

RECOGNITION OF THE «ORTHODOXY» OF THE MOST ANCIENT EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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1. A Roman Document which has been noted

Five years are gone by since the «Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity » published, on the pages of the *Osservatore Romano* of October 26, 2001, a document exquisitely of ecumenical flavour, entitled «*Orientamenti per l'ammissione all'Eucaristia fra la Chiesa caldea e la Chiesa assira dell'Oriente*». In spite of the different denominations, the two Churches mentioned in the title recall to the same stock, that is, the Church of the East. We know that from the apostolic or sub-apostolic era Christian faith reached the coasts of Kerala, giving origin to the "Christians of St. Thomas", or rather the Syro-Malabar Church.¹

When a part of the Church of East - opposed to the hereditary succession to the Patriarchate from uncle to nephew, established since the middle of the 15th century - got reunited with Rome in 1552, and was designated Chaldean Church;² the other section continued such custom for long, remaining all the time a pre-Chalcedonian Church, in as much as it recognizes only the first two ecumenical councils (Nicea and Constantinople I), and preferred to be called Assyrian Church of the East.³ We have in front of us a theological declaration of the calibre that, after being elaborated and examined jointly by three dicasteries of the Holy See, has received the approval of Pope John Paul II.⁴

It is significant to note that, next to the signature of Cardinal Walter Kasper, the President of the «Pontifical Council for the promotion of Christian Unity» to whom goes the merit of the initiative, and of Cardinal Ignace Moussa I Daoud, the Prefect of the «Congregation for the Oriental Churches», stands out the signature of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the then Prefect of the «Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith» and today Benedict XVI.

¹ On the history of the Syro-Malabar Church cfr E. TISSERANT, *Syro-Malabare (Église)*, in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, t. 14, 3089-3162 (= *Eastern Christianity in India. A History of the Syro-Malabar Church from earliest time to the present day*, Authorized adaptation from the French by E.R. Hambye, Bombay-Calcutta-Madras 1957).

² Cfr G. BELTRAMI, *La Chiesa Caldea nel secolo dell'Unione*, PIO, Roma 1933, 1-15

³ It is also known as Nestorian Church. Recently a synod of this Church has requested that this title should be avoided as it took pejorative connotation in the western world.

⁴ *L'Osservatore Romano* del 26/10/2001, p. 7.

In order to understand the Roman document we have to take into consideration the *Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East* signed on November 11, 1994 by Pope John Paul II and Catholicos-Patriarch of the Church of the East, Mar Dinkha IV. Conscious of professing one «common faith in the mystery of the Incarnation» and of having the same sacraments, the signatories, in the name of their respective Churches, were committed to do everything possible «to remove the last obstacles that still prevent the realization of full communion»⁵. It is in this context that the *Orientations of 2001* are inserted. It was treated, in fact, to concede to the Christians, either Chaldeans (Catholics) or Assyrians (non-Catholics), to receive the Eucharist in a church and from a minister of a sister Church, when, on account of the circumstances related to the Diaspora, they are not able to receive it from a minister of the proper community.

Although ignored by the media of the religious actuality, the *Orientations of 2001* regarding the inter-communion of the faithful, and all the problems that it presupposes, could not escape anyone who cultivate a specific interest in the theology of the Eucharist, whether he be an expert of liturgy, or the dogmatic or ecumenism, or still of canon law, history or the pastoral. The crucial point of the declaration concerns the problem of the validity of the Eucharist celebrated with the anaphora of Addai and Mari⁶ of the Assyrian Church of the East. The researchers of the oriental liturgies know well that, in this ancient Church, this anaphora is used even today, from time immemorial, without the *institution narrative*, and therefore without being pronounced the words of the Lord on the bread and wine⁷.

The Catholic Church, that considers the *words of institution* as integral part and therefore, indispensable of every Eucharistic prayer «has come to the conclusion that this anaphora can be considered valid», and this on the basis of three principal arguments: “*In the first place*, the Anaphora of Addai and Mari is one of the most ancient *Anaphoras*, dating back to the time of the very early Church; [...]. *Secondly*, the Catholic Church recognises the Assyrian Church of the East as a true particular Church, built upon orthodox faith and apostolic succession. [...] *Finally*, the words of Eucharistic institution are indeed present in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, not in a coherent narrative way and *ad litteram*, but rather in a dispersed eucharological way, that is, integrated in successive prayers of thanksgiving, praise and intercession.”⁸ This Roman document,

⁵ *Acta Apostolica Sedis* 87 (1995) 685-687.

⁶ According to the tradition, obviously not documented, Addai (or Thaddeus) and Mari would be disciples and companions of the Apostle Thomas in the evangelisation of the East.

⁷ The Assyrian church of the East knows very well the anaphoric function of the *institution narrative* since it possesses the *institution narrative* in the other two *Anaphoras*, that is to say the *Anaphoras* of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius. Nevertheless this Church has always been eager to respect the original configuration of the anaphora of Addai and Mari because of its venerable antiquity.

