

# The Hierosolymitain Origin of the Catechetical Rites in the Armenian Liturgy

As far as I know no extensive research has yet been carried out on the origin of any of the Armenian ritual texts. The occasional references to this subject which we find here and there in modern studies are mostly uncritical. We do not even know for certain whom the name of this book comes from, Mesrop Maštoc', the famous Vardapet<sup>1</sup> of the Vth century, or Maštoc' Elivardec'i, the Catholicos of the IXth century.<sup>2</sup>

Scholars are certainly familiar with a document translated by F. C. Conybeare<sup>3</sup> which deals with the authorship of almost all the canons of the most complete Armenian Maštoc'k' and states the circumstances of time and place in which they were composed and/or translated into Armenian. According to it most of these texts had a foreign origin and the remaining are attributed to remarkable Armenian personalities such as St. Gregory the Illuminator, St. Sahak and John Mandakuni.

Strange as it may seem, this catalogue has no indication of the author and place of origin of the baptismal rite. No one regrets

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<sup>1</sup> «Vardapet» renders the greek «didaskalos». In its original sense it is used to signify the function of teaching rather than the ecclesiastical rank of «doctor», but this latter meaning soon became attached to it. The Synod of Šahapivan (444), sometime after the death of Maštoc' (439), appears to use the term in this latter sense, cf. on this subject R. THOMSON, «Vardapet in the Early Armenian Church», *Le Muséon*, 75 (1962) p. 367-384, especially p. 369, 373 and 377. I believe that this is not a distinct situation even in its ambiguities, from that of the «presbyteri doctores» of whom many eastern and western fathers speak from the IIIrd. century onwards, Cf. A. VILELA, *La condition Collegiale des prêtres au III<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1971, p. 310-314 and 397-398.

<sup>2</sup> A. RENOUX, «Le rite arménien», *Bulletin du Comité d'Études de la Compagnie de Saint Sulpice*, 44 (Oct.-Déc. 1963) p. 271, favours the first opinion, as well as F. TOURNEBIZE, *Histoire politique et religieuse d'Arménie*, Paris 1910, p. 338.

The Catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali (1166-1173) says that Maštoc' Eļivardec'i «in unum librum canones inter se divisos collegit, ideoque eius nomine ipsemet liber vocatur» (cit. in F. C. CONYBEARE, *Rituale Armenorum*, Oxford 1905, p. XXVII). The same opinion is held by the historian of the XIIIth century KIRAKOS GANJAREC'I, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. K. A. MELIK-OHANJANIAN, Erevan 1961, p. 81, and by a recent author, V. HATZUNI, «Armenia, IV — Il rito armeno», *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, I, c. 1977.

<sup>3</sup> CONYBEARE, *op. cit.*, p. XXVIII-XXXI. This text is found, for instance, in MS Vatican, Arm. 3 (A.D. 1287) ff. 301b-302b and in *Mastoc'*, Constantinople 1807, p. 2-3, in a slightly different version.

the fact because the document is rather suspect; it has every possibility of being a late forgery of no historical value: its language, the name of the authors mentioned, the number of rites to which an author is given, the precisions of time and place which are advanced, all seem to lead to such a conclusion.

For scientific purposes, therefore, its information can only be taken, at the utmost, as a working hypothesis whenever we lack of a better one.

A more sound approach to the problems of the origin of the Armenian Liturgy would be to study the rites of those churches from which the Armenians are believed to have borrowed liturgical texts at the time of the constitution of their literature, the beginning of the Vth century. However, this ideal solution is hampered in the present case by two facts: 1. The rites of the churches of Syria, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Palestine etc., are mostly unknown to us at so early a stage of evolution. 2. Ritual Armenian texts certainly underwent successive arrangements between their translation and the last redaction which could have been carried out under or by Maštoc' Elivardec'i (898-899) <sup>4</sup> who, according to Kirakos Ganjakec'i «made adaptations adding things of his own» to the rites of the book «which is named Maštoc', after him» <sup>5</sup>.

The study of the origin of any rite in the Armenian Maštoc' is therefore a rather difficult task. Previous researches of eminent liturgists developed a good array of methodological tools for analysing liturgical evolution <sup>6</sup>. But these general hypotheses can only be

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<sup>4</sup> What we know for certain is that the Catholicos John Awjneç'i (717-728) in his «Synodal Oration», delivered at the Synod of Dvin in 719, describes many ritual misuses concerning baptism in the Armenian church of his time (JOHN AWJNEÇ'I, *Matenagrut'iwuk'*, Venice 1953 (2nd ed.) p. 17-19). A reflex of these may perhaps be found in the absence of an explicit rite of unction before the baptism, as we can see in MSS Venice, Mech. 457, ff 70b-71a and Erevan. Maten. 1001, ff. 85b-86a and in CONYBEARE, *op. cit.*, p. 93-94. However, there is no doubt that the prayer «Blessed art thou, Lord our God, who hast chosen thee a people» (cf. ID., *op. cit.*, p. 93) leads to the conclusion that an unction was made after it. Originally it was a prayer for the blessing of oil. In the present order of the ritual it is used for the blessing of water. The mixture of the oil is made much later in the rite (cf. ID., *op. cit.*, p. 95). This reveals that the texts between the blessing of oil and its pouring into the water are later additions.

