

THE BEGINNINGS OF LATINIZATION OF THE

MALABAR LITURGY: 1599-1606

A Dissertation

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RESUME

The East Syrian liturgy of Malabar was latinized by the western missionaries who came to India in the sixteenth century. The use of the same liturgy by the Nestorians, its Hindu adaptations, its lack of popular devotions of the western church, and the misguided zeal for orthodoxy on the part of the missionaries contributed to the latinization of the Malabar liturgy. This latinization began in an official and serious manner with the synod of Diamper (1599 A.D.) and with the promulgation of its decrees by Bishop Francis Roz, who headed the Malabar church immediately after the synod (1599-1624).

This study is an historical investigation of the depth of the latinization during the Diamper-Rozian period and is based mainly on primary sources. In order to understand fully the nature of the liturgical changes of this period, one should get a firm grip on the features of the liturgy used in Malabar prior to that period.

Direct and indirect testimonies show that the Persian bishops, who were the spiritual leaders of the Malabar church from as early as the fourth century, might have used the East Syrian liturgy in Malabar even before 1301 (when we find evidence of its use in MS Vat. Syr. 22).

The latinization began as early as the sixteenth century, when the missionaries tried to impede the Persian bishops from coming into Malabar and forced the Persian bishops already there to introduce the Roman liturgy. The process reached its climax only at the synod of Diamper (Chapter II).

Though the synod of Diamper has been proven invalid, it was in fact the cause of drastic changes in the liturgy and liturgical discipline of Malabar. It proposed the translation of the Roman Mass into Syriac for the use of the Malabar church. This met with great opposition and hence, the Qurbana text was kept; nevertheless, permission was given to the priests to make use of the Syriac version of the Roman Mass, which was shorter, for week-days.

Several modifications were made in the text of the Qurbana. The Institution-Narrative was practically the same as that of the Roman Canon. The Creed was translated from the Roman missal. Prayers from the Roman missal, such as Agnus Dei, Domine non sum Dignus, were introduced. The vestments and rubrics were all Roman. The liturgical calendar of the Roman church was substituted for the East Syrian calendar. In addition, the liturgical disciplines regarding the sacraments were made totally conformable to those of the Roman church.

Bishop Roz, who put into force the decrees of Diamper, though essentially he was for the romanization of the Malabar liturgy, did not agree in all things with Diamper. Knowing the attitude of the local Christians, he showed more sympathy for local customs and for Syriac, the liturgical language (Chapter III).

The principle of latinization, accepted in Diamper and applied officially to the Malabar liturgy by Roz, guided the liturgical changes of the subsequent centuries. This is evidenced through the works of the leaders of the Malabar church and the major events in its liturgy since Diamper.

The fourth chapter discusses the printing of the liturgical books (eighteenth century); the disciplinary regulations of Archbishops Bernardine and Leonard (nineteenth century); the attitudes of the Archbishop Kariattil (+1782) and other native bishops since 1886, as well as those of Father Kuriakose Chavara (+1871); and the popular reaction to the restoration of the liturgy from the 1950's until now. The latinization tendency, begun in the Diamper-Rozian period, swept away the East Syrian liturgy of Malabar except for the texts of the Qurbana, the ferial divine office, and the burial service, and even these were partially latinized.

The results were indifference to the distinction of Rites in the church, a depreciation of their own liturgy on the part of the Malabar Christians, and, as well, a Christian life placing undue emphasis on popular devotions.