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The Last Judgment Mural of St. Mary's Jacobite Soonoro Cathedral, Angamaly: Ecclesial and Iconographic Interactions

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General Introduction

The kerygmatic purposes of Christianity especially its central theme of resurrection employed progressive methods of visual representations. The scriptural and eschatological visualizations contributed to the development of iconography of Last Judgment in Christianity.

The visual world of Indian Christianity in the beginnings adopted Hindu cultural representations in expressing their faith and later incorporated the Eastern and Western Christian contributions. Christians in Kerala, known as the “St. Thomas Christians”, largely used Hindu visual culture in architecture. The arrival of the Portuguese mission in the sixteenth century, familiarized the vast horizon of Western Christian art to the St. Thomas Christians. The Portuguese established churches in the city of Goa and later expanded their ecclesial authority to the other parts of India. Though adaptation was the feature of early stages among the St. Thomas Christians, gradually unique techniques of art and architecture began to engage with the sacred spaces of Christians in Kerala. Art historians Jenee Peter and P.K Gopi identifies 46 churches with rich collections of mural paintings in Kerala. Most of the murals are preserved even today in their original, liturgical settings. Unfortunately, this field of research has not yet received deserving attention and exploration.

St. Mary’s Jacobite Soonoro Cathedral¹ situated in Angamaly, Kerala, India houses the largest panel of Last Judgment mural along with commendable other murals. The Last Judgment mural consists of two panels: one, depicting the second coming of Jesus Christ and the other depicting the mouth of hell. The literary sources regarding the church murals of Angamaly propose that the murals were executed after the Synod of Udayamperur² (Diamper) in 1599 by the Portuguese ecclesial authorities. However, these documents do not sufficiently explain the reason behind the noticeable differences in technique, selection of themes, and in the artistic skill between the paintings executed in Goa and the murals in Angamaly. It demands a comprehensive study of the ecclesial, iconographic and cultural interactions that

¹ St. Mary’s Jacobite Soonoro Cathedral is also known as St. Mary’s Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church, St. Mary’s Soonoro Jacobite Cathedral, St. Mary’s Jacobite Church, St. Mary’s Jacobite Syrian Church, Angamaly St. Mary’s Church, Angamaly Jacobite Church and as *Cheriyapally*. This paper will be here after using the abbreviation “SMJSC, Angamaly” to refer to St. Mary’s Jacobite Soonoro Cathedral.

² “Diamper” was the name attributed by Portuguese to denote to the local place “Udayamperur” where the Synod was convened. This Malayalam name is still in use.

existed between St. Thomas Christianity and the Portuguese Padroado. This study is an attempt in that direction focusing on the Last Judgment mural of SMJSC, Angamaly.

This master thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter explores the iconography of the Last Judgment in general, tracing the sources and its historical and iconographical development. A prototype of the experience of punishment and retribution can be traced from the Old Testament narration of the vision of the valley of dry bones, found in Ezek 37: 1-14.³ The iconography of the Last Judgment in the Christian world and its features are briefly discussed in this chapter.

The second chapter explores the roots of Christianity in India and introduces Christian art in India. The chapter explores the interaction that existed between the St. Thomas Christians with rest of Christendom, the migration of Christians from the Middle East and the trade relations extending to the Roman world, the role of the Church of the East, the arrival of Portuguese mission and the introduction of Antiochian liturgy. The chapter also introduces the Pre-Portuguese art, the European Christian art, and later representations of Christian art in India.

The third chapter consists of an investigation into the history of SMJSC and description of the murals in the church. The lack of a coherent history, especially the construction of the church poses multiple challenges in the identification and periodization of the murals. A comprehensive study of the murals in the church would only be possible by evaluating the historical contexts and contributing factors.

The last chapter focuses on the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly. The Biblical and iconographical foundations, spatial significance, composition, iconographical and socio-religious interactions are studied. The study also critically evaluates the identification of some of the murals and certain affirmations regarding the murals. A diligent search to identify the principal contributors, the commission and artists of the mural is attempted in this chapter.

The general conclusion focuses on the findings of the thesis and underline the critical observations. The master thesis within its limitations attempts a comprehensive view of the theological, ecclesial and iconographical elements of the mural.

³ This thesis will hereafter be using Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition.

Definition of Terms

The term “Last Judgment Iconography” refers to the area of study that deal with the artistic representations of second coming of Jesus Christ and the final judgement of the mankind. The term “iconography” in this paper refers to artistic representations in general that include mural, fresco, mosaic, icons and other visual expressions and do not refer to the technique of painting/writing icons. The word “mural” is used in this study in a general sense to refer to a composite form of art, done using traditional artistic techniques like lime wash and natural pigments on a coated or plastered dry surface enabling the artists additional time for execution.⁴ A secco fresco is a technique where pigments are applied to a dry plaster surface. Art historians generally in India, consider Angamaly Last Judgment mural belonging to secco fresco.

The term “Angamaly murals” refers to murals executed in the Akaparmbu and Angamaly churches which are similar in style, technique and have geographical proximity. “Angamaly Last Judgment mural” refers, exclusively to the two panels of murals executed on both walls of nave of SMJSC, Angamaly. “Representation” denotes, the executed mural and “interaction” refers to the ecclesiastic, cultural and socio-religious engagement of the mural.

Limitations of the Study

Scholarly literatures on the Last Judgment iconography of SMJSC to verify the period of execution, principal contributors, composition, and technique are scarce. Most of the available literatures contain only general observations, short descriptions, particular perspectives, and sometimes biased conclusions. Scientific analytical studies of the mural are not yet conducted to assess the age or to find out the materials used. Scientific analytical studies of the mural for instance, Infrared Reflectography (IRR), Optical Microscopy (OM), Energy Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy (EDXRF), Scanning Electron Microscopy-Energy Dispersive Spectroscopy (SEM-EDS) Micro X-ray Diffraction, are not yet conducted. Due to tropical weather part of the murals are faded and the possibility of painting over on the original, modification etc. are suspected. The renovation, reconstruction etc. of the church have also affected the murals.

⁴ Cf. PETER – GOPI, A Monograph on Church Mural Art, 3.

The study faces the serious difficulty that there is scarcity of authentic documents about the history of the SMJSC where the murals are executed. The church itself has gone through several historic and ecclesiastical changes that make the research even more difficult. The oral transmission of the history and existential challenges of the community make it difficult to arrive at a unanimous conclusion regarding the history of the parish. The available identification of some of the murals demands reconsideration.

State of Research

Chitra and Srinivasan have published a book titled “Cochin Murals” in 1940, M.K. Devassy published “*Keraleeya Kraistava Devalayangalile Chitra-shilpa Kalakal*” in 1978, Sashibhooshan published “*Keralathile Chuvarchitrangal*” in 2000. George Menachery published “Glimpses of Nazraney Heritage” and “*Pallikalile Chitrabhasangal*” in 2005. Roy Thottathil, Pius Malekandathil, Cyriac Jose, Ajith Kumar, Sheena V.R, etc. are few other scholars who attempted the study of Kerala Church murals. Jenee Peter and P. K. Gopi (2009) codified all the previous studies done in the field church murals in Kerala and published “A monograph on church mural art of Kerala” in 2009.⁵ This is a book that sheds light on the church murals of Kerala and it lists out 47 churches with surviving murals and includes a general description of Christianity in Kerala, church architecture and the church murals. An inventory of mural panels in various churches is presented in this work.

There are articles by art historian Roy Thottathil, and by archaeologists Cyriac Jos, Ajith Kumar and Jenee Peter on church murals of Kerala and they describe some of the murals of SMJSC and especially refer to the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly. An article exclusively on murals of St. Mary’s Church of Angamaly titled “Cultural Interactions and Religious Iconography in 16th Century Kerala, the Mural Paintings of St. Mary’s Church in Angamaly” was published by Patrizia Granziera in 2017. It is a study on the demonization of feminine deities focusing the depiction of *Kali* in the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly.⁶ Nevin Dalvin also published an article on the colonial motives of demonization of indigenous deities which also refer to the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly.

⁵ Cf. PETER – GOPI, A Monograph on Church Mural Art, 11.

⁶ Cf. GRANZIERA, Cultural Interactions and Religious Iconography in 16th Century, 83–99.

Varghese Angamaly and Jomon Thachil published in 2002, “*Angamaly Reghakaal*” (Angamaly Documents), which attempt the documentation of the geographical and historic details of Angamaly and its Christian population. Another book edited by Ignatius Payyappilly titled “*Mar Abrahamum Saint Hormis Devalayavum*”, contains articles both in English and Malayalam, dealing with history of Angamaly and St. Hormis Church with substantial references to history of Christianity in Angamaly and SMJSC.

A comprehensive study, focusing on the murals of St. Mary’s Jacobite church Angamaly or the Last Judgment mural is unfortunately not available. The available literary sources deal with the murals in general and focus less on the historical and ecclesial context of St. Mary’s church. There is also the need to identify the artistic sources of the murals and the contributing factors of execution. Therefore, the study must take into account earnestly the local community of St. Thomas Christians to whom the church belonged, along with studying the contribution of the Portuguese ecclesial authorities. Such a process would engage deeply with the evident aspects of execution and composition of the mural. The identification of murals by some of the studies demand reconsideration and most of them does not adequately addresses the scriptural and ecclesial motives of the murals. Therefore, this study tries to review the existing academic assessments and present further information and proposals that include the historical, artistic and ecclesial factors that contributed to the execution of the mural and the interactive agents of representation.

CHAPTER I

ICONOGRAPHY OF LAST JUDGMENT

1.1 Introduction

The mystery of death, life after death, judgement and end of the world find expressions across religions and civilizations.⁷ The Egyptians, Romans and Jews (Ps 96:10; 104:4) had their own belief system concerning the end of the world and final judgement.⁸ The concept of Last Judgment in Christianity has its roots in the Scripture and teachings of Christ. The development of Last Judgment iconography incorporated biblical teachings, patristic, and apocryphal writings in its composition. The social and existential contexts of the painters or the primary contributors also played a role in shaping the details of the Last Judgment iconography. This chapter deals with providing a general introduction about the development of Last Judgment iconography in Christianity.

1.2 Old Testament Iconography of Last Judgment

An iconographical representation of Last Judgment is found in Dura Europas that corresponds to the vision of the valley of dry bones narrated in the book of Ezekiel (Ezk 37:1-14). This is the earliest instance of the Last Judgment iconography from Old Testament. It is found in the great synagogue of Dura Europas, (fresco on north wall of assembly room) dated around the middle of third century C.E.⁹ Later in the 11th and 12th centuries, the same theme is found in the illustrated manuscripts belonging to Byzantine and occidental cultural arena, obviously with iconographical diversities.¹⁰ Ezekiel's vision of dry bones appears often in the Roman funerary art.¹¹

1.3 Christian Iconography of the Last Judgment

The promise of second coming of Jesus Christ expressed in Matt 24:30; 25:31, John 20:11 Rev 20: 11 inspired the notion of reward of heaven to the righteous and of hell to the damned. Last Judgment iconography in Christianity has adapted its scriptural

⁷ Cf. BRENK, Tradition und Neuerung, 19.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 20.

⁹ Cf. PLANCHETTE, The Old Testament Prophecy, 2.

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 10.

¹¹ Cf. BRENK, Tradition und Neuerung, 149; PLANCHETTE, The Old Testament Prophecy, 2.

foundations both from the New Testament and the Old Testament. The concept of Last Judgment in Christianity finds expression in multiple places in the Bible.¹² The Gospels portray Jesus as the one, who would judge the world (Matt 16: 28) and as the one who fulfils the prophesies (Luke 24: 44). Jesus himself narrates the separation of sheep from goats (Matt 25: 3–46) incorporating a practice which was prevalent among the Shepherds of his time, which invariably connote to Last Judgment.¹³ Bodily resurrection of the dead and immanent Parousia has been concepts which occupied strong responses at the early centuries of Christianity. The writings of Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom etc. discuss broadly the theme of Last Judgment.¹⁴ The queries regarding the finality of life and expectation of “the Judge” played huge role in the life of early Christians, even before its expression in art forms.¹⁵ Justin Martyr in his first Apology talks about Last Judgment which describe the raising of bodies of all who lived, where the worthy being clothed with immortality and the wicked punished in everlasting fire.¹⁶ He also talks about Christ dividing the human race into those inheriting the everlasting life and those put to unquenchable fire.¹⁷

The earliest representation of Christian Last Judgment was found in a Roman Sarcophagus relief from the third century.¹⁸ This is a depiction of Jesus separating the sheep from goats according to Mathew’s gospel. It appears also in a sixth century mosaic on the north wall of the nave of San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna.¹⁹ The S. Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna illustrates Christ separating the sheep from the goats and two Angels by the side (Matt 25:32). A fifth-century Coptic textile in the Edinburgh Museum and the sixth-century Rossano Gospels, illustrate the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Mk.25:1–11).²⁰ There is also a copy of sixth century Christian Topography by *Cosmas Indicopleustes* available that was copied in Constantinople in the second half on ninth century, now preserved in the Vatican (*Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Vat. gr. 699).²¹ Another Last Judgment icon was

¹² Cf. Isa. 27:13; John. 5: 24; Matt. 24:31, 2; Cor 5: 10; 2 Tim. 4:1; John 5:24; Heb. 6:2; Rom 2:11; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Cor 11:15; 1 Thess 4:16; Acts 8:2.

¹³ Cf. BRENK, Tradition und Neuerung, 26.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 28.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 35.

¹⁶ Cf. JUSTIN THE MARTYR, 1Apology 18, (Ancient Christian Writers 56, 211–212).

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 212.

¹⁸ Cf. BRENK, Tradition und Neuerung, 37.

¹⁹ Cf. BHALLA, Experiencing Last Judgment, 7.

²⁰ Cf. MARTIN, Understanding the Last Judgment Mosaic at Torcello, 53.

²¹ Cf. BHALLA, Experiencing Last Judgment, 8.

found in İçeridere in Cappadocia. The Last Judgment icon of Hagios Stephanos in Kastoria is considered as the first available Last Judgment icon from the Byzantine tradition.²² The painting in the front hall of Hagios Stephanos in Kastoria depicts Christ sitting on a throne with archangels and angels.²³ A The sarcophagus of Agilbert in Jouarre shows Jesus sitting on the throne with raised hands corresponding mostly with the description of Matt 25:41. Contrary to the literal depiction of sheep and goat, people are depicted on both sides here.²⁴ An icon belonging to the late 11th or early 12th Century, is found in the katholikon of the Monastery of Panagia Mavriotissa, Kastoria, Greece.²⁵ In this icon, Christ is depicted in glory, enthroned and adoring angles below him. It has two layers depicting, those who are risen from the death.²⁶ In Byzantine art from the 8th century; Jesus is depicted as sitting on a rainbow or on a throne with stretched hand that has sign of wounds to bless the selected are seen.²⁷ Abraham with the poor (Lazarus) in his bosom, the enthroned mother of God etc. can be found in the Last Judgment icon of Thessaloniki which belong to the tenth century.²⁸ The depiction of the Last Judgment acquires certain canonical standards with Byzantine iconography of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, like the one found in Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, Egypt (12th century).²⁹ In the Sinai icon of the Last Judgment, beneath the lake two angels are painted as warding off black demons as they weigh deeds. In the west, Byzantine motives were largely adopted though there were elements added like Christ appears bigger than angels and saints, Jesus shows upper body, angel carrying the cross, instruments of passion, wise and foolish made, his wound in the chest, etc.³⁰ Last Judgment icons appear in the form of frescos, murals, mosaics later also in the forms of icons on wooden surface on the walls of churches. Traditionally Last Judgment representations decorate the west wall of the churches.

²² Cf. KIRCHBAUM – BRAUNFELS, (eds.), *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, 513.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, 513.

²⁴ Cf. BRENK, *Tradition und Neuerung*, 43.

²⁵ Cf. TSAKIRIDOU, *Tradition and Transformation in Christian Art*, 54.

²⁶ Cf. BHALLA, *Experiencing Last Judgment*, 8.

²⁷ Cf. SEIBERT, *Lexikon Christlicher Kunst*, 335.

²⁸ Cf. KIRCHBAUM – BRAUNFELS, (eds.), *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, 513.

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 9.

³⁰ Cf. SEIBERT, *Lexikon Christlicher Kunst*, 335.

1.3.1 Elements of Christian Last Judgment Iconography

The biblical accounts highlights four key elements of the Last Judgment: 1) the end of time and of the world, 2) the resurrection of the dead, 3) the separation of the just from the damned, and 4) final position of the just or damned in the kingdom of Heaven or the everlasting fire, respectively.³¹ John Paul Himka writes: “Last Judgment iconography was the most complex iconography in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine cultural sphere. An icon or mural of the Last Judgment was composed of dozens of discrete elements.”³² The common elements of Last Judgment iconography include enthroned Christ, God the Father, Lazarus at the bosom of Abraham, Cherubim with fiery wings (Ezek 10:12–14; Isa 37:16), the storm of fire (Ezek 7:10), lake of fire, Mary and John the Baptist, the throne (*Hetoimasia*), *Arma Christi* (Acts 1:7, Zech 12:10–14. John 19:37), Apostles, Saints, Devil or Satanic creatures, reptiles, the hand of God, scales, Paradise, Saints entering through the gates of heaven, Serpent and tollbooths, Moses, Jews, Prophet Daniel, Monks flying into paradise, the Almsgiving fornicator, the new Hell, the Tavern maid, the Lamb etc. The themes of heresy and damnation are prominent in the iconography of the Mavriotissa.

Last Judgment depiction from ninth century, achieved distinctive characteristics and descriptive portrayals in the East.³³ The Byzantine icon of Last Judgment in the main hall of Hagios Stephanos in Kastoria, embodies a perfect depiction of the Last Judgment.³⁴ In the West, Christ is depicted with his mark of wounds and also with transfigured upper body.³⁵ The soul of a dying person depicted as facing the juridical process with a scene of listing the deeds of the person is found in the West. In the East, the soul might have to pass through a series of toll houses or customs houses in which its baggage was checked for specific sins.³⁶ The weighing, was also incorporated as a sign of God’s mercy to sinners.³⁷ In the West, iconography largely does not follow strict canonical rules. For instance, the icon of separating the lamps (Matt 25 31-46) in S. Apollinare Nuovo. The paintings in west wall of the church of St. John in Müstair 800 C.E., shows the first register with stary sky and resurrection of the dead. And second register with Christ in *Mandorla* flanked by archangels. The third register

³¹ Cf. MARTIN, *Understanding the Last Judgment*, 101.

³² HIMKA, *Last Judgment Iconography in the Carpathians*, 6.

³³ Cf. *ibid.*, 7.

³⁴ Cf. KIRCHBAUM – BRAUNFELS, *Lexikon Christlichen Ikonographie*, 513.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 519.

³⁶ Cf. MARTIN, *Understanding the Last Judgment*, 109.

³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 10.

shows Separation of the saints from the damned. A typical element of Western iconography is the portrayal of angels in conformity with Matt 25.

Tsakiridou is of the opinion that iconographers incorporated Greek mythologies into Christian iconography especially in functional level without losing its mythical dimension.³⁸ The famous icon of “Christ liberating Adam” from death, is adapted from the Macedonian Renaissance (867–1056) motive of Herakles dragging Cerberus out of Hades.³⁹ Niamh Bhalla observes that New Testament passages pertaining to death and judgement were largely influenced by Jewish apocalyptic thought.⁴⁰ The Kastoria Last Judgment, icon has weighing of the soul with no biblical precedent associated with it but can be related to god Hermes.⁴¹ “The incorporation of non-Christian motifs in Christian iconography was not only an act of amalgamation. It created a new dynamic inside the work.”⁴² Last Judgment iconography unlike the canonical icons modified, added and removed elements place to place and the cultural elements were incorporated.⁴³

The Last Judgment iconography along with scriptural expressions and symbols made use of cultural context of the artists, or those who commissioned it. They also employed to portray heresy, judgement, punishment, condemnation etc. Thus, Last Judgment iconography was a meeting point of scripture, apocryphal writings, historical context of the artist and a contemporary interpretation of the doomsday. It was a contextualized scripture of last events incorporating freedom of expression and interpretation.

1.3.2 Last Judgment Iconography and Literature

Last Judgment literature in the forms of sermons, letters and poetry has been part of the Christian tradition. The sermon of Ephrem the Syrian on the “Second Coming of Our Lord” discusses the theme of Last Judgment with details of punishment in “Rede über das Gericht und die Zerknirschung, 3–4”⁴⁴. Satan and the threat of eternal punishment were an established part of theological debate in the Early Christian period

³⁸ Cf. TSAKIRIDOU, *Tradition and Transformation in Christian Art*, 20.

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Cf. BHALLA, *Experiencing Last Judgment*, 16.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*, 16–21.

⁴⁴ Cf. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, *Ausgewählte Schriften des hl. Ephräm von Syrien*, 147.

but later by sixth century it became part of the Church's funeral liturgy.⁴⁵ Hagiography, like 'The Life of Basil the Younger' extensively narrated the process of death and different booths of judgement.⁴⁶ 'The Life of Basil the Younger' narrates an account of the fate of the souls by describing the final journey of Theodora and uses typologies like black angels who makes screaming sound and attack those who committed evil deeds.⁴⁷ Ephrem the Syrian describes a hierarchy of apostles, angels and saints around Christ the King;⁴⁸ which later becomes a typology of arrangement in Last Judgment iconography.

