

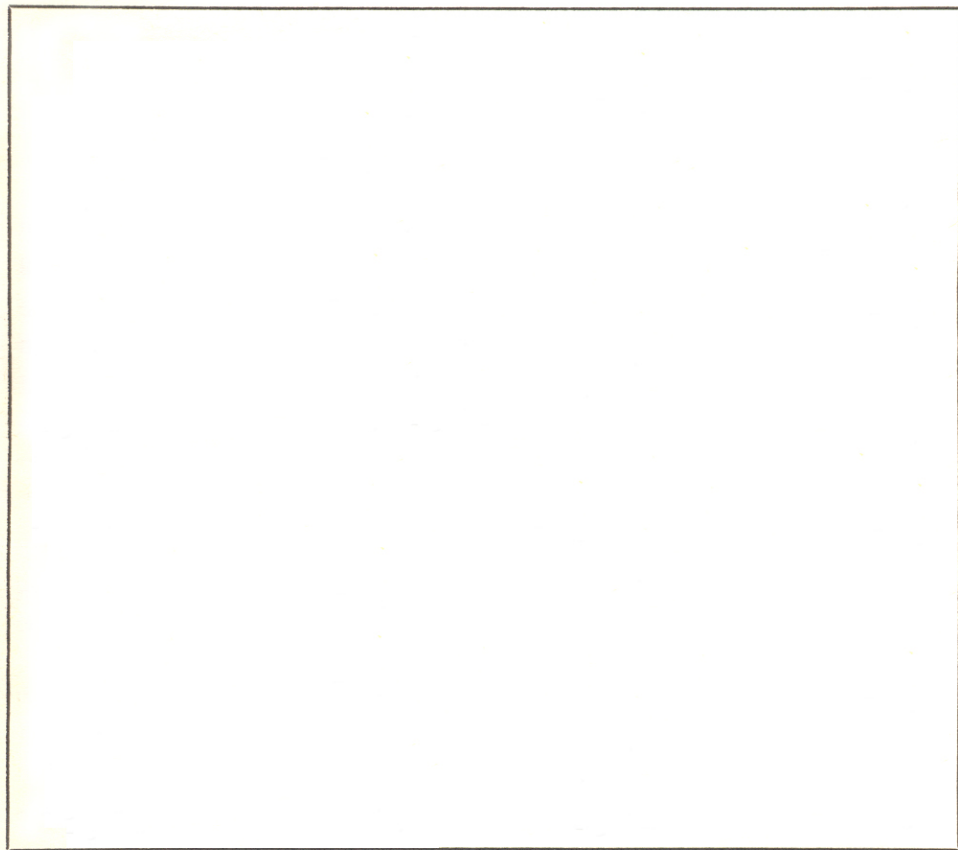
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A SHORT MELKITE BAPTISMAL SERVICE IN SYRIAC

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INTRODUCTORY

Although to-day the Melkite baptismal service is in Arabic and belongs to the Constantinopolitan rite, the oldest surviving manuscripts of the service are in Syriac, and some of these manuscripts preserve a form of text which antedates the byzantinisation of the rite that took place after the recapture of Antioch by the Greeks in 969. This earlier form of the service represents a genuinely Antiochene rite, and one that has several points of contact with the other Antiochene baptismal *ordines* in Syriac, i.e. the two Syriac Orthodox services, attributed to Severus (=S) (1) and Timothy of Alexandria (=T) (2) respectively, and the Maronite service attributed to Jacob of Serug (=JS) (3). This Antiochene Melkite *ordo*, which is attributed to Basil (=B), has been published, from a Vatican manuscript, by J.A. Assemani in the invaluable collection of baptismal *ordines* in volumes 1-III of his *Codex Liturgicus Ecclesiae Universae* (4).

The other Antiochene *ordines* all have short forms of the service, for use in cases of emergency: thus the Syrian Orthodox have abbreviated services

(1) For the various texts of S in Assemani's *Codex Liturgicus* and Denzinger's *Ritus Orientalium* I, see *Le Muséon* 83 (1970), p. 369, and for the early manuscripts of S, see *Studies in the early history of the Syrian Orthodox baptismal liturgy*, *JTS* 23 (1972), pp. 16-64.

