

Christianity, Latinization and Resistance: Archbishop Menezes and his Encounters with the St. Thomas Christians of the *Serra*, 1599

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Introduction

The St. Thomas Christians or the *Nasranis* are a community of ancient Christians of South India who traditionally trace their origins to the evangelistic activities of the apostle St. Thomas in first century CE. By the time the Portuguese arrived on the coast of Malabar at the end of the fifteenth century the St. Thomas Christians enjoyed strong linkages with the Churches of West Asia. The St. Thomas Christians depended on the West Asian churches for their bishops and used the Syriac language in their liturgy. This essay will explore the protracted interactions (often hostile) that ensued between the St. Thomas Christians and the Portuguese by focussing on notions of Christianity, the processes of Latinization, and forms of Resistance, through a late sixteenth century Portuguese text titled *Jornada do Arcebispo*.¹

The *Jornada do Arcebispo* is a Portuguese work written by Antonio de Gouvea in 1603 and published from Coimbra in 1606. The title of the text translates to 'Journey of the Archbishop'. The archbishop mentioned in the title is Dom Alexis Menezes and the journey refers to a chain of visits made by Dom Alexis Menezes to the various churches and settlements of the St. Thomas Christians in Malabar in 1599 to bring the native Christian community of the region under the obedience of the Roman Church. The journey made by the Archbishop in the *Serra*,² the area where the St. Thomas Christians lived, marked a crucial phase in the protracted interaction between the Portuguese and the St. Thomas Christians that began with the organized arrival of the Portuguese on the shores of Malabar from the turn of the sixteenth century. In the prologue to the book, Gouvea confidently claims that the book deals with the

*bringing of Christians who in this Oriental India are called as of St. Thomas, residents of the Mountains of Kingdoms of Malabar, to the obedience of the Holy Roman Church and giving up of the errors in which they lived, embracing the truth of the purity of the Catholic Faith, of which they are kept apart.*³

In a Christian Europe that was torn by the forces of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the story of Archbishop Menezes and his mission found many readers. Within three years of the Portuguese edition being published from Coimbra, a French translation of the *Jornada* was published from Bruxelles and Antwerp in 1609.⁴ In the eighteenth century, a Latin version of the text was published by Joannes Facundus Raulin.⁵ The *Jornada*, no doubt, had considerable and sustained circulation, especially in the more Catholic regions of Europe. However, it was only in 2003, four hundred years after the original text was published in Portuguese, that an English translation was published.⁶ The English translation by Pius Malekandathil has made the text accessible not just to the larger English-speaking world but also to the St. Thomas Christian community whose experiences constitute the flesh and bones of the text. I have used the English translation for this essay.

The author of the *Jornada*, Antonio de Gouvea, was a Catholic priest who belonged to the religious order of St. Augustine.⁷ Gouvea wrote the *Jornada* when he was teaching theology at the Augustinian monastery in Goa.⁸ Gouvea was neither a participant nor a direct observer in the events mentioned in the book. The author tells us that he was tasked by the Congregation to gather 'true information' about the journey of Archbishop Menezes as there were several treatises printed in Lisbon about the journey that were brief and casual besides not providing any news in particular of many 'remarkable events'

that happened during the journeys in the *Serra*.⁹ This tells us that the journeys of the Archbishop had already captured attention in Europe much before the publication of the *Jornada*. The emphasis on the 'remarkable events' should also be read as an attempt by the Augustinians to legitimise their position in both Europe and Malabar after the embarrassment caused to the Catholic cause by another Augustinian monk – Martin Luther.¹⁰ It must also be noted that the Augustinians were late-comers to India. The Franciscans, Dominicans and the Jesuits had already established a considerable presence in the Malabar region by the mid-sixteenth century. Henrique Henriques, a Jesuit priest, had, for instance, already published Tamil catechism books such as the *Thambiran Vanakkam* (1578) and the *Kirisithiyaani Vanakkam* (1579) besides many other works in the Malabar language by this time. Therefore, the *Jornada* would have also served as a means to announce the arrival of the Augustinians.

