos ffauoreça e guarde. Porque se assy ho ffizerres, tu terás sempre este seruiço que tenho dito seguro destes cristãos e de mim. E oulha que te aconselho coussa que te conuem muj mujto, porque se

and churches, by which we are much distressed and disgraced.

And that thy Highness may help us the more with just reasons, I make known unto thee, that it is already a long time, since these *Quilon* Christians bought with their money a big piece of land in *Cranganor* with power to pronounce sentence of death and all the other rights, which the then ruling king had in it, of which we have a *Copperplate* sealed with his seal⁴¹. This land is now usurped by many lords. Therefore I beseech thee, order the Viceroy by a letter from thee, get it restored to us, that the Christians in it may be won more for thy service. And he shall also forbid the pepper, that goes to Calicut, to leave the country. And thou couldst also have a scales in it, whither most of the pepper will come, and so thou shalt avoid the taxes, which thou payest to the king of Cochim, over 7,000 Cruzados every year. And that this may be done better and your property be safe, thou canst get a tower or *fortress* made there⁴², as thou shalt find it better for thy service. And in this case give good advice, for the advice I give thee is for thy profit and safer for thee. Only I ask thee, order that this land be restored to us, and to thy Viceroy, that he favour and guard us. For if thou wilt do this, thou shalt always have from these Christians and myself this service, of which I

⁴⁰ On this occasion the Mahometans burned also their Cranganore Church "from the time of the Apostle St. Thomas" (*Quellen* 121).

⁴¹ About this copperplate s. below n. 69.

⁴² The Cranganore fortress was built 1536 (*Quellen* 191)

não o que escrevo mandas fazer, podrá ser, que sse descontentem estes cristãos de ti e asy nunca terrás pimenta senão çuja e chea d'aguaa.

Mandaste-me hua letra del Rey teu pay que Deus tem, que ha recebesse por tua, a quall me trouxe *Alvaro Penteado*⁴³, que pera ysto mandaste. Em a quall se continha, que me mandauas dar cada hum anno de mercé XX milreis e de mantimento o que tinhão os teus sacerdotes na India. E asy me mandaste nela pedir que leixasse baptizar aos sacerdotes, que pera yso mandaes. Quanto á esmolla Deus te dê ho pagamento della e eu ho pagarej com orações e melhorando estes seruiços que tenho dito. Quanto á *Alvaro Penteado* baptizar hos cristãos da terra, se tu ho ffazes por te parecer, que eu baptizo em outra fforma da que deu *Jhesus Cristo* no Euangelio e a ysto alguns asy te infformarão podes ser infformado por ho Padre Mestre *Joam Caro* como erra nisso enganado e não te pareça eu ser tão neceo e pouquo sabedor em a ley, que não ssaiba a Sagrada Escritura Uelha e Noua⁴⁴, quanto pertença á este casso de baptizar, ajnda que seja verdade, que eu não sou enssinado nos costumes dos Papas e no costume romano⁴⁵. E sse mandares todavia, que eu consinta o dito *Alvaro*

spoke, safe. And see, that I advise thee a thing, which becomes thee very much, for if thou dost not command, what I write, then it can happen, that these Christians get dissatisfied with thee, and so shalt thou never obtain pepper otherwise than dirty and full of water.

Thou hast sent me a letter from the king thy father,—God rest his soul!—that I might take it as thine. *Alvaro Penteado*⁴³, whom thou hast sent for this purpose, brought it to me. Therein was said, that thou orderest the favour of 20 Milreis to be given me yearly and as maintenance what thy priests had in India. And further thou lettest me ask in it, I should allow *Alvaro Penteado* and the priests, whom thou sendest for it, to baptize the Christians of the country. As regards the alms, may God give thee the reward for it, and I shall pay it with prayers and with these services of which I spoke. As for *Alvaro Penteado's* baptizing the Christians of the country, if thou doest this, because thou thinkest, that I baptize in a manner different from that, which *Jesus Christ* gave in the Gospel, and some so informed thee, then mayest thou be informed by Father Master *Joam Caro*, how thou hast been deceived in this. Do not think, that I am so silly and know so little of the law, that I do not know the Holy Scripture Old and New⁴⁴ as far as concerns this

⁴³ About him see below (n. 53-56).

⁴⁴ About the New Testament of Mar Jacob, written 1510, see *Quellen* 25.

⁴⁵ That is: the Latin rite.

Penteado bautizar com os outros Padres, fallo-ey. Pero parece-me que perderás aos cristãos de tua amizade, porque tem em mim mujto credito e não querão que outrem bautize ssendoeu viuo. Porém trazel-os ey entanto comjgo até uer tua reposta pera que os cristãos tomem conuersação com eles, e os ditos Padres entanto hos enxinarão nas cousas da ffee, e eu hos enduzirej a que depois de eu morto hos reřebão em meu lugar, e asy se remediará hum e outro segundo o seruiço de Deus, a quem eu te encomendo.

matter of baptizing, though it be true, that I am not instructed in the usages of the Popes and in the Roman usage⁴⁵. And if thou in spite of that shouldst order me, to allow the said Alvaro Penteado to baptize with the other Fathers, I shall let them do so. But it seems to me, thou shalt lose the friendship of these Christians, for they esteem me very much and do not want anybody else to baptize them as long as I am alive. But in the meantime I shall take them with me, until I get thy answer, that the Christians may get acquainted with them; and the said Fathers shall in the meantime instruct them in the things of the faith, and I shall introduce them, that they after my death may receive them in my place, and so one and the other thing shall be remedied according to the service of God, to whom I recommend thee.

Esto abaixo pos ho Padre em caldeu, em que ha por bem a verdade, que ele dixे ho ssobredito⁴⁶.

What follows below was written by the Father in Chaldean, wherein he testifies as true, what he says above⁴⁶.

Hállên surtē men mehîlâ Ja'qôb dabsem episco de Hendu mâr Scham pussaq mellē hállên ”.

This letter is from the humble Jacob called 'Bishop of India'. Master Joam wrote these words ”.

[Address] “Perra el Rey Nosso Senhor ”.

[Address] “To the King Our Lord ”.

From this letter it *follows*: 1. Mar Jacob asks the help of the Portuguese king for his missionary work in India. 2. He gets from him 20 Milreís yearly and the ordinary allowance of the Portuguese priests in India. 3. He brings his Christians in touch with the Portuguese, makes them their friends and brothers in arms. 4. He hopes from the Portuguese help against the Mahometans and Hindu usurpers. 5. He confesses that he has received

⁴⁶ The rest in Syriac by Mar Jacob; Photo in *Quellen* Plate XVIII.

many instructions from the Dominican Father João Caro for his salvation and that of his people. 6. He defends himself against false accusations as if the baptism administered by him was defective and calls upon Caro as witness for his theological scriptural knowledge in this matter. 7. He considers it imprudent to let Penteadó and his companions, sent by the king for missionary work among the St. Thomas Christians, go and baptize them, as these Christians are accustomed to be baptized by him only. But if the king insists he is ready to allow it. 8. In the meantime he takes these Portuguese priests with him, that they may get acquainted with his Christians, and may instruct them in their faith, so that his flock may receive them in his place after his death. 9. Mar Jacob confesses that he is not instructed in the usages of the Popes and Rome, that is in the Latin rite.

The third letter goes a step further. We see from it, that Mar Jacob in the course of time not only became acquainted with the Latin rite, but that he even prevailed on part of his Christians to accept it.

*Letter III. Mar Iacob to John III. of Portugal, Cochín 16th Dec. 1530*⁴⁷.

(Portuguese text)

“Jacome Abuna beijo as mãos de Vossa Alteza. Cá me deram hua sua, com que tomei muita consolaçam em me parecer que sse lembra de mim e assy destes christãos da terra, os quaees me emcommenda que trabalhe com elles. Deus sabe a mjnha vontade que he ser boa para ysso, e quanto á obra trabalho njssó quanto posso, como Vossa Alteza poderá saber por Alfonso Mexias⁴⁸, ho quall me tem ajudado por ser amjguo do seruiço de Deus e de Vossa Alteza. E tambem dos Padres de Sam Francisco som bem ajudado, porque ho Padre Comisario⁴⁹ foy lá comjgo duas hou

(English Translation)

I, Jacombe Abuna, kiss the hands of your Highness. Here they gave me a letter from you, which gave me much consolation, as I saw from it, that you think of me and also of these christians of the country. You recommend them to me, that I should work for them. God knows my will that it is good for it, and as regards the work, I am working in it as much as I can, as your Highness may learn from *Alfonso Mexias*⁴⁸, who has helped me well, as he is a friend of the service of God and that of your Highness. Also the *Fathers of Saint Francis* help me well. Fõr the Father

⁴⁷ *Quellen* 130.

⁴⁸ He was in India 1524-31 (Archivo Portuguez Oriental, Nova Goa 1865, Fasc 51 p. 76).

