

The Benedictio Olei in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus

by

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The prayer over the oil in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, chapter V in the edition of G. Dix, is preserved in two texts only, the Latin and the Ethiopic versions.

The Latin text of the Verona-fragments, written about 500 A.D. does according to Dix go back to a translation from the time of St. Ambrose or somewhat later which was founded on a Greek text of a type current in Syria¹.

G. Horner published and translated the Ethiopic and the Arabic versions and published a translation of the Coptic versions of this Church Ordinance². Dix tried to show that the Ethiopic text was a translation of a lost Arabic one, which via a Sahidic version, lost as well, was derived from a Greek text³.

These two witnesses were regarded as sufficient to prove that this prayer really did belong to the "original" Apostolic Tradition.

In the Latin version there is also in Chapter VI blessings of cheese and olives, the last of which reads as follows: *Fac a tua dulcitudine non recedere fructum etiam hunc oliuae qui est exemplum tuae pinguidinis, quam de ligno fluisti in uitam eis, qui sperant in te*⁴.

When studying the liturgical heritage of the Church one easily finds, that there are a number of prayers which are at least very similar to that of the Apostolic Tradition. Dix himself has observed a relation between the prayer of the Apostolic Tradition and the benedictio olei of Maundy Thursday in the Gelasian Sacramentary and mentions that the prayer in the present Roman Pontifical is but a verbal modification of the Gelasian text⁵.

The text referred to by Dix recurs also in the Gregorian Sacramentary and the two texts are closely related.

There are, however, quite a number of other texts which no doubt belong to the same tradition, but it seems as if no scholar had observed it in its entirety.

¹ G. Dix, *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome* (London 1937) LIII sqq.

² *The Statutes of the Apostles* (London 1904).

³ Op. cit. LXV.

⁴ Op. cit. 10 sq.

⁵ Op. cit. XXXIX note. He also says: "In both cases my own feeling is that the Sacramentaries have not borrowed from Hippolytus, but that he and they independently reproduce the same enduring liturgical tradition".

Cf. his early essay *The Blessing of the holy Oils* = *Laudate XIV* nr. 56 (1936) 231-40, esp. 234 n. 1.

It is therefore my first task to present the texts which I have found, a list which, no doubt is not complete.

In the Latin field I have found a prayer which although containing a number of additions, shows its affinity with the prayer of the Apostolic Tradition. It is found in the Ambrosian Manual as published by Magistretti⁶. But from other latinspeaking countries like Gaule or North Africa it has not been possible yet to find any texts of greater value for our purpose.

Some other African countries are more rich in information. In the Coptic field there are three texts observed, two of which are prayers used in the Coptic church today and thus preserved in the Bohairic dialect⁷, the third one is preserved in the ancient euchologion of the White Monastery, written in Sahidic and used in the wedding ceremony⁸. The Bohairic prayers are used one for the consecration of myron and the other for the "oil of gladness".

Dom Emmanuel Lanne, who published the Euchologion of the White Monastery observed 'des affinités étonnantes' between that text and the blessing of oil in the Gelasian Sacramentary⁹. The Ethiopic versions are akin to the Coptic ones and they have been used one for catechumens and for sick people, the second for those "who have received the lavacrum and for believers who are ill", the third finally is used in the wedding-ritual¹⁰. One may be right in supposing that these prayers already belonged to the Greek recension which via the supposed Sahidic or Bohairic and Arabic versions, is preserved in the Ethiopic Church Ordinance.

From the Syrian field we have some slight evidence from the Testamentum Domini, where according to Dix, there are traces of the prayer of the Apostolic Tradition, having some peculiarities derived from the benedictio olivarum and this should be one of the proofs that this prayer originally belongs to the Apostolic Tradition¹¹.

In the West-Syrian field it has been possible to trace at least two prayers, one preserved in both Jacobite and Maronite versions, being prayers for the catechumens or the sick, the other being the prayer for the consecration of myron among the Jacobites¹².

⁶ M. Magistretti, *Manuale Ambrosianum* I (Milan 1905) 147. The MS dates back to the 13th century.

⁷ R. Tuki, *ⲡⲓⲛⲟⲙ ⲉⲉⲣⲁⲡⲁⲛⲟⲩⲧⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲭⲉⲛ ⲡⲉⲧⲭⲏ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ* I (Rome 1761) p. τϥ, τϥ sq.

⁸ PO XXVIII 2, 393 sq.

