

SYRIAC DIALOGUE

**FIRST NON-OFFICIAL CONSULTATION
ON DIALOGUE WITHIN THE
SYRIAC TRADITION**

Vienna: June 1994

PRO ORIENTE
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FIRST NON-OFFICIAL ASSYRIAN CONSULTATION

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The Oriental Orthodox - Roman Catholic
Ecumenical Dialogue

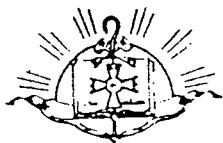
PRO ORIENTE Publications in English

- * First Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 1 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1972) 190 p.
- * Second Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 2 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1974) 208 p.
- * Third Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 3 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1976) 240 p.
- * Fourth Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 4 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1978) 256 p.
- * Fifth Ecumenical Consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 5 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1989) 208 p.
- * Selection of the Papers and Minutes of the Four Vienna Consultations between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Edited by Ökumenische Stiftung PRO ORIENTE in Vienna (1988) 286 p.
- * Five Vienna Consultations between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church 1971 - 1988. Selected Papers in One Volume. Published and edited by the Ecumenical Foundation PRO ORIENTE - Vienna (1993) 370 p.

The Oriental Orthodox - Roman Catholic
Ecumenical Dialogue

PRO ORIENTE Booklet Series

- * Booklet Number 1, Communiqués and Joint Documents; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1990, 136 p. Available in English, Arabic and Malayalam, planned in Armenian, Amharic and German.
- * Booklet Number 2, Summaries of the Papers; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1991, 74 p. Available in English and Arabic; planned in other languages.
- * Booklet Number 3, Middle East Regional Symposium, Deir Amba Bishoy, October 1991; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993, 168 p. Available in English, Arabic, planned in other languages.
- * Booklet Number 4, On Primacy, First Study Seminar, June 1991; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993, 92 p. Planned in the above mentioned languages.
- * Booklet Number 5, On Councils and Conciliarity, Second Study Seminar, June 1992; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993, 67 p. Planned in the above mentioned languages.
- * Booklet Number 6, Kerala Regional Symposium, Kottayam, October 1993; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1994. Planned in the above mentioned languages.
- * Booklet Number 7, Lebanon Regional Symposium, Kaslik, September 1994, PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1995. Planned in the above mentioned languages.
- * Booklet Number 8, On Ecclesiology, Third Study Seminar, July 1994; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1995. Planned in the above mentioned languages.



Catholicos Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East

PREAMBLE

It is my great good pleasure to welcome the fruit of this most important and historic contribution to dialogue and understanding among the various fractured elements of The Apostolic Church. Here we have the product of thoughtful considerations of a number of the world's prominent Syriac scholars. Their reflections upon the history and doctrine of The Church of the East have shed light bringing understanding to a subject which had long languished in the dim mists of neglect and incomprehension, fed by mistrust. The rich and valuable studies contained in this compendium will provide the reader with new insights into the long and glorious history of eastern Christianity. They will bring to the reader a greater appreciation of the variety and the scope of The Church's manifestations throughout the world.

I am happy to say that among the benefits of the efforts of these scholars, along with the patient and diligent labor of others was the historic signing of a „Common Christological Declaration“ by His Holiness John Paul II and myself on 11 November 1994. This most welcome development could not have taken place without the understanding brought about through the gesture of opening the eastern and western Churches towards one another.

The initiatives made since the time of Vatican II by PRO ORIENTE Ecumenical Foundation, the organization of the five unofficial consultations between Roman Catholic and Oriental Orthodox theologians under the guiding influence of its founder, H. Em. Franciscus Cardinal König, and the contributions this organization has made toward the re-energizing of eastern Christianity led by its current president Alfred Stirnemann, are of incalculable worth. The healing of ancient wounds that had taken place through PRO ORIENTE's efforts brought The Church of Christ a new healthy vigor and rekindled a hope for the renewal of the original unity and mutual cooperation that had marked the Churches of the earliest fathers, both East and West.

I thank H. Em. Hans Hermann Cardinal Groër, Archbishop of Vienna for his episcopal sponsorship of this PRO ORIENTE conference, and for his personal interest in the reconciliation of The Eastern churches, both among themselves and with The West.

Given at Morton Grove, Illinois, The United States of America,
on this 20th day of December 1994.

+ K. Mardinkha

FOREWORD BY THE EDITORS

This documentation presents PRO ORIENTE's first steps in the non-official dialogue with the pre-Ephesian Church. Under the title of "Orthodoxy and Catholicity in the Syriac Tradition with Special Attention to the Theology of the Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire" a consultation was held in Vienna from 24th to 29th June 1994. The papers and the minutes of the discussions together with the Joint Communiqué and a selected list of literature can be found in this volume.

The meeting was modelled on the five non-official consultations PRO ORIENTE had with the non-Chalcedonian Churches in 1971, 1973, 1976, 1978 and 1988. Following the general acceptance of the results of the non-Chalcedonian dialogue, its most outstanding achievement, the Vienna Christological Formula, was officially approved in Common Declarations signed by Heads of non-Chalcedonian Churches and Roman Pontiffs.

The new initiative involving the pre-Ephesian Churches brought together all the Churches of Syriac tradition irrespective of their denominational affiliation. The idea for starting a dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East had evolved from the participation of bishops, priests and lay people of this Church in the 2nd PRO ORIENTE Regional Symposium held in Kottayam/Kerala from 30th September to 4th October 1993. It was proposed that this should be done in the form of non-official consultations under the auspices of PRO ORIENTE and after consulting with the Heads of the Churches concerned.

Besides experts and eminent scholars of Syriac studies and ancient church history, theologians of the following Churches were invited:

- A) East Syrian (Mesopotamian or Persian) Tradition:
 - a) Assyrian Church of the East - New Calendarian (Teheran/Chicago)
 - b) Assyrian Church of the East - Old Calendarian (Baghdad)
 - c) Chaldean
 - d) Syro-Malabar of India;
- B) West Syrian Tradition:
 - a) Syrian Orthodox of the Patriarchate of Antioch including its Church in India
 - b) Syrian Orthodox of the Autocephalous Malankara Church of India
 - c) Syrian Catholic
 - d) Maronite
 - e) Malankara Catholic of India.

The presence of observers of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome and of the Middle East Council of Churches underlined the importance of this effort which proved to be the first ever meeting of all Churches of Syriac tradition from the Middle East, India, and the diaspora in Europe and the New World.

Participants were well aware of the work of the conference held in Cyprus from 5th to 7th September 1991. Its task then was to examine the application of the Assyrian Church of the East for joining the Middle East Council of Churches, after having been a member of the World Council of Churches for several years.

In preparing this consultation PRO ORIENTE received valuable advice from three scholars: Fr. André de Halleux OFM, professor at the Louvain University in Belgium, had been invited to attend but declined because of poor health. His premature death on 27th January 1994 deprived us of further counseling of this well-known expert. So we at least printed his MECC article on "Nestorian History and Doctrine" as an annex.

The second one, Prof. Alois Grillmeier, who had played such an outstanding role in the Catholic/non-Chalcedonian Vienna dialogue, was also not in a position to take part in the conference but had a major share in the preparatory stages. Besides, we were most honoured when this PRO ORIENTE consultant of long standing was promoted to the rank of a cardinal of the Holy Roman Church on 30th November 1994. This was a well-deserved distinction for the man who discovered the virtues of the Eastern Churches for the Church Catholic and made them accessible.

The third one was Mar Aprem of Trichur. He was the first Assyrian Bishop to come to Vienna and speak about "Was Nestorius a Nestorian?" on the occasion of the 59th PRO ORIENTE Ecumenical Symposium in June 1990 (see page 212). His christological creed professed at the 2nd PRO ORIENTE Regional Symposium in Kottayam paved the way for PRO ORIENTE initiating dialogue with the pre-Ephesinians.

The Joint Communiqué, carried unanimously by the 45 theologians participating in the consultation proposed the creation of a permanent commission for developing further steps towards unity with the pre-Ephesinian Church in the context of the Syriac family.

Having received the approval of the Heads of Churches concerned, the PRO ORIENTE Commission for Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition was set up on 28th September 1994, immediately after the 3rd PRO ORIENTE Regional Symposium at the Holy Spirit University in Kaslik/Lebanon. The minutes of this constitutive session including the list of the members are also contained in this volume (see p.).

The signing of a Common Christological Declaration of Pope John Paul II and Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV on 11th November 1994 (see p. ...) showed that the timing of our initiative was appropriate. The fact that the Declaration was partly inspired by the Vienna Christological Formula with the non-Chalcedonian Churches proves the usefulness of our efforts. This is however also a call for the future to continue our work of striving towards complete unity.

By way of conclusion, we would like to express our thanks to all the participants in the consultation, above all to those who took the trouble of preparing papers. Likewise, we are grateful for the work of the collaborators and staff of PRO ORIENTE. To H.H. Mar Dinkha IV we are particularly indebted for his kindness to write the preamble.

Peter Hofrichter

THE CHURCH OF THE EAST - WITNESS OF AN AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN TRADITION OUTSIDE THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The Scholarly Achievement of this Volume

Up to now the Assyrian Church of the East was at the fringe of ecumenical interest. People spoke of the "Nestorians" and they associated them with the Council of Ephesus of 431 and the condemnation of Nestorius at the time - wrongly so as a matter of fact. Likewise known were the great missionary past of this Church and her former extending as far as China. On the other hand though hardly anybody in Europe was aware of her existence in our days. Too remote are her home regions in Iraq and Iran, too small her numbers and political weight. In this respect the first non-official Consultation the Foundation of PRO ORIENTE held with the Church of the East in Vienna from 24th to 29th June 1994 may be regarded as a turning point. Thus the Foundation of PRO ORIENTE took up one of the tasks set in its 1971 statutes. The timing was right. Only a few months later, on 11th November 1994 in Rome, Pope John Paul II and Catholicos Mar Dinkha IV could sign the "Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East".

There are several reasons why the time was ripe for starting a dialogue with the Church of the East. On the one hand the Christological talks with the pre-Chalcedonian Churches had come to a positive conclusion in 1988. The official signing of the so-called "Vienna Christological Formula" by Heads of the Churches concerned had put an end to one and a half millennium of misunderstandings between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Church of Rome. This made it possible to take the risk of the next step, i.e. the involvement of the pre-Ephesinian Churches in the theological talks. On the other hand the Church of the East had begun taking a closer look at her own tradition and was eager to communicate with other Churches. Important initiatives were the meeting of the "Middle East Council of Churches' Committee for Dialogue with the Assyrian Church" in Limassol/Cyprus from 5th to 7th September 1991 and the "Mesopotamia Light" Seminar in Modesto/California from 15th to 17th May 1992. The aim of the Middle East Council of Churches starting a dialogue was the commitment of the "Church of the East" to interchurch cooperation, especially in the Arab world. The Seminar in the United States first brought together the three groups of the East Syrian tradition, the "Chaldean Church" linked with Rome, and the "Assyrian Ancient Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East" both the New Calendarian and the Old Calendarian group for a consideration of their common historical and cultural heritage. Thus the Church of the East as well as the other Churches involved were prepared for a non-official consultation with experts. With this volume the papers and discussions of the 1994 Vienna/Lainz encounter made possible by the Foundation of PRO ORIENTE are submitted to the public.

The success of the event was largely due to the fact that many of the participants in the talks already knew and respected each other. Moreover, the inclusion of all Churches of Syriac origin proved to be a good thing. Thus the



Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Maronite, Indian Orthodox, Syro-Malabar and Malankara Catholic Churches were also present. Finally eminent scholars of the Lutheran and Anglican traditions not belonging to any of the Churches directly involved contributed in a major way to the objective and relaxed atmosphere of the talks. Three areas of topics were treated from the different standpoints: history, christology and the liturgy of the Church of the East. All papers and the discussions were characterized by a high degree of factual consensus among the participants.

The historical contributions showed that the Church of the East had developed an independent structure and theology. In the Sasanid Empire taking one's distance from the enemy super power of Rome was a question of survival. The Persian Church had nothing to do with the imperial synods of the Roman Empire which had adopted Christianity. It was as late as in 410 that the Creed and the Canons of the Council of Nicea were received and the Council of Constantinople was never mentioned before the 6th century. This is also why the Church of the East was not affected by the Council of Ephesus and the Condemnation of Nestorius. In the Church of the East, Nestorius is venerated as one of the "three Greek teachers", together with Diodor of Tarsus and Theodor of Mopsuestia. He is known as a martyr of the Antiochian tradition, but plays no role as a theological authority. The legitimacy of the Antiochian intellectual approach in christology and the orthodox intention of the models of solution advocated in the Church of the East are undisputed. In the sense of the later Council of Chalcedon Nestorius must be conceded personal orthodoxy, although with a terminology which had to be rejected by Alexandrian theologians. The authentic teachings of the Church of the East are expressed in the "Liber unionis" of Babai the Great. Hence, the terms "Nestorian" and "Nestorianism" need interpretation. A distinction must be made between the actual teachings of Nestorius, the official teachings of the Church of the East and the classical designation of a heresy, which the Church of the East however never advocated.

All christological models of Antiquity are trying to do equal justice to both the human and divine realities in Jesus. In doing so, there were of course different emphases. Whereas Alexandrian theology stressed the divine identity of Jesus in the interest of his personal unity, Antiochian theology favoured the distinction between his divinity and his humanity in the interest of the real human being of Jesus. Thus the Church of the East speaks of two "kyane", two "qnome" and one "parsopa" in Jesus. With this she means two natures - divine and human -, one specimen of each of these natures - God the Son and a specific human being -, and the person of Jesus in its unity. The source of the misunderstandings in this model of thought was the term "hypostasis". While the Creed of Nicea had understood it as the divine "being" of the Father, by whom the Son was begotten, half a century later Father, Son and Holy Spirit were referred to as three hypostases which means three persons. In the first sense one might speak of two hypostases in Jesus, the divine one mentioned and the human, in the second sense Jesus is unique as a person or hypostasis. As the Assyrian understanding of the corresponding Syriac term of "qnoma" is different from the two Greek coinages, it correctly remains untranslated.

The independence of the Church of the East is also revealed in her liturgy. When two "Western" Eucharistic forms were introduced under the names of Theodor of Mopsuestia and Nestorius, this may well have been because the traditional liturgy according to the Apostles Addai and Mari did not come up to the

standard of the Church in the Roman Empire. The fact that the indigenous liturgy does not refer to the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper may well have been one of the inadequacies felt at that time. Nevertheless, the liturgy according to Addai and Mari remained the predominant form of the celebration of the Eucharist in the Church of the East. Its archaic structure without institution narrative is paralleled by liturgical witnesses of the two first centuries and can be regarded as being just as authentic as the form based on the Pauline synoptic tradition in the rest of the Churches. There is no theological justification for adding to liturgical texts as done on a voluntary basis in recent times. On the contrary, the liturgy of the Church of the East could relativize the gap between the Western and the Eastern liturgies regarding the moment of the consecration of the Eucharistic offerings. It is through the celebration as a whole that Jesus becomes present in the Eucharistic offerings.

Although the Vienna Consultation couldn't yet be crowned by a common formula of faith on Christology, there was nevertheless the feeling that the matter had been successful in the substance - at least between the Church of the East and the Catholic Church - and all that remained to be done was looking for a proper form of expression. The common declaration of Pope John Paul II and Catholicos Mar Dinkha IV, which has meanwhile come about, is a confirmation of that earlier impression. The influence the "Vienna Christological Formula" which was so successful in the agreement with the Oriental Orthodox Churches had on the common declaration with the Church of the East cannot be overlooked. As in the first case it proved again successful to renounce controversial and incriminating terms of the past and express the common witness of the faith in simple and contemporary language.

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 23rd June 1994: Arrival

Friday, 24th June 1994:

9.00 Opening Ceremony: chaired by the president of PRO ORIENTE Alfred Stirnemann
 Address by president Alfred Stirnemann
 Address by Mar Narsai de Baz
 Greeting Messages

10.00 Papers and Discussion: chaired by Mar Gregorios of Aleppo

Alfred Stirnemann

The Vienna Dialogue between Catholic and non-Chalcedonian Theologians
 and its Treatment of Nestorius and Nestorianism

12.30 Lunch

15.30 Paper and Discussion: chaired by Mar Narsai de Baz of Lebanon

Prof. Luise Abramowski

The History of Research into Nestorius and Nestorianism

18.30 Dinner

Saturday, 25th June 1994:

9.00 Papers and Discussion: chaired by Mar Aprem of Trichur

Prof. Sebastian Brock

The Persian Church up to the 6th Century and its Absence from the
 Councils in the Roman Empire

Father Sarhad Jammo

Three Synods, two Ecclesiologies of the Church of the East:

12.30 Lunch

15.30 Paper and Discussion: chaired by Archbishop Emmanuel-Karim Delly of
 Bagdad

Fr. Jean Maurice Fiey OP

The Spread of the Persian Church

18.30 Dinner

Sunday, 26th June 1994:

9.30 Liturgy at the Syrian Orthodox Church of St. Ephrem, celebrated by Metropolitan Ma
 Gregorios of Aleppo

11.30 Departure from Syrian Orthodox Church to a Reception given by the
 Syrian Orthodox Community in Vienna and its Episcopal Vicar Emmanuel Aydin

14.00 Departure for sightseeing

16.00 National Library:
 show of first printed Syriac Bible of 1555 and handwritten original texts

18.00 Liturgy at St. Stephen's Cathedral, celebrated by Mons. Michael Wilhelm

19.30 Dinner

Monday, 27th June 1994:

9.00 Papers: chaired by Mar Joseph Powathil of Changanacherry

Father Bernard Dupuy OP

The Christology of Nestorius

Discussion

Mar Bawai Soro / Prof. Adelbert Davids / Metropolitan Mar Aprem

Is the Theology of the Assyrian Church Nestorian?

12.30 Lunch

15.30 Paper and Discussion: chaired by Mathews Mar Severios of Kundanadu

Prof. Geevargheese Chediath

The Contribution of Bawai The Great to Theology:

18.30 Dinner

Tuesday, 28th June 1994:

9.00 Papers and Discussion: chaired by Patriarchal Vicar Bishop Youssef Matar

Father Sarhad Jammo

The Quddasia of the Apostles Addai and Mari

- 12.30 Lunch
- 15.30 Discussion and Conclusions: chaired by President Alfred Stirnemann
- 18.00 Closing of the Consultation
- 19.00 72nd PRO ORIENTE Ecumenical Symposium on „PRO ORIENTE in India“ at the House of the Diet of the State of Lower Austria
Speakers: *Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil*
and *Dr. Kondothra K. M. George*
- Award of PRO ORIENTE Honorary Memberships by *H. Em. Hans Hermann Cardinal Groër* to both speakers of the symposium and to Metropolitan *Philippos Mar Theophilos* of Bombay and Ankamaly, head of the Office for External Affairs of the Syro-indian Patriarchate and Metropolitan *Thomas Mar Thimotheos* of the diocese Outside Kerala;

Wednesday, 29th June 1994:

- 9.00 Departure for Schallaburg Castle to see the exhibition
„Syria - From the Apostles to the Caliphs“
- 11.15 Departure for the Benedictine Monastery of Melk. Welcome by H. G. Abbot *Burkhard Ellegast*, member of the board of PRO ORIENTE
- 12.05 Midday Prayer
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30 Guided Tour through the Monastery
- 14.30 Drive through the Danube Valley
- 17.00 Visit of the Benedictine Monastery of Göttweig. Welcome by H. G. Abbot *Clemens Lashofer*, member of the board of PRO ORIENTE
Evening Prayer
Dinner
Return to Vienna

Thursday, 30th June 1994: Day of departure

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12. Observers

Fr. Bernard Dubasque, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Rome

Dr. Erich Renhart and MMag Dietmar Winkler,
University of Graz, Institute for Liturgical Studies, Parkstr. 1a, A-8010 Graz

Archbishop Dr. Mesrob K. Krikorian (*prevented*)
Kolonitzgasse 11/11
1030 Wien

13. Secretary of the Minutes

Fr. Gerhard Habison
Pfarramt, A-2002 Großmugl, AUSTRIA

14. Interpreters

Mrs. Odette Nasif
UNICEF, 8, Adnan Omar Sidky-Street, Dokki, Cairo, EGYPT

Mrs. Marcelle Al-Khuri Tarakji
Kassa-Jadda-No 29, SYR-Damascus, SYRIA

Opening Ceremony: Friday June 24, morning

The session begins with a prayer, welcome and greeting addresses and expressions of hope that this historical split between the churches may soon be brought to an end.

Address by President Alfred Stirnemann

Your Graces and dear participants of the Consultation,

I would like to welcome the participants of this consultation on behalf of the Board and the Executive Committee of PRO ORIENTE. H.Em. Hans Hermann Cardinal Groer, Archbishop of Vienna and President of the Board, has asked me to convey his best wishes. He promised to be with us later on. Moreover, I have to convey the best wishes of our founder, the Archbishop emeritus of Vienna, Franciscus Cardinal König, who will also be with us some time later. He asked me to apologize that he cannot take part in all the sessions, for he is very busy in spite of his 88 years.

PRO ORIENTE invited all the churches of Syriac tradition in order to study and evaluate the history, theology and ecclesiological positions of the Assyrian Church of the East, who for so many centuries was unjustly defined as Nestorian. It is the first time that we have such a meeting and so I hope that this day will be marked in the notebooks of history.

May I trace how the idea and the convocation of this conference came about. In 1971, 1973, 1976, 1978 and 1988, in this very hall, we had five great consultations with the non-Chalcedonian Churches. Here the most important individual result, the Vienna Christological Formula, was unanimously passed by theologians of these churches. It had been proposed by Bishop Amba Shenouda, who two months after the event became Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the Coptic Church. Subsequently, the Formula was officially recognized in Common Declarations signed by Popes and Patriarchs.

During the discussions with the non-Chalcedonians some theologians asked about the Assyrian Church and if we should not treat it in a similar way. There were a lot of arguments in favour and a lot against. Some felt that the dialogue would become more difficult by including additional problems.

In October 1991 we held our 1st Regional Symposium upon invitation of H.H. Amba Shenouda in Deir Amba Bishoi/Wadi Natrun. The task was the popularization of the results of the Vienna Dialogue among the different churches of this region. The minutes of this meeting in Egypt recall that under the chairmanship of Metropolitan Amba Bishoy of Damiette "a rather lengthy exchange developed about the opportunity to engage PRO ORIENTE in a dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East, which does not accept the Council of Ephesus in 431 and was in the past considered as being Nestorian."

The subject was again taken up in Kottayam at the 2nd Regional Symposium with the participation of both jurisdictions of the Assyrian Church of the East in India, among them Mar Aprem, who is happily among us today.

As in 1971 we did not know the outcome of the first consultation with the non-Chalcedonians, we today do not know the outcome of the discussions with pre-Ephesian theology. But we hope that something fruitful will result, not only for the dialogue of theologians and the scholarly debate but also for the well-being of the churches, for the unity of the one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

My special thanks go to the Heads of the Assyrian Church of the East, to Mar Dinkha IV, whom a PRO ORIENTE delegation visited in Teheran from 14th to 17th February 1994, and to Mar Addai II, whom we met in Baghdad from 19th to 25th May 1994. Their encouragement gave us the conviction that we are on the right path. The initiative was equally welcomed by the Patriarchs and Heads of the Oriental Catholic Churches of Syriac tradition: H.H. Mar Zakka I Iwas, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antiochia and all the East, H.H. Mar Thoma Mathews II, Catholicos of the East, H.B. Ignace Antoine II Hayek, Syrian Catholic Patriarch, H.B. Nasrallah Pierre Sfeir, Maronite Patriarch, H.B. Raffael I Bidawid, Chaldean Patriarch, H.Em. Anthony Cardinal Padiyara, Head of the Syro-Malabar Synod, and H.G. Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios, Head of the Malankara Catholic Church.

The advice and support of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Middle East Council of Churches were a valuable encouragement.

So I thank you once again for coming to Vienna and propose to open the conference with the Lord's Prayer said by everybody in his or her language.

Address by Mar Narsai de Baz

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As members in the Body of Christ we come to this Vienna consultation with *hope, gratitude, and joy* to celebrate a historic gathering of member Churches who belong to one of the most distinguished ecclesial traditions in Christendom. Indeed, we are *joyful* because, today, after more than 1.500 years filled with misunderstanding, controversy and separation distinguished representatives of all our Churches, for the first time in centuries, have come together in humble recognition that the present divisions in the One Body of Christ are scandalous in the sight of God and an impediment to our witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For this gathering we are *grateful* for all the ecumenical efforts of His Eminence Hans Herman Cardinal Groër, the Archbishop of Vienna, and for the leadership of Dr. Alfred Stirnemann, whose actions of both have brought us one step closer to one another but also a step further from the hypocrisy of preaching unity but not practicing it. We are also grateful to the PRO ORIENTE Foundation for bringing together a most illustrious team of experts in the history and theology of our tradition, as well as observers from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. But most of all we have *hope*. A *hope* that is grounded in the realization that since we have come here motivated by Jesus' prayer „*that they all may be one*,“ the Lord of the Church will be with us and will fill our hearts with his Spirit, so that we are able to appreciate one another in a new way that will encourage us to resolve all that has kept us apart for these long centuries.

Our delegation will present two papers in this conference. These will address two topics proposed by PRO ORIENTE, and will suggest that the Church of the East is an apostolic Church that has maintained her faith in accordance with the sacred scriptures and the holy tradition of the one catholic and apostolic Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Beyond this, I would want to emphasize that our Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, is not a „Nestorian“ Church. Though Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, is honored and venerated in her thought and liturgical action, the Church of the East was established in Mesopotamia during the apostolic age centuries before his birth. Students of Eastern Christianity are aware of the historical evidence that the Church of the East, in just the first three centuries after the resurrection, offered up thousands upon thousands of saints and martyrs on the altar of her faith in witness to Christ. The Church of the East has been and will always remain an integral part of the one catholic and apostolic Church that our Lord has established.

This glorious history of the Church is the heritage of us all. It unites our churches, in a special way, as members of one ecclesial tradition. For this, I bid all of us to embrace this historic opportunity to bridge the gap that has separated our churches, and to do so in such a way as to give birth to a new ecumenical era for Eastern Christianity in general, and for our Mesopotamian tradition in particular.

We trust that the effects of this dialogue will render a new stronger Church to the sons and daughters of our faith. For this vision, we pray to our Lord Jesus that participants in this and future Vienna consultations will labor unceasingly for the restoration of our unity in faith, for it is only through such unity we will uphold our Christianity in the face of today's challenges both in the East and the West.

GREETING MESSAGES RECEIVED

Syrian Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East
Damascus - Syria

June 17, 1994

Our Dear Brothers in Christ; Dr. Alfred Stirnemann, President of PRO ORIENTE, Archbishops, Bishops and Theologians who are meeting in Vienna for the Ecclesiastical Consultations. We greet you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are very happy to know the PRO ORIENTE which we are very proud of its activities in the Ecumenical Movement, has started now a dialogue between the one family of Syriac speaking Churches, i.e. to say, my Church, The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and the ancient Assyrian Orthodox Church of the East. As you know, these two Churches share the same heritage of Syriac language and their fore-fathers struggled over the ages suffering for Christ's sake and thank God they still exist. Moreover, they co-operated in different kinds of sciences and their scholars translated many books from Greek to Syriac and to Arabic languages, though they had in their history some unhappy events of misunderstanding specially

on the doctrines of Christology and Mariology. But, we hope, in this era which is considered to be an ecumenical one, we can reach to a better understanding.

We wish to mention here that in 1988 we started an un-official dialogue between us in order to study the historical relationship between our two Churches.

We hope, PRO ORIENTE, which we are proud to be one of its Protectors, has an experience in the field of dialogues, will succeed in narrowing the gap between these two Churches and to correct some untrue and undefended events in history so that to remove the accusations and open a new chapter in the history of these Churches with an ecumenical spirit.

We pray that God may grant success to these consultations which you are holding and bestow His blessings on all of you. May the grace of God be with you.

With best wishes,

Yours in Christ,

+ Ignatius Zakka I Iwas

Patriarch of Antioch and all the East,

Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church

**The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Catholicate of the East**

Deeply esteemed participants in the consultation,

With cordial love I send my greetings to all the participants in the consultation on „Orthodoxy and Catholicity in the Syriac Tradition“ held at Vienna under the auspices of PRO ORIENTE.

We have a profound feeling of satisfaction that PRO ORIENTE could arrange this consultation after the Regional Symposium held at Kottayam in Kerala in 1993, thereby starting another page in the history of its ecumenical efforts, and could open up a broader horizon for Inter-Church relations.

I had the opportunity to be present at Kottayam on the occasion of the Regional Symposium held last year which was a great success. The efforts of the PRO ORIENTE is very well appreciated. In recent years we have been able to gain much experience in the study of a number of themes and come to better understanding on various important matters of common interest for the good of the community.

As Christians we have to understand the present day realities of life in this world and have to be aware of our religious and social duties. We have to take an active part in all the forums aimed at promoting Christian co-operation and implementing Christ's commandments of love and brotherhood for the triumph of lasting peace and goodwill throughout the world.

Inspired by God's spirit who „guides into all truth“, let us work for the unity and purity of the Faith so as to be worthy of the eternal calling of salvation and of the high responsibility of our times and let us strive for the implementation of the Christian ideals which are also common to all mankind, ideals of peace on Earth, rapprochement among nations and good will among men.

Let the healthy inner strength in us under the beneficial influence of the healing Right Hand of our Lord gradually lead us to the blessed unity of faith and life. May the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit - one True God - be with you all.

May the „one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all“ bless with strength and success the spirit bearing efforts of PRO ORIENTE and lead us all to that unity which our Lord Jesus Christ willed and prayed for.

With much love in Christ

+ Baselios Marthoma Mathews II

Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan

Syrian Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch

Beirut, 20th June 1994

Dear President,
Dear Congressists

It was a pleasure for me to know that our Syrian Churches will meet together to study this year: ORTHODOXY AND CATHOLICITY IN THE SYRIAC TRADITION with special attention to the Theology of the Persian Church.

We bless your meeting and thanks PRO ORIENTE, in the person of his President Mr. ALFRED STIRNEMANN, which always tried to promote the Syrian Tradition and help to investigate thoroughly in the Theology of Syrian Churches.

We also want to assure you of our deep consideration to this hard work you have done, and of our total and vital engagement in the Tradition and Theology of our holy Fathers, from Thomas the Apostle to Addai, Mari, Ephrem, Ya'qub, Narsai and Maroun. They will be forever our guides and mentor to unify our thought and theology, and our rich Tradition so harmonious and various in the same time.

The difference of statements by diversity of countries plus political influences and language expression, all these things leads to a kind of discordance in this largest Church wide as the width of two Empires.

But now it is time to put an end to this historical tunnel by returning to our sources throwing down ourselves under feet of our Holy Masters then we will meet in our Schools: Nisibis, Edessa, Kennashrin, Gondishapor, etc. to spread the whole world by the depth of Syriac spirit with his solid spiritual theology so simple and easy in his subtlety that he penetrate the human mind.

To all the congressists we say: You are the pioneers of Syriac culture and theology. You are the basement and light who guide us to the identity of Syriac Churches.

Say the truth, all the truth and do not forget that love is the salt of life.
God bless all of you.

+ Ignace Anthony II Hayek
Syriac Catholic Patriarch of Antioch

Maronite Patriarchate

To Alfred Stirnemann, President of PRO ORIENTE

Your letter dated June 1st 1994 reached me recently. In it you request a Message from me on the occasion of your Vienna Consultation, June 24-29 1994 on „Orthodoxy and Catholicity in the Syriac Tradition with special attention to the Theology of the Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire.“

You forwarded to me also the programme of the Consultation as well as the list of participants experts and lecturers, among whom figure some of our Brother Bishops, representatives of their Beatitudes the Patriarchs.

We command you on this initiative which will hopefully shed further lights on the theological issues at hand, and will bring closer the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, for the good of the faithful and the glory of the Gospel values, especially at a time, when we feel in utmost need of the fulfillment of the wish so dear to the heart of Christ „That they may be one as we are one.“ (Jn 17).

We pray that God may bestow upon you His strengthening Grace to help you pursue your commendable endeavour in the leadership of PRO ORIENTE, sparing no effort in the promotion of such a great cause as the Unity of the Church of Christ.

I wish also to thank you for your last visit to Bkerké and hope to see you again in Lebanon in the coming September on the occasion of your third symposium to be held in Lebanon after the ones held in Egypt and India.

Finally, may I ask you to convey my brotherly greetings to all the participants coming from various countries and backgrounds. I implore, once more, God's Grace upon your consultation and pray that He may grant you strenght and success and shower His blessings upon your work.

+ Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

Chaldean Patriarchate of Babylonia

15th June 1994

Dearest Mr. President,

It is a pleasure for me to convey my cordial greetings to the participants in the conference held by the Foundation PRO ORIENTE in Vienna from 24th to 29th this month, to which we had the honour to send our representatives, who are present among you. I take this opportunity to express the great appreciation our Chaldean Church has for the work your Foundation is doing to bring about Christian unity in the Orient.

His Most Reverend Eminence, Cardinal Franciscus König, the founder of this institution, will remain the most credible symbol of the ecumenical movement which, since the Ecumenical Council of Vatican II, has been working for the

creation of a new mentality, a daughter of the Gospel, which throughout the centuries does not stop reminding all those believing in Christ of the necessity of Christian union and at the same time encourages the wholesome living together of all believers in Christ in our oriental region.

The Chaldean Church is accompanying your endeavours with her prayer to the Lord for the success of your conference and assures you of her cooperation in your efforts for the realization of your intentions and your sacrifices, to which I give my blessing, imploring upon all of you the favours of divine grace.

Yours devoutly in Christ,

+ Raphael I Bidawid
Chaldean Patriarch of Babylonia

Syro-Malabar Church of India

Dearest Mr. President Stirnemann,

thank you very much for welcoming me and for introducing me to this distinguished gathering. Because of a certain previous engagement I could not be present this morning but I am very happy to join you.

Mr. President has asked me to give a sort of message also on behalf of my church. The Father and Head of our church, the Syro-Malabar Church, H. Em. Anthony Cardinal Padiyara, I have not been able to contact him for a message to this consultation. But I have also been the chairman of the ecumenical commission of the Syro-Malabar Church and therefore I deem it a privilege to greet this assembly and to give you my good wishes. Also as the President of the National Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India I am very happy to see that PRO ORIENTE has taken this subject for the discussions.

The Syrian tradition is very important for the whole church. Perhaps we can speak of the three strands of church tradition: the Greek, the Latin and the Syriac. Therefore it is but natural to give special attention to this branch of Christianity, the Syrian tradition. For us in India this is vitally important because the Syro-Malabar Church and also other Christian churches certainly depend on the Syrian tradition. For the church community in India dialogue between the various sections of Christianity is certainly important and therefore on behalf of my church I wish the best results for this first meeting of all the churches of Syrian tradition which came together on this world-wide level.

+ Mar Joseph Powathil
Archbishop of Changanacherry

22 June 1994

A Message to PRO ORIENTE:

From the time Christian unity was disrupted, by conflict between the East and the West, the Spirit of God has been, in mysterious ways, acting to heal this most tragic and painful wound. In the course of recent history, the PRO ORIENTE is one of God's powerful instruments, in this healing action.

More numerous, and more powerful, signs are today beckoning to all followers of Christ, to come together. External means are also abundant. Science and technology have eliminated distances. Political barriers are falling apart. From the most unexpected quarters, hands are extended, to grasp each other, as members of the one large family of God.

The disciples of Christ should, more than all others, read these signs of the times. Peace is God's gift and it is the Lord who builds the House. Let us therefore, first of all, turn to the Father above, for an abundant gift of the Holy Spirit, Who is the author of unity, love and reconciliation.

The presence of Christian groups, promoted by PRO ORIENTE, in various locations, through regional meetings, greatly fosters deep and personal understanding. It increases good-will and mutual understanding in marvellous ways. It paves the way for real cooperation.

To make unity effective and fruitful, prayer and study must be strengthened, with effective joint action, for the common good of Church and society. For this noble task, today there are innumerable openings - elimination of abject poverty in many parts of the world, education and rehabilitation of youth - fighting new and mysterious diseases - elimination of drugs and narcotics, and a host of others.

Let the efforts of the PRO ORIENTE be an integrated one, so that, the work of gathering together of the children of God scattered throughout the world, which the Risen Lord is continuing among us, may be hastened and consummated.

Maranatha!

+ Benedictos Mar Gregorios
Archbishop of Trivandrum

First working session: Friday June 24

Chairman: Mar *Gregorius*, Archbishop of Alepppo

Alfred Stirnemann

**THE VIENNA DIALOGUE BETWEEN CATHOLIC AND
NON-CHALCEDONIAN THEOLOGIANs AND ITS TREATMENT OF
NESTORIUS AND NESTORIANISM**

When PRO ORIENTE started in 1971 with its First non-official Consultation between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church it was actually transgressing its goal as established by its statutes. The PRO ORIENTE statutes passed on the occasion of its creation on November 4th 1964 define the scope of PRO ORIENTE as follows:

"...to establish and to promote contacts with the European East in all intellectually relevant sectors especially also between representatives of the Roman Catholic and of the Orthodox Churches..."¹

It was only after the Fourth Consultation that the statutes of our foundation were changed, defining its scope as

"to develop and to promote the ecumenical relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox, the pre-Chalcedonian and the pre-Ephesian Churches."²

Accordingly, first contacts with the heads of the pre-Ephesian church were initiated, thus when the then President Dr. Theodor Piffel-Percevic, our theologian Prof. Ernst Christoph Suttner and the Secretary General visited H.H. Mar Addai II in Baghdad on their way to India on April 8th 1982 and when Cardinal König accompanied by the President and the Secretary General of PRO ORIENTE met H.H. Mar Dinkha IV on June the 11th 1988 at the celebration of the Russian millenary in Moscow.

The Vienna Christological Formula

The most important result of the Vienna dialogue between Roman Catholics and the Ancient Oriental theologians was a definition which came to be called the "Vienna Christological Formula". It is contained in the communiqué of the First Vienna Consultation unanimously accepted on September 12., 1971 which reads as follows:

"We, as Christians, feel united in a spirit of brotherhood in our faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, God and Saviour, and recognize equally the commission and prayer of Our Lord, that we all may be one in Him, in order that we may bear common witness to Him that the world may believe (John 17,21)

¹ Statutes of PRO ORIENTE in the version of November 4th, 1964

² Stirnemann/Wilflinger "In verbo autem tuo" Tyrolia XVI, Wien-Innsbruck 1994, p. 310, Statutes in the version of October 29th, 1979

We believe, that our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is God the Son Incarnate; perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment, not for the twinkling of an eye, his humanity is one with his divinity without commixtion, without confusion, without division, without separation. We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard his mystery inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible.

We see that there are still differences in the theological interpretation of the mystery of Christ, because of our different ecclesiastical and theological traditions; we are convinced, however, that these different formulations on both sides can be understood along the lines of the faith of Nicea and Ephesus...³

This agreement was taken up by the communiqué of the Second Vienna Consultation of September 9th 1973 with the words:

"We reaffirm what was said in the First non-official Consultation We saw, that what appears to be the right formulation can be wrongly understood, and also how even behind an apparently wrong formulation there can be a right understanding. We understand that our common father in Christ, St. Cyril of Alexandria speaks of the one Incarnate nature of God's Word, it does not deny but rather express the full and perfect humanity of Christ. We believe also, that the definition of the Council of Chalcedon, rightly understood today, affirms the unity of person and the indissoluble union of Godhead and Manhood in Christ, despite the phrase 'in two natures'. We all agree, that our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is consubstantial with the Father in his Divinity Himself became consubstantial with us in His Humanity. He perfectly unites in Himself perfect Godhead with perfect Manhood without division, without separation, without change, without commixture."⁴

The basic assumptions of this Vienna Christological Formula can be summarized as follows:

- a) Different formulations can exist within one church and can be regarded as orthodox even by those who do not use them in their theological tradition.
- b) Instead of just reinterpreting the terminology and the expressions of the fifth century it is essential to redefine the mystery of our faith in terms of the concepts of contemporary philosophy and theology and to use a modern language.
- c) As the mystery will always remain inexhaustible and ineffable our attempts at understanding and defining are only approximations of the truth.
- d) In this effort the different traditions either stressed unity or duality. Both attempts were considered orthodox as long as the stress on unity or duality did not deny the other (divine respectively human) aspect.

The proposals made by the theologians assembled in Vienna in their personal capacity as experts and faithful were submitted to the judgement of the competent church authorities there were received by popes and patriarchs and taken over even

³ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 1, Vienna 1972, p.182; PRO ORIENTE „The Vienna Dialogue - Five Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy: Communiqués and Joint Documents“ - Booklet No. 1, Vienna 1990, p. 46

⁴ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 2, Vienna 1974, p. 174; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No. 1, p. 58

word for word by common declarations signed by the Roman Pontiffs and H.H. Moran Mar Ignatios Yacoub III, Patriarch of Antioch,⁵ H.H. Pope Shenouda III, Patriarch of Alexandria,⁶ Mar Moran Ignatios Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch,⁷ the bishops of the Coptic Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church⁸ and the Joined Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.⁹ Thus, the Vienna Christological Formula was officially recognized by the highest church authorities concerned.

It will be a challenging task of this consultation or of a following one to reconsider the Vienna Christological Formula in the light of a dialogue between theologians of the Ephesian and the pre-Ephesian churches.

On Extreme Dyophysitism

During the discussions of the five non-official consultations between theologians of the Roman Catholic and the non-Chalcedonian churches neither the subject of Nestorius, nor of Nestorianism or of the Assyrian Church of the East was on the agenda. The theology of Nestorius and the tendency of Nestorianism were marginally treated where it was considered to be essential for the historical understanding of what happened at the Council of Chalcedon or where it was important to understand the theological tendencies of this time. Extreme emphasis on duality is repeatedly condemned by the wording of the five Vienna dialogue rounds and obviously called Nestorianism. On the other hand the extreme position of monophysitism is rejected under the label of Eutychianism. It seems clear, that the twelve anathemata¹⁰ of the Council of Ephesus of 431 as defined in the letter of Cyril of Alexandria to Nestorius of Constantinople are included in this implicate definition.

This is expressed in the communiqué of the First Consultation:

"We find our common basis in the same Apostolic traditions, particularly as affirmed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed; we all confess the dogmatic decisions and teachings of Nicea (325), Constantinople (381) and Ephesus (431); we all agree in rejecting both the Nestorian and Eutychian positions about Jesus Christ. We have endeavoured for a deeper understanding of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christologies which have separated us until now."¹¹

The Second Vienna Consultation similarly stated:

"For those of us in the Western tradition, to hear of the one nature of Christ can be misleading, because it may be misunderstood as a denial of his humanity. For those of us, in the Oriental Orthodox Churches to hear of two natures can be misleading because it can be misunderstood as affirming two

⁵ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 5, Vienna 1989, p. 184; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 108

⁶ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 5, Vienna 1989, p. 165; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 109 and p. 111

⁷ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 5, Vienna 1989, p. 164; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 117

⁸ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 5, p. 168, PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 120
⁹ PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 123

¹⁰ Das Gemeinsame Credo, Tyrolia VI, Wien 1983, p. 25 f.

¹¹ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 1 Vienna 1972, p.182; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 46

persons in Christ. But both sides are agreed in rejecting Eutychianism and Nestorianism....¹²

In the communiqué of the Third and the Fourth non-official Vienna Consultations the Christological agreement was reaffirmed, whereas the Fifth Consultation stated in its final communiqué of September 25th, 1988:

"The Fifth Consultation emphasized that the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God could not be exhaustibly formulated in words, and that within the limits of condemned errors like Arianism, Nestorianism and Eutychianism, a certain plurality of expressions was permissible in the relation to the inseparable and unconfused hypostatic union of the human and the divine in the one Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God Incarnate of the Holy Spirit, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, consubstantial with God the Father in his divinity and consubstantial with us in his humanity..."¹³

Thus, the Five Vienna Consultations were concerned to state, that any Christological definition defining the mystery by laying more stress on either unity or duality can be considered orthodox as long as they do not deny or undervalue the other aspect. In this context extreme monophysitism is considered to deny duality and is called Eutychianism, whereas extreme dyophysitism denying unity is defined as Nestorianism in the Vienna dialogue with the pre-Chalcedonian theologians.¹⁴

Apart from this terminological use of the word Nestorianism no reference was made in these five dialogue rounds either to Nestorius nor to the Assyrian Church of the East. It must also be stated that Nestorianism was not systematically treated as this was beyond the scope of that dialogue.

Similar Methods - Similar Results ?

It stands to reason that other elements of the five rounds of the Vienna Dialogue with the pre-Chalcedonian churches could also be applied in this dialogue here and studied for their usefulness both in terms of similar methods or in terms of their results.

I. In terms of methods:

a) starting with a non-official dialogue the results of which are then put before the competent authorities of the respective churches for judgement, this leading to a possible recognition for the official theological dialogue

b) repeating the experience with the remaining problems in various further discussions in follow-up rounds

c) starting with the historical problems which were decisive at the stage of separation of the churches and going on to contemporary problems which are fermenting actual church life

d) starting with the easier problems (say the historical and dogmatical ones) and moving on to the more difficult and complicated questions (the ecclesiological and canonical)

¹² Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 2, p. 175; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 59

¹³ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 5, p. 149; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 102

¹⁴ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 1, pp. 154-166; Piet Schoonenberg SJ, Monophysitic and dyophysitic languages about Christ

II. In terms of the results:

a) redefining of theological problems with the help of contemporary philosophy and modern language in order to give adequate expression to the concerns of the churches and Christians today :

"In order to overcome these differences and to find mutual agreement and understanding, new ways of thinking and fresh categories of reflection and vision seem to be required, so that the sister Churches may together fulfil their common responsibility to the Lord and carry out their common mission in the light of the present situation and for the sake of future generations."¹⁵

b) solving the problem of the condemnation of persons who are recognized as fathers by the other side and dealing with the existing mutual anathemata:

"In the question of anathemata now being pronounced by one side on the teachers and fathers of the other, we were of the opinion, that it was not necessary to insist on the acceptance of these as teachers and fathers by those who formally had condemned them. A formal lifting of the anathemata also may not be necessary. It may be possible for the Churches simply to drop from the liturgical corpus anathemata of saints and teachers of the other side, as some Churches have already begun to do."¹⁶

"A ... major positive result of the first four Vienna Consultations was in relation to mutual anathemata. Several churches have in the interest of better ecumenical relations, given up condemning fathers and teachers of the other side in their liturgical practice. It was recognized, that it may not be possible or necessary to lift these ancient anathemata formally; wrong teaching should however continue to be reprovved."¹⁷

c) the recognition of councils of the past as ecumenical ones and their relevance for the faith, especially those which are not recognized or even condemned nor formally rejected by the other side:

"There is disagreement ... on the status of councils after 431 a.D. regarded as ecumenical by the Roman Catholic Church ... If there is anything of value in these later Councils this could be discussed ... The suggestion has been made, that some of these Councils can be regarded simply as general councils of the Roman Catholic Church. Only the first three councils would be regarded as ecumenically binding and pre-eminently the expression of the faith of the Apostolic Church."¹⁸

d) the naming of fathers or church authorities in the liturgy¹⁹

e) models of future unity

I can imagine that the methods followed or the results achieved in the Vienna Dialogue between Roman Catholics and pre-Chalcedonians be put to fruitful use in our dialogue, be it as an inspiration for developing other ways or as a model for following a similar path.

¹⁵ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 4, Vienna 1978, p. 234; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No. 1, p. 88

¹⁶ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 2, p. 176, PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 59

¹⁷ Wort und Wahrheit, Supplementary Issue No. 5, p. 149; PRO ORIENTE Booklet No.1, p. 102

¹⁸ PRO ORIENTE „The Vienna Dialogue - Five Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy: „On Councils and Conciliarity“ - Booklet No. 5, Vienna 1993, p. 61

¹⁹ PRO ORIENTE Booklet No. 1, p. 18: Holy 'Heretics' and 'Schismatic' Saints - The Question of Anathemata

Dialogue with the Assyrian Church

Let me add some information about how the idea of starting a dialogue with pre-Ephesian theologians developed. Obviously, it was already in the minds of those who wrote the new statutes of PRO ORIENTE in October 1979. When they formulated the different tasks relations with the pre-Ephesian churches seemed a potential field of action for the foundation. I even remember an allusion made by our theologian of the founding days, Mons. Otto Mauer, about this kind of future dialogue.

The possibility again came up at the First Regional Symposium in Deir Wadi Natrun in Egypt in October 1991. The minutes recall that under the chairmanship of Metropolitan Amba Bishoy of Damiette

"a rather lengthy exchange developed about the opportunity to engage PRO ORIENTE in a dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East, which does not accept the council of Ephesos of 431 and was in the past considered as being Nestorian..."²⁰

Mar Gregorios of Aleppo from the Syrian Orthodox Church was advocating practical solutions for receiving the Assyrians by the other churches, especially in the Middle East. Bishop Krikorian from the Armenian Apostolic church called for a language in ecumenical dialogue "*which reflects more Christian charity*". Archimandrite Antiba from the Greek Catholic church called for a new way of understanding Nestorius, Prof. Father Elie Khalifé Hashem from the Maronite church suggested the creation, of a special PRO ORIENTE Commission, composed of theologians belonging to all the churches of Syriac tradition in a broad sense. An initial dialogue with the Assyrians within this particular tradition could contribute greatly to clarify positions. This "Syriac" PRO ORIENTE commission could afterwards be extended to include others. Concluding this discussion H.H. Pope Shenouda indicated that he would not be opposed to the idea of PRO ORIENTE handling the problem of the Assyrians.

In the final discussion chaired by the Secretary General the Assyrian issue was taken up once more. There was a common feeling that it was

"not possible to include the Assyrians in the PRO ORIENTE consultations between Roman Catholic and Ancient Oriental Theologians, because that would complicate the dialogue as well as the reception of its results by the faithful."²¹

However, any Roman Catholic group or PRO ORIENTE would be free to open a separate dialogue with the Assyrians. Accordingly point 13 of the final Report and Suggestions of the Wadi Natrun Symposium reads as follows:

"m) A study of the faith of the Assyrian Church of the East and its rejection of the 3rd Council of Ephesus (431) was not considered to be a subject of bilateral or multilateral dialogue in the near future, is however open to examination in the long run."²²

²⁰ PRO ORIENTE „The Vienna Dialogue - Five Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy: Middle East Regional Symposium Deir Amba Bishoy“ - Booklet No 3, Vienna 1993, p. 98

²¹ PRO ORIENTE Booklet No. 3, p. 151

²² PRO ORIENTE Booklet No. 3, p. 154

At the Second Study Seminar on Councils and Conciliarity held in Vienna in June 1992, Professor Hofrichter of Salzburg University again raised the question of Nestorianism.²³ The Armenian Archbishop Krikorian pointed out that the Assyrian Church is a member of the World Council of Churches. Thus other churches already find themselves in an organized relationship to them.

The Second Regional Symposium held in Kottayam, Kerala, in October 1993 was attended by Bishop Mar Aprem of Trichur as well as priests and lay-people of his (old-Calendarian) church and of the neo-Calendarian Assyrian Church in India. The minutes state:

"There was satisfaction that the bishop of the Assyrian Church present, Mar Aprem, agreed with the PRO ORIENTE Christological statement. H.H. Catholicos Mathews II greeted it with enthusiasm. Mar Aprem deplored the rejection of the Nestorian position in the communiqués of the first two Consultations.

He stated that not using the term Theotokos by the non-Ephesian church does not imply a denial of the Holy Virgin being the Mother of God.

The Assyrian Church is neither pro - nor anti-Chalcedonian, since the responsables of the Persian Church were not able to attend the Council of Chalcedon because of an ongoing war between the Persian and the Roman Empires.

A Christology of the Persian Church should be studied and a dialogue initiated with theologians of all the churches of Syriac traditions."²⁴

This is a short description of how the initiative of a dialogue on pre-Ephesian theology in the framework of all the churches of Syriac tradition came about.

PRO ORIENTE is most grateful, that a delegation composed of Archbishop Mar Gregorios of Aleppo and myself was received by H.H. Mar Dinkha IV in Teheran (February 14th to 17th 1994) and by Mar Addai II in Baghdad (May 19th to 25th 1994) which in turn led to the participation of their theologians assembled here.

We are equally grateful to the patriarchs and heads of the Oriental Orthodox and Oriental Catholic Churches of Syriac tradition for their understanding, support and blessing of our initiative.

²³ PRO ORIENTE Booklet No. 5, p. 53

²⁴ PRO ORIENTE Booklet No. 6 (in preparation)

THE VIENNA CHRISTOLOGICAL FORMULA IN AN ASSYRIAN PERSPECTIVE

I. Introduction

In order to present an Assyrian perspective on the Vienna Christological Formula, we shall first divide the text of the formula into twelve (12) short and related segments, then make our remarks on each one respectively. As we deal with each segment we shall focus on issues that are relevant to our Christological discussion. Finally, we shall offer a concluding summary on this formula. However, during our work with the segments, we shall keep in mind the following four points as stimuli to our thoughts:¹

Whenever dealing with confessional statements, the historical, theological, political and cultural contexts out of which the issues involved have arisen need to be kept in mind in order to discern its true significance.

In Christological and confessional statements what needs to be the focus of our attention is not the words but the meaning of those words. In addition, the meaning of words shifts according to varying circumstances of time and space. It may prove necessary, sometimes, to change words for the sake of conveying their original ideas more effectively.

The subject matter of Christological and confessional statements has to do with matters of truth that are basically a mystery which cannot be fully comprehended. In other words, the essence of God is unapproachable and the mode of the Incarnation of the Word of God is ineffable.

Before a group of people seriously begins a theological dialogue, participants must find a way to ascertain whether any side has substantially departed from the truths of the Gospel.

II. Comments on the Christological Formula

Segment 1:

„We, as Christians, feel united in a spirit of brotherhood in our faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, God and Savior, and recognize equally the commission and prayer of our Lord that we may all be one in Him in order that we may bear common witness to Him that the world may believe (John 17, 21).

We find our common basis in the same Apostolic tradition, particularly as affirmed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed; we all confess the dogmatic decisions and teachings of Nicea (325), Constantinople (381)...

Indeed, we affirm the notion that all Christians should strive through dialogue towards reconciliation until they actually achieve unity in a spirit of brotherhood

¹ *The Survival of Dogma*, Avery Dulles, Crossroad, New York, NY, 1971, pp. 160, 168-169. See Chapter (10) for a fuller discussion of dogma as an ecumenical problem.

and faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ. The common basis that the Church of the East already finds herself sharing with the other sister churches is the dogmatic faith of the Council of Nicea (AD 325), for during the Synod of Mar 'Ishaq (AD 410) the Church of the East officially received the decisions and teachings of the Council of Nicea through the embassy of Marutha bishop of Maiparqat.² Since that time the Church of the East has with fidelity and fondness maintained the Nicene-Constantinopolitan tradition and has implemented in its Trinitarian and Christological teachings the essence of the Apostolic faith affirmed by the early Church Fathers. Therefore, today, we feel that the Church of the East would find the acceptance of such a statement very possible.

Segment 2:

..... and Ephesus (431);

Historically the Church of the East has never been officially approached by the Catholic Church or any of the Orthodox Churches to accept the Christological formula and dogmatic teachings of the Council of Ephesus (431). However, we feel that today, in light of modern scholarship and contemporary ecumenical efforts, there is a significant opportunity for dialogue and ultimately for progress in regard to the question of the relationship of the Church of the East to the Council of Ephesus by approaching the disputed Christological teaching and its formula with mutual restraint and respect, and with a desire for mutual understanding and tolerance.

There are three points that we may suggest for consideration whenever there is a realistic inquiry into whether (or how) the Church of the East might accept the Christological formula of the Council of Ephesus:

Since, every Christological statement articulated by an authoritative body such as a Council, a Synod, or a Commission is an attempt to explain the inexplicable mystery of the Incarnation, and because of the fact that no single formula or series of statements are ever able to capture in words the essence of the mystery of the Incarnation, we therefore feel that the Christological formula of the Council of Ephesus needs to be respectfully considered as one among other genuine expressions from both the Eastern and Western traditions that are legitimate and validly significant.

The Christological debate, which prompted the Eastern bishops in the Roman Empire to convene the Council of Ephesus in AD 431 in order to resolve the ongoing debate over the modality of the union of the Divine and human natures in Christ, continued to persist with intensity for years even after the conclusion of the Council. Therefore, the Church felt an urgent need for a more definitive resolution of the same Christological problem, which was actually achieved in the Council of Chalcedon (451). We therefore feel that the theological formulation of the Council of Ephesus need to be considered as they are refined and brought to a fuller completion in and through the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon,

² *Synodicon Orientale*, (hereinafter *SO*) ed., J.B. Chabot, Paris, 1892, p 18-19 (Syriac text).

which clearly affirms the objective reality of both the Divine and human natures, as well as the personal³ (hypostatic⁴) oneness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We feel that today particular attention needs to be paid, as well, to the Christological definitions and formulae which have been canonical sanctioned in the Church of the East⁵. And since these statements and others in both the Eastern and Western traditions stem from the one holy catholic and apostolic Church of our Lord, we feel that it is necessary to consider all of them as statements in harmony with one another and as parallel in their common objective, for they all add spiritual enrichment and theological wealth to the one Christian tradition, each statement with its own unique genius and distinct authenticity.

Segment 3:

..... we all agree in rejecting both the Nestorian [position about Jesus Christ]....

A clarification of what the „Nestorian“ Christological definition actually consists of and means, by both the Church of the East and other Churches, would be an important bridge connecting our differing vocabularies and points of view. The position of the Church of the East on the rejection of „Nestorianism“, however, will all depend on what the participants in previous Vienna consultations and others understand the term „Nestorian“ or „Nestorianism“ to mean.

If, for example, the term „Nestorian“ as mentioned in the text of the Vienna Christological Formula is perceived to describe a union of the two natures of our Lord which results in „one and another“ or „Two Sons“ in Christ, or suggests that Christ is an „ordinary man“ whom God adopted in order to reside in him and inspire him, as in the righteous ones and prophets of old, then the Church of the East will also condemn and reject such teaching regardless of the „name“ it has been presented under.

The fact must be taken into account that historically the Church of the East has never understood the term „Nestorian“ to mean what has been suggested above. On the contrary, the term „Nestorian“ has always been conceived by Church of the East Fathers to refer to a Christological position in harmony with the orthodox teaching they had received from their Fathers who, in turn, received it from the Apostles.

Segment 4:

..... and [we all agree in rejecting the] Eutychian positions about Jesus Christ.

If what is meant by the „Eutychian“ position includes or reflects any of the following three points, then the Church of the East has already agreed for centuries to the rejection of the „Eutychian“ position.

An assertion that in Christ there were two natures „before the Incarnation“, there was only one „after the Incarnation“. In other words, in the Person of the Incarnate Christ there was but a single nature, and that is the Divine nature, as against

³ According to the terminology used by the Church of the East.

⁴ According to the terminology of Ephesus and Chalcedon.

⁵ See Appendix I of this paper.

the Chalcedonian teaching of the double nature, Divine and human, after the Incarnation.

An emphasis on the divinity of Christ to the extent that it would seem to overlook or deny his integral humanity. A denial of the fact that the humanity of Christ was consubstantial with us.

Segment 5:

We have endeavored for a deeper understanding of the Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonian Christologies which have separated us until now.

The recent ongoing dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Unit on „Faith and Unity“ of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) has in many ways been an occasion for the Church of the East to enrich her understanding with insights into what have been for her the most complicated and problematical terminologies employed by the Oriental Orthodox brethren. The focus of the three sessions of dialogue that started in September 1992 has been on the subject of the Christology of the Church of the East. In spite of the fact that the resultant analyses drawn from these relatively short encounters have reached across the theological spectrum, the delegation of our Church re-affirmed her long-held view that though the Church of the East differs in the „language and terminology“⁶ she uses to express her Christological faith from that vocabulary employed by Cyril of Alexandria at the Council of Ephesus, we felt that the Church of the East does in reality share the same „essence“ of the one Apostolic faith that the Catholic Church and all the Orthodox Churches also share. The fact that the essence of our God remains a transcendent mystery compels us believe as well that no one statement of faith will ever be sufficient to express the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation. Accordingly, if a distinction is established between the „content“ of our common faith and the „terminology“ utilized to articulate that faith, we at this consultation may be able to overcome most of the Christological problems which have thus far been the primary obstacles to the re-establishment of communion.

Therefore, based on her goodwill and ecumenical commitment, the Church of the East would welcome any bi-lateral or multi-lateral attempts to increase the understanding of all the participants in this Christological dialogue so that we may ultimately be enabled to remove all the obstacles which stand in the way of our unity in faith, love and service.

Segment 6:

We believe that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is God the Son Incarnate; perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. His divinity was not separated from his humanity for a single moment; not for the twinkling of an eye. His humanity is one with his divinity without commixture, without confusion, without division, without separation

⁶ Namely, by emphasizing the objective reality of both the Divine and human natures in one Person, after the Union, and thus, by employing the Christological formula of „Two Natures“, „Two Qnume“ in „One Parsopa“.

The Church of the East would enthusiastically affirm this segment as it stands, and the literature of the Church speaks directly to the question. Concerning the Manhood of the divine Son of God, Mar Babai Raba states in his „Book of the Union“: „With the beginning of its fashioning (was) its taking (and) its anointing, which was for the union, and the image of the Invisible was received, and God the Word dwelt in it for ever - not as the impiety of those early wicked men who said, 'It came to pass and then was anointed', nor as those of the company of the accursed Paul [of Samosata] who claimed that (it took place) at the baptism, nor as their colleagues who said that after the resurrection it acquired the honor of Sonship...“⁷ And, „Thus it is incumbent upon us to understand that with the voice of the angel, who said, 'The Holy Spirit shall come, and the power of the Most High shall rest upon you', immediately, with the sound, at that moment was the taking.“⁸

Whenever a non-technical language is put to use in confessional statements, as in the one in segment 6, there seems to be less possible grounds for disagreement among its readers. With this statement we not only find no objectionable concepts or terminology but we fully agree; if such an approach were utilized regularly there should be nor reason for disagreement.

Segment 7:

We in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ regard his mystery to be inexhaustible and ineffable and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible.

We regard such an understanding of the mystery of Incarnation to be essential in dialogues such as this one, especially when the parties involved in the conversation come from such differing points of view as the Antiocheans and the Alexandrians. Such a consideration of the notion of mystery will help us to realize that no one statement or tradition is able to „fully comprehend or express the inexhaustible and ineffable mystery of the Incarnation.“ We feel that such an assertion should, if it is sincerely held, prevent, or at least minimize, the possibility of a church or an ecclesial authority condemning or rejecting the expression of a historically rooted and consistent statement of faith by any of the apostolic churches when such a statement arguably contains the same essence of the faith as - though its terminology is not in conformity with - that church or authority's own historically rooted and consistent usage of terminology.

Segment 8:

We see that there are still differences in the theological interpretation of the mystery of Christ because of our different ecclesiastical and theological traditions,

For us the issue of differences in certain theological interpretations is partly a consequence of the different emphases which our Christological formulae have made in order to protect the one faith from certain „heretical“ implications. When the

⁷ See Babai the Great, *Liber de Unione*, A. Vaschalde, Syr. Ed., (Louvain: Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1971) pp. 91-92. (Eng. Trans. by M.J. Birnie.)

⁸ LU, p. 95.

apostolic faith is expressed in different ways as a result of using differing methods in theology, in accordance with one's own language, tradition, philosophical terminology, and idioms, over a period of time, the result will be that these differences may implicate a divergent meaning of interpretation, as well. Thus, the Church of the East recognizes that the effects of differences in terminology can go beyond the mere distinction of expression.

However, for us such differences in theological interpretation need to be first stated and then clarified in order for us to assess the nature or the source of differences, i.e., whether the differences stem from the „essence“ of the Apostolic faith or from the „form“ through which that faith is being expressed.⁹ In our various discussions with representatives from the Catholic, the Chalcedonian Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox Churches we have been impressed with the sense that we are all trying to express the incomprehensible mystery of the same faith, while each of us is trying to protect what we feel is threatened by terminology differing from our own. What is needed above all else is humility, openness, and a willingness to put aside suspicion about our mutual intentions.

Segment 9:

..... we are convinced, however, that these differing formulations on both sides can be understood along the lines of the faith of Nicea and Ephesus.

In the case that there should be an agreement between the churches as a result of this and other consultations, we would feel the necessity of extending the scope of such an accord among these churches to include the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon as well, assuming that the problem of terminology has been dealt with and successfully resolved. A significant part of the Christological teachings of the Council of Chalcedon has been accepted by the Church of the East, and the Council is included among the various „Western“ synods considered canonical.¹⁰

Segment 10:

Realizing that there can be different emphases in the theological and dogmatic elaboration of Christ's mystery, we wish to encourage common efforts for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of this mystery in harmony with our different ecclesiastical traditions.

We agree very strongly with the affirmation of this paragraph. So far in this paper, we have suggested many times the idea that the Church of the East would welcome the possibility of continuing the present dialogue(s) or the initiation of fresh ones, as long as they encourage common efforts for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the mystery of Christ. We will always seek the objective that will legitimize a pluralism of expression within the one apostolic faith in Jesus Christ, while preserving at the same time the essence of that faith. For we

⁹ Dogmatic statements essentially contain „essence“ and „form“; „form“ contain „words“ and „concepts“; „concepts“ are mainly constructed of „concerns“, „experience“, and „presuppositions“. (See Dulles, p. 191)

¹⁰ SO, p. 610.

must strive to prepare a Church of the future whose various theological formulations could be considered complementary rather than conflicting.

We feel that the primary reason for any disagreement on Christological formulae is not so much due to differences in understanding of the „essence“ (content) of the Christian faith as it may well be owing to the lack of sincere and loving effort to seek reconciliation and compatibility between the differing definitions of terms employed to articulate the Apostolic faith in the mystery of the Incarnation by the various traditions which make use of their own idioms, concepts and priorities.¹¹ Thus the Church of the East would welcome future dialogues so that the various theological schools may have the opportunity to reconcile terms utilized in their formulae.

Segment 11:

We have also discussed generally the problem of the Ecumenical Councils, their authority and reception, and we urge that these problems be extensively studied on both sides.

The Ecumenical Councils were major ecclesial events for the Church within the domain of the Roman Empire. The Church of the East, being within the Persian Empire, was never directly involved in any one. Yet, it has ultimately received Nicea, Constantinople I, and the canons of Chalcedon, and is in agreement with the tone and substance of others. Today, while we too would like to engage in extensive studies of the theological concepts and dogmatic decisions involved in all Ecumenical Councils, we would also like to ask the following question: „Is positive acceptance of all dogmas of the Councils an absolute prerequisite for agreement on other issues and for the question of unity?“

Segment 12:

We commonly submit ourselves to the witness of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament and thus to the Apostolic Kerygma and express our intention not to become weary in the search for a common language of the mystery of salvation in our Lord in a brotherly spirit ... 'until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God' (Eph 4: 13). We wish to see the mystery of the compassion of God translated into a life of Christian compassion.

All of us have experienced how fruitful this Consultation has been, and we pray that God who brought us together may bless us and guide our future efforts in such helpful discussions.“

¹¹ A good example for the problem of terminology is the important theological term „Qnoma“, which is used in Christological statements of the Church of the East, and the term „Hypostasis“, which may be considered as its equivalent. Qnoma has historically been defined by Babai Raba in Book of the Union, Minra, IV, Head xvii, as: (a) ... a particular nature which has been individuated but not independently personalized; (b) As a specific exemplar of that which is common to a general classification or species - that which moves from an abstract generalization to a concrete example; (c) As a set of natural properties (as opposed to distinguishing accidents) as they exist in an individual. From this we see that Qnoma has been placed at the level of „Nature“. One way to reconcile our terminologies is to redefine Qnoma on the level of „Person“ as was the case in the West by the time of the Council of Ephesus. For more on the changing of the meaning of Hypostasis in the West, see Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, Crossroad, New York, NY, 1982, pp. 257-260. Also, Dulles, pp. 164.

Indeed, it is significant that the participants close off the text of their statement with hope for a brighter future, while committing themselves and their work to the witness of the Word of God and looking for God's compassion to be reflected in an enhanced life of Christian compassion. We consider such an approach and expectation to be a crucial step towards reflecting in the here and now the Reign of God in our lives. The arrival of God's kingdom, for which Jesus taught us to pray, can be realized among us in a more developed form when the Church is able to fulfill God's will on earth in a way conforming as closely as possible to the reign of God in heaven. With love which reflects that of Christ we can transform the Church to be a loving community of believers, a church that is conciliatory and is conformed to „the mind that is in Christ Jesus“.

III. Conclusion

To sum up our perspective of the Vienna Christological Formula, we first need to recognize the sincere efforts that have been put into the formulation of the text. It essentially reflects the apostolic teaching that is compatible to the theology of the Church of the East, though the terminology of some of its segments poses some linguistic difficulties. The task of any theological statement is one of much difficulty, because it attempts to clarify a mystery, and to do so, one will never be able to fully achieve his/her task simply by using philosophy or logic, but by using words that are woven into a sincere desire to worship that mystery without ever expecting to understand its essence. To talk about the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ one must make use of prayerful statements and worshipful assertions which go beyond the capacity of reason.

To sum up, we wish to offer our concluding remarks for future formulae.¹²

We recommend for the future that a distinction be made between the „content“ and „form“ of our common faith. If this is so, we feel we will be able to eliminate a significant part of difficulties which form a barrier between different parties to the dialogue.

We affirm the notion that dogmatic unity in pluralistic expression should go hand-in-hand with reconciliation and ecclesial unity. There needs to be tolerance of the concept of „pluralistic dogmatic expression in one faith“.

Credal statements may be regarded as the outward expression of the inner exigencies of a lived faith; they should not be forcibly imposed by external authorities acting upon groups of people not prepared for them by their corporate historical experience. In order to restore communion one must „impose no burden beyond what is indispensable“ (Acts 15: 28).