⁸ *L'Osservatore Romano* del 26/10/2001, p. 7.

on the part of the commentators, has provoked contradictory reactions. In the attempt to clarify to us the motive of the divergences, let us give a look at the two different approaches in Eucharistic theology which can explain, respectively, the enthusiasm of some and the disagreement of the others.

2. The Roman document at the Crossroad of two Methodologies

The historians remind us that the Latin West came to the knowledge of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari when its missionaries, at the end of the 15th century, started to disembark in the East. If, to their eyes, already the subsequent epiclesis of the Byzantines and of the whole Oriental⁹ had aroused enormous perplexity, it is easy to imagine how they stood literally flabbergasted in front of the custom of the Chaldeans and Malabarians, who celebrated the Mass (Qurbana) with an anaphora devoid of the words of *institution*. If their surprise is comprehensible even today, it is as well comprehensible, in the light of a systematic theology that we all know, the decision to intervene in time for curing the intolerable *defectus*, which means, to bring back to the celebrating orthodoxy, communities which for many centuries of isolation they had lost. The theologians of that time could neither think nor behave differently. They were too distant from the times in which Ambrose of Milan († 397), who needing to instruct the neophytes on the Eucharist, planned the whole treatment in the light of the whole prayer with which the Church celebrates.

Although vigorously underlining the operative efficacy of the words of *institution*, Ambrose was not used to isolate them from the *institution narrative*, which he read in relation to the successive anamnesis¹⁰ and in the function of the epicletic question, that is to say, the epiclesis on the mysteries (oblation) and epiclesis on the communicants.¹¹

Instead of the mystagogical methodology, typical of the first millennium, later emerged the methodology of «*clear and distinct ideas*»¹², better still, of ideas always more clear and always more distinct, characterised by the systematic abandoning of the primary reference to the *lex orandi*. Symptomatic of the new methodology, is the behaviour of Peter Lombard († 1160), the father of the

⁹ With the expression *subsequent epiclesis* is intended the invocation for the transformation of the offerings that in all the great anaphoric traditions, with the exception of the Roman canon, «*follows*» the *institution narrative*. The epiclesis of the Roman canon is shaped in fact as *antecedent epiclesis*, since it «*precedes*» the *institution narrative*. For a correct formulation of the question of the epiclesis, *antecedent* or *subsequent*, in the light of the *lex orandi*, cfr C. GIRAUDDO, «*In unum corpus*». *Trattato mistagogico sull'eucaristia*, Cinisello Balsamo 2001, 541-560.

¹⁰ The term *anamnesis* designates the prayer paragraph that immediately follows the *institution narrative* in the Eucharistic prayer.

¹¹ Cfr AMBROGIO, *De sacramentis* 4,21-27, in *PL* 16, 443-446. In the Roman Canon, while the *epiclesis* on the offerings corresponds to the prayer paragraph *Quam oblationem*, the *epiclesis* on the communicants is represented by the paragraphs *Supra quæ e Supplices*, that require jointly the transformation of the communicants «*in only one body*».

¹² Although recognizing the paternity of the formula to the father of the modern philosophy who was Descartes († 1650), we have to admit that the consistent methodology in order to distinguish for clarifying was known and practiced long before him.

scholastics, which conveying the whole attention on the words of consecration, considered in addition in the briefest possible formula, and ended up isolating it from the wholeness of anaphora formulation.¹³

The method of analysis and the thought of Lombard exercised a notable influence. In fact, in the second millennium, the understanding of the unity of the anaphora was least understood in the West. The canon (Eucharistic prayer) was intended as a series of isolated prayers that frame the consecration. The theologians and the celebrants no more knew the value and the function of such prayers, neither were they worried about knowing it. These prayers were kept on saying only because they were in the missal. But on their significance, fell a dense fog of inattention. The whole attention was polarized by the pre-occupation to affirm the absolute and exclusive efficacy of the words of *institution*, with the consequent negation, explicit or not, of every consecratory efficacy to the Epiclesis. In order to avoid misunderstandings, we affirm immediately the absolute efficacy of the words of consecration the Church has never doubted.¹⁴ Nevertheless, while the Fathers knew to compose the absolute efficacy of the words of the consecration with the role of epiclesis equally efficient, the scholastic theologians instead added that exclusiveness which the magisterial documents were always cautious to avoid.¹⁵

Formed to identify the Eucharist solely with the *words of institution*, how couldn't the Latin theologians pass from one century to another in front of the anaphora of Addai and Mari, that is to say, in front of a celebrative praxis, the existence of which none of them could ever imagine?

3. The Problematic Changes of a Missionary Era

Determined to «conquer the East to Jesus Christ»¹⁶, the Latins launched with admirable zeal, unfortunately accompanied not always by wise choices in the endeavour, that conditioned heavily the liturgical expressions, above all of the Malabar Church.