Gouvea mainly depended on the notes of the participants in the events mentioned in the *Jornada* for writing his account. One such source was Belchior Braz, Dean of the Cathedral of Goa, who accompanied Archbishop Menezes. Braz noted down in a manner of itinerary all that happened every day. Gouvea also used a treatise written by Francis Roz, a Jesuit priest who had accompanied the Archbishop on his journey. Information was also taken from the notes of Brás de S. Maria, an Augustinian cleric and confessor of the archbishop. Several other shorter treatises, including some of the Archbishop himself, were used to write the *Jornada*. Seemingly stricken by an intense need to convince the readers of the credibility of his account, Gouvea also tells us that everything that he wrote about 'happened in public, in full view and presence of many trustworthy and qualified people'.¹¹ As the work was nearing completion, in 1602, the author was despatched as an ambassador to the court of Shah Abbas I of Persia by Aires de Saldanha, the Portuguese Viceroy at the time. The work would be completed only after his return to Europe after the assignment.¹²

The protagonist of the story, Dom Alexis Menezes, was born in a noble family in Lisbon in 1559 and came to India in 1595 as the Archbishop of Goa. Between 1607 and 1609, besides being the Archbishop of Goa, he was also appointed the Governor of Portuguese India. In 1612, he was made the Archbishop of Braga, the traditional centre of Catholicism in Portugal, and a year later, was appointed the President of the Council for Portugal. Finally, between 1614 and 1615, he served as the Viceroy of Portugal before passing away in Madrid in 1617.¹³ Alexis Menezes, without doubt, occupied several very important positions in the late sixteenth and early

seventeenth century Catholic Portugal. The St. Thomas Christians of modern-day Kerala remember him mainly for his controversial role in the convocation of the Synod of Diamper in 1599, which subsequently led to the splintering of the Church into various denominations that are often at odds with each other.

Structure of the Text

The *Jornada* is divided into three books. The first Book has twenty-two chapters. It starts with a history of the St. Thomas Christians and moves onto an account of how the St. Thomas Christians were 'corrupted' by the 'heresy of Nestor'. The text then follows the Archbishop through his arrival in Goa in 1595, his first set of visits to the churches of the *Serra*, ending with the convocation of the Synod of Diamper in 1599. The text does not betray the absence of the author during the journey. The mission of the Archbishop is portrayed as beset with dangers and strong resistance (often violent) from the St. Thomas Christian community. The Archbishop is portrayed as a Catholic hero who preached in the face of difficulties and resistance that he faced in the *Serra*. The latter part of the first book is focused on the measures taken by the Archbishop to ensure support during the Synod of Diamper, culminating in the 'triumph' of the Archbishop in the Synod.

The second book has fifteen chapters and deals with the visit of Archbishop Menezes to the various settlements of the St. Thomas Christians after the conclusion of Synod to implement the decrees of the Synod. Gouvea paints the Archbishop as a victor who had won against all odds and brought 'truth' to the St. Thomas Christians of the *Serra*. Any indication of resistance from part of the St. Thomas Christians is therefore downplayed in the second book compared to the first. The dissenting priests and protesting groups are pictured as an insignificant minority who are either punished by the wrath of God or put straight by the admonition of the Archbishop. The Archbishop moves much deeper into the hinterlands of Malabar in the second book.

The third and final book has thirteen chapters that deal with the departure of Archbishop from Malabar and his activities in Calicut, Mangalore, Basrur and Honawar on his way to Goa. This part also contains the customs and practices of the Bedouins of the island of Socotra as well as the activities of the Augustinian monks sent by the Archbishop to the court of Shah Abbas I of Persia among whom Gouvea was also a delegate. The third book broadens the geographical scope of the text and throws light on the larger ambition of the Portuguese state in the South and West Asian region.

The *Jornada do Arcebispo* tries to reproduce the actual journey for its readers. The *terra incognita* of the *Serra* is gradually mapped and revealed as the Archbishop moves through it. Gouvea gives a blow-by-blow account of what transpires along the way and at the different churches. This account is accompanied with well-crafted digressions and commentaries on the culture and traditions of the St. Thomas Christians and other communities that are encountered along the way. Descriptions of the politics and intrigues of the Portuguese state also creep into the narrative, such as the Portuguese attempts to capture Kunjali Marakkar,¹⁴ and the Portuguese concerns with a fort that the king of Travancore was building close to the fortified Portuguese settlement in Kollam.¹⁵ The journey is not just a journey of spiritual conquest by a Catholic Archbishop but also one of temporal and ritual conquest by an agent of the Portuguese state. The ethnographic and surveillance mission of the Archbishop is never hidden in the text.

Background to the Journey

Hundred years before the Archbishop made his journey through the *Serra*, Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on 20 May 1498, establishing a sea-route between Europe and India. Upon arrival in Calicut, he was met by two Moors from Tunis who could speak Castilian. They asked him the purpose of his visit. Gama, without wasting a breath, promptly answered that he had come in search of 'Christians and Spices'.¹⁶ The St. Thomas Christian community of Malabar at the time had deep roots in Kerala, with a characteristic form that it had acquired over several centuries as a result of the protracted interaction that the Church had with the West Asian Churches: the latter had provided them with ecclesiastical leadership for several centuries.