We need to look upon our Christological formulae not as statements of abstract philosophy with concepts which are alien and confusing to members of our churches, but rather as statements which reflect the liberating recognition that the God of love was and still is present and active among the lives of his people today.

¹² Dulles, pp. 162-168.

APPENDIX I:

Synodial Christological Confessions

Synod of Mar Aqaq, AD 486

But our faith in the dispensation of Christ should also be in a confession of two natures of Godhead and manhood, none of us venturing to introduce mixture, commingling, or confusion into the distinctions of those two natures. Instead, while Godhead remains and is preserved in that which belongs to it, and manhood in that which belongs to it, we combine the copies¹³ of their natures in one Lordship and one worship because of the perfect and inseparable conjunction¹⁴ which the Godhead had with the manhood. If anyone thinks or teaches others that suffering and change adhere to the Godhead of our Lord, not preserving - in regard to the union of the parsopa of our Savior - the confession of perfect God and perfect man, the same shall be *anathema*. (Synod of Mar Aqaq, AD 486)

Synod of Mar Aba, AD 544

... These things were made known with precision by the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, who learned from the Holy Spirit that Christ is not ordinary man, nor God stripped of the clothing of manhood in which he was revealed, but Christ is God and man, that is, manhood which is anointed with [the Godhead] which anoints it. As it is written, „Therefore God, your God, anoints you with the oil of gladness above your fellows“, the same making known his manhood. Again, „In the beginning was the Word“, this showing his Godhead, which exists eternally and for ever, which created all that is seen and all that is unseen, and exists in three *qnome*, without beginning, without change, without passion, and without division, which are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As our Lord said- for by him the eternal Trinity was made known - as he spoke concerning himself, „Destroy this temple“, that is, the manhood with which he clothed himself, and again said, „My Father, who [dwells] in me, performs these works“, and again concerning the Holy Spirit who is in him when he said, „The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because of this he has anointed me.“ Behold, from the title „Christ“ we learned about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and we have understood his manhood from the same, and in it is the seal of the entire confession of Christianity. Anyone who does not confess in this way, let him be anathematized. Anyone who introduces a „quaternity“ into the holy and immutable Trinity, let him be anathematized. Anyone who does not confess that in the last time the Only-be-gotten Son of God, who is Christ our Lord, was revealed in the flesh, let him be anathematized. Anyone who does not acknowledge the suffering and death of the manhood of Christ, and the impassibility of his Godhead, let him be anathematized. Or anyone who seals a prayer with the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit but numbers some other with them, or does not believe

¹³ For *ܐܡܘܠܝܬܐ*.

¹⁴ *ܕܚܕܐܝܬܐ*.

that in the name „Son“ he refers to the Godhead and manhood of Christ together, or anyone who seals a prayer with the name of Christ and not as confessing the Trinity, let him be anathematized. (Synod of Mar Aba, AD 544)

Synod of Mar Išo'yahb, AD 587

... to „one Lord“ they¹⁵ added „Jesus Christ“, and revealed that which is one in common with the *qnome* of the Trinity ... but they did not add „one Lord, the Son“, as in „one God, the Father“. Instead, they altered the order of their words and said „in one Lord, Jesus Christ“, not forgetting those correct matters which relate to the manhood of God the Word, magnificently explained and wisely proclaimed in one unity of the Godhead and manhood of Christ, even though those of the company of Eutyches babble and reject the manhood of the Son of God. For the title „Anointed One“¹⁶ is indicative of his Godhead, which is from the Father, and of his manhood, which is indisputably from the mother, even though Eutyches and the offspring of his error speak foolishly and deceive, denying the taking of our manhood, or affirming the obliteration of the manhood of Christ. Indeed, the fathers consequently continued, saying, „the Only-begotten and First-born of all creatures“, as it is written.

Again, they added, „by whose hands the worlds were established and everything was created“, revealing (that) he was the Cause and Maker of all with his Father. Again, they made known concerning his Essence that he was „begotten of his Father before all ages and was not made - Light from Light, true God from true God“ - Jesus Christ in his Godhead. Again, they continued, as it were, for the destruction of Arius, setting forth the world „homousion“, that is, „connatural“ and „co-essential“ with the Father, by whose hand everything came to be - Jesus Christ in his Godhead. And struggling in the invincible armor of true teaching, with which they clothed themselves against the phantoms and apparitions of the worthless teachings of the Simonians and Manicheans, they said, „who for us men and for our salvation descended from Heaven and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and by the Virgin Mary and became man“ - Jesus Christ, in the union of his natures, in his revelation [in the flesh, and in his incarnation - for this indicates the uniting of the natures of Godhead and manhood, in that he descended, became incarnate, and became man. It makes known the assumption of our manhood indisputably, so that from every side the hallucinations of the company of Simon and Mani might be removed, who deny his incarnation, and the taking of a body, and the revelation] of God the Word, who took our manhood and dwelt in it - as it is written, „The Word became flesh and dwelt in us“¹⁷ - and that, even more, the greatness of the loving kindness of him who descended and dwelt in us might be revealed.

The impious Arius, because he ascribed things exalted and lowly to the nature of the Godhead of the Word, and did not know to apply them separately or conjointly, as the truth requires, for this reason was weighed (in the balances), and fell, and erred, and deceived, and was anathematized and excommunicated. But the fathers added to and completed the saying concerning the dispensation, and after the

¹⁵ I.e., the 318 Fathers of Nicea.

¹⁶ For

¹⁷ Jn. 1:14.

teaching concerning the divine nature of the Only-begotten, and after the teaching concerning the unity of the natures of Christ, that is, of his Godhead, which does not change and does not die, and his manhood, which is not rejected or forgotten, they added teaching concerning his manhood. As they had revealed clearly by way of exalted things concerning his Godhead, (so) they would reveal clearly concerning his manhood, which was taken for us and for our salvation and for the renewal of all creatures, saying, „He was crucified for us in the days of Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and died, and was buried, and rose after three days“, as the Holy Scriptures say - Jesus Christ in his manhood. That is - let us speak the truth - in his corporeal state he accepted the death of the cross for us, in that it is clear to all the upright in their confession that, as the nature of his Godhead does not suffer and die, so neither did his soul receive the sentence of death, for it is not possible for the soul to be subject to the limitation of death. Our Lord bore witness, „Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul.“¹⁸ And the reality bore witness (to this), for after our Lord was crucified, and died, and his holy body was buried, he went in his soul to Paradise.

Again, the blessed fathers added, „And ascended to Heaven and sat down at the right hand of his father“ - Jesus Christ in his manhood. For in his manhood he received exaltation and session at the right hand, not in his Godhead, which exists eternally and indestructibly with his Father. „And he is coming in glory to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom has no end“ - Jesus Christ in his Godhead and in his manhood. ...

This is the faith which does not corrupt, and this is its meaning, briefly, according to the sequence of its statements, by which the *parsopa* of Christ is proclaimed fully - and the natures of his Godhead and manhood - against those who acknowledge his Godhead but deny his manhood, and against those [who acknowledge his manhood but deny his Godhead, and against those] who deny his Godhead and confess that the manhood is ordinary or like one of the righteous. ...

After they had thus richly and fully proclaimed the truth, they turned thereafter to the anathematization of Arius and the children of his error. „But to those who say that there was (a time) when he did not exist, or before he was begotten he did not exist, or he was made from nothing, or say he was from some other *qnoma* or essence, or reckon the Son of God changeable and mutable, such the catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes.“ The heretics, that is, in their stubbornness, venture to ascribe the properties and sufferings of the nature of the manhood of Christ to the nature and *qnoma* of the Godhead and Essence of the Word, things which occasionally, because of the perfect union which the manhood of Christ had with his Godhead, are ascribed to God economically, but not naturally. (Synod of Mar Išo'yahb, AD 587)

Išo'yahb I, Letter to Ya'qob

The faith in all (these) things is marvelous and cannot be explained ... which Christianity learned from the Holy Spirit through the apostles and through the prophets concerning the manifestation of God the Word, and concerning the incarna-

¹⁸ Mt. 10:28.

tion which was for us and for our salvation, unto the renewal and reformation of all creatures.

For because of the great love (with) which he loved us he departed from the bosom of his Father by way of good pleasure¹⁹, not by way of removal²⁰, and came to the world, though he was (already) in the world, as it is written, the Hidden One revealed in the flesh. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He became, but was not changed. He who was the equal of God emptied himself and took the likeness of a servant. He took but did not increase, for in his generation as well as his taking his essence²¹ remained without change and without addition. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God the Word, Light from Light, descended and became incarnate, and became man by way of economy²², beyond alteration or change. Our Lord God, Jesus Christ, who was born of the Father before all worlds in his Godhead, was born in the flesh from the ever-virgin Mary in the last times, the same, yet not in the same²³. The Word became flesh in an inseparable union and dwelt among us. O the depth of the riches of the faith! He became but was not changed - let the Eutychians and Apollinarians lament! He took but did not add - let the Photinians and Paulinians wail! Again I say, let the faithless and the schismatic hear ... the truth of the faith and remain within the ecclesiastical folds with the whole Church, saved by the blood of the great Shepherd of the flock, Jesus Christ the Son of God, God over all, born in his Godhead eternally from the Father without a mother. The same, but not in the same, was born in his manhood from a mother without a father in the last times, suffered in the flesh, was crucified, died, and was buried in the days of Pontius Pilate, and rose from the dead after three days. On the one hand, Christ, the Son of God, suffered in the flesh, while on the other hand, in the nature of his Godhead, the same Christ the Son of God was beyond sufferings - Jesus Christ, impassible and passible, the Creator of the worlds and the recipient of sufferings, who for us was impoverished though he was rich. God the Word accepted the insult of sufferings in the temple of his body economically, in a perfect union²⁴ without separation, though in the nature of his Godhead he did not suffer, as our Life-giver said, „Destroy this temple and after three days I will raise it up“²⁵. Because the Jews in their stubbornness thought that he spoke concerning the temple of stones, the Evangelist explained the word of our Savior, saying, „But he spoke concerning the temple of his body“²⁶. Our Lord explained the entrance - by way of union and not by way of mingling - into the *parsopic* union when he said, „No one has ascended to heaven except him who descended from heaven“²⁷. Indeed Christ, who descended from heaven without removal in his Godhead while not (yet) endued with a body²⁸, and was, in the infinitude of his Godhead, also in heaven, the same, in his manhood, was exalted to heaven while he did not lose his visible nature,

¹⁹ For ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

²⁰ For ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

²¹ For ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

²² For ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

²³ For ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ. ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ. The antecedent of the first „same“ (masculine) is „our Lord God, Jesus Christ“, and the antecedent of the second „same“ (feminine) is „his Godhead“.

²⁴ ? for ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

²⁵ Jn. 2:19.

²⁶ Jn. 2:21.

²⁷ Cf. Jn. 3:13.

²⁸ For ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ.

Synod of Mar Sabrišo', AD 596

²⁹ Acts 1:11.
³⁰ For *mid*.

Synod of Grigor, AD 605

Giwargis, Letter to Mina

31 חַלְמֵי חַלְמֵי אֶתְכֶם אֶתְכֶם אֶתְכֶם אֶתְכֶם for
32 חַלְמֵי אֶתְכֶם אֶתְכֶם אֶתְכֶם אֶתְכֶם
33 Ps. 45:7.

„Synod“ of AD 612

d for our salvation th

Concerning this, we believe in our hearts and confess with our lips one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose Godhead does not disappear, and whose manhood is not stolen away, but who is complete God and complete man. When we say of Christ „complete God“ we are not naming the Trinity, but one of the *qnome*

35 අනුකූල වශයෙන් සකස් කළ බව

[illegible]

THE VIENNA CHRISTOLOGICAL FORMULA IN AN ASSYRIAN PERSPECTIVE

The Church of the East does not find it difficult to subscribe to the Vienna Formula of Christology because the Church of the East accepts like all other Churches that decisions and decrees of the first two ecumenical Councils of Nicea 325 A.D. and Constantinople 381 A.D.

Every Church recites the Nicene Creed. The Church of the East recites the Nicene Creed without the addition made to it later. The Western Churches added the filioque clause that is the Holy Spirit proceeded not only from the Father but also from the Son.

In May 1994 as the present writer worshipped in the Indian Orthodox Qurbana in London - England, the words 'Mother of God' in the Nicene Creed recited there made him realise that there was an addition to the original Nicene Creed. He did not mention it to the worshippers there, because experience in the past has taught him that they would not believe that their Fathers made an addition to the Nicene Creed. But can anybody claim that the expression 'Mother of God' was used by anybody in the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. or in the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D.?

Pope Shenuda III writes that Nestorius „believes that Saint Mary gave birth to a mere human and that Divinity descended and filled this human; thus the Virgin Mary would be called the 'Mother of Jesus' (Christotokos), and not the 'Mother of God' (Theotokos).¹ It is clear from the prayer book (hudra) of the Church of the East that they never claim that Jesus „was merely a man born of a woman.“

The problem is that of the terminology. In reply to the second anathematism Nestorius states that

„...if anyone ascribes to the flesh, by reason of its reception of God, extension to the infinite and boundless, and says that God and Man are one the same in nature, let him be Anathema.“²

The phraseology of Cyril of Alexandria was not clear to the Antiocheans. Referring to this Anathema, Theodoret of Cyrus wrote:

„But we are wholly ignorant of the phrase 'hypostatic union' which is strange and foreign to the divine Scripture and to the Fathers. Does Cyril mean by it a mixture of flesh and Godhead?“³

As Dr. Sebastian Brock wrote,⁴ it is better to leave *qnoma* just transliterated to avoid confusion. As Pope Shenuda III wrote in his commemoration-medal he had coined with the inscription „PRO ORIENTE Symposium - Egypt Oct. 1991 - Amba Bishoy Monastery - Perfect in Divinity, Perfect in Humanity - CHRIST OUR LORD - 1 Tim 3,16.“⁵

¹ PRO ORIENTE. The Vienna Dialogue - Five Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy: Middle East Regional Symposium - Deir Amba Bishoy. Booklet No. 3, 1993, pp. 58/9

² Aprem G. Mooken, *A Study of the East*, Bangalore 1966

³ Herbert Bindley, *The Ecumenical Documents of the Faith*, London 1950, p. 126

⁴ Sebastian Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity*. In: *Variorum XIII*, p.131

⁵ PRO ORIENTE, Booklet No. 3, 1993, p. 9

Discussion:

Prof. Samir: The term "qnoma" was transliterated but never translated into Arabic, but used as such, even in the Coptic Church.

Mar Bawai: The exact meaning of "qnoma" is at the heart of the issue. Especially because of the fact that the meaning of qnoma changed in the 4th-5th centuries. At the Council of Nicea, qnoma was identified with "ousia" and very close to the meaning of "kyana". In the West Syrian tradition, under the influence of the Cappadocian Fathers, the meaning of qnoma developed to come very close to that of person. That change did however not occur in the East Syrian tradition. If we can define what qnoma means today, most of the difficulties would be insignificant.

Dr. Hainthaler: 1. The speakers underline the need to find new ways of expressing the faith. I agree with this vision, but at the same time we need to understand the ancient formula. We have to try to understand what the Church Fathers really wanted to say.

2. What does Mar Bawai exactly mean when he speaks of the "dogmatic decisions and teachings of Ephesus (431)": the text of 431 or the formula of the union of 433?

Prof. Koodapuzha: Attempts have been made to define "kyana" as a nature in the abstract sense; "qnoma" as a concretized nature; "parsopa" as person. Are these attempts acceptable to us here?

President Stirnemann: These first papers were not meant as an introduction to a historical discussion. There will be time for it later. If we want to find a solution to the Christological problem, it will not be in the formulas of the 5th century. We need a statement in the language of today. The Churches will have to face the 3rd millennium.

Prof. Davids: What does Mar Bawai mean by the expression "Christological teachings of Ephesus"? In the previous Vienna Consultations it was easier to come to agreement because there were no "Eutychians" present. We have now persons here who were called "Nestorians" in the past and have Nestorius in their tradition. PRO ORIENTE, in 1971, should have also included the Nestorians into their considerations. It is an easy solution to anathematize.

Mar Bawai: It is important to understand the exact meaning of the teaching of the Councils. Our thinking comes from three different traditions, which now interact for the first time after 15 or 16 centuries. We have to be honest to our traditions, when we want to express ourselves in an ecumenical manner, even if that may create difficulties, for instance with the Oriental Orthodox. The problems exist and we have to express them. Our efforts are geared to solve the problems. We will be working and praying for it.

Prof. Jammo: Everyone is innocent until proved guilty. Someone has to prove that what Nestorius said is "Nestorian". The Church of the East does not have to prove

that it is innocent. It is up to the others to prove that the Church of the East is guilty of saying two Sons, two persons. But show me one author of the Church of the East, or any liturgical or canonical text where it says that Christ is two persons! All of us would probably agree with what Mar Bawai says about the Christological formula of Vienna. If we leave the philosophical background and come to the actual meaning, we can sign it.

Mar Severius: The experience of the Vienna Consultations shows that there is a real need to go deeply into the problems. Our lesson from the former consultations is that we have to tackle the problems that really separate us. From what Mr. Stirnemann said one could get the impression that we are going to close that chapter. We cannot forget the 4th - 5th centuries. We need a real discussion of *qnoma*, *parsopa*. Afterwards we can speak about the content. Only if we discuss the formulas of the 5th century can we know if the reasons of the difficulties were only social or political or if there was a real meaning behind them.

Bishop Matar: Mar Bawai rightly makes the distinction between faith and the expression of faith. However, even the human expressions have something to do with the truth, have a relation to the truth. If we explain the two different expressions, we should be able to understand each other.

Mar Bawai wishes that pluralism is tolerated, and calls for understanding what each church intends. We have to bring the two conflicting expressions together in order to see what we are trying to say. He reports about his experiences in the Middle East Council of Churches where he heard for the first time "words not comfortable to us, coming from a strange context". As the Coptic delegation explained St. Cyril, on the substance we could agree. It was difficult. We had to struggle and to pray to come to an understanding in front of the conflicting expressions. Only after that we discover that our faith is in fact one. Our faith is really one, though the different sides tended to emphasize either duality or unity.

The Church of the East has been accused of claiming one thing intellectually but practising another faith. This is a challenge. When we speak the Orthodox faith we also practise it.

Dr. Hainthaler quotes St. Ignatius who said: Every good Christian has to suppose that the other Christian has the good faith. This attitude would ensure the conditions for a fruitful dialogue, conceding to the other that he is orthodox. If you do find him wrong, then in all love try to explain it to him.

What does Mar Bawai mean when in his introduction (n. 4) he puts as a condition for dialogue that "participants must find a way to ascertain whether any side has substantially departed from the truth of the Gospel"?

Mar Bawai: This tries to associate faith and practice. Since we come together, we suppose that we already practise that faith. In the dialogue at the Middle East Council of Churches we were challenged that we believe in one faith and practise another one. This is very painful.

Since no church has left, this is a sign that all of us are actually living in the right faith. But there are historical, dogmatical, canonical and ecclesiological problems to solve.

Prof. Samir: In the Middle Ages we have at least ten Arab theologians from the three main traditions - Jacobite, Maronite, Nestorian - who want to understand what each Church is trying to say in their special terminologies. They come to the conclusion that there is unanimity in faith in spite of the diversities in the expressions. It is good if one can say, "The others say it differently. It is not the best but it is all right." Speaking of Mary as Mother of God in Arabic would be impossible, a blasphemy.

Prof. Fiey: At that time they made no distinction between "Godhead" and "God", when they said Christ is God. They did not have the words for it. Hence the refusal to say "Mother of God".

Prof. Koodapuzha: The expression "Mother of God" remains a difficulty even now, for theology students of today. They tend to ask, "Does it mean Mother of the Trinity?" The insistence on uniformity - instead of unity - has been at the origin of a lot of problems and sufferings.

Prof. Brock: What does Mar Bawai mean in his paper when he speaks of the Christological formula of Ephesus?

1. The Council did not issue a proper formula and so it would be the same as Nicea; this would solve all the problems.
2. If the second letter of Cyril is meant, then there would be a real problem for the Church of the East.
3. If the formula of the union of 433 is meant (as A. de Halleux would suggest), then the problem would be solved.

Mar Bawai: I referred to the wording of the Vienna Agreement. As far as the condemnation of Nestorius is concerned, we would like to keep it open for the time being. As far as the substance is concerned, all dogmatic texts should be taken into consideration.

Mar Gregorios: Now our discussions are concerned mainly or even only with the Christological formula. There were many other issues in the Vienna Consultations. What about the canons of Chalcedon mentioned by Mar Bawai?

Mar Bawai: The synodical tradition of the Church of the East (cf. *Synodicon Orientale*) contains a list of Western synods that have been accepted in the Church of the East. The *Synodicon* has several implicit mentions of Chalcedon. There is also an explicit mention of the canons of Chalcedon, as a positive gesture to the Western Church. With the time passing, it became clear that the expression "hypostatic union" was the only difficulty that the Church of the East had with Chalcedon.

Prof. Samir: We need to explain the many texts of one Church against another. We have to assume history and explain it in order to liberate ourselves. At the same time we also have to think about something new.

Mar Gregorios: Most of the writings are against Nestorius and the Nestorians as far as the doctrine is concerned. They are not directed against any living community.

Prof. Hofrichter: The discussions about the term "hypostasis" in relation with the Trinity in the 4th century are the root of the Christological difficulties in the 5th century. The Cappadocian Fathers distinguished between "ousia" and "hypostasis", the council of Nicea, however, used "hypostasis" as "ousia". Therefore, discussing the understanding of the Trinity in the 4th century will bring us progress.

Prof. Davids: One of the main difficulties is the expression "Theotokos" that appears in official texts in 431. Does it have a history in literature before that? Or was it used only out of fear of Nestorianism? It would be interesting to study this point.

Second working session: Friday June 24, afternoon

Chairman: Bishop *Boulos Matar*

The paper of Prof. *Abramowski* is read by Prof. *Brock*

Luise Abramowski

THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH INTO NESTORIUS

Modern research concerning Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople 428-431, started with „Nestoriana“, edited by Friedrich Loofs in 1905. The book is a collection of the extant Greek and Syriac remains, often fragments, then known. For the first time fragments of the several sermons were put together by Loofs under their hearings or other characteristics, so that a picture of the preacher was beginning to emerge. Loofs's fundamental work became the point of reference for every scholar who edited writings containing quotations from Nestorius, mainly Eduard Schwartz for the Acts of the Ecumenical Councils (ACO) and Joseph Lebon for Severus of Antioch (in CSCO). The edition of Severus added also new fragments formerly unknown. The „Nestoriana“ can be now brought up to date with the help of Maurice Geerard's invaluable *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, vol. III, 1979, nos. 5.665-5.766; missing in his survey are only the few quotations, partly unknown, contained in the „Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts“ (see below).

In 1910 Paul Bedjan edited under the name of his real author, Nestorius, „Le livre d'Héraclide de Damas“, the name of Heraclides being of course a camouflage. In the same year already appeared the French translation of this long text, done by François Nau with the help of Bedjan himself and of M. Brière. This volume com-

prised also several appendixes, i.a. three complete Greek sermons by Nestorius. An English translation by G.R. Driver - and Leonard Hodgson followed in 1925, awkwardly called „The Bazaar of Heraclides“, because the translators were evidently not aware that ܡܬܝܢܐܝܝܐ can also mean *tractate*; Anastos (s. below) even thought that it was a fault of the Syriac translator to use ܡܬܝܢܐܝܝܐ at all! Driver/Hodgson were reviewed by Loofs rather critically in 1926; the reviewer sketched a program of research still to be done on the book at that time, after the first flourish of publications caused by Bedjan's and Nau's foundation work had died down. It was this review which gave the idea to undertake the tasks, as listed by Loofs, myself, since nobody else had done it in the meantime. The results can be read in the second part of my monograph of 1963, a volume in the *Subsidia of CSCO*, with the title: „Untersuchungen zum liber Heraclidis des Nestorius“.

To clear up the question of authenticity I subjected the work to literary critical analysis. Not all of the book was by Nestorius himself, but he is the author of the largest part which is his Second Apologia. At the end of the Apology I found some interpolations, presumably from the late 5th century. But more important is the fact that somebody whom I call Ps.-Nestorius has written a kind of introduction to the main part, in the form of a dialogue. All of this was done by Greek sympathisants, at Constantinople no doubt. To fit the Dialogue and the Second Apology together part of the original introduction by Nestorius was cut away. The demarcation line is between p. 125 and 126 of Bedjan's edition. The results of this analysis have been accepted by Grillmeier, Gribomont and de Halleux, while others tried to interpret the facts in other ways. The existence of the Dialogue is an important witness to the survival of Antiochene christology into the late fifth century in the Greek West. In fact it was still existing there in the 6th century.

Ps.-Nestorius develops a christological doctrine which is a variant on the teaching of Nestorius. Concerning the two prosopa in Christ which are the one prosopon he is going a step further than Nestorius: the prosopon of one nature „appropriates“ the prosopon of the other nature and thus there is one prosopon, the „own“ prosopon of one nature becomes the „own“ prosopon of the other (and viceversa). But both authors differ completely in the use of hypostasis; the authentic Nestorius has two hypostases for the two natures in Christ, but the author of the dialogue does without the term in christological teaching - with one surprising exception. He says after having spoken of „one“ and „two“ in Christ: „They have difference of nature, one qenoma and one „parzopa“ (Bedjan p. 81, 4 f.). Nau in his translation added to this, though in brackets: „(pour chaque nature)“ (p. 52, 11 f.), because he considered the Dialogue to be authentic and could not believe that Nestorius would use ܡܬܝܢܐܝܝܐ for the one Christ.

At this point let me digress for a moment. When Antiochene and Syriac dyophysite theologians of the 5th century take their basic formula, two natures, one prosopon, as a frame and start to develop it into the variants we find in Nestorius and Ps.-Nestorius (there are further variants in the Syriac translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, *De incarnatione* in add. 14.669, and in Narsai), they all have a common starting point. It is to be found in a single passage from Theodore's *De incarnatione*, bk. VII, ch. 63. All the elements of the later development are there, though in a rather loose connection, which explains why people felt free to go on from that in their own several ways. These elements are

- 1) ὥστε οὐκετι εἰσὶν δύο πρόσωπα ἀλλ' ἐν
(in Christ), „so that there are not anymore two prosopa but one“;
- 2) οὐδε γὰρ ἀπρόσωπον ἔστιν ὑπόστασιν εἰπεῖν,

„you may not say that hypostasis is without prosopon. This is said about the Logos and not repeated in the following sentence about the human nature - should we add it here mentally by inference?

3) the constitution of man is given as an example by Theodore: soul and body have each a nature, a hypostasis, a prosopon. The inference „therefore in Christ...“ is not drawn expressly.

Theodore evidently never worked out this sketch in another of his works, so anybody who took it up had to try and answer for instance the question for himself, *how* the two prosopa were one prosopon in Christ. So far as I can see, this special question was taken up explicitly only by Nestorius and in his wake by Ps.-Nestorius. Later Syrians like Babai the Great and others when they speak of it are using the *Liber Heraclidis* which they of course took to be an authentic work throughout by Nestorius.

In the conclusion of my monograph on the *Lib. Her.* (p. 228 f.) I pointed out the difficulties arising from the fundamental presuppositions of Nestorius. The presuppositions are three:

- 1) The unity of the one Christ is a matter of course (it has been the merit of Scipioni, to point this out firmly, see below) and is seen from the outside so to speak, the one prosopon is a prosopon of doxology; it is also seen in Christ's work and reign;
- 2) the absolutely transcendent nature of the God Logos which cannot unite itself with human nature in a „physical“ manner;
- 3) the full human nature without any diminution.

During his time in Constantinople Nestorius did no more than to put side by side the three elements just defined. But the description of Christ's unity „from the outside“ was misunderstood to be purely external; nevertheless the polemics against the teaching of one nature and one hypostasis caused Nestorius to stress even sharper the differences of the two natures. But how to present the inner structure of the unity in Christ? The natures, unable to communicate as natures because of their definition, are to be further determined in such a way that their coming together could be understood as indivisible union. So Nestorius sharpens so to say their concept to the point of the prosopon physikon of each nature; the prosopa physika „use“ each other. The mutual „usage“ cannot be conceived to be interrupted even for a moment - otherwise there would not be the „one common prosopon of union“ of both. What Nestorius really aims at is the identity of existence of both natures. I have told you already, how much nearer Ps.-Nestorius has come to this aim (above p. 2). - So far about the *Liber Heraclidis*.

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Farthest in this direction went the renowned byzantinist Milton V. Anastos, in his article in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* of 1962 „Nestorius was orthodox“. It was just possible for Anastos to mention Grillmeier's paper „*Das scandalum oecumenicum*...“ (Scholastik 1961) in his notes. He finds himself „in essential agreement“ with Grillmeier. „The major difference between us“, Anastos continues, „is that I take Nestorius to have been *completely* orthodox, whether judged on the criterion of the Chalcedonian Symbol or from the point of view of speculative theology, whereas he“ (Grillmeier) „has some reservations“. Anastos takes as point of comparison not only the Chalcedonense but also the second letter of Cyril to Nestorius. In his summing up we read (p. 139): „Still, since Cyril is universally esteemed in the Church as a Chalcedonian before Chalcedon, the christology of Nestorius, if orthodox, should be reconcilable, notwithstanding angry denials on both sides, with Cyril's. In truth, it must be admitted, the line which separates them on this, as on all other issues, is either very thin or nonexistent. Both agreed that the qualities of the two natures are referable to the one person, Jesus Christ. They defined this entity somewhat differently, but it is obvious that Cyril's 'one prosopon, ... the one incarnate hypostasis of God the Logos' and Nestorius' 'one prosopon of Christ'... were both intended to define the Jesus Christ of the Gospels. Moreover, Cyril's characteristic notion that 'the Logos suffered in the flesh' is theologically the exact equivalent of Nestorius' dogma that the Logos suffered in the prosopon of the manhood he took for his own“ (this latter expression is in fact from Ps.-Nestorius). „For as we have seen ..., the prosopon of the manhood is the *schema* or the flesh and body of Jesus Christ“.

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1) ὥστε οὐκετι εἰσὶν δύο πρόσωπα ἀλλ' ἓν
(in Christ), „so that there are not anymore two prosopa but one“;

2) οὐδε γὰρ ἀπρόσωπον ἔστιν ὑπόστασιν εἰπεῖν,
„you may not say that hypostasis is without prosopon. This is said about the Logos and not repeated in the following sentence about the human nature - should we add it here mentally by inference?

3) the constitution of man is given as an example by Theodore: soul and body have each a nature, a hypostasis, a prosopon. The inference „therefore in Christ...“ is not drawn expressly.

Theodore evidently never worked out this sketch in another of his works, so anybody who took it up had to try and answer for instance the question for himself, *how* the two prosopa were one prosopon in Christ. So far as I can see, this special question was taken up explicitly only by Nestorius and in his wake by Ps.-Nestorius. Later Syrians like Babai the Great and others when they speak of it are using the Liber Heraclidis which they of course took to be an authentic work throughout by Nestorius.

In the conclusion of my monograph on the Lib. Her. (p. 228 f.) I pointed out the difficulties arising from the fundamental presuppositions of Nestorius. The presuppositions are three:

1) The unity of the one Christ is a matter of course (it has been the merit of Scipioni, to point this out firmly, see below) and is seen from the outside so to speak, the one prosopon is a prosopon of doxology; it is also seen in Christ's work and reign;

2) the absolutely transcendent nature of the God Logos which cannot unite itself with human nature in a „physical“ manner;

3) the full human nature without any diminution.

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the earlier Nestoriana. - To all of this we all of us should be able to consent and should go on from that to more positive statements.

Next I want to mention the two monographs written in Italian by the Dominican Luigi I. Scipioni in 1956 and 1974 respectively. The first is called „Ricerche sulla cristologia del ‘Libro di Eraclide’ di Nestoria“ with the subtitle „La formulazione teologica e il suo contesto filosofico“. Of course the whole of the Lib. Her. is still taken to be authentic. That has the result, as Gribomont noted (in his review of the second monograph, p. 115), that Scipioni's picture of the christology of his hero was most lucid in the parts based on the dialogue (by Ps.-Nestorius) at the beginning of the Lib. Her. Scipioni also took the Liber de Unione of Babai the Great as a commentary on the Lib. Her., but, as Gribomont noted again (p. 113), perhaps without taking into account sufficiently the fact that Babai himself uses the Lib. Her. and therefore does not represent an independent Antiochene tradition. Nevertheless, „Ricerche“ is a very good book, not only because of his fundamentally positive view, but above all by the explanation given of the relationship between nature, hypostasis and prosopon with the help of „the Stoic position“ (part III of the book) which is quite illuminating. Grillmeier is right however, when he says that all this had been absorbed already by Christian theology before Nestorius, and when he indicates the relationship with Cappadocian formulas. But there is also a precedent nearer home, in the text I quoted above already, the De incarnatione of Theodore, where we can constitute the series of individuation as ousia or physis - hypostasis - prosopon. The connexion between Cappadocian and Antiochene terminology is easily explained by the common position the Cappadocian and Antiochene theologians took in the trinitarian debates of the time, that is the position of neo-Nicaenism. Meletius, the bishop of Antioch, was the most important figure at the ecumenical council in Constantinople in 381, and the Catechetical Homilies of the Antiochene presbyter Theodore, the later bishop of Mopsuestia, are a powerful statement of neo-Nicaene trinitarian thinking.

Scipioni's second monograph, Nestorio e il concilio di Efeso, of 1974, gives a lively narrative of the gripping story of Nestorius. The author's judgement on Cyril's christology is coolly critical: the Alexandrine's teaching is oldfashioned and inadequate considering the problems raised by the teaching of Apollinarius. Concerning the ps.-Nestorian dialogue in the Lib. Her. Scipioni takes the position that it is written by Nestorius himself at the time of his first exile. This does not convince me at all, of course (which would not have surprised Gribomont, see op. cit. p. 115).

A. Grillmeier has worked on Nestorius through the continuing growth of his great work on christology and also i.a. in his paper „Das scandalum oecumenicum des Nestorius in kirchlich-dogmatischer und theologiegeschichtlicher Sicht“. This paper appeared first in the journal „Scholastik“ of 1961 and has been reworked and republished in the volume of Grillmeier's collected papers, „Mit ihm und in ihm“, in 1975. As the title indicates, Grillmeier is distinguishing two viewpoints from which the teaching of Nestorius has been, respectively *can* be judged.: the ecclesiastical and dogmatical on one side, on the other the role of Nestorius in the history of theology. Concerning the first, resulting in the condemnation of the bishop, Grillmeier is apologetic and considers it unavoidable, given the circumstances at the time, and therefore justified (p. 279 f.). But concerning the position of Nestorius in the history of theology the judgement has to be much more favourable. For Nesto-

rius was sincerely trying to find a solution of the christological problem as it had been posed by Arianism and Apollinarism. He is to be claimed in fact as one of the first theologians who thought out a theory of incarnation. Grillmeier notices (p. 261) the bishop's use of trinitarian terminology in christology, but in course in inversion, and asserts that nobody else had done this with so much deliberation. But this is not quite true, since Tertullian had done exactly the same more than 200 years earlier in *Adversus Praxeas* - however Tertullian was not bothered by the term „hypostasis“. It is not necessary here to go into the reasons for this difference between the two theologians.

Anyhow, the method used by Nestorius is seen by Grillmeier as one to raise the discussion of the problem to the level of theological and metaphysical analysis. The ecclesiastical framework of the thinking of the bishop has to be insisted on (ibid.). With the exception of the term „hypostasis“, Nestorius anticipated the Chalcedonian formula, for he speaks of Christ „in two natures“ or of „one prosopon in two natures“ (p. 263). But the passion, vehemence and impetuosity displayed in the disputes of the time blocked the way which could have led to a solution, if only there had been the possibility of common endeavour and careful analysis of arguments (p. 282). - If we are in a better position today and not so ready to hurl anathemata against each other, we may perhaps come to a better understanding.

We now come to Grillmeier's „Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche“, vol. 1, third German edition of 1990 with corrections and additions. The chapters on Nestorius are arranged strictly in the chronological order of events, the treatment of the Liber Heraclidis is therefore to be found after the chapter on Ephesus 431.

To describe the role of Nestorius in the development of christological tradition is considered by Grillmeier to be a contribution to the theological rehabilitation of the bishop. The better we can show the orthodoxy of his teaching, the easier will be the establishment of contact with the Nestorian church of today (p. 642). About the „kerygmatic“ necessity of the condemnation of Nestorius by the church Grillmeier speaks perhaps with more caution here than in the former paper. What was condemned was a „popular“ presentation of a heresy and of a heretic, which corresponded more to the exigencies of the church's preaching than with historical exactitude (p. 644). Modern research has the ecumenical task to fill up the gap between what was seen as heresy and the real teaching of the condemned. The Second Vatican Council promoted just such a task (p. 645).

Of Grillmeier's chapter on the Ephesinum we may take note of the following remarks: The fathers of Ephesus did not create a new formula of faith - this refers to the synod held by Cyril of Alexandria, which won the recognition of the church. If one wants to speak of an „Ephesian symbol“, there is the formula of the synod held by John of Antioch, which with some alterations became the symbolum unionis of 433. The theological center point of the Cyrillian synod was the content of the dogma of incarnation and the „heresy“ of Nestorius (p. 687). Very important was the strong stress on the council and creed of Nicea; Cyril's second letter to Nestorius was compared and found to be in conformity with it, while the answer of Nestorius was condemned as contrary to the Nicaean creed, in spite of the fact that the bishop of Constantinople had argued from it (p. 688). The lecture of the two letters by the synod is to be taken as the decisive dogmatical act of the synod. The dogmatical idea found in Nicaea by the Ephesian fathers is: „One and the same is the eternal Son

of the Father and the Son born according to the flesh by the Virgin Mary, who is justly called theotokos" (p. 689).

Grillmeier's chapter on the Liber Heraclidis I recommend as a very good description and analysis of the authentic parts of that book (p. 707-726). Grillmeier repeats his former observation that Nestorius is really interested in a unity of being in Christ. The idea of the exchange of prosopa is completed by the idea of perichoresis (p. 722 f.). But the Cappadocian language was not sufficient to express his real meaning and he himself was not able to surmount it. However, this treatment of the problem is not too simple but too complicated: „Truth does not lie in complication" (p. 726). - At this point it may be useful to remind ourselves of a remark made by Josef Barbel concerning the insufficiency of the term prosopon as used by the Cappadocians and therefore by Nestorius (RHE 60, 1965, p. 499): „Naturellement, toute métaphysique de la personne fait défaut. Mais elle fait défaut tout aussi chez Augustin. Et nous-mêmes, en savons-nous aujourd'hui tellement plus?" To which we may add: Could we apply a better definition of person, should it exist, without further reflection and accommodation to the one person of Christ? The Antiochenes were very conscious of the problem. But in fact, whether we seek to define the unity of Christ on the level of nature, or hypostasis, or prosopon, or person in a more modern sense - in every case we have to define the term used in a special way, which is not applicable to any other case; though you will find always, I suppose, the special and unique application formulated as a general rule.

I conclude the first part of my paper with two articles, quite recently printed, by our much regretted and truly irreplaceable colleague and friend, André de Halleux. These are: La première session du concile d'Éphèse (22 juin 431), in Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses 69 (1993), and: Nestorius, histoire et doctrine, in Irénikon 66 (1993) and p. 198 of this volume. The latter article was written for the Council of the Churches in the Middle East; as de Halleux told me in his last letter - so the members of the Council here present will already know it.

To begin with the paper on Ephesus 431 and the condemnation of Nestorius, De Halleux finds that very few of the newer standard works on the history of the church and of dogma are making direct use of the material in the diverse collections of the conciliar acts as edited for the first time critically by Ed. Schwartz in ACO. The first session of Ephesus 431 especially is retold normally without taking into account the many stages of editing that a report went through, before the publicized form was reached; de Halleux speaks of a „cascade of adaptations" and the consequent loss of correspondence with the original words. For the first session of Ephesus these usual disadvantages are doubled by another circumstance: the lack of impartial verification and of official authentication. There were gathered the followers of Cyril, being by themselves after they had expelled by force the imperial commissioner whose task it was to uphold the order of the proceedings. The „editio" of the acts of this session therefore was dependent completely on the Alexandrian secretariat of the meeting. Since the imperial commissioner was of course going to submit his own report on the court, it was extremely urgent to produce as quickly as possible a report on the meeting by the actors which had to appear as keeping scrupulously close to the rules of procedure, which were those of the imperial senate (p. 48-51).

De Halleux then treats his subject in two chapters dealing with the time before the inauguration of the synod and the course of the first session, respectively. He ends with an „ecumenical conclusion". For one purpose it is this conclusion which is most important (p. 81-87). The first session of the synod was not the doctrinal debate demanded by the emperor, but a judicial action against Nestorius as a heretic. The inauguration of the Cyrillian synod as it was engineered went against the imperial instruction and was therefore irregular. When one tries to evaluate that decisive session two questions pose themselves:

- 1) Was the process against Nestorius equitable?
- 2) Where is the „dogma of Ephesus"? (p. 82).

Today one has to find an answer to these questions in the spirit of Vatican II. Christians will have to purify their memory of the faults of the past so as to overcome them. To try to deny incontestable historical truths in the name of faith is a sign of badly understood faith and leads to bad apologetics (n. 178 on p. 83). Nestorius in his Apology complained that without bishop John of Antioch and his suffragans the Cyrillian synod was only a particular and partisan synod; the bishop of Alexandria was judge and interested party as well; the judgment was passed without the presence of the accused. The imperial commissioner himself told the Oriental bishops that the decision had been reached without any examination or investigation and contrary to the imperial instruction. But not very much later it was punishable to say this and the 5th ecumenical council condemned everybody who still kept to this opinion (p. 83).

Today nobody can detect in the literary relicts of Nestorius the gross adoptionism which Cyril attributed to him and which the victim always repudiated. Concerning the title Theotokos we have to take note of the fact that Nestorius accepted it in his cathedral homily of Dec. 7, 430; that it was taken up in the symbolum unionis of 433 which was accepted in its turn by Cyril (p. 84). De Halleux speaks twice of the „orthodoxie foncière" of Nestorius, meaning that he is basically orthodox. Having established that, one should be in a better position to say what the „dogma of Ephesus" consists of (p. 85). Roman catholic theologians located it in the second letter of Cyril to Nestorius, condensing its content in the catchwords „Theotokos" and „hypostatic union". This is also what tradition kept as doctrinal result of the third ecumenical council. Cyril explained to adversaries and followers alike that „hypostatic" or „natural union" is nothing else than a „true" union. Therefore the „dogma of Ephesus" does not exclude the legitimacy of the Antiochene approach to the mystery of distinction in unity. And that is expressed in the symbolum unionis of 433 which can be considered to be the true doctrinal conclusion of the Ephesene council. Nestorius could have signed that symbol. We should therefore undertake a *rélecture* of the Ephesene judgement on Nestorius in the light of the symbolum unionis and in an ecumenical spirit. In recognizing the basic orthodoxy of Nestorius we of course do not overlook the weakness of his explanation of the unity of Christ's person.

The second paper of de Halleux, printed in Irénikon 1993 in two sections, is much shorter but treats the doctrinal side of the question in the same measure as the procedural. The opinions of de Halleux appear in even sharper relief than before. He considers the judicial action against Nestorius contestable (p. 40), the inauguration of the synod illegal, there is indeed no other ecumenical council that began its

proceedings by defying imperial instructions (p. 41). Though the ecclesiastical tribunal sought to compensate the juridical irregularity of its meeting by strict observation of the forms of procedure, it nevertheless acted against an elementary rule of natural right, by having the accuser as judge (p. 41). It is not certain whether the excerpts from Nestorius which now figure in the acts were read at all at the synod, in any case they were not discussed. If the theological expressions used by the author of the excerpts is sometimes disagreeably provoking, they nevertheless correspond to Antiochene christology which in its turn is non incompatible with the patristic florilegium included in the acts. - The accused is *deposed*, which is much more severe than to be excommunicated (p. 44). Nowhere his „heresy“ is put in precise terms, it is stated simply that he uttered blasphemies against Christ (p. 45). De Halleux then recounts the events after the arrival of John of Antioch at Ephesus: his own synod, and how the case of Nestorius was lost by the Orientals, not without help of enormous bribes from Alexandria distributed at Constantinople; how the Orientals were forced to assent to the condemnation of Nestorius's doctrine, the persecution of those who refused to do this. One has to acknowledge the disinterested attitude of Nestorius during all these troubles, in spite of the ever harder places of exile he was brought to in Egypt, where he lived until 450 (p. 45-50).

Concerning the doctrine of Nestorius: his answer to the second letter of Cyril was judged in Ephesus to be in opposition to the faith of Nicaea, but it gives a philologically correct, Antiochene interpretation of the second article of the Nicaene creed. The disturbing expressions from his excerpts have to be read against the background of pre-Chalcedonian Antiochene christology with its strong anti-Apollinarian impetus (p. 163 f.). What about the opposition of Nestorius against the title Theotokos? This „bugbear“ (as the church historian Socrates called it, h.e. 7,32) has to be reduced to his just proportions. The title was far from being in universal usage and had to be explained to the Occident after Ephesus. In Cyril's large oeuvre it practically does not appear before 428, while it can be found in one of the homilies which Nau printed (in the Appendix to his translation of the Lib. Her.). Even at the height of the controversy Cyril is not constant in applying the title to Mary and he can call her the „holy Virgin“ without further attributes. Nestorius opposed an „Apollinarian“ interpretation of Theotokos, but he took up the expression in a sermon (of 430, mentioned already above) (p. 165). It is *not* the teaching of Nestorius that Jesus was *constituted* divine Son of God by his merits. Like all Antiochene theologians Nestorius refuses to let „ascend the proprieties of the flesh into the essence of God“. The humanity of the Word incarnate, its consubstantiality with us is taken very seriously by Nestorius. According to him, one may not say that the Word „became“ flesh, „becoming“ is interpreted as „inhabitation“ and as „taking on the form of a servant“. To use „to become“ for the Logos entrains mutability and that had been condemned by the Nicaene creed. Nestorius also uses the language of clothing - de Halleux refers at this point to the „venerable Syriac tradition“ in the use of the metaphor (p. 166), but I may also add that Alexander of Alexandria, the predecessor of Athanasius; employs this language. De Halleux regrets that Cyril by his restrictions has impoverished the christological heritage of the church universal. „In spite of all his glory, the Alexandrian christology represents a partial approach only to the mystery of incarnation. One should avoid to confuse Alexandrian particularities with the Apostolic tradition as such“, - for the Antiochene tradition

preserves other and authentic aspects of that tradition. Also regrettable is Cyril's suspicion concerning the term *synapheia*, „conjunction“, which he misunderstood (intentionally) as simple moral union. Here I want to point out that *synapheia* is used by the Antiochenes in the sense of „unconfused union“ (*asynchytos henosis*), and that *asynchytos henosis* since its introduction into trinitarian and christological language belongs to the realm of the divine, is *not* less than a physical union and certainly not a mere moral union, but a supranatural union in the strictest sense. - De Halleux then mentions, as did Grillmeier, the passages where the thought of Nestorius could have been expressed by the term *perichoresis* (p. 167). Therefore de Halleux repeats his claim that Nestorius is basically orthodox in his intentions (p. 168). The next chapter is called by de Halleux „une christologie insatisfaisante“ (p. 169-174) - since by now we know all about this, I will take up only some of the author's remarks, such as: „Let us avoid the condemnation of 'the' dualism of hypostases, which is at first sight unacceptable for any Cyrillian, be he a Chalcedonian or a non-Chalcedonian“, for one has to remember that the concept of hypostasis (in its christological use) was not defined before the 6th century, and even then not in the same way by all (p. 171). Understood in the sense of Nestorius, hypostasis as objective and individual nature can be applied to Christ's manhood in a completely orthodox sense (p. 172). The great question is of course the „prosopon of union“. De Halleux does not see it as deprived of *all* ontological consistence, but „at least of its signification of ultimate ontological principle“, that is of „person“ in the modern sense. Nestorius, though au fond an orthodox believer, was not a good theologian. He brought a defect of Antiochene christology to its extreme expression (p. 173). But Antiochene christology has an irreplaceable function: to remind us that the Christian paradox of God who is born, suffers and dies, cannot compromise the immutability and impassibility of the divine nature nor mutilate the humanitas assumpta in the exercise of its activity and its own will (p. 174).

Concluding with „Une perspective pour le dialogue“ (p. 174-177), de Halleux emphasizes that the Assyrian church of the East professes through the formulas of her own tradition the common faith in the unconfused unity of Christ. In the creeds and theological statements of the patriarchal synods of this church, the specifics of the Liber Heraclidis, that is to say: the exchange of *prosopa* and the one common *prosopon*, do not appear. The greatest of her theologians, though, use these expressions (because they are the most educated among the clergy, we may add - the Liber Heraclidis does not make easy reading).

The perspective for the near future as seen by de Halleux, looks like this: After clearing up the misunderstandings in matters of terminology, the Assyrian Church of the East could agree to consider orthodox the Cyrillian and Chalcedonian formulas of the one hypostasis of the Word incarnate, situating the Hypostasis on the ontological level of person. However, this church must not be asked by the other churches to receive the formulas mentioned into her own christology; at the same time, her own formula of two hypostases in Christ are to be understood in an entirely orthodox sense, given the different concept of hypostasis.

Each tradition has tried to express in ontological language something of the unfathomable mystery of union without separation and confusion. A common profession of faith, respectful of these traditions should content itself to be inspired by

the kerygmatic language of the Apostolic tradition, as it was condensed in the creed of Nicaea.

De Halleux's insights are of crucial importance for our consultations, for this reason I have referred to them at such length. But now of course the time and the space is lacking to do justice to research on Nestorianism in the same way.

In spite of this I want to begin with some remarks on the translation of Syriac christological terminology in the existing editions. Those who do not read old Syriac are of course obliged to rely on translations. Some of them give a quite misleading picture of Nestorian christology by translating *qenoma* as „person“, „personne“, so that the two *qenome*, the two hypostases of Christ, become two persons. This then leads to the further difficulty to find a fitting translation for *parzopa*, prosopon. To give some instances from the nineties of the last century to the eighties of ours: „personne“ for *qenoma* is used by François Martin in his edition and translation of Narsai's Homily on the three Nestorian teachers (1899/1900); Frederick McLeod in his edition and translation of a group of Narsai's Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion etc. of Christ still does the same (Patr. Orient. 1979). But I hear that in the meantime he has seen the error of his ways. The great Chabot in his big volume containing the Synodicon Orientale (1902) appears to be not consistent in the way he renders *qenoma* we find again and again „personne“, though occasionally he says hypostasis. To my amazement Robert Hespel and the venerable Draguet still kept to „personne“ for *qenoma* in their translation of the Scholia of Theodore bar Konai, the text of which had been edited by Addai Scher long ago. Hespel and Draguet then proceed to give *parzopa* as „personnage“ with sometimes unhappy results (CSCO 1981/2).

Antiochene christology and exegesis reached the Christian church in Persia in full force by Narsai, formerly director of the School of Edessa and then in the same position at the School of Nisibis, where also other teachers assembled after the closure of the Edessene academy. A great difficulty is the fixation of the date of Narsai's expulsion from Edessa, see the discussion in the Leiden thesis by Judith Frishman, „The Ways and Means of Divine Economy“, of 1992 (p. 1-6 of the third part). Frishman here edits and translates a group of six homilies of Narsai. Narsai's arrival at Nisibis belongs to the second half of the 5th century (471 probably); but he did *not* bring with him the Liber Heraclidis, he did not even know that book. It was in the first half of the 6th century that the Liber Heraclidis came to Persia: Mar Aba, later Catholicos, brought a Greek copy from the West, from Constantinople, I believe. It was translated in 539/40 and gave to the dyophysite church there a second injection of Antiochene christology, in a very special form. The most effective use of it was made by Babai the Great (d. 628) in his book „On the divinity and the humanity and on the prosopon of union“, better known under his shorter title as De unione. The „Great Monastery“ of Abraham of Kashkar evidently had a copy of the translated Liber Heraclidis, for we know of Bar'Edta from this monastery, who learned the book by heart (really all of it?) before 561. Bahai the Great himself was abbot of the Great Monastery and indeed addressed the Liber de Unione to the brethren there. This work shows him to be the best dogmatician of his church; a remarkable trait of it is the subtle reinterpretation of some topoi central to Theodore of Mopsuestia. On the other hand he takes over the two *qenome* and the complicated doctrine of the different kinds of *prosopa* from the Liber Heraclidis, which result in

the one prosopon of union, cp. the original title of De unione just quoted. It is his influence which altered with the document of 612 the character of the synodal statements of the Persian dyophysite church, until his time of cautious expression, sometimes very near the Chalcedonian formula, sometimes insisting on adherence to the heritage of Theodore. There is a paper by Sebastian Brock in a Festschrift of 1985 describing and translating into English the material from the Synodicon Orientale. The document of 612 made two *qenome* in the one Christ the official teaching of the Church of the East. The reasons for this more radical expression of the christological dogma were the presence of a second ecclesiastical organization in Persia, of Severian persuasion, and a branch of neo-Chalcedonianism in the dyophysite church itself teaching one composite *qenoma* of Christ, so taking up the hypostasis synthetos from the West. In the person of Henana it dominated the School of Nisibis for several decades. A handbook like the „Nestorian collection of christological texts“, published by A.E. Goodman and me in 1972 is intended as a statement of Nestorian orthodoxy in view of these divergent christologies.

If we look back from 612 to Narsai we find in his homilies also a clear doctrine of two natures, two *qenome* and one prosopon in Christ. As in Nestorius, the distinction of *two* hypostases by Narsai was certainly a reaction to Cyril's one christological hypostasis as taught in a special provoking manner in the twelve anathemata.

It is our task now to overcome the old misunderstandings and the hostile insinuations on both sides. The rich heritage of the Church of the East should be preserved by the efforts of us all.

Discussion:

Chairman: Bishop *Boulos Matar*

Dr. Hainthaler quotes Antoine de Saint Exupéry: The human language is the cause of misunderstandings.

Prof. Davids: What do we mean when we speak of the dyophysite tradition? It designates certainly the Nestorian and Byzantine positions. There may be need of a more clear definition.

Prof. Brock: The concept may be too broad. It may be a danger.

Prof. Jammo: The paper presented the tendency of modern scholars to revise the judgement of history on Nestorius. Is there any opposition to this attitude? If not, it would have great consequences. This question is especially addressed to the Oriental Orthodox. Is there any opposition by the Syrian Orthodox to the interpretation of this paper?

Mar Gregorios: This interpretation is not acceptable to my Church. We distinguish between the doctrine of Nestorius, as our Fathers understood it, and the Church of

the East which did not accept all the teachings of Nestorius. Hence, we kept up relations.

Mar Severius: We cannot discuss here this paper if we do not have a paper by an Oriental Orthodox on the same subject. In my view Prof. Abramowski takes the standpoint of the Church of the East.

Prof. Davids: We should distinguish historical research from the doctrinal approach.

Mar Severius: History is subject to many different visions and interpretations. The Oriental Orthodox have different views of Ephesus. The dyophysites for us are both those who accept Chalcedon and those who are opposed to Ephesus.

Prof. Samir: There are two different things. The facts in themselves and their interpretation. We should come to a common vision of the facts. Therefore we need a study from the other viewpoint. On the other hand, on the level of interpretation, there will be differences. I think in this audience we can come to a common agreement on the facts within one to two years. It would be a great step to establish a common historical description.

Mar Gregorios: We should be clear about our aim. Is it to bring Nestorius back to the Church? Or to accept the Church of the East which did not follow exactly the doctrine of Nestorius?

Prof. Jammo: The variety in theology is a richness. Nestorius as a person is not primarily important. I agree with the distinction between Nestorius and the Church of the East. As a uniate Chaldean I consider and evaluate the entire heritage, the variety of theology and the different theological points of view. And there is a Mesopotamian theology! The theology of the Church of the East is a richness for the whole Church.

Mar Bawai: Nestorius will become a real issue in the debate if the Church of the East will be asked to condemn Nestorius and to remove his name from the Acts. This was sometimes brought forward as a pre-condition for dialogue. In that case, there is no ground to expect the Church of the East to condemn part of its historical heritage. Nestorius will not become an issue if such a condition is not raised. Later we may come to a different view of the past.

Bishop Matar: Nestorius was Patriarch of Constantinople. Why was he adopted by the Church of the East?

Mar Bawai: The Church of the East always had an ecumenical mind, was open to the West. The main issue is not so much Nestorius as the second Council of Constantinople and the condemnation of the Three Chapters.

Prof. Jammo: The name Nestorianism was a plight to our forefathers. But he was none of them, he was neither their patriarch nor shared their language.

Prof. Davids: This paper is about history and research. Are there any new investigations in the last 50 years done in the East on the person of Nestorius, along the lines of the paper that was presented? We are prepared to use them.

Mar Severius: On p.63 the paper states, "Nestorius was not a good theologian". Until now we discussed here the book of Heraclides. We should also discuss the letters of Cyrill of Alexandria and the responses by Nestorius, if we want to discuss the teachings of Nestorius. If we put all this together, I do not think it is possible to bring Nestorius back to orthodoxy. However, the Church of the East has also other theologians.

The paper also says: "Nestorius brought the Antiochian Christology to its extremes." We should study the Antiochian Christology and see where Nestorius deviated.

Prof. Brock: The paper gives an indication why Nestorius could be a figure who stood for the defence of the Antiochian Christology. There are two completely different understandings of Nestorius. For the Church of the East he is simply a symbolic figure, for the West he is a theologian. He was victimized for his stand, his actual teaching was not of prime concern.

Bishop Matar: The Nestorian question belongs to and affects the whole Universal Church.

Archbishop Garmo: It is my privilege to intervene with this esteemed assembly on behalf of both the Assyrian and Chaldean delegations and state the following:

- We request that both of our churches and delegations be addressed according to their proper and historic names.
- The same Church of the East that is in communion with the Roman See be called: the Chaldean Church or if you wish: the Chaldean Church of the East. For the other same Church of the East that is independant and not in communion with any of the existing ecclesiastic families, be called: the Assyrian Church, or if you wish: the Assyrian Church of the East. Further, when addressing both Churches together, it is proper to call them: The Assyrian and Chaldean Church of the East, or if you wish: the Assyro-Chaldean Church of the East.
- As for the language of Chaldeans and Assyrians, or the Assyro-Chaldeans, they use two forms of the Aramaic language; one is the vernacular Aramaic of Edessa, also called Syriac, and the other is the vernacular Aramaic of Mesopotamia called Swadaya or „surath.“ - Therefore, when speaking about our language we see it proper to call it: Aramaic-Syriac or Aramaic vernacular according to the respective dialect.

- As for the people that are members of these two churches, they are the descendants of ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia, whose last names in ancient history are Assyrians and Chaldeans.
- As a commentary to the usage by many scholars of the name East Syrian or East Syriac to mean the people and the Church of the East, we think it is inaccurate and inappropriate nomenclatures. Because Mesopotamia was never called neither in geography nor in history East Syria.

Mar Gregorios: We should not mix other elements like geographical names with the questions of church and theology when it comes to terminology.

President Stirnemann: We are aware of the sensibilities, but the first aim of our terminology is to be understood and to be as simple as possible. As far as language is concerned we distinguish between West Syriac and East Syriac.

Prof. Jammo: By simplifying things there is a danger of altering realities. This is for the sake of clarity. Churches and peoples have had their names changed. But we were never called East Syrians.

Prof. Fiey: The problems of language are numerous. Official traditional texts from synods etc. never use "Chaldean" or "Assyrian" and would rather be opposed to any such use. In the 19th century they never wanted to be called Syriacs.

Prof. Samir: Prof. Abramowski's papers invites us to re-read the history of the councils, what was a taboo until now. It is important that we re-examine our history. This would provide liberation for more objectivity. We must become free from our traditional way of reading, where we read a summary from previous summaries. This is especially true for the East. Thus, we must reconstruct history to make theology. Today we are able to do it, we have the documents.

Dr. Hainthaler: Prof. Abramowski being a Protestant, I doubt whether she represents the sight of the Church of the East. Her paper only wants to present the recent research done by scholars. Likewise, we should not forget that de Halleux, who wrote the recent study on Nestorius and Nestorianism¹ (Irenikon 1993) worked almost his whole life on the theology of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Like Grillmeier and de Halleux she represents the sight of a scholar: careful, objective and admirable.

Prof. Koodapuzha: The East Syrian tradition developed autonomously outside the Roman Empire and the Greco-Roman world in Mesopotamia, Persia and India. About such problems of the main Church like Ephesus and the role of Cyrill in the Council they came to know from the outside. They were forced to develop their own life and theology and received, whenever possible, the main elements from the Churches in the West. That way they could develop some sympathy for the Nestorians.

¹ cf. p.200 of this volume

Mar Gregorios: Our Syrian Orthodox Church is only one among the Oriental Orthodox Churches. We cannot represent the whole family. Our task here is not primarily to study Nestorianism. We need a formula like the 1971 Vienna formula if we want to reach an agreement. Hopefully, PRO ORIENTE will convene a meeting where we can find a common formula.

Archbishop Garmo: Mar Gregorios is talking only about the Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic Churches. But there are also the Assyro-Chaldean Churches. The Syrians were 2000 years before the Romans and did not get their name from them.

Mar Severius: I do not misinterpret the scholarly paper by Prof. Abramowski. There has to be an evaluation of Nestorius and Nestorianism from the point of view of the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Until now we have only discussed history, but there are many other aspects. Our main interest should be the letters of Cyrill and Nestorius. Since they are not considered or discussed here we are not able to come to a conclusion.

Dr. Hainthaler: Prof. Abramowski limits her paper to the research of Nestorius and did not have the time to write on the research of Nestorianism. If so, we would have had a different picture. But in this respect she also refers to Prof. de Halleux.

Third working session: Saturday morning, June 25

Chairman: Archbishop *Garmo*

Sebastian Brock

THE CHURCH OF THE EAST IN THE SASANIAN EMPIRE UP TO THE SIXTH CENTURY AND ITS ABSENCE FROM THE COUNCILS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Introductory

My aim in this paper is twofold: first I shall try to offer a rapid sketch of the history of the Church living within the Sasanian Empire (i.e. approximately Iraq and Iran) to the east of the Roman Empire up to the sixth century, paying special attention to church contacts between the two empires.¹ From the perspective of the Assyro-

¹ The fullest history remains J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse* (Paris, 1904), though it should now be supplemented by J.-M. Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'Église en Iraq* (CSCO Subsidia 36, 1970). The first volume of an important new history in Arabic has recently appeared: J. Habbi, *Kanizat al-Mashriq* (Baghdad, 1989). There are also two important studies of particular periods: S. Gero, *Barsauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century* (CSCO Subsidia 63, 1981), and M.-L. Chaumont, *La christianisation de l'empire iranien des origines aux grandes persécutions du IV^e siècle* (CSCO Subsidia 80, 1988). In English helpful general accounts can be found in W.A. Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church* (London, 1910) and in W.G. Young, *Patriarch, Shah and Caliph* (Rawalpindi, 1974).

Chaldean Church of the East of today, I will simply be sketching the early history of the Church of the East, that branch of the universal Church which grew up outside and to the east of the Roman Empire; from the perspective of the Chalcedonian and Oriental Orthodox Churches, however, this period is customarily seen as bipartite: up to and including the Catholicos Babowai (d. 484) this is part of the history of the universal Church, but after his death the Church of the East is seen as going its own independent way, having adopted a dyophysite christology that was perceived as unacceptable, not only to the Oriental Orthodox opponents of Chalcedon, but also to many supporters of the Council in the eastern half of the Roman Empire.

Then secondly I shall suggest some prerequisites for any balanced study and understanding of the Church of the East's christology, especially in this period.

I

At the outset it is worth reflecting briefly on the way in which early Church History has traditionally been seen as consisting essentially of the history of the Church within the Roman Empire. The model for this was already provided by the author of the very first Ecclesiastical History, Eusebius of Caesarea, in the early fourth century, and it is unfortunate that this perspective has regularly been followed, whether consciously or unconsciously, by almost all historians of the early Church down to the present day. Eusebius passes over the history of the Church to the east of the Roman Empire in almost total silence; even if the purview of some later Church historians is wider, there remains a strong tendency to marginalise the history of the Church outside the bounds of the Roman Empire. This is of significance, especially in connection with the term „ecumenical“ in our Greek and Latin sources for the period, for in an ecclesiastical context this normally refers to the oikoumene of the Roman Empire. This is especially important to remember in connection with the „Ecumenical Councils“: these were gatherings confined to bishops of the Roman Empire and they were in any case convoked by the Roman Emperor, whose authority of course was not recognized outside the bounds of the Roman Empire. This of course meant that the creeds and canons issued by these Councils were only authoritative within the Roman Empire - though they might, of course, be subsequently accepted by the Church outside the Roman Empire, as indeed happened with the Council of Nicaea, which was formally accepted by the Church of the East at the Synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410, eighty-five years after the original Council.

I stress these two points at the outset, for the legacy of Eusebius' model of a Church History has had an insidious influence on his successors, ancient and modern, encouraging the emergence of the excessively Eurocentric view of Church History that is generally current today. I turn now to a brief outline of the history of the Church to the east of the Roman Empire.

The beginnings of Christianity within the Parthian Empire (i.e. up to 224) are shrouded in legend. Later tradition associates the initial preaching of the Gospel in this area with the name of Mari, a disciple of Addai who, according to the Abgar

legend,² preached the Gospel in Edessa. Although the Acts of Mari cannot be used as a historical source, a topographical detail preserved elsewhere suggests that Mari could have come to Seleucia-Ctesiphon some time between 79 and 116.³ It is not, however, till the early third century (i.e., the very last decades of the Parthian Empire) that we have really good evidence of Christian communities east of the Roman Empire.⁴ This is found in a passage in the Book of the Laws of the Countries, by a pupil of Bardaisan (d. 222), where Christians are said to be present in Parthia, Gilan, Kushan, Fars, Media and Hatra. From a little over half a century later we have further reliable evidence in the form of a contemporary inscription erected by the Zoroastrian mobad (Magian priest) Kartir who was active in the reign of Bahram II (276-93); in this inscription he boasts how he has suppressed various non-Zoroastrian religions, among which are the *naçara* and *kristiyan*. Although the precise identification of these two groups, almost certainly both Christian, is not clear, it is possible that the *naçara* are the native Christian community in the Sasanian Empire (*nasraye* is the term used of Christians by Sasanian authorities in the Martyr Acts), while the *kristiyan* are Christians (Syriac *krestyane*) from the eastern Roman Empire (primarily Syria) deported in large numbers by Shapur I as a result of his successful campaigns against the Roman Empire,⁵ during which he even captured the Roman Emperor Valerian (in 260).

We know from a number of other sources that the deported communities included a number of Christians and that their presence helped to spread Christianity within the Sasanian Empire, even though they do not seem to have integrated with the local Christian population until well into the fifth century, for we hear of separate churches (where Greek was retained as the liturgical language) and separate hierarchies existing as late as the first decades of the fifth century.

It is in fact only with fourth century that we begin to be better provided with sources for the history of the Christian Church in the Sasanian Empire, though much still remains obscure. This applies above all to the struggles which evidently surrounded the emergence of the episcopal see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (the Sasanian winter capital) as the primate see. The hints we receive in our (often conflicting) sources concerning opposition to Papa, bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (c. 310-29) suggest that previously several bishops (notably that of Fars) had had a more or less autonomous existence. The repercussions of this dispute probably lie behind Demonstration 14, by Jacob „the Persian Sage“, better known today as Aphrahat.⁶ Aphrahat, whose Demonstrations are given the precise dates of 336/7 (I-X), 343/4 (XII-XXII) and August 345 (XXIII), is our first major Christian writer from outside the Roman Empire, and thus a source of greatest importance.

² For this see my „Eusebius and Syriac Christianity“, in H. Attridge and G. Hata (eds), *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism* (Detroit, 1992), pp. 212-34

³ See Fiey, *Jalons*, pp. 41-2

⁴ Even if the Chronicle of Arbela is not a twentieth-century composition (as has been claimed), its account of the early spread of Christianity in the Parthian period cannot be regarded as having any historical basis

⁵ See my *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (London, 1984), ch. IV, pp. 91-5, and VI, p. 6

⁶ For the debate concerning the authorship of Demonstration 14, see M.-J. Pierre, *Aphraate le Sage persan*, I (Sources chrétiennes 349, 1988), pp. 47-54. For Aphrahat's christology there is now a good monograph by P. Bruns, *Das Christusbild Aphrahats des persischen Weisen* (Bonn, 1990); cp also W. Petersen, „The christology of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage: an excursus on the 17th Demonstration“, *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992), 241-56

Aphrahat's Demonstration XXI is a contemporary witness to what was perhaps the most traumatic event in the history of the Church under the Sasanian Empire, namely the persecution inaugurated by Shapur II, which began (probably) in 341 and then continued intermittently until his death in 379. Aphrahat, writing early on in the persecution, already compared it to that of Diocletian in the Roman Empire.

Shapur II's persecution was the first large-scale persecution of Christians in the Sasanian Empire. (Previous to this we only know of some isolated cases under Bahram II, where the circumstances were special,⁷ and there is no good evidence of any persecution under the Parthians). It is important to recognize the political situation behind these persecutions: hostilities had recently broken out between the Sasanian and Roman Empires; moreover, the latter had recently acquired a Christian emperor for the first time, and this emperor, shortly before his death in 337, had written a letter to Shapur, singularly lacking in tact (at least in the form in which it is reported by Eusebius), where he urges Shapur to protect his Christian subjects and thus experience the good will of Constantine's own deity. Furthermore, when we reflect on the excitement expressed by Aphrahat as he speculates on the implications of the advent of a Christian emperor in the Roman Empire, it is not difficult to see that Shapur had good reason to suspect the loyalty of at least some of his Christian subjects.⁸ Suspicions on the part of the Sasanian authorities over the loyalty of Christians evidently continued to play a role in the much shorter persecution under Yazdgard I and Bahram V in the early 420s (again significantly at a time of open hostilities between the two empires). Later on it would appear that this ceased to be an issue, and there are two good reasons for this. By the sixth century, there was a much greater number of converts from Zoroastrianism, and the communities of the „Greek captivity“, that is, families descended from people deported from the Roman Empire, had probably lost their separate identity; furthermore, by then the theological positions of the Church in the Eastern Roman Empire and of the Church in the Sasanian Empire had moved apart yet further. Some Christian writers within the Sasanian Empire actually saw this as beneficial for Church-State relations there.

