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**The Genesis of the Anaphoral Institution Narrative  
in the Light of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari:  
Between Form Criticism and Comparative Liturgy**

1. *Studying the Eucharist, but through what lens?*

My mind often turns to the figure of the old watchmaker in the village of my childhood. A skilled artisan, he spent most of his days taking apart and putting back together watches of every shape and style. Choosing this profession meant an apprenticeship that required managing to hold the magnifier in one eye by curling the cheek and furrowing the brow to free his hands for the task to be done. He became so used to this instrument, which had become a part of himself, that he no longer noticed its presence. So that when he decided to go out on the street from his shop to take a bit of air, he continued unperturbed to filter the world through this monocle held in position with great skill. If this instrument provided him valuable help, it also had the disadvantage that, putting in focus the detail, made him lose a view of the whole, while at the same time depriving him of depth of field due to the loss of binocular vision, making him see objects as if they were all on the same plane. If such limits did not upset him at all nor cause any damage to his beloved customers, far more significant have been the limits that adopting the magnifier — metaphorically — has caused for the many who, throughout the entire second millennium in the West, have done all they could to clarify ideas in Eucharistic theology. The same applies naturally to those who were formed by their theological manuals.

Continuing this chosen image, one can say that the Latin theologians of the second millennium have learned only too well from our watchmaker the systematic recourse to a magnifying lens. With the admirable desire to always better understand the reality before them, they were preoccupied with focusing on the detail in order to draw forth ever clearer and more distinct ideas. Abandoning the metaphor, they went to the heart of the Eucharistic prayer, namely the *institution narrative*, which they named with the exclusive term “consecration”. Rather than concentrating on the entire narrative, they focused on the words of the Lord alone: not all the words, but only those their system had established as necessary and sufficient to effect the consecration. The consecration is beyond doubt the heart of the Eucharistic prayer. But, as with any organism, the heart cannot exist on its own. It subsists only in interactive

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\* The final conference given during the Congress of Addai and Mari (25-26 October 2011) is here reproduced in English. In the publication of the Acts – at present in process of preparation – the text will be in the original Italian, with further additions and documentation.

correlation with all the other parts of the body. With respect to the Eucharist, this is what Western systematic theology of the second millennium has not really grasped.

Placing the *institution narrative* in a sort of splendid isolation, theological speculation has lost sight of the operative unity of that literary-theological corpus which is the Eucharistic prayer. Nor has it grasped its natural dependence on the *anamnesis*, its dynamic reference to the double *epiclesis*, in particular to the eschatological *epiclesis*, which asks that those who receive communion be transformed “in unum corpus.” In this way, Catholic theology unconsciously cultivated an understanding of the Eucharist that Protestant theology had translated into action. If the Catholic Church succeeded in escaping the blunders to which the Reform succumbed, it was because of a purely contingent if providential factor: the absolute devotion of Catholics to the Roman Canon, for centuries considered to be of apostolic origin. If there had not been such unconditional attachment to the old Canon, whose internal logic moreover was no longer understood, there might have resulted a similar grave slippage in liturgical practice, since Catholics no less than the Protestants had come under the influence of the same splintering and static “mens”.

The first of the two monocle limits, the reduction of the field of observation, was thereby translated to the conceptual reduction of the Mass to the consecration alone. But the other limitation has also been felt: because of the failure to perceive the depth of the field, the understanding of the Eucharist, which the systematic theologians were bringing about, was projected as nothing less than the serene conviction that at the Last Supper in the Cenacle Jesus said the first Mass, followed by another one at Emmaus. The Apostles then would just continue the ritual series, recounting, saying, and doing what Jesus said and did. Iconography portrayed Jesus at the Cenacle with pyx in hand distributing communion in the mouth to his Mother and the Apostles, or depicts Saint John in sacred vestments giving Holy Communion to the kneeling Virgin. This iconography reflected the conviction of one and all. The Mass was understood in a static way because it had intentionally been made static, as if it had to be preserved as it had come from the hands of the Lord, “until his return.” One theologian of renown in fact wrote: “As the Mass of Christ was most simple, thus the more the Mass is close and similar to that which was the first of all Masses, the more it is Christian.” Most Catholics would not find anything to contradict in this affirmation. Indeed, they would readily subscribe to it, at the cost then of having to withdraw their signature when they found out that the theologian of renown was Martin Luther.<sup>1</sup> But among so many Catholics disposed to subscribe to this thesis of Luther, was there not Joseph Sulaqa and with him, exactly forty-three years

