



# THE HARP

A Review of Syriac and Oriental Ecumenical Studies

Volume: XVII 2004



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John Madey\*

## **"Structures" in the Churches of Eastern Tradition**

The Eastern and Oriental<sup>1</sup> Churches, whichever tradition they might follow, are deeply aware that they are *Apostolic* Churches. They feel that they are bound by this inheritance and they preserve it with greatest consciousness. The Second Vatican Council has referred to it with emphasis in its Decree on Ecumenism<sup>2</sup>. Also Pope John Paul II in many documents during his pontificate has stressed the faithfulness to this inheritance of Apostolicity and presented it as exemplary for the western Church.

Therefore it is no wonder that the Eastern theology does not speak about "Structures", but again and again goes back to the apostolic inheritance; for by that today's Church remains true to Christ, its Lord, to the Apostles whom He appointed as his representatives and to their successors. Thus we can legitimately speak about the Epistles of St. Ignatius (+110), the Theophoros (God-Bearer)<sup>3</sup>, the second bishop of Antioch in Syria, the Church founded by St. Peter, as the *Magna Charta* of ecclesiastical life and Church affairs.

What are the signs of the true Church that is instrumental for the salvation of the faithful in the concrete local Churches? She is the

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\* I wish to express here my gratefulness to my colleague GEEVARGHESE CHEDIATH, Trivandrum, for his collaboration.

1 For the terminology see J. MADEY, *Quellen und Grundzüge des Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* (= BzMK 22), Essen 1999, 12-17.

2 *Unitatis Redintegratio* 14-17. See also *Lumen Gentium* 23 and *Ecclesiarum Orientalium* 3.

3 In the Syriac tradition he is called „the Fiery“.

Church "of God the Father and of the Beloved Son". She possesses the means of Grace, she is filled with Faith and Love, she does not lack any means of Grace, and she is the "beloved of God and the bearer of the Saints"<sup>4</sup>. St. Ignatius exhorts his addressees:

"You must all follow the lead of the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed that of the Father; follow the presbytery as you would the Apostles; reverence the deacons as you would God's commandment. Let no one do anything touching the Church, apart from the bishop. Let that celebration of the Eucharist be considered valid which is held under the bishop or anyone to whom he has committed it. Where the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not permitted without authorization from the bishop either to baptize or to hold an agape; but whatever he approves is also pleasing to God. Thus everything you do will be proof against danger and valid... it is well to revere God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop is honoured by God"<sup>5</sup>

What is referred to the local Church, *ecclesia localis* (diocese, eparchy) here, has won the validity during the course of the ecclesial development on the relationship between each and every local church and the metropolies and the patriarchate, and the patriarchates among themselves. It is referring to an organic development that does not at all exclude differences in the traditions. In general it can be said that the bishops of the local churches within the Roman Empire, after 292, through tacit agreement handed over a part of their right to the chief leaders who resided in the metropolies and after that received the title Metropolitans. That does not mean that the Metropolitans (Patriarchs) were made the possessors of absolute authority. The canons of the early Church already made it clear that a characteristic of the exercise of Eastern Church authority lies in synodality; i.e., in the collegiality of the bishops of a certain Church, a Church *sui iuris* as we say today.

During the Synod of Bishops (4<sup>th</sup> October, 2001), the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch Gregorios III of Antioch pointed out emphatically that it would be a mistake to call in one breath the Patriarchal synod<sup>6</sup> equivalent to the Bishops' Conference in the western Church. While the latter is an advisory body of a hierarchy of a country or area, the

4 Introduction to the Epistle addressed to the Church of Smyrna.

5 IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, Ep. to the Church of Smyrna, ch. 8-9: in: *Ancient Christian Writers*, I, tr. J. A. KLEIST, 1961, p. 93). Cf. Ep. to the Church of Magnesia, XIII, 1-2 and Ep. to the Church of Tralles, XII, 2-XIII.

6 See J. MADEY, *Quellen und Grundzüge* (fn. 1) 86-94.

Patriarchal Synod, together with the Patriarch, is the *highest authority* of a Church of eastern Tradition. It can enact laws, elect bishops and patriarchs and excommunicate delinquents.<sup>7</sup>

## The Hierarchical Structures

According to the *Annuario Pontificio* 2002<sup>8</sup>, there are 22 *sui iuris* Churches, which follow five Oriental traditions: the Alexandrian, Syro-Antiochene, Armenian, Chaldean or Syro-Oriental, and Byzantine. Out of these six are Patriarchal Churches, two Major Archiepiscopal Churches, four Metropolitan Churches. The other ten *sui iuris* Churches, all following the Byzantine tradition, have only one single eparchy or are taken care of by the Apostolic See as Apostolic Exarchates or Apostolic Administrations<sup>9</sup>. The only exception is the *Italo-Albanian* Church in South Italy and Sicily. It has two eparchies and one territorial monastery.

It is striking that in the patriarchal Churches, the rights and the duties of the office of the metropolitan are surrendered to the patriarchs. The title Metropolitan or Archbishop is today an honorary title for specific sees or persons<sup>10</sup>. The Ukrainian Major Archiepiscopal *sui iuris* Church has a few metropolies outside its territory. Their metropolitans and the suffragans are similarly only

7 SYNODUS EPISCOPORUM, *Bollettino* (www.vatican.va). The Patriarch underlines in his intervention, that with regard to the patriarchate there is no question of honour, privileges or concessions. This institution is a specific characteristic of eastern Ecclesiology. Therefore it is not admissible to consider the office of the patriarch as a Roman creation; it is not the fruit of privileges conceded or granted by Rome. The Syrian Patriarch emeritus Mar IGNATIUS MOUSSA I (Daoud), now a cardinal and prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, proposes also a change in the way of electing bishops that would be more in conformity with the genuine tradition. It should become possible to announce immediately the name of the new bishops elected by the respective Patriarchal synod. Thereupon the new elect asks the Pope as the head of the episcopal college to grant him the *communio ecclesiastica*. See *Christian Orient* 22 (2001), 193.

8 *Annuario Pontificio* 2002, 979-982.

9 The Congregation for the Eastern Churches may also take them under its immediate care. As a rule, an ordained bishop rules the apostolic Exarchates and administrations.

10 The title „Archbishop *ad personam*” is also granted to certain bishops in the Western (Latin) Church on ground of their function, e.g. in the diplomatic service, or of personal merits. In most of the Orthodox Churches the title "Metropolitan" is reserved to an eparch in contrast to assistant (auxiliary) bishops. Alone the Romanian Orthodox Church knows ecclesiastical provinces (metropolies).

aggregates (*aggregati*) of the Synod<sup>11</sup>. Against it, there are four metropolies in the sense of ecclesiastical provinces in the Indian Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church. Therefore, the Canons of CCEO about the Metropolitans within the Patriarchal Church (cc.133-139) are applicable to them also. Logically the Metropolies of Philadelphia (USA) and Winnipeg (Canada) of the Ukrainian Church must also be considered in the same way. They are *not* Metropolitan Churches *sui iuris*.

## The Structures at the Eparchial level

It is difficult to say something on this point, which is valid for all. There are several reasons for that. As mentioned in the beginning, each *sui iuris* Church dates back to different traditions. Further, on the various historically conditioned grounds the number and the extension of the eparchies also vary. Some have no difference on the basis of the number of the faithful, parish structures and extension from the western Church. The others have possibly only a handful of parishes or are as large as one single *Dekanat* (deanery) in Germany<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, the decisions of CCEO regarding the advisory body of the bishop in the guidance of the eparchy and also on the presbyteral assembly and the eparchial consultant body (cc. 235-278) are in practice only conditional.

As shown above in the Epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the whole activity of a local Church is centred on the bishop; he, as successor of the Apostles, guides the folk of God in Christ's name. He entrusted him to pasture it in collaboration with the presbyterium: "Adhering to its pastor and gathered by him in the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes a particular Church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative" (c.177 § 1; cf. CIC c. 369).

11 VATICANUM II, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 7c. — Cf. J. MADEY, "Orientalium Ecclesiarum". *More than Twenty Years After; A New Commentary on Vatican II's Decree on the Oriental Catholic Churches* (= OIRSI 110), Kottayam 1987, 76-87.

12 Two eparchies of the Chaldean Church may illustrate this. In the patriarchal eparchy of Baghdad there are 155,000 faithful in 28 parishes. 40 eparchial and 3 religious priests serve them. The number of seminarians is 64. In contrast to it, the metropolitan eparchy of Urmyâ (Iran) has actually only 1,500 faithful in two parishes. The metropolitan who is, in personal union, also the Bishop of Salmas (Dahpur) is assisted in both eparchies only by three eparchial priests and one religious priest.

## The Eparchial Assembly

In order to get helpful support in the ecclesiastical matters, especially for the requirements and needs of the eparchy, the legislator makes provisions that the eparchial bishop establishes an eparchial assembly<sup>13</sup> (c. 235). The eparchial bishop should convene it after consultation with the presbyteral council (c. 236). Those whom the bishop invites to the eparchial assembly have the obligation to participate (c. 238). The following must be present for it, if they exist in the eparchy:

1. The coadjutor bishop and the auxiliary bishops;
2. The protosyncellus, the syncelli, the judicial vicar and eparchial finance officer;
3. The eparchial consultants;
4. The rector of the eparchial major seminary;
5. The protopresbyters;
6. At least one pastor from each district, to be elected by all of those who actually have the care of souls, the protopresbyter presiding over the election; another presbyter is to be elected as an alternate to fill in for him if he is impeded;
7. The members of the presbyteral council and some delegates of the pastoral council, if it exists, elected by the same council in the manner and number established by particular law;
8. Some deacons elected according to the norms of particular law;
9. Superiors of monasteries *sui iuris* and some superiors of other institutes of consecrated life which have houses in the eparchy, to be elected in the manner and number established by particular law;
10. Lay people elected by the pastoral council, if it exists, or designated in some other manner determined by the eparchial bishop so that the number of lay people does not exceed one-third of the members of the eparchial assembly.

13 The Code for the Latin Church speaks in this context of the *synodus dioecessana* (CIC c. 460). The use of this term would not be adequate in the CCEO. The term *Synod* is reserved exclusively to an assembly of bishops who are exercising here their ministry of guidance in common.



In spite of the considerable representation of the people of God, the eparchial bishop *alone* remains as the legislator: He "is the only participant in the eparchial assembly with a decisive voice; all the other participants have only a consultative vote", says c. 241 (cf. c. 466) very clearly:

"The eparchial bishop is the sole legislator in the eparchial assembly, the votes of others being only consultative. He is the only one who signs the decisions which have been made in the eparchial assembly which, if they are promulgated in the same assembly, begin to oblige immediately unless expressly provided otherwise." (c. 241).<sup>14</sup>

It lies on the eparchial bishop to decide whether decisions should have an immediate effect or a *vacatio legis* be given, so that within a span of time the new legislation may be promulgated throughout the entire eparchy.<sup>15</sup>

## The Eparchial Curia

Under this name should be understood the eparchial administration, which the bishop should have for his assistance. According to the canonical norms, the eparchial curia consists of the protosyncellus, the syncelli, the judicial vicar, the eparchial finance officer with the council for economic affairs, the chancellor, the eparchial judges, the promoter of justice and the defender of the bond, notaries and other persons assigned by the eparchial bishop for properly fulfilling the offices of the eparchial curia (c. 243 § 2).

But this regulation cannot be put into practice everywhere in the same way; especially in the Churches of the Near East some matters are arranged differently or lie within the competence and responsibility of the Holy Synods of the Patriarchal Churches. The *Melkite Church* in its Synod in September 2001 had adopted something similar in the new election of the representatives of the various synodal commissions and committees<sup>16</sup>:

14 J. D. FARIS, *Eastern Catholic Churches: Constitution and Governance*, New York 1992, 512.

15 Cf. c. 1489 § 2: „Laws given by other legislators [than the Apostolic See] are promulgated in the manner determined by these legislators and begin to oblige from the date prescribed by them.”

16 See *Le Lien. Revue du Patriarcat Grec-Melkite-Catholique* (Beirut) 4/5, 2001, 60.

1. Commission for theological and ecumenical questions;
2. Commission for the questions connected with Church laws;
3. Commission for the preparation of the patriarchal assemblies;
4. Commission for the common treasury;
5. Commission for the supervision of St. Anne's major seminary;
6. The Permanent synod;
7. Election of the president of the patriarchal tribunal of second instance<sup>17</sup>;
8. Election of the secretary general of the synod;
9. Election of the moderator general of the administration of justice;
10. Election of the representative of the synodal tribunal (*see above no. 7*);
11. Election of the representatives for the "Synod of Bishops in Rome".

The Council of Hierarchs of the Indian *Syro-Malankara Church*, which is a Metropolitan Church *sui iuris*, has similarly constituted a few Commissions for definite questions, which are equally valid for all the eparchies:

1. Commission for the priestly formation;
2. Commission for the clergy, the religious communities and societies of apostolic life;
3. Commission for ecumenical dialogue;
4. Commission for inter-religious dialogue
5. Commission for sacramental and liturgical questions;
6. Commission for the Malankara Catholic Youth Movement;
7. Commission for the Malankara Catholic Association, the laity and the family
8. Commission for education;
9. Commission for catechetical instruction and the mass media;
10. Various *ad hoc* Commissions with time-limited mandate.<sup>18</sup>

17 Cf. c. 1063 §§ 1-3. – "The synod of bishops of the patriarchal Church, with due regard for the competence of the Apostolic See, constitutes the highest tribunal within the territorial boundaries of the patriarchal Church" (c. 1062 § 1).

18 See MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH (ed. Joshua Mar Ignathios), *Directory*, Trivandrum 2001, 8-9.

The St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary, the Malankara Catholic Association and the Malankara Catholic Youth Movement are inter-eparchial institutions. We are presenting here, in a survey, a comparison showing the way in which the eparchial curias are formed.<sup>19</sup> The metropolitan eparchy of Trivandrum and the eparchy of Tiruvalla are the mother eparchies of the two others, which still have the character of mission eparchies.

### **Metropoly of Trivandrum-Eparchy of Tiruvalla-Eparchy of Battery-Eparchy Marthandom**

|                     |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Protosyncellus      | Protosyncellus      |                     |
| Syncellus           | Syncellus           | Syncellus           |
| Syncellus           |                     |                     |
| Episcopal Vicar     |                     |                     |
| Chancellor          | Chancellor          | Chancellor          |
| Chancellor          |                     |                     |
| Economus            | Economus            | Economus            |
| Economus            |                     |                     |
| Secretary           |                     |                     |
| Eparchial tribunal  | Eparchial tribunal  | Eparchial tribunal  |
| Eparchial council   | Eparchial council   | Eparchial council   |
| Eparchial council   |                     |                     |
| Presbyteral council | Presbyteral council | Presbyteral council |
| Presbyteral council |                     |                     |
| Pastoral council    | Pastoral council    | Pastoral council    |
| Pastoral council    |                     |                     |
| Finance council     | Finance council     | Finance council     |
| Finance council     |                     |                     |

For a comparison is here the presentation of the structures of the *Ukrainian Catholic Church in Poland*, which after an oppression of several decades appeared again on the scene after the political *change* in the eastern parts of Europe<sup>20</sup>. It consists of the Metropoly of

<sup>19</sup> *Directory* (see fn. 18), 12-22, 89-97, 137-144, 166-169.

<sup>20</sup> For details see J. MADEY, "Untergang und Wiederentstehung der Griechisch-Katholischen Kirche in der Polnischen Volksrepublik", in: *Ostkirchliche Studien* 38 (1989), 3-33.

Przemysl-Warsaw and (since 1996) the Eparchy of Breslau-Danzig (Wroclaw-Gdansk)<sup>21</sup>. The Ukrainian Church in Poland is not a Church *sui iuris*, but is a Metropoly outside the territory of the Major Archiepiscopal Church of Lemberg/L'viv (Ukraine).

Metropoly Przemysl-Warsaw      Eparchy of Breslau-Danzig

**Headquarters in Przemysl      Headquarters in Breslau**

- |                                                         |                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Consistory                                           | Consistory                           |
| Protosyncellus                                          | Protosyncellus (Breslau)             |
| Syncellus (Danzig)                                      |                                      |
| Chancellor                                              | Chancellor                           |
| Protonotary                                             |                                      |
| Finance Officer                                         | Finance Officer                      |
| College of eparchial consultants (8)                    | College of eparchial consultants (7) |
| Presbyteral council (15)                                | Presbyteral council (9)              |
| 2. Chapter <sup>22</sup>                                |                                      |
| 3. Inter-eparchial major seminary in Lublin             |                                      |
| 4. Publications                                         |                                      |
| 5. Commission for the preservation of ancient monuments |                                      |
| 6. Caritas                                              | Caritas                              |
| 7. Commission for Catechism                             |                                      |
| 8. Archbishop's library                                 |                                      |
| 9. Bookshop                                             |                                      |
| 10. Protopresbyterates                                  | Protopresbyterates                   |
| (Przemysl, Cracow-Krynica, Olsztyn/                     | (Breslau/Wroclaw,                    |
|                                                         | Grünberg/Zielona Gora,               |
| Allenstein, Elblag/Elbing)                              | Köslin/Koszalin, Stolp/Slupsk)       |
| Parishes and pastoral centres 83                        | Parishes and pastoral Centres 55     |

21 See „Śematyzm hreko-katolyc'koho duchovenstva u Polšëi“, in: *Kalendar „Blahovista“ 2002*, Gorowo llaweckie 2002, 167-186.

22 The cathedral chapter of Przemysl has its origin in the time, when this town was under Austrian rule. It consists of the provost, four ordinary and four honorary canons.

The only Eastern Catholic Church unit in Germany with its own bishop is the Apostolic Exarchate for the Ukrainian Catholics in Germany and Scandinavia. During the *Soborcyk*<sup>23</sup> in Altenbeken-Buke, 2001, it got a new structure in accordance with the CCEO. With the Exarch Kyr Petro (Kryk), there is the protosyncellus, the chancellor (who is a deacon) and the finance officer. In addition to that, there is a finance council, the eparchial council and the presbyteral council. For the pastoral leadership in Scandinavia, another syncellus must be appointed; also a protopresbyter for Berlin and the new German states (former GDR). The other parishes and pastoral centres belong to the northern protopresbyterate with its headquarters in Hamburg, to the southern with its headquarters in Munich and to the western with its (actual) headquarters in Bamberg. In addition to this, the bishop appointed one episcopal vicar for the religious, one spiritual animator and the presidents for the catechetical commission (a deacon), the commission for the youth ministry and for the Caritas.<sup>24</sup>

## Protopresbyter and Protopresbyterate

Since the time that the Church grew over the city in which the bishop resided and with his presbyterium directly exercised his office, there emerged the necessity for a kind of intermediary office between the bishop and the pastors. Therefore new offices were set up: For the village pastoral work, there emerged the office of *Corepiscopa*, who was in the beginning an ordained bishop, subordinated to the bishop of the city. A similar office in relation to the city clergy was exercised by the Archpriest. Next to him, there was the *Periodeutes* who as representative of the city bishop conducted the visitation of the parishes of the eparchy. The institution of the *protopresbyterate* grew from these offices. In some Oriental Churches these titles are still now only honorific; on the other hand, as stipulated in the CCEO cc. 276-278<sup>25</sup>, the office of the protopresbyter is of real significance (e.g. Ukrainian Church, Syro-Malabar Church, Syro-Malankara Church etc.).

The CCEO presupposes that the protopresbyter is a presbyter who is placed over a district consisting of several parishes (c. 276); other institutions such as schools, hospitals and pilgrim centres do not come under him.

23 In the Ukrainian Church this is the reunion of the presbyterium under the chairmanship of the eparch or exarch.

24 See *Chrystyjans'kyj Holos/Christliche Stimme* 53/20 (Munich 2001), 2.

25 Cf. *CIC* cc. 553-555.

## An eparchy without parishes

The Melkite Greek Catholic eparchy of Aleppo in Syria whose history dates back to the fourth century, and which has the rank of a Metropolis is of a special category. Its territory encompasses Aleppo and surroundings. It is headed by a metropolitan with his curia (protosyncellus, finance officer general, and secretary). There exists in the eparchy an *eparchial council* which is identical with the *presbyteral council*, in which all the incardinated priests are members and also the *small eparchial council* which consists of the protosyncellus, the finance officer, the senior-most ordained priest and two other elected priests. There are four commissions or committees: the commission for the temporal goods, the committee for social work, the Committee for social development and the committee for the cemetery.

The eparchial tribunal is *inter-ecclesial*, i.e., the tribunal of first instance for *all the Catholics* of Aleppo (Melkites, Maronites, Armenians, Chaldeans, "Latins").

There are no canonical parishes. All the 16 priests of the Metropolitan eparchy have equal jurisdiction throughout the eparchial territory, irrespective of the nine churches they are appointed.<sup>26</sup>

## Parishes

With the exception of the above-mentioned "eparchy without parishes", the principle for the division into parishes is generally the same in all the Eastern Churches.<sup>27</sup>

The provisions of the CCEO concerning the parishes and the parish priests are the same in content as those of the CIC. It is worth mentioning that before the Second Vatican Council, theology and canon law understood a parish to be an administrative institution or a territorial sub-unit of the eparchy at the service of the spiritual needs of the faithful (CIC [1917] c. 216; *Cleri sanctitati* c. 160 § 1). However, nowadays, both the CCEO and the CIC emphasize more the *communio* character. The parish is a *community of faithful* where the Eucharistic mystery is celebrated and concretely lived. And therefore the parish cannot be

26 LE LIEN, *Almanach de la Communauté grecque-melkite-catholique*, Beirut 1986, 80-81 ; see also *Annuario Pontificio* 2002, Vatican City 2002, 26-27.

27 This is valid even for those Chaldean eparchies in Iraq that, because of the Kurdish wars during the latest decades, have now only a few faithful: Amadiya (2452 faithful, 2 parishes), Aqra (192 faithful, 1 parish), Sulaimaniya (403 faithful, 1 parish).

considered as a temporal get together of the faithful, which just exists when the Eucharist is celebrated. On the contrary, it is an established community, headed by a particular pastor and the other members.

The eastern ecclesiastical parishes are as a rule both territorial and personal. They encompass all the members of the respective Church *sui iuris* in a particular area. Only if a faithful of an Eastern Catholic Church is outside the border of the parish of his church *sui iuris*, and has no pastor to take care of him, generally the priest of the local Latin parish looks after him.<sup>28</sup>

The CCEO also briefly refers to Vatican II's Decree on the Lay Apostolate *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no 26, dealing with the issue of consultative organs: "In the parish there are to be<sup>29</sup> appropriate councils dealing with pastoral and economic matters, according to the norms of the particular law" (c. 295). It is the wish of the legislator that the parish priests receive from the part of the lay people an active support in pastoral and economic matters. While the CIC proceeds from the pastoral council (CIC c. 536)<sup>30</sup> and the economic council, the CCEO simply speaks of "appropriate councils dealing with pastoral and economic matters, according to the norms of the particular law of its own Church *sui iuris*". The CCEO hereby considers the differences of the legal structures of the different Churches of eastern tradition as well as their growth over different countries and continents.<sup>31</sup> Therefore the CCEO that can give only the outline, leaves the details to the competence of the particular law. This includes also the question whether, as in the Roman Catholic Church, there should be a pastoral council and an economic council, in a Church *sui iuris* of Oriental

28 In the United States where there are numerous jurisdictional units, the following is valid since 1982. The ordinary of an Eastern Church may in places where no parish of his Church *sui iuris* is established, authorize the pastor of another Church *sui iuris* (not necessarily a Roman Catholic or Latin) to take care also of his faithful, with the consent of the ordinary of this pastor. This does not mean, however, that the episcopal jurisdiction goes over to this ordinary. It remains with the ordinary of the Church *sui iuris* of the faithful. — Letter of the Delegate Apostolic in Washington, D.C., of 24th June 1982. In contrast to this, in countries where there is no hierarchy of the Church *sui iuris* of the faithful belonging to eastern Catholic Churches, normally they are placed under the jurisdiction of the local Roman Catholic hierarchy (cf. CCEO c. 916 § 5).

29 The English edition of the CCEO is more accurate in translating "habeantur" with "there are to be", while the German translation of the CCEO, Paderborn 2000, has "there must be = muss es geben).

30 The so-called *Pfarrgemeinderat* in German parishes is not identical with the pastoral council described in the CIC.

tradition on the parish level. Anyway it is being tried to ward off a growing tendency coming from the Roman Catholic Church to form these councils according to the model put forward by the local political parliaments, through which the authority of the bishop and that of the parish priest are being affected in essential things connected with their office and quarrels programmed in advance.

## Conclusion

As a consequence of the above-mentioned matters, it becomes clear that we are not able to compare the structures of the Roman Catholic Church with the structures of the Catholic Churches of eastern tradition. The different historical backgrounds, the developments and the difficulties of the various periods are so different that one can consider always either a single Church *sui iuris* at a time or several Churches which have a similar tradition and evolutionary background. By this alone it is possible for us to do justice to the Churches of eastern tradition "which are equally entrusted to the pastoral guidance of the Roman Pontiff who by God's appointment is successor to Blessed Peter in primacy over the Universal Church". They all possess the same dignity and are of equal rank, so that "none of them is superior to the others because of its rite"<sup>32</sup>

31 The collaboration of lay people in Church life is very ancient in the Churches of Oriental tradition. In this context it should be reminded of the order of the *palliyogams* (Church assemblies) with the Thomas Christians of India, abolished by Roman Catholic prelates during the period of colonialism. Its restoration continues to be an actual *desideratum*. See J. KOLLAPARAMPIL, *The Archdeacon of All-India* [= The Syrian Churches Series, 5], Kottayam 1972, 200 and 215; TH. KOONAMMAKAL, "Syro-Malabar Maladies or Ecumenical Scandal?", in: *Christian Orient* 22 (2001), 171.

32 VATICANUM II, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* no. 3.



**THE FIRST GIFT: Voluntary renunciation of worldly possessions and distancing oneself from evil passions.**

“Do you wish, as a human being, rightly to turn back from the road of death to the path of life, and from the outward appearance of a world of griefs to the world of reality, and from the short life of the present to the lengthy life which is with Our Lord? Leave behind, then, appearance, which is transitory, and seize what is true as the basis of your hope and the pattern for your life. Because this world of ours, with all its life, is a pattern of the one, which is to come, choose, therefore, to renounce definitively all possessions, which are external to yourself. These are the things which will not accompany you to Our Lord, if, according to his commands, you do not acquire them because there is no need of them in the life which lacks nothing. Here on earth, they increase vexation and fear in us through their abundance; in the life beyond, they make our torment the more because they have been carefully guarded. For example, that is, gold and silver, provisions for life; clothing; male and female servants, and everything in excess of your needs here and now. It is necessary that you set aside only for the long term, but gather and keep only for a short time”.

*(Quoted from “The Book of Gifts” which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J.Lane)*

Vincent G. Nyoyoko\*

# **The Church and Non-Christian Religions in Contemporary Society**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Jesus Christ, preached and proclaimed salvation to all mankind. He sowed the seed of the reign of God, and commissioned the apostles to carry the message to the utmost ends of the earth. Encouraged by the resurrection experience and animated by the Holy Spirit, the apostles set out to carry out the work assigned them. They preached Christ's resurrection and taught even the Gentiles the hidden mysteries of God.

In a two-thousand year history of Christianity one still finds a pluralism of ideological forces, among which belongs the religious pluralism of our age. Even within the Christian religion and other world religions there is a diversity of sects, each claiming to possess the authentic means of salvation with matchless vigour and monopoly. Thus, religious pluralism has really been a hallmark of the present day world. And it has been the great "scandal" of Christianity that after the two-thousand year history of her existence one still finds in

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all parts of the world different types of religion, and some to spring up, and some have not even received the Gospel message at all. Hence, the issue of religious pluralism creates a great threat and anxiety to Christianity with her relentless claim to absolute religion and promise of salvation to all mankind.

The church of today finding herself in such a state of religious pluralism wakes up to address herself to the problem of our time. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council (1963 – 1965) and some eminent contemporary theologians discuss and deliberate on the issue seriously.

It is, therefore, the preoccupations of this paper to look historically into the Church's attitude towards non-Christian religions starting from the apostolic age down to the prevailing ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. Ours, then, is to see how the Church has moved from within herself (*Ecclesia ad intra*) and has gone to meet the world outside herself (*Ecclesia ad extra*). We shall go further to posit the dogmatic theological discourse of Karl Rahner on the issue at stake, his moves from the church's claim to absolute religion and means of man's salvation to the church's open arms to the world through the principles of "Open Catholicism" and "Anonymous Christians".

Finally, we shall explore the possibility of the practical application of the principles, dialogue and ecumenical tolerance, mapped out by the Council Fathers for a better unification. We hope also to see the achievements and the inherent problems militating against the proposal as well as the paradigm for possible execution of such an endeavour.

## **BASIC CONCEPTS IN THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS**

The issue of the attitude or disposition of the Church towards Non-Christian religions is specifically the issue of religious pluralism. There is then a clarion call for explication of two fundamental terms, religion and pluralism, in order to understand and cherish the relationship that had existed, what exists and how it ought to exist between Christian religion (pre-supposedly the Catholic Church) and other world religions.

The term religion comes from the Latin word "*Religio*" meaning that which is sacred. Religion is a system of belief in the existence of a supernatural being over and above man to which man owes worship.

And among the diverse attempts to bring to light the meaning of the word religion, Hall says "religion is the varied symbolic expression of an appropriate response to that which people deliberately affirm as being unrestricted value to them".<sup>1</sup>

Fundamentally, man is a religious being (*ens religiosus*). There is intrinsically in man that natural instinct which impels him towards a being higher than himself. This phenomenon exists in every man irrespective of status, colour, geographical or political origin. Every aspect of human life is in one way or another influenced by the religion of the man in question.

From the subjective point of view, religion is a virtue that leads man to render to God the homage that is due to Him. As an objective manner of behaviour and concrete manifestation of virtues, it comprises belief in one God, personal and infinite in his attributes, an attitude of absolute respect and submission.<sup>2</sup>

Here we witness a two-fold innate power in man, namely, the power that is within himself impelling him to recognize a being higher than himself and the power outside of himself which invites him to the ideal living and salvation. In other words the relationship that exists between God and man comprises a two-fold upward and downward movement of call-response. It is God who calls and invites man to respond. But unfortunately for man, it has not been easy for him to respond adequately to this action of call-response. He has been debarred by the existential phenomenon of pluralism.

The term pluralism means difference or variant modes or opinions. We find in our age multiplicity or divergence in so many aspects of human activity. We have pluralism in politics, economics, language and society. Hence, "pluralism is today a human existential problem which raises acute question about how we are going to live our lives in the midst of so many options".<sup>3</sup>

Pluralism emerges because of the ever-growing ideological forces in the universe. The development in science and technology in today's world has also given rise to the diversity of belief systems in our age.

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1. T. W. Hall, et. al., *Religion-An Introduction* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), p.11.
  2. J. Geetz, "Religion in the New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 12, eds. J. M. William et al., (Washington: John Heraxty and Associates, 1981), p. 240.
  3. R. Panikka, "The Myth of Pluralism: The Tower of Babel-Meditation on Non-Violence" in *Cross Current*, No. 29 (New York: 1979): 201.

The term also refers to the diversity in man's response to the call and his awareness of the higher being. Thus, we also speak of religious pluralism. And in this perspective pluralism means, "the theory that the great world religions constitute variant conceptions and perceptions of, and responses to one ultimate, mysterious divine reality."<sup>4</sup>

In the history of religion one finds plurality of traditions among various world religions and even plurality of sects within each of the religious groups. In the past, the various religious groups exhibited uncompromising and inexorable attitudes towards each other. Each claimed superiority over the others and isolated them as **damned ones**. But in the modern era there have been changes, which enhance a better understanding among divergent world religions. With regard to this Cardinal Arinze remarks;

There is a growing desire in the world for communication with others. Isolationism is being frowned upon more and more. What people and religions have in common is being recognised increasingly as more important than what divides them.<sup>5</sup>

People have become aware of their need of each other and the need to build up a more united community worldwide. How possible this can be and the steps taken already will be dealt with in the course of this paper. But let us first and foremost see the various world religions: What they are and their basic beliefs.

So many religions have emerged in the history of religion. Among the existing religions are the following, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and African Traditional religion. They are living expressions or ways of life of vast group of humanity and claim allegiance of great populace of the world.

Among the principal religions there are many differences but at the same time there are certain ideas they all share. Each religion seems like a piece of giant puzzle in which the whole is greater than the parts.<sup>6</sup>

4. M. Eliade, "Religious Pluralism" in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12 (New York: Macmillan, 1987).

5. Francis Arinze, *Church in Dialogue: Walking with Other Believers* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1970), p. 166.

6. L. Kettlekamp, *Investigating God* (London: Target, 1974), p.9.

These various religions have certain things in common especially with regard to their beliefs, doctrines, and liturgies. Each of them approaches the same objective point of focus, which is God, from different angles. Still each varies enormously when compared with one another in degrees of feelings and purity of the individual groups. Thus, we cannot take each of them to be equal in degrees of origin, purpose and truth.

Hence we make distinctions between natural and revealed religions, national and missionary religions. Of these religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity are regarded as revealed religions on the basis of their claim to the proclaimed mysterious encounter of their founders, Abraham and Moses, Mohammed and Jesus Christ respectively. They claim to be divinely instituted from the onset. The others are natural religions since they originated from human beings in their instinctive quest for better life for man and his happiness in the world. And apart from Christianity, only Islam and Buddhism are traditionally missionary religions whereas Judaism, Hinduism and African traditional Religion are considered as national religions.

## **ATTITUDE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TOWARDS NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS**

In the course of centuries of existence of the Church, there have been divergent reactions or attitudes towards those who do not belong to the same fold or who do not share the same faith with the Catholic Church. This period extends from the adoptionism of the Apostolic Age through the exclusivist attitude of the Dark and Middle Ages to the present day open door policy and its concurrent ecumenical tolerance concretised in the dialogue with non-believers.

We hereby proceed to giving a schematic history of the Church within the 2000 years history of the Church in order to appreciate the Church's attitude toward non-Christian religions (specifically non-Catholic religions).

In her earliest centuries the Catholic Church found herself in the midst of Graeco-Roman World. She carried on the task of spreading the Good News as instructed by Jesus Christ. And in order to perform such task the early Church rejoiced to build into herself whatever in Paganism she found compatible with and adaptable to the salvation of which she deemed herself to be depository; without in any way

watering down the message she had received from her divine founder, she gathered into herself all the riches and all wisdom that lay scattered throughout the Graeco-Roman World.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the early Church followed the footstep of Jesus Christ who came to the world in human form and became like us in all things but sin. The Christian message got fitted into the frame of life of the then Graeco-Roman World and therein inserted herself into Judaism, which was the basic religion of the time. The age, however, had not been an easy one for the early Christians. There were persecutions. But the pioneers of the Church triumphed over the situation because of their burning zeal and fearless faith. The Apostles preached in various parts of Jerusalem and even among the Gentiles, taking cognizance of the already existing religious beliefs of the Jews and other nations. Thus, we have the outcome of the First Council of Jerusalem (Act. 15) and the preaching of Paul at Iconium (Acts. 17).

Another remarkable period in the history of the Church is the "Dark Ages". During this period there was mass ignorance of scientific knowledge. People became more interested in magic and superstitions. Galileo came up at this period affirming that the earth was round and was condemned by the Church. Within this period also, the Roman Church prevented the people from reading books that spoke against doctrines of the Church. Those who found fault with the Church were punished, much as the early Romans had persecuted the first Christians ... People who refused to accept Christianity were tortured and put to death.<sup>8</sup>

The situation this time was an unhappy one for those who did not share the same faith with the Church. The period was marked with exclusive and restrictive attitudes, which held on to the doctrine of "extra Ecclesiam nulla Salus" (Outside the Church there is no salvation).

This position was tenaciously upheld by some Fathers of the Church as the Shepherd of Hermas, St. Iraneus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and St. Cyprian. Also several Magisteria and Councils of the Church maintained this view. For instance, Pope Innocent III in 1208 A. D. declared, "We believe in our heart and confess in our mouth that there is one Church, not of heretics, but the holy Roman Catholic

7. R. C. Zachner, *Twentieth Century Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1964), p.8.

8. Kettlekamp, p.82.

Church, outside of which we believe no one is saved."<sup>9</sup> Anyone who doubted or refused to accept, in the mind of the Church, the teaching of the Church was then anathemised. This was also extended to the Lutheran era during the period of Reformation.

Then comes the era of the Second Vatican Council convoked by the inspired Pope John XXIII. Time was now ripe for unification. In this dispensation of the Second Vatican Council, the reigning word is "Dialogue", fostered by the grand principle of ecumenism. Dialogue with non-believers has been the motto with which the Church for the past forty years has been trying to establish a mutual relationship with those who do not belong to the same fold with her. Accordingly, "true inter-religious dialogue is concerned to promote for both parties progress in movement towards God, more sincere search for the truth, greater obedience to God, and therefore greater openness to divine action and so to salvation."<sup>10</sup> Thus, the Catholic Church by virtue of her mission to carry the Gospel message to all parts of the earth cannot bypass and exclude outright the greater number of the world populace who do not share the same faith with her. In the Declaration of the Church on Dialogue with Unbelievers, the Council Fathers state,

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her teaching... often reflect a ray of which enlightens all men.<sup>11</sup>

Also the Council Fathers see this venture as a rightful venture in today's world. For "it is demanded by the dynamic course of action which is changing in the face of modern society. It is demanded by pluralism of society, and by the maturity man has reached this day and age".<sup>12</sup>

Besides, there is much to learn from and give to the non-Christian religions. In inter-religious dialogue many differences are being resolved and what the religions have as a common heritage is being recognized, cherished and respected. And such truth is always realized when the church meets with others with different views. Giving credence to this Inter-Religious Dialogue, Pope John Paul II says,

9. Quoted by G. M. William, *Our Father's Plan* (Manassas: Trinity Publications, 1988), p.247.

10. Arinze, p.10.

11. Vatican Council II, ed. A. Flannery, "Nostra Aetate", (Dublin: Dominican Publication, 1990), No.2.

12. Vatican Council II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, No. 1.



The Catholic is endeavouring to engage in friendly dialogue with all the great religions that have guided mankind throughout history. Thus we shall continue to offer wisdom and inner strength to men and women of our time...<sup>13</sup>

But the programme has not always been a smooth moving one because of inherent problems and hindrances. Firstly, there is suspicion by non-Christian religions concerning the motives of the dialogue. They fear that the dialogue has behind it a motive of conversion. As Cardinal Arinze would say,

They are afraid that dialogue is a Trojan horse, which Christians want to bring into the fortified cities of the Non-Christians. They need assurance that the dialogue, although not opposed to conversion, does not aim at conversion but at mutual exchange and enrichment, deepening one's faith and greater fidelity to God and openness to his action.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, there is a doctrinal problem whereby words that seem very similar have different conceptions in the various great religions. Such words as Perfection, Salvation and Charity have different interpretations in the respective religions.

Besides, many Christians put up non-chalant attitude towards the programme. For them, dialogue is a task that belongs to University lecturers and Major Seminaries where the issue is merely for classroom discussion. Also religious Fundamentalists who insist on the purity of their religious doctrines prove intolerant and uncompromising to the call to dialogue. There is also the problem of sectionalism within the various individual principal religions. Above all some people fear that dialogue would amount to syncretism. They also fear that it may amount to religious relativism. In spite of all the problems, there has been progress in the programme. Today, there has begun some understanding among members of great religions and each is beginning to take interest in the others. And with this the Church becomes more aware of her mission to favour unity and communion among mankind. By a new and special title they are dedicated to seek the perfection of charity in the service of god's kingdom for the honour of God, the building up of the church and the salvation of the world. They are a splendid sign in the church, as they foretell the heavenly glory.

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13. John Paul II, Address to Leaders of Principal Religions in Korea, (6 May, 1984.)

14. Arinze, pp. 21-30.

## **THE CHURCH'S DISPOSITION TOWARD NON – CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS IN THE THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE OF KARL RHANER**

The question of the relationship between the Church and Non-Christian religious ought to be the concern of any meaningful individual of today's world. This according to Karl Rhaner is because,

We live in a condition of division everywhere: believers and unbelievers sometimes even within our families. The effect of today's faith will be the healing and salvation that always accompany it. And God will be experienced with this faith, in a person, in a shared event, in the spiritual element in man.<sup>15</sup>

The present world situation poses a serious challenge to the Christian faith and faith must not deny this situation in which it finds itself today.

For Karl Rhaner the plurality of religion today poses both for the Church and the individual Christian a great threat and ground for greater anxiety for all other religions. Indeed, "no other religion, not even Islam proclaims itself so absolutely as the Religion, as the one and only revelation of the one living God."<sup>16</sup> And yet, "After a two thousand year history this very, real, abiding, ever new and virulent pluralism of religions proves the greatest scandal and danger to Christianity."<sup>17</sup> Thus, Karl Rhaner sees in the current problem the need for deeper reflection and record by a broader vision within the Christian understanding of her existence. This he does in order to effect the composition and understanding of religious pluralism in the light of Catholic dogmatic interpretation of Non-Christian religions and her disposition towards them. Rhaner's theological discourse is progressive, moving from the concepts of Absolute Religion, through Open Catholicism to Anonymous Christian.

## **THE CHURCH'S CLAIM TO ABSOLUTE RELIGION**

We have seen from our discourse that Karl Rhaner accepts the existence of religious pluralism and its effect on Christian faith today.

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15. Karl Rhaner, *Do You Believe in God*, Trans. R. Strachan (New York: Newman, 1969), Cover Page.

16. Karl Rhaner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. V. (New York: P. J. Kenedey, 1963), p. 113.

17. Rhaner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. V, p. 113.

What makes the difference is the Church's claim to absolute religion. In this sense, "Christianity conceives itself as the absolute religion determined for all mankind, as a religion which can recognize no other as having equal right alongside itself."<sup>18</sup>

In other words, Christianity acclaims itself as divinely intended and, thus, is the true legitimate religion for all mankind and as such judges all mankind in the light of itself. Such a claim has meaning in the incarnate expression of the relationship established in Christ, the God-man. It can also back the claim from the point of view of history. Christianity has its own pre-historic origin traceable to the history of salvation, that is, extending its back into the genesis of human history. Summarily, the claim to absolute religion according to Karl Rhaner arises,

Wherever Christianity expressly encounters man in the genuine urgency and profundity of his concrete existence. Christianity consequent upon its autoconsciousness, presents itself as the only valid religion for this man as a necessity for his salvation not only by a necessity of precepts but by necessity of means.<sup>19</sup>

### **"OPEN CATHOLICISM"**

In the light of modern theological interpretation of her existence, the Church moves from within her innermost being (*Ecclesia ad intra*) to those who do not belong to her fold by profession of faith (*Ecclesia ad extra*). The Council Fathers of the Second Vatican Council have this to say,

...if the Church is to be in a position to offer all men the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, then it must implant itself among all these groups in the same way that Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of men among whom he lived.<sup>20</sup>

Here the Catholic Church approaches the human person in general with open arms in the spirit of ecumenical tolerance. According to Eliade, "Such inclusivist view presumes the centrality and normativeness of one's own revelation or illumination but is concerned in the spirit of ecumenical spirit, not to condemn those who are religiously not privileged because they have been born into other traditions".<sup>21</sup>

18. Karl Rhaner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. V, p. 114

19. Karl Rhaner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. V, p. 118

20. Vatican Council II, "Ad Gentes", No. 10.

21. Eliade, p. 331.

It would show a lack of love on the part of the Catholic Church to pretend to have no concern for the salvation of those who also experience in their own way God's gracious providence. In the light of "Open Catholicism", therefore, the Church ceases to ignore contemporary ideological forces as purely irreligious and devoid of any significance for her. In this circumstance, "the 'Supernatural Existential', the dynamic impulse present in man by the power of grace and impelling him towards the triune God, is at work in all these religions and plays a decisive part in determining the form in which these religions are objectively expressed."<sup>22</sup> This covers a broader view of the Church as involving not only those who profess the Christian faith but also as including all humanity, which constitute in the general sense 'the People of God'.

### **"ANONYMOUS CHRISTIANS"**

The discussion on "Open Catholicism" as expounded by Karl Rahner has its basis within the context of "Anonymous Christians". Here the pre-Christian religions are viewed as valid and legitimate ways to salvation destined primordially by God. As already noted above, religion is a natural impulse in man calling him to an inconceivable reality called God. Thus, one finds in the nature religions an intrinsic history of God's salvation. For in them the intention is directed to the one and the same Absolute object of religious act under diverse names. We see in these religions the divinely intended means of salvation for the individual within the concrete religion of his actual historical existence. Within this perspective, "Christianity encounters the man of extra-Christian religion not merely as non-Christian pure and simple, but as one who in one respect or another, can and must be considered already as Anonymous Christian."<sup>23</sup> The man of extra-Christian religion has some part in Christianity and is regarded as an anonymous or unacknowledged Christian. Thus, it will be unjust to regard a pagan as one untouched by God's grace and truth. He can be taken as "... a man prior to his conversion searches for his salvation, and in certain cases finds it, and if at the same time it is true that the salvation is the salvation of Christ, because there is no other salvation, then such a one is necessarily not only able to be anonymous atheist

22. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, Vol. X (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973), p. 39.

23. Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, Vol. V. p. 131.

but also anonymous Christian."<sup>24</sup> Additionally, Rhaner says, "The grace of God is at work even in one who has not yet explicitly called upon it but who, at the same time has already hungered after it in the unexpressed, unacknowledged longing of his heir."<sup>25</sup>

## CONCLUSION

We have gone through the processes whereby we have knowledge and the attitude of the Church towards non-Christian religions, in the light of the history of the Church till the Second Vatican Council and the theological approach of Karl Rhaner. One observes that the central focus of all the great religions is theocentric, with the exception of Buddhism, which teaches that man by his own effort would attain absolute freedom.

The attitude of the Church towards these religions in the contemporary era is quite commendable. For in no age than in ours has the Church been able to establish peaceful and mutual relationship with people of different religions. Today there is a broader understanding of the concepts of "People of God" and of "Salvation". The Catholic Church without underrating other religions affirms the centrality of Christ and his Church for the salvation of all men.

Karl Rhaner shows himself a man of his time. His effort was an attempt to safeguard the uniqueness and universality of Christ while at the same time making enough room for all mankind, thus his theory of anonymous Christian. Additionally, it has been to the credit of the Second Vatican Council Fathers and Karl Rhaner to come out with such conclusions without contradicting the Church's dogmatic teaching on the necessity of membership in the Catholic Church for salvation.

Certainly, there are some possible dangers involved in such a programme, and we cannot bypass them or at least fail to suspect such dangers as important. What we think with regard to these is that the Church, while accepting the good values in the non-Christian religions, should endeavour to strike a balance between esoterism and intergralism. In the former, the Church regarded itself as sacred and the world as evil that should not be touched or associated with. The latter regarded the world as mere manifestation of the action of Christ

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24. Rahner, Theological Investigation, Vol. V. p. 132.

25. Rahner, Theological Investigation, Vol. X. p. 20.

and therefore strives to integrate the whole world in the Church, making her a leaven to the world.

It must also be noted that some people who claim to promote this dialogue have some hidden agenda. According to Cardinal Arinze such agenda might include "a desire to have dialogue with the secretariat for Non-Christians because of possible religious diplomatic advantages and winning of international respectability."<sup>26</sup> Others still, "look on their dialogue with Christians as an opportunity to announce their religions to Christians in order to get these to go in them."<sup>27</sup> As such the Church must exercise some discretion as she seeks dialogue with the leaders of other principal religions, to decipher the motives for accepting the dialogue.

The paradigm for authentic dialogue should first and foremost be rooted in Jesus Christ. As the Council Fathers assert,

By His incarnation, the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man ... since he died for all men and since the ultimate vocation of man is in fact one and divine we ought to believe the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to God, offers to every man the possibility of being associated with his paschal mystery.<sup>28</sup>

The various nations in the world have secular organizations, which foster their mutual relationship. We have such organisations as United Nations (UN), World Health Organisation (WHO), Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and a host of others. So also the church should continue to convoke the meeting of the leaders of the various world religions, as she has already started, to foster brotherly faith that makes sincere dialogue possible and strengthens it.

Finally, we affirm with Karl Rhaner that "The Church will approach the Non-Christian of tomorrow with that attitude which Paul expressed when he said, "What therefore, you worship in ignorance, that I proclaim to you" (Acts 17:23-27). It is then that the ecumenical tolerance, forbearance and inexorable brotherly attitude of the Church towards the Non-Christian religions will be fruitful.

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26. Arinze, p. 33

27. Arinze, p. 33

28. Vatican Council II, "Guardian et Spes", No. 22.

## **The second gift : Detachment from all the low condition that passions and sins fully inhabit**

"In so far as a man can detach himself from his home and his relations and former friends, he does well; except in the case of someone who has reasonable causes which require him to stay at home. These may be some constraint on the part of his spiritual fathers, by whom he is given birth so that he may live in our Lord; the care of relations after the flesh, for whom he is responsible by natural and scriptural law, and who are dependent on him; or to be the comfort of parents who are old and sick, and in need of bodily necessities. Or perhaps the bringing up of brothers and sons who are not grown up, and who lack necessities. Or the care of a wife, who would at that very time be a sister if she had without compulsion chosen to live in chastity with him, and is in need of sustenance and instruction of her way of life until she is settled in her hope. Or worldly debt, or human servitude, or bodily misfortunes that may occur unexpectedly, or new affairs that summon. It is right that a man should remain at home for such reasons as these, provided that their fulfillment is urgent. But do not allow him to fall away from his pattern of living and be hindered through them. For the rest, as long as he is detached in the manner of an ascetic, he does well: it is a requirement of the great and wise, in order to strengthen the living, that they should stay at home and be made perfect. This is especially so for someone who is responsible for himself."

*(Quoted from "The Book of Gifts" which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J.Lane).*

David Lane

## Image and Word of God

There are two things that I must do this afternoon. The first is to remind us of what we have heard this afternoon. The second is to add some words from St Ephrem which are a fitting comment on that, and lead us into the world of biblical as well as icon images.

First we heard of how the icon begins with the physical senses, and appeals to beauty. Next it goes beyond the beautiful to the sublime, to the realm of God. This happens because beauty is not only a physical attractiveness, but also a mental or spiritual one. And this leads to the word of God. Or, in the classical Syriac terms, from *pagro* (body) to *naphsho* (soul), and on to *ruho* (spirit). The icon, therefore, must allow the sublime to shine through the physical. This is achieved by the traditional method of painting, and conventions of design, shape and colour. The eternal is glimpsed through the temporal. We were then led on to talk and further pictures of frescos, and illuminated manuscripts so that we could understand how the churches and manuscripts could feed our imagination and draw us to the heavenly; and to the design of churches whose shape and structure expressed a worship into which we could be drawn.

St Ephrem has some passages about scripture which speak in much the same way as icons speak. But when we turn to these passages we can see that we are looking at things upside down. St Ephrem begins with God, and asks how God can be interpreted: that is, be made comprehensible to the human mind or soul. Only God can explain God; and then only to himself. To follow later Syriac thought, man is



*pagro* and *naphsho*. God is *ruho*, a completely different category of being. What God does is to portray himself, paint a picture of himself: He paints the image of himself: *dmuto* (likeness of God. In the case of Adam after the fall and his expulsion from Paradise, he is no longer the divine image, but capable of receiving the image and likeness of God. The image has been spoiled, but can be restored- like the frescoes we were told about. And of course, the Messiah is in the image and likeness of God, and he is the pattern for restoration. God painted the image of himself in the body of the Virgin Mary.

So it is not that scripture or icon are to be explained. It is God who is to be explained or understood, and explained by himself. But to mankind he gives hints (*remze*). We have been given, says St Ephrem, three harps (Virginity 8:23; 21:7): the Old Testament, the New Testament and the natural world. The tunes of each of these point towards God: providing symbols or mysteries (*'roze*). In each of these harps there is a *su'rono*, an observation or incident, from which an element of the divine truth *ruhono* (spiritual) is indicated. Not that this is a simple one-for-one correspondence: 'God has depicted his word with many beauties, so that each one may consider which he likes' (Diatesseron 1:18). Later, in Diatesseron 7:22, he says that the words of our Lord have many possibilities. To take an example, Isaac is a portrayal of our Lord- but there are many points of reference. He is the only son; begotten not by nature. He is received back from the dead; on his way to the place of death he carries the means of his own sacrifice.

Now much of the same happens in the world of Christian art. In the West, the early examples are from the catacombs, the underground burial and meeting places of Christians. Here there was the need for secrecy, and Christian places had to be marked by a sign or picture that meant something to the Christian and did not mean anything particular to the pagan or the persecutor.

This could be something with a double meaning. In the frescoes, the figure of Apollo, though without a beard, could be a pagan deity, or Jesus Christ. An orator could be an orator: or Christ preaching; A shepherd could be Endymion the pagan God, or Christ the Good Shepherd.

Orpheus and his lyre could be just that, or Christ leading the world by his sweetness. All these portrayals are indications, pointers, from the world to the person of Christ who pointed to God. For Christ is the image of God, God's own portrayal of himself.

In the earlier period still, the code could be even simpler, yet in a way more complex. The vine, the lamb are obvious. The fish is a code which works in Greek- *ixtus* has letters each of which points to Jesus: Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour; the fish and bread and wine point to the eucharist and beyond that to the banquet of heaven.

Now all of this brings us to the pointers, the *remze* (hints) or *tupse* (exemplars) of scripture. Each individual, each episode, is a person or episode in its own right. But it indicates an aspect of Jesus and his work of salvation. Noah is an example of righteousness and faith, and he and his ark point to the Church, and the salvation of souls through water. Moses is an examples of humility, pointing to our Lord as the chief example of humility, and in his act of striking the rock from which water came pointing to our Lord who provides true drink and from whose side is the water of baptism and the blood of redemption.

Many more examples could be given. But perhaps these are enough to show that episodes of the Old Testament or instances from the natural or even pagan world are images which suggest to the mind something of God. They are God-given pointers to himself, suited to the capacity of mankind. Whether they are depicted before our physical eyes, or presented to our mind through the written word, they point to God, and themselves suggest other elements which also point to God. For as Ephrem says, if everything had only one significance or interpretation, then no-one other than the first interpreter would have the challenge or the satisfaction of finding others. From the world of the body images are formed in the mind or soul indicators of the world of the Holy Spirit, God himself. For his self portrait is to be found in creation, in Adam, and above all in Jesus the Messiah.

*(From the speech delivered on 19-01-2002 at SEERI Seminar on 'Iconography')*

### **The third beloved gift: The new humility that Our Lord taught his disciples**

“Humility is the first principle of Our Lord’s household. It is a necessity for the righteous who are already virtuous and for sinners who are in the process of repenting. It consists in this: a person must set in his heart that he himself is subordinate to all. Further, that he should be the first in giving a greeting, and be lowly in showing a prudent respect towards everyone both in his manner of life and in his spirit. He should be like someone who is subject to and smaller than anyone, so that with regard to him there is fulfilled the word of Our Lord when he said ‘*Unless you turn and are like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven*’. He did not say that you should be so in height or girth or childishness, but in simplicity and humility. So, he is to reverence and honour and love everyone as the image of God. He is not to treat with contempt or to despise anyone because of stupidity or ignorance or slackness or infirmity, or because of sins and lapses which are born from these things”.

*(Quoted from “The Book of Gifts” which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J.Lane)*

Thomas Koonammakkal

## Divine Love and Revelation in Ephrem

Divine transcendence and human inability to grasp God within the realms of limited, erected categories of intellectual scrutiny is a common and much repeated thought in Ephrem. But divine immanence and revelation is a corollary to this view. A definable God is ruled out; but a loving, merciful descending and revealing God is a reality within the human categories of theological speculation. The chasm between Creator and creatures is explained by Ephrem.<sup>1</sup> Divine descent into human language is the reason for our God- talk. It is a double incarnation: an incarnation into our languages through types, symbols and names, as well as an incarnation in Jesus.<sup>2</sup> Revelation and divine condescension is culminating in the person of Jesus. Incarnation becomes the climax of revelation of divine love and mercy. Symbols and types are rivers flowing into ocean of Jesus. Divine-human exchange of names is the result of this revelation of God.

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1 See my "Ephrem's Imagery of Chasm", Symposium Syriacum VII ed. R. Lavenant (OCA 256 Roma 1998), pp. 175-183.

2 See My "Divine Names and Theological Language in Ephrem", Studia Patristica XXV, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Leuven 1993), pp. 318-323.

It is a merciful Lord  
 Who Himself put on our names,  
 Even to a mustard seed,<sup>3</sup>  
 Humbling Himself, was He compared.  
 HE gave us His names:  
 He accepted from us our names  
 His names made us great;  
 But our names made Him small.  
 Blessed is he who has spread out  
 Your good name over his own name  
 And adorned his names with Your name.<sup>4</sup>

Divine descent and human ascent go hand in hand because God is revealing His goodness and grace with this purpose. Divinization or theosis is the goal envisaged in the process of divine revelation and incarnation.<sup>5</sup> The glorious name of Jesus is the hidden bridge leading humanity from death to life.<sup>6</sup> Faith, love and prayer are the means to reach and know God.<sup>7</sup>

Divine distance is in fact divine nearness according to Ephremic categories.