To return to the martyrdoms of the 340s. The very large number of martyrdoms under Shapur II is exceptionally well documented,⁹ though the historical value of the different martyrdoms varies enormously - ranging from the brief and factual, through literary elaborations based on good material (such as the two martyrdoms of the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Simeon bar Sabba'e), to epic martyrdoms such as

that of Qardagh. Although some beginnings on the sifting of this material have been made,¹⁰ a great deal remains to be done. Here I would merely like to note that, even in the case of the martyrdoms that have taken on legendary proportions, there nevertheless remains much of incidental interest for our understanding of the nature of Christianity in the Sasanian Empire.

Subsequent persecutions, in the early 420s and in the 440s, involved much smaller numbers, and normally there were special circumstances which led to the recorded martyrdoms. After the persecution of Yazdgard II, in the 440s, almost the only martyrdoms recorded are of high-born converts from Zoroastrianism who thus incurred the wrath of their families and the Zoroastrian clergy.¹¹

A date in the reign of Shapur II which was to be of significance for the future is the year 363, when Nisibis, the home town of Ephrem, was ceded by the Roman Empire to the Sasanians as part of the peace treaty after the emperor Julian's death on campaign in southern Mesopotamia. Although under the terms of the treaty the Christian population were to be evacuated and resettled within the Roman Empire (Ephrem settled in Edessa), Nisibis soon became an important bishopric of the Church of the East, and in due course it was to receive the refugee staff from the School of the Persians in Edessa when this was closed by the emperor Zeno in 489. We shall return to this School, of such importance for the future direction of Church of the East, in due course.

Alongside the martyr acts, the other main source for our knowledge of the Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire is the collection of synods covering the period 410 to 775, generally known today as the *Synodicon Orientale*.¹² The documentation surrounding the synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410 is of particular interest for us. It is significant that the synod was convoked by the Shah himself, Yazdgard I, and that the initiative for it came, not from the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (Isaac), but from the Roman ambassador for the peace negotiations between the two empires, Marutha, bishop of Maipherqat, who also brought with him a letter, addressed to himself, from a number of „western“ bishops, who are identified as Porphyry bishop of Antioch, Akakios of Aleppo, Peqida of Edessa, Eusebius of Tella and Akakios of Amida. The letter, which had previously been shown to the shah, was read out to the forty assembled bishops at the very first session of the synod; it urged that three reforms be put into effect:

⁷ For the one surviving martyrdom (Candida), see my *Syriac Perspectives*, ch. IX (reprinted from *Analecta Bollandiana* 96 (1978), pp. 167-81).

⁸ For this, see my „Christians in the Sasanian Empire: a case of divided loyalties“, reprinted in my *Syriac Perspectives*, ch. VI.

⁹ The best guide to the scattered materials is P. Devos, „Les martyrs persans à travers leur actes syriaques“, in *Atti del Convegno sul Tema La Persia e il Mondo Greco-Romano* (Rome, 1966), pp. 213-25. A selection of translations (or, in Hoffmann, summaries) of Persian martyr acts of all periods can be found in G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig, 1880), O. Brau, *Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer* (München, 1915), and S. Brock and S. Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley, 1987). Attention might be drawn here to two interesting credal statements in the second recension of the martyrdom of Simeon bar Sabba'e (B. 44, 93; ed. M. Kmosko in *Patrologia Syriaca* 2): this is of significance since it is also transmitted in some West Syriac manuscripts, yet it contains phraseology normally dropped in that tradition (e.g. „the rational robe that You put on from our humanity“), but which is characteristic of the East Syriac tradition.

¹⁰ See especially G. Wiessner, *Untersuchungen zur syrischen Literaturgeschichte*, I. *Zur Märtyrerüberlieferung aus der Christenverfolgung Schapurs II* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl. III. 67, 1967).

¹¹ These include some long and detailed narratives which provide many important sidelights on Christianity in the Sasanian Empire in the sixth and early seventh centuries.

¹² Edited, with French translation, by J.B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale* (Paris, 1902); German translation in O. Braun, *Das Buch der Synhados oder Synodicon Orientale* (Stuttgart/Wien, 1900; repr. Amsterdam, 1975). Cp W. Selb, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht*, I. *Die Geschichte des Kirchenrechts der Nestorianer* (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl., Sitzungsbericht I, 1981), pp. 97-106, 111-5; A. Thazhath, *The Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church* (Kottayam, 1987), pp. 82-90. There is an English translation of the christological statements in the various synods in my „The christology of the Church of the East in the Synods of the fifth to early seventh centuries: preliminary considerations and materials“, in G. Dragas (ed.), *A Festschrift for Archbishop Methodios of Thyateira and Great Britain* (Athens, 1985), pp. 125-42, reprinted in *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (Variorum [Aldershot], 1992), ch. XII.

(1) each diocese should have only one bishop, and that he should be properly consecrated by three bishops and have the written authorisation of the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (described as metropolitan and head of the bishops). This was clearly aimed at doing away with the double hierarchies in certain towns, where one bishop represented „the Captivity“ (descendants of the deported population), and another represented the indigenous Christian population.

(2) There should be uniformity in calendrical matters, notably over the date of Easter.

(3) The creed and canons of the Council of Nicaea should be accepted.

All three points were agreed to by the synod. Clearly the prime concern of the western bishops lay with matters of Church order, and the particular matters they raise clearly indicate that these aspects had previously been absent from the life of the Church in the Sasanian Empire. The reappearance of some of the very same points in later synods shows that not everyone was prepared to go along with these decisions.

The synod of 410 witnessed one further important development: a few days after the initial session Marutha and Isaac arranged for an audience of all the bishops with the shah, in the course of which the relationship between the State and the Church was (probably for the first time) regularised.

Two points should be noted in connection with the transmission of the text of the synod of 410. Firstly, the 21 canons are the product of the synod, and not a straight reproduction of the canons of Nicaea. And secondly, the acts of the synod are transmitted, not only by the *Synodicon Orientale*, but also in a Syrian Orthodox recension. If one compares two texts of the creed, one will find some small but significant differences in the wording;¹³ in particular, corresponding to Greek *esarkothe* („he was enfleshed/incarnate“), the text of the *Synodicon Orientale* has *etgashsham* („he was embodied“), while that of the Syrian Orthodox recension has *lbesh pagra* („he put on the body“). The latter rendering, which reproduces phraseology regularly current in early Syriac writings (Acts of Thomas, Aphrahat, Ephrem etc), is clearly the original. The fact that the version in the official text of the Church of the East has undergone slight alteration (in the form of updating the language) is significant from another point of view, for in the *Synodicon Orientale* Isaac, bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, is described as „Catholicos“: in all probability this is anachronistic, and represents the retrojection of a title that developed only later.¹⁴

The next synod in the *Synodicon Orientale* is dated 420 (under Yahballaha I), only shortly before a short period of persecution that coincided with the outbreak of hostilities between the two empires. Once again, it was on the initiative of a „western“ bishop, serving as ambassador, that the synod was convened. The bishop in question was Akakios of Amida. The main outcome of this synod was the

approval of the canons of a whole series of „western“ councils, namely, Nicaea (again!), Ancyra, Neocaesarea, Gangra, Antioch, and Laodicea. Reading between the lines of the acts of the synod of 420 it is clear that the reforms of the synod of 410 had not been very effective. The preface to the acts of the next synod, of 424 (under Dadišo'), suggests that its predecessor too had not had much effect either (only 12 bishops subscribed to it), and it is clear that Dadišo' himself faced open schism. The main outcome of this synod was the affirmation of the independence of the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon from the authority of the „western bishops“; since we know from Socrates' Church History that Akakios bishop of Amid had visited Bahram V shortly after the conclusion of peace between the two empires, it may well be that Dadišo's opponents had appealed to Akakios for support.¹⁵

Although the synod of 424 probably effectively put an end to appeals to „western bishops“ and their consequent interference in the affairs of the Church in the Sasanian Empire, the influence of „the west“ (i.e. the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire) was soon to make itself felt in another way. One of the effects of the persecutions of Yazdgard I, Bahram V, and Yazdgard II, was that a number of Christians crossed the border, into the Roman Empire, for safety, and some of these ended up as students at the so-called Persian School in Edessa, before returning home when times were safer. Now it was precisely from the 420s onwards that the christology of this school developed a markedly dyophysite character, coming (especially in the 430s) strongly under the influence of the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, many of which were translated into Syriac at the School itself. The presence at the famous School in Edessa of students from the Sasanian Empire meant that when these students returned home (often becoming, in due course, bishops), they were the main source of information about theological developments in the Roman Empire, and it would have been surprising if they had not also disseminated something of the strongly dyophysite christology with which they had become familiar at the Persian School. Thus it is likely that, long before the closing of the Persian School in Edessa in 489, and the emergence of its successor in Nisibis, the influence of Theodore of Mopsuestia had long been felt beyond the eastern bounds of the Roman Empire. Once the School of Nisibis was established, this influence could only become stronger. Our main witness for the theological teaching both at Edessa and at Nisibis in the fifth century is the poet Narsai, who both studied and taught at Edessa, and then (perhaps in 471) moved to Nisibis

¹³ On this, see especially J. Gribomont, „Le symbole de foi de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)“, in R.H. Fischer (ed.), *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus* (Chicago, 1977), pp. 283-94, and A. de Halleux, „Le symbole des évêques perses au synode de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)“, in G. Wiessner (ed.), *Erkenntnis und Meinungen*, II (Göttinger Orientforschungen, 1. Reihe: Syriaca, Band 17, 1978), pp. 161-90. A reedition of the West Syrian recension is given by A. Vööbus, „New sources for the Symbol in early Syriac Christianity“, *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972), pp. 291-6.

¹⁴ Cf. J.-M. Fiey, „Les étapes de la prise de conscience de son identité patriarcale par l'église syrienne orientale“, *L'Orient Syrien* 12 (1967), pp. 3-22.

¹⁵ Possibly it was from texts emanating from circles such as these that some medieval East Syriac writers introduced the theory that the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon had once been subordinate to the patriarchate of Antioch were originally produced; for this theory see A. de Halleux, „Autonomy and centralization in the ancient Syriac Churches. Edessa and Seleucia-Ctesiphon“, *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplement 4 (Wien, 1978), 59-67 (with references to studies by W. de Vries and J.-M. Fiey). Two particular letters by „western“ bishops (both of Edessa) should be mentioned in passing: (1) that of Aitallaha to the Persians, preserved only in Armenian translation; this is held to be genuine by P. Bruns (who gives a German translation), „Aitallahas Brief über den Glauben. Ein bedeutendes Dokument früh-syrischer Theologie“, *Oriens Christianus* 76 (1992), 46-73. If the Letter is indeed genuine it will date from c. 340; D. Bundy, however, argues that Aitallaha is not the real author and that the Letter dates from between 410 and 428/31, „The creed of Aitallaha“, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 63 (1987), 157-63. (2) The Letter of Ibas to Mari the Persian: though earlier writers had speculated that the recipient was an unknown bishop of Rev Ardashir (Labourt), or even a Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (Blum), M. van Esbroeck has adduced new evidence which indicates that he was an archimandrite of the Akoimetai community in Constantinople: see his „Who is Mari, the addressee of Ibas' Letter?“, *Journal of Theological Studies* 38 (1987), 129-35.

where he was still teaching in 496, the year when the School of Nisibis' revised statutes were issued.¹⁶

Although we know of the existence of theological schools in other towns as well as in Nisibis (notably, that in Seleucia-Ctesiphon), regrettably we know nothing about the character of their theological teaching. Since it is likely

a) that they would have had at least some interest in theological developments in the Christian Roman Empire, and

b) that they would not, however, have had any direct contacts with the Roman Empire,

one can legitimately suppose that virtually all knowledge of such matters would have been filtered through the Theodoran spectacles of either the Persian School of Edessa, or of its successor at Nisibis. In the light of such considerations, then, it is absolutely no surprise to find that the wording of the christological statement issued at the synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 486 often reflects, in its phraseology, the strongly dyophysite language of Theodore.¹⁷ Subsequent synods in the course of the sixth century likewise often reflect specifically Theodoran language, though by no means always so: several synods use quite different terminology to express the relationship between the divinity and humanity in the incarnate Christ, avoiding (whether deliberately or not is unclear) the disputed terms current in the Greek debate.

Though my title only takes me up to the sixth century, it is perhaps helpful to conclude this rapid historical survey by highlighting certain salient features in the history of the Church of the East in the course of the sixth century.

The century again witnessed several periods of open warfare between the two Empires, but by this time the Sasanian authorities no longer felt any serious need to doubt the loyalty of their Christian subjects. It is significant that the synod of 576 instructed that prayers for Khosroes I always be included in the liturgy. Worth mentioning too in this context is the fact that the sixth century also saw the growth of a Christian literature in Middle Persian (whose existence is only known indirectly today). At some point towards the end of his reign (perhaps c. 562) Justinian arranged for theological discussions with a representative of the Church of the East; in the surviving report of this three-day meeting,¹⁸ we encounter for the first time in a document of the Church of the East the two *qnome* formula, familiar from Babai's *Liber de Unione*, but which is absent from all the christological formulations of the sixth century synods.

It is indicative of the trust which the shahs now felt in the Catholicos of the Church of the East that Iso'yahb I was sent on embassy to Constantinople in 587.¹⁹ The same thing was to happen with Iso'yahb II in 630, a time when a theological accord of potentially great import was nearly reached only to be foiled in an early stage by a sudden change in the course of political events.²⁰

Quite apart from the direct discussions with the Church of the East c. 562, Justinian's ecclesiastical policy in other spheres had a number of repercussions for the Church of the East, most obvious among which was the condemnation of Theodore's writings at the Fifth Council (553). Curiously enough we find hardly any direct reference to this in East Syrian sources; instead it is Justinian's adoption, at the end of his life, of a perceived apthartodocetic position that particularly catches Babai's attention in his *Liber de Unione*.²¹ It is also clear that the Origenist controversy had certain repercussions in the Church of the East, above all, it seems, in the conflict between Hnana and Babai.²²

An indirect consequence of Justinian's persecution of opponents of Chalcedon was that many Syrian Orthodox monks and clergy crossed over into the Sasanian Empire for safety. One result of this was that the late sixth century saw a marked extension of the Syrian Orthodox presence in the Sasanian Empire, with the Syrian Orthodox cause being promoted above all by a number of monastic establishments in what is now north Iraq. It is partly as a response to this new challenge that one should view Babai's great christological work, the *Liber de Unione* and the development of a two *qnome* christology.

Babai²³ had studied at the School of Nisibis, and throughout the sixth century this School evidently maintained a very influential position in the theological developments of the Church of the East in this period. The seeds for the decline of the School's influence in the next century were also sown in the sixth century: in the middle of this century Abraham of Kashkar had initiated a monastic revival, centred on the mountain of Izla (a little north east of Nisibis), from which numerous monastic foundations were made in the course of the late sixth and early seventh century. In due course some of these monasteries were to take on a prominent role in theological education in the Church of the East, with the resulting diminution of the influence of the School of Nisibis.

Before drawing this section of my paper to a conclusion, it is worth reflecting on certain relevant aspects of this period as a whole.²⁴ In the fourth century the Syriac theological idiom of Aphrahat and Ephrem was quite distinct from that of

¹⁶ These were edited by A. Vööbus, *Statutes of the School of Nisibis* (Stockholm, 1962). For the history of the School, see his *History of the School of Nisibis* (CSCO Subsidia 26, 1965). For Narsai's christology there is an unpublished thesis by I. Ibrahim, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai* (Rome, 1974/5), for which see F.G. McLeod, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension* (Patrologia Orientalis 40, 1979), pp. 22-9. It is important to take notice of Narsai's own statement that the great emphasis he gives in his writings to the distinction between the natures is due to the fact that he is trying to refute people whom he sees as introducing confusion or mixture: see especially Homily 56, in vol. 1 of the Patriarchal Press' edition (San Francisco, 1970), p. 594: „The zeal of foolish men who have acted boldly / has compelled me to distinguish the natures. / Although I have distinguished the natures, / the glorious things from the lowly, / in my confession I have not made any split / for it is the one Son that I confess...”

¹⁷ On this synod see also below

¹⁸ See A. Guillaumont, „Justinien et l'église de Perse“, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23/4 (1969/70), pp. 39-66.

¹⁹ For this and other embassies see L. Sako, *Le rôle de la hiérarchie syrienne orientale dans les rapports diplomatiques entre la Perse et Byzance aux Ve-VIIe siècles* (Paris, 1966)

²⁰ See C. Mango, „Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide“, *Travaux et Mémoires* 9 (1985), 91-118, esp. 105-17

²¹ Babai even commends Severus at one point in this connection (*Liber de Unione*, ed. Vaschalde, p. 79)

²² For this, see Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, ch. VIII; as far as Hnana's christology is concerned, little can be said with any real certainty.

²³ On Babai, see especially L. Abramowski, „Die Christologie Babais des Grossen“, in *Symposium Syriacum 1972* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 197, 1974), pp. 219-45, „Babai der Grosse: Christologische Probleme und ihre Lösungen“, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 41 (1975), pp. 290-343, and G. Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai the Great* (Kottayam, 1982)

²⁴ An excellent overview of the Christology of the Church of the East down to the end of the seventh century can be found in the Epilogue (by D. Miller) to *The Ascetic Homilies of Saint Isaac the Syrian, Translated by the Holy Transfiguration Monastery* (Boston, 1984), pp. 481-541

their Greek contemporaries, although in the case of Ephrem, the Greek theological agenda was already coming to the forefront. In the fifth century, with the christological controversies, both the Greek theological agenda and the Greek theological idiom effectively invades the theological discourse of most Syriac writers.²⁵ Since the Church of the East had gained its familiarity with the theological discourse of the Roman Empire directly or indirectly through the Persian School at Edessa, by the time that School was closed (489) the specifically Theodoran variety of theological discourse had become well established in the Church of the East. Thus when, at the end of the fifth century, and then increasingly during the sixth century, the Church in the eastern Roman Empire moved away from the Antiochene end of the Chalcedonian spectrum towards the Alexandrine end of that spectrum,²⁶ the Church of the East felt more and more out of sympathy with these doctrinal developments in the Roman Empire (above all with the condemnation of Theodore's writings), and one of the results of this dissatisfaction is to be found in Babai the Great's Book on the Union.

Two final points should be mentioned before I move on to my second section. First, what about the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon? Since, as was mentioned at the outset, these were imperial initiatives, they were of no direct concern to the Church outside the Roman Empire. It is unknown when information about the Council of Ephesus²⁷ reached the Church in the Sasanian Empire, but we can be reasonably certain that when it did, it would have been mediated through the Persian School in Edessa, and accordingly sympathies would naturally have been with the side of John of Antioch. In the case of Chalcedon, the fact that Ibas was restored to the see of Edessa, made it likely that for alumni of the School of Edessa (with which Ibas was closely associated) the Council of Chalcedon had something in its favour. As for the Council's Definition of Faith, later theologians of the Church of the East had an ambivalent attitude towards it: perhaps one might cite as characteristic the comment of Išo'yahb II (628-46):²⁸

„Although those who gathered at the Synod of Chalcedon were clothed with the intention of restoring the faith, yet they too slip away from the true faith: owing to their feeble phraseology, wrapped in an obscure meaning, they provided a stumbling block to many.“

An opinion with whose second half Syrian Orthodox opinion would certainly concur!

Secondly, what of Nestorius? As is well known, the Church of the East has an Anaphora attributed to Nestorius, and Nestorius' name features a number of times in the *Hudra* and other liturgical books. On the other hand, the name of Nestorius does not feature a single time in any of the fifth- or sixth-century synods, and nowhere is he ever adduced as an authority to be followed on christological matters.

²⁵ A notable exception is the poet Jacob of Serugh

²⁶ See, for example, the table given in the Appendix

²⁷ For a study of the Council of Ephesus from the point of view of the Church of the East, see Mar Aprém, *The Council of Ephesus* (Trichur, 1978)

²⁸ L.R.M. Sako, *Lettre christologique du patriarche syro-oriental Išo'yahb II de Gdala* (Rome, 1983), 42, tr. pp. 146-7. Possibly some time in the seventh century the wording of the Chalcedonian Definition, as transmitted in the East Syriac synodical collections, was tacitly „corrected“, so that it actually speaks of two *qnome*: see A. de Halleux, „La falsification du symbole de Chalcedoine dans le Synodicon nestorien“, in *Mélanges offerts à J. Dauvillier* (Toulouse, 1979), pp. 375-84

Elucidation of this curious situation comes if one reads Narsai's Homily on the Three Doctors, namely Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius.²⁹ Narsai clearly knows something about Diodore's teaching, a lot about Theodore's, but nothing of consequence about Nestorius: for him Nestorius is simply someone who was a martyr for the cause of Antiochene, i.e. strict dyophysite, christology, and the victim of the machinations of Narsai's bogey, Cyril of Alexandria. In other words the name of Nestorius is primarily used as a symbol for the embattled Antiochene cause, and certainly does not imply the direct knowledge or influence of his specific teaching. It is this sort of motivation that will explain why the future Catholicos Mar Abha evidently brought back and had translated Nestorius' *Apologia*, the *Liber Heraclidis*.³⁰

II

In the second and final section of my paper I would like to suggest a number of prerequisites for any balanced consideration of the christology of the Church of the East in its formative period, under the Sasanian Empire.³¹

First and foremost, we should endeavour to avoid misleading nomenclature. In Late Antiquity, just as in modern politics, people tried to denigrate their opponents by portraying them as holding opinions of groups who were one or more stages further removed along the theological spectrum: thus the supporters of Severus of Antioch were frequently described as Eutychians by their Chalcedonian opponents (even though the former specifically anathematized Eutyches)³² and similarly the adherents of the Church of the East were regularly designated by everyone else as „Nestorian“. It is lamentable that a hostile heresiographical tradition should so often still be perpetuated today - no doubt more now and more by habit than by ill-will - in most modern text books on doctrinal and ecclesiastical history. A single example will indicate how insidious the continued use of the term can be: in a chapter on the Church of the East and Chalcedon in the three-volume commemorative work *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, the great Roman Catholic scholar W. de Vries wrote (I, p. 603), „the official adoption of Nestorianism by the Persian Church took place at the Synod of Seleucia in 486.“³³ A mere glance at the short christological statement issued at this synod will reveal that there is nothing specifically Nestorian in the formulation of the wording. It is significant that Macomber, in his study of the

²⁹ Ed. and tr. by F. Martin in *Journal Asiatique* IX. 14 (1899), pp. 446-92, and IX. 15 (1900), pp. 469-525; cp L. Abramowski, „Das Konzil von Chalkedon in der Homilie des Narsai über die drei nestorianischen Lehrer“, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 66 (1954/5), pp. 140-43

³⁰ The translation is dated 540; that it was Mar Abha who brought it back from the Roman Empire and had it translated is conjectural. The English translation by G.R. Driver and L. Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides* (Oxford, 1925), is not always very satisfactory: see the review by R.H. Connolly, in *Journal of Theological Studies* 27 (1926), pp. 191-200. On the work itself, note especially L. Scipioni, *Ricerche sulla cristologia del „Libro di Eraclide“ di Nestorio* (Fribourg, 1956), L. Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum Liber Heraclidis de Nestorius* (CSCO Subsidia 22, 1963), and R. Chesnut, „The two prosopa in Nestorius' Bazaar of Heracleides“, *Journal of Theological Studies* ns 29 (1978), pp. 392-409

³¹ See in more detail my „The Christology of the Church of the East“ [n. 12]

³² In the Appendix, in order to distinguish clearly between these two positions I have employed the term „Henophysite“ for the former, since the blanket term „Monophysite“, widely used by Western writers to denote both groups, is as a result seriously misleading

³³ W. de Vries, „Die syrisch-nestorianische Haltung zu Chalkedon“, in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, I (Würzburg, 1951), pp. 603-35 (the quotation is from p. 603).

christology of this synod,³⁴ where he consistently interprets the terminology in *malam partem*, nevertheless has to admit, „It is also true that the words used can be taken as materially orthodox, provided they are interpreted *sensu aiente*“. (It should be noted that both scholars were writing before Vatican II.)

Closely related to this point concerning nomenclature is the matter of the oversimplified way in which the christological controversies of the fifth and sixth century are regularly portrayed in many textbooks produced in the various Churches of the Chalcedonian tradition. In these we will normally find a three-fold model, where the Chalcedonian position is seen as the balanced middle position between low opposing heretical extremes, Nestorianism and Monophysitism. Needless to say, such a simplistic model is grossly misleading, and urgently needs replacing. Here I would like to suggest that we might think of replacing it by a sevenfold model (see Appendix), which makes better allowances for the various gradations of opinion along the theological spectrum. On such a model, one might propose that, in view of the different interpretations given to the main terms of the Chalcedonian Definition (see further on this below), a different basic criterion of orthodoxy might be adopted, such as the formula „Christ is consubstantial with us as well as with the Father“ (see the bottom of the diagram).

Secondly, it would seem to be of fundamental importance to allow the Church of the East to speak in its own terms, and not just judge its christology by the yardstick of the Greek christological agenda of the fifth to seventh centuries.

The third point I should like to make concerns the technical theological terminology. If we are to understand what is going on in the theological controversies of Late Antiquity, two things in particular are essential:

a) First of all (and this goes without saying), we need to try to understand what writers actually mean by the technical terms they use, rather than rely on what their opponents claimed that they meant. This means that we need to be aware that several of the key terms used in the Chalcedonian Definition meant rather different things to different people and at different times. Further complications are introduced when these terms are translated into another language, in our case Syriac, and when advances in translation technique over the course of time³⁵ means that a single Greek term, such as *esarkothe* or *homoousios*, may come to be represented over the course of time by several different Syriac equivalents. In this context both the Syriac terminology, and the understanding of that terminology, in the Church of the East can be described as both archaic and conservative. Some specific examples will be presented below.

b) Secondly, we need to discover what were the starting points of the different parties, both from a positive and from a negative point of view. In other words, what was their primary concern in formulating their Christological teaching, and what position were they trying at all costs to avoid. Obviously, different starting points will - and did - produce different end formulations. Thus, broadly speaking, one can say that the prime concern of the Syrian Orthodox position was to provide a

formulation that did full justice to the reality of the incarnation, for without this salvation would not be effective; thus, given this starting point, emphasis is laid primarily on terms of unity, and any separation, other than purely mental, of the natures is seen as obviating the full reality of the incarnation.³⁶ For the Church of the East, on the other hand, the starting point is quite different: on the one hand there is a deep concern to maintain the transcendence of the Godhead and a horror of any idea that the Godhead could be subject to any kind of suffering (which for them, evidently had moral overtones);³⁷ on the other hand, great emphasis is put on the link between the humanity of Christ, the *homo assumptus*, and the promise of salvation for all humanity that this provides. As a consequence of both these starting points, in the Church of the East particular stress falls on the terms of duality. Thus, though the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Church of the East both have an essentially soteriological concern behind their preferred christologies, because they were looking at this soteriological concern from two quite different perspectives, they ended up with two opposing christological formulations. This is a point of great importance.

I conclude by looking at two sets of specific examples which I hope will indicate some of the problems of which we need to be aware: both are cases where the language used by the Church of the East could best be described as archaic; in the first case this is due to different understandings of the same terms, while in the second case we are dealing with imagery which was once widespread and which was still preserved in the Church of the East after it had been for the most part dropped by everyone else in the course of the fifth century controversies.

It is interesting that the Oriental Orthodox theologian Severus, and Babai in the Church of the East, both objected to the Chalcedonian Definition on the grounds that it was illogical: for the Syrian Orthodox, one *hypostasis/qnoma* logically implies one *physis/kyana*,³⁸ while for Babai two *physeis/kyane* logically imply two *qnome*.³⁹ Both terms have markedly different connotations in the two christological traditions, and once this is recognized, it becomes possible to see why each of these writers (and others like them) felt constrained to uphold their two verbally conflicting formulations.

To take *kyana*, the formal equivalent of *physis* and conventionally translated „nature“, first: in fourth and early fifth-century translations from Greek it is significant that *kyana* sometimes renders *ousia*, as well as *physis*; the same phenomenon can be seen in the early translations of *homoousios* by *bar kyana*. It is essentially this understanding of *kyana* as going with *ousia* that is retained in the Church of the East in the sixth century. By contrast, later fifth- and sixth-century Syrian Orthodox writers understand *physis/kyana* as virtually a synonym with *hypostasis/qnoma*, and consequently they understood the Chalcedonian Definition to

³⁶ This is of course quite the opposite to the common caricature of „Monophysite“ christology that one still finds all too often

³⁷ Underlying this are very different conceptions of (a) what *pathos/hashsha* („suffering“) implies, and (b) what was the nature of the Fall

³⁸ E.g. Severus, *Orationes ad Nephaliu* (ed. Lebon, CSCO Scr. Syri 64), p. 16; similarly Philoxenus, *Letter to the Monks of Senun* (ed. de Halleux, CSCO Scr. Syri 98), p. 11

³⁹ E.g. Babai, *Liber de Unione* (ed. Vaschalde), p. 97; similarly Išo'yahb III, *Liber Epistularum* (ed. Duval, CSCO Scr. Syri 11), p. 129; L. Abramowski and A.E. Goodman, *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts* (Cambridge, 1972), II, p. 9

³⁴ W. Macomber, „The christology of the synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon AD 486“, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 24 (1958), pp. 142-54 (the quotation is from p. 154)

³⁵ See in general my „Towards a history of Syriac translation technique“, in *Symposium Syriacum III* (*Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 221, 1983), pp. 1-4, reprinted in *Studies in Syriac Christianity* [n.12], ch. X

imply (in modern terms) a schizophrenic Christ. Significantly, in Syrian Orthodox translations of the later fifth and of the sixth century the older rendering of *homousios* by *bar kyana* is replaced by various other translations, thus removing the (now archaic) association of *kyana* with *ousia*.

The second term, *qnoma*, is of course especially problematic in the East Syrian tradition. At the outset I would suggest that, in the case of East Syriac writers, it is important to retain the Syriac term, and not retrovert it into *hypostasis* (let alone translate it as „person“, as has occasionally been done). Whereas in the Syrian Orthodox tradition *qnoma* equates closely with *hypostasis* (which itself can have a range of senses), in the Church of the East this is evidently not so, above all in the formulation characteristic of Babai, where he frequently speaks of „the two natures and their qnome“. Put very briefly, it would seem that, for Babai,⁴⁰ whereas *kyana* is generic and verges on the sense of *ousia*, *qnoma* refers to an individual (though not necessarily self-existent) manifestation of that *kyana*. Thus, divinity is the *kyana* of God and humanity the *kyana* of Man; in the case of the person of the incarnate Christ, his divinity is the *qnoma*, or individual manifestation, of the *kyana* of divinity, and his humanity is the *qnoma*, or individual manifestation, of the *kyana* of humanity. „Property“ *lidiotes/dilayta* would be one stage further down the hierarchy, i.e., one particular aspect of the individual manifestation of the *kyana*.

Quite apart from questions of precise interpretation, however, what is of fundamental importance is to be aware that these theological terms were used in the Church of the East in different ways and in different senses from those current in the Roman Empire at the same time. This is a point to which both Babai and Išo'yahb III themselves specifically draw attention.⁴¹

In many cases the East Syriac tradition of the Church of the East will be found to have preserved images and metaphors of the incarnation which were once widely current, but which writers in other Syriac traditions had subsequently dropped, either on grounds of their perceived inadequacy, or because they were thought to lend support to the position of their theological opponents. A good example of this is provided by the imagery of clothing, so often used by early writers - Greek as well as Syriac - in connection with the incarnation.⁴² There are many variations in the way in which this metaphor was employed, and these all continued to remain popular in the Church of the East, whereas elsewhere, especially among writers in the Alexandrine christological tradition, there was a strong tendency to drop the imagery altogether as implying too dyophysite a christology.⁴³ Two examples will illustrate the typical development over the course of time.

1) The phrase *lbesh kyanan*, „he put on our nature“, is found in both Narsai and Babai, and recurs frequently in the liturgical *Hudra*.⁴⁴ According to Severus this phraseology is specifically Nestorian.⁴⁵ Now it is true that it does indeed occur in a passage from Nestorius cited by Timothy Ailourous⁴⁶ - but what Severus overlooked was the fact that the phrase also had a perfectly respectable ancestry in no less an authority than Cyril of Alexandria (at least in Syriac translation).⁴⁷

2) Narsai, Babai and the *Hudra* (not to mention many other East Syrian writers) also speak not infrequently of Christ's humanity as a „garment“ (*lbusha*, or *estla*)⁴⁸ This is phraseology only very rarely found after the mid-fifth century in Syriac writers of other christological traditions, and even the mild Jacob of Serugh expresses disapproval of it in one of his letters.⁴⁹ Yet the phrase has a very respectable ancestry, for not only does it occur in Ephrem,⁵⁰ but also in Cyril of Alexandria's *de Incarnatione*.⁵¹

Finally, mention might be made of a surprising image that occurs several times in the *Hudra*:⁵² Christ's body is described as a „hostage“ (*hmayra*, from Greek *homeros*) taken from humanity and sent to heaven. (In antiquity hostages were given as a token of good faith, and not seized). This essentially dyophysite image also turns out to have a perfectly respectable ancestry, for it occurs in both Aphrahat and Ephrem,⁵³ and very similar language can be found in John Chrysostom.⁵⁴ The purpose of the imagery is clearly soteriological: Christ's assumed human body, now raised to heaven, ensures the salvation of humanity.

Let me conclude by drawing attention to two passages, one by Philoxenus of Mabbug, and the other by Babai the Great:⁵⁵ both writers make the same point,

⁴⁴ E.g. Narsai (ed. Mingana) I, p. 28; *Homily on Passion* (ed. McLeod), line 660; Babai, *L. de Unione*, p. 63; *Hudra* (Trichur edition) I, pp. 117, 248, 485, 491, 574, 648; II, pp. 118, 548 etc.

⁴⁵ Severus, *Homily 23* (*Patrologia Orientalis* 37, p. 122)

⁴⁶ Ed. R.Y. Ebied and L.R. Wickham in C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz, L. van Rompay (eds), *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History* (Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 18, 1985), p. 123, col. 2, where it is a gloss on John 1:14. The phrase also occurs in Theodore of Mopsuestia (e.g. *Catechetical Homily VII.1*)

⁴⁷ Cyril, *de Incarnatione* (ed. Pusey), p. 84 (not, however, an exact translation of the Greek); *Letter 46* (ed. Ebied and Wickham; CSCO Scr. Syri 157), p. 48. In early Syriac writers it occurs in John of Apamea's *Letters* (ed. Rignell), p. 28

⁴⁸ E.g. Narsai (ed. McLeod), *Homily on the Nativity*, line 446; *Homily on the Passion*, lines 622, 668-9; Babai, *L. de Unione*, p. 274 (and often); *Hudra* I, pp. 119, 147, 487, 603 etc. (mostly *estla*)

⁴⁹ Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* (ed. Olinder), p. 124; nevertheless he uses the phrase *lbush pagreh* in one of his verse homilies (ed. Bedjan, V, p. 644).

⁵⁰ E.g. *Hymns on Faith* 91:2; *Hymns on the Nativity* 21:5

⁵¹ Ed. Pusey, p. 145: „the garment (*lbusha*) that he put on from earth, which is his body“; where the Greek has *periblema ten apo ges sarka*, „flesh from earth (as) a wrap“

⁵² See my „Christ 'the Hostage': a theme in the East Syriac liturgical tradition and its origin“, in H.C. Brennecke, E.L. Grasmuck, C. Marksches (eds), *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski* (Beihefte zur ZNW 67, 1993), pp. 472-85 (the *Hudra* passages are translated on pp. 483-5)

⁵³ Notably Aphrahat, *Demonstration* 23:51; Ephrem, *Hymns on the Nativity* 22:40, *Commentary on the Diatessaron* 21:33. The imagery also occurs in the Syrian Orthodox baptismal ordo attributed to Timothy (ed. with English translation in *Le Muséon* 83 (1970), pp. 367-431 (the passage in question is on p. 379). The purpose of the image is soteriological, drawing attention to the promise for humanity as a whole implied by the glorious ascension of Christ's humanity. „Pledge“ (*rahbonal/arrhabon*) is another term used in this context.

⁵⁴ John Chrysostom, *Patrologia Graeca* 50 col. 461, and 62 col. 19

⁵⁵ Philoxenus, *Tractatus tres* (ed. Vaschalde, CSCO Scr. Syri 9), pp. 152-5; Babai, *Liber de Unione*, p. 233, cp pp. 249-50

⁴⁰ See especially Babai, *Liber de Unione*, pp. 71, 159 (where Babai defines *qnoma* as 'usya ihidayta', „an individual (manifestation of) ousia“)

⁴¹ Thus Babai, *Liber de Unione*, p. 306; Išo'yahb III, *Letters*, p. 136. 42. In general see my „Clothing metaphor as a means of theological expression in Syriac tradition“, in M. Schmidt (ed.), *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Eichstätter Beiträge 4, 1982), pp. 11-40, reprinted in *Studies in Syriac Christianity* [n. 12], ch. XI

⁴² In general see my 'Clothing metaphor as a means of theological expression in Syriac tradition', in M. Schmidt (ed.), *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Eichstätter Beiträge 4, 1982), pp. 11-40, reprinted in *Studies in Syriac Christianity* [n. 12], ch. XI

⁴³ See, for example, Philoxenus' objections to the Peshitta's rendering of Hebrews 5:7 and 10:5 in his *Commentary on the Prologue of John* (ed. de Halleux, CSCO Scr. Syri 165), pp. 53-4

namely, that each image or metaphor used in connection with the incarnation will only illustrate one particular aspect of that mystery, and it will prove inadequate, or even be misleading, if used in isolation, or if the wrong analogies are drawn. What is important, both writers stress, is to use a whole variety of images and metaphors, each of which will illustrate some different aspect of the incarnation. It is in this spirit that I would suggest that we should look at the christology of the Church of the East. If we examine one aspect in isolation, and press its logical implications too far, we will be committing an injustice to the intention of the author in question. What is needed is not an atomistic approach, but rather, a holistic one.

(Appendix next page)

Discussion:

Dr. Hainthaler: Had Justinian really adopted the aphthartodocetic position (p.77)? Is it exact to say that the School of Edessa showed sympathies for the side of John of Antioch (p.78)? There is an old model which tries to show that the Church is always moving in the middle, trying to avoid extremes. It is in this light that I see the expression in this paper that Chalcedon held a balanced middle position.

Prof. Brock: We should not continue to apply this model which has a potential for misunderstandings.

Prof. Chediath: It proves after examination that both sides had their points and that there are a number of schools of thought which are of importance to this day.

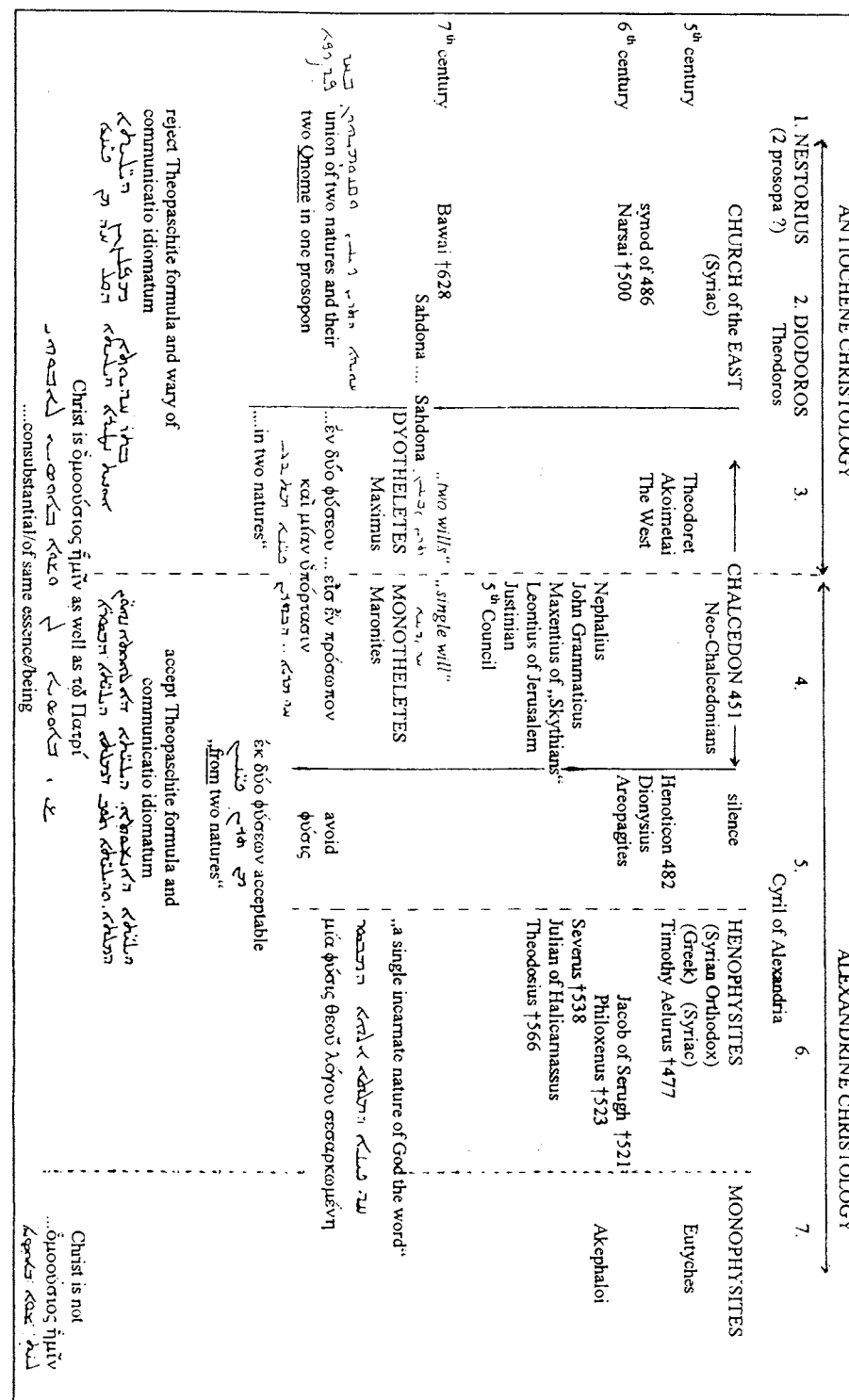
Mar Gregorios: The Synodicon Orientale uses its own terminology, and this should be accepted. The Syrian Orthodox use different terms but certain terms are also used in both traditions, although with a different frequency. In the paper it is mentioned that the Churches of the East should be allowed to speak in their own terms. This is very important.

We should not compare the place of Eutyches in the history of the Oriental Orthodox Churches - because he was condemned by these Churches - with the place of Nestorius in the Church of the East - who never condemned Nestorius. What regards Nestorius the fact is that we anathematized Nestorius from the beginning.

Prof. Brock: The 4th century texts seem to understand kyana very much as ousia, certainly Ephrem of Aphrahat. This meaning was kept unchanged in the East. In the 6th to 7th centuries however the Syrian Orthodox moved with the times and their understanding came close to the Western/Greek development of hypostasis/prosopon. This gave rise to most of the problems.

Mar Bawai: In relation to the comparison between Philoxenus and Babai, would Prof. Brock agree that every description of the mystery of incarnation is in some way illogical?

APPENDIX



Prof. Brock: I would rather say inadequate, because we should not stress the logical aspect there.

Mar Bawai: I want to express some concern about the historical chart at the end, especially the place of Nestorius. The equivalent to Eutyches (at one end) would rather be Paul of Samosate (and not Nestorius) at the other end.

Prof. Samir: The words and concepts used must always be taken *in sensu aiente*. I must always presuppose the good, orthodox interpretation. The problems in vocabulary also exist in medieval Arab Christian texts.

Bishop Matar: The Maronites were strongly Chalcedonian but in the diagramme we were put close to Monotheletism. Are the Maronites on purpose given the qualification of monotheletism? How are Aphrahat and Ephrem different from the Greek?

Talking about the word *kyana*: it is very ambiguous in Arabic but not in Aramaic.

Prof. Brock: The content is identical but the methods of discourse and expression are different. Aphrahat and Ephrem use a more poetic mode with successive images.

Prof. Koodapuzha stresses the positive starting point of the paper, where it says the Church of the East existed outside the Roman Empire. The attitude of the Church of the East has to be with this in mind. The differences in the way of expressing the mystery of Incarnation must be examined with care.

In India the St. Thomas Christians have since long been called Nasrani by the Hindus. In the paper the name Nasara for Christians is mentioned.

Abbot Naaman: The presentation of the Maronites is not accurate. Why are they not mentioned as heretics in the Council of Constantinople in 680-681?

Mar Severius explains by the example of the term *arche*: it is necessary for us to understand why the Church of the East uses different terms. Most theological language is allegorical. In Philoxenos most of the different ancient terms in Syriac are used. How can the *qnoma* be real and concrete if it is also said to be "not necessarily self-existent"?

Prof. Brock: *Qnoma* is seen as a reality, an individual example of the abstract notion, but not necessarily "existent". This is a philosophical question. Let us try to understand what he meant: *qnoma* is a self-existent entity, the individual example of the abstract notion.

Mar Severios: Is it not the concrete individuation?

Sarhad Jammo

THREE SYNODS OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST AND THEIR TWO ECCLESIOLOGIES

A Comparison between the Synod of Mar Isaac (410), of Mar Yahballaha (420) and the Synod of Mar Dadišo' (424),

The manuscript Vatican Syriac 160, in its section of the folios 80-219, has the same calligraphy of the British Museum Additional 12150 which is written in 411 A.D.; therefore, inferred the great scholar E. Tisserant, it should belong to the same period, i.e. the first decades of the fifth century (Dict. Theol. Cath., 11, col. 166). These precious folios contain the description of the martyrdom of Mar Shim'on Bar Sabba'e and his companions, Mesopotamian and Persian clergymen and dedicated women, who accepted death at the hands of agents of Shapur II rather than renounce their faith.

A Church with No Constantine

The brutal reality of the Shapurian persecution (340-379), confronted by the heroism of the Mesopotamian and Persian martyrs, is not only so vividly reported here with firsthand testimony, but became the very landmark of a suffering Church. A Church that never knew any Ponte di Milvio battle nor a converted and triumphant Constantine. A Church without worldly power and splendour. A Church whose major achievements are liturgical, cultural, and missionary. How has this Church confronted the challenge of surviving and flourishing within the fences of her hostile surrounding?

Following the martyrdom of three successive shepherds, Mar Shim'on Bar Sabba'e, Mar Shahdost, and Mar Barba' Shmin, the see of Seleucia remained vacant for about forty years (348-388), that is until the death of Shapur II and the installment of Behram IV. Immediately after, Tomarsa was elected to the see of Seleucia. His major task was the reconstruction of broken hearts and destroyed churches. He was succeeded by Qayyuma, who, being of old age, had resigned shortly after his election in favor of an energetic organizer, Mar Isaac. According to Mari (p. 30 of trans.), he is related to Marutha; according to Barhebraeus, Marutha is related to Tomarsa or Tamuza (Chronicon, t. III, p. 47 sq.). In either case, he appears to be close to the hierarchy of the Mesopotamian Church.

Yazdegerd and His Era

Yazdegerd had been installed on the Sasanid throne in 399. His advent to the reign was an occasion for good-will exchange between the two superpowers of the time. Arcadius of Byzantium sent a delegation of good-wishers to the newly installed emperor headed by a bishop from the Mesopotamian frontier, Marutha of Mayferqat, who possessed recognized medical skills in addition to diplomatic manners. His Aramaic culture, medical skills, and diplomatic manners were all

quite useful in fulfilling his embassy with great success, not only with the Shahinshah but also toward the Church of his empire.

The Western Support

As soon as religious liberty had been guaranteed to Christianity in the Constantinian era, Christians of the West showed interest and concern for their brothers in the Persian Empire. Eusebius of Caesarea reports in his *Life of Constantine* (IV, 9-13; P.G., t. XX, col. 1157-1161) the content of the letter that Emperor Constantine wrote to Shapor regarding the protection of Christians of his empire.

The School of Nisibis

Also, the opening of the school of Nisibis by Mar Ya'qub the bishop, with the young and talented Mar Aprem as a teacher, is a clear sign in itself of the concern and care of Western Christianity of Mesopotamia to its Eastern or Persian side. In fact, at the time of its opening, immediately after the Council of Nicea (325), the School of Nisibis, as well as the city itself, was within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Only in 363 A.D., the city of Nisibis had been ceded by Jovian to Sapor, and the School was transferred to Edessa, inside the boundaries of the Roman Empire again, from where it continued its task in the formation of generations of clerics and laymen. Moreover, it was the School of Nisibis who furnished, in 'the day after' the Shaporian persecution, a well prepared ecclesiastic elite to the besieged Church, ready to assume the role of leadership in the ranks of the Church of the East.

While Nisibis and Edessa were - at this junction of history - an active and efficient point of encounter, as well as of communion, between Western and Eastern Christianity, it was an official synod of the Church of the East that presented a formal setting for the bishop of Seleucia and Catholicos of the East to undertake the task of the re-organization of ecclesiastic life in the Persian Empire, to be sought in unity and harmony with the Western Church in all matters: theological, liturgical, and administrative. That was the Synod of Mar Isaac 410 A.D.

The Synod of Mar Isaac

The Occasion

A letter, written by the bishops of Syria and Upper Mesopotamia (Porphyrius, bishop-catholicos of Antioch, Acacius, bishop of Aleppo, Peqidha, bishop of Urhay, Eusebius, bishop of Tella, and Acacius, bishop of Amida) to the Shahinshah Yezdegerd, was entrusted to Mar Marutha Bishop of Mayfarqat. Marutha showed the letter to the bishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the catholicos Mar Isaac, and, „with one accord and one perfect will they translated the letter from the Greek tongue to the Persian, and it was read before the victorious and illustrious King of Kings.“ (In all references to the *Synodicon Orientale*, I will use here, with occasional minor improvements of my own, the yet unpublished English translation

of M.J. Birnie; with my deep gratitude to the author. See p. 2, lines 26-28 of the translation; p. 19 of the text).

The Subject Matter

From the favorable reaction of the king to the letter, we may know the content of it. The Shahinshah reportedly said at the reading of the letter: „East and West are but one authority in the dominion of my kingdom.“ (Ibid., p. 2, ln. 34; text p. 19). The implied meaning is that Christianity in the East, within his empire, should be ruled by the same laws as in the West. Thus, the King recognizes the validity of ecclesiastic law that was legislated in the Roman Empire in regard to his own Christian subjects. That should have been the request of the „Western Fathers“.

The scope of Mar Marutha, as delegate of the „Western Fathers“, was more explicit: „He concerned himself with the restoration of the churches of Christ the Lord, and was assiduous that the laws, divine ordinances, upright and trustworthy canons which had been established in the West by our honored fathers, the bishops, might also be established in the East as an edifice of steadfastness and truth for the people of God.“ (Ibid., p. 2, ln. 9-13; text p. 18).

A great synod was convoked, under the patronage of the King of kings, and, sequentially, 40 bishops gathered together at the cathedral of Seleucia on Jan 6, 410. During the first and the sequent sessions, the acts of the synod included the following:

a) Communion of Faith

The synod accepted the Nicean Profession of Faith, including it within the acts of the synod.

b) Canonical Unity

The code of canons that Marutha brought with him from the West has been read, approved by the fathers of the synod, and subscribed to. This is how the event is reported in the Synodicon:

„When they had brought it and read it, when we had heard from it all the provisions which were needed for the upright order of the ministry of the church of Christ, and learned from it all the canons which were spoken in the wisdom of God by our fathers - the bishops in the great and holy synod of the West- our souls were exceedingly gladdened with perfect joy.

First, Mar Isaac the bishop, as the elect head of his members, said: 'Anyone who does not agree to these glorious laws and upright canons and does not accept them shall be considered anathema by all the people of God and may not hold authority in the church of Christ'. All of us bishops alike made ratification with amen after him, and all of us spoke as he had.“ (Ibid., p. 4, ln.14-22; text p. 21).

c) Unity of the Liturgical Form of Worship

„Also the western service which Isaac and Marutha the bishops taught us and all of us saw celebrated here in the church of Seleucia, henceforth, we shall celebrate alike in the same manner. The deacons in every city shall proclaim the litany like this, the Scriptures shall be read thus, the pure and holy oblation shall be offered upon one altar in all the churches, and the order of ancient memory shall no longer exist among us.“ (p. 8, ln. 32-36; text p. 27).

d) Unity of Liturgical Calendar and Sacraments

„We should together, as one, keep the holy feast, the first-born of blessed feasts, the glorious birth and epiphany of Christ our savior. Again as one, at one appointed time we should all, alike, keep the complete fast of forty days - seven weeks - and observe the feast of Holy Passover, and the great day of the crucifixion, passion, and resurrection of our savior. In all of our churches one holy oblation should be offered to God, that is the body and blood of Christ for the pardon of our living ones and the resurrection of our departed.“ (p. 3, ln. 39-45; text p. 20).

The Synod of Mar Yahballaha (420)

The Occasion

The Byzantine emperor and the Persian Shahinshah continued their exchange of ambassadors, chosen from among the Aramaic-speaking clergy of their subjects. It was first Mar Yahballaha, the Catholicos of the East who went, in 418, in embassy to the Roman capital. Then, at the end of 419, Mar Acacius, bishop of Amida was sent by Theodosius the Young to return the visit to Yazdegerd in the city of Beth-Ardashir. His presence in the land of the East became an occasion for the gathering of 10 metropolitans and bishops headed by Mar Yahballaha.

The Subject Matter

The fathers confirmed the synod of Mar Isaac, adding to their commitment toward the Synod of Nicea their acceptance of other minor synods of the West: Ancyra, Neocaesarea, Gangres, Laodicea. The rational behind it is of the greatest importance. I must give here the text in its fullness:

„Through the blessed Mar Isaac, who governed the episcopate in Seleucia-Ctesiphon at that time, and the faithful Marutha the bishop, a few corrections were made in the churches of Christ. But because they (the bishops) were unacquainted with the laws in their totality - in the fullness of the holy synod and in an accurate tradition - especially the canons of the episcopal fathers, those (laws) were not established; thus, they wrote the things which were necessarily requisite at that time in a document.

When the greater part of our brother bishops had departed from the world or were drawing near, and these things had not been established, there was no perfect remedy for the previous disease which multiplied ignorance. Divisions and schisms had occurred in one place or another until today, as it was from the old leaven of ignorance, because of the insolent, proud, ungrateful ones, and those who do not know peace.

Henceforth, all of us bishops who, according to the will of our worshipful God, of Christ our hope, and of the Holy Spirit our Rudder, have gathered from various places to Seleucia and Ctesiphon with the fellow-servants of our people, to our father, the honorable Mar Yahballaha, and to his brother, the honorable Mar Accacius, the bishop and envoy. Together they request of your excellency that these laws which were established by the illustrious fathers and blessed bishops in the catholic church of the entire dominion of the Romans, that have been up to now carefully and diligently kept there, be given to each one of us by your excellency, our honorable father, head and leader of all of our brothers, the bishops who are in the whole realm of the illustrious, mighty and peace-loving Yazdegerd, the king of kings. *By the hand of your excellency we might receive the perfect tradition of the laws of our fathers and might keep them diligently and meditate upon them day and night, so that they become guides and enlighteners of us and our council.*

As for the kindness of your committing them, every one of us - we and all those who rise up in our positions after us and occupy our sees - will give thanks before the worshipful God for your undertaking. *Our feet will be planted in the correct way and tradition through your diligence, and by the direction of your word we will discover the protective commandments and preserving laws of our illustrious fathers and blessed bishops.*

We will stand in the one true faith of the fathers, the bishops, which was handed down from the illustrious apostles. So too, we will be led by the laws which their Perfection established at various times, so that there will be utterly nothing in the least matter foreign between us and them, that as we are all in one body of Christ, so too we will agree in the perfection of their divine and complete love and perfect order.“ (p. 18, ln. 1-35; text p. 39-40).

Ecclesiology of the Two Synods

1) The Church, East and West, is one body of Christ. It has its principal segment in the West; the East being an extension of the same body. The bishops of the West have the perfect apostolic tradition. They have the true faith. They have issued protective commandments. It is only normal for the Church of the East to adhere to their faith and order.

2) The bishops of the borders, among them the bishop of Antioch, were collectively valid representatives of the church in the land of Romans. However, according to the acts of these synods, neither one of them is seen, individually, as a point of reference for the Church of the East. The title of Porphyrius of Antioch is exactly the same as Isaac of Seleucia: Bishop-Catholicos.

3) The Church of the East has accepted the care and guidance of the Western Fathers. Evidently, it was done in love and respect and most of all in the sharing of a common faith and purpose.

The Synod of Mar Dadišo' (424)

The Occasion

Mar Yahballaha died shortly after the synod. Ma'na, a former student of the school of Edessa, had been elected to succeed him. By that time, though, big events happened that had drastically changed the mood of the King. Christianity, having made noticeable gains among the Mesopotamian and Persian society, also having conquered the hearts and minds of some of the Persian nobles, drove some Christians to become bolder and more aggressive in their attacks against Zoroastrianism and the temple of fire. A priest, 'Osea, of the city of Hormizdardashir, had been accused of having instigated the destruction of a firehouse adjacent to a church. Yazdegerd was furious and ordered the destruction of churches.

Even though the Ma'na succeeded in obtaining the approval of his election to the rank of Catholicos - that is after paying a good sum of money to the chief of police - he was severely rebuked by the King. When a priest of his entourage dared to respond, the priest had been beheaded and the Catholicos exiled.

Yazdegerd died shortly after. Behram V succeeded him, enforcing the policy of persecution against Christians. Many were killed by the sword of the tyrant. Many apostasized, others fled to the northwest. The Persians reclaimed the fugitives. The Romans refused to give them up, and the war broke out, lasting one entire year until 422 when an agreement had been reached between the two superpowers: Behram V would allow the liberty of conscience to Christians in his kingdom, while Theodosius II would tolerate the Mazdean cult in the territory of the Roman empire.

Ma'na had died since 421, so the bishops were allowed to gather together for the election of a new Catholicos. They elected Dadišo'. However, not every one was satisfied. Some bishops found a way to cite him to the King and Dadišo' was imprisoned in 422; he was freed later through the intervention of the Roman delegate at the signature of the peace agreement.

Dadišo', antagonized from the beginning of his pontificate, lost interest and will to bear the burden of leadership. He retired to the small kingdom of Al-Hirat, under the rule of Mundhir I, distant from the Shahinshah and the intrigues of competing bishops. It was in that difficult junction that the Church of the East had more than ever the need for an undisputed leadership. For that purpose, thirty-six bishops assembled in Markabtha of the Arabs around Dadišo' in 420 A.D.

The Subject Matter of the Synod

The Church of the East was then besieged by the worldly power of the Sasanid state. Christianity and Christians of the Persian Empire were then protected by a foreign power, rival or enemy of the Persians. A war had been fought because of these Christians. The Romans were protecting them as their own subjects, but that made them disloyal subjects of the Persian state. The hardship is compounded by the

factor of internal divisions and rivalries among the bishops. The Catholicos was challenged by his bishops, persecuted by his king, and couldn't anymore ask help from his brothers in the West.

This was an emergency situation. What was there to be done? The answer of the synod was: to assert the unity of the Church of the East under one unchallenged leadership of the Catholicos - in this case, Dadišo' - and face the predicament of Christianity in the Eastern empire as one united body.

„In holy church all perfection ought to be especially fulfilled. For, as the Father of truth is one, and his Son, Christ the Savior, is one, and his living Spirit, the Paraclete, is one, so his faithful steward, Simon Bar Jonah, who was surnamed Cephas, is one. He promised him: 'Upon this rock I will build my church', and again, 'To you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' 'Upon you I will build' and 'I will give you' was not said by Christ to all the disciples. Although the gift of priesthood was bestowed upon all the apostles, yet one headship, which was a spiritual fatherhood, was not for all. Instead, as it is with one true God, so it is with one faithful steward, who should be head, leader, and administrator of his brothers. These things are observed in the Church with us.“ (From the speech of Bishop 'Agpata, p. 24, ln. 39-47; text p. 48).

This is a perfect Catholic theology very similar to the formulation of Vatican II. A theology which is valid for the whole catholic church at any time and every region. But now, let us see how the fathers of the synod have applied it to their concrete situation.

„You yourselves, our fathers, know that every time there was schism and strife among us. The Western fathers were supports and stays to this fatherhood, for all of us are disciples and children, bound and affixed to it as members of an entire body to the head, the king of the members. They have also saved and delivered us from the persecutions which rose up against our fathers and us through an ambassador, whom they sent to us from time to time.

Now in the same way, persecution and affliction has become grievous against us, and the era does not permit them to take care of us as before. But we, as beloved sons and profitable heirs, are obliged to take pains to support and help one another through the primacy which is over us. For if, God forbid, we fall from the height of the headship, will shall perish without mercy.

Come, let us repair the breaches of our people and of our standing, and let us give ourselves up to any deaths for the sake of our father and head, for he is our leader and provider, the giver of all the stores of divine treasure, Mar Dadišo' the Catholicos, who is Peter for us, the head of our ecclesiastical council.

Let us petition and supplicate so that may be our father will condescend to receive our petition. If not, let us all stand in front of his door with lamentation and sadness, in sackcloth and ashes, with weeping and great shouting, until the mercies of our father are revealed unto us and he accepts our petition, returning to his paternal see and *seizing his leadership over us according to the command of Christ to the head of the apostles, Peter.*“ (From the same speech, p. 26, ln.1-20; text p. 49).

What precedes regarded the relation of the bishops to their catholicos. What will follow regards also the relation of the Patriarch of the East toward other „patriarchs“ (The title of „Patriarch“ is, at this point of time, surely an anachronism):

„We have confirmed ... that which our Western Fathers decreed that: Henceforth bishops are not allowed to make a council against their head, nor to write a bill of accusation or complaint. If there is violence done to them and they do not receive relief in a council before him, let them *make an appeal before his fellow patriarchs*, that by their examination there might be a determination between him and them.

But since this has been tried so many times - for those who have appealed against the catholicos have been found in the wrong and have received the punishment of their offense by excommunication and deposition, having been defrocked and stripped of the title of their ranks and the wearing of their raiment - *we now determine by the Word of God that easterners are not allowed to make an appeal against their patriarch even before the Western Fathers*, but every contention which is unsolved before him shall be reserved to the judgment seat of Christ.

For no reason should anyone think or say that the Patriarch of the East may be judged by those who are under him, or by a patriarch like him; but he shall render judgment upon all who are under him, while his judgment shall be reserved to Christ, who chose him, raised him up, and placed him at the head of his church, for so it pleased his eternal Lordship that his own all-governing Lordship be entrusted to and honored in the primacy of his church...“ (p. 27, ln. 7-33; text p. 51).

Ecclesiology of the Synod

1) In the synod of Mar Isaac and Mar Yahballaha, East and West are one body of Christ. The Church is universal. She has her center of gravity in the West; the East considers itself and behaves as integral part of that catholic church. Here again the principle of primacy is affirmed with its basis meaning: it belongs to the perfection and fullness of the church to have one head. Christ appointed only one head to his church: Peter. The synod's acts hint to the existence in other ecclesiastic circles or regions of a different approach where it says: „These things are observed among us in the Church.“ Nevertheless, the application of the principle of primacy is totally transformed here with a complete transfer of position. In the synod of Dadišo', the regional church takes the place of the totality of the church, and Dadišo', the actual Catholicos, is „Peter for us.“

2) This transposition of primacy from a perfection of the universal church to a perfection of the local church is done, not through any theological rationale, but as a survival necessity and the requirement of an emergency situation; otherwise, „we shall perish without mercy.“

3) If Dadišo' is Peter, then there is nobody above him. Thus, the right of appeal to the Western Fathers is to be abrogated, the other patriarchs being „like him.“ Even though the other „patriarchs“ are individually like Dadišo', they might not „collectively“ be of the same status. Here again, the fathers present a rationale of

contingency: since the appeal to the Western Fathers have resulted so many times in the favor of the Catholicos, there is no further use of maintaining that procedure.

Conclusion

Within fourteen years, two patterns of ecclesiology have been adopted by the Church of the East. Each one responds to a particular concrete situation: one, of communion with the West, when that church applied herself to have the unity of faith, of liturgy, and of ruling laws; the other, under the pressure of drastic circumstances, imposed on the very church to consider herself as representing the totality of the Church and her head her ultima instantia.

Amazingly after fifteen hundred years, the Church of the East and its people are again divided between these two patterns. On one side, the Chaldean Church implementing basically the catholic principles and policy of the synod of Mar Isaac and Mar Yahballaha. On the other side, the Assyrian Church of the East, implementing the more regional ecclesiology of the Synod of Mar Dadišo'.

Nevertheless, Mar 'Abdišo' of Nisibis, as late as 1319, had expressed the common understanding of his church and the summary of her tradition in regard to ecclesiastic primacy, reconfirming her original and seemingly constant belief. So he stated in the ninth chapter of his book *Collection of Synodal Canons*:

Five are the cities which have precedence in the world...: Babylon... Alexandria... Antioch... Rome... and Byzantium... The rank of patriarchate has been given to each one of these places not because of being a capital or having precedence, but because of its Apostle, Evangelizer, and its king; To great Rome it has been given for the sake of the two pillars that were installed in it: Peter, the head of the Apostles, and Paul, the Teacher of Nations. This is the first see and head of the patriarchs...

All the three synods that have been here exposed belong to the heirs of the Church of the East. Each of the two diverse ecclesiological attitudes adopted through them has its own justification in history. Both have their own merit and validity and both have their own achievement in the course of events. I tried to show that one attitude represented the *normal mode* of ecclesiastic life, while the other represented the *survival mode* and the state of emergency. At that junction of history, in the fifth century, all of our church and people adopted together first the one then the other of those two ecclesiologies and attitudes. Our present problem is that The Church of the East and her people are divided today into two segments, each one representing one of those ecclesiologies and attitudes, instead of having one Church of the East representing the best of both *Modus Vivendi* as a church. In the actualization of that prospect lies the hope of the heirs of the primordial Church of the East.

Discussion:

Mar Gregorios: We can agree with the whole text since it deals with the time before 451. We can see that the words East and West are subject to different standpoints.

What does Prof. Jammo mean by East and West? When he speaks of (p.93) "a perfect Catholic theology" it cannot be in the sense of today.

Prof. Davids: Should we not also include the Synod of Antioch among the minor synods?

In my view the only relevant text for theological Pauline ecclesiology is: We are all one body in Christ.

Regarding the knowledge of the life of the churches we should take more out of the canons of the synods.

Prof. Fiey explains the topography of Mesopotamia with Ktesiphon and Seleucia by means of a drawing on the board.

Prof. Jammo: The West designates the bishops who came from the borders of the Roman Empire as representatives of the Church in the Roman Empire, and in the first place Antioch.

Mar Aprem: Mar Abdišo died in 1318, while the collection of Canons was made in 1291. In the paper presented we are talking about pre-Nestorian times. We should be aware of the different set up. At that time denominations were not mentioned because there were no denominations.

Mar Bawai: The issues of ecclesiology are usually put in the second place after Christology. So the paper speaks about work that might be done at a later date. I do not have any objection to the fact that the paper does not see any dogmatical differences, only perhaps in ecclesiology.

Prof. Jammo: At the beginning of the formation of our Churches there was an opening and openness to the West, the Universal Church, represented by the Church at the border. Our fathers accepted their synods and directives. This Church was not closed in itself!

Mar Bawai: In our Church, we perhaps need a double coordinating movement: with the other Churches and with our own people at the grassroots level.

Archbishop Powathil: At that time (i.e. beginning of the 5th century), were there already differences in theology, liturgy, etc.? Or were there only political differences?

Prof. Jammo: Before Nestorius became Bishop of Constantinople there was a synod in our church. The fathers came to the conclusion: The Western Christians cannot help us any more. We have to have an ultima instantia of our own. There were already differences, but the reasons to proclaim independence were not of a theological nature but more circumstantial.

The Assyro-Chaldean Churches are an ecclesial entity, having the same historical, liturgical and spiritual tradition, and are only different in jurisdiction. Therefore unity will be a great remedy and fulfillment of the will of the Lord.

Mar Timotheos: When did the term "*Catholicos*" originate? The term "*Catholicos*" was first used by the bishop of Ktesiphon according to the acts of the Synod of Marishak. When was it seen as a Petrine office? And what means the Petrine office for us? That we need to have an ultima instantia as a survival mode or emergency measure and not as an absolute principle. This opens the road for further union.

Prof. Jammo: "*Catholicos*" originated exactly at that time (410), but it is still disputed whether the use is not an anachronism. The Synod of Dadišo (424) claims the Petrine aspect with some nuances: "Peter for us", because of the emergency situation.

Prof. Koodapuzha: The differences in the Arabic Nicene Canons also need some study.

Fourth working session: June 25, afternoon

Chairman: Mar Bawai

Jean Maurice Fiey OP

THE SPREAD OF THE PERSIAN CHURCH

The „Church of the East“ is certainly, after only Jerusalem and Antioch, the most ancient Church in the world. While orientalists used to place its evangelisation in the third century, I think that it can be proved that its origin dates from the end of the first century, or, at the latest, the beginning of the second century.