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<sup>1</sup> M. Lutero, *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium*, in *Werke* (ed. Weimar) 6, 523. The affirmation is taken up in the Acts of the Council of Trent (Societas Goerresiana, *Concilium Tridentinum*, Tomus 7, Actorum pars 4/1, 377).

later, the combative synod participants of Diamper who removed from the anaphora for some 400 years the *institution narrative*?<sup>2</sup>

At this point we should ask ourselves: “Is that how the mystagogues of the ancient Church reasoned? When they set out to speak about the Eucharist, did they turn their eyes to the consecration alone, or to the whole Eucharistic prayer?” In fact, when they spoke of the Eucharist all the Fathers of the Church of both East and West pursued simultaneously a double approach.

The patristic bishop was first preoccupied, in a first moment, with drawing the attention of the neophytes to the substantial difference between the Eucharist and the other sacraments. In baptism and confirmation what produces a sacramental effect is the water that remains water and the oil that remains oil, whereas in the Eucharist it is not the bread and wine that transform us into an ecclesiastical body, but the Body and Blood of the Lord under the veil of the sacramental signs. To underline this difference, the bishop concentrated the attention of his audience on the words of the Lord, reflecting, in this pointed and provisional *first approach*, that these words said by the priest produce the real presence.

Then, in a second moment, the episcopal mystagogue was preoccupied with resituating the mystery of the real presence — temporarily extrapolated for teaching purposes — within the frame of the anaphora’s dynamic, seeing the efficacy of the institutional words in the light of the epicletic request, either antecedent in the *pre-institutional epiclesis*, or subsequent in the *post-institutional epiclesis*. In this global and definitive *second approach* the Fathers became aware of a harmonious connection between the institutional words and the *epiclesis*, complementary but not concurrent. In short, when speaking of the Eucharist the perspective of the mystagogues — and consequently that of their neophytes — instinctively assumed the opening of a wide-angle lens that embraced with one glance the Eucharistic prayer as a whole, in order to grasp the dynamic interaction between that pulsating heart which is the *institution narrative*, and all other articulations of the great prayer.

## 2. *The institution narrative and the notion of “development”*

The request addressed to me by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — and which I hastened to pass on to this International Congress — was to “suggest a few themes concerning the question of the development of the *embolism* or *institution narrative*, perceived as a ‘graft’ onto the body of the anaphora, during the first millennium.” The request invites us to view the notion of “development” in a positive way, without allowing ourselves to be

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<sup>2</sup> While in the Catholic Chaldean missal the *institution Narrative* had been inserted officially by the Latin missionaries immediately after the *Sanctus*, in the Catholic Malabarian missal somebody had the idea to place it outside the anaphora, namely before communion, where it remained undisturbed for over 400 years, from 1556 until the reform of 1962.

conditioned by preconceived notions or false alarms. In the past the *opinio communis* of both theologians and liturgists took for granted the pre-existing origins of the *institution narrative*, around which were juxtaposed and framed on successive levels the different euchological elements. Now, however, encouraged by the promulgation of the Roman Declaration on the anaphora of Addai and Mari,<sup>3</sup> liturgists and theologians are becoming more comfortable with the idea of a dynamic genesis of the Eucharistic prayer, and consequently of a progressive insertion of the *institution narrative* into a pre-existing prayer.

### 3. *Beyond the chronology of formularies: the “chronology of forms”*

With respect to the *institution narrative*, two authoritative witnesses behave differently: the anaphora of Addai and Mari, which has no *institution narrative*, and the anaphora of the Apostolic Tradition, which does have one. Though it is not possible to assign a precise date to either of these formularies, the certainly ancient date of its presence in the anaphora of the Apostolic Tradition is beyond doubt. What happened then between the earlier Judeo-Christian anaphora of Addai and Mari and the present fully developed Apostolic Tradition’s anaphora? Obviously, it would be gratifying to be able to set out the various phases of such a development based on the successive dating of a given period. The absence of witnesses between the two anaphoras, however, demonstrates that such a strictly chronological research is not at all practicable. One should not forget, however, that besides a chronology of formularies inviting researchers to compare texts, preliminary to that minute exercise there is a chronology of forms: the comparison of literary constants emerging from the observation of the different levels of Biblical, Jewish, and Christian euchology.