Though far away  
 He is near to us  
 In His union of love<sup>8</sup>  
 Ephrem writes again:  
 His form cannot be searched out,  
 Nor can it be depicted in our mind,

3 Mt 13:31-32; Jn 12:24

4 HdF 5:7.

5 S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem* (Kalamazoo 1992), pp. 148-154.

6 Cf HdF 6: 17; see my "Ephrem on the Names of Jesus," *Studia Patristica XXXIII*, ed E.A. Livingstone (Leuven 1997), pp. 548-552.

7 Cf HdF 4: 11

8 CNis 50:6.2: cf. my, "The self-Revealing God and Main in Ephrem," *The Harp VI*:3 (1993), pp 233-248.

He hears without ears;  
He speaks without mouth;  
He works without hands,  
And He sees without eyes.<sup>9</sup>

Ephrem uses the imagery of light in order to explain the divine love which makes the human souls luminous and holy. Divine treasury is the source out of which this light of love begin to flow. It is a free, generous and inexhaustible gift that is open to all.

In a symbol our Lord distributes light without a fee.  
He opened His treasury as grace and He scatters it.  
To each who meets Him He gives and He makes him rich.  
For to all eyes  
His gift is equal without jealousy  
Even to the weak eye in His wisdom  
He gives from His blessings; He reaches out to it with His beams.  
Since (the weak eye) is not sufficient for His radiance,  
His energy moderated by His Love He manifested to it.<sup>10</sup>

Ephrem goes on to explain that light makes the eyes bright, beautiful and luminous. Light becomes the garment of the eye. This light is the symbol of our Saviour. The eye stands for the human soul which is filled with the divine light of revelation, salvation and love manifested through incarnation.<sup>11</sup>

Behold a wonder, my beloved ones, a light sufficient for all they wish:

Who opened even stopped up ears and mouths,  
Who made straight withered hands, Who in His love fed the hungry.  
Hands He made straight give glory,  
and mouths He opened chant praises,

9 CNis 3:2.

10 HdV 51:3=K.E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns* (New York 1989), p. 462.

11 Cf. HdV 51:4.

and feet He made straight dance for joy,  
 and the couches whose dead He revived come to meet Him  
 and the hungry with their food and the debtors with their release.  
 'Blessed is Your coming!; they cried out.<sup>12</sup>

The divine light of love is dynamic and salvific at the same time. It is redeeming and revelatory. It revives humanity and recreates humanity from within. The healing touch of this divine love incarnate evokes praise and glory for God. The whole creation is refreshed at His coming down in love and as love. All the same human thoughts cannot touch Him.<sup>13</sup> But He came down to us in His Love and compassion.

The Power that governs all dwelt in a small womb.  
 While dwelling there, He was holding the reins of the universe.  
 His Parent was ready for His will to be fulfilled.  
 The heavens and all the creation were filled by Him.

The Sun entered the womb and in the height and depth His rays were dwelling.<sup>14</sup> Divine incarnation is divine condescension in love towards all creatures. So God dwelt in all the wombs of created world when the First born dwelt in Mary's womb. Divine compassion is the reason for this dwelling within the wombs of all creation.<sup>15</sup>

Revelatory nature of divine love incarnate is clear to Ephrem. So we read:

Who will not give thanks to the Hidden one, Most hidden of all,  
 for he put on a body, and other bodies felt Him  
 though minds never grasped Him.<sup>16</sup>

The revelatory love of God is purificatory like fire. Ephrem has often explained it with the imagery of fire.<sup>17</sup>

12 HdV 51: 10= K.E. McVey,, *op. cit.* ,p.464.

13 Cf. HdV 51: 12.

14 HdV 21:6= K.E McVey, *op. cit.* , pp. 174-175.

15 Cf HdV 21:7-8

16 Hdf 19:7=S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Ephrem* (Rome 1985), p. 14

17 HdF 10:8-13; 4:2;

Blessed are you, my brethren,  
For the Fire of Mercy has come down  
Utterly devouring your sins  
And purifying and sanctifying your bodies.<sup>18</sup>

The condescending character of incarnational love is described by Ephrem: 'It is a matter of wonder that God has bent down to dust.'<sup>19</sup> Divine descent in love is in view of human ascent in glory. He wanted to clothe us with His glorious names.

He clothed Himself in the likeness of man  
in order to bring man to the likeness of Himself<sup>20</sup>  
Lord, You bent and put on humanity's types  
so that humanity might grow through Your self-abasement.<sup>21</sup>  
How wonderful is this abundance  
that the Lord should be poured out in us continually,  
for He has left the heavens and descended:  
let us make holy for Him the bridal chamber of our hearts.<sup>22</sup>  
Commenting on Gen 6:7 Ephrem writes:

"This remorse which, on account of the offenders, was extended to those who committed no evil vindicates God who said, 'I am sorry', for it was out of love for those sinners who were to perish that He said it and not because He was announcing His ignorance. That they should perish in their deeds was a great sorrow to that Grace that had made them, but if they did not perish, future generations would have been corrupted because of them."<sup>23</sup>

This same merciful love of God is operative throughout salvation history. But the climax of this divine love we find at Jesus' death on the cross. Explaining this mystery of divine love Ephrem comments:

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18 Epiph 3:10 = S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, p. 24.

19 HdF 46:11 = S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, p. 30.

20 HdP 11:6 = S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, p. 33.

21 HdF 32:9 = S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, p. 38.

22 HiA 47 lines 46-47 = S. Brock, *The Luminous eye*, p. 104.

23 K. McVey, ed, *St Ephrem the Syrian: selected Prose Works* (FC 91, Washington 1994), p. 138.



"Abraham had many servants, Why did (God) not command him to offer up one of these? It was because (Abraham's) love would not have been revealed by a servant. His son, therefore, was necessary so that Abraham's love might be revealed (Gen 22: 1-8). There was likewise (other) servants of God, but he did not show his love towards his creatures through any of these, but rather through his Son, through whom his love for us might be proclaimed. 'For God so loved the world that (he gave) his only Son (Jn 3:16).'"<sup>24</sup>

Revelation of divine love is redemptive as far as the humanity is concerned. This salvific dimension of divine love revealed and expressed is a constantly repeated theme in Ephrem. God becomes God for us here and now through this revelation of His love towards humanity.

Blessed is the Shepherd Who became the sheep for our absolution.

Blessed is the Vineshoot that became the cup of our salvation.

Blessed also is the Cluster, the source of the medicine of life.

Blessed also is the Ploughman Who Himself became.

the grain of wheat that was sown<sup>25</sup> and the sheaf that was reaped.

He is the Master Builder who became the tower of our refuge.

Glory to Him who never needs us to thank Him.

Yet He (became) needy for He loves us, and He thirsted for He cherishes us.

And He asks us to give to Him so that He may give us even more.

His fruit was mingled with our human nature

to draw us out toward Him Who bent down to us.

By the Fruit of the Root He will graft us onto His Tree

Let us thank Him Who was Beaten and Who saved us by His wound.

Let us thank Him Who killed death by His dying.

Let us thank Him Who was silent and vindicated us<sup>26</sup>

24 C. Mc Carthy, Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron (Oxford 1993), pp. 320 f.

25 Cf Jn 12: 24.

26 Cf Mt 27: 14.

Let us thank Him Who cried out in death that had devoured us<sup>27</sup>

Blessed is He Whose benefits have laid waste the enemies of God.<sup>28</sup>

Divine love is manifested through incarnation and all what follows from it. It is a transforming and dynamic love of God that we experience in the salvation history. That is why Ephrem states about the imprint of God upon humanity effected through nativity.

Today the Diety imprinted itself on humanity,  
so that humanity might also be cut into seal of Diety.<sup>29</sup>

The descending divine love is reciprocated by the ascending love from the part of humanity.

The Lamb has come for us from the House of David,  
The Priest and Pontiff from Abraham;  
He became for us both Lamb and Pontiff,  
giving His Body for sacrifice, His blood for sprinkling<sup>30</sup>  
Blessed is His accomplishment!

The Shepherd of all flew down  
in search of Adam, the sheep that had strayed:  
on His shoulders He carried him,<sup>31</sup> taking him up:  
he was an offering for the Lord of the flock.  
Blessed is His descent!

He sprinkled dew and life-giving rain  
on Mary, the thirsty earth<sup>32</sup>  
Like a seed of wheat He fell again to Sheol,  
to spring up as a whole sheaf,<sup>33</sup> as the new Bread.<sup>34</sup>  
Blessed is His offering.

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27 Cf Mt 27: 50.

28 HdN 3: 15; 17–18 = K.E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, pp. 86-87.

29 HdN 1:99 = K.E. McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, p. 74.

30 Ex 12:6-7.

31 Lk 15:5.

32 Is 53:2.

33 Lev 23: 11

34 Jn 6:36.

From on High He flowed like a river,  
 from Mary He stemmed as from a root,<sup>35</sup>  
 from the cross He descended as fruit,  
 as the first-fruit He ascended to heaven,<sup>36</sup>  
 Blessed is His will!

The Word came forth from the Father's bosom,  
 He put on the body in another bosom;  
 from one bosom to another did He proceed,  
 and chaste bosoms are filled with Him.  
 Blessed is He who dwells within us!

His Birth gives us purification,  
 His baptism gives us forgiveness,  
 His death is life to us,  
 His ascension is our exaltation.  
 How we should thank Him!<sup>37</sup>

It is because of divine love Divinity decided to descend to Adam. The image of Adam had grown old and hence He came down in love to renew it.<sup>38</sup> The descent of divine love is in view of a new creation and renewal of the earth. Hence nativity resembles the first day of creation.<sup>39</sup>

It is You who fashioned the dust at the beginning in Your mercy,  
 and it is You who have conferred upon it Your gift in love.  
 It is Yours, O Blessed One, to repeat Your mercy once more:  
 Let Your hand shape Adam anew, let Your fingers refashion him.

35 Is 11:1; Lk 3:32; Rom 15:12.

36 Cf Col 1:18.

37 HdR 1:1-3; 6-7; 16 = S. Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem* (London 1983), pp.27-29.

38 Cf. Homily on Nativity, lines 109-110 = S. Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit*, p.65.

39 *Ibid.*, lines 151-160, p. 66.

For Your compassion, Lord has never failed:

You began with him in love, end up with him in mercy.<sup>40</sup>

Divine love and divine mercy go together and operate as a single salvific power. It is the dynamic manifestation of divine loving kindness that finds expression in salvation history.

The merciful One poured out, saw a soul in the pit, and devised how to draw it up.

Through His mere nod he could have saved that soul,

Yet He girded up His love in readiness for His labour and put on humanity:

He acquired His child like state so as to bring it to true knowledge;

He sang to it with His lyre lowly songs, inviting it to be raised up.

His Cross raised Him up to the heights

so that Eve's children might likewise be raised up on high.<sup>41</sup>

As we have already mentioned divine transcendence and divine immanence exist together. His presence is His absence and His absence is His presence as we look from our intellectual angle. The essential mysteriousness is never explained away in revelation. This is really the paradox of revelation as Ephrem explains:

However much, Lord I would feel you,

it is still not You Yourself I touch,

for my mind can touch nothing of Your hiddenness:

it is just a visible, illumined image

that I see in the symbol of You;

for all investigation into Your being is hidden.<sup>42</sup>

40 CNis 69:1; 6-7 = S. Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit*, p. 77.

41 HdJ 3:6 = S. Brock, *A Garland of Hymns from the Early Church* (McLean 1989), p. 34

42 CNis 50:13 = S. Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit*, p. 58.

This paradox is a favourite theme in Ephrem as we read:

If the creatures depend on Him  
 How can they be far way from Him?  
 Far away, his nearness!  
 Near, His far-awayness!  
 He is far away, though very near!  
 Who can describe Him?<sup>43</sup>

The paradox of divine manifestation is described further; but God's love bridges this paradox of revelation.<sup>44</sup>

He is far away and near  
 Also, hidden in his revelation.<sup>45</sup>  
 Be far away and near!  
 Blessed is He, who is near  
 While being far away.<sup>46</sup>

In this context it is necessary to turn our attention towards HdF 31 where Ephrem describes the divine descent in a classic manner. God has ears in order to teach us that He listens to us; He has eyes to show that He sees us. He appears to be angry and repentant in order to teach us. We should realize that God is coming down to our level to speak with us.<sup>47</sup>

Through what is ours He came near to us.  
 He put on our names so that He may clothe us  
 With His own manner of life.  
 He asked for our form and put it on,  
 And as a father with his children,  
 He spoke with our childishness.<sup>48</sup>

43 SdF II 709-714.

44 Cf see my, "The self -Revealing God and Man in Ephrem", pp. 240ff.

45 HdV 36: 9.3.

46 CNis 21: 13.5.

47 Cf HdF 31:1.

48 HdF 31:2.

Once He was like an Old Man and Ancient of Days<sup>49</sup>  
All the same He was like a Warrior, Valiant and Warlike;<sup>50</sup>  
For judgment He was an Old Man  
For wresting He was Valiant<sup>51</sup>  
Once as though sluggish He ran,<sup>52</sup>  
Elsewhere He was weary;<sup>53</sup> Once He was sleepy,<sup>54</sup>  
In another case He was needy<sup>55</sup>  
With all means He wearied Himself to gain us.<sup>56</sup>

The Being, exalted above all in everything  
In His love has bent down its height to gain from us our manners;  
He toiled with all to turn all to His side...  
He became small to match us  
He became great to enrich us  
He became small, and great again, to make us great...

He wanted to teach us two things,  
That He became and He did not become.  
In His love, He made for Himself appearances  
Of His servants that they may look at Him.  
But that we should not damage ourselves and think that 'He is thus'.  
He changed from image to image to teach us,  
That He has no image.  
And though He did not depart from human picture  
He left it through His changes.

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49 Dan 7:9.

50 Ex 15:3.

51 Gen 32:24-30.

52 Pss 40:17; 70:1.5

53 Is 1:14; 7:13.

54 Pss 44:23; 78:65; Mt 8:24.

55 Jn 4:6.

56 HdF 31:4ff.

Human language is an insufficient medium for divine revelation. But it is a revelation of divine love, divine mercy for the salvation and divinization of humanity. Divine descent is motivated by divine love. Human ascent is only an after effect of divine descent in love and mercy.

*(From the paper published in Actes du colloque VIII  
Patrimoine Syriaque, Lebanon)*

### **The fourth honoured gift: Distinctive obedience**

"It is fitting for a humble man that he should also be obedient, because humility is given an added splendour by obedience, as a gold coin by its impress, or an image by the honour done to it. She is first recognized when a man utterly abandons his own will, and the whole of him is subordinate to the commandments of Our Lord. Even when fatherly correction no longer examines and judges, he does actively and carefully everything that was commanded by the fathers at the time of his submission. It is this which he once sought out and put to the test, giving himself to it in Our Lord, so that by means of it he might be born to an incorruptible life, through the birth-pangs of correction, once his heart was settled without doubts or disturbed thought. Let him be both glad and fearful in the task of acquiring this obedience, putting his submission into effect in every word and deed in the dwelling or cell or wherever he is. When once a true disciple has been brought into subordination in this distinctive way, like a child not yet weaned he does not again question either in word or thought the opinions of his fathers and brethren, even if they are found to be at variance with his will or his own opinion. Instead, he blames and reproves himself for his offering. If he is a true brother and a genuine disciple, whatever is held by his companions to be either virtue or vice, he holds as his opinion too".

*(Quoted from "The Book of Gifts" which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmnaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J.Lane)*

A. M. Mathew

## Iconography, Church Architecture, Church Decoration

### Icon:

Both Iconography and Church Architecture had their origin or were inspired by the old Roman Empire and its judicial procedures. In the Roman Empire, every act signed in the presence of the portrait of the Emperor, assumed the same validity as one signed before the Emperor in person. With Christianity accepted by emperor Constantine, Christian art burst forth. Not only pagan symbols were received and transformed, but new ones invented for fostering and sustaining faith. The sacred image was a reality by the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century.

We have heard about the legend of Veronica's veil, into which it is supposed that Jesus imprinted His face. Is the name VERONOCA, a symbol of VERA ICONIA, meaning True Icon?

More than just a work of art, the Icon calls for an art form, permitting the transition from the visible to the invisible. Its interior beauty will elude the esthetic, requiring an interior light, to contemplate on it.

Though it is said that the Icon, reflecting the beauty of God and His saints is at the very heart of Orthodoxy, the icon is not so common in the Orthodox churches of Kerala. The objection to the icon may be that it itself becomes an object of veneration, tending to idol worship.



The Christ Icon is contrary to the Monophysitic view that the humanity of Christ is entirely fused with His divinity, becoming just one nature. This iconoclastic crisis was in its full swing in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century, the most soul-stirring episode within the entire Eastern Church. Though the Council of 745 A. D., held in Hieria near Constantinople agreed to a formal condemnation of the icon, resulting in a massive destruction of icons, the monastic world resisted and the second Council held in Nicea in 787 A.D (7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council) restored the cult of the icons.

I am sure that the expositions of Rev. Dr, Abdo Badwi will enlighten all of us regarding the essence of Icons.

### **Church Architecture:**

The Christian Church or liturgical space is where God and His people meet and find each other. It is a place of communion and place of promise and has its foundation in the proclamation of the Gospel message and celebration of the sacraments of the new covenant.

During the early centuries of Christian era, Christians worshipped in catacombs and private houses. Later on some modifications were made for particular houses and set apart for assembling and breaking bread. They were known as house churches. The details of such a house Church, at Dara Europes, on the banks of the Eupretese, which was built in 232 A.D, is now available to us, as a result of excavations done by archeologists in 1930 - 1934 .

When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in 313 A.D, allowing Christians to worship freely, they adopted the Roman Baslica – the court for disposing justice – as a model for their Church construction. Basilican churches were long rectangular structures with timber roofs, supported by long rows and columns. The columns divided the long building into a central aisle (later known as the nave) and two main side aisles. This is the basic form of western Church, cruciform plan being adopted in certain cases. The roof and decorations evolved according to the developments in engineering as well as the different periods of architectural styles such as Roman, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance etc.

In the east, Byzantine architecture developed, oriental precedents becoming popular. The style was characterized by square floor plan, domes and rich decorative mosaics. The dome or vault of the building was considered as the image of the glory of heaven.

The symbols regarding liturgical space are quite different in the Western and Eastern churches. For the Western Church, the nave, from the Latin word *navis*, meaning ship, represents in a symbolic way, the ship of the faithful, being safely led through the stormy world by Jesus. According to Apostolic Constitution compiled in fourth century, the Church building is to be lengthy, in an eastward direction and is to resemble a ship. But in the Eastern churches, the two important symbols are Jacob's ladder from the Old Testament (Gen: 28-10 to 22) and the body of the Christ from the New Testament (John: 2-19).

### **Kerala Churches:**

The earlier Kerala Churches might have been in the model of Hindu Temples and built with laterite and timber. These materials being not much durable, frequent renovations were necessary. With each renovation, current techniques, materials and style were adopted. With advent of the Portuguese and English their forms were adopted, with the result, at present no Church depicting pre-Portuguese period exist. The only exception is perhaps the Church at Thiruvancode in South, which also I think was recently renovated. Ostentatious facades and Gothic openings had become the order of the day and without these the common people could not accept them as Christian churches.

### **Church Decorations:**

Icons and symbolic representation in the Church can engender spiritual insight and joy in the mind of the worshipper. Byzantine and Baroque churches had much ornamentation and decorations. Modern architecture gives more stress on utility, form, mass, proportion, unity, environment etc. The recently built Paumala Church has no significant façade and is devoid of all decorations except for the large stained glass panels, depicting Christian symbols.

*(From the speech delivered on 19-01-2002 SEERI Seminar on 'Iconography')*

### **The fifth attractive gift: Steadfast endurance.**

"It is proper for someone who is obedient and who turns to life and wishes to live and to be made righteous by his promise that he will be steadfast in all his labours. Now the foundation of endurance is this: that everyone bears his pains together with his trials with steadfastness of heart and thanksgiving in the mouth. Like Job, who said *'The Lord gave, and the Lord took away: may the name of the Lord be blessed'*. And again, to his wife he said *'You speak as one of the mad women speak, that I should abandon my steadfastness and utter a curse and die. We have welcomed the goodness of God, is it not right that we should also welcome his chastisement, which gives us the victory? In the same way let him say 'I trust him,' when his thinking troubles his opinions, in depression or the tempest of his calamities. But let him take on the shoulder of his freedom the easy yoke of labours without a carelessness of will. Let him also persevere and complete his struggle for life in the place he chose and where he promised to live, whether it be a monastery, a cell, or somewhere he desires and loves, so that with prudence and the advice of a wise man he may gain his crown. Let him not be slack in his struggle and be a fugitive whenever afflictions of demons seize him, or offences and reproaches from anyone – especially those from his spiritual neighbours. Let him not leap from his place, and turn his back on his obligation, lest hidden bands of our race overpower him and bring him into bondage, and put out the eyes of his soul, as the Babylonian blinded Zedekiah after he had driven him from his city into exile"*.

*(Quoted from "The Book of Gifts" which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J. Lane)*

Emmanuel Thelliyil

## **Translation of the Syriac Prayers (from Bedjan) of the Feast of St. Simon BarSamba'e**

The Sixth Friday of Qaitha. (Commemoration of Simon Barsamba'e, Casoliqa patriarch, the disciple of Pope and of Fathers who were martyred (crowned) with him. These were martyred on the Friday of the Passion in the year 655 of the Greeks, in Karka of Ledan in the land of Husaye, during the days of Shabor. Their memory was left out until the Friday of mavd'yane (confessors), which is common to all martyrs. But this Friday it is celebrated because on this day was dedicated the sanctuary of Mar Simon BarSambae in Karka (Kirkuk?) of Ledan. Mar Simon BarSambae buried in Sosan of Eelam which is called in Arabic, Sus.

Marmisa d'ramsa: Svaith Marya ..;

Suraya daqdam: Eramermak ..

Onisa daqdam: (tune: Sleehe g'vayya..) "Know that the Lord has wonderfully set apart his elect: His tongue speaks judgment." O, our faithful and wise father, whom his master set apart to preach his power among the gentiles, who is able to narrate about the hard work of your life? For, in chain and in sufferings you were preaching his gospel. For him, you were daily suffering among the jews and gentiles. And you

shed the blood of your neck as libation. And you became the apostle of the High-priest. Blessed is your lord who filled you with his spirit (ruha) and made you a preacher of his gospel in the four quarters (of the world). (Repeat)

Sambah: O, martyrs, you were called famous valiant men in the holy Church and fortresses and strong walls; she takes shelter in you, for, she saw the power hidden in you, by whose help you took up sufferings and diverse deaths. The Church as well, gathered up and placed your bones and built glorious churches in your honour. Behold, they let flow all helps, to your honour and to the glory of Jesus who crowned you.

D'marya qresak: I have fought a nice battle (contest). \* I have completed my race.\* I kept my faith.\* henceforth, the crown of justice (justification) is kept for me.\* Which my master who is a just judge, shall give me as a reward, on that day.\*

Suraya d'vasar: Qareevu marya..= The Lord is near..

Onisa d'vasar: (tune: Urha d'rome..) "And he answered him from his holy heaven:

Whose are spotless. "O, our holy father, whom his lord chose for the apostleship of his preaching and called him a chosen vessel and tested according to the pleasure of his love and equipped him with the spirit and wrought by his hand all miracles (signs).\* And converted all gentiles by his hand to adore Him. He gathered them from the error of idolatry. O, spiritual harp and trumpet of benevolence, pray for us so that we may be saved from punishment. (Repeat)

Sambah: Holy martyrs, who suffered on the cross for the love of Christ the king and crucified the word and its lust, in their limbs, suffered the weight of the day and its heat, like diligent labourers. They delivered themselves for their master, with love, so that he might fulfill his given promises.\* O, heirs of the good things and stewards of the kingdom, pray and beseech Christ for peace (tranquility).

D'vasalige: (tune: Res qala..) "O, Lord, you have examined me and known me: He examines the heart and reins." O, you who know the thoughts of all men and examine the secrets of the hearts, you know our weakness; have mercy on us (Repeat).

Add: (tune: Lvbes la meshablanusa..) "Choicest silver tested on the earth: The precious treasure of heavenly riches, desirable above (to) angels, prophets, apostles and martyrs, Christ gave to his faithful

church, by his benevolence. Pious Mar Simon, whose neck was cut off for the law of love of God. Come all gentiles with fear and love and psalms of the Holy Spirit, let us honour the day of his commemoration. For, he is an invincible fortress for our people.

(Its companion): (tune: L'hayye u'thuve..) "The friends of the Lord hate evil." Martyrs, friends of Christ, preachers of Jesus our saviour, were holding the cross in their hands like a plough-share, and the land which was lost in idolatry (error of idols) they thoroughly ploughed and cultivated and sowed in it the word of life. Let us all honour them.

Sambah: Yada husabe.. See above.

Suraya: Help us O, God, our saviour.\* For the honour of your name.\* Purify us and save us from our sins, for your (name) name's sake.

For Lelya they recite from: Alaha qam.. three hulale with geeyore;

Maythwa: (tune: man meskah..) "O, Lord, show me your ways: and make known to me your paths." Holy mar simon walked in the way of early martyrs who became famous. For, he was burning for the sake of (justice) truth, against the pagan magicians who abandoned the adoration of (adoring) their creator and adored fire and sun. The bishop of the disciples who was believed by his master and the head of the company of hundred and three who were with him, were (crowned with the sword) martyred by Sabor the pagan king (of the pagans). \* Torturing (with iron comb), scourging and afflictions the just man suffered for his diocese (flock). And like Moses, nourished (fattened) his sheep with gentleness and humility, in the good pasture of his doctoring (learning) and the sweet drink of the spirit of his words, tended his sheep and ewes according to the word to Peter. He visited the sick, (anyone who was sick), bandaged the broken, sought the lost, like a diligent labourer. He heard his master saying in his gospel to his disciples, that a vigilant and careful shepherd submits his life (himself) for his flock, delivered himself (soul) with his body to horrible and bitter punishments. He dipped the tunic of his body, in his blood like his master on Gagultha (Golgotha). And behold, today, his body is made a fountain shedding all (kinds of) helps. And the angels in their companies, celebrate together the day of his commemoration. Which torments has he not suffered for his sheep, rejoicing? He was imitating his master who chose him, for, he suffered death for us all. \* O, Christ, who made his friend famous, protect your Church from harm (deceits), by his prayers and have mercy on it. (Repeat).

"Come let us kneeling adore him." Adorable is the power which makes his warrior (athlete) famous; for, the brilliant holy martyr mar Simon, by divine zeal, fought against the devil and overcame all his tactics by the power of the cross. The Lord who chose him to be the (chief) head of his flock (diocese), adorned him with the beauty of soul and body, during the days of king Sabor. \* The just man by his endurance (perseverance) put to shame this wicked king. He put away paganism completely, by his humble behaviour (humility). The hundred and three of fame, converted the deviated sheep Gustazar and made him enter the fold of life. By his exhortation, they earned perseverance. By the sharp edge of the sword, they were crowned. Then he also gained victory by pouring out his holy blood in libation. On the very Friday of his crucifixion, the blessed faithful took his body and encircling the gate of the king, they carried it and placed it in the Church which they built with love, for the honour of his lord (master). His bones shed helps for those who came and take shelter in him. \* O, lover of mankind, by his prayer, protect your Church from the impiety (wickedness) of all heresies and have mercy on her. (it).

"Who will narrate the wonders of the Lord." Who is able to narrate the heroic deeds of the brilliant martyr Simon Barsambaye, renowned and chosen among the holy? He overcame that pagan king and put to shame all his chieftains, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Heaven and earth and everything in them were astonished at the endurance of the brave warrior. The angels were plaiting a crown of victory for him by their eulogy (praise). \* Blessed is Christ who by his love, made his servant famous in the laborious struggle. For, head of the disciples. He conquered the heat of magic art like Eliya (Elias) to the priest of Bal. He strengthened and consoled the blessed community on the day of his martyrdom (crowning). He gave blessing to the Church and peace and tranquility to the whole world. He cured the sick by the power of the spirit; he raised the dead by his prayers. And his bones (shed) let helps flow to all who are oppressed and take shelter in him. \* He blessed our entire assembly which celebrated and honored the day of his commemoration by the psalms of the spirit. O, Christ, who made his warrior famous, have mercy on us.

Suhlapa: (tune: N'viye d'qustha..) "Beseech the Lord and pray before him." O, holy father, comely in the spiritual life, whom his master has clothed with the garment (stole) of glory, beseech you lord for the remission of sins, for the world (this dwelling) which the devil has disturbed by the filth of his evil. May the priests and kings be pacified O, my lord, in their territory (districts). \* Let the Church and her children

sing praise to the lord who chose you and made you his shrine and bestowed on you unspeakable strength and promised his spirit and the power of his wisdom and cut off the snares of the devil who tried (desired) to enmesh you by his nets. \* Blessed is your lord, who exalted your memory and made you for him a holy priest and brought to a complete end your struggle. Praise be to him.

"With holy splendour from the womb." O, Levite, who from your (his) boyhood received spiritual talent from the one who chose you, and delivered himself (yourself) with perfect love, to become a priest in the Church of the gentiles from your boyhood, you started with works for justification (of justice) and completed your race with diligence. \* So that when the glorious bridegroom shines again, he might make you stand with him, on his right hand, in the chamber of light. \* Blessed is your lord who set you apart for his service and made you wise by the glorious light of his teaching and made you head in his Church. Praise to him.

"Blessed are you and goodness to your soul (self)." Happy is your spirit O, holy father, servant of the Son, how much severe torments did you suffer from the persecutors? You put up with pain, death, sword and scourges, with joy, for your lord whose love you loved, by the great hope with which you were crowned \. You were rewarded by him twofold of the wage for your labours. \* You heard that voice: "Come, enter, inherit imperishable life which is going to come. Your crown shines in the sanctuary, for, you meditated on the spiritual books of the heavenly groom. \* Praise to the exalter of his warrior who fought in the struggle with the devil and by the confidence in his name became famous in faith.

"The retinue of the angels of the Lord." Holy martyrs went down into the struggle, in multitudes, who were crowned in the land of Persia, whose chief was Simon the second who holds the faith of Simon Peter. He dipped the garment- his body, in his own blood, for the love of the master who chose him as the head of his Church. The king and his army- inhabitants of the palace, were wonderstruck, at his pleasant beauty. At the time of his death, he consoled and strengthened the blessed company of 103 who were killed with him. With his martyrdom, was completed the company of saints, all of them crying aloud, with their voices "praise be to you.

"Blessed is his glorious name for ever." Blessed is Christ who appointed in his Church, shepherds to feed his sheep bought by his blood. By (for) his love, they suffered all torments from the persecutors,



for his flock, among the Persians. During the days of Sabor, he chose Mar Simon Bar Samba'e, shepherd of his Church. He enriched his sheep wisely (with wisdom) in good pasture and sweet drink of the sprit of his words. \* The just man put to shame, by his perseverance, the heathen king and his army who fought with him. He was crowned by a sharp sword, with the company of hundred and three who became famous with him on the day of his crowning. Behold, today, the holy church celebrates the day of their memory, with perfect love. \* May our saviour, give by their prayers to our country, time of rejoicing and may he protect the Church by his compassion. Praise be to him.

"Blesswed are you and goodness to your soul (self)." Happy is your spirit ), holy father, servant of the Son, how much severe torments did you suffer from the persecutor? You put up with pain, death, sword and scourges with joy, for your lord whose love you loved, by the great hope with which you were crowned. You were rewarded by him twofold of the wage (of) for your labours. \* You heard that voice"" Come, enter, inherit imperishable life (which is) going to come. Your crown shines in the sanctuary, for, you meditated on the spiritual books of the heavenly groom. \* Praise to the exalter of his warrior who fought in the struggle with the devil and by the confidence in his name, became famous in faith.

"The retinue of the angels of the Lord." Holy martyrs went down into the struggle in multitudes, (who) and they were crowned in the land of Persia whose chief was Simon the second who holds the truth of Simon Peter. He dipped the garment- his body- in his blood for love of the master who chose him as the head of his Church. The king and his army-inhabitants of the palace-were wonderstruck at his pleasant beauty. At the time of his death (slaughter) he consoled and strengthened the blessed company of hundred and three who were killed with him. With his martyrdom was completed (sealed) the chain (?) of saints, all of them crying aloud with their voices. "Praise to you."

"I will bless the Lord always." O, warrior clothed with victory, blessed is Christ who exalted on the earth the triumph of your labours and wrote (enrolled) your name in the book of life with the number of group of twelve (apostles). The news of the triumph of your labours and your life spread in the four quarters. \* Priest, kings, and leaders gathered together and came to honour the day of your memory. Satan also who saw the banquet which the people made, has left and fled, out of shame. He cried aloud and mourned sighing; Woe to me, for an

earthling son of an earthling, (conquered) subdued me. Multiply all helps to the assembly, which celebrated your memory. \* Glory to the father who strengthened you, and thanks to the Son who crowned you and to the holy Spirit who exalted you. Praise be to him

**Qala:** (tune: Alaha b'rahme..) "Blessed are those who are spotless in the way. " O, our saviour, blessed are the just who loved you and kept your commandments and fulfilled your will: May the power, which is hidden in them, protect the world. Let them be in your church fountains of help. May the sick gain health and be healed, and the lame walk (stretching themselves) straight by the help of your bones. And on the day of yopur coming in the clouds, may they fly to meet you and with their songs sing praise to your name. O, Lord, may their prayers be to us who acknowledged your servants, a fortress. Lord of all, who makes his domestics famous, praise be to you.

"From the mouth of youth and children." Praise to you, Lord of the worlds; for, the saints became perfect by your love. You made them intoxicated with your love. O, Lord, may their prayer be a wall to the world and incense of reconciliation and appeasing victim. May you cast away sickness from your church and let pains be removed from her children by the power hidden in their bones and they will sing praise with the angels on (the day of) your revelation and with their ranks they will take shelter in you in your kingdom. O, Being who exalts the glory of the just, may they be to you intercessors (advocates) for us. O, Lord of all, who enriches his friends of his love, praise to you.

**(Suhlapa:** tune: Ha pasora..) "To those who keep his covenant." Behold, enjoyment is prepared above in heaven to those who have laboured diligently and served justice. They shall receive fine reward for their life, and on the right hand of Christ, they shall be sweetened with glory; and shall rejoice and dance merrily in the heavenly king of kings. They shall cry out to him: Holy, holy, holy judge."

"The little ones with the great." Behold, you are invited to the adorable mystery of the body and blood of Christ whiten your clothes and with lips of praise sing and thank the bread, which descended from heaven to vivify us who were dead. Offer pure victims, (sacrifices) to him- minds carrying thanks for his gift to us. For, it is beyond speech. (above word).

**Daslosa:** David hav bar Isai..= David the son of Isai... two of the first oniyasa and of Mary and of our father and of Annide: suhlapa 2; qala 20; see p. 181\*.

Sambah : (tune: man meskah..) The orders of fire and spirit stood up with great wonder and boundless astonishment, who saw the greatness of the struggle of the warrior taking by himself the marks of the Son of God. Mar Simon Bar Samba'e, instead of the red garment of mortal king, dipped the tunic, his body, in the precious blood of his own person, which he shed for his master. And with fear and trembling, (one division was asking the other division) they were asking each other.: Set ready your spiritual groups to descend (go down) and see the wonder among men. They spread their fiery wings and stretched out wings of flame, and flew descending in choirs (groups) and went in and out of the arena in groups. They praised the high-priest with love and praised his lord with trembling. The bands of Gabriel cried out: "Praise to the hidden one who makes his friends famous."\* The choir of Michael replied: "Blessed in the warrior who became famous and victorious." The Thrones chanted; Cherubims sang halleluyya (praise): "Blessed is your honour O, the one who crowns his warrior."\* The Seraphim and Powers with the Dominions cried to one another: "Hail wrestler. The Lords and Authorities raised shouts of joy: "O, the one who exalts the king and honours his servants."\* Archangels and Angels sang responsively: "Blessed is the athlete." With them the assembly below, wondered and were stupefied and praised honouring him. The Persians cried out: he is blessed. The domestics of the palace were stupefied at his perseverance. The Parthians, Alanites, Indians and Elamites, Areskians, Medians, Ethiopians and Phrygians, Glesprians, Sena'arians and all tongues, composed (weaved) his praises. \* Gentiles cried aloud, nations replied: Well-done Apostle, chosen vessel who completed his race with victory and fought a heroic (God) fight. \* And kept your faith without spot.

Therefore, a crown of victory is made for you. Hail to you, O, martyr, victim and priest. The high-priest also shall offer sacrifice with his blood.\* For, the spirit has woven your crown, from the rays of the drops of blood and adorned with holy gems and precious stones of high-priesthood.\* And with jacinths of imprisonment and with pearls of glittering scourges, and all the more, shining blossoms of sufferings and lilies of splendid tortures. Hail to you, friend (best man) of the bridegroom Jesus. Hail to you, God-parent (sponsor) of the bride, the Church, for, your blood has brought the gift of the groom and your sufferings and torments, the gifts of the bride. Hail to you, whose blood was shed like that of Abel. Hail to you, who like Hanok the just, pleased (the Lord) and was taken to the land of happiness. Hail to you, who like the great Moses brought out your flocks from the Egypt of error and by

the water of baptism brought them across to the desert of the Church. \* And by the pillar of true faith, led them to the Sinai above and by the cloud of your teaching gave them shade from the heat of impiety. \* And nourished them by the manna-his body- (of) in the desert, with new life. And from the vessel of his precious blood, gave them drink for the remission of sins. \* Hail to you, who like John was beheaded. Your head is crowned by the hand of Sabor. Hail to you, and blessed are you who like Paul was crucified to the world and its pleasures. \* Hail to you, in whose commemoration, angels and men rejoice and sing praise and thanks to your lord who made you famous with all wonders and made you a fountain of helps to all who are oppressed.

Qanona: (tune: S'geed alaha..) "May the Lord answer you in the day of affliction," See p. 298\* May the prayer of the holy martyr who entered the contest and suffered torments and all afflictions, for the love of Christ the king, be for us a fortress. \* O, holy father, beseech and pray from the one who chose you, by the Holy Spirit, and completely fulfilled his will in you, to have mercy on us all. \* By the perseverance of the holy martyr, the heavenly assembly was quite stupefied; for, he stood up in the war against the devil. May his prayer be a wall to us.

Thesbohtha: May the prayer of the athlete, be to us a wall, night and day, from the devil and his army.. \* May the prayer of your saints which opened the door of heaven, open, O, our lord, the door to our prayer.

Karozusa: Isya msomaya..

Madrasa: (tune: Aswan d'erde am..) The son of light moved along the way of the light of the children of light: O, our holy father, friend of the Son, blessed is your commemoration.

Bathe: "Simon, Simon" pilots of the ships cry out, in the river Tigris and power descends and saves them from tempests. "Simon, Simon," call those who are distraught by the devil, around his shrine, he lifts up his hands and drives away from them the power of error. \* The merchants cry "Simon, Simon," on their way; he guards their (treasure) wealth and leads them to the place of peace. (peaceful place). On the day of his commemoration, our community (assembly) calls: "Simon, Simon," and by his prayers helps are being given to it.

Qala d'sahra: (First: Dun li marys.. = judge me Lord,.. See p.232\*.

Second: Min qdam marya masqnan.. = His ways are prepared by the Lord.. See p.242 \*.

Third: Rahem alai alaha d'dasan.. See p.250. \*

D'lelya: (tune: Hadusa am..) "All the servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.: All wait for yo D'lely au. Those who stand in the house of Lord, during the nights." O, Lord, all your servants are diligent and vigilant. They wait for your coming, judge of all. But I alone pass, and the days of my life pass away, like a dream. For, I did not extend my hands to you during the nights. For, I slept in my sins; arouse my soul, which is fast asleep (drowned in sleep), that I may enter with you into the chamber of light, and with those virgins, who lightened their lamps with true light, make me worthy of that splendour, by the mercy of your benevolence. (Repeat)

Sambah: O, apostle, you have adorned yourself, by your will, through the commandments of the king Christ. You sanctified your soul with your body, spotlessly. (without blemish) And the look of your eyes, by modest sight (sight of modesty). And your lips also, with psalms of the Holy Spirit, and your right hand with the gifts of alms. The walking of your feet was always in the holy place; and now you hear. Behold, now you have heard from your lord: "Well done, good servant, enter into the joy of your lord."

Alam" (tune: Slihav d'malka msiha..) The temples of the holy martyrs are a (reliable) harbour of confidence and foundations of spiritual drink. O, king Christ, make us all worthy, so that in the sea which is the world, we may journey (travel) without fear, with great peace.

Qanona: (tune: Sog'a..) "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord." Blessed are you, O, holy martyr, friend of Christ. For, from your childhood, you began works of justice. Behold, today, you enjoy in the chamber of the kingdom holy apostle, who during his struggle, was singing praise and your master answered saying sweetly, "behold the Holy Spirit weaves for you a crown of victory." \* Blessed are the martyrs. How much torture of the persecutors they suffered and they were not distressed about the separation of their life here. For, they knew that they were shifting from death to eternal life. (With it) O, Christ, for you the martyrs suffered all tortures by the persecutors. They despised for you, the world and its pleasures. O, my lord, make your right hand rest upon (this) land in which they are buried (placed) and protect its inhabitants.

H'paktha: Sabor built two cities in the land of 'Elam and named them after his power and his primacy.\* one he called Kusi Sabor which is Laph: the other named Gondi Sabor, walled city of Ledan. \* They

took Simon to this walled city, with fear, so that he may go to give tribute of his soul for his diocese (flock). \* Since, by prophecy his name was called Bar Samba'e: because he dipped the garment (of) his body in the blood of his neck. It was the order for them all, that those who were in chains (prisoners) should be killed before Simon by he sharp sword. \* Perhaps, seeing the murder of his friends, he may succumb (become weak): and do according to my desire and adore fire and we will let him loose. \* But Simon went forward as the head of his group like a commander. He was encouraging, strengthening (his companions) and glorifying (God). \* "See O, My brothers, trample upon the (sting) goad of the tyrant death which our lord made void and put it off from us and he rose up and raised us. \* My blood I give and my head I incline to the awful sword: And I shall not deliver the sheep of Jesus in the hands of the devil. \* My blood I give, my neck I deliver to (before) the judge: he swearing said: I will not deny the king Christ. \* The devil fought a harsh fight with the athletes and the sharp instruments of wickedness of his propensity did not touch the perseverance of their soul. \* The devil fought a terrible war against the church: At that time he found evil workers to help him. \* In morning of the day which is the Friday of the Passion of Our lord, an edict came out that Simon and those who were with him should be killed. \* Darkness spread) it became dark); suddenly the sun became eclipsed: There was an earthquake, as well as fear for the people who were there. Gusthasar became famous on the Thursday of Pathira (unleavened bread): And then, he and the athletes were crowned in the morning of the day. \* O, shepherd, who turned the deviated sheep (which went astray from him): turn all the lost and have pity on the afflicted. \* All afflictions and torments and deaths I accept (receive) on me, for the Church and her children whom Christ entrusted into my hands. \* Tortures and slaughter and all afflictions are better for me than ( I should) to renounce my God and adore the work of his hands. \* The martyrs entered ten by ten, before Sabor: placing their confidence in the Lord and received the crown (of martyrdom. \* Tharbo, the sister of Bar Samba'e, and the sister of his mother, the rebellious killed because of the calumny of the Jews. \* With saw, they cut them to pieces; and they hung them and hung them on six trees- a horrible sight.

Karozusa: N'qum sappir..= Let us stand devoutly...

O, Christ who made our noble holy father Mar Simon famous and strengthened him to stand in the contest against the devil and his army and conquer him and condemn him by the power which he received from his lord...

O, Christ who clothed (equipped) our holy noble father Mar Simon, with a powerful and invincible weapon (and he fought) to fight against the passions of lust and against the artifices of the devils...

O, Christ who promised our holy illustrious father Mar Simon and all those who followed in his footsteps, unending (pleasures) enjoyments and ineffable happiness and eternal life and stay with the angels...

O, Christ who helped our holy noble father Mar Simon to lead an angelic life and to humble himself with divine toil and twofold fasts and earnest vigils and emaciating food (nourishments) and assiduous prayers, help us who are weak to celebrate his memory vigilantly and carefully...

O, Christ who sanctified all the limbs of our noble holy illustrious father Mar Simon and made him a fountain of helps to all the oppressed and distressed who take shelter in his prayers...

O, Christ who made us worthy to meditate on the glorious feast of the commemoration of our noble holy and illustrious father Mar Simon from evening to morning, make us worthy to enjoy with him in the banquet of the heavenly kingdom ...

O, Christ, who made our father a (beautiful) clear mirror and glorious temple of his benevolence and by his prayers, (make void) stop from us punishments; (for), he is a physician of the sick and healer of the pained (painful) and boast of the household (domestics) and puts to shame outsiders...

For the health of..

O, merciful God, ...

He who is praised in heaven..

Save O, my lord Christ, who exalts his saints and makes the friends of his love famous, your people redeemed by your truth, who celebrated (the feast) and honoured you and exalted you by the memory of your servant, friend and worshipper have mercy on us...

D'sapra: (tune: Sahde brike..) Sambah. The martyrs, famous men who loved Christ, are invited to the kingdom pf heaven and eternal life- to something which the ear has not heard, and the eye has not seen, as it is written; the happiness of those who dwell in it has not come to the mind of men, (Repeat)

Sambah: (tune: M'eena d'thavasa..) O, holy martyrs, teachers of faith, pray that there may be peace in the world. May the wars be brought to an end and quarrels be silenced from us and may the Church sing praise by the mouth of her children.

Alam : B'madnahai sapra..

D'varek : By the prayers of Mar Simon, may your mercy be on us and may your helps accompany your adorers and may priests and kings be reconciled. \* Blessed are you holy apostle, harp of the Holy Spirit who worked in the vineyard of the Christ from morning to evening. \* Blessed is the Lord who came down (descended) with his servants to the battlefield and by his power they conquered all torments and oppression of the persecutors. And their crowns are woven in heaven.

Thesbohtha : The saviour marked in heaven the commemoration of the casolicka and the Church celebrates it duly, in his noble remembrance. \* May the martyrs who inclined their necks before swords, for their master, gave their bodies to torture, help us by their prayers.

Marmisa d'rase: Smayya mesthayen..

Addition: He will be like a tree which is planted by a stream of water. \* Which yields fruit in (due) time, and its leaves do not fall off.

D'qanke : (tune: Sahdav davra...) "The Lord is praised in heaven: You made (placed) your habitation in heaven." Up above, with the angels, O, our father, your memory is marked, with the just who became famous and victorious. (Also) As well, with the martyrs who are crowned. The king Christ whom you loved, gives you a chamber in heaven as your inheritance. (Repeat)

Suraya : His seed will be powerful on the earth. \* And he will be blessed in the generation of the just. L'dukrane dasliha n'yaqar..= Let us honour the memory of the apostle...

Zumara : The lords persecuted me without any reason (vainly); but my heart feared your word. \* I rejoiced at your word like that one who has found much booty. \* I hated evil and rejected (it) but, loved your law. \* O, Just One, I praised you seven times a day, about your judgment.

D'evangalion : (tune" Qal sleeche. Dagvaith..) "He made him ruler of his people: He appointed for them lawmakers. The lawgiver shall be clothed with blessing. The Lord over his house and administrator



of all his possessions." The master of the house appointed a faithful and wise steward who rebukes and corrects and consoles, to provide for the children (his domestics) of his house whose soul is pure and clear and heaped with love and mercy and lights his lamp with oil and lenity (pity) with the just who took the weight of the day and its heat in the vineyard and received his reward fully for that which he did diligently and traded with great works. He did not hide (bury) his talents but traded and doubled them. (Repeat)

D'rase: (tune: Balmene ...) "Come let us praise the Lord : Because his benevolence has grown strong over us. From the mouth of youth and children." Let us praise Christ who gave us his body and blood and made us worthy by his benevolence, for his gifts to our race. (Repeat)

Sambah: Even if you strip your clothes, - these externals- but not strip your (stole) interior garment, O, you baptized. If you put on this secret weapon (clothed with), the tempest of many temptations will not overpower you. You know which (what) words you heard.. You know you have eaten the living victim. Beware, of the devil, lest he should make you stumble, as he did Adam as well, and make you strangers to that glorious kingdom. He alienated Adam (him) from paradise. And again, he wishes to alienate us too. Therefore, cry out with us to Christ so that he may strengthen the souls of us all, by his, Holy Spirit.

D'vem: (tune: Ha b'gav etha ..) Unaya (Chorus/response) On the commemoration of holy martyrs, O, my brothers, approach and receive the precious body and the living and vivifying blood of the Son of the lord of all who established (marked) their memory on his altar. He made his secret power dwell in their bones so that they may let flow all helps in the holy Church in which we sing halleluyya.

Bathe: O, martyrs who became spiritual stewards help our community, by your prayers. For, your memory is marked on his altar and he made his hidden power dwell in your bones that they might let flow all helps in the holy Church in which we sing halleluyya..

Thesbohtha: Maran Iso ..

Abdo Badwi

# Initiation to Christian Iconography

## INTRODUCTION

### A. CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

What is iconography?

The term iconography is by definition "the analytical study of the symbolic, often religious, meaning of objects, persons, or events depicted in works of art"<sup>1</sup>. Marcel Pacaut defines it as being "the study of figurative representations, either of an individual, an epoch, or of symbols and dogmas of a doctrine or a religion"<sup>2</sup>.

Others prefer calling this study "iconology", a denomination that is not solely restricted to the description of the types of artwork, but that would be a complete interpretation of images<sup>3</sup>.

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- \* Fr. Abdo Badwi a Maronite monk, is from the University of the Holy Spirit Faculty of Fine Arts Department of Sacred Art
- 1 H. De la Croix, R. G. Tansey, D. Kirkpatrick, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, N.Y., 91991, p. 1101.
  - 2 Cf. M. Pacaut, *Iconographie chr\_tienne*, P. U. F., 1962, p.?? (Translated from French).
  - 3 Cf. L De Broune, *Rivista Archeologia Christianna*, anno XX, 1943, p.??

At any rate, the denomination "iconography" is etymologically justified by the Greek suffix "grapho" that derives from the verb "grafein" which means *to paint, to draw or to write*. Whereas the prefix "eikon" means image. "Eiknographia" in Greek means sketch or description, derives from the verb "eikonographein" that means to describe<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, "grapho" is the expression in using lines and colours and the creation of a work of art that will be an object of contemplation. It is a vision of the mysteries represented rather than a rational description.

The word "iconography" was used in Antiquity and the Middle Ages to designate any work of plastic art. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century it only comprised the miscellanies of authentic portraits of emperors, kings or of famous men of antiquity.

Nowadays, art history, liturgy and theology consider iconography as an introduction to the contemplation and the silent language of lines, colours and volumes peculiar to images representing the Christian mysteries.

Therefore our study will mainly consist of an initiation to iconography. Our objective is to help the reader understand the language of figurative and ornamental sacred (Christian) art, thus enabling him to seize its message.

## B. AESTHETICAL CONCEPTION

1. The aesthetical conception and the new way of contemplation of an art-work.

The Neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus (205-270) announced the precursory signs of the Post Classical and Medieval spirit and divulged a psychological climate of a new type of art.

Incipient Christianity was not the creator of this aesthetical conception; it has, however, appreciated and adapted the value of a vision that intended to substitute the transcendence, not only of this basic assumptions of the meanings, but also of discursive rational thought, to the "eyes of the body".<sup>5</sup> This transcendence will allow the ecstasy and contemplation in Christian Art.

4 Cf. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, Mossachussets, usa, 1984.

5 Our translation from French expression "les yeux du corps"; cf. the original text, p. 3.

This new aesthetical conception happened as a reaction to the excessive formal and cold perfection that had affected Classical Graeco-Roman art. Art historians liken this impulse to the reaction of our century to the 19<sup>th</sup> century art. The first mosaics<sup>6</sup>, like the earliest encaustic icons<sup>7</sup>, reveal a hieratic art concerned with the expression of the inner or supra-sensitive realities

2. What does this new aesthetical conception consist of?

(1) Art should reveal the spirit of things, that is the reflection of the superior intelligence "*Novo*", the only real thing. The material world is the only instrument for becoming acquainted with the "*Novo*".

(2) Such an aesthetic calls in question the value of the representation that only imitates the appearance of the object of nature.

(3) The image is a mirror of the represented object. This mirror reflects:

i- The appearance of material things;

ii- The spiritual essence of things, i.e. the universal spirit of the divinity<sup>8</sup>.

## C. THE BASES OF CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY: THEOLOGY AND LITURGY

The *visual* is a theological and liturgical dimension that was neglected. This *visual* is incarnated by iconography which in turn represents in space what the liturgical development represents in time: the reflection of the Divine Glory, the anticipation of the Messianic Kingdom. The word and the liturgical image constitute an indissociable whole.

Iconography is inspired, in prayer, by the Holy Scriptures, to the same extent as liturgical texts. Church art must necessarily be a liturgical art, and the icon that is contemplated should not serve as a framework to liturgical prayers and complete them. It constitutes, or should constitute a perfect correspondence of the image and the text.

Since its prehistoric stage in the catacombs, the Christian Art of the sign and of the symbol has always taken a christological meaning corresponding to the Sacred Scriptures. In order to point out the

6 Cf. *infra*, p. 18

7 *Loc.cit.*

8 Cf. ???, *enn ades* 4.3.11, Les Belles Lectures, E. Br\_hier, Paris, 1960, p.??.

liturgical character of Christian Iconography, one should distinguish between a *sacred image* (icon) and a *profane, secular image* the theme of which is religious. The conception of beauty in a liturgical art is completely different than in a non-liturgical art that simply stimulates emotions. The sacred image is the divine splendor. The beauty of an icon is not subjective, since it breaks up the triangle: artist-art work spectator, and brings about the advent of a fourth element: the advent of the transcendent, the presence of which it attests. Iconography offers the maximum of Biblical fidelity and ecclesiastical objectivity.

## I. THE ORIGINS OF CHRISTIAN ICONOGRAPHY

Due to the influence of Judaism, the Christian cult was practiced in the beginning in the total absence of images, the latter were even prohibited. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries Clement of Alexandria (P.G. 8, 161, 436, 9), Tertullian (P.L. 1,666-668) and other Fathers interpret the prohibitions of the Old Testament literally.

Towards the year 300 AD, the Council of Illiberitas in Spain forbids the use of images in churches<sup>9</sup>. The book, *Testamentum Domini* (5<sup>th</sup> century) prohibited painters from baptism and forbid them to enter the Christian Community unless they abandoned their heretical occupation.

### A. EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

The first Christians came from two distinct worlds: Judaism and the Greco-Roman world. Based on the Pentateuch "Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in water under the earth" (Ex 20,4)<sup>10</sup>, Judaism adopted a negative attitude *vis-à-vis* the image. Nevertheless, this banning of images was not categorical<sup>11</sup>. Later, we find figurative mosaics in the Synagogue of Beit Alpha in the 4<sup>th</sup> century in Israel, and in the Synagogue of Doura Europos in Mesopotamia (3<sup>rd</sup> century) with its splendid figurative murals.

9 (Cf. Mansi, II, p.11). (H. Leclerc, *Conciles*, I, p.241, ??).

10 Cf. *Good News Bible*, American Bible Society, New York, 1978.

11 Cf. "The snake made of bronze" (Nb 21, 4-9): In verses 8 and 9 we read "Then the Lord told Moses to make a metal snake and put it on pole, so that anyone who was bitten could look at it and be healed. So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Anyone who had been bitten would look at the bronze snake and be healed". Another example is the "Offerings for the Sanctuary" (Ex 25).

Whereas in the Greek world, the image acquired a mysterious or even magical character. It was the visible representation of the divine, and this representation was so exaggeratedly venerated that philosophers like Plato and Xenophanus of Colophon, detected a danger for the spiritual character of the divine in this cult.

In the Roman world this veneration of the divinity through the image subsists with the same spirit.

The first Christians of Jewish tradition couldn't avoid being exposed to confrontations with the Roman and Hellenistic worlds. They did not attach a great importance to the image; they limited themselves to the adaptation of some mythological themes to Christianity by conferring a more profound signification to them. The *seasons*, symbols of life beyond death, become the symbol of the Resurrection. The *garden*, the *palmer*, the *dove*, the *peacock* evoke the Celestial Paradise. The *ship* symbol of prosperity and of a happy passage of life, becomes the Church or the Christian souls. The *seaport* becomes eternal peace. *Erotic symbols* such as *Eros* and *Psyche* become the symbols of the thirst of the soul and of the love of God. The *Good Shepherd*, "that signified philanthropy in classical art, becomes the symbol for the loyal protector of the Christian flock who said to his disciples: 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep'"<sup>12</sup>. The Good Shepherd is represented as *Hermes*; *Jonas* reminds us of Endymion, etc.

By adding biblical symbols and scenes to these themes, such as the fish or the vine, this primitive Christian art was widespread everywhere with unification of the themes despite the geographical diversity in: Rome, Spain, North Africa and in the East. The best examples are the Roman catacombs (Saint Calixite, Saint Sebastian, Saints Peter and Marcellino, Domitille and Priscille, etc. In the East, the house of the Christians of Doura Europos).