⁴⁹ Frey Antonio de Padrão O. F. M. (*Quellen* 131); about him see *Schurhammer Ceylon zur Zeit des Königs Bhuvaneka Bâhu u. Franz Xaviers 1539-1552* (Leipzig 1928) 89-90.

tres vezes e fizemos muito proueito porque bautizámos dozetas e sesemta e sejs almas, e assy se casaram á porta da Igreja e trouxemos mujta pimenta. E esta ida que lá himos he com grande trabalho, porque imos por terra de imigos, em cujo poder e terra elles moram, e fauoreçem alguns duros de coração e outros que tem boa vontade de sse tornarem ao costume da Igreja de Roma⁵⁰ e non ousam com medo delles, asy como poderá dizer hum deses Frades, que lá vam⁵¹, ho quall sse achou lá com ho Comisario. E assy lhe poderá dizer a boa vontade que achou na gemte asy que com ajuda de Deus e de Vossa Alteza iremos em creçimento. E nom leuo lá ho Padre Alvaro Penteado, porque nom ousou com medo da gemte, qae nom estam muito bem com elle. Cá dey comta ao Governador de Vossa Alteza asy como me mandou da Igreja e christãos de Cranganor. Lá escreue a Vossa Alteza. Lembrasse Vossa Alteza diso. E asy com conselho do Governador trouxe pera Cochim sete moços, os cuaes lem bem e tem bom principio e desejo. Feyta em Cochim aos dezaseis de Dezembro de mjll e cinquecento XXX.

Commissary⁴⁹ went with me there 2 or 3 times and we brought forth much fruit, for we baptized 266 souls and, besides, people were married at the door of the Church and we brought much pepper. And this journey to that place is very arduous, for we go through enemies' land, in whose power and land they dwell, and they [the enemies] favour some, who are hard of heart, and others that have good will to go over to the usage of the Church of Rome⁵⁰, but have not the courage to do it for fear of them as one of the Friars who go there [to Portugal]⁵¹ can tell you, who was there with the Commissary. He can also tell you the good will he found amongst the people, so that with the help of God and that of your Highness we shall make progress. And I don't take Father *Alvaro Penteado* there, for I don't dare to do so for fear of the people, who are not very satisfied with him. Here I rendered account to the Governor of your Highness, as you ordered me, about the Church and Christians of Cranganor. He writes to your Highness. May your Highness think of it. And further I brought with the advice of the Governor 7 boys to Cochim, who read well and have good beginnings and desires. Written in Cochim, the 17th of December 1530.

⁵⁰ To the Latin rite.

⁵¹ Frey Duarte O. F. M. (*Quellen* 131).

Beijo as mãos de Vossa Alteza⁵² I kiss the hands of your High-
Ja'qôb dabsem episco." ness⁵².

Jacob called 'Bishop.'

The foregoing letter corroborates the second one. *We see from it*:—(1) The Portuguese king is satisfied with the missionary work of Mar Jacob and recommends it to him. (2) The Portuguese Factor and the Franciscans are helping him in his mission work among the Syro-Malabarian Christians. (3) These Christians are divided; part of them cling to their Syrian rite and are (for political reasons) helped in their resistance by the native Hindu kings; part of them are ready to accept the Latin rite but are prevented from doing so by the Hindu kings in whose territory they are living: part of them accept the Latin rite at the instance of Mar Jacob and his Franciscan helpers. (4) Mar Jacob has the children of his Christians educated by the Franciscan Fathers in Cochin, with whom the St. Thomas Christians are well satisfied. (5) Penteado is disliked by the same Christians and is therefore not allowed to accompany the bishop to their villages.

Let us add a few passages from *contemporary documents* that can throw light on the two foregoing letters.

That the St. Thomas Christians disliked Alvaro *Penteado* is explained by a letter of Seb. Pirez, Vicar General of India, to king John III, from Cochin in 1527, in which he says:

"Your Highness sent a Padre Alv. Penteado there, who does not seem to me to be the right man, for he has a hard head and a very hot temper: and the people who are Christians since the time of St. Thomas, are very little satisfied with him and this they told me already many times. Mind, he has been occupied for ten years already with that work and has not baptized a single one. With me these Christians are on good terms."⁵³

Still stronger is the letter, which Fr. Vicente de Laguna, O. P. wrote to the king from Goa in 1530:

"In São Tomé there are countless Christians. A priest called Alv. Penteado, who knows very little and is very dissolute, has charge of the Church and Christians. Therefore the Portuguese of the Coromandel Coast wrote to the Governor many things about him and drove him away from there writing, that if they sent him back, they would kill him on account of his bad example."⁵⁴

⁵² The rest in Syriac by Mar Jacob; Photo in *Quellen* Plate XVIII.

⁵³ *Quellen* 114.

⁵⁴ *Quellen* 128.

This explains also a passage in a letter of João Garções to John III, from Cochin, dated Jan. 2nd 1529, which reads :

“ You sent there (to the St. Thomas Christians) Fr. Alv. Penteado, to instruct them. But the captains do not show him any favour, and therefore the Christians think, all he says are lies and they believe rather their bishops that came from Armenia ”⁵⁵.

Another reason, why the Syro-Malabarian Christians believed their bishops rather than Penteado, was, because he wanted them to accept the Latin rite and all its customs, as the letter suggests which he wrote in 1518 after his first visit to Cranganore :

“ As soon as their priest, who came from Portugal, returned [from his pilgrimage to São Thomé] he was scandalized with me and asked me, what I wanted. I said, they should conform to Rome ”⁵⁶.

For the Portuguese missionaries of the first half of the 16th century and later the ideal thing was to win the St. Thomas Christians over to the *Latin rite*. The means employed were : missionary work of Latin priests, especially the Franciscans, amongst the Syro-Malabarian Christians, and the education of a native Latin clergy taken from their own midst. In both regards Mar Jacob gave his help.

We see from his own letters, how he took the Portuguese priests and the Franciscan Fathers with him, to help him in the instruction of his Christians. The same is attested by a letter of the Franciscan Commissary Fr. Antonio de Padrão of 1530⁵⁷ and one of his successors Fr. Lourenço de Goes of 1536⁵⁸. Moreover St. Francis Xavier tells us, that the bishop was in his time living in the Franciscan convent, where the Fathers were doing all they could for him.

Mar Jacob himself informs us, besides, how he sent the first children of his Christians to Cochin, to have them educated there. In 1539 four Malabarian students, at least partly sons of St. Thomas Christians, were sent to Lisbon to study there for the priesthood⁵⁹, and, 1541⁶⁰, Frey Vicente de Lagos OFM⁶¹ founded his college for the sons of the Syro-Malabarians in Cranganore, which in 1549 counted already 100 pupils, sons of the best families of the St. Thomas

⁵⁵ *Quellen* 121.

⁵⁶ *Quellen* 69.

⁵⁷ *Quellen* 131.

⁵⁸ *Quellen* 191.

⁵⁹ João de Barros, Grammat, Lisboa 1540, Introduçam (cf. *Quellen* 4978).

⁶⁰ *Roz, Relação da Serra* f. 93v (Br. Mus., Add. Mass. 9853)

⁶¹ About him s. *Schurhammer, Ceylon* 240 and *Quellen* 2937, 4123 4317 4917.

Christians, as St. Francis Xavier tells us⁶², certainly not without the help of Mar Jacob, the common friend of Xavier and Frey Vicente.

From one of the Syro-Malabarian students in Portugal *Barros* obtained his information about the St. Thomas Christians and Mar Jacob, of whom he writes :

“ A few years before our arrival in India the Armenian Patriarch sent four bishops, of whom two died soon on reaching India. The other two divided the land between themselves, the younger one taking the part from Quilon towards Cape Comorin, the older one residing in Cranganor. This latter being a virtuous man, stopped the above mentioned tyranny of Christening them for money. And Nuno da Cunha being governor always favoured him on account of the virtue he found in him, and also because he (Mar Iacob) was very much inclined towards the order of the priesthood and the ceremonies of the Church of our Roman rite ”⁶³.

That Mar Jacob was not only inclined towards the Roman rite, but even accepted it in his old age, follows from a letter of St. Francis *Xavier*, who writes to John III, from Cochin in 1549 :

“ A bishop from Armenia, called Jacob Abuna, has been serving God and your Highness in these parts these last 45 years, a very old, virtuous and holy man...Here he is only favoured by the Fathers of St. Francis, and they favour him that they could not do more. Write to him a letter full of love and recommend him to your governors, vedor and captains of Cochin... He has been working much amongst the St. Thomas Christians, and now in his old age he is very obedient to the customs of the Holy Mother the Church of Rome ”⁶⁴.

