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“Those who teach liturgy are well aware that hitherto there has been no single, up-to-date, and comprehensive study that covers both the history and the present *sitz im leben* of the classical Eastern liturgical rites. This timely volume by Stefanos Alexopoulos and Maxwell Johnson admirably fills the lacuna.”

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“The field of liturgical studies has long needed a manual like this. While the discipline affirms the fundamental importance of studying liturgy comparatively, students often find it difficult to access the Eastern rites. Alexopoulos and Johnson have helped fill a major void with this important introduction to the rich liturgies of the Christian East. It will be an important reference for scholars and students alike.”

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Introduction to Eastern Christian Liturgies

Stefanos Alexopoulos

and

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LITURGICAL PRESS
ACADEMIC

Collegeville, Minnesota

www.litpress.org

Cover design by Monica Bokinskie.

Detail of *Keresztrefeszítés—A kenetozó asszonyok* (*Crucifixion—The Anointing Women*), Rabbula kódex, 586, Firenze, Laurenziana, Plut. I. 56.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Alexopoulos, Stefanos, author. | Johnson, Maxwell E., 1952– author.

Title: Introduction to Eastern Christian liturgies / Stefanos Alexopoulos and Maxwell E. Johnson.

Description: Collegeville, Minnesota : Liturgical Press Academic, [2021] | Series: Alcuin club collections ; 96 | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "A survey of the liturgical life of the Eastern Christian Churches within the seven distinct liturgical Eastern rites still in existence today: Armenian, Byzantine, Coptic, Ethiopic, East Syrian, West Syrian, and Maronite"— Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021027570 (print) | LCCN 2021027571 (ebook) | ISBN 9780814663554 (paperback) | ISBN 9780814663806 (epub) | ISBN 9780814663806 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Eastern churches—Liturgy.

Classification: LCC BX107 .A44 2021 (print) | LCC BX107 (ebook) | DDC 264/.015--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021027570>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021027571>

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Abbreviations

ACC	Alcuin Club Collections
AGLS	Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
BAS	The Anaphoras of St. Basil of Caesarea (various versions: ArmBAS = Armenian BAS; ByzBAS = Byzantine Basil; EgBAS = Egyptian Basil; SyrBAS = Syriac Basil)
BEW	Robert Taft, <i>Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding</i> . Second revised and enlarged edition. Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1997.
CHR	The Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom
DBL	E. C. Whitaker, ed. <i>Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy</i> . Third revised and expanded edition, edited by Maxwell E. Johnson. ACC 79. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 2003.
ET	English Translation
GLS	Grove Liturgical Study
JAS	The Anaphora of St. James of Jerusalem
LWSS	Maxwell E. Johnson, ed. <i>Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation</i> . Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 1995.
MFC	Message of the Fathers of the Church
MFC 5	Thomas M. Finn, ed. <i>Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: West and East Syria</i> . Message of the Fathers of the Church 5. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1992.

- MFC 6 Thomas M. Finn, ed. *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechuminate: Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*. Message of the Fathers of the Church 6. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1992.
- NPNF Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
- OCA *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*
- OCP *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
- PEER 4 R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, eds., *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*. Fourth Edition, edited by Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson. ACC 94. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2019.
- PG Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*
- PL Migne, *Patrologia Latina*
- QL *Questions Liturgiques*
- SC Sources chrétiennes

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to express here their gratitude for the use of previously copyrighted and other material from the following works in this study:

Parts of the introduction appear in German in Stefanos Alexopoulos, “Die Liturgie in den östlichen Kirchen,” in the *Gottesdienst der Kirche - Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft*, vol. I.1.

The second half of chapter 4 appeared originally in Paul F. Bradshaw, *Rites of Ordination: Their History and Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 2013).

R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, eds., *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 4th ed., ed. Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, ACC 94 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2019).

Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts, and Seasons in Early Christianity*, ACC 86 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 2011).

An earlier version of chapter 2 appeared originally in Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, ACC 87 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 2012), 137–92.

Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Southern USA, “Coptic Reader,” Apple App Store, Vers. 2.84 (2020), <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/coptic-reader/id649434138>.

The Right Reverend M. Daniel Findikyan, primate and bishop of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church in

America, New York, New York, for the translation of the Armenian Anaphora of St. Athanasius, which appears in M. Daniel Findikyan, ed., *The Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church with Modern Armenian and English Translations, Transliteration, Musical Notation, Introduction and Notes* (New York: St. Vartan Press, 1999), 28–39.

An earlier version of chapter 1 appeared in Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, rev. and exp. ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 2007), 269–308.

Kenneth Stevenson, *To Join Together: The Rite of Marriage*, Studies in the Reformed Rites of the Catholic Church 5 (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1987).

Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd rev. ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993).

E. C. Whitaker, ed., *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, Third rev. and exp. ed., edited by Maxwell E. Johnson, ACC 79 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003).

Where not otherwise acknowledged, translations are the work of the authors.

INTRODUCTION

The Rites of the Christian East

There is a growing awareness of and interest in Eastern Christianity among Western Christians, so much so that Pope John Paul II in a well-known quotation said, "Without the Christian East Western Christianity breathes with only one lung." And Sebastian Brock has recently noted that the liturgical traditions of the Syriac Orient constitute actually a "third lung," since Christianity is not made up only of Latin and Greek traditions.¹ This increased awareness is the result of contacts within the ecumenical movement over the last seventy years or so, the increasing presence of Eastern Christian communities in the West (originally immigrant communities but more and more integrated into mainstream society), and, more recently, new movements of immigration due to the plight of Eastern Christians in the Middle East, especially in Syria, Iran, and Iraq. Indeed, even some of the great classic centers of Eastern Christianity (e.g., Mosul) have been destroyed, and their communities are now part of Eastern Christian diasporas located in California, Detroit, and Chicago.

Although short studies of Eastern Christian liturgies have occasionally appeared,² these have often been limited either to one specific rite or ritual family, such as the Byzantine, or tend to be introductions

¹ Sebastian Brock, "Variety in Institution Narratives in the Syriac Anaphoras," in *The Anaphoral Genesis of the Institution Narrative in Light of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, ed. Cesare Giraudo, OCA 295 (Rome: Edizioni Orientalia Christiana, 2013), 65n1.

² Robert Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History*, American Essays in Liturgy (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992); and Edward Finn, *These Are My Rites: A Brief History of the Eastern Rites of Christianity*, American Essays in Liturgy (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1980).

now rather out of date, based on scholarship long surpassed by the reigning experts in the field. In other words, really nothing of this sort of one-volume introduction to the liturgies of the Christian East has been produced within the last fifty years. Classic studies, such as Irénée-Henri Dalmais, *Eastern Liturgies*,³ or Donald Attwater, *The Christian Churches of the East*,⁴ while still helpful, were both written long before crucial developments in contemporary liturgical scholarship on the Christian East, exemplified by the work of scholars like Sebastian Brock (Syrian liturgies),⁵ Gabriele Winkler (Armenian and Ethiopian),⁶ and, of course, Robert Taft (Byzantine).⁷ Even Hans-Joachim Schulz's excellent study, *The Byzantine Liturgy*,⁸ was, again, limited to only one of the Eastern liturgical traditions. This study, then, seeks to fill this lacuna in the liturgical study of the Christian East.

It is not always remembered, especially among Western Christians, that Christianity originated as an Eastern religion. It was born in the East and saw its first communities established in Palestine, in Syria, in Cappadocia, and in Egypt. By the second century Christianity had reached Mesopotamia and India (evangelized, according to tradition, by the Apostle Thomas and his disciples), and by the fourth century Armenia and Ethiopia were Christian. Missionaries from Mesopotamia reached as far as China in the seventh century, and in the tenth

³ Irénée-Henri Dalmais, *Eastern Liturgies*, *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, vol. 112 (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960)

⁴ Donald Attwater, *The Christian Churches of the East*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 1961).

⁵ See Sebastian Brock, *Fire from Heaven: Studies in Syriac Theology and Liturgy*, *Variorum Collected Studies Series 863* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006).

⁶ See Gabriele Winkler, *Das armenische Initiationsrituale. Entwicklungsgeschichtliche und liturgievergleichende Untersuchung der Quellen des 3. bis 10. Jahrhunderts*, OCA 217 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1982).