At that time, to the east of the Roman empire, let us say beyond the Euphrates, there was the Parthian empire.

Coming from Jerusalem to Antioch, and then to Edessa, probably through the Apostle Addai/Thaddeus, the Christian faith was carried beyond Edessa to the south-east, by a disciple of the apostle Addai, called Mari. Hence the Church of the East began to be known as the Church of Mar Mari. Its first implantation was to the south of the Parthian capital, Ctesiphon, at a place called in Aramaic Kokhé, the huts, that is the huts of the labourers of a wealthy landowner from Ctesiphon, called Mardan Shah.

Contrary to certain spurious sources, the Parthian kings were peaceful (you see them at Hatra wearing a pen in their hand instead of a sword). They were not bothered by a new faith entering their kingdom and accepted many religions (statues of Hercules have been found at Hatra).

While christianity was persecuted in the Roman empire up to 313, the Church could develop peacefully in Parthia.

That was before the coming of the Persians, a new dynasty called the Sasanids, in 226, under king Ardashir I. We have no reliable documents about the spread of

the Church at that time, our first information being provided by the Acts of the Persian martyrs.

In 286, under the influence of the high priest (*mobed mobedan*) Kartir, the Persian empire adopted Zoroastrianism as its state religion. As, in 313, the Christian faith was recognized officially in the Roman empire, always at war with Persia, the faithful of this latter kingdom started being regarded as potential friends of the Roman enemy.

Hence several waves of persecution, the bloodiest being between 339 and 379, under Sapor II, causing thousands of martyrs. Among them were several heads of the Church, the „catholicoi“, later to be called patriarchs of the Royal Cities (Mahozé, which the Arabs would call al-Mada' in 35 km south of today's Baghdad). There, after the Tigris changed its course, Ardashir I had founded a new city, Veh Ardashir, south of Ctesiphon, and Mari's church was included within its walls.

Beside the catholicoi, we find, among the martyrs, bishops and believers from everywhere in what is now Iran, up to the Gilan province, south of the Caspian Sea.

The results of the persecutions were not altogether evil, since deportation took to the East more and more christians from Roman territory including a bishop of Antioch, Demetrianus, who was deported with his flock to Beth Lapat (Gondisapor) in 257, and will found there a new diocese.

When the Church recovered peace, synods were held in the Persian capital, the New Seleucia, Veh Ardashir, in 410, 420, 424, and so forth. The lists of bishops who took part show, around the catholicos, six provinces. The first is the metropolitan of Gondisapor, in Khuzistan, because it was the summer capital of the Sasanids. Next, the metropolitan of Nisibis, nowadays Nusaybin on the Turkish-Syrian border, under whom came several dioceses, extending well to the north, where they mingled with the Armenians. Next came Prath Mayshan, later Basrah, now in the south of Iraq. Next, Hadyab, round Erbil, with suffragan dioceses to the north, in the Kurdish mountains around the Greater Zab. Then the Beth Garmay, province of the Garmayé (al-Djaramiqa, a branch of Syriacs), around Karka d'Beth Slokh, the present Kirkuk. Finally, Fars, extending north to Rayy, near the present Tehran, and south on both sides, Persian and Arabic, of the Gulf.

Meanwhile, it was, according to Indian tradition, in 345 that, lacking hierarchy, the so-called „St Thomas christians“ of South India, asked the catholicos of the East to send them some clergy. A mysterious Thomas Qinaya, accompanied by seventy two families, would have come to India at that time, together with four priests, some deacons, and even a bishop, called Joseph of Edessa.

Whatever be the real identity of Thomas Qinaya, may be a goldsmith, and notwithstanding the fact that the date of the request seems to be incompatible with the persecution which raged at the time in Persia, it is a fact that, two centuries later, around 553, the traveller Cosmas Indicopleustes mentions that „in the country which is called Male (Malabar), where pepper is growing, in a place named Kaliana (Quilon), there is a bishop ordained in Persia.“

About the same time as Thomas Qinaya (346), a certain Theophilus the Indian came from Arabia to India, where he corrected some wrong habits, including the fact that the faithful remained seated while listening to the reading of the Gospel.

Relations between India and the seat of Mar Mari were still strong when, between 590 and 604, patriarch Sawrišo' received as a gift some perfumes coming

from India. The bishop of India, at first dependent on the metropolitan of Fars, became himself a metropolitan between 714 and 728. We have mentioned the fifth century synods, but what about the presence, or at least the reaction of the Church of the East to the ecumenical councils, Ephesus in 431, that condemned Nestorius, and Chalcedon, in 451, that condemned monophysitism? As a matter of fact, at these dates, persecution was raging in Persia, and the Church did not hear about the councils until later, thus neither refusing nor accepting them.

It was only in 485, that, under the influence of the metropolitan of Nisibis, called Barsaum, that part of the Church swayed to what has been called Nestorianism. But there were many people who hesitated; it will lead later to the establishment of a party linked with the [western Syriac] patriarchate of Antioch. This party will receive bishops, either from the Armenians, in 540, or from western bishops like Jacob Baradaeus, around 553, and it will be organized officially as a part of the patriarchate of Antioch in 629. The western Syriac dioceses on the territory of the eastern Syriac Church were all in the north and west of present Iraq, in a territory around Takrit, territory occupied by Heraclius and the Byzantine army in 628/29.

Between its so-called nestorianisation in 485 and the islamic conquest of the Persian Royal Cities in 637, the Church had to suffer, from the part of the Persian kings, more persecutions, but less ferocious than the first, and limited towards the end of the Persian rule, to the renegades of the official religion.

As for its extension, apart from losing to the western Syriacs part of the dioceses we have mentioned, the territory of the Church of the East did not change much. Limited conversions by monks, like Mar Pethion, completed the christianisation of the Kurdish mountains, so that it can be said that, when Islam came, most of the population of what is now Iraq and a great part of Iran was Christian.

What was the impact of the coming of Islam on the christians of the Church of the East? Here we should distinguish between the Arab Christian tribes and the other Christians, Arameans, Garamians, Kurds, former Jews, and so forth.

For the latter group, the choice was given between the „djizya“ (the poll tax) or becoming moslems. For the Arabs, they had to become moslems; but in certain cases it was agreed that they should pay a heavier poll tax, may be double. The result of that policy was that mass conversions occurred in places like 'Oman, while some Arabs remained Christians until very late in other places. The Muslims did not press the conditions on tribes like the Banu Taghlib, so that they would not cross the Byzantine border and become their enemies.

Moreover, certain conditions were sometimes imposed on the Christians, like distinctive dress or girdle, interdiction of external signs like bells or crosses, noisy street burial processions, etc, but, inside churches, they could, most of the time, worship freely.

Missionary work could progress again through the unification, under Islam, of the trade roads. Monks and bishops would accompany traders to the Far East.

As a matter of fact, trade relations with China, alongside what is called the Silk Road, had started long before Islam. Around 540, Cosmas Indicopleustes, who had come from Nisibis, reported that commerce flourished, silk being known in the Persian empire, but christianity does not seem to have followed immediately. Truly, it is mentioned that monks had already brought to Constantinople, at the time of

Justinian, in 552, eggs of silk worms, hidden in a hollow bamboo cane, but these monks seem to have been isolated individuals.

Missionary work proper started two years before the fall to the Arabs of the Royal Cities of the Persians. Then the Church of the East went along the Silk road, beyond Central Asia, to China. Eastern Syriacs are attested there in 635, according to the Si-ngan-fu (Xi-an) memorial, itself dated 781; the first missionary was called in Chinese A-lo-pen (the name has not been convincingly interpreted yet).

In 698, a Chinese imperial decree bestowed protection upon the believers of what is called „the radiant religion“, including the twenty one monks of the monastery in Si-ngan-fu itself.

Around the end of the same VIIth century, Christians in China suffered persecution from the part of the Buddhists, and again, in 718/719, from the Confucianists. But new strength was added to the community by the coming of a new missionary, Lu-han (Abraham) before 724, and then of Ki-lie (Gabriel)!

Before leaving the Si-ngan-fu stele, it may be said that it could be interesting to study the way the Chinese text expresses the Christian faith. Apparently, the vocabulary was borrowed from the Taoist doctrine, dominant at the time, but others have said recently that Christ there was a „buddhist Jesus“. Whatever be the case, it would be interesting to compare that text with the way the Jesuits (Matteo Ricci, for example) expressed the Christian faith in an other period, with a different philosophical vocabulary corresponding to the Chinese philosophy prevailing at the time, Confucianism.

The same question could be raised about so many texts, in different languages, produced by the Nestorian missionaries, notably in Sogdian, found in the Turfan oasis, in the Tarim region and comprising pieces dating from the VIth to the VIIIth century, texts which are now in Berlin.

As Saeki says nicely about the Chinese documents, they have been „somewhat fermented by the Taoist leaves, or by the local cults yeast“.

Is this a matter of mere translation, or is it „inculturation“, or even, as it has been said, „inreligionisation“?

Patriarch Timothy (780-823), contemporaneous with the stele, raised the bishop of China to the rank of a metropolitan, with several suffragan dioceses.

A new persecution, in 865, almost ruined the Chinese Church. A century later, toward the year 973, patriarch 'Awdišo' I, apparently ignoring the real situation, sent to China a monk from Nadjran, together with five companions. They came back quickly, because, when they arrived there (the text does not say exactly where), they found a single Christian left and were told that all the rest had perished and that their church had been destroyed.

The story, as told by the monk, in Baghdad, some seven years later, to al-Nadim, shows that the group had not travelled overland, but by sea, following the maritime silk road.

Mention of that road is already found in one of patriarch Timothy's letters. Writing to the monk Hnanišo', whom he had ordained for Sarbazia, he tells him that, before him, „many monks had crossed the seas to get to China and to India, with only a stick and a beggar's wallet“. According to cardinal Tisserant, it may be through that road that christianity was introduced to the Chinese port of Zaytun, now Quanzhu, on the coast opposite to Taiwan.

Some scholars have suggested recently that missionaries to China did not come straight from Mesopotamia, but from India, founding there a Syro-Indian Church. This may be true of Ceylon, where a diocese is attested since the sixth century, and again of Java, mentioned in the XIVth century under the name of Dabagh, linked with the diocese of southern China, but, nevertheless, the land route was far shorter, only five months of travel, (when peace made is safe) and the Si-ngan-fu monument mentions that A-lo-pen was a native of the country of Po-sseu, which is Persia.

Going back to the history of christianity in China, we have said that persecution had almost entirely wiped it off. When did it flourish again? It has been said that it had to wait for the time of the Mongol Rule in China; that seems to be only partly true. Pelliot has found some Christian families in the northern provinces, introduced by the Hitai and the Kin in the XIth and the XIIth centuries. A bishop, George of Kashkar, ordained by patriarch Sawrišo' III between 1064 and 1076 for the Khurasan and the Segestan, in Iran, went instead to China, where he remained until his death.

But it was surely under the Mongol Yuan dynasty, in the XIIIth century, that Mongolian Nestorians gave to the Church of China a new life. William of Rubrouck found them in fifteen towns of the Cathay, which is northern China, and so did Marco Polo and several western missionaries. But these Christians were probably rather Mongols than Chinese, what explains that Chinese christianity did not survive the Mongol rule. When the Jesuit missionaries came to China, they found some traces of that eastern christianity.

We have been jumping straight to China, because it is there that the Si-ngan-fu monument told us of Christian groups, already during the VIIth century.

Now, what about the Turks who are found on the road?

Some White Huns (Hephtalites), settled on what is now the Afghan border, had already received the Gospel (probably from the Armenians) at the beginning of the VIth century. In 549 they asked catholicos Mar Aba to ordain bishop one of their native priests.

It is mentioned that, in 581, Turks serving as mercenaries in the Persian army and made prisoners by the Romans, were wearing crosses tied on their forehead. Several pagan kings of the central Asian Turks became Christian: one in 644, converted by Eliyah, metropolitan of Merw, an other in 782/83, a third in 1009.

Patriarch Timothy, near the end of the VIIIth century, who favoured so strongly the missions, ordained a metropolitan for „the country of the Turks“, with residence at Samarqand. The seat is still attested in 1045, although Arab geographers mention churches already converted to mosques in the tenth century, at Bukhara, Mirki, and in Sogdiana, that is between the Amu Daria and the Syr Daria. Kashghar, in Chinese Turkestan (Sinkiang) had also a metropolitan, which means of course that there were several bishoprics (of which, unfortunately, we know nothing), its suffragans.

Two Turkish Nestorian graveyards have been found in 1885 in Central Asia, north of the Pamir, south of Lake Balkhash, near the towns of Pishpak and Tokmak, now in Kazakhstan. The finds there include some 160 tombstones (13 of them are now preserved in the Musée Guimet in Paris). They are inscribed in Syriac characters, and date from the IXth to the XIVth century, some of them from the pest of

1338-39. The Russian orientalist D. Chwolson has published some epitaphs, among them those of Church dignitaries, of priests or of laymen, of whom several high ranking military personnel.

Tibet is also mentioned in the letters of Timothy, who wanted to ordain a metropolitan for it in 792/93. When and how was christianity introduced there?

A Chinese inscription, on a stone tablet now in the Uenuo Museum of Tokyo, let us know that a Chinese general, a Persian by birth and a Christian by religion, whose name was A-lo-ham, that is to say Abraham, was appointed, between 656 and 661, as governor of the Tibetan tribes. He taught them what he calls „the essence of the Holy Doctrine“, that is the Christian faith. That was twenty years only after christianity had been introduced into China proper.

Another source of evangelisation for the Tibet seems to have been by way of the Turkish Sogdian bishopric of Samarqand. A man from that town, maybe in 825/826, is somehow connected with a Sogdian inscription, added, together with other inscriptions in several languages (some of them not yet deciphered) to three great crosses carved on a rock at Drang-Tse, near the Pang-kong Lake, that is at 96 kilometres from Leh, capital of the Ladakh (Small Tibet), on the caravan road to Lhasa.

More to the south-west, at Srinagar in Kashmir, the Muslim Muhammadiya sect still venerates what they consider to be the tomb of Jesus; I believe it to be a Melkite „saint“ rather than one from the Church of the East.

Again, we cannot rely on what has been written by Shmuel Djamil, that pilgrims coming from „Laase“ in 1606 did in fact come from Lhasa; the date seems to be too late, and the pilgrims' road seems to bring them from India rather than from Tibet.

We have mentioned christianity under the Mongolian rule in China. We don't know when and by whom it was preached to the Mongols. It is a fact that at the time of the Mongol thrust towards Baghdad, in 1258, several tribes were, at least partly, Christian: the Keraites, the Naimans, the Uighurs... Some had adopted syriac letters to transcribe their language (as the Republic of Mongolia has again taken up recently, instead of the Cyrillic characters).

The Kerait queen, Doquz Khatun, Khan Hulagu's powerful wife, was a Christian. She is depicted in a western Syriac manuscript, dated May 1260, as the new Helen, strong supporter of the Cross, with her husband, the new Constantine, although he was himself a buddhist.

Several chiefs of the Mongol armies (the „Noyons“) were Christians, such as the Naiman Kitbuga who will be defeated and killed by the Mameluks at 'Ayn Djalut, in 1260, because he was left without sufficient forces to resist; and also Sandaghu, mentioned in 1261 as crushing the rebellion of the king of Mosul. Again, an anonymous noyon of imperial blood rebelled against Qublai Khan in 1287 and was killed; his followers were relegated to Manchuria. A bronze cross found there may be one of their relics.

Some of the Mongol envoys to the West were Christian. The most famous is the monk Barsaum, who had been the master of the great patriarch Yahwalaha III (1291-1317). Both were Turkish speaking Unguts (Uighurs).

Barsaum went by sea from Constantinople to Naples, on his way to Rome and then to Paris where he met Philip IV le Bel, and later to Gascony, where he met the English king, Edward I. That was in 1287-88.

Other envoys had a less happy fate. Among Mongol envoys, this time to Japan, beheaded there in 1280, there was a Uighur Christian secretary, aged 32. His tomb and that of his companions is still known.

Nestorian christianity did not extend to Japan, but, apart from the tomb we have just mentioned, a steel helmet inlaid with a silver cross is all that remains of a mongol officer of the army beaten at Kyushu, in 1281.

Relics from one of the Christian Ungut tribes, namely the Ordos, have been found inside the great loop of the Yellow River. Several thousand metal crosses have been recovered; they had been worn as jewels in more recent times by Mongol women who did not know their meaning, or „used with a lump of mud to seal up doors“. In the ruins of the ancient Ungut capital Kashang (Olon Sume in Tor nowadays), in Inner Mongolia, remains of a Latin and a Nestorian church have been excavated. I said „Latin“ because a certain king, named George (who died in 1298), had become a catholic at Khan Baliq (now Peking). When he died, his successor, John, went back to his original Church.

The last lists of dioceses, by Saliba ibn Yohannan and 'Amr ibn Matta, and by the canonist 'Awdišo' of Nisibis, date from the beginning of the XIVth century, but it seems that they keep mentioning a few bishoprics that had in fact already disappeared.

Six metropolitan seats „of the interior“ are still grouped around the patriarchate, the first being that of Gondisapor, once summer residence of the Persian kings and seat of a school of medicine that gave several famous physicians to the caliphs of Bagdad, mainly from the family of the Bokhtišo's. Gondisapor kept (nominally until now) the right to ordain the patriarch.

As for the metropolitan seats „of the exterior“, the first was Fars, the heart of Iranshahr, still mentioned then with „the islands of the sea“, near Qatar, from which christianity had in fact disappeared, may be in the Xth century.

Then came Merw and Nishapur in Khurasan, north of Iran, with the city of Tus and a monastery at Sanabad (now Mashad), residence of the bishop; then Herat, now in Afghanistan, Samarqand in Turkestan, whose existence can be traced up to 1374; and, last, Aran and Alania, that is Armenia prima, now in Adharbaydjan, around Barda'a and Snikha (now Shemakha), west of Baku. As for the metropolitan seat of Rayy, near Tehran, it had already disappeared.

These were the „external“ dioceses, which were said to be still in existence, probably much diminished, in the territory of the Persian Mongol il-khanate.

As for the monasteries, most of them are listed in Yaqut al-Hamawi's Mu'djam al-Buldan, around 1225, although it is impossible to decide whether the writer quotes a previous source or means really that the monasteries were still flourishing in his time.

Christianity, that had melted away slowly during the Abbassid period, mainly because of the social pressure, declined more definitely around 1335, when anarchy prevailed in the Mongol kingdom.

However, after a lull of forty years, at the time of the Turkmen of the White Sheep, who showed some kindness to eastern Christians, because they needed the

help of the Christian West, including the pope, to fight against the Persians and the rising Ottomans.

Christianity dwindled again during the Ottoman sultanate.

In 1552, with Shim'un Sulaqa, a monk from the Rabban Hormizd monastery near Mosul, a group united with the Roman Church, especially as a protest against the hereditary principle, in a single family, that had been introduced to the patriarchate since the end of the XVth century. The line of catholicoi-patriarchs called „Chaldean“ or „patriarchs of Babylon“, derived from Sulaqa, was replaced later by a second line, first at Diyarbakir, with Joseph I at the end of the XVIIth century, moving later to Mosul and then Baghdad, line which is represented nowadays by His Beatitude Patriarch Raphael I Bidawid.

As for the Church of the East in India, which had become a metropolis in the VIIIth century, its relation with the eastern patriarchate had become looser during the Xth and XIth centuries, „because it was difficult to get there“, as says a manuscript of the time. A Syriac bishop could, only from time to time, visit the place.

After the death of the Metropolitan Mar Abraham in 1597, the Portuguese Padroado archbishop of Goa, Alexes Menezes convened a „Synod“ at Diamper in Kerala. From 1599 up to 1896 Latin bishops ruled over the Thomas Christians. This Church which was of the same faith and communion up to the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century, was divided into several groups during this Latin rule.

In 1896 those who continued under the Latin bishops got indigenous bishops and in 1923 their own separate hierarchy was established. At present they are known as Syro-Malabar Church having nearly 3,5 million membership. In 1993 they got a Major Archbishop.

The non-Catholic Thomas Christians are divided into several groups. The „Jacobites“ were Syro-Malabarians up to 1665. In course of time they adopted West-Syrian (Antiochian) liturgy. Those who separated themselves from the Jacobites at different times are the Anjurians (Thozhiyos in 1772), the Anglicans (in 1864), the Marthomites (in 1876). All these except the Anglicans who are included in the South Indian Church (CSI) use the West Syrian liturgy. The Jacobites are divided into two groups on the basis of those who admit the allegiance to the Jacobite Patriarch and those who deny it. The former is called The Syrian Orthodox and the latter The Orthodox Syrian. Both of them taken together have about 2 million members.

The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church dates from 1930 when two non-Catholic Jacobite bishops embraced the Catholic Church. They too follow the West-Syrian rite which was introduced into Malabar in the 17th century. Members are about 300 000.

The „Nestorians“ were Syro-Malabarians and in 1874 they followed Mellus, a Chaldean bishop from Mesopotamia. About 1908 they became Nestorians, gave up the latinized East Syrian rite and adopted the East-Syrian rite of the foreign Nestorians. They are about 15.000, divided into two groups under the two Nestorian Patriarchs.

The Thomas Christians of India who are divided into the above-mentioned different groups taken together are nearly seven millions in member.

Coming back to the main stream of the Church of the East, their hereditary patriarch, henceforth known as Mar Shimun, took refuge in 1672, at Qudhashnés, in the high mountains of Hakkari, in southern Turkey.

The last drama occurred in 1915, when the proud fighters of the Assyrian tribes, dwelling in the Hakkari mountains, were forced to leave by the Ottomans and the Kurds. The tribes of Tiyyari, of Tkhuma, of Djilu, of Baz, and the small patriarchal tribe of Dez, together with minor groups, had to leave their fatherland.

They are living now scattered around the world. In front of the danger of assimilation by their environment, the „Assyrians“ (as they are called now) try to preserve, not only their faith, but also their language and their culture. Their head is, since 1976, patriarch Mar Denkha IV, former bishop of Tehran.

Should I mention a new painful scission, which took place in 1965, when the last Mar Shimun (Ishai) decided to adopt the gregorian calendar, in order to celebrate the feasts with the Christians in the West. A bishop of India, Thomas Darmo, took the lead of the fraction and proclaimed himself patriarch in 1968, succeeded by Patriarch Addai II, who resides in Baghdad. Our warmest wish is that the two groups will soon be reunited.

(Map next page)

Discussion

In the *beginning of the discussion* a number of historical questions are discussed like: Was Cosmas of Indicopleustes a native of Nisibis or a merchant from Alexandria? Did Nishapur have a school of medicine in the 5th century? What was the reason why the Christian faith could not take roots with the Mongolians?

Mar Gregorios: Why was there no mention of the Syrian Orthodox in this paper?

Prof. Koodapuzha: By the time of the 6th century we know of a hereditary descent of the Indian hierarchy.

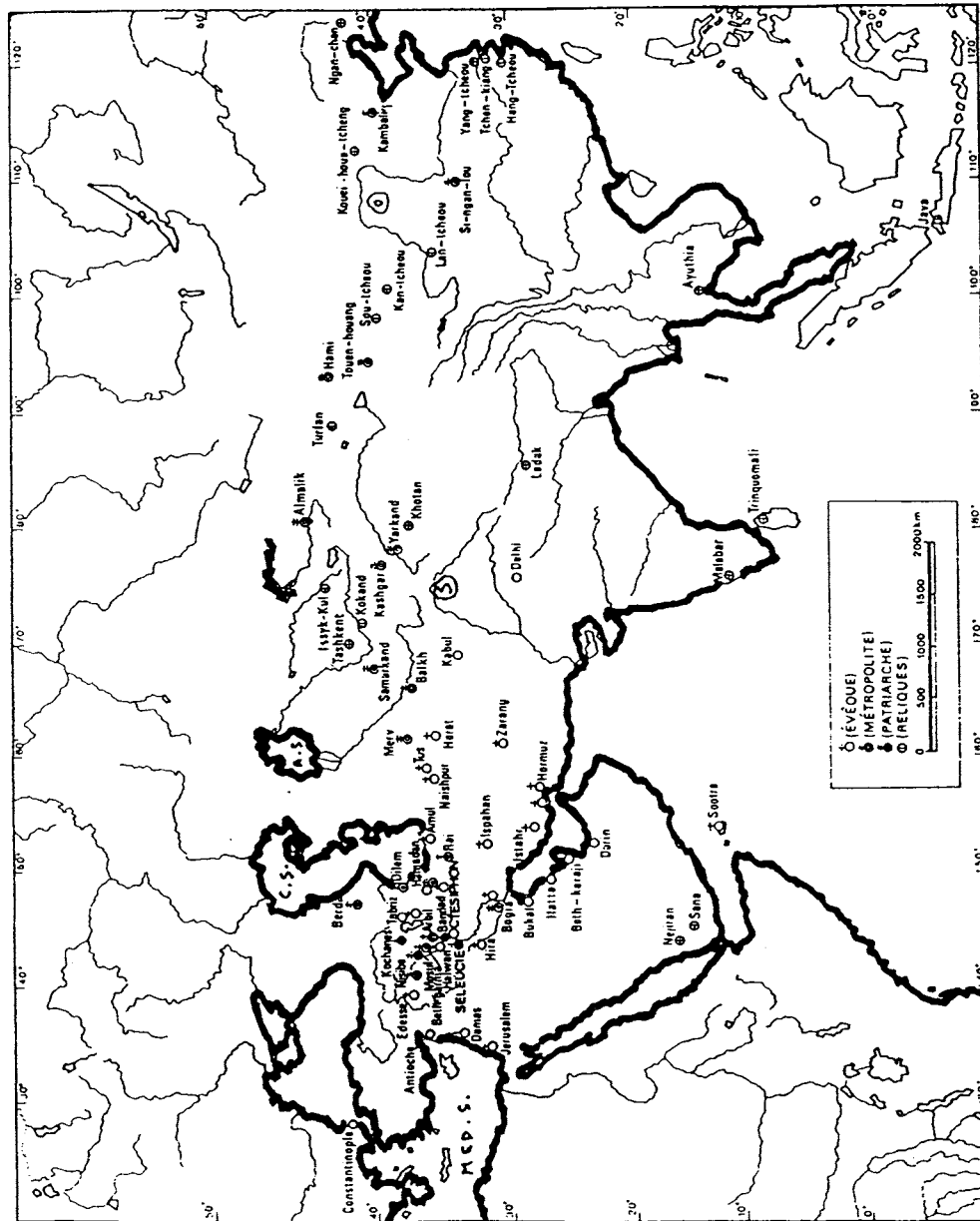
Prof. Samir: Is there any explanation for the disappearance of Christianity among the Muslims? Is it because the laws of fasting were not adapted to the life of these nomads who lived with their herds?

Prof. Fiey: This discipline does not seem to be the explanation because there were examples of dispensation. There seem to have been several reasons for conversion to Islam. According to Riccardo di Monte Croce (in 1291) Islam was easier and money of the "zakaat" was used to get new converts. Later it was for status and because of social pressure that Christians became Muslims.

Mar Aprem mentions a Nestorian mission near Samarkand where Persian crosses stand at an elevation of 1.800 feet.

Prof. Samir asks about the Chronicle of Arbela which is not mentioned in the paper.

MAP



Prof. Fiey: This chronicle is of no scientific use. He wrote it out of his vest pocket. The Christians under the Muslims frequently used Muslim names, except Muhammad, and therefore their number cannot be assessed. The Church of the East was privileged under the Muslims in the sense that it was the only Christian church officially allowed.

Prof. Davids: Is there literature about the content of their faith? Is it true that boys were ordained priests at the age of three because the bishop did only get there every 30 years? Were there Nestorian merchants who temporarily had the function of priests?

Mar Eustathios: Were there any names for Christians besides Syriacs or Chaldeans?

Prof. Jammo: The names of our last two kingdoms before becoming ruled by conquerors were Chaldea and Assyria. In the 16th century Christianity in Mesopotamia was reduced to a very special region and people. After the union of the Chaldeans with Rome the region where they lived corresponded to the land of the ancient Chaldeans. That is why they adopted that name. Likewise for the Assyrians and the ancient land of the Assyrians.

Bernard Dupuy OP

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF NESTORIUS

No Father of the Church bears on his head so many solemn condemnations as the unhappy Nestorius. Fallen from his episcopal dignity, however without having been excommunicated, anathematized for his doctrines by the council of Ephesus, presided over by Cyril of Alexandria in 431 A.D., sent to exile, he ended his days in deportation.¹

The later councils, specially the council of Constantinople II of 553 summoned by Justinian, fought desperately against his memory and, for most of the theologians, the epithet of „Nestorian“ became almost equivalent to „summary of all heresies“. During the whole antiquity, it was perpetually spoken of Nestorius, as if he had denied the divinity of Christ, without examining closely what he meant or what he really said. It is a fact that his ideas, even when they were orthodox, were misappreciated and distorted till modern times.

Yet he was venerated in the old Church of the East along with Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia since the episcopal assembly of 612,² is mentioned in the Liturgy, and remained throughout the centuries the symbol of the living faith of the Church in the Syriac oriental tradition.

¹ Cf. *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, tomus I. Concilium universale Ephesium, ed. E. Schwartz, Vol. I, (Collection Vaticane = V), Berlin - Leipzig 1925-1933.

² Episcopal Assembly of 612 held at the court of Chosroes, cf. J.B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale 1902, p. 629; cf. Narsai, „Memra on the Three Doctors' Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius“, transl. by F. Martin, in *Journal asiatique*, 14 (1899) pp. 446-492; 15 (1900) pp. 469-52

Today we can scrutinize afresh his thought directly from his writings, now published in critical editions.³

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To understand the christology of Nestorius, it is necessary to have in mind that he thinks as an Antiochian. His way of thinking is concrete not ideal, experimental not theoretic. Let us not forget that he writes in Greek but he was a monk of Antioch and had probably studied under Theodore of Mopsuestia. He was imbued with the principles of the Antiochene theological School. An example of the tendency of Nestorius to „divide“ when Cyril „unite“ can be given. In an extract of his letters rejected at Ephesus,⁴ Nestorius said: „The Virgin, mother of Christ, has not begotten the Son of God, she begot His humanity, which is Son because of the Son conjoined“, (V 60, 1); again: „Because of the one who bears, I revere him who is borne. I divide the natures, but not the adoration“ (V, 60, 8 et 15). For Cyril, such expressions were blasphemies. But, with all the Antiochians, Nestorius was engaged in the fight against the Apollinarist heresy. In spite of his leading selection, the florilegium of Nestorius gathered at Ephesus against him recognizes that „he prevented himself from dogmatizing two Sons“ (V, 60, 9).

According to the Antiochene theology, the union of the natures in Christ was temporally manifested from the moment of the Annunciation, at the listening by the Blessed Virgin of the words of the angel Gabriel. The birth on earth of the child Jesus was performed by the Blessed Virgin, his Mother. Over against his prosecutors at Ephesus, Nestorius said: „One must not attribute to God the birth or the nursing from a virgin. One must not say that God has been two or three months old“ (V, 53). To his opponents Nestorius explained later on in his *Book of Heraclides*. „Is it as a man who denies that Christ is God that the accused told you that Christ was two or three months old? Or was he confessing that Christ is God, but stating that it is not as God that he was born and became two or three months old..., as if his own essence has been changed into the essence of man“ (LH, 122).

We must come now to the main accusation, that is to say the opposition of Nestorius to the *Theotokos*. It is necessary not to exaggerate this rejection. The term *theotokos*, employed from the times of Origen, was not yet universally accepted when it became a matter of dispute at Constantinople in 428.⁵ It is probable that this term, which has no Latin equivalent in the exchange of correspondence between Rome and Constantinople, was created to avoid the pagan expression of *mètèr theou*. In the word „theotokos“ the prefix *theo-* is a predicate, not a subject. It would be perhaps preferable to translate in English „divinely Mother“ than „Mother

of God.“⁶ Even Cyril never used the term *theotokos* before the controversy and, for Nestorius himself, there is at least one homily in which he uses it (LH 345, 7-8). But it is well known that at the peak of the controversy Nestorius preferred to call Mary more simply „the Blessed Virgin“ in order to avoid that bone of contention.

It is probable that most of those who at Constantinople employed the expression *theotokos* used it in an Apollinarist way. Nestorius did not make opposition to the Roman reply to his request, accepted the advice of moderation given to him by John of Antioch and explained himself in a new homily. „The Blessed Virgin is Mother of God ... because the Temple created in her by the Holy Spirit was united with divinity“ (C 78; cf also *Letter to Pope Celestine*, p. 55). He uses the image of the garment, according to a venerable tradition preserved by Ephrem⁷ and engraved in an old Syriac version of the symbol of Nicea, in which the Greek term *sarkóthenta* was translated *lbeš pagra*, that is to say „he clothed the body.“⁸ That explanation returns to the old Antiochene formula to which Cyril certainly would agree: „The Blessed Virgin is Mother of God, because from her conception the Temple has been taken upon from her and united to God the Logos“ (V 127, 5).

Nestorius never claimed that Christ had been begotten as „a simple man“, in whom the Logos should have dwelt later on (V 4, 4).

According to the council of Nicea, Nestorius thought that it is the Son, begotten of the Father before all centuries, who is made flesh and made man for us and for our salvation (V, 5, 3). It is therefore mistaken to consider the Nestorian soteriology as if it were the meritorious acts and the sufferings of the man Jesus which had constituted him in His divine Sonship. For Nestorius, the incarnation is invested of an absolute priority in the „divine exchange“. „God the Logos was inhumanated in order to make humanity the image of God in himself and to renew it in the very nature of his own humanity“ (LH 188).

What Nestorius, along with all Antiochian theologians, denies, is that in Christ „the properties of his flesh could ascend into the essence of God ... so that this one suffered in undergoing the sufferings of his body, ... without operating the human operations neither by the will of his soul nor by his human intellect ... but in operating them only by the will and intellect of God“ (LH 185). We are touching here the kernel of Nestorius's thought. If he takes so seriously the humanity of the incarnate Logos, which is complete and „consubstantial“ with our own humanity, it is in order to avoid the application of the term „becoming“ to the Logos which could involve God's mutability and the character of a creature for the Son, that is to say the two main errors condemned in the anathemas of Nicea.

With the Antiochene tradition, Nestorius received the formation of an exegete. To remain close to the words of John, he understands the „becoming flesh“ of the

³ F. Loofs, *Nestoriana*, Halle 1905; Nestorius, *Tegourta Heraclidis: Le Livre d'Heraclide de Damas*, ed. P. Badjan, Paris - Leipzig 1910; Engl. transl. *The Bazaar of Heraclides*, ed. by G.R. Driver and L. Hodgson, Oxford 1925; French transl. *Le Livre d'Héraclide de Damas* (= L.H.), by F. Nau, Paris, éd. Letouzey et Ané 1910. Cf. Luigi I. Scipioni, *Ricerche sulla cristologia del „Libro di Eraclide“ di Nestorio*, Fribourg (Switzerland) 1956; Luise Abramowski, „Untersuchungen zum Liber Heraclidis des Nestorius“ in *CSCO*, Subsidia 1963.

⁴ Cf. L.I. Scipioni, *Nestorio e il Concilio di Efeso*, Milan 1977; André de Halleux, „Nestorius. Histoire et doctrine“ in *Irénikon* LXVI (1993), pp. 38-51, 163-178, in this volume in English translation p. 197.

⁵ J.F. Bethune-Baker, *Nestorius and his Teaching. A fresh examination of the evidence*, Cambridge 1908; *Ibid.*, An Introduction to the early History of christian Doctrine, London, Methuen and Co 1903 (rééd. 1958), p. 261, n. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 261, n. 2.

⁷ Cf. A. Vööbus, „New Sources for the Symbol in early Syrian Christianity“ in *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972), pp. 295. Cf. S. Brock, „The Christology of the Church of the East in the Synods of the Fifth to early Seventh Centuries: preliminary considerations and materials“ in *Aksum-Thyateira: „Festschrift for Archbishop Methodius“*, éd. G. Dragas, London 1985, now repr. in *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, London, Variorum reprints 1992, p. 126.

⁸ Cf. S. Brock, „Clothing metaphor as a means of theological expression in Syriac tradition“ in *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, Variorum Reprints (Aldershot) 1992, chap. XI.

Logos as his „indwelling“ in the Temple of his body and to speak like Paul he describes the Logos „taking the Form of the Servant“.

This vocabulary, used by Athanasius, was abandoned by Cyril after 428, subsequently to the pseudepigraphic literature circulating under the name of Athanasius or of Felix and Jules of Rome.⁹ When Cyril reproved this terminology, he unfortunately impoverished the christological patrimony of the dogmatic tradition.

For the same reason, one can regret that Cyril deliberately discarded Nestorius' terminology of the „conjunction“ (*synapheia*), which Cyril understood as a simple „moral union“ (V 6, 12, 3 et 11).¹⁰ The Cappadocian Fathers used this term in order to explain the communion of the divine person inside the one essence of God. Nestorius uses the same word in the context of the incarnation. „I do not mean a conjunction by love and by nearness, as for those who are far from one another and united only by love but not by the essences. And it is neither by equality in honour nor in authority that I spoke of union“ (LH 277). To explain the union, Nestorius invokes the biblical type of the burning bush: „The fire was in the bush; and the bush was fire and the fire was bush; and there was neither two bushes nor two fires, because both were in the fire and both in the bush“ (LH 141, cf 138). At the beginning even Cyril used the same way of speaking of the union.

The defence offered by Nestorius in his *Book of Heraclides* against Cyril was that his opponent wrongly accused him to „divide“ Christ. On this point Nestorius is extremely clear. „The natures are two, God and man, but the Sons are not two. For those natures from which our Savior is formed are one and another.“ He repeats over again a famous terminology set up by Gregory the Theologian in his *first Epistle to Cledonius*. It has been put down by André de Halleux that this expression, drawn from Gregory, was in the florilegium raised at Ephesus, against Nestorius (V 54, 14). Nestorius could complain that his judges, when they wished to confute him involuntarily testified to the truth he was himself defending.

The faith of Nestorius is in its intention profoundly orthodox. He is a witness to the apostolic tradition proposed in the symbol of Nicea, of the unconfounded union of divinity and humanity in the unique Son and Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate. Nestorius confesses his faith according to the Antiochene tradition but his sense of the mystery of God and a certain rationalistic trend of his thought lead him to avoid a systematic usage of the *communicatio idiomatum*.¹¹ He fights against all forms of confusion and against „theopaschism“. Then a dualist tendency leaves in certain sentences an impression of dualism in his Christology. But are provocative or uncautious expressions sufficient to make an heretic?

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We must take interest now to the words „hypostasis“ and „person“ in the thought of Nestorius. We said that he confessed his faith in the unconfounded union of the natures in Christ. For the Nestorian tradition (Babai, Isoyab II), he had been

⁹ Luise Abramowski, „Der Streit um Diodor und Theodor zwischen den beiden ephesensischen Konzilien“ in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 67 (1955-56), pp. 252-287

¹⁰ Cf. Luise Abramowski, „*Synapheia* und *asugkhutos enōsis* als Bezeichnungen für trinitarische und christologische Einheit“ dans *Drei christologische Untersuchungen*, Berlin, éd. Walter De Gruyter, 1981, pp. 63-109

¹¹ Aloys Grillmeier, *Le Christ dans la tradition chrétienne*, vol. I, Paris, éd. du Cerf 1973, 3ème partie, section I, chap. I, „Le langage et la pensée de Nestorius à Ephèse“, pp. 431-447

for that reason the great theologian of his time. In this sense, he could have been the first to have prefigured what would become the christological Chalcedonian formula of the inseparable union of „two natures in one person“.

But the things were much more intricate. Apollinaris, the maker of the formula. „one nature of God the Logos incarnate“, set up as a principle that two beings, if they are complete, cannot become one. His christological pattern was the composition of the human being: as human nature is composed by the incomplete parts of intellect, soul and body, which become one in the individual man, so in the one nature of Christ the divine Logos enters in composition with the human body, in which he stands instead of the soul (or instead of the intellect); so he can divinise our humanity by the instrument of the flesh, of which he bears the sufferings. It is against the Cyrillian notion of a „natural“ union of two natures, that Nestorius opposes the permanence of the two natures.

Nestorius caught a glimpse of the Apollinarian heresy in the words of Cyril of Alexandria, which he interpreted according to his own Antiochene logic. „The natural union (of Cyril) is carried into effect by composition in one nature. As the soul and the body form one nature in man, so also God the Word (would be) united with His humanity“ (LH 142). „In a natural composition, says Nestorius, it seems that none of the natures from which it exists is complete. They need each other in order to be and to subsist. So the body needs the soul for it to live and the soul needs the body for it to feel“ (LH 268).

For Nestorius, a „natural union“ of the incarnate Word would be necessary and not voluntary, that is, would submit God to suffering (LH 158). „Each of the parts which are united in the natural union are united with the natural passibility of the other. They do not receive the passions each from the other voluntarily“ (LH 142). If Christ is in natural composition, God „would only have borne passibly the sufferings of the body without the body fulfilling anything in his own nature in the economy which was directed towards us“ (LH 185). Christ would be considered „as an instrument without soul, reason and will“. But God the Word acts with the body and the soul, as for its own nature, acting and suffering in a body „which has become consubstantial to him“ (LH 212).

Nestorius, speaking of „voluntary union“, intends to safeguard the immutability and impassibility of the divine nature in its ontological union with one complete humanity. As an Antiochian, he thinks so out of reverence for the transcendence of God in relation with the created flesh, transcendence which is not abolished by the union. To speak of a „natural composition“, would be, according to this tradition, an insistence in drawing the flesh from the divinity, instead of confessing. „the flesh was created and the second Adam is of our nature.“¹²

Nestorius does not ignore that Cyril, in contrast to Apollinaris, acknowledges the humanity of the incarnate Logos as complete, that is to say with a body animated by a rational soul. And he knew that his opponent maintained the difference between the natures. Their difference rests not so much on the number of the natures but on the mode of their union. He finds an impossibility to speak of „natural union“ after the conjunction. „You said that the differences remain and are not suppressed after the union of the natures. Speak then of one person in two

¹² *Ibid.*, section II, „La réaction des Antiochiens“, pp. 484-520

natures and two natures in one person, as Gregorius, Ambrose, Athanase and all the Fathers, and you also, said!" (LH 209).

What then does Nestorius mean under the term of *hypostasis*? The word *hypostasis* is employed in the Letters of saint Paul, and two times (Hebr 1, 3; 11, 1), with the sense of „substance“, „essence“. Later on, it acquired a philosophical sense, especially in the works of Plotin (cf *Enneads* V, 1), in which the word has acquired the sense of „the dynamism of an origin.“¹³ It became necessary to precise its christological acceptance and this work was done by the Council of Chalcedon, which employed it on an other ontological level than the nature. For Cyril, the *hypostasis* implies the person; for Nestorius, it is always the essence. That is why the „union according to the *hypostasis*“ of Cyril is interpreted by Nestorius as a natural union. In formulating his criticisms, Nestorius uses paradoxically the same terms as the Council of Chalcedon which, distinguishing the *hypostasis* from the nature, could conclude that there was „one *hypostasis* in two natures“. But Nestorius concluded that there were in permanence two hypostases, as there were two natures. This discordance lasted through the centuries till our times.

It should not be proper to condemn this hypostatic dualism without considering in what context it is proposed by Nestorius. For the notion of *hypostasis* has not received its precise use in christology before the sixth century and even the best theologians of that period do not all share the same definition of hypostasis.

When Nestorius speaks of *hypostasis*, he accepts as his own an old use of the term, which designates the nature as reality and not as essence or as a conception of the intellect. „The natures are never natures without hypostasis, and are never thought intellectually, without the hypostasis“. If the word hypostasis means reality, it involves also individuality. This seems consonant with the lifelong ontology of the Cappadocian Fathers.

Because he means by nature the individual nature, in the same way he applies the concept of hypostasis to the humanity of Christ. This is of absolute orthodoxy. But the fact remains that Nestorius never perceived the hypostasis as a being subsistent in se et per se, as a principle of autonomy, as a subject of conscience and activity, that is as what we call today a person. And when he speaks of a person he does not have in mind an ontological principle. The ambiguity of the two terms is such that the translators into Syriac of the *Liber of Heraclides* renounced to translate the word *prosopon* and retained the Syriac word, forged from the same root: *parsopa*.

In the first part of the *Book of Heraclides*, Nestorius gave an organic reply to Cyril's last christological dialogues, with which there are several things in common. In this part, he seeks to defend and explain the nature of the union *en prosopo monadiko* which he sets up against Cyril's *en physei mia*. The line of exposition is a result of the opposition (between the *henosis* of his own doctrinal formula and the *synapheia schetike* attributed to Nestorius), proclaimed by Cyril when explaining the Symbol of Union of 433. The evolution lies not in the christological formula (*dyo physeis, en prosopon*) which Nestorius already held before the controversy with Cyril. But in the necessity he felt of clarifying the nature and the characteristics of the „union in the *prosopon*“, which Nestorius, right from the start, had forcefully set

up against the *physike* or *hypostatike* (*henosis*) of the Apollinarians, and taken up, in his view, by Cyril.¹⁴

When he speaks of the person in Christ, Nestorius invokes always the „common *prosopon*“ of the two natures. When he considers the Son of God inhumanate the common *prosopon* is for him theandric. When he refuses to apply this common *prosopon* to the Logos, as Cyril does, it is only because, as in the Antiochene tradition, the Logos is a term reserved by him to the divine nature.

We must recognize that Nestorius is never absolutely clear on this question of the *prosopon* of Christ. Never, for instance, does he identify the „*prosopon* of the union“ with the person of the Son. The person of the union subsists in what he calls the „natural“, and then, in the person proper to each nature. He holds so firmly to the principle „no nature without person and no person without nature“ that he comes easily to say that in Christ there are two persons: „Two are the *prosopa*, the *prosopon* of he who has clothed and the *prosopon* of he who is clothed“ (LH 193).

What then, for Nestorius, is the „person of the union“? Nestorius seems to conceive it as „an exchange“ of two natural persons in view of their common action. „The *prosopa*, he writes, receive and give mutually“ (LH 223). The permanence of the two *prosopa* as far as in the union itself seems to deprive it of its ontological reality and to be precisely the *hypostasis* or what we should call the „subsistence“, that is to say, the person in the modern sense of the term.

Nestorius on the whole remained faithful to himself. However it has been that after Pope Leo's intervention in the *Tomus ad Flavianum*, Nestorius felt himself comforted by a „just verdict“, which he had in vain longed from the Ephesine council. Putting into the background the soteriological aspect which up to this point had been prevalent in his writings, Nestorius set to work, as never before, on the Cyrillian terminology. This ultimate effort tends to restore Nestorius' true importance. He not only reached the threshold of the *enhypostatos* of the Chalcedonians to be set against the Cyrillian *anhypostatos*, but also caught a glimpse of the similarity between *prosopon* and the Chalcedonian idea of *hypostasis*. He affirmed that Christ is „in two natures“ or „a sole *prosopon* in two natures“, explicitly anticipating the Chalcedonian *en dyo physeis* which he set against Cyril's *ek dyo physeon*, using a formulation which the fathers of the fourth ecumenical council would have perhaps recognised as their own, had there not been so much misunderstanding on Nestorius up to Nestorius up to their time.

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Many are convinced today that Nestorius never taught what was called after him the „Nestorian“ heresy. The two positions must be clearly distinguished. The theologians of the Church of the East, who always disapproved what their opponents called „Nestorianism“, confess in the formulas of their tradition the common faith of all Christians in the inconfused unity of Christ.

The thought of Nestorius suffers from serious shortcomings. But it remains that he was condemned irregularly by the court at Ephesus, his judge being at the same time his accuser. His writings were declared contrary to the orthodox faith without having been discussed and were disapproved from the view-point of another

¹³ Cf. Paul Aubin, *Triade plotinienne et Trinité chrétienne*, Paris, éd. Beauchesne 1992, p. 159

¹⁴ Cf. Luigi I. Scipioni, *op. cit.*, chap XI, L'ultimo Nestorio, pp. 404-417

theology. The majority of those who gave agreement to the official decision kept without any modification their own conviction formulated in terms somewhat different. But the majority of those who denied the anathema of the council against Nestorius could, in respect of their conscience before God, remain in communion with the archbishop John of Antioch without being compelled to submit themselves to the condemnation.

The Ancient Church of the East, which had not been even present at the discussion of the assembly of Ephesus, was never put under the necessity nor even in a position to ratify this council, living in countries located outside the pressure of the imperial power. This Church could claim to benefit from the same economy as the one John of Antioch conceded to the objectors under his own jurisdiction when he settled not to make the condemnation of Nestorius a precondition or a preliminary to pursuing the dialogue.

Today, a common rereading of the texts and revision of the events of the past calls the churches to a purification of their memories and to a clarification on the real significance of the ancient individual anathemas. A work of discernment should have to be done first, estimate the legitimacy of the condemnation of Nestorius by the court at the time of Ephesus; second, evaluate the inadequacies and errors included in the christological expressions of Nestorius when he was condemned as „dividing“ Christ. If it is true that Nestorius confessed sincerely faith in Christ, the one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate and made man for us from the Virgin Mary, he may have been an insufficient theologian, whose writings must be submitted to discussion, but his memory cannot be branded, as it was done constantly in the course of history by so many historians and dogmaticians who had not even read him, with the charge of heresy.

Discussion

Dr. Hainthaler: I suggest not to use the term "person" (p.113) but "prosopon". Nestorius was always reacting against Apollinarianism and Arianism. His ontology is different from that of Cyrill.

Fr. Dupuy: I should use the original Greek term because the main problem is with hypostasis. At the Council of Chalcedon the term "prosopon" was primarily used. "Hypostasis" was added only in the last minute. The use has to be checked. For Nestorius "hypostasis" was not an interesting term.

President Stirnemann: Could Fr. Dupuy make these corrections before leaving Vienna and give us the corrected text?

Dr. Hainthaler: At Chalcedon the term "hypostasis" was put in at the last moment and "prosopon" used most of the time. The development of the meaning of "hypostasis" went on till well into the 6th century under the pressure of Christology.

Mar Severios: I would like Fr. Dupuy to treat the subject according to the Greek terminology used by Nestorius. Why are other documents not considered here? The

Book of Heraclides was not present at Ephesus. Why not consider the 1st and 2nd letters of Cyril? What is meant by saying (p.109) that "theotokos was not yet universally accepted"? It was used before by Origen, Alexander of Alexandria and Gregory of Nazianze.

Fr. Dupuy: You raise the question of a change of mind in Nestorius between Ephesus and the Book of Heraclides. Was the real question raised about Nestorius? It is a question of two different mentalities that do not understand each other. Has Nestorius tried to explain what was wrongly understood?

Mar Severios: "Synapheia" is used by the Cappadocian Fathers. The use is different in Trinity and in Christology. In Trinity we have three hypostases, in Christology only one. So synapheia cannot be used in the same way, and that is the main objection against its use by Nestorius.

Dr. Hainthaler: Cyril of Alexandria also uses "synapheia" in Christology before Ephesus.

Mar Severios: Yes, but together with the images of body and soul.

Fifth working session: Monday June 27, morning

Cardinal Groër welcomes the participants to this unofficial consultation. The unique gift of God to all mankind is Jesus Christ. It is high time that all Christians proceed on the way to unity and that they find this unity in Jesus Christ.

We see the great difficulties of the 5th century between East and West, but hopefully with the power of God in the Holy Spirit one language may be found in spite of the many cultural and historical differences.

He quotes Phil. 3,10: „There is only one thing I want to know, Jesus Christ.“ This was the ultimate desire of both Nestorius and Cyril, whose feast we celebrate today. We may hope that in God all that has not been achieved in this world will eventually become resolved. This conference - neither a synod nor a council - may help us on the way to unity.

A greeting message of the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, H.B. Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, is read. He congratulates all the participants on this ecumenical effort (see p.24).

Chairman: *Archbishop Powathil*

IS THE THEOLOGY OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST NESTORIAN?

I. Introduction

The question before us - whether the theology of the Church of the East is „Nestorian“ or not - can be quickly answered if one is asking whether that church holds to the same Christological formulae as the historical figure, Nestorius. The philosophical terms employed by Nestorius to describe the incarnate Christ - two natures (φύσεις/ ܩܬܝܢܐ), and two *hypostases* (ὑπόστασεις/ ܩܬܝܢܐ), in one *prosopon* (πρόσωπον/ ܩܬܝܢܐ) - are also employed by the theologians of the Church of the East. The liturgies of the church invariably name Nestorius, with Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, in their litanies. The calendar features a „Memorial of the Greek Doctors“, a list of „western“ fathers which includes - and emphasizes - the same three theologians. If the question is, „Does the Church of the East venerate Nestorius and continue to employ his theological vocabulary?“ the answer is obvious. However, if the question is whether the Church of the East is „Nestorian“, the answer is not so immediately evident. Was Nestorius himself a „Nestorian“ as that heresy is universally understood and described? Since many in modern times have diligently and honestly tried to come to a conclusion about this and have often answered it negatively, it is very likely that the same question applied to the Church of the East would often come up with a similar negative answer.

To deal with this question let us first examine the Persian church's relationship to the ecumenical councils of the Byzantine Empire. Then let us consider the historical development of Christological terms and their use. Finally, let us attempt to answer the question from the Church of the East's viewpoint: „Is the Church of the East 'Nestorian'?“ In doing all this we will rely heavily on the Church's official synodal record, the *Sunhados*¹, in order to trace the development of official positions on the person of Nestorius and his Christological formulations.

II. The Persian Church's Relationship with the Ecumenical Councils of the Byzantine Empire

A. Historical Background

1. The Establishment of Christianity in the West and Its Effects on Christians in the East

With the conversion of Constantine and the establishment of Christianity as the state religion in the West matters became perilous for Christians who lived in Persian territories. The ongoing hostility and intermittent state of war between the two empires of the East and West made adherence to Christianity in Persia a cause for suspicion of disloyalty to the state and possible collusion with the enemy. As long as Rome itself was hostile or indifferent to Christianity it did not materially

affect the status of eastern Christians. But when the Emperor in the West embraced the faith of Christ a dark shadow fell over his fellow believers in the East. In time fierce persecution broke out against the Church. Mass executions followed the martyrdom of Mar Sem'on bar Saba'e in AD 341, and throughout the next 70 years official persecution intermittently erupted and was devastating in its effects. According to the *Sunhados* churches were destroyed, altars torn down, and there were many who were imprisoned for their faith². For long periods of time members of the Church maintained an underground existence, fearful of public acknowledgment lest it bring upon them and others associated with them almost certain death, or at least persecution. At one point during this time the Church was without a Catholicos at its head for a period of 22 years³. This difficult situation perdured until the accession to the Persian throne of the emperor Yazdgard I and his proclamation of toleration in 410.

During the time, then, when the Synods of Nicea (325) and Constantinople I (381) took place in the Byzantine Empire the Church in Persia was effectively cut off from participation in those convocations. These synods were much more than discussions of theology and ecclesiastical affairs. They were also matters of state within the *ecumene* of the western empire. Though Constantine and Sapor II were nominally at peace with one another at the time of Nicea, the suspicion which lay heavily upon eastern Christians was that if warfare were renewed, or relations embittered, at any time, they would rally to the aid of the enemy and undermine the Persian cause - especially since the greater number of them lived in the western part of Persian territory⁴. The political realities dictated a prudent distancing by the Church of the East from the Church of the West, a distancing which was to remain, more or less, a constant in the experience of the easterns.

2. Temporary Peace Between East and West: Adoption of Nicea (Constantinople) by the Church of the East

At the end of this period of harsh repression, at the beginning of the 5th century, the bishop of Antioch, Porphyrius, together with the bishops of Aleppo, Urhai (Edessa), Tella, and Amida, out of concern for the Church in Persia, sent a letter to the bishops of the East through the Byzantine imperial ambassador, Maruta, bishop of Maiparqat (Martyropolis), who was representing Theodosius II on an embassy to the court of Yazdgard⁵. The letter urged the bishops to adopt the canons and creed of the Council of Nicea, which had taken place 85 years previously, and to effect certain reforms. How much communication the „western“ bishops might have had with the Persian Church in the preceding period may be gauged by the astonishing gap between the time of the Nicene synod and the introduction of its conclusions to the Persians. Of course, any communication on their part would have alerted the Persian authorities and aroused suspicions of political intrigue, and the

¹ *Synodicon Orientale*, (hereinafter *SO*) ed., J.B. Chabot, Paris (Syriac text).

² *SO*, p. 18.

³ *SO*, p. 48.

⁴ For a discussion of this situation see *A Short History of Syriac Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, W. Stewart McCullough, Scholars Press, Chico, CA, 1982, pp. 111-120; *History of the Assyrian Church*, W.A. Wigram, London, 1910, pp. 41-77.

⁵ *SO*, pp. 18-19.

Ecumenical Council was, as we have noted above, not just theological/ecclesiastical in significance, but also an imperial affair fraught with political overtones and consequences.⁶ The occasion prompting this action by the „western“ (in relative terms) bishops was the relaxation of persecution by Yazdgard and the rehabilitation of the Church in his domains. At a synod presided over by 'Ishaq, the Catholicos of the East, and Maruta, the „western“ ambassador, the Persian bishops ratified the Nicene Creed and restructured their badly fractured Church.

3. *The Official Silence of the Persian Bishops on Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople II*

It is a matter of some interest that the Creed adopted at 'Ishaq's synod had the older ending, not reflecting the additions of Constantinople I⁷. The latter council is not even mentioned in the synodal records of the Persian Church until the Synod of Mar Yausep, AD 554⁸. At what time in the interval the Creed of Constantinople was generally adopted by the easterns on an official basis is difficult to pinpoint. It is also noteworthy that prior to Yausep's synod the Byzantine Councils of Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), and Constantinople II (553) had also taken place, but none of these are acknowledged by that synod. On the other hand, it is a matter of synodal record that, up to that time, none of them are officially disavowed or condemned either, and the absence of any such overt disavowal or condemnation with canonical force gives pause to the student of Syriac-speaking Christianity considering the subsequent history of that outpost of Christianity. As a case in point, the Persian Church was presented with an opportunity to officially declare itself on the issue of Ephesus. A rump synod, presided over by the controversial bishop of Nisibis, Barsauma⁹, took place in 484, in which an explicitly anti-Ephesene mood prevailed, but the synod was subsequently repudiated in all but one of its decisions by a Patriarchal Synod¹⁰. What the reasons may have been for the official silence of the Persian hierarchy on matters of such import to the Byzantine world are a matter of conjecture, but it would be understandable, given the tumultuous history of the period in question, if they so declined. At least part of those reasons may lie in the geographic isolation and tenuous political situation of the Church of the East, and the administrative independence it was compelled by circumstances to exercise relative to the West - an independence that gave space to the bishops and time for putting off a decision on those matters, or even ignoring them.

B. The Official Independence of the Persian Church Proclaimed

During the reign of Bahram V (420-438) persecution again broke out against Christians in the East. The short period of toleration and state protection initiated by Yazdgard came to an abrupt end, and the old suspicions were again aroused against the Church. Much turmoil around the election of Dadišo' to the Catholicosate of the East and his imprisonment through the connivance of fellow-Christians brought about a crisis, the consequences of which have had enduring effects on the character and history of the Church of the East. Though the Catholicos was eventually released from prison, he resigned his office and fled to „Markabta of the Arabs“ for protection. A synod of 33 (or 35)¹¹ bishops convened at Markabta in 424 for the purpose of persuading Dadišo' to withdraw his resignation and return to his see. In the process of presenting their case to the Catholicos the bishops produced a historical analysis of their relationship to the „western“ bishops¹². The analysis concentrated on the crisis of the present situation and compared it with previous crises and their effects upon the Church in the East. Its motivation was not hostility to the western Church, but a sincere desire to resolve the ongoing difficulties occasioned by the Church's putative relationship to the West, a situation which ultimately resulted in the drastic action taken by Dadišo'. Beginning with the case of Papa bar Gagai, on the occasion of his establishment of the Catholicosate at Seleucia-Ctesiphon in the early 4th century, and recalling the more recent cases of the Catholicoi 'Ishaq and Yahbalaha, the bishops insisted that each time dissident clergy or those under penalty of some sort appealed to the „western“ bishops, the „westerns“ denied their appeals and supported the office of the Catholicos in its decisions, and although the confirmation of the „western“ bishops was appreciated and lauded, nevertheless political conditions no longer permitted those sorts of appeals to be made¹³. By canonical decree they proclaimed the Church of the East to be administratively independent, and they enhanced the power and dignity of the Catholicos, adding to him the title „Patriarch“:

„...we now determine by the 'Word of God' that easterners are not allowed to make an appeal - even before the western patriarchs - against their patriarch. Instead, every contention which is unresolved before him shall be reserved to the presence of the judgment seat of Christ. And we determined and confirmed this statute, which is indissoluble and irrevocable, for we have sealed it with the Holy Trinity.“¹⁴

The synod of Dadišo', which marks the beginning of the Church of the East's administrative separation *vis-à-vis* the „western“ bishops is notable for its lack of a theological „cause of schism“. It took place seven years prior to the Council of

⁶ See *SO*, pp. 46-49, for a discussion of „western“ dealings with the Church in Persia.

⁷ *SO*, pp. 22-23.

⁸ *SO*, p. 97.

⁹ For a full discussion of Barsauma and his relations with the Catholicos-Patriarch 'Aqaq and the larger Church, see Wigram, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-166.

¹⁰ *SO*, pp. 61, 63. One canon, concerning marriage of the clergy, was accepted by 'Aqaq's synod (486) and re-affirmed by Babai's synod (498). Another canon, touching on Theodore of Mopsuestia, seems to have been rehabilitated in Grigor's synod (605). See *SO*, pp. 210-211.

¹¹ See list, *SO*, p. 43.

¹² The bishops of the „West“ were those bordering on Persian territory (see list of bishops above who intervened at the time of Maruta/'Ishaq). The analysis, given by the bishop of Bet Lapat, 'Aqpata, may be found in *SO*, pp. 46-49.

¹³ In fact, „political conditions“ had seldom permitted such appeals. As noted above, any such appeals during times of warfare or ill relations between Byzantium and Persia would produce dire consequences for eastern Christians, whose patriotism was already suspect. The cases cited by 'Aqpat/a are, in the case of Papa bar Gagai, prior to the establishment of Christiani in the West, and, in the cases of 'Ishaq and Yahbalaha, during the recent rapprochement between the two empires.

¹⁴ *SO*, p. 51. The English translation is by M. J. Birnie, as are all such translations in this paper.

Ephesus, four years prior to Nestorius's appointment to the see of Constantinople, and there is no rancor or bitterness expressed toward the West. It is totally unrelated to any conciliar disputes or schisms in the West. The tone of all the speeches and conclusions is laudatory and sincerely affectionate and grateful for western help in the past. Certainly no doctrinal issue is involved. In the area of faith and practice the East remained united with the West. In the area of administration and organization, the East assumed a right, indeed a necessity, to govern itself. Final authority, without appeal, rested in the hands of the Catholicos-Patriarch¹⁵.

It is in the light of this independence that we must attempt to assess the actions of the Church of the East, or rather the lack of action, in regard to the Ecumenical Councils of Byzantium. The motive to independence was practical and grew out of political conditions, but was not dogmatic. The occasion was renewed persecution and a pessimistic prognosis of the political realities of the future. The outbreak of the „Nestorian“ controversy in the West did not immediately demand action by the Church in the East, there was no Persian imperial pressure on the bishops to make a decision, and the bishops were on the whole apparently unwilling to do so. When reaction began to set in it was a reaction triggered by events in the West, the effects of which began to spill across the border into the East.

III. The Historical Development of the Persian Church's Affinity for the Person of Nestorius

A. The School of Edessa: its influence in the East

With the brief peace brought about by Maruta's embassy to Persia, young scholars from the East flocked to the school at Edessa where they imbibed the traditional theology of the Antiochene school of thought with its strongly dyophysite Christology¹⁶. This marvelous institution, with its widely celebrated scholarship, became the training ground for an army of convinced and dedicated dyophysites who became the theological mentors of several generations of influential teachers, monks, and bishops in the Church of the East. When the school was closed by the Byzantine Emperor Zeno in 489 it was relocated in Nisibis in Persian territory under the patronage of Barsauma where it became the center of Christian intellectual life in the East. Under the influence of its patron, a zealous defender of the Antiochene positions, and of his choice to head the school, Narsai, the institution flourished and gained respect as a serious center of learning. The Antiochene partisans at Nisibis vigorously promoted their Christological position, using the terminology familiar to them, that is, with the very terminology anathematized by the Ephesine synod and by the partisans of Cyril. Among them Nestorius was venerated as a staunch defender of Antiochene orthodoxy and a martyr to the pride and arrogance of Cyril of Alexandria. The reluctance of the bishops of the Church

¹⁵ This „absolutism“ was modified somewhat in the synod of Yausep in 554 (SO, p. 101), when the Patriarch was instructed to do nothing, except in emergency situations, without the presence of other bishops, and his authority was partially curtailed.

¹⁶ The theology of the school at Edessa was related to the Antiochene school of thought. Some teachers at Edessa had studied at the feet of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and providing translations of Antiochene theological works and Biblical commentaries for the Syriac-speaking world was a significant by-product of the Edessene school's overall contribution to the Church in the East.

of the East to take a definitive posture, whether positive or negative, relative to Nestorius gave these partisans the opportunity and freedom to further their cause in his defense.

B. The Countervailing Pressure of the Monophysite Minority

At the same time, the Persian Church did not lack for champions of the Cyrillian position, both among the clergy and among the monks. Though convinced monophysites were few in number, they were vocal and even participated along with the dyophysites in administrative matters and in conciliar decisions.¹⁷ And the monophysite party was greatly augmented over time by captives of successful Persian campaigns into Byzantine territories who were resettled in the East. Among these displaced populations were many Chalcedonians as well, and a plurality of viewpoints came to exist in the Church of the East. Ultimately the monophysite party received the status of a separate Christian body after the military victories of Chosroes I had flooded the empire with hundreds of thousands of captives from battle engagements.¹⁸ But until their official status as a separate minority, the monophysites of Persia were nominally under the Patriarchate of the East, and though they had their own bishops, they were obliged to utilize the liturgies of the Church of the East and lived in uncomfortable tension with their dyophysite neighbors.¹⁹

C. Official Christological Formulations and Nestorius

However, with the enormous advantage in numbers which the dyophysites enjoyed in the East it was inevitable that any official Christological formulation by the Church would reflect a „two natures“ position. But caution seemed to be the watchword which guided conciliar deliberations in this regard. There was no need for the bishops to ratify or denounce either the Council of Ephesus or that of Chalcedon (though many might have preferred to take a position) and there certainly was the incentive of prudence to forego ratification. The same political conditions existed to one degree or another throughout the next 150 years or so, and the passions and partisanship which so rocked the Church in Byzantium needed to be abated or contained in the East. It is of some note that the name „Nestorius“ does not appear in *Sunhados* until a canonical letter from the Catholicos-Patriarch Giwargis (660-680) to the Chorepiscopus Mina in the province of Fars in which he explained the

¹⁷ McCullough, *op. cit.*, p. 131 (citing Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'Empire Perse sous la dynastie sassanide* [224-632]) lists Papa of Bet Lapat, Philoxenus of Tahal (the later bishop of Mabbog), his brother, Addai, Barhadbsaba of Qardu, and Benyanin of Bet 'Aramaye as prominent monophysites among the Persians.

¹⁸ For treatment of Chosroes and the growth of monophysism in Persia, see Wigram, *op. cit.*, . 240-243.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243. How much or how soon the dissidents adopted the Persian services is a matter of opinion. But see SO, pp.196-197, where monophysite dissidents are referred to in the synod of Mar Sabrišo': „... they remove the litanies and spiritual praises which were composed by the trustworthy teachers in which the duality of the natures of the Son is revealed and made known.“ Since the Church of the East enjoyed a special „status“ in Persian domains, and the Patriarch was the recognized spokesman for all Christians at the court, all factions were nominally subject to him.

Christology of the Church, by then markedly „Nestorian“ in terminology²⁰. This silence in the face of so many advocates and partisans of Nestorius and his cause in the eastern empire is striking, especially when it is compared with the little time it took the Church of the East to come to the defense of Theodore of Mopsuestia (see below).

In the earliest Christological definition by the bishops of the East in synod there is what seems to be a deliberate avoidance of inflammatory rhetoric, and an attempt to avoid complexity as well. This occurs in the synod of Mar 'Aqaq in 486:

*„But our faith in the dispensation of Christ should also be in a confession of two natures of Godhead and manhood, none of us venturing to introduce mixture, commingling, or confusion into the distinctions of those two natures. Instead, while Godhead remains and is preserved in that which belongs to it, and manhood in that which belongs to it, we combine the copies²¹ of their natures in one Lordship and one worship because of the perfect and inseparable conjunction²² which the Godhead had with the manhood. If anyone thinks or teaches others that suffering and change belong to the Godhead of our Lord, not preserving - in regard to the union of the *parsopa* of our Savior - the confession of perfect God and perfect man, the same shall be anathema.“²³*

This modest affirmation of a duality of natures may be contrasted with the aggressive promotion of a duality of *hypostases* which was a feature of Antiochene polemics in the East at the time of 'Aqaq's Patriarchate, and with which he may have personally agreed²⁴. How much it may or may not have been influenced by the Council of Chalcedon (451) could only be a matter of conjecture since the Byzantine council goes unmentioned in this synod.²⁵ In the synodal record of the Church of the East the word *qnoma* is reserved exclusively for discussions of the persons of the Holy Trinity in credal affirmations, and this pattern of usage continues until the canonical „Letter of Giwargis to Mina“ in the late 7th century.²⁶ However much the Antiochenes may have pressed for the „two natures and two *qnoma*“ formula of

²⁰ SO, p. 235, where Giwargis calls Nestorius „the blessed (one), who (is) reviled and gratuitously accused by the multitude of the unjust.“

²¹ For ~~copies~~ *ḥashawā*.