The initial encounters between the Portuguese and the St. Thomas Christians were quite amicable. In a strange and unfamiliar land, the Christians, 'Moors', spices and the sea were the only familiar threads for the Portuguese. It is also important to note that 'Christians and Spices' did not necessarily mean two different things in sixteenth-century Malabar. Before the coming of the Portuguese, European observers had already identified the Christian communities of Malabar as the chief producers of the coveted spices. In 1325, Odoric of Pordenone, a Franciscan friar and missionary explorer who travelled through India, wrote that 'all the world's pepper ... being produced and shipped' to other countries came from Quilon (Kollam). A quarter-century later, in 1349, another Franciscan friar named John de Marignolli, on his way back to Rome from the Great Khan, stopped in Quilon, and also reported that 'the whole world's pepper' was produced and controlled

by the 'Christians of St. Thomas'.¹⁷ This remained true in the sixteenth century as well.

It is therefore not surprising that in the 1520s, the Portuguese sought the help of Mar Jacob Abuna, the West Asian Bishop of St. Thomas Christians, to persuade the community to sell pepper only to the Portuguese. The Portuguese also paid monetary rewards to several of the inland rulers to supply spices for their vessels. However, this payment of monetary rewards to the inland rulers did not bring the desired result and the inland spice production centres remained only loosely integrated with the Portuguese factories on the coast.¹⁸ Realising that the St. Thomas Christians had very few things in common with the Catholicism of the Portuguese and that it could be impeding Portuguese control of spice trade, the Portuguese then started making several attempts to penetrate and interfere in the matters of the St. Thomas Christians.

The Portuguese imagined that if the divergent practices and elements from the spice producing community of St. Thomas Christians could be eliminated by bringing them under the Roman Catholic Church, it could potentially result in better mercantilist integration between them. Since the liturgical language used in the Roman Catholic Church in Europe at the time was Latin, the process came to be called Latinization.¹⁹ It will become amply clear that this was a misnomer. The Portuguese agents in Malabar were more interested in a kind of Catholic Christianity that aligned with the interests of the Portuguese state.

As already mentioned briefly before, the St. Thomas Christians had ecclesiastical linkages with the West Asian Churches. The Portuguese believed that this linkage of St. Thomas Christians with West Asia was the primary reason why the relationship between the Portuguese and spice producing St. Thomas Christians could not mature. Therefore, a college was established in Cranganore (Kodungalloor) by the Portuguese for training the youth of St. Thomas Christians for priesthood, in order to wean them away from the influence of the West Asian prelates. However, none of the priests trained in this college was allowed by the members of St. Thomas Christian community to work in their settlements and churches. The boys who trained in the college had no option but to go to the diocese of Cochin (established by the Portuguese) located on the coast for their ministry.²⁰ Thereafter, several measures were put in place by the Portuguese from the mid-sixteenth century onwards to prevent the West Asian Bishops from coming into contact with the St. Thomas Christians including blockades, incarceration, and forced exiles to Europe under charges of heresy.²¹

In addition to the Portuguese mercantilist ambitions, these developments also have to be located within the history of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in

Europe. Luis Filipe Thomas argues that it was mainly the paranoid atmosphere generated by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation that shaped the Portuguese attitude towards the St. Thomas Christians during the period.²² The various Provincial Councils of Goa held at different times in the sixteenth century, and the Synod of Diamper, were primarily convened to 'reform' the Indian Christians based on the canons and teachings of the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Further, the Portuguese would have also feared that the Malabar Christians, who were following diverse rituals and social practices, could spread these 'errors' among the Christians who were converted by the Portuguese, especially in the coastal areas.²³

The use of 'heresy' as a disciplining instrument against the St. Thomas Christians, therefore, needs to be read against the context of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. On the other hand, it also gave the Portuguese sufficient justification to intervene in the affairs of this native Christian community, all the while ensuring support in Catholic Europe for the Lusitanian ventures to change the affairs of the St. Thomas Christians according to their politico-commercial designs. This brings us to the question of whether the so-called 'Latinization' was meant to bring this indigenous community under Rome. Some answers emerge when we look at the *Padroado Real*, which determined how religious and ecclesiastical matters were administered in the territories occupied by the Portuguese.

The *Padroado Real*, in simple words, was a system of royal patronage. The king of Portugal was given patronage over the dioceses and religious orders in the territories controlled by the Portuguese. The king also held the right of presenting prelates to new and vacant sees and monasteries of all orders.²⁴ Through this system, the Pope transferred the responsibility of evangelization in the newly discovered territories to the Portuguese crown, as was done in Latin America by means of the Spanish *Patronato* system. On ground, the *Padroado* system became a tool in the hands of the Portuguese state to not only further God's glory but also by extension the glory of Portugal. Pius Malekandathil eloquently captures this in his introduction to the *Jornada*.

