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Ethnological-Historiographic View on Seven Ancient Extant Christian Liturgies

This article is an analysis of seven ancient extant Christian liturgies. They are distinct complex forms of the original Lord's Supper ritual which have been performed continuously for almost two millennia, from Antiquity until today. The liturgy is the holiest and the most mysterious act of faith for Catholic and Orthodox Christians, as well as for the members of the Churches of the East. It is held at the most important gathering on Sunday morning, when Jesus Christ resurrected according to the Scripture, and on other holidays and feasts. Firstly, we will discuss the older form of the Roman Catholic mass, the so-called Tridentine mass, today practiced by a small part of the faithful. In Eastern Christianity, the focus will be on the analysis of the liturgies from three church families: 1) Eastern Orthodox churches with Diophysite doctrine, 2) Oriental Orthodox churches with Miaphysite doctrine, 3) Churches of the East (Assyrian and Ancient) which follow the doctrine of radical Diophysitism ('Nestorians').[1] We will examine the standard Byzantine liturgy of Eastern Orthodox churches, and four liturgies of Oriental Orthodox churches: Coptic, Syriac, Armenian and Ethiopian. Also, we will explore the common liturgy of the Churches of the East.

Rather than discussing theological contents and meanings of the liturgies' texts, our intention here is to acquaint the reader with the complex issues of history of the liturgies and other selected aspects, primarily architecture, painting, drama and music, which will be discussed from ethnological point of view.

The Bloodless Sacrifice: An Overview of Ancient Christian Liturgy

The ancient extant liturgy is the central ritual of traditional Christianity. Meticulously elaborated in theology, the liturgy expresses the very essence of Christianity in the mystical and symbolic way. At the liturgy, the faithful are physically united with Jesus Christ.[2]

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1 The terms 'Monophysites' for members of the Oriental Orthodox churches, 'Nestorians' for members of the Churches of the East, 'Jacobites' for members of the Syriac Orthodox Church, 'Melkites' for members of the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and 'Uniates' for members of the Eastern Catholic churches are often used as pejorative exonyms and therefore will not be employed in this article. Daniel Patte (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 632, p. 786, pp. 805-806, p. 836, pp. 861-862, pp. 1261-1262.

2 Sean O'Riordan, "The Eucharist", *The Furrow* 6/5 (1955), pp. 315-323; Eve Tibbs, *A Basic Guide to Eastern Orthodox Theology: Introducing Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), pp. 141-164.

In its beginnings, the liturgy was a very simple ritual. According to the Gospels, on the evening of Maundy Thursday, anticipating the following day's tragedy, Jesus Christ performed the rite of consecration of the bread and wine and instructed his followers to do the same by repeating his words and gestures.[3] All traditional churches discussed here hold that, during the consecration ritual, the bread and wine transform into the real body and blood of Christ, although physically these substances do not change. They represent Christ's sacrifice on the cross for the salvation of humanity. In the end of the liturgy, the priests and the faithful consume a symbolic small amount of the holy bread and wine (or only bread in the Roman Catholic tradition). This way, they receive communion: by eating and drinking the living Christ, they strengthen themselves to endure life's difficulties. This specific form of spiritual consolation represents the essence and the peak of religious life for most members of the churches discussed here. [4]

The basic difference between the early Christian ritual of the Lord's Supper and ancient extant liturgies is that the creators of all liturgies very early, already in the first centuries of Christianity, shaped this simple ritual in such a way as to expand it into hours-long and very complex prayer structures. In particular, the recognition of Christianity by the Roman Empire in the 4th century contributed to this process of elaborating and ceremonialising of liturgies. For centuries, theologians, spiritual writers and poets modified and expanded liturgies. However, over time liturgies became standardised and further changes were not permitted any more. Most liturgies discussed here took their final shape in the Middle Ages.[5]

In this analysis, I decided to use the term 'liturgy' because it is acceptable for both, the Western Roman Catholic mass and various Eastern liturgies.[6] The term 'mass' is the most widely known due to the fact that Roman Catholics are the world's largest Christian community. On the other hand, Eastern Orthodox churches, numbers-wise the second largest community of Christians discussed here, use exclusively the term 'liturgy.' This term is also employed in European languages for liturgies of the Oriental Orthodox churches, Churches of the East and non-Byzantine Eastern Catholic churches, even though these churches usually use the terms 'holy sacrifice' and 'consecration.'

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3 Neil Xavier O'Donoghue, "The Shape of the History of the Eucharist", *New Blackfriars* 93/1043 (2012), p. 72, p. 74; Anscar J. Chupungco, "History of the Liturgy Until the Fourth Century", in Anscar J. Chupungco (ed.), *Handbook For Liturgical Studies: Volume I: Introduction to the Liturgy* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997), pp. 98-101.

4 Francis Appiah-Kubi, "The Theology of the Holy Eucharist and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation", *Noyam E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 7/6 (2021), p. 78; Angelo Nicolaides, "Investigating the Holy Eucharist and the term 'people of God' according to the Eastern Orthodox Church", *Pharos Journal of Theology* 102 (2021), p. 1.

5 Michael Fiedrowicz, *The Traditional Mass: History, Form, & Theology of the Classical Roman Rite* (Brooklyn: Angelico Press, 2020), pp. 3-42; Manel Nin, "History of the Eastern Liturgies", in Anscar J. Chupungco (ed.), *Handbook For Liturgical Studies: Volume I: Introduction to the Liturgy* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997), pp. 117-119, pp. 123-128.

6 In ancient Greek, 'liturgy' originally means "work for the people" or "public service". Naphtali Lewis, *"Leitourgia* and related terms", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 3 (1960), p. 177.

Liturgy's Performance Structure

The liturgy takes place in a sacred space, a special building usually built in a specific architectural style and embellished with various works of art. Each of the seven churches discussed here is known for its unique architecture and art works.

At the centre of the liturgy is the main celebrant – a priest or a bishop. He represents Christ the High Priest. That is why he wears specially decorated clothes that symbolise Christ's divine majesty. The bishop, the highest priestly rank with the authority of an administrator of a church province, wears priestly clothes, but also additional items that symbolise his authority, similar to those worn by royalty: a special headdress – mitre,[7] a bishop's crosier, special clothing items, etc. Deacons, subdeacons and altar servers wear their liturgical clothes, which are simpler than those of higher ranks. Each church has its own clothing style, and not only the forms and types of decorations do differ from each other, but also the level of decoration: from simple to luxurious vestments.[8]

In addition to the priests' liturgical attire, various other textiles, such as curtains and covers, often lavishly decorated, are used in the liturgy. There are also various ritual items used by priests and their assistants, such as lit candles, candleholders, censers, crosses, flags, canopies, umbrellas and large fans (ripidions, i.e. flabella).