²² *ḥashawā*.

²³ SO, p. 55.

²⁴ See Luise Abramowski and Alan E. Goodman, *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts*, Vol. II (Eng. trans.) Cambridge, 1972, p. 20, where Sahdost of Tarihān states that 'Aqaq and Barsauma agreed together in a synod on „the true faith of the two natures and the two hypostases.“ If Sahdost is referring to the synod of 486 he is mistaken (Barsauma did not attend the synod of 'Aqaq), at least insofar as that has come down to us through SO, for it plainly refers merely to natures. Sahdost also speaks of the reticence of the Church of the East toward Chalcedon, even though the partisans of that council „exercised great pressure on the Easterns to accept the synod of Chalcedon, and made a considerable defence on behalf of the 'one hypostasis' that was set down in it...“ (pp. 20-21.) It should be noted that the decisions of Chalcedon had already been superseded in the West by the „Henoticon“ of Zeno. By this time all dyophysites, including the Roman Pope and the western European bishops, were regularly labeled „Nestorians“.

²⁵ But see appendix to SO, pp. 545, 610, where the canons of Chalcedon are referred to as „accepted“ by the Church of the East.

²⁶ SO, p. 234. An appendix to SO sets forth the debate of the year 612 wherein a vigorous defense of the dual *hypostases* is made by the „Nestorian“ side.

Nestorius - and we can be very sure they pressed hard for it - the official Christology of the Church of the East continued to omit such a formula.²⁷

D. The Three Chapters Controversy and Its Effect on Persian Christianity

Breakdowns in the unity of the Persian Church over the historical period following the synod of 'Aqaq tended to be, as they had been in the past, of a personal nature, and factions which became divisive formed in the quest for power and influence. The „duality“ of the Patriarchate, for instance, which endured for a period of about 15 years²⁸ during the first half of the 6th century, was just such a struggle and was not due to Christological differences (or any other doctrinal disputes), but was due solely to parties whose interests were self-promotion. It might have been advantageous to one or another to frame the dispute in Christological terms, but neither of the factions deviated from the traditional dyophysite preference of the Persian Church.

However, at the mid-point of the century an event occurred in Byzantium which sent shock waves through the Church of the East: the condemnation of the „Three Chapters“ and the total anathematization of Theodore of Mopsuestia, both of his person as well as his writings. The drastic action taken in the Second Council of Constantinople (553), which also fractured the western Church, drew a reaction from the bishops in the East which up to that time was unprecedented: for the first time they came down decidedly opposed to an ecumenical decision of the Byzantine Church (though not obliged to through imperial pressure or otherwise) in a general synod, and unequivocally condemned those who condemn Theodore.

„Therefore, we decree by the 'Word of God', who rules over all and holds the height and the depth, that no one from any of the ecclesiastical ranks is allowed, secretly or openly, to revile this doctor of the Church, or to reject his holy writings, or to accept another commentary which is alien to the truth, one which, as they say, interprets for a lover of humbug and a lover of polished words which are alien to the truth, in the likeness of harlots who love a luxurious ornament. One who ventures, hiddenly or openly, to stand against these things which we have said and written above shall be anathematized and a stranger from all ecclesiastical congregations until he comes to his senses and becomes a true disciple of the teachers against whom he prattles in his foolishness.“²⁹

Unlike the western dissenters from this decision, the Persian bishops were not merely concerned with the issue of posthumous excommunications of persons who died in the good graces of the Church, but they were concerned with affirming an Antiochene father whose Scriptural interpretations had been normative in the Church of the East for well over a century. When one compares this with the total lack of mention of Nestorius or his teachings in the official synodal record of the eastern Church (despite his many defenders among clergy and laity), one is

²⁷ See the Appendix II of this paper where a reproduction of credal statements in various synods repeatedly affirms „two natures“ and „one *parsopa* in Christ while making no reference to *hypostasis*.

²⁸ See SO, page 70.

²⁹ SO, p. 138. (Synod of Išo'yahb I, 587)

compelled to conclude that the person and cause of Nestorius were not issues of ultimate moment for the Persian Church as a whole.

It is of some importance to note that the enthusiasm for Theodore of Mopsuestia did not alter the traditional approach of the eastern bishops to Christological formulae. The same synod of Iso'yahb which rejected the conclusions of Constantinople II includes an extensive confessional statement, and a canonical letter is appended to the synod which also includes a creed.³⁰ In these documents we note again that *qnoma*, or *hypostasis*, is used only in references to the Holy Trinity, which suggests that Chalcedonian adherents were not absent from the assembly and exercised their influence against a dual *hypostasis* formula, though the creeds are also silent on the term *hypostatic union*, undoubtedly in deference to Nestorius's defenders. They affirm the propriety of the *communicatio idiomatum*:

„The heretics, that is, in their stubbornness, venture to ascribe the properties and sufferings of the nature of the manhood of Christ to the nature and qnoma of the Godhead and Essence of the Word, which occasionally, because of the perfect union which the manhood of Christ had with his Godhead, are ascribed to God economically, but not naturally.“³¹ And, 'God the Word accepted the insult of sufferings in the temple of his body economically, in a perfect union without separation, though in the nature of his Godhead he did not suffer...'³²

They also locate the unitary subject of the Incarnation and his human experience and passions in „God over all“:

„...Jesus Christ the Son of God, God over all, born in his Godhead eternally from the Father without a mother. The same, but not in the same, was born in his manhood from a mother without a father in the last times, suffered in the flesh, was crucified, died, and was buried in the days of Pontius Pilate, and rose from the dead after three days. On the one hand, Christ, the Son of God, suffered in the flesh, while on the other hand, in the nature of his Godhead, the same Christ was beyond sufferings...“³³

The same reticence with regard to the employment of the word *qnoma* in formulaic constructions continues to be the norm into the early 7th century. What is striking, given the subsequent history of the Church of the East, is the absence of any defense of Nestorius or institutionalization of his Christological thought. What is paramount is the insistence, as per Chalcedon, upon „two natures“. What is missing is the Chalcedonian „hypostatic union“, or any other employment of the term *hypostasis*, aside from the Nicene Trinitarian use. While providing a haven for Antiochene partisans of Nestorius and affording them freedom to promote the cause of their brand of dyophysism, the eastern bishops yet maintained a certain distance from formally adopting their formulaic descriptions of the union of Godhead and manhood in Christ. Their administrative independence and the lack of political pressure from the state made such a situation possible. But the quick reaction to the „Three Chapters“ controversy betrayed a certain weariness with - as well as weariness of - the seemingly interminable disputations of the Byzantines. The reaction to Constantinople II seems, in retrospect, to have provided a bridge to the later outright (and perhaps inevitable) defense of Nestorius and his Christology.

E. The Breakdown of Moderation: King and Church and Confession

The long period of accommodating various viewpoints - doubtless uncomfortable to many, if not most - came to a rapid conclusion in the year 612 when the Persian king, influenced by his Christian wife, who was in turn influenced by her personal physician, a monophysite, sought to recommend a monophysite candidate to the Church of the East to fill the vacant see of the Catholicos-Patriarch. The „one nature“ party had been greatly strengthened over the years through infusions of captive populations from Byzantium, and relations between them and the dyophysites had worsened as they became bolder and more assertive in time. Meanwhile the supporters of Nestorius and his cause, always dominant in the schools and influential among the bishops, had sharpened their polemical tools as they were increasingly challenged by the dissidents. When the Church petitioned the king for the right to elect a head, the king suggested a „debate“ in which the parties would prove through arguments which was the correct „Christian“ point of view.³⁴ And as in the case of imperial intervention in the West, each faction viewed the occasion as an opportunity to settle the issue once and for all in its own favor through the acquisition of an imperial franchise. Official moderation gave way before the opportunity of a political „solution“. The king presented the questions in such a way as to label the easterners as „Nestorians“.³⁵ Though the dyophysites did not defend themselves *as such*, they did defend the terminology he (and they) used as being „pre-Nestorian“. Throughout the debate the dyophysite disputants mentioned the name of Nestorius only in the context of asserting that the manner in which they themselves spoke did not originate with him, but had Scriptural and paternal precedents.

We cannot overlook the fact that at this crucial moment in the history of the Church of the East both Antiochene partisans and those who were supporters of the Chalcedonian position were termed - and were considered to be - *Nestorian* by those of the monophysite party. For them the term had become a synonym for *dyophysite*. The extreme threat they presented forced the defenders of the „two natures“ position, alarmed by the imminent possibility of being subjected to a minority faction among them, to reach for the rhetorical tools with which they were most familiar, the linguistic usages and philosophical categories traditional in the East for generations, unfiltered by the modifications or reformulations of Ephesus and

³⁴ Wigram, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-258. For a dissenting view on the identity of the „Severian“ party, see Abramowski and Goodman, *op. cit.*, p. xlii, footnote.

³⁵ In *SO*, p. 574, one of the three questions posed to the disputants is given: „Again, an answer to what was asked: have the Nestorians or the monks turned aside from the foundation of the faith which the early teachers handed over? And until Nestorius, was there anyone who said that Christ was two natures and two qnome or not?“ Who was responsible for framing the question in this manner is not definitely known. McCullough, *op. cit.*, p. 159, suggests Gabriel, the monophysite physician of Queen Sirin, who was the major influence in promoting a Catholicos-Patriarch of his own party. The fact that the monophysite faction is labeled „monks“ (an inoffensive designation) and the dyophysites are labeled „Nestorian“ would seem to back up McCullough's contention. See the introduction of Abramowski and Goodman, *op. cit.*, pp. xlii-xliv, where the question of the authenticity of the wording is dealt with.

³⁰ See Appendix II of this paper and the full credal statements in *SO*, pp. 133-136, 193-196.

³¹ *SO*, p. 136.

³² *SO*, p. 195.

³³ *Ibid.*

Chalcedon. To them the monophysites posited the impossible: the corruption of divinity through admixture and confusion, and the abolition of man's hope of salvation through the denial of the integrity of the Son of God's substantive humanity. For the first time the Church of the East allowed a faction (to be sure, always a very influential faction) to speak on behalf of the entire Church and to employ the very controversial terminology which it had sought for 150 years or more to avoid using in synodal confessions:

„Concerning this, we believe in our hearts and confess with our lips one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose Godhead does not disappear, and whose manhood is not stolen away, but who is complete God and complete man. When we say of Christ 'complete God' we are not naming the Trinity, but one of the *qnoma* of the Trinity, God the Word. Again, when we call Christ 'complete man' it is not all men we are naming, but the one *qnoma* which was specifically taken for our salvation into union with the Word."³⁶

IV. Is the Church of the East „Nestorian“?

Having allowed themselves to take up the cause of Nestorius's terminology did the dyophysites consider themselves to be promoting the cause of „Nestorianism“ as it was understood by his enemies? How did their own treatment of the terms and their own view of the *subject* of the Incarnation emerge from their writings? Did they consider themselves to be dividing our Lord into two „persons“ and thus presenting, not the *God/man*, but *God + a man* functioning in tandem (though ever so close)? In order to understand them we would consider their own words on these subjects.

A. Philosophical Terminology From an Eastern Perspective

In the Church of the East there is no more credible source for understanding the Christology of the „Nestorians“ than Babai the Great's Book of the Union.³⁷ In it we get a glimpse into the mind of one of the prominent defenders of Antiochene thought in the East and one who lived at the time the Church there *officially* thought in the East and one who lived at the time the Church there *officially* adopted „Nestorian“ terminology. It is important to stress that this terminology was not new to the Church, but had been the common currency of theological and Christological discourse among Syriac-speaking Christians in the East for generations. It should not be abstracted from its cultural environment, nor should the images and impressions it evoked among those who employed it (and their hearers) in its unique linguistic setting be ignored and the whole of it forced to fit exactly into a Byzantine (or modern western) mold. It is the language of a distinct Christian culture, rich in the traditions of those who brought Christianity to the Eastern empire from the „West“. To reach a „Chalcedonian“ objective of one subject „person“ in two uncompromised substantive „natures“, the dyophysites felt required to affirm the hypostatic integrity of each nature. Babai, being one of those who participated in the „debate“ of 612, felt the term *qnoma* could not be dispensed with in addressing the threat

posed by monophysism to the essential integrity of Christ's humanity and divinity. It is instructive to know what he himself meant by this term which he employed.

In his Fourth Memra (seventeenth chapter) Babai defines his terms for us. First let us consider his definition of *qnoma/hypostasis*:

„A singular essence is called a '*qnoma*'. It stands alone, one in number, that is, one as distinct from the many. A *qnoma* is invariable in its natural state and is bound to a species and nature, being one [numerically] among a number of like *qnoma*. It is distinctive among its fellow *qnoma* [only] by reason of any unique property or characteristic which it possesses in its '*parsopa*'. With rational creatures this [uniqueness] may consist of various [external and internal] accidents, such as excellent or evil character, or knowledge or ignorance, and with irrational creatures [as also with the rational] the combination of various contrasting features. [Through the *parsopa* we distinguish that] Gabriel is not Michael, and Paul is not Peter. However, in each *qnoma* of any given nature the entire common nature is known, and intellectually one recognizes what that nature, which encompasses all its *qnoma*, consists of. A *qnoma* does not encompass the nature as a whole [but exemplifies what is common to the nature, such as, in a human *qnoma*, body, soul, mind, etc.].“³⁸

Here Babai sets forth his understanding of *qnoma* as being a representative exemplar of a general species. It is the essence of a given nature in concrete, realized form. It is the essential substratum upon which a *parsopa* is based. It is nature undifferentiated in any way from exemplary *qnoma* of the same nature except for number, but differentiated both in number and essence from exemplary *qnoma* of other natures. This substratum of nature is further individualized only by the addition of *accidents*, phenomena which are not of the essence of a given nature, but which make it possible to distinguish one *qnoma* from another. Nature is general and descriptive: *qnoma* is specific and exemplary. When Babai speaks of Christ as „God and man“, he insists on specificity: a divine *qnoma* (not the Holy Trinity) and a human *qnoma* (not mankind in general).

On the subject of *parsopa* Babai has this to say:

„Again, '*parsopa*' is the collective characteristics of a *qnoma* which distinguish it from other [qnoma of the same species]. The *qnoma* of Paul is not that of Peter³⁹, even though the nature and *qnoma* [of both of them] is the same⁴⁰. Each of them possesses a body and soul and is living, rational, and fleshly [that is, they are each a hypostatized nature], yet through their *parsopa* they are distinguished from one another by that which is unique to each of them - stature, for instance, or form, or temperament, or wisdom, or authority, or fatherhood, or sonship, or masculinity, or femininity, or in whatever way. A unique characteristic distinguishes and indicates that this [man] is not that [man], and that [one] is not this [one], even if this and that

³⁸ LU, pp.159-160. The bracketed text is added by the translator to amplify and/or clarify the meaning.

³⁹ I.e., Paul's *qnoma* is one, and Peter's another. The difference is in numerical distinction.

⁴⁰ I.e., Paul's *qnoma* is an exemplary recapitulation in concrete form of the essence of human nature, as is Peter's.

³⁶ SO (appendix), p. 566.

³⁷ Published by Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Paris, 1915, A. Vaschalde, ed. (Syriac, hereinafter LU.)

are of the same nature. Because of the unique property [or *parsopa*] which a certain *qnoma* possesses, one [*qnoma*] is not the other one."⁴¹

Here that which is not of the essence of an exemplary nature but a property possessed by it which distinguishes it from others of its kind, in combination with other such characteristics, comprises the *parsopa* of a given nature. Here Paul becomes Paul and not just „man“ and is distinguished from Peter, whose *qnoma* does not otherwise differ from Paul's except in numerical distinction. Paul not only looks different from Peter (hair color, height, weight, complexion, etc.) but acts differently, reflecting underlying differences in abilities, talents, interests, etc.-the characteristics of his *parsopa*. Paul becomes a subject of interest on his own, not just as a specimen of „manhood“. And the integrity of his *identity* is bound up in the fact that his *parsopa* is uniquely his and not another's, whereas the integrity of his *qnoma* lies in its faithful reflection, in exemplary form, of the exact nature of any other ordinary man.

B. The Unified „Subject“ of the Incarnation

Who then for the eastern commentators is the „subject“ of the *parsopa* of Jesus Christ? Who is the *one* to whom one may refer the various *accidents* that set him apart from those who are consubstantial with him? Is he a *he* and not a *they*?

It is a consistent teaching of the Church of the East, whether before or after 612, that the manhood which was fashioned by the Holy Spirit from the material of the Virgin's womb was for the express and only purpose of receiving the Incarnation of the Word and at no time possessed an independent existence. According to Babai, speaking of our Lord's humanity,

„With the beginning of its fashioning was its taking [and] its anointing, which was for the union, and the image of the Invisible was received, and God the Word dwelt in it for ever - not as the impiety of those wicked men of old who said, 'It came to pass and then was anointed', nor as those of the company of the accursed Paul⁴² who claimed that [it took place] at the baptism, nor as their colleagues who said that after the resurrection it acquired the honor of Sonship."⁴³

Again, not allowing for any interval between the fashioning and the „taking“, he says,

„Thus it is incumbent upon us to understand that with the voice of the angel, who said, 'The Holy Spirit shall come, and the power of the Most High shall rest upon you', immediately, with the sound, at that moment was the taking."⁴⁴

The „reason for being“ of the hypostatized manhood of Christ was to serve as the vehicle of God's redemptive acts through voluntary obedience. It has no existence apart from its union with God the Word, which took place „that God the Word might be revealed in it, and fulfill all his dispensation in it, and show through it the

beginning of the new age, and in it be worshipped for ever."⁴⁵ God the Word is the possessor of the fashioning and the *subject* of its *qnoma*⁴⁶. It is his own flesh and blood which he took, not another's, his own „temple“, his own „dwelling-place“, and his very own humanity. Here Babai does not stray far - if at all - from the confession of Išō'yahb:

„... the Son of God, God the Word, Light from Light, descended and became incarnate, and became man by way of economy⁴⁷, beyond alteration or change. Our Lord God, Jesus Christ, who was born of the Father before all worlds in his Godhead, was born in the flesh from the ever-virgin Mary in the last times, the same [Lord God], yet not in the same [Godhead].“⁴⁸

There are not plural subjects in the mind of Babai or in those of his fellow „Nestorians“. There is one Son of God who takes his own flesh, not another's, from the Blessed Virgin. The double consubstantiality and double birth of „the Son of God, God the Word, Light from Light“, with the Father, from whom he was begotten naturally, and with Mary, from whom he was begotten in the flesh of our humanity, is thus affirmed. Therefore Babai is able to concede the *communicatio idiomatum*, though preferring a more broadly indicative title inclusive of Godhead and manhood:

„God the Word is consubstantial with the Father, and because of the union the blessed Mary is called Mother of God and Mother of Man - Mother of Man according to her own nature, but Mother of God because of the union which he had with his humanity, which was his temple at the beginning of its fashioning and was begotten in union. Because the name 'Christ' is indicative of both natures in the hypostatic state of his [i.e., God the Word's] Godhead and his humanity, the Scriptures say that the blessed Mary bore 'Christ'⁴⁹ - not simply God in a disunited way, and not simply man untaken by God the Word.“⁵⁰

V. Conclusion

The legacy of Babai, his companions, and their successors has remained with the Church of the East to the present day. Nestorius is venerated and his vocabulary is employed in the service of Christological thought and expression. But the Church of the East rejects the epithet „Nestorian“ because it does not accept all the implications of that name⁵¹. It confesses two natures in Christ, inseparable and unconfused, subsisting in one personal subject, whose subject, God the Word, the Son of God, God over all, is consubstantial with his Begetter in his own essential nature, and consubstantial with us in the nature which he took from the Virgin and made his own. Whether the formulae employed by this confession are adequate to

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴⁶ See Appendix I of this paper. 4.

⁴⁷ For *ܕܡܝܬܐ*.

⁴⁸ *SO*, p. 194.

⁴⁹ The Scriptures regularly call Mary the „mother of Jesus“. But compare Mt. 1:16, 18; Lk. 2:11.

⁵⁰ *LU*, pp. 264-265.

⁵¹ A secondary reason the Church of the East rejects the „Nestorian“ label is that it suggests the Church began with Nestorius or with his followers. Even when this is not directly implied in the literature dealing with the Church, it is often inferred by the reader who is otherwise ignorant of the history of Christianity in the East.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

⁴² *I.e.*, of Samosata.

⁴³ *LU*, pp. 91-92.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

express a true *metaphysical* union of the two disparate natures we are unable to say with any degree of certainty, for we are well aware that the „mystery“ of the incarnation has eluded the powers of human thought and tongue to express to the satisfaction of all.

A. A Confession of Inadequacy

The *intention* of all parties to this dispute has always been to construct an adequate philosophical vocabulary to describe in an orthodox fashion the union of God and man in Christ. This intention, though noble, has led us to much frustration, mutual suspicion, and discord, and the dissonance of our voices only seems to resolve into harmony - if ever so briefly - at that point when we all agree on the impenetrability of the mystery we so strive to explain. The Church of the East confesses, as do people of good will everywhere, that her tongue is too stammering, her mind too limited, and her vocabulary too inadequate to do justice to a concept so sublime. Though we have often spoken with confidence, as though all doubts had been resolved and all issues settled, in our hearts and minds we have acknowledged our own limitations and the limitations of our descriptions of the indescribable. It is with this confession of inadequacy that we stand before you seeking for understanding and reconciliation.

The humility we express is born out of the recognition of our part in the longstanding disunity of Christ's body, and it reflects acknowledgment on our part that we have inflicted, as well as received, the wounds which that body bears. No matter how much we may attempt to justify the righteousness of our actions throughout the long history of this conflict, we ultimately conclude that all of us, to one extent or another, share the moral burden of having contributed to the present situation, a situation that is characterized by suspicion and separation among churches that have so much in common. A final analysis of the current ecclesiastical picture should prompt us to confess, each one of us, our part in the sin of division, and urge us to reach out for reconciliation. It should bring us to the point of expressing sorrow for the part we have played. For the very fact that divisions exist among our churches indicates the presence of sin, since schisms are bred in lovelessness and pride. But if there is to be forgiveness for any sin, there must first be a humble recognition of one's own frailty, and a contrite spirit to liberate the conscience before God. Only then will we be able to convert the present situation of divisions and schisms into a future process of healing and reunion.

B. A Call for Reconciliation

The attempt to explain the Incarnation, which was „for us men and our salvation“, has been the single most disruptive and destructive issue in Christendom. In the West the intervention of Christian Emperors consistently added fuel to the flames of discontent and disunion, frustrating the „oneness“ for which our Lord prayed so fervently. In the East, the intervention of pagan Emperors made permanent the division of Christian from Christian, institutionalizing it and dooming the Church to unrelieved subjugation and humiliation. The role of the bishops in allowing this to take place, and even aiding and abetting the process, is

perhaps understandable given the then current concepts of corporate society, but from the vantage point of the twentieth century it appears to ordinary people as censurable. This description may be harsh, but it accurately reflects the reactions and feelings of those outside the Church, those to whom we must make our appeal to „repent and be baptized“, but who scorn us for our lack of love for one another. They do not see Nestorians, Chalcedonians, or Cyrillians, they see only professed *Christians*. What we aspire for them to discern in us is an image of Christ, if only „as through a glass darkly“, but this image appears to them murky because of our self-assertion.

Now we stand at the door of opportunity, with the challenge of Christian love set before us. It is ours to take hold of the opportunity that this conference affords us and to speak to one another as brothers seeking mutual understanding. It is also ours to continue the dialogue which will be necessary if we are to draw closer to mutual acceptance. Christ himself will surely be with us in this task until it is finished, for it is he who instituted his Church, poured out his unifying Spirit on his disciples and their followers, and prayed for their constant oneness. Our Lord has already blessed his Church in such a manner as that some type of unity already exists in her confession of the Nicene faith, in her common hope of the resurrection, and in the charity she strives to demonstrate in his name, as well as in the sacraments of faith she administers in Baptism and Eucharist, and in the apostolic succession which she preserves intact. There already exists an „imperfect“ unity among our churches. Therefore, let us strive, through the grace of God and the guidance of his Holy Spirit, to realize an ever more „perfect“ unity.

C. A Doxology of Hope For Renewal in Christ's Body, the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

And to the end that this desire might be achieved let us invoke the blessing and aid of God the Father, the Cause of our existence, and his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the head of his Church and the source of her reconciliation and unity, and his living and life-giving Spirit, who sanctifies and purifies the hearts and minds of all who yield in obedience to his persuasion. Blessed be our Triune God, for ever and ever, Amen.

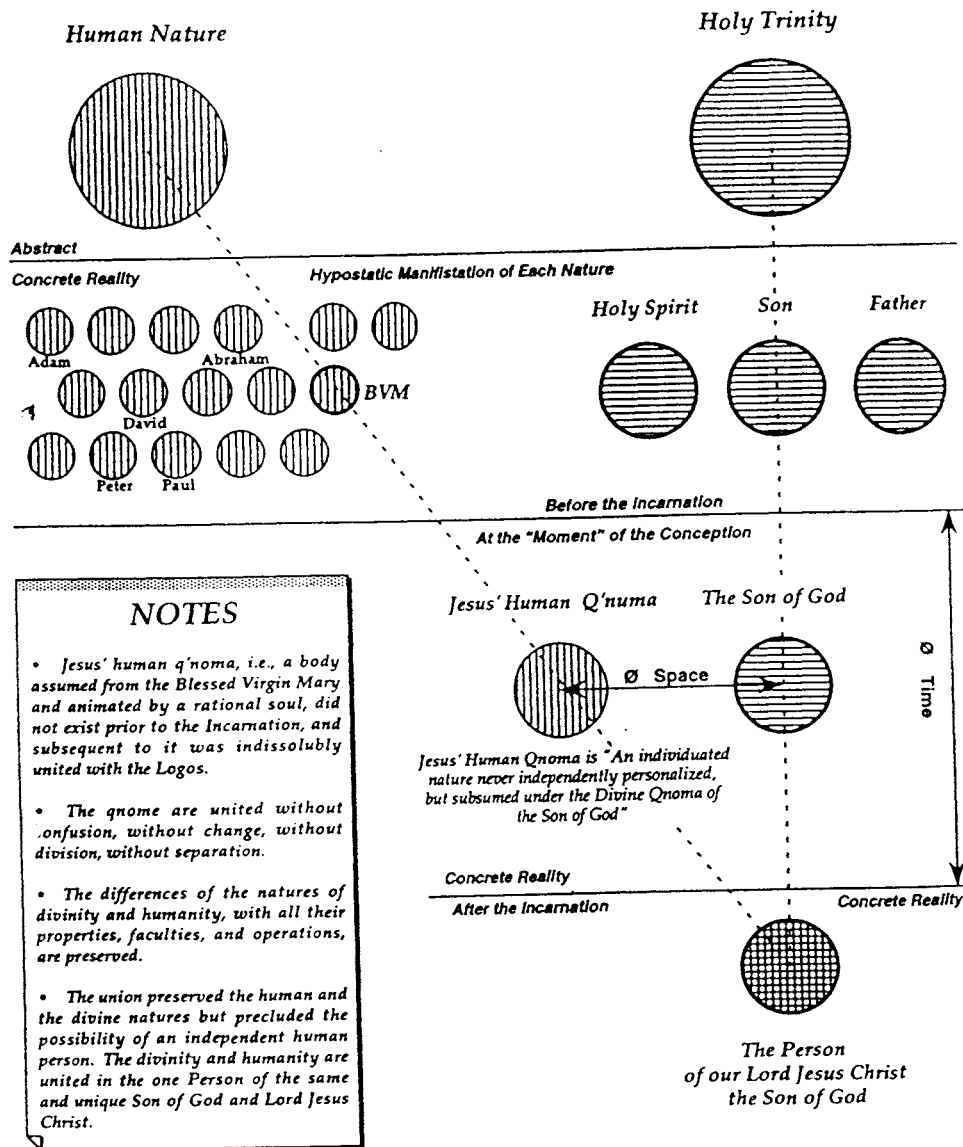
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Discussion

Archbishop Powathil: We thank the speaker for his ecumenical spirit and for this positive view of history. In our debate we should reassess what happened and then find out whether the Assyrian Church is wed to the ideas uttered by Nestorius or not.

Prof. Fiey: (Remark on p.122) The name of Nestorius appears for the first time in the assembly of bishops in 612.

APPENDIX



Mar Gregorios: The paper presented is excellent and makes discussion easier. There is more to be said about the closure of the School of Edessa. The reasons were not only political, but the conflict between Narsai and Barsauma also played a role. Regarding Mar Babai it must be stated that he was not the only theologian of his Church. We must also refer to the others.

Prof. Koodapuzha: Why are the liturgical texts of the Church of the East left out of the study and discussion? They also contain and express declarations of faith. I personally know many texts where one can find the communication of the "idiomata".

Mar Bawai: I have two studies ready on the liturgy and the office (Hudra), but I could not include the findings in this paper because of lack of time.

Mar Severios: I have a few questions. On p.127 "integrity of nature" is mentioned. What is meant exactly? On p.128 you speak of "qnoma" as being a representative exemplar of a general species." On p.130 the expression "two natures in Christ" should be avoided.

Mar Bawai: The *qnoma* is the core of the Christological issue. According to the Antiochian mind (which differs from the Alexandrian mind) the *qnoma* is necessary to affirm reality and integrity. I admit that the expression "hypostatic integrity" is a problematic one and it would be better to say "*qnoma* integrity". I think it is possible to omit the expression "two natures", it should be no problem, but I have to think about it because it is so important in our tradition. Referring to the Christological chart he explains Jesus as a human *qnoma*. His human nature stood in the word of God. These are terms 1500 years old. We have to understand them in the meaning of their times and we also must be aware that our Fathers were not as ecumenically minded as we are now.

Dr. Hainthaler: On p.125 "hypostatic union" should not be between quotation marks because the expression cannot be found in the text of Chalcedon.

Mar Bawai: The terminology concerning *qnoma* remains problematic and is to be understood in the framework of the time. Concerning Chalcedon, our Fathers did not go out of their way to try to understand and explain it.

Cardinal Groër: I would like to make three points:

1. Looking back at 2000 years of knowing about the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, we have to be aware and must proclaim in all the churches that Trinity and Incarnation have the character of a mystery.
2. Today not only the ordinary faithful but also students and others have difficulties understanding the philosophical and theological terminology of the time of Nestorius and Cyril. This is a fact which is also observed by consultations and synods. Just think of the difference between hypostasis and physis for example. Strictly speaking not even dogma is unequivocal. Etymologically it is clear; but not its role in speaking about the history of dogma in terms of Christology. At the time

the dogma of Christology meant an imperial order and a new law of the Empire. It was the image of monarchy as a theocracy in the old Israel. This was also almost a mystery. Nowadays many of these things are no longer understood, even by some priests and bishops. Moreover, the problems between Greek and Oriental philosophy are enormous.

3. Finally I would propose the publication of a booklet explaining the historical terminology. We have just heard a very excellent speaker, he would be able to do it. I think that this would be very important. In the same way as we are trying to introduce the metrical system on an international level we also need a common measure in Christology.

Adelbert Davids

IS THE THEOLOGY OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH NESTORIAN?

Around the end of the thirteenth century Abdišo', resuming discussions and polemics that had lasted for centuries, writes in his book *The Jewel*:

„The third sect [viz. alongside the 'Jacobite sect' and the 'Melkites'] which confesses two Natures and two Persons in CHRIST is called the sect of the Nestorians. As to the Easterners, however, because they never changed their faith, but kept it as they received it from the Apostles, they were unjustly styled 'Nestorians', since Nestorius was not their Patriarch, neither did they understand his language; but when they heard that he taught the doctrine of the two Natures and two Persons, one Son of God, one CHRIST, and that he confessed the orthodox faith, they bore witness to him, because they themselves held the same faith. Nestorius, then, followed them, and not they him, and that more especially in the matter of the appellation 'Mother of CHRIST'.“¹

In the Latin West, for instance at the council of Florence, the Eastern Christians were known as Chaldaeans, although the Chaldaeans of Cyprus are mentioned as Nestorians: „who in Cyprus until nowadays are called Nestorians, because they follow Nestorius.“² And Patriarch Elias writes to Pope Paul V in the year 1616: „They always call us Nestorians, and notwithstanding our efforts we cannot get rid of that name.“³

The Easterns were indeed called Nestorians and followed themselves sometimes that usage which originally stems from „anti-Nestorian“ polemics. In the eighth century Mar Shahdost (Eustathius) from Tirhen composed a book called *Why*

we Easterns have seperated ourselves from the Westerns, and why we are called Nestorians.⁴ Instead of „we Easterns“ he can write „we, the Nestorian Christians“.⁵

According to Assemani, who quotes Barhebraeus, the name „Nestorians“ was coined by Philoxenos, that means around the beginning of the sixth century.⁶ It is also used as substantive and as attribute in the Syriac translation of the last session of the Ephesian council of 449, of which the manuscript dates from the year 535. In some of the exclamations at the council of Chalcedon in 451 the „party of Nestorius“ is shouted at as being Nestorians.⁷ That brings us to the early stage of polemics in circles in which the „oriental“ way of thinking was vehemently attacked.

In the heyday of western influence, with queen Shirin and the physician Gabriel at the Sasanian court, the Persian king Chosroes, allowing in the year 612 an explanation of the faith by high church officials, addresses the one party as „Nestorians“, whereas the opposite party, Henanas followers, is called „the monks“.⁸

The crisis of 612 and „the ecumenical teachers“

Important issues have been set out in the crisis of 612 and during the vacancy of the patriarchal see, which lasted from 609 until 628. The abbot and theologian Babai writes in his *Life of S. George* on the topics which were being discussed and about the „desastrous“ influence of Henana who caused such a profound division in the „Nestorian Church“. ⁹ He accuses Henana of magic and „Chaldaeism“, of Origenism, of Severianism (as teaching one nature and one *qnoma*) and of theopaschism. Henana is excommunicated as a heretic and false teacher of an „impious doctrine, which is strange to the whole of Christianity and which is against the tradition of the whole Church of the land of the Persians“. As he had dared to attack Theodore of Mopsuestia (and with him the Antiochene tradition), Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and „the holy martyr“ Nestorius are canonized as the three „ecumenical teachers of the East“.¹⁰

Whereas all former creeds and credal statements had been said to derive from the Apostles, the long creed that was formulated in 612 is said to have been received from the Apostle Addai, one of the disciples of the Lord. Addai's companion Mari is not mentioned. The creed, as is furthermore said, has been accepted „by the

⁴ *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts*, ed. L. Abramowski & A.E. Goodman (Cambridge, 1972), II, pp. 3-36. Tirhan is not modern Teheran, as stated by Abramowski and Goodman on p. 15, n. 2, but a city on the Tigris.

⁵ *A Nestorian Collection* (note 4), II, p. 31.

⁶ Assemani (note 3), p. LXXVII.

⁷ *Akten der Ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449*. Syrisch, ed. J. Flemming (Berlin, 1917), f.i. pp. 16; 26; 84; for the council of Chalcedon: *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. E. Schwartz, II, 1, 2 (Berlin, 1933), pp. 123, 15.38; 124, 11; 125, 15.

⁸ *Synodicon Orientale ou Recueil de synodes nestoriens*, ed. J.B. Chabot (Paris, 1902), pp. 574; 591; so also in Babai's *Life of S. George*, ib., p. 632. A different tradition reads instead of „the monks“: „Severians“, see *A Nestorian Collection* (note 4), II, p. 100.

⁹ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 626. On the vacancy see J. Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'Empire perse sous la dynastie Sassanide* (Paris, 1904), p. 223-36.

¹⁰ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), pp. 627-28. The Three Chapters of the Council of Constantinople in 553 had been formulated against Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ibas of Edessa and Theodoret of Cyrrhus.

¹ Translation in G.P. Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, II (London, 1852), p. 400.

² „quos ad haec usque tempora nestorianos, eo quod Nestorium sequebantur, in Cypro vocaverunt“ in *Bulla unionis Chaldaeorum Maronitarumque Cypri* from 1445, *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. J. Alberigo a.o., 3rd ed. (Bologna, 1973), p. 590.

³ „Verum nomen Nestorii adhaesit nobis, et non possumus illud rejicere, quantumvis contendamus“, J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticanae*, III, 2 (Rome, 1728; repr. Hildesheim - New York, 1975), p. LXXVII. - In *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticanae*, III, 2, p. 515, Assemani quotes from an interesting *Book on the Agreement of Faith among the Syrians: Nestorians, Melchites and Jacobites*, according to Assemani written around 900 by Elias of Damascus: „In words they profess things different, but they believe the same.“ Cf. M. Jugie, *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium ab ecclesia catholica dissidentium*, V (Paris, 1935), p. 70.

universal synods which have taken place from time to time in the West and in the East, as well as by isolated persons, whose names are known in the Holy Church".¹¹

The estimation of Theodore of Mopsuestia before 612

In the official documents from 410 until 612¹² there is no mention of Ibas or Theodoret or even Nestorius. It is not until 680 that Nestorius is mentioned, together with Theodore of Mopsuestia, in a letter by Catholicos George.¹³

The (schismatic) synod by Barsauma at Bet Lapat in 484 is not included in the collection published by Chabot. But a later synod, held in the year 605, quotes from Barsauma's synod:

„Because of bad rumours against Theodore of Mopsuestia from the side of the heretics in several places, no-one of us may have doubts about this holy man. Because he was considered during his life as the most illustrious and the first of the teachers of the faith; after his death all his commentaries and his treatises became famous and were loved by all those who have a profound understanding of Holy Scripture and who adhere to the orthodox faith. His books and his commentaries really contain the pure faith, according to the spirit of the divine doctrine of the New Testament (...). So, if anybody dares either privately or in public to slander or to insult this teacher of Truth or his sacred writings, he will be anathematized by the Truth itself.“¹⁴

Mar Aba states in one of his canons in 544 that Theodore's theology contains the right explanation of the faith of Nicaea:

„We all the bishops of the East, we declare about the faith as it was formulated by the 318 bishops [at Nicaea in 325], which we always preserve in our church, that it is the faith as it has been explained by the holy friend of God, the blessed Mar Theodore, bishop and Interpreter of Holy Scripture.“¹⁵

In the year 585 Mar 'Išoyahb speaks of Theodore immediately after a long creed:

„He lived a life of chastity and of great zeal and was a bishop during 45 years (...). He interpreted Holy Scripture, he fought against the alien doctrines of the heresies and he enriched the church libraries with a brilliant treasure of doctrine and of spiritual erudition (...). Our Lord showed this by the miracles and the help he has given: during his life he was the great and real Teacher and after his death he was famous in all the churches of God. The books of this saint and his commentaries are pursued and honored by all those who confess the orthodox faith and who are not subject to error.“¹⁶

Išoyahb quotes, then, from a letter written by John Chrysostom in exile to Theodore. And, he continues by speaking about the severe attacks on Theodore made by people who call themselves orthodox, but actually are disturbing orthodoxy. Especially Henana's criticism on Theodore's interpretation of Job is mentioned: according to Theodore it is written by a Greek „sophist“, but Henana puts „the divine Moses“ forward as author.¹⁷

The synod of Catholicos Sabrišo in 596 is also confronted with attacks upon Theodore; Mar Aba's canon is repeated:

„We adhere to that faith to which adhered our holy Fathers and as it was explained by the renowned and most blessed among the orthodox, Theodore of Antioch, bishop of the city of Mopsuestia, the Interpreter of Divine Scripture. It is the faith to which all orthodox people of all countries have been adhered and still adhere, as did all the venerable Fathers who were at the head of this Apostolic and Patriarchal See of our country“.¹⁸

Finally, in 605, Mar Gregory, the last catholicos to be elected until the year 628, states in the synod (during which the above mentioned text of Barsauma's synod of 484 is quoted):

„We have defined that each of us must receive and accept all the commentaries and writings which have been composed by the blessed Mar Theodore the Interpreter, bishop of Mopsuestia, man of divine inspiration in his explanations of the treasure of the Two Testaments: the Old and the New. He has nurtured and nourished the children of the Church during his life and after his death with the real understanding of the meaning of the Scriptures in which he had been instructed by the Holy Spirit, as appears from the sincere history written by all the Fathers, ecclesiastical directors who lived in his times“.¹⁹

An *anathema* is pronounced against all those who hold opinions, which are different from Theodore's views and doctrine.

These texts show, that towards the end of the sixth century Theodore of Mopsuestia becomes the name that stands for Oriental Orthodoxy.

In all the official texts such an originally Syriac writer and theologian as Ephrem is mentioned only once. That was in the synod of catholicos Išoyahb of 585 and against Severian theopaschism:

„But the great and holy Teacher of the Church, the blessed Mar Ephrem, has said precious and true things in one of his writings: 'It is a great marvel that the Son, living entirely in the body, lived in that body without being limited in it. His will was entirely in it; his final purpose was not in it. Who could

¹¹ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 584. Chabot translates the Syriac *parsope ihidaye* with „personnes isolées“; cf. at p. 459: „chefs de l'école“; but „monks“ may be meant in the text.

¹² The documents are edited by Chabot in *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8).

¹³ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 500.

¹⁴ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 475-76; see on the synod of Bet Lapat S. Gero, *Barsauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century*, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 426 (Louvain, 1981), pp. 41-50; 73-7.

¹⁵ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 561.

¹⁶ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), pp. 398-99.

¹⁷ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 399. According to A. Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 266 (Louvain, 1965), p. 247, n. 23, Išodad of Merv in the ninth century followed the explanation of Henana; Vööbus quotes from a ms. of the Greek Patriarchate at Jerusalem: „but the godly Moses composed the book of the blessed Job, as many testify of these is also John Chrysostomos - during these 40 years the children of Israel lived in the wilderness“. The first four words are not given in the Syriac text by Vööbus. Unfortunately, the context of the passage of Išodad is not given either. But, as appears from the quotation, John Chrysostom is mentioned, as in Išoyahb's text.

¹⁸ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 457-58.

¹⁹ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 475.

explain how He, who was entirely in the whole universe, was at the same time entirely in the body?"²⁰

The symbols of faith

Several symbols and credal explanations from the fifth century on are preserved in the collection of the *Synodicon Orientale*, namely from the Synods of 410, 486, 544, 554, 576, 585, 596, 605 and of the assembly of bishops in 612. The relevant texts of the symbols have been translated lately by S. Brock and, as for the assembly of 612, by L. Abramowski and A.E. Goodman.²¹

As for the christological terminology Brock suggests the following translation equivalents:

<i>itya</i>	(divine) Being
<i>ituta</i>	(divine) essence
<i>kyana</i>	nature
<i>qnoma</i>	not translated, but transliterated
<i>parsopa</i>	person, prosopon,

and draws attention to the variety of positions within the christological spectrum in order to avoid the simplistic threefold model of „Nestorian - Chalcedonian - Monophysite“.²²

From the first synod on there is a constant appeal, first to the symbol of Nicaea, later to that of Nicaea-Constantinople. The Nicaean creed is said to have been brought to Persia by the Byzantine bishop Maruta and the synod of 410 quotes it; it is surviving in two versions, each with their own translation of the term *homousios*: the West Syrian text has *bar kyaneh*, whereas the East Syrian recension reads *bar ituta*. But both Syrian expressions are used together later, as appears in the profession of faith at the synod of 585 about the Nicaean creed: „the Word who is homousios, that is, of the same nature and of the same essence (*bar kyaneh w-bar ituteh*) as the Father“. The East Syrian recension of 410 had rendered the Nicaean *hypostasis* and *ousia* from the Nicaean *anathema* with *qnoma* and *ituta*.²³

Only later, in the commentary of the synod of 585 on the symbol of faith there is an explicit quotation from the addition to the Nicaean creed by the council of Constantinople about the Holy Spirit. After quoting the first part of the Constantinopolitan article of faith on the Spirit, the text continues:

„Thus by their divine teaching the Fathers preached magnificently concerning the *qnoma* of the Holy Spirit, showing him to be of the same essence and of the same nature as the Father and the Son.“²⁴

²⁰ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 455.

²¹ S. Brock, „The Christology of the Church of the East in the Synods of the Fifth to Early Seventh Centuries: Preliminary Considerations and Materials“, *Aksum - Thyateira: A Festschrift for Archbishop Methodios of Thyateira and Great Britain* (Athens, 1985), pp. 125-132; and L. Abramowski and A.E. Goodman in *A Nestorian Collection* (note 4), pp. 66-7; 88-101, with a better text than that of the *Synodicon Orientale*.

²² Brock (note 21), pp. 131-32.

²³ Brock (note 21), pp. 133; 136-37; the edition of the West Syrian text: A.Vööbus, „New sources for the symbol in early Syrian Christianity“, *Vigiliae Christianae*, 26 (1972), 291-96, at 295. In this recension the Nicaean *anathema* (with *ex heteras hypostaseos e ousias*) is missing.

²⁴ Brock (note 21), p. 137.

In the synod of 605 the council of Constantinople of 381 is explicitly mentioned.²⁵ The assembly of bishops of 612 develops what has been put forward in 585:

„[the one divine nature] is perfect in its essence (*ituteh*) and in all that belongs to it; and it cannot receive addition or subtraction, for it alone is Being (*itya*) and God over all, who is known and confessed in three holy *qnome*, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a nature with three *qnome* essentially (*tlitay qnome itya'it*), *qnome* with a single eternal nature (*hdanay kyana mtomaya*), between whom there is no distinction apart from the distinct characteristics (*dilayata*) of their *qnome*, (namely) Fatherhood and Sonhood and Procession.“²⁶

Antiochian Christology starts to be introduced with the synod of 486, together with clear statements against theopaschism, which will be continued in all following statements:

„(...) the confession of the two natures, of the divinity and of the humanity, while none of us shall dare to introduce mixture, mingling or confusion (*muzzaga aw hultana aw bulbala*) into the differences (*shuhlape*) of these two natures; rather, while the divinity remains preserved in what belongs to it, and the humanity in what belongs to it, it is to a single Lordship and to a single (object of) worship that we gather together (*mkannshinan*) the exemplars (*parshagne*) of these two natures, because of the perfect and inseparable conjunction (*nqiputa*) that has occurred for the divinity with respect to the humanity. (...) a confession of perfect God and perfect Man (...).“²⁷

In 544 Mar Aba writes in one of his letters in archaic imagery:

„These things came to be known (...) by the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples; for they learnt from the Holy Spirit that Christ is not an ordinary man, nor is he God naked of the garment of humanity in which he had been revealed, but (that) he is Christ God and Man, that is, the humanity which has been anointed with the divinity which anointed it (Ps. 44 [45], 8).“²⁸

While the short symbol of 554 only repeats older formulations (but with: ‘the single true and ineffable union [*hdayta*] in the single true Son of the one God’), the synod of 576 has more pronounced and longer Antiochene formulations:

„It is he who lowered himself of his own will for the salvation of our nature that had grown old and worn out through acts of sin; and he took for himself a perfect temple for the dwelling of his divinity, in an inseparable way, from Mary the holy virgin (...): Christ who is in the flesh, who is recognized and confessed (as being) in two natures, God and Man, one Son. In him the oldness of our nature was renewed, and in the robe of his humanity the debt of

²⁵ *Synodicon Orientale* (note 8), p. 473.

²⁶ Brock (note 21), p. 140.

²⁷ Brock (note 21), pp. 133-34. Here the words „perfect God and perfect man“ (*theos teleios kai anthropos teleios*) from the *Formula unionis* of 433 are taken up, see *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta* (note 2), pp. 69-70; the council of Chalcedon of 451 repeats them in a modified way, ib., p. 86. See on the council of Chalcedon W. de Vries, „Die syrisch-nestorianische Haltung zu Chalcedon“, *Das Konzil von Chalcedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, I (Würzburg, 1951), pp. 603-35.

²⁸ Brock (note 21), p. 135; in n. 60 Brock mentions the archaic imagery of the text.

our race was repaid, in his drawing close (*metqarrbanuteh*) to suffering and the death of the cross. And by the power of his divinity he rose from the dead after three days (...).²⁹

In the synod of 585 Eutyches and the Eutychians, „who are defrauding the humanity of the Son of God“ and who are speaking of the suppression of the humanity of Christ, are condemned. And about Christ:

„After the teaching on the divine nature of the Only-Begotten, and after the teaching on the unification of the natures of Christ - that is, of his unchanged and undying divinity and of his humanity that is not abused or absorbed - they [the Fathers] attach teaching concerning his humanity which was taken for our sakes (...).

By it [the true faith] the person (*prosopon*) of Christ and the natures of his divinity and his humanity are fully proclaimed (...).

About heretics: „who (...) have dared to attribute to the nature and *qnoma* of the divinity and (divine) essence of the Word the characteristics (*dilayata*) and sufferings of the nature of Christ's humanity, things which sometimes, because of the perfect union that took place for the humanity of Christ with his divinity, are allocated to God by economy, but not by nature.“³⁰

In the same light the confession of faith composed by Išoyahb I, who, according to Nestorian chroniclers, had been an ambassador to the Byzantine emperor Maurice, should be read. Išoyahb goes even further when speaking of the union of the two natures:

„God the word receives the abuse of sufferings (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9) in the temple of his body according to the dispensation in the supreme inseparable union while in the nature of his divinity he does not suffer (John 2:19). (...) Our Lord himself indicates the sublimity of the prosopic union (*hdayuta parsopayta*) unitedly and unconfusedly (John 3:13).“³¹

In the creed of the synod of 596 the same stress is laid upon the two natures of Christ and upon

„the dominical temple of God the Word to be ordinary man - (that temple) which, in an inexplicable mystery and in a union that cannot be understood, he united to himself from the womb of the holy virgin in a union which is for ever, indissoluble and inseparable.“³²

The same line is continued by the synod of 605:

„perfect God and perfect Man: perfect God in the nature of his divinity, and perfect Man in the nature of his humanity, two natures (...); and they are united in a true union (*hdayuta*) of the one person (*prosopon*) of the Son, Christ. And the divinity perfected the humanity in the suffering (...), while suffering, change and alteration of any sort did not enter the divinity.“³³

The long text of the assembly of bishops of 612 says about the union:

„Concerning the wonderful conjunction (*neqpa*) and inseparable union (*hdayuta dla purshana*) that took place from the very beginning of its fashioning, for the human nature that was taken by God the Word, the „taker“, he taught us that from that point we should recognize as one person (*prosopon*) our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born before the worlds (...) from the father in the nature of his divinity, and who was born latterly of the holy virgin (...) in the nature of his humanity. (...) (Thus) it is not possible to confuse the characteristics (*dilayathon*) of the natures (...). That the divinity should be changed into humanity, or that the humanity should be altered to the nature of the divinity, is impossible; for it is not the case that Being (*itya*) can fall under the compulsion of change or of suffering, for if the divinity is changed, it is no longer a revelation, but a destruction, of the divinity. And if, again, the humanity should depart from its nature, salvation no longer obtains, but a wiping out of the humanity.“³⁴

Conclusions

The symbols and explanations until the year 612 always depart from the Nicaean and, later, from the Nicaean-Constantinopolitan creed.

Explicit Antiochene christology is present since the end of the fifth century and will be developed in an „anti-Eutychian“ sense from 585 onwards.

At the same time there is a growing importance of the person and of the theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia for the Persian Church.

The council of Chalcedon is never rejected; on the contrary: Christ is perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity. The issue of the union of the two natures of Christ becomes more important.

A so-called „Nestorian“ orthodoxy has never existed, although Nestorius was considered as a saint and martyr in the Assyrian Church.

Theodore of Mopsuestia is a fine exegete and a great theologian, who represents a legitimate tradition of the Early Church and who stands for a legitimate way of thinking about the Trinity and about Redemption.

The role of Babai the Great in the development of a „Nestorian orthodoxy“ should be investigated.

Discussion

Mar Severios: What is the difference between "wonderful conjunction" and "inseparable union"? The two natures of Jesus Christ are united in a true union.

Prof. Brock: There is no difference, but two different traditions are juxtaposed here.

Mar Gregorios: We can say that there was Nestorianism already before Nestorius. The paper says that Chalcedon was never rejected, but no references are given. The anti-Eutychian position of the Oriental Orthodox is to be found in their writings since 449. Is Nestorius not a saint for the Church of the East?

³⁴ Brock (note 21), p. 141; there, in n. 77, Brock points at the influence of Babai.

²⁹ Brock (note 21), pp. 135-36.

³⁰ Brock (note 21), pp. 137-38.

³¹ Brock (note 21), p. 139. On the alleged visit of Išoyahb to the emperor Maurice (582-602) see Labourt (note 9), p. 201, n. 4.

³² Brock (note 21), p. 139.

³³ Brock (note 21), p. 140.

Prof. Davids: I wanted to show that in the Syriac tradition in the 13th century there were three different confessions: Nestorians, Melkites, Jacobites. The Church of the East never even mentions Chalcedon, because it was irrelevant. Thus no references can be given. Nestorius is presented as a holy man.

Prof. Jammo: There is no day of commemoration for Nestorius in our calendar.

Prof. Fiey: He is mentioned together with two other doctors (Theodore and Theodoret).

Prof. Jammo: Nestorius is not of prime order as a theologian. The sympathy goes more to the person than to the doctrine.

Mar Bawai: Nestorius is not a real theologian for the Church of the East. Our Church has two categories of theologians: on the one hand those coming from the West (Antioch) like Theodore of Mopsuestia, on the other hand the local ones like Babai. Nestorius belongs to neither one.

It is important to know that Mar Abdišo' of Soba, who died in 1290, is the first one in our tradition to call our Church "Nestorian".

As possible tasks for PRO ORIENTE I would like to suggest the Council of Chalcedon as it is understood in the Church of the East. PRO ORIENTE could also start dealing with Theodore of Mopsuestia, who is a key to a better understanding. In my opinion there should be no problem to accept Chalcedon. Even the teachings of Cyril of Alexandria may be acceptable, if they are put in a certain context.

Prof. Davids mentions that Rome prescribed all sorts of things to the Easterners, in terms of what they had to believe. On the other hand though Theodore of Mopsuestia was always skipped, even in official bulletins.

Sixth working session: Monday June 27, afternoon

Chairman: Metropolitan *Mar Severios*

Mar Aprem G. Mookan

IS THE THEOLOGY OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH NESTORIAN?

The question whether the Theology of the Church of the East (known as the Assyrian Church, East Syrian Church or the Nestorian Church) is Nestorian has been debated in the present century by some individual scholars. One problem in finding a suitable answer to this question is the difference in understanding the word Nestorian.

The Churches who accept the council of Ephesus of 431 A.D. presided over by Cyril of Alexandria consider Nestorianism as a heresy because they thought that

Nestorius taught two personalities in Jesus Christ and Jesus was born as a human being to whom divinity was joined later at the time of baptism or so. But the truth is that Nestorius did not teach any such heresy. He believed like all bishops in his time that Christ was God and man.

How exactly was this union of two natures, divinity and humanity in Christ, united in one person in Christ, this was the burden of the council of Chalcedon twenty years after the council of Ephesus of 431 A.D.

The Church of the East does not recognize the council of Ephesus presided over by Cyril of Alexandria. The history of the two rival councils held at Ephesus in June 431 A.D. is very complicated and unfortunate.

The anathematisms and counter-anathematisms have been discussed by the present writer in his M.Th. Thesis submitted to the Senate of Serampore in 1966 (Published by Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, Kerala, India in 1978).

A short evaluation of the Council of Ephesus of 431 A.D. would bring us to the conclusion that the Council of Ephesus of 431 A.D. was guided also by the personal enmity of Cyril against Nestorius, rather than the Christological issue which was evidently the cause according to the „official version“. Moreover, the help of the Pope of Rome given to Cyril resulted in the ultimate victory.

It appears that unless and until one is able to produce documents redeeming

- 1) the lack of authority in Cyril of Alexandria to convene the Council in spite of the protests of the Imperial Commissioner,
- 2) the absence of right intention in Cyril of Alexandria who presided over it,
- 3) the irregularity of the procedure of the Council when the accuser himself was the judge,
- 4) the absence of the patriarchs or authorised representatives of Constantinople and Antioch,
- 5) the incompleteness of the Council as the anticipated joint session of the Council could not take place even after the union of 433 A.D.,
- 6) the lack of form in the manner of conducting it and,
- 7) the lack of integrity of the sayings of Nestorius cited,

the validity of the Synod of Ephesus of 431 A.D. as an ecumenical Council of the universal church and its subsequent acceptance by the Church of the East remains doubtful.

The reasons for the refusal of recognition to this Council by the Church of the East are many. The Church of the East was neither invited nor present in this Council. The Council of Cyril was declared null and void, as per the order of the Imperial Commissioner in June 431 A.D. and the repeated orders of the Emperor till the „political“ settlement, and such a settlement did not affect the Persian Church as it was beyond the jurisdiction of Theodosius II. Moreover, the Council of Cyril did not settle any issue, but, on the contrary, created more problems as seen the Eutychian heresy which was a development of the *mia physis* thought of Cyril of Alexandria. Apart from the dangerous use of the ambiguous title *Theotokos*, the Christology of the Church of the East was much similar to that of the Council of Chalcedon, two decades later.

These factors demand a change of outlook by the other churches in regard to the recognition of the council of Ephesus of 431. Individuals have come out with statements in sympathy with, and in favour of, the stand of the Church of the East. Adolf Harnack and many others challenged the propriety of calling the Council of Ephesus the ecumenical council.¹

The French Roman Catholic theologian, Père J. Mahe, who made a fresh examination of the writings of Theodoret, was led to the conclusion that the two Christologies of Antioch and Alexandria, in spite of notable differences, were alike perfectly orthodox.² If Theodoret, who wrote against the twelve anathematisms of Cyril against Nestorius, was considered orthodox in the Council of Chalcedon, Nestorius also would have been considered orthodox if he had been present. What is required is not individual opinions, but official statements by the Churches.

The Necessity for a „Nestorian Christology“ Today

The relevance of Nestorianism for today is the appreciation of the humanity of our Lord. Such an emphasis was necessary at the time of Nestorius because of the influence of the Apollinarians. It is just as relevant today. G.L. Prestige says:

„Redemption requires a human response and human appreciation, God himself supplied a perfect human agent to lead the response and a perfect human instrument to convey the means of appropriation.“³

Donald Baille argues that if the human nature of Jesus Christ lacks a human person (a human centre, subject and principal of identity) it is incomplete.⁴ Cyril C. Richardson in his article „A Preface to Christology“, states that only Nestorians can answer the question „Wherein lies the reality of Jesus' temptation? Wherein is his human freedom?“⁵ The Christology of the Church of the East is relevant to modern times because of its teaching of perfect human nature. The Nestorian Christ is one who was subject to the conditions of life of the first century, tempted, triumphant and obedient and thereby being a perfect example to mankind of every nation for all times.

The necessity for a „Nestorian“ Christology becomes inevitable when we think of the greatest position ascribed to Virgin Mary in the Roman Catholic Church. The fear expressed by Nestorius against the use of *Theotokos* should not be ignored. It is one of the positive contributions of Nestorius to have exposed the potential danger of this title.

As far back as our records of history go there was nobody to speak against this title before 428 A.D. though it was used by certain individuals. Perhaps it would have become the standard expression of all Christians if Nestorius did not wage such a crusade against this title. Till the Reformation in the 16th Century, the Church of the East was the only Church which shared the concern of Nestorius

against the use of *Theotokos*. Since the Reformation, however, many churches share this attitude and thus the position taken by the Church of the East singularly, down through the centuries, is vindicated.

In these days, when the announcement such as the „Immaculate Conception of Mary“, Assumption of Mary to Heaven, Proclaiming Mary as the Queen of Heaven, are made, the Christians have begun to open their eyes to the dangers of the over-emphasis of the importance of Mary. The opposition to excessive Mariology demonstrated at the Vatican II and the opposition to a separate Schema on Mary from many bishops at the Council show that even in the Roman church, some at least are beginning to see the dangers of the title of *Theotokos*. Therefore, the position explained by Nestorius and consistently maintained by the Church of the East, deserves the appreciation of Christians.

Now many protestants have recognized that the fears expressed by Nestorius against the use of the title *Theotokos* were genuine. This justifies the stand that the „Nestorian“ Christology is relevant for today. The „Image of Nestorius“ has changed considerably in the recent years. Bethune Baker proved that Nestorius was not a Nestorian!⁶ Wigram could see the Christological formula of the Church of the East as free from any charges of heresy.⁷

F. Loofs, who did not give much importance to the „transactions of Ephesus“ of 431, showed considerable sympathy to Nestorius and his Christology. Against the charge of dualism in Nestorianism, he argued that Nestorius always emphasized the unity of the Person of Christ.⁸

A.R. Vine, who felt it impossible to comprehend the meaning of the Christology of Bazaar of Heracleides, without a „metaphysical and Christological system“ endeavoured to formulate a system by „working backwards and forwards“, and claimed to have succeeded in the „evolution of a self consistent metaphysics and Christology“. He reached the conclusion: „There are elements in the thought of Nestorius which provide a helpful mode of approach to the christological problem.“⁹ At present many take a position, which was long ago taken by Mosheim even before the „discovery“ of the Bazaar, that „Nestorianism“ is an error in words rather than in thought.¹¹

The present writer has gone a step further. The christology of the Church of the East, as well as that of Nestorius himself, is not far from the Chalcedonian formula. Though the words are different the teaching is very much the same. The christology of Chalcedon is Antiochene in emphasis. In other words, the Chalcedonian formula was the triumph of Nestorian Christology.

In 1907, William Edward Collins, Bishop of Gibraltar, made the first Anglican episcopal visit to the Assyrian Church to meet the Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun with a view to discuss the terms of inter-communion. During the interesting interview Bishop Collins explained the Anglican position in regard to the doctrinal

¹ Adolf Harnack calls Cyril's Council „this petty assembly“ in contrast to what he calls „the legal council under the presidency of the imperial Commissioner“. (Harnack. op. cit; p.187)

² Père J. Mahe in the Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique vol. VII, No. 3, July 1906, quoted from Bethune Baker, op.cit; p. 198

³ G.L. Prestige; Fathers and Heretics, London, S.P.C.K., 1948

⁴ Donald Baille; God was in Christ, New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1948

⁵ Cyril C. Richardson; „A preface to Christology“, Religion in Life, Vol. XXVII No. 4. p. 508

⁶ Bethune Baker, Nestorius and His Teachings, Cambridge, University Press, 1908

⁷ W.A. Wigram, The Doctrinal Position of the Assyrian or East Syrian Church, London, S.P.C.K. 1908, p. 289

⁸ F. Loofs, Nestorius and His Place in the History of Christian Doctrine, Cambridge 1914. p. 126

⁹ A.R. Vine, The Nestorian Churches, London, The Independent Press, 1937, p. 53

¹⁰ Ibid; p. 54

¹¹ J.L. Mosheim; An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern, (ed) Murdock James; London: William Tegg & Co., 1876, p. 633

requirements if such an inter-communion was to be made possible and frequent. Regarding Assyrians living in an area where there was no church of their denomination there ought to be no difficulty. Bishop Collins writes:

„Not that we should ask them to disavow their fathers, not that we should ask them to revise their doctrinal books or to make new creed, for but simply that we should say, 'This is the faith as we hold it. Is this what you believe?'“¹²

Three years later the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Davidson, following a resolution by the Lambeth Conference of 1908, wrote to the Patriarch of the Church of the East to clarify the doubts regarding the Christology of the Church of the East. After consultation with his bishops, the Patriarch replied on June 13, 1911, accepting the statement of faith propounded to him (the *Quicumque vult*) as expressing the belief of the Church of the East. The statement was sent by W.A. Wigram, head of the Archbishop's Assyrian Mission, who in a covering note to the Archbishop remarked:

„I venture to hope also that the letter of Mar Shimun to your Grace will suffice to clear this church from the charge of heresy, that has been levelled against it for so long.“¹³

His wish was fulfilled, for the Commission set up by the Lambeth Conference was completely satisfied by the explanation given to the use of the term *Christotokos*. Due to the outbreak of war in 1914 the attempt for inter-communion could not immediately bear fruit, but the following Lambeth Conference,¹⁴ received the report from the Committee. The report reads:

„... The watchword Theotokos is absent from their service books, and in one place is repudiated; on the other hand, its equivalent in other words is several times found, and strong instances of the language known as *communicatio idiomatum* occur.“¹⁵

Even the problem of two *Qnome* did not seem to be an obstacle to this Committee. The report states:

One phrase which has caused some perplexity, that which asserts that there are in Christ one *parsopa* (*prosopon*), two *qnome*, and two natures. The word *qnome* is equivalent of „Hypostasis“ and if used in the later sense of that word, i.e. as meaning „person“, it would imply real Nestorianism; but research had made it plain that it is used in the earlier sense of „hypostasis“, namely, „substance“, and this makes the phrase, if redundant, at least perfectly orthodox.¹⁶

This report strongly recommended that if the „present“ authorities of the church of the East adhered to their statement of June 13, 1911, occasional inter-communion should be established. It is a matter of regret to read in the report of the following Lambeth Conference, a decade later, that „it has not been possible, owing

to political and other conditions, to obtain the authoritative statement recommended in 1920.“¹⁷

While the Lambeth Conference Report of 1948 expressed the hope that the relations between these two churches may be strengthened,¹⁸ the report of 1958 mentioned only the political and material aspects of the Assyrian Church.¹⁹ It does not mean that the Assyrian Church is in disagreement with the doctrinal position explained in 1911 statement. Neither does it mean that the Anglican church had „Second thought“. The council of Foreign Relations of the Church of England at Lambeth agrees with this view.²⁰

A word is necessary on the position of the Council of Chalcedon in the Church of the East. Monseigneur Chabot deserves the credit for the information that *Synodicon Orientale* included the Council of Chalcedon and „Tome of Leo“ as officially accepted by the Church of the East. Though he did not print the texts of these documents in the edition, his announcement that these documents were the approved documents of the Church of the East took the scholarly world by surprise.²¹ Wigram who took pains to investigate this question, was able to find the manuscript of *Synodicon Orientale* in Mosul and happened to see the formula of Chalcedon in it.²² The Church which recognizes the formula of Chalcedon deserves the recognition of the western Churches. The Church of England took a right step in proper direction.

The Prospects of these Aims

„If the broken unity of the Church Catholic is ever to be knit up once more“, Wigram wrote, „it must be by full recognition of these national differences which are national heritages which are so treasured by the nations who hold them that they went into separation rather than surrender them.“²³

As far as the Assyrian Church of the East is concerned, it will never forsake their hero. The Protestant Church, which do not accept the title „Theotokos“ though used in the Council of Ephesus of 431 ought therefore to say officially whether they regard the approval of the condemnation of Nestorius by Cyril and his followers as a necessary test of orthodoxy.

The Anglican scholars expressed their willingness to accord official recognition to the Church of the East without insisting upon the condemnation of the three Greek doctors, provided they cease to repeat the *anathema* on Cyril of Alexandria. This may be possible if serious attempts are made from both sides to this effect.

It is extremely unlikely that the Church of the East will cease to mention the names of the three Greek doctors in their Litany. Wigram suggested to use an

¹⁷ Lambeth Conference, 1930, London: S.P.C.K., n.d. p. 146

¹⁸ Lambeth Conference; 1948, London: S.P.C.K., 1948, Part II, p. 71

¹⁹ Lambeth Conference, 1958, London S.P.C.K., 1958, p. 251

²⁰ Letter to the present writer, dated 3rd November 1965

²¹ The Church of the East officially has not made any statement about this announcement

²² Wigram informs us that the word „Theotokos“ is translated as „Mother of Christ“ who is both God and man; and one *Qnome* is altered as two *Qnome*. The „blessed Cyril“ is changed to „accursed Cyril“ and the phrase „to rebuke the folly of Nestorius“ is omitted! (cf., Wigram; op. cit; p. 296)

²³ W.A. Wigram; Doctrinal Position of the Assyrian Church, London: S.P.C.K., 1908, pp. 63-4

¹² A.J. Mason; Life of William Edward Collins, Bishop of Gibraltar, London: 1912, p. 125

¹³ W.A. Wigram, Letter addressed to Dr. Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury, dated August, 1911. (From the Archives of Lambeth Palace Library, London)

¹⁴ Lambeth Conference of 1920

¹⁵ Lambeth Conferences (1867, 1930); London: S.P.C.K., 1948, p. 132

¹⁶ Ibid.

alternate bidding found in the litany to avoid the names of the Greek doctors²⁴ with the hope that „the change would not be felt, as the people are all the while occupied in singing an anthem.“²⁵ Whether the change will be felt or not, the Church of the East will never agree to any „change“ in this matter. A change of attitude of other churches in regard to their recognition of the Council of 431 A.D. will pave the way for the reunion of this once far-reaching Church which is the first major schism of the Christendom.

The prospects of a „Nestorian“ Christology are much brighter today than ever before. The Protestant theologians who have begun to emphasize the reality of the suffering of Christ, as an example of his perfect humanity, can play a part in it. The present writer has gone further than the previous students of Nestorianism in suggesting without hesitation that Bazaar of Heracleides answers most of the charges levelled against Nestorius.

Sympathy towards Nestorius is being shown even in orthodox circles. M.V. Anastos, a Greek orthodox theologian, has shown that the Christology of Nestorius was not very different from that of Cyril. He argues:

„... The Christology of Nestorius, if orthodox should be reconcilable, not withstanding angry denials on both sides, with Cyril's. In truth, it must be admitted, the line which separates them on this, as on all other issues, is either very thin or non-existent.“²⁶

The results of the Aarhus consultation of August 1964, in a way, are discouraging, if a unilateral declaration of a Christological compromise is made from the East, they may have to go its own way and the „the Church of the East“ may find more affinity with the West than the East from the christological point of view. If the „eastern ecumenism“ is based on Cyril of Alexandria and the Council of Ephesus, „western ecumenism“ will be based on the Tome of Leo and the Council of Chalcedon.