## B. POST-CONSTANTINIAN ART

It was after the "Constantinian peace" in 313 A.D. that an aesthetical creation which later determined the art of the following centuries began. With the authority of the basileus, Christian art reflects the divine power. Paleo-Christian art, symbolic, concealed, unnoticed, becomes monumental, and Christ, until then represented as a philosopher or a doctor of Antiquity, becomes a hero, a King on his

<sup>12</sup> Cf. H. De La Croix, R. G. Tansey, D. Kirkpatrick, *op.cit.*, p. 257.

throne. The apostles and the saints become the members of the Imperial Court.

This adoption of imperial art will only last until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. A new Christian art, of Christian essence and of Hellenistic and Oriental roots, will see the light. Towards the 6<sup>th</sup> century the sacred image will have taken its definitive form using the harmony of the Hellenistic world of Alexandria and of the Greek cities, with the rhythm, the measure and the grace in Jerusalem and Antioch Christian art is characterized by the frontal view, the realistic or even portrayal features, without taking up its naturalism that is sometimes heavy. It is the period of the Codex Rabbulensis, the Ampullae of Mionza and Bobbia, the Triumphant Cross of Justin the Second, the mosaics of Ravenna, The ancient icons of Saint Catherine's Monastery, etc.

### C. ICONONCLASM

Iconoclasm is the doctrine, practice, or attitude of an iconoclast<sup>13</sup>. An iconoclast by definition is an image destroyer (Klan: to break – more at halt), who opposes the veneration of sacred/religious images. Another definition of an iconoclast is: one who attacks established beliefs or institutions.

Christian art enjoyed a fairly continuous blossom until the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. at this stage, the icon is no more a reminder of the divine, but it already portrays from within itself the protective power of the Saint,. Thus it is demotized, which places it a few steps away from superstition. It is this type of popular piety that explains the hostility or the iconoclasts.

#### 1-Iconoclasm plunges its roots very deep in history

The roots of iconoclasm are found in the proscriptions of the Old Testament, and in the teachings of the above mentioned Patriarchs (Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and other). The vehement revival of iconoclasm is not only due to the simple concern in maintaining the purity of faith, but is rather a result of the influence of Judaism, of Islam and of the monophysite resistance posterior to the Council of Chalcedony (451 A.D.).

#### 2-The Council " *In Trullo*" or *Quinquiesse* Council (691 A.D.)

This council was held in the imperial palace with a great majority

13 Websters Merrinan's Dictionary, *op.cit.*, "iconoclast".

of bishops from the East. The importance of this council resides in the declaration number 82 where it is required to represent the Lord in His truth and not by personifying him with a lamb or another symbol. The council was refused by Rome, seemingly for political reasons, because the Popes were the great advocates of the icon.

### **3-The Caliph Yazid II and the Emperor Leon III**

In 721 A.D. the Caliph Yazid II destroyed all the images in the sanctuaries and the homes of the occupied provinces. After his example, the Emperor Leon III, native of the East where the ideas of the Monophysites were revived, considering himself as being the reformer of the Empire and of the Church, starts a war against icons. It is the Patriarch Saint Germain who strongly supports the Sacred Icons. This quarrel turns into a revolt and the persecutions spread everywhere against the defenders of icons. After the Patriarch, it is the Pope Gregory III who convokes a council in Rome in order to defend the cause of sacred images. The emperor retaliates and confiscated the possessions/properties of Saint Peters and increased the taxes in Sicily and Calabre.

In territories occupied by the Arabs, it was St. John of Damascus (749) who defended the icons. He wrote the famous treat for the defense of the images, that will constitute one of the bases of the theology of the icon.

### **4-Constantine V and the Council of Hieria**

To Leon III succeeded his son Constantine V, who proved to be more of an icon destroyer than his father was. He convokes the Council of Hierera near Byzance, solemnly condemning "the criminal art of painting" and convicts the defenders of icons: Germain, George of Cyprus and John of Damascus.

The promulgation of this decree starts up a new wave of persecutions, tortures, exiles, thefts, forced marriages of monks and capital executions. Relics are thrown to sea, buildings transformed into barracks or stables and the words "saint" and "monk" proscribed.

5- Leon IV the Khazar, a lull is intimated. This emperor applies the decree in a liberal manner. After his death his spouse Irene, a fervent believer, takes over the throne. She ensures the election of "iconophile" bishops, abolishes the iconoclastic decisions of Hierera and calls for the reunion of a council: the Council of Nicaea (787 A.D.). This Council demonstrates the legitimacy of the cult of images with texts extracted from the unanimity of the Patriarchs (Fathers), condemns



Iconoclasm considering it heretic, and restores the cult of images. The Patriarchs (Fathers) prove to be tolerant *vis-à-vis* the iconoclastic bishops, despite the integrist monastic party. It was only an intermission.

#### 6- Leon V the Armenian: Declaration of the Sunday of the Orthodoxy

Iconoclasm will be reborn with the same violence and will be maintained between 813 and 842 A.D.. Some iconoclastic militaries and militants overthrew Michael Khangabe and elevated Leon V the Armenian (829 A.D.) on the throne, who took measures for destroying icons. Again prisons were filled with bishops, monks and icon painters. The death of this emperor in 843 put an end to iconoclasm. In march 843 the Byzantine Church declares the first Sunday of Lent and the *Feast of the Truth* also known as the *Victory of Orthodoxy*.

#### 7- The Iconoclast Argument

According to iconoclasts, if the deity is represented, the (two) natures are confounded, and we contend disposing of the power to "circumscribe" what is not conveyable. If we divide humanity, we divide what should be united in the person of Christ and we fall onto Nestorianism. Thus, the material image engenders the hypostatical union defined by the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon held in 451 A.D. which declared Monophysitism heretical. Moreover, matter in images degrades the primeval holiness of the paragon. The only possible icon, instituted by Christ is the Eucharist: it is the mystical presence of the Incarnation. The only representation of saints is their imitation through moral perfection. This iconoclastic doctrine reveals a monophysite basis, where human nature is practically absorbed by the divine nature.

#### 8- The Argument of Icon Defenders

According to the supporters of this movement, the image is the object of relative or veneration object of honour rather than an object of adoration (*latrei,a*)<sup>14</sup>. The latter is exclusively reserved for God alone. Furthermore, images are not the ultimate objects of veneration, since the image has no relation with the represented object. It is only the reflection of the prototype. The veneration of the image being addressed to the prototype, ipso facto is transformed into "adoration".

14 *Iconolatry*, defined as the worship of images or icons (cf. Webster's, *op.cit.*, p. 596), is by analogy comparable to *idolatry* that is the worship of an idol, a physical object as a God (Id., p. 598).

## II- THEOLOGY OF THE ICON

1-A better comprehension of the theology of the icon necessitates primarily an understanding the Byzantine society and its components, the reflection of which is found everywhere in the Oriental Empire. This society of Christian and Biblical foundations has inspired a special order to the iconographical art by analogy. The Celestial Court was a copy of the court of Byzantium; Christ King of the Universe replaces the "basileus," the angels and saints replace the pages, knights and soldiers; the Virgin Mary is the empress; the female saints, the ladies of the royal court, etc..

2-A new religious "Weltanschauung" (vision of the world in German) that originated from the Scriptures is added to the latter, the Scriptures being interpreted according to the categories and mostly the Neo-platonic philosophical terminology, mainly that of Plotinus. It is namely the distinction, since Plato, between two worlds: the *sensitive* world and the *intelligible* world. Originally, the *intelligible* world was dominated by a perfect harmony. Every material object found its perfect model in the Ideas that are the thoughts of a God who is "Creator". Man participates in these two worlds. His sensitive nature is linked to the material world, and his intelligible nature, the soul (a;nima) is tarnished, owing to his incarnation, by the contact with matter. Thus, the finality of life is to vanquish the sensitive world in order to exit this condition of sin. God is considered as a sovereign sitting enthroned on the summit of innumerable hierarchies. Man, imprisoned in his sinful body and living in fear of death has all his hopes polarized by the Eternal Life, after the emancipation of the soul

3- In the light of this concept of the Universe, the Mystery of the Incarnation is endowed with a particular meaning. Through/By the Incarnation Man is elevated towards God more than any other creature.

Saint Athanasius said: "God the Verb made himself human so that we could be defined". The body, defined by Plato as being the tomb (prison) of the soul, becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Faith in Jesus Christ and His imitation by prayer and ascetism constitute the only way that leads to the Kingdom. This is the door of the sensitive that guides to the intelligible. Ascetism could, by the effect of purification, be a preparation to the contemplation, the importance of which resides in the fact that it helps in plunging one's self in the mystical night and also in attaining divine illumination.

It is this interpretation that explains the importance of monastic

movement (monachism) even amidst noble families. In the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries approximately 130.000 monks and nuns lived in the monasteries of the Byzantine Empire.

4- This contemplation obliges the soul to elevate itself towards the transcendent sphere of God. And the glaring material riches do not have aim other than that of favoring a yet more powerful spiritual dynamism in order to lift Man toward the *world of intelligible beauty*: that of God. In the realization of this ideal, art plays a primordial role. The image helps in making the world of God's Glory appear.

5-In the Oriental Church, the theology of the Incarnation gave the image its Original face. It is for this reason that the icon painter is submitted to the doctrine of the Church. He is the interpreter of the theology by the means of sacred images. His '*creations*' always remain within the framework of the Church's doctrine. Every icon is a loyal interpretation of the prototype or archetype that represents the saint with his portraiture and his spiritual dimensions.

6-With the Incarnation the antique image of Man is metamorphosed. The image of carnal beauty is improper to express the New Creature; then, everything that reminds of the sensitive world should be transfigured. (The iconographer must paint the icon as an original, primordial work).

In the icon, human body loses its naturalistic aspects. It disappears beneath the clothes, with the fine lines that give an irrational and abstract impression. It is the face that becomes the '*center*' of the composition. It is the place of the presence of God's Spirit, since the head is the center of intelligence and wisdom.

7-A good artist must not only represent the human body, but also the soul. The pink carnations of Antiquity are replaced by ocre, and the warmth of the skin becomes that of the spirit. All the attention is concentrated on the look that radiates towards the spectator. The eyes wide open fascinate the spectator and impose themselves on him.

Above the eye-brows that surround and accentuate the expression of the look, the forehead, the center of wisdom, is usually exceedingly high and protuberant, expressing the power of the spirit. The nose, that originates in the forehead is seldom elongated and exaggeratedly stretched out, which adds great nobility to the face. At the extremity of the nose, the nostrils weightless, seemingly quivering under the motion of the spirit, express the passion of the represented saint towards God.

Neither too thrown-out, nor too flat, that cheeks surround the mouth harmoniously. The cheeks of ascets, monks and bishops show deep wrinkles, the latter symbolizing fasting and white, sleepless nights spent in prayer. The mouth, most sensual part of the body, is fine, often drawn geometrically, with the lips always closed implicating silence and contemplation.

The vertical dynamism of the face leads to an energetic chin. The head is surrounded by a halo<sup>15</sup>, symbolizing the glory of God. The iconographer avoids representing nature as it is in reality, and objects, such as rocks seem weightless. Colours are not natural, and they obey the dogmatic requirements of the composition. The whole composition is penetrated by a light with no shadows at all.

8-Iconography does not identify itself to the natural reality. It renounces more and more to terrestrial beauty and creates new forms based on the religious and philosophical ideas of the epoch. It prepares the faithful to perceive the image of the true reality that is above all appearances. It represents the Eternal Truths.

### III- THE ICON AND LITERATURE

"To paint" in Greek and in Russian mean: to write. When the iconographer paints, he writes the story of Salvation and the life of the Saints. He paints with a narrative style. He draws his themes from the Biblical source, the Patriarchs (Fathers), the Apocrypha and the liturgical and hagiographical texts. The iconographer is inspired by the literary genres or styles of his epoch. Of these genres we can deduce four iconographical models.

#### A. THE PANEGYRICAL MODEL

In Antiquity, the panegyric speech celebrated a great personality. This model was used by the Church. The great preachers used it without omitting anything from the rhetoric of the Ancients. A typical example of a grandiloquent discourse: the speech of Saint Basil in honor of Saint Barlaam: "Come to my aid, famous painters of the heroic exploits, by your art the image that I trace of this strategist, let the

15 The halo surrounding the head is usually circular. Nonetheless, we find square-shaped halos in some cases; e.g. ?? . (Cf. ?? ). There are halos that surround the whole body, and that are mostly represented in the Assumption.

victorious athlete I represented with little glamour shine with colours; I would like to be defeated by you in the painting of the martyr's valiance...". In this type, the predicator should use eloquent expressions, stir the faithful, convince him and exhort him to take action.

The saint or the martyr would, in this way, be an image of Christ in his Death and His Victory. The iconographer of the panegyrical model uses the same iconographical scheme of our Lord with all the stages of His life: Nativity, Death and Victory. This model comprises hagiographical series.

## **B. THE EPICAL MODEL**

It is the closest representation to reality and to historical truth. Similarly as in the panegyrical model, the scenes are disposed around the principal image. E.g. The icon of the prophet Elijah, that of the Nativity.

## **C. THE DRAMATICAL MODEL**

In the ecclesiastical literature, it is Ephrem the Syrian who used this model in his hymns, in order to provoke the dramatic tension that fascinates people. The liturgical hymns inspired iconographers. Typical icons such as: The Passion, the Resurrection, the Annunciation and the icon of the martyrs...

## **D. THE MODEL OF THE THEOLOGICAL TREATISE**

Principally, every icon, by the selfsame fact that it includes the transcendental element or the fourth dimension, contains a theological aspect. This theological element dominates the entire composition since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

It is the Russian iconographers who enhanced the evolution of this model. A typical example is: "The Hospitality of Abraham" ("The Trinity" of Andrei Roublev). These so-called models of the theological treatise, which were seldom hardly decipherable by the believers, constituted and still constitute a domain reserved to the specialists and erudites.

## **IV-AESTHETICALELEMENTS**

The icon brings about a sensitization by the harmony that it emits, even in a person who has no iconographical initiation whatsoever.

And this harmony is the result of an aesthetical study that is considerably developed and that comprises the geometric structure, the proportion of the human body, the perspective, the colours and the light.

## A. GEOMETRIC STRUCTURES

The icon is conceived to a geometric structure that gives it its harmony and equilibrium. And it is the composer-iconographer who plays the main role in tracing the models which will be copied and enlarged by the iconographers. The scheme of the composition is reduced to simple geometrical forms such as: the triangle, the cross, the grid, the square and the circle.

### a) The triangle:

If it is isosceles, it presents a perfect bilateral symmetry. It satisfies the eye, as well as the spirit. It is mainly used for the busts.

### b) The halo:

Surrounds the head of the personage. It is the central part of every icon. The proportion of the halo varies with the epochs.

### c) The square and the circle:

For icons representing saints standing up straight, the structure consists of three vertically adjacent squares:

i- The uppermost square comprises the bust: the torso and the head;

ii- The middle square includes the hips to the knees;

iii- The inferior square includes the legs from the knees to the feet. The width of the body corresponds to the square inscribed in the circle that is itself concentric to the central circle.

### d) The cross, the grid, the circle:

For the icons of festivities and larger compositions that are more rich in personages.

i- The cross: "The Ascension".

ii- The grid: "The Nativity".

iii- The Circle: "The Transfiguration", the Trinity" of Roublev, "The Last Supper".

## B - PROPORTIONS OF THE HUMAN BODY

The Antique World was fascinated by the beauty of the human body, beauty resulting from harmony and equilibrium of proportions. It has also established anatomical canons, models or standards in order to indicate proportions. Thus, according to the Greek canon, the body is equivalent in height to eight heads<sup>16</sup>.

In keeping a certain distance from the pagan world, Christianity is drawn away from the idealized nature of the Hellenistic World in order to find the New World. It abandons the three dimensional world to become the reflection of a world without dimensions.

The new system simplified the composition of the figures and favored the unity between several art works. Nevertheless, this renewal did not elude the problem of the proportion. According to the iconographical manual of Mount Athos, the proportions of the human body are the following:

- a) The human body is divided into nine measures (or units)
  - 1- The first measure divides the head into three parts: the forehead, the nose and the mouth and chin.
  - 2- Then, from the chin to the middle of the body (the naval), three measures.
  - 3- From the middle of the body until the knees, two measures.
  - 4- From the knees until the heels, three measures.

There are other Byzantine canons of the human body in Byzantine iconography, as there is a variety of epochs and schools. The canons vary between six times the head to ten and a half for the measures of the body.

In Syriac and Coptic iconography we find the smallest personages, whereas Russian iconography is known to have the tallest figures.

- b) The facial proportions
  - The face is divided into three parts, as we mentioned earlier.
  - It could also be divided into three circles by considering the length of the nose as radius of a circle.
  - The interest of the study of the Byzantine models or of the three

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16 The head, from the top of the scalp to the chin, being considered the unity.

circles is to permit us to access the ideal, almost abstract world of aesthetical iconography. This ideal abstract world is formed with the restructuring of forms in order to reflect the eternal truth of beings, and not their material appearance. If we borrow the human form from reality, we submit the latter to a particular geometrical, rhythmic, chromatic system, more apt to suggest the interiority of the spiritual and divine essence.

The iconographical modules permit us to step across and to enter the World of transfiguration of the body and of its harmony.

## **C - ICON AND PERSPECTIVE**

When we contemplate an icon, we are surprised with the impression that the personages and the objects seem to be moving towards us. The objects, in a space with little depth, seem to be seen and represented from both sides and seem not to have a stable position and depth.

This effect derives from the laws of iconographical perspective which differs from the 3D perspective. This bidimensional iconographical perspective differs from the 3D perspective by the spiritual idea based on two points:

i- Elimination of limits in space, in order to give more eternity and infinitude to the personage that is represented.

ii- A schism with pagan idolatry based on sculptures and statues.

There are, certainly, several systems of perspective drawing, but the iconographical perspective is the "inversed perspective". This perspective originates from a point in front of the icon, as opposed to the "linear perspective" where the origin lies behind the painting.

In this sense, the icon is the contrary of a Renaissance painting: it is not a window through which the human spirit penetrates the represented world. It is a "place of presence". In it, the represented world radiates towards he/she who opens himself/herself to receive. In the "inverted perspective", it is the space that is active, and not the spectator.

a) The sensation of space

In a work of art there are two aesthetical criteria:

i- The beautiful: It is an artistic current that tends to imitate nature, that searches for objectivity and that governs the ordonnance of



painting procedures and heads to the scientific conception of perspective.

ii- The sublime: It is the transcendent beauty that results from contemplation. Here, everything tends to infinity, feelings overflow while the means of representation become irrational, to fall within the province of a "transitional" order and attain a beyond or the rational where the finite and infinite intersect.

With the beauty, we fall into the "perceptible space". With the sublime, we experience the "sensation of space".

The former is an invariable physiological experience that finds its expression in the theoretical space determined by the 3D: length, width and depth. This triple dimension constitutes an immutable framework inside which the artist constructs the world of his vision.

In the "sensation of space", by harmony and the order art engenders the impression that every contradiction between the finite and the infinite is eliminated. The golden or monochromatic background creates a uniform and infinite space, like the sky, *the container of all things*.

b) The "perspective of importance" and the "epical perspective"

In certain icons, the principal personage is of more important dimensions than the rest. This is the "perspective of importance." E.g. Christ surrounded by saints. This technique was used in Antiquity; the kings were greater in dimensions than the subjects.

In group compositions: e.g. the "Last Supper", "40 Martyrs", etc., another type of perspective is resorted to: the "epical perspective". It has a narrative character. The vanishing lines that create a depth are replaced by lines that manifest the theological sense of the scene. The icon shows the bodies of the first row and adds the heads of the others at the back. Understood in this way, the "epical perspective" is one of the characteristics of Syriac miniatures.

## D. ICON AND COLOURS

In the icon, the role of the drawing is to determine the object. To draw it out of its medium, to render it comprehensible, despite its stylization and its emotive elements. Therefore, the drawing addresses itself first of all to reason, not as a significant carrying a sense to be deciphered but as a sense that is itself revealed.

Concerning colour, it is not the same. By itself, it does not represent the object, but confers significance to it. Its field of action is larger since it addresses itself to an order of knowledge that is not directly submitted to the control of the intelligence. A fundamental colour cannot be described, as it is an irreducible quality. By its concrete nature it touches the perceptions and it is here that its symbolic character resides, knowing that the symbol is not only an abstract sign of a truth, but also a call.

The fascinating glamour of the colour is always a sign: the sign of another world, nonetheless, not to say more fascinating. In iconography, colour is not a simple means of decoration, it takes part in the language that tends to express the *transcendent world*.

#### a) The sources of colour symbolism in iconography

1- The Biblical world is hostile to images. This explains its lack in matter of vocabulary concerning colour. The Semitic languages only have four names for four colours: white, black, red, yellow-green which are as rich as varied. The colours are distributed in two groups in accordance with two categories of symbols: white, red green and blue are the symbols of life, of purity, of peace and of goodness; black, gray, brown and pale yellow are the symbols of death, of menace and of uncleanness of sin. The enigmatic colour of crimson that is situated between the mentioned categories signifies royalty and death.

2- Concerning the contribution of Christian thought, it is Denys The Areopagite<sup>17</sup> who provides us with a scale of the values of colours. This author mentions "noble symbols" that are of paramount symbolic importance (e.g. the sun, the asters, the light), "medium symbols" (e.g. fire water) and the "inferior symbols" (perfumed oil and rock) and it is to the latter that the colours belong.

#### b) The colours and their significance

We are going to group the colours according to their transcendental value, i.e. in accordance with their capacity to express the properties of the divine essence, but we should therefore now consider the polyvalence of each colour.

<sup>17</sup> In Latin Areopagites, in Greek Areiopaites: Any member of the Areopagus (rocky hill northwest of the Acropolis, Athens. 1. The high court of justice that met there. 2. Any supreme court) in Ancient Athens. Denys The Areopagite: Saint, 3rd century A.D..

## 1- White

In the pagan world, white is the symbol of deity, of mourning. In the Christian world, white symbolizes the divine, the light and the dynamism; e.g. the halo circumscribing Christ in "the Ascension".

- The shrouds of the dead, the swaddling clothes of the infants,.... In the icons, white is the symbol of the Transfiguration, of the resurrection.
- White is the colour of the luminous; the angels of the Ascension and the Resurrection.
- Different names: titanium<sup>18</sup> white, silver white, zinc white, china white.

## 2- Blue

St Denys calls it "the mystery of beings"<sup>19</sup> and the "mysterious character"<sup>20</sup>.

Colour of transcendence, blue produces an impression of depth and calmness and gives an illusion of an unreal world, a world without gravity. It produces an effect of distance in the image and remains passive.

- In Babylonia, it was used for the background of the ceramic decorations.
- In Egypt it was the symbol of immortality.
- In Iconography: e.g. the *Himation* (coat) of the Pantocrator; the dresses (chiton) of the Virgin and of the apostles. It is the mystery of the Divine Life.

Types of blue: cobalt blue, outre-mer blue, Prussian blue, Turquoise blue, cerulean/azure blue, Celestine/celestial blue, Paris blue, etc.

## 3- Red

It is the most active and aggressive colour. It comes forward towards the spectator and imposes itself.

Due to its dynamism, red can be used as a background as the case is for gold and white.

18 *Titanium dioxide*: A colourless to black crystalline compound,  $\text{TiO}_2$ , used as a paint pigment and ceramic glaze, and in making white rubber, plastics, etc.: also *titanium white*, *titanic oxide*.

19 Stated by ? in, ?

20 *Id. Ibid.*, p.

- In Hebrew, it is the root of "blood" and the equivalent of "life". E.g. The Messiah's clothes are crimson red, His coat of Passion, The garment of the Pantocrator.
  - Red is also fire: Hell. It is the symbol of evil and sin; the symbol of war.
  - Red is a luminous colour. It is the Consecrated Blood of the Lord.
- Types of red: red of Venice, earth red, vermillion<sup>21</sup>, lacquer de Garance, carmine<sup>22</sup> lacquer, Indian red, etc.

#### 4- Crimson

Colour of richness, combined with magical and religious elements.

- Power and symbol of consecration.
- Colour of high dignities, we find it in the royal and sacerdotal clothes.
- In Iconography: it loses its menacing character to remind of the richness and the profound peace of God's Royalty.

#### 5- Green

It is the attribution of nature, of life, of vegetation. It is the symbol of growth, of fertility and of hope. The radiation of green is neutral and calm. It is situated between yellow and blue.

- It is used for the clothes of martyrs, next to the red colour (the sacrifice of the flower of their life and their youth).

Types of green: Chromium green, emerald, cobalt green, Veronese, earth green, olive green, English green,...

#### 6- Brown

Composed of red, green and black, it is a living colour, but it is always dim.

- It is the earthly colour.

Types of brown: It comprises all the ocre: Sienna, ocre red, ocre gold, Sepia.

21 Vermillion: 1.a) bright – red mercuric sulfide, used as a pigment; b) any of several other red pigments resembling this; a bright red or scarlet.

22 Carmine: In Arabic *qirmiz*, crimson: *krmi*, worm, insect: the dye comes from crushed insects (cf. cochineal). 1. A red or purplish – red pigment obtained mainly from cochineal. Also called crimson.

## 7- Black

Black is stronger than white. It is the nothingness and the absence of everything.

- It is the absence of colour. It is the night, the colour of the condemned and of the subterranean deities.
- It is the interior of tombs.
- The colour of the robes of monks.

Types of black: Ivory black, bone black, lamp black, etc.

## 8- Yellow

It is the light and the glitter of gold.

- It spreads sadness.
- It is the symbol of the divine light.

Types of yellow: Chromium yellow, lemon, etc

## 9- Polychromy

It is a system consisting of the juxtaposition of masses of colours, next to each other, by conserving the value of each colour. Sometimes the colour of an object does not correspond to its reality, but it is determined by the idea that it symbolizes. It is the abstraction that exceeds reality. It is the "expressionist" character of the icon. The saint image is the reflection of God's image, which in colour, makes matter shine.

Conclusion: The colours of icons fascinate modern painters. All contrast theories: "light-shade", "hot-cold", were used by iconographers. Sometimes without systematic study, but by being submitted to the requirements of the tradition in which the artists used to live and create. The icon becomes a work of art that reveals to our eyes a beauty that transcends us, a beauty that reflects the beyond.

## E. ICON AND LIGHT

Painting is usually based on the principle of the light and the shade. This principle expresses itself in three ways:

i- With the *academic technique* by enhancing the value of the shadows in order to accentuate the volume.

ii- With the *contrast technique* to enhance the value of light and the shade; planar decorative painting.

iii- With the *technique of the luminous spot* that enhances the light of the painting itself: it is the icon. Light is the sole condition for the presence of forms and colours. In the gloom we can distinguish neither forms nor volumes, nor colours.

- Light is transparency. It is intangible, unacquirable, whereas without it everything becomes dense and opaque, it is the sign of materiality. Initially, in the primitive imagination, is aroused a symbolism that is principally instinctive, which progressively became cognitive with the evolution: light and darkness evoke life and death, good and evil.

a) Antique roots of the *luminous conception in Iconography*

In the Classical Antiquity, beauty was still dominated by form. The sculptors defined themselves as the '*incarnation of shadows*'. According to Pythagoras (6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), it is the number that is the essence to everything: "All is number".

- The *theory of vision in antique physics*: The eye emits its light and the object emits its own light. Sight is produced when there is a formation of a homogeneous medium between the object and the eye. Whatever may be of the scientific value of this conception, it is capital because it permits to understand how the vision is "transforming". It is a base for the contemplation of the icon.

For Plato, the absolute being, the principle of every existence is the Good. The expression of the Good by Man (the philosopher) confers the *intelligence of the truth* to him.

In principle, the Supreme Being reflects himself in the material world by light, who thus loses his pure physical character and becomes an *interior light*. Through it God communicates His Truth, His Goodness and His Beauty.

In Neo-Platonism this idea is reconsidered and becomes the constitutive element of a new philosophical system:

- The reality in all dimensions is penetrated by light. Through it, beings receive beauty and moral goodness.

- Thus, a hierarchy of values in matter itself, is drawn: fire, lightning and gold are beautiful by themselves because they are light. The other objects are only beautiful in as much as they reflect the light. To this conception correspond, in the mystical religions of the Orient, the apparition of an irreducible duality: the opposition of light and of matter, of good and of evil. In Persia for example, this duality is already divinized: Ahura Mazda and Ahriman.

Plotinus gives light a religious sense; and it is light alone that permits to escape the human condition, the material world.

To perceive this *interior light*, the *internal eyes* should substitute themselves to the "eyes of the body", by the transcendental and intellectual vision, which gives access to the contemplation of The Being and to the identification of one's self to Him. Thus, the soul regains the One God by the abandonment of one's self in order to receive the "ineffable and indescribable vision" of His Light. Facing this reality, every thing in itself becomes non-existing; and a paradoxal inversion is produced.

"Natural light" becomes gloom because it is submitted to the condition of matter, it becomes a negation of the "True Light". "Created light" and night become identical. The human spirit, the "nou/j", and all disappears with it in the splendor of the uncreated light.

#### b) The Fathers of the Church and the light

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., this "theory of light", profoundly influenced Christian thought (Saint Augustine, Saint Ephrem and other patriarchs mainly in the Orient). The Pseudo-Denys of Areopagite (6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) is the author who impressed the Middle-Ages and their art. He rethinks Neo-Platonism in the light of the Christian Revelation.

Saint Bonaventura and other scholastics give light a sacred character:

-It somehow participates in God's properties, it rises above matter and space, proliferates and spreads on every being. In Gothic cathedrals, light unites with the colours of glass and becomes, according to certain theologians, the symbol of the Holy Spirit descending into the Virgin Mary. The conception of light constitutes the soul of its iconographical aesthetics. Iconography always attempts to exceed the forms of the material world; the mosaics with their glittering colours, the icons with a golden background, tend to make us perceive the beyond of matter. They are like perpetual irradiations, reflections of the uncreated light of God, and according to André Grabar, a "Gallo Placidia" in Ravenna becomes an "ecstasy of light"<sup>23</sup>.

#### c) The theory of light and the Icon

The icon itself must be luminous. Its personages and its colours

must reflect the light. The use of gold is very typical; it is not a colour: it is the reflection of the sun radiations. It possesses a transfigurative force that is different from that of colours. It is an active light. It occupies the zones of contact with the infinite and the divine, in the backgrounds and the halos. The light of the icon is an incarnated grace, and it must be received and perceived by contemplation.

It is Andrei Roublev who is the most luminous iconographer. In his "Trinity", excellent work of glazing, the transparent blue-green colours make the icon seem as if it was a "luminous cloud".

The technique that consists of specifying where and how the artist has placed the lights, and how it varied. It is the dynamism itself of the icon which engenders a luminous action: the use of light colours, of gold. The effect is the "inverted perspective", the use of spots or luminous hatching on the body and the clothes of the personage.

The most beautiful icon realized by an artist is that through which he/she manifests God's light on his creatures.

## V- TECHNIQUE OF THE ICON AND ICONOGRAPHICAL MATERIALS

The technique of icon painting is divided into three stages: A. The preparation of the support; B. Drawing and composition; C. Coloring.

### A. PREPARATION OF THE SUPPORT

What are the supports of iconographical painting? Several types of supports were known through the ages:

a) The wall: It consists of the sides of a natural cave or a construction wall. It should be well prepared in order to be painted.

The types of mural paintings are:

- Glue Tempera<sup>24</sup>;
- Engg Temera;
- Fresco;
- Mosaic (it is not really a painting, but rather a "collage").

24 "a) A process of painting in which pigments are mixed with size, casein, or egg, especially egg yolk, to produce a dull finish. B) The paint used in this process". (Cf. Webster's p. 1463).



b) Wood: It is the iconographic support par excellence. Most of the icons are painted on wood, the latter being prepared with plaster and glue on a fine cloth (e.g. linen). We can then paint on this support using different procedures:

- Encaustic painting<sup>25</sup>;
- Egg and glue tempera;
- Oil painting;
- Mosaic.

c) Paper and parchment: They are the support of miniatures<sup>26</sup> and manuscripts<sup>27</sup>.

- Paper is a thin flexible material made usually in sheets from a pulp prepared from rags, wood or other fibrous material, and used for writing or printing on, for packing, as structural material, as a fabric substitute, etc.

- Parchment, known in Latin as the *charta Pergamenum* (paper of Pergamun, where it was used as a substitute for papyrus). Parchment is made out of the skin of an animal, usually sheep or goat, prepared as a surface on which we write or paint.

d) The canvas: It is a coarse cloth of hemp, cotton or linen (better for big canvases), often unbleached, specially prepared for oil painting. The canvas alone was not currently used, and icon on canvas are not that numerous. The painting techniques used on canvas are tempera and oil.

## B. DRAWING AND COMPOSITION

As remarked in the previous chapters, drawing is the foundation of the icon. It traces its limits and essential form. It is executed after a general geometric composition, which gives each personage and each object its place and its role. It elaborates the structure and determines the surfaces to be painted. In general, the drawing is traced from a prototype. It is done by means of a charcoal pencil. Nevertheless there is another procedure: it consists of performing the drawing with a

25 "Coloured wax fused on a surface with hot iron". (Cf. Webster's p. 460).

26 "A Small painting or illuminated latter, as in a medieval manuscript". (Cf. Webster's p. 905).

27 "A book or document written by hand, especially before the invention of printing". (Cf. Webster's p. 864).

needle and placing it on the support. Then, with charcoal or a dark colour in a cloth we tap on the well fixed paper, such that the powder pigments pass through the whole and the drawing is reproduced.

### C. COLORING

It is done in steps and differs with the solvents and the media. What interests us here, is mainly to briefly explain about the media and the directions of their use.

The colours exist in the form of powder pigments which are very refined, and which could either be natural or artificial. In order to paint using pigments a medium (or solvent) is to be added to them the function of which is to provide enough adhesion between the pigments and the support. The techniques vary accordingly with the different kinds of media.

a) Encaustic: The pigments are mixed with wax on a metallic plate fixed on a pan, and the painting is done at high temperature. Later, solvents such as vegetable turpentine (white spirit) were used to dilute wax. The best support for this technique is wood. For example: the oldest icons of the Monastery of St Catherine in Sinai.

b) Glue tempera: The pigments are mixed with natural resins, for instance gum base (Arabic gum), honey, casein or animal glues (rabbit glue, skin glue,...). Casein<sup>28</sup> was very much used by Syriac Iconographers. These types of glue are valid whatever the kind of support.

c) Egg tempera: the pigments are mixed with egg yolk, water and vinegar. This technique is the most frequently used and it covers the majority of Byzantine icons.

d) The technique a fresco and the technique a Secco:

- The a fresco: The pigments are diluted in water and applied on the surface of a wall which has just been whitewashed. This technique is rather difficult so much so that the painting must be executed very rapidly (e.g. giornata: a painting made in one day). This technique is very common in mural iconography, it is the most durable.

- The a Secco: can be done slowly after the whitewash has dried.

28 Casein is a phosphoprotein of milk. It is precipitated from milk by heating with an acid or by the action of lactic acid in souring and is used in making paints and adhesives (Cf. Webster's, p.211).

e) Oil painting: It is a recent technique. It has linen oil a basis and convenes to any kind of support in general and canvases in particular. In the Byzantine world, painting an icon using oil paintings is considered a heresy.

f) Acrylic: It is a contemporary base of synthetic materials.: it provides colours with vivacity, and is highly recommended for big plane surfaces. The substance dries very quickly. it is unlikely that some of the actual iconographers are tempted by it, despite its consideration as oil and every other modern technique.

g) Mosaic: it is not a painting with pigments., but rather a "collage" of small coloured pebbles called tesserae of rocky origin (e.g. marble) or artificial (e.g. glass or enamel) or even metallic (e.g. silver or gold). Despite the little compositions that exist, the mosaic remains a monumental iconographic art that could cover walls entirely (e.g. Ravenna, Venice, Palermo, Hagia Sophia, etc.).

h) Enamel: Icons are made with enamels melted on metallic supports, with the drawing traced by means of metallic threads (that are also enclosed; in French "cloisonné"). The Georgians are the most famous in this domain.

At last, it remains for us to present a brief explanation about the bas-relief in iconography. As we know statuary and 3D sculptures do not exist I iconographic art, but painted bas-relief was seen in some icons. This phenomenon appeared in some icons in a late phase with the metallic cover (e.g. Rizza). It is also very frequent with ivories, vases and reliquaries (e.g. Chiese: vases), etc.

## VI-ICONOGRAPHICAL SCHOOLS

### A. SYRIAC ICONOGRAPHY

According to tradition, it is the oldest. We have a proof in the legend of the letter addressed by the Syriac King Abgar Oukomo of Edessa to our Lord. In brief, this king, contemporary of Christ, fell ill. He sent a letter to the Lord with a delegation, inviting Him to come to him in order to heal him. The Lord did not go, and sent two disciples on this mission: Addai and Mar, founders of the Syriac Church and of its tradition. Among the members of this delegation was a certain painter-archivist called Hanania. The latter tried in vain to draw the portrait of the Lord. Finally the Lord Himself gave him the imprint of His face, which latter became the prototype (more an archetype) of the

Christ Pantocrator diffused in the iconographical world and throughout Christianity.

This portrait was venerated in Edessa and after that in Constantinople. Today numerous are those who pretend to possess it. It is of traditional origin, but the historical origin is somewhat different. The Art of the Syriac Church, heir of the Art of the Mesopotamian civilization, has two sources:

1- The Oriental Source: which sometimes becomes exceedingly persianized and asiatic. We find pagan exemplaries in Edessa itself. It is characterized by the circular or square face, as well as the medium or small height of personages.

2- The Hellenistic Source: which mixed the Oriental tradition with the Greek tradition, the typical exemplaries of which are the murals of Doura Europe and the paintings of the Hellenistic cities of the Orient.

\* The Jacobite Church: Taking into account Monophysitism and under the influence of Islam, it limited itself to the presentation of ornamented and decorated crosses.

\* The Nestoro-Chaldean Church: It is in this Church that the Syriac miniatures have evolved with a Persian and even Mongolian influence. We sometimes see Christ represented as an Abbasid Caliph or as a Persian or Mongolian emir or prince, and the apostles are shown as the members of the royal court.

\* The influence of Islam: Introduced many decorative elements of geometrical shops that remind us of the "arabesques".

What also characterizes Syriac iconography is the frequency of juxtaposed personages. The drawing is "primitive" and no Hellenistic influence can be remarked, especially in Nestorian and Chaldean iconography.

Syriac iconographical elements are very rare. The largest collection out of which we were able to deduce some characteristics of this art comprises an ensemble of miniatures dispersed in the Syriac manuscripts throughout the world. We cite some examples:

1- The Syriac Bible of the National Library of Paris. The style of these miniatures tends towards Hellenization and strongly resembles the art of Doura Europos.

2- The *Codex Syriacus* 559 of the Vatican

3- The Syriac Manuscript of the British Museum 7170.

The latter and the former are illuminated with a series of miniatures of Persian –Oriental type. As for Syriac murals, we have the famous murals of the Monastery of Mar Moussa Al-Habshi in Nabk-Syria. The oldest go back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The "Last Judgment" is typical. The murals of the Monastery of Mar Yaakoub in Qara-Syria are questionable despite their Syriac style and inscriptions.

It is convenient to remind that the Syriac peoples did not experience military, political or economical stability throughout their history. This instability did not enhance artistic flourishing. This does not inhibit us from affirming – after the few prototypes we have seen the existence of a particular artistic Syriac genius. The Syriacs have most probably produced artistic works. But their geographical situation did not permit them to conserve their heritage, being stuck between the Byzantine Empire, the Persian Empire and the Islamic Caliphate, and being also exposed to continuous persecutions similar to the back and forth motion of a saw that destroys both ways.

## B. THE MARONITE ICONOGRAPHY

The Maronite belong to the great ecclesiastical heritage that is of Syriac tradition. More clearly, the Maronites have common artistic roots with the Syriacs. It is certain that anyone who observes the Maronite churches nowadays, is surprised to see a considerable quantity of copies of the European Post-Renaissance. Indubitably, the Maronite Church was the most Latinized Oriental Church- as it was said, in the name of the Universal Catholicism and of the application of the "*Lex Orandi, Lex Credi*" by Rome to all the Catholics worldwide, and in all domains. Fortunately, this "passion" failed to eliminate the treasures of Maronite Art, that were preserved in some grottos of the Qadisha Valley in Lebanon or in other places.

Maronite Iconographic art can be classified into three groups:

1- The Maronite iconographical heritage bequeathed by the Syriac and Oriental heritage that has been conserved through the ages.

2- The Medieval Maronite iconography that is found on the walls of some Lebanese churches.

3- Post-iconographical Maronite painting.

1- The first group is divided into two periods:

a) 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries: we have the gospel of Rabboula which dates

from the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It is illuminated with miniatures which are considered among the most ancient in Christian iconography. It is the Hellenistic-Syriac iconographical type.

It is the work of a calligrapher monk called Rabboula (6<sup>th</sup> century) from the Monastery of Mar Youhannon Beit-Zaghba in North Syria. It was transported by monks to Lebanon, where it appeared for the first time in the 11<sup>th</sup> century at Ilige (Mayfouq), then at Qannoubine. Later on he travelled with the Maronite students to Europe, and definitely settled in the Laerentio Medicean Library in Florence.

These miniatures are the work of several painters, and are divided into two groups: whole page miniatures and marginal miniatures with architectural decorations.

b) 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries: the iconographical painting of Our Lady of Ilige.

The discovery of diverse pictorial layers- of which the original- on the canvas of Our Lady of Ilige is a primordial event for the history of the Syro-Maronite iconography. The givens provided by the successive rearrangements of the canvas, light the iconographic period which was still in the dark due to the lack of documentation. Since then, Our Lady of Ilige can relay the *Codex Robbulensis* in its function as a cultural-historical witness of the origins.

Our Lady of Ilige alone summarizes an iconographical period extending from the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the present day.

This Iligian period remains an enigma when it comes to its origin. The question that still remains unanswered is: Where were we before Ilige? Rabboula comes from Beit-Zoghba in Ilige; but between the two localities, where was he? Our Lady comes also from some locality in the Syriac world and settles in Ilige: where did it originate from? And which trail did it scour?

Because the history of Our Lady of Ilige reveals a "Hodigitria"<sup>29</sup> of Syriac type, and fairly old. The laboratory study using diverse radiations, the analysis of pigments as well as an investigation with binoculars permitted the reconstitution of the iconographical morphology of the word and its technicity: it consists of a Syriac fresco of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

The Antiochian theological tradition that played a primordial

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29 Hodigitria:

role in the statement of the Dogma of the Incarnation and of the divine Maternity, brought about the first representations of the "Hodigitria" or the Guiding Virgin, that is said to have been "painted by the Evangelist Saint Luke".

The Origin of Our Lady of Ilige is to be sought in the Syro-Edessian world with Assyro Babylonian and Persian influences, far from Hellenization which was common in the great Mediterranean cities at that time. This representation of the Mother of God with the big blessing arm was also inspired from the antique myth of the goddess Mother Earth.

The Blessing Mother of God is already found in the Annunciation of the *Codex Robbulensis* and in that of the *Syriac Manuscript of Paris 33*. This "Hodigitria" of the Syriac type was diffused in Italy by defector Syriac colonies.

In Rome, there are two famous representations:

i- *Santa Maria Antiqua* (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries). Tradition of the Mother of God of the Sinai with the "Blessing Hodigitria".

ii- *Salus Populi Romani*: in Santa Maria Maggiore: The visible layer is dated of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. This icon was propagated in all the Christian world, until China and in Ethiopia, by missionary Jesuits.

In Lebanon, there are several representations as of the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

Saidet Et-Talleh in Deir El-Qamar; Saidet El Hosn in Akbar; Saidet El-Bawabe in Jbeil; Saidet El-Abraj in Ghazir.

A copy of small dimensions is found in the University of the Holy Spirit Kaslik.

The composition of Our Lady of Ilige was restored through the ages to attempt to conform it to *Salus Populi Romani*

The caves of (Pouille) and of Calbra (Southern Italy): hide much more than a representation of the Syriac Hodigitria, painted by Syriac refugees who formed colonies in these regions very soon. We remember that of *Rossano Calabro* (7<sup>th</sup> century), the morphology of which is very similar to that of "Our Lady of Ilige," constitutes an interesting variant of the Syriac Hodigitria, attested in the Syro-Edessian region as of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.. Similarly to antique Hodigitrias, the composition of "Our Lady of Ilige" hinges on an "X" shaped structure (of the Cristo,j).

Traces of the Syriac Hodigitria are found in Georgia, Armenia, Ukraina and Kiev.

By contemplating "Our Lady of Ilige" we find ourselves today before a face that has inspired prayer and labor to our fathers in Faith. It is before this is that our Saint Patriarchs have meditated, prayed and asked her intercession during the obscure hours of the Maronite and the Lebanese history. The restoration has uncovered that this painting of the Mother of God had endured the persecutions and the pain that the Lebanon was submitted to. Miraculously the most important traits of the composition have been conserved: what should have been effectuated in order to find out the origin of "Our Lady of Ilige".

The different pictorial layers of "Our Lady of Ilige":

1<sup>st</sup> layer: (11<sup>th</sup> century). Some touch-ups of the faces and other deteriorated regions. The original composition has been respected.

2<sup>nd</sup> layer: (12<sup>th</sup> / 13<sup>th</sup> centuries). In the Medieval Period; total rearrangement of the composition. Byzantine influence. The pigments used and the technique reveal a monastic environment still accustomed to illuminations.

3<sup>rd</sup> layer: (14<sup>th</sup> century). New rearrangement. We realize a local technique and an ignorance of the proper tradition.

4<sup>th</sup> layer: (15<sup>th</sup> / 16<sup>th</sup> centuries). Some disseminated touch-ups most probably to restore deteriorated regions.

5<sup>th</sup> layer: (17<sup>th</sup> century). New touch-ups in order to conform the composition with the "Madonna Salus Populi Romani".

6<sup>th</sup> layer: (At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century). A few touch-ups in order to restore deteriorated zones; attempt to conform with the "Madonna Della Strada".

7<sup>th</sup> layer: (18<sup>th</sup> century). Entire restoration of the composition with a local occidentalized taste. Georgian influence.

8<sup>th</sup> layer: (At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Partial restoration. Therefore, there are five important restorations and at least eight punctual touching-ups. After the investigations and the meticulous dismantlement of the noninteresting posterior layers, the pictorial restoration reconstituted the original composition with the same technique and the natural pigments that were located on the painting.



c) The third group of the period of the big murals: from the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The churches of Bahdidat, Maad (Byblos), Eddeh (Batroun), Saint Simon (Kfoun), the Grotto of the Cross and the church of Mart Shmouneh (Hadchit), as well as Saydet Ed-Dorr (Bcharri), the crypt of Our Lady of Qannoubine and others, from the large group of this period.

The murals that are founding these churches go back in time to the period starting from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are of Syriac style, mixed to Byzantine elements, even if some considered them as Romanesque paintings executed by the Crusaders. Similar paintings are found in some Greek Orthodox or Melkite Churches (Koura). We are aware that many churches and monasteries were repeatedly swapped among different communities.

### 3- The third group

These are local works executed with a mixed technique: iconographical and Post Renaissance style. The themes become increasingly Latin. The apparition of the light and shade effect, but always stressing on the iconographical graphism and on some elements of the traditional iconography. A typical example: The mural of the "Crowning of the Virgin Mary" in Qannoubine. In this painting, the theme is Latin, the elements are mixed: the sun and the moon of the Syriac iconographical tradition, the lamb and the triangular halos belong to the Occidental tradition. The graphism is iconographical, the carnation is Renaissance style. This reminds somewhat of the "Primitive Italians". It is the work of the Maronite Lebanese monk, R. F. Pierre the Cypriot, and it was later restored by Moussa Dib of Dlehta.

We could always insert in this period the canvas painting of some Maronite Lebanese monks of whom we mention:

- R. F. Charbel Dirani I (17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> c.): One of the last pictorial strata of "Our Lady of Ilige".

- R. F. Peter The Cypriot (1711): Apart from the mural of Qannoubine, there are several canvases between Lebanon and Aleppo.

- R. F. Ibrahim Traboulsi (1746): Several canvases also between Lebanon and Aleppo.

- R. F. Estephan Dirani (18<sup>th</sup> c.): Works lost after the theft of the Monastery of St. Anthony of Sir.

- R. F. Charbel Dirani II (18<sup>th</sup> c.): The canvas of Our Lady at the Monastery of Saint Elias Er-Rass- Jiita.

- We also mention with these monks the parish priest Moussa Deeb and his nephew Kanaan of Dlehta, the works of whom are dispersed in many monasteries and churches.

Concerning the modern and contemporary epoch in the Syriac and Maronite worlds, there are iconographical attempts or works of iconographical inspiration.

## C. BYZANTINE ICONOGRAPHY

Byzantine iconography is the most evolved and the most carefully worked iconography from all points of view. All this was due to the political, military and economical stability of the Byzantine Empire and due to its geographical, cultural and spiritual expansion.

This iconography was not exclusive to the Byzantium: it extended to Greece, to Italy, to the Middle-East, to Slavic and Balkanic countries and reached Russia. It is by itself an extremely large and very developed iconographical world.

Moreover, the iconographic history from the 5<sup>th</sup> century until the present day Byzantine. All the Iconoclastical quarrels and the great literary and theological currents, and the Oriental iconographical techniques are of Byzantine origin. In brief, when we speak about the icon, it is the Byzantium that primarily comes to mind.

In the Byzantine Church, the *templon* or barrier separating the sanctuary from the rest of the Church becomes, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, an "icon-carrier" or an "icon-support" that illustrates all of the history of Salvation, from the Annunciation to the Pentecost: we call it the *iconostasis*.

The iconostasis is divided iconographically in the following way:

- The main (central) entrance: The Annunciation and the four Evangelists.

- The lateral sides of the main entrance: "Christ Pantocrator" and the "Virgin Mary" "Theotokos".

- The two lateral entrances: the "Archangels, the Saints and the Deacons".

- Above the central entrance: the "Last Supper".

- Above the "Last Supper" or in the vault of the apse: the "Deisis" or the ("Supplication").

- Surrounding the latter, the great feast with the prophets and patriarchs.

The iconographical Byzantine Schools are classified according to the centuries and according to the locations. We will cite them in geographical order from the North to the South.

### **1- The Russian School**

It is the most renowned and the most evolved and advanced Byzantine School from a theological and geometrical composition point of view. Its colours are very attractive, its graphism is well emphasized.

Its personages are a very tall and slender. It is sufficient for the Russian iconographical School to have known an iconographer such as Andrei Roublev, who bequeathed his famous "Trinity". The great centers of Russian iconography are located in Moscow, Kiev, Saint Serge (Zagorsk), Vladimir, Novgorad, Koursoun,...

### **2- The Salvation and Balkanic Schools**

Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia,... The Russian influence is evident along with local variations.

### **3- The Greek School**

It is at the height of the Byzantium. Its personages are well proportioned. It is a royal iconography, especially with its golden mosaics: in the Byzantium, Saint Sophia, Chora. In Thessalonica, Hosios Louka, Hosios David and the Twelve Apostles.

### **4- The Cappadocian School**

Known for mural icons of rock-cut chapels. It is very close to the Syriac world. The grotto churches of the Göreñce Valley, those of Gulselier, those of Nigde and those of Nevsehir, etc

### **5- The School of Mount-Athos**

It is a purely monastical school: its icons represent the expression of monastical mysticism with the sobriety of the faces and the bodies. We find these icons in the monasteries of Mount-Athos.

### **6- The Cretian School**

It is the most important after the fall of Constantinople. The

personages are very refined. The Venetian influence is manifested by the visible attempts to emphasize the third dimension.

### **7- The Cypriot School**

It was strongly influenced by the art of the Italian Renaissance, especially during the Venetian period.

### **8- The Venetian-Italian School**

It is characterized by the contact of the icon with Occidental painting, between which the influence was reciprocal. The mosaics of Saint Mark of Venice bear witness to the latter. The Italian School bequeathed the most beautiful mosaics in Ravenna.

### **9- The Jerusalem School**

European Painters who copy Byzantine art.

### **10- The School of the Monastery Saint Catherine**

Despite its classification with the school of Jerusalem, it possesses its proper originality, technique and style. In Saint Catherine's Monastery we find the oldest icons in the world that were executed using the encaustic technique.

### **11. The Melkite School**

It is a local Middle-Eastern School. It could also be called the Late Antiochian School. Its icons constitute the majority of the Orthodox and Catholic Melkite Churches in Syria and in Lebanon. The biggest workshops of this School were in Damascus and in Aleppo.

## **D. ARMENIAN AND GEORGIAN ICONOGRAPHY**

Many consider it as being a Byzantine iconographical school, except for some particularities, which is incorrect because of the very particular art of its own. Armenian iconography has Syriac roots. (Armenian was christianized by the Syriacs). The Syriac origins were engrafted to an Armenian pagan stem. This iconography was subjected to a triple influence: Persian, Byzantine and Russian. One of the characteristics of Armenian iconography is the quest for popularity which sometimes attains "Primitivism". In the Seldjoukite period, the Armenians added a clearly perceptible geometrical decorative art to their iconography, in their embroidered-like decorated crosses called "Khatch 'kars".

The majority of the Armenian iconographical works consist of manuscripts in the Armenian manuscripts that are dispersed in several

regions: Etchmiadzin, Venice and elsewhere. There are approximately 25000 Armenian illuminated manuscripts.

Finally, another iconography is close to the Armenian iconography is worthy to be mentioned: it is Georgian iconography that is as old as the Armenian School and is known for its partitioned enameled icons.

## **E. COPTIC AND ETHIOPIAN ICONOGRAPHY**

### **I- Coptic iconography**

It draws its characteristics from three sources:

1-The Alexandrian Hellenistic period

2- The "primitive" local arts of the Upper-Egypt that is originally Pharaonic.

3-Syriac iconography introduced into the Coptic and Ethiopian communities by the Syriac monastic colonies implanted in Egypt.

Coptic iconography was well preserved until the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the period of Arabization (Islamization) during which it failed to resist to the influence of Islamic Art.

### **Characteristics of Coptic Iconography**

The bodies of the personages are evidently disproportioned. The anatomical proportion 1/8 sometimes attains 1/5 or 1/4. This derives from the Syriac influence and from the archaic African roots.

It is of convenience to remark that the first Christian icons derive from portraits of Egyptian mummies painted using the encaustic technique during the Greco-Roman period.

The Coptic iconographical vestiges are dispersed in the monasteries of Egypt, in the Upper-Egypt, the Natroun Desert, Fayoum, such as: Deir As-Surian, Anba Bishoi, Um Barakat, Saints Anthony and Paul, the Church of Karnak and Luxor, the White Monastery and the Red Monastery in Sohag.

Add to this a considerable series of manuscripts with miniatures dating from the Islamic period.

### **II- Ethiopian Iconography**

Coptic but with an African aspect. It is characterized by its graphism, its "primitive" forms and its exotic colors.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with Portuguese occupation, Ethiopian iconography was subjected to European Latinization. The most beautiful murals are found in the monolithical, cross-shaped churches of Lalibella: Bayata Abba Libanos, Bayata Maryam and Bayata Georgis.

From the Latin period we have Our Lady of Sion in Axum, the Palace of Goudar and the Church of Bourhan Selasieh.

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Victor N. Menon

## **A brief examination of the Eucharist Doctrine in Eastern Orthodoxy (Byzantine Tradition)**

Central to the life of the Orthodox Church is the Holy Eucharist. When asked by a visitor from Western Europe how the Russian Orthodox Church could be defined, the late Patriarch of Moscow His Holiness Alexij is said to have replied, "A Church that celebrates the Divine Liturgy."<sup>1</sup> Taft goes on to say that this reply which might be disconcerting to the Western Christian and adds "It simply indicates the overriding role played by liturgy in the life of the Christian East." It is Eucharist which truly transforms a human community into the Church of God.<sup>2</sup> It is only in the Eucharist that the Church discovers who and whose she is. It unites the whole Church-past, present and future- around a single table, sharing a single meal, and thereby re-enacting the whole life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, the incarnate God. To the Orthodox, the Eucharist is a mystery which is unfolded before our eyes like a great drama, and like a great drama, no two "performances" are exactly alike. One commentary on the Liturgy says, "The Fathers of our Church define the Holy Liturgy as the

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1 Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West* (Washington: Pastoral Press, 1984) p.111.

2 John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fordham Univ. Press. 1983) p.206



'mystery of mysteries'. It is the highest and holiest of Christian worship. It is the token of immortality, of resurrection and of the life to come."<sup>3</sup> Alexander Schmemmann echoes the same ideas and says, "It is indeed the heart of the whole of the Church, the means and the expression of her unity with Christ, of her nature as the body of Christ."<sup>4</sup> The truth of these statements is borne out by the fact that in the orthodox churches, the Divine Liturgy is celebrated by the clergy with great reverence and participated in by the faithful with great devotion. Even one who does not understand the language in which the Liturgy is conducted can get drawn into the spirit of worship as this writer experienced many years ago when he attended a service of Divine Liturgy at an Ukrainian Orthodox Catholic Church. This is not surprising since the Commentary from which we quoted above says, "The Holy Liturgy is not a speech, but a religious drama. All faithful can join it whether they understand all the words or not".<sup>5</sup> How important the Liturgy is for the very survival of the Church is best stated by R. Taft in these words,

But as long as they are free to participate in the Worship of their local Church, the Eastern Christians can survive. As long as the mysteries can be celebrated the Church lives, held together not by organization nor authority nor education, but by Communion year after year in the regular cycle of feast and fast. This is the secret of Russian Orthodoxy's survival in the USSR.<sup>6</sup>

At this point it may be necessary to define the term "Liturgy" as this is a very much misunderstood term among some branches of Protestantism especially of the Free Church tradition (This has, at times, been a theory issue in Church Union negotiations). Schmemmann points out that there are liturgical and non-liturgical churches.<sup>7</sup> This is because the liturgy is considered to be a cultic act, a sort of holy act different "not only from the 'profane' area of life, but even from all other activities of the Church."<sup>8</sup> But the Greek word, *Leiturgia* does not mean this at all, it means a service, an act, a work. Schmemmann writes.

