

A Journey in the thought of East Syrian Fathers about the sacrament of Baptism

Rev. TOWER ANDRIOUS

Introduction

Many Christians practice the sacrament of baptism with shallowness demonstrated in their focus on the external social manifestations rather than embracing it as a religious grace. Christian must be aware of the dimensions of his sacrament, and strive to make his earthly journey according to the logic of this divine call. Therefore, every Christian is called to go deeper every day to live this sacrament so that it does not remain a mere rank imposed on him since childhood. We sometimes see this distorted image of baptism in some Christians who did not try to open up to the grace of their baptism and did not really live it. Therefore, I was curious to shed light on the theological meanings of the sacrament of baptism according to the ecclesiastical fathers, because some believers do not realize the nature and purpose of the sacrament of Baptism in a deep, spiritual way.

Before the middle of the twentieth century, Western research did not pay much attention to the study of baptism, as if all the different churches accepted the same one baptism, in the same manner and in the same ritual sequence: baptism in water, oil, and the Eucharist. But thanks to the progress of research, the discovery of new sources and the analysis of ancient traditions, this endowment has changed in favor of recognizing the differences and characteristics of each ritual. Therefore, there is the real difference between the Eastern and Western rites, but also between the Eastern Churches was discovered, according to the local geographical centers and the temporal evolution from one stage to another.

In this article, we try to shed light on the meanings and the dimensions of the sacrament of baptism in the thought of the fathers of the Church of the East, so that its celebration becomes a feast, commitment, a source of hope and joy. In the Constantinople Nicene Creed, the ecclesiastical Fathers proclaimed the Church's faith in a one-time baptism for the remission of sins. This solemn declaration sealed a tradition in the Church that dates back to the apostolic period. The apostles were baptizing, by order of the Lord Christ himself, during his life and after his resurrection. As for the Christian baptism, it is historical, that is, it is linked to a divine and salvific historical event, which is the appearance of Jesus Christ, the Son of God in the flesh, in his baptism, his mission, his death and resurrection.

Origin of baptism

The Fathers based their ideas on the biblical dimension and presented them as a theological gem in the depth of the Church's rite. Accordingly, the Baptism is considered the fundamental mystery of Christianity, was already foreshadowed in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, St. Paul referred to the crossing of the Red Sea as a symbol of baptism (1 Corinthians 10: 1-5), and St. Peter to the Flood (1 Peter 3: 19-21). It is appropriate for us to clarify that these symbols in the thought of the fathers were not mere clarifications, but rather declarations of the power and effectiveness of baptism as revealed by all tradition. As Mar Ishodad of Merv¹ (9th) affirms that when he explains the passage from the first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 10:1-2): our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, in the sense that the passage through the Red Sea was a Mystery of baptism and that the covering of the cloud signified the grace of the Holy Spirit.² In addition, Mar Timothy II³ (1332) also sees the Old Testament circumcision as a model for baptism.⁴

Also, baptism is death with Christ and resurrection with him. Christ died on our behalf for our sins, and we should share with Him in His death in order to obtain the blessing of any power and effectiveness of this death in our lives, meaning that the old, fallen nature in us dies, and we also share with Him in His resurrection so that we may have His life. Therefore, the baptism is closely related to the Lord's death, which emphasizes it the Anonymous author (9th Century) in his saying: His death means our baptism.⁵

Mar Ishodad of Merv (AD 850) considered that the water that flowed from Christ's side was a sign of the new birth.⁶ Likewise, Mar Timothy II calls the blood and water that flowed from the side of the Lord a mystery of baptism. Blood and water: together they are the secret of replacing death with life in washing with living water from the side of the dead Christ, for when we are buried with Christ in baptism, we rise with Him, united with Him, and so we have life.⁷ We find its dimensions in the thoughts of the later East Syrian fathers about the origin of the fermentum of baptism from the water of the Lord's side in showing the conviction of the close connection between the Lord's death and baptism.⁸

¹ Mar Ishodad of Merv (AD 850) was a bishop of Hdatta and prominent theologian of the Church of the East, best known for his *Commentaries* on the Old and New Testaments.

² Ishodad of Merv, *Commentaries* V, 2, P. 34.

³ Mar Timothy II was Patriarch of the Church of the East from 1318 to c. 1332. He became leader of the church at a time of profound external stress due to loss of favor with the Mongol rulers of Persia.

⁴ Mar Timothy II, III, 21, f. 82v.

⁵ Anonymous II, 87.

⁶ Ishodad of Merv, *Commentaries* I, 278.

⁷ Timothy II, III, 16, f. 74v.

⁸ See. e. g. Questions from Mar Simon Kepha, Vat.syr. 164, f. 66r.

The general structure of the Baptismal Rite

The faith of the church finds expression in her prayers. This ancient principle is especially true of the church of the east. Catholicos Patriarch Ishoyahb III. (647-658) reformed the ritual of Christian initiation that existed earlier in the Church of the East, and Catholicos Mar Eliya III. Abu Halim al Hadithi (1176-1190) definitively arranged the text and the ceremonies. According to Abdisho's list, the reform of the rite is attributed to Ishoyahb III, who made the rite of baptism adapted to children, who were considered sinless, removed from it the stage of catechumens with denials and exorcisms and renunciation of Satan, since children were considered sinless and arranged it on the model of the Eucharistic arrangement.⁹

In this liturgy we find the three anointing according to Ishoyahb III. The priest lays his hands on the children during the prayer, at the end of the prayer draws a blessing cross over them all and then anoints their foreheads in the shape of a cross with the oil from the horn, which is usually kept in the altar, with the index finger from bottom to top and from left to right. Designation from below upwards represents the taking off the old man, the ascending from the depths of the world to the heights of the heavens. The oil used is pure olive oil. The form of this first pre-Baptismal anointing, reads: *N. is marked by the oil of anointing, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, forever.*¹⁰ Theodoros the interpreter of Mopsuestia says that through this anointing the candidate for baptism becomes sheep of Christ, soldier of the heavenly king.¹¹

After this first anointing, they enter the house of baptism. We will not go into details of the detail the rite of baptism, rather will but we focus on the basic pillars of the rite of baptism. After a group of psalms, Karuzuta, hymns You the Lord of all and Holy God and biblical readings. In general, the preparation for baptism begins with the antiphon of the mysteries Onitha d Raze ܐܘܢܝܬܐ ܕܪܙܐ. During this chant, the priest pours oil into the bowl ܐܘܠܝܐ, places it on the altar and covers it with a veil. At the beginning of the prayer for the consecration of the oil, the priest removes the veil from the bowl and wraps it around it. The consecration prayer takes the form of a preface with an epiclesis character. Then he takes the horn of oil from the bearer's hand and uses it to mark the new oil, dropping a drop from the horn into it. Thereby the consecration is accomplished. Where the priest says: *It is signed, sanctified, and mixed with the holy oil to*

⁹ We conclude from this that the preparatory stage was known until the tenth century, and was preserved in different ways according to place and circumstances, but it lost its importance since the increased practice of baptizing children, especially since the formation of a ritual for them. It is true that this rite is attributed to Mar Ishoyahb III of the seventh century, but it was not until about the tenth century that this rite reached us. Therefore, the current rite of baptism according to the reform from the tenth century, which is the second reform, while the first reform, which goes back to the third Ishoyahb, is the reform of the adult baptismal rite, and it is the original rite of the Church of the East, which was practiced from the sixth century (Ishoyahb III) to the century Tenth (Emmanuel Bar Shahhare).

¹⁰ J. Kelaita, Ta ksa d-ka hne: d-'i dta da -mda nha, the Liturgy of the Church of the East, Mosul 1928, 116.

¹¹ A. Raes, Introductio in Liturgiam Orientalem, Rome 1962, 128.

become a new bosom that is spiritually born in the forgiving baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.¹² Then, the consecration of the oil ends with the Lord's Prayer.¹³

The consecration of the baptismal water takes place at the baptismal font. As usual after many liturgical prayers Priest also uses the Oil of Horn to consecrate baptismal water. Whereas the priest again takes the horn of oil and dribbles into it in the form of a cross, saying: *The water is signed, consecrated, and mixed with the holy oil so that it may become a new womb that gives birth spiritually in the baptism that atones for sin: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, forever.*¹⁴

During the antiphon, the priest who performed the consecration stands by the bowl of oil. The deacons bring in the baptized and undress them. The priest anoints them one by one with his three middle fingers, this time from top to bottom (the meaning of this is that we are wearing the Messiah, in whose honor worship is done by anointing with the holy oil). The priest says at the anointing: *N. is anointed in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit forever.*¹⁵

Then the Priest anoints the whole body of the person being baptized. After the complete anointing of the body, the deacons bring the baptized to the baptismal font. The baptism is administered as follows: the priest puts the baptized in the font with the water up to his neck and puts his hand on the child's head. He immerses it three times, each time invoking one of the names of the Trinity, and they answer: Amen to each one: *N. is baptized in the name of the Father - Amen, and that of the Son - Amen, and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen. - Amen.*¹⁶

After that, the deacon carries the child through the door of the baptismal room and comes out and hands it to his godfather.¹⁷ Then they put him in clean white clothes, but without a headscarf. If the child does not have two young men, the deacons place him on the tomb of a saint or martyr or on the steps of the altar, and then his parents take him and put him in white clothes as we mentioned before.

¹² Baptismal Rite, 139.

¹³ It is related to the consecration of oil and not to the consecration of water, because according to the ecclesiastical rite, any consecration Liturgy or Vesper (Evening Prayer), Morning Prayer begins and ends with the Lord's Prayer.

¹⁴ Baptismal Rite, 142.

¹⁵ Ibid, 144.

¹⁶ Ibid, 145.

¹⁷ The godfather's job is to carry the baptismal candidate and enter the baptismal house. After the baptism, the priest takes the child and puts the baptized in the baptismal garment. Then the godfather carries the child and comes in front of the door of the altar, where the sacrament of anointing and wreath prayer takes place. He is responsible with the parents for the spiritual upbringing of the child in Christianity. During his wedding accompanies him, he serves as a witness. And his role ends when he marries the baptized. See: Johannes Madey, Georg Vavanikunnel, *Taufe, Firmung und Busse in den Kirchen des Ostsyrischen Ritenkreises*, Einsiedeln, 1970, 16.

After getting dressed, the godfather carries him in front of the entrance to the sanctuary. The priest enters through the great door and the deacons beside him. After two prayers laying on the hand, the priest places his hand or the cross of blessing on the head, draws on the heads of all, and they answer, Amen. After the prayer begins with the words: *The pledge of the Holy Spirit*,¹⁸ the priest takes the horn of the oil and with the thumb of his right hand (and not with the finger close to his thumb) draws on the forehead of the baptized with holy oil. And he says: *He was baptized and completed (N.) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.*¹⁹ The Church of the East now considers this anointing a sacrament, which will be dealt with in detail later.

Then the priest puts wreaths on their heads and says: *I put on his head the crown of glory, he asked for life, so I gave him. A wreath (N.) is held for feasts and weddings: in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*²⁰ After the wreath prayer, they enter the house of baptism with a Horn of oil and other things. Then, after many of hymns, the priest takes the Horn and stands next to the font, and pours oil of the bowl (ܐܘܝܠ) in the Horn (ܐܘܝܠܐ), and if any of the oil remains in the bowl, he throws it with the bowl into the font of water.²¹ This is how we presented the rite of baptism in its individual parts. Similar to the Coptic and Ethiopian churches, the baptismal rites of the Church of the East closely follow the path of the Eucharistic liturgy.

The rite of baptism can be divided into four main stages:

- 1. Preparatory stage:**
 - a. At the outer door there are elements from the preparatory period
 - b. Denial and commitment, prayer for hand laying and first oil anointing.
 - c. At the house of baptisms: The rank of opening the door of the house of baptism
- 2. Consecration stage:**
 - a. Biblical readings
 - b. The offering
 - c. Consecration of oil (three consecration prayers)
 - d. Consecration of water (one prayer)
- 3. The stage of baptism:**
 - a. undress
 - b. Second new oil anointing for the whole body
 - c. Immersion
 - d. Dress-up and wreath.
- 4. Final stage:**
 - a. Prayers for the Holy Spirit and the final anointing
 - b. Concluding prayers for the water release.

¹⁸ Baptismal Rite, 150. I think the place of this prayer is after the third anointing because its content shows that the baptized was marked with the anointing. Also, according to the order of the ritual prayer, if there are more two consecutive prayers, between them, it should be said, ܐܘܝܠܐ ܕܘܝܠܐ. However, the word ܐܘܝܠܐ is recited only after one prayer.

¹⁹ Ibid, 151.

²⁰ Ibid, 151.

²¹ Ibid, 155.

Types of the Baptism

Water baptism is not the only way to express belonging to Christ and union with Him. The goal of this integration in our earthly journey is the continuity of the permanent presence of Christ in our lives and forever. According to some fathers authors there are different types of baptism. They do not agree on the list of these types. Theodor Bar Konai (at the end 8th Century)²² distinguishes four types: Jewish Baptism, Baptism of John, which for forgiveness sins, Baptism that we believers are baptized, and the last one, which is Baptism of suffering and death that reconciled us.²³ Abdisho bar Berika(1318)²⁴ knows five different baptisms: 1. the washing off the filth of the body 2. The washings according to usage of the law, 3. the cleansing of chalices, pots etc. according to the tradition of the ancestors, 4. the baptism of John, whereby he preached only penance and the forgiveness of sins, 5. Baptism of our Saviour, which is received, through the holy Spirit (at the gift of adoption, resurrection from the dead, and eternal life). He then speaks of a sixth baptism by blood and a seven, the baptism of tears. But these last two belong to the fifth baptism, which is the image of death and resurrection.²⁵

An anonymous declaration from the Nicene Creed also states as follows: the baptism of Moses, the baptism of John with water for repentance, and the baptism of the Apostles with water for the remission of sins, as well as the baptism of martyrdom and the baptism of tears.²⁶ Following Gregory Bar Hebraeus (1286),²⁷ Timothy II (1318-1332) lists eight types of baptism: Baptism of the flood, Baptism of the sea and the cloud, Baptism of legal purification, Baptism of John, Baptism of our Lord, Baptism of martyrs, Baptism of tears, and the final baptism by fire.²⁸ Occasionally baptism is related to the spiritual sending. Ishodad von Merv (850) explains the passage in (Matthew 3.11): *he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire*: The fire indicates the descent of the holy spirit in the form of tongues of fire on the apostles. This was the first baptism and all those who came after received from her.²⁹

²² Theodore Bar Konai was a distinguished Syriac exegete and apologist of the Church of the East who seems to have flourished at the end of the eighth century. His most famous work was a book of interpretation on the Old and New Testaments.

