

CESARE GIRAUDO (ed.)



The Anaphoral Genesis
of the Institution Narrative
in Light of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari

Acts of the International Liturgy Congress
Rome 25-26 October 2011



Edizioni Orientalia Christiana


VALORE ITALIANO™
Lilamé

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY LEAVEN (MALKĀ) IN THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

MAR AWA ROYEL

Bishop of California, Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East

1. INTRODUCTION

The most important liturgical anomaly in the East and West today is, by far, in my opinion, the Holy Leaven (or *Malkā*); it is a sacramental practice that is only observed by the Assyrian Church of the East. In his *Liber Margaritae* (*Margānūthā*),¹ Mar 'Abdīšō' of Nisibis (d. 1318) enumerates the sacramental list of the Church of the East, five of which are in agreement with the Churches of both East and West.² This list includes two sacraments that are not recognized as such by the rest of Christendom, namely, the Holy Leaven and the Holy Cross. The first of these is not recognized by any other Church at all, and the second sacrament is at best considered to be a 'sacramental' in the Roman Catholic Church. According to the metropolitan of Nisibis, the Churches that *do not* have the sacrament of the Holy Leaven (*Malkā*) count marriage as the seventh sacrament.³

The Holy Leaven is preserved in the liturgy of the Assyrian Church of the East with the utmost care and diligence. Because of the antiquity of this sacramental practice, its origins are hidden in the memory of the Church's apostolic tradition and practice from time immemorial. It is highly venerated because of the direct link it bears to the very Eucharist which Christ instituted and celebrated for the first time at the Last Supper. Therefore, it is to be understood in conjunction with that liturgical practice which is the summit of the Church's prayer and offering, the Holy Eucharist.

¹ See J.S. ASSEMANI (ed.), *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana... de Scripturis Syris...*, vols. I-III/1-2, Rome 1719-1728 (reprinted Piscataway, NJ 2002), here vol. III/1, 352-360.

² I.e.: Priesthood, Baptism, Holy Chrism, Eucharist and Absolution.

³ Mar Eshai SHIMUN (editor & English translator), *The Book of Marganitha (The Pearl), On the Truth of Christianity: Written by Mar O'Dishoo Metropolitan of Suwa (Nisibin) and Armenia. Together with several pertinent passages quoted from the various Church Fathers; a successive list of the patriarchs of the East; and an index of Biblical and ecclesiastical writings*, Trichur 1965, 46; cf. G.P. BADGER, *Nestorians and Their Rituals: With the Narrative of A Mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan*, vol. II, Devon 1852 (reprinted London 1987), 405.

2. ORIGINS OF THE *MALKĀ*

In the sixth chapter of Part Four ('Of the Church Sacraments') of his *Margānithā*, Mar 'Abdīšō' of Nisibis treats the sacrament which is known as the 'Holy Leaven,' or *Malkā*. He states that this sacrament was handed down to all the Churches in the East by the blessed apostles St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew of the Twelve, and Mar Addai and Mar Mari of the Seventy.⁴ Mar 'Abdīšō' further makes the statement that those of the Western Church who claim that St. Peter did not hand down this tradition to the West, back up this statement by saying that if this were indeed the case, then one of two must be correct: 1) either the apostles were not in agreement as to their mode of evangelizing, or 2) our tradition is false.⁵

The fact remains that the 'Easterners' (i.e., Church of the East) did not change anything which they received from the blessed apostles of our Lord themselves, but rather diligently and with great care kept and preserved all that was handed down to the Churches which the disciples evangelized; not even in persecutions nor in the face of martyrdom did they change any creed or belief handed down by an apostle of Jesus. Mar 'Abdīšō' makes this beautiful statement, firm in the understanding of apostolic tradition:

Had this Leaven not been of Apostolical transmission they would not, most assuredly, have endured all these afflictions and trials to keep it together with the orthodox faith.⁶

The logical conclusion that Mar 'Abdīšō' comes to in this matter is that, indeed, it is the Westerners who have changed the substance of the faith, and in essence had done away with the *Malkā*. The proof that he puts forth is the fact that had not the Western Church changed what they received from the apostles of Christ and become subject to (what he affectionately calls) 'heretical kings,' they would have kept the faith. For example, the fact that both the 'Franks' (i.e. Roman Catholics) and the 'Romans' (i.e. Greek Orthodox) differ in the matter used for the Eucharistic Oblation, namely: the former makes use of unleavened bread, while the latter leavened; had they indeed kept the apostolic usage unchanged, there would not be two different usages among them in this regard. The fathers of the Church of the East, therefore, firmly believe and teach that the Holy Leaven, known as the *Malkā* (which literally means 'King') is a sacrament of apostolic origin.

However, due to a lack of more ancient documents of the Church, the earliest written attestation to the existence of the Holy Leaven, or *Malkā*, are the liturgical canons of Patriarch Mar Yōhannān (John) V, bar Abgare (900-905). Canon 15 of this patriarch's liturgical directives decrees:

⁴ SHIMUN, *Marganitha*, 58.

⁵ SHIMUN, *Marganitha*, 58.

⁶ SHIMUN, *Marganitha*, 59.

For it pleased the Holy Spirit, and he commanded: that those who make the dough of the *qsāthā* [i.e. hosts to be baked] preserve two leavenings, the one consecrated and the other ordinary. But the consecrated one is the one that is necessary for the hosts, and these things are so by the word of our Lord.⁷

The first reference to the *Malkā* exists in this canon, which refers to it simply as the 'Holy (i.e. consecrated) Leaven.' Now, this does not mean that the sacrament of the Holy Leaven did not exist before the year 900 AD; however it simply is not mentioned or recorded in any document before that year.

The use of the term *Malkā* in reference to the Eucharistic loaves is also mention in Canon 9 of the same Patriarch Mar Yōhannān; this canon reads:

For it has pleased the Holy Spirit, and he commanded: that no one from among the presbyters and deacons who minister the altar are to make from the dough loaves of flour — while it is the king (*Malkā*) — of dark wheat, and neither is it befitting that they should make the king (*Malkā*) [to be] an enslaved Ethiopian servant, but rather a 'white' [i.e. Caucasian] Roman; and these things are so by the word of our Lord.⁸

The use of the word *Malkā* here is in direct contract with the 'enslaved Ethiopian servant,' or dark flour (presumably, whole-wheat) and the intention is to impress upon the clergy who minister the altar that at no time is the bread of the Eucharistic loaves to be made of whole-wheat flour, but of pure, white flour. In the canons ascribed to Mar Gīwargīs Metropolitan of Athor (Arbel) from 938 to 960 AD, the following liturgical scenario is brought forward in which there is a mention of the holy leaven:

I have seen sacristans who knead the dough (*qsāthā*) with the profane leavening in the eventide, and at the nocturnal service they take half of the dough and bake the hosts in a profane manner [i.e. without the holy leaven], and the other half they sign with the holy leaven [= *Malkā*] and bake it [and bring it] up to the altar. They put forth the pretext that they give from the profane hosts to the pagans and to children, who are negligent in regards to keeping them and the crumbs which fall from them, and there are times that they are consumed after having taken food and drink.⁹

⁷ The English translation is that of the present writer. For the original Syriac, see: J.E.Y. KELAITA (ed.), *The Liturgy of the Church of the East. Compared in details with many ancient mss., which their name & date is given in the Syriac Introduction*, Mosul 1928; reprinted Chicago 2002, 213. According to J.S. Assemani, this is number as 'Canon 12;' see ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* III/1, 241.

⁸ KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 211. According to J.S. Assemani, this is 'Canon 10;' see ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* III/1, 240-241.