<sup>5</sup> KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, *op. cit.*, p. 81. This author seems to imply that Maštoc's editorial work was that of putting together the contents of two preexistent booklets: the book of ritual prayers and the book of readings. This at least appears to be the obvious sense of his sentence: «putting together all established prayers and readings». The liturgical non-sense mentioned at the end of note 4 would, therefore, be Maštoc's doing.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. BAUMSTARK, *Liturgie comparée*, Chevetogne 1953 (3th ed.) p. 17-34, for this author's celebrated laws. B. BOTTE, «Le baptême dans l'Église Syrienne», *Orient Syrien*, 1 (2, 1956) p. 149-151 says that what, in rituals, «a dû être mis par écrit en premier lieu ce sont les grandes prières sacerdotales». All the rest of the rites, like «les formules breves, les prières

considered as remote approaches and inoperative tools when certain original facts cannot be found in patristic literature and in liturgical parallels.

At the present stage of Armenian research on the baptismal rite it would be hazardous to undertake the study of the whole of its text. Besides, the multitude of problems that such a search would have to include would render the present paper too long. These are the reasons why I only study here the catechetical rites<sup>7</sup>. It is clear, however, that it would be a methodological error to imply that the conclusions I will draw from the analysis of these rites are valid for the entire text. I need hardly recall that two parts of a liturgical text can belong to different epochs or traditions: any liturgist is well ware of the fact. The most we can say is that we have a strong working hypothesis of the origin of a text if we discover where a part of it comes from.

### 1. *The hypothesis.*

A structural analysis of the Armenian Lectionary compared with other related documents, made in a precedent paper on the evolution of Lent in Jerusalem before the Vth century, led me to the conclusion that there was a three week preparation of penitents and catechumens for Easter, perhaps before the end of the IIIrd century<sup>8</sup>. In the same paper I pointed out that this primitive Lenten organization was curiously parallel to a three week preparatory period before the illumination, prescribed in the introductory rubric of the baptismal rite of the Armenian liturgy<sup>9</sup>. Such an agreement of two different sources, I thought, could only mean that both the Lectionary and the baptismal rite had been brought to Armenia from the same place, Jerusalem<sup>10</sup>. A preliminary investigation of

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diaconales, les chants, les rubriques» came afterwards. I may perhaps add that the contents of some rubrics, as those concerning the essential rites, are certainly anterior to some of the priestly prayers. But Dom Botte's rule is certainly true as far as the redaction is concerned. This fact certainly enhances the difficulty of analysing the evolution of liturgical texts.

<sup>7</sup> I intend to prepare another paper on the rites of baptism itself.

<sup>8</sup> M. F. LAGES, «Étapes de l'évolution du carême à Jérusalem avant le V<sup>e</sup> siècle. Essai d'analyse structurale», *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, N. S. 6 (1969) p. 67-102.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>10</sup> A priori an alternative hypothesis is possible since Rome had a similar Lenten organization from the end of the IIIrd century until somewhere between A.D. 354-384 (cf. A. CHAVASSE, «La structure du carême et les lectures des messes quadragesimales dans la liturgie romaine», *La Maison-Dieu*, 31 (1953) p. 84). One could make this hypothesis look

the structure of the rubric in comparison with the themes of Saint Cyril's catechetical instructions showed that the two documents were related<sup>11</sup>, for Saint Cyril develops what are essentially the themes of the Lectionary readings.

This is the starting hypothesis for the present study, of which I later found a literary confirmation in the «Synodal Oration» of John Awj nec' i (717-728). In this work the Philosopher summarily describe the main baptismal rites which are substantially identical to those of the Armenian Maštoc'. After that he says:

«In this form and according to this plan blessed Cyril, the Bishop of Jerusalem, illustrated the canon of catechumens. And, according to each article of faith, he assembled and ordained readings from the divine writ resembling each (article), which were performed over them, aside, out of the church, during the holy Lent of fasting; thereafter they were worthy of receiving the illumination of the holy font on the great day of the Easter's Office of Light»<sup>12</sup>.

The Philosopher states two things: 1 The readings supposed to be proclaimed before each of Saint Cyril's catecheses were organised by Cyril himself; 2 The baptismal rites of the Armenian church which the Philosopher wished to reconstitute to their pristine purity were identical to those commented by the famous bishop of Jerusalem<sup>13</sup>.

These statements are of unequal value. The first is also found in the Armenian Life of Saint Cyril published by E. Bihain<sup>14</sup>, but this author does not accept it<sup>15</sup>. For my part I believe that the structure of the nineteen readings must be anterior to Cyril. I gathered elsewhere the evidence for this conclusion<sup>16</sup>. Consistent both

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even more serious by stressing the parallel between the expression «dominica mediana» of the Roman liturgy and the «Feast of the middle of the Easter Lent» which we have in the Canons of Saint Sahak (387-429) (cf. V. HAKOBIAN, *Kanonagirk' Hayoc'*, Erevan 1964, p. 398). Nevertheless, anyone would agree that such a similarity cannot support a theory of dependence. Sahak's expression only informs us that this ancient Lenten organization happened to exist in Armenia as well as in Rome.