A popular theology centred on relics and images that identified with the sufferings of Christ emerged in Byzantium also contributed to the depiction of last judgment themes especially the presentation of tools of passion and Jesus as suffering Son of God. The icon of the Virgin attributed to St. Luke and the shroud of Christ has been part of this tradition. These icons and the relics were taken into procession around the city during the second Arab siege in 717.⁴⁹ In 1170 emperor Manuel Komnenos I, himself carried the *lithos* (the rock on which the body of Christ was laid for the preparation of the burial) on his shoulders, from the harbour to the palace.⁵⁰ The ascetic and mystical theology of Hesychasm that focused on humanism in the 14th century largely influenced last judgment iconography.⁵¹ Literature, liturgical traditions, popular piety etc. contributed to the elaborate representations of Last Judgment.

1.4 Conclusion

Last Judgment iconography starting with Old Testament visual representations and roman funerary inscriptions served in promoting and imparting eschatological thoughts. Last judgement iconography served the pedagogical purposes of the church. They functioned as tools of self-awareness⁵²and fostered repentance.⁵³ Last judgement frescos, mosaics and icons are generally found on the west wall of the churches. The representations were also a reminder to the visitors to hope for the resurrection.⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Cf. MARTIN, Understanding the Last Judgment, 71.

⁴⁶ Cf. Life of St Basil the New: Summary, in: HIMKA, Last Judgment Iconography, 213–217.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 213.

⁴⁸ Cf. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN, *Ausgewählte Schriften des hl. Ephräm von Syrien*, 147.

⁴⁹ Cf. TSAKIRIDOU, Tradition and Transformation in Christian art, 80.

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 81.

⁵¹ Cf. STREZOVA, Hesychasm and Art, 9.

⁵² Cf. KAGAN-MOORE, The Journey through the Judgment, 147.

⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*, 148.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 148.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIAN ART IN INDIA

2.1 Introduction

Though the name “India” has been in use from the early times, it is debatable whether it referred to the country as we know today as India. Andrade Nathanel in his recent book titled “The Journey of Christianity to India in Late Antiquity” points out that the term “Indians” was also used to describe the people of east Africa and south Arabia⁵⁵ or generally to Ethiopian and Arabian middlemen engaged in Indian ocean trade.⁵⁶ The origin of Indian Christianity is unknown especially about the first centuries. There are lack of historical sources concerning Christianity in India before 1500.

The first part of this chapter focuses briefly on Christianity in India with a purpose of identifying its cultural interactions. The second part of the chapter explores Christian art in India in general and in Kerala particular.

2.2 Christianity in India

Indian mission of St. Thomas calls for critical review. According to an oral tradition, St. Thomas arrived in Malabar, today’s Kerala in 52 C.E.⁵⁷ The word *Malabar* comes from a combination of Malayalam word “*Mala*” which means mountains, and Persian word “*bar*” means land.⁵⁸ It is reasonable to assume that the word came from Arab traders. The Portuguese used the name, *Serra* to refer to Malabar coast.⁵⁹ The geographical area was also known as “*Malankara*” which is also a combination of two Malayalam words “*Mala*” which means mountains, and “*kara*” which means land.⁶⁰ Christians, especially from Kerala associate the arrival of St. Thomas, the apostle of Christ, with the Malabar coast of Maliankara or Cranganore (Kodungallur). They believe that St. Thomas baptized many and established communities in several parts of Kerala and was martyred in Mylapore today’s Chennai in Tamil Nadu (Koramandal), where he was buried in 72 C.E.⁶¹ The details of such traditions

⁵⁵ Cf. ANDRADE, *The Journey of Christianity to India in Late Antiquity*, 73.

⁵⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 79.

⁵⁷ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *The Catholic East*, 362.

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 362.

⁵⁹ Cf. PERCZEL, *Syriac Christianity in India*, 653.

⁶⁰ Cf. THALIATH, *The Synod of Diamper*, 3.

⁶¹ Cf. NEDUNGATT, *The Apocryphal “Acts of Thomas” and Christian Origins in India*, 549.

originate mainly from “the Acts of Thomas”⁶². The fifth century activities of Sasanian merchants to travel to India can be treated as an agreeable starting point to research the origin of Christianity in south India.⁶³ Christian presence in south India also prompted the origin of certain folk songs, ballads and dance forms like *Margamkali pattu* (comes from *Thoma margam*, meaning the way/law of Thomas), *Viratiyan Pattu* (*villadichan pattu* as known today), *Ramban Pattu* in Kerala.⁶⁴

The Christians in Kerala are known as “*Marthoma Nasrani/ Suriyani nasranikal, Mappila* Christians.” The words “*Mar*” and “*Nasarani*” are not originated neither from Malayalam the language of Kerala nor from other Dravidian languages but from Syriac. “*Mar*” refers to holy man, here, St. Thomas and “*Nasarani*” means, “a follower of the Nazarene.”⁶⁵ The liturgical language of the early Christians of Kerala was Syriac.⁶⁶ In 1625 an engraved Stelle also called as the “Nestorian Stelle” was found in Xi’an, China, dating from 781 C.E.⁶⁷ It is a limestone block with a text in Chinese language and also with a Syriac inscription. Parthian and Sasanian pathways were extended to the north of India.⁶⁸ Merchants of Christians called “*Manigramakkar*” settled in Kollam and Kayamkulam in Kerala is an instance of such movements.⁶⁹

2.2.1 St. Thomas Christianity and the Church of the East

The Church of the East is the heir to the Persian Church with its center in Seleucia-Ctesiphon that expanded to other cities of Asia minor.⁷⁰ Indian Christians came in contact with the Church of the East. The book published by the Congregation for the Eastern Churches on The Catholic East, states that Catholicos Isho’yahb II (628–646) sent Bishops to India by removing Indian church from the jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Fars (the capital of Persian province) and elevating the Indian church as a metropolitanate under the direct control of the Patriarch.⁷¹ The Local head of the church was Archdeacon, a priest from the *Pakalomattom* family (historically from

⁶² Cf. Thomasakten (SCHNEEMELCHER, II⁵, 289-367).

⁶³ Cf. ANDRADE, The Journey of Christianity to India in Late Antiquity, 212.

⁶⁴ Cf. VISVANATHAN, The Legends of St. Thomas, 27; Cf. PERCZEL, Syriac Christianity in India, 656.

⁶⁵ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 361.

⁶⁶ Cf. MINGANA, The Early Spread of Christianity in India, 441.

⁶⁷ Cf. PARRY, Early Christianity in Central Asia and China, 32.

⁶⁸ Cf. ANDRADE, The Journey of Christianity to India in Late Antiquity, 214.

⁶⁹ Cf. ANDRADE, The Journey of Christianity to India in Late Antiquity, 220.

⁷⁰ Cf. MINGANA, The Early Spread of Christianity in India, 436; PINGGERA, Die Apostolische Kirche des Ostens der Assyrier, 21.

⁷¹ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 366.

1490).⁷² Patriarch Timothy I (780–823) and Pope John XXII (in 1330) recognize him as “the head of the faithful in India.”⁷³ Apart from the traditional and historic details, it is to be asserted that Christianity in India was depended on Persian church especially for episcopal leadership. The liturgical language of the St. Thomas Christians was East Syriac.⁷⁴ Even Malayalam equivalent of the word Syriac “*suriyani*” comes from Persian “*Soryani*”.⁷⁵

In 1552 Mar John Sulaqa became the Patriarch of the East Syrian Church and in 1553 he with formal profession of faith entered in formal communion with Rome, before Pope Julius III.⁷⁶ Pope Pius IV in 1565, recognized and confirmed the rights of the Patriarchs to appoint Bishops to India. Patriarch Mar Abdiso bifurcated the church of Malabar and appointed Metropolitan Mar Abraham to the See of Angamaly and named him, superior of all Bishops and metropolitans in India.⁷⁷

2.2.2 Portuguese Mission and Christianity in India

Vasco de Gama first arrived in Kappad on 20 May 1498.⁷⁸ With the following expeditions the Portuguese intervened not only in the political history but also in its ecclesial and cultural fabric of India. Kerala Christians cordially welcomed their Christian brothers from Portugal (*Communicatio in sacris*)⁷⁹ and received them in their churches to be part of the ceremonies which were officiated according to East Syrian liturgy.⁸⁰ In 1504 Mar Thomas, Mar Jabballaha, Mar Denha and Mar Jacob the Bishops from the Church of the East were received and well-treated also by Portuguese in Cananore.⁸¹ It is also recorded that in 1510, the Portuguese Governor Alfonso de Albuquerque had given 1000 *panams* to the Bishops of Cranganore.⁸²

The diocese of Goa was erected in 1533 and elevated to the status of Archbishopric in 1557. According to Jacob Kollaparambil, the Portuguese prevented the arrival of oriental Bishops to Kerala and intended to cut the relationship of St. Thomas Christians

⁷² Cf. CERETI et al., The Problem of Saint Thomas Crosses and Related Questions, 286.

⁷³ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 367.

⁷⁴ Cf. PERCZEL, Syriac Christianity in India, 663.

⁷⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 654.

⁷⁶ Cf. THALIATH, The Synod of Diamper, 6.

⁷⁷ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 365.

⁷⁸ Cf. VADAKKEKARA, The Synod of Diamper in Historical perspective, 45.

⁷⁹ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 368.

⁸⁰ Cf. THALIATH, The Synod of Diamper, 1.

⁸¹ Cf. PERCZEL, Syriac Christianity in India, 679.

⁸² Cf. VADAKKEKARA, The Synod of Diamper in Historical perspective, 53.

with East Syrian Patriarch.⁸³ Though the Portuguese wanted to bring St. Thomas Christians into Latin liturgical practices, the affinity of the people to the east Syrian liturgy made it difficult for them.⁸⁴ However a gradual policy of '*accommodatio*' was initiated with establishment of a Seminary at Vaipicotta in 1587, with the consent of Mar Abraham.⁸⁵ Following the death of Mar Abraham in 1597 the Bishopric of Angamaly was made a suffragan to the Latin Archbishop of Goa and was placed under Padroado jurisdiction.⁸⁶

A synod was convened at Udayamperur, a locality few kilometers away from Cochin, on 1599 by Archbishop of Goa, Dom Alexis de Menezes with the purpose of regulating the liturgical and ecclesial life of St. Thomas Christians. At his arrival in Malabar, Dom Alexis de Menezes forbid under the precept of obedience and under the pain of excommunication, the Archdeacon and priests of St. Thomas Christians the use of the name of the East Syrian Patriarch in the Eucharistic celebration.⁸⁷ The name of Patriarch that St. Thomas Christians used in the holy Mass then, was Mar Simon who was in communion with Rome and not Mar Elias the Nestorian Patriarch of the traditional line.⁸⁸ The synod of Udayamperur condemned "the law of Thomas" and Syrian liturgy, abolished Eastern jurisdiction and asked the faithful to reject the Patriarch of Babylon.⁸⁹ Francisco Ros, was appointed as the Bishop of Angamaly by Pope Clement VIII on 20 December 1599.⁹⁰ Bishop Francisco Ros informed Rome not to approve the decrees in 1603 and today the Synod is considered as invalid.⁹¹ On 22 December 1608 Pope Paul V restored the jurisdictional status of Angamaly and elevated Kodungallur to an Archeparchy of St. Thomas Christians and Francisco Ros as the Metropolitan of Kodungalloor.⁹²

⁸³ Cf. KOLLAPARAMBIL, The impact of the Synod of Diamper on the ecclesial identity, 149.

⁸⁴ Cf. PERCZEL, Syriac Christianity in India, 654.

⁸⁵ Cf. VADAKKEKARA, The Synod of Diamper in Historical perspective, 69.

⁸⁶ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 370.

⁸⁷ Cf. PODIPPARA, The Thomas Christians, 137.

⁸⁸ Cf. KOLLAPARAMBIL, The impact of the Synod of Diamper, 150. KOLLAPARAMBIL also talk about the formal union of Mar John Sulaqu of East Syrian Church with Rome in 1553; CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 369.

⁸⁹ Cf. MENACHERY (ed.), Indian Church History Classics, 84.

⁹⁰ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 74.

⁹¹ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 369.

⁹² Cf. PERCZEL, Syriac Christianity in India, 655.

2.2.3 The Oath of Coonan Cross and Introduction of West Syrian Liturgy

A group of St. Thomas Christians who were not ready to accept the changes brought about by the Synod of Udayamperur attempted to get an Eastern Bishop under the leadership of the archdeacon Thomas Parampil (de Campo).⁹³ Their efforts were defeated by the political power of the Portuguese. Meanwhile, a certain Bishop called Cyril Mar A'tallah Ibn-Issa, informed Thomas Parampil of his arrival in Malabar.⁹⁴ St. Thomas Christians prepared themselves to receive him. But he was taken for interrogation and later detained by the Portuguese. St. Thomas Christians gathered in the church at Mattancherry on 3 January 1653 and took a solemn oath that they will no longer obey the Portuguese Archbishop Garcia or any other "Paulists" (Jesuits). It is known as *Coonan kurishu Sathyam* (Coonan Cross Oath).⁹⁵ Thereafter a council was held in Alangad, Kerala on 22 May 1653 and chose Archdeacon Thomas as their Bishop candidate.⁹⁶ And consecrated him by name Mar Thoma I on 22nd May 1653, through laying hands by 12 priests. A letter from Mar A'tallah was presented for authenticity of the ceremony.⁹⁷ In their desperate search for a Bishop to validate the consecration, St. Thomas Christians was introduced to a Syrian Orthodox (also known as Jacobite) Bishop by name Mor Gregorios Abdal Jلیل, who used West Syrian liturgy. He arrived in India in 1665 and lived in North Paravoor till his death in 1681.⁹⁸ Thus St. Thomas Christians come in direct contact with Orthodox Syrian Patriarch of Antioch and West Syrian liturgy. With an aim to win back the faithful, Rome sent Joseph Mary Sebastiani in 1657 to Malabar and he managed to get the support of thirty two parishes.⁹⁹ His second visit that marked the beginning of the jurisdiction of *propaganda fide* in Malabar in 1661 did not succeed in preventing division in the church.¹⁰⁰ The whole events divided the community. Those who agreed to observe the decisions of the Synod of Udayamperur especially the rejection of Babylonian jurisdiction and acceptance of Rome withheld the revised east Syrian (Chaldean) liturgy. They were later known as "*Pazhayakuttu*" and those agreed to accept the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of

⁹³ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *The Catholic East*, 370.

⁹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

⁹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Cf. ANGMAly – THACHIL, *Angamaly Reghakal*, 78.

⁹⁷ Cf. *The Travancore State Manual*, vol 2, 184–185.

⁹⁸ Cf. PERCZEL, *Syriac Christianity in India*, 680.

⁹⁹ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *The Catholic East*, 371.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

Antioch and West Syrian Liturgy, began to be known as “*Puthenkuttu*” literally means new partisans.¹⁰¹ A good number of Christians who agitated against the Portuguese reformatations, later realizing that they are going away from their old liturgy and communion with Rome, returned to their original churches which were under the *Pazhayakuttu* faction.¹⁰²

With the defeat of Portuguese against the Dutch in 1663 and the conquest of Cochin, St. Thomas Christians were free from Portuguese ecclesial authority. And an indigenous priest, Mar Parambil Chandi was consecrated as Bishop of the Syro Malabar church in 1663.¹⁰³ He had the support of 64 parishes out of the 110 St. Thomas Christian parishes.¹⁰⁴ The *Pazayakuttu* faction is today known as the Syro Malabar Church. Mar Thoma I was excommunicated by Giuseppe di Santa Maria Sebastiani in 1663.¹⁰⁵ *Puthenkuttu* faction known as “Malankara church,” was later divided into different episcopal churches namely (1) Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (the autonomous), (2) Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church under the Catholicos in Kottayam (autocephalous), (3) Malabar Independent church of Thozhiyur, all of the three are of miaphysite confession¹⁰⁶ and (4) Syro Malankara Catholic Church, the reunited Catholics under the jurisdiction of Rome (5) Mar Thoma Syrian Church, a Church formed as a result of Anglican and Protestant missionary movements. There are other churches like Church of South India and other Protestant churches and denominations separated from *Puthenkur* faction.

2.3 Christian Art in India

The Christian presence in India was concentrated in Malabar, in the southern part of present-day India. The Pre-Portuguese churches in Kerala were built following the Hindu temple architecture with specific additions that constitute the necessities of Christian faith. The use of oil lamps, rock lamps, flag staffs, elephants in ceremonial processions etc. were adopted from the Malabar cultural plateau. George Meanchey periodized the development of Christian art and architecture in India into three stages

¹⁰¹ Cf. PERCZEL, Syriac Christianity in India, 688.

¹⁰² Cf. KOLLIYELIL, Episcopate: Martyrdom for Unity of the Sheep, 58.

¹⁰³ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 372.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 396.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. PINGGERA, Die Apostolische Kirche des Ostens der Assyrier, 87.

namely, The Pre-European Period, The Portuguese Period (16th to 18th century), The modern Period.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, with view to accommodate the artistic features and cultural characteristics of Christian art in India, an extended categorization is proposed here.

2.3.1 The Pre-European Christian Art in India

The Pre-European artistic expressions of Christianity in India were characterized by imitations of Christian visual culture from West Asia or Hindu religious expressions of Kerala. The first surviving artistic proof of Christianity in India are the granite Crosses which are also known as “St. Thomas Crosses” or “Persian Crosses.”¹⁰⁸ The Granite Crosses found in different parts of India like, Chennai, Goa, Kalyan and in Kerala are identified as reproductions that are also found in West Asia.¹⁰⁹ The excavations conducted at the site that was believed to be the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore by the Portuguese in 1547 discovered a granite slab with an inscription and with an artistically engraved Cross.¹¹⁰ The inscription was in Middle Persian, in Pahlavi script. Similar Crosses were also found in Kottayam in Kerala and in other parts of India and it had similarities with tombstones found along the Silk route.¹¹¹ F.C. Burkitt and C.P Winckworth from the university of Cambridge translated the inscription found in the Crosses from Mylapore near Chennai and two Crosses from Kottayam in Pahlavi language. The inscriptions are translated as, “Our Lord Christ, have pity on Sabrišō‘, (son) of Čahārbōxt, (son) of Sūray, who bore (brought?) this (cross).”¹¹²

Christian churches in Kerala architecturally, resembled Hindu temples, the façade was not elevated as in the western style.¹¹³ The churches were separated with a *chuttumathil* (high walls), *padippura* (edifice arched entrance), Monumental granite stones, granite stone lamps, flag masts, *vedipura*, *vaaddyapura* (where trumpets and musical instruments preserved) *uttupura*, *yogasala* etc.¹¹⁴ Chengannur and Kalloopara Orthodox churches are examples that still preserve some of the specimen. The

¹⁰⁷ Cf. KALAPURA, Christian Art and Architecture in India, 63.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. LÖWNER, Christian art and Architecture in Asia, 458.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. KALAPURA, Christian Art and Architecture in India, 63.

¹¹⁰ Cf. WINCKWORTH, A New Interpretation of the Pahlavi Cross-Inscriptions, 237.

¹¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 240; PERCZEL, Syriac Christianity in India, 671.

¹¹³ Cf. PERCZEL, Monuments of Indian Christian Art, 42.

¹¹⁴ Cf. CERETI et al., The Problem of Saint Thomas Crosses, 288.

churches and its surroundings were elegantly decorated with local and biblical motives.¹¹⁵ István Perczel identifies, open air granite Crosses, Persian Crosses, saint Thomas Crosses, winged angels and animal figures on granite baptismal fonts etc. as Pre-Portuguese genuine Indian Christian art.¹¹⁶ Granite Crosses with peacocks, dove and elephant motives are also found in this period.

Gregory of Tours, quoting a certain pilgrim monk Theodore (around 590 C.E.), records that there was a monastery of striking dimensions around the tomb of St. Thomas.¹¹⁷ There are also 12th and 14th century documents suggesting the existence of two churches in Mylapore. But no detailed descriptions regarding the specific architectural or artistic components of these churches or monasteries are available. The pre-Portuguese period of Christian art in India can be designated as “Indo-Persian Christian Art.”

2.3.2 The Portuguese Christian Art in India

The arrival of Vasco de Gama in 1498 on the coast of Malabar and the later conquest of Goa is marked as the beginning of European period of Christianity in India. Goa became the political headquarters of Portuguese in 1530. In 1534 Goa was assigned as the ecclesiastical headquarters of the Padroado mission.¹¹⁸ The Portuguese introduced artistic and architectural elements of European Christianity in India. They built many churches and monasteries and adorned them with statues and paintings imported from Portugal and various parts of Europe and introduced Gothic, Baroque and Rococo techniques to Indian Christianity. The Augustinian monastery and its bell tower, Bom Jesu Basilica, the Jesuit hospital, the Altar of the saint Francis Xavier church, Pillar seminary chapel, the church of St. Peter, Santa Monica convent etc. are a few to mention. They imported Retablo and wood carvings of Altar pieces and even trained local artists. Along with Goa other places like Bassein (Vasai) and in Salsette (north Mumbai) were part of Portuguese mission and the Baroque style architecture with Indian adaptations could be seen even today there.¹¹⁹ This period can be designated as “Indo-Portuguese Christian Art.”