In its kinetic dimension, the liturgy's performance structure is composed of various individual or collective movements and acts. They are mainly performed by clerics and altar servers. The congregation is intended to play a rather passive role, although there are certain simple motions in which they participate. In its essence, the liturgy is not dynamic. Many parts are slow and without any movements. The purpose of the performance slowness is to encourage meditation and contemplation. At the same time, the totality of the liturgical performance is impossible to imagine without music, that is, uninterrupted chanting of prayers. In the Tridentine Roman mass, there are also parts when there is complete silence, which further stimulates the devotion in silent prayer.

Liturgical motions include various signs of the cross and bowings, the priest's blessings in the form of a cross with a hand, a hand cross or a candle, raising of holy objects etc. Liturgical acts are often shaped as simple synchronised sets of gestures and movements. These include genuflections, shorter or deeper bows, kneeling, incensation, standing in longitudinal and horizontal lines, and shorter or longer processions in the form of lines, circles, squares, and rectangles.

Many acts in the traditional Roman Catholic mass and the Byzantine and Armenian liturgies somewhat resemble royal and military ceremonies. This is due to the fact that liturgies in the European Middle Ages were inspired by royal, military and other related rituals. In this context, strict ritualistic hierarchy among clerics and altar servers should be interpreted. Lower ranks must show respect to higher ranks, usually by kissing their hands,

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7 The bishop's mitre in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Armenian Church is in the form of a pointed arch. The mitre in the form of a crown is worn by the Byzantine, Coptic and Ethiopian bishops, as well as by the bishops in the Churches of the East. Bishops of the Syriac Orthodox Church of the Antiochian rite do not wear mitres but hoods.

8 Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, *Ecclesiastical Vestments: Their Development and History* (London: Elliot Stock, 1896), pp. 60-136, 175-191.

which is a reminiscent of European feudal etiquette.[9] The fact that the Alexandrian and Antiochian rites, the rite of the Churches of the East and the Ethiopian rite are less hierarchical indicates a different historical development of non-European ancient rites.

Holy Cities of Early Christianity

Through the dedicated work of missionaries, Christianity as a new religion reached most of the Mediterranean region and surrounding areas under the political administration of the Roman Empire shortly after Christ's earthly life. In the first three centuries, Christians were severely persecuted by the Roman Empire. However, in 313 Christianity was declared as the official religion in the Empire and the situation for Christians fundamentally changed.[10]

Three continents were known to the peoples of the Mediterranean in Antiquity: Europe, Asia and Africa. At the joint council of all Christian bishops in Nicaea in 325, it was determined that three large cities on different continents would be the seats of the patriarchs: Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. The patriarchs were primarily supposed to be the overseers of the existing dioceses on their continents and of missionary activities. The Pope of Rome was in charge of Europe (with the title of the Patriarch of the West), the Pope of Alexandria was given the title of the Patriarch of Africa, and the Patriarch of Antioch administered the church in Asia (with the title of the Patriarch of the East). In 330, the capital of the Roman Empire was transferred from Rome to Constantinople, and in 381, at the council in that city, it was decided that Constantinople, as New Rome, would also acquire the status of patriarchate. In 451, at the Council of Chalcedon, it was decided that Jerusalem would be added to the patriarchates. After that, the idea of pentarchy was established, i.e. the five patriarchates had the right to permanently rule the entire Christian world, mutually respecting the internal borders and changing them only by agreement.[11]

In the holy patriarchal cities of early Christianity, four rites developed with their own liturgies and liturgical chants: Roman, Byzantine, Alexandrian and Antiochian. The Jerusalem rite existed in Antiquity and partially in the Middle Ages, when it was replaced by other rites.[12]

The first four liturgies will be presented in the ancient order of the pentarchy cities: Roman, Constantinoplean (i.e. Byzantine), Alexandrian and Antiochian. The other three liturgies will be presented in chronological order: liturgy of the Churches of the East, Armenian and Ethiopian liturgy.

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9 Willem Frijhoff, "The Kiss Sacred and Profane: Reflections on a Cross-Cultural Confrontation", in Jan Nicolaas Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (eds.), *A Cultural History of Gesture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 212; Leslie Brubaker and Chris Wickham, "Processions, Power, and Community Identity: East and West", in Walter Pohl and Rutger Kramer (eds.), *Empires and Communities in the Post-Roman and Islamic World, c. 400-1000 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 123, p. 126 and p. 129.

10 William Hugh Clifford Frend, "Persecutions: Genesis and Legacy", in Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 1: Origins to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 503.

11 Manel Nin, "History of the Eastern Liturgies", p. 116.

12 John F. Baldovin, *Liturgy in Ancient Jerusalem* (Bramcote: Grove Books Limited, 1989), pp. 11-20.

Roman Tridentine Mass: Baroque Splendour of Medieval Mysticism

The Roman Catholic mass will be analysed in the basic form in which it was performed in the Latin language from late Antiquity until the 1960s. In the late Middle Ages, there were many variants of the handwritten and printed Roman Missals and many different types of Latin rites or masses throughout Western Europe. They had been continuously developing since Antiquity. In 1570, after the Council of Trent, Pope Pius V completely standardised the mass. From 1570 to 1969, for full four hundred years, the Roman mass remained virtually unchanged.[13]

In this article, the Tridentine mass is viewed as a form of continuity from the earliest Christianity until the 1960s. The new, reformed mass, created at the Second Vatican Council, preserved many elements of the old mass, mostly those regarding the text and performance structure. However, in some important aspects it broke the continuity with the old mass. The reformers tried to bring it closer to modern believers, as well as to renew some of the practices from the first centuries of Christianity.[14] That is why in the context of historical continuity, our focus will be only on the Tridentine mass.

The Tridentine mass was created at the peak of Counter-Reformation. It opposed Protestantism by preserving all the features of medieval mysticism and symbolism. After Pius's standardisation, the Tridentine mass was performed in the context of peculiar splendour of the lavish Baroque, while Protestantism favoured aesthetic minimalism and simplicity.[15]

In the past, as well as in the present, the Roman Catholic mass has been usually performed in churches that are exemplars of one or more canonical style periods in West European architecture, painting and sculpture, from Antiquity until today. Together with visual arts styles, the performance elements of the mass developed during centuries. At the same time, theological and artistic aspects were synchronised. Post Tridentine baroque vestments were influenced by Gothic and Renaissance styles, but the garments had different cut and were more elaborately decorated.[16]

The Tridentine mass standardisation occurred between the late Renaissance and early Baroque. The influences of previous times are evident in theological and artistic aspects. Visual elements are lavish, but the performance structure is rather simple. The mass is performed slowly and calmly, with the aim of creating an impression of magnificence. The atmosphere is mystical and symbolic. It is created by the stimuli of different senses. Beside

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13 Jörg Bölling, „Zur Erneuerung der Liturgie in Kurie und Kirche durch das Konzil von Trient (1545-1563): Konzeption – Diskussion – Realisation", *Analecta musicologica* 47 (2011), pp. 126.