Inspired, first, by the methodology which exegetes of the twentieth century have applied to the study of Biblical texts, and then by Baumstark’s insight concerning liturgical stratifications represented by his “comparative liturgy,”<sup>4</sup> I ventured to uncover the roots not of this or that Christian formulary, nor only of Eucharistic euchology, but of liturgical prayer in general. This reverse path could not be traced via logical discourse that would attempt to reconstruct theoretically the various steps of research. The concrete situation of the Christian anaphora and Jewish blessing is so complex that it does not allow a reasoned walk back through time. Instead, let me try to list schematically the principal conclusions I feel I have attained.

#### 3.1. *First issue: the notion of a “euchological literary form”*

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<sup>3</sup> Pontificio Consiglio per l’Unità dei Cristiani, *Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*, *L’Osservatore Romano* of 26 October 2001, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée. Principes et Méthodes pour l’étude historique des liturgies chrétiennes*, Chevotogne 1953<sup>3</sup>.

Research on the structure and genesis of the anaphora could not get off to a good start if limited to considering the anaphora as a formulary endowed with unique and exclusive characteristics. It would be better to start by considering the anaphora in parallel with non-anaphoral euchology formularies, like the blessing of the baptismal font, of the chrism, of the spouses in matrimony, the prayers of absolution Eastern and Western, the prayers of the anointing of the sick, the formularies of ordination, the Roman *Exultet*, etc. All these formularies are in fact subject to the same euchological form.

### 3.2. *Second issue: “with Bouyer, but beyond Bouyer”*

Around the 1960's Louis Bouyer asserted in a trenchant sentence that one cannot imagine Christian liturgy as having been born through some sort of spontaneous generation “without father or mother like Melchisedech” (cf. Heb 7:3)<sup>5</sup>. Melchisedech may have neither father nor mother, but not so Christian liturgy! The father and mother of Christian liturgy are to be sought in Jewish liturgy. Unfortunately, Bouyer and his followers were not concerned with pushing their research beyond the Jewish stratum.

But not even Jewish prayer is “without father or mother”. The father and mother of Jewish prayer are to be sought in Old Testament prayer. In fact, just as the first generation of Christians continued to pray in the same way as they had in the synagogue and at home, bringing bit by bit into their formularies new themes, so too synagogal Judaism continued certainly to pray as it had been prayed in the Old Testament, bringing bit by bit into the prayers new thematic developments. Hence the need to go beyond Bouyer.

Concretely, while continuing to assign a privileged position to the *Birkat hammazòn*, or blessing after the meal, because of its intimate connection with the institution of the Eucharistic memorial, we must recognize that the various Jewish blessings hold the same title of paternity/maternity to the ultimate genesis of the anaphora. The same is true for Old Testament prayer: it is not just this or that formulary that can boast a preeminent paternity/maternity with respect to Jewish prayer. For the discourse concentrates not on the formularies, but on the literary forms that underlie them.

### 3.3. *Third issue: the correlation between praise and petition*

From a consideration of forms dependent on the typology of the Old Testament covenant there emerges the *fundamental bipartite structure* of the covenant prayer, articulated in a *protasis in the indicative* (or *anamnetic-celebratory section*) and an *apodosis in the imperative* (or *epicletic section*). In turn, the two portions of the bipartite structure are

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<sup>5</sup> L. Bouyer, *Eucharistie. Théologie et spiritualité de la prière eucharistique*, Desclée et C., Tournai 1966, 21.

reciprocally connected by a relationship of juridical consequentiality, often evidenced by recourse to the logico-temporal particle *we'attà / kai nyn / and now*. In fact, the protasis in the indicative forms the juridical base for the apodosis in the imperative. Borrowing the terminology of Justin, we can say that the *eucharistia* is the correlative of the *euche*<sup>6</sup>.