<sup>11</sup> M. F. LAGES, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>12</sup> JOHN AWJNEC'I, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> The liturgical information of this text seems interesting and valuable for the study of the baptismal rite itself. On the other hand notice that the recommendation to give the instructions «aside, out of the church» repeats the discipline of the catechetical rubric in the baptismal rite of the Armenian Maštoc' as we shall see below.

<sup>14</sup> E. BIHAIN, «Une vie arménienne de saint Cyrille de Jérusalem», *Le Muséon*, 76 (1963) p. 346.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 335. E. Bihain does not say on what specific grounds he refuses this attribution.

<sup>16</sup> M. F. LAGES, *op. cit.*, p. 72 and 98-99.

with my early interpretation and John Awjnc'e'i's statement would be to say that Saint Cyril reorganized a primitive series of nineteen readings ordering them according to the articles of faith. Do the facts support such an interpretation? That is what we must investigate in this paper.

The second statement is more directly related to our study, and, as far as I know, we do not find it in other historical documents. It is possible, however, to find out if its contents are true<sup>17</sup>, as we know the baptismal rites of Jerusalem fairly well at the time of Saint Cyril or rather of his successor, John of Jerusalem<sup>18</sup>.

We shall attempt ascertain whether the text of the catechetical preparation, in the light of John Awjnc'e'i's statements, confirms my early hypothesis of a hierosolymitain origin for the Armenian baptismal rite. The sources for this search are the following: 1. The catechetical text of the Armenian «Canon of Baptism»<sup>19</sup>; 2. The catechetical readings of the Armenian Lectionary<sup>20</sup>; and 3. The catecheses of Saint Cyril<sup>21</sup>.

## 2. *The catechetical rubric in the Canon of Baptism.*

### 2.1. The text.

The baptismal rite of the Armenian *Maštoc'* begins with the text I translate below<sup>22</sup>. I divide it into versicles so as to make references easier in my commentary.

<sup>17</sup> As I am not studying the Baptismal rite itself I will not, in the present paper, attempt to prove John Awjnc'e'i's statement.

<sup>18</sup> On John of Jerusalem's authorship of the Mystagogic Catecheses, cf. W. J. SWAANS «A propos des Catéchèses Mystagogiques attribuées à saint Cyrille de Jérusalem», *Le Muséon*, 55 (1942) p. 1-43.

<sup>19</sup> I shall use in the present study the following documents: MSS Venice, Mech. 457 (IX-Xth cent.) ff. 68a (cf. B. SARGISEAN and G. SARGSEAN, *Mayr c'uc'ak hayerēn jēragrac' Matenadaranin Mxit'areanc' i Venitik*, III, Venice 1966, c. 19); Erevan, Maten. 1001 (IX-Xth cent.) ff. 82b; Venice, Mech. 199 (A.D. 1216) ff. 77b; and Conybeare's translation, *op. cit.*, p. 89-90.

Besides these documents the text is found in the following editions: *Maštoc'*, Venice 1839 (only vv. 1-3, 12 and ff.) p. 1-3; *Maštoc'*, Jerusalem 1961 (6th ed.) p. 5, and *Maštoc'*, New Julfa 1965, p. 1-3. The *Maštoc'* editions of Constantinople 1807 and Vienna 1905 exclude the whole rubric.

<sup>20</sup> A. RENOUX, *Le codex Arménien Jérusalem 121. II. Edition comparée du texte*, P.O. 36, 2 n.° 168, Turnhout 1971, p. 232-237.

<sup>21</sup> Greek text in PG 33 c. 332-1057. French translation in J. BOUVET's *Saint CYRILLE DE JERUSALEM, Catéchèses baptismales et Mystagogiques*, Namur 1962, p. 24-452.

<sup>22</sup> I correct in some details Conybeare's translation, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

### «Canon of Baptism.

1 When one makes a Christian <sup>23</sup> first of all it is not right to let him into the church. 2 But he shall have hands laid on him three weeks before the baptism 3 during which he may learn from the Vardapet both the faith and the baptism of the church. 4 First of all the Godhead of the holy Trinity, 5 and the creation and coming to be of (all) creatures; 6 and next the election of just men. 7 After that, the birth of Christ and in order all the economy; 8 and the great mystery of the cross and the burial, 9 and the resurrection and ascension unto the Father, 10 and the second coming, 11 and the resurrection of all flesh and the rewarding of each according to his works.

12 In teaching this (the Vardapet) shall admonish him to be untiring in prayer.

13 This is the order for those of ripe age. 14 First, hands shall be laid as catechumens on those of ripe age and (then) on the children.

15 And a psalms is said in even tone: Lord, my heart has not become haughty [ps. 130]. 16 Prayer over the catechumen before baptism: O Lord our God, God who does good...»