3 What We See and Hear in the Orthodox Church (New York: D.C. Divry, 1961) p.64.

4 Alexander Schmemmann Liturgy and Life (New York, Dept. of Religious Education, OCA, 1974) p.40.

5 What we See and Hear .... P.58.

6 Taft, *Ibid*, p.113.

7 A. Schmemmann For the Life of the World (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973) p.25.

8 *Loc.cit*.

It meant an action by which a group of people become something corporately which they had not been as a mere collection of the individuals. .... It meant also a function or ministry of a man or a group on behalf of and in the interest of the whole community. Thus the leitourgia of ancient Israel was the corporate work of a chosen few to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah ....

Thus the Church itself is a leitourgia, a ministry, a calling to act in this world after the fashion of Christ, to bear Testimony to Him and His Kingdom. The Christian liturgy in general, and the Eucharist in particular are indeed the end of cult, of the "Sacred" Religious act isolated from, and opposed to, the "profane" life of the community. The first condition for the understanding of liturgy is to forget about any specific liturgical piety.<sup>9</sup>

Now it is not possible to do justice to every aspect of the Divine Liturgy within the compass of a short paper, so we shall deal selectively with this material. Further, this writer does not have access to the vast range of the material (which daunts the mind on first view) on the subject and has to make do with the limited material at his command. Hence important questions like the Jewish antecedents of Divine Liturgy (except perhaps for making a small reference to the nature of the Eucharistic meal), an analysis of various liturgies, etc. will have to be kept out of our purview since each of these subjects would require a separate and detailed treatment and is beyond the scope of this paper. We shall only attempt to examine some aspects of the Orthodox Eucharist to help us understand what the Eucharist is and what it is not. But first, a couple of preliminary questions need to be dealt with before we delve into the subject.

### **The Nature of the Eucharistic Meal.**<sup>10</sup>

All the four Gospels tell us that the institution of the Lord's Supper took place either during or more probably after a meal. As is well known there is a discrepancy between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel. According to the Synoptists it was a Passover Meal and according to St. John's Gospel it was something different. But majority of scholars are agreed that the Fourth Gospel is right and that this was not a Passover Meal. Then what sort of a meal was this? At the risk of oversimplification we will put down the facts as briefly as possible.

9 Ibid. pp. 25f. (emphasis mine).

10 W.O.E. Oesterley, The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1925) pp. 156ff. I am indebted this book for what follows on Jewish observation of their festival.

Sometime after the Exile a custom arose among the Jews wherein friends would meet together in the house of one of them to partake of a social meal on Friday afternoons. This had a distinctly religious character and during the meal it was customary to discuss serious religious subjects. During the meal night would descend and the Sabbath begin. The Sabbath would be greeted with a blessing over the Cup and the wine would be served after some food had been eaten. Later on, to this religious, social meal another ceremony known as "The sanctification of the Day" was added and these two took place in private houses and had nothing to do either with the Temple or later with the Synagogue worship. Originally the meal preceded the sanctification ceremony but later the sanctification preceded the meal.<sup>11</sup> This ceremony was known as Kiddush – "the ceremony consisted of the commemoration of the institution of Sabbath, the blessing over the cup and its partaking of by all, next, the memorial of redemption from Egyptian bondage, followed by the blessing over the bread and its distribution."<sup>12</sup> As Oesterley further observes.

If, then, we identify the meal at which Christ and His disciples were sitting with the weekly social already alluded to, and if we identify the blessing of the cup and the bread with the sanctification ceremony known as "Passover Kiddush", all the difficulties ... disappear.<sup>13</sup>

We need to note just one other important point. That this was not a Passover Meal is further buttressed by the fact that the central feature of the Passover Meal, viz. the roasted Paschal Lamb is nowhere mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels.

Secondly, the bread eaten by our Lord and His disciples could not have been unleavened bread for in Greek the word for ordinary bread is 'Artos' whereas unleavened bread is 'Azuma' corresponding to the Hebrew Lechem and Mazzoth.<sup>14</sup> At the Passover Meal only the unleavened bread was used whereas the Synoptists do not use this word in their description of the Last Supper. Oesterley writes.

... we cannot help feeling that it is remarkable that Azuma is not used here when we find all Synoptists are familiar with the term (Mt. 26:17; Mk. 14:1, 12; Lk. 22:1,7), and further, Artos occurs over and over again in connection with ordinary meals, so that its use at this meal would go to suggest that it was not a Paschal Meal.<sup>15</sup>

11 Ibid, pp. 169-171.

12 Ibid, p.171.

13 Ibid, p.173.

14 Ibid, p.182.

15 Loc. Cit.

The controversy that arose between the Eastern and western churches over the use of leavened bread was really unnecessary (of course, the controversy was complicated by many other issue) and if what we have mentioned above is right then the Eastern Church was right in using leavened bread in the Eucharist.

Enough has been mentioned to show that the Last Supper was not a Passover Meal but a Kiddush-Passover Meal. This is not just a matter of academic interest but has important implications.

The fact that the Eucharist is vitally related to the Passover Festival as a whole cannot be denied. It was not an accident that the crucifixion took place around this festival time. Be that as it may, we shall now take up our original question raised earlier. But in discussing it we shall leave out of consideration the history and usage of the term Eucharist.

### **Epiclesis and Transubstantiation**

These two terms need to be considered together. Transubstantiation is a Latin scholastic term that has specific philosophical underpinnings and should be used with caution when speaking of Eastern Liturgies. In fact, this is not a satisfactory term to describe how the Orthodox view the Eucharist as we shall see later, but for the present we shall retain this word

Schmemmann writes, "It is the Holy Spirit who manifests the bread as the body and wine as the blood of Christ".<sup>16</sup> He further says that the transformation of the elements is performed by Epiclesis (i.e. the invocation of the Holy Spirit) and not by the Word of the Institution.<sup>17</sup> Oakley says that the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is "metabolist" in tone, and that, "following the prayer of the Epiclesis . . . are the words, 'changing them by the Holy Spirit' regarded by many Orthodox theologians as accomplishing the consecration".<sup>18</sup> Be that as it may, the Epiclesis has a long history behind it and we need to glance at it briefly to understand its relation to Transubstantiation and Real Presence. Here I have drawn heavily from Oesterley's work from which I quoted earlier.

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16 Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, p.43

17 Loc. Cit.

18 Austin Oakley, *The Orthodox Liturgy* (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co. 1958), p. 25, n.2.

By the fifth century, the Eastern Liturgy had reached its final shape. The Liturgy of St. James (seventh century) has these words, "... and send down upon us and upon these holy gifts lying before thine all-holy Spirit, that ... He may sanctify and make this bread the holy Body of Christ, and this cup the precious Blood of Christ, ... for the sanctification of their souls and bodies ...".<sup>19</sup> Two points are of significance in his quote: (a) Prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit on the worshippers as well as on the elements, (b) the descent results in the sanctification of the worshippers and the transformation of the elements.<sup>20</sup>

In the fourth century work *Apostolic Constitution* (Book VIII) the purpose for which the descent of the Spirit is prayed for is clearly stated. "... that He may show forth (or declare) this bread the Body of Christ and this cup the Blood of Christ, ..." Here again there is the prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit on the worshippers for the sanctification and on the eucharistic elements but with a difference,. Oesterley writes,

But what is specially noticeable is that the conception of the effect of the Spirit's descent upon these latter is less pronounced than in the case of the fully developed liturgies. The difference between the transforming of the bread and wine ('that He may sanctify and make') in the Liturgy of St. James and showing forth or declaring, in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, is too obvious to need further comment. In each, what is said about the effect of the Spirit's descent upon the worshippers is, in essence, the same. It is the effect of the Spirit's descent upon the bread and the wine that is conceived of as somewhat different.<sup>21</sup>

In the *Canon of Hippolytus* while prayer is offered for the descent of the Holy Spirit on the elements "there is no word about their conversion". The prayer is for the outpouring of the Spirit on the worshippers. In the *Liturgy of Serapion* it is the Word that is invoked to abide on the elements whereas *The Testament of Our Lord* does not have a prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit on the elements. What is significant here is that while the fully developed liturgies of the fifth century contain the idea of the conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the fourth century liturgies are vague and uncertain. It is the Divine Presence among the worshippers that is stressed strongly.<sup>22</sup>

19 Oesterley, *ibid*, p.206.

20 Loc. Cit.

21 Loc. Cit.

22 Oesterley, *ibid*, pp. 208-211.

In the third century Origen refers to the Epiclesis as prayer for the sanctification of the worshippers while Cyprian does not mention this part of the prayer at all and Tertullian had no prayer for the descent of the Holy spirit on the elements.

In other liturgical documents of this period the prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit on worshippers is stressed just as in the fourth century documents.<sup>23</sup>

In the second century Irenaeus, the Apocryphal Acts of John, Justin Martyr and the Didache, while they use the term Epiclesis (not in its later technical sense) contain no petition for the descent of the Holy Spirit on bread and wine but are concerned with prayers for the worshippers.<sup>24</sup> In other words, "the Epiclesis was in its essence a prayer for the Divine Presence among the worshippers during their most solemn act of worship."<sup>25</sup> This Divine Presence among the assembled worshippers seems to have been the "Original form of what ultimately developed into the Epiclesis".<sup>26</sup> As we noted above "during the first three centuries of the history of the Epiclesis there is no mention of the change in the elements being effected by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them."<sup>27</sup> This has important implications for the doctrine of the Transubstantiation as we shall see below.

If the Epiclesis in its original form did not intend to invoke the Holy Spirit to transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, then the question arises whether the doctrine of Transubstantiation was there in the early Church and is still there in the present-day Eastern Churches. Here again we cannot delve deeply into this question but will have to content ourselves by observing certain trends in the Early Church's thinking on the Eucharist.

Commenting on St. Gregory of Nyssa's teaching on the Eucharist, Srawley says that the relation in which the consecrated elements stand towards the Body and Blood of Christ and the exact nature of change due to consecration is difficult to decide.<sup>28</sup> Citing Fronto Ducaeus, Srawley says that "Gregory's words have been used to support the Western doctrine of Transubstantiation".<sup>29</sup> But the question which

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23 Ibid, p. 213.

24 Ibid, pp. 215-27.

25 Ibid, p. 218.

26 Ibid, p. 219.

27 Ibid, p. 218.

28 J.H. Srawley, *The Catechetical Oration of Gregory of Nyssa* (Cambridge, The University Press, 1903), p.XXXVIII

29 Loc.cit.

Gregory wanted to answer was, how could the one body of Christ while distributed and consumed by multitudes yet becomes "in its entirety the possession of each through the portion, and yet remain an undivided whole?"<sup>30</sup> Gregory uses the analogy of the process of nutrition to explain this and it is worth quoting Srawley at some length. Srawley writes,

Bread and wine are potentially flesh and blood, since they become such by the process of digestion. In the case of Christ's earthly Body bread and wine became in this way His Body and His Blood, while that Body, whose substance was from bread and thus in a manner was bread was consecrated by the inhabitation of God the Word. So now in the Eucharist the bread and wine, which are consecrated by the Word, become the Body of the Word, no longer by eating, as in His earthly life, but immediately. The purpose of Gregory's illustration, is to compare the relation in which bread and wine stand to the person of Christ in the Eucharist with that which the bread eaten by Him while on earth had to His earthly body. The change in both cases is a change of relation. His language suggests a real change, but does not indicate the exact manner of change.<sup>31</sup>

In this process of digestion "the constituent elements of bread and wine are ... rearranged under a new form so that they acquire the properties of the body."<sup>32</sup> Just as the bread and wine "are brought into a new relation and acquire fresh qualities" so also "in the Eucharist there is a change of the bread and wine, which acquire by their new relation to the person of Christ the properties of his Body and Blood".<sup>33</sup> Srawley cites Harnack as saying that "Gregory teaches 'a qualitative unity' between the bread and wine and the Body and Blood of Christ" and that therefore there is no justification to say that his teachings "involve the idea of a change of substance or a change of elements or constituent parts of the bread and wine" and since he "moves in a completely different circle of ideas" (to that of the West) his views can in no way be interpreted as supporting the Western doctrine of Transubstantiation.<sup>34</sup>

We chose Gregory of Nyssa as our starting point in this discussion because it was he who "gave a direction to the Eucharistic doctrine of the Eastern Church" that culminated in the teachings of John of

30 Loc.cit.

31 *ibid*, pp.XXXVIII. (emphasis mine)

32 *Ibid*, p.XXXIX

33 *Ibid*, p.XL (emphasis mine)

34 Loc.cit.

Damascus.<sup>35</sup> Like Gregory he too uses the analogy of digestion but goes beyond Gregory in asserting a "complete identity of the consecrated elements with the Body and Blood of Christ".<sup>36</sup> Srawley says that to St. John Damascene "the Body of Christ does not descend from Heaven, but the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of God" and that "this accords with Gregory's idea of an assumption of the elements into the Body of the Word".<sup>37</sup> If we have understood rightly what these theologians have been saying then something like this happens at the Eucharistic rite; In the Eucharistic sacrifice the Church offers bread and wine which is accepted by our Saviour Christ into His system, digested by Him and then returned to us as His Body and Blood. How and when exactly this transformation takes place is hidden from us. This is essential. Further, if this interpretation is correct then the Johannine statements attributed to Christ become intelligible: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed and my blood drink indeed." (John 6:53-55 RSV).

We have already noted that in the first three centuries there was no mention of any change in the bread and wine owing to the descent of the Holy Spirit. Yet the Fathers insisted strongly that what was consumed by the worshippers was the Body and Blood of Christ. Dom Gregory Dix Says that in the first or second century the elements were believed to retain their physical qualities and he adds, "Yet no language could be more uncompromising than that of the second century writers (as indeed that of the New Testament), ... as to the fact that what is received in communion is the Body and Blood of Christ. There is no hesitation, no qualification."<sup>38</sup> Dix quotes some of the Fathers who have said, "The Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins and which God the Father raised up" (Ignatius); "The food which has been 'eucharistised' is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh" (Justin); "How can the Gnostics claim that the Bread which has been eucharistised is the Body of their Lord and the Cup of His Blood, if they confess Him not to be the Son of the Creator of this world?" (Irenaeus).<sup>39</sup> Dix says that "the metaphysical questions about

35 p. XLI.

36 Loc.cit.

37 Ibid, p. XLII.

38 D.G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p.244.

39 Loc.cit.



the correlation of bread and wine with the Body and Blood" which have plagued the West "since the ninth century simply did not exist for these Writers."<sup>40</sup>

Yet couple of Greek Orthodox theologians appear to teach this doctrine of Transubstantiation. Bishop Polozoides in his catechism stresses that the Epiclesis is important because by it the Spirit descends and the plain bread and wine are changed to the real body and blood of Jesus.<sup>41</sup> Another Greek theologian states that in the Eucharist, the earthly and material are transubstantiated into Godly elements, the body and blood of Christ.<sup>42</sup> But the interpretation of these sayings (or teachings) cannot be construed as supporting Transubstantiation. But apart from these isolated teachings, the Orthodox reject the notion of Transubstantiation.

We believe we have produced enough evidence to show that the question of Transubstantiation – the when and how of it – does not exist for the Eastern Churches. John Meyendorff points out that the Byzantine theologians never use the phrase "divine essence" in the Eucharistic context and hence 'transubstantiation' would be a wrong word "to designate the Eucharistic mystery", he prefers the words "metabole" or "trans-elementation" or "re-ordination".<sup>43</sup> This, we believe, is extremely important in any understanding of the Eucharistic doctrine of Eastern Orthodoxy. This means that to the Eastern theologians the Eucharis is "fundamentally a mystery to be received as food and drink, and not to be 'seen' through physical eyes".<sup>44</sup> Meyendorff further observes that in the writings of the early Fathers such as Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom (as we saw above), one sees an emphasis on the Eucharist as a mystery of the real "participation" in the glorified Body of Christ, the seed of immortality.<sup>45</sup> We participate in the glorified humanity of Christ which is not the "essence of God" but a humanity still consubstantial to us and available to us as food and drink.<sup>46</sup>

40 Loc.cit.

41 What we See and Hear ... (Emphasis mine).

42 Demetrios J. Constelanos, The Greek Orthodox Church: Faith, History and Practice. (New York, Seabury Press, 1967) p. 81.

43 J.Meyendorff, Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes, 2nd Ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983), p. 203.

44 Ibid, p. 204.

45 Ibid, p. 201.

46 Ibid, p. 204.

No study of the Eucharistic doctrine would be complete without a brief mention of an important component of its liturgy, namely, the Anamnesis. Here again time and space do not permit us to engage in any extended discussion of this subject. Hence we shall just note that the Anamnesis or Commemoration or remembrance is not simply a memory of a past event, something in the nature of reminiscence. Florovsky says that the mighty events of the past which are the foundation of our faith are "paradoxically present in the Church here and now"<sup>47</sup> we just do not look back to the events that happened long ago in the dim past but perceive and experience them in a very real way here and now in the Church. He further says, "This changes radically the meaning and character of anamnesis in Christian worship" and then adds "This paradoxical coincidence of past and present constitutes the distinctive and unique characteristic of the Christian 'memory', which reaches its culmination in the Eucharistic anamnesis or commemoration".<sup>48</sup> Florovsky explains further what this actually means in terms of the Eucharistic rite. The Eucharist, while it is performed in remembrance of Jesus, is not a mere commemoration of the Last Supper. In fact, "it is the Last Supper itself".<sup>49</sup> It is "neither a mere remembrance nor a 'Repetition' of the Last Supper. It is rather its manifestation or extension".<sup>50</sup> Florovsky adds,

Worshippers are, as it were, taken back to the Upper Room and made participants of the same sacred Supper. This paradoxical nature of sacramental anamnesis, which is at the same time an actual and immediate encounter, or rather communion, with the ever-abiding Lord, discloses the ultimate mystery of Christian existence.<sup>51</sup>

It is this notion of being transported to the Upper Room which runs counter to the many attempts to explain the Eucharist with reference to the gifts alone; what "happens" to bread and wine, why and when does it happen. But we must understand that what "happens" to bread and wine, happens because something has, first of all, happened to us, to the Church.<sup>52</sup> It is this act of being carried back to the Upper Room which makes the anamnesis a key element of the liturgy. Further, the

47 Mary and Ware, *The Festal Menaion* (London, Faber and Faber 1977) Introduction by G. Florovsky, p.28.

48 Ibid, pp. 28f.

49 Ibid, p. 29 (emphasis mine)

50 Loc. Cit.

51 Loc.cit.

52 A.Schmemmann, *Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (New York; Herder and Herder 1965), p.43.

whole Eucharistic Liturgy is focused on thanksgiving, our giving thanks to God and offering to God the gifts which we have brought even though we recognize them as His already. "as we stand before God, there is nothing else we can remember and bring with us and offer to God but this self-offering of Christ, because in it all thanksgiving, all remembrance, all offering ... were fulfilled".<sup>53</sup> The Anamnesis brings to the surface the whole reason for our being together and reminds us that the Eucharist is an act of cosmic remembrance, for it is whole of cosmos that is present at the Eucharistic meal.

Having said and done all this we need to ask the final question before concluding this essay; What is it that gives the Eucharist its significance for the Orthodox? If it is a meal, how is it different from other meals? Nicolas Zernov cites six distinct elements which make the Eucharist significant.<sup>54</sup> First, there is its human character. The bread and wine are produced by human toil and by their usage God sanctifies human industry. Secondly, the Eucharist has a universal character. All humanity is invited to share the meal; no limitations are set. Thirdly, there is the significance of the new covenant between God and God's people. It links Christ's blessing of the bread and wine with the mighty deeds of God who led His people into the promised land and made with them a covenant. Fourthly, the Eucharist signifies a sharing in the sacrificial death of Christ and His glorious resurrection. In the fifth place, the Eucharist is a cosmic drama in which the whole of humanity plays its part. All humanity is united with the body and blood of Christ creating an indissoluble unity among all believers – living, dead and yet unborn. Finally, the Eucharist is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ who is Himself fully present at the meal. Such an understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist expands its significance far beyond that of a sacrificial act to insure salvation and forgiveness.

## Concluding Observations

That the Eastern Orthodox Liturgy has much to teach us (Roman Catholics and the Protestants – particularly the latter) is beyond question. It is heartening to see that many of its teaching on the Eucharist are being increasingly accepted by other churches to their spiritual benefits. We shall just glance at some of these. Of course, neither time nor space permit us to go into a detailed comparative

53 Ibid, p. 49.

54 Nicholas Zernov: *Orthodox Encounter: The Christian East and the Ecumenical Movement* (London; James Clark & Co., 1961) pp. 72-74.

study of the Eucharistic doctrines of various churches vis-a-vis the Orthodox doctrines. Frankly, it is beyond the competence of the present writer to engage himself in that task. However, we shall make some observations on the Orthodox contributions.

First, the Orthodox understanding of the Eucharist as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is being accepted by the Protestant churches as is evidenced by the Lima Document of the World Council of Churches. The Document says,

The Eucharist is the great sacrifice of praise by which the Church speaks on behalf of the whole creation. For the world which God has reconciled is present at every Eucharist, in the bread and wine, in the persons of the faithful, and in the prayers they offer for themselves and for all people ...<sup>55</sup>

If the text indicates anything, it is that Protestants who were once averse to the sacrificial concept are coming round to accepting it owing perhaps to the rich theological content that the term has in the Eastern tradition.

Secondly, the wealth of meaning that the term Anamnesis has acquired in the Lima Document must be directly due to the influence of the Eastern Churches. While some Protestant denominations tend to look upon "remembering" as recalling to mind something that happened long ago, the Lima Document adopts all the ideas connected with Anamnesis that we examined earlier. What Christ achieved for us and the whole of creation "is present in this anamnesis, granting us communion with himself. The Eucharist is also the foretaste of his parousia and of the final Kingdom."<sup>56</sup> It is both a "representation and anticipation".

Thirdly, the Lima Document emphasizes the importance of Epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit made both on the elements and the worshipping community. The Document says, "The Spirit makes the crucified and risen Christ really present to us in the Eucharistic meal, fulfilling the promise contained in the words of institution", and in the commentary on this it adds,

This is not to spiritualize the Eucharistic presence of Christ but to affirm the indissoluble union between the Son and the Spirit. This union makes it clear that the Eucharist is not a magical or mechanical

55 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. III WCC, Geneva, 1982), p. 10.

56 *Ibid*, p. 13.

action but a prayer addressed to the Father one which emphasizes the Church's utter dependence. There is an intrinsic relationship between the words of institution, Christ's promise, and the epiclesis, the invocation of the Spirit, in the liturgy.<sup>57</sup>

Max Thurien observes that "Many Western Churches have now adopted in their eucharistic liturgies an epiclesis of the Holy Spirit" and then says that he "suggested the following epiclesis in the Lima liturgy prepared for the Faith and Order Commission celebration on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1982." The prayer reads "... upon our Eucharist send the life-giving Spirit, ... May the outpouring of this Spirit of Fire transfigure this thanksgiving meal that this bread and wine may become for us the body and blood of Christ."<sup>58</sup>

Finally, the doctrine of the Transubstantiation is giving place to the doctrine of Real Presence. The document says that the Church confess Christ's real, living and active presence in the Eucharist.<sup>59</sup> The emphasis is on the dynamic Presence of Christ at the Eucharist by which He empowers his people to become his agents of healing and reconciliation in the world. This too is a notable contribution of the Orthodox Church which has lifted the Eucharist from being a mere rite divorced from life to be a channel of grace for the entire creation.

Thus the Orthodox theology of the Divine Liturgy has much to teach others on the meaning and significance of the Eucharistic liturgy. We need much more work to be done in this area to interpret the Orthodox teachings to others and enrich all Churches.

57 Loc. Cit.

58 Max Thurian, "The Eucharistic Memorial, Sacrifice of Prayer and Supplication" in Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry Ed. By Max Thurian (Faith and Order Paper 116, World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1983), p. 98.

59 Baptism, Eucharist ... p.13

Francis Acharya

# **The Week of the Life-giving Passion and the Night of the Resurrection in the Syro-Malankara Church of Asia**

## **Foreword**

The prayers of the Syrian Churches for this week have been described as "the greatest Christian prose and poetry that have ever been written about the betrayal, suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord."<sup>1</sup> They reveal to us the deep insight that the Syrian Christians have about their Saviour, His love for them, and the terrible humiliation which He allowed to befall Himself so that human kind could be reconciled to the Father. They are a beautiful expression of a Christian culture which is neither Latin nor Greek, but belongs to the Ancient Semitic world. They have been translated and published under the title of Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit, The Prayer of Asian Churches.

The style of these prayers is simple and direct. They are also remarkably biblical in their inspiration and devoid of any later western philosophical thought. They give voice to the cry that is in the hearts of

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1 Austin P. Mohrbacher, Holy Week service Book, Syrian Antiochian Church, New York, Typescript. n.d.

the people, a simply cry of love and sorrow repeated time and again, as the worshipper is struck by the vision of the glorious transcendence of God now being abused by His creatures.

## Prelude

The prelude to the Life-giving Passion of our Lord is the celebration of his Fast of forty days. On the last of these days, Friday before Palm Sunday, a feast day, the Church prays:

Today is the end of the Fast, and the Passion of Christ is near. Blessed are those who pleased Him with fasting; they carry spiritual gifts for the day of the Resurrection.<sup>2</sup> 1

The celebration which follows the Gospel accounts, day by day, is introduced by two significant feasts foreshadowing the Passover mystery: Jesus' sorrow at the death of Lazarus followed by His friend's resurrection, and, on the following day, His solemn entry into Jerusalem.

The significances of these two celebrations is that they renew the faith of the Church in both the humanity and the divinity of her Lord. The tears of Jesus at the tomb of His friend witness to His humanity, as the friendly Jews themselves observed: "How dearly He must have loved him;" while manifestation of His power over death when, "He commanded in a loud voice: Lazarus, come out, and the dead man came out, hands and feet bound with bandages," reveals His divinity. Similarly, the following day, Palm Sunday, He made His solemn entry into Jerusalem, loudly, even exuberantly acclaimed as the Messiah by the youth and the people. However He was not enthroned in glory, but seated on a poor donkey, while the Pharisees reprimanded Him, perceiving the threat which such an event held out for the Jewish establishment:

Our Lord came to this world walking in humility.

Prompted by His love for all creatures, He became flesh,

And did not use the adorned mount of the mighty.

He rode on an ass to visit His people in humility.<sup>3</sup>

2 Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit, Vol. III, p.335. Henceforth PWHS III, 335. Kurisumala Ashram, Kerala, India

3 PWHS III, 320

The events are celebrated simultaneously all through the week, in the one perspective of the ignominious death of the Son of God at the hands of the sons of men, and of His Resurrection from the dead. They proclaim His victory over Satan, death and sin, which brings about the restoration of Adam and his children to their full participation in God's life. Yet, within this unique perspective for the whole week, each day still obtains its proper identity.

These are very privileged days, as the re-enactment of the Life-giving Mysteries obtains its full vigour in their original unfolding in time, one week. Day by day, hour by hour, the Church identifies with her Lord in His prophetic utterances and gestures, his agony and His trials, His crucifixion and His death, and burial, His descent into Sheol to announce first there His resurrection.

### **The Dramatic Character of the Celebration**

The stage is set for the week's celebration on Sunday evening, when the sanctuary remains closed, after the altar has been stripped, and in the nave all icons have been removed. The curtain will be drawn aside only on Thursday for the celebration of the Great Passover. The worshipping community will now gather for her cultic assemblies without the eucharistic celebration. They come together before the Bible stand from where the Gospel is read at the conclusion of each hour. The prayer of the Church concentrates exclusively on Christ. No prayer is addressed to the saints or makes mention of them, except on Thursday and Saturday, at the celebration of the communion of saints.

Hence the climatic place given this week to the Gospel which is read in its harmonized form. The text is woven together out of the four Gospels, in an ongoing account, without leaving out any detail, even any variant, so that no crumb may fall on the ground and no meaningful word be left out of the wondrous story of the life-giving sufferings of the Uniquely Beloved Son of God.

The celebration embraces all the human events and divine interventions related to it, or which led to it, and finally brought it about. This extends very far, for the Passion of our Lord is related to the account of creation and the fall of our forefathers, with the call and the sacrifice of Abraham, the ill-treatment of his descendants in Egypt, their liberation with divine power and their settlement in the land of promise, together with the seers and the messianic kings, the prophets and the sages, the law and the temple, the feasts of the year and the daily sacrifices. It is out of all these that the Son of Mary emerges with increasingly clearer features.



He is the Servant of the Lord, the Teacher, the Mediator of Salvation, but also the Innocent Victim, who came to suffer in order that the guilty might repent and find mercy at the hour of judgment. The same Servant was later to be acknowledged by His disciples as "the Image of the Invisible God and the First-born of every creature."

## Monday and Tuesday

Monday and Tuesday, the prayer of the Church actuates the mounting opposition to the mission of Jesus. Two main biblical themes stand out. They are proclaimed in the scriptural readings, and in the accompanying hymns: the vineyard of God and the watchfulness which the coming of the Lord demands. The theme of the vineyard is first evoked by the account of the murder of Naboth at the hands of King Ahab's men, in order to seize the poor man's land. More moving and more constantly evoked is Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard, the Song of God's love rejected by His beloved. More dramatic still is the Gospel's parable of the wicked tenants of the vineyard, because it comes from the lips of Jesus Himself and was taught by Him to illustrate the existential situation in which He found Himself, and to reveal His own place in the perspective of the whole Economy of Salvation. This gives it an unsurpassable force. The parable is at once judgment and promise.

The persecution and the killing of the prophets find their climax in the persecution and killing of the Son. But the rejected stone becomes the corner-stone. The Messiah, rebuffed by the jealous leaders of the people, will be exalted as the Lord on high through His Resurrection. His victory over death marks the time of the Church to whom is entrusted the new life, and ushers in the Reign of God in which is gathered the harvest of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, humility and self-control, all expressions of the love of God and of the whole world. It is remarkable that the *Sedros*, the Eucharistic Prayers which are at the heart of each hour on Monday and Tuesday to celebrate the events of the Lord's work of salvation, are offered meaningfully on each day of the week.

## Wednesday

Wednesday is called Wednesday of the conspiracies. The Gospel tells us that the chief priests and the elders of the people, the Sanhedrin, the highest court of justice and supreme council, conspired to arrest Jesus secretly to put Him to death. Their antagonism to Him has reached its climax and takes a decisive turn:

A people foolish and blind conspire to condemn Him to death  
because He came to them seeking fruits of recognition  
from the vineyard planted at His command.<sup>4</sup>

But the darkest feature of the conspiracies is of course the betrayal  
of Judas, which crops up again and again in the prayer of the Church,  
even on Thursday:

On Wednesday and Thursday, at Jerusalem,  
there is intrigue and tension between buyer and seller,  
and neither of them makes any gain.

Judas sells and Caiaphas purchases.

They are traders of deception.

He who sells does not gain, neither does he who buys.

Jesus Himself is troubled in spirit,

when He reveals the betrayal to His disciples,

Judas receives the bread and goes forth. It was night.<sup>5</sup>

At other times Jesus reveals the whole drama to His disciples  
with great serenity:

On Wednesday our Lord revealed a hidden mystery

to His disciples "Do not grieve, little ones,

because it is for you that I die. The people will take Me

and crucify Me on Golgotha. They will pierce

My hands with nails for the sake of Adam, the earthly one.

I love him unto death.<sup>6</sup>

## **Thursday of the Great Passover**

The name of this celebration attests its Old Testament origins, the  
Jewish feast of the Passover or of the Paschal Lamb, but its newness is  
immediately asserted, even in the Opening Praise of the celebration:

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4 PWHS III, 450-451

5 PWHS III, 462-463

6 PWHS III, 450

Christ, who by Your Passover  
have ended the Passover of the lamb,  
rejoice us with Your Passover and be gracious to all.

The Responses and Hymns, as usual, are truly woven out of the Gospel account. The theology of the day, the theology of the Mysteries, that is of the sacraments, is found mainly in the Eucharistic Prayers:

After eating with Your disciples the lamb prescribed by the law and while celebrating the Mystery of the Passover, You made them understand that the prefiguration was now to be fulfilled, and the foreshadowing was to yield to the light, and the truth to be manifested. I have a Mystery. I have a Mystery. I and the children of My household, a new Mystery is revealed to them. And taking the bread in Your holy hands, and having said the blessing and broken it, You gave it to Your disciples, the children of Your Mystery, saying, This is My body which is broken for many and is given for the sins of the world. And You mixed the cup from wine and water, and gave it to them to drink saying, This is the cup of the new Covenant in My blood. Take and drink it, all of you. Do not doubt that I sacrifice Myself and consecrate Myself for you. From this time the old order has passed away and all things have become new. Do this in memory of Me.

On this evening You conferred the priesthood on the noble company of Peter's household, and they took charge of the Divine Treasure-house to distribute Your living body among the peoples and the nations, and to give Your blood to drink to all the tribes and races. Likewise today, on this evening, it is given in remission of sins to all the lands and countries according to Your commandment, Lord, to accomplish Your Life giving Memorial.<sup>7</sup>

The Lord had already revealed the newness of His Passover when He washed the feet of His disciples. The Holy Washing, undoubtedly, was meant to remove from the Twelve, the pillars of the Church, all triumphalism and self-complacency in the fulfillment of their mission. The, "all things have become new" and "the Wonderful Mystery," can only be the fruit of the humiliation and utter self sacrifice of Christ, and later of His followers.

## **The Great Friday of the Crucifixion**

Friday is a climax of the celebration of the Week of the Life giving

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7 PWHS III, 468-469 & 515

Passion. In saint Paul's well known hymn of the letter to the Philippians on the Mystery of the Word made flesh, it is the kenosis of Christ in His death on the cross, which marks the fulness of His humiliation, that opens the way to His glorification. The Friday of the Great Suffering, as it is also called, is very much the climax of the celebration in Kerala, where Good Friday is a public holiday- all works cease and the whole day is observed as a day of fast and prayer. In the churches the day is marked by long ceremonies. At the Ashram we begin at 4 a.m. and continue in prayer, with some brief intervals until 3 p.m. there are two processions. The first one, outside, as when Christ was led out to Golgotha; the other, inside, after the adoration of the Cross, when the body of Christ- the naked Cross – is carried to the sanctuary to be buried under the altar. But the golden thread of the celebration is the proclamation of the Gospel, hour after hour, with appropriate readings from the law, from the prophets and the apostolic writings, with well chosen psalms, hymns and homilies.

In all this, the prayer of the Church shows no inclination to magnify the apostles. It repeatedly brings out their total failure to stand by their Master and Lord, all of them. Peter's denial is recalled as the most miserable fall. But a whole hymn, *madrosho*, of Saint Ephrem describes, in very moving yet uncompromising terms, the pangs of the conversion that brought Him back to the feet of his Master.<sup>8</sup> It is the inner drama that inspires our hymns, as when the thief's repentance is contrasted with the disciples' inconstancy:

The faith of the thief is truly great and firm,  
as he asks forgiveness from his Lord hanging on the Cross.  
While the nails are in His hands and His feet,  
he says, Forgive me my evil-doing.  
Simon Peter denies Him saying with an oath,  
I do not know this man.  
John the Virgin and the disciples flee and are scattered,  
but the criminal cries out, Remember me, my Lord,  
when You come into Your Kingdom.<sup>9</sup>

8 PWHS III, 527-529

9 PWHS III, 556

One of the most astounding prayers of the Great Friday of the Cricifixion is the Supplication Song which concludes the Morning Service. The Gospel tells us that the end of the night trial, when the Sanhedrin pronounced that Jesus deserved death, early morning, He was taken to Pilate in order to obtain the Governor's verdict. At this announcement the Church, seeing the death of her Spouse as the dawn of the new life, as the new creation, bursts into praise:

Glory to You, Christ-Morning,  
who have redeemed us for Your morning.  
In the morning came to an end,  
the judgment conducted by the priests of iniquity.  
In the morning, seething with jealousy, they bound You.  
They held You and delivered You to the judge,  
clamouring all the time against You,  
"This One deserves death,"  
You who are the Fountain of Life  
for all those who believe in You.  
In the morning he saw You condemned,  
Judas the killer, and he repented,  
and returned the money which he had taken,  
witnessing by this to the innocent blood,  
the money which he loved, he did not keep  
and he earned for himself only the hanging,  
In the morning You clothed Adam  
in glory, in splendour and in beauty,  
and in the morning blind people  
clothed You in a garment of scorn.  
In the morning came out of Egypt  
these people who hate their Liberator.  
In the morning they load the Cross  
on His shoulder to take Him to His death.

In the morning the holy of holies of the temple wept,  
because on it fell the price of Your blood.

It knew that its time had come  
to be relieved from its service.

It wept for those who ensured its service  
and whose service was now coming to an end.

Sacrifices came now to an end.

They were now abolished and for ever.

And to Pilate who washed his hands,  
a people incensed against Jesus  
clamoured, "His blood be on us and on our children  
for the generations to come"

In the morning You clothed heaven  
in comely luminous garments.

In the morning the Winged Creatures cry out,  
"Blessed be Your glory in Your place."

And in the morning they rise against You  
the adulterous generation, in the tribunal,  
"Away with Him. Away with Him from this earth!

Do away with Him from among the living!"

You who are hallowed, our Lord,  
by the Wakeful Ones of fire and spirit.

In the morning Mary wept  
bitterly over her Beloved.

The judgment is over,  
and as He comes out, the Cross is waiting for Him.

In the morning they moan like doves  
the virgins of the house of Israel,  
when they see the High Priest Supreme

carrying a cross on which they will fasten Him.  
In the morning the mothers lament  
over the babies in their wombs  
for they are guilty of the innocent blood  
which the priests called on them all, in the tribunal.  
It is the will of Your Father  
that by Your death peace may come.  
and it is also Your will  
that reconciliation come through Your crucifixion.  
But why, our Lord, have You made supplication  
that the cup of death be removed from You?  
In the form of Adam which You assumed  
You made supplication to the Father for Adam  
that be removed from him and for his children  
the cup of the second death,  
mixed for him by the Evil One, from the day he sinned,  
and to be given to drink to his children.  
Glory to You, Christ-Morning,  
from all that Your Majesty has created.  
Glory to You, and all mornings,  
for You are the Morning that gladdens all.  
Glory to You from all beauties,  
for You are the beauty of all beauties.  
You are He who clothes with beauty  
all plants and flowers.  
Glory to You who are the staff  
and the support of all those who need support.  
Glory to You, Lord of graciousness.  
Glory to You, Lord of all, a thousand times.

Glory to You, myriads and myriads of times.

Glory to You, Judge of judges who stood in the tribunal.

Glory to You, our Lord, from Your Church.

And praise to You from her children.

Glory to You, and to the Father who sent You.

And to the Holy Spirit exaltation.<sup>10</sup>

## **Saturday of the Good Tidings**

This is a celebration proper to the Antiochen Church. All the hours are still celebrated before the drawn curtain of the sanctuary. But an altar has been erected there for the celebration of the Eucharist, at noon, after the Prayer of the Sixth Hour. But all this is done 'sotto voce', in a subdued voice, out of respect for the body of Christ resting, buried in the sanctuary under the altar. The salvific event which is celebrated is the first announcement of the Resurrection of Jesus, when He Himself brought it to the dead, when at His death on the cross, His soul joined them in Sheol. Though not celebrated by the Latin and Greek Churches, this is an event of the Economy of Salvation well attested in the Holy Scriptures, in both testaments, as can be seen from the readings of the day. As Peter said on the day of Pentecost, after quoting David's psalm, "My flesh shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor let Thy loyal servant see corruption." When David said that He was not abandoned to Sheol and His flesh never suffered corruption, he spoke with foreknowledge of the resurrection of the Messiah. Though not yet found in the Nicene Creed, the Descent of Christ into Sheol is included in several later symbols of the faith: "Jesus ... was buried. He went down to the dead. On the third day He rose again from the dead..." Christ's descent into Sheol has long been popular in Christian iconography, and it is still held as the proper icon of the Resurrection of Christ. The descent of Jesus among the dead is celebrated by the Church as an epiphany of His victory over the powers of death. In that sense it anticipates the appearances of Jesus after His Resurrection on the third day.

The Gospels of the day are the accounts of the burial of Jesus. The prayers celebrate the mystery that is hidden in it as the manifestation of Christ's power over death. They praise "His life-giving burial sprinkling on the dead the dew of graciousness, of compassion and of

<sup>10</sup> PWHS III, 545



the new life."<sup>11</sup> They speak of it as His visit to Adam, when He reclined at his side, making Himself one of the dead in order to announce life to them. And this takes the form of a real theophany, "Today a great light shines in Sheol which had never seen the light."<sup>12</sup> The realism of the mystery is conveyed with great power, by having recourse as usual, to the contrast of opposites, "Christ, Life Divine, Incorruptible and Immortal entwined Himself with Death, was knit together with her."<sup>13</sup> Mary herself is made to witness to this life-giving tragedy, even before the burial:

Mary drew near Jesus.

She leaned her head against the Cross

and began to sing sorrowfully lamentations to Him.

My son, who will give me the wings of an eagle

to fly to the four quarters of the earth

and invite all nations to come

to the feast of Your great slaughter.<sup>14</sup>

There are also dramatic personifications of the powers at work in the conflict of the Creation with God:

The Lord cried out in a loud voice and Death heard it.

The Creation was terrified and the rocks split apart.

Light shone in the darkness

and the radiance of the Son wiped out Death.

Those who were lying prostrate in Sheol clapped their hands  
for the voice of the Resurrection that called them.

Death terror-stricken howled and said to Satan, her friend,

Hear from me what happened:

the tombs burst open and the dead went forth.

'His name is Jesus' answered the Evil One.

He is the fruit, which came to the Virgin.

11 PWHS III, 568

12 PWHS III, 570

13 PWHS III, 574

14 PWHS III, 571

He is the Son of God, and the worlds quaked  
when He was crucified on Golgotha.

He takes away your burden, He who was crucified  
at the hands of the people who listened to me.<sup>15</sup>

While being essentially a celebration of Christ's victory over death and of His salvation, it includes the commemoration of those to whom the resurrection is announced and who have experienced His salvation, as narrated in the Gospel according to Saint Mathew. 'Today Sheol is resounding with praises and the dead rejoicing in their tombs shoot up as flowers in the month of April ... the captives return to their former place. Today all those who slept cry out with one accord, Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place for ever.'<sup>16</sup> Hence the celebration of the Service of the Communion of Saints at the Night Vigil, quite exceptional this week, turns into a universal commemoration of all the saints and the just since the creation:

Garlands of praises and adorations are offered  
By the just whom He awakes by His crucifixion.  
First Adam, the head of all races comes to worship, and Seth  
The beautiful, and the house of Noah together with Abraham.  
Then come the just, the fathers and the leaders of all peoples,  
the priests and the kings whom the prince of Sheol first took  
captivities. Moses and all the companies of the prophets,  
Aaron the priest and all the priests, sons of Levi,  
offer their adorations.<sup>17</sup>

Finally the mystery is brought closer to us in the last Service of this day, the Service of Mutual Forgiveness which will be sealed at night, at the end of the Service of the Resurrection, with the mutual gift of peace, following the Exaltation of the Cross, the Exaltation of the Risen Christ.

## **The Night of the Resurrection**

There is only one Christian feast, the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection from among the dead. This is the feast of feasts and there

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15 PWHS III, 576-577

16 PWHS III, 584

17 PWHS III, 592

is no other like it. All other feasts flow from it as a river from its source. It is also the crown of glory of all other festivals. A new humanity is created, a redeemed, vivified humankind,. After overcoming death, sin and Satan.

As in Adam all men died  
so in Christ all are brought to life...  
Christ, the First fruits, and afterwards...  
those who belong to Christ.  
Then comes the end,  
when He delivers up the Kingdom to God the Father...  
until God is all in all.<sup>18</sup>

As all the prophecies come to fulfillment today, the Creation sings praise to Christ who is risen. The Church is filled with holy light, like His tomb at the Resurrection, and she does not cease to sing and praise":

The Day which has no evening...  
the New day which dispels the ancient darkness...  
the Bright Morning which no setting shall veil  
the Flower of the Resurrection  
which marks the end of suffering  
and makes creatures of this earth like the creatures of heaven.<sup>19</sup>

Once more the newness of the mystery is conveyed in a cascade of contrasts:

Yesterday the shepherd was struck and the sheep scattered  
and today they gather together with joy and exultation.  
Yesterday Judas received the thirty pieces of silver  
and Caiaphas gave orders and had them obeyed.  
Annas accused.  
The elders of the priests made much ado.

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18 PWHS III, 1 Co 15:22-28

19 PWHS III, 618

The scribes spread terror.

Pilate sat in judgment and the Lord stood before him.

Today Caiaphas is confounded.

Annas is ridiculed and Judas has hanged himself  
and thrown away the thirty pieces of silver.

The scribes are cowed.

The elders of the priests are cast down.

The Pharisees are covered with shame

And accuse one another of having committed a fault.

Today the way to the tomb resounds with good tidings,

Echoed on Golgotha still wrapped in grief.<sup>20</sup>

We have called the feast, the Night of the Resurrection, to indicate that all our services are celebrated between sunset of Saturday and dawn on Sunday. At the end of the Third Watch, long before dawn, priests and deacons enter the sanctuary for the Service of the Resurrection, when the Cross – the body of Christ buried under the altar on Friday – is taken out of the tomb, no more as the naked Cross, but as the Cross of life, dressed in a red stole, as the solitary conqueror of Isaiah when he was asked "Why is your garment red?" The red stole is the garment of victory. This is well signified when the Cross is raised three times before the Congregation, by the main celebrant, "We bring you good tidings. Christ is risen from the tomb..." while the Congregation responds each time, "We believe and confess that He is truly risen." And when the priests and deacons have resumed their place in the Congregation, soon will be heard the triumphant nine fold halleluia, which will resound everyday of the year to mark the Fourth Watch of the Night Vigil, the greetings of the dawn, the new day.

The Eucharist, celebrated after Lauds, ends usually at dawn of Sunday.

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<sup>20</sup> PWHS III, 618-619

**The sixth wise gift: good patience in every deed  
and every temptation**

"It is necessary that someone who is to endure should acquire patience in all his deeds. Her nature is first, that in exemplary preparation and in calm, a man considers everything. He considers his opinion for a long time, and then on the basis of careful experience speaks or does her will. A man is not to do what he wishes, or is able to do, or knows, but only as the right ordering of an attractive integrity requires. Let him contend through God, who as from strength and wisdom and power is able by a single nod and in the twinkling of an eye to bring everything into being and to perfection. But for the sake of instruction and advantage to rational natures, he provided his wisdom and taught about himself for them to be a reward for patience. But you, O man, grasp whatever has virtue in it as if by your own will, through the use of every kind of patience and instruction, because our nature is subject to changes and infirmity. It is therefore not right for us to be hasty to undertaking everything that comes to our mind."

*(Quoted from "The Book of Gifts" which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhahmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J. Lane)*

Geo Thadikkatt

# The Sources of Spirituality of The Syro Malabar Church

## Introduction

The Church of St. Thomas Christians, known as the Syro-Malabar Church nowadays, is an ancient Apostolic Church in India. This Church has inherited the East Syriac liturgical heritage from its founder, Apostle Thomas and kept this tradition for the last twenty centuries; though there were times when this Church found it difficult to cope with the Latin tradition imposed upon her, because of the vicissitudes of history. This Church kept her tradition intact, incultured to the situations of her natural habitat, and lived a spirituality, which had its roots in the East Syriac tradition. As Latin jurisdiction and along with it, the liturgical and spiritual tradition imposed upon her by the Synod of Diamper (1599), she was forced to incorporate a spirituality, which is modeled after the Latin Church. Consequently, what remains in the Syro-Malabar Church is an amalgamated and amorphous form of spirituality, which no longer keeps any authenticity.

Spirituality is a term used in various contexts and having different understandings. The saints and writers of Oriental Churches explain it as the growth in Jesus Christ: One who is born in the 'image' of Jesus Christ is being continuously transformed to His 'likeness' by the assiduous help of the Holy Spirit. This process of 'divinization' is called Spirituality.<sup>1</sup> Spirituality can be explained in connection with the religious

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1. V. Pathikulangara, *Liturgy Experience*, (Kottayam: Denha Services, 1995), 34.

institutes (Benedictine, Carmelite....Spirituality) and renewal movements (Charismatic Spirituality), within the boundaries of nations and cultures (Indian Spirituality) or in a kind of universal or holistic colour (eco-Spirituality, holistic Spirituality). Taking all these into consideration spirituality may be described as a particular style of God experience.<sup>2</sup>

We aim at finding out the sources of spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church, and to build up an authentic spirituality from the scraps of the history and the liturgical texts, in order to rejuvenate the real Christian life. At the outset, we have to be frank that there were not much serious studies done on this subject so far. The research thesis of Dr. James Aerthayil can be taken as the first step.<sup>3</sup>

In last two centuries many devotions and pious activities began to be practiced in the Syro-Malabar Church, such as personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, Hours of Adoration, periods of exposition – short (One Hour), prolonged (Thirteen Hours) and annual (Forty Hours) - eucharistic benediction and eucharistic processions.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, personal and communitarian devotions and prayers such as Rosary, Way of the Cross, Marian month of Mary, and a variety of Novenas in honour of saints also developed and became the popular expression of the faith of the people to foster their personal devotions. The traditional family

2 V. Pathikulangara, *Liturgy Experience*, 34-35, ID, "Indian Spirituality" *Christian Orient* 5,3 (1984), 99-104, ID, "Indian Christian Spirituality" *Christian Orient* 12,3 (1991), 101-106.

3 J. Aerthayil, *Spiritual Heritage of the St. Thomas Christians*, (Bangalore, 1982). This is more a historical study and is an enquiry into the practices to find out the spirituality. G. Nedungatt, "Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church" See. A. Thottakkara, (Ed) *East Syrian Spirituality* (Rome, Bangalore, 1990), 143-202 is an earnest attempt to study this matter. Studies on the Syro-Malabar Liturgy are also done by J. Chittilappilly, *Mdabbranutha*, (Kottayam, 1999); T. Elavanal, *The Memorial Celebration: A Theological Study of the Anaphora of the Apostles Mar Addai and Mari*, (Kottayam, 1989); P. Maniyattu, *Heaven on Earth The Theology of Liturgical Spacetime in the East Syrian Qurbana*, (Rome, 1995); T. Mannoramparampil, *The Anaphora and Post Anaphora of Syro-Malabar Qurbana*, (Kottayam, 1984); V. Pathikulangara, *Resurrection, Life and Renewal*, (Bangalore, Kottayam, 1982); G. Thadikkatt, *Liturgical Identity of the Mâr Tômâ Nazrâni Church*, (Kottayam, OIRSI, 2004).

4 Though Benedict XIV in the encyclical *Certiores Effecti*, No. 3 and Pius XII, *Mediator Dei* No. 118 John Paul II in *Dominicae Cenae*, n. 3 recommended devotion to the Eucharistic presence, this is to be seen as a devotion of the Latin tradition. It is to be noted that Eucharist is kept in the tabernacle in all the Eastern traditions mainly as a viaticum to the sick.

prayer is still practiced.<sup>5</sup> Recently the charismatic movement also extended its popular base among the faithful. In this process, the faithful lost interest in the real and experiential participation in the solemn celebration of the Holy *Qurbana*. Moreover, the participation of the clerics and the faithful in the daily recitation of the Divine Praises in evening and morning; observance of fasts and abstinences, suffered a serious set back. The feasts and memorials are celebrated with external solemnities and extravaganza, while the spirit of such celebrations is lost sight of.

Today there is an urgent need to search for the sources of spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church. The spirituality of the Thomas Christians can be found as part of the *Tomâ Margâ* or the "Law of Thomas".<sup>6</sup> The way they celebrated liturgy, feasts and memorials; lived the Christian life by observing fasts and abstinence, were the source of their spirituality, than some written books, when printing was unheard and writing very rare, taking into consideration the under developed situations of the small kingdoms or princely states in India. Even if some manuscripts existed, as copy of the spiritual writings of the Fathers, they might have been turned into ashes when the Synod of Diamper (1599) ordered all Syriac books to be burned, in the name of Nestorian heresy.<sup>7</sup> We may discuss some of the sources of the Spirituality here.

## 1 Apostolic Spirituality

An apostolic spirituality springs from an apostolic experience.<sup>8</sup> As all experience is by definition personal, the apostolic witness in the various Churches founded by the Apostles, while handing down the

5 G. Nedungatt, "Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church", 182.

6 The life of the Thomas Christians is summarized in this word. This includes: Liturgical celebration, discipline, spiritual and temporal rule (Archbishop and Archdeacon), *Yogams*. See. P. Vazheeparampil, "The *Tomâ Margâ*: Icon of the Indo-Oriental Identity of the Thomas Christians of India", *CO* 15 (1994): 2-23.

7 G. Thadikkatt, *Liturgical Identity of the Mâr Tômâ Nazrâni Church*, 99-100.

8 There are discussions among the theologians whether the Apostolic experience is a collective one or an individual one. See M. Vellanickal, "Biblical Theology of the Individual Churches", *CO*, 1 (1980): 5-19. M. Vellanickal, "The Particular Churches and the Individual Church", *CO*, 5 (1984): 45-52. M. Vellanickal, "Apostolicity and Individual Churches", *Jeevadhara* 13 (1963): 265-78. F. Wilfréd, "Church Founded by an Apostle or on Apostles? Apostolicity of the Church in a New Context". *Vidyajyothi* XLVI, 7 (1982): 314-26. See also *Supplement to Ernakulam Missam*, LII, 12 (1982): 1-18. F. Wilfred, "Some Aspects of the Problem of Rites", *Jeevadhara* 13 (1983): 279-294.



entire mystery of Christ, had necessarily a personal colouring.<sup>9</sup> The faith of the Church of Christ rests on the witness of the Apostles on whom the Church is built or founded. The second Vatican Council says:

The heritage handed down by the Apostles was received differently and in different forms, so that from the very beginning of the Church its development varied from region to region and also because of different mentalities and ways of life. (UR. 14)

Thus, each *sui iuris* Church is formed out of two constituent elements: the apostolic Christ experience and the life situation of a particular community. Although the Apostles experienced Jesus through the same events, the Gospels witness to differences in each one's experience. The reactions of each Apostle in encountering particular happenings during Jesus' life can easily explain this variety in the Apostolic Christ experience.<sup>10</sup> As V. Pathikulangara rightly says:

The Apostolic Christ-experience stands as the principal constituent element and source of spirituality of an individual Church. In fact the spirituality, liturgy and theology of any particular Church depend upon the proper Christ-experience of the Apostles.<sup>11</sup>

The spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church is primarily a spirituality, which is based on the Christ-experience of St. Thomas the Apostle. The Gospel of John gives ample testimony to the Christ-experience of Thomas, the Apostle. The spiritual friendship and personal attachment of Thomas to his master is explicitly expressed when Jesus proposed to go to Judea. While other disciples showed reluctance out of fear, Thomas said bravely, "Let us also go that we may die with him" (Jn. 11:16). Thomas said to Jesus, as the representative of other disciples, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, how can we know the way" (Jn. 14: 5). The answer to the question of Thomas was one of the self revelations of Jesus, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14: 6). In another instance Thomas makes the most explicit Christological profession of faith by acknowledging Jesus as "My Lord and my God" (Jn. 20: 28). Thus, the spirituality of Thomas is the spirituality of intimate

9 G. Nedungatt, "Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church", 154.

10 V. Pathikulangara, *Liturgy Experience*, 42-43.

11 V. Pathikulangara, *Resurrection, Life and Renewal*, 7.

friendship, a spirituality of resurrection, a spirituality of faithful and not faith-less, a spirituality of believing without seeing, a spirituality of profession of faith and action. It is this spirituality that motivated Thomas to come to India, and to end his life as a martyr on a little hill near Mylapore.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. A Spirituality based on Bible

A biblical spirituality that is based on having a copy of the Bible and daily reading of the Bible is of very recent development in the Syro-Malabar Church. This is mostly the case with the rest of the Catholic Church as well. Before the age of printing and high education, it was not possible that at least a great number of people own a copy of Bible, and attain a spiritual benefit through reading Bible. Still Bible remains one of the means of growth in spirituality. As long as history could prove, the Bible they had used until recently was the Syriac *Peshitta* Bible, though Bible was not in common use in the Syro-Malabar Church. As early as in the second century the Christian community in India was able to possess a copy of the Gospel according to Matthew, in the original Aramaic. The St. Thomas Christians had great reverence for the book of the Gospel which they used mostly in the liturgy. They kept the Gospel on the altar in the sanctuary, adorned with gold, silver and precious stones. It was not to be taken out for private use, but was carted in procession by the clergy, when the faithful would kiss it. The deacons were required to learn the whole Psalter by heart.<sup>13</sup>

Bible was something to be venerated in the church and priests read it out during liturgical celebrations. It became relevant to the faithful when it was interpreted in a meaningful way by homilies, catechesis and symbols etc.<sup>14</sup> A biblical spirituality that is consciously biblical among the St. Thomas Christians is something recent. Still Bible is lived in the East Syriac liturgy, and the active participation in the liturgy is a means of growth also in the biblical spirituality.