*In the crown of Portugal, as the king and the Grand Master of the Order of the Christ, both temporal and spiritual powers were combined, where religious activities were not restricted to the spiritual realm alone, but were extended to the farthest possible temporal realms and the temporal activities were not confined to the secular realm alone, but were stretched to the farthest possible realm of the religious spheres to empower the national monarch. In this system several of the bishops of Padroado were made governors and other top temporal officials in Portuguese India, as in the case of Dom Alexis Menezes himself.*²⁵

The Journey

The *Jornada* begins with a brief History of the St. Thomas Christians, especially the mission of St. Thomas. The dangers and hardships faced by St. Thomas as he moved across the *Serra*, evangelising and spreading the message of Christianity, is given a lot of attention. This was probably done to invoke similar imageries and parallels in the minds of the readers about the journey that Dom Alexis Menezes would undertake several centuries later. There is an attempt to portray the Archbishop as the inheritor of the mission of St. Thomas. The St. Thomas Christians are depicted as a community who lost their way with the passage of time and were waiting to be redeemed by Archbishop Menezes. This idea finds resonance in the following statements made by Gouvea:

*In this blindness and ignorance or errors lived the poor Christians of St. Thomas, from the time when there came from Babylonia the cursed poison of Nestor until the era of our Lord 1599 in which the Archbishop Dom Frei Alexis de Menezes brought them over to the womb of holy mother the Church and showed them the falsehood of the errors in which they were living; and granted that the Portuguese after entering India tried with much force to bring them to the obedience of the holy Roman Church they never succeeded in it, partly because they have their main settlements much in the interior and in the lands where the arm of the Portuguese, who are busy in the sea and its things, does not reach.*²⁶

The paragraph is important for other reasons as well. First, it tells us that there was sense of frustration at the futility of the attempts to bring the St. Thomas Christians under the Roman Church. Second, it tells us that the Portuguese influence was mostly concentrated around the coastal areas, especially the forts and factories; their influence receded as one moved further inland towards the Western Ghats. This will play a very important role in the manner in which the Archbishop plans and undertakes his Journey into the *Serra*.

Dom Alexis Menezes reached India in 1595 and immediately found out that the decrepit West Asian Archbishop Mar Abraham and the Christians of his Bishopric had requested the Patriarch of Babylon to send them a successor in the event of the former's death. Archbishop Menezes immediately sent an order with serious censures to Ormuz (Hormuz), the place through which the Babylonian Bishops made their way to India. He instructed that no Chaldean, Persian or Armenian ecclesiastic should be allowed to pass to India without his special permission. In the ports of India, he arranged to check all the Armenians and Chaldeans who came in the ships. Anyone who aroused suspicion was sent back promptly to wherever they came from.²⁷

In the meantime, he wrote a series of letters to Mar Abraham and his Archdeacon in an attempt to subjugate

them to the authority of the Catholic Church. The letters did not make much progress, but Mar Abraham passed away in 1597 and the perfect opportunity presented itself before Archbishop Menezes.

On the very day that he received the news of Mar Abraham's death, Alexis Menezes sent a patent appointing Francis Roz, a Jesuit priest, as the Governor and Apostolic Vicar of the St. Thomas Christians in Malabar although he did not enjoy any ecclesiastical authority over the St. Thomas Christians to make such an appointment. Archbishop Menezes soon realised his folly when he was made aware by the Portuguese priests in Malabar that Francis Roz could not be obeyed since the Bishopric of *Serra* had not given obedience to the Roman Church. Moreover, Mar Abraham had left a Governor of the Church, Archdeacon Jorge (George of the Cross), who was well received by the St. Thomas Christians and related to many of them. It was decided that the patent given to Francis Roz had to be suspended for the time being.²⁸

Archbishop started looking at the next best alternative. Recognising the popularity of the Archdeacon Jorge, he decided to appoint him as the Governor of the Bishopric of *Serra*, but with two assistants of the Latin rite, to attain the aim of Latinization. The Archbishop also insisted that the Archdeacon should first make a profession of Faith in accordance with the Tridentine council. The Archdeacon did not accept it. Realizing that he had reached an impasse, the Archbishop gave another patent of Governorship to the Archdeacon, this time without any assistants. The Archdeacon accepted it, saying that even without it he was already the Governor.