⁹ ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* III/1, 242; W.C. VAN UNNIK, *Nestorian Questions on the Administration of the Eucharist by Isho'yahb IV. A contribution to the history of the Eucharist in the Eastern Church*, Haarlem 1937 (reprinted Amsterdam 1970), 171 (the English translation is that of the present writer, although van Unnik has already executed the English translation). This question belongs to the collection of liturgical 'Questions

The important note in the quote just given is the technical liturgical word utilized in the Church of the East for the Eucharistic dough is *qsāthā*. Literally, it means ‘a broken portion’ or ‘fragment.’ In its original liturgical setting, it refers to the Eucharistic hosts as they are actually being baked, that is, the process from apportioned dough to baked hosts. The term *qsāthā* corresponds directly to the Greek τὸ κλάσμα, which in *Didache* 9:3 refers to the fragmentary bread which is to be hallowed.¹⁰ Although the Eucharistic loaves collectively are referred to as the *qsāthā*, they may not, though, (as a matter of strict liturgical practice) be fragmented until *after* the epiclesis. Whereas in *Didache* 9, assuming that it is indeed describing the Eucharist, the bread which is hallowed is ‘fragmented bread,’ in the practice of the Church of the East the Eucharistic bread which is brought up to the altar for consecration may not be broken or fractured in any way, at all (at the risk of becoming invalid matter for consecration!), even though it is referred to as the *qsāthā*, the ‘broken bread’! It is interesting to note that in the Pšettā New Testament which mentions the feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14:20-21; Mark 6:43; Luke 9:13-17; John 6:13) and the 4,000 (Matthew 15:37-38; Mark 8:8) respectively, the word for “fragments of bread” does not vary. With regard to the feeding of the 5,000, the Syriac term for “fragments of bread” in Matthew 14:20 and Luke 9:17 is *qsāye*, the substantive of the Syriac verb from which the diminutive *qsāthā* stems. In the case of the feeding of the 4,000, the term used in Matthew 15:37 is also *qsāye*. This term may in fact have been preserved in the liturgical practice of the Church of the East from the early centuries (at least, from the time of the writing of the *Didache*), which depicts the Eucharistic celebrations of Syria or Mesopotamia in the late 1st to early 2nd centuries.

3. THE *MALKĀ*: A LEAVENING?

The sacrament of the *Malkā* has always been referred to as the ‘Holy Leaven,’ its earliest epithet. However, the question begged is this: *just what kind of leavening is the Malkā after all?* Naturally, in our present social context we think of a ‘leavening’ as being the fermenting agent that effects the rising of bread and bread products. In the New Testament scriptures, leaven has been seen as metaphoric for the Kingdom of God: “Another parable He

& Answers’ which are ascribed to George of Arbel. Cf. A. BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn 1922, 239. These liturgical questions are found in the manuscript Vatican Syriac 150 (1708/1709 AD). However, as van Unnik has aptly shown already in his thesis of 1937, these questions are to be properly ascribed to ʾĪšō‘yahb IV.

¹⁰ For the edition of the Greek text, see: W. RORDORF & A. TUILIER (eds.), *La doctrine des douze apôtres*, in SC 248 1978; revised edition SC 248bis, 1998. For the English translation, see: K. NIEDERWIMMER (English translation), *The Didache: A Commentary*, Minneapolis 1998.

spoke to them: 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened,'" (Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21). When referring to the *Holy Leaven*, the liturgical tradition of the Church of the East refers to *origins*. The presence of the *Malkā* in the Eucharistic dough brings that dough into 'liturgical connection,' beyond the limits of space and time, with the bread of the first Eucharist.

Foundationally, what is important to remember is that for each of the two 'Sacraments of Initiation' (i.e. baptism and the Eucharist), in the Assyrian Church of the East there is a 'leaven' (*khmīrā*) that comes by Tradition from the apostles of our Lord themselves. The reason for this 'leaven' with regard to these two essential sacraments is twofold: 1) in order to connect the sacramental act of the Church with the Lord of the sacraments, Jesus Christ and his first institution of these same two sacraments; 2) in order to perfect (*šumlāyā*) the consecration of these sacraments by the priesthood in the liturgy of the Church. For the sacrament of baptism, this 'leaven' is the Holy Oil, also known as the 'Oil of the Apostles;' this is parallel to the *Myron* of the other apostolic Churches. However, since the Holy Oil of Chrismation (used exclusively for baptism, and no other liturgical purpose) comes from the apostles themselves, it is not in need of being consecrated on an annual basis (e.g. on Maundy Thursday) as in the other traditions; rather, it is simply 'increased' at every celebration of the baptismal rite, when the freshly consecrated oil which remains after the administration of the sacrament is returned to the vile (called the 'Horn of Baptism,' or *Qarnā*) which contains the Holy Chrism.

The 'leaven' for the sacrament of baptism is already mentioned in the 6th century canonical sources of the Church of the East. In Canon 17 of the *Letter of Mar Īšō'yahb the Catholicos to Ya'qob, Bishop of the Island of Darai*, Mar Īšō'yahb I of 'Arzōn (patriarch 581-595 AD) mentions the Holy Chrism as being necessary and exclusive for the administration of baptism:

That the Oil of Anointing which is set apart for absolving baptism is not allowed to be given for the use of other things, but only for baptism: the holy Oil of Anointing, which by tradition is kept in the church in all regions, is powerfully and typically a mystery of the putting on of the 'adoption of sonship' and of incorruptibility, and the promise of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which those who are accounted worthy of holy baptism receive in a hidden manner, and by which they are begotten divinely to immortality. Because of this, it is commanded and decreed that it may never be given for the use of other things, but only for divine baptism, for which it is reserved and kept. Therefore, whoever gives it and takes it — excepting for baptism — both shall be anathematized until they are healed by repentance, and by agreement they are absolved. For as no one is allowed to employ the chalices and holy patens and vessels of the holy liturgy for the use of

other things, so also it has been decreed and held for the Oil of Anointing from of old, and it shall obtain forever as it has been held.¹¹

In like manner, the ‘leaven’ for the other ‘Sacrament of Initiation’ (both of which were established by the Lord Jesus Christ himself) is the Holy Leaven, or *Malkā*, for by it the Eucharistic bread that is baked for consecration in the liturgy is signed and ‘confirmed,’ or perfected. Being the two most important sacraments instituted by Christ, both baptism and the Eucharist enjoy a ‘leaven’ which is preserved in the Church of the East for the perfecting (*šumlāyā*) of these two sacraments. It is probably referred to as the *Malkā* because the vast majority of the adherents of the Assyrian Church of the East were living under rulers who were not Christian monarchs. Therefore, in the absence of a Christian king to not only rule over the faithful but to also guard them from harm as well, the Church saw it fitting to refer to this most important leaven as *the* king which we possessed.

4. THE WITNESS OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST TO THE *MALKĀ*

When discussing the theology behind the Holy Leaven, one must go straight to the source, Jesus Christ. The scene of the Last Supper — Jesus gathered around his disciples eating the Passover together before his arrest, trial and crucifixion — is where we begin to speak about the *Malkā* (see Matthew 26). After the Lord observed the Mosaic Passover, then he instituted his own Passover, now denoting the movement of humanity from the bondage of sin and death to the freedom of life eternal in Christ Jesus, seen as the ‘New Moses.’ The theology of the sacrament of the Holy Leaven, therefore, is grounded in the Last Supper itself. The tradition of the *Malkā* was written in the early 13th century by the well-known monk Yōhannān bar Zō’bī.¹² He was a priest-monk of the monastery of Beth Qōqā and a student of the celebrated monk and scholar Šem’ōn of Shanqalabad,¹³ who is the author of a work on the Eucharist and baptism, attributed to a certain “*Šem’ōn Kepā*.”