⁹ *ibid.* note.

¹⁰ Horner, *op. cit.*, 168, 176; Bessarione XVII: 2, 3 (1913) 268.

¹¹ Dix, *op. cit.*, 10, note: "L. alone preserves these three verses, but T. attests their genuineness by introducing the phrase *oil which is the type of thy fatness* into the blessing of oil which it substitutes for verse V. 2."

¹² H. Denzinger, *Ritus Orientalium* I (Würzburg 1864) 341, II (Würzburg 1865) 552, 539 ss.

From the East-Syrian field there is as yet no evidence for the existence of this prayer. Closely related to the Syrian tradition is usually the Armenian, and in fact there is a text from the baptismal ritual, probably a reminiscence from an antebaptismal unction, which is of certain interest¹³. One would expect this text to be derived from a Greek version current in Syria, possibly via a Syriac translation.

Finally, and this is perhaps the most important thing, we have two texts preserved in Greek. One was published by the Russian scholar A. Dmitrijevskij from a manuscript he found in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt Sinai dated to the 11th or 12th century. It has been used as the third blessing in a ritual for the heptapapadic unction of the sick, an unusual order which may contain also other ancient and valuable material probably specially illustrating an Egyptian tradition¹⁴. The text was later republished by N. Trebelas¹⁵.

The other Greek text is preserved in a prayer still used in the ritual for the consecration of myron¹⁶.

These two Greek texts probably contain parts of the original lost Greek version of the Apostolic Tradition and are thus extremely interesting, although we must bear in mind that the same may be here as in the Latin field, that we have texts not borrowed from the Apostolic Tradition but reproducing independently the same enduring liturgical tradition¹⁷.

In this paper it will not be possible to discuss all these texts mentioned and the very complicated relation between them all, but we shall especially deal with the Latin and Greek texts and mention some of the results of an investigation of the other ones, an investigation which is not yet finished.

The text of the Apostolic Tradition, preserved in two versions, presents some problems. Chapter V begins with a rubric telling that if any one offers oil, the bishop shall make eucharist as at the oblation of bread and wine. But he shall not say word for word the same prayer, but with similar wording (Dix translates *uirtute* by "effect", Botte with "wording" which seems more probable¹⁸):

Ut oleum hoc sanctificans
das Ds sanitatem utentibus
et percipientibus
unde unxisti reges
sacerdotes et prophetas
sic et omnibus gustantibus
confortationem et sanitatem
uentibus illud praebeat.

¹³ Denzinger I 385 sq. F. C. Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum* (Oxford 1905) 93.

¹⁴ Алексей дмитриевский, описание литургических рукописей (Kiev 1895-1901) II 104.

¹⁵ Μικρόν Εὐχολόγιον (Ἀθήναις 1950-1955) I 180.

¹⁶ Op. cit. I 383-386.

¹⁷ Already observed by Dix, op. cit., = *Laudate* XIV nr. 56 (1936) 234, n. 1.

¹⁸ Dix, 10; B. Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique* (Paris 1946) 33.

When interpreting, Dom Gregory Dix makes two alterations in the text. Instead of the first *sanitatem* he reads *sanctitatem*, presupposing a Greek ὑγίασμα for ἁγίασμα. This change although possible, does not seem necessary. The word is missing in the Ethiopic text.

The second emendation of Dix regards *uentibus* where he wants *unctis*, supposing a Greek χρησθεῖσι for χρισθεῖσι. There is evidence for this in the Ethiopic version (ይተቀብኩ). But the way of explaining may be open to criticism. If the Greek text of the Sinai manuscript is of any help — the words quoted are not exactly in the same place of the prayer — it reads χρισμένοις.

In spite of these emendations the text is not altogether satisfactory. I venture to present this translation:

“As Thou, God, sanctifies this oil and gives health to all those who are anointed thereby or perceive / taste / thereof, whereby Thou didst anoint kings, priests and prophets, so now give power to all them who taste / or perceive / and health to all who are being anointed thereby / or use it /.”

One may be right that *uentibus* also in the second case may have been misunderstood, as in the first case, but the Ethiopic text does not favour that supposition.

We now turn to the related prayers starting from the Roman tradition.

The consecration of the chrism

The Roman prayer for consecrating the chrism is known from both the Gelasian and the Gregorian Sacramentaries. The part of the prayer which seems to preserve the oldest part is:

Te igitur deprecamur Domine
ut huius creaturae pinguedinem sanctificare
tua benedictione digneris
et Sancti Spiritus ei admiscere virtutem
unde unxisti sacerdotes reges prophetas et martyres
ut sit his qui renati fuerint ex aqua et spiritu sancto
chrisma salutis Per etc.