⁷ See Robert Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History*; idem, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, 2nd rev. and enl. ed. (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1997); idem, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, vol. 4, *The Diptychs*, OCA 238 (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1991); idem, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, vol. 6: *The Communion, Thanksgiving, and Concluding Rites*, OCA 281 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2008); idem, *The Great Entrance: A History of the Transfer of Gifts and Other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, 2nd ed., OCA 200 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1978); and idem, "The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34–35 (1980–1981): 45–75.

⁸ Hans-Joachim Schulz, *The Byzantine Liturgy: Symbolic Structure and Faith Expression* (New York: Pueblo, 1986).

century missionaries from Byzantium Christianized the Rus and the Slavs. It is noteworthy that when the “Pentarchy” was established in the fourth and fifth centuries, four of the five patriarchates were (and still are) located in the East: Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem (with only Rome belonging to the West). These indigenous Christians have been living in these countries for up to two millennia now, from the very beginning of Christianity, and they are still present among us today, living in countries that popular mentality often does not associate with Christianity, such as Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, India, and Egypt. In other countries Eastern Christians are the majority (Ethiopia and Eritrea in Africa, Armenia and Georgia in the Caucasus, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Moldova, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine), whereas in others they are a historical minority (Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Finland, Latvia). Because of financial reasons, geopolitical shifts, wars, and persecution, a large number of these Eastern Christians have been immigrating in the last two centuries to Western Europe, to the Americas, to Africa, to Asia, and to Oceania, thus establishing Eastern Christian communities throughout the world.⁹

All of these Eastern Christian families have long-standing and rich liturgical traditions, called “rites.” A rite is a unique and integrated system of worship with its own rules and inner system conditioned by history, culture, theological outlook, and it embodies that tradition’s official expression of its Christian faith, i.e., what Aidan Kavanagh has called a “distinct ecclesial way of being Christian.”¹⁰ And in the East there are today seven extant liturgical rites: Armenian, Byzantine, Coptic, Ethiopian, East Syrian, West Syrian, and Maronite. Broadly speaking, these liturgical rites represent four ecclesial communities: the Orthodox, the non-Ephesians, the Oriental Orthodox, and the Eastern Catholic. (1) The Orthodox (Chalcedonian Christians) follow the Byzantine Rite. They are a communion of independent (autocephalus) churches that recognize the Patriarch of Constantinople

⁹ It is very difficult to assign numbers of adherents to each of the Eastern traditions; the study by Ronald Roberson, *The Eastern Christian Churches: A Brief Survey*, 7th ed. (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2010) has become the standard reference. See also Johannes Oeldemann, *Die Kirchen des christlichen Ostens: Orthodoxe, orientalische und mit Rom unierte Ostkirchen* (Kevelaer: Verlagsgemeinschaft Topos Plus, 2006).

¹⁰ Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo, 1984), 100.

as first among equals (*primus inter pares*). (2) The non-Ephesians are those who rejected the Council of Ephesus in 431—they follow the East Syrian Rite and are called “Church of the East.” (3) The Oriental Orthodox are those who rejected the Council of Chalcedon in 451. These are a communion of churches, each following their own rite: the Coptic Church, the Ethiopian Church, the Eritrean Church, the Armenian Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church. Finally, (4) the Eastern Catholics are communities of either Eastern Orthodox, Church of the East, or Oriental Orthodox that have entered into communion with Rome while maintaining their liturgical rites. A unique member of this group is the Maronite Church (follows the Maronite Rite) with no counterpart among the Orthodox or the Oriental Orthodox, which claims it has always been in communion with Rome.¹¹

A note should be made here regarding the naming of these liturgical traditions or rites. Historically, there is no standard principle behind the naming of a liturgical tradition; there are different ways, sometimes even overlapping: some are based on confession (such as “Orthodox,” “Chalcedonian,” “non-Chalcedonian,” “Monophysite,” “Nestorian”); others are based on language (“Syrian,” “Coptic,” “Armenian”); others again are based on political labels (“Byzantine,” “Armenian,” “Ethiopian”); others are named after people (“Nestorian,” “Maronite,” “Jacobite”); others are geographical (“Byzantine,” “Alexandrian,” “Antiochene,” “Hagiopolite”). In addition, as it is obvious from the short description above, the christological contro-

¹¹ For helpful introductions to these rites, see Ephrem Carr, “Liturgical Families in the East,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. 1: *Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 1997), 11–24. See also Bryan D. Spinks, “Eastern Christian Liturgical Traditions: Oriental Orthodox,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, ed. Ken Parry (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 339–67; Gregory Woolfenden, “Eastern Christian Liturgical Traditions: Eastern Orthodox,” in *ibid.*, 319–38; Christine Chaillot, “The Ancient Oriental Churches,” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 131–69; Lucas Van Rompay, “Excursus: The Maronites,” in *ibid.*, 170–74; and Alexander Rentel, “Byzantine and Slavic Orthodoxy,” in *ibid.*, 254–306. See also Paul Naaman, *The Maronites: The Origins of an Antiochene Church—A Historical and Geographical Study of the Fifth to the Seventh Centuries*, Cistercian Studies 243 (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications, 2009). On Eastern Christianity in general, see Mahmoud Zibawi, *Eastern Christian Worlds* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995); and for Egypt specifically, see Massimo Capuani, *Christian Egypt: Coptic Art and Monuments through Two Millennia* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002).

versies of the fourth and fifth centuries gave rise to the first major divisions in Christianity, and particular rites came to be associated with this or that communion of churches. As a result, terms used until recently were colored by this history and oftentimes were inaccurate. For example, the Coptic, the Ethiopian, the Armenian, and the Syriac churches were labeled as “Monophysite.” The Monophysitism condemned at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 was, however, that of Eutyches, one that these more accurately called “Miaphysite” churches also condemn! In the same vein, the use of the term “Nestorian” for the Church of the East is incorrect and misleading; it is the theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia and not that of Nestorius that defines the Church of the East. In addition, Eastern communities that have entered into communion with Rome (Eastern Catholics) were labeled as “Uniate” by the Orthodox, a term used in a derogatory manner. In fact, ecumenical dialogue between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches¹² and between many of these churches and the West has led to greater understanding and progress toward Christian unity. For example, the 1994 *Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*, leading in 2001 to a document titled *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*,¹³ is a hopeful

¹² Christine Chaillot, ed., *The Dialogue between the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches* (Volos: Volos Academy Publications, 2016).

¹³ Beginning in 1994 with a *Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*, continued ecumenical dialogue and convergence led in 2001 to a document titled *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*. There is no question that this is one of the most significant liturgical-ecumenical developments ever in the history of the Church. What makes it so is that it now allows Chaldean Catholics to receive Holy Communion in liturgies celebrated in assemblies of the Assyrian Church of the East among whom that early Semitic eucharistic prayer called the Anaphora of Saints Addai and Mari is used, that famous third-century eucharistic prayer which, like other extant prayers from the pre-Nicene period, lacks the institution narrative, the Verba Christi! (For a text of the anaphora of Addai and Mari see R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, eds., *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 3rd ed. [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 1987], 39–44). Hence, the Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari, *even without the explicit recital of the words of institution*, is recognized by Rome as a valid prayer of eucharistic consecration; i.e., as constituting a Catholic Eucharist in the full sense of the word within the Assyrian Church of the East and Chaldean Catholics, those receiving Communion in such eucharistic celebrations are assured that they are indeed receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. The implications of this are mind-boggling on several levels, not the least of which is the now-official

ecumenical sign of things to come, including the recognition by Rome of the validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, as used by the Church of the East still today, without a narrative of institution included or recited. And, indeed, christological and ecclesiological dialogues between Rome and the Oriental Orthodox Churches are quite promising along these same lines, as are the dialogues between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Modernity and the drastic changes occurring in our world today pose a new challenge to the Eastern Churches and their liturgical traditions. Through either immigration or forced expulsion, these Eastern communities find refuge in the West in a foreign cultural and intellectual milieu; we must not forget that the Eastern Churches have *not* experienced the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment and therefore face multifaceted tensions: between their culture and the culture of their new home, between their communities abroad and the communities in the “old” countries, between the past and the future. These new contexts are destined to have repercussions on the liturgical language used, on the length of services, on the texts used in the rituals, on liturgical architecture and iconography, and so on. Dealing with modernity, there are two major reactions, with many gradations in between: an extreme “conservatism” and rejection of modernity and all that it entails, on the one hand, and an extreme “liberalism” in which everything new is good and everything old is bad. The “old” countries also face these tensions now as they are more and more Westernized and are posed with the same issues and challenges. The Eastern Churches are at the crossroads, and it is their opportunity, through engaging modernity and all that it entails, to contribute to the modern world a worldview and a viewpoint that is rooted in history and tradition but is also fresh, vibrant, and prophetic; one of their major contributions is their liturgical traditions.