¹¹ M.J. BIRNIE (English translator), *The Eastern Synods (Synodicon Orientale)*, pro manuscripto, Seattle 1999, 131. Cf. J.B. CHABOT (editor & French translator), *Synodicon Orientale ou recueil des Synodes Nestoriens*, Paris 1902, 186 (Syriac text); 445 (French translation).

¹² For more on his life and works, see: BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 310; W. WRIGHT, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, London 1894 (reprinted Piscataway, New Jersey 2001), 258-259. Cf. ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* II, 455; III/1, 307-309. Bar Zō’bī was the master of the celebrated Syrian Orthodox author bar Jacob bar Šakkō of the monastery of Mor Mattai near Mosul; Jacob was taught Syriac grammar by bar Zō’bī at the monastery of Beth Qōqā in Arbel.

¹³ Modern-day Ṣaqlāwā in northern Iraq.

The tradition concerning the Holy Leaven recorded by Yōhannān bar Zō'bī is the following:

After our Lord was baptized and began his economy, he called John the son of Zebedee, and made him the 'beloved Disciple.' When he completed his dispensation, and drew near to the Passion and death, on the night of the Friday of the Passion, he handed over his Passover to his disciples. For, as he handed over the mystery of his Passover, in the bread and wine as it is written, to each he gave a single 'coal' [i.e. particle of the Eucharist], but to John he gave two. He made John to eat one and to keep the other as a leaven, which he preserved, and to be placed in the Church for a memorial. But when the Jews arrested our Lord in order to condemn him, the disciples were afraid and hid, and John remained by himself. But when they crucified him on the Wood, along with the malefactors in order to deride him; John was there also, to see what would be his [Jesus'] end; for the chief priests ordered, to bring down the crosses and to also brake their legs, that if they were alive they should die. The soldiers came and broke the legs of the malefactors; and as they came to our Lord, they saw that he was dead and they did not break his legs. Rather, one of the soldiers struck his side with a lance, and at that moment there came forth water and blood, and John saw them. For, the blood is the symbol of the [Eucharistic] mysteries of the Body and Blood, which exist in the Church. And the water is a sign of the rebirth of the faithful. It was John alone who saw them, the separation of the water and blood. And he testified in truth (even) as he said that we might believe his witness [cf. John 19:35]. He saw the separation which he declared, for they were not taken together, rather each one of them was taken by itself. He took the [drops of] blood by the particle, which was kept from the Passover. And he took the water in a vessel, that which John [the Baptist] had handed down to him. The blood of his body was mixed, with that bread which he [Jesus] called his Body; and the water from his side was mingled with the water from his baptism.

After he rose from the grave, he ascended in glory to his Father, and sent the grace of the Spirit upon his disciples and made them wise. And he commanded his apostles to place in the Churches the leaven which they took from his Body that it may be for the [Eucharistic] mysteries and for baptism. But when his disciples gathered, in order to go out for the discipling of the Nations; they took this leaven and divided it in portions amongst them. They took pure olive oil and mixed it with the water in the vessel, and they distributed in horns according to their measure, that it may be for the leaven of baptism. They ground the particle which was soaked with the blood from the side of our Lord, and they mixed it with flour and salt, and they divided it in vessels amongst them; that it might be in the Church for a leaven of the Body and Blood of Christ. This account which I have narrated, in which is placed the sign of Peter, and I copied it even as it is, for the benefit of those who come upon our writing. Giving testimony to this account, [is] the Priest-monk Shimun [Simon], who recounted it to me and showed its text as well.¹⁴

¹⁴ The English translation is that of the present writer. The text is that of the Modern Assyrian translation of the original Syriac; see I. REHANA (ed.), *The Book of the Harmonious Textile*, Chicago 1990, 85-89.

would there be for the priest to consecrate the Holy Oblation. As a demonstration, as our Lord gave his Body to his disciples, he blessed [it], and by that blessing with which he blessed, the Bread is consecrated.²⁰

Among the testimonies put forth by Šem'ōn Kepā are names of the more well-known fathers of the Church. In particular, he mentions the work titled *Cave of Treasures*,²¹ attributed to St. Ephrem (306-373). A reference is made to 'leaven' (*khmīrā*) that was handed down from Adam to his progeny. At the death of Methuselah, this leaven which originated with Adam was handed down to his son Noah:

And when Methuselah lived 969 years, he became ill unto death. And Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth gathered around him, they and their wives, for none [others] had remained from all the generations of Seth which was not cast down, save for these eight souls alone — Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, they and their wives — for they did not generate children before the Flood. And as they gathered to him and were blessed by him, and he hugged and kissed them chastely while weeping on the fall of the sons of Seth, with tears running down from his eyes, he said: 'From all the races and generations of the fathers, this remnant of these eight souls were spared. May the Lord God who formed our father Adam and Eve by themselves and who were multiplied and increased and all the blessed earth around Paradise was filled with them, may He multiply you and make you to increase. May all the earth be filled with you and may He protect you from the fearful wrath which is decreed upon this murmuring generation. May the gift which was given by God to our father Adam go out among you in this blessed land. *And may these three measures of flour, which were given to our father Adam be to you for a leaven and may a blessing be kneaded to your seed and the seed of your sons.* And Noah the blessed of the Lord ministered the kingship, priesthood and prophethood...²²

The reference to the "three measures of flour" given by God to Adam and passed on to his progeny as a blessing is indeed stunning! The authorship of the *Cave of Treasures* is not certain, though the attribution goes back to Ephrem, however the work is keen on providing a detailed listing of the generations of the Hebrews, the names of which were lost during the Babylonian Captivity (ca. 589-539 BC). The author refers to the person to whom the work is intended as 'My brother according to the Law,' who gives us to believe that Ephrem had addressed this work to the Jews more than to Christians. Be that as it may, the reference to the leaven (*khmīrā*) is very interesting and indeed relevant for a holistic understanding of the origins of the Holy Leaven in the Assyrian Church of the East.

²⁰ Mingana 604, f. 81v-82v.

²¹ See C. BEZOLD (ed.), *Die Schatzhöhle. Nach dem syrischen Texte der Handschriften zu Berlin, London und Rom, nebst einer arabischen Version nach den Handschriften zu Rom, Paris und Oxford*, Leipzig 1888.

²² See BEZOLD, *Die Schatzhöhle*, 78-82. The English translation is that of the present writer.

Around the same time as Mar Yōhannān bar Zo'bi, Mar Shlemōn of Khelāt, the metropolitan of Prāth Maišan (modern-day Basrah), writes an account of the tradition of the *Malkā* in his wellknown writing, *The Book of the Bee*.²³ In Chapter 47, commenting on the feast of the Pentecost, Mar Šlemōn gives an account of the Holy Leaven, with some interesting details not found elsewhere in other accounts. I quote that chapter in its entirety:

Concerning the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles in the Upper Room. Ten days after the ascension of our Lord, while the holy apostles were gathered in the Upper Room and awaiting the promise of our Lord, all of a sudden at the third hour [i.e. 9:00 am] of Sunday of the Pentecost, a mighty sound was heard, so much so that all men trembled and were amazed at the strength of that sound. The Upper Room was filled with a strong light which is unspeakable, and upon the head of each one of them the likeness of tongues of fire were seen. And a pleasant scent wafted from that place, which surpasses every fragrance that exists in this world, and the eyes of their heart were opened, and they began to interpret new things and to speak wonders or marvels in the languages of all nations.