The structure of the prayer as well as the unde-sentence prove that this prayer belongs to the “family”, but there are some peculiarities. The Te igitur-sentence and of course the words indicating the special purpose of the chrism, here exclusively having the chrismation after baptism in mind, give to this text its characteristics.

The blessing of unctio infirmorum

The blessing of the unctio infirmorum, which is recited on Maundy Thursday in the very Canon Missae before Per quem haec omnia is based on a prayer in the Gelasian Sacramentary which was slightly changed in the Gregorian.

The Gelasian text:

Emitte, quaesumus, Domine
 Spiritum sanctum Paraclitum de caelis
in hanc pinguedinem olivae quam de viridi ligno
producere dignatus es ad refectionem mentis et corporis
 ut tua sancta benedictione
 sit omni ungenti gustanti (later erased) tangenti
 (PR: sit omni hoc ungento caelestis medicinae peruncto)
 tutamentum corporis et animae et spiritus
 ad evacuandos omnes dolores, omnem infirmitatem, omnem
 aegritudinem mentis et corporis,
 unde unxisti sacerdotes reges prophetas *et martyres*
 crisma tuum perfectum nobis a te, Domine, benedictum
 permanens in visceribus nostris, in nomine D N I C per quem...¹⁹

This text has certain remarkable features, which seem most primitive. The words ungenti, gustanti, tangenti indicate a time when this oil was given to the faithful to be used by themselves without the assistance of a priest, further the ancient use of drinking the blessed oil or just to touch it probably signing therewith in the same manner as Holy water is used nowadays.

Remarkable is also the word crisma which one would not expect in this prayer. It may indicate a time when the prayer was used both for chrism and unction with small alterations in the actual case. But the explanation given below seems more probable.

The practice of drinking oil, so well testified from the ancient church later became unorthodox which is the reason why the word gustanti was deleted in the manuscript of the Gelasian sacramentary, it is missing in the Gregorian sacramentary as well as in the present Roman Pontifical but reminiscences of the ancient practice still seem to survive in the words: permanens in visceribus nostris.

Another peculiarity is the influence from Ap. Trad. VI 3 namely the sentence: in hanc pinguedinem — refectionem mentis et corporis.

The Gelasian text, however, seems somewhat incoherent. From the beginning until the unde-sentence it is logical, but with the unde-sentence there starts something new, and unde seems to lack its correlate. Would it not seem more probable that the second part is displaced and that unde has its original correlate in crisma tuum?

¹⁹ H. A. Wilson, *The Gelasian Sacramentary* (London 1915) 49; L. C. Mohlberg (ed.), *Liber sacramentorum Romanæ Ecclesiae ordinis anni circuli* = *Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta. Series Maior - Fontes IV* (Rome 1960) 61; cf. K. Mohlberg, *Das fränkische Sacramentarium Gelasianum in alamanischer Überlieferung* (Codex Sangall. No. 348) = LQF 1/2 (²1939); H. Lietzmann - H. Bornkamm, *Das Sacramentarium Gregorianum nach dem Aachener Urrexemplar* = LQF 3 (1921; reprint 1958).

We would then have a prayer like this:

Emitte quaesumus Domine Spiritum Sanctum ut tua sancta benedictione sit crisma tuum perfectum nobis, unde unxisti sacerdotes reges prophetas et martyres

If we accept that the Gelasian prayer is not quite coherent being composed of two related prayers, one for chrism another for unctio infirmorum, we also find that the "original" prayer for the unctio infirmorum is closely related to the Ambrosian tradition.

The Ambrosian tradition

From the Ambrosian field it has been possible to trace but one text, a prayer for the unctio infirmorum, whereas the prayer for the chrism belongs to another type of prayer²⁰. It has not been possible to trace the history of this prayer, but provisionally it is accepted as a "true representative" of the Ambrosian or Milanese tradition.

The part of the text of interest here reads:

Domine — Deus precamur — ut mittere iubeas Spiritum tuum Paraclitum — *super hanc pinguedinem quam de viridi ligno fluere praecipisti*: ut si quis ex eo unctus fuerit vel gustauerit sit ei animae atque corporis firmamentum. —

We observe some interesting features. The primitive idea of drinking the blessed oil appears also here: gustauerit, self-anointing is not evident: the text presupposing a minister sacramenti: unctus fuerit. The unde-sentence is missing. An influence from Ap. Trad. VI 3 is obvious: *super hanc — praecipisti*.