#### 3.4. *Fourth issue: the notion of "supplicatory injunction"*

Consideration of the close juridical nexus between *eucharistia* and *euche* permits us to understand the strong request, that is, the *epiclesis* broadly speaking, as the imploring *supplicatory injunction* that links its counterpart. Because of this injunction, the divine Partner is constrained to intervene in favor of the vassal, which is the praying community. By the term *injunction*, we wish to stress the linking force of the cry of the vassal. By then adding the adjective *supplicatory*, we note that the injunction is placed in a euchological context. For it is not an authoritarian injunction, but an authoritative one: the Church at prayer, asking for the sending of the Holy Spirit to affect the twofold transformation of the offerings and of their recipients, the communicants, *enjoins* God the Father to intervene and bring about "ex opere operato,"<sup>7</sup> as affirms the Council of Trent, what the humble request juridically implies.

#### 3.5. *Fifth issue: the simple praying dynamic, "speaking to God with our words"*

From the prayer's fundamentally bipartite anamnestic-celebratory and epicletic structure, we may speak of a *simple praying dynamic*. By "simple," we do not intend "poor." On the contrary, this is an euchological structure common to any prayer formulary, a dynamic structure able to harmoniously receive and articulate all the euchological material of any situation.

#### 3.6. *Sixth issue: the embolistic praying dynamic: "speaking to God with our words and with the words of God"*

In certain specific cases the simple praying dynamic is enriched by the fact that the formulary, in order to better radicate the request, assumes a Scriptural promise-text that intervenes as an *embolism* — *to embolon* —, which is like the *graft* a farmer places on the stem of the plant, a graft that in our case is obviously a literary-theological one. Having just been brought within the formulary by means of this grafting technique, the *theological-Scriptural locus* confers on the *epiclesis* the greatest value it is capable of receiving. Consequently, we can affirm that the function of the Scriptural citation, comprising the *institution narrative* of the

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<sup>6</sup> Justin, *I Apologia* 65,3; 67,5.

<sup>7</sup> Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum...* n. 1608.

concrete euchological formulary of which it is a part, is fully explained in light of the request that is the *epiclesis*.

Note further that the Scriptural citation is rigorously textual, even if in some cases a citation understood as textual may not correspond verbatim to any one Scriptural text, but may admit variants, depend on a parallel version, or comprise a summary of the Scriptural text. The embolistic dynamic provided by such literary grafting is widely attested in Old Testament euchology, Jewish euchology, and Christian anaphoral and non-anaphoral euchology. Obviously, in the anaphoras the embolistic dynamic is configured via the grafting of the *institution narrative* of the “sacramental body,” that is, of the *theological-Scriptural locus* of the request for our transformation into the “ecclesial body.”

### 3.7. *Seventh issue: the intermediate notion of “quasi-embolism”*

By a further step, the observation of Old Testament prayer enables us to discover an intermediate phase between the simple dynamic and the embolistic dynamic. For that reason I speak of a *quasi-embolism* or *quasi-graft*. The terminology can also change, without minimally invalidating the reality that emerges from an observation of the texts. In some cases the graft of the theological-Scriptural locus lacks a full configuration, either because of a *citation in indirect discourse*, or because of a *purely allusive citation*. But in fact this changes nothing in the function of the reference itself.

Adjusting the terminology, I have adopted the prefix *quasi-*, which intervenes into many substantive locutions of the juridical type, to stress the close link between a full notion and an attenuated one. This intermediate notion becomes especially useful in establishing the perfect orthodoxy of the anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari. Even in the material absence of the *institution narrative*, which until contrary proof it seems never to have had, the Addai and Mari anaphora presents us with a narrative in the germinal stage, yet enveloped in its own *anamnesis* that is much more explicit than a customary *anamnesis*.