(2) Edition and translation in *Le Muséon* 83 (1970), pp. 367-431.

(3) ASSEMANI II, pp. 309-50, III, pp. 184-7; DENZINGER I, pp. 334-50.

(4) In III, pp. 199-237; Latin translation only in DENZINGER I, pp. 318-27.

attributed to Severus (5) and to Iohannan bar Shushan (†1072) (6), and a very short *ordo* attributed to Philoxenos (7), while the Maronites have a short service attributed to Basil (8). These short forms of the services are of considerable interest in that they preserve a number of archaic features, but most interesting of them all, perhaps, is an anonymous short form of the old Antiochene Melkite *ordo*, which has hitherto passed virtually unnoticed (9).

BM Add. 14497, ff. 119a-152a, of the eleventh/twelfth century (10), contains a text of the full Antiochene Melkite *ordo* that differs in a number of respects (11) from that published by Assemani in *Codex Liturgicus* III (I hope to discuss the full service in this manuscript in a future article), and at the end a smaller, but contemporary, hand has added the short baptismal service (ff. 152a-153b), which is published below.

The most remarkable feature about the short service in BM Add. 14497 is the complete absence of any post-baptismal anointing. In this our text is unique among the surviving Antiochene *ordines*, and it represents a very archaic stage in the development of the Antiochene baptismal rite. It is well known that, in this rite, originally there was no post-baptismal anointing, only a pre-baptismal one; this is the situation represented by the references to the baptismal service in early documents such as the *Acts of Thomas*, and it is still presupposed in the baptismal homilies of both John Chrysostom and Narsai (12). A post-baptismal anointing, however, was

(5) ASSEMANI II, pp. 300-6; DENZINGER I, pp. 316-7; ed. E. BARSAUM, *Ktobo da-Cmodo qaddisho*, Homs 1950, pp. 51-5.

(6) See E. BARSAUM; *Ktobo d-berulle bdire d-^cal mardut yulpane suryoye hdire*, Qamishlich 1967, pp. 114-5, 466.

(7) ASSEMANI II, pp. 307-8; DENZINGER I, p. 318. Cp also A. DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog*, Louvain 1963, pp. 303-5.

(8) DENZINGER I, pp. 358-9.

(9) C. KARALEVSKY, however, notes its existence in passing: *Histoire des Patriarcats Melkites* III, p. 31.

(10) WRIGHT, *Catalogue...*, pp. 231-2.

(11) Some of these are noted in the course of my study of the early manuscripts of S, in *JTS* 23 (1972).

(12) T.M. FINN, *The Liturgy of Baptism in the Baptismal Instructions of St. John Chrysostom* Washington 1967, p. 139ff; R.H. CONNOLLY, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, Cambridge 1909, p. XLII ff.

להא עהוּאָ סהַדַּעָא לַתַּא הַלְלַמּ בּ לַחַמּ ❖ סַעֲוֹלֵפְתוּ מְרִי
 לַפְרִיָּהּ הַדְּהֵקָהּ מִדַּעָא . הַעֲתִיבָא עֲפֹד לַת מַעֲתֵרָא עֲמֵמָא דַּעֲוֵתָא
 סַעֲוֹכְמָא הַטְּלֵתָא לַתַּא הַלְלַמּ לַחַמּ .

8 הַכְּלִיָּקָהּ דְּתַא בַּת (נא) אַל תַּא מַעֲמָא מִדַּעָא בְּרִי דַּעַם לַת
 מְלִבְכָאֵל אֲזֻרְיָ מַלְלֵמָא דַּ אַתְּ .

9 אֲזֻרְיָ מַקְדֵּרַעַם אַתְּ תַּא מַלְּךָ כַּעַם אַתְּ אֲזֻרְיָ [דְּרֵמָא
 מִדַּעָא] ^c ❖

10-11 מְרִיָּהּ מַעֲמָא | לַת בַּת (נא) הַמְּלַבְרָה ❖ 153b

12 סַחֲדֵיָּהּ מַעֲוֹלֵפָּ לַת לְרֵאוּאָ מִדַּעָא .