The relation between the Roman and the Ambrosian tradition in this field is in essential matters very close, but in a number of details very different. The way of using the sacrament is different, unctus fuerit — ungenti, and what is more remarkable, the two prayers express their common ideas in a remarkably different way:

R: emitte	A: mittere iubeas
quaesumus	precamur
in hanc	super hanc
producere	fluere
tutamentum	firmamentum

One must accept that these two texts represent two different traditions having a common and most probably Greek source, which would explain the different wording²¹. It is possible to establish a Greek text which may be rendered in Latin like our two prayers.

²⁰ M. Magistretti, *Pontificale in usum ecclesiae Mediolanensis* (Milan 1897) 98. A prayer of the Ambrosian tradition belonging to our "family" is also preserved in the coronation ritual, p. 114.

²¹ Cf. A. Chavasse, *Etude sur l'onction des infirmes dans l'église latine du IIIe au XIe siècle* (Strasbourg 1942) 55.

Is it too brave to suggest that an underlying Greek text must date back to the early 3rd century?

The two Greek texts

Trebelas has published the text of the prayer actually used in Byzantine tradition for the consecration of myron together with some slightly different and possibly more ancient variants from other manuscripts²².

The more interesting part of the prayer according to one of the best manuscripts says: Κύριε, ...κατάπεμψον τὸ πανάγιόν σου Πνεῦμα ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ Μύρον. Ποίησον αὐτὸ χρίσμα βασιλικόν, χρίσμα πνευματικόν, ζωῆς φυλακτήριον, ἁγιαστικὸν ψυχῶν καὶ σωμάτων, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως, ἐν ᾧ ἐχρίσθησαν Ἱερεῖς, προφῆται καὶ βασιλεῖς· δι' οὗ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔχρισας τοὺς ἁγίους σου ἀποστόλους καὶ πάντας τοὺς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας ὑπ' αὐτῶν... ἀναγεννηθέντας... ἵνα ᾧσι λαὸς περιούσιος, βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα, ἔθνος ἅγιον, ἐσφραγισμένοι διὰ τοῦ... μυστηρίου τούτου...

The structure of this prayer reminds one of those we have already met with or will later come across. There is a prayer to the Lord that he may send his Spirit over the myron that it may become chrisma royal by which were anointed priests etc. The unde-sentence has here become split up into two sentences one beginning ἐν ᾧ, the other δι' οὗ. This is not the only example of such a development when new ideas have become more relevant and the original meaning, having become obscured for various reasons, is reshaped or transformed. In repairing the unde-sentence you find that this text embodies a prayer which seems closely connected with the "original" or supposed "original" prayer and where there is no influence from Ap. Trad. VI 3. The restored text might have the following wording: Κύριε, κατάπεμψον τὸ πανάγιόν σου Πνεῦμα ἐπὶ τοῦτο τὸ Μύρον, δι' οὗ ἔχρισας ἱερεῖς, προφῆτας καὶ βασιλεῖς, ἵνα ᾧσι ἐσφραγισμένοι...

Thanks to this prayer it has been possible to establish some evidence for the existence of this prayer also in the Byzantine field possibly including Asia Minor. The problem is, however, to prove how long time it has been indigenous there.

As our knowledge of the history of the Byzantine rite is most vague we dare not say anything about its age as a Byzantine prayer. We know that Constantinople was not without liturgical influence from Antioch and therefore we may here have an example of Syrian influence, but it rather seems to lack Syrian peculiarities.

The second text in Greek already mentioned is that from Sinai. It reads: Ἐκπεμψον, Κύριε, τὴν πύστητα τοῦ ἐλέους σου ἐπὶ τὸν καρπὸν τῆς ἐλαίας τοῦτον, δι' οὗ ἔχρισας ἱερεῖς, προφῆτας, βασιλεῖς τε καὶ²³ μάρτυρας καὶ ἐνέδυσας τῇ χρηστότητί σου δικαιοσύνης ἔνδυμα, ἵνα γένηται παντὶ τῷ

²² Trebelas, Μικρὸν Εὐχολόγιον I 383; especially ms H.