14 William D. Dinges, "Ritual Conflict as Social Conflict: Liturgical Reform in the Roman Catholic Church", *Sociological Analysis* 48/2 (1987), pp. 141-142.

15 Keith F. Pecklers, "History of the Roman Liturgy from the Sixteenth until the Twentieth Centuries", in Anscar J. Chupungco (ed.), *Handbook For Liturgical Studies: Volume I: Introduction to the Liturgy* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997), pp. 161-163; Mike Tyldesley, "Signs of the Times", *Im@go: A Journal of the Social Imaginary* 11/20 (2022), pp. 38-40.

16 Michael S. Rose, *In Tiers of Glory: The Organic Development of Catholic Church Architecture Through the Ages* (Cincinnati: Mesa Folio Editions, 2004), pp. 23-98; Pauline Johnstone, *High Fashion in the Church: The Place of Church Vestments in the History of Art from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (Leeds: Maney, 2002), pp. 85-112.

a dimmed candlelight of wax candles and oil lamps, while inhaling the scent of burnt wax, or incense in festive occasions, the faithful watch the rhythm of changes between static and dynamic parts of the mass. They also take part in congregational standing, sitting or kneeling, depending on the character of a certain mass part. As in other ancient liturgies, the priest is facing the altar, i.e. east (*ad orientem*) while the faithful watch his back. Rather static sections, in which the priest sings or prays quietly in front of the altar, are interrupted by simple synchronised movements of clerics and altar servers.[17]

In terms of acoustics, loud organ playing and/or singing of medieval monophonic Gregorian chants or later polyphonic artistic compositions are exchanged with moments of complete silence.[18]

From the contemporary reformed mass perspective, the Tridentine mass is long, monotonous because of specific static performance, incomprehensible because it is held in Latin and archaic in terms of music. These characteristics make it similar to Eastern liturgies. Today, the post-Vatican II mass dominates in the Roman Catholic world. However, the Tridentine mass is still performed in various communities scattered around the world, because the movement for its renewal was successful, especially after the 1990s.[19]

Byzantine Divine Liturgy: Heaven Has Come Down to Earth

The Byzantine liturgy will be considered in its standard form, as performed by all Eastern Orthodox churches. The liturgy arose from the Antiochian rite and the defunct Cappadocian rite. It was given its basic form by St. Basil, the bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia in the 4th century, and St. John Chrysostom, the Patriarch of Constantinople in the 5th century.

The Byzantine liturgy is the most performed ancient extant liturgy in the world. The elaborate performance structure of the liturgy arose from the patriarchal cathedral of the Great Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. It was directly inspired by the ceremonies at the nearby court of the Byzantine emperor. The final shaping of the Byzantine liturgy was mostly completed during the 12th century.[20] From the 16th to the 20th century, the performance of the liturgy in the Russian Empire was aesthetically modified under Western European influences, primarily the influences of feudal and military ceremonies, theatre, and especially art music, and to a lesser degree even the Tridentine mass. This had a chain effect on all liturgies of Eastern Orthodox churches in the Balkans,

17 Michael Fiedrowicz, *The Traditional Mass: History, Form, & Theology of the Classical Roman Rite*, pp. 46-47, p. 56, p. 59, pp. 200-230.

18 Peter Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the Study of Gregorian Chant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 69-86.

19 Dennis M. Doyle, "The Traditional Latin Mass Movement and the Unity of the Church", *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 72 (2021), pp. 350-355, pp. 362-366; Nathaniel Marx, *Ritual in the age of authenticity: An ethnography of Latin Mass Catholics* (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2013), pp. 29-73.

20 Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 18-20, pp. 77-83.

the Caucasus and the Middle East, as well as on the Armenian liturgy.[21] Today, the Byzantine liturgy's performance structure is largely standardised. Still, there are slight differences in liturgical practices among various autocephalous churches.[22]

Theological postulates from which the Byzantine liturgy originates are, in many aspects, similar to other ancient liturgies. The Byzantine liturgy is interpreted as a heavenly, cosmic worship, an act that transcends time and the world. In it, the kingdom of heaven descends to earth. The kingdom of heaven is inhabited by God, angels, saints and the souls of the righteous, who will welcome the faithful after their death. This is why the entire liturgy is imbued with ritual symbolism. And the interior of the church building is understood as the cosmos. The hierarchised kingdom of heaven is frescoed on its vaults and walls, and painted on the high altar partition – the iconostasis. The divine grace pours upon the faithful from various directions.[23]

The long liturgy's performance is completely integrated into the architectural-iconographical ambience of the church. It is made up of many ritual movements and acts. For example, it consists of shorter or deeper head bows, frequent making the sign of the cross, blessings by priests and kissing hands of higher rank priests. Processions imply synchronised walking in lines, circles, squares and rectangles. They include incensation and ringing of small bells on censers, carrying candles, ripidions and other ritual items. The faithful often light candles in designated places, in the church's nave or narthex.[24] Expensive liturgical clothing has a special form and decorations. The bishop's mitre resembles the Byzantine imperial crown.[25]

Chanting according to the Octoechos, that is the musical system which consists of eight modes, is in complete harmony with the mystical character of the liturgy. Although the performance structure of the liturgy differs only slightly in various autocephalous churches in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Caucasus, and in the diasporas, the chants in these churches are significantly different.[26] Byzantine chanting in Koine Greek has been preserved in a continuous form from the Middle Ages until today in autocephalous churches with Greek ethnic population (Churches of Greece, Cyprus, Constantinople and Alexandria). It is usually called Neo-Byzantine chant.[27]

Unlike Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy has a long and rich tradition of translating liturgy from Greek into vernaculars. In their missionary work, the Byzantines allowed the Georgians and the Slavs in the first millennium, and later the Arabs

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21 Georgij Krylov, "Izgnat' barokko iz bogosluzhenija", *Bogoslov.Ru: Nauchnyj bogoslovskij portal* (Sergiev Posad: Bogoslov.Ru, 2016), https://bogoslov.ru/article/4797445 (accessed 11 November 2023).

22 Vasilij Krivoshein, *Istochnik: Bogoslovskie trudy: Arhiepiskop Vasilij (Krivoshein)*, edited by Aleksandr Musin (Nizhnij Novgorod: Hristianskaja biblioteka, 2011), pp. 644-661.

