

THE INSTITUTION NARRATIVE,  
EUCCHARISTIC PRAYERS  
AND THE  
ANGLICAN LITURGICAL TRADITION.

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The attachment of Anglicans to the words of institution as being in some sense consecratory, and essential to the main prayer of the eucharist may or may not reflect sound theological sense, but it certainly betrays our decidedly late Western medieval origins. The eucharistic rites of the successive Books of Common Prayer had as their ultimate paradigm the single canon missae of the Western medieval Church. That prayer is certainly an "anaphora", but "eucharistic" is not a term which would readily suggest itself from its overall content. Apart from the proper prefaces, there is practically no thanksgiving at all; rather, the canon missae is almost entirely supplicatory in nature, and the words of institution are contained within the general supplicatory thrust of the whole prayer - asking for the elements to be the body and blood of Christ, asking God to accept the oblation, and offering for the communicants, for the living and the departed.<sup>1</sup> Cranmer retained this supplicatory emphasis in his recasting of the canon in 1549, though catholic doctrine was transposed into a protestant key.<sup>2</sup> The 1552 rite simply separated and repositioned the supplicatory material (later known as "The Church Militant", the Prayer of Consecration, and "Prayer of Oblation") and changed some ambiguous phraseology. Thanksgiving

was confined to the proper prefaces and sanctus, and the post communion thanksgiving.

Although Western concern with the words of institution can be seen in Cyprian and Ambrose, it was the medieval theologians who were preoccupied with precise definitions, and isolated the words of institution as the "form" of the sacrament.<sup>3</sup> As Edward Ratcliff illustrated some years ago, Anglican reformation divines rejected the catholic claims of the effect of the recitation of the words, but they agreed on the usage, and retained the words of institution as being proper for consecration.<sup>4</sup> Cranmer avoided the term "consecration", but John Jewel had no such hesitation, and in refuting Thomas Harding and Bishop Scot, he seems to have established the Anglican idea that the narrative is essential for a valid eucharist. This was reinforced first by Canon XXI in 1603, which as Richard Buxton has shown, made Anglican usage unique;<sup>5</sup> and also by the heading in the rubric of 1661, "the Prayer of Consecration". One might be tempted to conclude that the superstition with regard to "magic" words which the reformers so deplored made a rather unexpected re-entry through the<sup>6</sup> Anglican "usage" door - as Robert Johnson was to find in 1573.

Since the advent of Series 2, Series 3 and the ASB, the Church of England has had "Eucharistic Prayers" - that is, prayers recited over the bread and wine which contain a great deal of thanksgiving as well as supplicatory material, moulded as one continuous prayer in a form comparable with the classic anaphoras which emerged towards the end of the fourth and at the beginning of the fifth centuries. The four eucharistic prayers of Rite A in the ASB, however, all show a distinct bias towards the Western concern with the institution narrative. All four prayers have the same form of institution narrative (suggesting some fixed, invariable form), which although not as embroidered as in some Eastern anaphoras, is nevertheless a composite form of some length. Furthermore, in all four prayers the narrative is within a supplicatory context, the post-sanctus being used as the transition from praise to supplication.

The fourth eucharistic prayer of Rite A was based on

the Prayer Book material. However, the first and second prayers stem from Series 3 and 2, which, in turn were inspired by the anaphora of Apostolic Tradition.<sup>7</sup> The third prayer was inspired directly by this source.<sup>8</sup> In the 1960's (and the ASB was the fruition of work put in hand in the 1960's) the Apostolic Tradition contains an anaphora of the pattern which a bishop might author at his own ordination; it does not purport to be the type of anaphora recited every Sunday. It is our earliest undisputed reference to the institution narrative within an anaphora. Louis Ligier suggested that the narrative entered the anaphora as an embolism or proper preface, on analogy with the embolisms for Purim and Hannukah which are<sup>9</sup> inserted in the Jewish meal berakot, the birkat ha-mazon. Indeed, since at that time only bishops could preside at the eucharist, the narrative would be an appropriate proper preface at an ordination eucharist, authenticating one of the main functions of the new bishop. However, in the Apostolic Tradition the narrative is an extension of the thanksgiving, anchoring the Last Supper and the command to repeat the rite within salvation history; only in the anamnesis does the prayer turn to supplication. This is true of the function of the narrative in all the Syro-Byzantine anaphoras, and is therefore quite different from the Egyptian, Roman, and Anglican supplicatory/consecratory usage.