²³ Theodor Bar Konai, Liber Scholiorum II, 43.

²⁴ Abdisho was first bishop of Sinjar and the province of Bet 'Arbaye around 1285 and from before 1291 metropolitan of Nisibis and Armenia. He was the author of the Marganitha - *ܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ* (The book of the jewel), one of the most important ecclesiastical texts of the Assyrian Church of the East, a kind of theological encyclopedia.

²⁵ Abdisho Bar Brikha, Marganitha, IV, 3, p.331; Translated by His Holiness Mar Ishai Shimun XXIII, 51-52.

²⁶ Vat. Syr. 179, 68r.

²⁷ He was a prominent writer, who created various works in the fields of Christian theology, philosophy, history, linguistics, and poetry.

²⁸ Mar Timothy II, III, 4, f. 48v-49r; see. Bar Hebrews, Book of light, II, 3, vat. Syr. 168, f. 197r.

²⁹ Ishodad of Merv, Commentaries I, 25.

About the relation of the baptism of Christ to our baptism we find something in some ecclesiastical fathers. According to Mar Babai the Great (c. 551 – 628)³⁰, the baptism of Christ is synonymous with the institution of our baptism. The baptism of Christians has the same effect as that of Christ.³¹ On the other hand, the Anonymous author (9th century) writes: *the baptism of Christ is not simply equal to our baptism. His baptism was more excellent than those who are baptized in his name. His baptism was more excellent than that of the rest. When he was baptized, heaven opened to him immediately, and the Spirit descended, and the Father called.* Therefore, his baptism is not our baptism itself, but the final closing ceremony, anointing with oil after baptism, is equated with the baptism of Christ. He says: The final signing is the baptism of our Lord; for it is also the perfection in the Holy Spirit. They are baptized with the baptism of John (Water) and then completed with the baptism of Christ (Oil).³²

On the other hand, Ishodad of Merv (9th) equates the baptism of Christ with ours. He said: in his Baptism Christ puts an end to the baptism of the law and Baptism of John and opens the door to his baptism for his church. He also confirms that the baptism of John is not enough. After the resurrection, the apostles also baptized those who had received the baptism of St. John.³³ In an Epiphany hymn we read: When our Savior was baptized in the Jordan, from then on the springs were filled with power for sanctification.³⁴

The Baptism is door to the other sacraments

Since the sacrament of the priesthood is at the fore in the list of sacraments, the sacrament of baptism is considered the basis of the sacraments. After these general Introductions, we come to treatment of baptism itself. The first thing is that the East Syrian Fathers emphasize the fundamental importance of baptism. As Anonymous author (9th Century) confirms in his teaching that through baptism a person is accepted into the church.³⁵ Therefore it is the first precondition for receiving the other sacraments. He also said: whoever has not received baptism is rejected from receiving the sacraments and he calls baptism the door to sacraments. He said: *Let us recognize our Lord's ordinances and the sweetness of his sacraments, for those who seek these, a door is necessary through which they enter into it. This door is baptism. Let's begin with baptism. Afterwards let's enter into the sacraments.*³⁶

³⁰ Babai the Great (c. 551 – 628) was an early church father of the Church of the East. He set several of the foundational pillars of the Church, revived the monastic movement, and formulated its Christology in a systematic way.

³¹ Grumel, Un Theologien nestorien etc. In EO 1923. P. 270-271; Mar Babai, Liber de unione, p. 114.

³² Anonymous II, 87,35,131,96.

³³ Ishodad, Commentaries I, 26, 45.

³⁴ The Book of Khudra, Volume I, 648.

³⁵ Anonymous, II, P. 133.

³⁶ Ibid, II, 93, 73.

As well, Mar Narsai (399 – c. 502)³⁷ affirms that only the baptized are allowed to take part in the Eucharistic celebration.³⁸ Ishodad von Merv (9th) asserts the precedence of the sacrament of baptism, when he rejects the view of some who hold that Paul had already become a priest by being called to the apostleship at the moment of his conversion before Damascus. That is impossible, because that way he would have been a priest before he was baptized.³⁹

Mar Emmanuel Bar Shahare (10th Century) states in his Homily ܩܘܪܝܢܐ about baptism that only the baptized could participate in the mystery of the Easter Lamb, where, as in the Old Testament, only the circumcised were allowed to eat from the Easter Lamb. Already in the era of the law, circumcision was a symbol of the sacrament of baptism that precedes eating the Passover. And he also said: the Baptism is the beginning and the foundation of all mysterious things.⁴⁰ Likewise, Yoḥannan bar Zo'bi⁴¹ (13th Century) writes in his homily: Whoever does not receive baptism has no share in the enjoyment of the living body and blood.⁴² In his explanation of the liturgy, Abdisho bar Brikha (14th Century) interprets the liturgical formula: (*the holy for the saints*) in the sense that only those who are sanctified by baptism are allowed to receive the holy Eucharist.⁴³ Timothy II (14th century) too explains the request to the catechumens to leave the Church. He says in this context that the Unbaptized are not worthy of receiving the sacraments.⁴⁴

Baptismal theology

Baptism has a great importance in our lives, in which a person leaves his previous life empty of God to commit himself fundamentally to Jesus Christ. Our position before the mystery of baptism is one of respect for the divine mystery and celebration of God's great mercy through the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ, in which there is a new spiritual birth for the believers.

It appears that the theology of baptism in the early church was based on the new birth, as described in the Gospel of John 3. However, towards the end of the fourth century, the church took more and more interest in the believer's participation in Christ's death and resurrection, according to a letter to Romans chapter 6, with the acceptance of the Holy Spirit after immersion, on the example of Christ, upon the baptized ascension from the water.

³⁷ Narsai (399 – c. 502) was one of the foremost of Syriac poet-theologians. He is the most important writer of the East Syriac Christianity after Mar Aprem. Narsai is highly venerated in the Churches that descend from the Church of the East, in which he is known as the 'Flute of the Holy Spirit'. Although many of his works are likely lost, around eighty of his *mêmrê* (ܩܘܪܝܢܐ), or homilies are extant.

³⁸ Connolly, Mar Narsai, Homilie XVII, 2.

³⁹ Ishodad of Merv, Commentaries IV, 23.

⁴⁰ Emmanuel Bar Shahre, Memra about the Bapism, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 269r; Wilhelm De Vries, Sakramententheologie bei den Nestorianern, Roma, 1947, 153-154.

⁴¹ Yoḥannan bar Zo'bi (1246), was a monk, grammarian, philosopher, theologian and liturgist of the Church of the East who wrote in Syriac.

⁴² Johannan Bar Zobi, Explanation of all divine Mysteries, Borg. Syr. 90, f. 44b.

⁴³ Mar Odisho, Ordo iudiciorum, 101.

⁴⁴ Mar Timothy II, IV, 15, f. 105r; Joseph Qalaita, The Liturgy of the Church of the East, 13.

Necessity of baptism

If baptism is the primary sacrament, then it is natural that it is considered necessary. In fact, the Fathers of the Church of the East generally teach the necessity of baptism. We baptize our children on the basis of the work of the saving management of Christ as a whole and the faith of the Church. Baptism is a sign of entering into the covenant between God and his people, as was done with his people in the Old Testament with the sign of circumcision. The church in its early days practiced infant baptism. There is much evidence that infant baptism is ancient in the history of the Church of the East. We overlook in this article the issue of baptism of children in the New Testament, but rather to delve deeper into the thought of the church fathers about the baptism of infants.

If baptism is the basic mystery, then it makes sense to regard them as necessary. Indeed, the East Syrian fathers generally teach the necessity for baptism. Mar Babai the Great (628-551) writes: *Whoever does not take this hope from baptism has no real life and will not be saved; for he who believes and is baptized will live, and he who is not born again of the water and the Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God.*⁴⁵ Shortly beforehand he also speaks of the Firstborn of the Spirit which are bestowed through baptism, and in this context says: *Accordingly, this gift of grace cannot be received without baptism and without the priesthood, except through martyrdom.*⁴⁶ In the chronicle of Seert,⁴⁷ it is reported how a Jew hears the sermons of Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350 – 428), comes to faith and wants to be baptized. But he dies unexpectedly beforehand. Theodore wakes him up from the dead in order to be able to baptize him.⁴⁸ In the questions of Joseph Hazzaya (8th century),⁴⁹ however, the reason given for the resurrection of Lazarus is given that he was not baptized and therefore would have been lost if Christ had not called him back to life. Therefore, he states: all those who fell asleep before Christ are outside the kingdom since they were not baptized.⁵⁰

According to Theodor bar Konai (at the end of 8th century), no one can be called a Christian without baptism, Just as no one could be a Jew without circumcision. It is so through divine will. The same author writes: And just as man cannot be born again to life without first being carried in the womb, so whoever is not born of it (baptism), after the coming of Christ has not life in himself.⁵¹ As the Chronic of Arbela says, man is received into the bosom of the Holy Church

⁴⁵ Babai the Great, the book of union, 182.

⁴⁶ Frankenberg, Euagrius, 253.

⁴⁷ The *Chronicle of Seert* (or *Siirt*), sometimes called the *Histoire nestorienne*, is an ecclesiastical history written in Arabic by an anonymous Nestorian writer, at an unknown date between the ninth and the eleventh century.

⁴⁸ Chronicle of Seert, PO V, 287-288.

⁴⁹ Joseph Hazzaya (c. 710) was an 8th-century East Syrian Christian writer, ascetic and mystic. The nickname Hazzaya means "the seer" or "the visionary".

⁵⁰ Joseph Hazzaya, Borg. Syr. 88, 333. The same thought can also be found in the Jacobin Moses Bar Kepha. See: Wilhelm De Vries, Sakramententheologie bei den syrischen Monophyten, Roma, 1940, 177.

⁵¹ Theodore Bar Koni, Liber Scholiorum II, 244, 247.

through baptism (spiritual circumcision).⁵² As well, according to Abdisho Bar Brikha, For as the circumcision of the flesh was given for a sign denoting those who were of the family of Israel of old according to the flesh; so the baptism of Christ is a sign of spiritual relationship to the new Israel.⁵³

Timothy I (728-823)⁵⁴ even allows himself to be baptized by a heretical priest in an emergency. This shows how much he considers baptism is necessary.⁵⁵ Anonymous author (9th Century) teaches that perfect bliss is not possible without baptism. He said: those who were zealous in works but did not take part in baptism are not perfectly happy, but they are, as they were blind in bliss. In this way they fulfill the word that our Lord has spoken: He who is not born of the water and the spirit cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3.5).⁵⁶ Emanuel Bar Shahare refers to the word of the Lord to Nicodemus about the birth of the water and the Spirit and then he continues in saying: Anyone who is not baptized through the suffering of our Lord and His resurrection is robbed of the life and salvation of the bliss of the kingdom.⁵⁷

Likewise, Solomon of Basra (13th Century)⁵⁸ interprets the words of the Lord to Peter If I do not wash you; you have no share with me (John 13.8) that means: if I do not baptize you, you are not capable of entering into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, anyone who is not baptized by the priests and who does not receive the body and blood of Christ our Lord does not enter the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁹ In an anonymous collection of questions it is prescribed that if there is any doubt as to the validity of a child's baptism, the baptism should be repeated conditionally with the formal: It is baptized N.N. if he is not baptized.....⁶⁰ Also, Timothy II (14th Century) explains the invitation to catechumens to leave the Church: it means that those who have not been baptized and are not worthy of the gift of receiving the sacred mysteries and who have not

⁵² It is worth to mention that East Syrian fathers generally oppose circumcision although it was used at the time. Timothy I (8th Century) forbids circumcision in his canons: Christians are only allowed to practice one (kind of) circumcision, that through baptism. For the circumcision in the flesh and the foreskin of the law is the business of old and new Judan. Isho Bar Nun speaks in seven canons that the people of Hira practiced Jewish circumcision even for women. He firmly rejects this. However, circumcision seems to have actually been practiced later. According to Assemani, Ishoyahb of Nisibis (13th Century) attests to this usage. As well, In the Sulaqa creed, circumcision is rejected. That means it was using already at that time, but this was no longer the case in our time. See more: De Vries, 190-191.

⁵³ Abdisho Bar Brikha, Marganitha, 52.

⁵⁴ Timothy I was the Patriarch of the Church of the East from 780 to 823 and one of the most influential patriarchs in its history. Respected both as an author, a church leader and a diplomat, Timothy was also an excellent administrator.

⁵⁵ Mar Timothy I, Epistulae, 9.

⁵⁶ Anonymous II, 77.

⁵⁷ Emmanuel Bar Shahare, Memra about the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 271r.

⁵⁸ Solomon of Basra, was a bishop of the Church of the East during the first half of the 13th century. He was a diocesan bishop of Basra now in Iraq, and was present at the consecration of Patriarch Sabrisho IV in 1222.

⁵⁹ Shlemon of Basra, Book of Biene, 93. See: Questions about the Gospel from a Church Teacher, in Borg. Syr. 88, 323, where you can find exactly the same words.

⁶⁰ Anonymous Collection, Borg. Syr. 81, f. 371r.

believed in their truth are barred from entering Paradise.⁶¹ However, this does not clearly state whether the lack of baptism in itself excludes paradise. A whole series of testimonies from East Syrian authors can be cited who generally assert the necessity of baptism, but it does not go against this necessity that martyrdom can replace baptism. We have just already quoted the passage from Babai the Great (c. 551 – 628), according to him the gift of the Spirit cannot be received without baptism, except through martyrdom. Ishodad of Merv (9th century) writes on the matter: Many have triumphed in suffering and blood baths without having received baptism.⁶²

On the other hand, we find passages in the East Syrian fathers in which they express themselves quite doubtfully about the necessity of baptism. The anonymous author (9th Century) speaks ones of the dead who have sinned. Nevertheless they hasten with confidence in the Lord, some because of their faith in him, because of baptism and good works, but others because of faith alone, others because of a moderately good life.⁶³

Ishodad of Merv (9th Century) explains the passage in Acts: *Can anyone forbid water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?* (Act 10:47). On this he remarks: *that means it is not time that we should think about water, as for those who have already received the Holy Spirit as well as we have. Otherwise we would claim that grace is by the water and not by the Spirit, while participation in goods is connected with the Spirit, but the water was taken in the manner of the sign. It is foolish, when the treasury of goods has been given them, which we should then inquire into the sign, since it is impossible to prevent anything of God's grace even if the sign should not be given. So the thief was not prevented from going to paradise even though he was not baptized with water.*⁶⁴

Elsewhere he objects to the necessity of baptism expressed in the words of Christ to Nicodemus: *God rewards according to works. Are the righteous excluded from heaven because they have not been baptized? He points to the martyrs and to the good thief who were saved without baptism. The word of Christ is said to terrify those who unnecessarily disregard the spiritual birth of baptism.*⁶⁵ One can certainly interpret this passage correctly. In the case of the impossibility of baptism, Catholic theology also knows baptism of desire. Perhaps Ishodad of Merv is thinking of something similar here.

