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**The Anaphoras of The Ethiopian Church
in the context of the present day liturgies.
Liturgical unity and diversity**

Thesis Summary

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THESIS SUMMARY

"Ethiopia has stretched her hand before God" (Ps. 69, 27)

The Holly Liturgy is a living and dynamic spiritual organism which, from the time of committing in the "higher pavilion" by the Apostles until today, preserved the sacrament of the Church's unity. Over the centuries, it has evolved from apostolic simplicity to richness and splendor of today. But this did not mean an alienation from the truth, but a natural growth, expression of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

The Church history has been linked to the history of divine cult, especially the Divine Liturgy. 1700 years ago, when St. Constantine gave freedom to Christians, the cult of the Holy Church - committed almost three centuries in houses and catacombs – moved into a new historical stage of development.

The 4th century is seen by experts as the turning point in the history of the Christian liturgical cult. This period was, for the Church, the moment of moving from persecuted minority status, religious tolerance and then to the rank of official religion. On the liturgical ground, this period is known as the time of the formation of "liturgical source rites".

The introduction of national languages and dialects in liturgical cult was a decisive step in shaping the liturgical rites. The freedom to have one's own liturgical language has led to a significant number of new Eucharistic Prayers. This phenomenon can be seen to this day in Old Oriental Churches, where liturgies are held in the Greek version, but also in national languages.

The event of the utmost importance in liturgical rites delimitation was the Synod of Chalcedon in 451. Although long before there was a misunderstanding between the two great traditions, Antioch and Alexandria, the Chalcedon moment and its historical follow ups were the key of affirmation of Eastern liturgical rites. However, we cannot talk about the Fourth Ecumenical Synod as the moment of a sudden rupture. Oriental rites formation phenomenon, as stated also by specialists, was a long one. This phenomenon extends over a period of several centuries. It started in the late third century and ended in the late sixth century.

From the fifth century, in the Christian East, under the influence of political, social, but also cultural factors, the delimitation of the new liturgical rites began. For starters, the main liturgies have been translated into national languages, to which were added their own anaphoras, but have kept the traditional line.

All known Eastern Christian liturgies derived from the two Liturgies of apostolic origin: that of Saint James and that of Saint Mark. The first is at the origin of the liturgical rite of Antioch, which includes Byzantine liturgy, the Armenian Liturgy, St. James Syrian Church Liturgies, Maronite Liturgy and the Chaldean Church Liturgy. Liturgy of St. Mark was the source of the Alexandrian liturgies, from which were developed Liturgies of the Coptic Church and the Ethiopian Church.

As we will demonstrate, almost nothing from the specific of the real Monophysitism doctrine is present today in liturgical texts or external forms of this cult.

According to researchers, the national character is found in the cult of the Ethiopian Church. Although it belongs to what we now call the Old Oriental Churches, Ethiopia represents a special part where the early Church cult sits together with African indigenous customs, but also with Jewish reminiscences.

With an estimated number of almost 50 million believers, the Ethiopian Christianity is today one of the fastest growing churches in which everyday life is not yet separated from the Divine Liturgy. Expression of a pure prayer of martyr people, one of the poorest countries in the world, the Ethiopian liturgy keeps many elements from the cult of the Church from the first four Christian centuries. With the 14 main anaphoras contained in *Metsehaf Qeddassie*, it is a treasure for liturgical theology. The Eucharistic prayers preserved the authentic Christian heritage. Faithful followers of the Church and apostolic Liturgies, the Ethiopian anaphoras represent the way how people prayed to God. In addition to popular features, they kept the unity with the Alexandrian rite which, in its turn, descends from Apostolic Liturgy.

The same structure, same development and the same fundamental idea, all these lead to the common goal – the committing of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the sanctification of Gifts, in order to share to liturgical community.

