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Baptism in the Hispanic-Mozarabic Liturgy

The liturgy celebrated in the Iberian Peninsula remains a valuable testimony to the faith of many generations of Christians, carrying within it the experience of the liturgical traditions of the first centuries of Christianity, the Visigoth renaissance, the efforts to preserve the ancient rite after a period of Islamic domination (beginning in the eleventh century), and the regaining of freedom after the Reconquista. It was never completely Romanized, although the influences of both Roman and African liturgy with Egyptian-Ethiopian as well as Byzantine-Syrian roots certainly shaped its celebration.¹ Nonetheless, the most important era for the development of the Hispanic rite was the time of the Councils of Toledo and the activity of St. Isidore of Seville († 636), as well as numerous Hispanic euchology connected not only to Toledo, but also to Tarragon and Saragossa. St. Ildefonsus of Toledo's († 667) treatise *De cognitione baptismi*,² which explains the deep meaning of numerous rites, is especially important here, as are the works by earlier authors of the late

¹ Cf. J. P. Rubio, *Introducción del rito romano y reforma de la Iglesia hispana en el siglo XI: De Sancho III el Mayor a Alfonso VI*, [in:] J. M. Magaz, N. Alvarez, *La reforma gregoriana en España*, Madrid 2011, p. 55–76. For more on the history of the rite: P. Roszak, *Mozarabowie i ich liturgia. Chrystologia rytu hiszpańsko-mozarabskiego*, Toruń 2015.

² Cf. J. M. Hormaeche, *La pastoral de la iniciación cristiana en la España Visigoda: estudio sobre el De cognitione baptismi de san Ildefonso de Toledo*, Toledo 1983, p. 48.

Roman era: St. Gregory of Elvira († 392), Hosius of Cordova († 359), and St. Pacian of Barcelona († 391).

In the following article, I will present the procedure of the baptismal celebration in the renewed Hispanic-Mozarabic rite, beginning with how the catechumenate was experienced and with the theological understanding of holy baptism as expressed in the euchology of the rite, with a simultaneous focus on the historical topics related to the shaping of the sacramental *ordo baptismi*. The development of the conflicts with Arianism (specifically, its Iberian form, known as adoptionism,³ which dominated in the first era of the rule of the Visigoths, which had an influence on the specific decisions of the Church in the Iberian Peninsula concerning the celebration of the sacrament of holy baptism) is important to understanding certain Hispanic-Mozarabic practices.

1. A General Description of the Hispanic *Ordo Baptismi*

Without a doubt, an important source for celebrating sacraments in the Hispanic rite is Marius Férotin's 1904 publication of *Liber ordinum*,⁴ which according to Jordi Pinell was formed around the initial sprout that was the assimilation of early Roman formulas in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. However, it was nonetheless deeply inscribed in the framework of the Hispanic rite and was adapted to its euchological

³ J. McWilliam, *The Context of Spanish Adoptionism: A Review*, [in:] *Conversion and Continuity. Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands. Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. by M. Gervers, R. Bikhazi, Toronto 1990, p. 75–88. Cf. J. F. Rivera, *El adopcionismo en España, siglo VIII: historia y doctrina*, Toledo 1980.

⁴ Cf. *Le Liber ordinum en usage dans l'église wisigothique et mozarabe d'Espagne du cinquième au onzième siècle. Publié pour la première fois, avec une introduction, des notes, une étude sur neuf calendriers mozarabes, etc.* par M. Férotin, Paris 1904 (*Monumenta Ecclesiae Liturgica*, 5).

style.⁵ The baptismal rituals and those of the other sacraments as well as blessings are found in the *Liber ordinum*'s first part, which appears to be the oldest and fundamental part of the book.

With regards to the age of persons being baptized, it is widely accepted that it essentially encompassed adults. However children were also baptized, although this usually took place when their lives were threatened, as expressed in 517 by the Synod of Girona, which accepted the baptism of children when they were born sick (this was evident in their reluctance to consume milk from their mother's breasts, as defined by the canons of this synod). However, it is characteristic that the synod did not require this.⁶ As is known, a significant development of the doctrine related to the baptism of children took place in the context of the conflict with Pelagianism and was expressed in the works of St. Augustine.⁷ Initially in the Hispanic liturgy during the Visigoth era, baptism was a decision that led to life changes and a new existential configuration; thus there were cases during which decisions related to baptism were postponed until one's later years. One can discern a clear change beginning in the mid-sixth century; the change is so evident that rituals essentially require the presence of children. This is expressed in the decisions of the Second Council of Braga (572), which was entirely devoted to the topic of children's baptism and specifies that they be undertaken without requiring a fee and that children should not be baptized earlier than three weeks before Easter. Nonetheless, one should assume that in practice baptism encompassed both children and adults during the Visigoth era, although the conciliar texts mostly discuss children. In the form that it is described in the rituals, the catechumenate required the baptized to be conscious of what he or she was doing.