13 הַמְּרִיָּהּ אַלְמַתִּי מְרִיָּהּ מִדַּעָא אֲלַמְתָּא הַעֲפִרִי לְרַכְּמַתִּי וְרַבִּי
 לְהַעֲמִילָא בְּתַא הַעֲמֹכָא לְרַבִּי דְּרַכְּמַתִּי עֵא . סַלְפִּיָּהּ כְּרִיָּהּ
 הַמְּרִיָּהּ . סַחֲדֵיָּהּ כְּרִיָּהּ מַעֲוֹלֵפָּהּ דְּרֵמָא . הַמְּרִיָּהּ
 דְּרֵמָא אַל עַמְרִיָּהּ . מַרְּעֵיָּהּ לַת דְּרֵמָא הַעֲתִיבָא הַמְּרִיָּהּ
 הַעֲתִיבָא כַּלְמָא . סַחֲדֵיָּהּ הַעֲמֵי לְרֵאוּאָ מִדַּעָא הַמְּלַבְרָה (עֵא) .
 כַּלְמָתִי הַמְּרִיָּהּ ^d . מַרְּעֵיָּהּ לַת מַעֲמָא פַּעַל מְרִיָּהּ הַמְּלַבְרָה
 כַּלְמָתִי הַעֲמָא . מַדַּעָא הַכְּלִיָּקָהּ .

עַלְּמָא אַתְּ הַכְּפִיָּתְמָלָא .

a. MS לְרַכְּמַתִּי .

b. MS הַלְלַמּ .

c. sic, om. MS.

d. prim. supral.

TRANSLATION.

The order for the short baptism(al service), in cases of need, when a child is in danger after seven days from birth.

1. They bring him to the priest and he seals the child with the cross, saying :

2. N. is signed to the glory of God the Father, and to the knowledge of the only-begotten Son, and to the worship of the Spirit of holiness, amen.

3. *Then the priest prays the prayer of incense*: this is written in the long baptismal service.

4. *Then he prays as follows*:

Blessed is thy holy, glorious and exalted name, O Lord God, merciful and pitiful,— thou who didst send, in thy grace and great mercy, the Lord thy Christ, for the life and salvation of all mankind. He came and chose for himself twelve men, valiant and just, and showed them the mystery of holy baptism. Every one who believes in it and is baptized lives, while every one who does not believe is judged. I too have received (the tradition) and I beseech thee, O Lord God, Lord of all, and our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Son and thy beloved one,

5. *Here the priest bends over the water and blows on it, saying gently*:

6. May thy Spirit, living and holy, be sent, and may it come and dwell and rest and reside on this water, and sanctify it, and make it like the water which flowed from thy side on thy cross.

7. *He raises his voice*: and may this water be a sprinkling and purification, and a beneficial healing and forgiveness of sins for this thy servant standing (here) now and being baptized in it. And sanctify him in his soul and in his body and in his spirit, and may he become a new child, and a holy one, unto eternal life; and cause him to share in thy holy body and blood, so that he may receive from them propitiation of faults and forgiveness of sins, unto eternal life.

8. *Then the priest casts the holy oil on the water, signing it with the cross and saying "Halleluiah" three times, saying*:

9. This water is sanctified in the name of the Father and the Son [and the Holy Spirit].

10. Here the priest anoints him,

11. and baptizes him.

12. And then he communicates him with the holy mysteries,

13. *and prays this prayer over him*:

The God who has been pleased to choose you for adoption, and who puts on you his living sign and has mingled you among the sheep of his flock, and put on your head the helmet of salvation, and who puts the sword of slava¹tion in your right hand, — may he make you worthy of his heavenly reward, that the conduct of your life may be in peace, and may he, who has shown us the holy mystery of baptism by his baptism in the Jordan, give you a portion, a lot, and an inheritance, and life in the kingdom of heaven, now and always.

End of the short service.