And when the Jews saw them, they thought to themselves that they had drunk new wine, and were drunk and out of their minds. And in that very day they participated in the mystery [sacrament] of the Body and Blood of our Lord and they consecrated the Leaven of the signing [*rošmā*] and the Oil of baptism.

For [some] people hand down that when our Lord broke his Body for his disciples in the Upper Room, John the son of Zebedee hid [some] from his portion until our Lord rose from among the dead. And when our Lord was seen to his disciples and to Thomas, with them, and he said to Thomas 'Bring your finger and put it in my side, and do not be without faith, but believe' [John 20:26-27], and Thomas touched our Lord's side with his finger and it fell upon the place of the [wound] of the spear, and the disciples saw the blood from the wounds of the spear and the nails, [then] John took that portion from the 'coal' (portion from the Body given at the Last Supper] and he wiped that blood with that portion. And the Easterners, Mar Addai and Mar Mari took that portion and consecrated by it this Leaven which has been handed down to us. But the other apostles did not take from it, for they said that 'We will consecrate for ourselves whenever we wish.' But [regarding] the Oil of baptism, there are those who have said that it had come from the oil with which kings were anointed, this, our Oil of baptism. And still others have said that [it comes from] the embalming ointments with which they embalmed our Lord, and many agree with this. Still others have said that when John took that portion of the Passover in his hand, it burst into flames and burned in his palm, and his palm sweated, and he took that sweat and kept it for the signing of baptism.

²³ Mar Šlemōn is mentioned in the annals of the election and consecration of the catholicos-patriarch Mar Sabrisho' IV in the year 1222 (who reigned until 1226). Šlemōn was originally from Khelāt (or 'Akhlat'), in modern-day Armenia. For the original text and English translation see E.A.W. BUDGE (ed.), *The Book of the Bee. The Syriac Text edited from the manuscripts in London, Oxford and Munich, with English Translation*, Oxford 1886; reprinted Piscataway, New Jersey 2006.

And we have heard this saying from mouth to ear, from a monk and visitor [i.e. cor-bishop], and we have not received it in writing...²⁴

We see that the leavens for the two sacraments of the Eucharist and of baptism (which are used to 'perfect' the celebration of these same two sacraments according to the rites of the Church) have their origin in the person of Christ himself, and in his earthly dispensation for our salvation. First, the Holy Oil for baptism comes from the water which fell from the body of Christ at his baptism, and which was collected by John the Baptist and handed over to John the son of Zebedee (one of John the Baptist's own disciples, who later followed Jesus). At the Last Supper, John the 'Beloved Disciple' received an extra portion of the Eucharistic bread, offered by Christ himself, and he hid this portion with him. At the crucifixion atop Golgotha, the only disciple to be present with the Lord in his suffering was John. When the side of Christ was pierced by the Roman soldier (see John 19:34), water and blood gushed forth from the Lord's pierced side.

According to the tradition of Mar Yōhannān bar Zō'bī, John the disciple collected the water in a vessel, and took the extra portion of the first Eucharist he received from Christ and soaked it with the blood of the Lord on the Cross. Mar Šlemōn has a similar tradition written down, though he has an extra (unique) account for the origin of the Oil of the Apostles. These two leavens were kept by John and then later he distributed them to the disciples when they began to make disciples of and to evangelize all nations. The water was mixed with pure oil and placed in vessels of 'horn' and given to the apostles, while the bread was ground and mixed with flour and salt, and then in turn distributed among the apostles for the making of the Eucharist.

Thus, the importance of the two 'leavens' for baptism and the Eucharist is that they come from the person of Christ himself and from his own holy body, in fulfillment of his earthly dispensation/economy (*Mdabbrānūthā*) for the salvation of mankind. The importance of the role of John the apostle (i.e. the Evangelist) is very important as well. Remember that he was formerly a disciple of John the Baptist, and John sent him to follow Jesus. Further, he was the 'Beloved Disciple' and it was he who was reclining on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper (John 13:23). This closeness to Jesus, more than Peter and the other apostles, is very important. The fact that John was at the foot of the Cross during the crucifixion with Mary the Mother of Jesus while the other disciples had fled and were in hiding is equally important. John was given the grace to see the vision of the water and blood issue forth from the side of our Lord when it was pierced immediately after his death. We see earlier that Mar 'Abdīšō' of Nisibis states that the disciples St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew of the Twelve, and Mar Addai and Mar Mari of the Seventy had handed this

²⁴ This partial English translation is that of the present author. For the original see: BUDGE, *The Book of the Bee*, 115-117; for the English translation, see: 102-103.

tradition of the Holy Leaven down to the Church of the East. The position of John the Evangelist in this tradition is unique because although he was not an apostle who evangelized the Church of the East, he is associated closely with this tradition. His closeness to the Lord Jesus was recognized among all the apostles, for he was called the 'Beloved Disciple,' he leaned on the Lord's breast while they were at table for the Passover and was the last of the disciples to have passed this life (cf. John 21:23).

5. THE MALKĀ IN THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

The *Malkā* is made use of in two very important liturgies of the Church of the East that are closely connected to the Eucharist. It is, in fact, this understanding that will give us a correct theological perspective concerning the sacrament of the *Malkā* in the Assyrian Church of the East, namely its liturgical and sacramental function and theological *raison d'être* as an 'extension of,' or rather 'connection to' the Eucharist. In essence, the *Malkā* provides both a *sacramental* and *scriptural* connection between the Church's Eucharistic celebration today and the foundational Eucharistic act of Christ at the Last Supper. This understanding of the *Malkā* highlights the importance of the theological dichotomy of *Word* and *Sacrament* with regard to the Eucharist, and the unity among the two.

The first usage of the *Malkā* proves to be a sacramental link between the Eucharist that the Church celebrates and offers today — in accord with and in faithfulness to the command of Christ to 'Do this in remembrance of Me' (Luke 22:19) — and the Eucharist which Jesus himself first celebrated after he observed the Mosaic prescription of the Passover meal. The *Malkā* is the living witness acting as a 'theologico-sacramental link' between the Church's Eucharist today and the first Eucharist of the Lord Jesus himself observed in the Upper Room; and where does that link come from to us? Again, from the apostles who are the authentic witnesses of Jesus Christ, his holy doctrine and his suffering, death and resurrection. The presence of the sacrament of the *Malkā* as a 'leaven' for the Holy Eucharist takes us back to the first Eucharistic observance, so that we truly believe and hold that we are observing the same Eucharistic celebration which Christ and his holy apostles first observed and handed down to the generations of believers in the Church.