With regards to the appropriate time for celebrating this sacrament, we should heed attention to the Visigothic customs, according to which the appropriate dates were the Easter Vigil (thus it was advised that nobody

⁵ J. Pinell, *Liturgia hispánica*, Barcelona 1998, p. 255.

⁶ G. Ramis, *Iniciación cristiana en la liturgia hispánica*, Bilbao 2001. This is a basic contemporary publication dealing with the sacraments of initiation in the Hispanic rite.

⁷ Cf. D. Borobio, *La Iniciación Cristiana*, Salamanca 1996.

be baptized during Lent) as well as Pentecost.⁸ In this context, the custom of closing the baptismal font and having it sealed by the bishop with his own seal becomes even more comprehensible. Apart from these two dates, one could be baptized only when one's life was threatened, and regulations of this matter usually refer to the practices of the early Church, as attested by the pope's letter to Himerius, the bishop of Tarragona. He asked about the growing practice of baptism on Christmas, Epiphany, or the feasts of martyrs, to which Pope Siricius (384–399) responded with a summons to baptize only during the aforementioned two days of the liturgical calendar.

What is unique about the Hispanic baptismal rituals is the practice of a single dousing with water or immersion, as opposed to doing it three times as in other rites. Traditionally, this was related to researchers' conviction that the origins of this practice are in its anti-Arian nature, but in recent times other researchers have also argued that that could have been the tradition of the Hispanic Church, which later found a theological justification. Evidence this practice is found in the correspondence between Profuturo, a bishop of Braga, and Pope Vigilius (537–555) in which the question of if baptism through one immersion (*semel*) is also practiced in Rome. The pope responded in the negative.⁹ The symbolic meaning of this lies not in the trinity of the persons, but in the unity of God's nature, the Divine *simplicitas* as well as the *unitas fidei*, as St. Isidore of Seville writes in Chapter 25 of *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, thus referring to the fact that after rising from the dead Christ no longer dies. The triple *immersion* practiced in other parts of Christianity was justified by Christ's

⁸ C. McConnell, *Baptism in Visigothic Spain*, University of Notre Dame 2005.

⁹ J. Pinell, *Liturgia hispanica...*, op. cit., p. 123. As Pinell notes, this was also related to the political situation of Braga under Swedish rule and the tendency towards liturgical unification undertaken by the Fourth Council of Toledo. Leander's discrete consultation with Pope Gregory, during which the latter responded positively to the unique form of celebrating the sacrament of baptism in the Iberian Peninsula, was of great importance to the council's decision. Cf. R. González Ruiz, *La obra de unificación litúrgica del concilio IV de Toledo*, [in:] *Hispania Gothorum. S. Ildefonso y el reino visigodo de Toledo*, Toledo 2007.

spending three days in the tomb, as Pope Gregory explains in his correspondence with Bishop Leander of Seville.

It is also significant that, despite their differences, the baptismal rituals described in the *Liber ordinum* were treated as part of a whole regardless of if a bishop or a priest celebrated them, and even if a priest celebrated baptism, then it was simultaneously related to the fact that he anointed and gave holy communion to the newly baptized person.

It is also worth noting the symbolic significance of the rite of tasting salt, which is described by St. Isidore of Seville, although the Hispanic liturgical books that have survived up to the present day do not mention this liturgical tasting. However, this ceremony is a unique trait of the Hispanic celebrations of the sacraments of initiation. The salt taken and tasted by the baptized was supposed to remind and encourage him or her to not return to his or her previous life (through the associations with the story of Lot's wife) and to show how Christ's teachings impregnate the catechumen's life. Furthermore, this "salt rite" wants to express the truth that the life of the Christian in contact with Christ's Word undertakes a new taste.¹⁰ This is also a reminder that just as sacrifices offered up to God were sprinkled with salt, the Christian along with Christ likewise gives up his or her life in a sacrifice pleasing to God.¹¹ It is significant that both the beginning and the end of the Christian's life were marked by the presence of salt in the Hispanic rite: during baptism salt was sprinkled on the catechumen, and during the funerary rituals the completed tomb was likewise sprinkled with salt.¹²

¹⁰ St. Isidore emphasizes this in particular in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* (PL 96), referencing the symbolism of salt. Similarly, St. Gregory of Elvira emphasizes its purifying properties in a homily strongly dealing with baptism (in the African tradition, there was even talk of *sacramentum salis*).