After this prayer, which is not important for the present study, begins the rite of baptism itself: «Thereafter on the day of baptism at the door of the church...»

## 2.2. Critical commentary.

Some critical remarks seem necessary for the understanding of this text.

2.2.1. Essentially this is the text of MS Venice, Mech. 199, fl. 77b with only two exceptions, in v. 3 and v. 15. The other two manuscripts I have used directly, MSS Venice, Mech. 457, fl. 68a and Erevan, Maten. 1001, fl. 82b, seem more corrupt in some details of the text. Note, however that MS 199, of A. D. 1216 is much more recent than the other two manuscripts which are the oldest Maštoc'k' known.

<sup>23</sup> Many consider this a part of the title: SARGISEAN and SARGSEAN, *op. cit.*, c. 19, *Maštoc'*, Venice 1839, p. 1, and CONYBEARE, *op. cit.*, p. 89, who translates: «The Canon of Baptism, when they make a Christian». The punctuation of MS Erevan, Maten. 1001 gives ground to my interpretation in which I follow *Maštoc'*, New Julfa 1965 p. 1 and *Maštoc'*, Jerusalém 1961 p. 5.

2.2.2. If the text of v. 1 is practically identical in all manuscripts, v. 2 seems to have undergone some adaptations. In fact, the lesson of MS 199 was developed in the other two manuscripts as we can see from the following comparison:

MS 199	MS 1001	MS 457
yaṙaĵ erek' šabat'ovk'	yaṙaĵ eris šab <at'> ov	yaṙaĵ eris šabat'awk'
	aweli nax	kam aweli nax
k'an zmkrtut'iwnn	k'an zmkrtut'iwnn	k'an zmkrtut'iwnn.

As can be seen, the simple text of MS 199: «three weeks before the baptism»<sup>24</sup> was developed into «three weeks more (sic) before the baptism» in MS 1001 and into «three weeks or more before the baptism» in MS 457. From MS 1001 we can deduce that «more» was a marginal note in its model which was mechanically inserted in the text by a scribe who did not pay attention to the resulting text, which, as it sounds, is rather poor. On the other hand the scribe of MS 457 noticed it was incorrect and tried to amend it introducing another word «or» which makes it readable. Anyone can see that the «nax» of both MSS 1001 and 457, which is a repetition of the same word found shortly before, renders their text heavier than that of MS 199.

2.2.3. An important difficulty arises in v. 3 from a rather small problem. The lesson «baptism of the church» which I keep in my text is found in MS 457 but not in MSS 199 and 1001 where we have, instead, «the teaching of the church»<sup>25</sup>. Therefore I follow in this detail, the manuscript which in the preceding paragraph appeared as the most evolved from the supposed original of the rubric. Moreover, we know from some early literary documents

<sup>24</sup> We know from the variant *c* of CONYBEARE, *op. cit.*, p. 89 that MS 199 is sustained by MS Vatican, Barberini 100 (XIIIth century).

<sup>25</sup> The only manuscripts CONYBEARE (*op. cit.*, p. 89 var. *d*) mentions as presenting the variant «teaching» instead of «baptism» are MSS Vatican, Barb. 100 and Paris, B.N. 52-55. He forgets to mention MS Venice 199 even though it belongs to the number of manuscripts from which he ordinarily gives the variants. From these variants of his one can deduce that the manuscripts which are supposed to have «baptism» instead of «teaching» are the following: Venice 457, British Museum, Or. 1411 (XIIIth cent.) and Bodleian, Arm. e. 8 (A.D. 1464).

MS Erevan, Maten. 1001 has some characteristic traits. The text of v. 3 according to its original punctuation says: «so that until the day of baptism he may learn the faith. And they teach the teaching of the church:». The last sentence, «And they... church» is supposed to introduce the list of the articles of faith which constitute the teaching of the church. The sentence does not finish in «church» as in MSS 199 and 457 but is continued by «first of all» of v. 4.

that the word «teaching» (vardapetut'iwn) seems to signify traditionally the instruction of catechumens<sup>26</sup>.

As I am not producing a critical edition of the baptismal text it is difficult to state which variant, «baptism» or «teaching» is the correct one. The intrinsic and palaeographic evidence we gather from the text is insufficient for such a discussion. However, one can point out that it is reasonable to suppose that the Vardapet who is preparing the catechumens has to instruct them on baptism. This argument from common-sense is corroborated by the fact that a double pleonasm would be present in the text if we accepted the variant «teaching». The catechumen must learn the «teaching» from the «teacher» (Vardapet). Certainly this is acceptable, but too obvious to be written down, especially when one cannot distinguish the contents of «faith» and «teaching» in the same sentence: if we compare the meaning of «teaching» with the contents of vv. 4-10 will notice that «faith» and «teaching» would be identical. Besides, one can suppose of a misreading of the word «baptism». It is not impossible, on palaeographic grounds: the first three letters of «baptism» are quite similar, in uncial writing, to those of «teaching». Because of all these indications I follow, in this instance, MS 457.