Before entering into an examination of these Eastern liturgical rites in the following chapters, it is important to give a framework and

recognition of what liturgical scholars have been saying for years—namely, that it is the entire eucharistic prayer itself, and not various “formulas” (whether institution narrative or epiclesis), that “consecrate” the Eucharist. On all of this, see Robert Taft, “Mass without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001,” *Worship* 77, no. 6 (2003): 482–509.

context for our study. Therefore, what follows are brief sections on the methodology of the study of the Eastern liturgical traditions, the phases of the evolution of liturgical rites, a discussion on the factors and forces in the development of these rites, some of the characteristics of these rites, and, not least, a description of each of the living rites themselves.

Methodology

There are two traditional theories regarding the emergence of liturgical rites. The theory of “diversification,” proposed by Ferdinand Probst,¹⁴ argues that from the initial pristine liturgy of the apostolic times the various rites emerged, becoming quite distinct over time. Although Probst had a point in recognizing that Christian liturgical practice ultimately has its roots in apostolic times and practice, more recent scholarship has noted that the development of a multitude of liturgical usages were there from the very beginning and certainly continued during the first three centuries and beyond.¹⁵ Anton Baumstark,¹⁶ the father of comparative liturgy, recognized the Peace of Constantine in 312 as a major turning point in liturgical history. After the Peace, one observes an ongoing process of unification, moving not from unity to diversity but from original diversity toward unity, anchored around ecclesiastical centers and dependent on ecclesiastical and political influence, historical circumstances, and dogmatic disputes. There have been two primary methodological approaches in examining Eastern liturgies: (1) *philological* and (2) *Liturgiewissenschaft* or the approach of comparative liturgy. The *philological* approach

¹⁴ Ferdinand Probst, *Liturgie der drei ersten christlichen Jahrhunderte* (Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1870); idem, *Liturgie des vierten Jahrhunderts und deren Reform* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1893).

¹⁵ See Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 2002), 1–20; and Andrew McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

¹⁶ Anton Baumstark, *Vom geschichtlichen Werden der Liturgie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1923) = idem, *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), introduction, translation, and annotation by Fritz West; and Anton Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée; principes et méthodes pour l'étude historique des liturgies chrétiennes*, 3rd ed. (Chevetogne: Éditions de Chevetogne, 1953) = idem, *Comparative Liturgy*, ed. Bernard Botte (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1958).

is centered primarily on the critical editions of original texts. This approach is absolutely necessary for the study of Eastern liturgies, as without the proper edition of the primary texts no serious further study can be made. And unless further primary texts are properly edited and published, the systematic study of the liturgical traditions of the East will lag.

The origins and the evolution of the liturgical rites are studied by the approach called *comparative liturgiology*, founded by Anton Baumstark and incarnated in the work of Juan Mateos, Robert Taft, Gabriele Winkler, Paul Bradshaw, and their students.¹⁷ Robert Taft points out that comparative liturgy as a method is based on the fact that

knowledge is not the accumulation of data, not even new data, but the perception of relationships in the data, the creation of hypothetical frameworks to explain new data, or to explain in new ways the old. For the sources alone do not tell us how they got the way they are, nor do later ones tell us why they are not the same as earlier ones. . . . The problems of liturgical history . . . arise from the appearance of changes in the sources themselves, be they additions, omissions, or aberrations, which constitute a departure from previously established patterns. The only way these problems can be solved, if only hypothetically, is by sifting and analyzing, classifying and comparing, liturgical texts and units within and across the traditions. . . . And since the evidence presents similarities and differences, its study is comparative.¹⁸

In the study of a particular rite of any liturgical tradition it is very important to identify and study the building blocks of that rite, which are called liturgical units.¹⁹ These liturgical units form the founda-

¹⁷ On the method of comparative liturgy, in addition to Bradshaw in note 15 above, see Robert Taft, "Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (d. 1948): A Reply to Recent Critics," *Worship* 73 (1999): 521–40; Fritz West, *The Comparative Liturgy of Anton Baumstark* (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1995). In 1998 a conference tribute to Baumstark and his methodology took place, where a large number of papers were delivered demonstrating the methodology "in action"; see Robert Taft and Gabriele Winkler, eds., *Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (1872–1948): Acts of the International Congress, Rome, 25–29 September 1998*, OCA 265 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2001); and the preface by Robert Taft in Baumstark, *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy*, xv–xxiv.

¹⁸ Taft, "Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (d. 1948)," 523.

¹⁹ See, for example, Robert Taft, "The Structural Analysis of Liturgical Units: An Essay in Methodology," in BEW, 187–202.

tional structures on which or through which the rites are built. For example, we see in the Armenian liturgical tradition a persistence of a standard structural unit, called "*kanon*" in Armenian. It consists of a (1) psalm (hymn), (2) followed by a diaconal proclamation (invitation to prayer, expanded to a proleptic statement), and (3) concluded by a prayer. Another such liturgical unit with origins in Jerusalem but eventually appearing in almost all traditions (it can clearly be seen in the Byzantine and the Armenian Rites) is the following: (1) diaconal proclamation, (2) first prayer, (3) offering of peace and response, (4) invitation to inclination, and (5) second prayer (inclination prayer). Another important element in the study of liturgy is the identification of the "soft points"²⁰ in a rite; these are moments where in the original primitive structure one would have actions, usually of a practical nature, without words. These were then covered by chant and concluded by a prayer, thus forming a liturgical unit: action, covered by chant, concluding with prayer. For example, "soft points" can be identified in three places in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy across all traditions: (1) the entrance into the church/the beginning of the service; (2) the kiss of peace and transfer of gifts; and (3) the fraction, Communion, and dismissal rites. It is at these particular "soft points" that we observe the greatest diversity among liturgical rites and the multiplicity of layers of liturgical material deposited there over the centuries. At the same time, the contribution of the social sciences (such as anthropology, sociology) is recognized in the study of liturgy, even giving birth to a separate liturgical discipline called ritual studies. This methodological approach allows for the study of liturgy "from the bottom up"; in other words, it allows us to explore how people in a given time and place lived, experienced, and understood liturgy.

Phases in the Evolution of Liturgical Rites²¹

Although each liturgical tradition of the East has its own history of evolution, growth, adoption, adaptation, and inculturation, the following phases can be discerned in almost all of the traditions, as

²⁰ See, for example, Robert Taft, "How Liturgies Grow: The Evolution of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy," in BEW, 203–32.

²¹ The identification of the phases is of Robert Taft, as presented in his class lectures on Eastern liturgies.

they share the same broader geographical region and therefore are prone to live together through the watersheds of history. (1) The first phase is that of initial formation, from the very beginnings of Christianity to the time of Constantine the Great. Characteristic of this period is the considerable variety of ritual practice among Christian communities but also a certain synthesis around centers. (2) The second phase, lasting from the fourth to the seventh centuries, is the phase of growth and differentiation; greater unity is observed in particular areas but also differences between larger areas. It is during this phase that we can start to recognize and identify liturgical families. (3) The third phase, from the eighth century on, is characterized by the diffusion of liturgical families, where recognizable formed traditions are transplanted elsewhere. Such an example is the diffusion and expansion of the Byzantine Rite to the Balkans and Kievan Rus'. (4) The beginning of the fourth phase coincides with the invention of the printing press, which in liturgy has a drastic effect; as soon as liturgical books are printed (in the first centuries of printing mainly in Rome and Venice), the printing press in essence dramatically slows down the process of liturgical evolution, as the copy of the same original is diffused to a wide geographical area, thus eliminating local ritual expression and creativity. (5) Finally, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have forced all the Eastern liturgical traditions, in varying levels and degrees, to face and engage modernity and its challenges.