12 A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality of the St. Thomas Christian Church in the Pre-Diamper Period". B. Puthur. ed., *The Life and Nature of the St. Thomas Christian Church in the Pre-Diamper Period*, (Kochi, Liturgical Research Centre of the Syro-Malabar Church, 2000), 126; G. Nedungatt, "Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church", 156-62; V. Pathikulangara, *Liturgy Experience*, 43-47.

13 G. Nedungatt, "Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church", 176-77; A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 129.

14 G. Nedungatt, "Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church", 178.

### 3 Veneration of the Cross

The cross, used by the St. Thomas Christians for many centuries is known as Saint Thomas Cross.<sup>15</sup> It is not clear from which century onwards this cross was in constant use among the St. Thomas Christians. Saint Thomas Cross is the perfect symbolic representation of St. Paul's resurrection theology in the cultural background of India. This cross, in the form of a stone slab with a Cross sculptured upon it and an inscription running round the edge of the Cross, was discovered at the Great Mount of Mailapur on 23 March, 1547, while the Portuguese Jesuits were digging the foundations of the church.<sup>16</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century it is said to have sweated blood and to commemorate this the feast of the Mailapur cross is celebrated on 18 December.

Four main elements in the Saint Thomas Cross are:

- (1) Three *steps* at the bottom, which indicate calvary and the rivulets, channels of grace flowing from the cross.
- (2) The [lotus] *leaf* shaped covering the steps, symbolizing Buddhism and the cross over it showing that Christianity was established in the land of the Budha.
- (3) The *cross* without the figure of Jesus with fruit like appearance / projection at the four ends. These are symbolizing the resurrection theology of St. Paul and proclaiming the new life, which we have gained through participation in Jesus' Resurrection. The flowery cross reminds us always as mark of early Christianity and its victory over death through Jesus Christ.
- (4) The *descending* position of the *dove* at the summit of the cross touching it gently. The Holy Spirit on the top shows that Christ

15 This cross is also known as Persian Cross and Mailapur Cross. There are some who do not accept the St. Thomas Cross as part of the St. Thomas Christians' heritage (and they call it Manickaen Cross), though the Synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church accepted it as a valid cross along with crucifix. See G. Thadikkatt, "The Cross in different Ecclesial Traditions", in P. Kochappilly, ed. *The Folly of the Cross*, (Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications, Kottayam, Denha Service, 2000), 263-279. J. Vazhuthanapally, who had done extensive studies on the meaning and archeological evidences of the Saint Thomas Cross prefers to call it Saint Thomas ʿlibā. See. J. Vazhuthanapally, *Archaeology of Mar ʿlibā*, (Kottayam, 1990), 23-24.

16 K.K. Kuruvila, *Mar Thoma Church and its doctrines*, (Mylapur, 1951), 2., G. Schurhammer, "The tomb of Mailapur" in G. Menacherry (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of the St. Thomas Christians of India*, (Trichur, 1982), 5; J. Vazhuthanapally, *Archaeology of Mar ʿlibā*, 8.

was risen through the work of the Spirit.<sup>17</sup> This cross also embodies profoundly the Christian notions of "tree of life", "rebirth", and "spiritual passage" which are also fundamental in Indian symbolism.<sup>18</sup>

There are different usages for the cross according to the liturgical celebrations and the life of a Christian in relation to the worship, and also in the normal Christian life.<sup>19</sup> The anthem of the sanctuary extols the glory of the Cross, as the prayer from the *Raza* shows: "The Cross that has been the cause of our good and by which our mortal humanity was set free, be for us, O my Lord, a strong fortress, and by this Cross, we shall overcome the wicked one and all his devices".<sup>20</sup> Some of the occasions where cross is venerated in the Syro-Malabar Church can be mentioned here.

1. The cross is kept on the altar and is adored equally with the holy Eucharist.
2. The cross at the top of the churches is one of the distinguishing marks of a church from a Hindu temple, and especially from a Budha pagoda, as many of the churches represented the pagoda style.
3. The open-air granite cross was erected in front of the church within the boundary wall. The church processions, which are common in connection with the feasts, would go around the open-air granite cross once and around the church thrice. In such occasions the cross is carried in front and the Bible is carried by the priests at the end of the processions.
4. St. Thomas Christian men used to wear the cross on the tuft of their hair and women hang it on their necks.
5. The blessings were made by the priest in the form of the cross and sometimes raising the cross and the faithful make a sign of cross on themselves from left to right, meaning one is blessing oneself with the sign of the cross.

17 J. Vazhuthanapally, *Archaeology of Mar ʿlibā*, 25; T. Puthiakunnel, *Syro-Malabar Clergy*, (Ernakulam, 1964). cover page.

18 A. Kalliath, "A Call to Liberative Praxis of the Gospel", 25; S. Elavathingal, *Inculturation and Christian Art*. (Rome, Urbaniana University Press, 1990), 194-200.

19 J. Vazhuthanapally, *Archaeology of Mar ʿlibā*, 43-45.

20 *The Order of the Solemn Raza of the Syro-Malabar Church*, (Trivandrum, 1986), 13. (Hereafter quoted as *Solemn Raza*) See also: V. Pathikulangara, (ed. & comp.), *The Crown of the Year*, Vol. I, (Kottayam, 1997), 1; G. Thadikkatt, "The Cross in different Ecclesial Traditions", 271.

In the Solemn *Raza*, the most solemn form of Eucharistic celebration in the Syro-Malabar Church there is a special rite after the psalms, namely the Anthem of the Sanctuary and the Kissing of the Cross.<sup>21</sup> According to the Solemn Order of *Raza*, all the celebrants (the main celebrant, archdeacon, deacons and ministers) go to the *Bema* to begin the *Qurbana*. After priestly prayer which follows the psalm when the choir begins the anthem of the sanctuary, the first deacon takes the cross and gives it to the celebrant, who receives it, kisses it, and extends it to be kissed by the archdeacon, deacons, ministers and the people.<sup>22</sup> It remains today a rite where the community shows its respect and adoration to the Cross and an occasion to proclaim the particular phase of the mystery of salvation emphasized on that particular day.

#### 4 Participation in the Liturgical Celebration

Syriac Christianity offers us a discrete tradition of its own, with its closeness to the apostolic Church and serves as the basis of the spiritual theology for the whole Church. The eastern tradition in general, has never made a sharp distinction between personal experience of the divine mysteries and the dogma affirmed by the Church.

There are some basic differences in the approach to Spiritual theology, seen in both Greek and Western, in contrast to Syriac Spirituality. The traditional theologizing as seen in the former ones is based on definitions, which are in a way putting boundaries.<sup>23</sup> East Syriac Spirituality is concerned mainly on the experiential level, than on the intellectual level. This is done mainly through their participation in the liturgy, usually long services, with lots of hymns and incenses,

21 According to the most ancient original style of *Raza* celebration, the bishop or the main celebrant goes directly to the sanctuary from the sacristy only at the beginning of Anthem of the sanctuary. Other priests and ministers, however, go to the *Bema* to begin the celebration. After the psalms and the priestly prayers, the sanctuary veil is removed for the bishop to proceed to the *Bema*. The choir then begins the Anthem of the sanctuary and everybody in the community kisses the bishop's hand-cross. V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana The Eucharistic Celebration of the Chaldeo-Indian Church*, (Kottayam, 1998), 163-64.

22 Solemn *Raza*, 13.

23 The theological "definitions are not only potentially dangerous, but they can also be actually blasphemous", especially "when these definitions touch upon some aspect of God's being: for by trying to 'define' God one is in effect attempting to contain the uncontainable, to limit the Limitless". S. P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, (Rome, 1985), 10.

recitation (or chanting) of the Divine praises, reception of sacraments, celebration of feasts and the observance of fasts and abstinences. The authentic Christian Spirituality is experiencing God in Christ in the Liturgy of the Church. It is an authentic liturgical celebration in one's own proper ecclesial tradition. The Fathers of the Church tried to develop their theological concepts through Biblical commentaries, liturgical homilies, hymns and other writings of the spiritual nature. Even certain external things like church building, the art, architecture, the use of veil, the eastward facing position also played a prominent role in their life.

#### 4.1. Particular Aspects of Celebration

In the Syro-Malabar Church, the most solemn form of *Qurbana* is known as *Raza*, the perfect form of celebration in this liturgical tradition.<sup>24</sup> There are two other forms, such as, the Solemn or the High Mass and the Simple or the Low Mass. In any Church, either of the Eastern or of the Western tradition, High Mass (Solemn *Qurbana*) is the ideal and the historically original form of celebration. The simple mass (Low Mass) is really only a shortened form of the celebration.<sup>25</sup> The East Syriac liturgy is always a sung liturgy. Even if the liturgy is not solemn, the celebrant, with the exception of some silent prayers, recites or sings all the prayers aloud. In solemn liturgies, he is surrounded by several officiating deacons, subdeacons, readers, and singers, all wearing special liturgical vestments, who place themselves on both sides of the altar serving divine mysteries.<sup>26</sup>

The structure and plan of a church vary considerably according to its size, the architectural design and various other factors. It is to be noted that the ancient churches were made almost in identical fashion in the outside and the interior, and these churches were made in such a way that the liturgy might be celebrated facing the east.<sup>27</sup>

The sanctuary is the most raised and protected area within the church; it is in the eastern end. Even the roof of this part is built a little raised above other parts. Sanctuary is the symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem. It is the presence of heaven on earth. The floor of the

24 V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*. vii.

25 A. Fortescue, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd. 1920.), 41.

26 G. Panicker, "Liturgy of St. James and Theology of the Trinity," *Studia Liturgica* 30,1 (2000), 120.

27 A. Fortescue, *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described*, 1.

sanctuary is built three steps above the *Qestroma* (Choir). There was a lamp, *Thukkuvilakku*, hung from the roof and lit always at the entrance of the sanctuary.<sup>28</sup>

In the Syro-Malabar church there is only one altar in the sanctuary. Altar is considered as the throne of God; hence called *sornos* in Malayalam, which means throne.<sup>29</sup> It is never raised by more than one step; often, it remains at the level of the sanctuary floor.<sup>30</sup> Altar is also considered as the sepulchre of our Lord.<sup>31</sup> In the prayer of farewell to the altar, after the final blessing the priest prays: "Remain in peace, altar of forgiveness; remain in peace, sepulchre of our Lord..."<sup>32</sup>

Along with book of *Evangelion* (on the right side) and sacred vessels (at the time of the liturgy of the Eucharist) the Saint Thomas Cross (on the left side) is on the altar, as a perfect symbol of Our Lord's Resurrection.<sup>33</sup> The *beth gaze* (means treasure houses) are arranged on both sides of the altar. They are made as niches or recesses in the northern and southern walls of the sanctuary. The chalice is prepared in the *beth gazza* on the southern side and the paten in that on the northern side.<sup>34</sup>

There is a veil that encloses and to a certain extent hides the sanctuary from the people in most of the eastern traditions. This veil before the "Holy of Holies", the throne of the God, emphasizes the aspect of mystery, and is against the idea of "gazing at the Lord", as is the case in the Roman tradition. Generally, the sanctuary is kept veiled. This brings to our mind the real nature of heaven, which is beyond human perception. At the appointed times during liturgy, the veil is drawn aside. According to the prescriptions of the liturgical books, at least during the celebration of the Solemn and Most Solemn forms of the *Qurbana*, the sanctuary veil is to be used.<sup>35</sup>

28 V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 60, 137-38.

29 V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 60, 140.

30 S. Salaville, *An Introduction to the Study of Eastern Liturgies*, Adapted by John M. T. Barton, (London: Sands & Co. (Publishers) Limited, 1938.), 134.

31 V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 140.

32 *Solemn Raza*, 71.

33 V. Pathikulangara, *Church and Celebration*, 17-21. V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 60, 141-42.

34 V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 142.

35 V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 138-39.

### 4.1.1 Use of Incense

Incensing is an indispensable element of public worship for the Easterners. In the use of incense in the *Qurbana* several symbolic meanings are involved. It is a symbol of supreme adoration or submission of the whole creation to the Creator; the symbol of forgiveness of sins; and human prayer rising to God. Hence liturgy without incensing is a contradiction and naturally imperfect.<sup>36</sup> Incensing before altar, which is the throne of God in heaven, signifies the total surrender of the worshipping community to God and confessing his divinity and dominion over all. Incensing the faithful shows the remission of their sins and debts. A prayer for blessing the incense in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari expresses the symbolism of incensing:

In the name of your most holy Trinity, may this incense which we offer in your honour be blessed so that it may be most pleasing to you, and obtain remission of the debts of the sheep of your flock, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever.<sup>37</sup>

The priest prays blessing the incense, before the elevation:

May our prayer, O Lord our God, and the incense of our censer be fragrant before you like the censer of the holy priest Aaron in the tabernacle of the Covenant, O Lord of fragrant roots and sweet smelling spices, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for ever.<sup>38</sup>

The following prayer of the priest joining his hands cross-wise over his breast, shows the importance of incense for the forgiveness of sins:

Turn into fragrance, O Lord our God, the foul smell of our uncleanness and corruption by the sweet scent of your charity and purify us by it from the vileness of sin: O good Shepherd who set out to seek us and found us when we were lost, forgive my offences and sins, those I know and those I know not.<sup>39</sup>

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36 V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 58-59.

37 *Solemn Raza*, 14.

38 *Solemn Raza*, 52.

39 *Solemn Raza*, 52.



The occasions on which the incense is used are the following: (1) during the entrance procession, (2) at the beginning of *Lakhu Mara*, the deacon incenses the whole sanctuary with altar at its centre, the whole church and the faithful assembled there, (3) at the procession and proclamation of the gospel, (4) at the time of preparation to incense chalice and paten, (5) at the beginning of the Anaphora, to incense the offerings and altar, (6) before elevation to incense the priest, deacon, people, altar, body and blood.

#### 4.1.2 Role of the deacon

The deacon establishes communication between the priest and the faithful.<sup>40</sup> The deacon standing at the head of the congregation before the central doors of the iconostasis, forms a bridge between the people and the holy of holies, a body standing before men, but a mind knocking at the gates of heaven through prayer, in the lively image of St. John Climacus.<sup>41</sup> The deacon also represents the angel.

The deacon plays an active role in the celebration of the Eucharist in any Eastern Church. There will be two deacons assisting the *Qurbana*. In the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana* the proclamations are done by the deacon. Before the prayer by the celebrant the deacon reminds the faithful of the importance of the following prayer by saying, "Let us pray: peace be with us." It is the deacon, who reads the epistle, where as the first and second readings are done by lectors. After the Gospel proclamation by the celebrant, one deacon proclaims the *Karozutha*. At this time, the archdeacon prepares the chalice and paten in the *Raza*, whereas in the solemn *Qurbana* this is done by the deacon. In the *Raza* after the dismissal of the catechumens, the deacon goes to the southern *beth gazza*, takes the chalice, raises it to the forehead and carries it to the middle of the altar and hands it over to the archdeacon. The deacons help also to distribute the Communion.

#### 4.1.3 Preparation of the offerings

According to the tradition in the East Syriac rite, there is a long service for the baking of the bread for the Eucharist, which is done by the priest, in the midst of prayers and psalms. This rite is not seen in

40 Y. Congar, *Diversity and Communion*, trans. Bowden. (London: SCM Press, 1984), 72.

41 P. Hammond, *The Master of Marah, The Present State of Greek Church*. (London: Rockliff, 1984), 36.

any other rite, though in the Eastern churches leavened bread is used for the Eucharistic celebration. F. E. Brightman gives the full text of these ceremonies and prayers in his Book *Liturgies Eastern and Western, being the texts original or translated of the Principal liturgies of the Church*. Vol. I. *Eastern Liturgies*.<sup>42</sup> The baking of leavened bread, just before the Eucharistic celebration, by making use of a portion of the dough from the previous eucharist, kept as leaven, symbolically shows the continuation of the eucharist.

According to the ancient ceremony, the priest brings fine flour and olive oil and warm water, mixes them together, and pours leaven into them. When he prepares, he first takes the portion for the *mecaprâna* from the top of the dough, then the leaven, and then he takes from the middle of the dough the portion of the *malka* (i.e., the priest's loaf) and makes in it a square cavity, in which he puts a little olive oil kept [for the purpose].<sup>43</sup> The accompanying prayer, when he opens the vessel and takes with two fingers some of the *malka*, at the time of the preparation of the leavened bread explains the meaning:

This dough is signed and hallowed with the oil and holy leaven of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given and handed down to us by our holy fathers mar Addai and Mari and mar Tuma the apostles, who made disciples of this eastern region: in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4.1.4 Symbolism of Heavenly Liturgy

The East Syriac tradition considers sanctuary as the type of the heavenly sanctuary and the true liturgy is being celebrated in the heavenly Jerusalem. Liturgy includes place, objects, persons, words, actions and time. These are collectively called the liturgical spacetime.<sup>45</sup> The earthly liturgy is a symbol of the heavenly liturgy. The whole eucharistic liturgy begins with the angelic hymn. "Glory to God in the

42 "Liturgy of the Nestorians including Anaphora of SS. Addai and Mari", F.E. Brightman, ed. *Liturgies Eastern and Western, being the texts original or translated of the Principal liturgies of the Church*. Vol. I. *Eastern Liturgies*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 247-52. (Hereafter quoted as F.E. Brightman, "Anaphora of SS. Addai and Mari")

43 F.E. Brightman, "Anaphora of SS. Addai and Mari", 247

44 F.E. Brightman, "Anaphora of SS. Addai and Mari", 248.

45 P. Maniyattu, *Heaven on Earth*.

highest".<sup>46</sup> The 'Our Father' said in the beginning includes the mention of the angels praising God, "Holy, Holy, Holy are You". The *Slotha* of the Sanctuary on Feasts and Sundays reads:

Before the glorious throne, my Lord, of Thy majesty, and the high and exalted chair of Thy honour, and the awful judgment-seat of the intensity of Thy love, and the absolving altar which Thy command hath established, and the place where thy glory abideth; we, Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture, with thousands of cherubin singing Hallelujahs to Thee, and ten thousand times ten thousand seraphin and archangels proclaiming Thee Holy, do kneel and worship and confess and glorify [Thee] at every season, O Lord of all, Father and Son and Holy Spirit for ever.<sup>47</sup>

As part of the Eucharistic prayer, the *Sanctus* was always sung as a sign of the participation of the earthly community in the heavenly worship of God.<sup>48</sup> It is in praising God and in hallowing the Name of God that heaven and earth are joined together. It is at the focal point of the *Sanctus* that the Church seems to be actually participating in the praise of heaven. Thus, the whole Christian worship can be seen as an anticipation and reflection of the heavenly worship of God.<sup>49</sup> The introductory words of the Second *G'hantha* prayer of Addai and Mari Anaphora are the best example of the liturgy that joins heaven and earth. "With those heavenly hosts we confess Thee, O my Lord..."<sup>50</sup> The participation in the earthly liturgy makes one eligible to participate in the liturgy in heaven, praising God in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is an eschatological reality. In the final blessing the priest prays:

May our Lord Jesus Christ ...make us worthy of the magnificent glory of his kingdom, and of eternal joy with his holy angels and of confidence in his presence, granting us to stand at his right hand in Jerusalem on high.<sup>51</sup>

The people of God are participating in a liturgy that has two phases. First, it is an offering in earth, which gives an experience of

46 *The Liturgy of the Holy Apostles Addai and Mari. Together with two Additional Liturgies to be said on Certain Feasts and Other Days: and The Order of baptism.* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1893), 1 (Hereafter quoted as Addai and Mari), Solemn Raza, 5.

47 *Addai and Mari*, 2.

48 G. Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (London, 1971), 117.

49 T. Elavanal, *The Memorial Celebration*, 103.

50 *Addai and Mari*, 23. Solemn Raza, 46.

51 Solemn Raza, 69.

heavenly Jerusalem. Again, the worthy celebration of the Eucharist and the receiving of body and blood of Jesus will make one worthy to praise God in the eschatological Kingdom of God, represented by Jerusalem which is above.

#### **4.1.5 Narration of names or themes**

There is a general tendency in the East Syriac liturgy to explain the same concept by the multiplication of words, as we see on many occasions in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari. To quote one prayer from the beginning of the Divine Liturgy:

May the adorable and glorious name of your blessed Trinity, be worshiped, glorified, honoured, exalted, confessed and blessed in heaven and on earth, at all times, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for ever.<sup>52</sup>

The Canona after the first *G'hantha* Prayer is also giving the same message:

We offer you praise and honour, worship and thanksgiving now and always and for ever.<sup>53</sup>

In the Anaphora there is always seen the prayer for the glorification of the name of God. The first *G'hantha* prayer is addressed to Trinity and it asks for the glory of the name of God:

Worthy of glory from every mouth, and of confession by every tongue, and of adoration and exaltation from all creatures, is the adorable and glorious name of Thy glorious Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>54</sup>

#### **4.1.6 Mystery of Christ**

Mystery is a word repeatedly occurring in the Anaphora. There are different meanings for the word "Mystery" in the Eucharistic celebration.<sup>55</sup> Divine Liturgy is called a mystery of Christ for the following reasons:<sup>56</sup>

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52 *Solemn Raza*, 8.

53 *Solemn Raza*, 42.

54 *Adai and Mari*, 22.

55 The Syriac word for mystery is "*Raza*". See R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 21, 77. For a detailed study on this subject See, J. Poovannikunnel, *The Concept of "Mystery" (Raza) in the Syro Malabar Qurbana*, (Kottayam, 1989).

56 J. Aerthayil, *Spiritual heritage of St. Thomas Christians*, 81-93.

1. It is the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ.
2. It is the mystery of the passion, death, burial and resurrection and ascension of Christ.
3. It is a mystery delivered to us by Christ so that we may commemorate in it His graces towards us.
4. The Divine Liturgy qualifies it as a glorious, holy, life-giving and Divine mystery.
5. It is a mystery given for the renewal and salvation of our nature.

Anaphora of Addai and Mari is originally addressed to the Son.<sup>57</sup> The phrases like, 'you put one our humanity' and 'the example which is from you' are clearly directed to the second person of the Trinity.<sup>58</sup> Divine Liturgy is the celebration of the mystery of the passion, death, burial and resurrection of Our Lord. It officially proclaims this fact at the Offertory<sup>59</sup>; when the priest solemnly approaches the altar after the Creed, making three profound bows of adoration<sup>60</sup>; at the end of third *G'hantha* prayer (just before the Epiclesis)<sup>61</sup> and before communion<sup>62</sup>. The whole mystery of Christ is seen in the second *G'hantha* prayer. This prayer has full of implications about the mystery of Christ. The works of the Saviour for the salvation of the human kind are described in this prayer:

You have done us great favours which cannot be repaid. You, O Lord, put on our humanity in order to give it life by Your Divinity, and have lifted up our low estate, raised us who are fallen, brought new life to our mortality, forgiven our debts, justified us in our sinfulness and enlightened our understanding. O our Lord and our God, You have conquered our enemies and granted victory to our weak and frail nature in the overflowing mercies of Your grace.<sup>63</sup>

57 G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (London, 1960), 180; W.F. Macomber, "Maronite and Chaldean Versions of the Anaphora of the Apostles", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XXXVII (1971), 67-69.

58 T. Elavanal, *The Memorial Celebration*, 66-72.

59 *Adai and Mari*, 13. *Solemn Raza*, 37.

60 *Adai and Mari*, 16. This particular part is not seen in *Solemn Raza* (Cf. for the text. 40)

61 *Adai and Mari*, 26. *Solemn Raza*, 50.

62 See the text quoted below.

63 *Solemn Raza*, 46-47; *Adai and Mari*, 23.

The humanity of Jesus is made known in the following prayer said by the deacon, after the fraction, "For our sakes the Only-Begotten of God took of mankind a mortal body, and a reasonable, intelligent, and immortal soul".<sup>64</sup> Then the prayer continues to summarize the economy of salvation, "... was lifted up on the cross, He rose from the dead and was taken up to heaven."<sup>65</sup>

The explanations of the different aspects make it clear that the celebration of the *Qurbana* in a solemn and meaningful way will enhance the spirituality of the faithful. It is only because that the celebration of the Eucharist is not properly done, or when it is not given its proper importance in the Church that the people of God go after their own pious devotions. Along with the Holy *Qurbana* there are other elements which help the spiritual growth of the Church as described further.

## 5 Divine Praises

The 'Divine Praises' is generally considered the "canonical prayers" of priests and religious. It is also known as the 'Liturgy of the Hours'. Vatican II made it clear that it is the official prayer of the Church. It was so in the beginning in all traditions and for the Eastern traditions to the present day. The 'Divine Praises' is a celebration of our day-to-day Christian life; it is an extensive celebration of the history of salvation, centered around the Christ-event; in fact, it is the Eucharist spread out to the whole of the liturgical year. We may say that it is the Eucharist extended to the other hours of the day. Thus, the 'Divine Praises' makes our Christian life continuous experience of salvation, fulfilling the Lord's command to pray always.<sup>66</sup>

Pius XI says: "If private supplication is so powerful because of the solemn and great promises given by Jesus Christ [Mt. 7:7-11; Mk 11:23; Lk 11:9-13], then the prayers, which are uttered in the Office in the name of the Church, the beloved spouse of the Redeemer, without doubt enjoy greater force and virtue."<sup>67</sup> The Catholic Catechism says in clear terms:

64 *Adai and Mari*, 31; *Solemn Raza*, 56.

65 *Adai and Mari*, 31; *Solemn Raza*, 56.

66 *Instruction*, nos. 95-96; See also V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, (Denha Services, Kottayam, 2000), 13.

67 Pius XI, Encyclical *Ad Catholic Sacerdotii*, December 20, 1935, Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 2276.

Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office), is the public prayer of the Church for sanctifying the day by praising God. Its daily recitation, or celebration, is a sacred duty of men in holy orders and of men and women religious according to their role of life. It is highly recommended to all the faithful. By tradition going back to early Christian times, the faithful devoted themselves to prayer at certain hours. Gradually the practice developed of praying together not only in the morning and at sundown but at regular intervals during the day. It was not long before the custom arose of arranging the whole course of the day and night in such a way that somewhere in the Church the praises of God would be sung and his name would be hallowed by those who believe.<sup>68</sup>

It is the importance of the Divine Praises that in it "the Church exercises the priestly office of her head and constantly offers God a sacrifice of praise, a verbal sacrifice that is offered every time we acknowledge his name. Whoever participates in the Divine Praises makes the Lord's people grow by imparting to them a hidden apostolic fruitfulness. For the goal of apostolic works is that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's Supper."<sup>69</sup>

In the words of Vatican II, Divine Praises is the participation in the prayer of Christ Jesus, the high priest, who took human nature, introduced into this earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. The Church continues the priestly work of Christ by ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world. She does this, not only by celebrating the eucharist, but also by praying the divine office. (SC. 83). Vatican II further says:

By tradition going back to early Christian times, the divine office is devised so that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praises of God. Therefore, when this wonderful song of praise is rightly performed by priests and others who are deputed for this

68 *The Catholic Catechism*, Part Three: Chapter XIV. Sacramentals, Liturgy of the Hours.

69 *The Catholic Catechism*, Part Three: Chapter XIV. Sacramentals, Liturgy of the Hours

purpose by the Church's ordinance, or by the faithful praying together with the priest in the approved form, then it is truly the voice of the bride addressed to her bridegroom; It is the very prayer which Christ Himself, together with His body, addresses to the Father. (SC. 84)

The divine praises has the sublime importance in the daily prayers of the church, that the Vatican II wants to restore the traditional sequence of the hours:

Because the purpose of the office is to sanctify the day, the traditional sequence of the hours is to be restored so that once again they may be genuinely related to the time of the day when they are prayed, as far as this may be possible. (SC. 88)

In continuation with the Jewish tradition, all Christian Churches developed their own pattern of community worship in the course of time.<sup>70</sup> There was a cycle of the Divine Praises with seven times of prayer a day.<sup>71</sup> According to the East Syriac tradition, the following are the seven times of prayer<sup>72</sup>:

1. *Ramsa'* - "Evening Liturgy", celebrated at 6.00 pm.
2. *Subba'a'* - "Prayer after Supper" at 9.00 pm.
3. *Lelya'* - "Night Liturgy" at 12.00 midnight
4. *Qala d-Sahra'* - "Vigil", at 3.00 am
5. *Sapra'* - "Morning Liturgy, at 6.00 am
6. *Qutta'a'* - "prayer of Third Hour", at 9.00 am
7. *Endana'* - "Noon Liturgy", at 12.00 mid-day.

Though there were traditionally these prayers only the bishops and monks used to celebrate all these seven prayers as far possible in

70 The norms given in SC. 89 are affecting the Latin Church. The norms are: a) The chief hours are Lauds as morning prayer and Vespers as evening prayer, the two hinges on which the daily office turns. b) Compline will be a suitable prayer for the end of the day. c) The hour known as Matins, shall be adapted so that it may be recited at any hour of the day. d) The hour of Prime is to be suppressed. e) In choir the hours of Terce, Sext, and None are to be observed. But outside choir it will be lawful to select any one of these three, according to the respective time of the day.

71 *Instruction*, no. 95

72 V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 20



community; the clergy in parishes and ordinary faithful were celebrating only *Ramsa* in the evening and the *Lelya-Sapra* together in the morning. The European missionaries who came to India even as late as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century attest to the fact that there were regular celebration of the Divine Praises in all Thomas Christian parish churches at dusk and dawn. There was sufficient number of clerics attached to every parish in order that they celebrate liturgical prayers properly. A large number of faithful too used to participate in those liturgical celebrations.<sup>73</sup>

Psalms form a major part of the Divine Praises. All liturgical traditions include all the psalms in one way or the other in their liturgy. Besides the 150 psalms, certain other Old Testament hymns such as Exodus 15: 1-21, Isaiah 42: 10-13; 45: 8 and Deuteronomy 32: 1-43 are also included in the Psalter of the East Syriac tradition. This is called *Dawidaya'* meaning "David's Book" in Syriac. The *Dawidaya'* is divided into 20 *Hullale* and subdivided into 60 *Marmiyatha'*. Two or three psalms form one *Marmitha'* and two or three *Marmiyatha'* form one *Hullala'*.<sup>74</sup>

Several Fathers have been involved in the formation and ordering of the Divine Praises in the East Syriac tradition. Mar Jacob, the Bishop of Nisibis is said to have been one very much interested in the proper celebration of the Divine Praises. Mar Simeon Bar Sabbae (+341), the then Catholicos of Chaldean Church is said to have divided the community into two choirs and introduced the choral recitation and singing style in place of the responsorial system. Similarly by arranging the whole prayer in "two weeks", *Da-Qdam wa-d-Bathar*, the first and the other, each choir was directed to intone the prayers alternately. St. Ephrem (+373) has contributed immensely to the treasury of the East Syriac liturgical heritage. He composed several hymns and prayers in it. They are all very simple in language, style and at the same time highly poetical and theological.<sup>75</sup> Mar Marutha of Maipharkat (+ca. 420), Narsai (+520) and Babai the Great (+609) also contributed considerably to the development of the Divine Praises in this tradition.

Mar Iso'Jahb III, who led the East Syriac Churches from 647 to 657 as the Catholicos ought to be considered the most important reformer of liturgical tradition in this tradition. He first arranged the liturgical year in nine periods according to the flow of the history of salvation,

73 V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 20

74 V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 21.

75 V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 24

centred around Christ-event.<sup>76</sup> Then he tried to collect all existent manuscripts of the Divine Office and arranged them according to the liturgical year. He grouped them in three collections. They are: (1) *Hudra'*, Divine Office for all Sundays and movable Feast days, (2) *Gazza'*, Divine Office for all immovable Feast days, and (3) *Kaskol*, Divine Office for all weekdays. All these three collections were arranged in the pattern of seven times of prayer a day. Mar Abad-Iso (+1328) also added a few prayers to the collection of the Divine Praises.

The St. Thomas Christian cathanars and the lay people used to recite the Divine Praises in the parish churches daily in the morning and evening, as the letters and other historical notes of the missionaries and Portuguese writers who visited or worked in Malabar testify.<sup>77</sup> Barbosa Durate writes in A.D. 1518, "They have the church law and they recite their prayers perpetually".<sup>78</sup> According to Dionysio there were in each parish two or three cathanars who said the Divine Praises in choir in the Chaldeo-Syrian language.<sup>79</sup> Monserrate, another visitor to India wrote that the cathanars did not consider reciting the hours obligatory except in choir. If recited they had it three times – before sunrise, after sunrise and in the evening.<sup>80</sup> M. Canteiro and his companions found in 1557 that the cathanars assembled in the churches in the morning to recite the hours and in the evenings before the sunset to adore a Cross which they had in the church.<sup>81</sup> Melchior Nunes Barreto after a visit to the Christians of Malabar about AD 1564 wrote to his friends in Europe:

All the days before sunset, they assemble in the church to recite the psalms and the lessons in Chaldean language, and in the morning they do the same the Cathanars reciting their matins at the altar and the people answering their Halleluyas and other words with such impetus of spirit that although I did not understand, they provoked in me devotions.<sup>82</sup>

76 V. Pathikulangara, "The Liturgical Year of the Syro-Malabar Rite". *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 90 (1976): 173-196.

77 A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 132.

78 Quoted in A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 132.

79 F. Dionysio, *Information of Christians in Malabar*, (573), 399; T. Puthiakunnel, *Syro-Malabar Clergy*, (Rome, 1962), 134.

80 T. Puthiakunnel, *Syro-Malabar Clergy*, 135.

81 J. Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, (Rome 1948-66), Vol VI, 806; A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 132.

82 J. Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, vol.V, 416, A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 132.

On the manner of reciting the Divine Praises Monserrate says: When they set themselves to pray prostrate themselves and kiss the ground and when all have prostrated they rise again and then prostrate once again. ... The prayers were sung always on foot but leaning on some kind of elevated tables.<sup>83</sup> The priests began the recitation with a special ceremony of giving peace called "*Casuri*", which is a gesture that expresses and reinforces the family unity as well as ecclesiastical communion.<sup>84</sup> It was the custom of the Christians, that while the cathanars stood for the Divine Praises all who entered the church, both cathanars and the faithful went to the oldest cathanar (the officiating priest) and touched his hands with both of their hands as a sign of peace.<sup>85</sup>

As decided by the Patriarchal Synod of the Assyro-Chaldean Church which met on 7-21, 1853 to abridge the manuscripts of the Divine Office and to correct the theological errors if any and to print it for daily use, Mar Audiso Kayyath and Father Paul Bedjan published the whole work in three volumes under the title, *Breviarium iuxta Ritum Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*, from Paris in 1886-87. Preserving intact the variations and specialties of liturgical seasons and feasts, these volumes give common and variable prayers and hymns for each and every day throughout the liturgical year. The Congregation for the Oriental Churches reprinted the same volumes with some corrections in Rome in 1938 with a preface by Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, the then secretary of the Congregation.<sup>86</sup> According to these volumes three times of prayer are underscored: *Ramsa*, the Evening Liturgy, *Lelya*, the Night Liturgy and *Sapra*, the Morning Liturgy.<sup>87</sup>

## 6 Feasts

The word "feast" is usually confined by the East Syrians to the feasts of our Lord. Saints' days are called by them "Memorials".<sup>88</sup> The

83 See. T. Puthiakunnel, *Syro-Malabar Clergy*, 136.

84 Geddes, *Synod of Diamper*, Actio VII, 5. A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 132.

85 F. Dionysio, *Information of Christians in Malabar*, 402.

86 P. Bedjan (Ed.) *Breviarium iuxta Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum* 3 vols. (Paris 1886-87, Romae, 1938). The first volume contains Offices for the periods from 'Annunciation' till the 'Great Fast', the second from the Great Fast till Pentecost; and the third from the Pentecost up to the end of dedication of the Church. See. J. Aethayil, *Spiritual heritage of St. Thomas Christians*, 175, footnote no. 129.

87 V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*. 25-27.

88 *Adai and Mari*, 1

Syro-Malabar Church has also taken this tradition. The main feasts are celebrated in relation to the economy of salvation brought by Christ. According to Joseph the Indian, these were: Nativity, Epiphany, Holy Week, especially Good Friday, Easter and two days following, Ascension, the Holy Trinity and the Assumption and all Sundays of the year were celebrated with great festivity. Goes adds the feast of Pentecost and Pentecost speaks about the Exaltation of the Cross.<sup>89</sup> In the third hallowing<sup>90</sup> the prayers (canons) are given for the feasts of Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Revelation (Transfiguration on August 6) and feast of the Cross (September 14).<sup>91</sup> Generally, a feast was begun with a solemn vespers.<sup>92</sup>

## 7 Memorials

As we have seen the days dedicated for the memory of saints are known as memorials. The commemorations are made on the Blessed Virgin Mary, apostles, martyrs, Fathers, confessors and the departed. There were many days set apart for the commemoration for Virgin Mary. We could not find any references to the celebration of these memorials from the historical documents. But the varying prayers for these memorials, seen in the Divine praises, serve as the basis for such information. Besides all Wednesdays, the Thomas Christians celebrated in a special way the following memorials of Virgin Mary around the liturgical year: Immaculate Conception (December 8), Mary, Mother of Jesus (Last Friday of the Weeks of Annunciation), Annunciation to Mary (March 25), Mary, Protectress of Growth (May 15), Visitation to Elizabeth (June 21), Mary Mother of Carmel (July 16), Dormition and Assumption (August 15) and Nativity of our Lady (September 8).<sup>93</sup> It is not very clear from which time on these memorials began to be celebrated. The fast of fifteen days before the Assumption of Our Lady and the fast called *ettunoimpu*, (eight days fast before the

89. A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. I, (Bangalore: TPI, 1984), 210.

90 This is the Third Eucharistic Prayer in the name of Nestorius, which was in use before the Synod of Diamper. This was in use five times in a liturgical year; on the Epiphany, on the Friday of John the Baptist, on the Memorial of Greek Doctors, on the Wednesday of the Rogation of the Ninevites, and on the Passover. *Adai and Mari*, 47. See. H.W. Codrington, *Studies of the Syriac Liturgies*, 62.

91 *Adai and Mari*, 59-66.

92 According to the East Syrian tradition, the day begins in the evening. Vespers is the solemn *Ramsa*.

93 V. Pathikulangara, ed. *Mary Matha. The "Divine Praises" in honour of Our Lady*, (Kottayam, 1998), vii

memorial of birth of B. Virgin Mary), are clear indications that these memorials were celebrated with solemnity. The memorial of St. Joseph was celebrated on March 19.

According to the list of feasts given by Joseph the Indian, the octave of Easter was the greatest day of commemoration of the year because on that day St. Thomas put his hand in the side of Christ.<sup>94</sup> The *Dukhrana* (memorial) of St. Thomas was celebrated with great veneration on July 3.<sup>95</sup> Among the memorials of other saints, there was a special celebration to commemorate Mar Sapor and Mar Prot, known as *Quadisakal* (saints), on May 19.<sup>96</sup> There were many churches dedicated to them in Kerala. There was also a memorial celebrated on July 5, that of St. Cyriac, a child martyr and son of St. Julita, known as the feast of "Quirce".<sup>97</sup>

## 8 Fasts

Fasting, which was rigorously practiced in Judaism and by the disciples of John the Baptist, was taught by Christ in word and example. It was observed by the apostles (Acts. 13:2, 14:23; II Cor. 11:27); and in the early Church, weekly fast days soon developed, Wednesday and Friday being mentioned in the first century. The foundation of fast and abstinence is seen deep in Christian revelation, and throughout the Church's history it was assumed that doing penance was a necessary condition for salvation.<sup>98</sup> *Didache* speaks about fasting "Your fasts must not be identical with those of the hypocrites. They fast on Mondays and Thursdays; but you should fast on Wednesdays and Fridays."<sup>99</sup> In early times, fasting meant entire abstinence from food for the whole or part of the fast day.

Since the Church is closely linked to Christ, the penance of the individual Christian also has an intimate relationship with the whole ecclesial community. In baptism he receives the fundamental gift of conversion (*metanoia*), which if lost through sin after baptism, is restored

94 A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, 210.

95 Mundadan mentions about Joseph the Indian and Goes to say that the memorial of St. Thomas was celebrated on July 1. See. A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. I, 210. But this does not seem to be correct.

96 A. M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. I, 211.

97 A. M. Mundadan, *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St. Thomas Christians*, (Bangalore, 1970), 178.

98 *The Catholic Catechism*, Part Three: Ritual and Worship - XIV. Sacramentals, Fast and Abstinence.

99 *Didache*, no.8

in those who avail themselves of the sacrament of mercy. The abstinence from meat and fasting, united in the traditional triad of prayer, fasting, and charity, is the fundamental means of complying with the divine precept of penance. Christians also have the opportunity to give the witness of charity toward their brethren who suffer poverty and hunger.<sup>100</sup>

St. Thomas Christians loved fasts and accepted fasts as part of their Christian life. More than half days of the year were days of fasting and abstinence. They accepted the ancient discipline of East Syrian Church. There are testimonies to show that St. Ephrem's sermons and poems on fasting were read and interpreted in the churches on certain feast days among the St. Thomas Christians.<sup>101</sup> East Syriac Church Fathers instructed the people on the necessity and usefulness of fast and showed the necessary relationship between fasting and Paschal Mystery of Christ in and through Liturgy. The Divine Praises describes the power of fasting, the innumerable benefits acquired through it and asks us to follow those examples from the Scriptures.<sup>102</sup>

The days of fasting practiced among the St. Thomas Christians as seen in the decrees of the Synod of Diamper are: The Great Fast or Lent, Annunciation, the fifty days fast of the Apostles, fifteen days before the Assumption, three days fast of the Ninivites or Rogation, fast before the Nativity of Our Lord, fast before the feasts of the apostles Peter and Paul<sup>103</sup>, fast of 12 Fridays after Christmas, fast of Elias, fast of the Virgins, fasts of Transfiguration and fast on all Wednesdays and Fridays, vigil-fasts of the Nativity of our Lord, Pentecost, Ascension, Assumption, fast days of Hormisdas and the Patrons of the respective churches.<sup>104</sup>

A letter written by Fr. Dionysio. S.J. from Cochin, in 1579 gives more information about fasts:

100 *The Catholic Catechism*, Part Three: Ritual and Worship - XIV. Sacramentals, Fast and Abstinence

101 J. Aerthayil, *Spiritual heritage of St. Thomas Christians*, 138.

102 J. Aerthayil, *Spiritual heritage of St. Thomas Christians*, 148.

103 This may be the fast of twelve Fridays in honour of the twelve apostles, described by J. Aerthayil. See J. Aerthayil, *Spiritual Heritage of the St. Thomas Christians*, 159.

104 A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 135. There were also fasts of the migration of Our Lady. Along with the fast of Elias fast of cross was included. See. J. Aerthayil, *Spiritual Heritage of the St. Thomas Christians*, 150.

They [the Thomas Christians] are friends of fast by obligation.... In Lent the fast begins from Monday after carnival. On the days of fasting they eat neither fish nor extracts from milk, nor do they drink wine or eat *betre* (betal leaves) which are leaves of a herb, which they eat usually all the day through. They abstain even from conjugal rights.<sup>105</sup>

However, they did not consider the fast broken by eating *canji* in the morning nor by eating fruits. Fr. Jerome writes to his superior that it is very difficult for the missionaries to observe the local fasts in the same way as Thomas Christians did, because of their rigour and strictness.<sup>106</sup> The discipline of fasting was observed earnestly and rigorously by the Christian community before the Synod of Diamper in close relation to the East Syriac liturgical spirit and the Indian spiritual tradition. More prayer, more renunciation and more almsgiving were associated with fasting.

## 9 Monastic and Ascetic Spirituality

Monasticism was deeply rooted in the strongly ascetical minded eastern Christianity, which gave birth to an ascetical institution like the "Sons and Daughters of the Covenant".<sup>107</sup> According to St. Ephrem, Monasticism is above all an institution of penitence.<sup>108</sup> Suffering is the hallmark of a monk and it permeates the whole monastic life. It is also compared to the life to be lived in heaven like angels, always rendering praise and service to God. The central idea of St. Ephrem is that a monk has to realize the spiritual type of angel-like life, transforming his earthly existence through pain and suffering.<sup>109</sup> The monastic life of the Syrian monks was centered on prayer. They took monastic profession and practiced various forms of asceticism. The prayer life consisted in reading and studying the Scriptures, hours of liturgical prayer, meditation and liturgical

105 Silva Rego, *Documentaco*, XII. P. 383. J. Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, vol. III, p. 804-05. See also A. M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, 212; J. Aerthayil, *Spiritual heritage of St. Thomas Christians*, 158; A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 135.

106 J. Aerthayil, *Spiritual heritage of St. Thomas Christians*, 164.

107 S.P. Brock, *Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition* (Kottayam, 1989), 8.

108 A. Voobus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient* (Louvain, 1960) vol. I, 149-150.

109 Ephrem, *Hymni de Virginitate* II, p. 38, 66, 84, *Hymni et Sermones* IV, col. 217, cited A. Voobus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, 99.

ceremonies. Perfect continence, together with voluntary poverty, obedience to the superior and austerity of life were the constitutive elements of the life-style of the monks.<sup>110</sup> Monastic profession was considered to be an extension and renewal of baptismal commitment. There is explicit reference to celibacy as the content of the profession.

The tradition of monasticism might have influenced the Church of St. Thomas in India, but from which century onwards, we do not know. There seem to have monks and nuns among the St. Thomas Christians in the first millennium. Joseph the Indian said: "They [the Thomas Christians] had monasteries where monks with black habit live a very chaste life. They have also many nuns."<sup>111</sup> Damniao de Goes confirms the opinions of other authors saying, "They [the Thomas Christians] have monasteries of monks. Both monks and nuns live in a great observance, honesty, chastity and poverty".<sup>112</sup> Cosmos Indicopleustes in his *Christian Typography* (AD 535) writes, "They [Church of Christians in Male (Malabar)] have many martyrs and recluses leading a monastic life".<sup>113</sup>

At the very heart of monasticism lies asceticism, which consists in leading a hard and austere life, in rigorous, almost continuous fasting and in voluntary, self-inflicted punishments. The life of penance of the Indians and the theology of fast of the East Syriac Church had strong influence on the Christian community in India and they made use of them, earnestly to progress in spiritual life. Both the Syrian and Indian practices of asceticism have influenced the St. Thomas Christian community.<sup>114</sup> The ideal of monastic life is unthinkable without mortification and fasting. It is directed against the dangerous desires of the human body and continued in the fight for the "subjugation of the Body", and its desires. Wakefulness and vigils were consistent with spiritual life. Sleep furthered laziness, laxity and the rise of all low instincts. The monks were trying to escape from their body to attain God-realization. There were monk-bishops and monk pastors among the Syrians. So many monks served

110 A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 138.

111 Joseph the Indian, *Paesi*, 158. Cited A. Vallavanthara, *The Narratives of Joseph the Indian*, 176. A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 133.

112 Goes, *Cronica d Felicissimo*, vol. I, 137, 215, cited A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. I, 188.

113 Cosmos, *Topographia Christiana*, cited A.E. Mediyecott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, (London, 1905), 199; Mingana, "The Early Spread of Christianity in India", 29-30.

114 A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 134.



as helpers as well as guards and wardens in the man chapels of martyrs. The system of *chorepiscopus* starts from the Syriac Monasticism.<sup>115</sup>

In the year 403 St. Jerome wrote from Bethlehem to his spiritual daughter Laeta in Rome: "From India, from Persia, from Ethiopia we daily welcome monks in crowds"<sup>116</sup> Jerome is speaking of a notable number of Indian Christian monks, come probably on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. This speaks of the existence of monasticism in India as early as in the fifth century.

We have evidence of a monastery bearing the name of Apostle St. Thomas situated at Mailapur. St. Gregory of Tours wrote around AD 590: "Thomas the Apostle according to the narrative of his martyrdom, is stated to have suffered in India... In that part of India where they first rested, stand a monastery and a church of striking dimensions, elaborately adorned and designed..."<sup>117</sup> But we do not have information about the functioning of this monastery from the later documents. Many centuries later, under the leadership of Archdeacon George of the Cross and permission of Archbishop Stephen de Britto a monastic Congregation came into existence on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1626. It was known as "*Recolhimento of Repelim*" (Retreat house of Edappalli).<sup>118</sup> The motive behind the establishment is evident from letter written by the Archdeacon to Rome:

There had been many among us who were leading the contemplative life retiring to solitude and even to mountains and deserts. The Patriarchs had erected Religious houses for those who wished to have such retired and contemplative life. So, grant us permission to found a Religious house on the model of Basilians for those who are longing for such a kind of life.<sup>119</sup>

A study on the rules of the Congregation of St. Thomas the Apostle reveals that their formation and life-style were planned according to the East Syriac monastic tradition, taking into consideration some of the local or Indian customs and practices of

115 A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 138-139.

116 Jerome, Letter CVII, n.2. *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, vol. VI, p. 190.

117 cited A.E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, 71.

118 E. R. Hambye, "The Congregation of St. Thomas the Apostle", J. Vellian, ed., *The Malabar Church*, Symposium, Orientalia Christiana Analecta (OCA), 186 (Rome, 1970), 124; G. Nedungatt, "Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church", 184;

119 Cited A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 142.

sanyasa. The liturgy and Divine Praises and their timings corresponded to the East Syriac and Syro-Malabar traditions.<sup>120</sup> The total time table clearly shows that they had a strict, austere and regular religious or monastic life with considerable personal freedom which is characteristic of Indian and Syriac monasticism.<sup>121</sup> Unfortunately, this monastery became extinct between 1652 and 1657. After more than two centuries another indigenous religious Congregation was founded, the present Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), one of the three founders being Blessed Chavara Kuriakos Elias. The present monastic orders in India are modeled after the Latin monastic orders, while these are congregations of religious life for men and women under the Latin and Syro-Malabar traditions.

## Conclusion

The foundation of a real and ideal Spirituality is to be seen on the tradition handed down by the Fathers; the ancient liturgical traditions and the monastic and ascetical practices. However, as we experience in our day-to-day life, there are deviations in the theology of the Church because of the undue influence of the Latin theology, which is alien to the heritage and tradition of the Syro-Malabar Church. While considering the East Syriac liturgical heritage, inherited by the Syro-Malabar Church there is always an importance given to the liturgical spacetime. No liturgy is celebrated in private in the East. Liturgy is a communitarian act of the Church. There is an urgent need of taking the liturgical heritage of the Church into consideration. The place of celebration, the east-ward facing position, the liturgical dress, liturgical calendar, music, art, architecture, etc. are important in this perspective. The Latin liturgical calendar gives importance to the feasts of the saints of the day. However, according to the East Syriac calendar the whole liturgical year is designed on the basis of the mystery of Christ and various feasts of Christ. It is through the meaningful participation in the liturgy according to the spirit of the liturgy that we participate in the life of the Church.

It is always a popular tendency to limit spirituality to certain spiritual or ascetical practices, mainly done in private, for the mental satisfaction of the believer. In this context we may remember the meaningful saying "*sentire cum ecclesia*" (feel with the Church). Every

120 T. Puthiakunnel, *Syro-Malabar Clergy*, 126-45; E. R. Hambye, "The Congregation of St. Thomas the Apostle", 135.

121 A. Thekkudan, "Sources of Spirituality", 143-44.

activity is an ecclesial activity. The spirituality can be fostered only in communion with the Church and in the communitarian activities. The celebration of the mysteries of Christ, in the spirit of the liturgical seasons, the celebration of Sundays and the feasts of the Lord, the memorials of Virgin Mary and saints, the observance of fasts in connection with the liturgical seasons are some of the real means of developing the spirituality.

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### **The seventh beloved gift: the kindness and condescension found in Our Lord.**

"It is proper for a kindly person to be pure in heart and a maker of peace by his word, and for his appearance to be openly cheerful in the sight of everyone individually, but sensitive with respect to times and persons. Yet he is to humble himself and minimize his greatness with every kind of moderation and wisdom, so as to capture all thoughts for obedience to the Messiah. He is not to consider his earlier state: dignity of lineage or greatness of knowledge or repute, whatever that may have been, not even if he had owned a multitude of activities and had been held in honour by the goodwill of all his brothers. Rather let him assess himself as a great sinner and a small penitent, and let him pour out his kindness freely upon every one. Let him not make mock of a human blemish in a man as if he were evil or stupid. Instead, let him love and honour everyone, appropriate to the measure of the perfection of the Messiah, who poured out his goodness on the good and upon the evil, as the sun's rays do upon the earth and upon all growing things and all kinds of thing rooted in it. So he will be kindly and welcoming to everyone".

*(Quoted from "The Book of Gifts" which was compiled by holy  
Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J. Lane)*

Dietmar W. Winkler

## **Theodosios of Alexandria and some Theological trends of his time (535-566)**

The last outstanding personage of the antichalcedonian movement in the 6th century is the Patriarch of Alexandria, Theodosios. At a time when the hierarchy of the Antichalcedonians was almost destroyed, he was the only one remaining who was able to give the decisive impulses for reestablishing the miaphysite churches<sup>1</sup> in Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia and Egypt. Because of his comprehensive and universal responsibility for the antichalcedonian church, he has been called by his adherents several times an "Ecumenical Patriarch"<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore his writings

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- 1 The term "monophysite" describes a heresy, of which usually Eutychianism is the classical form. As the theological and ecumenical research of the last decades has clearly shown that the so-called non-chalcedonian churches have a very orthodox Christology as heirs of Cyrill of Alexandria and Severus of Antioch. Therefore the term "Monophysitism" is technically incorrect and misleading. Cf. D. W. Winkler, Miaphysitism. A new term for use in the history of dogma and in ecumenical theology, in: *The Harp* 10 (1997) 33-40; D.W. Winkler, Monophysites, in: G.W. Bowersock - P. Brown - O. Grabar (eds.), *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World*. Cambridge, Mass.-London 1999, 586-588.
  - 2 For this title cf. A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche* II/4. Die Kirche von Alexandrien mit Nubien und Äthiopien nach 451. Freiburg 1990, 53 note 4; Rh. Haacke, Die kaiserliche Politik in den Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon, in: A. Grillmeier - H. Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Vol. II Würzburg 1962, 159 note 65.

are of utmost interest for the history of dogma and show the theological trends of the 6th century.<sup>3</sup>

My aim in this paper is (1) to give a brief survey of the historical context and the significance of Theodosios, and (2) to look at the theological disputes reflected in the writings of Theodosios.

## 1. Historical Context

After the Council of Chalcedon (451) it was not clear for years - nearly a century - if Chalcedonians or Antichalcedonians would get the upper hand in the Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup> At that time the Patriarchate of Alexandria was the center of the antichalcedonian resistance. Even in 519 (70 years after the Council), when a chalcedonian restoration started under Cesar Justin (519-527), the antichalcedonian party in Egypt was so strong that Patriarch Timothy III (517-535) could condemn the Council of Chalcedon, the Tome of Pope Leo (449) and the Henoticon of Cesar Zeno (482)<sup>5</sup>, while in other regions of the Empire antichalcedonian bishops were deposed and exiled. Even one of the most eminent theologians of the Miaphysites, Severus of Antioch, operated from Egypt after his deposition in 519. The ten years there were a very fruitful time of his literary activity.

However, the antichalcedonian movement in Egypt was not able to use this peace to consolidate their party. It is possible to identify about 20 (!) different groups of Antichalcedonians such as

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- 3 Sources: a) Writings of Theodosios Alex.: CPG 7130-7159. Texts concerning the Agnoetists and the Tritheist controversy in: *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century*. Edited, translated and annotated by *Albert van Roey-Pauline Allen*. Leuven 1994 (OLA 56) 16-56.103-263. b) Theodosios Alex. and his historical context cf. *Zacharias Rh.*, *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Ed. *E. W. Brooks* (CSCO 84) 87-174 (syr.); (CSCO 88), 60-118 (lat.); *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria II*. Peter I to Benjamin I (661). Arabic text edited, translated, and annotated by *B. Evetts*. PO 1 (1904) 455-469. Cf. *J. Maspero*, *Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie depuis la mort de l'empereur Anastase jusqu'à la réconciliation des églises jacobites* (518-616). Paris 1923, 102-134.135-181; *A. Grillmeier*, *Jesus der Christus II/2*. Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jh. Freiburg 1989, 379.386-391; *Grillmeier II/4* (cf. note 2 above) 53-59.
- 4 Cf. *D.W. Winkler*, *Koptische Kirche und Reichskirche*. Altes Schisma und neuer Dialog. Mit einem Vorwort von Franz Kardinal König. Innsbruck 1997 (Innsbrucker theologische Studien 48).
- 5 Cf. *Th. Hainthaler*, *Das Ringen zwischen Chalcedoniern und Antichalcedoniern*, in: *Grillmeier II/4* (cf. note 2 above) 43 note 55, with reverence to *W. E. Crum*, *Sévère d'Antioche en Égypte*, in: *ROC* 23 (1922/23) 97 note 5.