23 Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History*, pp. 36-38, pp. 67-75.

24 Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Welcoming Finitude: Toward a Phenomenology of Orthodox Liturgy* (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2019), pp. 80-145.

25 Krista M. West, *The Garment of Salvation: Orthodox Christian Liturgical Vesture* (Yonkers: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2013), pp. 85-139.

26 Christian Hannick, *Orthodoxe Kirchenmusik: I: Einleitung: MGG Online*, www.mgg-online.com/article?i=mgg15860&v=1.2&rs=mgg15860 (accessed 10 December 2023).

27 Tore Tvarnø Lind, *The Past Is Always Present: The Revival of the Byzantine Musical Tradition at Mount Athos* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012), pp. 5-7, pp. 204-206.

(Patriarchate of Antioch) and Romanians in the early modern period to use their own languages. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the Byzantine liturgy has been translated and performed in other vernaculars around the world. However, ancient liturgical languages are still widely used, such as Koine Greek and Old Slavonic.[28]

The Fate of Alexandria and Antioch

To understand the Alexandrian and Antiochian liturgies, it is crucial to take into account the schism that arose at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The assembled bishops of the Christian world of the time had a major disagreement in interpreting theological doctrine. The Diophysites believed that Christ was one person with two separate natures: divine and human, while the Miaphysites (still derogatorily called 'Monophysites') believed that Christ had only one nature that contained divine and human features. The emperors accepted Diophysitism as the state religious doctrine, and proclaimed the the Miaphysits as heretics.[29]

Since Miaphysite churches, today the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Syriac Orthodox Church, have continuously kept the ancient Alexandrian rite (in the Coptic language) and Antiochian rite (in the Aramaic language), we will present their extant liturgies. Therefore, we will not discuss the standard Byzantine liturgies in contemporary Eastern Orthodox (Diophysite) Patriarchates, Alexandrian and Antiochian.

Alexandrian Coptic Liturgy: Voices of Descendants of Pharaoh's Subjects

In the territory of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, in Egypt, the majority of the local population were the Copts. Their Coptic language is a direct successor of the ancient Egyptian language. The Copts mostly accepted Miaphysitism, while Diophysitism was accepted by the population in the cities: Greeks, other peoples settled in the cities and a small number of the Copts. Consequently, there coexisted two patriarchs: the Miaphysite and the Diophysite one. For the Copts, Miaphysitism was partly an expression of resistance to the hegemonic policy of the Byzantine Empire. The Copts used Coptic as the liturgical language, and the Greeks used the Greek language. Due to the weakening of the Diophysite Patriarchate of Alexandria, especially as a result of the Arab and Crusader conquests, the remaining small community of that patriarchate permanently switched from the Alexandrian rite to the Byzantine one by the end of the 12th century.[30]

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28 Bert Groen, "Liturgical Language and Vernacular Tongues in Eastern Christianity", in Paul Van Geest, Marcel Poorthuis, Els Rose (eds.), *Sanctifying Texts, Transforming Rituals: Encounters in Liturgical Studies* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2017), pp. 412-417.

29 Wolf Liebeschuetz, "Theological and Political Aspects of the Council of Chalcedon", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 36 (2017), p. 108, pp. 114-120.

30 Paola Buzi, *La Chiesa copta: Egitto e Nubia: Con una breve Appendice sull'Etiopia* (Bologna: Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 2014), pp. 18-42.

Coptic churches have specific architecture and iconography.[31] Liturgical clothing is relatively simple. The basic colour worn by all liturgy performers is white, and decorative clothing items in other colours are added to it. Priests wear small mitres similar to those of the Roman bishops, with short veils behind, while bishops wear specific turbans or Byzantine mitres. In the past, during the liturgy, bishops covered their heads only with thin white scarves.[32]

The Alexandrian Coptic liturgy is noted for its length. It is performed at a slow pace, and its focus is on contemplation. The faithful are very dedicated to listening to long sung prayers. The performance structure of the liturgy is less dynamic than the Roman, Byzantine, Antiochian and Armenian ones. It mostly takes place in the altar.[33] The Coptic liturgy is most recognisable for its unique rhythmic chanting accompanied by cymbals and triangles.[34] The basic language of the liturgy is Coptic (the so-called Bohairic, the successor of ancient Egyptian), but today the liturgy is performed bilingually, in Coptic and in Arabic. Due to the rootedness of the Coptic rite in Christianity of ancient Hellenistic Alexandria, many important liturgical phrases and formulas in the Coptic liturgy are still performed in the Greek language.[35]

Antiochian Syriac Liturgy: Living Heritage of the Former Patriarchopolis

In the territory of the Patriarchate of Antioch, the situation was very similar to that in the Patriarchate of Alexandria. The conflict between Diophysites and Miaphysites was not only theological, but also ethnolinguistic. The Miaphysite patriarch was expelled from Antioch in 518 and since then he has lived in various cities and monasteries.[36] Part of the natives who spoke Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ, by joining Miaphysitism expressed the desire for autonomy and independence from the Eastern Roman Empire, i.e. the Byzantine Empire. They preserved the Aramaic language until today.[37] On the other hand, Aramaic speakers who were loyal to Diaphysitism during the late Middle Ages almost completely

31 Pierre du Bourguet, "Art and Architecture", in Aziz Suryal Atiya (ed.), *Coptic Encyclopedia I: Abad-Azar* (New York: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 261-278.

32 Archbishop Basilios, "Liturgical Vestments", in Aziz Suryal Atiya (ed.), *Coptic Encyclopedia V: John-Mufa* (New York: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 1475a-1479a.

33 Athanasius Iskander, *Understanding the Liturgy: A Series of Articles Published in "Parousia": September 1993 – March 1997* (Kitchener: St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church, 2001), pp. 104-119.

34 Nicholas Joseph Ragheb, *The Transmission of Coptic Orthodox Liturgical Music: Historical and Contemporary Forms of Theorization, Translation, and Identity Construction* (PhD diss., University of California Santa Barbara, 2019), pp. 256-259.

35 Nicholas Ragheb, "Coptic Ethnoracial Identity and Liturgical Language Use", in Omotayo O. Banjo and Kesha Morant Williams (eds.), *Contemporary Christian Culture: Messages, Missions, and Dilemmas* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), p. 154.

36 Christine Chaillot, *The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East: A Brief Introduction to Its Life and Spirituality* (Geneva: Inter-Orthodox Dialogue, 1998), pp. 12-23, pp. 25-28.