¹¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 287.

¹¹⁶ Cf. PERCZEL, *Monuments of Indian Christian Art*, 51.

¹¹⁷ Cf. KALAPURA, *Christian Art and Architecture in India*, 61.

¹¹⁸ Cf. VADAKKEKARA, *The Synod of Diamper in Historical Perspective*, 57.

¹¹⁹ Cf. PEREIRA, *When Emperor Akbar Encouraged Christian Art*.

2.3.3 The Mughal Christian Art in India

A historical evaluation of Christian art in India cannot bypass the unique genre of Mughal Christian art. The Mughal dynasty which followed Islamic faith, favored and fostered art and architecture throughout their empire. The famous Qutab Minar, Taj mahal, Jahangir palace etc. are a few examples to mention. Trade and Pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas made India a destination for Armenian Merchants.¹²⁰ They were also migrating to India following persecution. Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) promised the migrated Christians protection and he has given permission to build a church in Agra to practice their religion. A church was built in 1562.¹²¹ Akbar even took an Armenian Christian as his wife called Mariam Zamani Begum.¹²² There is also a report from one Iskander that the emperor had also a wife called Juliana, probably an Armenian Christian and bore him two sons, Mirza Zalzarnain in 1592 and Mirza Sikander in 1595.¹²³ There was a prominent Armenian presence in the Mughal court.¹²⁴

The Portuguese managed to win over the trust of Akbar and maintained good relationship with the emperor. Portuguese missionaries were invited to his court in Fatehpur Sikri, near Agra.¹²⁵ Emperor Akbar himself was interested in founding a new religion called “*Din Ilahi*” (divine faith) amalgamating different faith teachings. He invited scholars and theologians from diverse religions to his court.¹²⁶ In 1580, Jesuit priests Rodolpho Acquaviva and Antonio Monserrate and lay brother Francisco Henriques were in the court of Akbar. The emperor was very fascinated by the paintings of Madonna and child brought by the missionaries and the engravings in the Antwerp Polyglot Bible (Royal Polyglot Bible).¹²⁷ Akbar commissioned Jerome Xavier, a Jesuit priest to write about the life of Christ. He produced the manuscripts, which had illustrations too, known as Mirát at-Quds (the Mirror of Holiness) and submitted to the emperor in 1602 which was also translated into Latin.¹²⁸ The manuscript was originally prepared in Portuguese (language) and translated into Persian with local help. The illustrations were intended to impress the emperor and

¹²⁰ Cf. KALAPURA, Christian Art and Architecture in India, 61; LÖWNER, Christian Art in India, 164.

¹²¹ Cf. CHONG (ed.) Christianity in Asia, 83.

¹²² Cf. NEIL, A History of Christianity in India, 385.

¹²³ Cf. *ibid.*

¹²⁴ Cf. CHONG (ed.) Christianity in Asia. 83.

¹²⁵ Cf. PEREIRA, When Emperor Akbar Encouraged Christian art.

¹²⁶ Cf. CHONG, Christian art, 76.

¹²⁷ Cf. PEREIRA, When Emperor Akbar Encouraged Christian art.

¹²⁸ Cf. GOSWAMY, Art N Soul. Life of Christ in Mughal Paintings.

therefore incorporated the elements of the then existing Mughal style and European Christian art. According to B.N. Goswamy, Akbar was very much interested in Christianity and the painters in the manuscript consciously tried to “*Mughalise*” the illustrations by rendering it to Mughal Indian art. They illustrated people in Indian dresses, buildings with Mughal features, noblemen looking as Mughal princesses.¹²⁹ The image of St. Mary was painted “wearing ‘*Bindiya-dot*’ on forehead and her fingers dyed in henna, with lotus eyes and baby on her lap, like an affluent Hindu lady.”¹³⁰

The successor of Akbar, Jahangir who himself was an artist was also interested in Christianity.¹³¹ He even ordered artists of his court to make miniatures of the Madonna and child and even decorated his palace with paintings of Jesus, Madonna and child, Catholic saints, Christmas story, western Kings etc.¹³² The paintings of Virgin and Christ hang above, very close to his throne.¹³³ Mary was painted as a Mogul queen. According to Myron J. Pereira, many of the artist were Hindus, but they followed the European (Italian) and Iberian (Spanish or Portuguese) originals but adapted to the Indian sensibilities.¹³⁴ Jahangir also allowed to build a chapel in Agra that was completed in 1605.¹³⁵

An exchange of artistic techniques between Jesuit and local artists in Mughal culture resulted in the production of a number of Christian Mughal art pieces like “the Evangelist Luke” adapting the work of Hans Sebald Beham,¹³⁶ “Portrait of a Jesuit”, “Nativity”, “the deposition from the cross”¹³⁷, “Virgin and Child” adapting the painting of Virgin and child in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, “the Pentecost”¹³⁸ etc. The works, though followed the European samples, in their style and execution introduced a unique technique which today can be classified as Christian Mughal art.

The political differences with the Portuguese and their conscious efforts to impose Christianity and political power, made the relationship worse and the emperor turned

¹²⁹ Cf. GOSWAMY, Art N Soul. Life of Christ in Mughal Paintings.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Cf. CHONG, Christianity in Asia, 77.

¹³² Cf. SHARMA, A study of Visual Interpretations of Christian faith in Indian Art, 300.

¹³³ Cf. GOSWAMY, Art N Soul. Life of Christ in Mughal Paintings.

¹³⁴ Cf. ibid.

¹³⁵ Cf. PEREIRA, When Emperor Akbar Encouraged Christian art.

¹³⁶ Cf. ibid.

¹³⁷ Cf. CHONG, Christianity in Asia, 87.

¹³⁸ Cf. ibid., 88–89.

¹³⁹ Cf. ibid., 93.

against them. It even led to the destruction of the churches and eradication of Christians from the empire.

2.3.4 Christian Mural Art in Kerala

There are number of paintings in Kerala which art historians refer to as “church murals” preserved today. St. Mary’s Catholic church Champakulam Alapuzha, St. Thomas Jacobite Church Karthikapally Alappuzha, Mar Sabore Afroth Jacobite church Akaparmbu Ernakulam, SMJSC Angamaly, St. Mary’s Catholic church Angamaly, St. Mary’s Catholic church Kanjoor, St. Mary’s Orthodox Syrian church Kottayam, Kottayam Cheriapally, St. Mary’s church Paliyekkara, Chepadu church, are a few to mention. An art historian, Jenee Peter proposes the following periodization of church murals in Kerala.¹³⁹ Pre-Portuguese tradition (c. 1000–1200), Portuguese tradition (c. 1500–1700), Early Portuguese (c. 1500–1600), Late Portuguese (c. 1600–1700), Dutch tradition (c.1700–1800), British tradition (c. 1800–1900), Modern tradition (c.1900 onwards).¹⁴⁰ According to Jenee Peter, no concrete examples of pre-Portuguese paintings in Kerala can be found other than the art forms in Granite structures at the entrance of the churches called *Sthamba* (pillar), *Kodimaram*, *Deepasthamba*, etc.¹⁴¹

A study published by Chitra and Srinivasan dated 1920 regarding the murals of Kottayam Cheriapalli, Changansseri Valiyapalli, Paliyekkara Church, Akaparmbu church, Angamaly Jacobite church, Kunnumkulam Pazhanji Church, Kanjur Church, Vallom (Perumbavoor) Church, Rampapuram church, Cheppad Church, Mulamthuruthy Church ascribe the Church murals of Kerala to the Portuguese period. According to Sashibhooshan the church mural tradition starts with Portuguese in sixteenth century.¹⁴² Jenee Peter & P. K. Gopi, proposes three broad phases of church murals in Kerala¹⁴³

1. The Period between early 16th to mid-17th which is characterised by baroque in style with minute details of drapery and thick details. Some murals of Akaparmbu and Angamaly Jacobite churches, Kottayam Cheriapalli, Paliyekkara,

¹³⁹ Cf. PETER, Contextualising Church Murals of Kerala.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Cf. KALAPURA, Christian Art and Architecture in India, 63.

¹⁴² PETER– GOPI, A Monograph on church murals of Kerala, 29.

¹⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*

Muttuchira, Kadamattom, Cheppad, Vallam and Koretty churches are identified belonging to this period.¹⁴⁴

2. The period between mid-17th to 18th Century. The salient feature of this period shows gradual return to simplicity. Some murals of Akaparmbu, Angamly, Cheppad, Kanjur, Kottayam Cheriyaapally, etc. are cited as examples.
3. The third period constitutes mid- of 18th to 19th Century where more local artistic elements appear. This period shows the use of indigenised symbols for instance, in Changanassery, Pazahnji, Vallam, Koretty churches.

According to Jenee Peter and P. K. Gopi, the earliest murals are seen at Akaparmbu Mar Sabore and Mar Mar Afroath (Mar Shahpur and Aphrahat) church, Angamaly St. Mary's church, Kottayam Cheriyaapalli, Paliyekkara Martha Mariyam Church, Muttuchira St. Sebastain's church, Kadamattam St. George Church, Cheppad St. George Church, Vallom St. Teresas Church and Koratty St. Mary's Church which they assess as belonging to late sixteenth century.¹⁴⁵ An archaeologist, Cyriac Jose, is of the opinion that mural paintings in churches developed along with mural tradition in temples.¹⁴⁶

Following the defeat of the Portuguese various mission societies influenced the art and architecture of Kerala Christians. By the mid-19th century, churches began to be built and adorned with artistic motifs from the missionary societies they belonged to, such as British, Dutch, German, Portuguese, Danish etc.¹⁴⁷

2.3.5. Modern Indian Christian Art

Indian Christianity has travelled a long way, adapting different artistic expressions along its historical path. Recent developments in Christian art in India indicate a move away from their colonial influences. Angelo da Fonseca, Sr. Marie Claire, Lemuel R. Patole, Alphonso A. Doss, Francis Newton Souza, Jyotisahi, Joy Elamkunnappuzha, Roy Thottom etc. are native Indian Christian artists who present a unique artistic identity called, Modern Indian Christian art.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Cf. PETER—GOPI, A Monograph on church murals of Kerala, 29.

¹⁴⁶ JOSE, A study of the church Murals in the south-Central Kerala.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. KALAPURA, Christian Art and Architecture in India, 65.

2.4 Conclusion

Kalappuara writes: “In India we have good examples of the different styles of architecture down from the Basilican, the Romanesque, the Byzantine, the Gothic, the Baroque, the Rococo, to the ultra-modern and pragmatic”.¹⁴⁸ Nowadays many churches in Kerala also employ *Chuvarchitrakala* technique with Christian adaptation. Orthodox and Catholic churches also use Byzantine, Russian icons for public and private devotions. The mission churches in North India largely adopt tribal art like, Warli painting. Today, strong independent creative representations find expression in the artistic horizon of Indian Christianity.

¹⁴⁸ KALAPURA, Christian Art and Architecture in India, 70.

CHAPTER III

ST. MARY'S JACOBITE SOONORO CATHEDRAL, ANGAMALY: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION TO THE MURALS IN THE CHURCH

3.1 Introduction

The ecclesiastical tensions triggered by the Synod of Udayamperur and the Coonan Cross Oath led to the introduction of the Syrian Orthodox (West Syrian/Antiochian) liturgy and customs among the *Puthenkuttu* faction of the St. Thomas Christians in India. Consequently, the *Puthenkuttu* faction came under the leadership of the Antiochian Syrian Orthodox Patriarch. The Church was further divided and today, (Jacobite) Syrian Orthodox Church (autonomous) is a dominant Oriental Orthodox Church in India under the spiritual leadership of the Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II the Patriarch of Antioch, and the leadership of Catholicos Mor Baselios Joseph I of the (Malankara) Syrian Orthodox Church in India. SMJSC is situated in Angamaly, Kerala, India, and today belongs to the Angamaly diocese of the (Jacobite) Syrian Orthodox Church.

According to Varghese Angamaly, Ajith Kumar, Sheena V.R., Cyriac Jose, and local historians like Jimmy Varghese, SMJSC Angamaly was founded in 409.¹⁴⁹ There is an inscription placed in the church in old Malayalam language which states that “the foundation stone of this church was laid in *Kollam 776 makara njayar 29*”¹⁵⁰. It is assessed as Common Era 1601. There is a Wikipedia source that suggests that SMJSC was erected in the year 1564.¹⁵¹ An undisputed historical document regarding the construction of the current church is not available. There are claims suggesting the existence of SMJSC as the first church in Angamaly and that the murals are of the pre-Portuguese period. Therefore, a historical evaluation of the existence of the Christian community in Angamaly and their places of worship is of utmost priority. An authentic study of the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly is impossible without a reliable

¹⁴⁹ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 196; KUMAR – SHEENA, Mural Paintings in the Churches of Kerala; PETER, Contextualising Church Murals of Kerala; JOSE, A Study of the Church Murals in the South-Central Kerala; GRANZIERA, Cultural Interactions and Religious Iconography in 16th Century Kerala, 83; VARGHESE, Palli Muthassiyum Abhvandya Pithakkanamarum, 24.

¹⁵⁰ ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 196. The word “*makara njayar 29*” means Sunday 29 according to calender year *Kollavarsham*.

¹⁵¹ ST. MARY'S JACOBITE_SOONORO_CATHEDRAL, ANGAMALY, En. Wikipedia org.

historical account of the church in which the mural exists. Additionally, it becomes essential to describe and introduce the murals in the church other than the Last Judgment mural for a comprehensive assessment of its technique, composition, and commission. This chapter is an attempt in this regard.

3.2 Christian Settlement in Angamaly

V.V.K Valath observes that the word “*Mali*” denote sea-port referring to the port of Malliankara, which locally used as, “*Ange*” (that side) and “*Mali*” (Malliankara) to indicate the place in relation to the port.¹⁵² It is to be noted that Angamaly was the centre from where spices moved from hinterland to Malliankara port.¹⁵³ The name “Angamaly” is also considered as a combination of two words “*Angam*” which means, battle and “*Mali*” means empty and plain land. Angamaly denotes a field where warfare was practiced or a battlefield.¹⁵⁴ In Syriac the name was used as *Angamali* and in Latin and in Portuguese as *Angamalle*. Cosmas identifies a place called “*Male*” where pepper grow abundantly and there was a Bishop, this was Angamaly, according to Cardinal Eugene Tisserant.¹⁵⁵

Angamaly was a Christian settlement due to its closeness to Kodungallur. It is said that the religious and social hostile situation in Kodungallur, forced Christians to migrate to Angamaly. *Calendaria* or the *Vaidikapanchaangam* of 1910, states that the first Christian settlement in Angamaly was in 450.¹⁵⁶ It is to be assumed that Christians moved to Angamaly in different periods due to various reasons. Another historically recorded migration was caused by flood in the Periyar river in 1341.¹⁵⁷ The attacks by Muslim traders in 14th and 15th centuries¹⁵⁸ and burning down of the church in Kodungallur and Christian trade establishments in 1523 also caused a migration and concentration of Christian communities in Angamaly.¹⁵⁹ The local ruler of the Angamaly village “*Mangattachen*” happily welcomed Christians and even grant them privileges.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² Cf. VALATH, Keralathile Sthalcharitrangal, 317.

¹⁵³ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 132.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.* 132; ANGMAI – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 143.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. TISSERANT, Eastern Christianity in India, 10; ANGMAI – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 29.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. CALENDARIA, Rakshaniyam 1910am Vatsarathile Panchangam, 12.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 137.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. IYER, The Zamorins of Calicut, 1–2.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Cf. VARGHESE, Palli Muthassiyum Abhvandya Pithakkanamarum, 13.

The metropolitan of St. Thomas Christians Mar Jacob resided in Cranganore (around 1540).¹⁶¹ While Mar Joseph stayed in Angamaly especially after 1555.¹⁶² In a brief to Pope Pius IV, Fr. Alexander Valignano in 1575, states that the administration of St. Thomas Christians were carried out under two Bishops, Mar Joseph residing at Angamaly who rules over the Christians of north and Mar Abraham who ruling over the Christians of South.¹⁶³

3.3 The Ancient Churches in Angamaly

A Jesuit missionary, Melchior Carneiro writes (in 1557) that there was only one church in Angamaly.¹⁶⁴ The Church in Angamaly was named “Holy Virgin the mother of Christ, the light and life.”¹⁶⁵ Alexander Valignano refers Angamaly as the principal church of St. Thomas Christians in 1575.¹⁶⁶ In 1580 Gasper Alvares writes to Everardo Mercuriano that archdeacon George of Christ is the founder of St. Mary’s church. In his travelogue, Antonio de Gouvea in 1604 testifies that Christian in Angamaly was divided into two groups.¹⁶⁷ Antonio de Gouvea, also confirms that there was a Cathedral church in Angamaly which was initially dedicated to Hormusio/Hormusio, an abbot and Persian martyr whom Alexis de Menezes understood as Nestorian and changed the name into Saint Hormisdas.¹⁶⁸ Anquetil Du Perron, who visited Malabar in 1758, gives a description of three churches. (1) the church dedicated to Holy Virgin that was used by both the Syrian Catholics and Jacobites and there was a chapel dedicated to St. George, in which both celebrated their own liturgies one after the other. (2) Another church that was dedicated to Saint Hormisdas, located at the extremity of *Angadi*, which belonged to the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians. (3) And another church that was dedicated to the Blessed virgin Mary which was the

¹⁶¹ Cf. GOUVEA, *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes*, 389.

¹⁶² Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, *Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians*, 141–142.

¹⁶³ Cf. *ibid.*, 142.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. SILVA REGO, *Informação do que fez o Padre Mestre Melchior Carneiro*, 498. Angamaly Reghakal and some other sources gives 1557 as the year of Carneiro’s visit; ANGAMALY – THACHIL, *Angamaly Reghakal*, 67. It is probable to believe that he made more than one visits. According to Catholic Encyclopedia, he was consecrated Co-adjutor Bishop of Nicaea in 1555. And he was in Goa and Malabar until 1567; GULDNER B, *Melchior-Carneiro*.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. ST. MARY’S JACOBITE_SOONORO_CATHEDRAL, ANGAMALY, En. Wikipedia org.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, *Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians*, 142.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. GOUVEA, *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes*, 350.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. *ibid.*; MALEKANDATHIL, *Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians*, 144.

headquarters of the Archdeacon and used only by Jacobites, that was also called *Cheryapally*.¹⁶⁹

It is undisputed today that Hormisdas church also known as *Kizhakkepally* was founded by Mar Abraham. According to Kuriakose Mundandan, Mar Abraham laid foundation stone for the church in 1577 and completed the construction in 1583, where he resided and was laid to eternal rest in 1597.¹⁷⁰ In 2015 September 18, the tomb of Mar Abraham was discovered under the Sanctuary of this church, during the renovation of the church.¹⁷¹ There were three ancient churches in Angamaly namely, “Holy Virgin the mother of Christ, the light and life”, “Assumption of our Lady church” or *Cheryapally* and Hormisdas church also known as *Kizhakkepally*.

3.4 St. Mary’s Jacobite Soonoro Cathedral, Angamaly

A letter dated 21st December 1576, written by the King of Cochin Keshava Rama Varma to Pope Gregory XIII, states that Archdeacon Giwargis (George) of Christ erected a church by name “Assumption of Our Lady church in Angamaly”.¹⁷² Archdeacon George of Christ requested the Jesuit visitor Fr. Alexander Valignano in 1577 “for granting indulgences for the church of St. Mary of Angamaly, which he had erected”¹⁷³. There is also a report of Jesuit priests and brothers of Mater Dei college of Cochin, being invited to celebrate a solemn mass in the church of Archdeacon that was dedicated to assumption of Mary.¹⁷⁴ Pope Gregory XIII has bestowed the church with certain indulgences responding the request of Mar Abraham in 1576.¹⁷⁵ Fr. Gasper Alvares in his report to Fr. Everado Mercuriano dated 10th January 1580 confirms that Archdeacon George of Christ, also known as Archdeacon Geevarghese (Gewargis) was the founder and administrator of Angamaly Assumption church. “He had built church St. Mary with his own money and the monetary help from his parents.”¹⁷⁶ Archdeacon himself writes to Fr. Everardo Mercuriano in 1580 that he requested Pope for perpetual indulgences for those who visit the church on stipulated days.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁹ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 139–140.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. MUNDADAN, Kizhakkepally, 13.

¹⁷¹ Cf. PETER, Interim Report of the Scientific Clearance at the St. Hormis Church, 157.

¹⁷² Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 195.

¹⁷³ MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 138.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 60.

¹⁷⁶ MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 138.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

One of the major historical reasons that prompted Archdeacon Geevarghese to construct a new church was the deportation of Mar Joseph to Rome in 1562. The ecclesial authorities of the Portugal were preventing the arrival of Bishops from East Syrian church with a view of bringing St. Thomas Christians under Latin Jurisdiction and Mar Abraham was the only Syrian Bishop living that time in Malabar. Sensing the danger of losing the ecclesiastical authority, Patriarch Abdisho IV in 1566 appointed Archdeacon George of Christ to be the Bishop of Palayur and Co-adjutor Bishop of Angamaly as per the nomination by the Episcopal council.¹⁷⁸

Another reason was the ill health of Mar Abraham. Mar Abraham informed Pope Gregory XIII, of the nomination in his letter dated 15th January 1580 and requested to confirm, so that he could consecrate the Archdeacon as the Bishop. Pius Malekandathil argues that it prompted George of Christ to construct the church as the seat of Archdeacon.¹⁷⁹ He celebrated the feast of assumption solemnly in 1578, as bishop-elect in his church.¹⁸⁰ Pius Malekandathil talks about Portuguese documents which refer to the ceremony of laying of foundation of Hormisd church probably in 1577, on the occasion of feast of Assumption which took place in St. Mary's church erected by the Archdeacon.¹⁸¹ It shows that the consecration of the St. Mary's church was on or before 1577.