²³ The text according to Dmitrijevskij: τοῦτος(;)

ἀλειφομένῳ καὶ γευομένῳ εἰς ὄνησιν καὶ ὠφέλειαν ψυχῆς καὶ σώ-
ματος (καὶ) πνεύματος, εἰς ἀποτροπὴν παντὸς κακοῦ, εἰς ὑγείαν τῷ
χριομένῳ διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ [Χριστοῦ]. Ἐκφώνησις Ὅτι εὐλογητὸς
 εἶ καὶ δεδοξασμένος σὺν τῷ Παναγίῳ...

Two sentences are most probably later additions namely καὶ ἐνέδυσας — ἐνδύμα and εἰς ἀποτροπὴν κακοῦ.

The first one seems to be dependent on Eph. VI 14. Εἰς ὑγείαν τῷ χριομένῳ may also be a later accretion although it may be regarded as detached from its context as well.

Thus it seems possible to establish a more primitive text for this prayer, being the underlined part of the text above. What is now of certain value is that we here seem to have the Greek text of part of the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus or at least a Greek tradition closely related to the text known in Rome about A.D. 215, a tradition having a relation similar to that of the Gelasian text in relation to the Hippolytan one. The double tradition, the Byzantine and the Sinaitic, indicate the importance of the text, they represent two traditions which seem more different than they really are because the one is the myron-prayer the other rather intended for the anointing of the sick.

I am afraid it will be very tiring to follow this investigation going from one liturgical tradition to the other but I am sorry that I must still take the attention of the reader for another three traditions, namely the Coptic, Syriac and Armenian, mercifully leaving the Ethiopian for the time being. In the Coptic field three most valuable texts are registered. The Sahidic version, preserved in the Great Euchologion of the White Monastery and published by Dom Emm. Lanne, has been part of the wedding ritual, where in the Coptic as well as the Ethiopian tradition an anointing takes place.

This tradition seems to be a later development of a text akin to the Sinaitic Greek. One should observe that the unction should be to the ἀηρεσις according to the Sahidic text, whereas the Greek has ὄνησις. Both readings are possible but one has the right to ask whether ἄνεσις is not a better reading in a prayer which has something to do with health.

The Sahidic text which has a certain relationship with the Greek Sinaitic one has become a fairly lengthy prayer, repeating and varying the "original" thoughts of the prayer, as known from the Greek source. One difference is that the Sahidic asks God to send his holy power, whereas the Greek has πιότητα τοῦ ἐλέους, but thoughts similar to that seem to be embodied in what I should like to call later accretions of the Coptic text.

The two Bohairic texts are one for the myron and the other for the ἀναλειθαιον. Although they are in essential matters akin they do not seem to be related very much from a linguistic point of view. As Coptic texts they seem to be independent of another and they are not dependent of the

Sahidic text either. We thus have three Coptic versions probably going back to Greek sources and independently translated.

Both prayers have had a long history of growing and have become long prayers, where some of the insertions are quite obvious.

Turning to the Syriac field we first find the Testament of our Lord, which by Dix was regarded as in many ways the most important witness of the text of Ap. Trad. next to the Latin version²⁴. It is dated between 350 and the 5th century. For our purpose the Testament is partly a failure as the text of our prayer is not preserved there, but some reminiscences thereof are of certain interest.

The text presupposes a prayer which has known priests, prophets and kings or something similar which is summed up in the phrase: those whom thou hast found worthy thereto. It has also known a text inspired from Ap. Trad. VI 3, which is more akin to the Latin text than the other witnesses known, which are dependent of the same source.

The words ܐܠܗܝ ܕܡܝܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܪܝܢܐ (which is the type of your fatness) rendering τύπος τῆς πλοότητος σου (qui est exemplum tuae pinguidinis) prove the genuineness of the text in this Syriac field²⁵.

In Syro-Antiochene or West-Syrian tradition we find a prayer for myron and one, in several versions, from the baptismal ritual.

The myron-prayer is framed as a proper Eucharistic prayer starting with Gratias agimus tibi Domine sancte and has the phrase et praesta ut faciamus chrisma hoc quod consecratum est, ut oleum illud sanctum per quod uncti sunt sacerdotes prophetae et reges a Moysi usque ad Iohannem...²⁶.

This text has very little in common with the other Syriac one, but seems to represent an independent tradition; much as happened in Egypt, where the myron-prayer had the slightest possible kinship with the prayer for the ܐܘܪܝܬܐ.

