

# The Structure and Theology of the Anaphora of Mar Nestorius



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## Introduction

The Anaphora of Mar Nestorius is the most solemn anaphora of the East Syrian liturgical tradition. East Syrian liturgy is celebrated by the Catholic Chaldeans, Syro-Malabar and the Assyrian Church of the East. Since it was out of use in the Syro-Malabar Church for the last five centuries, attributing doctrinal errors, ordinary people are much prejudiced and lack due knowledge about this Eucharistic prayer. Therefore, there is the urgency of explaining all aspects of it and especially its theology so that people may participate in it knowingly and fruitfully. We intend to have an overall view of the sources, structure, content and theology of this anaphora.

Anaphora is the central part of the Holy Qurbana where the Church commemorates and celebrates the main elements of the history of salvation in Christ. It is the anamnesis of the passion, death, burial and resurrection of Christ. By participating in it, the community is sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mar Aba I (540-552) introduced the anaphora of Mar Theodore and Mar Nestorius in the East Syrian liturgy. Before Isho Yahb III there were several anaphorae in use. There was an anaphora attributed to St. Ephrem. Scher says: "Ephrem composed a liturgy which the Melchites have used until the present time. The Nestorians also celebrated it until the days of Metropolitan Isho Yahb III who, when he arranged the order of the prayers, chose three and forbade the use of the rest"<sup>1</sup>. The sixth century fragment of the East Syrian anaphora was discovered by Bickel. Other anaphorae which were used in the East Syrian Church were attributed to Mar Barsauma, to Chrysostom according to Ihn At Tayyib of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and to Diodorus according to the Acts of the Synod of Diamper.

<sup>1</sup> A. Scher & Perieer (ed., tr.), *Histoire Nestorienne inédite* (Chronicle of Seert), Paris 1908-1909, 112.

This synod prohibited the use of these three anaphorae in session 5, decree 2 in the following words: "Whereas in the missals of this diocese there are some masses that were made by Nestorius, others by Theodorus and other by Diodorus, their master, which are appointed to be said on some certain days, and which, carrying those names in their titles, are full of errors and heresies, the synod doth command all such masses, entire as they are, to be taken out, and burnt, and in virtue of obedience, and upon pain of excommunication *latae sententiae*, doth prohibit all priests from henceforward to presume to use them, ordering them to be forthwith cut out of their books, and at the next visitation to be delivered by them to the most illustrious Metropolitan, or to such as he shall appoint to correct their books, that so these masses may be burnt."<sup>2</sup>

Chaldean Church continued their use, after deleting the names of Theodore and Nestorius from their titles. Patriarch Joseph II (1696-1712) suppressed them, but they were restored by Patriarch Kayyath in the 1901 missal. Pope Pius XII approved the restoration of the second and third anaphorae for the use of the Malabar Church. It is to be noted that the titles of these anaphorae are no more the anaphorae of Theodore and Nestorius but the second and third anaphorae. The Oriental Congregation in its decrees of 20 January 1962, 9 May 1969 and 1 March 1983 in vain ordered the translation and introduction of these anaphorae in the Syro-Malabar Church. The letter of this Congregation to Mar Antony Padiyara on 24 July 1985 deplored that the texts containing three anaphorae, namely AM, AT and AN<sup>3</sup> were not integrally translated into Malayalam and put to use.<sup>4</sup> The Synod of the Syro-Malabar bishops held from 8 - 16 January 1996 asked to publish the translation of the two remaining anaphorae under the auspices of the Central Liturgical Committee.

The names Theodore and Nestorius have had for many centuries a pejorative sound. So, when someone spoke of the anaphorae of Theodore and Nestorius he thought automatically on the liturgical texts with doctrinal errors. This is perhaps the reason why in spite of the insistence of Rome they were not introduced by the Syro-Malabar Church authorities. To make

<sup>2</sup> *Diamperitana synodus in Mansi*, t.35,p.1250.

<sup>3</sup> AM = The Anaphora of Mar Addai and Mar Mari; AT = The Anaphora of Mar Theodore; AN = The Anaphora of Mar Nestorius.