The objective of this paper is the study of Ethiopian anaphoras from liturgical and historical perspective. Most approaches so far regard their importance in the tradition of the Ethiopian people. Father Ene Braniște however, brought an important idea, the study of Ethiopian Eucharistic prayers as part of the entire Old Oriental Liturgies.

The work wants to be a continuation and a thoroughness of this idea in the attempt to demonstrate that the Ethiopian anaphoras keep the continuity of Apostolic Liturgy and they have, in their text, common elements with the other Christian Liturgies.

Another objective is the complete translation into Romanian of the Liturgy of the 12 Apostles, the 14 anaphoras contained in the printed editions of *Metsehaf Qeddassie*, and a further four anaphoras that are stored in the liturgical tradition of Debre Damo and Debre

Marcos. Related to Ethiopian anaphoras text, this paper aims to identify whether or not the Monophysite heresy and if any traces exists, to what extent are they still a reality to Ethiopian Christians.

Beyond the national culture and language in which has been developed, each Liturgy of Oriental origin has preserved its apostolic nucleus. All these Eucharistic ordinances are a part of a big liturgy family of the Church of the East. Their common descent, the unit structure and design have made the Liturgies of Old Oriental Churches to keep their apostolic heritage.

Although the differences created by the development and diversification of these Liturgies, one can observe a common scheme and background, even a textual similarity between some of them. Alexandrian tradition, recorded in the Greek Liturgy of St. Mark, kept the apostolic background to which were added characteristics of Alexandrian rite.

Beyond the border of the Roman Empire of the East, Ethiopia has outlined a special Christianity, but retained the unity with the Church, developed within the empire. A preserver of the Christian unity, the Christian Ethiopian Church, thru the missionary work of Saint Frumentiu, received the Alexandrian liturgy in the liturgical cult, in its development state as it was in the late fourth century.

Although at first glance, literally speaking, the 18 anaphoras presented in this research are not alike, they retain a common scheme. The Greek Liturgy fatherhood of St. Mark and St. Hippolytus the Roman makes its presence felt by keeping the main course order of the main moments of the Eucharistic prayer. The Alexandrian classical Eucharistic prayer, starting with the fourth century, has the following conduct: an initial prayer of giving thanks, followed by a pre-epiclesis, a prayer of intercession and diptychs plus a prayer of acceptance of sacrifice, the Sanctus and the first epiclesis, the words of establishment, anamnesis, epiclesis in a developed form and a final doxology. The characteristics of Alexandrian Eucharistic prayer are present in all 18 anaphoras studied, acknowledged even in the apocryphal anaphoras of St. Cyril of Alexandria.

As we have seen, every Eucharistic prayer used in Ethiopian liturgical cult received national and religious connotations. At the basis of current liturgical texts were the Eucharistic Prayers of the first four centuries of Christianity. This common core is a unifying factor, a possible recovery point of ecumenical dialogue between the Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodoxy.

Unity in diversity, the Ethiopian anaphoras express the teachings of the first three centuries of the Christian faith shared. As it can be seen from the text of the Eucharistic

prayers, all of them acknowledge the dogma of the two natures, divine and human united in the person of Jesus Christ. In none of the liturgical passage we cannot find a formulation characteristic to the Monophysitism heresy. The similarities highlighted by the Ethiopian Church can be a starting point for theological dialogue on liturgical themes. Unity in diversity, the Ethiopian anaphoras highlights a common origin of all Eastern liturgies.

If, in the Orthodoxy dialogue with the old Oriental Churches, the doctrine can be an obstacle, the Divine Liturgy aims to unite. The study of Old Oriental Churches Liturgy can become a starting point for discussions between the two Christian families. Today, more than ever, The Divine Liturgy has a particular importance in the problem of the continuity of the Church in the state of union and unity. Christ the Savior wants to see us all around Him, during His Sacrifice, waiting to share with us his Holy Body and Blood: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you will not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you will have no life in you" (John 6.53).

Until a communion, we still have the desire and consciousness that the Eucharistic Liturgy represents the unity of the Eastern Christianity.