Anglicanism has always emphasised its appeal to the traditions of the first four centuries. This appeal has interesting implications regarding eucharistic prayers and the institution narrative. As has been noted, however it got there, the narrative in Apostolic Tradition has a different use or setting to the historic Anglican and present ASB usage. Recent scholarship has emphasized the fact that other early eucharistic prayers appear not to have had an institution narrative; Apostolic Tradition was but one of a great variety of patterns.<sup>10</sup>

Despite R J Halliburton's attempt to reassure the Church of England, that Addai and Mari did contain an institution narrative,<sup>11</sup> the overwhelming consensus of scholars are agreed that the East Syrian prayer did not.<sup>12</sup> Thus the Roman Catholic liturgist, Enrico Mazza writes:

*Whatever theories historians may elaborate, there is no disputing that an entire Church - the Chaldean or East Syrian - has lived for centuries with an anaphora of that archaic type which does not contain an account of institution but simply refers to the institution; we mean the Chaldean Anaphora of Addai and Mari. Furthermore, no one wants to or can deny the validity of the Eucharist that has been celebrated for centuries in the Chaldean Church.*<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting that the Portuguese Catholics attempted to persuade the Syro-Malabar Church to insert a narrative in this ancient anaphora, as did the Archbishop of Canterbury's Urmiah Mission to the East Syrians !

Dr Halliburton wrote before the work of GJ Cuming, WH Bates and H Wegman on Strasbourg Papyrus 254 had been completed.<sup>14</sup> These scholars (two Anglican and a Roman Catholic !) have argued that far from being a fragment of the anaphora of St Mark, the Strasbourg Papyrus is a very early version of the Egyptian eucharistic prayer. It contained no institution narrative, but instead quotes Malachi 1:11 as the rationale for the eucharist. It seems that the usage of Jerusalem also lacked an institution narrative in its anaphora at one time. The sermon of Eusebius of Caesarea and the Mystagogical Lectures of Cyril witness to a two-part anaphora without an institution narrative. Various scholars in the past have suggested that Cyril alludes to one, had already discussed it elsewhere, or omits mention of it for reasons of secrecy. However, the examination of the Eikon-Mimesis concern or Cyril by E Cutrone has laid to rest these older apologetics.<sup>15</sup> The recent doctoral thesis by John Fenwick suggests that Jerusalem had no narrative of institution until the end of the fourth century, when it was borrowed from St Basil.<sup>16</sup> And most recently Enrico Mazza has argued that the eucharistic prayer of Mopsuestia upon which Theodore commented had, like Addai and Mari, only a brief reference to the institution.<sup>17</sup> The emerging picture of the eucharistic prayer up to the fourth century, at least with regard to the institution narrative, seems to be as follows:

- some eucharistic prayers without a narrative.
- some eucharistic prayers with a brief reference to the institution.
- some prayers which quoted the narrative as part of the thanksgiving.
- some prayers (eg. Ambrose) which quoted a narrative in a supplicatory/consecratory context.

Unless Anglicanism is suddenly going to ignore scholarship and reason, this variety of usages - and their apparent validity - must be acknowledged.

When liturgists turn to the early centuries, they are often accused of "patristic fundamentalism", and are seen as advocating a return to some imaginary ideal past. It is important to state that no such return is possible or hinted at here. However, the early traditions can often help us to escape an unnecessary Anglican fundamentalism which is as unhelpful as patristic fundamentalism. The variety of usages in the early centuries may well be helpful in an ecumenical context, as well as in the compilation of forms of worship for the future Church. Lutherans and Reformed Churches have usages which although distinctly their own, can find support in these early precedents. In mainstream Lutheranism, until recently, the narrative was regarded as essential to the eucharistic celebration, but was not enclosed by any prayer. It was recited or sung separately as a proclamation of the Gospel, the Word proclaimed effecting what it promised. In recent liturgical revision some Lutherans have felt under pressure to use eucharistic prayers of the classical shape with the narrative enclosed within the prayer. Yet, if we look back to the sources prior to the fifth century, there seems no reason why the narrative should not remain separate.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the Reformed tradition usually has the narrative before the eucharistic prayer, and/or after it at the fraction; such prayers, although not containing the narrative, are very rich in euchology and eucharistic theology.