COMMENTARY.

1-2. The absence of any mention of oil might lead one to suppose that this corresponds to the consignation without oil that accompanies the inscription of names in all the full Antiochene *ordines* (19), but comparison with the structure of the other short services (see table below, p. 12) would indicate that this consignation should rather be liked with the second consignation—with oil—of the normal service, a consignation which follows the exorcism, *apotaxis* and *syntaxis* (all omitted in the short services), and, which immediately precedes the consecration of the water. This interpretation is strongly supported by the fact that the wording of the formula (§2) is almost identical with that for the initial consignation, *with oil*, of the abbreviated service attributed to Severus, which reads (20):

N is signed (*ršm*) with the oil of holiness to the glory of God the Father and to the knowledge of the only-begotten Son, and to the worship of the all-holy Spirit, for eternal ages, amen.

(The formulas for the second consignation (i.e. the first with oil) in the full service of **S** are very different) (21).

(19) *JTS* 23 (1972), p. 26 ff.

(20) Ed. BARSAM, p. 52 and likewise the oldest manuscripts of this service (e.g. BM Add. 14495, ff. 83^b-86^a, of the 10th / 11th century); the short service printed in ASSEMANI and DENZINGER differs on this point, having four (not three) consignations, the first of which, without oil, and corresponding to the initial consignation of the full service, has the formula in question. Cp also note 30.

(21) Cp *Le Muséon* 83 (1970), pp. 414-5, and *JTS* 23 (1972), p. 30 ff.

3. The prayer referred to (Add. 14497, ff. 137a-8a) is identical with that in the printed text of **B** (Assemani, III, p. 215)

4. The prayer is not found elsewhere.

5. The blowing is exorcistic, but this service, alone of the short *ordines*, has no exorcistic prayer accompanying the action.

6. The epiklesis is archaic in two respects: the preservation of the feminine gender for the Holy Spirit — at least for one verb! — and the phraseology used.

The first of these archaisms, however, may be only apparent, for, while there are indeed parallels in the other Syriac *ordines* for the occasional preservation of the feminine (22), the passive (“Let thy Spirit be sent...”) is not found other epikleses, and it is possible that *tštdr* is a corruption of *tšdr*, “Do thou send...”, which would have parallels in some forms of the epiklesis in **S**. Against this suggestion is the difficulty that it involves a very awkward change of subject, “Do thou send thy living and holy Spirit, and may it come...”, although, as will be seen, this awkwardness could be due to a fusion of two different ways of formulating the epiklesis.

The wording of the main part of the epiklesis (23), “May thy... Spirit come and dwell and rest...” represents an archaic form of the epiklesis which is preserved in the eucharistic liturgies in the three East Syrian anaphoras and the old Maronite anaphora commonly known as the *Sharrar*, but which is rather more widespread in the baptismal liturgies, being found in **JS**, **T** and one manuscript of **S**, as well as in the East Syrian service.

The epiklesis of Add. 14497 is actually almost identical with that of **T**, and very close to those of **JS** and **BM** Add. 14518, a manuscript of **S** (24):

(22) E.g. T § 53, on which see *Le Muséon* 83 (1970), p. 429; cp also E.-P. SIMAN, *L'expérience de l'Esprit par l'Eglise d'après la tradition syrienne d'Antioche*, Paris 1971, p. 155 (with note 40), 211-2 (with note 89).

(23) See note 15 for references.

(24) See notes 16-18 for references.

In the absence of an exact parallel it is perhaps best to leave the question open: if *tšdr* is not a corruption, it not only preserves the archaic usage of the feminine for the Holy Spirit, but it also represents an unparalleled wording; if on the other hand, **tšdr* is the original reading, then the epiklesis of Add. 14497 will represent something of a fusion of the West Syrian and East Syrian types of epiklesis.

Although the preceding prayer ends "...I beseech thee, Lord God, holy, Lord of All, and our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son and beloved one", the suffixed "thy side" and "thy cross" show quite clearly that the epiklesis is immediately addressed to the Son, a feature which is unparalleled in the other Syriac baptismal epikleses, and one which will definitely be archaic.