In a more historico-theological understanding, it could very well be the case that as the early anaphorae of the apostolic Churches came into being and crystallized into written texts, the need was felt to provide not only a sacramental but a scriptural link between the Church's actual Eucharistic celebration and the first Eucharist of the Lord Jesus. In many of the other eastern and western Eucharistic prayers, this was achieved through the insertion of the *Institution Narrative* in the actual text of the anaphora. The pri-

mordial Eucharistic prayer of the Syriac-speaking Church of Edessa (that is, the Edessene dialect of Aramaic), the anaphora of SS. Addai & Mari (which originated from Jerusalem) did not contain the Institution Narrative in the original text of its prayer and never was the need felt to insert the Words of our Lord, which in the West had been seen historically as the ‘consecratory moment’ of the Eucharistic prayer. Rather, the words of Christ are found “in a dispersed euchological way... integrated in successive prayers of thanksgiving, praise and intercession.”²⁵ Those who have studied this anaphora have proposed to speak of a ‘Quasi-Institution’ or ‘Quasi-Embolism’ being present in the ‘Institution-Anamnesis’ portion of the anaphora.²⁶ To this day, only the Assyrian Church of the East has preserved the original text of the anaphora of SS. Addai & Mari unaltered!²⁷ It is the oldest Eucharistic prayer still in use in all of Christendom today.²⁸ The *Malkā*, therefore, was preserved by the Church of the East and understood as taking the place of the Institution Narrative in the Eucharistic prayer.²⁹

During the service of the preparation of the Eucharistic bread, known as the ‘Rite of the Ornamentation’ (*Takhsā d-Sūba thā*),³⁰ the dough that is prepared to be baked and made into the Eucharistic hosts is signed with the Holy Leaven which is kept in a vessel in the altar of the church. When the priest bakes the Eucharistic hosts fresh (on the morning of each celebration of the Holy Qurbana), during the ‘Rite of Ornamentation’ he brings out the vessel containing the *Malkā*, while reciting Psalm 145:1-6. Then, he proceeds to sign the dough with the *Malkā* in two portions: first, the main lump of dough is signed in the form of the Cross with the *Malkā* as the priest says:

²⁵ *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East* 3:4.

²⁶ C. GIRAUDO, *Eucaristia per la Chiesa. Prospettive teologiche sull’eucaristia a partire dalla ‘lex orandi’*, Rome 1989, 462.

²⁷ The Syro-Malabar and Chaldean Catholic Churches have both inserted an Institution Narrative in the text of the Eucharistic prayer of SS. Addai & Mari after their union with Rome. The Syro-Malabarians under the influence of the Synod of Diamper (1599 AD), and the Chaldeans for the first time under Joseph Sulaqa (the Chaldean metropolitan of India and the brother of John Sulaqa) in 1556. Interestingly, Joseph Sulaqa inserted the improvised Institution Narrative in the text of SS. Addai & Mari immediately before the Fraction, as opposed to preceding the epiclesis (in keeping with the anaphoric tradition of other Eastern Eucharistic prayers).

²⁸ Cf. GIRAUDO, *Eucaristia*, 455.

²⁹ B.D. SPINKS, “The Mystery of the Holy Leaven (Malka) in the East Syrian Tradition,” in M.E. JOHNSON (ed.), *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West. Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis* (Collegeville 2010), 63-70, here 66.

³⁰ The ‘Rite of Ornamentation’ has already been described in a popular fashion; see: E.S. DROWER, *Water into Wine. A study of ritual idiom in the Middle East* (London 1956) 58-59. Cf. SPINKS, “The Holy Leaven,” 67-68.

This dough is signed and consecrated with the ancient and holy leaven of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given and handed down from our holy fathers Mar Addai, Mar Mari and Mar Thomas the apostles, who discipled (this) Eastern region; in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.³¹

The priest then signs the smaller portion of dough which was taken out from the middle of the large lump, and this portion is used to form the principal host, or *malkaytā*; he signs it while saying: "This broken portion is signed and consecrated with this holy leaven, in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit."³² The priest then returns the vessel back into the altar while reciting Psalms 24:1-6; 33:12; 24:9-10. He then proceeds to amalgamate the Holy Leaven into the dough, and to fashion and bake the Eucharistic hosts according to the prescribed rite.

The other important liturgical rite involving the Holy Leaven is the 'Rite of the Renewal of the *Malkā*.' Both this rite and the 'Rite of Ornamentation' have an anonymous authorship, and there are absolutely no indications as to who ordered or authored these two rites. However, it is highly likely that the latter rite (the 'Rite of Ornamentation') did not exist before the year 900 AD, that is at the time of the writing of the canons of Patriarch Mar Yōhannān bar Abgare. In fact, according to the witness of the *Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae* of Pseudo-Gīwargīs, metropolitan of Arbel,³³ Patriarch Īšō'yahb III (648-658) never prescribed how the Eucharistic loaves were to be prepared. He discusses this matter in Chapter 15 of Memrā Four:

Why is it that when they recite the antiphon [of the Mysteries] in the nave, the deacons recite it in the chancel? And why does he say that now they setup the Mysteries, and why did he not show how the bread is to be baked and the wine mixed? For, when the holy Church is perfected with the coming of the Spirit, in all true perfection and holy faith, even the hosts of the Spirit have accepted from her [i.e. the Church] just as the heavenly apostle said, that 'The manifold wisdom of God was revealed in the Church to the principalities and powers in the heavens' [Ephesians 3:10]. But now that the Church has demonstrated the economy of our Lord in the antiphon [of the Mysteries], that by this very same faith they may be accounted worthy of the Kingdom, he [i.e. the Spirit] is then revealed to the spiritual ones [= angels] and they confess along with us, as they follow our confession without division. That the archdeacon and those with him place the Mysteries even as Īšō'yahb had taught [is the mystery] of the season of preparing the mansions of the Kingdom. But one might say, 'Why did he [= Īšō'yahb] not teach as to how they are to be prepared and where they come from — even as he had spoken concerning minute actions such as the washing of the lamps, the semantron and similar things. Rather, in as much as our Lord said 'I go to prepare a place for you' [John 14:2], as well as 'Many are the mansions in my Father's house' [John 14:2], but as to

³¹ For the Syriac text, see: KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 162.

³² KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 163.

³³ For the life and works of George of Arbel, see: BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 239.

how or from where, he did not inform. In like manner, even now this blessed man [= ʾĪṣōʿyahb] does not show from where the [Eucharistic hosts] have come, or how they have been made and prepared — as if it is contrary to our nature to know the blessed things which are prepared, or from where they originated or where they were from before, or now that they have been prepared — we have learned from our Lord. And we have known that the ministers of these things are the spiritual ones [= angels], and he has revealed to us that they will raise up to the Kingdom those who are worthy. But as to what the beatitudes are, we have not known; for, our Lord [= St. Paul] has also said that ‘Eye has not seen, ear has not heard and it has not entered into the heart of man that which God has prepared for those who love him [1 Corinthians 2:9]; and he also demonstrates symbolically concerning the setting-up of the mansions, which are the Mysteries, as if they were hidden from us as to where they originated from, and not because he was not concerned to teach about them, but rather, he depicted a type of these incorruptible things.³⁴

In this important testimony of Pseudo-George of Arbel, we learn clearly that Mar ʾĪṣōʿyahb III had not established a rite for making and preparing the Eucharistic Elements, and in his *Expositio*, George gives us the theological reasoning for that absence in his mystagogical exposition on the Eucharistic liturgy. In fact, almost five centuries before the witness of Pseudo-George of Arbel concerning the preparation of the Eucharistic loaves, we have an important testimony of the Syrian Orthodox Jacob of Serugh (451-521). In his *Homily on the Memorial of the Departed and on the Eucharistic Loaf*,³⁵ Jacob tells us that the Eucharistic loaves for consecration were brought by the faithful in commemoration of their faithful departed; this may have indeed been the uniform practice of the Syriac-speaking Churches during this period, at least with regard to the Eucharistic liturgy offered for the departed. A portion of this homily, or *memrā*, is worthy quoting here:

Despised and dishonoured and meanly the loaf (*qesāthā*) is brought to the house of God to be offered. There are many who have altogether made an end, and bring it not; and there is that when he brings it, brings it not himself in person: by the hands of his maid servant he sends the sacrifice to the house of God. And as though it were a dishonor to him to bring in his own hands his sacrifice to the Lord, the despised dependents of his house, who are set to the meanest works, them he commands to bring his sacrifice, while he is absent. Why, good sir, dost

³⁴ R.H. CONNOLLY (editor & Latin translator), *Anonymi Auctoris Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensi vulgo adscripta*, I & II. *Accedit Abrahæ Bar Lipheh Interpretatio Officiorum*, (CSCO 64, 72-71, 76 = SS 25, 29-28, 32) Paris-Rome 1913, 1915; reprinted Louvain 1960-1961, here II, 36-37. The English translation is that of the present writer.