¹¹ M. González López-Corps, *Apuntes para la historia de la iniciación cristiana en los primeros siglos de Hispania*, "Toletana" 16 (2007), p. 67–95.

¹² Cf. G. Ramis, *La liturgia exequial en el rito hispano-mozárabe*, Roma 1996.

2. The Hispanic Catechumenate According to the Antiphony of Leon

In accordance with a decision of the Council of Elvira (303), the catechumenate should last for approximately two years.¹³ We know that in the Visigothic rite the rituals began on the Sunday called *in vicesima* (its name resulted from the fact that it took place in the middle of Lent), also referred to as *in mediante* (in reference to the Gospel reading read that day: John 7: 14, in which Christ stood in the middle of the temple), during which the candidate was officially “assigned” to a baptism and officially became a catechumen.¹⁴ A description of this ritual can be found in the Antiphony of Leon, which specifies that on the Vigil of that Sunday (i.e., on Saturday evening) it was publicly announced that all who have children ready to be baptized should bring them to the temple the following day so that they participate in their first catechumenal rites.¹⁵ Such an announcement related to the designation for baptism took place after the Gospel reading and before the homily.

The rite of designation of candidates as catechumens itself took place on Sunday: after the Gospel reading, three deacons asked for them to sign up. Afterwards, the bishop read the *Homo ille quem Dominus*¹⁶ homily, after which they went to the place where the children were in a process with a cross and the Gospel Book. The bishop would sit down, while the deacons would approach the catechumens or parents with children and ask their names, after which they would write them down and give them to the bishop. Having received a book with exorcisms from the bishop

¹³ M. S. Gros, *Liturgia y legislación conciliar en la Hispania visigoda*, “Phase” 241 (2001), p. 29–45.

¹⁴ I base my description of the Mozarabic catechumenate mainly on a detailed analysis of the Antiphony of Leon found in: J. M. Ferrer Grenesche, *Curso de liturgia hispano-mozárabe*, Toledo 1995, 64nn.

¹⁵ *Antifonario visigótico mozárabe de la Catedral de León*, dirs. L. Brou, J. Vives, Barcelona–Madrid 1959 (Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra. Serie litúrgica 5.1).

¹⁶ Tamže, 203

(given to him by the *thesaurarius*), the subdeacons would proceed to approach children held by their mothers on their right arm: they would stand on the left side with girls and on the right with boys. At this time, the deacons' task was to make sure that the children wouldn't sleep and that the mothers would hold their children on the correct (i.e., right) arm. The prayer with the exorcism consisted of blowing on the child's forehead and the subdeacon saying a formula against Satan (*Liber ordinum*, 24). Afterwards, another subdeacon approached the child, asked for his or her name, and anointed him or her with the sign of the cross while saying the child's name.

This was followed by the laying of hands and two prayers said by the subdeacons: *Deus Pater omnipotens* as well as *Deus autor universae*.¹⁷ The ceremony ended with the blessing of the bishop (from the place of celebration), who embraced the children about to be baptized during the upcoming Easter. This was how the inclusion of candidates into the "state" of catechumens, to the first stage of preparation in the case of adults (which consisted of their inclusion in a group called *audientes*, from which they became *competentes*¹⁸ on Palm Sunday, as in the Ambrosian rite), proceeded in the Hispanic rite. During the time of direct preparation beginning with *in vicesima* Sunday after the *sacrificium* prayer, adults were summoned to prayer; they came closer to receive a blessing and were said farewell to. As St. Ildefonsus notes, the model for both groups, and especially for the *competentes*, was the Biblical figure of Nicodemus, who was a model of opening all the senses and all of one's intellect to the integral understanding of the meaning of Sacred Scripture, the model of the catechumenate heard in Jesus' teaching. Thanks to this ability to listen, Nicodemus became a man of faith. Another trait of the catechumenate emphasized in the Mozarabic tradition – awareness of one's sinfulness and the need for the Redeemer, which leads to the discovery of the necessity of faith – is born of this listening to Christ's Word.

¹⁷ Tamže.