A year later 1550, *Matheus Diaz*, a Latin-Malabarian priest ordained in Portugal, where he had made his studies, wrote from Cochin to king John III, on Jan. 22nd 1550 :

“ On this coast there are many St. Thomas Christians, over 40,000 souls, who formerly had the Patriarchs of Babylon as their prelates. In their name there came men from Babylon as bishops, to instruct them in the Catholic faith, which they did, not without some errors. Amongst other things they ordained the natives, but without the permission to say mass. And now there are here two from the said Babylonia, who first did all after the manner of Babylon, until Your

⁶² *Mounmenta Xaveriana* (Matriti 1900) I 480-81.

⁶³ *Barros* 3, 7, II, 236.

⁶⁴ *Mon. Xav.* I 511.

Highness sent Fr. Alv. Penteado, who with much diligence and zeal brought the said two Babylonians to the obedience of the Holy Mother the Church and obtained for them a salary from Your Highness, and now they no longer do anything after the Babylonian custom and they are very honest and obedient towards the Holy Mother the Church. One, however, of those ordained by one of the Babylonians above mentioned, is going about teaching these St. Thomas Christians the Babylonian custom without fear of God or the Holy Mother the Church, nor has he the permission of his Babylonian prelates, and he has already created much confusion amongst them " ⁶⁵.

What these *Babylonian customs* were we see from the valuable "Relação da Christandade da Serra" written in 1604 by Bishop Francisco Roz, S.J, where he says, that many St. Thomas Christians left Cranganore, when the Portuguese missionaries in Cranganore and the native Latin priests educated by them "hindered their Cassanars [priests] from saying mass with unleavened bread, made people eat fish on fast-days etc., and commanded that they should begin Lent on Ash-Wednesday only" ⁶⁶, and from his Information about the Territory of the Serra diocese, written about 1606, where he says, that they left Cranganore on account of the many molestations of some, also religious, 'who did not understand anything at all that was not of the Latin rite, and declared everything else at once as heresy and superstition, forcing them to eat fish and drink wine in Lent against their rite, though this fasting is more in conformity with the Holy Canons and the fasting of the original Church' ^{67 (a)}.

From Roz we hear also, that Mar Jacob introduced the Sacrament of *Confession*, which he saw in use amongst the Portuguese, ^{67 (b)} translating the formula of absolution from Latin into Chaldaean; but that one of his successors, Mar Joseph, made a better translation, which however was not quite sure either, "because he had no good interpreter and also, as some things written by him prove, because he really knew little Chaldaean" ⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ *Quellen* 4349.

⁶⁶ *Roz*, *Relação da Serra* f. 90 9^v.

^{67a} *Goa* 65, 43v (in the possession of the Society of Jesus). This is to be held in view when the Portuguese indiscriminately speak of the "errors" of the Syro-Malabarian Christians and their Bishops, e. g. the newcomer Ant. de *Eredia* S.J., 1552, when he writes: "They have many erroneous doctrines, because they were instructed by two Bishops, who came from the Preste [sic]". He adds, however: "They have very good Churches, many of their children are in the College of the late Frey Vicente. I visited two of their villages: they obey in all things the Roman Church and are instructed by one of the two Malabarian priests, who studied at Coimbra" (*Quellen* 4917).

^{67b} This can mean only that Mar Jacob introduced the *rite* of private confession as he found it practised by the Portuguese. This is clear from the next article—Editor.

⁶⁸ *Roz*, *Relação* f. 91.

According to Damião de *Goes*, Mar Jacob went from Cranganor to Cochin in 1543, where he took his abode in San Antonio, the Franciscan Convent. Here he met St. Francis Xavier. Here he also died, about a year after his last interview with him in 1549, in the year 1550. On his death-bed he asked his friend Pero de Siqueira as a great favour for himself and his dearly beloved Christians of Cranganor, to redeem the *copperplate grant* containing their privileges, of which he had written to the king of Portugal in 1523 and which he had pawned to a man in the interior for 20 Cruzados some years ago, "two plates, with their text in Chaldean, Malabar and Arabic". Before his death he had the consolation of seeing this treasure restored⁶⁹.

⁶⁹ Much has been written about the *Copperplates of Mar Jacob*, also called the Thomas Cana Plates. *Goes* gives their description: "Ha scriptura era Caldeu, Malabar, e Arabio. Estas taboas são de metal fino, de palmo e meo cada lua de comprido, e quatro dedos de largo, scriptas dambalas bandas e infiadadas pela ban'la de çina" (1, 98). Then he gives a summary of the contents adding, that a Jew deciphered them with great difficulty and translated them into the Malabar tongue, from which they were translated into Portuguese and a copy sent to Portugal, but that he could not find it in the National Archives and that the original must still (1558) be in the Factory of Cochin. *Couto* gives the text according to the Jew's translation (12, 3, 5, 283-85) and says, that on his arrival at Cochin (1559) he still found the originals in the Factory, but that of late (he writes in 1603) they had disappeared (7, I, 12, 15). *Roz* in 1604 gives the same text, somewhat fuller, "following a copy left in India, as the Franciscans had taken the originals to Portugal" (Relação 86v-87v). But when the Copperplates of Mar Jacob disappeared, a "new set" was discovered in the possession of the Christians of *Tevalacara near Quilon*. *Gouvea* writing in 1603 deploring the loss of the former set tells us, how Archbishop Menezes in 1599 saw at Tevalacara a set of 3 plates, with writing on both sides, joined by a ring, 2 palms long and 4 fingers broad, containing the privileges of the Quilon Church, written in different letters and characters, Malabar, Canarin, Tamul and letters of Bisnagaa" (Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa D. Aleixo de Menezes, Coimbra 1606 l. 1, c. 2). *Roz* adds, that the Plates were in the possession of the "tarega ou rendeiro de Teualicare" and that he, *Roz*, in 1601 had a translation made by cassanar Etymana, of which he gives a summary (Relação 85v). 1637 Plates dealing with the privileges of the Manigrâmam Christians are partly engraved on stone in Quilon (in the actual Jacobite Church: see T. K. *Joseph*, Malabar Christians and their ancient documents, Trivandrum 1929, App. VII). In 1758 Plates are again mentioned in or near Quilon in the possession of schismatics (*Germann*, Die Kirche der Thomaschristen 228, *Kerala Society Papers* 4, 192). The Mar Jacob (Thomas Cana) and the Tevalacara Plates mentioned above are regarded as lost (*Joseph*, Malabar Christians 32). We, however, incline to the following hypothesis: The measures given by *Goes* and *Gouvea* are rough estimates; the description of Pero de Siqueira given after his return to Portugal and reproduced by *Goes* is perhaps partly incorrect as is his statement about de Sousa; the "translation" of the Jew, reproduced by *Couto* and *Roz*, is fantastical, giving one or other well or half understood word and for the rest the oral tradition of what the St. Thomas Christians thought the plates contained; and the *Mar Jacob Plates* are identical with the *Tevalacara* and these with the *Quilon Tarisa Plates II*, described and partly deciphered in the *Travancore Archaeological Series* (Trivandrum 1920) II 70-85 and belonging to the time of king Shânû Ravi (end of 9th century). Of these Plates No. I is missing, II and III are in the old Syrian Christian Seminary of Kôttayam (since Micalay 1806), IV in the palace of the bishop of the Mar Thomas Syrian Christians at Tiruvallâ. Plates II and III, written in Vatteluttu and Grantha letters are in Tamil and contain the donation of land by the King of Quilon to Maruvân Sapîr Isô, the builder of the Tarisâ Church at Quilon, and the concession of privileges to the Anjuvannam and Manigrâmam communities. Plate IV gives the signatures in Pahlavi, Kufic and Hebrew. The text is "full of unintelligible words and phrases" and the signatures have only partly been deciphered. The following dates agree in the Mar Jacob, Tevalacara and Quilon Plates, which we call shortly A, B and C, (an English translation of *Couto's* and *Roz's* text is given in the interesting monography of the Kerala Society Papers 4, 189):

Towards the end of 1548 Fr. Nic. *Lancilotto* S. J. wrote, probably from Cochin, where he met his friend Mar Jacob in the Franciscan convent :

“ When the Patriarch for Ethiopia comes, incredible fruit is to be hoped for, because besides Ethiopia other great Christian provinces as Armenia, Syria and Alexandria will be reconciled with the Roman Church; especially because, as I have been told by one from those provinces, all wish to submit to the Roman Pontiff; which they have not dared so far to do because they are hindered by the Turks, who are between them ⁷⁰.

The man, from whom *Lancilotto* received this information, seems to be no other than Mar Jacob ⁷¹. Three years later the newly elected Catholicos of the Syro-Chaldaeans in Mesopotamia, Mar Simon Sulaka, with his flock submitted to the Pope ⁷², and again three years later he was killed by the Turks.