Phantasiasts, Actists and Akephaloi.<sup>6</sup> The most dangerous challenge was the one of the adherents of Julian of Halikarnassos († after 527), the so-called Aphthartodocetism.

When Theodosios was elected as successor of Timothy III as Patriarch of Alexandria in 535 the Julianists elected Gaianus, who was ordained by Julian of Halikarnassos himself. This party was the strongest one in Egypt until the mid-6th century. As we are informed at some length by the Arabic "History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church" it was very hard for Theodosios to succeed against Gaianus.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, with the support of the Empress Theodora and of Severus of Antioch, who was since 534 in Constantinople again, Theodosios was able to appease the struggle between the two most powerful sees of the eastern Empire. By the exchange of the respective letters between the two patriarchs, Theodosios and Anthimos (535-536), Alexandria and Constantinople were reconciled again. However, in 536 Pope Agapet of Rome (535-536) arrived in Constantinople. He was forced to do so by the King of the Goths (Western Roman Empire), Theodahat. The Pope was forced into diplomatic and political action, because the eastern Roman forces of Justinian were already on their way to Rome.

The Pope refused communion with Patriarch Anthimos because of his antichalcedonian attitude. The emperor Justinian realized very fast that it was much better for his political plans of reuniting the whole Roman Empire to keep good relations with the west. Therefore he deposed Anthimos and announced the Chalcedonian Menas as new Patriarch. At a Synod in Constantinople (536)<sup>8</sup> Severus of Antioch

6 Cf. *Maspero* (cf. note 3 above) esp. 102-134. For example: Those who did not recognize any Patriarch after the death of Dioscur (454), because Timotheus Ailuros was too less radical for them, are called Dioscurians; others did not accept Petros Mongos as Patriarch, because he signed the Henoticon (Akephaloi); for one group only Eutyches taught the genuine doctrine (Eutychians, Phantasiasts), for another group the body of Christ is not only a phantasia but uncreated at all (Actists).

7 Cf. *History of the Patriarchs* II 455-461 (cf. note 3 above). Also *Liberatus*, *Breviarum* XX, in: *ACO* II,5 p. 135 (lin. 15-17) writes: "mansit autem in sede Theodosius annum unum et menses quattuor paucis ei communicantibus; plurimi enim communicabant ad nomen Gaiani. populi autem pugnaverunt pro Gaiano multis diebus..."

8 Cf. *Grillmeier* II/2 (cf. note 3 above) 367-372; *J. Speigl*, *Die Synode von 536 in Konstantinopel*, in: *OstKSt* 44 (1995) 105-134.

and Patriarch Anthimos were condemned. A new wave of persecution overtook the Antichalcedonians, this time it also reached Egypt. Even the Empress Theodora could not prevent Theodosios from banishment to Derkos in Thrace. In 537 practically all antichalcedonian bishops became victims of the persecution or were deposed. The antichalcedonian party then was without leaders.

In the same year 537 Theodosios was called to Constantinople to sign the formula of faith of Chalcedon. With about 300 (!) members of his clergy<sup>9</sup> he shifted to the capital. There he refused to approve the Council of Chalcedon and was therefore exiled again. However, two years later (539) he found a safe refuge in one of the palaces of the Empress Theodora in Constantinople. From there he was able to guide not only the Church of Egypt, but all those of the antichalcedonian movement who had lost their bishops.

Two ordinations in particular point out his universal care of the Miaphysites. In 542 the ruler of the Ghassanid Arabs, Harit, had asked Theodora for bishops. Therefore Theodosios ordained Theodore of Arabia as Metropolitan of Bostra and the famous Jacob Baradaï as Metropolitan of Edessa.<sup>10</sup> Theodore concerned about the Arab tribes in the Syrian desert and the Transjordan territory. Jacob Baradaï ordained bishops and priests on his adventurous walking-tour from Syria, Armenia and Asia minor to Isauria and Egypt. He thereby established the basis of a Miaphysite church organization. He became a symbol of resurrection for the Syrian Orthodox Church, which was therefore nicknamed Jacobite.

The efforts of Theodosios of Alexandria are put in a special light by these two ordinations. They were the main impetus for the resurrection of the antichalcedonian Church. From there the term "Ecumenical Patriarch" used by his followers finds its justification. In my opinion this was also done as a counterpart to the Patriarch of Constantinople who laid claim to this title since the 6th c.

It might be interesting to note that in Egypt the succession of the Chalcedonian Patriarchs was interrupted since the Henoticon, which means from 482 to 537. Whereas the antichalcedonian Church was

9 A. de Halleux, Theodosios I, monophysitischer Patriarch von Alexandrien, in: LThK 10, 48.

10 The exact date of the ordination of Jacob is unknown. The sources waver between 541 and 543. Cf. D. D. Bundy: Jacob Baradaeus. The state of research, a review of sources and a new approach, in: Le Muséon 91 (1978) 45-86.

able to continue its succession from Dioscur to Theodosios either officially or in exile. In 537 Justinian enthroned Paulos Tabennesiota as Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria. From that year onwards the emperor Justinian appointed Patriarchs who were faithful to Chalcedon and loyal to the emperor (Melkites). These ruled in Egypt with absolute power till the invasion of the Arabs, although the Chalcedonians were only a Greek minority.<sup>11</sup>

The whole western Church remained true to the Council of Chalcedon. And for Justinian's plans to reunite the whole empire the West was of utmost importance. After several efforts to regain the Antichalcedonians<sup>12</sup> Justinian proclaimed Chalcedonian Christianity as the religion of the empire. Nevertheless the politics of Justinian failed. Most of the Christians of the Patriarchates of Alexandria and Antioch were lost to the Imperial Church.

## 2. Theological disputes reflected in some of the writings of Theodosios

Up to now we know of significant correspondence of Theodosios preserved in Syriac translation, with some Arabic and Ethiopic fragments. Then short Greek quotations and extensive Syriac fragments of a *Tomus ad Theodorum augustam*. Further a *Oratio Theologica* against the Tritheists in Syriac translation and finally Greek, Coptic and Arabic fragments of some homilies.<sup>13</sup>

### a. Aphtartodocetists

The first controversy Theodosios had to deal with was the one with the adherents of Julian of Halikarnassos. They are called Julianists, Gaianists according to their first bishop Gaianus, or Aphtartodocetists.

11 Cf. C.D.G. Müller, Die koptische Kirche zwischen Chalkedon und dem Arabereinmarsch. In: ZKG 75 (1964) 269-308; *Maspero* (s. note 3 above) 183.

12 Cf. S. Brock, The conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian. In: OCP 47 (1981) 87-121; J. Speigl, Das Religionsgespräch mit den severianischen Bischöfen in Konstantinopel im Jahre 532. In: AHC 16 (1984) 264-285; Grillmeier II/2 (cf. note 3 above), 242-262.361-363; Haacke (cf. note 2 above) 95-177.

13 Cf. CPG 7134-7136.7138-7147 according to *Documenta ad origines monophysitarum illustrandas*. Ed. Jean-Baptist Chabot. Louvain 1952, textus (CSCO 17), translatio (CSCO 103); CPG 7148-7149 according to *Zacharias Rh.*, *Historia Ecclesiastica*; CPG 7133.7137 and ep. ad Armenios according to Van Roey-Allen (cf. note 3 above).



As in the whole postchalcedonian controversy the starting point of this christological theory was again the question, how close the unity between godhead and manhood in Christ is to be seen. For Julian the unity was more important than the distinction between the two natures. Therefore he designates the human body of Christ as incorruptible (greek: *aphtharton*) already before the resurrection. His followers took over the doctrine and interpreted Christ as incorruptible from the very moment of the unification of the two natures. This teaching spread all over the Roman Empire, also to Armenia and Persia.<sup>14</sup> The emperor Justinian was very fond of this doctrine and had in mind to acknowledge it by law. His death in 565 prevented him from doing so.

However, latest research on the terminology of Julian of Halikarnassos<sup>15</sup> points out that he does not want to suspend the human reality of Jesus but he wants to underline a privilege of the new Adam: As Christ is above sin He is also above the necessity of punishment, which is a characteristic of post-adamitic mankind. Only by the free will of the divine Logos in Christ did He take passion and death upon himself.

But Julian could be easily misunderstood by describing Christ as incorruptible before Easter. And – as it happens quite often – the followers were more extreme than the founder. In the first half of the 6th century the Gaianites were the strongest party in Egypt. Even the antichalcedonian (Coptic) Patriarch Jacob of Alexandria (819-830) condemned Chalcedon, Phantasiasts and Gaianites, which means: Nestorians, Eutychians and those who deny the passion of the God-Logos.<sup>16</sup>

How did Theodosios argue against the Julianists? In his letters the controversy is omnipresent. In an early letter – the one to Anthimos which gave the impulse for reunification of the two sees of Alexandria and Constantinople in 535 – Theodosios mentions his authorities of faith:

“I believe one definition of faith and this is the one which was announced in Nicea by our 318 Fathers and the Holy Spirit. This definition was sealed by the Synod of the 150 and the one of Ephesus which rejected Nestorius

14 Cf. *Th. Hainthaler* (cf. note 5 above) 45-52.

15 For Julian's of Halikarnassos theology cf. *Grillmeier* II/2 (cf. note 3 above) 83-116.

16 Cf. *History of the Patriarchs of IV* (cf. note 3 above) 447f.

with twelve chapters of our father Cyril. And I receive the document of Zeno which unites the church and condemns the Synod of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo."<sup>17</sup>

The first three councils and the Henoticon in an antichalcedonian interpretation are the theological norm for Theodosios. The letter continues now with the confession to the consubstantiality of Christ with his father and to manhood, born of the virgin animated with a rational soul.

Then he writes against the Gaianites. Following Hebr 2,14 he sees the passion of Christ as soteriologically necessary:

"If – as some foolish people say – we had been justified in another nature, and if the divine Logos had not participated in it [i.e. the human nature] or in this same flesh which has been taken from us and united with him hypostatically, and if he had not made it impassible and immortal from the same unity which is with him, our faith would be in vain."<sup>18</sup>

Further Theodosios rejects the "illusion of Eutyches"<sup>19</sup> and the "doctrine of Nestorius"<sup>20</sup>, that is those who believe that "Christ was only a phantasia"<sup>21</sup> and those who "divide the one Christ into two natures"<sup>22</sup>. In contrast to this Theodosios emphasizes the unity of Christ and explains his understanding of the passion and the death of Christ:

"Christ, who was from two, perfect godhead and manhood... was one and not separated. The unity in him was not confused, because he left [the flesh] in the whole incarnation passible and mortal. This was truly holy and without sin. And with the resurrection he restored it and made it impassible and immortal and incorruptible."<sup>23</sup>

17 *Theodosios Alex.*, ep. ad Anthimum Summum Sacerdotem, in: *Zacharias Rh.*, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (cf. note 3 above) 170 (lin.22)-171 (lin.3).

18 *Ibid.* 172 (lin.17-23).

19 *Ibid.* (lin.8).

20 *Ibid.* (lin.9).

21 *Ibid.* (lin.10f).

22 *Ibid.* (lin. 13f).

23 *ibid.* (lin.19)-173 (lin.1).

In 1994 Pauline Allen and Albert van Roey edited a Syriac fragment of a letter of Theodosios to the Armenians<sup>24</sup> which shows his persistent opposition against the Julianists (Gaianites, Aphthartodocetists). That the letter is sent to the Armenians shows the spread of the doctrine of Julian but also the ecumenical significance of Theodosios from the Nile to the Araxes. The fragment includes a beautiful Christological text:

"The divine Logos, which nature was incorruptible, impassible and immortal, became flesh out of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Theotokos and Virgin in recent days. He was consubstantial with us and as well passible, animated with a rational soul and consciousness. He was out of two natures, godhead and manhood which are perfect ... He is one Christ, Son and Lord. As god he is unpassible in godhead, and as Son of man he is truly human passible."<sup>25</sup>

Theodosios has a logos-centered Christology which regards manhood as perfect and completed with a rational soul. He sees this as a soteriological necessity. Therefore this Christology is not at all monophysite in the eutychian sense. This antichalcedonian leader is very orthodox though miaphysite.

## b. Agnoetists

But not only the adherents of Julian occupied Theodosios. Already at the time of his predecessor Timothy III a christological group called Themestians or Agnoetists came up.<sup>26</sup> Themestios was a deacon in Alexandria. He taught that, analogous to the transience of the body of Christ, his human soul was of limited knowledge and cognition.<sup>27</sup> This doctrine may be seen as a result of the opposition against Aphthartodocetism.

24 *Theodosios Alex.*, ep. ad Armenos, in: *Van Roey-Allen* (cf. note 3 above) 58f (syr.) 60 (lat.).

25 *Ibid.* 58 (lin. 7-15).

26 Cf. *Maspero* (cf. note 3 above) 96

27 Cf. *Liberatus*, *Breviarum XVIII* (cf. note 7 above) 134 (lin. 18-22): "cui cum diceret Themestius diaconus eius: si corpus Christi corruptibile est, debemus eum dicere et aliqua ignorasse, sicut ait de Lazaro, hoc Timotheus negavit dicendum. a cuius communione Themestius desciscens schisma fecit, et ab ipso dicti sunt in Aegypto Themistiani."

With the discussion about the knowledge of Christ a new topic of theological thought came on the scene of the 6th century. Even emperor Justinian felt himself obliged to write an edict against the Agnoetists and Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) wrote against them.

Around 540 Theodosios composes his *Tomus ad Theodoram augustam* against the Agnoetists.<sup>28</sup> Extensive Syriac fragments of it were edited in 1994 by Pauline Allen and Albert van Roey. The *Tomus* may be regarded as the oldest and most significant treatise on the knowledge of Christ.<sup>29</sup>

Here I just want to point out some remarkable conclusions of Theodosios. He regards the cognition of Christ as *energeia*. As someone may speak of two natures before the unification (*henosis*) and after it of one nature, so he may do with the energy. The logical consequence of the one nature (*mia physis*) is the one energy (*mia energeia*) or one cognition (*mia gnosis*). The *mia energeia* becomes therefore the strongest expression of the *mia physis* and guarantees the unity of Christ. A separation into two activities as known from the *Tome of Leo* (449) would be Nestorianism in the eyes of Theodosios. Just as one may only speak theoretically of "two natures", so may one speak only in theory of Christ's lack of knowledge or of his omniscience.

With the *Tomus ad Theodoram*, Theodosios anticipates the theological discussion of the 7th century about the *mia energeia theandrike*. Until today the Coptic Church preserves this position. H.H. Pope Shenouda III writes: "As we believe in the One Nature of the Incarnate Logos, as St. Cyril the Great called it likewise: We believe in One Will and One Act: Naturally, as long as we consider that this Nature is One, the Will and the Act must also each be one."<sup>30</sup>

We have to point out that at the time when the emperor Heracleios expelled the Persians out of Egypt (628/30) and tried to reunite the Empire ecclesiastically, the antichalcedonian theology was very clear. When the Imperial Church discussed monotheletism and clarified it

28 Cf. *Van Roey-Allen* (cf. note 3 above) 23-41 (syr.), 42-56 (lat.); CPG 7133. There are some more texts from the times between 530 and 580 concerning the Agnoetists published in this volume: A fragment of a letter of Theodosios to the Armenians; a oratio of Anthimos of Constantinople to Justinian; a oratio of Constantine of Laodicea to Theodora; a refutatio from Theodore the Monk.

29 Cf. *Grillmeier* (cf. note 3 above) II/2 386.

30 Cf. *Pope Shenouda III*, *The Nature of Christ*. 2nd ed. Cairo 1991, 44 and in: *Pro Oriente* (ed), *The Vienna Dialogue. Middle East Regional Symposium Deir Amba Bishop* October 1991. Vienna 1993 (Booklet 3) 70:

on the Council of Constantinople (680/81), the topic was already answered theologically for the Miaphysites and Egypt was lost again, this time to the Arabs (since 642).

### c. The second Council of Constantinople (553)

It might be useful to have at this point to take a brief look at the problems of the Imperial Church of that time. Trying to reconcile Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians Justinian oscillated between theological concessions and violent re-integration. Ultimately the Fifth Council was doomed to fail politically. It had no consequences for several churches, because at that time they were already outside the borders of the Imperium Romanum and its Church.

Between 543 and 545 Justinian wrote an edict on the Three Chapters.<sup>31</sup> The affair was probably brought up by Theodor Askidas who wanted to divert off attention from Origenism. Justinian demanded with three capitula the condemnation of (1.) the person and writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, (2.) the writings of Theodoret of Cyrus, (3.) the letter of Ibas of Edessa to Mari the Persian. By that he tried to get the sympathy of the anti-Chalcedonians. However, the following confrontations were not useful in recovering anti-chalcedonian terrain. Rather they poisoned the relations between Rome and Constantinople.

The quarrels in the years leading up to the Council of Constantinople (553) are not a glorious page in imperial church history and it is not my aim to repeat the whole Three Chapter Controversy<sup>32</sup>. It might be useful to recall the main elements of the controversy in broad strokes: The African bishops considered Justinian's edict as heretical; Pope Vigilius was deported to Constantinople by Justinian in 547 and imposed a penance on Patriarch Menas who had signed the edict; Patriarch Menas then imposed a penance on the Pope; Pope Vigilius entangled himself between rejection and approval of the condemnation of the Three Chapters and finally submitted to the pressure of Justinian (548); as a result the African bishops excommunicated the Pope (550); in the meantime Pope Vigilius refused communion with Patriarch Menas who for his part no longer mentioned the Pope in the liturgy; with a second edict Justinian condemned the

31 This edict got lost. Fragments in *E. Schwartz*, *Zur Kirchenpolitik Justinians*, in: *Idem*, *Zur Geschichte der Alten Kirche und ihres Rechts*. Berlin 1969, 321-328; Cf. also *Schwartz*, *Drei dogmatische Schriften Justinians*. München 1939, 45-69.

32 Cf. *Winkler* (cf. note 4 above) 163-167.

Three Chapters in 13 anathemata (551)<sup>33</sup>; now the Pope declared himself against the anathema (552); finally the council was summoned without the pope who refused to come, because he was prohibited from returning to Rome to consult the western bishops; 168 bishops were present at the council, only eight from the West, i.e. from the African provinces<sup>34</sup>; the council then executed the condemnation of the Three Chapters according to the edict of Justinian.

From the point of view of church politics the result of the Three Chapter Controversy was terrifying: the unity of the Church, the desired goal of the council, receded into the far distance and the trenches between Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians became deeper. In the West continuous differences came up between Rome and some provinces, especially in northern Italy, in Africa and Illyricum. The reputation of the Pope declined enormously. In a History of Councils published in 1993 one reads that the Council of Constantinople finally re-established the order and the unity of the church, but it did not bring a rapprochement or reconciliation with the "Monophysites", because they did not accept the resolutions of the council.<sup>35</sup> The opinion of the 1993 book shows a very limited ecumenical understanding of the Church. Which unity was re-established if there was no reconciliation with the anti-Chalcedonians? The unity between Rome and Constantinople? But even in that case the circumstances are not so clear as one likes to see it today. The imperial synod of 553 was accepted as the Fifth Ecumenical Council in the West only in the 7th century.<sup>36</sup>

From a theological point of view the most valuable contribution of the controversy was Justinian's edict of 551 with the clarification of the terminology in the spirit of Chalcedon. The unclearness of the term *hypostasis* had been a main defect of the formula of Chalcedon. Now the exact definition of the terms definitely helped the Chalcedonians to save their Christology from "Nestorian" interpretation. However, the Council of Constantinople 553 used the terms in a Chalcedonian sense, but it did not give a definition of *hypostasis* as distinguished

33 Cf. Schwartz, Drei dogmatische Schriften (cf. note 24 above) 71-111.

34 Cf. Grillmeier II/2 (cf. note 3 above) 459 note 492.

35 Cf. P. A. Yannopoulos, Vom Zweiten Konzil von Konstantinopel (553) zum Zweiten Konzil von Nicaea (786-787), in: G. Alberigo (Ed.), Geschichte der Konzilien. Vom Nicaenum bis zum Vaticanum II. Düsseldorf 1993, 149.

36 Cf. Y Congar, Der Primat der vier ersten Ökumenischen Konzile. Ursprung, Bestimmung, Sinn und Tragweite eines traditionellen Themas, in: B. Botte et al., Das Konzil und die Konzile. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Konzilslebens der Kirche. Stuttgart 1962, 125.

from *nature*.<sup>37</sup> The Antiochene heritage is an important and legitimate balance to Alexandrine tradition. By the condemnation of the Three Chapters this heritage had almost been lost in the Imperial Church.

The theological background of the Council was the so-called Neo-Chalcedonianism, which tried to bring a precise synthesis of the Christology of Chalcedon and of Cyrill, including the *mia physis* and the twelve anathemata, and to avoid the terminological inaccuracy of the Henoticon (482).<sup>38</sup>

However, the goal of the Council in 553 was to reconcile Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians. That brings us to a very basic observation:

1. According to the lists of participants of the council there was *no* bishop of the anti-Chalcedonian movement present.<sup>39</sup> This is remarkable since the supporters of the Imperial Church have atrophied into a Greek minority in Egypt, and since the church in Syria was on its way to achieving a durable organization in the mid 6th century.
2. Without doubt the central anti-Chalcedonian province was Egypt. Nevertheless only eight bishops from *imperial* Egypt were present. The head of the delegation was Patriarch Apollinarius (551-570), who was a fanatic Chalcedonian and not very much predisposed toward reconciliation. He acted ruthlessly against the anti-Chalcedonians in his dioceses.<sup>40</sup> By keeping away the anti-Chalcedonians, the Council of Constantinople (553) failed in its goal already in its very convocation.
3. It is impossible to examine the whole anti-Chalcedonian literature in this paper in order to answer the question of whether the Second Council of Constantinople was received in some or another way. A look at sources mentioned in relevant reference works offers a negative answer.<sup>41</sup> No anti-Chalcedonian collection or author is

37 Cf. Grillmeier II/2 (cf. note 3 above) 484.

38 Cf. S. Helmer, *Der Neuchalkedonismus. Geschichte, Berechtigung und Bedeutung eines dogmengeschichtlichen Begriffs*. Bonn 1962; Winkler (cf. note 4 above) 144-148.

39 Cf. Grillmeier II/2 (cf. note 3 above) 459 note 492.

40 Cf. Maspero (cf. note 3 above) 165.

41 Cf. the sources mentioned in P.T.R. Gray, *Konstantinopel II. Ökumenische Synode von 553*. In: TRE 19, 524-527; E. Amann, *Trois-Chapitres (Affaire des)*. In: DThC XV/2, 1868-1924; K. Baus, *Dreikapitelstreit*. In: LThK 3, 565f; Ders., *Konstantinopel V. Ökumen. Konzilien*, in: LThK 6, 495-497.

mentioned there. Even the texts published by Chabot, *Documenta ad origines monophysitarum illustrandas*, – all of them from the time between 535 and 581(!) – do not speak about the Synod of 553. The three theologians condemned by the Three Chapters – Theodore, Theodoret and Ibas – only appear in lists which include from Arius and Appollinarius to Eutyches and Nestorius everybody heterodox to the anti-chalcedonian theology. The three theologians do not have an extraordinary position. The anathema against the Three Chapters seems not to have been useful for a reconciliation of Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians. Was the Second Council of Constantinople ignored by the anti-Chalcedonians? It seems to have been a negligible entity. Herewith the council produced no effect and changed from an ecumenical council to an imperial synod.

4. In the mid 6th-century the formation of an anti-Chalcedonian Church had already been completed in Egypt. Relevant for that is a) the confessionalization of the theology and b) the duplicating of the hierarchy. The first was achieved by Severus of Antioch, the second happened in 537 by the deposition of Theodosios of Alexandria and by the enthronement of Paulos Tabennesiota as chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria.<sup>42</sup> The anti-chalcedonian Church had made its way through history outside the Imperial Church. The council was convoked too late to reconcile Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians.
5. We do not know exactly where Theodosios was at the time of the council of 553. But we may suppose that he was in Constantinople under Theodora's wings. Nevertheless the known sources do not inform us how and if Theodore of Alexandria took note of the council. The letters examined by me do not mention either the Fifth Council or the Three Chapter Controversy.<sup>43</sup>

#### **d. Tritheists**

Near the end of his life Theodosios wrote an *Oratio Theologica* against the Tritheists (around 560). A Syriac translation was already

42 Cf. Winkler, *Koptische Kirche und Reichskirche* 135-163 (cf. note 4 above).

43 Cf. CPG 7134-7136, 7138-7147 according to Chabot, *Documenta ad origines monophysitarum illustrandas* (cf. note 13 above); CPG 7148-7149 according to Zacharias Rh., *Historia Ecclesiastica*; CPG 7133, 7137 and Ep. ad Armenios according to Van Roey-Allen (cf. note 3 above).



published in 1908 by Jean-Baptist Chabot.<sup>44</sup> Three further Syriac translations were edited in 1994 by Albert van Roey and Pauline Allen.<sup>45</sup> As far as I know a textually critical reconstruction is still lacking. The Tritheist controversy also remains largely unexamined. Obviously the Syriac texts of the Patriarch of Antioch, Peter Callinicus (581-591), against the Patriarch of Alexandria, Damianos (578-607), of which two volumes were edited in 1994 and 1996 by Rifaat Y. Ebied, Albert van Roey and Lionel W. Wickham will bring some light into the darkness of our knowledge about Tritheism.<sup>46</sup> But this main theological work of Peter Callinicus was composed in 588 while the *Oratio Theologica* was written about 30 years before.

Tritheism arose within the antichalcedonian movement of Syria and Egypt.<sup>47</sup> Around 557 a certain John Askozanes starts to teach three hypostaseis, three physeis and three ousiai in the godhead. Only three years later Theodosios intervened and composed his tractade. In the miaphysite Church he was the only one at the time who had the authority to do so. His christological and trinitarian terminology is extremely revealing:

"But the Holy Trinity is of the same ousia, distinguished in qnomê and without commingling, but one undivided ousia, kyana, godhead, power, honor, force, act, cognition, adoration and others which are naturally (kyanaith) to God. The property (dilayta) of the father is fatherhood and the fact that he exists in an ungenerated way. The property of the Son is the sonhood and the fact that he was begotten of the Father. The property of the Holy Spirit is that he should not be begotten but should proceed from the Father without a beginning and continuously. For thanks to these properties there are three parsopê without commingling ... And in confessing three qnomê we do not proclaim

44 Cf. CPG 7137; Chabot (cf. note 13 above).

45 Cf. *Theodosios Alex.*, *Oratio theologica* 148-221 (syr.) 222-251 (lat.), in: Van Roey-Allen (cf. note 3 above)

46 Two of the three volumes of the *Tractatus Contra Damianum* are already published: R. Y. Ebied-A. Van Roey-L. R. Wickham (eds), *Petri Callinicensis Patriarchae Antiocheni tractatus contra Damianum I. Quae supersunt libri secundi; Petri Callinicensis Patriarchae Antiocheni tractatus contra Damianum II. Libri tertii Capita I-XIX*. Cf. the review of A. B. Schmidt, in: *Le Muséon* 110 (1997) 254-256.

47 For a brief survey of the tritheist controversy cf. Van Roey-Allen (cf. note 3 above) 122-143; P. Allen, *Monophysiten*, in: TRE 23, 230f.

three rulers, three gods, three ousiai or three kyanê ... but one god, one rulership and one kingship."<sup>48</sup>

This passage shows very clear the terminological dilemma of miaphysite theology. In this Christology the terms physis and hypostasis are used as synonyms for the economy of salvation. In a trinitarian context these terms are now used with further content. That means, in Trinitarian theology Theodosios uses physis where Chalcedonians use ousia (substantia), but in Christology Theodosios uses physis where Chalcedonians would use hypostasis. However, Tritheistic three natures are subsequently denied by Theodosios. Although he is not very precise in terminology, the theological content is of course orthodox.

## Conclusion

In the 6th c. a series of theological developments arose which are of utmost interest for the history of dogma and not very frequently studied. In this paper I could only refer to them very inadequately. The last prominent person of the antichalcedonian movement reacts in his writings to these trends to defend orthodoxy of his faith. Furthermore he gives the main impulses to build up and consolidate the miaphysite church.

Even in the second half of the 6th century the controversy between Chalcedonians and Antichalcedonians was not resolved. The emperor Justin II (565-578) allowed in 566 a lot of antichalcedonian bishops to return from exile. Theodosios died a few month before and could not enjoy this amnesty anymore. However, the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Miaphysites got an official funeral in Constantinople, where - according to Michael the Syrian (X 1, II 283)<sup>49</sup> - the monk Athanasios, a nephew of the Empress Theodora, publically condemned the Council of Chalcedon.

48 *Theodosios Alex.*, *Oratio theologica*, in: *Van Roey-Allen* (cf. note 3 above) 152 (lin. 116-125) 153 (lin. 133-135. 138f).

49 Cf. *Allen* (cf. note 47 above) 230.

**Abbreviations used in the notes:**

- ACO Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. Ed. E. Schwarz. Berlin  
AHC Annuarium historiae conciliorum. Amsterdam  
CPG Clavis patrum Graecorum. Ed. M. Geerard. Brepolis-Turnhout  
CSCO Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Lovain  
DThC Dictionaire de théologie catholique. Paris  
LThK Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche. Freiburg  
OCP Orientalia Christiana Periodica. Roma  
OLA Orientalia Louvaniensia Analecta  
OstKSt Ostkirchliche Studien. Würzburg  
PO Patrologia Orientalis. Paris  
ROC Revue de l'Orient chrétien. Paris  
TRE Theologische Realenzyklopädie. Berlin  
ZKG Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte. Stuttgart

Karl H.Kuhlmann

## **The Harp out of Tune: The anti-Judaism/ anti-Semitism of St.Ephrem**

The history of anti-Judaism/anti-Semitism is a very long one. As a racist ideology, however, it stems from France and Germany during the last decades of the 19th century describing the Jews as a special race which would endanger the culture and life of Europe. Tragic and sad peak then the holocaust with millions of dead.

In a wider sense anti-Judaism/anti-Semitism is related to the hatred which is known from different works of hellenistic and roman writers of antiquity and later adopted different forms in Christian and Muslim cultures. In any case it gave rise to an enduring discrimination of the Jews. Research and discussion of anti-Judaism/anti-Semitism has got a central position in the science of history, the history of ideas, in sociology, psychology, science of religion, philosophy and in the history of the countries concerned.

As we know the New Testament gives us a multitude of clashes over contemporary Jewish persons and groups, polemics against Jewish institutions and attitudes (Mt. 23,13-33; Lk 11, 42-52; Mk. 12, 1-12). But all this is part of the Jewish world of faith and life according to the self understanding of the early Christian church. They reflect inner-Jewish caused disputes and delimitations. So it would be an anachronism to speak here of an anti-Judaism or even an anti Semitism.

First signs, however, are emerging there where out of political reasons the Roman responsibility for the death of Jesus is minimalized and that of the Jews is maximalized (Luke 23,1-25). This is also the case where the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans is explained as punishment for the rejection and murder of Jesus and connected with the threat of the "heilsgeschichtliche" disinheritance of the whole people (Mt.21, 33-44). Nevertheless, even in these cases it is out of the question to call this anti-Judaism as an expression of principle opposition against Judaism.

The texts of the New Testament, however, have developed an anti-judaistic power in history and were understood and in general exploited against Judaism. In this way theological anti-Judaism and practical hostility against the Jews has been looming from the New and Old Testament in the course of the further development of Christianity.

Following the New Testament we then find special anti-Jewish polemics and argumentation in the literature of the early church. This anti-Judaism shows no uniform picture but is shaped by regional, political and sociological facts and theological preconditions.

The attacks against Judaism are aiming definitely at the proof that the church is the true Israel and the Christians the heirs of the biblical promises. Often the Jews are portrayed as immoral and criminal, they are shown as animals and devils. In the argumentation the evidence of scripture is very important. The stories about the disobedience of the people of God (revolution during Exodus), dancing around the golden calf) as well as the scolding of the prophets are used to underline the apostasy of the Jews. The ritual laws are allegorized in order to unmask the Jewish piousness as stupid.

Within this literary level also the Syriac anti-Jewish polemic has its place and St. Ephrem, the most celebrated of the Syrian fathers, "The Harp", is one of the champions. It is striking that in most of his biographies we do not find any hint to this attitude. In the relative long article on him in "Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche" by Edmund Beck (1959) St. Ephrem's anti-Judaism is mentioned with no single word. A. de Halleux in his article "Ephrem the Syrian" at least comes to the conclusion "that the danger of a conquering eagerness of conversion which could be disseminated in the yet delicate Christian communities does, however, explain more a Christian anti-Judaism than excuse it and which is fortunately no more ours" (287). The anthology of "Theologians of the Christian Antiquity" (2002) has an

article on St. Ephrem by Peter Bruns with no comment on his anti-Judaism.

Besides Stanley Kazan's series "Isaac of Antioch's Homily Against the Jews" (1961 - 65) and Robert Murray's "Symbols of Church and Kingdom" (1975) only A. P. Hayman has contributed in depth to the study of Ephrem's hatred for the Jews. For him the image of the Jew in Syriac literature depends, in the first place, upon a common Christian attitude which emerges virtually full - fledged during the second century C.E. in Justin Martyr's "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew", the first anti - Jewish dialogue.

Ephrem he sees possessed of a type of mentality that could not stand opposition to what, for him, was obvious, and his resulting frustration boiled over into bitter recrimination against the enemy. In the torrent of abuse which he (and John Chrysotom) heaped on the Jewish people, milder voices such as the Persian Sage Aphrahat's and the "Didascalia's" Syriac version were swamped. So it is the voice of Ephrem which dominates the earlier Syriac tradition of anti - Jewish polemic.

In the Sermon on Palm Sunday St. Ephrem (II. 319 - 387) depicts the Synagogue as a harlot. He then develops the image of the stripped - off garments as he expounds on the traditional theme of how, since she crucified Christ, Israel has lost everything: priesthood, Temple, Land. Earlier on he had painted the picture of Judaism as a ruined vineyard, as an empty shell which no longer has a reason for existence. The whole series of images constitutes a very effective attempt to depict the emptiness and worthlessness of contemporary Judaism. Later on in the Sermon, the average Jew is depicted as, quite simply, sick (Israel's heart has become fat and its ears heavy) - he does not understand the Scriptures when he reads them (II. 486 - 506).

Ephrem's image of Jews leads to a perversion in the narrative of Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem. In his description, the crowds who acclaim Jesus are described as Gentiles, not Jews. The mental process by which this happens is clear. It derives from the stereotype of the Jews as those who have always rejected the Christian message, whereas on the festival of Palm Sunday, the Church re-enacts the Triumphant Entry with the Christian worshippers playing the part of the crowd.

So, according to Hayman, we have here, in Ephrem's first Hymn on the Resurrection, the apogee of a process which begins in the passion

narratives themselves - the attempt to shift onto the Jewish People as a whole the blame for accusing and condemning Jesus.

Ephrem's personal bitter animosity towards the Jews is nowhere revealed more clearly than in his 67th Nisibene Hymn. Here his anti-Jewish rhetoric sinks almost as low as anything produced by modern anti-Semites when he openly admits how much he hates the Jews: "Death did not crucify Jesus but the People, how hateful, then, is the People, even more than I am." He then proceeds to build up a terrifying image of Jews as less than human beings, the prime example being how Jewish mothers ate their children. Ephrem even stoops to using a theme which recurs so fatefully in modern anti-Semitism, the "special smell" of the Jews. He confesses he is amazed that the Holy Spirit could dwell so long in a people which smelt so much.

The gratuitousness of Ephrem's anti-Judaism is demonstrated by the way in which he simply has to throw in anti-Jewish comments in completely inappropriate contexts. In the Hymn on the Faith, no. 82, from the group of five Hymns on the Pearl, in stanza 2 by describing the pearl he throws in the following: "Your symbol rebukes the Jewish girls when they wear you."

Ephrem's incessant need to bring in anti-Jewish themes reveals how deep-seated was his detestation of the Jews. There can be no positives in Ephrem's theology without the inevitable negatives. So, for instance, the refrain of the 18th Hymn on Unleavened Bread reads: "Praise the Son who gave us his body in place of the unleavened bread which he gave to the People." The refrains of the 17th and 19th hymns in this series are totally negative.

After reference to the stinking smell of Jewish food reminiscent of Nisibene Hymn 67, Ephrem reaches the height of his rhetorical appeal to Christians not to eat Jewish unleavened bread. He then follows through his image of unleavened bread kneaded by hands stained with Christ's blood in this startled parallel: "For the blood of Christ is mixed and dwells in the unleavened bread of the People and in our Eucharist. He who takes it in through our Eucharist, takes the medicine of life; he who eats it with People, takes the medicine of death" (19, 23-24).

Finally comes an allusion to that fateful verse - Mt. 27, 25. "For that blood which they cried out should be upon them is mixed in their festivals and sabbaths. And he who takes part in their festivals the sprinkling of the blood comes to him as well" (19, 25-26).

Hayman sums up his study by giving an assessment of St. Ephrem's reasons for his anti-Jewish attacks. As does Kazan and others he sees the virulence of his anti-Judaism partly in the strength of the continuing attraction, which Judaism exercised over Christians. But it also owes a lot to Ephrem's own fiery temperament, for he reacted to other threats to the Church with the same degree of virulence and abuse. Unfortunately, Ephrem's approach met the Church's organizational need to draw a firm line between itself and the Jews. At any rate Ephrem's attitude to the Jews had permeated the whole Syriac literature by the beginning of the fifth century and his teaching leaped out of the realm of mere rhetoric into action as it can be seen in different places.

The German church critic Karlheinz Deschner has written a "Crime History of Christianity" (1986) of several volumes, and in vol. I, *The Early Time*, he deals with the "Teacher of the Church and the Antisemite St. Ephrem". It may be worthwhile to listen to his reproaches as they bring us outside the circle of those who may tend to dispel the dark side of the "Luminous Eye". There can be no doubt that the holocaust has sharpened the conscience concerning all anti-Judaistic remarks and especially in Germany has produced an atmosphere of tetchiness. This does not only concern St. Ephrem but other fathers of the church too. Martin Luther has been under an ongoing attack because of his harsh statements on the Jews at the end of his life.

Deschner calls St. Ephrem one of the wildest enemies of the Jews not only of his time. "Coming from a Christian family already as a child he was vituperating, rough and as once stoning to death the cow of a poor man so he later castigated the Jews. While being professor at the Christian school of Nisibis he called them villains and natures of slaves, lunatics, servants of the devil, criminals, being of insatiable bloodthirst, 99 times worse than non-Jews. They are not only murderers of God but murderers in general". Deschner concedes that the "holy antisemite" created the earliest church hymns and that he became the first Christmas singer of Christianity. "But nevertheless the saint is confronting the radiant purity of the church with the madness and the stink and with the killing of the Jewish people. For St. Ephrem the church is free from the stink of the stinking Jews who want to hand over their earlier sickness to the healthy. They try to tear to pieces the healthy limbs by cutting, burning and medicine which was intended for their own diseases. The Jewish people have murdered the prophets and God himself; will it not massacre everybody else? They have tasted too much blood therefore they could not stop the



murder anymore. Then they murdered openly now they do it in secret. O you miserable, flee from the Jews, for your death and your blood is nothing for them. They have taken on the blood, should they therefore shy away from yours? They put God to the cross, they slaughtered the prophets like lambs. Physicians came to them but they became their butchers. Flee and escape from the furious people, take your refuge with Christ! The son of God came to the semen of Abraham but the heirs became murderers" (131 - 132).

With all these quotations from the writings of St. Ephrem Deschner is indeed embarrassing Christians of today. And although these quotations are taken out of their context they show an attitude which we can no longer support. Therefore it is of little help when the publishing house Herder in Freiburg/Germany has put together several articles of theologians (Criminalizing Christianity?) to reply to the attacks of Deschner which try to bring some understanding for the historical situation in which all this happened. So Günter Stemberger in his contribution concerning St. Ephrem has just this to say: " All this shall not lead to offset the atrocities of the one side against those of the other but refer to the fact that the development of the Jewish-Christian relations and the rivalry of the both communities of which the Jewish has been the stronger one for a long time was much more complex than collection of anti-Jewish statements in Christian texts can suggest.

This is especially clear with Ephrem whose plastic poetical language, emphasized above all in his statements against Christian heretics, for us today is sounding real drastic. To simply use late anecdotes to characterize that man (of whom contemporary almost nothing is known) and then quote single expressions does not add anything to the understanding of those days when in Edessa and Nisibis Christianity was much weaker than the Jewish communities which were extremely attractive for many Christians and thus created even stronger defence reactions. This should also be taken into consideration concerning John Chrysostom: his unspeakable hostile eight sermons against the Jews are not to be excused at all, but a little bit more understandable if one is thinking of the attraction of Judaism for many Christians of the then Antioch; which anger must have been bottled up when preachers had to see that Christians also still frequented the synagogues and celebrated Jewish festivals before they forced themselves to church late: to bring out the own Christian identity seemed to be possible only in sharp contrast to Judaism...The ugly spots cannot be spotted out but they should not be seen alone" (125 - 126).

Now this seems to be a rather shaky argument and does not at all breathe the spirit of Christ. It is not enough to concede some inappropriate behaviour but the Church fathers and thus St. Ephrem too must be condemned without any restraint there where they failed to follow the gospel. It is of course understandable that the heroes of any tradition create the tendency to see them only in their glory but by neglecting their weak sides we do them no good. They should be praised where they deserve it and they should be rejected where they failed. In this way St. Ephrem, The Harp, had not only a beautiful sounding but sometimes was also out of tune. Only if we see these two sides together we do him justice and he can find the right place in the history of the Church.

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### **The eighth gift: the pure and perfect fast of those who belong to Our Lord**

"Public fasting is the first-born and pre-eminent of all bodily labours. It is a prolonged abstinence from all nourishment. Against this endeavour the first demon, at the outset, set up this contest against the first human beings: the first begotten demon against the first begotten of mankind. He overwhelmed him and conquered him. And from that time onwards, the adversary set as the first of the snares this passion: love of the stomach. And by experience the serpent, crooked in his leanness, learned that as a result of greediness, all produce brings on the possibility that evil desires be stirred up in us. When this is clearly established, these desires are embodied and bound together, since this is the first contest to confront every one, good and evil. It is a small passion according to the foolish, but it is the chief of all evil passions of the body, and from it and by it many evils come upon anyone whom it has in its power. Life in this world is sordid and transient, for there is little shame in this world, and the hard fall from it into destruction is great. And beyond this, the ruler of evil continually fights against all good endeavours that are known to the body or the soul, and he wages war against all the virtues that are seen in anyone, to disfigure and destroy until either he conquers or is conquered."

*(Quoted from "The Book of Gifts" which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J.Lane)*

Sebastian P. Brock

## The Background To Some Terms In The Syriac Eucharistic Epicleses

In the various anaphoras used by the different Churches of Syriac liturgical tradition the wording of the epiclesis, or invocation to the Holy Spirit, takes on many different forms<sup>1</sup>. In this paper my aim is to explore something of the background to four of the main verbs used.

The majority of epicleses are addressed to the Father, who is asked, either to 'send' his Holy Spirit, or that his Holy Spirit 'may come'. The latter, with 'may your Spirit come ....' is the form familiar from the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari, and from the other two East Syrian anaphoras. It is also found in a considerable number of West Syrian anaphoras, either alone, or in combination with 'send'; in Greek, it features in the Anaphora of St Basil, and in a few Coptic and Ethiopic anaphoras. Its roots can be traced back to the phrase *marana*

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1. For an important recent study, using the early Syriac material, see G. Winkler, 'Nochmals zu den Anfängen der Epiklese und des Sanctus im Eucharistischen Hochgebet', *Theologische Quartalschrift* 174 (1994), 214-31, and her 'Zur Erforschung orientalischer Anaphoren....', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 63 (1997), 363-420. A detailed study of the Syriac epicleses in the current anaphoras can be found in my 'Towards a typology of the epicleses in the West Syrian Anaphoras', in R. Taft and others (eds.), *Festschrift for Gabriele Winkler* (Rome, forthcoming). The verbs discussed here also feature in invocations to the Spirit in the various Syriac baptismal services, for which see my 'The Epiclesis in the Antiochene baptismal ordines', [i] *Symposium Syriacum* (OCA 197, 1974), 183-218.

tha, 'our Lord, come', in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> 'Send' is the verb found in the Anaphora of St James, and it features in the majority of the West Syrian anaphoras, as well as in the Greek anaphoras of St John Chrysostom, St Gregory, St James and St Mark, and in the various Coptic and Ethiopic anaphoras.

It is not, however, my purpose to spend time on these two initial verbs; instead, I would like to concentrate on four specific verbs with which the wording of many of the epiclesis continues, namely shra, 'to reside', etnīh 'to find rest', raḥ ḥep, 'to hover', and aggen, 'to tabernacle, to overshadow', the last two of which also have related noun forms, ruḥ ḥapa, 'hovering', and maggananuta, 'tabernacled, overshadowing'. Usually these verbs will occur in combination with one another, and with other verbs such as qaddesh, 'to sanctify', barrek, 'to bless', and are then followed either by 'bad, 'to make, effect' or hwa, 'to become' (see Appendix 2). Thus, just to give two examples here, taken from the most commonly used anaphoras: the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari has '.....Lord, may your Holy Spirit come and find rest on this offering,..... and bless it and sanctify it so that it becomes for us.....etc.', while the Anaphora of St James has '....send upon us and upon these offerings set out your Holy Spirit,....., so that, tabernacled (kad maggen), he may make the bread.....etc.'.

### (1) shra, 'to reside'

The verb shra, in the sense of 'reside' temporarily, is already used in the Jewish Targums in a sacral context. In these Jewish Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible actions by God are often paraphrased, in order to preserve a sense of divine transcendence. Thus for example, at Exod. 25:8, where the Hebrew text has '(make me a sanctuary) and I (=God) will dwell among them', Targum Onkelos renders this by 'I will cause my Shekhina to reside (ashre shekhinti) among them', using the causative, or af'el, form of the verb shra. It is very possible that the earliest Aramaic-speaking Christians took over this verb in order to describe the mystery of the incarnation:<sup>3</sup> this is suggested by the fact that in early Syriac poetry (and indeed in Syriac liturgical poetry in

2. The phrase can be taken in two ways: (1) maran atha, 'our Lord has come', or (2) marana tha, 'our Lord, come!'. Since Palestinian Aramaic of the first century AD seems to have had a 1st plural suffix in -na, rather than -an, this means that the second interpretation is the most likely.
3. For this, see my 'The lost Old Syriac at Luke 1:35 and the earliest Syriac terms for the incarnation', in W.L. Petersen (ed.), *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century* (Notre Dame, 1989), pp. 117-31.

general), this is the verb regularly used when authors are paraphrasing the two key verses of the Gospels which refer to the incarnation, namely the annunciation narrative in Luke 1:35, 'the Holy Spirit will come and the Power of the Most High will overshadow you,' and John 1:14, 'the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us'; their constant use of the verb *shra* in these two contexts is all the more striking in that all the Syriac versions of the Gospels use quite a different verb for both passages, namely *aggen*, 'to tabernacle', one of the verbs to which we shall be returning below. A couple of examples must suffice to illustrate this use of *shra* instead of *aggen* in these two fundamental Gospel passages. Reflecting the use of the term 'Power (of the Most High)' in Luke 1:35, Ephrem writes:

When the Power resided (*shra*) in the womb,

that same Power was fashioning babes in the womb. (Madrashe on the Nativity, 4:174)

The use of the verb *shra* to describe the incarnation of the Divine Word in Mary's womb is found in many other passages of Ephrem's *madrashe* on the Nativity, and elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> The same verb can also be found, though less frequently, in clear allusions to John 1:14. Thus, again from Ephrem, we find the following:

Blessed is He who bent down his height

and resided (*wa-shra*) in us. (Madrashe on the Church, 15:2; cp on Resurrection, 1:7).

From the more specific point of view of the use of *shra* in eucharistic epiclesis to denote the activity of the Spirit, it is intriguing to find that there are close parallels in phraseology already in the Targums. In the official Targum (Onkelos) at Gen. 45:27 we read that 'the Spirit of Holiness resided (*shrat*) on Jacob', and likewise in the Palestinian Targum Neofiti at Num. 11:25 'the Spirit of Holiness' is described as having 'resided (*shrat*) on the Seventy Elders'.<sup>5</sup>

The use of the verb *shra* in a eucharistic context is already found in Syriac in the Acts of Thomas. In a passage describing the baptism of the general Sipur and his wife and daughter, at the ensuing *qurbana* the apostle Judas Thomas prays, saying 'We call to mind the name of

4. E.g. H.de Nativitate 3:20, 16:2, 21:6; H. de Virginitate 25:8; Carmina Nisibena 46:1. In many passages in the *Fenqitho* and *Hudra* both *aggen* and *shra* are used together in paraphrases of Luke 1:35.

5. Ephrem uses *shra* with the Holy Spirit as subject at H.de Nativitate 5:10 and 6:13.

the Spirit over you, the exalted name, hidden from all; in your name, Jesus, may the power of blessing and thanksgiving come and reside (w-neshre) on this bread.....' (\*\*\*)). Likewise in Ephrem, in a passage where he addresses Christ:

In your bread is hidden the Spirit....

in your wine there resides (sharya) the Fire....(Madrashe on Faith, 10:8).

It is significant that no verb corresponding to shra is ever to be found in any Greek anaphora; this absence as a technical term from Greek is a further indication that we are dealing with a specialized term that goes back to the very roots of Aramaic-and Syriac-speaking Christianity.

## 2. ettnih, 'to rest, find rest'

The biblical origins of the use of this verb in connection with the Spirit lie in the Peshitta translation of Isaiah 11:2, '(A staff shall come forth from the trunk of Jesse, and a shoot will bud from this stock), and the Spirit of God will rest and reside upon him nyaha'. The concept of 'rest' (Syriac nyaha, Greek anapausis) was evidently an important one in early Christianity and was associated with Matt. 11:28-29, where Christ says 'Come to me, all you who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up upon yourselves (or: your souls)<sup>6</sup>. Corresponding to the word translated 'gentle' here (praus in Greek), in the Syriac Gospels there is nihā, which is from the same root as nyaha, 'rest', and one is tempted to suspect that the same word play was also present in the Jewish Aramaic saying of Jesus behind the Greek Mathew. Whether or not that was the case, it is evident from a variety of different sources that the verb ettnih, 'to rest, find rest' was taken up at an early date in Syriac as one of the specialized terms to denote the activity of the Holy Spirit.

This use of ettnih in the context of invocations of the Spirit seems to be a feature distinctive to Syriac liturgical tradition, for no corresponding use of the verb anapauein ('to rest') is to be found in Greek epicleses.

6. For this, see G. Winkler, 'Ein bedeutsamer Zusammenhang zwischen Erkenntnis und Ruhe in Mt 11, 27-29 und dem Ruhen des Geistes auf Jesus am Jordan. Eine Analyse zur Geist-Christologie in syrischen und armenischen Quellen', *Le Museon* 96 (1983), 267-326.

### 3. *rah hep* 'to hover'

In the Syriac Bible both the verb *rah hep* and its derived noun form, *ruh hapa* 'hovering, hovering presence', occur a number of times. In almost all of these passages, in both Old and New Testaments, the noun is found in combination with *rah me*, 'compassion', and the verb *rah hep* normally translates Hebrew verbs meaning 'to have compassion'; likewise the nominal form *mrah hpana* is regularly paired with *mrah hmana* 'compassionate'. But none of these passages provides the origin of *rah hep* and *ruh hapa* as they are used in subsequent Syriac literature, above all in a liturgical context. For this origin we need to go back to single verse at the beginning of the Creation narrative in Genesis, 'the *ruh a* (spirit, wind) of God hovered (*mrah hpa*) over the surface of the water' (Gen 1:2b). The underlying Hebrew verb here, *mrah epet*, is from the same root as the Syriac; the Greek translation of the Septuagint, by contrast, rendered the Hebrew verb by a passive, *epepherto*, 'was carried' - a difference which (as we shall see) was to become important for one strand of Syriac exegesis. Unlike the situation in the Syriac Bible, the verbal root *rh p* only occurs once again in the Hebrew Bible, at Deut 32:11, where it is used of a bird hovering over its nest.

At this point we must make a short diversion into the exegetical problems surrounding Gen 1:2. A glance at a selection of modern English translations of the Bible will quickly indicate that there is great uncertainty about the exegesis and translation of the passage, and in particular about the precise identity of the subject of the Hebrew participle *mrah epet* here, namely the (Hebrew *ruah*): does it refer to the Holy Spirit, or to a divine spirit other than the Holy Spirit; or does *ruah* really mean 'wind', in which case, is it 'a wind of God' or just 'a mighty wind'? The variety of opinion among modern Bible translators and exegetes is no new thing, for in antiquity there was a similar variety of views among both Jews and Christians. Discussion of the matter took on somewhat different forms in different languages, and here we shall just glance at the intriguing history of the different Syriac interpretations.<sup>7</sup>

The two earliest references to Gen 1:2 in Syriac literature, in the Acts of Thomas and in Aphrahat, clearly identify the *ruh eh d-allaha*

7. For fuller details, see my 'The *ruah*' *elohim* of Gen 1,2 and its reception history in the Syriac tradition', in the *Melanges for P-M. Bogaert* (Louvain, forthcoming).



in this verse as the Holy Spirit, and it is likely that this was the widespread understanding in early Syriac Christianity. Only on this supposition is it possible to explain how the adoption of *raḥ ḥep* as a specialized verb, denoting the activating of the Holy Spirit, came about. Only a few decades after Aphrahat wrote his *Demonstrations*, however, we find Ephrem taking a totally different view in his *Commentary on Genesis*. Although he knows of the identification of the *ruḥeh d-allaha* with the Holy Spirit, he goes on to say that "the faithful" understand it as 'a wind of God', sent to disperse the clouds that had produced the darkness (mentioned in the first half of Gen. 1:2). This is not the place to go into his reasons, which seem to have been governed, at least in part, by a desire to controvert Bardaisan's views on the verse. The fact that Ephrem is perfectly happy in his other works to use the verb *ruḥ ḥep*, and the noun *ruḥ ḥapa*, in connection with the Holy Spirit (outside the context of Gen 1:2) simply indicates that these terms had already by his day become standard ones in Syriac for describing the activity of the Holy Spirit.

As far as the understanding of Gen 1:2, however, was concerned, Ephrem's voice carried authority in the later Syriac tradition. Now it so happened that the same view was taken by the main Greek writers in the Antiochene exegetical tradition, Diodore, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret (one of Theodore's arguments was that the passive verb of the Septuagint was inappropriate for describing any action of the Holy Spirit). Theodore's *Commentary on Genesis* was translated into Syriac and was evidently studied at the famous Persian School in Edessa and in the successor School of Nisibis (where of course Theodore became the 'Exegete' or 'Interpreter' (*mpashḥqana*) par excellence). The combined authority of Ephrem and Theodore ensured that the East Syrian exegetical tradition was unanimous in taking the *ruḥa* of Gen 1:2 as just 'wind'.

On the surface this might lead one to suspect that this understanding of the identify of the *ruḥa* which hovered over the primordial water accounts for the absence of *raḥ ḥep* from any of the epicleses in the three East Syrian anaphoras. Though this is just a possibility, it needs to be recalled that the noun *ruḥ ḥapa* was used in precisely this context in the famous verse commentary on the liturgy, namely Homily 17 attributed to Narsi (there are good reasons for doubting the attribution and dating it instead to the sixth century); here we find the explicit statement, put in the very mouth of Christ:

I will make the bread and wine Body and Blood

Through the hovering ruḥ ḥapa and action of the Holy Spirit.

In fact there are quite a number of occurrences of both raḥ ḥep and ruḥ ḥapa in East Syrian liturgical poetry describing the activity of the Holy Spirit in a variety of different contexts. Thus, for example, a passage in the Hudra for Pentecost describes the 'power of the Spirit' as 'hovering over the apostles' (the biblical text in Act has 'settled' (iteb).

What about the West Syrian tradition? Although Theodore's name was anathema, nevertheless his biblical exegesis, as taught at the Persian School of Edessa, did exert a considerable influence on Syrian Orthodox authors who were educated at this School. Among these was the famous poet Jacob of Serugh, whose verse homilies on the Six Days of Creation draw heavily on the exegetical traditions of Theodore as well as Ephrem. But again, despite his identification of the ruḥ a of Gen 1:2 as 'wind', Jacob is perfectly happy to use both raḥ ḥep and ruḥ ḥapa in other contexts, including eucharistic ones. Most later Syrian Orthodox writers, however, see Gen 1:2 as referring to the Holy Spirit; as authorities for this view they were able to claim the authority of St Basil, in his commentary on the Hexaemeron, or Six Days of Creation. Basil himself quotes as the source for his understanding an anonymous Syrian. There is a perennial urge to identify anonymous persons, and this particular anonymous Syrian was already by the early sixth century identified as Ephrem: this identification did not fit with Ephrem's own views, as known from his Commentary on Genesis, for many this alleged authority of St Ephrem, combined with that of St Basil, was welcomed. It so happens that the true identity of this anonymous Syrian has only recently come to light. he is now known to have been an older contemporary of St Ephrem, Eusebius of Emesa, who actually originated from Edessa.