### 3.8. *Eighth issue: the differentiation of anaphoral structures relating to the placement of the institution narrative*

While in Old Testament, Jewish, and non-anaphoral Christian prayer the location of the embolism in the anamnetic or epicletic section is of no special importance, in the specific case of Eucharistic prayer the placement of the institutional embolism in one or the other section is indeed important, allowing us to divide the various anaphoral traditions into two clearly distinct groups. For it is in connection with this difference of location that two particular types of anaphoral dynamic have crystallized: one places the narrative-anamnesis bloc at the end of the

anamnetic-celebratory section, while the other incorporates it in the movement of the epicletic section.

### 3.9. *Ninth issue: it is time to forget the notion of static genesis*

The embolistic dynamic, or the comprehension of the *institution narrative* as the literary grafting onto a pre-existing formulary, sheds new light on the genesis of the Eucharistic prayer. I will frame the question with a “naïve” demand: “Which was born first: the *institution narrative* or the anaphoral formulary?” Confronting such a dilemma, scholars of a not yet completely overcome past responded by setting forth the genesis of the anaphora in a static way, taking for granted — as we have seen — the pre-existing origin of the *institution narrative*, around which would be juxtaposed in successive layers, as if in a frame, the other euchological elements. The disjointed understanding of the Roman Canon reached by liturgists of the twentieth century perfectly illustrates this static and agglomerating view of anaphoral genesis.

Today, however, attention to the Form Criticism of liturgical prayer, and particularly to its literary-theological vitality, obliges us to speak of a dynamic genesis of the Eucharistic prayer, and to affirm the absolute pre-existence of the prayer formulary. The latter, availing itself of the possibility, foreseen from its literary form, of inserting a Scriptural text in order to confer the greatest value on the fundamental request of the *epiclesis*, finished by rather quickly accepting the *institution narrative* in the form of an *embolism* or literary grafting.

The attention I have given to the intermediate notion of *quasi-embolism* and to the progressive developments of the *institution narrative*, which we perceive “in an embryonic state” in the anaphora of Addai and Mari, and which then take form progressively in an ever wider group of “anomalous” Syriac anaphoras, has, I believe, made a significant contribution in favor of a postulating a dynamic genesis of the Eucharistic prayer.

### 4. *“If Darwin had been a liturgist...”*

Apart from any evaluation of Darwinian theories, it is obvious that the famous English naturalist would not have been able to conduct his research, for example, in the cities or villages of his home and time. If in fact he had continued to live in nineteenth-century England, he would have run the danger of generalizing and making absolute deductions about the forms and habits he found there, unconsciously projecting them back into earlier eras, saying for example that the Greeks and Romans wore swallow-tailed coats and white bow ties! To avoid enclosing himself within his present and anachronistically projecting it into the past, thereby making history dull, uninspired, and shallow, Darwin, barely twenty-two years old, chose to embark on the twin-masted sailing ship *Beagle* for a five-year trip “around the world,” a



famous journey that took him to the Galapagos Islands. There he was surprised to discover, not men in formal tails, but the existence of species that had disappeared elsewhere, yet of extreme interest for understanding the origins of living beings.

This is not the way Western theologians have proceeded. In an ardent desire to understand the Eucharist and its secrets, to know how it came to be, for what end it was instituted, what are its celebratory form and rhythms, the “naturalists” of scholastic theology limited themselves to observing how the Mass was celebrated in the churches of their time. Then, conditioned by a biased and static understanding their preconceived methodology imposed on them, they enunciated a thesis like this: “*Perficitur sacrificium consecratione sola. Respectu autem consecrationis faciendae nulla gaudet efficacia aut necessitate epiclesis* (The sacrament is brought about by the consecration alone. With respect to the consecration, the *epiclesis* has no efficacy and is no way necessary).”<sup>8</sup> This is what Fr. Maurice de La Taille was still teaching in the classrooms of the Gregorian University in the 1930’s. Such reductionism, unanimously accepted, was projected not just onto the praxis of the Apostolic Church, but — as we have already said — all the way back to the institution in the Cenacle.

I am convinced that all of us, scholars and students with a keen interest in Eucharistic theology and sincerely engaged in the genesis of the anaphoral *institution narrative*, must set off like “new Darwins” for the “Galapagos of anaphoral eucharology.” As Eastern liturgists (if not others) know, these “liturgical islands” really exist. They form a sort of archipelago with the mother island in the center, completely surrounded by a discrete number of minor islands. The mother island of the metaphor is the anaphora of Addai and Mari.