The second tradition in the West-Syrian field, represented by a Jacobite and a Maronite version are probably derived from a common source of a type similar to this: Sancte et gloriose, cuius sancta unctione prophetae et pontifices et reges et sacerdotes uncti sunt: veniat domine ab excelsis altitudinibus virtus tua super oleum hoc...

There are also some more texts which we have not opportunity to deal with here.

The Armenian version ought, however, to be mentioned²⁷, as it may reflect an older Syriac tradition now lost. The text, used in the baptismal

²⁴ Dix, *Ap. Trad.*, LXIX.

²⁵ Ed. I. E. Rahmani (Mayence 1899) 48; cf. Dix, *op. cit.*, 10 sq.

²⁶ I have used the translations of Denzinger. Thanks to the kindness of Bishop Khoury-Sarkis I have recently got hold of some Syriac texts, but I have not used them here.

²⁷ Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum*, 93.

ritual and once accompanying an antebaptismal unction, is a very lengthy text embodying at least parts of our prayer and which may be reconstructed as follows:

Rogamus te Domine
 emitte gratias Spiritus tui Sancti
 in oleum hoc
 unde unxisti sacerdotes reges et prophetas
 et sit ei qui ex eo ungitur ad...

This text, although reconstructed, is of great value because it seems to be a witness to a primitive tradition without any influence from Ap. Trad. VI 3, indicating a type earlier than most of our prayers.

This Armenian text shows a change in the order of the prayer which we recognize from the West-Syrian sources, but not from the other ones known, and yet it is impossible to derive the Armenian text from any of the Syrian ones. This may indicate a fairly considerable age for the Armenian tradition.

The influence from Ap. Trad. VI 3

As has already several times been mentioned one can trace an influence from Ap. Trad. VI 3 in a number of texts, namely in the Roman, Ambrosian, Sinaitic Greek, Sahidic, Bohairic (ⲁⲩⲁⲗⲓⲉⲗⲁⲓⲟⲛ), the Testamentum Domini and one Ethiopic text. They all have in common that they are prayers for the unctio infirmorum or the related unction in the wedding-ceremonial, but it is lacking in the Armenian, and two West-Syrian texts, all of them related to baptism, and in the Roman chrism-prayer, the Syrian and the Coptic prayers over myron.

In the Apostolic Tradition, the only text of which is the Latin version testified in some way also by the Syrian version of the Testament of our Lord, reads:

Fac a tua dulcitudine non recedere fructum etiam hunc olivae qui est exemplum tuae pinguidinis, quam de ligno fluisti in uitam eis, qui sperant in te.

For the sake of simplicity the various texts preserving a similar tradition are here rendered in Latin:

- R in hanc pinguedinem olivae
 quam de viridi ligno producere dignatus es
- Amb super hanc pinguedinem
 quam de viridi ligno fluere praecipisti
- Sin pinguedinem misericordiae tuae
 super fructum hunc olivae
- Sah super fructum hunc olivae
- Boh 1 pinguedinem magnae misericordiae tuae
 super fructum olivae pinguis
 (or: pinguedinis olivae)

Test super oleum hoc
quod est exemplum tuae pinguedinis

Eth 2 super fructum huius olivae

All these sentences, being *Fremdkörper* in the prayer over the holy oil, are thus derived from the prayer for the olives, as is obvious from the fact that it prays for the fructum olivae, not for the oil, oleum hoc, and this causes some obscurity in the text.

Three phrases of Ap.Trad. VI 3 are quoted in our prayers but never more than two of them appear in one and the same prayer.

1. Fructum etiam hunc olivae appears in the Greek Sinaitic text, Sahidic, Bohairic (inf.), Ethiopic and possibly Testamentum Domini, although the text super oleum hoc may also be regarded as representing a different tradition. Egypt is possibly the centre of the tradition. The Sahidic text is of certain interest, repeating the words the fruit of the olive the second time introducing and saying: sending from heaven your mercy and grace upon this fruit of the olive, which is the oil by which you did anoint priests etc.

2. Qui est exemplum tuae pinguidinis recurs only in the Testament of our Lord, but there are reminiscences of it, the word pinguedo being the key-word. Egypt and the Italian peninsula provide the evidence.

3. The third phrase, quam de ligno fluisti, being quoted only in the two Latin sources, the Roman and the Ambrosian, is of great interest. The Ambrosian text lacks the word oliva, which is probably the result of a later redaction, the word oliva as it stands causing some lack in the context.