When it came to the matter of profession of Faith, things got a bit more complicated. The Archdeacon initially dissimulated by saying that he would make the profession on the solemn occasion of Maundy Thursday, four months later. He was perhaps hoping that another Bishop would arrive from Babylon by then. As the hopes of a new Bishop from Babylon waned, the Archdeacon declared that he would make no such profession and rallied the *Cassanars* (priests) and important people of the community against the Archbishop at Angamaly, the seat of the Bishopric of *Serra*. They swore that in matters of faith they would follow nothing except what the Archdeacon said. It was made into a resolution and published throughout the *Serra*.²⁹ The Religious of the College of Vaipicota who until then lived inside the Bishopric of *Serra* and went to the St. Thomas Christian churches to give sermons were also shut out of the churches of the St. Thomas Christians.³⁰

As the plans fell apart, the Archbishop decided that he had to personally go to settle the matters of the *Serra*. Therefore, on the second octave of Christmas, the feast

day of the glorious St. John the Evangelist on December 27, 1598, Dom Alexis Menezes started his journey to Malabar in a galley which the Viceroy had ordered to be fitted out for the Archbishop. Both temporal and spiritual authority was entwined in the person of the Archbishop as the second most powerful Portuguese official in India. Therefore, it is not surprising that the first stop made by Menezes on his journey had nothing to do with the St. Thomas Christians; he stopped at Cananor (Kannur) to collect the opinion of all the Portuguese captains and soldiers on what was to be done to destroy the fort of Cunhale (Kunjali).³¹ From there he proceeded to Cochin.

At Cochin, he was received with a lot of pomp and taken to the Cathedral Church of Cochin established by the Portuguese. From there, the Archbishop did not waste any time in embarking on his journey across the *Serra*. He arranged all the things which were needed for the visit of the churches and put the people he was taking with him, both servants and priests, in seven *Tones* (rowing boats).³² These vessels required little water to travel. In the broad rivers, they navigated with sails and rowing, and in the narrow rivers they were moved by poles. For the Archbishop, it was also a safer way to travel into the unfamiliar areas of the *Serra*, being connected to the safety of the waters over which the Portuguese lorded. The journey of the Archbishop mapped the riverine arteries into the interiors radiating from the centre of Portuguese power in Cochin. The waterways were also the best way to transport spices and other commodities in bulk from the interiors.

The Archbishop decided to start his journey into the *Serra* from Vaipicota, a place near Cochin. The choice was deliberate. Vaipicota had a Jesuit College founded in 1577 and was the most Latinized centre among the settlements of the St. Thomas Christians, whose lifestyle was greatly influenced by the practices of the Jesuits of the Seminary. The St. Thomas Christians of Vaipicota unlike other places, earnestly attended daily masses; and it was the place where the least amount of resistance could be expected.³³

When he reached Vaipicota, the priests and boys of the college at Vaipicota came to receive him. On arriving at the main altar, the Archbishop put on the Pontifical and blessed the people with great solemnity. Sitting with the staff in one hand and the mitre on his head, he preached to the people in a very long sermon about the obedience they owed to the Holy Roman Church and the falsehood of the errors which the prelates of West Asia had taught them.³⁴ Interestingly, the Archdeacon and his *Cassanars* were absent at all these events. Absence and dissimulation were two ways in which the St. Thomas Christians resisted the ambitions of the Archbishop. This

was perhaps most visible when the Archbishop reached the church of Cheguree (Chowara):

The archbishop arrived at Cheguree (Chowara) at dawn and soon after sunrise tried to disembark and go to the church, and first sending a message to the Cassanars and to the people to come and wait for him, he got the reply that the church was closed, and that on that spot one could see no man, nor did women talk about their whereabouts, with which he waited throughout the morning, and in the evening, and at sunset, seeing that no person was appearing, because all had disappeared or had stayed closed not to receive him, he disembarked and only with the people he brought with him he went to the church, and ordering to open its doors he prayed and retired himself.³⁵

This does not however mean that other overt forms of resistance did not occur. For instance, when the Archbishop reached Parur, he was received by a small coterie of eight or ten persons. Taking his Cross in front, he went to the church where, immediately, a large number of people rushed in with lances, swords and guns and, thus armed, filled the church with much commotion.³⁶ The author ascribed the tension to the handiwork of the Archdeacon. It must be noted here that traditionally the St. Thomas Christians would leave all their weapons outside the Church before entering it.