¹⁸ The transmission of the Credo (*traditio symboli*) in the Hispanic rite took place after proclaiming the Gospel: catechumens would have to publicly repeat it from memory in the presence of a bishop on Maundy Thursday; this was the so-called *redditio symboli*.

It is worth emphasizing, as Father Juan Miguel Ferrer Grenesch has noted, that the described rites were repeated everyday up through Palm Sunday and that we practically know only two chronological instructions: exorcisms began twenty days before baptism, and the transmission of the symbol always took place after Palm Sunday.¹⁹ Its celebrations began on the vigil of the preceding day (for those who were to be baptized in a given year), and during the Matins Gospel on Palm Sunday the oil that would later be used in the *epheta* ceremony was blessed. The bishop would blow on the oil, saying exorcisms and blessings, after which the catechumens would surround the altar in order to listen to three series of exorcisms, which were then said by the deacons, who then received answers from the choir. Next, the bishop moved to the West, which in Christian symbolism (this motif is also present in Greek culture, in which the gates of Hades were situated in the west) was an expression of the domination of sin and evil, in order to say the formulas exorcising Satan three times. These would be interrupted by a brief pause, after which the sign of the cross was made in the western direction. These formulas (reminiscent of enchanting and renouncing; *conjuros* in Spanish) expressed the request for the Lord, the Lion of Judah Who chose Jerusalem as His seat, to rebuke Satan and remove him from the paths of those aspiring to be baptized. What is interesting is that the texts of the Mozarabic exorcisms contain the topic of spiritual battle against Satan during the preparations, thus forming a clear contrast: while Satan closes the path to the faithful, God opens it.

Next, the choir of clergymen undertakes another series of three exorcisms, during which the cross of the catechumens is used for marking. Afterwards, the *epheta* ceremony, during which the ear is anointed three times after the catechumen's mouth is blessed with oil, occurs, and finally the ceremony of the laying of hands takes place, thus completing the Matins Gospel.

¹⁹ J. M. Ferrer Grenesche, *Curso de liturgia hispano-mozárabe...*, op. cit., p. 66.

3. The Ceremony of Giving the Sacrament in the Renewed Hispanic-Mozarabic Rite

In principle, the sacrament was performed by the bishop; in fact, many liturgical norms related to the celebration of the Easter Vigil presupposes this. It was recommended that candidates for baptism coming from communities close to episcopal seats be baptized by their bishops, but the performing of this sacrament by priests and deacons was also permitted.

In the Easter Vigil rituals in the renewed Hispanic rite, the bishop, catechumens, and godparents would proceed to the baptistery in a procession while singing *Psallendum* after the last Old Testament reading.²⁰ This did not have to occur within eyesight of the congregation, but it did have to occur with its participation.²¹ Meanwhile, as Jordi Pinell notes, during the times of the Visigoths, this occurred while the congregation read the readings assigned for the Easter Vigil liturgy.²² Because the baptismal font is closed off during Lent, the bishop opens it while saying the following prayer: “As we come nearer to the venerable source of salvation with an invigorating step, we summon Your greatness, omnipotent and almighty God, that You make this sealed source open for us with the keys

²⁰ It is worth noting that after every Gospel reading the deacon would summon the faithful present to kneel and to a moment of prayer in the following intentions: for the penitents, pilgrims, and travellers; for peace for the people and the king; and the final intercession directly before beginning the procession to the baptismal font was for the *competentes* (the deacon literally said *Pro competentibus flectamus genua*), for whom purification of sin in the baptismal waters is asked.

²¹ The rubrics of the contemporary MHM specify this: “Post lectionem ultimam Veteris Testamenti cum sua oratione, ordinatur processio episcopi, ministrorum et baptizantium, comitantibus parentibus et patrinis, ad baptisterium sive fontem, ibique incipit pars tertia, seu Liturgia baptismalis. Haec autem non habet per se locum in conspectu totius populi; potest tamen uno vel alio modo ita ordinari, ut populus eam participare possit.” Szczegółowy opis celebracji: P. Beitia, *Le baptême et l’initiation chrétienne en Espagne du IIIe au VIIe siècle*, Paris 2010, p. 170nn.

²² J. Pinell, *Liturgia hispanica...*, op. cit., p. 257.

of Your forgiveness and that You may make it available to those thirsting for a cup of sweet water. May the voice of Your divinity and Your Spirit of sanctification, which lives in these waters, echo over them [...] May that which comes from paradise now generously flow from this source so that new children, encouraged by You, may receive heavenly graces.”²³ Next, the celebrant would face the west, exorcising by blowing into the surface of the water three times. This gesture is very suggestive and symbolic, referencing the Holy Spirit’s breath.²⁴ The words of the exorcism summon the power of God that is stronger than Satan as well as the humility of those approaching baptism who do not trust in their own accomplishments. Water is also referenced; it is into water that the words to “joyously give its flowing nature for [baptismal] service” and to reject all filth and villainy of the evil one are directed.