Factors and Forces of Influence in the Development of Eastern Liturgies

A variety of factors and forces played a larger or a smaller role in the development and evolution of the Eastern liturgical tradition, and their study provides us with a hermeneutical tool both in our examination of their history and in our understanding of their faith, life, liturgy, and spirituality. (1) Political structures without any doubt played an important role. The emergence, for example, of Constantinople in the fourth century as the new capital of the Roman Empire catapulted this city into the epicenter of events, displacing cities such as Alexandria and Antioch, which, nevertheless, continued to play a very important role as regional centers of finance, education, government, and theology. It is not a coincidence that these important cities were also significant ecclesiastical centers. (2) The dynamics in the

relationship between states, such as the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire, or the Byzantine Empire, the Latin Crusader Kingdoms, and Armenia, were also an important factor. (3) Geography and geographical proximity certainly played a key role as well; trade routes enhanced liturgical exchange as liturgy and liturgical practices traveled together with people. For example, communication between Alexandria and Rome via the sea trade routes might explain some common elements between the two liturgical traditions. (4) The liturgical influence of Jerusalem after the fourth century as a center for Christian pilgrimage needs to be highlighted. Christians from all around the Christian world, of different languages and liturgical traditions, came to Jerusalem, and pilgrims brought liturgical practices back home from the Holy City. Jerusalem's liturgical stamp can be seen, in a greater or a lesser degree, on almost all liturgical traditions. (5) The Christianization of the Roman Empire changed how the empire viewed itself and influenced the development of liturgical art and practice (such as psalmody, architecture, iconography, public liturgical processions). (6) The christological controversies of the fifth century played an immensely important role in the history of the Eastern liturgical traditions. Combined with political tensions, they led to the first major schism in the Church, leading to the formation of the Church of the East and the non-Chalcedonian Churches (Oriental Orthodox), each developing its own liturgical tradition, colored by these dogmatic tensions and clashes. (7) The end of martyrdom with the Christianization of the Roman Empire gave rise to monasticism in places like Upper and Lower Egypt, Palestine, Caesarea, Antioch, Mount Sinai, and later Bithynia, Mount Athos, and Meteora, and this influenced, in varying degrees, the development and theological approach of liturgy in the various liturgical traditions. (8) One cannot underestimate the significant contributions of particular individuals and the effect they had on their liturgical traditions, such as Ephrem the Syrian, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Severus of Antioch, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nersess the Gracious, and Išō'yahb III, to name just a few. (9) Finally, the reality of an oppressive rule that almost all Christians of the East have experienced and many are still experiencing has also affected the way liturgy is practiced, its architecture, and its art, leading—and we are generalizing here—to a miniaturization of everything liturgical and related to liturgy in order not to be visible and thus provoke persecution, a reality that also affects spirituality and theology.

The Characteristics of Eastern Liturgies

"Liturgy is the soul of the Christian East."²² Liturgy is not just texts, rites, and rituals; it is encountering the mystery of God, the now-and-not-yet of the Christian experience; it is the visible expression of the faith of a community; the incarnation of the Christian message in a particular time, place, culture, and people. The history of liturgy is a story of people at prayer, and the different rites express particular cultural incarnations of a people at prayer. For liturgy is at their center as it expresses their faith, their life, their spirituality, their piety, their heritage, and their experience of God. Central to the identity, conscience, and liturgical practice of the Eastern Christian traditions is the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy. The Divine Liturgy (Byzantine), *Qurbana* (Syriac), *Badarak* (Armenian), *Prosfora* (Coptic), *Qedussah* (East Syrian), or *Keddase* (Ethiopian), and worship as a whole, is seen as the expression and the epitome of the faith of the Church. It is through worship that Scripture is taught, as Scripture permeates every aspect of Eastern worship, and the worship space is filled in many traditions with an iconic representation of the Divine Economy (scenes from the Old and the New Testament) and the life of the Church (martyrs and saints).

Among Eastern Christians there is a sense of ownership of their liturgical tradition that connects them with their historical, cultural, and theological roots as a community. There is also the awareness of the responsibility to hand their tradition down to the coming generations. In these communities clergy have a role of liturgical, spiritual, and communal leadership. Eastern Christians have a very strong sense of community, fostered by the communal liturgical celebrations. Liturgy has a sense of transcendence: "The liturgy is transcendent but not distant, hieratic but not clericalized, communal but not impersonal, traditional but not formalistic."²³ Finally, another characteristic of the Eastern Churches and their liturgical traditions is the fact that most of them have survived in contexts hostile to Christianity, and many still do. Hence, the notion and sense of martyrdom is very real for them. The martyrs of the early Church and the neo-martyrs of the recent centuries are sources of inspiration and courage, giving a strong eschatological flavor to their liturgy and spirituality.

²² Taft, "Response to the Berakah Award," BEW, 286.

²³ Taft, "Sunday in the Byzantine Tradition," BEW, 67.

It is in this context where the Eastern Christian understanding of sacraments and sacramental theology should be placed. When Eastern Christians talk about sacraments, they usually use the term “mysteries,” from the Greek word *mysterion*, and its equivalent in the other Eastern languages. They talk about participating in the sacramental life of the Church, not “receiving” the sacraments.²⁴ It is through the celebration of and participation in the sacraments that the faithful enter into communion with the triune God, where the community experiences the presence of God. Although most of the Eastern Churches will say that the sacraments are seven, this number has been superimposed on them through direct or indirect scholastic Western influence.²⁵ If one looks at the lists of sacraments of the Eastern Churches, one finds, other than the standard seven (baptism, chrismation, Eucharist, ordination, penance, marriage, unction), others counted as sacraments such as funerals, tonsure of monks, the blessing of waters on Epiphany, and consecration of a church, while chrismation sometimes is not considered separate from baptism. As a result, the total number of sacraments varies, even among authors within the same tradition.

The Liturgical Rites of the Christian East

As we noted above, there are seven extant liturgical rites in the Christian East: Armenian, Byzantine, Coptic, Ethiopian, East Syrian, West Syrian, and Maronite. We begin here, however, with Jerusalem and Palestine, since, as we have also noted, Jerusalem’s liturgical stamp can be seen, to a greater or lesser degree, on almost all of these

²⁴ Michael Fahey, “Sacraments in the Eastern Churches,” in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter Fink (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Michael Glazier, 1990), 1123–30, here at 1125.

²⁵ Thomas Hopko, as quoted by D. Smolarski, *Sacred Mysteries: Sacramental Principles and Liturgical Practice* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 1; Christiaan Kappes, “A New Narrative for the Reception of Seven Sacraments into Orthodoxy: Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* in Nicholas Cabasilas and Symeon of Thessalonica and the Utilization of John Duns Scotus by the Holy *Synaxis*,” *Nova et Vetera* 15, English ed. (2017): 383–419; see also Yury Avvakumov, “Sacramental Ritual in Middle and Later Byzantine Theology: Ninth-Fifteenth Centuries,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology*, ed. Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 249–66, here 253–54; Evangelos Theodorou, «Τὸ ζήτημα τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τῶν μυστηρίων ἐξ ἐπόψεως ὀρθοδόξου» in *Θεολογία* 57 (1986): 370–77.

Chapter 1

Christian Initiation and Reconciliation

The Rites of Initiation in the Christian East, generally speaking, have kept their original unity as one integral rite with three key sacramental moments. Postbaptismal chrismation has remained an inseparable part of the baptismal rites. The baptized, no matter their age, are chrismated and immediately communed either from the reserved Eucharist or at the subsequent eucharistic liturgy, although, as we shall see below, this is not always the case in practice everywhere today, especially among Eastern Catholics. Chrismation is administered by a priest with the chrism itself consecrated by a bishop, or even by the patriarch or catholicos. Historically, especially in Syrian and Armenian baptismal practices, there was originally only one anointing, namely, a *prebaptismal* anointing, representing a theology of baptism of birth, imitation, and adoption closer to John 3 and Jesus's own baptism in the Jordan by John, rather than a Romans 6 theology of dying and rising with Christ. Baptism is seen more as the incorporation of a new member into the Church, the Body of Christ, rather than a cleansing from original sin, an Augustinian-Latin concept actually rather foreign to the Christian East in general. The ritual process of initiation remains, by and large, faithful to the shape of the ritual process of Christian initiation of the fourth and fifth centuries, known to us from the homilies and writings of the great mystagogues, Cyril (or John) of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia.¹

¹ For patristic antecedents, see Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, rev. and exp. ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 2007), 41–82, and 115–57; Bryan Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent* (Aldershot, England:

In this chapter we present, not a detailed study of the initiation rites in each of the seven Eastern liturgical traditions,² but a study of those

Ashgate, 2006), 3–70; and Edward Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001).