⁶¹ Timothy II, IV, 15, f. 1054.

⁶² Ishodad of Merv, Commentaries I, 226.

⁶³ Anonymous, II, 124.

⁶⁴ Ishodad of Merv, Commentaries IV, 22.

⁶⁵ Ibid, Commentaries I, 226.

Necessity of the Infant Baptism

Infant baptism has affected the gradual erosion of the old preparatory stage for adults because this stage does not apply to children. Therefore, the preparatory stage for catechumens has lost its meaning since the increased practice of infant baptism. A clear distinction was made between the baptism of adults and children in the set of questions in the Eucharist and the baptism attributed to Ishoyahb IV (1020-1025), while this distinction was not made clear by Emmanuel Bar Shahari (10th. century) and anonymous author (9th. century), as only the adult rite of baptism was mentioned with the preparatory stage during fasting. The rite of baptism of children is attributed to Isho'ab III (seventh century), but this rite did not become clear until the tenth century. This indicates that the rite of infant baptism dates back to the tenth century at the time of the Second Reformation by abolishing the rank of denial and commitment. And the writer Ishoyahb IV can mention both rites around 11th century.

Indeed, we can say that the rite of baptism for adults was the only rite that was used until the tenth century for adults and children alike, and it is attributed to the Catholics Ishoyahb III. Therefore, infant baptism would not have been practiced by the East Syrian fathers in the 9th century. As appears this fact because the anonymous author (9th Century) only describes adult baptism.⁶⁶ Therefore it is impossible that Ishoyahb III., to whom the child baptism ritual is constantly attributed in the manuscripts, is really its author. These rites were reformed on the basis of the theological principles of Theodore al-Musassisi in the concept of original sin, and from the liturgical aspect the effect of the arrangement of the rite of the Eucharist on other rites.⁶⁷

In the past, baptism expressed a personal decision, conversion, but nowadays only the baptism of children is known. The meaning of baptism changes from baptism of personal conversion to baptism, such as accepting children into the church community in commitment to family responsibility. The meaning of infant baptism is not primarily the forgiveness of original sin, but rather a celebration of the mystery of life. In Baptism, our Lord Jesus comes to him, to accept him, to give him his spirit, and to share in his relationship with God the Father. Here, of course, issue of the original sin comes into play; because the original sin is the reason for the necessity of infant baptism according to the canonical concept.

⁶⁶ Anonymous, II, 2.

⁶⁷ Welhelm. De Vries, Zur Liturgie der Erwachsenentaufe bei den Nestoriaern, in: OCP 9 (1943), 460-473.

First, let's see how far back we can trace the practice of infant baptism in church fathers history. The chronicle of Arbela tells of the baptism of boys, but who had already come to the use of mind.⁶⁸ Infant baptism is already mentioned by Babai the great (7th Century). He writes: *Look for children from birth to be baptized.*⁶⁹ The children do not receive the high knowledge that baptism imparts when they are baptized, but later when they have come of age.⁷⁰

Another testimony to infant baptism, which also belongs to the 7th century, is found in Seert's chronicle. Here it is related of the holy Rabban Hormizd, how he commands to pray also over the children who died before baptism. This seems to indicate that the children were usually baptized.⁷¹ For if one doubted whether prayer about children who died without being baptized made any sense, it can be assumed that one regarded infant baptism as at least very desirable. The seventh century should therefore be the time of the transition to infant baptism.

Emmanuel Bar Shahare (10th Century) does not mention infant baptism in his Memra on baptism, but it was undoubtedly already common in his time. Johannan V. Bar Abgar, who was a patriarch at the beginning of the 10th century, speaks of the communion of children immediately after baptism.⁷² In the questions about baptism, it is a serious abuse that parents let their children wait up to ten years to be baptized.⁷³

Mar Abdisho' Bar Brikha (14th Century) says: *Baptism is immersion and washing in water. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, The baptism of our Savior grants its recipient, the gift of the treasure of children, the resurrection from the dead and immortal life. Just as circumcision was given to the house of Jacob as a sign of blood kinship, so the baptism of Christ was given to the new Jacob as a sign of spiritual kinship (John 1-12).* If some church fathers did not mention about the baptism of children in their writing, this does not mean that it was not practiced at that time. As well, in this context there is no explicit text from the church fathers or an ecclesiastical law prohibiting the baptism of children.

⁶⁸ Sachau, Chronik von Arbela, 50,55.

⁶⁹ Mar Bawai, The book of Union, 116.

⁷⁰ Frankenberg, Euagrius Ponticus, 241.

⁷¹ Chronicle of Seert, PO XIII, 596.

⁷² Johannan Bar Abgar, church questions, in BO III, 1, 250.

⁷³ Vat. Syr. 150, f. 45 r. also the synod of Diamper rebukes the Malabar Christen abuse of postponing the baptism of children for months, even years. See: Mansi 35, c. 1219.

Infant Baptism and the Adam Sin

East Syrian fathers often emphasize that children are not baptized for the forgiveness of sins. However may be one asks oneself at first whether they are hereby denying original sin.⁷⁴ This is shown in the abolition of the ritual of exorcisms and the Rejection of Satan in infant baptism, which was in advance applied to the Baptism of adults who confessed their sins. In general, the East Syrian fathers do not seem to accept any inheritance of Adam's guilt.⁷⁵ Let us delve a little deeper into the thought of the Church Fathers on this issue.

According to St. Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 428), salvation is based on restoring the grace and fellowship with God that the first Adam lost after sin and death through the sacrament of baptism. Theodore points out that the death referred to is the death of the soul, and he asserts that through sin, death entered, and this death weakened human nature and caused a strong tendency to sin. Sin is a conscious rejection of God's will, and only through Christ did man regain his perfection and harmony. According to Theodore of Mopsuestia, through Adam human nature man inherits mortality, not sin nor guilty. In his sense, the death which was caused by the fall means to be separated from God and to return to the earth and to be in alliance with Satan. Sin is an action of voluntary disobedience to God commandment. Accordingly, it is not innate in man nature but is a result of his choices, namely, of the practice of will because sin is an ownership of will, not of nature. He asserts that man natural inherited mortality which underlies his moral failure.⁷⁶

Babai the Great (551-628) confirms this explicitly that by sin death entered in, and this death weakened human nature and produced in it a great tendency towards sin. Sin is not transmitted from one person to another through heredity as a personal act, but rather what is transmitted is the result: the tendency. Thus, He regards mortality as the cause and the effect of sin and Death reigned over all who had sinned in any way whatsoever. He denies the consequences of Adam's

⁷⁴ Original sin isn't biblical term, but it is the Christian doctrine that holds that humans, through the fact of birth, inherit a tainted nature in need of regeneration and a proclivity to sinful conduct. This belief began to emerge in the 3rd century, but only became fully formed with the writings of Augustine of Hippo (354–430), who was the first author to use the phrase "original sin". Influenced by Augustine, the councils of Carthage (411–418 CE) and Orange (529 CE) brought theological speculation about original sin into the official lexicon of the Church. Early Christianity had no specific doctrine of original sin prior to the 4th century. The idea developed incrementally in the writings of the early Church fathers in the centuries after the New Testament was composed. The authors of the Didache, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Epistle of Barnabas, all from the late 1st or early 2nd centuries, assumed that children were born without sin; Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch, from the same period, took universal sin for granted but did not explain its origin from anywhere. See: Wiley, Tatha, *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings*, 2002.

⁷⁵ As well, we find this notion as in Jewish Thought. The first writings to discuss the first sin at the hands of Adam and Eve were early Jewish texts in the Second Temple Period. In these writings, there is no notion that sin is inherent to an individual or that it is transmitted upon conception. Judaism does not see human nature as irrevocably tainted by some sort of original sin. See: Eugene Boring, *Introduction to the New Testament: History, Literature, Theology*, 2012.

⁷⁶ Theodore Commentary on Romans, 5:13-14, Staab, 56,119; Mingana, Theodore of Mopsustia, VI, 21, 30.

sin for the whole human race. He said in his book of the Union: *The man of our Lord was not worthy of death in the name of the sin by which Adam and all his descendants were kept, who all sinned.* It is not said here whether all sinned personally or whether all sinned in Adam. So he admits consequences of Adam's sin for his descendants, and he doesn't deny that the death came into the world through Adam's sin.⁷⁷

In the questions about baptism it says: *Why is it ordered in the book of Mar Ishoyahb III that the priest should mark the person to be baptized with his thumb, whereas now we see that should mark with the finger next to the thumb? Answer: in the first days previously men and women were baptized. Because they were entangled in sin and because grace called them to faith, he indicated them with his thumb. But now the Children are true Christians and they are baptized as innocent (guiltless) children and are not involved in sin. Therefore they are designated with the finger next to the thumb.*⁷⁸ Timothy II (c.1332) also teaches that children are clean of sin and are therefore not baptized for the eradication of sin.⁷⁹

As well, the sinlessness of children is emphasized in the baptismal liturgy: *and though their bodies are not defiled with the filthiness of sin, yet they receive an imperishable purity, and they desire to become members of Christ.*⁸⁰ Since the fathers viewed the children as sinless, they changed the baptismal rite that presupposed sin in the baptized person when infant baptism became common among them. This change is generally attributed to Ishoyahb III. The exorcisms and the rejection of Satan were abolished. However, in today's rite of child baptism there are still traces of the old ritual, an allusion to the earlier rejection of Satan and the creed.⁸¹

In addition, Ishodad of Merv (850) formally denies inheritance of Adam's guilt. He comments on the text in Romans: *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.* (5.14). He remarks: *the tree was not forbidden to them, and they had not taken from it and eaten like Adam.*⁸² Thus he interprets the text as denying the participation of man in Adam's sin.

Some authors attribute the death sentence on all mankind not to the sin of Adam, but to the fact that all humans sinned personally. Theodor bar konai (end of 8th Century) asserts what he means by the word (in the manner of Adam's transgression) is that they died like Adam, even though they sinned in different ways. So death came upon people because of their personal sin.⁸³ Timothy I (780 to 823) also says that Death reigned from Adam to Moses etc (Rom. 5.14); that

⁷⁷ Mar Babai the Great, Liber de unione, 30, 116,182.

⁷⁸ Wilhelm. De Vries, Zur Liturgie der Erwachsenentaufe bei den Nestorianern, 160.

⁷⁹ Timothy II, III, 16, f. 64v.

⁸⁰ Baptismal Rite, 115; Diettrich, die nestorianische Tauf liturgie, 7.

⁸¹ Ibid, 19. We find a description of the old adult baptism in Timothy II. He knows the exorcisms and the rejection of Satan. So Emmanuel Bar Shahare mentions the rejection of Satan and the creed in his Memra about baptism. See: Wilhelm. De Vries, Zur Liturgie der Erwachsenentaufe bei den Nestorianern, in OCP IX (1943), 465.

⁸² Ishodad, Commentaries V, 2, 7.

⁸³ Theodore Bar Konia, Liber Scholoeum, II, 199.

is: *and those to whom the law was not imposed from Adam to Moses, and those to whom the law was imposed, from Moses to Christ our Lord, have all sinned, although not in the likeness of Adam's transgression, and the bondage of death and Satan's sin ran to all men.*⁸⁴ Abdisho Bar Brikha (14th century) judges similarly in his saying as following: *Their sons likewise, pursuing the same way of transgressions, of ill-natured men, laid the yoke of death upon their necks severely.*⁸⁵

In Addition to that, we find much more often in the fathers thought that the sin of Adam itself had disastrous consequences for all mankind. Joseph Khazzaya (7th century) said that natural death was imposed by God on Adam and on all his sons for violating the commandment.⁸⁶ Ishodad of Merv (9th century) writes: *When Adam sinned by transgression the commandment, death thought he would wear a crown and reign forever.... The death sentence (verdict) came by the fall of Adam...., he was found guilty for he was the cause of the death penalty that fell upon all.*⁸⁷ As well we find another witness in the questions attributed to Simon Kepha it says: *Death began from our father Adam by transgression the commandment and he handed it over to all people, and they became mortal.*⁸⁸ So disastrous consequence of Adam sin to all human race is death.

It was condemned by the Synod of 596. Here the view of those who claim that sin is in nature and that people sin without their will is rejected. And whoever said that the nature of Adam was created immortal from the beginning let him be accursed. In this clear text says that sickness and death are not the result of Adam sin, but are related to the corrupted nature of humanity.⁸⁹ This is also found it with Johannan Bar Zobi (13th century). He writes: *: God gave man when he was watching him to live with his descendants forever, when he was not watching the death sentence on him and his descendants. Satan seduced Adam to sin. And he and his descendants became a slave of Satan. Three dominions subjugated the beloved heir: Sin, Death, and Satan, the tyrant of those who rebelled.*⁹⁰

On the other hand, the transmission of Adam's guilt to his descendants is generally not recognized among the church fathers. Only rarely do we find texts, which seem to indicate an inheritance of guilt itself. According to the Anonymous Author (9th Century), the white cloth (سحفة) that the priest wears on his head when serving sacrament of the baptism means that his head became white, which was black due to Adam's sin. He wears it before he goes to baptize

⁸⁴ Timothy I, Epistulae, 149.

⁸⁵ Abdisho Bar Brikha, Marganitha II, 3, 347.

⁸⁶ Joseph Khazzaya, Borg. Syr. 88, 342; De Vries, Sakramentheologie, 162.

⁸⁷ Ishodad of Merv, Commentaries V, 2, 7-8.