It is to be assumed that St. Mary's church known as *Cheriyapally* (sub-church) functioned as archdeaconate and the church of Holy Virgin the mother of Christ the light and life or *Valiyapally* (Main church) remained as the local parish. Archdeacons used it as the official residence of the archdeacons.¹⁸² In *India Orientalis Christiana*, Paulinus writes that in 1790, the church of St. Mary was under the Jacobites.¹⁸³

Today in Angamaly, there are three churches existing corresponding to the claim of Melchior Carneiro, namely the *Valiypally (Padinjarepally)* St. George Basilica church, St. Hormisd church (*Kizhakkepally*) and SMJSC (*Cheriyapally*). The first church "Holy Virgin the Mother of Christ, the light and life" with a chapel of St. George which was later renamed as St. George church is identified today as St. George Basilica Syro Malabar church. The second church is identified as Saint Hormisd or St.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 139.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 143.

¹⁸² Cf. *ibid.*, 139.

¹⁸³ Cf. BARTHOLOMEW, *India Orientalis Christiana*, 267.

Hormis Syro Malabar church which was erected by Mar Abraham and where he was buried. The third church is dedicated to the assumption of the Holy Virgin which was the headquarters of the Archdeacon, identified as SMJSC also locally known as *Cheriyapapilly*. SMJSC church still today is also known as “*Karetta palli*” (*karetta mathavinte palli*, literally means the church of Mother who was taken up (into heaven)).¹⁸⁴ The main murals of the sanctuary of the church being Trinitarian crowning of Mary in heaven and other murals dealing mostly with the life of St. Mary justify the name.

Local historians Varghese Angamaly and Jomon Thachil, are of the opinion that it was Archdeacon Geevarghese who re-built the today existing SMJSC conveying that the church was already existing, in reference to the first church, “Holy Virgin the Mother of Christ, the light and life”. According to them Archdeacon George of Christ was reconstructing the church.¹⁸⁵ A member of the church, Jimmy Varghese underline that St. Mary’s church was the only and original church in Angamaly and it was established in 409 and that Archdeacon re-built the church in the same place later where the first church of Angamaly was standing.¹⁸⁶

Today SMJSC and St. George church are existing in the same compound though divided by walls and roads. The main church: “Holy Virgin the mother of Christ, the light and life” also had a chapel of St. George.¹⁸⁷ There are documents referring to the change of patron saint in 1760s of the first church to St. George.¹⁸⁸

SMJSC is built with a façade on the west side and the sanctuary on the east. The influence of Portuguese architecture is very evident. It is to be noted that the sanctuary was originally built without windows. In his report on *Serra Francisco Ros* refer such style to pre-Portuguese period. It is even today noticeable that the windows created in a later period on the sanctuary wall caused the destruction of the murals existed there. However, the members of all the three churches can rightfully claim the legacy of a Christian community from 409 C.E in Angamaly. It may also be assumed that there could have been temporary churches built, even before the consecration of the first church namely, “Holy Virgin the mother of Christ, the light and life.”

¹⁸⁴ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 60.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Cf. VARGHESE, Palli Muthassiyum Abhvandya Pithakkanamarum, 13.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 140.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 141.

There is record by C.M.S. Missionaries in 1831 that the church of the *Puthenkur* (St. Mary's church) was burnt down by Tipu Sultan.¹⁸⁹ The invasion of Tipu Sultan is recorded in the year 1790.¹⁹⁰ Quoting a report by Claudius Buchanan from 1806, Varghese Angamaly and Jomon Thachil states that though Tippu attempted total demolition of churches, he could only partially destroy the churches because the walls of the churches were five feet and half thick.¹⁹¹ St. George church (*Valiyapapally*) was seriously damaged, only the roof of St. Hormis church (*Kizhakkepally*) was destroyed. The renovation of Hormis church was done in 1803.¹⁹²

The historical investigation prompt me to conclude that the currently existing SMJSC was constructed by Archdeacon George of Christ between a period of 1564 and 1577. The church was the official residence of Archdeacons. It is not sure whether the solemn feast celebrated in 1577 also was an occasion of the consecration of the church.

3.5 The Murals of St. Mary's Jacobite Soonoro Cathedral, Angamaly

SMJSC, is adorned with numerous murals that show similarity of artistic technique, style and composition. The composition of the murals and its curation demand special attention. The murals existing in the church are briefly introduced here to compliment the study of Last Judgment mural.

3.5.1 The Mural Retablo and Murals of St. Mary

The west wall of the sanctuary is a mural retablo that is supported by four angels with Corinthian column of eight pair. The retablo is excellently decorated and illustrated. The retablo is a huge panel divided into seven registers with Mariological themes starting with annunciation, meeting of St. Mary and Elizabeth where Zacharia and Joseph are also depicted, Birth of Christ, visitation of three kings, depiction of immaculate conception, Crucifixion where St. Mary and John depicted at the foot of the cross and the crowning of Mary in heaven. Besides the mural retablo of the sanctuary, St. Mary is also depicted in the Last Judgment mural.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 140.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. THACHIL, Panikkar Upekshicha Kallu Moolakkallayi, 84.

¹⁹¹ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 194.

¹⁹² Cf. *ibid.*, 122.

3.5.2 Left and Right Panels of Sanctuary

The right wall of the sanctuary is painted with a panel consisting of four murals depicting Christ's passion, prayer at Gethsemane, arrest, flagellation. And another panel is destroyed and a window is inserted there. The left side of the sanctuary is painted also with four murals. They are crucifixion, resurrection, a mural of a Bishop. Here also, a window is constructed destroying a mural. Besides, there are also murals of two angels, a mural of sacrifice of Abraham on the right side and a mural of Adam and Eve in the garden on the left side.

3.5.3 Mural of Holy Trinity

Holy Trinity is depicted on the east wall of the sanctuary with the mural of coronation of Mary in heaven. The Last Judgment mural also depicts father son and holy spirit. The persons of the Trinity are depicted with a rhombus shaped halo, consciously separating them from the saintly figures who are depicted with circular halo. Holy spirit is portrayed as a dove which George Menachery observes as a unique feature of Last Judgment mural of Angamaly.¹⁹³

3.5.4 Murals of Jesus Christ

The murals in the sanctuary deal with the life of Christ starting with Christ praying in the garden, his arrest and flagellation. The opposite wall portrays the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. On the side walls of the southern and northern side Altar, the apparition of Jesus to Thomas, ascension and apparition of Jesus to Thomas at a port, are presented. Besides, the church has murals of Jesus in the Trinitarian themes and mural of child Jesus in the nativity scenes. Resurrected Christ is depicted with a flag of triumph.

3.5.5 Mural of St. Thomas

The right wall of side Altar is painted with the mural of apparition of Jesus to St. Thomas in the background of a port. A king is also depicted in the scene. The apocryphal "Acts of Thomas" narrates the story of Gundaphar the King of India, sending Habban an emissary to whom Thomas was sold as a slave, which eventually

¹⁹³ Cf. MENACHERY, Pallikalile Chitrabhasangal, 54.

caused the arrival of St. Thomas to India.¹⁹⁴ The mural depicts Jesus appearing to Thomas who was reluctant to take a voyage to India. “Acts of Thomas” speaks of the reluctance of Thomas to travel to India.¹⁹⁵ He was employed by the King as a carpenter to build a palace for him. And it is portrayed in this mural that Jesus himself appears to Thomas and encourages him to take up the journey. Thomas recalling Jesus’ words (Jn 14:2) builds a heavenly palace for the King other than an earthly mansion.¹⁹⁶ This legend was also popular in Europe in the Middle Ages.¹⁹⁷ Angamaly mural depict St. Thomas as holding a try-square and a book (Gospel) which is also typical of Christian iconography of St. Thomas. On the left wall of Kestromo the mural of apparition of Jesus after his resurrection to St. Thomas and his faith proclamation is depicted. St. Thomas is depicted as touching the wounds of the risen Christ. St. Thomas is consistently depicted in a blue cassock (tunic) and red outer garment.

3.5.6 Mural of St. Joseph

St. Joseph is depicted in the retablo of the sanctuary in the mural of visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. He is depicted as young and holding branch of flowers. St. Joseph also appears in the nativity mural.

Another mural in the sanctuary of Angamaly church the mural of visitation of three kings, a young man is depicted as holding a jar. In a nativity icon from Lagoudera, church of the Panagia Arakiotissa (1192 C.E.), Cyprus and in the nativity icon of Moutoullas church (1280 C.E.) midwives are depicted as pouring water from a jar to bath the newborn Jesus. The nativity iconography of this type is part of the Byzantine tradition.¹⁹⁸ In Angamaly mural, the figure also has a halo symbolizing that the person is a holy man. Therefore it can also be treated as a mural of St. Joseph.

In the second register of Last Judgment mural there is a mural identified by Ajith Kumar, Sheena, Jimmy Varghese, Cyriac Jose, as the mural of St. Thomas, which Menachery identifies as that of St. Joseph.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Cf. NEDUNGATT, The Apocryphal “Acts of Thomas” and Christian Origins in India, 542.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Thomasakten, 1-29 (SCHNEEMELCHER, II⁵, 303-315).

¹⁹⁶ Cf. NEDUNGATT, The Apocryphal “Acts of Thomas” and Christian Origins in India, 543.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. OSSWALD, From Modo Nostro to Modo Goano, 211.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. MEYER-FERNANDEZ, Arab Christian Refugees in Lusignan Cyprus, 171.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. MENACHERY, Pallikalile Chitrabhasangal, 54.

3.5.7 Mural of Adam and Eve

The sanctuary of the church also has the mural of Eve and Adam in the garden of Eden. It shows a devil in the mouth of the snake which has crocodile shaped head with canine teeth that instigates Eve to enjoy the fruit. There are two trees with plenty of fruits which look like pomegranate.

3.5.8 Mural of Sacrifice of Issac

The sacrifice of Abraham from the Old Testament is painted on the wall of the sanctuary. The mural depicts Abraham with a sword raised in his hand, about to sacrifice Isaac and an angel interrupts him. Issac is depicted as laying down, his hands and legs tied. This motive is typical of the Byzantine iconography by fifth century on the arch of apse or inside the bema. It was also a prominent theme in Syria and Egypt recurrently painted for instance, at Monastery of St. Anthony on the Red Sea Egypt (1232/1233), in the chapel of St. George in the church of St. Mercurius, Virgin's church at the monastery of Rmans (*deir al baramus*),²⁰⁰ and at St James in Qara, Syria.²⁰¹ It gets along with the eucharistic theology and especially along with the theme of divine intervention.

3.5.9 Mural of St. George

A mural of St. George, killing the dragon is painted on the right-side Altar. The side Altar is also dedicated to St. George.

3.5.10 Mural of St. Behnam

The wall of the left Side-Altar is painted with a mural identified as of St. Behnam. The legend of St. Behnam and forty martyrs were much popular among the Syrian Christians of Asia minor. The mural shows St. Behnam visiting hermit Mathai on a horse back and his friends along with him.

3.5.11 Mural of A Bishop

A mural identified as Mar Thoma I, dressed in episcopal attire is painted inside the sanctuary. The episcopal garments resemble Latin liturgical tradition, but the figure is

²⁰⁰ Cf. WEYL CARR, *Iconography and Identity*, 145–146.

²⁰¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 147.

depicted as holding Holy Cross in which a towel attached as it is in the Syrian liturgical tradition. The shape of the cross also resemble Persian tradition. Close to him there is also an image of a deacon carrying a book and a thurible. Identification of this mural as Mar Thoma I is not free from dispute.

3.5.12 Mural of David and Goliath

On the wall above the arch that demarcates the sanctuary, and the nave has the mural of David defeating Goliath. It depicts not only the victory of good over evil but also serves as a eucharistic theme. The genealogy of Jesus connects to Davidic dynasty (Matt 1:1–17). David symbolizes the priestly and kingly prophecies which would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

3.5.13 Other Murals

SMJSC, church also has a vast collection of murals of plants and animals. They not only occupy a place in the murals as decorative motives but also symbolize theological and cultural motives. Four owls occupy very prominent place close to the retablo, horses, cows, elephant (in mural of hell), fruits, plants, creepers, etc. also are depicted in the church. SMJSC contains multiple murals of Angels in the sanctuary and outside, besides the angels depicted in the Last Judgment.

3.6 Conclusion

The murals in the church are arranged systematically and placed according to its theological significance. The murals also contribute to the liturgical setting. The history of St. Mary's Soonoro cathedral is very important in understanding the period of execution of the murals. The murals of SMJSC, undoubtedly mark the golden age of church murals in Kerala. Similar murals except the mural of Last Judgment is also seen in other churches of St. Thomas Christians. St. Mary's church at Kanjoor in Ernakulam had a small panel of Last Judgment in which an Angel reading the book of deeds was depicted.²⁰² Unfortunately, this mural is severely damaged today. Similar murals in style, technique, theme, and artistic characteristics are present in nearby churches and several other churches in Kerala.

²⁰² Cf. THOTTATHIL, *The Christian Mural Paintings in Kerala*, 511.

CHAPTER IV

LAST JUDGMENT MURAL OF ANGAMALY: ECCLESIAL AND ICONOGRAPHICAL INTERACTION

4.1 Introduction

The Last Judgment mural of SMJSC, Angamaly is one of the significant Christian murals found in Kerala. However, ambiguities surrounding the period of its execution, the artists and the key contributors, are yet to be resolved. To date, research has largely affirmed that the mural tradition in Kerala is an unequivocal contribution of the Portuguese, especially Jesuit ecclesial authority. This conclusion derives from the Decree of the Synod of Udayamperur (see page 62) and the assumption that the Churches of St. Thomas Christians were aniconic pre-Portuguese period. It is important to note that few churches accepted the decisions of the Synod of Udayamperur at first while the majority opposed the decisions of the Synod. Angamaly St. Mary's Church was one of the churches that resisted the decisions of the Synod. SMJSC, being the residence of the Archdeacon was also one of the places of resistance. It is in this church and similar other churches, which eventually strayed from Catholic communion, that many of the murals are preserved today. Therefore, comprehensive research should consider not only the iconographic interactions but also the historical and ecclesial elements that played a role in the execution of the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly.

This chapter explore in detail the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly and discuss its biblical, iconographic, and socio-religious features. It also identifies individual components that highlight the cultural and ecclesial interactions within the mural.

4.2 The Last Judgment Mural of Angamaly

The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly consists of two panels, positioned opposite to each other on the south and north walls of the nave of the SMJSC. Conventionally, the first panels are referred to as “the mural of heaven” or as “the mural of vision of heaven” and the second panel as “the mural of hell” or as “the mural of vision of hell”. Upon examining the mural, this master thesis opts to call the first panel as, “the mural of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ” and the second panel as, “the mural of the mouth of hell” respectively. The thesis outlines in the following pages the supporting

arguments for the same. The “Mural of the Second Coming” measures 156 x 144 inches, while the “Mural of the Mouth of Hell” is 144 x 144 inches. Notably, this is the largest Last Judgment mural in Kerala.

4.2.1 The Mural of Second Coming of Jesus Christ

The mural is arranged in six registers. The first register of the mural depicts God the father flanked by angels and a dove resting in His hand symbolizing Holy Spirit. Christ is depicted in the second register. It is noteworthy that Jesus Christ is depicted only in the second register alluding to the incarnation and second coming of the second person of the Trinity. Nevertheless, a *mandorla* covering the persons of the trinity covering first and second register can be observed. The Artists of the Last Judgment mural uses rhombus shaped halos exclusively to the persons of the Trinity. Christ is depicted carrying a wooden cross. Apostles are painted on both sides of Jesus Christ, where thirteen persons are illustrated. The twelve persons can be understood as apostles. However, a person is added to the first row of apostles behind the mural, which can be treated as of Saint Peter. On the left end of the same register St. Mary is painted in blue robe, wearing a golden crown. On the right end of the same register, there is the mural of St. Joseph. The third register is dedicated for the depiction of heavenly Angels of different herds and ranks. They are represented as praising God with a different musical instrument. The depiction of archangels occupies the central space of the fourth Register. Archangel Gabriel is painted as playing a double trumpet and Michael is represented as holding a sword. Raphael carries a staff in his hand. On the left side, four figures are depicted in liturgical vestments carrying scrolls in their hands, notably without halos. On the right side there are four figures with scrolls and writing tools in their hands presumably the four Evangelists. On the fifth register at the center Adam and Eve are depicted and, on their left, female saints and on the right male saints are painted. There are no inscriptions to identify the murals. However, some of the murals can be identified with the help of biblical contexts. For instance, Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can be assumed. Abraham is standing behind Adam with grey beard Isaac and Jacob close to him. The rest of the figures in the murals, probably be identified as Moses with a book reminding of stone tablets, Aron wearing a priestly hood, King David with a harp, Samson with muscular body and John the Baptist identified with camel hair clothing. The mural includes prophets, saints, martyrs, Bishops, priests, etc. The sixth register portray the (earthly) Church with Bishops

priests, monks, kings, queens, men and women. They are depicted as standing with folded hands, gazing to heaven. The right side of the same register portrays those who are not elected. They are painted by the artists as expressing their disappointment and despair. Except three persons, others are depicted nude and hiding their faces against their hands, as if lamenting over their exclusion from heaven. One among the among the rejected who is in royal attire is identified as Pontius Pilate, who convicted Jesus.²⁰³ Another figure among the rejected, identified as Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus due the bag (of coins) he holds.²⁰⁴ The sixth register shows two small figures, who are also among the blessed, perhaps the contributors of the mural.

4.2.1.1 Biblical Representation of the Second Coming of Christ and the Separation of the Righteous

Jesus himself talks about the end of the world and punishment through parables (Matt 13: 41–43).²⁰⁵ The parable of Abraham and Lazarus narrated by Jesus conveys the message of separation and election. It is an Old Testament idea which get vivid expression in Matt 25: 31–34, 41, 46. The sermon of John the Baptist described in Luke 3:9 uses the imageries like, cutting down and throwing into fire the branches which do not bear fruit, gathering of wheat in granary and separation chaff. The scriptural sources of Last Judgment, the separation of the righteous from the damned and the day of judgement are found in Matt 24: 29–31; 25: 31–34, 41, 46; 13: 38–43; 13: 49–50, I Cor 15: 51–52, Rev 20: 11–15, I Thes 4: 14–17. The New Testament has ample expressions of Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Gospel of Mathew 24: 44, Acts 1: 10–11, Rev 22: 20; 3: 11; 1: 8, 1 Jn 2: 28, 2 Thes 2: 1 etc. talks about the coming of Son of Man. The concept of “the approaching day” (Heb 10: 24–25), the need of “staying awake and watchful” (Matt 24: 42), “coming of Son of Man in clouds” (Rev 1:7), “the coming of the Son of Man as lightening that comes from the east and flash as far as the west” (Matt 24: 26–27) etc. are also expressed in the Bible. The description according to I Cor 15: 51–52, is combined in the Last Judgment mural scene of Angamaly with greater importance.

²⁰³ Cf. KUMAR – SHEENA Mural Paintings in the churches of Kerala.

²⁰⁴ Cf. *ibid*.

²⁰⁵ “Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt 13: 40–43).

4.2.1.2 Representation of Enthroned Christ

Hetoimasia (throne) is an important element of Last Judgment iconography. The Last Judgment painting of the Baptistery chapel of Florence (c.1271–1330) depicts Enthroned Christ. The Rabulla Gospel (*Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana*, Florence) illustrates Jesus as sitting on the throne. The triumphant Parousia of Beaulieu Tympanum, the third century crypt of saint Victor of Marseille shows Christ sitting on the throne with stretched hands along with apostles.²⁰⁶ The depiction of enthroned Christ in Angamaly mural may be well identified with description of Evangelist Mathew, who describes Jesus as the judge and the one who comes back to gather the blessed (Matt 25, Acts 1: 9–11).²⁰⁷ The Angamaly mural portray enthroned Jesus Christ. He carries a Cross on his left shoulder and His right hand, depicted as inviting the elect to the kingdom. His glory is picturized using yellow background. The throne is not visible in detail in the mural, yet Christ is depicted as seated, which corresponds to the scriptural description. Enthroned Christ in Angamaly, is accompanied by Mary, Apostles and Joseph.