² In addition to Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 71–108, for the Byzantine Rite, see Alexander Schmemmann, *Of Water and the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974); Miguel Arranz, "Les Sacrements de l'ancien Euchologe constantinopolitain" (9 articles): 1, OCP 48 (1982): 284–335; 2, OCP 49 (1983): 42–90; 3, OCP 49 (1983): 284–302; 4, OCP 50 (1984): 43–64; 5, OCP 50 (1984): 372–97; 6, OCP 51 (1985): 60–86; 7, OCP 52 (1986): 145–78; 8, OCP 53 (1987): 59–106; and 9, OCP 55 (1989): 33–62; idem, "Evolution des rites d'incorporation et de réadmission dans l'église selon l' Euchologe byzantin," in *Gestes et paroles dans les diverses familles liturgiques : Conférences Saint-Serge, XXIVe Semaine d'études liturgiques, Paris, 28 juin-1er juillet 1977*, ed. A. Pistoia and A. Triacca (Rome: Centro liturgico vincenciano, 1978), 31–75; and Stefano Parenti, "Christian Initiation in the East," in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. 4: *Sacraments and Sacramentals*, ed. Anscar Chupungco (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo, 2000), 29–48. For other initiation rites, see as follows. *Armenian, Syrian, Maronite*: Sebastian Brock, "The Consecration of the Water in the Oldest Manuscripts of the Syrian Orthodox Baptismal Liturgy," OCP 37 (1971): 317–32; idem, "The Epiklesis in the Antiochene Baptismal Ordines," *Symposium Syriacum*, OCA 197 (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1974): 183–218; idem, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, Syrian Churches Series 9 (Kottayam, India: Anita Printers, 1979); idem, "Studies in the Early History of the Syrian Orthodox Baptismal Liturgy," *Journal of Theological Studies* 23 (1972): 16–64; idem, "The Syrian Baptismal Ordines," *Studia Liturgica* 12 (1977): 177–83; idem, "The Syrian Baptismal Rites," *Concilium* 122 (1979): 98–104; idem, "The Transition to a Post-Baptismal Anointing in the Antiochian Rite," *Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae, Subsidia* 19 (1981): 215–25; Joseph Chalassery, *The Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation in the East Syrian Tradition*, (Rome: Mar Thoma Yogam, 1995); Augustin Mouhanna, "Le symbolisme dans les rites de l'initiation de l'Église Maronite," *Studia Anselmiana* 87 (1983): 105–21; Baby Varghese, *Les onctions baptismales dans la tradition syrienne*, CSCO, Subsidia 82 (Louvain: Peeters, 1989); Winkler, *Das armenische Initiationsrituale*; idem, "The Blessing of Water in the Oriental Liturgies," *Concilium* 178 (1985), 53–61; idem, "The History of the Syriac Prebaptismal Anointing in the Light of the Earliest Armenian Sources," *Symposium Syriacum 1976*, OCA 205 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale 1978): 317–24; and idem, "The Original Meaning of the Prebaptismal Anointing and Its Implications," *Worship* 52 (1978): 24–45 (= LWSS, 58–81). *Coptic and Ethiopic*: Paul Bradshaw, "Baptismal Practice in the Alexandrian Tradition," LWSS, 82–100; Heinzgerd Brakmann, "Neue Funde und Forschungen zur Liturgie der Kopten 1992–1996," in *Ägypten und Nubien in spätantiker und christlicher Zeit. Akten des 6. Internationalen Koptologenkongresses, Münster, 20.–26. 1996*, ed. Stephen Emmel (Weisbaden: Reichert, 1999), 451–64; O. H. E. Khs-Burmester, "The Baptismal Rite of the Coptic Church: A Critical Study," *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 11 (1945): 27–68; Georg Kretschmar, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Liturgie, insbesondere der Tauf liturgie, in Ägypten," *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie* 8 (1963): 1–54; and Habtemichael Kidane, "Ethiopian (or Ge'ez) Worship," in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. Paul F. Bradshaw (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002),

baptismal, chrismation, and First Communion rites in the Christian East organized by what is a common overall pattern in all of the rites. That is, our presentation is organized into the four parts or sections of the rites themselves: (1) the making of catechumens, (2) prebaptism and baptism, (3) chrismation, and (4) Communion. In each case, attention will be given to specific texts in context.

Because the rites of confession, penance, or reconciliation have been often interpreted from very early on as a repentant return to baptism and the catechumenate, we include a brief description of this sacrament in the various Eastern rites at the end of this chapter.

1.1 The Making of Catechumens

Because infant initiation would become the regular and dominant practice in both East and West, the rites of the ancient catechumenate were ultimately reduced to a series of lengthy ceremonies taking place at the beginning of the initiation rites in all of the Eastern liturgical traditions. As table 1.1 illustrates, however, the provision of specific prayers for infants on the eighth and fortieth (eightieth for females in the Coptic and Ethiopic Rites) days after birth (all rites except Armenian, East Syrian, and West Syrian) is a clear indication that, unlike in the medieval West, infants in the East were never really baptized *quamprimum* (as soon as possible after birth), except in danger of death or for some other serious reason. Rather, at least some vestiges or remnants of the overall catechumenal process remained in effect as they still do in many of these churches today. One of those catechumenal remnants appears in the introductory rubric in the ninth- or tenth-century Armenian rite of baptism and a pertinent rubric in the *Georgian Lectionary*, which represents Hagiopolite liturgical practices between the fifth and eighth centuries. The Armenian baptismal rubric reads in part:

The Canon of Baptism when they make a Christian. Before which it is not right to admit him into the church. But he shall have hands laid on beforehand, *three weeks or more* before the baptism, in time sufficient for him to learn from the Wardapet [Instructor] both the faith and the baptism of the church.³

169–72; and Maxwell E. Johnson, *Liturgy in Early Christian Egypt*, AGLS 33 (Bramcote, Nottingham: Grove Books, 1995).

³ DBL, 74.

Table 1.1: The Making of Catechumens

Armenian	Byzantine	Coptic	Ethiopian	East Syrian	West Syrian	Maronite
	Rite of the first day					
	Rite of the eighth day					Rite of the eighth day
	Rite of the fortieth day	Rite of the fortieth and eightieth day	Rite of the fortieth or eightieth day			Rite of the fortieth day
Psalms 130 (131) Blessing of <i>Naracot</i> (ribbon/crown) Prayer						
Pss 3, 25, 26 50 (51) Deacon's Proclamation Prayer Psalm 90 (91)	Facing East Consignation and Exsufflation	Psalms 50 (51)	Psalms 50 (51)		Chants and Readings	Chants and Readings
		Prayer Name of Child	Prayer Name of Child			
	Inscription: Imposition of Hands and Prayer	Inscription: Prayer x2 Prayer over Oil		Inscription: Imposition of Hands Prayer	Priestly Prayer Inscription: Prayer	Inscription: Prayer
	Exorcistic Prayers (3)	Consignation with Oil Prayers (everyone kneeling)	Consignation with Oil Prayers (everyone kneeling)	Consignation with Oil	Consignation x3	Consignation

	Psalms	Hymns
	Exorcism with Exsufflation and Consignation	Priestly Prayer Exsufflation
Renunciation of Devil	Facing West: Renunciation of Devil Spit and Blow	Exorcism with Consignations
Profession of Faith	Facing East: Adherence to Christ Profession of Faith	Renunciation of Devil Spit
Matt 28:16-20 Nicene Creed Deacon's Proclamation Prayer	Facing West: Renunciation of Devil Spit and Blow Facing East: Adherence to Christ Profession of Faith Prayer: Call to Baptism	Exorcism with Consignations Renunciation of Devil Spit Facing East: Adherence to Christ Profession of Faith Prayer
	Imposition of Hands and Prayer	Exorcism with Consignations
	Facing West: Renunciation of Devil Spit and Blow	Renunciation of Devil Spit
	Facing East: Adherence to Christ Profession of Faith	Renunciation of Devil Spit
	Prayer	Prayer
	Renunciation Anointing Imposition of Hands with Two Prayers	Consecration of and Anointing with Oil

And the *Georgian Lectionary*, while listing the same nineteen catechetical readings as the prebaptismal catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem and the *Armenian Lectionary*, specifically directs that catechesis is to begin with these readings on the Monday of the Fifth Week in Lent, that is, exactly *nineteen* days (or approximately three weeks) before paschal baptism.⁴

It is also important to note, perhaps not surprisingly, given the patristic witness of John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia,⁵ that it is the Byzantine and West Syrian prebaptismal rites that have tended to become the most exorcistic in orientation.