³⁵ E. BISHOP is of the opinion that the tradition of the offering of bread and wine by the congregation for the consecration died out in the East sometime in the 4th century; see E. BISHOP, “Observations on the Liturgy of Narsai,” in R.H. CONNOLLY, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai. With an appendix by Edmund Bishop*, Texts and Studies 8 (Cambridge 1909) 87-163. Dom R.H. Connolly notes that this practice in the East (at least, the Syriac-speaking East) lasted till the beginning of the 6th century; see CONNOLLY, “A Homily of Mar Jacob of Serugh,” 261.

thou not bring thy sacrifice in thine own hands, like Abraham, who carried the calf to the angels? He and his consort made them ready and stood to minister, and performed not that which was due by the hands to others. Today the faith of men is waxed little, and love is grown lukewarm, and the sense of things seemly is lacking. What rich man is there that has brought the eucharistic loaf (*qesāthā*) to the house of God, and carried it in his hands when he brings it in to the house of atonement? Either he brings it not at all or, if he brings it, he does not command the menials of his house to bring his sacrifice, while he is not present. Blessed is the widow who bears her sacrifice in her hands, and the bereaved who carries it and glories in it. She sends not the loaf (*qesāthā*) to the Lord, like the rich man: she herself offers it, and cries out earnestly that He will accept it of her. She, like the priest, brings in her vow to God, earnestly making mention of her dead over her oblation. Such a one has known how to offer and bring sacrifices to the Lord: not the rich man, who sends it as though the one in need. Acceptable is the oblation of the bereaved woman when it is offered, and with it mingled tears and love and faith: the loaf in her hands, and tears in her eyes, and praise in her mouth: and as her oblation great also is the offering of her faith; for save with love the oblation is not accepted.³⁶

It is noteworthy to mention that Jacob of Serugh utilizes the technical term *qsāthā* for the Eucharistic bread. This term is used by the Assyrian Church of the East till the present, whereas the Syrian Orthodox do not make use of this term for the loaves at present in their liturgy. This term, as was noted above, most likely comes from the Greek τὸ κλάσμα of *Didache* 9:3. In the liturgy of the Assyrian Church of the East till this day, the names of the faithful departed are commemorated in the Eucharistic liturgy, though the practice of the faithful bringing the Eucharistic loaves for consecration in their memorial has long since died out.

Thus, we can safely surmise that from about 650 AD (the approximate date of the famous liturgical reforms of ʾĪšōʿyahb III at the Upper Monastery in Mosul) to about the late 980's (when George of Athor would have died), there was no 'Rite of Ornamentation' in the Church of the East. Even the euchologion does not give the author of this rite for preparing the Eucharistic bread.³⁷ The rite for the signing of the Eucharistic chalice 'on the day of need,' which is also found in the Church of the East euchologion, does not mention the name of the author, though some manuscripts have ascribed it to Mar ʾAbdīšōʿ metropolitan of Elam (ca. 13th century); could this same ʾAbdīšōʿ of Elam be the author of the 'Rite of Ornamentation?' That has yet to be determined. However, the fact remains that Patriarch John V had already prescribed in his liturgical canons as to how the Eucharistic loaves were to be made and prepared, some 80 years before the writing of the *Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae* of Pseudo-George of Arbel. It could well have been the case that when John V prescribed the proper method of preparing

³⁶ CONNOLLY, "A Homily of Mar Jacob of Serugh," 270.

³⁷ Cf. KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 161.

the Eucharistic loaves, that it took some time for it to be received by the whole Church at large. This same phenomenon took place almost a century earlier when Patriarch Mar Timothy I (780-823) introduced the Lord's Prayer at the beginning and end of the Eucharistic liturgy and the divine office, for the innovation by the learned patriarch was not met without much opposition in many an ecclesiastical circle.

For its part, the renewal rite of the Holy Leaven might be of an earlier origin than that of the 'Rite of Ornamentation.' In fact, there seems to be an indication of the 'Rite of Renewal of the *Malkā*' in the collection of the Christian library of Turfan.³⁸ A series of two antiphons in the fragments identified as HT 143r seem to follow the flow of antiphons contained in the 'Rite of Renewal.'³⁹ Both these antiphons recall the founding of the Church by Christ and his continued support and upholding of her foundation, as well as the true and orthodox faith contained therein, founded upon the confession of Simon Peter that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed 'the Son of the Living God' (cf. Matthew 16:16). If this fragment from Turfan does in fact carry the 'Rite of Renewal of the *Malkā*,' then we are looking at the earliest reference to this rite (thus far), taking us back — possibly — to the midninth century.⁴⁰

The "Rite of the Renewal of the *Malkā*" is to take place on Holy Thursday, and the parish priest himself is generally the main celebrant.⁴¹ The rite takes place in the vestibule in the church where they bake the Eucharistic

³⁸ For general information on the Christian texts and relics of Turfan see: M. DICKENS, "Multilingual Christian Manuscripts from Turfan," *JCSyrSt* 9 (2009) 22-42; ID., "Syriac Gravestones in the Tashkent History Museum," in D. WINKLER & L. TANG (eds.), *Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters: Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia* (Vienna 2009) 13-49; ID., "The Importance of the Psalter at Turfan," in D. WINKLER & L. TANG (eds.), *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on "Research on the Church of the East in China and Central Asia"* (Vienna forthcoming); ID. & A. SAVCHENKO, "Prester John's Realm: New Light on Christianity Between Merv and Turfan," in E. HUNTER (ed.), *The Christian Heritage of Iraq* (Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 13, Piscataway 2009) 121-135; ID., "The Syriac Bible in Central Asia," in E. HUNTER (ed.), *The Christian Heritage of Iraq* (Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 13, Piscataway 2009) 92-120. For a more classic study of the Syriac-Turkic Turfan literature, see: Nina Pigoulewsky [= Pigulevskaya], "Fragments syriaques et Syro-Turcs de Hara-Hoto et de Tourfan," in *RevOrChr* [3rd series] 30 (1935-1936) 3-46.

³⁹ For the Syriac text of this rite, see KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 180-192, particularly 183. This same rite was printed earlier in the *Takhsā* printed by the Archbishop of Canterbury Mission Press at Urmia, 1890; this rite is contained in Volume II (quite rare), 115. I am indebted to Prof. Sebastian Brock for indicating the presence of this text in the Turfan collection and the Urmia *Takhsā* citation.

⁴⁰ Although the dating of the Turfan fragments is not yet conclusive and still under study, it seems to be the case that the *Hudrā* fragments (at least) of this collection go back to the early to mid 800's of the Christian era.