2.2.4. Our three manuscripts have practically no variants from v. 4 to v. 11. Those concerning vv. 12-14 are not relevant to the subjects discussed in this paper. In v. 15 I abridged the text of MS 199, according to the redaction of the other two manuscripts. What MS 199 adds to «haughty»: «and benediction and glory. Again they repeat and say a third time the same psalm; and benediction and glory» is typical of later additions in more recent manuscripts. In v. 16 MS 457 adds: «This is the beginning of baptism» after the text I kept in my translation following the other two manuscripts. It is unnecessary to demonstrate that this additional sentence cannot be original. Anyone can infer this conclusion from the fact that all our texts have the rubric: «Thereafter on the day of baptism at the door of the church...», and this rubric follows in all cases the prayer to which the addition of MS 457 is prefixed.

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. the Armenian text of the Lectionary (A. RENOUX, *op. cit.*, II, p. 232); AGAT'ANGELOS, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, ch. 23 (Venice 1930, p. 191); P'AWSTOS BUZANDAC'I, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, III, 3 (Venice 1933, p. 20). For complements and other uses of the term cf. R.W. THOMSON, «Early Armenian Catechetical Instruction», *Armeniaca. Mélanges d'études arméniennes*, Venice 1969, p. 99-100.



### 2.3. Liturgical commentary.

The only important liturgical questions which arise from this text are those concerning the whereabouts of the catechetical instructions, supposed to be given outside the church, and the rite of the imposition of hands which accompanies the catecheses.

Both elements seem quite primitive. They are certainly found in Hippolytus<sup>27</sup> but, to my knowledge, they are absent from the rites mentioned by Theodore of Mopsuestia<sup>28</sup> and John Chrysostome<sup>29</sup>. As far as Jerusalem is concerned it seems that entrance in the church was related to the exorcisms<sup>30</sup>. On the other hand, Saint Cyril says, almost at the beginning of the third catechesis<sup>31</sup>: «until now, in fact, you were at the door». It would seem, therefore, that an entrance had been made shortly before. Does that mean only the catecheses on penance were given at the church door? Such a discipline would be very much in accordance with the baptismal and penitential organization of the Armenian church. What we know for certain is that the Mystagogical Catecheses prescribe that the renunciation of Satan be made outside the baptistery, in the *proaulion* or *exoteros oikos*<sup>32</sup>. As far as I know no imposition of hands parallel to that of the catechetical rubric is mentioned in the Catecheses of Saint Cyril.

These findings do not seem perfectly identical to those supposed by our rubric which, taken literally, suggests that all instruction was given outside the church. As a matter of fact the first part of the baptismal rite itself is performed at the church door. The entry would, therefore, have been made after the confession of faith<sup>33</sup>, just as in the Mystagogical Catecheses<sup>34</sup>. But we must

<sup>27</sup> HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME, *La tradition apostolique*, ch. 18 and 19, ed. B. BOTTE, Münster/Westf. 1963 p. 40.

<sup>28</sup> THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, *Les homélies catéchétiques*, Catech. XII, XIII and XIV, ed. R. TONNEAU and R. DEVRESSE, Vatican 1949, p. 321-461.

<sup>29</sup> JOHN CHRYSOSTOME, *Huit catéchèses baptismales inédites*, ed. A. WENGER, S. C. 50, Paris, 1957. Cf. also «Introduction» by A. WENGER, *ibid.* This does not mean that these rites did not exist in Antioch when the catecheses of Theodore and of the Chrysostome were pronounced.

The greek Barberini manuscript of the euchologion mentions the imposition of hands, cf. J. GOAR, *Euchologion sive Rituale Graecorum*, Venice 1730, p. 281.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Catech.*, *Procat.* 13 and 14 (PG 33, 353-355). But cf. *Procat.* 4, *ibid.* 340 where he seems to speak of an entrance for the inscription.

<sup>31</sup> *Id.*, *Catech.* III, 2 (PG 33, 426).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*, *Mystagogic Catech.* I, 2 and 11 (PG 33, 1068 and 1076).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. CONYBEARE, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>34</sup> CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Myst. Catech.* II, 2 (PG 33, 1077).

be careful because these conclusions come from two undue extrapolations: 1 we would have the text mean what it does not expressly say; 2 we would assume, without proof, that the introductory rubric and the baptismal text have the same origin. It is not impossible, therefore that the recommendation not to let the catechumen into the church refers only to the beginning of his instruction, as, for instance, in the cyrilian catecheses. But all this is rather hypothetical.

We can conclude that the evidence collected is not sufficient for us to state that the instruction was supposed to be carried out at the church door in accordance with an ancient discipline maintained in the introductory rubric of the *Maštoc'*. On the other hand we know that many of the most important rites of the Armenian liturgy are organized according to the same scheme: outside and inside the church<sup>35</sup>.

### 3. *The catechetical readings, the Catecheses of Saint Cyril and their relation to the catechetical rubric.*

It is well known that in his explanation of the faith to the catechumens Saint Cyril followed the themes of a list of catechetical readings which are found both in the Armenian Lectionary and at the beginning of each catechesis. The only apparent difference is that the last of the nineteen readings was not commented by Cyril. On the other hand we know the extent of each reading only from the Lectionary, because Saint Cyril merely quotes their *incipit*, and, occasionally, another versicle at the beginning of each catechesis.