1.1.1 Byzantine

Today you are to publish before Christ the contract of faith: for our pen and ink we use our understanding, our tongue and our behaviour. Watch therefore how you write your confession: make no mistake, lest you be deceived. When men are about to die, they make a will and assign someone else as the heir of their possessions: tomorrow night, you are to die unto sin: now you make and ordain a will, namely your renunciation, and you assign the devil as the heir of your sins, and you dispose of your sins as a patrimony (to him). So if any of you has anything belonging to the devil in his heart, throw it to him. He that dies no longer has power over his possessions: let none of you therefore preserve in your hearts anything that is the devil's. That is why you stand and hold up your hands when I command, as though being searched lest anyone has hidden upon him anything belonging to the devil. Let no one harbour enmity or anger, let no one behave with deceit, let no one listen with hypocrisy. Throw to the devil all *filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness* [Jas 1:21]. Conduct yourselves as prisoners, for as such Christ purchases you. Each of you shall look at the devil and hate him, and thus you shall blow upon him. Each of you must enter into his conscience, search his heart, and see what he has done. If after you have blown upon the devil there is still anything evil in you, spit it out. Let no Jewish hypocrisy dwell in any one; have no doubts about the sacrament. *The Word of God* searches your hearts, *being*

⁴ See above, p. 3.

⁵ See DBL, 43–49; Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 156–61, 168–79.

sharper than any two-edged sword [Heb 4:12]. The devil stands now to the west, gnashing his teeth, tearing his hair, wringing his hands, biting his lips, crazed, bewailing his loneliness, disbelieving your escape to freedom. For this cause Christ sets you opposite the devil, that having renounced him and having blown upon him you may take up the warfare against him. The devil stands to the west because it is from there that darkness comes: renounce him, blow upon him, and then turn to the east and join yourselves unto Christ. Be not contemptuous. Behave with reverence: all that is happening is most awful and horrifying. All the powers of the heavens are there, all angels and archangels. Unseen, the Cherubim and Seraphim record your voices: at this moment they look down from heaven to receive your vows and carry them to the Master. Take care therefore how you renounce the enemy and accept the Creator.⁶

1.1.2 West Syrian

On pronouncing each of the following invocations, the priest draws the sign of the cross upon the face of the child who is facing East.

Upon You do we call, O Lord God, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, while we lay our hand upon this Your creature whom we seal in Your Holy Name, from whom restrain all the devils, demons, and unclean spirits that they may be driven away from Your creature who is formed by Your holy hands. Hear us, O Lord, rebuke them and cleanse this Your servant from the instigation of the adversary.

- A. Hearken unto me, you perverter and rebellious one who oppresses this creature of God ✠
- B. Enemy of righteousness who violates the holy and divine law, I do adjure you by the glory of the great King, and command you to depart hence with dread, and be subject under the authority of the almighty Lord by Whose command the earth is firmly founded on the waters, and the sand is an established boundary for the seas ✠

⁶ DBL, 110.

- C. I adjure you by God, Who has authority in heaven and on earth, by Him Who created all things and by Whose providence they are preserved ✠
- D. I adjure you in the name of the Redeemer Who sent the legion of demons into the swine and drowned them in the water. I adjure you by the name of God Who drowned the hard-hearted Pharaoh, his horsemen, and chariots in the depth of the sea ✠
- E. I adjure you by Jesus Christ, Who with power and divine authority ordered the mute and inarticulate spirit saying: "Get out of the man, O you unclean spirit, and dare not to attach him again" ✠
- F. Stand in awe of God's dreadful name of Whom the creation of angels and archangels tremble; in Whose presence all the powers and ministers stand in fear; Whom the cherubim and seraphim dare not behold; the heavenly hosts worship Him with reverence, and the whole universe declares His glory ✠
- G. Stand in awe of God's dreadful name Who fastened the first rebellious ones in chains of darkness and sent them to the pit of perdition ✠
- H. Stand in fear of the judgment to come; tremble and depart. Do not approach or afflict God's creation. Dwell not in God's creation for it is not the dwelling place of demons, but the temple and dwelling place of the Living God Who said: "I shall dwell among them and walk with them; I shall be their God and they will be My people." As to you, He made you detestable, void of virtues, and fuel for the unquenchable fire ✠
- I. I adjure you by God Who is victorious and holy, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, depart from this servant of God and go to the pathless deserted lands where there is no water, where your dwelling place should be ✠

Be uprooted and dispersed. Be vanished from God's creation, O you accursed one, unclean spirit, spirit of deception, and fuel for the unquenchable flames. Make haste and do not resist. God,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shall extirpate you and drive you out from His creation that you may be destroyed and tormented in the tormenting fire; whereas this, who is the creation of His hands, shall be redeemed until the day of salvation. For to Him is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for evermore.⁷

At the same time, those rites that include anointing as part of the catechumenal or baptismal preparation process (Coptic/Ethiopian and East Syrian), as the following texts demonstrate, tend to conflate an exorcistic orientation with an “oil of gladness” theology (Coptic/Ethiopic) or show no signs of an exorcistic motif at all (East Syrian).

1.1.3 Coptic and Ethiopian

First Prebaptismal Anointing: *Anoint his forehead, saying: You are anointed, child of N., in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, One God, with oil of catechumens in the holy only catholic and apostolic Church of God. Amen. Anoint his breast and his hands and his back, saying: May this oil render of none effect all assaults of the adversary. Amen.*⁸

Second Prebaptismal Anointing: *Take the agallieliaion of the oil of exorcism. Anoint him who is to be baptized on his breast and his arms and over his heart behind and between his two hands in the sign of the cross, saying: You are anointed, child of N., with the oil of gladness, availing against all the workings of the adversary, unto your grafting into the sweet olive tree of the holy catholic Church of God. Amen.*⁹

1.1.4 East Syrian

First Prebaptismal Anointing: *He signs in the air above them all, and then signs them on their foreheads with the Sign of the Cross with the oil in the Horn with his forefinger from below upward and from right to left, saying: So and so is signed (with the Oil of Anointing) in*

⁷ DBL, 84–85.

⁸ DBL, 134.

⁹ DBL, 136.

the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit for ever. *And they respond: Amen.*¹⁰

The Coptic/Ethiopian Rites appear to have conflated what may be interpreted as an earlier non-exorcistic “oil of gladness” with the “oil of exorcism” itself (“the agallielaiion of the oil of exorcism”). Such a conflation, according to Paul Bradshaw, may well have resulted from the influence of the *Apostolic Tradition* within Egyptian Christianity.¹¹ Finally, elements such as spitting at or blowing against the devil at the time of the renunciation are certainly related to the increase in what might be called the flair for the dramatic in the immediate aftermath of Constantine in the fourth century.¹²

Following the west-facing *apotaxis*, or renunciation of Satan (including a literal spitting at Satan), and an east-facing *syntaxis*, or “act of adherence to Christ,” expressing “a change of allegiance” for the candidate, first testified to in the catechetical lectures of the great fourth-century Eastern mystagogues (John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Cyril [John] of Jerusalem), all Eastern rites today have the profession of faith using a declarative form (“I believe”) of the Nicene Creed. There is some scholarly debate, however, as to whether earlier forms of the Eastern rites, especially the Coptic, may once have known instead an interrogatory form of the profession (i.e., “Do you believe in God the Father?” etc.) within the context of the baptismal immersions, which only later became declaratory.¹³

1.2 Prebaptismal Rites and Baptism

Within the baptismal rites themselves, especially in those rites immediately before the baptismal washing, i.e., the consecration of the baptismal waters and the prebaptismal anointing(s),¹⁴ the clearest

¹⁰ The Order of Holy Baptism that was composed by Mar Išo’yahb of Kh’dayab, catholicos, and was later explained by Mar Eliya, catholicos-patriarch, translated by M. J. Birnie, and used with permission.

¹¹ See Bradshaw, “Baptismal Practice” 94.

¹² Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 59–66.

¹³ See Paul Bradshaw, “The Profession of Faith in Early Christian Baptism,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (2006): 107ff.

¹⁴ The best guide to the anointings in the Eastern liturgical traditions is Gabriele Winkler. See her essays, “History of the Syriac Prebaptismal Anointing,” 317–24; and

indications of the overall theology of baptism in the various rites are to be located. Here we will look in particular at the anointing(s), the blessing of the waters prayers, and the baptismal formulae employed in the rites. The overall shape of “baptism proper” is indicated in table 1.2.