The mural of Christ in Angamaly Last Judgement mural is unique due to its gaze towards people who are lined up to listen to the pronouncement of judgment. The cross, Jesus carries may be understood as a symbol of passion and redemption. Last Judgment mosaic of Torcello also depicts Christ as carrying a cross as he redeems Adam and eve from hell.²⁰⁸ This picturization also appears in the manuscript of Cosma Idicopleustes from sixth century.²⁰⁹ Depiction of the instruments of passion (*Arma Christi*) which include cross, nails, crown of thorn etc. were also used in later stages of Last Judgment iconography.²¹⁰

4.2.1.3 Representation of St. Mary

The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly depicts St. Mary wearing a crown and she is adorned in royal attire. St. Mary is positioned alongside Jesus Christ and His apostles on the same register. The concept of crowning of St. Mary in heaven, has been popularised with the feast of Assumption in the West. The image of St. Mary as the

²⁰⁶ Cf. MUNTEAN, *Medieval Christian Painting*, 259.

²⁰⁷ “The Son of man comes in his glory and all angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory” (Matt 25:31, Rev 4: 2). “Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them” (Rev 20:11–15).

²⁰⁸ Cf. MARTIN, *Understanding the Last Judgment Mosaic at Torcello*, 101.

²⁰⁹ Cf. MUNTEAN, *Medieval Christian Painting*, 260.

²¹⁰ Cf. BHALLA, *Experiencing Last Judgment*, 140.

Queen of Heaven and her coronation by the Father and the Son was popular in western Marian depictions. In the eastern and oriental tradition, the feast of Dormition was known. An early official approval for the feast of Dormition was granted by Emperor Maurice in the sixth century in the Eastern Roman Empire.²¹¹ The Bible verses from the Song of Solomon 2:10 “Arise my love, my fair one” according to Grindlay, can be understood as invitation from the bridegroom to the virgin, symbolizing Christ inviting St. Mary to rise to heaven.²¹² However, it is not clear whether the dormition depictions invariably used crowning or crowned St. Mary as an essential element.

The Angamaly mural of Last Judgment portrays St. Mary, crowned and seated in heaven to the right of Christ. This placement may allude to I Kings 2:19 and Psalm 45:9, where King Solomon prepares a throne for his mother, Bathsheba, at his right hand. The concept of Christ as King and Mary as Queen of Heaven is echoed in the sermons of Bernard of Clairvaux, a mystic who interprets the Songs of Songs.²¹³ This royal tradition of the king’s mother seated on his right suggests messianic significance. The sanctuary (East wall) of SMJSC also depicts the crowning of Mary by the Father and the Son.

4.2.1.4 Representation of Angels and Saints

The depiction of angels in the Last Judgment iconography has its root in the Bible. Gospel of Mathew 13: 41, proclaims the presence of angels along with Jesus Christ. “And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt 24: 31). Four angels are depicted in the first register of the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly. Third register exclusively depicts herd of angels (Isa 6: 2–4), and the fourth register depicts archangels, Michel (Dan 10:13, Rev 12: 7–9) Gabriel (Luke 1:19) and Raphel (Tob 5:10). The angel in the middle of the fourth register is depicted as blowing a double-edged trumpet, announcing the second coming (Rev 9:1). Notably, the reduction of the herd of angels to three in the fourth register is a distinctive feature of the Angamaly Last Judgment mural. Roy M. Thottom identifies the angel with the double-edged trumpet as Gabriel, the one carrying the sword as Michael, and the other one holding

²¹¹ Cf. GRINDLAY, Queen of Heaven, 18.

²¹² Cf. *ibid.*, 24.

²¹³ Cf. *ibid.*

a bunch of flowers as Raphael.²¹⁴ (The depiction of the bunch of flowers is in a faded state today and could be understood also as a measuring rod or simply as a staff). The triumphant Parousia of Beaulieu Tympanum, depicts angels behind Christ, shown as carrying a cross, and two angels on either side of Jesus blowing trumpet.²¹⁵

Apostles are depicted without detailed artistic specifications, though Peter could be identified by his grey beard and John as the youngest. There are 13 figures, and it is clear that the figure behind St. Peter was not originally planned. However, it does not appear to be an addition by the same artist upon noticing the omission or on following an order from the sponsors. This figure probably be a depiction of St. Paul, who is considered also as an apostle (Gal 1:1). The saints are arranged in row of a hierarchy leading from apostles, prophets, martyrs, holy monks, and the righteous.²¹⁶ Ajith Kumar, Jenee Peter, Granziera Patricia identify the figure on the right side of the second register as St. Thomas.²¹⁷ However it seems to be an erroneous identification. On the Questroma walls of the Angamaly SMJSC, St. Thomas is consistently depicted as wearing a blue tunic with red outer garment and carrying a try-square. This distinct attire and attributes of St. Thomas provide clear signs of identification that the figure on the Last Judgment mural is not St. Thomas.

In Christian iconography, the figure of St. Joseph is often depicted notably with the staff with flowers. The fresco panel in Giotto's Scrovegni chapel beautifully illustrates this iconographic detail, depicting Joseph holding a staff that blossoming.²¹⁸ A lily stalk is also linked with the iconography of Joseph. The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly depicts the figure in a green tunic and red outer garment, holding a staff with flowers. This careful portrayal aligns with the established iconography of St. Joseph. Therefore, this thesis identifies the figure in the second register of the Angamaly Last Judgement mural as of St. Joseph and not of St. Thomas.

The fourth register portrays four figures on the left of archangels wearing liturgical vestments. They hold papyrus scroll and writing tools in their hands. They are portrayed without halos. They can be paralleled to other priestly figures depicted elsewhere in the mural. The book of Revelation (Rev 7:1) talks about servants or angels who guard the four corners of the earth. But the Last Judgment mural does not

²¹⁴ Cf. THOTTAM, Devalaya Chuvarchitrangal.

²¹⁵ Cf. MUNTEAN, Medieval Christian Painting, 259.

²¹⁶ Cf. MARINIS, Death and Afterlife in Byzantium, 43.

²¹⁷ Cf. KUMAR– SHEENA Mural Paintings in the churches of Kerala.

²¹⁸ Cf. STRACKE, St. Joseph: The Iconography.

include angelic characteristics to these figures. Ephrem the Syrian, in his sermon on the Last Judgment talks about “Men who will come from the four corners for Judgement”.²¹⁹ The mural representation corresponds to the description of St. Ephrem. Though their liturgical vestment seems to be similar, the details of vestments, show differences. The papyrus scrolls and writing tools may be indicating their teaching ministry. Therefore, they might be representing the fathers or doctors of the church or four patriarchates of the early church. The Altar retablo of Santa Monica convent in Goa, India has also four doctors of the church carved on it. It is yet to be verified whether Angamaly Last Judgment mural is depicting, patriarchs, judges or doctors of the Church.

The fifth register depicts women on the right side and men on the left side who were elected. Biblical figures like Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Aron, King David, Samson, John the Baptist and other figures of kingly, priestly, and saintly class appears in the mural. The sixth register on the left side shows those who are elected who also include persons belong to priestly, kingly category and other people. It may be representing the “the great” and “the small” described in Rev 20:12 as standing before the throne.

4.2.1.5 Representation of Celestial World

The composition of the celestial world with layers of cloud as boundaries, appears in all the registers.²²⁰ Archangels are positioned at the center of the mural, separating a higher celestial world. The fourth register acts as a bridge between the place of those already in heaven and those who are raised at the sound of the trumpet at the second coming. The fleeing of heaven and earth²²¹ and the emergence of a new world is depicted in the Angamaly murals by demonstrating intensity of color in the background of the first and second registers compared to that of the fourth and fifth registers. The blue background gradually transitions to yellow. It seems that the textual description of the ascension of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:9–11), who comes surrounded by clouds, has been incorporated in the depiction of His Second Coming in the mural.

²¹⁹ Ephraim the Syrian’s Sermon on the Second Coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Summary, in: HIMKA, Last Judgment Iconography, 208.

²²⁰ Cf. THOTTAM, Devalaya Chuvarchitrangal Samskarika Samanyathinte Adayalanagl.

²²¹ “Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them” (Rev 20:11).

Angamaly mural of Last Judgment painted on the left side of the *Haykla* depicts primarily, the event of Second Coming of Jesus Christ in detail. Angamaly Mural of Last Judgment present the biblical descriptions of second coming in a collective and coherent way. Therefore, this thesis uses the title “the mural of Second Coming of Jesus Christ” instead of the other titles for instance, “the mural of heaven” or as “the mural of vision of heaven”.

4.2.2 The Mural of Mouth of Hell

The mural painted on the left wall of SMJSC depicting a giant mouth and punishments of souls, is commonly called as “the mural of vision of hell” or simply as “the mural of hell.” Hell is painted as a fiery place inside a giant mouth with fierce eyes, nose, and teeth. In contrast to the orderly organized mural of heaven, hell is chaotically arranged.²²² Though a strict demarcation of Registers is difficult, for the purpose of study, the mural could be divided into four registers. The first register from the top, on the left and right corners depict four figures with human body and animal head. Their bodies are painted in blue, green and yellow colors. The central figure is a unique characterization which is not familiar in Christian Last Judgment iconography. The central figure carries a trident in hand. This figure is also accompanied by two other inferior hybrid figures. Hybrid figures (Rev. 9:11) with body of a lion and head of crocodile with fiery eyes, teeth and wings appear. The artists of the mural have given special attention in separating them, more over not confusing them with the angels who are in service of heaven. The opening and reading of the book of the dead (Rev. 20:11–15) is depicted in the mural.²²³ The second register consists of sinners depicted as being tortured by agents of devil. However, their punishments are not severe compared to the torture depicted in the third and fourth registers. The third register depicts punishments like snake bite, plucking of eyeballs and tongue, scorching, torture on a rolling wheel against a saw by the agents of devil. The third register has got inscriptions in primitive Malayalam (*Vattezhuthu*) language. The inscriptions

²²² Cf. KUMAR – SHEENA, *Mural Paintings in the churches of Kerala*.

²²³ “Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened also another book was opened, the book of life and the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they have done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20: 11–15).

denote sins and their corresponding punishments. In the fourth register, two devils tearing a sinner by holding on his legs and a *makara* figure swallowing a sinner can be seen. Torture on a pillar tied upside down, forcing to drink poison, forcing to pull demonic cart etc. are depicted here. There is also the presence of elephant, snakes, wild creatures that eat and harm the sinners. A man is painted as carrying a luggage box, probably symbolizing greed. A figure holding a colorful umbrella and another playing “*mrudangam*” a musical instrument, are also painted.²²⁴ It resembles ritualistic procession that are familiar in Hindu temples and in Christian churches in Kerala. Figures are depicted whose eyes are bitten by snakes and another figure being punished by a devil as he rides on him. Two devils carry a sinner tied on a rod and burn him. Sins related to vision are punished by plucking out of eyeballs and eyes being bitten by snakes. Sins related to speech are punished by plucking out of tongue. Snakes, reptiles, worms are often depicted as agents of punishments. The whole panel depicts flames of (unquenchable) fire. The mural show kings and priests as being rejected and going through punishments. The human figure (Judas Iscariot) which appears in the mural of Second Coming is depicted again in this mural.

The existence of two worlds can be traced from New Testament. Jesus himself describes a world as hades (Lk 16:23) and second, as bosom of Abraham or as by the side of Abraham (Lk 16: 19–31, Gal 3:29). Bosom of Abraham is qualified with the presence of angels (Lk. 16: 22) and hades with torture, agony in flames and with the presence of unquenchable fire (Lk. 16:17).

According to Gary D. Schmidt depiction of the “mouth of hell” is associated with the zoomorphic beast ready to devour the souls of the damned appeared first, in 10th century in England and later spread to Europe.²²⁵ Hybrid creatures known to be devourers of souls in the Near East and Mediterranean regions were connected with Hebrew concept of “*Sheol*”, the Egyptian beast named “*Ammit*”, Canaanite god of the underworld “*Mot*” etc. They were identified with the Old Testament “*Leviathan*”.²²⁶ The devourer is presented in certain cases horizontally and in other cases vertically. Horizontal depictions portray the damned as approaching the devourer on foot and in vertical depiction as they fall into its maw.²²⁷ The Last Judgment relief dated 1240

²²⁴ Cf. THOTTATHIL, *The Christian Mural Paintings in Kerala*, 505.

²²⁵ Cf. SCHMIDT, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-century Britain*, 13–14.

²²⁶ Cf. BERMUDEZ – PENA, *The Iconographic Origins of Hell as a Soul-devourer*, 90.

²²⁷ Cf. SCHMIDT, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-century Britain*, 127–130.

C.E. of Amiens Cathedral Picardy France depicts the damned entering into hell through the mouth.²²⁸ The depiction of mouth of hell appeared in the Romanesque period, especially in relation to the tympanums of European Cathedrals. The introduction of Satan, sometimes with multiple faces in the mouth of hell and cauldron, can be traced to the 15th century.²²⁹ *Tarasque*, a mythological creature from Tarascon (Provence, France) with a head similar to that of a lion, with ears like a horse, with torso of an ox, and with a tail ending with a scorpion's sting, became part of the Last Judgment iconography.²³⁰

There are different terms used to describe the place of punishment in Last Judgment iconography. Hades, *Gehenna* and *Sheol* are commonly used to describe hell. The term "*Gehenna*" denotes, "a fiery stream" described in the book of Daniel (Dan 7:10). There are also different chambers underneath *Gehenna* representing torments, the outer darkness, weeping, and gnashing of teeth (Matt 25: 30), everlasting fire (Matt 25: 41). There are worms that would not die (Mk. 9:44, 48) reptiles and desire of death (Rev. 9:6). The word "*Sheol*" is an expression used by the Syrian and Eastern theology which has its roots in the Hebrew bible.²³¹ It is understood as a biblical place of the dead, a subterranean realm or a place of abandonment, a watery abode.²³²

The figure of Leviathan is associated with the depiction of hell in Last Judgment iconography. The portrayal of Leviathan originates from the Old Testament.²³³ The book of Job describes two creatures one, Leviathan and the other *Behemoth*.²³⁴ Leviathan as described in the book of Job could be understood also as a divine advisory who execute punishment, or as a fallen angel. Leviathan is identified as a monstrous creature, commonly understood to be an aquatic monster or as a dragon. The depiction of sea monster is originated from ancient Near Eastern world.²³⁵ Leviathan is also portrayed as a divine advisory (Ps 74: 12–17) who is associated with Canaanite chaos monster "*Lotan*" (Ps 74:12–17).²³⁶ Leviathan is also connected with the Hebrew word

²²⁸ Cf. MURPHY, Leviathan to Lucifer, 148.

²²⁹ Cf. BERMUDEZ – PENA, The Iconographic Origins of Hell as a Soul-devourer, 91.

²³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 92.

²³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 89.

²³² Cf. SURIANO, Sheol. The Tomb and the Problem of Postmortem Existence, 2.

²³³ Cf. Job 3: 8, 41:14, 21, 34.

²³⁴ Cf. MURPHY, Leviathan to Lucifer, 149.

²³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*

²³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 150.

“*liwyatha*” which means coiled, and the picturization often follow the form of a snake.²³⁷

Leviathan is translated into Malayalam as “*muthala*” (crocodile) in the POC Bible.²³⁸ Crocodile shaped figures (*Makara*) are depicted in the Angamaly mural as servants of devil. *Makara* figures are vastly used Southeast Asian temple architecture generally on footsteps, lintels and arches of temple entrances.²³⁹ *Makara* is also understood as the vehicle of river goddess Ganga and water god Varuna.

The depiction of “unquenchable fire” and “worms that would not die” occupy a prominent place in the iconography of hell in Angamaly mural. The Angamaly mural depicts Mouth of Hell as a fiery place incorporating the Biblical narrations.²⁴⁰ The mural of Angamaly depicts infernal furnace in the mouth of hell. Angamaly mural depicts devourer positioned vertically ready to swallow the damned, as they fall into its maw. Therefore, this thesis uses the title “the mural of mouth of hell” to designate this mural.

In the Angamaly mural of Mouth of Hell, there is a central figure, which can be identified both as monster and a divine advisory who execute punishment. This figure has close iconographical resemblances with depiction of Hindu Goddesses “*Kali*”. The depiction of the trident which is also called “*Trishul*” in Hinduism, the seating posture, the crown of serpents etc. are also used in depiction of Goddesses “*Kali*”. The figure in the Angamaly mural of mouth of hell also has similarities to *Theyyam*, a ritualistic God-appearance among Hindus of Malabar.²⁴¹ *Theyyam* also is known for comforting the devotees during their appearances and has similarities with the illustration of the figure in Angamaly mural of mouth of hell.²⁴² Angamaly mural also depicts, one of the rejected soul, described to be as Judas Iscariot is being comforted by the central figure in the mural of mouth of Hell. However, a similar illustration can also be found in the Torcello Last Judgment mosaic in which Leviathan is seated on his throne holding a soul in his lap.

²³⁷ Cf. BERMUDEZ – PENA, The Iconographic Origins of Hell as a Soul-devourer, 94.

²³⁸ Bible, Pastoral Orientation Centre. The word Leviathan is not stated here, but translated as *Muthala*, (crocodile). Job 41:1. But in Job 3: 8, the name “Leviathan” is used as same without translating.

²³⁹ Cf. NEVIN, Elements of Colonisation and Indigenisation, 59.

²⁴⁰ “So, it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt 13: 49,50). “Then he will say to those at his left hand, you that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt 25: 41).

²⁴¹ Cf. KUMAR – SHEENA, Mural Paintings in the churches of Kerala.

²⁴² *Theyyam* is a Malayalam word which means God.

From the thirteenth century onwards the Last Judgment iconography widely employed vivid descriptions of hell and punishment.²⁴³ According to Brenk, the mosaic of S. Apollinare Nuovo includes the oldest depiction of demon in the Christian iconography of Last Judgment.²⁴⁴ Demons were portrayed most often with socio-cultural connotations and expressed a spectrum of artistic freedom. The icons made use of the historical and cultural events to communicate with the society which included, Jews, Christians, Muslims and other belief systems.²⁴⁵ The iconography of the Last Judgment and that of Hell include confrontation between the followers of Christ with those of Satan. This concept is very much contextualised according to the iconographer's imagination, that were mostly influenced by the motifs drawn from the Hebrew Bible, the Gospels, the Epistles, the book of Revelation, the Jewish apocalyptic literature etc. The Last Judgment icon of Kastoria has an image of the Synagogue with antisemitic overtones. In the crucifixion fresco, there is a man with skullcap in the company of two clerics engulfed by flames. In the Kastoria icon of Mavriotissa monastery, local elements are incorporated. The legend of Jephonias, who disrupted the funeral of Virgin Mary and was punished by archangel Michael by chopping his hands and later being miraculously rejoined following his repentance and conversion to Christianity, is depicted in this icon.²⁴⁶ "Describing demons as black and as 'Ethiopians' began in late Antiquity and continued throughout the middle ages"²⁴⁷ points out Niamh Bhalla. Jews, Muslims and even Christians who did not follow the right faith were depicted in Last Judgment together with evil or with those who suffer in the eternal fire.

4.3 The Spatial Significance of Last Judgment Mural of Angamaly

The Last Judgment depictions are generally found on west walls of the churches or on the walls of the Baptisteries. The Last Judgment mural of Torcello is painted on the west wall of the Santa Assunta church.²⁴⁸ Last Judgment murals are mostly painted on a single panel portraying election and damnation separating the panel vertically or horizontally. For instance, the Last Judgment fresco of the monastery of Mar Musa al-

²⁴³ Cf. QUIRICO, *The representation of Heaven and Hell*, 577.

²⁴⁴ Cf. BRENK, *Tradition und Neuerung*, 43.

²⁴⁵ Cf. TSAKIRIDOU, *Tradition and Transformation in Christian Art*, 25.

²⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 23.

²⁴⁷ BHALLA, *Experiencing Last Judgment*, 12.

²⁴⁸ Cf. MARTIN, *Understanding the Last Judgment Mosaic at Torcello*, 101.

Habashi Nebek, in the Qalamoun region of Syria, uses the Horizontal formation.²⁴⁹ Last Judgment mural of Torcello has vertical formation. However, there are exceptions where spatial constraints compelled the artists to extend themes to the neighboring walls.²⁵⁰

The sanctuary of the churches of St. Thomas Christians were on the east and the main Entrance (*Aanavathil*) was on the west. Widad Khoury is of the opinion that churches of St. Thomas Christians in Kerala have “syro-oriental” structure that originates from ancient Syriac model where, to the east is the *Qudosh Qudshin* (sanctuary) then *Questroma* (area between sanctuary and nave), *Haykla* (nave), and at the west is *Modalam* (portico).²⁵¹ Bishop Francisco Ros in his report of Serra writes the following. “The temples which these Christians had built before the arrival of the Portuguese were in the style of the Greeks. The main Chapel is rather narrow, with a small Altar in the center built on the wall at the east end.”²⁵² The congregation would face the east during the services. In Angamaly, when looking from the Altar, the mural of second coming of Jesus Christ is painted on the right wall, and punishment of the damned on the left wall. The parallel presentation of Second Coming and mouth of hell on both walls as seen in Angamaly is not common in Last Judgment iconography. The placement of these murals corresponds with biblical narration of Second coming of Christ “He will put the sheep on his right and goats on the left” (Matt 25:33). The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly executed on left and right walls of the *Haykla* need to be treated as single mural, which illustrates the election and rejection during the event of second coming. It can be confirmed from the depiction of the figure who holds a purse of coins in hand, appearing also in the mural of mouth of hell. The depiction suggests that the Artists deliberately convey that election and retribution as part of the same event but executed based on the biblical narration on both walls of the nave.