After the grant of the special authority, known as Padroado (*jus patronatus*) in 1534, to the king of Portugal by pope Paul III († 1549), on everything that concerns Catholic faith, Latin dioceses were erected, first in Goa, whose jurisdiction was extended from the “Cape of Good Hope”

¹³ Cfr PIETRO LOMBARDO, *Sententiae* 4,8,4, in *PL* 192, 856.

¹⁴ We have confirmation of it from the most ancient testimonies of the sub-apostolic Church (cf IGNAZIO DI ANTIOCHIA, *Ai cristiani di Smirne* 7,1, in *PG* 5, 713a; GIUSTINO, *Prima Apologia* 66,2, in *PG* 6, 428c-429a).

¹⁵ For the way of intending some minor pontifical documents, compiled beginning from the XVIII century and dictated by the pastoral concern to avoid that someone could disorientate the Christians attributing consecration efficacy also to the *epiclesis*, cfr GIRAUDDO, *In unum corpus*, cit., 549⁷².

¹⁶ The title of a book reads thus: *Oriente Conquistado a Jesus Christo pelos Padres da Companhia de Jesus da Provincia de Goa*, Segunda edição, Bombaim 1881 (1^a ediz. Lisboa 1710).

up to China¹⁷; seminaries were opened and the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Jesuits occupied themselves in the forefront in the Latin formation of the local clergy.

Around those years they even went to the extent of challenging the famous bishop Mar Jacob († 1550), who was sent by the Chaldean Patriarch and who was in the Malabar since 1503, on the validity of the baptisms administered by him, demanding that the missionaries be conceded to re-baptise those baptised by him with the Roman formula.¹⁸ St Francis Xavier († 1552), who gives a eulogy in praise of him in a letter to the king of Portugal¹⁹, had the occasion to meet Mar Jacob much later.

In short, after a brief and difficult cohabitation, between the Latin bishops who were always more powerful and the Malabar bishops who were always under surveillance, it reached the point later of being forced to a retreat into Latin convents at times to study the language and to be Latinised in the use of the Latin liturgical vestments and liturgical celebrations²⁰, and at other times to keep them out of the power game. It was like this that at the end of the 16th century, the effective jurisdiction entirely passed into the hands of the Latin hierarchy, which maintained it for three centuries.

¹⁷ Cfr J. VELLIAN, *Raza: The most solemn Qurbana*, Kottayam [s.d.], 13-14.

¹⁸ In a letter to the king John III, written from Cochin around the year 1523, Mar Jacob defends the orthodoxy of his own baptismal practice; it considers unwise the fact to re-baptise with the Roman formula, as the missionary Alvaro Penteado pretends, because, so doing, the king will lose the friendship of his Christians who esteem him much; but, if the king orders it, he declares ready not to oppose, (cfr G. SCHURHAMMER, *Three letters of Mar Jacob bishop of Malabar 1503-1550*, in *Gregorianum* 14 [1933] 76-78).

¹⁹ On January 26, 1549 Francis Xavier writes from Cochin to the king John III thus: «An Armenian bishop [nb: to be intended in the sense of "aramean, that is chaldean], named Abuna Jacob, from long 45 years serves God and Your Majesty from this region: a very old man, virtuous and saint, but in the meantime disfavoured by Y.M and almost all those of India [...]. He is favoured here only by the Franciscans [...]. May Your Majesty write to him a letter full of affection, and in a specific chapter of it recommend him to the governors, advisers and captains of Cochin, so that they give him honour and receive him as he deserves, when he goes to ask anything [...]. He has done a lot of work with the Christians of St. Thomas, and now, in his old age, he is very obedient to the customs of the holy Mother the Church in Rome» (G. SCHURHAMMER & I. WICKI [ed.], *Epistolæ S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta*, t. 2, Romæ 1945, 57-63).

²⁰ In a letter of January 18, 1580 from Cochin to Father Emmanuele de Góis, the young Matteo Ricci, in his brief Indian stay, thus makes praise of a Malabar archbishop, whose doctrine and praxis in fact worried many times the Roman authority: «The Archbishop Mar Abraham — the real one, nominated by the Pope Pious IV—, from the moment who was a good man, he didn't prohibit to our entry into his diocese. Now, for fear of Simon [nb: the false bishop] and with great providence of God, he is united to us and professes much more openly, together with his archdeacon, who is a very influential man among them, the Roman Church, and they are already dressed in the manner of the Portuguese clergymen (removing the beard). They say mass with vestments made as ours; they say (mass) with the host, not with the round loaves (com hostia, não com bolos) as they did before. They give communion to people *sub una tantum specie*» (I. WICHI [ed.], *Documenta Indica XI [Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, vol. 103]*, Romæ 1970, 844). Concerning the aforementioned Simon, enough to say that he was a megalomaniac: not being even priest, he presented himself as bishop, «disturbing the peace and the government of Mar Abraham» and, after endless vicissitudes and a trip to Rome, «unmasked by the sagacity of Sixtus V», he ended his days confined in a Franciscan monastery in Lisbon (cfr BELTRAMI, *La Chiesa caldea*, cit., 103-108). For the availability, spontaneous or forced, of the Malabar bishops to learn and to celebrate the mass in Latin, cfr SCHURHAMMER & WICKI, *Epistolæ S. Francisci Xaverii*, cit., 62-63⁹.