As the non-Chalcedonian Churches insist on the reunion with the orthodox churches without recognizing the Council of Chalcedon of 451 A.D., the Church of the East has a legitimate claim to insist on the reunion without recognizing the Council of Ephesus of 431 A.D., presided over by Cyril.

Even Cyril treated the decision of the Council of 431 with such a scant respect that within two years he swept that decision absolutely on one side, and made, on his own authority, a compromise with his rivals. It is possible for the churches to follow the example of Cyril and to re-think the importance they have attached to this as the third ecumenical council - an idea, which perhaps did not occur ever to Cyril.²⁷

A Final Word

The present writer had claimed his M.Th. Thesis to be an impartial study of the Council of Ephesus. Impartiality, however, does not consist in refusing to form any opinion or in a futile concealment of the dangers of the thought of the man concerned, but in treating them scientifically and sincerely and attempting to discover objectively the thought in the historical background in which it was developed.

This, then, the present writer hopes to achieve in this consultation. Men have thought about all the conceivable forms of the conception of the union of the divine and human natures of Christ. How exactly has this union taken place? It is open to conjectures. To a certain extent, it is beyond human speculation.

There was a period when these terms were only „in the making“. Such a beginning, though unfortunate, was necessary for an adequate understanding. „Nestorianism“ was necessary to prevent any notion of deification of human nature as an entity, thereby losing sight of the historical Christ. As Bethune Baker warns us the teachings against which Nestorius protested „would have made of the Saviour of men a person not really human, and Redemption a magical, instantaneous, rather than ethical, gradual, process.“²⁸

The „re-discovery“ of the Bazaar was a „dispensation of God, in an age in which the doctrine of the Incarnation is exposed to dangers from opponents and defenders alike which are at least as dissolvent as those against which he cried unheard“. ²⁹ Modern thought can best profit from this controversy by attempting a synthesis of the apparently opposed but really complementary views.

The christology of the Church of the East, i.e., one person, two *qnoma* and two *kyane*, when it is translated as one person, two concrete natures and two abstract natures, is perfectly orthodox. As A.R. Vine has pleaded we should give Nestorius the benefit of doubt with regard to the technical terms. If we attempt to understand exactly how Godhead and manhood are united in the one person of Jesus Christ, we reach the inevitable conclusion that the problem of Christology is insoluble.

Conclusion

The Syriac manuscripts and printed books found in this Church teaching the Christology of one person, two *qnoma* and two natures. Having examined this Christological formula this thesis upholds the theory put forward earlier by Professor J.F. Bethune Baker that Nestorius was not a „Nestorian“.

In understanding the *qnoma*, this writer rejects the translation given by some scholars as person and puts forward an alternative view that it should be understood as „the individuated nature“ or concrete nature, if the word *kyana* (nature) is understood as „abstract nature“. *Qnoma* is also translated in this thesis as hypostasis. This is done so because several other writers have done likewise; for instance, in their useful work „A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts“, Luise Abramowski and Alan Goodman translate the word as *hypostasis*. But *hypostasis* does not convey the true meaning of *qnoma* as used by Nestorian Fathers. The present writer is of the

²⁴ The bidding is not an alternate one in the litany as Wigram states

²⁵ W.A. Wigram; Doctrinal Position of the Assyrian Church, op. cit; pp. 25-26

²⁶ M.V. Anastos; „Nestorius was Orthodox.“ Dumbarton Oaks Papers XIV, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 139. He concludes that Nestorius was the „dyophysite par excellence“ (Ibid. p. 140)

²⁷ W.A. Wigram; Doctrinal Position of the Assyrian Church, op. cit; p. 35

²⁸ F.J. Bethune Baker; op. cit; p. 207

²⁹ Ibid; p. 196

opinion that some better word could be coined in order to convey the true meaning which the members of this Church attributed to this controversial, but crucial, term *qnoma*.

This writer does not argue that this Christology, even if it is understood properly, agrees completely with the Christological formula of the Council of Chalcedon A.D. 451. though the Nestorian Christology has several points of agreement with Tome of Leo, as Nestorius himself has claimed, over against his opponent Cyril of Alexandria, the observations made by V.C. Samuel, quoted in the present writer's D.Th. dissertation, give us a new direction to explore further the points of agreement between Cyril's Christology and the Christology of Nestorius.

Though this Church considers Nestorius as a saint, this is not a Church founded by Nestorius. Nestorius did not know Syriac and the East Syrian Church of the Persian empire knew no Greek. There was no contact between the East Syrian Churches of Persia and the „heretic“ and his supporters in A.D. 431. Only after the death of Nestorius, when the East Syrian Church which had no part in the Christological battles between Nestorius and Cyril, nor had any knowledge of this unhappy controversy during the life time of the champions, has been unjustly described as the Church founded by Nestorius.

The separation of the East Syrian Church from the rest of the Christendom and particularly from the jurisdiction of Antioch had taken place before the Christological controversy had sprung up in A.D. 428. A canon of the Synod of Dadišo' in A.D. 424 forbade the bishops of this Church to have any ecclesiastical jurisdictional contact with the West. This fact itself leads us to the conclusion that the separation of the East Syrian Church was motivated by political, cultural, linguistic or personal considerations rather than any theological reason for there was none such existant in A.D. 424.

The important Pauline ideas of self-emptying, image of God, form of servant, historical Jesus etc., have been found in Nestorius too. It was from his biblical foundation Nestorius formulated his theory of prosopic union.

The Christological formula of this Church is that of the prosopic union rejecting the formula of hypostatic union accepted by both Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox Churches (Greek, Russian etc.) This prosopic union is a three tier Christology where the union is not at the first level of natures, nor at the second level of the *hypostases* but at the third level of the *prosopon*. To the members of this Church, the idea of perfect God and man is understood only if Christ has both natures and *qnome* of both God and man and the union has taken place only at the level of *prosopon*.

As for the Mariology, it refuses to call Mary „Theotokos“ unlike the Orthodox Church. However, this writer believes that despite the refusal to use the title *Theotokos* to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the „Nestorian“ Churches throughout the world, is in general agreement with the Eastern Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox (non-Chalcedonian) Churches in giving respect and veneration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. A Nestorian is an orthodox without *theotokos*.

This Church does not overdo the respect due to Mary as the Roman Catholics seem to do, nor does it underestimate the honour due to the Blessed Virgin Mary as some of the Protestant Churches have admittedly done. The prayers of this Church about Virgin Mary would lead to the inevitable conclusion that this Church tries to

give a proper place to the Blessed Virgin Mary avoiding the excesses and at the same time trying to save the Church from the danger of ignoring the Mother of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In this context, it must be stated further that nobody in this Church has ever questioned the Virgin Birth, as some modern theologians in various Churches do today. She is ever virgin before, in and after the birth of Jesus Christ.

The special emphasis of the Nestorian Christology on the humanity of our Lord is the statement that in Jesus Christ there are two distinct *qnome*, divine and human. This emphasis on the humanity of the Saviour of the mankind saved the Church in the fifth century from the heresy of the followers of Apollinarius who were still in the capital city of Constantinople where Nestorius worked as the head of the Church during the period A.D. 428-31. This emphasis on humanity is generally recognized today in the contemporary theological debate throughout the world. The East Syrian Church therefore, the present writer hopes, will have a definite contribution to make in the development of a Christian theology utilising the initiatives provided by some emerging dynamics in the religious and cultural context in the world today.

By the denial of the title *Imme D'alaha* (Mother of God) the Assyrian Church never denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. They believed like all fathers of the Council of Nicea 325 A.D. and the Council of Constantinople 381 A.D. that the expressions used in those Councils and the Nicene creed are good enough to guarantee the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Imme D'Msheha (Mother of Messiah) is proper expression as all Christians believe that Messiah is perfect God and perfect man. Is the theology of the Assyrian Church Nestorian? The answer is both Yes and No. If Nestorius himself was never a Nestorian, why should anybody bother whether the reply is Yes or No? It is „Nestorian“ to the extent that the Assyrian Church considers him a Saint and Greek doctor (*Malpana Yawnaya*) of the Church. The answer is „No“ if the questioner thought that Nestorianism is the denial of the divinity or the total separation of the divine and human natures in Christ.

Discussion

Prof. Koodapuzha: I have a question of methodology. Why does Mar Aprem try to prove the orthodoxy of the Church of the East on the basis of evidence coming from the Anglican Church?

Archbishop Garmo: St. Ephrem, 70 years before Ephesus, has two or three times the term "Mother of God" in the "Carmina Nisibena", likewise he alludes to the Immaculate Conception.

Mar Aprem: I quoted the Lambeth Conference because it is the only one that expressed itself more or less officially on the subject and the Anglicans accept the Council of Ephesus. I am only bringing it in for discussion. At the same time I was studying at an Anglican seminary.

I agree that Theotokos was used here and there before 431, but in no official synod or council.

Bishop Matar: As a question of method, the paper seemed to be more an attack than a defence. A more ecumenical spirit is needed. The expression Theotokos has to be understood, not rejected. We can stay in our Eastern context for solving the issues, i.e. without the Anglicans.

Mar Aprem adds that by his blunt statements he aims at trading concessions.

Prof. Samir: In the same line, regarding Theotokos, one could quote Safi Ibn Assal: in 1239, as a Copt answering the Muslims, he defends or explains the fact that Nestorians do not like the term Theotokos, even if he maintains Theotokos to be the best one. I do not think that we should try to make a point by attacking someone else, as is done in the paper regarding development in Mariology. We should try to find the common roots in Theotokos and these texts seem to exist.

Prof. Davids: To my knowledge, the Creed of Constantinople is not found in Chabot (Synodicon Orientale). If it is, I would like to have the reference. The term Theotokos has become a shibboleth these last years. Besides, the Muslims will be opposed to us when we use the term Mother of God.

Mar Aprem: I was not able to consult the Synodicon myself. The question of Theotokos seems an important print to us in India: without this term we feel that relations with Muslims are easier.

Dr. Hainthaler: The insistence of the paper on the humanity of Nestorius is positive, but some of the expressions may be questioned. I cannot subscribe to the position that Chalcedon is a victory of Nestorian theology.

Mar Bawai: The issue of Theotokos in a certain sense has more politics in it than theology. Babai the Great is not entirely opposed to it, since the Church of the East confesses the union. But the expression is highly theological and could be misunderstood. Babai accepts to say that Mary is the Mother of God "economically", but not "naturally". I think that no Apostolic Church would say that Mary is "naturally" the Mother of God.

The relationship of the Assyrians with the Anglicans is a difficult and emotional one. At the time we Assyrians in the mountains had difficult times with the Anglican British. It could be interesting to study this in future. The succession in the Apostolic way is of prime importance and should be kept in mind in connection with the relations with the Anglicans.

Dr. Hainthaler: The paper affirms (p.150) that the union is only on the level of the prosopon. The ultimate subject of the union is the Logos and it is important that this is lacking in the paper.

Archbishop Emmanuel Delly

COMMENT EXPRESSING THE VIEW OF THE CHALDEAN CHURCH TODAY ON THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY

For many centuries the Assyro-Chaldean Church, that is to say the Church of the East, was considered a heretical church because many judged her christology as contrary to the traditional teachings of the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church Universal. The Church of the East protested strongly through her authors and synods and declared her teachings as being true and in line with the teachings of the Apostles and the Church Universal. But in order to convince her opponents and to make them accept this fact and reality, many pages have still got to be written. My own book and previous studies of many courageous theologians and historians (like François Nau and André de Halleux, Luigi Scipioni, Samir Khalil and Louis Sako) are but a draft and an indication of the main outlines. We should expect more wide-ranging and in-depth research into the history of councils from this point of view and into the great influence which different philosophical, theological and political currents and persons - through their writings - had when it came to take positions in the formulation of doctrines and the anathematization of innocent people.

The different philosophical currents that found their way into the schools of the Orient are well-known, most importantly the Hellenic current, as well as the Semitic, Alexandrian and Antiochian ones, and the Platonic and Aristotelian ones; the latter current travelled through the Schools of Nisibis, Edessa, Gundisabur and Baghdad to Spain/Andalusia and to the European universities.

Two different currents, which used the same terminology albeit with different meanings caused many centuries of misunderstandings in a number of fields, diverted the minds from profound research and created tensions between the members of this family, which is the Church.

In order to calm down the minds and to open up a path to a fraternal and true ecumenical dialogue between our ancient Churches, we have to put ourselves into the context of that time and must not judge such pioneers like Narsai, the Synods of the Church of the East, Išō'yahb II, Išō'yahb III, Timotheos I, Elia Bar Senaya of Nisibis etc. according to the mentality of our time and the philosophical and theological terminology used by us today. We have to understand the contents and the true meaning of the terminology adopted by the Alexandrian School on the one hand and the Antiochian and Nisibis Schools on the other.

Fourty years ago, when I was a young man and wrote my first theological paper on an author of the Church of the East (La Théologie d'Elie bar-Senaya, Etude et traduction de ses Entretiens, Rome 1957), I judged him - unjustly so, as I would say today - as a true Nestorian. If I had to do the same work today, I would write it in a different way. The teachings of Elia Bar Šenaya are those of his Fathers and of the Apostles and basically those of the Church Universal. The principal reason for this severe and unjust judgement levelled against the authors of the Church of the East in general is the lack of understanding of the way they conceived and interpreted the terminology which they adopted for theological issues and for the christological question in particular.

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The Seert Chronicle speak of „many books“ and mentions some of them.⁵ Abdišo in his Catalogue counts eighty three.⁶

Christological Works

Although eight Christological works are known, only three are extant and all the three are being published:

1. The Book of Union (= LU).
2. Tractatus Vaticanus (= TV).
3. The Small Extract transmitted in the „Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts“ (= X).

The first two are contained in the edition of A. Vaschalde (Babai Magni Liber de Unione, ed. & tr. by A. Vaschalde, cscs 79/80, Louvain 1915). And the third one in the Collection ed. & tr. by L. Abramowski & A. Goodmann (2 vols. Cambridge, 1972, p. 207-210/123-125).

The Book of Union is the most important Christological writing. It is published in the Syriac original with Latin translation by A. Vaschalde. An English translation is recently prepared by Michael J. Birnie Corepiscopa in the USA. It exists still in the MS. form. Book of Union is generally known as Liber de Unione (LU) or the Book of Union. Its full title, however, is „Memre dmar Babai ‘al alahuta u‘al’ nasuta u‘al parsopa dahdayuta (Tractatus Mar Babai de divinitate et de humanitate et de Persona unionis).“⁷ This work consists of seven „membre“ (treatises) and each „memra“ is subdivided into reshe (chapters) and the numeration of chapters one to twenty one goes on to the end of Memra VI, but Memra VII has no such division.⁸ Memra I deals with the Trinity and develops the Infinite Transcendence of God. The nature of the Supreme Godhead in Himself is very well discussed here. The Second Memra speaks of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. In the third Memra, Mar Babai explains the nature of the union. Memra IV & V deal with the two natures in Christ. Memra VI has two chapters: ch. 20 deals with the names of Christ, the Son of God. Chapter 21 is the climax of the whole treatise. Memra VII starts with a separate heading and it may be originally an independent treatise, but later added to the main work.

Mar Babai - a believing Christian

As a believing Christian Mar Babai speaks of the need of faith in discussing matters pertaining to God. He demands faith from his readers for the understanding of the Divinity and Incarnation.⁹ The mystery of the Divinity is beyond all human comprehension and it has to be accepted by the faithful by faith.¹⁰

Without any qualification whatsoever, he accepts the fact of the union of the two natures.¹¹ He believes firmly that it is the Word, the Second qnoma of the

Trinity, who is united to our humanity. That at the angelic salutation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, there effected a perfect and everlasting union in the womb of the Virgin, of the humanity and of the divinity in the one parsopa of Filiation of the Second qnoma of the Trinity, is also one of the basic Christological concepts accepted by Babai as dogma. Babai has absolutely no doubt regarding the intimacy of the union. He speaks about the union of Christ as most intimate and inseparable as possible. His faith is above every rational argument and metaphysical principle. That the Son is one and unique and that He has two perfect natures in the union without mixture is also an unquestioned fact for Babai. His concern was to explain the duality in the union.

Mar Babai's Christ-picture

Mar Babai's Christ-picture is biblical and in accordance with the Tradition. The very first chapter of LU begins with the basic Christian affirmation of the believing Christian: „Jesus Christ is head of our life, and our hope and our God.“¹² Jesus Christ is our God.¹³ He is our Lord Jesus Christ, Head of our life, and our God.¹⁴ Christ is our hope, who is present in our infirmities, and our feebleness and deficiency of our puerile knowledge, according to our faith in Him. He foreknows everything because He is God eternally.¹⁵ Christ is our God and we are His servants. He is to be adored and we with all the creatures are His adorers. He is the cause of our salvation and our life.¹⁶ Christ is the Principle of our life and our God and our Teacher.¹⁷ He is our wisdom, our hope and our power and our consolation.¹⁸ The hope of all sincere adorers is strongly rooted in Him. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him. He gives wisdom to the wise and intellect to the intelligent. He inspires and incites those who ask for the common good and teaches abundantly through the effusion of His Grace, those which are beneficial to the future life.¹⁹ Christ is the sublime Head of the Church.²⁰ - These and similar other expressions show that he firmly believed in the historical and biblical Jesus Christ, taught by the Apostolic Church.

Mar Babai - a synthesizer

In Mar Babai we find a synthesis of various traditions. As a follower of the Antiochene tradition, he begins with the historical Jesus Christ and ascends to the divinity. On the other hand, in certain parts He begins with the „Word of God“ as

¹² Ibid. 2, 1/1, 25

¹³ Ibid. 6, 20/5, 18-19

¹⁴ Ibid. 27, 17/22, 23-24

¹⁵ Ibid. 39, 28-31/32, 28-30

¹⁶ Ibid. 139, 30-31, 140, 1-3/112, 35-113, 3

¹⁷ Ibid. 160, 17/130, 2-3

¹⁸ Ibid. 245, 18-19/199, 19-20

¹⁹ Ibid. 2, 2 ff/1, 26 f.

²⁰ Ibid. 51, 6/46, 33

⁵ *Histoire nestorienne*, II, p. 212

⁶ Abdišo, *Catalogus librorum*, p. 94.

⁷ Babai, *LU*, p. 1/1.

⁸ Ibid. 252/205

⁹ Ibid. 3-6/2-5; 20/16

¹⁰ Ibid. 7, 31, 8, 1/6, 24-26

¹¹ Ibid. 36, 25-28/30, 9-13; 166, 16-22/134, 24-30

the Alexandrians do, and comes down to the union. As a follower of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Babai uses concrete and abstract expressions side by side.²¹

The „Word of God“

It is God the Word who assumed our humanity. Word is the second qnoma of the Trinity. The term „Word“ is indicative of the divine nature shared by the three divine qnome equally and eternally. The natural unique and unchangeable property of the Word is the Parsopa of Filiation, by which He is distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit and related to them. The Parsopa of Filiation is ontological and essential to the Word. The Word of God is perfect in everything as the Father and the Holy Spirit in nature, essence and substance.²² His divine nature with its attributes common to the three qnome cannot be shared with any creature. Such are His Eternity, Infinity and Incomprehensibility. But His Parsopa of Filiation with all its honour and glory could be communicated, not to the other two qnome of the Trinity, but to the creatures. Although Babai affirms that the Word assumed our humanity „with the greatest humility“, he would not say that the Word is born from the Virgin or the Word died. He makes a very subtle distinction between „Word“ and „Son“. „Word“ is pointing to the common nature (divinity) and the qnoma, while „Son“ is indicative of the particular property of the nature, the Parsopa of Filiation, which is incommunicable with the Father and the Holy Spirit while communicable with the creatures.

The Terms used

Kyana, qnoma and Parsopa are the three Syriac words used by Mar Babai to explain the Christological mystery in a philosophical and technical way. He does not define the terms, but he explains them somewhat in the seventh chapter of LU. These terms were in current use already among the Syrians and Babai tried to clarify them to a certain degree.

Kyana is the same as nature in the abstract, designating the common elements found in all the members of the species. It is the universal compared to the particular. qnoma is the concretisation of the abstract kyana. It is incommunicable. Qnoma as qnoma cannot be divided. Once divided it ceases to be that qnoma. It possesses all the properties of the common nature. But it cannot include all the members, coming under a common species. Since it is fixed and non-communicable, it cannot be taken or added to another qnoma, so that it be with it one qnoma subsisting, which possesses everything of its nature, i.e. one complete or perfect qnoma cannot receive another perfect qnoma. Therefore a union of two perfect qnome so as to form one qnoma is impossible. In short qnoma may be translated as „this or that substance“, „subsistence“, „reality opposed to the unreal or illusion“. It is primarily referring to concrete reality or actuality rather than Person. The qnoma in Babai is not the Chalcedonian hypostasis. Chalcedon in fact identified hypostasis

with prosopon. While in the Persian church one finds a differentiation between them.²³

Parsopa is the property which distinguishes one qnoma from another qnoma of the same species. It is the sum total of the accidents, and properties, giving the particular characteristic to the qnoma. The indivisible and singular property of the qnoma is given by the parsopa. Although parsopa is also fixed, it could be communicated and assumed by another qnoma. Fixed because it is the distinguishing property of a qnoma from other qnome of the same species and it shows that this is not that. It could be assumed by another qnoma and can indicate everything that the qnoma possesses in its distinction from other qnome. When applied to men, qnoma and parsopa are one and the same thing, and there is identity between qnoma and parsopa. When we say Paul, we mean the qnoma of Paul and the parsopa of Paul. In the divinity, qnoma is not the same as parsopa.

Parsopa distinguishes one qnoma of the divinity from the other and there is no accident like in the creatures. The distinguishing property of the Word is Filiation and it is ontological and essential, proper to the Son. In other words, the second qnoma of the Trinity is the „Word“ and His parsopa is „Sonship“. This Sonship cannot be communicated to the Father and the Holy Spirit, but could be communicated to the creatures.²⁴

Oneness of Christ

God the Word, the Second qnoma of the Trinity, having the Parsopa of Filiation, assumed our humanity to His Parsopa and gave His Parsopa to the man, formed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus the Parsopa of Filiation of the Word became the parsopa of that which is formed in her. The Word is a perfect qnoma and the humanity is a perfect qnoma as any other man.²⁵

Jesus of Nazareth possesses a fixed qnoma with his natural parsopa, such as height, weight, colour etc., but he has no human filiation and independent existence. By his natural parsopa he is Jesus of Nazareth and not Peter nor John.²⁶ God the Word assumed the man Jesus and gave him His glorious Parsopa of Filiation at the moment of his formation in the womb. At the same time God the Word received the humble parsopa of the human nature and revealed Himself through it. The man, apart from the Word and independent of Him and without union with Him, never existed and can never exist, not even for a moment. The human nature is formed to be united: formation and union were simultaneous.²⁷ At the very moment of its formation, the human nature or man received the Parsopa of Filiation and thus he became the Son of the Most High, because of the Parsopa of the Word. But the human nature remained a perfect man, endowed with a rational soul and body. The Word did not take the place of the soul. He, in fact, was united to both body and soul.²⁸

²³ Ibid. 159, 16-160, 1/129, 4-20

²⁴ Ibid. 160, 2-16/129, 21-34

²⁵ *Textus Vaticanus*, 300, 14 f./242, 17f.

²⁶ Ibid. 300, 31/242, 32-33

²⁷ LU. 59, 13 ff./47, 32ff; 95/88; 133/107

²⁸ Ibid. 58, 29 ff./47, 18ff.

²¹ Ibid. 54, 29-31/44, 25-27

²² Ibid. 39-40/32-33

Repeatedly, all through the LU Babai teaches that Christ is one, and the Son is one. In his divinity, Christ is Son by nature; in his humanity he is Son by union and assumption. It is the same Son. One and the same is the Son of the Most High in heaven and in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The one who is formed from her is called Son of the Most High by union with the Eternal Son of the Most High. Christ is Son in his humanity, not by adoption, but by union. One is Christ in His human nature and in His divine nature. One is Son in His human nature and in His divine nature. One is Christ the Son of God and the Son of man.²⁹

The principle of union in Christ is the Parsopa of Filiation. The Parsopa of Filiation of the Eternal Son became the parsopa of the man formed in the womb. The Son of God assumed the man to His Parsopa of Filiation and gave His glorious Parsopa to the man formed in her. Thus the Parsopa of Filiation of the Word became the parsopa of the man. Except the very divine nature of the Word, which cannot be imparted to anyone, all what the Word has or is, are of the man, formed in the womb by union with the Word. The union did not take away the distinction of natures - God and man - but remaining what He is, God the Word united the man to His Parsopa of Filiation. At the same time, the Word assumed the lowly state of the man and it became His own, not by nature but by union. All what the man has or is, are of the Word by union. So everything can be spoken of the one Son, both the glorious ones of the Word and the humble ones of the man.³⁰

Christ is one in His Filiation; the Son is one in His anointing. There is only one honour and adoration to Christ. The double qnoma is not against the most intimate union between the two natures in the one parsopa. There is no distinction between Christ and Son. Christ and Son are not one and another. Christ is the Son and the Son is Christ.

This Parsopa of Filiation, by which Christ is one unique Son, is called by several names: It is called „parsopa of union“ (parsopa dahdayuta) indicating the uniting element, namely the Sonship which is one. It is ontological, because it is the very property of the Word. It is called „common parsopa“ (parsopa gawanaia), because it belongs to both the qnome, to the one by nature and to the other by union and assumption. The common parsopa is not the result of a fusion of the two natural parsope.³¹ It is also called „parsopa of economy“ (parsopa damdabranuta). The Parsopa which is natural to the Word becomes the parsopa of economy, because it is the Son who became man. It is through His adorable Parsopa that He undertook all the salvific economy for our renovation and salvation.

Christological Union compared with the Trinitarian Union

Just as the three divine qnome are one eternal nature and essence and existence, the two natures and two qnome (eternal and temporal) constitute one Son.³² The two natures of Christ are preserved in the one Parsopa of the Son of God with the properties of each qnoma preserved without confusion, and each qnoma is

acknowledged in the same parsopa, not separately.³³ The three Divine qnome in the Trinity are entirely one without any limitation (had enun kul bkul). In the same way the two natures in Christ constitute an absolute oneness (had medem).³⁴ Babai has taken the comparison from Gregory Nazianzen through Nestorius.³⁵ This analogy is made use of to show the most intimate unity existing between the two natures and the inconfused existence of the two natures in the one parsopa of Filiation. In both cases, „while united, they are distinct, while distinct, united“.³⁶

Union of the Natures - not a mixture

God the Word assumed the form of servant and dwelt in it unitively in one adhesion, „without mixture, without admixture, without commixture and without confusion“ and made him one Son with Him for ever.³⁷ Even in the absolute union the properties of the natures subsist in the union without any confusion.

Union expressed in various ways

Chapter 21 of the LU deals with the question of the different ways of expressing the union of the two natures in Christ. Babai makes an analysis and comparison of the basic Antiochene Christological terms and evaluates them. He says that theologians use different terms to express the „adorable economy“, i.e. the union of the two natures in the Incarnate Son. He uses six basic terms, namely assumption, indwelling, temple, vestment, adhesion and union. The adorable union is all these and above all these. All these terms have their limitations, but the union is an inexplicable mystery. It is ineffable, unspeakable, inscrutable and indivisible and unmixed, and theologians use different expressions to denote this union. Each of these expresses a part of the truth which the other terms may not be able to express. All these terms have their limitations, but the union is an inexplicable mystery.

The most commonly used expression is Union. This union is called assumption. Assumption alone, according to him, indicates „the diverse natures in their properties“ and the Assumer and the assumed in the one Parsopa of Filiation and Domination.³⁸ This union is more than assumption: not all assuming is indwelling. But this union is an indwelling. There is difference between indwelling and putting on the vestments and union. We put on our clothes, but it is never said that we indwell in our clothes nor do we say that we are united to our clothes. Fish dwell in water, but nobody says that they put on water.³⁹

The Word of God put on the nature of our humanity; more than that He dwelt in it and is united with it in one ineffable union. The humanity is called dress. It does not mean that there was no union as the dress of a man and that it was exterior

²⁹ Ibid. 223/181; 105/74; 62/50; 61/49; 131/105

³⁰ Ibid. 162, 13-163, 13/131, 20-132, 10

³¹ Ibid. 162/131; 163/132; 164/132

³² Ibid. 29, 21-23/24, 18-19

³³ LU 71, 1 ff/57, 25 ff; 168/136; 162/131; 166/134; 168/135

³⁴ Ibid. 245, 16/199, 14; 228/185; 247/201

³⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, Ep. 101 to Cleodnius, PG. 37, 180; Nestorius, LH, p. 20 (Driver)

³⁶ LU. 59, 18-24/48, 2-7; 245/199; 248/201

³⁷ Ibid. 56, 26-27/45, 32-33; 57, 14-18/46, 11-14; 230, 20-21/187, 18-19

³⁸ Ibid. 231/187; 232/188

³⁹ Ibid. 228/185

to him as the dress of a man.⁴⁰ Christ's dress - humanity - is ever united and never separated, and belongs to Him for ever. The dress and the one who dresses it are not one and the same and they do not constitute one nature and one qnoma.⁴¹ The example of dress helps to show the distinction of the natures. Just as the dress hides the members of the body, the divinity was hidden in the humanity. Since it is assumption, it is not a simple putting on. The Word of God put it on by assuming. It is His dress, belonging to Him in the union for ever.⁴²

This union is called adhesion or conjunction. Man and woman adhere to each other; fish adhere to water; our dress adheres to our skin, but they do not constitute a union. So there is a difference between adhesion and union. In the union of humanity and divinity „*had medem*“ is constituted in the one Parsopa of Filiation.⁴³ But neither between water and fish nor between dress and the skin is the „*unum quid*“ because of the parsopa of union, so that the fish is called water and water fish, and we our dress and our dress we. All things united are not called adhered. Body and Soul are united but they are not adhered. Adhesion makes clear the distinction of the properties.

Even though the Christians are united to Christ in faith and in one direction of Christ, and in the spiritual birth and by the bond of charity to one another, we do not say, we are adhered to one another; we do not dwell in one another nor are we temples of one another. The parts of a house adhere one another, but they do not indwell mutually. The adhesion of husband and wife is no indwelling, nor do they mutually put on, nor are they temple of one another; nor do they have parsopic union through assumption.⁴⁴ When it is said that God dwells in heaven and in Jerusalem, it is no dwelling conjunctively, unitively and parsopically, „so that they be gods and God may be they assumptively through the union of the „*parsopa*“.⁴⁵

Indwelling shows, that one is in another and that God the Word has not adhered extrinsically and finitely to the form of servant, whom He assumed to His parsopa. Adhesion shows that the natures are not mixed in any way and that there is no union through composition. Word of God did not become the qnoma of man and the man did not become the qnoma of Filiation. But both are united in the one parsopa of the Word. But the union is not an extrinsic adhesion nor an intrinsic limitation or inclusion, nor is made parsopically „in distance“ nor voluntary „with separation“. The Infinite is in the finite without any confusion or mixture or admixture, composition or parts.

This ineffable union is more than all these terms put together can express. Because of the parsopa of union, „this is that and that is this“ and the names of the humanity also are applied to the divinity assumptively in the union and vice versa. When all the terms are put together, they in some way express the ineffable mystery. The different terms together show that the divinity is not distant from the humanity; the humanity assumed the parsopa of Filiation of the Divinity adhesively; the properties of each nature exist without any confusion; the union is non-composite

and free unlike the union of body and soul. Babai is trying to give a synthesis of the various terms in use and explain the union in a possible way.

The Duality in Christ

Babai held firmly that Christ is God and man; the two natures subsist in Him without any mixture or confusion in the one parsopa of Filiation. He is Son in His divine nature and in His human nature. The formula „preserving the properties of each nature“ is an ever recurring expression in Babai.⁴⁶ His whole concern was the question of explaining the duality in Christ. According to him, in order to keep the properties of the two natures intact, it was necessary to admit two *qnome*.

Babai finds the duality of Christ on the side of natures as the Scriptures teach. Christ is God and man. The Son of God became the son of man, by assuming a complete man. If he is perfect God, states Babai, Invisible, Eternal, equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit, even before the Incarnation, He is a perfect qnoma, one of the *qnome* of the Trinity. If He is perfect man, it means one visible human qnoma as of any other man, one of the qnoma of men. The eternal divine qnoma became man, not by changing to the human qnoma. On the contrary, preserving the properties of the divine qnoma, the Word of God assumed to its parsopa of Filiation the human qnoma with its humble parsopa. The human properties subsisted in the human qnoma. Hence two *qnome* and two natures. If there is only one qnoma after the Incarnation, namely the Eternal Invisible qnoma, Word, either it has undergone change in Incarnation by becoming man and has become a composite qnoma by adding that which is of man, or it has not assumed anything from us. Both these are impossible. He could not think of another alternative and he considers that this is the only way to explain the perfect Godhead and perfect manhood in Christ.⁴⁷

In this system, Christ is visible and invisible, the Assumer and the assumed, the Form of God and the form of servant, God and man, the subject of passion and the Lord of Glory. He suffered and died in His human nature; in His divinity, He did not suffer nor die.⁴⁸ As „*principium quod*“ Babai attributes all the actions to the Son and to Christ; as „*principium quo*“ the humiliations are attributed to the human nature and to the human qnoma. It is the Son who underwent all humiliations in His human nature; it is Christ who died for us in His humanity.⁴⁹

Babai finds the duality on the side of nature and qnoma. But there is no independence for the human qnoma. Even though, according to the definition, qnoma is a singular substance, existing by itself⁵⁰ etc., the human qnoma of Christ has no separate existence, of its own, not even for a moment. It is a complete human qnoma, but its parsopa of Filiation is that of the Word. The human qnoma, man, does not have a human filiation. At the moment of its formation in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, it was assumed by the Word and it received the parsopa of Filiation of the Word. The man has no autonomous existence and independence. It exists, united with the Word in the one parsopa of Filiation.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 233/189

⁴¹ Ibid. 241/195; 242/197

⁴² Ibid. 242/197

⁴³ LU. 228/185

⁴⁴ Ibid. 230/186

⁴⁵ Ibid. 230, 9-10/187, 7-8

⁴⁶ Ibid. 62, 15-16/50, 18-19; 62, 21-22/50, 24-25; 64/52; 68/55; 70/79; 131/105

⁴⁷ T. VII, 254/206; 274 ff./221 ff.; TV, 291/235

⁴⁸ LU. 67, 20-23/54, 28-31

⁴⁹ Ibid. 60, 23-25/49, 1-3

⁵⁰ Ibid. 159, 1 ff./129, 4 ff.

Even in the union, which is everlasting and ineffable and never breaking, the natures do not come into any kind of mingling. Each nature keeps the properties proper to it. When they are united, they are distinct, when they are distinct, they are united. They are united in the one parsopa of Filiation, they are distinct in the properties of each nature. They are distinct, but not distant, and independent.⁵¹

Babai speaks of the „Son“ as the subject of attribution of all the predicates. He accepts all the biblical statements and he can see them all being attributed to the one Son. There are biblical statements speaking about the divinity of the Son, and there are other statements speaking about the humanity of the Son, and certain other statements about both the divinity and the humanity. Because of the Parsopa of Filiation of the Word and of the man, all are spoken of the one subject. However, Babai makes a distinction: by nature and by union. That which by nature pertains to the divinity (e.g. parsopa of Filiation) pertains to the humanity by union. In the same way, that which pertains to the humanity by nature is of the Word by union. „The Son of the Most High is the son of man and the son of man is the Son of the Most High“. He is God Incarnate and man deified. As the natures are united in the one parsopa, the names also are united in the one parsopa. There are certain names properly and by nature pertaining to the one or the other nature, but always to the one Christ.

Because Babai speaks of two qnome, it does not follow that he teaches a theory of two sons. Babai finds the unity of Christ on the side of the parsopa of Filiation and the duality on the side of natures with their proper qnome. There is only one Son, and he is God and man, having perfect Godhead and perfect manhood.

Here are three passages from Mar Babai wherein he describes the unity and duality.⁵² „Just as the humanity of Our Lord assumed the parsopa of divinity, the divinity assumed the parsopa of humanity in one adhesion. This mystery is great, stupendous, and admirable. For, indeed, God the Word assumed the form of a servant, i.e., a complete man to His parsopa, and dwelt in it unitively and infinitely. He appeared in the flesh; and His humanity, through the union with Him received a name, more excellent than all names, i.e., Son and Lord, in one power and dominion. And He is made this in the union and not in the nature: „Son of man who is in heaven (Jn 3:13); and this is made He in the union and not in the nature, i.e., Son and Lord of Glory. And in this one parsopa are recognized the two natures with their properties, without separation; and one is the Lord Jesus Christ yesterday and today and for ever. To Him and to His Father and to the Holy Spirit be honour, adoration and exaltation for ever and ever. Amen.“ (LU, ch. 21)

Second passage (Ch.17)⁵³: „One is the parsopa of Christ, the Son of God, in his divinity and humanity. And He is the one parsopa, the Son of the Most High: the Lord, Jesus, the Only Begotten, the first born, the son of man, Christ; and in this one parsopa which is one Christ the Son of God is recognized, in two natures, and their names, in the properties of their qnome, which while distinct, are united without confusion, and while united without confusion, are distinct, in their properties in the one union of one parsopa of Christ, the Son of God for ever... From the union and after words, the divinity is not Son without the humanity, nor the huma-

nity is a mere man, separately, without the divinity, and not united and called Christ. But in this one parsopa they give and take mutually, so that this be that and that be this parsopically only; for in their *qnome* this and that remain in this adorable union of one parsopa of Christ, the Son of God. Therefore, if you say Son, He is this one parsopa; if you say man, He is; if you say firstborn, He is; if you say Only Begotten, He is; if you say the Lord of Glory, He is; if you say son of David and of Abraham, He is; if you say Son of the Most High, He is; truly, not in the same way. And in short, Jesus Christ, Son of God, yesterday and today He is for ever“.

Speaking about the Risen Lord Babai says that one cannot speak of duality. There is only oneness after the resurrection: „After the resurrection, already one is the beatitude; again, there is not the one who gives and the one who receives; but one is the knowledge, one power, one dominion, one adoration of the humanity and the divinity of Christ, in one parsopa of Filiation, united.“⁵⁴

Evaluation

Memre I and II of LU represent one of the most beautiful pieces of Christian literature. They represent in an excellent way the doctrine on God (Trinity and Unity of the Supreme Godhead) and the Incarnation of the Word, the Only Begotten Son of God. This piece can compete with any other Christian literature in its beauty, excellence and clarity of presentation. This part was influenced by the Catechetical Homilies of Theodore. The use of concrete and abstract terms side by side have by this time become Babai's basic trait.

With regard to the Diophysite Church of Persia, Babai was the first one to write a major Christological work. No author from among them dealt with the Christological questions so extensively as he did. For the Persians Babai's Christology was the Christology of their Church. Babai was influenced by several previous Christian authors. He clarified portions of his sources that were obscure, confusing of liable to misinterpretation by opponents. He tried to refute the accusations launched against the „Nestorian“ Christological tradition. His Christology is less dualistic than that of Nestorius. Babai's synthesis revitalised the Syrian heritage. Babai made a synthesis of the „rationalism“ of Theodore and the mystical traditions of others, making the Persian Christological system deeper and more solid.

Babai's Christology is Parsopic Christology. He presents a Christology which is as orthodox as the Christology of the Alexandrian tradition. His stress is on the parsopa of Filiation of the Word; till the Incarnation he speaks in terms of the Word and after the Incarnation, he speaks in terms of „Parsopa“ (Son or Christ). The concrete expression „man“ for the humanity does not mean a duality of Filiation, but actuality and reality of the humanity assumed. The two qnome are indicative of the reality of the duality in Christ without confusion. The „homo assumptus“ was in the tradition of the Church. When there are two independent qnome, then it becomes heretical. But as long as the two exist in the one parsopa, the one having dependence on the other, it is orthodox.

With the help of Babai's Christology, we are in a better position to understand Nestorius, Theodore and even Diodore. Babai had at his disposal almost all the

⁵¹ Ibid. 245, 13-17/199, 13-16; 248/201-202

⁵² Ibid. 251/204

⁵³ Ibid. 172/138-139

⁵⁴ Ibid. 122, 13-17/98, 31-35

works of these authors and his synthesis enables us to make a reevaluation of their positions regarding the union of the natures in Christ. Babai's Christology can be considered as the best interpretation of the Antiochene position. He avoids 'Nestorianism' (teaching of two sons, one natural and another adoptive son, joined together only externally and morally). He continued the Antiochene insistence of the perfectness of the human nature of Christ and the assumption of the form of servant by the Word of God.

He calls the Blessed Virgin Mary „Mother of God“ (*Yaldat Alaha dahwat leh men gaw marba*: LU. 100, 4-5; *Yaldat Alaha den metul hdayuta dahwat leh 'am 'nasuteh*: T. VII, 264, 27-28; *Yaldat Alaha den metul damhayed lbarnaseh*: T. VII, 271, 28-29). According to Babai, if any one says that Mary gave birth to a mere man only, the Blessed Virgin, is deprived of the honour given to her, „Blessed are you among women“. If any one says „mother of God“ in the sense that she did not take anything from our nature, our salvation will become meaningless.

In the One Universal Church of Christ, Babai's Christology has a definite position. If one tries to confront it with the Alexandrian Christology and regard it from that point of view, one may have doubts about it. But if one considers it as a particular Christology of a particular church, contributing to the richness of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ, then one would happily accept it as a particular Christology acceptable in the Christian Tradition. Babai's Christology expresses the very same truth, which the Cyrillian Christology presents to the Church. Although the same words meant different things to different people, in each context they are correct and the words must be accepted in the particular sense of each. Each one has to be taken in his own context, certainly after accepting the basic belief in Christ as God and man.

A deeper study of Babai can lead us to a better understanding of Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius. We hope that one day the injustice and dishonour done to them will be rectified and they will be reinstated in the one true Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ for the glory of God the Father.

Discussion

Prof. Samir: It is interesting to point out how important Theodore of Mopsuestia is in the East in medieval times. He could be a person of reconciliation, like Babai. He entered also the Coptic Church as the greatest exegete.

Prof. Koodapuzha to Mar Aprem: Mar Babai, who is a Father of the Church of the East, calls Mary Mother of God. Consequently, one cannot say that this expression is alien to your tradition.

Prof. Jammo: I find the analysis of "qnoma" very enriching, but a kind of difficulty remains with "parsopa". Especially when there is mention of two "parsopa" a question arises.

Prof. Davids: The conclusions at the end of this paper were very illuminating. I learned a great deal about the background of the Antiochene tradition. However,

there was only one reference to Theodore of Mopsuestia (who in official statements is almost put into heaven). Perhaps we need more studies on their relationship.

Fr. Dupuy: The paper is impressive by showing the serenity of the Christology of Babai.

Mar Bawai thanks Prof. Chediath for his paper which is full of serenity without polemics.

Mar Severios: Is it possible to use the same theology of "qnoma" in Trinity and in Christology? How can the qnoma be concretized without being independent? The paper says that Babai avoided Nestorianism by not teaching two sons, but Nestorius never taught this. How does it go together?

Prof. Chediath: It would be useful to know the exact influence of Theodore of Mopsuestia on Babai. - Concerning the union of Christ, strictly speaking it remains difficult to apply the same notions in Trinity and Incarnation. In Christ there is a giving and taking between the human parsopa, which is accidental "as he appeared", and the parsopa of the Son. In Trinity they are "allos kai allos". - There is a difference in Christology between Nestorius and Babai.

Mar Bawai: This is an extremely expressive paper about how Babai is received. In response to the question of Mar Severios, I can say that normally two "qnoma" would lead to two "parsopa". But we have to distinguish individuation and independence. Abstract natures are individuated. The human qnoma is individuated but never independent, personalized, individualized. It is entirely given to the parsopa of the Son.

Seventh working session: Tuesday June 28, morning

Chairman: Mar Aprem G. Mookan

Sarhad Jammo

THE QUDDASHA OF THE APOSTLES ADDAI AND MARI AND THE NARRATIVE OF THE EUCHARISTIC INSTITUTION

The Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari has received from the scholars in the last decades distinguished attention and special treatment. In fact, the bibliography dealing with the many aspects of its puzzling text is impressive. Why? Is it the hunt for a treasure that may be hidden inside? It just may be!

My doctoral thesis, „La structure de la messe chaldéenne“, defended in 1968, stops at the threshold of the Anaphora. I am fortunate to be able, after so many years, to apply myself to the completion of my previous work on the structure of the Chaldean mass, and to begin my actual research with the anaphora itself. My

participation in the search for the hidden treasure is in order. However, my essay here intends to deal with a specific topic: the presence or absence of the eucharistic Institution Narrative in the anaphora of Addai and Mari, and the meaning of that factor for the history of eucharistic prayer.

Historic data

There are three anaphoras in use by the Church of the East. The Hūdhra of Mar Esha'ya, seemingly of the tenth century, is the oldest known liturgical manuscript that contain the text of the three anaphoras. Their titles in it run respectively as follows: Quddasha Da-Shlihe, Quddasha Da-Mpashqana, and Quddasha D-Mar Nestoris. Brevity is a constant feature of the Hūdhra. Most of the later manuscript formularies containing the Takhsa d-Raze have the following standard titles as presented by J. Kelaita (*The Liturgy of the Church of the East*, Mossoul 1928):

The Quddasha of the Apostles, composed by Mar Addai and Mar Mari the blessed apostles.

The Quddasha of Mar Theodore - the Interpreter of the divine Books, Bishop of Mopsuestia - that was translated and rendered from the Greek language into Syriac by Mar Abba the Catholicos when he went up into the region of the Romans. Moreover, he produced it with the help of Mar Thomas, the Doctor, of Edessa.

The Quddasha of Mar Nestorius, Patriarch of Byzantium - i. e. the city of Constantinople - martyr, without blood, and persecuted for the sake of the orthodox faith. The Catholicos Mar Abba the Great, of blessed memory, when he went up into the region of the Romans, translated the Anaphora of Mar Nestorius and all his works from the Greek language into Syriac, as the Catholicos Mar John (Bar Abgar 900-905) indicates in the poem which he made on the Fathers.

The three anaphoras seem to be only a remnant of a richer collection that seems to have been in use in the domain of the Church of the East. Let us first review the known historic references (cfr. I.M. Hanssens, *Institutiones Liturgicae de Ritibus Orientalibus*, III, n. 1.533--37, pp. 622-24):

The Anaphora of Diodore of Tarsus (391/3) as being used by the Chaldeo-Malabareses, according to the testimony of the acts of the Synod of Diamper (1599 A.D.) (Decretum II, Mansi 35, p. 1250 CD):

„CXXI. Cum in missalibus huius episcopatus nonnullae existent missae, quae Nestorium, aliae quae Theodorum, aliae vero quae Diodorum, ipsius (seu Nestorii) magistros, auctores habent, quas cassanarii certis diebus recitare iubentur ... praecipit synodus ut omnes, prout iacent, integrae proscindantur e missalibus et comburantur...”

The Chronicle of Seert states that Saint Ephrem (†373)

„composed a liturgy which the Melchites have used until the present time. The Nestorians also celebrated it until the days of Metropolitan Išho'yahb who, when he arranged the order of the prayers, chose three Anaphoras and forbade the use of the rest“ (ed. A. Scher, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, IV, p.295).

'Abdišo' of Nisibis, the author of the Catalogue of Authors, states from his side that: Nestorius „wrote a prolix liturgy, which was translated by Thomas and Mar

Abba“ J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, III, I, PP. 139-). He enlists also a liturgy (Quddasha) under the name of Barsauma, Bishop of Nisibis (435-489) (Assemani, *Bibliotheca*, III, Catalogue, c. 54, p. 66), and a „Qurrah Qurbana“ under the name of Narsai the Teacher and Head of the School of Nisibis (437-502) (Ibid., c. 53, p. 65).

Narsai, in his *Memra on the Mysteries of the Church*, refers his comment to an anaphora or treatise of Theodore (Mingana, I, p. 284; Connolly, *Liturgical Homilies*, pp. 16-17; cfr. also Cyrus of Edessa, *Six Explanations*, pp. 49-50). However, commenting on the intercessions, he mentions the anaphora of Nestorius by name. (Mingana, I, p. 288; Connolly, *Liturgical Homilies*, p. 20, n. 4).

A fragment of a lost anaphora of the Church of the East has been published first by G. Bickell, then by R.H. Connolly (in *Oriens Christianus* XII-XIV, 1923-4, pp. 99-128.). It is remarkable for having the narrative of the institution without reporting the words of Christ.

The only mention of the anaphoras of the Church of the East by a Greek orthodox author is the one made by Leontius of Byzantium about the year 531, in the context of his polemic with Theodore of Mopsuestia:

„He also had the effrontery to perpetrate another evil, not second to those we have mentioned. For he concocted another anaphora besides that which had been handed down from the Fathers to the churches. He had respect neither for that of the Apostles, nor for that which was composed by Basil the Great in the very Spirit, thinking that would be worth something, in which anaphora he filled up the service with blasphemies one cannot call them prayers.“ (Contra Nestorianos et Eutychianos, III, XIX; P.G. LXXXVI, c. 1.368).

We may conclude from this text that at the time of Leontius:

1. There was an anaphora with the title of The Apostles.
2. There was also another anaphora known under the name of Theodore of Mopsuestia.
3. The perception was that the Anaphora of the Apostles „has been handed down from the Fathers to the churches“.

The fact of the residency of Mar Abba and his companion, Thomas, in Constantinople at that time is confirmed by the information given to us in *Christiana Topographia*, II, of Cosmas Indicopleustes (c. 547-9) (Patr. Gr. 88, 73 A. Note that the Latin translation is erroneous here; ed. also Wolska-Conus W., tom I, Paris 1968, p. 306).

Of all of these anaphoras, why is it that only three are left for us today?

The answer has been given to us by the Chronicle of Seert: „(It was) Išho'yahb who, when he arranged the order of the prayers, chose three Anaphoras and forbade the use of the rest“ (ed. A. Scher, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, IV, p. 295). Among the three anaphoras, the Quddasha of Addai and Mari is doubtless the main liturgy of the Church of the East. It is the most venerable and the most discussed. One of its major features is the absence of the narrative of the eucharistic institution. On this feature we shall focus our research.

The Quddasha of Addai and Mari
The Narrative of the Eucharistic Institution, the Crux of the Matter

The Commentators

Theodore of Mopsuestia:

Eventhough he is not a member of the hierarchy of the Church of the East, Theodore held a prominent position among her theologians and exegets. He is the Interpreter par excellence. After having explained the Sanctus and the christological prayer of the anaphora that he exposes in his last Catechesis (Raymond Tonneau-Robert Devreese, *Studi e Testi*, Vatican 1949, Homelie XVI, p. 541-5), Theodore goes on with the following, unclear description:

„We make a remembrance of the death of our Lord in this awesome service, and we receive the immortal and spiritual food: the body and blood of Christ. (We) to whom our Lord, *when he approached suffering, delivered the (mysteries) to his disciples, so that through them all of us who believe in Christ will receive them and benefit from them...* Successively, we do the memory of the death of Christ our Lord, from which we accept the undescribable food. Thus, hope is given for us able to attract us toward the futur (goods).

The priest utters these and like these in this holy service. In the commemoration of those things that happened, he prepares us all to see, through these offerings, the gift of Christ.

Now Christ, our Lord, must rise from the dead through what is being performed. He shall pour in all of us his grace, which cannot happen but through the advent of the grace of the Holy Spirit, who has already raised him“.

As general and vague that the text might seem, it has nevertheless established a pattern of interpretation for the Assyro-Chaldean commentators. The general lines of that pattern are:

- a) In the offertory and the sections that follows the liturgy expresses the image of the death of Christ; in the anaphora the image expressed is that of the resurrection.
- b) The priest, through the eucharistic form that he uses, makes a commemoration of those things that happened as Christ did them.
- c) The liturgical resurrection of Christ is done through the grace of the Holy Spirit that is invoked.
- d) The phrase: „When he approached suffering“, rings well as a reference to a liturgical text.

Narsai (†502) is the most ancient Mesopotamian commentator of the liturgy of his church. His XVII Memra, when it comes to the anaphora, does not relate to the text of Addai and Mari but to that of Nestorius.

- Lord Jesus departed from us to the upper country, so that by his coming he will lift us with him to the upper kingdom.
- Because he went to a country beyond our knowledge, he wanted to console us with his body and blood until his return.

- Giving his church his own body and blood was impossible, thus he commanded us to do this mystery in the bread and wine.
- What a blessing for the Christian people to possess, and what a hope without end is reserved to them in heaven.
- *So when the time arrived of the suffering of the Savior, he ate the legal Pes-ha with his disciples.*
- *He took bread and blessed, he broke and gave to his disciples, and said: this is my body, truly without doubt.*
- *He took the cup, gave thanks and blessed and gave to his apostles, saying: this truly is my blood for your sake.*
- *He ordered them all to take and drink from so it will forgive their faults for ever.*
- That he gave thanks and blessed, it is so written in the living Gospel, as to what he said, we were not talled by the chosen apostles.
- *The prominent among teachers and exegets, Theodore, delivered unto us what the Lord would have said when he took the bread:...*
- In this fashion, the Son of the most high raised thanks to his father, and he uttered these words when he gave his body and blood:
- This is my body that I have given for the life of the world, and this is my blood also that I have wanted to be shed in ransom for the sins.
- Whoever eats with love from my body and drinks from my blood, will live forever and will remain in me and I in him.
- You shall do so in your churches for my commemoration, and shall take my body and blood in faith.
- You shall offer bread and wine as I taught you, I will complete them and make them body and blood.
- *I will make the bread and wine body und blood, through the descent and the efficacy of the Holy Spirit.*
- In that fashion spoke the savior of the universe with his disciples, calling the bread and wine his body and blood.
- He did not call them „type“ or resemblance, but definitely body and truly blood.
- Eventhough their nature is immeasurably distant from him, through the power and unity (of God) one is the body...
- By the Power (of God) one is the body that the priests break in the church with that body which is sitting in glory to the right hand (of the Father).
- As the God of the universe is united to the head of our race, so is Christ united with the body and blood that are on the altar...
- *The apostles have received the command of their master carefully, then they passed it diligently to their posterity.*
- It is kept until this moment in the church, and shall be kept, until the mystery will be dissolved in his apparition and epiphany.
- *In this fashion the priest confesses in front of God, raising his voice at the end of the prayer so that the people could hear.*

• He raises his voice signing with his hand the Raze layed there, the people follow up answering with Amen as a conclusion. (Mingana, I, pp. 283-5).

Narsai expands on the Theodorian pattern, making it more concise and more inclusive. We underline here the following features in his comment:

1) The author certainly comments on the narrative of the eucharistic institution as part of the second Gehantha or section of the anaphora, giving us a paraphrase of its incipit and text: „When the time arrived of the suffering of the Savior, he ate the legal easter with his disciples...” etc. which is quite similar to the parallel section of the Anaphora of Nestorius.

2) Also, the intercession before the epiclesis is certainly not that of Addai and Mari, but that of Mar Nestorius.

3) Narsai mentions that at the end of the anaphora the priest raises his voice and makes the sign of the cross over the offerings.

4) The mysteries are sanctified through the descent and efficacy of the Holy Spirit.

5) There is unity between the body of Christ that the priests break in liturgy with the one which is in heaven.

Išo'yahb I (c. 587), in his response to the Bishop of Darai, describes a common feature of the Mesopotamian anaphora: „(The priest) at the end of each sequential section, duly glorifying with his tongue, draws with his hand over the divine mysteries - according to the norm - the sign of the lordly cross. When he finishes the three sections he draws near to sign...” (Synodicon, text, p. 169)

Gabriel Qatraya (c. 615) makes this comment in his introduction to the anaphora:

Up to this point, the church expresses with its images (typoi) the mystery of the death and burial of Christ. Thence, the priest approaches to express the image of resurrection, by the recitation of the holy words by his mouth and through the signing of the cross with his hand. For just as our Lord Jesus Christ, when he handed over these mysteries blessed, gave thanks and spoke, so likewise the church, according to his command, designates one priest to bless and give thanks in the likeness of Christ our Lord, through the recitation making known that he says the words of our Lord, namely: this is my body which is broken for you for the remission of sins.

As soon as the priest recites and blesses the bread and wine, by the grace of the Holy Spirit that comes down, thereupon they become the body and blood of Christ, not according to nature but according to faith and efficacy. Not that Christ would have two bodies: one in heaven and another on earth. Rather, just as a king and his image do not constitute two kings - neither does the manhood taken from us constitute two sons, but one son of God who has taken our manhood - similarly this body with that which is in heaven are one body of Christ.

Therefore the priest should fulfill this dreadful service rightly with awe and guard, knowing that in that moment he stands in the place of Christ, blessing and giving thanks. (f. 199r-200r).

Expanding on the commentary of Theodore and Narsai and articulating with more concision, G. Qatraya formulates his theory with patent clarity:

a) Until this moment, i.e. until the placement of the offrands on the altar, the ceremonial has expressed or enacted the mystery of the death and burial of Christ.

From now on, the priest will approach the altar to express the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord.

b) This mystery of resurrection is manifested through two acts:

1) the recitation by the priest of specific holy words, and

2) the execution of the sign of the cross with his hand.

c) The holy words are those related to the Last Supper. The Church, in fact, in fulfillment of the command of Christ, appoints a priest in order to do what Christ has done, i.e.: to bless, give thanks, and show in the formula that he uses that he is saying the very words that the Lord said: this is my body which is broken for your ransom for the forgiveness of sins. Moreover, the priest stands at the altar in the place of Christ.

d) When the priest blesses the bread and wine with the sign of the cross, they become, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the body and blood of Christ, not according to the law of nature, but in faith, according to the power of God.

e) The transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord doesn't mean a multiplication of bodies of Christ. Therefore, we have on the altar the very body of Christ which is in heaven.

E. Kilmartin (*John Chrysostom's influence on Gabriel Qatraya's theology of eucharistic consecration*, Theological Studies, 1981 pp. 444-457) has presented parallel passages in Chrysostom's homilies, thus establishing a link of dependency between G. Qatraya and Chrysostom.

Abraham Qatraya:

A text parallel to that of Gabriel is found in the Interpretation of Offices of Abraham Bar Lip(h)ah (Cormolly, p. 162 trans., text.). This text is identical with the text of Gabriel, except on one addition and two omissions. The addition is related to the command of the Lord to repeat what he has done in his memory. The omissions are:

a) at the beginning, where he omits to say that the priest represents the resurrection of Christ through the recitation of the holy word and the gesturing of the sign of the cross;

b) in the middle, where after stating that the priest with his words shows that he is saying the words of the Lord, does not quote those very words as does Gabriel.

The above-mentioned omissions make the text less clear in regard to the text of Gabriel but they do not alter its basic meaning.

The Anonymus author of the Expositio Officiorum quotes the final doxology of Nestorius and mentions once his anaphora explicitly, calling it by name (pp. 56-64). He paraphrases the thanksgiving for the redemption with clear parallels with Nestorius. He quotes Theodore one time too. It is to be noted that the Author of the Expositio does not give any specific theological reflection on the consecration of the offerings, but only a description of the content of the anaphora.

It is useful to add to the list of ancient authors later theologians that would reflect a position in line with that of Gabriel. One of them is Yohannan Bar Zo'bi (XIII century, cfr. Baumstark, *Geschichte...*, pp. 310-11), the other is 'Abdišo' of Nisibis (†1318).

Yohannan Bar Zo'bi has a commentary on the divine Razeh, contained in the Vatican Library manuscript Borgia Syriac 90, and after examination results to be a reproduction in poetry of G. Qatraya's commentary. Without missing any of the elements of the text of Gabriel, Bar Zo'bi includes the addition of Abraham regarding the command of the Lord. (ff. 48r.-49r).

Mar 'Abdišo of Nisibis in his book: *Ecclesiastic Judgments* (cfr. Jacobus-M. Voste, *Ordo Iudiciorum Ecclesiasticorum*, Vatican 1940, p. 97) interprets the anaphora and the action of the celebrant executing it as follows:

„The priest does three prostrations in front of the altar, then he approaches to consecrate. This is an image of the fact that our Lord rose from the dead the third day and had announced salvation to our race. Then the priest, through the invocation of the Holy Spirit, makes the body arise mystically. His standing in front of the altar, reciting the prayers of the consecration of the mysteries, (expresses) the image of our Lord, who gave thanks and blessed, broke and gave to his disciples, saying: 'This is my body which is broken for you', and: 'This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. Thus, receive it all of you, eat of this bread and drink from this chalice; do like this whenever you gather together in my commemoration'.“

Thus, Mar 'Abdišo' knows clearly that:

- a) the priest comes to the altar to consecrate and by so doing he expresses, „in mystery“, the resurrection of Christ;
- b) this resurrection is effected by the invocation to the Holy Spirit;
- c) the priest stands to consecrate in representation of Christ himself; therefore he recites the narrative of the Last Supper and Jesus' own words over the bread and wine.

Moreover, Mar 'Abdišo' in a successive text seems to attribute to the words of Christ a consecratory role, without specifying to which words he is referring. The passage comments on why the celebrant receives holy communion first:

The celebrating priest first takes the Eucharist himself. Thus he shows that he has need of sharing in these holy mysteries more than the others, although he was, in his service, the mediator. But the one (Christ) who has sanctified is greater than all. Namely, he lives always and offers prayers for them. *By his word and the power of the Spirit*, whom he sent, they (the mysteries) have become sanctified. (p. 101).

Mar Timotheus II (1318-32) is the last of the classic Assyro-Chaldean commentators. His treaty on the Seven Issues of the Sacraments of the Church, a manuscript yet to be explored, provides us with an account of the Institution Narrative, including the dominical words, but without any comment in regard to their role in the consecration. (Vat. Syr. 151: IV, ff. 115r--115v).

Three conclusions should be drawn from this exposition of commentators:

- 1) Either explicitly or implicitly, all Assyro-Chaldean commentators refer to the Institution Narrative as part of the anaphora they comment.
- 2) One line of authors focus more on the epiclesis and in the advent of the Holy Spirit as the divine power effecting consecration.
- 3) Another line of commentators, headed by Gabriel Qatraya, attribute to the narrative of the Last Supper and to the words of the Lord an importance, if not a

value, equal to the one attributed to the epiclesis; both form together cardinal parts of the consecratory rite.

Addai and Mari compared to Sharrar

The Quddasha of A&M as edited first by Macomber, and in more finished version by Gelston (*The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari*, Oxford 1992), presents to us the following structure:

Introductory dialogue

Ist Ghanta: Praise and Thanksgiving for creation and redemption; Sanctus.

IInd Ghanta: Thanksgiving for salvation plan and Doxology.

IInd Ghanta: Commemoration of Fathers, Prayer for peace, the Purpose of our piety, Reference to the Last Supper.

Epiclesis and Doxology.

This structure stands in net distinction from the Antiochean type of anaphoras (Chrysostome, Basil, and Jacob), having the following structure: Thanksgiving, Institution, Anamnesis, Epiclesis, Intercessions.

Theodore and Nestorius present the following structure:

Ist Ghanta: Thanksgiving; Sanctus.

IInd Ghanta: Salvation Plan, Eucharistic Institution, Anamnesis and Doxology.

IIIrd Ghanta: Intercessions.

Epiclesis, Doxology.

Peter III or Sharrar Structure:

According to the text edited by Sauget:

Praise for creation and redemption; Sanctus.

Thanksgiving for salvation plan, Doxology.

Commemoration of Fathers, Institution, Commemoration of Fathers.

Epiclesis.

Principal Question

Since „the possibility remains... that the Anaphora of Addai and Mari is the earliest actual anaphora extant, and it is almost certainly the earliest still in regular use“ (Gelston, 1992, p. 76), the text of A&M remains worthy of great veneration and of serious consideration for the history of primordial eucharistic prayer. However our main subject in this presentation, which is at the same time the crux matter of A&M, is the absence of the institution narrative in all the formulary manuscripts. How is it to be explained? Was it absent from the beginning of the formation of the anaphora? Was the anaphora abridged at some later time and the narrative removed from it? A convincing answer to this question may well be the secret route to the hidden treasure!

The hypothesis of the existence of the narrative in the original text of A&M:

The fact that A&M and Peter III Sharrar exhibit a major textual similarity between them induce us to date those similar segments to a time that should precede

the drifting of the church of Mesopotamia away from her western, mainly Antiochian and bordering Syriac brothers, either for political or doctrinal reasons, that is prior to A.D. 431, as correctly indicated by Macomber (The Maronite and Chaldean Versions, 1971, p. 79). Since this anaphora, even in its common core, exhibits a structure different from the Antiochian and Syrian structure, I don't see why it should originate in the „Aramaic-speaking regions of Syria“ (ibid.). For that very reason it is more coherent to ascribe it to the Aramaic-speaking regions of Mesopotamia adjacent to the Syrian borders. Since the narrative of institution is a major differential segment between the two similar anaphoras, the question arises: has a Mesopotamian or Persian reviser abridged the original anaphora, removing from it the last supper narrative, or has an Antiochian reviser of Peter III added the narrative, inserting it between the commemoration of upright fathers?

The Nomocanon of Abulfaraj Ibn-at-Tayyib (†1043) says of the Anaphora of the Apostles: „The Quddasha of the Apostles was composed by Addai and Mari; the Catholicos 'Išo'yahb of Adiabene abridged it“ (W. Hoenerbach und O. Spies, *Ibn At-Tayyib, Fiqh An-Nasraniya*, CSCO, vol 168, Arabici, tom. 19, Louvain 1956, p. 93).

The Chronicle of the Jacobite Patriarch Michael the Great (1166-1199) says of 'Išo'yahb: „And he reduced the liturgy of Nestorius to an abridgment; for it was exceedingly prolix“ (Michael I, *Chronicle*, IV, 776 A (text, III, 521 (tr.))

Rahmani remarks that no trace can be found of the original text contemplated by Ibn-at-Tayyib (*Les Liturgies*, pp. 338, 352). While Baumstark comments on the statement of the Michael I that „this, in view of the already considerable prolixity of this formulary, can only rest upon a misunderstanding ; and it must rather be attributed to the anaphora of the Apostles, whose text as it has come to us actually makes an impression of decided abbreviation“ (*Geshishte*, p. 199).

Among several Scholars, such as Raes, Dalmais, Bouyer, and Spinks, who argued in different ways in favor of the original existence of Institution Narrative in the A&M, I would give a special mention to B. Bott and W. Macomber.

Botte, in a serie of articles (L'Anaphore Chaldéenne des Apôtres, OCP 15, 1949, pp. 259-276; Problèmes de l'Anamnèse, JEH 5, 1954, pp. 16-24; Problèmes de l'Anaphore Syrienne des Apôtres Addai et Mari, Or. Syr 10, 1965, pp. 89-106) has studied the paragraph of the anaphora: „And we also, o Lord, your lowly, weak and miserable servants who are gathered together 'in your name' and stand before you at this time, etc.“ identifying it as anamnesis of particular type and concludes from this fact that it is an indication of the original existence of an Institution Narrative.

Macomber, also, has argued for it, following Ibn At-Tayyib in attributing the abridgment to 'Išo'yahb. (The Maronite and Chaldean Versions of the Anaphora of the Apostles, OCP 37, 1971, pp. 55-84; The ancient form of the Anaphora of the Apostles, Dumbarton Oaks Syrnposium, May 1980).

I too in 1966 have entertained that approach (Gabriel Qatraya et son commentaire sur la liturgie chaldéenne, OCP, vol XXXII, 1966, p. 52). Pêché de jeunesse! At the present time I have to discard it decisively, for the following reasons:

1) The manuscriptic tradition, as well as Leontius of Byzantium, indicates that the Anaphora of the Apostles was recognized as belonging to the apostolic era and

have been linked to the apostles of the east Addai and Mari. I don't see how a Catholicos, or any other reviser from the Church of the East, would permit himself to modify it in such an abnormal way. Leontius considered the addition of the Anaphora of Theodore to the existing Anaphora of the Apostles a lack of respect toward the latter. How much more would be the same if the text of the anaphora itself has been touched and excised.

2) The eucharistic theology of the Church of the East has developed between the fourth and seventh centuries, in line with its development west of Euphrates, to point out the importance of the Institution Narrative as an integral part of the anaphora, leave aside viewing it as a part of consecration ceremonial. We should be looking for a call to add the narrative to the anaphora, not vice versa.

3) 'Išo'yahb is truly the great reformer of the Assyro-Chaldean liturgy. If the Church of the East has three anaphoras today, this is very likely the result of his regulation. However, it does not make sense to cut off the last supper narrative from A&M and leave it untouched in Theodore and Nestorius. If there was a reason to do it, the same reason would have been applied to all of the three anaphoras.

4) If 'Išo'yahb, or any other reviser, has intended to „abridge“ A&M, there was no sufficient length of text to abridge. A&M, especially if compared to Theodore and Nestorius, is already remarkably short. If an abridging is called for, this should be in regard to Theodore and even more of Nestorius. Engberding, since 1932 (*Urgestalt, Eigenart und Entwicklung eines altantiochenischen eucharistischen Hochgebetes*, Or. Ch. 7, p. 47) questioned the accuracy of the tradition reported by Ibn-at-Tayyib and suggests that it may mean no more than the fact that 'Išo'yahb has been a „liturgical reformer“. I would add: and that A&M is shorter than Theodore and Nestorius.

5) The presence of Mar Abba and Thomas of Edessa in Constantinople around 531 AD is reported not only in the manuscriptical introduction to the anaphoras, but it is also attested by Leontius and Cosmas. To them - i.e. Abba and Thomas - attributed is the work of translation, and most probably of redaction of the two anaphoras of Theodore and Nestorius. In those turbulent times, when the Church of the East was pressured to withdraw within her borders, what was the reason for her to send two of her theologians to Byzantium in order to provide her with two more Quddashe? For what compelling reason, was the Church of the East not content with her venerated Anaphora of the Apostles?