4.4 Composition and Pedagogical Representation of the Mural

The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly predominantly relays on Bible for its thematic composition. The coming of the son of man narrated by Jesus Christ (Matt 24: 39–41, Matt 25: 31–34, 41) and the corresponding scriptural sources are the fundamental

²⁴⁹ Cf. LOOSLEY, The material culture of the Syrian peoples in the late antiquity, 468–469.

²⁵⁰ Cf. BRENK, Tradition und Neuerung, xi.

²⁵¹ Cf. KHOURY, Churches in Syriac Space, 544.

²⁵² ROS, Report on the Serra, 305.

components of the representation.²⁵³ The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly utilizes biblical motives in abundance. Along with Scripture, tradition of the church is also used, for instance the depiction of archangels, the apostles etc. However apocryphal motives such as tunnel, St. Peter or Mary in the gate of heaven etc. which are widely seen in other Last Judgment representations are scarce in Angamaly mural.

Jenee Peter identifies the paintings of Goa and Kerala churches belonging to fresco-secco tradition that employ egg tempera on dry plaster walls.²⁵⁴ The mural shows simplicity and naivety and cannot be treated as belonging to advanced artistic skill. Scientific and analytical study of the pigments and binders of Murals of SMJSC Angamaly is not available. Nevertheless, a study of murals of St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church, Kottayam, Kerala (also known as "*Kottayam Cheriyaapally*") that are relatively similar in style and technique to that of the murals of SMJSC, Angamaly done under the title "Scientific study of the pigments and binders used in mural painting from the 16th century C.E. and its relevance to conservation" by Anjali Sharma, Manager Raydeo Singh and Rajat is available. The study proposes a process of preparation of the surface in three stages according to the traditional way. In the first stage the walls are plastered with lime and sand named, coarse plaster. In the next stage a thin layer of arriccio plaster is used. In the final stage superfine lime layer called intonaco was applied on rendered surface so that painting can be done.²⁵⁵ The study also proves that the earlier medium used was Tempera. Regarding the colors used in the mural, the study finds out that for the preparation of red color, mercury was used. The study states: "The painting palette comprised cinnabar and malachite as the main pigments for producing red and green colors, along with lead oxide, calcite, and clay in minor quantities."²⁵⁶ The prominent colors used in the Last Judgment mural SMJSC, Angamaly are red, blue, yellow and green. The thematic presentation of the murals and the consistency of representations shows the clear planning and work experience. It seems that the artists stay faithful to an established expertise especially without improvising ethnicity in portraying human figures.

²⁵³ "And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other" (Matt 24: 39–41).

²⁵⁴ Cf. PETER – GOPI, A Monograph on church mural art of Kerala, 4.

²⁵⁵ Cf. SHARMA et al., Scientific study of the pigments and binders used in mural painting, 631.

²⁵⁶ SHARMA et al., Scientific study of the pigments and binders used in mural painting, 632.

Christian iconography was primarily intended to transmit the scriptural and theological teachings of the church to the faithful. The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly adequately fits to a time when the Bible in vernacular language was not available, and the liturgical language was foreign to St. Thomas Christians.²⁵⁷ The prelates of the East Syrian church used Syriac, and the Portuguese used Latin for the liturgical celebrations. In such a context, the Last judgment mural functioned as a visual tool that conveyed the Biblical, ecclesiological and the eschatological doctrines of the church to the ordinary faithful. The mural also has seventeen inscriptions in local language referring to sins and their punishments. The mural without much exaggeration translates the scripture into a powerful visual tool. The mural evoked repentance, contrition and conversion in a descriptive manner. The composition of the mural especially the choice of themes arrangement of figures underlines the ecclesial and theological involvement which will be discussed later.

4.5 Iconographic Interactions of Angamaly Last Judgment Mural

Angamaly mural of Last Judgment uses typical iconographical depictions like Holy Trinity, St. Mary, Apostles, angels etc. However, absence of some common Last Judgment depictions can be observed. For instance, the *deesis* (grouping of Jesus Christ, his mother on his right and John the Baptist on his left), the blessed passing through a gate to paradise, the presence of Abraham with holy and tiny souls in their bosoms,²⁵⁸ the toll booths, Abraham with Lazarus, St. Peter with keys of heaven, lake of fire, scroll leading to the feet of Christ, angels pushing the souls to hell etc.

Hence, on the basis of the history of the SMJSC discussed in the previous chapter, an enquiry into the iconographical interactions of the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly is attempted here.

4.5.1 Angamaly Last Judgment Mural and Syriac Visual Tradition

The status of Syrian visual world as aniconic was changed with the publication of studies starting with the funerary mosaics found in the city of Edessa dated to third century C.E.²⁵⁹ According to Emma Loosley, the close fluidity between the Syriac speaking world and Greek speaking world caused the neglect of the Syrian artistic

²⁵⁷ Cf. THOTTAM, Devalaya Chuvarchitrangal.

²⁵⁸ Cf. BEREZHNYAYA – HIMKA, The world to Come, intro. Xix.

²⁵⁹ Cf. LOOSLEY, The material culture of the Syrian peoples, 460.

heritage. Estrangla inscriptions and panels found from Edessa initiated a trend of exploring the Syriac artistic world, which was deeply rooted in Syrian and Mesopotamian culture.²⁶⁰ Artists from Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and county of Tripoli painted the Syrian monastery of Mar Yakub at Qara (before 1266) and Dormition fresco at Maronite church of Maad (1250–1270).²⁶¹ Annemarie Weyl Carr and Geoffrey Meyer-Fernandez talks about Syrian Christian artists with Persian stylistic influence referred to as “*maniera syriaca*” and their migration and work in Holy land.²⁶² The monastery of Mar Musa al-Habashi Nebek, in the Qalamoun region of Syria, sixty miles north of Damascus has a Last Judgment fresco on the west wall, dated between 1058 to 1088 and the second phase of execution to 1192.²⁶³ There are documents that report about a confraternity of “Saint George and Bethlehem” based in Acre (Holy land) before its fall in 1291, who were painters specialized in depicting subjects related to St. George and the Nativity of Christ.²⁶⁴

Angamaly SMJSC, has murals of St. George, nativity scenes, St. Behnam. The murals in Lagoudera, church of the Panagia Arakiotissa (1192), Cyprus and icons of Moutoullas church (1280) painted by Syrian and Armenian Christians also parallel in selection of themes, criteria of presentation and composition of panels with Angamaly murals. A panel of icons belong to 1300 from Saint Catherine Monastery attributed to an Armenian painter from Cilicia, represents Nativity at the bottom of the composition and the crucifixion above.²⁶⁵ The Angamaly sanctuary also has a similar scheme of arrangement. The placement of Mary and Joseph on both sides, the four figures (judges) in the fourth register, the arrangement of Adam and Eve with men and women on both sides, the clergy with hoods, the arrangements of Abraham, Aron, Moses, David etc. show similarity to Syrian visual tradition. The murals of Angamaly for instance, the sacrifice of Isaac, St. George and St. Behnam also suggest influence of Syrian tradition. The relief images of angels and other figures on the granite stone pillars in Kerala also points to the acquaintance to such representations.

The prelates of the St. Thomas Christians were referred to as “Armenian” by themselves and by others. Mar Jacob in the letter II. written to Portuguese King in

²⁶⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 462.

²⁶¹ Cf. MEYER-FERNANDEZ, Arab Christian refugees in Lusignan Cyprus, 173.

²⁶² Cf. *ibid.*, 171.

²⁶³ Cf. DODD, The Frescoes of Mar Musa al-Habashi, 202.

²⁶⁴ Cf. MEYER-FERNANDEZ, Arab Christian refugees in Lusignan Cyprus, 174.

²⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 175.

1523, introduces himself as “Jacome Abuna, Armenian”²⁶⁶. In an another letter Joao Garces to John III, from Cochin dated 2 January 1529, designate the Bishops of St. Thomas Christians as “Bishops that came from Armenia”²⁶⁷. Francis Xavier also describe Mar Jacob as “a Bishop from Armenia”²⁶⁸ in his letter to the King John III of Portugal in 1549. It is not clear whether all those speaking Syriac was considered as Armenian or vice versa especially by the Portuguese. The involvement of Armenian Christians in Mughal court and in finding the tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore are documented.

In the report on *Seera* (Malabar) Bishop Francisco Ros talks about Armenian Bishops²⁶⁹ who came to Malabar, and he also describes their attire. “The said Bishops who came from Babylon wear hoods and a tuft of hairs on the top of the head where we have the tonsure”.²⁷⁰ In the Angamaly mural of Last Judgment Adam and other figures are depicted with hoods and tuft of hair. The depiction of Bishops with a hood and tuft points that the priests represented in the Last Judgment mural, may be of Syriac tradition. However, Ajith Kumar notices that dress of priests has close resemblances with Latin usage.²⁷¹ The same report by Bishop Francisco Ros states that “Mar Joseph who governed this Christianity before Mar Habraham [Sic: Mar Abraham] removed this rite (Syrian liturgical vestments) and introduced the amice and other sacred vestments of the Roman usage”²⁷². No priest is depicted in the Last Judgement mural wearing an amice, which according to Francisco Ros, was later introduced in Malabar. Moreover, friars are depicted in the sixth register with tonsure and a friar with tonsure is depicted standing close to the mural of a Bishop identified as of Mar Thoma I. It shows that the Bishops and priests painted in the Last Judgment mural not necessarily be Portuguese clergy other than those depicted with tonsure. It is also noticeable that the four figures without halo in the fourth register of the murals of Second Coming does not have priestly attire of a Pope or any Latin Bishops. And there is no case of clergy wearing a *mitre* in the sixth register. The priestly class belonging to Old Testament is depicted in the fifth register with head wear which has close similarity to *mitre*.

²⁶⁶ SCHURHAMMER, Three letters of Mar Jacob, 71.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 81.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 82.

²⁶⁹ Cf. ROS, Report on the Serra, 317.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 317.

²⁷¹ Cf. KUMAR – SHEENA, Mural Paintings in the churches of Kerala.

²⁷² ROS, Report on the Serra, 331.

4.5.2 Angamaly Last Judgment Mural and Indo-Portuguese Art

The term “Indo-Portuguese” art, refers to art objects made in India by indigenous craftsmen or in Portugal under Indian influence by Portuguese craftsmen residing in the East under the Portuguese patronage.²⁷³ Alfonso de Albuquerque (1453-1515) conquered Goa in 1510 and the Portuguese ruled it for next 450 years.²⁷⁴ Goa became a political and ecclesiastical center of Portuguese *Estado da India*.²⁷⁵ It was a fresh field of missionary activities and missionaries succeeded in massive conversions of native people to Christianity. The relationship with the Mughal empire was also cordial at the beginning. They transformed Goa in the shape of a European city. Christianity in Goa developed Indo-Portuguese identity not only in liturgy but also in art, architecture and culture. The Trinity chapel of the Santa Monica convent in Goa popularly known also as “Sistine chapel of Goa” is a best example in this regard. The construction of the Santa Monica convent was commenced on 2nd July 1606 and consecrated on 19th December 1627.²⁷⁶ Aleixo de Menezes was the Archbishop and Governor and contributed largely to the construction.

The rhombus shaped halo found around the persons of Holy Trinity in the Angamaly mural of Last Judgment is also depicted in the “Mural of Trinity” in the Santa Monica convent chapel. The armor and attire of angels also has similarities with that of angels in the Angamaly mural.

A mural panel titled “Jesus carrying the cross” which was exhibited as part of “Indo Portuguese art Exhibition” from Dr. Siddharth Bhansali’s collection, said to be of 17th –18th C.E., has close resemblances in technique, style and composition with Angamaly Last Judgment mural.²⁷⁷ The size of the panel (60 x 46 inches) suggests that it was intended for a church or a monastery.²⁷⁸ This painting undoubtedly belongs to the artistic technique of the murals of Angamaly. But the origin of the mural remains unknown.

Jesuits in Goa preferred Indian artists in the beginning due to their artistic skills that they expressed in temple art.²⁷⁹ Indian artists used oil, tempera, and fresco in

²⁷³ Cf. IRWIN, Reflections on Indo-Portuguese Art, 386.

²⁷⁴ Cf. SHARMA, A study of Visual Interpretations of Christian faith, 298.

²⁷⁵ Cf. BONTA, Arte Sacra, 12.

²⁷⁶ Cf. ROSSA, Santa Monica convent -Building.

²⁷⁷ Cf. BONTA, Arte Sacra, 33.

²⁷⁸ Cf. *ibid*.

²⁷⁹ Cf. OSSWALD, From Modo Nostro to Modo Goano, 267.

churches in Goa which were erased or defaced later.²⁸⁰ The inclusion of guardian angels in Angamaly also shows the Jesuit devotion to angels which was popularized in Goa.²⁸¹ The priestly attire of the mural includes alb, surplice, cope, cassock, stole, zucchetto of Angamaly Last Judgment mural indicate indo-Portuguese usage. Anyhow, the style of dressing, facial characteristics, color of hair and skin etc. of figures illustrated in Angamaly Last Judgment mural does not portray indigenous people of Malabar or their culture.

Church murals in Goa, were largely copied or inspired from the illustrated Bible brought by the Portuguese missionaries. The court of Mughal emperors like Akbar and Jahangir found favorite place for Christian paintings inspired by the illustrated manuscripts like Anton Wierix.²⁸² It is yet to be explored whether such sources were a reference to the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly.

4.6 Ecclesial Interactions of Last Judgment Mural

A close study of the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly shows that the mural was not a blind imitation of an existing original rather it conveys a ecclesial historical context.

4.6.1 Last Judgment Mural and “Nestorianism”

Today, the theological doctrines of the Church of the East are understood in better light by the Catholic Church.²⁸³ However, the Portuguese ecclesial authorities treated St. Thomas Christians and their Prelates as “heretic”.²⁸⁴ It is not sure, how deeply the St. Thomas Christians themselves were engaged in the theological discussions related to Nestorianism.²⁸⁵ Nevertheless the Portuguese, starting with Vasco da Gama, treated St. Thomas Christians under suspicion of “orthodoxy of Catholic faith”.²⁸⁶ The Portuguese King Manuel in his instructions exhorts Pedro Alvares Cabral, to bring “Indian brothers” to orthodoxy.²⁸⁷ In a letter written in 1515 from Lisbon by a certain Valentin, Christians of Quilon (Malabar) are referred as “Nestorian Christians”.²⁸⁸ The Dominican bishop of Cochin who assumed office in 1559, refers St. Thomas

²⁸⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 269.

²⁸¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 282.

²⁸² Cf. BAILEY, *The Indian Conquest of Catholic Art*, 26.

²⁸³ COMMON DECLARATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL II AND PATRIARCH MAR DINKHA IV.

²⁸⁴ Cf. ŽUPANOV, *Jesuit Missions in Coastal*, 38.

²⁸⁵ Portuguese authorities considered Nestorian doctrine as a heresy.

²⁸⁶ Cf. VADAKKEKARA, *The Synod of Diamper in Historical Perspective*, 59.

²⁸⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 60.

²⁸⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

Christians as one of the heretical segments in India.²⁸⁹ The leaders of St. Thomas Christians, like Mar Joseph, Mar Denha and Mar Abraham were either deported or asked to proclaim their faith by the Portuguese more than one occasions.²⁹⁰ Therefore, the depiction of Marian themes in SMJSC can be seen as a deliberate attempt to eliminate the effects of Nestorianism.

The first church in Angamaly, “Mother of light and the life” points to the fact that veneration of Mary was not unfamiliar among the St. Thomas Christians. But it is not clear whether the usage of the title of “Mother of God” was very common. According to Perczel, Mar Abraham calls Mary as “Mother of light and the life” in a Chaldean *Nomocanon* by avoiding the title “Mother of God” though he accepted it out of compulsion which he says, “an innovation of the church of Romans.”²⁹¹ For the eastern Christians, chiefly oriental orthodox Christians even though the dormition of Mary was an acquainted faith expression, the coronation of Mary was not very conversant. Although the depiction of St. Mary was part of many of the Last Judgment representations, Angamaly Last Judgment mural depicts St. Mary as queen of heaven.

D. Alfonso Henriques invoked “*Santa Maria*” as queen and special intercessor of Portugal and declared Portugal as “*Terra de Santa Maria*” (Land of the Holy Mary).²⁹² An art historian Granziera Patrizia observes that the excessive representation of Marian cult in the murals of SMJSC as typical example of counter reformation-art from European Christianity. The Last Judgment mural depicts Mary as queen of heaven and places her in an elevated status along with Jesus Christ and His Apostles. The communion of apostles, communion of saints, are also represented in the Last Judgment mural. St. Mary’s church itself due to its dedication to assumption of Mary functions as a symbol of the catholic faith proclamation.

4.6.2 Last Judgment Mural and the Synod of Udayamperur

Art historians in Kerala periodize the church murals post-Udayamperur Synod, due to the decree on Church affairs promulgated by the Synod. The Decree XXIX (Action VIII) of the Synod of Udayamperur (1599), prescribed that the churches of St. Thomas Christians should be decorated with paintings.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Contextualizing the Encounters, 74.

²⁹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 66.

²⁹¹ Cf. PERCZEL, Documents about Mar Abraham, 119.

²⁹² Cf. OSSWALD, From Modo Nostro to Modo Goano, 234.

²⁹³ Cf. GEDDES, A Short History of the Church of Malabar, 375.

Whereas almost all the churches of this Dioceses are without pictures, which was the effect of their being governed by Nestorian heretics, who do not allow of the healthful use of sacred images, therefore the synod doth command, that in churches that are finished, the first work that shall be done after that of the Baptismal font out of the alms of the Parish, shall be images, according to the directions of the prelate, who shall always be consulted about every picture, and after that of High Altar is once set up, if the church has any Side Altars, they shall also have images set up in them, and on every Altar besides an image, there shall be cross or some Matter or other set up.²⁹⁴

The decree exhorts building of Baptismal font, installation of images on high Altar and other Altars, Crosses and decorated pulpits.²⁹⁵ This document is widely used in assessing the period of the execution of murals in the churches of St. Thomas Christians.²⁹⁶ The decree indicates also the absence of images in St. Thomas churches, in association with Nestorianism. The decree points to the necessity of consultation at every stage of installation of images. In the ecclesiastical context of St. Thomas Christians, the “Prelate” refers to Archbishop of Goa or the Metropolitan of St. Thomas Christians. The synod of Udayamperur also proposed a Decree on heaven and hell.

That at the day of Judgment, our Bodies, those crumbled into dust and ashes, shall be raised up as same as that they were in this Life, and be reunited to their Souls, those of the Righteous to be clothed with Glory, and to reign with Christ forever in the Heavens; and those of the Wicked, to be together with their souls tormented forever in the company of devils in the Eternal and real Fire of Hell.²⁹⁷

The illustration of the synodal decree, especially “clothed with glory”, “reign with Christ forever in the Heavens” and “their souls tormented forever in the company of devils” etc. can be found as expressed in the Last Judgment mural. Archbishop Alexis Menezes in his visit to the several churches of the St. Thomas Christians prior to the synod of Udayamperur, made lengthy exhortations to the community about the doctrine of purgatory.²⁹⁸

After the Synod of Udayamperur and death of Mar Abraham archdeacon George of Cross and the *Mahayogam* (an official assembly of St. Thomas Christians) formerly protested the Portuguese due to their disappointment caused by the Jesuit Bishops appointed by the Portuguese authorities.²⁹⁹ St. Thomas Christians favoured Franciscan and Dominican friars, but Bishop Stephen Britto insisted on sending them

²⁹⁴ GEDDES, A Short History of the Church of Malabar, Decree XXIX, Action VIII, 375.

²⁹⁵ Cf. GEDDES, A short History of the Church of Malabar, 375.

²⁹⁶ Cf. PETER – GOPI, A Monograph on church Murals of Kerala, 20.

²⁹⁷ GEDDES, A short History of the Church of Malabar, 127.

²⁹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 429.

²⁹⁹ Cf. CONGREGATION OF THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 370.

away from Malabar. And insisted on the only presence of Jesuit missionaries. The protest by archdeacon and *Mahayogam*, even caused attempts by the Bishop for the abolition of Archdeaconate. The last judgement mural of Angamaly omits ecclesial representations like St. Peter with keys of heaven, Pope or even ecclesial representation from Goa. Instead, four figures identified as four Patriarchs/doctors of the church is painted on fourth register. It probably indicates the ecclesial tensions prevailed during the period of execution of the murals. It seems that the last judgement mural promotes the local church.

Last Judgement mural can be directly related to the above-mentioned factors. At the same time the execution, principal contributors, the period execution play vital role in relation to ecclesial interactions, which will be treated later in this paper.

4.7 Socio-Religious Interactions and the Mural of *Kali*

Angamaly Last Judgment mural depicts a central figure with the characterization of Hindu deity “*Kali*”. Hinduism considers *Kali* as the goddess with the duty of punishment and as deity with destructive powers. *Kali* is usually depicted with demonic characterizations. Unlike the understanding of Satan, *Kali* is an agent of divine power who execute the punishment on behalf of God in Hinduism and therefore *Kali* is not evil in-itself.