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<sup>35</sup> Besides the rites of the benediction and consecration of the church (cf. SARGISEAN and SARGSEAN, *op. cit.* III, c. 7-11 and 13-14) and the rite of the *mataṭ* which was performed only at the entrance of the church (cf. *ID.*, *op. cit.*, c. 17) I can mention the two canons of the monk's benediction (cf. *ID.*, *op. cit.*, c. 26-27 and 27-33) and the canons of penance. Concerning the various rites of the calling to penance, cf. M. F. LAGES, «The Most Ancient Penitential Text of the Armenian Liturgy», *Didaskalia*, I (1, 1971) p. 47-48. For the Canon of dismissing penitents on Maunday Thursday, cf. SARGISEAN and SARGSEAN, *op. cit.*, c. 37-38.

The canons in which there is a symbolic meaning attached to the fact that the rites are performed at the church door all have a penitential connotation: baptism, penance and benediction of monks. The other cases in which a rite is prescribed at the church door (benediction and consecration of the church and *mataṭ*) this is done primarily for functional reasons, not for symbolic ones.

These two documents can be compared throughout so as to ascertain their correlation with the catechetical rubric<sup>36</sup>. This is what we shall attempt to do now systematically.

3.1. The 1st catechetical reading of the Armenian Lectionary is taken from Is. 1, 16-20. This text is an invitation to purification and penance. Reference is made to the works of charity which must accompany that sincere penance by which a sinner is assured by God of the remission of his sins.

This is substantially the theme of Cyril's first catechesis in which he quotes the beginning of the same lesson as an introduction to his teaching. Curiously enough, he emphasizes the idea of the «calling» (I, 1) which is certainly related to the title of the catecheses in the Armenian translation where they are entitled «Calling to the oblation», «Vocatio oblationis»<sup>37</sup> instead of the classical «katechéseis photidzoménon» of the Greek.

3.2. The 2nd reading is taken from Ez. 18,20ff-23. It can be considered a meditation on the effects of renouncing sin. These are life and forgiveness. The theme of penance and forgiveness of sins is also central in Cyril's 2nd catechesis. A specific idea of this catechesis, which we find also in the preceding one, is the confession of sins. Saint Cyril insists on this theme rather extensively<sup>38</sup>.

The general theme of the two first readings and catecheses is, therefore, penance<sup>39</sup>.

In the introductory baptismal rubric we do not find a specific related text, unless we see in the contents of vv. 1-2 the liturgical rites that were supposed to be performed on the occasion of these readings and catecheses. This relation does not seem impossible. However, the evidence we can gather from our documents is all

<sup>36</sup> The sources of this study have already been quoted in notes 20 and 21.

<sup>37</sup> The dative form seems preferable to the «vocatio oblationis» proposed by E. BIHAIN, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Catech.* II, 12-13 and 20 (PG 33, 398, 400, 404 and 408) and *Catech.* I, 2, 5 (PG 33, 372, 376).

<sup>39</sup> Both readings have been inserted in most of the penitential texts of the Armenian liturgy. Cf. the rite of MS Venice 457 in SARGISEAN and SARGSFAN, *op. cit.*, III, c. 35. For this and other manuscript texts cf. CONYBEARE, *op. cit.*, p. 192 and 202.

but conclusive. Nevertheless, we cannot neglect some facts that seem of relevance to the question discussed<sup>40</sup>.

1. The interdiction against letting the catechumen into the church, in the introductory rubric, has a penitential connotation which is perhaps related to the exorcisms the «doctor» had to perform for the purification of the catechumen.

2. Both the readings and Cyril's catecheses begin with a penitential preparation of the catechumen. Cyril even stresses the importance of the confession of sins.

3. In the early Armenian texts of the penitential rite the confession of sins was made before entering the church<sup>41</sup>.

4. Saint Cyril seems to imply that the entrance is made after the second catechesis.

I think that these facts are possibly related. Therefore, the contents of vv. 1 and 2 of the baptismal rubric and that of the first two readings and of the 1st and 2nd catecheses could essentially be the same. The only difference would be that the rubric mentions the rites without the themes of the instructions whereas the catechetical readings and instructions develop these themes without stating clearly the corresponding rites.

3.3. The 3rd reading is taken from Rom. 6, 3-14. Its theme is baptism. The 3rd of Cyril's catecheses is a good comment on the main ideas of the reading.

The baptismal rubric also mentions baptism as a subject of the instruction given by the Vardapet. The parallelism between our three documents is perfect<sup>42</sup> if we ignore the fact that faith precedes baptism in the rubric whereas we have the inverse order in the readings and the catecheses.

3.4. Col. 2,8-3,4 is the 4th reading. It speaks mainly of Christ as the true Lord of men and angels and as the principle of new life.