To the eyes of the conquerors everything was contaminated with Nestorian deviations and errors! The Synod of Udayamperur or Diamper, staged in the homonymous town of the Kerala (near Cochin) from June 20 to June 26, 1599 and presided over by the energetic archbishop of Goa, the Portuguese Alessio de Menezes († 1617), has left in the «Christians of St. Thomas» the bitter memory of latinization with very little respect for their ancient traditions.²¹

In the session, *De Sancto Missæ Sacrificio*, the Synod begins: «Since this Church for 12 centuries was not at all subjected to the holy Roman Church [...], it happened that the things that concern the Holy sacrifice of the Mass were not preserved with the due integrity and purity [...]. Insofar in the Syriac Mass that is said in this diocese, some things are removed without consideration, which seems that it can introduce and favour errors, many of them entirely impious and heretical. For this motive [...] the Synod orders that the missals are expurgated and that the following things are inserted into them»²².

To make an idea of the deviations which needed to set remedy, it is enough to follow the decisions taken in the Synod, which often allow us to see them against the light. But we have also positive testimonies. On the matter of the Eucharistic sacrifice, for instance, the Jesuit Anthony de Monserrate († 1600) refers to the use of baked bread of rice and wine of raisin to consecrate²³, while the Carmelite historian Paulinus of St. Bartholomew († 1806) affirms that flour of wheat and wine of coconut were used then²⁴. Concerning the matter, but with greater understanding, treats Joseph the Indian (XVI sec.), who recognizes how difficult it was for them to procure the wine.²⁵

To set remedy to such serious abuses, the Synod ordered that every single church procure the suitable irons for the confection of the needed round hosts made of grain flour, not to be mixed

²¹ On this synod, cfr G. NEDUNGATT (ed.), *The Synod of Diamper revisited*, PIO 2001.

²² J.D. MANSI (ed.), *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, t. 35, 1243 (Decreto 1).

²³ In a letter of January 12, 1579 concerning General Mercuriano, Fr Antonio de Monserrate writes thus: “ In antiquity they used to have different rites in the mass, as they did a loaf of rice flour (*una torta de harina de arrós*) and in the middle --we do not know if in the same paste or if by the grain flour (*de harina de trigo*) — a round form (*una bola*); and we neither know if they consecrated only this round form or the whole loaf. The fact is that the priest consumed the middle portion and distributed the loaf among the people. In similar offering committed an intolerable mistake that is, to divide the sacrament, because it was not such if you think about the people who communicated. They consecrated wine of grape raisin made by lot of water and shared with the people that wine as if it was the blood of Christ. [...] After the arrival of the Portuguese, they use hosts and wine from Portugal and they all wear our vestments for the sacrifice, and now they give the communion *sub specie panis tantum* with a lot of veneration. (WICHI, *Documenta Indica* XI, cit., 517).

²⁴ «The Mass was purely Nestorian: consecrated in wine of coconut called by the Indians *Tàgaram* or *Aràcca*. The wafer was a flour paste of grains mixed with oil and salt. This wafer was made to descend from above through a hole on the altar of the celebrant. The Mass was said on Sundays, but there was no obligation to hear it». (PAOLINO DA S. BARTOLOMEO, *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali*, Roma 1796, 136).

²⁵ «Consacrano el Corpo [&] el sangue del nostro Signore como nui in azimo & [si] dice che quando non hanno uino, perche in quelle parte non nasce uua, tolgeno de lua passa de la qual ne viene grandissima quantità dal Cataio [= Cina] & quella mentano in aqua & la strenzeno & ne cauano certo sucho & cum quello consacrano» (A. VALLAVANTHARA, *India in 1500 AD. The Narrative of Joseph the Indian*, Mannanam 1984, 174).

with other ingredients,²⁶ moreover, that the wine be rigorously Portuguese, not of raisin soaked in the water, neither mixed with local and traditional wines. Precise indications were not missing regarding the preservation of wine: while the vicars had to conserve the big quantities in small wooden bottles or in (straw covered) bottles, the priests had to conserve accurately the small quantities in glass bottles. In addition the synod appealed to the munificence of the king of Portugal, and also of the faculty of the archbishop himself, in order to foresee to send regularly from Portugal determined quantities of dried grapes which better supports the warm climate.²⁷