The effectiveness of these various forms of resistance cannot be underplayed since after the ordeals at places like Parur and Chowara, the Archbishop finally decided to enter into a compromise with the Archdeacon. He proposed that a Synod be held which would 'deal with the truth of things': essentially, the Synod or the council of the church would decide on issues of doctrine and administration of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar based on discussion and vote. The Archbishop also guaranteed that until then he would go to the churches as only a guest Bishop; and would not give confirmation or perform any ritual of the Pontifical that were unacceptable to the Archdeacon and the St. Thomas Christians. The Archdeacon in return agreed not to issue any writing against the Archbishop and to accompany him to the rest of the churches. A resolution was made and signed by the Archbishop, the Archdeacon and the *Cassanars*.³⁷

After the resolution, Archbishop Menezes' actions were focused on garnering the support that he would need at the Synod of Diamper to push forward the agenda of Latinization. He realised that the ecclesiastics of the St. Thomas Christians were extremely loyal to those who ordained them and that many wished to get ordained, for it was almost two years since ordinations had taken place in the Bishopric. Sensing opportunity, he announced ordination throughout the *Serra* in Diamper. He would then go on to conduct two more rounds of ordinations, accumulating a large support base for himself during the

Synod of Diamper. Gouvea does not try to hide this fact when he mentions the following at one point.

As the Archbishop at this time wished to have many people with himself for the things of the Synod in which the principal votes would be those of the priests, he ordered the publication of orders for a second time throughout the Bishopric for the four temporals of the Trinity in the church of Paru, where came together fifty men for ordination.³⁸

When the Synod finally happened, out of the 153 priests who took part in the Synod as delegates, more than 100 were the Archbishop's men, ordained by him within a period of three months for this purpose alone and that too without proper training.³⁹ Despite these efforts, there was still opposition against the proceedings of the Synod. Gouvea's account of the protest that ensued against the Archbishop's conduct of the Synod is a revelation.⁴⁰

They entered in with great passion and impetus in the middle of the congregation and wishing to talk with their eyes on the Archbishop, to whom they would address their talk, who was wearing Pontifical vestments, with Mitre and crosier in hand in all the ceremonies of the Synod, in order to have more majesty and reverence, such fear did God put in their hearts and in such a way he frightened them.⁴¹

Everything from the participants to the vestments and rituals were very meticulously planned to generate fear and awe. The environment was not conducive to discussion. Even the venue of the Synod – Diamper – was chosen after a lot of thought on the part of the Archbishop; it was located within the territory of the ruler of Cochin who was a Portuguese ally and it was also at the same place that the Archbishop had ordained several priests less than three months earlier. Understandably, the Archbishop did not stop at that. Francis Roz, who was a close associate of Dom Alexis Menezes in the convocation and conduct of the Synod, and who later became the Bishop of the St. Thomas Christians, mentioned in a letter that he wrote to the Jesuit General, Claudius Aquaviva, in 1603, that several of the decrees of the Synod of Diamper were added by the Archbishop himself after the Synod was over.⁴²

The Synod decreed sweeping changes among the St. Thomas Christians.⁴³ This formed the background of the second round of visitations made by the Archbishop in the *Serra*. The visitations were designed to put into effect all things that were ordained in the Acts and Decrees of the Synod. The decisions of the Synod provided the Archbishop with a foothold from where he could restart his mission. Gouvea tells us that before entering any church or settlement, the Archbishop would send a message in advance, asking them to be ready to receive him ceremoniously on arrival. When he reached the churches, a routine of preaching, giving of sacraments,

and burning of Chaldean and Syriac books of the St. Thomas Christians ensued.

Gouvea tells us that the performance of some of these sacraments such as Baptism and the procession of the dead was done with so much ceremonial glitter that it became a spectacle for the 'gentiles' who lived around the St. Thomas Christian churches of the *Serra*. The Nairs and Brahmins were awestruck by the Archbishop's pontifical vestments. Gouvea tells us that some of them were so curious to see the novelties that they would stay for entire days without moving from one place and without ever getting tired of it.⁴⁴ The Portuguese, who were hitherto confined to the coastal areas, had made their presence felt amongst the people of the hinterlands.

The second is more silent about the resistance of the St. Thomas Christians against the measures of the Archbishop. It is not surprising since the entire narrative of the journey was arranged in a manner that would show how the vociferously resisting group of St. Thomas Christians were made completely submissive to the Portuguese by the personal charisma and piety of the Archbishop Dom Alexis Menezes. It was Gouvea's panegyric for his fellow Augustinian in an attempt to get greater acceptability in Europe for the Augustinian endeavours.