37 Arietta Papaconstantinou, "Why did Coptic fail where Aramaic succeeded? Linguistic developments in Egypt and the Near East after the Arab conquest", in Alex Mullen and Patrick James (eds.), *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 60-66.

switched to the Arabic language in everyday use, and in terms of rite they switched to the Byzantine liturgy.[38]

Aramean Miaphysites, the members of today's Syriac Orthodox Church, at the beginning of the 20th century lived mostly in the area of the present-day southeastern Turkey, with the centre in the area of Tur Abdin, and in northwestern Iraq and northern Syria. During the First World War they experienced large massacres by Turkish-Kurdish military units. Today, Aramean Miaphysites mostly live in the diaspora.[39] Their liturgy is performed in Aramaic, and sometimes in Arabic.[40]

The temples of the Miaphysite Syriac Orthodox Church are usually simple buildings with specific sanctuaries. The altar is placed in a niche. Its rich decoration is mainly inspired by unique ornaments in the oldest monasteries in the Tur Abdin area.[41] A decorated cross usually stands out on the altar. Liturgical vestments have particular forms and decorations. The episcopal clothing is rather distinctive. The bishop does not wear a mitre, but a hood and a large bishop's crosier. The Syriac liturgy has a developed performance structure. In the sanctuary next to the priest on both sides are the deacons' and subdeacons' choirs. The basic set of synchronised movements is simple. While the priest celebrates liturgy in the altar niche, a deacon stands in the middle and constantly incenses the sanctuary. Two altar servers stand to the side and hold ripidions with small bells. When the solemn parts of the service begin, the deacon swings the censer which causes stronger ringing, and the bearers of the ripidions lower them towards the priest and swing them, so they ring, too. These motions produce a specific effect, both visual and auditory.[42] In its singing style, based on the ancient Octoechos (*Beth Gazo*), the sound of the Syriac liturgy is closest to the Middle Eastern modal system of maqam.[43]

In order to provide a wider historical context of the development of contemporary communities originating from the Antiochian rite in the first millenium, we will briefly mention three Diophysite communities. These include the members of today's Antiochian Greek Orthodox Church, the members of the Melchite Greek Catholic Church and the members of the Maronite Catholic Church. We will not describe their liturgies.

Antiochian Diophysites, that is Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Catholics, live mostly in Syria and Lebanon. From the 10th until the 12th century, the old Antiochian rite was

38 Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "Between Hellenism and Arabicization: On the Formation of an Ethnolinguistic Identity of the Melkite Communities in the Heart of Muslim Rule", *Al-Qanṭara* 33/2 (2012), pp. 463-465.

39 Christine Chaillot, *The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East: A Brief Introduction to Its Life and Spirituality*, pp. 23-25, pp. 29-76.

40 Sarah Bakker Kellogg, "Ritual sounds, political echoes: Vocal agency and the sensory cultures of secularism in the Dutch Syriac diaspora", *American Ethnologist* 42/3 (2015), pp. 431-432.

41 Elif Keser-Kayaalp, "Églises et monastères du Ṭur ʿAbdin: Les débuts d'une architecture 'syriaque'," in Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet (ed.), *Les églises en monde syriaque* (Paris: Geuthner, 2013), pp. 272-286.

42 Ishaq Saka, *Commentary on the Liturgy of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2008), pp. 31-45.

43 Maher Farkouh, *Die Madroshe der westsyrischen Kirche: Eine analytische und vergleichende Studie* (PhD diss., Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock, 2019), pp. 199-201.

gradually being replaced by the Byzantine rite, which has been performed continuously since the 13th century.[44]

Maronites are a separate Christian community residing mostly in Lebanon. Their liturgy fundamentally derived from the ancient Antiochian rite. At the turn of the 12th century, they formed a union with the Roman Catholic Church, which was further strengthened in the 16th century. In the late Middle Ages, they started using the Arabic language, which replaced their original Aramaic language. The intense Latinisation of their Antiochian rite began in the late 16th century.[45]

Early Christian Missionary Work

In addition to the four patriarchal rites described in the previous section, a separate rite of the Church of the East also originates from the era of early Christianity, as well as two rites which were shaped by the missionary work of the Patriarchates of Antioch and Alexandria – the Armenian and Ethiopian rites.

Aramaic Liturgy of the Church of the East: The Simple Ancientness

The Church of the East was created in 410 as the church of the Persian Empire. At the general Christian Council in Ephesus in 431, the doctrine of the Constantinoplean Patriarch Nestorius was condemned as heretical. He claimed that Christ's mother Mary should not be called the Mother of God (*Theotokos*) because it is impossible for a human being to give birth to God. He also endorsed the idea of radical Diophysitism, i.e. Christ's two completely separate natures: divine and human. Many of Nestorius's supporters took refuge in Persia, where they established Nestorius's doctrine as official with the local clergy.[46] Due to a disagreement over calendars, in 1964 the Church of the East was divided into two churches: the Assyrian Church of the East, which uses the Gregorian calendar, and the Ancient Church of the East, with less followers, which uses the Julian calendar. Both churches have three liturgical patterns, the central one being the liturgy of Addai and Mari, one of the oldest liturgies in general. The Churches of the East have survived until today in the area of northwestern Iraq and the western part of Iran. Like their Miaphysite

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44 Christoph Leonhardt, "The Greek- and the Syriac-Orthodox Patriarchates of Antioch in the Context of the Syrian Conflict", *Chronos: Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand* 33 (2016), pp. 22-25; Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "Between Hellenism and Arabicization: On the Formation of an Ethnolinguistic Identity of the Melkite Communities in the Heart of Muslim Rule," pp. 445-453.

45 Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2005), pp. 14-15, pp. 85-86, pp. 195-196, pp. 220-221, pp. 267-280; Shafiq Abouzayd, "The Maronite Church", in Daniel King (ed.), *The Syriac World* (London-New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 731-734, pp. 737-738.

46 Because of this, the followers of the Churches of the East are pejoratively called 'Nestorians' to this day. Unfortunately, so far, nobody came up with an adequate, neutral theological term to replace this offensive one.

neighbours, the adherents of the Churches of the East suffered in the 1910s at the hands of Turkish and Kurdish army.[47]

The liturgy of the Churches of the East is overall simple compared with other liturgies discussed here. This is due to the long-term isolation of the Church of the East and its reduced communication with other Christians. In the Church of the East, the architecture, the interior of the church and the liturgical clothing are also simple, similar to many Protestant churches.[48] Only the cross stands out on the altar. Today, the bishops of the Ancient Church of the East occasionally wear the replica of the ancient Mesopotamian "pagan" crown as an identity symbol. Compared to other liturgies, the liturgy of the Church of the East has the fewest liturgical motions and acts. Its text is relatively short compared to most ancient extant liturgies.[49] The liturgy is still mainly performed in Aramaic. In the sanctuary, deacons' and subdeacons' choirs stand on both sides. Their singing is performed partly solo, partly antiphonally in two groups. Most believers, men and women, know the ancient liturgical chants by heart. In certain parts of the liturgy, they sing them congregationally so that the whole church resounds with singing.[50]