Before the discovery by William Macomber, then professor of liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, of the oldest codex of this anaphora still without an *institution narrative*,<sup>9</sup> liturgists turned up their noses, placing responsibility for its absence on ignorant or less than conscientious copyists. Today, however, fortified by the Catholic approval of the original form of the anaphora of Addai and Mari, the liturgist is invited to look with great interest not only at that anaphora, but also at those so-called “anomalous” anaphoras, which are not anomalies at all.

These are anaphoras attested to mainly, though not exclusively, in the Churches of Syriac language, known only to specialists and regarded by them as peripheral deviations from the tradition. While recognizing that these “anomalous” anaphoras are not all of great antiquity, most of them dating from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries, we can still call upon them to fill the lacuna that exists between Addai and Mari and the Apostolic Tradition. Beyond establishing precise analogies between these anaphoras and several formularies of Old

<sup>8</sup> M. de La Taille, *Mysterium fidei*, Beauchesne, Parisii 1931<sup>2</sup>, 432-453 (thesis 34).

<sup>9</sup> W.F. Macomber (ed.), *The Oldest Known Text of the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari*, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 32 (1966) 335-371.

Testament, Jewish, and non-anaphoral Christian euchology, the particular situation of these texts allows us to abstract from the dating of their redaction. In view of their belonging to ecclesial communities living under a regime of pronounced socio-cultural autonomy, these anaphoras are a sort of *organe-témoin* representing survivals of the formation process of the anaphoral *institution narrative* in communities that had lost contact with the Churches where the consensus formed around the great tradition had matured.

By a backwards projection, the interrogation of these witnesses of the past allows us to recapture the “back and forth” that Form Criticism surely knew. In fact, if we want to know what actually happened between the absence of the *institution narrative* in the anaphora of Addai and Mari and its presence in the Apostolic Tradition, we must turn precisely to this group of anaphoras. The context of this report does not allow us to examine them one by one. That analysis has already been done with great competence, but with an equal severity regarding the real value of the anaphoras, by Alphonse Raes in a famous 1937 article<sup>10</sup>. And I have published research in a notably different light in a 1989 book<sup>11</sup>. In his paper presented at the Addai and Mari Congress, Professor Emmanuel Fritsch made reference to some Ethiopian anaphoras also characterized, as he noted, by this felicitous “anomaly.”

##### 5. *The institution narrative and the phases of its development*

The intermediate notion of *quasi-embolism* or *quasi-graft*, *quasi-narrative*, supported by the observation of these “anomalous” anaphoras, permits us to advance the hypothesis of a development of the *institution narrative* in four phases: (1) the presence in the Addai and Mari anaphora of an institutional core “in an embryonic state,” still enveloped by its own *anamnesis* that is far more than a common *anamnesis*; (2) a phase of oscillation between the *quasi-embolism* and the *embolism*, comprising a purely allusive reference to the event of the institution and the first parsimonious direct citations of the Lord’s words; (3) a progressive stabilization phase of the *institution narrative* as *embolism* already perfect in the form of direct citation, but defective in content; (4) the definitive phase characterized by a full configuration of the *institution narrative* as ultimately imposed on the whole tradition and attested for the first time by the anaphora of the Apostolic Tradition. About the so-called “anomalous” anaphoras we must remark that they are attested between the second and third phase.

Such multiple indices of literary structure permit us to hypothesize that the primitive Church, having inherited the embolistic dynamic from Old Testament and Jewish euchology, required a certain lapse of time to realize the possibility of applying to the anaphora, by

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<sup>10</sup> A. Raes, *Les paroles de la consécration dans les anaphores syriennes*, OCP 3 (1937) 486-504.