The end of the Archbishop's journey and his final return from the settlements of the St. Thomas Christians to Goa is described by Gouvea as a heart-breaking moment. The melodramatic scenes in which the St. Thomas Christians pleaded with the Archbishop to remain in Malabar as their prelate hid the strong anti-Portuguese sentiments that were present among the members of the community. For instance, the St. Thomas Christians would gradually start diverting pepper to the Coromandel Coast through the Ghat routes. This caused considerable damage to the Lusitanian trade, following which in 1601, two royal letters were sent to Aires de Saldanha, the Viceroy, asking him to specially favour the St. Thomas Christians and to win their goodwill.⁴⁵ Between 1606 and 1609, no ship departed from Cochin to Lisbon due to lack of merchandise.⁴⁶

Perhaps the greatest testament to continuing resistance from the St. Thomas Christians comes from a comment that Gouvea, perhaps inadvertently, makes towards the end of the book while comparing the Latin Christians of coastal Malabar converted by the Portuguese with the St. Thomas Christians.

*The Bishop of Serra who until now was appointed by the patriarch of Babylon, and today, even though he is a Latin, and appointed by the Roman Church, yet their church preserves the Chaldean rite, according to the corrections made therein in the Synod of Diamper, and this is the difference we can talk of our Christians, who are made and are continuously growing, and the old ones of Saint Thomas.*⁴⁷

The fantasies of a homogenous Catholic Church in Malabar did not really bear fruit as evidenced by the above passage. Further, we know that a strong group within the St. Thomas Christians under the leadership of their Archdeacon continued their resistance against the Portuguese and the *Padroado* to preserve their age-old traditions and customs, which ultimately exploded into an open revolt against the Portuguese in the Coonan Cross Oath of 1653 and consequent fragmentation of this community into Catholic and non-Catholic factions.

After the Archbishop leaves Malabar for Goa, Gouvea shifts his focus towards the Portuguese interests in Mangalore, Barçelor (Basrur), Onor (Honawar), Goa, the Islands of Socotra and Persia. All these places played a decisive role in the diversion of spices as well as other commodities from the Indian Ocean region to the Mediterranean ports and control of these strategic centres was essential for the Lusitanians to maintain their monopoly over the spice-trade. The *Jornada do Alexis Menezes* in many ways captured the fantasies of the Portuguese Catholic empire that encompassed the vast regions of West and South Asia bordering the Indian Ocean.

Conclusion

Latinization is usually imagined in the St. Thomas Christian context as the subjection of the native Christians to the authority of Rome and the Pope. While this is true to some extent, the form that Latinization took in sixteenth-century Malabar was deeply intertwined with the mercantile and political ambitions of the Portuguese maritime empire. These ambitions were fuelled by the *Padroado Real* which essentially turned the Lusitanian Catholic Church into an arm of the Empire. It is in this context that a person like Archbishop Menezes could very easily shift between his religious and stately responsibilities, often both being the same. The journey of the Archbishop into the *Serra* was not just an exercise in Latinization, but also an attempt to announce the arrival of Portuguese influence in the hinterlands, away from traditional centres of Portuguese power on the coast. Latinization, however, always remained an incomplete project for the Portuguese. Resistance in its overt and covert forms kept the Portuguese ambitions at bay. Dissimulation formed an important tool for both parties. Everyday forms of resistance such as discourtesy and absence formed part of the resistance that the St. Thomas Christians put up.

The *Jornada de Arcebispo* is also as much about Portuguese writing in India during the period which was often a product of the pressures in Europe. The various religious orders and congregations marked their arrival

and importance through such writings. The *Jornada* was perhaps not just an account of Latinization, but lessons in Catholicism for the European reader of the sixteenth century, set in a world torn apart by the forces of Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