The Catholic counterpart of the two autocephalous Churches of the East is the Chaldean Catholic Church. It was created in the 16th century by Catholic missionaries. It is the church with the largest number of adherents in northern Mesopotamia, mainly in Iraq, which inherited the rite of the Church of the East.[51] The rite and liturgy of this church are somewhat latinised, but the singing remained very similar to the singing in the autocephalous Churches of the East.[52]

Malabarians and Malankarians: Indian Acculturation of Two Aramaic Rites

The missionary activity of the Church of the East permanently took root outside of its original territory in the Middle East only in the South Indian state of Kerala. Christians there trace the origins of their church to the mythical story about the arrival of St. Thomas the Apostle in Kerala in 52 A. D. For that reason, Keralite Christians are also known as Saint Thomas Christians. From the 8th to the 16th centuries, they were members of the

47 Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London-New York: Routledge-Curzon, 2003), pp. 1-32, pp. 73-80, pp. 98-99, pp. 104-111, p. 118, pp. 135-157; Kristian Girling, *The Chaldean Catholic Church: A Study in Modern History, Ecclesiology and Church-State Relations (2003-2013)* (PhD diss., University of London Department of Theology Heythrop College, 2015), pp. 17-19.

48 Nicholas al-Jeloo, "Persian Christians: Assyrian Art and Architecture of Urmia as an Example of Regional Cultural Expression", *Parole de l'Orient* 40 (2015), pp. 18-20.

49 Stylianos Muksuris, *The anaphorae of the liturgy of Sts. Addai and Mari and the Byzantine liturgy of St. Basil the great: A comparative study* (Master of Letters Thesis, Durham University, 1999), pp. 19-34, p. 262.

50 Eve Georges Sada, *Assyrian – Syriac Chants: From the Liturgy of the Church of the East* (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma Graduate College, Norman, 2021), pp. 159-161.

51 Kristian Girling, *The Chaldean Catholic Church: A Study in Modern History, Ecclesiology and Church-State Relations (2003-2013)*, pp. 19-61, pp. 81-83.

52 Noëlle Zarifeh, *Le chant* de la šūḥlāpa *assyro-chaldéenne: Enregistrement, transcription et analyse des intonations de tradition orale* (PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Padova Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali, 2018), pp. 191-192.

Church of the East. In the 16th century, Portuguese colonisers tried to impose on them Latinisation of the old rite and to convert them to Roman Catholicism or Eastern Catholicism. This was met with resistance from some of the Saint Thomas Christians. Still, one group of the faithful formed the Malabar Catholic Church, which preserved the rite of the Church of the East, adapted it to Catholic dogmas and latinised it over the centuries. On the other hand, the faithful who opposed this church in mid-seventeenth century joined the Miaphysite Patriarchate of Antioch and accepted its Antiochian rite. The new autonomous church was referred to by different terms for centuries, among which the name Malankara Orthodox Church stands out. In 1912, it split into two churches: one autonomous church within the Syriac Orthodox Church (Jacobite Syriac Christian Church) and the other independent as an autocephalous patriarchate (Malankara Orthodox Syriac Church).[53]

In the analysis of the five rites discussed so far, we did not analyse different variants of the liturgies. However, with a brief analysis of the Malabar liturgy of the Churches of the East and the Malankara Syro-Antiochian liturgy we set a precedent, because these two liturgies represent the only prominent variants in the families of the Miaphysite Churches and the Churches of the East. As both geographically and culturally Kerala is very far from northern Mesopotamia, this is an additional criterion for presenting its Christian heritage and liturgies in this place.

Both liturgies, Malabar and Malankara, are immersed in South Indian interethnic and multireligious culture. This is manifested especially in architecture, painting and sculpture, for example in ornate altars, in the choice of liturgical colours and bishops' mitres, but also in paraliturgical ceremonies, singing and instrumental music.[54] The playing of instruments accompanies not only the choir's singing, but the priest's one, too, which is not practiced in other liturgies.[55] Until recently, both liturgies were performed in Aramaic, whereas now they are mostly performed in the regional language Malayalam.[56] The Syro-Malabar Eastern Catholic liturgy is deeply latinised and resembles the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic mass.[57] The Syro-Malankara liturgy is the same as the Syriac Orthodox liturgy in terms of text and performance. However, there are different liturgical and paraliturgical practices. For example, there are churches with three or five altars, and in exceptional cases three to five priests perform liturgies simultaneously.[58]

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53 Dietmar W. Winkler, "The Syriac Church Denominations: An Overview", in Daniel King (ed.), *The Syriac World* (London-New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 130-132; Przemysław Turek, "Syriac Heritage of the Saint Thomas Christians: Language and Liturgical Tradition", *Orientalia Christiana Cracoviensia* 3 (2011), pp. 115-119.

54 Barnet Alex Varghese, "The Churches of St Thomas Christians of Kerala", *Ahana: Peer-reviewed Bilingual Yearly on Visual Art and Culture* 7 (2021), pp. 44-47.

55 Joseph J. Palackal, *Syriac Chant Traditions in South India* (PhD diss., The City University of New York, 2005), pp. 93-133, pp. 178-182, pp. 214-218.

56 Przemysław Turek, "Syriac Heritage of the Saint Thomas Christians: Language and Liturgical Tradition," pp. 120-121.

57 Paul Pallath, *The Liturgical Heritage of the Syro Malabar Church: Shadows and Realities* (Changanacherry: HIRS Publications, 2019), pp. 18-20, pp. 129-191, pp. 213-227.

58 Joseph Pamplany, Thomas Kochukarottu, Joseph Kakkaramattathil, *Liturgical Theology* (Thalassery: Alpha Institute of Theology and Science, 2016), pp. 64-72.

In addition to Persia and India, two other missionary countries, Armenia and Ethiopia, developed separate rites starting from the late Antiquity.