Copperplates, with writing on both sides, in different characters, mentioning a donation of land, given by the king to the leader of the Christians, who builds a church (ABC). The leader is Sapor = Sapîr, the place Quilon (BC). The land is measured by an elephant (AC); the king gives, besides, 72 vidupèru = gifts (A : 62 or 72 casas. B : 72 hortas; the Jew read wrongly : vidu = houses) and five parts (A : 5 tributes, C : panchakhandi = 5 parts?), and privileges to the Manigrâmam (B inscription 1637 = C), and “ direitos, corretagem, chapa, peso ” (BC). Further literature see in *Kerala Soc. Papers* 4, 169, 198 and 201.

⁷⁰ *Selectae Indiarum Epistulae* (Florentiae 1887) 36.

⁷¹ See *Quellen* 4059, where the date “ [Nov? Goa] ” is perhaps better changed into “ [Dec. ? Cochin] ”, because Dec. 26th 1548 *Lancilotto* writes from Cochin: “ Whilst I was writing this, there entered an Armenian bishop, and said ” (*Quellen* 4102) and “ Here at Cochin is a very old Armenian Bishop, who has instructed the St. Thomas Christians for the last 45 years ” (*Quellen* 4100).

⁷² See *Quellen* 4950 and 4951.

THE MALABAR CHURCH AND ROME

BEFORE THE COMING OF THE PORTUGUESE

In our article "Three letters of Mar Jacob, bishop of Malabar 1503—1550," published in the "*Gregorianum*" (Rome) 14 (1933) 62—86, we have shown, that the Malabar Christians, and in particular their Bishop Mar Jacob, considered themselves from the first arrival of the Portuguese in India as their brethren in Christ and in union with the chair of Saint Peter, with Rome. What was their attitude *before* the arrival of the Portuguese?

We know, how well the Papal Legate John de Marignolis O.F.M. was received by the Malabar Christians, with whom he stayed 16 months (1348—50) and how they payed him monthly 100 gold fanams, which he got "as perquisite of my office as Papal Legate," and how they gave him, besides, 1000 fanams, when he left. For the 15th century we have only a letter of Pope Eugen IV to his "beloved Son in Christ, Thomas, the illustrious Emperor of the Indians," in which he recommends his Legate Albert de Sartiano O. F. M., whom he sends to the East. The letter shows, that communications between the Christian Occident and India had been interrupted for many years, as the Pope says: "There has often reached us a constant rumour, that your Serenity and all, who are subjects of your kingdom are the Christians."¹*

But we have an Indian witness, who lived in the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century, who proves that the attitude of the Malabar Christians towards the Church of Rome had

¹ J. C. *Panjikaran*, the Syrian Church in Malabar, (Trichinopoly 1914-34).

* As Assemani says (Biblioth. Orient. IV, 442) "in process of time the prosperity of the Christians of Quilon and Cochin so increased that they gave themselves a king. The first Biliartes (Villalvettam or Villarvattam, the name of the Royal Family) called King of Christians of St. Thomas reigned in Malabar and when after him some of his sons had reigned, at last by the law of adoption the dynasty passed from the Christians to the Heathen Kings of Diamper. When the Portuguese first came to these shores the Malabar Christians were obeying the king of Cochin. They still preserved the sceptre of their king which was a red rod tipped with silver having three bells at the top." They presented the sceptre to Gama and sought protection against the Mohommedans. Gama solemnly accepted the sceptre and promised protection in the name of the king of Portugal (Cf. G. T. *Mackenzie*, Christianity in Travancore, Trivandrum, 1901 p. 10). The ruins of the Royal Palace can still be seen at Diamper near Ernakulam.—Editor.

not changed since the departure of Marignolis in 1350. It is *Joseph the Indian*, a Malabar Christian, who in 1490 went from Malabar to the Catholicos of the East Syrians in Gazarta Bêt Zabdai in Mesopotamia, to ask for bishops for the Indian Church and was himself ordained priest by the Catholicos, "being fairly well instructed". Having returned to Malabar with two bishops and hearing of the arrival of Christians from the Occident in Cochin, he went there from Cranganore in 1501 and sailed with them to Portugal to see the Pope in Rome and the Holy Places in Palestine.² From Lisbon he went with a companion to Rome and Venice, from where he returned to Portugal and to India, where we find him still as parish-priest of his native place Cranganore in 1518.³ What Joseph told in Rome and especially in Venice, where he stayed for many days, was collected and published in 1507 by Fracan-Montalboddo in an extremely rare book: "*Pæsi nouamente retreuati et Novo Mondo da Alberico Vesputio Florentino intitulado*" with the Colophon: "Stampato in Vicentia con la impensa de Magistro/Henrico Vicentino and diligente cura and indu/stria de Zanmaria suo fiol nel MCCCC. VII. a/di III. de Novembre". The book, of which an unreliable Latin translation with essential changes, additions and omissions was 1532 published by Simon Grynaeus in his "*Novus Orbis*" (Basileæ), gives the relation of Alouise da ca da Mosto about his voyage to West-Africa in 1463, a relation the voyage of Vasco da Gama to India 1497 and the Indian countries, of the voyage of Cabral in 1500, of those of Columbus and Vespucci and finally in the 6th book some contemporary letters from Lisbon about Cabral's voyage, to which the editor adds chapters 249—292 about Joseph the Indian according to the relations of those who conversed with him during his stay in Venice. Following the edition of 1507, written in Venetian Italian, we give the passages illustrating the attitude of Joseph and his Christian brethren in Malabar towards the successor of Saint Peter, the Pope of Rome.

Editio princeps 1507

Ueneno da una cita chiamata Caranganor. II fratelli Christiani, quali desideranano uenire ab parte de Ponente per poter andar a Roma and Jerusalem. Li quali montadi sopra le Carauelle...Tol-

English translation

Two Christian brothers came from a certain town called Cranganore. They wanted to get to the Occidental Parts to be enabled to go to Rome and Jerusalem....They ascended the Caravels. And they

² *Schurhammer*, Three Letters of Mar Jacob. 63. 69.

³ *Ib.* 8t. The Syro-Malabarish parish-priest of Cranganore, "who came from Portugal", mentioned 1518 is probably our Joseph.

sero el camin loro verso portogal. Dei quali fratelli uno mori per camino; laltro si uinere nominato Joseph. Dapoi al fine de Zugno MCCCCCI ariuorono a lisbona. Zonti Che foreno in dicto loco, Joseph predicto stete fino al mese de Zener. E partendesi de dicte loco, per la majesta de quel Signore Re li fu dato uno per sua compagnia, quelle lo acompagnasse a Roma, Venitia and Jherusalem. E cosi essendo stato a Roma uene poi a Venetia nel anno MCCCCII nel mese de Zugno and dimoro per molti zorni. Nel qual tempo se hebbe notitia dal dicto Joseph de le cose inferius scripte.

C. 230. Joseph sopradicto e homo de eta de anni XL scinto de natura beretino, and de comune statura a iudicio de chi q'ello ha uisto and con lui parlato. E homo ingenioso, ueridico e de summa integrita, in tanto che per quello s'e potuto comprender ist vite exemplaris a and possi dir de amplissima fede

[Then follows a description of the Hindu religion as practised in Cranganore, after which the editor adds :]

Sono molte altre sorte de sacrificii, li quali epso Joseph per non hauer la lingua ne hauer gran praticha cum gentilli non ne ha saputo explicare el tutto.....

took their way to Portugal. Of these brothers one died on the way, the other is alive and is called Joseph. Hereafter they arrived in Lisbon at the end of June 1501. After their arrival in the said place, the said Joseph remained there till the month of January. And when he departed from that place, he was by order of His Majesty the King of that country, given a certain person to accompany him to Rome, Venice and Jerusalem. After having been therefore at Rome, he came from there to Venice in the year 1502 in the month of June and remained there for many days. During this time the informations of the things written below were got from the said Joseph.

C. 230. The aforesaid Joseph is a man forty years old, meagre, of a brownish colour and of common stature after the judgment of those who saw him and spoke with him. He is an intelligent man, veracious and of the greatest integrity, as far as one could judge from his conversation he is of an exemplary life and one can call him a man of very great faith.

There are many other sacrifices, but as Joseph did not know the language well enough and had not had much conversation with the gentiles, so he could not explain all.....

[Then follows a description of the Christians, living "from the Indus up to Ormus" and in Cranganore, of whom Joseph said:]

Questi Christiani predicti in rebus divinis hanno per capo loro uno Pontifice, Cardinali XII, Patriarchi II, Veschoni and Archineschoni. Referisse el predicto Joseph lui esser partito cum uno suo patrone Veschouo de la dicta cita de Cranganor, and montato in naue ando uerso la insula de Ornus...e de li passo in terra ferma per mesi III de Zernata. Se ne uene insieme cum dicto Veschuono fino in Armenia a trouar el suo pontifice. De qual esso Veschono fo consecrado e pre Joseph predicto ordinato da messa. El simile fanno tutti li Christiani de India and del Cataio.