Meanwhile, its positive power is expressed in the prayer of blessing, which occurs directly after the exorcism and in which its power present above all in the mystery of creations (as attested to the references to the Biblical cosmivision, ocean reservoirs, etc.) is summoned. After the blessing, the celebrant makes a sign of the cross on the baptismal font, thus pouring a bit of chrism into the baptismal source. When such a *conmixto* occurs, the priest says another prayer of blessing: “Although filthy with the scabs of fault and tormented by pangs of guilt, we humbly and meekly beg and ask You, Almighty God, to in Your goodness be present at our side and graciously comply with our prayers, blessing this water mixed with holy oil through the gift of Your Spirit and to pour Your holy graces upon it. May those who will descend into this stream, calling the

²³ “Ad venerabilem salutis aeternae fontem græssibus concitis properantes, obsecramus magnificentiam tuam, dominator omnipotens Deus, ut fontem signatum clavibus indulgentiae tuae nobis reserari praecipias et dulcissimum aquae poculum sitiéntibus impertias. Intonet super aquas has vox tuae divinitatis, et Spiritus tuae sanctificationis inhabitans in eis medelam valetudinibus conferat universis. Emissiones quoque paradisi nunc ex eo largiénter profluent; ut caelestium gratiarum munera novi infantes, te propitiante, percipiant.”

²⁴ Cf. F. M. Arocena Solano, *Tajemnica Pięćdziesiątnicy w Mszale Hiszpańsko-Mozarabskim*, [in:] *Veritas con Caritate – intellegentia cum Amore*, red. C. Rychlicki, I. Werbiński, Toruń 2011, p. 47–65.

name of the Holy Trinity, be freed from original sin and equipped with You eternal blessing, be clean of all fault and strengthened with the gifts of the spirit and be added to the heavenly book.”²⁵

It is worth noting that, oftentimes, Spanish baptismal fonts featured three steps going up and three going down, which along with the ground, summed up to a total number of seven levels; seven was a very important number in Visigothic symbolism.²⁶ St. Isidore saw in these levels a reference to three renunciations and three professions of faith, while the middle section was something of an “oven of the Passion” that the fiery oven from the Book of Daniel (cf. Daniel 3 : 11) had already referenced. In the context of closing off the baptismal font during Lent, there is the significant drawing up of an analogy to Moses’ striking the rock with his staff, which led to the flowing of water (cf. Numbers 20 : 11): the equivalent of this striking is the aforementioned making the sign of the cross on the baptismal font, and thus “striking” with the cross, which opens up the power of water. The water that as used to baptize the catechumen had its theological origins in the same water that flowed from Jesus’ wounded side on the cross (without a doubt, the Hispanic tradition borrows this from St. Augustine).²⁷

After this prayer, the catechumens are presented to the celebrant, and they first renounce evil in the form of three questions:

Celebrant: Do you *N* renounce Satan and his minions?

²⁵ “Quamvis flagitiórum squalóre sordéntes et consciéntia mordénte facinorum, abiécti et húmiles te, Deus omnipotens, deprecámur et quæsumus, ut pro tua miseratióne adsis benígus, et libens aspíres, atque propítius has aquas óleo sanctificatiónis admixtas virtútis tuæ múnere benedícas, atque eis ex tuis sédibus grátiam sanctitátis infúndas. Ut quicúmque, summo invocáto nómine Trinitátis, in hæc fluénta descénderint, origináli noxa solvántur et benedictióne perpétua condonéntur, cuntísq; emundáti a vitiis et confirmáti spirituálibus donis, cæléstibus annoténtur in páginis.”

²⁶ For more on Hispanic baptismal fonts and their history, see: cf. C. Godoy Fernández, *Baptisterios hispánicos (siglos IV al VIII): arqueología y liturgia*, [in:] *Actes du XIe congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne. Lyon, Vienne, Grenoble, Genève, Aoste, 21–28 septembre 1986*, Rome 1989, p. 607–634.

²⁷ M. González López-Corps, *Apuntes para la historia...*, op. cit., p. 90.

Catechumen: I do renounce them.