The biggest problem, with which the synodal fathers of Diamper had to encounter, was undoubtedly related to the anaphora of Addai and Mari, the question of the *institution narrative*. We have already mentioned the absence of the *narrative* in the traditional configuration of the one which remains the anaphora par excellence of the whole oriental Church. Regarding the necessity to insert it there was no doubt. But where to insert it? While in the Catholic missal of the Chaldeans the *institution Narrative* had been inserted officially by the Latin missionaries immediately after the *Sanctus*, in the Catholic missal of the Malabarians somebody has had the idea to place it out of the anaphora, precisely between the preparatory prayers at the fraction. Many people attribute this curious placing to the synodal fathers of Diamper. Undoubtedly, they were not lacking the courage to do this and other. Any way, to be fare, we have to admit that the synodal fathers of Diamper limited themselves to validate a praxis which was already in force since at least forty years.

In the Apostolic library of Vatican, a code is conserved, marked *Vat. Syr. 66*, which reports the *institution narrative*, but, - beware - distinctively from the anaphoric formulary, as a kind of addition, by way of good evidence from the annotation, obviously in Syriac, «Over the body» which the same hand was cautious to place it on the top of the margin. To the text, whose tone gives an echo of the Roman canon, follows, framed by the related rubrics, the Chaldean-Malabar formula, which in Italian translation recites: «*E quindi: La grazia del Signore nostro Gesù Cristo, l'amore di Dio Padre e la comunione dello Spirito Santo sia con voi, ora. E si fa il segno di croce*»²⁸.

Although it goes well with the initial salutation which precedes the anaphora, this greeting formula is the one which in the traditional order of the Chaldean-Malabar Mass comes after the formula which sounds: «*Glory to you, my Lord, Glory to you, my Lord, Glory to you, My Lord, for your ineffable gift to us, for ever.*»²⁹ Now, this last formula proves, beyond all doubt, that we are in the area of the fraction, which is before the communion, and actually the *institution narrative*

²⁶ MANSI, t. 35, 1252-1253 (Decreto 7).

²⁷ MANSI, t. 35, 1253-1254 (Decreti 8 e 9).

²⁸ *Vat. Syr. 66*, folio 101 (recto).

²⁹ Cfr, For Example, *Ordo Missæ Syro-Chaldæo-Malabaricæ cum Translatione Latina*, Puttenpally 1912, 40-43.

attested here is visibly outside the Anaphora. But to whom owes this precious testimony transmitted from the only folio of our code?

The commentators underline that the *institution narrative* constitutes oriental formulae and Latin formulae and they date the redaction in the year 1556, attributing this to Mar Joseph Sulaqa (+1569)³⁰ who was sent by the Chaldean Patriarch Mar Abdisho (+1567) as the first Catholic Metropolitan of the Indies. He was the brother of the first Catholic Chaldean Patriarch Mar Simon (John) Sulaqa, the one who realised the union with Rome in 1552 and little later in January 1555 was killed at the instigation of the rival Nestorian Patriarch, and therefore he is correctly considered the first martyr of the cause of Ecumenism of the Church of the East. It is known the sympathy which the two Sulaqa brothers nourished for the Latins, with whose theology and ritual praxis they have had to confront, besides the continuous contacts with the western missionaries, also during the occasions of respective journeys to Rome.

Turning to the synod of Diamper, we have to recognize that, though it renewed the merit of the formulation of the *institution narrative*, it did not renew its location that received as an already fixed tradition. In fact, after precisising that the criteria for the evaluation of the formulae has to be rigorously scriptural, with the exception of a few minor additions, which bring the essence of the Roman Canon, - among which the conjunction, *enim* (therefore), the adjective “*aeterni*” (eternal) and the parenthesis *Mysterium Fidei* (mystery of Faith)- , concludes the long disquisition saying: <Then, after these words, let the priest immediately proceed, as it happens in the Mass, saying, *Glory to you, My Lord; Glory to you, etc.*>. ³¹

Trying to understand the logic which brought to place the consecration before the fraction, between the prayer <Glory to your Holy name etc.> and the prayer <Glory to you, My Lord etc>³², we can propose a hypothesis that in order to obviate the problematic absence of the *institution narrative*, intended as consecration, that is as sacramental form (*forma sacramenti*), in the years in which is dated the above mentioned codex, *Vat.Syr.66*, a kind of *institutionalisation*, normative of rubrics of the Roman Missal concerning the *defectus formae*, intended in analogy with the *defectus materiae*, has intervened.

³⁰ For the analysis and attributions cfr S.E. & J.S. ASSEMANI, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae Catalogus*, t. 2, Romae 1758, 370; A. RAES, *Le Récit de l'institution eucharistique dans l'anaphore chaldéenne et malabare des Apôtres*, in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 10 (1944) 217-219; D. WEBB, *Mar Joseph Sulaqa et la liturgie du Malabar*, in *L'Orient Syrien* 3 (1958) 200-203.

³¹ MANSI, t. 35, 1244 (Decreto 1).