6) How come no Assyro-Chaldean commentator ever mentions the Quddasha of the Apostles? As early as Narsai in the fifth century and as late as the fourteenth century, 'Abdišo' of Nisibis, the text they comment is not the known text of A&M.

I can see only one satisfactory answer to both questions: the A&M was not anymore in pace with the theological and liturgical developments that occurred in Christendom. Instead of introducing such a major change into the text of the Anaphora already burdened with earlier accommodations, the Assyro-Chaldean fathers preferred to formulate new Quddashe for their congregations, taking the theological material from the western fathers and casting it in Mesopotamian structure.

The Church of the East, even though isolated, administratively, from the western christianity since 424, wanted to celebrate her liturgy in unison with the „western fathers“, as it was the case all the way throughout her past history. In fact, the trisagion, the Ba'utha and Karozutha, the Unus Sanctus before the communion

are but a sample of the eucharological communion that the Church of the East wanted to have with the western fathers despite her administrative independence. The anaphoras of Theodore and Nestorius are in fact another expression of liturgical and theological communion with the western fathers.

The Institution Narrative in Peter III Sharrar

Evidently, if A&M was originally without the Institution Narrative, then the redactor of Sharrar should have added it to the original common core of both. Here is a comparative table that shows both: (I am using here Spinks' comparison table given in *Addai and Mari - the Anaphora of the Apostles: A Text for Students*, 1980)

Addai and Mari (III Ghanta):

You, O Lord, in your unspeakable mercies make a gracious remembrance for all the upright and just fathers who have been pleasing before you, in the commemoration of the body and blood of your Christ, which we offer to you upon the pure and holy altar as you taught us.

And grant us your tranquillity and your peace for all the days of the world, that all the inhabitants of the earth may know that you alone are God, the true Father, and you have sent our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son and your beloved, and he, our Lord and our God, taught us in his life giving gospel all the purity and holiness of the prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and bishops and priests and deacons, and of all the children of the holy catholic church who have been marked with the mark of holy baptism.

St. Peter III or Sharrar:

You, O Lord, therefore, in your many mercies, make a gracious remembrance for all the upright and just in the commemoration of your body and your blood which we offer to you upon your living and holy altar, as you, our hope, taught us in your holy gospel and have said: I am the bread of life which came down from heaven so that mortals may have life in me.

We make, O Lord, the memorial of your Passion as you have taught us: who, in the night that you were delivered up to the crucifiers, you took, o Lord, bread into your pure and holy hands and you looked towards your glorious Father in heaven. You blessed, and signed, hallowed, o Lord, and broke and gave to your disciples, the blessed apostles, and said to them: this bread is my body which is broken and given for the life of the world. And for those who receive it, is for the forgiveness of debts and remission of sins. Take and eat from it and it will be to you for eternal life.

And likewise over the cup you gave thanks and glorified and said, O Lord: This cup is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Take and drink from it all of you. And it will be to you for the pardon of debts and forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Amen.

For whenever you eat from this holy body and drink from this cup of life and salvation, you are calling to remembrance the death and resurrection of your Lord until the great day of coming...

We offer before you, O Lord, this oblation in memory of all upright and just fathers: prophets, apostles, martyrs and confessors; and all ... bishops ... priests and deacons ... and all of the children of the holy Church who are marked with the mark of saving baptism, and whom you have made to participate in your holy body.

On one camp, A. Raes, in his article of 1944 (*Le Récit de l'institution eucharistique dans l'anaphore chaldéenne et malabare des Apôtres*, OCP 10, pp. 216-226) has concluded that the Sharrar Institution Narrative shows signs of decadence and could not be original. On the other camp, Macomber in 1971 (*The Maronite and Chaldean Versions...*) thought that Sharrar preserves both the text and the position of the Narrative of the original common source.

Bryan Spinks in 1977 thinks that Raes is on more solid ground (*The Original Form of the Anaphora of the Apostles*, *Ephemerides Liturgica*). He notes, arguing, that the introduction of the narrative in Sharrar comes abruptly with a quotation from John's Gospel 6 „I am the bread of life...“, while there is no other direct quotation from the New Testament in the whole anaphora. Most seriously this form of Sharrar does not connect with the anamnesis of A&M. Therefore, Spinks concludes:

„Every paragraph in the Mar Eša'ya text has a parallel in the Maronite anaphora with the sole exception of the Anamnesis. If ... the text of Sharrar must be taken seriously, then why is the Anamnesis missing? Its absence suggests the possibility that the anamnesis is a later East Syrian addition to the original form of the anaphora.“ (p. 160).

As for Sharrar, my conclusion is that the maronite reviser has felt the same liturgical problem: the Anaphora of the Apostles was out of pace with the current liturgical development of his time and it needed updating.

Raes (1944, p. 224) analyzes the fragment of a Mesopotamian anaphora of sixth century which presents a peculiar form of Institution Narrative. We give here the English translation of the fragment as rendered by Gelston (1992, pp. 74-75):

„And because he was about to be taken up from our place and exalted to the place of the spiritual beings from which he had come down, he left in our hands a pledge of his holy body, that through his body he might be near to us and at all times be united to us through his power.

For before the time of his crucifixion and the hour in which he was about to be glorified, he took bread and wine which his will had made, (and) made it holy with a spiritual blessing.

And he left this awesome mystery to us, and allowed us a good likeness, that we should continually do as he did, and live through his mysteries.“

It is patent that, even though the dominical words are not included here, the anaphora refers to the Lord as taking bread and wine, sanctifying them with a blessing, and directing us to do the same in his likeness. We agree with Raes that this is not an Institution Narrative, we agree more with Gelston that „it seems to stand half-way between a full Institution Narrative of the normal kind, in which the dominical words are quoted, and the kind of allusion to the Last Supper that is to be found in (the passages) of Addai and Mari“ (o.c., p. 75).

In fact two passages of A&M make a clear and concise reference to what the Lord did in the Last Supper and connects to it the liturgical act of the church:

„...in the commemoration of the body and blood of thy Christ, which we offer to thee upon the pure and holy altar, as thou hast taught us...”

„And we also ... O my Lord, thy unworthy, frail, and miserable servants, who are gathered and stand before thee, and have received by tradition the ritual example (Tupsa) which is from thee...”

Addai and Mari as a valid Quddasha

The study of prominent contemporary liturgists such as Ligier, Dix, Bouyer, Giraudo, not to mention but a few, has shown that the classic form of the preserved anaphoras is the result of a historic process of development. Giraudo hypothesizes the stages of this process according to the following lines:

- a) The euchological formulary should be considered anterior to the Institution Narrative in the anaphora.
- b) The origin of the Institution Narrative in the anaphora should be understood in light of the dynamic of embolistic form of prayer.
- c) The primitive church, even though she has inherited from the OT and from Judaism the embolistic dynamic, had necessarily need of some length of time to become aware of the actual possibility of putting it in action, namely linking it to the scriptural theological spot of the eucharist, i.e. „ipsissima verba” uttered by Lord Jesus „the night before He suffered.” (C. Giraudo, *Eucharistia per la Chiesa*, Roma 1989, pp. 358-35)

As this study has shown, in agreement with most scholars, A&M as presented in the Hudhra of Mar ‘Eša’ya text, witnesses to the early stages of that process, somewhere between the second century and early third. Different studies have tried to distinguish various strata in the actual texture of its text, especially through comparison with Peter III. The most recent of such studies that I would like to mention is done by Jean Magne (*L’anaphore nestorienne dite d’Addée et Mari et l’anaphore maronite dite de Pierre III*, Étude comparative, OCP 53, 1987, pp. 107-158).

Even though the intention of the fathers of the Church of the East was to celebrate their liturgy in unison with the theological and liturgical developments taking place among the Western Fathers, they preferred to maintain the souvenir of early apostles and primordial euchological compositions without further modification. It was this attitude of veneration toward the Quddasha Da-Shlihe that prompted the representatives of the Church of the East to seek the west for an updated material to redact two additional anaphoras rather than introduce a major modification to the text she was using for centuries.

Conclusion

Today it is still the case with the Church of the East. A&M is a precious, venerated, and quite valid consecratory form of eucharistic prayer, because:

a) It is an euchological authentic witness and remnant of primordial Christianity and apostolic era.

b) Eventhough the Institution Narrative is not included within the text of the anaphora, the connection between the celebration of the church and Last Supper is clearly and concisely established.

c) The Church of the East has adopted two other Quddashe containing the Institution Narrative, declaring by this her intention of relating to the scriptural institutional rite of eucharist, accepting, as well, the theological and liturgical developments in Western Christianity. With that very intention the Church of the East celebrates the Quddasha of Addai and Mari until today.

Discussion

Prof. Davids: Is the approach of this paper specifically Oriental Catholic or Oriental in the general sense?

Prof. Jammo: This paper does not represent a controversy, but a new line of thought. There is not controversy in the East about the consecration of the Eucharistic elements.

Prof. Samir: I would like to ask a question about the comparison with "a king and his image". Patriarch Timotheos I uses it one century later in Trinity. Is it a traditional image in the Fathers?

Prof. Brock: It is traditional in the controversy around iconoclasm, but not so much in Christology, although it is used by Ephrem.

Dr. George: The paper says that the Church of the East was "isolated, administratively" from Western Christianity. When that Church turns to the West, what is it looking for? A Complement? Or is it aware of a defect?

Prof. Jammo: I wanted to show that the Church of the East always wanted to live and act as an integral part of the Universal Church. It had no problems to adopt elements from the West, in the 6th century for instance the Trisagion. It never felt separated, like having its own border, but in the same faith with the Universal Church.

Mar Gregorios: The term "Jacobite" is not used any longer, so it is better to avoid it and replace it by "Syrian". Is it really necessary and exact to make that distinction between the region of Antioch and Mesopotamia, when the anaphoras are concerned? Are the roots not common?

Prof. Jammo: The place of the intercessions before the Epiclesis is proper to the Mesopotamian type. It is not a question of dividing but of distinguishing.

Mar Severios: The paper puts the stress on the difference of the place of the intercessions: after the Epiclesis, in the Antiochian type, and before the Epiclesis, in the Mesopotamian type. Why and how did this difference come about?

Prof. Jammo: Recent liturgical studies on the differentiation of the anaphoras give great importance to the place of the intercessions. In the 2nd century there was probably a common core. Later the Antiochian, Alexandrian and Mesopotamian types of anaphora developed.

Mar Severios: Is there a theological background for this differentiation?

Prof. Jammo: No, it is a purely liturgical question.

Prof. Samir: The Alexandrian tradition of anaphora, only preserved in some papyri, has the intercessions before the Epiclesis. Since the Copts are now accustomed to use the (Antiochian) liturgy of Basil most of the time, the Alexandrian type has become strange to them. As a consequence, the few days they celebrate the anaphora of Alexandrian origin, they tend to change the place of the intercessions and have them after the Epiclesis. I could be interesting to compare the Alexandrian and Mesopotamian traditions.

Prof. Jammo: At present, liturgical research tends to go back to the "birket hamazon" in the Jewish tradition. The anaphora of Addai and Mari is widely studied, because it seems to reflect the tradition of the Apostles to a greater extent.

Peter Hofrichter

THE ANAPHORA OF ADDAI AND MARI IN THE CHURCH OF THE EAST – EUCHARIST WITHOUT INSTITUTION NARRATIVE?

1. The Anaphoras in Use in the East Syrian Tradition

Unlike the West Syrian tradition of the Jacobites and Maronites that shows a great variety of anaphoras the East Syrian tradition knows and uses only three anaphoras:

- a) the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari,
- b) the Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia,
- c) the Anaphora of Nestorius.

These three anaphoras were selected and brought into definite form as early as in the seventh century by the Catholicos 'Išo'yahb III of Adiabene, who at the same time banned all other Anaphoras.¹

¹ According to the Chronicle of Seert, in: J. M. Hanssens, *Institutiones liturgicae de ritibus orientalibus II*, Roma 1930, 467. Only by name (and by only one fragment) three other East Syrian anaphoras are known: those of Barsauma, of Narsai and of Diodore of Tarsus. Cf. A. A. King, *Liturgie d'Antioche. Rite Syrien et rite Chaldéen*, Paris 1967, 206f.

The anaphora of the oldest tradition, which is still predominantly used in eucharistic celebrations is that of the Apostles Addai and Mari. This anaphora is used from the day after Palm-Sunday till the end of the liturgical year, except on feasts of the day. The other two anaphoras are not only of later origin but also less used: The Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia is celebrated from the beginning of the liturgical year – we would say from Advent – till Palm-Sunday and on feasts of the day. The Anaphora of Nestorius is reserved to only five feasts before Easter: Epiphany, John the Baptist, the Greek Teachers of the Church, Wednesday of the Fasting of the Ninivites and Tuesday of the Holy Week.

But the Anaphoras of Theodore of Mopsuestia and of Nestorius have their origin in Asia Minor. They belong to the Byzantine tradition and were translated from Greek into Syriac only in the middle the 6th century. We even know the persons responsible. Both anaphoras have been brought back from a visit to the Byzantine Empire and translated into Syriac by Catholicos Mar Abba, who was in office from 540 to 552. And this Mar Abba was assisted in his work by Mar Thoma, the "Teacher of Edessa."² On the other hand the Anaphora of Addai and Mari must have originated in Syria itself at a very early time, probably in Edessa in the 3rd or 2nd century.

2. The Question of the Missing Institution Narrative

The anaphoras used by the Assyrian Church feature two issues of dogmatic interest. One of them, which I am not going to treat here, is that of the christological background and the understanding of the Eucharist in the texts under the name of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius. The other one is that of the missing institution narrative in the Anaphora of the Apostles.

Whereas the Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Anaphora of Nestorius do contain the words of eucharistic institution, as do other Western and Oriental liturgies, the old Anaphora of the Apostles or of Addai and Mari does not. Since the 16th century, when the Church of the East and the Thomas-Christians in India came into close contact with the Roman Catholic Church, Catholic theologians became aware of the fact that the holy mass as it is most frequently celebrated in this tradition did not contain an institution narrative, which was considered by the Latins the most essential part of the eucharistic high prayer.

The Latin concept of the consecration and transsubstantiation by and at the moment of the words of the institution dates back to the 12th century and at that time was not yet commonly accepted even among Western theologians.³ The development of this view was obviously supported by the fact that in Latin tradition the epiclesis is prayed before and not after the institution narrative.

The Council of Florence imposed on the Armenians the theory of St. Thomas Aquinas that in terms of Aristotelian philosophy the "forma" of the Eucharist is the

² J. Vadakkel, *The East Syrian Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Kottayam 1989, 221. According to S. Jammo and his paper "The Quddasia of the Apostles Addai and Mari" read in Vienna 1994, these informations are found in the titles of liturgical manuscripts presented by J. E. Y. Kelaita, *The Liturgy of the Church of the East*, Mossul 1928.

³ J. Betz, *Eucharistie und Patristik* (Schmaus-Grillmaier, *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV, 4a), Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1979, 27.

words of institution spoken by the priest "in persona Christi."⁴ Although this doctrine had never before been explicitly dogmatized nor was repeated at the Council of Trent,⁵ it has always been considered to be a Catholic dogma.

Western theologians in their majority were and still are convinced that the institution narrative was omitted in the manuscripts only because of respect and originally was and should be spoken by heart. Therefore also those East Syrian Christians who since the 16th century came into Union with Rome, namely the Chaldeans and Malabars in India, had to insert the institution narrative into their liturgical books. For the same reason the Anglicans in the last century also printed liturgical books for the Assyrians with the institution narrative added.⁶ Whether or not these additions were right must be questioned.

All old manuscripts of this anaphora are without an institution narrative, the oldest of them – as already mentioned – dating back to the 10th or 11th century.⁷ The older Catholic Chaldean and Malabar missals show the institution narrative as an addition only at the end of the anaphora. Only the more recent ones have it as an insertion within the anaphora itself after the Sanctus.⁸ Obviously there existed no authentic oral tradition of an institution narrative in this anaphora and where it should be spoken. Moreover there is no space for it unless the coherence of the text is interrupted. Since the Maronite anaphora called "Sharar" has much in common with that of the Apostles it was supposed to have preserved the original institution narrative of the Apostles Anaphora.⁹ But there are still good reasons to maintain that the ante-Nicene Anaphora never contained an institution narrative and that this East Syrian tradition is justified.¹⁰

3. Can Eucharist without Institution Narrative be Authentic?

3.1. Other Anaphoras of Syrian Origin without the Words of Institution

First, there are the partial parallels of other liturgies of Syrian origin without the words of institution. There is a fragment of an East Syrian anaphora of the 6th century out of use that does contain an institution narrative but without the words of institution.¹¹ Other parallels of this kind have their origin in the West Syrian tradition. Also the Ethiopian Anaphora of Jacob of Sarug, unlike from the Anaphora of

the Apostles, does relate the fact that Jesus celebrated the Eucharist with his disciples but does not quote or mention any words he spoke on that occasion. The priest says in this anaphora:

*"Thou hast taken bread in thy holy hands to give it to thy pure apostles. Thou who then hast blessed also now bless this bread. And again (thou wast) mixing a cup of wine with water to give it to the disciples. Thou who then hast sanctified also now, o Lord, sanctify this chalice. Thou who then hast distributed distribute also now this cup. Who then hast united unite also now this chalice with this bread that it may be thy flesh and thy blood."*¹²

Instead of quoting the words which according to Paul and the Synoptics Jesus spoke, this anaphora shows only an anamnesis of the eucharistic meal Jesus had with his disciples and a prayer that the holy elements may be his flesh and blood. Of course, this is not an institution narrative in the full sense and in line with the traditional Catholic requirement of transubstantiation through Jesus' words spoken by the priest.

This absence of the words of institution being absolutely unique among the Ethiopian anaphoras is not unnormal in the West Syrian tradition from where this anaphora must have its origin. Among the Anaphoras used by the Syrian Orthodox Church there are three where the words of institution are missing: the Anaphora of St. Peter, the Anaphora of Xystus of Rome and the Anaphora of Dionysius Jacob Barsalibi.¹³ In this the priest says:

*"When he prepared for the redemptive passion, he took bread and blessed, sanctified and broke, and called it His Holy Body for eternal life for those who receive it. Amen. And also the cup blended with wine and water, He blessed and sanctified and completed as His Precious Blood of eternal life for those who receive it."*¹⁴

Even the Anaphora of John Chrysostomus according to the Syrian tradition contains the words of signification only for the bread but not for the cup:

*"Likewise he took the cup, blessed, sanctified and gave His disciples, saying: Take, drink of it all of you for the remission of debts, the forgiveness of sins and for everlasting life."*¹⁵

While the institution in these cases is at least recorded as a fact it is not even mentioned in the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari.

⁴ Denzinger-Schönmetzer 1321.

⁵ Cf. Denzinger-Schönmetzer 1640.

⁶ King, *Liturgie d'Antioche* 203: "... en 1890 les Anglicans publièrent une édition de la liturgie à l'usage des dissidents. Les Paroles de l'institution furent insérées dans la liturgie des Apôtres ..."

⁷ W. F. Macomber, *The Oldest Known Text of the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari*, OCP 32 (1966) 335-371. J. Betz, *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV, 4a, 61f.

⁸ Vadakkil, *Anaphora of Mar Theodore of Mopsuestia* 215, footn. 35: "Surprisingly enough, the Chaldeans and the Syro-Malabarians had it in the post-anaphora just before the fraction. See Ms. Vatican Syriac 43 & 44 for the Chaldean evidence and the Taksas of 1774 and 1844 for the Syro-Malabar evidence. But at present both of them have joined it to the post-sanctus prayer."

⁹ W. F. Macomber, *The Maronite and Chaldean Versions of the Anaphora of the Apostles*, OCO 37 (1971) 55-84. To the whole discussion cf. B. D. Spinks, *Addai and Mari - The Anaphora of the Apostles. A Text for Students*, Bramcote Notts 1980.

¹⁰ Thus at last: A. Gelson, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari*, Oxford 1992, and S. Jammo in his paper "The Quddasia of the Apostles Addai and Mari" (1994).

¹¹ MS. Brit Mus. Add. 14669 ff. 20 sqq; F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, Vol. I. Eastern Liturgies, Oxford 1967 = 1886, 511-518: 515, l. 27-35.

¹² S. Euringer, *Die äthiopischen Anaphoren des hl. Evangelisten Johannes des Donnersohnes und des hl. Jacobus von Sarug* (Orientalia Christiana 33,1), Roma 1934.

¹³ Anaphoras. *The Book of the Divine Liturgies According to the Rite of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch*. Translated from the original Syriac by Achdeacon Murad Saliba Barsom, edited and published by Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, Lodi (N. J.) 1991, 190. 256. 442.

¹⁴ Anaphoras 442, vgl. Euringer, *Anaphoren* 82 and 110f. He refers to Pierre Dib, *Étude sur la Liturgie Maronite*, Paris 1919, 59, *Separatum* out of the review "Le canoniste contemporain".

¹⁵ Anaphoras 300

3.2. Witnesses of the Second Century

Nonetheless, it is exactly this tradition of total absence of any reference to the institution which can be traced back as early as to the second century. In the apocryphal Acts of Thomas and of John we find at least six eucharistic liturgies all of which are not related to the institution.¹⁶ Four of them consist of a more or less extended prayer which is immediately followed by the breaking of the eucharistic bread and its distribution. Two of those liturgies are found in the Acts of John, in the chapters 85f and 106-110,¹⁷ Another one of the same kind is reported in the Acts of Thomas in chapter 133.¹⁸ All these celebrations of eucharist are performed with bread alone, moreover they don't speak of the body or flesh of Jesus and they do not refer to his death. One celebration in chapter 49f of the Acts of Thomas while equally using bread alone does speak of body and blood of Jesus.¹⁹ Only two other reports in the Acts of Thomas, in the chapters 120 and 158, where the eucharist comes immediately after a baptism, show celebrations with both bread and cup. But again only one of these refers to the body and blood of Jesus and to the salvation by his death on the cross. The Apostle Thomas takes here, in chapter 158, bread and cup, blesses and speaks:

"Thy holy body that was crucified for us we eat, and thy blood that was shed for our salvation we drink. May thy body become for us salvation and may thy blood serve for forgiving of sins."

Thereupon follows the memory of single details of the passion with prayers resulting from them. The last part of this anamnesis is that of the resurrection:

*"Therefore that thou hast risen and hast come to life again let also us come to life again and live and stand before thee in just judgement."*²⁰

Then Thomas breaks the bread and distributes the Eucharist. But even here the event of the institution according to Paul and the synoptic Gospels is not at all mentioned. Instead of Christ's death his resurrection is commemorated and Eucharist is understood as a promise of life.

We may object that the orthodoxy of the Acts of John and of Thomas can be doubted. At least the Acts of John teach a dualistic Christology in which the godhood of Christ is not affected by the death of his body. This may also have influenced the understanding of Eucharist. But on the other hand, as we shall see, the breaking of the eucharistic bread without the interpretation as the body of Christ and without reference to his salutary death has its basis already in the New Testament.

3.3. The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles or Didaché

Of course, more relevant than the witness of two apocryphal Acts of Apostles is that of the "Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles" or Didaché the orthodoxy of which has never been doubted. The Didaché teaches and explicitly decrees a eucharistic prayer²¹ which in no way refers to the institution nor to the passion and which does not even interpret bread and cup as body and blood of Christ:

"As to the eucharist: Thus you shall say thank: First as to the cup: We thank thee, our father for the holy vine of David, thy servant, whom thou hast revealed to us through Jesus, thy servant. Unto thee be the glory in eternity. As to the bread: We thank thee, our father for the life that thou hast revealed to us through Jesus thy servant. Unto thee be the glory in eternity. As this was spread on the mountains and gathered became one bread, so thy church shall be gathered from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom! For thine is the glory and the power in eternity. – But nobody shall eat nor drink of your Eucharist except those baptised in the name of the Lord. For also about this has the Lord said: Don't give the holy to the dogs!"

This liturgical text is followed by a second example of a Eucharist Prayer for the case that eucharist is celebrated after a meal.²² Here the holy elements are called spiritual food and spiritual drink.

The Didaché dates from between 80 and 130 AD and according to common conviction originated in Syria. It deals with the doctrine of the two ways, with the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, with the ministers of the church and with eschatology. Mainly because of the lack of an institution narrative some scholars deny that the Didaché teaches the celebration of Eucharist.²³ But the evidence is that this document treats the most important matters of church life. It would make little sense to speak about baptism, fasting, daily prayer and then go on and elaborate on some opening prayer for an ordinary meal with bread and wine called eucharist but not on Eucharist in the proper sense. However, the parallel introductions: "As to the baptism thus shall you baptize" and "As to the eucharist thus shall you thank" and the fact that only the baptized are allowed to receive this eucharist prove that we are really dealing with the sacrament.²⁴ Evidently and exactly in line with the apocryphal apostle acts, the Didaché bears witness to the early celebration of the Eucharist without an institution narrative and in distance to the Pauline and Synoptic traditions. A similar witness also is found in Justin Martyr 1 Apol 67:

¹⁶ Cf. C. Vogel, *Anaphores eucharistiques préconstantiniennes*, Augustinianum 20 (1980) 401-410.

¹⁷ Vogel, 404f. W. Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen II. Apostolisches, Apokalypsen und Verwandtes*, Tübingen (5. Auflage) 1989, 186f.

¹⁸ Vogel, 406-409. Schneemelcher, *Apokryphen II*, 354.

¹⁹ Schneemelcher, *Apokryphen II*, 323f.

²⁰ Schneemelcher, *Apokryphen II*, 363.

²¹ Cf. B. Kollmann, *Ursprung und Gestalten der frühchristlichen Mahlfeier* (Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten 43) Göttingen 1990, 94-101. Thus also Vogel and Betz.

²² *Zwölf-Apostel-Lehre, Apostolische Überlieferung* (Fontes Christiani 1), Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1991, 120-123.

²³ At last again: K. Niederwimmer, *Die Didache* (KAV), Göttingen 1975, 172-209, and G. Schöllgen, in: *Zwölf-Apostel-Lehre, Apostolische Überlieferung* (Fontes Christiani 1), Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1991, 50-54.

²⁴ A certain difficulty of the text is the sequence of the chapters 9 and 10, that is of the prayer over bread and wine and the prayer after the meal of saturation. Commonly they are supposed to represent a unity and to belong to one and the same celebration which indeed is difficult because the second one ends with an invitation to communion. Obviously the two prayers show two different possibilities to celebrate eucharist: one absolute form and one alternative form following a meal (cf. Paul in 1Cor 11,20.33-34 and Lc 22,19-20) ending with an invitation to the "holy ones". This makes sense only in a meeting of faithful.

"... The leader of the congregation thanks as well as possible and the people say: Amen. Then the eucharist is distributed."

3.4. Biblical evidence

As commonly known, the Gospel of John contrary to the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke does not mention the institution of the Eucharist at the last supper. According to the Fourth Gospel the basis of the celebration of the Eucharist is the marvelous feeding or the multiplication of bread. The origin of the Fourth Gospel may again be found in Syria, at least that of its pre-redactional layer, which did not yet speak of flesh and blood of Jesus, but only of Jesus himself as the living bread coming down from heaven (Jn 6,32-41). It is noteworthy that also the Synoptic Gospels equally use eucharistic terminology and motives in their reports of the multiplication of bread.

The earliest witness of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper is St. Paul. He already quotes the institution narrative as a firm tradition (1Cor 11, 23) and he can be assumed to already refer to the common use of this text in the eucharistic celebrations. Also the synoptic Gospels are considered to implicitly prove this liturgical practice. On the other hand, this conclusion of the form criticism does not necessarily imply a general practice. Neither in the Gospels nor in the Acts of the Apostles we find any hint that the words of institution "*This is my body*..." were ever again used in the context of "breaking the bread", not in the mouth of the risen Christ himself (Emmaus: Lc 24,30; Galilee: Jn 21,13) and not in the community of Jerusalem. And if we accept that Paul and the synoptics by their quotations already give witness to a certain liturgical practice, we consequently must also admit that the Gospel of John and the church behind it either do not know this practice or even are opposed to it by their omission.

Finally, and this is decisive, even the institution narrative itself according to Paul and the Synoptic Gospels²⁵ does not claim that Jesus ordered this very action to be commemorated or the words he used to be repeated. According to Paul, 1 Cor 11,23, Jesus ordered an action, not a wording: He said: "*Do this...*" And he continued: "*in my memory.*" That means that he ordered the Eucharist to be celebrated in memory of his person in respect of his entire salvation work. Neither did he say: "*Do this in memory of what I am doing now,*" nor did he add: "*and speak these my words.*" As to the proper words of signification, according to the Gospels they cannot have been the words of transubstantiation but obviously an interpretation after the disciples had already received the sacrament: "... then he broke the bread, gave it to them and said: *This is my body...*" Then he took the cup, thanked, gave it to the disciples and they all drank of it. And he said to them "*This is my blood...*" (Mc 14,22-24).

Altogether, there are several serious reasons to acknowledge that the celebration of the Eucharist without the narrative or the words of the institution may also be considered to be authentic traditions dating back to the very beginnings of the church. They are primarily preserved in Syria and still found in the Didaché, in the apocryphal Acts of John and of Thomas in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari and

in other anaphoras of Syrian origin like those of Jacob of Sarug, Peter, Xystus or Barsalibi.

Recent research came to the result that the tradition of the Eucharist without reference to the institution, compared with that of Paul and the synoptics, may even be the more original.²⁶ It is attached to the multiplication of bread, to the understanding of the Eucharist as bread from heaven and bread of life and to the Old Testament motive of the manna in the desert. Similar concepts we find in Philo of Alexandria and in the book on Joseph and Aseneth.²⁷ In any case the New Testament and especially the Synoptic Gospels show us two different interpretations of the Eucharist one beside the other, that of the multiplication of bread and that of the institution at the Last Supper.

4. Can the Catholic Church Agree to the Anaphora of Addai and Mari in its Original Form?

The new "Catechism of the Catholic Church" speaks in its number 1412 in the traditional manner of "*the words of consecration, spoken by Jesus himself at the last supper: This is my body that was surrendered for you ... This is the cup of my blood ...*". And in its next number (1413) it says: "*By the consecration the transubstantiation is performed.*" This is what Catholics are taught. But it is necessary to realize, that even conservative Catholic theology does not consider the doctrine that the Words of Institution are the "*forma sacramenti*" to be a doctrine "*de fide*" but only a "*sententia certa*".²⁸ That means that this doctrine is taken for sure but that it has not been definitely dogmatized. Therefore there is enough space left for new insights. And indeed, the theological approach to this question has significantly changed.²⁹

According to the common conviction of the Old Church as well as of contemporary Catholic theologians the presence of Christ in the eucharistic elements is due to the whole eucharistic celebration and not to any single formula. Therefore also the validity of the celebration cannot depend on one decisive text only. Basil the Great extends this power of consecration to whatever is spoken in the eucharistic liturgy.³⁰

But even seen from a traditional Western standpoint the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari proves all intentions of a eucharistic celebration. In spite of the absence of an institution narrative it speaks of the body and the blood of Christ, it is essentially related to the Easter events and is understood as a sacrifice.

²⁶ Kollmann, Frühchristliche Mahlfeier. To a similar result comes the thesis on the concept of eucharist in the Gospel of John by my student Franz Halbmayr.

²⁷ Philo, e.g. Legum allegoria III, 175-178; JosAs 16,15f: "bread of life" and "cup of immortality".

²⁸ L. Ott, Grundriß der katholischen Dogmatik, Freiburg-Basel-Wien (8. Auflage) 1970, 468.

²⁹ cf. J. Betz, Eucharistie und Patristik (Schmaus-Grillmaier, Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte, IV, 4a), Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1979.

³⁰ Basilus of Caesarea, De Spiritu Sancto 27, 66 (PG 32, 188B; SC 17, 233f): Which of the saints has left us in writing the words of the epiclesis at the displaying of the bread of the Eucharist and the cup of blessing? For we don't limit ourselves to what the apostle or the Gospel has recorded, but both in preface and conclusion we add other words as having the power for the mystery, and these we derive from unwritten teaching.

²⁵ 1Cor 11,23; Mc 14,22-25; Mt 26,26-30; Lc 22,19-20.

A prayer says: "... in commemoration of the body and blood of thy Christ which we offer unto thee on thy pure and holy altar as thou hast taught us..."³¹

Moreover, there is also an explicit anamnesis of the Easter events: The priest speaks:

"And we also, o my Lord, thy weak and frail and miserable servants who are gathered together in thy name, both stand before thee at this time and have received the example which is delivered unto us, rejoicing and praising and exalting and commemorating and celebrating this great and lifegiving and divine mystery of the passion and the death and the burial and the resurrection of our Lord our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Last not least, the Catholic Church already did officially agree to sacramental communion with the Syrian Orthodox Church.³² which of course implies that her Eucharist is acknowledged to be valid, although – as we have seen – some anaphoras do not contain the words of institution or signification. Therefore the same may also be possible in the case of the Church of the East.

5. Ecumenical Relevance of the East Syrian Tradition

Catholic and Orthodox Christians should be extremely thankful to the "Church of the East" for having saved an original and authentic tradition totally displaced and forgotten in all other branches of Christianity.

The existence of Anaphoras without the Words of institution or even without any reference to the institution like that of Addai and Mari must essentially change the traditional Catholic concept of the Holy Mass. But likewise also the traditional orthodox doctrine that the consecration is performed by the epiclesis is concerned by the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari because of the unusual character which this prayer here shows. For the Holy Spirit is called down here onto the eucharistic elements without any reference to the body and the blood of Christ:

*"And may there come, O my Lord, thine Holy Spirit and rest upon this offering of thy servants and bless it and hallow it that it be to us, o my Lord, for the pardon of offences and the remission of sins and for the great hope of the resurrection from the death and for new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have been wellpassing in thy sight."*³³

In accordance with the common conviction of the Orthodox Churches the Church of the East considers this epiclesis of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari to be the prayer of consecration.³⁴ However, also the orthodox concept of consecration does not properly correspond to the texts of this old liturgy. The Holy Spirit here is called down not in order to make bread and wine body and blood of Christ but to make the offerings a means of forgiveness and eternal life for us. Obviously the

³¹ Brightman, Liturgies I, 286, l. 13 - 287, l. 3.

³² Common Declaration of H. H. John Paul II and H. H. Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas of June 23rd 1984, published in: Wort und Wahrheit, Revue for Religion and Culture, Supplementary Issue Number 5 (Fifth Ecumenical Consultation ...), Vienna 1989, 166-168.

³³ Brightman 287, l. 20-36

³⁴ W. de Vries, Sakramententheologie bei den Nestorianern (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 133), Roma 1947, 233.

Anaphora of the Apostles gives support neither to the Catholic nor to the Orthodox traditional positions.

The evidence of the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari can lead us to the insight that the old controversy between Catholics and Orthodox whether the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist is effected by the Words of Institution or by the Epiclesis of the Holy Spirit indeed is meaningless. It is not by this or by that formula but by the whole celebration with its High Prayer or anaphora that Christ becomes present in the eucharistic gifts of bread and wine, not least according to his promise: "Where there are two or three gathered in my name I am in midst of them" (Mt 18,20).

Some time ago the Church of the East decided to print the Anaphora of the Apostles in her missals with the institution narrative inserted on a page without number³⁵ and many priests indeed use this text in order to prevent all doubts on the validity of their Eucharist. One can understand that. It would hardly make a problem for the Church of the East to also make this addition obligatory as Chaldean and Malabar Catholics have done long ago on dogmatical reasons. But this would deprive us definitely of an important and compulsive motive for the development of a more comprehensive and more ecumenical concept of the Eucharist in our own Church.

When the Conference on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches published 1982 in Lima the "Declarations of Convergence" on the sacraments of baptism, eucharist and ordination this was a great progress in the ecumenical efforts for unity. In accordance to the Western tradition this declaration confirmed the central importance of the words of institution: "*The words and acts of Christ at the institution of the eucharist stand at the heart of the celebration.*"³⁶ To meet also the position of the Orthodox churches this statement was balanced out by a stress on the importance of the epiclesis and the epicletic character of the whole celebration.³⁷ But the commentary on this point seems to be open also for the East Syrian tradition, although it is not explicitly taken into account:

*"In the early liturgies the whole 'prayer action' was thought as bringing about the reality promised by Christ. The invocation of the Spirit was made both on the community and on the elements of bread and wine. Recovery of such an understanding may help us overcome our difficulties concerning a special moment of consecration."*³⁸

The witness of the Church of the East through its Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari can facilitate this recovery and promote the theological awareness of the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches in this hopeful direction.

³⁵ According to Mar Bawai, the second holy synod in the patriarchate of Mar Dinkha IV (Baghdad/Iraq, 1978) decreed to allow priests and bishop celebrants of the Holy Communion to recite the words of the institution narrative during their Eucharistic celebration.

According to Mar Aprem, the decision to print missals with the institution narrative on a page without number was taken in 1957 under Patriarch Darmo. This was then first realized in 1964. Originally the Anglicans were the first to print missals including the narrative institution for the Church of the East. One edition came out in Urmia in 1890, another in Mosul in 1927.

³⁶ Eucharist, 13, in: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. Faith and Order Paper No. 111, World Council of Churches, Geneva 1982, 12.

³⁷ Eucharist, 14, in: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, 13.

³⁸ Eucharist, Commentary (14), in: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, 13.

Discussion

Prof. Koodapuzha: The paper says (p.184) "when the Thomas Christians in India were supposed to join the Catholic Church ..." The formulation has to be changed. We do not accept the statement that the three centuries of Latin rule and the process of Latinization in India should have been a sign of becoming Catholic. In our Church there was no tendency to join. There was no document of joining. The union was imposed by Rome. It has to be seen as a process of Latinization.

Prof. Hofrichter: It is a question of finding the right formulation.

Mar Gregorios: Don't you think that the word of the institution were omitted with the aim to shorten the anaphora? There are other anaphoras without the institution narrative. In our tradition the Epiclesis is most important. So the words of the institution could be left out.

Prof. Hofrichter: The reason for the absence of the words of the institution are not so important here, but the question of the validity of the anaphora without these words, especially in Western Latin theology. I wanted to prove that a Eucharist without the words of institution is legitimate and possible, especially in the Syrian tradition. We know that the Epiclesis is more important for the Orthodox Churches.

Mar Bawai: Do you perceive any difficulties in the field of Christology because two anaphoras bear the name of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius? Or because of their content?

Prof. Hofrichter: Some formulations may present certain difficulties.

Mar Bawai: During the conversations organized by the Middle East Council of Churches, papers on liturgical texts were submitted. Far from presenting difficulties, the contrary is true. In the liturgical texts some affirmations of Catholic and Orthodox tradition are strongly confirmed, for instance the communication of idioms.

Prof. Hofrichter: Some expressions on the Eucharistic presence may present some difficulties, concerning presence in the elements or the assumption of the elements.

Mar Bawai: Transsubstantiation as a Latin dogma means: the presence of Christ is through uniting with the elements. The absence of "transsubstantiation" can be verified not only in the Assyrian Church but also in other Oriental traditions. It is interesting to note that the "forma sacramenti" is not a dogma, a doctrine "de fide", as the paper says. This fact helps and makes the dialogue easier.

Prof. Davids: Speaking about transsubstantiation here is not to the point. One should be careful to distinguish the periods before and after Nicea. They are two different worlds. Before Nicea there was the "disciplina arcani": some essential things were not given to the public, were not written down.

Prof. Hofrichter: I doubt that the "disciplina arcani" ever existed. The literature of pre-Nicene times may be very limited but every topic is covered, nothing is left out.

Mar Severios: In our tradition the Epiclesis asks the Holy Spirit to come down on the gifts to make them the Body and Blood of Christ. The paper says that the Epiclesis had a different aim. Why?

Prof. Hofrichter: In the anaphora of Mari and Addai the text of the epiclesis is different. It does not ask to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood, but to make the offering a means of forgiveness and eternal life.

Mar Eustathios: In the anaphora of Barsalibi (p.185), the words of institution are not missing to me. I see them present, although perhaps not with the exact wording, not in the same order, but used freely.

Prof. Hofrichter: I distinguish between the exact word of the institution, the words spoken by Christ, and the institution narrative, the sentences that recall, describe the facts. In the anaphora of Marsalibi the very words "this is my body, (...) this is my blood" are missing. In a Catholic understanding this affects the transsubstantiation. There are other anaphora that do not fit into our Latin concept.

Prof. Samir: In the Ethiopian liturgy the anaphora of Jacob of Sarug seems to come from Syria via Wadi Natrun in Egypt and came from there to Ethiopia. It is found among the ancient documents discovered at the White Monastery in Sahidic languages, and all these documents are of Syrian origin. Anaphoras in Coptic language but Syriac origin is all we use.

Abuna Gabriel: The anaphora of Jacob of Sarug came directly from Syria. There were contacts between Syria and Ethiopia in the 11th to 12th centuries documented by many writings. Out of 16 anaphoras only three come from the Coptic Church.

Dr. Hainthaler also underlines the existence of a number of contacts, connections and translations directly from Syria to Ethiopia.

Prof. Samir: Has the absence of the words of the Institution in the Syrian tradition something to do with the fact that in the Syrian tradition the last supper was located on Tuesday and not Thursday?

Prof. Hofrichter: I have not studied that question in itself. There are four anaphoras not so much linked to the commemoration of the sufferings and the death of Christ but to his resurrection, immortality and eternal life. Sometimes Body and Blood of Christ are not even mentioned.

PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION

(collected before or during the consultation from the participants)

Samir Khalil Samir, Paris

1. The name of the so-called „pre-Ephesinians“ in the Arabic documents from the Middle Ages (8th-14th Cent.): How did they call themselves & How were they called by the others?
2. Do the „pre-Ephesinians“ confess two Christs, one human and one divine? What is the opinion of Catholicos Thimothee I (780-823) on this subject?
3. What is the opinion of some Syrian Orthodox Theologians, such as Ali Ibn Dawud al-Arfadi (9th Cent.) and Bar Hebraeus (13th Cent.), regarding the „pre-Ephesinians“?
4. What is the opinion of some Melkite Orthodox Theologians, such as Abu Ali Nazif Ibn Yumn (9th Cent.), regarding the „pre-Ephesinians“?
5. What is the opinion of some Coptic Orthodox Theologians, such as Al-Safi Ibn al-Assal (13th Cent.), regarding the „pre-Ephesinians“?
6. While refusing to call Mary Theotokos, do they deny the divinity of Christ?

Metropolitan Eustathios Matta Roham, Hassake

1. Who are the sons and daughters of the Covenant in the Persian Church?
2. How the teachings of Nestorians happened to spread in the Persian Church?
3. How the Christians were seen and treated by the Persian Empire?
4. In what aspect the Christology of the Nestorians differs from the teaching of the Church at large?
5. What was the background of the Syrian Christianity in the Persian Empire?
6. What was the status of Christianity among other religions in the Persian Empire?
7. What was the attitude of the Syrian Christians towards the Persian Empire after the conversion of Constantine the Great to Christianity?

Prof. Sebastian Brock

1. (Fri) From the perspective of the Church of the East is Nestorius of importance *qua* theologian, or is he more primarily to be seen as a symbolic figure of a martyr for the Antiochene Christological cause?
2. (Sat/Mon) How far are the Christological disputes of the 5th/6th centuries due to different understandings by the different parties of the key technical terms (esp. *kyana*, *qnoma*)?
3. Need a satisfactory Christology necessarily be confined to using these terms?
4. When and why was the two *qnoma* formulation introduced in the Church of the East? Was it always subsequently regarded as normative?
5. What is the extent of variety in Christological statements in the Church of the East (e.g. in the different 5th-7th century synods)? Who are regarded as the

authoritative Syriac Fathers in the Church of the East? What is the standing of (e.g.) Narsai, 'Išo'yahb II, or George I, alongside Babai the Great?

6. What are the underlying reasons that led to a strict *dyophysite* position in the Church of the East?
 - need seen to maintain transcendence of the Divinity, and the ontological gap between Creator and creation;
 - different conceptions of the nature of the Fall;
 - different understandings of what is involved by the terms *pathos*/*hašša* („suffering“ and „corruption“);
 - soteriological concerns.
7. Differing exegetical traditions of certain key biblical passages upon which Christological doctrines have been based (eg.g. John 1:14; John 2:21 etc). Variety of analogies and images used (e.g. body/soul; clothing metaphors etc.)
8. (Tues) Christology of liturgical texts for the main dominical feasts in the *Hudra*.

Delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East

1. Do we recognize that we can express the same Apostolic Faith with different words? What would this mean for our dialogue on Christology? Is the essence of our faith in the mystery of the Incarnation bound to any particular vocabulary like „Nature“ and „Hypostasis“? Do these Philosophical terms belong to the Apostolic Tradition as expressed in the Nicene Creed?
2. In this question the following statement bears a certain difficulty for aus: „the distinction of natures of Christ are in contemplation (theory) alone“. In the 1989 agreement on Christology between the Orthodox and the Oriental Orthodox, the latter maintained that they do not object against the formula of „two natures“ as long as the Orthodox assume that the natures are distinct by mere thought. According to Chalcedon, the term „*natures*“, as distinct from the term „*hypostasis*“ (that is, from „*person*“), means that the divinity and the humanity of Christ are different from each other and that each of the two natures is being preserved with its own properties after the union. So, asserting that the two natures are distinct by mere thought implies that the humanity of Christ is no more considered as an objective reality. What are the soteriological implications of such statement? Do the Orthodox mean this as Chalcedonian? In that case, are they being fair with Chalcedon?

Suggestions collected from the minutes

1. *Prof. Hofrichter*: Future dialogue should study more directly the question of the „Three Chapters“, because of their importance.
2. *Prof. Samir*: We need to study the trends of Nestorianism in later times, from the 5th to the 11th century. During this period the Churches meet again in the attitudes they had to adopt in the front of Islam.
3. *Prof. Davids*: Studies should not be restricted to christology, but also on history; how did successive periods of polemics influence the image of the Church of the East?

4. *Mar Timotheos*: The studies should not take place only on international level between the families of Churches. If possible also on the local level, for instance.
5. *Prof. Koodapuzha*: Why each Church presents its christology, the focus should be on what distinguishes it from the others and explain why. There it would be possible to answer. Not sufficient attention was given to the condemnation of the „Three Brothers.“ The context and reasons have not sufficiently been analysed.
6. *Erich Renhart*: It is necessary to study the liturgical texts. Before dealing with liturgical details, would it not be necessary to clarify the contributions of liturgical studies to the dialogue.
7. *Mar Bawai*: I propose to bring the understanding reached now to the grassroots level. However this could be problematic for the Assyrians, because they are scattered around the world.
8. *President Alfred Stirnemann*: First, we have to look into the participation of members of the Assyrian Church in the present regional symposia with the Oriental Orthodox. Later, if there are results, one could think of special meeting with the Assyrians.
9. A way of reconciliation: the formula of the union of 433
10. 431 Ephesus and 1556 until today: the influences upon the creation of the Chaldean Church.
11. Exploit national and regional levels in special dialogues.
12. Focus on those areas of differences between the churches in order to be able to explain why they disagree.
13. Establishing of a multilateral, unofficial dialogue between the three families. Catholic, Oriental Orthodox, Chaldeo-Assyrian. Make the first one on Christology to break the ice.
14. PRO ORIENTE should include the Eastern Churches in the consultations and distribution of publications.

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ of the PRO ORIENTE non-official Consultation on the Theology of the Churches of the Syriac tradition

In the last working session of the non-official Consultation organized by the foundation PRO ORIENTE of Vienna on "Orthodoxy and Catholicity in the Syriac Tradition, with the Special Attention to the Theology of the Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire" on June 28, 1994, this Communiqué has been worked out in mutual agreement by all participants of the Consultation, which reads as follows:

In her quest to promote theological understanding and ecumenical relations among the apostolic Churches, PRO ORIENTE Foundation has invited to Vienna from June 24-29, 1994, participants from the Oriental Catholic churches (Chaldean, Syrian, Maronite, Malabar and Malankara), from the Oriental Orthodox churches (Syrian Orthodox from Antioch and Malankara Orthodox from India) and the Assyrian Church, namely all who share a common ecclesial heritage in the Syriac language and tradition. This is the first conference to include all the Syriac Churches mentioned.

Participants coming from twelve different church backgrounds and twelve nations, twelve bishops and a number of theologians, have come together for this purpose. Present there were also staff of PRO ORIENTE, expert scholars on the theology and the history of these Churches, a representative of the Middle East Council of Churches and an observer from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

This historic ecumenical initiative of PRO ORIENTE was most warmly welcomed by all participants who gratefully accepted the fraternal hospitality of the foundation.

The presence of H. Em. Hans Hermann Cardinal Groër, Archbishop of Vienna, underlined the importance of the event and was met with respect and enthusiasm.

The subjects that were treated, were Christology, the history of the Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire and the Eucharistic Anaphoras of the Church of the East. These topics were treated by Assyrian and Chaldean participants and a number of international renowned experts.

The theological papers dealt with the main topics:

1. The Christology of the Synods of the Church of the East under the Sasanian Empire, and of Bawai the Great's "Book on the Union", with special attention paid to the various understandings of the key Christological terms (in particular *qnoma*) current in the 5th-6th centuries. Here it was made very clear how different understandings of the meanings of these terms had led to verbally conflicting Christological statements.
2. The context and the different stages by which the Church of the East came to adopt a distinctive *qnomic* terminology.
3. The Christology of Nestorius and the problems of its interpretation.
4. The Vienna Christological Statement from the point of view of the Assyrian Church of the East.

Finally, there was a call for the further and common exploration of the different Christological traditions, especially the traditions of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius of Constantinople.

In the historical papers special attention was paid to two specific areas:

(1) the early history of the Assyro-Chaldean Church of the East, from the 1st to the 7th centuries; and

(2) the expansion of this church across Asia, as far as China, in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Of particular relevance to the theme of the Consultation is the fact that the Assyro-Chaldean Church of the East was located to the east of and so outside the Roman Empire, with the important consequence that it was never directly involved in the Church Councils convened by the Roman Emperor within the Roman Empire. In the case of the Council of Nicea (325), however its creed and canons were subsequently officially accepted at the synod of Seleucia-Ktesiphon (410).

Two papers, on the anaphoras used by the Church of the East have been presented to the Consultation. Both focused on the issue of the absence of the Institution Narrative in the extant manuscripts containing the text of the anaphora of Addai and Mari. One paper dealt with the subject matter from the standpoint of the history of liturgy, the other from the biblical and patristic point of view.

Similar conclusions were reached; that the anaphora of Addai and Mari, as it stands in the manuscripts is an authentic anaphora of early christianity, close to the primordial patterns of the Eucharistic prayer, and therefore quite valid as a consecrative liturgy, even in the context of Catholic theology.

We, as Christians, seek to be united in a spirit of brotherhood in our faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, God and Savior. Thus, we recognize our christian duty to strive through prayer and dialogue towards reconciliation until Christ's wish that his church may be one One (John 17,21) is brought to a perfect and complete realization.

We have all endeavoured for a deeper understanding of the pre-Ephesian, non-Chalcedonian, and Chalcedonian Christologies which have separated us until now.

Although we see that there are differences in the theological interpretation of the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ because of our different theological traditions, we were able to recognize the fact that we, in our common faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, regard his mystery to be inexhaustible and ineffable, and for the human mind never fully comprehensible or expressible. For this reason, we, at this consultation have started to discuss and further explore the principle of various theological expressions in the one Faith.

But realizing that there are still different emphases in the theological and dogmatic elaboration of Christ's mystery, we wish to encourage common efforts for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of our different Christologies in harmony with our different theological traditions. We are convinced, however, that these different Christological formulations on all sides need to be discussed in order to clarify further the teaching of the Council of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).

To continue this understanding, participants in the consultation have agreed to form a Follow-up Commission consisting of one representative from each church tradition. The task of this commission will be to plan future consultations, symposia, publications, etc., and to develop the appropriate procedures and methods.

We recommend that PRO ORIENTE invites members of the Assyrian Church of the East to attend the forthcoming PRO ORIENTE regional symposia, as part of the effort to promote further contacts and collaboration with the Assyrian Church of the East.

The participants have also decided that an unofficial tri-lateral dialogue of PRO ORIENTE on issues of common concern for the three ecclesial traditions of the Oriental Catholic, Oriental Orthodox and Assyrian Church of the East should be organized. For the first dialogue round the topic will be on Christology.

In conclusion, we commonly submit ourselves to the witness of the Holy Scriptures and thus to the Apostolic Kerygma and express our intention not to become weary in the search for a common language concerning the mystery of salvation in our Lord in a fraternal spirit "...until we attain to the unity of faith and to the knowledge of God's Son..." (Eph 4,13). We wish to see the mystery of the compassion of God reflected in our enhanced life of Christian compassion.

All of us have experienced how fruitful this Consultation has been, and we pray that God who brought us together may bless us and guide our future efforts in such a way that one day we are all united in one communion of faith and love.

André de Halleux OFM

NESTORIUS: HISTORY AND DOCTRINE

Nestorius has been considered, historically, a heretic who denied that the Blessed Virgin was the Mother of God, because he failed to confess that Emmanuel is truly God (V 6, 12, 1). „A teacher of the impious heresy of the ‘man-worshippers’“ (V 94, 2), he divided Christ into two Sons and revived the old adoptionism (V 18). Accordingly, the council of Ephesus proclaimed his condemnation by calling him „the new Judas“ (V 63), and subsequently the law of the empire denied to the Nestorians even the very name of Christians (V 111).

Nestorius himself always protested against these charges and denounced his excommunication as an injustice. Today, the Assyrian Church of the East counts him among her saints (without, however, reserving to him a particular liturgical commemoration), and it considers him an orthodox doctor. The dialogue which is opening with this church invites us to re-evaluate the past, recalling that personal anathemas have often resulted from a lack of mutual understanding. If the other churches revise the official history of the events of the years 428-433, they will purify their memory of this dross without conceding anything to a Christological heresy which remains justly condemned.

It is easier now than it has been heretofore to re-examine without prejudice the history and doctrine of Nestorius. We have for that purpose the critical edition of what is called „the Acts of the Council of Ephesus“ in their diverse ancient collections. And we have, above all, evidence of the last defense of Nestorius himself, through the restorations of the *Book of Heraclides*, which has been preserved in a Syriac version. Four approaches will be drawn here from a *group of very complicated ideas*:

I. From the historical point of view:

1. the trial and deposition of Nestorius at Ephesus and
2. the condemnation of his heresy by the Antiochene episcopate

II. From the doctrinal point of view:

3. the faith in Christ confessed by Nestorius and
4. the technical formulation that he gave to his Christology.

I. The Historical Perspective

The trial of Nestorius at Ephesus was surrounded with intrigues that today we consider regrettable, but which were natural under the rule of the Christian empire. It was the emperor who held supreme responsibility for religious unity and good ecclesiastical order. Not only did the archbishop of Constantinople have to be

approved by the Palace, but the council of bishops itself was also „the council of the Prince“. That is why adversaries and partisans of Nestorius alike endeavored to win the favors of the Court and high imperial administration in the interest of what they thought to be the cause of orthodoxy. One must recognize, however, that Cyril of Alexandria was less scrupulous in this matter than the Antiochenes (C 293-294; C 130).

The council of Ephesus itself was a theater of mean bickering and unworthy violence. The two parties blamed each other, but the blame could not be attributed either to the Cyrillians (V 151) or to the Nestorians (V 83, 2-4; V 101, etc.). At the time of their reconciliation, both John of Antioch and Cyril of Alexandria thought it unnecessary to recall these scandals (V 123; V 127, 2). While leaving to God the burden of judging the actions and intentions of individuals, it is a pity that the Nestorian controversy unfolded in an atmosphere foreign to the spirit of dialogue and mutual respect.

1. A questionable trial

The hostility between Cyril and Nestorius broke out on the occasion of a disciplinary question (some clerics from Alexandria had come to Constantinople to bring a complaint against their archbishop), but it immediately took a doctrinal turn. One of Nestorius' priests had scandalized a number of the faithful by criticizing the venerable title „Mother of God“ (V 22, 1), and the archbishop, all the while claiming to arbitrate the controversy, had in his turn shocked his own congregation by his offensive Christological expressions; in addition, he had received into his fellowship a bishop who had openly declared, „If anyone says ‘Mary, Mother of God’, let him be anathema!“ (V 16; V 21; V 144).

Cyril believed himself called to renew the offensive for the term, for the sake of which his uncle, the archbishop Theophilus, thirty years earlier, had caused another orator to be condemned by a synod at which Cyril himself had been present (A 107, 4), an orator also called from Antioch to the see of Constantinople - John Chrysostom. Like John, Nestorius had provoked the hatred of an empress (LH 89; Suidas, art Πουλχηρία), and Chrysostom before him had been accused of blasphemy in the church on the subject of Christ (Photius, cod. 59, 7).

But unlike his predecessor, Nestorius did not find support from the archbishop of Rome, whom he had disaffected by protecting Pelagian refugees in the East (Vr 2, 15-16). On the contrary, it was Cyril who succeeded in convincing Pope Celestine and the Roman synod of his adversary's heresy, to the point of receiving from them the unheard-of mission of executing their own canonical judgment: Nestorius, under pain of excommunication, must retract his heresy in ten days by a written profession conforming to the faith of the churches of Rome and Alexandria (Vr 1, 7).

Cyril would condense this faith into some very Alexandrian terms in a letter for the Egyptian synod, summed up in twelve anathemas, to which the accused was called upon to subscribe (V 6, 12). But by the time Nestorius had received this injunction, the emperor, perhaps warned of the singular Roman procedure, had already decided to submit the controversy to an ecumenical council, which he convoked at Ephesus for Pentecost of the following year. The decree of convocation insisted, not without a barb at Cyril (V 8, 2 and 4), that not a single innovation

would be made in private by certain people before the convocation of the very holy council and the judgment which must be brought by it in all things by a common vote (V 25, 3).

By June 22, 431, sixteen days after the date chosen, neither the Roman delegates nor the Eastern bishops had yet arrived at Ephesus, but John of Antioch had sent word of his imminent arrival (V, 30). It was then that Cyril took the initiative of opening the council with 153 bishops (V 33; V 157, 2), ignoring a protest signed by 68 other bishops (C 82). Moreover, the day before, the official in charge of the good order of the assembly had pointed out that they must wait for the Antiochenes, who were not more than four days' journey away; when he came the next day to protest against the „special council“, they expelled him without notice (C 84; V 31).

In this manner, then, the ecumenical council of Ephesus began illegally. Although it is true that the Church has repudiated as anticanonical many a universal synod legally assembled, there are no other examples of an ecumenical council opening against imperial orders. Cyril must have been aware that he was taking a great risk (cf. his apology to the emperor, V 81). Perhaps he should have waited in the hope that the Roman delegates would outstrip the Oriental bishops. The latter were coming to the council to see that the „12 heretical chapters“ [of Cyril] were condemned (V 151, 15; LH 97-116). It was the announcement of their approaching arrival that provoked the Alexandrian to hasten the trial of Nestorius.

For Cyril, the unique object of the council of Ephesus, in effect, consisted of confirming the judgment of the Roman and Egyptian synods against the heretic (V 6, 2). The writs present the „archbishop of Alexandria“ as „holding also the place“ of „the archbishop of the church of Rome“ (V 33, 1; V 106, 1). After he had consulted Celestine on the authority of the conciliar tribunal (Vr 10, 2), Cyril considered himself the appointed judge of this tribunal, and it is under this title that he assumed the chairmanship. Both the order of the day, presented by the Alexandrian secretary of the assembly (V 34), and the effective unfolding of the first session of the council, and even the preamble to the condemnation which concluded it (V 61), point to the evidence that it was indeed a judiciary procedure in application of the Roman judgment.

The trial opened with the triple canonical summons of the accused (cf. Apostolic Canons, 74); the first summons had taken place the day before. The second summons invited the archbishop of Constantinople to attend the assembly „so that religious matters would be decided by common decision and assent“ (V 35 f., V 39, 3). One cannot blame Nestorius for his response to this convocation. „When all the bishops have convened, we will all speak together.“ (V 40, 1) The third summons unveils the true judicial nature of the council: Nestorius was then asked to come to give an account „of the heretical doctrines that, it is said, you have pronounced to the church“ (V 41, 3).

After refusing to appear as a defendant, the accused man was to be judged and condemned by default through a suit that his adversary completely controlled. „Who was the judge? Cyril! And who was the accuser? Cyril! Who was the bishop of Rome? Cyril! Cyril was everything!“ (LH 117) The ecclesiastical tribunal that judged Nestorius tried to compensate for the juridical irregularity of its assembly by the observation of canonical forms of procedure (V 43); it did, nonetheless, violate

an elementary rule of natural right. A century before, Athanasius had argued against his adversaries at the council of Tyre that divine law would not allow an enemy of the accused to be at the same time his judge (II V apology, 77, 2-3 and 79, 2-3). And it is also on this same grounds that Chrysostom had challenged the competency of the tribunal which was to condemn him (cf. Photius, cod. 59, 29).

The trial of Nestorius unfolded in two stages. The assembly would first have to verify the accusation of heresy. The canonical norm of the orthodox faith being the creed of Nicea, they began, then, by reading the creed (in its pure form and with the anathema which follows it [V 43]). On this basis, Cyril had the orthodoxy confirmed which had already been established by the Roman and Egyptian synods (V 6, 2) and by his second letter to Nestorius (V 44); then he had Nestorius' heterodoxy declared by virtue of Nestorius' reply (V 47, 1). Following the text of each of these two letters, 125 sentences are preserved (which are unanimously laudatory) concerning the first (V 45), and 34 others (unanimously condemnatory), concerning the second. There is no indication here of any explanation or synodical discussion. The sentences, as well as the acceptances which follow (V 48), merely condemn a heresy whose supposedly obvious content is in no way specified. (Cf. however V 48 8: Cyril had been able to instruct his partisans the days preceding.)

The second part of the trial consisted in having the tribunal of the council execute the judgment of Celestine and Cyril as soon as it was established that the heretic persisted in his error. After reading the synodical letters of the two popes to Nestorius (V 49), the bishops who had carried the sentence to the accused six months before were asked how the sentence had been received at that time. According to one of the bearers, „He so little deferred to the writs that he repeated to the church the same doctrine and worse things!“ (V 50) In reality, as will soon be shown, the reaction of the archbishop of Constantinople had actually been conciliatory.

In order to show, finally, that „Nestorius perseveres until this day in the same doctrines“, the tribunal called on two witnesses (V 51) who reported some very recent remarks of the accused, presenting them as scandalous or absurd (V 53). This testimony was received by the tribunal without verification, and for this reason the condemned complained to Cyril: „He accepted it without examination, as an accuser-judge, without asking (of the witness) either 'What was he (Nestorius) telling you when he spoke thus to you?', or, 'How did you answer when you realized this was aimed at you? Wait! Say it before us ... so that we may not accept without cause the accusations against him in his absence, that we may not bring a judgment against him without examination and without investigation before those who need to understand exactly why he has been condemned! This way the accused will not be able to plead „not guilty“, and he will have no pretext for accusing me of being partial to anyone.“ (LH 121-122)

A florilegium of patristic texts and excerpts from one of the „blasphemous books“ of Nestorius (V 60) are inserted in the minutes, but it is not certain that the corpus was actually read at this moment of the trial. Like the two synodals of accusation, but unlike the second letter of Cyril and the response of his adversary, they are not followed by any judgment from the churches, and nothing indicates that they were the object of a discussion. Under their sometimes disagreeable, provocative manner of expression, the excerpts of Nestorius correspond to an

Antiochene Christology which is not incompatible with that of the patristic florilegium. It would be easy for the condemned to protest that he never had wanted to say anything different from those texts of Athanasius, Ambrose, and Gregory the Theologian invoked against him (LH, 176-189; 194-205; 210-218).

The sentence (ἀποφάσις) which concluded the trial reduced the bishop of Constantinople to the lay estate (καθαίρεσις = deposition, a judgment more severe than excommunication = ἀφορισμός). His writings confirm that the grounds of the accusation had not been submitted to impartial verification, which the absence of the accused made even more necessary. What the grounds adduced for the judgment style „an examination of the impieties“ of Nestorius in effect amounts to the reading of his „letters and writings“ and the public hearing of witnesses on „the homilies that he recently gave in this city“. And here again the heresy which is imputed to him is not otherwise indicated than by the act „of thinking and preaching about impious things“, or of „having committed blasphemy against Christ“ (V 61-62).

It is astonishing that „the dogma of Ephesus“ did not have as its object any formal „definition“. What happened in reality is that Cyril had transformed a council at which the emperor wanted doctrine to be defined „without any dissension born of antipathy“ (V 31). Held illegally by a tribunal where the judge was also the accuser and where the charge was not made the object of scrupulous verification (V 151, 7-8), this trial by default could only come to an end as a questionable deposition. And yet this deposition would soon be passed off as a doctrinal anathema, imposed on the oriental bishops by an emperor more and more hostile to the archbishop of his capital.

2. An imposed anathema

Before the calling of the council of Ephesus, archbishop John of Antioch, surrounded by several of his bishops, called upon Nestorius to yield to Celestine and to Cyril by agreeing to call the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God. In this appeal to moderation - what was intended by it will soon be clear - there was an amicable remonstrance to the imprudent one responsible for the „enormous tempest“ now disturbing the faithful everywhere. „I do not see why - pardon me! we have troubled ourselves with this unnecessary question, contrary to (our interests) and, as you yourself can see, contrary to the peace of the Church.“ (V 14, 3-4)

After arriving in Ephesus four days after the trial, the oriental bishops declared that Nestorius had been deposed „without any sort of judgment, examination, or injury, contrary to the ecclesiastical canons and the imperial letter“ (V 151, 7-8). But they did not explicitly name the condemned, either in the sentence by which they deposed Cyril and the local bishop and excommunicated the other participants of the „special synod“ (V 151, 15), or in their report of the affair to the emperor (V 154, 1).

This silence, if it admits any reserve toward Nestorius, perhaps revealed the presentiment that his cause was already compromised in high places. And in fact the emperor notified the two parties three days later that he disapproved of the irregularity of their procedures, specifically that what mattered to him was true dogma and not „Nestorius or anyone else“ (V 83). Nestorius must have felt that his presence was an obstacle to a serene discussion of the doctrinal question. Leaving to

the oriental bishops the task of defending the faith, he would ask the emperor for permission (which was willingly granted) to return to his monastery in the area of Antioch (A 65; A 55-56).

In the meantime the excommunication of the oriental bishops by the partisans of Cyril (July 17; V 97-89) was a response to that of the Cyrillians by the oriental bishops (June 26; V 151-153), dividing irremediably the ecumenical council of Ephesus into two „special councils“, each of which claimed henceforth to represent „the holy council“ by itself alone (V 95,1; V 96,1). The emperor at first thought to settle the matter by approving the deposition of Nestorius and that of Cyril (V 93,2). Unlike the Cyrillians, the oriental bishops welcomed without protest the sacrifice which was asked of them (C 104, 3), in exchange, perhaps, for the delay in the confirmation of their own excommunication. They would understand too late that to consent to the deposition of Nestorius would amount to recognizing the „twelve chapters“ of Cyril's party to which they would attribute his condemnation (A 67, 3-4).

In the hope of reconciling the two parties, the emperor invited them each to choose eight bishops who would discuss the faith in his presence (V 95, 1; V 96, 1). Once they reached Chalcedon, the oriental bishops would learn there that bribes to the court had extinguished the truth (C 130) and that the influential Archimandrite Dalmatius (V 66; V 84; LH 241-247) had persuaded the emperor to dismiss Nestorius: „His fate has been decided once and for all!“ (A 69, 3) The delegation of the Cyrillian council had been invited to Constantinople to ordain a successor to the deposed archbishop (C 130; V 115), then a second decree dissolving the council of Ephesus would ensure the return of Cyril to his episcopal see (A 97; cf. C 118).

This same decree refused, however, to confirm the excommunication of the oriental bishops by the Cyrillians, since the latter had not consented to enter into a discussion with their adversaries (A 97; V 118, 22-23), and it invited them instead to make peace with them. Some months later, the emperor would impose by his own prerogative the beginning of talks between Antioch and Alexandria. The oriental synod began by bringing a motion hostile to the dogmas recently introduced by letters or by chapters (A 105). But Cyril, who could not thus deny the judgment of the Egyptian synod confirmed at Ephesus, instead wanted the oriental bishops „to consent to the deposition of Nestorius, by declaring his blasphemies and profane dogmas anathema“ (A 107, 6).

Still believing that he was able to avoid condemning an orthodox and unjustly maligned man, John of Antioch proposed, in the name of his synod, a Christological profession devoid of all personal allusions (V 123, 2-3). But Cyril, knowing that Nestorius' cause was lost, was intractable on this point: after he had exacted an anathema from the Antiochene ambassador (V 122), he made his own acceptance of the profession proposed by John conditional upon the oriental bishops all recognizing „the judgment of the holy council brought against Nestorius, held in order to depose and anathematize his impious teachings“ (V 129; V 130).

The archbishop of Antioch could not easily agree to so drastic a formula, if only because he knew it was unacceptable to many of his bishops. He asked Cyril to accept „a small change“, which he presented as purely formal and as recommended by „economy“ (A 118). The modification meant that Nestorius was to be considered deposed, „by submitting to anathema all that he had said or thought in a manner hostile or foreign to apostolic teaching“ (A 120, 2; cf. A 121; A 123).

This „determination“ (C 236) avoided the general and absolute terms of the anathema formulated by Cyril. John's intention would have been more clear if he had used the conditional in condemning all that Nestorius had been able to say or think against the apostolic tradition. But even though the indicative is a more timid manner of expression, it implied the same mental reservation - that for the oriental bishops Nestorius had never said or thought any such thing. The reconciliation desired by the emperor came at the cost of this humiliating but inevitable compromise, at least for the archbishop of Antioch.