These aforesaid Christians have in spiritual things as their head a Pontiff, 12 Cardinals, 2 Patriarchs, Bishops and Archbishops⁴. The said Joseph told, that he departed from the said town of Cranganor with a Bishop⁵, his superior. Ascending a ship he went towards the island of OrmusFrom there he went to the mainland and travelled for three months. So he went with the said Bishop up to Armenia⁶ to find his Pontiff. By him this Bishop was consecrated and the said Fr. Joseph was ordained priest⁷. And the like do all the Christians of India and of Catai⁸.

Questo suo pontifice se Chiama Catholicha and ha la testa rasa ad formam crucis. Fa sui patriarchi, ut superius dictum est: uno uidelicet nel India, l'altro al cataio. Li altri ueschoui and archiueschoui, come e dicto de

This his Pontiff is called Catholicha and he has his head shaven in the form of a Cross. He nominates his Patriarchs⁹, as has been said above, namely one in India and the other in Catai. The other Bishops and

⁴ We need not underline, that the titles and dignities of the Latin Church, of which Joseph had only a very vague knowledge, do not exactly correspond to those in the Chaldean Church of that time. The "Chief Head" is of course the Catholicos in Gazarta, the "2 Patriarchs", as Joseph explains later on, are the Metropolitans of India and China.

⁵ Here the author of *Our Relation* mixed up things, perhaps because he misunderstood Joseph, or because his memory failed. Joseph's Companion from India was George, who was ordained priest, not bishop; then Joseph went to the Convent of St. Eugenius and returned to Gazarta with two monks, who were ordained bishops. Cf. *Schurhammer*, *Three Letters* 63-64.

⁶ With "Armenia" and "Armenians" the Portuguese of that time mean as a rule "Aramea" and "Arameans", that is to say upper Mesopotamia and Eastern Chaldeans. So Mar Jacob is always called an Armenian Bishop.

⁷ *Schurhammer*, *Three Letters* 63.

⁸ China, which still sent flees under Cheng Ho to India, Ormus and Aden (1405-30), had various fortresses in India at that time and got e.g. tribute from Ceylon as late as 1459. See *Schurhammer*, *Die zeitgenössischen Quellen Zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens und Seiner Nachbarländer* (Leipzig 1932) No. 358.

⁹ Patriarch is here Metropolitan, Archbishop.

sopra, manda a le sue prouincie come a lui pare. De questo Catholicha ne e facto mentione in marchio polo, doue tracta de l'armenia, in quel loco dice esser due generationi de Christiani, una de le qual se chiama Jacopiti, l'altra nestorni; and dice loro haver uno Papa, el qual se chiama Jacolita, che e questo Catholicha, che dice pre Joseph pre nominato.

Dice insuper el dicto Papa far veschoui, Archiuerchoui and Patriarchi and mandano nel India. Patriano esser alcuni, che dirano, che auctorita houesse questo Pontifice. El Pontifice nostro-Alexandro essendo pre Joseph predicto aroma and parlando cum sua sanctita de le parte de India, el Pontifice dimando, chi havena dato questa auctorita al suo Catholicha. E pre Joseph li respose, che al tempo de Simon mago sancto Pietro era Pontifice in antiochia. Et essendo nele parte de Roma molestadi li christiani per l'arte de questo Simon mago, non havendo niuno li potesse obstar, fu mandado a suplicar a San-Pietro, che se uolesse transferir fino a Roma. Qual lassando uno suo Vicario uene a roma. E questo e quello, che al presente se chiama *Catolicha et gerit vicem petri*. Cerca el far del dicto Pontifice ouer Catholicha li XII Cardinali predicti se reducano ne la

Archbishops, as has been said above, he sends to their provinces, as he thinks fit. This Catholicha is mentioned in Marco Polo, where he treats of Armenia, for he says there, that there are two generations of Christians, of which the first are called Jacobites, the second Nestorians, and he says, that they have a Pope who is called Jacolita, which is this Catholicha, of whom the aforesaid Fr. Joseph is speaking¹⁰.

Besides, he says, that the said Pope¹¹ creates Bishops, Archbishops and Patriarchs and sends them to India. There might now be some, who will ask what authority this Pontiff has. Our Pontiff Alexander, when the aforesaid Fr. Joseph was at Rome and spoke with His Holiness about the region of India, the Pontiff asked him, who had given this authority to his Catholicha. And Fr. Joseph answered him, that at the time of Simon Magus Saint Peter was Pontiff in Antiochia. And as the Christians in the parts of Rome were molested by the craft of this Simon Magus, and as there was nobody who could withstand him, they sent to Saint Peter entreating him, to transfer himself to Rome. So he left a Vicar behind in his place and went to Rome. And this is the one who at present is called *Catolicha* and he *rules in the name of Peter*. And as regards the

¹⁰ Marco Polo l. 1, c. 15. Speaks of Mossul, not of Armenia in the said connection.

¹¹ Catholicos.

provincia de Armenia, doue fanno el pontifice loro, *qual auctorita dico no hauer dal Pontifice Romano.*

creation of the said Pontiff or Catholica the 12 aforesaid Cardinals betake themselves to the province of Armenia, where they create their Pontiff *which authority they say they have from the Roman Pontiff.*¹²

C. 234. Como consecrano and sepellisceno li morti cum le sue feste.

C. 234. How they consecrate and bury the dead with their feasts.

Hanno insuper Sacerdoti, Diaconi and Subdiaconi . . Se confessano, se comunica no como nui, ma non hanno l'ultima unzione and in loco di quella benedicano el corpo . . .

They have, besides, priests, deacons and sub-deacons . . . they go to confession and Communion as we do, but they have not got the Extreme Unction, they bless the body instead

C. 239 Domandando a pre Joseph, se in quel loco e facto mentione de le parte nostre, dice deli non se far mentione salue che di Roma, Franza and Venetia. Et esser facta grandissima existimatione dele monete Venetiane. El qual pre Joseph essendo sta mandado dauanti la nostra Illustrissima Signoria monstre alcuni

C. 239 when they asked Fr. Joseph, whether in that place [Cranganore] our parts were mentioned, he said, that people do not mention them except Rome, France and Venice. And that they hold in the greatest esteem the Venetian coins. Which Fr. Joseph having been called before our Illustrissima Signoria, showed

¹² Here the editor of the Latin translation of Basil of 1532 adds:—"Everybody knows, that this is wrong; for there is only one spouse of Christ, the figure for the One Roman Church outside of which there is no salvation; and what is said about others is all invention not deserving any faith. This I wanted to say, that somebody might not think he had to recede from the solidity of the Rock of Christ. Therefore there is one God, one Faith and one Holy Roman Church." This remark, suggested by the dangerous times of the Reformation and by the author's zeal for the one true Church of Christ, is based on a wrong interpretation of Joseph's words, who does not speak of an independent Head of the Eastern Chaldeans, but expressly acknowledges the Supremacy of Rome in its Catholic sense. It is *entirely wanting in the Original* of 1507. The Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria on account of the connexion of their Sees with St. Peter enjoyed always an eminent position and special patriarchal privileges and formed so together with Rome a certain Triarchy, which supposed the Supremacy of the Popes in its Catholic sense, and was expressly acknowledged by the Popes e.g., by St. Gregory the Great (590—604) in his letter to Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, and St. Nicholas (865) in his letter to the Emperor Michael and in his letter to the Bulgarians: Cf. *M. Jugie, Theologia Dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium ab Ecclesia Catholica dissidentium* 4 (Parisii 1931) 451 and *Migne lat* 119,949 and 1011-12. The Patriarch of Antioch called himself "Patriarch of Antioch and the whole East" and though the parts beyond the Euphrates on account of the constant wars between Persians and Romans were later on separated, yet after the Patriarchs of Seleucia had fallen into Nestorianism, those of Antioch reclaimed jurisdiction over the Catholics in the East. So e.g. the Melchite Patriarch of Antioch writes in 1050, that he had under him two Catholicoses, to whom were subject Asia, India and other countries.—*Panjikaran* 21.

ducati del dese da ca sten, che some ducates of the Doge da Ca lui da quella parte hauea portade... Sten [Michele Steno, Doge 1400-14], which he had brought with him from those parts... ¹³.

So far the Relation on Joseph the Indian. His long and dangerous pilgrimage to Rome to the successor of St. Peter, and his explanations which he gave to Alexander VI about the Primacy of Rome, by the authority of which, he says, that their "Cardinals" elect their Catholicos in Mesopotamia, show, that he considered himself not a heretic or schismatic, but a Catholic, a true child of the one true Church founded on the rock of St. Peter, from whom his Catholicos derived his power through Antioch.

This testimony is important, for Joseph was not a simple, ignorant layman, but he was the representative, whom the Syro-Malabarians having been without bishops for generations in 1490 sent to Mesopotamia to their Catholicos to get from him bishops for India. We must, therefore, see in him also the representative of his Indian brethren and as he left India already in 1501, by the first ships he met of the Portuguese, he gives us not only his own private opinion about the Primacy of St. Peter, but also *the opinion of the Syro-Malabarian Christians before the coming of the Portuguese*. This explains also the attitude of the same Christians towards the Portuguese from the very beginning, who saw in them always their brethren in faith.