³² Cfr A. DE GOUVEA, *Iornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes, primaz da India Oriental*, Coimbra 1606, [nelle pp. non numerate a fine libro]; J.F. RAULIN, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Diamperitana Synodo apud Indos Nestorianos, S. Thomae Christianos nuncupatos, coacta ab Alexio De Menezes*, Romae 1745, 316-318.

In order to clarify our hypothesis better, it is enough to think of the casuistic of the Roman missal related to the *defectus materiae*. If the priest, in the moment of communion, realises that <the host is not bread (*hostiam esse corruptam, aut non esse triticeam*)>, or that <in the chalice there is no wine, but water (*vinum non fuisse positum, sed aquam*)> he has to immediately provide the valid <matter> and pronounce over that the words of consecration, beginning respectively from <“*Qui pridie quam pateretur*”> or from <*simili modo*>. Next to the <*defectus materiae*> the same rubric norm contemplates also the <*defectus formae*>. Behold the part which is of interest to us! «If the priest has certainty, or it results to him as extremely probable to have omitted any of those things which are necessary for the sacrament, which is the form of consecration, let him repeat the form and then proceed with the order in doing what is established. (*Si tamen certo ei, vel valde probabiliter constet, se omisisse aliquid eorum quæ sunt de necessitate sacramenti, idest, formam consecrationis: resumat ipsam formam, & cetera prosequatur per ordinem*)»³³

It is possible, therefore, to assume that in the specific case of the anaphora of Addai and Mari, it has been a sort of affirmation, - *de facto* institutionalised - related to the *defectus forme*, which imposed, in order to be able to receive a valid communion, to do <*in extremis*> that consecration which had not yet been done.

The testimony of the addition in the folio of *Vat. Syr. 66*, seems to accredit this our hypothesis. In addition, a further confirmation is resulting from the behaviour of the synodal fathers of Diamper, who, although very careful to oppose either the doctrinal deviations or the liturgical derivations, they limited themselves to touch the formulation of the *institution narrative* in order to adapt better to the tone of Roman canon, being not at all surprised by its location outside the anaphora. Doing this, they were perfectly in line with the exclusive absolutization which the systematic scholastics recognised for the efficacy of the *institution narrative* meant as consecration, and with the golden isolation in which the scholastics had confined it. Such is therefore the order of the Malabar Mass, which figures in print in 1774³⁴ in the first Catholic missal. In any case, however the things have gone, let us be beware of condemning the decisions of the fathers of Diamper, or of whoever is the source of this curious systematisation. It would be anachronistic today to throw stone against them. The considerations we have done convince us that the systematic theology of that time did not allow to behave otherwise.

³³ M. SODI & A.M. TRIACCA (ed.), *Missale Romanum. Editio Princeps (1570)*, Città del Vaticano 1998, 23-24 [*De defectibus Missæ*].

³⁴ *Taksa d'Quddaša, vel Ordo Chaldaicus Missæ juxta morem Ecclesie Malabaricæ Superiorum permissu editum*, Romæ 1774.

For the moment, without considering the fact of this anomalous placing of the narrative which has been maintained in the Malabar Church for a good 400 years, which is up to the revision of 1960³⁵, let us have a look at the anaphora of Addai and Mari with the narrative, which is in use even today in the Assyrian Church of the East. It is in fact, with this (own) configuration that dialogues with the Roman document.

4. Addai and Mari: An Anaphora with out the words of the Lord or with out consecration?

In favour of the original absence of the *institution narrative* in the anaphora of Addai and Mari places its most ancient codex discovered in 1964 by William F. Macomber in the parish Church of Mar Esaya in Mosul.³⁶ Due to lack of space, we shall immediately direct our attention on the typical portion of the anaphora³⁷, to the one which from the unique *intercession*, passing through the *anamnesis*, conduces to the double epiclesis. We shall see that the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, although still with out having the *institution narrative*, it possesses <*in nucleus*> the essential elements, completely surrounded by its characteristic *anamnesis*.

The portion in examination, which corresponds to the second part of the anaphora, or the section of the supplication, is opened by the unique *intercession*. At the first sight the fact surprises us, and we ask ourselves why on earth the ancient praying East Syrian had wished to initiate exactly with it. Nevertheless after a more careful examination results that his behaviour is motivated by a precise intention. Here is the text: “You, Lord, in your ineffable mercies, of which we are not able to speak, make good memory of all the right and just fathers who have been delighted before you in the commemoration of the body and blood of your Christ, that we offer on the pure and Holy altar as you have taught us.[...]”.