⁴¹ The practice of the Church of the East in India (Kerala, South India) is that the metropolitan renews the *Malkā* together with all of his priests on Holy Thursday, and then each priest takes a portion of the new sacrament to his parish church.

hosts; generally speaking the baptistry, for it is there that the Eucharistic loaves are to be baked and where the clay oven is constructed. First, the priest brings out fine white flour (constituting two-thirds of the whole mixture), pure white salt that is fine (one-third of the whole portion), a few drops of pure olive oil is poured over the mixture, and three drops of water. Note that these ingredients are the same ones used for the making of the dough for the Eucharistic hosts (leavening is to be included, of course). This mixture is amalgamated together well, while they begin with the Our Father and the recitation of three *hūlālā* of the Psalms, beginning with *Hūlālā* XII (Psalms 82 to 88 inclusive). It seems that this portion of the 'Rite of Renewal' was taken from the 'Rite of Ornamentation', since the same opening prayer and Psalms are recited for that service as well. Then, a beautiful prayer opens the second set of the psalmody:

Glory to you, O Exalted One who descended and put on the body of our humanity, and fulfilled his dispensation (economy) for our salvation, and by his holy Pass-over he broke and gave to us [his Body], and gave himself up to the salvific passion, and he suffered the Cross of scorn, and by the blood and water that poured forth from his side he absolved, washed and cleansed our wounds in his grace and mercy, O Lord of all: Father and Son and Holy Spirit.⁴²

After the regular retinue of prayers (i.e. *Lākhū Mārā*, the Trisagion, the 'Prayer of the Imposition of Hands' (i.e. Dismissal of the Catechumens), a series of antiphons are chanted that directly recall the Lord's passion and suffering. The antiphon of the 'Glory be' is worth quoting in its entirety, as it looks toward Jesus' suffering, the mysteries and the Body and Blood upon the altar, celebrated by the priests:

With the eye of the conscience and of love let us all behold Christ, in the Mysteries and types which he handed down to us, being led to the suffering of the Cross. And upon the holy altar the living Sacrifice is placed, and in the likeness of angels the priests celebrate the memorial of his death with voices of thanksgiving, and they say: Glory to him for his unspeakable Gift.

Next follows the recitation of the Nicene Creed, and the first 'Prayer of Inclination' (*ghanthā*) for the Renewal, of which this one may be recited:

O Almighty Lord God [repeat], holy and incomprehensible, who placed in the holy Church spiritual treasurers — the blessed apostles — to shepherd his flock to the still pastures of knowledge; and he told them to make disciples of all nations, and to baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And from the time that they baptized them they made them to participate in the life-giving Mysteries in the holy Church. And the same apostles handed down this sacrament and committed it to the priests and administrators [*Mdhabrāne*] of the flock of Christ; and by the strength of that very same authority we too, your frail,

⁴² KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 181.

weak and pitiable servants, do also fulfill in the grace of the Holy Spirit, and we renew this holy Leaven, that it might give holiness for the mixture of the holy and life-giving Mysteries, and absolve and heal the wounds of sin and the filth of iniquity, unto the aid of all the community and to the honor and worship of the glorious Trinity; now and at all times and forever and ever.⁴³

The actual prayer of consecration, the third *ghanthā* ('Prayer of Inclination'), states:

In your name, O Lord God, compassionate Father [repeat], and in the name of your Only-Begotten Son Jesus Christ the Merciful, and in the name of your holy and living Spirit: we call upon you and beg you, that you might send power of the grace along with the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, and that you might bless this Leaven and consecrate it; may your Godhead dwell in it and your Lordship be revered by it, that by it the life-giving Mysteries are perfected and completed, which upon the throne⁴⁴ of your Lordship are offered for the absolution and forgiveness of sins. Amen.⁴⁵

The priest then concludes this inclining prayer with the *qānōnā*, which rather than a doxology (properly speaking), consists of verses taken from John 1:1-5,

In the beginning was the Word, and that very Word was with God, and God was that very Word. The same was in the beginning with God. Everything came to be through him; and without him not even one thing that was created came to be. In him was life, and the life is the light of men. And the same light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The presence here of a direct quote from Scripture is noteworthy; it is taken from the Prologue of John's Gospel (i.e. 1:1-18). This may in fact be an indication of the Johannine tradition of the handing down of the Holy Leaven, as recorded by Šlemōn of Basrah, Šem'ōn Kepā and Yōhannān bar Zo'bi. He then signs over the mixture with the old Leaven in the sign of the Cross, and this accompanying formula:

This flour is signed, consecrated, mixed, renewed and joined to this holy and ancient Leaven of our Lord Jesus Christ, which has been handed down to us from our spiritual fathers Mar Addai, Mar Mari and Mar Thomas the blessed disciples of this region of the East, and that it might be moved from one place to another, and from one land to another for the perfection and mixing of the living Broken Portion [i.e. the Eucharistic hosts], at all times when the cause of necessity requires; in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶

⁴³ KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 185-186.

⁴⁴ Liturgically speaking, the 'throne' referred to here (*thrōnōs*) is in fact the altar itself.

⁴⁵ KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 187-188.

⁴⁶ KELAITA, *The Liturgy*, 188.

After signing the new mixture with the old Holy Leaven, while mixing everything together very well, he returns it to the old vessel wherein it was kept. The priest then concludes by signing the dough (with the new Leaven) to be baked for the Eucharistic celebration of Holy Thursday and he concludes with the prescribed prayers. Once the dough is signed with the Holy Leaven, the priest (or sacristan) may not give any portion of it to a non-believer, or even to a Christian child; rather, the dough (once signed with the Leaven) is to be specifically used for the Eucharistic hosts, and it may not leave the church under any circumstance.

The sacrament of the Holy Leaven, therefore, is observed with the utmost care and diligence by the priesthood of the Church of the East. It has been handed down to us by the holy and blessed apostles Mar Addai and Mar Mari of the Seventy, and Mar Thomas of the Twelve. Its origins, according to the apostolic tradition of the Church, go back to the apostle St. John the Evangelist and the Last Supper of the Lord, but it was committed to the East (the Church of the East, that is) by St. Thomas of the Twelve, and SS. Addai & Mari of the Seventy-Two. This sacrament, unique to the Church of the East amongst all other apostolic Churches, has always been observed, being diligently and reverently preserved, and remains alive in her ecclesial memory and liturgical practice. Without the presence of the *Malkā* in the *Qurbana*, a valid Eucharistic celebration is not confected, for the ancient canons and tradition require the priest to include the Holy Leaven in every and each Eucharistic celebration as a requirement for validity.⁴⁷ To say that the *references* to this sacrament are rather late speaks nothing conclusive about the antiquity of its origins.

Indeed, one of the elements which played a significant role in the promulgation of the Vatican document *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*⁴⁸ was the Holy Leaven. The *Guidelines* takes into consideration with regard to the Assyrian form of the anaphora of Mar Addai & Mar Mari the presence of the Holy Leaven in the Assyrian *Qurbana*, “thereby linking the present celebration with all previous ones back to the Mystical Supper itself.”⁴⁹ As this year marks the 10th anniversary of this document, the validity of this ancient

⁴⁷ Cf. SPINKS, “The Holy Leaven,” 67.

⁴⁸ For the English text of this document cf. *supra* 52-55.