Armenian Patarag: Heavenly Liturgy in the Caucasus

The Armenian Apostolic Church was the first national church in Christianity as the Kingdom of Armenia was the first independent country, outside the Roman Empire, that accepted Christianity as its official religion at the very beginning of the 4th century (probably in 300–301 A. D.). Miaphysitism, which arrived from Syria, was confirmed as Armenian official state doctrine in 506. Old Armenian (Classical Old Armenian, *Grabar*) is the liturgical language of the Armenian Apostolic Church.[59]
The Armenian rite developed under the influence of the Antiochian and Byzantine rites. It was partly influenced by the Roman rite in the Crusader period and by later missionary activities of Eastern Catholicism. The cities outside the Armenian lands that initially had impact on the creation of the Armenian liturgy were Edessa, Caesarea in Cappadocia and Jerusalem.[60] Much later, in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Armenian liturgy was influenced by the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church, which is evident primarily in high aesthetics of performance of synchronised movements and singing.[61] The altar shape and the bishop's mitre in the Armenian Church come from the Roman rite, while the priests wear crowns similar to those worn by Byzantine bishops. Liturgical vestments are distinctively designed (for example, they have high collars) and richly embroidered.[62] The liturgy is performed on an elevated platform similar to a stage. The ripidions ringing is identical to the practice in the Syriac Orthodox Church (described above).[63] The melodies of the Armenian Octoechos performed in liturgy are specific. They are sung in unison or, accompanied by the organ, in three-part or four-part arrangements.[64]

Ethiopian liturgy: The Splendour of the Oldest African Christianity

Christianity became the state religion in Ethiopia in 330. The Ethiopian Church accepted Miaphysitism from the Coptic Church, which ruled over the Ethiopian Church from the 4th

59 Simon Payaslian, *The History of Armenia: From the Origins to the Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 34-35, pp. 44-45, p. 118.

60 Robert F. Taft, "The Armenian 'Holy Sacrifice *(Surb Partarg)*' as a Mirror of Armenian Liturgical History", in Robert F. Taft (ed.), *The Armenian Christian Tradition: Scholarly Symposium: December 12, 1996* (Roma: Pontificio istituto orientale, 1997), p. 195.

61 Vladimir Sergeevich Blohin, "Voprosy vzaimootnoshenij Russkoj pravoslavnoj i Armjanskoj apostol'skoj cerkvej v otechestvennoj istoriografii: Tendencii, dostizhenija, problemy", *Istorija, arheologija i jetnografija Kavkaza* 19/2 (2023), pp. 395.

62 Michael Daniel Findikyan, "Armenian Liturgical Vestments", in Helen C. Evans (ed.), *Armenia: Art, religion, and trade in the Middle Ages* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2018), pp. 282-285.

63 Donald Attwater, "The Mass in the East: III: Armenian", *The Irish Monthly* 61/717 (1933), pp. 171.

64 Agota Bodurian and Stela Drăgulin, "Armenian Church Music: Genres, Modes, and Notation Issues", *Bulletin of the Transilvania University of Braşov* 13/2 (2020), pp. 35-46.

century until 1959, when the Ethiopian church was granted autocephaly.[65] However, in practice, this rule was symbolic, and the Ethiopian church enjoyed a high level of autonomy.[66]

The Ethiopian rite is related to the Coptic one, and they both derive from the same root – the ancient Alexandrian rite. However, the Ethiopian rite was formed almost entirely independently from the Coptic rite.[67]

The Ethiopian liturgy is very specific compared to all other liturgies discussed here. It fully expresses the features of traditional regional African Sub-Saharan culture. Ethiopian icon painting style[68] and church architecture are also unique. Liturgical clothing is distinguished by its form and choice of liturgical colours, which are often very vivid. Singers and dancers also wear colourful costumes. Like the Coptic bishops, the Ethiopian bishops wear distinctive turbans or Byzantine crowns on their heads. Priests and deacons wear special types of head coverings.[69] The performance of the very long Ethiopian liturgy is characterised by relaxed motions and the lack of strictly hierarchical roles of clerics and altar servers. Short processions are frequent. All the faithful cover their bodies with thin white cloth, while women cover their heads, too. Frequently, they perform prostrations and participate in congregational singing. The Ethiopian Church also uses specific ritual items, such as large processional richly decorated crosses and colourful umbrellas.[70]

Ethiopian liturgical singing is unique.[71] After the completion of the liturgy, on solemn occasions, the ritual *'aqwaqwam* is performed with drumming and the sound of sistrums[72] and prayer sticks. The basis of the ritual is a special slow dance by selected performers, which involves rhythmic swaying of the upper body while chanting. This ritual is the peak of Ethiopian uniqueness in the context of ancient extant liturgies. The ritual follows a

65 The Eritrean Church seceded from the Ethiopian Church after Eritrea gained independence in 1993. Due to contemporary situation, it would be correct to use the double name: "Ethiopian-Eritrean liturgy," but in light of the fact that the Eritrean church is much smaller than the Ethiopian one and that it separated from it recently, I will only use the term "Ethiopian liturgy". Stanislau Paulau, "Ecumenical Dialogue in the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church", in Pantelis Kalaitzidis (ed.), *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), pp. 600-601.

66 John Binns, *The Orthodox Church of Ethiopia: A History* (London-New York: I. B. Tauris 2017), pp. 39-60; Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 103-109.

67 Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, "Retrospect and Prospect", in Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (eds.), *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 1372.

68 Stanislaw Chojnacki, "Two Ethiopian Icons", *African Arts* 10/4 (1977), pp. 44-47.

69 Fabrizio Cammelli, *Paramenti d'Oriente: Le Chiese Ortodosse e Orientali e i loro paramenti* (Lecce: Youcanprint, 2021), pp. 194-200.

70 Tom Boylston, *The Shade of the Divine: Approaching the Sacred in an Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Community* (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012), pp. 127-131.

71 Kay Kaufman Shelemay and Peter Jeffery, *Ethiopian Christian Liturgical Chant: An Anthology: Volume One: General Introduction: Dictionaries of Notational Signs* (Madison: A–R Editions Inc., 1993), pp. 1-5.

72 It is an ancient manual metal percussion instrument of the rattle type.

solemn ceremonial procession led by priests with altar slabs (tabots)[73] on their heads, decorated with special long cloths of vivid colours.[74]

Despite all its peculiarities, the Ethiopian liturgy is a standard ancient extant liturgy in terms of text and performance and thus does not differ at all from other liturgies. It is the only Sub-Saharan Christian liturgy preserved from the earliest Christian centuries, which carries many original features of East African Ethiopian and Eritrean culture.