The „economy“ of this compromise was denounced by the episcopate of several provinces of the Orient, including in particular Theodoret of Cyrrhus, an influential theologian and a friend of John. The oriental protesters did not perceive in the anathema that their archbishop had conceded to Cyril the „determination“ that he claimed to have put into it (C 205). They denounced instead the murder of an innocent (C 205) and orthodox man „who had preached nothing outside of the apostolic doctrine, but had followed the footsteps of the Fathers“ (C 217; C 229). They saw also the betrayal of all who had struggled for the faith at Ephesus and at Chalcedon (C 159) and the betrayal of the faith itself (C 188; C 256). John should only anathematize those who said that Christ is simply a man or who divide the unique Lord Jesus Christ in two and deny His divinity (C 150).

The protesters were persecuted at the command of secular power, which rapidly made their resistance desperate. John exhorted Theodoret to put above everything - above Nestorius and his intractable partisans - the faith alone, which he thought henceforth safeguarded in the Antiochene profession that Cyril had accepted (C 138). In the course of a private interview (C 210), the archbishop assured his friend that he would remain faithful to his prior promise never to force anyone to anathematize Nestorius (C 182; C 155), respecting the conscience of those who could not bring themselves to do it before God (C 248-250; C 254).

It is on this condition that Theodoret and those of the protesters whom he succeeded in persuading returned to communion with John of Antioch. After other trials, the bishop of Cyrrhus would have to anathematize Nestorius at the council of Chalcedon in 451. Even reduced to this extremity, he still had to add the personal condemnation of a doctrinal „determination“: „Anathema to Nestorius and to whoever does not say that the Blessed Virgin Mary is Mother of God and to whoever divides the single only begotten Son into two Sons!“

But had Nestorius really denied the divine motherhood of Mary and divided Christ into two Sons? Before determining this by a brief examination of his doctrine, the unselfishness with which the condemned man accepted his abandonment by nearly all his friends must be recognized. His deposition, first of all: „They have troubled themselves little with what has been done to me for the sake of correcting the confession of the faith. ... What has been done to me does not concern me, only that peace is restored to the churches!“ (LH 290) Next, his anathema: „Let Nestorius be declared anathema, but let (my adversaries) say what I ask them to say concerning God! ... For I am prepared to endure and suffer everything for Him, so that if possible, by my being considered anathema, each might be reconciled to God (Rm 9:3), because nothing is greater or more precious to me than that.“ (LH 323)

After he had retired to his Antiochene monastery, Nestorius was still an obstacle to the imperial power, which was occupied with smashing the resistance of those

who refused to betray him. A series of more and more difficult exiles took him from Petra to the oasis of Khargeh, where he died about 450 (Evagrius, h.e. 1, 7). How did the one whom the law now called a „traitor to the faith“ and „trammelled with abominations“, accept being „crushed under the feet of a calamity“? (V 110) Hear his last words: „I do not seek to obtain any help from men, for I am henceforth sacrificed and the time is come for me to be dissolved and be with Christ (2 Tim. 4:6; Ph. 1:23), so that the people do not stray from the true faith.“ (LH 155; 227)

Even if they had surely come from a heretic, such words would command respect. They in any case preclude considering as a new Judas and blasphemer of Christ, the one who ended his apology by the prayer here: „(As for me,) I have endured the ordeal of my life and all that is mine in this world as the ordeal of a single day. Lo, I have met even now (the hour of) my dissolution. Day after day, I pray that God bring about my dissolution. ... Rejoice for me, wilderness, my good friend, my father and my home: (Rejoice for me) exile, my mother, for after my death you will watch over my body until the resurrection, by the will of God.“ (LH 331)

II. Doctrine

In order to evaluate the doctrine of Nestorius fairly, the accusations of his adversaries must not be taken literally. In the fire of polemic, the doctrinal positions of each of the two parties appeared heretical to the other, because each judged them by its own presuppositions and its own logic. While Cyril thought he saw the adoptionism of Paul of Samosata in the homilies of Nestorius, the Antiochenes denounced in the Cyrillian „chapters“ the monophysitism of Arius and Apollinarius. There was mutual misunderstanding, born of ignorance and of mutual mistrust.

The spuriousness of these reductions to heresy is further exposed by the astonishing change shown by the reconciliation of 433. Cyril then recognized „the faith of the inspired Scriptures and of the tradition of the holy Fathers“ in an Antiochene statement containing the phrases he had condemned regarding Nestorius: „complete man“, „two natures“, „temple assumed“ and „division of the names concerning the two natures“ (V 127, 5-6). This recognition satisfied the majority of the oriental bishops, and they were henceforth united by it with Alexandria „in one single and unitary belief, according to the true standard of the Gospels“ (A 119, 1-3). But the Antiochene profession, henceforth recognized as orthodox by Cyril, also expressed the faith of Nestorius, even if all Nestorius' Christological formulas were not the equal of his fundamental faith.

1. An orthodox faith

First of all, let us consider again without prejudice the elements of the accusation. The response of Nestorius to the second letter of Cyril, a response that the judges of Ephesus thought opposed to the faith of Nicea (V 47), presents an Antiochene interpretation, philologically correct, of the second article of the creed: the common names „A single Lord Jesus Christ, the unique Son of God“, precede the names which are suited to „theology or to economy“ (V 5, 3: the creed did not contain the Johannic and Alexandrian title of „the Word“!) That this interpretation

was not at all erroneous theologically Cyril himself shows by agreeing to complete his fourth „chapter“ by a distinction between the Christological common names and those which are proper to each of the two natures (V 127, 5-6).

The Ephesian excerpts of one of the „blasphemous books“ of Nestorius contained some statements that are indeed disturbing. The Virgin Mother of Christ did not engender the Son of God, but she did engender his humanity, which is the Son because of the joint Son (V 60, 1). „Because of the one who bears, I revere him who is borne. ... I separate the natures, but I unite my adoration.“ (V 60, 8 and 15) Fairness always requires that one return these divisive expressions to the context of Antiochene, pre-Chalcedonian Christology and to understand them in their anti-Apollinarian, polemical context. In spite of the tendentious choice of words, the anti-Nestorian florilegium nevertheless shows that Nestorius refused „to dogmatize the two Sons“ (V 60, 9).

In another affirmation reported as scandalous by one of the two witnesses for the prosecution at the trial in Ephesus, Nestorius said: „One must not attribute to God suckling or birth from a Virgin. ... One must not say that God was only two or three months old.“ (V 53) The accused explained himself and the meaning of his remark by having the judge ask the witness: „(Is it) like someone who says that Christ is not God that (Nestorius) told you that Christ was two or three months old? Or is it a confession that Christ is God, but that not as God was he born and became aged two or three months ... as if his very essence had been changed into the essence of the man?“ (LH 122)

But what about the main accusation, the one that began the „ecumenical scandal“ (V 2, 3) - the opposition of Nestorius to the name „Mother of God“? This „scarecrow“ should be reduced to its just proportions (Socrates, h.e., 7, 32). Before the explosion of the dispute, this marian title virtually did not appear in the abundant literary production of Cyril, while it occurs at least once in a homily of Nestorius (LH 345, 7-8). And further, at the height of the controversy, the archbishop of Alexandria restricted his use of the title to simply calling Mary the „Blessed Virgin“.

Nestorius only opposed the exploitation of the term „Mother of God“ in a Manichean or Apollinarian sense, as it was thought (rightly or wrongly) the term was used by certain of the devotees of the expression at Constantinople (LH 91-92). Upon receiving the Roman and Alexandrian sentence, he yielded to the advice of moderation that John of Antioch himself had cast away, declaring in a homily: „The Blessed Virgin is Mother of God ... because the Temple created in her by the Holy Spirit was united with divinity.“ (C 78) This explanation in actual fact returns to the Antiochene formula, the orthodoxy of which Cyril himself would recognize: The Blessed Virgin is Mother of God because God the Word ... from the moment of conception, united the Temple assumed from her.“ (V 127, 5)

The obviously relative refusal of an ancient expression of the divine maternity did not derive under the circumstances from an adoptionist Christology. Far from claiming that Christ had been begotten first as an ordinary man in whom the Word had later come to reside (V 4, 4), Nestorius started, like all the Christian tradition, with the creed of Nicea, according to which it is the Son, begotten of the Father before the beginning of time, who is incarnate and made flesh for us and for our salvation (V 5, 3). It would be erroneous to represent the Nestorian soteriology as if

image of God in Himself and for renewal in the very nature of His own humanity (LH 188).

What Nestorius refuses, along with all Antiochene theologians, is that in Christ „the properties of the flesh are ascribed to the essence of God ... in order that He might suffer passibly the sufferings of the body, without the bodily frame's fulfilling any purpose in its own nature ... and without its performing human actions, either by the will of the soul, or by human intelligence, ... (but by performing them uniquely) by the intelligence and by the will of God.“ (LH 185) This is to take seriously the humanity of the incarnate Word, consubstantial with our own humanity and complete, which entails, according to Nestorius as according to the other Antiochenes, an insistence on the obedience of the second Adam, by which the victory over Satan atones for the disobedience of the first (LH 161-162). The human mediation of Christ is here comprised as active, but also as assumed in the divine person of the Son.

With the Antiochene tradition, Nestorius interprets the „becoming flesh“ of God the Word as his „indwelling“ in „the Temple of his body“ (Jn 1:14 and 2:19), or as „taking the form of a Servant“ (Ph. 2:7), that is, of a man like us. In effect, the application of the term „becoming“ to the nature of the Word, according to this tradition, would suggest also mutability and creatureliness in the Son, something also condemned by the anathema of Nicea (LH 214-215; 222). Nestorius also uses the Antiochene Christological image of a garment (conforming to a venerable Syriac tradition admirably used by Ephrem), which is present even in the old version of the creed of Nicea, or the Greek „σάρκωθέντα“, rendered by **لحم فجد**, that is to say, „he put on a body“.

In disqualifying this vocabulary and these metaphors that some of the earlier Fathers also used without the least scruple, Cyril had unfortunately impoverished the Christological patrimony of the universal Church. It is true that he sincerely thought himself bound by some pseudoepigraphs presented under the authority of Athanasius or of Felix and Julius of Rome (A 24, 65-67; V 54, 7-8). In spite of all its grandeur, the Alexandrian Christology represents only a partial approach to the mystery of the incarnation. It must not be confused, in its specificity, with the apostolic tradition itself, which the Antiochene Christology preserves, in spite of its shortcoming, in other authentic and complementary ways.

For the same reason, one can equally regret that Cyril had cast suspicion on the Christological expression of the „conjunction“ (συναφεία) by reducing it to the expression of a simple moral union (V 6, 12, 3 and 11), whereas the Cappadocian Fathers had used it in Trinitarian theology in order to signify the communion of the divine hypostases in the unique essence. Nestorius explains himself clearly on this point: „I do not speak of a conjunction through love or through proximity, as though it were between those who are far apart and who are united by love and not at all in their essences. And it is neither by equality in honor nor in authority that I explain the union.“ (LH 277) If the union of the two natures is too narrow for him to show that by it „the flesh is the Son and God the Word is the flesh“, he applies the type of the burning bush (Ex. 3:2). „The fire was in the bush, and the bush was fire, and the fire was bush, and each of them was bush and fire, and there were not two bushes or two fires, because the two were in the fire and the two in the bush.“ (LH 141; cf.

fire was bush, and each of them was bush and fire, and there were not two bushes or two fires, because the two were in the fire and the two in the bush.“ (LH 141; cf. 138) Neither Cyril nor Severus of Antioch himself spoke otherwise of this „κράσις ου ολον“!

Thus the inconsistency of the accusation that Nestorius divided Christ is shown. And Nestorius criticized Cyril for imputing this to him: „he slanders me dishonestly, as if I spoke of two Sons, and those things which he has brought against me, whether from my letters, or from such of my homilies as have been excerpted by him, proclaim it.“ (LH 280) „How can he who, with regard to the union, speaks of ‘one Son’, ‘one Christ’, ‘one Lord’, by separating them, speak singularly of one Son, God, and of another (Son, the man), and thus of two Sons?“ (LH 140) „The natures are two, God and man ... but the Sons are not two. For those (natures) from which our Savior is (formed) are one and another, but He is not one and another.“ (LH 190) It is not by chance that Nestorius thus quotes the celebrated distinction of Gregory the Theologian. The first letter to Cleodnius was at length cited in the patristic anthology of Ephesus (V 54, 14). Thus the condemned objected to his judges because they proved him right by the very words they intended to use to prove him wrong (LH 194-196; 213; 217).

It seems therefore that one cannot suspect the fundamentally orthodox intention of the Christological faith of Nestorius. It corresponds in substance to the apostolic tradition, condensed in the creed of Nicea, of the unconfounded union of the divinity and humanity in the unique Son and Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate. Nestorius explained this faith with concepts and metaphors familiar to the Antiochene tradition (and in the writings of the other Fathers of the fourth century, among whom was Athanasius himself). His rational and apologetic approach to the mystery makes him avoid any paradoxical expression of the kenosis and of divine mediation. A probably excessive fear of confusion and theopaschism made this dualist insistence readily take on an oratorical and polemical form of affirmations and negations apparently „divisive“. It is then that more noteworthy non-theological factors intervened, transforming into heresy some imprudent or provocative statements, and later preventing the inclusion of the condemned of Ephesus in the reconciliation of Cyril with John of Antioch.

2. *An insufficient Christology*

The manner in which Nestorius used the terms „nature“, „hypostasis“ and „person“ in order to translate his faith in the unconfounded union of Christ into ontological language remains to be examined. There are some today who maintain that he shows himself in this matter to be the greatest theologian of his times. He specially had presaged the Chalcedonian statement of Christology: „I confess the inseparable union of two natures in one person.“ (LH 142) Such an assessment is undoubtedly excessive, for the ideas are considerably more complex.

Nestorius opposes the „two natures“ to the Cyrillian notion of the „natural union“ (V 6, 12,3). Apollinarius, who is the creator of the formula „one nature of the incarnate Word“, had established in principle that two complete beings could not become one. Consequently, he had chosen the composition of a human being as a Christological model: in the same way as human nature is made up of the

incomplete parts of the intellect, soul and body, so in the one nature of Christ, there are both the divine Word and a human body, in which the divine Word is as the soul (or even as the intellect): thus He is able to bring about the „divinization“ of our humanity by the instrument of His own flesh, by which He endured sufferings (LH 162).

Such is the Apollinarianism that Nestorius thought he saw, wrongly to be sure, in Cyril of Alexandria, thus interpreting his theology according to his own Antiochene logic. „[A] natural union ... (comes about) by composition in one nature. In the same way as the soul and the body (form) one nature in man, so also God the Word (would be) united with His humanity.“ (LH 142) But „In a natural composition, it seems that neither of the natures from which it is (formed) is complete, but each needs the other in order to be and to subsist, even as the body needs the soul for it to live ... and as the soul needs the body for it to have perception.“ (LH 268)

According to Nestorius, a „natural union“ of the incarnate Word would therefore be „necessary“ and not „voluntary“ - that is, the union would subject God to suffering as by a natural property (LH 158). „Things which are united in a natural union are united with the natural passibility of the other and do not receive the sufferings, each of the other, voluntarily.“ (LH 142) If, then, Christ is in „natural composition“, God „endures passibly the sufferings of the body without the body fulfilling any purpose in its own nature in the economy (which was) for our sake.“ (LH 185) It is „like an instrument without soul, without reason, and without will“ that God the Word uses the body and soul, „as for His own nature, acting and undergoing the sufferings of His body which has become consubstantial“ with Him (LH 212).

It is confirmed here that in speaking of „voluntary union“, Nestorius does not mean a purely moral union, but simply intends to safeguard the immutability and impassibility of the divine nature in its ontological union with one complete humanity (LH 158). Like all the Antiochene tradition, he revered the infinite transcendence of God in relation to the created flesh, the difference between which subsists in the union itself. To speak of a „natural composition“, according to this tradition, amounts to finding the origin of the flesh in the Trinity, instead of confessing „that the flesh was created and that the second Adam is of our nature“ (LH 208).

In reality and contrary to Apollinarius, Nestorius does not ignore that Cyril recognized the humanity of the incarnate Word as complete - that is as a body animated by a rational soul, and he well noted that his adversary maintained „the difference between the natures“ in the union (V 4, 3). This is precisely why he reproached him for his seeming illogic in speaking of natural union. „You have said that the differences subsist and are not nullified because of the union of the divine and human natures. Speak then of one person in two natures and two natures in one person, like Gregory, like Ambrose, like Athanasius, like all the Fathers, and as you yourself have spoken!“ (LH 209; 148, 150 etc.) One person in two natures: here again is a formula evidently very Chalcedonian!

But how did Nestorius understand „hypostasis“ in Christology? He did not define this notion by an ontological standard other than that of „nature“ any more than Cyril did. But while for Cyril this common standard is that of person, for

Nestorius it is that of essence. Thus, the „union according to hypostasis“ professed by Cyril (V 6, 12, 2) became the object of the same critique by Nestorius as did the „natural union“ (V 6, 12, 3). Contrary to the Chalcedonian formula, which in distinguishing in principal the „nature of the hypostasis“, affirms one hypostasis in two natures, Nestorius counts in Christ two hypostases as well as two natures.

Let us avoid condemning this dualism of hypostases, at first sight unacceptable for any Cyrillian, whether he be of the Chalcedonian tradition or not. The Christological notion of „hypostasis“ had not taken shape before the sixth century, and further, the theologians of the period did not all give it the same definition. One cannot criticize Nestorius for his formula of two hypostases unless it proves to be, for him, part of a general acceptance contrary to his faith in the personal unity of the Son of God made man.

But the primary sense that Nestorius attributed to „hypostasis“ corresponds to an ancient usage of this term, denoting objectively existing reality, in opposition to abstract thought. It is not „simply in thought alone that (the Antiochenes perceive this difference) ... These are not natures devoid of hypostases and it is not by way of reflection, without the hypostases of the natures, that they constitute them intellectually through (descriptive) statements“ (LH 283-284). Nestorius therefore rejected the Cyrillian distinction between the natures of the Word „by contemplation alone“ (V 172, 5; LH 267-270). According to him, to maintain two hypostases in Christ amounts to affirming two objectively existing natures, dwelling unconfounded in the union itself, and not two natures „without hypostases, nor natures (constituted) in thought anhypostatically“ (LH 284).

To this denotation of objective reality, Nestorius sometimes adds that of concrete individuality. „I distinguish the properties of the union that each nature has in such a way that each of them subsists in its hypostasis. I do not mean ... that (the properties) of the flesh were assumed by God without hypostasis, so that He only appeared in the likeness of the flesh ... but that the two natures each exist with the properties and with the hypostases and with the essence.“ (LH 184-185) The hypostasis seems comprised here (in conformity with the ontology of the Cappadocian Fathers) of the common essence, or a general essence, concretized and individuated with the ensemble of qualities or natural properties of which it is the substratum.

Understood in the Nestorian sense of objective and individuated nature, the notion of „hypostasis“ is applicable to the humanity of Christ in a perfectly orthodox sense. Nestorius does not mean by „hypostasis“ being subsisting in itself and by itself in the principle of the ultimate autonomy of a subject in intellectual conscience and in free will that we today call the „person“. But this statement does not indicate what it is that is the ontological principal constitutive of the unity of Christ that he designated by the term „person“. The matter is so uncertain that the translators of his apology (which is preserved in Syriac) usually simply give up, translating the word „προσωπον/ /prosopon/parsopa“).

Nestorius speaks more freely of the person of the union (LH 127-129 etc.) or of the common person (LH 152 etc.) of Christ. These two synonymous expressions undoubtedly correspond to the „common names“ called to mind in regard to the creed of Nicea and the Antiochene profession of 433. „The common person of two natures is Christ.“ (LH 281-282) Since Nestorius considers Christ the Son of God

made man, the „common person“ has for him a theandric meaning. If he refuses to attribute it to the Word, as Cyril has it, it is solely because he, with the Antiochene tradition, considers the name „Word“ as one of the appellations proper to the divine nature (LH 127).

But Nestorius also seems to avoid identifying the „person of the union“ with what we call today the hypostasis or the person of the Son, and this is more disturbing. One is amazed, in effect, to see him leave subsisting in the union itself what he calls the person „natural“ or „proper“ to each of the two natures. Because of the principle according to which „nature is not without the person, nor the person without the nature“ (LH 219), he must say of Christ that „there are two persons of the one who has assumed and of the one who has been assumed ... It is neither without the person nor without the hypostasis that (each nature) becomes known.“ (LH 193)

Of what, then, could the „person of the union“ be comprised? Nestorius seems to restore it to a simple „exchange“ of two „natural persons“ by their reciprocal „use“. „The divinity uses the person of the humanity and the humanity uses the person of the divinity; and thus we speak of one person in the two.“ (LH 212-213; cf. 194, 266) „By receiving and by giving, and by use of the mutual union, the persons receive and give mutually.“ (LH 223) There is no other known patristic example of this curious conception of the Christological concept of „person“, conceived in the manner of an „αντιδοσις των ιδιοματων“. The permanence of two „actual“ persons or „natural“ persons even in the union itself seems necessarily to take from the „common person“ or from the union, if not all ontological consistency, at least the meaning of the ultimate ontological principle, from hypostasis or from subsistence, that is to say, from „person“ in the actual sense of the term.

One must therefore recognize that the Christological system of Nestorius is not the equal of his faith in Christ. This fundamentally orthodox believer was not a good theologian. He did not succeed in expressing the unity of the Son of God made man in a satisfying ontological category, in the process bringing the major flaw of Antiochene Christology to its extreme. The irreplaceable function of the latter, which is fundamentally apologetic and rational, is as a reminder that the Christian paradox of the God who was born, suffered, and died, cannot compromise either the immutability and impassibility of the divine nature, nor disfigure the humanity assumed in the exercise of his activity and his own will.

Conclusion: A perspective for Dialogue

After fifteen centuries of mutual lack of understanding, the dialogue of the Oriental Orthodox Churches with the Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church has permitted them at least to recognize in all the confession of the same Christological faith, beyond the divergences between formulations peculiar to each of their two traditions; and this recognition obligates them henceforth to forget the personal anathemas of the past. In the same manner, by the dissipation of another prejudice, also more than fifteen centuries old, all must recognize that as Nestorius never professed the heresy called Nestorianism, the Assyrian Church of the East, which like him has always condemned this heretical Nestorianism, professed the

common faith in the unconfounded unity of Christ throughout the formulation of its own tradition.

Whatever the faults and wrongs of Nestorius may have been (a certain theological arrogance and an intemperate zeal contrary to popular piety), one cannot ignore the fact that he was condemned by an irregularly assembled tribunal where the judge was at the same time the accuser. The writings and the remarks of the accused were declared contrary to orthodox faith without any irenic discussion of them, without Nestorius, and without the other representatives of the Antiochene Christological tradition, who perceived their own thinking in this Christology even though they would not necessarily have approved of its polemical expression. The oriental episcopate was forced to declare the doctrine of Nestorius anathema under the compulsion of imperial power. The majority of those who yielded to this did so with a mental reservation which safeguarded their inward conviction of the orthodoxy of this doctrine. And the minority - those who steadfastly refused this anathema - were able to return to communion with the archbishop of Antioch without submitting to it, out of respect for their conscience before God.

The Assyrian Church of the East, which was not directly represented at the council of Ephesus, was historically connected to this dissenting minority. The other Churches are fortunately free today from the pressure of imperial power of former times. They should therefore accord to this Church the same „economy“ that John of Antioch had promised to the dissenters of conscience of his patriarchate, by not requiring of this Church any anathema of Nestorius as a preliminary to dialogue. Cyril himself would have proved his magnanimity by no longer requiring this for reconciliation with the eastern bishops of his time.

But the spirit of dialogue invites the Churches everywhere to cleanse their memory by examining the doctrinal justification for the personal anathemas of the past by an impartial reconsideration of history. Under the circumstances, the common task consists of testing the cogency of the condemnation brought by the tribunal of Ephesus. But whatever legitimate reservations there may be, based on some apparently divisive Christological expressions, it is incontestably proved that Nestorius professed in all sincerity the faith of the creed of Nicea in the unique Lord Jesus Christ, the unique Son of God, incarnate and made man for us of the Virgin Mary, and that he did not refuse to call her Mother of God as long as he knew that any velleity of monophysite distortion had been stripped from this marian title.

If Nestorius distinguishes two „hypostases“ in the unconfounded union of the unique Christ, it is because he understood the „union according to hypostasis“ as a „natural union“ mingling the divinity and humanity of the incarnate Word in one „composition“ of incomplete parts. These two „hypostases“ are not at all compatible with the unity of the person of Christ since, contrary to Cyril and the council of Chalcedon, but conformably to the Antiochene Christology of his time, Nestorius placed „hypostasis“ on a level with „nature“, by which he means „real and individual character.“ To detect in this the germ of an objective error would be to return to judging this Christology in the context of a later development in terminology. The true heresy, justly condemned at Ephesus, is the adoptionism imputed to Nestorius.

In its first synodical confessions, the Assyrian Church of the East, which has never professed this Nestorianism, was willing to confess, with an antitheopaschite objective, the two unconfounded natures of Christ and the permanence of their

qualities. In the sixth and seventh century, some theologians were disposed to receive the formula of the one hypostasis, conformably to the Cyrillian and Chalcedonian sense of the „hypostasis“. But in 553 the council of Constantinople had explained, in its fourth anathema, the „union according to hypostasis“ as „union according to composition“; the Antiochene objections to this last expression recovered their strength in the Assyrian Church, so that the formula of two hypostases was canonized as early as the synodical profession of 612. And if its greatest theologians, such as Babai, ʾĪṣoʾyahb III or Timothy I, adopted the theory of Nestorius in their writings, according to which two „natural persons“ are exchanged in one „common person“, nevertheless this theory never passed into the official Christological formula, which remains thus: „two natures, two hypostases, one person.“

Once dialogue is allowed to dissipate misunderstandings of terminology, the Assyrian Church of the East will be able to accept without difficulty a recognition of the orthodoxy of the Cyrillian and Chalcedonian formula of the unique hypostasis of the incarnate Word, by placing the „hypostasis“ on an ontological level with the person. But the other Churches cannot require of her that she receive this formula in her own Christology, since her formula of two hypostases, operating in the context of another definition of the word „hypostasis“, assumes an entirely orthodox meaning.

The Christological terms „nature“, „hypostasis“ and „person“ form part of the particular traditions by which the three families of Churches, Chalcedonian, Oriental Orthodox and Assyrian, have endeavored to translate into ontological language something of the unfathomable mystery of unity without separation and without confusion. A profession of common faith respectful of these traditions must therefore be inspired by the terminology of the kerygma of the apostolic tradition, which is condensed in the creed of Nicea. A good example of this kind of profession may be found in the Christological accord signed in 1987 by the leaders of the Orthodox Churches of the Near East. The Assyrian Church undoubtedly would not have any objection to associating itself with this without reservation.

(Translated from French by Annette Hednan)

Abbreviations:

LH = Nestorius, *The Book of Heraclides of Damascus*, trans. F. Nau, Paris 1910 (reference to the page, verified by the Syriac edition of P. Bedjan).

All the other abbreviations refer to the *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, tomus I, *Concilium universale Ephesinum*, ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin and Leipzig, 1925-1933 (references to the collection and to the number of the piece, with its eventual subdivision): A = *Collectio Atheniensis* (Vol. 1, part 7); C = *Collectio Casinensis* Vol. 4); V = *Collectio Vaticana* (Vol. 1, parts 1-6); Vr = *Collectio Veronensis* (Vol. 2).

Metropolitan Mar Aprem G. Mookan

WAS NESTORIUS A NESTORIAN?

Professor Bethune Baker of Cambridge in the beginning of this century concluded that Nestorius was not a „Nestorian“. Since then, theologians as well as „Orientalists“ interested in the Eastern Churches began to show interest to have a fresh look at the Bazaar of Heraclidus written by Nestorius towards the end of his life which was in 451 A.D., probably soon after the 4th Ecumenical Council which met at Chalcedon. Although many theologians from both the East and the West have exonerated Nestorius who was condemned as a heretic in the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. for his refusal to call Virgin Mary, Mother of God, the doubts still remain in the minds of many whether Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (428 - 431 A.D.), was a heretic or a victim of the ecclesiastical politics between the patriarchs of Alexandria and Constantinople. There was also a rivalry between the thoughts of the School of Alexandria and the School of Antioch. Cyrill of Alexandria and Nestorius (a monk of Antioch who became the Patriarch of Constantinople in 428 A.D.) were the key figures in this unfortunate Christological controversy of the 5th century.

When we discuss the Christology of the Church of the East we are dealing with a very crucial controversy of the fifth century in which Nestorius of Constantinople representing the Antiochene thought on one hand and Cyrill of Alexandria representing the School of Alexandria on the other are involved. Though the Church of the East did not participate in this controversy, it is a historical fact that the Church in the Persian Empire later defended the Christological utterances of Nestorius.

The School of Alexandria, under the influence of the philosophy of Plato, developed Logos-Sarx Christology. On the other hand the School of Antioch, under the influence of the philosophy of Aristoteles, maintained that sin did not happen only in the body, but through the soul of man. Therefore Logos united not with sarx but with man. Hence the Antiochene Christology can be called the Logos-Man Christology.

The Greek doctors such as Diodoros, Theodoros and Nestorius were the fathers who initiated the discussion or the union of the natures of Christ which led to the formation of a Christological formula in the fifth century. The Christological discussion began among the Syrian fathers only after the fifth century Christological controversy in the Greek speaking Christianity. Hence they are treated later in this chapter.

1. The Greek Fathers

While we examine the prayer books found in the Chaldean Syrian Church in Trichur, we come across references to three Greek Fathers, namely, Diodoros of

Tarsos, Theodoros of Mopsuestia and Nestorius of Antioch. To mention these three together is the common custom of the Church of the East. That is the reason why it is called the Nestorian Church. It is a Church that venerates Diodoros, Theodoros and Nestorius, but it is not a Church founded by any of the three. A Nestorian Father of the 13th century, Mar Abdišo, says:

„As to the Easterns, however, because they never changed their faith, but kept it as they received it from the Apostles; they were unjustly styled 'Nestorians', since Nestorius was not their Patriarch, neither did they understand his language; but when they heard that he taught the doctrine of two natures, two Qnome, one will, one Son of God, one Messiah, they testified about his that he confessed the faith as orthodox. Because they too held it likewise. Nestorius, then, followed them, and not they him, and that more especially in the matter of the appellation 'Mother of Christ'.“¹

The fifth Friday after the Epiphany is observed as a memorial to the Malpane Yavnaye² Greek doctors. The prayers for that day are seen in the Khudra.³ The heading of these prayers is given as Memorial of Greek Doctors. The second line, like a subtitle states „Mar Diodoros and Mar Theodoros and Mar Nestorius.“⁴ The next twenty printed pages of prayers have several references to these saints.

On the second Wednesday of the Advent season the Church requests that the prayers of Diodoros, Theodoros and Nestorius be a fortress to them.⁵ These prayers speak of Nestorius as Kadhiša (holy) Nestorius⁶ and their holy teaching. All the three, i.e. Diodoros, Theodoros and Nestorius are spoken of as teachers (Malpane), priests and holy men (Kadhiša). These prayers also speak of the opponents of Nestorius, namely Cyrill of Alexandria and Severus as „wicked“ men.⁷

These three fathers are so important to the Church of the East, so that their names are mentioned not only on the Memorial of the Greek Doctors but also every day in the litany of the evening prayers⁸ as well as in the litany of the liturgy.⁹ In the litany these three are remembered along with the three Syrian teachers, i.e. Ephrem, Narsai and Abraham.¹⁰

¹ Marganeetha, Part III, Ch. 4. op.cit., pp. 42/43 (Syriac numeral)

² Syriac Calendar 1974, p.3, month Adar (march)

³ Khudra, Vol. I., pp. 741-760 (Syriac numeral)

⁴ ibid., p.741

⁵ Kaškul MS of A.D. 1585, op.cit., p.17

⁶ ibid., p.271

⁷ A.A. King. Vol. II., p.313. Footnote 198. cf. Badger, Vol. II., p.80. Unfortunately this is not found in the Khudra of the Church of the East as well as in the three volume Khudra published by the Chaldean uniates of Mosul. Probably this was found in the MSS used by Badger in the Middle East. Perhaps it was removed from the prayer books because in the recent years, especially after the contact of the Assyrians with the Anglicans in the 19th century some of the condemnatory sentences against Cyrill, Severus et alios were not found to be very edifying and therefore slowly disappeared from the Syriac prayer books.

⁸ Khudra, Vol. I., p.416. Litany

⁹ Takhsa (Trichur English edition). op.cit., p.215. The litany of the liturgy is not printed in both Syriac editions, Mosul 1928, and Trichur, no date

¹⁰ The memorial for the Syrian Fathers is also observed in the Church of the East. The prayers for it are found immediately after the prayers of the Greek Fathers. The names of the Syrian Fathers mentioned here are five instead of the usual three Ephrem, Narsai and Abraham, adding Lolyane and Yokhannan (John). Khudra, Vol. I., pp.761-779 (Syriac numeral). The names of Michael and Barsauma are mentioned in the prayers.

2. Biblical Basis of this Christology

Our present concern is to examine whether Nestorius taught or intended to teach the doctrines attributed to him and condemned as his. The bitter tale of this unhappy controversy has been told so often and so fully especially in the present century that it makes a re-telling irrelevant and unnecessary. Bethune Baker observes: „It is a singularly painful story, even in the annals of controversies and of councils.“¹¹

Much has been written on the historical aspect of the unfortunate fate of Nestorius and his teachings. To little has been said or written, however, to discuss and determine the biblical basis of the Christology of Nestorius. Nestorius has always been primarily interested in finding Scriptural foundation to the teachings be upheld as orthodox and adequate. He quoted quite often both from the Old and the New Testament to support and substantiate his arguments. He appealed to Scriptures as final authority.¹² The concluding sentence of Book I, part I of the *Bazaar* bears testimony to the truth of the above statement:

„Therefore the words of the Divine Scriptures befit not Christ in any other manner than this: but as we have examined and found, all refer not to the union of the nature but to the natural and hypostatic prosopon.“¹³

But we must also note that Nestorius has never been considered even by his supporters as a biblical exegete par excellence. It is Theodoros of Mopsuestia, (d.428) the famous disciple of Diodoros of Tarsos who bears the title „the interpreter“ (*Mpaškana*) among the Nestorians. Nevertheless, the importance of the biblical exegesis of Nestorius should not be minimised.

All those who have written on the Christology of Nestorius are students of either Church History or Theology. It is unfortunate that no biblical scholar - particularly no New Testament scholar - has undertaken to study this very interesting and important subject from the point of view of his special field. The following pages, it is hoped, will justify the need for such an undertaking.

a. Pauline Passages

Like his rival Cyrill of Alexandria, Nestorius too appealed to the scriptures in defence of his teachings. The *Bazaar of Heraclides* has numerous references to the Gospels, Epistles and in some cases to the Old Testament too. As the *Bazaar* does not have an index of the biblical passages cited, let us turn to the pages of this

important work of Nestorius to have an idea of the extent of the use of the Bible in the theological system of Nestorius.

It is true that Nestorius has written various works other than the *Bazaar*. According to the Nestorian metropolitan Abdišo (d.1318): „Nestorius the patriarch wrote many excellent books which the blasphemers (viz. the anti-Nestorians) have destroyed.“¹⁴ *Tragedy, Bazaar of Heraclides, Letter addressed to Cosmas, Book of Letters and Book of Homilies and Sermons* are usually ascribed to Nestorius. Nevertheless the *Bazaar of Heraclides* is the only complete work extant. Consequently the attention of our present study is focused only upon that work.

Among the biblical references in the *Bazaar*, let us limit our interest, only to the works of Paul. The Philippians, ch. 2, occupies the first rank among the Pauline passages cited. The verses 5 to 11 of this chapter have been referred to twenty two times.¹⁵ The second place is taken by 1 Cor 15, which has seven references. One verse from each of the chapters 10 and 12 of the same Epistle has also been quoted. Each of the Epistles to the Romans, Colossians and Galatians has been mentioned twice. There is also one reference to 1 Tim 2,15.

The extent to which Nestorius used these Pauline passages can be understood by looking at the following table which shows that the same passage can be referred to again and again whether in the beginning, the middle or the end of the *Bazaar of Heraclides*. The following Pauline passages found in this article is not a random selection. This selection is based on the fact that there are certain passages quoted in the *Bazaar of Heraclides* and some not. The passages treated by Nestorius are discussed here. The concern here is to focus our attention mainly on Nestorius and his agreements and disagreements with the concern of Paul rather than a detailed discussion of Pauline Christology.

Philippians 2:	8-11	Bazaar, p.	40
	9-10		55
	9		57
	8		58
	6		60
	7		61
	9-11		61
	8		68
	7		69
	7		79
	9		89
	7		90
	9		91
	7-8		165
	8		165
	9-11		165
	7-9		165
	9		166

Khudra, Vol. I., p.774. It is interesting to note that the Memorial Day of the Greek Father coincide with the Memorial Day of the Syriac Fathers in some years such as 1972. But in 1973 they happened to be on two different Fridays. Greek on February 9 and Syriac on February 23

¹¹ J.F. Bethune Baker, *Nestorius and his Teaching*. Cambridge University Press 1908, pp.20/21

¹² Not only Nestorius, but the Nestorian theologians after him appealed to the Scriptures very often. For example 64 passages from the Old Testament and 311 passages from the New Testament have been quoted or more in the book *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts* edited and translated by L. Abramowski and Alan E. Goodman. Cambridge University Press 1972

¹³ Nestorius, *Bazaar of Heraclides*, English translation by. G.R. Driver and D.H.C. Hodgson, Oxford Clarendon Press 1925, pp.85/86

¹⁴ F. Loofs, *Nestorius*, Cambridge University Press 1914, p.3

¹⁵ Probably this is one of the reasons why the English translators of *Bazaar* (Driver and Hodgson) observe: „His few points are repeated again and again with monotonous consistency“ (*Bazaar*, p.XXXV)

10-11	171
5-7	207
5-7	214
10-11	217

The references from 1 Corinthians XV are:

1 Corinthians XV:	47	Bazaar, p.	41
	45		41
	47		42
	48		42
	49		42
	45		42
	21		184

The other references are as follows:

1 Corinthians X:	16	Bazaar, p.	30
XII:	27		12
Romans V:	6-7		70
Galatians IV:	4		188
III:	19		53
Colossians I:	18		56
II:	9		51
1 Timothy II:	5		51

The concern of Nestorius was also to show that Jesus was truly a man. Nestorius spoke of a Jesus who was tempted as we are. By emphasising the true humanity of Jesus Christ Nestorius bears testimony to the historical Jesus. Phil 2,8 speaks of „even death on the Cross.“ This text is quoted by Nestorius to refer to the historical fact of salvation. Nestorius writes:

„... he made use of the prosopon of him who died and was crucified as his own prosopon, and in his own prosopon he made use of the things which appertained unto him who died and was crucified and was exalted.“¹⁶

This language Nestorius is likely to be interpreted as a subtle admission of two prosopa in Jesus Christ. But at the same time his other statements will safeguard his teaching of one prosopon in Christ as we see later in our discussion on the „prosopic union.“

To Nestorius, ‘Son’ refers to the pre-existent Logos which takes the flesh in the Incarnation. His concern is to maintain the traditional unity in Christ. The name ‘Son’ permits no division. The two natures are united in one ‘Son’. His statement on this is quite clear and Grillmeier, the Roman Catholic historian, calls it „one of the best pages of his (Nestorius) Christology.“¹⁷

¹⁶ Bazaar, op.cit., p.58

¹⁷ Alois Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, translated by J.S. Bowe, London 1965, p.379

It goes without saying that Nestorius used the title Christotokos. It was the bone of contention between him and Cyrill of Alexandria. When Cyrill advocated the adoption of the non-biblical phrase ‘Theotokos’ as a title for the blessed Virgin Mary, Nestorius insist on the use of ‘Christotokos’ as the appropriate phrase since she was the mother of Christ.¹⁸

Nestorius unequivocally declares that the child born of Mary was at no time a separate man, but at the same time Man-God. Anastos, an Orthodox writer, reminds us:

„This is a favourite subject with him and he repeatedly gives utterance to his conviction that in Jesus Christ God and man were one ..., as when he argues that the child (the human Jesus) and the Lord of the Child (the divine Logos) are the same.“¹⁹

b. New Adam

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: „For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.“²⁰ This important verse which speaks of the relation of Adam and Christ is not quoted by Nestorius. However, Nestorius deals with this topic when his imaginary questioner, Sophronius, draws his attention to the later verses of the same chapter. Paul writes:

„Thus it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being’: the last Adam became a life giving spirit: But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust: the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust: so are those who are of the dust: and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of heaven.“²¹

According to Loofs, Bazaar of Heraclides clearly shows „a new line of thought“²² when Nestorius speaks of Adam and Logos. As Adam lost the image of Logos which he received at the time of creation, the Logos which he received at the time of creation, the Logos Himself came down to efface the fault of the first man. Thus the purpose of the Incarnation was to give back the original image to man. Loofs remarks in this connection:

„Only he (Logos) could do it; apart from him there was nothing divine or honourable: and only in the manhood could this renovation take place. Nestorius gives in this connection a complete answer to the question: Cur deus homo? and it is not only by physical categories as in Athanasios’ de incarnatione that Nestorius argues.“²³

Attention should be drawn to the fact that Nestorius in his biblical exegesis followed the literalistic, anti-allegorical method employed by Theodoros of

¹⁸ Bazaar, op.cit., p.99. It is true that ‘Christotokos’ is also not used in the Bible. But this phrase is more biblical than Theotokos

¹⁹ Milton V. Anastos, „Nestorius was Orthodox“, in: Dumbarton Oaks Papers XVI (1962) p.126

²⁰ 1 Cor 15,22

²¹ 1 Cor 15, 45-49

²² Loofs, Nestorius, op.cit., p. 87

²³ ibid., pp.88/89

Mopsuestia and favoured in Antiochene circles. Richard Morris states that it was „Theodoros who propounded the undoubted original of the Nestorian Christology.“²⁴

Logos took flesh, He took the form of a servant. He was a sinless man, though the possibility of sin was open to him, as he was a perfect man. Being a sinless man, he was able to restore mankind to the image of God. Loofs writes:

„The main thing is that the Logos of a servant brought into existence a sinless man: hence the stress is laid on the moral and religious development of Jesus.“²⁵

Nestorius says that the Incarnation took place through an intelligent and rational soul. The soul, therefore, is the relation between Logos and man. This is a voluntary union. Here we find a union of free will. The relation becomes so close that one cannot be separated from the other. Or, in the terminology of Paul, Nestorius says that the ‘form of God’ shows itself in the ‘form of a servant’ in acting in the ‘form of God’. Loofs concludes:

„If thus justice is done to the idea of the unity of the nature in one person, then Nestorius too made it intelligible even where he, dealing with the Logos on the side and the man on the other, tries to understand the union as the result of the incarnation.“²⁶

The word ‘likeness’ is a crucial term in the writings of Nestorius. He refers to the creation story in Genesis where God created man in his own image and likeness.

„And it was congruous with the dispensation which is for ‘our’ sake that both of them should be taken into the prosopon; for, because God created the first man in his own image and in his likeness and the prosopa of God the maker of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit were not revealed to us, so that we might also know the Creator and obtain completely the teaching of the Divine knowledge and receive in completeness a complete idea of the image of God, he has renewed all creation in Christ and has made known and shown unto us what the maker is...“²⁷

It must be stated, however, that ‘image of God’ is not a very important doctrine to Nestorius. His concern is christological. Here, he differs from Irenaeus and the majority of the Church Fathers. In Bazaar of Heraclides, he never discusses the ‘image of God’ in itself. His interest is not man’s creation in the image of God, but the image of God as it was found in Christ.

The image of God is both the perfect revelation of God as well as perfection of the human nature. Image of God to Nestorius includes both the human and the divine prosopa. In his exegesis of the Philippian hymn Nestorius equates the image of God with the prosopon of union. When Nestorius used Gen 1,26-7 to explain Phil 2, the resulting exegesis expounds prosopic union. Rowan states:

²⁴ R.A. Morris, Manhood and Christ, Oxford 1963, p.X

²⁵ Loofs, Nestorius, op.cit., p.83

²⁶ ibid., p.83

²⁷ Bazaar, op.cit., pp.58/59

„Therefore the image of God is the perfect expression of God to men. The image of God, understood in this sense, can be thought of as the divine prosopon. God dwells in Christ and perfectly reveals himself to men through him. Yet the two prosopa are really one image of God.“²⁸

The same author rightly thinks that Nestorius’ use of the image of God solves „in a fairly coherent way the fundamental problems of the Antiochene Christology.“²⁹

No doubt, it adds to the biblical foundation of the thought of Nestorius, and brings him more in line with Paul. In this respect, Nestorius is not such different from his opponents.

Sebastian Brock

PRO ORIENTE CONSULTATION 1994 Orthodoxy and Catholicity in the Syriac Tradition

Founded thirty years ago by Cardinal König, the Stiftung PRO ORIENTE in Vienna has promoted numerous unofficial dialogues and consultations between theologians of the Roman Catholic Church and those of the Eastern Churches, Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, and (most recently) the Assyrian Church of the East. Out of these meetings there have come, not only a number of important publications, but also some very practical results. For the „Vienna christological formula“, produced by theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches as the first of a series of five consultations held between 1971 and 1988, served as the basis for subsequent official declarations made by the Roman pontiffs with the Coptic Orthodox patriarch, Pope Shenouda III, and with two successive Syrian Orthodox patriarchs, Moran Mor Ignatios Yacoub III and Moran Mor Ignatios Zakka I Iwas.

In the case of the consultation with the Oriental Orthodox, discussion had centred primarily around the christological definition of faith issued at the council of Chalcedon in 451, seeing that this had been the traditional stumbling block for the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Thanks not only to the benefit of hindsight, but also to a genuine openness on the part of the participating theologians on both sides, it became possible to look back on the heated fifth- and sixth-century controversies in a more dispassionate light and to realise that both sides were seeking to express the same reality of the divinity and the humanity in the incarnate Christ, albeit expressing this mystery in different, and sometimes verbally conflicting, ways.

The consultation

Dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox Churches had meant a concentration on the Alexandrine pole of the christological spectrum, with its emphasis on language

²⁸ Rowan Greer: „The image of God and the Prosopic Union in Nestorius“ Bazaar of Heraclides in Lux in Lumine, Essays to Honor W. Norman Pittenger, edited by R.A. Morris jr., New York 1966, p.50

²⁹ ibid., p.60

of unity in connection with the divinity and humanity of the incarnate Christ. The Antiochene pole, by contrast, where the emphasis is on terms of duality, was for a long while rather set aside in ecumenical discussion, with the result that the Assyrian Church of the East has been left out on a limb, above all in the context of the Middle East Council of Churches. Indeed, it has not yet been formally admitted to membership on the grounds of objections to its christology on the part of (especially) the Coptic Orthodox. In view of the critical situation of Christianity in the Middle East today it is clearly an urgent task to attempt to clear up the misunderstandings and misconceptions that surround the christology of the Assyrian Church of the East, and initiatives in this direction, taken both by the Middle East Council of Churches itself as well as by PRO ORIENTE are most timely and welcome.

The official title given for the PRO ORIENTE Consultation held in Vienna 24-29 June 1994 was „Orthodoxy and catholicity in the Syriac tradition, with special attention to the theology of the Church of the East in the Sasanian period“; and it had been decided to invite to it theologians from all the Syriac Churches. Thus representatives were present from the Assyrian Old Calendar Church of the East (under Mar Addai), the Assyrian New Calendar Church of the East (under Mar Dinkha), the Chaldean, Syro-Malabar, Maronite, Syrian Orthodox, Indian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic and Syro-Malankara Churches. The wisdom of confining this initial consultation to the different Syriac Churches was rewarded by the sense of a common underlying Syriac tradition that united everyone present, and this ensured a willingness to understand theological positions that might appear to be diametrically opposed to one's own.

The papers

The general pattern of the meetings was to have a couple of papers, with discussion, each morning and afternoon. These were focused for the most part on theological issues of the fifth to seventh centuries, and the speakers were (with one exception) either theologians from the Assyrian and Chaldean Churches or western scholars who had also been invited to participate. The one exception was a theologian from the Syro-Malankara Church, who happened to be an authority on Babai the Great, one of the most important theologians of the Church of the East in late antiquity. The Syrian and Indian Orthodox input was thus limited to the discussions; of another occasion it would be interesting to have papers from their theologians as well on some of the key issues.

For me the two most impressive papers (all of which are to be published by PRO ORIENTE) were those presented by Mar Bawai Soro, the Assyrian bishop of the western United States - impressive not only for their clarity of presentation and eminently constructive approach, but also for the wonderful spirit in which they were given. In the first of these, entitled „The Vienna christological formula in an Assyrian perspective“, Mar Bawai went through the Vienna christological formula clause by clause, indicating where the Assyrian Church of the East would have no difficulty in giving full assent, and where the phraseology of the formula poses problems. The extent of agreement that Mar Bawai brought out right at the beginning of the consultation was most encouraging, and the two main points of difficulty lay primarily in a certain ambiguity inherent in the wording of the formula.

The first of these concerned references to the „Dogmatic decisions and teachings“, and „the faith“ of Ephesus (alongside Nicea and Constantinople). Here the problem was a double one. In the first place, the Church of the East has never accepted the council of Ephesus (which, apart from its procedural irregularities, was a council convened by the Roman emperor, and so was not applicable to the Church of the East in the Sasanian empire). Secondly, since the council of Ephesus never issued any new credal formula, it is unclear what precisely is meant by „the faith of Ephesus“, and several different interpretations are possible.

The second point, not surprisingly, concerned the first half of the phrase, „we all agree in rejecting both the Nestorian and the Eutychian positions about Jesus Christ.“ Here it is a question of what is meant by „Nestorian“. As Mar Bawai pointed out, if it meant a description of the union of the two natures in Christ which resulted in two Sons (that is, involving two subjects), then the Church of the East would likewise condemn such teaching. This, however, was not what the Church of the East understood to be the teaching of Nestorius (nor, one can add, does it accord with the findings of modern scholarship, as clearly emerged from a number of other papers specifically on Nestorius' teaching).

This whole aspect received further comment in Mar Bawai's second paper, entitled „Is the theology of the Church of the East Nestorian?“ where he set out, on the basis of the synods and other texts of the Church of the East in the fifth to seventh centuries, the christological teaching of this Church and what it understood to be the teaching of Nestorius, whose only writing to be translated into Syriac was his second *Apologia*, to be found in the so-called *Liber Heraclidis*. This, moreover, was only translated into Syriac c. 540, over half a century after the „official adoption of Nestorianism“ by the church of the East in 486, as all too many western textbooks misleadingly would have it.

It was probably as a result of the sobriquet „Nestorian“ that has traditionally (and misleadingly) been applied to the Church of the East by all the other Churches that particular attention was given to the theology of Nestorius himself, and none to that of Theodore of Mopsuestia. Yet it was the latter who exerted a far greater influence on the Church of the East, while Nestorius is accepted as more a symbolic figure of a martyr for the Antiochene christological tradition, than an actual authority on christology. As a matter of fact (and Mar Bawai's second paper brought this out well), what is even more important than tracing the influence of these Greek theologians is a proper appreciation of the Church of the East's own tradition of expressing the mystery of the incarnation.

At an early stage in the consultation some had hoped that it might be possible to issue some form of agreed statement of faith on christology, and my impression was that the individual representatives of the different Syriac Churches present would themselves have had no great problems in reaching such a statement. In the event, however, this did not prove practicable. Given the centuries of miscomprehension that have divided these Churches, it was thought that such a statement would be premature and open to misunderstanding and misinterpretation in some circles. As a result, the joint communiqué is for the most part purely descriptive, though it will be seen that several of the concluding paragraphs deliberately reflect the wording of the earlier Vienna christological formula.

I think all those present felt that the consultation had been eminently worth while. It was felt that some significant progress had been made towards bringing together the divided Syriac Churches, and towards a better understanding among them of the christological tradition of the Assyrian Church of the East. It is to be hoped that this initiative of PRO ORIENTE, under its president Alfred Stirnemann, will prove in due course as fruitful as PRO ORIENTE's earlier initiatives.

**MINUTES OF THE CONSTITUENT SESSION OF THE SYRIAC
COMMISSION
HOLY SPIRIT UNIVERSITY/KASLIK/LEBANON
28TH SEPTEMBER 1994**

1. Formation of the Commission

President Alfred Stirnemann opens the meeting by quoting the paragraph of the Joint Communiqué of the PRO ORIENTE unofficial Consultation on the Theology of the Church of the East (Vienna, 28th June 1994) which proposed the creation of a follow-up commission: "To continue this understanding, participants in the consultation have agreed to form a Follow-Up Commission consisting of one representative from each church tradition. The task of this commission will be to plan future consultations, symposia, publications, etc., and to develop the appropriate procedures and methods."

PRO ORIENTE has written to the heads of the churches concerned to delegate members for this unofficial body, suggesting participants in the Vienna Consultation.

As a result, the following representatives attended the constituent session:

Assyrian Church of the East (New Calendarian):

Mar Bawai Soro, Bishop of Western USA

Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch: Mar Gregorios, Archbishop of Aleppo

Malankara Orthodox Church:

Dr. Kondothra K.M. George, Vice-Principal of the Old Seminary in Kottayam

Chaldean Church: Prof. Joseph Habbi, President of the Theological

Faculty Bagdad

Maronite Church: Bishop Boulos Youssef Matar, Vicar General

Cardinal König, Founder and Protector of PRO ORIENTE

President Alfred Stirnemann of PRO ORIENTE

Mons. Philipp Harnoncourt, Institute for Liturgical Studies, Graz

As far as the other churches are concerned, the following proposals were made:

Assyrian Church of the East Old Calendarian: So far there was no response from Mar Addai. PRO ORIENTE had invited Mar Aprem, who had in principle agreed to attend but did not get a visa.

Syrian Catholic Church: Patriarch Ignatios Hayek had agreed that Mons. Al-Jamil should be the Syrian Catholic representative. He was however unable to attend because of other duties in the US.

Chaldean Church: Patriarch Raffael Bidawid had only expressed his general approval of the creation of the commission. Thus Prof. Habbi, who attended the

PRO ORIENTE Lebanon Regional Symposium, came to represent the Chaldean Church at the constituent session.

Malabar Catholic Church: Cardinal Padiyara had agreed to Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil's membership in the commission, who however asked to be excused this time for reasons of health.

Malankara Catholic Church: There has been no reaction from Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios so far. The most likely member is Prof. Chediath.

PRO ORIENTE: Fr. Frans Bouwen and Prof. Hofrichter are to be asked whether they would accept to be members.

It was agreed that the name of the newly formed body should be:

Unofficial PRO ORIENTE Commission on Dialogue Within the Syriac Tradition, or for short: PRO ORIENTE Syriac Commission.

Chair: As Catholic co-chairman President Stirnemann was proposed. He however declined and suggested that the Maronite Patriarchal Vicar should have this function. According to the three church families involved, there will be three co-chairmen.

They are: Mar Bawai Soro (Assyrian)

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim (Orthodox)

Bishop Boulos Matar (Catholic)

As the eventual goal is the formulation of an agreement with the Assyrian Church of the East, the other Oriental Orthodox Churches should eventually also be brought in.

Moreover, specialists like Prof. Brock should be consulted for expert advice.

Mar Dinkha IV's letter welcoming the formation of the Syriac Commission is read out.

The press is to be informed about the formation of the PRO ORIENTE Syriac Commission and the results of its deliberations

2. Procedure:

PRO ORIENTE is to invite for the meetings and take the minutes. For the time being meetings are to be held in Vienna. Later on the commission might go round.

For a start the proven methodology of the PRO ORIENTE Standing Committee is to be adopted for the Syriac Commission. Adjustments may be made in future according to necessity. For practical reasons, the dates of the two bodies are to be coordinated.

3. Discussion of the Communiqué of 28th June 1994:

Before the Communiqué is read out, President Stirnemann gives the following explanation: at the June Consultation a steering committee made up of representatives of the Assyrian and Chaldean delegations had been asked to draw up a Christological declaration to be included in the Communiqué. Initial apprehensions of one of the Oriental Orthodox representatives could be overcome. However, when the proposal was presented, a Chaldean representative who had not been on the steering committee wanted to put in the formulation "in two natures" for discussion by the plenum. This led to the Christological paragraph being dropped altogether.

Thus the possibility of having at least some sort of minimum Christological agreement was lost.

4. Future Consultations:

In order to come to a Christological agreement (similar to the Vienna Christological Formula with Oriental Orthodoxy) a second unofficial consultation is to be held from 25th February to 3rd March 1996.

The following subjects are proposed:

1. Summary of the Christological debate in the 5 Vienna Consultations between theologians of the Oriental Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches in the light of its applicability to the dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East

2. The historical development of Christology

3. Dogmatic Christology. Titles proposed:

"Oneness (Unity) and Twoness (Duality) in the Mystery of Christ";

"The distinction of the natures from each other in contemplation (theoria) only" (verse from the Orthodox/ Oriental Orthodox Agreement, Amba Bishoi, 1989);

"Does Ephesus Unite or Divide?"

"Pre- and post-Ephesian Christology in the Church of the East"

4. Liturgy as a source for Christology: Title proposed: "Lex orandi - lex credendi"

Only after having established common ground in the field of Christology, ecclesiological questions should be tackled. The following subjects were proposed:

"The Conditions for the Chaldean Union with Rome";

"The Cyrillian 'mia physis' Terminology at the Council of Ephesus";

"The Theotokos Terminology at the Council of Ephesus";

"The Condemnation of Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus".

Representatives of the Coptic, Armenian and Ethiopian Churches are to be invited to take part in the consultation on a consultative basis.

5. Publications:

The dialogue within the Syriac tradition should be documented in a separate booklet series not to be confused with the "Vienna Dialogue" series with Oriental Orthodoxy. Mar Bawai will provide pictures which might be used for the cover. Prof. Habbi suggests that PRO ORIENTE should have a look at "Stèles de Si-quan-Fou" by Delliott in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris for a cover picture. The publication of texts necessary for the studies was suggested.

6. Other Activities:

The results of the dialogue should be made known in the form of symposia, also in the diaspora outside the traditional regions such as the US and Australia. Moreover, mutual visits and academic exchange were recommended.

Members of the PRO ORIENTE Syriac Commission

Assyrian Church of the East (New Calendarian):

Mar Bawai Soro, Bishop of Western USA

Assyrian Church of the East (Old Calendarian):

Metropolitan Mar Aprem of Trichur

Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch:

Mar Gregorios, Archbishop of Aleppo

Malankara Orthodox Church:

Dr. Kondothra K.M. George, Vice-Principal of the Old Seminary in Kottayam

Chaldean Church:

Prof. Joseph Habbi, President of the Theological Faculty in Baghdad

Maronite Church:

Bishop Boulos Youssef Matar, Patriarchal Vicar

Syrian Catholic Church:

Mons. Mikhael Al-Jamil, Patriarchal Vicar

Malabar Catholic Church:

Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil of Changanacherry

Malankara Catholic Church:

Prof. Geevarghese Chediath

PRO ORIENTE:

Franciscus Cardinal König, Founder and Protector

President Alfred Stirnemann

Mons. Philipp Harnoncourt, Institute for Liturgical Studies, Graz

Fr. Frans Bouwen PA, Jerusalem

Prof. Peter Hofrichter, Institute for Church History, Salzburg

COMMON CHRISTOLOGICAL DECLARATION BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

His Holiness John Paul II, Bishop of Rome and Pope of the Catholic Church, and His Holiness Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, give thanks to God who has prompted them to this new brotherly meeting.

Both of them consider this meeting as a basic step on the way towards the full communion to be restored between their Churches. They can indeed, from now on, proclaim together before the world their common faith in the mystery of the Incarnation.

* * *

As heirs and guardians of the faith received from the Apostles as formulated by our common Fathers in the Nicene Creed, we confess one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten of the Father from all eternity who, in the fullness of time, came down from heaven and became man for our salvation. The Word of God, second Person of the Holy Trinity, became incarnate by the power of the Holy Spirit in assuming from the holy Virgin Mary a body animated by a rational soul, with which he was indissolubly united from the moment of his conception.

Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man, perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity, consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with us in all things but sin. His divinity and his humanity are united in one person, without confusion or change, without division or separation. In him has been preserved the difference of the natures of divinity and humanity, with all their properties, faculties and operations. But far from constituting „one and another“, the divinity and humanity are united in the person of the same and unique Son of God and Lord Jesus Christ, who is the object of a single adoration.

Christ therefore is not an „ordinary man“ whom God adopted in order to reside in him and inspire him, as in the righteous ones and the prophets. But the same God the Word, begotten of his Father before all worlds without beginning according to his divinity, was born of a mother without a father in the last times according to his humanity. The humanity to which the Blessed Virgin Mary gave birth always was that of the Son of God himself. That is the reason why the Assyrian church of the East is praying the Virgin Mary as „the Mother of Christ our God and Saviour“. In the light of this same faith the Catholic tradition addresses the Virgin Mary as „the Mother of God“ and also as „the Mother of Christ“. We both recognize the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and we both respect the preference of each Church in her liturgical life and piety.

This is the unique faith that we profess in the mystery of Christ. The controversies of the past led to anathemas, bearing on persons and on formulas. The Lord's Spirit permits us to understand better today that the divisions brought about in this way were due in large part to misunderstandings.

Whatever our christological divergences have been, we experience ourselves united today in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man so that we might become children of God by his grace. We wish from now on to

witness together to this faith in the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, proclaiming it in appropriate ways to our contemporaries, so that the world may believe in the Gospel of salvation.

* * *

The mystery of the Incarnation which we profess in common is not an abstract and isolated truth. It refers to the Son of God sent to save us. The economy of salvation, which has its origin in the mystery of communion of the Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit -, is brought to its fulfilment through the sharing in this communion, by grace, within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, which is the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Spirit.

Believers become members of this Body through the sacrament of Baptism, through which, by water and the working of the Holy Spirit, they are born again as new creatures. They are confirmed by the seal of the Holy Spirit who bestows the sacrament of Anointing. Their communion with God and among themselves is brought to full realization by the celebration of the unique offering of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This communion is restored for the sinful members of the Church when they are reconciled with God and with one another through the sacrament of Forgiveness. The sacrament of Ordination to the ministerial priesthood in the apostolic succession assures the authenticity of the faith, the sacraments and the communion in each local Church.

Living by this faith and these sacraments, it follows as a consequence that the particular Catholic churches and the particular Assyrian churches can recognize each other as sister Churches. To be full and entire, communion presupposes the unanimity concerning the content of the faith, the sacraments and the constitution of the Church. Since this unanimity for which we aim has not yet been attained, we cannot unfortunately celebrate together the Eucharist which is the sign of the ecclesial communion already fully restored.

Nevertheless, the deep spiritual communion in the faith and the mutual trust already existing between our Churches entitle us from now on to consider witnessing together to the Gospel message and co-operating in particular pastoral situations, including especially the areas of catechesis and the formation of future priests.

In thanking God for having made us rediscover what already unites us in the faith and the sacraments, we pledge ourselves to do everything possible to dispel the obstacles of the past which still prevent the attainment of full communion between our Churches, so that we can better respond to the Lord's call for the unity of his own, a unity which has of course to be expressed visibly. To overcome these obstacles, we now establish a Mixed Committee for theological dialogue between the Catholic and the Assyrian Church of the East.

Given at Saint Peter's, on 11 November 1994

† *Catholicos Mardinkha IV*

† *Joannes Paulus II*

RELATIONS WITH THE APOSTOLIC (ASSYRIAN) CHURCH OF THE EAST

General:

Faithful: 200.000 in Iran (10-15 000), Iraq (50-70 000), Lebanon (5-10 000), Syria (7-10 000), India, America, Europe and Australia (100 000)

Mother Tongue: Aramaic (East Syriac), Arabic, Persian, English

Church Administration: Catholicate of the East, two Patriarchs, as the Church is split on the question of the calendar.

a) New Calendarists: 8 dioceses (3 in the Middle East, one in India, 4 in America and Australia)

b) Old Calendarists: 6 dioceses (4 in the Middle East, one each in India and America), two monasteries

Rite: East Syriac

Heads:

a) New Calendarists: H.H. Mar Dinkha IV Khanania, Patriarch of the Apostolic Church of the East (elected on 17th October 1976 in London by 6 (8) bishops)

Seat: Teheran, currently Morton Grove, Illinois, USA

b) Old Calendarists: H.H. Mar Addai II Givarghis, Patriarch of the Apostolic Church of the East (elected on 20th February 1972 in Baghdad by 5 bishops)

Seat: Baghdad

Predecessors: Mar Shimun XXIII (emigrated to the US in 1961 and was deposed, he died 1975 in a car accident), opposition patriarch in Baghdad was Mar Thoma (Darmo) (1961 - 69)

Signing of a Common Christological Declaration between H.H. Pope John Paul II and H.H. Mar Dinkha IV in Rome on 11th November 1994 (see p.224-226)

Relations with PRO ORIENTE:

8th April 1982: Audience with H.H. Mar Addai II Givarghis in the Assyrian Patriarchate of Baghdad (President Theodor Piffli-Percevic, Prof. Ernst-Christoph Suttner, Alfred Stirnemann) (Old Calendarists)

11th June 1988: Encounter with H.H. Mar Dinkha IV in Moscow on the occasion of the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the baptism of the Kievan Rus' (Franciscus Cardinal König, President Theodor Piffli-Percevic, Alfred Stirnemann) (New Calendarists)

18th June 1990: 59th Ecumenical Symposium on "Was Nestorius a Nestorian?" with Metropolitan Mar Aprem of Trichur of the Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East in the Beethoven Hall of the Palais Palfy in Vienna (Old Calendarists), published in this volume, pp.216-223

30th September to 4th October 1993: "Kerala Regional Symposium/Kottayam" at the St Thomas Apostolic Seminary in Vardavathoor (Kottayam) for promoting the results of the five Vienna Consultations with Oriental Orthodoxy in India. Participation of 25 bishops of eleven different Churches, among them Mar Aprem of Trichur together with priests and lay people of both jurisdictions (New Calendarists and Old Calendarists), published in Booklet No. 6 (Vienna 1995)

14th to 18th February 1994: Trip of a delegation (President Alfred Stirnemann, Mar Gregorios of Aleppo) to Teheran and Isfahan in order to discuss the possibilities of dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Assyrian Churches at an audience with the Patriarch and Catholicos of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Dinkha IV. Visits to the Chaldean Bishop Youhanna Semaan Issayi and the Armenian Apostolic Bishop Artak Manukian. Talks with the Assyrian member of parliament Shemshoon Maghsoodpour. Visit to the Armenian community of New Julfa in Isfahan (New Calendarists)

19th to 25th May 1994: Trip of a delegation (President Alfred Stirnemann and Mar Gregorios of Aleppo) to Baghdad for preparing dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East and a regional symposium in Baghdad. Audiences with H.H. Patriarch Mar Addai II, accompanied by the Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan Mar Severios, and with the Chaldean (Catholic) Patriarch Raphael I Bidawid. Visits to the Armenian Apostolic Archbishop Avak Asadurian of Baghdad and the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Konstantin Papastefanou. Visits to Pro-Nuncio Archbishop Marin Oleš and the Syrian Catholic Bishop Athanase Matti Shaba Matoka. In Mosul visits to the Syrian Orthodox Monastery Mar Matta, the Syrian Orthodox Seminary St Ephrem and the Syrian Catholic Monastery Mar Bechnan. Joint lecture given by President Stirnemann and Mar Gregorios of Aleppo in Mosul. Talks with the Minister for Waqf Abd Al-Muram Ahmed Saleh and the department head for religious affairs in the Ministry for Religions Sami Girgis Ilia. Visit to the President of the Iraqi Academy of Sciences Dr. Saleh Ahmed Al-'Ali. Meeting with Mar Yousef Sarkis, Bishop of the second Assyrian jurisdiction (Mar Dinkha IV), and with the Head of the Mandeans, Sheik Gazibra Abdullah Nejem Zihrun (New Calendarists and Old Calendarists)

24th to 29th June 1994: "First Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition: Orthodoxy and Catholicity in the Syriac Tradition with Special Attention to the Theology of the Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire" at the Bildungshaus Lainz. Theological seminar attended by some 30 Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Assyrian theologians discussing the history and christology of the Assyrian Church of the East. Papers read by 15 participants of all Churches of Syriac tradition on nine different topics (New Calendarists and Old Calendarists)

26th June 1994: Solemn liturgy in the Syrian Orthodox Parish Church in Vienna /Lainz celebrated by Bishop Mar Bawai Soro and Metropolitan Mar Aprem G. Mookan in the presence of the participants of the consultation (New Calendarists and Old Calendarists)

26th June 1994: Solemn liturgy in the Cathedral and Metropolitan Church of St Stephan's celebrated by Mons. Dr. Michael Wilhelm, member of the Executive Committee of PRO ORIENTE, in the presence of the consultation participants (New Calendarists and Old Calendarists)

July 1994: Contacting the Heads of the Churches of Syriac tradition for the formation of the commission proposed on the occasion of the First Non-Official Consultation (New Calendarists and Old Calendarists)

23rd to 27th September 1994: Participation of Mar Bawai Soro and Mar Narsai de Baz in the Third PRO ORIENTE Regional Symposium in Kaslik/Lebanon (New Calendarists), Mar Aprem G. Mookan from Trichur (Old Calendarist) is prevented by passport difficulties. Published in Booklet No. 8 (Vienna 1996)

28th September 1994: Constituent session of the "PRO ORIENTE Commission for Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition" in Kaslik/Lebanon in the presence of H.Em. Franciscus Cardinal König, chaired by President Alfred Stirnemann. As future co-chairmen were elected: Mar Bawai Soro (Assyrian), Mar Gregorios of Aleppo (Syrian Orthodox), Patriarchal Vicar Bishop Boulos Matar (Maronite), see p. ... of this volume.

25th to 27th February 1995: Second meeting of the "PRO ORIENTE Commission for Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition" at the Bildungshaus Lainz/Vienna.

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