⁴⁹ Quoted in N. V. RUSSO, “The Validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari: Critique of the Critiques,” in M.E. JOHNSON (ed.), *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West. Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis* (Collegeville 2010) 21-62, here 24. There were originally five arguments, the fifth of which refers to the presence of the *Malkā* in the Assyrian form of the *Qurbana*, in favor of the validity of the Assyrian form of the anaphora, which appeared in a preparatory document of May 23, 1998 titled *Pastoral Disposition for Eucharistic Hospitality between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Catholic Church*. For more on this preparatory document, see R. TAFT, “Mass Without the Consecration? The Historic Agreement on the Eucharist Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church

anaphora is once more 'justified.' The Roman document not only took into consideration the ecumenical rapprochement between the two Sister Churches, but it also significantly professed the orthodoxy of the Assyrian Church of the East in terms of her doctrine and liturgy, for:

... the Catholic Church recognizes the Assyrian Church of the East as a true particular Church, built upon orthodox faith and apostolic succession. The Assyrian Church of the East has also preserved full Eucharistic faith in the presence of our Lord under the species of bread and wine and in the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. In the Assyrian Church of the East, though not in full communion with the Catholic Church, are thus to be found 'true sacraments, and above all, by apostolic succession the priesthood and the Eucharist.'⁵⁰

The Roman document is an added witness in our modern day to the antiquity and orthodoxy of this most beautiful 'Eastern Gem' (*la gemma orientale*). The anaphora of SS. Addai & Mari has been diligently observed and handed down in the liturgical practice of the Assyrian Church of the East from time immemorial. Notwithstanding the absence of an Institution Narrative *ad litteram*, it has preserved the orthodox doctrine and liturgical practice concerning the Eucharist from the earliest age of the Church down to the present.⁵¹ With the presence of the sacrament of the Holy Leaven, or *Malkā*, the tradition of the Assyrian Church of the East has kept the orthodoxy of both *Word* and *Sacrament* in regards to the Eucharist. By apostolic tradition, the Holy Leaven originates with St. John the Evangelist, and it was handed down to the East by SS. Thomas, Addai and Mari. Its ancient origins (by faith), perpetual liturgical practice and ecclesiastical tradition begin with the Last Supper, and continue to our very own day, all the while remaining faithful to the command of our Lord to 'Do this in memory of Me' (Lk. 22:19). To conclude with the words of the Evangelist St. John: "But there many other things which Jesus did, those which if they were written down one by one,

of the East Promulgated 26 October 2001," in *Worsh* 77 (2003) 482-509, here 483; also published in: *America Magazine* 188/16 (May 12, 2003) 7-11.

⁵⁰ *Guidelines for Admission*, 3:3 (cf. *supra* 54). Cf. also VATICAN II, *Unitatis Redintegratio* 15:3.

⁵¹ According to R. Taft: "The Catholic magisterium teaches that the traditional practices of our Eastern sister churches are worthy of all veneration and respect. Scholars all agree that Addai and Mari is one of the most ancient anaphoras still in use. The consensus of the latest scholarship is that Addai and Mari in its original form never included the institution narrative. Contrary to earlier opinion, this is by no means unique: several other early eucharistic prayers have no words of institution. And though Addai and Mari may not cite the words of institution literally, it contains them virtually, in explicit references to the eucharistic institution, to the Last Supper, to the body and blood and sacrifice of Christ and to the oblation of the church, thereby clearly demonstrating the intention of repeating what Jesus did in obedience to his command, *Do this in memory of me*." See TAFT, "Mass Without the Consecration?" 485.

I think not even the world would suffice to contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25).

SUMMARY – *The Sacrament of the Holy Leaven (Malkā) in the Assyrian Church of the East* – The most important liturgical anomaly in the East and West today is, by far, the Holy Leaven (or *Malkā*); it is a sacramental practice that is only observed by the Assyrian Church of the East. In his *Liber Margaritae (Margānūthā)*, Mar Abdišō of Nisibis († 1318) enumerates the sacramental list of the Church of the East, five of which are in agreement with the Churches of both East and West. This list includes two sacraments that are not recognized as such by the rest of Christendom, namely, the Holy Leaven (*Malkā*) and the Holy Cross. The first of these is not recognized by any other Church at all, and the second sacrament is at best considered to be a “sacramental” in the Roman Catholic Church. According to the metropolitan of Nisibis, the Churches that do not have the sacrament of the Holy Leaven (*Malkā*) count marriage as the seventh sacrament. The Holy Leaven (*Malkā*) is preserved in the liturgy Assyrian Church of the East with the utmost care and diligence. Because of the antiquity of this sacramental practice, its origins are hidden in the memory of the Church’s apostolic tradition and practice from time immemorial. The Holy Leaven (*Malkā*) is highly venerated because of the direct link it bears to the very Eucharist which Christ instituted by celebrating for the first time. Therefore, it is to be understood in conjunction with that liturgical practice which is the summit of the Church’s prayer and offering, the Holy Eucharist.

SOMMARIO – *Il sacramento del Santo Lievito (Malkā) nella Chiesa Assira d’Oriente* – Oggi la più importante anomalia liturgica tra l’Oriente e l’Occidente è di gran lunga il Santo Lievito (o *Malkā*). Si tratta di una prassi sacramentale che è osservata unicamente dalla Chiesa Assira d’Oriente. Nel suo *Liber Margaritae (Margānūthā)*, Mar Abdišō di Nisibi († 1318) enumera i sacramenti della Chiesa d’Oriente, di cui cinque sono comuni alle Chiese d’Oriente e d’Occidente. Questa lista include due sacramenti che non sono riconosciuti dal resto della cristianità, vale a dire il Santo Lievito (*Malkā*) e la Santa Croce. Il primo di questi due sacramenti non è riconosciuto da nessun’altra Chiesa, mentre il secondo è considerato tutt’al più come un “sacramentale” dalla Chiesa Cattolica Romana. Secondo il metropolita di Nisibi, le Chiese che non hanno il sacramento del Santo Lievito (*Malkā*) contano il matrimonio quale settimo sacramento. Il Santo Lievito (*Malkā*) è conservato nella liturgia della Chiesa Assira d’Oriente con la più grande cura e diligenza. A causa dell’antichità di questa prassi sacramentale, le sue origini sono nascoste nella memoria della tradizione della Chiesa apostolica da tempo immemorabile. Il Santo Lievito (*Malkā*) è sommamente venerato a motivo del suo legame diretto con l’Eucaristia istituita da Cristo. Pertanto esso va compreso alla luce della prassi liturgica che rappresenta il culmine della preghiera e dell’offerta della Chiesa, cioè la Santa Eucaristia.

RÉSUMÉ – *Le sacrement du Saint Levain (Malkā) dans l’Église Assyrienne d’Orient* – Aujourd’hui l’anomalie liturgique majeure entre l’Orient et l’Occident est de loin le sacrement du Saint Levain (ou *Malkā*). Il s’agit d’une pratique sacramentelle qui est uniquement observée par l’Église Assyrienne d’Orient. Dans son *Liber Margaritae (Margānūthā)*, Mar Abdišō de Nisibe († 1318) énumère les sacrements de l’Église d’Orient, dont cinq sont communs aux Églises d’Orient et d’Occident. Toutefois, cette liste comprend deux sacrements qui ne sont pas reconnus par le reste de la chrétienté, notamment le Saint Levain (*Malkā*) et la Sainte Croix. Le premier de ces deux sacrements n’est connu par aucune autre Église, alors que le second sacrement est tout au plus considéré comme un “sacramental” par l’Église Catholique Romaine. Suivant le métropolite de Nisibe, les Églises

qui n'ont pas le sacrement du Saint Levain (*Malkā*) comptent le mariage comme étant le septième sacrement. Le Saint Levain (*Malkā*) est conservé dans la liturgie de l'Église Assyrienne d'Orient avec le plus grand soin et la plus grande attention. En raison de son antiquité, les origines de cette pratique sacramentelle sont enfuies dans la mémoire de l'Église apostolique, car elle remonte à des temps immémoriaux. Le Saint Levain (*Malkā*) est hautement vénéré en raison de son lien direct avec l'Eucharistie instituée par le Christ. Pour cela il doit être compris en lien avec la pratique liturgique qui constitue le sommet de la prière et de l'oblation de l'Église, la Sainte Eucharistie.