But Joseph was more. He knew the faith of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia, where he stayed in 1490, of the monks of St. Eugenius, where he went to get two monks as bishops for India, he knew the Catholicos Mar Simeon, by whom he, "being fairly well instructed" was ordained priest. He is therefore also *the representative of the faith of his brethren in Mesopotamia*. And when he says, that his Catholicos is the Vicar of St. Peter and that their "Cardinals" elect him by the authority which they derive from the Roman Pontiff, then he agrees simply with the faith manifested 50 years later by the same Chaldean Christians, when they after the election of the abbot of the Rabban Hormizd to their Catholicos recommend him to the Pope asking his confirmation, and writing: "To the highest of the Fathers and Pastors,...the Peter of Our days,...the cincture compre-

¹³ Europe was to the Indians known as the land of the Franks, as the Mahometans called the Europeans, Venice as the great merchant City for the East, Rome as the centre of Christianity. Under the Doge Michele Stene the Tartars 1416 destroyed the Venetian commerce in the Black Sea, killing their merchants at the great Fair of Thana (Asow), over 600 persons, and robbing their merchandise in the value of over 20000 ducats; cf. P. Daru, *Historie de Venise* 2 (Paris 1821) 255.

hending all the Christians; who art in the place of Christ, Our Lord and God and sittest upon the chair of Peter the Apostle, and hast the keys of the Height and Depth, to whom Our Lord said: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind, it shall be bound, and whatsoever thou shalt loose, it shall be loosed". And upon this rock he built his Holy Church. And now Christ Our God gave it to Thee, that Thou mayest give Ecclesiastical Orders in his place in as much as it shall be necessary for the flock of Christ, which he handed over to Thee... To Thee he gave his Holy Church...Thou art in the place of Peter... Thou art the Father of the whole Christian people, as Peter was the head of all the Apostles, to whom had fallen the lot to teach the great and famous Rome. We Oriental Nestorians, thy servants, are Orphans without an elected Father, who could give priestly orders. Nor are with us Metropolitans extant whose office it is to ordain the Catholicos, but only a few Bishops, those of Arbela, Salamasta and Adurbeigan.....Therefore we sent for it the monk Siud...and ask Thee, to ordain him Catholicos and give him power, that he will be able to confer the Ecclesiastical Degrees after the usage of the Patriarchs...This also Thou shalt know, our Supreme Father, *that our priesthood comes from Rome, which is the seat of Peter, the Head of the Apostles from the beginning.* But since the time that the order of the Christians has been disturbed by the sons of Hagar the Egyptian [the Mahomedans], *our way to you has been interrupted these last 300 years up to the present day.*"¹⁴

And Siud, the abbot of the convent of Rabban Hormizd, in whose Monastery Mar Simeon IV (who ordained Joseph) and Mar Simeon V, his successor, who died in 1538, were buried, as Patriarch called *Simon Sulâka*, says in his Profession of Faith 1553:

"We acknowledge the Four Great Councils. First that of Nicaea, held at the time of Pope Silvester.....It wrote about the Holy Roman Church, which is the Seat of Peter, that it is the Head of all Churches, which privilege Christ gave her with the words: 'Thou art Peter the rock and upon this rock I shall build my Church.' (Math. 16, 18). This faith is being kept amongst us"¹⁵

¹⁴ See text in *Bessarione* fasc. 61 (Roma 1901) 50-51 and the last part of the letter in *Oriens Christianus* 4 (1904) 271.

¹⁵ *Bessarione* l. e. 52. Sulâkâ speaks of the so-called Nicaean Canons of the famous Maruta of Maïpherkat, the reorganisator of the Persian Church, who died about 420 of which the Syrian original is preserved in Mossul, a copy in the Propaganda Archives, from which the text was published in German by Oscar Braun (*De Sancta Nicaena Synodo. Syrische texte des Maruta von Maïpherkat, Münster 1898*). These canons, highly esteemed in the Chaldean, Syrian, Egyptian and Ethiopic Churches, say for instance: "There shall be 4 Patriarchs. *Their head shall be the one of Rome*, according to the commandment of the Apostles" (Canon 2). "The see of Seleucia in the Orient shall in future have the privilege to create like the Patriarchs Metropolitans, to prevent

No wonder, that Cardinal *Maffei*, presenting the new Catholicos Simon *Sulâkâ* for the Pallium, said: "These Nestorians seem to have kept rather the name of the heretic Nestorius than his heresies." ^{16*}

These texts together with the relation of Joseph the Indian explain the attitude not only of the St. Thomas Christians in India towards the Portuguese, but also the attitude of their leaders, the four bishops sent to India in 1503, contained in their famous letter of 1504, in which they tell their Catholicos Mar Elias, the successor of Mar Simeon IV, of their brethren in faith, the Portuguese, and how they said Mass in their Church in Cananor after the Latin Mass of their chaplain. This explains also the attitude of their last survivor, the saintly Mar Jacob, who remained in union with Rome all his life, from 1503 to 1550, as his letters, discovered by us, those of his time and especially those of Saint Francis Xavier clearly prove.

Three objections might be raised against our thesis, that the St. Thomas Christians, at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese, say in 1500, considered themselves Catholics in union with Rome as at the time of Marignolis 150 years ago, in the 14th century.

1. The St. Thomas Christians considered Mar Jacob an apostate because he went over to Rome and therefore entirely abandoned him, as the letter of St. Francis Xavier of Jan. 26th 1549 proves (So *K. N. Daniel*, Rome and the Malabar Church 1504—97, in: Kerala Soc. Papers 10, 1932, 273).

2. The St. Thomas Christians abandoned Mar Jacob because he, by joining the Latin rite became disloyal to his own Patriarch (ib. 273).

3. The Catholic authors confess themselves, that the first Roman Catholic Patriarch of the Chaldeans came only in 1553, that therefore, his predecessors were Nestorians.

that the pagans take the going to and coming from the Patriarch of the Orient, that is of Antioch in Syria, which lies in Roman Territory, as pretext for stirring up persecutions against our brethren in those parts. The Patriarch of Antioch cedes his power over the whole Orient to him, who is his representative in the Orient" (Canon 3). "The Patriarch is over the whole community and the bishops are the sons of his inheritance... And as the Patriarch has power to do legally all that belongs to his jurisdiction, so shall the one of Rome have power over all the Patriarchs, as the Blessed Peter had it over the whole community, for he has the place of Peter in the whole Church of Rome" (Canon 8).

¹⁶ *Bessarione* l. e. 55.

* Innumerable documents can be produced to prove that the East Syrian "Nestorians" in the 16th century and before believed in the Divinely instituted Roman Supremacy, that they never contradicted or called into doubt this supreme dogma of our Faith, and that they were always in the firm conviction of their being under the Pope of Rome, the successor of St. Peter on whom Christ built His Church. They also believed that their faith was the same as that of the Roman Church. Since we are now treating of their attitude towards the Roman Supremacy, it seems irrelevant here to enter into the question of their Nestorianism—*Editor*.

We answer:—

1. The text of the letter of St. Francis Xavier, written from Cochin on Jan. 26th 1549 to King John III, of Portugal is not correctly given by Coleridge, who follows the very free Latin translation of Possinus. In the Portuguese original, which we discovered in Castellobranco and published in our work: *Ceylon Zur Zeit des Koenigs Bhuvaneka Bâhu und Franz Xavers* (Leipzig 1928) 532—34, the text is (in English Translation):

“ Jacob Abuna has been serving God and Your Highness in these parts these last 45 years, a very old, virtuous and holy man and at the same time disfavoured by Your Highness and almost all here in India. God gives him his grace, for he wants to favour him personally, without using us as mediators to console his servants. Here he is only favoured by the Fathers of St. Francis, and by them he is favoured, that one could not do more. And if it was not for them, the good and holy old man would already be resting with God. Your Highness should write to him a letter full of love, and in a chapter of it you should have him recommended to the Governors and Procurators and Captains of Couchim, that they give him the honour and reception, which he deserves, whenever he comes to them with some demand. *This I do not write, as if the Bishop suffered want, for the Charity of the Fathers of the order of St. Francis will supply abundantly whatever he wants* according to the zeal of charity they have. But Your Highness should write to him, recommending him very much to recommend you to God, for Your Highness needs more to be favoured by the Bishop in his prayers, than the Bishop needs the temporal favour of Your Highness. He has been working much amongst the St. Thomas Christians and now in his old age he is very obedient to the customs of the Holy Mother the Church of Rome.”