⁸⁸ De Vries, Sakramentheologie, 162; Questions of Mar Simon Kepha on the divine mysteries, viz., the sacred fermentum and fermentum of baptism. Vat. Syr. 164, f. 69r.

⁸⁹ HABBİ, Joseph, يوسف حبي مجامع كنيسة المشرق, / mġām knystālmšrq / Synods of the Church of the East, Beirut 1999, see: Mar Aba council 598, Canon 16, 445; J. B. Chabot, Synodicon Orientale, Paris 1902, 459.

⁹⁰ Johannan Bar Zobi, explanation of all divine mysteries, Borg. Syr. 90, f. 35 b.

and purify the candidates from the sin.⁹¹ The same idea is seen in the baptismal commentary of Timothy II (14th Century) who also criticizes the opinion of some that the head of John was covered with much thick hair due to the lack of hair cutters, so the priest covers his head with hood. But Timothy II says that the priest wears white hood to show that he is about to cleanse men from sin.⁹² Also, Timothy II speaks of a decree of God made against man as a result of Adam's sin, and was abolished in their reconciliation with God through redemption. He also names evil covetousness and slavery to sin as consequences of Adam's sin: *because men strayed from God, and thus drew upon their liberty the yoke of the bondage of sin and imposed it by breaking the law. From then on all the children of Adam were inherent in deeds of sin, as one born of a slave is a slave until he receives deliverance from bondage. The bondage of sin seems here to be thought of as Adam's inheritance. In baptism, children are freed from the bondage of sin.*⁹³

That children must be baptized because they are burdened with original sin, Adam's guilt, is never clearly spoken by the fathers. Yes, it is expressly emphasized, as we said above, that children are not baptized for the eradication of sins. The baptism of children in the rite of the Church of the East is not because of sin, but because of their need to receive the grace of divine sonship. The Fathers try to explain the meaning of infant baptism in a different way. Mar Babai the Great writes: *For, behold, even children are baptized from their infancy, not for the remission of sins – but for how? Behold, they did not sin - but for the adoption of sons, that they might receive the first fruits of the Spirit for the mystery of the resurrection and the redemption of their bodies.*⁹⁴ This concept may be borrowed from the Antiochene tradition. Because St. John Chrysostom says that we prepare children even though they are without sin, so that they may have: righteousness, sonship, inheritance and grace, that is, until they are brothers of Christ and members of his body and the Holy Spirit dwells in them.

When asked about the meaning of infant baptism, Timothy II (14th Century) replies that, the children are indeed clean from sin, but they still have to be adopted. From this adoption comes the release from the yoke of bondage to sin: *And because it is not fitting that while they are still slaves of sin they should receive the name of the sons of God, they are first freed from the yoke of the bondage of sin, and then they are made worthy of child adoption, so that through their freedom they may receive the inheritance of God. therefore the gift is not in vain even in those who approach baptism as sinless boys and children, because they were born of bondage, and are servants to the sin of the first man, which reigns over all men through the transmission of the law. But through baptism they receive their union. But for this reason we baptize infants, although they are without sin, that they may be delivered from bondage and become sons of*

⁹¹ Anonymous II, 93.

⁹² Timothy II, III, 18, f. 77v. Cf. P.B. Kadicheeni, *The Mystery of Baptism: the test and translation of the chapter on Holy Baptism from the Causes of the Seven Mysteries of the Church of Timothy II, Nestorian Patriarch (1318–1332)*, Bangalore 1980, p. 76.

⁹³ Mar Timothy II., III, 20, f. 8 80v., 81r.

⁹⁴ Babai the Great, *Book of the Union*, 116.

*God.*⁹⁵ It is noteworthy that deliverance from the bondage of sin and adoption of child are here conceived from each other as two quite independent things. The idea that original sin essentially consists in the lack of filiational grace caused by Adam is far from Timothy.

The question now arises whether, according to the fathers, infant baptism is necessary for the eternal salvation of children. In the questions about baptism, a penalty is laid down for parents who let their children die without being baptized. This is felt to be something completely inappropriate. As well in is mentioned in this book that in an emergency, the children can also receive baptism during Lent. In addition, the deacon can also administer baptism in emergencies. Abbreviated rites are provided for emergencies.⁹⁶ In another manuscript of the Questions on Baptism, to the blame of parents who let their children die without baptism.⁹⁷ The fact remains that the church fathers generally regard baptism as necessary. It is the fundamental sacrament through which man is accepted into the Church, becomes a Christian, and receives the grace of the sonship. From this perspective, East Syrian theology sees the baptism of children as a celebration of the mystery of life rather than salvation from sin.

Unrepeatability of baptism

It is unfortunate that we find re-baptism in some Christian denominations, which does not reflect the biblical and spiritual character. According to the New Testament (Eph4:5), Christian baptism is given once, because it is a complete and definitive union with Christ. It is already clear from these characteristics of baptism that it must be something unique. The East Syrian fathers actually teach, following the general church tradition, the unrepeatability of the baptism which is granted once validly. Since the early centuries, the early church fathers emphasized that the sacrament of baptism should not be repeated as is evident in the theology of Saint Ephrem in his saying: *the Lord commanded his disciples that they cleanse the sins of human nature once with the water of baptism* (Faith 4/9).⁹⁸

As well, in this path Mar Timothy I. (c.740 –823) derives the uniqueness of baptism from the passage in the Ephesians letter: *One Lord, one faith, one baptism (4:5). He said: if there were several gods, then there would also have to be several baptisms ... whoever divides one baptism into two or how many, he must also divide the one Lord and the one faith and the one God in the same way. Those who once descended into baptism and crucified the old man and died with Christ cannot crucify the Son of God again through a second baptism. A repetition of baptism is a disgrace inflicted on Christ. Isn't the one cross of Christ represented by that first baptism, by*

⁹⁵ Mar Timothy II., III, 20, f. 81 r-v.

⁹⁶ Question about the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 150, f. 45 4-v, 44v., 44v-45 r. 47v.

⁹⁷ Codex 93 of the Chaldean Monastery our Lady of Seeds near Mosul, f. 31v; De Vies, Sakramentenheologie, 165.

⁹⁸ Hymn on Faith, XX, is translated deom Dom F. Beck edition, Des heiligen Ephrem des Syrers Hymnen de fide, CSCO 154, Scr. Syri 73 (1955).

*which we were rightly baptized, sufficient for the solution of sin and death? Is it necessary that we add another and again crucify and shame the Son of God through this second baptism?*⁹⁹

So, all this is said against those who rebaptize the heretics. He regards the heretics' baptism as valid and therefore absolutely rejects rebaptizing them therefore rejects their rebaptism unconditionally. As well, he asserts that those who apostatize after baptism may not be baptized again when they are converted. The repentance is there for them.¹⁰⁰ Some studies summarized that the rite of acceptance of heretics was part of the rite of baptism. This rite was performed by anointing, without renewing the baptism of some repentant heretics.¹⁰¹ Likewise, the East Syrian liturgy rejects baptizing anyone who was been already Christian and he disbelieved in Christ. When he came back voluntary to his belief, he should repent his sins and then priest anoints his head with holy oil.¹⁰²

In this context also Ishodad of Merv (AD 850) remarks on the spot in the letter to the Hebrews: *It is impossible, those who have already been enlightened ..., In the New Covenant there is no repetition of baptism for the forgiveness of sins, as in the old Testament, but only one baptism, the symbolism of which baptism cannot be repeated.*¹⁰³ Along the same lines Timothy II (14th Century) justifies the unrepeatability of baptism from its symbolism. It is a symbol of the resurrection and an image of the death of Christ. Both are unique. By repeating baptism we would crucify Christ anew. Also, circumcision in the Old Testament, which is a model of baptism, was performed only once for Jewish people. Likewise, Baptism are been granted only once for Christian. Just as man cannot return to the womb of his mother, so also cannot return to the womb of the water.¹⁰⁴

The necessary things for baptism

1. The Water

Use water as a purifying and sanctifying instrument. The water, which by its nature purifies the body from its filth, becomes a symbol of purifying the soul from the filth of sin if it is used in religious rites and accompanied by prayers and supplications. But besides this resemblance, there is a radical difference in meaning and substance between the ablutions, pagan bathing and Christian baptism.

The water from which all life springs and it is the origin of life. Life came out of the water on the third day (Genesis 1). It shows that life came out of the water, as the Spirit of God was hovering over the water. Baptism is a new creation. It is the water of life that our Lord talks about with the Samaritan woman at the well the well of the meeting and the meeting of Christ with Nicodemus (John chapter 3 and 4) that renews the human heart. Therefore, the living water

⁹⁹ Mar Timothy I., Epistulae, 3-4.

¹⁰⁰ Mar Timothy I., Epistulae, 8.

¹⁰¹ E.J.Lengeling, vom Sinn der präbaptismalen Salbung, in: Mel. B, Botte(Louvain 1972),327-358.

¹⁰² Kelaita, Liturgy of the Church of the East, 179.

¹⁰³ Ishodad of Merv, Commantery V, 2, 109.

¹⁰⁴ Timothy, III, 21, f. 82 r/83 r.

became a fountain in the heart and a symbol of divine love that renews the image of God in man. Water heals the dry heart of the baptized, so that the Holy Spirit may flow from it. In the waters of Baptism, God creates a new heart in man.

The consecration of water and oil in the rite of baptism has been known to Christians since the second century, as evidenced by traces of it in the book of Acts of Saint Thomas.¹⁰⁵ In the rite of baptism, the water is consecrated with holy oil, that is, the consecrating power of oil. The grace of the Holy Spirit is the effective active element in sanctification, and the whole sacrament of baptism is due to the grace of the Father with an explanation of the role of the Trinity. Consecration takes place by a kind of mixing between the spirit in the oil and the oil in the water, and through them the Holy Spirit descends upon the Baptized.

According to Timothy II (14th century), the essential parts of baptism are water and oil, a priest and priestly prayers, without their being together it cannot be accomplished at all.¹⁰⁶ Mar Abdisho Bar Brikha (14th century) describes water, following the scholastic terminology as the Substance of baptism: the Subject matter of baptism is pure water.¹⁰⁷ He refers to the classical text in the third chapter of the Gospel of John. Theodor Bar Konai (9th Century) specifies six reasons for choosing water as the matter of baptism: 1. because the life of sentient beings consists in it; 2. as a sign of the new creation; 3 to atone for the drowning in the days of Noah; 4. because it is found in all places; 5. because it shows well the forms of those seen in it; 6. because it washes the fault.¹⁰⁸

The baptismal water is consecrated by the priest. Mar Ishoyahb I also mentions the consecration of baptismal water. In his letter to Jacob of Dari he speaks about the consecration of the baptismal water by the priest.¹⁰⁹ As well, Mar Narsai asserts that the priest consecrates the womb of the waters of baptism. The consecration of baptismal water already happens in the name of the holy trinity. He said in his homily: *the priest is like a feather versus hidden power and in their hands he writes the three names over the water*. Through consecration, the Holy Spirit descends into the water. Mar Narsai (5th century) continues at the passage just quoted: *O scribe, you are writing the spirit on a weak blackboard and the ink of your words is not erased by the running water*.¹¹⁰ Mar Isho Bar Nun (9th Century) describes the water of baptism as an organ for the effectiveness of the spirit.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ S. Brock, The consecration of the water in the oldest Manuscripts of the Syrian Orthodox Baptismal Liturgy, in: OCP 37(1971), 317-332.

¹⁰⁶ Timothy II., II, 6, f. 50r.

¹⁰⁷ Odisho, Marganitha IV, 3, 332 (trans 357).

¹⁰⁸ Theodor Bar Konai, Liber Scholiorum II, 77-78.

¹⁰⁹ Youssef Habbi, Synods of the Church of the East, 403.

¹¹⁰ Connolly, Narsai, Hom. XXI, 47.

¹¹¹ Isho Bar Nun; Brief an Isaac, Borg. Syr. 81, f. 366r.

The anonymous author (9th Century) repeatedly says that the spirit descends into the water. As well, according to the anonymous, the designation with the oil occurs after the spirit has already descended. The designation is done so that the Old Testament is combined with the New.¹¹² In the consecration of baptismal water is done with oil. The water is marked and mixed with the oil.¹¹³ Mar Narsai (5th century) already indicates that oil is added to the water: God cleverly mixes the colors for the renewal of our lineage, with oil and water and the invisible power of the spirit.¹¹⁴ The use of oil in the consecration of the water of baptism is described in the questions about baptism as absolutely necessary for the effect of baptism: *if the consecration of the Jordan is not performed with the oil, then the baptized will not receive the gift of grace.*¹¹⁵

Johannan Bar Zobi (13th Century) writes: *Anyone who is not baptized with this (oil) does not receive the Holy Spirit.*¹¹⁶ Also, according to Timothy II (14th Century), the water of baptism must be marked by the oil that is consecrated by the Holy Spirit to indicate that birth in baptism is by the Spirit.¹¹⁷ We here find importance the role of holy Oil in consecration of the baptismal water.

However, the need for oil for baptism is not necessarily. In case of danger to life, the baptism can also be granted without oil. In the rubrics of the baptismal liturgy it says: *And know that without consecration (of the water of baptism) there is no baptism at all, except when a man is near death. Then they may baptize him (even without consecration).*¹¹⁸ As well, in an anonymous collection of questions it is said that a dying child could also be baptized by the priest on the way if only water could be found.¹¹⁹ This water is of course not consecrated. But in the event that the child lived after that, then he must be baptized according to the ritual of ecclesiastical baptism.

2. The Holy Oil

We discovered in ancient ecclesiastical sources that oil is more important than water, because his symbolic healing power is more than water. In the Syrian language, oil symbolizes Christ the healer and the victor over death. Water is a symbol of humanity, and oil is a symbol of divinity. Saint Ephrem (4th. Century) says: *The invisible seal of the soul with oil is imprinted on the bodies* (Virginité 7-6).

¹¹² Anonymous II, 95, 97, 100.

¹¹³ Baptismal Rite, 41.

¹¹⁴ Connolly, Narsai, Hom. XXI, 46.

¹¹⁵ Question of the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 150, f. 54 v.

¹¹⁶ Johannan Bar Zobi, Memra about die Taufe, Vat. Arab. 657. F. 19r.

¹¹⁷ Timothy II, III, f. 51 r.