1.2.1 Prebaptismal Anointing(s)

As indicated in table 1.2 the Armenian Rite has a consecration of the prebaptismal oil at the very location where both the West Syrian and Maronite Rites have a simple anointing of the baptismal candidate on the forehead. The full-body anointing, characteristic of the East Syrian, West Syrian, Maronite, and Byzantine Rites, is separated from this initial anointing by the consecration of the water with its own attendant ceremonies. The Byzantine Rite is a notable exception here with no break between anointings but with the full-body anointing flowing directly from that of the anointing of the forehead, breast, and back. At this point the Byzantine Rite may well have preserved a vestige of how it was that a full-body anointing resulted from an earlier anointing of the head only. The second prebaptismal anointing in the West Syrian Rite provides somewhat of a parallel to the Byzantine Rite in this regard.

It is important to look briefly at the texts of these various prayers and anointings:

1.2.1.1 Armenian

Prayer Over the Oil: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who chose for yourself a people, unto priesthood and kingship, *for a holy race and for a chosen people* [1 Pet 2:9]. As of old you anointed priests and kings and prophets with such all-holy oil, so now also, we pray you, beneficent Lord, send the grace of your Holy Spirit into this oil: to the end that it shall be for him who is anointed with it unto holiness of spiritual wisdom, that he may courageously fight and triumph over the adversary, unto strength of virtuous actions, and unto his perfect instruction and exercise

“The Original Meaning of the Prebaptismal Anointing and Its Implications,” 24–45 (= LWSS, 58–81).

Table 1.2: Baptism

Armenian	Byzantine	Coptic	Ethiopian	East Syrian	West Syrian	Maronite
Procession to Font with Ps 117 Hymn	Procession to Font	Procession to Font	Procession to Font	Procession to Font	Procession to Font	Procession to Font
Deacon's Proclamation Prayer						
Ps 99 (100)						
Deacon's Proclamation Prayer						
Hymn						
Blessing of Oil					Consignation with Oil	Consignation with Oil
Pouring of the Water in the Font	Incensation	Pouring Oil in the Font	Pouring Oil in the Font		Prayer	Prayer
Readings	Petitions	Liturgy of the Word until after the Readings	Liturgy of the Word until after the Readings	Liturgy of the Word until after the Readings	Prayer	Prayer
Intercessions	Prayer of Priest			Prayer of Priest	Chant	
Blessing of the Water	Blessing of the Water with Consignations and Exsufflations	Prayer over the Font	Prayer over the Font	Placing of Oil on Altar	Blessing of the Water with Consignations and Exsufflations	Blessing of the Water with Consignations and Exsufflations
		Prayer of Priest	Prayer of Priest	Creed		
		Creed	Creed			
		Pouring of Oil in the Font with Exsufflations and Consignations	Pouring of Oil in the Font with Exsufflations and Consignations			

Blessing of the Oil		Consecration of the Oil	
Pouring Oil in the water with Alleluia	Pouring Oil in the water with Alleluia	Pouring Chrism in the Water with Alleluia	Pouring Chrism in the water with Alleluia
			Lord's Prayer
	Anointing of the Body		Prayer
Three immersions with Formula	Three Immersions with Formula	Three Immersions with Formula	Anointing of the Body with chant
			Three Immersions with Formula
			and Imposition of Hands
			Chant and Ps 31
Ps 33 (34)	Ps 31		
Hymn			
Rom 6:3-11			
Matt 3:13-17			
Lord's Prayer			
Hymn			
	Dressing with Formula	The "Release" of Water	Dressing with Formula
		The "Release" of Water	

in the worship of God. To the end that enlightened in his understanding he may pass through the life of this world, unto the salvation of his soul, to the honour and glory of the all-holy Trinity, to become worthy of and to attain to the lot and heritage of those who love the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom to you, Father, and to the Holy Spirit, are due glory, rule, and honor.¹⁵

1.2.1.2 Byzantine

*Such a one is anointed with the oil of gladness, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. . . . And then his whole body is anointed by the deacon.*¹⁶

1.2.1.3 East Syrian

*Second Prebaptismal Anointing: The faces of the candidates for baptism being to the east, the priest anoints each one of them on his breast with his three middle fingers from above downward and from right to left—not from below upward—with the Sign of the Cross, saying: N. is anointed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit for ever, showing by this that the knowledge of the Trinity is fixed in his heart, which is imparted from above. Then such as are preparers anoint the whole body of one who has been anointed by the priest, discreetly and in an orderly fashion (except for a mature woman or a mature man). And they turn him again upon his back in the previous manner without omission.*¹⁷

1.2.1.4 West Syrian

First Prebaptismal Anointing: The priest moistens his right thumb with the anointing oil in the vase of ointment and signs the child upon his forehead. At each invocation he draws the sign of the cross upon the child's forehead and says: N. . . is signed with ointment of spiritual rejoicing that he might confront the satanic influence and be en-

¹⁵ DBL, 76. See Maxwell E. Johnson and M. Daniel Findikyan, "Toward the Restoration of Pre-baptismal Anointing in the Armenian Rite of Baptism," in *Eastern Christian Studies*, ed. Nina Glibetić and Gabriel Radle (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming).

¹⁶ DBL, 122.

¹⁷ DBL, 68–69.

grafted into the cultivated olive tree in Your Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. *Deacons: Barekhlmore (Bless, my lord). Priest: In the name of the Father, ✠ Deacon: Amen. And of the Son, ✠ Deacon: Amen. And of the Holy Spirit ✠ for everlasting life. Deacon: Amen.*¹⁸

Second Prebaptismal Anointing: *The deacon presents the child to the priest who moistens his right thumb with the anointing oil, and as he says the following prayer, he draws the sign of the cross upon the child's forehead at every invocation: Priest: N . . . is anointed with the oil of gladness wherewith to be armed against the operations of the adversary. Priest: In the name of the Father, ✠ Deacon: Amen. And of the Son, ✠ Deacon: Amen. And of the living Holy Spirit ✠ for life eternal. Deacon: Amen. The priest pours out a sufficient quantity of the anointing oil into the palm of his hand and anoints the child's body completely, head downwards. If there be more than one child, the same act of anointing is to be followed for each one. During the anointing, the deacons chant the following hymn (Tune: Moray d'Ramsho—Second): God said: "Let Aaron be anointed with the oil of holiness and henceforth be consecrated." Now this innocent lamb, who has come for baptism, is being anointed likewise. Aaron was made perfect by receiving the oil of holiness, a sacrament of consecration which was declared by the prophet David. Now the new lamb who has come to be baptized is being anointed in the Church.*¹⁹

1.2.1.5 Maronite

N. is signed a member of the Christian community with the holy life-giving oil in the name of the Father ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **R̄. Amen.**²⁰

In light of the various political, social, and religious shifts in the fourth- and fifth-century Christian East noted in our introduction,

¹⁸ DBL, 87–88.

¹⁹ DBL, 93–94.

²⁰ DBL, 106. An alternative translation appears in Diocese of St. Maron—USA, *Mysteries of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, According to the Maronite Antiochene Church* (Washington, DC: Diocesan Office of Liturgy, 1987), 45: "N. is anointed as a member of the flock of Christ with the living oil of the divine anointing. In the name of the Father. . . ." Our thanks to Jorge Perales of Miami, Florida, for providing us with this text.

even with the shift toward exorcism in the prebaptismal rites of the Eastern Churches, the prebaptismal anointing(s) still retain the strong remnant of what scholars such as Sebastian Brock and Gabriele Winkler²¹ have identified as the earlier stratum and theology of the Eastern rites. That is, although the prebaptismal anointing itself ultimately disappeared from the Armenian Rite, the following images from the consecration of the oil prayer still point in that ancient Syrian direction focused on the Holy Spirit's assimilation of the candidate to the messianic priesthood and kingship of Christ: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who chose for yourself a people, unto priesthood and kingship, *for a holy race and for a chosen people* [1 Pet 2:9]. As of old you anointed priests and kings and prophets with such all-holy oil, so now also, we pray you, beneficent Lord, send the grace of your Holy Spirit into this oil: to the end that it shall be for him who is anointed with it unto holiness of spiritual wisdom." What is most interesting here is that, currently, the Armenian Rite has this blessing prayer for the prebaptismal oil in the rite, but, even if used today, this oil is merely set aside and there is, as noted, no prebaptismal anointing at all. Since the Synod of the Armenian Apostolic Church has recently taken up the question of the reform of the Rite of Baptism as an item of high priority, it is possible that even this prayer will disappear from the prebaptismal rites, since it is regularly omitted already. This possibility has led some to argue not only for the retention of this prayer but for the restoration of the rite of the prebaptismal anointing itself.²²

The simple formulae in the East Syrian Rite show no trace of an exorcistic understanding just as, surprisingly, neither does the Byzantine anointing: "*Such a one* is anointed with the oil of gladness, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."²³ With regard to the West Syrian or Antiochene Rites, Brock himself has demonstrated on the basis of the earliest manuscripts that the formula, "N . . . is signed with ointment of spiritual rejoicing that he might confront the satanic influence and be engrafted into the culti-

²¹ See note 14 above.