On the basis of the divine mercies spoken in the first part of the anaphora or the section of the praises, God is prayed to direct His ineffable mercies on the departed fathers. But here there is more than a simple <*memento*> of the departed. Here is asked to God to remember, not anybody, but those right and just fathers who were acceptable exactly through their iterations of the memorial which the assembly is doing. In this way the Eucharistic celebration is immediately projected and rooted in the uninterrupted tradition of the fathers, who have transmitted the teaching of the Lord up to the present generation. In fact, to the memory requested to God in favour of the Fathers who have been acceptable to Him in the commemoration of the body and blood of Christ, is joined the

³⁵ *Taksa d'Quddaša* [Ordo Missæ], Always 1960. Sulla revisione del messale malabarese, cfr VELLIAN, *Raza*, cit., 59-62.

³⁶ Cfr W.F. MACOMBER, *The Oldest Known Text of the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari*, in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 32 (1966) 335-371.

³⁷ For a detailed comment on the whole anaphora, cfr C. GIRAUDO, *Eucaristia per la Chiesa. Prospettive teologiche sull'eucaristia a partire dalla "lex orandi"*, Roma 1989, 455-464.

declaration with which the gathered community notifies to God that he is doing that same commemoration.

The Anaphora formulation continues thus: “*and also we, Lord, your weak, frail and miserable servants, who are gathered together and stand before you this moment, we have received in the tradition the type (figure) that comes from you, and as we rejoice and praise, commemorate and celebrate and make this great mystery and trembling of the passion, death and resurrection of our Jesus Christ.*” At the first sight, these expressions make us to think of an anamnesis, but these actually are much more than an anamnesis, as they base on the anamnestic offertorial declaration with the content of that element which, in the history of the anaphora, is being configured as the real and proper account. We find ourselves before us a composed element which we name (*quasi*) *anamnesis narrative*. In fact, despite the material absence of the *institution narrative*, we can speak of *quasi narrative*. We shall immediately see the textual basis which authorises such naming of ours.

The passage from the Eucharist of the Fathers to the present Eucharistic celebration is established by a double declaration, which the «gathered» community makes through the mouth of the one who presides. In the first place, with only one verb in the finite form which distinguishes the principal sentence, it declares «also we, your servants [...] have received in the tradition the figure which, [through your Christ] comes from you». Therefore with series of subordinate participle forms which express syntactically dependent clauses and logically consequent of the first, the cultic community declares that, in this moment, «we are at this moment [...] commemorating and making this great and tremendous mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ». We recognise the essential components of the liturgical *anamnesis* or the anamnestic declaration, expressed by the verb, «commemorate», and the offertory declaration, here entrusted to the verb «to do» which says the intensity of the act of offering. Further more, we have admitted that, if this is an anamnesis, it is more than an ordinary anamnesis. Because of the insistence on the figure (type) given and received in the tradition. Here the term figure is to be understood as the designation of the sacramental signs that are bread and chalice. It is exactly these (bread and chalice) in this moment that really figure, as in a sacramental level these really are the body broken and the blood shed.

Even though not possessing the *institution narrative*, the Jewish Christian formula of Addai and Mari, it possess it in incipient manner as the *Orientamenti of the 2001* recognises when they specify that «the words of Eucharistic institution are indeed present in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, not in a coherent narrative way and *ad litteram*, but rather in a dispersed euchological way»³⁸.

³⁸ *L'Osservatore Romano* del 26/10/2001, p. 7.

For a formal confirmation of this statement it is sufficient to confront this portion of Addai and Mari with about fifteen Syriac anaphoras which present an anomalous formulation of the *institution narrative*, either for the total or for the partial absence of the institutional words, or for their formulation otherwise defective.³⁹ From a careful observation of these cases commonly presumed «anomalous», our hypothesis concerning the progressive configuration of the *institution narrative* as *embolism* (which is literally budded)⁴⁰ receives a proof which should not be neglected. Departing from the imperfect configuration of the *quasi-embolism*, the narrative reaches quite quickly to be configured as a full anaphoric embolism.⁴¹

Some scholars, considering that the insertion of the *institution narrative* can not be considered original and primitive, have spoken of «*interpolation*». But we note that the notion of interpolation for the very fact that it evokes the addition of a textual portion to a preceding text which did not possess it, neither it could foresee it, is indeed not fitting for shedding light on the origin of the *institution narrative*, from the moment that it would unavoidably finish by relativising the presence and the function. The attention which we have paid to the history of the forms beginning from the Old Testament and Judaic *eucology*, convinces us to affirm, under literary-theological profile, that the *institution narrative* - understood both in the germinal and fully settled form - is in the DNA of the anaphora, which is its genetic codex, in the sense that it is included in its internal programming.

With its *quasi-embolism* or quasi narration, the anaphora of Addai and Mari, far from being presented as an anomaly, documents a phase in which the *theologico-scriptural locus of the sacramental corpus* was being rapidly inserted in the prayer formulation in order to confer to the epiclesis, which is the prayer for our transformation in the ecclesial body, the maximum credit for which it is capable. Therefore the attention paid to the literary form of the Eucharistic prayer and to its genesis, results profitable for the theology. It projects a light which gives security on a question which made the western liturgists curious and alerted those pastors, who came from the west and was not preoccupied to abandon their «form mentis» unable to enter into the school of «*lex orandi*».