The multi-religious society that experienced the Last Judgment mural consisted of Hindus and Muslims. Francisco Ros writes that “the churches of these Christians are venerated also by the heathens, who live in the Land. The heathen kings, in whose lands exist these churches, grant them a part of their taxes for their expenses”³⁰⁰. The Christian churches of Angamaly and Akaparmbu were under local Hindu kings.³⁰¹ Last Judgment mural was a depiction, exposed to the public contrary to the murals in the sanctuary. Moreover, the Hindu king of Cochin was in cordial relationship with the Archdeacon. St. Thomas Christians were organized under Archdeacon and the king even written letters to Rome supporting Archdeacon George of Christ against the accusations of the Portuguese ecclesiastical authorities. A historical evaluation of power dynamics proves that the Archdeacon, the king of Cochin and Mar Abraham (Metropolitan), constituted an alliance against the Portuguese. Consequently, a

³⁰⁰ ROS, Report on the Serra (1603-1604), 339.

³⁰¹ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 73.

deliberate attempt of demonisation of Hindu deities were undesirable. The socio-religious situation during the reign of Archdeacons especially George of Christ and George of the Cross has been moderately peaceful though there were individual cases of violence reported among Christians, Hindus and Muslims.³⁰²

Last Judgment iconography elsewhere also adopted the local elements especially in depicting hades. The depiction of leviathan, lucifer, the nature and types of sins, the religious and social identities of the people were expressed directly. Room for creativity and contextualization was very much part of the Last Judgment iconography of hades. The Torcello Last Judgment mosaic shows Satan seated on his throne receiving the souls. It can be seen as a contrast to the image of Lazarus at the bosom of Abraham. The figure of Satan in Torcello is also painted predominantly with blue body and large eyes, which can be observed also in Angamaly *Kali* figure. The incorporation of transcultural and religious elements finds in the fresco of the Koimesis (Dormition) of the Virgin Mary in the Monastery of the Mavriotissa in Greece.³⁰³ Depiction of people of other religions like Jews, Muslims were part of the iconography of hell. The inscription “*ARABE*” (men of Arabia), is found in Basilica of old San Marco, Venice.³⁰⁴ Dormition fresco of Maronite church, Maad (1250–1270) depicts a Jew Jephonias associated with his punishment and conversion.³⁰⁵

Depiction of *Kali* in the Last Judgment mural may be seen as an adaptation of cultural elements of the society. There are also presence of *Makara* figures and elements of Hindu ritualistic procession painted in the mural of Last Judgment. The figures of *Makara* had been in use in the Hindu temple art. St. Thomas Christians were already in a cultural exchange with Hinduism, especially in adopting their temple architecture, ritual elements of marriage, funerary and processional rituals.

4.8 Periodization and Execution of Angamaly Last Judgment Mural

There are diverse opinions regarding the periodization of church murals in Kerala available. Jenee and Gopi confirms that only a relative dating of Kerala church murals are done till today.³⁰⁶ They are of the opinion that the mural probably belongs to late

³⁰² Cf. ROS, Report on the Serra, 347.

³⁰³ Cf. TSAKIRIDOU, Tradition and Transformation in Christian Art, 23.

³⁰⁴ Cf. BHALLA, Experiencing Last Judgment, 144.

³⁰⁵ Cf. MEYER-FERNANDEZ Arab Christian refugees in Lusignan Cyprus, 173.

³⁰⁶ Cf. PETER – GOPI, A Monograph on Church Murals of Kerala, 5.

sixteenth century³⁰⁷ and also indicate that the style and technique belong to European art.³⁰⁸ Chitra and Srinivasan also share the same view.³⁰⁹ These assessments are mainly based on the testimonies of travelers (that churches of St. Thomas Christians were aniconic pre-Portuguese period) and the decree of the Synod of Udayamperur.³¹⁰ Cyriac Jose an archaeologist assert that the mural paintings in churches appeared only after the synod of Udayamperur.³¹¹

The periodization becomes complex due to the arguments by the SMJSC authorities that the church itself was already existing, and Archdeacon only reconstructed the church. Through the argument they even project the murals to an pre-Portuguese period. Another hurdle in periodizing the murals is the identification of the mural of the Bishop in the sanctuary as that of Mar Thoma I, who became the first Bishop of *Puthenkur* community after the Coonan cross oath in 1653. It projects that at least the mural of Bishop belongs to a period after 1653.

There is also a record by C.M.S Missionaries dated to 1831 that “the church of the *Puthenkur* was burnt down by Tipu Sultan”³¹². Tipu Sultan invaded Angamaly in 1790.³¹³ If the church was completely destroyed and re-built later, then the murals belong to a period after 1831, and it could only be possible that it took place under the commission of Malankara Orthodox Church without the involvement of Catholic Church or Portuguese authorities. An undisputed periodization of the mural remains a complex task. Therefore, three possible hypotheses are proposed here, based on the historical investigation done in the third chapter that the church was constructed by Archdeacon George of Christ in a period between 1564 and 1577.

4.8.1 The Last Judgment Mural: A Commission of Portuguese Jesuit Authorities

After the death of Mar Abraham, the diocese of Angamaly was suppressed and Archbishop of Goa convened the synod of Udayamperur in 1599. Later, in 1601, Francisco Ros was consecrated as the bishop of Cranganor and as the apostolic administrator of Angamaly.³¹⁴ Bishop Francisco Ros was a Syriac professor in

³⁰⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 29.

³⁰⁸ Cf. PETER – GOPI, A Monograph on Church Murals of Kerala, 20.

³⁰⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 30.

³¹⁰ Cf. REITZ, The Western Façade of St. Mary’s Forane Church at Kaduthuruthi, 417.

³¹¹ Cf. JOSE, A Study of the Church Murals in South-central Kerala.

³¹² MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 140.

³¹³ Cf. *ibid.*

³¹⁴ Cf. VELLIAN, The Synod of Diamper and Liturgy, 185; cf. PERCZEL, Syriac Christianity, 680.

Vaipikotta seminary. Francisco Ros had deep knowledge of Syriac liturgy and its theological and eschatological concepts. He was already working on identifying the Nestorian elements of the Syrian liturgy. He tried to foster the Syrian liturgical traditions and had the support of Archdeacon in his early period of service as the bishop. He convened two synods in Angamaly one, in 1603 and another in 1606³¹⁵ to heal the wounds of Udayamperur synod and reviewed the decrees of the synod promoting the Syrian traditions instead of its annihilation.³¹⁶

It is also recorded that the Portuguese king Joao III and Viceroy D. Joao de Castro fostered “St. Thomas cult” in the churches, knowing the affinity of people from Malabar to the apostle.³¹⁷ King Joao III in 1545 sent a new coin to India which bore the representation of St. Thomas, and he asked priests to intercede for him. Joao de Castro attributed his military victories to St. Thomas. In 1548 the image of doubting Thomas touching wounds of the resurrected Christ was taken out in procession in Goa.³¹⁸ A Dutch traveler Hughes Linschotten (1563–1611) wrote, “the history of Saint Thomas was painted and installed as a perpetual memorial in many places and churches in India”³¹⁹. In Goa several churches were built during the episcopate of Alexis de Menezes, and large-scale execution of Portuguese art was underway.³²⁰ The Trinity chapel of the Santa Monica convent (1606-1627)³²¹ and Se Cathedral of Saint Catherine of Alexandria (1562-1640) were constructed and painted during this period. The Portuguese Royalty sponsored construction and decoration of many churches honoring the saint Thomas after synod of Udayamperur. Francisco Ros as the metropolitan of the St. Thomas Christians was capable of incorporating the Syriac theology and sentiments of people, especially their emotional attachment to St. Thomas tradition. His period was a favorable time for the execution of the Mural in which the decree XXIII of Synod of Udayamperur also would be materialized.³²² According to Mechery “Roz [s] appeared as a Chaldean in terms of his imitation and appropriation of the traditions of the Malabar church”³²³. His appearance also explains the liturgical attire seen in the Last Judgment mural. Bishop Ros, being

³¹⁵ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *The Catholic East*, 370.

³¹⁶ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, *Angamaly Reghakal*, 77.

³¹⁷ Cf. OSSWALD, *From Modo Nostro to Modo Goano*, 237.

³¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

³²⁰ Cf. OSSWALD, *From Modo Nostro to Modo Goano*, 237.

³²¹ Cf. ROSSA, *Santa Monica convent*, 133.

³²² Cf. REITZ, *The Western Façade of St. Mary’s (Martha Mariam) Forane church*, 417.

³²³ MECHERY, *Testing Ground for Jesuit Accommodation*, 431.

aware of the “St. Thomas tradition” and the goal of Portuguese authorities to install paintings and images in Malabar churches was capable of hiring Portuguese or Goan artists. The mural of immaculate conception, crowning of Mary as queen of heaven etc. can be better explained under this hypothesis.

4.8.2 The Last Judgment Mural: A Commission of Mar Abraham

Metropolitan Mar Abraham was the last Syrian Bishop of St. Thomas Christians after Mar Joseph, who died in Rome in 1569.³²⁴ Mar Abraham was aware of the difficulties of getting bishops from Syria and showed his willingness to cooperate with the Portuguese especially during the last years of his episcopacy. In order to renew the liturgy in accordance with the catholic teachings, Mar Abraham convened a Synod at Angamaly in 1583.³²⁵ Mar Abraham informed Rome about this synod on 13 January 1584.³²⁶ The synod took initiatives in correcting the errors in the liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians especially in the context of the accusation of Nestorian heresy with the help of Jesuits and Francisco Ros.³²⁷ The cordial relationship, Mar Abraham developed with the Jesuits was also an important reason for such a synod.³²⁸ This synod brought out directions on priestly attire that essentially agreed to adopt the Latin custom.³²⁹ Mar Abraham also attended the Jesuit Provincial chapter in Goa in 1585 and agreed to the suggestions of the chapter regarding the renewal of faith practices.³³⁰ The period between 1583 to 1599 was a period of greater understanding and cooperation that assured the existence of St. Thomas Christians and their liturgy in communion with Rome. St. Thomas Christians collaborated with the Portuguese ecclesiastical authorities and made necessary changes in their liturgy and practices.

According to Varghese Angamaly and Jomon Thachil, Mar Abraham was the most popular metropolitan and his period was the golden period of St. Thomas Christians.³³¹ Mar Abraham had close ties with King of Cochin. The Franciscan missionaries and Jesuits also supported him. In 1577 a celebration took place in Angamaly, following the Jubilee announcement by Pope Gregory III. On the eve of celebration, fifty

³²⁴ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 49.

³²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 51.

³²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 52.

³²⁷ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 51.

³²⁸ Cf. VADAKKEKARA, The Synod of Diamper in Historical Perspective, 69.

³²⁹ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 51.

³³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 52.

³³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 56.

thousand rosaries were distributed to promote Marian devotion among St. Thomas Christians.³³² The celebration of feast of Assumption took place in 1577 at the church of Archdeacon George of Christ. There was Holy Mass celebrated by Metropolitan Mar Abraham (in Syriac liturgy) and Jesuit priests (in Latin liturgy).³³³ The theme of the sermon was, “the union of Syrian church with the Roman Church”.³³⁴ The spirit of cooperation, trust and identification of both liturgies, belongingness to the catholic faith were proclaimed during this period.

The execution of murals in during this period in collaboration with Portuguese authorities and artists was possible. For instance, Mar Abraham laid foundation stone to the construction of Martha Mariyam church Kaduthuruthy, Kerala, in 1590.³³⁵ The church has on the façade the relief of crowning of Mary by Father, Son and Holy spirit. The church also has relief of Archangels Michael and Raphael. The murals of St. Behnam, St. George, St. Thomas murals corresponding to stories of “Acts of Thomas”, the thematic portrayal of eucharistic themes like sacrifice of Isaac, the passion and resurrection, the mural of Syrian bishop holding a *sleebe* (a Cross used by bishops of eastern tradition to bless people) etc. presupposes instructions from someone who know the Eastern Christian perspectives.

The heresies and errors of Mar Abraham according to Francisco Ros included, that Mar Abraham taught the souls of the just will not go to heaven till the day of Judgement.³³⁶ A visible representation of Purgatory as a place of purification is not depicted in the Last Judgment mural. The Last Judgment mural also presents the resurrection of the dead on the sound of trumpet and no sphere of purification is depicted in the mural.

Francisco Ros in his report shows that the priests of St. Thomas Christians had no chasuble, which the fourth register of Last Judgment mural exclusively confirm.³³⁷ It is only logical to assume that if Bishop Francis Ros commissioned the mural, he would have insisted portrayal of chasuble and other the Latin traditions. The liturgical renewals taken by Mar Abraham following the synod of Angamaly proves that the synod agreed to adopt the Latin vestments.³³⁸

³³² Cf. *ibid.*

³³³ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 144.

³³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

³³⁵ Cf. REITZ, The Western Façade of St. Mary’s Forane Church, 423.

³³⁶ Cf. ROS, Information about Mar Abraham (1593/1594), 286.

³³⁷ Cf. ROS, Report on the Serra, 305.

³³⁸ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 51.

A complementary argument from the life of Mar Abraham that can be mentioned is that Mar Abraham was sent to Venice where the fresco of the Last Judgment of Torcello was attracting visitors' attention to receive episcopal consecration in 1567 from the Patriarch of Venice.³³⁹

4.8.3 The Last Judgment Mural: A Commission of Archdeacons

After the death of Archdeacon George of Christ, George of Cross became the archdeacon of St. Thomas Christians of Malabar. The death of Archdeacon George of Christ is disputed today. According to Perczel it happened either in 1585 or in 1591.³⁴⁰ Jomon–Varghese gives 1604 as the year of demise of Archdeacon and according to them he was buried at St. Mary's church.³⁴¹ The ecclesial situation was tensed following the synod of Udayamperur. An unofficial separation between the churches that agreed to the synod and hesitated to accept the synod emerged. The churches which supported Archdeacon George of Cross largely constituted 84 churches of “*Malankara*” region.³⁴² It is a compelling argument that the murals that are surviving today, belong to the churches the “*Malankara*” region. *Malankara* was used to refer to the territories in the Cochin and Travancore kingdoms at the time of synod of Udayamperur. The synod of Udayamperur was originally planned in Angamaly, but Archbishop Menezes changed the venue to Udayamperur. One of the reasons for this change, in his own words, was “that the Christians of *Angamale* were the Christians of the whole Bishopric that were most addicted to their old Religion”³⁴³. It is not surprising to see that these churches have strong emotional attachment to the murals, and they preserve them even today with lot of reverence.

The successor of Bishop Francisco Ros (death in 1624) Bishop Stephen Britto, (both belongs to the Society of Jesus) deliberately tried to exclude Franciscan and Dominican friars from Malabar, which invited protest from the Archdeacon George of Cross.³⁴⁴ Archdeacon insisted them to stay and invited them to his churches which triggered attempts to eliminate the “Archdeaconate” itself by Bishop Stephen Britto. Archdeacon and *Mahayogam* in 1632 strongly condemned these efforts and resolved

³³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 142.

³⁴⁰ Cf. PERCZEL, Documents about Mar Abraham, 110.

³⁴¹ Cf. ANGAMALY – THACHIL, Angamaly Reghakal, 60.

³⁴² Cf. *ibid.*, 106.

³⁴³ GEDDES, A Short History of the Church of Malabar, 87.

³⁴⁴ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, The Catholic East, 370.

not to obey any order of the Archbishop unless countersigned by Archdeacon. Archdeacon and *Mahayogam* deliberately continued to associate and favour Dominican and Franciscan monks over the Jesuits. The mural of the Bishop with friars, and exclusion of Jesuits Bishops in the Last Judgment mural can be understood as an expression of protest from these Christians. The successor of Bishop Stephen Britto, Bishop Francis Garcia (1641–1659)³⁴⁵ made the ecclesial tensions even worse by clashing with next Archdeacon Thomas Parambil (*de Campo*) which eventually led to Coonan Cross Oath in 1653. Therefore, the mural most probably could be a commission of Archdeacon George of Cross or Archdeacon Thomas Parambil in collaboration with Portuguese Dominican or Franciscan monks.

4.9 Artists of Last Judgment Mural of Angamaly

Goa was the main meeting point of artists from Europe and Asian colonial settlements.³⁴⁶ The main artists who were active in Goa are recognized today by academicians like, Victor Serrao. He identifies the painters of the Santa Monica convent. The refectory paintings were done by Aleixo Godinho and Joao Peres.³⁴⁷ Aleixo Godinho was highly involved around 1590-1631. Vitor Serrao refers Aleixo Godinho as “the most distinguished painter in the city of Goa”³⁴⁸. The paintings of the Viceroy (1600-1622), paintings from Santa Monica Convent refectory (1612), ornamentation of the chapel of Santa Monica Convent (1631) are recognized as done by him. Frei Diogo de Sant’Ana (1572-1644) was another artist who was responsible for the re-work (1639) in Santa Monica, (he was in Persia and caused the conversion of the Armenian Patriarch David prior to his mission in Goa).³⁴⁹ The Lisbon Royal painting workshop (*Real Oficina de Lisboa*) was also involved in the execution of murals in Goa.³⁵⁰ Garcia Fernandes, who was an apprentice of the workshop is believed to be the artist of the seven panels of the first Altarpiece of the Se Cathedral of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, in Goa.³⁵¹

³⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 370.

³⁴⁶ Cf. GUSELLA, *New Jesuit Sources on the Iconography of the Good Shepherd*, 584.

³⁴⁷ Cf. ROSSA, *Santa Monica Convent*, 133.

³⁴⁸ SERRAO, *Painting and Worship in Goa*, 20.

³⁴⁹ Cf. SERRAO, *Painting and Worship in Goa*, 20.

³⁵⁰ Cf. REIS – ANTUNES, *Deciphering the Luso-Indian Art of the Past*, 1.

³⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*

Portuguese used to hire the services of native artists because they were also good in painting Christian themes.³⁵² Artists and painting workshop from Portugal, local artists trained by them, were working in Goa and places under Portuguese influence. The Angamaly mural of Last Judgment proves greater involvement of Artists or artists guild belonging to the “indo-Portuguese” art. The Portuguese themselves supported veneration to Mary and St. Thomas. A legend of apparition of Mary in a vision to the chief of Indian local painter “*Mocaden*” was popular in Europe.³⁵³ However, King Joao III ordered prohibition of Hindu artists working in churches and monasteries due to “noxious” habit of them painting images of Jesus and saints as Hindu Gods. In 1588 Dom Duarte de Menezes, the Viceroy of India levied heavy fine on artists who evaded prohibition. Portuguese Patronage of the Orient determined that all works only to be undertaken with royal permission.³⁵⁴ Nonetheless, by the time, many paintings were already executed especially in Goa.³⁵⁵ The composition of Last Judgment mural shows simplicity and naivety compared to the murals executed in Goa. Therefore, there is possibility that Angamaly murals were executed by local artists.

Documents suggests that Martin Ochoa was an artist who was in Cochin, and he engraved a tabernacle for the church of the college of cochin in 1576.³⁵⁶ There was an artist guild based in Cochin and the (four large and twenty-two small pictures) paintings on the Sacristy walls of Francis Xavier chapel in Goa were produced by this Artist guild under the leadership of Father Goncalo Martins.³⁵⁷

A book on the Paliyekkara church and its murals mentions the involvement of a local Artist group named “*Manjummel Painters*” settled in Cochin.³⁵⁸ But no documents of solid evidence is available to support this. The main Altar piece (carved on wood) of Santa Monica in which the figure of Father and Holy spirit proceeding from his open arm, Mary and Joseph, four evangelist, four doctors of the church are presented, has similarity of presentation with Angamaly Last Judgment mural. The Altar piece of Santa Monica church is attributed to artists Santopa and Babuxa.³⁵⁹

³⁵² OSSWALD, *From Modo Nostro to Modo Goano*, 210.

³⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*, 211.

³⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 207.

³⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 212.

³⁵⁶ Cf. OSSWALD, *From Modo Nostro to Modo Goano*, 308.

³⁵⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 105.

³⁵⁸ Cf. MAILAKKALAIL, *Paliyekkara Palli*, 52.

³⁵⁹ Cf. SERRAO, *Painting and Worship in Goa*, 40.

However, the absence paintings similar to the style of Angamaly Last Judgment mural in Goa or other parts of Portuguese influence, remain a problem. The churches constructed directly by Portuguese in Kerala for instance, St. Francis church in Cochin, or other churches in Goa do not have similar murals.³⁶⁰ The works of artists Aleixo Godinho and Garcia Fernandes shows improved style compared to the mural of Last Judgment in Angamaly.

A compelling argument to discover the artists of Angamaly mural rests with mural of the Bishop identified as “Mar Thoma I” with friars. The mural shows friars with tonsure. The friars also appear in the sixth register. Dominican or Franciscan friars who were artists or artists under their leadership, painting the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly is possible.

4.10 Final Observations and Findings of the Study

According to this study the two panels of Last Judgment mural of Angamaly can be titled as “the Mural of Second Coming” and “the Mural of Mouth of Hell.” This study underlines the necessity of treating the two panels of Angamaly Last Judgment mural as a single eschatological event: the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Both panels together need to be treated as “the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly.” The mural depends largely on New Testament narrations and consolidates them in an aesthetic manner.