²² See Maxwell E. Johnson and M. Daniel Findikyan, "Toward the Restoration of Pre-baptismal Anointing in the Armenian Rite of Baptism," in *Eastern Christian Studies*, ed. Glibetić and Radle.

²³ The prayer of consecration of the oil, of course, *does* contain a reference to the exorcistic power of the oil. See DBL, 122.

vated olive tree in Your Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church," was originally, "N is signed (*rsm*) with the oil of gladness, *that he may be made worthy of the adoption of rebirth*, in the name . . ." ²⁴ The references in these formulae (West Syrian, and the Coptic and Ethiopic prayers included in the previous section) to fighting against the adversary and to being grafted into the "sweet" or "cultivated olive tree" is a sure sign of Jerusalem influence, going back to Cyril (John) of Jerusalem's description of the prebaptismal anointing in MC II.3. ²⁵

1.2.2 *The Consecration of the Baptismal Waters*

The prayers for the consecration of the baptismal waters in the various Eastern rites, with their attendant hymns and ceremonies of exorcisms, consignations, exsufflations, and infusions of chrism, also offer an important window by which to view the theology of baptism in the Christian East. ²⁶ While the following texts are both abbreviated and selective, they will suffice in order to demonstrate their particular theological orientation.

1.2.2.1 *Armenian*

You have also decreed by your unfailing word that they who are not born of water and of the spirit shall not enter into the kingdom of God. So this your servant, standing in awe of your word and desiring everlasting life, has willingly come for the baptism of this spiritual water. We now therefore pray, O Lord, send your Holy Spirit into this water and sanctify the same as you sanctified the river Jordan by descending thereinto and prefiguring thereby this font of baptism for the regeneration of all people. ²⁷

²⁴ Brock, "Studies in the Early History of the Syrian Orthodox Baptismal Liturgy," 32; emphasis added.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38–39.

²⁶ On the consecration of waters, see Brock, "The Epiklesis in the Antiochene Baptismal *Ordines*," in *Symposium Syriacum 1972*, 183–218; and Gabriele Winkler, "The Blessing of Water in the Oriental Liturgies," 53–61.

²⁷ Adapted from Tiran Nersoyan, *The Order of Baptism According to the Rite of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church* (Evanston, IL: Saint Nersess Publications, 1964), 47. This prayer, unfortunately, does not appear in DBL.

1.2.2.2 *Byzantine*

You have set free the children of our race. You sanctified a virgin's womb by your birth: the whole creation hymns your appearing. For you, our God, looked upon the earth and dwelt among men. For you sanctified the waves of Jordan, you sent down your Holy Spirit from heaven and crushed down the heads of the serpents that lurked there. *Therefore, our loving king, be present now in the visitation of your Holy Spirit and sanctify this water. Give it the grace of redemption, the blessing of Jordan.* Make it a fount of purity, a gift of sanctification, a way of deliverance from sins, a protection against disease, a destruction to demons, unapproachable to the power of the enemy, filled with angelic power. Let all who seek the overthrow of this your child flee away from it, that we may praise your name, O Lord, which is wondrous and glorious and fearful to the enemy. *And he breathes into the water three times and signs it with his finger three times, and says:* May all the enemy powers be crushed down by the sign of the type of the cross of your Christ. May all aerial and unseen shapes depart from us, may no dark demon lie hidden in this water: and, we pray you, Lord, let no evil spirit go down with him at his baptism to bring darkness of counsel and confusion of mind. But, maker of all things, declare this water to be a water of rest, water of redemption, water of sanctification, a cleansing of the pollution of the body and soul, a loosening of chains, forgiveness of sins, enlightenment of souls, washing of rebirth, grace of adoption, raiment of immortality, renewal of spirit, fount of life.²⁸

1.2.2.3 *Coptic and Ethiopian*

And now, O our Master, lord of hosts, king of the armies of heaven; look, you who sit upon the Cherubim; sow forth yourself, and look upon this your creature, this water; give unto it the grace of the Jordan, and the power and strength of heaven; and by the descent of your Holy Spirit upon it, bestow upon it the blessing of the Jordan. *Amen.* Give it power to become water of life. *Amen.*

²⁸ DBL, 120–21; emphasis added.

Holy water. *Amen.* Water washing away sins. *Amen.* Water of the laver of new birth. *Amen.* Water of sonship. *Amen.*²⁹

1.2.2.4 East Syrian

By your grace, O our Maker, *repeat*, which is a fountain of living water, the need of your creation is filled, and manifold petitions are offered to you, after which generous gifts come, and from the great riches of your mercifulness assistance is rendered for the refreshment and support of our nature. For you, in your incomprehensible knowledge, brought us into this world corruptible at the beginning, and in the time which was pleasing to you proclaimed to us the good news of renewal and restoration through our Lord Jesus Christ, who by the type of his baptism pre-figured our resurrection from the dead, and he commissioned us to make, by the Mystery of his baptism, a new and spiritual birth for those who believe. For the Holy Spirit, who is from the glorious Being of your Trinity, through visible water makes new as he wills the worn out condition of our fashioning, placing in us by his grace an incorruptible earnest, who also descended upon our Savior and remained on him, when he delineated the type and image of this holy baptism. And may there come, O my Lord, the same Spirit upon this water as well, that those who are baptized in it may receive power for their help and salvation, that being perfected in body and soul they may lift up to you glory, honor, confession, and worship, now, always, and for ever and ever. *And he signs over the water. Also one should know this: when the priest comes to the phrase which says, "And may there come, O my Lord, the same," he kneels, and the archdeacon says, In silence and fear remain as you are. Peace be with us. And all who are there kneel, and when the priest rises they rise. And at the end of the Canon they respond: Amen. Then the priest takes the Horn of the Oil of Anointing and signs the water with the oil which is in it, pouring it over it in the form of a cross and saying: This water is signed, consecrated, and mingled with the Holy Oil, that it may be a new womb, giving birth spiritually through absolving baptism, in the*

²⁹ Adapted from Reginald Maxwell Woolley, *Coptic Offices* (London: SPCK, 1930), 37.

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit for ever.³⁰

1.2.2.5 *West Syrian*

Hymn (Tune: *Quqoyo*): The voice of the Lord is over the waters, Halleluiah. John mixed the water of the baptistery, which Christ sanctified and went into the river to be baptized in it. At the moment when He came out from the water, heaven and earth gave honor to Him. The sun submitted its dazzling light and the stars did obeisance to Him Who sanctified all the rivers and springs, Halleluiah, Halleluiah. You gave gifts to people, Halleluiah. Who has ever seen two noble sisters such as the pure baptistery and the Holy Church; the one gives birth to the new and spiritual children and the other nurtures them; whomsoever the baptistery bears from the water, the Holy Church receives and presents to the altar, Halleluiah, Halleluiah. *Priest*: Glory be to the Father. . . . *Here the priest uncovers the baptismal font and waves the veil above the water.* How miraculous is the time when the priest stretches out his hands and opens the baptismal font! The heavenly hosts are astounded to behold the mortal standing above the flame. He calls upon the Holy Spirit to descend from above. His desire is hastily fulfilled when the Holy Spirit sanctifies the baptistery for the remission of sins, Halleluiah, Halleluiah. *Deacons*: From eternity to eternity. Amen. When the baptistery was sanctified by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit it became a fountain of life. The Father's voice was heard saying: "This is My beloved Son," the Son was bending His head to be baptized and the Holy Spirit descending upon Him like a dove: Holy Trinity by whom the worlds gained life. Halleluiah, Halleluiah. . . . *Priest*: You did establish the seas firmly with Your might. You did break the heads of the dragons that lay hidden in the waters. You are awe-inspiring. Who dares to stand against You? We beseech You, O Lord, to look upon this water which is Your creation; grant to it the grace of Your salvation, the blessings of the Jordan River, and the holiness of Your Holy Spirit.³¹

³⁰ DBL, 67.

³¹ DBL, 89–90.

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