Turning now to the various Syriac anaphoras, we find both raḥ ḥep and ruḥ ḥapa appearing in epicleses in a number of Syrian Orthodox anaphoras. Thus in the Syriac anaphora of St John Chrysostom (which is totally different from the Greek anaphora attributed to this saint), the relevant part of the epiclesis reads: '..... may your Spirit and your sanctifying Power tabernacle over this holy altar and sanctify its offerings, and may he hover nraḥ ḥep and reside (w-nwshre) upon the bread....'; and, for an example of the use of ruḥ ḥapa, we may take the anaphora of Gregory Iuhannon: '....may your Spirit come and reside

8. See I., van Rompay, 'L' Informateur syrien de Basile de Cesaree', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 58 (1992), pp.245-51.

(w-neshre) and tabernacle over these Mysteries and sanctify them with the sanctity that comes from him, so that through his hidden and mysterious hovering ruh ʰapa he may make the bread.....'.

As with the two verbs, shra and ettnih, previously considered, rah ʰep too has no counterpart in Greek epicleses (and indeed the verb used by the Septuagint in Gen. 1:2, epehereto, 'was carried', is hardly appropriate for use in invocations to the Spirit).

#### 4. aggen, 'to tabernacle'<sup>9</sup>

Our fourth term, aggen, 'to tabernacle', has its roots in Jewish Aramaic, as was the case with shra. In certain strands of the Palestinian Targum tradition aggen was the verb used to translate the mysterious Hebrew verb *pasah* in the Exodus narrative (Exod. 12). This verb (from which Pesach, i.e. Pascha, Passover, derives) is of very uncertain meaning and scholars both in antiquity and in modern times have come up with a large number of suggestions. The translators of the Palestinian Targum evidently chose aggen because it was a verb that had connotations of divine protection (the root is also found in Hebrew *magen*, 'a shield'). Although the Peshitta translation of Exodus chose quite a different translation for *pasah*, earliest Syriac-speaking Christianity must have taken over from Jewish Aramaic the specialized use of the verb aggen for denoting divine activity among humanity, and this was why it was the term chosen to render the two different Greek verbs used in the key verses mentioned above, Luke 1:35 (where the Greek has *epeskiasen*, 'overshadowed') and John 1:14 (where it has *eskēnōsen* 'tabernacled'). The original choice of aggen seems to go back to the Syriac Diatessaron, and the rendering has been preserved in all subsequent Syriac versions of the Gospels. Now in neither Gospel passage is aggen an obvious translation of the Greek, and closer renderings could easily have been found; this means that the person who chose to use aggen did so for some particular reason. Here one can tentatively suggest that he did so because he was aware of the Palestinian Targum use of the verb in the Passover narrative and, as a result, wanted to introduce into these two Gospel passages a

9. For fuller details, see my 'From Annunciation to Pentecost: the travels of a technical term', in E. Carr and other (eds), *Eulogema: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft SJ* (Studia Anelmiana 110, 1993), pp. 71-91. It is difficult to find a satisfactory translation of aggen (all the more so since it translates two different verbs in Luke and John); I choose 'tabernacle' (closer to John) in view of the etymologically related noun *gnona*, 'bridal canopy, bridal chamber'.

typological resonance between the incarnate Lamb of God and the Passover lamb. This may at first sound rather far-fetched, but it needs to be remembered that this typological link between the Passover lamb and Christ, 'the true Lamb', was very strong in early Syriac Christianity, and the parallels between the two were worked out in detail by Ephrem and others, as the following passage from Ephrem's Commentary on Exodus will indicate:

The (passover) lamb is a symbol of our Lord who came to the womb on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan. For, from the 10<sup>th</sup> of the seventh month, when Zechariah was told about the birth of John (Luke 1:11, taken as the Day of Atonement), up to the tenth of the first month (=Nisan), when the announcement was made to Mary by the angel, constitute six months. That was why the angel said to her, "This is the sixth month for her who had been called barren" (Luke 1:36). On the 10<sup>th</sup> (Nisan), therefore, when the (passover) lamb was confined (Exod. 12:3), our Lord was conceived,<sup>10</sup> and on the 14<sup>th</sup>, when it was slaughtered, he whom the lamb symbolized was crucified.

From the fifth century onwards the use of *aggen* was extended from the context of the annunciation to that of other important stages in salvation history, above all the eucharist. Here, the common use of the verb *aggen* in both the annunciation narrative and with reference to the consecratory action of the Spirit in the Eucharist helped to bring out the close links, as seen by Syriac writers from Ephrem onwards, between the incarnation and the eucharistic consecration of the bread and wine.

In the East Syrian anaphoras *aggen* occurs only in the anaphora under the name of Theodore. It has been suggested that the use of *aggen* in this anaphora is due to the influence of the West Syrian anaphora of James, where *kad maggen*, 'while tabernacling', features very prominently, corresponding to the Greek participle, *epiphointē san*. The wording of the epiclesis in the Anaphora of St James certainly exerted a strong influence on many subsequent Syrian Orthodox anaphoras, where the phrase *kad maggen* is preserved. In view, however, of the widespread use of *aggen* in the context of the eucharistic epiclesis among Syriac writers of the fifth and sixth century, it may well be that the use of the imperfect of *aggen*, as opposed to the phrase *kad maggen*, arose quite independently of influence from the Anaphora of St James.

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10. The 10<sup>th</sup> Nisan (~ April) is regularly seen as the date of the Annunciation in early Syriac literature. The 25<sup>th</sup> March, familiar today, is a much later introduction.

The derived noun *maggnanuta* is first attested at the end of the fifth century, normally in the context of the incarnation. It too, however, soon got extended to other contexts, and above all, the Eucharist, where it features in a considerable number of West Syrian epicleses.

Although the phrase *kad maggen* in the Anaphora of James is certainly a translation of the Greek participle *epiphoitēsan*, it is not at all likely that the use of *aggen* in Syriac invocations took its origin in this Greek verb, seeing that *aggen* is an important biblical word in Syriac, whereas *epiphoitaō* (and likewise the noun *epiphoitēs*) in Greek is not.

All of these verbs used in Syriac eucharistic epicleses are distinctive features of the Syriac liturgical tradition, and each of them has its own resonances and its own intriguing background, sometimes (as in the case of *shra* and *aggen*) even taking us back into the prehistory of Syriac Christianity, to its roots in Jewish Aramaic. Another, *raḥ ḥep*, has an origin in a passage of the Peshitta Old Testament that subsequently became the subject of a lively exegetical controversy- not that this ever impinged on the use of *raḥ ḥep* in the context of the Eucharist. The remaining verb, *ettiniḥ*, likewise has its origin in the Peshitta Old Testament, but seems to have taken on added connotations from a passage in the Syriac Gospels.

An awareness of all these various associations which lie behind the use of these four terms in the Syriac Eucharistic epicleses can profitably serve to help enrich our understanding of the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit in the course of each celebration of the Qurbana.

## Appendix 1:

Attestation of the four verbs, *shra*, *ettiniḥ*, *raḥ ḥep* and *aggen*, in the East and West Syrian epicleses.

|                 |                                                               |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Shra</i>     | - Nestorius, Theodore; 11 West Syrian anaphoras <sup>11</sup> |
| <i>ettiniḥ</i>  | - Addai & Mari, Nestorius; 6 West Syrian anaphoras.           |
| <i>raḥ ḥep</i>  | - ; 14 West Syrian anaphoras.                                 |
| <i>ruḥ ḥapa</i> | - ; 9 West Syrian anaphoras.                                  |
| <i>aggen</i>    | - Theodore; 18 West Syrian anaphoras.                         |

11. For the identity of the West Syrian anaphoras, see my 'Towards a typology...' (n.1).

kad maggen - ; James and 17 9 West Syrian anaphoras.

maggnanuta - ; 9 West Syrian anaphoras.

## **APPENDIX 2:**

Verbs used in the epicleses of select Syriac anaphoras (for the West Syrian anaphoras the selection is based on the collections of anaphoras published at Pampakuda).

### **a) East Syrian:**

**ADDAI AND MARI:** ....wneṭṭniḥ....wa-nbarrkiw(hy) wa-nqaddsiw(hy)

d-nehwe...., '(may the Spirit) ..... find rest.... And bless and sanctify it so that it may become....'.

**NESTORIUS:** ....w-teshre w-tettniḥ... wa-tbarrkiw(hy) wa-tqaddhiw(hy) w-te`bdiw(hy)... kad mshaḥ lep.. wa-mqaddesh... d-nehwe...., '(may the grace of the Spirit).... and reside and find rest ..... and bless it and sanctify it and make it...., changing.... And sanctifying .... So that it may become....'.

**THEODORE:** .....w-teshre w-taggen .....wa-tbarrek wa-tqaddesh wa-nraḥ ḥep.... w-nehwe...., '(may the grace of the Spirit).... And reside and tabernacle ..... and bless and sanctify and seal... so that it may become....'.

### **b) West Syrian:**

**JAMES:** ... kad maggen ne bed....., '(may the Spirit)... while tabernacling make ....'.

**XII APOSTLE (second anaphora of):** ...wa-nraḥ ḥep... w-ne`bdiw(hy)... (w-lan nḥasse wa-nqaddesh)... dab-maggnanuteh ne`bed... d-nehwe...., and hover.... and make ....(and forgive and sanctify us).... So that through his tabernacling he make make ... so that it becomes....'.

**DIOYSIUS BAR SALIBI (first anaphora of):** ....negmor....nshaḥ lep...., '...may he tabernacle.... And sanctify .... so that, while tabernacling, he may make....'.

**JOHN of HARRAN (or 'John Chrysostom'):** ....w-naggen we-neshre...wa-sanctify...may he make...appoint...perfect....'.

**JULIUS:** wa-nrahhep...(wa-ndayyarban wa-nqaddesh lebbawatan)....d-kad maggen...ne 'bed...

**MATHEW the SHEPHERD:** ....w-naggen w-neshre...wa-nqaddshiw(hy)....d-kad sha'eb...wa-mrahhep ...nshamle .....negmor...., '....and may he tabernacle and reside ....and sanctify it ....so that, while scorching...and hovering ...he may perfect and complete...'

**XYSTUS:** w-qaddesh...b-maggnanuteh....negmor..nsahmle...'....and sanctify.... by his tabernacling...may he complete...perfect...'

### **The ninth virtuous gift : the true ascetic life our Lord's household**

"The genuine fast of the New Testament requires the chief adornment of a good ascetic life: preservation from the pleasing and luxurious things which fatten up the body but impoverish the soul. Someone who fasts from evil follies ought to take precautions against them. In the first place, as by the uprooting of the tree of the passions, and then against their simple urgent demand which is unsuitable for ascetics' manner of life. Let that person use simple things and meager food, and avoid rich foods from animals and animal products, and similarly bread which is excessively fine, and great variety in foods, even if they are appropriate for ascetics. If he has need of something rich, let him use oil from trees or prepared from vegetables. Also, for his refreshment let him use to drink something set apart in a small quantity. He is not to any extent to mingle the blood of the grape with the blood of his soul, lest blood destroy blood and bring the whole man to ruin. Those who in the Old Testament led a life of abstinence by vows or prophetic choice kept themselves, by way of self-discipline in accordance with the commandment of the law, from wine and strong drink, and from loaves made from fermented wheat and grape stones. They were preserved as ascetics by things which are visible in the body, growth of hair and nails; but they were not persuaded by a common abstinence which is from hidden passions."

*(Quoted from "The Book of Gifts" which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J.Lane)*

O. M. Mathew Oruvattithara

# **The Pentateuch**

## **A peep into its formation**

### **1. Return to the 'Sources'**

Renaissance, the enlightening episode, enkindled the enquiring ethos of Europe. Naturally, Biblical scholarship too, blossomed forth. Provenance of the Pentateuch posed a puzzle for the academic world. Certainly, the 'revealed book' could not have originated from a single author or corpus, they surmised. 'Return to the sources', the solution lies there, ran the refrain.

### **2. The Inaugurators of the solution**

Savants, both of the Catholic and Protestant world joined the chorus. Prominent among these inaugurators of the solution, or the decisive men of revolutionary insight for this exacting endeavour were the following. Thomas Hobbes of England, the treasury pensioner turned political philosopher of the Stuart period, Benedict de Spinoza of Holland, the anathematized Jewish thinker cum theologian, the French Oratorian priest Richard Simon, Issac de la Peyrere, the propagator of Protestantism in France, Herring Bernhard Witter, the Lutheran pastor of Hildesheim and the Swiss Calvinist Jean le Clerc.



### 3. The Problem Expatriated

#### A. Why the 'five-fold' division?

Scholars opine that, before the 2<sup>nd</sup> c B.C, the 'Torah', or the Pentateuch, as it is called in the present period, was 'One Scroll'. The Hebrew word Torah denotes 'Instruction'. This is a quite meaningful designation, as the scroll contained the do's and don'ts to be followed by the faithful to please God. The term Pentateuch, derived from the Greek language, means 'five scrolls' or 'five rolls'. In Greek, 'pente' signifies 'five' and 'teuchos' denote 'the case' for holding scrolls. Here, it may be borne in mind that in those days, documents on parchments and other pliable materials were kept in rolls. The term Pentateuch may also signify the 'five-fold division'. Such a division was not attested before the 2<sup>nd</sup> c B.C. Scholars suggest that the Pentateuch "had in all essentials reached its final form much earlier than the Second Temple period."<sup>1</sup> In any way, we may safely say that this division was effected latest by the 4<sup>th</sup> c B.C. It may be noted here, that the names of the individual books of the Pentateuch are dated back to the translation of the Torah into Greek. This must have taken place under Ptolemy Philadelphus, (285-247 B.C). The name 'Septuagint', represented by the Roman numerals LXX was ascribed collectively to the produced book, as the translation was said to have been undertaken by seventy Jewish rabbis. Although, in Hebrew, books of the Torah were named after their first word or by the first important word, the translators, on their own accord, imposed Greek names on the five books. The Greek titles were adapted in the Latin Vulgate. English versions have adopted and adapted the Latin titles. Thus have come the names, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It was only in the Middle Ages, that the Hebrew MSS of the Torah began to appear in chapter-wise arrangements, This method however, was resorted to earlier, in the English versions, by Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury in the 13<sup>th</sup> c A.D. The question, the scholars pose, is as to why was the original 'One Scroll' divided into 'five'. That it was necessitated for convenience of handling is too commonplace an argument. Therefore, one is tempted to contend that this scheme of the so called systematization had an ulterior motive. The observation of Blekinsopp in his article, 'An introduction to the Pentateuch' is not inappropriate to be cited here. It "had the purpose of highlighting Leviticus.....defining Israel as holy community distinct from others."<sup>2</sup>

1. JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP, 'An Introduction to the Pentateuch' (The New Interpreters Bible Vol. 1,
2. Ibid, 307

## B. Thematical Incoherence

Thematically too, the Torah betrays incoherence and inconsistencies. Scholars discerned divergent themes, like myths or origin stories, sagas with cult legends, legal codes, poems and poetic fragments. This is the suggestion of S. H. Hooke, in his article 'An Introduction to Pentateuch'.<sup>3</sup> The narratives or the mythical portion tells the story of mankind from the first man Adam to Abraham the first patriarch and his descendents. The legal materials appear as two large blocks. The first one is Mt. Sinai revelation and the other, which appears at a later portion, is Moses' mandatory proclamation, with a different motif. On analyzing S. H. Hooke's above cited article which runs, "When we examine the varied natures of its contents and inquire how this shapeless and heterogeneous mass of material came to be welded into a book with a plan and purpose"<sup>4</sup>, an unbiased student is inclined to take one of the following two conjectures; that it was the result of due deliberation or deliberate dilatation.

## C. 'Five Pillars-a puzzle'

Added to the thematical problem is the puzzle of incongruous collation of the different subjects. On the structural level, the savants noticed five variations. These five have come to be called 'five pillars' of criticisms. They are designated so because the Biblical scholars of initial periods built up their theories or hypotheses on these variations. They may be enumerated as 'variations'. They are "1. the use of divine names, 2. language and style, 3. contradictions and divergencies within the text, 4. duplication and repetition of materials, 5. evidences that different accounts have been combined."<sup>5</sup> With regard to the variation in 'the use of divine names', It is to be mentioned that at some places, the Almighty is accosted by the name 'Elohim', while in certain contexts the addressing is by the tetragrammaton 'yhwh'. Again, in some portions or pericopes, God is conceived anthropomorphically, while elsewhere, the conception is transcendental. Regarding the variation in 'language and style', suffice it to say, that sometimes it is curt but at other times copious. As regards the 'contradictions and divergencies within the text' as referred above, the two 'creation stories' as depicted in Gen. 1 and 2 are

3. S.H. HOOKE. 'An Introduction to Pentateuch, Peake's Commentary on Bible, (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. London, 1967), 168
4. Ibid, 168
5. JOH H. HAYES. An Introduction to Old Testament Study, (Abingdon, Nashville, Tennessee 1980), 118

irrefutable proofs. The accounts in Gen. 21:31 and 26:33 are instances of repetition. These two verses speak the same incident, of how, 'Barsheeba' was named so. Similarly Gen. 32:28 and 35:10 are examples of duplication. Both of these verses describe, the same event of the change of the name of Jacob to Israel. All these instances would substantiate the 'duplication and repetition of materials'. As for 'evidence that different accounts have been combined', the already cited two 'creation stories' can be adduced. Further, there is the problem of anachronisms too, the savants surmised. A classical example of it, is the description of the death of Moses in the Pentateuch, believed to have been authored by Moses himself. How could it come about? A logical question indeed! There must be some satisfactory solution to these riddles.

#### 4. Scholars step in

- a.) Very naturally scholars stepped in to resolve the enigmas. They dared to propound hypotheses. A hypothesis is a device or contrivance or conceptual structure with a definite purpose. And, it is to organize and render intelligible a mass of observations which is otherwise disjointed, disordered and disparate.
- b.) A few important points should be borne in mind by the reader of the theories of the scholars. They may be summarily dealt with. The subject of the Pentateuch narrative is Israel's secular as well as spiritual history. The question on the origin and the emergence of the 'historic' Israel with the twelve tribes is not easy to be settled. Yet that event served as the historical condition for the formation of the Pentateuch. Likewise, the arable land of Palastine must have been the arena for the origin, the development and the completion of the Pentateuch. Another noteworthy subject is that the Exodus and the consequent Sinai Covenant form the central theme of the Torah. Genesis is only a prologue to Exodus. The other three books are either amplification or amendments of the Exodus.
- c.) With the dawn of the 15<sup>th</sup> century of our era the 'holy book' was subjected to the scientific scrutiny of many a savant, especially of those mentioned in the very beginning. True, even before them many men of Biblical scholarship had expressed doubts about Mosaic authorship of the Torah. One of the earliest in this category of scholars was Abraham Ibn Ezra, the 12<sup>th</sup> century Jewish thinker. In his commentary on Deut., he alludes to it. Certain passages like

Gen. 12:6, Deut 13:1 presuppose situations and events long after the time of Moses, he pointed out. He, however did so very cryptically, as he was prudent enough to reckon the signs of the times. For, both Judaism and Christianity or to put it figuratively, the Synagogue and the Church as well, were cherishing as an article of firm faith, that the Torah in its entirety was authored by Moses in complete deference to divine dictates. Another scholar to cast doubt on the views of the ecclesiasts was, Rabbi Issacdes, the celebrated commentator of the Talmud.

- d.) But the insight generated by the Italian resurgence of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries changed the scenario. Scholars started to spell out their 'secular' views, freely, frankly and fearlessly. Aided by the archaeological findings, buttressed by the body of traditions in the Lavant, led by logic, both deductive and inductive and propped up by philology of ancient classical and oriental languages, the scholars built up various hypotheses. Of course, not all of their findings were impeccable or infallible. But, by the sheer inner strength and systematic sequel of their arguments, the academic world had to heed to them. However, as the 'once commented glory' of the 'holy book' began to fade and wane, the ecclesiasts, both of Judaism and Christianity came out with censures and denunciations on the Biblical critics. They, however, carried on their research relentlessly.
- e.) Thomas Hobbes in his 'Leviathan' published in 1651, narrated a number of arguments against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.
- f.) About two decades later, Spinoza declared in his 'Tractus theologico-politicus' of 1670, that in the Torah "we have only notes and collations to be examined at leisure; materials for history rather than the digested history itself"<sup>6</sup>. He stressed the doublets in the Pentateuch and ascribed to Moses only what was specifically attributable to him.
- g.) Richard Simon, brought out a revolutionary thesis in his 'Critical History of the Old Testament' of 1678. Conceded that he wanted, inter alia, to establish that the Protestant principle, 'sola scriptura' was not as authentic and sound as the Catholic canon of reliance upon Scripture, Tradition, and Church. Rejecting the time-honoured Mosaic authorship of the 'five scrolls', Simon suggested

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6. JOHN H. HAYES. An Introduction to Old Testament Study, Op. Cit, 110

that there stretched a history of traditions from Moses the prophet to Ezra the priest; it was finally reduced into writing by Ezra. He, therefore argued that "the Pentateuch had been compiled from a number of sources"<sup>7</sup> or traditions. His contention can be put differently. The tradition of a hero, or the saga or romantic tale of heroic action of a 'dead yesterday' was first transmitted orally. This may be christened "saga tradition."<sup>8</sup> Here, the Mosaic tradition is deemed to have been handed down through the mouth of the narrator. With the efflux of time this is reduced into writing. The transition from the oral to the written was accomplished through an evolutionary process, spanning from the tribal to monarchical epochs of Israel. Simon can legitimately be called the protagonist of the 'traditional source' theory. The sagacious Simon must have been aware that his hypotheses would naturally give scope for plethora of problems or a multitude of misunderstandings, of diverging dimensions. He, however, cared little to attempt to answer them as it would have been presumptuous. His view on traditions has come to be hailed the "Catholic principle of tradition"<sup>9</sup> But, as ill luck would have it, the Catholic Church, too conservative as it was then, put Simon's three volume treatise on the 'Index' i.e list of forbidden books.

- h.) Peyrere, in his book, 'Men before Adam' argued as under. Remarks like 'unto this day' on the death details of Moses, found in the Pentateuch, logically lead one to disbelieve this account. This passage, Peyrere pointed out is poignant enough to proclaim a passage of periods between the death of the prophet and its commitment to writing.
- i.) Jean le Clerc proposed that the Pentateuch portion which came to be called later, the 'Priestly Source' must have been penned by the priest, who on his return from the Babylonian captivity, engaged himself in heralding a reformed Judaism.
- j.) In 1711, Henning Bernhard Witter, noted the alteration of divine names, Yahweh and Elohim in the preliminary chapters of the Genesis. In fact, he was the first to exploit the variation as a means of distinguishing between the two sources, the 'Yahwist' and the 'Elohist'.

7. ANTONY F. CAMPBELL AND MARK A. O'BRIEN. Sources of the Pentateuch (Fortress Press, Minneapolis 1993), 1
8. MARTIN NOTH. A History of Pentateuchal Traditions. Tr. Bernhard W. Anderson (Scholar Press, Chico, California), xiv
9. Ibid, xv

- k.) Witter's theory was developed shortly afterwards by Jean d' Astruc, a Protestant turned Catholic physician. But his hypothesis inclined towards giving Moses a hand in the formation of the Pentateuch. Astruc astutely argued that Moses, though not the author was the compiler. His theory of 'parallel stories or memoirs' was significant for two reasons. Firstly, "the appeal to variation in the divine names as a sign of different sources."<sup>10</sup> True, this idea was put forward earlier by Witter. The second reason is "his employment of a combination of approaches which was later developed into the source and fragment hypotheses."<sup>11</sup> He held that Moses had made use of the 'Yahweh' and 'Elohim' sources "plus ten fragments."<sup>12</sup>
- l.) Johann Gottfried Eichhorn gave publicity to the 'source hypothesis' put forward by Astruc in seminal form. It may be noted that he made it his own during the period 1780-83 and named the same 'Documentary Hypothesis'. It was he, who named the two principal sources, 'Jahwist' and 'Elohist'. Incidentally it may be indicated here that in the German language, 'Yahweh' is spelt 'Jahweh'. Hence the usage 'Jahwist'. This was the Genesis of the 'two source' theory. The methodology of the 'Documentary Hypothesis' is to focus on the texts with narrative continuity. 'Fragment hypothesis', on the other hand makes use of 'fragments' or what was remembered about or in other words memories of a particular figure. This 'Fragment hypothesis' was developed by certain scholars of the same century.
- m.) Heinrich George August Ewald (1803-1875) and a few other scholars of Germany made an attempt to reconcile the 'Jahwist' and 'Elohist' theories. The result was the formation of 'Supplementary hypothesis'. According to this theory, "a basic document or one connected strand formed the nucleus of the Pentateuch to which were added various materials in course of time."<sup>13</sup>
- n.) Alexander Geddes a Scottish Roman Catholic cleric of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and J.S Vater, professor at Halle, in the early years of the following century rejected the 'two source' hypothesis. Instead,

10. ANTONY F. CAMPBELL AND MARK A.O' BRIEN . Sources of the Pentateuch, Op. Cit, 2

11. Ibid, 2

12. JOH H. HAYES. An Introduction to Old Testament Study. Op. Cit, 116

13. Ibid, 118

they developed the 'Fragment hypothesis' hinted at, by Astruc. They contended that a number of quite disparate blocks of materials were combined, long after Moses.

- o.) Karl David Ilgen, in 1798 isolated seventeen documents. He assigned them to three parallel sources. It is to his credit that he distinguished two sources within the 'Elohists' tradition and designated them by the sigla E1 and E2 was later called 'Priestly'. E2 came to be designated 'Elohists'. P and E were the notations used respectively to indicate these two sources. The 'Yahwist' was deemed to have been combined to these two, by a later redactor.
- p.) Martin Liberercht De Wette, professor in the University of Berlin, came out with bang in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. He proposed that Deut. was the 'law book' for the reform of King Josiah. This must have been around 621 B.C. The observation of Blenkinsopp is not out of place. "The law book which the priest Hilkiah discovered in the Temple during Josiah's reign is planted by the priests to serve as a basis for the religious reforms that followed its discovery."<sup>14</sup> De Wette argued that as Deut. was an independent work, it should be regarded as the fourth stratum or source of the Pentateuch. Owing to the force of the argument, the scholarly world added 'Deuteronomist' source also to the 'Jahwist', 'Elohists' and 'Priestly' traditions. Thus was born, the 'four source' theory. The chronological order accepted by most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century scholars was 'Priestly', 'Jahwist', 'Elohists' and 'Deuteronomist', indicated by the letters 'P' 'J' 'E' 'D' respectively.

## 5. Chronology Changed

- a.) A rearrangement of the chronological sequence was necessitated because of the redating of the sources, following further studies by certain scholars. Notable among them were Edouard Reuss and his student Karl Heinrich Graf (1865-69) of the University of Strasbourg Germany. Graf contended that 'P' was not the earliest as held by earlier scholars, but the latest.
- b.) Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) gave a definite impetus to 'historical-critical' approach. In his 'magnum opus' 'Prolegomena to the History of Israel', first published in 1878, Wellhausen adduced

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14. JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP. The New Interpreters Bible Vol. 1, Op. Cit. 309

this four-fold approach; but changed the sequence from 'P' 'J' 'E' 'D' to 'J' 'E' 'D' 'P'. This has been acclaimed as the classical form of source hypothesis.

- c.) A brief explanation on the notations. 'J' represents 'Yahwist' tradition. It is called in this manner because in this source, God is referred Yahweh. The abbreviation used for 'Elohim' code is 'E'. This source is named so, as the Almighty is accosted 'Elohim'. 'D' stands for 'Deuteronomy'. This book is designated 'Deuteronomy' because it contains a repetition of materials like the Decalogue and Laws given in Exodus. The letter 'P' is assigned to the priestly document because of its evident predominant priestly interest. Incidentally it may be noted, that Wellhausen preferred the abbreviation 'Q' to 'P' because 'Q' represents the Latin 'Quattuor' meaning four. Therefore, "he designated the Priestly source as the book of the four covenants."<sup>15</sup>
- d.) Following Wellhausen, 'J', the oldest strand is assigned to the late 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C; 'E' to the period between 9 and 8<sup>th</sup> century. 'D' is from the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Source 'P', which was once considered to be the oldest of the four documents is now recognized as the most recent. Its origin was between 6 and 5<sup>th</sup> century, before Christ. While the 'Jahwist' source was put to writing in the Southern Kingdom Judah, it was in the Northern Kingdom Israel that the 'Elohist' tradition was reduced into black and white. Following the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 721 B.C. these two documents were combined. After Josiah's regime, 'D' code was added. 'P' was fixed to the existing corpus in the post-Exile period.

## 6. Features formed, from 'Formation'

### A. Perennial Source of Morality

The foregoing account may prompt one to jump into the conclusion that the Torah is merely a treatise on secular history of the Jewish nation. Nothing can be farther off the mark. The Bible in general and the Pentateuch in particular have a special view of History. The Pentateuch points to the intervention of God in the affairs of men. The objective of the authors of it was not to divorce God from men, but to bring Him more intimately to them. The Pentateuch is a perennial source of moral teaching and theology.

15. ANTONY F. CAMPBELL AND MARK A.O' BRIEN. Sources of the Pentateuch. Op.Cit, 5



## **B. The Theology of the 'Yahwist' tradition**

The faithful folk owes to this tradition much of the exhilarating passages of the Pentateuch. Though primitive in character, its handling of the working of human psyche is subtle. Admittedly, problem of sin is made much of; but this tradition instills confidence and joy in man by its repeated references to the divine promises and of its permanent nature. This tradition speaks of the intimacy of man and his lord, even verging on the anthropomorphic conception of God. The part played by divine intervention and God's initiative is very prominent in this tradition. The soul-stirring story of salvation is unique, conspicuous and grand.

## **C. The Theology of the 'Elohist' tradition**

Undoubtedly, this tradition is less vivacious and dramatic than the 'J'. Instead of the anthropomorphism of the author of the 'Yahwist' tradition the 'Elohist' emphasizes the transcendence of God and stresses on the stern sovereignty of the supreme Lord. Here, God communicates with mankind through envoys like angels and prophets. Verily, this tradition instills the indefatigable spirit of vigorous prophetic movement mooted and moulded by Elijah and Elisha, in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

## **D. The Theology of the 'Deuteronomist' tradition**

The Levites composed this treatise to remind the people of the Northern Kingdom, about the Mosaic laws, as its rulers did not care to enforce them. When this Kingdom was overthrown by the Assyrians in 721 B.C, those Levites who took to flight to Jerusalem took it with them and kept the same in the Temple. This code was subsequently developed. The Deut, has a particular style and theology. That theology is spelt out through instructions and not by imperatives. Further, this theology is very closely linked with the Law that it enshrines. It starts with the idea of election of Israel as the chosen nation and summons the nation to an absolute and all-absorbing allegiance to the Almighty. The Deuteronomist, discerns divine punishment for her defaults and delinquencies, in the disasters which visited Israel.

## **E. The Theology of the 'Priestly' tradition**

The Book of Leviticus is the best testament of this tradition. It must have been codified under Ezra the priest and Nehemiah the governor. This code is remarkable for its cultic and liturgical aspects. Wellhausen eulogises this code as "the scarlet thread on which the pearls of JE

were hung."<sup>16</sup> This tradition gives a blue print for the prospective spiritual commonwealth to be ushered in, on the vestiges of the system before Abraham's call by the Lord. A critical minded reader may conclude that this tradition is a sanction for theocracy. But this code is appreciated because of its exquisite exposition. To substantiate, the observation of Antony F. Campbell and Mark A.O' Brien may be quoted "P may be likened to a necklace strung with pearls. The thread of the necklace is made up of genealogies, itineraries..... The pearls are the major stories such as creation and flood.....the plague and passover....."<sup>17</sup>

## 7. Hypothesis on the Anvil-Reactions and Criticisms

- a.) There is no gainsaying to the triumph of these hypotheses by the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is well to remember, however, that "the victory was not won easily nor without battles and scars."<sup>18</sup>
- b.) The critical treatment of the Pentateuch was deemed by theologians both of Judaism and Christianity, as a frontal attack on many of their professions and proclamations. The Jewish theologian U. Cassuto challenged the 'five pillars' of the 'Document hypothesis'. He declared "all these pillars were without substance and that the imposing and beautiful edifice which scholars had erected as their own and lavishly decorated has, in reality, nothing to support it and is founded on air."<sup>19</sup>
- c.) From the Christian world Mangenot arrayed a number of passages from the OT and the NT and asserted that Moses was the 'author and editor' of the Pentateuch. The critics were not at all satisfied. So Marie Joseph Legrange, a Roman Catholic Biblical scholar suggested a solution to the perplexing problem of Mosaic authorship. He put forward this at the Fribourg Catholic Congress of 1897. His contention was that, in the Ancient Middle East, authorship was attributed to the one who provided the pervading spirit of the work. We may further add, that in the Middle Eastern areas there was the practice of pseudonymity. This implied that a literary work would be attributed to a celebrated person to receive

16. JOHN H. HAYES. An Introduction to Old Testament Study. Op.Cit. 166

17. ANTONY F. CAMPBELL AND MARK A.O' BRIEN. Sources of the Pentateuch. Op.Cit. 9

18. JOHN H. HAYES. An Introduction to Old Testament Study. Op.Cit. 120

19. Ibid, 172

recognition from the readers. As Moses was the chief and central character of the corpus of Pentateuch, Israel had no hesitation in attributing the entire Torah to him.

- d.) The chronological details express the conviction of the Israelites that History has a direction and divine dispensation. The reconstruction of History by the secular Biblical scholars, who supported these hypotheses conveniently sidelined this aspect.
- e.) It was pointed out that the 'Source theory' tended to assume that the 'J' 'E' 'D' 'P' were solely the intellectual properties or products of the particular persons who penned them. This is certainly a misconstruction. For, myths, songs, stories etc. were amply availed of by the authors.
- f.) R.N. Whybray makes an attempt to resolve the 'repetition riddle' of the Pentateuch. He opines that the so called "repetitive compilation from different sources need be nothing more than the necessary literary repetition required to produce a particular effect."<sup>20</sup> It may be mentioned here that much of the prejudices to the Pentateuch may dwindle to insignificance, once it is realized that the "Pentateuchal story has been formed as the result of an incremental process of over a considerable period of time."<sup>21</sup>
- g.) Herman Gunkel's (1852-1932) 'Form criticism' was a challenge to the 'Documentary Hypothesis'. According to Gunkel, the emphasis must be shifted from the 'documents' as such to individual pericopes.
- h.) The 'Documentary Hypothesis' is being threatened by the ongoing analysis of the sources themselves. The result is disquieting if not unsalutary. "The sources tend to disintegrate into bewildering variety of smaller units or strands and the entire hypothesis is undermined."<sup>22</sup>
- i.) Another argument against the approach and analysis by the documentary theory is that it makes use of modern criteria for things which happened in bygone ages and entirely different environments from those of modern times.

20. ANTONY F. CAMPBELL AND MARK A.O' BRIEN. Sources of the Pentateuch, Op. Cit. 14

21. JOSEPH BLENKINSOPP. The New Interpreters Bible Vo1.1, Op. Cit, 307

22. Ibid, 311

- j.) Adverting to the challenges of modern times, the following observations deserve attention. In his treatise, 'Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic', published in 1973 Frank Moore Cross proposed that 'P' should be redefined as a redaction rather than a source. Hans Heinrich Schmid refuted a theory which was in vogue and opined that " 'J' is not the product of 'Solomon's Enlightenment', rather it is a product of the exilic period and bears a close affiliation to the 'deuteronomistic-deuteronomist literature' ".<sup>23</sup> In similar vein does John Van Seters too, argue.
- k.) Considering all these views, one is forced to follow the point put forward by the renowned Biblical scholar H.H. Rawley in the article, 'Old Testament and Modern Study'. He argues ".....it cannot be said that any agreed pattern is emerging from the welter of challenges, to the older view."<sup>24</sup>
- l.) In conclusion, it is expected that a student of Pentateuch will be charitable to the critics. For, they tried to enlighten the people and broaden their vision which had degenerated into mere optics, due to excessive Bibliolatry.

## 8. Rationale of the Hypotheses and criticisms of the Pentateuch

The celebrated Biblical scholar, John H. Hayes points to the following rationale for the various hypotheses. According to him, there are mainly three reasons for the marvelous attempt by the scholars to identify the sources. He opines that it was "first of all to deal with the problems inherent in the Biblical text; secondly to make sense the history of Israel presented in the historical books and thirdly to make understandable the 'Old Testament which was practically a sealed book even to the thoughtful people', who did not possess 'the historical key to the interpretation' of that wonderful literature."<sup>25</sup> Why bother to pursue the study of the Pentateuch? An ordinary man might ask. A very convincing answer has come answer has come from Antony F. Campbell and his co-author Mark A.O' Brien. They say, "awareness of the processes of

23. ANTONY F. CAMPBELL AND MARK A.O' BRIEN. Sources of the Pentateuch, Op. Cit. 10

24. H.H. RAWLEY. Old Testament and Modern Study'. Peake's Commentary on Bible, Op. Cit. 168

25. JOHN H. HAYES. An Introduction to Old Testament Study. Op. Cit. 159

growth inherent in the creation of the biblical text can give contour and colour to the understanding in its final form"<sup>26</sup>. "The Lord has more Truth to break forth out of His holy Word." This prophetic proclamation of the great Evangelist, John Robinson to the 'Pilgrim Father', as they set sail to America, the New World in search of greener pastures, ought be the directive principle, paradigm and parameter to the future study and research of the Pentateuch.

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26. ANTONY F. CAMPBELL AND MARK A.O' BRIEN. Sources of the Pentateuch, Op. Cit, xiv

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### **The tenth beloved gift: voluntary poverty**

"Voluntary poverty is the holy likeness by which participants in the mysteries of the new life of the household of our Lord may be recognized by the discerning. Attend carefully to her and to those who love her. Possess simple and modest garments, such as are not adorned or made brilliant with colours for decoration, which are suitable for your pattern of life and have regard to your true purpose and manner of living. As far as you can, let there be one colour and pattern of garment for your clothing during the whole of your life lived in penitence. Let all your possessions be few, because of your moderation in everything, in order that there may be openness and frankness in all your outward behaviour, so that you can also instruct others. Give close attention to the fathers and teachers of integrity of your own time, with respect to all their precepts concerning an ascetic life. Do not turn away from their guidance, or alter your pattern of life from theirs, but mark out your own, in imitation of them, following the commands of their admonitions."

(Quoted from *"The Book of Gifts"* which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J.Lane)

D.J. Lane

## **Know the place, know the name: Syriac behind the newspapers**

The newspapers at present are full of news about Iraq; they tell of an American-led invasion of an Islamic country. But to those of us who know something of the Syriac patrimony, that 'third lung' of Christian tradition, the commonest place names in the newspapers are those of key places in the history of that patrimony. Let us take five. Baghdad, Takrit, Mosul, Kirkuk, Qatar: those five are enough for us now. To most people Baghdad is Saddam Hussein's capital, and Takrit his birthplace. Mosul is a city to the north, where military aircraft get shot down; Kirkuk the center of the oil industry; Qatar the territory where American men and equipment were massed before the invasion was launched. But for us, Baghdad was for 500 years the seat of the Catholicos of the Eastern Syriac church. Takrit, or as we know it, Tagrit, was also for nearly 500 years the seat of the chief bishop of the West Syriac church. Mosul, to the north west of Iraq, not only had one of the famous Monasteries of the East, but in its turn was from 1259 to 1400 the seat of the Catholicos. Kirkuk, city of martyrs, had a distinguished series of bishops, among them an outstanding writer and reformer of ascetic life, Shubhalmaran. Qatar on the Persian gulf, was outstanding in a brilliant group of trading cities, and provided what has been called a constellation of talent of spiritual writers gazing, as one of them said, over a polluted and turbulent sea to a harbour of peace and contentment beyond the horizon.

Let us turn briefly to each one, in gratitude for the past, our past, and in prayer for them in the present, our present. First, then, Baghdad on the Tigris. The earliest seat of the Catholicos had been Seleucia Ctsiphon, the Twin cities. But in 762 the second dynasty of the Arabs, the Abbassids, changed their capital from Damascus: the Caliph al Mansur settled in Baghdad, just a few miles up-river from Seleucia. For convenience and ease of association, the Catholicos on the west bank of the river. For close on 500 years that was the chief see, the center of an East Syriac community which included 230 dioceses and 27 metropolitan sees. There were churches between Turkestan in the north and India and Yemen in the south, Jerusalem in the west and the China coast in the east, including those at such cities as Merv, a city at a mid-point on the Silk Road and at the junction of a road dropping south through the mountains to meet the road which runs from near the present Bombay to Patna. Incidentally, Merv, under the name Meru or Mary is the biggest military airbase in central Asia, Turkmenistan. Although proximity to the Caliph in Baghdad was often as much a danger or source of interference as it was a benefit, it also put the Syriac church at an intellectual centre. Its own school was renowned, and its members played a part in the capital's university, of which Job of Edessa's Book of Treasures indicates the syllabus. Further there was the stimulation of dialogues with Arabs, of which the debates with Mutawakkil are an instance.

Of similar significance, further up-river, is Tagrit, providing a river crossing for roads leading into desert cities such as Hatra. Noted for its high cliffs, and with a reputation for boat-building it acquired a reputation for withstanding attempted influences from the East Syriac church: perhaps not surprisingly, as the area had been one for the settlement of Christians deported by Chosroes II from Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor in his campaigns between 609-619 as well as for those deported by his predecessors in 540 and 573. This was the area where work was done by that indefatigable traveller and proselytiser for the Western Syriac church, Jacob Baradaeus. Horse-blanket, they called him after his travelling gear. He was one of the two men appointed as bishop for the anti-Chalcedonian West Syriac communities, and ordained bishops and priests for them. Ahudemme of Beth Arabaye became metropolitan at Tagrit, and from 629 the Jacobite Anathasius I established it as the place of the chief bishop, later Maphrian (fructifier), and under Arab rule it became a Millet under a titular Patriarch of Antioch. This link with Antioch had become possible in 627 when the Byzantine emperor Heraclius had invaded the Sassanian empire, and

made Tagrit one of his garrison cities. The high point of its intellectual life was between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and one of its chief luminaries was the writer on rhetoric, Antony of Tagrit. Later on, the city had fame of another kind, as it had close links with the famous Syriac and Coptic Monastery, that of Deir es Suryan in the Nitrian desert of Egypt. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century Moses of Nisibis traveled between the two places, conveying manuscripts from Tagrit to Egypt: many of the important Syriac manuscripts preserved in Europe come from Dier es Suryan, some carrying the annotation that they were prepared for churches in Tagrit and conveyed by Moses to the Monastery of Mary Deipara, otherwise Deir es Suryan. Tagrit maintained its position as chief Jacobite see until 1156.

Moving now to the north-east, we come to Mosul, also famous as a source of manuscripts and as a patriarchal city. From 1258 to 1400 it was the Patriarchal see of Eastern Syriac Christians, but its fame goes back five hundred years or more than that. The importance lies in that here was one of the most famous monasteries of all, the Upper Monastery, otherwise known as the Monastery of Gabriel and Abraham. Traditionally the monastery is named after the eighth-century Gabriel of Kashkar and the ninth-century Abraham bar Dashandad, but obviously it is older than either of them. At the earliest council of Syriac Fathers at Seleucia Ctesiphon in 410 it was decided that all churches would follow the use of the cathedral of that place; however in later years the prescriptive use was that of the Upper Monastery in Mosul: parish churches would follow the Use of the Upper Monastery but monks would follow their own custom for the night services. This establishing of the Use as prescriptive certainly dates from the reforms of the Hudra, made by Ishoyadh III of Adiabene and Hnanisho between 650-58. understandably this uniformity was extended to that of all other texts, that is the biblical excerpts required for the services. The work of uniformity in biblical text tradition seems particularly focused in the reign of Timothy I: from the 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards biblical manuscripts of the east Syriac text tradition tend to have some connexion with Mosul. It seems that the text tradition of the Syriac bible has more to do with the authority of the scribal school than the inherent quality of the text. Similarly, for Hudra manuscripts, wherever they were copied, their authenticity was guaranteed that they followed the custom of the Upper Monastery in Mosul. Here in his time Ishoyabh lived and gave the monastery a role which has been compared to that of the Latin Congregation of Rites, and at his time Timothy was responsible for authorizing a biblical text tradition quite clearly distinguishable from that of Tagrit.



The change of place for patriarchal residences is, as we have seen, the practical need of closeness to secular power. As mentioned earlier, closeness was not always an advantage, as there could be, and frequently was, interference on the part of the ruler, and on the part of the patriarch and his supporters lobbying for the ear and support of individuals in court circles and even of the ruler himself.

Mention of this double-edged relationship between church and ruler brings us to an important figure of the early 7<sup>th</sup> century and of the fourth and last city in Iraq that we shall look at. The city is Kirkuk, and the individual is its metropolitan Shubhalmaran. Kirkuk now is well known for its oil fields—indeed in the 1920's Britain, Turkey and Iraq were fighting over them. But as the chief city of the area of Beth Garmai, in the north-east of Iraq, it had long been a city with Christians, and acquired a lasting reputation as a city of martyrs because of an infamous massacre in 446 in the time of Yazdegird II. Until the line came to an end in the middle ages, there was a series of 15 metropolitans. But the one we are concerned with lived at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, and became involved in the theological and political complexities of the time. Both West and East Syriac communities were pressing claims for recognition by Chosroes II. His wife Shirin had been cured by a physician Gabriel of Sinjar, a supporter of the West Syriac group, but he was accused of bigamy by the East Syrians. As a result, Shubhalmaran had been one of those who had presented an argument and a statement of faith which had seemed to convince Chosroes of the rightness of their theological position, but, as we have seen, to no effect against the wiles of his wife and her medical protector. But the events show the stature of Shubhalmaran, who was a contemporary and associate of Babai the Great, and helped to hold the East Syriac church together in the 12 years when Chosroes refused to allow the consecration of a Catholicos. Shubhalmaran's strength was in ascetical integrity. He stood out against debased monasticism where communities were mixed and monks had wives, and presented attractive arguments contrasting the calm of an enduring life with Christ against one disturbed and tormented by human passions and attacks of demons. He backed these up by practical comments and rules on avoiding sexual curiosity between ascetics and regulation of opportunities for gluttony. He was a master of what now we would call the sound bite or one-liner: 'Many run after silence, but few that summon it', 'If you have not learned from experience you will gain nothing by chance', 'Better be bitten by a viper than be prey to a slanderer'.

One last city and area remains for this paper: an area and city outside Iraq, but for different reasons significant for the present and the past alike. Subhalmaran had mentioned humility and silence as necessities for a life with God, and these themes are taken up in a group of writers from Qatar. This city and its surrounding area are now famous as the gathering place for American military material and personnel for their invasion of Iraq, but the shore of the Arabian sea has long been the scene of vigorous trading activity, with goods coming down the Euphrates and Tigris and being moved on into Arabia or India, with different cities rivaling each other for primacy according to political and trading conditions. So important, influential and rich was the area that in the 9<sup>th</sup> century it was drawn into an attempt at a unilateral declaration of independence from the Patriarchal control of Timothy I. However, our present concern is with Qatar and the area round it, especially in a period a hundred years or so earlier. Many outstanding names are linked with the Qatar area of that time. Among them were the Gabriel, who commented on the Hudra, but especially Dadisho Katraya and Isaac of Nineveh. They are both practical, and both give a wide survey of other writers as they provide their own pictures of the physical and spiritual formation of ascetics. For Dadisho solitude and silence are the means of disengagement from the physical and mental and spiritual busyness which hinders the contemplation of God. For Isaac there is the paring away of all that hinders a person's instinctive movement towards God. In both we see a blending of three elements: first, day to day practicalities of ascetic life; second, scriptural perceptions drawn from Ephrem and his successors; and third, the psychological and philosophical insights of Evagrius. This fusion gives a moving portrayal of the motions of body and mind and spirit to that which lies beyond them and is their source. They draw together the merchandise of the Syriac ascetical theology from Asia Minor, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt in a market beyond compare.

That, alas, must conclude our tour of cities to which our newspapers give prominence in their coverage of the American-led invasion of Iraq. But despite their contemporary significance, there is the more-enduring memory of Christian communities of the Syriac patrimony. Remember, then, Kirkuk, city of martyrs and see of Shubhalmaran; remember Baghdad, for five hundred years seat of the Catholicos; remember Takrit, for 500 years also the seat of the Maphrian owing allegiance to a Patriarch of Antioch; remember Qatar home of writers looking across the sea of a troubled life to the light and hope of a city which was sure lodging of their hope. Take to heart, too, the words of a 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century poet-writer on troubled Mosul:

Who has had the happiness of knowing Emmanuel;  
 The convent of Sabhrisho  
 Or the Upper convent, or Gabriel at Mosul,  
 Or the river banks, washed by the waters of the Zab?

(Tr. from *Elia de Shaqlawa*, 1860-1943)

L-moran shubho, wa-'laiyn wa --'layhon ethraham moryo sgydo.

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**Universitätsverlag, 1705 Freiburg, Switzerland.**

**Iso Baumer:** *Von der Unio zur Communio. 75 Jahre Catholica Unio Internationalis* (Oekumenische Beihefte zur Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie. Herausgegeben vom Institut für Oekumenische Studien Freiburg Schweiz, 41). Freiburg Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 2002, 529 pages, Swiss Fr. 65.00, EUR 44.50

In our days, the *Catholica Unio* is known everywhere as a work of assisting the Churches of oriental tradition, especially those in communion with Rome, because of its excellently illustrated periodical *Der christliche Osten*, its book publications, the journeys-pilgrimages to centres of Eastern Christianity, etc. It works in Switzerland, Austria und Germany. The author who was its Secretary General (1994-2000) depicts its history from its very beginnings just after World War I, presents the men whose commitment to the cause of Christian Unity of the West and of the East made this work possible (e.g. the founder, Fr. Augustinus Graf von Galen OSB (+ 1949), Archimandrite Alfons Mitnacht OSA (+ 1976), Archpriest Fr. Jockwig (+ 1993), Archimandrite Prof. Raymund Erni (+ 1980), Archimandrite Gregor Hohmann OSA) despite the vicissitudes caused by political circumstances, but also churchmen or other similar works existing e. g. in the Unites States or in France that felt a certain rivalry with the newcomer. Different attempts to establish the *Catholica Unio* in countries like the Netherlands, France, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria, England, Italy, and Belgium failed. In Brazil, however, it existed from 1930 thru 1978. Today these works as well as the *Catholica Unio* and others fraternally work together in the ROACO (Riunione Opere Aiuto Chiese Orientali). Baumer's book is based on archive studies in Rome, Vienna, Freiburg

(Fribourg)-Switzerland etc. It has three parts according to the most important epochs of development: The time of the foundation - preceding the beginning of World War II (1939) - the second half of the 20th century. Important documents have been added; some of them were never printed before. At last there is a short bibliography and an index of persons.

**Verlag Dr. Ingo Resch GmbH, Maria-Eich-Str. 77, 83166  
Gräfelfing, Germany**

**Bat Ye'or: *Der Niedergang des orientalischen Christentums unter dem Islam. 7-20. Jahrhundert.* Gräfelfing, Resch-Verlag, 2002, 482 pages, ppb. EUR 35.00**

This is the German version of the book *Les Chrétientés d'Orient entre Jihâd et Dhimmitude. VIIe-XXe siècle* (Paris : Les Éditions du Cerf, 1991. For the German edition, additions from the English edition *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam. From Jihad to Dhimmitude. Seventh - Twentieth Century* (Cranbury, NJ/London/Missiossauga [Canada], 1996) have been taken into consideration. New in this edition is a letter of the German Envoy in Istanbul to Bethmann Hollweg on the persecutions of the Armenians, dated July 15, 1915. The author of this book, Bat Ye'or ("Daughter of the Nile") was born in Egypt and is a British citizen. In her studies, especially in her book *Islam and Dhimmitude. Where Civilizations Collide*, she examines the possibility of a "western Dhimmitude" and comes to the conclusion that reconciliation between Judaism, Christendom and Islam could become successful only with an evaluation of Jihad and Dhimmitude. This is the more urgent after the events of September 11, 2001. In the book under review, the author deals with her topic, as a good historian, objectively, examining the roots and reasons of the decline of the once so flourishing Christian communities in the Middle East: next to Dhimma there were internal and external factors that effected it: conflicts between the native population and the invading nomads, rivalries between Churches and "Rites", collaboration of the notables and church authorities with the Muslim administration, interference of European powers from the 16th century onwards making themselves protectors of the oriental Christians having mainly in mind their own political and economical interests. We are glad to state that this work is now accessible in three languages to the students of history of Christianity in the Middle East and trust they will find a lot of inspiration in it.

## Tyrolia-Verlag, Exlgasse 20, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria

YSABEL DE ANDIA/PETER LEANDER HOFRICHTER, *Christus bei den Vätern. Forscher aus dem Osten und Westen Europas an den Quellen des gemeinsamen Glaubens* (= Pro Oriente, XXVII/Wiener patristische Tagungen 1), Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia, 2003, 360 pp., ppb. • 28

Which are the roots and the hopes of Europe, a continent on the way to political, and above all spiritual unification? "To look together on Christ is the way that may lead the separated Christians to unity", writes Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, himself a patristic scholar whose doctoral thesis *L'icône du Christ* has been translated into several European languages, in his preface to this book. With his consent, the editors could gather about 30 patristic scholars, Orthodox and Catholic, in the Austrian capital in June 2001. Ysabel de Andia, once the cardinal's teacher in Paris, describes the project of this encounter under three dimensions: (1) ecumenical, (2) university, and (3) European. The participants came from different centres of learning in different countries: from France 5, from Italy 3, from Russia 3, from Greece and Turkey 2, from Germany 2, from Belgium 1, from Bulgaria 1, from Austria 1, from Hungary 1, from the Czech Republic 1, from Great Britain 1, from Ukraine 1, and from Spain 1. Their contributions were published in their original version. Nine research workers presented their papers in German, seven in French, five in English, two in Italian and one in Spanish. Different aspects of Christ were shown with Greek and Latin Fathers like Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, John Damascene, Symeon the New Theologian, Augustin, Gregory the Great. Other papers were more of dogmatic nature, others emphasised more spiritual contents, etc. We note with regret that the paper of Abbot Michel van Parys « La figure du Christ chez saint Isaïe de Scète et saint Jean Climaque et sa réception dans les traditions, latine et byzantine » is missing in this volume. It is welcome that Prof. Hofrichter's paper entitled "The Christological Dialogue of the foundation PRO ORIENTE and its European perspective" (*in German*) is preceding the other texts. Each of them merits to be studied separately. Of course, also the student of Syriac patrology will find a lot of information in them, especially in those touching the Antiochian tradition.

AUGUSTYN BABIAK (ed.), *Visite de Jean Paul II en Ukraine. Entre espoirs et incertitudes. Actes du colloque du 27 mars 2001 à l'Université Catholique de Lyon*. Lviv : Vydavnyct'vo oo. Vasylijaniv « Misione » (m. Zhovkva, L'vivs'koï obl., vyl. Vasylijans'ka 8, Ukraine), 2001, 111 pp., ppb. n. pr.

THOMAS BREMER (ed.), *Religion und Nation. Die Situation der Kirchen in der Ukraine* [= Schriften zur Geistesgeschichte des östlichen Europa, 27]. 65174 Wiesbaden (Germany): Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003, 147 pp., ppb. EUR 36,00

These two publications owe their origin scientific conferences held at Lyons, France, in March and at Berlin in December 2001. In that year Pope John Paul II visited Ukraine. The first is prefaced by the late Archbishop of Lyons, Louis-Marie Cardinal Billé († 2002), and introduced by Xavier Lacroix, Dean of the Theological Faculty of the Catholic University of Lyons. The conference itself was opened by Fr. Augustyn Babiak who gave a short presentation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and its great ecumenist, the Servant of God Metropolitan Andrey Count Sheptytskyi, the head of this Church from 1901 to 1944. Fr. René Beaupère O.P., founder of the famous ecumenical centre Saint-Irénée, a leading French ecumenist during more than half a century, placed his paper on Sheptytskyi's thinking and work within the context of the third millennium asking the question whether they belonged only to the past or had an impact also for our days. Dr. Walter Zelazny, a Polish professor of Economics and social sciences at an institute of higher learning at Tyczyn-Rzeszów, Poland, spoke on Sheptytskyi's role in the Polish-Ukrainian context. We admire the depth of his most objective study, a rare phenomenon with Polish academicians. Precious are also the informations on the denominational situation in present Ukraine, presented by Fr. Michael Dymyd, former rector of the Theological Academy of L'viv and now a member of the ecclesiastical tribunal of the metropolitan eparchy, who is hailing from the Ukrainian diaspora in Belgium. This small and rich brochure is closed by some impressions from the discussion that followed and a synthesis authored by the editor and the dean of the theological faculty.

Religion and the situation of the Churches in present Ukraine was also the topic of a conference held at Berlin, Germany, with the participation of international speakers. Their contributions were collected and edited by professor Thomas Bremer, director of the ecumenical institute of the Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Münster. The first contribution authored by ALFONS BRÜNING is dealing with "Orthodoxy as element of Ukrainian national identity". The Ukrainian Greek Catholic historian OLEH TURIJ on his part analyses "The Greek Catholic Church and the Ukrainian national identity in Galicia" (i.e. western Ukraine), while VICTOR YELENSKY is making an approach to the issue of "Religious and national identities.