¹¹⁸ Baptismal Rite, 156. Diettrich, Die Nestorianische Tauf liturgie, 52.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous collection, Borg. Syr. 81, f. 371 v.

Nicene canons.¹²⁷ Many church fathers of different centuries assert that only at least priest has the right to sanctify the oil.¹²⁸ This oil (ܐܝܠܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ) is consecrated by calling down the Holy Spirit according to baptism liturgy. As well, in the questions of the baptism speaks of the recall of the Holy Spirit via the oil.¹²⁹ Timothy II asserts that the Spirit consecrates the oil and water by the descending grace.¹³⁰ In the liturgical prayers of the consecration of oils it says: *But may grace come from the gift of the Holy Spirit ... and may it unite with this oil and all those who are anointed with it: A token of resurrection from the dead...*¹³¹ The oil to be consecrated anew with each baptism (the oil in the basin) is marked and mixed with the one consecrated earlier (the oil in the horn). Also the Anonymous Author confirms that mark the new oil with the old one from the Horn.¹³²

From the formula used for the anointment, it follows that the oil is also mixed in: *It is marked and consecrated and mixes this oil with the Holy Oil, so that it is the type of immortality in the atoning baptism.*¹³³ The old oil in the horn is repeatedly refilled with the remaining newly consecrated oil. The baptismal liturgy gives instructions on this. The oil that remains after the horn has been filled it must be poured into the baptismal water and thrown with the bowl into the baptismal font.¹³⁴ On the other hand, *the questions about baptism* prescribe that the oil in the basin should be poured into the baptismal font.¹³⁵ But here, too, it is not expressly forbidden to pour the oil in the basin into the horn of the anointing.

So the east Syrian fathers always keep old, previously consecrated oil in the horn of anointing. The church fathers especially the later ones, bring the most remarkable chronicle about the origin of this horn of anointing. According to Anonymous author (9th Century), John the Baptist received the horn of oil from the prophets.¹³⁶ The anointing at baptism and the horn of oil Emmanuel Bar Shahhare (10th Century) ascribes to apostolic tradition. He traces the horn back to the apostles; *the apostles handed down this mystery (that of the anointing at Baptism) to us in this horn of oil, in which was mixed the mystery of the anointing of our Lord's body.*¹³⁷ According to which the apostles took of the oil with which the body of the Lord was anointed at the burial and handed it down as fermentum of baptism. Also according to Ibn Butlan (11th century), the apostles commanded oil, although the baptism of Christ was without anointing.¹³⁸

¹²⁷ Odisho, Ordo iudiciorum, 50, can. 52.

¹²⁸ See, Wilhelm De Vries, Sakramententheologie bei den Nestorianern, Roma, 1947, 171.

¹²⁹ Vat. Syr. 150, f. 52v.

¹³⁰ Timothy II, III, 8, f. 52r.

¹³¹ Baptismal Rite, 137.

¹³² Anonymous, II, 97, 100.

¹³³ Baptismal Rite, 139.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 153,155.

¹³⁵ Vat. Syr. 150, f. 56 r.

¹³⁶ Anonymous, II, 95.

¹³⁷ Emmanuel Bar Shahhare, Memra about the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 269 v.

¹³⁸ G. Graf, Ibn Butlan (11th century), Die Eucharistielehre des Nestorianers Al-Mukhtar Ibn Butlan. In: Oriens Christianus, Band 35, 1938, 63.

Question about the Baptism refer to the Oil of Baptism and the fermentum of the Eucharist as apostolic tradition.¹³⁹ Simon of Rewardeshir and Abdisho following him trace the details of the baptismal rite and the burial rite back to Dionysius and the apostles.¹⁴⁰

Timothy II also teaches that the oil goes back to the apostles, but he refrains from telling about its origin: *In order that the unity of the orthodox faith of the apostles and evangelists might be recognized, they (the apostles) consecrated this oil, as a sure sign and a seal, and they gave it, that it might be brought forth by the hands of the bringers of the gospel, so that it may continue its immortal course to eternity and bestow immortality on all peoples through doctrine and baptism.*¹⁴¹ Also, as can be seen in the consecration of the altar where is noted that the oil of the anointing of baptism comes from the apostles.¹⁴²

This was also confirmed by Mar Abdisho Bar Brikha in his book *ܩܘܪܕܢܐ ܕܡܪ ܐܒܕܝܫܘ ܒܪ ܒܪܝܟܗܐ*, who says: *The anointing oil is an apostolic tradition. It came to us from the oil consecrated by the apostles and circulated by the Church of God to this day. We find the reason for its use from nature and scriptures. The divine book teaches in the law to anoint those who are singled out for the symbolic priesthood or for the earthly kingdom with anointing oil. We find the same thing. Those who are singled out for the heavenly kingdom and for the true priesthood are anointed with this multi-symbols oil in order to be true Christian and brothers of Christ, who anointed a real in a supernatural kind by his union with God and his accession to Him.*¹⁴³

There are various historical narratives about how the apostles consecrated the first oil of the anointing. It is often told how the apostles kept some of the water of Christ's baptism and of the water that flowed out of the Lord's side on the cross and mixed oil with this water. Johannan Bar Zobi (13th Century) reports in his Memra about baptism and the mystery of Fermentum. He tells in more details how St. John gathered from the water that descended on the body of the Lord when he came out of the Jordan and how he later mixed this water from the water that flowed from the side of the Lord under the cross. Before the apostles parted to proclaim the gospel in all parts of the world, they added olive oil to the water. Everyone took it with them as a fermentum for baptism. He grasps materially that fermentum of baptism was formed from the water of the side wound of the Lord.¹⁴⁴

In the questions of the Shimon bar Kipha about the divine mysteries, various views are given as to the origin of the oil of anointing. Some say it comes from the circumcision, or from the diapers, or from the baptism of the Lord, or from the fragrant mixture of burial, or from the oil

¹³⁹ Questions about the baptism, Vat. Syr. 150, f. 53 v.

¹⁴⁰ A. Rücker, *The Canons of Simon of Rewardeshir*, Leipzig 1908, 27-28; Abdisho Bar Brikha, *Ordo iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum*, 139.

¹⁴¹ Timothy II, III, 11, f. 57 r.

¹⁴² Kelaita, *Liturgy of the Church of the East, Consecration of the new Altar*, 469.

¹⁴³ Abdisho Bar Brikha, *Pearle-ܩܘܪܕܢܐ ܕܡܪ ܐܒܕܝܫܘ ܒܪ ܒܪܝܟܗܐ*, 50-51.

¹⁴⁴ Johannan Bar Zobi, *Vat. Arab.* 657, f. 18 r; f. 16 v. 17 v. 18 r.; f. 19 v. *De Vires, Sakramententheologie*, 174.

consecrated by the apostles. The author himself gives the following history of origin of the oil of anointing: *John held with his right hand, as he stood under the cross, a particle of the bread consecrated by the Lord. He had a horn with him and let the sweat of his right hand, with which he held the particles, trickle into it. Also he poured into this horn from the water, Christ's side. The horn was then mixed with the blood that the apostle Thomas had on his hand when he placed it in the Lord's side. The apostle Addai (Thaddeus) brought the fermentum to Edessa and handed it over to Mar Mari, the apostle of the east. His East Syriac fathers inherited it from him.*¹⁴⁵

In his book of the bees, Shlemon of Basra (13th Century) gives the following view of the origin of the oil of anointing: Some attribute it to the oil with which the kings were anointed in the old covenant. others say it was taken from the oil with which the Lord was embalmed. Many share this latter opinion. others derive the origin from the sweat that formed in the right hand of the apostle John when he held the particles under the cross.¹⁴⁶ In the Explanation of the Nicene Creed there is the following narrative about the origin of oil: At the baptism of Christ there was a myrtle tree by the Jordan. The wind blew something fragrant down from this tree. That's what the apostles collected. After the resurrection they took some of the myrrh and the aloe with which the body of the Lord was embalmed. They mixed it with oil, prayed about it, and shared it among themselves. St. Addai and St. Mari then delivered this oil to the Christians of the East.¹⁴⁷

3. The immersion

According to the Baptismal Liturgy, the baptism comes immediately after the anointing of the whole body of the candidate in the consecrated water. The Anonymous Author(9th Century) describes the blessing of water, which stands as the symbol of absolution of sins. The priest immerses the whole body three times to show that Christ was three days in the tomb. For Anonymous Author (9th Century), John was baptizing the whole body of the Son of Man, so also he (priest) baptizes the whole body in the water¹⁴⁸ This complete immersion up to the head, or the immersion of the whole body under water, as an expression of burial in water, is tantamount to the voluntary fall of man to death under the punishment of God by the flood (1 Peter 3:20-22), because of the sins that man made and whose motives, effects and consequences he inherited in his earthly nature. But because this burial is in the name of Christ and on the basis of his death and burial and as participation in it, death becomes a justification for the previous sins, and thus establishes a fellowship in the resurrection for a life without sin; That is, it brings about a new birth of man to a new creation. Then, by giving the Holy Spirit (the chrism), the new creation becomes spiritual and united with Christ.

¹⁴⁵ Questions of Mar Simon Kepha on the divine mysteries, viz., the sacred fermentum and the fermentum of baptism, Vat. Syr. 164, f. 66r. 70v. See. Borg. Syr. 88, 350,353. De Vries, Sakramententheologie, 174.

¹⁴⁶ Shlemon of Basra, Buch der Biene, 103.

¹⁴⁷ Anonymous Writings, Explanation of the Nicene Creed, III. About baptism. Vat. Syr. 179, f. 68 v.; De Vries, Sakramententheologie, 175.

¹⁴⁸ Baptismal Rite, 145; Anonymous, II, V: 108, 10., 17–19.

So water and oil are the necessary materials for baptism. The water is used for washing by immersion. Complete immersion has always been the norm among church fathers and it is still in use until today. The East Syrian Fathers see the rank of immersion as a symbol of death and resurrection, following the letter to the Romans (6). The symbolism of immersion, which means dying, being buried and rising with Christ. The threefold immersion already points to Christ's three-day stay in the grave.

For Anonymous Author (9th Century), John was baptizing the whole body of the Son of Man, so also he (priest) baptizes the whole body in the water. The font of water at Mar Narsai (5th Century) symbolizes the tomb of the Lord. He mentions the baptismal formula where the priest prays in the name of the Trinity. The priest immerses the whole body three times to show that Christ was three days in the tomb. Where he confirms that symbolically, the baptism represents the tomb, and the priest's voice represents the trumpet that will call people at the end of time. The baptized is the image of Christ our Savior, and in his likeness he stands as Christ was in the tomb for three days. Then, the Baptized leaves the grave of sin and death, similar to Christ, who left his shroud in the grave and came out of it.¹⁴⁹ St. Theodore of Mopsuestia (392-428 AD) also calls the baptized to behave on the level of the resurrection and strive to match his life with the life of the risen Christ. We find the same symbolism in Abraham Bar Lipheh (7th century) and in Theodore Bar Koni (8th Century). As well, according to Emmanuel Bar Shahhare, the baptismal font is a symbol of the grave. Furthermore, Timothy II (14th Century) describes the water of baptism as a type of the grave and the resurrection. But at the same time the baptismal water is a symbol of the womb of rebirth. According to the consecration of the baptismal water, Mar Abraham Bar Lipheh (7th century) and Theodore bar Koni (8th century) and Timothy II. (14th Century), the water of baptism is the womb of a new birth and a symbol of the new creation.¹⁵⁰

Chronicle of Seert tells how Mar Abda, who followed the Persian religion in his youth, is baptized. He sees an angel putting a crown of light on the Christians who step out of the baptismal font. He immediately takes off his clothes and is baptized. In the same chronicle the use of the heretical Macedonians is rejected, who only immerse their heads and chests in the water, because only the brain and heart are in need of purification.¹⁵¹ Emmanuel Bar Shahhare speaks of the people being baptized as they go into the tomb of the baptismal font.¹⁵² As well, the baptismal ritual includes instructions to completely submerge adults. Children are put in water up to their necks and submerged three times while the priest puts his hand on their heads.¹⁵³ We also notice this movement in the rite of Antioch from the fourth century when John Chrysostom.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ Connolly, Mar Narsai, Hom. XXI, 51.

¹⁵⁰ De Vries, Sakramententheologie, 42-43.

¹⁵¹ The Chronicle of Seert, PO XIII, 549; V,284.

¹⁵² Emmanuel Bar Shahhare, Memra about the baptism, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 27 Or.

¹⁵³ Baptismal Rite, 145.

¹⁵⁴ C.Baur, J.Chrysostomus und seine zeit I-II, München, 1929-30.

However, immersion is not considered necessary in all circumstances. in the chronicle of Seert it is reported how Theodor of Mopsuestia brought a Jew back to life in order to baptize him. He has water brought and baptized him.¹⁵⁵ Obviously, this is not about of immersion. it seems that emergency baptism was also granted without immersion. As mentioned above, a priest can baptize a Child about to die if there is only water.

4. The liturgical Prayers

According to East Syrian Fathers, priestly prayers are necessary. In the chronicle of Arbela, baptism is done by pronouncing by bishop or priest in the name of father, the son and the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁶ And in the canons of the apostles, given by Clemens, baptism is done by pronouncing by bishop or priest in the name of father, the son and the Holy Spirit. Mar Narsai (5th Century) brings the following words: *N.N. is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.*¹⁵⁷ As well, Babai the Great states that the priest speaks the name of the Trinity over the person to be baptized with each immersion a divine name is mentioned. Theodor Bar Konai (8th Century) writes: *he (Christ) taught us that we will baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in the Spirit through which we have become worthy of acceptance in the place of his children.* The same author emphasizes that *baptism is in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and not in the name of the Lord or in the name of God or in the name of the Creator.*¹⁵⁸

Ishodad of Merv (9th Century) explains the text from the Acts of the Apostles: *Let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Act 2:38), as follows: This is not to say that the apostles do not baptize in the name of the father and the sons and the holy spirit. However, some have said that the apostles baptized in the name of Jesus Christ alone. But this name includes the whole trinity. My father lives in me (John 14:11). The spirit came down on him (Mt 3:16).*¹⁵⁹ the baptismal liturgy describes the act of baptism as follows: *he (the priest) places him (the person to be baptized) in the baptismal font, with the face of the child facing east, and he submerges it three times and the first time he says: it is baptized N.N. in Father's name; and they answered, Amen; and the second time: In the name of the son; and they answered, Amen; and the third time, in the name of the holy spirit forever and ever, Amen; and they answered: Amen.*¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ De Vries, Sakramententheologie, 175.