Celebrant: And his works?

Catechumen: I do renounce them.

Celebrant: And his rule?

Catechumen: I do renounce it.

The profession of faith, which takes place in the form of the following dialogue, is somewhat extended:

Celebrant: How do you wish to be called?

Catechumen: *N*.

Celebrant: Do you *N* believe in God the Almighty Father?

Catechumen: I do believe in Him.

Celebrant: And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our God and Father?

Catechumen: I do believe in him.

Celebrant: And in the Holy Spirit?

Catechumen: I believe.

Next, there is one immersion (after Lent, the catechumen approaches without cloths) or one pouring of previously blessed water on the head, thus saying the baptismal formula: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit so that you may have eternal life." The distinguishing trait of the Hispanic rite is thus adding the aforementioned words "so that you may have eternal life" (*ut habeas vitam aeternam*), which have a soteriological dimension, to the sacramental formula present in all the liturgies; this is common to both the Hispanic and Gallican rites.

The next part of the celebration featured the sacrament of confirmation, which consisted of two parts: the person conferring the sacrament would make the sign of the cross on the uncovered head of the baptized, standing next to his or her godparents, and say the formula: "This is the sign of eternal life that God the Almighty Father gave the faithful through His Son Jesus Christ for redemption."²⁸ Next, he would perform the gesture of the laying of hands on the neophyte, accompanied by a long prayer to the Holy Spirit to allow the reborn to persist in the grace of baptism and be strengthened in faith (*A te fides exóritur, in te*

²⁸ "Signum vitæ æternæ, quod dedit Deus Pater omnipotens per iesum Christum, Filium suum, credéntibus in salútem."

fides exténditur, et ex te fides armátur) and give his or her gifts. What is striking in this prayer is the unusual richness of names for the Holy Spirit (*pastus animárum, dulcédo credéntium, invisibilis pinguédo iustórum*), as well as the connection of the profession of faith to eternal life. This is a profession of the Triune God: *Deum trinum, non tríplicem, sed unum, non solitárium*.²⁹ Characteristically, the prayer presented in the version from the *Liber ordinum* focuses not on the person of the Holy Spirit, but on the holy oil itself. It is worth recalling that for St. Isidore the anointing after baptism was a reference to the very name “Christian,” which means the anointed one, although Ildefonsus appears to not see any connection between these two gestures (anointing and prayer with held out arms) as referring to the transmission of the Holy Spirit. Instead he seems to associate this with blessing (a reference to Mark 10: 13) and thus does not associate it with the presence of bishops.

Next, the laying of white vestments, a sign of the purity of life, that are to be present before Christ’s tribunal, takes place: “Accept the white vestment, the nuptial vestment, which you must present unadulterated before Christ’s tribunal for eternal life.”³⁰ The newly baptized wear it up until the Tuesday after Easter, when a special prayer is said after Mass, a blessing is given by the wall that is a boundary between the choir and the nave, after which the baptized leave their baptismal vestments.

St. Ildefonsus mentions transmitting the *Our Father* to the neophytes as the prayer appropriate for those who have become children of God the Heavenly Father. After this ceremony, the celebrant returns in procession to the choir, where he celebrates the remaining parts of the Easter Vigil. At this time, the antiphons based on Song of Songs 4: 2 (“Your teeth are like a flock of ewes to be shorn, which come up from the washing; All of them big with twins, none of them thin and barren”³¹) and Psalms 23: 6 and 106: 2–3, which emphasize the freedom of the baptized and

²⁹ J. Colomina Torner, *Los textos litúrgicos trinitarios y la identidad del pueblo mozárabe en la historia*, Toledo 2000, p. 39–52 (Anales Toledanos, 37).

³⁰ “Accipe tibi vestem cándidam, vestem nuptiálem, quam immaculáto corde feras ante tribúnal Dómini nostri Iesu Christi in vitam ætérnam.”

³¹ “Ecce grex quæ ascéndit de lavácro, omnes geméllis foetibus, et stérilis non est in eis.”

the program of their new life (looking for the face of God and the new spiritual fertility consisting of bringing the fruits of the Spirit) are sung.

A fulfillment of this homogenous moment constituted by the sacraments of Christian initiation is the taking of the Eucharist in two kinds, even by small children. One should remember that this was the first opportunity to fully participate in the entire Mass. At the same time, it was lowered like a curtain, thus Hispanic writers often emphasize their fascination with the liturgy, with its frequent acclamations, presented gifts, and song, which characterized the newly baptized. Men and women approached the wall separating their place from the *chorus* with open hands and a veil, respectively, to receive Holy Communion. In this way, the truth about the table prepared by the Lord “under the eyes of my enemies,” where the cup “brims over” (Psalm 23:5) and where the newly baptized can experience the fruit that is the counterpoint to that of Eden, is fulfilled.