Notes

1. The full title is as follows: *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Frey Aleixo de Menezes Primaz da India Orientali, Religioso da Ordem de S. Agostinho. Quando foy as Serras do Malavar, & Lugares em que marão os antigos Christãos de S. Thome & os tirou de muytos erros & obdeiencia da Santa Igreja Romana, da qual passava de mil annos que estavão & reduzio à nossa Sancta Fè Catholica, & obediencia da Santa Igreja Romana, da qual passava de mil annosqhe estavão apartados*. The English translation reads as follows: *The journey of the Archbishop of Goa, Dom Frei Alexis de Menezes, primate of East India, of the Order of St. Augustine. When he went to the Mountains of Malabar and to the places where inhabit the ancient Christians of St. Thomas, he brought them back from many errors and heresies, in which they were found and reduced them to our Holy Catholic Faith and to the Obedience of the Holy Roman Church, from which they had remained separated for a thousand years*.
2. The word 'Serra' meaning 'mountain range' in the Portuguese language was used by the Portuguese to refer to the regions inhabited by the St. Thomas Christians probably because of the lofty Western Ghats nearby.
3. Antonio de Gouvea and Pius Malekandathil, *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes: A Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*, (Kochi: LRC Publications, 2003), LXXVIII.
4. Antonio de Gouvea, *Histoire orientale des grandes progress de l'Eglise catholique en la reduction des anciens chretiens, dits de Saint – Thomas*, (Brueles-Antwerp, 1609).
5. Antonio de Gouvea and Joannes Facundus Raulin, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Diamperitana Synodo*, (Rome, 1745).
6. Pius Malekandathil, *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes: A Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*, (Kochi: LRC Publications, 2003).
7. It is worth noting that the protagonist of the *Jornada*, Archbishop Alexis Menezes, also belonged to the religious order of St. Augustine. With the accession of the Spanish King of Habsburg to the throne Portugal in 1581, the Augustinian monks began to get preferential treatment in various many of the Portuguese enclaves and a decline in the privileged position of the Jesuits who kept Sebastianism alive in Portugal. The previous ruler, King Sebastian was educated by the Jesuits and had a special liking for the Jesuits. The latter used to keep alive stories of an immortal King Sebastian, resulting in active anti-Spanish feelings in Portuguese colonies.
8. Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, LXXIX.
9. *Ibid.*, LXXVIII-LXXIX.
10. Denis L Cottineau de Kloguen, *An Historical Sketch of Goa: The Metropolis of the Portuguese Settlements in India: with an Account of the Present State of the Celebrated City, and of the Surrounding Territories Unders Its Immediate Jurisdiction, Collected from the Most Authentic Sources*, (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2005), 80.
11. Gouvea talks about his sources in the Prologue of his work. See, Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, LXXIX-LXXX.
12. Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, LXXII.
13. For more details on Archbishop Alexis Menezes see Carlos Alonso Vañes, 'Dom Alexio De Menezes and Social Transformation on the West Coast of India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', in *The Portuguese and the Socio-Cultural Changes in India, 1500-1800*, edited by KS Mathew, Teotonio R. de Souza and Pius Malekandathil, (Tellicherry, Kerala: Institute for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities, MESHAR, 2001), 163-164.
14. Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, 69-70. Kunjali was a title bestowed upon the admirals of the Zamorin of Calicut. Kunjali and his men with the support of the Zamorin developed an alternative arrangement of trade, wherein plundering and confiscation of Portuguese vessels were done along with parallel shipment of commodities to the destinations of their choice. As the Kunjali gradually started assuming pretensions of creating a Muslim state in Pudupattanam, the Portuguese and the Zamorin joined hands to capture Kunjali.
15. Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, 146-147.
16. *A Journal of the First Voyage of the First Voyage of Vasco Da Gama, 1497-1499* (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1897), 48.
17. Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India, From Beginnings to the Present*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 118.
18. For more details see Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, XXX-XXXI.
19. Scaria Zacharia, *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper 1599*, (Edamattom; Kerala: Indian Institute of Christian Studies, 1995), 15.
20. Pius Malekandathil, 'The Portuguese and the St. Thomas Christians, 1500 – 1570', in *The Portuguese and the Socio-Cultural Changes in India, 1500-1800*, 137-140.
21. For more details see Pius Malekandathil, 'Contextualising the Encounters between Portuguese Missionaries and the St. Thomas Christians', in *Thomas Christian Heritage: Journal of the Syro-Malabar Liturgical Centre*, Vol.X, No.18 (2017), 61-109.
22. Luiz Filipe FR Thomaz, 'Were Saint Thomas Christians Looked upon as Heretics?', in *The Portuguese and the Socio-Cultural Changes in India, 1500-1800*, 90.
23. João Teles e Cunha, 'Socio-Cultural Aspects of the Catholic Missionary Works in India', in *The Portuguese and the Socio-Cultural Changes in India, 1500-1800*, 240.
24. Thomas Pallippurathukkunnel, *A Double Regime in the Malabar Church*, (Alwaye, 1982), 3-4.
25. Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, LIV-LV.
26. *Ibid.*, 29.
27. *Ibid.*, 49.
28. *Ibid.*, 53-54.
29. *Ibid.*, 56-57.
30. *Ibid.*, 57.

31. Ibid., 69-70.
32. Ibid., 120.
33. Ibid., 119.
34. Ibid., 121.
35. Ibid., 139.
36. Ibid., 131-132.
37. Ibid., 144-145.
38. Ibid., 234.
39. Jonas Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, (Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1958), 24.
40. Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, 267.
41. Ibid., 276.
42. Ibid., LXX. Also see, Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, 129-138.
43. The details of the changes that were decreed by the Synod can be found in Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*.
44. Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, 29.
45. Ibid., LXII-LXIII.
46. Niels Steensgaard, *Carracks, Caravan and Company*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 166.
47. Gouvea and Malekandathil, *Jornada*, 414-415.