¹⁵⁶ Sachau, Chronicle of Arbela, 49.

¹⁵⁷ Connolly, Mar Narsai, Hom. XXI, 51.

¹⁵⁸ Theodore Bar Konai, Liber Scholiorum II, 79, 132.

¹⁵⁹ Ishodad of Merv, Commentaries IV, 11, 17.

¹⁶⁰ Baptismal Rite, 145.

The Holy Spirit in Baptism

The role of the Holy Spirit appears in a distinctive way in the sanctification of oil and water. However, the effectiveness of the Spirit is not limited to materials, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed during the whole sacrament of baptism in all companionship prayers for each certain ritual. And Through the Holy Spirit, baptism was understood more as a participation in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6), in which the salvific power is present and is accepted as a pledge of incorruption. Therefore we must say that the gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred during the whole sacrament of baptism and is not limited only to a particular rank. In the East Syrian tradition, the gift of the Holy Spirit is first associated with the anointing that precedes baptism, because the Spirit comes before birth. Gradually the anointing lost some of its importance in favor of immersion first, and then this gift was transferred to the anointing after Baptism (Confirmation).

The symbol most frequently used for the Holy Spirit is not the dove, but the fire. St. Ephrem (4th Century) interpreted this idea a number of times that the symbol of the Spirit is in the fire. It is the image of the Holy Spirit who was mixed in baptismal water, to become forgiveness, and in bread to become the sacrifice (Faith 10-40). Christ came to baptism to mix the invisible spirit with the visible water. Therefore, St. Ephrem sees the oil as a symbol of Christ. And in the incarnation the human nature was anointed with divine nature. With the power of the Holy Spirit, water and oil are sanctified to purify from evil forces and give new life to children from the womb of the mother, namely the Church. This birth brings forgiveness, purification, and sanctification on the basis of fire and the Spirit, which Christ mixed with the baptized to make them incorruptible and indestructible.¹⁶¹ Therefore, since the early centuries, the Church of the East has pointed out the importance of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the soul of the Christian man, to become a truly believing disciple day after day, until the last meeting with the Heavenly Bridegroom.

5. The Priest

The primary authority of the priest is to offer sacrifice (Eucharist) and grant baptism. Only the priest can give baptism. If there is no priest present, deacon is candidate in order to baptize in the case of mortal danger, he is permitted to perform emergency baptism in the home of the sick child. According to a rubric of a codex published by Diettrich, in an emergency, when a child is dying and no priest is available, the deacon is to mix baptismal water and mark it with the holy oil of anointing. But he must not call down the Holy Spirit, neither on the oil nor on the water since he has no right to do that. So in an emergency, He can mark the child with the oil of

¹⁶¹ Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye, the spiritual world vision of saint Ephrem the Syrian*, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1992, 38-39; J.Obeid, *Lonction baptismale dans HDE III de Saint Epfrem*. Traduction et analyse, in: *PdO* 17 (1992), 7-36.

anointing and baptize him by sprinkling.¹⁶² In various manuscripts, the introduction to the baptismal liturgy states that the deacons anoint at baptism.¹⁶³ However, In case of danger to life, baptism can also be performed without oil. In the rubrics of the baptismal liturgy it says: *And know that without consecration (of the baptismal water) no baptism is performed at all, except when a person is near death.*¹⁶⁴ Then they may perform the baptism (even without consecration) on him. In any case, the child who recovers must later be baptized in the church according to the prescribed rite. Therefore, there has already been mention of the Giver of baptism. It is the priest and, if necessary, the deacon.

For Babai the Great (551 – 628), the priest sanctifies water and oil by virtue of his priesthood.¹⁶⁵ This requires priestly authority. The Chronicle of Seert tells how Saint Hormizd baptized nine hundred people. Only afterwards is it reported that the Metropolitan of Mosul ordained him a priest. So he was probably not yet when he baptized.¹⁶⁶ According to Ishodad of Merv (AD 850), in the baptism of Christ by John it is represented that believers receive baptism from priests.¹⁶⁷ As well, Timothy II indicated that the priest as essential to baptism.¹⁶⁸ The East Syrian fathers never recognize a baptism by laypeople, not even in an emergency. In the Chronicle of Bar Hebraeus it is reported how the king of the Keraite (Mongol tribe), who were converted in 1009, sends messengers to the Catholicos with the request that a priest be sent to baptize him. He previously had relationships with Christian merchants. So they could not baptize him.¹⁶⁹ We conclude from this, according to the rite of baptism and the thought of the church fathers, that only the priest has the right to baptize, but from emergency cases, it is possible for a deacon to baptize a child who is close to death.¹⁷⁰ However, when the child recovers must later be baptized in the church according to the baptism rite. Today, baptism may only of course be administered in the church.

6. The liturgical baptismal anointings

Since the first centuries, in the ancient Syriac tradition, a certain relationship between the Holy Spirit and oil has been mentioned, as though he were the bearer of the spirit. St. Ephrem says that oil is the friend of the Holy Spirit, serving him and following him, following the example of the disciple (Virginité 7-6). According to the biblical texts (Luke 4-18, Acts 10-38), the anointing refers to the prophecy of Isaiah (61_1), as a missionary dedication by the Spirit.

¹⁶² Diettrich, Nestorianische Tauf liturgy, 98-99; Baptismal Rite, 159.

¹⁶³ Baptismal Rite, 107.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 156; Diettrich, Nestorianische Tauf liturgie,

¹⁶⁵ Frankeberg, Euagrius Ponticus, 253.

¹⁶⁶ Chronicle of Seert, PO XIII, 596-597.

¹⁶⁷ Ishodad of Merv, Commentaries, I, 26.

¹⁶⁸ Timothy II, III, 6, f. 82r-83r.

¹⁶⁹ J. B. Abbeloos, Th. J. Lamy, Gregorii Bar Hebraei Chronicon Ecclesiasticum, Lovanii 1872, t. II, 280-282.

¹⁷⁰ What is strange is the stipulation that baptism could be replaced by the anointing an emergency, when the priest thinks the child may die in immersion. See: Vat. Syr. 150, f. 44 v- 15 r.

First of all, we should stress the importance of oil consecration in the East Syriac baptismal rite. It is the only ritual among all the rites which gives such importance to the oil. After the preparatory section, this consecration constitutes a large part of the groups of prayers. The essential theological idea of the rite of baptism is the resurrection. So, the celebration of baptism is a celebration of the resurrection. In which the baptized pass in Christ through from death to life, this idea was preserved in the consecration of oil and its use in consecrating water and in anointing the Baptized. Through the second bowing prayer, we understand that the origin of the anointing prior to baptism goes back to the consecration of kings and priests with holy oil in the Old Testament.¹⁷¹ From all this it becomes clear that the consecration of oil is more important than water, because the oil represents Christ the victor over death, as he rose from the waters of doom, alive and giving life, meaning the Holy Spirit. Acceptance of the Spirit is the condition and basis for the new birth from the water. As the Spirit descended on Christ in the Jordan, thus it descends on the oil and through it on the Baptized. By means of the anointing with oil, the baptized is enabled to ascend and floating like oil on the waters of death. Therefore, the oil of anointing, which is used at baptism, is commonly interpreted as a symbol of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's delve into the thoughts of church fathers, mar Narsai calls the oil a symbol that proclaims divine power. According to Babai the Great, the refreshing oil means the grace of the Holy Spirit. Timothy II writes in the whole of the ninth section of the Chapter three of his book about the mysteries of the anointing oil that symbolizes to the power of the spirit. We also find other symbolic interpretations of oil. Ishoyahb I calls it a mystery of the garment of adoption. In the prayers of the liturgy of baptism, oil is referred to as a type of immortality. In the memra-ܡܡܪܐ about baptism and the mystery of the Fermentum by Johannean Bar Zobi, the oil is a symbol of peace and immortality.¹⁷²

There is a point worth mentioning about the origins of the oil of anointing. Timothy II (1332) confirms that this oil of the anointing is handed down to the church by the Apostles. He says: *the apostles handed down the consecrated oil so that believers could be distinguished from unbelievers and anointed. Whoever has not received the mark upon himself by it, which is through it and from it, is a disciple of those who are subjugated by Satan, and who are being led by the lying spirit. But whoever is sealed with it and anointed with it is formed in immortality here, and in the end he is glorified by the consummation.*¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Baptismal Rite, 137-138.

¹⁷² De Vries, Sakramententheologie, 43.

¹⁷³ Timothy II, III, f. 60 r.

A. The two Anointings before Baptism

As explained above, the oil is used for the consecration of the water. It is also used for anointing during baptismal ceremonies.¹⁷⁴ The anonymous author (9th Century) uses a three times of the oil at baptism. He mentions about three rušmā-ܠܫܡܐ and their symbolisms. 1. First marking (ܠܫܡܐ ܠܫܡܐ) is compared to the call of Abraham. 2. Second anointing (ܠܫܡܐ ܠܫܡܐ) stands for the anointing of priests and kings of the Old Testament, 3. Post-baptismal rušmā-signing (ܠܫܡܐ-sealing) stands for the baptism of Jesus with the fullness of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁵ The fifth chapter repeats the significance of horn and oil in baptismal ritual. It is especially concerned with four phases of baptism and its importance in relation to the Old Testament and the New Testament. There is the signing before the sanctifying of the water, when the forehead is marked with the sign of the cross. But after the sanctifying of the water immediately before the baptism, there is anointing-ܠܫܡܐ where the whole body is anointed. After the baptism, there is the final sealing-ܠܫܡܐ, involving the organs of sense or just the forehead.¹⁷⁶ This describes is basically the same as that still in use in East Syrian Baptismal Liturgy.

The questions about baptism also know three anointings about those to be baptized. But the anointing before baptism is done with the newly consecrated oil from the basin, not with the old oil from the horn.¹⁷⁷ As well, during the anointing before baptism, according to Emmanuel Bar Shahare(10th century), the person to be baptized is first marked with three fingers on the chest in the shape of a cross with the oil and then the whole body is anointed.¹⁷⁸ However, East Syrian baptismal rite today is initially known as the oil of anointing at the beginning of the baptism ceremony. Originally this marking was carried out without oil.¹⁷⁹ In the early centuries of early Christianity, the rite of Jewish circumcision, which preceded baptism, was accepted into Christianity as an anointing, on the basis of some biblical texts (Galatians 4:6, Romans 8:15, 1 Corinthians 12:3, 2 Corinthians 1:21, and especially 1 John 5:7). . We also find in the Bible verses that it appears that the giving of the Holy Spirit preceded baptism since the time of the apostles (Acts 9: 17-18; 10: 44-48). It is possible that the title of Christ influenced the evolution from a spiritual anointing to a real anointing with oil. In the first stage, the Holy Spirit was

¹⁷⁴ Namely at the ܠܫܡܐ, or ‘marking’ ‘signing’, at the ܠܫܡܐ, or anointing’, the pouring of oil on the baptismal water at its consecration and the post-baptismal ܠܫܡܐ, ‘sealing’.

¹⁷⁵ Anonymus, II, V: 106, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Anonymus II, 96. P.B. Kadicheeni, *The Mystery of Baptism*, p. 88–93; S. Brock, *The Baptismal Anointings*, 35.

¹⁷⁷ *Questions about the Baptism*, Vat. Syr. 150, f. 42r, 43v.

¹⁷⁸ Emmanuel Bar Sahhare, *Memra about the Baptism*, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 171v.

¹⁷⁹ *Baptismal Rite*, 116. As well, according to Diettrich, this designation was originally carried out without oil. See: Diettrich, *nestorianische Tauf liturgie* 8, 62.

conferred by the laying on of the bishop's hand and without anointing, but by teaching in the anointing of the catechumens the Church took to express it by physical anointing with oil.¹⁸⁰

The great biblical and theological interpreter Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350 – 428) says that through this anointing the baptismal candidate becomes the sheep of Christ. He interprets the pre-baptismal ܐܘܝܠܐܝܢܐ - anointing on the fore-head with the holy Oil as a type of stamping as a lamb of Christ and as a soldier of the heavenly King. The candidate is stamped on the forehead because it is higher than the rest of the body and it is placed above all the body and above the face. Also, Saint Theodore sees the anointing of the forehead as a sign of freedom, because the forehead is a sign of nobility. However, St. Theodore also refers to the second anointing before immersion, as the baptized must take off all the clothes, then anoint with oil, after which he descends into the consecrated water. In taking off the clothes as a symbol of the removal of the old man, the shroud of death was also taken off. As for the anointing of the whole body, it has two meanings: belonging to Christ, becoming his own, and spiritual immunity. Therefore, Theodore finds in this anointing of the body a symbol of immortality (3-8). As well, Saint Theodore described the first anointing after the rank of atonement (Unbelief in Satan) and a commitment to the covenant with the Lord Christ by bowing before the priest. Saint Theodore sees kneeling as a sign of the first fall and atonement for it.¹⁸¹ Also, Mar Narsai refers to kneeling on two knees, the first refers to a fall and the second refers to penance.¹⁸²

According to the East Syrian baptismal rite, there is two anointing before the baptism. It is essential to note that two different sources of oil are involved:

1. The oil in (ܐܘܝܠܐܝܢܐ) –the oil of anointing (ܐܘܝܠܐܝܢܐ ܐܘܝܠܐܝܢܐ), it is pre-sacred and thus provides an element of continuity.¹⁸³
2. The oil in the bowl (ܐܘܝܠܐܝܢܐ), which is sanctified through certain prayers and invoking the Holy Spirit and marked with the oil of the holy horn during the rite of baptism.

However, this oil in the bowl is used only for the anointing immediately before the baptism while the oil from the horn is used for the first and the last anointings. The first anointing is given outside the house of baptism. The first anointing related to the ceremony of denial in the preparatory section, which indicates its original relationship with the ritual of denial. The original rank of exorcism had changed and became an anointing that precedes baptism. Some have said that the Jewish rite of circumcision that preceded baptism was accepted in Christianity under the form of an anointing, on the basis of some biblical texts (Galatians 4:6, Rom 8:15, 1

¹⁸⁰ E.C.Ratcliff, *The Old Syrian Baptismal Tradition and its Resettlement under the Influence of Jerusalem in the Fourth Century*, in: *Stud. In Church Hist.* 2(1965), 19-37.