³⁹ For the analysis of these anaphoras, cfr GIRAUDDO, *Eucaristia per la Chiesa*, cit., 350-359.

⁴⁰ We intend for *embolism* the formal quotation in direct style of the *theologico-scriptural locus*, of the event which is celebrated. The expression assumed as denomination of literary figure is modelled by the Greek word “*to embolon*” which means exactly “*budding of the tree*”. This our technical title is not to be confused with the generic title, common among the classical liturgists of “*complementary prayer*” with particular reference to the embolism of our Father, or the prayer of the Roman mass *Libera nos*.)

⁴¹ In order to sustain our notion of *quasi embolism*, which says the literary budding of the *theologico-scriptural locus* of the prayer when it is revealed in the first phase, first through an allusion to the institutional moment and afterwards through the indirect reference to the divine words, the notion of *quasi-narrative* evokes a *narrative* just traced., and therefore still in germ (cfr GIRAUDDO, *In unum corpus*, cit., 221.244). The notion of *quasi-embolism* preludes to the *embolism* understood as full literary figure.

Fully convinced of the orthodoxy of this «oriental gem» of the *lex orandi* let us proceed to the examination of the double epiclesis for the transformation of the offerings and for the eschatological transformation of those who communicate. «May it come, O Lord, your Holy Spirit, and dwell over this offering of your servants, and may he (she) bless it and sanctify it, so that it may become for us O Lord for the atonement of our debts and for the remission of the sins, and for the great hope of the resurrection of the dead and for the new life in the kingdom of heaven, with all those who found favour before you». In its archaic formulation, the epicletic component is limited to asking God the father that the Holy Spirit « come [...] and dwell over this offering [...] and may he (she) bless it and sanctify». The motivation of this prayer, so naked on the lips of the praying Church but so binding on the ears of God, is adopted with the second epicletic component which lists the effects of reconciliation that the sacramental communion is destined to produce in us.

5. The Roman Document, that is the recognition of the primacy of the «*lex orandi*».

The considerations concerning the dynamic of the prayer, which we summarised here, make it possible for us to enrich further more the third argument adopted from the «*orientamenti of 2001*». In fact, in favour of the non-discussed «orthodoxy» of Addai and Mari it deposes, besides its marvellous epiclesis, the attestation of its anamnesis is much more than an ordinary anamnesis, from the moment that it bears in the womb - still in an embryonic stage - its *quasi-narration*⁴² that entirely surrounds it.

On the basis of the consistent indications of the literary structure, gathered beginning from the Old Testament eucology, Judaic and Christian, and most of all beginning from the observation of Addai Mari, we can therefore affirm that the prayer formula with which the Eucharist is celebrated must be considered as pre-existing to the anaphoric *institution narrative*; further more that the origin of the anaphoric *institution narrative* has to be intended in the light of the embolistic prayer dynamic; finally, that the primitive Church even though it had inherited the embolistic dynamic from the Old Testament and Judaic eucology, it had necessarily, in a certain period of time to be conscious of the effective possibility to translate it into action, exactly in relation with the theologico-Scriptural locus of the Eucharist, which means with the *ipsisissima verba* pronounced by

⁴² The same notion of *quasi-narrative* has been received in the official comment to the Roman document that has for title: *Admission to the Eucharist in situations of pastoral necessity*. This way the writer is expressed: «Tutti questi elementi [= i precisi riferimenti al mistero eucaristico “disseminati in modo eucologico”] costituiscono un “quasi-racconto” dell’Istituzione Eucaristica» (*L’Osservatore Romano* del 26/10/2001, p. 8).

the Lord Jesus «*pridie quam pateretur*» and transmitted by the kerygmatic cultural summaries received in the New Testament and patristic redactions.⁴³

Certainly, one would make a mistake who think that the Roman document opens now the way to the redaction of the anaphoras which have no *words of institution* or still possessing a kind of formulation - let us say- free and liberal of the *words of institution*. We know that the *institution narrative* has been imposed, in its full configuration, in all the anaphoric traditions, as it has been attested beginning from the anaphora of the apostolic tradition. But now, the fact the roman document wanted to recognize the validity and the perfect orthodoxy of that anaphora which, because of its venerable antiquity, still does not possess the *words of institution*, invites the systematic theologian to reflect and reconsider, in the light of the magisterium of the «*lex orandi*» its own positions.

Finally, we can not ignore that in this specific case, the merit of having interpellated and made to evolve the theology «*lex credendi*» belongs properly to the liturgy «*lex orandi*», stimulated by a pastoral and ecumenical instance.

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⁴³ For the progressive insertion of the *institution narrative* in the eucological formulas, cfr GIRAUDO, *Eucaristia per la Chiesa*, cit., 329-345; ID., *In unum corpus*, cit., 245-266.