The question posed for the Church of England is whether or not its historic usage is to be elevated as the essential and only proper expression of its eucharistic theology, or

whether in recognition of the more ancient past, and the present usage in other communions, it can allow and even encourage more flexibility? Some Anglican Provinces - eg. Canada - already have eucharistic prayers which adopt the Syro-Byzantine use of the narrative, as an extension of thanksgiving, and making use of an *epiklesis*. This shift is to be welcomed, since it admits to a variety of patterns and usages. However, can Anglicanism go further, and use eucharistic prayers which have only a brief reference to the institution, or even prayers which pass over it altogether? Jewel appealed to St. Augustine - Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum.<sup>19</sup> Providing a narrative was recited at some point near the administration of communion, as for example in the Reformed usage, this would surely satisfy historic Anglicanism, the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, and the most ardent Tridentinist?

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- 2 The older assertion that 1549 adopts an Eastern epiklesis can no longer be sustained. FE Brightman, "The New Prayer Book Examined", Church Quarterly Review 104(1927), 219-52; EC Ratcliff, note <sup>4</sup> below; my essay ' "And with thy holy spirite and worde": Further thoughts on the source of Cranmer's petition for sanctification in the 1549 Communion Service', forthcoming in the essays to commemorate the birth of Thomas Cranmer.
- 3 For the background, Gary Macy, The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period, Oxford 1984.

- 4 EC Ratcliff, "The English Usage of Eucharistic Consecration 1548-1662", Theology 60 (1957) 229-236;273-280.
- 5 Richard F Buxton, Eucharist and Institution Narrative, Alcuin Club Collection 58, Great Wakering 1976.
- 6 A parte of a register 1593, and outlined by Ratcliff, art.cit. Johnson ran out of wine, and sent for a new supply, and simply continued with the administration. The Court decided he should have repeated the appropriate words of institution, and imprisoned him.
- 7 RCD Jasper and PF Bradshaw, A Companion to the Alternative Service Book, London 1986, p230; CO Buchanan, The Development of the New Eucharistic Prayers of the Church of England, Grove Liturgical Study 20, Bramcote 1979. RT Beckwith and JE Tiller, The Service of Holy Communion and its Revision, Abingdon 1972.
- 8 Jasper and Bradshaw, note <sup>7</sup>, p230.
- 9 L Ligier, "The Origins of the Eucharistic Prayer : From the Last Supper to the Eucharist", Studia Liturgica 9 (1973), 176-85.
- 10 A Boulet, From Freedom to Formula, Washington 1981; Bryan D Spinks, "Beware the Liturgical Horses ! An English Interjection on Anaphoral Evolution" Worship 59 (1985) 211-19; With Angels and Archangels, D.D. Thesis, University of Durham 1988, Chapter 6.
- 11 RCD Jasper, The Eucharist Today, London 1974, p108
- 12 Bryan D Spinks, Addai and Mari - The Anaphora of the Apostles: A Text for Students, Grove Liturgical Study 24, Bramcote 1980.
- 13 E Mazza, The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite, New York 1986, p258

- 14 GJ Cuming, "The Anaphora of St Mark: A Study in Development", Le Museon 95 (1982) 115-29; WH Bates, "Thanksgiving and Intercession in the Liturgy of St Mark" in ed. Bryan D Spinks, The Sacrifice of Praise, Rome 1981, 107-19; HAJ Wegman, "Une anaphore incomplete ?" in R Van Den Broek and MJ Vermaseren, Studies in Gnostic and Hellenistic Religions, Leiden 1981, 432-50.
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- 16 JRK Fenwick, "An investigation into the Common origin of the Anaphora of the Liturgies of St Basil and st James", Ph.D. Thesis, London University 1985.
- 17 E Mazza, "La Struttura dell'anafora nelle Catechesi di Teodoro di Mopsuerstia", Ephemerides Liturgicae 102 (1988) 147-83.
- 18 "Berekah, Anaphoral Theory and Luther", forthcoming in the Lutheran Quarterly, autumn 1989.
- 19 Augustine, In Joannis Evang.Tract., LXXX.3.

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