Lignum or lignum viride stands for the tree of life, which is the cross. The addition viride is probably very old, possibly of the 3rd century A.D., if it is right that the two Latin versions are going back to a common Greek source. There are possibly a number of references from the fathers to be found for the expression lignum viride, but it should here only be noted that in the Gospel of Philip, of the Nag Hammadi texts found in Egypt and being of the Valentinian tradition, there is a text which ought to be quoted here. The tree of life according to this text is an olive tree: the tree of life is in the midst of Paradise. And the tree of olives from which the chrism is taken were formed from it for the resurrection²⁸. This olive tree, which is the tree of life, was according to the same apocryphal Gospel planted by Joseph in his garden (EP 91)²⁹.

What conclusions may be drawn? Quotations from Ap.Trad. VI 3 or similar prayers independently from that Church Order current in various

²⁸ Segelberg in: Numen VII (1960) 193. McL. Wilson, *The Gospel of Philip* (London 1962) 155, following Till accepts the interpretation of τῆς as tree and not 10 000 and I think one should accept this translation and correct what I have previously published.

²⁹ McL. Wilson, op. cit., 153 sq.

churches have been combined usually in the same place with a prayer related to the benedictio olei of Ap. Trad. V 2. It has been differently done in Italy and Egypt. In the Greek field a play on words possible only in Greek appears (πιότητα τοῦ ἐλέους ἐπὶ τὸν καρπὸν τῆς ἐλαίας). When the two traditions first were combined is difficult to say, but there are reasons to suppose that at least in Italy it happened as early as the 3rd century A.D.

The original text of the blessing of the oil

When comparing the numerous texts we find that they have a common shape: invocation of God that he shall send his spirit or grace etc. upon the oil, wherewith he did anoint kings, priests and prophets that it may give health etc. A Greek original text may have been like this:

Ἐκπεμψον, Κύριε, τὸ Πνεῦμα σου ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλαιον τοῦτο δι' οὗ ἔχρισας ἱερεῖς βασιλεῖς καὶ προφῆτας ἵνα γένηται/τοῖς ἀλειφομένοις καὶ γενομένοις εἰς ὠφέλειαν σώματος καὶ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος

Most of the prayer may be changed in one way or another in the various traditions, but there is one thing which except in the Ambrosian prayer always recurs, the phrase: wherewith thou didst anoint kings, priests and prophets. It is interesting to see how the threefold ministry of our Lord is accentuated here. The number of offices quoted varies, quite often a fourth is added, martyrs, in some cases also archpriests, in some others kings is missing, probably caused by the negativism of the Monophysites to the Melkites and Byzantine empire, but nevertheless there is no doubt about the fact that originally there were mentioned just three offices, which are the offices of our Lord. Dr. Beskow in his *Rex Gloriae*, referring to this my unpublished thesis, has made some observations in this connection³⁰.

In relation to the text of Ap. Trad. V 2 there are obvious similarities. It is no doubt that the text of Hippolytus is of the same tradition, the same phrases recur although partly in a different order.

The purpose of the prayer

As was already mentioned the type of prayer actually appears in many different settings, mainly two, the one for the consecration of chrism or myron, the other for the blessing of oil for the sick which prayer seems to have specialised to become in some cases a prayer used in the wedding-ritual. A prayer used in the baptismal ritual for an antebaptismal unction is probably derived from the firstmentioned type.

But what was the original purpose of the prayer. Was it intended for chrism or oil? From the various traditions it is difficult to judge, as it seems that the two different maintypes appear in almost all parts of the church. One must try to find an interior criterion. This is in the key-phrase unde unxisti, δι' οὗ ἔχρισας.

³⁰ Per Beskow, *Rex Gloriae* (Uppsala 1962) 120 sq.

The Dutch scholar J. Ysebaert, in his valuable book *Greek Baptismal Terminology* (Nijmegen 1962) demonstrates that in NT texts the word ἀλείφειν is "the prophane term for the anointing intended for the care of the body", "the same word and ἐπιχρίειν are used for anointing as a gesture of healing" and finally "the sacral terms χρίειν and χρῖσμα are reserved for anointing with the Holy Spirit"³¹.

The result of his research regards the terminology in the early Christian literature, he sums up: The verb χρίειν and derivatives, but not ἀλείφειν are the technical terms for the postbaptismal anointing with an oil which is called χρῖσμα, μύρον, and sometimes ἔλαιον³².