<sup>11</sup> C. Giraud, *Eucaristia per la Chiesa. Prospettive teologiche sull'eucaristia a partire dalla “lex orandi”*, Morcelliana (Brescia) & Gregorian University Press (Roma) 1989, 349-359.

grafting onto the formulas received from Jewish domestic and synagogal euchology, the *ipsissima verba* pronounced by Our Lord *pridie quam pateretur* and transmitted by *kerygmatic-cultic summaries* received in New Testament and patristic versions.<sup>12</sup>

6. *The institution narrative: an interpolated element?*

To suppose a gradual insertion of the *institution narrative* into the anaphora does not, however, permit, an appeal to the notion of “interpolation.” For to imply the addition of a textual portion to a text that neither possessed it, nor could have foreseen it, would be thoroughly inadequate to explain the genesis of the *institution narrative*, and would end up relativizing its presence and function. Attention to Form Criticism, especially in Old Testament euchology, convinces us to recognize that from a theological and literary point of view that the *institution narrative*, understood in both its embryonic and fully established forms, arises from the DNA of the anaphora, in the sense that it is presupposed by its internal programming. With its *quasi-embolism* or *quasi-narrative*, the anaphora of Addai and Mari, far from presenting itself as an anomaly, opens new horizons in the history of the anaphora. In fact, it attests to a phase in which the *theological-Scriptural locus* of the “sacramental body” allowed itself to be inserted into the euchological formulary with the precise goal of conferring upon the *epiclesis*, that is, upon the demand of our transformation into an “ecclesial body,” all the credit that is its due.

7. *Addai and Mari: an anaphora “out of series” or an archetype of the series?*

Concluding a study of the anaphora of Addai and Mari, Bernard Botte wrote: “As interesting as this document is, one must refrain from seeing here an anaphora ‘out of series’ that casts new light on the history of the Eucharist. The theories one might elaborate on such a basis are nothing more than pure fancy, with no relation to reality”.<sup>13</sup> Today, reading the anaphora with the help of Form Criticism and Comparative Liturgy leads us to say exactly the opposite.

In summary: with the recognition of the perfect orthodoxy of this “oriental gem” that is the Judeo-Christian anaphora of Addai and Mari considered in its original configuration, still without an *institution narrative*, but with an *anamnesis* that is more than an *anamnesis*, and with an *epiclesis* excellent in every respect, the Roman Declaration invites theologians to rethink not just the genesis of the *institution narrative* of the anaphora, but also the very

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<sup>12</sup> For the kerygmatic-cultic summaries of the New Testament cf C. Girardo, “*In unum corpus*”. *Trattato mistagogico sull’eucaristia*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo 2007<sup>2</sup>, 256-259. One kerygmatic-cultic summary can be found, for example, in Justin, *IApologia* 66,3-4 (cf ib. 261).

<sup>13</sup> B. Botte, *Problèmes de l’anaphore syrienne des Apôtres Addai et Mari*, *L’Orient Syrien* 10 (1965) 106.

understanding of the Eucharist, transcending those formulas and methodological limits that have often conditioned communion among the Churches, in the certainty that obedience to the *lex orandi* will also unblock ecumenical relations in the “new spring” Benedict XVI alludes to so often. We can only hope that this invitation, made by then Cardinal Ratzinger, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the most authoritative, determined, and determining supporter, finds prompt and convinced acceptance.

*(Translated from Italian by James McCann and Robert Taft)*

#### SUMMARY

Before the discovery, by William Macomber, of the oldest codex of the Chaldean anaphora of Addai and Mari still without an *institution narrative*, liturgists be used to place responsibility for its absence on ignorant or less than conscientious copyists. Today, however, fortified by the Vatican approval of the original form of Addai and Mari, we are invited to look with great interest not only at that anaphora, but also at the so-called “anomalous” anaphoras. Based on multiple indices of literary structure, we can hypothesize that the primitive Church, having inherited the Old Testament and Jewish euchology, needed a certain lapse of time to realize the effective possibility that it had to apply to the anaphora, by grafting onto the formularies received from Jewish domestic and synagogal euchology, the *ipsissima verba* of the Lord and transmitted by the *kerygmatic-cultic summaries* of the New Testament tradition. With its “quasi-narrative,” the anaphora of Addai and Mari attests to a phase in which the *theological-Scriptural locus* of the sacramental body allowed itself to be inserted into the euchological formulary with the precise goal of conferring upon the *epiclesis*, that is, upon the demand of our transformation into an ecclesial body, all the credit for which it is capable.