As this Letter has been misunderstood, a few remarks will be useful. *First* of all, Xavier writing to the King of Portugal does not speak of the St. Thomas Christians, when he says, that Mar Jacob was disfavoured by His Highness and *almost* all in India. He speaks of the King's Portuguese officials. *Secondly* Xavier does not say, that the St. Thomas Christians, celebrated for their hospitality, especially to foreigners, entirely neglected the bishop in his old age, as he does not speak of the St. Thomas Christians at all in this letter. He does not even say, that the bishop suffered want and was in need of the help of these Christians. On the contrary, he tells us expressly, that he did not need their alms at all, as the Franciscan Fathers gave him abundantly all he needed. *Thirdly*, Xavier does not say,

that without the help of the Franciscans the bishop "would have long ago breathed out his soul, worn out by affliction." This is a wrong translation of Possinus-Coleridge. What he wants to tell the King, is, that if it was for the Portuguese officials, who were (as we see from numerous other contemporary documents from the Jesuit and other Catholic missionaries in India) very careless in paying the King's rents, then the bishop "would already be resting with God." Therefore, if anything follows from this letter, it follows, that the bishop, being an Oriental bishop, was neglected by the Roman Catholic Portuguese officials, and not by his St. Thomas Christians. *Fourthly*, that Mar Jacob was not abandoned by his St. Thomas Christians, follows from another letter of St. Francis Xavier, where he *does* speak of these Christians, a letter written the same day and directed to Fr. Simão Rodrigues, the confessor of King John III. In this letter he says, that the Franciscan Father Frey Vicente founded a college in Cranganore, "where he has about 100 students, sons of those, that descend from the Christians, whom St. Thomas converted, whom they call there St. Thomas Christians, and there are there 60 places of these Christians, and near these places is this college. Frey Vicente is a very great friend of mine In Cranganore there are two Churches, one in honour of St. James and the other of St. Thomas. The St. Thomas Christians have a great devotion to the Church of St. Thomas. Frey Vicente would like to have some indulgences for these Churches for the consolation of these Christians . . . and also a Plenary Indulgence for the vigil of St. Thomas, the feast itself and all the days of the Octave for those who visit the St. Thomas Church of Cranganore". And in his letter to St. Ignatius, written on the same day, Xavier adds, that these 100 pupils of Frey Vicente were the sons of the leaders of the St. Thomas Christians in the 60 places around Cranganore ("son hijos de los principales Christianos") and speaking of the indulgences asked for by Frey Vicente, he says, this would help to increase the devotion of the native Christians, "who descend from those converted by St. Thomas and are very much attached to him ("son mui deuotos suos" ¹⁷). From these two letters it follows with evidence, that the St. Thomas Christians were very much attached not only to St. Thomas but also to the Franciscans, to whom they confided their children, and therefore also to their old bishop, who on account of his old age lived now retired in the Cochin convent of the said Fathers. For

¹⁷ *Monumenta Xaveriana* I (Matri 1900) 480-81, 490-91. Fr. Ant. Eredia S.J. writes 1552 of the St. Thomas Christians near Cranganor: "They have very good Churches, many of their children are in the college of the late Frey Vicente. I visited two of their villages: they obey in all things the Roman Church." (*Schurhammer*, Three letters, 83).

that they confided their children to Frey Vicente was not due to Portuguese force, because they were living outside the Portuguese territory under native princes very often hostile to the Portuguese (e.g. 1550 the King of Tekkumkur fighting against the Cochin King and his Portuguese allies, was killed by the Portuguese on Vadutela), but due to the advice given them by Mar Jacob, who brought their first students to Cochin in 1530¹⁸. *Fifthly*, Xavier recommends Mar Jacob to King John III. Not because he was in need of money or was suffering want (he expressly states the contrary!), but because the King's Officials did not give him, Mar Jacob, the honour and reception due to his dignity, when he came to them with some demand. And what were these demands? Certainly not personal ones. The holy bishop did not long for riches, we know from Barros: (who says he got his information from a Syro-Malabarian Student), that "he stopped the tyranny of christening for money", up to now the chief source of income of the Chaldean Bishops in India, and accepted instead a salary from the Portuguese King¹⁹—his demands were in favour of his Syro-Malabarian Christians, who needed the King's help against the native princes, the Portuguese Officials, the Mahometans etc., as can be seen from the Reforms proposed to John III by the Vicar-General Miguel Vaz 1545, the King's answer 1546²⁰ and his instructions of 1550²¹. Of course, Xavier wants also, that the King's Officials should pay the salary of Mar Jacob, granted him by the King, but if the bishop had sometimes no money, as a (not in all details reliable) passage in *Goes* suggests²², this was not, because he was abandoned by his Christians, but because he did not want to burden them. Already in 1510 Mar Jacob and his fellow bishop accept an alms of 1000 fanams from Albuquerque for the building of the St. Thomas Church of Cranganor burnt by the Mahometans²³, and already in 1523 the bishop thanks John III, the new King, for the allowance of a salary, telling the King in the same letter, that he did not know the "usages of the Popes and the Roman usage", and that his Christians "esteem me very much and do not want anybody else to baptize them, as long as I am alive"²⁴.

¹⁸ *Schurhammer*, Three letters 79.

¹⁹ *Ib.* 82—83. 76.

²⁰ *Schurhammer*, Ceylon Zur Zeit des Koenigs Bhavaneka Bahu 240—41, 301—2, 326—29.

²¹ *J. Freire de Andrade*, Vida de D. João de Castro (Lisboa 1835) I. 4, c. 73.

²² *Schurhammer*, Three letters 84.

²³ *Ib.* 70.

²⁴ *Ib.* 76-77.

So far the answer to the first objection.

2. *The second objection* was, that the Christians abandoned Mar Jacob, because by joining the Latin Rite he became disloyal to his own Chaldean Patriarch. How far Mar Jacob went in accepting the Roman Rite, we do not know. We know, that the Portuguese of his time, missionaries and laymen, did not know much of the Chaldean Rite, and they often called heretical whatever was different from the Latin Rite and that therefore the ideal thing for them was to win the Syro-Malabarian Christians over to their Latin Rite. We know also from St. Francis Xavier, that in his old age the Bishop became "very obedient to the customs of the Church of Rome." We know also from Bishop Roz of Angamale, that Mar Jacob introduced the private confession according to the Roman custom, that he brought children to Cochin and later on to Cranganore, where the Franciscans educated them for the priesthood in the Latin Rite, that he brought his Christians in communication with the Portuguese and with the Franciscans and others, whom he took with him to instruct his flock, and got part of his Christians "to go over to the usage of Rome."²⁵

In his letter of 1523 he gives the reason. The king had sent him Penteado with other priests to baptize his people. He answers: "the Christians do not want anybody else to baptize them as long as I am alive. But in the meantime I shall take them [the Portuguese priests] with me, that the Christians may get acquainted with them; and the said Fathers shall instruct them in the things of the faith and I shall introduce them *that they (the Christians) after my death may receive them in my place.*"²⁶

How is this attitude of Mar Jacob to be explained? Was he disloyal to his Patriarch, the Catholicos of the Chaldean Christians? We think not. The solution of the riddle is to be sought for in the political situation of the time. As in former times, before Mar Jacob's coming to India, the communication between the Syro-Malabarian Christians in far away India and Gazarta near Mossul, the seat of their Chaldean Patriarch had again become impossible. The Portuguese had wiped out the Mahometan trade from the Indian sea from Moçambique to Suez, Basra, and India to the Moluccas and China. The overland trade from Asia to the Levante, one of the chief sources of income to the Turks, had become ruined. In 1517 the Turks had conquered Egypt and since that time they were fighting in Southern Arabia and Abyssinia to get the control of the

²⁵ Ib. 79-84.

²⁶ Ib. 77.

Red Sea and with it a foothold for their attempt to reconquer the Indian trade and to drive the hated Christian rivals back beyond the Cape of Good Hope. 1538 Aden fell into the hands of the Turks and their fleet appeared before the Portuguese fortress of Diu, but was forced to retire. Two years later the Sultan of Zeila, the terrible Ahmed Grãñ, with the help of the Turks had already conquered the greater part of Abyssinia, 1546 the Turks with their ally, the sultan of Shihr, drove the sultan of Kishn, the only friend of the Portuguese on the southren coast of Arabia, out of his kingdom, 1552 a Turkish fleet captured the half finished Portuguese fortress of Maskat and appeared before Ormuz, the key of the Persian Gulf.

At the same time the Turks, constantly harassed by the Shah of Persia, who was aided by Portuguese artillery and gunners, were advancing towards the same direction from their North-Eastern frontier. 1517 Kurdistan fell into their hands, 1534 Baghdad, 1546 Sakiah, 1547 Basra, 1550 al-Katif, so that Pir Beg, the Turkish admiral could in 1552 try to conquer Ormuz, where, he, however, was finally forced to retire²⁷.