7. The *tloyto* to the epiklesis differs from those in **T, JS** and Add. 14518, and is not found elsewhere. Notice that it too is addressed to Christ.

8. Regularly found in the West Syrian *ordines*.

9. The pronouncement that the water is consecrated is found in **T, JS** and the printed texts of **S** (but not in the oldest manuscripts!) (27).

10. No indication is given of the parts of the body involved (28). The absence of a formula here is paralleled in **B, T** and several printed texts of **S** (29).

11. Again no formula is given, but it is very unlikely that none was used, and presumably the standard passive formula was to be employed.

12. For the absence of any post-baptismal anointing, see above.

13. The concluding prayer has several links with the concluding prayer of the Maronite short *ordo* (Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium*, I, p. 359). I give Denzinger's Latin translation of the latter, and italicize the material in common:

(27) See *Le Muséon*, 83 (1970), p. 420.

(28) On the significance of this feature, see *JTS* 23 (1972), p. 29 ff, 37 ff.

(29) See *JTS* 23 (1972), p. 32 ff.

Deus sanctus, qui beneplacito voluntatis suae elegit te ad ministerium filiorum electorum, et sanctificavit te sanctitate sancta sua, deditque sibi signaculum vitae novae, et adjunxit te gregi suo spirituali, ipse dignum te faciat vita beata, detque tibi partem et haereditatem in regno caelorum, in quo habitant omnes sancti eius, et ibi gaudeas cum vigilibus, et angelis, qui famulantur ei nunc et semper et in saecula.

CONCLUSIONS.

The service consists of the following basic elements: consignation (probably with oil) — prayer of incense — narrative prayer leading into the epiklesis and request for the efficacy of the water — anointing of the water and pronouncement of its consacration — prebaptismal anointing (without formula) — baptism — communion — final prayer.

The main elements absent from the short service, when compared with the normal one (**B**), are thus: the initial consignation (without oil), the exorcism with *apotaxis* and *syntaxis*, the prayer over the oil, the exorcism of the water, and the post-baptismal anointing. At the same time, the prayers of the skeleton service that our short *ordo* does provide are all different from those of the full service of **B**, and indeed, with one or two exceptions, they appear to be without parallel in any other baptismal *ordo*. The few contacts which are to be found occur in the formula for the initial consignation (almost identical with that in the short service of **S**), in the epiklesis (very similar to that in **T**, **JS** and Add. 14518 (**S**), and in the final prayer (some links with the Maronite short service).

It is interesting to compare like skeleton structure of our Melkite service with that of the short services employed by the Syrian Orthodox and the Maronites. Here the similarities and differences best stand out in tabular form.

<i>Melkite</i> Add. 14497	<i>Syrian Orthodox</i> attr. Severus (30)	attr. Philoxenus	<i>Maronite</i> attr. Basil
consignation	consignation with oil	consignation with oil	consignation
formula	formula	formula	formula
prayer of incense		prayer of incense creed	prayer of incense
consecration of water	exorcism of water	exorcism of water	exorcism of water
epiklesis	epiklesis	epiklesis	epiklesis
anointing of water	anointing of water	anointing of water	
pre-baptismal anointing	pre-baptismal anointing	—(31)	pre-baptismal anointing
baptism	baptism	baptism	baptism
—	prayer	—	prayer
—	post-baptismal anointing	post-baptismal anointing	post-baptismal anointing
communion	communion	communion	communion
prayer	prayer	—	prayer

From this table it will be seen that the main differences between the short Melkite *ordo* and the other short services lie in the absence from the former of a specific prayer for the exorcism of the water, and, in particular, of any post-baptismal anointing. In all other respects the basic structure is virtually the same.

(30) I use the service in the edition of E. BARSAUM as the model, since this is the closest in form to the oldest manuscripts of the service. The short service in ASSEMANI and DENZINGER differs in a number of respects. Cp also note 20.

(31) For the absence of any consignation immediately before the baptism, see *JTS* 23 (1972), p. 30 note 2.