According to the Hispanic tradition, the period of direct post-baptismal mystagogy lasted until Tuesday in the Octave of Easter, thus encompassing the “Triduum” (Eastern Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday), this time right after the Paschal night. It ended with the folding of the vestments received during the Easter Vigil and mystagogical catechesis given in that time. It reminded of the importance of the new life, which cannot be soiled by new sins and the *lex agendi*, which consisted of going from the sign to the meaning, that is to live according to what one professed and believed. Without a doubt, a deepened understanding of the Eucharist in which the baptized met with the living Lord played a role in this process: for the baptized, the water from the baptismal font was a source of grace flowing from the Cross, where the unblemished Lamb now being sacrificed on the altar was crucified.

The Hispanic tradition is unique with this pastoral trait and concern for mystagogy, which was cultivated by ceremonies foreseen for children and youth in different periods of their life in the Hispanic rite.³² It is worth mentioning several of them: *Oratio super eum qui capillos in sola fronte tondere vult* (when a religious awakening occurs), *Benedictio super*

³² J.-M. Ferrer, *La iniciación cristiana y otros ritos en los rituales hispanos*, “Toletana” 16 (2007), p. 113–127.

parvulum, quem in ecclesia ad ministerium Dei detonditur (when one is catechized and gains a deepened understanding of Christian doctrine), *Ordo super eum qui barbam tangere cupii* (the entry into adult life): they all attest to the spirituality of accompanying the baptized not only in the day of the celebration of the sacrament, but throughout their entire lives.³³

It is worth noting that the *ordo baptismi* from the *Liber ordinum* was prepared with celebration not on the Easter Vigil, but during the liturgical year in mind, hence the expression *ordo baptismi celebrandus quolibet tempore* and emphasis that all the described rituals were to be celebrated by the same priest. Nonetheless, as Jordi Pinell suggests, the bond between the baptized and the Paschal night was cared for throughout the entire year, because a detailed prayer with the laying of hands was formulated for these persons (*oratio manus impositionis in vigilia Paschae*)³⁴.

4. Baptismal Euchology

When analyzing the theological themes in reference to the sacrament of holy baptism present in the Hispanic euchology, it is worth noting several unique characteristics that fulfill and explain the previously described rituals. In the Hispanic mentality, water and its power – which not only purifies from the filth of sin, but above all it is an environment in which new life is born – have great symbolic meaning. This is expressed in the prayer said during the consecration of the baptismal font, which is opened once again during the Paschal night (the already mentioned *benedictio fontis*): “May they be brought to peace in order to feel redeemed and reborn, renewed in the mystical streams.”³⁵ One must “recognize” oneself in the waters, because they serve as a mirror in which one can discern the evil of contemporary life far from Christ, the real source. The symbolism of water thus not only refers to its redeeming function described in Sacred

³³ J. Sancho, *Ritos de la infancia y la adolescencia en el antiguo rito hispánico*, Roma 1992.

³⁴ J. Pinell, *Liturgia hispánica...*, op. cit., p. 257.

³⁵ “Surgant ad réquiem, producántur ad véniam; ut mýsticis innováti liquóribus, et redémpptos se nóvierint, et renátos.”

Scripture, but also to its life-giving nature necessary for the everyday functioning of the person. Thus it should not be surprising that already in Gregory of Elvira († 394) we can see the emphasis on the meaning of water in the image of God the potter, Who immerses His hands in water (baptism) and molds the vessel anew (a metaphor for the soul), which had cracked because of sin, is glued together anew in the warmth of the Holy Spirit, and thanks to the “density” of promises and “bonds” of discipline gathers it in its entirety. Only after such a bath in the baptismal basin (*piscina lavacri*) is the soul capable of accepting grace.³⁶

Furthermore, it is significant that the *epheta* rite, which is of the nature of an exorcism, contains a direct summons to the Holy Spirit. This pneumatological accent connected to a frequent reference to the image of Jesus’ own baptism in the waters of the Jordan demonstrates the uniqueness of the practice of baptism in relation to the *Liber ordinum*.