¹⁸¹ S. Brock, *Some Baptismal Commentaries*, in: *OCP* 46 (1980), 20-61; Cf. Theodore, *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, A. Mingana (ed. & trans.), *WS* 6, Cambridge 1933, p. 46.

¹⁸² Louis Sako, *The Rite of Baptism and Marriage*, Baghdad, 2000, 363.

¹⁸³ Anonymous Author placed the horn of oil represents the Holy Spirit. He indicated through the horn of oil that which took place in the time of the Law, for by the horn the New Testament is perfected. The unity of the Spirit is activity in the two Testaments. See. Anonymous, *V*, 105.

Corinthians 12:3, 2 Cor 1:21, especially 1 John 5: 7).¹⁸⁴ As well, according to Anonymous author (9th century), the anointing before baptism symbolizes of the anointing of the Old Testament, in which the perfection by the Holy Spirit has not yet been given. The anonymous author (9th century) indicates in details which anointing in the Old Testament is symbolized by the signings at baptism. The first recalls the nomination of Abraham by God, the anointing of Aaron and his sons and of the kings. In his Exposition of the Church Services, he sees the allegory is more important in the baptismal rite. Anointing of the candidate with the oil is compared to the promise given to Abraham. According to the Author, journey through the rite of baptism is a journey through the salvific plan from Abraham up to Pentecost.¹⁸⁵

For Anonymous, The priest marks the first signing from the horn of oil on the forehead of the baptismal candidate with his index finger, because the power of God has not been revealed fully but partly.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, this signing typifies the promise of God to Abraham which took place without the labor of laws. The first ܠܘܡܝܐ is signed upon the blessed Abraham by God freely. Therefore, this rušmā is signed [ܠܘܡܝܐ] upon the foreheads of the candidate to show that one who blesses the gentiles comes from his (Abraham) seed. As well, he compares this signing-ܠܘܡܝܐ to circumcision of Abraham and the promise given to him the first anointing and the post-baptismal anointing are doubly linked: The pre-baptismal anointing and the post-baptismal anointing both involve the forehead, and because Christ is a descendant of Abraham, rather than of Aaron. The first signing is in connection with the rite of renunciation of Satan. In addition, the signing made on the forehead shows that Satan has no more power over the candidate, from now on the property of Christ, and that the seal of Christ on the forehead is a sign of protection against devil, and a sign of dedication to Christ.¹⁸⁷

As for the second anointing of the whole body, it is done with the new oil ((ܠܘܡܝܐ, which is consecrated with the oil of anointing (ܠܘܡܝܐ). It is the rank of anointing on the entire body. The Anonymous Author (9th century) reports about the anointing of the whole body of the baptized, saying “he is anointed” [ܠܘܡܝܐ] in order to deliver him from the Evil, because the anointing belongs to the Old Testament and it corresponds to the anointing of the Old Testament priests (Aaron) and kings. Since the Old Testament anointing was accompanied by prayers and offerings (i.e. was subject to the ordinances of the Law), there is need to sanctify oil (that in the bowl) particularly for this anointing. The anointing of the baptized is the one which took place through

¹⁸⁴ E. C. Ratcliff, the old Syrian Baptismal Tradition and its resettlement under the influence of Jerusalem in the fourth Century, in> Stud. In Church Hist.2, 1950, 19-37; L.L Mitchell, Baptismal Anointing, London 1966; E.J. Lengeling, Vom Sinn der präbaptismalen Salbung, in: *Mel. B. Botte* , Louvain 1972, 327-358.

¹⁸⁵ Anonymous II, 96.

¹⁸⁶ Some manuscripts of the Baptismal liturgy do not assign the use of oil, and Diettrich confirmed that there is no oil in the original situation. However, in view of the anonymous testimony this is unlikely. See. Diettrich, die nestorianische Tauf liturgie, 62.

¹⁸⁷ Anonymous, II, V: 106, 9, 106, 5–7; 108, 4–5; S. Brock, the Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition, p. 49.

Aaron and his sons, and the kings of Israel.¹⁸⁸ It is performed with three fingers on the chest of the candidate and followed by the anointing of the whole body.¹⁸⁹ The second anointing is done from above to below to signify that one is putting on Christ.¹⁹⁰

This anointing was a special characteristic of the baptism liturgy from the first to the sixth centuries, and it is still according to the current liturgical texts. In the first *ܠܕܘܢܝܘܬܐ*, the power of the gift of the Holy Spirit descends upon the oil to grant the baptized incorruption. In the second *ܠܕܘܢܝܘܬܐ* there is the phrase "*ܠܘܐ ܠܘܐܝ*" referring to baptism as an answer to the faith attitude. Due to the power of the spirit, the believer is freed from Satan in preparation for accepting the token of the Resurrection. We conclude and say that the anointing on the entire body with oil that mixed with the Holy Spirit means resurrection, immortality, or participation in the kingdom. This is based on the special relationship between Christ the Victorious and the symbol of oil and the realization of this relationship is due to the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹¹

Mar Timothy II (1332) has talked about the pre-baptismal anointing with anointing oil that symbolizes the strength of the spirit by which the believer is united with Christ and the Church. He states: *The one anointed with oil is Christian. By anointing us with it, the fire of grace kindled in us to purify and enlighten us. Through this sacred oil, the active power of the Spirit is confirmed in us.*¹⁹² As well, Mar Narsai (5th Century) asserts that the signing with oil before baptism is carried out in the name of the Trinity: *they constantly put the stamp of his name on his flock and with the Trinity to mark the people ... The priest holds the iron of the oil in his fingertips and he marks the body, the senses of the soul with his sharp edge.*¹⁹³ As well, Theodore mentions the anointing of the whole body of the candidate with the Holy Oil. He interprets the anointing of the whole body of the candidate with Oil as a symbol of the immortality.¹⁹⁴

According to Emmanuel Bar Shahhare (10th Century), during the anointing before baptism the person to be baptized is first marked with the oil with three fingers on the chest in a cross shape and then the whole body is anointed.¹⁹⁵ The anointing in the baptismal ritual is described in a similar way: *And when they have brought the children in, the priest anoints them, each one of them on his chest with his three fingers from top to bottom and from right to left with the sign of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit for ever ...*¹⁹⁶ Emmanuel Bar Shahhare (10th

¹⁸⁸ Anonymous, II, V: 108, 7–8. Noteworthy for the Anonymous author, the priest himself does not anoint. That with adult women the anointing is performed by the deaconesses, while the priest himself only designates. See. Anonymus II, 97.

¹⁸⁹ Baptismal Rite, 144.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 116.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 122-124.

¹⁹² Mar Timothy, III, 12, f. 62 r.

¹⁹³ Connolly, Mar Narsai, Hom. XXII, 41, 45.

¹⁹⁴ Theodore, Commentary on the Baptism, 54.

¹⁹⁵ Emmanuel bar Shahhare, Memra about the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 171 v.

¹⁹⁶ Baptismal Rite, 42-43.

century) describes them as absolutely necessary for salvation. About the anointing before baptism he says: *the divine oil is judgment unto death and life, and whoever does not want its mystery is utterly deprived of salvation.*¹⁹⁷ In the questions about baptism it says: *If the person to be baptized is not marked with the oil consecrated by the priest and if the consecration of the Jordan is not performed with him, he does not receive the gift of grace.*¹⁹⁸

In addition, Mar Abdisho bar Brikha (1318) also compares the anointings at baptism with those of the Old Testament. As in the Old Testament, priests and earthly kings were anointed, so in the New it was customary for Christians, who are intended for the true priesthood and for the kingdom of heaven. The anointed become brothers of Christ. The anointing is also done to protect against devilish influences.¹⁹⁹ Timothy II (1332) writes on the matter: *Everyone who is anointed with oil must be called an anointed one. This is a great mystery of our election to familiarity with God and our incorporation into Christ, the Head of the Church, from whom we also received that we are called Christians, i.e. anointed.*²⁰⁰

We note through the ancient Syrian documents of (memre-ܡܡܪܐ) of St. Ephrem and St. Narsai that there is one anointing with oil immediately preceding the rite of immersion and it seems that it was for the conferring of the Holy Spirit. However, since the fifth century, the concept of anointing was changed and the gift of the Holy Spirit was transferred from the anointing with oil before immersion, which was in the early church for the final anointing after baptism. By receiving the Holy Spirit after immersion following the example of Christ, upon the baptized ascension from the water. This is in contrast to the tradition which linked the giving of the Holy Spirit before baptism.

¹⁹⁷ Emmanuel bar Shakhare, Memra about the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 171 v.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, Vat. Syr. 150, f. 54 v.

¹⁹⁹ Mar Odisho, Marganitha IV, 4, 332; Franz. H. Jos. Dölger, Das Sakrament der Firmung, Wien 1906, 94-95.

²⁰⁰ Mar Timothy, III, f. 62 r.

B. After Baptism (Sacrament of the Oil of Chrismation)

A question many ask: Do the church fathers know of an anointing after baptism that we could interpret as the sacrament of Confirmation? There is no trace of such anointing in the homilies of Narsai.²⁰¹ Despite the absence of this anointing with Mar Narsai, we find it in the majority of the east Syrian ecclesiastical fathers, as well as in the East Syrian baptismal rite.²⁰² This Post Baptismal anointing has its root in the Gospel narratives since the Holy Spirit shows at Christ's baptism only after he has come out from the water. While the granting of the royal priesthood is connected with the pre-baptismal anointing, 'putting on the robe of the glory' and 'putting on the Spirit' is connected with post-baptismal anointing-ܠܘܝܐ.²⁰³

For Babai the Great (7th Century) there is a text that may contain an allusion to the anointing after baptism: *Here he (Evagrius) teaches us, how we have received the knowledge of the divinity in the three persons in the pledge of bliss and the anointing of holy baptism. Compare 1 John. 2, 27: You have the anointing of the saints, and the expression: He anointed us and sealed us with the Holy Spirit. This baptismal anointing raises us to the blessed knowledge of the essence of the Trinity.*²⁰⁴ As well, in another place he said: *In particular, people owned the refreshing oil, that is, the grace of the anointing of the Holy Spirit in baptism.*²⁰⁵ However, it is not clear whether the talk is of an anointing before or after baptism and whether it is actually an anointing in the literal sense or perhaps only in the figurative sense.

The first reference about this ritual is seen in the baptismal homilies of Theodore of Mopsuestia. He writes that the priest marks on the forehead of candidate saying: *"So and so signed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"*.²⁰⁶ According to him, he makes the last anointing after baptism a proof of acquiring the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is not clear if the anointing after baptism was a real material anointing.²⁰⁷ And, the clear text for the anointing after baptism can be found in the anonymous author (9th Century): *From the same horn he signs and anoints and baptizes and seals.*²⁰⁸ The stamping happens after baptism. It means that the final ܠܘܝܐ- indicates the fulfillment of the baptized in the Holy Spirit. As well in his

²⁰¹ In Mar Narsai's Homilies, there is no anointing after baptism, while the anointing that precedes baptism takes on a great significance to the extent that it is related to the giving of the gift of the Holy Spirit. See: Mar Narsai, Homily XXII and XXI, Connolly, 33-61.

²⁰² Baptismal Rite, 151.

²⁰³ S. Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, p. 48-49.

²⁰⁴ It is not clear whether we are talking about an anointing before or after baptism, and whether we are talking about anointing in the literal sense or perhaps only in the figurative sense. Frankenberg, *Euagrius*, 271.

²⁰⁵ De Vries, *Sakramententheologie*, 182.

²⁰⁶ Theodore, *Commentary on the Baptism*, p. 68.

²⁰⁷ Some scholars believe that this text does not belong to Theodore, but to a late Syriac translator, because his student Narsai never mentioned the baptismal anointing after Baptism. See: B.Varghase, *Les onctions baptismales dans la tradition syrienne*(CSCO 512, sub.82) Leuven 1989,97-99, note 47.

²⁰⁸ Anonymous, II, 98.

exposition, he compares the post-baptismal anointing to the coming down of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost.²⁰⁹

Also, Emmanuel Bar Shahhare (10th Century) speaks only of signing after baptism.²¹⁰ In the questions about baptism it doesn't said that whether this signing after baptism with Oil or not.²¹¹ Joseph Assemani(1686-1768)²¹² brings a testimony from Elias Anbarezis (11th century), which is supposed to prove that the East Syrian fathers knew Confirmation: *The oil with which the priest anoints the baptized on the forehead is a symbol of the trust that the saints will receive there (in Bliss).*²¹³ In context, it really is post-baptismal anointing. Likewise, Mar Abdisho bar Brikha (1318) he seems to allude to a post-baptismal anointing: *As to the natural properties of oil, we know that the most eminent artists, after having completed a picture with all its rich colouring, anoint it with oil, in order that it may not easily be injured, or receive damage when brought into contact with other objects. in like manner, those who are drawn after the likeness of the Heavenly King are for the same reason anointed, lest they should receive damage from the chances of the world and from the opposition of the evil.*²¹⁴ This anointing occurs after people are conformed to the image of the heavenly King. This clearly refers here to the anointing after baptism. According to Assemani, Timothy II knows an anointing after baptism that could be understood as confirmation.²¹⁵ The text he cites is: *But the third (signing), which is the final conclusion, is the completion by the Holy Spirit, which took place in the baptism of our Lord, and it is the perfect completion.*²¹⁶ A very similar text can also be found in Anonymous author (9th century): *The ultimate signing (ܐܘܝܠܐ) is the baptism of our Lord and also perfection is in the Holy Spirit.*²¹⁷

Regarding the three signings, Timothy II (14th century) describes in detail in sections 15 and 16 of the third chapter the three signings of Baptism. Without saying here, whether it is a question of designations before baptism or after, or whether they are anointing or not. In section 17 he gives a very superficial presentation of the baptismal ceremonies. Before baptism, he mentions only one marking on the forehead that follows exorcism, rejection of Satan,²¹⁸ devotion to Christ

²⁰⁹ Anonymous, II, V: 106, 13–14, 20–21.

²¹⁰ Emmanuel Bar Shahhare, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 42 v.

²¹¹ Question about Baptism, Vat. Syr. 150, f. 42 v.

²¹² Joseph Simon Assemani, July 27, 1687–January 13, 1768) was a librarian, Lebanese Maronite orientalist, and Catholic bishop. For his efforts, and his encyclopedic knowledge, he earned the nickname "The Great Assemani".