Though the Turks' efforts in driving the Portuguese out of India were finally frustrated, yet the Turkish advance in Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt and Abyssinia cut off the communications between the Eastern Churches and that of Europe, the Church of Rome, and as the Turks were also between Upper Mesopotamia and Ormuz, communication was also impossible between the Chaldean Patriarch in Gazarta and the Syro-Malabarian Christians in India. The Turks' power was constantly increasing in the East and West, the hope of opening a way seemed excluded for ever. So we understand, that Mar Jacob saw no other way of providing his Christians, than to put them under the protection of the Portuguese and their bishop in Goa and his Latin Missionaries, to take care of them after his and his companion's death. That this at least partly involved a change of rite, considering the attitude of the Portuguese clergy at that time, seemed to him the lesser evil, especially as his Christians, persecuted by the Indian Mahometans, needed also the political help of the Portuguese, and depended on them for their pepper-trade, of which the Portuguese had the monopoly. This seems to us the only reasonable and possible explanation, and at the same time also a full justification of the attitude of the saintly Mar Jacob and Mar Thoma, his companion.

²⁷ See *Schurhammer*, *Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen Zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asians und Seiner Nachbarländer Zur Zeit des hl. Franz Xaver* (Leipzig 1932), where all the documents are given, and the general survey. ib. p. XXIV—XXXIII.

3. The *third objection* is that according to the Catholic authors themselves the first Roman Catholic Patriarch of the Chaldeans in Upper Mesopotamia was Simon Sulaka 1553.

If there were authors who said that, they were badly informed* though the history of the Eastern Syrians is only partly known and though their Church, far a way in the interior of Asia, could as a rule not communicate with Rome, yet we hear of repeated cases, where these Christians and their Patriarchs tried and succeeded in getting again connection with the Successor of St. Peter in Rome. J. C. Panjikaran in his work "The Syrian Church in Malabar" (Trichinopoly 1914) p. 27 speaks of several Patriarchs of the Eastern Syrians, who were in communion with Rome and sent there their profession of faith: Marimme (758-62), Mar Sabar Jesu V (1226), Mar Makika II (1247), Mar Yahballâhâ III. (1281-1317) 1445 the Pope forbids under pain of excommunication to call the Catholic Chaldeans Nestorians, as they (those of Cyprus) had complained that they were wrongly called by this name, and ordered to call them henceforth Eastern Syrians²⁸.

For 1490—1504, that is for the Patriarchs *Mar Simeon* and *Mar Elias* we have the indirect, but weighty testimony of Joseph the Indian, which we gave at the beginning of our article, and that of the four bishops whom he sent to India contained in their letter which they sent to their Patriarch in 1504, a letter corroborated by the later behaviour of Mar Jacob and Mar Thoma.²⁹

Of their successor *Mar Simon Mâmâ* there can be no doubt that he was a Catholic too. For not only have we still in the Vatican Library 5 manuscript books of the Chaldean Pontifical, of which one, containing also the translation of some portion of the Latin Pontifical, was transcribed by the said Patriarch in Mesopotamia in 1529, but we have the express declaration of Pope Julius III, who confirming his successor Simon Sulâkâ in 1553, that is two years after the death of Simon Mâmâ, calls him "of good memory," an expression only used of Catholic dignitaries.³⁰ *

That the Turks for political reasons hindered as far as possible any communication between the Chaldean Patriarchs and Rome is

²⁸ *Fr. Bartholomew of Jesus*, T.O.C.D., The Syrian Christians in Malabar (Mangalore 1917) 12-14.

* Had Assemani and other Oriental scholars seen all the documents we now possess they would certainly have changed their view on the subject.—Editor.

²⁹ See *Schurhammer*, Three letters.

³⁰ *Panjikaran*, 59.

* The Pope says also that he provides for the Church bereft of its Pastor Simon Mâmâ who died *extra Romanam Curiam*.—Editor.

proved by two documents, which we discovered, both of 1549, one from Cochin and one from Ormuz.

1549 *Fr. Nicolaus Lancilotto S.J.* writes from Cochin, where he met the old Mar Jacob, his friend, to his brethren in Europe, who had informed him, that the king of Portugal was sending a Jesuit Patriarch for Abyssinia: "When the Patriarch for Ethiopia comes, incredible fruit is to be hoped for, because besides Ethiopia other great Christian provinces as Armenia, Syria and Alexandria will be reconciled with the Roman Church: especially because, as I have been told by one from those provinces, all wish to submit to the Roman Pontiff; which they have not dared so far to do because they are hindered by the Turks, who are between them."

The man from whom Lancilotto received his information, seems to us to be no other than Mar Jacob and the province, his country, Upper Mesopotamia, which the Portuguese always call "Armenia" after the Chaldean name "Aramea," the only of the three last mentioned, that was really cut off from Rome by the Turk, as Syria and Alexandria had communication by sea³¹.

A second letter, preserved in the original and unpublished, confirms the first one. On the 10th Dec. 1549 *Fr. Gaspar Barzaeus S.J.* writes from Ormuz to his brethren in India and Europe:

"If Fr. Master Francis allows it, I should also like to visit the Poles, Russians and Armenians, that confine with the Persians and are his tributaries, giving him of certain men who are born one. They are complaining much about the weakness of the Christian Kings, because they do not make war against the Turk. Here I find many captives of these nations and renegades, whom I reconcile all and receive them into the Church (meto todos no gremio da Ygreja reconciliando-os), and let them be set free at once. From this Urmus an ambassador, a Portuguese, went from the part of the Governor of India to the great Sultan of Babilonia. They [the ambassador and his companions] received a letter in corrupt Latin, from a Christian Bishop, who wanted very much to have a meeting with them for his consolation. But amongst them all there was none who knew Latin and so they did not go to see him"³².

Who was this bishop of Babilonia, who wanted by all means to see and console themselves with the Portuguese ambassador and wrote him a letter in corrupt Latin? Evidently he was not living

³¹ *Schurhammer*. Three letters, 85-86.

³² Original in the possession of Society of Jesus: *Goa* 8, 11-28 v; our passage is f. 12 v.

in Baghdad itself, where the ambassador stayed, but at some distance from it, for else he could have easily arranged a meeting with him. We think we are not wrong, if we see in him the Chaldean Patriarch Mar Simon Mâmâ, who in 1529 translated part of the Latin Pontifical and wanted to try by means of the first Portuguese embassy to Baghdad to get into communication, with his Syro-Malabarian bishops and the Pope of Rome.

Simon Bar Mâmâ died in 1551. Since 1450 the dignity of the Catholicos, contrary to the canons, had become hereditary, going over from uncle to nephew. The party of the Nestorian nation, that wanted to restore the method of election prescribed by ecclesiastical law, refused therefore to acknowledge the nephew of Bar Mâmâ and elected as Catholicos the abbot of the convent of Rabban Hormizd, Sind (Sulâkâ), and sent him to Rome to have his election confirmed by the Pope.

The memory of former representatives of the Nestorian Church, who had fostered the union with Rome, of men like Rabban Simon (1245) and the Catholicos Yahballâha III, who lived in the most cordial relations with the Latin Missionaries and sent Rabban Saumâ 1287 with a letter to the Pope³³, had not vanished from the minds of the Nestorians, as their letter of recommendation for Sulâkâ shows, which they tell the Pope: "Our priesthood comes from Rome, which is the Seat of Peter. But since the time, that the order of the Christians has been disturbed by the sons of Hagar the Egyptian, our way to you has been interrupted these last 300 years up to the present day"³⁴. And the same we read in the address of Cardinal Maffei of 1553, based on the information got from Sulâkâ: "It is about 300 years or more, that by common decree of this nation one was sent here to the Apostolic See, to have him by its authority created Patriarch. His name was Maraus (Mar-Ara) and he was created Patriarch by the Pope and sent back to his country"³⁵.

Sulâkâ escaped the watchful eyes of the Turks on his way to Rome, but not after his return. Towards the end of 1553 he came back fixing his seat in Diarbekir, but shortly after the Turks put

³³ See the article of *E. Tisserant*. *L'Eglise Nestorienne* in the "Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique" (Paris 1931) 157-323, where the latest literature is given and made use of, especially 219-223.

³⁴ *Oriens Christianus* 4 (1904) 271.

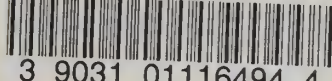
³⁵ *Bessarione* fasc. 61 (1901) 55. Saumâ, whom the Catholicos Yahballâhâ III sent to Rome, is here confounded with the great friend of the Latin Missionaries and representative of the Nestorians Rabban Simon. Maraus=Mar-Ara seems to be corrupted from Mar-Ata. Rabban-Ata was the name, which the Mongols gave to Kabban Simon (*Tisserant* 219-)

him into prison, where he was killed in the beginning of 1555, proving by his martyr's death, how sincere was his Catholicity and how difficult and dangerous the communication between the Nestorians* and Rome had become since the domination of the Mahometans, who saw in every messenger sent to the Christian Occident a spy and a traitor.



* The term "Nestorian" indicates nationality rather than communion when used to designate the East Syrians.—Editor.

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