This study is of the opinion that the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly shares the biblical, theological and artistic elements of Last Judgment iconography in Christianity. A comparative examination of famous Last Judgment murals and frescos in western and eastern tradition helps to find the some of the iconographical sources of the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly. The Lateran council in 1215, emphasized details of last judgment, which were widely discussed in the sermons especially of Dominican monks during lent and easter seasons of the liturgical year in the West.³⁶¹

The study of the historical evolution of Christianity in India helps to understand the ecclesial and cultural interactions that may have contributed to Christian art in India. A categorization of Christian art in India by incorporating the existing studies and identifying the main sources of iconographical interactions is attempted in this

³⁶⁰ Cf. REITZ, *The Western Façade of St. Mary’s Forane church*, 422.

³⁶¹ Cf. QUIRICO, *The Representation of Heaven and Hell*, 578.

study. Considering the classifications proposed regarding the Indian Christian art in India, a codification is also attempted in this thesis.

The historical investigation of St. Mary's Soonoro Jacobite Church in Angamaly, undertaken in this study, consolidates the available historical sources and presents a reliable history of St. Mary's Church. Though the exact date of construction or consecration cannot be proven, a period between 1564 to 1577 has been identified as the time of construction of the currently existing church. This study concludes that SMJSC was the second church in Angamaly after the church "St. Mary mother of life and light" and it was not re-constructed but newly constructed. The church was constructed by Archdeacon George of Christ, primarily as the archdeaconate of St. Thomas Christians. SMJSC served as the residence of the Archdeacons and still today the church belongs to the *Puthekuttu* faction.

The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly vividly marks the emergence of detailed artistic representation of Christian art in India and in Kerala. Although St. Thomas Christians were involved in architectural and symbolic expressions of their faith, mural paintings were not part of their art until the arrival of the Portuguese. This thesis is of the opinion that, that there is fewer possibility to date the Angamaly Last Judgment mural prior to Portuguese period. Accounts from Alexander Valignano, Melchior Carneiro, and Antonio de Gouvea, which describe the churches in Angamaly, do not mention the existence of murals. It is unlikely that these murals would have gone unnoticed if they had existed at that time. However, it is a matter of discussion whether the church mural tradition in Kerala started only after the Synod of Udayamperur. The reform process started by Mar Abraham with Angamaly Synod need to be considered in this regard.

This study identifies the influence of Syrian visual culture in the composition of Kerala church murals. The oriental theological perspectives find expression in representation of Second coming. The choice of the themes, details of the presentation and composition suggest the influence of the Syriac world or the active involvement of Mar Abraham, Archdeacons or to a certain extent Bishop Francisco Ros. The Synod of Udayamperur also insisted on the constant consultation of the Prelate, which in effect points to Bishop Francisco Ros or Archdeacons. The mural of Behnam, Visitation of Kings, and murals related to St. Thomas's call and journey etc. need to be contrasted with the absence of such murals in churches of Goa. The side Altar paintings of churches in Goa, unanimously portray western saints, Like St. Augustin,

St. Monica, St. Rita etc. This endorses the possibility of commission of St. Thomas ecclesial authorities and execution with the help of Portuguese artists. A direct involvement and influence of local ecclesial authorities in the implementation and presentation of the of the mural can be asserted.

The influence of *chuvarchitrakala*, a unique mural technique developed in Kerala and fostered in Hindu temples can be seen in the color patterns of the Last Judgment mural. Ajith Kumar assumes the involvement of local artists, majority of them Hindu artists who were engaged with *chuvarchitrakala* in Angamaly mural.³⁶²

The Last Judgment mural interacts with the socio-religious context of Christian faith in India and in Kerala. The representation and inscription of the sins in the mural of mouth of hell shows the socio-religious situation of the society. The mural indicates different practices and deviations of the society.

The depiction of *Kali* has embarked critical remarks from academics like Patrizia Granziera and Nevin Dalvin. Art historian Patrizia Granziera assumes that the Angamaly Last Judgment mural was painted by a converted Indian artist, trained under a Portuguese clergy and executed during the Portuguese period.³⁶³ She identifies the excessive use of Marian cult in the murals of SMJSC as deliberate demonization of local deities initiated by the Portuguese.³⁶⁴ Granziera also observes that in the mural of Hades, “the Catholic propaganda reaches its zenith” in demonizing the native deities.³⁶⁵ Similar observation is also shared by Nevin Dalvin in his article titled “Elements of Colonization and Indigenization: Changing Lucifer into *Kali*.”³⁶⁶ Patrizia Granziera and Dalvin Nevin emphasizes the conscious demonization of *Grama devatha* (Village goddesses) cult by the colonizers.³⁶⁷ However, mass conversion of local Hindu population as happened in Goa, was not the case in Kerala as Patricia presupposes. *Kali* in Hinduism was associated with punishment and was also depicted in the temples with fierce characterization. St. Thomas Christians and the influence of Portuguese over them was also not same as in Goa.³⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the Last Judgement mural imply the socio-religious life of the people in Malabar.

³⁶² Cf. KUMAR – SHEENA, Mural Paintings in the churches of Kerala.

³⁶³ Cf. GRANZIERA, Cultural Interactions and Religious Iconography, 84

³⁶⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 88.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ NEVIN, Elements of Colonisation and Indigenisation, 52.

³⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 53.

³⁶⁸ Cf. ŽUPANOV, Jesuit Missions in Coastal, 40.

The identification of the mural as of “St. Thomas” in second register of Last Judgment, is an error. This thesis is of the opinion that it is the mural of St. Joesph. The thesis also proposes the identification of four figures on the fourth register either as four doctors of the church or as judges coming from the four quarters of the world on the day of Second Coming.

A historical investigation about the periodisation of the Last Judgment Mural and other murals in the church, undertaken by this study, postulates the argument that the murals in SMJSC were executed after 1665 for further verification. The existence of murals which proclaim Catholic theology for instance, mural of immaculate conception, Mary as queen of heaven, Crowning of Mary in Heaven etc. cannot be adequately supported in a Church after the Oath of Coonan cross and the consequent introduction of Antiochian (Syrian Orthodox) rite. Moreover, the liturgical attires would have been according to west Syrian liturgy which are evidently different from that are depicted in the mural. The rigorous introduction of West Syrian liturgical practices initiated after Coonan Cross Oath would not have been an ideal period to execute paintings of catholic themes in churches under *Puthenkuttu* faction, who rejected Portuguese and catholic communion. The west Syrian prelates like Mar Ivanios (1685) and Mar Baselios Sakrallah (1751)³⁶⁹ even burned crucifix and images of saints used in the churches.³⁷⁰ Pius Malekandthil writes: “Mar Ivanios started introducing several West Syrian practices forcefully among the *Puthenkur* faction and in the churches dominated by the *Puthenkur*.”³⁷¹ Due to these reasons there are less possibility that the murals were executed after 1665. The only feasible argument would be that the arrival of Mar Gregorios and the instantaneous introduction of the Antiochian liturgy did not affect the execution of the murals and that the murals were executed between 1665 and 1685.

Another point of reference about the periodization, is the identification of a Mural of a Bishop (with friar) as that of Mar Thoma I (1653-1673). After the consecration of Mar Thoma I, the *Puthenkur* faction came under the ecclesial authority of Syrian Orthodox church, which favored less exclusive catholic representations. The mural of Mar Thoma I, shows a catholic friar (priest or deacon) with tonsure accompanying him. In the mural, the Bishop is not wearing a hood as it was the practice among the

³⁶⁹ Cf. MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 140.

³⁷⁰ Cf. Bartholomeo, *India Orientalis Christiana*, 86.

³⁷¹ MALEKANDATHIL, Angamaly and St. Thomas Christians, 152.

oriental orthodox Bishops. Pius Malekandathil identify this as the mural of Archdeacon George of Christ. Though Archdeacon was nominated as coadjutor of Angamaly, he was never consecrated as a Bishop. But there are documents which referred in this thesis that confirms that he is wearing the liturgical attire of the Bishops. In Akaparambu church there is also the mural, where the Bishop is presiding over the funeral of an important person. The catholic monks are also portrayed there accompanying him. Therefore, this study proposes two possibilities. One, it is the mural of Mar Abraham (death 1597), the last East Syrian Metropolitan of St. Thomas Christians. Mar Abraham was also working closely with Jesuit priests during his last years of episcopacy. It is likely that his murals were installed in different churches to hold on to his tradition. The funeral he presides over could be of Archdeacon George of Christ (who died either in 1585 or 1591). The second and most compelling identification is that it is the mural of Archdeacon George of Cross. Archdeacon George of cross was closely associating with Franciscan and Dominican monks and resisted the efforts of Bishop Stephen Britto even disobeying his order to exclude them from the mission among the St. Thomas Christians.³⁷² This conflict even led to the resolution of *Mahayogam* in 1632 not to obey the orders of Bishop without the countersign of Archdeacon. Therefore, this mural would serve as a suitable memoir of his resistance. The liturgical dress in the mural would have been a practice among archdeacons especially following the example of Archdeacon George of Christ. In the mural of the Bishop there is also a friar depicted. It seems that the image of a friar has deliberate purpose.

The mural of the Bishop with friars stands as an indicator to assess the commissioning, period of execution of murals. This thesis gives higher validity to the hypothesis that Archdeacon Thomas Parambil commissioned the mural. The Bishop in the mural accompanied with friars is the mural of Archdeacon George of Cross. The period of the execution of mural might be extended from 1577 until 1665.

This thesis falls short of identifying the individual names of artists or artists groups, who executed the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly. However, the involvement of artists trained by the Portuguese, but it can be asserted that they were not advanced in skill compared to the painters who were working in Goa. The order of

³⁷² Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *The Catholic East*, 370; ZUPANOV, *Jesuit Missions in Coastal and South India*, 40.

the King of Portugal regarding the prohibition of native Hindu artists, points to the possibility that Angamaly mural was executed by local artists. The involvement of artist group from Cochin who were part of the Indo–Portuguese (not only of Jesuits but also of Dominicans and Franciscans) tradition poses high possibility.

The study gives more probability to artists who were familiar of Portuguese artistic skills executing the Last Judgement mural under Franciscan and Dominican friars in constant consultation and with the archdeacon Thomas Parambil. Church murals similar to that of Last Judgement mural of Angamaly, found in different churches in Kerala proves that it was part of a movement that was promoted by Syrian Christians especially those supported Archdeacons.

The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly shows a period of ecclesial tensions that started with the Synod of Udayamperur in 1599 and extended to 1665, leading to the official separation of *Puthenkur* Christians from the Catholic church. In 1632, Mar Parambil Chandi was consecrated as the first indigenous Bishop of the St. Thomas Christians.³⁷³ This event officially divided the St. Thomas Christians under the leadership of archdeacon Thomas Parambil and Bishop Mar Parambil Chandi. The supporters of archdeacon during the period between 1632 and 1663 remained as Catholics waiting for a Syrian Bishop. The murals show their ecclesial commitment to the catholic church even in a situation of constant struggle. Therefore, it is to be assumed that the execution of mural was under Archdeacons and their allies namely Franciscans and Dominicans.

4.11 Conclusion

The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly survives despite the dangers of restorations, mishandling, humidity of monsoons and the existential challenges of the parish community, as symbol of antiquity of Christian faith, ecclesial and social interaction and as an example of Christian art in India. The meeting of Indo-Portuguese artists and the Syrian Christian tradition can be seen in the Angamaly mural of Last Judgment. The mural preserves the faith proclamation and artistic sensitivity of the Christians in Kerala.

³⁷³ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE EASTERN CHURCHES, *The Catholic East*, 370.

General Conclusion

In his report to Portuguese authorities Bishop Francisco Ros writes about St. Thomas Christians in 1604, “[...] among them there are indigenous fathers, very good Latinists, artists and theologians. They are very pious and have great veneration for the cross, which they make in the manner of the legacy of St. Thomas, the ends of the four arms divided into three leaves of the lily”³⁷⁴. Francisco Ros in his comment acknowledges the artistic sensitivity of St. Thomas Christians. The artistic representations of St. Thomas Christians in Pre-Portuguese period were characterized by acceptance of Persian Christian art and cultural adaptations of the native communities. Later transcultural interactions with Portuguese and Mughals fostered Christian art in India. The Angamaly murals shows influences of Indo-Portuguese art. It is sure that the artistic contributions of the Portuguese enhanced the Christian art both in India and in Kerala. Nevertheless, the iconographic representations found elsewhere in Portuguese India, considerably changes from the murals executed in St. Thomas Christian churches of Kerala. There are evident influences of ecclesial and historical elements discovered, especially when considering the existence of Portuguese and East Syrian traditions. Church murals in Kerala, therefore, need to be treated in its own substratum of existence. Due to the inadequacy of historical data, an undisputable conclusion regarding the execution of the murals and the artists involved is difficult. However, this master thesis attempted to explore various historical and ecclesial factors without compensating the iconographical influences those lead to better understanding of the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly.

The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly primarily depends on Bible and tradition for representation of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It faithfully synchronizes and translates the scriptural teachings on Christian finality. Along with scripture it also responds to the cultural contexts and interacts with the ecclesial life of St. Thomas Christians. The mural of Last Judgment stands for the theological and ecclesial concerns of St. Thomas Christians and the desire to remain in Catholic communion without sacrificing their ecclesial identity.

³⁷⁴ ROS, Report on the Serra (1603-1604), 327.

The Last Judgment mural of Angamaly is regarded as a secco mural.³⁷⁵ The incorporation of artistic elements found in European and Syrian traditions also make the Angamaly Last Judgment mural special. The mural undoubtedly needs to be counted among the Last Judgment iconographies of the Christian world. With its style, composition, socio-religious and ecclesial significance, the Last Judgment mural of Angamaly remains to be a unique piece of Christian art in India and as an important example of Last Judgment iconography.

³⁷⁵ Cf. PETER – GOPI, A Monograph on church mural art of Kerala, 4.

Abbreviations

BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
CHAI	Church History Association of India.
CBCI	The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India
IJHSS	International Journal of Humanities& Social Science Studies
JCA	Journal of Culture and Archaeology
JMSA	Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology
MCC	Malankara Catholic Church
MOSC	Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
SARAS	The South Asian Research Assistance
SMC	Syro Malabar Church
SMJSC	St. Mary's Jacobite Soonoro Cathedral (St. Mary's Jacobite Syrian Church)

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Figure: 1

Angamaly Mural of Second coming

Photo: Shaiju Mathew, 17.04.2024



Figure: 2

Angamaly Mural of Hell

Photo: Shaiju Mathew, 17.04.2024



Figure: 3
Last Judgment icon of Torcello, Venice.
Photo: Shaiju Mathew, 06.10.2023

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Abstract

Christian Last Judgement iconography consists of eschatological representations about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and final judgment of mankind. Along with conveying Scriptural teachings, Last Judgement iconography interacted with the ecclesial and socio-religious features of the communities in which they were executed. The early instances of Christian art in India are found in the granite Crosses, granite pillars, etc. Though, the beginning of Christianity in India is unclear. There is a tradition of St. Thomas Christianity and its interaction with Syriac Christian world, especially to the Church of the East. The arrival of the Portuguese and their ecclesial mission introduced western Christianity and its visual culture to Indian people. Goa became a centre of art and Western art began to be applied to Indian context. This master thesis briefly studies Christian art in India and categorizes it into Indo-Persian art, Indo-Portuguese art, Mughal-Christian art, Church murals in Kerala and modern Indian Christian art. Church murals are found in different parts of India and in Kerala, many of them are attributed to Portuguese mission. However, the observable differences of Kerala church murals in comparison with that of Goan murals stimulate academic curiosity.

Among the church murals of Kerala, the Last Judgment mural of St. Mary's Jacobite Soonoro Cathedral (SMJSC) Angamaly, is the focus of this master thesis. It reviews the history of SMJSC resolving the historical ambiguities regarding the construction of this church and strives to present a coherent history of the church. The thesis also introduces all the murals existing in the church with a view of facilitating the study of ecclesial and iconographic interactions of the mural. Since the commission and execution of the Last Judgement mural of Angamaly is unknown the thesis proposes three possible hypotheses (1) the Last Judgement mural is commissioned by Portuguese Ecclesial authorities, (2) the Last Judgement mural is commissioned by Mar Abraham, (3) the Last Judgement mural is commissioned by Archdeacons. The analysis of available sources and the study of the complementing factors suggest that the Last Judgement mural of Angamaly was executed between 1577 and 1665, under the guidance of Archdeacons.

The biblical sources, spatial significance, composition and pedagogical purposes of Last Judgement mural are briefly discussed in this thesis. It also identifies theological and iconographical influence of Indo-Portuguese and Syriac Christian

visual culture along with proposing correct identification of some of the murals, especially certain figures in the Last Judgement. The involvement of St. Thomas Christians along with indo-Portuguese artists groups, can be traced in the execution of the mural.

The Last Judgment mural interacts with the ecclesial history and the multicultural society of Malabar. The mural conveys a consolidated visual representation of Second coming and Final Judgement primarily based on the scripture and tradition of the Church along with incorporating its own artistic features. The mural also exuberates the features of eastern and western Last Judgement iconography along with indigenous visual elements. A comprehensive convergence of scriptural and ecclesiastical perspectives in the cultural context makes this mural unique.

Abstrakt

Die christliche Weltgerichtsikonographie im Christentum beinhaltet eschatologische Darstellungen über die Wiederkunft Jesu Christi und das Jüngste Gericht über die Menschheit. Die Darstellungen des Weltgerichts vermitteln biblische Lehren und stehen in Wechselwirkung mit den kirchlichen und sozio-religiösen Merkmalen der Gemeinden, in denen sie ausgeführt wurden. Die ersten Beispiele christlicher Kunst in Indien finden sich auf Granitkreuzen, Granitsäulen usw. Der Beginn des Christentums in Indien liegt im Dunkeln. Es gibt eine St. Thomas-Tradition und Beziehungen zur syrischen christlichen Welt, insbesondere zur Kirche des Ostens. Mit der Ankunft der Portugiesen und ihrer kirchlichen Missionierung begann die Einführung des westlichen Christentums und seiner visuellen Kultur in Indien. Goa wurde zu einem Zentrum der Kunst, und mit der Zeit drang westliche Kunst in den indischen Kontext ein. Die christliche Kunst in Indien kann in folgende Typen eingeteilt werden: indisch-persische Kunst, indisch-portugiesische Kunst, christliche Kunst der Moguln, kirchliche Wandmalereien in Kerala und moderne christliche Kunst in Indien. In verschiedenen Teilen Indiens und in Kerala finden sich kirchliche Wandmalereien, die der portugiesischen Missionierung zugeschrieben werden. Die sichtbaren Unterschiede zwischen den Wandmalereien in den Kirchen Keralas und denen in Goa wecken jedoch die wissenschaftliche Aufmerksamkeit.

Diese Masterarbeit befaßt sich mit dem Wandgemälde des Jüngsten Gerichts in der Jakobitischen Soonoro Marienkathedrale in Angamaly (SMJSC). Aufgearbeitet wird die Geschichte dieser Kirche. Es wurden historische Unklarheiten bezüglich der Errichtung dieser Kirche beseitigt und versucht, eine kohärente Geschichte dieses Bauwerks zu präsentieren. Außerdem werden alle Wandmalereien dieser Kirche vorgestellt, um die weitere Erforschung der kirchlichen und ikonografischen Wechselwirkungen dieser Weltgerichtsdarstellung zu erleichtern. Da der Auftrag und die Ausführung dieses Wandgemäldes nicht bekannt sind, werden in dieser Arbeit drei mögliche Hypothesen aufgestellt: das Wandgemälde des Weltgerichts wurde (1) von portugiesischen kirchlichen Autoritäten, (2) von Mar Abraham, (3) von Archidiakonen in Auftrag gegeben. Die Analyse der verfügbaren Quellen und die Untersuchung der ergänzenden Faktoren lassen darauf schließen, dass das Wandgemälde des Jüngsten Gerichts von Angamaly zwischen 1577 und 1665 unter der Leitung von Archidiakonen entstanden ist.

Die biblischen Quellen, die räumliche Bedeutung, die Zusammensetzung und die didaktischen Zwecke des Wandgemäldes zum Weltgericht werden in dieser Arbeit kurz betrachtet. Außerdem werden theologische und ikonografische Elemente der indo-portugiesischen und syrisch-christlichen Bildkultur in den Wandmalereien von Angamaly identifiziert. In dieser Arbeit wird auch die Identifikation einiger Figuren des Wandgemäldes, insbesondere beim Jüngsten Gericht, vorgeschlagen. Die Beteiligung der kirchlichen Verantwortlichen der Thomaschristen und der indo-portugiesischen Künstlergilde an der Ausführung des Wandgemäldes kann nachgewiesen werden.

Das Wandgemälde des Weltgerichts steht in Wechselwirkung mit der Kirchengeschichte und der multikulturellen Gesellschaft von Malabar. Das Gemälde vermittelt eine konsolidierte visuelle Darstellung der Wiederkunft Christi und des Jüngsten Gerichts, die sich in erster Linie auf die Heilige Schrift und die kirchliche Tradition stützt, es bezieht aber auch eigene künstlerische Merkmale ein. Das Wandgemälde enthält auch Merkmale der östlichen und westlichen Ikonographie des Jüngsten Gerichts sowie einheimische visuelle Elemente. Eine umfassende Konvergenz von biblischen und kirchlichen Perspektiven im kulturellen Kontext macht dieses Wandbild einzigartig.