²¹³ Assemani J. S., *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, III, 2, Rome 1725, 274.

²¹⁴ Mar Abdisho, *Marganitha* IV, 4, 274.

²¹⁵ Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, III, 1, 54; III, 2, 274.

²¹⁶ Timothy, III, 19, f. 79r.

²¹⁷ Anonymous, II, 96.

²¹⁸ We also find this in a didactic sermon by Theodore of Mopsuestia, which was preserved in a Syrian manuscript 16, through which he interprets a ritual similar to the ritual of John Chrysostom, with ܐܘܝܠܐ on the forehead after denial and before immersion, and also signing after immersion related to the Holy Spirit, without mentioning whether it is done in oil. See: G.E.Saint-Laurent, Pre-Baptismal Rites in the Baptismal Catecheses of Theodore of Mopsuestia, in: *Diakonia* 16 (1981), 118-126.

and the creed and precedes clothing and baptism.²¹⁹ It bears some resemblance to the rites described by Emmanuel bar Shahhare (10 Century) and the rites described by Theodor von Mopsuestia.²²⁰

The ceremonies after the baptism were described by Timothy in the 18th section.²²¹ He mentions the clothing, the introduction of the person to be baptized into the Sanctuary and then communion. Nothing at all is said of designation. In any case, he does not attach great importance to it. Since he apparently wrote out a template here that did not give the rites of his time, we cannot conclude from this that he knew no signing after baptism, especially since his description is incomplete. We must assume that the third signing after baptism also occurred in the time of Timothy. The explanation that Timothy gives of the third marking that it is the perfect completion corresponds well to the formal of that signing: *It has been baptized and it has been completed N.N. etc.*²²² In any case, Timothy does not realize that this marking is a sacrament in its own right. It appears to him simply as one of the three signings pertaining to baptism. Timothy II says that the third signing is from below to above to signify that the candidate is raised from earth to heaven through baptism.

Let us now see whether in Timothy's time this signing was made with or without oil. In the 19th section of the third chapter he comes back to talk about the three designations of baptism. He said here that all three designations come from the same horn-*ܩܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ*.²²³ Accordingly, the after-baptism would also be performed with oil. Contrary to what was mentioned in questions about baptism, not all anointings are made with the same oil.²²⁴ Also, in the sixteenth section of the fourth chapter, St. Timothy talks about baptismal anointings in general and the three markings of baptism in particular. Here he speaks about: 1. a signing before baptism, 2. an anointing in the form of a cross before baptism and 3. a signing after baptism. However, it does not make it clear that the signing after baptism is an anointing with oil. As well, Emmanuel Bar Shahhare (10th century) speaks only of a sign after baptism, not about anointing.²²⁵

However, the existence of anointing after baptism in the fourteenth century is supported by the fact that in the oldest known manuscript of baptismal liturgy written in 1496, this anointing is mentioned.²²⁶ As well, the third designation is mentioned in later manuscripts in 16th and 17th centuries.²²⁷ Anyway, the oldest handwritten testimony is more than 150 years later than Timothy. After all, the practice during multiple centuries regarding the anointing after baptism

²¹⁹ Timothy II, III, f. 66 v – 75 r.; f. 75 r-77 r.

²²⁰ Memra about the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 270 v ff; Mingana VI., 143-187.

²²¹ Timothy II, III, f. 77r-78 r.

²²² Baptismal Rite, 48.

²²³ Timothy II, III, f. 78 v.

²²⁴ Question about the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 150, f. 43 v.

²²⁵ Emmanuel Bar Shahhare, Memra about the Baptism, Vat. Syr. 182. F. 272 v.

²²⁶ Berlin, Sachau 167, f. 160 b ff; see. Diettrich, 84 und S. XII.

²²⁷ Diettrich, 84.

seems fluctuating.²²⁸ On the other hand, the baptism rituals published by Kelaita, speak of an anointing after baptism with the holy oil from the horn. It is done on the forehead of the candidate in the form of the Cross. Thus the Holy Spirit is conferred upon the candidate through the sacrament of Confirmation.²²⁹

Let us now ask the meaning of this anointing after baptism. Anonymous author describes the meaning of anointing after the baptism as follows: *The ultimate signing is the baptism of our Lord and the perfection in the Holy Spirit.*²³⁰ While the anointing before baptism only refer to Old Testament models and baptism itself only means the baptism of John, the last signing after baptism gives perfection, it donates the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere he says that the baptism of Christ with the Holy Spirit is to be equated with the signing with oil. So the baptism is associated with the baptism of John and the post-baptismal anointing is associated with the baptism of Christ. Therefore, the anonymous author observes the baptismal Ritual as a chronological progress through salvation history in four stages represented in the signing (ܩܒܘܪܐ), the anointing (ܩܕܫܘܬܐ), the baptism (ܩܒܘܪܐ) and the sealing (ܩܕܫܘܬܐ); the first two stages belong to the Old Testament, and the last two to the New, while the horn of oil representing the Holy Spirit provides the continuum between them.²³¹ This view is not unfavorable to an interpretation of the anointing as a sacrament of confirmation.

Emmanuel Bar Shahhare (10th Century) writes about the meaning of the signing after baptism, where he says: *the priest signs them anew after they have come out of the water, in the likeness of the Spirit which descended upon our Lord after his baptism. He marks them on their forehead with the sign of the life-giving cross and the priest completes the mystery of the passion of Jesus, the Redeemer. So now he represents through the sign the power of the gift of grace which we have received from the resurrection through the perfection of body and spirit.*²³² With regard to the words that are spoken during the anointing, according to Anonymous author, are: *He was baptized and made perfect.*²³³

²²⁸ Johanna Sulaqa declares in his creed before Julius III, Johannes that he does not know whether confirmation was in earlier use by church fathers or not. So it wasn't common in his day. For the Synod of Diamper, Confirmation was unknown to the Malabar. According to Assemani, there is no anointing after baptism in the liturgical books of his day. Badger, too, who knows the east syrian rites well from his own experience, says that after baptism there is no anointing among church fathers. See: De Vries, Sakramententheologie, 186; S. Giamii, Genuinae relationes inter Sedem Apostolicam et Assyriorum Orientalium seu Chaldaeorum Ecclesiam, Romae 1902, 478; Mansi J. D., Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio. t. 35 Diamperitana Synodus in Malabaria, c. 1232: Assemani, BO III, 2, 283.

²²⁹ Kelaita, Liturgy of the church if the East, 151.

²³⁰ Anonymous, II, 96.

²³¹ Ibid, 96, 103.

²³² Emmanuel Bar Sahhare, Vat. Syr. 182, f. 272 v- 273 r; De Vries, Sakramententheologie, 187.

²³³ Anonymous, II, 98.

The questions about baptism give the following formula for the designation after baptism: *It has been baptized and it has been completed N.N. in the name of the Father, etc.*²³⁴ The East Syriac Baptism Ritual brings the words: *It was baptized and perfected in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit for eternity.*²³⁵

Someone may ask whether they perhaps gave Confirmation by the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands in connection with the baptismal ceremonies is already mentioned by the synod of the year 544. It speaks of the laying on of hands by the priest, without specifying when this laying on of hands will happen.²³⁶ Timothy I. (740-823) writes in one of his letters: *if someone is not baptized in the name of the Trinity but has received the baptism of John, which gave not the Holy Spirit but the forgiveness of sin by penance, then is a second Paul. Baptize again in the name of the Lord! put your hand up and give the Holy Spirit, as the apostle did to those who were in Ephesus.*²³⁷ Here too it is not clear whether the laying on of hands is understood as a sacrament distinct from baptism. In the baptismal liturgy there are two prayers for laying the hand after baptism and before the final anointing, which is like the sacrament of the Oil of Unction. But the content of the second prayer of laying on the hand (*the pledge of the Holy Spirit that you accepted, the mystery of Christ that you received, and the drawing of life that you received.... and let this signing that you accepted for the good things....*) is not appropriate to be before the signing, because in the second prayer is mentioned the gifts of grace granted by the signing the gifts of grace granted. Also in the Mar Isaiah manuscript in Mosul, the last drawing is given to the baptized person before the prayer of laying on the hand (the Pledge of the Holy Spirit) and not after it, because in the prayer it was shown that the baptized accepted the signing. Also, according to the liturgical rule in the evening and morning prayers, between any two priestly prayers there is a word (Amen, bless, Lord - ܐܡܝܢ ܒܥܝܢ ܕܡܠܟܝܢ), but between these two prayers only the word (Amen - ܐܡܝܢ) appears. This means that originally there was one prayer after the baptism and the second prayer after the last signing. Therefore, the third concluding anointing should be before the second prayer of laying of the hand as a token of the Holy Spirit, because in the last anointing the baptized becomes complete because of the Holy Spirit, which was granted by our Lord Jesus Christ, who is victorious over death and corruption. However, in the rank of Isho'ab III, Baptized is anointed after immersion and laying the hand as a fulfillment (ܐܘܩܘܡܢܐ) of the sacrament and the granting of the Holy Spirit, as shown in the publication of Youssef Qalita, where the rank of the last signing takes place after the prayer of Token of the Holy Spirit. And the priest says this prayer of the laying on of hands by placing his right hand on everyone's head (one after the other) and recites it in a loud voice.²³⁸

²³⁴ Vat. Syr. 150, f. 42 v.

²³⁵ Baptismal Liturgy, 151.

²³⁶ Joseph Habbi, Synods of the Church of the East, 403.

²³⁷ Timothy I, Epistulae, 7.

²³⁸ Baptismal Rite, 149-150.

After all, we must say that the Fathers of the Church of the East did not clearly recognize the sacrament of Confirmation as separate and different from baptism, but rather as an integral part of the sacrament of baptism, and that they do not use any particular rite to confer this sacrament. This is also confirmed that Ishodad von Merv does not in any way refer to the classical texts for Confirmation (Acts 8.14 ff and 9.1-7). The Spirit had not descended upon the new converts of Samaria because Philip, being a mere deacon, could not administer proper Christian baptism.²³⁹ Also according to the Anonymous author (9th century), the Holy Spirit is bestowed only through the last sign of the oil after baptism. In baptism he sees only the baptism of John for the forgiveness of sins and in the last designation the baptism of our Lord, that is, the actual Christian baptism. It is here that the actual effect of baptism is given.²⁴⁰ Timothy II (14th Century) copies the anonymous text about the last sign, but without adopting his view of baptism.²⁴¹

After baptism, the baptized wears the white robe as a symbol of the new state. For Anonymous author (9th century), this ceremony of putting ‘white robe’ upon the candidate comes soon after the baptized coming out of the water. It symbolizes putting of the ‘robe of glory’ which was darkened by the sin of Adam.²⁴² The baptized is reminded of the preservation of his pure life, in the hope of the glorified state in heaven. According to Mar Narsai (5th Century), the baptized performs his wedding in baptism, and the garment of the symbol of glory is prepared for him. He wears this garment as a symbol of the glory to come, and he lives it secretly what he will receive. Also, the child, when he puts on the white garment after baptism, symbolizes his purification. The celebrant puts the white dress on the child after the baptism symbolizing his purification. The priest gives the lighted candle also to the child.²⁴³

Holy Communion was usually celebrated after baptism. The priest would lead the baptized by circling to the church, where the people were waiting, after which they would celebrate the Divine Sacrifice, in which the baptized would receive the Qurbana. The majority of the Fathers of the Church of the East associate the idea of the new birth with the new food. Saint Ephrem (4th Century) says: Blessed are the newborns who directly eat whole bread instead of milk (Virginité 7-8). As well, he repeatedly mentions the mystery of the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ and the baptism of the believers in some ܩܘܪܒܢܐ (hymns), and these chants are in the oil (Church 4-7) and the chants in the Epiphany (3-8), in which it indicates to the sequence of the specific ranks: anointing the body, immersion, and the Eucharist. These three ranks constitute one mystery. And he understand the theology of baptism according to symbolic thinking, as if baptism is a basic and central sacrament in the plan of salvation, as it combines symbols from the Old Testament

²³⁹ Ishodad of Merv, Commentaries IV, 17. 29-30.

²⁴⁰ Anonymous, II, 96.

²⁴¹ Timothy, III, 19. 79 r.

²⁴² Sacraments of the Syro-Malabar Church, p. 46–47.

²⁴³ Narsai, On Baptism, p. 52.

and new realities in the Church.²⁴⁴ In addition, Mar Narsai (fifth century) also likens the Eucharist to the feast of the heavenly wedding. Where he says: As soon as they are born in baptism, they suckle the spirit. This is a sublime food specially prepared for a new born baby.²⁴⁵

Conclusion

Most of the simple believers think that the ecclesiastical rite came at once, but we conclude through this journey in the thought of the Fathers of the Church of the East that this is not true because the current ritual is the result of a gradual development that took centuries. After the ascension of the Lord, the nucleus of the ritual started from the first apostles in Jerusalem, and it became with the passage of time with expressions and movements until it took its final form and ended with the collecting and arrangement of rituals in Mesopotamia in particular for the Church of the East at the Patriarch of Ishoyahb III of the seventh century and organized them on the basis of the salvic disposition centered on meditation in the life of Christ and the true believer has a role in active participation in his divine life.

Therefore, these mysteries of initiation (baptism - the sacrament of confirmation - the Eucharist) are given to believers at the same time so that they interact with these mysteries to discover the meaning of their lives over time. Baptism gives birth to a person to a new life, and the chrism gives him the power of the Holy Spirit to grow in him this life and reach its fullness in the reality of his personal and collective existence. Baptism makes a new being through the death and resurrection of Christ, water in baptism is purified by grace and the holy Oil allows this new being to realize itself in all its dimensions. The Holy Spirit, which is poured in the holy anointing into the heart of the baptized Christian, and fills the folds of his body and soul, places in him the seeds of freedom and the seeds of spiritual maturity and the sacrificial bread refers to the spiritual nourishment, the body and blood of the Lord. These three mysteries have tangible signs that express something deeper and more sacred. The Christian is called to complete all his works in free submission to the Spirit of God, in order to reach by the power of this same Spirit "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:" (Ephesians 4:13).

²⁴⁴ E. Beck, *le baptême chez Saint Ephrem*, in: OS 1 (1956), 111-136.

²⁴⁵ Narsai, *Eucharist*, 205.