<sup>4</sup> *Roman Documents on the Syro-Malabar Liturgy*, OIRSI 213, p.111.

the matter clear, the memorandum signed by 19 professors of Dharmaram College, Bangalore to the Oriental Congregation states: "These two anaphoras are totally unacceptable to us. This is not merely on account of the names of Nestorius and Theodore attached to them. The anaphora attributed to Nestorius probably originated in Jerusalem. It is quite wordy and has nothing of the simplicity of the anaphora of Addai and Mari, to which it adds practically nothing. The one known under the name of Theodore is very Byzantine in tone and spirit." Some bishops were of the opinion that the titles of the two anaphorae are really a possible block to accept them. A memorandum, sent to Rome in 1984 by 12 Syro-Malabar bishops under the title 'A Response to the Observations of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, n.d., 1984' says: "Though they are euphemistically called II and III anaphorae by some of our liturgists, the Taksa published by the Nestorians of Kerala clearly ascribe them to Mar Theodore and Nestorius. If we are compelled to accept those anaphorae, it will be an indirect confirmation, that we were followers of Nestorius in the past." Mar Joseph Cardinal Parecattil in his posthumous book "Liturgy as I see it" states that the liturgies of Theodore and Nestorius are heretical and thus explain the difficulty in restoring them to the Syro-Malabar liturgy.<sup>5</sup>

The CLC held on 29 March 1984 appointed a subcommittee consisting of Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil, Dr. Jacob Vellian and Fr. Silas CMI to prepare the Malayalam text of these anaphorae and they prepared and published it for study.<sup>6</sup>

The Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church approved the text of the anaphora of Mar Nestorius in its session from 9-14 January 2017. After obtaining *recognitio* of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches on 19 June 2018. Mar George Alencherry, the Major Archbishop promulgated the third Qudasha, that is, the Qudasha of Mar Nestorius to be effective from 8 September 2018.

It is intended to be used for the Eucharistic celebration on the following days: on Denha, on the Friday of Mar John the Baptist, on the commemoration day of Greek Fathers, on Wednesday of the Ninivites, and Thursday of the Pasch. The new text permits it to be used on any day

<sup>5</sup> J.Parecattil, *Liturgy Ente Drukshtiyil*, Ernakulam 1987, 34, 196-197.

<sup>6</sup> *Anaphorae of Mar Theodore and Nestorius*, LRC Publications, Kochi 2005, p.30-78.

of the year. We are concerned with a short study of the Anaphora of Nestorius.

### Sources

The anaphora is founded on a solid manuscript tradition. More than 50 manuscripts contain this anaphora. The oldest Mss containing this anaphora is Mar Esaya Hudra (XIIth century). It is inserted to the liturgy of the feast of Denha. The early edited missals such as Urmi text (1890) Kelaitha and Chaldean missal (1901) contains this anaphora.

The study of early sources leads us to the following conclusions:

1. Mss before the 13<sup>th</sup> century are all Hudra manuscripts.
2. Scribe marked his name and the date of its completion.
3. They were copied for the use of a monastery or parish. So, they are proofs for active liturgical tradition.
4. Comparison between Mss shows no essential differences. The structure is the same. The most notable difference is the presence or absence of kušapae. According to Ratcliff and Botte they are of late origin because they are not mentioned in Narsai. Macomber thinks that they were not universally introduced before the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. But after comparing them with the writings of the early Christian writers Spinks concludes that they are contemporary with Theodore of Mopsuestia, St. Chrysostom and Narsai because we find in them the same theology on the ministerial priesthood regarding the Eucharist.

There are three stages in the development of the anaphora

1. Anaphora without kušapae
2. Anaphora with kušapae of AM. For example, Add.Syr. 2046 B of the XII century, Cambridge.
3. Anaphora with kušapae proper to the anaphora (Br.Mus.add.Syr.7181, 16<sup>th</sup> century). The kušapae of AN are more recent compared to those of AM.

East Syrians are faithful to the liturgical tradition. For example, the position of the title of AM remains just before the first G'hanta in spite of later additions of other elements before the g'hanta. The general practice was to leave intact the existing texts and add to them new ones.



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