Eastern Catholicism and Western Orthodoxy

Eastern Catholic churches are autonomous churches "of its own right" (*sui iuris*) within the Catholic Church. The full communion of the Eastern Catholic churches with the Pope of Rome is represented by the recognition of the papal supremacy and equal mutual sacramental sharing, including mutual eucharistic communion.[75] From the 11th until the 15th century, Eastern Catholicism was mostly present in southern Italy, among the Byzantine rite congregations, as well as in Lebanon among the Maronites. From the 16th century until the mid-20th century, the Roman Catholic Church attempted to create unions with all eastern autocephalous churches gathered in three families (Eastern Orthodox churches, Oriental Orthodox churches and the Churches of the East).[76] All mentioned churches now have their catholic counterparts;[77] however, most of Eastern Catholic churches have significantly smaller congregations compared to their rival autocephalous churches.[78]

All eastern ancient extant liturgies discussed in this article are also performed within Eastern Catholic churches. However, Eastern Catholic liturgies are to a higher or lesser degree distanced from their autocephalous counterparts, mostly due to the long-term process of influence of the Roman Catholic rite on ancient Eastern Catholic traditions. This process of Latinisation is particularly evident in performative and visual aspects of

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73 In Ge'ez language, tabot literally means the Old Testament "Ark of the Covenant" of Moses. Ethiopian Miaphysites believe that this original tabot is kept in the city of Aksum. Each of the Ethiopian churches has at least one small copy of the original tabot, which is also called a tabot and is used as an altar slab. Haile Getatchew, "A History of the Tabot of Atronəsä Maryam in Amhara (Ethiopia)", *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde* 34 (1988), p. 13; Marilyn E. Heldman, "Architectural Symbolism, Sacred Geography and the Ethiopian Church", *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22/3 (1992), pp. 223-225.

74 Ol'ga Evgen'evna Maksimova, "Liturgicheskij tanec akvakvam v Jefiopskoj pravoslavnoj cerkvi", in Zoja Mihajlovna Dashevskaja (ed.), *Sretenskie chtenija: Materialy XXIV nauchno-bogoslovskoj konferencii studentov, aspirantov i molodyh specialistov (Moskva, 24 fevralja 2018 g.)*, (Moskva: Svjato-Filaretovskij pravoslavno-hristianskij institut, 2018), pp. 1-4.

75 Joan L. Roccasalvo, *The Eastern Catholic Churches: An Introduction to Their Worship and Spirituality* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 5-19.

76 Alberto Elli, *Breve storia delle Chiese cattoliche orientali* (Milano: Edizioni Terra Santa, 2017), pp. 15-26; Taras Khomych, "Eastern Catholic Churches and the Question of 'Uniatism'", *Louvain Studies* 31/3 (2006), pp. 217-219.

77 The only Eastern Catholic church without autocephalous counterpart is the Maronite Church.

78 The Chaldean Church and The Syro-Malabar Church have significantly more adherents than the autocephalous Churches of the East. Segreteria di Stato Vaticano, *The Eastern Catholic Churches 2016: Source: Annuario Pontificio*, https://cnewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2016-Statistics.pdf (accessed 20 December 2023).

liturgies.[79] It occurred in order to adapt these churches to Roman Catholicism in terms of theology, but also because both Roman Catholic and Eastern Catholic clergy aspired to mutual closeness and similar appearances. Since the Second Vatican Council some Eastern Catholic churches have gradually re-introduced liturgical practices from the past, but this does not happen often. Most of Eastern Catholics perceive the latinised aspects of their rites as specific features of their identity and heritage.[80]

Missionary work similar to the creation of Eastern Catholic churches, but substantially less intense, since the mid-19th century has existed in two autonomous Eastern Orthodox churches in North America, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. During the 19th and 20th centuries these churches attracted groups of disaffected Roman Catholics and Anglicans, allowing them to retain their own liturgies. This phenomenon is called Western Orthodoxy, and it has a relatively small number of followers. In both abovementioned Orthodox churches today, the Western Orthodox do not have the right to their own bishop, that is, autonomy, and their rites have been slightly modified according to the postulates of the Byzantine rite. The adapted Roman Tridentine mass is called the Liturgy of St. Gregory the Dialogist, while the adapted Anglican Mass is called the Liturgy of St. Tikhon.[81]

Conclusion

In this article, I presented various historical and ethnological aspects of seven ancient extant liturgies. Having roots in the same source and developing in different directions as the oldest and most specific rites of the Lord's Supper, these liturgies were originally formed in mutually distant parts of Asia, Africa and Europe. In general, they did not experience major external influences, nor did they undergo through radical reforms for centuries. Due to specific historical circumstances, each of them developed autonomously. Consequently, they differ from each other in terms of aesthetics and cultural significance. Still, the very essence of the rite and text in all these liturgies is the same. Today, they are present on the Internet, in live broadcasts and audio or audiovisual recordings. This way they are within reach of large audiences all over the world. In their two-thousand years long history, these seven liturgies constitute unique segments of the intangible and material heritage of humanity.

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79 Thus, the episcopal mitre, an identity symbol of a particular church, underwent certain changes. Byzantine Catholic bishops in Ukraine wear mitres of a special design compared to Eastern Orthodox bishops. The bishops of the Syriac Catholic Church and the Chaldean Catholic Church wear Roman-shaped mitres, while their autocephalous counterparts do not.

80 Taras Khomych, "Eastern Catholic Churches and the Question of 'Uniatism'", pp. 225-236.

81 Jack Turner, *Cum illi Graeci sint, nos Latini: Western Rite Orthodoxy and the Eastern Orthodox Church*, (PhD diss., University of Wales Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Lampeter, 2010), pp. 9-10, 55-71, 111-121.

Abstract: The author analyses comparatively seven ancient extant Christian liturgies: Roman Catholic Tridentine mass, Byzantine liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, four liturgies of the Oriental Orthodox Churches: Alexandrian-Coptic, Antiochian-Syriac, Armenian and Ethiopian, and finally the liturgy of the Churches of the East: Assyrian and Ancient. Furthermore, the author researches inculturation of Antiochian-Syriac liturgy and Churches of the East liturgy in South India, as well as liturgies in Eastern Catholicism and Western Orthodoxy. This study explores historical events that are crucial to understanding the origin and development of ancient liturgies, as well as major architecture, painting, drama and music aspects of liturgies from ethnological perspective.

Keywords: Liturgy; Catholicism; Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy; Church of the East.

Resumen: El autor analiza comparativamente siete liturgias cristianas antiguas existentes: la misa tridentina católica romana, la liturgia bizantina de las Iglesias ortodoxas orientales, cuatro liturgias de las Iglesias ortodoxas orientales: copta alejandrina, siriaca antioqueña, armenia y etíope y, finalmente, la liturgia de las iglesias de Oriente: asirio y antiguo. Además, el autor investiga la inculturación de la liturgia antioqueña-siríaca y la liturgia de las Iglesias del Este en el sur de la India, así como las liturgias del catolicismo oriental y la ortodoxia occidental. Este estudio explora eventos históricos que son cruciales para comprender el origen y desarrollo de las liturgias antiguas, así como los principales aspectos arquitectónicos, pictóricos, dramáticos y musicales de las liturgias desde una perspectiva etnológica.

Palabras clave: Liturgia; Catolicismo; Ortodoxia oriental y del este; Iglesia del Este.