Cyril begins his 4th catechesis with a commentary on some passages of this text, mainly 2,8 and 20-23, but immediately engages

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<sup>40</sup> This assertion does not imply that these facts come necessarily from the same tradition or that they were laid down in the same period. On the contrary, they must have been written in different periods. But I suppose they are related because they follow the same principle of liturgical organization.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. M. F. LAGES, «The Most Ancient...» *op. cit.*, p. 46 and 52-53.

<sup>42</sup> I take for granted that the lesson «baptism» is the better one, according to the discussion above.

his listeners in a meditation on the articles of faith (n.° 4-17) not directly connected with the reading. Another parallel with the text (2,16) is found in n.° 27-28 of this rather desorganized catechesis

The baptismal rubric has nothing we can relate to this uncharacteristic reading.

3.5. The 5th reading is taken from Heb. 11, 1-31. Its only theme faith, is developed by Saint Cyril in his 5th catechesis. The same subject is prescribed in the introductory baptismal rubric (cf. v. 3). The three documents seem therefore perfectly parallel.

3.6. The 6th reading is taken from Is. 45,17-26. It is a meditation on the works of God and on God himself. The second part of the reading (v. 20-26) is well summarized in the baptismal rubric (v. 4) when it speaks of the Godhead of the holy Trinity, even though this formulation is far from the concepts of Isaia. The first part of the reading (v. 17-19), which deals with creation, can perhaps be related to «the creation and coming to be of (all) creatures» mentioned in v. 5 of the same baptismal rubric.

Saint Cyril, in his 6th catechesis comments only on the second part of the reading, developing the first article of faith, «I believe in one God», with a long explanation on the heresies against it. Our three documents agree essentially, as we can see. A question remains: was the creation theme mentioned in the baptismal rubric because of the first part of the 6th reading?

3.7. The themes of the 7th reading (Eph. 3, 14-4,13) are a somewhat miscellaneous collection. Saint Cyril centers his 7th catechesis on the «Father» theme which is, however, one of the most characteristic of the text (cf. 3, 14-15 and 4, 6). The baptismal rubric does not specify anything similar.

3.8. The following reading is taken from Jer. 32, 19b-44. It begins with the words: Lord almighty, you (have) a great name. In the corresponding of Saint Cyril's catecheses this reading begins a versicle sooner stressing even further the theme of God's powerfulness. Consequently the 8th catechesis is centered on God «almighty», as a commentary of this word in the symbol.

It is worth noticing that the 8th reading speaks of the «almighty» theme only in v. 19b. From what follows this versicle we can deduce that God reveals himself as almighty by the «mirabilia» he realizes in favour of the people he chose. The whole reading,

especially 22, 20-23 and 36-44, has as its central theme what the baptismal rubric (cf. v. 6) summarizes as «the election of just men».

St. Cyril's commentary therefore, takes as its central subject what is merely a passing reference. It is perhaps for this reason that according to the 8th catechesis, the reading begins with v. 18b where the «almighty» theme is quite vividly expressed. Such an addition could only have been made by someone who wanted to focus this reading on a subject to be commented according to the scheme of the symbol-of-faith. Was this done by Cyril himself or by someone before him? We do not know for certain, but it is clear that Cyril's reading is an adaptation.

3.9. In the next reading, taken from Job 38,2- 40,5, we have the «creative wisdom» theme. On this occasion Cyril comments on the article of faith which says «creator of heaven and earth and of all beings visible and invisible». This theme, as we have seen, is also found in the baptismal rubric (cf. v. 5) but is supposed to be commented before the preceding catechesis. The question of the original order arises once more, but it is impossible to solve it clearly with the evidence we have collected.

3.10. There is no particular problem in connection with the 10th reading (I Cor. 8,5-9,23) and the corresponding catechesis. Saint Cyril comments on the «unique Lordship of Jesus Christ». Doing so he only follows the theme of the first two versicles of the reading. The baptismal rubric indicates no parallel theme.

3.11. The 11th reading taken from Hebr. 1, 1-2,1 is an ideal basis for the catechesis on Jesus Christ the only son of God, which Saint Cyril develops in his 11th instruction to the catechumens. The baptismal rubric has nothing similar.

3.12. The theme of the 12th reading (Is. 7, 10 -8,10) seems to be perfectly identical both to v. 7 of the baptismal rubric and to the developments of the 12th catechesis. The only noticeable difference lies in the perspective in which our three documents present it. The reading and the rubric insist on the fact, the birth of Christ, the catechesis comments on the theology of the fact, the incarnation.

3.13. The 13th reading is taken from Is. 53,1 -54,5. It is the classical text from the Old Testament for a meditation on the passion

and burial of the «man of sorrows», of which it speaks in terms of rare poetic beauty and pathos. The 13th of Cyril's catecheses as well as the v. 8 of the baptismal rubric have the same theme.

3.14. The subject proposed in the following versicle of the baptismal rubric (v. 9) is perfectly identical with the theme of both the 14th reading and the corresponding catechesis: the resurrection and ascension unto the Father.