At the same time, it refers back to the rich euchology of Advent and *Apparitio Domini*, ceremony, in which the role of John’s baptism of Christ Himself is heard.³⁷ As is known, typology is one of the preferred forms of expression in the Hispanic rite, but not only in the context of Old Testament characters, but those from the Gospels as well. Lenten euchology notices the announcement of the power of baptism in the miracle undertaken by Jesus in the Bethesda Pool.³⁸

At the same time, listening to the content of the blessing said above the person being baptized we see that it contains not so much a reference to Christ’s death and resurrection as to the rebirth taking place in the baptismal waters, thanks to which Adam’s innocence in paradise is restored. This has to do with regaining God’s image, which had suffered as a result of the iniquity of the snake, and thus consequently man’s sin and

³⁶ Gregory of Elvira, *Tractatus [Origenis] de libris sanctarum Scripturarum*, cap. XXIV, 26.

³⁷ A. Ivorra Robla, *San Juan Bautista en el Rito Hispano-Mozárabe*, “Hispania Sacra” 62 (2010), p. 375–405.

³⁸ The *post nomina* prayer during the third Sunday of Easter: “sicut abluti sumus originali peccato per tinctionem baptismatis, cuius significationem habuit piscine illa quae oculis lumen praestitit caecis, ita quoque nos secundo lacrimarum baptismate purifices a delictis.”

his disobedience. The baptismal waters appear to be a “mystical stream” in which man’s rebirth and regaining of the first brightness related to being *ad imaginem Trinitatis* take place, just as the Palm Sunday euchology specifies. As researchers have shown, these accents contain a reference to the tradition of the Syrian liturgy.³⁹

Conclusion

The above-presented procedure of the celebration of the sacrament of holy baptism in the Hispanic-Mozarabic rite, which takes into consideration the historical context and genesis of many rituals that accompany the road to Christian initiation, allows for the comprehension of several motifs that are especially important to this rite and to its theological message.

One of the characteristic traits of Mozarabic baptismal spirituality is the emphasis placed on the struggle against Satan and evil, which begins along with the decision to sign up for baptism and lasts until the moment when the sacrament is conferred. As Ferrer notes,⁴⁰ one can see analogies and theological connections to the theology of martyrdom and role of witnesses (*confesores*), which are so important to the Hispanic rite. The catechumen receives spiritual support in these internal challenges in order to ultimately free him or herself from the bonds of sin and to not wallow in the torpor of the half-liberated life. Thus during the period of preparation for baptism the Hispanic rite emphasized the frequent participation of catechumens in the liturgy, during which they frequently came closer to the celebrant in order to receive a special blessing. Faith brings one closer to the sacrament; without it, faith is destined for weakness. Thus the sacrament is a “seal” of the faith, making it the basis of the new existence of the baptized.

³⁹ M. Jonson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, Collegeville 1999, p. 234.

⁴⁰ J. M. Ferrer Grenesche, *Curso de liturgia hispano-mozárabe...*, p. 67.

This also emphasized the changes that occurred within the person received the sacrament: from deafness to hearing, from spiritual blindness to seeing the full light, and from a contaminated to a pure image of God. At the same time, the message of the euchology of the rite left no doubts with regards to the responsibility to constantly attuning or harmonizing the received sacrament with the faith. This was an awareness of the necessity to feed the faith so that it would fully reach the mystery of Christ to Whom they had become bound.

Abstract

Baptism in the Hispanic-Mozarabic Liturgy

Celebration of the sacrament of baptism in the Hispanic-Mozarabic Rite, as in other liturgical families, was preceded by a period of the catechumenate to which the candidates were introduced by the special rite celebrated on Sunday *in vicesima*. This article analyzes the course of the celebration of the sacraments of initiation according to the norms from a revised rite and with reference to the earlier tradition reflected in the *Liber Ordinum* and Antiphony of Leon. It explains the Visigoths' practice of single immersion in water during the administration of the sacrament and various other rites, post-baptismal Triduum and acclamations typical for the Hispanic liturgy. Extensive euchology of this rite provides valuable information on sacramental theology, which betrays the African influences (in particular the reference to St. Augustine) and has been transmitted by St. Gregory of Elvira, St. Ildefonsus of Toledo and St. Isidore of Seville. It is worth emphasizing the pastoral dimension of the process of initiation visible in complex formulas and the variety of blessings received by catechumens and rituals celebrated in post-baptismal mystagogy.

Keywords

Hispanic-Mozarabic Rite; sacrament of Christian initiation; catechumenate; Isidore of Seville; Ildefonsus of Toledo; blessings

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