Ukraine in focus". The latter paper was presented in English. WOLFGANG ULLMANN's part was to present "The theological vision of religion and nation". HANS-DIETER DÖPMANN examines the relation between "Ecclesial identity and canonical territory", a term brought forward recently especially by the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow, particularly in regard to Ukraine. KATRIN BOECKH presents the results of her research on "State and Churches during the transformation in Ukraine", i.e. in the post-Soviet period, and JOHANNES OELDEMANN is dealing with "Ecumenical Relations between the Churches in Ukraine". NATALIA KOTSCHAN attends to the issue "'Polish' and 'Russian' Church. The Ukrainian Churches and foreign identities". Her contribution was translated from English. The last contribution is by BEN SCHENNINK on "Religious identity as a cause of conflicts and ways towards solution: An analytical frame applied to Ukraine". A rich bibliography concludes this book. Unfortunately the editor has omitted to present the contributors

Both the publications presented above, are completing each other and merit the attention not only of Church historians.

—John Madey

### **"The Future of the Asian Churches: The Asian Synod & Ecclesia in Asia"**

By James H. Kroeger & Peter C. Phan : Claretian Publications, Quezon City, Philippines -2002): This is a highly informative and very useful publication. Those who are concerned about or interested in the affairs of the Catholic Church in the vast Asian continent will find this book extremely illuminating and beneficial.

The two main parts of the book deal with the proceedings of the Synod by Bishops for Asia and commentaries on the apostolic exhortation issued by the Synod. Several eminent scholars have contributed their reflections on various aspects in either part. In part 3, we are offered notes on Ecclesia in Asia. Part four is an analytical index.

Nearly 5 years have gone by after the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Asia was held in Rome in April-May 1998. The contribution by James H. Kroeger gives a graphic exposition of the month long Synod. The other 8 titles in the first part illustrate the view points of the Church in various Asian countries on witnessing and



proclaiming the Lord Jesus and his message to the Asian billions. The priority of values of the Asian Church is clearly distinct from that of the central administration in Rome.

Most world religions, including Christianity, originated in Asia. The Asian Church is acutely aware of the intrinsic merit and value of non-Christian Asian religions and wish to deal with them with reverence and appreciation. The message to the people of God issued by the Synod is carried in full.

The first item in part II is a beautifully crafted editorial of the Jesuit magazine *Vidyajyothi*, published from Delhi, the capital city of India, where the Holy Father Pope John Paul II officially released on November 11, 1999, the Apostolic Exhortation as the official concluding document of the Asian Synod. This is followed by several scholarly commentaries on the document. This book is recommended reading for all who are interested in the Asian Church

—Fr. Abraham Kalakudi.

## The Spirit of Life

**Author:** Dr. Emmanuel Kaniyamparampil OCD., **Published in** 2003. 352 pages. Rs. 200 ( \$ 20)., **Printed at** St. Joseph's Press, Trivandrum, **Publishers & Distributors:** Oriental Institute of Religious Studies in India (OIRSI), P.B.No. 1, Vadavathoor, Kottayam. 686 010, Kerala, India.

This is a thesis defended at the Catholic Institute of Paris. This book provides a valuable contribution in the field of Syro-Chaldaic Patrology. It concentrates particularly on the early Syriac Christian literatures and their attention to the development of the Christian thinking on the role of the Holy Spirit, a very important attention of Christian faith and doctrine. In this latter sense this book is rather unique.

A thorough analysis and synthesis of the early Syriac sources like the *Odes of Solomon*, the *Acts of Thomas* and the writings of Aphrahat, the Persian sage, has led the author to come to certain conclusions that enlighten the importance that the early Syriac Church has accorded to the activity of the Holy Spirit even before the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was officially declared at the Council of Constantinople in 381.

The book is well organically constructed, beginning with a detailed discussion on the sources of study in Chapter one. The Author then proceeds to study the Holy Spirit according to Syriac biblical

exegesis. The Holy Spirit's place in Christian initiation and in the life of faithful are clearly brought out in chapters three and four. Finally, the author concludes with two speculative chapters, namely on the symbolism of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's place in the Holy Trinity. These two chapters really bring out the essence of the theological thinking that the early Syriac tradition has achieved regarding the question of the Holy Spirit in Christian belief.

The analysis and interpretation of the data are achieved by the Author with a critical sense: constant reference to the original Syriac text, verification of previous eventual translations, concern with modern works etc. This book is not only a study of the history of the doctrines. It also opens our attention to the rich theological insights of the early Syriac theology, although they remain at their initial stages of thinking and development at this very early period of Christianity and Christian theology. This book can really inspire the present day reflections on the person of the Holy Spirit.

— *Dr. Jacob Thekeparampil*

### **"East Syrian Baptismal Theology"**

"East Syrian Baptismal Theology" with the bottom-line "A Judeo-Christian Synthesis" authored by Mathew Kizhakearajaiyil and published by OIRS (Oriental Institute of Religious Studies) from Kottayam, is the Two hundred and twenty fifth book in its series with eight chapters and two hundred and fifty eight pages.

The book fills a lamentable lacuna: want of works on East Syrian Baptismal Theology. The book brings the reader to a very important component of baptismal tradition – the Syrian Orient-along with the Greek East and Latin West (p.29).

The first chapter recounts the features of the Syriac theology which he enumerates as symbolic, synthetic, spiritual, typological and definition-free (p.36). The conclusion of the first chapter is that Syriac Orient evolved a Judeo Christian theology.

Chapter two demonstrates how much East Syrian baptismal tradition is influenced by the Jewish initiation-rite. The author parades compelling similarities to prove his thesis. Basically both have, according to him, the same structure: 1) anointing 2) immersion and 3) Eucharist. Anointing replaced the Jewish rite of circumcision; and Eucharist that of sacrifice. Thus, Syriac baptism was proselyte initiation christianized.

Chapter three divides the baptismal service into three acts as anointing, putting on of garments, and crowning and delves into each of them deeply. Ephrem evinces many O.T. types for baptismal anointing. Oil for him is Christ (Msiho = Christ), (Mesho = Oil) (p.85). In baptism the fire of grace descends and consumes our offences rendering us hallowed persons. White garment received at baptism signifies that they become sons of heavenly light-new man. It is a sign of receiving the robe of immortality at Resurrection, of receiving the royal garment (2 Sam.6:14), the sacerdotal vestments of Aaron (Ex.28), mantles of Elijah (2 kings 2:14), uniform used in heavenly liturgy (Re.7:9), besides being a sign of regaining the garment of grace. The crowning ceremony signals kingship, freedom and victory. It points to the would be reward for successful battle (2 Tim. 4:8, Pet.5:4, Rev.2:10, 1Cor.9:25).

The fourth chapter titled "The East Syrian Baptismal Liturgy: Celebration of Christ's Messiahship" unpacks themes such as the purpose of water-rite, priesthood of Christ, the use of cross, and the meaning of turning to the East.

Syriac fathers understood the central mysteries of Christian life in a unique way. That forms the headlines in chapter five: Renewal and Regeneration Through Baptism. The first prayer of baptismal service, the gehenta prayer after the credo, the karo-zutha, the epistle read (1 Cor.10:1-13) all remind us of the restorative properties of baptism – in baptism one is re-born in Christ.

The sixth chapter "baptism as Marriage between Christ and his Bride", offers the reader the Syriac vision, profound, fresh and purposeful. This chapter will certainly help the Indian Christians to deepen their appreciation of the rich Syrian baptismal heritage.

The burden of the seventh chapter is to show how one is salvaged from the powers of darkness and brought to the knowledge of the Trinity in baptism. Chapter eight furnishes the general conclusion of the research which can be summed up thus:

1. It is a synthesis of Judeo-Christian theology.
2. Its Jewish heritage is quite central to Christian tradition.
3. It depicts a soteriologically determined Christology.
4. Its ecclesial vision is biblical rather than canonical.
5. It has a profound eschatological vision.

In this doctoral thesis the author, Mathew Kizhakearanjaniyil, skillfully combines subtlety of the subject with unusual readability and clarity. No serious student of Syriac tradition can afford to forego reading this book without heavy loss. With the simple, straightforward style, this book is one of those good things that come in medium packages. An exhaustive study of East Syrian Baptismal Theology under all its vital aspects, the book is garnished with biblical and patristic references and represents a long overdue attempt. Scientifically written, it includes a forty-nine-page bibliography, glossary, and index. For all the above-said reasons and a host of others this brief but beautiful book remains a STERLING reference guide for all theology students and teachers.

*Fr. John Kudiyiruppil*

## The eleventh good gift: modesty and gentleness

"The modesty which is fitting for ascetics is this: that a man recollects himself at all times in everything, and is quiet and peaceful whether in his calamity or in his prosperity, in his sickness and in his joy. He is not ruffled by his griefs, or disquieted by his trials, and not perturbed by the objects of his desire. When he walks, wherever it may be in inhabited places or the wilderness, he is not to be impudent in his gaze or vulgar in his walk, or wave his arms around or gaze at his clothing, or let his stare rove this way and that or behind him. And this applies too when he is standing up or sitting down, when he is ministering or praying, when silent or talking; when he is working at his craft, whether he is sitting with his brethren or alone, at labour or at table, and so on. But he should modestly look in front of himself. Many are the pains and losses that demons bring into the heart through this gateway of the gaze."

*(Quoted from "The Book of Gifts" which was compiled by holy Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J.Lane)*

## Personalities

### Dr. Mar Aprem (1)

Dr. Mar Aprem moves about all over the world like a satellite. He is friendly to all and co-operative with all, for all good things. He is a friend of all human beings as well as a poet and musician. He mixes knowledge with fun. He is open hearted and generous and encouraging all and ecumenical too. Mar Aprem shines like an extraordinary star of the East. Though a little short in stature, he is head and shoulders above many, never wasting time.

—Fr. Emmanuel Thelliyil, C.M.I.

### Dr. Mar Aprem (2)

I am very happy to preside over this meeting convened to convey our greetings and best wishes to His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Mar Aprem, Metropolitan of the Church of East. His Grace is fulfilling a great mission not only in the history of Christianity but also in the literary field. Hence I make use of this occasion to congratulate His Grace Mar Aprem for his important contribution and achievement and Fr. Jacob Thekkeparampil, the Director of SEERI, for organizing a gathering of this kind. A civilized society understands and appreciates the achievements of others.

Though I have not gone through the entire book I am reliably informed by one of the examiners of the doctoral thesis that His Grace has conducted successfully his doctoral research on the history of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Twentieth century. Students of history are well aware of the stress and strain of the centuries old

struggle of the St Thomas Christians to get bishops of their own Church who would respect their ecclesial identity and Syriac heritage. The history of the Church of the East is intimately linked with this struggle. It is not our intention to go into the details of the liberation movement of the St Thomas Christians, which can rightly be called a forerunner of the great Independence Movement of India. Our forefathers courageously withstood the colonial domination and were not prepared to part with their venerable heritage.

The study of the past is unavoidable to understand, assess and appreciate the present. Today is the product of yesterday. The symptoms of the time have got their deep root in the past. Hence we can compare it to the case study of a patient that preceeds the diagnosis and the subsequent prescription by a medical doctor. The historical background of our society may be compared to the roots, which sustain and give strength to a big tree while remaining hidden below. Once the tree is cut off from its roots it ceases to exist. In this context the words of Arnold Joseph Toynbee, a well known philosopher of history who has analysed the history of the great civilizations of the world come to my mind. "A society cut off from its roots begins to wither away and disappear from history". Nothing is lost to the society as it has already lost its living link. The study of history is to enrich the society we are living in and to enable us to accept its challenges more meaningfully and effectively.

Our forefathers were well aware of their roots and rich heritage. In this context I am reminded of an important document written to Rome in 1578 by some of the eminent laymen of St Thomas Christians. It is a letter addressed to Pope Gregory XIII. At the beginning of this letter they introduced themselves to the Pope that they are called St Thomas Christians and their liturgy is in the Syriac language, which they have inherited directly from their apostle St Thomas himself. Similarly, we read in the famous Varthamanapusthakam written two and a quarter centuries ago by Paremmakkal Thoma Kathanar, an outstanding scholar and freedom fighter of our Church, the great importance our forefathers had given to their indigenous identity, apostolic heritage and Syriac patrimony.

As a result of a long struggle at present the St Thomas Christians have got their own indigenous leadership. But I feel sad that because of the various vicissitudes of history we still continue to remain divided and have not yet succeeded in restoring what we have lost during the colonial period. A Church, which was united up to the sixteenth

century, is now disastrously divided reality! But it is a historical truth that we are the legitimate heirs of a venerable heritage. The Syriac liturgical patrimony adds to this unique identity, which is intimately linked with our St Thomas tradition. At the same time I am hopeful that the St Thomas Apostolic Seminary and Paurastya Vidyapitham, which were established in this city, itself nearly half a century ago would also continue to contribute their share in fostering the study of our common apostolic patrimony including the Syriac heritage.

It is in this context the historical importance of the role of SEERI and the contribution of Mar Aprem become evident. Though we are called Syrians on the basis of our Syriac liturgical heritage, our competence in this liturgical language is far from the ideal. Much remains to be done. It is providential that Fr. J. Thekkeparampil has taken it up as a challenge and has been rendering a great service in promoting the study of our common heritage. The Institutes become real and relevant only when scholars make use of them. His Grace Mar Aprem has come forward and successfully completed his research, which the Mahatma Gandhi University has accepted by awarding him the Ph.D. Degree. The presence of Dr. Cyriac Thomas, the Vice Chancellor of the M.G. University, adds to the solemnity and importance of this meeting.

I am very happy to congratulate His Grace Mar Aprem for his scholarship, which is worthy of praise and emulation. I make use of this opportunity to congratulate also SEERI for organizing it and offering an opportunity of this kind to meet and greet all of you.

—Mar Mathew Arackal, Bishop, Kanjirappally

(Presidential address of Mar. M. Arackal at Seeri, Kottayam on 19, July 2003 at 3.00pm)

## Dr. Geevarghese Panicker (1)

My task today is to welcome you all. Usually it is a pleasant task. But today it has a mixture of joy and sorrow. Joy, because we have come together to felicitate our beloved and most respected Guru and Acharya Fr. Geevarghese Panicker. Sorrow, because it is also a day of farewell. What is in a name? Yes, there is a lot in his name. Geevarghese is the name of *Megalomartys* – the most heroic and celebrated *Sahda* in the Eastern Christian tradition. And who is a Panicker in the Indian tradition? It is the fitting and honourable traditional title of master and teacher par excellence, a man of discipline and principle, a



commander in chief, the leader and master trainer of an army, an educationist in the fullest sense of the word.

As the most celebrated name of college principals the name of Fr. Panicker is unique in the annals of history in this part of the world. As a man of principle and discipline he developed a unique methodology of education. As an educationist we find four periods in his career: 20 years as Teacher and Principal in Mar Ivanios College in Trivandrum, 6 years as Rector President and Professor in the then undivided Mangalapuzha Seminary and Institute, then the biggest Seminary in the whole world, 2 years at Trivandrum Malankara Seminary and 17 years as Dean of Studies at SEERI. Altogether 56 years he served as a teacher and educationist par excellence both in the field of secular as well as religious studies. He became a living legend and hero in Mar Ivanios and a Panicker without a rival in every sense of this honorary surname. He lived up to his name Geevarghese Panicker.

I thank God that as a theology student I had the good fortune to study under the Rectorship of Fr. Panicker at Mangalapuzha. I met him in 1979 and I remember his royal arrival like a hero accompanied by hundreds of his former students, like a victorious commander in chief escorted by devout followers. In the following three years he imprinted the most indelible stamp in my life as a priest. Since then, even today he remains in my mind and heart, the most ideal and perfect icon of a priest, I repeat, he is the most priestly priest I have ever met in my life. He is a man of prayer, a fighter for justice and principle, a Panicker of Christ the likes of which we seldom come across in the modern world. As a man of courage and conviction he equals Diodore of Tarsus, the greatest teacher of the School of Antioch. Diodore "rose like a rock in the ocean". Fr. Panicker has been described as "a modern Chrysostom". Like Origen the Adamantius or Man of Steel he captivated his students; just as Origen "the Prophet and divine man" galvanized the conscience of his students in Alexandria and Caesarea, Fr. Panicker has also done.

In the ocean of confusion and tempest Fr. Panicker stood up like an impenetrable rock and fort of protection and icon of spiritual courage and love of truth. As a man of principle, discipline and integrity he rose like a prophet. Never has he receded from standing for the truth, upholding it and telling it at the face; without counting the cost he spoke the truth. The zeal and courage of prophet Elijah and John the Baptist, who risked everything for standing for the truth, wafted to us by Fr. Panicker. He always had a heroic, ascetic and prophetic aura

around his personality as a priest. He is also the best bishop we never had!

All his experience, qualities and expertise have been put to the fullest service at SEERI as its Dean of Studies. Thanks to his eminent reputation SEERI got acceptance and credibility as a centre of higher learning and scholarly research. In the annals of SEERI's history he stands out as the prime mover towards the noble ideals of this Institute of Syriac Studies. Now our dearest Fr. Geevarghese Panicker we all welcome you most cordially and most gratefully to this meeting.

— Dr. Thomas Koonammakkal.

*(From the welcome speech delivered at the farewell function of Dr. Geevarghese Panicker, held at SEERI on 24.01.2004)*

## Dr. Geevarghese Panicker (2)

I now come as someone who is not known to praise someone who is well known, and who has been praised by those of you who have known him in his prime and in his maturity, and have seen him set a stamp on four major institutions in Kerala

And I have known him only for fifteen years, in the last of them, at SEERI. He is known, however, outside SEERI and outside Kerala, as a scholar and wise counsellor, and has been welcomed by friends and colleagues in Britain. But since the early days of the SEERI World Syriac Conferences he has been known to an increasingly large number of us from all over the world as well as from Kerala and the rest of India. We have seen the affection and respect with which he has been greeted by his colleagues and former students, and we have come to see for ourselves a man of outstanding quiet wisdom. We have seen, too, the way in which his influence in the SEERI Journal, *The Harp*, has helped it to grow from a small local production to a well-respected journal for the academic world, found in the libraries of priests and scholars, and now also in University Collections too.

That is the enduring memory we have: a man of quiet wisdom, *hekinto w-shelyo*, whose influence in SEERI is as important as the more open, public, action needed to set our Institute in being. For his wisdom is practical, *hekinto d-su'rone*: it includes knowledge of university bureaucracy, knowledge of how to use it and benefit from it for the good of SEERI and its students. That is a skill which comes only with time and inside knowledge of different institutions. The outside world

knows little of the scheming and wheeling and dealing that goes on in a university- any university- and the outside world knows little of the patience required to draft and to get a University to accept a specialist course which will not attract large numbers, but which even so is an essential part of well-found university programme.

In time the Syriac fathers tell us, we all acquire a likeness to what, to Whom, we worship; and if there is one quality of God which over a lifetime Fr Panicker has acquired it is a quality of God who is creator. It is described in a hymn used weekly or even daily in the Latin church

O God, creations's secret force,  
Thyself unmoved, all motion's source.

Fr Panicker, himself unmoved, has given impetus to a syllabus; a secret force, he has been a vital agent in implementing the vision of others where it required engagement with the earthly bodies of our excellent university; where it required someone skilled in wording a syllabus in conformity with the human language required by specialists in education.

May the grace of God continue to accompany you, as surely the goodwill of your students and colleagues does.

— David J. Lane

*(From the speech delivered in the farewell function conducted at SEERI on 24.01.2004)*

## **Prof. Dr. Sebastian Paul Brock (1)**

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Paul Brock was born on 20 February 1938 in London. He had his B.A. from Cambridge University; this he achieved in 1962 with first class in Classics and Oriental Languages Hebrew and Aramaic. On 15 July 1966 he married Helen Hughes. In 1966 he got his double M.A.s from Cambridge and Oxford. In the same year he got his Doctorate in Philosophy from Oxford. He was a Fellow of Christ Church. In Cambridge he was a member of Trinity College. Though he finished his dissertation in 1966 it was surprising that he forgot all about it until 1996 when he got it published from Italy "The recension of the Septuagint version of the 1 Samuel." During 1963-67 he was Lecturer at the Department of Theology, University of Birmingham. During 1967-74 he was Lecturer in Hebrew and Aramaic in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge University. In 1974 he became Lecturer in Aramaic and Syriac at the Faculty of Oriental Studies

in the Oxford University where he is a Fellow of Wolfson College. In 1977 we see him as the youngest ever Fellow of the British Academy. In 1979 he became the Corresponding Member of the Syriac Section of the Iraqi Academy. In 1979 he joined the Editorial Board of *Sobornost* incorporating *Eastern Churches Review*. In 1982 he became the Curator of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts at Selly Oaks Colleges, Birmingham.

In 1984 Dr Brock was invited to Rome to conduct the Placid Lectures at the Centre for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies. It was then I met him for the first time. When late Prof. Jean Gribomont sent me to Brock for consultations the latter accepted me as one of his beloved students without any formality and even without any appointment. An hour long discussion made us friends. His inspiring enthusiasm in Syriac studies, the utmost simplicity of his life, the depth of his academic commitment and the gentle, kind Christian teacher in him captivated me as a student of Patrology and Syriac. That was the beginning of my contact with Brocks whose cheerful and generous hospitality I enjoyed on innumerable occasions. The ascetical and monastic character of the prayerful life of Sebastian and Helen has been a source of inspiration to many of his students.

In 1986 he became the Member of the Editorial Committee of the *Translated Texts for Historians*, published from Lancaster University. During the period 1986-90 he was Co-Editor of *Journal of Semitic Studies*. In 1987 he became Vice-Chairman of Aram Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies. In 1988-90 he got the British Academy Marc Fitch Research Readership. In 1989 he became Member of the Advisory Editorial Board of Aram periodical. In 1989 he received a very rare honour as an Anglican. Following the nomination by the Diocese of St Maron, USA, Pope John Paul II awarded him the Order of St Sylvester. This is a clear proof of his being first and foremost a Christian scholar beyond the confines of any particular denomination and the universal acclaim, appreciation and admiration aroused by him.. He knows no boundaries for the Church because he is a Christian beyond the parameters and boundaries created by unfortunate history. Thus he is accepted as an ecumenist par excellence. In 1989 he delivered the Schweich Lectures at the British Academy. In 1989 he was given *ad hominem* Readership in Aramaic and Syriac Studies at the Oxford University. In 1992 the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome conferred an honorary Doctorate upon him. From 1994 onwards he is a *peritus* for the Pro-Oriente, The Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue, Vienna. In 1998 the Patriarch Moran. Mor Ignatios Zaka

I. granted him the Medal of St. Ephrem. In 1998 he got another honorary Doctorate from Birmingham University.

In 2001 "The Hidden Pearl: The Aramaic Heritage" was published. It is indeed a land mark in the history of Syriac scholarship and publication. In November 2003 he conducted Lectures at the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies in Toronto. In March 2004 he is going to deliver Lectures on Syriac Monastic Heritage at The Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. So he knows no retirement, though in fact he got retired from Oxford University in September 2003. And today the President of SEERI is going to give him another honorary title which will be declared soon after this introduction of a scholar who needs no special introduction.<sup>1</sup> How many articles and books he has published? That he does not know! More than some 400 articles and nearly 40 books. It is not the quantity but the quality, the scientific academic quality that marks him out. The unique academic character and scholarship evident in these articles and studies has been noticed and appreciated by scholars all over the world. How many doctoral dissertations did he guide? That he does not know! I think, some twenty-five. How many doctoral examinations did he conduct? That also is something that he does not know; perhaps some fifty in various Universities all over the world. On Byzantine, Biblical, Patristic, Ecumenical, Oriental, Syriac topics he is always eagerly listened to at various international conferences. Symposium Syriacum and International Conference on Patristic Studies await his papers every four years since last four decades. The Variorum Reprints has published more than some thousand pages of his studied articles. I went through their catalogue and found that no other author has been honoured with the reprint of three volumes. Indeed a rare honour for our beloved Malpan. His "Syriac Studies: A Classified Bibliography (1960-1990)", published from Kaslik in 1996, combines four bibliographies published by him in *Parole de l'Orient* in 1973, 1981, 1987, 1992. This classical series is being updated upto 2000 and it is already in print. It is an indispensable tool for students and scholars of the Syriac world for all times.

Besides Syriac he knows Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Aramaic. And then a little of Coptic, Armenian, Arabic, German, French, Italian and Modern Greek. His English is really poetical which makes his Syriac translations unique, accurate and distinguished, reflecting the flavour

1 On 21 January 2003 SEERI awarded him an honorary Doctorate with the title *Malpan Malpane* (Teacher of Teachers, Doctor of Doctors).

of the Semitic original. The now famous discovery, critical edition and translation of Isaac the Syrian, the Second Part made history. Something known but thought to have been lost by the scholarly world came to light. Five volumes, "Bible in Syriac Tradition", "Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition", "A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature", "Bride of Light" and "Burial Service of Nuns" are published from SEERI. Of these the first item has been translated into classical Syriac. Three other volumes published in The Syrian Churches Series are "Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition", "Studies on Syrian Spirituality" and "Sogiatha: Syriac Dialogue Poems".

Rev. Dr. Shafiq Abou Zayd the founder of Aram and a former student of Brock writes about him: "all roads lead to Rome, all aspects of Syriac studies lead one way or another to Sebastian Brock. His voluminous work on Syriac, and related fields, is unique in our modern times... Every year, since he was a graduate student, Sebastian Brock took part in some academic conference and needless to say his participation always created a landmark. When I met him for the first time at his home in Oxford in September 1982, I found myself to be in the presence not only of a scholar but also of a man of God, a *gabra d'alaha*, a virtue now rare in the academic world as most believe the spirituality cannot easily be married to scholarship... We treated each other as friends, as his meekness and humility wiped out all the barriers of bureaucracy and formalism... One must not forget Sebastian's other half, his wife Helen, who plays a major but hidden role in his life for she is the one who eases his many responsibilities and obligations. Our gratefulness goes to Helen, for without her presence in his life, it might not have been possible to see today our *malfono* achieving his daily work with great energy and joy. She certainly owns a fair share of her husband's glory as she also has had her share in his worries and pains".<sup>2</sup>

The experience of Shafiq is typical of any student under Brocks. Both Sebastian and Helen are like Guru and Gurupatni in the ancient educational system of India known as Gurukula. They embody paternal and maternal concerns as the students have experienced always. They compliment each other in many ways. Helen is an archaeologist and scholar in her own right busy with conferences and publishing her studies, all the same sharing the academic and scholarly aura of her husband. The wonderful hospitality of Mrs. Helen Brock to all the students and friends of Dr. Brock has often reminded me of

2 S. Abou Zayd, "Sebastian Paul Brock: Life and Work", *Aram* 5 (1993), pp. 2-3.

Abraham and Sara. As a conclusion to this introduction let me remind you about the invitation. Prof.Dr.Sebastian Paul Brock is the most renowned Syriac scholar of today. Students and scholars all over the world draw inspiration from him in their Syriac studies. He is always available to any Syriac lover anywhere, ever vigilant to sow the seed of Syriac learning, constantly inspiring and nourishing the spirit of Syriac scholarship. Hundreds owe their inspiration, initiation and life-long commitment to Syriac studies to Dr.Brock. SEERI owes its origin, development and growth also to the inspiring and guiding directions of Dr. Brock. A major portion of SEERI's Syriac literature and library, the syllabus of its post-graduate studies grew up with the generous and gentle scholarship of this eminent and simple Patriarch of Syriac scholarship.

A few days ago Prof. O.M.Mathew qualified Brock as "Second Ephrem" and "Ephrem reborn". Burkitt was scholarly but erratic at times; Connolly and Murray were less productive; Beck concentrated only on Ephrem; Voobus was really prolific but very often more speculative than scientific. Brock is unique as he is prolific, precise, clear, scientific, available to all. Both students and scholars all over the world look up to him for clearing their doubts. He is able to inspire his readers and sow the spark of zeal in their heart to follow Syriac studies. Thereby he is complimenting from the Syriac side without which Christianity and its theology will not be what it is today. Nobody is able to do a doctoral research or serious study in the Syriac field without referring to the name of Dr.Brock and consulting his publications. At every stage of SEERI's growth from its very origin, Dr.Brock accompanied it with masterly strokes, inspiring direction and skilful touch like a gentle mother and a loving father. Hence it is our honour and obligation to celebrate the achievements of "the man who has dedicated his life to Syriac studies"<sup>3</sup> by taking part in the programmes today.

— Koonammakkal Thoma Kathanar

*(From the speech delivered on 21-01-2004 at SEERI, Kottayam.)*

## **Prof. Dr. Sebastian Paul Brock (2)**

I come in as the last; and you who are Indians will know the nail-biting moments when the last batsman saves the game. But I am more likely to lose it, for the longer I speak the longer you will have to wait for Dr Brock. But have no fear: I shall be short.

3 Ibid.,p.3.

My first meeting with Dr Brock was in 1966: we met in Palestine on a study tour of Israel and Jordan organised by the Society for Old Testament Study, and I have a photograph of him and his then new wife, Helen, with myself and two others, taken I think at Jerash, where his wife gave an example of Hellenic dramatic speech on the stage of the impressive ruins of the Hellenistic theatre. I am glad to mention Helen Brock, herself an accomplished scholar in Greek archaeology, for in honouring the husband we are honouring the wife: together they form a most impressive and hospitable academic couple.

It is apt that my first recollection of Dr Brock is in the Middle East, for his work has been as impressive outside Oxford as it has been in it. He is no 'remote and ineffectual don', for while the world has beaten a path to his door he has trodden many paths from it. His pupils from the Middle East and India, from America and Europe are examples of those who went to him, and the conference papers he has given in those locations provide examples of the paths he has trodden. Indeed our next association was over the 20 years or so that he was engaged in work for the Peshitta Institute of Leiden. Next we see him in Rome to give the Placid Lectures, which you know as *The Luminous Eye*; later this year he is Rome again to lecture. Deservedly he has been given a title, knighthood, by the Vatican. Other occasions and publications are further evidence of his world-covering activities. Work on the New Finds at St Catherine's in Sinai, Syriac conferences in the US of A, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany; contributions to journals published in France, Iraq, Italy; books in Syriac as well as English....his *Aram Festschrift* of ten years ago listed 28 books and 222 articles. There is an echo in the courts of heaven complaining that they will have to extend the world for it to be large enough to contain all that he has written. The Americans plan to put a man on the moon again: the real reason is to make more space available for book-cases.

You know of the contribution Dr Brock has made to Kerala and to India, by being among the first to respond the Indian bishops' call for a Syriac centre on the model of the Insitute Catholique in Paris; the first SEERI conference; the setting up of the syllabus; the encouragement of Indian scholars here and in Europe. But to all that must be added his activity in international circles in order to promote the cause of ecumenical co-operation between the Greek and Russian Orthodox East and the Latin West and between the Oriental churches and the other churches, orthodox and Latin, in particular with Pro Oriente where some of you will have met him. Indeed there are many photographs of him taken with Prelates, Patriarchs, the Pope himself,



and when people see them they say 'Who is that? We recognise Dr Brock, but who is he with?'

*Kabod Ish Kabod Abiyu* says the book of Proverbs: when a man is honoured, his father is honoured in him. We honour Dr Brock, but to honour him properly is to raise up many disciples for him. So I speak now especially to you, your excellencies, right reverend fathers in God, that you make it your business to raise up in India scholars who will, by their scholarship in Syriac, bring honour to this *malphono d' malphone*. No political party will make election promises to give India more Syriac scholars; you must do it for them. Promise how many Syriac scholars you will give India in the next five years to legitimate your churches' position within the Syriac patrimony. What you promise you can give, unlike so many politicians. I have several British bishops among former pupils, and I have to urge them not to think only of the short term, but of the long term. I am not frightened of British bishops, nor am I, I think, frightened of Indian ones. The short term, the care of the parishes, is important; but you bishops in Kerala also have a mission beyond the parishes to the larger world of India and of the world, to nourish the Syriac patrimony. Freely has our honorand given: now it is your turn to give, to give honour to Kerala and yourselves as well as to him.

—David J. Lane

(From the speech delivered in the function held at SEERI on 21.01.2004 in honour of Dr. Sebastian P. Brock).

## News

### CHALDEAN CATHOLICOS-PATRIARCH PASSED AWAY

Raphael I Bidawid was born at Mosul, Iraq, on April 17, 1922. After his studies he was ordained to the presbyterate on October 22, 1944, aged 22. He crowned his advanced studies in Rome with a thesis on the epistles of Mar Timotheos I, Catholicos-Patriarch of the East, and obtained the doctorate in theology. On June 20, 1957, the Holy Synod of the hierarchy of the Chaldean Church elected him as Bishop of Amadiyah, Iraq. From there he was transferred to the Episcopal see of Beirut, Lebanon, on March 2, 1966. After the death of H.B. Maran Mar Paulos II Cheikho, the Holy Synod elected him as Catholicos-Patriarch of Babylone of the Chaldeans on May 21, 1989. Until October 2002, Mar Raphael I was assisted by Mar Amanouil Karim Delly, titular Archbishop of Kaškar, who had already served under Mar Paulos II since 1963. Now there are two hierarchs at the patriarchal curia in Baghdad: Mar Shlemon Warduni, titular Bishop of Anbar (since 2001), and Mar Andraos Abuna, titular Bishop of Zenobia (since January 6, 2003). Pope John Paul II having been notified of the catholicos-patriarch's death on July 8, 2003, sent immediately a telegramme of condolence.

### Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East

#### New hierarchy for Australia and New Zealand

For many years the Patriarchal Vicariate for Australia and New Zealand, established in 1990, has been deprived of a bishop of its own. On September 7, 2003, Patriarch Mor Ignatios Zakka I Iwas ordained Rabban Malke Lahdo Malke to the episcopate in the

Cathedral of Mor Petros and Mor Paulos in Ma'arat Sednaya near Damascus, Syria, to serve the Syriac Orthodox Church in that continent. He received the episcopal name Mor Malatios and resides now at Mor Ephrem Cathedral in Sydney. Mor Malatios hails from Kershamo (Gerke Shamo) in northeastern Syria, where he was born on January 3, 1971. He studied first at Kershamo and Qamishli. In 1984, when was in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of education, he joined the Mor Ephrem Seminary in Damascus from which he graduated in 1989 obtaining a diploma in theology. In the same year he was ordained as a monk by the patriarch. In 1990 he was named the personal secretary of the Archbishop of Jazirah and Euphrates. In 1991 he was sent to India to teach Syriac in the Malankara Syriac Orthodox Seminary at Udayagiri. There he obtained a second diploma in theology in 1994. From 1994 to 1996 he served in the patriarchal secretariat at Damascus. The he was sent for further studies to Athens. He completed his studies with the B.Th. degree there. For a short period of six months he was attached to the Mor Jacob of Nisibin cathedral of Södertälje, Sweden, before he continued his studies in Athens where he received the M.Th. degree in 2003.

### **New Malankara Archhierarch in North America**

After the suspension of Mor Nicholas Zacharias by the patriarch in 2001, the Malankara Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese of North America was vacant. Only on January 4, 2004, Patriarch Mor Ignatios Zakka I ordained Ramban Yeldho Pathikkal to the episcopate conferring him the title of Archbishop and Patriarchal Vicar of the Malankara Archdiocese in North America. The ordination took place at the Mor Petros and Mor Paulos patriarchal cathedral in the St. Ephrem Syrian Monastery of Ma'arat Sednaya near Damascus. The new hierarch was given the episcopal name Mor Titos. Mor Titos Yeldho (according to Indian custom: Yeldho Mor Titos) was born at Perumbavoor (Aluva eparchy) on July 22, 1970. His schooling was at the Asramam High School at Perumbavoor. He graduated from Union Christian College in Aluva and took later the degree B.Ed. from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. On October 28, 1982, when he was twelve years old, he was ordained deacon by the late Paulos Mor Athanasios, Metropolitan of the Evangelical Association of the East. In 1997, he went to Damascus where the patriarch ordained him Ramban and priest in 1999. He owes his theological, education to the patriarchal seminary in Damascus and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Seminary at Udayagiri. During his stay in Damascus he had the occasion to study also at monasteries in Jerusalem, Turkey, the Netherlands,

Germany and Switzerland. Before being called to the episcopate he was serving different churches in his new eparchy.

### **Mor Julios Yeshu Çiçek receives the Aram Prize**

The Association of the Academic Arameans, Stockholm, Sweden, honoured the Metropolitan of Central Europe and the BeNeLux countries, Mor Julios Yeshu (62) with the Aram Prize. The solemn act took place on December 12, 2003. The Prelate was honoured because of his merits for the revivification and cultivation of the Syro-Aramaic language and literature. The metropolitan added fame to his name also in the pastoral service for his Church since becoming its shepherd in 1977, at first in the rank of patriarchal vicar, from 1979 on as its eparch. At that time, his eparchy covered the territory of six countries: the Netherlands where the episcopal residence is at Mor Ephrem Monastery, Glane-Losser, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. In 1997, Germany became an independent patriarchal vicariate and got an archbishop as its archpastor. He established many parishes, acquired 40 churches and three monasteries, ordained many priests, deacons, subdeacons and readers as well as monks and nuns. Founding a publishing house, until now he got printed 113 books. Patriarch Mor Ignatios Zakka I conferred upon him the title "Mor Jacob Burd'ono of the 20<sup>th</sup> century".

The Metropolitan hails from Kafro 'Eloyto, a village in Tur Abdin (South East Turkey). His parents were Fr. Barsoumo Çiçek and Bathqyomo Sayde. His mother was an ordained *Bathqyomo* (daughter of the alliance; this title can be found as early as with Aphrahat the Sage, 280-367), a rare ministry in the Syriac Church of Antioch of that time that had the task to help the priest, especially at the baptism of an adult woman. In 1960 he embraced monasticism at Mor Gabriel monastery and was ordained priest in 1969. Twelve years later, in 1973, Patriarch Mor Ignatios Jacob III sent him to Germany and western Europe. Only from 1975 to 1977, he was in the United States with the late Archbishop Mor Athanasios Yeshu Samuel.

### **St. Ephrem's College in Rome inaugurated**

In early March 2003, His Beatitude Patriarch Môrôn Môr Ignatios Moussa I (Cardinal Dawood) blessed and inaugurated the new Pontifical College "Saint Ephrem" (Pontificio Collegio "Sant'Efreem") in Rome. This College is meant for Arabic-speaking priests and students of those Oriental Catholic Church not having a college of their own. So

far there is only the Pontifical Armenian and the Pontifical Maronite College in the Eternal City. The alumni of the Pontifical College "Saint Ephrem" will pursue ecclesiastical studies at the different pontifical universities. The rector of this college is Father Jihad Battah, the former rector of the Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Seminary in Sharfet, Lebanon. The substitute of the Vatican Secretariat of State, Archbishop Leonado Sandri, was represented at the inauguration by the Apostolic Nuncio Dominik Hrušovsk, titular Archbishop of Tubia.

**SOLNews** - His Holiness the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas ordained Very Rev. Ramban Yeldho Pathikkal as the Archbishop and Patriarchal Vicar of the Malankara Archdiocese in North America at the solemn function held at the St. Peter and St. Paul Cathedral in the Monastery of St. Aphrem the Syrian, at Ma'arrat Seydnaya, Damascus, Syria. The new Metropolitan was entrusted with the title 'TITHOS' during the consecration ceremony. His Grace will henceforth be known by name 'Mor Tithos Yeldho'. Archbishops from different countries were present to grace the occasion: Mar Gregorios Joseph (Kochi), the synod secretary of Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, Mar Julius Kuriakose- Secretary to His Holiness the Patriarch, H.G. Mor Osthathius Matharohom (Syria), Mor Severius Isaak Saka Mosul (Iraq), Mor Silvanos Petrus (Homs), Mor Athanasius Elia Bahe (Patriarchal Assistant), Mor Cyril Aphrem (America). Also were present the 1st secretary of the Indian Embassy in Damascus Mr. R.C. Manchanda, monks, nuns, friends and family members. At the end of the Holy ceremony, the newly consecrated Archbishop thanked His Holiness the Patriarch Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas and all those who were present. He pledged his fidelity to the church and promised to be faithful in imparting the teachings of the church to the faithful. Born on 22 July 1970 to Pathikkal P M Kuriakose and Sosamma, His Grace belongs to the Perumbavur Bethel Suloko Church in the Angamali diocese, India. His schooling was at the Asramam High School, Perumbavur. He took the Degree and Post Graduation in Mathematics from the Union Christian College at Alwaye. Later he completed the B.Ed. course from the Mahatma Gandhi University. It was at the age of 12, on 28 October 1982, Metropolitan Mor Tithos Yeldho was ordained deacon by Mor Athanasius Paulose, the late Metropolitan for the Evangelical Association of the East. In 1997 he went to the Patriarchal Cathedral at Damascus. On September 5, 1999 he was ordained Ramban by His Holiness the Patriarch and on 26th ordained as Kashisho. The Metropolitan had his theological education from the Patriarchal

Seminary at Damascus and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Seminary at Udayagiri, India. During this period he had the opportunity to have studies at the Syrian Orthodox Monasteries of Jerusalem, Turkey, Holland, Germany and Switzerland. After the demise of Mor Gregorios in 1999, he was appointed the administrator of the Perumpally St. George Church. Later he was deputed to New York and was serving different churches in the Malankara Archdiocese of North America till recently. From 1995 to 2001, he was actively involved in YMCA organization as its regional vice chairman and also as its National Executive Board member. Thomas Daniel (SOCM Forum)

**SOLNews** - On the 7 September 2003, His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East consecrated Raban Malki Lahdo Malki as bishop for the Syrian orthodox diocese of Australia and New Zealand in the patriarchal cathedral Mor Petrus and Mor Paulus in Saydnaya/Damascus. The Holy father gave to him the Episcopal name "Mor Malatius". So His Eminence Mor Malatius Malki Malki is the first Archbishop consecrated officially for the diocese of Australia. He currently resides at Mor Ephraim Cathedral in Sydney. Before from 1991-1996 Mor Timotheos Afram Aboodi, the earlier bishop of Sweden and later for Canada, served the Syrian Orthodox community and later other Patriarchal delegates Monk-Priests. The Syrian orthodox diocese of Australia has the status of the "Patriarchal Vicariate", which was established in the year 1990 after the dramatic increase in the number of Syrian Orthodox community members migrating to Australia from Mesopotamia and different parts of the world. The first Syrian Orthodox emigrated to Australia early 60s and settled in Sydney and Melbourne. But most of them came in the late 1970s and 1980s. Now there are 6000 Syrian orthodox members who are served by 8 Priests in parishes. Mor Malatius Malki Lahdo Malki was born on the 3 January 1971 in Kershmo (known earlier as Gerke Shamo) in north eastern Syria. His Eminence studied at the elementary school of Kershmo up to year 2 and then transferred to the Syrian Orthodox Church elementary school in Qamishli. In 1984, the third year of high school (9th year), he joined the seminary of Mor Ephraim in Damascus. In 1989, he graduated from the seminary and was awarded a diploma of Theology. Later that year, on Christmas Eve, His Eminence was ordained a monk by His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. From 1990 to 1991, He was the personal secretary to His Eminence Mor Ostaheos Matta Rohom, Archbishop of Jazirah and Euphrates. In September 1991, he was sent to India where he joined the Malankara

Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary (M.S.O.T Seminary) to teach the Syriac language. He received another diploma of Theology in 1994 whilst at the Seminary. After his return to Syria he served from 1994 to 1996 in the Patriarchal Secretariat in Damascus. In 1996, His Eminence was sent to Greece for further education, earning a Bachelor of Theology from the College of Athens in 2001. From March to September 2001, he served with Churoyo Gabriel Bar Qasho in the Cathedral of Mor Jacob of Nisibin, Sodertälje, Sweden, before returning to study. In 2003, he received his masters degree in New Testament Studies, also from the College of Athens.

### **07.06.2004 15:55:34: Pope Zakka speaks on preserving the ancient language of Aramaic in a new, modern world**

Pope Zakka speaks on preserving the ancient language of Aramaic in a new, modern world This is the fourth in a series of interviews with spiritual leaders in the Middle East by cultural historian Yvonne Seng.

By Yvonne Seng Special to The Daily Star Wednesday, June 02, 2004

#### **CULTURAL HISTORY DAMASCUS:**

With the recent release of the film, "The Passion of The Christ," Aramaic has likely been heard by more people in the past months than in it's entire history. Once the vernacular, it is now reduced to subtitles, spoken daily by a few. The man in front of me has a less brutal way of keeping the language alive.

Patriarch Zakka sits in a gold encrusted chair in a fading cathedral in the Old Quarter of Damascus, but the power of this holy man is not contained in a chair. Or in his extensive title: His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas. The power of Pope Zakka rests in words.

Pope Zakka is the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and the Supreme Head of the Universal Syriac Orthodox Church, the planet's second oldest church, founded by the Apostles.

As intriguing as the longevity of the institution, is its charge to keep alive Aramaic, the language in which Christ spoke. That is, the words in which The Word spoke.

Words have consequence, but few take words as seriously as Pope Zakka.

We all know one phrase in Aramaic: Abracadabra. Childish magical

gibberish to the rest of us, loosely translated from Aramaic it has a vastly more serious meaning: "Create what I speak, or, May my words be brought to life." These are not men who dangle their participles.

The church has come within a breath of extinction at least twice in its long history, and its survival is a miracle.

In the 6th century, following doctrinal splits in Christology, the church was down to three tattered bishops hiding underground from persecution.

Empress Theodora, daughter of a Syriac Christian priest and wife of the Byzantine Justinian, intervened, giving the green light for Jacob (after whom the church is often mistakenly named) to establish missions and bishops throughout the East, into Arabia and Ethiopia.

In the early 21st century, the church and the language so intimately linked to it again struggles to survive. This time it has found an oddly modern ally; the internet.

"The most important thing is that Aramaic was spoken by Our Lord Jesus Christ," the Patriarch says.

"That's why we love it. It has been the liturgical language of our church from the beginning of Christianity and, of course, it was the ancient language of Syria before Islam. That's also why we love it. And we feel it is our duty and responsibility to keep it alive because we can't imagine that, one day, the language spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ will be forgotten. It's something we can't imagine."

Monks and holy scholars have kept the flame alive for almost 2,000 years, but can they survive the tornado of Western culture?

Syria has been isolated from much of the recent technology and communications boom and it is yet to be seen what will happen to these protected enclaves when exposed to global culture and technology.

I asked the Patriarch whether he fears this will be the final demise of The Word of God? The internet, with its disrespect for man-made borders, is his ally.

"Technology has always been with the human being," he states. "Those who believe the world was created by God, they will always be loving God through Our Lord Jesus Christ."

With the help of technology - and the savvy leadership of the Patriarch - Aramaic is undergoing revival among members of the Syriac



Orthodox Church connected across the globe and scholars attracted to its cerebral mission.

"We have many scholars here and there," the Patriarch says with enthusiasm. "And they learn the language and they teach it and, of course, we are proud of those people, too. And grateful, too. Yes." Although he admits he doesn't fully understand the new technology, Pope Zakka visited Los Angeles to bless it.

The Syriac-Orthodox Church of Antioch, formed in the time of the Apostles, has its own website, with libraries, chatrooms, youth groups and CDs of liturgical music for sale through Amazon.com.

Pope Zakka has his own page where you can access copies of his encyclicals and writings. The Syriac-Aramaic language project has a worldwide center that the peripatetic Apostle Peter, first Bishop of the church, would definitely approve of.

For the Patriarch also, globalization and technology are positive developments.

When asked about the commercialization of the globe and the loss of individual identity, he shrugs it off. I'd forgotten that Syrians are hard-wired as world traders - just check out the chambers of commerce from Buenos Aires to Brisbane. The first in formation highway was the famed Silk Route which moved goods and ideas from one side of the known world to the other and terminated in Syria.

The Patriarch immediately identifies the positive and sellable side of Damascus.

"We may not have McDonald's here," he says, "But we have much to offer. The spirit. Nature. This city is a blessing of God. We call it the City of Saint Paul, of course, because when he came to Damascus, he had the experience of the faith."

Apostle Paul is instrumental in explaining the openness of the Syriac Orthodox Church toward technology and new ideas. The church was grafted from Jerusalem onto Antioch, the former capital of Eastern Rome (now Antakya in south-eastern Turkey), by Aramean and Gentile converts among the local Greek population. A simple and central act of the Antiochians inspired Paul in his writings on inclusiveness: converted Gentiles and Jews broke a pre-Christian taboo by eating together at the same table.

The locals coined a new term for these peculiar church members -

"Christian" - and thereby introduced a new word into the planet's lexicon.

Inclusiveness has contributed to the quiet survival of the church and the preservation of the language. The Patriarch greets the advent of Westernized culture with the same careful openness.

"We have Coca-Cola here, already," he continues on his discussion of globalization. He shrugs. "It is the same all over the world. If they don't have Coca-Cola, for example, they have something similar to that. People always try to get the best."

He adds, quietly: "I think we don't have our lives in the bread. We have it in the spirit. That's something very important."

The Patriarch's concerns about the future are larger than fast food and Western movies, or even about the continued existence of the Syriac Orthodox Church in Syria. His concern is for the continuation of the church on this planet.

"What does peace look like to you?" I ask the holy man in front of me.

Ceremonially poised until this question, he now slumps. He sighs deeply and grinds his forehead with the foot of his palm.

"Ayyy. Peace, you ask?" he says, slowly. "Peace is a tired, old man."

His Holiness knows all about being tired. Even the boon of technology cannot reduce the weight of a long history.

"Let me say," the Patriarch continues after a sigh, "in my opinion, first there must be peace with God."

According to the Patriarch, peace between God and humankind has already been given through Christ.

Globalization, advances in science and technology, faster communications, these we chase after out of novelty and need. They will each impact our present lives and the future of our planet in ways we are just beginning to understand, but they will not bring peace. As the Patriarch says: Peace is a given. It is we humans who don't accept the gift.

Yvonne Seng, author of *Men in Black Dresses: Quest for the Future Among Wisdom Makers of the Middle East*, is a cultural historian specializing in the Middle East and Turkey.

*Gabriel Rabo*

**The twelfth gift : ordered calm and a warning about  
distraction and noisiness and guardianship of the tongue,  
and about gain and loss and despair.**

"Great is the gift of calm to a person who truly loves it. Right calm is this: that a man refrains from speech with anyone; gives heed to himself alone; converses with himself in his trials, and that he should condemn and continually fight his passions that oppose him. If he has any hateful failing or wicked sins, let him have compunction and repent, through having a pause from them, and a passion that confronts them. If, according to the will of him who gives victory, he acquires a gracious way of life through his perpetual and pure endeavours, then let him keep watch and more and more keep on guard by day and by night. He is not to be negligent, because he does not know at what time the thief comes. He is to take heed over his own person, so that he is not robbed by his passions and his understanding be blinded to the prospect and direction of his journey. From our passions the demons carry off an abundant wickedness for their own nature, in order to prevail over us, take us captive, and cast us away from the whole of life".

(Quoted from *"The Book of Gifts"* which was compiled by holy  
Mar Šubhalmaran, Bishop of Karka d-Beit Selûk. Edited by Dr. D.J. Lane)

## SEERI CHRONICLE - 2003

**25.01.2003:** The 25<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee was conducted on 25.01.2003 in the SEERI reading room. Rev. Dr. K.V. Mathew presided over the meeting.

Dr. Jacob Thekeparampil submitted a comprehensive report on the main activities of SEERI during 2002. This included the details of courses conducted in SEERI, the meetings of Advisory committee, 5<sup>th</sup> Syriac conference, Seminars conducted during the year, publications, the activities of Kavithamandalam, award of Doctorate to Mar Aprem by M.G. University and conferral of Doctorate by SEERI to Abt. Hanna Aydin of Warburg, Germany.

Subsequently Dr. Jacob Thekeparampil apprised the members about the proposed addition to the main building due to shortage of lecture halls and requirement of additional accommodation for library. Sanction of the Municipality is already received and the ground is cleared of trees. The actual construction work may start soon. There will be a basement floor + ground floor + first floor. The meeting further discussed the proposed activities during the year 2003.

**02.02.2003:** H.E. Geevarghese Mar Timotheos laid the foundation stone for the new extension building of SEERI.

**03.02.2003:** In the G. Claas Lecture Series, the 17<sup>th</sup> One-day Seminar of SEERI was conducted on 3rd Feb.2003. Dr. Mar. Aprem presided. Dr.

K.H. Kuhlmann led the seminar on the subject "The Harp, out of tune". Dr. Thomas Koonammakkal, Dr. D.J. Lane and Dr. Baby Varghese participated in the appraisal of the subject.

**19.07.2003:** The Release of Harp Vol. XV (Festschrift of Dr. Mar Aprem) and Moran Etho 18 (The Assyrian Church of the East in the Twentieth Century" by Dr. Mar Aprem) was done. The function started at 3 PM. and was attended by around 150 persons. H.E. Mar Mathew Arackal, Bishop of Kanjirappally presided. Fr. Abraham Kalakudi welcomed the gathering and Dr. Cyriac Thomas (Vice Chancellor, M.G. University) released the books. Dr. Stephen Thottathil, Administrator, Diocese of Tiruvalla received the copies. Prof. Dr. C.V. Cherian and Dr. Geevarghese Panicker felicitated Dr. Mar Aprem. After reply speech by Dr. Mar Aprem and vote of thanks by Dr. Jacob Thekeparampil, the meeting ended at 15.00 hrs.

**27.09.2003 :** V. Rev. Msgr. John Varghese Easwarankudi and Rev. Dr. Prof. David Lane laid two small parcels of sand from the tomb of Mar Jacob of Nisibis in the wall of the new Library.

**30.09.2003:** Photographic Exhibition of "Christian Angels on the South China Coast (Nestorian Tombstones from China)" and "Icons of Syriac Tradition" was conducted at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 30<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2003 at SEERI Auditorium. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Panicker (Dean of Studies, SEERI) inaugurated the exhibition.

Prof. Dr. Ken Parry and his wife (Mcquarie University, Sydney, Australia) guided the photographic exhibition of the tombstones from China. Rev. Fr. George Kurisummoottil (doing Master's degree in Iconography: Holy Spirit University, Kaslik, Lebanon) introduced his icons as "Shrines of the Word".

## **PUBLICATIONS OF THE SEERI**

### **I. THE HARP: A review of Syriac and Oriental Studies**

Vols. I – IX have been published in 1987-96

Vol. X in 1997

Vols. XI, XII in 1999

Vol. XIII in 2000

Vol. IV in 2001

Vol. XV in 2002

Vol. XVI in 2003

Vol. XVII in 2004

### **II. 'MORAN ETHO' series: Monograph Series : Occasional Publication**

1. Prof. Wolfgang Hage (University of Marburg, Germany):  
Syriac Christianity in the East.
2. Dr. Sebastian P. Brock (Oxford University, U.K.):  
Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition.
3. J.P.M. van der Ploeg O.P. (University of Neijmegen, The  
Nederlands): The Book of Judith, Syriac Text and English  
Translation.
4. Dr. Sebastian P. Brock: Burial service for Nuns (West Syrian  
Liturgy), Syriac Text with translation.
5. Paul S. Russel (U.S.A.): St. Ephraem the Syrian and St. Gregory  
the Theologian Confront the Arians.
6. Dr. Sebastian P. Brock: Bride of Light.
7. Sidney H. Griffith (The Catholic University of America): Syriac  
Writers on Muslims and the Religious Challenge of Islam.
8. Alison Salvesen (Oxford, U.K.): The Exodus Commentary of  
St. Ephrem.
9. Dr. Sebastian P. Brock: A Brief outline of Syriac Literature.
10. Rev. Dr. Baby Varghese : Dionysius Bar Salibi :  
Commentary on the Eucharist.

11. Rev. Dr. Curian Kaniamparambil Cor-Episcopa :  
The Gospei of St. Mathew.
12. Dr. Rev.Dr. Baby Varghese : John of Dara –  
Commentary on the Eucharist.
13. Francis Acharya : The Ritual of the Clothing of Monks.
14. Rev.Dr. Curian Kaniamparampil Cor-Episcopa :  
Syriac in Six Months.
15. Dr. Geevarghese Chediath: Mar Babai the Great -  
Some Useful Counsels on the Ascetical Life.
16. Prof. O.M. Mathew Oruvattithara – Church and Sacraments .
17. Dr. John Madey: The Hierarchy of the Churches of East and  
West Syriac Traditions.
18. Dr. Mar Aprem: The Assyrian Church of the East in the  
Twentieth Century.
19. Rev. Dr. Curien Kaniamparampil Corepiscopa:  
A concise Syriac-English Dictionary.
20. Dr. Jean-Paul Deschler: Christian Iconography (German)

### III. MADROSO (Malayalam publication)

Vol. 1: Marthommayude Bharatha Prasthanam.

Vol. II: Suriyani Samvada Ganangal.

Vol. III: Mar Apreminte Mariya Geethangal.

Vol. IV: Yakobinte Anaphora.

(Harp Vol.1(No.1), 8, 9 and Moran Etho No.2 are out of print now)



MALANKARA  
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## SEERI Offers

- Course of initiation into Syriac literature for students going to universities abroad for higher studies and to the M. Th. students in India
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