3.15. The identity of themes between our three documents is also visible if we compare the contents of v. 10 of the baptismal rubric with those of the 15th lecture and catechesis. The second coming is the subject of all of them. The reading, taken from Dan. 7,2-27, is shortened in the catechesis where it begins with Dan. 7, 9, but this has no influence on the theme which is identical. Once again, however, a question arises: was this adaptation Cyril's work or was it done by the tachigraph mentioning only the versicles more directly related to the theme?

3.16. The 16th reading is taken from I Cor. 12, 1-7. Its subject is charisms and the Spirit. Saint Cyril comments on the Holy Spirit in the corresponding catechesis, using examples from the Old Testament.

3.17. In his 17th catechesis Saint Cyril comments again on the same theme with texts and examples taken from the New Testament. This instruction is based on the first part of the 17th reading which is the continuation of the previous one (I Cor. 12, 7-27). The second part of this reading which deals with the mystical body of Christ, is not commented in Cyril's catechesis.

There is no mention of the subjects of these two readings and catecheses (16th and 17th) in the baptismal rubric. It is worth emphasizing that this document follows a more logical sequence. After the second coming it mentions the resurrection of the flesh, which means it follows an order of events rather than a theological one.

3.18. The 18th reading narrates the resurrection of the flesh according to the vision in Ez. 27, 1-24. This is the theme of the 18th catechesis and the subject prescribed in v. 11 of the baptismal rubric, which, however, also mentions «the rewarding of each

according to his works». This is not explicit in the reading, but Cyril comments on the same idea (cf. *Catech.* XVIII, 4).

3.19. The 19th text, taken from I Tim. 3, 14-16 which deals with the mystery of the Church, has no parallel either in Cyril's catecheses or in the baptismal rubric.

#### 4. *Conclusion.*

The evidence collected in the preceding pages leads to the following conclusions.

4.1. The themes of the five first readings and catecheses seem to interpret and develop the contents of vv. 1-3 of the baptismal rubric.

4.2. The main differences between the themes of vv. 4-11 of the baptismal rubric and those of Saint Cyril's catecheses 6-18 derive from their different principles of organization. The catecheses follow a symbol-of-faith order. The baptismal rubric reflects a history-of-salvation scheme. In other words, the baptismal rubric is focused on the facts of salvation whereas Cyril's catecheses are framed in theological concepts. The series of readings serve both perspectives, and because of that they do neither reflect the first organization of the instructions for catechumens, nor represent the last stage of evolution.

4.3. The rubric of the baptismal rite has a rather primitive outlook. 1. It prescribes a three week preparation for baptism; 2. The instructions are supposed to be given outside of the church; 3. It is ordered according to a history-of-salvation scheme; 4. It has no theological developments on the Holy Spirit or on the Church. Concerning this latter fact one might object that this baptismal rubric is just a rather short index of themes. Such an objection would, however, neglect the fact that the writer could have made his index even shorter. The formula «and in order all the economy» of v. 7 would have allowed him to cut all the themes he specifies in vv. 7-11.

4.4. The readings and the catecheses are a development of the rubric and not vice versa. In other words, the baptismal rubric



could not have been taken from the readings or the catecheses or it would have been ordered in accordance with them.

4.5. The baptismal rubric could only have been written in Jerusalem. We cannot explain otherwise 1. the general parallelism of our three documents; 2. the identity in themes of the 8th reading and v.6 of the rubric. This versicle of the rubric could never have been written by anyone who knew the series of readings and its commentary by Saint Cyril. Therefore it would seem to be it well established that the rubric is anterior to the other documents.

4.6. As far as the adaptations of the catechetical instructions' primitive organization are concerned we have no proof of their having been made by Cyril himself, other than John Awjnc'e'i's statement mentioned above.

4.7. The general hypothesis of this paper seems to be confirmed: the catechetical rite of the Armenian Canon of Baptism has a hierosolymitain origin.

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**Resumo****A ORIGEM HIERSOLIMITANA DOS RITOS CATECUMENIAIS  
DA LITURGIA ARMÉNIA**

O presente trabalho pretende demonstrar que a rubrica introdutória do ritual arménio do baptismo tem uma origem hierosolimitana. Para tanto comparo o texto original com os temas das leituras catequéticas que se encontram no Leccionário Arménio e com os assuntos tratados por São Cirilo de Jerusalem na suas Catequeses. Tal comparação permite descobrir que a rubrica baptismal é mais antiga do que os outros dois documentos. Esta conclusão está baseada, por um lado no esquema de catequeses que a rubrica propõe, o qual só pode ser anterior ao das leituras catequéticas e das correspondentes instruções cirilianas: a rubrica ordena-se segundo um esquema de história de salvação enquanto que os outros documentos seguem a ordem do símbolo da fé; além de que outros pormenores supõem, na rubrica, uma menor evolução teológica. Por outro lado a organização litúrgica que tal rubrica supõe só pode ter existido nos fins do século III — princípios do IV. E tal organização era particular à igreja de Jerusalem. Daí a minha conclusão de que esta rubrica viu a luz do dia em Jerusalem donde teria transitado para a Arménia por ocasião das grandes traduções do século de ouro, o século V.

M. F. LAGES