It would thus seem most probable that the type of prayer, with which we are concerned was originally used for consecration of myron or chrism, as it uses the term χρίειν. For this interpretation also speaks the reference to the Old Testament anointings of priests, kings and prophets, which were not any anointings of the sick but conferring of the Holy Spirit for their offices.

If this interpretation is right the prayer of Ap. Trad. V 2 which is no doubt a prayer for the blessing of the oil of the sick and which does refer to the Old-Covenant anointings, presents a secondary use of our prayer-type. And this secondary use has become almost more widespread than the original one, the use of the prayer for the consecration of myron. This difference in frequency is, however, not surprising, as chrisma was consecrated by the bishop only and at rare occasions, whereas unction of the sick could be performed by any priest. One has therefore reason to expect more material for the blessing of the last mentioned oil.

The age of this type of prayer

What we know is, that two prayers in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, one for the blessing of olives, one for the blessing of unctio infirmorum did exist in Rome about A.D. 215-220. From the same source we know about two kinds of oil, the Oil of Thanksgiving and the Oil of Exorcism (XXI 6-8, 10, 19-20; XXII 2).

The prayer of the Apostolic Tradition does not turn up in any other liturgical source, but there are a number of texts which are all closely related to another and related to the Apostolic Tradition as well although not so closely, and these texts sometimes quote the blessing of the olives of the Apostolic Tradition or related traditions.

It seems, thus impossible to derive the prayers of let us say the second family from that of Hippolytus. As a result of this research we are ready to suggest that the texts of the Apostolic Tradition here represent one tradition among several which all may be derived to a still more ancient common source or tradition, going back to the second century, perhaps to the very Apostolic age.

³¹ Ysebaert, 283, where he himself is referring to Schlier in: ThWb I 230sqq.

³² Op. cit. 366.

For this presumption another reason may be added. The Didascalia which in accordance with other early Syrian sources knew of a sacramental antebaptismal anointing does not preserve the text of a consecration prayer, but it refers to a rite which is interpreted in the light of the custom of the Old Covenant. I quote Dom Hugh Connolly's translation of the Syrian Didascalia: As of old the priests and kings were anointed in Israel, do thou in like manner with the imposition of hand anoint the head of those, who receive baptism . . . ³³.

In the Greek text the same thought recurs with the addition: not as if this laying on of hand were an ordination to the priesthood but a royal priesthood (ἱεράτευμα βασιλικόν) a holy people, the Church of God . . . (III 16,3).

It would be surprising if these words did not refer to a prayer similar to that of the Apostolic Tradition and the related texts and this would be a strong argument in favour of the hypothesis that the prayer of Hippolytus is just one example of a widespread and very early tradition.

I suppose there is none who would argue in favour of a dependance of the Apostolic Tradition upon the Didascalia or vice versa.

From the Syrian field another rather early source must be mentioned. Aphraates (280? — 345) in his Demonstrations XXIII 3 refers both to the baptismal unction and the anointing of the sick, and what should be observed, his way of expressing himself presupposes a prayer mentioning priests, kings and prophets:

But the door was opened to ask for peace, and darkness fled from the minds of many; the light of understanding dawned and there sprouted the fruit of the splendored olive tree, wherein is the sign of the sacrament of life, whereby Christians and priests and kings and prophets are perfected; He [Christ] enlightens those in darkness, anoints the sick, and through his hidden mystery leads back the penitent³⁴.

The terms perficiuntur (ܦܪܝܥܝܢܬܘܪ) and sign (ܫܝܢ) seem to indicate that the prayer is used in the baptismal sphere, which would suit well with what we have already observed; that our prayer in Syria and Armenia is used in the baptismal ritual.

May I now conclude by summing up what we have observed:

The text of Hippolytus V2, which is not word by word known from any liturgical tradition, has a number of relatives, more or less closely connected, and among them texts in Greek which preserve parts of the original text of Hippolytus' prayer. In some of the texts quotations of Hippolytus VI 3 or related texts appear, which prove either that this text was known in the version of the Apostolic Tradition current e.g. in Egypt, or that the prayer mentioned was known there as well as in some other provinces of the Church independently of the Apostolic Tradition.

³³ Ed. Connolly (Oxford 1929) Chapter XVI, p. 146.

³⁴ Patrologia Syriaca II col. 9. Cf. E. J. Duncan, *Baptism in the Demonstrations of Aphraates, the Persian Sage* (Washington 1945) 110, whose translation has been quoted above.